



# 2003-2004 ANNUAL REPORT

## A message from the chair and the executive director

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

- Develop, build, and maintain hiking trails.
- Protect hiking trail lands through conservation and advocacy.
- Educate the public about the responsible use of trails and the natural environment.



There is an Indian folk tale of six blind men who came upon an elephant. Each reached out, grasped what was near him, and described it to his companions. Thus to the one who felt the body, the elephant was massive as a wall. To the one at the tail, the elephant was a rope; the man at the trunk felt a snake; the sharp tusk was a spear; the ear, a fan; a leg was interpreted as a tree. Each man argued at length for his "vision" of the elephant, unable to convince any companion to change his view. None of them was totally correct, yet none of them was totally wrong.

So too, the Trail Conference is different things to different people. Initially members may know the organization through our books and maps, or through the discount they receive at select stores. They may know us through the trails we manage and maintain, or even the friends

they made as a result of volunteering. Over time, as they become familiar with different aspects of the Trail Conference, members realize there is more to the organization than initially met their eye; they consider the sum of the parts.

As you read in this Annual Report about what the Trail Conference has done in fiscal year 2004, think of the components that make up this organization: trails, conservation, advocacy, publications, science, and people—our volunteers and staff. They are all connected.

Trails are our core component; like the body of the elephant, they are central to our being. Our conservation work corresponds to the elephant's trunk, trumpeting needs and doing the heavy-lifting, in our case, of acquiring trail lands and protecting our trails. Advocacy, like tusks, is serious business; it draws

attention to and backs up our trails protection efforts. The elephant's outsized ears reflect the importance of communication, as do our many maps and books. Science is new to our mix; we use science to ensure that we practice what we preach – sensible use and sharing of resources. Consider it our tail, small but very important. Our volunteers and staff are the legs on which we stand and what make our organization as strong as it is.

Now add to the above list our Capital Campaign, announced in October 2004, and you have an organization with an elephant size job to do.

*Jane Daniels*  
*Edward Lovell*

## Treasurer's Report Respectfully submitted by Herb Hochberg, Treasurer

I am pleased to report that the Trail Conference ended fiscal year 2004 in excellent financial health.

The financial statements for fiscal 2004, as audited by Loeb & Troper, show record Total Revenue of \$2,301,000 and record Change in Net Assets (Net Income) of \$175,000. Grants and Contributions of \$953,000 were 46% greater than last year, due primarily to cash and irrevocable pledges received by the capital campaign. Services contributed by volunteers, primarily to build and maintain trails and publish maps and books, were valued at \$712,000.

Total Net Assets (Net Worth) at September 30, 2004, was \$937,000, also a record. The largest assets were trail land of \$888,000, an increase of \$588,000 during the year, and cash and investments of \$393,000. The trail lands acquired during the year

were incident to the Trail Conference program of protecting trails threatened by or vulnerable to development, using funds from the capital campaign. The Conference intends to resell these lands to governmental agencies and/or land trusts; it resold one parcel during the year for \$200,000. The largest liability at year-end was Mortgages Payable of \$634,000. The Conference expects to repay these mortgages before the due dates from the proceeds of the sale of the underlying properties.

The Conference looks forward to another banner year for its membership and hikers in the metropolitan area.

The statements that follow are taken from the audited financial statements for the years ended September 30, 2003, and September 30, 2004.

