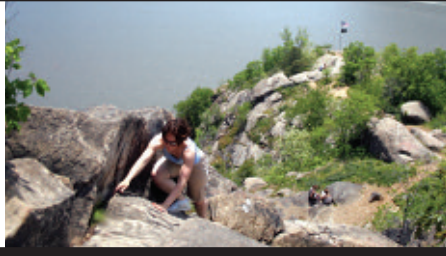


Stop the Invasion!
Steps you can take to help protect our native species.

READ MORE ON PAGE 9 ▶



Scrambling Up Breakneck?

Our trail stewards are there with tips, maps, and water.

READ MORE ON PAGE 2 ▶



TRAIL WALKER

Summer 2014

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference – Connecting People with Nature since 1920

www.nynjtc.org



JAKOB FRANKE

We Open a Great New Trail that Links the Village of Phoenicia to Catskill High Peaks

After decades of planning, three years of field work, and close to 10,000 hours of trail building by more than 100 volunteers, the new 9-mile stretch of Long Path in the Slide Mountain Wilderness Area of the Catskill Mountains opened on National Trails Day, June 7.

More than 70 people, including representatives of the Trail Conference, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, and Catskill partner organizations attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Lane Street trailhead in Phoenicia. The new trail section replaces 5 miles of road walk and 2.8 miles of Burroughs Range Trail with a beautiful, rugged route over Cross Mountain, Mount Pleasant, and Romer Mountain, offering viewpoints along the way. Access is either from Lane Street in Phoenicia or the Woodland Valley State Campground parking area.

Long Path Trail Co-chairs Jakob Franke and Andy Garrison not only organized this ambitious project, but spent weeks in the

mountains building trail and leading teams of volunteers. Special thanks go to them and to the Long Distance Trails Crew and the Jolly Rovers, which contributed their technical expertise to building sections of the trail over several work outings.

Martin Brand, the NYSDEC Region 3 Director, thanked everyone for their hard work and looks forward to more projects. He also formally announced the commencement of the DEC/Trail Conference Catskill Conservation Corps partnership (see page 10).

Jeff Senterman, Senior Program Coordinator for the Trail Conference, says, "This project is a stunning example of what is possible when Trail Conference volunteers and staff collaborate with the DEC. Thanks to our volunteers we have built a trail that sets a new standard for quality and sustainability in the Catskills. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the DEC to improve existing trails and



Jakob Franke and Andy Garrison (second and third from left) cut the ribbon opening the trail.

expand the trail network when necessary." This project was also the first time that the Trail Conference fielded week-long service trips to help complete the project, most of which was a long, hard climb to access.

With this project complete, Andy and Jakob are turning their sights to their next big thing: a new off-road route for the LP

north of Minnewaska State Park Preserve, in the Vernoooy Kill State Forest. Stay tuned.

The Trail

From Woodland Valley, follow the red-blazed Wittenberg-Cornell-Slide trail (and former LP route) up Wittenberg Mountain to the new junction with the new Long Path section (below the Wittenberg summit). The new trail section will be blazed with blue DEC footpath markers and is considered an extension of the Phoenicia-East Branch Trail; LP blazes will appear only at junctions. Turn left to hike the new trail north toward Phoenicia. The trail appears as a dotted line (under construction) on the 2013 edition of the Catskill Trails map set. A map of the new trail can be downloaded from our website.



Friends of Van Cortlandt Park Put Young People to Trail Work



JOHN BUTLER

Our member group's volunteer crew at the end of a hard day of work. Find story on page 8

What New Federal Accessibility Guidelines Mean for Our Trails

Trail volunteers and trail users alike have been asking questions and expressing concerns about the impact new federal accessibility guidelines for outdoor recreation areas may have on our trails. Ama Koenigshof, our Trail Builder/Educator, here writes about the rationale behind the guidelines and how they do, or don't, impact our trail work. A version of the article that includes discussion of technical trail requirements can be found on our website: nynjtc.org, Community tab, then Resources for Volunteers.

By Ama Koenigshof

There are 57 million people in the United States with disabilities. As our population ages, this number increases. When you consider the family and friends of people with disabilities who want to do recreational activities together, the percentage of the population affected is very large.

But it's not just people with disabilities who appreciate accessible trails. As I have seen over and over while building trails on Bear Mountain, people are looking for opportunities to get outdoors with the whole family on paths they can walk together, regardless of their age or fitness level. Though the federal Outdoor Developed Area Accessibility Guidelines were produced with wheel chairs in mind, they increase the accessibility of a trail for every type of user.

For all these reasons, a group of accessibility experts, trail builders, and

continued on page 8



GEORGETTE WEIR

The author measures a trail's cross slope during a workshop.

TRAIL WALKER

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 GEORGETTE WEIR EDITOR
 LOU LEONARDIS GRAPHIC DESIGNER

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Mission Statement

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

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

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What's New at Darlington HQ?



JEREMY APGAR

The Walls Are Up!

By mid-May, anyone passing the Darlington Schoolhouse could see the expanded building taking shape.

Other progress since we last reported in these pages:

- Crawl space in both the existing building and addition has been completed;
- Structural steel frame has been installed to reinforce the chimney on both the first and second floors;
- Installation of both the electrical cables and installation of the sprinkler system has begun;

- Select trees were downed to make way for the addition and designed landscape;

- Footings, concrete foundation, and framing have been finished for the new addition ;

- The water main and sleeves for geothermal piping have been stubbed through the foundation;

Native fieldstone removed from the boiler room and garage were stockpiled to build a dry stone, free standing wall on site later. Black locust, maple, and ash trees were set aside for future use, such as benches.

The landscape around the building—designated the Riparian Restoration Landscape and Wood Turtle Habitat in

early stages—has been formally renamed the Grzybowski Preserve. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, world-renowned environmental sculptor George Trakas has been engaged to design the nature preserve.

Trakas is known for his artistic transformation of a water treatment plant at Newtown Creek, the design of Beacon Point in Beacon, NY, and many other locations.

Please call the Trail Conference office at 201-512-9348 for any construction questions or ways to volunteer at the Darlington Schoolhouse.

We Launch Expanded Trail Steward Program at Breakneck Ridge

If you are planning to hike at Breakneck Ridge this summer, stop and say Hi! to Trail Stewards from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

Starting on the Memorial Day holiday weekend in May, teams of trail stewards began greeting hikers at the foot of the “most popular trail in North America,” or hiking along trails on the ridge, sharing information to help visitors enjoy this spectacular Hudson Valley destination: how to hike safely, good trail routes, hiking etiquette, and how to support hiking trails in our region.

Five trail stewards will be assisting hikers during the weekends through the Columbus Day Weekend. The program was tested for one month last summer, during which two stewards helped equip more than 5,000 visitors with maps and information, answered hundreds of questions about local flora, fauna, and history, steered dozens of visitors back onto trails they had missed, and assisted multiple injured hikers. Neither NYS Parks nor local emergency responders received a single call from Breakneck hikers while the stewards were on duty.

The success of the program inspired financial and in-kind support from several donors for an expanded program this year.

Based on counts made by stewards last year, the Trail Conference estimates that in the pleasant-weather months more than



GEORGETTE WEIR

2014 Trail Stewards, back: Brian Trago and Matt Decker; front: Karen Melanson, Malachy Labrie-Cleary, and Kali Bird with Trail Conference volunteer Fred Stern, our Trail Supervisor for Hudson Highlands State Park.

View Trail Steward Kali Bird's one-minute lesson on how to identify poison ivy on www.youtube.com/nynjtc.

Video by Krysti Sabins of Unboring Exploring.

2,000 people scramble up Breakneck Ridge each week. Many of them arrive by train at Metro-North's Breakneck Ridge weekend whistle stop. The railroad makes three stops in each direction on weekends, and hundreds of hikers may get off on peak days. On their first weekend this year, the stewards counted 343 hikers going up the Breakneck Ridge Trail (white) on a rain-threatening Saturday, 816 on Sunday, and 1004 on a sunny Monday holiday.

The Stewards will be sharing photos and experiences via the Trail Conference Twitter account, [#BreakneckRidge](https://twitter.com/NYNJTC). Follow it to keep up with weekend news from Breakneck.

This year's Trail Stewards are: Kali Bird of Kingston, who launched last year's program; Matt Decker of Beacon, Malachy Labrie-Cleary of Cold Spring, Karen Melanson of Hopewell Junction, and Brian Trago of Union City, NJ.

The Trail Conference is pleased to be working with Hudson Highlands State Park on this project to connect with hikers right on the trail and improve the trail experience for everyone. We thank our Beacon-based retail partner MountainTops for their support of the program.

To learn more about hiking at Breakneck and about getting involved as a trail volunteer, visit www.nynjtc.org/breakneck



From the Executive Director



Spring was a whirlwind and the forecast is for more of the same

50 Trail U workshops during March, April, and May, with 394 participants.

Sixteen AmeriCorps members who were accepted into Year 2 of our Conservation Corps program were given extensive training in trail building, volunteer development, and wilderness first aid. They are now in the field improving our trails and welcoming new volunteers to work alongside them. Four are assigned to the Palisades Crew at Sterling Forest and will continue to build and improve trails at the Doris Duke Wildlife Sanctuary at Sterling Forest State Park. Four are working in our East Hudson area, building our new Taconic Crew and improving trails in Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks. Four are working on the Appalachian Trail at Bear Mountain. And four are working with Land Stewardship Director Linda Rohleder and the Invasives Strike Force on projects in New York and New Jersey.

Our East Hudson Program Coordinator Hank Osborn is expanding upon last year's successful hiker education initiative at Breakneck Ridge trailhead. Five trail stewards were hired and trained to welcome and educate hikers at Breakneck Ridge. In their very first weekend—Memorial Day weekend—these enthusiastic young people encountered 2,163 hikers at this very

popular trailhead in Hudson Highlands State Park, sharing information, maps, water, and helping to make at least one rescue of an injured hiker.

