



82nd Year

TRAIL WALKER

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE...MAINTAINING OVER 1500 MILES OF FOOT TRAILS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2002

Storm King Trails to Open in Time for Fall Hiking!

Reopening Storm King State Park has been a priority for the Trail Conference in recent months, and an exceptional turnout by hikers at a midweek, evening meeting on the park's status proved their commitment and bolstered the cause.

Nearly 150 citizens, most of them hikers sporting tags reading "Open All Trails Now," crowded a meeting room at Bear Mountain July 26 in which representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reported on their nearly three-year study of unexploded ordnance (UXO) at Storm King. The attendees were there to show their support for Trail Conference efforts to get the park open once again to the public. The park has been closed since 1999, when forest fires unexpectedly detonated historical explosives that had been lobbed into the area during a century (1840s-1940s) of artillery practice by West Point and the Cold Spring Foundry.

Near the end of the meeting, and in response to direct questions from hikers, Palisades Interstate Park Commission Executive Director Carol Ash said that more than two-thirds of the park could be fully open before the end of August. She said a third section that shows evidence of ordnance would remain off-limits to all, including fire fighters, although marked trails in it that have been declared clean by the Corps might be open by October.

Ash's promise of a quick opening of portions of the park was based on recommendations by the Corps and its survey for UXOs. The Corps found no evidence of ordnance in two sections of the park, but did in a third. It recommended that the two clean sections could be open for full public use and that marked trails in the third section—which have been declared clear of ordnance to a distance of 25 feet on either side—also could be open to the public contingent on proper "institutional controls," i.e., signs that indicate the risks and prohibitions against going off-trail.

James Moore, project manager for the Corps, said a full clean-up of the contaminated section will cost \$5 to \$7 million; money for the job is not in his budget, though he has made the request.

Both Ash and Moore noted that Congresswoman Sue Kelly's interest in the project had helped advance it to this point.



CHARLES PORTER

Moore also said that additional political intervention will be needed in order to get funding to complete the cleanup.

"The Trail Conference fully supports these recommendations," TC Executive Director Edward Goodell said at the meeting. "I think I can also speak for the organization in pledging our full cooperation in implementing these recommendations as quickly as possible and in trying to get you a budget to complete the cleanup."

Trail Conference maintainers were numerous in the audience, and they left the meeting eager to get back on the trails to assess and begin the necessary work. After the fires, explosions, Army surveys, and three years in which no work could be done, maintainers likely have a lot waiting for them. West Hudson Crew Chief Bob Marshall attended the meeting and

said he was ready to get the crew into the park "as soon as they let us."

MEMBER ADVOCACY STILL NEEDED

Storm King State Park should be made completely safe for public use by removal of all military ordnance from its lands. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimates the cost of this cleanup will be \$5-\$7 million. But the money will not be allocated without public pressure. Write to:

- Senator Charles E. Schumer
 - Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton
 - Congresswoman Sue W. Kelly
 - Congressman Maurice Hinchey
- Urge them to work to add these funds to the Department of Defense's FUDS (Formerly Used Defense Site) program.

Keep up with the latest on Storm King news, including trail openings, at the Trail Conference web site: www.nynjtc.org.

Annual Meeting, Torrey Memorial Hike October 27 at Harriman S. P.

The Trail Conference's Annual Meeting and the yearly Torrey Memorial Hike will be joined in one exciting event this year, to take place Sunday, October 27 at Harriman State Park.

The day will begin with a continental breakfast and socializing at 9 am at the Silvermine Picnic Area in the park (just off Seven Lakes Drive, approximately 1.7 miles south of the Long Mountain traffic circle). The Annual Meeting will follow, from 10 am until noon. The meeting will include an awards ceremony and board elections (candidates are named on page 2). Advance registration is requested by October 18 so refreshments can be ordered (form is on page 3).

At 12:30, those interested in making the yearly pilgrimage up Long Mountain to the Torrey Memorial will shuttle to the start at the Long Mountain parking lot. Individuals should carpool as necessary for return or circuit hike back to Silvermine. The Torrey Memorial can be the starting point for other hikes in the area.

This year's Torrey Memorial hike will be the 65th for the annual event. It honors the Trail Conference's first president and co-founder, Raymond H. Torrey.

Note: daylight savings time ends early on the 27th—clocks go back one hour.

Bear Encounters on the Rise in Northern New Jersey Parks, Trails

Date: 7-15-02
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Worthington State Forest, NJ, Backpacker Camp Site # 2
Situation: Five tents stand in a loose circle. Twelve backpacks lie on the ground. A food bag hangs on the bear pole. No one is in sight.

Observation: One of the backpacks is moving up the hill. There is a black furball attached to the backpack.

—Garth Fisher, Appalachian Trail Ridgerunner

Hikers in the Kittatinnies and homeowners in West Milford are among the many recreationists and residents in northern New Jersey telling bear stories this season. While local newspapers have

thrilled to such reports as that of a 500-pound bear breaking down one homeowner's garage door to access the untold treasures behind it, and of other bears injuring domestic dogs, Trail Conference officials have been fielding an unusual number of

reports of human-bear encounters on trails and campsites of northern New Jersey.

Garth Fisher, TC-sponsored Ridgerunner on the Appalachian Trail in the state, says that in his first two weeks of duty this summer, "I saw more bears than I had seen in all of 2001."

He says problems have been particularly numerous in Worthington State Forest, where, in addition to ambling off with unattended packs, bears have ripped through vacant tents (including Fisher's), grabbed food in the presence of

**BEARS WANT YOUR FOOD;
DON'T GIVE IT TO THEM**

continued on page 6

Georgette Weir *Editor*
 Nora Porter *Managing Editor*
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NEW YORK - NEW JERSEY
 TRAIL CONFERENCE

Mission Statement

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, founded in 1920, is a federation of member clubs and individuals dedicated to providing recreational hiking opportunities in the region, and representing the interests and concerns of the hiking community. The Conference is a volunteer-directed public service organization committed to:

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

Board of Directors

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The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is a volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is a federation of 88 hiking and outdoor groups, and 10,000 individuals.

from the president's notepad...

Off Trail

About 400 Trail Conference members volunteer their time on trails—clipping, sawing, digging, rolling rocks, painting blazes, and just generally making sure that the 1500 miles of trails in our region are in good shape for the rest of us to walk on. These trail maintainers are the TC's largest group of volunteers, and likely always will be.

As our organization grows, however, so does our cadre of off-trail volunteers. Among this group are individuals who share their special skills in order to advance the work of the Trail Conference. Here are just a few examples:

- Barry Mark, a retired executive with direct marketing experience, is heading up our efforts on membership renewals, making it possible to test our direct mail and track the success rate.
- Mary Anne Massey's extensive experience as trainer is helping us to standardize our excellent maintainer training pro-

gram and make it even better.

- Jan Hesbon, a fundraising professional, has put together our newly announced charitable gift annuities program (see page 5), enrolled our charter member, and will be managing the program.

