

# GreenSpace

For members, supporters, and friends of Parks & Trails New York

Winter 2012 – 2013



Parks & Trails  
NEW YORK

[www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)

## Hurricane Sandy leaves behind damaged parks and trails

Many state and local parks and trails in New York City, the Hudson Valley and Long Island were hit hard by Hurricane Sandy.

Gantry Plaza State Park in Queens experienced significant flooding, as did Roberto Clemente in the Bronx and East River in Manhattan. Jones Beach, Robert Moses and other coastal parks on Long Island were dealt a serious blow as parts of buildings, roads, and boardwalks were demolished and dunes swept away.

In the lower Hudson Valley, there were extensive power outages, downed trees, and wind destruction. The Hudson River experienced heavy flooding due to the surge, with impacts to a number of park facilities located on the waterfront. At Schodack Island State Park just south of Albany, for example, the boat launch was reported to be under five feet of water.

While it is too early for detailed damage estimates, restoration of the region's parks and trails will probably end up costing upwards of \$100 million dollars. Our thoughts are with the many people and places affected by the storm and our hope is for a speedy recovery.



Jones Beach and other state parks experienced significant damage from Hurricane Sandy

## NY Works capital funding will help revitalize state park system

Earlier this year, the infusion of \$89 million—leveraged to \$143 million—in capital funding through the NY Works program to address infrastructure needs at 48 state parks and historic sites is breathing new life into a park system that has suffered from decades of

*PTNY led the effort to keep parks open when they were threatened with closure; now we are at the forefront again, making sure that our treasured parks and historic sites are restored, rejuvenated and revitalized.*

underfunding. This is a smart investment and an important down payment in what PTNY hopes will be a multi-year revitalization of the state park system. Continuing to invest in these treasured places will help grow New York's economy sustainably and secure our parks and conservation legacy for future generations.

We are grateful to the Governor and Legislature for helping to rejuvenate our state park system and recognizing the strong connection between economic vitality and outdoor recreation. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy the need for restoring our parks with sustainability and resiliency in mind is greater than ever.

Love your park?  
Save the date –  
Saturday, May 4, 2013



Join us for I Love My Park Day 2013.  
Pitch in to clean up, improve, and beautify  
a park *you* love. Find out more at  
[www.ptny.org/Ilovemypark](http://www.ptny.org/Ilovemypark).

# FOSTERING OUTDOOR RECREATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

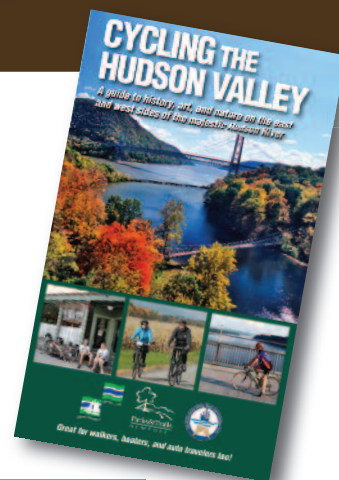
## Hot off the presses: *Cycling the Hudson Valley*

Our new guidebook, *Cycling the Hudson Valley*, highlights bicycle routes, attractions, historic sites, parks, trails, wineries, campgrounds, bike shops, and much more.

Developed in partnership with the Hudson River Valley Greenway and Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area—with support from Con Edison and Furthermore, a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund—the 142-page guide is the perfect companion for touring the Hudson Valley on both sides of the river between Albany and NYC.

*Cycling the Hudson Valley* offers residents and visitors the information we've garnered during years of organizing the Great Hudson Valley Pedal, our annual supported bike tour from Albany to NYC (in 2013, July 30 to August 4).

To order a copy, visit [www.ptny.org/guidebook](http://www.ptny.org/guidebook) or call 518-434-1583.



## 14th annual Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour

More than 500 riders from 35 states and four countries took part in PTNY's 14th annual Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour July 8-15. In addition, we had some special VIP guests this year.

### Team New York

NYS Canal Corporation Director Brian Stratton led a rotating team of New York officials from the Governor's Office and commissioners from Empire State Development, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Dept. of Environmental Conservation, and other key agencies.



Members of Gov. Cuomo's cabinet and executive staff joined PTNY's Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour. Among Team New York members shown in photo: Brian Stratton, NYS Canal Corp. Director; Rose Harvey, State Parks Commissioner; and Ken Adams, Pres. and CEO of Empire State Development.

