West Jersey Crew Nears Completion of New 7-Mile Jenny Jump Trail

The West Jersey Trail Crew is into its sixth year of work building a new, nearly 7-mile-long trail within the 4,200-acre Jenny Jump State Forest in Warren County. The Jenny Jump Trail (formerly known as the Warren Trail) will add to the forest’s existing network of biking-only trails. Some trails in the forest are open for biking. The trail offers pastoral farm scenes and ridgeline overlooks that provide views over the fertile fields of the Great Valley all the way to the Delaware Water Gap. The completed section is approximately 6 miles long, an additional 3/4 mile will be added this spring. The first six miles, and most of this spring’s extension, are new construction. The trail was laid out by Bob Boyers, author of Kittatinny Trails and a Trail Conference board member. Work began on the trail in spring 2005. The crew, led by Monica and David Day, aims for a trail opening this year and the Trail Conference hopes to mark the occasion and celebrate the crew’s work with a guided hike. Watch for details in our future print and electronic publications.

Professional Trailbuilders Name Bear Mountain “Project of the Year”

The Professional Trailbuilders Association named the Bear Mountain Trails Project “Project of the Year” during its 2011 Sustainable Trails Conference in Asheville, NC, in March. The award was the first ever made by the organization, and projects undertaken during the past five years were eligible for nomination.

Eddie Walsh, the professional trail builder supervising the construction project for the Trail Conference (his company is Tahawus Trails), accepted the award. Trail Conference staff members Larry Wheelock, Chris Ingui, and Jeff Senterman were taking workshops at the conference and were also in attendance. Ingui, former Bear Mountain project manager and now New Jersey program coordinator, reports that “more than 200 people voted, and overwhelmingly Bear Mountain won out against the other two projects in the final round, one being an exceptionally long curvilinear bridge and the other being an extensive mountain bike trail system in Cuyuna State Recreation Area in Minnesota.”

The Trail Conference congratulates the professional and volunteer trail builders whose hard work and dedication resulted in this valued national recognition from their professional colleagues.

The award follows the naming of Walsh as New York State Trail Worker of the Year for 2010 by American Trails, a national trails advocacy organization (see March/April Trail Walker, page 10).
Good news often begets new challenges. Such is the case with the Trail Conference’s land program—the Land Acquisition and Stewardship Fund (LASF). At the March board meeting, the LASF was the subject of a masterly report from the Conservation & Advocacy (C&A) Committee presented by Seth McKe, a former board member who is the C&A Chair, a Trail Supervisor (Andy Garrison), and able assistance from staff members.

The LASF’s record of past accomplishment is an impressive one. Starting with $1 million in funding, primarily from last decade’s Capital Improvement Program, the LASF has bought and conserved 2,087 acres bordering three long-distance trail corridors maintained by the Trail Conference. At 1,624 acres on the Shawangunk Ridge Trail (SRT) in New York, 296 acres on the Long Path in New York and 170 acres on the Highlands Trail in New York and Jersey, LASF lands form the core of the new Hacklebee Nature Forest in New York, ensuring new trails such as the Lenape Ridge and Mininsk Trails.

In addition to these outright purchases by the Trail Conference, we secured several purchase options on 1,084 acres of land and then transferred these options to land conservation organizations, which then purchased the land.

Finally, we have assisted—with on-the-ground volunteer outreach and parcel mapping—in conserving an additional 1,174 acres. All of this work was done at a cost of $2,459,000—$3.16 million for direct land purchases (an average of $1,514 per acre) and the remainder for closing costs, loan interest payments, staff and other expenses. Taking together previous sales of land to the state and an anticipated payment from New York State last year, the monies received by the Trail Conference from resale of land purchases will cover our costs.

Past success brings new decisions for the LASF’s future. The LASF was originally envisioned as a revolving fund that would be replenished by money from quick turnovers of Trail Conference lands to state agencies. This funding model worked well until the Great Recession and the ensuing state budget crises, which resulted in the Trail Conference holding onto lands for far longer periods. The outcome of this inaction on acquisition by New York has brightened somewhat, with small appropriations for land acquisition through the Environmental Protection Fund, but the Trail Conference still owns 284 acres along the Long Trail, which will likely not be transferred for the state for years.

There are still important links in our trail systems that are not protected. With property prices down, this is a particularly opportune time to preserve land. But the Trail Conference is not a land bank. The Conservation Policy adopted last year by the board calls us on to “[h]old property as best as possible, or not at all, and never permanently.”

The question is how the Trail Conference can best protect important trail lands when funds in the LASF do not revolve as quickly as they have in the past. The board will soon face decisions such as:

- what is the appropriate LASF funding level?
- what are the most effective means of conserving trail lands with these funds?
- what criteria should be developed to guide our land protection efforts in the future?

The answers will lead to a strategy appropriate for the times. Circumstances for land protection may be changed, but our interest in protecting trails is as focused as ever.

Kudos to X

I wanted to add my voice to others in praise of Ed Goodell. Not only is he a dedicated volunteer, inspiring teacher, and skilled professional—he is an artist. It only takes one look at the 700 new granite steps up Bear Mountain to know that they have been conceived and executed by someone whose aesthetic sense and an intuitive grasp of nature-inspired design. Congratulations Ed!—Fred Rich

Life Member, NV-NJ Trail Conference Chair, Scenic Hudson Land Trust

Send Us a Letter
Email it to info@nynjtc.org, in the subject line, put “letter to TW editor”, or send it to Trail Walker Letters, N Y -N J Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah, NJ 07430.

From the Chair
4,345 Acres Protected. What’s Next for Our Land Acquisition and Stewardship Fund?

Call for Nominations for Awards
Members may nominate individuals for Trail Conference awards. Award winners are honored at the Trail Conference’s Annual Meeting. Cut-off date for recommendations is July 1, 2011. Please send nominations (with supporting statements) to the Volunteer Coordinator at awards@nynjtc.org.

