

# Annual Report 2010 and GreenSpace

Spring 2011 Newsletter



Parks & Trails  
NEW YORK



[WWW.PTNY.ORG](http://WWW.PTNY.ORG)



“Joining  
Parks & Trails New York  
was our way of  
becoming New Yorkers.”

— PTNY members since moving to New York in 1995

## Dear Friends of New York's Parks and Trails,

Last year, we were “this close” to losing 90 precious state parks and historic sites, those special places where we go to picnic, swim, enjoy nature, and build beautiful memories with our children and grandchildren.

With the generous support of our members and donors, PTNY, the leading statewide advocate for New York's parks and trails, rallied hundreds of thousands of park lovers who spoke out so loudly and clearly that Albany backed off. Our goal is to activate many more of the 57 million annual visitors to New York's state parks.

We've been increasingly successful in reaching the New Yorkers who love trails. We have helped more than 300 communities plan, build, and promote more than 1,500 miles of local trail.

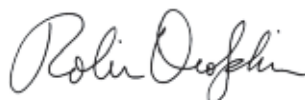
And our Capacity-Building Program, launched in 2009 with the support of a visionary donor, has provided technical assistance and funding for outreach and membership development to 25 park and trail Friends groups across the state, building grassroots support from the ground up.

New York's parks and trails are threatened by draconian cuts in government budgets and by the uncertainty of increasing reliance on the private sector. PTNY believes that public parks, historic sites, and trails – everybody's backyard – must continue to be beautiful, safe, and available to all New Yorkers. They connect us with nature, close to home.

At Parks & Trails New York we have been dedicated to these principles since our formation in 1985. Your generous support inspires us, and we are extremely grateful.



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Robin Dropkin  
Executive Director



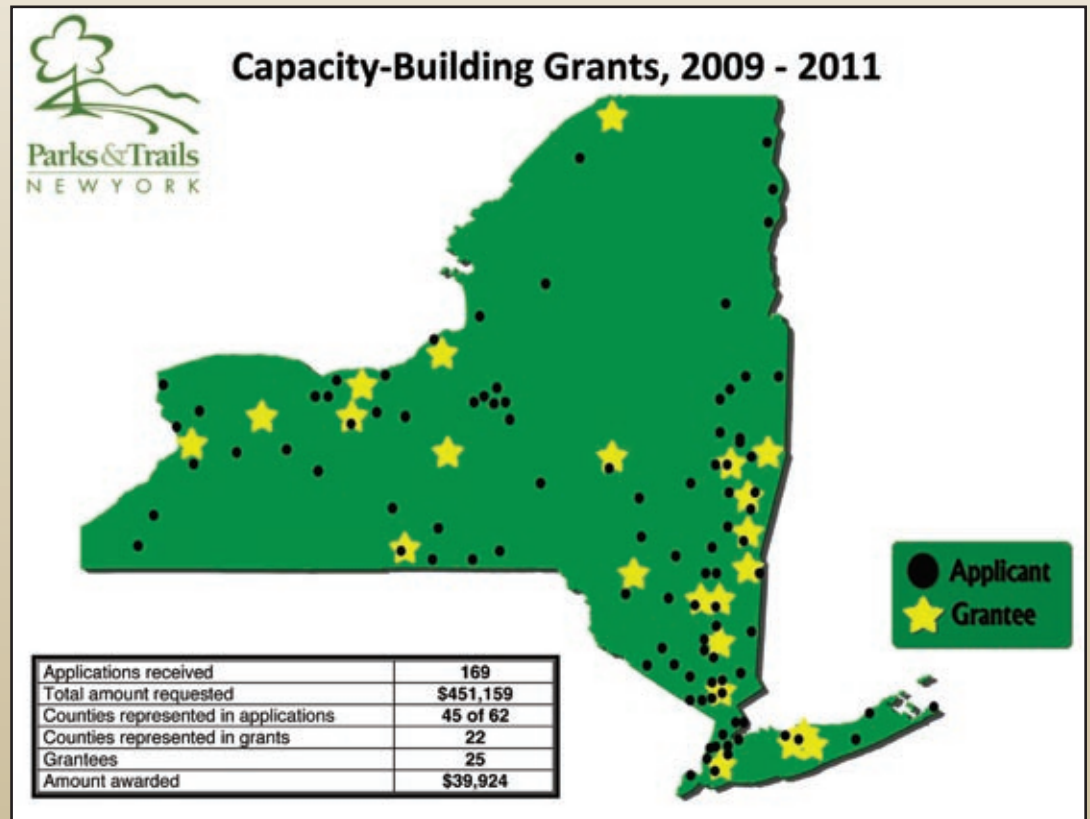
# PTNY's Capacity-Building Program

Our unique Capacity-Building Program provides small grants and ongoing technical assistance to strengthen grassroots park and trail Friends groups and build the grassroots park and trail movement across New York.

