Eddie Walsh gets State Trail Worker Award from American Trails

Eddie Walsh, a life-long member and volunteer of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, was recognized as State Trail Worker in New York for 2010 by American Trails, a national trails advocacy organization. The award was made at the group’s 20th annual symposium held in November in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Eddie has been assisting with trail development and maintenance since an early age, learning in the company of his father Ed, a Trail Conference Life Member (as is Eddie) with decades of trail service to his credit, particularly on the Long Path. Over the years Eddie’s passion for trails has led him to become a leader in both training volunteers in the various skills for trail development and coordinating the on-the-ground work. While Eddie continues to volunteer his expertise and muscle on trail projects, he has also turned his passion into a career and business, building trails for enhanced trail recreation in our local area/state.

They included cuts to State Parks (8.3% according to his executive summary) and DEC (5%). The “good” news is that these proposed cuts are in line with, not more than, cuts proposed to other agencies. Additional “good” news is that he promises to appropriate $134 million to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), the same as the prior year. (This includes $17 million for open space acquisition and funding for other parks and stewardship programs.) And the governor has promised no “sweeps” from the EPF, the practice of diverting money from environmental projects into other state projects.

Given the fiscal situation in the state, many environmentalists consider the governor’s proposals a good sign that he is committed to environmental concerns, although at a much reduced level. (The EPF was scheduled to be funded at $300 million in the 2011-12 budget year.) As this budget is negotiated with the legislature, those who support parks and open space need to stay vigilant and be ready to jump to their defense.

For the first time in 11 years, the Trail Conference is adding a new region to its popular line of durable Tyvek map sets.* This spring, enjoy the lookout for Jersey Highlands—Central.

This two-map set will show marked hiking trails throughout the central part of the New York Highlands and adjacent areas, including parks such as Fanny State Park, Pyramid Mountain, High Mountain Park Preserve, Allamuchy Mountain State Park, and Mahlon Dickerson Reservation. A large portion of the Highlands Trail is also shown. The map complements the current North Jersey Trails map set, which focuses on an area of the Jersey Highlands further north.

The map set is being produced in partnership with the Land Conservancy of New Jersey.

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*“Seeding Forest Trails map, first published in 2000, was the last “new” regional map added to our catalog."
Nominations - We Want Your Voice To Be Heard

The Trail Conference Nominating Committee is seeking Delegates-at-Large and nominations for membership on the Board of Directors. The conference is looking for new talent to fill the positions of Delegates-at-Large and Board of Directors on the Trail Conference. The qualifications for Board of Directors are current membership in the Trail Conference and service participation in trails maintenance or on a Trail Conference committee. Self-nomination for Delegate-at-Large and Board of Directors are appropriate and welcome. Please email your nomination to nominations@nynjtc.org. Nominating Committee members are: Ailin Dodd (chair), Jim Gregoire, John Gunzler, Eddie Walsh, and Mary Smith.

Thruway Sporting Goods Now Offers Discounts to Our Members!

The Thruway Conference is pleased to announce a new retail partner. Thruway Sporting Goods in Walden, NY, now offers our members a 10% discount (you must show your member card off at the cash register to get the special price). Thruway will also make a donation to the Trail Conference for each purchase made on the ad page 9.

Visit Thruway Sporting Goods online at www.thruwaysports.com or in person at 78 Oak St. Walden, NY.

OUR PARKS ON LIFE SUPPORT

continued from page 1

New York: Where's the Duct Tape?

In New York, park personnel overseeing administration, maintenance, and operations at parks is at 35% below levels targeted for good stewardship, down to an average of just one superintendent (or less), one customer service assistant, and two to three maintenance workers per park. Some of these parks are over 50,000 acres with an understaffed maintenance to capacity in their early morning hours. This ongoing lack of funding from the state has also led to the cumulative degradation of the maintenance equipment used to keep parks open. For example, since 2006 no new maintenance vehicles or equipment purchases have been made in the New York parks system, forcing maintenance staff to push older vehicles beyond their capacity and often into unsafe operating conditions. This has led to a host of horror stories that involve PVC piping being used to replace broken shifters, old road signs being repurposed to patch rusted holes in the floors of trucks, and staff going to junk yards to buy replacement parts that have been out of production for years. Just how long these parks can operate at this level before public access is uncertain. During the January 2011 Blizzard, for example, many parks were closed for several days because all their plows were broken.

With staff barely able to keep parks open as is, additional cuts could well be the death blow that results in park closings.

Message to Officials:

Public Money = Volunteer Help = Value

Officials in both New York and New Jersey need to realize that parks are some of the best examples of well-managed, cost-efficient, public-private partnerships. Nonprofit groups, including the Trail Conference, already subsidize operating and capital costs, saving the taxpayers millions. But volunteers can’t do it alone. We need the gates open and support from staff to keep parks accessible to the public.

