



NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE TRAIL MANAGEMENT GUIDE - VERSION 4.3

Approved by the Policy Council on September 25, 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Organization Overview](#)
3. [Policies, Practices and Background Documents](#)
4. [Roles, Responsibilities and Resources](#)
5. [Volunteer Management](#)
6. [Land Manager Relationships](#)
7. [Safety](#)
8. [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
9. [Money Matters](#)
10. [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)
11. [Communications](#)
12. [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
13. [Tools](#)
14. [TMG Review and Prior Version Replaced](#)
15. [Publication History](#)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About this Guide

As a leader in the design, construction, maintenance, and preservation of trails for outdoor recreation, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is engaged in a wide range of projects and activities.

The Trail Management Guide (TMG) was originally created in 2002 as a resource to train new volunteer Trail Chairs and Supervisors. It has since evolved to include all aspects of trail management and administration, to provide a more complete view of the interactions among various roles and external entities involved in the Trail Conference's mission and annual plans.

The TMG describes current Trail Conference organizational structures, roles, responsibilities, and practices relating to trail management. It is intended to be used as a reference for ongoing learning and onboarding of volunteers and staff, to enable consistency in carrying out the mission of the Trail Conference. The TMG references policies, additional practice documents, and available resources.

The Trail Conference environment is constantly evolving. Sections of the TMG will be updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in the organization, practices, and environmental needs.

1.2. Mission, Vision and Values

Trail Conference Mission and 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.

Trail Conference 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.

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.

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.

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.

Respect is essential to success. We exercise the same courtesy we advocate for on the trail in all of our partnerships, and we strive to be a trusted source of information and expertise for the trail community.

Sustainability is fundamental to a healthy organization. We will generate and raise an appropriate level of awareness and income to support the needs of the organization.

1.3. About the Trail Conference

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is responsible for maintaining over 2,100 miles of trails. This network of trails is managed by a wide network of volunteers from across the New Jersey, East Hudson, West Hudson, and Catskills regions and by the Trail Conference staff.

The Trail Conference is a volunteer-powered organization, with a high level of collaborative teamwork between volunteers, staff, partner organizations, and land managers key to its success. To accomplish the activities that advance the Trail Conference mission, the Trail Conference depends on the high quality and timely work done by each volunteer and staff member. Volunteers serve a major function by providing time, skills and expertise that expand the organization’s overall capabilities.

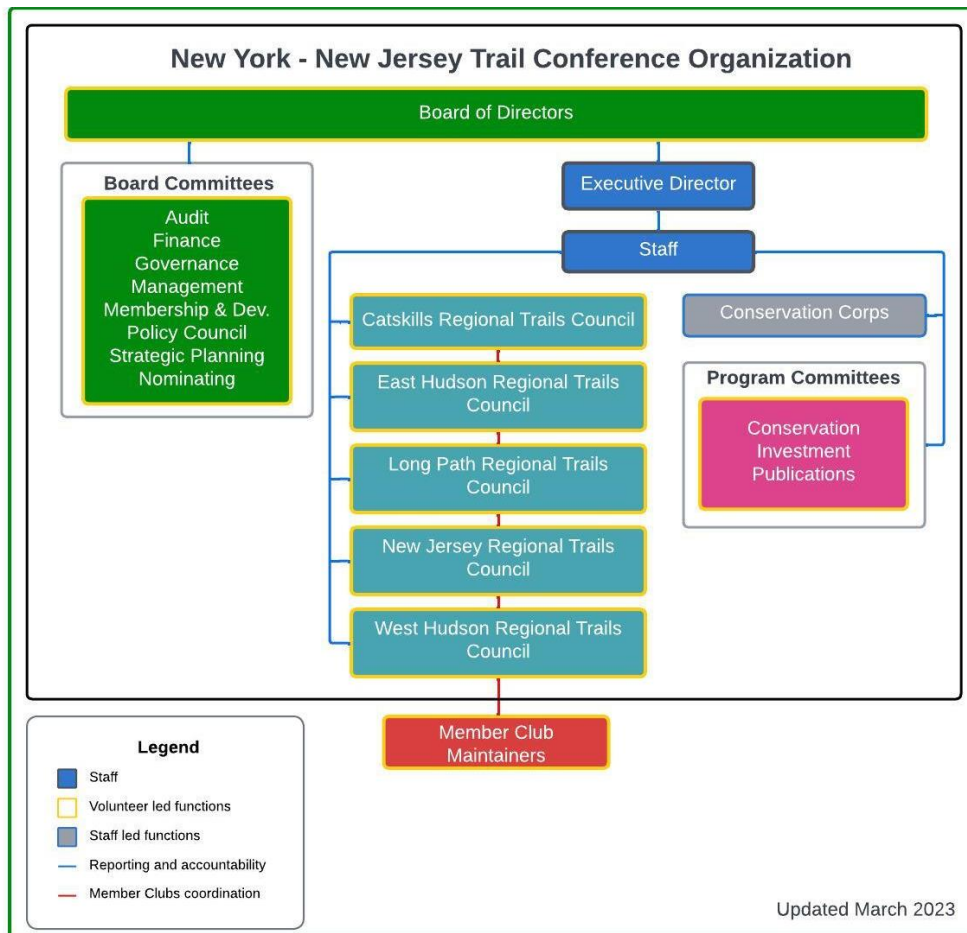
To learn more, see the [About Us page on www.nynjtc.org](http://www.nynjtc.org).

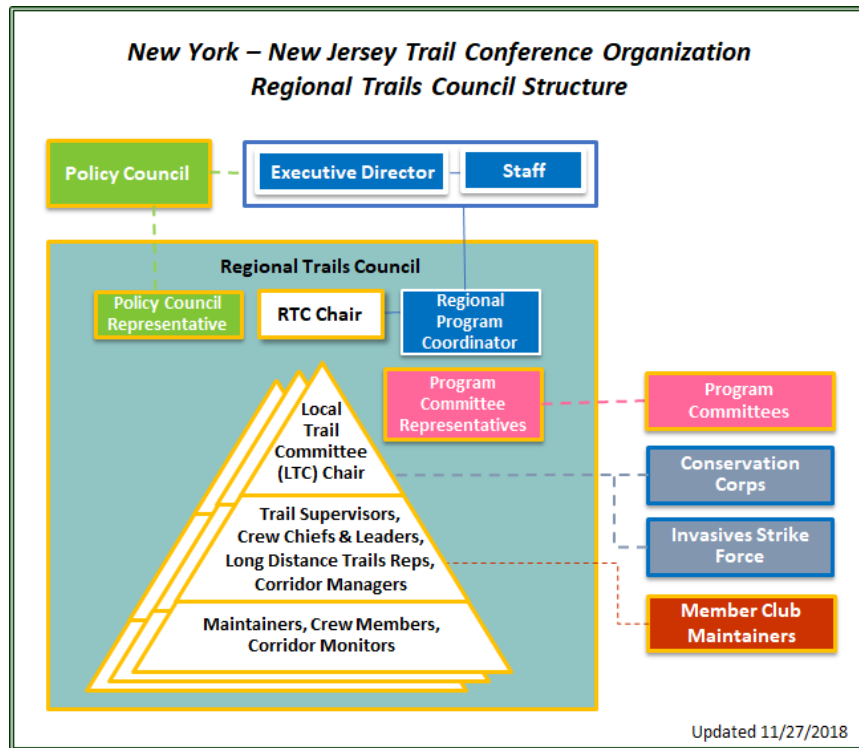
2. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

In 2016, the Trail Conference implemented a structure based on regional organization that changed the management and operation of trails from a single Trails Council to several Regional Trails Councils and a separate Policy Council.

The first diagram represents the organizational groups of the Trail Conference. The second diagram further details how each Regional Trails Council is structured.

The sections following the diagrams provide a high-level description for each part of the organization.



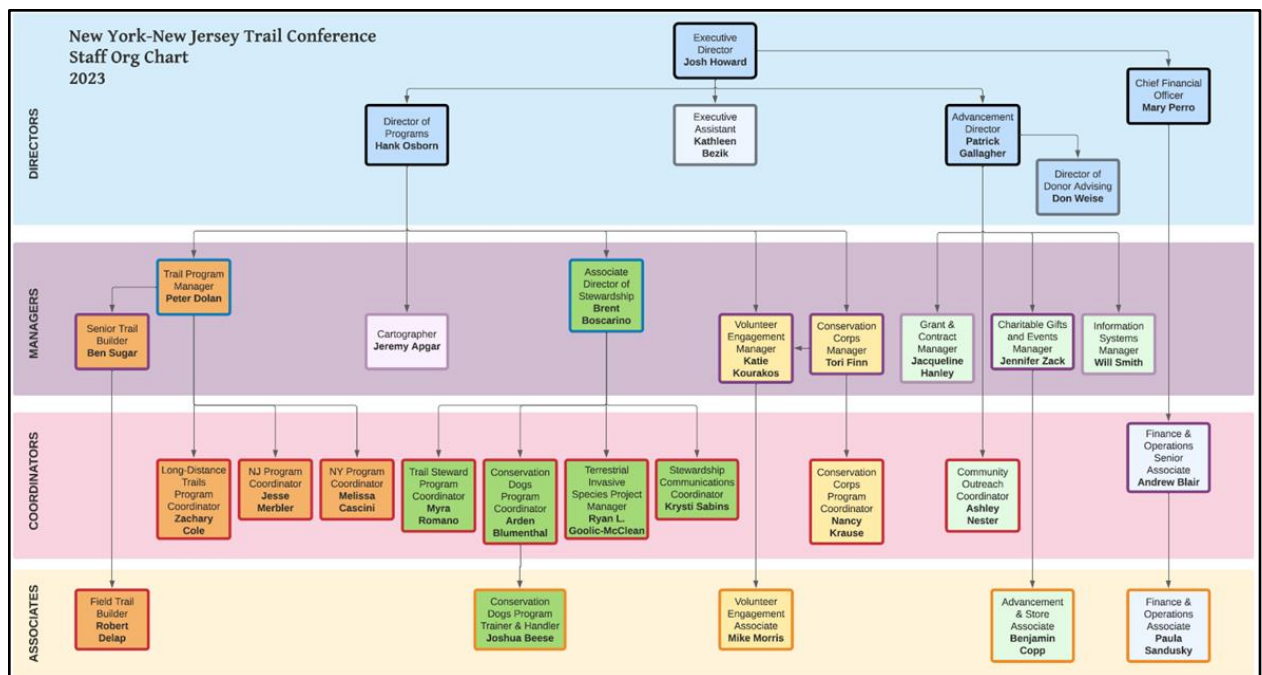


1. **The Board of Directors** is the governing body of the Trail Conference. The authority of the Board derives from state law, articles of incorporation, and bylaws. The Board is responsible to the members and staff of the Trail Conference and also holds a public trust for ensuring that the organization carries out the purposes for which it was established in a responsible and accountable fashion. The Board provides overall leadership for the organization and selects the Executive Director. The Directors establish broad policies and objectives, strategic plans, approve the annual plan and budget, and ensure sufficient resources. The Board delegates authority to the Executive Director to fulfill the mission of the Trail Conference and manage the implementation of the annual plans.
2. **Committees:** The [Bylaws](#) establish **Committees of the Board** (Audit) and make provisions to authorize sufficient and appropriate **Committees of the Corporation** to support the necessary work. Charters establish accountability, purpose, responsibilities, membership, and meeting expectations for each Committee.
 - a. **Committees of the Board** accountable to the Board.
 - i. **Audit Committee**, the only committee established in the bylaws as a Committee of the Board, ensures compliance with local, state and federal regulations governing nonprofit financial reporting, and for interacting with outside auditors. See [Audit Committee charter](#).
 - b. **Committees of the Corporation** accountable to the Board.
 - i. **Advancement Committee** is responsible for the development of sustainable, long-term financial resources for the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.
 - ii. **Finance Committee** is responsible for monitoring, and periodically reporting to the Board on, the financial condition of the Trail Conference; and for working

