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## Grant helps Wayne County trails grow, increase membership

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A small grant given to Trail Works Inc. may help the Wayne County organization increase its membership. The group is a not-for-profit association founded by trail users who advocate for trail development and expansion.

Trail Works along with seven other parks and trails groups were awarded money this month from Parks and Trails New York to fund small projects. This is the first year Parks and Trails New York, a statewide not-for-profit organization in Albany that helps communities preserve and maintain recreational landscape, instituted the program which was made possible through a private donor.

"Parks and trails have a key role to play in the economic health and recovery of New York State, and grassroots groups have a key role to play in the development and promotion of parks and trails," said Robin Dropkin, executive director for Parks and Trails New York.

These grants were a means to add funding for volunteer programs, fill gaps in government spending and provide relief during challenging economic times.

Trail Works was awarded \$1,850 to fund a membership recruitment campaign to do outreach in Wayne County's 15 towns. Part of the campaign involves designing and displaying 15 signs in each of the towns' local government buildings and libraries to promote the organization. The budget also includes a number of slide show presentations, a booth for the Wayne County fair, four free programs on nature topics and trails and a welcoming event for its new membership.

Since 1997, Trail Works have raised money and relied on volunteers to help protect and improve year-round multi-use trails and parks within the county's borders. Wayne County has two state parks, four wildlife management areas, 12 town parks, five county parks, one undeveloped county park and six private preserves open to the public.

The organization recently completed the Town Loop Trail-Williamson Town Park, a 4.2 mile trail that connects towns, parks and neighborhoods.

"What's great about this particular trail is that it connects places and makes links between places within the town," said Fran Gotcsik, director of programs and policy for Parks and Trails New York . "These are the types of trails we like to encourage, the ones that allow people to access a number of different resources."

More than 76 groups from 41 different countries applied for the grant program.

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