Now is the time advocates for our parks should speak up. Visit our website (click on Get Involved-Talk-Advocate for Trails) to find the latest info and links to elected state officials. If you are interested in leading in the Trail Conference efforts to support New York’s state parks system, contact our New Jersey Program Coordinator Chris Ingui at chrisingui@nynjtc.org. In New York, contact West Hudson Program Coordinator Larry Wheelock at wheelock@nynjtc.org.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s 38th Biennial Conference Virginia Journeys 2011

July 1 – 8, 2011

Emory & Henry College

Morrovia

Hosted by the seven A.T. maintaining clubs of Central and Southwest Virginia, the Biennial will celebrate the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Blue Ridge Mountain Trails of Virginia. Planned around ATC’s membership meeting, Virginia Journeys 2011 is also an opportunity for A.T. enthusiasts to take a Trail-related workshop, hike on the A.T. (and other trails in Virginia), and explore Damascus, Virginia, the “friendliest town on the trail.”

Register, volunteer, and find out more about the Biennial. Find links at www.appalachiantrail.org.

EDDIE WALSH

continued from page 1

(ATA), New York, and others. Eddie Walsh was named as an ATC Christian Stewardhip Board Representative for Rockland County. Eddie is a hike leader for both the New York-North Jersey Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Westchester Trails Association. He recently was elected as president of the latter organization. Eddie lives in Tarrytown, NY, with his wife, Toni.

Dept. of Clarifications

In the January/February Trail Walker story, “OSI Purchase Closes Long Path Gap on Shawangunk Ridge,” Andy Garrison was quoted as saying: “Now we have a permanently protected corridor…” stretching from Wurtsboro to Jersey Lane to Minnewaska State Park Preserve.” Clarification: While the OSI purchase does close a gap in a protected corridor, it does not close the entire 75-mile Shawangunk Ridge Trail. It does not stay on those protected lands; its route also crosses privately owned land, with the permission of the land owners.

“I have memories of Eddie coming down the mountain with what seemed to me to be impossible amounts of tools strapped all over his body...”

Eddie’s dedication to trail development and rapport with trail volunteers is captured by Linda Ingui, once a volunteer at Bear Mountain. Linda says: “Just being around him is, I am truly astonished at how humble he is. Eddie is always open to others’ concepts and never dismisses another out of hand. He rates him on this recognition on the spot. I am proud to say that I work with him.”

Eddie’s role as a hike leader on the Appalachian Trail has greatly contributed to our trails system, and he has been instrumental in reaching his goals. For example, he is a hike leader for both the New York-North Jersey Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Westchester Trails Association. He recently was elected as president of the latter organization. Eddie lives in Tarrytown, NY, with his wife, Toni.

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From the Executive Director

What’s that Buzzing Sound?

This issue of Trail Walker is compiled during what many think of as the quiet season for trail work—mid January and February. But the buzz of activity around me—and I don’t mean only our chainsaws out clearing winter blow-downs—tells a different story.

Members of our Volunteer Committee are in the next room, busy collecting the names of all our volunteers for 2010 so we can publicly recognize and thank you for your work (see pages 6-8). They are adding up the hours you contribute to building and maintaining trails, surveying protected trail corridors, investigating the presence of invasive species, field checking trail info that we publish for public use, and meet- ing, speaking, and writing as advocates for trails. These hours are reported annually to our funders, to our trail partners, and to elected officials. The numbers help us make the case that public investment in parks and open space is an especially good deal because it is leveraged by significant contributions by volunteers. (This is why it’s so important for ALL volunteers to report the hours they work and travel for their assignments.)

Earlier, I listened as our Publications Committee zipped off in a new direction, investigating the best ways to make Trail Conference map and editorial content available using new and constantly evolving digital formats. With guidance from newly recruited volunteer consultants, we aim to make our books available as e-books and our maps and collection of hundreds of hike descriptions downloadable on mobile devices, such as smart phones. We know we must keep up with changing communication technologies if we are to remain the education and information resource for hikers and other trail users in our region. We also know that we must take care to protect our numerous and valuable assets such as maps and trail information. But there is lots of excitement among our volunteers and staff about the possibilities for expanding awareness of the Trail Conference and delivery of our maps and books.

Our Conservation & Advocacy Committee has been ringing up phone time and is actively monitoring New York State’s acquisition plans for land parcels that we acquired years ago to protect the Long Path and Shawangunk Ridge Trail. Despite very severe cutbacks in the state’s land acquisition funds, we remain hopeful that New York will use some of what little remains to fulfill its promises to acquire this land from us. The committee has also been active, in collaboration with other groups, in efforts to defend and restore park buddies in New York and New Jersey.

The Darlington Schoolhouse Committee has dished open envelopes that contained bids to do Phase II restoration of this historic structure as our future office space in Mah-wah. Funding is in place, needed permits are in hand, and, through a rigorous bid process, we have hired a contractor, Zinno Construction of Vernon, NJ, and we plan to break ground in March. Plans are racing ahead for what will unquestionably be the busiest Trail University workshop season we have ever planned (see page 1), from Staten Island to the Catskills. We thank outdoor sporting goods company REI for its financial support of this expanded schedule of workshops. Trail Chairs met in the office one Saturday in January. These are the volunteers who keep our regional trail committees (trail supervisors) staffed and on track, and who coordinate trail work with park managers and other land owners. They reviewed procedures, shared ideas, and got focused on the work season to come.

