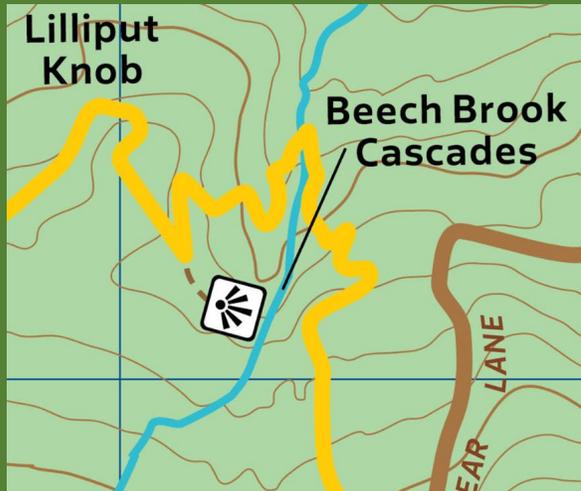


2026 Annual Public Meeting



Maplewood Memorial Library
March 11, 2026

Our 27th Year!

Agenda

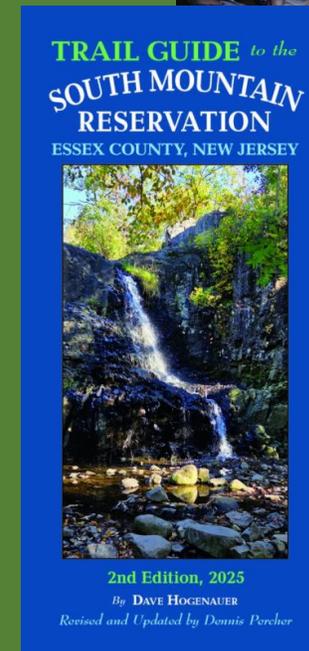
- 7:00 - 7:30 Year Overview and Financials, Dennis Percher
- 7:30-7:50 Mill around and discuss programs with Program Coordinators
- 7:50 - 8:05 Break
- 8:05-8:55 Presentation by Don Weise of the NY NJ Trail Conference, "Great Hikes and Less-Traveled Trails in North Jersey."



2025: A Remarkable Year

*Making a Difference in this “Wilderness at our Doorstep”
for Thousands of Visitors Each Year*

- ❑ Volunteers: Over 6,500 person-hours
- ❑ Ongoing, multiple stewardship programs
- ❑ Diverse public programs
 - 500+ attend 3rd Fairy Trail Day in May
 - 56+ hikes
 - 3 new Wildflower Sculpture Park exhibits plus workshop
 - Spring Family Campout
 - Mayapple and 2 co-sponsored Sassquad Trail Runs
- Revision of 2017 Trail Guide
- Grants: \$10k Hyde and Watson Grant for infrastructure (pollinator meadow fencing) – and still to use \$25k Bollinger Grant



Wendell Jeffrey,
Roly-Poly



Stewardship & Public Program Accomplishments from 6,500 Hours of Volunteer Effort

SMC Stewardship & Public Program Involvement Summary- 2025						
Program	Tab Code	Leader(s)	YTD Total # Volunteer Appearances	YTD Total Volunteer Hours	Other YTD Data	YTD Total Other Data
Chainsaw Gang	CG	Dave Berry	471.5	262	# Trees Removed	248
Citizen Science	CS	Lori LaBorde	35	46		
Fairy Trail	FT	Julie Gould; Beth Kelly	120	590		
Family Campout	FC	Penni Malakates; Dennis Percher	13	31.5	Total # of Participants	85
Forest Regeneration	FR	Rich Rockwell & Tom Pollard	80	195		
Hardscape	HS	Dennis Percher	145	233		
Hiking	HK	Ivette Canjura	56	183	Total # Hikers	622
Mayapple Trail Run	MTR	Kim Levinsky; Dennis Percher	24	245	Total # Runners	202
Trail Work	TW	Dennis Percher; John Verzani	436	1230	All Trailwork Volunteer Hours	1891
Trail Work- Miscellaneous	TW-Misc	J. Verzani, D. Percher, D. Berry	167	661	All Trail Work Total Volunteer Appearances	603
Trash Tackler- Group	TT-GP	Eric Tuvel	345	396	Trash Bags Removed	185
Trash Tackler- Individual(s)	TT-I	Eric Tuvel YTD Vol Appearances- D15+D16= 	45	105	Trash Bags Removed	49
YTD TT Volunteer Hours	501	390			Total Trash Bags	234
Wildflower Sculpture Park	WSP	Doris Cacoilo	139	543	# Activity Participants	139
Totals 2025			2077	4,720		

248 trees removed

Spring Campout

56 hikes, 622 hikers

202 trail runners at Mayapple (a record!)

Dozens of trail improvements from 1,891 hours of work

234 bags of trash removed

+ 1,800 hours from Chair and Treasurer

2025 – Ongoing Multiple Stewardship Programs to Improve SMR's Ecology and Infrastructure

❑ Forest Ecology:

- Continued work in Preserve with volunteers & two summer interns
- Pollinator Meadow creates preliminary design paths
- Invested \$5k in Forest Stewardship for long-term emerging invasive removal

❑ Trail Maintenance-Construction, Signage:

- Monthly workdays and 14-weeks of SWAT teams
- Major reroutes of the Lenape, Oakdale armoring
- Cleaning swales and culverts on woods roads to fortify storm water management
- Water bars installed to make hiking trails more sustainable
- 40 Trailkeepers monitor 55 miles of trails
- A dozen sawyers removed 248 trees
- 3 Eagle Scout projects to remove graffiti, fix forest regen site fencing and construct water bars



Interns
Henry Donat (l)
and
Kelly Zambrana



**We're a Small, Volunteer-Driven Organization ...
and yet we continue to do exceptional work!**

**“Teamwork and discipline are the
handmaidens of accomplishment.”**

Frank Bruni, NY Times, Column on Professionalism,
March 10, 2026

2025 Transitions

- ❑ Gabe Elias joined the Board
- ❑ Tom Pollard joined Rich Rockwell as a co-coordinator of Forest Regeneration (and will be leading a Pro Group to tackle difficult invasive removal)
- ❑ Board Member Ivette Canjura became the Hiking Program Coordinator replacing Bobbette Mannacotti.
- ❑ Julie Gould stepped away from Fairy Trail as coordinator with Beth Kelly. Two new coordinators will soon be helping: Susan Brody and Caty Villasuso
- ❑ Craig Leisher left the board
- ❑ Jon Stout, who served on the SMC Board as secretary for five years, long-volunteered at the Mayapple Trail Runs, was as a dragger on the Chainsaw Gang, repaired regeneration site fencing, and helped with dozens of SMC projects large and small, moved this week to Albany to be closer to his daughter and son-in-law. We thank him for all his help over the years. He will be missed.



