



2016 Legislative Priorities



About Parks & Trails New York

Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide organization working to preserve and enhance a network of parks, trails and greenways for all New Yorkers for generations to come. Since 1985, we have been dedicated to improving our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space.

Parks & Trails New York has worked with hundreds of community organizations and municipalities to envision, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks and more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, and trails throughout New York State. Our influential reports and advocacy efforts have been critical to keeping parks and historic sites open and protecting New York's natural, recreational, cultural and historical resources.

For more information, visit www.ptny.org.



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Keeping the Momentum Going

From the glorious beach parks on Long Island to the delightful waterfall parks in the Finger Lakes to the cross-state Erie Canalway Trail—and hundreds of other parks and trails throughout the state—New York’s outdoor gems are destinations and significant drivers of the state’s economic engine.



*Robin Dropkin
Executive Director
Parks & Trails New York*

Thanks to the commitment of the Governor and Legislature, state parks, under the Governor’s visionary NY Parks 2020 plan, are in the midst of an unprecedented renaissance, with four straight years of significant capital funding to build and restore visitor centers, bath houses and other critical infrastructure.

The Erie Canalway Trail between Buffalo and Albany continues to grow and is now more than three-quarters complete. New York will soon boast the longest statewide trail in the country. Local communities across the state are adding hundreds of miles of greenways, bikeways and multi-purpose trails, building vital green infrastructure and promoting sustainable tourism throughout New York.

More and more, parks, trails and greenways are being recognized for the essential role they play in New York’s economic growth, the health of its residents, and the long-term resiliency and sustainability of its communities.

Let’s keep the momentum going for New York’s outdoor spaces.

As we have been doing for 30 years, PTNY looks forward to working with Governor Cuomo and legislators to enhance New York’s role as a national leader in the protection, promotion and enhancement of parks, trails and greenways, and to ensure that these natural, recreational and cultural treasures are an integral part of the state’s economic, transportation, health, and environmental strategies.

State Parks

Protect and revitalize state parks for future generations

- Support continued NY Parks 2020 annual capital investment of \$110 million to restore and rebuild state parks' aging and dilapidated infrastructure.
- Begin to put OPRHP's operations budget on an upward trajectory so that our state parks and historic sites can more fully realize their potential as destinations and economic engines for local communities.



Local Parks

*Enact legislation to protect communities
from a loss of parkland*

- Establish a more rigorous process for the taking of parkland, or park “alienation,” that holds government accountable and provides transparency. Legislation should include:
 - » A requirement that all alienation legislation includes a detailed description of the parcel to be alienated and the replacement parkland;
 - » A requirement that alienation authorization not become effective until a municipality has first acquired and dedicated replacement parkland. When replacement parkland is not available, dedication of an amount equal to, or greater than, the fair market value of the alienated property must be dedicated for park improvements;
 - » A process to track alienation actions once they have been approved;
 - » Provisions for enforcement of the terms of the alienation.

Trails & Active Transportation

Strengthen local economies, promote public health, and increase clean transportation options

- Incorporate funding mechanisms for active transportation (biking/walking) infrastructure and policies that support greater use of non-motorized transportation into climate change resiliency planning at all levels.
- Close the 79 miles of remaining gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail between Buffalo and Albany, enhancing its appeal as a premier tourist destination.
- Establish \$20 million of dedicated funding to build infrastructure that supports bicycling and walking, with a minimum additional commitment of \$20 million annually.
- Create a plan for a statewide, interconnected network of multi-use trails.
- Strengthen the NYS Complete Streets law by expanding the scope to include all projects (currently, the law only applies to state- and federally funded projects) and mandating consideration of all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, when undertaking resurfacing, maintenance, and pavement recycling.
- Develop roll-on service for bicycles on Amtrak trains, supporting trail-related tourism and the restaurants, lodging and other businesses in communities that serve cyclists.
- Enact legislation providing for local control of road speed limits, a proven means to increase safety, especially for non-motorized roadway users.
- Reconvene NYS DOT's statewide bicycle-pedestrian task force as a forum composed of diverse stakeholders to discuss policies and initiatives related to walking and bicycling.

Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)

Support a fully funded and sustainable EPF

- Support a \$300 million appropriation for the EPF, putting New York in a position of national leadership and addressing environmental needs across the state, including land acquisition for trail corridors and parks; municipal parks and waterfront revitalization grants, which fund many local park and trail projects; and state land stewardship and public access to state parks, historic sites, and state forest lands and recreation facilities.
- Unlock the potential of grassroots Friends groups that support and strengthen state parks and historic sites with a second round of \$500,000 for the NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program.
- Provide state agencies responsible for administering the EPF and implementing important programs that protect our shared environment and public health with sustainable funding to meet existing needs.

Local Stewardship

Remove obstacles to volunteerism

- Support the creation of a standard, universal registration form for volunteers working on lands owned and managed by DEC, OPRHP and the Canal Corporation, and remove complicated permitting processes, the requirement that long-term volunteers register each year, and fees for volunteer registration.

Increase recreational opportunities

- Expand the number and kinds of recreational uses that are covered by the Recreational Use Statute in order to provide increased recreational opportunities throughout the state.
- Encourage park and trail development by extending liability protection for recreational use to landowners of railroad and utility corridors.

Federal Priorities

- Increase funding for active transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, safety programming, and research, in a new federal transportation bill.
- Provide full, dedicated, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million.
- Implement a national Complete Streets standard.
- Improve the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians by setting specific goals and performance measures.
- Support new funding mechanisms for Complete Streets and encourage funding equity in low-income communities.
- Support local control of federal transportation funding.
- Make permanent the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant program to provide funding to create and revitalize urban parks.





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