Construction Expected to Begin in 2018 on Breakneck Connector

The partners spearheading creation of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail are preparing for commencement of construction on the Breakneck Connector. The project will dramatically improve visitor access to Breakneck Ridge from Metro-North and NYS Route 9D. It is the first major undertaking by the coalition that has been working for years to plan how best to manage safety and visitation concerns along the portion of Route 9D between Cold Spring and Beacon. The Trail Conference is a member of this alliance and has played a role in shaping the Breakneck Connector project.

see CONNECTOR, page 2

Who Is the Trail Conference?

When a handful of passionate hikers decided to build the first public trail across Harriman State Park in 1920, they didn’t blaze a path for their own recreation—they kicked off the beginnings of a trail revolution. This movement formed the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, which in turn has grown into an organization that stewards more than 2,150 miles of trails and the lands they traverse. Today, nearly every trail experience in this region has been made possible through the hard work of a Trail Conference volunteer.

Who are these volunteers? Some have lovingly described them as “trail gnomes,” people who quietly head into the woods, work swiftly, and leave no evidence of their efforts beyond safe, sustainable trails and improved green space. It’s a special kind of trail magic, to be sure. But there is no magic wand. This magic is in the passion of these special individuals who give so much of themselves for the sake of helping others connect with nature.

There is no better way to describe what the Trail Conference does than by showcasing who the Trail Conference is. And so, on pages 6 and 7, you’ll find a “day in the life” snapshot of the organization, featuring some of these incredible people and their efforts to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy, for generations to come.
In Memoriam: John Gunzler

John Gunzler, a tireless champion of the Trail Conference for decades, passed away on Nov. 10. He was 82.

John generously gave back to the trail he loved through volunteer service and financial gifts to the Trail Conference for many years. John was a very active member of the Board of Directors, serving from 1999 to 2008, and continued to be a leading member of various committees, including the Membership and Development Nominating, Darlingston Schoolhouse, Finance, and Investment committees.

In 2011, John and his wife Marianne inaugurated the Trail Conference’s Legacy Fund with a gift of $100,000. Trails were a life-long passion for John and Marianne; in fact, it was on a hike in Harriman State Park that they met 58 years ago.

A Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, John recently published a memoir about his life, Happily Ever After: A Journey of Survival, written by his granddaughter. In all of his endeavors, John always seemed to be a happy man. He will be greatly missed.

Twice the Love for Trails and Parks

Our Giving Week and #GivingTuesday campaign was a success! A huge thank you goes out to the nature lovers and trail walkers who showed such generous support for our work and had their gifts doubled during this special fund drive. We’ve got several funds that have matching opportunities all year long. From supporting Summit Stewards in the Catskills to combating invasive species to trail improvements in Ramapo Valley County Reservation and Harriman and Sterling Forest state parks, you can make your gift go twice as far for trails and trail lands when you donate to these projects. Please consider supporting your trail builders, maintainers, and protectors with a tax-deductible gift to the Trail Conference today.

Learn more about doubling the impact of your donation at bit.ly/tc-bcc. Contact Brendan Cunningham at 201.512.9348 ext. 828.

The Breakneck Connector project will include many improvements, like this welcome center, that will help to create a better trail experience for all users.

half mile section north of the Breakneck tunnel, and eliminate nose-in and other dangerous parking conditions. 

Pave and strip the current dirt parking area, including designated space for three emergency vehicles, bathrooms facilities, and a trolley stop.

Reduce the speed limit on Route 9D from 35 to 40 mph and add enhanced pedestrian crossings and other features to improve safety.

Add a new welcome center for trail orientations and visitor assistance by stewards at the Breakneck Ridge trailhead, including new trailhead signs and other wayfinding.

Although the trails along the ridge will remain open during construction, it is anticipated that the Breakneck Ridge trailhead and train stop will need to close temporarily to allow for safe and quick construction. The current anticipated timeframe for closure of the trailhead by the Breakneck Ridge train stop is in early 2018 and both would remain closed until the project is complete in mid-2019.

Read more at bit.ly/tc-bcc.

Updated construction information will be made available on the project website at hudsonfjordtrail.org and through the Trail Conference website, E-Walker, and social media. For alternative hikes around Breakneck Ridge, check out bit.ly/tc-btc.

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The Trail Conference, founded in 1920 with the purpose of creating a network of marked trail for the public to enjoy the region’s parklands, recently adopted a new Trail Use Policy. In sync with our mission of ensuring that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come, the policy acknowledges that “trails should be collectively funded and maintained for a single use are most satisfying for that use,” whereas multi-use trails may compromise design standards among the uses. However, we also believe we can help bikers and equestrians create trails that will be popular for hikers and trail runners, too. Bikers and equestrians have long been frustrated by the lack of places to ride, and there are many “vacant” public lands that could support trails systems and protect their ecological integrity.

