

Trail Conference Receives 5-Year Contract to Continue Leading Lower Hudson PRISM

For the last five years, the Trail Conference has been doing our part to protect the rich biodiversity of the region as leaders of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (LHPRISM). During this time, LHPRISM partners have removed more than 220,000 invasive plants over 1,600 acres and involved 7,000 volunteers in protecting our natural areas. So we're thrilled to announce that the Trail Conference has been awarded a new, 5-year contract from New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to continue leading the Lower Hudson region's invasive species management efforts from 2018-2022.

This new contract allows us to build on the successes of our current program. We plan to:

- ▶ Work with partners to develop and implement a regional strategy for invasive species management.
- ▶ Develop management plans for high-priority species in the region.
- ▶ Offer training programs for volunteers and members of the public.
- ▶ Assist with developing site management plans.
- ▶ Continue our volunteer programs, such as the BlockBuster Survey and Southern Pine Beetle trap monitoring.
- ▶ Enhance our capacity to detect new invaders in the region.

You Can Help

▶ Invasives know no boundaries; a robust Invasives Strike Force in both New York and New Jersey benefits the entire region. Help us expand our efforts—please consider helping the Trail Conference fund a dedicated New Jersey Invasives Strike Force crew in 2018 and 2019. Call Development Director Don Weise at 201.512.9348 ext. 813 for more information. To donate directly to our invasives work in New Jersey, go to nynjtc.org/donate and write "NJ ISF Crew" in the special instructions box.

More Awards for Invasives Programs

The Trail Conference was also awarded a 3-year NYS DEC Invasive Species Rapid Response and Control grant in July to manage sticky sage (*Salvia glutinosa*) in Dover, Japanese angelica tree (*Aralia elata*) in Red



Giant hogweed is a priority species for LHPRISM to eradicate.

▶ Improve our website and social media presence.

With this funding, we will grow the impact of our work with:

- ▶ Full-time staffing of an invasives program educator and volunteer coordinator, an invasives project manager, and an aquatic program coordinator.
- ▶ Full funding for a seasonal crew to perform invasive plant early detection and control work in the Lower Hudson

region and a seasonal aquatic stewards crew to perform watercraft inspections and survey for aquatic invasives.

▶ Budget an annual amount of \$100K for contract projects.

Dr. Linda Rohleder, the Trail Conference's Director of Land Stewardship, will continue to lead LHPRISM and its 45 partner organizations. The aquatic program will be led by Samantha Epstein at Hudson River Sloop Clearwater.

Mike Young, a member of the 2016 Invasives Strike Force Crew, is the new terrestrial invasive species project manager. He is responsible for overseeing all invasive plant control projects we undertake and training and managing the seasonal ISF Conservation Corps crew. Eric Stone is the new invasives program educator and volunteer coordinator. He will conduct training sessions and manage the volunteers for our ISF program and several programs for the LHPRISM.

Hook, silver vine (*Actinidia polygama*) in Mt. Kisco, and giant hogweed throughout the Lower Hudson region.

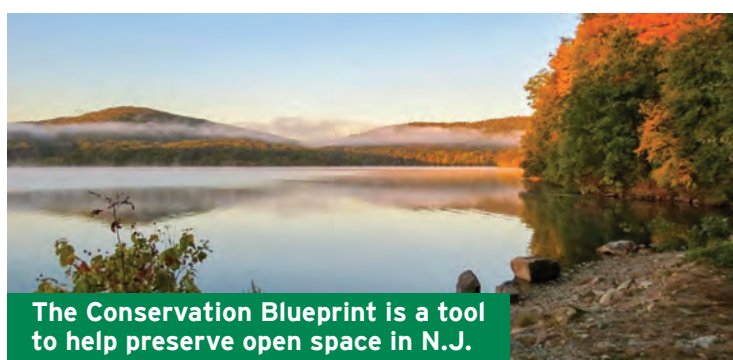
We also recently completed a program agreement with USDA APHIS to head up the mile-a-minute biocontrol program for the Lower Hudson, which will fund a seasonal intern position and provide for biocontrol weevil releases.

Creating a Blueprint to Protect New Jersey's Last Undeveloped Lands

Newark's Branch Brook Park, preserved in 1895, was the first county park in the United States and the beginning of a proud legacy for New Jersey as a national leader in land conservation. In 1961, the division of Green Acres was created to help N.J. municipalities through the often challenging and costly process of land acquisition. Through the work of Green Acres, local and county governments, and nonprofits, a third of the state's approximately 5.4 million acres has been preserved. Conversely, a third of the state has been developed, leaving around one third of the state "up for grabs." These remaining acres and the conservation opportunities they represent are the focus of a project called the New Jersey Conservation Blueprint.

▶ Feedback or questions about the Conservation Blueprint can be sent to conservationblueprint@gmail.com, or via the comments section in the menu bar of each map on the website.

As New Jersey moves toward becoming the first state to reach full build-out—projected to occur within the next 50 years—fostering a collaborative approach to preserve the state's most valuable lands has become more important than ever. The Blueprint brought together a steering committee of over 20 nonprofit organizations and state and federal agencies to identify the most critical lands that



The Conservation Blueprint is a tool to help preserve open space in N.J.

remain vulnerable to development. Led by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and the GeoLab at Rowan University, the committee decided which values would inform the prioritization models used to identify conservation opportunities as they relate to water quality, ecology, agriculture, and community green space.

The results of this process can be found at njmap2.com/blueprint. Here you can look at the priority maps, as well as the data sets and reference layers that support them. (The priority models are still a work in progress as the methodology is refined using input from various advisory boards.) The design and navigation of the maps are user-friendly, allowing anyone to view data

at both a statewide and parcel level, with multiple base maps available. Members of environmental commissions and open space planning boards have already reported the usefulness of this tool.

The Conservation Blueprint is indeed a planning tool, and one of its primary goals is to be used in building connected networks of protected lands and trails. The current trails data set is incomplete, but the Trail Conference sits on a task force that is working on creating a comprehensive, statewide trails layer to make the Blueprint even stronger. The hope is that with the aid of the Conservation Blueprint, more land is preserved and more trails are built to connect people with protected open space. [Adam Page Taylor](#)

Join the Trail Conference, Get Great Deals

Check out some of the latest Trail Conference retail partners and their great, members-only discounts. Visit nynjtc.org/retail-partners for full details on dozens of partner discounts.



Solar for Good: Suntuity
▶ Suntuity Solar offers an affinity program for New Jersey residents of the Trail Conference. Request a free quote for installing a solar panel system at your home or business. www.solarforgood.org/NY-NJTrailConference

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