



TRAILWORKER

News, information & resources for our trail volunteers

November 2012



by
Jonathan Martin
New Jersey Program Coordinator

Wawayanda State Park, post-Sandy
Photo by Estelle Anderson

One of the more apparent dangers on trail after a storm the magnitude of Sandy is going to be tree fall. Hundreds, if not thousands, of trees have come down across the trails throughout New York and New Jersey. Many sections of trail will need to be regraded, structures will need to be repaired and some sections may need to be rerouted depending on the severity of the damage. If a tree is not removed from the trail in a timely fashion, hikers who circumvent these trees will create unsightly foot paths that may take a long time to rehabilitate.

Trail Conference volunteers are hard at work reporting any issues they see and some are even taking care of these trees themselves with a variety of cutting tools. Whether you are out surveying a trail or planning to assist with tree removal please be acutely aware of hazard trees. The definition of a hazard tree, according to the US Forest Service, is a tree that "has structural defects likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, which could strike a 'target'". A target can be a vehicle, building, or a place where people gather such as a park bench, picnic table, street, or backyard." While emphasis is being placed on gathering places, hazard trees are all along our trails and the sooner you go on trail after a storm like Sandy, the greater the probability of you or someone else being injured by one of these trees.

Keep an eye out for dead wood, cracks in trees and weak branch unions. If you are consistently moving on the trail, every now and again stop and look up and off trail. Survey the area. If there are any significant dangers that you find adjacent to the trail corridor or directly above the trail, make

Hurricane Sandy has wreaked her havoc on our trails. Damaged and fallen trees are a serious concern, but your safety always comes first!

note of them and report them to your supervisor. If you're planning on doing work on the trail and you notice these issues near or above your work site, address them immediately. The longer you spend time in one spot when a hazard tree is nearby, the more you increase the likelihood of injury. If the hazard tree is something you don't feel comfortable handling yourself, let the park know and postpone whatever work you were planning at that specific site. Be reminded that only certified sawyers should be using chainsaws on trail and that those who are certified are not permitted to cut anything that is not lying on the ground. Your safety is our number one priority and these rules are in place to ensure nothing happens. ☺

It's only what YOU make it!

TRAILWORKER is your newsletter. We are looking for content that interests you. Articles, pictures, comments, opinions, suggestions, rants and raves are welcomed and appreciated. You are our primary source for information and ideas. We just can't do it without you!

Please e-mail your ideas, submissions and photos to the TRAILWORKER at trailworkernews@nynjtc.org.

Tackling the tough jobs

Maintainer Anna Kurz reports on repair of a section of Long Path on Tallman Mountain

Hikers all over our region benefit from a service whose existence they likely are completely unaware of: The Trail Conference's volunteer "army" of Trail Maintainers (TMs). Some TM trail segments are easy to maintain; a steep Tallman Mountain Long Path segment is not one of them. When Jakob Franke and Chris Reyling got together a crew of four volunteers (John Bradley, Thom Patton, Steve Zubarik and myself), it took a day to replace one stone step and to begin replacing a second one.

The stones, dug out of the earth using five-foot prybars, each weighing about 30 lbs, were very large, very heavy and very awkward to move. It took the strength of all five TMs to wrest them out of the ground and move them to the correct position on the trail. As if the task were not difficult enough, the crew had to contend with the trail's very

Jakob (left) and Chris strategize on the trail. Note the turquoise LP blazes on the trees and how steeply the trail falls away.

steep grade. As the crew huddled around the boulder, they kept talking to each other (making comments and suggestions, then taking them up) so that they moved as one entity, all the while being careful to avoid injury. Seeing that the stones were larger and heavier than myself, I chose to stay out of the way and to photograph the event.

Once the stone was brought to its destination, the crew dug out a bed for it, placed it and then stood on it. As various positions caused it to rock (no pun intended), stones were placed



Work it, work it!

was a glorious view of the Tappan Zee Bridge. The crew dug it out and pushed it to its new home. Because of the lateness of the afternoon, they left the completion for another day and retired to a local pub for a camaraderie celebration. ♣

Photos and story by Anna Kurz

Catskill lean-to maintenance

by Doug Senterman *Catskill Lean-to Supervisor*



Wendell George helping to clean out the fire pit at the Kelly Hollow Trail lean-to. Photo by Howard Raab.



