Meet the Morris Trails Partnership

They build high-quality footpaths and multiuse trails close to home. READ MORE ON PAGE 3

Worms in the Woods

In the Northeast, worms are going where no worm has gone before. READ MORE ON PAGE 5

TRAILWALKER

July/August 2009

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference – Maintaining 1.716 Miles of Foot Trails

www.nynjtc.org

Thank a Trail Conference Chain Sawyer

Many of hikers’ favorite trails would still be closed this summer if not for the extraordinary efforts of the Trail Conference’s volunteer chain sawyers. In just a few months they cleared hundreds of trees and limbs brought down by ice this past winter from trails throughout our region: in Harriman-Bear Mountain, Minnewaska, Schunnemunk, Sterling Forest, and Storm King State Parks; along the Appalachian Trail in Putnam, Dutchess, and Orange Counties in New York and on the Bearfort Ridge in New Jersey; and in parks in the Hudson Highlands East of Hudson. These volunteers were too busy to take pictures of themselves at work, but join us in thanking:

Tom Amison
Steve Banyacki
Robert Betanzos
Roland Breault
Rose Diamond
Jack Driller
Chris Connolly
David Dvosky
Mike Garrison
Jim Gebhard
Suzan Gordon
Peter Hoh
Joan James
Mark Liis
Bob Marshall
John McCullough
George Muller
Chris Reyling
Cal Rizzuto
Ollie Simpson
John Skinner
Petie Tingle
Steve Zubarik

They are the backbone of the Trail Conference’s extensive trail maintenance effort, providing indispensable service and capable of maintaining trails to US Forest Service standards in helping keep trails in our region clean and accessible. For more information on Trail Conference volunteer chain sawyer activities, contact Christie Ferguson, ferguson@nynjtc.org.

Trail Work in the Big Apple

The Bronx and Bear Mountain. Queens and the Ramapo Mountains. Staten Island and the Shawangunks.

What do all these have in common? They are places where Trail Conference volunteers maintain trails.

The Metro Trails Committee, which has responsibility for over 60 miles of trails in five city parks in New York City, is, perhaps, the most unlikely of the Trail Conference’s 16 regional trail committees. Who would think there are hiking trails to maintain in a region better known for its cement?

Yet on May 16, Trail Conference volunteers were out on those trails taking part in the City Parks Department’s annual celebration, “It’s My Park Day.”

“It is always great to see members of the local community, especially youth, getting involved in improving our hiking trails,” said Joe Gindoff, who helped to introduce eight teenagers from Flushing High School to trail work at Alley Pond Park in Queens that day. As warblers sang overhead, the teens built five new waterbars, filled a dozen existing trail steps with mineral soil, and installed two posts to serve as trailhead markers. A rock with mysterious carvings, discovered on a trail crew trip last year, was moved back to its original resting place, but not before a large tree fell, sending an owl flying over the startled group.

As the students learned about trail blazes, erosion control methods, how to move rocks and use trail tools, and how to identify and stay away from poison ivy, their adviser, Jared Widjeskog, later said that they really enjoyed the experience, and “some students have already asked if we can schedule another day to help out in the park!”

Meanwhile, at Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx, Trail Conference volunteers joined the Parks Department Natural Areas Manager John Grayley to restore a small meadow that provides lovely views south of Orchard Beach. Led by Peter Quinones, the enthusiastic group of volunteers was cheered when Elizabeth Alston identified praying mantis eggs.

As evidenced by just these two outings, trails and parks in New York City encompass a wide variety of terrain types. “Many of the city parks border coastal waters where you can find salt marsh and fresh water ponds, Alley Pond Park has kettle ponds, and the Staten Island Greenbelt has a fully terrain with beautiful vistas,” boasts the conference’s brochure. “The trails in these areas have high usage due to the easy access and high population density. This heavy use demands continual upkeep by our maintainers and by our trail crew (but also makes for easy access for volunteers!).”

Not many cities can offer trail work opportunities within their boundaries. Even if you are a city resident who likes to escape to the country to do your hiking, think about staying in town from time to time to do a little community service in the great outdoors. Check out the opportunities and contacts below or be in touch with East Hudson Regional Representative Christie Ferguson, Ferguson@nynjtc.org, who will get you connected.

