



New! Improved!

Trail Conference volunteers build a new trail loop and improve another in Norvin Green. [READ MORE ON PAGE 5](#) ▶



Return of the Fisher

Reintroduced in NY in 1970, fishers have traveled the Shawangunk Ridge to NJ. [READ MORE ON PAGE 7](#) ▶



TRAIL WALKER

November/December 2009

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference – Maintaining 1,716 Miles of Trails

www.nynjtc.org

Teamwork Saves Gunks Trail Parcel

Adiligent Trail Conference volunteer kicked off a series of negotiations that resulted in protection of land adjacent to the Shawangunk Ridge Trail.

At a tax auction in Orange County on July 31, County Executive Eddie Diana removed a scenic, 129-acre undeveloped parcel in the Town of Deepark on the Shawangunk Ridge from the sale, indicating that it would be preserved as open space and opened for trails.

The Trail Conference applauds Diana's decisive action, which culminated several weeks of work by the Trail Conference, Orange County Land Trust, Open Space Institute, the Nature Conservancy, and Orange County officials to remove the land from the auction and preserve it in its natural state.

The effort began in July when Trail Conference volunteer Andy Garrison, supervisor for the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, spotted the parcel on the list of properties to be auctioned by Orange County. The land was identified by the Trail Conference as a preservation target in its 2004 Land Acquisition and Stewardship Plan. The property borders other Trail Conference-owned land

on the ridge and stretches down to the Neversink River, where it meets the Neversink Preserve, owned by the Nature Conservancy, and an adjacent county park.

Trail Conference Executive Director Ed Goodell noted that many people and organizations worked together to protect this land parcel. "Andy Garrison played a crucial role in alerting us that the property was in tax arrears and was set to be included in the tax auction," Goodell explains.

"This is a wonderful outcome..."

Goodell then began to spread the word about the preservation opportunity to others. He contacted two frequent Trail Conference partners in land preservation projects, Jim Delaune at the Orange County Land Trust and Bob Anderberg at the Open Space Institute, as well as longtime Trail Conference member and Orange County legislator Wayne Decker. "From that point," says Goodell, "Jim Delaune took the lead, including contacting the Nature Conservancy, which provided

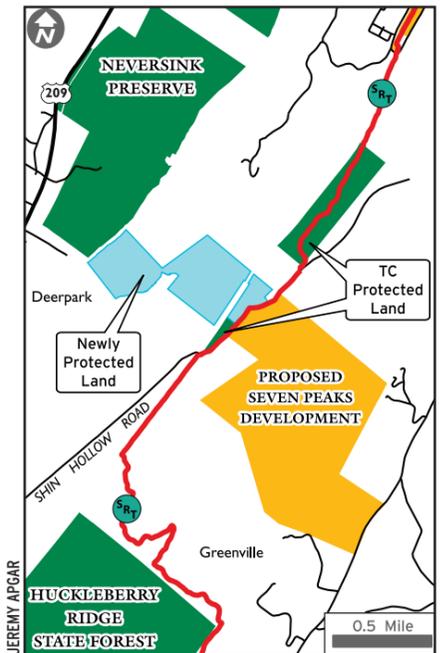
\$15,000 to pay the back taxes, and working with Orange County officials to find a way to protect the land."

The effort revealed an obstacle to the county's ability to quickly protect conservation land that ends up on its auction block: an advance review process to identify key parcels. Legislator Decker began work on legislation to enable saving conservation properties in the future.

"This is a wonderful outcome that was made possible by the continuing collaboration of numerous organizations and officials," Goodell says.

Andy Garrison adds, "That parcel would have never been pulled from the auction had others not produced the land acquisition plan in 2004 and other acquisitions in the area not happened. So a special thanks goes out to all those who laid the groundwork for me to follow and to everyone for their support of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail project."

The Trail Conference's work to advance land protection along the Shawangunk Ridge is supported by a grant from the Land Trust Alliance and NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation.



Newly preserved land (in blue) protects a section of the Shawangunk Ridge Trail and creates a corridor to the Nature Conservancy's Neversink Preserve.

Not Your Usual Walk in a Park



On the first weekend of October, an estimated 40,000 trail users walked, ran, biked, skate-boarded, kick-scootered, roller-bladed, or wheelchaired across the Hudson Valley's newest state park: Walkway Over the Hudson. A not-for-profit group spearheaded the conversion of the former railroad bridge, which connects Poughkeepsie, in Dutchess County, and Highland, in Ulster County, into a paved corridor for pedestrians, bikers, and other non-motorized users. Opened in 1888, the bridge carried train traffic until a fire in 1974 put an end to its service. Rail-trails on both sides of the river come close to the 1.25-mile bridge, but do not yet connect to it, though such connections are being pursued. A loop walk that includes the Walkway, a sidewalk on the neighboring Mid-Hudson Bridge, and Poughkeepsie city streets is possible. Learn more about the Walkway on our website (type Walkway into the Search box).



The Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad bridge in 1978 and, top, on October 4, 2009 when it opened as a Mid-Hudson trail link for walkers and bikers.

Volunteer Profile Phil McLewin

Looking at Palm Trees, Writing about New York-New Jersey Trails

When, more than a year and a half ago, Phil McLewin, Mahwah resident and professor emeritus of economics at Ramapo College, volunteered to help develop content about parks and trail regions for the new Trail Conference website, he quickly proved to be the very model of a new kind of volunteer—one who can make enormous contributions to a project or organization without necessarily being on the scene in person.

Phil volunteered not only via his computer at home, but, for most of last winter, from the sun-stoked warmth of a seaside apartment in Southern California. "It was a bit jarring writing about mountain peaks and pine trees while looking at the Pacific Ocean and palm trees," he confesses. Lucky the one who can do it.

When the Trail Conference began planning a new, expanded website more than three years ago, among its objectives was to make its vast storehouse of information about trails, hikes, and parks more easily available to the public. Starting points for this effort included the *Walk Books* for New York and New Jersey. Together these two books are a trails encyclopedia for our region. The goal was not simply to transcribe their contents onto web pages, but to use them as points of departure for structuring and creating an entirely new resource for trail users.

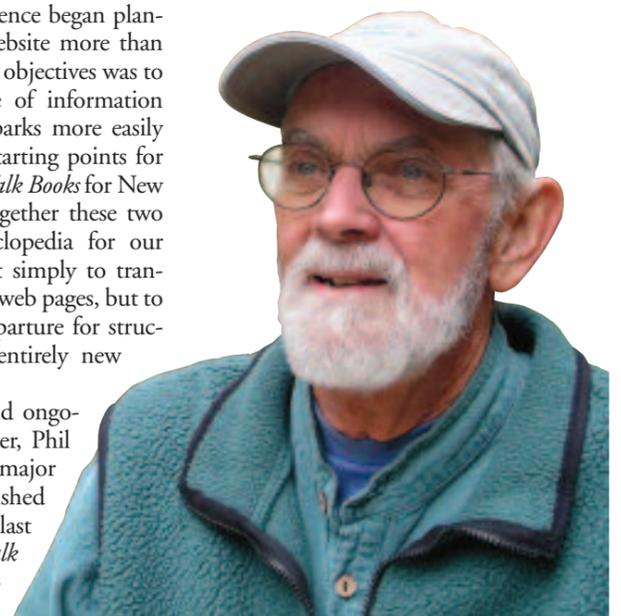
The project is huge and ongoing, but in mid-September, Phil announced reaching a major marker. "I recently finished uploading content for the last park in the *New Jersey Walk Book*," he wrote on Sep-

tember 18. "This is a milestone for me, and I thought the right moment to take stock."

Phil started researching and writing in early May 2008. He uploaded his first park write-up—Ramapo Valley Reservation—on May 19, 2008. The finish that he announced came on September 12, 2009, when he uploaded information about Turkey Swamp Park in the Jersey Shore region.

During that year-and-a-half, he also contributed extensively to getting up information about New York parks. When the website's March go-live deadline approached with relatively little park content developed for New York State, Phil worked with Gayle Edgerton and Ken Malkin to divide up responsibility for *New York Walk Book* regions. Ultimately he completed four of them on the west side of the Hudson River, including Harriman-Bear Mountain, the site's most visited web page.

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TRAIL WALKER

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GEORGETTE WEIR EDITOR
LOUIS LEONARDIS GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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156 Ramapo Valley Road (Rt. 202)
Mahwah, NJ 07430
201-512-9348
e-mail: info@nynjtc.org
editorial e-mail: tw@nynjtc.org
World Wide Web: www.nynjtc.org



Mission Statement

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a federation of member clubs and individuals dedicated to providing recreational hiking opportunities in the region, and representing the interests and concerns of the hiking community. The Conference is a volunteer-directed public service organization committed to:

- Developing, building, and maintaining hiking trails.
- Protecting hiking trail lands through support and advocacy.
- Educating the public in the responsible use of trails and the natural environment.

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The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is a federation of 103 hiking and outdoor groups, and 10,000 individuals.

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Letters to the Editor

Remember Our History

The Trail Conference is accomplishing great things these days, and the *Trail Walker* has been—and is—a great part of it. I eagerly look forward to reading every issue.

However the Trail Conference seems to be afflicted with a case of “social amnesia.” A case in point is the elimination of the sketch of “The Three” (Dr. Dickinson, Frank Place, and Raymond Torrey) from the heading of the hike listings. Yet they were the pioneers who, with very little help from others,



put out two editions of the *New York Walk Book*, the first in 1923 and the second in 1934. And it was done in an age that most regions could be reached by train and trolley, with a motor car now and then, with rough roads, and an average speed of 25-30 miles per hour. Still, their books inspired many city folks to seek out and tread “the long brown path.”

Then there is the case of the “Beech” Trail. This trail was scouted and marked well over 30 years ago to honor Art Beach for his many years of dedicated work for the Trail Conference, both as a tireless trail worker and as a holder of several official positions, not the least of which was that of liaison to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

The name “Beach” did appear on a park map shortly after the trail was made, but the park had a policy of not naming trails for living persons, and Art, being a modest man, agreed with the policy, so the name of the trail took on the spelling of the tree.

Perhaps the time has come to set the matter aright by changing the spelling back to what it was intended to be, perhaps with a little ceremony held at one of the trailheads to emphasize the point.

Robert Schulz
Richmond Hill, NY

Send Us a Letter

Email it to tw@nynjtc.org; in the subject line, put “letter to TW editor”; or send it to Trail Walker Letters, NY-NJ Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430.



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From the Executive Director



A Pundit Gets It

New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof typically addresses topics in the international and human rights spheres. But in August, Kristof wrote a couple of columns that took as their theme the need for people to keep in touch with nature. He and his 11-year-old daughter, he reported, had backpacked into wilderness “to recover from a surfeit of civilization.” Kristof said that he and his family are frequent trail users, often backpacking on long-distance trails. But, he observed, trails in the U.S. are too often poorly maintained, especially compared to trail networks in Europe and Canada.

Our work is a kind of public health program intended to forestall an epidemic of “nature-deficit disorder.”

“One problem may be,” he wrote, “that the American environmental movement has focused so much on preserving nature that it has neglected to do enough to preserve a constituency for nature. It’s important not only to save forests, but also to promote camping, hiking, bouldering and white-water rafting so that people care about saving those forests. So let’s protect nature, yes, but let’s also maintain trails...”

Hear, hear!
It’s great to see such a ringing endorsement of the kind of work the Trail Conference is all about and such a keen understanding of its importance from a prominent writer.

Trail Conference people know first-hand that a direct connection to nature benefits our mind, body and spirit. For most of us, indeed for most people, the usual route to nature is via a trail. Further, as Kristof writes, a direct connection to nature helps create a body politic attuned to environmental self-preservation. We need only look back to two acclaimed walkers with a literary bent—John Muir and John Burroughs—who opened the eyes of an unsuspecting public to the pleasures and spiritual rejuvenation that could be achieved by a walk in nature. Readers became hikers and campers and, seeing increasing urbanization, industrialization, and population around them, realized that nature could not be taken for granted. The Adirondack and Catskill Preserves, the Palisades and state park systems, and the

National Park system soon followed.