And finally, there is the hub of new staff members. After the trauma of layoffs in 2008, in response to the national economic meltdown, the generosity of Trail Conference supporters has created opportunities for us to rebuild. We are delighted to once again have a Program Coordinator for New Jersey—Chris Ingui, a former trail volunteer at Bear Mountain who quickly graduated to paid project manager and is already familiar to many of you. As of the deadline for this issue, we are interviewing for a brand-new position of Catskill Region Program Coordinator. Long-time staffer Larry Wyslock, who has been coordinat- ing all West of Hudson River programs, from New Jersey through the Catskills, will enjoy the more manageable—but still big—task of coordinating the West Hudson area that lies between New Jersey and the Catskills. Leigh Draper continues as East Hudson Program Coordinator. That background buzz you hear is the hub of Trail Conference people gearing up for a new season of trail work.

Executive Director

Save the Date and Join Us on National Trails Day, June 4

We’ll be celebrating the opening of the Accessible Trail project at the top of Bear Mountain.

Hikes, Delegates Meeting, More!

Watch our website for details!

Trail Inventory Monitors Needed in NJ

The Trail Conference is developing a comprehensive inventory of trail conditions and is seeking volunteers to help inventory approximately 100 miles of trail in four northern New Jersey state parks. The project builds upon a pilot trails inventory project conducted by the Trail Conference in New Jersey’s Farny Highlands. A grant from the State of New Jersey will further develop this comprehensive trail inventory will expand the inventory to High Point State Park, Stokes State Forest, Wawayanda State Park, and Worthington State Forest.

Trail Inventory Monitors will use a GPS-enabled handheld device to collect important information about trails (deficiencies and assets such as bridges, viewpoints, unauthorized campsites, and areas of trail erosion) that the Trail Conference can use to assess and improve trails in the region. Training will be provided, and data will be collected during the upcoming spring, summer, and fall seasons. After training, volunteers—individuals or teams—will be assigned to each of the four parks.

An individual should be familiar with GPS devices and be able to assess trail conditions; training in assessment will be provided.

If you have an interest in helping us inventory public trails in these parks in New Jersey, please visit our website at www.nynjtc.org/volunteer or contact our Volunteer Administrator at volunteers@nynjtc.org or 201-512-9348 ext. 22.

March 2, 6, 7 & 8!

Two locations:
New York City & Rockland County/Northern New Jersey

See exciting films on mountain themes from around the world.

VISIT SPONSOR TABLES, WIN GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES & SUPPORT THE PROGRAMS OF THE NEW YORK - NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE

Wednesday, March 2, 7pm
Suffern, NY – Lafayette Theater
Tickets at Ramsey Sports after February 1

Sunday, March 6, Monday, March 7 and Tuesday, March 8, 7:30pm
New York City – Peter Norton Symphony Space
Programs are the same on Sunday and Monday. Tuesday is entirely different. Tickets at Paragon Sports

Find ticket information, film lists, and directions, at www.chestnuttnmiproductions.com click on “Banff Mountain Film Festival”
Be a Path to, and in, the Bronx

The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park (FCVP), in partnership with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, seeks 12-20 volunteers interested in developing critical skills focused on clearing, improving, and maintaining high quality trails for the Bronx community. Recruiting trail volunteers is the next step in FCVP’s implementation of a park trail plan that was developed by the Trail Conference and adopted by FCVP in 2010 (see March/April 2010 Trail Blazer).

New trail volunteers will have the opportunity to enroll in Trail Conference workshops to be scheduled at the park and to work alongside trails professionals, learning techniques for stone work, trail construction, and sustainable design. All events begin at 9am. Please phone/email the schedule and details.

For more information, please contact Sandy Sullivan in order to receive email notices of work outings or check the Metro Trail Crew page on the Trail Conference website.

Westchester County Parks

Westchester County Parks has planned projects for 2011:

- Trail repair & drainage work
- Pipelines work to impact trails
- New bridge replacement
- Dam repair

Volunteers are needed. No experience necessary. We provide gloves, tools, training.

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

Pipeline Work to Impact Trails in Wawayanda and Long Pond Ironworks Parks

Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company planned to begin construction of a new pipeline across Wawayanda and Long Pond Ironworks State Parks on February 1, 2011. Winter tree clearing will be followed by spring and summer pipeline installation. Restoration efforts will continue through the fall. Trails will be closed periodically during specific construction phases. Trails that will be affected are, in Wawayanda, Old Coal Trail, Terrace Pond North, Turkey Ridge Trail, and Cabin Trail. In Long Pond Ironworks: Hewitt-Butler Trail, Monks Trail and the Cooperator-Union Trail.

The Trail Conference will post trail closings online in our Trail News section as they become known.

Work Set to Begin on Seven Lakes Drive Bridge Replacement

Some time in mid to late March, work is expected to start on a project in Harriman State Park to replace the bridge on Seven Lakes Drive over the spillway of Lake Aukot Dam. The trail markers for the Long Path take hikers over the bridge. During the construction period, it would be prudent to detour around this small segment by cross- ing the stream below the bridge and then cross Seven Lakes Drive south of the construction zone. The parking area and Lake Skanahattan boat launch will remain open, however, some of the parking area may be used for equipment storage. The boat launch for Lake Aukot (adjacent to the south end of the bridge) will not be accessible for the duration of the work. The project should take eight to nine months to complete. The bridge will be replaced one lane at a time in order to keep the road open to alternating one-way traffic.