- Frank Bamberger, a retired collection agent, makes phone calls from home to collect our accounts receivable and to check which retailers still offer a discount to our members.

The valuable services provided pro bono by our members may not be accounted for in our official budget, but they greatly enhance the Conference's capability to pursue its advocacy and education agendas. Every one of our members can take advantage of similar opportunities to make a difference. Some of the most immediate ones we've identified are listed on page 5 of this issue. Here are three other examples:

- Personnel: Someone with human re-

source experience would be invaluable to the Administrative Committee, which wants to revise our personnel manual and investigate benefits for our hard-working staff.

- Special events: If you enjoy entertaining, how about helping with special events such as our major donor hikes, annual meeting, delegates meeting, training sessions, open house, or annual Torrey Memorial Hike?

- Public outreach: Do you like to talk to people? Consider talking to them about hiking and the Trail Conference at public outreach events. It's a great way to spread the word about how much fun it is to hike and where to do it. We even have handouts and materials to put together the booth.

Our Volunteer Projects Director, Josh Erdsneker, can help get you connected to an experience that is right for you. Every one of these jobs contributes to the health of our organization and thereby supports our passion for hiking. You will be working for a great cause alongside interesting people who share your love for the outdoors. What could be more satisfying? Please join us off trail!

—Jane Daniels, President

L · E · T · T · E · R · S

Driving While Sleepy

In reply to the article by Joachim Oppenheimer in the July/August issue of the *Trail Walker* ("Rocks Do Give Way: A Reflection on Risk and Caution," p. 5): I agree that driving home is more dangerous than the hike itself, partly due to the sleepiness of the driver. I am guilty of having dozed off for an instant while driving.

I had always considered drivers who drove while drunk as being very irresponsible and deserving of a suspended license at the least. Recently, however, I happened to read an article in which the author stated that falling asleep at the wheel is as bad as drunk driving, and you know, he is right. Since reading that, I always try to get a good night's sleep before driving long distances. Also if you do feel sleepy before or while driving, you should either ask someone else who is not sleepy to do the driving, or you should pull to the side of the road and take a nap. Signs along some highways say you can only stop for emergencies; drowsiness is considered an emergency. Also, you have probably discovered that you get sleepy after eating, so limiting your food intake before driving may help keep you more alert.

Coralyn Gorlicki
 Edison, New Jersey

Boardwalk Trail Threatened on Fire Island

In your May/June 2002 issue a short article described the fire at Pochuck (p.

11). Three pictures showed the boardwalk that received only minor damage. There are many of these boardwalks on Fire Island. The one I'm about to describe is on the west side of Smith Point Park and is part of the National Seashore. It makes a loop around the area from the south to the north with some twists and turns. I have walked this many times over the years and find it very pleasant. It's about a mile.

Recently I read in *Newsday* that they plan to take the boardwalk down the next time it needs to have extensive repairs. I believe this to be overkill in their endeavor to return the whole area back to the Piping Plover. Soon they may want to take our trails away.

Richard A. Hollmann
 Ronkonkoma, New York

Errata:

Re "Blaze Where You Must, Not Where You Can," May/June 2002 issue, p.4:

In reference to my sentence: "Frequently, blazes are put one directly above the other which may lead to some confusion." At times such a blaze combination is necessary, i.e., when the only trees available do not have adequate width to indicate the turn direction or a single tree is available at a sharp switch-back with the same side visible from two directions. These should be interpreted as alerts to the hiker to look for a sudden change ahead in the trail.

—Larry Wheelock, Trails Director

Wildlands Exchange:
 Beyond the Border (WEBB)

October 5-6
 Paul Smith's College, Paul Smith's, NY

The Adirondack Mountain Club and Paul Smith's College will host a weekend gathering of managers and users of the wild areas in the northeastern U.S. and eastern Canada.

Saturday, October 5: Management, use, and maintenance of wild areas will be the focus of panel discussions and seminars.

Sunday, October 6: Participate in field workshops to see management practices in the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

All members and staff from clubs, federations, associations, learning institutions, retail stores, tour companies, and government agencies are invited to attend.

For more information, call 518-668-4447, ext. 31, or visit www.adk.org.

Board Candidates
 Nominated

Neil Zimmerman, chair of the Trail Conference Nominating Committee, reports the following nominations:

To three-year terms on the board of directors, ending in 2005: Paul Bell, John Gunzler, Malcolm Spector, John Kolp (new), and Bob Newton (new).

The following are candidates for delegates-at-large: Bob Berlin (new), Eric Calder, Jim Conlin (new), Russ Cannizzaro, Cliff Gerenz, Dennis Halliwell, Jill Hamell, John Jurasik, Hal Kaplan, Jane Levenson, Karen Rose (new), Trudy Schneider, and Naomi Sutter.



from the Executive Director

Why Science?

Paul Leiken, long time Trail Conference volunteer and member, recently came into my office and asked me what lobsters have to do with hiking trails. After a bit of questioning, he allowed that a recent *Trail Walker* article about research being conducted by the Trail Conference and Columbia University to determine the effects of hiking trails on avian and arthropod communities had sent him to the dictionary. There he learned that arthropods are animals with exterior skeletons and segmented bodies, including insects and many crustaceans such as lobsters. Paul, of course, was pulling my leg. But the question "Why science?" is a serious one for the Trail Conference to ask and answer.

Science Serves Our Mission

The essence of the Trail Conference's mission is to provide people with access to a direct experience of our natural world. This experience is part of humanity's natural heritage and serves as the political basis for conservation advocacy. To pursue this mission, we must fight trends in this re-

gion that result in fewer opportunities for the average individual to experience and appreciate nature in their day-to-day life.

Traditionally we have accomplished our mission through building and maintaining hiking trails, publishing accurate hiking maps and books, and strong advocacy efforts. I predict that science-based activities will be increasingly seen as an important method for achieving our objectives. There are several reasons for this.

The fundamental issue we face is that we are facing a shrinking resource compared to the number of users. The recent Highlands studies showed that from 1990 to 2000 development encroached on 5,200 acres annually in the Hudson Highlands while population increased 11 percent for the decade. Current zoning laws will allow the population to ultimately grow another 48 percent. This creates more demand for "services"—clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, recreational space, and other quality of life intangibles—from less open space. Laissez-faire open space management is no longer sufficient under these circumstances. We must become

much more sophisticated in our understanding and management of resources in order to accommodate the inevitable growth.

Protecting hiking areas, habitats, and ecosystems is a two-step process consisting of acquisition and management. Acquisition can remove immediate acute pressures, but only through careful, prolonged management can we hope to protect areas from the subtle but pervasive pressures of motorized use, invasive species, climate change, and misguided wildlife management. Only through science-based management techniques can we hope to provide adequate long-term protection.

We Must Protect What We Have

A scientific inventory is the first step in protecting what we have. For example, natural heritage inventories of the Appalachian Trail have identified 200-250 occurrences of rare plants growing immediately adjacent to the AT, and which could be inadvertently harmed by trail maintenance activities. Through scientific inventory, monitoring, and protection, it is possible not only to avoid harm to rare species but also to introduce management techniques that can improve the health of the existing populations.

