The Trail Conference has announced its support of *Open Spaces for All*, a report issued by the Open Space Institute (OSI), in partnership with the New York Outdoor Recreation Coalition (NYORC), in the fall of last year. The report includes state-level recommendations designed to improve equity, inclusion, and access to parks, waters, trails, and other open spaces for visitors and residents of New York State.

The report was guided by a steering committee, of which the Trail Conference is a member, along with input from other members and more than 200 individuals representing diverse identities, community groups, businesses, non-profit organizations, thought leaders, and government entities from across New York State. *Open Spaces for All* is based on years of research and identifies barriers that inhibit access to outdoor spaces for people of color, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and other underrepresented or marginalized groups. It includes the following guidelines for future policies, programs, and initiatives, intended for state leaders, land managers, partners, and the greater outdoor recreation industry:

- Engage and empower communities and partners in identifying challenges and opportunities and developing solutions.
- Prioritize equity at the forefront of future park and open space investments, including the revitalization and creation of open spaces near communities, developing accessible infrastructure, and reducing barriers for use.
- Honor Indigenous people and their connections to the land.
- Cultivate diverse partnerships to help identify new opportunities, in turn building support and capacity for implementation of recommendations and improvements.

“The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference believes that the joys of nature belong to everyone. All people—regardless of age, ability, or location—should be able to experience the rewards of connecting with nature,” said Joshua Howard, Executive Director of the Trail Conference. “This report is an important first step to ensure that barriers to enjoying the outdoors are identified and eliminated. We look forward to continuing working with the state and our partners to implement this groundbreaking plan.”

The vision of *Open Spaces for All* is to ensure that all New Yorkers and visitors, regardless of identity, can access and enjoy the benefits of open spaces and outdoor recreation. The full report can be viewed on the Open Space Institute website, openspaceinstitute.org.

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**WHAT’S INSIDE:**

- New Catskill and Morris County Highlands maps now available page 6
- Trail Conference receives Governor’s Award for Lenape Trail page 9
- Reflecting on 2022 and what’s to come pages 4-5

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**Remembering Lifelong Trail Conference Member and President**

At the time of printing, the Trail Conference learned of the passing of H. Neil Zimmerman, lifetime Trail Conference member, volunteer, and Board president from 1987–1999. Neil’s leadership and conservation efforts had an immeasurable impact on our organization. The trail community has lost a dear friend and unwavering advocate for our region’s parks and trails, and we are deeply saddened by his loss.

As the Trail Conference works to put together a tribute to commemorate Neil, we encourage readers to visit our website at nynjtc.org to learn more about his work and make a gift in his memory.
In Memoriam

Werner Mueller

Treasured volunteer Werner Mueller passed away in May 2022. Werner was a jack-of-all-trades whose tireless worth ethic and dedication to learning new skills and giving back was second-to-none. He found harmony in nature and was an exceptional steward of the land that brought him joy. Werner was an active trail maintainer and volunteer on the Long Path and west of the Hudson, and quickly became one of the most valued volunteer plant surveyors with our Terrestrial Invasive Strike Force Survey Program. He was especially active in the Trail Conference’s spotted lanternfly response efforts. Werner adopted remote infestation sites, helped to set up and service traps, and reported data on a regular basis.

When Werner wasn’t volunteering his time and land, he also worked with our Aquatic Invasive Strike Force team, helping to remove over 30,000 water chestnut plants from waterbodies in New York.

Werner’s accomplishments were recognized at the Trail Conference’s Volunteer Service Awards last year, and a volunteer workday was held in his honor to remove invasive plants in Harriman State Park. Werner had his hands in many aspects of our organization and always did so with energy, enthusiasm, and a giving spirit. He is dearly missed.

Pursuant to an agreement with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Trail Conference volunteers in 2021 maintained and improved 27 of the 30 lean-tos (shelters) in the Catskill Forest Preserve. These volunteer crews are responsible for making regular visits to the shelters, cleaning the privy and latrine, emptying ashes from the fire pit, clearing brush, improving drainage, and making other minor site improvements. When circumstances are beyond a caretaker’s scope and ability are needed, the condition is reported to their volunteer leader, who arranges for the repairs to be made by a volunteer trail crew.

I began maintaining the Baldwin Memorial Shelter on Mount Tremper around 2010. As a lifelong carpenter, I was able to go beyond my responsibilities as a caretaker and make repairs to the foundation and roof, as well as to improve various aspects of the shelter site.

In the late summer and fall of 2021, my crew completed our first projects at the Baldwin Shelter. As far back as 10, I had realized that the outhouse was in poor condition. We now had the opportunity to rebuild it at a new location, reusing as much as possible of the former structure. Subsequently, we rebuilt the septic system and added a pumphouse. When we arrived, we were able to minimize the amount of new material we needed to carry into the woods.

In the spring of 2022, we used the same approach to renovate the Devils Acre Lean-to on Hunter Mountain. We removed two layers of old flooring, providing enough material for one good layer. Minimizing the amount of new material we needed to carry in was crucial, as the hike to this lean-to involves a 1,500-foot elevation gain in a mile and a half! A second weekend work trip to Devils Acre allowed us to re-locate and rebuild the privy. Finally, we returned in the fall to stain the floor and perform other site improvements.

In early summer 2022, we spent three long weekends at the relatively new Fox Hollow Lean-to at the base of Panther Mountain, which involved a much easier hike in than on our previous trips. We carried in the materials for a new privy that was built on-site, thanks to a contribution from the Catskill 3500 Club that covered most of the costs. We also installed pipes at the adjacent spring and constructed a stone “patio” in front of the lean-to. During the August heat wave, we returned to the Baldwin Shelter to do a full rebuild of the shelter. What a challenging and ambitious project to date. Years of patching had kept the shelter dry, but a tunnel-like opening was the last straw for the 40-year-old roof. Thankfully, the DEC was able to transport the 10,000 pounds of ashphalt to the shelter, but we needed to carry in the remaining tools and materials about a mile and a quarter uphill. We removed the entire roof down to the main logs and rafters, and we recut or replaced the beams and boards. Miraculously, the final shingles were nailed down by the end of day four!