Benton MacKaye took this idea of individual renewal in nature and made the societal case for its importance. In 1922, he proposed a trail along the length of the Appalachian Mountains as a refuge for the laboring population of the East Coast’s cities that would help save the mountain ecology, link communities, and provide individuals with the opportunities to preserve their connections to nature.

The Appalachian Trail still performs that function today, as do all trails and all parks.

As this issue goes to press, the Trail Conference is wrapping up a year marked by unusual challenges, both to our own operations and those of many of our partners. But even in the midst of cutbacks and hard choices, the Trail Conference has continued to make a difference. The work we do to keep trails open and enjoyable is a kind of a public health program intended to forestall an epidemic of “nature-deficit disorder.” Thanks to our dedicated volunteers and staff, we have helped keep many of our most beloved parks and open spaces accessible to the public via the trails we maintain and build. And interest in our work has grown.

- We support more volunteers—1,636 individuals actively volunteering—than ever before—a more than 25% increase in the number of volunteers over two years!

- We maintain more miles of trail—on average we add 50 miles of trails to our network each year. Some we build, some are added at the request of local communities and park managers, themselves strapped for funds with which to properly maintain public open space and trails. The Trail Conference’s expertise in managing trail projects and recruiting, training, and organizing trail volunteers is highly regarded and sought after by park agencies and local governments with trails in their care.

- We have pushed the vacancy rate in our volunteer posts to its lowest level on record (less than 10%), even as we continue to add new opportunities for outdoor public service.

So there is good news for the Trail Conference and trails in our region. We may not yet be out of the woods, but with your continued support—through your membership, donations, and purchase of Trail Conference maps and books—we are on the Recovery Trail!

— Edward Goodell
Executive Director

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS HIKE-A-THON



Stella Leonardis and her mom, Christine



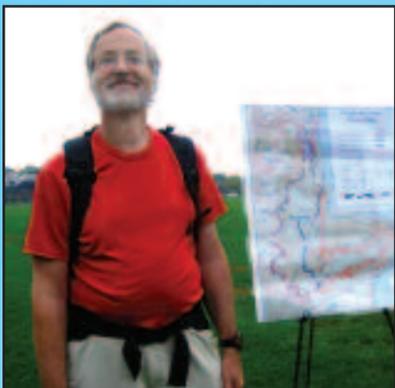
North Face Upper West Side and SoHo Store Team participants Amanda Blakely (right) and Apple Hernandez (left).



Scout Troop 97



Hiker Paul Freshnock



Top fundraiser Bob Fuller



Volunteer Wendy Parker displays a gift card from Nike, one of many event sponsors that donated gifts and prizes.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Sixty stalwart trail supporters turned out on a gray, rain-threatening Saturday to support trails in our 2nd Annual Hike-a-thon. This was a 50% increase in the number of participants over last year. Thanks to the hikers, donors, and sponsors for helping us raise \$15,000 for trail stewardship and education!

Presented by:



A very special thank you to our sponsors:

HIKERS RAISE \$15,000 FOR TRAILS AT HIKE-A-THON 2009

Boy Scouts + Girl Scouts + Trail Conference = New Trail Loop

The Highlands Trail Creates an Opportunity for a New Loop Hike in Norvin Green State Forest

Long-distance trails such as the Appalachian Trail, Long Path, and Highlands Trail are more than linear corridors for one-way thru hikes or in-and-out excursions. They are the backbone along which more modest loop hikes, popular with hikers and casual trail users, can be attached and enjoyed.

Such is the case with a new loop route in Norvin Green State Forest, west of the Wanaque Reservoir in New Jersey. Completion of a link in the Highlands Trail (HT) connecting Windbeam Mountain to the Blue Mine area sparked the idea to build a new loop by making a trail connection to the HT from the Roomy Mine Trail a short distance away. The project became the focus for a productive collaboration between Trail Conference volunteers, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. Not only was the Roomy Mine Trail extended to the HT, the Mine Trail was improved and a section relocated to avoid a difficult climb up a talus slope. (See map on page 12.)

The Mine Trail improvements became an Eagle Scout project for Anthony Outeiral, a Life Scout of BSA Troop 350 in Westwood. Anthony worked with Norvin Green Trails Co-Supervisor Paul Makus and us (Central Jersey Trails Co-Chairs Estelle Anderson and Robert Jonas) to design a new route off the talus slope up the hill alongside the Roomy Mine that would afford a nice viewpoint over the Wanaque Reservoir. This portion of the project was completed in the fall of 2008.



Left to right: Estelle Anderson, Antonio Lombardo, Debbie Maynard, Jessica Levine. Kneeling is Rachel Maynard, the Girl Scout who earned her Gold Award for her trail work and points to "her" rock step.

Anthony and members of his Scout Troop then went on to build a series of 15 waterbars on the northern section of the Mine Trail up Ball Mountain.

We then had to consider the actual connector trail from above the Roomy Mine down to the Highlands Trail and the lowlands via a rather steep hill. To perform the required work of building stone steps, we enlisted Monica and David Day of the West Jersey Trail Crew to make this a combined work trip and a Trail Construction Workshop, aka Trail Maintenance 102. So this crew of hardened veterans of rock work were joined by an eager group of volunteers, who high-lined, pried, dug, wedged, and cajoled large slabs of rock into position

for a staircase, and spent hours terracing and side-hilling this new trail section.

Joining our group was Rachel Maynard, a Girl Scout from West Milford Girl Scout Troop 499, who was working towards obtaining her Gold Award, which is the equivalent to the BSA's Eagle rank. Rachel, and her mom, Debbie, although new to trail building, enthusiastically charged into the work of building new trail.

After the West Jersey Crew completed two weeks of hard work, Rachel and her crew of fellow Girl Scouts and school friends returned to finish clearing the trail, painting blazes, and joining it with the Highlands Trail. Rachel is now proud to point out "her step" (see photo) to all visitors.

Hikers will now have the pleasure of traversing this new loop. (Turn to page 12 for a description of one hike that uses the new and improved trails or visit the Hikes database on the Trail Conference website, www.nynjtc.org/view/hike. Scroll to Norvin Green State Forest in the Parks column and look for "Highlands/Roomy Mine Trails Loop from West Brook Road.") It offers the hiker a little bit of everything as it makes its 3.1-mile circuit up and down a series of hills, passing two old mines, a few scenic viewpoints, a lovely forest, and gorgeous rock outcrops.

A huge thank-you to all who participated in this project, as it is an important and scenic trail connection.

— Bob Jonas & Estelle Anderson,
Central Jersey Co-Chairs,
Paul Makus & Chris Synol,
Co-Supervisors



IN HARRIMAN STATE PARK Victory Trail

That a section of the Victory Trail is a utility road was barely noticeable until recent work that has been reported and questioned by several hikers. Construction of a road accessible to large utility trucks was begun by the park after the utilities advised that without the road development, the lines to park facilities would not be serviced. As of the September deadline for this newsletter, clearing and construction of a widened dirt road over the trail, extending from a short distance north of Lake Skenonto, south to the terminus of the trail, was nearly complete. Culverts have been installed for drainage at some low spots.

The Trail Conference has requested that low spots be filled in and the road and adjoining surfaces be made as neat as reasonable. During an early September field trip to the site, the Victory Trail remained blazed adequately to follow. Maintainers Seth Schwartz, Janet Waegel, and Wayne Miller planned to attend to the trail by the end of September.

We thank the several hikers who reported and questioned this major trail disruption. Trail users are often the first to be aware of trail issues and we encourage your eyewitness reports. To report a trail issue or problem go to our website, click on the Community tab and choose Report a Trail Problem; or call 201-512-9348.

Blue Disc Trail

A large number of the blue-on-white disc trail blazes were removed this past summer by persons unknown, who not only damaged and removed blaze tags, but hacked off painted blazes from the trees. Re-blazing has been accomplished for the eastern two-thirds of the trail and, as of September, is adequate to follow the entire trail length.

Nurian Trail

As of late September, the bridge over the Ramapo River, between Route 17 and the Southfields Pedestrian Bridge over the NY State Thruway, was impassable. Watch our website for news of the bridge reopening.

Also on the Nurian Trail, of the two low bridges across Stahahe Brook, the more eastern one had collapsed and Trail Conference volunteers have removed it; at this time the park is unable to provide materials to replace it. The almost adjacent western bridge has sagged but is currently crossable though slippery. Both stream crossings are quite easily achieved without use of the bridges.

Parking Note: Parking is not allowed at the defunct Red Apple Rest or on surrounding private property. Parking is available about 0.8-mile northwest of Route 17 on Hall Drive off of Orange Turnpike, but would entail a road walk. Parking should also be allowable at the Southfields Post Office during hours that it is not open—but never in the adjacent privately owned lot. The difficulty of parking in this location may also affect hikers who would otherwise plan to connect with other trails, such as the Stahahe Brook, White Bar, and Dunning Trails.

Kanawauke Lakes and Route 106

Route 106 remains closed between Lake Kanawauke and Little Long Pond, due to deterioration of two bridges. Repair has begun on one of them and is expected to be completed and the road opened by winter. The lakes are being drained to allow the repair work to be accomplished and for some weed control. Parking on 106 from 7-Lakes Drive is available at Lake Kanawauke. From Route 17 the road is also passable to the closed bridge, providing access to parking for the Parker Cabin Hollow and White Bar Trails, Island Pond

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Norvin Green Volunteers

Norvin Green Trails Co-Supervisor Paul Makus and Central Jersey Co-Chairs Estelle Anderson and Bob Jonas thank the following volunteers for their work on trails in Norvin Green State Forest.

Eagle Scout candidate Anthony Outeiral and his fellow scouts, friends, and family, including: Anthony Catalano, Mike Diaz-Piedra, Christopher, James, and Marie Geocos, Robert Jonas, Kyle Katorincek, Abie Khalil, Emily Kratzer, Matt and Tim Krogdahl, Sal, Celeste, Marie-Elena, and John Manteria, Henry, Pat, Matthew, Tristan, and Rosalia Outeiral, Mike Penn, Todd Porter, Matthew Rogers, Jeffrey Telep, Ashley Noelle Volpe and Alex Voss.

Girl Scout Gold Award candidate Rachel Maynard and her fellow scouts, friends and family, including: Jessica Levine, Antonio Lombardo, and Debbie Maynard.

West Jersey Trail Crew, helpers, students, and potential Central Jersey Crew members: Monica and David Day (West Jersey Crew Chiefs), the Barnhard family, Jack Baccaglioni, Ian Blundell, Brian Dostal, Christie Ferguson, Lee Higgs, Larry May, Gay Mayer, Leslie McGlynn, Lee Mott, Steve Reiss, Jeff Roggenburg, Karen Schoof, Shawn Smith, and Bill and Linda Taggart.



Conservation & Advocacy News Notes

Make sure you get Action Alerts from the Trail Conference so that you can help support our region's trails, parks, and open spaces. Set your email program to accept mail from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference!

NATIONAL

Members Help Save Funds for Non-motorized Trails

In September, Trail Conference members and supporters were among those who helped defeat two amendments to annual federal Transportation funding legislation that would have prohibited the use of federal funds for pedestrian or bicycle facilities, efforts to reduce vehicle collisions with wildlife, and other specified Transportation Enhancement projects. The amendment was withdrawn before a vote on it was taken. A second amendment would have eliminated the current set-aside that ensures funding for non-motorized trail enhancements in all states. All four senators from New York and New Jersey voted against this amendment. The Trail Conference had sent an email alert about the funding issue to its members and friends.

NEW JERSEY

ATV Legislation Up for November Votes

By advocacy volunteer Brenda Holzinger

Bills that would create new regulations for All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) in New Jersey are expected to be up for full votes in both the Assembly and Senate after the November 3 elections. S2055 and A823, would establish requirements for the registration and identification of ATVs and enforcement of laws regarding their use.

