



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



UNITED BY TRAILS

The trail community in the greater New York metropolitan area is an inspiring movement. We are wanderers, hikers, runners, and riders of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. We appreciate, respect, and deeply treasure the wealth of wild places reachable within just a few hours of home because we live in one of the most amazingly cosmopolitan regions on Earth. Our life experiences may be worlds apart, but on the trail, we are united in our passion to connect with nature.

The founding of this movement runs parallel with the founding of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. In 1920, through the spirit of volunteerism, dedicated members of local hiking clubs created the Trail Conference to work alongside burgeoning park administrations and make newly preserved public lands accessible to everyone via blazed trail systems. Nearly 100 years later, our legacy of building, maintaining, and protecting trails and stewarding parklands as a volunteer-powered organization continues. Today, we don't just serve as the hub of this trail community, we operate as one big Trail Family.



Like any strong family, the Trail Conference works together in good times and bad to get the job done. In 2017, a small staff coordinated and supported the work of over **2,100 volunteers across more than 180 parks**. Together, we contributed more than **100,000 hours of labor**. We **cared for close to 2,200 miles of trails** and the lands through which they pass. We **advocated for the interests of trail users and nature lovers** and are constantly **seeking ways to improve your outdoor experience**.

You'll find the accomplishments of our Trail Family members throughout this report. You'll also find them on the trail, day in and day out, caring for our lands, our trails, and each other. Because that's what family does.



YOUR TRAILS AND PARKS

2,156 miles of trails maintained through **181** parks

26 counties served

75 public and private agency partners



YOUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

2,124 volunteers gave **94,010** hours to trails and parks

35 AmeriCorps members served **28,452** hours as the Trail Conference Conservation Corps

21 Trail Stewards assisted **88,329** trail users in **3** parks

8,476 members and **88** member clubs amplified your voice on issues affecting trails and parks



BETTER OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

2017 Highlights

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has taken a leadership role in coordinating stewardship efforts to build, maintain, protect, and promote public trails and parks throughout the greater New York metropolitan region. We believe that the most effective way to advance change is through user education, public participation, and sustainable, on-the-ground solutions. Powered by volunteers, we act to preserve the integrity of trails and natural areas and inspire a deeper appreciation for the care that open space requires.



BOOTS Works to Build and Maintain Trails

In 2017, Trail Conference volunteers and staff worked to...

Route Easier-to-Navigate Trail Systems

The trails at Campgaw Mountain County Reservation, as well as underutilized trails in Norvin Green and Long Pond Ironworks state parks in New Jersey, were reconfigured into more user-friendly “loop trail” systems.

Build Multi-Use Trails

The new multi-use Hutchinson Trail officially opened in Sterling Forest State Park in March. It was built by members of the Palisades Trail Crew, including hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

Create Safer Trails

A section of the Highlands Trail along Laroe Road in Chester, N.Y., was rerouted through Goosepond Mountain State Park, eliminating a road walk.

Reach New Trail Users

The 34-mile, urban-suburban Lenape Trail in Essex County, N.J., received numerous upgrades, including a full inventory and assessment of trail conditions, increased access with new signage in four parks, and an up-to-date map available in digital and print formats.



Trail Crew Accomplishments

Catskills

The **Catskill Trail Crew** made improvements to the Quarry Loop Trail in Sloan Gorge Preserve and constructed reroutes on the Gorge Loop. In Platte Clove Preserve, the crew built a nature loop trail and performed maintenance on the existing Waterfall Trail. Throughout the season, four Conservation Corps members served alongside 25 volunteers.

East of the Hudson River

In FDR State Park, the Crom Pond Trail, featuring a 32-foot outlet bridge with a 50-foot boardwalk on the north side and a 25-foot ramp on the south side, was officially opened by the volunteers and park staff who worked together to build it.