Good scientific information provides a tested body of knowledge on which sound policy can be formed. Scientific information is recognized as a factual basis for making decisions in law, in government, and in natural resource management.

The Trail Conference needs to use good science to ensure and demonstrate that people can directly experience the natural environment without harming it. And we need to be able to rebut bad science that would unnecessarily restrict responsible access to the natural environment.

More importantly, the Trail Conference can play an important role in generating the scientific information needed to

Fall Maintenance "101" Workshop

Saturday, October 26

Learn basic techniques, maintenance standards, and the types of problems you may encounter on the trail and how to solve them. The day will begin with coffee, tea, and donuts, continue with some classroom review, then we'll head into the field, where we will spend the majority of the day. If you are considering adopting a trail for maintenance or would like to improve your techniques, this is the workshop for you. The day will be spent in Clarence Fahnestock State Park in New York's Putnam County.

Reservations are required for this course; the deadline is October 18, 2002.

Contact the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference office during weekdays at 201-512-9348 or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, email address (if you have one), to: NY-NJ Trail Conference Courses, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430-1199

best manage our remaining natural lands. Hikers, naturalists, and trail maintainers, by virtue of their on-the-ground presence, are in a position to provide real-time environmental monitoring to professional scientists and land managers.

We have begun the process of becoming a source of original science with recent projects to monitor rare and endangered species along hiking trails and the study of whether hiking trails actually affect forest communities of beetles (arthropods) and birds. This is just the beginning of what I expect to be a major program for the Trail Conference in the 21st century. And I can guarantee that if we do find that hiking trails affect lobsters, it will be a scientific first!

—Edward Goodell

TC Volunteers Help Monitor Threatened Species Along AT

Find your plants! That was the mission given in June to eighteen Conference volunteers as they left a seminar on monitoring rare, threatened, and endangered plants. The new Natural Heritage trail monitors had participated in a day-long training session at the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge, jointly sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, the Appalachian Trail Conference, and the National Park Service (NPS).

Ecological consultant Ted Elliman and NPS natural resource specialist Kent Schwarzkopf presented slide lectures. The group then followed Elliman into the field, where he introduced them to local examples of threatened plants and demonstrated monitoring techniques.

The Natural Heritage volunteers will monitor specific species along designated sections of the Appalachian Trail in New York and New Jersey. The program has been implemented along the AT in other states, and the results indicate that while some species seem to be flourishing and multiplying in numbers, others are being impacted by drought, disease, motorized



IN THE FIELD: Ted Elliman (left) and George Petty (right) identify rare plants.

vehicles, and even unsuspecting hikers.

The TC volunteers are now prepared to monitor and provide recommendations to the ATC and the Trail Conference regarding how these rare, threatened, or endangered species of flora can best be managed.

—Josh Erdsneker,
Volunteer Projects Director

Annual Meeting, Torrey Memorial Hike October 27 at Harriman

continued from page 1

REGISTRATION FORM

Annual Meeting

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

PLEASE PRINT.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Daytime telephone: (____) _____

Evening telephone: (____) _____

_____ adults

Please return the registration form by October 18 to:

NY-NJ Trail Conference
156 Ramapo Valley Road
Mahwah, NJ 07430

You can register online at www.nynjtc.org or by phone, 201-512-9348.



TRAIL NEWS

❖ Car Break-ins at Harriman

Hikers are cautioned that there have been a number of car break-ins at various spots in Harriman State Park. Park police recommend the following:

- Do not leave any valuables in parked cars, especially credit cards.
- Do not leave any tempting targets visible (purses, wallets, or anything that looks like these), even if they contain nothing important.
- Check passenger-side door locks upon returning your car. (Damage will be visible if a break-in occurred.) If a break-in occurred, any credit cards that were in the car should be checked for immediately.

- Be alert for any suspicious activity at trailheads. Try to note any related license plates.

The telephone number for the park police is 845-786-2781.

❖ No Parking along Banker Road at Wawayanda

The hiker's parking area on Banker Road, at the trailhead for Double Pond and Banker Trails, is now posted "no parking" and the road leading to the parking area is posted "private driveway." The new restriction is the result of an effort by a new property owner to put a stop to illegal ATV and off-road pickup use in this area and is not targeting hikers. The trails continue to be open for those on foot.

❖ Black Rock Parking Area

A new lot, accessed via Mineral Springs Road and purchased by the Trail Conference and Open Space Institute, is now available for use by TC members. It is behind a locked gate and a key is necessary. The key is available to TC members only by calling the TC office in advance during regular business hours to make arrangements for access.

Sterling Forest Trails Group Brings Diverse Users Together

On June 16, 2002, Sterling Forest State Park management called the first meeting of its Trails Work Group. This group's mission is to assist the agency in implementing the interim trails plan as well as developing the park's Comprehensive Trails Plan. An assessment team appointed at this meeting will be responsible for completing an inventory of trail features, such as trail grade, natural and cultural points of interest, problem areas etc. The team will likely follow up with a work-plan to bring the trails to a standard acceptable to the agency and to implement the interim trails plan.

At the initial meeting of the assessment group on July 23 a very diverse group of trail users, including representatives from the hiking community, equestrian groups, mountain biking groups, and others, came together to establish an assessment procedure that would be common to all users.

This procedure was fairly easy to agree on as it simply sets the standards for measuring and inventorying the existing features of a trail. It was agreed that the workplan would include specifications required for each designated trail use. If this is done with adequate attention to such details as soil type, slope, and vegetative cover, then the proper construction of any trail should become obvious.

This effort has already resulted in the first draft of a handbook for trail assessment that should be of help to anyone attempting this type of work and presents opportunities for much closer cooperative work with our agency partners and other trail user groups.

—Larry Wheelock,
Trails Director

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO HIKERS



Hundreds of volunteers from many lands and in all sizes helped build the Pochuck quagmire crossing.

Pochuck Crossing Dedication & Public Celebration

October 20
Celebrate completion of 15 years of work on one of the biggest AT projects ever. Contact the Trail Conference at 201-512-9348 for full details.

SOLO Wilderness First Aid Course Offered by AMC

Sun./Sun., Sept. 22 & 29 or
Sat./Sat., Oct. 26 & Nov. 2

SOLO Wilderness First Aid. Emergency medicine for those who travel where ambulances can't. A 16-hour course taught by volunteer AMC SOLO instructors. Location: Sterling Forest State Park, Tuxedo, NY. Price: \$30 members; \$95 non-members, payable to NY-NJ AMC. Fee includes course materials. Member cost does not include optional SOLO certification available for \$25 upon successful completion. Send check, address, phone, AMC membership number, e-mail address and SASE to R. Lori Baird, 33-09 31 Ave. Apt. 3H, Long Island City, NY 11106; 718-274-5173 (NCA 9:30 pm) email: lori.baird@verizon.net

Registration deadlines: September 18 for the September course; October 23 for the October/November course.