View the list of past award recipients at: www.nynjtc.org/content/award-winners.

The Volunteer Coordinator comprises Dan Van Engl, Chair, Catherine Gemell (staff), Ken Mallkin, Chris Connolly, and Estelle Anderson.

ANNUAL AWARDS
Honorary Life Membership
Recognizes individuals and the right to vote at Delegates meetings. Usually given after long years of service to the Conference.

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

William Hoefler Award
Recognizes Trail Conference members who have demonstrated exemplary service to trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection.

Leo Rothschild Conservation Award
Presented to those who have made a significant contribution to the protection of our trails and/or the natural lands that surround them.

Corporate Partner Award
Given to businesses or their employees for outstanding service to the hiking community.

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

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

Ken Lloyd Award
Recognizes members of Trail Conference member or club officers who have demonstrated exemplary service to trail maintenance, management, and/or trail land protection.

Paul Leikin Extra Mile Award
Recognizes those volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to projects such as a book, map or advocacy.

COMMITTEE AWARDS
Distinguished Service Certificates
Recognized to those who have given many years of service, generally upon retirement from their volunteer duties. This award can be given to anyone. Any committee chair may make a nomination to the Volunteer Committee. Two awards are allotted to each committee per year. A certificate will be created and the committee chair will be responsible for delivering it to the recipient.

Send nominations with supporting statement to awards@nynjtc.org.

Nominating Committee Seeks Trail Conference Members Willing to Serve as Delegates-at-Large

Delegates, together with the Board of Directors, govern the Trail Conference. Each hiking organization represented by the Conference selects a Delegate to represent that organization. Individual members of each Trail Conference are represented by Delegates-at-large, in a ratio of one Delegate per 400 members. There are currently approximately 100 Organization Delegates and 25 Delegates-at-Large who serve one-year terms.

There are three Delegates meetings each year, including the annual meeting in the fall. All Delegates should be willing to attend all these meetings and exercise their responsibilities in a fair and open manner on business matters that are brought up for approval.

Anyone interested in serving in a Delegate-at-Large should contact the Nominating Committee: nominations@nynjtc.org.
Work on New Headquarters Begins

In March, a milestone was reached with the groundbreaking ceremony for the restoration of Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah, NJ, as the Trail Conference’s future headquarters. Located only two miles from our present location, the historic building is considered to be “New Jersey’s most architecturally significant historic building.” Certainly, its sturdy fieldstone construction and location on the edge of the Jersey Highlands escarpment embodies the spirit of trail tramps and builders from our past.

Work is underway to repair and stabilize the portions of the building that need immediate attention. Meanwhile, our architects and engineers, led by life members Win Perry and Tibor Latinics, are developing plans and applying for permits that will result in an energy efficient, environmentally friendly space for welcoming volunteers and holding trainings.

The Trail Conference’s role as future occupant and steward of this building puts it at the center of a group effort to restore the structure as an actively functioning part of the community. Many have pitched in, including the State of New Jersey, Bergen County, Township of Mahwah, the Land Conservancy of New Jersey, and countless individuals who have donated their time and donations to move the project forward.

More than $2 million in funding so far has come from: Garden State Preservation Trust ($1,190,000); Bergen County Trust Fund ($687,000); an in-kind (pro-bono) legal and engineering ($200,000); and Trail Conference member donations ($200,000). These funds include the purchase of the property and various planning and preservation studies needed to qualify for historic preservation tax credits.

This is a major project that the Trail Conference can’t accomplish without help. It will ultimately cost another $1.2 million to occupy the building, depending on whether we include an addition that would permit assemblies of 100 or more people, make the second-floor handicap accessible, and increase workspace for volunteers and staff.

Many of the people who have had a hand in moving the project forward were present at the groundbreaking. I look forward to the day a couple of years hence when everyone, especially our members, can join us in celebrating the (re-)opening of the doors to our new headquarters.

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New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Member & Community Survey

To better serve our trails community of members and non-members, we would like to get your feedback with this brief 13-question survey. Respondents who provide their contact information will be entered in a drawing to win one of 10 free copies of our newest map sets: Jersey Highlands Trails or Sterling Forest Trails. Or take this survey online at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/tc-feedback

(Use just one method.) For longer responses, please use separate sheet of paper.

1. What is your Trail Conference membership status? 
   - Currently a member
   - Not a member
   - Not currently a member, but would like to join
   - Not sure

2. What is your level of involvement with the NY-NJ Trail Conference? (please check all that apply)
   - I use the website to look up hikes and get maps
   - I’m actively involved in trail maintenance projects
   - I’m an active volunteer, advocate and supporter
   - I attend member events
   - I’m not active, beyond annual membership dues
   - I’m not active, but would like to get more involved

3. How effective are we in communicating with you? 
   - Communications are excellent as is
   - Need more frequent communications
   - Need less frequent communications
   - Other recommendations/feedback:

4. Which of our communications do you rely upon most frequently? (please check all that apply)
   - Person-to-person from my trail leaders and fellow members
   - Email blasts
   - Website
   - Trail/Walkie print newsletter
   - Word-of-mouth
   - Social media such as Facebook and Twitter
   - Do not currently receive or seek communication from the Trail Conference

5. What best describes your level of activity in trail maintenance?
   - I’m actively maintaining a trail
   - Not currently active maintaining a trail, but have in the past
   - Not active, but I would like to maintain a trail
   - No interest in trail maintenance at this time

6. Do you own any Trail Conference maps or books? 
   - Yes
   - No
   - No, but I would like more information

7. Would you recommend the Trail Conference to a friend? 
   - Yes. (Please indicate why below.)
   - No. (Please indicate why not below.)

