Meet the Westchester Trails Association
This member club hikes all over our region and welcomes new members. **READ MORE ON PAGE 9**

Mark National Trails Day with the Trail Conference at Wonder Lake State Park

S top wondering if there really is a lake in Wonder Lake State Park. See for yourself! Join the Trail Conference in celebrating the opening of the first leg of the Highlands Trail east of the Hudson River in the park. A route to the lake will officially be opened on National Trails Day, June 6 at 10 am at the parking lot on Ludingtonville Road, followed by hikes into the park. Using a combination of newly constructed hiking trails and woods roads, the route will encircle the lake, highlighting the beautiful setting of this new parkland when the mountain laurel is in bloom. A provisional map will be produced for the occasion with some tidbits of local history thrown in for good measure.

The trail is the result of a carefully realized strategy. Following the completion of a two-day Trail Layout and Design course led by Eddie Walsh in April 2008, several graduates formed a team—consisting of Tom Amosson, Jean Arenella, Tom Buckley, David Dworsky, Andrew Settipani, and Highlands Trail Committee Chair Gary Higley—to scout and develop a network of trails in the park with the Highlands Trail forming a central spine. After receiving park approvals for sections of the trail, volunteers cleared them, and where more serious work was required, crews on loan from Metro Trails and West Hudson Trails came to lead side-hilling and rock work trips. Many additional volunteers have helped with the project, and while there is still a lot of work to be done, we are anxious to introduce this park to hikers.

Thanks also to Christie Ferguson, Trail Conference East Hudson Regional Representative, and Josie Gray, East Hudson Trails Committee Chair, who have been enormously helpful and enthusiastic about this project, and trail crew leaders Chris Ezzo and Joe Gendoff. Directions to the park: the parking lot is located on Ludingtonville Road between exits 17 and 18 of Interstate 84 in Putnam County.

Meanwhile to the south: The Highlands Trail is crossing the Delaware River, and we’re having a party May 16 to celebrate! See story below for details.

Volunteer Profile
Have GPS, Will Travel

Chester Sensing isn’t looking to be in the spotlight. “I’ll go along with a volunteer in profile, if a decision is made to do that,” he acknowledged in an email to Trail Conference staff cartographer Jeremy Appag, who wanted to see Chester get due credit for enormous contributions to several big, recent mapping projects.

He further protested to Jeremy, “I don’t feel much like a volunteer since I would be hiking with a GPS unit anyway.” Maybe so. But many people hike with a GPS unit; few of them collect reliable data that they contribute to the Trail Conference so that accurate maps can be produced for use by the public. Chester does, and for that every person who uses the new Kittatinny Trails map set (see story this page), or the Harriman, Sterling Forest, and North Jersey map sets, owes him thanks.

A long-time hiker and a member of the Trail Conference for an uncertain amount of time (“I became a life member to make up for the years I missed”), Chester says he typically frequents parks close to his home in Warwick, NY. Wawayanda State Park, being adjacent to his property, is a favorite of course. Harriman and Sterling Forest have been other frequent destinations. Since taking GPS in hand for Trail Conference assignments, however, he has explored further afield—the Kittatinnyis, for example, and other parks in North Jersey. Jeremy, who prepares lists of trails and trail segments that need GPS data for assignment to Trail Conference volunteers, reports that Chester was the primary volunteer GPSer for the new Kittatinny Trails map set. Since 2006, Chester has logged over 1100 working hours (not counting travel) on more than 160 separate data collection assignments.

Celebrate Crossing of Highlands Trail into Pennsylvania

Thanks to the hard work of many volunteers (see November/December TW, page 10), the Highlands Trail has reached the Delaware River! The Trail Conference will be celebrating the achievement on Saturday, May 16, at an event co-sponsored by the Appalachian Mountain Club, which will be continuing the trail across the 13 counties in participating in the various outdoor activities available along the Kittatinny Ridge and the adjacent section of the Delaware River.

These maps show all trails along the Kittatinny Ridge in northwestern New Jersey, including those in High Point State Park, Stokes State Forest, Worthington State Forest, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (including trails in the Pennsylvania section of the DWGNRA) and other smaller parks and preserves. A portion of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail that extends into New York also appears on the maps. Over 50 miles of the Appalachian Trail along the Kittatinny Ridge are shown on the map set, along with sources of drinking water, shelters, and side trails.

The new edition of these maps represents a vast improvement over the previous edition in many respects. Contour lines are now provided every 20 feet (instead of at intervals of 100 feet), and a UTM coordinate grid has been added to assist with navigation. Three new maps have been added to provide additional detail in three areas around the High Point Monument, the newly-reopened Laucknich Farm trail system in High Point State Park, and the Kittatinny Point area at the Delaware Water Gap.

The entire trail network has been completely replotted using state-of-the-art Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. Trail Conference volunteers spent more than 400 hours walking the trails to collect accurate trail and woods road data.

Also a Resource for Paddlers
The maps will be useful not only to hikers, but also to those who canoed along the scenic New Jersey section of the Delaware River. The entire 50-mile section of the river from Port Jervis, NY, to Columbia, NJ, is shown on the maps, and—for the first time—river mile markers, river access points, campsites along the river, and rapids are also shown.

To obtain this map set, see the Hikers’ Marketplace on page 13, call 201-512-9348, plan to attend holzinger@nynjtc.org or 973-303-3538 (cell).

Now Singing in a Forest Near You

Hear the overbird in the woods or with a click on our website. **READ MORE ON PAGE 7**

The Trail Conference Publications Committee is pleased to announce that the completely new, digitally-produced fifth edition of our *Kittatinny Trails* map set is expected to be available in early May.

This map set is the most comprehensive trail map of the Kittatinnyis ever published, and it is a must-have for anyone interested in participating in the various outdoor activities available along the Kittatinny Ridge and the adjacent section of the Delaware River. These maps show all trails along the Kittatinny Ridge in northwestern New Jersey, including those in High Point State Park, Stokes State Forest, Worthington State Forest, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (including trails in the Pennsylvania section of the DWGNRA) and other smaller parks and preserves. A portion of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail that extends into New York also appears on the maps. Over 50 miles of the Appalachian Trail along the Kittatinny Ridge are shown on the map set, along with sources of drinking water, shelters, and side trails.

The new edition of these maps represents a vast improvement over the previous edition in many respects. Contour lines are now provided every 20 feet (instead of at intervals of 100 feet), and a UTM coordinate grid has been added to assist with navigation. Three new maps have been added to provide additional detail in three areas around the High Point Monument, the newly-reopened Laucknich Farm trail system in High Point State Park, and the Kittatinny Point area at the Delaware Water Gap.

The entire trail network has been completely replotted using state-of-the-art Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. Trail Conference volunteers spent more than 400 hours walking the trails to collect accurate trail and woods road data.

Also a Resource for Paddlers
The maps will be useful not only to hikers, but also to those who canoed along the scenic New Jersey section of the Delaware River. The entire 50-mile section of the river from Port Jervis, NY, to Columbia, NJ, is shown on the maps, and—for the first time—river mile markers, river access points, campsites along the river, and rapids are also shown.

To obtain this map set, see the Hikers’ Marketplace on page 13, call 201-512-9348, plan to attend holzinger@nynjtc.org or 973-303-3538 (cell).
NJ Rescue Squad Seeks Volunteer Victims

By Jeremy Feinberg

A version of this article first appeared in Trails & Waves (spring 2009), the newsletter of the New York-North Jersey Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and is reprinted with permission.

Lost twice in the same day—boy, am I ever stupid. The first time, I was close to the edge of the woods and was quickly found by Moose, a young black Lab. The second time I was deeper into the woods and had dropped my pack along the way (hypotheti- cally?). Boomer, a German Shepherd, found the pack, carried it back to show his owner, and then found me, cuddled against a tree. Each rescue equipped a free face-wash, and each was followed by a big tug-toy play ses- sion, as a reward for the rescuers.

