Pochuck: A Small Name for a Huge Accomplishment

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference coordinated the Pochuck project. An extraordinary number of dedicated organizations and individuals volunteered time, materials, and manual labor to construct the crossing. Among these were the Appalachian Trail Conference, the National Park Service, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection—Division of Parks & Forests, Vernon Township Municipal Authorities, Purcell Associates Consulting Engineers, Builders Association of North New Jersey, Jersey Central Power & Light, General Public Utilities, Vernon Public Schools, St. Benedicts Prep School, and NY-NJ Trail Conference members.

“Seeing this crossing completed, knowing all the sweat equity that went into it, is one of the most satisfying endeavors of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference,” says Ed Goodell, executive director. “It never could have been accomplished without a whole lot of goodwill from people with many different interests in the project—and some who definitely did not have interest. Ultimately, everyone pulled together to make it a reality. Now, we take pleasure in hearing the kudos of hikers from all over the world who say they’ve never had an experience such as this provides.”

Oh, about that bear: The day before the Pochuck dedication, the bear ransacked the camping area of the Appalachian Trail Conference’s Mid-Atlantic crew, which was wrapping up work at the site. It returned for celebration goodies and was shooed off the boardwalk.

Stony Kill Falls Access Trail May Be Ready for Spring

Almost two years after the Trail Conference teamed up with the Open Space Institute (OSI) to purchase property with access to Stony Kill Falls on the western edge of Minnewaska State Park, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is poised to give its approval for the building of a trail that will provide the actual access. Until now, visitors could not visit Stony Kill Falls without trespassing on Napanoch Sand & Gravel Co. land.

If work on this trail can begin in early spring, it could be finished during the hiking season. When complete, the trail will include a small parking area near the first gate at the end of Shaft A Road. From there the trail will descend to a seasonal stream crossing of the Stony Kill. At certain times of the year, this may be a wet crossing and, at times (after severe rains), impassable.

Once across the Stony Kill, the trail will follow an old road leading upstream for a few hundred yards until it crosses a bridgeteak over a small creek. The trail then climbs onto a plateau that gradually pulls back and away from the Stony Kill while affording views towards the Falls. The trail will ascend a side valley, where there is a beautiful 30-foot cascade near the top. Above the cascade, the stream levels out and emerges from the valley at an elevation of approximately 1350 feet. Here the trail crosses a stream and heads due west to connect with the Stony Kill carriageway that continues on to the top of Stony Kill Falls.

Owing to the foresight and generosity of the many Trail Conference supporters who contributed more than $13,500, enabling OSI to purchase the property, hikers will soon have legal access to Stony Kill Falls as well as the relatively inaccessible western edge of Minnewaska State Park. Additional thanks go to Trail Conference volunteers Neil Zimmerman, Malcolm Specter, Jan Hesbon, and Larry Braun, and Bob Anderberg of OSI for making this dream come true.

For additional news on the Conference’s Shawangunk Ridge preservation work, please turn to Advocacy & Conservation on page 3.

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The Trail Conference as Inspiring Teacher

Educating the public about the responsible use of trails and the natural environment is as much a part of our organization as preserving open space and maintaining trails. Hiking is not just a matter of putting one foot in front of the other. Hikers recognize that they need to know about equipment, trail marking, destinations, weather, and fitness. To insure that there is a place to hike, they also need to be aware that trail lands need protecting and that trails need to be maintained. At the same time, hikers need to know that in some places, their footsteps can cause irreparable harm, by creating erosive conditions, for example, or by trampling on rare and endangered species of plants.

What else can we do to promote hiking and its benefits? Think about your life, your work, and how it connects or might connect to hiking. We publish books, maps, and a newspaper; it is why we have an outreach program in Harriman, are present at corporate health fairs, and present curriculum ideas for science teachers at a teachers convention. Sometimes this education work is as simple as answering trail questions that come into the office via email or telephone; other times it is members talking to folks on the trail about what they see and what they are doing.

The Trail Walker welcomes letters to the editor. They may be edited for style and length. Send to ta@nynjtc.org or to Trail Walker, NYYNJC, 136 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430.

Familiarity Breeds Pride of Place

The Nov/Dec 2002 Trail Walker, took me from a feeling of adventure, back to the everyday reality of what it is like to be a volunteer.

As I read “Never a Dull Night on Fri-day Mountain,” I could feel the adventure and excitement of being on that mountain, but what I felt most was a sense of ownership and love that the author felt for his favorite place. I share that sense of ownership and love because I am a trail steward. In my volunteer work I have come to feel ownership for the piece of trail and the section of mountain that I care for every season. I have also seen the splintering trees, the bear tracks, and the special rock formations. And I can also say “don’t sell my section short,” because sometimes I feel that hiking anywhere else is dull in comparison to the familiarity and sense of pride I enjoy from volunteer work.

When I read “Putting a Value on Your Time,” I came back to the practical reality of volunteering. My first reaction to the title was: “you couldn’t pay enough for the time I have given to the trail.” I work for a living like everybody else, and although I’d like to believe that everything is so peaceful and “nice” when you volunteer, I don’t find it to be any better or worse than my paying job. I just found some opportunities and rewards that weren’t in the description for my regular job. As much as I enjoy the trail work, I still have to commute to work every week. I don’t think it is easy for anyone (working or retired) to find time to get out on the trail or write a report. I really do feel that our time is worth every penny that was quoted. I am glad to see recognition for the actual monetary value of what we give to the trails. I also applaud efforts to recruit more volunteers. Thank you.

Michael Rea,
Belfvale, New York
Volunteer, AT, West Hudson

Additional Hoefferlin Award Winner

The list of William Hoefferlin Award winners in the last issue was minus one: John Magerlein, supervisor for the trails in Fahnstock State Park and Hubbard Perkins Conservation Area. The awards are made annually by the TC board and recognize extraordinary dedication to the cause of trail preservation.

