



# TRAIL WALKER

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE • CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE SINCE 1920

## Creating Open Spaces for All

The Trail Conference has announced its support of *Open Spaces for All*, a report issued by the Open Space Institute (OSI), in partnership with the New York Outdoor Recreation Coalition (NYORC), in the fall of last year. The report includes state-level recommendations designed to improve equity, inclusion, and access to parks, waters, trails, and other open spaces for visitors and residents of New York State.

The report was guided by a steering committee, of which the Trail Conference is a member, along with input from other members and more than 200 individuals representing diverse identities, community groups, businesses, non-profit organizations, thought leaders, and government entities from across New York State.

*Open Spaces for All* is based on years of research and identifies barriers that inhibit access to outdoor spaces for people of color, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and other underrepresented or marginalized groups. It includes the following guidelines for future policies, programs, and initiatives, intended for state leaders, land managers, partners, and the greater outdoor recreation industry:

**Engage and empower communities and partners**



in identifying challenges and opportunities and developing solutions.

**Prioritize equity at the forefront of future park and open space investments**, including the revitalization and creation of open spaces near communities; developing accessible infrastructure; and reducing barriers for use.

**Honor Indigenous people and their connections to the land.**

Cultivate diverse partnerships to help identify new opportunities, in turn **building support and capacity for implementation of recommendations and improvements.**

“The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference believes that the joys of nature belong to everyone. All people — regardless of age, ability, or location — should be able to experience the rewards of connecting with nature. It has

been an honor to be a part of the *Open Spaces for All* team that pioneered the roadmap and vision for New York State to become a leader in equitable access and inclusivity for public outdoor recreation,” said Joshua Howard, Executive Director of the Trail Conference. “This report is an important first step to ensure that barriers to enjoying the outdoors are identified and eliminated. We look forward

to continuing working with the state and our partners to implement this groundbreaking plan.”

The vision of *Open Spaces for All* is to ensure that all New Yorkers and visitors, regardless of identity, can access and enjoy the benefits of open spaces and outdoor recreation.

The full report can be viewed on the Open Space Institute website, [openspaceinstitute.org](https://openspaceinstitute.org).

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

**New Catskill and Morris County Highlands maps now available**  
page 6

**Trail Conference receives Governor's Award for Lenape Trail**  
page 9



**Reflecting on 2022 and what's to come**  
pages 4-5

### Remembering Lifelong Trail Conference Member and President

At the time of printing, the Trail Conference learned of the passing of H. Neil Zimmerman, lifetime Trail Conference member, volunteer, and Board president from 1987–1999. Neil's leadership and conservation efforts had an immeasurable impact on our organization. The trail community has lost a dear friend and unwavering advocate for our region's parks and trails, and we are deeply saddened by his loss.

As the Trail Conference works to put together a



**H. Neil Zimmerman at the Trail Conference's centennial gala in 2021**

tribute to commemorate Neil, we encourage readers to visit our website at

[nynjtc.org](https://nynjtc.org) to learn more about his work and make a gift in his memory.



**In Memoriam**

**Werner Mueller**

Treasured volunteer Werner Mueller passed away in May 2022. Werner was a jack-of-all-trades whose tireless worth ethic and dedication to learning new skills and giving back was second-to-none. He found harmony in nature and was an exceptional steward of the land that brought him joy. Werner was an active trail



Werner (far right) with our Aquatic Invasive Strike Force crew after a day pulling water chestnut at Constitution Marsh

maintainer and volunteer on the Long Path and west of the Hudson, and quickly became

one of the most valued volunteer plant surveyors with our Terrestrial Invasive

Strike Force Survey Program. He was especially active in the Trail Conference's spotted lanternfly response efforts. Werner adopted remote infestation sites, helped to set up and service traps, and reported data on a regular basis.

When Werner wasn't volunteering his time on land, he also worked with our Aquatic Invasive Strike Force team, helping to remove over 38,000

water chestnut plants from waterbodies in New York.

Werner's accomplishments were recognized at the Trail Conference's Volunteer Service Awards last year, and a volunteer workday was held in his honor to remove invasive plants in Harriman State Park. Werner had his hands in many aspects of our organization and always did so with energy, enthusiasm, and a giving spirit. He is dearly missed.

# A New Beginning for Catskills Lean-to Crew



**ERIC FRIEDMAN**  
CATSKILLS LEAN-TO  
CREW LEADER

Pursuant to an agreement with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Trail Conference volunteers maintain 27 of the 30 lean-tos (shelters) in the Catskill Forest Preserve. These volunteer shelter caretakers are responsible for making regular visits to the shelters, cleaning the privy and shelter, emptying ashes from the fire pit, clearing brush, improving drainage, and making other minor site improvements. When repairs that are beyond a caretaker's scope and ability are needed, the condition is reported to their volunteer leader, who arranges for the repairs to be made by a volunteer trail crew.

I began maintaining the Baldwin Memorial Shelter on Mount Tremper around 2010. As a lifelong carpenter, I was able to go beyond my responsibilities as a shelter caretaker and make repairs to the foundation and roof, as well as to improve site drainage. I also helped put a new cedar roof on the Diamond Notch Lean-to, through a work trip organized by the Trail Conference.

Over the years, I have spent many nights at the Baldwin Memorial Shelter, mostly in the colder months. I got to know the mountain more intimate-

ly, cooking over the fire and enjoying the tranquility of the woods, as well as experiencing the satisfaction of doing service for others. My favorite parties became "work" parties — having fun working with others while accomplishing needed tasks to improve the lean-to.

When I reached the age of 65 in 2021, my paid work responsibilities decreased and my desire to do more volunteer work for the Trail Conference increased. I reached out to the Conference and offered to lead larger projects to improve Catskill lean-tos — and, thus, my journey as Catskills lean-to crew leader began.

In the late summer and fall of 2021, my crew completed our first projects at the Baldwin Shelter. As far back as 2010, I had realized that the outhouse was in poor condition. We now had the opportunity to rebuild it at a new location, reusing as much as possible of the former structure. Subsequently, we rebuilt the severely damaged, porcupine-eaten floor of the lean-to. By turning over some of the floorboards, we were able to minimize the amount of new material we needed to carry into the woods.

In the spring of 2022, we used the same approach to renovate the Devil's Acre Lean-to on Hunter Mountain. We removed two layers of old flooring, providing enough material

for one good layer. Minimizing the amount of new material we needed to carry in was critical, as the hike to this lean-to involves a 1,500-foot elevation gain in a mile and a half! A second weekend work trip to Devil's Acre allowed us to relocate and rebuild the privy. Finally, we returned in the fall to stain the privy and perform other site improvements.

In early summer 2022, we spent three long weekends at the relatively new Fox Hollow Lean-to at the base of Panther Mountain, which involved a much easier hike in than on our previous trips. We carried in the materials for a new privy that was built on-site, thanks to a contribution from the Catskill 3500 Club that covered most of the costs. We also installed pipes at the adjacent spring and constructed a stone "patio" in front of the lean-to.

During the August heat wave, we returned to the Baldwin Shelter to do a full rebuild of the roof — our most ambitious project to date. Years of patching had kept the shelter dry, but a fallen tree was the last straw for the 40-year-old roof. Thankfully, the DEC was able to transport the 700 pounds of asphalt shingles to the shelter, but we needed to carry in the remaining tools and materials about a mile and a quarter uphill. We removed the entire roof down to the



Volunteers Charles Whitaker and Demetrius Watson frame the Baldwin Memorial Shelter roof.

main logs and rafters, and we recut or replaced the beams and boards. Miraculously, the final shingles were nailed down by the end of day four!

In the fall, we spent three weekends high up on Table Mountain, working on the newly built Bouton Memorial Shelter, which the Trail Conference maintains in partnership with the Catskill 3500 Club. The Club generously paid for the materials, which enabled us to restrain the shelter, chink the cracks, rebuild the privy, and make general site improvements.

Over the years, the Catskills lean-to crew has had the help of about 25 volunteers and two dogs, some returning numerous times. Over the course of a typical work trip, between two and 12 volunteers come for the day or stay overnight. I've enjoyed meeting and getting to

know people from many walks of life — some are seasoned backpackers, others are camping out for the first time, and most are learning new skills.

Our first annual lean-to crew campout took place this past Labor Day at Colgate Lake, with no lean-tos in the area! All five attendees had a wonderful time. We cooked over the fire, fished, swam, and hiked around this beautiful location. We are looking forward to the second annual campout — but in the meantime, there is work to do!

*After a successful 2022, Eric has more projects in mind for 2023, with trips planned throughout the year. If you are interested in learning more about our volunteer opportunities or joining an upcoming work trip, contact [volunteer@nynjtc.org](mailto:volunteer@nynjtc.org) or visit [nynjtc.org](http://nynjtc.org).*

TRAIL WALKER (USPS Permit #970-100) (ISSN: 0749-1352) is published by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as a benefit of membership. Periodical postage paid at Mahwah, N.J., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to the address below.

Copyright 2023 by:

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Inc.  
600 Ramapo Valley Road  
Mahwah, NJ 07430  
201.512.9348

Opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent the policy or position of the Trail Conference. Submissions for print consideration are welcome. Any unsolicited material accepted for print may be edited for style and length. For information on submission deadlines and advertising rates, please write or call.



**TRAIL WALKER**

VOLUME LI, No. 1 SPRING 2023  
PREVIOUS TRAIL WALKER: FALL 2022 EDITION

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer-powered organization that builds, maintains, and protects public trails. Together with our partners, we strive to ensure that the trails and natural areas we share are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

*The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer, non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization.*

Printed on recycled content paper  
**PLEASE RECYCLE TRAIL WALKER**

**Board of Directors**

Ken Posner	Chair
John Magerlein	Vice Chair
Charles Gadol	Secretary
Beth Ravit	Treasurer

**Directors**

Carol Ann Benton	Emily Hague
Barbara Evans	Juan Melli
David Felsenthal	Sreeni Nair
Andy Garrison	Michael Pashley
Kalyan Ghosh	Mary Ann Villari

**Senior Staff**

Joshua Howard EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Mary Perro CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
Hank Osborn DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS  
Pat Gallagher ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR  
Don Weise DIRECTOR OF DONOR ADVISING

For a full list of staff, visit [nynjtc.org/about-us](http://nynjtc.org/about-us)

email: [info@nynjtc.org](mailto:info@nynjtc.org)  
editorial email: [tw@nynjtc.org](mailto:tw@nynjtc.org)  
website: [www.nynjtc.org](http://www.nynjtc.org)



**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

Trail Walker is a quarterly paper published by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, 600 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430. The editor and managing editor is Ashley Nester, at the same address. The annual subscription price is \$15; contact person is Ashley Nester; telephone number is 201-512-9348. The tax status of the organization has not changed during the preceding 12 months. As of the filing date of March 9, 2023, the average number of copies of each issue during the preceding 12 months was 7,500; the actual number of copies of the single issue published nearest to the filing date was 7,500. The paper has a total paid and/or requested circulation of 4,454 (average) and 4,454 (actual, most recent issue). The free distribution for the 12 months preceding the filing date was 1,549 (average) and 1,549 (actual, most recent issue). The total average distribution was 7,036; the actual distribution of the single issue published nearest to the filing date was 7,036. This information is reported on U. S. Postal Service Form 3526 and here as required by 39 USC 3685.