## Condensed Financial Statements 2003-2004

Assets	Year ended 9/30/04	Year ended 9/30/03	Statement of Activities	Year ended 9/30/04	Year ended 9/30/03
Cash & Investments	\$ 393,000	\$ 314,000	Membership Dues	\$ 177,000	\$ 148,000
Receivables	161,000	114,000	Grants & Contributions	953,000	529,000
Inventory	78,000	130,000	Contributed Services	712,000	670,000
Other	10,000	9,000	Sales, Maps & Books	194,000	184,000
Current Assets	642,000	567,000	Sales, Land	230,000	
Trail Land	888,000	300,000	Investment Income	35,000	43,000
Other Assets	137,000	175,000	Total Revenue	\$2,301,000	\$ 1,574,000
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,667,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,042,000</b>	Personnel Expense	572,000	386,000
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>			Consulting Services	156,000	149,000
Current Liabilities	54,000	211,000	Volunteer Labor	712,000	670,000
Mortgages Payable, Long Term	634,000	15,000	Printing/Shipping	143,000	140,000
Other	42,000	54,000	Cost of Land Sold	152,000	
Total Liabilities	730,000	280,000	Other	391,000	209,000
Net Assets	937,000	762,000	Total Expenses	2,126,000	1,554,000
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,667,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,042,000</b>	<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 175,000</b>	<b>\$ 20,000</b>

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Trails

At the heart of the Trail Conference's mission is our commitment to build and maintain hiking trails. In FY2004, our trail system included more than 1,600 miles of hiking trails. An inspiring number of volunteers—900 TC-registered trail workers and 250 of their friends—contributed well over 21,000 hours of their time to constructing these trails and keeping them in good condition.



## New Trails

- Originally proposed by the late Martin Deeks, the 4.7-mile **Hasenclever Iron Trail** in Ringwood State Park, NJ, was completed with the cooperation of the Friends of the Long Pond Iron Works.



- The new 2.68-mile **Sapphire Trail** extends from Harriman State Park in the north to the Appalachian Trail in Sterling Forest State Park in the south.
- New sections of the **Shawangunk Ridge Trail** were completed in the Orange County towns of Deerpark and Greenville. These sections run across lands that were preserved by the Trail Conference with funds raised by the capital campaign. The Trail Conference and the New York Department of Conservation continue to work together to acquire park lands along the Shawangunk Ridge.
- An extension of the **Trestle Trail** at the north end of Schunemunk Mountain was connected to the Otterkill Road parking lot.

## Appalachian Trail

- The Trail Conference received a New Jersey National Recreational Trails Program Grant for almost \$18,000 to replace nearly 800 feet of puncheon and build about 120 feet of bridging on the **Appalachian Trail in Vernon, NJ**. This work will be completed in 2005.
- The Trail Conference took the lead in planning the restoration of the Appalachian Trail and other trails on **Bear Mountain**. A "charette" design process was initiated in coordination with the Rutgers University Dept. of Landscape Architecture. This major project involved the cooperation of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and the Appalachian Trail Conference.
- Support continues for the **New Jersey Appalachian Trail Ridgerunner Program**. Garth Fisher was hired as a Ridgerunner for the fourth consecutive year. In spite of fiscal threats, this important and successful program continued to educate hikers on the AT, while providing a valuable presence in the backcountry for understaffed park management.



## New York Trails

- A 15-foot bridge was added to the **Twin Forts Trail** and the trail was formally adopted by the Trail Conference for maintenance in Harriman/Bear Mountain State Park.
- The 62-foot **Popolopen Bridge** in Bear Mountain State Park was rebuilt in May 2004, after being washed out by Tropical Storm Floyd in 1999. Extensive trail reconstruction on the 1777 and 1779 Trails leading to and from the bridge was completed in May and June 2004.



- Work began on the **Wappingers Falls Greenway project**, part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway project. This project is one of the first times that the Trail Conference has contracted with a municipal agency to develop a new trail system and build a volunteer maintainer base within a local park.
- A part of the **Stillman Trail** in Storm King State Park was rerouted to avoid a dangerous crossing over Route 9W.
- The **Parker Cabin Hollow Trail** was re-opened in the west central area of Harriman State Park.
- A major re-routing of the **Ramapo-Dunderberg Trail** was completed in the central part of Harriman State Park.
- Approximately six miles of new trails were adopted in **Forest Park, Queens**, enabling the Trail Conference to continue expanding its trail maintenance responsibilities in the New York City area.