We are not only creating exciting new experiences for trail users previously unaware of the Trail Conference’s 100-year legacy, we are creating new volunteers, new members, and new advocates. Goodell is excited by New York State Parks’ project to design a trail system that is compatible with nature and the historic landscape of the Catskills.

Edward Goodell
Executive Director
goodell@nynjtc.org

Help Celebrate Our Volunteers on March 10
Trail Conference volunteers make incredible commitments to the trails and lands they love. With more than 2,400 people spending their time and energy to our mission, there are so many award-worthy volunteers in our ranks. We’ll be honoring those who have gone above and beyond in the last year at our annual Volunteer Appreciation event on Saturday, March 10. Join Trail Conference volunteers, staff, and partners for awards, food, fun, and raffles. Mark your calendars now and check nynjtc.org/va18, where we will be posting full details about the day.

Edward Goodell
Executive Director
goodell@nynjtc.org

Six Art Exhibitions Planned for Trail Conference Gallery
Located in the main hall of Trail Conference Headquarters, our art gallery is celebrating the close of a successful second year and has many exciting exhibitions lined up for 2018. Gregory Fray’s paintings and etchings of “Wild Landscapes, Near and Far,” on display through Jan. 5, end our second season. The New Year brings a new exhibit, “Hiker, Who Are You?” opening Jan. 8. This show features hiker portraits and stories and can be seen through March 6. An opening reception will be held on Jan. 11 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.; all are invited to attend.

In the spring, Pete Tilgner, a dedicated Trail Conference volunteer and former instructor of photography, will display his photographs. Then, we will once again display the creativity of Joyce Kilmer Elementary School students—the 2017 showcase of art by 4th and 5th grade participants of the Mahwah Gifted and Talented Program was a hit. Later, expect to see a group show called “Winging It,” featuring birds and bugs, as well as a show on botanical art and a solo artist show (TBA). Additionally, the Art Selection Committee is discussing presentations featuring art talks and demonstrations.

The Trail Conference Art Gallery is located at 600 Ramapo Valley Road in Mahwah, N.J. and is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit nynjtc.org for more info.

Nicole Dion joined the Trail Conference in October 2015 as the Finance and Operations Associate. This year, she will receive her bachelor’s degree in accounting from Montclair State University. Since 2013, Nicole has been an active volunteer for several wildlife organizations, including the Conservancy Wildlife Foundation of NJ, where she works on a variety of projects that help protect New Jersey’s rare species. She was introduced to the Trail Conference in 2015 and volunteers for our invasive species programs.

Eric Stone, Invasives Program Educator and Volunteer Coordinator, joined the Trail Conference in September after two years as a naturalist with Westchester County Parks. He graduated from SUNY Environmen
tal Science and Forestry in Syracuse in 2012 with a B.S. in resource management and minors in recreation resource management and environmental writing and rhetoric. While in school, he developed a passion for connecting people to the land through hands-on experiences. In his free time, he enjoys teaching, learning, and camping, skills and campfire cooking.

Michael Young joined the Trail Conference in September as the Territorial Invasive Species Project Manager. In 2015, Michael received his B.S. in landscape architecture with a concentration in ecological design from Rutgers University. While at Rutgers, Mike interned with the Central Park Conservancy as a project manager and spent two seasons with Maplewood Township in New Jersey as a horticultural specialist. Earlier in life, he was the trail maintainer for Greenbrook New York’s New Paltz Sod Palsades, where a desire to protect our native environment and environment was fostered. More recently, he was a member of the 2016 Invasives Strike Force Crew.

Happy Trails to Sabina and Tori
Sabina Cardenas joined the Trail Conference in 2016 as a Conservation Corps member serving in Sterling Forest. She became field manager the following winter and worked on teaching sustainable trail building with the Corps. Tori graduated from the State University of New York at Fredonia in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in environ
tmental studies. She returned to her hometown of Buffalo, N.Y.

We thank Sabina and Tori for their contributions and wish them the best of luck.
Notes from the Field: Improving the Lenape Trail

DEBRA KAGAN
FIELD MANAGER

On the evening of Nov. 2, the Trail Conference hosted the first Lenape Trail Gathering, held at the Robert J. O’Toole Community Center in Cedar Grove, N.J. The event, co-sponsored with the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, celebrated the latest improvements to this unique urban trail, created by Al Kent over 40 years ago.