Groups from the Bronx and Long Island, in the Hudson Valley and up to Niagara Falls and Western New York are using these grants to increase outreach and visibility, build membership, and generate community support.

“Parks & Trails New York is a godsend to grassroots groups such as ours.”

— Long Island park Friends group



The Friends of Taconic State Park used their PTNY Capacity Grant to strengthen marketing and membership development. “I truly believe that winning the Columbia County Heritage Award was the result of our increased publicity and outreach efforts, neither of which would have been possible without PTNY’s support,” says Friends Treasurer Deborah Cohen.

# The Erie Canal – a marvel of community development and progress since 1817

The New York State Canal System is the most enduring and historically significant canalway in the U.S. PTNY has been working for more than a decade with the NYS Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor to complete the Canalway Trail and revitalize the area as a source of sustainable outdoor recreation, tourism and economic development.

## A moving memorial

With his easy smile, Thomas Lowrey was a welcome fixture on Parks & Trails New York's annual Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour for the last six years. He loved bicycling and wholeheartedly supported our work to complete the 350-mile Erie Canalway Trail.

When Tom passed away in March, his wife Barbara could think of no better way to honor her husband of 45 years than by asking friends and family to send contributions to Parks & Trails New York in Tom's name. We've been overwhelmed by the support we've received.

We will miss Tom this summer on the Erie Canalway Trail.



Finish Line, our Cycling the Erie Canal bike tour

## A CLEAN SWEEP



Every year, PTNY coordinates, in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, the Canal Clean Sweep, a series of "spring cleaning" events along the Canalway Trail. Individual activities are organized by local service clubs, businesses, non-profit organizations, Scouts, churches, schools, and families.

**In 2010 there were 95 events and nearly 1,000 participants – a record.**



# Close the Gaps Campaign

Once we made the case to Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand that completing the Erie Canalway Trail is essential to the future of upstate communities, her office leapt into major action, convening roundtables in communities along the trail and promoting the importance of the trail.

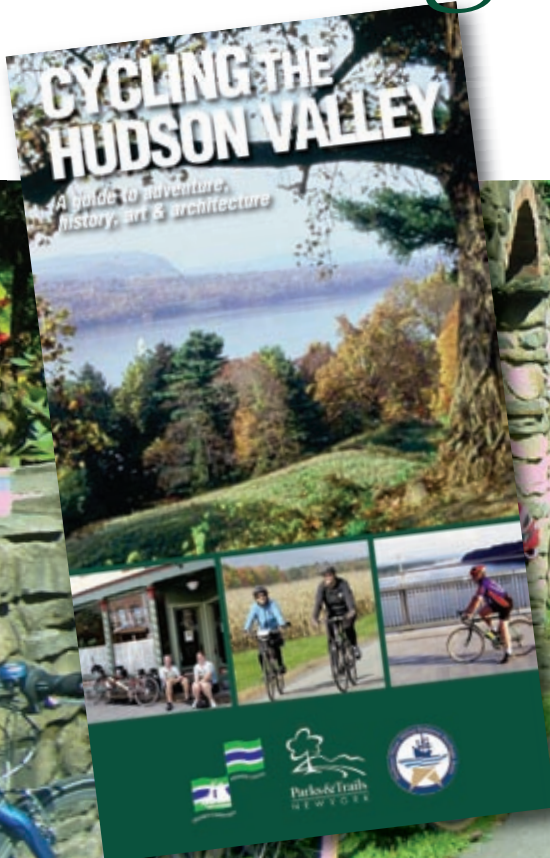
Our 2010 *Closing the Gaps* report provided additional advocacy, and we are confident that with the support of Sen. Gillibrand and so many other New Yorkers the trail will be completed before too long.