Legislation requiring the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to "try" to locate three ATV parks in the state is currently linked to S2055 and A823, which means that both bills must move forward through the legislative process together. If no action is taken before the end of the year, when the current legislative session ends, the entire process will need to begin anew in 2010, when a new legislative session, with a fully reelected Assembly and a slightly reconfigured Senate, convenes. Because this time frame is so short, your help is needed more than ever to pass this important legislation!

For current updates about this legislation and ways you can support this effort, please visit the Trail Conference website at www.nynjtc.org/content/atv-legislation-summary.

NEW YORK

Trail Conference Awarded Two Conservation Grants

The Land Trust Alliance New York State Conservation Partnership Program awarded the Trail Conference two grants on October 1, 2009.

A grant of \$40,000 over two years will support the Trail Conference's West Hudson Community Trail Program, which aims to enhance public access and promote community support for open space protection by expanding trail networks and improving links between public parks and preserves in Rockland, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster, and Greene counties. Funding will enable the Trail Conference to provide assistance, largely through a Regional Representative, to local municipalities and private landowners in DEC Regions 3 & 4, bringing thousands of New Yorkers closer to trailheads and local protected areas.

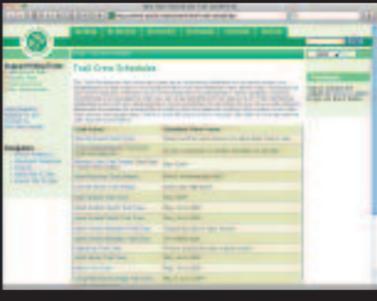
A second grant, of \$3,000, will help the Trail Conference, in partnership with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and Orange County, to complete the bargain-sale purchase of a key parcel adjacent to the Sterling Forest State Park, expanding an important natural area in close proximity to the New York City metropolitan area.



Trail Crew Schedules

October – December 2009

Check our website for possible additions or changes to schedules. Go to www.nynjtc.org and click on Trail Crews in the Get Involved tab.



TBD = To Be Determined

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

CENTRAL JERSEY TRAILS COMMITTEE

Leaders: Estelle Anderson and Bob Jonas, ynoke@aol.com, 908-803-3883 (cell)

Winter Break

NORTH JERSEY WEEKEND CREW

Leader: Sandy Parr, 732-469-5109

Second Sunday of each month

Trips start at 9:30 am; call for location and details during the week before the scheduled trip day. Tackle a variety of projects ranging from trail repair to bridge building in northern New Jersey.

NORTH JERSEY WEEKDAY CREW

Leader: John Moran, thornburyhall@verizon.net

Work outings as needed

This crew covers the NJ Ramapos, Ringwood S. P., Norvin Green S. F., and NJ Palisades area. Its purpose is to respond quickly to immediate needs, rather than to schedule definite events far 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, westjerseycrew@trailstobuild.com 732-937-9098 or 908-307-5049 (cell)
Website: www.trailstobuild.com

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/email the leaders for meeting location and driving directions. There is usually a walk to the work site, so please be there on time (call the leaders' cell phone if you are coming to an event and 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 or riding), please let the leaders know and we will try to arrange a shared ride. (Passengers please be prepared to contribute for gas.)

Saturday, October 31 Terrace Pond North Trail, Wawayanda State Park

We will install stepping stones in a wet area of the Terrace Pond North Trail.

**Saturday, November 14
Garvey Springs Trail, Worthington State Forest**
We will install water bars and mitigate an eroded area of the Garvey Springs Trail.

NEW JERSEY APPALACHIAN TRAIL CREW
Leader: Gene Giordano, trails@genegiordano.com

Second Saturday of Each Month, April through November

Work begins at 9am and is finished before 4pm. Covers the entire NJ section of the AT, blue-blazed side trails, and shelters. Supplements work by our individual maintainers as requested and for special work projects. Workers bring gloves, lunch, and water; all tools, equipment and training provided. Email leader to be placed on email notification list.

HIGHLANDS TRAIL CREW

Leaders: Glenn Oleksak, HT Supervisor: htsupervisor@verizon.net or 973-283-0306
Adam Rosenberg, HT Co-Supervisor: dobsonian@verizon.com or 973-570-0853

Monthly on a Sunday

We generally get together the first Sunday of every month to tackle various jobs building new sections or reworking existing sections of the Highlands Trail throughout New Jersey as well as in New York west of the Hudson River. We also schedule other work dates. All are welcome, experience is not necessary. Contact leader for details of the current trip and what tools to bring.

**Sunday, November 15
Combo Hike & Work Trip
Location TBD**

**Sunday, December 13
Combo Hike & Work Trip
Location TBD**

METRO TRAIL CREW

Leaders: Joe Gindoff, 718-614-2219, joeghiker@nynjtc.org; Linda Sullivan, crew chief, 347-721-6123, marmilinda@yahoo.com; Liz Gonzalez, lz.gonzalez@verizon.net

Sturdy work boots or other hiking footwear is mandatory. All participants must sign in to perform trail work. **RSVP is a must.**

Please contact Linda Sullivan, Metro Trail Crew Chief, in order to receive email notices of work outings, or check the Metro Trail Crew page on the Trail Conference website.

EAST HUDSON CREWS

Ward Pound Ridge Weekly Trail Maintenance Trips

Leader: WPRR Trail Maintainer
wprtrailmaintainer@gmail.com
Meet: 9:30am at the Trailside Nature Museum Ward Pound Ridge.

Ward Pound Ridge volunteer trail maintainers meet weekly year round. If you would like to be put on their email list for notifications, contact wprtrailmaintainer@gmail.com or view the East Hudson Trail Crew webpage at www.nynjtc.org for more information and the schedule.

Dutchess-Putnam AT in Fahnestock State Park Every Saturday

Leader: Tim Messerich, bascomgrillmaster@yahoo.com 845-297-9573
Meet: 9am at the west side of Canopus Lake (Rt. 301), at the AT Crossing.

Trail work involves hauling stones, drilling stones, placing stone steps, and building waterbars. Call leader to confirm!

Angle Fly Preserve in Westchester County

Saturday, November 8
Contact: Friends of Angle Fly, fafp@somerslandtrust.org
Meet: 10am at the entrance to Angle Fly, off Primrose Street, 0.5 miles south of Reis Park (in the Town of Somers).

The Friends of Angle Fly are working on some new trails at Angle Fly with the support of the Trail Conference. Work includes trail clearing, putting in a bridge, and sidehilling.

Teatown to Kitchawan Trail in Westchester

Saturday, November 21
Contact: Catherine Gemmell, gemmell@nynjtc.org
Meet: 9:30am at location TBA (See Trail Crew Page)

Be a part of connecting Kitchawan County Park to Teatown Lake Reservation with a carefully planned trail on designated DEP recreational lands. New trail construction begins in October, and will continue through the end of the year.

BEAR MOUNTAIN TRAILS PROJECT

Project Manager: Eddie Walsh, bearmountaintrails@gmail.com, 845-591-1537
Volunteer Coordinator: Christopher Ingui, bearmountaintrails@gmail.com, 201-783-3599

Thursday-Monday, Weekly to November General work days, suitable for beginners to experienced trail workers

Training will be provided according to participant's skill level, interest, and project needs. Meeting time is 8:30am at Bear Mountain. Please sign up via email and wait for either an email or phone confirmation from us prior to attending to confirm the trip and so we know whether to expect you.

Work trips involve a variety of tasks and experience, such as: corridor clearing, prepping work sites, quarrying stone, using an overhead highline to transport stone, creating crushed stone (with mash and sledge hammers), building crib walls, setting rock steps, and splitting stone.

Volunteers Build New Staircase to Wyanokie High Point

On two consecutive weekends this September, members of the West Jersey Trail Crew and the Central Jersey Trails Committee constructed a total of 34 rock steps on the co-aligned portion of the Mine and Hewitt-Butler Trails as they begin their climb of Wyanokie High Point in Norvin Green State Forest. The goal was to create a safer, more enjoyable hiking experience and to forestall erosion on a steep and rocky trail section to Wyanokie High Point. This popular route connects with the Otter Hole Trail from the Weis Ecology Center.



ROBERT JONAS

Left to right: Monica and David Day, Joan Lyons, Estelle Anderson, Steve Reiss, and Lee Mott. Not pictured: Paul Makus, Gay Mayer, and Bob Jonas.

WEST HUDSON SOUTH CREW

Leaders: Chris Ezzo (crew chief): 516-431-1148, musicbynumbers59@yahoo.com
Brian Buchbinder: 718-218-7563, brian@grandrenovation.com
Claudia Ganz: 212-633-1324, clganz@earthlink.net
Bob Marshall: 914-737-4792, rmarshall@webtv.net
Monica Day: 732-937-9098, Cell: 908-307-5049, westjerseycrew@trailstobuild.com

Saturday, October 31 Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail on Black Mountain, Bear Mountain State Park

Leader: Claudia Ganz

**Saturday, November 7
AT on West Mountain,
Bear Mountain S.P.**
Leader: Monica Day

**Thursday, November 12
TBD**
Leader: Bob Marshall

**Saturday, November 14
TBD**
Leader: Brian Buchbinder

WEST HUDSON NORTH CREW

Leaders: Denise Vitale (crew chief): WHNTrails@aol.com, 845-738-2126 (days or early evenings)
Dave Webber (crew leader): webberd1@yahoo.com, 845-452-7238

**Peters Kill Loop Red Trail,
Minnewaska State Park Preserve**
Relocation of this trail continues. Each work trip will include education for the novice and plenty of challenges for the more experienced. This is a great opportunity to learn all the basics of trail building like side-hilling, rock moving with rock bars and a high-line system, plus rock splitting/shaping and building crib walls and stairs.

Saturday, November 14
Leader: Dave Webber

Sunday, November 22
Leader: Denise Vitale



Trail Conference members can take advantage of exclusive discounts and benefits with participating retailers and businesses!

You can recoup the cost of your membership in one visit!



NY-NJ Trail Conference BENEFITS

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 Hoeflerlin 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.



Some of Our Discount Partners



VISIT WWW.NYNJTC.ORG/CONTENT/RETAIL-PARTNERS FOR COMPLETE LIST OF MONEY-SAVING DISCOUNTS!

Volunteer Classifieds: Get Involved!

To indicate your interest, or for more information about these or other volunteer opportunities, go to www.nynjtc.org/volunteer on our website; or contact us at volunteers@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9348 ext. 22

ON-TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Trail Maintainer

Adopt a segment of a trail to keep clear and adequately blazed two or more times a year, and help to keep our region's footpaths accessible, pristine, and protected. Vacancies exist in the following areas:

NEW YORK

Appalachian Trail (Putnam County), Black Rock Forest, Black Dome Range (Catskills), Catskills Long Path (Devil's Path, North Escarpment, Phoenicia-East Branch, or Mount Tremper), Harriman/Bear Mountain, Hudson Highlands, Shawangunk Ridge Trail, South Taconics, Staten Island, Van Cortlandt Park

NEW JERSEY

Fanny Highlands, High Mountain, High Point State Park, Highlands Trail, Northern Wyonokies, Palisades (Edgewater), Pequannock Watershed, Ringwood State Park, Southwest Highlands, Stokes State Forest, Swartswood State Park, Wawayanda State Park.

Corridor Monitors Needed in Northern NJ/NY Border and Putnam County, NY

Corridor Monitors walk the boundaries of the Appalachian Trail lands, reporting incursions and misuse, documenting monuments and markers, and interact with neighboring landowners. If you enjoy the off-trail experience, and would like to help protect these trail lands, then this is the opportunity for you!

Trail Supervisor for Harriman State Park

If you have a trail maintenance background and would now like to apply your experience to the stewardship of 25% of the footpaths in Harriman, then this may be just the job for you! Working with the West Hudson Trails Chair, you would be responsible for assigning, training and supervising maintainers covering an area of about 45 miles of trail.