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- iii. **Governance Committee** is responsible for the review of the Trail Conference’s governing documents, policies, procedures, and practices, makes recommendations to the Board to enhance the effectiveness and development of the Board, and ensures that the Board is carrying out its legal and fiduciary duties. See [Governance Committee charter](#).
 - iv. **Investment Committee** sets the overall investment policies, guidelines and risk levels for the Trail Conference's funds, subject to Board approval following review and recommendation by the Finance Committee. See [Investment Committee charter](#).
 - v. **Management Committee** assists the Board Chair to develop the agendas for each Board meeting. The Committee does not speak for the Board or make decisions on behalf of the Board. See [Management Committee charter](#).
 - vi. **Nominating Committee** is responsible for recommending nominees for election to the Board, and for election as Delegates-at-Large. The committee also oversees orientation of new members of the Board. See [Nominating Committee charter](#).
 - vii. **Policy Council** is responsible for developing mission-related policies and Trail Conference-wide practices. Its members represent the RTCs and all aspects of the organization. Policies require approval from the Board, while practices are approved by the Policy Council. See [Policy Council charter](#) and [website page](#).
 - viii. **Strategic Planning Committee** assists the Board in the oversight of the strategic planning process to include development of appropriate strategic plans, objectives, monitoring of progress against strategic objectives, and periodic updates to the Trail Conference’s mission and vision statements. The current strategic plan is for [2022-2027](#).
- c. **Committees of the Corporation** accountable to the Executive Director are referred to as **Program Committees**. These committees provide leadership and expertise for major initiatives and activities in functional areas that complement staff expertise. The committees extend the capabilities of the Trail Conference, leverage the skills and experience of volunteers and are critical for the mission. Committees are led by and made up of volunteers with interest and expertise in the subject area, and 1-2 staff representatives. Program committees are encouraged to collaborate with RTCs, participate in meetings as appropriate, educate on committee activities and seek stakeholder feedback or specific input on projects. See [Committee Best Practices](#).
- i. **Advocacy Committee** advocates for the preservation of trails the Trail Conference has built and maintains, and the lands upon which trails are situated. See [Advocacy Committee charter](#).
 - ii. **Conservation Committee** advances the Trail Conference mission by acquiring fee simple properties and easements needed to improve, preserve and extend the Trail Conference network of trails. See [Conservation Committee charter](#).
 - iii. **Publications Committee** develops, produces, and markets all Trail Conference map sets and books. See [Publications Committee charter](#).
 - iv. **Trails:**

1. **Appalachian Trail Coordinating Committee** coordinates the three Appalachian Trail LTCs. See the [AT Coordinating Committee webpage](#) for more information.
2. **Sawyer Committee** oversees the implementation of policies and procedures related to all saw operations within the Trail Conference. The Sawyer Committee manages the Sawyer program including the enrollment, tracking, certification, and training needs for all sawyers. The committee creates annual plans to ensure that training and safety needs are met for sawyers and swampers. See [Sawyers Committee charter](#).
3. **Staff**, hired by the Executive Director, provide operational leadership and management support for the organization. The Executive Director is accountable to the Board.

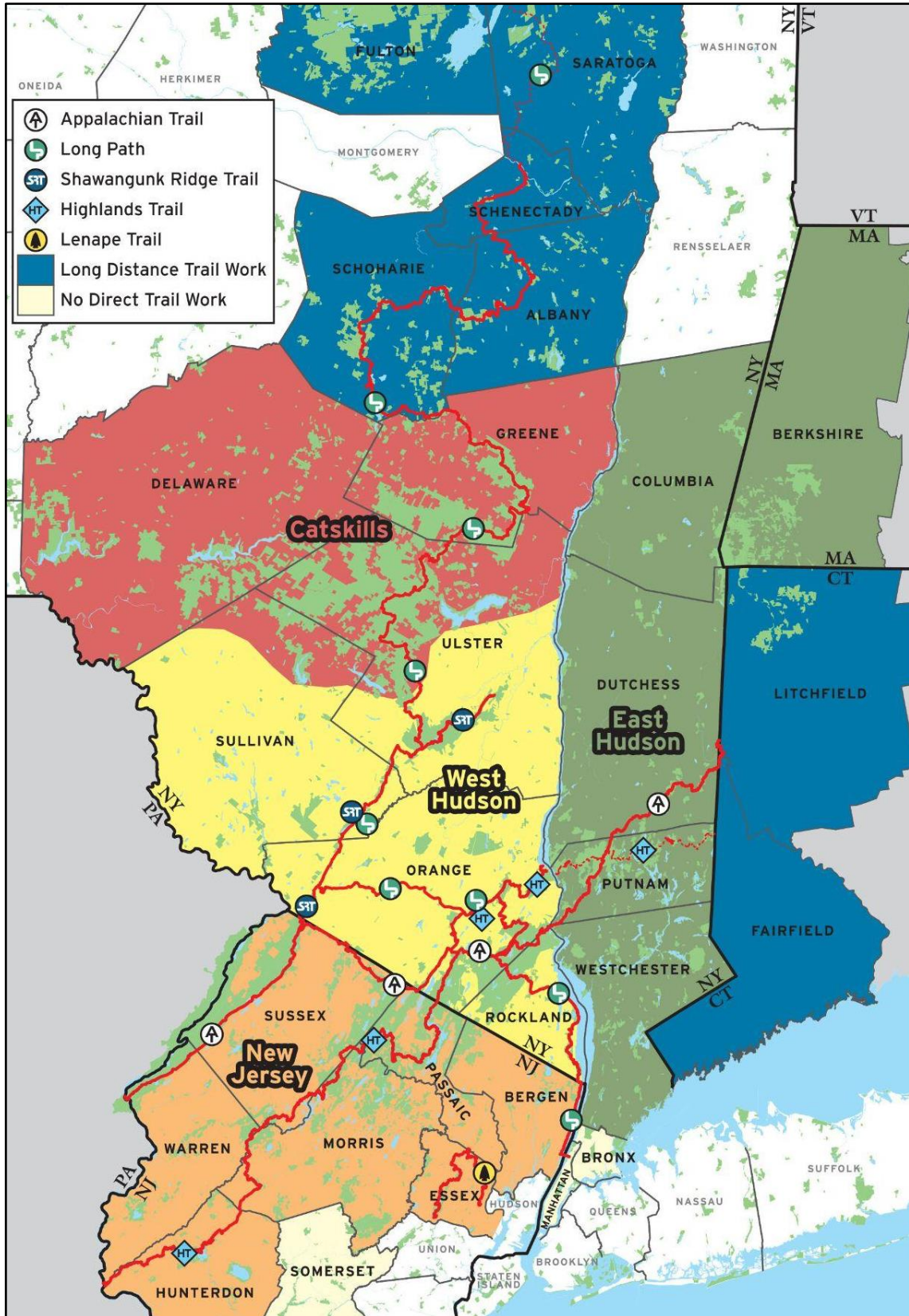
The Trail Program Coordinators (PCs) are the primary staff members who work with the Regional Trails Council (RTC), Local Trail Committee (LTC), and Land Managers. The PCs are also the primary trail-facing points of contact for the rest of the staff members.



For the most current staff directory see the [About Us page on www.nynjtc.org](#).

4. **Regional Trails Councils** operate within a specific geographic region to coordinate operational activities and issues, as well as to provide input to policies and the annual plan and budget. See the [Regional Trails Council charter](#) for further information. There are five regions, each with an RTC:
 - a. Catskills RTC
 - b. East Hudson RTC
 - c. New Jersey RTC
 - d. West Hudson RTC

e. Long Path RTC



To facilitate communication within a region and to keep up to date about Trail Conference practices and policies, trail leaders are members of a Regional Trails Council (RTC). The RTC provides networking opportunities, provides training, distributes information about practices and policies, and provides opportunities for discussion between trail leaders to share proposals, success stories, or best practices. The RTC elects a Chair, who works with their Regional Program Coordinator to develop agendas and ensure adequate communication about meetings.

Voting members include the RTC Chair(s), Local Trail Committee (LTC) Chairs, Supervisors, Corridor Managers, Crew Chiefs and Leaders (from trail crews that publish work trips on the Trail Conference website and submit reports), and designated representatives from program committees. Other volunteers in the region may participate as non-voting members. Each RTC is organized in the same way, as represented in the above organization diagram.

Regional Maintainers, Monitors, and Crew Members are the hundreds of volunteers throughout the several regions. Maintenance is delivered by individual volunteers, maintaining clubs, trail maintenance crews, or through episodic events. All maintenance, restoration, or building is done as part of smaller supervisory groups and crews that make up the several regions. The Corridor Managers and Monitors are Appalachian Trail-specific positions.

5. **Local Trail Committees (LTCs)** recruit and organize volunteers, work with agency partners and staff to provide trail users with a high-quality, well-maintained trail network in a specific LTC geographic area within an RTC. The LTC Chairs, Supervisors, Crew Leaders, Long Distance Trail Crew Leaders, and Corridor Managers are members of the RTCs. See the [Local Trail Committee charter](#) for further information.
6. **Invasives Strike Force (ISF)** is a Trail Conference-managed program. The ISF program was formed as a way to survey, design and implement best management practices to control the rate of spread of invasive species found along the region's trail system and surrounding natural areas. There are two main types of ISF volunteers: (1) surveying volunteers who hike the trails and report high priority invasive plants and forest pests, and (2) removal volunteers who work to manually remove invasive species along trails and surrounding natural areas. The ISF program typically focuses on reporting and managing emerging invasive species, or those less common to our region's forests that pose significant threats to local biodiversity. The ISF is coordinated by the Associate Director of Stewardship and the Terrestrial Invasive Species Project Manager. See the [Invasive Strike Force webpage](#) for further information.
7. **Conservation Corps** is a Trail Conference managed program with up to 60 AmeriCorps members serving between April and November. The Conservation Corps trains, enables, and empowers future conservation leaders by teaching sustainable trail building, stewardship, and invasive species management techniques. See the [Conservation Corps webpage](#) for further information.
8. **Member Clubs** are established by the Trail Conference Bylaws:

“Organizations offering hikes, maintaining or monitoring hiking trails or trail lands in New York or New Jersey, or owning land on which hiking trails are maintained, are eligible for membership as Member Organizations. Other organizations that support the Trail Conference's goals but are not qualified to become Member Organizations shall be eligible for membership as Supporting Organizations. Each application from an organization seeking

admission either as a Member Organization or as a Supporting Organization shall be submitted to the Executive Director, or to his or her designee, for review and approval, subject to review by the Board. Member Organizations, but not Supporting Organizations, shall have voting rights as provided below in the bylaws.

Each Member Organization shall be entitled to select from among its members an "Organization Delegate" who shall have one vote. It may or may not be the Club Trail Supervisor."

Some member clubs also maintain trails. The Club Trail Chair or Supervisor coordinates the work of the club members who maintain trails, is responsible for ensuring all assigned maintenance work is done, and reports activities to the Trail Conference Trail Supervisor.

3. POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Policies, Practices, Guidelines, or Processes, and Charters are foundation documents that guide the operation of the Trail Conference at all levels of the organization.

- Policies are basic principles formulated to direct and guide the actions of the Trail Conference in pursuit of long-term goals. All policies are reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors.
- Guidelines, practices, and processes address the "how" questions of policy implementation. These are second-tier documents that typically support one or more policies and do not require Board approval.