Metro Trails Committee, Who’s Who

Metro Co-Trail Chairs: Joe Gindoff, joegindoff@aol.com and Lizbeth Gonzalez, lgonzalez@verizon.net

Metro Trail Crew Chief: Linda Sullivan, marmindia@yahoo.com

Alley Pond Park, Queens

Trail: Approximately 3 miles maintained by Trail Conference; 65’ acres
Volunteer Need: Trail supervisor, maintainers
Supervisor: Joe Gindoff with assist from Erwin Schaub

Pelham Bay Park, Bronx

Trail: 10 miles, including Hunter Island Trail and the Brindle Path, 276 acres, including 13 miles of shoreline; NYC’s biggest park
Volunteer Need: trail maintainers, including equestrians and paddlers
Supervisor: Lizbeth Gonzalez

continued on page 4

Highlands Trail Crosses the Delaware

Brenda Holzinger and Glenn Oleskak from the Trail Conference and Suzanne Widder, president of the Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy, on the Highlands Trail in Pennsylvania.

Almost 100 Highlands Trail supporters gathered at the Delaware River on Saturday, May 16, to celebrate the Highlands Trail crossing from Pochatcong Township, NJ, to Riegelsville, PA. The trail crosses the Delaware River via the Riegelsville Toll-Supported Bridge. The day started on the New Jersey side with a welcome from Brenda Holzinger, the former New Jersey Regional Representative for the Trail Conference.

Following this welcome, Gary Haugland, the TC Highlands Trail Chair, and JoAnn Dolan, former TC Executive Director, spoke about the challenges and rewards of building the Highlands Trail, and thanked all the volunteers involved in the trail building effort over the past 15 years. The Appalachian Mountain Club plans to continue the trail in the Highlands of Pennsylvania.

See page 3 for news of the HT east of the Hudson River. Find links to HT info at www.nynjtc.org; click on Trails Overview under Go Hiking, then on Highlands Trails under Long Distance Trails.
**TRAIL WALKER**

**From the Executive Director**

Mapping a better route to the same destination

Last winter, the board of directors, with assistance from two family foundations, initiated a strategic planning process. The objective was to create a new organizational framework that takes into account our organization’s unique strengths and temporary conditions to build a more efficient and sustainable organization.

An external facilitator is a critical component in organizational development. As far as we know, this is the first time that the Trail Conference has engaged an external consultant. We believe that this was the best course of action for several reasons:

- Conservation Impact based in Boulder, Colorado. The principal of this firm, Shellis-Bischoff Turner, has done similar work for universities, environmental organizations, and local organizations, such as Scenic Hudson, Mohonk Preserve, The Land Trust of New Jersey and Orange County Land Trust.

A wide variety of stakeholders were consulted during the process, including 99 interviews with agency partners, members clubs, volunteers, donors, and staff. A 29-page draft was sent interally, supplemented with input from Trail Conference staff and volunteers, as well as the Federation of trail organizations. The final document is 48 pages long and includes a workbook for trail managers to use in their communities.

The research and input from our stakeholders confirmed the importance of the following principles:

- Easy access to well designed and maintained trails, as well as access to information and guidance, are seen as important components of achieving the public health priorities of active, healthy lifestyles and obesity reduction.

- Although fragmented, the amount of public open space has increased dramatically, and many groups are seeking ways to address their growing stewardship responsibilities with limited resources.

- Hiking clubs have the most popular trail activity, with 35% of the population reporting that they hike on natural surface trails an average of 11 times per year. Other major trail users include 24% who say they mountain bike, and 17% who report trail running, with many "multisport" participants. The fastest growing trail users are the post-pandemic crowd seeking fresh air and snowshoeing, whereas backpacking has declined.

Specific to the Trail Conference, the following observations were deemed strategically important:

- The Trail Conference’s distinctive competence is volunteer management and trail development and promotion.

- There is an opportunity for the Trail Conference and land managing partners to create a national trail system serving a major metropolitan area.

- Hiking trails are not a non-traditional trail users (including mountain bikers, trail runners and equestrians) have far more mutual interests than differences and should be working more closely together to achieve mutual goals.

- The Trail Conference’s 10+ members organizations represent a large and important constituency, but the lines of communication need to be improved.

Based on the stakeholder input and planning process, the Board of Directors has taken the following actions:

1. Setting trail quality standards and increasing the miles of trails meeting these standards
2. Reaching a new level of commitment in volunteer recruitment, development, and deployment

For some time, it has been our policy to work with other user groups, but as a matter of practice, the majority of the trails have been designated (or user managed) by the agency managing the land. For hiking only.

In the future, I expect the Trail Conference to have more non-hiking organizations as members and more trails in its inventory.

