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### Inside this issue:

- [Message from the Parks Program Director](#)
- [Flagships get facelifts](#)
- [Testing underway at New York's newest state park](#)
- [Capital Region Friends collaborate](#)
- [Updated I Love My Park Day materials available](#)
- [Ask your state legislator to support parks](#)
- [Special Feature: State Council of Parks](#)
- [Park Profiles: Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks](#)
- [News from Friends groups](#)
- [That's What Friends Are For: Volunteer Profile](#)
- [You Gotta Have Tips: Meetup groups](#)

### Also Inside:

- [Become a non-profit member of PTNY](#)
- [Grant opportunities for Friends groups](#)
- [Save the dates!](#)
- [Why, Thacher, you don't look a day over 99!](#)
- [Smoking ban overturned](#)
- [Yurts debut in State Parks](#)
- [Robert Moses Parkway report released](#)
- [Virtually explore a NYS Campground](#)
- [New Walkway Over the Hudson app](#)
- [Expedition New York](#)
- [PTNY Parks Program and Friends Resources](#)

Dear Friend:

A little over a year ago, state parks and historic sites throughout Long Island, New York City and the Hudson Valley faced unprecedented devastation. Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on beaches, boardwalks, trees, and buildings, costing \$120 million in damages to the state park system.

Through the commitment of Governor Cuomo, elected officials, park staff, Friends groups, volunteers, and other partners, every park was open by Memorial Day. While repairs are still underway, tens of millions of New Yorkers and visitors to our state were able to enjoy all our state parks and historic sites have to offer this summer, from boating and fishing to hiking and camping to swimming and picnicking. It seems not even Mother Nature can damper the state parks renaissance.

This issue of *You Gotta Have Friends* is full of ways in which our state park system continues to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From advances in technology to new collaborations to physical improvements, New York's state parks and historic sites are thriving. Parks & Trails New York is proud to be a part of this journey and will continue in our role as partner, supporter, advocate and cheerleader as we've done for nearly

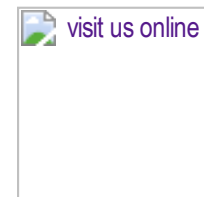
## Fall 2013



**Celebrating  
nearly 30 years  
of advocacy for New  
York's parks and trails**

### Stay connected!

There are lots of ways to stay up-to-date on the latest news affecting our magnificent state park system and stay connected to other park supporters. If you're not already on our email list, visit our [website](#) to join. Friends groups can connect through the [Discussion Forum](#). You can also follow us:



### Become a non-profit member of PTNY

Is your Friends group a member of Parks & Trails New York? PTNY works to build the capacity of Friends groups, expand outreach and communications, and enhance advocacy efforts. With continued economic

30 years.



Best regards,



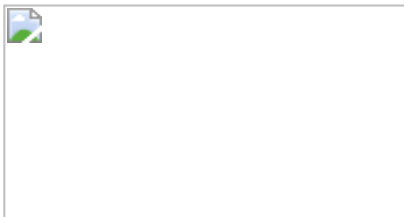
Laura DiBetta  
*Director, Parks Program & Government Relations*

[back to top](#)

## Flagships get facelifts

Upgrades at state parks and historic sites across the state continue to move forward, including at two of the state's flagship parks, [Niagara Falls](#) and [Saratoga Spa](#). Projects are funded by the NY Works initiative.

A \$900,000 project to green and repair the gateway to Saratoga Performing Arts Center off Route 50 in Saratoga Spa State Park began in October. The [improvements](#) will create a more welcoming entrance for the 2 million annual visitors to the park as well as protect water quality and incorporate sustainable design. The project includes repaving and restriping all roadways and parking spaces, installing new landscaping at the entryway and throughout the parking area, adding new ADA-compliant parking spaces, and incorporating porous asphalt and new drainage systems to improve stormwater filtration, protecting water quality. Two additional parking lots in the park are slated to be resurfaced as well, both of which will incorporate porous asphalt.