## Great New York cycling

*Join us next summer for a fun and affordable cycling vacation!*

Bike tour registration opens January 1

### Cycling the Erie Canal

A 400-mile bicycle tour along the legendary Erie Canal  
July 7-14, 2013

### Cycling the Hudson Valley

A 200-mile bicycle tour from Albany to New York City through the picturesque and historic Hudson Valley  
July 30-August 4, 2013

[www.ptny.org/canaltour](http://www.ptny.org/canaltour) • 518.434.1583 • [www.ptny.org/hudsonstour](http://www.ptny.org/hudsonstour)

### First Niagara Bike Ambassadors

Bike ambassadors from our official bank sponsor, First Niagara, rode and reported daily on their adventures.



A big thank you to all our bike tour sponsors: NYS Canal Corporation, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, First Niagara Foundation, CSEA, Brookfield, Wegmans, Terry Bicycling and I Love NY. Nine tourism agencies supported the tour: Rochester, Albany, and Syracuse and Orleans, Wayne County, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and Montgomery Counties.



# SPEAKING OUT/TAKING ACTION

## Leading the fight for federal trails funding

The newly passed federal Transportation bill (MAP-21) dealt a big blow to trail and bike/ped funding in NYS, slashing these programs by one-third. States now also have the option of diverting half of these funds to non-trail and bike/ped projects and opting out completely from the Recreational Trails Program.

## Taking action

Via a letter to Governor Cuomo—developed with our partners the Tri-State Transportation Campaign and the NY Bicycling Coalition, and co-signed by almost 100 organizations and municipalities—PTNY urged immediate action to ensure continued robust funding for trail, bicycle and pedestrian projects in NYS.

We plan to continue our vigorous advocacy through multiple communications with decision makers, publicity, and social media.

## NYS Recreational Trails Program preserved

PTNY advocacy, including a very successful postcard campaign, helped preserve the popular Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a vital funding source for trails in NYS.



PTNY delivered a box of postcards from trail advocates asking Governor Cuomo to support the Recreational Trails Program

## You can help

We still have a lot of work to do. NYSDOT has not yet made available tens of millions of dollars in Transportation Enhancement funds from the previous transportation law—funds that communities around the state want and need to use to build trails.

We will continue to call on you to help as we lead the fight for ample funding for bicycle, pedestrian and trail funding in NYS.

## PTNY Campaign to Close the Gaps in Erie Canalway Trail makes progress

PTNY's campaign to "Close the Gaps" in the Erie Canalway Trail has made some real progress!

- The NYS Canal Corporation announced that work would begin to complete two sections of trail in western New York, one eight miles, the other one mile, which will result in a 134-mile uninterrupted trail route between Buffalo and Lyons.
- The City of Rome is completing two miles of on- and off-road trail east of Old Erie Canal State Park. When added to the two miles of trail already under development within the city, it will result in more than 50 miles of continuous trail from Dewitt to Utica.
- Schenectady County is constructing 1.3 miles of trail along the Mohawk River. When complete, almost all the trail in the City of Schenectady will be off-road.
- Finally, the Syracuse Metropolitan Planning Council is working on a plan to complete the trail through the City of Syracuse.



# SUSTAINING NEW YORK'S PARKS & TRAILS

## PTNY honors Governor Cuomo, Cong. Hinchey, Brookfield

An overflow crowd joined Parks & Trails New York on October 17 to celebrate and honor three park and trail champions: Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey, and Brookfield and its Co-Chairman John E. Zuccotti.

At the festive event, PTNY presented its first Park Legacy Award to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo for his commitment to keep New York's state parks open and for providing increased capital funding for the magnificent but previously underfunded state park system. State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey accepted the award

for the Governor.

Cong. Hinchey, who is retiring this year, was honored with PTNY's George W. Perkins Award for his long and distinguished record of leadership on behalf of New York's precious natural and historic heritage. And PTNY honored Brookfield and Mr. Zuccotti with the Perkins Award for creating green and beautiful public spaces and for an outstanding record as a model of corporate social responsibility.

Dr. Lucy R. Waletzky, Chair of the State Parks Council and an Honorary Chair of the event, offered a tribute to Gov. Cuomo for his unswerving support of the state park system. Tributes to Cong. Hinchey were offered by former NYS Parks Commissioner Joan Davidson and by Elizabeth Waldstein-Hart, Executive Director of the Walkway Over the Hudson. Tributes to Brookfield and Mr. Zuccotti were offered by Diana L. Taylor, Chair of the Hudson River Park Trust. Robert R. Dyson was also an Honorary Chair of the award reception.

The award reception was held at the beautiful and historic University Club in midtown NYC.



Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey (center) accepted the Park Legacy Award on behalf of Governor Cuomo. She is flanked by Judith Mower, PTNY Board Chair (left) and Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, Chair of the State Parks Council and an Honorary Chair of the event.

## Tributes to cyclist Tom Boehm to benefit all NY cyclists and trail users

How do you express your love and admiration for someone who spent much of his free time enjoying New York's great outdoors, often by bicycle?

