



« 2013 LOOK BACK 2014 LOOK AHEAD » REGION BY REGION REPORT

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2013 LOOK BACK

CATSKILLS

On National Trails Day, volunteers completed the first phase of the Kaaterskill Rail Trail, which has become an exceptionally popular hike. Between Phoenicia and the Burroughs Range Trail, we created 8 new miles of backcountry trail. In Platte Clove Preserve, volunteers constructed a 30' bridge for the Long Path. A roving Trail Crew was also launched.

We have increased resources in the Catskill Region by publishing five new brochures and maps for the restored Catskill Fire Towers. These brochures introduce visitors to hikes in the Catskills and to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

As co-chair of the Catskill Park Advisory Committee, the Trail Conference is tackling challenges and creating opportunities throughout the Catskills. We have advocated for DEC resources, provided volunteers to assist DEC staff, and developed new ways to expedite regional planning with the state.

EAST HUDSON

We launched the highly successful Breakneck Ridge Trail Stewards Program, which educated and assisted an average of 2,000 hikers per week. Volunteers adopted over 40 miles of new trails in areas including Pound Ridge Land Conservancy property, the Briarcliff-Peekskill Trailway, Westmoreland Sanctuary, Town of Lewisboro and Hilltop Hanover Farm. We also signed four new trail stewardship agreements and welcomed Dawson Smith as our new Metro Region Trails Chair.

The Invasives Strike Force increased the surveyors in the region by holding four training workshops and recruiting 31 new volunteers. Volunteers surveyed 49 miles of trails and removed invasives in two parks.

WEST HUDSON

On the Bear Mountain Trails Project we trained 134 attendees at 14 workshops and fielded 251 volunteers who contributed 6,264 hours of work completing a significant reroute of the Major Welch and 500 linear feet of the new, sustainable route for the Appalachian Trail on the Upper East Face.

Elsewhere in the park, volunteers reinforced the Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail by building stone steps and retaining walls, improved a water crossing on the 1779 Trail with stepping stones, and worked to restore the Welch Trail Education Center.

In Sterling Forest, we completed nearly a mile of improvements along the Doris Duke Trail. This trail provides a haven for hikers during hunting season, creates a scenic loop, and improves access to the A.T. and Highlands Trail. On the A.T. at Fitzgerald Falls, volunteers completed the stone staircase and installed stepping stones over the creek.

The Invasives Strike Force removed invasive species at Bear Mountain, Storm King, and High Tor State Parks. Many of the trails in Rockland County have been surveyed, and an additional 91 miles of trails were surveyed in this region by 46 volunteers.



West Hudson Region: Volunteers participate in a side-hilling workshop on the Doris Duke Trail.

NEW JERSEY

Major on-the-ground improvements in New Jersey include a new entry trail at the Ramapo Reservation—built by our Bear Claw Crew and summer interns, along with high school students from Mahwah—and the repair of an eroded section of the Wanaque Ridge Trail in Ramapo Mountain State Forest, courtesy of the Jolly Rovers.

Collaboration between the Trail Conference, New Jersey DEP, the National Park Service, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy resulted in a tremendously successful Ridge Runner season on the A.T. in western New Jersey.

The Invasives Strike Force completed removal work along trails at Abram Hewitt State Forest, continued work at Norvin Green State Forest, Worthington State Forest and Flat Rock Brook Nature Center and began work at Ramapo Mountain State Forest and Ramapo County Reservation. In 2013, 39 additional volunteers were trained as surveyors; 49 volunteers surveyed over 121 miles of trail.

PUBLICATIONS

We produced revised editions of six map sets: West Hudson, Catskill, Harriman-Bear Mountain, Sterling Forest, Shawangunk, and North Jersey. Downloads of our digital maps through the PDF Maps smartphone app exceeded 15,000 in 2013, and our maps were made available to Android device users (previously Apple device users only). We produced a brand new book, "Hike of the Week", and began offering selected book titles in eBook format.

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CATSKILLS

In 2014, we will continue to increase our volunteer presence on the trails and in the communities of the Catskills. We are also working to expand membership here and secure major funding for the Catskills Trails Program.

On the ground, we will be building and rehabilitating trails, including a new section of the Long Path (opening on National Trails Day), relocating part of the Long Path through the Vernooy Kill Wild Forest, and constructing a bridge to allow the completion of Phase 2 of the Kaaterskill Rail Trail, which will connect the KRT directly to the trail system of the North-South Lake State Campground.

We will take a leadership role in building interpretive trails and several bridges at the Catskill Park Interpretive Center and will staff the center with experts who will provide information on Catskill tourism.

We will also launch the Willowemoc and Northern Catskills volunteer trail crews.

EAST HUDSON

In 2014, we will expand the successful Breakneck Ridge Trail Stewards Program to run from Memorial Day through Columbus Day. We will develop a dedicated East Hudson volunteer trail crew. Along the A.T., we have planned a major re-route and viewshed protection project. To correct erosion problems, stone steps will be constructed at Hudson Highlands State Park, Manitou Point Preserve and Van Cortlandt Park. New bridges are planned at Fahnestock and FDR Parks as well as at Camp Smith Preserve. Finally, we will add more “volunteer power” out on the trails by recruiting additional AT Corridor Monitors and trail maintainers.

Our Invasives Strike Force will continue training additional surveying volunteers and will focus on increasing the number of invasive removals completed in the region.

WEST HUDSON

In 2014, we will focus on securing the final \$1,000,000 needed to complete the Bear Mountain Trails Project. On-the-ground work includes completing another 700 linear feet of the Upper East Face, finalizing the design of the Trails for People Exhibit, and continuing restoration of the Welch Trail Education Center.

We will build a new volunteer crew at Sterling Forest to continue improving trail quality and serve the region between Harriman and the Gunks. In addition, we will expand and establish a formal leader for the successful West Hudson North Crew.

Our Invasives Strike Force will survey additional trails in Harriman State Park, Black Rock Forest and Sterling Forest and focus on increasing the number of invasive removals completed and volunteer trail crews held in the region.

NEW JERSEY

In 2014, we will complete the scenic boardwalk over Cedar Swamp in Wawayanda, complete the permitting process for the Long Pond Ironworks Bridge, form and deploy a Ramapo College Trail Crew, and improve trail quality statewide.

Our Invasives Strike Force will remove invasive plants along our trails, survey, plan and lead removal volunteer events as well as train additional volunteers. We will increase the number of advanced invasive species identification workshops so that many of our volunteers will learn additional invasive species to search for.

PUBLICATIONS

We will create an all-new, digitally-produced South Taconic map, along with revised editions of two other maps sets. We will begin producing handout maps for 16 northern New Jersey parks. Our goal is to increase Trail Conference awareness, membership, and publication sales.

Finally, we will produce updated versions of two popular books, “Walkable Westchester” and “Hiking Long Island,” continue making our books available in eBook format, and produce a brand new book, “Circuit Hikes in Harriman.”



Catskills Region: Breathtaking view from the new section of the Long Path on Romer Mountain.



East Hudson Region: Trail Steward, Kali Bird, orients hikers at Breakneck Ridge.



New Jersey Region: A bridge is replaced on the Appalachian Trail along the Pochuck Canal.

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