The 34-mile Lenape Trail is an urban/suburban network that ties together 12 communities in Essex County. As one of the Lenape Trail field managers, I’ve been following the trail’s yellow blazes from one park and township to another, meeting some amazing people along the way. The dinner was the first time I was able to get so many of the trail stewards in one location, and it made me appreciate once again the great diversity of landscape, wildlife, and people connected by the Lenape Trail. Winding through parks like Brook Brook and Brookdale—both planned by Fredrick Law Olmsted, the designer of New York City’s Central Park—and providing access to the broad, scenic overlooks and quiet woods of Eagle Rock, South Mountain, Mills, and Hilltop reservations, the Lenape Trail offers green respite in one of the most densely populated counties in the country. All along the way you’ll find several small gems, like the Nay Pyi Taw Historic Museum, making the Lenape Trail a rich resource to get outdoors and engage with nature and local history.

The dinner brought together trail stewards, members of local park conservancies, walking groups, and historical societies to celebrate the latest improvements to the Lenape Trail, made possible by a generous grant from Partners for Health. These upgrades include a full inventory and assessment of trail conditions; increased access with new signage in four parks; and an up-to-date map available in digital and print formats. Get yours at nynjtc.org/park/lenape-trail.

In the Works

One of the most exciting changes to the trail is the planned reroutes to include two historic landmarks: the spectacular blooms of the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens and the sweeping vistas and profound tributes of the 911 Memorial in Eagle Rock Reservation. In addition, when new bluing is completed, the trail will include the Hilltop Reservation, a restoration of which was recently completed through the heroic efforts of local volunteers. They restored an amazing natural meadow, an area now filled with birds, buttercups, and a great variety of beautiful grasses.

To ensure this unique trail remains accessible to all for many years to come, we need the help of people who believe in the power of connecting with nature—people like you. The Lenape Trail offers a wide range of opportunities for volunteering. Contact Peter Dolan (pdolan@nynjtc.org) to learn more.
Protecting Open Space and Trails in Orange County

From improvements on the Highlands Trail to land preservation, exciting things are happening in and around Goosepond Mountain State Park.

Highlands Trail Gets Rerouted Onto Parkland

A section of the Highlands Trail along Laroe Road in Chester, N.Y., has been rerouted through Goosepond Mountain State Park. The former road walk—which at one time forced hikers to step into a deep ditch to avoid approaching traffic—has been replaced with a beautiful, well-graded multi-use trail. Approximately 2 miles long, this new section of the Highlands Trail now passes 200-year-old oaks as it winds its way along the shoulders of the park’s hills.

Parking for this section of the trail is at Bull Mill Road on the southern end and at a newly improved roadside parking pullout on Laroe Road at the junction of Lardy Hill Road. Here, you’ll find a connector trail (black-on-blue diamond blaze) that creates access from the parking area to the newly relocated Highlands Trail. Thanks to recent work by state parks staff and the Long Distance Trails Crew, this connector trail is now accessible to persons with disabilities from the parking area to the Seely Brook bridge.

Ed like to thank Mark Hengasser, Park Planner for NYS Parks, for getting the new trail approved; the volunteers who helped build the trail; and Trail Conference staffers Sona Mason and Erik Seely, whose passion for and dedication to this project went above and beyond the call of duty.

Before

After

In August, the Trail Conference acquired a piece of undeveloped land in Chester, N.Y., that is key to ongoing efforts to create a greenway from Sterling Forest to Storm King state parks in Orange County. The 14.3-acre parcel is an important step in forming a corridor for the Highlands Trail between Goosepond Mountain State Park and the Appalachian Trail corridor in Sterling Forest. Preservation of this land will allow the Trail Conference to eliminate a dangerous section of road walk on the Highlands Trail.

The Highlands Trail is a 182-mile-long route that extends from Pennsylvania to Connecticut. It highlights the national beauty of the Highlands region, linking scenic and historic attractions in New York and New Jersey along the way. The Trail is a cooperative effort of state and local governments, local businesses, the Trail Conference, and other conservation organizations.

The Trail Conference continues to focus its conservation efforts on protecting trails and trail lands, with an emphasis on long-distance trails such as the Highlands Trail. The Trail Conference will hold this parcel until it is sold to the state for permanent protection.

We are thankful for the efforts of our volunteers and partner organizations, including Open Space Institute and Orange County Land Trust, who work diligently with the Trail Conference to identify and acquire properties that are important to trail protection.

Check out some of the latest Trail Conference Retail Partners and their great member-only discounts. Visit nynytc.org/retail-partners for full details on all partner discounts.

Join the Trail Conference, Get Great Deals

Long Distance Trails Crew Completes Stone Arch Bridge

Starting last January, the Long Distance Trails Crew took on the task of repairing the severely damaged stone arch bridge over Seely Brook in Goosepond Mountain State Park. Over 30 work days, 43 volunteers gave a total of 2,493 hours to rehabilitating this stream crossing. They built 945 square feet of crib wall, installed 350 pounds of rebar, and mixed and poured 580 bags of concrete—that’s over 25 tons! The finished crossing, celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 4, is 18 feet wide and 37 feet long. This once dangerous section of the Highlands Trail is now beautiful and safe.

