Walk the New Trails at Sparta Mountain (and Bring Your Binoculars)

By Martin Treat

As I saunter through the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area, following newly posted blazes, I can hardly believe this 2,000-acre site in the heart of New Jersey’s Central Highlands was once targeted to host thousands of homes in cluster villages with retail outlets and golf courses. Thanks to The Friends of the Sparta Mountains, Sparta Township (Sussex Co.) listened and put limits on this proposed sprawl. By 1997, 1,800 acres had been permanently preserved with their purchase by New Jersey Green Acres and the Victoria Foundation.

Now, with the agreement from co-owners NJ Fish & Game and NJ Audubon, and with very special advice from the latter, a system of trails has been designed and NY-NJ TC volunteers have nearly completed their construction. The trails balance the need for public access with respect for a wildlife sanctuary.

Situated in southeastern Sussex County, at the very western edge of the Newark Pequannock Watershed, the Sparta Preserve beckons the hiker. One way to reach the area is along the Highlands’ Trail; traveling north from Mahlon Dickerson Reservation (6 miles), or south-west from the Newark Pequannock Watershed (8 miles from Canistear Road/Rte 23), the hiker travels in a contiguous greenway. I particularly like the stop at beautiful Ryker Lake for rest and lunch. Then, follow the shoreline trail for an excursion to the HT over the raceway of the dam. At this spot in April, I saw a Bald Eagle scouting out the lake.

In addition to access via the HT, there is a trailhead to the Sparta Preserve, with parking, less than a mile from Ryker Lake at Edison and Glenn Roads. Visit NJ Audubon’s kiosk showing trail map and historic markers. This is located soon after the turn from Glenn Road to Edison Road on the right after the bridge. Another trailhead can be reached by continuing the drive north along Edison Road for about 2 miles. Take a moment to read the historical monument dedicated to Thomas Edison and the 19th-century ironworks he built (National Register of Historic Places). The brand-new monument features lithographic depictions of the works and is so accurate that, standing there, you can identify the buildings, mines, and machinery out of the remnant foundations.

Almost Official: Sterling Forest Is a “Scenic Park”

A recommendation to classify Sterling Forest State Park as a “scenic park” and designate 95 percent of its territory as “park preservation area” was enthusiastically endorsed by the Trail Conference in its official review of the draft master plan for the park. By definition, “a scenic park is located in a natural setting and has limited development which is oriented toward accommodating visitors who seek nature oriented activities and scenic attractions.”

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission and NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation released the draft plan, along with a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, March 21, and conducted two public meetings in April. The public comment period closed on May 4.

Speaking after an intensive review of the drafts with TC members, Executive Director Edward Goodell applauded the park preservation area proposal and noted that overall, the draft is “a very thorough inventory of the landscape’s natural, physical, and cultural features.”

Some interim management strategies put forth in it, however, were not so favorably reviewed by the Trail Conference. In particular, the Conference strongly objected to a proposal to uniformly locate hiking trails on existing woods roads pending the development of a Comprehensive Trails Plan. Woods roads, the Trail Conference response noted, “do not conform to the latest hiking trail design standards... .often require a greater commitment of maintenance resources than a properly sited and designed trail... .gather and channel so much surface water, the associated flooding and erosion is often beyond the ability of trail maintainers with ordinary hand tools to solve... .create “edge” and significant ecological “breaks” in the landscape... .and lack an aesthetic trail experience. “We believe the Interim Hiking Trail Plan can be easily improved even while working on a Comprehensive Trail Plan.”

Following that declaration were specific suggestions for trail route changes in the park along with relocating hiking trails off of woods roads. Goodell said he was “optimistic” about the final master plan for Sterling Forest State Park, which was expected to be released by early July. “I’m confident that the concerns of backcountry hikers will be more adequately addressed in the final document,” he said. — G.W.
Remembering George Zoebelein by Gary Haugland

It is with great sadness I announce the death of George Zoebelein, president of the Trail Conference from 1965 to 1970. George died on May 3, 2001. He was active and influential in many hiking and land protection organizations and movements for much of his life. He served as president of the Appalachian Trail Conference, president of the Palisades Nature Association at Greenbrook Sanctuary, and was a friend and participating supporter of many regional entities, including the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and the Rockland County Planning Department. He served his town of Grandview-Hudson as a trustee.

Much that characterizes today's Trail Conference can be connected to George: our expanded membership, our publications, our partnerships with other organizations, our interest in land protection. He was, in essence, the first individual member of the Trail Conference. Meyer Kukle remembers when George first came to the TC office in 1961 to inquire about becoming a member. At that time, membership was restricted to clubs and their delegates. George was advised to join an outdoor club; he said he did not want a hiking club. Rules are meant to be broken, and he was granted a class B membership, previously reserved for former club delegates who wanted to continue their association with the TC. He stayed active with TC for 40 years. Today there are nearly 10,000 individual members.