In the fall, we spent three weekends high up on Table Mountain, working on the newly built Benton Memorial Shelter, which the Trail Conference maintains in partnership with the Catskill 3500 Club. The Club generously paid for the materials, which enabled us to restain the shelter, stucco the cracks, rebuild the privy, and make general site improvements.

Over the years, the Catskills lean-to crew has had the help of about 25 volunteers and two dogs, some returning numerous times. Over the course of a typical work trip, between two and 12 volunteers come for the day or stay overnight. I’ve enjoyed meeting and getting to know people from many walks of life — some are seasoned backpackers, others are camp- ing out for the first time, and most are learning new skills.

Our first annual lean-to crew campout took place this past Labor Day at Colgate Lake, with no lean-tos in the area! All five attendees had a wonderful time. We cooked over the fire, fished, swam, and hiked around this beautiful lo- cation. We are looking forward to the second annual campout — but in the meantime, there is work to do!

After a successful 2022, Eric has more projects in mind for 2023, with trips planned throughout the year. If you are interested in learning more about our vol- unteer opportunities or joining an upcoming work trip, please contact volunteers@nynjtc.org or visit nynjtc.org.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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New and Returning Board, Voting Members Named for 2023

Ken Posner Elected as Board Chair

The Trail Conference is pleased to announce that Ken Posner has been elected Board Chair. Ken has been an active hiker, backpacker, and photographer. He has been a Trail Conference volunteer and member for many years, having through-hiked the Long Path in 2013 and organized the Appalachian Trail in Worthington State Forest and serves on the board of Team Wilderness, a non-profit that empowers urban youth through wilderness experiences. Ken’s long-term goal is to develop new online volunteer management software.

Ken is currently senior vice president of strategy at Mercury, a strategy firm, and director at the global public relations firm, Mercury, specializing in government relations. He earned his degrees in government relations and public affairs from George Washington University. Ken has been a board member and chair of the Jolly Rovers Trail Crew and has completed the record for the 292-mile Adirondack High Peaks maximum distance or longer. Ken serves as the Harriman Trail Crew Leader, working regularly with volunteers, other Corps members, and members of the public, and leading several successful workshops. Prior to joining the Conservation Corps, Ken earned a degree in marketing and worked at Eastern Mountain Sports, gaining essential customer service skills while applying his passion for knowledge and customer service.

Ken is a graduate of the Jolly Rovers Trail Crew and has completed the record for the 292-mile Adirondack High Peaks maximum distance or longer. Ken serves as the Harriman Trail Crew Leader, working regularly with volunteers, other Corps members, and members of the public, and leading several successful workshops. Prior to joining the Conservation Corps, Ken earned a degree in marketing and worked at Eastern Mountain Sports, gaining essential customer service skills while applying his passion for knowledge and customer service.

Welcome, Mike and Pat!

Mike Morris joined the Trail Conference in December as the Volunteer Engagement Director. He brings more than a decade of nonprofit experience to the role, having spent his career in development, helping organizations that are working to provide life basic necessities. During his time at Pathways Vermont, Pat implemented a communications and fundraising system that developed a start-up organization into a statewide leader in housing and mental health services. At Family Reach, he expanded the organization’s national footprint by leading a team of fundraisers providing financial lifelines to families experiencing the hardships of a cancer diagnosis; and most recently, Pat led the Development team at Jazz House Kids, providing music education to underprivileged youth. When he’s not helping to raise necessary funds for the Trail Conference, Pat enjoys hiking, skiing, and partaking in the occasional karaoke night.

Save the Date

Mark your calendars for the Trail Conference’s Annual Gala, honoring Frederick Osborn III and Anne Todd Osborn. Friday, October 13 • The Garrison, Garrison, N.Y.
REFLECTING ON 2022 AND
Conservation Crews Collaborate to Create Stewardship Synergy

There’s nothing we like more than helping our Conservation Corps members become force multipliers of both productivity and education. During the 2022 Conservation Corps season, we made it a priority for our Corps crews to interact with each other during “swap days.” These swap days were an opportunity for members of different crews to spend quality time together while building a sense of community and better understanding each crew’s responsibilities.

By spending time with the Invasives Strike Force (ISF) crews in the field and in pre-season training, Trail Stewards were able to expand their knowledge of invasive species while gaining hands-on experience in the removal process. In 2022, Stewards received training and education throughout the season on plant identification, common and emerging invasive species in our region, and the best methods for communicating effectively with a diverse range of visitors. Similarly, ISF and Aquatic ISF (AISF) Corps members participated in Leave No Trace training to gain a better understanding of the synergies between responsible recreation and ecological stewardship messaging.

At some locations, the Trail Stewards interact with upwards of 1,400 visitors a day. This puts the Stewards in the perfect position to provide information and share simple steps with the public to help prevent the spread of invasive species – such as utilizing a boot brush and cleaning gear and pets before and after hiking. ISF Crews were excited to work with the Hudson Valley Trail Steward sites of Breakneck Ridge and the Old Croton Aqueduct. During these swap days, ISF members joined the Stewards in talking to the public about the invasive species they found in the area. Increased signage, such as informational posters at the steward stations, as well as boot brushes at trailheads and kiosks, were key points for visitors who may be first-time trail users, unaware of the threat that invasive species pose to the parks in our region. Trail Stewards also engaged the public with volunteer opportunities and encouraged visitors to sign up and volunteer in a way that is meaningful to them, whether it be invasive species-related trail maintenance, outreach and education, or citizen science.