Gabe



Jon



2025 Fairy Tales at the Fairy Trail

Julie

Penni

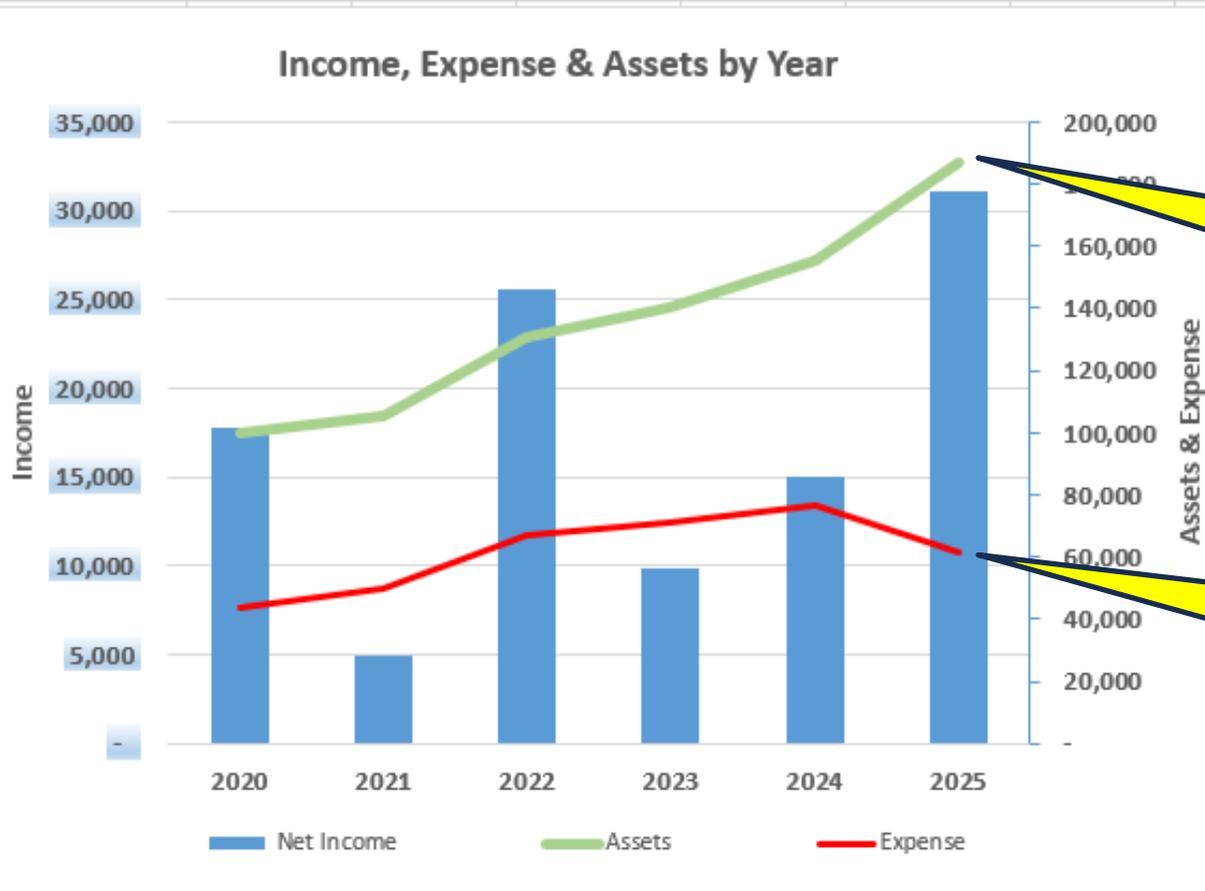
Beth

Dennis

2025 SMC Financial Report

By Paul Kerner, Treasurer and IT

South Mountain Conservancy Inc. 2025 Financials



Increased assets will allow us to tackle more major projects in 2026-2027 and increase the number of summer interns from 2 to 3 and Forest Stewardship investments

Expenses dropped due to:

- Lower Pollinator Meadow expenses
- Fairy Trail benches covered by the County
- Storage container project under budget (courtesy of the County's contributions)

Income & Assets						
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Expenses	44,046	49,685	67,023	71,085	76,725	61,516
Net	17,776	4,953	25,620	9,844	15,022	31,143
Assets	100,239	105,192	130,812	140,656	155,678	186,821

2025 Expenses and Income

Forest Regen-Pollinator Meadow is not an income generator: A \$10k grant from the Hyde and Watson foundation for fencing to be spent in 2026. It is the single largest program expense.