Trail Crew Leader for East Hudson

Exercise your leadership skills! Supervise and work with regional Trail Chairs and Trail Supervisors to lead Trail Crew trips throughout the East Hudson area. Trail Crews provide the construction and trail restoration needs in order to ensure that trails are built or repaired to Trail Conference standards. Determine the work schedule, help identify and plan projects, build your team of volunteers, and mentor new leaders.

OFF-TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Help Support our Virtual Trail Conference

Join an enthusiastic team of volunteers who ensure our website is the best place to go for trails information in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan region!

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is putting in place a team of volunteers to support and enhance our website's capabilities. If you have a few hours each month or more to volunteer and would like to be a champion of our virtual presence on the Web, sign up now! We need a wide range of skills and abilities to keep our site running, ensure its content is current and accurate, and to maintain our presence in the expanding Web-enabled social network. Much of the work can be accomplished from your home computer on your own schedule.

Openings exist in the following areas: Assistant Webmaster, Web Developer, Analytics Maven, CRM database lead, Long Island Parks Section Writer. See our volunteer openings postings on our website for additional details.

Volunteer Office Assistants Needed!

We need your help! Come to our Mahwah office and assist us whenever you can. The Trail Conference has a wide variety of tasks that could use your expertise, from assisting customers and answering phone calls, order processing and mailings, to working on special projects. Make new friends or join current ones at the TC office for a few hours

Volunteer Job Description Writer

We need a volunteer to write clear and comprehensive job descriptions for our different volunteer positions. This would suit someone with a background in HR, or an individual with good listening and writing skills. If you are able to listen and help volunteers think through particular job positions to develop a set of written volunteer job descriptions, then let us know!

Long Island Parks Web Writer

Our web site includes descriptions of parks throughout our region, but the Long Island region is yet to be done. Check out other park pages at www.nynjtc.org/view/parks and let us know if you're interested in researching and writing the Long Island region.



JANE STEUERWALD

There are many ways to give back to trails. In addition to volunteering to serve as a new member of the Trail Conference Board of Directors, Hans Khimm (center) recruited friends to participate in Hike-a-thon. Check the volunteer opportunities listed above or visit our website, www.nynjtc.org and click on "Volunteer" to give back in the way that best suits you.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

Trail Walker is a bi-monthly paper published by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, New Jersey 07430. The editor and managing editor is Georgette Weir, at the same address. The annual subscription price is \$15; contact person is Josh Howard; telephone number is 201-512-9348. The tax status of the organization has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

As of the filing date of October 1, 2009, the average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months was 11,000; the actual number of copies of the single issue published nearest to the filing date was 11,000. The paper has a total paid and/or requested circulation of 7,427 (average) and 7,639 (actual, most recent issue). The average free distribution for the 12 months preceding the filing date was 4,000 (average) and 4,000 (actual, most recent issue). The total average distribution was 11,000; the actual distribution of the single issue published nearest to the filing date was 11,000.

This information is reported on U. S. Postal Service Form 3526 and here as required by 39 USC 3685.

Science & Ecology

Fishers Return to New Jersey

By Robynn K. Shannon

Fishers (*Martes pennanti*), sometimes known as “fisher cats,” have returned naturally to New Jersey, after an absence of at least 100 years. Data collected by C. C. Kontos and P. A. X. Bologna in 2006 and 2007 from camera trapping, tracking, and scat analysis confirmed the occurrence of this relative of martens and weasels in Stokes State Forest (Sussex County). (See Charles Kontos’s article on tracking fishers and bobcats this page.)

Fishers were once widespread and abundant throughout the northeastern U.S., but habitat destruction and trapping during the 19th century led to dramatic declines and local extinctions. Over the past 30 years, successful fisher reintroduction programs have been carried out in Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut, providing potential source populations for the natural return of fishers to New Jersey. The most likely source of the New Jersey fishers is the introduced population in the Catskills, via the Shawangunk Ridge. The combination of large areas of suitable habitat (forest) and abundant prey (small

mammals and birds) makes Sussex County an ideal area for fisher populations to establish and persist naturally.

Historically, fishers and other native North American wildlife species were able to disperse across vast areas of forested landscape. With agriculture, industrialization, and modern development in the northeastern United States, such habitat became increasingly fragmented, resulting in a patchwork of forest and human-impacted habitats. Now, in this fragmented landscape, fishers and other wildlife, and even plants, depend on corridors of suitable habitat connecting forest fragments of various sizes. As Kontos and Bologna point out, the Shawangunk - Kittatinny Ridge is such a corridor. The Trail Conference’s work in protecting trail corridors that can also serve as biodiversity corridors is extremely important to conservation efforts of both animals and plants, and like-

ly to become even more so.

Fishers are mysterious animals, in part because they are solitary and secretive (although they are apparently becoming increasingly habituated to humans), fast moving, and mostly nocturnal. They are dark brown to nearly black, with white tipped hairs that give them something of a frosted appearance, about the size of a red fox or a little smaller, with a long, bushy tail. They have a reputation of being fierce predators, and are the only known natural predator of porcupines. Around human habitations, where natural prey may be scarce, they are a threat to small domestic animals (cats, dogs, chickens), though probably less so than coyotes. They are adept tree climbers, and often nest in holes in trees.

I was first introduced to fishers by way of their strangest trait. Three of us were sitting out on a deck near Hartford (CT)



The elusive fisher is making a comeback in our region.

after dark one late summer evening, surrounded by a small patch of woods. All of a sudden came a sound that is generally described as a screech or a scream, eerily human sounding, like something straight out of a horror movie. Hearts pounding and eyes wide, we all looked at each other, wanting confirmation that the others had heard it as well. There was some (brief) discussion about taking a flashlight and going to look for whatever had made the noise. The next day a neighbor asked us if we had heard something in the woods. When I told a local zoologist about it, she said without pause, “Oh, that was a fisher.” About a year later, the photo at left was taken from the same deck.

Robynn K. Shannon is a botanist and Trail Conference volunteer who divides her time between northern New Jersey and Connecticut.



This fisher was photographed in a suburban yard in Connecticut.

Snow Tracking Fishers and Bobcats

By Charles Kontos

With the winter season fast approaching, many animals such as wood-warblers, salamanders, and black bears have started to either migrate or hibernate and will not be seen again until spring. This doesn't mean that naturalists can't continue to explore the amazing landscape within the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference trail network. In fact, winter is the perfect time to search for rare forest carnivores such as bobcats and fishers, which are mostly active at night, and usually avoid humans.

Over a century ago, fishers were extirpated from the New York-New Jersey region because of a combination of loss of their forest habitat to farmland and unregulated trapping. Thankfully, they were reintroduced in New York in the late 1970s and have just recently made their way back to the Kittatinny Ridge of New Jersey. Similarly, bobcats were eliminated from New Jersey and were reintroduced to the Garden State around the same time. Now we have the opportunity to find evidence of these elusive mammals—normally associated with remote wilderness regions in Ontario or Maine—right here using snow tracking techniques.

Fishers leave tracks similar to mink and otter, but of intermediate size. Clear tracks of the fisher measure about 2 3/4" in length by 3" in width and have five toes on each foot with claws showing. Depending on

snow conditions, the grouping pattern of tracks may assist in species identification. Fishers often move in a lope pattern with the four feet landing at different times, but usually one track overlaps another. In deeper snow, fishers will travel by bounding with both front feet landing simultaneously at an angle to one another and then the hind feet landing in the same spots. Raccoons will sometimes use this pattern as well but will switch up the track angle more frequently than fishers. Without a clear print, other diagnostic characteristics are the fisher's solitary behavior and general avoidance of trails and open areas. So, you may not see tracks running along a trail, but watch for tracks crossing trails, or in the nearby woods.

Bobcat tracks have the classic shape of animals in the cat family, with four asymmetrically aligned toes on both front and hind feet, and tracks measuring about 1 3/4" in length by 2" in width with no claws showing. The front feet are slightly larger than the hind feet. Bobcats usually move using a direct register pattern in which the front foot is lifted and then the hind foot of the same side is placed almost exactly on top of the previous track. Small bobcat tracks can overlap with those of a large housecat but are typically about twice the size and have a wider trail width.

Surprisingly, much more can be learned from following the trail of an animal than from an actual sighting. Habitat use, food preferences, and even human impacts can all be gleaned from snow tracking. My best outdoor memories are of below-freezing days near the Appalachian Trail in New Jer-



sey tracking fishers, bobcats, and coyotes as crisp, cold winds howled through majestic white pines. I have discovered sites in which fishers and bobcats have left the remains of their prey—raccoon, opossum, and red squirrel—allowing me to learn about their feeding behavior. By following tracks, I have also directly seen the fisher's preference for mixed coniferous forests with old trees, downed logs, and standing snags.

On several occasions, I was able to track a fisher long enough to recover a precious scat sample. Through genetic analysis of the scat, we can determine not only what species made the scat and what population it came from, but even distinguish individual animals. Following tracks is also used to figure out where animals are crossing roadways, and this information is then used to help establish wildlife corridors, underpasses beneath highways, and other linkages that allow animals to move safely from one patch of habitat to another.

So, keep your eyes peeled this winter if you're out in the snow! Please report any tracks of fishers or bobcats to me at ckontos@eden.rutgers.edu. The information will be used in making recommendations to the wildlife management agencies to protect and enhance these wonderful predator's lives in our midst.

Charles Kontos is a conservation biologist focusing on wildlife in New Jersey. He is a graduate student in ecology and evolution at Rutgers University.



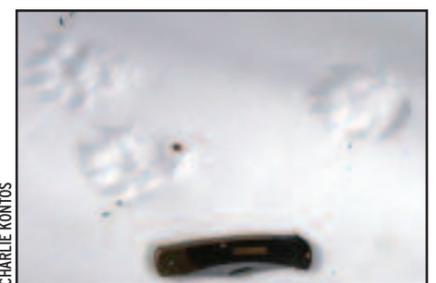
A 2 by 2 bounding lope pattern of a fisher.



A 3 by 4 lope pattern.



Bobcat tracks in a direct register pattern.



Fisher tracks (Stokes State Forest)



Bobcat tracks (High Point State Park)



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

November

Sunday, November 1

[Don't Forget to Turn Your Clocks Back]

NYR. Dozer Junction North, East Hudson Highlands, NY. Leader: Jim Korn, 212-697-4811. Meet: 7:30am at Grand Central Terminal for 7:47 Hudson Line train (RT Beacon; check train times). Shoreline Trail and local roads to Overlook Trail and Fishkill Ridge, over Lambs Hill to Dozer Junction. After loop around Bald Hill, return to Beacon; possible side trips.

ADK-MH. Black Creek Preserve, Esopus, NY. Leader: Beth Willis, 845-373-8202. Meet: 1pm; call for meeting place. 2-3 miles on west shore of the Hudson in a Scenic Hudson Park, with 150-foot uphill and then gently sloping forest path ending at the river. Bad weather cancels.

WTA. Sterling Forest State Park, NY. Leader: Catharine Raffaele; for more hike info contact Eileen West at eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:30am at North White Plains train station (\$7 fee if carpooling), or send email inquiring about alternate meeting place. Moderate 6 miles. Climb to fire tower and along the ridge, then return along the lake.

AFW. Ramapo Valley County Reservation, Mahwah, NJ. Leader: Must register at www.adventuresforwomen.org or 973-644-3592. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike at an easy pace; out by 2pm.

UCHC. Somerset Environmental Center, Basking Ridge, NJ. Leader: Mary Doyle, 908-580-1778. Meet: 10am at Somerset. Moderate hike on trails and boardwalks. Bring lunch to enjoy outdoors after the hike. Rain cancels.

IHC. Blue Mountain, Blairstown, NJ. Leader: Bob Warren, 908-626-0130. Meet: 9am at lot on Rt. 521, just north of exit 12 on I-80. Moderately strenuous 8 miles. We'll drive to parking just past Millbrook Village, then hike along Blue Mtn. Lake to Hemlock Pond, then Woods Trail to Buttermilk Falls. Return on the AT to Crater Lake.