At Ramapo College, our New Jersey Program Coordinator Peter Dolan made great progress toward our goal of creating a student trail crew as an extracurricular program at the college. Faculty and administrators have been supportive, and students have been engaged, several of them working on trail projects through the summer.

In the Catskills, Senior Program Coordinator Jeff Senterman continues to build strong partnerships with state agencies, local nonprofits, and business organizations to promote outdoor trail recreation and tourism in the region. He has also been supporting our very energetic Long Path volunteers as they worked feverishly to complete construction of 9 miles of new trail over three mountains that now connect the Village of Phoenicia to the Catskill High Peaks. Jeff is also leading an initiative with support from New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, to create a Catskill Conservation Corps of volunteers working with DEC to protect and improve lands and waters in the Catskills and create additional access for residents and visitors.

Our Publications Committee published two new editions of popular guidebooks—*Walkable Westchester* and *Hiking Long Island*. Daniel Chazin, with support from key volunteers, produced new editions of *50 Hikes in the Lower Hudson Valley* and *50 Hikes in New Jersey* for The Countryman Press. Dan and the Trail Conference are listed as authors.

We continue to be reminded about the importance of advocacy for protecting trails and improving access. Whether for park and open space budgets or against

intruding development on the Palisades cliffs or the Shawangunk Ridge, or casino proposals adjacent to Harriman and in the midst of Sterling Forest State Parks, a strong grass roots advocacy strategy is our most effective (and most American) approach. We are always in need of more advocacy volunteers prepared to educate themselves and the decision makers.

Trail Builder and Educator Ama Koenigshof has not only been training our new Corps members and giving Trail U workshops, she has been busy educating herself and many of our partners about the implications of new federal guidelines regarding trail accessibility. In addition to that, Ama is the leading force behind the ongoing restoration of our Harriman trails camp, formally known as the Welch Trails Education Center. This camp is home to most of our Corps members during their service period, as it is for visiting volunteers and crews.

Our other construction project—the Darlington Schoolhouse Headquarters—is moving quickly ahead. The walls are up, the roof is on, the plumbing and electrical infrastructure are being installed, the geothermal wells are about to be drilled, and we can now really picture ourselves working in new quarters.

How can we accomplish so much so quickly? Because we have great supporters, great volunteers, and great staff. Thank you one and all.

— Ed Goodell
Executive Director
goodell@nynjtc.org

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Susan Holmberg
Mahwah, NJ

A reflection: I had always taken for granted that I could enjoy the peace and serenity of our beautiful wooded trails any time I wanted. I never thought about how those trails stayed in such pristine condition.

When I broke my back in a car accident last September, the neurosurgeons were very surprised to find both of my legs fully functioning. Thanks to my trail fitness and a healthy lifestyle, I was able to get back to work in less than half the time predicted by the doctors.

An appreciation: After this past challenging winter, I am eager to experience the gift of vitality I always feel when traversing the hills and valleys, streams and rock faces. Today I realize that this privilege is afforded me through the generosity of volunteers and donors who allow me to enjoy this luxury.

For decades, volunteers and hiking clubs have come together through the Trail Conference, giving their time and sweat to create a diverse trail system for all to enjoy, now and for years to come. They build the bridges, clear the fallen trees, cut back overgrowth, and work with hundreds of landowners to keep trails open. And they're looking out for our interests, protecting parks and trails from abuse, encroachment and countless other threats.

Giving thanks: I urge you to join me in supporting over 1,300 Trail Conference volunteers who make over 2,000 miles of trails happen, with your gift to the Trail Conference.

To make a gift to support the trails you and your family and friends love and enjoy, please go to nynjtc.org/donate now

74-Mile Endurance Race To Celebrate Gunks Greenway



September 19-21, 2014

The Shawangunk Ridge Trail now extends 74 miles, from High Point State Park in New Jersey all the way to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail and the rail trail trestle in Rosendale. To draw attention to the extended trail and the need to continue protection efforts for the Gunks Greenway through which it passes, a running/hiking event is planned for September 19-21. Registration is now open.

Ed Goodell, Trail Conference Executive Director, notes, "The Trail Conference has taken a leadership position in preserving the Shawangunk Mountains. Proposed developments continue to threaten the integrity of the Gunks Greenway and the SRT in multiple areas. Through athletic events like SRT Run/Hike and other activities, we intend to build popular awareness of and rally popular support behind preservation of this distinctive natural area."

SRT Run/Hike has three divisions: a complete 74-mile crossing of the SRT for seasoned ultra-runners and ultra-light thru-hikers, and 32- and 20-mile divisions which will appeal to trail runners and hikers with a range of abilities. More information is available at www.srtrunhike.com and www.facebook.com/srtrunhike



Trail News, Conservation, and Advocacy

Harriman Trails Access: The Committee Reports

On April 22, the Harriman Trails Access Committee met with Jim Hall, Executive Director of PIPC, and David Barone, General Park Manager, to review suggestions for improving parking and access to trails in the park. The committee formed after the winter closing of the Orange County section of Route 106 in the park. Although the park is unable to plow Route 106 due to limited equipment and personnel, they are negotiating with an outside contractor to keep this section of Route 106 open during the winter.

The park also agreed to consider expanding and improving existing parking areas where feasible, adding several new small rustic parking areas to allow additional access to existing trails, and will explore the possibility of new connecting trails that would link existing Lake Welch and Kanawauke Boat Launch parking areas with the existing trail network. This is dependent upon the ability to identify acceptable safe and sustainable routes that meet modern trail requirements.

Additionally, they will be working to improve signage to indicate pedestrian (hiker) crossings, directions to parking areas, and the reason for road or parking area closures.

Independent of this committee's work, the park has made many recent improvements, e.g., re-paving roads, paving the Elk Pen, and keeping the south lot at Anthony Wayne open (not plowed) during the winter.

As of June 11, the R-D, Victory, and White Bar parking areas have been enlarged and greatly improved by filling and leveling. The Sebago Boat Launch Parking lot has been enlarged, cleared of encroaching brush, paved, and further landscaped.

Find the full report of the committee at <http://www.nynjtc.org/news/harriman-bear-mountain-trails-access-report-and-recommendations>

For trail alerts and updates about Harriman-Bear Mountain, bookmark nynjtc.org/content/trail-alerts-harriman-bear-mountain

Crowds Pack Englewood Cliffs Master Plan Hearing

A dark and stormy night did not stop hundreds of people from descending on a meeting of the Englewood Cliffs planning board May 1 to offer their views, pro and con, on proposed changes to the borough's master plan. Not all got in. The changes under consideration would permit more tall buildings—up to 150 feet—such as those approved for LG Electronics. It was later reported that the borough council was considering a non-binding referendum on the zoning changes in November. Follow this issue at www.protectthepalisades.org



Trail Conference supporters wait in the rain to attend a Palisades hearing.

NYS Moves Toward September Bear Hunt in Catskills

Despite concerns expressed by the Trail Conference and others about the impact a new, peak foliage bear hunting season in the Catskills may have on other tourist activities, such as hiking, New York DEC announced in May that it is moving ahead with its plan by writing the regulations that would implement it. One more round of public comments extends until July 7. Visit <http://www.nynjtc.org/view/issues>, to find more about this issue.

continued on page 7

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Hikers' Directory

These clubs and organizations support trails by being members of the Trail Conference. Visit their websites to see their activities. To add your organization to the list, contact Joanne Reinhardt, jreinhardt@nynjtc.org.

Catskills

AMC Mohawk Hudson Chapter
www.wsg.net/amc

Catskill Center for Conservation & Development
www.catskillcenter.org

Catskill Mountain Club
www.catskillmountainclub.org

Catskill 3500 Club
www.catskill-3500-club.org

Church Communities Foundation
www.bruderhof.com

Long Path North Hiking Club
www.schoharie-conservation.org

Rip Van Winkle Hikers
<http://newyorkheritage.com/rvw>

Sullivan County Audubon Society
www.sullivanaudubon.org

SUNY Oneonta Outing Club
www.oneonta.edu/outdoors

Connecticut

New Haven

New Haven Hiking Club
www.NHHC.info

East Hudson

Dutchess

ADK Mid-Hudson Chapter
www.midhudsonadk.org

Jolly Rovers
<http://jollyrovers.org>

RPHC Volunteers
timtrek.mikentim.com

Sierra Club Mid-Hudson Group
www.newyork.sierraclub.org/midhudson

Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee

Putnam

Nelsonville Greenway Committee
www.villageofnelsonville.org/greenway_new.html

Westchester

ADK Mohican Chapter
www.adkmohican.org

Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Inc.
<http://aqueduct.org>

Hudson Highlands Gateway Task Force
www.TownofCortlandt.com

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Outings Committee
www.newyork.sierraclub.org/outings

Sierra Club Lower Hudson Group
www.newyork.sierraclub.org/lhg

Teatown Lake Reservation
www.teatown.org

Town of Lewisboro
www.lewisborogov.com

Westchester Land Trust
www.westchesterlandtrust.org

Westchester Trails Association
<http://www.nynjtc.org/clubpages/wta.html>

Long Island

Nassau

German-American Hiking Club
<http://gah.nynjtc.org>

Mosaic Outdoor Mountain Club
ny.audubon.org

Nassau Hiking and Outdoor Club
www.nassauhiking.org

Valley Stream Hiking Club
www.msleo51@hotmail.com

Suffolk

East Hampton Trails Preservation Society
www.ehtps.org

Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference
hike-ligreenbelt.org