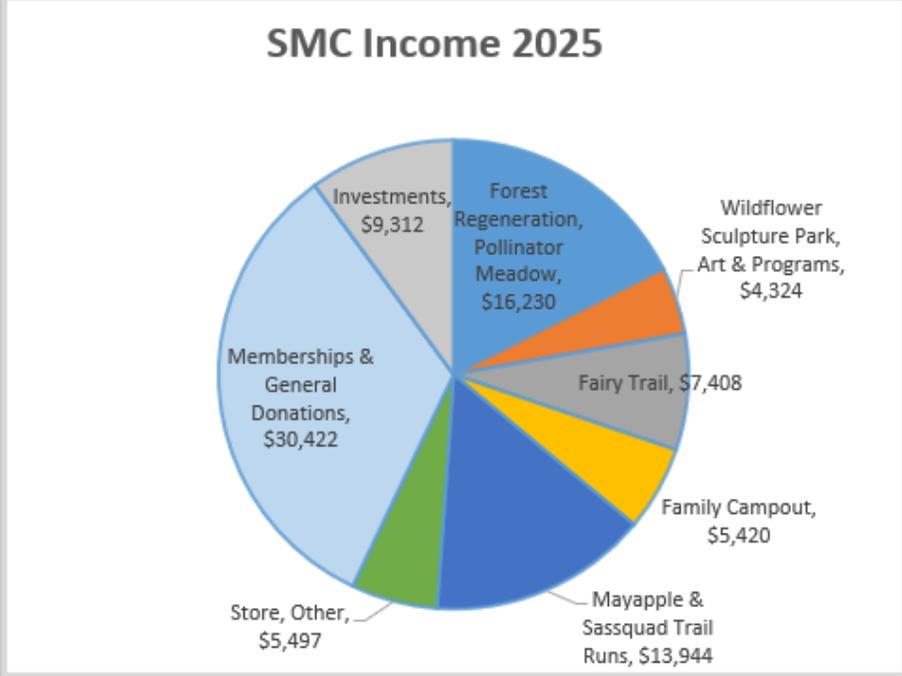
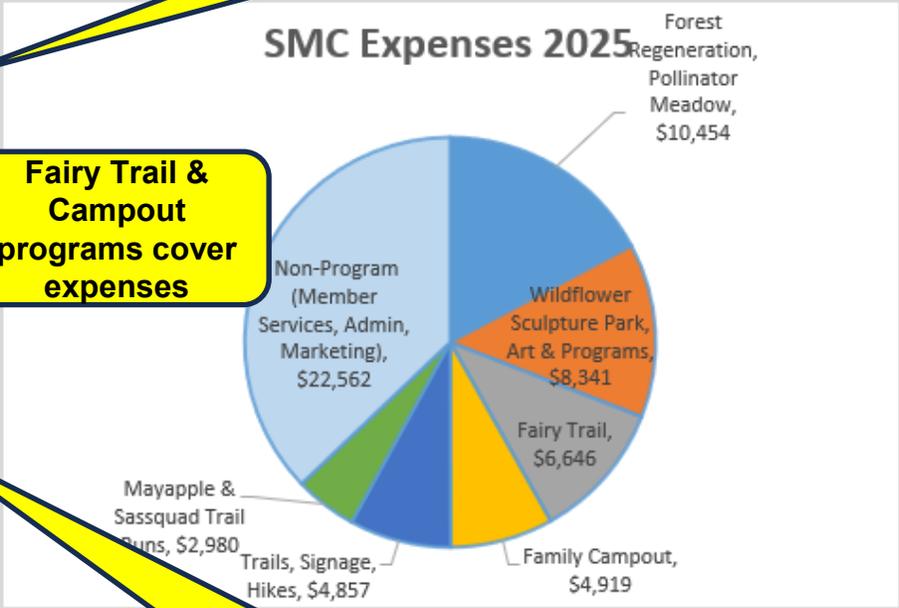
South Mountain Conservancy Inc. 2025 Financials

Income & Expense (Dollars)		
	Expense	Income
Forest Regeneration, Pollinator Meadow	10,454	16,230
Wildflower Sculpture Park, Art & Programs	8,341	4,324
Fairy Trail	6,646	7,408
Family Campout	4,919	5,420
Trails, Signage, Hikes	4,857	
Mayapple & Sassquad Trail Runs	2,980	13,944
Non-Program (Member Services, Admin, Marketing)	22,562	
Store, Other		5,497
Memberships & General Donations		30,422
Investments		9,312
Total Program	38,198	47,325
Total Non-Program	22,562	45,230
Grand Total	60,760	92,556

Fairy Trail & Campout programs cover expenses

Mayapple Trail Runs and co-sponsoring Sassquad Trail Races net around \$11k.

Memberships and general and specific donations at \$40k+, represent 2/3 of income