In addition to their weekend stewarding activities, the Trail Stewards teamed up with ISF/AISF crews to tackle invasive species surveying and removal projects over 12 days during the 2022 season. For example, the Stewards spent time with the Terrestrial Invasives Strike Force crew (TISF), along with the Harriman Trail Crew at the Three Arrows Cooperative Society in Putnam Valley, New York, where they removed invasive Japanese spirea. Thanks to the efforts of these three crews, an incredible amount of this emerging invasive species was removed! At another site in the Hudson Valley during fall, the Stewards assisted the ISF in removing over 700 Scotch broom plants. The AISF crew also had the opportunity to swap days with the Trail Stewards. The Taconic Trail Crew had the Trail Stewards assist with their reroute of the Wilkinson Memorial Trail near Sugarloaf Mountain in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. The Stewards helped close the original trail, dispersed duff and rock piles, hid signs of the old trail, replanted native plants, removed old blazes, and added new trails along the new trail. In October, the Stewards were fortunate to be with the Taconic Trail Crew on the day the new Wilkinson Memorial Trail officially opened and welcomed its first hikers. One hiker had never previously visited the park, and was excited to be part of the trail history.

Looking ahead, we plan to further expand this synergistic energy between Corps programs.

In future seasons, the ISF plans to work much more closely with Trail Programs. With the rollout of the Trail Conference’s new five-year strategic plan in 2023, plans are underway for stewardship department staff and Corps members to learn about sustainable trail building, including how routes are chosen, habitat and species considerations, erosion concerns and mitigation, and practical trail building skills. In turn, the Trail Builders will learn about invasive species ecology and identification, the importance of healthy, native habitats, and best management practices for removal of invasive species.

Collaborative projects could include revegetating lands surrounding new or closed trails, mitigating erosion damage, removal of invasive plants near or at Trail Crew worksites, and/or the strategic creation of “invasives free” trails. By offering the public access to nature, trails help engravre an appreciation of and desire to protect the landscapes that surround them. With this overlapping goal, the ISF is beyond excited to work more closely with Trail Crews going forward!

Additionally, the Conservation Dogs Program (CDP) has the goal of offering an immersive training experience to Corps members who are interested in learning how we use conservation dogs to survey for invasive species. Corps members will have the opportunity to rotate into the CDP for several weeks and learn about the conservation detection dog method, dog behavior, ecology of various species, canine fitness and husbandry, and more. These Corps members will also help contribute to our Conservation Dogs Program initiatives through fieldwork support and data collection during joint projects with the ISF.

Furthermore, the Trail Stewards will continue their collaborative work in upcoming Corps seasons with ISF, Trail Programs, and Conservation Dog Teams. ISF and Trail Crew members will join the Stewards at popular high-use trailheads and summits in the greater New York metropolitan area, allowing them to practice and receive guidance on communicating effectively with a diverse range of visitors. Combining the outreach and education messaging of responsible recreation with sustainable trail building and ecological stewardship will help increase visitors’ awareness of how we can help protect these special places — before, during, and after their hike. Trail Stewards will also join ISF, Trail Crews, and the Conservation Dog teams on projects allowing them to expand their knowledge of invasive species ecology and identification, best management practices for removal of invasive species, trail building and rehabilitation methods, fieldwork support and data collection, and much more.

We are looking forward to future seasons in which these combined forces will inspire supportive and meaningful connections between our various programs and foster leaders in environmental stewardship.
New Maps Ahead After Supply Shortages

**Harriman Conservation Corps Trail Crew**
The 2022 crew picked up where last year’s left off, making repairs and improvements to the historic Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail east of Tuxedo, N.Y. Their first area of focus was the climb up to the overlook above Tuxedo. This stretch was marked by a steep, eroded slope and loose stone, so the crew bypassed actively, resulting in the widening of the trail. The crew installed and repaired more than 60 stone steps and blocked off the adjacent area to keep hikers on the trail.

Next, the Harriman Crew began work on another section of the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail north of Tom Jones Mountain. The poor tread definition, degraded stone steps and drainage issues led to much off-trail travel, erosion, and environmental damage. The crew spent several weeks building and repairing stone steps and blocking access to off-trail areas.

The Harriman Crew also constructed several waterbars and earthen drains on the Ramapo-Dunderberg and Kakiat Trails, and they performed maintenance on drainage structures on the Triangle Trail. Members of the 2023 Conservation Corps will continue their work to improve these trails, as well as the adjacent Blue Disc and Tuxedo-Mt. Irvy Trails.

**Palisades Conservation Corps Trail Crew**
In 2022, the Palisades Crew continued their work on the multi-use McKeags Meadow Loop in Sterling Forest State Park. They linked the McKeags Meadow Loop with the newly constructed Augusta Mine Connector, and they constructed a new connection between the Caretaker and Laurel Pond Meadow trails, thus improving the connectivity of the burgeoning multi-use trail network in the park.

Working from mid-May through October, the crew repaired more than 80 stone steps on the McKeags Meadow Loop, bypassing a steep, eroded, and wet segment of trail. They built over 1,500 feet of new trail, which included nearly 500 square feet of stone retaining wall and over 400 feet of turnpiking. The stone retaining wall enabled the trail to traverse rough terrain with sustainable grades. They also built several drainage structures and other smaller rock walls. The work was both technical and laborous, and it involved moving tons of walling stones, stone fill, and mineral soil. Throughout the season, the Palisades Crew worked alongside partners and volunteers, including a new partnership with Palisades MTB, which advocates for the establishment of mountain bike trails in the Palisades Region.

The 2023 Palisades Crew will continue this work, revising the Undercliff Trail and installing a bridge on the nearby Redback Trail.

**Taconic Conservation Corps Trail Crew**
The 2022 Taconic Trail Crew, consisting of three crew members and one crew leader, worked from June to October on improving the Wilkinson Memorial and Undercliff Trails in the Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. Their primary task was to construct a 1,400-foot reroute of the Wilkinson Memorial Trail near the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain to bypass a steep and eroded section of the trail and protect vegetation that had been damaged by fire in 2019.

The crew built 32 stone steps and nearly 100 square feet of retaining wall, and they blocked off and naturalized the former trail route. At least once a week, the crew worked on improving the Undercliff Trail, installing and repairing stone steps, making drainage improvements, and blocking off informal “social paths.”