8. Have you ever been to a Trail Conference meeting or event? 
   - Yes
   - No

9. What would attract you to a Trail Conference event? (choose all that apply)
   - Food
   - Entertainment/music
   - Hikes
   - Info on trail issues
   - Workshops/discussion groups on trail-related topics
   - Trail Conference business meeting
   - Guest speakers
   - Social time

10. What are the current strengths of the Trail Conference? 

11. What areas for improvement for the Trail Conference?

12. Where do you live?
   - New York City
   - Long Island
   - Northern New Jersey
   - Central or Southern New Jersey
   - Western New Jersey
   - Western Massachusetts
   - Dutchess or Columbia Counties
   - Rockland or Orange Counties
   - Other:

13. What is your favorite hike in the NY-NJ region?

May we contact you to find out more about your survey responses? (Optional)
   - Yes, thanks
   - Yes, please contact me at:
Fly a Bridge over Angle Fly Creek

Trail Conference Volunteers Help Fly a Bridge over Angle Fly Creek in Somers, NY. To prepare, another crew of 100 packed in parts for the bridge the week before, including 14 80-pound bags of concrete and six 50-pound bags of gravel for the footings. The next step for Friends of the Angle Fly Preserve is to clear trails on the other side of the bridge by the end of the year.

Volunteers from the Trail Conference were able to make the bridge installation much easier by assembling a high line to "fly" the bridge safely into place. Vic Allen traveled from his home on Long Island to help with the project. Vic has been a long-time member of the West Hudson Crew and helped install the bridges over Popolopen Creek in Harriman-Bear Mountain State Park. Other Trail Conference volunteers who assisted with the high-line were Walt Daniels, Joe Gindoff, and Andrew Seirup.

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

Additional workshops are being scheduled as of the deadline for this issue. For additional details or to register for a course, go to www.nyntjc.org/view/workshops

Putnam County Land Trust Plans Trails, Seeks Volunteers

Wonder Lake trail supervisor Andrew Seirup (at left in photo below) attended the Putnam County Land Trust (PCLT) Open House in March as Trail Conference representative. Gary Haugstad, chair of the Trail Conference’s Highlands Trail East Committee, also attended and brought maps and the latest information on the Highlands Trail. Andrew and Gary were instrumental in designing and building trails, including a segment of the HT, at Wonder Lake State Park, which is located in the county.

PCLT held the open house to kick off its 2011 trail season. It seeks to develop a cadre of volunteers interested in developing trail skills focused on clearing, improving, and maintaining high quality trails. Trainings will offer novices and seasoned veterans opportunities to develop skills in trail construction and maintenance while shaping the future of trails in the region. The group hosted a Trail Maintenance 101 workshop led by Gary and Andrew on April 3. Other advanced trainings are being planned for the summer and fall, including trail layout and design.

The Trail Conference and the Putnam County Land Trust supports the Hudson Hills & Highlands Community Trails Program, a partnership between the Trail Conference and Teatown Lake Reservation.

Not Worse but No Better, Either: Update on Parks Funding in New York & New Jersey

In the March/April issue of Trail Walker, we reported that cuts to park budgets were under consideration in both New York and New Jersey as administrations in both states dealt with severe fiscal challenges. This report briefly chronicles decisions since then.

New York

In New York, Governor Cuomo had proposed across-the-board cuts to all state agencies, including State Parks and the Dept. of Environmental Conservation, which manages state forests and preserves (Catskills and Adirondacks). The good news was that he was not proposing disproportionate cuts to those agencies, as had been the case under several previous administrations. And, he proposed to keep funding for the Environmental Protection Fund, which, among other things, includes dollars for open space protection. It was at the same level as in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Though the budget proposals for parks and the environment fell far short of being sufficient to meet needs, the Trail Conference recognizes the state’s dire fiscal straits and actively supported the governor’s proposals as they were negotiated with the legislature. Together with representatives of more than 100 organizations across the state united as Friends of New York’s Environnment, Trail Conference representatives met with legislators in Albany to make the case for continued funding for the environment and no additional cuts. We are happy to report that our message has been heard. New York’s officials reached agreement on a budget by their April 1 deadline, and the governor’s proposals for funding parks and environmental staff and projects were adopted.

New Jersey

In New Jersey, we saw similar results. Trail Conference representatives assertively supported the governor’s proposals as they were negotiated with the legislature. Together with representatives of more than 100 organizations across the state united as Friends of New York’s Environment, Trail Conference representatives met with legislators in Albany to make the case for continued funding for the environment and no additional cuts. We are happy to report that our message has been heard. New York’s officials reached agreement on a budget by their April 1 deadline, and the governor’s proposals for funding parks and environmental staff and projects were adopted.

Intro to Invasive Plant Identification

This workshop will teach the basics of plant identification and introduce 14 common invasive plants. You will be prepared to join 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 Jersey monitoring project. (See story on page 7.) You will be taught how to collect data for the ISF and how to use a GPS unit.

Saturday, May 21 Flat Rock Preserve Nature Center, Englewood, NJ

Advanced Invasive Plant Identification

This workshop is for volunteers already participating in the Trail Conference’s Invasive Strike Force (ISF). You will learn how to identify a set of invasive plants that are just starting to emerge as problems in New Jersey and that will be targeted for monitoring in the second phase of our project. Prerequisite: returning volunteer trailer workshop, or an introduction to Invasive Plant Identification workshop.

Saturday, June 18 Location: TBD

Shelter Caretaker Training

This one-day training session will cover the skills necessary to maintain a shelter (lean-to) so that it is ready for use by campers and is harmonious to its surroundings.

Saturday, May 14: 10am-4pm Catskills, Batavia Kill Lean-to

TRAIL U

Teaching Practical Skills to Trails Volunteers at Locations Throughout the NY-NJ Area

May/June 2011

We thank REI for its support of Trail U in Spring 2011.