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

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

REGIONAL TRAIL CREWS

CORNELL UNIVERSITY TRAIL CREW
Leaders: Bob Jones & Estelle Anderson
Phone: 973-637-5326 Cell: 908-830-3883
Email: CUL/Trailshop@cornell.net

Some of the projects planned for 2011:
Trail repair & drainage
Trail organizing
Trail “Tunnplogging”
Bridge replacement

Please check the website or watch E-Walker for schedule details as they are set.

NORTH JERSEY WEEKEND CREW
Leader: Sandy Port. 732-469-0109

Second Sunday of each month
Trip start at 9:00 am. Check location and details during the week before the scheduled trip day.
Tasks include removing trash from trail and bridge building in the Mennenland Community Trails Program, a partnership between the Trail Conference and Teatown Lake Reservation.

Projects are planned for: Harriman State Park, Mennenland Community Trails, Angel Fly Preserve, South Taconics, Teatown Lake Reservation.

WEST HUNSON SOUTH CREW
Leaders: Chris Ernst, Marc Kingsley: 516-431-1146, musicnumber99@yahoo.com
Brian Draper: 718-218-7563, briandramorandrews.com
Claudia Isaac: 212-633-1234, isacculet@hotmail.com
Bob Marshall: 914-737-4792, marshallb@optonline.net
Monica Day: 732-597-9098, Cell: 908-507-3049, wesleyr@aol.com

TRAIL CREW LEADERS
Jersey: Leaders: Monica and David Day
Phone: 732-937-9088 Cell: 908-307-5049
Email: wesleyrcrew@aol.com
Website: www.trailstobuild.com

Note: Please check our website or at www.njtrail.org/ content/trail-crew-schedules for expanded information.

April 2011

Individual Trail Conference volunteers and those with our member clubs keep 1700+ miles of trails open for the public. In addition, we field regional crews of volunteers who take on the heavy lifting of building new trails, rehabilitating damaged trails, and constructing bridges. Our new Roving Crew of Volunteers and Trail Volunteers trained to do challenging stone work projects. All crews welcome new members: training occurs “on the trail” or in Trail U workshops.

March – April 2011

HIGHLANDS TRAIL WEST CREW
Leaders: Adam Rosenberg
Phone: 973-626-0852
Email: dotsonian@verizon.net

We tackle various jobs building new sections or rescuing 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.

Saturday, March 19 and April 3
Spring patrol takes with late maintenance.

METRO CREW
Leaders: Joseph Holz
Phone: 718-614-2219
Email: joseph.holz@icloud.com
Linda Draper
Phone: 473-721-0133
Email: marmilind@yahoo.com
Lifeline Gonzalez Email: t.gonzalez@verizon.net

We work in various parks throughout New York City, generally the third Saturday of each month. May through October, with additional work dates as needed. No experience necessary. We provide gloves, tools, training.

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

Saturday, March 26
Staten Island Greenbelt Trail Maintenance 101

The crew will assist with this most popular of Trail Conference workshops. Go to www.njtrail.org/views/workshops for details and to register.

Saturday, April 16
State Island Greenbelt Trail News

The crew will continue work on the Blue Trail. Prior experience is required. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a guardian on all general crew trips.

EAST HUNSON CREW
The East Hudson Trail Crew is seeking leaders and members. Contact Leigh Draper at draper@nyctc.org or 201-739-4434 for more information.

Trail work in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties will support the Hudson Hills & Highlands Community Trails Program, a partnership between the Trail Conference and Teatown Lake Reservation.

Projects are planned for: Fahrenstock State Park, Hudson Highlands State Park, Yorktown Community Trails Project, Angle Fly Preserve, South Taconics, Teatown Lake Reservation.

April 2011

- THE JOHN MUIR NATURE TRAIL is a 1.5-mile trail located in the Borough of Manhattan. The trail is named for the father of nature conservation. It is open for the public. In addition, we field regional crews of volunteers who take on the heavy lifting of building new trails, rehabilitating damaged trails, and constructing bridges. We welcome new members: training occurs “on the trail” or in Trail U workshops.
- Cascade Trail, 914-307-3333
- The crew of the Cascade Trail is seeking leaders and members. Contact Leigh Draper at draper@nyctc.org or 201-739-4434 for more information.
- HIGHLANDS TRAIL WEST CREW
- The crew of the Highlands Trail is comprised of volunteers with the local member clubs of the Trail Conference. They do various work at various locations throughout the state.
- E- WALKER
- E-Walker is the Trail Conference’s e-newsletter.
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- E-Walker is the Trail Conference’s e-newsletter.
- April 2011
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TRAIL CREW SCHEDULES

**EVERY WEDNESDAY - 5PM TO 8PM**

**ROVING CREW OF STONEWORKERS**

**JOLLY ROVERS—A NEW CREW**

Contact: Chris Ingai, cingai@nynjtc.org

Volunteers trained in rock work will provide construction and training support to address special trail challenges across the New York/New Jersey region. New recruits will be required to take all workshops at Bear Mountain to qualify for membership. See Trail U listings.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

The Trail Conference frequently collaborates with Friends groups, park and preserve land managers, and our member clubs and organizations on special trail projects. Often these welcome new volunteers and provide training.

