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Rail groups receive funding

First published: Friday, January 16, 2009

Efforts to develop new trails in Albany and Rensselaer counties got a boost recently from the advocacy group Parks & Trails New York.

Friends of the Rail Trail, based in Delmar, and the Hoosic River Watershed Association, based in Hoosick Falls, were among eight groups in the state awarded grants by Parks & Trails New York.

Friends of the Rail Trail was awarded \$2,000 to help pay for printing and mailing a membership/project information brochure to promote community financial and in-kind support for the group, which is advocating for a 9-mile rail trail between the city of Albany and Voorheesville.

The Hoosic River Watershed Association was awarded \$880 to design and build a Web site for the Hoosic River Greenway, a 2.5-mile rail trail being developed within the village of Hoosick Falls.

"Parks and trails have a key role to play in the economic health and recovery of New York state, and grass-roots groups have a key role to play in the development and promotion of parks and trails," said Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks & Trails New York. He said the grants help strengthen the state's not-for-profit park and trail organizations, enabling them to attract more private funding and recruit volunteers.

Parks & Trails New York received more than 75 applications from park and trail groups located in 41 counties throughout the state. Other groups were awarded grants for projects in St. Lawrence County, the Bronx, Otsego County, Ulster County, Wayne County, and Oswego County.

Parks & Trails New York is a statewide not-for-profit organization that has nurtured New York's park and trail movements for more than 20 years, helping hundreds of groups and municipalities build, maintain, and promote parks, greenways, and more than 1,200 miles of multiuse trails.

More information on the grant program and Parks & Trails New York can be found on the Web site <http://www.ptny.org>.

— Staff reports