Metro

Bronx

Friends of Pelham Bay Park
www.pelhambaypark.org

Friends of Van Cortlandt Park
<http://vancortlandt.org/>

Urban Trail Conference, Inc.
www.urbantrail.org

Kings

Boy Scout Troop 8, Brooklyn

New York Ramblers
www.nyramblers.org

Women About
www.womenabout.org

New York

ADK New York Chapter
www.adkny.org

AMC New York North Jersey Chapter
www.amc-ny.org

Chinese Mountain Club of New York
www.cmcny.org

New York Alpine Club
www.nyalpine.com

New York City Audubon Society, Inc.
www.nycaudobon.org

New York Hiking Club
<http://nyh.nynjtc.org>

Shorewalkers Inc.
www.shorewalkers.org

Society for the Advancement of Judaism
www.thesaj.org

Sundance Outdoor Adventure Society
www.sundanceoutdoor.org

The Outdoor Club, Inc.
www.outdoorsclub.info

Queens

Alley Pond Environmental Center
www.alleypond.com

Thendara Mountain Club
www.thendaramountainclub.org

Richmond

Protectors of Pine Oak Woods
www.siprotectors.org

New Jersey

Bergen

ADK North Jersey Ramapo Chapter
www.hudsonhikers.org

Adventures for Women
www.AdventuresforWomen.org

Boy Scout Troop 50 Mahwah
MAHWAHTroop50.scoutlander.com

Boy Scouts of America-Northern NJ Council
www.nnjbsa.org

Closter Nature Center Association
www.closternaturecenter.org

Flat Rock Brook Nature Association
www.flatrockbrook.org

Friends of Garret Mountain
www.friendsofgarretmountain.blogspot.com

Friends of the Hackensack River
Greenway in Teaneck

Hike for Mental Health
<http://www.hikeformentalhealth.org>

New Jersey Search & Rescue Inc.
www.njsar.org

Palisades Nature Association
www.njpalisades.org/greenbrook.htm

Tenaflly Nature Center Association
www.tenafllynaturecenter.org

Essex

Hilltop Conservancy, Inc.
www.hilltopconservancy.org

South Mountain Conservancy Inc.
www.somocon.org

St. Benedicts Prep Backpacking Project
www.sbp.org

Hunterdon

Hunterdon Hiking Club
www.hunterdonhikingclub.org

Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy
<http://mmc.nynjtc.org>

Middlesex

East Coast Greenway Alliance
www.greenwaynj.org

Monmouth

Monmouth County Park System
www.monmouthcountyparks.com

Morris

Morris County Park Commission
www.morrisparks.net

Protect Our Wetlands, Water & Woods (POW)
<http://box292.bluehost.com/~powwworg>

TriState Ramblers
<http://tsr.nynjtc.org>

Passaic

ADK Long Island
www.adkli.org

Interstate Hiking Club
www.interstatehikingclub.org

The Highlands Natural Pool
www.highlandsnaturalpool.org

West Milford 13ers
www.weishike.com

Weis Wyanokie Wanderers
www.saltshakersrun.com

Somerset

University Outing Club
www.universityoutingclub.org

Sussex

Byram Township Environmental Commission
www.byramtwp.org

Rock Lodge Club
www.rocklodge.com

Salt Shakers Trail Running Club
www.saltshakersrun.com

Union

Union County department of Parks & Community Renewal
www.ucnj.org/community/parks-community-renewal/parks-facilities

Warren

Warren County Morris Canal Committee

Shawangunks

Ulster

Friends of The Shawangunks
<http://shawangunks.org>

Mohonk Preserve
www.mohonkpreserve.org

West Hudson

Orange

Bellvale School

Black Rock Forest Consortium Inc.
www.blackrockforest.org

Boy Scout Troop 121-Hudson Valley Council

Fox Hill School

Storm King Adventure Tours
www.stormkingadventures.com

Rockland

Boy Scouts of America, Troop 21

The Nature Place Day Camp
thenatureplace.com

Torne Valley Preservation Association

Pennsylvania

Northampton

AMC Delaware Valley Chapter
www.amcdv.org

Looking for Hikers' Almanac?
Find upcoming club hikes at
nynjtc.org-Go Hiking-Scheduled Hikes

Work Begins on 6-Mile South Taconic Trail Extension

"Why aren't we just following that deer path, Andrew?"

The deer route looked ready-made for hikers: leaves packed down, mostly free of low-growing blueberry shrubs and downed branches. But, Andrew Seirup explained, the deer didn't go where hikers would want to go, and anyway, their path soon petered out. "We need to head up," he said, pointing in the direction of a tangle of downed branches and thick shrubs.

He had already made his way through the tangle, planting little orange flags to mark the intended route. "Sometimes, you

have to use your imagination."

And so our trail crew of six slowly picked its way along the wooded, shrubby hillside—tossing downed branches, uprooting, sawing, or clipping shrubs, raking a defined path—and painstakingly following a short section of the 6-mile route that a dedicated team of volunteers had laid out over the course of three years of scouting, bushwhacking, and working with state park officials.

The Trail Conference route planning team included Andrew, East Hudson Trails Chair; Claudia Farb, South Taconic Region Trails Supervisor; and Christopher Leonard, a maintainer on the South Taconic Trail.

The April 26 work trip was the first in what is expected to be a multi-year project to clear a new 6-mile extension of the



The first day's crew included East Hudson Trails Chair Andrew Seirup, Michael Schenker, Sue Rangeley, Joanna Seirup, and Charles Drak.

Welcome, AmeriCorps!

“Aaaahh, a tick!”

Learning how to deal with our local eight-legged wildlife threat was one of the first lessons for this year’s class of AmeriCorps trail members. Learning to live without an Internet connection has been another—the Corps members are based at our Welch Trails Education Center (ie, Camp) at Hariman State Park.

Over three weeks in spring, the lessons added up: how to build crib wall, how to recruit volunteers, how to lead a trail crew. Finally, in mid-May, the 16 Corps members who comprise this year’s Conservation Corps were deployed to four Trail Conference crews in New York and New Jersey. Now they are in the field four to five long days a week, building new trails, rehabilitating existing trails, teaching trail construction techniques to other volunteers, and, in the case of the Invasives Strike



SONA MASON

Force, helping to monitor and remove invasive plants along trails in both states.

The Trail Conference’s Conservation Corps members make a full-time commitment to do trail work for a season that generally extends from mid-May to October. In return, they receive training, work experience, housing, and a scholarship. Working alongside our traditional volunteers, Corps members expand our capacity to complete priority projects identified by our park partners. At the same time, the Trail Conference nurtures a new generation of trail leaders.

Corps members are assigned this year to one of four crews:

Palisades Crew, inaugurated last year at Sterling Forest State Park, where Corps members worked with 53 volunteers to build the new Doris Duke Trail. The crew this year will be building additional trail in the same area, aiming to complete a nice loop. The crew is being developed to provide trail building support to New York State Parks’ Palisades Region—southern New York west of the Hudson River to the Catskills. This crew is in the field and welcomes volunteers Thursdays through Sundays.

Taconic Crew, a new crew, working in New York State Parks’ Taconic Region, which covers much of the area in southern

New York east of the Hudson River to the Taconic Mountains. Projects this year will include trail work at Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks, including at the Breakneck Ridge area. This crew is in the field and welcomes volunteers Fridays through Mondays.

Bear Mountain Crew: Corps members assigned to the Bear Mountain Trails Project will work alongside other volunteers, building trail (Appalachian Trail on the east face of the mountain) and teaching technical dry masonry skills. This crew is in the field and welcomes volunteers Thursdays through Sundays.

We’re building the next generation of trail talent and our own crews.

Invasives Strike Force: Corps members assigned to our Invasives Strike Force are trained to recognize and monitor targeted species and to lead volunteer crews in removing them at select locations. They also work with Linda Rohleder, our Land Stewardship Director, on managing and analyzing the data collected. This crew is in the field and welcomes volunteers Wednesdays through Sundays.

Check our online Trail Crew Outings schedule at nynjtc.org/view/trail-crew-outings and get out with a crew.



Trail U Welcomes Ramapo College

When someone handles a sledgehammer, you can see almost immediately if it’s their first time. If it is, legs buckle, wrists seem to flex at angles they shouldn’t, and nobody knows what in the world to do with their feet. Helping volunteers get their bodies in order while handling unfamiliar tools is one of the goals of our Tool Use and Safety course.

At a spring workshop in Long Pond Ironworks State Park, many of the volunteers exhibiting these symptoms weren’t just students of Trail University – they were also students at Ramapo College. And, by the time you read this, several of these students will be on their way to becoming teachers on the trails as they look to assist with projects in the coming months.



With Ramapo College soon to be an across-the-street neighbor of the Trail Conference at Darlington, and with our goal to attract more young people to our volunteer ranks, it seems natural to target the college for volunteer development. Our first semester working with the campus community has been very promising.

Several non-college organizations that operate on campus, such as MEVO (Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization) and the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, helped connect us to col-



PETER DOLAN

A Ramapo College student learns to handle a sledgehammer.

lege administrators and faculty members. Ramapo College professors, especially in the environmental departments, were receptive to our request to give a presentation about the Trail Conference in their classes. Interested students signed up to receive emails about volunteer opportunities, training sessions, and work trips.

Our North Jersey Trails Chair identified a trail at Long Pond Ironworks State Park in need of some drastic work. We planned a series of Trail U courses to teach the basics needed to build a new trail from the ground-up: Trail Layout and Design, Tool Use and Safety, and Introduction to Trail Maintenance. These were all open to the public through our website, but most of the participants were Ramapo students.

With the park superintendent’s approval, the heavily eroded trail was re-aligned over the course of the three workshops. At this time, students have contributed almost 100 hours to this project from start to finish. Some, looking for more work, have crossed the border to join crews in New York State.

The end result of our first semester with Ramapo College has been a perfect model of collaboration, and we’re looking forward to what the future brings. We have some exciting projects lined up in the Ramapo Valley Reservation this summer, so keep an eye on our Trail U page online to get involved, whether you’re a student or not!

If you want to learn more about how to get involved on New Jersey trails, email Peter Dolan at pdolan@nynjtc.org. If you’re a member of the Ramapo College community, find other trail-lovers on campus at [facebook.com/groups/RamapoTrailCrew](https://www.facebook.com/groups/RamapoTrailCrew).



PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Salley Decker
Poughkeepsie, NY

About: Salley is known not only for her long-term commitments—a Trail Conference member since 1978, a Life Member, and a trail maintainer on the Appalachian Trail in Dutchess County since the early 1980s—but for also getting things done, even when, maybe, she didn’t intend to be the person who would do so.

Take for example trails at the Dover Stone Church Preserve in eastern Dutchess. Earlier this year, Salley agreed to be Trail Conference Supervisor for the unique area when, as the result of her prompting, the Trail Conference adopted it for trail stewardship. “I met some of the people involved in the preserve last year at an event” Salley says. “I suggested that the Trail Conference might be helpful in developing the trails they want to see there, and in developing volunteers.” The next thing she knew, she was Trails Supervisor.

Quickly, she organized an Intro to Trail Maintenance workshop for potential volunteers—21 attended. In May, she followed up with the first outing of the new Harlem Valley Trail Maintenance Crew. The crew will help as needed at Dover Stone Church, on the nearby A.T., and other trails in eastern Dutchess County.

Making connections: A long-time hiker, active member of Mid Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, active with Hyde Park Trails partnership and our Dutchess-Putnam A.T. Committee, Salley often wears multiple hats. As in Dover, she habitually creates and supports partnerships to advance the trails and hiking she loves.

Why do I volunteer? Salley asks herself. “It gets me outdoors and gets me to meet people with similar interests. I’ve enjoyed being part of growing system of trails in Dutchess County.”

The trail will link a campground to the ridgetop.

South Taconic Trail in northeastern Dutchess County. The extension will create a connection from the state park and campground at Rudd Pond, just north of the village of Millerton, to the extensive trail network on the Taconic Ridge, where hikers can bag three states—New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut—with a single day hike. [A new, updated and expanded edition of our South Taconic Trails map, last published in 2006, is to be published later this year. It will show the trail extension to Rudd Pond, as well as other nearby trails.]

Joining Andrew on the inaugural trail

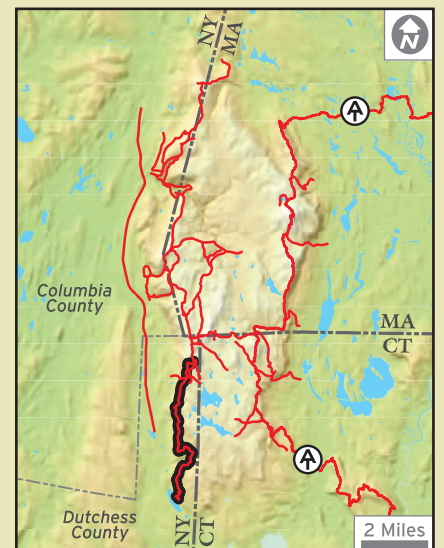
work outing were Sue Rangeley and Michael Schenker, nearby homeowners and hikers who say they spend much of their time on trails in the Taconics and wanted give something back to trails; Joanna Seirup (Andrew’s niece) and Charles Drake of Tarrytown, frequent hikers and backpackers for whom this was a first trail work trip; and Georgette Weir, a Trail Conference staff member who thinks the views from the Taconic Ridge are among the best in the Trail Conference region.

New volunteers are welcome on future



GEORGETTE WEIR

work trips; Andrew hopes to schedule about one a month. Check our website for scheduled trips: nynjtc.org/view/trail-crew-outings. Learn more about the project at nynjtc.org/content/south-taconic-trail-extension



The thick red line represents 6 miles of new trail being built in the Taconics.

People for Trails. Trails for People.

A quarterly look at some of what our volunteers have been doing to assure public access to nature.

Walkers in Brookdale Park in Montclair, NJ, may unexpectedly learn that they are, and have been, trail walking.



On Tuesday, May 13, Trail Conference volunteers and staff worked with employees of the Essex County Parks Department to install 12 trail bollards along a one-mile stretch of the Lenape Trail in the park.

The bollards not only mark the Lenape Trail and draw attention to it in a busy urban park, but function as mini kiosks, describing the trail's entire 34-mile route and providing instruction on how to read the yellow paint blazes that indicate the trail's path.

Several other parks on the Lenape Trail's route will get the bollards in the future, but most direction for the trail is provided by traditional yellow blazes painted on trees.

The Lenape Trail arches through 19 county and municipi-

pal parks in Essex County, NJ, from Newark's Branch Brook Park to the county border at the Passaic River in West Essex Park. Currently blazed and maintained by Trail Conference volunteers along 34 miles of rail trails, park paths, rights-of-way, and roadways, with an extension tracing over six miles in South Mountain Reservation, the Lenape forms a spine connecting Essex County's many natural, cultural, and historical resources.

Learn more about the Lenape Trail at www.nynjtc.org/park/lenape-trail. To learn about volunteering on this or other trails, contact the Trail Conference at volunteers@nynjtc.org.

From viewer's left to right: Paul Paisano, Sean Hanonangie, and Michael Nugent from Essex County Parks; from the Trail Conference, volunteer Sam Huber (Trail Chair), volunteer Federico Nealon (Lenape Supervisor), staff member Peter Dolan, and volunteer Marc Elfenbein (Lenape Supervisor).

Also helping that day but not pictured was parks staffer Ken Edler. Thanks go to Tara Casella, Environmental Coordinator in the Essex County Office of Environmental Affairs, and Carmine Raimo, Superintendent of Essex County Parks, for their help in arranging the work crew.

Pulling Invasives, Finding Natives at FDR State Park

At FDR State Park in Westchester, NY, our Invasives Strike Force teamed with the Friends of FDR State Park and Parks & Trails New York on I Love My Park Day (May 3)—to pull invasive plants and protect native ones. More than two dozen volunteers removed oriental bittersweet vines, multiflora rose bushes, and some barberry and burning bush to uncover young native black cherry trees, a serviceberry in bloom, some silky dogwoods, and a white oak tree. When they mature, all of the native specimens that were rescued will provide important food for wildlife. Learn more about our Invasives Strike Force and opportunities for you to get involved in protecting our native species at www.nynjtc.org/invasives.



Loving Minnewaska

At Minnewaska State Park Preserve in Ulster County, NY, 16 cheerful people worked on the popular Mossy Glen Trail as part of I Love My Park Day activities May 3. They began restoring a wet area and building a new bog bridge. Dave Webber, our volunteer Supervisor for Minnewaska and crew leader of the West Hudson North crew, led the work day, with the support of park staff, who supplied the lumber for the bog bridge and transported it close to the site. The volunteers carried lumber in to the work site, stockpiled stone and crush, and started construction of a bog bridge.

Work will continue this season to complete bog bridges as well as stone turnpikes across several wet areas along the trail, in between the Blueberry Run and Mossy Glen footbridges. If you are interested in working with this crew on this or future projects at Minnewaska, please contact Sona Mason at smason@nynjtc.org. Find schedules for all of our trail crews on our website and get involved with the one that best suits you.



Crew Builds Foot Bridge on Gunks Greenway D&H Canal

Volunteers with our Long Distance Trails Crew (LDTC) were up in Wawarsing in the Shawangunk region in April, building a new footbridge on the D&H Canal. The canal's towpath is a popular walk for residents and visitors, and provides a route for a section of our Long Path along the Gunks Greenway. A grant from Avon Products of Suffern, NY, helped pay for supplies for the project. The crew is out often, and welcomes new participants. You can find details and contact info for their outings on the crew schedule on our website: nynjtc.org/view/trail-crew-outings. Look for 'Long Distance Trails Crew' or leader Chris Reyling.

New Trail Initiatives in Westchester County

With declining budgets and shrinking payrolls, many municipalities and nonprofits turn to the Trail Conference for help with their trails. This spring the Westchester Trail Committee has taken on maintenance at Hunt-Parker Sanctuary, Cranberry Lake Preserve, and Westmoreland Sanctuary. Negotiations are underway to add three North Salem Open Land Foundation preserves adjacent to Mountain Lakes Park and Taxter Ridge Park Preserve in the Town of Greenburgh.

Discussions in April and May revealed all the above parks need some help; how the Trail Conference will help their partners varies. Discussions at Westmoreland Sanctuary revealed that their well loved trails need more than trail maintenance; water seeping onto the trails has created muddy areas or erosion. Another trail needs work to improve its treadway before erosion occurs. With work trips and workshops, we will begin to form a fledging group of people who love to work on trails. Eventually individual maintainers will be assigned to the trails at Westmoreland.

The trails at Cranberry Lake Preserve also need some TLC. In June, more than 60 employees of the Xylem Corporation turned out to give it some. Their work included spray painting out graffiti, removing trash, installing puncheon, and closing a trail. Corporate days of service help employees connect with each other outside of the work place. Their day volunteering helps do much needed work at parks.

Bedford Audubon's Hunt-Parker Sanctuary needs people willing to maintain a trail. It is a beautiful place with a variety of habitats: pond, wetlands, meadows, upland forest.

One of those parks might be near you or where you like to take a walk. You could have bragging rights to a place you love to visit. The Trail Conference offers new maintainers a workshop to give you the skills you need. Introduction to Trail Maintenance is a hands-on course offered at many locations. See <http://www.nynjtc.org/view/workshops>

To let us know if you would like to maintain a trail, help on a trail crew, take a workshop, or have your company help on a day of service, please contact East Hudson Program Coordinator Hank Osborn at hosborn@nynjtc.org

*Jane Daniels, Westchester Trail Chair
Rose Bonanno, Assistant Chair*

TRAIL NEWS, CONSERVATION

continued from page 3

Seven Peaks on the Shawangunk Ridge

As of the deadline for this issue, developers of the proposed Seven Peaks housing project in Mamakating, NY were still working on their Final Environmental Impact Statement. The Trail Conference and other groups, including the state Department of Environmental Conservation, posed numerous challenges and questions to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project in 2010. A recent workshop session between developers, planners, and representatives of the Trail Conference and the BashaKill Area Association left the latter two groups dissatisfied with developers' responses and concerned about the future of the ridge and its environs.