John has been supervisor for the trails in Fahnstock State Park since 1991 and has had responsibility added for the trails in Hubbard Perkins and more recently for Teatown Lake Reservation.

John’s commitment to trails is evident in a number of ways. He takes maintainers out to train them and introduce them to their section before he lets them maintain. He is a certified chain sawer and has been an instructor in Maintenance 101. Supervising the trails is a family project with his wife Karen officially helping and his six-year-old son Tom, helping unofficially.

Off trail, John has helped with the 6th and the 7th editions of the Walk Book. He rewrote two chapters and oversaw the work for two others for the 6th Edition and did the revisions for the 7th. In the latter case, he and his wife researched new material for inclusion.

Joshua Erdsmaker
Volunteer Projects Director
NY-NJ Trail Conference

2 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003 TRAIL WALKER
Blazing Trails to Our Future

Conservation and Advocacy, trails development, education: Trail Conference volunteers accomplished prodigious work in our mission areas in 2002 with assistance from staff. Some highlights of the year’s achievements remind us of the breadth and depth of activities we embrace in our pursuit of trails development, even as we consider new initiatives for the future.

Conservation and Advocacy
• The year began when we presented expert testimony regarding the proposed development for Sterling Forge—the hole in the donut of Sterling Forest State Park.
• Our work on the Shawangunk Ridge continued unabated, fueled by the generous outpouring of support from Trail Conference members. By the end of the year, the Trail Conference had 1,100 acres under option, another 3,000 acres with willing sellers, and had presented several workshops to town officials.
• In late spring the Trail Conference hosted a symposium on off-road vehicle (ORV) use on state lands, which produced an ORV position paper that was submitted to the State of New Jersey. Just this fall, the state released a revised ORV policy that contained many of the enforcement provisions we sought. Along the way, the proposal for the Extreme Habitat ORV Park in West Milford went into deep hibernation.
• In the summer, hundreds of Trail Conference members attended a public meeting demanding to know when Storm King State Park could be reopened. As a result, 70 percent of the park is now reopened and we are working on the remaining 30 percent (see page 10).

Trail Development
• The biggest trails event was the opening of the one-mile boardwalk and suspension bridge crossing of the Pochuck Creek wetland (see story on page 1).
• Earlier, in spring, the Trail Conference cooperated with Scenic Hudson to build a 35-foot bridge over Mombasha Creek at the Southfields’ Furnace in Sterling Forest State Park.
• In September, our volunteer trail crews quickly constructed the Twin Forts Trail connecting Bear Mountain’s Trailside Museum with the recently renovated Fort Montgomery Bridge.
• The trail crew then moved to rehabilitating the trails on Storm King Mountain.

In November, trail and chainsaw crews went further west, assisting High Point State Park in New Jersey and Minnewaska State Park in New York to clear downed trees resulting from an early-season ice storm (see page 4).
• Finally, the Trail Conference cooperated with Palisades Interstate Park Commission to submit a proposal to reconstruct the bridge over Popolopen Creek in Bear Mountain State Park.

Education
Trail Conference President Jane Daniels talks about our organization’s education work in her column, including several new projects initiated in 2002 and our ambitious publications agenda (see opposite page).

What do we do for an encore?
First, we keep doing what we do so well. What more? Let me sketch out a few ideas that have been bouncing around my mind lately. I break these ideas into five general categories: protection, access, stewardship, education, and tools.

Trail lands protection
• Enlarge and strengthen the Outdoor Fund—our revolving land acquisition fund used for land purchases and protection.
• Create an advocacy partnership in New Jersey similar to our successful one with ADK in New York.
• Integrate our professional advocacy more seamlessly with grassroots advocacy by working with our member clubs more closely.

Access
• Increase the number of trail crews in the field to help state, municipal, and private owners.

SHAWANGUNK RIDGE
Development Proposals
Details are not yet available, but spokesperson for the owner of a 2,700-acre parcel known as the Awosting Reserve, nestled below and adjacent to both Minnewaska State Park and Sam’s Point Preserve, have made known that John Bradleyp plans to develop high-end housing and a golf course on the land.
Those with an interest in protecting the natural environment of the ridge are preparing for what many expect to be a large and protracted effort to prevent the development from degrading the environment.
Neil Zimmerman, chair of the TC Conservation and Advocacy Committee, notes: “The NY-NJ Trail Conference is very concerned about newspaper accounts of a major development on the lands of the Awosting Reserve. This large property borders the backcountry areas of Minnewaska State Park Preserve and their boundary runs right up against Gertrude’s Nose. However, it is important to note that the owner/developer has not yet revealed any specific plans. They have not yet requested any permits or zoning exceptions. Until something is presented to local and state agencies, there is nothing for NY-NJ Trail Conference to comment on or react to.
“In the meantime, however, we can educate ourselves on the relevant issues. Plans are in the works for a coalition of various interest groups to follow this issue closely and work to ensure an outcome that protects the valuable environmental and cultural resources of the northern Shawangunk ridge.”
Bradley’s development partner is Chaffin Light Associates. The following websites are relevant to those following this issue:
www.shawangunkridge.org: Shawangunk Ridge Coalition
www.nynyc.org/clubpages/foxes.html for Friends of the Shawangunks
www.savethegunks.com: created by a resident of Gardiner
www.chaffinlight.com: John Bradley’s development partner

View 3-D Gunks Maps Online
New three-dimensional GIS (Geographic Information System) maps of the Shawangunk Region commissioned by the Trail Conference can now be viewed at www.shawangunkridge.org. These maps, as well as a very informative viewshed map showing all the surrounding locations that would be able to see the proposed eight-story casino at Route 17 on top of the ridge, are excellent resources for those interested in ridge preservation issues. The maps were produced by former TC intern Bernd Kuchar.