The Taconic Trail Crew also contributed 165 hours of work by state park partners, Conservation Corps Trail Stewards, and volunteers.

The 2023 crew will continue to improve the Wilkinson Memorial Trail, anticipating higher usage to that trail by hikers descending from Breakneck Ridge.

**MTB**

**LOOK AHEAD TO 2023**

**LOOK BACK/LOOK AHEAD continues on page 6**

Volunteers from RI joined us for litter clean-up along the Long Path in Tackamack Town Park, N.Y.

Thank you to our volunteers for your efforts in 2022. See you on the trails in 2023! —Katie Kourakos, Volunteer Engagement Manager

A visit to Fort Orange Press in Albany, N.Y., for the printing of the Catskill Trails map

**Volunteer Engagement Team Grows**
The volunteer engagement team at the Trail Conference hit the ground running in 2022 with new staff, and many goals to accomplish! The year started with the planning and coordination of the virtual Volunteer Appreciation Event in June. As successful as the event was, we’re excited to be planning and finalizing this year’s spring event — the first in-person Volunteer Appreciation Event since 2020! Further into 2022, the volunteer engagement team rolled out the new online reporting form for trail volunteer hours. Since July 1, when online reporting went live, over 14,000 volunteer hours have been reported! We’re looking forward to seeing how well online reporting will continue to do in 2023, and we will remain available to provide assistance to users of the form.

We’re also thrilled to announce that 15 new volunteer leaders were onboard in 2022: three Trail Chairs, 11 Trail Supervisors, and one Habitat Helper Leader. Many of these volunteer leaders stepped up from other volunteer positions within the Trail Conference, while others became part of the Trail Conference volunteers — but all share a passion for the outdoors. With many of our leadership positions filled, we have minimal maintainer vacancies in our larger regions, such as Harriman State Park and the Catskills. In 2023, our focus will be to recruit maintainers for positions in smaller parks or regions that have historically been difficult to fill, to continue recruitment efforts for the remaining Trail Chair and Trail Supervisor vacancies, and to continue to provide support for new maintainers and our volunteer leaders.

Thank you to our volunteers for your efforts in 2022. See you on the trails in 2023!

**CONSERVATION CORPS TRAIL BUILDING CREWS**

The Avenza Maps app user guide was updated in 2022.

**LOOK BACK/LOOK AHEAD continues on page 6**
In 2022, volunteers Matt Smith and Charlie Gadol started the volunteer-led Catskills Trail and Charlie Gadol started the East Hudson Trail Crew. During their first season — on the Mary’s Glen Trail, the Long Path, and the Huckleberry Hill Fire Tower Trail — they tackled several trail improvement projects and their work on this new edition of maps in the Catskills.

The Trail Crew worked on eight different projects during their first season — on the Mary’s Glen Trail, the Long Path, and the Huckleberry Hill Fire Tower Trail. Each of these trails had muddy and wet areas that required drainage improvements, rock crushing, stepping stones, and water bars. The Mary’s Glen Trail spent many hours building heavy gear over rugged terrain on the Overlook Mountain Trail, the Dry Brook Ridge Trail, and the Pine Hill-West Branch Trail, removing over 100 blowdowns. Most impressively, they cut all the blowdowns on the 24-mile Devil’s Path in a single weekend.

The Mary’s Glen Trail crew logged nearly 1,500 hours of work during 30 multi-day work trips with over 30 different volunteers. Eager to get started in the 2023 season, the crew continued working on the Long Path at the base of Indian Head Mountain, as well as on the Huckleberry Point Trail, Mary’s Glen Trail, Geiger Point along the Devil’s Path, Pecoy Nature Preserve, and Mossy Glen Trails. Special thanks to all the volunteers who joined the crew above and the crew leaders Matt Smith, Charlie Gadol, Cal Johnson, Andy Garrison, and Don Cohen. If you are interested in learning more or joining the crew for their 2023 season, contact volunteer@nynjtc.org.

MEVO
The Mahwah Environmental Volunteer Organizations (MEVO) Trail Crew, composed of hard-working college-age volunteers led by a dedicated Crew Leader, performed 314 hours of trail work in 2022. The majority of this work was on the State Line Trail in Abram S. Hewitt State Forest, rerouting this steep and eroded connector to the Appalachian Trail to a more gradual and sustainable path. The crew’s work on this important project, along with various spot-fixes to wet and muddy locations, is an example of the kind of work that can be done when volunteers contribute high-quality resources in Ramapo Valley County Reservation, which will continue in 2023.

West Coast Trail Crew
The West Coast Trail Crew constructs a walkway in Wawayanda State Park, the West Jersey Crew constructed a 4-foot-long walkway across a swampy stream area. They also added new water bars on the Rock Core Trail in Wappington State Forest, which features historic stone columns, as well as maintaining existing waterbars to ensure effective drainage. As in many years past, the crew also continued the long-term regrades of the Appalachian Trail boardwalk through the Pouchuck quadrangle. The forecasts promises to be another busy year for this veteran crew, with several projects already in the field-scouting and partner-review phase.

NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREWS

Starting off 2023 on a high note, our New York-New Jersey Trail Conference proudly announces the publication of our first ever revised maps, We launched the Catskill Morris County Highlands Maps to complement our existing Catskill Maps and Blowdown Brigade Begins trails. We are excited to share these new maps with you and encourage you to explore the trails and unique locations they offer.

These maps were originally developed by MEVO volunteers during the 2021 season. The crew held eight work trips over the course of the season, during which they completed a short reroute at Glyncfey, in partnership with the Open Space Institute, and improved the Lost Pond Appalachian Trail connector at Manisto.

Hudson Nor’Westers
The crew held eight work trips over the course of the summer and fall season to address drainage issues on the Blueberry Run Trail, Mossy Glen Trail, Bull Wheel Trail, and Red Loop Trail in the Minnewaska State Park Preserve. On both the Blueberry Run Trail and Mossy Glen Trails, the crew built treadpuck to raise the trail aling which they completed a short reroute at Glyncfey, in partnership with the Open Space Institute, and improved the Lost Pond Appalachian Trail connector at Manisto.