3.1. Policies

The following mission-related policies have been approved by the Trail Conference Board. Mission-related policies guide the direction and management of trails:

- [Conservation and Advocacy Policy](#) - approved June 22, 2010
- [Publication Policy](#) - approved January 28, 2020
- [Sawyer and Swamper Policy](#) - approved August 1, 2013
- [Trail Management Policy](#) - approved May 9, 2017
- [Trail Use Policy](#) - approved October 24, 2017
- [Youth Policy](#) - approved March 29, 2011

The following corporate governance policies have been approved by the Trail Conference Board. Corporate governance policies guide the Board and the organization:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Confidentiality Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Diversity Equity and Inclusion Policy 2020](#)
- [Document Retention and Destruction](#)
- [Gift Acceptance Policy](#)
- [Investment Policy](#)
- [Lapsed Organization Member](#)
- [Media Policy](#)

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- [Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Property Naming Policy](#)
 - [Whistleblower Policy](#)
 - [Wholesale Return Policy](#)
 - [Youth Policy](#)

3.2. Practices

The above policies are supported through practices that provide specific how-to guidelines. Practices are approved by the Policy Council.

- [Definition of Terms](#) - list of terms used in approved policies and practices
- [Guidelines for Blazing Trails](#) - approved September 6, 2015
- [On-Trail Position Descriptions](#)
- [Outdoor Activity Safety Guidelines](#) - approved by the Policy Council on February 6, 2017.
- [Trail Project Approvals](#) - approved by the Policy Council on June 25, 2019
- [Recommended Blaze Colors](#) - approved July 8, 2020.
- [Trail Design Standards](#) - approved December 13, 2016. The standards define a set of classification guidelines to ensure the character of a trail as agreed to by Land Managers and LTCs is maintained after maintenance, repair, or new trail building work is completed.
- [Trail Maintenance Manual](#) - 7th edition. Substitute RTC for all references to Trails Council in the Trail Maintenance manual.
- [Volunteer Handbook](#) - approved March 24, 2009. The Handbook provides new volunteers with an introduction to the Trail Conference. Please note that some of the organizational descriptions are dated and superseded by the information in this document.

3.3. Background Documents

Additional documents such as the latest Bylaws, Committees Chairs, and Trail Conference history are available on the website. See [About Us Resources page on www.nynjtc.org](#).

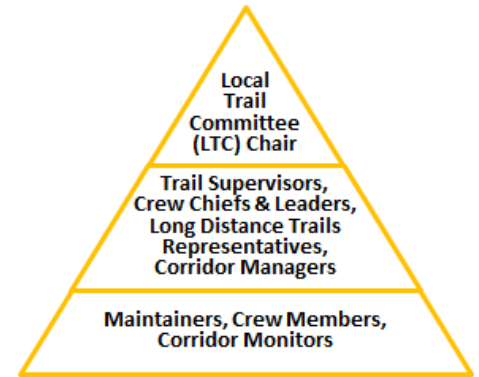
4. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES

There are many volunteer and staff roles that support the Trail Conference's trail program. Whether as a leader or a hands-worker, all roles contribute to keeping our trails open to the public. Each role is identified and linked to its associated responsibilities and available resources.

4.1. Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices

The following responsibilities are shared by all leadership roles:

- Operate in a safe manner at all times
- Act in accordance with Trail Conference policies and practices
- Communicate with staff and other volunteers to coordinate work and personnel
- Delegate whenever possible to ensure that work is done
- Ensure that the reporting identified in [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#) are completed and submitted on time
- Follow best practices relevant to each position



The following best practices are shared by all leadership roles:

- Solve on-the-ground and personnel problems
- Attend RTC and committee meetings
- Participate in annual planning
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Plan for succession
- Recognize the contributions of volunteers
- Take Trail U workshops
- Participate in at least one of the following, according to your interests and abilities:
 - Help at outreach tabling events,
 - Become a certified chain sawyer,
 - Teach or assist at Trail U workshops,
 - Review proofs of maps,
 - Develop and run a trail crew, or
 - Work on special projects

4.2. Volunteer Roles

Because the Trail Conference began as a volunteer run organization, a three tier structure was developed to manage trail volunteers: generically maintainers, Supervisors/Corridor Managers, Local Trail Committee chairs. Over the years, as the Trail Conference took on more miles of trails and additional responsibilities, additional volunteer positions were developed. Full time staff was hired and more trail crews were created to build and repair high usage trails.

4.2.1. Regional Trails Council (RTC) Chairs

As head of the Regional Trails Council, the RTC Chair organizes and runs meetings which help trail leadership gain insight and expertise on local operational issues. The RTC chair coordinates operational activities and issues within a specific geographic region and provides input with respect to policies and the annual plan and budget. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Local Trail Committee chairs in the region and the Regional Program Coordinator, annually appoints the RTC chair for a renewable term of one calendar year. The RTC chair may be removed by the Executive Director and replaced in consultation as described above.

At the discretion of the RTC Chair, a Vice-Chair may also be appointed to share the responsibilities and duties of the Chair. If applicable, the RTC Chair responsibilities and resources apply to the Vice-Chair.

The RTC chair and the Regional Program Coordinator collaborate as a team to match organizational goals and objectives with an annual plan that coordinates activities within the region.

The RTC Chair collaborates with Local Trail Committee Chairs, Supervisors, Crew Chiefs, Crew Leaders, Corridor Managers, Program Coordinator and Committee Chairs.

All of the RTC Chairs and selected staff meet as the RTC Roundtable several times a year to discuss common concerns across regions. Meetings end with follow up plans along with a topic and date for the next meeting.

Responsibilities:

- [RTC Chair job description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)
 - [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Best Practices](#)
- [Communications](#)
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.2.2. Local Trail Committee (LTC) Chair

As the point person in a defined geographic region, the LTC Chair is responsible for planning and reporting on the maintenance and development of the trail network. To carry out this role, the LTC Chair communicates and coordinates on a regular basis with agency partners and land managers, Supervisors, Corridor Managers, Crew Chiefs, the Regional Program Coordinator, and other staff. Depending on the needs of the region, the LTC Chair may delegate that a Trail Supervisor is the contact to a Land Manager. While LTC Chairs are the volunteer leaders who organize and effectively run their committee, they can delegate some aspects of those meetings to other volunteers.

Responsibilities:

- [LTC Chair job description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)

- [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Chair and Leaders Best Practices](#)
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [New LTC Chair to do list](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resource](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.2.3. Trail Supervisor

Ensuring that the trails in the Supervisor’s area provide a positive hiking experience for the public is an easy way to describe what Trail Supervisors do. But they also have to take care of Trail Maintainers providing them the resources to accomplish the job and to cultivate a pleasant and rewarding volunteer experience. Ongoing contact with each Maintainer is a way of motivating them and recognizes their contributions in a positive manner.

A Trail Supervisor reports to the Local Trail Committee (LTC) Chair and is part of the Local Trail Committee and the Regional Trails Council.

Responsibilities:

- [Trail Supervisor job description](#)
- Encourage maintainers to take more advanced workshops
- Follow blazing standards established by the Land Manager
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)
 - [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Find a sawyer](#)
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [Trail Leader Resources](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Supervisor Best Practices](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.2.4. *Trail Maintainer*

Working behind the scene and but sometimes in full view, Trail Maintainers make it possible for hikers to enjoy the outdoors on trails that the Trail Conference maintains. Frequently maintainers sign up because they love to hike and want to “pay back” so that others can enjoy hiking. Once part of the volunteer trail community, they never see hiking trails in the same way.

Responsibilities:

- [Trail Maintainer Job description](#)
- Take the Trail Maintenance workshop
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Blazing Guidelines](#)
- [Maintainer Best Practices](#)
- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Paint Color Standards](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Maintenance Manual 7th Edition](#)
- [Trail U Workshops](#)
- [Tools](#)

4.2.5. *Club Trail Supervisor*

Member Clubs that are member organizations are responsible for providing maintainers and a Supervisor of those maintainers for the trails that they have agreed to maintain. The Trail Conference uses the job title Club Trail Supervisor to refer to the Supervisor of the club maintainers, regardless of what title the Club uses. Trail workers in member clubs report to their Club Trail Supervisor who is responsible for ensuring all assigned maintenance work is done, and reports their work to the Trail Conference Trail Supervisor.

Trail Conference Supervisors do not directly interact with the club maintainers except at their request. The clubs do not interact with the Land Managers, except through the Trail Conference Supervisor. The clubs are responsible for funding any work they do on their trail segments but may ask for Trail Conference resources through the Trail Conference Supervisor and the budgeting process.

Responsibilities:

- [Trail Maintainer Job description](#)
- Take Trail U workshop Introduction to Trail Maintenance
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Blazing Guidelines](#)

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- [Maintainer Best Practices](#)
 - [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
 - [Paint Color Standards](#)
 - [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Trail Maintenance Manual 7th Edition](#)
 - [Trail U Workshops](#)

4.2.6. Corridor Manager

The Corridor Manager is responsible for designing and implementing the club's corridor monitoring program. Note that the ATC refers to this position as Monitor Coordinator.

Responsibilities:

- [Corridor Manager Job Description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [AT Corridor Stewardship Field Book](#)
- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)

4.2.7. Corridor Monitor

A Corridor Monitor gathers and reports information about their assigned section of the corridor and its boundaries through periodic, on-the-ground inspections.

Responsibilities:

- [Corridor Monitor Job Description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [AT Corridor Stewardship Field Book](#)
- Best Practices
- New Corridor Monitor to do list
- [Appalachian Trail rare plant monitoring](#)
- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)

4.2.8. *Trail Crew Chief and Crew Leader*

Repairing and building trails with a Trail Crew is the job of a Crew Chief with assistance of a Crew Leader. The former may appoint one or more Crew Leaders to perform technical and administrative tasks necessary to run the crew, including overseeing the crew at the work site in the absence of the Crew Chief. Projects include, but are not limited to trail design/construction and building crib walls, steps, other rock work and bridges. Work may also involve brush clearing, removal of blowdown, clipping, invasive removal, etc.

Some crews function only with a "leader," who serves the same function as the Crew Chief. Sometimes the same individual is a Supervisor and is in charge of a crew. Formal crews and informal crews can be formed for a specific project. They follow the same reporting and safety guidelines as a crew with a designated leader.

Responsibilities:

- [Trail Crew Chief job description](#) and [Trail Crew Leader job description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)
 - [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)
- Basic First Aid/CPR at a minimum is recommended.
- Wilderness First Aid training is recommended.

Resources:

- [Trail Crews Best Practices](#)
- New Crew Leader to do List
- [Crew Work Trip report](#)
- [Crew Chief Summary Report](#)
- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.2.9. *Trail Crew Member*

Under the direction of a Trail Crew Chief or Crew Leader, Trail Crew Members restore and build our trails. They are not afraid to get their hands and boots dirty. Loving the camaraderie with others who enjoy hiking and to be part of a project are what makes a Trail Crew Member tick. They say and do safety first, fun second, and then work done. Unlike Maintainers and Monitors, Trail Crew Members do not have to fill in report forms.

Responsibilities:

- [Trail Crew Member job description](#)
- Knowledge of basic First Aid and CPR is recommended

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- Report on all work trips and complete summaries for reporting periods
 - Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
 - [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Trail Crews Best Practices](#)
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)

4.2.10. *Sawyers and Swampers*

The NY-NJ Trail Conference defines a Certified Sawyer as an individual who operates a chainsaw, while holding the required current saw operator and First Aid certifications.

The NY-NJ Trail Conference defines a Swamper as the person who works with a sawyer as part of a saw team. They do not operate a chainsaw unless they are also a Certified Sawyer.

Sawyer and swamper teams work within and across regions depending on where they are needed. Generally, a sawyer will work in cooperation with a particular Trail Supervisor. Frequently, a swamper will work with a given sawyer as part of that sawyer's regular team. Both are free to work anywhere within the NY-NJ Trail Conference's affiliated lands.