**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**The 'Magic Ingredient' to Our Success**

Every spring, there is a fresh sense of purpose at the Trail Conference. The holiday and end-of-year distractions are behind us. The excitement and promise of a new year propels our staff and volunteers to look ahead to those first warm spring days when we can return to the trails and lands that we all cherish. We enthusias-



attention.

As I reviewed this edition of the Trail Walker, I was as-

tically plan and prepare to tackle projects that waited through the long winter days for our

tounded by our accomplishments in 2022 and I am in awe of our plans for 2023. Even more amazing is how all this work is achieved. Without the generous support of our members and donors, the incredible volunteers and staff at the Trail Conference would not be able to provide the public with access to the amazing lands and trails we have come to rely upon for our physical and mental well-being. While the "magic ingredient" to our success has always been leveraging the goodwill and hard

work of a dedicated cadre of volunteers, it also requires a similar dedication and passion from individuals who financially support the Trail Conference.

As we reflect on 2022 and look ahead at the year to come, I would like to thank everyone who supported the Trail Conference's efforts to connect people with nature. Whether it was a few hours on a trail removing invasive species or helping us reach our end-of-the-year fundraising goal by donating, we could not have

done it without your support. I am excited for the year ahead, to witness the amazing work we will undertake and see the generosity of our supporters who make the Trail Conference's mission a priority. I look forward to writing my column in 2024 and celebrating another successful year for the Trail Conference. Have a great 2023, and I'll see you out on a trail.

*Joshua Howard  
Executive Director  
executivedirector@nynjtc.org*

# New and Returning Board, Voting Members Named for 2023

Three new members were appointed to the Trail Conference Board of Directors for a three-year term at the Annual Meeting, held virtually, this past November.

**Juan Melli** is managing director at the global public strategy firm, Mercury, specializing in government relations and strategic communications. A first-generation immigrant from Argentina, he is an active hiker, backpacker, and photographer. Juan has been a Trail Conference volunteer maintainer of the Appalachian Trail in Worthington State Forest and serves on the board of Team Wilderness, a non-profit that empowers urban youth through wilderness experiences. He lives in Hoboken, N.J. with his wife and two boys.



**Emily Hague** is the assistant director of land conservation at Scenic Hudson with a background in natural

resources inventory, natural resource and water resource management, land use, nonprofit governance, and volunteer management. Emily's focus is on protecting lands for all to access, working lands, and resilient landscapes. She also serves as a board member and chair of the Jolly Rovers Trail Crew.



**Michael Pashley** is a Cambridge University, U.K. physics PhD and retired corporate researcher with a long career at Philips as a senior research investigator. He is an active hiker throughout the U.K., U.S., the Alps, Canadian Rockies, and New Zealand. Michael also volunteers his time as a Trail Conference sawyer, Appalachian Trail corridor monitor, assistant Appalachian Trail supervisor, co-lead of



The following At-Large Voting Members were appointed for one-year terms.

- ▶ Suse Bell
- ▶ Kevin Bukowski
- ▶ Dan Chazin
- ▶ Jane Daniels
- ▶ Matt Decker
- ▶ William Gannett
- ▶ Robert Lehmann
- ▶ Deborah Padula-Genna
- ▶ Anne Powley
- ▶ Peter Reiner
- ▶ Ron Rosen
- ▶ Eddie Saiff
- ▶ Doug Sohn
- ▶ Dave Stuhr
- ▶ Ned Whitney
- ▶ Patsy Wooters
- ▶ Lydia Zakim

the Westchester Trail Tramps Crew, and East Hudson Regional Trails Council (RTC) chair. Recently, Michael utilized his software skills to develop a new online volunteer reporting system for the Trail Conference.

## Ken Posner Elected as Board Chair

The Trail Conference is pleased to announce that Ken Posner has been elected Board Chair. Ken has been an active supporter of the organization for many years, having through-ran the Long Path in 2013 and organizing the SRT Run thereafter to promote awareness of the Trail Conference's activities.



Ken is currently senior vice president of strategic planning and investor relations at Mr. Cooper Group, Inc., the nation's leading residential mortgage servicer. He was previously co-founder and chief of strategic planning and investor

relations at Capital Bank, and prior to that he was a senior research analyst at Morgan Stanley. A graduate of Yale and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Ken served in the U.S. Army as an infantry

officer and was Airborne and Ranger qualified. He has earned the Certified Public Accountant, Chartered Financial Analyst, and Financial Risk Manager designations.

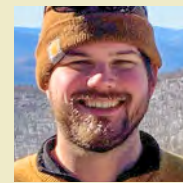
Ken has completed the 46 Adirondack High Peaks and the Catskills Grid, set the record for the 292-mile Badwater Double, barefoot thru-hiked the John Muir Trail, and has completed 101 races of marathon distance or longer.

"In today's tech-crazed world, connecting people with nature is a sacred mission," Ken said. "As Board Chair, I'm beyond excited to be working on this mission with inspiring board members, incredibly professional and dedicated staff, and our volunteer superheroes."

## Staff Updates

### Welcome, Mike and Pat!

**Mike Morris** joined the Trail Conference in December as the **Volunteer Engagement Associate**.



Mike is a familiar face to many at the organization, having served two terms with the Trail Conference Conservation Corps. During his time as a Corps member, Mike functioned as the Harriman Trail Crew Leader, working regularly with volunteers, other Corps members, and members of the public, and leading several successful workshops. Prior to joining the Conservation Corps, Mike earned a degree in marketing and worked at Eastern Mountain Sports, gaining essential customer service skills while applying his passion for and knowledge of the outdoors. Mike is an Eagle Scout, and in his free time he can be found hiking and backpacking all seasons of the year.

**Pat Gallagher** joined the Trail Conference in December as the **Advancement Director**.



He brings more than a decade of nonprofit experience to the role, having spent his career in development and fundraising, supporting organizations that are working to provide access to life's basic necessities. During his time at Pathways Vermont, Pat implemented a communications and fundraising system that developed a start-up organization into a statewide leader in housing and mental health services. At Family Reach, he expanded the organization's national footprint by leading a team of fundraisers providing financial lifelines to families experiencing the hardships of a cancer diagnosis; and most recently, Pat led the Development team at Jazz House Kids, providing music education to underprivileged youth. When he's not helping to raise necessary funds for the Trail Conference, Pat enjoys hiking, skiing, and partaking in the occasional karaoke night.



## Save the Date

Mark your calendars for the Trail Conference's Annual Gala, honoring Frederick Osborn III and Anne Todd Osborn.  
**Friday, October 13 • The Garrison, Garrison, N.Y.**



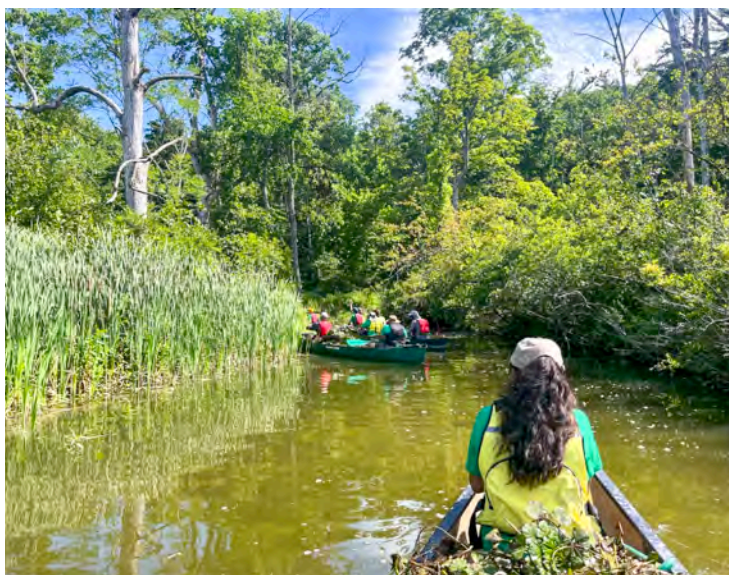
# REFLECTING ON 2022 AND Conservation Crews Collaborate to Create Stewardship Synergy

There's nothing we like more than helping our Conservation Corps members become force multipliers of both productivity and education. During the 2022 Conservation Corps season, we made it a priority for our Corps crews to interact with each other during crew "swap days." These swap days were an opportunity for members of different crews to spend quality time together while building a sense of community and better understanding each crew's responsibilities.

By spending time with the Invasives Strike Force (ISF) crews in the field and in pre-season training, Trail Stewards were able to expand their knowledge of invasive species while gaining hands-on experience in the removal process. In 2022, Stewards received training and education throughout the season on plant identification, common and emerging invasive species in our region, and the best methods for communicating effectively with a diverse range of visitors. Similarly, ISF and Aquatic ISF (AISF) Corps members participated in Leave No Trace training to gain a better understanding of the synergies between responsible recreation and ecological stewardship messaging.

At some locations, the Trail Stewards interact with upwards of 1,000 visitors a day. This puts the Stewards in the perfect position to provide information and share simple steps with the public to help prevent the spread of invasive species – such as utilizing a boot brush, and cleaning gear and pets before and after hiking. ISF Crew members spent time at the Hudson Valley Trail Steward sites of Breakneck Ridge and the Old Croton Aqueduct. During these swap days, ISF members joined the Stewards in talking to the public about the invasive species they found in the area. Increased signage, such as informational posters at the steward stations, as well as boot brushes at trailheads and kiosks, served as talking points for visitors who may be first-time trail users, unaware of the threat that invasive species pose to the parks in our region. Trail Stewards also engaged the public with volunteer opportunities and encouraged visitors to sign up and volunteer in a way that is meaningful to them, whether it be invasive species-related trail maintenance, outreach and education, or citizen science.