The crew held seven work trips over the course of the season, during which they completed a short reroute at Glyncfey, in partnership with the Open Space Institute, and improved the Lost Pond Appalachian Trail connector at Manisto.

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West Jersey Crew
The West Jersey Trail Crew along the Wawayanda Lake Loop Trail in Wawayanda State Park, the West Jersey Crew constructed a 4-foot-long walkway across a swampy stream area. They also added new water bars on the Rock Core Trail in Wappington State Forest, which features historic stone columns, as well as maintaining existing waterbars to ensure effective drainage. As in many years past, the crew also continued the long-term regrades of the Appalachian Trail boardwalk through the Pouchuck quadrangle. The forecasts promises to be another busy year for this veteran crew, with several projects already in the field-scouting and partner-review phase.

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Thank you!

As we turn the page and start a new year here at the Trail Conference, all I can say is WOW! Our supporters really stepped up this past December to make the year-end fundraising campaign one for the books, raising more than $350,000 over the course of a few weeks! As the Conference’s new Advancement Director, and on behalf of our entire staff, I would like to send a thank you to all of you who donated this past holiday season. We would especially like to thank the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Board of Directors, the Valley Rock Inn, and The Ranch at and for graciously providing triple match funds to make everyone’s dollar go much further.

Our year-end fundraiser is vital in supporting critical infrastructure and environmental conservation projects in your own backyard and throughout the region. Exciting and innovative initiatives such as the continuation of the Long Path, invasive species remediation, the Conservation Dogs Program, and regional land protection are only made possible by supporters like you.

As we look ahead to 2023, we are in a great position to build on the successes of the past year and truly make a lasting impact on the lands and trails that we all love and cherish. I look forward to meeting our wonderful supporters this year at our many wonderful events and out on the trail! Thank you again and happy trails!

Pat Gallagher, Trail Conference Advancement Director

TRAIL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

January 1 • December 31, 2022

TRIBUTES
In George Adam and Helena Nowak
Anna Nowak-Wegrzyn
In Honor of Andrew Jacobs
Pamela Pfeffer
Marina Wong
In Memory of Andrew Wong
Margaret Marie
In honor of Brookeville 8th Grade Project
Elisa Connors
In Honor of Cheryl Gaido
Susan Green
In Memory of Charlie Cook
Karen Dankamer
In Honor of David Chauciers
David Stephenson
Robert Colagiovanni
In Honor of David Farelentia
Priscilla Lundin
In Memory of David Woolf
Naola Gresten-Woolf
In Memory of Dillon friend, companion and ball chaser
Perry Petkanian
In Memory of Donald Barsony
Joan Makotowsky
In Honor of Doug Fulk
Lynn & Steve Chaiken
In Honor of Fred Oros III
Whitney Korsberg
In Memory of Fred Travnogile
Lynda Travnogile Recchia
In Memory of George D. Freeman III
Christopher Freeman
In memory of George Yazawa
Pat Gallagher, Trail Conference Advancement Director
On Behalf of Glom Oleskuk
Marian Macdonald
In Memory of John Hanley
Carole & Bruce Knarich
In Memory of Isaac Sehldn
George Sheedy
In Memory of Jack McShane
Lisa Lyons
In memory of James Fazzari
Lilo Saulo
In Honor of Jesse Fiedl
Michael Zue
In memory of Jim Furey
John Furey
In Memory of Joan Sisney
Alice Sisney
In Honor of Joe and Rita Okonieki
David Okoniewski
In memory of Joe Kozin
Joanne Odcast
Emma Russell
In Memory of John & Marianne
Guenther
Robin Osman
Weinzeffel/Semifondation Foundation
In memory of John Tugat
David Tugat
In Memory of Joseph Briziollosa Jr.
Matthew Seldat
In Memory of Joseph Suarez
Jackie Rubenbaker
In Memory of June Stude
Peter Tlgnor
Lucille Markay
Rein Huisnanger
Lori Leydard
Marilyn Adair
In Memory of Karen L. Peterson
Ken Peterson
In Memory of Ken Malik
Melissa Sexton
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Kara Yotri
Jennifer Heppel
Aly Hay and Mathew
Deborah Steinbaum
Kenneth & Katya Mayer
Roger Bergman
Scott Gold
Beth Jennifer Beth
Lewis & Leslie Nassau
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In Memory of Luna Kreiswirth
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Laura Barca
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Pat Gallagher, Trail Conference Advancement Director

TRIBUTEs
In George Adam and Helena Nowak
Anna Nowak-Wegrzyn
In Honor of Andrew Jacobs
Pamela Pfeffer
Marina Wong
In Memory of Andrew Wong
Margaret Marie
In honor of Brookeville 8th Grade Project
Elisa Connors
In Honor of Cheryl Gaido
Susan Green
In Memory of Charlie Cook
Karen Dankamer
In Honor of David Chauciers
David Stephenson
Robert Colagiovanni
In Honor of David Farelentia
Priscilla Lundin
In Memory of David Woolf
Naola Gresten-Woolf
In Memory of Dillon friend, companion and ball chaser
Perry Petkanian
In Memory of Donald Barsony
Joan Makotowsky
In Honor of Doug Fulk
Lynn & Steve Chaiken
In Honor of Fred Oros III
Whitney Korsberg
In Memory of Fred Travnogile
Lynda Travnogile Recchia
In Memory of George D. Freeman III
Christopher Freeman
In memory of George Yazawa
Pat Gallagher, Trail Conference Advancement Director
On Behalf of Glom Oleskuk
Marian Macdonald
In Memory of John Hanley
Carole & Bruce Knarich
In Memory of Isaac Sehldn
George Sheedy
In Memory of Jack McShane
Lisa Lyons
In memory of James Fazzari
Lilo Saulo
In Honor of Jesse Fiedl
Michael Zue
In memory of Jim Furey
John Furey
In Memory of Joan Sisney
Alice Sisney
In Honor of Joe and Rita Okonieki
David Okoniewski
In memory of Joe Kozin
Joanne Odcast
Emma Russell
In Memory of John & Marianne
Guenther
Robin Osman
Weinzeffel/Semifondation Foundation
In memory of John Tugat
David Tugat
In Memory of Joseph Briziollosa Jr.
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Pat Gallagher, Trail Conference Advancement Director
Why Have Archives?