## New Jersey Trails

- Work began on the development of the **Warren Trail** in Warren County. The Warren Trail, which will connect Allamuchy State Park with Jenny Jump State Park, facilitates a new cooperative relationship between the Trail Conference and park managements in the region.



- With the cooperation of the Bergen County Parks Department, **two new bridges** were installed in Bergen County parks by Boy Scouts, under the supervision of Gene Giordano, Ringwood State Park Trails Supervisor and New Jersey Appalachian Trail Management Committee Chair.
- **New trail systems were adopted** in Stephens State Park and the Pequest Wildlife Management area, as well as new trails in Wawayanda State Park and High Point State Park.

## Training

Trail Conference volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. Without their dedication, building and maintaining trails would be impossible. Because our volunteers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, the Trail Conference has developed a comprehensive training program, including workshops and certification courses that harness their unique talents and skills.

- Two workshops on **Trail Maintenance 101** and **Trail Construction** were offered in April and October 2004. Nearly 100 volunteers participated in these workshops, giving a boost to our trail crew and maintainer rosters.
- **Chainsaw Safety Certification** courses were held in November 2003 and March 2004. Both recertification and new certification courses were offered, covering the safe use of chainsaws for all levels.
- **Trail Leadership Seminars** were provided for new supervisors and trails chairs in March 2004.

- **GPS Training** was held in 2004 to assist volunteers with mapping and trail layout in correlation with GPS.
- In October 2004, Denise Vitale, Trail Crew Chief (West Hudson North Trails Committee) and Eddie Walsh conducted a very successful **Trail Construction and Restoration Workshop**, focusing on technical winch and high-line.

## Other Trail Related Activity

- Thanks to the cooperation of Harriman/Bear Mountain State Park, the Trail Conference has acquired a tools storage facility in an easily accessible location for the various trail crews.



## Advocacy

The work of safeguarding trails and hiking doesn't all happen outdoors. Much of the Trail Conference's activity is directed towards local and state agencies and lawmakers; it requires pen and paper and the well spoken word as much as it calls for loping shears and pick axes.

The threats to trails and hiking come in varied forms:

- development proposals that would eliminate open space corridors or destroy beloved scenic vistas;
- other recreational activities, such as all-terrain vehicle use, that degrade the environment;
- budget appropriations that undermine the acquisition and stewardship of public lands.

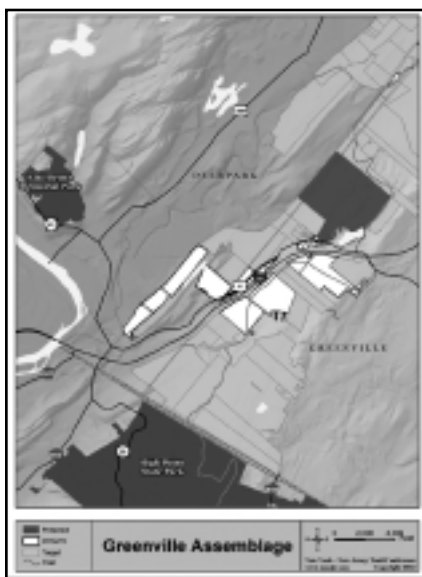
In FY2004, the Trail Conference, working singly through its volunteers and staff, as well as in partnership with other organizations, continued its vigilance and activism on behalf of trail protection, from the Catskill Mountains in New York down through the Highlands of New Jersey. It celebrated major achievements and sustained ongoing activities.

- In partnership with the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Trail Conference reviewed and influenced the draft **Catskill Park State Land Master Plan**. As a result, the proposal included expanded areas of officially designated Wilderness in the park (an additional 50,000 acres) and the prohibition of motor vehicle and all-terrain vehicle use on all trails in the Catskills Forest Preserve.
- Also in the Catskills, the Trail Conference-ADK Partnership reviewed a proposal for a massive **Belleayre Resort** that developers would site near the Slide

Mountain, Big Indian, and proposed Hunter-Westkill Wilderness areas. We urged that the developers and the state Dept. of Environmental Conservation complete extensive reviews of the environmental impact of the project.