In addition to their weekend education and outreach-focused stewarding activities, the Trail Stewards teamed up



with ISF/AISF crews to tackle invasive species surveying and removal projects over 12 days during the 2022 season. For example, the Stewards spent time with the Terrestrial Invasives Strike Force crew (TISF), along with the Harriman Trail Crew, at the Three Arrows Cooperative Society in Putnam Valley, New York, where they removed invasive Japanese spirea. Thanks to the efforts of these three crews, an incredible amount of this emerging invasive species was removed! At another site in the Hudson Valley during fall, the Stewards assisted the ISF in removing over 700 Scotch broom plants.

The AISF crew also had the opportunity to swap days with the Trail Stewards. The Stewards were excited to work on canoes with the AISF Crew, both for surveying and for pulling pounds (and pounds!) of invasive water chestnut. Altogether, the Trail Stewards collaborated with the ISF and AISF Crews for over 500 hours of important work managing

invasive species that pose risks to the trail corridors, waterways and natural habitats that surround them.

Our Trail Crew Corps members also participated in swap days with the Trail Stewards. The Taconic Trail Crew had the Trail Stewards assist with their reroute of the Wilkinson Memorial Trail near Sugarloaf Mountain in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. The Stewards helped close the original trail, dispersed duff and rock piles, hid signs of the old trail, replanted native plants, removed old blazes, and added blazes along the new trail. In October, the Stewards were fortunate to be with the Taconic Trail Crew on the day the new Wilkinson Memorial Trail officially opened and welcomed its first hikers. One hiker had never previously visited the park, and was excited to be part of the trail's history.

Looking ahead, we plan to further expand this synergistic energy between Corps programs.

In future seasons, the ISF plans to work much more closely with Trail Programs. With the rollout of the Trail Conference's new five-year strategic plan in 2023, plans are underway for stewardship department staff and Corps members to learn about sustainable trail building, including how routes are chosen, habitat and species considerations, erosion concerns and mitigation, and practical trail building skills. In turn, the Trail Builders will learn about invasive species ecology and identification, the importance of healthy, native habitats, and best management practices for removal of invasive species. Collaborative projects could include revegetating lands surrounding new or closed trails, mitigating erosion damage, removal of invasives near or at Trail Crew worksites, and/or the strategic creation of "invasives free" trails. By offering the public access to nature, trails help engrain an appreciation of and desire to protect the lands that surround them. With this overlapping goal, the ISF is beyond excited to work more closely with Trail Crews going forward!

Additionally, the Conservation Dogs Program (CDP) has the goal of offering an immersive training experience to Corps members who are interested in learning how we use conservation dogs to survey for invasive species. Corps members will have the opportunity to rotate into the CDP for several weeks and learn about the conservation detection dog method, dog behavior, ecology of various species, canine fitness and husbandry,

and more. These Corps members will also help contribute to our Conservation Dogs Program initiatives through fieldwork support and data collection during joint projects with the ISF.

Furthermore, the Trail Stewards will continue their collaborative work in upcoming Corps seasons with ISF, Trail Programs, and Conservation Dogs. ISF and Trail Crew members will join the Stewards at popular high-use trailheads and summits in the greater New York metropolitan area, allowing them to practice and receive guidance on communicating effectively with a diverse range of visitors. Combining the outreach and education messaging of responsible recreation with sustainable trail building and ecological stewardship will help increase visitors' awareness of how they can help us protect these special places — before, during, and after their hike. Trail Stewards will also join ISF, Trail Crews, and the Conservation Dogs teams on projects allowing them to expand their knowledge of invasive species ecology and identification, best management practices for removal of invasives, trail building and rehabilitation methods, fieldwork support and data collection, and much more!

We are looking forward to future seasons in which these combined forces will inspire supportive and meaningful connections between our various programs and foster leaders in environmental stewardship.

 New York-New Jersey  
Trail Conference Stewardship Team



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023

## CONSERVATION CORPS TRAIL BUILDING CREWS



### Harriman Conservation Corps Trail Crew

The 2022 crew picked up where last year's left off: making repairs and improvements to the historic Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail east of Tuxedo, N.Y. Their first area of focus was the climb up to the overlook above Tuxedo. This stretch was marked by a steep, eroded slope and loose stone steps that most hikers bypassed entirely, resulting in the widening of the trail. The crew installed and repaired more than 60 stone steps and blocked off the adjacent area to keep hikers on the trail.

Next, the Harriman Crew began work on another section of the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail north of Tom Jones Mountain. The poor tread definition, degraded stonework, and drainage

issues led to much off-trail travel, erosion, and environmental damage. The crew spent several weeks building and repairing stone steps and blocking access to off-trail areas.

The Harriman Crew also constructed several waterbars and earthen drains on the Ramapo-Dunderberg and Kakiat Trails, and they performed maintenance on drainage structures on the Triangle Trail. Members of the 2023 Conservation Corps will continue their work to improve these trails, as well as the adjacent Blue Disc and Tuxedo-Mt. Ivy Trails.



### Palisades Conservation Corps Trail Crew

In 2022, the Palisades Crew continued their work on the multi-use McKeags Meadow Loop in Sterling Forest State Park. They linked the McK-

eags Meadow Loop with the newly constructed Augusta Mine Connector, and they constructed a new connection between the Caretaker and Laurel Pond Meadows trailheads, thus improving the connectivity of the burgeoning multi-use trail network in the park.

Working from mid-May through October, the crew rerouted a section of McKeags Meadow Loop, bypassing a steep, eroded, and wet segment of trail. They built over 1,500 feet of new trail, which included nearly 500 square feet of stone retaining wall and over 400 feet of turnpiking. The stone retaining walls enabled the trail to traverse rough terrain with sustainable grades. They also built several drainage structures and other smaller rock walls. The work was both technical and laborious, and it involved moving tons of walling stones, stone fill, and mineral soil.

Throughout the season, the Palisades Crew worked alongside partners and volunteers, including a new partnership with Palisades

MTB, which advocates for the establishment of mountain bike trails in the Palisades Region.

The 2023 Palisades Crew will continue this work, rerouting additional sections of the McKeags Meadow Loop and installing a bridge on the nearby Redback Trail.



### Taconic Conservation Corps Trail Crew

The 2022 Taconic Trail Crew, consisting of three crew members and one crew leader, worked from June to October on improving the Wilkinson Memorial and Undercliff Trails in the Hud-

son Highlands State Park Preserve.

Their primary task was to construct a 1,400-foot reroute of the Wilkinson Memorial Trail near the summit of Sugarloaf Mountain to bypass a steep and eroded section of the trail and protect vegetation that had been damaged by fire in 2019.

The crew built 32 stone steps and nearly 100 square feet of retaining wall, and they blocked off and naturalized the former trail route.

At least once a week, the crew worked on improving the Undercliff Trail, installing and repairing stone steps, making drainage improvements, and blocking off informal "social paths."

The Taconic Trail Crew also benefitted from 165 hours of work by state park partners, Conservation Corps Trail Stewards, and volunteers.

The 2023 crew will continue to improve the Wilkinson Memorial Trail, anticipating higher usage to that trail by hikers descending from Breakneck Ridge.

Ben Sugar, Senior Trail Builder

## New Maps Ahead After Supply Shortages



**JEREMY APGAR**  
CARTOGRAPHER

2022 was a challenging year for our map production, as the waterproof and tear-resistant Tyvek we use for our printings became extremely scarce due to the pandemic. Despite our inability to print hard-copy maps, we did publish digital versions of revised Catskill and Morris County Highlands maps on the Avenza Maps app, and we also prepared an updated User Guide for the app to help volunteers and users get the most out of these digital maps.

Our volunteers also remained quite busy on multiple in-progress publications projects, and our Publications Committee welcomed several new volunteer members who are getting involved in various

ways with the committee.

Thankfully, we successfully secured enough Tyvek at the end of 2022 to ensure that all of our upcoming maps can be printed without delay.

We started 2023 with two previously delayed map printings: *Catskill Trails* (13<sup>th</sup> edition) and *Morris County Highlands Trails* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), previously titled *Jersey Highlands Trails: Central North Region*. Read more about both of those on **page 6**. This spring and summer will see several additional revised maps, so 2023 will be a great year to upgrade from your older maps or explore somewhere new!

The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of *East Hudson Trails* will include several new and updated trails in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve and Fahnestock State Park. Next, our 20<sup>th</sup> edition of *Harriman-Bear Mountain*



The Avenza Maps app user guide was updated in 2022.

*Trails* will provide the latest trail updates throughout these popular parks. The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *Hudson Palisades Trails*, featuring the Long Path and adjacent trails and parks along the Hudson River in northern New Jersey and southern New York, will also include new trails and other updates.

Next up, the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of *Shawangunk Trails* will highlight the latest trail changes in Minnewaska State Park Preserve and Mohonk Preserve. Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *South Taconic Trails* will provide up-to-date trail information for this map that has been out-of-stock for some time.

We are also nearing completion of *Afoot in Morris*, a new guidebook showcasing the great trails in Morris County, New Jersey, so stay tuned for updates about this exciting new book.

## Volunteer Engagement Team Grows

The volunteer engagement team at the Trail Conference hit the ground running in 2022 with new staff, and many goals to accomplish! The year started with the planning and coordination of the virtual Volunteer Appreciation Event in June. As successful as the event was, we're excited to be planning and finalizing this year's spring event — the first in-person Volunteer Appreciation Event since 2020!

Further into 2022, the volunteer engagement team rolled out the new online reporting form for trail volunteer hours. Since July 1, when online reporting went live, over 14,000 volunteer hours have been reported! We're looking forward to seeing how well online reporting will continue to do in 2023, and we will remain available to provide assistance to users of the form.

We're also thrilled to announce that 15 new volunteer leaders were onboarded in 2022: three Trail Chairs, 11 Trail Supervisors, and one Habitat Helper Leader. Many of these volunteer leaders stepped



Volunteers from REI joined us for litter clean-up along the Long Path in Tackamack Town Park, N.Y.

up from other volunteer positions within the Trail Conference, while others became first-time Trail Conference volunteers — but all share a passion for the outdoors. With many of our leadership positions filled, we have minimal maintainer vacancies in our larger regions, such as Harriman State Park and the Catskills. In 2023, our focus will be to recruit maintainers for positions in smaller parks or regions that have historically been difficult to fill, to continue recruitment efforts for the several remaining Trail Chair and Trail Supervisor vacancies, and to continue to provide support for new volunteers and our volunteer leaders.

