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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2011

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

ALBANY, N.Y. Just a few weeks remain to register for the Finger Lakes Region's first-ever trails and greenways conference, to be held Friday, September 23 and Saturday, September 24, 2011 at Cornell University in Ithaca. Registration fees increase September 12.

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. Friday September 23 will feature a choice of four field trips to area trails and an early evening networking reception at the Nevin Welcome Center at Cornell Plantations. On Saturday, September 24, two nationally recognized trail experts, Jeff Olson and Craig Della Penna, will headline the program.

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.

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Saturday’s program will also include nine different workshops for municipal officials; planners; trail activists; and health care, business and tourism leaders to learn more about planning, designing, and marketing trails that promote active living, tourism, and economic development. The program is appropriate for meeting state training requirements for local planning and zoning boards, but it is advisable to check with local officials to confirm.

“Interest in trails is growing as communities recognize that not only can trails help citizens get the physical activity they need to stay healthy but they are also a popular amenity that can add to the tourist appeal of the Finger Lakes region,” 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, planning, business, tourism, and health care communities.”

The conference is being presented by the statewide nonprofit parks and trails advocacy organization, Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

To register for the conference, visit www.ptny.org or contact Parks & Trails New York at 518-434-1583 or ptny@ptny.org.

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