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

Additional workshops are being scheduled as of the deadline for this issue. For additional details or to register for a course, go to www.nyntjc.org/view/workshops

Trail Maintenance 101

This one-day training session covers the skills necessary to maintain a hiking trail so it is easily passable and harmonious with its surroundings. Students will learn assessment of trail conditions, clearing, blazing, proper use of tools and how to repair any trail problems. No previous experience is necessary and beginners are welcome. Students will spend the morning in a classroom environment and then head out into woods for hands-on instruction.

Saturday, May 14: 9am-4pm Sterling Forest State Park

Saturday, May 15: 9am-4pm Yorktown Trails/Mill State Park, Yorktown Heights, NY

Saturday, May 21: 10am-4pm North-South Lakes, Catskill Park

June 4: 9:30am-4pm Shawangunk/Catskills New River Unique Area, Wurtsboro, NY

More workshops are being scheduled as of the deadline for this issue. For additional details or to register for a course, go to www.nyntjc.org/view/workshops

The Staten Island Greenbelt was the location for a Trail Maintenance 101 course held on March 26 at the Visitor’s Studio in High Rock Park. The course was supported by Metro Trail Conference volunteers Mark Kusick (new trails supervisor for Staten Island, at left in the photo), Joe Gindoff and Linda Sullivan. There were 18 participants, including several members of the Staten Island Athletic Club who subsequently offered to serve as club maintainers on trails in the Greenbelt. They will coordinate with Park Manager Jeanne Paliswal, who also assisted with the course. The Greenbelt Conservancy provided refreshments.

Reporting Reminder

Trail Maintainers

As you maintain your trails this spring, please remember to complete a Trail Maintenance report. It’s quick, simple, and the information helps the Trail Conference identify trail problems, allocate resources, and promote the value of your volunteer efforts to our park partners.

All maintainers submit a Trail Maintenance Report twice annually to their volunteer supervisor. Your volunteer supervisor will provide the form. (Forms and many other resources can also be found at nyntjc.org/content/active-volunteers.)

Reports for winter/spring work (December 1 through June 30) are due to supervisors by June 30. Reports for summer/fall work (July 1 through November 30) are due to supervisors by November 30. Please note: Trail time is time traveled from home tomaintainer’s trail and return (auto plus foot travel).

Trail Supervisors

Supervisors complete their Supervisor’s Summary Report based upon the maintenance reports received. The Summary Report, and all completed Trail Maintenance Reports, are then sent to the Trail Chair, who provides an overall summary of a region to the Trail Conference.

The total number of volunteer hours helps the Trail Conference in grants and other fundraising and so it is important that you include all the time you spend.

continued on page 11
CB96-457-0326    Cell: 908-307-5049
Email: westjerseycrew@trailstobuild.com

Note: Check our webpage or at www.njtrail.org/                      
filename-trail-schedules for expanded                       
schedule and details.

All events begin at 9am. 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 (all the leaders' cell phones if you are coming to an event and are running late). Rain cancel or delay, check 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.)

Note: This spring the crew plans to focus on the Jenny Jump Trail (previously called the Warm Trail) with the aim of announcing its official opening this summer. There’s still a lot of blazing, some trail work, and some clearing yet to be done. The crew will also start work on the next section of this trail in Warren County.

Check our webpage for possible additions or changes to schedules. Go to www.njtrail.org/                      
filename-trail-schedules for expanded                       
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Awards from the Volunteer Committee
Paul Leikin Extra Mile Award Presented to Annette Feldman
This award recognizes those volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to projects.

Annette Feldman’s quiet and persistent dedication to organizing our Hoeftelin Memorial Library—a collection of more than 1000 books on hiking-related subjects housed at the Trail Conference office—has resulted in a cohesive and orderly lending library. For years the books have been “shelved” in a not-so-neat manner. Annette has weeded out the overly worn and unrelated books to present members with a proper library that will be enjoyed by many for years to come. She was presented with her award certificate at the March 29 meeting of the board of directors.

Two Volunteers Thanked for Distinguished Service
The Volunteer Committee acknowledges the contributions of two long-time volunteers: Richard Zinn and Jim Robbins. Each received a certificate for distinguished service.

Richard Zinn, who turned 87 in March, has been a Trail Conference volunteer in various capacities for over 12 years. He serves as a Delegate-at-Large and volunteers in the office, often assembling map sets to ready them for sale. It is estimated that Richard has assembled tens of thousands of map sets for the Trail Conference. Richard maintained trails in Harriman-Bear Mountain for more than 10 years, and eagerly volunteered as a hike leader for a variety of Trail Conference events. He has been a hike leader for the AMC for 25 years, for ADK, and, until recently, he led the Wednesday Hiking group. Richard is a consummate volunteer and a tremendous asset to the Trail Conference and the hiking community.

Jim Robbins maintained the Ramapo-D Anderson Trail in the area of West/Bald Mountains in Harriman State Park for more than 12 years. During that time, those who hiked on that trail often commented on the obvious diligence with which the trail was maintained; hikers took particular note of the precision and accuracy of Jim’s trail blazes. More recently, Jim took over maintenance on the Sapphire Trail with the same dedication. Both assignments were under the aegis of AMC, NY-North Jersey, a Trail Conference member club that coordinates maintenance on these trails. Jim has also served for many years as the highly effective chair of the AMC NY-NJ Chapter Walks Committee—and faithfully continues to serve in that capacity.

Banff Mountain Fundraising Reaches New Heights
Each year, the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Suffern and Manhattan offers more than four nights of exciting short films about outdoor adventures. This annual event is also an opportunity for the Trail Conference to make new friends and raise money for trail projects. Once, thanks to the generosity of retail supporters Ramsey Outdoors and Paragon Sports. Each year these two businesses donate high-quality sporting goods for Trail Conference raffles during the nightly events.