George was effective in public relations and publications. A letter he wrote to the New York Times in 1962 resulted in a burst of interest in hiking and the TC and led to a regular feature on hiking in the paper. He chaired the TC Walk Book Committee and, according to another former Conference president, Don Der, persuaded the editors at Doubleday to take on our reissue of it, published in 1984. As president of the Appalachian Trail Conference, one of his lasting accomplishments was to develop a trail guide series that was uniform throughout the AT's many sections.

George actively participated in many of the burning issues of the day. He joined the opposition to the plan to carve into Storm King Mountain for a massive utility scheme, a successful grass-roots effort that ultimately led to the environmental law movement as we know it today. He was involved with the protection efforts of the Friends of the Shawangunks that led to the creation of Minnewaska State Park. In his last decade he served as president of the Palisades Nature Association at Greenbrook Sanctuary, and selflessly gave himself over to this work as he had to so much else during the course of his life.

I knew George best from our mutual involvement with the Long Path. Through his relentless advocacy, he helped secure the extraordinary status that the LP has in Rockland County, where the trail is on the official planning department maps and must be considered in all development proposals that impact its route. His working relationship with Rockland County has been rewarding to all parties, and serves as a model for the rest.

My fondest memories are of George conversing with key politicians and environmentalists. He had a precise way with words and a gracious way with people, gaining the respect of all he met. Then, at the most unexpected moments he would interject a wry bit of humor and, with a gleam in his eye and a smile twitching on his lips, wait for the laughter.

JoAnn Dolan, former Executive Director of the Trail Conference, recalls George's creativity and generosity. “Trail Conference colleagues sought out George for his creative thinking and his vision for the future. George was always considering ways to draw out talent of mixed disciplines from volunteers, and he fostered continued on page 8
The Race for Open Space

by Edward Goodell

Have you ever gone for a hike with your mind fixated on the grand picnic you’ll have at a favorite overlook only to find yourself abruptly pulled back to the present by a pumping heart and gasping lungs as you encounter a steep climb on the way? That is a bit how I feel working for the Trail Conference.

As I approach my fourth month on the job, it sometimes seems that the lofty aspirations set for me are overshadowed by the immediate challenges of day-to-day operations with highly competent but mostly new staff and office volunteers.

Even so, I am reminded of the importance of the larger issues on a regular basis.

For example, at a recent seminar held by the Rutgers School of Public Policy and Planning, the speakers predicted that the State of New Jersey will be “built out” in 40 years if current trends continue. By then, there will be no more land to be developed—or conserved. Only lands that have been protected will be available as open space. Conservation opportunities dwindling rapidly, hikers must act now to protect our trail lands and the backcountry experience.

In mid-May I also attended a “listening session” with the US Forest Service Highlands Study team. Over the next 12 months, with an appropriation from the 2001 Congress, this study will be a snapshot of the important natural and recreation resources of the area and the status and trends of development pressures; the information will be available to agencies and groups like ours via the web.

Many people expressed disappointment that the scope of the study was insufficient because it isn’t addressing a variety of socioeconomic issues that encourage development. While I agree with these criticisms, my primary feeling is the study will be worthwhile if it does just one thing—clearly demonstrate just how bad the uncontrolled sprawl scenario is compared to “smart growth” and a sustained program of land conservation over the next several decades.

I believe that the Highlands Study can create an excellent tool for demonstrating the impact of uncontrolled sprawl as well as workable alternatives. It is up to the Trail Conference and our affiliates in the Highlands Coalition to get the word out and to carry on the actual conservation and advocacy work of preserving the open space before it is developed.

To be more effective in this strategy, the Trail Conference needs more influence and more resources. In short, we need more members—both individual members and member clubs. We need to do more to recruit potential members and communicate what the Trail Conference does and what it stands for. To do this, we must work more closely with our member clubs to help build their membership and capacity to influence conservation issues.

So, as we work through the issues of running the day to day operations of the Trail Conference office this summer, I want all of our current readers to know that we are also focused on increasing our long term effectiveness by increasing our membership and our ability to influence the outcome of current and coming conservation efforts. This is the best way to assure that we all continue to have access to trail lands far into the future.

Experts predict that New Jersey will be “built out” in 40 years.

Trail Conference Open House Draws Many Guests to the Mahwah Office

I t may have been a day when people would rather have been hiking, but that didn’t stop over 100 people from coming to the NY-NJ Trail Conference’s Open House on Sunday, May 20. As guests nibbled on chocolate cake and delicious munchies, conversations were rampant in every part of the new Mahwah offices.

“I talked with people that I wouldn’t ordinarily have the chance to in the normal course of my work,” said NJ Field Representative Larry Wheelock. “And this was also a great way to strengthen our own volunteer base.”