The Trail Conference would like to preserve the entire parcel as open space but, short of that, our position is that the Mamakating Planning Board should not approve the project unless, at a minimum, provision is made for an adequate wilderness corridor along the western edge of the property.



BOB JONAS

Central North Jersey Supervisor Meetup

Sometimes, trail work gets done while sitting around a table. On May 3 the Central North Jersey Trails Chairs Meeting, led by Estelle Anderson and Bob Jonas, held their Annual Supervisors Meeting at the City of Newark's Echo Lake office in Milford. "We discussed all matters concerning our work with an emphasis on safety and the importance of establishing excellent communications between them and their trail maintainers, and a host of other issues," Bob Jonas said. Present, left to right, sitting: Jeff Roggenburg, South Wyandott; Paul Makus, South Wyandott; Kori Kops, Pequannock Watershed; Alan Abramowitz, Wawayanda West; Ron Luna, Pyramid Mountain; Bob Osborn, High Mountain. Standing: Bill Phillips, Pequannock Watershed; Ed Leonard, Mountainside Park; Keith Kerner (BSC); Wawayanda East; Estelle Anderson, CNJ Trails Chair; Nick McKenna, Wawayanda East. Unable to attend: Chuck Irwin and Michael Lenhardt.



ROBERT FULLER



JOIN PEOPLE FOR TRAILS ON ONE OF MANY EXCITING PROJECTS THIS SEASON

Check the crew trip calendar at nynjtc.org/view/trail-crew-outings

CREW U! – The Rocky Evolution of a Maintenance Crew

By Mary Dodds

I am the supervisor of the Westchester Trail Tramps (Westtts), a crew which meets every Wednesday morning to maintain and improve trails in northwestern Westchester County. My crew (photo 1) is an offshoot of the Ward Pound Ridge Crew, which maintains trails at WPR and other county, municipal, and local sites in northeastern Westchester.



1

The Westtts started out as maintainers during a period when successive "storms of the century" wrought havoc on trails maintained by the Trail Conference. Individual maintainers were overwhelmed by the damage. The Westtt and WPR crews were able to clear large limbs and small blow-downs and to move washed-out puncheon and bridges back to their original, or more appropriate locations.

During the relatively peaceful year and a half since super storm Sandy, my crew has turned to more technical problems, mainly involving trail tread. Many of the crew members have taken trail tread courses offered by the Trail Conference. Additional invaluable instruction from Leigh Draper, a former Trail Conference East Hudson Program Coordinator (now the Trail Steward and Volunteer Coordinator for Teatown Lake Reservation) and from the Trail Conference's Westchester Chair and volunteer extraordinaire Jane Daniels was provided in actual work settings.



2

I also had the incredibly good fortune of working and learning with Chris Reyling's Long Distance Trails Crew on a Trail U day. I operated a grip hoist, wielded a sledge hammer, and dug, transported and distributed mineral soil for the new Appalachian Trail reroute on West Mountain.

My crew and I have had ample opportunity to use and hone our rock skills this spring at Teatown. We moved large rocks to create above-the-flood-line tread on a very wet section of trail. We became proficient at using rock bars, learning to wedge the bar



3

as far as possible underneath the rock, and then leveraging it high enough for the other person to wedge her bar further underneath and lift the rock even higher (photos 2 and 3). This continued until the rock was nudged/flipped/rolled to its final resting place. We learned that communication is vital - when a mover set her bar, she loudly said "SET" so the other mover knew to then set her bar.

Meanwhile, a hole was dug by other crew members tasked with fitting and stabilizing the rock, making it safe to walk on. Crew also worked to identify seepage origins and create a drainage system.

In addition to rock transport, rock alteration was required. Small, crushed rocks were needed to provide fill on the trail. A sledge hammer was used to make rocks smaller and a mallet to make rock crush from the smaller rocks. First, suitable rocks (helpful hint - rock with layers) were identified. Next a protected pit was dug and rocks dumped in. Our rock-breaking crew member raised the sledge overhead with her dominant hand gripping just below the hammerhead and her other hand at the end of the handle (photo 4).



4

Smaller rock crush was needed and our youngest crew member (under Mom's supervision) was up to the challenge. (photo 5).

Some crew members opted for safer work. We "paved" a wet section of trail that must be kept accessible to Teatown tractors and trucks. Unfortunately, the presence of such vehicles exacerbate wet conditions while precluding use of large rocks on the trails. Paving is the answer and one of our spring projects is to drain what can be drained and pave the rest.



5

Join the fun - Join a crew!
<http://www.nynjtc.org/content/trail-crews>

PS: I reward MY crew with homemade cookies, but don't let that influence your crew choice!





REI Gives \$20,000 Grant to Support Trail Crews

In June, REI announced a \$20,000 grant to the Trail Conference to support work this year by our volunteers and AmeriCorps members in building 700 linear feet of an Appalachian Trail relocation on Bear Mountain, including 5-foot wide surface tread hardened by stone stairs and supported by stone crib walls.

In addition, the grant will provide for much needed improvements to the Welch Trail Education Center (Harriman camp), which provides housing for our AmeriCorps members and other volunteers as well as space for Trail Conference events and trainings.

REI gives grants "to select stewardship nonprofits that care for the outdoor places our customers love."

Previously, REI has given significant financial support to the Trail Conference for our Trail University and, last year, our program in the Catskills. To learn more about REI's support for our Catskill program, see their GeoStories feature at www.rei.com/stewardship/community/non-profit-partnerships-and-grants.html. Search for Catskills.



SAVE THE DATE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

Annual Fall Member
& Friends Meeting

Caputo Community Center
Ossining, NY

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Trail Walker blogs
all year long.

Visit blog-tw.nynjtc.org
and read about
Trail Conference
people, projects and
relevant trail stories.

Lyme Disease 2014 Update

By Howard E. Friedman DPM

Early anecdotal reports indicate ticks are plentiful this season. Below is a brief overview of some of the main points to remember during tick season. This update reinforces as well as supplements the article that appeared in *Trail Walker* in 2012 about Lyme disease, which can be found on our website: www.nynjtc.org/news/health-news.

The following information is based on the latest Clinical Practice Guidelines of the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA), the largest society of physicians, scientists and others who specialize in infectious diseases. The IDSA Lyme disease guidelines, developed in 2006, were reviewed and re-endorsed in 2010, and again in part in 2012; they are endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Lyme disease is caused by an infection of the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which can be transmitted through a bite by an infected individual of either of two tick species, *Ixodes scapularis* (black-legged deer tick, pictured) or *Ixodes pacificus* (western black-legged tick). The first of these ticks is endemic in the northeast United States and is of most concern to those who enjoy outdoor activities in our region.

The Society's recommendations address two tick-bite scenarios: one in which Lyme disease may be prevented, and one in which symptoms appear and it must be treated.

Preventing Lyme disease: Avoiding exposure to ticks is still recommended as the most effective means for preventing a Lyme infection. If exposure to ticks is unavoidable, the Society recommends use of barrier clothing, tick repellent, checking the body for ticks and prompt removal of any ticks found. The insect repellent DEET is recommended to help protect exposed skin (but not recommended for use on the hands or face) and permethrin is effective as a tick repellent on clothing, the IDSA writes.

If you find a tick attached to your skin: The Society does not recommend routine

antibiotic treatment for anyone bitten by a tick UNLESS the tick is positively identified as one of the species that transmits the bacteria that causes Lyme, AND the tick is thought to have been attached for at least 36 hours AND treatment can begin within 72 hours from the time the tick was removed. A fourth criterion, that more than 20% of local ticks are known to be infected, is assumed to be the case throughout our region.



If the above criteria are met, the IDSA recommends one dose of doxycycline 200 milligrams in adults and the appropriate dose in children 8 years old and older. This is all before developing a rash, fever, or other typical Lyme symptoms. That is, just being bitten, even with an engorged tick, is not the same as having the disease.

People who have removed a tick from their skin, even if they have received a dose of antibiotics, should monitor themselves for 30 days for signs of skin rash and/or fever or viral type symptoms which suggest infection. Someone who develops symptoms should be evaluated not only for Lyme but also for babesiosis and human granulocytic anaplasmosis (HGA or just anaplasmosis), both of which may also be transmitted by the black-legged deer tick. The Society makes the same recommendation even for people who have had a prior case of Lyme or who have received the Lyme vaccine (the vaccine was removed from the market in 2002).

The Society recommends blood testing for Lyme be done only in labs that follow the CDC guidelines for interpretation of results and should be a two-staged test.

If Lyme symptoms appear: Early Lyme disease is still treated with one of the follow-

ing oral antibiotics: doxycycline, amoxicillin or cefuroxime axetil for 14-21 days. The lengths of treatment or doses may be changed based on the clinical findings.

Other diseases: Babesiosis and HGA can be transmitted by the tick that transmits Lyme and someone can be infected with one, two, or all three of these infections at the same time. HGA may resolve on its own within 30 days, but the IDSA still recommends appropriate antibiotic treatment.

Babesiosis is caused by a protozoa also transmitted by the Ixodes tick. This disease does occur in New York and New Jersey and can cause fever, sweats, muscle and joint pain, nausea, and vomiting. Babesiosis is reportedly one-third less common than Lyme disease. Complications of this infection can be serious. Diagnosis is confirmed by evaluating a blood smear in the lab and antibiotic treatment is recommended. In some cases a transfusion is required as well.

Other ticks: For those of us hiking in the Northeast, the deer tick and Lyme disease are still the top concerns we have regarding tick-borne diseases. However, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies four other ticks in our region that may transmit disease. These are: American Dog Tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), the most common vector for Rocky Mountain Spotted fever in New York; Brown Dog Tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*), Groundhog Tick (*Ixodes cookiei*), and Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*). Potential tick hosts are not limited to the animals in the names.