This year, the raffles broke previous fund-raising levels: $6,102 was raised during four frenetic intermissions. Many thanks to the teams of volunteers who helped staff members get the word out, sell tickets, and award prizes. In Suffern: Artie Hidalgo, Meryl Stata, Madeline Giotta In New York City: Frank Bamberg, David Brotsky, John Carey, Jane Giordano, Joe Gindoff, Lou Leonards, George Munger, Aaron Rabinowitz, Ruth and Michael Rosenthal. We also thank Lou Leonards, who enthusiastically helped drum up interest in this event.

Catskill Fire Tower Project Needs Summer Mountaintop Volunteers
If you like climbing mountains, love talking to people, and relish spending time above the treetops, think about joining the Catkill Fire Tower Project as a volunteer interpreter this summer.

The Catkill Park is home to five fully restored fire towers. Located on Balsam Lake Mountain (in Hardenburgh), Hunter Mountain (near Hunter), Overlook Mountain (just outside Woodstock), Red Hill (in Denning) and Mount Temper (near Phoenicia), they once played a key role in detecting and pinpointing the location of forest fires. Modern fire-spotting techniques have replaced them. The structures fell into disrepair and deteriorated, but, by 1990, New York State had declared all five off limits. Thanks to the efforts of dedicated volunteers who supplied everything from engineering expertise to building skills.

continued on page 11

Volunteer! The Trail Conference Needs You!
To apply, or for more details about these and other volunteer opportunities, go to the Volunteer Web Page on our website at: www.nynjtc.org/volunteer or contact us at: volunteers@nynjtc.org

OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES
Become a Trail Maintainer! Great Work Environment!!

Trail volunteer admires Mullet Falls in Neversink Unique Area during last year’s trail clearing day.

Adopt a section of a trail and help to keep our region accessible, pristine and protected. We have vacancies for maintainers on trail sections in these areas:
• Neversink River Unique Area
• Schunnemunk Mountain State Park
• Minnewaska State Park Preserve
• Shawangunk Ridge Trail

Since going to press, trail sections in other areas may have become vacant, as well as other off-trail opportunities such as: Trail Supervisor, Corridor Monitor, Corridor Manager, Crew Chief, Crew Chief Assistant, Lean-to/Shelter Caretaker, and Trail Inventory Monitor. Check out our current volunteer opportunities and what they entail at: www.nynjtc.org/vol-trail-vacancies

INDOOR OPPORTUNITIES
Order Processing Assistant
Do you want to be a part of the team that sells our outstanding trail maps and books? We have an opening for a volunteer to assist our Fulfillment Coordinator processes our book and map orders. Training will be provided. Come join us in our interesting and educational office environment—we need your help!

Membership Program Assistant
If you have a few hours or more each week to spare, come and volunteer in our office by helping out with our membership renewal mailings. This position involves some computer work, and familiarity with MS Office products would help, but we will provide all the necessary training. We have details on these, as well as other off-trail volunteer opportunities on our website at: www.nynjtc.org/vol-vacancies
Fireflies, or lightning bugs, have fascinated humans through the ages with their evening displays of twinkling lights. Fireflies actually are beetles, not flies, and belong to the family Lampyridae (“shining ones”). Like all beetles, they have hardened outer wings, called elytra, which protect the membranous inner flight wings. There are about 2,000 species of fireflies worldwide. About 200 species occur in the United States, mostly in the eastern half of the country.

Firefly light, or bioluminescence, results from a chemical reaction and emanates from an organ called a lantern in the beetle’s abdomen. Both males and females have lanterns, although male lanterns are larger. Other bioluminescent organisms exist, but fireflies are the only ones that flash their lights.

During their two-week adult life, male fireflies fly about and flash to attract females. Each species has a unique flash. females watch the show from a perch on or near the ground. If a female is impressed by a certain male, she will emit a brief “come hither” flash that also is unique to her species. A flash dialogue will continue between the male and female until they find each other and mate. Firefly mating is hypercompetitive, as males greatly outnumber females. A female will respond to the brightest or most impressive male flash as he is likely to make the fittest parent.

Fireflies are fun to watch on warm evenings and are best observed when the air is still and when there is little moonlight or artificial light. With practice, you can distinguish different species based upon the color and pattern of their flashes, their flight patterns, their habitat, and the time of day and year that the adults are active.

For example, Photinus pyralis, the common eastern firefly, is the ubiquitous small firefly of meadows and fields. It first appears around late June and becomes active at dusk. Male flies low over the grass and emit a long yellow flash that traces an “ascending” J pattern. Photinus vitigena, the woods firefly, is larger than the eastern firefly and prefers damp wooded areas. It usually appears in early to mid June, but doesn’t become active until well after dark. The male flies high and fast and emits brief green flashes. A receptive female will flash a response to a potential mate of her species. But Photinus females also are trickeres and can mimic the female response flashes of several different species of the smaller Photinus firefly and lure an unsuspecting male Photinus to her grasp. The female Photinus then devours the male Photinus to obtain a protective toxin that he has but she lacks. By eating him and his toxin, she and her eggs become unattractive to predators.

Shortly after mating, females lay their eggs on moist ground. The eggs hatch into larvae after about three or four weeks. The carminous larva, also called glow worms because they too are bioluminescent, feed on snails, slugs, and other invertebrates for the next year or two. They then pupate for a period underground and emerge as adult fireflies.

The chemicals luciferin and luciferase play key roles in firefly bioluminescence. Because of their unique properties, they also are widely used in biomedical research. In the past, these chemicals were obtained from fireflies collected in the wild, and scientists believe that collecting adversely affected firefly populations. Today, the chemicals can be produced synthetically, which may help firefly populations to rebound.