Administrative Director Scott Voorhees was kept busy selling a variety of maps and books, while TC board members discussed issues and helped out in many ways. Among them was the well-organized Ann Loeb, who spearheaded the party’s planning.

Township of Mahwah Mayor Richard Martel, members of the area’s Fire and Rescue squad, volunteers and several long-time TC supporters such as Paul Leikin, Bob Newton, Marcelle Silman, and Tom Prentzel were among those enjoying the get-together.

“This may have become an annual event,” summed up Executive Director Edward Goodell. “The great turnout we had is an indicator that people want to interact directly with us and meet other members as well. This is exactly the kind of function that builds new personal bridges across the whole organization.”

— Pip Klein
CATSKILL TRAIL NEWS

D Catskill Hiker Dies in Fall

A hiker fell to his death while attempting a solitary bushwhack of Friday Mountain in the Catskills. The hiker, Trail Conference member Schiram Biyani, 48, of Fishkill, was found at the bottom of a 30- to 50-foot cliff about a third of a mile due east of the summit of Friday Mountain at an elevation of 3,400 feet, according to state Forest Ranger Patricia Rudge, quoted in a report in the Kingston Freeman. Biyani, a Ph.D. employee of IBM, was last seen on Sunday, April 29, leaving his car in the parking lot in the Town of Olive. Catskill trail registers showed that he was a frequent hiker in the region. His body was discovered eight days later following an intensive search by DEC rangers and volunteers, many of them from the Catskill 3500 Club. He was reported to be carrying a light daypack and a computer printout of a map.

D Headed for the Adirondacks?
Keep in mind that restrictions on camping and hiking, implemented on an emergency basis last year, are now permanent. The regulations include a ban on camping over 4,000 feet; a limit on camping between 3,500 and 4,000 feet to designated areas; a ban on glass containers; a limit on groups to 15 for day hikes and eight for overnight stays; and a requirement that pets be leashed on trails and at campsites. Also expect to fill out a mandatory trip ticket at the start of any hike into the High Peaks area. The tickets will be available at all High Peaks trailheads. Half the ticket is to be left in a box at the trailhead, the other half is to be carried and ready to show rangers. Rangers can fine people up to $250 for each violation of a wilderness-management plan, adopted last year after public hearings, that aims to better assess wilderness use and improve protection of the wilderness environment.

D Forest Service Maps More Easily Available
Forest Service maps previously available only from agency offices and limited retail outlets will now be offered also through the U.S. Geological Survey's map sales program. USGS topographical maps typically show natural and constructed features such as roads, boundaries, and transmission lines; Forest Service maps add information on available recreation use, local plant and wildlife, trails and visitor centers, campgrounds and picnic areas. For more information, log on to http://maping.usgs.gov/.

D Sterling Forest Information Center Relocated
By the time this issue of Trail Walker reaches readers, the information center at Sterling Forest should be in a new location, at the former Sterling Forest Conference Center on Old Forge Road, off Long Meadow Road in Warwick. The new information center will be used until the Lautenberg Family Visitor Center is built several hundred yards away, across Old Forge Road on the south shore of Sterling Lake. At that time, according to park officials, the information center will become part of the new visitor center, and the renovated building will continue to be used as an education and research center.

D Note to GW Bridge Users
The George Washington Bridge’s Patisalades Interstate Parkway toll plaza is now open all night to EZ-Pass customers only. Hours: Sunday–Thursday, 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. and Friday–Saturday, 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. For information call 1-800-221-9903. This eliminates the need to take a longer route through Fort Lee.

The Eyes and Ears of the Appalachian Trail

Levi Mason, Garth Fisher, Matthew Moore—AT Ridgerunners 2001

Ridgerunner.

That’s the job title Garth Fisher will carry this summer as he hikes the New Jersey stretch of the Appalachian Trail monitoring trail use, educating hikers, and caring for the backpacker campsite in Worthington State Forest. Fisher, who is one of three ridgerunners working the New Jersey AT this summer, is sponsored by the NY-NJTC.

The New Jersey ridgerunner program began in 1992 when the Trail Conference, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the National Park Service, and the Appalachian Trail Conference co-sponsored two ridgerunners for AT patrol duty. In that first year the two encountered 800 hikers between Memorial Day and Labor Day. In year 2000 the number of ridgerunners had increased to three and they encountered 6,685 trail users; an increase of 800 percent. This year again, three ridgerunners will patrol the 74 miles of AT in New Jersey and act as caretakers for the campsite in Worthington S.F. The section of the AT from the Dunnfield parking area in the Delaware Water Gap to Sunfish Pond in Worthington is the heaviest used section of trail on the entire AT.