The Trail Conference’s recent celebration of its 100th anniversary has brought into focus the importance of preserving our history. There are legal requirements to retain certain documents, but even when not legally required, it is important to preserve our archives — photos, maps, books and other documents that relate the history of our organization and the accomplishments of the people who contributed to that history.

Archives are more than just paper that is organized and placed in boxes. Archives are:
- Interviews or transcripts of interviews
- Of what use are archives to the Trail Conference’s volunteers and staff? Items can be interesting, useful, or both. A 1966 booklet briefly describing hiking trails in the United States is an interesting item. A tiny Trail Conference patch from the 1950s is both interesting and useful. It could be reproduced and sold or used for fundraising. Useful items also include a 1973 list of plants in Harriman and files of previous attempts to deal with ATV’s on trails. Collecting and organizing information about when and where trails were established or relocated is useful to both staff and volunteers.
- Because archival material can be digitized, information can be made available online in a searchable form. Examples include Trail Walker and early trail maintenance manuals.
- Although several inventories have been made of the archive files at the Trail Conference, they were no longer accurate when the Trail Conference moved its offices to new locations. So, over the last year, a small group of volunteers have been working hard to accomplish the following:
  - Organize and inventory all documents published by the Trail Conference and Walking News, the antecedent to the Trail Walker, noting their location in the archives room
  - Create a spreadsheet to serve as a database for the history of our organization’s trail network
  - Scan old issues of the Trail Walker so they can eventually be viewed and searched online
  - Sort through many drawers of old files and photos
  - Conduct interviews with decades-long volunteers to properly document their critical efforts and dedication to the organization

Learn more about the Trail Conference’s volunteer opportunities by visiting nynjtc.org/volunteers or emailing volunteer@nynjtc.org.

Catskill Advisory Group Report to DEC Contains Recreation ‘Roadmap’

The Trail Conference is a proud member of the Catskill Advisory Group (CAG), which submitted its final report to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos at the end of last year. The CAG was formed in 2020 and is comprised of stakeholders from local government, recreation, natural resource protection, tourism, and other areas. The group’s final report provides recommendations to the DEC, and its state and local partners, for promoting sustainable recreation in the Catskill Forest Preserve amid increased public use, helping to protect the park’s natural and historic resources.

“The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference was excited to share this report with DEC Commissioner Seggos and the public. The Catskill Advisory Group’s final recommendations are the culmination of a great deal of collaboration and consensus building amongst organizations who care about the Catskill Forest Preserve,” said Joshua Howard, Trail Conference Executive Director. “This report provides a roadmap for making recreation in the Catskill Park sustainable, welcoming, and equitable for all who seek the benefits of one of New York’s greatest treasures.”

Learn more and read the full report by visiting the DEC website, dec.ny.gov.

1. Retain the dedicated line for the Forest Preserve Parks as an annual appropriation of $10 million under the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) State Land Stewardship Fund.
2. Add and support staff positions necessary to implement the use of EPF and Clean Water, Clean Air, Clean Jobs Bond Act funding.
3. Invest in Forest Preserve Park communities through implementing projects funded by the Bond Act, Smart Growth initiatives, and support of visitor centers. The full contents of the letter can be read online by visiting the news section of our website: nynjtc.org/news-center.

100-Year Legacy Honored

It was the 100th anniversary of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. The COVID-19 pandemic had shut everything down, but staff and volunteers felt it was important that our century of work be commemorated. Bob Jonas, volunteer trail supervisor for the Trail Conference, was determined to create a display of historic items.

Bob reached out to the Trail Conference’s trail maintaining clubs, volunteer trail chairs, and trail crews to gather photos and trail memorabilia. He received a huge response: photos of trail builders and trail blazers, many of whom have since passed away, as well as trail-specific keepsakes, such as Elizabeth Levers’ Appalachian Trail Conservancy award, gifted by supporter Ron Rosen. All of the items collected and showcased in the display represent the Trail Conference’s rich history and 100-year legacy. The individuals memorialized played a direct role in shaping the organization and, without them, the vast trail network we have today would not exist.

The display showcases two phases: “We Work” and “We Play from 1920 and Beyond.” It can be viewed at the Trail Conference headquarters in Mahwah, N.J., which is now open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information about the “olden days of trails,” read Reflections: 100 Years of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, available on the Trail Conference Marketplace at nynjtc.org.

Bob Jonas and Estelle Anderson, Trail Supervisors
The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is the recipient of the 2022 Governor's Environmental Excellence Award in the Healthy Communities category for its ongoing work on the Lenape Trail in Essex County, N.J.

The Lenape Trail is a 36-mile, unique urban-suburban trail named in recognition of the Lenape people, the original inhabitants of the area. Since 2010, the Trail Conference volunteers and staff have dedicated more than 2,900 hours toward improving the trail, including trail clearing, blazing, installation of wayfinding signage, and enhancing the trail's environmental sustainability. The Lenape Trail brings visitors to Essex County's outdoor destinations by connecting 18 parks and 11 communities. An in-depth digital guide, highlighting the Trail's abundant recreational opportunities, can be found at LenapeTrail.org.

The Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards are presented each year to individuals and organizations that demonstrate commitment and leadership on a variety of environmental issues, including environmental justice, climate change, sustainability, education, and protection of natural resources.

To learn more about the program and watch the virtual awards, visit dep.nj.gov/awards.

The Trail Conference is honored to receive the Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for this ongoing project, and we hope to see you on the trail!

In Memoriam

H. Neil Zimmerman
July 18, 1945 – February 28, 2023

On February 28, 2023, Neil Zimmerman passed away after a long illness at his home in Accord, N.Y.