To learn more about fireflies and to volunteer for a citizen science monitoring project, visit Boston’s Museum of Science and Nature’s光电 watch website at www.mos.org/fireflywatch.

Edna Greg is a frequent contributor to Trail Walker of articles on the natural world.

The Shadberry: A Delightful Local Edible

By Thomas H. Parliament

One of the joys of hiking in Harriman State Park is the variety of edible fruits we may find there. Blueberries and wine berries are prevalent in the park and well known, but few people are familiar with the shadberry.

The shadberry (Amelanchier arborea Nutt.) was a very important fruit to the early settlers and the Native Americans. The latter used it dried, much as we use raisins and prunes and as an ingredient of pemmican. Pemmican is a mixture of dried meat (usually buffalo or deer) and fruit, corn, and/or nuts. Different fruits were used, but shadberries were preferred. The early colonists used shadberries in puddings, wines, pies, and as dried fruit.

The shadberry grows ubiquitously on the North American continent and is regionally known by many other names, including serviceberry, Juneberry, sugar plum, and grape pear.

The derivation of the common names is interesting. Shadberry or “shad-bush” was coined because the species’ flowering often coincides with the time of the upper migration of the shad fish in the Hudson. Serviervicus is thought to refer to the fact that these trees are one of the first to bloom and the timing of the blooms coincided with burial services postponed until such time as the ground had thawed sufficiently for interment. Juneberry refers to the fact that in northern areas such as our own, these berries mature in June.

The best way to identify shadberry is to look for the trees in April, when they blossom with white, fragile, downy-like flowers (see photo). To enjoy the berries, note the location, then return between late June and early July. Further identifying features include smooth, light gray bark with a contrasting darker tiger-striped pattern. The berries are normally less than 12 feet in height, but larger specimens may be over 20 feet high and several feet in circumference. The fruits are about the size of cherries and become edible when red, but are best when they attain a purple coloration. The berries hang on individual stems, not in clusters like blueberries. They usually grow heaviest at the top of the plant, which places them out of easy reach. Picking them is a slow task. Their flavor is usually that of any other wild or cultivated fruit and is commonly described as a combination of cherry and blueberry.

For those of you who have taken some chemistry, a publication on these fruits by Dr. Walker discusses the aromatic chemicals present in the shadberry and responsible for its unique and desirable flavor. These primary chemicals responsible for the aroma is benzaldehyde; other important contributors are phenylethylaldehyde, 2-hexenal, and hexanal.

My experience with shadberry trees in Harriman State Park is that they are scattered along the trails on the higher ridges where the soil is relatively thin. Particularly good places to find the trees include the Breakneck Mountain Trail, which runs parallel to and about 0.25-mile south of Breakneck Pond. Last year the berries also grew along the Juneberry Trail near where the “bowling rocks” are located, which is about 1.5 miles southwest from the headquarters of the Arden-Surebridge Trail. Breakneck Pond. Last year the berries also grew along the Breakneck Mountain Trail near where the "bowling rocks" are located, which is about 1.5 miles southwest from the headquarters of the Arden-Surebridge Trail and have an opportunity to find and sample these unique berries.


Parliament, T., and Smith, A. Volatile Compounds of Amelanchier arborea Nutt. (Shadberry). Fruit. Trail Conference member Thomas Parliament has a PhD in chemistry and was a research chemist for General Foods and Kraft Foods during his industrial career. He has studied the aroma composition of various foods and is a frequent speaker for the Appalachian Mountain Club. For questions about his June 19 AMC hike, contact him at 845-654-4116 or email tpardline@verizon.net.

The Shadberry is one of the earliest blooming trees in our region.
HIKERS' ALMANAC
A Sampling of Upcoming Hikes Supported by Member Clubs

Search for more hikes at www.nyntcj.org. Click on Scheduled Hikes under Go Hiking!

The activities listed are sponsored by member clubs of the NYNJTC Conference. All hikes are welcome subject to social regulations and rules of the hike. You are responsible for your own safety. Wear hiking boots or sturdy footwear. Bring food, water, weather gear, first aid, and a flashlight. A hike leader has the right and responsibility to refuse anyone where they believe it is not safe to continue.

Sage Ravine along the Appalachian Trail in the Taconic Mountains of Massachusetts (Bear Mountain hike).

Hiking the AT in New York

The deadline for the 3rd quarter issue is May 15.

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

May

Saturday, May 7

AMC-NY. Southern Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Donn Olds, 845-786-3122, donn.olds@nynjtc.org. Meet contact leader for meeting time and place. Moderate 8 miles with hills. Explore Bear Mountain, a tour of trails some of which requires rock scrambling. Suitable for beginners but all hikers should be in good shape.

Tom Cotter, Harriman State Park, NY. Meet: 9am at state Park entrance, moderate pace, easy 5 miles.

AWC. South Mountain Reservation, South Orange, NJ. Leader: Sid headache, 973-746-7415; call for date and carpooling.

Saturday, May 8

AMC-NY. Ramapo Valley Convention Reservation, NY. Leader: Mike Benincasa, 201-263-0727,⛷️mikebenincasa@gmail.com. We'll meet the trailhead, learn about trail etiquette, and hike Bear Bottom to the White Plains Reservoir. Easy, 5 miles.

AWC. East Hudson Highlands, Leader: Donn Olds, 845-734-8766, donn@nynjtc.org. Meet trailhead for moderate hiking, easy pace, beautiful area. 4 miles.

Mother's Day Hike, Tarrytown Nature Center, NY. Leader: Michelle Erath, 914-332-4537, michele@tncny.org. Meet for meeting time and place. Intro to sketching and photo composition while hiking to the Hudson River Valley. Easy rate, 2 miles.

Saturday, May 14

EHT. Hike along the Hudson River, NY. Leader: Ed Buretta, 914-946-7300, edburetta@verizon.net. Meet contact leaders for meeting time and place. Easy pace, beautiful area. 5 miles.

