



**Parks & Trails**  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Trails and Greenways Conference to be Held September 23 and 24 in Ithaca**

ALBANY, N.Y. Parks & Trails New York and the Finger Lakes Land Trust will host the region's first-ever trails and greenways conference, Friday, September 23 and Saturday, September 24, 2011 at Cornell University in Ithaca. The conference, entitled *Finger Lakes Trails and Greenways: Connecting communities, promoting health, and strengthening local economies*, will examine the important contribution that trails can make to individual health, quality of life and the environmental and economic health of the region.

Through workshops covering a variety of trail-related topics and field trips to four area trails, the conference will provide municipal officials; planners; trail activists; health care, business and tourism leaders; and trail users with the tools to successfully promote, build, and maintain trails that promote active living, tourism, and economic development. The program will include ample time for networking so participants can share their experiences and learn from recognized leaders in the field.

“Interest in trail development is growing throughout the region because of the recent attention directed to the costs and health effects of inactive lifestyles and recognition of the role that trails can play in Finger Lakes tourism,” commented Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “Through the conference, we not only want to offer tools and strategies for effective trail advocacy, promotion and development but also strengthen and broaden the increasingly diverse trails constituency to foster greater understanding and new working relationships among the trails,

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planning, business, tourism, and health care communities.”

Afternoon field workshops on Friday, September 23 will offer a variety of opportunities for participants to get out in the field and learn first-hand what others are doing to design terrific trails, raise funds, overcome challenges, and motivate volunteers. Selections include visits the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, Lick Brook Gorge Trail, and Cascadilla Gorge Trail in Ithaca or the Catharine Valley Trail in Montour Falls. The field workshops will be followed by a networking reception at the new, award winning Nevin Welcome Center at Cornell Plantations.

On Saturday, September 24, a daylong program at Cornell’s Robert Purcell Community Center will include a dynamic mix of talks, workshops, and panel discussions featuring timely issues, interesting case studies, and implementation tools and strategies. Two nationally recognized trail experts will serve as keynote speakers: Jeff Olson and Craig Della Penna.

Olson is a Saratoga Springs-based architect and planner and a principal with Alta Planning + Design, a national firm specializing in transportation, recreation, and innovation. He has more than 20 years of experience creating greenways, open space, active living and alternative transportation projects throughout the world

Della Penna is the author of four books on rail-trails and owner of the Sugar Maple Trailside Inn, the first B&B in New England next to a rail trail, and Pedal to Properties - Della Penna's Trailside Realty, a Northampton, MA trailside real estate and rental agency specializing in properties next to trails.

“We have a tremendous opportunity here in the Finger Lakes to create a network of trails and greenways that will help improve our quality of life, foster economic development, and conserve our cherished open spaces,” said Finger Lakes Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. “We

are delighted to be working with Parks & Trails New York to bring together trail advocates and public officials to advance a vision for trails and greenways in the region.”

To register for the conference, visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) or contact Parks & Trails New York at 518-434-1583 or [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org).

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