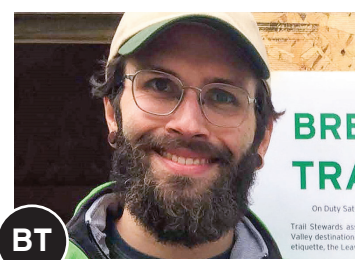


A Day in the Life of the Trail Conference

Both on and off the trail, every day of the year, there is a member of the Trail Conference family working hard to make your next adventure possible. From Manhattan to Albany, the Delaware Water Gap to the Taconics and beyond, right now, Trail Conference volunteers and staff are working to improve access to outdoor opportunities for all and protect the belief that the joys of nature belong to everyone.



Brian Tragno
Trail Steward

After working all week as a coffee shop manager in Manhattan, Brian Tragno has what he calls the perfect weekend job: being outside and educating hikers as a Breakneck Ridge Trail Steward. Brian, who lives in Astoria, N.Y., and grew up hiking in New Jersey, joined the Trail Conference as a Steward in 2013. The Breakneck Stewards often see about 2,000 visitors at this popular trailhead every weekend, and Brian's favorite part of the job is introducing first-time hikers to this challenging-but-rewarding trail—as long as they've got the right shoes and enough water, of course! "There is an incredible community surrounding Breakneck: regulars who hike this trail every weekend and people who are out on their first hike ever. The views and experience can hook people," Brian says. "We're here to educate visitors, recommend new hikes, and get people involved with the trails they love."



Cliff Berchtold
Trail Maintainer, ISF Surveyor, Workshop Instructor

"As a citizen scientist, you get a better idea for the health of a forest," says Cliff Berchtold, who has been keeping an eye on trails and trail lands as a Trail Conference volunteer for more than 20 years. A retired director of transportation for Monroe-Woodbury School District, Cliff joined the Trail Conference as a trail main-

tainer in 1995 and became an Invasives Strike Force surveyor in 2013. The Trail Conference's Invasives Strike Force (ISF) trains volunteers in invasive plant identification and survey protocol in efforts to protect biodiversity in our region. Since he joined ISF, Cliff has surveyed 58 miles of trails for invasives. Cliff, who lives in Monroe, N.Y., also volunteers in the Trail Conference office helping to prepare for the season by creating maps and processing data. But his favorite part of the job is getting outside while giving back to benefit future hikers. "In today's fast and techy world, surveying for invasives forces you to slow down," he says. "You can soak in the forest, appreciate the smaller things in nature, and get to know that piece of trail."



Connie Stern
Trail Supervisor, Trail Crew Member, Trail Maintainer, Swamper, A.T. Corridor Monitor

"Working outside in the water and mud, you feel like a kid again. I'm more active, happier, and healthier than ever," says Connie Stern, who began volunteering with the Trail Conference in 2009.

Since her retirement as a physical therapist in 2014, Connie has become a member of three different trail crews, a trail maintainer, an Appalachian Trail corridor monitor, and swamper to her sawyer husband, Fred Stern (also a trail superhero). In December, she was named Trail Supervisor for Southern Westchester. On Wednesdays, you'll find the Cortlandt Manor, N.Y., resident with the Trail Tramps Crew; Fridays she works with the Westchester East Trail Crew; and other days, she helps out the East Hudson Trail, the trail she maintains

in Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve. On non-crew days, Connie stays busy walking trails to evaluate the conditions, clips back invasive plants, and monitors two sections of the Appalachian Trail corridor. "I'm so proud to wear my Trail Conference volunteer T-shirt," Connie says. "It's such a great organization, and being a part of that is just wonderful."



David Haas
Committee Member

Glenda Haas
Committee Chair

Longtime members David and Glenda Haas have become more involved in the Trail Conference since the organization's move to the headquarters at Darlington Schoolhouse. David, owner of the investment firm Cereus Financial Advisors, serves on the Development, Events, and Fundraising committees, while Glenda, program director for the Community Arts Association, serves as the chair of the Art Selection Committee. The Mahwah, N.J., couple seamlessly works together to raise funds and visibility for the Trail Conference.

Glenda spearheaded the formation of the Art Committee to decorate Trail Conference Headquarters' grand stairwell with the history of the building and organization. She has been instrumental in transforming the main hall into a rotating art gallery. "By hanging art from the walls, we can invite the community in to enjoy this beautiful building and learn about the Trail Conference," she says.

Glenda and David's good work coalesced in preparation for the 2017 Annual Gala, planned by the Events Committee. Artist Gregory Frux was the keynote speaker,

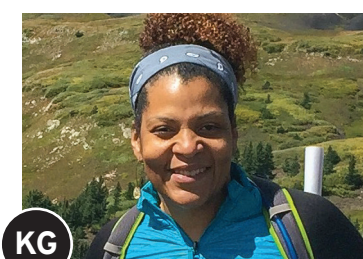
whose work was the featured fall art exhibition. "We're constantly taking on new projects," David says. "It's been quite a fun adventure!"



