



# 2016

ANNUAL REPORT





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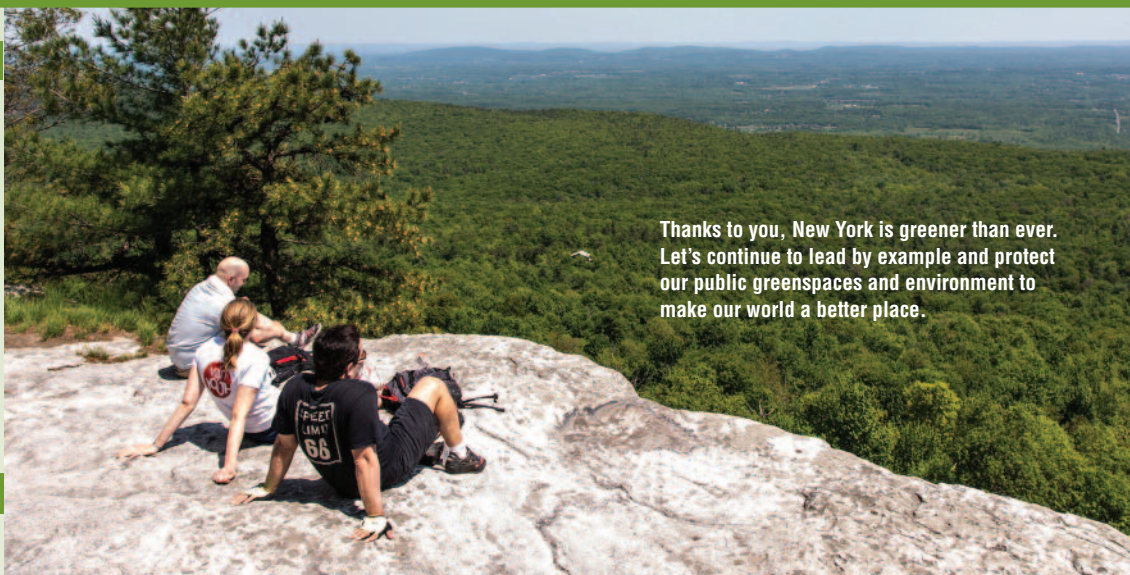
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**Annual Report 2016**



Thanks to you, New York is greener than ever. Let's continue to lead by example and protect our public greenspaces and environment to make our world a better place.

## Dear Friends of New York's Parks and Trails,

You made 2016 a year to remember for New York's parks and trails – thank you! Together we've helped put the need to invest in our parks and trails front and center in New York and our efforts are really paying off.

The recently passed NYS budget has more funding for parks and trails than ever before. The budget includes \$120M to continue the revitalization of state parks. The \$300M Environmental Protection Fund includes \$30M for state land stewardship, \$20M for municipal parks, and \$500,000 for grassroots Park and Trail Partnership grants, which we've been entrusted to administer.

And, the biggest news of all, the budget includes a landmark \$200M for the 750-mile Empire State Trail, with \$77M going to close the gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail, which we've been fighting to see completed for more than a decade.

Contrast this very green NYS budget with the federal budget proposal, which, although temporarily put on hold with the current budget extension, is very troubling for environmentalists and people who care about parks, trails and other outdoor places.

From a drastically slashed EPA budget (20% of the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation operating budget comes from federal funding) to reductions in the National Park Service budget (26 NPS sites are located in NYS) to the elimination of Americorps (the funding source for the NYS Excelsior Conservation Program), the proposed federal budget would have a sharply negative impact on the environment and people of New York.

Also on the chopping block is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, another of our priority advocacy issues, which uses proceeds from off-shore oil and gas drilling to fund park and trail projects in every region of New York and across the country.

We have a lot to be grateful for in New York. But now, more than ever, we must double our efforts to protect our environment, public parks and trails and be a model for the rest of the country.

Thank you for standing with us.

