

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK 2010 COMMUNITY TRAIL AND GREENWAY AWARDS

HEALTHY TRAILS, HEALTHY PEOPLE AWARD



The award recognizes an individual, not for profit organization, governmental entity, business, or corporation that has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to improving universal access to trails, promoting trail use, or creating programs that encourage a heightened awareness of active community environments.

In 1999, the need for better trails and bikeways was highlighted in the Binghamton Metropolitan Greenway Study. The resulting report examined the potential for trail development along the

Susquehanna and Chenango river corridors and provided a set of recommendations that would engage seven local municipalities seeking creative ways to increase and promote access to these waterways as well as contribute to building a 30-mile trail network.

In 2004, Mark Bowers, NYS Department of Transportation Region 9 Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, and Scott Reigle, Transportation Planner for the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, became involved. At that time only eight percent of the study's proposed trails had been completed. Convinced that their respective agencies should partner to be the implementer for the Greenway Study, Mark and Scott called officials to a meeting, asked them to look out the window, and challenged them to make Binghamton the most walkable and bikeable community in New York State. The group's reaction was – "Go to it" - and that is just what Mark and Scott did.

Often called the Don Quixote and Sancho Panza of the Binghamton Greenway project, this dynamic duo partnered with all sectors of the community to involve people where they lived, worked, learned, played and prayed. In addition to wearing colorful hats, the key to their success was gaining the support of the people, local governments, and multi-disciplinary partners such as Steps to a Healthier New York, the Healthy Heart Coalition, United Health Services, Broome and Tioga County Health Departments, school districts and colleges, garden clubs, and environmental groups. These alliances helped validate and promote the Greenway plan, fund

trail enhancements, generate in-kind donations, and reach new audiences which increased public and local government support

Beyond their official duties, Mark and Scott volunteered countless hours of their personal time providing tours to showcase the greenway project to national, state and local leaders. In a little over five years, these efforts have paid off. Now almost 60 percent of the proposed Greater Binghamton Greenway trail network is now either built, in design, or recently funded.

For their leadership, compassion, exemplary display of teamwork, and dedication to engaging local governments, the health care sector, and many other community organizations to improve the health of the region by creating the Greater Binghamton Greenway, Parks & Trails New York honors Mark Bowers and Scott Reigle with its Healthy Trails, Healthy People Award.