“The ‘Closing the Gaps’ roundtables are a great way to enlist our local communities to help figure out how to complete the multi-use Erie trail, a major attraction not only for New Yorkers but for tourists across the country.”

— Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

## New Hudson Valley Cycling Guidebook Coming Soon!

PTNY's *Cycling the Erie Canal* guidebook is a best seller, so we decided to expand to another area that welcomes bicyclists (and hikers) and rewards their efforts with gorgeous views, historic and cultural treasures, and unique adventures: the Hudson Valley.



# Trails Are Us



Under our Healthy Trails, Healthy People program, we are providing intensive technical assistance to lower-income communities seeking to build trails and help their residents enjoy the outdoors and get more exercise.

## The latest communities we selected to participate in HTHP are:

- City of Kingston, Ulster County, connecting downtown with existing rail trails and establishing Kingston as the hub of a regional trail network
- Village of Copenhagen, Lewis County, creating a 1.5-mile walking trail linking the Deer River with a village school and park
- Village of Cayuga, Cayuga County, creating a 2.5-mile walking trail connecting two parks, an elementary school, and the Cayuga Lake waterfront



## Trails and Greenways Awards



PTNY Board Chair David Shaffer presents the Public Leadership Award to Dorothy Lewandowski (left) and Velma Segars of the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation for their work on the New York City Water Trail.

## SAVE THE DATE!

### September 23-24 Trails and Greenways Conference

Do you want to learn more about creating, maintaining, and promoting a local trail? Come to our trails conference next September on the Cornell University campus in beautiful Ithaca.

PTNY, in partnership with the Finger Lakes Land Trust, is bringing together trail experts, grassroots activists, tourism professionals, and business and government leaders for a varied program of workshops, panel discussions, field trips, and networking opportunities.

Whether you're interested in trails for healthy living, economic development, sustainability, or alternative transportation, you'll find a lot to learn and talk about at this conference.

For more information, contact us at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org), [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583.

# Is your company a Green Partner?

Parks & Trails New York's Green Partners program recognizes businesses that support a more sustainable and greener New York by helping PTNY build, protect, and promote New York's parks and trails.

**Become a Green Partner by contacting us at [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org).**

## **PTNY's other 2010 Green Partners included:**

- Broadway Stages LTD
- Brookfield Renewable Power, Inc.
- Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.
- Chazen Engineering  
& Land Surveying Co., PC
- Clough Harbour & Associates
- Con Edison
- Cozen O'Connor
- CSEA, Inc.
- Glenwood Management Corp.
- Hodgson Russ LLP
- L.L. Bean
- Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises
- Nalgene
- Terry Cycles
- Verizon
- Voss Signs, LLC
- Wegmans

## **CDPHP is a Green Partner**



**Capital District Physicians Health Plan  
(CDPHP), steadfastly promoting the  
health not only of its members  
but also of its communities**

“As a health plan committed to wellness, CDPHP understands that promoting positive ways to become more physically active and maintain a healthy lifestyle are vital to keeping our community well. We applaud the commitment of Parks & Trails New York to improve life in the Capital Region and beyond.”

— John D. Bennett, MD, President and  
CEO, CDPHP

# New York's public parks need you!

**Yes, we won the battle** – together with hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who spoke out last spring in opposition to park closings, we made sure the Governor and the legislature know how important parks and historic sites are to the people of New York. As a result, Gov. Cuomo pledged not to close any parks this year. We're encouraged by this commitment.



**But we still have to win the war.** Just because the gates are open, it doesn't mean parks are okay. Parks today are operating on a shoestring, with 25% fewer staff and severely reduced equipment and supplies compared with just a few years ago. Budget cuts are jeopardizing the noble legacy that is our New York State park system.