Resources: A particularly useful guide is the 2014 brochure (PDF), Tickborne Diseases of the United States (<http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/TickborneDiseases.pdf>). Produced for health care professionals, it can be comprehended by lay readers.

Also consult these websites: www.idsociety.org/Lyme, www.cdc.gov/lyme, and www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme



NEW FEDERAL GUIDELINES

continued from page 1

representatives from the Federal Highway Administration and Forest Service developed Federal guidelines for outdoor recreation and trails. The guidelines are meant to produce accessible, sustainable, low-maintenance trails that showcase nature. They are not meant to encourage paving our wild places.

The Outdoor Developed Area Accessibility Guidelines fall under the Federal Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and affect trails built on federal lands or federal projects. Currently many states and land managers are choosing to adopt the guidelines as best practice. They apply *only* to trails that meet ALL three of the following criteria (few of our trails do):

1. the trail is new or altered from its original purpose, intent, or function;
2. the trail has a designed use of hiker/pedestrian;
3. the trail connects *directly* to a trailhead or *directly* to a trail that currently substantially complies with all the trail accessibility technical requirements.

VAN CORTLANDT PARK

continued from page 1

On I Love My Park Day, May 3 in New York, member group Friends of Van Cortlandt Park teamed up with the Bronx park's hard-working trail crews and students from John Jay College and Lehman Colleges, to close a "desire path" running perpendicular between two main trails. These desire paths (also called social trails) can cause erosion issues when rain runs off these trails and create a more fragmented forest affecting forest interior plant and wildlife species. To close the trail the crew first raked the tread to loosen the soil for new plantings, and

The guidelines do not apply if meeting them is not practicable due to terrain, would fundamentally alter the function or purpose of the facility or the nature of the setting, cannot be accomplished with the prevailing construction practices, or is precluded because the cultural, historic, or significant natural features are eligible for protection under Federal, State, or local law.

At any point on a trail where a condition prevents compliance with a technical provision, at that point the trail is to comply *to the extent practicable*. Once past that point, the trail must comply with the technical provisions.

How the New Rules Affect Our Work

For the Trail Conference, the guidelines apply to new trail that we build on federal land or for federal projects, or if a land managing partner wants to build a more accessible trail, they *may* apply (all three conditions need to be met). Trail maintenance, our primary trails function, is not directly affected by the guidelines.

Nevertheless, when designing new trail, we can use the guidelines to help make

trails more accessible and more sustainable, even if we aren't able (or it doesn't make sense) to fully comply.

- When creating a reroute around a problem area, for instance, consider grade rules; following them will help you to avoid creating a future problem area.
- When discussing signage with our park partners, we can encourage safe placement and easier-to-read designs.

New ABA Regulations for trails help to ensure that we consider who we may be *excluding* when we make decisions about trails. In so doing, they help open up opportunities for *all* stakeholders to enjoy nature. Following the guidelines, we can design trails that are harmonious with nature, an enjoyable experience for all users, and sustainable, easing the burden on the volunteers, park personnel, and budgets that maintain them.

To learn more about trail design and Outdoor Developed Area Accessibility Guidelines, check our Trail-U schedule of courses.



later covered the trail with leaf matter and woody debris to camouflage the area. A few check dams were also installed using downed logs from the site to catch sedimentation as the water runs down the former path. The group ended up planting



nearly 50 trees and shrubs along this trail as well as a variety of herbaceous plants.

In the end the trail that once was can now barely be seen by an unknowing eye. Only time will tell, but the group is hopeful that the planted trees, shrubs, and herbs will grow and add to the health of the forest in Van Cortlandt Park and that the improved landscape will result in a more positive hiking experience. The Friends of Van Cortlandt Park is always looking for willing volunteers to lend a hand. If interested, please contact john@vancortlandt.org or by phone at 718-601-1553.



Invasive Species: What's in Your Neighborhood?

By Jen Stengle and Linda Rohleder

You might have noticed them crawling in your curtains, or buzzing around your chandelier; alarming numbers of brown marmorated stink bugs settled down for winter this year in Putnam County. These alien invaders are just one of many invasive species that have taken hold in the metropolitan area. Perhaps you have noticed Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) on your favorite hiking trail or have seen your viburnums eaten to shreds by Viburnum leaf beetle (*Pyrrhalta viburni*). These invasive plants and insects are just the ones we see. There are many others we don't notice, clinging to the bottom of our hiking boots and kayaks, hiding beneath the bark of our ash trees, nestled in firewood picked up on the roadside.

While some of these invaders seem like they are no more than a nuisance, they impact our quality of life, the cost of our foods, and the health of the ecosystems that we enjoy as part of our natural heritage. Take the example of the Brown marmorated stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) buzzing around your house. While these insects are an indoor nuisance, once outside they and their young begin to feed on emerging fruits. Our regional apple orchards are prime grazing territory for this insect, costing farmers millions of dollars in extra materials and work, while adding more pesticides to our food, land, and waters. Brown marmorated stink bugs don't stop at apples, they are happy to eat all the same fruits that we do, in our orchards, farms, gardens, vineyards, and woodlands. Many of the fruits they feed on in natural areas are the same foods that the birds and wildlife rely on.

To put some numbers to the impacts of these alien invaders, more than 6,500 non-indigenous species are now established in the United States. The current annual environmental, economic, and health-related costs of invasive species exceed those of all other natural disasters combined. The most widely referenced estimate (Pimental et al. 2005) reports that invasive species cost the United States more than \$120 billion in damages every year. In 2011 alone, the Department of the Interior spent \$100



CHRIS EVANS, ILLINOIS WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN, BUGWOOD.ORG

Japanese stiltgrass *Microstegium vimineum*

million on invasive species prevention, early detection and rapid response, control and management, research, outreach, international cooperation and habitat restoration. This doesn't include state and local costs. Many municipalities, already stretching their budgets, are unprepared when invasive species devastate their trees or clog their waterways.

But it's not just the government that has to deal with these impacts. An aquatic invasive plant, Eurasian watermilfoil, (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) reduced Vermont lakefront property values up to 16 percent and Wisconsin lakefront property values by 13 percent. Homeowners managing

What Can You Do?

Gardeners: Ask your nursery or garden center which plants are native. Or call your local Cornell Cooperative Extension; they can help you select plants suited to your landscape that are either native or that do not show invasive tendencies. Remember, garden centers and nurseries carry what their customers ask for. You can help make the change: if you ask for native plants, growers will be more likely to stock them.

Boaters and Anglers: *Clean, Drain, Dry & Disinfect.* When you leave a body of water, remove any visible mud, plants, fish or animals before transporting your equip-



DAVID R. LANCE, USDA APHIS PPO, BUGWOOD.ORG

Halyomorpha halys adult, i.e., stinkbug

Brown marmorated stink bug and Asian multicolored lady beetles have had to take extra steps or hire contractors to caulk openings, replace screens, and seal soffits and fascia boards against these insects. And those backyard gardeners who planted blackberries and raspberries have learned the disappointment of losing their entire crop to a small fruit fly called spotted wing *Drosophila* (*Drosophila suzukii*).

How do they get here?

Plants and animals have always traveled with us. World travel, international trade, and the Internet have all promoted the movement of exotic species to our region. The more we travel, the more goods we import, the greater the chance that we accidentally transport these hitchhikers. Our cars, boats, and hiking boots become pathways for invasive species.

Sometimes it's accidental: stiltgrass seeds can be trapped in soil on construction equipment or hiking boots. But sometimes it's more intentional: a beautiful shrub planted in our yards produces seeds that, unintentionally, start new plants in the local park.

One of New York's newest invasive species, Feral swine (*Sus scrofa*), is one such escapee, brought in intentionally to farms and hunting preserves and escaped into the wild. Without predators, these destructive and dangerous hogs are becoming established in New York State—including in the Catskills—tearing up crops and destroying fragile wetlands.

Another escapee, Giant Hogweed (*Herculeum mantegazzianum*) was sold as an ornamental garden plant up until a few years ago. Like many invasive plants, it is quite striking, but this beauty is a beast, causing severe skin reactions, scarring and blindness.

ment. Be sure to eliminate any water from your hidden areas like bait wells and bilges. Clean and dry anything that comes in contact with water (boats, trailers, equipment, even your dogs). Never release plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water. If you have leftover bait, don't just dump it out in the brush or into the water. New York State maintains a list of approved baitfish species: ask your bait shop what they are carrying.

Hikers, Birders, Outdoor Enthusiasts: Chances are, you're out there to enjoy nature. The last thing you want to do is introduce an invasive species. Clean equipment, boots, and gear between trips, preferably, before leaving an infested area. Make sure to remove all seeds and other plant parts. And since you're already out there, learn to recognize and report invasive species. If you'd like to improve your ID skills and learn how to report what you've found, attend one of the many free invasive plant ID classes offered throughout the region.

Citizens: Chances are your municipality will have to pay for invasive species control or removal. Whether it's a bad neighbor like running Bamboo (*Phyllostachys* sp.) or the sudden loss of trees on town property

PEOPLE FOR TRAILS



Cliff Berchtold
Monroe, NY

Just say 'Yes!' That's Cliff's position when it comes to the Trail Conference. He has helped teach several Trail U courses, taught a map and compass course for scouts, tabled at events, and regularly promotes our organization while hiking. He's not above using his dog to get someone's attention. "Baron is cute enough to get many hikers to stop."

Cliff began maintaining a two-mile section of the Scenic Trail (Long Path) at Minnewaska State Park Preserve in 1995. Last fall, he switched to the Townsend Trail in Sterling Forest.

In 2012 Cliff retired as Director of Transportation for the Monroe School District. In 2013, he attended a presentation on invasive plants by our Invasives Strike Force coordinator Linda Rohleder. He took the ISF training, and last summer surveyed most of the trails on Schunemunk Mountain.