Sunday, May 15

AMC-NY. NYNJTC Headquarters, NY. Leader: Michelle Erath, 914-332-4537, michele@tncny.org. Meet for meeting time and place. Intro to sketching and photo composition while hiking to the Hudson River Valley. Easy rate, 2 miles.

AMC-NH. Southern Harriman State Park, NY. Leader: Donn Olds, 845-786-3122, donn.olds@nynjtc.org. Meet contact leader for meeting time and place. Moderate 8 miles with hills. Explore Bear Mountain, a tour of trails some of which requires rock scrambling. Suitable for beginners but all hikers should be in good shape.

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Leave No Trace: Ethics & Trail Tips

By Bob Russo

Etiquette on the trail!

Trail etiquette is a subject often neglected by hikers both novice and seasoned. The following are Leave No Trace suggestions that might be considered etiquette ‘rules’ on the trail.

• The little things are often the most important: courtesies such as offering a colored clothing to blend in with your scenery, using your cell phone to call for help in an emergency, remembering to set up camp away from natural water supplies, and not storing gear in campsite...

When hikers are out on the trails, they are often faced with the responsibility of teaching and maintaining good trail etiquette and Leave No Trace practices. In this article, I have attempted to offer guidance on how to avoid getting lost. The unit will conduct the open house between the hours of 3pm and 5pm.

There will be displays and demonstrations for all ages to observe or participate in. This will include: firewood gathering, building a fire ring, setting up a tent in the field, and preparing a meal over an open fire.

The Trail Conference is proud to offer a Membership Benefit Program, which was created to provide hikers 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.nynmtc.org/content/retail-partners for current offers.

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

FREE Subscription to the Trail Walker, the Trail Conference’s bimonthly newsletter filed 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 10,000 books on hiking worldwide, along with maps, guides and a historical archive.

For more information on the Trail Conference and Leave No Trace principles visit www.ht.org.

Search & Rescue

JNSAR Open House

Search and Rescue volunteers demonstrate the techniques and equipment used to find and rescue unfortunates and offer guidance on how to avoid getting lost. The unit will conduct the open house between the hours of 3pm and 5pm.

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Our Annual Winter Meeting returned to New York City on a spring-like February 19. Two city hikes—one led by New York Hiking Club’s Bob Ward in midtown and the other by Shorewalkers’ Cy Adler from Battery Park along the Hudson River—attracted workshops—one focusing on Metro Barry, on how to effectively advocate for trails. Hikers, along with other Trail Conference members, delegates, and on 35th Street to enjoy a buffet dinner of hot and cold foods and beverages, (pictured at bottom) , and a short Tony Hiss, retail partner Gear To Go (National Trails Day) at Bear Center: M ark your calendar!

Next Meeting Dates
Saturday, June 4
(National Trails Day) at Bear Mountain (see at page 3)
Saturday, October 15, 8:00-2pm in Ossining (Caputo Community Center): Mark your calendar!

In memory of Walter E. Britt
In memory of Donald B. Derr
In memory of Donald B. Derr
In memory of Daniel R. & Lynne H. Van Engel, Robert J. Ward, Joseph Zack

In memory of Donald B. Derr, president of the Trail Conference from 1978 to 1984, died March 6, 2011, after a long illness. Don’s influence on the Trail Conference was significant and pervasive. He attracted and mentored dedicated volunteers and staff who themselves have made last- ing impact on the organization and trails community. An accomplished cartographer, Don is credited with developing the Trail Conference’s map publication program and produced several trail maps published in the 1970s.

H. Neil Zimmerman, Trail Conference president 1988-1999, recalls Don as the person who got him involved with the Trail Conference. “In the mid-70’s, I started some mid-week hiking in Harriman using the new Trail Conference maps. Each week I’d do a new trail (it was all new to me) and often send in minor map corrections. At the time, Don was the map chair. He basically started the Trail Conference map program. “Within a very short time, Don called and explained he was soon to become Trail Conference president and would I take on the Map Committee? I was very surprised and explained I knew very little and initially turned him down. But Don was persistent, persuasive, and, above all, encouraging. I took the job. Whatever I have done for the Trail Conference can be traced back to my mentor, Donald Derr.”

JoAnn Dolan, executive director 1980-1985 and again 1991-1999, recalls Don’s impact: “First hand, day to day, I was privileged to experience Don’s terrific management style as Conference president. With volunteers and staff he was superb at mentoring and delegating. With clear vision, Don promoted persistent, persuasive, and, above all, encouraging. I took the job. Whatever I have done for the Trail Conference can be traced back to my mentor, Donald Derr.”

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News about the Long Path Guide: Now Online, and Free!

The Long Path Guide, last published in 2005 and out of stock for some time, is now available on the Trail Conference website. Search for "Long Path Guide," click on "Long Path Guide (softcopy)." Alternatively, click on "Long Distance Trails" in the left column, then select "ED," then click on "electronic edition." This version of the Long Path Guide is free to all users.

Beaufort Books, 2010 Reviewed by Jared Catapano

Jennifer Pharr Davis’s newest Becoming Odyssey: Epic Adventures on the Appalachian Trail is your young woman’s account of personal growth through her experiences in hiking the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. Unfortunately, the book falls short of delivering on the title’s promise. The trouble is not in the story, but in the telling.

The title hearkens to the epic travels of the classical hero. The heroine and her immediate creation has high reader expectations: these will be exciting stories of extreme challenges, physical endurance, mental and emotional stamina, and high drama! No doubt Davis had such experiences and demonstrated the qualities in the course of her long-distance hike. Unfortunately she throws her narrative ambitions with too much detail. I had trouble staying attentive to the movement of her story as I followed through the minutiae of her travels. Filling out detail is important, but Davis’s overhead board is so high that the presentation seems of little use and the reader watches Davis’s movement toward her ultimate destination in Maine. When she gets there, I wanted to share Davis’s satisfaction in accomplishing her journey. I was disappointed that my feelings fell short of that.

