Sharing the Trails with Timber Rattlesnakes

By Kris Schantz

A walk through the lush forests of northern New Jersey through southern New York may encounter the northern copperhead (Agkistrodon contortrix) or the timber rattlesnake (Crotalus horridus). Both are poisonous, however, neither is aggressive.

The timber rattlesnake is listed as a state-endangered species in New Jersey, a state-threatened species in New York, and as either threatened or endangered in most of the northeastern states. Their state listings afford them protection, making it illegal to kill, handle, collect, or harass timber rattlesnakes. Why protect a snake? To rattlesnakes, we’re the predators. Both are poisonous, however, neither is aggressive. The rattlesnake is the last attempt for self-preservation. If that fails, they may rattle and retreat again. A female timber rattlesnake may give birth only once or twice in her lifetime. Although she’ll give birth to six to ten young, little is known about the survival rate of the newborns. The newborns do have venom to kill their prey, and just like the adults, will strike if their lives are threatened. They don’t look like the pictures of rattlesnakes that we often see in books or on television. To those unfamiliar with snakes, adult snakes of other species are often misidentified as rattlesnakes, and newborns of various snakes look similar.

Rattlesnakes are found in different habitats depending on their life cycles and seasons. When snakes forage, they can be found in the forests—hardwoods.

CREWS CONTINUE TO CLEAR WINTER TRAIL DAMAGE IN REGION’S PARKS

It has been a hard winter for many trails in our region. First came the ice and windstorm of November 16-17 that snapped the tops off trees, broke many branches, and toppled many other trees. Next, the heavy snowstorms during the end-of-year holidays bent and broke more branches. Heavy snowstorms in January, February, and even into March brought down more debris.

Much blowdown has been cleared, but the accumulation of snow on the trails after mid-December kept Trail Conference crews and maintainers, as well as many park staff, from trail-clearing work almost until spring. Owing to the extent of damage, hikers are cautioned that some of their intended routes may still be blocked. In addition, unusually wet conditions may persist, particularly in low-lying areas, into May or even June. Be prepared with proper footwear and avoid walking around wet areas to help prevent widening of the trail. Better yet, try to plan hikes in higher and dryer zones so as to avoid wet trails until the ground has firms up.

The most significant winter damage was reported in Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Schunnemunk Mountain, Black Rock Forest, Storm King State Park, the Taconic Ridge, and the Catskills, all in New York, as well as in High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest in New Jersey.

With the return of warm weather in late March, Trail Conference crews of volunteers headed back to the work of clearing trails. Hikers can help by removing as much debris as they can safely handle from the trails they walk.

The Trail Conference maintains a webpage where hikers can exchange information about trail conditions (click on Viewpoint at www.nynjtc.org). To report serious trail problems, email info@nynjtc.org or call the office at 201-512-9348. Additional trail maintenance opportunities are available—please inquire when you register.

This new trailhead, the only one on this side of the park, was made possible through the joint efforts of the Trail Conference, its individual and club members, and the Open Space Institute.

For more information or to register, contact Trails Director Larry Wheelock, 201-512-9348, wheelock@nynjtc.org. For additional trail maintenance opportunities, see page 4.

Help Build New Stony Kill Falls Trail

Trail Conference members help make good things possible. Two years ago, your generous donations supported the purchase of access property at Stony Kill Falls on the northwestern edge of Minnewaska State Park. Now the Conference is ready to put in the new trail. Everyone is invited to join the trail-building effort from Thursday, June 19, through Sunday, June 22. All skill levels are welcome (including total novices), and you can join us for one or multiple days. Limited camping opportunities are available please inquire when you register.

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Ah, Spring

This past winter has had more than its share of snow and cold weather. There are hikers who will be out in almost any temperature and those who eagerly await the longer days and warmer weather. No matter which group you belong to, spring is a welcome time of renewal and renewal.

When spring peeps herald things to come, one cannot help but smile, put away the heavy clothes, and begin to plan hikes and trips. With spring being a time of renewal, why not show your love and appreciation of the outdoors in a different way this year?

Celebrate spring and visit a park or area you have not been to before. All of us pass by parks on our everyday travels. We may look at the gateway and decide—it’s just a playground, a picnic area, or a farm. Look again. Gedney Park in Millwood, NY, and Muscoot Farm on Route 100 in Somers, NY (both in Westchester County, near where I live and work), are just the types of parks where appearance is deceptive. The former has about three miles of trails tucked around playgrounds, tennis courts, and ball fields, but coyotes live there and a variety of plants grow in the woodlands and edge environments. Muscoot (which means something swampy) Farm has more than seven miles of hiking trails, covering a variety of habitats—old farm pastures, woodlands, ponds, and wetlands. Both parks are easy-to-get-to venues for delightful nature walks. Look around; likely there are similar places near you.

Another way to celebrate spring is to take several children on a hike and in the process point out interesting things along the trail. One spring 10 years ago, I was the trail sweep on a hike that had two children along. The 6-year-old could not keep up with the group. However, her father, another adult, and I split off from the group and did the loop part of the hike in reverse. There had been moist weather during the previous week, and we saw so many orange salamanders (red efts) that we did not bother to count them. The four of us spent most of our hike looking at them and noticing differences such as coloration, number of spots, and size. Interesting discussions occurred. When the other hikers joined us, they could not believe that we could have had such a good time and not gone very far. For me it was one of my personal top-10 hikes because the walk in the woods became something more than that.

A third way to celebrate is to organize an “It’s Spring” hike for adults who have never been on a hike. Family, coworkers, members of your church, temple, or mosque are people you might include. Choose a hike with a destination such as a lake, a great view, or a waterfall. Bring something special along for the celebration—it might be someone to talk about flowers, geology, or birds, or have a box of homemade cookies for dessert at lunch.

For those of you who are maintainers, celebrate spring this year and invite a hiking friend to help you. This introduction to trail maintenance will let you spread the word about how to help maintain trails so that we can continue to hike. Just remember to let your friend know that one does not go and just maintain; you need to be assigned a trail or trail segment. If you don’t have a trail assignment, call Josh at the Trail Conference office and let him know you would like to help.

Now, if you are one of those people who has more money than time, why not celebrate spring by making a donation to the Trail Conference. That way your dollars make a difference, whether in protecting land, the environment, or educating people as to where to go and how to do it.

Happy Spring and Happy Trails.

—from the Chair

Jane Daniels
Chair, Board of Directors

LETTERS

Thank This Man If You Hike at Storm King State Park

Getting Storm King State Park ready for hikers last fall took scores of volunteers, SKSP trail maintainers and supervisor, the trail crew, and its outgoing chief, Bob Marshall. They worked many hours and days to accomplish the huge amount of work necessary to undo three years of maintenance neglect and to construct the new Crossover connector trail (a red-blazed trail between the Stillman South Trail and the Howell Trail). Through it all, there was one figure who was there all the time. He gave of himself beyond the call of duty. He was there in the beginning assessing the work required. He helped scout, plan, and construct the Crossover Trail. He clipped and cleared trails. He removed blowdowns. Most of all, he rebalanced virtually the entire trail system in Section C—the eight miles of trails from about Clove Road, across Storm King Mountain to Mountain Road and from Rt. 9W to Rt. 218.

He devoted more than 20 FULL days in 2002 to reopening Sections C and A. He is committed to however many more days it will take to reopen Section B in 2003. He will not be satisfied until the job is done completely and properly.