The New Jersey program is now a well-established component of the older AT Ridgerunner and Caretaker program, begun 30 years ago. These programs were set up to provide a backcountry management presence on the AT in areas of heavy visitation. Ridgerunners and caretakers have become an important source of information and education to users of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the indispensable “eyes and ears” of the maintaining clubs, managing agencies, and the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC). They help reduce crime, vandalism, and nuisance problems while enhancing the experience of novice hikers. AT maintainers have found the ridgerunners’ first-hand reports very valuable for the latest in trail conditions. Garth Fisher is an experienced hiker and backpacker. After 35 years of doing social work, he is looking to this experience as a new opportunity to apply his skills in working with people. Fisher hails from Wisconsin, but he is not unfamiliar with the eastern regions—he hiked the entire AT in 2000!

Look for him, if you are on the AT this summer.

— Larry Wheelock
NJ Field Representative

Final Closure of the Graymoor/Appalachian Trail Land Dispute . . . at Last

The Graymoor Friars of the Atonement signed new easements for the Appalachian Trail over to the National Park Service in a brief ceremony May 25, 2001. These new easements settle a longstanding dispute that resulted from previous easement violations by the friars. The new easements were agreed to at a meeting on August 23, 2000, which Senator Charles Schumer and Congresswoman Sue Kelly, other 7.59 acres to the NPS corridor, provides for the friars with $25,680 for the easement upgrades, and ensures a yearly meeting between the friars and NPS to facilitate communications.

With the addition of new land to the ridge-line of Wiltse, Dutchess/Putnam AT South manager for the Trail Conference, notes the current trail will be moved to a new and better location. The relocation work, Daniels says, should be completed in June. The length of the trail will not change significantly, but the road crossings of Old Highland Turnpike and Old West Point Road will be different places by less than a few hundred feet.

Camp Glen Gray Protected

Thanks to a public-private partnership among the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Bergen County, NJ, and a community group, an important segment of the Ramapo Mountains greenbelt near the Trail Conference office in Mahwah, NJ, will be protected as open space as the result of the sale of the property to the partners. The Trail Conference is working with TPL to maintain and expand public access to trails on the site—particularly the Yellow Trail, which traverses Camp Glen Gray from Cannonball Lake in the north to Skyline Drive in the south.

Camp Glen Gray was the nation’s oldest continuously operating Boy Scout Camp. The Scouts put the camp up for sale in January, saying it was too expensive to maintain. The camp had been included on a list of New Jersey’s 10 most endangered historic sites by Preservation New Jersey, a statewide historical resource conservancy. Although developers were reported to have offered as much as $7.5 million, the Scouts accepted the joint offer through TPL of $5.1 million.

Questions about how the land will be divided among the purchasing parties and how much public access there will be remain to be settled, noted Trail Conference board member Daniel Chazin.

One of the partners, a Washington township-based Jewish community center, reportedly plans to establish a day camp on its portion of the site.
Hikers Haul Trash in Annual Litter Day Cleanup

Freezers, washing machines, sofas, tires, televisions, and many bags of trash were among the unnatural items found along the trails on Litter Day, May 6, 2001. The annual cleanup was a great success this year in areas throughout New York and New Jersey.

Among those reporting on their Litter Day activities was Diana Dikovsky, Trail Conference member and teacher at Lincoln High School in Brooklyn, who led a group of her eager students up Bull Hill. They were pleasantly surprised to find only one bag’s worth of trash along their hike, mostly in pleasant areas of New York City. These parks not only provide waterbars.

— Karen dePodwin

Litter Day Coordinator

Editor’s Note: The Trail Conference thanks Karen, a student at Saddle River Country Day School, for taking on the job of Litter Day coordinator as a senior project. Her enthusiasm and skills pulled off a successful event within a short time.

Help Develop a “Leave No Trace” Workshop For September

The Trail Conference, Appalachian Mountain Club, and AMC’s New York-North Jersey Chapter are cooperatively producing a Leave No Trace workshop specially tailored for day hikers in New Jersey and southern New York. Leave No Trace is a program created by the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) to help those engaging in backcountry recreation and travel minimize their impact on the environment, wildlife, and the experience of other visitors. The program is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the many different environments and situations we encounter.

The popularity of backcountry recreation has soared, bringing more people to our parks and trails than ever before. Nowhere is this more true than in the parks and trails on the environment, wildlife, and the experience of other visitors. The program is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the many different environments and situations we encounter.

Development Associate

The Trail Conference seeks an experienced part-time development associate to work closely with the Executive Director in fundraising activities. Skills desired: wordsmithing, research, and donor cultivation. Passion for conserving the backcountry experience is preferred. Send resume to the Trail Conference Office, Attn: Development Associate Position (info@nynjtc.org).
**FOR & ABOUT**

**Our Members**

- Save the Date/Annual Meeting Saturday, Oct. 13 is the date set for the NY-NJ Trail Conference’s annual meeting. Hikes will follow the meeting, then a dinner and square dancing. Details to follow in the September/October issue of *Trail Walker*.