*Robin Dropkin* *Joe Scott*



**Robin Dropkin**  
*Executive Director*



**Joe Scott**  
*Chair of the Board*



# Ensuring Your Support for Parks and Trails is Heard in Albany and Washington



The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which has provided critical funding for parks in every region of our state, is in jeopardy. We must fight to ensure its continuation.

Parks & Trails New York plays an active role in the annual state budget process, advocating for important park and trail legislation. Our annual advocacy plan lays out our priority issues and legislation and serves as a basis for testimony at hearings, meetings with lawmakers and annual advocacy days, as well as letters in support of or opposition to projects and legislation. In all of our advocacy efforts, we strive to provide park friends groups and regional trail committees with the tools and information they need when it matters most.

In supporting our advocacy work, you've helped bring about a renaissance for New York's state park system. This year's state budget keeps that momentum going with another \$90 million to repair and upgrade state parks and historic sites, as well as an additional \$30 million for targeted projects that leverage private funding to improve facilities and services.

This year's investment builds on the \$469 million provided over the past five years, which has leveraged \$264 million in other funds. Nearly 383 park improvement and enhancement projects have been completed or are underway at more than 130 parks and historic sites in every region of the state thanks to the Governor's NY Parks 2020 initiative.

Our advocacy efforts have also helped ensure that this year's budget maintains the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) funding at \$300 million, securing New York's position as a national leader in conservation. Included in the EPF is a third

year of funding for the Park and Trail Partnership Program, our \$500,000 capacity-building grants program that enables grassroots groups to leverage more private funding; marshal more volunteer power; and support increased investment, events and activities at the parks and

historic sites they serve.

In these troubling times, your support also enables us to fight at the national level to protect New York's green spaces and environment. PTNY is a leading member of a national coalition advocating for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which is currently slated for elimination in the federal budget.

For more than 50 years, the LWCF has funded the creation and protection of our iconic national and state parks, city playgrounds, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and historic sites. New York State alone has received \$319 million from the LWCF for the protection of places such as Fire Island National Seashore, Saratoga National Historical Park and the Finger Lakes National Forest. Losing the LWCF would be a huge setback and we can't let that happen on our watch!

The success of our advocacy work in New York is heartening but there is still much to do and we must keep on pushing to protect our parks, trails and environment. We are so grateful to you, and our wonderful community of supporters, for making our work possible.

To donate or join visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)



# Park and Trail Partnership Program Gives Friends Groups a Powerful Boost

PTNY has provided assistance and support to communities and park and trail grassroots groups for more than 30 years. Whether through landmark studies and reports or technical assistance from our experienced staff, we provide important resources and share our extensive knowledge and network of contacts with parks and trail organizations across the state.

We've championed the importance and value of Friends groups, whose dedication, passion and on-the-ground knowledge of their parks needs and potential enable them to do great things at the grassroots level. Working in concert with state park staff, they fundraise, develop trails, organize and lead community programs, staff nature centers and museums, plant trees and flowers, and lead tours...all the while spreading love for New York's parks and trails.

In 2015 we were excited to launch the Park and Trail Partnership Program in collaboration with the NYS Office of

Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The program is designed to boost the power of Friends groups by giving them critical funding to carry out projects that improve the parks, trails and state historic sites they support.

In 2016, more than a third of all Friends groups applied for funding from the Park and Trail Partnership Program and we were pleased to award \$450,000 to 20 groups. From innovative programs designed to get kids active in parks, to replacing leaky roofs and outdated signage, to hiring part-time staff and developing marketing plans to increase visitation, the great diversity of projects funded will improve and enhance parks for all to enjoy. Given the success of the program so far, we are pushing to make sure that this transformative source of funding is a regular part of future budgets.

For a full list of projects funded through the Park and Trail Partnership Program, visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).

"A grant from the Park and Trail Partnership Program was critical to The Olana Partnership's launch of the first public tours of Olana State Historic Site's nationally-significant 250-acre artist-designed landscape. The grant funded the interpretive materials, including a Historic Landscape Tour brochure and trail map, signage at our visitors' center, and audio headsets. The grant also made possible the downloadable digital audio tour, which has enabled visitors to experience the history and beauty of Frederic Church's artful landscape and its integral viewshed anytime the site is open."