This man is a gem in the crown of the Trail Conference. The Trail Conference would be a far, far, better organization if it could clone TC’s Storm King State Park trails supervisor, John Blenninger.

Larry Braun
West Hudson North Trails Committee, chair

FROM THE CHAIR

The TRAIL WALKER (USPS Permit 970-100) is issued bimonthly by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as a benefit of membership. Subscriptions are available to libraries only at $15.00 a year. Periodical postage paid at Mahwah, N.J., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to the address below. Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily represent the policy or position of the Conference. Contributions of typed manuscripts, photographs, and drawings are welcome. Manuscripts may be edited for style and length. Send SASE for writers’ guidelines. Submission deadlines for the TRAIL WALKER are June 15 (Aug./Sept. Issue), July 15 (Sept./Oct. Issue), September 15 (Nov./Dec. Issue), November 15 (Jan./Feb. Issue). Unsolicited contributions cannot be acknowledged unless accompanied by SASE. For information on advertising rates, please write or call.

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Stepping into the Breach, Again

In 1920, Major William Welch, the first Superintendent of the Palisades Interstate Park, had a problem. Crowds were congregating on the shore of the Hudson River, and there were few paved roads or marked trails to help distribute visitors to other park areas and no money to build any.

Major Welch began talking to the various hiking and “tramping” clubs who were avidly using the backcountry. He knew they could help him entice the crowds away from the river’s edge. A meeting with the various clubs was arranged at the log cabin on the top of the Abercornbie & Fitch Building in Manhattan.

At that meeting, the assembled groups agreed to work together to promote “a deeper interest in the use of the Palisades Interstate Park for recreational purposes” and to work cooperatively “in the development of trails and shelter systems.”

So it was that the Trail Conference was created in 1920—a federation of hiking groups dedicated to helping the broader public connect with nature on public lands. This continues to be our core purpose to this day and far into the future.

Major Welch went on to chair the Trail Conference for 10 years, a period in which he was very active in the state and national park movement of the times. The Palisades Interstate Park and the Trail Conference served as a model for other public/private park partnerships across the nation. The Trail Conference built the first section of the Appalachian Trail in 1923 and, in 1925 with Major Welch as its first chair, the Appalachian Trail Conference was formed along TC lines to build and manage the Appalachian Trail.

The Trail Conference, with more than 85 member organizations, has remained focused on the trails and trail lands rather than on the activities that can occur there. The Trail Conference does not lead hikes or organize recreational events—that is what our member organizations do.

The Trail Conference is a forum where individual and organizational members come together to protect their common interests—the lands and the trails that traverse them. Our focus is on the projects that are either too large for an individual club or better managed by an umbrella group where the interests of all users are taken into account.

As our region’s population grows and open space shrinks, the need to optimize the public’s benefit from the remaining open space will present even greater challenges. For example, disputes between different user groups that have been seen in recent years are reminiscent of the “trail wars” between different hiking clubs that the Trail Conference had to overcome in its first decade.

The Trail Conference’s mission has been and will remain to assist public agencies in making their lands accessible and beneficial to the public. The enormity of this task is made ever more formidable with each new budget cut announced by federal and state administrations. It is clear that public agencies will continue to rely on Trail Conference volunteers.

Force reductions in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection as a result of early retirements and budget cuts are leaving essential positions unfilled. In New York the ranks of the Department of Environmental Conservation are thinning and the legally dedicated Environmental Protection Fund is eroded further with each additional budget proposal.

Under these circumstances, which are expected for the foreseeable future, organizations like the Trail Conference become more important than ever. We nurture a reservoir of volunteer talent, people who are moved to action by their passionate dedication to a cause; these are resources that can make the difference when public commitment falls short. The public/private collaborations that have marked Trail Conference history since 1920 will continue, but it is clear that our public partners will be increasingly stretched in the days ahead.

The private commitments we each make—whether to keep a trail accessible by being a maintainer, field-checking a book description, attending a hearing on a development proposal, or writing a letter to a government decision-maker—will often be the difference between stewardship and loss. There’s never been a more important time to be a Trail Conference member and a volunteer.

— Ed Goodell

Sterling Forge Estates

A Development “Hole” in a Hard-Won Park?

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Sterling Forge Estates, a proposed development for an 18-hole golf course with 103 upscale houses to be located in the heart of the Sterling Forest State Park, is imminent, developers announced in March. The Town of Tuxedo Board, which is the lead agency reviewing the project, appears to favor the proposal, citing its projected tax-positive benefits and the perception that a golf course is a “green,” environmentally-friendly land use.

The development proposal was first put forward in 2000; public hearings were held on the project’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and additional studies were required by the town board and the NYS DEC. Sterling Forest Partnership members (the Trail Conference is among them) monitored all Tuxedo Town Board meetings and workshops dealing with Sterling Forge Estates. Its expert consultants have written letters to the town board whenever it appeared the board’s actions or interpretations of environmental law were questionable and when the town’s consultants appeared to be in error. Repeated requests have been made to the town to require a Supplemental EIS. If the town refuses to require a Supplemental EIS, it is possible that legal action may follow.

The 571 acres proposed for this development are very rugged, consisting of steep ridges of exposed bedrock and very thin soils. The only level areas are composed of wetlands and stream valleys. Turning this particular piece of property into a golf course and a housing subdivision is going to require a massive change to the landscape with far-reaching environmental impacts that will extend beyond the boundaries of the Sterling Forge property into the Sterling Forest State Park, Tuxedo Lake and Tuxedo Park, the Ramapo River, and potentially into New Jersey’s drinking water system.

What You Can Do

• Write letters to Governors Pataki or McGreevey and to your local legislators, and urge them to finish the job of protecting Sterling Forest.

• Work with a member group of the Sterling Forest Partnership. There are times when your attendance at meetings and your written opinions will be critical.

Sterling Forest Partnership has committed payment of nearly $100,000 to pay its expert consultants. Through funds raised by the Partnership, and with donations continued on page 9
Orange Alert! Backpacks Searched at Bear Mtn. Bridge

The Orange Alert declared the first day of the U.S. war against Iraq led to early confusion about the status of pedestrian traffic on the Bear Mountain Bridge. A State Police spokesman told a Trail Conference staffer that the bridge would be closed to all pedestrians when an Orange Alert was in effect, and at least one hiker reported that she had been prevented from crossing walking across the bridge. Bridge authorities confirmed that one hiker was denied permission to cross the bridge, but only after she refused to allow inspection of her pack. After a flurry of emails and phone calls on the subject from Trail Conference representatives to the State Police, Pipp Park Police, the Bridge Authority, and the National Park Service (which oversees the AT), announced police procedure seemed to settle on permitting pedestrian crossings, subject to inspection of any and all bags or packs. Hikers who do not agree to a bag search will not be allowed to walk on the bridge. Vehicles are not being searched. Please contact the TC office if your experience differs from the announced procedure.

Orange Alert! Ashokan Causeway Crossing Closed

Hikers heading for the southern Catskills should be aware that Monument Road, which crosses the Olivebridge Dam in the midst of the Ashokan Reservoir, is closed indefinitely. The closure is a security measure enforced by the New York City Dept. of Environmental Protection that aims to protect the water supply.

Breakneck Relocation

The Breakneck Ridge Trail east of where the Notch Trail leaves the ridge toward Bull Hill was relocated on March 29 at the request of the DEC Natural Heritage Program. The relocated section is coaliigned with the Notch Trail and contours around the high point to the north before rejoining the old trail.

