

# GreenSpace

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

Winter 2011 – 2012



Parks & Trails  
NEW YORK

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

## BRINGING NATURE CLOSER TO HOME – *FOR ALL NEW YORKERS*

### Working with communities to build trails close to home

Three trail projects have been selected to receive assistance from PTNY as part of its *Healthy Trails, Healthy People* program, which is funded in part from the Healthy Heart Program of the NYS Department of Health. The projects are:

- **Genesee Valley Greenway, Allegany County** — to encourage usage and volunteer support for a newly completed one-mile section of Genesee Valley Greenway in the Village of Cuba.
- **Montezuma Heritage Park Erie Canal Towpath Trail, Cayuga County** — to help the Town of Montezuma create and promote a network of trails linking the hamlet with the Seneca River and several historic Erie Canal sites.
- **Andes Trails, Delaware County** — to create a five-mile trail linking the Village of Andes to the Pepacton Reservoir.

PTNY staff provides help with technical issues, planning, public outreach, grant writing, fundraising, programming and organizational development to these communities.

More than 39 communities have benefitted from PTNY's assistance through its *Healthy Trails, Healthy People* program. When all the trail projects are completed, almost 270 miles of new multi-use trail will be open to the public.



### Bringing together Park and Historic Site Friends around the state

PTNY staff members met with more than 125 park and historic site enthusiasts, representing 34 Friends groups, at three meetings held across the state in October. The meetings were held at some of our state park system's gems: Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park on Long Island, the Taconic Regional Headquarters in Staatsburg (a LEED Platinum-certified building), and Letchworth State Park in the Genesee Valley.

The gatherings — organized by PTNY and the Alliance for NYS Parks, in cooperation with State Parks and the State Council on Parks — were an opportunity for park enthusiasts to share information about working more collaboratively to protect and promote our park system.



PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin addresses a group of park and historic site Friends at one of three regional meetings held around the state this fall.

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**Parks & Trails New York**

29 Elk Street, Albany, New York 12207

(518) 434-1583

E-mail: [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org) • website: [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)

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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, David Ramada, Friends of Gantry Plaza State Park, Association for Conservation of Recreational and Natural Spaces, Inc.*

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# SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS PARK AND TRAIL ACTION

## Helping grassroots park and trail groups help themselves

*"Parks & Trails  
New York is a godsend  
to grassroots groups  
such as ours"*

—Long Island Park  
Friends Group

PTNY's unique capacity-building program provides small grants and technical assistance to enable local park and trail Friends groups to be stronger and more effective in protecting and enhancing local green space.

Groups from the Bronx and Long Island, in the Hudson Valley and up to Niagara Falls and Western New York are using PTNY's grassroots grants to increase outreach and visibility, build membership, and generate community support.

Since the inception of the program in 2009, PTNY has given grants to 25 groups. This year's recipients will be announced in January.



PTNY grants help park and trail Friends group be stronger and more effective stewards and advocates.

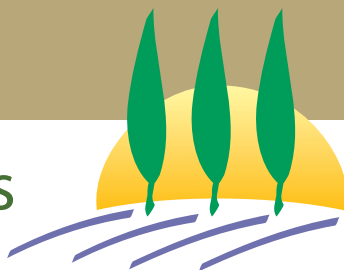
## PTNY awards mini-grants for local trail projects

PTNY has awarded mini-grants to two of our *Healthy Trails, Healthy People* communities to help them advance their trail projects:

- Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail Inc. will create a Neighborhood Trail Plan poster for part of its proposed 27-mile trail southeast of Buffalo
- Village of Copenhagen Trail Committee will develop a trail plan for a section of its 1.8-mile trail in Lewis County in northern New York.



# First-ever Finger Lakes Trails Conference builds a regional network



PTNY's Finger Lakes Trails and Greenways Conference, presented in partnership with the Finger Lakes Land Trust, drew over 150 trail advocates from across New York State and beyond to Cornell University in late September. Attendees were able to get their boots dirty in one of four field workshops, meet old friends and new at a reception at Cornell Plantations, and hear from trail experts from around the state and nation.

Visit the PTNY website at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) to view presentations and photos from the conference.



*"Knowledgeable and skilled presenters, lots of networking opportunities, very effective field workshop...valuable to those new to park and trail development as well as those with years of experience."*

— Conference Participant



## FROM THE DESK OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROBIN DROPKIN

Why support New York's parks and trails in tough times?

Dear Friends,

This newsletter highlights some of PTNY's recent activities on behalf of New York's parks and trails.



It all adds up to a matter of dollars and sense.

Our precious parks and trails are an integral part of the state's recreational tourism economy, supporting thousands of jobs and generating millions in tax revenues each year.

And our quality of life would be immeasurably poorer without our parks and trails.

With government resources so thin, the future of our public green space depends on all of us.