TRAIL CREW SCHEDULES



For the latest schedules, check <http://www.nynjtc.org/volunteers/trvlop.html#crew>.

For all trips bring work gloves, water, lunch, insect repellent. In some cases, tools are provided. Contact leaders in advance for meeting times and places. Volunteers must become members of the Conference to participate in these projects. A one-time "guest" participation is allowed, so bring your friends.

WEST JERSEY CREW

Leaders: David Day and Monica Resor
Phone: 732-937-9098
Email: westjerseycrew@trailstobuild.com
If possible, please notify the leaders that you are coming, so they will know how many people to plan work for.

Sept. 7 (Saturday), AT Pochuck Relocation. We will be continuing the "wrap-up" work: finalizing the carpentry, and installing anchors and tie-downs to "flood-proof" the boardwalk. Meeting time: 9:00 am. Meeting location: where the AT crosses Rt. 517 in Vernon. Heavy rain cancels.

Sept. 8 (Sunday), AT Pochuck Relocation. See above. Joint with North Jersey Crew.

Sept. 14 (Saturday), AT Pochuck Relocation. See Sept. 7.

Sept. 15 (Sunday), AT Pochuck Relocation. See Sept. 7.

Oct. 6 (Sunday), Mt. Tammany Trail, Worthington SP. We will be continuing (and hopefully completing) our work on the connector trail between the two Mt. Tammany trail-head parking lots. Meet 9:00 am in the DOT parking lot (the first

parking lot). Heavy rain cancels.

Nov. 9 (Saturday), Mt. Tammany Trail, Worthington SP. We will be continuing trail reconstruction/rehabilitation work on the Mt. Tammany (Red Dot) Trail in Worthington State Forest. Meet 9:00 a.m. in the Dunnfield Creek parking lot (the second parking lot).

NJ HIGHLANDS TRAIL CREW

Contact the leader for details, no more than one week before the scheduled work date.
Leader: Bob Moss, 973-743-5203

Sept. 15 (Sunday)

Sept. 29 (Sunday)

Oct. 13 (Sunday)

Oct. 27 (Sunday)

Nov. 10 (Sunday)

NORTH JERSEY

Leaders: Sandy Parr, 732-469-5109
Dick Warner, 201-327-4945

Second Sunday of each month. Tackle a variety of projects ranging from trail repair to bridge building in northern New Jersey.

EAST HUDSON CREW

Contact the leader for details. Train pickups can be arranged.
Leader: Walt Daniels, 914-245-1250, wdaniels@bestweb.net

WEST HUDSON

Crew Chief: Robert Marshall 914-737-4792, email rmarshall@webtv.net
Brian Buchbinder: 718-218-7563, email brian@grandrenovation.com
Chris Ezzo: 516-431-1148
Claudia Ganz: 212-633-1324, email ciganz@earthlink.net
Monica Resor: 732-937-9098, email adamant@trailstobuild.com

Sept. 12 (Thursday), Nurian Trail, Harriman S. P.; Bob Marshall

Sept. 14 (Saturday), Nurian Trail, Harriman S. P.; Bob Marshall

Sept. 15 (Sunday), Nurian Trail, Harriman S. P.; Chris Ezzo

Sept. 21 (Saturday), Southfields Furnace Loop, Sterling Forest S. P.; Claudia Ganz

Sept. 22 (Sunday), Southfields Furnace Loop, Sterling Forest S. P.; Chris Ezzo

Sept. 28 (Saturday), Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail at the Timp, Harriman S. P.; Monica Resor

Sept. 29 (Sunday), Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail at the Timp, Harriman S. P.; Monica Resor

Oct. 5 (Sunday), Buck Trail, Harriman S. P.; Bob Marshall

Oct. 12 (Saturday), Menomine Trail at Silvermine, Harriman S. P.; Claudia Ganz

Oct. 13 (Sunday), Menomine Trail at Silvermine, Harriman S. P.; Chris Ezzo

Oct. 17 (Thursday), Popolopen Gorge Trail, Bear Mt. S. P.; Bob Marshall

Oct. 20 (Sunday), Popolopen Gorge Trail, Bear Mt. S. P.; Bob Marshall

Nov. 2 (Saturday), Seven Hills Trail, Harriman S. P.; Chris Ezzo

Nov. 3 (Sunday), Seven Hills Trail, Harriman S. P.; Chris Ezzo

Nov. 10 (Sunday), TO BE ANNOUNCED, Harriman S. P.; Brian Buchbinder

Nov. 14 (Thursday), TO BE ANNOUNCED, Harriman S. P.; Bob Marshall

Nov. 17 (Sunday), TO BE ANNOUNCED, Harriman S. P.; Brian Buchbinder

Nov. 24 (Sunday), TO BE ANNOUNCED, Harriman S. P.; Bob Marshall

APPALACHIAN TC MID-ATLANTIC

The Crew will be in New York September 26-30 relocating the AT off of Perkins Drive in Bear Mountain State Park. A Women's Crew will be working October 17-21, either on the relocation project or on the AT above Dunnfield Creek in Worthington S. P. in New Jersey. Local volunteers are welcome to join either of these crews.

Contact: Larry Wheelock, Trails Director, NY-NJ Trail Conference, 156 Ramapo Valley Road, Mahwah, NJ 07430-1199; telephone 201-512-9348; email wheelock@nynjtc.org.

So That Future Generations May Have Trails to Hike

GIFT ANNUITY PROGRAM NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE

The Trail Conference now accepts charitable gift annuities, and long-time member, hiker, and former Board member Bob Newton has become the first contributor.

Through his gift, Bob and his wife, Alma, have become charter members of the new planned giving program of the Trail Conference. By making an irrevocable gift of at least \$5,000 for a charitable gift annuity, Bob and Alma will receive a guaranteed payout rate of 6.7 percent for their lifetime from the Trail Conference. From their gift of cash, some of the payment will be taxable and some will be a tax-free return of principal. And, they also receive an immediate income tax deduction from their gift.

Bob readily admits to his life-long interest in hiking, and he has always enjoyed supporting the Conference's remarkable success in trail building and trail land protection. Bob and Alma want to ensure the continued progress of the Trail Conference in extending the 1500 miles of hiking trails along a corridor of 100,000 acres in the bi-state region.

Bob says, "Our gifts are for future hikers. We want to be sure that more lands are protected to build more hiking trails. Hiking nurtures our physical and mental health, which we need more of in the stress-filled sprawling urban areas in the New

York metropolitan area. The Trail Conference has been the pre-eminent organization in protecting lands for hiking in the bi-state region, and I want to support that for the future."

Bob emphasizes, "The charitable gift annuity is an investment in the future work of the Trail Conference. Gift annuities are not a financial investment, though the guaranteed payment and the tax deduction may provide incentives for some people."