*Dignitaries at the ribbon cutting of the new Prospect Point viewing area.*

At Niagara Falls State Park, the ribbon was cut earlier this month on phase 1 of a [project](#) to restore the Prospect Point viewing area, one of the most popular areas of the state's oldest state park. At the same time, officials broke ground on phase 2. The completed work included landscape restoration, new railings, benches, light fixtures and

walkway surfaces in the main area of Prospect Point. Work on phase 2 is expected to be completed by late summer 2014.

The \$4.3 million improvements to Prospect Point are outlined in a comprehensive landscape improvement plan developed in 2012 to restore the most heavily used areas of Niagara Falls State Park, including its primary viewing points, walking trails, historic buildings, and plantings. In all, the state has made a \$25 million commitment to revitalize Niagara Falls State Park,

constraints, it is more important than ever that the network of Friends groups grows and strengthens.

Some of the tools PTNY offers include spearheading [Love My Park Day](#), publishing the *You Gotta Have Friends* eNewsletter, and providing [capacity grants](#), [technical assistance](#) and an online [Friends Resource Kit](#). PTNY also gives a voice to Friends groups at the Capitol.

[Become a non-profit organization member of PTNY today!](#)

## Grant Opportunities for Friends Groups

### **Norcross Wildlife Foundation** - G

Grants for small, grassroots organizations, which usually fund practical, immediate things, such as office and field equipment of all kinds. [Learn more.](#)

### **New York State**

**AmeriCorps** - Groups can request AmeriCorps help for the coming year. 2014 Request For Proposals now available. [Learn more.](#)

### **Toyota Every Day Event**

**Grants** - Grants of up to \$2,000 to hold a minimum of three educational, recreational and/or volunteering-based events. Applications due December 18. [Learn more.](#)

## Save the Dates!

February 26, 2014: [Park Advocacy Day](#)

May 3, 2014: [I Love My Park Day](#)

which is visited by more than 8 million people each year.

[back to top](#)

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## Testing underway at New York's newest state park

New York has a new state park in Buffalo: [Gallagher Beach and Small Boat Harbor](#). The 215<sup>th</sup> addition to the state park system has a few tests to pass before it can be fully open to the public, however. [Testing](#) of soil, sediment, surface water and storm water has begun at Gallagher Beach in order to determine if the site can be made safe for swimmers in the near future. [Read more](#).

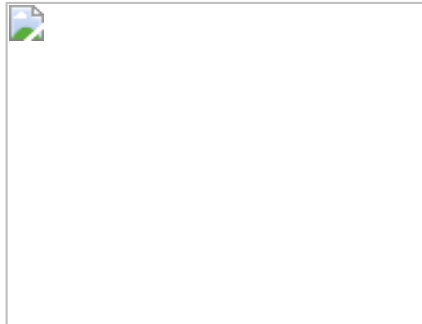
[back to top](#)

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## Capital Region Friends collaborate

Friends groups from across the Saratoga/Capital Region met at [Saratoga Spa State Park](#) on a beautiful early November day to get together and share ideas. Friends group leaders discussed the successes and challenges they have encountered, inspiring new discussion and innovation.

Our own Parks Program Director Laura DiBetta presented on the different [PTNY resources](#) to Friends groups. Later, breakout sessions allowed Friends group members to discuss strategies for fundraising, sustainable volunteer recruitment, and board development. The day concluded with the presentation of an award to James Kettlewell of the available [Friends of Saratoga Spa State Park](#) who will be retiring from his post as president this year.



*Saratoga/Capital Region Park Commissioner Barbara Glaser presents an award to retiring Friends of Saratoga Spa State Park President James Kettlewell.*

[back to top](#)

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## Updated I Love My Park Day

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### Why, Thacher, you don't look a day over 99!