In the pages of this issue of GreenSpace you will read about some of PTNY's successes –

- the environmental law pioneers we honored at our annual Perkins Award reception
- the volunteers who are the backbone of the local trail and park Friends groups we support with technical assistance and grant programs
- the business people and elected officials who support our Close the Gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail and Bicyclists Bring Business campaigns

In addition, we're fighting to ensure that our state's evolving economic development policies include a major role for environmentally sustainable outdoor tourism.

And on May 5, 2012, we're organizing the first-ever statewide I Love My Park Day – when New Yorkers will pitch-in to improve our state parks and historic sites.

New York's parks and trails are an asset that deserves the support of New York's government, business community, and citizenry. Parks & Trails New York will continue to work at every level to bring nature close to home – for every New Yorker.

*Robin Dropkin*

Robin Dropkin



# Legislative Victories

## Greater drilling protections for vulnerable Allegany State Park

Two bills that provide greater drilling protection to Allegany State Park, both strongly supported by PTNY, were signed by Governor Cuomo in September. Allegany, the largest state park in New York, is vulnerable to drilling since the state doesn't own all the subsurface mineral rights. The two new laws protect the park by providing that any unused mineral rights in the park will lapse and revert to the state after a certain period of time and that the State Parks agency will have strict oversight authority over any future requests for drilling.

Much of Allegany State Park's subsurface mineral rights are privately owned.



## Safer Streets for All

New York's roadways are going to be safer for everyone — drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. Now that Governor Cuomo has signed the Complete Streets bill, state highway law mandates that design features such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, lane striping, share-the-road signage, crosswalks, bus pull-outs, curb cuts, and traffic calming be considered in the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of roadways that receive federal or state funding.



# Promoting Green Jobs and Economic Development

## Campaign to Close the Gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail buoyed by Senator Gillibrand

The campaign to “Close the Gaps” in the Erie Canalway Trail – a potential boon to the upstate economy – continues to gain momentum through the efforts of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand in collaboration with PTNY and the NYS Canal Corporation. So far the Senator has sponsored five roundtables along the Erie corridor to consider how to complete the remaining 85 miles of the 350-mile trail between Albany and Buffalo. Roundtables have taken place in Canajoharie, Utica, Syracuse, Clyde, and Lockport.

*“The Erie Canalway Trail is critical to local economic development and to attracting tourists, and the outdoor recreation it offers helps make Upstate a great place to live, work and raise a family.”*

— Senator Kirsten Gillibrand



The Erie Canalway Trail is a potential boon to the upstate economy.

## Outdoor recreation is vital to NY's economic future

Parks & Trails New York has been working to ensure that Governor Cuomo's new Regional Economic Development Councils understand the major contribution of outdoor recreation to New York's tourism economy. Our efforts, along with those of many of our partner organizations, are important to making sure New York makes smart investments, such as enhanced recreational opportunities that are so important to improving quality of life and attracting business.

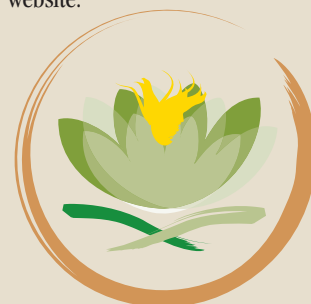
PTNY has developed talking points and has been urging local park and trail advocates to contact their regional council to ensure that parks, trails and all types of outdoor recreation are incorporated into the vision and strategic plans developed for each region. The talking points and contact information for the councils are available on our website.



Outdoor recreation supports more than 130,000 New York jobs and generates annual tax revenues of nearly \$800 million  
— Outdoor Industry Foundation

## Bicyclists Bring Business workshop held in Little Falls

In late October, Parks & Trails New York and the NYS Canal Corporation held the 10<sup>th</sup> in an ongoing series of Bicyclists Bring Business roundtables, in Little Falls in the Mohawk Valley. Attendees included avid cyclists, local business owners, redevelopment advocates, and elected officials. Regardless of their background, the attendees were eager to discuss the best methods for encouraging more cyclists to visit the Mohawk Valley. A summary of the meeting, and the *Bicyclists Bring Business* handbook, are available on the PTNY website.



# Meet our new staff



**Laura DiBetta** joins PTNY as Director, Parks Program and Government Relations. Prior to coming to PTNY, Laura was a Program Manager at the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. Laura was previously with Environmental Advocates of New York, where she worked on nearly every major state environmental policy issue, from brownfields and smart growth to climate change and renewable energy.

**Elijah Yearick** is PTNY's new Project Coordinator. Growing up amidst the Appalachian Mountains in central Pennsylvania, Elijah was lucky enough to have thousands of acres of forest land as his backyard. His passion for nature led him to earn a Master's Degree in Geoenvironmental Studies. Before joining PTNY he spent four years working as a long-range/heritage planner at the County Planning Commission in Lancaster, PA.