Thom (left), Steve (center) and Chris extirpating the future step.

around and under it and/or more digging assured that it was secure no matter how hikers trod on it, even after heavy rains. Chris' and Jakob's experience guided this critical trial and error effort.

After the first step was securely embedded into the trail, replacing a second step was begun. Chris found a freighter-sized boulder at the top of the hill, whence there

The NYNJ Trail Conference currently maintains 27 lean-tos located in the Catskill Park. The individual lean-tos are adopted by volunteers who are in charge of their maintenance and upkeep. The adoption process is similar to that of a trail maintainer adopting a trail segment except that the adopter is in charge of a shelter instead of a trail section. Lean-to adopters are in charge of many aspects of the shelter and follow the "General Duties of an Adopter" in order to care for the lean-to. These responsibilities include inspecting the shelter for damage, vandalism, rotten logs, cleaning up any litter and cleaning out/rebuilding the fireplace of the shelter. Like with trail maintenance, a lean-to adopter visits their lean-to three times a year (spring, summer, and fall) to perform the maintenance and check on the condition of the structure and surrounding area.

Lean-to adopters have a special connection with their shelter and feel a sense of pride knowing that their efforts help many people have a safe, dry place to stay while on their trips. Some adopters have maintained the same lean-to for years and consider it to be theirs and love the satisfaction it gives them.

If you would like to maintain a Catskill lean-to, contact Doug Senterman at dws456@gmail.com. Other shelters are available along the Appalachian Trail in New York and New Jersey for adoption. Contact info@nynjtc.org for more information on those shelters. ♣

Trail Workers ... we salute you!



Photo by Les Ferguson.

by
Melissa Bean NY-NJTC Operations & Finance Assistant

The following piece was written prior to the impact of Hurricane Sandy. We can expect more big volunteer numbers for the second reporting season, now underway.

Reporting for the first half of 2012 is complete, with thousands of volunteer hours collected! You braved brambles, barberry, broken glass, garbage, rogue vehicles, nettles, wasps, ingrown blazes, poison ivy, vandals, and landslides. Your reports were encouraging, enlightening, often humorous, and always inspiring.

Hurricane Irene cleanup continued up to and beyond the new devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy. Over and over, our volunteers prove to be stalwarts. Volunteers tackled flood damage, storm debris, uprooted and fallen trees, and hanging limbs. This spring you reported clearing nearly eight hundred blowdowns from your trails! If this weather keeps up, we'll have to add another column in the reporting form for time spent sharpening your saw.

Another *New York Times*-worthy natural event occurring this past reporting period was the Giant Stairs rockslide. A "300-foot section of Shore Trail under State Line Lookout disappeared on May 12 under [the] worst Palisades slide in over 20 years," reported North Jersey Trail Chairs John Moran and Karen Schoof.

And despite, as Moran and Schoof said, the "wet spots getting wetter," your constant efforts against erosion, invasives, and litter kept local trails open, safe, and beautiful for the hiking public. One supervisor even reported using a donated backhoe to do major trail cleanup. File that one under 'don't try this at home'!

While some supervisors lamented trail vacancies, others boasted that all of their maintainers reported, or praised the finished work of many a Boy or Girl Scout, to whom you continued to provide on-trail service opportunities and support. Your camaraderie on and commitment to our area trails never ceases to amaze me.

Thank you, maintainers, monitors, supervisors, chairs, chiefs, crew leaders, caretakers, and crew members, for leaving the world a little better than you found it. You obviously love your job, despite being elbow deep in blueberries, laurel, or whatever else may, as supervisor Ron Luna expressed, "continue to test my resolve to keep hikers on the 'true path.'" ☺

Trail Reports Coming Due!

It's that time again. One of our duties here at the TRAILWORKER is to remind everyone to submit their biannual maintenance reports. Maintainer reports are due **November 30th**. Supervisor and Crew Chiefs reports are due to their Chairs by **December 15th**. The Chair reports are due by **January 1st**.



West Hudson North Trails Chair Patty Lee Parmalee completes the Supervisor Maintainer Summary form in the field at Minnewaska State Park Preserve with Trail Supervisor Dave Webber.