From downwind, they can air-scent you up to 1,000 feet away if the wind and other conditions are right.

Moose and Boomer are 80%, part of New Jersey Search and Rescue (NJSAR). They are air-scent dogs, not tracking dogs as you might think. From downwind, they can air- scent you from up to 1,000 feet away if the wind and other conditions are right. They follow the scent to you, then go back to their owner and lead him to you. Later, I was invited to observe handler and dog working together, as Jerry, who worked with 9/11, solved a “multiple victim” scenario. Of course, Trail Conference members never forget how well, hardly ever... but just in many cases you surely want to see that Moose, Boomer, Jerry, and their friends get the best possible training, don’t you?

The team trains mostly in Passaic, Saur- sex, and Morris counties in New Jersey, and Orange County in New York. There are six dogs and five handlers on the team. The NJ Search and Rescue K9 Team needs fresh volunteers to get “lost” (if a dog rescue Fred all the time, he might start thinking it’s only Fred that he’s meant to find). If you’d like to help a day helping these amazing dogs train, email Mr. Peter Bremy at K9@njsar.org.

You can read more about NJSAR as www.njsar.org. It’s not just K9 Search and Rescue; they do other cool stuff, like high- angle rescues (translation: getting you down from that cliff you’re stuck on). They work all over the region—in New York and Pennsylvania as well as in New Jersey. 

Record Raffle Ticket Sales at Banff

Each year, the Trail Conference is privileged to participate in and benefit from the Banff Film Festival events in Suffern and New York City. The festival features exciting cinematography focused on outdoor themes and attracts hundreds of enthusiastic viewers on each of the three nights of showings. The Trail Conference benefits by promoting its services and selling raffle tickets for goods and services donated by two of our generous retail partners.

At the LaFayette Theatre in Suffern on March 4, a packed theater yielded raffle ticket sales of $1,787. Items being raffled were donated by Ramsey Outdoor Store. In New York City, film showings at Peter Norton Symphony Space on March 10 and 11 sold out both of their nights, and we raised $3,321 in raffle ticket sales. Items for the Banff events were donated by Patagonia Sports.

Trail Conference volunteers were able to interact with an energetic crowd each night, as well as enjoy the incredible cin- ematography. They also had the opportunity to share with attendees information about the Trail Conference. In particular, many people who were familiar with the Trail Conference spoke excitedly about our new website!

Another benefit of our participation is a number of new potential volunteers.

A big THANK you goes out to all who helped at the event: Christine Ferguson, Larry Wheelock, Doug Ferguson, Kathy Goldman, Ruth and Michael Rosenthal, Lou Leonardis, Frank Bamberger, Joe Gindoff, Maia Josebachvill, Bram Levy, and Jenny Hez.

A high point of the evening was meeting an additional Thank you goes out to the Trail Conference members and friends who provided some much needed extra support. Notably: Ruth and Michael Rosenthal’s son and friends; and Conrie, Craig, and Kirk Davis.

Thanks to our enthusiastic volunteers and the generous Banff attendees, the Trail Conference raised a total of $5,103 in donations in three fun-filled evenings.
From the Executive Director

Location: Teatown Lake Reservation
Explore this beautiful preserve in Westchester County and learn about the Hudson Hills and Hills Community Trail Program, a partnership by the Trail Conference and Teatown to enhance protection and enjoyment of the region’s open space through education and recreation.

A brief business meeting of Trail Conference delegates will begin at 10am and will be followed by a presentation on the region’s ecology by Fred Koontz, executive director of Teatown Lake Reservation.

Then enjoy guided hikes and other activities at or near Teatown Lake Reservation. More details will be available on our website and, to delegates, in the mail.

Lunch will be provided, so preregistration is a must. Watch your mail or our website for details. Contact: Jennifer Hezel, 201-512-9348, ext. 28 or hezel@nynjtc.org.

Save the Date: Delegates Meeting
Sunday, June 14, 2009

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!

Dear Friends,

The Trail Conference, like many nonprofits, is coping with unwanted changes prompted by our unsettled—and unsettling—economic times. Donations are down—overall by about 30%, consistent with declines in the value of many individual and foundation portfolios. And so we have taken aggressive steps to control and reduce our costs—including staff reductions and furloughs—without the aim of sacrificing our core mission and programs.

We are not in the immediate dire straits of two-thirds of the nation’s nonprofit groups, which the New York Times reported in March had insufficient cash to get them through June. But we are not immune from the stresses.

Even as we are forced to reduce our capacity to help, there is more demand than ever for our services—from state and local land managers who themselves have reduced capacity to keep open space open to the public. We are also fielding more interest from volunteers—our spring schedule has had more workshops, more projects, and more participants than any in memory.

As I write this, Trail Conference volunteers are putting in new trails at Sterling Forest State Park and Wonder Lake State Park in New York. They are bringing the Highlands Trail to the Delaware River in New Jersey. They are cleaning up trails atop Schunemunk Mountain and Black Rock Forest, devastated by ice storms this past winter. They are building bridges and installing water bars in Pelham Bay Park in New York City. Maintainers are clearing blowdowns, trimming brush, and repainting blazes throughout our region.

Can the public be far behind them?

To keep this work going, we need your help now.

Our goal: to meet and exceed our current austerity-level budget so that the Trail Conference can continue to support the work of our volunteers.

What can you do?

- Give a gift membership to a friend or relative. They benefit and so do we.
- Buy a trail map or book for someone who could use the consolation of time outdoors.
- Renew your membership early. Your early renewal will help our cash flow now and extend your membership into the future.
- Make a donation. You can donate either online at Donate Now, by calling Hedy at 201-512-9348 ext. 17, or via a check in the mail.

Whatever you can do, Thank You.

Happy Hiking,

Edward K. Goodell
NJ ATV Legislation on the Agenda for Mid May

In a major step forward for ATV (all-terrain vehicle) regulation, the New Jersey Senate Environment Committee held its first hearing on proposed ATV legislation—March 16. The primary focus was on a bill that would require ATV registration and that would impact (S2075). However, discussion also covered another bill (S1059) that would require the state to develop an ATV management program.

Most of those testifying supported S2075 and emphasized the need for further hearing on proposed ATV legislation. Many also spoke in favor of crafting ATV park legislation that would allow such parks to be created on surplus land, whether on current state park or forest land, which would be required by the original language of S1059.

PSE&G hoped, as it had been urging, on enough time to file its final decision on PSE&G’s transmission line permit, which could not be on the voting slate for mid-May. Neither the Assembly ATV enforcement bill (A2832) nor the ATV park creation bill (A2796) was up for a vote on March 16, but they should be on the voting slate for mid-May.

Soon after the hearing, the NJ Legislature passed a new transmission route, pursuant to the US Supreme Court’s Manassas decision. The bill that would require ATV registration and offer the state parks office. (The 139 pages plus 19 maps are available at http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us.) The trail plan has been long awaited, following many years of public meetings, scouting, and proposing of trail routes, with input from the Trail Conference, other organizations, and interested individuals. The Allis and Barn Rock Trails are among several new hiking and multi-use trails identified in the plan as approved. Prior to lay out or working on any of these trails or sections, a specific request to the park, and written approval, is required.

L.P. Relocated Off Old Route 9W

The Long Path along the Palisades cliff has been rerouted for about 0.7 mile south of the State Line Lookout, substituting a pleasant walk through the woods for a more challenging climb. Longer, the Long Path (traversing north from the Forest View Trail) was routed along Old Route 9W (now the access road to State Line Lookout) up to the Lookout Inn. The trail now crosses the road and reenters the woods, following a newly-constructed ski trail to the Lookout Inn. It passes back in the bight and briefly rejoins Old Route 9W about 500 feet beyond it (to the right, leaving the road, and follows another ski trail).