**Tanya Brown**, our new administrative assistant, is a recent graduate of Bryant & Stratton College. Tanya plays an integral role in the administration of our membership program, fundraising initiatives, and bike tours. In her spare time, she enjoys watching football, singing, and going to her son's baseball games.

Thank you to our Green Partners — businesses that support New York's parks and trails!

*Wegmans*

Headquartered in Rochester, New York and founded in 1916, Wegmans is a major regional supermarket chain, and one of the largest private companies in the U.S. Family-owned since 1916, Wegmans stores are known for their dazzling displays of fresh produce, baked goods, fish, meats, cheese, and foods from around the world. Wegmans is also known for its exceptional commitment to the community. The company is a long-time sponsor of PTNY's *Cycling the Erie Canal* bike tour and more recently a sponsor of our Finger Lakes Trails and Greenway conference.

## Welcome to three new Board members



**John Bolebruch** — John grew up in the Binghamton area, moving to NYC to pursue a career in finance. An avid sportsman, John enjoys doubles squash, tennis, sailing, skiing and bicycling. He has done numerous supported and unsupported bike rides in Europe, Central America, and the U.S., including PTNY's *Cycling the Erie Canal*.

**Anthony Sherin** — Tony has been a filmmaker for over 20 years. A native New Yorker, he lived for many years in Los Angeles, garnering impressive credits as a film editor. He returned to NYC to make his own films. In 2010 he completed a terrific film about Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks.

**Tim Nelson** — Tim is Assistant Vice President of Advancement at Utica College. He has extensive experience in development, marketing, and public relations. He is an avid bicyclist and has served as a volunteer with PTNY's *Cycling the Erie Canal* bike tour.

**Tom Holmes** - Tom, a family practice physician in Norwich, had been dreaming about a trail along the Chenango River for years when in 2005 he successfully applied for assistance from PTNY through our *Healthy Trails, Healthy People* program. Since then, Tom has been instrumental in forming the Chenango Greenway Conservancy and establishing six miles of riverside public pathway.

## Honoring New York's environmental pioneers

PTNY honored New York's pioneers of environmental law with our George W. Perkins Award at a convivial reception on November 17 at The University Club in NYC.

The George W. Perkins Award was established by Parks & Trails New York to honor outstanding environmental leadership. The Award is named for George W. Perkins, who, in his long-time commitment to New York's magnificent state park system, was a model of the best in environmental leadership and public service.



Pioneers of NYS environmental law were celebrated at a reception on November 17 at the University Club in NYC.



## Green Briefs

### Why support state parks in tough times?

PTNY gave a presentation on "Making the Case for America's State Parks" at the National Trust for Historic Preservation national conference, October 19-22, in Buffalo. The national system of more than 6,600 state parks is an incredible resource but under escalating budget pressure.

Do you know which is the oldest state park in the nation? Our own Niagara Falls State Park, protected in 1883 by then-Governor Grover Cleveland.



Niagara Falls State Park is the oldest of the 6,600 state park units nationwide. It was protected in 1883 by then-Governor Grover Cleveland.

### Celebrating Erie Canalway Trail End-to-Enders

Parks & Trails New York, in conjunction with the NYS Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, has launched a new program that allows everyone who bikes and/or walks the entire Erie Canalway Trail between Buffalo and Albany to join the Erie Canalway Trail End-to-Enders Honor Roll and receive a certificate and decal identifying them as official Erie Canalway Trail End-to-Enders. The journey can be completed either as one through trip or in segments over a period of time. Check our website for more information.

### PTNY testifies at Assembly tourism hearing

PTNY was invited to testify at a recent hearing held by the Assembly Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development. Our testimony, available on the PTNY website, stressed the economic benefits of parks and trails and the need for creative solutions to support the state park system, including more support for Friends groups.

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

Bike tour registration opens January 1

**14th Annual**

### Cycling the Erie Canal

A 400-mile bicycle tour along the legendary Erie Canal  
**July 8-15, 2012**

**8th Annual**

### Great Hudson Valley Pedal

A 200-mile bicycle tour from Albany to New York City through the picturesque and historic Hudson Valley  
**July 31-August 5, 2012**

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# Love your park? SAVE THE DATE — Saturday, May 5, 2012

New Yorkers love their parks and historic sites. That's why PTNY, in coordination with State Parks and Friends groups, is launching an exciting new event to attract attention to the entire state park system and its needs.

I Love My Park Day will be the first-ever statewide event to improve and enhance New York's state park system. Friends groups and volunteers are more important than ever to keep parks beautiful, clean, and welcoming for all to visit and enjoy. On I Love My Park Day, thousands of volunteers will celebrate New York's park system by cleaning up park lands and beaches, planting trees and gardens, restoring trails and wildlife habitat and carrying out site-improvement projects. **Save the date for May 5, 2012** and be on the lookout for more details soon!



On May 5, volunteers for I Love My Park Day will celebrate New York's state park system by carrying out improvement projects to make our parks and historic sites beautiful and welcoming for all to visit and enjoy.