- The Trail Conference, a founding member of the Highlands Coalition, celebrated passage of two pieces of landmark legislation that aim to preserve these important open spaces: the New Jersey State **Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act** and the federal **Highlands Conservation Act**.
- Trail Conference volunteers, working at the local level in New Jersey, were crucial in persuading the West Milford town council to preserve 420 acres that connect **Norvin Green State Forest and the Newark Watershed** and provide a vital route for the Highlands Trail corridor. The town agreed to sell the land to the state's Green Acres program rather than to attempt to develop it.
- Our new GIS capabilities allowed **viewshed analyses** to be conducted for several proposed projects in close proximity to trails, including the Shawanga Lodge on the Shawangunk Ridge; the Yukiguni mushroom plant near the ridge and the Basha Kill watershed; the Sterling Forge development within Sterling Forest State Park; a senior housing complex in Sloatsburg; and another 400-unit development in Hopatcong, NJ.
- In New York, the Trail Conference was a founding member of the **Orange County Open Space Alliance**. Parts of all of our region's long-distance trails—the Appalachian Trail, the Long Path, the Highlands Trail, and the Shawangunk Ridge Trail—pass through the county.

## Conservation



To expand our trail network and enable the public to explore additional scenic areas in our region, the Trail Conference works with public agencies to ensure public access to open space. Although in most instances the land is acquired by public agencies, the Trail Conference often facilitates these transactions by purchasing trail lands from willing sellers and subsequently transferring title to the public agency at such time that the agency is able to acquire these lands.

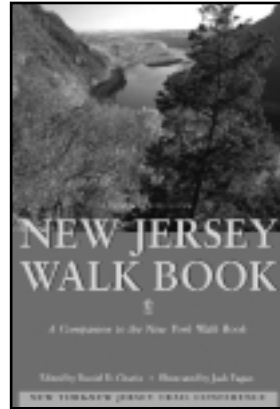
In 2004, our land acquisition activities expanded into the state of New Jersey and we received approval for funding in the amount of \$500,000, considered to be matching funds for land acquisition purposes from the New Jersey Green Acres Program.

In the state of New York, the Trail Conference made significant progress in expanding our trail network and in acquiring hiking lands for permanent preservation. During fiscal year 2004, the Trail Conference acquired and protected an additional 814 acres. This means that the Trail Conference owned 1,030 protected acres of land; 898 of these acres are located on the Shawangunk Ridge and 132 are located along the Long Path north of the Catskills. These properties are in the process of being sold to the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and this transfer is expected to be completed in late 2005.

In other news, the Conference transferred the Stutzman fire tower and 150 acres surrounding it in Mamakating, NY, to New York State. The fire tower is now permanently protected. In the same area, the Trail Conference assisted with another almost-800 acres that were transferred to DEC.

## Publications

Starting in 1923 with the *New York Walk Book*—which the *New York Times* has called “the hiker's bible”—volunteers have directed and managed the publication of trail maps and hiking guides. These books and maps provide the public with useful information about hiking and the natural environment of the region, and encourage people to experience the back-country responsibly.



In FY2004, the Trail Conference offered a selection of 10 map sets and 10 guidebooks, each providing detailed information about trails in the area. A completely revised second edition of the *New Jersey Walk Book* was published in March 2004. In addition, volunteers worked on the production of a new guidebook, *Kittatinny Trails*, on a second edition of *Hiking Long Island*, and on revised editions of the *New York Walk Book* and the *Long Path Guide*, all of which appeared in print in late 2004 or early 2005. Work also progressed on a new digital edition of our *Hudson Palisades Trails* map set.