Changes at Fort Montgomery Visitor Site

• The policy of paid admission to the Visitor Center has been discontinued. Entry will be free for all users.
• The Twin Forts Trail leading down to the Hudson and Sankarac Mountain has been improved by building two drainage ditches to carry off running water, and eliminating much of the mud underfoot.
• Hikers arriving by canoe or kayak from the Hudson River will soon find an official access point from Fort Montgomery.

A new section of the Barn Rock Trail, which will actually go to the Bare Rock overlook of Greenwood Lake, is also in the works for Sterling Forest. Trail Supervisor Susan Gordon and Bill Higgin hope to lead work trips in June to construct the new trail. See Special Projects in Crew Schedule for details.

These trail projects are moving forward following the publication of the Comprehensive Trail Plan for Sterling State Park by the state parks office. (The 139 pages plus 19 maps are available at http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us.) The trail plan has been long awaited, following many years of public meetings, scouting, and proposing of trail routes, with input from the Trail Conference, other organizations, and interested individuals. The Allis and Barn Rock Trails are among several new hiking and multi-use trails identified in the plan as approved. Prior to laying out or working on any of these trails or sections, a specific request to the park, and written approval, is required.

NJ Environmental Groups, Local Officials Work to Move on Still Electric Transmission Electric Transmission project. The boundaries of FERC’s power to usurp state decision making authority have been recently tested in a case heard by the United States Court of Appeals 4th Circuit sitting in North Carolina. The issue in this case pertains to a proposed transmission line that would run through western Pennsylvania through West Virginia and across Virginia to the Manassas National Battlefield Park. The federal court ruled that under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FERC’s power to act in this regard must be constrained by NEPA.

The boundaries of FERC’s power to usurp state decision making authority have been recently tested in a case heard by the United States Court of Appeals 4th Circuit sitting in North Carolina. The issue in this case pertains to a proposed transmission line that would run through western Pennsylvania through West Virginia and across Virginia to the Manassas National Battlefield Park. The federal court ruled that under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the FERC’s power to act in this regard must be constrained by NEPA.

NJ ATV Legislation on the Agenda for Mid May

In a major step forward for ATV (all-terrain vehicle) regulation, the New Jersey Senate Environment Committee held its first hearing on proposed ATV legislation—March 16. The primary focus was on a bill that would require ATV registration and that would impact (S2075). However, discussion also covered another bill (S1059) that would require the state to develop an ATV management program.

Most of those testifying supported S2075 and emphasized the need for further hearing on proposed ATV legislation. Many also spoke in favor of crafting ATV park legislation that would allow such parks to be created on surplus land, whether on current state park or forest land, which would be required by the original language of S1059.

PSE&G hoped, as it had been urging, on enough time to file its final decision on PSE&G’s transmission line permit, which could not be on the voting slate for mid-May. Neither the Assembly ATV enforcement bill (A2832) nor the ATV park creation bill (A2796) was up for a vote on March 16, but they should be on the voting slate for mid-May.

Soon after the hearing, the NJ Legislature passed a new transmission route, pursuant to the US Supreme Court’s Manassas decision. The bill that would require ATV registration and offer the state parks office. (The 139 pages plus 19 maps are available at http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us.) The trail plan has been long awaited, following many years of public meetings, scouting, and proposing of trail routes, with input from the Trail Conference, other organizations, and interested individuals. The Allis and Barn Rock Trails are among several new hiking and multi-use trails identified in the plan as approved. Prior to laying out or working on any of these trails or sections, a specific request to the park, and written approval, is required.

L.P. Relocated Off Old Route 9W

The Long Path along the Palisades cliff has been rerouted for about 0.7 mile south of the State Line Lookout, substituting a pleasant walk through the woods for a more challenging climb. Longer, the Long Path (traversing north from the Forest View Trail) was routed along Old Route 9W (now the access road to State Line Lookout) up to the Lookout Inn. The trail now crosses the road and reenters the woods, following a newly-constructed ski trail to the Lookout Inn. It passes back in the bight and briefly rejoins Old Route 9W about 500 feet beyond it (to the right, leaving the road, and follows another ski trail).

Changes at Fort Montgomery Visitor Site

• The policy of paid admission to the Visitor Center has been discontinued. Entry will be free for all users.
• The Twin Forts Trail leading down to the Hudson and Sankarac Mountain has been improved by building two drainage ditches to carry off running water, and eliminating much of the mud underfoot.
• Hikers arriving by canoe or kayak from the Hudson River will soon find an official access point from Fort Montgomery.

A new section of the Barn Rock Trail, which will actually go to the Bare Rock overlook of Greenwood Lake, is also in the works for Sterling Forest. Trail Supervisor Susan Gordon and Bill Higgin hope to lead work trips in June to construct the new trail. See Special Projects in Crew Schedule for details.

These trail projects are moving forward following the publication of the Comprehensive Trail Plan for Sterling State Park by the state parks office. (The 139 pages plus 19 maps are available at http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us.) The trail plan has been long awaited, following many years of public meetings, scouting, and proposing of trail routes, with input from the Trail Conference, other organizations, and interested individuals. The Allis and Barn Rock Trails are among several new hiking and multi-use trails identified in the plan as approved. Prior to laying out or working on any of these trails or sections, a specific request to the park, and written approval, is required.

NJ ATV Legislation on the Agenda for Mid May

In a major step forward for ATV (all-terrain vehicle) regulation, the New Jersey Senate Environment Committee held its first hearing on proposed ATV legislation—March 16. The primary focus was on a bill that would require ATV registration and that would impact (S2075). However, discussion also covered another bill (S1059) that would require the state to develop an ATV management program.

Most of those testifying supported S2075 and emphasized the need for further hearing on proposed ATV legislation. Many also spoke in favor of crafting ATV park legislation that would allow such parks to be created on surplus land, whether on current state park or forest land, which would be required by the original language of S1059.

PSE&G hoped, as it had been urging, on enough time to file its final decision on PSE&G’s transmission line permit, which could not be on the voting slate for mid-May. Neither the Assembly ATV enforcement bill (A2832) nor the ATV park creation bill (A2796) was up for a vote on March 16, but they should be on the voting slate for mid-May.

Soon after the hearing, the NJ Legislature passed a new transmission route, pursuant to the US Supreme Court’s Manassas decision. The bill that would require ATV registration and offer the state parks office. (The 139 pages plus 19 maps are available at http://www.nysparks.state.ny.us.) The trail plan has been long awaited, following many years of public meetings, scouting, and proposing of trail routes, with input from the Trail Conference, other organizations, and interested individuals. The Allis and Barn Rock Trails are among several new hiking and multi-use trails identified in the plan as approved. Prior to laying out or working on any of these trails or sections, a specific request to the park, and written approval, is required.

L.P. Relocated Off Old Route 9W

The Long Path along the Palisades cliff has been rerouted for about 0.7 mile south of the State Line Lookout, substituting a pleasant walk through the woods for a more challenging climb. Longer, the Long Path (traversing north from the Forest View Trail) was routed along Old Route 9W (now the access road to State Line Lookout) up to the Lookout Inn. The trail now crosses the road and reenters the woods, following a newly-constructed ski trail to the Lookout Inn. It passes back in the bight and briefly rejoins Old Route 9W about 500 feet beyond it (to the right, leaving the road, and follows another ski trail).