**Our pledge to you:** we will continue to fight to keep New York's parks open, safe, and beautiful.

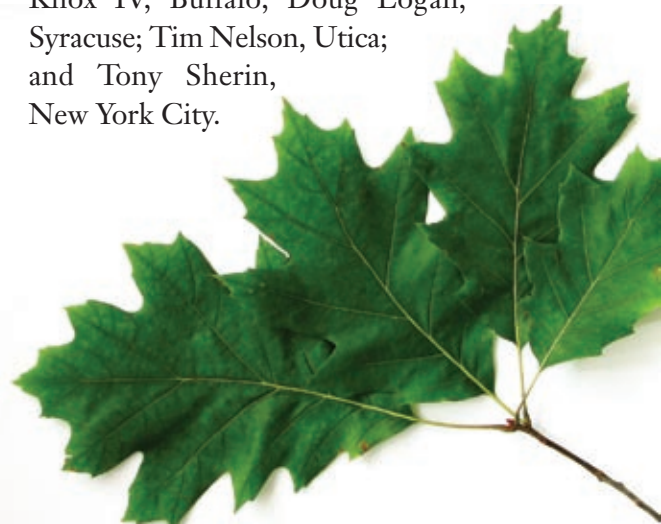
Join PTNY and speak out  
for state parks at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)



PTNY honored parks champions State Senator José Serrano (left), Assemblyman Steve Englebright, and intrepid Friends groups statewide, represented by the Friends of Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks, Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Friends of Riverbank State Park, and Friends of Thacher and Thompsons Lake State Parks, with our George W. Perkins Award for environmental leadership at a reception in New York City in November 2010.

## Working with park and trail leadership across New York

PTNY is proud to announce that in recent months we added five new Board members. They are from very different parts of our state, but they have one thing in common: they love parks and trails. They are: Dr. Thomas Holmes, Norwich; Seymour Knox IV, Buffalo; Doug Logan, Syracuse; Tim Nelson, Utica; and Tony Sherin, New York City.



# Meet the new parks commissioner, Rose Harvey

PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin recently met with recently-appointed parks commissioner Harvey to talk about her vision for New York's parks and historic sites.

*NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Commissioner Rose Harvey has enjoyed a long and successful environmental career. For 27 years, she held leadership positions with the national Trust for Public Land, most recently as Senior Vice President and National Director of Urban Programs.*



**Robin Dropkin: Why did you decide to take the position at such a challenging time?**

**Rose Harvey:** I've spent my entire working life focused on issues of land and park conservation. Actually, I had a hand in acquiring many of the properties, including parks, the state is now responsible for. This is an exceptional opportunity to focus on the stewardship side of things. I am fully aware of the challenges but if this is what you care about, this is what you do.

**RD: How important are parks during this time of government shrinkage?**

**RH:** I don't see parks as an amenity but as a critical government service. Now more than ever, parks and historic sites are essential to our health, social welfare, happiness and, of course, our economy. All parks and historic sites will remain open, but we have to figure out how to do more with less, to come up with new efficiencies, new operational angles. We're looking hard at who we serve and how and why we serve them.

**RD: What are your short- and long-term goals?**

**RH:** In the shorter term, I'd like to work with staff and users to ascertain which aspects of each park and historic site are most valued and most critical. Then focus on those core values.

Looking out a bit, I'd like to enhance our work with our many partners, including Friends groups. Our partners have done so much for us and we're deeply appreciative.

**RD: How will the agency's reduced budget affect visitors' experience?**

**RH:** On the operations side, we've pledged to keep all parks and historic sites open but we are very sensitive to maintaining services that have the most impact on visitors. If any agency can do it, we can. We have a fabulous staff, many of whom have been with the agency for years. They genuinely care about the parks and historic sites and about how visitors experience them.

On the capital side, we have only \$7 million for the entire

system yet we have a \$1 billion backlog of infrastructure needs. The only thing to do is prioritize our top health and safety needs and hope down the road there will be more public money for aging infrastructure. We are particularly grateful to our advocates, who are advancing various ways of sustaining our parks.

**RD: Some controversy has surrounded the agency's recent contracting out of management of a few parks to municipalities. Do you have any qualms about the practice?**

**RH:** For parks with mostly local usage, municipal management is often the best solution. We currently have 35 agreements with municipalities and non-profits, some for decades, with excellent results. These agreements are very tight: the land remains ours, the municipality must manage it according to state park rules and regulations, and any capital improvements are ours at the end of the term.

The reality is that today some parks will be run as satellites, without an exclusively assigned park employee. I see municipal agreements as a great opportunity to have a more local manager with eyes and ears closer to the ground.

**RD: How do you see trails and greenways fitting into the agency's mission?**

**RH:** Trails and greenways are enormously important. They provide connections within and between our parks and historic sites, increase access to green space and provide opportunities to be active, which is so critical today.