**DONORS TO THE ANNUAL FUND**

*April 1, 2009 to May 31, 2009*

We thank the following trail supporters for their generous donations to the Trail Conference Annual Fund. The Annual Fund is our primary resource for funding trail projects and support services for trail volunteers.

**GIFTS**

Paul Sheldrake & Kathy A. Weh left, KRBI/KNPR-Charity Today, In honor of William Ryan, Sr.

**MATCHING GIFTS**

**NEW HOEFLER AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED**

In April, the Trail Conference board of directors presented former Catskill Trails Chair Pete Senterman with the William Hoeferlin Award, which recognizes Trail Conference volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary service to trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection. The volunteer committee recommended the award upon Pete’s retirement after 15 years of service as Catskills trail chair, deconstituted in the January/February issue of Trail Walker in the page "Leaving the Catskills a Better Place." (back issue articles can be found on our website under Be Imofoed. Congratulations to Pete, and thank you for your many years of dedicated service.

Pete Senterman, former chair of our Catskills Trails Committee and latest Hoeferlin Award winner.
The Highlands Trail Lands East of the Hudson River

On National Trails Day, June 6, at least 80 people celebrated the grand opening of several new trails at 974-acre Wonder Lake State Park. This recent addition to the state park system is managed by the Taconic Region of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Trail Conference volunteers have been hard at work building the park’s first trails, including the first section of the Highlands Trail (HT) east of the Hudson River.

Beginning from the parking lot off historic Ludingtonsville Road, attendees enjoyed the newly constructed HT, linking to Wonder Lake. Also new is a trail to Bare Hill, a high point in the park. Several pre-existing woods roads have also been blazing, resulting in many miles of inspiring opportunities. Surrounded by mountain laurel and tall hemlocks, the peaceful setting of Wonder Lake was both picturesque and invigorating.

The Highlands is a unique physiographic region that traverses four states: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. Storm King and Breakneck Ridge are two of the more famous mountains in the range. The Highlands Trail—currently established in New Jersey (see page 1)—and in New York west of the Hudson River—is expanding into the remaining areas. Plans are well underway in Pennsylvania, this is the first segment of the trail built in Putnam County.

You can be a part of the continuing work at Wonder Lake. We are taking the HT around Wonder Lake and Laurel Pond. Join our trail crew on a scheduled work day. NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED! We provide the tools and the training!

Please check the website for work dates: Click on Trail Crew Schedules under Get Involved, then choose East Hudson Trail Crew.

Gary Haugland, Chair of the Highlands Trail Committee and crew leader of the trail-building project at Wonder Lake State Park, and Bill Baumann, park manager, pound in the trailhead to get things going.

Invasive Plant Volunteers Survey Park Trails

Citizen-scientist volunteers in the fourth and last season of our study of invasive plants along park trails were trained at the end of May in Sterling Forest State Park under the direction of botanist Robynn Shannon. This joint study with Rutgers University was funded by the USDA. Above, volunteers identify plants during training in the field.

Member Club Profile

Morris Trails Partnership

“Creating and maintaining great trails in Morris County.”

From their tagline to their activities, the Morris Trails Partnership (MTP) is an organization that cuts to the chase. “Nobody wants to sit in a room and have a meeting,” says Tom Carr, of Mountain Lakes, NJ, the group’s chief volunteer trail designer. “The thing we do well is build trails. That’s what we pride ourselves on. It’s not a social group, it’s a working group. Brunch, we’re not so good at. Everybody wants to get their hands dirty.”

Aside from its geographical focus, MTP sounds a lot like the Trail Conference of which it is a member and strong supporter—in May the club made a $1,000 donation to the Trail Conference. “We wanted to help the Trail Conference in its hour of need,” explains Duncan Douglas, a long-time club member who coordinates much of the group’s work and serves as president.

In a previous incarnation, the group offered hikes and other social activities. These days, however, its focus is on designing, building, and maintaining trails in Morris County, NJ. They work primarily in Pyramid Mountain Natural Historical Area, where they build and improve trails for foot-traffic only, and in Morris County Parks, where they build multi-use trails, often working with crews comprising mountain bikers and equestrians.

“The biking community has really stepped up when it comes to building trails,” Tom says. “They’re some of the best workers we have.” Duncan notes that the team relies on trail standards developed by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) while building multi-use trails, and often borrow from those standards for foot trails.

“It’s damn good engineering,” he says. MTP has built countless miles of trails (“we’re not big on keeping records,” says Duncan), and several bridges. They are particularly proud of a 45-foot bridge constructed at Pyramid Mountain.