In addition to New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, thanks goes to Jeff and Elizabeth Zahn, the Board family, the Bellvale Community, Protection Fence Inc., and many individual donors.

Marty Costello, LDOTC Member

This new section of the Highlands Trail is right on the border of original and newly protected parkland.

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A Day in the Life of the Trail Conference

Both on and off the trail, every day of the year, there is a member of the Trail Conference family working hard to make your next adventure possible. From Manhattan to Albany, the Delaware Water Gap to the Taconics and beyond, right now, Trail Conference volunteers and staff are working to improve access to outdoor opportunities for all and protect the belief that the joys of nature belong to everyone.

Brian Tragno
Trail Steward

After working all week as a coffee shop manager in Manhattan, Brian Tragno has what he calls the perfect weekend job: being outside and educating hikers as a Breakneck Ridge Trail Steward. Brian, who lives in Astoria, N.Y., and grew up hiking in New Jersey, joined the Trail Conference as a Steward in 2013. The Breakneck Stewards often see about 2,000 visitors at this popular trailhead every weekend, and Brian’s favorite part of the job is introducing first-time hikers to this challenging but rewarding trail—"as long as they’ve got the right shoes and enough water, of course!" There is an incredible community surrounding Breakneck: regulars who hike this trail every weekend and people who are out on their first hike ever. The views and experience can hook people, Brian says. "We’re here to educate visitors, recommend new hikes, and get people involved with the trails they love.

Cliff Berchtold
Trail Maintainer, ISF Surveyor, Workshop Instructor

“As a citizen scientist, you get a better idea for the health of a forest,” says Cliff Berchtold, who has been keeping an eye on trails and trail lands as a Trail Conference volunteer for more than 20 years. A retired director of transportation for Monroe-Woodbury School District, Cliff joined the Trail Conference as a trail maintainer in 1995 and became an Invasives Strike Force surveyor in 2013. The Trail Conference’s Invasives Strike Force (ISF) trains volunteers in invasive plant identification and survey protocol in efforts to protect biodiversity in our region. Since he joined ISF, Cliff has surveyed 58 miles of trails for invasives. Cliff, who lives in Monroe, N.Y., also volunteers in the Trail Conference office helping to prepare for the season by creating maps and processing data. But his favorite part of the job is getting outside while giving back to benefit future hikers. "In today’s fast and techy world, surveying for invasives forces you to slow down," he says. "You can soak in the forest, appreciate the smaller things in nature, and get to know that piece of trail.”

Connie Stern
Trail Supervisor, Trail Crew Member, Maintainer, Swamper, A.T. Corridor Monitor

"Working outside in the water and mud, you feel like a kid again. I’m more active, happier, and healthier than ever,” says Connie Stern, who began volunteering with the Trail Conference in 2009. Since her retirement as a physical therapist in 2014, Connie has become a member of three different trail crews, a trail maintainer, an Appalachian Trail corridor monitor, and sawummer to her sawyer husband, Fred Stern (also a trail superhero). In December, she was named Trail Steward for Southern Westchester. On Wednesdays, you’ll find the Cortlandt Manor, N.Y., resident with the Trail Tramps Crew; Fridays she works with the Westchester East Trail Crew; and other days, she helps out the East Hudson Trail Crew on the Cornish Trail, the trail she maintains in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. On non-crew days, Connie stays busy walking trails to evaluate the conditions, clips back invasive plants, and monitors two sections of the Appalachian Trail corridor. "I’m so proud to work my Trail Conference volunteer T-shirt,” Connie says. "It’s such a great organization, and being a part of that is just wonderful.”

David Haas
Committee Member

Glenda Haas
Committee Chair

Longtime members David and Glenda Haas have become more involved in the Trail Conference since the organization’s move to the headquarters at Darlington Schoolhouse. David, owner of the investment firm Cererus Financial Advisors, serves on the Development Committee, and Fundraising committees, while Glenda, program director for the Community Arts Association, serves as the chair of the Art Selection Committee. The Mahwah, N.J., couple seamlessly works together to raise funds and visibility for the Trail Conference. Glenda spearheaded the formation of the Art Committee to decorate Trail Conference Headquarters’ grand stairwell with the history of the building and organization. She has been instrumental in transforming the main hall into a rotating art gallery. “By hanging art from the walls, we can invite the community in to enjoy this beautiful building and learn about the Trail Conference,” she says. Glenda and David’s good work coalesced in preparation for the 2017 Annual Gala, planned by the Events Committee. Artist Gregory Fruex was the keynote speaker, whose work was the featured fall art exhibition. “We’re constantly taking on new projects,” David says. “It’s been quite a fun adventure!”