Ridge Coalition
Members of the Shawangunk Ridge Coalition began in November to take the steps necessary to make the federation a self-sustaining entity. The Coalition is a group of some 25 organizations, both national and local, created and thus far sustained by the Trail Conference to coordinate strategies that aim to protect the ridge environment. Members divided into three action groups at their third meeting, held at the Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center: Communication, Funding, and Grassroots Organizing.
For updates on Shawangunk Ridge news, visit www.shawangunkridge.org.

continued on page 10
Ice Storm Devastates Area Parks; TC Crews Out in Force

Trail Conference volunteers were out in force in November and December, helping to clear trails throughout the region after a mid-November storm devastated several area parks. The November 16-17 storm deposited several inches of freezing rain and snow in the higher elevation forests of the Shawangunk Ridge, and broken limbs, toppled trees, and downed power lines blocked trails, roads, and carriage ways in state parks and private preserves.

Minnewaska State Park was closed for several days as crews worked to clear the main access road, parking lots, and the carriage way around the lake. And, with electric lines still down, the park staff spent Thanksgiving weekend moving its offices from its mountaintop facilities to the small but still powered building at the Peters Kill main access road, parking lots, and the intended rock so that it is lined up with the rock, and far enough away to allow you to roll the rock onto it and have the rock land on the "X" made by the two cross chains.

Roll the rock onto the net, keeping the chain as flat as possible. Pull the cross chains up and use the grab hook to connect the diagonal corners to each other. (Sometimes a big rock won’t permit them to reach. In that case, connect the two same-side corners and use a short web “choker” to link the two loops.) Place a shackle around the crossed chains (or on the web choker between them) and attach your lifting hook and haul away.

We begin with David Day’s ROCK NET

After countless time spent re-wrapping a loosened chain around a rock we were moving, I decided there had to be something better. Nylon webbing was certainly a good approach—if you were not dragging the rock over the ground. What made the webbing great was that it cinched up on the rock and held it, no matter how it was shaped; but dragging it over rocks and ledges would run a nylon web in a heartbeat.

I toyed with the idea of using a more durable material in a manner similar to the web. Nothing much came to mind that didn’t take major work to construct and/or cost a fortune. So, back to chains—it’s cheap, durable, and easy to work with. By making a kind of net bag out of chain, I got what I was after. The cross pieces of the net make the whole thing hold onto the rock, conforming to whatever shape the rock presents; while the flying ends make enclosure quite flexible and easy.

I used 1/4-inch proof coil chain, which has a load rating of 3,000# per strand. Since there will always be at least two strands holding the rock at any given time (and most rocks I plan to move are in the sub 900# class), that seems like good tradeoff between strength and weight. If you expect to move bigger stuff, just scale up the chain and fittings! (You may also want to make the legs of the “X” longer.)

Please feel free to tinker with this design idea. I made a couple of them like this for our crews and they are a huge success. If you have suggestions, ideas, whatever—just pass the word back along. Using the rock net is simplicity itself.

Spread the net out on the ground alongside the intended rock so that it is lined up

Maintainer’s Toolkit

If you have created an efficient gizmo to move heavy objects (see below), an easy whadayacallit to carry paint, or can list the pros and cons you have encountered in using relevant handtools—either old reliables or those new to the market—please send you thoughts along to tc@trysttc.org and share them with other maintainers. A photo or illustration of the object of your affection (or detestation) will be helpful. We will run this as an occasional feature—more often if we get enough submissions.

MATERIALS

(2) 7 feet of 1/4-inch proof chain
(1) 4 feet of 1/4-inch proof chain
(1) 8 feet of 1/4-inch proof chain
(2) 1/4-inch grab hooks, clevis style
(1) 5/8 inch hex bolts (grade 3+)
(2) 3/8 inch flat washers
(24) 3/8 inch hex nuts

ASSEMBLY

To make all chain fastenings:

• place a flat washer on the bolt
• place the two chain links on the bolt
• tighten the first nut down firmly
• tighten a second nut down hard, jamming the two nuts together.

• Cross the two 7-foot chains so that they cross at 3 feet, leaving a 4-foot tail. Fasten the crossed chains, making an “X”.
• The inner net ring should have 1 1/4-inch long sections fastened to the cross chains 8.5 inches from the center. It is made from the 4-foot piece of chain. Don’t overlap the ends, just fasten them on adjoining links.
• The outer net ring should have 24-inch long sections fastened to the cross chains 17 inches from the center. Don’t overlap the ends, just fasten them on adjoining links.
• Attach the two grab hooks, via their clevis, to the 3-foot (shorter) ends of the two cross chains.

Voila! You have a chain basket, aka, rock net.

—David H. Day

pinerock@trailstobuild.com

Thank You!

Deep appreciation for their work in helping park staff clear trails following the November ice storm goes to the following TC volunteers:

In New Jersey (High Point)
Bob Boyle, Jim and Debbie Cowell, Jim Gilmore, Robert Haemmerle, Peter Kohlberger, Robert Sicklely III, Mike Rosenthal, Shawn Viggiano, Steve Weissman, Larry Wheelock

In New York (Minnewaska and Sam’s Point)
Steve Banyacki, Larry Braun, Roland Brault, Bill Consiglio, Jean-Claude Fouere, Colleen Kelly, Eric Meyer, George Muller, Chris Rayling, Rob Segal, Mike Selender, Rob Sklar, Stuart Shakman, Lorraine Valentini, Dave Webber, Georgette Weir

More Trail News on page 10.
The Friends of the Shawangunks

Volunteers Joe Gardner, Clark Galloway, Paul Praus, and Jennifer Thorne help clean up the new Long Path northern terminus.

New Long Path North Terminus Announced

The Long Path North Hiking Club reports that the off-road northern terminus of the Long Path has a new look, thanks to the Open Space Institute, the County of Albany, Selkirk-Cogen, and many volunteers. The trail now ends at an old limestone quarry, a 13-acre tract previously owned by the county, which recently sold it to the Open Space Institute.