In addition to their routine maintenance of the Ralph's Peak Hikers Cabin on the Appalachian Trail in East Fishkill, N.Y., the **RPH Cabin Volunteers** removed and replaced the deteriorated steps at Miller High Road where the A.T. crosses the Taconic State Parkway.

The **East Hudson Trail Crew**, along with members of the **Trail Tramps**, completed an extensive reroute of the Cornish Trail in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. The Tramps also did considerable trail construction and repair work at Teatown Lake Reservation and in Hudson Highlands Gateway Park.

The **Taconic Trail Crew** continued its efforts to make the Undercliff Trail more sustainable and user-friendly for hikers looking for options around Breakneck Ridge. They set more than 100 stone steps on the trail. The crew also built an approximately 1-mile new section of the Highlands Trail. Throughout the season, four Conservation Corps members served alongside 63 volunteers.

New Jersey

The **West Jersey Trail Crew** replaced the stairs on the suspension bridge on the popular Pochuck Boardwalk section of the Appalachian Trail in Wawayanda State Park. They also redecked approximately 1,000 linear feet of the Boardwalk. The crew completed an approximately 1/2-mile-long relocation on the Rock Cores Trail in Worthington State Forest, replacing a steep and rutted trail. In Stokes State Forest, they replaced a bridge, and repaired another bridge in Tillmans Ravine.

The **Sweet Water Trail Crew** constructed over 534 feet of new trail on the Vista Loop in Ramapo Valley County Reservation. Not only does the reroute bring hikers along a stream to a popular waterfall, it also features 45 stone steps that will prevent erosion and make the climb more accessible for hikers for years to come. Throughout the season, four Conservation Corps members served alongside 25 volunteers.


West of the Hudson River

The **Long Distance Trails Crew** worked on three projects: 1) a rehabilitation of the Appalachian Trail in Harriman State Park near the top of West Mountain; 2) continued rehabilitation of the Long Path in Sam's Point Preserve, co-aligned with the Verkeerder Kill Falls Trail; and 3) a rehabilitation of a bridge originally built in 1873 in Goosepond Mountain State Park. Sixty-six crew volunteers donated a total of 7,915 hours.

The **Hudson Nor'Westers** improved the tread and drainage of six trails at Minnewaska State Park Preserve. More than 13 stepping stones were placed, three open stone culverts added, and two waterbars and general improvements were made to harden and raise the trail where needed.

The **Palisades and Floworks Trail Crews** worked on the multi-use Munsee Eagle Trail in Sterling Forest State Park, building a total of 3.1 miles of new trail. The crews built six bridges to make the trail accessible for a variety of users. Throughout the season, 12 Conservation Corps members served alongside 228 volunteers.

Two **Conservation Corps** crews serving on the reroute of the Appalachian Trail on Bear Mountain set 121 stone stairs and built 339 square feet of crib wall. In total, seven Corps members built 474 linear feet of new trail alongside 284 volunteers.

 *Powered by volunteers, we act to preserve the integrity of trails and natural areas and inspire a deeper appreciation for the care that open space requires.*



BOOTS (CONTINUED)

BOOTS Works to Protect and Promote Trails and Parks

In 2017, Trail Conference volunteers and staff worked to...

Install Better Signage

The Trail Conference, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, developed a new set of signage for installation in most of the New Jersey state parks and forests where we maintain trails. These signs educate visitors about these parks and trails and raise awareness of our stewardship efforts.

Stand up for Trails

The Trail Conference raised the alarm that the Long Path and Highlands Trail are at risk of being severed in Orange County, N.Y. We succeeded in making the protection of these long-distance trails part of the conversation in proposals to develop lands through which these trails cross.

Protect Trails, Create Greenways

The Trail Conference acquired a piece of undeveloped land in Chester, N.Y., that is key to ongoing efforts to create a greenway from Sterling Forest to Storm King state parks in Orange County.