- Thank-You To Richard and Nancy Wolff, who have generously contributed a number of publications and a large number of “topo” maps to the library. The material was left with them by a friend who has moved from the area. These welcome contributions are much appreciated and will serve the Trail Conference well.

- To Gari and Lori Ledyard of Hartsdale, NY, who donated a brand-new Panasonic phone/fax machine to the Conference. The equipment has been installed in the office and has greatly improved the staff’s ability to send and receive faxes.

- Poetry Wanted for *Trail Walker* Send your contributions to the Trail Conference office (note “TW Poetry”) or to tw@nyntc.org. The staff thanks John Perlman for suggesting and coordinating this possible new feature in *Trail Walker*.

- Kids in the Woods at Minnewaska The Nature Center at Minnewaska State Park will be open weekends and Wednesdays this summer, noon to 5:00 p.m. Nature walks are scheduled for each Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

  The park also sponsors a series of programs for children: Junior Naturalist Adventures, Session 1, Tuesdays and Fridays (July 3, 6, 10, 13); Session 2, Tuesdays and Fridays (July 24, 27, 31, August 7); Session 3 (August 10-13). Please call for information and to sign up: 845-255-2011.

  Also, each Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. the park will sponsor short programs, most with short walks, on a “Feature of the Week.” Topics will include Trees of the Shawangunks, Native Americans in the Shawangunks, and Owls, and Other Night Birds. Meet at the Nature Center.

- Kids in the Woods at Kittatinny Valley State Park: Trails for Trout and Kids for the Kitts The park will sponsor programs for children and families this summer. They include “Forrest Field Day” (Saturday, July 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., “Bug!” (Sunday, July 15, from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m.), and “Lost in the Woods: Child Survival” (Sunday, July 29, 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.). Pre-registration is recommended. Call 973-786-6445 for additional information.

**Trail Conference Intern Needs Lodging in the Fall**

The Trail Conference seeks to host a student intern from Austria from August 6 to November 30 to help set up a website for protecting the Shawangunk Ridge in New York. The website will serve as a resource where professionals and the public can access information about conserving the ridge. The goal is to see the Shawangunk Ridge protected through a combination of acquisitions and good local planning.

We have identified an excellent candidate, Bernd Kuchar, who is 24 years old, completing a master’s degree equivalent, and has worked on similar websites in Europe. He reports that his hobbies are “hiking, skiing, swimming, trail running, inline-hockey, mountain biking, Tae Bo, traveling, cooking, reading . . . and a lot of other things.” He has ample funds to support his stay if we can locate housing within a reasonable commute to the Mahwah office.

If you would like to host Bernd this fall and support an important project, please contact Edward Goodell at the Trail Conference office for more details.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Ken Lloyd**

A long-time trail maintainer and lover of the woods, Ken Lloyd, of Clifton, NJ, passed away this spring. A memorial service was held for him in Clifton on May 31 at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church. Ken, a retired accountant with a degree from Rutgers, came to New Jersey by way of England and Canada. He served almost half of his 83 years as a volunteer with the Woodland Trail Walkers and the NY-NJ Trail Conference. He joined his hiking club in 1960 and served both as president and director.

With the Trail Conference, his maintenance efforts included the trails at Pyramid Mountain in Kinnelon and the Appalachian Trail on Kittatinny Ridge, both in New Jersey. He once summed up his love for working in the woods: “There’s the physical exercise, the fresh air, the joy of being in the woods, and the tangible results. When you’re through working, there’s a real sense of accomplishment. It’s a magnificent sport!”

**Contributions Sought for Silman Tool Fund**

Since 1982, the Harry B. Silman Tool Fund, established by Marcelle Silman in memory of her husband, an avid trail maintainer, has helped the Trail Conference acquire the tools necessary for building and maintaining trails. Over the years the fund has received further support from the Silman’s daughter, Lydia Zakin. The Trail Conference invites other donors to contribute to the fund and thereby expand it for additional tools, such as global positioning systems. “As we acquire more and more tools, it becomes evident that just getting more places to walk and hike doesn’t mean that they are in pristine condition,” notes Marcelle Silman. The work of keeping trails passable, she reminds hikers, “is a never-ending chore.”

To make a contribution to the Silman Tool Fund, send a check made payable to the NY-NJ Trail Conference, to the TC office. Note “Silman Tool Fund” in the memo line.
The Invasive Top Twenty

List of the top 20 most serious invasive plants in New York State, compiled by the Invasive Plant Council of NYS.