The site had become an unofficial community dump, and volunteers from the LPNHC worked over the summer and fall to clean up the mess. Hundreds of hours of labor, and the filling of several trucks and a large dumpster, resulted in an almost pristine area—the remaining eyesore, an abandoned bus, is to be cut up and disposed of. The pot-holed access road to the site was gravelled by work crews from Thacher Park.

The Selkirk-Cogen firm provided funds for the clean-up and will pay to have an interpretive kiosk placed at the site. OSI plans to turn the property over to the State of New York as a further extension of John Thacher Park.

Friends of the Shawangunks is one of 80 member clubs of the NY-NJ Trail Conference and is a frequent collaborator with the TC on Shawangunk issues. Friends, as it is popularly called, will likely lead any challenge that may be made to an expected development proposal for the Auvoesting Reserve, a privately held 2700-acre forest adjacent to Minnewaska State Park and Sam’s Point Preserve (see story on page 3). The following profile of the group was prepared by one of its current board members.

Forty years ago the beauty and serenity of the Shawangunks was in tact, surviving as much from disinterest as anything else. But then developers started proposing major projects—beginning with a ridgetop highway in 1963—and individuals committed to preserving the ridgeline’s natural beauty organized. Friends of the Shawangunks was born out of the successful fight to stop that highway, and during the four decades since, has been first to the front lines to combat every attack on the natural integrity of the mountains.

The Friends of the Shawangunks is an advocacy organization dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and environment of the Shawangunk Ridge for the benefit of everyone. Its sister organization, The Shawangunk Conservancy, buys and protects land for public use in this area. Many groups are dedicated to the enjoyment and protection of the Shawangunks; among them, Friends stands out for its aggressively activist mission.

Friends of the Shawangunks is not reluctant to take legal actions where they are meaningful, and the organization has proved its mettle time and again in confronting land developers, loggers, and speculators on the ridge. Perhaps its biggest effort was leading the opposition to the Marriott Corporation’s proposal to construct a 400-room hotel and 300 condominium units at Lake Minnewaska in the 1980s. The success of this fight finally resulted in the state acquiring the property and establishing Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

Friends is an independent, watchdog group of volunteers who believe it is necessary that our organization be able to act quickly—especially given the problems that this unique natural resource, located only 70 miles from New York City, faces today. The issues tell the tale: casinos and cell phone towers are proposed for the top of the ridge, second homes blossom on the slopes, and new, sometimes inappropriately recreational demands all need the vigilant attention that Friends of the Shawangunks can provide.

With fewer than 700 members, Friends is a small group as environmental organizations go, but through 39 years its impact has been great. Our activities range from the mundane road clearances we regularly do along routes 44/55 through The Trapps, to a festive annual members meeting with organized hikes to newly protected or endangered areas that the average hiker might not normally visit. Our newsletter, Shawangunk Watch, regularly includes articles on the history of the ridge, trail descriptions, and ecological information while primarily keeping our community up-to-date on current threats to the Shawangunks and strategies for dealing with them.

For a sample issue of Shawangunk Watch, and information about joining Friends of the Shawangunks, you can write to us at PO Box 270, Accord, NY 12404; or send an email to gunks@hotmail.com.

—Thomas Nozkowski
Thomas Nozkowski is a member of the board of The Friends of the Shawangunks.

Catskill Women Re-Roof and Rejuvenate McKenley Hollow Lean-to

The Catskills’ McKenley Hollow lean-to has a new cedar-shingle roof in place of the old asphalt-shingles-over-tar-paper, a new sunken fire pit in place of the old bonfire-generating ring, new landscaping, and no graffiti—all thanks to a local group called Celebrating Catskill Mountain Women. The group was formed in response to an international effort—part of the UN-designated International Year of the Mountain—to bring recognition to

The West Jersey Crew completed its third successful year—finishing its founding project at Worthington State Park and participating in the final chapters of the Pochuck AT boardwalk.

Starting at the end of June and continuing throughout the summer, many unscheduled work trips were added for the Pochuck project. West Jersey Crew members worked alongside those from the North Jersey crew, folks from the ATC, and others.

In September, the final push for Pochuck completion was on; two back-back-back full weekends were scheduled. The core crew turned out, and were again joined by the many others who had been working on Pochuck. The work progressed marvelously well, and on September 14—one day ahead of plan—the final piece of the boardwalk was put in place. A grateful shout was heard!

Returning to Worthington in October, the crew completed the connector link between the two lots—the last of the trailhead work for the Mt. Tammany Trail. All totaled, there were well over 150 timbers cut, carried, placed, and spiked in, forming terraced steps, curved staircases, and hundreds of feet of reinforced side-hill tread. Finally, in November, the crew rounded up the fall season on Mt. Tammany, with a day of rock steps, terraces, and waterbars.


“We’ll be back out there in the spring!”

—David Day and Monica Resor, Crew leaders
Robert Latou Dickinson: Walk Book Illustrator

Although Robert Latou Dickinson (1861-1950) is frequently cast as an icon of hiking (he is the one at left in this often published illustration of three hikers), his obituary in the New York Times made little mention of his work in and for the hiking community. We are told he was a gynecologist and a past president of the American Gynecological Society, the New York Obstetrical Society, and other medical groups. Dr. Dickinson was made Assistant Chief of the Medical Section of the National Council of Defense during the First World War, and also served with the rank of lieutenant colonel as medical adviser to the General Staff. In 1919 and 1926 he headed missions to China for the Public Health Service. With fellow sculptor Abram Bekenskie, he developed the “Birth Series” exhibit for the New York World’s Fair in 1939-40. He was the first important medical figure to align with Margaret Sanger and the Planned Parenthood movement.