Responsibilities:

- **Sawyer Certification Requirements**
 - Sawyers must hold and maintain a current chainsaw operator's certification from one or more of the following presently recognized authorities:
 - Appalachian Trail Conservancy (USFS program)
 - NY-NJ Trail Conference (USFS program)
 - USDA / US Forest Service
 - Sawyers must obtain, hold and maintain current, nationally recognized, First Aid, Adult CPR and (in some regions) Bloodborne Pathogens certifications. Advanced, or Wilderness First Aid are recommended.
- **[Certified Sawyer Job Description](#)**
 - A Certified Chain Sawyer is a person who operates a chainsaw saw for the purpose of maintaining and/or building trails on lands owned or managed by partners of the NYNJTC.
 - Certified Sawyers may only operate within the scope of their certification level.
 - A sawyer is the final authority about the sawing activity's safety in the undertaking of work by their saw team.
 - Requests for saw work will come from Trail Supervisors, Trail Chairs, Trail Crews, and other TC established communications.
 - A sawyer will report all activities and potential problems via the [\[saw trip report form\]](#).
- **[Swamper Job Description](#)**
 - A swamper assists a sawyer by sharing the carrying of equipment, clearing of materials from the working area, watching for hazards during the cutting process, and other similar duties.
 - A swamper should have/wear the appropriate PPE for the work being performed, as specified by the lead sawyer.

- There is no current formal saw-related training requirement to be a swamper.
- In some jurisdictions, a swamper is required to obtain, hold and maintain current, nationally recognized, First Aid, Adult CPR and (in some regions) Bloodborne Pathogens certifications. Advanced, or Wilderness First Aid are recommended.
- **Sawyer Training Options**
 - The NY-NJ Trail Conference cooperates with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to deliver periodic approved Sawyer Basic Certification and Sawyer Recertification events. They are generally held twice a year at different locations within the NYNJTC's operating region.
 - Training events are coordinated and delivered by the NYNJTC's [Sawyer Committee](#), in conjunction with ATC and other certified training professionals.
 - It is a sawyer's responsibility to be aware of their sawyer certification's expiration date, and to place themselves in a recertification event.
 - It is a sawyer's responsibility to be aware of their First Aid certifications' expiration dates, and to ensure they remain current.
- **Management practices**
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Sawyers best practices](#)
- [Find a sawyer](#)
- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resource](#)
- [Resources for Sawyers and Swampers](#)
- [Tools](#)

4.2.11. *Invasive Plant Surveyor*

The Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) utilizes volunteers to survey invasive plants that are along the trails the Trail Conference maintains. Volunteers are required to attend a one-day [training workshop](#) held in late spring or early summer to learn how to identify 14 common invasive plants, collect data for the [Invasives Strike Force \(ISF\)](#), and use a GPS. The GPS units can be borrowed from the Trail Conference or volunteers may use their own.

- After completing training, volunteers are assigned to a trail section approximately 2 miles long.
- Surveyors are expected to walk their assigned trail section while identifying and mapping these invasive plants. Data collection can be completed in one outing or over several trips the surveyor feels he/she has identified all of the target species along the assigned trail, but should be completed by the end of the summer.
- After the trail section is completed, Surveyors can ask to be assigned another section.
- Surveyors can map as many trail sections during the season as they have time for.
- Surveyors may prefer to learn the second set of invasive species and move on to Phase 2 mapping.

Responsibilities:

- [Invasive Plant Surveyor Job description](#)
- Basic First Aid/CPR at a minimum is recommended.
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Invasives Strike Force page on www.nynjtc.org](#)

4.2.12. *Invasives Remover*

Invasives Removers participate in the Invasives Strike Force program. Removers are members of the [Invasives Strike Force Trail Crew](#) which holds removal work days around the region. Removers learn on-the-job and anyone can participate.

Responsibilities:

- [Join the ISF project](#)
- Basic First Aid/CPR at a minimum is recommended.
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Invasives Strike Force page on www.nynjtc.org](#)

4.2.13. *Invasive Insect Trap Monitor*

The Trail Conference supports the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in monitoring invasive insects. Each volunteer is assigned to check traps in a specific location every two weeks over a two month span.

Responsibilities:

- [Invasive Insect Trap Monitor Job description](#)
- Basic First Aid/CPR at a minimum is recommended.
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Invasives Strike Force page on www.nynjtc.org](#)

4.2.14. *Appalachian Trail National Heritage Program Monitor*

The Trail Conference supports the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and National Park Service in monitoring rare and endangered plants along the Appalachian Trail. This program is overseen by the Director of Land Stewardship.

- Each volunteer is assigned to check on a single species in a specific location and typically only makes one monitoring visit per year.
- Volunteers should have good plant identification skills and preferably some background with plants (landscape designer, master gardener, botany training, etc.),
- Need to be able to hike at least 4 miles, possibly over steep and uneven ground, to and from the monitoring location, and need to be comfortable going off-trail to look for the assigned species.

Responsibilities:

- Appalachian Trail National Heritage Program Monitor job description
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)

4.2.15. *Committee Chair*

Many volunteers donate their expertise, experience and time by chairing committees. Committees extend the overall capabilities and functions of the the Trail Conference. Committees may be trails-related such as the Appalachian Trail Coordinating or Sawyers committees, program or function oriented such as the Publications committee.

Responsibilities:

- [Program Committee Chair job description](#) draft
- [Committee Best Practices](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)
 - [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)

4.2.16. *Committee Members*

The charters for specific committees outline member responsibilities. In addition, committee members are encouraged to take on responsibilities outlined in the Best Practices.

Responsibilities:

- Committee Member job description
- Attend and participate in all meetings; let chair know if not available and provide status for assigned tasks or action items.
- Take on delegated tasks and complete them outside of meetings.
- Complete deliverables by the committed deadlines.
- Stay current with committee activities through regular emails; keep committee members with a need to know in all communications.
- Consider taking on additional responsibilities such as chair, vice chair or secretary.
- Members who are also board members ensure that the board expectations and perspectives are represented.
- [Committee Best Practices](#)
- Management practices
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)

Resources:

- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)

4.3. *Staff Roles*

4.3.1. *Trail Program Coordinator*

Trail Program Coordinators (PCs) are the primary staff who work with the Regional Trails Council (RTC), Local Trail Committee (LTC) Chairs, and Land Managers, and are the trail-facing points of contact for the rest of the staff. Trail Program Coordinators are usually the primary "go-to" employees for requests and questions pertaining to a specific region. In addition to their other responsibilities Trail Program Coordinators act as Trail Supervisors and Trail Chairs in areas where those positions are vacant to ensure that local trail issues don't fall by the wayside as new volunteer leaders are sought.

Each Trail PC is responsible for a particular geographic region; as of 2023 these are divided between a New Jersey Program Coordinator, New York Program Coordinator, and Long-Distance Trails (LDT) Program Coordinator who supports the Appalachian Trail, Long Path, and Highlands Trail across both states. Each Trail PC facilitates the team of staff, land managers and volunteers responsible for the trail experience in their region of responsibility. This position reports to the Trail Program Manager and is ultimately accountable to the Executive Director.

Responsibilities:

- [Regional Program Coordinator job description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)

- [Land Manager Relationships](#)
- [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Communications](#)
- Regional Program Coordinator best practices
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.3.2. Trail Builders

The Trail Conference has a single Senior Trail Builder who oversees one or more Field Trail Builders, depending on project load and seasonal funding. The role of a Trail Builder is to be the Trail Conference's staff-side institutional expertise in technical trail building. The primary function of the Trail Builders is to work on project planning, training, and field oversight for the Trail Conference Conservation Corps. They work closely with partners and land managers to ensure that project goals are attainable, technical work is high-quality, and contract obligations are fulfilled. The Trail Builders work alongside volunteer leaders in varying capacities, depending on the contract and project.

In addition to working with the Conservation Corps, Trail Builders can be requested for input and guidance on volunteer-led projects. Trail Builders also conduct technical Trail U workshops such as Trail Layout and Design, Stone Step Construction, and more. While the Senior Trail Builder is a full-time position, Field Trail Builders may operate in a full-time capacity or be hired on a seasonal basis for certain projects.

Responsibilities:

- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)
 - [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- Field manager best practices
- [Communications](#)
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.3.3. *Volunteer Engagement Team*

The Volunteer Engagement Team develops and sustains the Trail Conference’s volunteer base by planning, implementing, and evaluating staff and volunteer relations, volunteer policies, programs, and Practices. The team is made up of a Volunteer Engagement Manager and Volunteer Engagement Associate.

The Volunteer Engagement Team works with staff and existing volunteers to recruit community leaders and mobilize new volunteers to strengthen the capacity of the organization; develops, plans and executes effective volunteer programs; meets with committee chairs and other volunteer leaders to improve outreach and determine what is needed to enhance the productivity and satisfaction of the volunteers they oversee. The Volunteer Engagement Manager works closely with the Executive Director and senior staff to support the strategic plan and execution of programs that engage staff and volunteers to accomplish the organization’s mission.

Responsibilities:

- [Volunteer Coordinator job description](#)
- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)
 - [Land Manager Relationships](#)
 - [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- Volunteer Engagement Manager best practices
- [Communications](#)
- [My Dashboard on www.nynjtc.org](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.3.4. *Trail Program Manager*

The Trail Program Manager supports the organization’s trail-focused objectives and strategies, including support and leadership for the staff Program Coordinators, Trail Builders, and volunteer RTC committees. A major task of the Trail Program Manager is ensuring the quality and consistency of programs across all regions, sharing best practices and communicating organizational messages clearly.

The Trail Program Manager serves as the staff liaison for long-distance trail committees and interstate relationships, reducing the logistical challenges of managing projects and relationships that span both New York and New Jersey. The Trail Program Manager also works on MOUs, technical trail planning, and other time-intensive tasks so that Program Coordinators may focus on their core obligation of supporting volunteers.

Responsibilities:

- Management practices
 - [Shared Leadership Responsibilities and Best Practices](#)
 - [Volunteer Management](#)

- [Land Manager Relationships](#)
- [Money Matters](#)
- [Policies, Practices & Background](#)
- [Safety](#)

Resources:

- [Senior Engagement Manager best practices](#)
- [Communications](#)
- [My Dashboard on \[www.nynjtc.org\]\(http://www.nynjtc.org\)](#)
- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Trail Conference Owned Property](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Working with External Organization Volunteers](#)

4.4. Trail Crews

Volunteers, staff, and Conservation Corp (AmeriCorps) members come together in the field to work as Trail Crew teams. Their priority is safety first, fun second, work third. This section describes the types of Trail Crews that operate throughout the several regions.

4.4.1. Volunteer Trail Crews

The many rock steps, bridges, boardwalks, and bog bridges are the product of thousands of trail building hours of work performed by all-volunteer trail crews. The crews design, construct, and rehabilitate the hiking trails in our region. With plenty of on-the-job training, newcomers to the crew feel right at home on our crews. Trail crews usually meet on the weekends, in groups of six to ten persons. These dedicated crew members head off into the woods, armed with high spirits, rugged determination, and the know-how to accomplish the task at hand. Our crews vary widely in composition - some being formed of regular recurring members, and some being ad-hoc groups of one-off volunteers - and work as far north as the Catskill Forest Preserve and as far south and west as the Delaware Water Gap.

4.4.2. Conservation Corps Trail Crews

The Trail Conference manages the Conservation Corps which is filled with AmeriCorps members who work 900 hour terms throughout the year. The Conservation Corps trains, enables, and empowers future conservation leaders by teaching sustainable trail building and stewardship techniques. Corps crews engage and teach community volunteers on the responsible use and care of open space by addressing the needs of land managers. The Trail Conference Conservation Corps is a member of the [Corps Network AmeriCorps Education Award Program](#).

Conservation Trail Crews Corps extend the Trail Conference trail building capacity and are typically funded through specific restricted grants. The projects vary widely based on project stipulations dictated by partners and land managers - variables include the number of crews run a year, the hour commitment of each crew, the work season, the involvement of traditional volunteers alongside Corps members, public training workshop requirements, and more.

Work varies widely and may include technical stone work, GPS inventory and assessment, invasive species removal, and more. Crews always encourage volunteers to attend public work days throughout the season.