Temporary Closing of Columbia Trail in Hunterdon County

The Hunterdon County portion of the Columbia Trail, extending from the Morris County border into High Bridge, will be closed to the public until sometime in May 2004, while the trail undergoes reconstruction. New bridge decking, drainage work, and clearing of some vegetation will be in progress.

In the future, parking will be in the High Bridge municipal and Valley parking lots. No parking will be permitted in the Hoffman Crossing Area. Future additional parking may be available in the Borough of Califon.

During the period of construction, there will be a zero tolerance policy in effect for all violators of the trail closure postings. A court summons will be issued to anyone violating this notice.

For additional information or questions, please contact William A. Clothier, Supervising Planner, Hunterdon County Department of Parks and Recreation at 908-782-1158 or email him at bclother@co.hunterdon.nj.us.

West Hudson

Crew Chief: Chris Ezzo, 516-431-1148
Brian Buchbinder, 718-218-7563,
brbchub@mindnoven.com
Claudia Ganz, 212-633-1324,
clganz@earthlink.net
Robert Marshall, 914-737-4792,
rfmarshall@wevnet.net
Monica Resor, 732-937-9098,
dadam@trailstobuild.com
May 3: 9 am–3 pm, Daniels, Hudson Highlands Gateway Park (new trail)
May 10: 1–4 pm, Platz
May 17: 1–4, Platz
May 24: 1–4, Platz
May 31: 1–4, Platz
June 14: 9 am–3 pm, Daniels, TBA

June 7: Nuanian Trail in Harriman, Buchbinder
June 8: TBA in Harriman, Ezzo
June 12: TBA in Harriman, Marshall

New Jersey Highlands

Call the leader no earlier than one week before the scheduled date. Work will be concentrating in the Lake Hopatcong area. Leader: Bob Moss, 973-743-5203
May 10; May 25; June 14; June 29

West Jersey

Leaders: David Day and Monica Resor, 732-937-9098,
westerjerscy@trailstobuild.com
All meeting times: 9 am; call for meeting location; heavy rain cancels.
May 3: Appalachian Trail, Stokes State Forest - Erosion control
May 18: Appalachian Trail, Stokes State Forest - Erosion control
June 7, National Trails Day: Appalachian Trail, Worthington State Forest - Erosion control and trail revitalization on the AT between the Dunnfield Creek parking lot and Sunfish Pond. Meet 9 am at Dunnfield Creek (AT) lot.
June 28: Howell Trail, Stokes State Forest - Work to begin on replacing a defunct bridge.
June 29: Howell Trail, Stokes State Forest - Continuing bridge work.

North Jersey

Leaders: Sandy Parr, 732-469-5109
Dick Warner, 201-327-4945
Second Sunday of each month. Tackle a variety of projects ranging from trail repair to bridge building in northern New Jersey.

Delegates’ Meeting Thursday, June 12

All Members Are Welcome

All Trail Conference members are invited to attend the next meeting of the hiking club delegates on Thursday, June 12, 2003, at the Fort Lee Historic Park, in Fort Lee, New Jersey.

The meeting and program start 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.

Although each member club or organization of the Trail Conference designates a delegate to act as liaison to the Conference, individual conference members are always welcome at delegate meetings.

Meetings, held in New York City or at Fort Lee Historic Park on the New Jersey Palisades, provide wonderful opportunities to share hiking and conservation news, discuss issues, and help guide the Trail Conference’s future work and activities.

Getting There: Fort Lee Historic Park is immediately south of the George Washington Bridge on the east side of Hudson Terrace, on the New Jersey Palisades. Frequent bus service from the GWB terminal in Manhattan is available, or take the lovely (and free) one-mile walk across the bridge. Ample (free) parking is available. Driving directions are available at www.njpalisades.org or by calling the Trail Conference office.
The author, a roche moutonée in the background.

The startlingly beautiful, aqua-green Lake Minnewaska lies along an ancient fault line, as do Lakes Awosting and Mohonk, and the underlying conglomerate bedrock greatly influences the clarity of the water. Very little sediment washes off the hard conglomerate, and the rock’s chemical composition results in the water being too acidic for most plants to grow. From the lake, take the Millbrook Mountain Trail (red blaze) to Millbrook Mountain, a return to the ridge overlooking the Wallkill Valley. The 360-degree views from Millbrook Mountain are, in my opinion, among the best in the Shawangunks, encompassing the Catskills to the northwest, the Taconic Mountains to the northwestern

### Stories Told by Shawangunk Stone

by Daniel Brownstein

The Shawangunk Mountains offer fascinating opportunities for geological observation. From vantage points within a radius of several miles, it is possible to see evidence of one billion years of geologic history (the Hudson Highlands visible to the southeast are 1.1 billion years old) and the remnants of four major mountain-building events: the Grenville event that formed the Hudson Highlands; the Taconic event, responsible for the Taconic and Berkshire Mountains; the Acadian, the erosion of whose mountains resulted in the sedimentary deposits of the Catskills; and finally the Appalachian event, which created the Appalachian range and uplifted the Gunks.

Along the Shawangunk ridge we also find evidence of ancient seas and beaches, see the tremendous impact glaciers had on this region in the not-so-distant past, and witness the effects of weathering and erosion that continually alter the landscape of the Hudson Valley, a process dramatically demonstrated this past January by a major rock slide that closed Route 52 east of Ellenville for days.

In November of last year, I led a geology hike in the Shawangunks for earth science teachers from Long Island to Oneonta. The trip comprised three separate mini-hikes to spots selected for their special geological interest and beautiful vistas. This a guided tour for those who may want to follow in our group’s footsteps and enhance their knowledge of this beautiful hiking area.

### Overview

The story of geology almost always comes down to rocks. Fortunately, there are just two main rock types to be concerned about in the Shawangunks: the hard, resistant, younger Shawangunk Conglomerate, which is found capping the ridge; and the weaker, older Normanskill Shale, which underlies the conglomerate. To understand how the Shawangunks formed, we need to travel back about 430 million years. At this time, a large mountain range on the scale of the Rockies existed to the east of the present-day Gunks. To the west of this mountain range, called the Taconic Mountains, was an island sea. Into this sea, rivers flowed off the Taconics carrying sediment eroded from its slopes. The larger particles in this stream—the sand and pebbles—settled out of suspension once the river met the ocean and formed a beautiful white sand beach made mostly of quartz. Once this beach solidified it became the attractive Shawangunk conglomerate that visitors now associate with the Gunks.

Several hundred million years later, this solidified beach was folded during another mountain-building event called the Appalachian orogeny. Just like folds in a carpet, the Shawangunk conglomerate was tilted and uplifted when Europe and Africa collided with North America.

Then for nearly 250 million years the geologic environment was rather “quiet,” until the climate suddenly cooled about one million years ago. During this time, up until about 12,000 years ago, glaciers repeatedly advanced and retreated over the Shawangunks, dramatically altering their appearance. The softer underlying shale weathered at a much faster rate than the harder conglomerate cap, and the result is a noticeable ridge along the uplifted layers. The topography we see today is therefore a result of faulting, folding, glaciation, and the extremely resistant Shawangunk conglomerate cap rock.