Membership and Donations

\$24,873

2025
Donations

\$18,972

Prior 5-Year Average
Donations

\$15,820

2025
Memberships

\$19,092

Prior 5-Year Average
Memberships

\$40,693

2025
Combined

\$38,064

Prior 5-Year Average
Combined

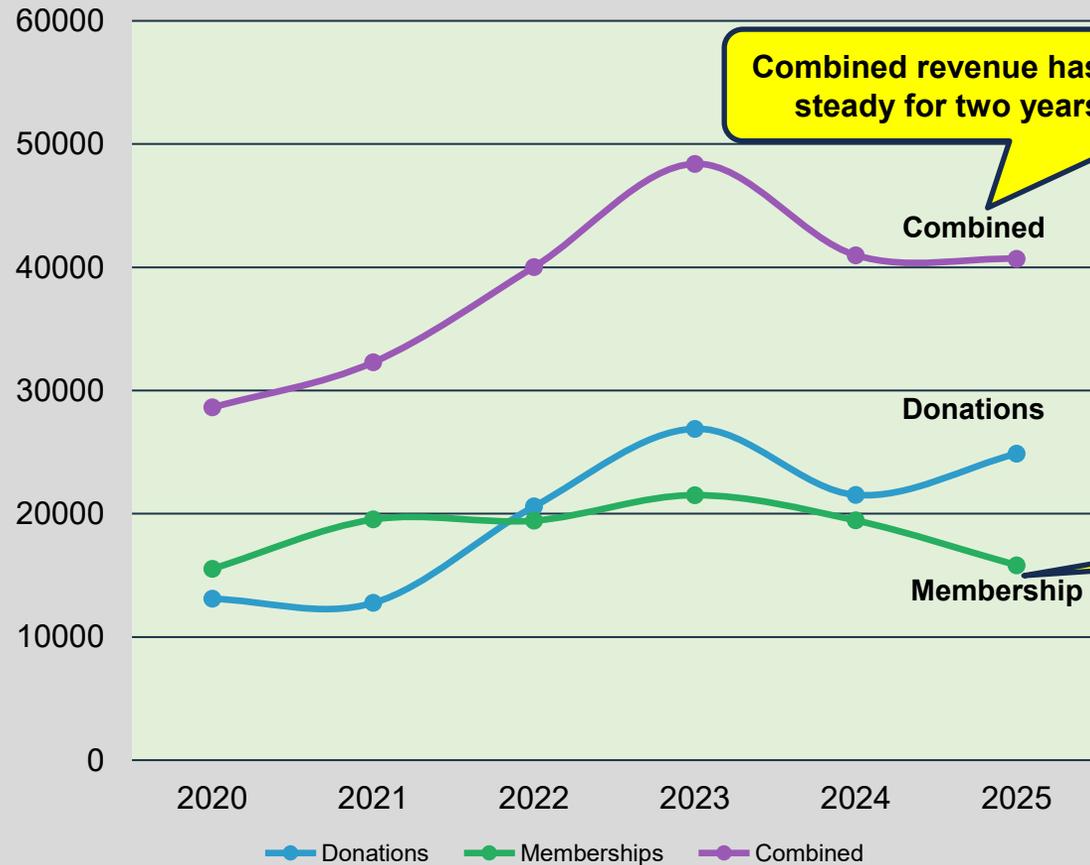
320

2025
Donors

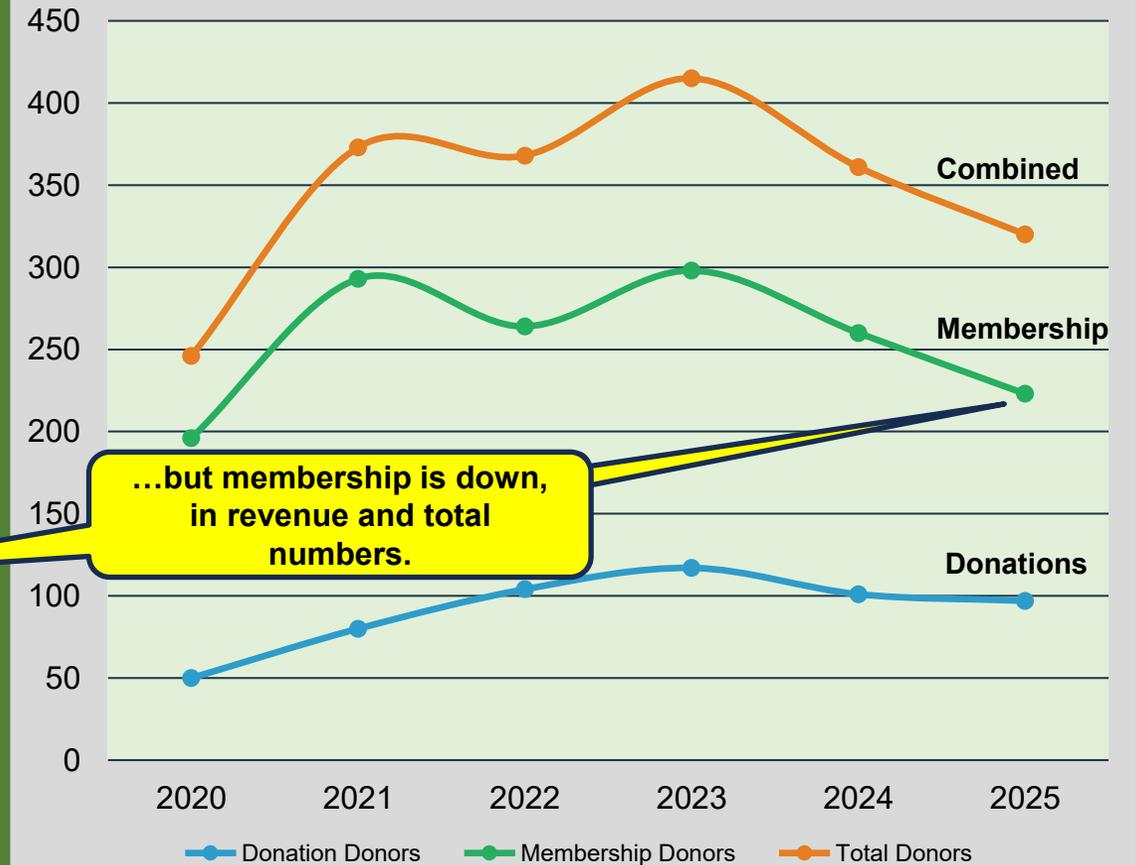
333

Prior 5-Year Average
Donors

Revenue by Year (\$)