Duncan calls MTP an informal group, numbering 10-20 regular volunteers. Yet they are on the trail two Saturdays each month, and have established a close working relationship with Morris County Parks, which provides logistical and equipment support for their projects.

Morris Trails Partnership recently donated $1,000 to the Trail Conference, and is working with us to create trail links among several New Jersey parks.

Join Our Second Annual Hike-a-thon

October 3, 2009
at Bear Mountain State Park

Individuals and Clubs: Plan now to take part in this fun event that will raise funds for the Trail Conference.

There will be multiple routes, varying in length and difficulty. Something for everyone!

Watch for details in future issues of Trail Walker and online at www.nynjtc.org.

Put your feet to work for the Trail Conference!
Volunteers Spiff Up Hudson Highlands Gateway Park

Ho rmoz Kheirabi, the Trail Conference’s newly appointed volunteer trails supervisor for Westchester County, welcomed a small crew of volunteers for a day of maintenance and trail planting at Hudson Highlands Gateway Park on May 16. Hank and Vika Goldberg, and Katherine Kyle joined Horrmoz at this 352-acre park on the border with Putnam County. They replaced the 0.8-mile red trail, which runs along the Annsville Creek.

In the afternoon, the Trail Conference team helped to plant 250 trees in the park, part of a collaborative project with Scenic Hudson, the Town of Cortlandt, and the Highlands Task Force. A total of 18 people helped plant trees, and the Trail Conference volunteers were pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to this community service project.

Hudson Highlands Gateway Park is bordered by the Annsville and Sprout Creek. It features 4 miles of trails, which are described in Walkable Westchester, published by the Trail Conference and available for purchase. (See Hikers’ Marketplace on page 8 or shop on our website, www.nynjtc.org.)

Hikers’ Marketplace on page 8 or shop on the TrailConference website, www.nynjtc.org. (See hiking too, the Long Path there was spared any major damage.

We did have a week-long closure of the Long Path on the Warmthorne Ridge, where a fire on April 18-19 consumed more than 400 acres. Nearly 1.5 miles of trail were affected, with lots of blazes melted or completely burned. The entire section had to be reblazed.

Down south we had a cleanup session in Mt. by in Rockland County, on the stretch of the Long Path along the Palisades Interstate Parkway. A load of old household debris, including a washing machine, motorcycle, and lots of shoes, was finally removed in a cooperative effort between Trail Conference volunteers, Keep Rockland Beautiful, and the New York State Dept. of Transportation.

Other projects involved rebalancing the orange connector trail between the Long Path and Mountainview Nature Park in Central Nyack, and side-hilling along the yellow siderail of the Long Path near Fer goon Road in the Town of Mahwah.

Up north, in Greene County, Bob Russo has become the trail supervisor of Long Path sections 24, 25, and 26. Bob was also in charge of a Trail Maintenance 101 work shop in the Catskills on May 9, which yielded several new maintainers (in the Catskills) for the Trail Conference.

And finally, we are working hard on a new edition of the East Hudson Guide, which will also appear online in an experiment that is to gauge its effect on the sales of published guides. Is it a harbinger of things to come? — Jakob Franke, Long Path South Trail Chair
Earthworms! The mere word evokes, at least for gardeners, a vision of rich, crumbly, beautifully fertile soils and the luscious vegetables that pour abundantly from them. But for many forest ecologists in the northern parts of the United States, the word strikes them with fear, even terror. The reason! Earthworms are not naturally found in the stony soils of most forests. They were covered by glacial ice during the last great Ice Age.

For those in the glaciated regions thus lacked earthworms, in New Jersey, this includes the areas north of an uneven line extending from Woodbridge in Middlesex County, through Morristown, and west to the Delaware River near Phillipsburg, and north to the town of North York near New York City. But over the past couple of decades, European and Asian species of introductions have been earthworms in forests throughout the glaciated region, with profound and often damaging consequences for the soils, plants and animals of the forest.