Conserve Trail Lands

The Trail Conference purchased approximately 170 acres of land in Albany County, N.Y., for permanent protection, allowing us to reroute 2.35 miles of the Long Path off roads and into woodlands.

Raise Awareness

The Trail Conference-managed Catskill Conservation Corps coordinated over 40 volunteers for a litter clean-up at Peekamoose Blue Hole as part of the Leave No Trace Hot Spot Week. The week aimed to raise awareness of the need to protect this popular destination from being “loved to death.”

Grow the Trail Family

In April, Greater Blairstown officially became the first Appalachian Trail Community in New Jersey. The Trail Conference maintains all 72 miles of the A.T. in New Jersey.

Care for the Environment

The Trail Conference was awarded a 5-year contract from the New York Department of Environmental



Conservation to continue leading the Lower Hudson region's invasive species management efforts through 2022. In 2017, the Invasives Strike Force Crew removed 108,612 invasive plants. By the end of the season, the program had held 206 eradication projects for 57 invasive species. Our volunteers surveyed almost 150 miles of trail for invasive species, monitored rare and endangered plants, and checked invasive insect traps across the region. They cared for native habitats as the new Habitat Helpers Crew. Collectively, they gave over 5,000 hours of service.

Serve on the Front Lines

The Invasives Strike Force completed the first year of full-scale efforts to remove sticky sage along the Appalachian Trail. This plant, with sticky seeds, has the potential to spread quickly along the trail corridor. It is only known at one other location in New York, which we are actively managing.

Promote Stewardship and Outdoor Ethics

The Trail and Summit Steward program educated and assisted 88,329 total visitors across three parks in New York State: at Bear Mountain on the Appalachian Trail; in Hudson Highlands on Breakneck Ridge; and at several popular locations in the Catskills. Twenty-one Stewards provided outreach and information about park regulations, hiker safety, preparedness, and other best practices.

Serve as a Resource

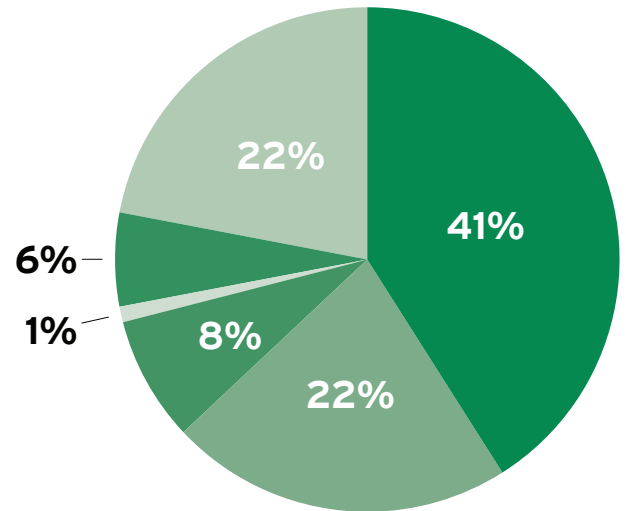
The second edition of *Circuit Hikes in Harriman* was published. The completely revised, 12th edition of the North Jersey Trails map set was released.