4.4.3. *Invasives Strike Force (ISF) Trail Crew*

Unlike other trail crews that serve a particular LTC or Supervisor, the Invasives Strike Force (ISF) Trail Crew works in different parks and regions as needed, but primarily in the New Jersey, West Hudson and East Hudson regions. The projects are selected by the Director of Land Stewardship and run by staff or seasonal Conservation Corps members qualified in invasive species identification and removal techniques. Volunteers receive on-the-job training and anyone can participate.

5. VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

From its beginning in 1920, volunteers have been part of the Trail Conference. It was not until 1974 that the first staff person was hired. As the Trail Conference's responsibilities have grown so has the number and type of staff and volunteers increased. Based on the number of hours worked, both on-trail and off-trail volunteers are the equivalent of 30 full time employees.

Both staff and volunteers are involved with managing volunteers. For example, LTC Chairs appoint and manage Supervisors who, in turn, manage maintainers. For the AT committees, a Corridor Manager supervises Monitors. LTC Chairs are appointed by the Board of Directors based on the Executive Director's recommendation.

The relationship between LTC Chairs and their Program Coordinators is based on trust and delegation. They are a team that makes trails possible.

In some sense, RTC meetings are part of volunteer management as they provide a forum for discussion of issues and dissemination of information.

Volunteer management includes

- Recruiting and retaining volunteers
- Providing formal education learning opportunities such as Trail U workshops and on-the-job training
- Report on completed work
- Assist with recruiting
- Motivate and mentor
- Recognize and celebrate contributions
- Insurance

The three R's of volunteer management - Recruit, Retain, and Recognize are only a part of a successful volunteer management program. Recruiting includes orientation and some education. Retention means providing an environment and culture that volunteers enjoy.

5.1. Recruiting Volunteers

A volunteer powered organization must constantly recruit - whether it is for episodic volunteers, ones with on-going but few hour per year or positions with responsibility. Any position with volunteer management responsibilities is involved with recruiting whether making the ask or filling a position with someone who is interested.

No single recruiting method works best to fill every volunteer position. What works for recruiting many people for the same job is different than recruiting for a trail leadership position. The table gives recruiting methods with examples of where it could be used as well as the advantages and disadvantages.

Do it Yourself			
Method	Used to Find	Advantages	Disadvantages
Email to targeted groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintainers, monitors, crew members ● Projects needing many people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inexpensive ● Easy to forward and reply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reaches only those who reveal their email address ● Impersonal
Contact a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many volunteers for a large project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Someone else finds volunteers ● Serves as a recommendation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Message of what you want could be lost ● Might get a variety of skill levels, some not useful
Volunteer interest sheet from website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any of the jobs listed on the sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They have expressed interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unknown what they have any track record
Seen in action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trail Supervisor ● In a similar position ● Likely able to assume more responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has a track record that might or might not be valid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Risk taking them from another project ● Must ask them
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities requiring specific skills (board members) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has a track record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to follow up ● Must ask person
Targeted phone call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Folks to help on work trips or attend workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cold calls are never fun
Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintainers, monitors, trail crew members, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Folks who are interested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dates might not be convenient
Speaker at meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Particular projects ● Project requiring episodic volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Captive audience ● Group enthusiasm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● people feel you are putting them on the spot
Word of mouth or seen on the trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintainers ● Monitors ● Trail Crew members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can gauge interest immediately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some might not follow through
Over the transom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Almost anything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wants to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suitable opportunity not currently available
Volunteer recruitment event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Projects requiring sheer numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Might not be convenient ● Cost to present

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups interested in becoming involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs a more elaborate presentation Group enthusiasm 	
Sign up sheets at a tabling event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintainers, monitors, trail crew members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wants to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up is passed along to others

Coordinate with Program Coordinator or Communications Manager			
Method	Used to Find	Advantages	Disadvantages
Email to targeted groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintainers, monitors, crew members Projects needing many people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive Easy to forward and reply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches only those who reveal their email address Impersonal
Ad on website that lists volunteer opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintainers, monitors, crew members Committee members with specialized skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide scope of people; contact if interested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might not be suited (non member)
Article in local or regional newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities listed in article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide broadcast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot control content of article Miss people who do not subscribe
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects needing many people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive Immediate results Don't need a mailing list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches only those who have friended your page
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large project needing people on short notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive and immediate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No control as to where it goes
Rack card, flyer, or poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise workshop, work rip or special event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcast to wide audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impersonal Perception of junk mail
Volunteer match website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large projects with low skill Position with high skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wide broadcast of needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For positions of high skill, match with mission is important

5.1.1. Finding Maintainers and Monitors

When Supervisors or Corridor Managers need to replace maintainers and monitors, they should let their LTC know about vacancies. Ways fill vacancies include:

- Run a trail maintenance workshop - often the best way
- On the trail when an interested party stops and asks
- Placing an ad in the e-walker
- Sending a blast email to selected zip codes
- Sign up sheets at tabling events
- Letting others know of your need(s) via a phone call.

5.1.2. *Finding Supervisors and Corridor Managers*

The LTC and the Program Coordinator should review the job description, best practices, and a list of Maintainers or Monitors in that area.

- See who, if any, has those most of those skills or you think would be to interested in assuming more responsibility
- Identify someone who could assist you, ask him/her if interested, and then begin to have he/she assist you in selected tasks.
- Gradually shift responsibilities

5.1.3. *Finding Crew Chiefs and Crew Leaders*

- Consider Crew Leaders interested to take on more to see if responsibilities can gradually be shifted.
- Look among the crew members for those who gravitate towards and have an interests in leading a team.

5.1.4. *Filling an ad hoc or new leader position*

Ad-hoc positions may include running a tabling event or a work trip:

- Ask volunteers who have similar skills for recommendations or if they are interested
- Targeted email based on interests
- Develop a Trail U course

5.2. Volunteer Eligibility and Membership Requirements

Volunteers do not need to be members of the Trail Conference, but they are agents of the Trail Conference in interactions with the public or our partners. As such, they need to know the bounds of what they can and cannot do, e.g. [Code of Conduct](#), non-disclosure or confidentiality agreements, statements to the press, following established Trail Conference policies and procedures, and obeying state and local laws.

Any volunteer under the age of 18 -- and not working as a member of an adult supervised Trail Conference member club that has already obtained guardian/parental permission -- must submit a signed and completed Trail Conference Guardian/Parental Permission form to the Trail Conference prior to participating in a Trail Conference sponsored activity. See [Working With External Organization Volunteers](#).

5.3. Orientation

LTC Chairs, Supervisors, Corridor Managers, and Crew Leaders orient and train their new Maintainers, Monitors, and Crew Members, respectively. Orientation should also include information about the Trail Conference.

Who	What	By whom
Maintainer	Trail U, Site visit	Supervisor

Monitor	Trail U, Site visit	Corridor Manager
Crew member	Tailgate safety talk, On the job, Trail U	Crew Chief/Crew Leader
Supervisor	Trail U, New Supervisor to do List, Review TMG	LTC Chair
Corridor Manager	Previous position as Monitor	AT Committee Chair
LTC Chair	Trail U, New LTC Chair to do List, Review TMG	Another LTC Chair and PC
Crew Chief	Previous experience but from where	Existing or retiring

5.4. Volunteer Service Agreements (VSA)

Many land managers require the completion of Volunteer Service Agreements before volunteers are allowed to undertake work on their property. This can serve a number of important purposes: ensuring an appropriate scope of work, maintaining accurate contact lists of current volunteers, and legally establishing insurance and liability protections for volunteers.

The [Volunteer Forms webpage](#) maintains a current list of VSAs that volunteers might need to sign. The Volunteer Engagement Team reaches out annually to volunteers and committees where these forms are required, and Trail Supervisors should assist with ensuring that all of their Trail Maintainers have completed VSAs where appropriate. Any questions about VSAs should be directed to volunteer@nynjtc.org.

5.5. Training: Trail University

The training workshops offered by the Trail Conference are known as Trail University (Trail U). Trail University (or “Trail U” for short) is a series of workshops and hands-on training opportunities designed to empower outdoor enthusiasts, taught by experienced Trail Conference volunteers and staff. Trail U provides the skills needed to help build and maintain trails, as well as care for the lands these trails pass through.

Trail U offers 3 Curriculum Tracks: Expert Trail Maintainer, Expert Ecological Steward, and Expert Trail Builder. Volunteers complete the required core workshops and take at least 2 elective courses to complete a curriculum track. The [Trail U Brochure](#) must be used as a checklist with corresponding dates of workshops attended. Completed Trail U brochures should be emailed to volunteer@nynjtc.org to receive the Trail Conference logo patch and rocker. For each additional track completed, you will receive a new rocker.

Workshops offered include, but are not limited to:

- Trail Maintenance
- Leave No Trace Awareness
- Eyes of a Trail Builder
- Rigging for Trail Work
- Invasive Plant Management Tips and Techniques
- Trail Layout and Design

Resources:

- [Trail U](#)
- [Scheduled workshop events on www.nynjtc.org](#)

5.6. Retention and Recognition

Dedicated volunteers are a core part of the Trail Conference. Just like businesses know that keeping customers is easier than attracting new ones, the Trail Conference recognizes that they have a similar situation: it is easier to retain volunteers rather than constantly replace them. The factors that encourage a volunteer to stay are under the direct control of the Trail Conference.

5.6.1. Retention

An organization that wants to retain its volunteers knows they need to engage, respect, and educate. But the ways to retain a volunteer vary - one size does not fit all. They continue to volunteer not for what they can do for the Trail Conference, but what the Trail Conference can do for them. A volunteer may have more than one important motive for giving their time and effort; they can have different reasons at different times during their life.

Knowing why someone wants to volunteer is important both to attract them and retain them. But what attracts someone to volunteer might not be the same reason they stay. For example, a common reason why someone volunteers at the Trail Conference is to give back because they love to hike. But they continue to volunteer because of the opportunities to develop skills.

The flip side of why volunteers stay is why do they leave. There are only so many hours in a day and everyone has different demands on their time. Unlike paying jobs, volunteers can leave on a whim. Health, aging, or the demands of personal life such as family or work might cause a volunteer to step down. The Trail Conference has little or no effect on those decisions. But they do have some control over other factors such as poor working conditions, relationships have gone sour, disrespect of work done, lack of training or challenging tasks

Reasons why volunteers stay:

- **Social:** Being able to work with like minded people provides opportunities to socialize and make new friends.
- **Personal Growth:** Being able to contribute to the better good gives a feeling of satisfaction especially if it is something you like to do.
- **Skill Development:** Some volunteers want to bring their expertise to a group, while others are looking to enhance their skills or learn something entirely new. Trail Crew members might hold a desk job, but the camaraderie of a group working with their hands has more appeal. Finding what a potential volunteer would like to develop or likes to do becomes a retention factor.
- **Challenge:** The lure of a challenge is a way of retaining a valued volunteer with a proven track record. For those folks who love to learn, keeping them interested means finding a suitable challenge such as taking on more responsibility or enhancing existing skills. Volunteers who stay are ones who feel they are making a significant impact.

5.6.2. Recognition

The multiple ways to celebrate the achievement of Trail Conference volunteers include both internal and external recognitions. No matter what the level, recognition should always mean something to the recipient, but everyone places a different value on the same recognition.

Some of the ways the Trail Conference recognizes volunteers:

- A thank you note from Trail Leaders during Volunteer Week, before and after reporting, and at holiday time.
- Annual recognition items like t-shirts or hats recognize the largest number of Trail Conference volunteers and serve two purposes. Made available every year with new designs, they not only say thank-you to volunteers but also advertise the Trail Conference.
- Thanking people for participating includes: supplying food after a work trip, writing an email, holding a trail opening, hosting a volunteer picnic. Funds are available to Chairs, Supervisors, and Corridor Managers for each of their volunteers to use towards the celebration event.
- An article in a local publication publicizes a volunteer’s effort in the wider community is two fold: it recognizes the volunteer and at the same time brings attention to the Trail Conference. All external publicity is to be coordinated with the Communication Manager.