Evidence of glaciation is everywhere in the Shawangunks. The mountains are littered with glacial erratics (out-of-context boulders that were transported and deposited by glaciers), have extensive cliff ridges, and large “fields” of glacial polish scored with scratches, chatter marks, and gouges. In general the northwestern slopes are smoothed, and cliff lines are on the southeast, a result of the direction the glaciers were moving. Glacial features are especially prominent on the glacial polish. The conglomerate is so hard that it has barely weathered on the surface since the last glaciation (thus aiding in the preservation of these features). Instead, weathering occurs mainly along vertical cracks, which are extensive. Water easily seeps into these cracks, and, owing to the fact that water expands when it freezes, the conglomerate is susceptible to extensive splitting due to ice wedging. Eventually this process results in many talus fields or large block fields, as well as many crevices and caves. The winter rockslide along Route 52 was a dramatic recent example of this process.

**To Hawks Watch**

Hawks Watch overlook in the Mohonk Preserve offers excellent views of the Wallkill Valley and Catskill Mountains, and the chance to observe numerous glacial features. (From the Mohonk Preserve’s West Trapps Trailhead parking lot, go to the Trapps Carriageway just west of the Route 44/55 overpass and take the blue-blazed Millbrook Mountain Trail up to the ridge.) This quick jaunt goes over spectacular glacial polish (very smooth, shiny rock “polished” by a glacier) to the overlook. Preserved amidst the glacial polish are numerous glacial parallel scratches and concave gouges.

At Hawks Watch, look across the highway gap to a glacial feature called a roche moutonée, a mountain or hill that has been smoothed on one side by an advancing glacier and “plucked” by the action of its retreat on the other. In the Shawangunks, many of the northwestern slopes are smoothed and the southeastern slopes plucked, and these roche moutonées create magnificent cliffs.

The Catskills, visible to the northwest, are essentially the remains of an ancient delta (like the Mississippi Delta). Huge mounds of sediment piled up over millions of years from the erosion of another range called the Acadian Mountains.

**The Lost City**

Lost City is a marvelous area, also in the Mohonk Preserve, with small cliffs, towering spires, and very large boulders looking very much like an abandoned, broken down city. (Park in the Coxing Kill overpass and take the blue-blazed High Wallkill Valley and Catskill Mountains, then hike the Trapps ridge to the east. Like the Trapps ridge, the Lost City has cliffs on the southeastern slope and glacial polish on the northwestern slope. Unlike the Trapps ridge, the angle of the fold (dipping down instead of up) has generally caused the cliffs to slide downhill. Ice-wedging and ancient faults have aided this process significantly. Because of this difference, tall towers and pinnacles that were once part of the cliffs stand alone, tempting adventurous climbers to scale them.

The startlingly beautiful, aqua-green Lake Minnewaska lies along an ancient fault line, as do Lakes Awosting and Mohonk, and the underlying conglomerate bedrock greatly influences the clarity of the water. Very little sediment washes off the hard conglomerate, and the rock’s chemical composition results in the water being too acidic for most plants to grow.

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Hiking the Path of Asset Protection

Assets—your piece of the earth and our trail lands. Each can be protected through a Charitable Gift Annuity.

You make an irrevocable gift, and we pay you—a high rate payment, paid quarterly and guaranteed for your lifetime.

You also get tax benefits—more than enough to buy a new pair of hiking boots.

Your generous gift rewards you and the Trail Conference.

For information specific to you, contact Jim Davis or Maureen Walsh at the Trail Conference office, 201-512-9348.

Provide your name, address, phone, and date of birth. All inquiries are confidential.

Ruta Apalache

We are looking for Spanish/English speaking volunteers to update a Trail Conference brochure regarding the Appalachian Trail written in Spanish. Help the Trail Conference educate and inform Spanish-speaking audiences about the Appalachian Trail; a national treasure located less than 50 miles from Times Square.

Fulfillment Clerk

Looking for an interesting way to stay cool during the hot summer months? Why not come to the Trail Conference office once a week and assist our membership and sales department with the processing of membership forms and sales orders. Data entry has never been more exciting! Our friendly staff will set you up on a computer and give you all the training you’ll need.

Lawyer Sought...

The Trail Conference is looking for a copyright/intellectual property lawyer. If you have experience in this area of the law or know someone who does, contact Josh.

Trail Maintainers Wanted for High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest

In 1923, Colonel and Mrs. Kuser donated the first 10,500 acres of what has become High Point State Park, one of the most popular hiking locales in New Jersey. Join the team of dedicated volunteers who maintain and protect these hiking trails. Many trails have been closed and/or damaged from the severe winter storms that hit our region this winter. Sign up to adopt a section of trail; your work will allow other hikers to enjoy one of New Jersey’s treasures.

Harriman Nature Walks Coordinator

Every summer the TC offers nature walks in Harriman State Park. We are looking for an organized individual to coordinate walk leaders and arrangements with the park ranger at Torciati Circle. The leaders will be offered a training session to learn about the plants and animals they might see during the hike. A coordinator who knows enough about the plants and animals to lead the training is desirable, but we can supply a naturalist if necessary. There do exist guide sheets and identification books to use on the hikes.

Do you remember 1990-2000?

The Technology Committee and webmaster are looking for a brief synopsis of the Trail Conference’s activities during the ‘90s. Help maintain our website and inform our conference’s activities during the ‘90s.

The Technology Committee and webmaster are looking for a brief synopsis of the Trail Conference’s activities during the ‘90s. Help maintain our website and inform our website visitors about the Trail Conference and its activities.

**NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

The Trail Conference welcomes the following new Life Members:


- Gifts over $500
  - Duanne Douglas, Hedley M. and Barbara Weeks

- DONORS

  Gifts up to $500

- MATCHING GIFTS

  Altria Group, Inc, CNA, IBM, Pfizer, Prudential Insurance, Unilever Bestfoods

**IN MEMORY OF MARILIES WU**

David Sutter & Naomi Sutter, Richard Wolff & Nancy Wolff

**FARRELLY, LIBBY HERLAND**

Early this April Libby Herland, Manager of the Walkill Wildlife Refuge since 1995, left to take up new duties in Massachusetts. In her eight years of managing the Walkill Refuge, Libby more than doubled its acreage, directed the restoration of the Dagmar Dale farm into refuge headquarters, conceived and developed an interpretive trail system, and increased the staff from three to seven. She was an excellent collaborator, and excelled in developing partnerships between federal, state, county, municipal authorities, and the volunteer community. The TC acknowledges the contributions and thanks her for a very productive eight years.

—Larry Wheelock, Trails Director

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

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**NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE**

The Trail Conference is a volunteer-powered organization. Without the dedication of its members, we would not be successful in accomplishing our mission. Below are new and interesting opportunities for members to get involved. If you are interested in volunteering with the TC and can’t find an opportunity that suits you, contact Volunteer Projects Director Joshua R. Trotschner at josh@nynt jc.org or 201-512-9348, and he will find a way to get you involved.

**WHY did the hiker cross the road?** Because a volunteer like you coordinated the placement of “Hiker Crossing” signs and trailhead signs at strategic trail/road intersections. If you are interested in working with our Trails Council to identify and oversee the placement of roadside and trailhead signage to increase hiker safety, call now. Make a difference; help create a safer hiking environment.

**Hike of the Week Expansion**

Help expand the scope and utilization of our popular Hike of the Week newspaper series. Your business savvy can add miles to our ideas.