- Black locust (Robinia pseudoacacia)
- Black swallow-wort (Cynanchum species: C. nigrum and C. rossicum)
- Common reed (Phragmites australis)
- Curly pondweed (Potamogeton crispus)
- Eleagnus species
- Autumn olive (E. umbellata)
- Russian olive (E. angustifolia)
- Eurasian water milfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum)
- Garlic mustard (Alliaria petiolata)
- Honeysuckles (Non-native shrub species), including
  - Fly honeysuckle (Lonicera morrowii)
  - Tartarian honeysuckle (Lonicera tatarica)
- Japanese barberry (Berberis thunbergii)
- Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica)
- Japanese knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum)
- Japanese stilt grass (Microstegium vimineum)
- Multiflora rose (Rosa multiflora)
- Norway maple (Acer platanoides)
- Oriental bittersweet (Celastrus orbiculatus)
- Porcelain-berry (Amelopsis brevipedunculata)
- Purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria)
- Rhamnus species
- Common buckthorn (R. arctocarpa)
- Smooth buckthorn (R. frangula)
- Spotted or bushy knapweed (Centaurea maculosa)
- Water chestnut (Trapa natans)

Arsenic on the Trail?

Chromated copper arsenate is a pesticide infused into wood to protect it from termites and beetles. It also protects against the ravages of humidity. It has been used for 60 years and is the material used to build many playgrounds, residential decks, docks, railings, fences, and trail wetland crossings. Lumber treated with CCA is banned in some countries but permitted in the US, though questions about its continued use have recently become more numerous and public. In March, sections of three Miami-area parks were closed after researchers found that arsenic had leached into the soil from pressure-treated wood.

According to an Associated Press report May 23, the Environmental Protection Agency was conducting a routine review of the use of CCA, which it expected to complete in June.

What alternatives are there to “pressure-treated” wood? TC Science Advisory Committee member Chris Harmon recommends black locust. Although a common local weed tree, it is not readily available commercially. Where it is common in a woods area it can be harvested and milled. Similarly, local cedar is recommended by TC staffer Larry Wheelock, who notes that the bridge at Moosy Glen in Minnewaska State Park is built with cedar. AT South Manager Walt Daniels also notes the use of red cedar along the AT. “We have some dead red cedars on the AT, which we have used for posts to mark the trail across fields. We have also used rough-sawn oak for puncheons on the AT. We get this cut for us at a local sawmill. Ron Rosen (chair of the AT Dutchess/Putnam Management Committee) is the expert on obtaining it.”

Wood made of recycled plastic, recommended by Bill Richardson, another member of the science advisory committee, is commercially available under the name Trex. Walt Daniels notes this has been used fairly extensively in Teatown Reservation. “Many of the small bridges are surfaced with it. It has a somewhat spongy feel walking across it. I have mixed feelings about its use. Most of our trails and the AT in particular prefer a ‘natural’ solution to problems. Trex is far from natural, but it’s good for the environment and is better than landfilling the plastic.”

—C.W.
Help Tailor the TC Web Site for Hikers

“The Sunday New York Times contains more factual information in one edition than in all the written material available to a reader in the 5th century.” A new book called The Attention Economy by Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck (Harvard Business School Press, April 2001, ISBN 1-57851-441-X) makes the case that most of us are suffering from attention overload. (A sample chapter can be read at www.acm.org/ubiquity/book/t_davenport_e.html.) Every business or organization you are part of, and many more that would like you as a customer or member, seeks your attention.

Perhaps the Trail Conference website is contributing to this overload, but I would like to think that it is helping reduce the overload by making targeted, selected information available for hikers.

The most useful information is that which magically appears exactly when you need to know it. We can’t quite meet that criteria, but we can make relevant information easy to find. Of course, the needs of Trail Conference members are very broad and may not be met by the results of the somewhat eclectic wanderings of the webmaster through the Internet. If your content does not match your needs let us know what we are missing. Better yet, spend an hour trying to make sense of some small corner of the Internet universe, looking for good books or Internet sites, and send them to us. If they are trail related, we will find a place for them on our site. In future articles we will mention some of those small corners.

To start things off, one of those small parts of the universe is a list of books about plant identification at www.nynjtc.org/committees/science/references.html. Another is a list of books and links about trail maintenance, design, and construction—www.nynjtc.org/committees/trailscouncil/index.html.

Share your web recommendations with other hikers by sending them to info@nynjtc.org.

—Walt Daniels
Technology committee chair
What is a Torrey Society Contributor?
The Society is named after Raymond H. Torrey who led the Trail Conference for its first 18 years serving as a prolific publicist, exuberant hiker, brilliant trail builder, uns Wed/Reinecroft, conservationist, organizer, shrewd negotiator, and diplomat/historian.
The Torrey Society honors individuals who contribute $500 or more annually to the ongoing operations of the Trail Conference. Members of the Torrey Society enable the Trail Conference to carry this proud tradition into the future.