Donors by Year

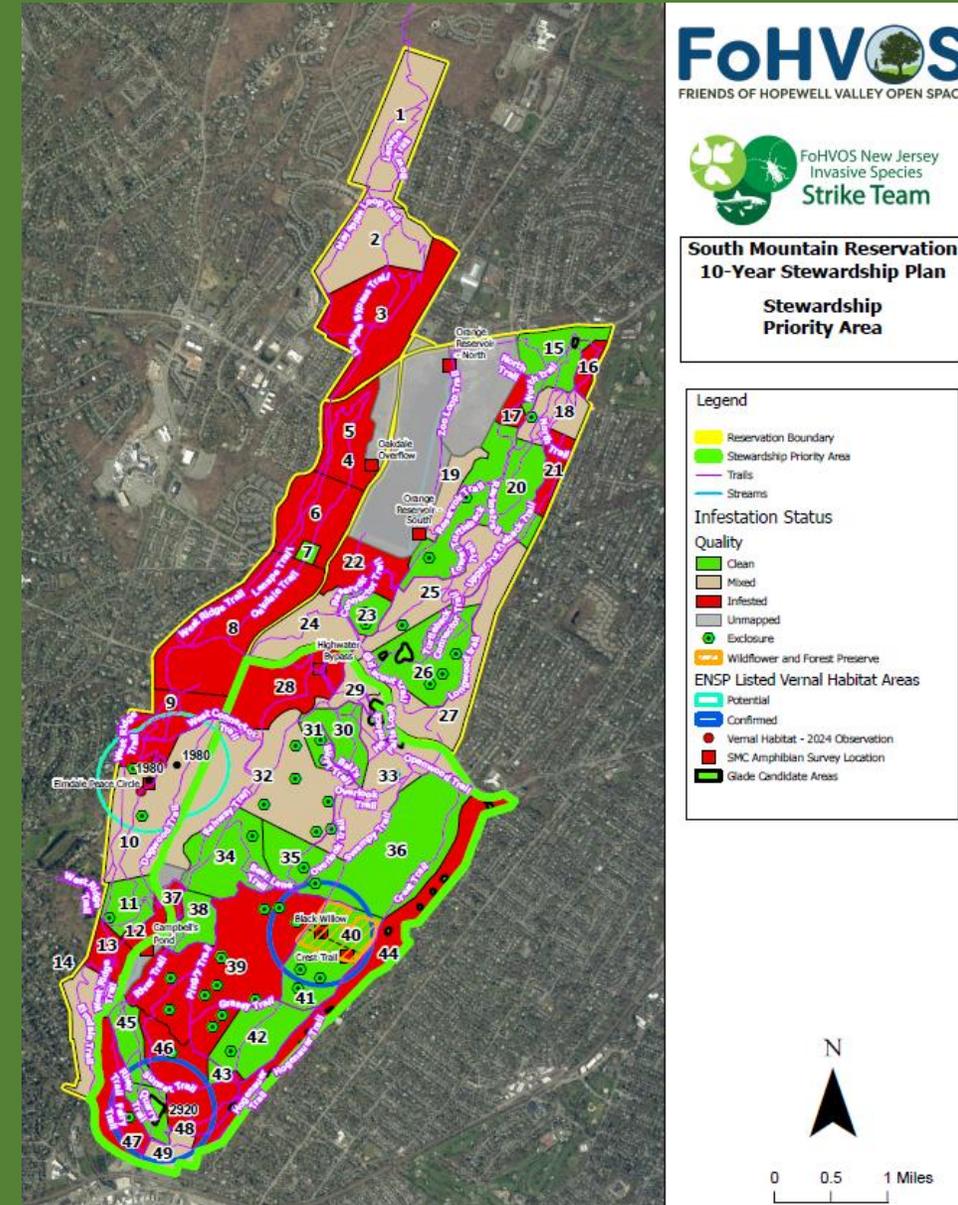


Major Ongoing Initiatives:

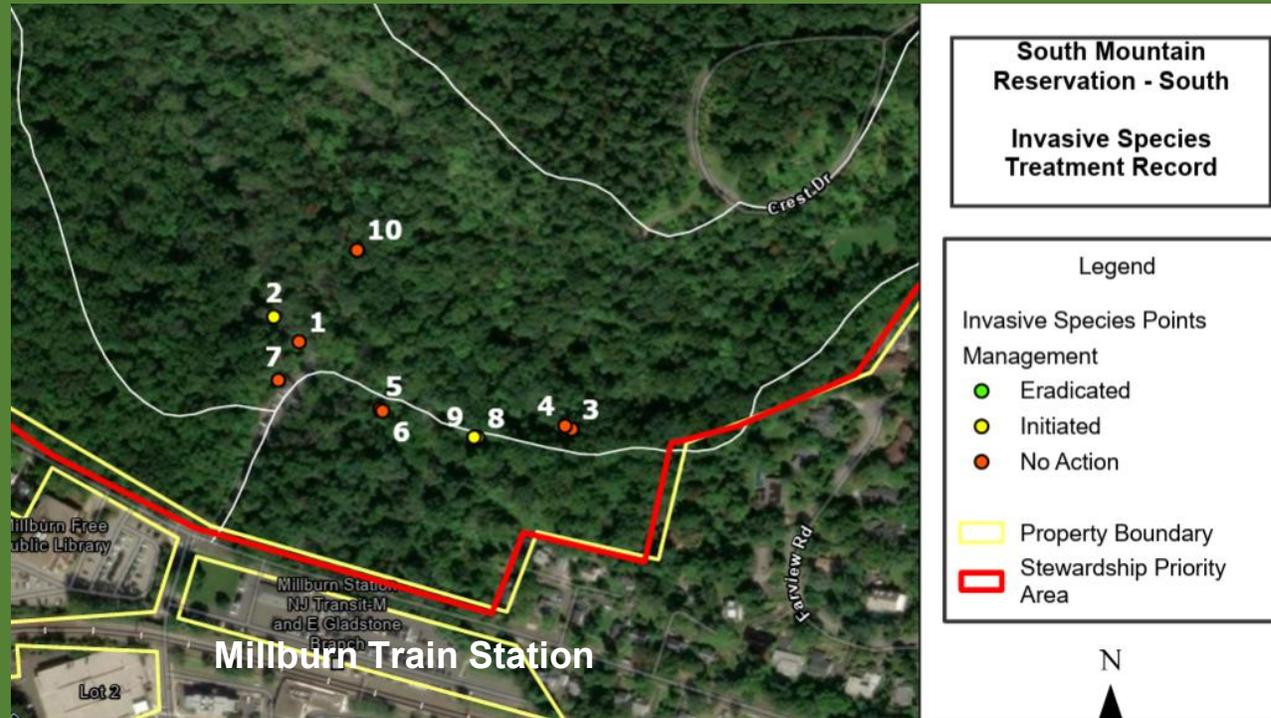
- ❑ **Forest Stewardship**
- ❑ **Green Acres Grant**

2025: Forest Stewardship Initiative

- In 2024, the Conservancy funded an \$11k study by NJISST to identify the threats and recommend actions to combat emerging invasive species over ten years to ensure the survival of the SMR's forest, especially in light of the beech trees dying.
- In 2025, the County partnered with the Conservancy in 2025 and will do more in 2026. Total Investment: \$7.5k County, \$5k SMC
- In 2026, the Conservancy has set up a special fund and committed \$7.5k plus volunteers. The County has committed \$15k, efforts all directed by by NJISST and Rich Rockwell, our liaison.