**Ruta Apalache**

We are looking for Spanish/English speaking volunteers to update a Trail Conference brochure regarding the Appalachian Trail written in Spanish. Help the Trail Conference educate and inform Spanish-speaking audiences about the Appalachian Trail, a national treasure located less than 50 miles from Times Square.

**Fulfillment Clerk**

Looking for an interesting way to stay cool during the hot summer months? Why not come to the Trail Conference office once a week and assist our membership and sales department with the processing of membership forms and sales orders. Data entry has never been more exciting! Our friendly staff will set you up on a computer and give you all the training you’ll need.

**Lawyer Sought…**

The Trail Conference is looking for a copyright/intellectual property lawyer. If you have experience in this area of the law or know someone who does, contact Josh.

**Trail Maintainers Wanted for High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest**

In 1923, Colonel and Mrs. Kuser donated the first 10,500 acres of what has become High Point State Park, one of the most popular hiking locales in New Jersey. Join the team of dedicated volunteers who maintain and protect these hiking trails. Many trails have been closed and/or damaged from the severe winter storms that hit our region this winter. Sign up to adopt a section of trail; your work will allow other hikers to enjoy one of New Jersey’s treasures.

**Harriman Nature Walks Coordinator**

Every summer the TC offers nature walks in Harriman State Park. We are looking for an organized individual to coordinate walk leaders and arrangements with the park ranger at Torciati Circle. The leaders will be offered a training session to learn about the plants and animals they might see during the hike. A coordinator who knows enough about the plants and animals to lead the training is desirable, but we can supply a naturalist if necessary. There do exist guide sheets and identification books to use on the hikes.

**Do you remember 1990-2000?**

The Technology Committee and webmaster are looking for a brief synopsis of the Trail Conference’s activities during the ‘90s. Help maintain our website and inform our website visitors about the Trail Conference and its activities.

**IN MEMORIAM**

Martin Deeks

It was only a year ago that Martin Deeks came to a Trails Council meeting to request support for his concept of a trail linking iron-making historic sites in New Jersey’s Ringwood State Park. His enthusiasm for this project was infectious, and many of us began looking forward to assessing these future trails and spending field time with Martin learning about the history in this fascinating area. Soon, he was involved with trail-planning efforts in Sterling Forest, and again he showed us how to see the land through a historian’s eyes. With increasing anticipation we looked forward to the spring thaw and getting back on the trails with him when, suddenly, we paused upon hearing that he was ill, and then came to a standstill with the news of his untimely passing in late February.

Martin worked for the Ringwood State Park as a historian, was a member of Friends of the Long Pond Ironworks and Ringwood and North Jersey Highlands Historical Society. His efforts to bring back to life some of the iron-making history of this area will not be forgotten. We at the Trail Conference look forward to working with the members of the Long Pond Ironworks and Ringwood S.P. to see these trails completed. He set in motion a concept that has taken on a life of its own, and through these valuable educational trails, Martin Deeks will be remembered.

—Larry Wheelock

**TRAILS DIRECTOR**

**STERLING FORGE ESTATES**

continued from page 3

from the Village of Tuxedo Park, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, NY-Jersey Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, Appalachian Trail Conference, and Thendara Mountain Club, the Partnership has raised $60,000. To meet commitments, an additional $40,000 must be raised, and likely more to finally finish the job of protecting Sterling Forest. A Sterling Forest Defense Fund has been set up for this purpose. Donations are being sought.

You can defend Sterling Forest with an individual or organization donation to: Sterling Forest Partnership for the Sterling Forest Defense Fund, 7 Spring Rock Drive, Goshen, NY 10924, or New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for the Sterling Forest Defense Fund, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430.

Keep up with news on this issue at www.nyntjc.org/partners/sterling.
Call for Board and Delegate Nominations

Conference members are welcome to submit nominations, with supporting background information, for candidates for the TC board of directors and delegates-at-large. Elections are held for 5 members of the board of directors and 15 delegates-at-large at the annual meeting each October. Also at that time, awards are presented to members and friends to recognize outstanding people in the hiking community. Send your suggestions for board and delegate candidates to the Nominating Committee, in care of the NY/NJ Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430; telephone 201-512-9348; email info@nynjtc.org. The deadline is May 15, 2003.

Nominating committee members for this year are Robert Cherdack, Jane Daniels, Anne Osborn, Phyllis Stewart, and Robert Ward.

Call for Candidates for Recognition Awards

Each year, the TC board of directors selects individuals to honor for their contributions to the hiking community. Nominations are welcomed from the membership, and should include supporting background information. Send your nominations to Recognition Awards, in care of the NY/NJ Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430; telephone 201-512-9348; email info@nynjtc.org. The deadline is May 15, 2003.

The annual awards are as follows:

William Hoefflin Award: recognizes Trail Conference volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary service to trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection.

Next Generation Award: given to those under age 21 who are making significant contributions of time and energy to trail building and/or protection.

Major Welch Trail Partner Award: presented to those outside the Trail Conference—for example, state, federal, or local agency partner officials—who have given long and/or significant assistance to the local hiking community.

Corporate Partner Award: presented to a company that has furthered the hiking trail experience and/or protection effort.

Raymond H. Torrey Award: the Conference’s most prestigious award, given for significant and lasting contributions that protect our hiking trails and the land upon which they rest.

Lee Rothschild Conservation Award: presented to a person or organization that has made a significant contribution to the protection of our trails and/or the natural lands that surround them.

SHAWANGUNK RIDGE
SAVE THE SHAWANGUNK RIDGE!

The Shawangunk Ridge and its contiguous slopes are being threatened by development. Negative effects of these developments could:

Encroach on our magnificent Shawangunk trails

Spoil valuable and irreplaceable viewsheds

Threaten significant water supplies, forest ecosystems, and wildlife habitats

Get involved with the Shawangunk Ridge Coalition, a project of the Trail Conference. The Coalition is an alliance of more than 20 local, regional, and national organizations working to protect the entire Shawangunk Ridge.

What You Can Do to Help Save the Ridge

Get Involved!

See our website for latest action needed: www.shawangunkridge.org

Become informed on the issues

Attend public hearings

Write letters to elected officials

Support organizing efforts by making a financial contribution now.

Please make checks payable to the NY/NJ Trail Conference with Shawangunk Ridge Coalition in the memo field. Mail or call 156 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430; 201-512-9348

For more information about the Shawangunk Ridge Coalition, please visit: www.shawangunkridge.org

contact Amy Little 845-353-3786; amylittle@shawangunkridge.org—or Josh Erdsneker at josh@nynjtc.org; 201-512-9348

Your efforts helped protect Sterling Forest, now help us protect the Ridge!

Malcolm Spector TC’s Renaissance Man

I knew something about Malcolm Spector before I joined him one afternoon for a hike and conversation around Terrace Pond in New Jersey. I knew he was a member of the board of directors at the Trail Conference. I knew he served on the Conservation and Advocacy and Development Committees. I knew he was a trail maintainer and a trail crew member. I knew that he recently assumed the role of project manager for the upcoming sixth edition of the Shawangunks map set. I knew he was a hike leader for the AMC. I knew a lot about Malcolm.

But that afternoon I learned more. I learned that Malcolm grew up on a small farm in the suburbs of St. Louis and is a knowledgeable and capable chicken farmer. He speaks both French and Italian. He was a civil rights activist. He also is an accomplished gondolier, having learned that skill in the canals and Grand Lagoon of Venice, Italy. Malcolm can solo or tandem row and has the tales to prove it!