Monday, November 2

UCHC. Lewis Morris Park, Morristown, NJ. Leader: Susan Jacobs, 973-402-2555. Meet: 10am at Sunrise Lake lower parking area. Easy 3 miles, meandering trails past Sunrise Lake.

RVW. Ashokan High Point (3080'), Catskills, NY. Leader: 845-338-8772. Moderate+ hike: 7.5 miles, 6 hours; elevation gain 1980'. Meet at 8am. Inclement weather date-following Monday.

Thursday, November 5

UCHC. Shepherd Lake, Ringwood State Park, NJ. Leader: Bob Bieri, 201-664-3813. Meet: 10am at Shepherd Lake parking. Moderately strenuous 7-8 miles; for experienced hikers. Marked and unmarked trails, and old carriage roads.

AFW. Buttermilk Falls, Rockland County, NY. Leader: Must register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike; out by 2pm.

Saturday, November 7

UCHC. Watchung Trail Maintenance, Mountainside, NJ. Leader: Register by calling Betty Kelly, 908-789-3683. Meet: 9:30am; we'll work until noon. Have fun while giving back to the trails; no experience needed. Bring work gloves, bag for trash, and clippers/loppers if you have them. Trail work is held unless there is severe weather.

AMC-NY/NoJ. Breakneck Ridge to Sunset Point, East Hudson Highlands, NY. Leader: Hallie Wolfe, halliewolfe@optonline.net or 914-941-5331. Meet: Contact leader. Rocky climb with exposure; 9 miles - difficult but rewarding hike. Newbie-friendly, but not for the faint of heart or short of breath. Laid back pace and lots of support for first-time scramblers.

ADK-MH & Trail Conference. Shawangunk Ridge Trail, Ferguson Road to Sam's Point, NY. Leaders: Georgette Weir and Jean-Claude Fouere, geweir@optonline.net (put SRT Hike in subject line) or 845-462-0142. Meet: Contact leaders for details and to register; registration limited. 12 strenuous miles. The NY-NJ Trail Conference has been developing this trail for decades. Section includes Roosa Gap State Forest and the new South Gully Trail. Shuttle required.

WTA. Westchester Wilderness Walk, Pound Ridge, NY. Leader: Marcia Cohen; for more hike info contact Eileen West at eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:30am at North White Plains train station (\$3 fee if carpooling), or send email inquiring about alternate meeting place. Easy to moderate 5-6 miles; shaded paths on varied terrain.

ADK-MH. Easy Poetry Walk, Red Hook, NY. Leader: Nancy Keenan-Rich, 845-452-1727. Meet: 10am at Poet's Walk; call for directions. 2 miles on level trail with views of the Hudson; poetry reading in the gazebo. Bring snack and poem that fits the season, if you like. Rain cancels.

UCHC. South Mtn. Reservation, Millburn, NJ. Leader: Ellen Jeydel, 908-232-2413. Meet: 10am at Locust Grove parking, corner of Glen Ave. and Lackawanna Pl., across from RR station. Moderate hike. Rain cancels.

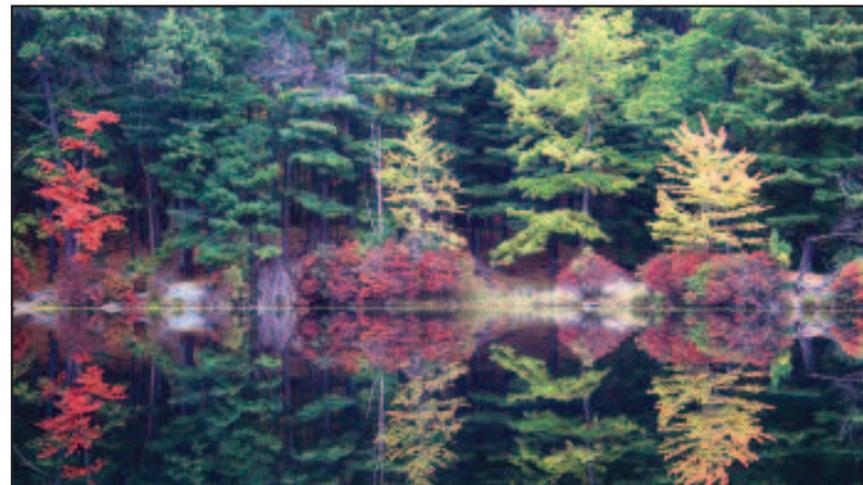
AFW. Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: Noon; register for location. Easy hike; out by 4pm.

Sunday, November 8

AFW. Buttermilk Falls, Stokes State Forest, NJ. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike at a fast pace; out by 4pm.

IHC. West Mtn. and the Timp, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Roy Williams, 570-828-6207. Meet: 9am at Anthony Wayne parking lot, off exit 17 on Palisades Parkway. Strenuous hike over West Mountain and continuing over to the Timp. Return on the Ramapo-Dunderberg and other trails. Bad weather cancels.

AMC-NY/NoJ. East Hudson Highlands, Garrison, NY. Leader: Hal Kaplan, 914-376-3156. Meet: Contact leader; message on machine Friday evening. Moderate 7 miles. Climb to AT viewpoint at White Rock, then down 600 feet and back to Arden Point, finishing at Garrison Landing. Bad weather cancels.



Lake Kanawauke in Harriman State Park

WTA. Mt. Taurus, East Hudson Highlands, Cold Spring, NY. Leader: Peter Hibbard; for more hike info contact Eileen West at eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:30am at North White Plains train station (\$6 fee if carpooling), or send email inquiring about alternate meeting place. Moderately strenuous 6 miles, more moderate in the afternoon. Climb to top of Mt. Taurus for views then descend past streams and a former dairy farm.

TNC. Family Nature Walk, Tenafly, NJ. Leader: TNC environmental educator; sign up at www.tenaflynaturecenter.org or call 201-568-6093. Enjoy a guided walk along one of the center's trails. Program intended for adults and families; no strollers please. Preregistration requested but not required. Free for members; \$5 for nonmembers.

Monday, November 9

RVW. Balsam Cap (3623') and Friday (3694') Mountains, Catskills, NY. For details: Call 845-246-8616. Strenuous bushwhack: 7.5 miles, 7.5 hours. Meet: 8am. Inclement weather date-following Monday.

Wednesday, November 11

UCHC. Ramapo Lake, Oakland, NJ. Leader: Micky Siegel, 201-797-7054. Meet: 10am at Skyline Dr., first lot on left at bottom of hill (I-287 to exit 57). Very scenic, casual hike, well worth the drive. Beautiful view of the lake; bring snack or lunch for 20-minute rest stop. Call if in doubt due to inclement weather.

RVW. Buttercup Farm Sanctuary, Pine Plains, NY. Leader: Call 845-758-6143. Easy Hike: 3 miles, 3 hours. Meet: 9am.

Thursday, November 12

UCHC. Seven Hills Trail, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Ron Kuhns, 201-836-5256. Meet: 10am at Lake Sebago boat launch parking. Moderately strenuous 7-8 miles with nice views; for experienced hikers.

Saturday, November 14

ADK-MH. Locust Grove Walk, Poughkeepsie, NY. Leaders: Bill Beehler and Ellen Zelig, 845-473-5557. Meet: 10am at parking lot on Rt. 9 opposite Beechwood Dr. Join the strollers for an autumn tour of the Locust Grove grounds. Bring snack; rain cancels.

AFW. Jockey Hollow National Park, Morristown, NJ. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike; out by 2pm.

ADK-MH. Appalachian Trail, From NY to NJ. Leader: David Koehler, 917-613-2043 or k2dave88@yahoo.com; must register by Nov. 13. Meet: Contact leader for details. 8 miles from Rt. 17A outside Sterling Forest to Longhouse Rd. Crosses Cascade and Furnace Brooks and Longhouse Creek.

AMC-NY/NoJ. Osborn Loop, East Hudson Highlands, Garrison, NY. Leader: Janice Bortree, 845-831-4430. Meet: Contact leader. Moderate 6 miles. From Manitoga, up to Russel Wright's inspired nature preserve with a glimpse of "Dragon Rock," his famous house. Then on to Osborn Loop and views from Sugarloaf. Rain cancels.

WTA. Long Path North from Nyack State Park, NY. Leader: Ellie Carren; for more hike info contact Eileen West at eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:30am at North White Plains train station (\$4 fee if carpooling), or send email inquiring about alternate meeting place. Moderate 5 miles with lots of hills but at a leisurely pace. Scenic hike starts and ends on Ice House Road, with lovely views of the Hudson.

Thursday, November 19

UCHC. Pochuck Mtn. to the Boardwalks, Vernon Township, NJ. Leader: Carol O'Keefe, 973-328-7395 or okcarol@optonline.net; must register the day before with leader. Meet: 9:30am. Easy to moderate 6 miles down Pochuck Mtn. and across the boardwalks on the AT - if you have never seen the boardwalks and bridge built by volunteers, it is something you should not miss.

Saturday, November 21

AMC-NY/NoJ. Blue Disc & Victory Trails, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Susan Pollak, 914-698-1838. Meet: contact leader. Hilly 6 miles. Relaxed pace with climbing in morning and easy terrain in afternoon. We'll do both trails end to end. Bad weather may cancel.

AFW. Anthony's Nose, East Hudson Highlands, NY. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Strenuous hike at a moderate pace; out by 3pm.

UCHC. DeKorte Park, Meadowlands, NJ. Leader: Lynn Gale, 973-763-7230. Meet: 10am at visitor center parking in Lyndhurst, NJ. 4 miles of salt marsh and upland trails with beautiful and wild views and lots of birds; some floating boardwalk. Heavy rain cancels.

WTA. Storm King Mountain, West Hudson Highlands, NY. Leader: Minu Chaudhuri, 914-941-6408. Meet: 9:30am at North White Plains train station (\$8 fee if carpooling), or contact leader about alternate meeting place. Strenuous 4 miles. Steep scramble up Storm King to enjoy the beautiful views. Return on Bluebird Trail.

WTA. Bronx River Pathway, NY. Leader: Audrey Sutton; for more hike info contact Eileen West at eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 10am at south end of Garth Rd. (\$2 fee if carpooling from North White Plains). Easy 6 miles. Flat walk to Bronxville and back along a very pretty section of trail.

RVW. Five Rivers Environmental Center, Delmar, NY. Leader: Call 845-246-4590. Easy hike: 3 miles, 3 hours. Meet: 9am.

Sunday, November 22

IHC. Reeves Brook Trail, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Roy Williams, 570-828-6207. Meet: 9am at Reeves Meadow Visitor Center on Seven Lakes Dr. Moderately strenuous hike with some spectacular scenery. Includes Seven Hills and Hillburn-Torne-Sebago Trails with some great views, and return down Cascade of Slid. Bad weather cancels.

NYR. Colonial Greenway, Mamaroneck, NY. Leader: Kay Cynamon, 212-865-3245. Meet: 8:20am at Grand Central Terminal for 8:37 New Haven Line train (RT Mamaroneck; check train times). Local roads to Saxon Woods, then complete Colonial Greenway via Weinberg Nature Center, Hutchinson River Parkway, Twin Lakes Park, and Leatherstocking Trail.

WTA. Three Preserves in Easton, CT. Leader: Eileen West, eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:15am at North White Plains train station (\$6 fee if carpooling), or contact leader about alternate meeting place. Moderate 9 miles. Explore Trout Brook, Crow Hill and Jump Hill Preserves; views of Saugatuck Reservoir. Optional stop on way home at Apple Barn. Rain cancels.

UCHC. Jockey Hollow National Park, Morristown, NJ. Leader: Mae Deas, 908-233-6641. Meet: 10am at visitor center parking. Casual morning ramble of about 4 miles in this gem of a national park. Steady rain cancels.