The Trail Conference adheres to annuity rates recommended by the nonprofit American Council on Gift Annuities, which

SAMPLE RATES TO ANNUITANTS			
Single Beneficiary		Two Beneficiaries	
Age	Rate	Ages	Rate
65	6.7%	65/65	6.3%
70	7.2%	70/70	6.6%
75	7.9%	75/75	7.0%
80	8.9%	80/80	7.7%
85	10.4%	85/85	8.7%
90	12.0%	90/90	10.2%

has been recommending rates for 75 years. The rates are actuarially-based, gender-neutral IRS tables, and meet the standards of the Departments of Insurance of both New York and New Jersey.

If you want to know about the charitable gift annuity with the Trail Conference, contact the Conference office for a Disclosure Statement. To receive information and calculations specific to you, please provide your date of birth or that of you and your spouse, and indicate if your gift will be cash or stocks.

Send your inquiry to the attention of Maureen Walsh.

Put your skills and time where your heart is, and work with people who share your passion for the outdoors. Opportunities abound with the Trail Conference. Contact Volunteer Projects Director Joshua Erdsneker at 201-512-9348 or josh@nynjtc.org (or alternative listed contact) for information or to apply for any of the following positions or to offer your talents to the TC.

CLIPPING FILE HELP

Assist the Trail Conference without leaving your home. Volunteers are needed to collect articles related to the TC from their local daily and weekly newspapers. All you need to do is read your daily newspaper, cut out any articles that mention the TC, and mail them to our office. It's that simple.

MINUTE TAKERS

Would you like to get more involved with the Trail Conference without heading into the woods? The Trail Conference needs volunteers to attend official TC meetings such as Trails Council meetings, Delegates meetings, and the Annual Meeting to record the official minutes. On average, meetings are three to four hours long. While attending these meetings, you will learn more about TC issues and have a chance to meet your fellow TC members/volunteers.

YOU CAN ADOPT YOUR OWN SECTION OF TRAIL

As the number of trail miles maintained by the TC continues to grow, the need for additional maintainers has become ever apparent. Join our current maintainers in their efforts to provide the public with the best hiking trails around. All that is needed is the willingness to volunteer two or three days a year. Training sessions and maintenance manuals are available for first-time maintainers.

We have trails in northeastern New Jersey, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area, and Harriman State Park that need you. Adopt a section of trail with a friend or family members and be rewarded with the satisfaction of helping to preserve one of our greatest recreational assets, our trail network. Opportunities exist that are accessible via public transportation.

NATIONAL TREASURE NEEDS YOU

The nation's greatest historic footpath needs

a highly motivated volunteer to coordinate and manage the men and women who maintain the Appalachian Trail in New Jersey. The NJ Appalachian Trail Chair position needs immediate filling. Qualified candidates need to be well organized, detail oriented, good communicators, and have a passion for the AT. Be a part of the team that maintains one of the most diverse and intriguing sections of the Appalachian Trail. If you are interested in this position, please contact Larry Wheelock at 201-512-9348 or wheelock@nynjtc.org.

GENERAL OFFICE HELP

Looking for something new to do? Why not visit the Trail Conference office once a week and volunteer to spend a few hours with us. We can use your help! The Trail Conference has a wide variety of tasks that could use your expertise; from organizing mailings, answering phone calls, working on special projects, and many more exciting challenges. Make new friends or join current ones at the TC office for a few hours.

BITS AND BYTES

If you are familiar with MS Windows 2000 OS, business application software, anti-virus software, loading and installing software, and other general technical support duties, then we have a job for you. Volunteers are needed to be responsible for the routine maintenance of the TC office desktop computers. Be rewarded by making new friends, solving challenging problems, and contributing to the TC team.

WAWAYANDA AND YOU!

Are you interested in enhancing the hiking opportunities in Wawayanda State Park in New Jersey? The Wawayanda Supervisor will be the TC liaison to trail maintainers and park managers, and will help solve trail issues and problems in the park.

This position offers significant influence on a regional system of trails, a satisfying reward for a fairly large time commitment. If you are well organized, a good listener, detail oriented, and willing to learn, contact Larry Wheelock at 201-512-9348 or wheelock@nynjtc.org.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS/ BULK MAIL GURU

The TC seeks a detail oriented volunteer to coordinate the membership renewal process. Someone who knows or wants to learn the wonderful world of bulk mail would love this job! The job would require a few days a month to coordinate the preparation of 500+ renewal notices and bulk mail sorting. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Maureen Walsh at the TC office at 201-512-9348 or walsh@nynjtc.org.

TRAIL WALKER ADVERTISING MANAGER

We are looking for a volunteer advertising manager for *Trail Walker*. Responsibilities include soliciting new advertisers and managing communication between *TW* staff and our current advertisers. Interested volunteers should be comfortable working with deadlines, have good people skills, and be familiar with desktop publishing. Previous advertising and sales experience is not necessary, but helpful. Please contact Maureen Walsh at the TC office at 201-512-9348 or walsh@nynjtc.org for more information.

ADVOCACY & CONSERVATION

Sterling Land, Programs Expand

An innovative use of \$3 million in criminal environmental fines has led to the protection of 145 more acres of Arrow Park and funding for the acquisition of the 480-acre adjacent Indian Hill tract. Both parcels will be conveyed to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission to expand Sterling Forest.

The Trail Conference has been a partner in the first 80-acre easement phase of protecting Arrow Park and Lake, a 477-acre tract of land just north of Sterling Forest, the Doris Duke Sanctuary, and the Little Dam Lake section of the Appalachian Trail. The remaining 252 acres are

subject to current negotiations, with the Orange County Land Trust playing a major role.

Former Conference Executive Director JoAnn Dolan and her husband Paul Dolan have been working closely with PIPC and others on the project.

In addition, an extraordinary use of the Arrow Park land is underway funded by the Variety Children's fund and anonymous donors. The program includes:

1. A five-day program for children whose firefighter fathers were killed in the World Trade Center attack.

2. A five-day program for children of war from Sierra Leone, Africa.

3. A special one-day program for children from Northern Ireland.

4. A five-day program with the Pediatric Bereavement Project of Calvary Hospital that included children whose parents were killed in the terrorist attack on 9/11 and children who lost parents or loved one from other tragedies.

5. A family day for Ground Zero recovery volunteers from the fire department and their families, most of whom were from Orange and Rockland Counties

■ *Keep up with the latest conservation and advocacy news for hikers at www.nynjtc.org.*

continued from page 1

families, and terrified tent occupants with night-time “sniff-outs.”

Fisher, who thru-hiked the AT in 2000 and is now in his second season monitoring trail activities as an AT Ridgerunner, says that though he has heard many bear tales, this year is the first in which he has

actually had to deal with “problem bears.”

“Generally,” he notes, “bears are a curiosity along the Appalachian Trail, one of the animals along with moose, deer, snakes, porcupines, raccoons, frogs, and birds, that all hikers want to see and hopefully get that once-in-a-lifetime picture to show the family back home.” But close encounters present risks for both humans and bears.

Al Ivaney, a biologist with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and spokesman for the state’s Department of Environmental Protection, agreed that most human-bear encounters in the state’s woods this season have occurred in Worthington State Forest. He also said that there have been twice as many home break-ins by bears this year as compared to last, and four times as many reported attempted break-ins.