**BUILD A CATSKILL LEAN-TO**

Support for this project is provided by the Christopher Moscat Medal Fund.

Dates: TBD, but likely four days in May/June. Location: Shohondon Brook in Saugus, NY. (Catamounts Map #142)

New volunteers welcome. No experience necessary. We will disassemble old shelter, clear site, and build new lean-to.

Contact: Larry Wheeler at 201-512-9348, ext. 16 or wheelow@nynjtc.org

**BEAR MOUNTAIN TRAILS PROJECT**

Trail Crew members include the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Office, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

Through November 28

Thursday-Monday, 8:30-4:30pm

Learn how to install stone steps; just one of many trainings offered by Trail U.

Workshops in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties support the Hudson Highlands Community Trails Program, a partnership between the Trail Conference and Teatown Lake Reservation.

Some scheduled workshops were not yet scheduled as of the deadline for this issue. For additional details or to register for a course, go to www.nyntjc.org/view/workshops

Volunteer Orientation

A quick introduction to the Trail Conference: who we are, what we do, who we work with. You’ll leave with a good sense—and a printed list— of the ways you can get involved and support the trail projects. Other volunteers and Trail Conference staff will answer your questions about volunteering with the Trail Conference.

Tuesday, March 22

Greenbush Nature Center, Staten Island

Thursday, April 7; 6:30-8:00pm

Teatown Lake Reservation

Thursday, April 14; 6:30-8:00pm

Teatown Lake Reservation

**Trail Maintenance 101**

This one-day orientation covers the skills necessary to maintain a hiking trail so it is passable and harmonious with its surroundings. Students will learn assessment of trail conditions, clearing, proper use of tools and how to report any trail problems. Beginners are welcome.

Saturday, March 5

Corlant Point Park, Bronx

Saturday, March 26

High Rock Visitors Studio, Staten Island

Sunday, April 3

Putnam County Land Trust

Saturday, April 23

Teatown Lake Reservation, Westchester County

**Intro to Trail Building**

During this one-day workshop, students will learn about the basic elements that make a hiking trail sustainable as well as the techniques and tools used to construct hiking trails from scratch.

Saturday, April 20

Teatown Lake Reservation, Westchester County

**Workshops in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties**

GPS and GIS for Trail Management

The one day workshop provides a basic level of skills for using Global Positioning Systems and Geographic Information Systems to aid in trail layout, design and inventory keeping. This is a great workshop for all you “techies” who love to hike.

Date TBD

With Putnam County Land Trust

**Trail Layout & Design**

This two-day workshop is devoted to establishing guidelines for laying out a safe, exciting and ecologically sound trail. Topics: identifying control points, methods of highlighting landscape features, and understanding sustainable trail principles, using clinometers to measure trail and ridge heights.

Date TBD

Location: Saugerties, Ulster County

**Orientation: Bear Mountain Trails Project**

An all-day review and walk through of the Bear Mountain Appalachian Trail Restoration project with explanations of the techniques used to make the trail passable and harmonious with its surroundings.

Friday, April 1

Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx

Saturday-Sunday, April 16-17

Morgan Green State Forest, NJ

Saturday-Sunday, May 21-22

Teatown Lake Reservation/Yorktown, Westchester County

**Angle Fly Preserve, Westchester County**

**Suggested Readings**

This two-day workshop will teach the basics of trail identification and introduce 14 common invasive plants. It will prepare you to be a volunteer in the Trail Conference’s Invasive Strike Force (ISF). These 14 plants are to be surveyed in the first phase of a New York State invasive surveying project (see story, page 9). If you would like to help us collect data for the ISF and how to use a GPS unit. An outdoor session will allow you to practice plant identification and collection. ISF-trained volunteers will be assigned a specific route (about 1.2 miles) along which to collect invasive plants. The data will be used to target eradication by a specially trained crew.

Saturday, April 2

Bear Mountain State Park

**Intro to Invasive Plant Identification**

This workshop will teach the basics of trail identification and introduce 14 common invasive plants. It will prepare you to be a volunteer in the Trail Conference’s Invasive Strike Force (ISF). These 14 plants are to be surveyed in the first phase of a New York State invasive surveying project (see story, page 9). You will be taught how to collect data for the ISF and how to use a GPS unit. An outdoor session will allow you to practice plant identification and collection. ISF-trained volunteers will be assigned a specific route (about 1.2 miles) along which to collect invasive plants. The data will be used to target eradication by a specially trained crew.

Saturday, April 30

Bear Mountain State Park

**Intro to Trail Building**

During this one-day workshop, students will learn about the basic elements that make a hiking trail sustainable as well as the techniques and tools used to construct hiking trails from scratch.

Saturday, April 20

Teatown Lake Reservation, Westchester County

**Word Pround Ridge Reservation**

Weekend Trail Maintenance Workshop

Contact: vpmtrailmaintainer@gmail.com

**Wonder Lake State Park Trail Project**

With Fahnestock State Park, in Putnam County

Contact: Legh Draper at leghdraper@nynjtc.org or 201-759-4344 for more information

**Putnam County Land Trust Volunteer Orientation**

Thursday, March 24; 7:00-8:30pm

Sunday, March 27; 1:00-2:30pm

**Work Days**

Saturday, April 30

Sunday, May 15

**Contact:** Judy Tenorio at 845-208-4402 for more information or email info@putnamct.org

**Bear Mountain Trails Project**

Contact: Tim Messerich, tscott.messerich@nynjtc.org or 845-297-9573

**Roving Trail Crew Seeks Members**

By Invitation to previously trained volunteers

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**March/April 2011 Page 5**

**Hills & Highlands Community Trails Program**

Conference partners include the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, National Park Service, Appalachian Trail Office, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

Through November 28

Thursday-Monday, 8:30-4:30pm

Learn how to install stone steps; just one of many trainings offered by Trail U.