The View from Albany continued on page 2

the trail that connects the Catskill Forest Preserve and Thacher Park.

Clearing the Air, Restoring Mountain Views

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, ADK, and the American Hiking Society invited the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Appalachian Trail Conference to join a unique partnership to lobby for national legislation to curb acid rain. Since then, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Conference has joined the partnership, which recently launched an ad campaign. The purpose of Hikers for Clean Air is to enlist our hiking colleagues in the Mid-Atlantic states and the South in our lobbying campaign.

There is much for us to do. Recently, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced new regulations that would force reductions of smog and haze-causing sulfur and nitrogen emissions by coal burning power plants.

The suits represent a new effort by the EPA and the Justice Department to actively enforce the new source rule. The EPA and the Justice Department and to Attorney General Elliot Spitzer has filed similar lawsuits. The EPA and Spitzer are merely doing routine maintenance, but the suits represent a new effort by the EPA and the Justice Department to actively enforce the new source rule.

The EPA has begun to actively enforce the new source rule. Since 1999, the Justice Department has filed lawsuits against coal burning power plants in the Midwest and South, charging them with violations of the new source rule (NSR) requirements of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Under the CAA, older power plants were exempted from installing the latest scrubber and pollution control technology. New plants or reconstructed plants that added generating capacity or increased emissions triggered the requirement to install the best available pollution control technology.

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The Catskill Forest: A History
Michael Kudish, Purple Mountain Press, 2000
Review by Daniel Case

Michael Kudish, a professor of forestry at Paul Smiths College, has taken the essence of his 1970’s-era doctoral dissertation and his considerable research into the Catskill forests since then, and compiled it into an informative yet highly readable book of great value to hikers. *The Catskill Forest: A History* is nothing less than the most complete guide yet to the forests of the Catskills and what they contain, a resource long needed.

Kudish took as his study area the region that includes all peaks higher than 2,400 feet—prime hiker territory. Over three decades he has thoroughly explored this rough circle covering parts of five counties, from river valleys to isolated summits. So devoted has he been that he is probably the only person to claim bland, viewless Eagle Mountain as his favorite peak, owing to its research possibilities. He starts with a history section, finding in isolated bogs as old as 9,000 years a record of the forests that flourished as the last glaciers were melting and plant life returned. The next great event in the lifecycle of the woods, European settlement and the ensuing impact on the woods of tanbarking, farming, and logging, gets equal consideration.

The second half of the book will provide those whose hikes are as much explorations as walks with plenty of objects for their quests. Range by range, the book gives the locations of interesting areas of forest, such as old burns, landslides, and quarries. Sidebars helpfully explain the signs of first-growth forest, old farmland, and burn areas, in case you think you’ve found one he’s missed (I believe, for instance, that some first-growth hemlocks near Halcott Mountain have escaped Kudish’s eye). The book is accompanied by a lavish map, prepared with the financial backing of the Catskill Watershed Corporation. It details and delineates the areas of virgin forest, fires, landslides, past farmland, reforestation, and other disturbances on one side and locations of all known forest-product industries (logging operations and quarries) on the other. It makes an excellent way to condense the vast knowledge in these hardback covers into something that can go into a backpack.

**Product Review**

**It’s North O’Clock**
A new GPS watch by Casio

Review by John Jurasek

At first glance, the SATELLITE NAV1 PAT 2GP (GPS) watch by Casio appears to be one of the best innovations in the area of electronic navigation devices in a long time. The concept of taking a GPS device, miniaturizing it to the size of a (albeit large) wristwatch, is certainly innovative. The idea of having a GPS on your wrist rather than having to hold it out in front of you seems very convenient.

I found that this unit performed reasonably well under most conditions. It comes with most of the features that the casual user would need. The watch has adjustable track-point recording intervals and satellite contact modes. In order to get consistent readings the watch needs to keep a continuous satellite fix. However, in this mode, the battery becomes depleted in only 70 minutes, hardly the length of a standard hike. If you switch to an auto mode setting, the battery life extends to 140 minutes, still not long enough for the average hike, and you sacrifice accuracy as the watch must continually reacquire contact with the satellites, which introduces errors into the measurements.

The included computer interface lets you store the GPS measurements on your computer. Interfacing the watch with the computer, however, is no easy task. The watch must be placed in a special holder to be linked to the computer’s serial port. The data can then only be sent to the proprietary software that comes with the watch. At best, this is a complex and time-consuming task.

Besides the computer interface problems, data input into the watch was difficult. The menus are a series of mazes that are easy to get lost in and hard to memorize. You need to continually refer to the thick 50-page manual that reads like the technical journal it is.