Increasing bear populations are one factor for the step-up in the number of encounters, he said, but there are also indications that many of the species’ natural foods are dried up or in reduced amounts—a probable result of the ongoing drought. And the fall, he cautioned, could be even more stressful for bears. There are indications, he said, that this year’s acorn crop—an important food source—may be much reduced, a likely result

of the combined impacts of drought and gypsy moth devastation of oak trees.

Ridgerunner Fisher notes that food is almost always what brings bears and humans into close encounter. “When bears learn—and they will learn with one exposure—that humans are a source of food, either unintentionally (a kid leaves food in their backpack on the ground) or by design (a person throws part of their sandwich at the cute bear over there at the edge of the woods), then there is a ‘problem bear’—or is it a ‘problem human?’ Oh well, no matter, the bear will take the rap.”



DARYN KEHR

BEAR IN MIND

NJ Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and Garth Fisher offer these bear tips to hikers and campers:

- Do not feed bears, either unintentionally or intentionally.
- Normal trail noise will likely alert a bear to your presence and it will leave before you ever see it.
- Exercise caution in berry areas.
- Never approach a bear; observe it from a distance.
- Make a bear aware of your presence by clapping, singing, talking.
- If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact, back up slowly, and speak in a calm, assertive, and assuring voice.
- Hang your food and toiletries or use a bear box (remember to latch it).
- Do not throw your cooking pot leftovers into the woods.
- Clean up your camping area before you leave.

Additional tips and information about bears are available at www.njfishandwildlife.com.

A Quiet Walk to a Rattling Experience

by Betsy Thomason

Harriman State Park is a mere 30 minutes from my home. I go there often to take a break in the shade of the forest. One day, I went for that reason, but also to discover where the berries are abundant. In the coming week, I would be leading two groups in search of blueberries. I thought I should have some idea of where to go and not leave everything to serendipity.

So, on a moderately hot summer morning, I went off to explore, starting at Anthony Wayne Recreation Area just south of Bear Mountain, within earshot of the Palisades Interstate Parkway. In the spring, I’d seen some lovely high-bush blueberry bushes in full bloom and now I wanted to verify

that the fruit was plentiful. This area is ideal for picking because the terrain is gentle, with old woods roads crisscrossing numerous marked footpaths, including the Appalachian Trail. Thus, a lot of energy is not needed to reap a good harvest, especially important on a hot summer day.

I walked south on a shaded forest trail, marked with blue dots, crossing a meandering stream several times on little board bridges, then up a grade to Beechy Bottom Road. Just a short distance further, at the junction of the 1779 Trail, is the place that I expected a cache of blues.

Was I disappointed! Not one berry.

I knew of another location on the west side of the Palisades Parkway, so I crossed over. In 10 minutes I was there and out of range of the parkway noise. Again, not a blueberry to be found, though a few ripe blackberries lured me through a maze of downed trees and sticker bushes. An old woods road that I’d noticed in the spring and had placed on my list for future exploration took me further. I was off, walking in the rut of the grassy road as it curved around a swamp full of phragmites shaking their fronds in the gentle breeze.

The road turned south under a canopy of chestnut oaks, and I found a sprig of wine berries, growing out of an old stone wall, loaded with sticky, ripe, reddish-orange berries. Quickly my bucket was half full. I continued south along the shaded road. To my right, the hillside was a mass of boulders with sturdy trees growing out of them. To my left, the land sloped down to the swamp, which was bathed in full sun. Shortly, through the canopy of trees, I saw a pond, the outflow of the swamp. The road ended at a circle where a previous visitor had built a fire. Small piles of

old concrete chunks marked the path towards the water’s edge. Draped over this barrier were blackberry bushes laden with thumb-size berries. Along the dry dirt margin of the pond sprawled enough ripe thumb-size blackberries to win a prize at any state fair. I was in berry heaven.

I filled my quart bucket, then a small, plastic bag. I began my walk back, and noticed that the hillside I had passed earlier was covered in knee-high blueberry bushes. They had been the subject of my search, so I started up the hill—through the shrubs, over logs—picking and eating. I spotted another sprig of my favorite wine berries. As berries melted in my mouth I heard rustling in the bushes. The sound came and went. I moved on toward a rocky outcrop.

From this island in the midst of acres of low blueberry bushes in a forest that had recently been burned, I again heard rustling. I took three steps forward to get a better look at the white striped thing I saw 20 feet away in the blueberries. My mind confirmed that a skunk might indeed like blueberries. I stopped. The skunk kept falling over. The white line was crooked. The rattle sent me back three paces.

Two rattlers cavorting, entwining themselves vertically, their heads visible at the tops of the knee-high bushes. Then they’d crash to the ground and start entwining upwards again—a classic snake dance. I’ve seen rattlers—some coiled, some in bushes or wrapped around a tree, a lone one slithering across a rock to the safety of a crevice—but in 30 years of wilderness travel I’ve never seen anything quite like this.

I was entranced, glued to that rock. This was nature at its best. In 15 minutes they were done and disappeared.

Then reality—or was it imagination—struck. I had to return to the woods road, through acres and acres of knee-high blueberry bushes, with rattlers on my tail. This would not do. I needed a different picture. I called on my brain to give me more information about snakes. It told me that those were probably the only two rattlers in a square mile. Food isn’t plentiful enough to support dozens of snakes. They’re not lurking in every rock crevice. My decades of experience in Harriman Park told me this.

I took a deep breath and methodically placed one foot among the bushes. Then the other. Again and again. I looked for the occasional oasis of grass or rock or fallen tree where I could relax and gather strength. I forced myself to bend over and pick a few berries. Soon I was back at the road.

My search was over. I had my berries. And my serendipity.



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A Black Rock Oak Tree

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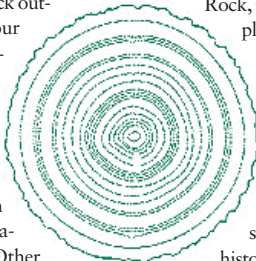
The year was 1713, twenty years before the birth of the father of our country. While native Americans freely roamed these woodlands, a tree was born in a remote forest wilderness that would someday be known as the Black Rock Forest. For the next three centuries, this white oak tree would reside next to a small vernal pool near a rock outcropping to be known in our time as Raup's Rock (elevation 1400 feet).

Today, the surrounding plant life of dense blueberry and mountain laurel is overtopped by yellow and black birch trees and dominated by mature red and black oaks. Other white oaks resembling the grandfather tree are also nearby.

Late in the second century of the oak's life, the creation of the Chatfield Trail gave nearby access to the tree. Miraculously spared by the saw, its straight-grained, slow-growing (24 years to the inch of ra-

dial growth) wood was never considered for use as furniture, flooring, ship-building stock, or charcoal or firewood.

The tree dropped its leaves for the final time during the drought of 1999. No sign of leaf-out was observed for the next two growing seasons. On a hunch that it may have been the oldest living tree in Black Rock, the tree was cut down to explore its history in February 2002. Thin disks, known as "cookies," were cut from the base of the tree.