Now, he also goes to the office one or two days a week to help enter ISF data and create maps that are used in the field or for analysis. "I'm learning new things and keeping myself mentally active as well as physically active. And I enjoy my time in the office. It's very collegial. I have a feeling of being on a good team."

About: "I had decades of enjoyment from the trails that someone else made and kept up. Finally, over the past two decades, I've begun to 'pay it forward.' "

"Perhaps surprisingly, my Army experience, even in Vietnam, did not ruin my enjoyment of wild places. In fact, engineer officer training gave me a useful foundation for map and compass field work in more peaceable surroundings."

Find your place with the Trail Conference. Visit nynjtc.org or contact Volunteer Coordinator John Leigh, jleight@nynjtc.org.

to emerald ash borer, municipalities often have to foot the bill and pass the burden on to taxpayers. Get involved at the local level to encourage invasive species regulation and preparedness for your town or village. Don't know where to start? See if your county or municipality has an emerald ash borer task force, environmental commission or citizen's advisory committee.

Keep up with our efforts to control invasives and learn more at nynjtc.org/invasives



Learn, Look and Lend a Hand: NY Invasive Species Awareness Week July 6-12, 2014!

Invasive species affect all New Yorkers - from hikers to highway personnel, from birders to boaters and from farmers to foresters. The first annual NY Invasive Species Awareness Week (ISAW) will provide opportunities for all citizens of New York to participate in invasive species awareness events around the state. Join with local environmental organizations, hiking and trail clubs, and parks for a week of special activities. You can volunteer to help remove invasive species, get out on the trails or on the water to see invasive species firsthand, attend presentations to learn more about what you can do to help fight these threats, and much more.

Find a local event at <http://nyinvasivespeciesweek.org>

Learn, Look, and Report: Invasive Plant Surveyor Trainings

Invasives Strike Force volunteers are trained to identify 14 different invasive plants and collect data along hiking trails throughout the Hudson Valley region and northern New Jersey. Free training for ISF volunteers is being offered by the Trail Conference:

- July 12 - Westchester Land Trust, Bedford Hills, NY
- July 13 - Cornell Cooperative Extension, Rockland Co., Stony Point, NY

To register, go to <http://nynjtc.org/view/workshops>

2014 Nominees for Board of Directors, Delegates at Large

The Nominations Committee of the Trail Conference presents the following candidates for the Board of Directors for three-year terms and Delegates at large for one-year terms. These nominations will be voted on at the Annual Meeting to be held on October 18 in Ossining, NY.

For Board of Directors

Walter E. Daniels Mohegan Lake, NY

Following his 30-year career at IBM, Walt has volunteered over 2,000 hours annually for the last 13 years for the Trail Conference as its webmaster, trail maintainer, trail supervisor, trail assessment leader, workshop leader, steering committee member for the 2007 Appalachian Trail Conference, publications committee member and co-author of *Walkable Westchester*, a guide to hiking trails in Westchester County, published earlier this year in its second edition. Walt was elected to the board of directors in 2011. He is an Honorary Life Member of the Trail Conference.

Andy Garrison Wurtsboro, NY

Andy is a long-term, active volunteer with the Trail Conference, with broad experience in maintaining, building, and preserving trails and open space, often working with partner organizations. He currently serves on the Trail Conference Conservation Committee, is co-chair of the Long Path Committee, and is Shawangunk Ridge Trail Supervisor and a maintainer. Andy led the clean-up of the Trail Conference property in the Shawangunks known as LaFarge, and just finished leading the effort to build the new 8+ mile Long Path route in the Catskill Park.

Richard R. Levine Upper Saddle River, NJ

Rick is the current Treasurer of the Trail Conference and chair of the Finance Committee. He is the Managing Director of ITP Associates, a commercial real estate developer and manager of transportation facilities, primarily at Newark Airport. He was the executive director of the "Love Newark Committee," a public-private environmental initiative to clean up and promote Newark and a hike leader for the Adirondack Mountain Club's Outdoor for Kids program. Rick was first elected to the Trail Conference board in 2011.

John Magerlein Yorktown Heights, NY

John has been a Trail Conference volunteer for nearly 30 years. Since 1992 he and his wife Karen have been supervisors for the trails in Fahnestock State Park. John has led the construction of new trails and bridges in the park, worked closely with park managers, and frequently taught Trail Maintenance. He is a certified chain sawyer. As registrar for the 2007 Appalachian Trail Conservancy biennial conference, he set up

the first on-line registration system for that conference. John has served on the board of directors of his church congregation and as its president. John works at the IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, where he has held a variety of technical and managerial positions.

Dr. Beth Ravit Closter, NJ

Beth spent three decades as a corporate executive before entering graduate school and earning her Masters (2001) and Ph.D. (2004) degrees in Environmental Science from Rutgers University. She joined the Rutgers faculty in 2005 and is currently an Instructor in the Department of Environmental Sciences, School of Environmental & Biological Sciences (SEBS), New Brunswick, NJ, where she has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Environmental Science and Microbial Ecology. She serves on the boards of Hackensack Riverkeeper (treasurer) and the Closter Nature Center, among others. In her business life Beth developed significant experience positioning, developing, and expanding new and restructured retail concepts as President & Chief Executive Officer of Next USA, and prior to that, as President of Speedo Authentic Fitness Retail Division.

Edward Saiff Mahwah, NJ

Eddie is a professor of biology at Ramapo College, and clinical professor of pathophysiology and neurosciences at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He has served on and chaired the Mahwah Environmental Commission, and the Mahwah Board of Education. He is a dedicated outdoors man and a key liaison between Ramapo College and the Trail Conference. Eddie serves on the Headquarters Construction Committee of the Trail Conference. He has served on the board of directors since 2008.

Christine DeBoer New Paltz, NY To fill an unexpired term.

Christine is executive director of the Walkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT), since 2009. Prior to that, she was a Trail Conference staff member, serving as East Hudson Regional Representative from 2008-2009. Christine's 15 years of experience working in conservation includes a focus on environmental education and extensive experience training and managing staff and volunteers, and collaborating with multiple organizations on projects.

For Delegates-at-Large

Therese Allen	Paul Makus
Susan Barbuto	Steven Marano
Norman Blumenstein	Margo Moss
Allyn Dodd	Karen Rose
Jack Driller	Ruth Rosenthal
Harvey Fishman	Mellonie Sanborn
Bob Fuller	Frank Schoof
Jill Hamell	Karl Soehnlein
Pete Heckler	Douglas Sohn
Rob Lehman	Nancy Tollefson
Mark Liss	Daniel Van Engel
Alice Luddington-Cantor	Robert Ward

DEC, Trail Conference to Partner on New Catskill Conservation Corps

At the National Trails Day opening of the new 9-mile trail route in the Catskills for the Long Path (see page 1), DEC Region 3 Director Martin Brand announced the commencement of the DEC/Trail Conference Catskill Conservation Corps partnership.

Based on our model of volunteer management and development to maintain 200 miles of trails and 30 shelters in the Catskills, the Catskill Conservation Corps will promote and manage volunteer resources and opportunities to help the state preserve and protect the natural resources of the Catskills.

New volunteers, partnerships, and trail-

related projects in the region are likely to emerge as we embark on this new arrangement. Stay tuned and bookmark your web browser for nynjtc.org/catskills for announcements and links.

In a press release about the new program, DEC Commissioner Martens said: "Governor Cuomo is committed to expanding outdoor recreation opportunities in the Catskill Region and across the state so that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy New York's beautiful scenery and a wide range of activities. DEC is pleased to partner with the Trail Conference to form the Catskills Conservation Corps to protect and improve lands and waters in

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February 24, 2014 - May 26, 2014

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In memory of Bill Moss
Richard & Nancy Wolf

In memory of David Sive
June P. Slade

In memory of our friend, Fred Kelly
Trish Long

In memory of Ruth Robinson
Holger Nissen & Sally W. French

In memory of Dr. Joan G. Ehbrenfeld
Rutgers Ecology & Evolution Graduate Students,
Joni Baumgarten

In memory of William (Bill) Moss
avid biker & outdoorsman
Interstate Hiking Club

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Tributes are only printed for donations of \$25 or more.

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IN MEMORIAM

David Sive

David Sive, called by the *NY Times* "a father of environmental law and advocacy," died March 12 at the age of 91. He was, with his wife Mary, who survives him, a Life Member of the Trail Conference. Mr. Sive was an accomplished, assertive lawyer who put his skills and talents to work to protect natural beauty. He was a litigator in the precedent-setting Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference vs. Federal Power Commission that both helped stop the building of a power plant on Storm King Mountain and led to the acknowledgement that private citizens could have legal standing to contest projects on the basis of potential environmental and aesthetic harm they might cause. He was a founder of the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Law Institute, Friends of the Earth and Environmental Advocates of New York, among other groups.

the Catskills and create additional access for residents and visitors. Working together, we will preserve critical habitats, develop and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities like hiking and fishing, promote tourism in the Catskills and ensure our environment is in good hands."

Ed Goodell, executive director of the Trail Conference, said, "The Trail Conference is pleased to assist DEC in developing a Catskills Conservation Corps that will provide volunteering opportunities to the public and augment DEC's professional efforts to protect and improve the Park. Working together, we will be able to engage more individuals and groups in the stewardship and recreational development of the Catskills."

Under a contract with DEC, the Trail Conference will recruit and supervise vol-

unteers to perform various stewardship tasks in conjunction with DEC's efforts in the Catskills. The contract totals approximately \$75,000 for two years, funded through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), with an option to extend the agreement for an additional three years.

DEC will identify specific needs and the Trail Conference will recruit, train and supervise volunteers working on specific projects across multiple DEC divisions and at various sites in the Catskills. Projects may include trail construction and maintenance, fish sampling, invasive species control, research and monitoring of State Lands, and a broad range of other activities.