I learned that Malcolm’s current career has him practicing law. He is an attorney for Legal Services for the Elderly, in New York. I say current career because Malcolm has many trades that he could pursue. In addition to the Juris Doctor he earned from NYU in 1994, he also earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University. He was an associate professor at McGill University in Montreal, where he taught sociology. He is an accomplished writer, author of Constructing Social Problems.

Tucked in around everything he does, Malcolm makes time to hike, and he has done so around the world: the White Mountains in New Hampshire, the Catskills, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, New Zealand, the Dolomites in Italy. Even Terrace Pond in the Newark Watershed lands, where this interview was conducted during our ramble around the pond, is a place where he enjoys nature’s beauty. He especially loves to scout new trail routes. The thrill of the hunt, bushwhacking through the ups and downs of uncharted hills to find the perfect route is his passion. Scrambling through the rocks and cracks of the Lost City in the Mohonk Preserve is this lawyer’s idea of fun.

In short, Malcolm Spector is a great companion on any hike and he brings a treasure trove of skills and talents as a busy volunteer for the Trail Conference. After hiking with Malcolm through what many would consider a miserable day of rain, Maureen Walsh, the Conference’s administrative director, proclaimed with a smile, “I’d follow him anywhere…”

—Josh Erdsneker, Volunteer Projects Director
RATTLESNAKES

continued from page 1

and evergreens—as long as it’s a forest where small mammals are found. Timber rattlesnakes that are incubating and hibernating can be found on rocky talus slopes. Shedding snakes can be found just about anywhere that they can find warmth and moisture (including high humidity). They can be found within the forest, on the talus, in seeps, in tall grassy fields, and in forested floodplains.

Rattlesnakes are active in this region from around early May until late October. Occasionally, a snake may be found basking on a talus in November, trying to soak up the last bits of warmth. Research has shown that the snakes will emerge when there is a string of two to seven warm days and nights above 15 degrees Celsius (59 degrees Fahrenheit). They’ll emerge from the dens to bask in the sun and then return to their crevices at night. Continued warm weather day and night might initiate their migration to their foraging and shedding grounds.

What to Do

The best actions to take when you encounter a timber rattlesnake are to avoid prolonged interaction by moving around the snake, ALWAYS keep your dog on a leash and children by your side, and continue on your hike. The snake will not follow you and will often move to seek cover. NEVER attempt to sho the snake away, and NEVER attempt to move a rattlesnake. Such actions are considered harassment of a protected species and may provoke a defensive response; poking may injure the snake. Inexperienced handlers risk their own safety, the safety of those around them, and the snake’s safety. (It’s best not to handle any wildlife; even the furriest bunny is a protected species and may provoke a defensive response.)

And the snake’s safety. (It’s best not to handle any wildlife; even the furriest bunny can have a ferocious bite when cornered.) If a hiker is for some reason unable to move around a snake at a safe distance, the hiker should turn back and travel about 50 yards away from the snake and wait. Carefully check the trail every half-hour or so. If the snake is basking, it may take some time for it to move off the trail. If the snake is basking, wait until the last possible moment before moving, then move at a safe distance, normally 5-10 feet, and move in a direction away from the snake.

As a memorial to their father, the family of Lt. Col. Ed Kaasmann last year funded construction of a new shelter, fire-place, and outhouse at Long Pond in the Catskills.

Ed Kaasmann spent much of his free time in the Narrowsburg area, hiking through the woods. “We felt that a campers’ shelter was the perfect tribute to our Pop,” writes Tina Kaasmann-Dunn. “He was a giving and caring man who shared his love of the outdoors with all of his children and grandchildren.”

The new campsite is located just off the orange-blazed snowmobile trail high above the pond and across the water from the old campsite. It was built by Jeff Ryder of the DEC along with two seasonal helpers. Ken Kaasmann also assisted in the construction.

Last July, the family gathered to dedicate the new campsite. “The trail into the site was a rocky, uneven road, making it difficult to get Mom—age 87—to the campsite. A method was devised using a rickshaw-like device pulled by her sons—a bumpy ride that was full of laughs and will be remembered long after Mom’s headache fades away!”

The family thanks the DEC builders for their dedication and flawless work. “To all hikers, we invite you to visit our shelter,” Ms. Kaasmann-Dunn says. “Dad would be most pleased to have you stay awhile, and if perchance you should hear the strains of reveille in the early morning, well, that’s just our Army Pop.”

ADOPT A LEAN-TO

The Trail Conference has responsibility for caretaking many of the lean-to’s in the Catskill Forest Preserve. Caretaking positions are currently vacant. Find out more by indicating your interest and writing to: Lean-to Supervisor Elie Biju, P.O. Box 26, Elizabeth, NJ 07207-0026, or by contacting him atelie@wilcox.com. Be sure to include your name, address, telephone number, and email address.

Catskill Lean-to Is Family’s Gift in Memory of Their Father

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■ Kris Schantz is Senior Biologist with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Endangered and Nongame Species Program.
Eagle Projects Benefit Norvin Green

Two Eagle Scout candidate projects in Norvin Green State Forest in New Jersey resulted in significant improvements to the park's trails.

Blue Mine Footbridge

A new footbridge near the Blue Mine is the result of a project by Tom Dempsey of BSA Troop 144, Pequannock, NJ. Tom chose the project with the help of the Trail Conference and received financial support from its Elizabeth Levers Memorial Fund.

The new wooden bridge spans a 24-foot stream that over the years had wiped out a number of log bridges. Tom handled the project's engineering requirements, produced a bill of materials, made arrangements for precutting and delivery, and recruited the assistance of fellow scouts. The professional results of this effort are on view for hikers who traverse the Mine and Wyanokie Circular Trails.

In addition to money from the Levers Fund, the project benefited from discounted materials supplied by 84 Lumber of Somerville, NJ, and Somerville Lumber of Somerville, NJ. Rentals Unlimited of Pompton Plains, NJ, donated the use of an electric generator for on-site tool power.

Financial contributions were received from the Knights of Columbus (John E. Kennedy Council No. 5,86 of Lincoln Park, NJ); James LaSala, attorney-at-law; Helen K. Mueller; Kathleen Golden; Karin Kolodziejski; Philip Kolodziejski; Janet Konecki; Thomas Casey, Sr.; Thomas Casey, Jr.; and Joe Dugett, Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 23. Others who contributed to the success of this project include the scouts, leaders, parents, and friends of Troop 144, and volunteers from the Trail Conference.

Hewitt-Butler Waterbars

Tim Cook of BSA Troop 34, Ramapo Mountain district, tackled the job of building a series of waterbars on the Hewitt-Butler Trail. This popular section of trail, leading up the north side of Wyanokie High Point, is heavily traveled, quite steep, and subject to erosion and degradation.

The project of building and installing waterbars and check dams, utilizing both stone and wood materials, required several work days. The final day of work was plagued by constant rain and slippery conditions as the trail turned into a greased flume. Nevertheless, the scouts prevailed and completed the project of installing eight erosion control devices in a few hours of toil under difficult circumstances.

Other participants included Scoutmaster Tom Cook, Assistant Scoutmaster James Pidgeon, former Scoutmaster W.Milford, and Doug Stelling; scouts Jarrett Barbuto, Phil DeNicola, Mike Kobes, and Tom Sidoti; and NY-NJTC advisers Cliff Gerenz and Bob Jonas. Special thanks go to Jim Fleischig, Hiawakem's Friendly Mobil Service, and Peter McBride (all of Franklin Lakes), Larry and Linda Schumann of Wyckoff, and Shop Rite of Oakland.