Don Tripp
Trail Chair, Headquarters Volunteer

Don Tripp loves interacting with people who have a passion for the outdoors. The retired commercial mortgage banker joined the Trail Conference in 2009, and he’s been a tireless champion for the trails ever since. As the West Jersey Trail Chair, he oversees supervisors and maintainers around the Delaware Water Gap region. Don, who lives in Lambertville, N.J., also volunteers at the front desk of Trail Conference Headquarters selling maps, marketing publications to prospective retailers, and answering email inquiries. “I enjoy reading and responding to questions about hiking,” Don says. “The questions are fun and interesting to answer!” Don often answers calls and emails from hikers concerned about trailhead parking, reading maps, and running into snakes. “That’s what I like the most: educating and connecting people with nature,” Don says. When he’s
Katina Grays  
Member Club Representative

“The outdoors belongs to all of us, but for some people of color, the outdoors is a complex thing,” says Katina Grays. Katina, who lives in Harlem, is the NYC Volunteer Coordinator for Outdoor Afro, a national non-profit that celebrates and inspires African American communities and their connection with nature. She is passionate about building an inclusive community for people to connect in and with nature, working to dissipate any fears of the outdoors. She’s been a member of the New York chapter of Outdoor Afro and joined the Trail Conference as a member in early 2017. Katina has led several hikes with the Trail Conference, and is always up for fixing the outdoors adventure—from backpacking to archery—to her members. She believes in creating cultural outdoor experiences that are accessible—95 percent of their events are reachable by public transit—as well as meaningful. Outdoor Afro has organized healing hikes after social injustices. “My favorite part of my work is building a deep and restorative community where we can connect within nature to heal and reflect or just go out and have some fun,” she says.

not “on duty.” Don enjoys getting outside to hike the trails and works so hard to protect.

Sona Mason  
Program Coordinator

“You can’t love and protect what you don’t know, and trails create a path for people to explore, experience, and develop a passion for wilderness,” says West Hudson Program Coordinator Sona Mason. Sona, who lives in Pearl River, NY, works to protect trails and trail lands in a region that is rapidly developing, so conservation of open space is a big part of her job. In addition to supporting trail crews and maintainers, she provides staff assistance to the Conservation Committee, a team of volunteers that works to preserve green corridors to protect and improve trail experiences throughout the region. Thanks in part to their efforts, Huckleberry Ridge, Gobbler’s Knob, and Roossa Gap state forests were all protected. “The Hudson Valley is unique in that there’s such wild topography within reach of the most densely populated area in the country,” says Sona. “We’re working to create a legacy of wilderness in this sea of development before it’s too late.”

Daniel Chazin  
Writer, Editor, Project Manager, Committee Member

Daniel Chazin is the man behind many of the Tool Conference’s hike descriptions and guidebooks. He joined the Trail Conference in the late 1970s and became a Board member from 1982 to 2016. A retired lawyer who lives in Traneck, N.J., Daniel is currently a member of the Publications and Conservation committees. For the past 35 years, Daniel has written or edited many of the organization’s most popular guidebooks, which have been extensively involved with creating and updating Trail Conference maps. His favorite project is laying it out to create a legacy of nice experiences throughout the region. "I meet a lot of bird watchers who are into the outdoors and encouraging people to leave no trace,” Mike, an engineer, says. “I love being a part of a 2,000-plus-mile trail community.” Mike says the Trail maintainers help make it all possible.

Olivia Sohn  
Crew Leader

Olivia Sohn came to the Trail Conference as an Invasive Species Strike Force volunteer in 2015. Now her days involve moving rocks you’d imagine are unmoveable with the help of her trail crew (and some rock bars). For the 2017 season, Olivia serves as a crew leader for the Trail Conference Conservation Corps’ Rockalaka and Sterling Forest crews. Her season was split between the Catskills and Sterling Forest Preserve.

Olivia, who lives in Ringwood, N.J., loved building trail in the Catskills’ Sloan Gorge Preserve in 2016 while on a trail that has many glacial features and interesting geology. “I love getting outdoors to give back to the trail community. We hike a lot,” Tara says. “We’re in the woods anyway, so it just made sense to do something useful while we’re on the trails.” Tara thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2016, and for her birthday, Mike surprised her by adopting her own stretch of her favorite trail. The Hewitt, N.J., couple maintains two sections of the A.T. in Wawayanda State Park. “We’re really particular about picking up trash,” Mike says. So they created the group Make West Milford Clean Again to tackle the trash problem at Wawayanda’s Terrace Pond. Tara, an Applled Behavior Analysis School Therapist and grad student, also volunteers for New Jersey Search and Rescue in West Milford.