When Albany-area resident Tom Boehm passed away this past summer, his family decided to honor his love of cycling by suggesting that friends and family make a contribution to Parks & Trails New York.

We have been overwhelmed by the response. We are dedicating these funds to supporting our work to strengthen grassroots organizations that promote trails and bicycling. We are honored to have been recognized in this manner.

## Welcome new Board member Richard Remmer

PTNY is pleased to welcome Richard Remmer to the PTNY Board. Richard has been a prime mover in the Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve on Long Island since he joined its board in 1998. In addition to the Friends, Richard is an avid fly-fisherman, has a law practice, and runs a 250-seat restaurant with his wife that has been in the family since 1929.

## Jack Bertsch gives back to things he believes in

As a child Jack Bertsch was constantly outdoors, playing in the fields and woods around his western New York home. This led to a lifelong love of nature and passion for gardening, camping, hiking, and fishing. It also led to his commitment to and involvement in organizations, such as PTNY, which share his belief that green spaces are essential.

"Parks keep families together. I love seeing multi-generational family groups out enjoying the sunshine and fresh air together," says Jack, who is founder and CEO of Polymer Conversions, a full-service medical injection molding firm in Orchard Park, N.Y.

Jack's own family's enjoyment of Chestnut Ridge, a 1,200-acre Erie County park, caused him to help found the Chestnut Ridge Park Conservancy, a Friends group dedicated to improving the park through direct action and advocacy.

The Conservancy has enjoyed significant success since its inception four years ago— park roads have been repaved, the CCC-era casino updated, and maps and signs installed.

Jack supports PTNY because, "I'm at the point in my life when I can give back to the things I believe in and I believe in what PTNY does."

One of Jack's hobbies is growing oak trees from acorns he has collected on his travels around the country. Just as he nurtures his oaks, he nurtures many causes and organizations. Thank you, Jack!



*I believe in  
what PTNY does*



# PROMOTING GREEN JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## **Bicyclists Bring Business!** ▶ Roundtable and bike-a-round highlight potential of bicycle tourism along Erie Canalway Trail

Western New York residents, government officials, and business owners discovered how to appeal to and profit from bicycle tourists visiting the Erie Canalway Trail at an October roundtable in western New York. They learned about the demographics and needs of the bicycle tourist as well as tips for making communities and businesses more bicycle-friendly and attractive to outdoor recreationalists.

The next morning participants had an opportunity to experience the Canalway Trail and the Village of Albion, 30 miles west of Rochester, firsthand from the perspective of a cycling tourist.

"Things look quite different from the seat of a bicycle," noted one participant, who hadn't been on a bicycle in at least 10 years.

The events were sponsored by Parks & Trails New York, New York State Canal Corporation, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and Western Erie Canal Alliance.



## **PTNY to report on economic impact of Erie Canalway Trail**

PTNY has launched the first-ever study of the current and potential economic impacts of the Erie Canalway Trail on New York's economy. Results will be presented not only in terms of dollars generated but also number of jobs created and sustained. Paul Scipione, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Business and Director of the Survey/Research Center at SUNY Geneseo is conducting the eight-month effort. Study results will be available in early 2013.

## **Thank you to our Green Partner - REI**



REI is dedicated to inspiring people to love the outdoors and take care of the places they love. From local educational events to volunteer efforts to protect natural spaces to partnerships with regional and national nonprofits, REI works with local communities to preserve the environment and get people outside.

REI engages a full spectrum of resources to mobilize communities around outdoor stewardship of public lands, natural areas, trails, and waterways. In 2010, for example, REI hosted more than 540 outdoor volunteer projects that engaged more than 31,000 people.

In May 2012, REI was a Premier Sponsor of PTNY's *I Love My Park Day* and continues to promote and support our outdoor programs.

## **Bikes on trains — Sen. Gillibrand reaches out to Amtrak**

As a result of PTNY's advocacy efforts, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand reached out to Amtrak to urge it to allow roll-on bikes on trains between Buffalo and Albany to make it easier for bicycle tourists to enjoy the area. Stating that the inclusion of bicycle racks was a "commonsense step to remove barriers" between

New Yorkers and the State's natural beauty, the Senator underscored the potential of bicycle tourism to "jumpstart a new economic engine" in communities along the Erie Canalway Trail. Currently, bicycles are prohibited on Amtrak trains unless they are disassembled and boxed.



*Published by:*

**Parks & Trails New York**

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Parks & Trails New York works to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout the state for all to use and enjoy.

Parks & Trails New York is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization as defined by the IRS. Contributions are tax-deductible.

*GreenSpace* is published by Parks & Trails New York and is available on the PTNY website at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org). Contributions of manuscripts, letters, photographs or other material relating to parks and trails in NYS are encouraged.