In NJ, More $$ for Open Space?

In March, New Jersey Governor James E. McGreevey proposed several measures that could boost efforts to preserve New Jersey's Highlands region: raising the cap on the bonding capacity of the Garden State Preservation Trust, exempting from capital gains taxes the sale or transfer of open space to the state for preservation, and allowing farmers to average their yearly net profits to level out their tax liability.

According to the governor's office, the proposal to raise bonding capacity for the GSTP would have the effect of increasing by at least $100 million the amount of money available for open space preservation over the next three years. He suggests these additional funds be divided between land acquisition in the New Jersey Highlands and local park upgrades and expansions throughout the state.

New Jersey residents are encouraged to support these efforts by writing letters to local newspapers and to the governor thanking him for this commitment to the Highlands and urging him to consider creating a new state park in the Highlands.

Send your letters to Governor James McGreevey, PO Box 001, Trenton, NJ 08625.

Contributors to this report include Neil Woodworth, counsel to the TC-ADK Partnership, and Amy Little, coordinator of the Shawangunk Ridge Coalition.

In NY, Environment $$ at Risk

Money from New York's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), a dedicated fund financed by taxes on real estate sales (revenue from which has actually increased since September 11, 2001), would be used for purposes unintended for the fund under a plan proposed by Governor Pataki.

Given a nearly $1.2 billion dollar shortfall in New York State tax revenues, reductions in expenditures for the environment in 2003-04 were expected. The governor proposes to spend just $35 million for acquiring new forest Preserve and state park lands and $5 million for land stewardship, down from $38 million for land and $65 million for stewardship in 2002-03.

He has also proposed to saddle the EPF with $33.4 million in state employee salaries and routine agency (DEC/OPRFH) capital projects, expenses previously paid out of the General Fund. This diversion represents nearly a 10 percent reduction in the funding available for traditional EPF programs such as clean water, land acquisition, farmland preservation, wilderness stewardship, recycling, and solid waste remediation.

Further, the governor proposes to withdraw an additional $20 million for non-environmental purposes. In 2002, the state transferred $235 million of EPF funds to non-environmental general fund programs.

The total of $255 million siphoned from New York's only dedicated fund for the environment exceeded the amount actually spent on the environment by some $10 million.

In HIKERS' BOOKSHOP

50 Hikes in the Lower Hudson Valley

By Stella Green and H. Neil Zimmerman

Backcountry Guides, 2002

Reviewed by Georgette Wear

To those long in our region's hiking circles, few names are likely to be more familiar and well regarded than Stella Green and H. Neil Zimmerman, respectively past vice-president and past president of the Trail Conference. Last year, these two inveterate hikers published this, their second hiking guide (their first was 50 Hikes in New Jersey), and it comes as no surprise that the book reflects the authors' broad and deep knowledge of the diverse trails in our region.

The hikes are grouped regionally, Westchester County, East Hudson Highlands, Rockland County and Harriman Park, etc., and each description is accompanied by a black-and-white topographical map and detail and photograph. The outings are introduced with paragraphs on historical or natural history background, directions on how to get to each destination, phone numbers, and information relevant to open hours and accessibility. The necessary information about trail blaze colors, turns, confusing junctions, and, when relevant, poor signage are reliably noted and enlivened by observations about views, geology, history, plants, and good places to stop for lunch.

A handy chart at the opening of the book summarizes the details of each walk, including its suitability for kids, camping, cross-country skiing, and whether or not it features a waterfall or requires a shuttle.

Green and Zimmerman have an expansive view of what constitutes the Lower Hudson Valley (or is just provincial of us who live south of Albany, in my case in the area usually designated Mid-Hudson, to consider the Lower Hudson area to be south of Peekskill?). Happily, this gives them leave to include hikes in the Shawangunks, Catskills, even as far north as Thatcher Park near Albany, though most of the hikes in this guide are clustered in the area bounded on the north by I-94 and on the west and south by I-287.

This is a good guide for hikers in our region, and a handy one for those of us who may be ready to break away from our accustomed romps in just one or two favorite parks or who may want to learn a bit more about the paths we regularly walk.

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In 50 Hikes in the Lower Hudson Valley

By Stella Green and H. Neil Zimmerman

Backcountry Guides, 2002

Reviewed by Georgette Wear
opened Stony Brook Trail (yellow blaze) for approximately a third of a mile before (red blaze). The trail parallels Stony Brook northeast along the Pine Meadow Trail Sloatsburg. Leave the parking area beside the Reeves Meadow Visitor Center at the Slid on the Kakiat Trail. Access is from most interesting to visit is the Cascade of waterfalls with names, but of them, the one largest falls is just below the junction with the Hiliburn-Torne-Sebago Trail (HTS, orange blaze). There are ledges to sit on and the Hilburn-Torne-Sebago Trail (HTS to cross the bridge over Pine Meadow Brook on a bridge just before they part ways.

Turn right to continue along the Kakiat Trail as it heads uphill alongside Pine Meadow Brook. The way is steep and bouldery, with splashing water on the right. After about 200 yards of climbing, the grade eases and there are some small ledges beside the stream, below the trail. The steepest and largest falls is just below the junction with the Hiliburn-Torne-Sebago Trail (HTS, orange blaze). There are ledges to sit on and the place makes a wonderful lunch spot. To return to the parking lot, turn right on the HTS to cross the bridge over Pine Meadow Brook and go uphill about 100 feet. There, the HTS crosses the Pine Meadow Trail. Turn right on the Pine Meadow Trail to descend back to Stony Brook and return to the parking area. Total distance: approximately 2 miles.

June 7: National Trails Day
Staten Island Greenbelt
10 am–4 pm
200 Nevada Avenue, Staten Island, NY
Information: 718-667-2165

The trails and natural areas around High Rock Park, Staten Island, will be the staging area for several outdoor maintenance and gardening activities performed by volunteers from the Metro Area Trails Committee, Goldman Sachs Community TeamWorks, and Staten Island Greenbelt staff to improve trails and promote care of Greenbelt, one of five flagship parks of Greenbelt, one of five flagship parks of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK). Staff to improve trails and promote care of Greenbelt, one of five flagship parks of the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK).

Kaaterskill Falls
The tallest waterfall in New York State isn’t Niagara Falls. Instead, that distinction belongs to a waterfall in our own neck of the woods, the Catskills. Kaaterskill Falls, at just over 260 feet over two drops, has had a checkered history of discovery, fame, control, and restoration to a more or less natural state. Access to the waterfall is at a small parking lot on the south side of NY Route 21A as it heads westward up Kaaterskill Clive toward Haines Falls and Hunter beyond. The parking lot is most of the way up the Clive, just after a sharp hairpin turn and a small bridge crossing Spruce Creek. Leave the car at the parking area and return to the small bridge by walking along the highway. Use extreme caution, as there is no sidewalk. Cross the bridge and turn left into the woods toward Spruce Creek. In front of you lies Bastion Falls, a small taste of what to expect. The Kaaterskill Falls Trail (yellow blaze) heads uphill immediately on the east side of the stream through small boulders. When wet, the rocks can be extremely slippery. Sign in at the trail register and continue along the rock steps until the path tops a hill and levels off. The hard part is now over. Follow the yellow blazes as they twist alongside Spruce Creek and round a corner. Suddenly, there you are, looking up at the waterfall. There is a convenient wooden log to rest at, if you are not one of hundreds of people visiting. If you feel ambitious, you can scramble along the slopes to the hard platform of the amphitheater below the upper falls, but there is no trail and the way is steep and slippery. Return to the parking lot by retracing your steps on the yellow trail. Total distance: approximately 1 mile.