Monday, November 23

UCHC. Old Short Hills Park, Millburn, NJ. Leader: Cherryll Short, 973-299-0212. Meet: 10am; call for directions. Easy to moderate 3 miles, quite hilly.

RVW. Blackhead Mtn. (3940'), Catskills, NY. Leader: Call 845-246-8074. Moderate hike: 5 miles, 5 hours. Meet: 8am. Inclement weather date-following Monday.

Tuesday, November 24

ADK-MH. Franny Reese Park, Highland, NY. Leader: Fred Otte, 845-462-8305. Meet: 9am; register with leader for meeting place. Easy 3-4 mile hike in park with interesting history and views from west side of Hudson.

Thursday, November 26

UCHC. Thanksgiving at South Mountain, NJ. Leader: contact Terry Kulmane for info, terrykayhiker@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:30am at Locust Grove parking, corner Glen Ave. and Lackawanna Pl, Millburn, NJ. 2-hour, moderately paced hike.

Saturday, November 28

WTA. Fahnestock State Park, Cold Spring, NY. Leader: Carol Ann Benton, aquarius2950@hotmail.com; must email leader to register. Meet: 9:15am at Hubbard Perkins Lodge. Moderate 9-10 miles. Stops at two ponds and at the view from Round Hill. Short shuttle required.

UCHC. Watchung Reservation, Mountainside, NJ. Leader: Gail Waimon, 973-467-4761. Meet: 10am at Trailside Nature Center on Coles Ave., at New Providence Rd. Brisk 4+ miles with some rocky trails. Rain cancels.

Sunday, November 29

ADK-MH. Vanderbilt Mansion Walk, Hyde Park, NY. Leader: Carol Gray, outdoorcarol@aol.com or 845-471-1168. Meet: 10:30am at mansion parking lot. Easy 3 miles on park roads, including trail to Bard Rock.

AMC-NY/NoJ. Thanksgiving Weekend Wrap-Up, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Stanley Lewin, 212-929-7012. Meet: Contact leader. Hilly 7 miles at a moderate pace. Time to work off some of that turkey we had over the holiday; join us for this fun hike. Call 6:30-7:30am day of hike if weather in doubt.

The activities listed are sponsored by member clubs of the NY-NJ Trail Conference. All hikers are welcome subject to club regulations and rules of the trail. You are responsible for your own safety. Wear hiking boots or strong, low-heeled shoes. Bring food, water, rain gear, first aid kit, and a flashlight in a backpack. Leaders have the right and responsibility to refuse anyone whom they believe cannot complete the hike or is not adequately equipped. Easy, moderate, or strenuous hikes are relative terms; call leader if in doubt.

More than 100 clubs belong to the Trail Conference, and many of our affiliate groups sponsor hikes not listed in the Hikers' Almanac. For a descriptive list of Conference clubs, consult our website or send a SASE with your request to NY-NJ Trail Conference.

Club Codes

Only those clubs with hikes offered in this issue are listed below. Please call numbers listed to confirm.

ADK-MH	ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter	RVW	Rip Van Winkle Hiking Club
AFW	Adventures for Women	TNC	Tenafly Nature Center
AMC-NY/NoJ	AMC New York-North Jersey Chapter	UCHC	Union County Hiking Club
IHC	Interstate Hiking Club	WTA	Westchester Trails Association
NYR	New York Ramblers		

Clubs wishing to have hikes listed in Hikers' Almanac should send their schedules to tw@nynjtc.org or to the Trail Conference Office. The deadline for the January/February issue is November 15.

WTA. Popolopen Gorge, Bear Mountain State Park, NY. Leader: George O'Leary, 914-631-8441. Meet: 9:30am at North White Plains (\$7 fee if carpooling), or ask leader about alternate meeting place. Moderate 7 miles. We'll hike to Popolopen Creek, with stops at Brooks Lake, Popolopen Gorge, and Torne, then return to Bear Mountain and Hessian Lake. Bad weather cancels.

WTA. Erie Rail Bed, Nyack to Piermont, NY. Leader: Stewart Manville, 914-582-1237. Meet: 10am at North White Plains (\$4 fee if carpooling), or ask leader about alternate meeting place. Easy, level 2.5 or 5 miles (your choice). Views of Hudson River, stop in Piermont for a café lunch.

IHC. Patriots' Path: Schiff Reservation to Scherman-Hoffman Audubon Sanctuary, Morristown, NJ. Leader: Claire Bransfield, 908-240-1479. Meet: 9am at Jockey Hollow visitors center in Morristown, NJ. Strenuous 11 miles. Hike will also include Lewis Morris Park and Cross Estates. Shuttle required. Rain cancels.

Monday, November 30

RVW. Millbrook Mtn., Minnewaska State Park, NY. Leader: Call 845-338-8772. Moderate hike: 6 miles, 4 hours. Meet: 9:00. Inclement weather date—following Monday.

December

Tuesday, December 1

UCHC. Ramapo State Forest, Wanaque, NJ. Leader: Carol O'Keefe, 973-328-7395. Meet: 10am at back beach parking area. Moderate 5-6 miles; for experienced hikers. Hike on some newer trails on the west side; some climbs and nice views.

Thursday, December 3

UCHC. Seven Hills Trail, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Irene Logan, 845-753-5651. Meet: 10am at Lake Sebago boat launch. Moderately strenuous 7 miles. Climb the Seven Hills Trails, then on to Tuxedo-Mt. Ivy Trail, and the Buck Trail. Crampons/ice creepers may be needed. Bad weather or bad forecast cancels.

AFW. Ramapo Tourne, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike; out by 2pm.

Saturday, December 5

UCHC. Watchung Trail Maintenance, Mountainside, NJ. Leader: Register by calling Betty Kelly, 908-789-3683. Meet: 9:30am; we'll work until noon. Have fun while giving back to the trails; no experience needed. Bring work gloves, bag for trash, and clippers/loppers if you have them. Trail work is held unless there is severe weather.

ADK-MH. James Baird State Park, LaGrange, NY. Leader: Marie Caruso, mariehv@verizon.net or 845-452-9086; call before 10pm. Meet: 10am; contact leader for place. Easy 3-4 miles, through woods and across the golf course to view ponds. Bad weather cancels.

UCHC. South Mtn. Reservation, Millburn, NJ. Leader: Ellen Jeydel, 908-232-2413. Meet: 10am at Locust Grove parking, Glen Ave. and Lackawanna Pl. Moderate hike. Rain cancels.

AMC-NY/NoJ. Skannatati Skedaddle, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Art Almeida, 914-271-8659. Meet: Contact leader. Hilly 9 miles at a moderate pace. Steep initial climb, then wander as many interesting trails as we can find. Call morning of hike if weather doubtful.

AFW. Deer Park, Hackettstown, NJ. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Easy hike; out by 2pm.

Sunday, December 6

IHC. The Fire Escape in Winter, Bear Mtn. State Park, NY. Leader: Dave Sutter, dsuttr@aol.com. Meet: 9:30am at Iona Island parking on Rt. 9W; 1.4 miles south of Bear Mtn. Bridge. Strenuous 8 miles. Bring crampons or ice creepers as there may be a very difficult ascent. This section of Bear Mtn. Park, south of Doodletown, has some of the best views in the park.

AFW. Merrill Creek Reservoir, NJ. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike; out by 2pm.

WTA. Monksville Reservoir and Ringwood Manor, NJ. Leader: Eileen West, 914-747-3776 or eileenw1000@yahoo.com. Meet: 10am at North White Plains (\$6 fee if carpooling), or ask leader about alternate meeting place. Easy to moderate 5-6 miles. Morning hike features views all around the reservoir, in the afternoon we'll explore trails around the Manor. Optional tour of the Manor, decorated in 19th-century holiday décor, after the hike (\$7 admission).

TNC. Family Nature Walk, Tenafly, NJ. Leader: TNC environmental educator; sign up at www.tenaflynaturecenter.org or call 201-568-6093. Enjoy a guided walk along one of the center's trails. Program intended for adults and families; no strollers please. Preregistration requested but not required. Free for members; \$5 for nonmembers.

Thursday, December 10

UCHC. Ringwood State Park, NJ. Leader: Eric Singer, 973-744-7147. Meet: 10am at Ringwood Manor upper lot. Moderately strenuous 8 miles. Starts level but gradually gets steeper. Crampons/ice creepers may be needed.

Saturday, December 12

ADK-MH. High Tor, Rockland County, NY. Leader: Pete McGinnis,

845-454-4428 or pmcgin1@aol.com. Meet: 9am to carpool at Rt. 9 Holiday Inn, Fishkill. Moderate 4-5 miles. A landmark above the Hudson, 800 feet high, High Tor offers spectacular views of the river and to the west. Additional walking along Long Path or through town of Haverstraw may be added. Bad weather cancels.

AFW. Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderately strenuous hike; out by 3pm.

Sunday, December 13

AMC-NY/NoJ. Ramapo Valley County Reservation, Mahwah, NJ. Leader: Ellen Blumenkrantz, eblumenkrantz@hotmail.com. Meet: 10:15am; must contact leader to register; limited to 12 people. Moderate 10 miles. Our loop will also include Ringwood State Park, passing three lakes and two great viewpoints.

UCHC. Echo Lake Park, Mountainside, NJ. Leader: Mae Deas, 908-233-6641. Meet: 10am at lot closest to Mountain Ave. Casual walk; may also go up hill by the lakes and investigate a marshy area.

Tuesday, December 15

AFW. Tallman Mountain State Park, NY. Leader: Register at 973-644-3592 or www.adventuresforwomen.org. Meet: 10am; register for location. Moderate hike; out by 2pm.

UCHC. Skylands Manor, Ringwood, NJ. Leaders: Carolyn and Jim Canfield, 973-728-9774. Meet: 10am at parking at end of Morris Ave. Moderate 5-6 miles; for experienced hikers. Great views from Mount Defiance.

Thursday, December 17

UCHC. Waywayanda State Park, NJ. Leaders: Carolyn and Jim Canfield, 973-728-9774. Meet: 10am at boat launch parking. Moderate 6 miles. If swamp is passable, Pumphouse loop around the lake is possible.

Saturday, December 19

ADK-MH. Race the Bear Hike, Taconics, CT. Leader: Russ Fallier, russoutdoors@yahoo.com or 845-297-5126; call before 9:30pm. Meet: Contact leader. 9 miles, over 1500 feet ascent; winter gear may be necessary. From Race Brook Falls, we'll hike up Mt. Race, continue on the AT down into beautiful Sages Ravine, then up Bear Mtn., the highest mountain in CT.

WTA. Orchard Beach and City Island, NY. Leader: Marcia Cohen, 914-478-1172. Meet: 10am at the Orchard Beach parking lot (right, front side of the main lot). Easy 5 miles. Stroll along the beach, through woods, then over the bridge to streets of City Island. Lunch at a cozy spot in City Island (purchase there or bring your own).

UCHC. South Mtn. Reservation, Millburn, NJ. Leader: Naomi Shapiro, 973-564-8780; call before 9pm. Meet: 10am at Locust Grove parking, Glen Ave. & Lackawanna Pl. 4-5 miles at a steady pace; uneven terrain. Rain cancels.

Sunday, December 20

AFW. Raccoon Brook Hills Trail, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Register at www.adventuresforwomen.org or 973-644-3592. Meet: 9:30am; register for location. Strenuous hike at moderate pace; out by 2:30pm.

IHC. Three Reservoirs, Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Dave Sutter, dsuttr@aol.com. Meet: 9:30am at Lake Sebago parking on Seven Lakes Dr. Moderately strenuous 9 miles past three reservoirs and more. Rain cancels.

ADK-MH. Table Rock Photo Hike, Mohonk Preserve, NY. Leader: Brian Sullivan, 845-594-9545. Meet: 9:45am at Spring Farm trailhead; call for directions. Easy to moderate 5 miles; out by noon. Bad driving conditions cancel.

Wednesday, December 23

UCHC. Watchung Reservation, Mountainside, NJ. Leader: Ellie King, 908-233-8411. Meet: 10am at Trailside Nature Center, Coles Ave. at New Providence Rd. Moderate 2-hour walk. Rain or heavy snow may cancel.

