



85th YEAR

TRAIL WALKER

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE — MAINTAINING OVER 1,600 MILES OF FOOT TRAILS

JULY/AUGUST 2005

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Next Great Leaders

Who among us can take on one project at time and see it through to the end? Most of us!

By Josh Erdsneker
Volunteer Projects Director

State-wide budget problems and limited resources are challenging recreational land managers and conservationists alike in New York and New Jersey. Consequently, the Trail Conference is being asked to do more than ever before. Is the Trail Conference prepared to accept these new challenges and will we still be able to provide the hiking community with the same services that we have offered for the last 85 years?

My first reaction is, yes, our volunteers can do anything they put their minds to. Last year we built a 63' bridge over the Popolopen Creek. The mileage of trails we maintain has grown steadily over the past five years to more than 1,600 miles. We are the leading publisher of hiking guidebooks and maps in the region. We successfully advocated for the reopening of Storm King State Park. Just pick up a copy of the *Trail Walker* and you'll be able to read about our successes. With the support of 1,200 recorded volunteers in 2004, the Trail Conference accomplished more than ever before. Individuals, couples, families, and our member clubs have all made contributions to our success.

In the past three years, I have met hundreds of these volunteers. None of

them considers him- or herself extraordinary or special, but I beg to differ. Whether I'm out with a trail crew, on the phone with a member of the board of directors, emailing a publication volunteer, or even bumping into a maintainer while s/he is out on a work trip, I have noticed they all share a deep sense of pride and commitment when they contribute to the Trail Conference. Some can't say no: one is currently a map project manager, map field checker and GPSer, office volunteer, trail maintainer, trail crew member, NJ Highlands advocate, member of the Sterling Forest Working Group, trail layout and designer, and delegate-at-large. And others won't say quit, such as the volunteer who has maintained a trail for 26 years.

Trail Conference volunteers are passion-



PAUL MAKUS

Commitment, passion, stamina: TC volunteers have leadership qualities in spades.

ate, extraordinary people. Right now, we need more people who are passionate and committed to trails to become our volunteer leaders. To state the obvious, without volunteer leaders, we would be hamstrung.

Each of our maps and guidebooks needs a dedicated project manager to oversee its production. Our trail committees need supervisors to manage specific areas of trails. Volunteers are needed to coordinate our training efforts. The hiking community needs to organize its efforts to tell developers and elected officials how we feel about proposals that threaten our trail

lands. Our advocacy committee needs leaders to spearhead the effort to address illegal ORV usage. We need volunteers to take on one project at time and see it through to the end.

With new project management tools to be developed, an increased number of workshops, specialized training for hi-tech work, and advanced trail building and design workshops, a wide range of supported, volunteer opportunities is available; it's never been easier to get involved.

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Order Updated North Jersey And Kittatinny Maps Today

The Trail Conference Publications Committee has just concluded its busiest map-making season ever. Four updated maps sets have been published so far this year: the brand-new digital edition of the Shawangunks, the updated digital Sterling Forest map (both announced in the May/April *Trail Walker*), and now updated analog versions of the North Jersey and Kittatinny maps.



Although the previous edition of the North Jersey map set was published only three years ago, many changes have taken place to the trails in the area, and the 2002 edition of Map #22 had become obsolete. The new edition includes the expanded network of trails in the area of Camp Glen Gray, which has been acquired by Bergen County. It also shows the new Hasenclever Iron Trail and Will Monroe Loop, as well as the new trail designations in the Wyanokies. The new edition of the Kittatinny Trails map set includes several new trails and relocations of existing trails.

Thanks go to the many hard working and diligent volunteers who helped see these projects through to their successful completion by taking on the jobs of map manager, map back editor, layout artist, field coordinator, field checker, and cartographer. New volunteers are welcome for upcoming projects; support and guidance are provided. Please contact Josh Erdsneker at 201-512-9348, ext. 25 or josh@nynjtc.org for information.

Trail Conference Sends Crews into the Woods for 13 National Trails Day Events

Please turn to page 5 for photo gallery of the day.