*Photos courtesy of: NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Chittenango Boat Landing, Patti Looney, Concerned Long Island Mountain Bicyclists (CLIMB), Friends of Cuba Architecture, Pauline Shostack, Mandy Applin, James Huntley.*

Join or Donate to Parks & Trails New York today at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)

# BUILDING PARK AND TRAIL "INFRASTRUCTURE"

## Strengthening the community of park friends: a new technical assistance program

Friends groups are invaluable partners in efforts to protect and enhance New York State Parks and Historic Sites. With parks still facing significant underfunding, Friends organizations – oftentimes made up entirely of volunteers – are more important than ever in keeping state parks and historic sites inviting and welcoming places for visitors.

That's why PTNY is launching a new technical assistance program for state park Friends groups. By working one-on-one with Friends groups and helping to

build their capacity, we can strengthen the community of park supporters and enhance stewardship of the state park system. The program will officially launch in early 2013. Stay tuned!

## Ensuring parks and trails are part of regional planning

PTNY is leading the effort to promote the strong connection between parks and trails, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability in every region of New York.

Two initiatives set in motion by Governor Cuomo – the Regional Economic Development Councils and the new Cleaner, Greener Communities Program – involve millions of dollars in awards for specific projects that help achieve economic development and sustainability goals. PTNY has been working to ensure that expanding, promoting, and protecting a network of parks, trails, and greenways is an integral part of these regional economic development and sustainability planning efforts happening now around the state.

*Outdoor recreation contributes \$11.3 billion to the state's tourism economy each year – over 25% of the state's total tourism industry*



## Trail users count

Trails are popular—just how popular will be better known as the numbers from the first statewide Trail User Count are tallied.

As part of efforts to implement recommendations of New York's Statewide Trails Plan, PTNY partnered with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to count users of 15 of the state's multi-use trails during the month of August. The study aims to build a body of data on the nature and volume of trail usage to better ascertain the impact on the state's outdoor recreation economy.



## You Gotta Have Friends

Make sure you sign up to receive our quarterly e-newsletter *You Gotta Have Friends* for friends of the NYS park system. Visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) to subscribe. **IT'S FREE!**



# SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS AND GRASSROOTS PARK AND TRAIL GROUPS



## Growing the Grassroots grants strengthen park and trail groups

Another round of our popular Growing the Grassroots capacity-building grants for park and trail groups is underway. The grants are designed to strengthen not-for-profit organizations that are working to build and protect parks and trails in communities across the state. More than 50 applications have been received. Winners will be announced in mid-January.



The Genesee Valley Greenway grows again. Elected and state agency officials joined Cuba Village Mayor Tom Taylor and Trail Sparkplug Michael Doyle (center with scissors) and PTNY's Fran Gotcsik (right front) to officially open a new mile of Genesee Valley Greenway in the Southern Tier.

## Hooray for new trails!

PTNY's *Healthy Trails, Healthy People* program has assisted 40 communities around the state advance their trail projects, providing help with technical issues, planning, public outreach, grant writing, fundraising, programming, and organizational development.

When all the trail projects are completed, 270 miles of new multi-use trail will be open. And we're proud to announce the opening this summer of 3.5 miles of new trail.

### Andes Trails, Delaware County

A 2.5-mile former rail corridor opened for trail use on June 2, National Trails Day.

### Village of Cuba, Allegany County

A one-mile section of the Genesee Valley Greenway adjacent to the Village of Cuba opened this fall.

## PTNY awards mini-grants for local trail projects

PTNY has awarded mini-grants to two of our *Healthy Trails, Healthy People* communities to give a boost to their trail projects:

- In the Catskills, the Andes Society for History and Culture will develop trail signs, a brochure and a trailhead kiosk
- In central New York, the Montezuma Historical Society will get a new logo and brochure for the trail system within Montezuma Heritage Park



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## Did you see us in the *New York Times*?

New York's parks, and Parks & Trails New York, were featured recently in an article in the *New York Times*, "New York State Parks Use Infusion of Money Toward Backlog of Repairs" (October 10, 2012). The article reports on this year's infusion of capital funding and highlights the tremendous need that still remains. It also cites PTNY's advocacy and our goal of a multi-year reinvestment in the state park system.

## I love my park because...

Congrats to the winners of PTNY's first-ever *I Love My Park Because* summer photo contest. And thanks to REI for donating some great prizes.



### FAVORITE

Pauline and Zachary Shostack,  
Erie Canal Park, Camillus

### MOST ORIGINAL

James Huntley, Long  
Point State Park, Aurora



### Impromptu

Mandy Applin,  
Mednon Ponds  
Park, Pittsford