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01 County receives park and recreational grant

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New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Carol Ash announced \$3.3 million in grant awards for 32 trail-related projects around the state as part of the federal Recreational Trails Program. The grant acquisitions were announced June 23.

"New York's expansive trail system offers four-seasons of recreation for all who live and visit our great state," said State Parks Commissioner Carol Ash. "Through these grants, New York will help connect people to the spectacular scenery and wide open spaces across the Empire State, while helping to improve the quality of life and economies of host communities."

New York has one of the most expansive trail systems in the nation, providing public access to the many natural resources across the state. The trails, which lead through public and private lands, are developed and maintained by state and local municipalities and motorized and non-motorized trail group volunteers.

"Trails are a key asset to New York, providing multiple benefits," said Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks & Trails New York. "They encourage people to be more physically active, protect our air, water and wildlife, provide close to home recreation, and bring tourists and visitors to communities."

As big parcels of land get harder and harder to come by, Dropkin said it's time to turn more attention to greenways and trails-as green swaths of protected open space in their own right and enhancements to and connections between larger parcels of open space.

"New York's many trail user groups appreciate the opportunity to apply for these awards biannually, which enable them to complete projects on trail systems statewide," said Anne M. O'Dell, chair of the New York State Trails Council. "Many groups could not otherwise afford to complete these projects without the Recreation Trails Program. Snow-mobiling in particular, these projects will greatly increase the safety and continuity of the statewide snowmobile trail system."

The grants will be used for such projects as creating new trails, improving trails, providing connections and purchasing equipment. Trail development plans must emphasize providing access for people with disabilities and minimizing environmental impact. State Parks administers the federal matching grant program providing funding to state and local governments, not-for-profit organizations, corporations, and partnerships for the maintenance, renovation, development, acquisition and construction of trails and trail-related facilities.

Funding is provided through the Federal Highway Administration's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.

Madison County projects

The Chittenango Polar Bears Snowmobile Club, Inc. has been granted \$113,600. The club will purchase snowmobile trail grooming equipment to develop and maintain multi-use trails in the Chittenango area.

Oneida County projects

The town of Kirkland \$50,000 The Kirkland Fitness Trail Committee has formed a partnership with the Town of Kirkland to develop a recreational trail on the Chenango Canal Tow path and connecting it with an established trail in a neighboring community. T.C. Riders Snowmobile Club Inc. \$162,800 T. C. Riders Snowmobile Club, Inc. of Camden will purchase trail grooming equipment to maintain 46 miles of public trails providing year-round access to more than 50 square miles of forested terrain in the Tug Hill Plateau.

Ontario County projects

The county has been granted \$80,000. The four-fold purpose of the Finger Lakes Trail Spur at Grimes Glen County Park project is to improve accessibility and usability of the trail at Grimes Glen, while increasing the overall connectivity between trail resources in the region.

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