Saturday, May 14; 4:00pm

Sterling Forest State Park

Saturday, May 14

FDR State Park, Yorktown Heights

Saturday, May 21; 10:00am-4pm

North-South Lakes, Catskills County

Date TBD

Bedford Audubon Center, Westchester County

Date TBD

South Taconic State Park, Ditches/Columbia County

Date TBD

Musher River Unique Area, Shawangunks/Catskills

**Introduction to Stonework**

Students will learn how to set stones and use stone working tools. A stone cribwalling wall, rock staircase or terrace will be built during training.

Friday, April 1

Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx

Saturday-Sunday, April 16-17

Morgan Green State Forest, NJ

Saturday-Sunday, May 21-22

Teatown Lake Reservation/Yorktown, Westchester County

Date TBD

**Angle Fly Preserve, Westchester County**

**Suggested Readings**

This two-day workshop will teach the basics of trail identification and introduce 14 common invasive plants. It will prepare you to be a volunteer in the Trail Conference’s Invasive Strike Force (ISF). These 14 plants are to be surveyed in the first phase of a New York State invasive surveying project (see story, page 9). If you would like to help us collect data for the ISF and how to use a GPS unit. An outdoor session will allow you to practice plant identification and collection. ISF-trained volunteers will be assigned a specific route (about 1.2 miles) along which to collect invasive plants. The data will be used to target eradication by a specially trained crew.

[Image 235x1007 to 584x1206]
As a result of this impressive volunteer commitment, an expansive and high-quality trail network, supported by outstanding information and educational resources, is available to millions of people in the most densely settled part of our nation.

What a gift Trail Conference volunteers make to our collective well-being!

Thank You!

Trail Conference Volunteer Committee

April is National Volunteer Month, and we take advantage of this March/April issue of Trail Walker to acknowledge and thank the many Trail Conference volunteers who have been so generous with their time and energy during 2010. We list every individual, maintaining member club, and group recorded in our database as having made a volunteer contribution in 2010. If your name, or that of another, is missing, please tell us by contacting us at volunteers@nyntnc.org. We want to keep and correct the record. Our apologies for any omissions or other errors.

The Trail Conference is a large organization with volunteers pursuing diverse activities on behalf of trails. We have attempted to be comprehensive in listing everyone: trailkeepers, crew members, club leaders, trail stewards, corridor monitors, lean-to caretakers, book editors, publications field checkers, proofreaders, hike writers, Trail Conference workers, technology advisers, GPS trackers, office assistants, web editors, legal advisers, marketing consultants, policy advocates, workshop trainers. We estimate that more than 60,000 hours were donated in 2010 by over 1,400 volunteers. (While our list includes about 1,400 names, countless more volunteer with their clubs but are not reported to us.)

As a result of this impressive volunteer commitment, an expansive and high-quality trail network, supported by outstanding information and educational resources, is available to millions of people in the most densely settled part of our nation.

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Trail Conference Volunteer Committee
There is no “I” in Hiking

Personally, I am not a big fan of hiking alone. But I can understand why people do it. There is the solitude. You don’t have to hear other people’s complaints or jokes. You can go at your own pace, as for as long as you like and stop whenever you want. The woods are definitely more peaceful and quieter during those times.

But even if you venture off by yourself, there are people backing up. Are there the builders that the trails and the maintainers that keep them up? Are there those who make the maps, create the trail books and keep them all up to date. Is there the office staff that allows the Trail Conference to function. Are there supervisors who supervise it all. And then there are the people in Search and Rescue who give their time and risk their lives to help you if you get into trouble.

So even if you go off into the woods by yourself, remember, you are never truly alone.

Dan Van Engle, chair, Volunteer Committee
A Trio of Early Woodland Wildflowers
By Edna Greig

As winter’s cold gives way to the warmer and longer days of spring, the earliest wood-land wildflowers awaken to tap the energy of the sunshine that passes through the leaf-less tree canopy. These diminutive plants have only a brief time to flower and set seed before the trees leaf out and claim the sun’s energy. By mid June, there is little sign of the brief aboveground show of many of these wildflowers, usually only their roots persist until the following spring. Another explanation may be that the mottled leaves have a trout-like coloring. Like hepatica, the seeds of trout lily are dispersed by ants.

Round-lobed hepatica
Round-lobed hepatica (Hepatica americana) is found in upland woods, especially those dominated by sugar maple and mixed hardwoods. It is not a true spring ephemeral because of the leaves of the previous year persist, although somewhat tattered and brownish, and protect the emerging flower buds of the next generation. As early as late March, the flower buds begin to bloom in a variety of colors, from white to pink to lavender to various shades of blue. Each plant has several to many flowers that are about one inch across and have what appear to be six to eight petals that, to be botanically correct, are actually sepals. The flowers are sometimes fragrant. Hepatica comes from the Greek word for liver and relates to the liver-like shape of its three-lobed leaves. Not surprisingly, another common name for the plant is liverwort.