Still to be added to the web edition are maps and photos and an updated version of "Backpacking the Long Path" by Ed Gunk Ridge Trail. It too includes updated information.

The Publications Committee is investigating the possibility of converting some Trail Conference books, possibly including the Long Path Guide, to a format accessible via a Palo or print-on-demand. Until then, this electronic version of the Long Path Guide fills an important information niche for trail users.

We extend a hearty Thank-you to Jared for completing this very big volunteer job.

CATSKILL FIRE TOWER continued from page 6

state’s Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Mountain Club and the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, they were all restored and reopened in 2000 and 2001.

Today, the soaring, 70-foot-tall struc- ture atop the Catskill Fire Tower offers views of neighboring peaks and the sur- rounding landscape, as well as a thrilling "climb back in time."

Volunteers (about 90 in all) work in pairs to meet and greet visitors and answer their questions about the towers, the Catskill Mountains, and related topics. Each volun- teer works a minimum of three weekend days, plus a day or two of on-site training, during a season that runs from Memorial Day through Columbus Day.

The trails leading to the towers are all marked with signs. Staying within the marked area means hikers will remain in the same general area. There are three miles. Volun- teers may hike in and out on the same day or stay overnight in summit cabins.

The Catskill Fire Tower Project is a fun and fulfilling way to meet people, share the experience of the beauti- ful Catskill Mountains, and help preserve a key piece of Catskill history.

For more information, email ccartfell@verizon.net or call the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development at 845-586-2611. Visit www.catskillfiretowers.org.

The Trail Conference’s brand new, digital- by-print e-book 230+ Miles and More than 30 Parks! Highlands Trails: Central North Region (previously identified as Central Region) is now available.

This two-map set shows more than 230 miles of marked trails within more than 30 parks in the central north region of the New Jersey Highlands and adjacent areas, including Pyramid Mountain, High Mountain Park Preserve, Allamuchy Mountain State Park, Mohawk Mountain Reservation, and the Fanny Highlands. More than 45 miles of the Highlands Trail are shared with the state’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), calls for an increase in parks and forestry appropriations, and continuing backing for several programs charged with protecting the state’s natural resources.

In addition, $62 million in funding for the operations of the state’s parks and forests is being restored from the state’s general fund and allocated to three more parks, and $2 million in matching funds are provided to the state parks and forests. The $2 million in matching funds were allocated $2.6 million in Gov. Christie’s budget, helping to assure that visitors can use the parks and enjoy them.

The budget process is still in the negoti- ating stage, so the state’s fiscal year begins July 1. Those who love parks and open space need to stay vigilant and vocal. Let your state representatives know your views.

Find links to your representatives and updates on issues on our website: www.nynjtc.org/page/protectourtrails

UPDATE ON PARKS FUNDING continued from page 4

W hile walking the Mountain Sunset Campground, a hike in a hike-out camping resort. Simply lake latos Northern to the Boscawen train station. Once there, our shuttle will take you to one of the three headlamps on the Fishkill Ridge trail to reach the camp. Hikes range from 1 to 5 hours. While you’re out wearing your hike, gear is taken to your campsites for you convenience. Our covered platform site come with a mini kitchen which has most of your camping necessities. Tents are still available. Rough on a primitive site. Either way, our shuttle and hot shower will put the finishing touch on your stay.

Check us out at www.mountainsouthsunrise.com or call 845-831-7677

Catskill Fire Tower

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The breathtaking view of the Highlands is well worth the walk even when the hawks are not moving. The view provides an otherwise hard-to-obtain understanding of the vastness of the Highlands forest resource and its value to hundreds of species including humans, in northern New Jersey.

Dan Chain's detailed directions for the hike and getting to the parking area can be found on our website: www.nynjtc.org, search for "Hawk Watch." Trails in the WMA are among the 230+ miles of marked trails, spanning more than 30 parks, that are shown on the Trail Conference's brand new map set: Jersey Highlands Trails: Central North Region.

From its popular trail networks like the ones found at Pyramid Mountain and Mahlon Dickerson Reservation, to more recently established areas such as Jonathan’s Wood and sections of the Morris Canal Greenway, the new set of maps is an excellent resource for discovering the wealth of hiking opportunities in this “breathtaking” region of the New Jersey Highlands. (Read about the map set on page 11.)

His route follows multi-use trails (blazing and maintenance for these are the responsibility of JO R BA—Jersey Off Road Bicycle Association) and the charmingly named, white-blazed Four Birds Trail (maintained by Trail Conference volunteers). The hike skirts a beaver pond that is home to a variety of wildlife, and passes an empty stone building that is a remnant of the abandoned Marcella Mine. Old, unhandled telephone poles that stick up from the beaver pond and a television transmission tower on the ridge attest to a continuous human presence in the region.

As NJF&W reports, "The breathtaking view of the Highlands is well worth the walk even when the hawks are not moving. The view provides an otherwise hard-to-obtain understanding of the vastness of the Highlands forest resource and its value to hundreds of species including humans, in northern New Jersey."

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**Hikers enjoy a view from the Hawk Watch in March.**

A hike to the Hawk Watch overlook leads to panoramic views of these Highlands forests and, on a clear day, a portion of the New York City skyline. Hike of the Week writer Daniel Chain (his column appears in the Bergen County-based newspaper The Record and on our website) recommends a 2.4-mile, easy-to-moderate loop hike to the Hawk Watch that starts in the parking area at the end of Upper Hibernia Road.

**Trails in the Jeremy Highlands lead to panoramic viewpoints, wildlife, and history.**

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