Clearly a record that is more than distinguished. In the hiking community, however, Dickinson is probably best known as the original illustrator of the New York Walk Book. That book was apparently his second foray into publishing about hiking. On October 28, 1921, in the outings page of the New York Evening Post, we learn that “the AGS [American Geographical Society] has just issued a booklet on the Palisades Interstate Park by Dr. Robert Latou Dickinson, a physician practicing in New York. Dr. Dickinson, whose hobby is mapping and sketching, has long explored every nook of the Palisades.”

In 1923 the first edition of the New York Walk Book was published by the AGS. The book is designated as the American Geographical Society Outing Series No. 2. With Raymond Torrey, Frank Place, and Dickinson listed as authors and pen sketches by Dickinson. The three men collaborated splendidly: “We have brought out a book and the authors are still good friends,” marveled Dickinson. (In the hardcover edition of the book, which is designated “Special Edition,” Dr. Dickinson’s booklet on the Palisades is bound in at the rear and designated as first of the offering series.)

In the April 1952 issue of Reader’s Digest, author David Loth wrote an article entitled “The Most Unforgettable Character I’ve Met” about his acquaintance with Dickinson. Loth was living in a house overlooking the Hudson from the Palisades when his friend Dr. Dickinson came to visit on a hot summer day; Dickinson was then 89 years old and had walked 12 miles to see him and to sketch new drawings for a revised edition of the Walk Book. Loth recalled that many times over the years Dickinson had said, “What you do for yourself in this world doesn’t matter. It’s what you do for others.” By either measure Dr. Dickinson was a man who mattered. His illustrations continue to be used in updated editions of the New York Walk Book.

—Jules Orkin

Trail Conference Archivist
The annual Torrey Society Hike recognizes those individuals who donate more than $500 per year to the Trail Conference. This year’s hike on October 5 was especially noteworthy. Thanks to Carol Ash, Executive Director of Palisades Interstate Park, the Conference was permitted to hike on Storm King prior to its being open to the public. Hikers enjoyed a beautiful day augmented with sharp-shinned hawks flying after prey and black vultures circling on thermals. Prior to the hike, Jane Daniels, President of the TC board, presented Bob Marshall, who is stepping down as West Hudson Trail Crew Chief, with an 1891 map of the Hudson River including Peekskill and Bear Mountain. Special thanks go to John Blenninger, who repainted the blazes and made the trail ready for use.

**Delegates’ and Membership Meeting February 13**

All Trail Conference members invited

All Trail Conference members are invited to attend the next meeting of hiking club delegates on Thursday, February 13, 2003, at the Seafarers and International House, 123 East 51st Street, in Manhattan (corner of 51st Street and Irving Place, one block east of Union Square).

The meeting starts at 7 pm. Please join us for a social hour, beginning at 6 pm, for a chance to share refreshments and chat with hiking club representatives.

The agenda includes a vote on the By-laws (see website at www.nynjtc.org/by-laws/index.html for full versions or call the office to have one sent to you; 201-512-9348). Club delegates are also encouraged to bring general and specific issues of concern to the meeting.

**Public transportation to the Seafarers House**: subway lines 4, 5, 6, N, R and L to 42nd Street/Union Square; Or bus lines 6 and 7 (Broadway); lines 1, 2 and 3 (Park Avenue); and lines 102 and 103 (Third Avenue).

**www.nynjtc.org**

Your link to the latest news and action alerts of interest to hikers.

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**Volunteer Profile**

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**Frank Bamberger Keeps an Eye on TC Sales**

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**About Our Members**

- Alexander G. Gonzalez recently received the Finger Lakes Trail Conference’s Clar-Willis Award for design, construction, maintenance, and sponsorship of his section of the Finger Lakes Trail in southwestern Cortland County.
- TC board member Brian Goodman was the subject of an admiring profile in the November 17 issue of The Journal News in Westchester. Goodman is a former banker who, in 1992, took on the job of site manager of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail. His loving stewardship of the 26-mile linear trail is credited with increasing its popularity over the years, to the point that it now boasts 600,000 visitors annually. Goodman stepped down from the post at the end of 2002.

- Member club Rip Van Winkle Hikers was the subject of a November 18 story in the Kingston Freeman in Ulster County. The club organized a special outing to celebrate Halloween and hiked up Overlook Mountain in costume. The club has some 125 members from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.

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The Trail Conference mourns the loss of two dedicated volunteers: Palmer Langdon, who regularly gave his time in the office when the Trail Conference was headquartered in New York City; and Peter Howell, of New Paltz, who was a long-time maintainer and volunteer at Sam’s Point.
door classrooms and involve them in environmental monitoring projects.

- Expand our collaborative research with area universities on important recreational ecology issues, particularly as they relate to the impact of hiking trails on the environment.

Tools

- Develop a computerized geographic information system that displays our trails and trail lands on realistic and scalable maps. This would be helpful in mapping trail problems and trail work, depicting trail segments for each of our trail maintainers, creating and updating our hiking maps, mapping priority land parcels for land acquisition and advocacy, and portraying the biological inventory along trails for environmental monitoring and stewardship efforts.

- This is a big agenda. We can’t realize it all or, at least, all at once. But to protect and provide access to the best trail network possible, we must adapt to new roles in this new century, and at the same time remain true to our roots. Your comments and input will be essential to shape and implement any of these initiatives.

LEAN-TO RE-ROOFING

continued from page 5

Celebrating Catskill Mountain Women. Structural soundness wasn’t the only thing the Catskill Women were after. “Aesthetically,” says Rudge, “we wanted to make the lean-to more harmonious with its wilderness setting.” That meant replac-

ing the stone chimney with a more modern design—a virtually reborn lean-to in McKenley Hollow.

The women packed the stuff in on pack frames for land acquisition and advocacy, multi-colored Tibetan prayer flags—to make the lean-to more harmonious with its wilderness setting.” That meant replacing the stone chimney with a more modern design—a virtually reborn lean-to in McKenley Hollow.

