



# GREENBEAT

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## GREEN TEAM HUDSON VALLEY | BUILDING BRIDGES ON THE A.T.



IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL JULY DAY ON VERMONT'S SECTION OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL. The natural quiet of the trail was interrupted only by a bunch of teenagers and a National Park Service ranger, who identified nearby plants. The group wandered past a fence, and suddenly the gentle conversation turned to raucous hoots and laughter: they had found a cow. The black-faced brown animal was the first of its kind the members of the Groundwork Hudson Valley Green Team had ever been close enough to pet.

But what were the seventeen members of the gw Hudson Valley Green Team doing with cows on the trails of Vermont? From July 17 through July 19, the Green Team attended *(continued on back)*

The National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program (RTCA) and Groundwork USA have teamed up to engage teens from diverse backgrounds with their local National Parks as part of the Groundwork Green Team Program.

For more information visit: [www.groundworkusa.net](http://www.groundworkusa.net)

the Appalachian Trail Festival in Castleton, VT, as part of a growing relationship between the Hudson Valley and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The team was sponsored by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The festival, or, more accurately, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Biennial, is a week-long celebration of the Appalachian Trail. As Green Team Program Director Curt Collier recalls, there were about 900 people at the festival, and the Green Team members were the only youth, and the only people of color present.

Collier was delighted to see that everything was interesting to his team members, “I’ve directed youth groups for 20 years, and they’re one of the best. They looked out for each other, they weren’t disrespectful, and they made sure all of their team members were included in activities, which was unique.” What was even more impressive to Collier was that “[the team members] are different age groups, they go to different schools, yet they were immensely respectful of one another, which is rare.”



*It was an honor to sponsor the Hudson Valley Green Team kids to attend the festival in Vermont. They made real hands-on contributions to the Trail, and we hope this is just the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship.*

**Pamela Underhill**  
Superintendent, Appalachian National Scenic Trail

Once on the trail, the Green Team split into two groups. On the first day, one group went on a 3-mile hike (here they met the illustrious cow) with a ranger, who talked to them about the surrounding flora and fauna. The second group carried picnic table parts and tools up a steep 1.5 mile trail. Team member Brianna Rohlehr recalled, “The Appalachian Trail was very fun even though it’s a lot of hard work to travel upwards. There were steep hills, slippery rocks, and a lot of mud.” At the top, they rebuilt a picnic table and a 16-foot bridge. On the second day, the groups switched places. The first group dug trenches and lined them with boulders to build water bars that help prevent erosion, while the second group went hiking.

*The Appalachian Trail, or A.T., spans 2,170 miles between Georgia and Maine. The brainchild of forester Benton Mackaye, the trail was blazed by several autonomous groups of hikers along Mackaye’s proposed route. The trails were eventually connected and became the first designated National Scenic Trail, a unit of the National Park Service, in 1968. Today the trail is maintained by 30 trail clubs and multiple partnerships. It passes through fourteen states, eight national forests, and six national parks. It takes an estimated five million steps to complete the entire trail.*

*The Trail showed us a different part of the country that many of us have never had the pleasure to see before.*

**Shaela Lennox**  
Green Team Member

In the afternoon, the Green Team went swimming and canoeing in Lake Bomoseen, even learning to ride canoes and kayaks in deep water. In the evening, the Green Team got a treat: screenwriter Dayton Duncan presented clips from the upcoming TV series “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea,” which comes out in the fall.

The team members stayed in dorm rooms on the Castleton College campus, getting what Team member Jasmine Sdrougias called “a taste of the college life.” Though they weren’t camping, the team members had plenty of opportunities to take in the landscape.

### THE GROUNDWORK HUDSON VALLEY GREEN TEAM ON THE BRIDGE THEY BUILT!