VOLUME XXXII, NUMBER 4

ISSN 0749-1352

PERMIT #970-100

The TRAIL WALKER (USPS Permit #970-100) (ISSN 0749-1352) is published bi-monthly by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference as a benefit of membership. Subscriptions are available to libraries only at \$15.00 a year. Periodical postage paid at Mahwah, N.J., and additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to the address below. Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily represent the policy or position of the Conference. Contributions of typed manuscripts, photos, and drawings are welcome. Manuscripts may be edited for style and length. Send SASE for writers' guidelines. Submission deadlines for the TRAIL WALKER are January 15 (Mar./Apr. issue), March 15 (May/June issue), May 15 (July/Aug. issue), July 15 (Sept./Oct. issue), September 15 (Nov./Dec. issue), November 15 (Jan./Feb. issue). Unsolicited contributions cannot be acknowledged unless accompanied by SASE. For information on advertising rates, please write or call.

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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 advocacy and acquisition.
- Educating the public in the responsible use of trails and the natural environment.

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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 92 hiking and outdoor groups, and 9,200 individuals.

FROM THE CHAIR

Trails to Friendship

About 10 years ago I would listen in awe to then president of the Trail Conference Neil Zimmerman and his tales of hiking adventures with friends. Thinking he was quite fortunate, I asked if he had any friends who did not hike. His reply that all his friends hiked surprised me. But then he went on to say that because he hiked so much, in time his non-hiking friends gradually drifted away. I had not really thought much about his remark until recently.

While out hiking the Appalachian Trail in southwest Virginia, I had opportunities to talk to a variety of hikers, primarily the thru hikers as they headed north. In many cases, they were people who had decided to make a life change and were using the

AT as an agent of change. During these conversations, many told me that their families and friends could not understand why they were spending time hiking. Some of them expressed the wish to know others who hiked.

Finding others who have similar interests is possible and not too hard. In fact, these walkers were already making friends with their fellow hikers. What they did not know was that meeting people who volunteer to make hiking possible and volunteering themselves are even better ways to make friends. And you don't have to thru-hike the AT to find either. In this area, the Trail Conference and its member clubs offer ample opportunities for both.

Hiking changed my life, and the best of

the changes are the friendships I have formed. I cannot truly say that all of my friends hike. But I can say that my closest friendships have formed as a result of volunteering for the Trail Conference.

So think about joining a trail crew or volunteering to help on a Trail Conference project, whether long or short term. There are ways to discover others with the same interests and join what I consider to be a wonderful community. The volunteer ads in the *Trail Walker* are a great place to start. You'll quickly learn that hikers don't care what you do at a day job, just that you enjoy the outdoors on your feet!

—Jane Daniels, Chair, Board of Directors

Letters

That Reminds Me...

The article by Faith W. Eckler (May/June *Trail Walker*, p. 10) brought back vivid memories of Bill Hoeflerlin and Oton Ambroz. Over the years I hiked nearly every foot of trails on Bill's maps, and sent him many corrections. I once ordered a complete set of his maps, and he delivered my "big order" in person, all of \$11 worth, since he charged only a few cents for each map.

Oton Ambroz was an exuberant, super-self-confident leader. His belief in his infallibility caused some amusing problems. I once joined Oton on the Garret Mountain Trail on a foggy day. He counted the group frequently. At the end of the hike, a police car drove up and one of the officers said, "We found two lost hikers. Did you lose any?" Oton instantly said, "Oh, no! I never lose anybody." The police drove off and then Oton and another driver discovered their passengers were

missing. Two ladies got lost in the fog without Oton noticing. They got a lift from the police to a diner, where one of them called her husband to pick them up. Oton's passenger was his neighbor, who gave him an earful or two when he got home!

—Richard H. Tourin
Flushing, NY

The writer is past president of the College Alumni Hiking Club and past chair of the Knickerbocker Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Thanks for Great AT

My best friend and I have been section hiking the AT for 10 years. We leave our husbands and children and "walk our dogs" for days on end.

Our hike in New Jersey [the first week of May] was the most wonderful surprise. The trail was very well marked. The shelters were great. All of the park employees we encountered were wonderful. Great Job!

Special thanks to Desperado!
—Brigid Demand
Sandy Hook, CT

Support NY ATV Plan

The DEC must stand by its ATV plan (see story on page 3) and emphasize that \$25 ATV fees must be used primarily for enforcement and education. There must be qualified hard trails only and no soft ATV trails in any public forest. Also any ATV trail must await the completion or modification of a Unit Management Plan like any other trail. All public forests must be protected from ATV damage, not just Forest Preserve.