Bash Bish
What is a hike in the Hudson Valley without some tale of romance or history to enliven the places one goes to or passes? Such is the case with Bash Bish Falls. Supposedly named after an Indian maiden who threw herself over the falls to her death after a love unrequited, the falls doesn’t need any story to be a romantic place to go to. The parking area is located on the south side of NY Route 144 in the village of Copake Falls. The trail has no blazes, but unless you go on an absolutely horrid day or very early in the morning, there will be a steady stream of visitors to guide your way along Bash Bish Brook upstream to the falls along a packed gravel roadbed. Along the way, you will cross the border from New York into Massachusetts. You will arrive in less than half a mile at a small clearing with a comfort station. Well before that, though, if the water is running well, you will hear the sound of the falls itself. Descend the rock steps to the pool below the falls. In a dry year, the falls will be barely enough to wet the rocks and keep the moss alive. In a year such as this one, you will barely be able to hear yourself think. Return to the parking area the way you came. Total distance: approximately 1 mile.

Cascade of Slid
Harriman State Park contains few waterfalls with names, but of them, the one most interesting to visit is the Cascade of Slid on the Kakiat Trail. Access is from the Reeves Meadow Visitor Center at the south end of Seven Lakes Drive near Sloatsburg. Leave the parking area beside the stone comfort station and proceed northeast along the Pine Meadow Trail (red blaze). The trail parallels Stony Brook for approximately a third of a mile before turning uphill. At this point, the newly opened Stony Brook Trail (yellow blaze) comes in from the left. Turn left on the yellow trail and continue to follow Stony Brook. In approximately half a mile, the Kakiat Trail (white blaze) crosses Stony Brook from the left on a small wooden bridge above the water and joins the Stony Brook Trail. The two trails travel together northeast alongside Stony Brook for less than a quarter mile, crossing Pine Meadow Brook on a bridge just before they part ways.

Turn right to continue along the Kakiat Trail as it heads uphill alongside Pine Meadow Brook. The way is steep and bouldery, with splashing water on the right. After about 200 yards of climbing, the grade eases and there are some small ledges beside the stream, below the trail. The steepest and largest falls is just below the junction with the Hiliburn-Torne-Sebago Trail (HTS, orange blaze). There are ledges to sit on and the place makes a wonderful lunch spot. To return to the parking lot, turn right on the HTS to cross the bridge over Pine Meadow Brook and go uphill about 100 feet. There, the HTS crosses the Pine Meadow Trail. Turn right on the Pine Meadow Trail to descend back to Stony Brook and return to the parking area. Total distance: approximately 2 miles.

Kaaterskill Falls
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THURSDAY, JUNE 5
FVTW. Ramapo Tower, Harriman State Park. Leader: Dave Hogencamp, 201-704-1475. Meet: 10 am at Ramapo Valley Visitors Center parking. Spectacular view of NYC and northern NJ from the tower. 7-10 miles; not for new hikers.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7
NATIONAL TRAILS DAY
OCSJ. Leader: Joseph Trujillo, 856-468-4849. Meet: 10 am; call for location. 9 miles. Get acquainted with a section of the Bonnie Trail, which spans three state forests.


TBS. Black River County Park Botanical Walk, Morris Co. Leader: Steve Gaius, 718-623-3174, angler57@gmail.com. Meet: 10 am in the parking lot of the park in Millstone, on the south side of NY-54/701/513/513A, Washington Tpke. Just east of the Bear Mountain Bridge. The park has access to a wetland, woods, and fields. A 6-mile hike with a 400-ft. elevation gain.

UCIC. South Mountain Reservation, Millburn. Leader: Acemi Sherpa, 973-762-1632; call before 5 pm. Meet: 10 am at Scout Grove parking, corner of Millbrook Ave. and Llewellyn Ave., across from Millburn RR station. 9.5 miles with a 700-ft. climb, suitable for intermediate, experienced hikers. Rocky ups and downs. Steady rate canes.

UCC. Palisades Hills, NJ. Leader: Jesse Jones, 732-251-6150. Meet: 9 am at Johnson Park, Ponackay NJ. Moderate hike. 3 miles.

WTW. At Pascack Bridge and Boardwalk. Leader: Dick Butts, 201-773-0710. Meet: 10 am at Mountain Shopping Center, Rt. 202, Butler. A 5-6 mile hike on this newly completed boardwalk trail. If time permits will visit the 1430 acre Beauty of Wanaque Mountain.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8


IHC. High Point State Park Summer Hike. Leader: Call 845-658-8606 for information. Meet: 7 am to Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area Visitor Center, 4724 Banneker Ave., Montville Township. Easy hike by a scenic forest.


SATURDAY, JUNE 16
ADK MH. Shingle Slick Rock Crescent Rock Scramble. Leader: Ray Davidson, 845-744-3469. Meet: Call to register. Scramble, more of a rock scramble than a hike. Snowflakes are possible; bring flashlight, snowshoes and light gloves. From Smiley Campfire Trl, take up Shingle Slick Ridge to Great Views and Catskills and the Flame.


SUNDAY, JUNE 22

Alpine Adventure Trails TOURS
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Support the work of the NY/NJ Trail Conference with your membership.

The activities listed are sponsored by member clubs of the NY/NJ Trail Conference. All hikers are welcome to use club-regulated trails and roads of the trail. You are responsible for your own safety. Wear hiking boots or shoes, long-haied shirts. Bring head, wind, rain gear, first aid kit, and flashlight in a backpack. Leaders have the right and responsibility to exclude anyone whom they believe cannot comply with the trail or rode task adequately equipped. Easy, moderate, or strenuous hikes are relative terms; call leader in doubt.

More than 90 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, contact our Web site or send an SASE with your request to NY/NJ Trail Conference.

May

Saturday, May 3

MJO. Pine Mead Lake. Leader: J. Dennis Shields, 973-980-6224; call between 7:30 pm to 8 pm. Moderate, 6 miles.

PMNHA. Ramapo Mountain Hike. Leader: Jim & Theresa McKay, 973-826-1019; call before 9 pm. Moderate, 5 miles.

PMNHA. Birdwatching Hike. Leader: Call 973-334-3130 for information. Meet: 9 am at Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area Visitor Center. 472A Boonton Ave., Montville Township. Bring your binoculars on this moderate hike.


Thursday, May 8


UOC. Mountain Lakes Nature Preserve, Princeton. Leader: Charles Sessions, 609-246-3837; meet at 9 am in Jackson Park, Housewau, N.J. Walks made through 70 acres of wetlands.

Sunday, May 11

ADK MH. Appalachian Trail Maintenance. Leader: Jane Gudelsky, 609-987-0800; meet: 10 am at Footpath gate at Black Rock, 609-987-8379. moderate 3 miles.

UOC. Mountain Lakes Nature Preserve, Princeton. Leader: Charles Sessions, 609-246-3837; meet at 9 am in Jackson Park, Housewau, N.J. Walks made through 70 acres of wetlands.

Trail Walker
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