With an endless passion for nature, Patsy Wooters is the Board Vice Chair and belongs to the Advocacy and Management committee. She’s been familiar with the Trail Conference since her dad’s days as a volunteer in the ’70s, and has been a member herself since 1984. Patsy, of Suffern, N.Y., spent her childhood adjacent to the mountains and grew up hiking and camping. “My sister and her father in Harriman State Park. A retired NYC public school teacher, Patsy’s fascination with wildlife and ecology drives her to protect them. “I’m very attached to the mountain forest, and as a board member, I can help to preserve it for the longer term,” she says. “We allow us to connect with true wilderness. Hikers are critical for protecting lands that would otherwise be developed.”
A quarterly look at some of what we have been doing to improve public access to nature.

Force of Nature Shows Its Strength on Bear Mountain

No matter who you are, trail building can sound like an intimidating task. While double jacks and grip hoes aren’t part of everyone’s tool vocabulary, giving back to the trails you love is something we can all do together.

On Sept. 30, the Trail Conference hosted a female-focused introduction to trail building in celebration of REI’s Force of Nature campaign. Field managers Tori Welch and Ellie Pelletier led a trail-building workshop on the reroute of the original section of the Appalachian Trail at Bear Mountain State Park. We were joined by four Conservation Corps members and 18 volunteers.

The workshop began with a lesson on tool safety. Tori and Ellie explained why the trail is being built with crib walls and stone steps, and how these features help control soil erosion created by trail traffic and water runoff. The participants then picked up their rock bars and set eight, 1-ton rock steps—work that might typically take a crew two or three days to complete. “I walked away from the trail that day feeling empowered and inspired,” says volunteer and new Trail Conference Finance and Operations Associate Nicole Diom. “Being a part of such a supportive group of women helped me to test my own mental and physical strength while learning new skills.”

At the Trail Conference, we’re surrounded by strong and inspiring women who are at the forefront of our field. Our 100-year legacy was blazed by both men and women, and we continue to celebrate and support this passion for the outdoors. Every day, we’re connecting with new people from all walks of life who believe in creating a welcoming environment to get outside and give back—because YOU are a force of nature, and together we can move mountains.

We invite all women to get outside and give back to one of our many diverse interconnections to nature: trails. Stay tuned for more Force of Nature events in 2018!

Eric Stone
Eric Stone is the Trail Conference’s Volunteer Coordinator. Find more info at nynjtc.org/corpsmembers.
Thank You, Volunteers!

We’re delighted to introduce John Fiedler as the new volunteer trail supervisor at Black Rock Forest. John lives locally in Cornwall, N.Y., and has been a maintainer of several trails in the park for over five years. He’s looking for new maintainers to adopt trails in Black Rock Forest and is eager to meet all who are interested in giving back. Email volunteers@nynjtc.org for info on how to get started.

At the Trail Conference’s Annual Gala on Oct. 19, longtime volunteer Daniel Chazin received the Raymond H. Torrey Award, the Trail Conference’s most prestigious award, given for significant and lasting contributions that protect hiking trails and the land upon which they rest.

The Taconic Trail Crew worked in Hudson Highlands State Park this season, setting 133 stone stairs as they improved sections of the Highlands and Undercliff trails.

On Black Friday, 30 volunteers hit the trails with us at Ramapo Valley County Reservation for a clean-up hike with United By Blue and Campmor.

Appalachian Trail thru-hikers Storm (aka Mike Lemire, Orange and Rockland County Appalachian Trail Volunteer Chair), Bear Bait, and Corner gave back to the trail they love, helping the Megalithic Trail Crew put in stairs on the new section of the A.T. on Bear Mountain in October.

Our loyal supporters are invited to attend monthly hikes and work project tours as a thank you for helping protect the trails we all love. October’s Member Hike explored the new multi-use trails in Sterling Forest State Park, and ended with lunch at the Valley Rock Inn & Market.

Work on the trails in northern Norvin Green and Long Pond Ironworks in New Jersey continues. Recently, members of the Venturing Officers Association with the Boy Scouts of America volunteered to improve the blazing and trail corridor on the way to Lake Sonoma. If you’re interested in helping on these trails, email pdolan@nynjtc.org.

News in Brief

A Donation That Blazes Trails

The Trail Conference would like to thank Benjamin Moore for the donation of over $1,000 worth of paint. Generous supply and tool donations like this make our work possible. This white, blue, red, and yellow paint will allow our maintainers to freshen up their blazes and help people stick to the trail. If you’re a maintainer whose blazes are in need of fresh paint, email volunteers@nynjtc.org for more info.

Patagonia, L.L. Bean, Interact Marketing Support the Corps

The Trail Conference Conservation Corps trains the next generation of environmental stewards to preserve the integrity of trails and natural areas and engage volunteers to inspire a deeper appreciation for the care that open space requires. Support for the Conservation Corps comes from public and private donors who believe in the power of connecting people with nature. Thanks goes to L.L. Bean and Patagonia for supplying crew members with rucksacks and raingear respectively, and Interact Marketing for a $500 gift to fund the crews’ work. If you’re interested in learning more about supporting the Conservation Corps, contact Geoff Hamilton at geoff@nynjtc.org or 201.512.9348 ext. 819.