The ATV riders make it very difficult for anyone to support them. They will not even yield some smaller issues to win their most important one—TRAILS. The registration fee was argued down from \$45 to only \$25 and they won't give up the winch or agree to smoother tire treads. Also notice the ATV tires are exempt from the environmental disposal tax everyone else pays. Speed takes priority over pollution, noise, and safety. The ATV riders demand everything.

While ATV rider clubs intend to pay only \$25 registration per vehicle and then leave the mess for others to clean up, other outdoor recreation groups such as hiking and conservation clubs have spent more than a century trying to give back, via volunteer work and funding, more than they have ever taken from our New York State forests.

The way for ATV clubs to get trails is by compromise, credibility, legitimacy, and an honest desire to keep our forests natural. Most ATV clubs don't get it.

—Bill Coffin
Chittenango, NY
NY-NJ TC, ADK, FLTC, and NCTA

Posted! Swapping Snake Stories

An exchange of recent posts on the NYNJTC online hiking forum, Viewpoint:

May 4, 2005

I just want to vouch for all those preservationists who argue that the remaining non-public, hole-in-the-doughnut area of Sterling Forest is a stronghold for the endangered timber rattlesnake. Recently while I was hiking, I encountered a huge (rather boa-like... "Really!") timber rattlesnake very near the area that may be developed. This encounter is the first time while I've been hiking that I have seen a rattler either north of Florida or east of the Mississippi River. That makes me a believer, although I never have had any doubts that all of Sterling Forest should be preserved.

May 16, 2005

Over the past two to three years, I have been seeing a lot more rattlesnakes in Harriman. I encountered about five last summer alone. I guess they are getting driven out. The biggest I have seen was about six to seven feet long and thicker than my arm (along with a rabbit or something in its belly). I have been getting paranoid about my dog getting bit by one, but besides that, they are cool to see.

Join the online hiking forum by going to www.nynjtc.org and clicking on "Viewpoint."

Visit Us Today! 
www.NYNJTC.org



From the Executive Director

TC Seeks Transfer of Protected Lands to New York State

As we go to press in June, we are working to transfer 923 acres of trail corridor that the Trail Conference has assembled on Shawangunk Ridge in Orange County and on Ginseng Ridge in Greene County to New York State's Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

The lands involved in this transfer protect sections of two of our major long distance trails, the Long Path in the Catskill Region and the Shawangunk Ridge Trail in the Shawangunk Mountains.

The Long Path assemblage is located on the Ginseng Ridge in Greene County, just north of the Catskill Park and will protect about 3.5 miles of existing and proposed new trail. The trail in this section passes along a continuation of the Catskill Escarpment, through deciduous woods, at elevations ranging from about 1,600 feet to 2,600 feet.

The newly protected lands in the Shawangunks are clustered in the towns of Mount Hope, Deerpark, and Greenville in Orange County and protect over 6.5 miles of existing and new trail.

The Mount Hope assemblage offers 360-degree views from the ridgetop, and features one of only two historic firetowers on the Shawangunk Ridge. The Greenville and Deerpark assemblage adds over 600 acres to the Huckleberry State Forest and includes a new connector trail from the Shawangunk Ridge Trail down into Port Jervis.



A view toward High Point in New Jersey from TC-protected Shawangunk Ridge lands.

Permanently protecting these ridge lands by putting them in NYDEC's hands is good news for several reasons:

1. Hikers and nature lovers of all stripes can enjoy the views from these majestic ridges without ever worrying about them being closed to the public, developed, or clear-cut.
2. Wildlife can continue to use them as dispersal and migration routes.
3. Watershed headlands and aquifer recharge areas will forever produce cool, clean water.
4. The scenic vistas these forested ridge lands present will be forever preserved for residents and visitors to the region.
5. The proceeds from the sale will immediately be put to work buying more threatened trail corridors.

In 2004, NYDEC purchased 905 acres that the Trail Conference helped assemble on the Shawangunk Ridge in Sullivan County. We are currently working closely with the Open Space Institute in assembling another 698 acres in this



Looking out from the TC-protected Long Path on the Ginseng Ridge.

area in our drive to permanently protect trail corridors throughout the region.

This work could not happen without the support of Governor Pataki, NYDEC, and the people of New York. In particular, I want to take this occasion to thank all those who have contributed to our Land Acquisition & Stewardship Fund, which has made this trail protection possible. Happy hiking; you deserve it!

—Ed Goodell

ADVOCACY & CONSERVATION

A Windfall for NJ State Parks?