Thank you to our volunteers for your efforts in 2022. See you on the trails in 2023! Katie Kourakos, Volunteer Engagement Manager



A visit to Fort Orange Press in Albany, N.Y., for the printing of the Catskill Trails map



LOOK BACK/LOOK AHEAD continued from page 5

## A Blowdown Brigade Begins



**MELISSA CASCINI**  
NEW YORK PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR

In 2022, volunteers Matt Smith and Charlie Gadol started the volunteer-led Catskills Trail Crew and Blowdown Brigade. These groups assist with trail projects and clear blowdowns with non-motorized saws within the Catskill Forest Preserve in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Over the course of their first full field season, they tackled several trail improvement projects and cleared a huge number of blowdowns in the Catskills.

The Trail Crew worked on eight different projects during their first season — on the Mary's Glen Trail, the Long Path, and the Huckleberry Point Trail. Each of these trails



had muddy and wet areas that needed drainage repairs, rock crush, stepping stones, and water bars.

The Blowdown Brigade spent many hours lugging heavy gear over rugged terrain on the Overlook Mountain Trail, the Dry Brook Ridge Trail, and the Pine Hill-West Branch Trail, removing over 100 blowdowns. Most impressively, they cut al-

most all the blowdowns on the 24-mile Devil's Path in a single weekend.

In their first season, the crews logged nearly 1,500 hours of work during 30 multi-day work trips with over 30 different volunteers. Eager to get started in the 2023 season, the crew will continue working on the Long Path at the base of Indian Head Mountain, as well as on the Huckleberry Point Trail, Mary's Glen Trail, Geiger Point along the Devil's Path, Pecoy Notch Trail, and Slide Mountain Trail. Special thanks to all the volunteers who joined the crew and to Crew Leaders Matt Smith, Charlie Gadol, Cal Johnson, Andy Garrison, and Don Cohen!

If you are interested in learning more or joining the crew for their 2023 season, contact [volunteer@nynjtc.org](mailto:volunteer@nynjtc.org).

### NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREWS

#### MEVO

The Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization (MEVO) Trail Crew, composed of hard-working college-age volunteers led by a dedicated Crew Leader, performed 314 hours of trail work in 2022. The majority of this work was on the State Line Trail in Abram S. Hewitt State Forest, rerouting this steep and eroded connector to the Appalachian Trail to a more gradual and sustainable path. Their work on this important project, along with various spot-fixes to wet and eroded trail sections in Ramapo Valley County Reservation, will continue in 2023.

**West Jersey Trail Crew**  
Along the Wawayanda Lake Loop Trail in Wawayanda State Park, the West Jersey



**The West Jersey Trail Crew constructs a walkway in Wawayanda State Park.**

Crew constructed a 64-foot-long walkway across a swampy stream area. They also constructed new water bars on the Rock Cores Trail in Worthington State Forest, which features historic stone columns, as well as maintaining existing waterbars to ensure effective drainage. As in many years past, the crew also continued the long-term refurbishing of the Appalachian Trail boardwalk through the Pochuck quagmire. 2023 promises to be another busy year for this veteran crew, with several projects already in the field-scouting and partner-review phase.

### NEW YORK VOLUNTEER TRAIL CREWS



#### Hudson Nor'Westers

The crew held eight work trips over the course of the summer and fall season to address drainage issues on the Blueberry Run Trail, Mossy Glen Trail, Bull Wheel Trail, and Red Loop Trail in the Minnewaska State Park Preserve. On both the Blueberry Run and Mossy Glen Trails, the crew built turnpike to raise the trail above wet, muddy areas and to prevent trail widening. The crew also tackled some steep sections of the Blueberry Run Trail, where they installed water bars and stone steps. On the Red Loop and Bull Wheel Trails, the crew cleared water bars and created new drainage solutions to address muddy areas.

ga. In total, the crew built 120 linear feet of new trail, installed 21 stone steps, and built 20 linear feet of tread structure.



#### Bish Bash Builders Crew

Continuing their work from last year, the crew held 14 work trips to improve the Quarry Hill Trail in Taconic State Park. Despite the difficult terrain, the crew was able to lug tools up the mountain to install 31 stone steps on very eroded sections of trail.



#### Westchester Trail Tramps

The crew held nearly 50 work trips throughout the 2022 season. They focused their efforts on the Briarcliff Peekskill Trailway, addressing blazing issues, relocating a section of trail, and installing boardwalk through muddy areas. Additionally, the crew worked in other parks throughout Westchester, including George's Island, Montrose Point State Forest, and Hudson Highlands Gateway Park. In total, the crew built about 1,500 linear feet of new trail, installed four drainage structures, 10 step stones, 55 square feet of crib wall, 200 feet of boardwalk, and two bridges.



#### East Hudson Trail Crew

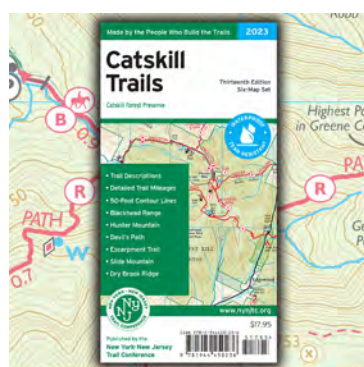
The crew held seven work trips over the course of the season, during which they completed a short reroute at Glenclyffe, in partnership with the Open Space Institute, and improved the Lost Pond-Appalachian Trail connector at Manito-

## Catskill, Morris County Highlands Maps Available

Starting off 2023 on a high note, our Publications Committee is proud to announce that two revised maps are now available in both print and digital format: Catskill Trails and Morris County Highlands Trails.

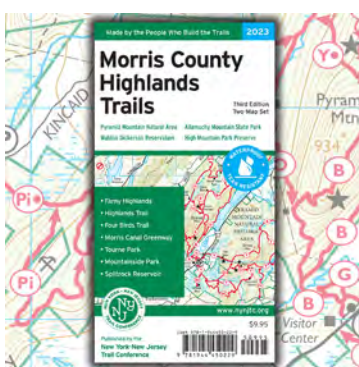
Both maps were initially made available digitally through the Avenza Maps app in 2022, but due to supply issues relating to the Tyvek material we use for our maps, the print versions had been delayed. After a year-long search and assistance from our paper supplier partner, we successfully secured enough Tyvek at the end of the year for all scheduled map printings in 2023, starting with these two revised maps.

Both maps are available in print format, in vibrant color on waterproof, tear-resistant Tyvek, by shopping online at [nynjtc.org/shop](http://nynjtc.org/shop) or at our Trail Store at our headquarters in Mahwah, N.J. They are also available in digital format on Apple and Android devices through the Avenza Maps app.



Learn more about our popular GPS-enhanced maps for your phone at [nynjtc.org/pdfmaps](http://nynjtc.org/pdfmaps).

Our *Catskill Trails* map set, now in its 13th edition, features more than 420 miles of trails in and around the Catskill Park in New York. This update incorporates several significant changes, including new trails, such as the Red Hill Fire Tower Trail and trails within Bluestone Wild Forest, several trail lines updated with newer GPS data, the addition of several viewpoint stars and removal of some stars at overgrown locations, adjustments



near Doubletop and Graham mountains to indicate no public access, and the addition of several newly-protected lands.

All maps feature trail mileage numbers, 50-foot elevation contour lines, woods roads and unmaintained trails, parking areas, viewpoints and waterfalls, and shelters and campsites, and the map backs include a detailed trail guide as well as park contact information and regulations.

Our *Morris County Highlands Trails* map set, formerly titled *Jersey Highlands Trails: Central North Region*, is now

in its third edition and features more than 230 miles of trails in the Highlands of northern Morris County, New Jersey, as well as nearby counties. This update incorporates significant trail changes, including new trails and blazing changes in several parks, including Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area, Mountainside Park, Tourne County Park, Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area, Jonathan's Woods, Farny State Park, Mahlon Dickerson Reservation, High Mountain Park Preserve, and Mount Hope Historical Park.

Both maps feature 20-foot elevation contour lines, woods roads and unmaintained trails, parking areas and public transportation options, viewpoints, and other points of interest. More than 45 miles of the Highlands Trail are included, along with the nearly 20-mile-long Four Birds Trail.

Built on more than 85 years of mapping experience, Trail Conference maps are your

### Thank You

Special thanks to volunteer project managers George Dagit and Daniel Chazin, and all the volunteers and park partners who helped produce these significant map revisions! These maps were also produced with support from Storm King Adventure Tours, a proud supporter of our volunteers.

source for reliable trail information in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan region. These maps are Made by the People Who Build the Trails and are regularly updated with changes to the trails. Sales of these maps directly support our organization's efforts to keep the trails open and safe for all to enjoy.

**Jeremy Appgar, Cartographer**



## Thank you!

As we turn the page and start a new year here at the Trail Conference, all I can say is WOW! Our supporters really stepped up this past December to make the year-end fundraising campaign one for the books, raising more than \$350,000 over the

course of a few weeks! As the Trail Conference's new Advancement Director, and on behalf of our entire staff, I would like to send a heartfelt thank you to all of you who donated this past holiday season. We would especially like to thank the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference Board of Directors, the Val-

ley Rock Inn, and The Ranch Hudson Valley for graciously providing triple match funds to make everyone's dollar go much further!

Our year-end fundraiser is vital in supporting critical infrastructure and environmental conservation projects in your own backyard and throughout the region. Excit-

ing and innovative initiatives such as the continuation of the Long Path, invasive species remediation, the Conservation Dogs Program, and regional land preservation are only made possible by supporters like you.

As we look ahead to 2023, we are in a great position to build on the successes of the

past year and truly make a lasting impact on the lands and trails that we all love and cherish. I look forward to meeting our valued supporters this year at our many wonderful events and out on the trail! Thank you again and happy trails!