Forest Stewardship: Focus in 2025



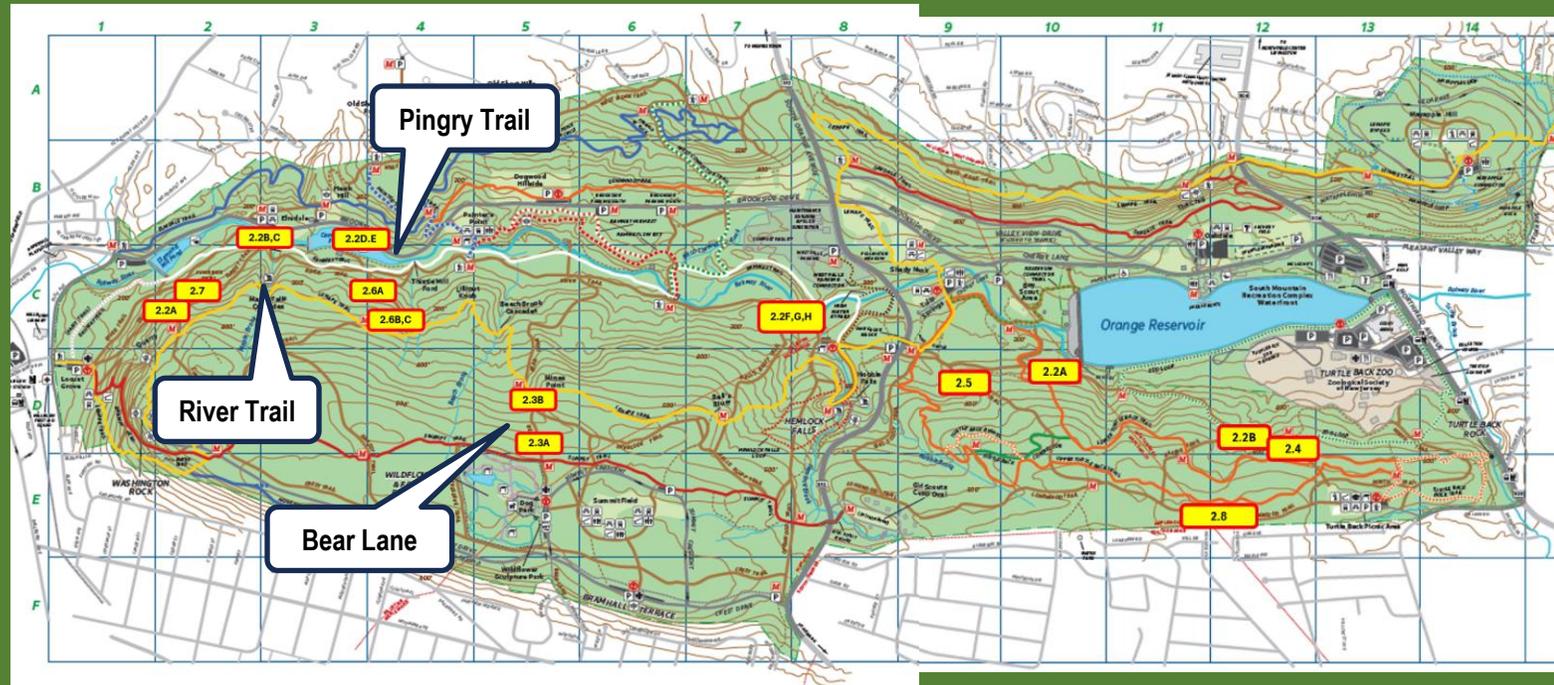
2026 – Still Planning the \$1 million Green Acres-Open Space Grant

- ❑ Joint Partnership with Essex County Parks to match 2021 \$500k NJ DEP Grant
- ❑ Substantial Improvements to:
 - The Fairy Trail with a shelter, benches and safer walkways
 - Southeast woods road repair to improve visitor experience and emergency access



