

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK CELEBRATES BUDGET;  
REGRETS MISSED INVESTMENT FOR PUBLIC LANDS  
EXPERIENCING RECORD VISITATION**

(ALBANY, NY) – Parks & Trails New York is alternately pleased and disappointed by the recently-passed FY 2024 State Budget. While the budget includes critical funding for New York’s public lands—experiencing continued record-breaking visitation since the pandemic—the amount allocated to capital infrastructure does not meet the need, nor the necessity of these spaces for community well-being and health. An important opportunity for our leadership to maintain capital investment at \$250 million for our state parks, historic sites, and public lands has been missed.

Public lands are not just a fringe benefit—they are critical public health infrastructure. Ensuring our 181 parks and 35 historic sites are adequately funded and staffed is essential for a parks system that sees 80 million visits per year—five times more than Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone combined. Addressing long-deferred infrastructure projects, transforming flagship parks, and expanding accessibility for all New Yorkers is more necessary now than ever, especially on the cusp of celebrating parks’ Centennial Year in 2024. Parks & Trails New York hopes to see this critical value reflected in future budgets.

“Parks, trails, and public lands are cornerstones for local communities and the state’s economy”, says Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York. “We are pleased this budget ensures continuation for most of last year's increases for environmental stewardship. However, we cannot help but be disappointed by Governor Hochul and the legislature’s decrease in funding for critical infrastructure improvements and maintenance. The state welcomes hundreds of millions of visitors to our public lands and greenway trails every year. Ensuring New York continues to enjoy a premiere park system for the next 100 years is foundational for the health of our communities and vitality of our economy.”

Despite the decrease in capital investment for State Parks, the newly-passed budget maintains crucial funding for our parks, trails, and public lands in other vital areas: maintenance of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) at \$400 million, and PTNY’s Park and Trail Partnership Grants—administered in partnership with State Parks—at \$2 million. We hope New York State’s leadership will recognize our parks, trails, and public lands’ critical role in the state’s economy, community health, and climate change management by continuing the critical reinvestment in our parks system in next year’s budget.

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**About Parks & Trails New York:**

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is New York’s leading statewide advocate for parks and trails. Since its founding in 1985, PTNY has been fighting to improve our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. In collaboration with members, supporters and partners from across the state, PTNY is a prominent voice for the protection and expansion of New York’s magnificent state park system and multi-use trail network, including more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, and river walks. Learn more at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).

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