The seeds of hepatica mature by late May. Each small yellow berry matures in late May or early June. Another common name is ground nut, because it has a small round root nodule. Dwarf ginseng is a relative of the larger wild ginsengs (Panax quinquefolium), also native to the northeast but infrequently found because it has been over-collected for medicinal uses. These are just three of the early spring wildflowers that grace our woods. Be observant and you may find others.

Further reading: Newcombs Wildflower Guide by Lawrence Newcomb is an excellent amateur field guide to the wildflowers of the northeast. It has a user-friendly key system that makes wildflower identification a pleasure. Edna Greig is a frequent contributor to Trail Walker of articles on the natural world.

Round-lobed hepatica
Dwarf ginseng

Have you ever hiked along the trail admiring the variety of wildflowers, shrubs, and ferns and then run into an area choked with a single species of thorny shrub or a vine climbing over everything? What was going on? Often those aggressive species are non-native that are invading the area and causing a problem for native plant communities. With support from a Recreational Trails Grant, a federal program administered in New Jersey by the Dept. of Environmental Protection, the Trail Conference is gearing up an initiative we are calling the Invasives Strike Force to protect the diversity of life along our trails by mapping these invasive species and targeting removals to prevent their spread into native communities. The study follows on the heels of our four-year project, “Tracking the Wild Invasives,” which surveyed trails in eight parks in New York and New Jersey. Experience, volunteers, and materials developed during that project, conducted jointly with Rutgers University and USDA, will be put to work in the new survey. Invasive plants are a problem, because they did not evolve naturally in the community and therefore have not formed mutual relationships with other plants and animals that keep their populations in check. Thus these populations grow out of control and suppress or crowd out the native species. The result is not only the loss of diversity but also the loss of food resources for animals; as above, so below.

Up to 90% of insect species that eat plants are specialized on a single species of plant or group of species; once these plants are gone, the insect’s food source is gone too. Many terrestrial bird species rear their young on insects; if the insect population decreases, the bird population decreases as well. It’s a domino effect started by invasive plants. Come join us in making a difference! Anyone interested in learning how to identify invasive plants can volunteer to map a two-mile section of trail. Thanks to our grant from New Jersey DEP most of the invasive work will be conducted on New Jersey trails this year.

We will be conducting training classes in May and June (see Trail U schedule on page 5) on some of the more common invaders, so we can catch them before they become a huge problem. If you participated in the Trail Conference’s previous invasives study in 2006-2009, you can take a short refresher course and be ready to go.

Japanese still grass dominates a New Jersey woodland.

Japanese still grass (Microstegium vimineum) is not necessary to work on the trail crew. If you are interested in mapping a trail section, being a Strike Force trail crew member, or both. Contact Linda Rohleder via email at rohleder36@comcast.net or phone at 862-779-1400.
April flowers in our region include Ditchburn's Liriope (Liriope cinctularia).
Leave No Trace: Ethics & Trail Tips

By Bob Russo

Stick to the trail! Spring is coming, and many of us will be hiking our favorite trails and hiking some new ones.

No doubt, we will be encountering wet and muddy areas on those trails. It’s a human tendency to avoid wet and muddy places, and no walk around them. Please don’t!

Instead, observe this Leave No Trace front-country principle: Stick to the trail.

Trails in our region travel forested areas, which are delicate and vulnerable environments. Going off trail to avoid getting your boots and socks wet can damage this ecosystem and create a spur trail that others tend to follow.

Moos, for example, is a very important part of the forest ecosystem. One slope of a hiker’s boot may destroy half a century’s growth. So, your boots will get muddy, they can always be clean. (Just bring a pair or two of dry socks.)

Bob Russo is a Trail Conference member and volunteer and a Leave No Trace Master Educator. Find more Leave No Trace principles at www.lnt.org.

By Bob Russo

Sunday, April 24

ICMC, Easter & Passover in the Woods, NY. Leader: Larry Spinrad, 845-654-8996 (spinal@rochester.rr.com), call 7:15pm only, meet: 10am at #11, Boscobel, NY behind Town Hall/Fishbowl. Moderate. Join in as we celebrate the holidays at all skill levels and beginners welcome. Holiday enjoyment pass. Leader will bring trail treats to share on the trail along the way. We’ll also see well-inked weather remains, call after 7am if in doubt.

URCE, Bear Mountain Preserve, Somersett, NJ. Leader: Joel Hamilton, 718-750-0208. Meet: 9am at parking lot on right. Moderate 5 miles. We’ll hike the Ridge Trail. Geologists describe this as sub-sedimentary and granite rock formed 150-180 million years ago when the area was under the sea.

Saturday, April 30

IRC, Roosevelt Island, NY. Leaders: Craig Raha/Mark Berman, 212-777-0078. Contact leader for meet time and location. Moderate/paced 7 miles. Group stops at scenic points to learn and practice. Bring camera in sketchpad with colored pencils or crayons.