The Trail Conference, The Friends of the Shawangunks, and all those who hike and enjoy outdoor recreation in the New York–New Jersey area have lost a great friend and a tireless and fierce advocate for preserving open space and using it responsibly.

In Memoriam

George Dagis

George Dagis, longtime volunteer for the Trail Conference, passed away in February at the age of 69. George first got involved with the Trail Conference in the early 1970s, and he became a volunteer with the Publications Committee in 2007. In light of his familiarity with the Catskills and the organization's trail education efforts through his various roles over the past 15 years, we will greatly miss him.
If you hike the New York-New Jersey Highlands you might notice some unique-looking, diamond-shaped, teal-colored blazes. These are the mark- ings of the 180-mile-long Highlands Trail (HT). This scenic footpath was designed to showcase the region’s natural beauty and countless lakes and ponds, which provide clean drinking water to tens of millions of people. With help from the N1 Highlands Council and Hardworking Trail Conference volunteers, the HT is clearly marked with many new signage and blazing improvements. And thanks to some thoughtful trail planning and strategically preserved buffer lands, you can explore the trail without realizing how close you may be to populated areas.

Last summer, Trail Conference board member Charlie Gadol completed a south- bound hike of the HT as a fundraiser. Hiking from the Hudson River to the Delaware River, Charlie generated donations for the Trail Conference and excitement for the trail. We caught up with Charlie to get his reflections on the experience.

Congratulations on completing your journey! What inspired you to hike the Highlands Trail and become interested in long-distance trails?

I am especially interested in hiking the long-distance trails cared for by the Trail Conference. This journey was to highlight the trail’s importance and help it continue evolving into a better and better trail experience.

What did you enjoy most about hiking the Highlands Trail?

I loved the entire trail. My favorite parts were the dramatic landscapes of Storm King, Black Rock Forest and Schunemunk Mountain, but also the scenic areas of the New Jersey Highlands, includ- ing the Stonetown Circular Trail section, Wyanoke High Point, and other parts of Norvin Green SF. Years ago, I ran in Allamuchy SF and on this hike, I got to explore parts of Allamuchy I hadn’t seen before. I’d like to return there with my kids who still live nearby.

How does the Highlands Trail differ from other long-distance trails?

In my limited experience, each long-distance trail is very different. The Long Path traverses many different landscapes from the suburban Palisades to the rugged, re- mote Catskills and Schoharie County.

The Highlands Trail also varies widely from section to section. The southern portion near the Delaware passes through rolling farm country, ducking in and out of local parks, with a few sections still on country roads. Further north, the Pequanock (aka Newark) Watershed is heavily forested, rugged, and remote; I didn’t see a soul there, and I walked through plenty of cowbells! But even in its most populated areas, I rarely saw other hikers on the Highlands Trail. By contrast, on my recent vacation in Colorado, I saw tens of hikers. If you are looking for solitude, try the Highlands Trail!

What advice can you offer to prospective Highlands Trail hikers?

First, download and read the Trail Conference’s Highlands Trail hiking guide at highlandstrail.org. You will need a permit to access the Pequanock Watershed. Figure out what is a good daily distance for you and where to set up parking and car shuttle services. Some sections are more than 30 miles long, while others are only 5 or 6 miles. I sug- gest downloading the West Hudson Trails, Sterling Forest, Northern NJ Highlands, and Highlands Trail Avenza maps from the Trail Conference. The trail is well-marked, but the few times I wandered off trail, having the maps on my phone map enabled me to see instantly where I went wrong, and how to get back on trail. Special thanks to Sandra Balsdanz Galindo, Jodi Bower and everyone who accompa- nied me on my hikes.

Why should people consider hiking long-distance trails?

They provide you with a great journey and the chance to become deeply immersed in nature. You appreciate how in- significant you and your trou- bles are, while out on the trail. The Highlands Trail took me to scenic vistas I never knew existed, as well as to places that people have worked hard to preserve. Finally, it offered me the chance to meet fellow hikers and spend time with friends.

Thank you, Charlie, for gen- erous support, attention, and excitement for this remarkable trail!
Race Directors, Runners Go the Extra Mile for Trails

Hikers and trail runners share a special connection to nature, which is forged in our mutual love of trails and the simple joys of experiencing the forest on foot. Trail runners are frequent hikers, and many group leaders and race directors support trails by generously giving back to the Trail Conference.

This year, more than 1,000 people participated in trail running events benefitting the Trail Conference, thanks to the leadership of community-minded race directors and organizations like Charlie Gadot (Run Wild), Kim Levin-sky (Sassaquid Trail Running), Ian Golden (Red Newt Racing), and the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce. Here are just a few of the exciting events they organized, which directly benefited our work.

Pocantico Hills Marathon and Half-Marathon

In November, hundreds of nature-loving runners tried their legs on the skies and pavement for a more natural kind of New York marathon. Organized by the Trail Conference, this race featured two scenic landscapes and great views from Parker Cab-in Mountain and Almost Per-pendicular. Race Director Kim Levinsky runs several benefit races for the Trail Conference and other charities. She also volunteers and advocates for the Trail Conference, and has brought in many new Trail Conference volunteers and members.

Breakneck Point 42K and 21K

Race Director Ian Golden, who has been giving back to the Trail Conference through his Red Newt Racing events since 2014, greeted more than 800 participants for the 8th annual Breakneck Point 42K and 21K. This unique, challenging event includes steep, technical pitches requiring climbing and tolerance of exposure, and up to 9,000 vertical feet of climbing. Michelle Merlis of Albany won the women’s race in under 5.5 hours, qualifying her to compete with the US Na-tional Team at the 2023 World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Ian has a vari-ety of events regionwide, from the New Jersey Highlands to Adirondacks and Finger Lakes regions.