AmazonSmile: Shop Online, Support Trails

Want to know how to give back to your favorite trails at no cost to you? When you shop AmazonSmile, Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of the purchase price of eligible orders to the Trail Conference. Bookmark bit.ly/acs and show your love of trails every time you shop. Thank you to our supporters for raising $121.78 in the third quarter in 2017!

Trail Conference Honored as a ‘Champion of the Palisades’

On Oct. 5, the Palisades Parks Conservancy honored “The Champions of the Palisades” at their 2017 Annual Benefit Dinner. The Trail Conference, along with the Natural Resources Defense Council, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, New Jersey State Federation of Women’s Clubs, Larry Rockefeller, Scenic Hudson, and LG Electronics, Inc., were awarded for their collaborative work in protecting the Palisades Cliffs. In 2012, these five conservation groups had raised concerns about the original proposed height of the LG headquarters design to be built adjacent to the New Jersey section of the Palisades Interstate Park, a National Natural and Historic Landmark. This three-year battle was settled amicably in 2015 when LG announced a redesign of its proposed new headquarters reducing the height of the tallest building from 343 feet to the tree line, at 70 feet.
JAMES SULLIVAN
Walden, NY

The Morgan Duke Conservation Society is a volunteer organization and Trail Conference partner that works to protect natural resources and wildlife habitat throughout the Catskill and Adirondack forests and preserve lands. James Sullivan is the founder, president, and chief executive officer. James was first inspired to take action after a camping experience in the Adirondacks: “I noticed a blue heron stepping in litter in what should have been pristine wilderness,” he says. “I decided I needed to do something about this.”

For the last year, James and his team of Morgan Duke volunteers have been working to protect Vanderwhy Kill State Forest and Peekamoose Blue Hole. Due to overuse and misuse, the Blue Hole was identified as a 2017 Leave No Trace Hot Spot. In August, Morgan Duke volunteers were a part of this litter clean-up effort along with the Catskill Conservation Corps, Leave No Trace, Adirondack Mountain Club, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Through organizing litter pickups, various recycling drives, and much more, James and his organization seek to minimize human impact on the natural environment in efforts to protect and restore wildlife habitat and preserve nature for the enjoyment of future generations. They also work to educate people on the consequences of littering through means of outreach and fundraising.

Environmental conservation is a shared duty, and partnerships like this one are essential to preserving the integrity of our natural world. To learn more about the good work of the Morgan Duke Conservation Society, visit morganduke.org.

Hikers’ Directory

Can’t find your club? This list represents all Trail Conference member clubs whose dues are up-to-date. If you have questions about your club’s status, please ask your officers to contact the Membership and Development team at 201-512-9348.

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS

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As the Trail Conference cartographer for more than 10 years, I have received praises on the quality of our maps, as well as many inquiries about them. The purpose of this column is to share some answers to certain questions I regularly receive. If you have a question about our maps, email appgar@nynjtc.org and include “Map Talk Question” in the subject line. Your question might appear in the next issue of Trail Walker.

Jeremy Appgar
Trail Conference Cartographer

Pick up any of our maps, and you can immediately tell it has been produced by the Trail Conference based on a few hallmark features: an uncluttered design, limited color palette, prominent trail network, and rugged Tyvek. This past fall, the New York Map Society (newyorkmapsoociety.org) invited me to talk about trail map history at the iconic main branch of the New York Public Library, and I was able to piece together a fascinating, 100-year progression of trail map design.

The first real trail maps in our area were a series of Hikers Region Maps, first produced by William Hoefelin in 1934. While these maps were entirely in black ink, they did use circled letters to indicate blaze colors, a method still used today. Hoefelin died in 1970, leaving a void in trail map availability. The Trail Conference picked up this mantle, and in 1975, the debut edition of Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails became the first standalone map to have red trail lines. It split up a large area into two smaller maps, and was our first Tyvek map set.

Over the next 15 years, several map iterations allowed for the experimentation of various designs. It wasn’t until the 1989 edition of Harriman-Bear Mountain Trails that our maps had developed consistent design components, such as red solid lines for trails, brown lines for parklands, green parklands, and thick Tyvek.

In 2000, our first digitally produced map of Sterling Forest further experimented with map design, such as shaded relief and colored contour lines. By 2007, when I became staff cartographer, the look of our maps had largely shifted back to a design used in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, which, for the most part, can still be seen today.

As of 2018, the Trail Conference has printed about 800,000 maps since the early 1970s. Our easy-to-read design that has developed over more than 45 years is a key reason why our maps have continued to serve the trail-using public.