Saturday, May 4, was the kick-off day for the project. Some 14 women gathered at the trailhead and began conveying the needed materials up the trail: 17 bundles of cedar shingles, two ladders, six wooden sheathing planks, 50 empty boxes, shovels, saws, hammers and other hand tools, nails, linseed oil, drinking water, and a surprise birthday cake for one of the workers. The women packed the stuff in on pack frames on their backs, pushed it up in wagons, carried it in their hands, even dragged it on the Stokes litter usually used to ferry injured hikers out of the woods. In addition, champion mountain biker Heather Roberts hitched a trailer to her fat-tire bike and made repeated trips back and forth from trailhead to lean-to all day long, hauling supplies in and refuse out. Two separate crossings over a stream swollen by recent rain complicated but did not halt the proceedings.

Patti Rudge oversaw the creation of a sunken fire pit in place of the upright stone structure “that can house a massive flame,” in Rudge’s words. The sunken pit makes less of an impact on the wilderness and is safer as well. With the raising of this new fire pit, the lean-to is made more harmonious with its wilderness setting.” That meant replacing the stone chimney with a more modern design—a virtually reborn lean-to in McKenley Hollow.

Information on the project and how to contribute can be found at www.catskillcenter.org and click on Celebrate Catskill Mountain Women.

--Susanna Margolis

Ms. Margolis and several other members of Celebrating Catskill Mountain Women are members of the Trail Conference.

Annual Meeting Results

NEW BOARD MEMBERS
Bob Newton (returning after a break)
John Kolp (full term after filling a partial term)
Paul Bell (relected)

NEW CLUBS
East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
Ramapo Mountain Ski Club
Morris Trails Conservancy

LEADERSHIP

Jim Conlon

After the Annual Meeting hikers joined the Torrey Memorial hike and enjoyed this view from the memorial site on Long Mountain.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003 TRAIL WALKER 8
**Notes from a Moss Walker**

**Sphagnum on My Mind**

*By Eric F. Karlin*

New Jersey, global hotspot for biodiversity? With close to 50 species of *Sphagnum* (peat moss), the state qualifies. The natural landscapes of the Garden State—and adjacent portions of New York—support one of the most diverse assemblages of *Sphagnum* in the world. Costa Rica, in comparison, boasts less than half the number of *Sphagnum* species found in New Jersey.

The living *Sphagnum* plant is a dominant component of peatlands. Its ecological influence continues long after death, as the peat that occurs in these special wetlands is primarily composed of dead *Sphagnum*. Peat stores a significant percentage of our biosphere’s carbon, and therefore plays an important role in modulating global warming. Economically noteworthy, peat is used extensively in horticulture. It is used as a source of fuel. Furthermore, *Sphagnum* has antibacterial properties; this—along with its great absorbency—led to the use of sterilized *Sphagnum* for wound dressings in World War I.

**Identifying Sphagnum**

*Sphagna* are large mosses, with a dense, crowded mass of tiny young branches (the capitulum) at the top of the plant. Branches occur in clusters (fascicles) of three or more, a unique arrangement among mosses. It is easy to observe the fascicles below the capitulum, where stem elongation causes maturing branches to spread.

Although *Sphagnum* can be easily identified at the genus level (is this plant a *Sphagnum* or a *Bryum*?), it is one of the most difficult groups of plants to identify at the species level (is this plant *S. bryenose* or *S. palustre*?). Indeed, microscopic analysis is often needed to make an accurate identification. This is a major reason why there are no common names for the different species of *Sphagnum*; for most folks, “peat moss” is sufficient.

A few *Sphagnum* species grow submerged in shallow pools (*S. cuspidatum*, *S. macrophyllum*, *S. portoricense*, *S. toreyyanum*). Several form dense carpets at, or just above, the water surface (*S. palustrum*, *S. rubellum*, *S. recurvum*, *S. (alax)*). Others grow in dense hummocks, which rise well above water level (*S. fuscum*, *S. magellanicum*, *S. fissicoma*ns, *S. palustris*, *S. fimbriatum*).

Because they display a wide spectrum of colors, walking through ecosystems where *Sphagnum* occurs in abundance provides a unique visual experience. Some species are green (*S. fimbriatum*, *S. gregensohni*, *S. recurvum*), some vivid red (*S. bartletti*ani*um*, *S. magellanicum*, *S. rubellum*, *S. warnstorfii*), and others rich brown (*S. austini*, *S. floricanum*, and *S. fuscum*).

For pictures, descriptions, and keys, you’ll find *Field Guide to the Peat Mosses of Boreal North America*, by Cyrus B. McQueen, a useful reference. You may also want to take a look on the Web at [http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~ekarlin/mosses/moss/moss.htm](http://phobos.ramapo.edu/~ekarlin/mosses/moss/moss.htm) (click on *Sphagnum* in the menu.)

**Finding Sphagnum in New Jersey and Adjacent New York**

When looking for *Sphagnum*, focus on wet spots in the landscape. Typical habitats in the Ridge & Valley as well as the Highlands (both partially glaciated in the past) include kettle-hole bogs, highbush blueberry thicket swamps, and rich fens. In the Coastal Plain, you’ll find *Sphagnum* in Atlantic white cedar swamps and streamside savannahs.