 Pat Gallagher, Trail Conference Advancement Director

# TRAIL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

January 1 - December 31, 2022

## TRIBUTES

*In Memory of Adam & Helena Nowak*

Anna Nowak-Wegrzyn

*In Honor of Andrew Jacobs*

Pamela Berger

Marina Wong

*In Memory of Andrew Wong*

Marina Wong

*In honor of Brookside 8th Grade Project*

Elissa Connors

*In Honor of Charles Gadol*

Susan Green

*In Memory of Charlie Cook*

Karen Dubiner

*In Honor of David Cucchiara*

David Stephenson

Robert Colquhoun

*In Honor of David Felsenthal*

Priscilla Lundin

*In Memory of David Woolf*

Naola Gersten-Woolf

*In Memory of Dillon friend, companion and ball chaser*

Perry Pirkkanen

*In Memory of Donald Barney*

Joan Makwinsky

*In Honor of Doug Falk*

Lynn & Steve Chaiken

*In Honor of Fred Osborn III*

George Whipple

*In Memory of Fred Travaglione*

Lynda Travaglione Recchia

*In Memory of George D. Freeman III*

Christopher Freeman

*In memory of George Yuzawa*

Pat Yuzawa-Rubin

*On Behalf of Glenn Oleksak*

Marian Macdonald

*In Memory of Hal Stan*

Carole & Bruce Knarich

Leslie Staudt

Cookie McGillicuddy

*In Memory of Isaac Siskind*

George Sheedy

*In Memory of Jack McShane*

Lisa Lyons

*In memory of James Fazzari*

Lilo Kassel

*In Honor of Jesse Fried*

Michael Zac

*In memory of Jim Furey*

John Furey

*In Memory of Joan Sloane*

Jacqueline Hanley

*In Honor of Joe and Rita Okoniewski*

David Okoniewski

*In memory of Joel Kazin*

Joanne Ouchte

Emma Russell

*In Memory of John & Marianne*

*Gunzler*

Robin Osman

Weitzenhoffer/Seminole Foundation

*In Memory of John Togut*

David Togut

*In Memory of Joseph Brizzolara Jr.*

Matthew Sedita

*In Memory of Joseph Suarez*

Jackie Rubenacker

*In Memory of June Slade*

Peter Tilgner

Lucille Markay

Rein Hunningher

Lori Ledyard

Lilo Kassel

Marilyn Adair

*In Memory of Karen L. Peterson*

Karen Ashbrook

*In Memory of Ken Malkin*

Melissa Sexton

*In Memory of Kenneth Malkin*

Kara Yorio

Jennifer Heppel

Alison Sherma

Deborah Steinbaum

Kenneth & Katja Mayer

Roger Bergman

Scott Gold

Beth Benjamin Beth

Lewis & Leslie Nassau

Kenneth & Katja Mayer

*In Memory of Luna Kreiswirth*

Harvey Kreiswirth

*In Honor of Margaret Grochalska*

Carol Ann Scheiner

Edward Schwetz

Blair Scheiner

Nancy Percent

*In Memory of Michael Mann*

Boyscout Troop 8 Brooklyn NY

*In Honor of Monica & David Day*

Lori Jo & Peter Jamieson

*In Honor of Nachshon Estin-Guzik*

David TK Spencer

*In Honor of Odie Labradoodle*

Ken Posner

*In Memory of Luna Kreiswirth*

Harvey Kreiswirth

*In Memory of Patricia Donchez*

Mario Medici

*In Memory of Paul Forste*

Susan Forste

Shelley Bruce

Lilly and Howard Kliman

Theresa Ruch

Theodore Au

Katherine Flowers

Angela Andrew Larkin

Sue and Ron Hayzlett

Nancy Chapman

Ira Schreck

Julie Feldman

Andrew Forste

*In Memory of Rain Johnson-Hakim*

Sharon Johnson-Hakim

*In Memory of Ralph Thomas Unkefer*

Howard Harrison

*In Memory of Richard Ireton*

Karen Ireto

*In Memory of Rick Weber*

Alex Weber

*In Memory of Rita Boyd*

Elizabeth Boyd

*In Honor of Robert Bonkowski*

Ryan Mruczek

*In Memory of Robert Reynolds*

Tami Horowitz

*In Memory of Rosebud Lyons*

James Lyons

*In Honor of Sudipta's Bachelor Party*

*Benefit*

Evan Glickman

*In Memory of Leon Maleson*

Leon Maleson

*In Honor of Tom and Gina Gannon*

Anthony Berman

*In Memory of Tomoko Sawada*

David Hartree

*In Honor of Torne Mtn Team*

Tim Donovan

*In Memory of Warren A. Beck*

Sandy & Pete Cate

*In Memory of Werner Mueller*

Robert Fenness

Susan Metzger

Robert LaMagna

Amie Graper-Simm

Norma Holmes

Kimberly Lukas

Joseph Frissora

Jeffrey Rice

Laura Barca

New Jersey American Water

Walter Ross

Alicia Vaccaro

Dawn Saetta

Lee Mueller

Julie Stein

## GRATITUDE FOR OUR DONORS

Our work at the Trail Conference would not be possible without the incredible kindness and support from our community of donors who share our love and commitment for access to natural, outdoor spaces. Below is a list of supporters who gave \$1,000 or more in 2022 or who gave a gift in-honor or in-memory of someone special to them. The Trail Conference staff would like to send our sincere gratitude to everyone who donated in support of our cause last year. Our wonderful supporters make all the vital work detailed in this Trail Walker possible. Thank you!

Peter R and Cynthia K Kellogg, Miklos P Salgo, Mark Ledgerwood, Jane and Walter Daniels, John W Ellingboe and Page Hartwell, Richard and Marion Katzive, Philip L and Melinda Kirstein, Richard R. and Diane Levine, John and Karen Magerlein, Mary and Gay Mayer, R. Daniel and Durdane Rouse, Phyllis Teitelbaum and Anthony Lunn, Peter Tilgner and Suzan Gordon, Edward B Whitney and Martha Howell, Patsy and Roy Wooters, J. Bruce and Beverly Thomson, Geoff Dann and Lauri Novick-Dann, Raymond and Rose Begin, Bill and Christine Balcerski, James and Barbara Hanson, Daniel and Laura Gold, Charlotte and Stanley Fahn MD, Lynn and John Salmon, David and Ronnie, Lawrence and Diane Minkoff, James A Gregoire, Don L Weise, Frederick Osborn III and Anne Todd Osborn, Bastedo K K Chris, Tom and Nancy Berner, David Boyum, Anne Perkins Cabot, Lisa C Caplan, William C Close, Christopher Connolly, David J Epstein, Christopher Ezzo, Louis Feeney, Deborah Franzblau and Jerry D Tersoff, Gary & Carol Freidman, Claudia L L Ganz, David and Glenda Haas, Gary Haugland, Philip & Ellen Heidelberger, Maria

Himber, Philip Horman, Samuel Huber, Stuart J Kurtz, Leonard Lauder, Rob and Cheryl Lehmann, William Meier, Elizabeth G Mindlin, William D Mishler, David S S Orentreich, George P Perkinson, Douglas H Robins, Laurance Rockefeller, Robert C Ross, Michael Sasse, Jeffrey Scott and Patricia Merritt, Stephen C Shyne, John F Stoffel, Marian R Stuart PhD, David P P Stuhr, Mary and Michael Suleski, John H Swanson, Jim Hamilton and Lucy R Waletzky, Larry A Wehr, Laura and Stanley Wiegand, Lydia and Jack Zakim, Charles E Binder, Donna J Leftwich, Rachel Theilheimer and Jonathan D Beard, Bill and Anna Gannett, Karen and Mark Perreault, Lalita Malik, Keith & Nicole Oringer, Brian Walter Kassenbrock, Anders and Carlene Maxwell, Alice Heffner and Alan Lieber, Jeff Corbin and Darrel Schoeling, Robert Mazzola, Evan and Maria Williams, Franklin Marra, Olga Jabbour, Donor Anonymous, Kate and Jeffrey Baum, Laura Gil, Barry Wittlin, Frank Genna and Deborah Padula-Genna, David Roland Emero, Matt Smith, Steven L. L. Holley, Bruce Winant and Kristin Reeves, Kevin Stamey, Tara Carroll, Dylan Armajani, Beth Ravit, Raymond Russell, Ian Golden, Shelley Weber, John O'Connor, Nicholas A Cifelli, Robert Hand and Carolyn Chave, David Applegate, Lynn Peebles and Douglas Land, Gavin J J Duffy, Ryan P P Windess, Marguerite Pitts, Alexander Jackowec and Michael Bruno, James Gleick and Cynthia Crossen, Barbara A Santoro, Susan Eby and Ken Posner, David Mark Togut, Barbara R Evans, Cindy & Jonathan Cohen, Donald K McNeil, Seth D Reichlin and Susie Melnick, Erin Gass, Elizabeth Brody, Andy Yaco-Mink and Britt Lunde, Ken & Lindsay Morgan, Clayton & Geri Hemmert, Jim LeMaire and Joan Huang, Evan and Laura Colgan, Jim and Tina Hagggett, Thomas and Laurie Fusco, Jane & Michael MacDonald, Georg Budenbender and Katy E Elwyn, Thomas and Melany Campanile, Sue and Joe Barbuto, Charles Clark, Charlie Gadol and Donna Sherman, David L Felsenthal and Margaret Schwartz, Joanne Ostrander, Jennifer L Ghannam, Louis Poulas, Mike and Laura Peyton, Brendan Pytko, Mary Ann Villari, Barbara Silman, Bruno Casolari, Jonathan and Mimosa Gordon, Jonathan and Mimosa Gordon, Todd Finger, Susan Ochshorn, Deborah Smith and Ron Keefe, Patrick Andersen, TGeorge O'Brien, Michael Wolfson, Alyssa & Matt Kretlow, Matthew Smith, Ann Shea, Paul & Patricia Bisset, Kim Levinsky, Deborah Fields, George C Whipple, David Sammons, Edward Carmine, Kimberly Levinsky, Mary Ann Brown Copp, Ira Schreck, Paul Forste, Brendan T O'Connor, John Togut



# Why Have Archives?



**JANE DANIELS**  
TRAIL CONFERENCE  
VOLUNTEER AND ARCHIVIST

The Trail Conference's recent celebration of its 100th anniversary has brought into focus the importance of preserving our history. There are legal requirements to retain certain documents, but even when not legally required, it is important to preserve our archives — photos, maps, books and other documents that relate the history of our organization and the accomplishments of the people who contributed to that history.

Archives are more than just paper that is organized and placed in boxes. Archives are:

- ▶ Photographs, books, and documents digitized, organized, labeled, and indexed so that they can be found and used as needed.
- ▶ Published materials, such as newsletters, and materials not legally required to be preserved.
- ▶ Physical items, such as signs.

- ▶ Interviews or transcripts of interviews.

Of what use are archives to the Trail Conference's volunteers and staff? Items can be interesting, useful, or both. A 1966 booklet briefly describing hiking trails in the United States is an interesting item. A tiny Trail Conference patch from the 1950s is both interesting and useful. It could be reproduced and sold or used for fundraising. Useful items also include a 1973 list of plants in Harriman and files of previous attempts to deal with ATVs on trails. Collecting and organizing information about when and where trails were established or relocated is useful to both staff and volunteers.

Because archival material can be digitized, information can be made available online in a searchable form. Examples include *Trail Walker* and early trail maintenance manuals.