MRCC Trail Conference 5K Run and 3K Walk

Each year, the Mahwah Re-gional Chamber of Commerce and Trail Conference partner to provide opportunities for hikers, beginning trail runners and veterans to sample a shorter, hybrid trail race at Trail Conference headquar-ters. Starting and ending at the iconic Darlington School-house, participants learn about the Trail Conference’s work as they explore a mix of wide, level trails and roads. The an-nual event is co-sponsored by many local businesses, with proceeds benefitting the Trail Conference.

Trail Conference Trail Runs

If racing is not your thing, we invite you to join us for 12 free, monthly, non-competitive trail runs throughout the Trail Conference’s service area. Runs typically highlight parks where the Trail Conference is ac-tively involved in preserving land, and a few locations far-ther afield. We offer two lead-ers, with two pace and distance groups, to accommodate a va-riety of skill and ability levels.

Find us on Facebook by joining our group, “Trail Conference Runs” or search for our events at nynjtc.org/events.

HiKERS’ MARKETPLACe

Warm weather is upon us, which means it’s time to start planning your spring and summer outdoor adventures! Shop gear, apparel, maps, trail guides, and more in our Trail Conference Marketplace. Plus, our members receive a discount on everything in the store!

Volunteer Trail Leaders Still Needed in New York, New Jersey

As an organization pow-ered by volunteers who care for more than 2,000 miles of trails and natural areas throughout our region, there is a significant impact when a volunteer position is vacant for a lengthy amount of time. Our small staff isn’t equipped to keep up with the demand required to keep trails open and safe, 365 days a year, rain or shine (or snow). The follow-ing Volunteer Trail Leader positions are still available. We — and your favorite trails — are asking for your help in filling them.

Do you know a passion-ate trail user or outdoor enthusiast who may be interested in maintaining trails, planning trail upkeep and projects for a particular area, and working directly with our local trail partners and local commu-nity? Please help us spread the word: share this arti-cle, send an email, make a phone call. We couldn’t do this work without you.

Learn more about our Volunteer Trail Leader po-sitions, and other volunteer opportunities, by visiting nynjtc.org/volunteer.

NEW YORK

West Hudson North Trail Chair

The West Hudson North re-gion covers trails in Minne-waska State Park Preserve, Storm King State Park, Schunemunk Mountain State Park, and Black Rock Forest in the lower Hudson Valley. You will work with a dedicated group of volun-teer Trail Supervisors, the Hudson Nor’Westers Vol-unteer Trail Crew, and park partners to tackle main-tenance and trail projects.

Dry Brook Ridge North Trail Supervisor

The Dry Brook Ridge North Trail Supervisor region covers a less-traveled area in the western Catskills, the Catskill Forest Preserve. The position gives the opportu-nity to oversee trail main-tenance on nearly 14 miles of trail with a team of trail main-teners and NYS De-partment of Environmental Conservation staff.

Southern Shawangunks Trail Chair

The Southern Shawangunks region extends from the New York-New Jersey bor-der at High Point State Park, north to Shawangunk Ridge State Forest, and west to the Neversink River Unique Area. If you’re looking to experience the varying landscape that this area has to offer, this volunteer role is for you.

NEW JERSEY

North Jersey Trail Chair

The North Jersey Trail Chair includes Norvin Green State Forest, Long Pond Iron-works State Park, Ramapo Mountain State Park, and Ringwood State Park. The North Jersey Trail Chair will work closely with NJ De-partment of Environmental Protection, park partners, and our Trail Supervisors and Maintainers to en-sure the sustainability and accessibility of the trails in these parks. This role is ideal for anyone looking to get involved in preserving this area’s hidden outdoor treas-ures and natural history!
Public Health and Environmental Conservation: Interrelated Fields

It is no secret that the environment directly affects human health, and humans directly impact the environment, creating a constant feedback loop. As a Trail Steward, part of my responsibility was to educate people about Leave No Trace (LNT) principles. The most direct link between LNT and public health is, of course, waste management. We taught people to carry out human and dog waste, when possible, or to responsibly bury it under 6-8 inches of soil and at least 200 feet from any water source. Aside from aesthetics, properly burying waste is important for mitigating the spread of harmful pathogens, such as E. coli or Giardiasis, which can directly affect safety of the individual; a simple browser search for risks of hiking off the established paths brings up dozens of articles about death and injury. On trail maintenance days, we engineered the physical environment to encourage staying on the trail. Connecting this with public health on a larger scale may seem a bit of a stretch, but stay with me. When we build a water bar and retrade muddy trails, we are making an area more walkable, thus eliminating the development of social trails that degrade vegetation, providing the spread of invasive species, and encroach on natural habitats. Subtle visual design, accident cues (blazes, quality maps, etc.), and education can help mitigate intentional and accidental off-trail travel. Treading off trails can be a vehicle for the spread of invasive species that the Conservation Corps worked on last summer in Japan. This non-native plant has been shown to be a habitat for ticks and their hosts, thus impacting human health. The second link has to do with methodological public health. I studied how the built environment—sidewalks, stairs, urban parks, etc.—specifically engineered to encourage exercise and outdoor activity, thus promoting healthy behaviors. This, in combination with education about the importance of brushing one’s boots and staying on the trail, works to mitigate environmental impacts, thus having the downstream effect of protecting human health via protecting native ecosystems.

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Support trails, parks, and open space in the region by joining the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. Your membership supports the trails you love and ensures they are accessible and safe to enjoy for generations to come. You also receive:

25% Discount on Trail Conference books and maps when purchased directly from the Trail Conference. You’ll also receive 10% off on logo products in our Trail Marketplace. Visit nynjtc.org/shop.

Discounts at our outdoor retail partners and businesses. See our full list of partners at nynjtc.org/retail-partners.

Invites to members-only workshops, hiking socials, and more.

Access to a wide range of volunteer opportunities on- and off-trail. Check out nynjtc.org/volunteer.

Learn more and join or renew your membership by scanning the QR code or visiting nynjtc.org/membership.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, July 13
Guided Invasive and Native Plant ID Workshop

Thursday, August 24
Conservation Dog Demonstration

September 16 – October 31
Trail-A-Thon: 103 Miles for 310 Years