Friday, December 25

IHC. Ho, Ho, Ho, Happy Holidays in Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Larry Spinner, 845-517-0858. Meet: 10am at commuter lot in Sloatsburg, NY (right at blinker light, one block, then right again). Moderate, holiday-enjoyment pace. Leader will bring cookies and hopes others will bring treats to share. All levels and beginners welcome. Snowshoes or crampons/ice creepers may be needed; those without needed gear may be turned away. Bad weather may cancel; call after 7am if in doubt.

UCHC. Traditional Christmas Day Hike - South Mtn. Reservation, W. Orange, NJ. Leader: For info, contact Terry Kulmane, terrykayhiker@yahoo.com. Meet: 9:30am at Tulip Springs parking on Brookside Ave. Moderate 2-hour hike through the pines.

Monday, December 28

UCHC. South Mtn. Reservation, W. Orange, NJ. Leader: Joe McLaughlin, 973-263-2799. Meet: 10am at Deer Paddock; call for directions. Easy, fairly level 3 miles. Hike to Washington Rock. Bad weather or icy conditions cancels.

Friday, January 1

UCHC. Traditional New Year's Day Hike - South Mtn. Reservation, W. Orange, NJ. Leader: For info, contact Terry Kulmane, terrykayhiker@yahoo.com. Meet: 10am at Tulip Springs parking on Brookside Ave. Moderate 2-hour hike through the pines.

Green and Black Forest At Minnewaska, nature thrives a year after a major fire

By Laura Conner

The Overlooks Fire at Minnewaska State Park Preserve, which lasted for six days in April of 2008 and closed the Preserve for over a week, was significant in size and intensity. The fire burned through 2,700 acres of forest with reported flames as high as 70 feet. Some trails, notably Jenny Lane (co-aligned with the Long Path), were closed to hikers for months as nature was allowed to take its course with as little disturbance as possible. When hikers re-entered the fire-struck trail areas, however, they saw evidence of a regenerating forest.

The Shawanagunk Ridge has a history of fire dating back to the late 19th century, when local berry pickers set fires to increase their harvest. The berry picker fires culminated in the largest recorded fire on October 30, 1947, which burned for six days and charred between 7,000 to 8,000 acres.



Adventitious buds on charred pitch pine.

Native Americans in this region used fire as a tool as far back as 3,000 years ago. Regular burning of the forest created a park-like landscape with overarching nut trees complemented by a grassy understory with fruit producing shrubs. This sort of open forest made for easy hunting and traveling.

The forest at Minnewaska has evolved to be fire-dependent, and the plants living in it have adapted specifically to survive and even thrive through fire. For instance, a close look at the trunk of a pitch pine often reveals clusters of pine needles. These bright green tufts surround adventitious buds that are capable of producing new growth if other portions of the tree die. And, the pitch pine has serotinous pine cones, which remain tightly closed until exposed to extreme heat, when they open for pollination. This strategy provides the tree with a competitive advantage. The fire eliminates other plants, which would vie for sunlight and nutrients in the forest, and the organic matter resulting from their destruction produces a rich, humus layer that is ripe for seed germination.

Fire tolerant trees, such as chestnut oak and pitch pine, have a thick, flaky bark that protects the living cambium layer beneath from burning. These trees, as well as many other fire tolerant plants, have the ability to resprout from root material. This category of plants includes laurels, blueberries, huckleberries, oaks, and sassafras.

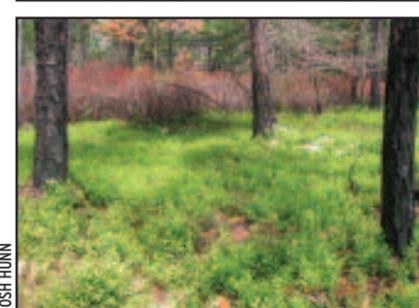
It's been no surprise to see the pitch pine trees bouncing back as ecologists predicted,

but it has been a delight to actually witness the aggressive growth of adventitious buds out of blackened, dead-looking trees. Anyone who hiked Jenny Lane/ Long Path this summer saw a dazzling abundance of blueberries. And in mid-September, the forest floor was carpeted with a plethora of light pink and red berries protruding from abundant wintergreen.

One surprise has been the super-sized return of the sassafras. After the fire last year, I noticed stump-sprouting sassafras that seemed to grow stronger, bigger, and faster than other trees. The sassafras are still going strong, but other plant species seem to be catching up. Included among these are New York fern, bracken fern, tulip tree saplings, hay-scented fern, sheep and mountain laurel, wintergreen, Indian cucumber root, red maple, chestnut oak, and bear oak.

In 2008, it was easy to distinguish the pockets of forest that had burned hotter from those that were more lightly scorched. The hotly burned forests revealed the charred skeletal remains of mountain laurel, and the tall blackened trunks of mature trees retained leaves only in their crowns. Other areas were burned so lightly that charring could be seen only upon a close examination of the forest floor and the bottom of tree trunks.

In 2009, though plants rebounded and added their green costume over the blackened ground and stumps, a keen observer could still pick out these areas. Many of the badly burned deciduous trees, in particular red maple, chestnut oak and birch, are sprouting vigorous, almost shrubby new growth from their stumps, even as lightly leafed upper branches struggle to sustain these large trees.



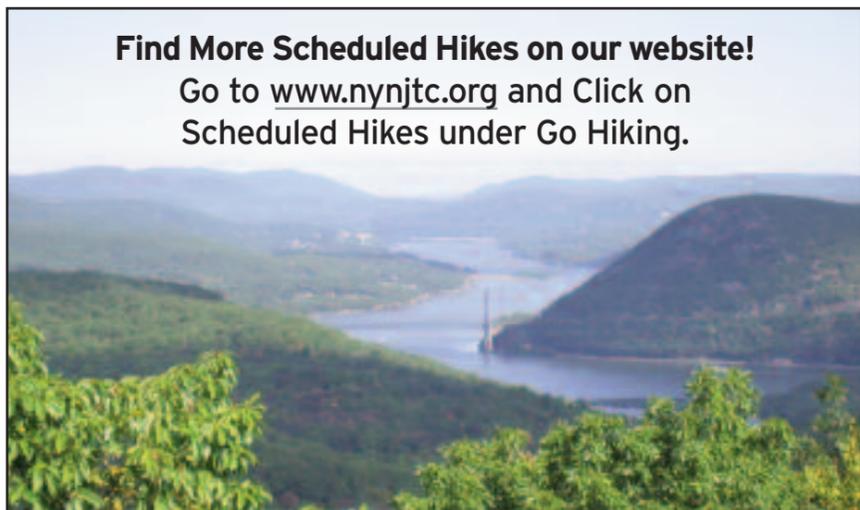
A charred area in early June 2008 (top) was sporting green one month later in July.

On late summer walks along Jenny Lane I observed an abundance of wildlife, including chipmunks, red squirrels, ravens, numerous song birds, coyote, turkey, deer and insects. Overall, a visit to the site of last year's forest fire left me with an impression of a peaceful, vital, bright green forest humming along just as it is meant to.

Laura Conner is Environmental Educator at Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

Find More Scheduled Hikes on our website!

Go to www.nynjtc.org and Click on Scheduled Hikes under Go Hiking.



Hudson River view from Bear Mountain State Park.

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For more information, please contact Jennifer Hezel at hezel@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9348, ext. 28.



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Hunting Seasons 2009

NEW YORK

Deer Seasons: Regular and Archery Southern Zone (includes Hudson Valley and Catskills)

Regular: Nov. 21 – Dec. 13

Bow: Oct. 17 – Nov. 20, Dec. 14 – Dec. 22

Westchester County

Bow only: Oct. 17 – Dec. 31

Suffolk County

Bow only: Oct. 1 – Dec. 31

Hunting is not allowed in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Parks. However it is allowed in parts or all of other state parks. Call parks for details.

Black Rock Forest (845-534-4517) closes to all hikers from Nov. 21 through Dec. 13.

For more info about deer season in New York, go to www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28605.html. For info about all big game hunting seasons and regulations in New York, visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/10003.html.

NEW JERSEY

In New Jersey, the safest course in the fall is to hike only on Sundays, when hunting with firearms is generally prohibited throughout the state. Otherwise, hunting seasons vary by weapon and geography.

A six-day firearm season is set for December 7-12 in all zones.

A one-day shotgun season is set for December 16 in many zones with additional days permitted in some zones.

For the complete set of deer season regulations, go to www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw, then click on Hunting, then Deer. Go to the same site for other hunting seasons and information.

Those 70 1/2 Years Old Can Use IRA Distribution as Charitable Gift

December 31, 2009 is the deadline for those of you 70 1/2 years and older to use your IRA to make your charitable gifts this year and avoid federal tax on your required IRA distribution. Some additional restrictions apply:

- Tax benefits apply for gifts up to \$100,000 per person,
- This federally tax free distribution is only available through 2009. According to the law, after that, this window of opportunity will be closed.
- Your gift distribution must be directly to the Trail Conference,
- Only outright charitable gifts can be made (not to a donor advised fund or income gifts such as charitable gift annuities)

You should consult with your financial adviser or accountant to see how the Pension Protection act can help you.

To inform the Trail Conference that you are making an IRA distribution, please contact Joshua Howard, the TC's Deputy Executive Director, at josh@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9348, ext. 14.

PHIL MCLEWIN

continued from page 1

All-in-all, by mid-September, Phil had developed content for 14 regions and 185 parks, in the process writing more than 50,000 words, roughly the size of a 200-page, double-spaced manuscript. "I did not keep a careful count on the number of



Web volunteer Phil McLewin regularly gets away from his computer for hikes in the parks he writes about. A favorite and nearby destination is Ramapo Valley County Reservation, the first park he entered into the web database.

hours spent," he admits, "in part because it was an enjoyable process of discovery and I became engaged without thought of time." For Trail Conference record-keeping purposes, he figures he averages five hours per location for research, writing, and uploading content. That works out, he notes, to practically 1,000 hours over the past 16 months.

Phil next plans to review the information he compiled on the earliest parks, to continue monitoring comments on web pages for needed updates, and to search for and add parks that may not be included in the *Walk Books*, particularly county parks. There is, in fact, no end to "finishing." Phil welcomes suggestions to correct errors, clarify, add or delete information. Just go to "find a park" (under the Go Hiking tab), select one you know, and post a comment as appropriate. He will find it, because, once again, he plans to keep at it during his next cold-season sojourn on the California coast.

TRAIL NEWS

continued from page 4

Road, and Victory and Ramapo-Dunderberg Trails.

IN RAMAPO MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST

Cannonball Trailhead Closed in Pompton Lakes

Access to the Cannonball Trail from Barbara Drive in Pompton Lakes, at the southernmost point of Ramapo Mountain State Forest, is officially closed by the property owner, DuPont. The closure is part of a planned three-month renovation of the soccer field in the area and, we hope, is temporary. Negotiations to allow continued access to the Cannonball Trail once the field renovation is complete are in progress. Alternative access to the Cannonball Trail can be had via the Hoeflerlin Trail from parking on the north side of Pool Hollow Road in Oakland, or via the Indian Rock Trail from parking at Back Beach Park in Wanaque. (See North Jersey Trail Map 115.)

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On the Trail with GPS

How to Choose a GPS Receiver

By Jeremy Apgar, Trail Conference cartographer

As the staff cartographer here at the Trail Conference, I am often approached by volunteers or members asking, "I am interested in getting a GPS receiver to hike with but don't quite know what to look for...can you provide any recommendations?"

More and more people are carrying a GPS receiver when they hike. In addition, many people are getting into geo-caching, a family-friendly activity that utilizes GPS receivers to hunt for treasure in the great outdoors. In a survey we conducted earlier this year concerning trail map usage, 50% of the 660 respondents noted they use a GPS receiver when out hiking, with their frequency of use ranging from rarely to always.