Earthworms appear to be very simple and innocuous, long segments, no appendages, not much difference between the head and tail—that just wriggle and squirm if you pick them up. Most people are only even aware of worms after a hard rain, when they come to the surface of the ground and are found, dying, on sidewalks and roads. But they have fascinating and complex life cycles and behaviors within this type of environment. The worms have two major effects on the structure and chemistry of the soil (whence their importance to gardeners and farmers). Because of the decomposing activity of many forest ecosystems on the soil, the introduction of earthworms starts a cascade of effects on many other organisms. In deciduous forests, dead leaves falling to the forest floor in the autumn decay rather slowly, so that a layer of litter, to which another species of earthworm builds up on the surface of the soil. This layer of organic material, aptly termed by soil scientists the “O horizon,” plays a crucial role in the forest: its loose, spongy structure stores moisture, supplies nutrients for plants, provides an ideal environment for seeds to germinate, and supports an amazing number and diversity of other soil organisms. Its crumbly structure provides a nest for other invertebrates like ants and beetles, and for vertebrates like salamanders, mice, and birds.

The lack of leaf litter in turn results in the loss of many native forest plants, including ferns, wildflowers, and tree seedlings. Conversely, and perhaps diabolically, the lack of litter promotes the establishment and growth of some of the most invasive non-native plant species, such as Japanese stilt grass (Microstegium vimineum), seen in almost every forest in our region. The loss of the leaf litter is also thought to result in a loss of salamanders, the most abundant vertebrate in the forest.

Earthworm-invaded forests are found throughout the United States through all types of commerce and activities that move soil around—horticultural plants, garden plants, dirt on the wheels of vehicles, or even hiking boots, or the bottoms of boats. Earthworms have been transport- ed to the United States through various means: small piles of tiny pellets or crumbs.

These worm species have been transport- ed to the United States through various means: small piles of tiny pellets or crumbs. They have been introduced to this country for use in horticulture, such as for use in gardens and for use in the composting of plant waste. They have also been used to control pest populations, such as cockroaches and bedbugs. They have been introduced to the United States through commerce and activities that move soil around—horticultural plants, garden plants, dirt on the wheels of vehicles, or even hiking boots, or the bottoms of boats. Earthworms have been transport- ed to the United States through various means: small piles of tiny pellets or crumbs.

Earthworms are rarely found in the United States, but they are abundant in much of Europe, Asia, and Australia. They are not native to the United States, but they have been introduced here for use in horticulture, such as for use in gardens and for use in the composting of plant waste. They have also been used to control pest populations, such as cockroaches and bedbugs. They have been introduced to the United States through commerce and activities that move soil around—horticultural plants, garden plants, dirt on the wheels of vehicles, or even hiking boots, or the bottoms of boats.

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**Find more hikes at www.nynjtc.org. Click on Scheduled Hikes under Go Hiking!**

**July 4th, 2009**

**AMC-NY/NJ West Mts, and the Timp, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Michelle Deas, 908-233-6641. Meet: 9am at Central Valley to Manitou, NY. Drive: 1hr 20min from Manhattan. From Central Valley, we'll follow the Long Path over Brooks Mtn., Hallowell Mtn., and Torrey Memorial to Popolopen Gorge. Out on this hour-long walk, no strollers; inclement weather cancels. Meet at 8:15am at Manhattan Staten Island Ferry Terminal for 8:30am ferry. Return to 259th St. Hiking distance: 4 miles. Pretty nice to those ponds; only 300 feet of elevation.


**SAMC-NY/NJ West Mts, the Timp, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Michelle Deas, 908-233-6641. Meet: 9am at Central Valley to Manitou, NY. Drive: 1hr 20min from Manhattan. From Central Valley, we'll follow the Long Path over Brooks Mtn., Hallowell Mtn., and Torrey Memorial to Popolopen Gorge. Out on this hour-long walk, no strollers; inclement weather cancels. Meet at 8:15am at Manhattan Staten Island Ferry Terminal for 8:30am ferry. Return to 259th St. Hiking distance: 4 miles. Pretty nice to those ponds; only 300 feet of elevation.

**Early spring on the Croton Dam along the Old Croton Aqueduct.**

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Book Review


By Paul E. DeCoste and Ronald J. Dupont, Jr.

Recently published by Globe Pequest Press as part of their series of Falcon guides, *Hiking New Jersey*, describes 50 hikes throughout the Garden State, from High Point to Cape May. Each hike begins with a general outline of the major features of the hike, but also much interesting historical material. Ron Dupont, one of the authors, is an expert on New Jersey history, and his comprehensive knowledge is reflected in the fascinating historical accounts that accompany most of the hikes.

The authors have selected some of the best hikes in the state. Novice hikers will be provided with a great selection of hikes, and even experienced hikers will find some hikes that will lead them to places that they have not previously visited. In terms of depth of information provided, accuracy and ease of use, this is probably the best guidebook published to date on hiking in New Jersey.

