National Trails Day 2014: New trail openings, group hikes and volunteer projects…
and renewed calls for completion of the Erie Canalway Trail

In celebration of the American Hiking Society’s 22nd annual National Trails Day®, Parks & Trails New York is urging everyone to spend some time on one of the state’s more than 16,000 miles of trail on Saturday, June 7. New Yorkers can select from 45 different events. Hikes, bike and horse rides, trail maintenance, paddle trips, trail dedication ceremonies, and other activities are being held in cities and towns across the state.

“No New York’s trail system is absolutely second to none! No matter your age or fitness level, there is a trail for you in New York State. National Trails Day allows us to show our appreciation for trails and all they bring to a community - physical activity, tourism dollars, economic development, and improved quality of life. It’s also a great time to think about creating new trails or moving forward with unfinished trail projects, especially the Erie Canalway Trail,” said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York.

What better way to celebrate National Trails Day® than a hike? Join the Rip Van Winkle Hiking Club in the Catskills for a hike up to the Giant Ledges, with beautiful views of Slide Mountain and the Catskill region, and an optional trek to the top of Panther Mountain. Western New Yorkers can head to Artpark in Lewiston for hiking along the Niagara Gorge, and North Country nature lovers can join the Adirondack Mountain Club for a hike in Northville.

Ribbon cuttings will celebrate the official openings for several trails. In Andes in Delaware County, the Catskill Mountain Club will celebrate the official opening of the Palmer Hill Hiking Trail, a wandering route through the woods and meadows of an old Catskills farm with views of high peaks. In western New York, Ontario Pathways will celebrate the opening of the Flint Bridge, a pedestrian and bicycle crossing of Routes 5 & 20 near Canandaigua.
Those looking for trail work opportunities also have plenty of options. Appalachian Mountain Club will host projects on the Long Path at Thacher Park in Albany County, as well as trail clearing on the Siwanoy Trail in Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx. The Student Conservation Association will be removing invasive species, clearing trails, installing signage and tackling a host of other projects at Saratoga State Park and Grafton Lakes State Park in the Capital District; Van Cortlandt Park and East River Park in New York City; and Esopus Meadows Preserve in Ulster County.

Beyond celebrations of new trails and inspiring volunteer trail projects across New York, National Trails Day® also serves as a reminder of the need for creation of an inter-connected network of multi-use trails across the state. The Erie Canalway Trail, the state’s longest trail and the backbone of any state-wide trail network, is still unfinished. With 277 miles now open to the public, the Canalway Trail is 77% complete, but to reach its full potential as a world-class economic, recreational, and tourism asset for all of New York, it must be finished. A continuous, multi-use, off-road trail will serve hundreds of communities along the Canal’s route, and attract thousands of national and international tourists.

Find an event near you
For a schedule of National Trails Day® events in New York State, visit www.AmericanHiking.org/ntd.

About Parks & Trails New York
Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving the health and quality of life of all New Yorkers by working with community organizations and municipalities to envision, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks, greenways and trails throughout the state for all to use and enjoy. For more information about Parks & Trails New York visit www.ptny.org.