Be sure to use the correct form. Reporting forms have minor and sometimes major changes. All forms, including the two-page **trail maintenance report** form, are on the web site at: www.nynjtc.org/pform/trail-maintainer-report-form, or by contacting your supervisor or chair.

To find out who your Supervisor is, contact your regional representative (find them at www.nynjtc.org/content/staff). Trail crew chiefs and supervisors send their reports to their regional Chair; the Chairs send reports to their Regional Program Coordinators. The information contained in these reports is crucial to operations, planning and analysis. Please don't neglect this very important responsibility. ☺

TRAILWORKER



Tips on using, buying & maintaining our favorite trail toys!

Got a Tool Tip you'd like to share?
Send it to: trailworkernews@nynjtc.org.

The Drawknife: a venerable and useful tool

by Bob Jonas, CNJ Trails Committee & The Highlands Warriors Trail Crew



The drawknife may prove to be a welcome addition to the trail builder's tool box. It's especially useful for preparing for blazing on heavily barked trees such as mature chestnuts, white oaks and maples, to name a few. It quickly cuts through the bark, is much easier to use than a paint scraper, and much neater than a hatchet. With the two handles, it's easy to be precise and to remove only what's necessary to create a flat substrate. It is not for use on young or delicate trees, like birch, beech, young maples. They are much better prepared using a 3M Pad or a barbecue brush. You can find drawknives on the internet starting at about \$30.00, but used items from a source like EBay will also do the job. ☺

Trail Tool & Zombie Deterrent!

by Les Ferguson, Editor, TrailWorker

A machete has long been on my wish list of maintainer tools. I figured it would be great for quickly mowing down those thorny thickets on my section of the AT and it would be fun to use. I thought about picking up a cheapy at Harbor Freight, but then I came across this impressive number by Gerber – the **Gator Machete Pro**.



It certainly is not cheap, but the corrosion-resistant, multi-purpose blade can be used as an axe, machete, brush thinner or knife. The grip handle and nylon lanyard keep the machete safely in your hand when in use. It comes with a military-grade nylon sheath and includes a sharpening stone. It weighs only 18 oz. and retails for between \$40-\$50.

Oh yes, about the zombies! The Gator Machete Pro has been featured as a weapon of choice against marauding zombies on the hit cable series, "The Walking Dead." So you can maintain your trail and feel safer if any creatures from the grave pop out from behind a tree! ☺

Chainsaw Fuel Follow-up

David Day, of the West Jersey Trail Crew, commented on our chainsaw fuel "Tool Tip" and sent along his recommendation on fuel additives.

I use StarTron-Enzyme Fuel Treatment. In essence, it "eats" the alcohol, converting it to something which just blows through the engine without any impact. (Kind of like what dry-gas does for water in your car's fuel.) This product is made by the Star Brite Company (www.startron.com), and is available in 8-oz bottles. The small bottle will make over 40 gallons of fuel. At \$9, it's inexpensive. You can't over-dose it and it can be added retroactively to a saw with a load of "dead" fuel. I've been using it for over a year, and all the machines are running smoother, have needed fewer tune-ups, and go a full season without fouling a spark plug. Not quite a magic elixir, but pretty darn close. Most Stihl dealers are now carrying it now, but if not mine does: Chip-Chop Shop: (732) 238-7888. ☺

Did you remember to ...?

a maintainer's checklist
from the Tool Guru,
Bob Jonas



- ✓ Did you remove all your clippings from the trail?
- ✓ Did you place your branch clippings so that the butt or cut ends face off the trail?
- ✓ Did you check to see that no branches or brush are obscuring the blazes?
- ✓ If you have a trail with nail-on blazes, did you pull them out from the tree so they don't become ingrown?
- ✓ Everytime that you visit your trail section did you look at it through a visitors eyes, so that you observe the correct placement of blazes, or wet areas that need attention?
- ✓ Did you, or your maintainer, clean out the debris from your waterbars so they are effective in removing water from the trail?
- ✓ When you observed indications of illegal trail use, did you fill out the ILR (Illegal Use Report), that you can download from the web?
- ✓ When you observed trail problems beyond your capabilities, did you ask for assistance from your Supervisor or Chair before things got worse?