Types of Recognitions	Time, cost			Suitability									Given By			
	Low Cost	Fast and Easy	High Visibility	Long Time Volunteers	Volunteers & Staff	Youth	Youth groups	Groups >10	Groups <10	Public Officials	Land Managers	Businesses	Special circumstances	Trail leader or Staff	Volunteer Committee	Board
Food																
After work trips	•	•												•		
Volunteer recognition event		•		•				•	•					•		
Gifts																
Stickers, magnet	•	•			•	•	•							•		
Patches	•		•		•	•	•							•		
T shirt		•	•	•	•									•		
Caps			•	•										•		
Vests			•	•								•			•	
Written																
Postcards		•		•	•			•					•	•		
Names listed in a book or on a map	•	•	•		•					•	•	•	•	•		
Letters of appreciation	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Article in ewalker or <i>Trail Walker</i>	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Press release or article on website	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Awards																
Certificates	•	•	•							•	•	•		•	•	
Unframed photos	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Framed photos		•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Poster of trail or project			•							•	•	•	•	•		
Named awards	•		•	•	•					•	•	•	•			•

5.6.3. Awards

In addition to the forms of recognition that are easy to implement, the Trail Conference annually honors volunteers who go above and beyond through annual service awards recognition. Each year the Trail Conference invites volunteers, members, park partners, staff, land managers, and the general public for nominations of volunteers for these awards. There are 12 categories, each with specific criteria to be met. Anyone may nominate individuals for these awards through a [webform for nominations](#). The Awards Committee deliberates all nominations, and makes a determination. Award winners are honored and recognized at the annual volunteer appreciation event. Summaries of the award recipients and events are shared in the Trail Walker and on social media.

Resources

- [Example nominations](#)
- [Web form for nominations](#)
- [Awards and honorees](#) Describes the awards and recipients; click on awardees to see past honorees and their contributions.

5.7. Volunteer Performance

When a trail volunteer is not doing the job as described in their job description, their supervisor needs to find out why and if necessary encourage the volunteer to step down. Before beginning a formal process, try to find or figure out a reason behind poor performance. Some common reasons are:

- Health or aging issues for self or family members
- Failure to realize the time and scope required for the job
- Dislike of paperwork or online reporting
- Not knowing how to do some aspect of the job description
- No longer interested, or interested in something else
- Unwillingness to engage with Trail Conference staff members or protocol, including online hour collection and reporting processes

When asking someone if they can step down, a trail leader must be tactful and remember to thank the volunteer for their time and service.

If the issue involves a volunteer who is directly managed by another organization, such as a Club, the supervisor should notify the Club trails chair about the problem. It is likely they will already know about the problem, however, the Club President may need to be notified if the Club Trail Chair is not aware of (or unwilling to address) the issues.

Removing a Club from maintaining a trail is similar to removing a Maintainer. But if they maintain only one trail, their membership fee would increase to be the fee charged to member organizations. When such a situation arises, discuss the changes with the relevant trail PC and Executive Director.

Because the LTC Chair has a functioning relationship with a Supervisor, he/she will notice more than just a failure to report. In addition to the reasons listed above, another common failure is that a Supervisor fails to contact a potential maintainer in a reasonable amount of time. An LTC Chair should have a continuing conversation with a Supervisor to help fill in the gaps.

Removing an LTC Chair has large ramifications, but sometimes it needs to be done. It might be that the LTC Chair does one part of the job extremely well such as having an excellent rapport with land managers but falls short in other areas. Areas that frequently cause problems are:

- Dislike of recruiting or filling vacancies
- Failure to follow up on problems or projects
- Antagonistic relationships with Land Managers, other trail organizations, or Trail Conference staff
- Health or aging issues for self or family members
- Lack of time due to other obligations, such as work or family

Some LTC Chairs who are not fulfilling responsibilities hold onto the position out of a sense of obligation, feeling that if they leave nobody will take their place. Removing the LTC Chair means that a PC has to fill in the gap and sometimes something is better than nothing. Having a conversation about the shortcomings usually results in an LTC Chair seeing that they need to resign or find an assistant to fill in the gaps.

Resources:

- [Reporting, Trail Information and Resources](#)
- [Procedures for removing a maintainer, club maintainer, or maintaining club.](#)

5.8. Succession Planning

No one stays on a job forever. Eventually they leave whether it is a paid position or a volunteer one. Regardless of why they leave, it is prudent to plan ahead, especially if the volunteer position was one with major responsibilities. Succession planning is closely tied to recruiting. Every Trail Leader needs to think proactively about his or her replacement.

5.8.1. *Maintainers and Monitors*

On average, there is a 10% annual turnover in Maintainers and Monitors. Supervisors and Corridor Managers need to be proactive and run a workshop every year. Coordinate with other members in your RTC so that you don't run too many in a region.

5.8.2. *Trail Leadership Positions*

The annual vacancy rate across Trail Conference trail leadership positions is about 10%. These positions are typically harder to fill than Maintainer or Monitor positions because of the responsibility involved. As for Crew Chiefs and Crew Leaders, trail building and repair skills are necessary and best done by recruiting current crew members. Finding replacements for trail leader positions is best done through succession planning.

Trail leaders periodically should think of how long they would like to stay in their volunteer positions. Finding a replacement ahead of time means that:

- Recruiting can be done under less stress see Section 5.1 for suggestions
- Training is done at the pace agreed upon by both parties
- Service continues especially with reporting

- The Land Manager gets to know the new trail leader
- Responsibilities can shift at a pace agreeable to both parties

5.9. Injury and Insurance Protocol

While the Trail Conference makes every effort to emphasize and support safety, the nature of the work may result in accidents. Before starting work, each individual should know what steps to take in the case of an injury. All referenced forms can be found at www.nynjtc.org/incident.

Steps to follow in the case of an injury:

1. Assess the situation and risk. Call 911 if necessary.
2. Administer first aid and care within the scope of your ability and training. The person with the highest level of first aid training should take charge of administering care.
3. If the injury is serious seek professional medical attention.
4. Notify the injured person's emergency contact if necessary.
5. If the injured individual refuses care, they must sign a [Refusal of Care Form](#) after they are deemed to show no evidence of an altered state of consciousness that impairs judgment by completing the assessment on the Form. See www.nynjtc.org/incident for the [Refusal of Care Form](#).
6. Volunteers: Limited insurance coverage is available if needed. If the injury is not serious, notify the Trail Conference before seeking medical help to sort out insurance. See www.nynjtc.org/incident for the Volunteer Insurance Coverage Grid.
7. Report the injury to the Trail Conference and file a [Personal Incident Report](#) within 24 hours or the next available business day, even if medical treatment is not sought.
 - a. Phone calls should be made directly to the Trail Conference:
 - i. If the involved parties are volunteers, contact the Volunteer Engagement Manager at **201-512-9348 ext. 850**.
 - ii. If the involved parties are paid full or part-time staff, contact the Finance and Operations Manager at **201-512-9348 ext. 823**.
 - iii. If the involved parties are Conservation Corps Members, contact the Conservation Corps Manger at **201-512-9348 ext. 819**.
 - iv. If the above contact is unavailable, make sure to leave a message, then call the office at **201-512-9348** and **select 0** to be connected to the general line.
 - b. Document the injury via a [Personal Incident Report](#), even if medical treatment is not sought. See www.nynjtc.org/incident for the [Personal Incident Report](#):
 - i. Email reports to volunteer@nynjtc.org for volunteer related incidents; to mperro@nynjtc.org for staff related incidents; or drop off at headquarters.
 - ii. If a volunteer-related injury occurs while working on the Appalachian Trail, fill out the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's incident report and send it to both the Trail Conference and ATC. This report can be done in place of the TC Personal Incident Report.

- iii. If a volunteer-related injury occurs while working on OPRHP land, fill out the OPRHP incident report and send it to the Trail Conference. This report should be done in addition to the Trail Conference's Personal Incident Report.
 - iv. If a volunteer-related injury occurs on National Park, PIPC, NJDEP, NYDEP or DEC lands (etc.), the Trail Conference office or elsewhere, additional paperwork may need to be filed. Complete the Trail Conference Personal Incident Report first and then we will determine if additional reports need to be filed.
- c. The Trail Conference staff will notify all appropriate entities.

See www.nynjtc.org/incident for:

- Injury Protocol and Insurance Information
- Refusal of Care Form
- Personal Incident Report
- ATC Incident Report Form
- OPRHP Injury and Illness Report

5.10. Confidentiality

From time to time volunteers in certain positions will have access to confidential information that the Trail Conference regards as extremely sensitive.

Volunteers with access to confidential information must sign a Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and return it to the staff member responsible for volunteer programs. In accordance with Confidentiality Agreement, no confidential information may be disclosed to any other organization or to anyone else without a legitimate reason related to Trail Conference work, as approved in writing by the Executive Director. This includes, but is not limited to, information about Trail Conference policies, systems, strategies, methods of operation, contractual agreements and software, any confidential information related to volunteers, customers, contributors, and other proprietary matters.

By signing the acknowledgement in the [Confidentiality Policy](#) and continuing volunteer activities with the Trail Conference, all volunteers agree not to make any such disclosure during or after their involvement with the Trail Conference. Disclosing confidential information in violation of this policy will result in severing the Trail Conference's relationship with the volunteer. Private information is confidential and should also be treated as such. Also see

5.11. Teamwork and Collaboration

Teamwork and collaboration are cultivated through the deliberate actions of leaders. They are based on inclusiveness, trust and delegation in a symbiotic relationship with mutual respect for team members.

Amazing teams such as LTCs and Trail Crews:

- Cultivate a diverse, active, and informed structure
- Create and activate dynamic succession plans that invite, encourage and inspire participation from all members of a committee.

-
- Use multiple communication tools and techniques to consistently listen, inform, share, and steward trail activities
 - Plan and implement a variety of opportunities recognize volunteer efforts
 - Offer projects that engage volunteers with each other and the Trail Conference
 - Have amazing leaders who
 - Are results driven
 - Have passionate professionalism
 - Possess a collaborative mindset
 - Own the problem and make no excuses
 - Are constant champions
 - Energize others

Many volunteers offer their contributions through virtual teams, that is teams that meet through conference calls or on line. Communication, coordination and staying in touch with technology ensures that out of sight is not out of mind. Also see [Committee Best Practices](#) draft

5.12. Code of Conduct

The Trail Conference attracts volunteers from all walks of life. The Trail Conference Code of Conduct is intended to promote professionalism, safety, equal opportunity and a harassment-free environment. The code also addresses conflict resolution, should it become necessary.

To ensure that the organization maintains a welcoming environment, all volunteers and staff members must abide by the [Trail Conference Code of Conduct](#) approved by the Board on December 6, 2022.

5.13. Decision Making Process

How the Trail Conference makes decisions is just as important as the decisions we make. The many components that feed into a decision take available resources, funding, existing agreements, contractual obligations and impacts on future relationships with partners or land managers into consideration.

- Councils and Committees are empowered and encouraged to manage decisions in the context of their respective approved charters.
- Leaders are encouraged to make decisions within their scopes of responsibility based on the resources that are available.
- Decision making for trails is a cooperative process that involves the Land Manager, LTC Chairs, Supervisors, Trail Crews, environmental assessment, and Program Coordinators.
- Decisions should be made at the lowest possible levels taking multiple options and paths into consideration.

6. LAND MANAGER RELATIONSHIPS

The Trail Conference works in close cooperation with various governmental agencies and nonprofits in the region and is the only coordinating organization for hiking trails in its area. The Trail Conference works through Land Managers, the representatives of these organizations, to accomplish our mission.