— Sean Sawyer, *The Olana Partnership*  
Washburn and Susan Oberwager President



# I Love My Park Day is a Spring Tradition for Many

With 125 state parks, historic sites and public lands welcoming more than 8,000 eager volunteers, the 6<sup>th</sup> annual I Love My Park Day was our biggest and most impactful to date. This year five National Park Service sites took part, as well as 15 properties managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation in the Adirondack and Catskill regions and at four environmental centers.

A key factor in the success and growth of I Love My Park Day has been the dedication of volunteers who, in many cases, come year after year to support their favorite parks. For many, I Love My Park Day has become a spring tradition with family and friends that they look forward to each year.

*“New Yorkers love their parks, and it’s not a surprise that I Love My Park Day has grown exponentially in size since its inception in 2012. AT&T salutes the good work of the thousands of volunteers who pitch in cleaning beaches and shorelines, improving trails, painting fences, clearing debris and making parks more accessible.”*

*— Marissa Shorenstein, president of AT&T New York, premier supporter of I Love My Park Day*

Adam Bartoszek works for The Service Collaborative of WNY, a nonprofit that connects people with meaningful opportunities to experience service. They have been participating in I Love My Park Day since its inception in 2012 and have helped recruit more than 200 volunteers to work in parks in Western New York. Adam says it’s a popular event because “Everyone loves serving the parks. It’s a great way to give back to the community and spend time outdoors, and it gives volunteers a great appreciation for our region’s natural assets.”

Jane Ayers has been bringing Girl Scout Troop 40408 to I Love My Park Day at Fairhaven Beach State Park for the past 6 years. She says, “Every year the girls make a wish list of things to do and I Love My Park Day is always at the top. They get spring fever and feel so lucky to have a state park in their back yard. From cleaning trash off the beach as younger girls to planting gardens and building wren houses now that they’re older, they’ve developed valuable skills and are proud of what they accomplish.”

I Love My Park Day would not be possible without the support of corporate partners such as AT&T, Con Edison, Brookfield, and Harney & Sons Fine Teas. They have been instrumental in providing resources to promote the event and engage volunteers and encouraging teams of employee volunteers to give back.

The enthusiasm and work that volunteers and sponsors bring to the event make a real difference for parks just as the tourist season is starting. With more than 69 million visitors a year, the service they provide is much appreciated!



I Love My Park Day volunteers, eager to lend their time and talents, make parks more enjoyable for millions of visitors each year.

## Promoting the Use and Care of Our Parks and Trails Ensures Their Future

New York is rich with beautiful parks and trails and we want everyone to experience them firsthand. The more that people use and care for our parks and trails, the stronger our movement to protect, improve, and expand them becomes.

PTNY promotes New York’s outdoor spaces with a wide variety of tools, programs and events. Outdoor adventurers can plan trips using our interactive online Erie Canalway Trail map and statewide Trailfinder map. Our *Cycling the Erie Canal* and *Cycling the Hudson Valley* guidebooks have helped thousands of cyclists from across the state and country as they plan their journeys. And innovative programs such as our **Bicycles Bring Business** workshops

and **Bike Friendly New York** certification program are helping local businesses attract cyclists by showing them how to meet their unique needs.

PTNY also organizes statewide events like **I Love My Park Day** and **Canal Clean Sweep**, which bring thousands of volunteers together to care for our parks and trails while building a tradition of stewardship, service, and pride that will ensure their place in people’s hearts. And for 19 years, cyclists from across the country and the world have joined us on our annual eight-day **Cycle the Erie Canal** tour to enjoy historic villages, beautiful scenery, and first-class cycling on this fully-supported trip.