Although several inventories have been made of the archive files at the Trail Con-

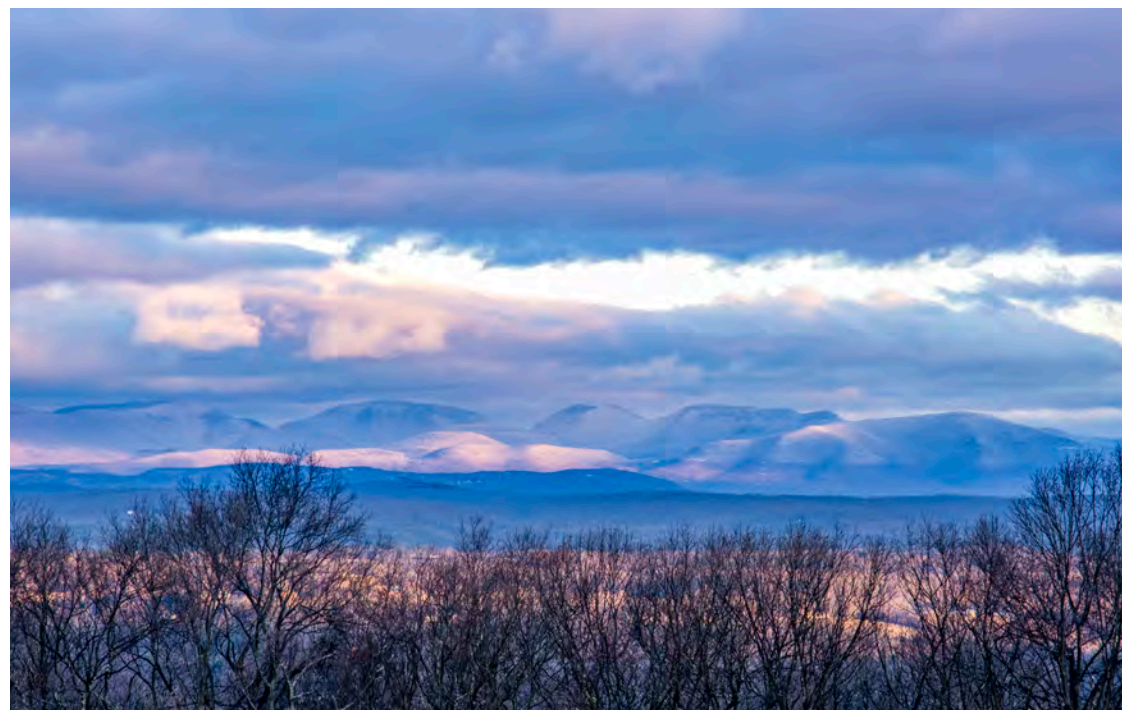
ference, they were no longer accurate when the Trail Conference moved its offices to new locations. So, over the last year, a small group of volunteers have been working hard to accomplish the following:

- ▶ Organize and inventory all maps published by the Trail Conference and *Walking News*, the antecedent to the *Trail Walker*; noting their location in the archives room
- ▶ Create a spreadsheet to serve as a database for the history of our region's trail network
- ▶ Scan old issues of the *Trail Walker* so they can eventually be viewed and searched online
- ▶ Sort through many drawers of old files and photos
- ▶ Conduct interviews with decades-long volunteers to properly document their critical efforts and dedication to the organization

Learn more about the Trail Conference's volunteer opportunities by visiting [nynjtc.org/volunteer](http://nynjtc.org/volunteer) or emailing [volunteer@nynjtc.org](mailto:volunteer@nynjtc.org).



Old map, guidebook, and patch from the archives



STEVE AARON

## Catskill Advisory Group Report to DEC Contains Recreation 'Roadmap'

The Trail Conference is a proud member of the Catskill Advisory Group (CAG), which submitted its final report to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos at the end of last year. The CAG was formed in 2020 and is comprised of stakeholders from local government, recreation, natural resource protection, tourism, and other areas.

The group's final report provides recommendations

to the DEC, and its state and local partners, for promoting sustainable recreation in the Catskill Forest Preserve amid increased public use, helping to protect the park's natural and historic resources.

"The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is excited to share this report with DEC Commissioner Seggos and the public. The Catskill Advisory Group's final recommendations are the culmination of a great deal of collaboration

and consensus building amongst organizations who care about the Catskill Forest Preserve," said Joshua Howard, Trail Conference Executive Director. "This report provides a roadmap for making recreation in the Catskill Park sustainable, welcoming, and equitable for all who seek the benefits of one of New York's greatest treasures."

Learn more and read the full report by visiting the DEC website, [dec.ny.gov](http://dec.ny.gov).

## 100-Year Legacy Honored

It was the 100th anniversary of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. The COVID-19 pandemic had shut everything down, but staff and volunteers felt it was important that our century of work be commemorated. Bob Jonas, volunteer trail supervisor for the Trail Conference, was determined to create a display of historic items.

Bob reached out to the Trail Conference's trail maintaining clubs, volunteer trail chairs, and trail crews to gather photos and trail mementos. He received a huge response: photos of trail builders and trail blazers, many of whom have since passed away, as well as trail-specific keepsakes, such as Elizabeth Levers' Appalachian Trail Conservancy award, gifted

by supporter Ron Rosen.

All of the items collected and showcased in the display represent the Trail Conference's rich history and 100-year legacy. The individuals memorialized played a direct role in shaping the organization and, without them, the vast trail network we have today would not exist.

The display showcases two phases: "We Work" and "We Play from 1920 and Beyond." It can be viewed at the Trail Conference headquarters in Mahwah, N.J., which is now open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information about the "olden days of trails," read *Reflections: 100 Years of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference*, available on the Trail Conference Marketplace at [nynjtc.org](http://nynjtc.org).

Bob Jonas and Estelle Anderson, Trail Supervisors



## Forest Preserve Groups Call for State Action

In a letter to Governor Kathy Hochul, the Trail Conference and 28 other organizations

and municipalities outlined three key actions that they would like to see taken in the 2023-2024 state budgeting process to address high recreational use in the Catskill and Adirondack Forest Preserves Parks. These actions include:

1. Retain the dedicated line for the Forest Preserve Parks as an annual appropriation of \$10 million under the Environmental Protection Fund's (EPF's) State Land Stewardship funding.
2. Add and support

staff positions necessary to implement the use of EPF and Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act funding.

3. Invest in Forest Preserve Park communities through implementing projects

funded by the Bond Act, Smart Growth initiatives, and support of visitor centers.

The full contents of the letter can be read online by visiting the news section of our website: [nynjtc.org/news-center](http://nynjtc.org/news-center).



# Trail Conference Receives Governor's Environmental Excellence Award

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is the recipient of the 2022 Governor's Environmental Excellence Award in the Healthy Communities category for its ongoing work on the Lenape Trail in Essex County, N.J.

The Lenape Trail is a 36-mile, unique urban-suburban trail named in recognition of the Lenape people, the original inhabitants of the area. Since 2010, Trail Conference volunteers and staff have dedicated more than 2,300 hours towards improving the trail, including trail clearing, blazing, installation of wayfinding signage, and enhancing the trail's



environmental sustainability. The Lenape Trail brings visitors to Essex County's outdoor destinations by connecting 18 parks and 11 communities. An in-depth digital guide, highlighting the Trail's abundant recreational opportunities, can be found at [LenapeTrail.org](http://LenapeTrail.org).

The Governor's Environ-

mental Excellence Awards are presented each year to individuals and organizations that demonstrate commitment and leadership on a variety of environmental issues, including environmental justice, climate change, sustainability, education, and protection of natural resources.

To learn more about the program and watch the virtual awards video, visit [dep.nj.gov/awards](http://dep.nj.gov/awards).

The Trail Conference is honored to receive the Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for this ongoing project, and we hope to see you on the trail!



A volunteer paints blazes along the Lenape Trail in an urban neighborhood.

## CELEBRATING OUR MEMBER CLUBS

### Westchester Trails Association Turns 100!

Formed in 1923 by the Westchester County Department of Recreation, Westchester Trails Association (WTA) is celebrating its centennial this year. Raymond Torrey, one of the founders of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, was among its original leaders, and early schedules showed a wide range of activities: visits to the Rockefeller property and other philanthropists' estates, hikes to familiar locations like "Interstate Park - Harriman Section," and climbs up the face of Anthony's Nose on what was then the Appalachian Trail.

Participation slowed during World War II due to leader enlistment and wartime shortages, but the club's fortunes improved when the war ended. Membership grew, and in 1961 WTA separated from the county and became a private organization. We were also an innovative trail maintaining

club: according to the book *Harriman Trails* by Bill Myles, our maintainers were the first to use double offset blazes to indicate a turn — now the standard method of blazing in the area. Today we continue to maintain a number of trails, including sections of the Appalachian Trail in Westchester and Putnam Counties.

WTA is now a vibrant presence in the hiking community. Our schedule offers two hikes of varying difficulty on almost every Saturday and Sunday. We host an annual dinner in April, a holiday party each December, and a "hiking week" every year to a more distant location, such as Shenandoah, Acadia, and Harpers Ferry National Parks, the Berkshires, the Catskills, the Adirondacks, and elsewhere.

As we celebrate our 100th year, buoyed by the energetic assistance and ideas of



Members of the Westchester Trails Association in Acadia National Park for the club's "hiking week"

our volunteer officers, board members, hike leaders, trail maintainers, committee chairs, long time members, and "newbies," WTA is moving forward, all the while continuing to pursue its original goals of hiking and good fellowship that were established a century ago. For more information, visit our website at [westhike.org](http://westhike.org).  Eileen West



Hikers from the Westchester Trails Association atop Sugarloaf Mountain in Hudson Highlands State Park, 1935

#### H. Neil Zimmerman

July 18, 1945 – February 28, 2023

On February 28, 2023, Neil Zimmerman passed away after a long illness at his home in Accord, NY.

The Trail Conference, The Friends of the Shawangunks, and all those who hike and enjoy outdoor recreation in the New York – New Jersey area have lost a great friend and a tireless and fierce advocate for preserving open space and using it responsibly.



#### In Memoriam

##### George Dagis

George Dagis, longtime volunteer for the Trail Conference, passed away in February at the age of 69. George first got involved with the Trail Conference in the early 1970s, and he became a volunteer with the Publications Committee in 2007. In light of his familiarity with the Catskills as



a local resident, long-time hiker, and Catskill 3500 Club member, he served as project manager for five edi-

tions of our Catskill Trails maps, including the most recent edition, published in February. George was also an accomplished nature photographer, and several of his photos of the Catskills and Shawangunks have been used in our publications. George's dedication to our organization's trail education efforts through his various roles over the past 15 years will be greatly missed.