FINANCIALS



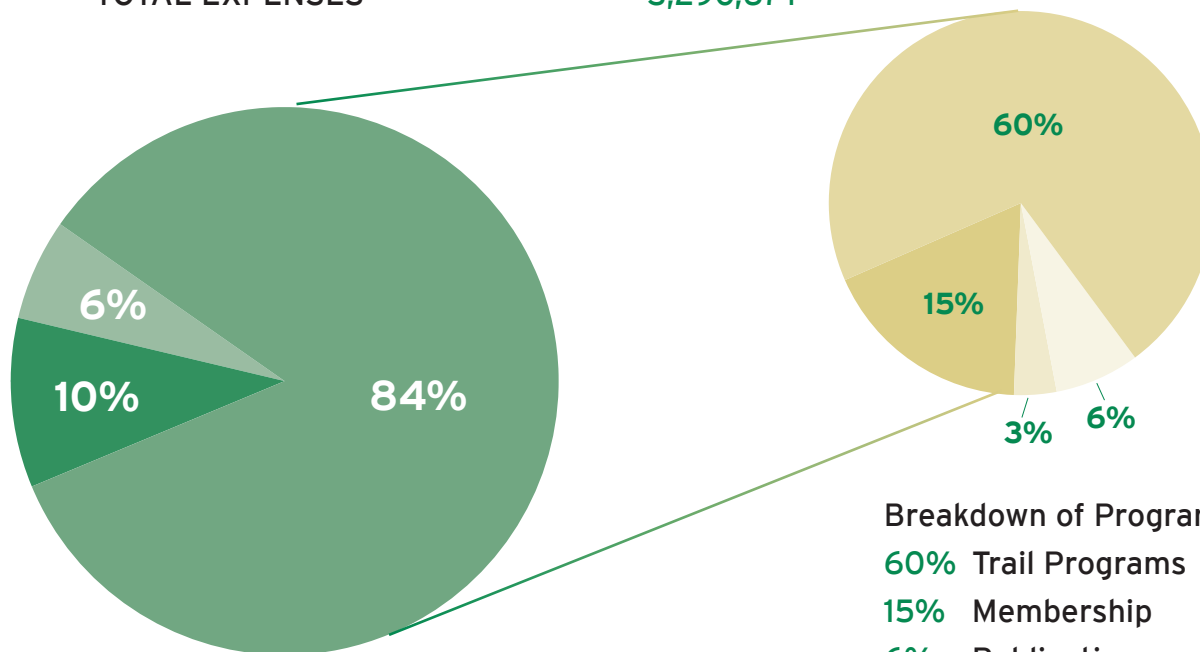
2017 REVENUE

41%	Memberships & Contributions	1,388,424
22%	Grants & Contracts	760,849
22%	Net Investment Income	739,529
8%	Sales of Books, Maps & Other Items	256,183
6%	In-Kind Contributions	205,300
1%	Other	33,995
	TOTAL REVENUE	3,384,280



2017 EXPENSES

84%	Program Services	2,768,720
10%	Management & General	331,496
6%	Fundraising	190,458
	TOTAL EXPENSES	3,290,674



Breakdown of Program Services

60%	Trail Programs	1,980,852
15%	Membership	484,890
6%	Publications	191,446
3%	HQ Building	111,532

The Trail Conference's mission is made possible through generous support from hundreds of individuals, companies, and foundations—outdoor-lovers just like you. Do your part to protect the trails and parks you love at nynjtc.org/donate or contact Development Director Don Weise: dweise@nynjtc.org; 201.512.9348 x813.

In 2017, the Trail Conference achieved Charity Navigator's highest ranking, the 4-star rating, for our sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency. For the fourth year in a row, this "exceptional designation" indicated adherence to good governance and best practices that demonstrates trustworthiness to the public.



OUR MISSION AND VALUES

Mission-Vision

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

Values

The joys of nature belong to everyone.

All people—regardless of age, ability, or location—should be able to experience the rewards of connecting with nature.

Environmental conservation is a shared duty.

We must preserve the integrity of our natural world—not only to sustain our trail systems, but to ensure future generations can enjoy the outdoor experiences a healthy planet has to offer.

Volunteers are our superheroes.

Creating and protecting trails is a labor of love. We celebrate our volunteers—their passion, dedication, and leadership make the trails we all love possible.

Respect is essential to success.

In our partnerships, we exercise the same courtesy we advocate for on the trail, and we strive to be a trusted source of information and expertise for the trail community.

The right path is always a responsible one.

We take land stewardship seriously and approach every decision—whether we're out in the field or in our headquarters—with balanced judgment and firm conscience.



Let's Connect

You'll find us on the trail and at:

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