The book does contain some minor errors. Reference is made to Trail Conference North Jersey Trails Map 21, which was superseded two years ago by all-new digitally-produced Maps 115 and 116. Some place names, such as “Shaunavon” and “Cooper Mill,” are misspelled, and in at least one instance (Hike #13, The Indian Rock Trail), the mileage given is over half a mile too short. But overall, the book is very well done, and I highly recommend it to anyone looking to find new places to hike in New Jersey.

The book offers not only well-written and easy-to-follow descriptions of each hike, but also much interesting historical and geographical information. The authors have selected some of the best hikes in the state. Novice hikers will be provided with a great selection of hikes, and even experienced hikers will find some hikes that will lead them to places that they have not previously visited. In terms of depth of information provided, accuracy and ease of use, this is probably the best guidebook published to date on hiking in New Jersey.

Globe Pequest Press, 2009
Reviewed by Daniel Chazan

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR continued from page 2

tory that are not exclusively or even primarily for hiking.

To those who may take exception to this approach, I want to make clear that we believe in a diverse system of trails, with standards and conditions for each type of use. Also, as the prominent trail organization in the region, our public agency partners expect us to play a central role in bringing mutual interests together to create the best trail system possible.

We certainly don’t subscribe to the notion that all trails can or should be shared by all users — in part, because we don’t think the bulk of existing hiking trails meet the standards for other uses. On the other hand, the dramatic expansion of public open space provides simple opportunities to create more trails for never-before-users, groups as well as hikers. We look forward to working with these user groups externally and internally to take advantage of these opportunities.

The overarching goal should be to get people outside appreciating and caring for our natural resources. In particular, we need to attract more young people and ethnic groups who are underrepresented in outdoor recreation surveys, for it has been shown that people who bond with nature at a young age, or with family and friends, are much more likely to support public policies that are nature-friendly.

The implications of this strategic planning process will unfold over the coming months and years as we work towards specific goals and objectives. I look forward to engaging with all of our stakeholders and supporters moving forward.
Here covers 5.5 miles and is rated as "moderate." 

Wolfe Drive in Wanaque. A loop hike from Wanaque Ridge Trail. It's a great hike. Peter Ramapo Mountain State Forest, writes: "It's largely off the eroded ATV tracks and woods roads and has been moved to an outstanding route. Check it out if you haven't been there in the past year. I think you will be impressed."

The hike is in Ramapo Mountain State Forest in Bergen County and features panoramic views, including dramatic views of the Wanaque Reservoir with the massive Raymond Dam in the foreground, and the Wyanokies beyond. Several hikers who have walked the route recommend starting on the blue-blazed MacEvoy Trail from Wolfe Drive in Wanaque. A loop hike from here covers 5.5 miles and is rated as "moderate." by Daniel Hazin, editor of many Trail Conference books.

From Wolfe Drive, follow the MacEvoy Trail uphill, and continue for half a mile to a gas pipeline clearing. Just before reaching the pipeline, you'll notice three orange blazes on a tree to the left, which mark the start of the Wanaque Ridge Trail (WRT).

Turn right on the WRT, and continue on it as follows several woods roads, descends through a ravine, crosses a stream, and passes Profile Rock before climbing to the crest of the ridge, where it heads south. It is from above this ridge that panoramic views west-facing (over the Wanaque Reservoir) and east-facing open up. After continuing along the crest of the ridge for a short way, offering views on both sides, the WRT descends and briefly follows two woods roads. You'll come to a Y-intersection, where a red stripe-on-yellow-blazed trail begins to the right. Bear left to continue on the orange-blazed trail, which crosses a stream, climbs to cross the gas pipeline, and turns right onto the pipeline service road.

In 60 feet, it turns left and climbs into the woods. After a relatively level section, the trail descends to and junction with the Indian Rock Trail (inverted red triangle on white). Turn left on this trail, which soon ends at a junction with another woods road. Here, you should turn left, now following the white "C" on-red-blazed Cannonball Trail. This parallels, at some distance, the ledge along the way offers a broad view over the western shore of scenic Ramapo Lake, a rock ledge.

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How to get there: To reach the trailhead, take Skyline Drive (from I-287) west to County Route 99. Turn left and continue for about a mile to Cannonball Road. Turn left, then take the first left onto Wolfe Drive. Follow Wolfe Drive to its end, where street parking is available.

 adapted from Daniel Chizotti October 12, 2007 hike of the week column in The Record, Bergen County Daily newspaper.