# Highlands Trail Hiker Raises Funds, Awareness



**DON WEISE**  
DIRECTOR OF DONOR  
ADVERTISING

If you hike the New York-New Jersey Highlands, you may have noticed some unique-looking, diamond-shaped, teal-colored blazes. These are the markings of the 180-mile-long Highlands Trail (HT). This scenic footpath was designed to showcase the region's natural beauty and countless lakes and reservoirs, which provide clean drinking water to tens of millions of people. With help from the NJ Highlands Council and hardworking Trail Conference volunteers, the HT is clearly marked with many new signage and blazing improvements. And thanks to some thoughtful trail planning and strategically preserved buffer lands, you can explore the trail without realizing how close you may be to populated areas.

Last summer, Trail Conference board member Charlie Gadol completed a south-bound hike of the HT as a fundraiser. Hiking from the Hudson River to the Delaware River, Charlie generated donations for the Trail Conference and excitement for the trail. We caught up with Charlie to get his reflections on the experience.

## **Congratulations on completing your journey! What inspired you to hike the Highlands Trail and become interested in long-distance trails?**

I am especially interested in hiking the long-distance trails cared for by the Trail Conference. My goal for this journey was to highlight the trail's importance and help it continue evolving into a better and better trail experience. I have heard friends talking about hiking or running the Highlands Trail, Long Path, SRT, Lenape Trail, and A.T., but time was always an issue. Now that I am retired, I have time to explore these trails!

## **What did you enjoy most about hiking the Highlands Trail?**

I loved the entire trail. My favorite parts were the dramatic landscapes of Storm King, Black Rock Forest and Schunemunk Mountain, but also the scenic areas of the New Jersey Highlands, including the Stonetown Circular Trail section, Wyanokie High Point, and other parts of Norvin Green SF. Years ago, I ran in Allamuchy SP, and on this hike, I got to explore parts of Allamuchy I hadn't seen



**Charlie's last day hiking through the Musconetcong Gorge along the Highlands Trail.**

before. I'd like to return there with my kids who still live nearby.

## **How does the Highlands Trail differ from other long-distance trails?**

In my limited experience, each long-distance trail is very different. The Long Path traverses many different landscapes from the suburban Palisades to the rugged, remote Catskills and Schoharie County.

The Highlands Trail also varies widely from section to section. The southern portion near the Delaware passes through rolling farm country, ducking in and out of local parks, with a few sections still on country roads. Further north, the Pequannock (a.k.a. Newark) Watershed is heavily forested, rugged, and remote; I didn't see a soul there, and I walked through plenty of cobwebs! But even in its most populated areas, I rarely saw other hikers on the Highlands Trail. By contrast, on my recent vacation in Colorado, I saw tons of hikers. If you are looking for solitude, try the Highlands Trail!

## **What advice can you offer to prospective Highlands Trail hikers?**

First, download and read the Trail Conference's Highlands Trail hiking guide at [thehighlandstrail.org](http://thehighlandstrail.org). You will need a

permit to access the Pequannock Watershed. Figure out what is a good daily distance for you and where to set up parking and car shuttles. Some sections are more than 30 miles long, while others are only 5 or 6 miles. I suggest downloading the West Hudson Trails, Sterling Forest, Northern NJ Highlands, and Highlands Trail Avenza maps from the Trail Conference. The trail is well-marked, but the few times I wandered off trail, having the maps on my phone map enabled me to see instantly where I went wrong, and how to get back on trail. Special thanks to Sandra Baldanza Galindo, Jodi Bower and everyone who accompanied me on my hikes.

## **Why should people consider hiking long-distance trails?**

They provide you with a great journey and the chance to become deeply immersed in nature. You appreciate how insignificant you and your troubles are, while out on the trail. The Highlands Trail took me to scenic vistas I never knew existed, as well as to places that people have worked hard to preserve. Finally, it offered me the chance to meet fellow hikers and spend time with friends.

*Thank you, Charlie for generating support, attention, and excitement for this remarkable trail!*

## **New Partnerships in Morristown National Historical Park**

Volunteer Trail Supervisors Estelle Anderson and Bob Jonas lead a hardworking team of volunteers in Morristown National Historical Park (NHP). From clipping back sticker bushes to widening trail access and restoring erosion control, they have been working diligently to provide a welcoming and pleasant trail experience to park visitors.

Now, thanks in part to the support of a new partnership group for Morristown NHP, the Friends of Jockey Hollow ([fojh.org](http://fojh.org)), Trail Conference volunteers have additional materials and supplies to continue their vital trail work in the area. The Friends of Jockey Hollow share the Trail Conference's goal of protecting the natural landscape and environmental integrity of this treasured National Historical Park, as well as preserving its cultural and historic assets, and we are excited to work with them in the years to come.



**Subaru staff participate in a volunteer clean-up at Franklin Lakes Nature Preserve**

# Subaru Helps Volunteers Learn New Skills

Subaru believes that a group of well-trained, hard-working volunteers can accomplish just about anything on the trails. That is why, for the last three years, Subaru Distributors Corp. has been demonstrating its commitment to empowering volunteers by supporting our Trail University program.

Many of our trained volunteers and volunteer crew members are capable of building new trails, restoring and re-routing existing trails, clearing blowdowns, improving water crossings, and tackling difficult problems, such as erosion and the spread of invasive species. Our award-winning Trail University program provides volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to protect the trails and surrounding lands. Workshops, many of them free and open to the public, are taught by professionals and experienced volunteers.

The generous support of Subaru Distributors Corp. allows us to invest in volunteers who are interested in expanding their skill sets. A more capable, productive workforce translates into

better trail experiences for us all.

According to Sam Spagnuolo, Director of Sales and Marketing, "Subaru and the outdoors go hand in hand. Subaru not only hopes to help its owners enjoy earth's natural wonders, it also strives to protect and preserve them for generations to come. The Trail Conference turns those goals into reality every day, and we are thrilled to be a small part of that effort here at Subaru Distributors Corp."

Subaru Distributors Corp. also supported our 2022 gala and recruited 13 of its staff members to participate in a volunteer clean-up at Franklin Lakes Nature Preserve. Subaru retailers similarly donate their time and support throughout the year. Most recently, Johnstons Subaru completed a volunteer workday at the Welch Trail Education Center in Harri-man State Park.

All of us at the Trail Conference would like to thank Subaru Distributors Corp. and Subaru retailers for helping us keep trails and natural areas open and safe for many years to come!



# Race Directors, Runners Go the Extra Mile for Trails

Hikers and trail runners share a special connection to nature, which is forged in our mutual love of trails and the simple joys of experiencing the forest on foot. Trail runners are frequent hikers, and many group leaders and race directors support trails by generously giving back to the Trail Conference.

This year, more than 1,000 people participated in trail running events benefitting the Trail Conference, thanks to the leadership of community-minded race directors and organizations like Charlie Gadol (Run Wild), Kim Levinsky (Sassquad Trail Running), Ian Golden (Red Newt Racing), and the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce. Here are just a few of the exciting events they organized, which directly benefitted our work.

## Pocantico Hills Marathon and Half-Marathon

In November, hundreds of nature-loving runners traded in skyscrapers and pavement for a more natural kind of New York marathon. Organized by Trail Conference board mem-

ber Charlie Gadol, the second annual Pocantico Hills race featured forests, fields, hills, friendly cows, and spectators, all in beautiful Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Volunteers from the Trail Conference, Sassquad Trail Running, and other groups provided support at aid stations and at key intersections. The event was a significant fundraiser for the Trail Conference. Charlie and Run Wild organize a variety of races that benefit the Trail Conference and land preservation in the Hudson Valley.

## Harriman Big Bear SquaTch Marathon and Half Marathons

In the spring and fall, Sassquad Trail Running offers challenging trail races in Harriman and Bear Mountain State Parks. The spring event led intrepid runners and hikers up rugged West Mountain and the Timp, and through the historic, abandoned village of Doodletown. The fall race highlighted the Trail Conference's work on Harriman's oldest trail (Ramapo-Dunderberg). It also

featured two scenic lakes and great views from Parker Cabin Mountain and Almost Perpendicular. Race Director Kim Levinsky runs several benefit races for the Trail Conference and other charities. She also volunteers and advocates for the Trail Conference, and has brought in many new Trail Conference volunteers and members.

## Breakneck Point 42K and 21K

Race Director Ian Golden, who has been giving back to the Trail Conference through his Red Newt Racing events since 2014, greeted more than 400 participants last spring for the 8th annual Breakneck Point 42K and 21K. This uniquely challenging event includes steep, technical pitches requiring climbing and tolerance of exposure, and up to 9,000 vertical feet of climbing. Michelle Merlis of Albany won the women's race in under 5.5 hours, qualifying her to compete with the US National Team at the 2022 World Mountain and Trail Running



Trail Conference Trail Runs group explores new trails and the Long Path at Hook Mountain, Rockland County, N.Y.

Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Ian hosts a variety of events regionwide, from the New Jersey Highlands to Adirondacks and Finger Lakes regions.

## MRCC Trail Conference 5K Run and 3K Walk

Each year, the Mahwah Regional Chamber of Commerce and Trail Conference partner to provide opportunities for hikers, beginning trail runners and road runners to sample a shorter, hybrid trail race at Trail Conference headquarters. Starting and ending at the iconic Darlington Schoolhouse, participants learn about the Trail Conference's work as they explore a mix of wide, level trails and roads. The annual event is co-sponsored by many local businesses, with

proceeds benefitting the Trail Conference.

## Trail Conference Trail Runs

If racing is not your thing, we invite you to join us for 12 free, monthly, non-competitive trail runs throughout the Trail Conference's service area. Runs typically highlight parks where the Trail Conference is actively building, improving, or preserving land for trails. This year, we explored parks both east and west of the Hudson River, and a few locations farther afield. We offer two leaders, with two pace and distance groups, to accommodate a variety of skill and ability levels. Find us on Facebook by joining our group, "Trail Conference Trail Runs" or search for our events at [nynjtc.org/events](https://nynjtc.org/events).

Don Weise

## HIKERS' MARKETPLACE

Warm weather is upon us, which means it's time to start planning your spring and summer outdoor adventures! Shop gear, apparel, maps, trail guides, and more in our Trail Conference Marketplace. Plus, our members receive a discount on everything in the store!