Land Managers have the authority to manage lands for the public and represent the owners of the land that allows the Trail Conference to do work on the lands. While the Land Managers are not part of the Trail Conference organizational structure, they are our partners and are an integral part of the Trail Conference operation. Without them and the land they manage, we would not be able to work.

Generally the LTC Chairs are the primary contacts to work closely with the Land Managers in their respective regions to assess needs and identify new projects. Depending on the region, Supervisors may be the primary contacts.

6.1. Agreements

The Trail Conference has two types of agreements: organization to organization and individual to organization. Whenever the Trail Conference maintains a trail on public land or on lands owned by a non-profit conservation organization, a cooperative management agreement should be entered into between the Trail Conference and the public landowner.

Whenever the Trail Conference maintains a trail on private land, permission must be requested and obtained from the landowner. Ideally, the Trail Conference should obtain a permanent easement to maintain the trail across the private land. If a permanent easement cannot be obtained, a written revocable agreement (which may be in the form of a letter) should be obtained.

If the landowner will give only verbal permission, a memorandum stating the circumstances under which verbal permission was obtained must be filed in the Trail Conference office with the Regional Program Coordinator.

Occasionally a land manager or government agency requires an individual to sign an agreement. Those forms are filled out and handled according to the requesting partner. Examples include National Park Service, New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. A copy can be obtained in the Trail Management Guide.

6.2. Private Property

Cooperative agreements will apply to private landowners who permit trails with or without a cooperative agreement. For New Jersey, provide them with a copy (or link) to the NJ Recreational Use Statute and The Private Landowner. This statute protects landowners who provide recreational opportunities. For New York, landowners are protected by the [General Obligations Law](#).

6.3. Land Manager and Partner Agreements

Land Managers or Partners can be in National Parks, State Parks, County, Municipal Parks, and nonprofits-own lands. Agreements must be either handshake or a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#). The latter is preferred. When Land Managers want a formal arrangement of how trails are maintained, they can choose using Trail Conference volunteers or supplying their own maintainers. The former situation requires the organization or municipality to join the Trail Conference as a member club, supplies their own volunteers and uses Trail Conference volunteers to train them and do heavy construction. In the latter case, the Trail Conference supplies maintainers either as individual maintainers or a club.

1. Generally, MOUs and other Agreements are considered confidential and should not be distributed.
2. MOUs must be approved by both the Trail Conference Land Manager. The Trail Conference will not agree to indemnify other organizations or public entities, except with Board approval.
3. These agreements include terms important to the Park or Land Manager with specifics as to what Trail Conference will do. Each Chair, Supervisor, and Corridor Manager is responsible to share the park-specific trail work rules with Maintainers, Monitors, Crew Chiefs, Crew Leaders and Sawyers working in the specific parks.
4. Some Land Managers and Partners require a formal Annual Report and Annual Meeting with them, which will be noted as part of the MOU. The LTC Chair works with the Land Manager to establish annual plans and commitments on the land manager's schedule.
5. MOUs have a term determined by the Land Manager and Partner and are renewable. Some MOUs have an "escape clause" stating notice of termination after a period of notification, but no renewal clause.

6.4. Working with Land Managers

While the Land Managers are outside of the Trail Conference organization, they form an important part of the Trail Conference operation. The LTC Chairs and Regional Program Coordinators work closely with each Land manager representing the parks in their respective regions to assess needs and identify new projects. Chairs and Crew Chiefs should establish and maintain pleasant, collaborative relationships to understand needs. In some instances, the Supervisor will be assigned to work with Land Managers.

Best Practices in establishing and maintaining a relationship with a Land Manager.

1. Limit visits to a Land Manager's office, recognize their busy schedules and plan for a professional visit.
2. Provide a notice of intent to visit, confirm availability, and have an agenda with a list of topics to discuss.
3. Work with the Regional Program Coordinators to provide timely reports to the Land Manager.

Many parks have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Trail Conference. Each Chair and Supervisor is responsible to share the park-specific trail work rules with the Maintainers, Crew Chiefs, Crew Leaders, and Sawyers working within that park. Generally MOUs and Agreements should be considered confidential and should not be distributed. [Sample MOU](#)

Each LTC Chair works with the Land Manager to establish the annual plans and commitments on the Land Manager's schedule. New projects are established through MOUs agreed to with the Land Manager.

6.5. Special Land Manager Considerations for Invasive Species Treatment

Invasive species removals in many parks require additional permissions from land managers and in some cases may even require official permits. If you are considering any invasive species removal work outside of the trail corridor you should consult with the Trail Conference's Director of Land Stewardship for advice on how to prepare and request permission from the land manager in question. The Trail

Conference has worked with many of our land managers for previous invasive species removal projects. In some cases, the Director of Land Stewardship will need to request official permits. The Director of Land Stewardship can also advise on the best practices for removal of the species in question and help you determine whether the project should be taken on by the Invasives Strike Force Trail Crew.

7. SAFETY

The [Outdoor Activity Safety Guidelines](#) are intended to reduce the occurrence of bodily injury during all outdoor activities conducted by the Trail Conference. The goal is to reduce risk as low as reasonably practical and to improve the outcome if bodily injury does occur. The outdoor activities covered by these guidelines range from leading hikes to chain sawing and crew work and include all outdoor-based Trail U workshops. The primary intent is to encourage a safety conscious culture without creating burdensome, unwieldy, or overly complex procedures and requirements.

The outdoor activities addressed by these guidelines have been divided into four levels based upon the risks associated with the activity:

- Level 1 – Activities on trails with no tools
- Level 2 – Activities off trails or activities on or off trails with tools including clipping, general trail maintenance, and herbicide use
- Level 3 – Trail rehabilitation and construction tasks typically done by trail crews
- Level 4 – Chain sawing

Tables are provided for each level showing:

- Potential job hazards
- Safety gear (Personal Protective Equipment or PPE) recommendations and requirements
- Recommended safety practices and procedures
- First aid training recommendations and requirements

One topic not covered by the Safety Guide is a check-in/check-out procedure for all individual and group trips. Such a process is required by ATC/NPS for all work on the Appalachian Trail. This document recommends that the following applies to all trail related work by volunteers or staff.

If you are going out alone, it is recommended that you tell someone that you are on a maintenance trip. Let them know where you are going, how long you expect to be out, and check back in with them when you have returned to the trailhead. (quoted from Trail Maintenance Manual)

In addition, if you are in a group of two or more, the leader/organizer of the group should verify that all of the people in the group have gotten back to the trailhead at the conclusion of any trip.

8. TRAIL CONFERENCE OWNED PROPERTY

The Trail Conference works to develop trails on purchased lands before selling them to state park agencies as soon as feasible to free up funds for future parcel conservation. During the time that the Trail Conference owns the property, the Conservation Committee manages the property. The property should be inspected at minimum once annually. Trail Chairs and Supervisors should be informed when a trail they are responsible crosses Trail Conference owned land to keep a watchful eye on it.

There are three categories of Trail Conference owned property:

- Lands with a trail running through it
- Lands that buffers one of our trails
- Land purchased for a trail relocation

9. MONEY MATTERS

The work of the Trail Conference is supported through membership dues, publication sales, and donations. Much of the maintenance, trail building, and corridor monitoring is performed by on-trail volunteers through thousands of hours of donated time and require no funding. Local Trail Chairs, Supervisors, Corridor Managers, and Crew Chiefs work with the Program Coordinators to consolidate the resource needs of the RTC.

9.1. Annual Plan and Budget

The Trail Conference's annual plan and budget process is used for setting priorities, requesting resources for the following year, review and final approval process.

Planning process for LTC Chairs, Supervisors, Corridor Managers, and Crew Chiefs:

1. January - Complete prior year end reports
2. June - Propose projects and plans for the following year, especially those that will require funding
3. July - Complete spring reports
4. September - work with Regional Program Coordinator to plan for the following year
5. December - Prepare end of year report



9.2. Procurement & Reimbursement

If funding is available from the sources described in the [Sources of Funding](#) section, the requisition procedure must be used before a purchase over \$250 is made. The reimbursement form should be used to be reimbursed for project expenses.

Resources:

- [Procedure and Requisition Form](#)
- [Volunteer Expense Form](#)

9.3. Sources of Funding

The Trail Conference often funds trail projects and staff time through grants, whose availability varies from year to year. These grants are typically awarded in the form of restricted funds, which means that they can only be utilized for purposes within a specific assigned scope. It is preferred to seek grants with the most flexibility in how funds are used, with “unrestricted” or “operating” funds being ideal so that money can be applied across different projects and regions as needed - this also minimizes the number

of separate restricted grants that need to be tracked and managed, which can consume lots of administrative time. For example, if someone offers to donate \$200 to repair a specific small bridge, we might instead direct them to donate that amount to a larger “trail crew tool and materials” fund with the understanding that the bridge would be a future crew project.

Grants have different matching requirements and some allow the match to be through volunteer hours. Thus tracking of volunteer hours is important.

The Trail Conference manages the Elizabeth Levers Memorial Fund for Youth Projects. As a longtime supporter of hiking trails, Elizabeth Levers encouraged young people to participate in trail projects. The grants are generally used to help an Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold Award with a project where the youth has done fundraising but is a little short of funds. A typical amount granted is around \$50 and up to \$200. See [Elizabeth Levers Memorial Fund for Youth Projects grant application](#).

The Trail Conference has access to various corporate, private foundation, state, and federal grants. The list of available opportunities constantly changes. Contact the Regional Program Coordinator to assess the best source for the project at hand.

All applications for grants must go through the Regional Program Coordinator, who will work with the development team to ensure that the specific grant application format and process are followed.

10. WORKING WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Trail Conference sometimes receives requests by an individual (usually youth), park, or corporation for help with a particular project or for a day of service. Requests by youth or corporate groups to volunteer on a project provide opportunities for longer term engagement with the Trail Conference. Accepting these requests also raises awareness and profile in the communities where the Trail Conference works.

These special events enable external groups to maintain or construct trails using episodic volunteers. Each park has different arrangements and restrictions on what volunteers can and cannot do.

10.1. Working With Youth

The value of working with youth is to encourage our next generation of trail volunteers, whether it be through a particular project, involvement in various trail crews, or trail maintenance.

Youth will need our advice and guidance when working on trail related projects. The most frequent requests come from scouts, either a Boy Scout to attain Eagle rank or a Girl Scout for a Gold Award. Through these projects, a scout learns to develop a project, manage from initial idea to funding needs, manage other scouts and workers during the project and project completion. Completed project will need sign-off from the relevant Trail Conference leader (i.e Supervisor, Crew Chief, etc.) and therefore will need the leader’s involvement.

Other youth projects include civic internships for seniors in high school. These projects can be as varied as the needs of a Supervisor or LTC chair. Enhancing a kiosk with a map of what is nearby or a video of activities that are in a park are just two projects that could be undertaken.

Requirements:

- [Youth Policy](#) must be strictly followed.
- A volunteer working with youth must be knowledgeable with the Youth Policy and must have had a background check completed through the Trail Conference at no cost to the volunteer.
- Two-adult rule followed and enforced.
- Parental Permission for youth under 18 unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Background check for Trail Conference volunteers when working with youth.

Resources:

- [Youth Policy](#)
- [Parental Consent form](#)
- [Youth Program Application form](#) (background check)

10.2. Working With Organizations

The Trail Conference receives requests for help from parks due to limited resources, and offers from corporations and schools wanting employees or students to give back to their community. Often organizations interested in helping on a community project discover the Trail Conference through a volunteer or word of mouth. There are ways to engage no matter who is requesting or offering to help :

1. For parks requesting project assistance, Maintainers available in the park area may be a way to fulfill the needs. If Maintainer resources are not available, the Trail Conference can provide technical assistance by organizing and hosting a Trail Maintenance workshop.
2. For organization and school requests, plan for a day of service. For a day of service to be successful, a Supervisor or LTC Chair should consult a list of projects that need work. The Supervisor or LTC Chair can fulfill the requests based on the number of people who want to help, the skill level required, and access to volunteers who can lead small groups. The larger the group, the more project management and cooperation is required from the land manager. Example activities: hauling lumber for a boardwalk or bridge, and building boardwalk. While nailing boards on a boardwalk requires some skill, toting the needed lumber requires far less.

11. COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is an important glue that binds this vibrant, geographically distributed organization of volunteers and staff so stay engaged and working as a cohesive team at all times.

11.1. Internal and Interpersonal Communications

The many roles described in Section 4 require frequent communication at all levels: Supervisors reaching out to Maintainers, LTC Chairs interacting with Land Managers, Staff sharing information with volunteer leaders.

- Staff, committees, and councils are expected to communicate with stakeholders and members to share information as soon as practical, to attend to the mission and plans at hand

- Communicate in a timely manner so that recipients can make the best use of time they are donating as volunteers
- Value and continue to strengthen teamwork and collaboration
- Use the available communication methods such as website infrastructure communication features, google groups, listserv email lists, etc.

11.2. External Communications

Generally, the Trail Conference Communication Manager is responsible for communications with the media and press, keeping the website news center <https://www.nynjtc.org/news/> current, social media postings and contacting press.

11.2.1. Press Contacts

The Board adopted a press policy on November 22, 1988, which states:

“Any Trail Conference official who submits any article or letter to the editor of an outside publication using their Trail Conference title should submit the article to the Trail Conference office for review beforehand. This policy does not apply to letters addressed to government officials unless such letters make policy for the Trail Conference.”

The ‘official’ in the press policy refers to a Trail Conference representative authorized to submit articles or letters as representatives of the Trail Conference.

- When speaking to the press, clear the remarks with the Trail Conference Communication Manager if at all possible.
- When speaking or testifying before public bodies such as the DEC, PIPC, zoning boards, greenway hearings, etc., one should be careful to distinguish between personal opinions and Trail Conference opinions.
- Even if one does not identify oneself as a Trail Conference official, governmental partners who recognize the speaker as a Trail Conference official may assume that all remarks made by the speaker reflect Trail Conference policy, unless the speaker clearly points that his remarks reflect only his or her own opinions.

11.3. Contact Lists

Please contact your RTC Chair, Regional Program Coordinator or Volunteer Coordinator if you need the contact information for a volunteer or a group. The RTC contact list is generally available at the RTC meetings.

When volunteer leaders are onboarded, they will receive a key Trail Conference staff contact list, and contact information for volunteers that will be reporting directly to them. RTC chairs are entitled to receive the contact information for relevant volunteer leaders in their region in order to maintain an up to date email list for RTC meetings.

Contact information is not to be shared and distributed outside of the Trail Conference. Also see [Confidentiality](#).

11.4. Website Content Management

The www.nynjtc.org website is a key communication tool for engaging with our volunteers and supporters, driving action towards our initiatives, and enhancing understanding of our impact.

- Content published on www.nynjtc.org is an employee-managed process designed to meet the needs of the organization and ensure our brand voice remains consistent across all channels. Any questions or requests can be directed to communication@nynjtc.org.

12. REPORTING, TRAIL INFORMATION, AND RESOURCES

12.1. Forms and Reporting

Reporting of volunteer work is an integral part of each role. Your reports form the foundation and help steer the future of the Trail Conference. This process is how we ensure trails are being cared for, identify repair needs, verify mapping data, issue appropriate alerts to hikers, maintain relationships with park managers, apply for grants to fund projects, and much more. Without reports from volunteers on the ground, the organization could not function.

The reporting process has two parts, both equally important: direct reporting of issues between individuals, and submitting hours via an [online reporting form](#).

The core of good reporting is **direct communication**. Trail management is most effective when matters are discussed as they arise, and we encourage you to maintain an ongoing dialogue with your supervisor. Whenever you go out as a volunteer, you should contact your supervisor afterwards to let them know about the work you tackled and any issues you observed. Most people prefer to use email for this communication, but when you first meet your supervisor you can both share what works best (email, text, phone call, etc). If you ever need clarification on who you should be reporting to, please email volunteer@nynjtc.org to ask.

Separate from the ongoing dialogue with your supervisor about trail issues and accomplishments, submitting hours is done using the [online reporting form](#). We track volunteer hours for many purposes: reporting to partners, grant applications, communications, fundraising, and much more. Many of the legal agreements that grant us permission to operate in parks require this type of accurate tracking and reporting of hours. When you sign up as a Trail Conference volunteer, an account is automatically made which allows you to submit hours. Each submission should only take a couple of minutes to complete, and the process is outlined in the [online reporting instructions](#).

The following volunteers* submit their hours online:

- Trail Maintainers • Trail Supervisors • LTC Chairs • RTC Chairs • Shelter Caretakers • Corridor Monitors
- Corridor Managers • Sawyers • Swampers

** Note that Trail Crews complete a separate PDF form instead, due to the group nature of their work.*

Regional Trails Council (RTC)



Note: Arrows indicate where reports are to be submitted.

The current list of forms with links is maintained on the Trail Conference website at <https://www.nynjtc.org/content/volunteer-forms>.

12.2. Trail Information Management

All information about trails is managed in the Trails Database which is part of the www.nynjtc.org website infrastructure. Maintaining and keeping track of trails directly supports the Trail Conference mission to build and maintain trails.

Information that the Trail Conference collects about a trail includes:

- Unique trail name. When a color is the name, that trail is given a “last name,” the name of the park.
- End points that define where a trail starts and stops in relation to other trails
- Blaze details such as paint, tag, and color
- Trail segments of that trail, each with their own start and end location points. Segments are defined by a change in
 - Maintainer
 - Land ownership
 - Political boundaries such as state, county, city, town, township, and village
 - Co-alignment
 - Handicapped accessibility or major surface change such as paved road or woods road

- Park where the trail is located
- What land manager position manages it
- Date when the Trail Conference agreed to maintain the trail

Note:

- As of January 2018, the process for updating trail information in the Trails Database is still being refined.
- Understanding how segments are defined and the nomenclature used, on the ground knowledge, and access to a map are required to make sure that the information is accurate.
- Access to the Trails Database is granted only to staff and volunteers trained on how to update the data.
- Requests for training can be made by contacting volunteer@nynjtc.org.
- The Trails Management Overview and How To guides are available on [My Dashboard Web Documentation page on www.nynjtc.org](#)

12.3. Resources and Approved Document

Approved documents such as policies, practices, charters, forms, are available on the website, through the 'My Dashboard' page for logged-in users:

Hello Peter Dolan!
Welcome to your dashboard.
Thank you for your membership.

[My Profile](#)

RESOURCES FOR ONLINE REPORTING

Forms

- Trail Volunteer Online Reporting Form
- Previously Submitted Reports
- Shelter Caretaker Worksheet
- AT Corridor Monitor Worksheet
- Trail Volunteer Worksheet

Hours Activity Reports

- Volunteer Hours by Region

Instructions

- PDF: Online Reporting Instructions & Supervisor Communications
- VIDEO: Online Reporting Instructions
- Dashboard Access Instructions

Resources

- Trail Volunteer Structure (RTC) Chart

COMMON RESOURCES

COVID-19 Volunteer Protocols: [Click Here](#)

Online Learning

- Visit the [Online Learning Library](#) for digital engagement opportunities. From live webinars

TRAIL ALERTS

- Dec 15 2022** [Closures in Hudson Highlands State Park Due to Fjord Trail Construction](#)
- Dec 06 2022** [Stokes State Forest Blue Mountain Trail Detour](#)
- Dec 02 2022** [Seasonal Road Closures](#)

1 2 3 4 5 ... next last

MY EVENT REGISTRATIONS

- Oct 15 2022** Trail Conference's Annual Gala_ Rio Vista 20 Emma Court Mahwah, NJ 07430 United States
- Oct 16 2021** Centennial Gala_ Complimentary Tickets Bear Mountain State Park - Bear Mountain Inn 3020 Seven Lakes Drive Tompkins Cove, NY United States
- Jun 19 2021** Trail Layout and Design Workshop Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area Patterson, NY United States
- Jun 12 2021** Trail Layout and Design Workshop Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area Patterson, NY United States

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ... next last

All volunteers are provided access to common resources. Further content is displayed relevant to the role of the user such as Maintainer, Monitor, Corridor Manager, or Supervisor.

13. TOOLS

LTC chairs and Supervisors should consult Trail Conference policies, Land Managers, and MOU agreements to determine what tools are permitted to be used for each area of responsibility.

Safety first is the motto for all work trips. Crew leaders review tool use and safety for Crew Members at the beginning of work trips. The instructors at all trail skill workshops must emphasize tool use and safety. Sawyers are also required to have basic First Aid/CPR training and wear properly approved personal protective equipment (PPE).

All Trail Conference tools must be in good working order and be used only for the work that they were designed to perform. Only those volunteers trained in the use of potentially dangerous tools (e.g. power

tools) should use them. In particular, volunteers cannot use chainsaws on behalf of the Trail Conference unless they are certified.

Trail maintainers own and use their own equipment (e.g. clippers, hand saws). They are not reimbursed for equipment, paint, or nails. Tag blazes are supplied by the land manager.

Crew Chiefs purchase the heavy duty tools needed by their crews. They budget for tool needs as part of the annual planning process. Following purchase requisition guidelines, they are eligible to be reimbursed for expenses. The tools are maintained as part of an inventory of tools and equipment that may be borrowed by volunteers. All equipment must be signed out by the individual borrowing the equipment with the proper representative. The person who signed out the equipment must replace items that are lost or damaged due to negligence or misuse.

Resources:

- [Reimbursement guidelines chart](#)
- [Safety](#)

14. REVIEW AND PRIOR VERSION REPLACED

This Guide was developed by the Policy Council TMG Task Force: Estelle Anderson, Jane Daniels, Walt Daniels, Peter Dolan, Mary Dooman (chair).

The document will be assessed periodically by the Policy Council TMG Task Force to ensure it remains current. Due to the comprehensive content, only the sections needing updates will be revised.

This document replaces the [older versions stored](#) in Archives.

15. PUBLICATION HISTORY

Publication Date	Comments
January 31, 2018	1st Draft of TMG Version 3 posted on the website. The decision was made by the Policy Council to post the TMG on the website to make the draft available, but not communicate or publicize the update more broadly until feedback from the volunteer survey is synthesized.
September 5, 2018	2nd draft of TMG Version 3 resolved many comments and includes editing updates to most sections. On September 5, 2018 The Policy Council approved the broad distribution and communication of the TMG.
October 5, 2018	Updated Sections 5.9 Injury and Insurance Protocol and 12.1 Forms and Reporting to reflect the Injury and Insurance Protocol published on www.nynjtc.org/incident 10/1/2018.
December 19, 2018	Updated Section 2 Organization Overview to reflect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised organization diagram that reflects the Metro

	<p>RTC and clarifies which functions are led by volunteers or staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revised the RTC structure diagram to consistently show the volunteer and staff led functions. ● Staff chart includes the Metro program coordinator; IT Systems Manager reporting to the Finance & Operations Manager.
September 16, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bump version to 3.1 ● Update Section 5.2 to remove restriction on volunteers being members. ● Trail Project Approvals process changed
March 18, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bump to version 4.0 ● Update the org chart and other changes to the upper management.
September 28, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bump to version 4.1 ● Add Long Path RTC ● Add diagram of reporting flow
June 16, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bump to version 4.2 ● New org chart. Remove Metro. Small editorial changes. Not posted to the web.
January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change RPC to PC ● More changes to org chart ● Update references to newer policies and job descriptions
February 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add DEI policy
May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Replace section on Volunteer Service Agreements with link to appropriate webpage ● Link to new Code of Conduct ● Updated Organization Chart, removing Metro Region ● Updated Staff Org Chart ● Removed outdated staff job descriptions