ARC-NY, NYCT, Tip Top Preserve, NY. Leader: Joe Borow, broker@ny7600.com. Contact leader for meet time and location. Medintense paced 7 miles hike along the Tip Top Preserve Trail. End will bring lunch and lots of water. Heavy terrain. The pace is steady, but not fast. Most of the route is fairly flat.

Saturday, May 7

SNW, The Great Sandhur, Manhattan, NY. For more info www.greatsandhur.org. Annual Zorrie walk around Manhattan’s rims. The pace is steady built fast. Meet in the middle of 4th week. We keep to the midtown as much as possible. No road stalls. We walk through more than 200 parks, and brush old cultures. There are many points of interest you can easily join in or stop off and catch public transportation.

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 discount, 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.nyntc.org/content/retail-partners for current offers.

25% Discount on Trail Conference publications and clothing when purchased directly from the Trail Conference office that includes more than 1,000 books and columns that will enhance your hiking experiences.

Money-Saving Discounts at participating retailers and businesses.

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

Volunteer Opportunities to “learn by doing” in areas as varied as trail maintenance, construction, publications, environmental monitoring, and cartography.

Access to the Hoeferlin Library at the Trail Conference office that includes more than 1,000 books on hiking worldwide, along with maps, guides and a historical archive.

The Trail Conference’s bi-monthly newsletter filled with timely articles and columns that will enhance your hiking experiences.

NYNJC Trail Conference BENEFITS

New membership discount program.

You must bring your valid membership card to area retailers for the following benefits:

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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.

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Access to the Hoeferlin Library at the Trail Conference office that includes more than 1,000 books on hiking worldwide, along with maps, guides and a historical archive.

Some of Our Discount Partners

NYNJ Trail Conference BENEFITS

For complete list of money-saving discounts! For complete list of money-saving discounts!
My favorite hikes are in Harriman State Park, where one can find trails offering great natural beauty and, on even the busiest of days, solitude for miles at a time with elevation changes measured in hundreds of feet. So it was with some hesitation combined with high expectation that I decided to take a train from northern New Jersey into lower Manhattan to walk the High Line—a most unusual rail-to-trail conversion, a half mile long (it’s due to double in length this spring when a new section opens) and 30 feet above street level.

Because the High Line is relatively short, I decided to start hiking at the site of the World Trade Center site, the natural beauty of the Hudson River and, to my surprise, a short, slightly elevated Nature Boardwalk, with native plantings and quiet resting areas. A walk of a few blocks (see directions on the website) from Hudson River Park takes you to the High Line, an inspired rail-to-trail conversion that offers truly unique experience for walkers and hikers. It features a carefully designed urban landscape paradoxically populated with unruly tall grasses, bushes, small trees, and other native plants. Planners made a conscious effort to keep the green wild during the time the track was abandoned. Among the many places to linger is at 10th Avenue Square [at 17th Street].

The deeply felt wounds but energetic rebuilding enveloping the World Trade Center site, the natural beauty of the Hudson River with its historic views, and the inspired design and unique setting of the High Line all make for a most thought provoking and thoroughly delightful hike. When I’m on the trails in southern Harriman State Park I can only see the tip of Manhattan, on this hike I experienced it on the ground.

Looking for a new hike? Find descriptions of 300 (and counting) hikes in our region on our website. (Click on Go Hiking/Find a Hike.) This issue, we point to a hike in New York City, perhaps a good choice when street patterns are fluid due to major construction projects. There are multiple routes to get to the Hudson River.

My chosen route started at the World Trade Center site, where construction activity mingles with painful memories, memorials, and historic sites. Walking southward along the perimeter of the site from Vesey and Church Streets, I passed St. Paul’s Chapel, Manhattan’s oldest public building in continuous use and a place of rest and refuge for recovery workers after September 11, 2001, and then lingered at the FDNY Memorial Wall.

Afterwards I headed toward the Hudson River, quickly arriving at The Esplanade. This “pedestrian’s paradise” runs along Battery Park from Historic Battery Park at the tip of Manhattan north to Stuyvesant High School paralleling the Hudson River.

Aerial view of the High Line’s Washington Grasslands over Little West 12th Street

Join/Renew Membership to the NY-NJ Trail Conference
1,700 miles of trails, your membership helps us expand our horizons. Included with membership, Trail Walker, 10% discount on purchases at many outdoor stores, and 25% discount on all Trail Conference maps and books purchased directly from the Trail Conference.

Save time and a free by joining or renewing online at www.nynjtc.org. Just click on the Join/Renew now button.

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Hikers’ Marketplace

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BOOKS

| NEW! Harriman Trails A Guide and History (2010) & see combo | $19.95 | $25.00 |
| Walkable Westchester (2009) & see combo | $24.95 | $30.00 |
| Walking the Jersey Highlands (2007) | $22.95 | $27.80 |
| New York Walk Book 5 (2005) & see combo | $22.95 | $27.80 |
| New Jersey Walk Book 4 (2004) & see combo | $19.95 | $24.95 |
| Walking Long Island (2008) | $22.95 | $27.80 |
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| AMC Catkill Mountain Guide (2009) | $23.95 | $29.00 |
| ADK Catskill Trails (2005 ed. with revisions, 2009) & see combo | $19.95 | $24.95 |
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