## Science

The Science Program made significant strides in FY2004 toward its goal of promoting sound environmental stewardship of our trail lands. Following Trail Conference tradition, volunteer involvement has been a key component of the program. Since its inception in 2003, nearly 200 individuals have responded to program announcements and, of these respondents, more than half have been actively involved in monitoring activities. In FY2004, Trail Conference volunteers contributed to the following program areas:

- **NY Natural Heritage Monitoring:** Volunteers received training in monitoring techniques and then adopted a natural heritage occurrence (rare plant colony or animal population) on trail lands, which they will monitor annually. A similar program has been in place along the AT in New York and New Jersey since 2002.
- **Lower Hudson Bald Eagle Survey:** This survey of wintering eagles in the lower Hudson River valley focused on parklands with Trail Conference-managed trails. Results led to the rerouting of the proposed Westchester County River Walk around key eagle habitats and the identification of eagle use areas on unprotected lands.
- **Shawangunk Ridge Hawk Watch:** Sullivan County Audubon, a new Trail Conference member club in 2004, completed its second hawk watch season using a fire tower viewing station located on Trail Conference-acquired land.
- **New England cottontail survey:** Trail Conference volunteers live-trapped for this rare lagomorph, a candidate



species for federal protection, at Sam's Point Preserve in the Northern Shawangunks.

Trail ecology research continued during the year thanks to a grant from the **Black Rock Forest Consortium**. This grant facilitated the second year of a cooperative research project with Columbia University that examines the effects of trails on bird and beetle biodiversity at the Black Rock Forest.

“Following Trail Conference tradition, volunteer involvement has been a key component of the program.”

The science program also won two **environmental monitoring contracts** in 2004, one for a project near the AT corridor in Sterling Forest State Park and the other on the West Point Military Reservation near Bear Mountain State Park. These contracts generated much needed revenue for the science program.

**Environmental surveys of proposed trails**, a key function of the Trail Conference science program, were conducted along 11 trail segments on conservation land holdings in the region, including five state parks, three nature preserves, one county park, one state forest, and the federal AT corridor. Nine trail reviews involved endangered species concerns and required close consultation with State Heritage and Parks Natural Resource managers. Two additional surveys were conducted on private lands with potential for trail development. Several new locations for state-listed rare species were discovered during these surveys.

Outreach activities included presentations at four scientific conferences and to the New York Science Teachers Association and the Ramapo Chapter of the ADK. The Trail Conference science program also organized and chaired a special symposium at the Northeast Natural History Conference in Albany.

# Over 38,000 Volunteer Hours!

## Volunteers

For the past 84 years, the Trail Conference has been a volunteer-based organization. The volunteer spirit of the Trail Conference has never been more evident. Our volunteers are active in every aspect of the Trail Conference's mission, from working on trails, publishing the guidebooks and maps we all rely upon during our hikes, to stuffing envelopes at our Mahwah office. Efforts to recruit new leaders have yielded remarkable results. A new team of volunteer leadership has emerged to strengthen and guide our organization. All of our volunteers are responsible for supporting the growth we experienced over the past year. We have produced new guidebooks, built new trails and bridges, and expanded our ability to represent the needs of the hiking community, all through the efforts of our extraordinary volunteers.

Our volunteers have received recognition awards for their achievements by various municipalities, the states of New York and New Jersey, as well as recognition from national organizations such as the American Hiking Society.

Based on filed reports, we are proud to report that 1,227 volunteers were active on behalf of the Trail Conference. If we did not have the services provided by our volunteers, equivalent services costing hundreds of thousands of dollars would have to be purchased.

### Value of Contributed Volunteer Services—FY2004\*

#### 1,227 Volunteers

Committee	Hours	Value
Office Assistance	1,227	\$ 26,853
Publications	4,122	161,615
Marketing/Outreach	2,303	122,806
Membership	126	5,460
Trail land conservation and advocacy	747	14,966
Development	217	8,256
Science	577	12,873
Trail builders and maintainers	20,899	359,052
Travel	8,103	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,320</b>	<b>\$ 711,882</b>

\*Calculated using Bureau of Labor Statistics hourly rates for comparable skills.