Changes at Fort Montgomery Visitor Site

• The policy of paid admission to the Visitor Center has been discontinued. Entry will be free for all users.
• The Twin Forts Trail leading down to the Hudson and Sankarac Mountain has been improved by building two drainage ditches to carry off running water, and eliminating much of the mud underfoot.
• Hikers arriving by canoe or kayak from the Hudson River will soon find an official access point from Fort Montgomery.
TRAIL U
Teaching Practical Skills to Trail Volunteers at Locations Throughout the NY-NJ Area

May — June

To register for a class, go to our website. The Trail Conference offers workshops in Trail Building and Trail Maintenance at locations across the region. Register online by calling the office, 201-512-9348, ext. 14.

To register online:
1. Go to www.nynjtc.org
2. Click on Trail University under Get Involved
3. Select Register Now

May 3 (Sunday)
Comox: Trail Maintenance 101 & Trail Construction Locality: Byram Town Hall, NJ
Time: 9am to 4:30pm
Instructors: Adam Rosenberg, Monica Day, and David Holzhauer
Coordinator: Brenda Holzhauer, holzhauer@nynjtc.org, 973-363-3088

May 9 (Saturday)
Trail Maintenance 101
Location: North South Lake Campground
Pavilion, Catskills
Time: 9am to 4pm
Instructors: TBD
Coordinator: Larry Wheelock, wheelock@nynjtc.org, 201-512-9348, ext. 10
TBD Workshops at Bear Mountain State Park Contact: bearmountaintrail@nynjtc.org

Trail Crew Schedules

May — June 2009

For the latest schedules and additional details, go to our website. Click on Trail Crew Schedules under the Get Involved tab.

To Be Determined
For all trips being, work gloves, water, lunch, insect repellent. In some cases, tools are provided. Contact leaders in advance for meeting times and places.

SPECIAL PROJECT
NEW Bare Rock Trail
STIRRING FOR STONE PARK
Leader: Susan Gordon and Peter Tignors
browning@nynjtc.org or 201-871-3301
Contact leaders if you want to help with this new trail over bare Rock, overlooking Greenwood Lake.

NORTH JERSEY WEEKEND CREW
Leader: Sandy Part, 732-469-1599

Second Sunday of each month
Trip starts at 10:30AM; call for location and details during the week before the scheduled trip date. Tackle a variety of projects ranging from trail repair to bridge building in northern New Jersey.

NORTH JERSEY WEEKEND CREW
Leader: John Moran, thornburyhall@verizon.net
This crew covers the NJ Ramapough, Pascack, S.P., Norm Morris Green S.P. and NJ Palisades area. Its purpose is to respond quickly to immediate needs, rather than to schedule definite events in advance. If you’re interested in being on call for this work, contact John Moran by email.

WEST JERSEY CREW
Leaders: Monica and David Day
Phone: 732-907-9365 Call: 908-307-9049
Email: westjerseytrailconservatory@gmail.com
Website: www.trailstobuild.org
Bring your lunch, plenty of water, gloves and sturdy work shoes, and be prepared to get dirty. All tools, materials and training will be provided. Beginners are welcomed on all work trips.

All events begin at 9:00AM. Please phone in the leaders for meeting location and driving directions. There is usually a snack at the work site, so please be on time (call the leaders’ cell phone if you are late or not sure you are running late). Rain cancels— if in doubt, call the leaders between 6:00 and 6:30 that morning.

Carpooling: If anyone is interested in carpooling offering a ride, please let the leaders know and we will try to arrange a shared ride. (Passengers please be prepared to contribute for gas.)

May 2 (Saturday)
Ranny Mine Trail Extension, Norvin Green State Forest
We will be completing rock work, stile building, and switchback construction begun in the fall 2008 Trail Construction Workshop.

May 16 (Saturday)
Douglas Trail, Worthington State Forest
We will be installing water bars and check dams on the Douglas Trail in Worthington State Forest.

May 30 (Saturday)
Garvey Springs Trail, Worthington State Forest
We will install water bars and check dams on the eroded lower section of the Garvey Springs Trail.

June 13 (Saturday)
Check the Trail Conference website, www.nynjtc.org, or contact the leaders for an update.

June 20 (Saturday)
Warren Trail, Jump State Forest
We will be installing rock steps and sidehill tread on a steep section of the trail near Rusk Mountain.

June 27 (Saturday)
Cedar Swamp Trail, Wawayanda State Park
We will be installing a “beaver forker” on a section of the trail flooded by a beaver dam.

The Staten Island Greenbelt received some much needed trail restoration on the February 28 trail crew trip. Several new volunteers joined the Metro Trail Crew and built nine check dams and two waterbars in record time. Linda Sullivan, the Metro Trail Crew Chief, was inspired by the energy of the group. “They were incredible workers!” The Trail Conference volunteers maintain over 38 miles of trails on the Staten Island Greenbelt, working closely with park management on trail improvements and erosion issues. Check the Metro Trail Crew Schedule for upcoming trips, or become a trail maintainer in Staten Island and support this special trail area!

HIGHLANDS TRAIL CREW
Leader: Glenn Okeeffe, HT Supervisor, HTsupervisor@nynjtc.org or 973-283-1006
Contact: Joe Gindoff, 917-597-0567, ogindoff@nynjtc.org or 973-283-1053
We meet generally on the first or second Sunday of each month, with additional trips sometimes scheduled. We tackle a variety of Highlands Trail projects from trail maintenance to trail building. Most upcoming spring trips will be in Hunterdon County, NJ. For details on trips, go to www.nynjtc.org and click on “Trail crews” under Get Involved. Please contact the leaders if you are interested in participating in a trip so that you are notified of planned changes.

May 24 (Saturday)
Combio Hike & Work Trip Location TBD
Leader: John Rosenberg
June 10 (Saturday)
Combio Hike & Work Trip
Location TBD
Leader: John Rosenberg

METRO TRAIL CREW
Leader: Joe Gindoff, 718-614-2219, jgindoff@nynjtc.org; Linda Sullivan, crew chief, 347-721-6123, mamildy@yahoo.com; Liz Gonzalez, lgonzalez@verizon.org
No experience is required. We provide the training, tools, gloves and the fun. You bring the lunch and plenty of water. A day pack to carry your lunch and tools is expected to be ready this spring and will be located on the creek at the north end of the suspension bridge carrying the Twin Forts Trail.

Stayed tuned for updates.

Hiking footwear is mandatory. All participants must sign in to perform trail work.

Carpooling: If anyone is interested in carpooling offering a ride, please let the leaders know and we will try to arrange a shared ride. (Passengers please be prepared to contribute for gas.)

May 2 (Saturday)
Ranny Mine Trail Extension, Norvin Green State Forest
We will be completing rock work, stile building, and switchback construction begun in the fall 2008 Trail Construction Workshop.

May 16 (Saturday)
Douglas Trail, Worthington State Forest
We will be installing water bars and check dams on the Douglas Trail in Worthington State Forest.

May 30 (Saturday)
Garvey Springs Trail, Worthington State Forest
We will install water bars and check dams on the eroded lower section of the Garvey Springs Trail.

June 13 (Saturday)
Check the Trail Conference website, www.nynjtc.org, or contact the leaders for an update.

June 20 (Saturday)
Warren Trail, Jump State Forest
We will be installing rock steps and sidehill tread on a steep section of the trail near Rusk Mountain.

June 27 (Saturday)
Cedar Swamp Trail, Wawayanda State Park
We will be installing a “beaver forker” on a section of the trail flooded by a beaver dam.

The Staten Island Greenbelt received some much needed trail restoration on the February 28 trail crew trip. Several new volunteers joined the Metro Trail Crew and built nine check dams and two waterbars in record time. Linda Sullivan, the Metro Trail Crew Chief, was inspired by the energy of the group. “They were incredible workers!” The Trail Conference volunteers maintain over 38 miles of trails on the Staten Island Greenbelt, working closely with park management on trail improvements and erosion issues. Check the Metro Trail Crew Schedule for upcoming trips, or become a trail maintainer in Staten Island and support this special trail area!