A convenient place to view *Sphagnum* on the Coastal Plain in southern New Jersey is at Webb’s Mill, about five miles south of Route 70 and on the east side of Route 539. In the Ridge & Valley physiographic region, you’ll find *Sphagnum* in the cedar swamp in the Kuser Natural Area, in High Point State Park. In the Highlands, it is abundant along the Cedar Swamp Trail in Wawayanda State Park. In these locations you probably won’t need hip-waders. But eager moss seekers might get their feet wet! *[Eric Karlin is Dean and Professor of Plant Ecology, at the School of Theoretical and Applied Science, Ramapo College.]*

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**Hikers’ BOOKSHOP**

*100 Hikes in New Mexico, 2nd edition*  
by Craig Martin  
The Mountaineers Books, 2002  
Reviewed by Jonathan Beard

Many of these “100 Hikes in New Mexico” were off-limits for much of 2002, owing to the long-standing drought in the Southwest that turned the state’s National Forests, Parks, and Monuments into tinderboxes. But it can be expected that with the return of rain, hiking in New Mexico’s mountains, deserts, and lava fields will once again be a pleasure, especially for someone who lives in New York City.

Craig Martin, a professional outdoor writer who covers every sport from fly fishing to mountain biking, has done a professional job with *100 Hikes*: The hikes are arranged geographically, and there is a good locator map at the beginning. Each individual hike gets a small map—without topo lines—and about a page-and-a-half of text explaining how to get there and what the trail is like. Since I have hiked the Pine Tree Trail near Las Cruces more than 10 times, I was impressed to see that Martin shows a side trail that I had never heard about.

Martin has chosen well: He provides a good mix of short hikes, loops, shuttle hikes, and longer ones that could be backpacker trips. Most, though, are 5-10-mile hikes in the mountains around Santa Fe, or the Gila Wilderness in the Southwest, or the area around Ruidoso. Many take advantage of the mountains in each of these regions; while in the winter this may take hikers into snow, in the summer it is a welcome source of relief to be in the cool air over 8,000 feet.

My only caveat for this book is the maps. You will need a good state highway map to reach the trailheads, and, whenever possible, get a large-scale map of each hike before putting on your pack.

**Exploring Colorado’s Wild Areas** by Scott S. Warren  
**Exploring Oregon’s Wild Areas** by William L. Sullivan  
**Exploring Washington’s Wild Areas** by Marge and Ted Mueller  
The Mountaineers Books, 2002  
Reviewed by Stella Green

In 2002, Mountaineers Books published revised editions of their popular series titled *Exploring Wild Areas*. Current offerings are for the states of Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. Each book is between 300 and 400 pages and includes photographs and maps. Important information such as location, size, kind of terrain, and elevation of the area is given at the beginning of each named wild area, and is followed by details of the available activities, which include such adventures as climbing, cross-country skiing, and water exploration. Instructions for hiking are minimal. No detailed trail descriptions are given, but rather suggestions as to what routes might be of interest, so a good topographic map or trail map would be invaluable. For the adventurer visiting the above states these books could prove a good investment.
TRAIL NEWS
continued from page 4

TRAILS REOPEN AT STORM KING

Hiking trails in two-thirds of Storm King State Park are open once again (sections A and C on the map), the first time since the discovery of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) in the park during a fire in 1999. A third section (B) remained closed as of early December. (Section A is west of Route 9W; B is south of the clove between Storm King and Crows Nest; C is north of the clove between Storm King and Crows Nest.)

Volunteers have been replazing the trails in sector B with the assistance of park management to ready the trails for future use. Park staff will also be removing the standing dead trees along the burned sections of the trails. Until this is complete these trails will remain closed. Although trails in sector B will open, they may be closed again when the Army Corps of Engineers begins its final sweep of the area. That work is not yet scheduled.

In order to bypass the closed sector and connect the Stillman and Howell Trails, a new crossover trail has been completed in the clove area (see map detail). This connector allows for extended hikes within sector C.

All of the trails, and 25 feet on either side, have been swept for UXOs and any found have been removed. Essentially no UXOs were found in sectors A and C, and it is believed that only hot fires will cause the remaining ordnance to explode, so it should be safe to hike in the area if appropriate precautions are taken. Special conditions will remain in place indefinitely on Storm King.

Restrictions:
- Be especially careful of all fires, including smoking. Because of the possibility of remaining UXOs, firefighters will never be allowed into the area to fight any fires.
- If you should find any UXOs, DO NOT TOUCH. Please report them to: 845-786-2781.
- No hunting.
- Do not disturb any flagging tape or posts that you see in the area. These mark areas to help with future clearing efforts.

FAVORITE HIKES

This NJ Ski Tour Is Not for Novices or the Easily Disoriented

By Jill Arbuckle

It doesn’t often snow heavily down here in New Jersey, but when it does—as it did in January 2001—there are some delightful ski outings nearby. My favorite is one of many possible loops in Wawayanda State Park; it’s a loop that I recommend only when snow-covered, as otherwise too many mountain bikes and motorized vehicles tend to spoil the experience.

Upon arrival at Wawayanda, stop at park HQ to pick up a map (Trail Conference Map 21 can also be used), and check on conditions. The trails in Wawayanda can be confusing; a map and at least one companion are essential.

From HQ, drive to the Wawayanda Lake parking area. From this lot, ski east, under the lake, and total more than 1,200 past the old iron furnace. Bear left through the group campsite and pass a gate, to the start of the yellow-blazed Double Pond Trail. After a half-mile on the Double Pond Trail, turn right on the Red Dot Trail (closed to snowmobiles), which was recently blazed all the way through to Cherry Ridge Road (be sure to keep heading south when a branch of the trail loops back north). This is two miles of delightful secluded skiing over rolling terrain.

When you reach Cherry Ridge Road, turn left (east) and pray that the snowmobilers have stayed home. When the road reaches a gate, and a parking area, turn left on the yellow Banker Trail, and ski a scant half-mile north. Stay awake! Your route now forks left on the blue-blazed Cedar Swamp trail (also closed to snowmobiles). Don’t miss the fork!

Wend your way north on the Cedar Swamp Trail. Here the skiing becomes a bit of a scramble; a narrow path twists through laurel bushes, and at one point crosses some bog bridges. Seeing the white cedar swamp dressed in winter whites is well worth the trouble. When you reach the Double Pond Trail again, after 1.3 miles on the Cedar Swamp Trail, turn left (west), and retrace your outbound route back to the lake.