First observations revealed the rosy pink springwood highlighting dense brown tree rings. Respectfully counting the rings, history becomes visible. First the tree's age is revealed, 287 years; then a scar from 1806 indicates the only remaining evidence from a long-past forest fire in these mountains. Further observation reveals growth trends related to climate extremes. A drought in the late 1790s, seen as thin crowded lines, describes the condi-

tions before the fire of 1806. The lush years from 1730 to 1750 can be seen as the greatest decades of growth, and the drought years of the 1960s as one of the worst.

While recording volumes of information annually for nearly three centuries, this tree has most importantly provided food and shelter for countless forms of life. This one tree, over its lifetime, may have produced one-half million acorns or more, creating an immense potential for future forests and acorn-eating animals.

This tree, a sentinel to time, witnessed every sunrise and sunset for 287 years. Every year of its life can be read in its rings and releases the wisdom of the grandfather's spirit.

—John Brady

John Brady is forest manager at Black Rock Forest. This article is reprinted from the Black Rock Forest News with permission.

The Black Rock Forest Consortium is an alliance of public and private schools, colleges, universities, and scientific and cultural institutions engaged in research, education, and conservation in the 3785-acre Black Rock Forest in New York's Hudson Highlands. The Trail Conference is a member organization.

Hunting Seasons

New York and New Jersey have announced their hunting schedules for large game and times when firearms are permitted. Hikers are strongly urged to wear safety orange clothing during these times. Dates listed are inclusive.

NEW YORK Southern Zone (including Catskills)

DEER SEASON

Archery: Oct. 15–Nov. 17; Dec. 11–15

Archery (Westchester Co. only): Nov. 1–Dec. 31

Firearms: Nov. 18–Dec. 10

Muzzleloader: Dec. 11–15

Hunting is not allowed in Bear Mountain-Harriman State Park. However, it is allowed in parts of Minnewaska and Sterling Forest State Parks. Call 845-786-2701 for more details about hunting in these parks. (As of the deadline for this newsletter, Storm King State Park is closed to all public use. Hunting is permitted in portions of the park when it is open to the public; call the above number for the latest status.)

Black Rock Forest closes to all hikers from Nov. 18 to Dec. 10, inclusive. For details, call 845-534-4517.

More information about New York's hunting schedules is available from the Department of Environmental Conservation at www.dec.state.ny.us.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey has very complicated hunting seasons that vary depending on location and kind of weapon permit. (Even the DEP spokesman in July was unsure whether the dates had received final approval.) It is recommended that hikers verify the dates for the location in which they are interested. Call 609-292-2965 or visit www.njfishandwildlife.com. The following dates for deer season were listed on the web site as of the deadline for this issue. There is no Sunday hunting.

DEER SEASON

Firearms: Dec. 9-14

Shotgun: Nov. 25, 26, 27, and 29; Dec. 9-14; Dec. 18-20; Jan. 4-31, 2003; and Feb. 1-15, 2003.

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ECOLOGY FOR HIKERS

Gypsy Moths in Our Forests

By Joan G. Ehrenfeld

Hiking on 90 degree summer days is hot work, but normally the shade of the forest makes it tolerable, if not absolutely cool. In northeastern New Jersey and adjacent New York, however, this year the forest provides less shade than might be expected: gypsy moth larvae have been at work, and large patches of forest are defoliated.

Gypsy moths, insects belonging to the order Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), are native to a large portion of Europe and Asia, where they live on oaks and other trees in forests that are similar to the deciduous forests of our region. In its native range, predators and parasites keep the insect's populations down, preventing it from causing the large-scale damage that it causes here.



The gypsy moth arrived on this continent in 1868 or 1869, when the Frenchman E. Leopold Trouvelot brought some egg cases from France to Boston, with the idea of crossing the gypsy moth with silkworms. That experiment failed, and Trouvelot turned from entomology to astronomy (eventually gaining a position at Harvard University in this field). But the moths he had reared escaped his backyard and by 1890 had become sufficiently widespread and damaging to stimulate control efforts by the government.

Life Cycle

Gypsy moths hatch in early spring from woolly egg cases that are laid on the trunks of trees during the previous summer; dozens of larvae emerge from each egg case. The larvae suspend themselves from silken threads, which allows the wind to disperse them widely. During the next two months, the larvae molt five or six times as they feed on young, growing leaves, which have more nutrients and fewer defensive chemicals than do older leaves. By the end of June, the caterpillars pupate; the dark brown smooth pupal cases can be seen adhering to the sides of the trees. The adult moths emerge by early July. The female does not fly; she emits a chemical attractant (termed a "pheromone"), and waits for a male to find her. After she has mated, she lays a single egg mass covered with hairs on the trunk of the tree.

A Taste for Oaks

Gypsy moths particularly like to eat oaks—white, red, black, chestnut, and others—but they also munch on sweetgums, aspens, and larches. The high percentage of oaks in our forests thus make them quite susceptible to gypsy moth damage.

Defoliation occurs in waves—several years of widespread, severe damage are usually followed by several years of low defoliation. During 1997-1999, for example, fewer than 2,000 acres were defoliated by gypsy moths in New Jersey each

year; but in both 2000 and 2001, more than 130,000 acres were affected. This year, about 42,000 acres have been conspicuously damaged. While defoliation alone usually does not kill trees, the combination of defoliation with other stressors, such as drought, air pollution, or other pests or diseases, will do so, especially the trees growing on ridgetops with shallow soils. Patches of dead trees, resulting from last year's drought plus defoliation, are conspicuous in the northeastern forests.

These cycles of damage result, in part, from complex interactions with predators and pathogens. The white-footed mouse and other small mammals are important predators of gypsy moths: when oaks produce large crops of acorns, mouse populations increase, and gypsy moth populations decrease during the following years, and vice versa. A naturally-occurring viral disease, and, most significant, an introduced fungal pathogen, appear to be most important in controlling the size of gypsy moth populations.

Gypsy moths continue to spread out from the northeast, at a rate of about 21 kilometers (14 miles) per year. While researchers are developing programs to try to slow the spread of the moth, they also recognize that the gypsy moth is here to stay. In time, it will likely be found in all the oak-dominated forests of the country.

Joan G. Ehrenfeld is a professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources, Cook College, Rutgers University. She chairs the Science Advisory Committee of the Trail Conference.

Thanks for . . . National Trails Day Support



erected posts through a large open field for trail markers so that the trail could be routed this way. Others cleared the way for a native plant garden. A good time was had by all 45 participants.

—Bob Ward, Chairman
Metro Area Trails Committee

. . . and for Outreach Collaboration

The Trail Conference would like to thank Tent City/Hempstead Outdoor store for a successful outreach event. On July 19 and 20 the Trail Conference provided informational handouts to store customers and signed up several new members.

“The majority of the store customers were unaware of the Trail Conference’s role in maintaining hiking trails in places like Harriman and the Catskills. This event gave us the opportunity to educate and promote ourselves to the hiking community of Long Island,” said Josh Erdsneker, TC Volunteer Projects Director. Keep an eye out in the *Trail Walker* for future outreach events in your neighborhood.