May 2 & 3, 9, 20 & 31 (Saturday, Sunday)
New Trail Construction at Wonder Lake State Park
Leader: Gary Haugland, hauglandg@atmail.com
Brush clearing, side-hilling, and some stone work. This section of trail is a critical portion of the Highlands Trail, a long distance trail project through New York and New Jersey. Meet: 9:30am at the Ludingtonville Road at Kent Corners of I-84 in Putnam County.

May 2 (Saturday)
Trail Restoration at Moonstone Preserve Leader: Mel Dorson, wesdorson@optonline.net Details TBD (please check website)

WEST HUDSON SOUTH CREW
Leader: Chris Ezio (Crew Chief), 516-431-1148, music@nynjtc.org or 718-287-7563, brian@summitcreation.com
Crew Chief: Claudia Garo
Leader: Brian Buchbinder

May 9 (Saturday)
Appalachian Trail on West Mountain Leader: Chris Ezio
May 14, June 11 (Thursday)
TBD
Leader: Bob Marshall

May 30 (Saturday)
Appalachian Trail on West Mountain Leader: Claudia Garo
June 7 (Sunday)
Leader: Chris Ezio

June 13 (Saturday)
Sterling Forest “special” Leader: Brian Buchbinder

WEST HUDSON NORTH CREW
Leader: Denise Vitale, 908-796-2126, wnhtrails@yahoo.com
Leader: Dawn Webster, 908-440-7238, websterd@yahoo.com

This season we will continue work on the Peters Kill Red Loop Trail relocation in Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

May 3 (Sunday)
Leader: Dave Webber
May 9 (Saturday)
Leader: Dave Webber
May 17 (Saturday)
Leader: Denise Vitale
June 14 (Sunday)
Leader: Denise Vitale
June 27 (Saturday)
Leader: Dave Webber

June 28 (Sunday)
Leader: Denise Vitale

continued on page 10
The Trail Conference is proud to offer a Membership Benefit Program, which was created to provide our members with money-saving discounts at area retailers and service providers—benefits only available to Trail Conference members.

As part of your Trail Conference membership, you are issued a card identifying you as a Trail Conference member, making you eligible for all program discounts. To receive your member discounts, you must present your valid membership card at the time of purchase. Some stores offer the discount only on select items, so be sure to ask.

We encourage our members to take advantage of this incredible opportunity that comes with a Trail Conference membership. New discounts and offers are continually being added so be sure to visit our website’s membership benefits area at www.nynjtc.org/content/retail-partners for current offers.

25% Discount on Trail Conference publications and clothing when purchased directly from the Trail Conference.

FREE Subscription to the Trail Walker, the Trail Conference’s bi-monthly newsletter filled with timely articles and columns that will enhance your hiking experiences.

Money-Saving Discounts at participating retailers and businesses.

Workshops and Seminars on trail maintenance and construction, leadership training, wilderness first aid, chainsaw operation, environmental monitoring and GPS operation.

Volunteer Opportunities to “learn by doing” in areas as varied as trail maintenance, construction, publications, environmental monitoring, and cartography. Access to the Hoeferlin Library at the Trail Conference office that includes more than 1,000 books on hiking round the world, along with maps, guides and a historical archive.

Volunteer Classifieds: Get Involved!

Are you thinking about volunteering for the Trail Conference, but don’t know where to start? Would you like to have a better understanding of the Trail Conference and the volunteer opportunities available? Join us for one of our VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION sessions to:

• Learn more about the details of our volunteer program!
• Meet new and experienced volunteers!
• Discover the many ways you can contribute to your trails and give back to the open space you enjoy so much!
• Gain a better understanding of how the Trail Conference connects people with nature.

Comming Orientation workshops are schedule for:

Tuesday May 5, 2009; 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm, New Paltz Town Hall, NY #383
Wednesday, June 24, 2009; 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm, Byram Town Hall, NJ #384

You can get more information and register for an orientation session by:

• Visiting our website at www.nynjtc.org/volunteerworkshops
• Emailing: volunteers@nynjtc.org with “Orientation” in the subject line, or
• Calling the office at 201-512-9348, ext. 14

Anyone interested in learning more about who we are and what we do is encouraged to attend one of our monthly ORIENTATION workshops.

You must register to attend.
Nature’s Teacher: The Ovenbird
By Jean Deo

“Teacher, Teacher! TEACHER!”

While hiking through northeastern forests in spring and early summer, you will likely hear the distinctive song of the male ovenbird. Their song sounds like, “Get away! This spot is mine!” and “Hey, good looking!” I like to think that ovenbirds also have a message for us, the hikers and nature enthusiasts. Their message is reflected in the phonetic representation of their song—“teacher” as they offer us valuable lessons in bird migration and conservation.

Ovenbirds are small, olive-brown birds whose white bellies are marked with lines of black dots. On their heads, they have two black stripes bordering a raw orange patch. Every spring, ovenbirds migrate from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean to the northeastern United States and Canada. In the tri-state area should watch for the spring arrival of ovenbirds from late April to mid-May. When looking for this bird, focus your search on leaf-litter-covered floors of large broad-leaved and mixed forests, as ovenbirds spend much of their day eating insects and other small organisms in the litter.

By late May, ovenbirds have reached their breeding grounds, which range from Tennessee to northern Saskatchewan, and have established territories, which are habitat patches that they use for food, nest sites, and mating. Males arrive one to two weeks before females to set up and defend territories from competing males. To defend a territory, males often counter-sing, in which one male’s song is immediately followed by a neighbor’s song. While hiking during this time of year, you will repeatedly hear males singing the “teacher—teacher—TEACHER” phrase.

Although loud, these songs are misleading as these birds seem to “throw” their voices and may be farther away than you expect. Ovenbirds breed from late May through early July. Females preferentially select mates based on their song; because these males often have superior territories, more effective defense strategies, and better health than males with shorter, disjointed songs. Using dead leaves as construction material, females build domed nests with side entrances that resemble Dutch ovens (hence their name). Ovenbirds often place these well-camouflaged nests on the ground in small fern patches, at the base of trees, and near trails. If you spot an ovenbird on her nest, the female will either sit very still or walk away from the nest while feigning a broken wing injury.

In the case of predators, the populations of ovenbirds are threatened by habitat fragmentation. Depending on the population, ovenbirds require minimum forest sizes ranging from 100 to 885 hectares (about 250 to 2,200 acres). In smaller forests, ovenbird populations rapidly decline because of higher predation rates and lower food availability. In their breeding range, brown-headed cowbirds, a parasitic bird species that replaces host eggs with its own eggs, can significantly decrease ovenbird populations, especially in smaller forest patches in which cowbirds have easier access to ovenbird nests. To protect these species, conservationists focus on preserving habitat, controlling cowbird populations, and learning more about other factors such as disease and pollution that affect ovenbirds.

The journey of the ovenbird and the challenges facing its survival are common themes among migratory birds. As nature enthusiasts, you can play an important role in migratory bird conservation by supporting local efforts to preserve natural habitat and by passing along the “teachings” of ovenbirds to others.

For links to hear the ovenbird’s song and see additional photos, visit www.nyijn.org and click on Science & Ecology under Be Informed.

Jean Deo is a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution at Rutgers University.

When a Bog Is Not a Bog

By Michael Alcamo

Not far off the bright red line that marks the Long Path on the map for Schuylkill Mountain (West HUD Trail, map 14), you’ll see a small patch of wavy blue lines indicating “swamps and wetlands.” Usually we hikers avoid wetlands. Yet they are among our most important ecosystems and can be quite interesting for their diversity.