# Ways to Support New York's Parks and Trails

Visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) to learn more

- **Become a member or make a donation online, by phone or mail**
- **Get involved** – Join us for I Love My Park Day, Canal Clean Sweep, and Park and Trail Advocacy Days, or join a Friends group and help make your local park or trail greener
- **Double your impact** – Does your employer match charitable donations? If so, send us their matching gift form and we'll take care of the rest!
- **Give at the office** – Consider setting up a convenient payroll deduction through Earth Share and the Combined Federal Campaign
- **Make a gift of stock** – Securely transfer stock directly from your brokerage account
- **Leave a legacy** – Consider leaving a legacy of parks and trails by including Parks & Trails New York in your estate planning

## We are accountable to you!

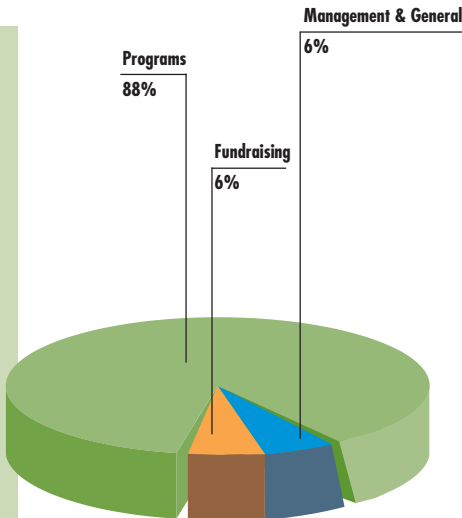
Thanks to the generosity of our members and donors, in 2016 PTNY was able to do even more to protect, sustain and promote New York's green network of parks and trails. Thank you!

### Financial Statement

Statement of Activities for the year ended June 30, 2016

Support and Revenue		Expenses (continued)	
Individual contributions	\$ 259,074	Supporting services	
Grants	462,049	Management and general	\$ 76,444
Corporate contributions	177,425	Fundraising	87,365
Program revenue	487,671	<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>\$ 163,809</b>
Other	15,943	<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,325,354</b>
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,402,162</b>		
Expenses		Net Assets	
Program services		Change in net	76,808
Conservation	\$ 888,526	Net, beginning	1,113,163
Public education	174,731	Net, end of year	\$ 1,189,971
Membership	98,288		
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>\$ 1,161,545</b>		

A copy of our most recent audited financial statement is available online at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) or upon request to Parks & Trails New York



Source: PTNY FY16 Audited Financial Statements

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PTNY thanks the thousands of volunteers who help build, maintain and enhance our state parks and trails, serve as trail ambassadors, and help our bicycle tour participants have a safe and happy journey on the Erie Canalway Trail. Thanks for all you do!

*Every effort has been made to provide an accurate accounting of PTNY supporters. Please contact us at [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org) about any corrections.*

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## An Empire State Trail Dream Comes True, Thanks to You!

For more than a decade, you've supported PTNY as we've led the campaign to Close the Gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail. Now, we are thrilled to see that dream, and much more, finally come true. The 2017-18 state budget contains \$200 million for the creation of the Empire State Trail, which when finished, will be the longest multiuse trail in the country!

By completing the Erie Canalway Trail and connecting it with the Hudson River Valley Greenway and the Champlain Canalway Trail, the Empire State Trail will link dozens of state and local parks, historic sites and museums, and communities between New York City and the North Country and Buffalo and Albany. All told, it will result in 350 miles of new trail construction by its completion in 2020 for a grand total of 750-miles.

The Empire State Trail will secure New York's place as a destination for outdoor recreation and heritage tourism, and contribute substantially to New York's economy, public health, and environment.

When complete, the Empire State Trail will connect state parks and historic sites in the Hudson Valley to millions of New Yorkers living between Manhattan and the North Country. From Battery Park, cyclists will be able to ride up the Hudson Valley to Albany, passing attractions such as

Rockefeller State Park Preserve, Walkway Over the Hudson and Olana State Historic Site. From Albany, the trail will continue north, past Saratoga National Battlefield and Fort Ticonderoga to the Canadian border. To the west, it will follow the Erie Canalway Trail all the way to Buffalo.

As the Empire State Trail project moves forward, PTNY will be there every step of the way, helping local communities engage with state agencies, and keeping momentum and enthusiasm for the project going strong.



When completed in 2020, the 750-mile Empire State Trail will be the longest multiuse trail in the country!