## Membership

Through collaboration with Campmor, an outdoor retail store, the Trail Conference's membership grew incredibly in FY2004. This partnership yielded 989 new Trail Conference members, through the sale of TC memberships at Campmor, Paramus, NJ. Plans to replicate the program instituted at Campmor are already in place with other retail partners and we are optimistic that our membership will continue to grow. **As of September 30, 2004, the Trail Conference had 9,171 members and 89 organizational members, with a combined membership of over 110,000 hikers.**

## Development

During the 2004 fiscal year, the Board of Directors authorized our first-ever capital campaign, *Connecting People With Nature*, to raise \$2.5 million for three specific goals:

- To capitalize a revolving Land Acquisition & Stewardship Fund for the purpose of permanently protecting trail corridors throughout the region that link open space and, over time, to evolve into an endowment that will sustain our trails stewardship mission.
- To restore the trails on Bear Mountain as a demonstration project to recruit and train a new generation of volunteers.

- To underwrite the development of a Geographic Information System, a powerful computer application that will support all Trail Conference programs.

The capital campaign's fundraising efforts got off to a fantastic start. As of September 2004, we had already raised **\$1.4 million in cash and pledges**. We are well within achieving our goal of raising \$2.5 million by June 2005.

However, during this exciting period, we recognized that substantial resources were needed to ensure that the Trail Conference could continue its core activities. In the 2004 fiscal year, **total financial contributions, excluding capital campaign gifts, received from individuals, corporations, founda-**

**tions, and bequests amounted to \$450,000.** This amount includes membership dues, contributions, and grants.

We thank all of our donors for their support and generosity during the last fiscal year!



### Board of Directors FY2004\*

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Jane Daniels

#### Vice Chair:

Thomas Humbach

#### Treasurer:

Herb Hochberg

#### Secretary:

Daniel Chazin

#### Directors:

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Mary Vance Duggan

John Gunzler

Gary Haugland

Peter Heckler

Robert Jonas

Art Lebofsky

John Moran

Robert Newton

Anne Osborn

Mary Smart

Malcolm Spector

### Committee Chairs FY2004

#### Science Advisory

#### Committee Co-Chairs:

Art Lebofsky and John Ehrenfeld

#### Development Committee Co-Chairs:

Mary Smart and John Gunzler

#### Membership Committee Chair:

Doug Sohn

#### Marketing Committee Chair:

Dottie Noe

#### Administrative Committee Chair:

Herb Hochberg

#### Publications Committee Chair:

George Petty

#### Nominating Committee Chair:

Phyllis Stewart

#### Trails Council Chair:

Gary Haugland

#### Trails Chair, AT Dutchess/Putnam:

Ronald Rosen and Jim Haggert

#### Trails Chair, AT New Jersey:

Gene Giordano

#### Trails Chair, AT Orange/Rockland:

G. Gail Neffinger

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#### Trails Chair, Catskills:

Peter Senterman

#### Trails Chair, Highlands:

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#### Trails Chair, Long Path North:

Vacant

#### Trails Chair, Long Path South:

Jakob Franke

#### Trails Chair, West Hudson North:

Larry Braun

#### Trails Chair, West Hudson South:

Pete Heckler

#### Trails Chair, Metro Trails:

Robert Ward

#### Trails Chair, North Jersey:

John Moran

#### Trails Co-Chair, East Hudson:

Jane Daniels and Walt Daniels

### Staff Positions FY2004

#### Executive Director:

Edward Goodell

#### Administrative Director:

Maureen Walsh

#### Trails Director

Larry Wheelock

#### Volunteer Projects Director:

Joshua Erdsneker

#### Science Director:

Edwin McGowan

#### Land Acquisition Director:

John Myers

#### Land Protection Specialist:

Richard Benning

#### Development Director:

James Davis

#### Development Associate:

Lisa Cargill

#### GIS Specialist:

Eric Yadlovski

#### Administrative Assistant:

Ramon McMillan

#### Product Manager:

Nayarid Barahona

#### Fullfillment Staff:

Gary Willick

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\*Due to turnover during the year, more than 15 Directors are listed.