Wetlands are among our most important ecosystems. Wetlands typically fall into one of four categories: bog, fen, marsh, or swamp. A bog (called a mire in certain areas) is a wetland that generally is cut off from flowing water. Bogs receive their water primarily from precipitation, augmented in some cases by groundwater seepage. Water outflow is generally as seepage to groundwater, not to an exiting stream. Owing to the lack of water circulation, bogs are low in oxygen and, owing to the chemical actions initiated by sphagnum mosses, which find bogs to be friendly habitat, bogs are quite acidic. For these reasons fish do not thrive and waters are quite clear. You may, however, find in bogs carnivorous plants, like pitcher plants and sundews, which derive their nutrients from eating insects rather than drawing them from soil. Mammals such as beaver and muskrat also do well in bogs.

Because of the bog’s high acidity, which discourages bacterial growth, plants and animals decompose very slowly in it. The organic matter instead builds up and forms peat, which, given enough time, will become a coal deposit. (Pest is useful itself as a fuel, though, and it’s estimated that 74 percent of the original bogs in the United Kingdom have been “mined” for peat.) A fen, by contrast, is a wetland with a watercourse. Though the wetland may look like a bog, somewhere water will be flowing—even if ever so slightly—bringing oxygen and nutrients to the area. Fen is described as either “rich” or a “poor” depending on the degree of water circulation and therefore nutrients. The more water flow, the richer the fen. The nutrients permit the growth of abundant plant life, including grasses and sedges. A fen can, in turn, resemble a meadow. Mosquitoes, dragonflies, and hосsels are very common in fens, as are the birds and mammals that eat them. Lastly, there are swamps. These too are intermittently flooded areas, but usually dominated by woody vegetation, such as trees and woody shrubs. Swamps can be fresh or saline and are generally seen as deeper than marshes. Because water moves continued on page 11
PO WWW. Spring Hike. Saturday, May 16
Leader: Eck Kehnert, 914-826-1300. Call for details. Meet at parking lot of Mountain Laurel BRK east of Brewster, 8:15 am. Follow through up Tri-state High Bridge and overpass to east of Brewster. 4 miles. Drainage. No food or drink permitted. Please
PayPal for this hike.

OC. Bronx River Pathway, Hartsdale to White Plains, NY. Saturday, May 16
Leader: Steve McNulty, 914-834-3906. Meet at White Plains Train Station parking lot and carpool to the hike site, 8:30 am. 6 miles, easy to moderate. Route of hike may be altered due to trail maintenance or hazardous conditions. Transportation contribution, $2.

CHEC. Mountain Laurel BRK, Netcong, NJ. Sunday, May 31
Leader: Steve McNulty, 914-834-3906. Meet at Mountain Laurel BRK, 8:30-9:00 am. 6 miles, easy to moderate. Route of hike may be altered due to trail maintenance or hazardous conditions. Transportation contribution, $2.

View from the Quail Trail, also known by some as the Jersey Glimpse Trail, on the Bearfort Ridge in New Jersey.

The activities listed are sponsored by members of the NY Trail Club. All hikes are free and open to the public. In case of cancellation of this hike, if the host club is responsible for your own safety. Be sure to check the trail before you leave home, even if you have seen it before. Be sure to bring water, food, and tools for trail maintenance or repair. More than 100 clubs are listed in the Trail Calendar, and many of our affiliate groups sponsor hikes not listed in the Indexer. Great for a brief description of Conference Club, consult our website to see a hike request for your next NY Trail Conference.

May Saturday, May 2
HOIC. Watchung Reservation, Summit, NJ. Meet at 10 am at the entrance to Watchung Reservation. 6 miles, easy. Hike through forest, brookside, and open areas on the Watchung Reservation. Bring water and lunch. Free to all others. Info: 908-273-2141.

OC. Long Island Greenbelt Trail, Southold, NY. Meet at 9:30 am at the North Fork Museum in Southold. 6 miles, moderate. Route may be altered due to trail maintenance problems. Transportation contribution, $2.

WTA. Mussel Pond Farm, Westchester, NY. Meet at 9 am at Mussel Pond Farm at 200 Mains Rd., 3 miles, easy to moderate. Bring food and water. Info: 914-595-5015.

A perfect time of year for this favorite destination, with broad views of the park, up to Harlem Meer and 3-4 easy miles through two estates with interesting gardens and fields. In Steeplechase Park. Free to all others. Info: 914-862-2900.

ADK. Appalachian Trail: Johnson Hill Rd. to Hoyt Rd., NY. Meet at 9 am at Hoyt Rd. parking lot, just before the CT border. 3 miles, easy. Bring water and lunch. Info: 914-628-3276; 207-782-5087.

A perfect time of year for this favorite destination, with broad views of the park, up to Harlem Meer and 3-4 easy miles through two estates with interesting gardens and fields. In Steeplechase Park. Free to all others. Info: 914-862-2900.
Help us clean up when you clean out! Do you have a working vacuum cleaner you no longer need that is cluttering your closet? To cut costs, Trail Conference staff has been cleaning out our office. We do not need a serviceable vacuum cleaner to help do the job.

Get Certified to Take a Jump in the Lake

If you would like to end your hike at Minnewaska State Park Preserve by taking a distance swim in the lake, you can, but only if you pass a swim test and become a member of the Minnewaska Distance Swimmers Association (MDSA). Details on testing standards and swim test dates can be found at the website www.minnewaskawinners.org or call the MDSA hotline at 845-895-4512.

Formally known as the Minnewaska State Park Preserve and Rockefeller State Park Preserve, the lake is 930 acres in size and 94 feet at its deepest. Each year a minimum of 1000 people take the swim test in the lake. In 1984, the first members were officially inducted on Father’s Day. The lake is open to the public from May through September, and testing is conducted every Saturday from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Testing is open to swimmers 10 years of age and older. If the swimmer successfully makes it across the lake, they are eligible to become a member of the Minnewaska Distance Swimmers Association (MDSA). Fees are $15 per test and $10 for retests. Visit the website for test dates, times, and other important details.

The rules are as follows:

1. The swimmer must be able to swim at least 400 yards, in 5 minutes or less.
2. The swimmer must be able to swim at least 200 yards, in 3 minutes or less.
3. The swimmer must be able to swim at least 100 yards, in 2 minutes or less.
4. The swimmer must be able to swim at least 50 yards, in 1 minute or less.

The MDSA offers membership to anyone who can complete the swim test. Membership fees are $15 per year, with a $10 per year retest fee. The MDSA helps to set up and maintain a water safety program for the lake, and provides a fun and healthy way for people to stay physically active.

If you would like to try the swim test and become a member of the Minnewaska Distance Swimmers Association, please contact the MDSA at 845-454-4206 or visit their website at www.adventuresforwomen.org.

If you are interested in trying the swim test, you can find more information on the MDSA website or by contacting the MDSA hotline at 845-895-4512.

Get to Minnewaska State Park Preserve by taking a distance swim in the lake, you can, but only if you pass a swim test and become a member of the Minnewaska Distance Swimmers Association (MDSA). Details on testing standards and swim test dates can be found at the website www.minnewaskawinners.org or call the MDSA hotline at 845-895-4512.

If you would like to try the swim test and become a member of the Minnewaska Distance Swimmers Association, please contact the MDSA at 845-454-4206 or visit their website at www.adventuresforwomen.org.

If you are interested in trying the swim test, you can find more information on the MDSA website or by contacting the MDSA hotline at 845-895-4512.

The Westchester-based club hikes throughout the region; above, an outing at Sterling Forest. Choose a hike in the Westchester and Putnam Counties, Connecticut, Harriman State Park, and the Hudson Highlands.