New 14oz ceramic mug. Perfect for enjoying a hot beverage, whether you're sitting around the campfire or reading on the couch



Our new puffer vests keep you warm on those chilly spring mornings. Available in men's and women's styles.

VISIT [nynjtc.org/shop](https://nynjtc.org/shop)

Or shop in-person, Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at our headquarters in Mahwah, N.J.

## Volunteer Trail Leaders Still Needed in New York, New Jersey

As an organization powered by volunteers who care for more than 2,000 miles of trails and natural areas throughout our region, there is a significant impact when a volunteer position is vacant for a lengthy amount of time. Our small staff isn't equipped to keep up with the demand required to keep trails open and safe, 365 days a year, rain or shine (or snow). The following Volunteer Trail Leader positions are still available. We — and your favorite trails — are asking for your help in filling them.

Do you know a passionate trail user or outdoor enthusiast who may be interested in maintaining trails, planning trail upkeep and projects for a particular area, and working directly with our environmental partners and local community? Please help us spread the word: share this arti-

cle, send an email, make a phone call. We couldn't do this work without you.

Learn more about our Volunteer Trail Leader positions, and other volunteer opportunities, by visiting [nynjtc.org/volunteer](https://nynjtc.org/volunteer).

### NEW YORK

#### West Hudson North Trail Chair

The West Hudson North region covers trails in Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Storm King State Park, Schunemunk Mountain State Park, and Black Rock Forest in the lower Hudson Valley. You will work with a dedicated group of volunteer Trail Supervisors, the Hudson Nor'Westers Volunteer Trail Crew, and park partners to tackle maintenance and trail projects.

#### Dry Brook Ridge North Trail Supervisor

The Dry Brook Ridge North Trail Supervisor region covers a less-traveled area in the western section of the Catskill Forest Preserve. The position gives the opportunity to oversee trail maintenance on nearly 14 miles of trail with a team of trail maintainers and NYS De-

partment of Environmental Conservation staff.

#### Southern Shawangunks Trail Chair

The Southern Shawangunks region extends from the New York-New Jersey border at High Point State Park, north to Shawangunk Ridge State Forest, and west to the Neversink River Unique Area. If you're looking to experience the varying landscape that this area has to offer, this volunteer role is for you.

### NEW JERSEY

#### North Jersey Trail Chair

The North Jersey region includes Norvin Green State Forest, Long Pond Ironworks State Park, Ramapo Mountain State Park, and Ringwood State Park. The North Jersey Trail Chair will work closely with NJ Department of Environmental Protection, park partners, and our Trail Supervisors and Maintainers to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of the trails in these parks. This role is ideal for anyone looking to get involved in preserving this area's hidden outdoor treasures and natural history!

## Save the Date for Our Volunteer Appreciation Event

Every year, the Trail Conference honors the outstanding volunteers who exemplify our mission and work tirelessly to ensure that our region's trails and natural areas remain accessible for all to enjoy. This year's Volunteer Appreciation Event

— the first in-person event since 2020! — will take place on Sunday, April 16, at Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J. If you're an active volunteer with the Trail Conference and haven't yet registered to attend, contact [volunteer@nynjtc.org](mailto:volunteer@nynjtc.org).



# Public Health and Environmental Conservation: Interrelated Fields



**BRANDON ELGUN**  
2022 CONSERVATION CORPS  
MEMBER

After about 15 years primarily spent in the public health sector, I told bewildered friends and colleagues that I was taking a “hard left turn” in my career. I left a job working for New York’s largest hospital system, and with that, a decent salary, a manager title, and probably the best benefits I will ever have, to serve as an AmeriCorps volunteer with a small stipend, no benefits, and a temporary/seasonal status. The deeper into the program I got, the more it became abundantly clear: It’s not as much of a “hard left” as I originally thought. Public Health and Environmental Conservation aren’t discrete disciplines, but rather completely intertwined.

Sure, I traded computer screens and latex gloves for safety glasses and work gloves. I traded business casual for boots and pants that got muddy, shirts that got wet with sweat and rain, and a hat that kept the sun out of my eyes. My days looked different: my commute was hiking up a mountain instead of avoiding eye contact on the subway. I could count on one hand the number of emails I sent in a typical week, whereas before, there were days where I couldn’t count on one hand the number of meetings I had in a single day. I had an office with a window for the first time in my career, and there was never a line for the bathroom. But here’s what was the same: I spent a lot of time attempting to subtly alter human behavior, providing education and outreach, and appreciating the delicate balance that supports life and wellness.



Brandon stewards at an overlook in the Catskill Mountains.

It is no secret that the environment directly effects human health, and humans directly impact the environment, creating a constant feedback loop. As a Trail Steward, part of my responsibility was to educate people about Leave No Trace (LNT) principles. The most direct link between LNT and public health is, of course, waste management. We taught people to carry out human and dog waste when possible, or to responsibly bury it under 6-8 inches of soil and at least 200 feet from any water source. Aside from aesthetics, properly burying waste is important for mitigating the spread of harmful pathogens, such as E. coli or Giardiasis, for example. Stevenson, et al (2020) cite an overall lack of research within the public health realm regarding the impacts of human waste in the setting of outdoor recreation and express concern that it is an overlooked risk. They also reference studies demonstrating that pathogens can survive in fecal deposits for 6-12 months, depending on the environment, thus making them

risky for humans and other animals that come in contact with them. Pathogens can leech into ground water and be carried to other areas, and in the age of antibiotics and hormones, which can be excreted, the contamination becomes even more problematic. So much so that some are advocating to do away with cat-holes and to promote packing out human waste instead. Backcountry human and dog waste is both an environmental and public health issue.

Another big point of education was keeping people from wandering off the trails. On an individual level, this can directly affect safety of the individual; a simple browser search for risks of hiking off the established paths brings up dozens of articles about death and injury. On trail maintenance days, we engineered the physical environment to encourage staying on the trail. Connecting this with public health on a larger scale may seem a bit of a stretch, but stay with me. When we build a water bar and retread muddy trails, we are making an area

more walkable, thus eliminating the development of social trails that degrade vegetation, promote the spread of invasive species, and encroach on natural habitats. Subtle visual design, direct cues (blazes, quality maps, etc.) and education can help mitigate intentional and accidental off-trail travel. Treading off trails can be a vehicle for the spread of invasive species which degrades biodiversity and can increase human-pathogen contact. Take, for example, one of the invasive species that the Conservation Corps worked on last summer: Japanese barberry. This non-native plant has been shown to be a habitat for ticks and their hosts, thus impacting human health. The second link has to do with methodology. In public health, I studied how the built environment—sidewalks, stairs, urban parks, etc.—are specifically engineered to encourage exercise and outdoor activity, thus promoting healthy behaviors. This, in combination with education about the importance of brushing one’s boots and staying on the trail, works to mitigate environmental impacts, thus having the downstream effect of protecting human health via protecting native ecosystems.

There is, of course, the very obvious link of greenspace and human health, especially when we look at urban parks. Creating trails and parks that are more accessible and are located in more urban environments promotes exercise, which positively impacts users’ emotional and physical health and wellness (and lowers overall healthcare costs.) While more robust studies are needed, those engaging in conservation activities also demonstrate enhancements in wellness due to physical activity, social connection, and emotional rewards. One of the challenges facing concrete jungles is wastewater and runoff due to the lack of soil and plants to absorb them, which contributes to pollution of the waterways, thus increasing human contact with pathogens. Additionally, this creates more opportunities for catastrophic flooding and erosion,

which can lead to the loss of human life. Similarly, parks and greenspaces, especially in urban areas, remove toxins from the air and from rainwater, thus decreasing impact on human health.

On a global scale, environmental pollution leads to more severe climate change, thus increasing the incidence of severe weather patterns. Stronger storms lead to more devastating erosion and degradation of the environment, which then increases the negative impacts to life (hurricanes, flooding, landslides) and the things needed to sustain it (crops, soil, trees, potable water). Zooming back in for a moment, off-trail travel degrades plants and soils, which can lead to erosion. This coupled with stronger storms and more intense weather can lead to landslides which can impact human populations. Climate change also has led to increased mating seasons and increased reach of populations of mosquitoes and ticks (vectors), for example, which coupled with an expanding human population and encroachment on natural habitats of reservoirs (animals and environments that sustain vectors), is linked with increasing incidence and prevalence of known zoonotic diseases (malaria, lyme, etc.) as well as emerging ones.

While it is easy to get overwhelmed by the vicious cycle of human impact on environment which affects human health, it is perhaps hopeful, too, that we have the ability to change this course through something as ‘simple’ as retreading a trail. This is what makes the New York- New Jersey Trail Conference and the Conservation Corps so incredibly valuable and special. Through the power of dedicated volunteers and staff, we contribute to a healthier environment, and thus, to a healthier human population. Public health and environmental conservation are intrinsically linked; the more we can acknowledge this, work collaboratively across disciplines, and trace these links back to the work we are doing, the greater our impact can be.

Support trails, parks, and open space in the region by joining the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

## Trail Conference BENEFITS

The Trail Conference maintains more than 2,100 miles of trails, advocates for parks, protects open space, and provides volunteer opportunities in the great outdoors.

Your membership supports the trails you love and ensures they are accessible and safe to enjoy for generations to come. You also receive:

**25% Discount** on Trail Conference books and maps when purchased directly from the Trail Conference. You’ll also receive 10% off on logo goods in our Trail Marketplace. Visit [nynjtc.org/shop](https://nynjtc.org/shop).

**Discounts** at our outdoor retail partners and businesses. See our full list of partners at [nynjtc.org/retail-partners](https://nynjtc.org/retail-partners).

**Invites** to members-only workshops, hiking socials, and more.

**Access** to a wide range of volunteer opportunities on- and off-trail. Check out [nynjtc.org/volunteer](https://nynjtc.org/volunteer).

Learn more and join or renew your membership by scanning the QR code or visiting [nynjtc.org/membership](https://nynjtc.org/membership).



### Upcoming Events

Learn more and sign up at [nynjtc.org/events](https://nynjtc.org/events).

**Saturday, April 22**  
Leave No Trace Awareness  
Hike + Happy Hour

**Thursday, July 13**  
Guided Invasive and Native  
Plant ID Workshop

**Thursday, May 11**  
Finding Less-Traveled  
Trails Waterfall Hike + Talk

**Thursday, August 24**  
Conservation Dog  
Demonstration

**Thursday, June 1 -  
Sunday, June 4**  
National Trails Day  
Celebrations

**September 16 -  
October 31**  
Trail-A-Thon: 103 Miles for  
103 Years