GEAR CHECK

An occasional series that reviews gear appropriate for hiking.



La Sportiva Wildcat Trail Shoes
Reviewed by Howard E. Friedman

I have been wearing/testing these shoes for almost nine months. The shoe is designed as a trail running shoe, but I recommend them for hiking and backpacking as well.

Introduced a few years ago by La Sportiva, an Italian company best known for its rock climbing shoes and mountaineering boots, the Wildcat shoes are well constructed for running or hiking on uneven, rocky, root covered, and even wet terrain. The shoes are not waterproof, a feature I desire as it allows wet or damp socks and shoes to dry when they do get wet (which they will).

La Sportiva uses a proprietary sticky rubber compound on the sole to provide excellent traction via strategically placed low-profile lugs. The upper material surrounding the foot is a type of mesh that overlays a thin non-mesh liner so debris does not penetrate. I have actually felt a breeze on my toes when running as air whooshes through.

The tongue of the shoe is widened to further help keep pebbles out. The midsole includes two layers of different types of EVA to provide support and cushioning, yet the shoes overall are not too heavy. Each shoe weighs about 12-13 ounces and has a 12 millimeter drop from heel to toe.

I have run about 10-12 miles a week in these on trails and grass, running both uphill and down, in dry and wet conditions, and have found them comfortable and reliable, albeit with some wearing down of the outermost heel lug.

Howard E. Friedman, DPM, is an avid hiker, a podiatrist in Suffern, NY, and a frequent contributor to Trail Walker.

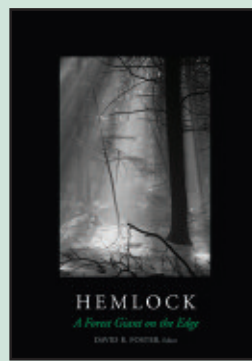


Rating: 4.5 boots out of 5

Ratings are 1-5 boots, with a 5-boot ranking signifying "This is very good. I like it."

Book Review

Hemlock A Forest Giant on the Edge



By David R. Foster
Yale University Press, 2014
Reviewed by Jonathan Beard

One of the sunniest, yet saddest, spots in Harriman Park is where the Arden-Surebridge Trail meets the Dunning. Thirty years ago, this was a shady glen; a dense canopy of tall hemlocks blocked the sun. The trees are still there: their decaying trunks now line both sides of the woods road.

Most of the hemlocks in the park and throughout the Hudson Valley are already dead—victims of a tiny insect, the wooly adelgid. The adelgid has already eradicated hemlocks in the South and is now in New England. In a decade or two, this once dominant tree will not be found south of Maine.

The fate of this species is explained in detail by a team of foresters and ecologists in *Hemlock*, a beautifully illustrated book centered around the trees in Harvard Forest, a research station near Petersham, Massachusetts. They tell a story, based on research done at the forest, that goes back 10,000 years, to the point when the glaciers retreated, and trees colonized the East Coast. Hemlocks slowly became one of the dominant species, until suddenly, about 5,500 years ago, they virtually disappeared—probably due to an invasive pest insect. It took the hemlocks about 1,500 years to recover.

What is occurring now, and will happen to our forests, as they die off again? Surprisingly, the ecologists do not tell a tale of doom and gloom. Oaks, hickories, and beech all flourished when hemlocks died out 5,500 years ago, providing a bonanza of nuts for wildlife and humans.

Today, as hemlocks topple, sun-loving pines and hardwoods rush to replace them, and populations of many birds, insects, and mammals surge. But the writers of *Hemlock* do worry about the future, and do offer advice: increasing development in woodlands is one threat; global warming is another. Both will cause new stresses that our forests may not easily survive.

One lesson from Harvard Forest is the importance of letting the trees fall where they may: dying hemlocks provide habitat and nutrients for decades, or centuries. This book will make you see those reddish-brown logs in a new light.

Jonathan Beard is a Trail Conference member and frequent book reviewer for Trail Walker.



PEOPLE FOR TRAILS

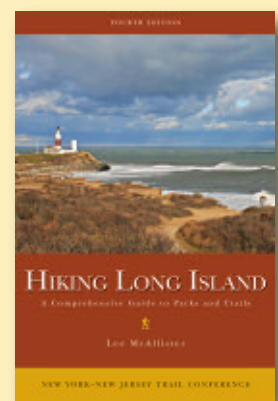


Lee McAllister
Ridge, NY (Long Island)

About: Husband, father of three daughters, insurance agent, Lee is also the author of *Hiking Long Island*, published by the Trail Conference and now out in its Fourth Edition.

History: A life-long resident of Long Island with a passion for nature, Lee discovered hiking through the *New York Walk Book*. He started hiking in Harriman, then the Catskills, earning membership in the 3500 Club.

During those Catskill years, he collaborated with a friend to produce his first book, *Hiking the Catskills*, published by the Trail Conference in 1989. By the time thoughts turned to updating that popular volume, Lee had moved further east on the Island with his family; he ruled out commuting to the mountains, but proposed a new book.



Hiking Long Island? The question mark came from the Trail Conference, which nevertheless decided to take a chance on Lee's proposal.

Where's the Nature?

"There is a lot of wildlife and open space. There are moraine hills that offer ocean views. There are cranberry bogs, dunes, pine barrens, tidal wetlands, four main rivers. There's a magnificent undeveloped coastline, including a maritime eastern red cedar forest. There are wild turkeys, hermit thrushes, whippoorwills, foxes—silver and red. There's the fragrance of trailing arbutus..."

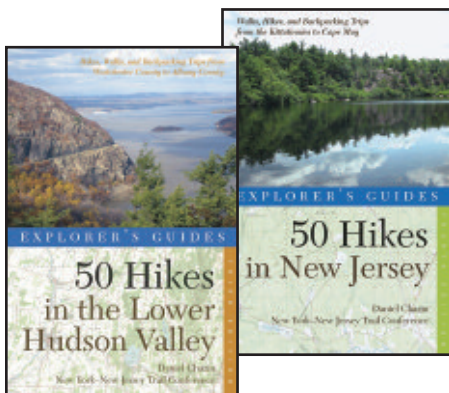
One thing he wants to say: "Get your children and grandchildren outside, more than once. Make each hike an adventure. There is no substitute for reality."

Get Your Copy:

<http://www.nynjtc.org/product/hiking-long-island>

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50 NY Hikes + 50 NJ Hikes



Two popular hiking guides published by Countryman Press of Vermont are now out in new editions, completely revised by Trail Conference member Daniel Chazin with support from other Trail Conference volunteers and staff.

50 Hikes in the Lower Hudson Valley and *50 Hikes in New Jersey*, both previously authored by Stella Green and Neil Zimmerman, also Trail Conference members, are available for sale on our website.

The New York book includes hikes in Westchester County, the East Hudson Highlands, Rockland County, Harriman-Bear Mountain State Parks, Schunemunk Mountain, Black Rock Forest, Storm King State Park, the Shawangunks, and the Catskills.

The New Jersey guide features hikes in the Ramapos, Wyanokeys, and Pinelands, in various county parks, and along the Palisades and the Delaware and Raritan Canal.

Each hike is accompanied by full-color photos and new digital maps, created especially for these editions.



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Featured Hike



By Robert Ross

Dover Stone Church



The gothic entry to the cavern led to its designation as the Dover Stone Church.

Overview: This short, moderate walk leads to a scenic brook and a dramatic natural cavern—the 'stone church'—through which water and light fall and flow.

Trail Uses: Hiking, picnicking

Dogs: On leash

Acreage: 120 (approx.)

City/County/State: Dover Plains, Dutchess, NY

Fees: None

Park Description: This is a small town preserve, currently offering a single short hike (about 1.5 miles round-trip), but the scenic brook and dramatic cavern at the end of the trail make the Dover Stone Church a worthwhile destination. Depending on the flow of water, you may or may not be able to keep your feet dry, and you may or may not be able to gain entry into the cavern. Regardless of the water level, rocks along the stream are likely to be slick, so caution is urged at all times.

In addition to the Stone Church Brook, three small ponds dot a small meadow. On a recent visit, a walker spied a pair of mallards relaxing on a rock in the middle of one. A bench nearby invites humans to do the same. The steep slopes of West Mountain rise around the tranquil scene.

Access to the preserve and trail is by foot over a private drive—No Parking! The trailhead is at the top of the small rise at the end of the drive. Metro-North's Dover Plains station stop is an easy quarter-mile walk distant.

The Trail Conference adopted trails in the preserve earlier this year.

Trails overview: At this writing, there is a single trail of less than a mile in length. While generally easy, the trail does follow close alongside the Stone Church Brook and the rocks are often wet and slippery. High water may cover stepping stones during rainy periods. The Friends of Dover

Stone Church, working with the Trail Conference, which adopted the trail in February 2014, plans to expand the trail network in the future.

From the trailhead, the path immediately descends on granite steps into a flat, man-made valley. The way here is lined by young maple trees that give a sense of formality to the start of the hike. At the end of this flat walk, another, shorter set of steps takes the path into woods and near the brook. You emerge briefly into an open area, where a way is mowed in both directions. Turn left. You will see another Welcome sign for the preserve. Follow the path across a wooden bridge, then along the stream bed; the path often follows rocks or flat stones. It rises gently and you are soon at the gothic-like entrance to the Stone Church.

To return, simply retrace your steps.

Directions: Take NYS Route 22 to Dover Plains. Immediately south of the traffic light at Mill Street (Metro-North Rail Station), look for blue-and-gold historic sign on west side of road for Dover Stone Church. The drive is private, but open for



The small preserve offers a cool summer's walk.

pedestrians; do not take cars up it. According to a brochure on the town's website, parking is permitted at the elementary school across the street when school is not in session, The Tabor Wing House at 3128 Route 22, and at Four Brothers Restaurant, all within walking distance.



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