This watch really is a paradox. The professional user who would understand the technicalities of the watch wouldn’t use it because of its limitations, while the casual user couldn’t use it because of its technicalities. However, the one factor that may dissuade most people from using it is its price tag. At around $500, roughly four times the price of a regular GPS with similar features, any advantage due to the convenience of wearing it on your wrist is foregone. So while the Casio NAV1’s PAT 2GP (GPS) Watch is a neat new device, practicality wins out and relegates it to the category of just another interesting “gadget.”
continued from page 12

where it intersects with N. Providence Rd. A moderate ramble of 4-5 miles.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21
FWV. Pyramid Mountain. Leader: Dave Heigemeyer, 973-762-1475. Meet 10 AM at the Kimberly basketball diamonds down park a couple of miles north of the park office on the Butter-Brook Road. Hike of 3-4 miles will take you to the south end of Pyramid Mountain and Finney Rock and other great geologies.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25
FWV. Wading River, South Mountain Reservation. Leader: Don Meserlian, 973-228-7971. A tour of Ramapo Lake and the surrounding Ramapo Mountains. Bring trail lunch. Meet in first parking lot. 5 miles.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25
FWV. Tremper Mt. (2740'). Leader: Peter Rigotti, 718-769-3814. Meet: 9 AM at Grand Central station. $4 per-person admission charge. Call for information.

SPARTA TRAIL continued from page 1

The trail begins at the monument and you work through the woods and back to the beginning of the 18th century. After a mile, the ancient cuts of human labor give way to an overlook of the beautifully spectacular Edison Bog.

The trail is placed close to the bog, but not too close. From the overlook, walk with careful observation, binoculars ready. The path is barely visible and quite narrow and warblers abound. At this point, I am not so much hiking as sneaking along among more rocky overlooks, trying to spot an egret or heron out on the bog or an osprey perched on a lofty pine. Continue on a combination of nature trail and forest road, cross pristine streams, edge along a great swamp; bask in this wilderness and marvel at this preservation and evolving trail work. After exploring the rambling nature trails, the hiker may head back to the monument via the mining road (four miles) or, if a friend has left a car back at Ryker Lake, continue another four miles on newly cut trail for a full traverse of the Sparta Mountain WMA.

Martin Treat says his work as designer and construction leader of the Sparta Mountain WMA trail network for the past five years has been “a pleasure.”

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SATURDAY, JULY 14

UHC: South Mountain Reservation-Family Hike: Leader: Mini-Seniors; 973-769-4319. Meet: 10 AM at the Tappan Spring parking lot, Brookside Ave., Millburn, 0.4 mile north of So. Orange Ave. A family ramble; children second grade and older welcome. Rambles at a casual pace to Hemlock Falls beyond. Surely the sneakers if no boots available, a small snack and drinking water, please.

FROM TAPPAHANNACK PUTNAM Ridge Circular.


UHC: Delaware and Raritan Canal: Leader: Paul DeFante, 359-488-3332, before 10 PM. Meet: 9:15 AM at NJ Transit train station in Princeton. Moderate, flat miles along this historic canal from New Brunswick to Bound Brook. 13 non-members, plus train fare.

MONDAY, JULY 16

UHC: Rock Hall State Park Leader: Dot Berreman, 973-848-6546. Meet 10 AM. Rocky roofing, casual 4 miles to enjoy scenic glacial rock and Black River.

IHC: Long Path. Long Valley Mt. IHC: Leader: Donald Kallay, 706-630-6231. Meet: 9 AM at IHC Commander parking lot (Rte. 20), Mt. Ivy, NY. Moderate strenuous 6.5-mile hike. This section passes a panoramic Path cliff and ascends high to Top Haven, where we have a 360-degree view of the Hudson Valley. Swimming stop planned at nearby High Tor State Park. Shuttle required.

SATURDAY, JULY 21

UHC: South Mountain Reservation. Leader: White, 973-746-4313. Meet: 10 AM on the Tappehannack Ridge parking lot across from Millburn Station, Millburn, 5 miles north of So. Orange Ave. Strenuous hike of 10 miles with ups and downs. Inclement weather date is following Monday.

UHC: South Mountain Reservation Leader: Lew White, 973-746-4313. Meet: 10 AM at the Tappehannack Ridge parking lot. From Millburn Station, Millburn, 5 miles north of So. Orange Ave. Strenuous hike of 10 miles with ups and downs. Inclement weather date is following Monday.

UHC: Delaware and Raritan Canal Leader: Leader: Call 845-354-0738 for information. Moderate 4-mile hike.

UHC: PATAPSCO Valley State Park Leader: Call 845-246-4082. Meet: Sawyer Savings Bank parking lot, 87 Market St., Sayeghts, 8 AM. Moderate hike of 5 miles. Inclement weather date is following Monday.