Planned Woods Road Repairs

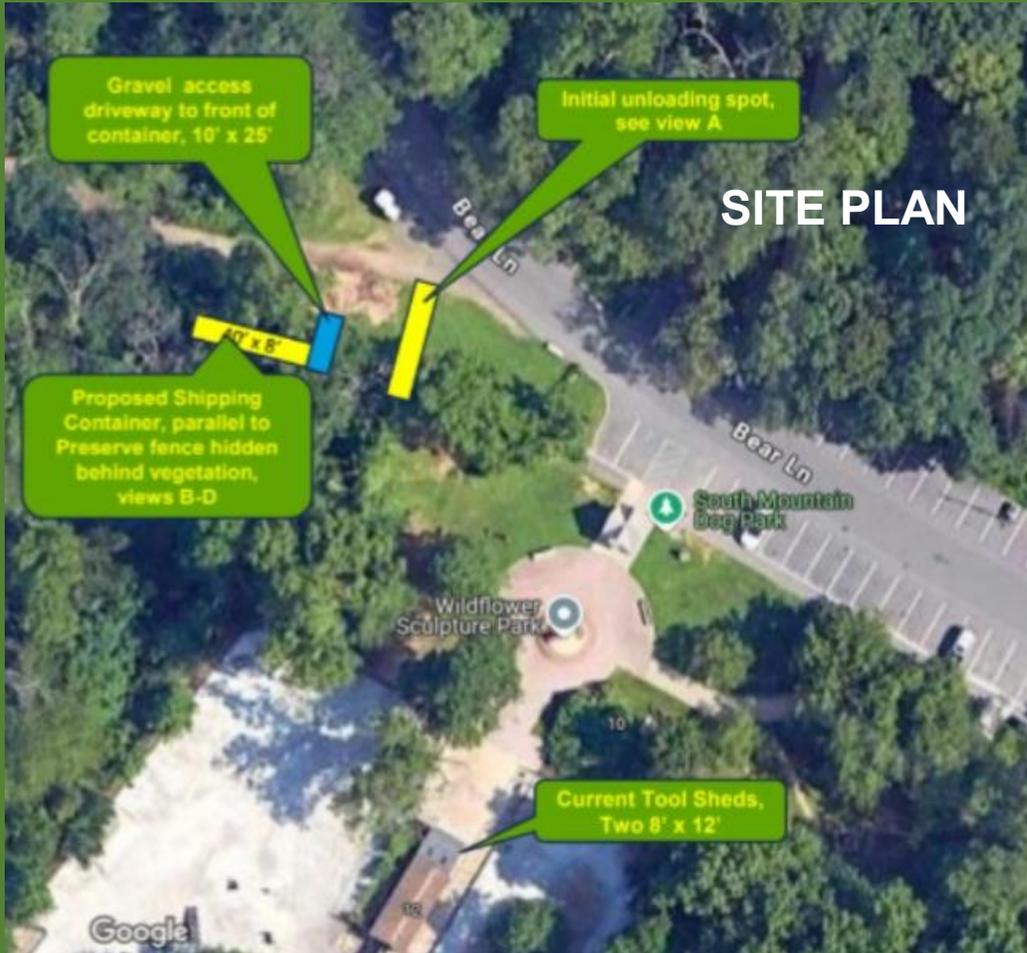
Fairy Trail Improvements



Major 2025 Projects: Impressive Accomplishments

- ❑ 40' Storage Container, "The Green Whale"
- ❑ Reroute of the Lenape Trail at Beech Brook Cascades

Major Project: The 40' Shipping Container – Original Site Condition

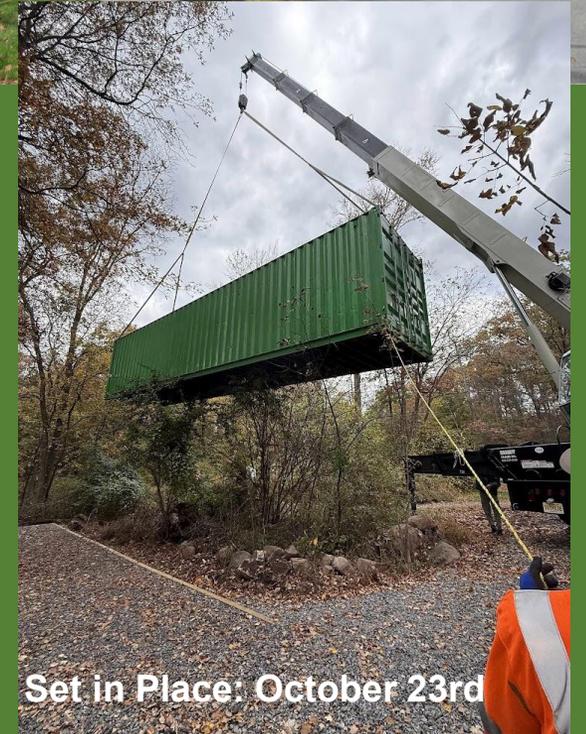


May 30th: Site with large fallen tree (removed by County) and poison Ivy



Clearing the Site (after spraying poison ivy 3X with vinegar solution)

Renovating the Green Whale!



Green Whale 2

Building the Foundation



Inside the Green Whale Today



Major Project 2: Lenape Trail at Beech Brook Cascades



Discussing possible bridge location at eroded north plank bridge: Tom Gilman (I) and John Sowell



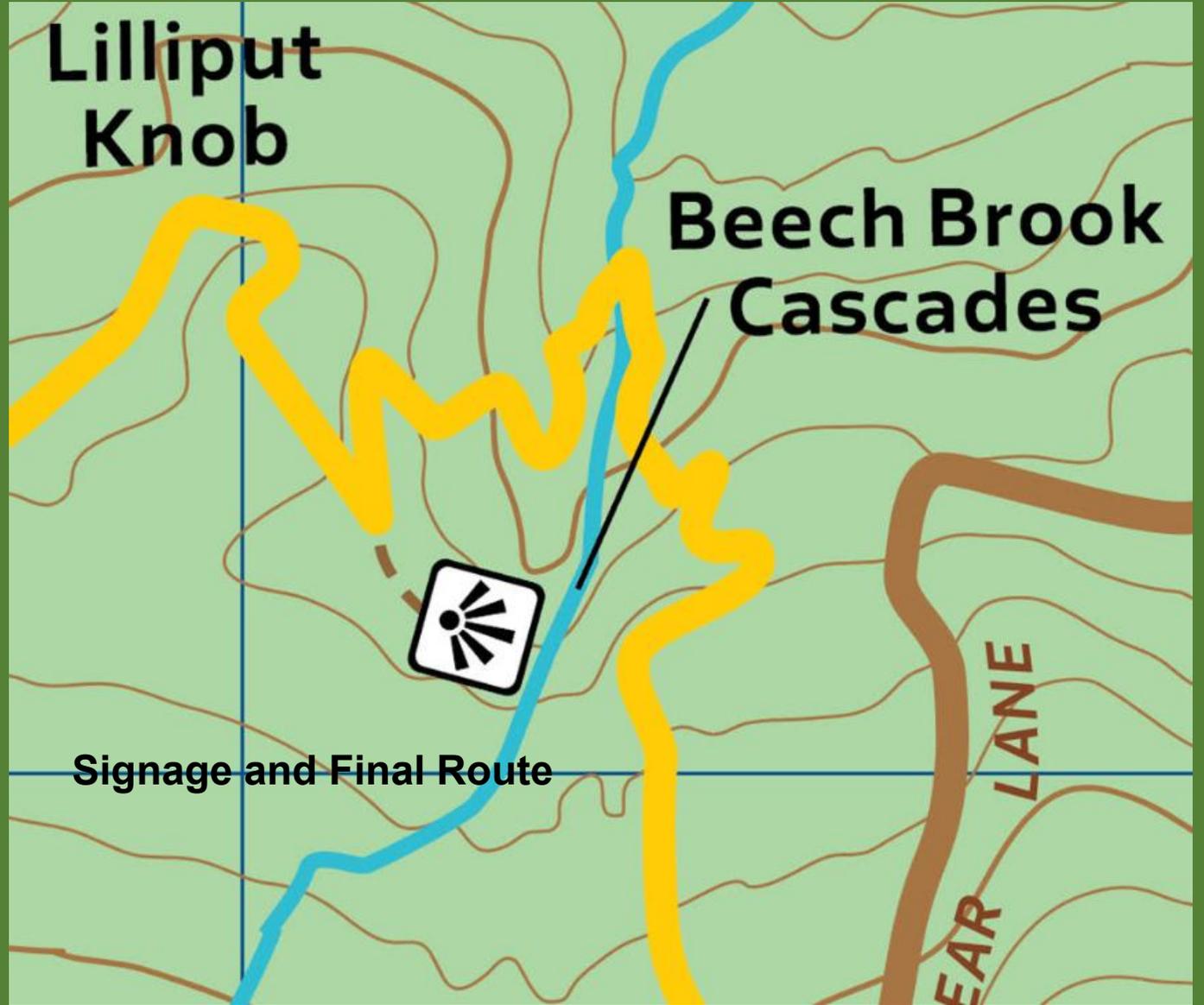
Preliminary work on short south bypass: Determined to be too difficult