These are the big changes since 1975. After that, we’ve made a lot of smaller changes as we’ve improved our design. We still use the same design we’ve used since the early 2000s, which is a key reason why our maps haven’t changed much since then. We’ve made a lot of smaller changes to improve our design, but we haven’t made any major changes since 2000.

For example, we’ve made a lot of changes to our trail map design since 1975. We’ve added shaded relief and colored contours to our maps, which are more accurate than ever before. We’ve also made a lot of changes to our trail map design since 2000. We’ve added shaded relief and colored contours to our maps, which are more accurate than ever before. We’ve also added shaded relief and colored contours to our maps, which are more accurate than ever before.

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Building Your Next Adventure in Sterling Forest

Ask people returning from a journey on the new trails at Sterling Forest State Park about their experience, and you’re likely to catch their excitement: “fun and flow,” “special,” and “my new favorite trail” have become common descriptions.

The new and repurposed trails are mostly narrow, single-track, multi-use trails. In 2016, the Red Back Trail was rerouted in a few sections and the 2-mile Hutchinson Trail was opened. This year has seen the addition of more than half a mile to the Red Back Trail, with 3 miles built so far.

The Munsee Eagle will connect the Red Back and Hutchinson Trail, with 3 miles built so far. In 2016, the Red Back Trail was rerouted in a few sections and the 2-mile Hutchinson Trail was opened. This year has seen the addition of more than half a mile to the Red Back Trail, with 3 miles built so far. The Munsee Eagle will connect the Red Back and Hutchinson Trail, with 3 miles built so far. In 2016, the Red Back Trail was rerouted in a few sections and the 2-mile Hutchinson Trail was opened. This year has seen the addition of more than half a mile to the Red Back Trail, with 3 miles built so far.

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In the meantime, you can enjoy the Hutchinson Trail, which joins onto the south-eastern section of the Red Back loop. The entire distance from the Caretaker Parking Area to the South Gate Parking Area is 3.5 miles, which can be done as an out-and-back or one-way hike or ride with a car shuttle.

The new trails incorporate several sustainability features like softer grades, pitches, and a general narrowness and turns to slow bikes down. They were built with frequent drains, open sight lines, and some banked curves and parallel trail features like rollers and drops for bikers, trail runners, or adventurous hikers. The character is a little different than a pure hiking trail in sections, but it’s equally enjoyable for boots and sneakers. It’s a playful trail with a sense of adventure that showcases the unique beauty of Sterling Forest.

In spite of all these design considerations, please refrain from using the trails after a significant rain event, or on the thaw end of a freeze-thaw cycle. Feet and tires rut the trails on wet, muddy days. Besides that, have fun and enjoy the new sights and shiny ribbons of dirt waiting for you in Sterling Forest.

Give a few hours of your time, and we’ll teach you everything you need to know to help build trails. Contact Field Manager Erik Mickelson at emickelson@nynytc.org for info on how to get involved. If you’d like to support our efforts without getting dirty, your gift at nynytc.org/donate goes a long way in allowing us to improve your trail experience.

Support trails, parks, and open space in the region by joining the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

The Trail Conference maintains more than 2,100 miles of trails, advocates for parks, protects open space, and provides volunteer service opportunities in the great outdoors.

Your membership supports the trails you love and gives you these additional benefits:

- **25% Discount** on Trail Conference books and maps when purchased directly from the Trail Conference. Get a 10% discount on Trail Conference logo goods. Visit nynytc.org/shop.
- **Great Discounts** at supporting outdoor retailers and businesses. See our full list of partners at nynytc.org/retail-partners.
- **Free Enrollment** in our Trail University introductory courses.
- **Workshops and Seminars** on trail maintenance and construction, leadership training, wilderness first aid, environmental monitoring, GPS operation, and more. Find details at nynytc.org/trailu.
- **Access** to a wide range of volunteer opportunities on- and off-trail. Check out nynytc.org/volunteer.

Join now at nynytc.org/membership.

Join/Renew Trail Conference Membership

We maintain more than 2,300 miles of trails. Your membership helps us provide access to open space for everyone.

Included with membership: Trail Walker, 10% discount on purchases at many outdoor stores, and 25% discount on Trail Conference maps and books and 10% discount on logo goods purchased directly from the Trail Conference. Save time and a tree by joining or renewing online at nynytc.org.

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE**

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A joint membership is for two adults residing at the same address.

For my membership of $60 or more, send me a:

- □ Trail Conference Hat  OR  □ Harriman-Bear Mountain Map Set

To purchase a gift membership, call 201-512-9348, ext. 828.

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Make check or money order payable to the NY-NJ Trail Conference and mail to: 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ, 07430.

Tax deductible. Dues are not refundable.