**RD: How can Parks & Trails New York help you realize your goals?**

**RH:** Parks & Trails New York, and our other non-profit partners, including Friends groups, will be a huge part of the future of OPRHP, advocating for more resources for parks, raising private funds to restore infrastructure, providing many extra touches such as interpretation and other program assistance, and helping increase usership.

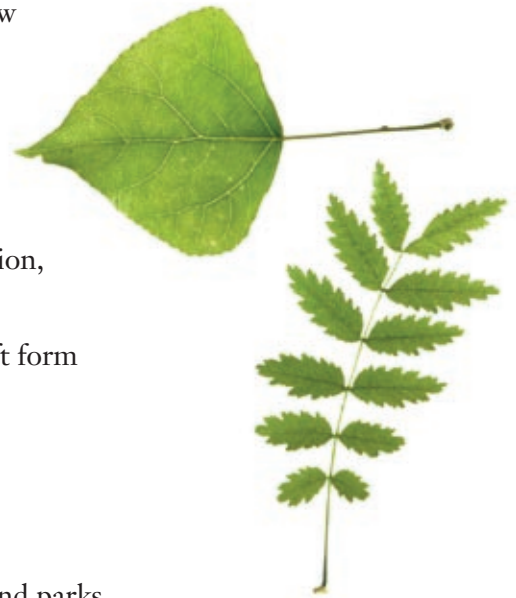
# Ways to Give

Visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) to learn more.

More than ever, we need parks and trails for their contributions to New Yorkers' quality of life, health, and economy and because they are our common ground.

## If you would like to help protect New Yorkers' access to public green space, you can:

- **Become a member of Parks & Trails New York** or make a donation, online or by phone or mail
- **Double your donation** by sending us your employer's matching gift form
- **Remember Parks & Trails New York in your will**
- **Give at the office** via Earth Share New York
- **Keep informed** – sign up for our free *Parks & Trails E-NEWS*
- **Get involved** – join us on Advocacy Days, participate in our trails and parks coalitions, and **help make New York greener, today and tomorrow**



# A Strong and Growing Organization

Thanks to the increasing generosity of our members and donors, in 2010 we were able to do even more to create and protect New York's green network of parks and trails. Thank You!

## Financial Statement

Statement of Activities for the year ended June 30, 2010

### Support and Revenue

Individual contributions	\$ 233,528
Grants	660,522
Corporate contributions	28,138
Special events	48,800
Program revenue	389,194
Other	3,108
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$ 1,412,961</b>

### Expenses

Program services	
Conservation	\$ 940,437
Public education	179,052
Membership	89,526
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>\$ 1,209,015</b>

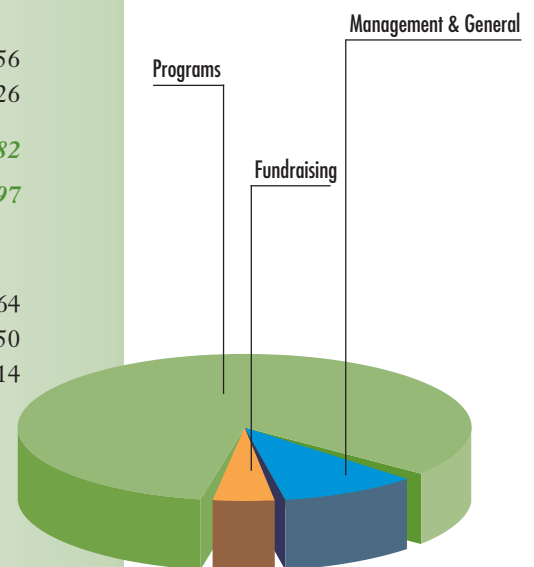
### Expenses (continued)

Supporting services	
Management and general	\$ 51,156
Fundraising	89,526
<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>\$ 140,682</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,349,697</b>

### Net Assets

Change in net assets	63,264
Net assets, beginning of year	814,250
Net assets (deficit), end of year	\$ 877,514

*A copy of our most recent audited financial statement is available upon request by contacting the Parks & Trails New York office*



Source: PTNY FY10 Audited Financial Statement

# Thank You Members and Donors

Gifts of \$100 or more

Parks & Trails New York is deeply grateful to the members and donors whose gifts of \$1 to \$99 also made our work possible.

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Lynden B. Miller	