Don Tripp
Trail Chair, Headquarters Volunteer

Don Tripp loves interacting with people who have a passion for the outdoors. The retired commercial mortgage banker joined the Trail Conference in

2009, and he's been a tireless champion for the trails ever since. As the West Jersey Trail Chair, he oversees supervisors and maintainers around the Delaware Water Gap region. Don, who lives in Lambertville, N.J., also volunteers at the front desk of Trail Conference Headquarters selling maps, marketing publications to prospective retailers, and answering email inquiries. "I enjoy reading and responding to questions about hiking," Don says. "The questions are fun and interesting to answer!" Don often answers calls and emails from hikers concerned about trailhead parking, reading maps, and running into snakes. "That's what I like the most: educating and connecting people with nature," Don says. When he's



Katina Grays
Member Club Representative

"The outdoors belongs to all of us, but for some people of color, the outdoors is a complex thing," says Katina Grays. Katina, who lives in Harlem, is the NYC Volunteer Leader for Outdoor Afro, a national non-profit that celebrates and inspires African American connections and leadership in nature. She is passionate about building an inclusive community for people to connect in and with nature, working to dissuade any fears of the outdoors. The New York City chapter of Outdoor Afro joined the Trail Conference as a member club in early 2017; Katina has led several hikes with the Trail Conference, and is always up for bringing outdoor adventure—from backpacking to archery—to her members. She believes in creating cultural outdoor experiences that are accessible—95 percent of their events are reachable by public transit—as well as meaningful: Outdoor Afro has organized healing hikes after social injustices. "My favorite part of my work is building a deep and restorative community where we can connect within nature to heal and reflect or just go out and have some fun," she says.



Mk Moore
Trail Chair

Mk Moore is the Trail Conference's Trail Chair for a region that's not exactly known for trails: New York City. "There are a lot of great hiking parks in the city that people aren't really aware of," says Mk, who lives in Kew Gardens in Queens. To protect one of his favorite parks, Mk formed the Friends of Forest Park volunteer group in 2015; one of his favorite projects in stewarding this 500-acre green space in his borough is organizing trail maintenance and invasive plant removal events. "We go out and repair damage to trails, close desire lines, and make trails better for the average hiker," he says. This job is a team effort: NYC Parks provides mulch, for example, and Scouts, students, and volunteers help lay it out to create a nicer experience for everyone.

Mk—an Air Force veteran and retired clinical psychologist—loves connecting with all the different trail users. "I'm curious what brings people out to the trails," he says. "I meet a lot of bird watchers and parents bringing their kids outside. City parks are a great

way to see nature without taking two trains or renting a car."



Daniel Chazin
Writer, Editor, Project Manager, Committee Member

Daniel Chazin is the man behind many of the Trail Conference's hike descriptions and guidebooks. He joined the Trail Conference in the late 1970s and served on the Board from 1982 to 2016. A retired lawyer who lives in Teaneck, N.J., Daniel is currently a member of the Publications and Conservation committees.

For the past 35 years, Daniel has written or edited many of the organization's most popular guidebooks, and has been extensively involved with creating and updating Trail Conference maps. More recently, he has dedicated himself to writing and maintaining over 300 hike descriptions on the Trail Conference's website, including easy-to-follow directions to explore trails throughout our region. Daniel's Hikes of the Week are featured on nynjtc.org and in North Jersey's *The Record* newspaper.

This past October, Daniel was given the Raymond H. Torrey Award, the Trail Conference's most prestigious award. Daniel has noted that it is particularly appropriate for him to have received an award named for Torrey, who was also a writer and editor—Torrey not only wrote hiking columns for the *New York Evening Post*; he also edited the first edition of the *New York Walk Book*.



Tara Spear and Mike Bousquet
Trail Maintainers

Tara Spear and Mike Bousquet love getting outdoors to give back to the trail community. "We hike a lot," Tara says. "We're in the woods anyway, so it just made sense to do something useful while we're on the trails."

Tara thru-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2016, and for her birthday, Mike surprised her by adopting her very own stretch of her favorite trail. The Hewitt, N.J., couple maintains two sections of the A.T. in Wawayanda State Park. "We're really particular about picking up trash," Mike says. So they created the group Make West Milford Clean Again to tackle the trash problem at Wawayanda's Terrace Pond. Tara, an Applied Behavior Analysis School Therapist and grad student, also volun-

teers for New Jersey Search and Rescue in West Milford. Their favorite part of the job is "connecting with people who are into the outdoors and encouraging people to leave no trace," Mike, an engineer, says. "I love being a part of a 2,000-plus-mile trail community," Tara adds. "Trail maintainers help make it all possible."



Olivia Sohn
Crew Leader

Olivia Sohn came to the Trail Conference as an Invasives Strike Force volunteer in 2015. Now her days involve moving rocks you'd imagine are impossible to transport with the help of her trail crew (and some rock bars). For the 2017 season, Olivia served as crew leader for the Trail Conference Conservation Corps' Rockalaka and Sterling Forest crews. Her season was split between the Catskills and Sterling Forest State Park.

Olivia, who lives in Ringwood, N.J., loved building trail in the Catskills' Sloan Gorge Preserve, a former bluestone quarry that has many glacial features and interesting geology, with rocks perfectly shaped for creating stone steps—a big part of her trail-building efforts this year. "We test every step by dancing on it to make sure it's stable and comfortable," Olivia says. Seeing a completed staircase on a trail she helped build for future generations of hikers, she adds, is one of the best parts of the job.



Patsy Wooters
Board Member, Committee Member

With an endless passion for nature, Patsy Wooters is the Board Vice Chair and belongs to the Advocacy and Management committees. She's been familiar with the Trail Conference since her dad's days as a volunteer in the '70s, and has been a member herself since 1984. Patsy, of Suffern, N.Y., spent her childhood adjacent to the mountains and grew up hiking and camping with her father in Harriman State Park. A retired NYC public school teacher, Patsy's fascination with wildlife and ecology drives her to protect them. "I'm very attached to the mountain forest, and as a board member, I can help to preserve it for the long term," she says. "Trails allow us to connect with true wilderness. Hikers are critical for protecting lands that would otherwise be developed."