The Metro Area Trails Committee would like to thank Goldman, Sachs Community Team Works for their generous support, both monetarily and physically, of our trail maintenance in the Staten Island Greenbelt on June 1, National Trails Day. With their help we were able to field four teams that worked on clearing the brush on parts of different trails in the Greenbelt. With technical assistance from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, a new foot bridge was placed across a stream on the La Tourette (Yellow) Trail. Some of the personnel

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For confidential information and legal language, contact the Trail Conference at 201-512-9348, or by email: info@nynjtc.org.

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HIKERS' BOOKSHOP



Hiking Long Island: A Comprehensive Guide to Parks and Trails

By Lee McAllister
New York-New Jersey Trail Conference,
2001
Reviewed by Russell J. Cannizzaro

While hiking in Caumsett State Park in Suffolk County some years ago, my family and I spotted a red fox. Moments later, our excitement more than tripled when we saw three baby foxes looking straight at us from a ditch. In his new book, *Hiking Long Island*, Lee McAllister examines the many hiking locations amid the island's extensive development where the observant walker may encounter such natural delights.

Part one of the book is context. There is excellent basic advice to hikers on planning, equipment, clothing, and supplies. The author offers information on the geology, flora, and fauna of the island. (Here I learned that the fox is the largest mammalian predator on Long Island.) Next is a short history of Long Island, from the native Indian tribes through the development of Levittown.

In part two, McAllister gives detailed descriptions of trails and preserves in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The descrip-

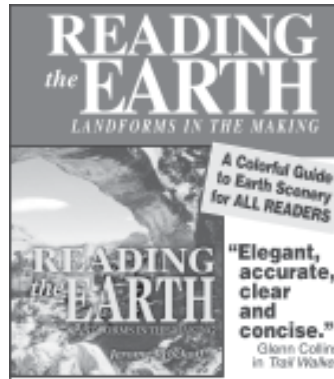
tions are interesting and include maps and details on car and mass transportation to trailheads. The three major long-distance trails on Long Island—Nassau-Suffolk Greenbelt Trail, Long Island Greenbelt Trail, and the Paumanok Path—are fully described. In addition, he covers many of Long Island's parks and preserves, which, though they may not have marked trail systems, present many opportunities for enjoyable walks.

McAllister also discusses issues that affect hiking on the island, such as the impacts of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), motor bikes, mountain bikes, and horseback riding, and recent efforts to conserve land.

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FAVORITE HIKES



Ashokan High Point



Map 43 (Southern Catskill Trails) in the TC Catskill Forest Preserve map series, 2001
Coordinates: K8/L8
Hiker: Katie Rottmann with Georgette Weir

Just south of the very popular Slide Mountain Wilderness Area in the Catskill Mountains, is the 27,214-acre Sundown Wild Forest, where stands Ashokan High Point. (It is indicated simply as High Point on the Trail Conference map). At 3080 feet, Ashokan High Point is often over-

looked by hikers, who typically set their sights on the 3500-foot peaks further north. But High Point and a knob below it offer several spectacular viewpoints, including unobstructed views south to the Shawangunk Ridge, the Highlands, and Schunemunk Mountain; northeast to the Ashokan Reservoir; west to little (2600) but lovely Mombaccus Mountain; and north to the Burroughs Range, where peakbaggers roam.

High Point's lower knob also features the delights of an extensive blueberry moor dotted with mountain laurel. Depending on one's timing, one might emerge from

the woods of the notch into the blooms of laurel (late June/early July), the bounty of blueberries (mid July), or the fire-colored brilliance of blueberry foliage in autumn. At any time, the views from the knob are magnificent and well worth the additional up-and-down from the summit.

Despite its modest height and the fact that it is not a difficult hike, Ashokan High Point offers a respectable workout: the elevation gain from the trailhead is more than 1800 feet; and if one walks the entire red-blazed lollipop circuit and unblazed spur to the knob, the distance covered is nearly 9 miles. Much of the route is along old woods roads, and those who prefer a fairly easy but lovely woods walk might like to give the section just up to the notch a try (about 5 miles, round trip).

The Hike

The trail begins across the road from the parking area and follows an old woods road for about 2.5 miles to the notch between High Point and Mombaccus Mountain. (It is also marked as a cross-country ski trail.) The incline here is gentle, the forest a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees interspersed with fern glens, and the Kanope Brook is generally within sight and hearing. At the notch, turn sharply left (do not continue straight as the way descends onto private property).

Just a few hundred feet from the notch, the loop trail from the summit (red blaze) comes in from the left. Continue straight and more sharply up. In the approximately one mile from the notch to the summit, you will benefit on three or four short, steep climbs from some recent serious heavy-lifting stair-building by trail maintainers. Admire their work and give thanks.

At the summit, the unmarked trail to the knob can be located either by descend-

ing through the crack in the table rock at the viewpoint and heading generally southeast, or via a trail (not the one blazed red) that leaves the northeast corner of the summit clearing. Once found, the herd path is easy to follow; it is about .25 mile to the knob.

Return from the knob the same way, and locate the red-blazed trail heading northwest. You shortly come to a little spur that offers a view west to Mombaccus. Back on the red trail, about .25 mile from the summit, you will arrive at a series of small meadows and wonderful views north to the Slide Mountain Wilderness peaks.

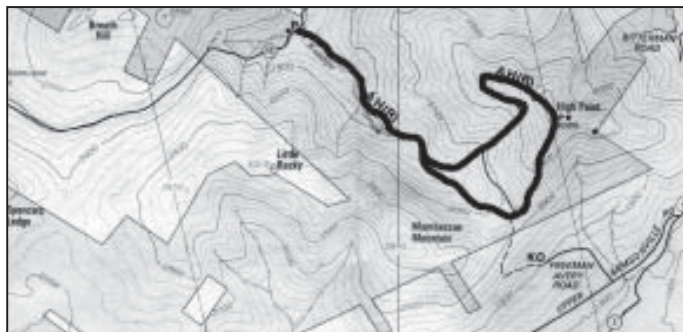
From here, this section of the loop retains some characteristics and occasional confusions of a seldom-used herd path, though a red blaze can almost always be spotted. The trail also includes one fairly long, steep, eroded, and unpleasant rocky stretch. However, this part of the loop also has its attractions: there are lovely, level walks through laurel, and rumors of an unfortunate airplane along the trail draw one's attention repeatedly into the woods. Complete the loop or retrace your steps. Either way, you've already enjoyed one of the nicest hikes in the Catskills.

To Get There

From the traffic circle at the Kingston exit on the NYS Thruway: Go north on Route 28; at 16 miles turn left onto Route 28A; at 2.7 miles turn right onto County Rt. 42 (Peekamoose Road, though no sign indicates this name); at 3.9 miles turn right into Kanope Brook parking area.

Share Your Favorite Hike

Either write up a description yourself, or invite the Trail Walker editor to join you. Email Georgette Weir at geweir@att.net or call 845-462-0142.



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