The total trip length is about six miles.

ADVOCACY & CONSERVATION
continued from page 3

- Ridge Land Purchases
TC Land Acquisitions Director John Myers continues to negotiate options for land purchases along the Shawangunk ridge. A new 50-acre parcel has been optioned in Mount Hope and another 50-acre parcel in Greenville should be completed soon. Unfortunately, owing to the very difficult fiscal environment in New York State, the Trail Conference has not yet been able to get commitments from the Department of Environmental Conservation to purchase the parcels currently under option; these total more than 200 acres. Myers has been working to extend these options into 2003 in order to gain more time. In the meantime, the Conference has been working with DEC on the necessary acquisition paperwork and lobbying for the funding required to complete protection of the optioned land.

- Aquifers and the Ridge
A geohydrologist hired by the Trail Conference has confirmed that the Shawangunk Ridge is an important recharge area to the drinking water aquifers for many of the towns along the ridge. Kathy Bienkafner’s report on the Shawangunk Region Watershed will be a critical information source in planned meetings between Trail Conference representatives and many local town officials to gain support for better protection of the ridge and its water resources.

ELSEWHERE

- EPA Weakens Clean Air Regs
Just before Thanksgiving, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced changes to key regulations that enforce the federal Clean Air Act. These changes modify the New Source Review law (NSR) and constitute a major weakening of the act. The NSR legislation was enacted by Congress in 1977 to ensure that older coal burning electrical generating plants operating without acid deposition emission controls would be required to install scrubbers or switch to clean fuels like natural gas if they were ever rebuilt. The Bush Administration’s regulatory changes have the opposite effect, allowing these old plants to be reconstructed and operated well until midcentury without having to install modern pollution technology.

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer immediately announced that he and the attorney generals of seven other eastern states would file a federal lawsuit against the Bush Administration for endangering air quality by gutting this critical component of the Clean Air Act. The suit will allege that the EPA is exceeding its authority by enacting rules that greatly weaken the Clean Air Act. Spitzer contends that the NSR changes in the Clean Air Act announced by the EPA would exempt thousands of industrial air pollution sources from the New Source Review enforcement provisions of the Clean Air Act.

The basic tenet of the lawsuit is that only Congress can repeal this critical enforcement program, the President can not do so simply by having the EPA amend a regulation. Unless overturned by the courts, the EPA regulatory changes will further degrade air quality in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

COMING UP

- Winter Trails 2003: January 18
High Point State Park will again mark Winter Trails day with a celebration of winter activities for the family and demonstrations on the use of winter gear. For info, contact www.xcsshighpoint.com.

- National Trails Day 2003: June 7
Now is the time for groups to plan National Trails Day events to celebrate Healthy Trails, Healthy People. Organize a maintenance trip, outreach hike, or other trail event.

For information on the use of winter gear, contact www.xcsshighpoint.com.
continued from page 12
beautiful, abandoned bogs southeast of Atsion. Car shuttle required.

UCIC. Hackensack River. Leader: Norm, 908-889-5983. Meet: 10 AM; call for directions. 5 miles along the bucolic banks of the
    beautiful, abandoned bogs southeast of Atsion. Car shuttle required.

SATURDAY, FEB. 8

OCSJ. Pasadena Tile Works. Leader: Norm, 609-654-5893. Meet: 9:30 AM; call for directions. 7-8 miles of delightful trail and
    beautiful, abandoned bogs southeast of Atsion. Car shuttle required.

SATURDAY, FEB. 15

UCIC. Appalachian Trail, Rt. 23 (Payne’s to Rt. 55 ECL). Leader: Stewart Mantell, 914-456-1377. Meet: 10 AM; call for location.
    7.5-miles at moderate pace, pump ups and down. Hike through
    Payning Nature Reserve before finally passing the Connecticut state
    line. Transportation contribution 15 $.

THURSDAY, FEB. 20

FVTW. Lake Skgammati Circular, Harriman. Leader: Peter Witter, 917-226-8170. Meet: call to time and directions. 7.5
    miles, many cross-cuts trails, rocks, and the beaver stream.

SATURDAY, FEB. 22

OCSJ. Marshlands Conservancy. Leader: Alan Alman, 914-526-8215. Meet: call Friday 5-7 PM ONLY. Meet: 10 AM; call for location.
    5 miles walking the trails of this lovely spot. Rain/hand/running
    conditions cancel.

OCSJ. Bear Mountain Gorge. Leader: Mike McKies, 917-967-3056. Meet: 9 AM; call for directions. 8 miles along a bubbling river. Bring an extra pair of socks. Return around 3:30 PM.

THURSDAY, FEB. 27

WVT. Woodcrest Waymakers. Leader: Bill & June, 908-661-8835. Meet: 8 AM; call for directions. 7 miles through the woods near
    Harriman, Saw Mill River. Snowy conditions may be necessary.

TUESDAY, FEB. 25

OCSJ. Herrontown Woods. Leader: Norm, 908-429-1337. Meet: 10 AM; call for directions. 5 miles along the woods near
    Herrontown, Saw Mill River. Snowy conditions may be necessary.

    Transportation contributions may be necessary.
Join the volunteers who bring you the great outdoors!

1500 miles of trails and counting; your membership helps us expand our horizons.

Included with membership: Trail Walker, 10% discount on purchases at most outdoor stores, and 20% discount on all Trail Conference maps and books.

Support the work of the NY/NJ Trail Conference with your membership.

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Make check or money order payable to the NY/NJ Trail Conference, and mail to: 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Tax-deductible.

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More than 80 clubs belong to the Trail Conference, and many of our affiliate groups sponsor hikes not listed in the Hikers’ Almanac. For a descriptive list of Conference clubs, consult our Web site or send an SASE with your request to NY-NJ Trail Conference.

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE

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