Lenape Trail at Beech Brook Cascades - 2



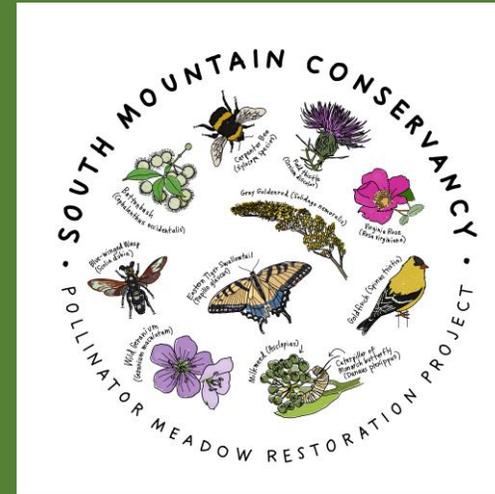
Lenape – Cascade Reroute: Moving large rocks using rope winch, pulleys and slings

Lenape Trail at Beech Brook Cascades - 3



What's New in 2026...

- ❑ Citizen Science Pollinator Meadow paths and fencing
- ❑ Ongoing Stewardship and Public Programs
- ❑ Conservancy Ambassador Program



2026: Conservancy Ambassador Program (CAP)

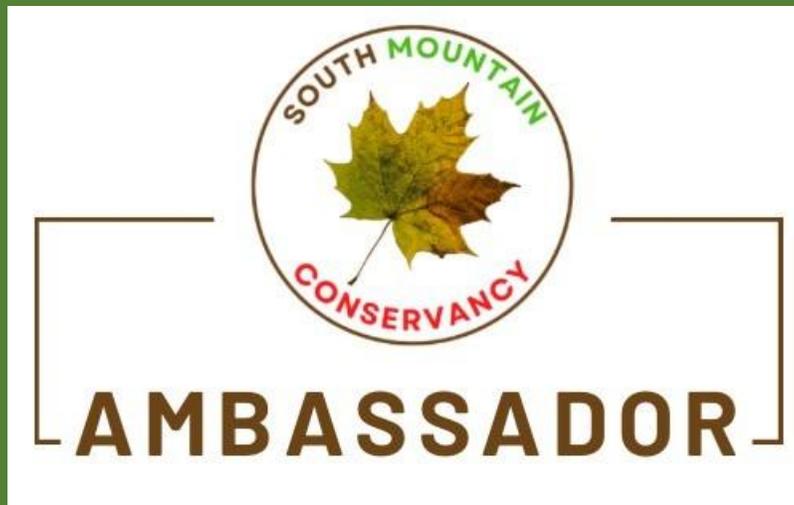
- Training
- A cadre of volunteers that promote the SMC and its mission to maintain and improve the reservation.
- 18+
- Junior Ambassador program may be created for community groups with younger members (12-17) with adult supervision.
- We will train you and give you a vest!

Ambassadors will:

- Educate visitors about SMC's mission & programs
- Encourage responsible trail use
- Promote membership, donations, and volunteerism
- Share trail knowledge & interact with hikers
- Gather feedback to improve visitor experiences
- Commitment: Minimum of 6 volunteer days per year, preferably one Saturday or Sunday per month at key SMR locations.

For more information contact program coordinators Penni Malakates and John Bylancik at smcambassadors@somocon.org, or fill out the application form on our website.

Training on Saturday, May 30th.



SMC Spring Calendar (1)

- **March 15 (THIS Sunday):** 1st Forest Regeneration Volunteer day
- **March 21, Saturday:** Trailkeeper and Chainsaw Gang breakfast
- **March 28, Saturday:** First SWAT Team work day (continuing on Wednesdays and Saturdays until May 20th)
- **April 5, Sunday:** Trail Work Volunteer Day – 1st of season!
- **April 11:** Deadline for Wildflower Call for Artists
- **April 12:** Last Day to submit entries into Fairy Trail House Building Contest



SMC Spring Calendar (2)

- **April 19 & 26 (Sundays):** Review and Installation of new Fairy Houses
- **April 19, Sunday:** Forest Regeneration Volunteer Day
- **May 2, Saturday:** Fairy Trail Festival, Locust Grove
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
- **May 3, Sunday:** Trail Work Volunteer Day
- **May 19, Sunday:** Forest Regeneration Volunteer Day
- **May 16, Saturday:** Mayapple Trail Runs (from 5 to 50 miles,
+ 1-mile Kids Race) – Run or Volunteer, see UltraSignup)
- **May 30, Saturday:** CAP Training at Tulip Springs, 10-Noon
and HIKES throughout the spring



2025 Start of MTR's 5, 10 and 20-mile Races

Next on the Agenda...

- Speak to the Program Coordinators (20 min.)

- Break (10 min.)

- Presentation by Don Weise,
NY NJ Trail Conference,
on
“Great Hikes and Less-Traveled Trails in North Jersey”