The club regularly welcomes new members. Find the club’s webpage at www.nynjtc.org – click on “Member Clubs,” under “Westchester.” We’ll do the grand loop; bring lots of water and wear hiking boots.

Join our Facebook group! We’re also local to the Westchester and the greater New York area, convenient to New York City. We are a friendly, welcoming group of varying ages and hiking interests. We usually meet at the parking lot of the North Trailhead of Harriman Train Station to carpool to the trail site. Give us a try!

Memorial Day Weekend

The WSTA hikers at Minnewaska.
Jennifer Hezel, originally from Glen Head, NY, joined the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference team in March 2009 as our Development Associate. As an avid outdoorswoman, Jennifer has lived in Utah, Alaska, California, Vermont, and various locations within Central America. Jennifer last lived in Vermont, where she spent time working in a trails organization, as well as within the zoning and planning department of the Town of Stowe.

She is a graduate of the University of Oregon’s Interdisciplinary Program, where she obtained a Master’s degree by completing coursework in political science; journalism and communications; planning, public policy, and political science; and environmental science. Jennifer brought to her job at the Trail Conference a high level of skill and an incredible amount of enthusiasm to her job. Jennifer is thrilled with the opportunity to integrate her love of the outdoors, the environment, and education within her professional life.

A picnic on May 16 will introduce the new Friends of Fahnstock and Hudson Highlands State Parks to the public. All are welcome.
**Try a Service Weekend at the AMG Mohican Outdoor Center**

(A Conference Trail Member Organization)

**Trail Work Weekend Work Parties**

Come join a friendly, fun, and family-oriented trail crew for one weekend a month in the mid-Hudson region! The Mohican Trail Crew is an all-volunteer crew based out of the Mohican Outdoor Center (a Conference Trail member organization) that is nestled in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DWG/NA) in Blairstown, NJ. The crew is ideal for individuals and families with children 8 years old and up. No experience or special skills required, just a desire to give back to the trails in the DWG/NA in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Work supplies and tools are provided, but participants should bring rugged footwear, suitable clothes, their own breakfasts and lunches and water bottles. There are various types of trail maintenance opportunities for everyone.

First-timers are welcome!

**2008 Accomplishments**

Over 5,000 hours were contributed by 80 individuals. Highlights: The Van Campen Glen trail was rebuilt, the Coventry Pond trail bridge was relocated, and the Hunterdon fishing pier at Loch Lomond was rebuilt.

**2009 Dates**

(second Friday weekend of the month)

- May 8, 9, 10
- June 12, 13, 14
- July 10, 11, 12
- August 14, 15, 16
- September 13, 14, 15
- October 9, 10, 11

**Contribution:** 86 for optional Saturday night dinner.

**To Register:** In order to stay overnight for the trail crew work weekends please register for a bunk-space (on a space available basis — so call early) at no cost by calling the Mohican Outdoor Center Reservations and Lodge Office: 908-362-5670, 9am-5pm, seven days a week.

For more information and questions please contact Mohican Trail Crew Leader, Greg Molyneux, email AMCmohicancrew@outdoors.org or Jennifer Heisey, 610-888-6906.

---

**WHEN A BOG IS NOT A BOG continued from page 7**

through both a swamp and a marsh, acidity is minimized and oxygen levels are generally high. Therefore marshes and swamps do not accumulate peat deposits and do permit the growth of fish.

Interestingly, Black Rock Forest in Orange County, NY, includes a feature that once was a swamp and is now a marsh. microbiologist, has written that the Peacock family owned and sold peat from the Black Rock area until the mid-1800s. The Black Rock peat deposit was drained and the area is now a marsh. Michael Alcamo is a naturalist, Trail Conference member, and frequent contributor to this newsletter. He is also a member of the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

* Black Rock’s Hidden Past, [http://www.blackrockforest.org](http://www.blackrockforest.org)

---

**The Cook’s View of an Annual Trail Work Weekend**

By Mike Pardee

"Me? I don’t know how to cook!" I responded when Tim Messerich asked me to be camp cook for a weekend of "trail magic"—providing food for thru-hikers—and trail work on the AT. Oh sure, I could boil water and I could make toasted, but cook for a bunch of crazy hungry thru-hikers? Little did I know what I was getting myself into.

Chuck Wood from Norristown, PA, picked us up in his truck and off we went to the RPH Shelter in Hope Junction. For what was to become an annual work/eat/hike party on the AT in Dutchess County, Fearless of Tim’s culinary talent, I had decided to give cooking a try. I have to admit to tumbling a bit at that first time, but to my surprise they loved it and wanted more. Every year since then I have done the cooking for Tim and have really enjoyed it.

Each year we have tried to give the hikers more of what they really crave on the trail. No Ramen noodles or rice cakes here. We do steaks, burgers, dogs, chicken, and plenty of fresh fruit and veggies plus deserts. At first we would just go to the store and grab food, but it became more of a challenge when we wanted to keep costs down and still "wow the hikers," as Tim likes to say, we would need to start planning. Tim and I were the late night, deep winter planning sessions, working out details of menus, food quantities, work planning and all the correspondence and a website that goes with getting the word out about the annual fest. As time went by the group of regular trail volunteers grew and they tackled more and more difficult jobs. "The kind of stuff no one else wants to do," Tim would often say. "No projects, paint projects, and even a major bridge construction project came and went; the hikers who stopped would often pitch in and help for the day, or the weekend, capped by Tim and the menu. Cooking three meals a day for 20 to 30 people plus squeezing fresh lemonade and preparing desserts is no easy chore. I spend most of my time near the kitchen area chopping vegetables, checking on ice, and all the other little things to keep the kitchen running smoothly. As hikers and volunteers came and went I had an opportunity to talk with them and hear about life on the trail, their hometowns, why they were hiking, etc. It is not every day that you can chat with people literally from all over the world. I have met thru hikers from Australia, Germany, Israel, the UK, and all over America.

---

**Volunteer Profile continued from page 1**

lecting trips for various map projects:

- Harriman-Rear Mountain – 400 working hours, 62 separate trips
- Kittatinny – 270 working hours, 40 separate trips
- Sterling Forest – 200 working hours, 26 separate trips
- North Jersey (2007) – 200 working hours, 29 separate trips
- North Jersey (2009) – 60 working hours, 9 separate trips

"It’s what I do for exercise," this retired NYU mathematics professor who turns 80 years old this spring, simply says. "I try to keep healthy. If the weather is nice, I hike pretty much every day. Thank goodness, for map users, that he does.

---

**Volunteer Profile continued from page 1**

- Kittatinny – 270 working hours, 40 separate trips
- Sterling Forest – 200 working hours, 26 separate trips
- North Jersey (2007) – 200 working hours, 29 separate trips
- North Jersey (2009) – 60 working hours, 9 separate trips

"It’s what I do for exercise," this retired NYU mathematics professor who turns 80 years old this spring, simply says. "I try to keep healthy. If the weather is nice, I hike pretty much every day. Thank goodness, for map users, that he does.

---

**Volunteer Profile continued from page 1**

- Kittatinny – 270 working hours, 40 separate trips
- Sterling Forest – 200 working hours, 26 separate trips
- North Jersey (2007) – 200 working hours, 29 separate trips
- North Jersey (2009) – 60 working hours, 9 separate trips

"It’s what I do for exercise," this retired NYU mathematics professor who turns 80 years old this spring, simply says. "I try to keep healthy. If the weather is nice, I hike pretty much every day. Thank goodness, for map users, that he does.
Featured Hike

Wildflower Walks in North Jersey

By George Petty

Hiking trails in the New Jersey Highlands offer several opportunities for wildflower lovers to walk in all seasons. For a prepared short wildflower walk with examples of most wildflowers in each season, try the one along the way, the directions are more complicated. For good early spring flowers (mid-April to early-May), try a hike from Wessex Ecology Center out the Yellow Dot Trail in back of the Roony Mine to catch a fine patch of columbine in late April to early May.