(Fortunately, over 90% of total respondents noted they carry a trail map at least most of the time. GPS units should not be considered substitutes for map and compass, but supplements to them. Like any electronic technology, they are not wholly reliable: batteries may die, the unit may fail, contact with satellites may be lost.)

With so many different brands offering multiple models with a wide range of features (Garmin, for instance, offers over 40 different GPS receivers for "On the Trail" use), it can certainly seem like an overwhelming task to find the GPS receiver perfect for your use. This article aims to provide some guidance about what to look for when shopping for a GPS receiver, keeping in mind that everyone has distinct needs and varying wallet sizes.



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FIRST, IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Do you want to just track your mileage or perhaps your elevation ups and downs? Do you want to record and find specific locations (waypoints, perhaps for geo-caching)? These are fairly straightforward GPS applications and you probably can get away with simpler and less expensive units that have no built-in map.

Or perhaps you want to record tracks of your hikes and impose them on maps on your computer at home or in your GPS unit? Maybe you want to follow a trail map installed on your unit. Mapping features tend to lead up the GPS scale of products and therefore in price.

STANDARD FEATURES

The following features are fairly standard among many handheld GPS receivers, but it is still important to make sure they are included for the particular model you are interested in.

Rugged/Waterproof: GPS receivers used on the trail should be able to withstand some abuse, from getting wet in a surprise thunderstorm to being dropped on a rocky trail. Look for at least some protection to dropping and a waterproof rating.

Battery Life: Most new GPS receivers can exceed 16 hours of use on two AA batteries, which works out great for most day trips. It's a good idea, though, to bring along an extra set of batteries.

Positional Accuracy: Look for GPS receivers that utilize a 12-channel parallel receiver system, as this allows the receiver to lock onto multiple satellites at the same time to more accurately pinpoint your location. Many factors affect GPS accuracy, regardless of the model; but some receivers provide enhanced accuracy under certain conditions, such as with a system called WAAS (Wide Area Augmentation System). GPS receivers need unobstructed access to satellites overhead, so to maintain the best connection, they should not be hidden inside a deep pocket or backpack (keep in mind that it is still possible to lose satellite connection even under seemingly perfect conditions).

ADVANCED FEATURES

Maps: Not all GPS receivers have mapping tools. The most basic units document and record data such as miles traveled, waypoints, or elevation, simply as numbers. Some GPS receivers have basic mapping capabilities, showing your location in reference to major roads or towns. Others can be used to access fully-featured topographic maps that are either preloaded or available for purchase. Certain GPS receivers even allow user-created maps to be used. It is important to identify what kind of mapping capability you need, as this variable plays a big role in the overall price.

Color vs. Grayscale: More expensive models tend to provide color screens while less expensive models have a grayscale screen. This factor often goes hand-in-hand with mapping capabilities, as topographic maps are often easier to follow with a color screen. If the intended use of the GPS receiver is less focused on using maps, consider a grayscale model to save some money. It is also important to make sure the screen is readable in the outdoors, as certain screens can appear to be washed out in sunlight.

USEABILITY

Size/Weight: Though many GPS receivers for hiking use are designed to be handheld, their sizes and shapes widely vary. Some are small enough to fit comfortably in a child's hand, while others can be bulkier and be easier to use with larger adult hands. Screen sizes and resolutions also vary, so be sure you can easily read the text and maps on the screen. The best way to figure out what works for you is to find an outdoor retail store such as Campmor or Ramsey Outdoor that carries GPS receivers and allows customers to handle the units and try them out.

PRICE

Each of the above factors influences the cost of a GPS receiver, so if you can decide what you need in a receiver, you can easily narrow your possibilities. A small, grayscale receiver with no or very limited mapping capabilities and other functions may cost about \$100, while a top-of-the-line color receiver with topographic mapping, a touchscreen display, and other advanced features may cost as much as \$600. Luckily, there are some great GPS receivers that offer a good mix of these extremes for around \$300.

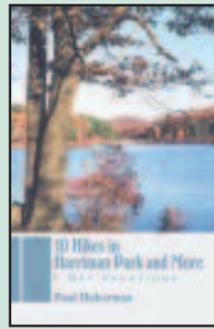
Keep these points in mind as you figure out your needs and research different brands/models on the internet or at an outdoor retailer. Please visit our website at <http://www.nynjtc.org/content/GPS-trail> to learn more about how to choose a GPS receiver and view some specific GPS receiver recommendations. If you have experience with GPS receivers and would like to provide your personal recommendations or additional input, please leave your comments on this webpage for others to read. (You must be a registered user of the site to read and write comments.)



Book Review

10 Hikes in Harriman Park and More

1 Day Vacations



iUniverse, Inc., 2007
Reviewed by Daniel Chazin

When Bill Myles' *Harriman Trails* guidebook was first published in 1992, one shortcoming of the book was that it only described trails and did not suggest any loop hikes. *10 Hikes in Harriman Park and More*, written and published through iUniverse by Paul Huberman, attempts to address this deficiency. It contains descriptions of ten hikes in Harriman-Bear Mountain State Parks, all of which are broken down into "short manageable stretches," along with hand-drawn maps for the first three hikes and many photos. The book also has a list of recommended overlooks, "peaceful spots" and waterfalls in Harriman, and ends with a section, entitled "Extras," that covers such topics as the author's favorite restaurants in nearby Suffern.

Some of the hikes are attractive loops, but one includes a long roadwalk for the return trip, and some involve off-trail hiking for part of route (generally not allowed). The descriptions are not always clear; in some instances, it's impossible to figure out which way to go without consulting a map.

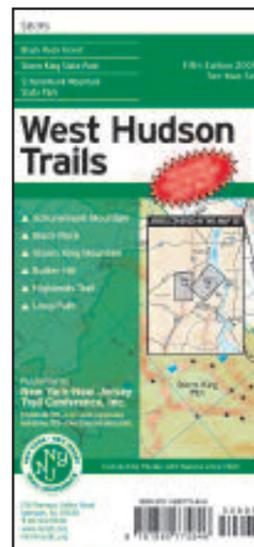
Unfortunately, the text includes substantive and typographical errors. For example, reference is made (p. 9) to the "Hillburn-Torne-Sloatsburg" Trail (it should be "Hillburn-Torne-Sebago"); and the Arden-Surebridge Trail leading down to Lake Skannataki is erroneously identified as the "Ramapo Dunderberg." Two of the three maps contain errors that are pointed out in the text, an awkward solution. The hikes are all rated, but it is difficult to understand why the hike beginning on p. 24, which includes a steep 1,000-foot climb of Bald Mountain, is rated "moderate," as this is one of the most strenuous hikes in the park.

In sum, the author has identified some attractive hikes, but a novice hiker is likely to have some difficulty following the author's descriptions.

Daniel Chazin is editor of the New York and New Jersey Walk Books and other Trail Conference books. He writes the Trail Conference's Hike of the Week column for The Record, in Bergen County.



New West Hudson Trails Map Set Now Available!



The revised fifth edition of the Trail Conference's West Hudson Trails map set is now available. This edition includes updates to the trails in Storm King State Park, Black Rock Forest, and Schunemunk Mountain State Park. New GPS data for many trails was collected by volunteers and used to improve the accuracy of the trail locations, especially in Black Rock Forest.

The maps show the route of the Long Path through Schunemunk Mountain State Park as well as a 20-mile section of the Highlands Trail, including a recently-completed segment that extends down to the Hudson River from Storm King Mountain. The section of Map #113 that includes the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum Outdoor Discovery Center has been revised to show the new entrance to the museum and its updated trail system.

Stay up-to-date with trail changes in the region. Refresh your map collection by ordering this new edition of West Hudson Trails. Or consider giving it as a gift to your trail-using friends and family.

To order, see the Hikers' Marketplace on page 12, call 201-512-9348, shop online at www.nynjtc.org, or stop in at the Trail Conference office.

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Featured Hike



New Highlands/Roomy Mine Trail Loop in Norvin Green S.F.

A new loop hike of 3.1 miles in Norvin Green State Forest in New Jersey is now possible, thanks to an extension of the Roomy Mine Trail to a new junction with the Highlands Trail. (See project story on page 4.)

In the opinion of Central Jersey Trails Co-chairs Bob Jonas and Estelle Anderson, this new route "offers the hiker a little bit of everything as it makes its 3.1-mile circuit up and down a series of hills, passing two old mines, a few scenic viewpoints, a lovely forest, and gorgeous rock outcrops." The description here has been adapted by the *Trail Walker* editor from Daniel Chazin's longer hike write-up on the Trail Conference website (www.nynjtc.org/view/hike).

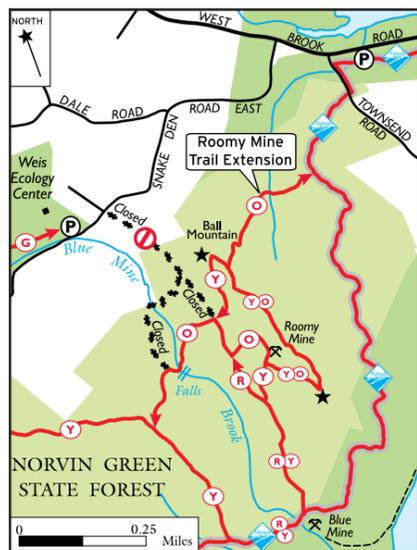


View from near Wyanokie High Point

The hike begins on the Highlands Trail (HT) from a parking area on West Brook Road west of the Wanaque Reservoir. Follow the HT's teal blazes parallel to West Brook Road, turn left onto Townsend Road, then turn right into the woods. The trail climbs, passing the orange-blazed Roomy Mine Trail on the right (the return route), then continues for about half a mile over undulating and scenic terrain, passing many glacial erratic boulders and crossing a number of picturesque rock ledges. It then descends to a junction with the red-on-white-blazed Wyanokie Circular Trail and the yellow-on-white-blazed Mine Trail.

Turn left for 150 feet (do not cross the footbridge), and you'll come to the historic Blue Mine, active in the 1800s but now filled with muddy water. Retrace your steps to the trail junction and proceed north (again, do not cross the footbridge). Continue past the junction with the Highlands Trail, following the red-on-white and yellow-on-white blazes along a rocky woods road. When the yellow-on-white blazes diverge to the right, continue to follow the red-on-white blazes of the Wyanokie Circular Trail.

In 600 feet, look for a small boulder festooned with blazes along the path. The Wyanokie Circular Trail ends here, and you should turn right onto the orange-blazed Roomy Mine Trail. You'll pass the mine entrance in about 500 feet; it is closed to the public. In another 200 feet, turn sharply left and head uphill, now following both the Roomy Mine Trail and the familiar yellow-on-white-blazed Mine Trail. Near the top, you'll reach a south-facing viewpoint over Wyanokie High Point, Carris Hill, and the Wanaque Reservoir. Now turning left and traveling north, a little further along (and up) you'll pass a west-facing viewpoint over Wyanokie High Point and Saddle Mountain.



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When the yellow and orange trails diverge, continue to follow the orange-blazed Roomy Mine Trail, which turns right and descends, first on switchbacks and rock steps, then more gradually to its end on the Highlands Trail. (This trail section was recently constructed by a Girl Scout for her Gold Award; see page 4.) Turn left onto the Highlands Trail and retrace your steps to your car.

Directions (from north and east): I-287 to exit 57. Take Skyline Drive to its northwestern end at Greenwood Lake Turnpike (County Route 511). Turn left and proceed south for 1.6 miles, then turn right onto West Brook Road and cross the Wanaque Reservoir. At the next T junction, turn left and proceed for 0.3 mile to a pullout on the left, with cement blocks and a gate. **Despite the "No Trespassing" signs, hiker parking is permitted here. Leave a note reading "Hiker" on your dashboard, and do not block the gate.**

Hikers' Marketplace



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Please order by circling price Retail Member P/H Total

Maps (TC published except where noted. Discounted shipping available for orders of 8 or more.)

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