New Jersey's state parks would get a \$75 million windfall under legislation acting Gov. Richard J. Codey introduced in May. The cash infusion to parks would represent the largest single investment in state parks in New Jersey history, according to a report by the Associated Press. The park money would go toward maintenance and repairs. Funds would come from loans that would be repaid with projected proceeds from the controversial state cigarette tax. The proposal was included in legislation that would fund a state center for stem cell research.

(Associated Press)

NY Budget Includes \$150 Million Environmental Protection Fund

The New York State Legislature approved a \$150 million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in April. The original budget approved by the legislature in March did not include an EPF. The Trail Conference-Adirondack Mountain Club Partnership worked closely with legislative leaders and the governor's office and successfully advocated that the EPF be approved as soon as possible.

The 2005-2006 EPF includes approximately \$70 million for open space projects broken down as follows: \$40 million for land acquisition projects; \$16 million for farmland preservation and \$14 million for local park grants. The EPF also includes \$6.5 million for state land stewardship, which provides critical funding for back-country trail maintenance and also funds the Summit Stewardship program.

(Neil Woodworth, Maria Iannacito: TC-ADK Partnership)

Camp Todd Becomes County Parkland

Camp Todd, a 73-acre parcel atop the Ramapo Mountain ridge line adjacent to Ramapo Mountain State Forest, was preserved in April thanks to a joint purchase by Bergen County and the state. The camp joins two other former boy scout camps, Tamarack and Glen Gray, as protected open space now owned by the county. The steeply sloping wooded property had been approved for a housing development by the local planning board in 2003.

(Bergen Record)

NY Announces Draft ATV Policy for Public Lands

In March, the NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released its long awaited, draft ATV use policy for public lands for public comment. The policy addresses guidelines for ATV use on Forest Preserve lands, conservation easement lands and state forests. The policy would prohibit ATV riding on Forest Preserve trails, a stand strongly endorsed by the Trail Conference (TC)-Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) Partnership.

The policy would not ban ATVs in state forests, although the designation of ATV trails would be subject to the unit management planning process and the SEQRA environmental review process. The TC-ADK Partnership has urged DEC not to designate ATV trails in state forests where a major non-motorized trail currently exists. For example, ATV riding should not be permitted in state forests containing portions of the Long Path.

The proposed policy gives DEC regulatory power over ATVs used in its

jurisdiction. TC-ADK recommend that DEC require ATVs to be equipped with: turf tires rather than tractor-type tires, appropriate muffler equipment to reduce noise, and four-stroke engines with catalytic converters to reduce air pollution emissions. DEC should also prohibit the use of winches on ATVs. ATV riders will often use winches to haul their ATV out of a mud hole when it gets stuck. The winch is fastened to a tree to help pull the ATV out of the rut. This causes significant environmental damage.



TC-ADK is also working with Assemblyman Morelle on his ATV Trail Development and Maintenance Fund legislation, which would provide funds for ATV trail development and maintenance on private or municipally owned lands. No funds would be used for ATV trail development on state-owned lands. The partnership is also working closely with Assembly staff on strengthening enforcement measures and increasing penalties for ATV trespass violations. The Trail Conference and ADK hope that a comprehensive ATV bill will be passed by the legislature and approved by the governor this year.

(Neil Woodworth, Maria Iannacito: TC-ADK Partnership)

House Bill Would "Zero Out" Land Conservation

In May, the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time voted to all but eliminate the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and to reduce by more than half funds for the Forest Legacy program. For the past 40 years LWCF been the nation's primary source of money to conserve land. Each year the fund is authorized to receive \$900 million in royalties from offshore oil and gas drilling. The Forest Legacy program provides money to states to help conserve privately owned forestlands threatened by development. The Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee was expected to take up this legislation sometime in early June.

(Wilderness Society)

NJ Green Acres Buying 6,000 Acres in South of State

The NJ DEP Green Acres program, with assistance from the Natural Land Trust and Nature Conservancy, is buying 6,000 acres of forest and wetlands from U.S. Silica, a sand-mining company with operations in southern New Jersey. Most of the land is in Cumberland County with other properties scattered among Atlantic, Gloucester, and Camden Counties. Much of the land is adjacent to other conservation properties, including the Peaslee Wildlife Management Area and the Edward G. Bevan Wildlife Management Area in Bear Swamp. The Bear Swamp parcel includes "one of the last remaining old growth forests in the state of New Jersey," according to Peter Williamson, Natural Land Trust's vice president for conservation.

(Press of Atlantic City)