As the spring progresses and leaves reach full growth, sunlight can hardly reach the forest floor, and woodland wildflowers become scarce. The wildflower scene then moves to open areas where sunlight is plentiful.

In all seasons, the Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area on County Road 511 in Kinnelon has very good flowers along the white trail. This location is particularly rewarding for late spring, summer, and early fall flowers along the cut under the power lines, where the sun is unobstructed. In late August and early September, on the white trail near Bear House Brook, you will see spectacular scarlet flowers, secrete beetle gnats, monkey flowers, turtle heads, and the uncommon delicate wild orchid called nodding ladies-tresses.

The Ryker Lake trails off Glen Road (county 517) near Sparta, in a preserve owned by the New Jersey Audubon Society, are full of flowers in early spring. Migrating songbirds also frequent that area. However, the loop around the lake is blocked by a beaver dam at the north end.

Nevertheless, a walk along the west shore and back will offer plenty of colorful entertainment, and be ready enough for a family hike with small children.

Every trail in the Highlands will offer the observant hiker in all good seasons some wildflowers to appreciate. In some ways it is more fun to choose a hike for its views, or its challenges, and be surprised at the colorful plants you see along the way.

The New Jersey Audubon Society offers a series of wildflower hikes from its Wes Ecology Center in Ringwood, NJ. A schedule is available on the Wes Ecology Center website.

George Petty authored the Trail Conference hiking guide, Hiking the Highlands, which pays special attention to wildflowers found along Highlands trails. It can be purchased on the Trail Conference website (25% discount for Trail Conference members) or Audubon Society associates naturalist, George guides wildflower hikes at the Wes Ecology Center.

The wild geranium, Geranium maculatum, a low pink five-petaled flower with deeply incised leaves, blooms in the woods from late April through June.

If you want a hike with some wildflowers along the way, the directions are more complicated. For good early spring flowers (mid-April to early-May), try a hike from Wessex Ecology Center out the Yellow Dot Trail in back of the Roony Mine to catch a fine patch of columbine in late April to early May.

As the spring progresses and leaves reach full growth, sunlight can hardly reach the forest floor, and woodland wildflowers become scarce. The wildflower scene then moves to open areas where sunlight is plentiful.

In all seasons, the Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area on County Road 511 in Kinnelon has very good flowers along the white trail. This location is particularly rewarding for late spring, summer, and early fall flowers along the cut under the power lines, where the sun is unobstructed. In late August and early September, on the white trail near Bear House Brook, you will see spectacular scarlet flowers, secrete beetle gnats, monkey flowers, turtle heads, and the uncommon delicate wild orchid called nodding ladies-tresses.

The Ryker Lake trails off Glen Road (county 517) near Sparta, in a preserve owned by the New Jersey Audubon Society, are full of flowers in early spring. Migrating songbirds also frequent that area. However, the loop around the lake is blocked by a beaver dam at the north end.

Nevertheless, a walk along the west shore and back will offer plenty of colorful entertainment, and be ready enough for a family hike with small children.

Every trail in the Highlands will offer the observant hiker in all good seasons some wildflowers to appreciate. In some ways it is more fun to choose a hike for its views, or its challenges, and be surprised at the colorful plants you see along the way.

The New Jersey Audubon Society offers a series of wildflower hikes from its Wes Ecology Center in Ringwood, NJ. A schedule is available on the Wes Ecology Center website.

George Petty authored the Trail Conference hiking guide, Hiking the Highlands, which pays special attention to wildflowers found along Highlands trails. It can be purchased on the Trail Conference website (25% discount for Trail Conference members) or Audubon Society associates naturalist, George guides wildflower hikes at the Wes Ecology Center.

The wild geranium, Geranium maculatum, a low pink five-petaled flower with deeply incised leaves, blooms in the woods from late April through June.

If you want a hike with some wildflowers along the way, the directions are more complicated. For good early spring flowers (mid-April to early-May), try a hike from Wessex Ecology Center out the Yellow Dot Trail in back of the Roony Mine to catch a fine patch of columbine in late April to early May.

As the spring progresses and leaves reach full growth, sunlight can hardly reach the forest floor, and woodland wildflowers become scarce. The wildflower scene then moves to open areas where sunlight is plentiful.

In all seasons, the Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area on County Road 511 in Kinnelon has very good flowers along the white trail. This location is particularly rewarding for late spring, summer, and early fall flowers along the cut under the power lines, where the sun is unobstructed. In late August and early September, on the white trail near Bear House Brook, you will see spectacular scarlet flowers, secrete beetle gnats, monkey flowers, turtle heads, and the uncommon delicate wild orchid called nodding ladies-tresses.

The Ryker Lake trails off Glen Road (county 517) near Sparta, in a preserve owned by the New Jersey Audubon Society, are full of flowers in early spring. Migrating songbirds also frequent that area. However, the loop around the lake is blocked by a beaver dam at the north end.

Nevertheless, a walk along the west shore and back will offer plenty of colorful entertainment, and be ready enough for a family hike with small children.

Every trail in the Highlands will offer the observant hiker in all good seasons some wildflowers to appreciate. In some ways it is more fun to choose a hike for its views, or its challenges, and be surprised at the colorful plants you see along the way.

The New Jersey Audubon Society offers a series of wildflower hikes from its Wes Ecology Center in Ringwood, NJ. A schedule is available on the Wes Ecology Center website.

George Petty authored the Trail Conference hiking guide, Hiking the Highlands, which pays special attention to wildflowers found along Highlands trails. It can be purchased on the Trail Conference website (25% discount for Trail Conference members) or Audubon Society associates naturalist, George guides wildflower hikes at the Wes Ecology Center.

The wild geranium, Geranium maculatum, a low pink five-petaled flower with deeply incised leaves, blooms in the woods from late April through June.

If you want a hike with some wildflowers along the way, the directions are more complicated. For good early spring flowers (mid-April to early-May), try a hike from Wessex Ecology Center out the Yellow Dot Trail in back of the Roony Mine to catch a fine patch of columbine in late April to early May.

As the spring progresses and leaves reach full growth, sunlight can hardly reach the forest floor, and woodland wildflowers become scarce. The wildflower scene then moves to open areas where sunlight is plentiful.

In all seasons, the Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area on County Road 511 in Kinnelon has very good flowers along the white trail. This location is particularly rewarding for late spring, summer, and early fall flowers along the cut under the power lines, where the sun is unobstructed. In late August and early September, on the white trail near Bear House Brook, you will see spectacular scarlet flowers, secrete beetle gnats, monkey flowers, turtle heads, and the uncommon delicate wild orchid called nodding ladies-tresses.

The Ryker Lake trails off Glen Road (county 517) near Sparta, in a preserve owned by the New Jersey Audubon Society, are full of flowers in early spring. Migrating songbirds also frequent that area. However, the loop around the lake is blocked by a beaver dam at the north end.

Nevertheless, a walk along the west shore and back will offer plenty of colorful entertainment, and be ready enough for a family hike with small children.

Every trail in the Highlands will offer the observant hiker in all good seasons some wildflowers to appreciate. In some ways it is more fun to choose a hike for its views, or its challenges, and be surprised at the colorful plants you see along the way.

The New Jersey Audubon Society offers a series of wildflower hikes from its Wes Ecology Center in Ringwood, NJ. A schedule is available on the Wes Ecology Center website.

George Petty authored the Trail Conference hiking guide, Hiking the Highlands, which pays special attention to wildflowers found along Highlands trails. It can be purchased on the Trail Conference website (25% discount for Trail Conference members) or Audubon Society associates naturalist, George guides wildflower hikes at the Wes Ecology Center.