2014 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [John Boyd Thacher State Park](#). State Parks is celebrating in all sorts of ways: finalizing a new [master plan](#) for the park, developing plans for a new Visitor Center, starting a climbing program, fixing up park infrastructure, and holding a big event on Thacher's anniversary, September 13, 2014. Stay tuned in the coming year for more details on Thacher's 100<sup>th</sup>.

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### Smoking Ban is Overturned

A New York judge reversed the newly instated ban on smoking in New York State Parks and Historic Sites. State Supreme Court Judge George Ceresia [ruled](#) that while the New York State Legislature has enacted laws that prohibit smoking in indoor locations, there is no legislative action that has targeted smoking in outdoor parks. State Parks may appeal the decision.

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### Yurts debut in State Parks

Yurts have made their way into New York's state parks. You may ask, what is a yurt? Does it wear a shirt? In the dirt?

No, it's not a Dr. Seuss creation. Yurts are actually wood lattice framed structures with heavy duty re-enforced fabric sides and insulated liners that were traditionally

## materials available



Are you a State Park Friends group ready to get started planning for next year's I Love My Park Day? The materials to help you are now available. Check out the [resources for organizers](#) on our website today. There's a [top ten tips sheet](#), an in-depth [Organizers'](#)

[Manual](#), and templates for everything from media advisories to flyers. Keep an eye out for more information about I Love My Park Day starting in January, when planning kicks off in full force. If you would like to confirm your participation for the May 3, 2014 event or would like to host an event for the first time, reach out to [Jackie Mullen](#), Parks Program Assistant.

[back to top](#)

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## Ask your state legislator to support parks

November is the perfect time to contact your state legislators and ask them to support funding for state parks and historic sites. Most legislators are in their districts in the fall, since the legislative session in Albany won't begin until January. Let them know that you support continued capital funding for our state's impressive park system, as well as an increase in the agency's operations budget. Contact your [Assemblymember](#) or [Senator](#)

today to set up an in-person meeting. Never lobbied before? It's easy! We've got some [tips](#) to help get you started.

[back to top](#)

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## Special Feature: State Council of Parks

Do you know the difference between the [Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation](#) (OPRHP) the Regional Parks Commissions, and the [State Council of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation](#)? If not, you're probably not alone. We've tried to demystify each below.

OPRHP is the state agency charged with overseeing the management of the state's 179 state parks and 35 historic sites. The state park system is divided up into 11 regions.

Each of the 11 state park regions is represented by a Regional Parks Commission. The 11 Regional Parks Commissions represent each of the state park regions, with the exception of

used by nomads in Central Asia. Think camping, light. [Four Mile Creek State Park](#) in Youngstown is the first New York State Park to have yurts installed, but [Golden Hill](#) and [Evangola](#) State Parks will also have yurts available by next season. The yurts at Four Mile Creek are available for [rental](#) again next spring. They cost \$310 per week or \$77.50 per day.



## Robert Moses Parkway Report Released

State Parks [recently](#) released the final version of a scoping report for the reconfiguration of the Robert Moses Parkway which leads to Niagara Falls State Park. The report focuses on the redesign of the parkway between Niagara Falls and the village of Lewiston and provides three alternatives. All three alternatives call for removal of a 2-mile stretch of the parkway and provide for native landscaping and a new multi-use trail network.

Many locals have long advocated for removal of the entire 6.5-mile parkway, restoration of the natural environment, creation of hiking and biking paths along the entire length, and better access to the City of Niagara Falls by tourists.

Copies of the final report are available at various local locations as well as [online](#).

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**Virtually Explore a NYS**

the Palisades (which is represented by the bi-state Palisades Interstate Park Commission) and the Adirondack and Catskill Park Region [which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)]. Regional Commissioners are appointed to seven-year terms by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, and serve without compensation. Regional Commissions serve as central advisory bodies on matters affecting parks, recreation, and historic preservation within their respective regions.

The State Council of Parks and Historic Preservation is made up of the chairs of each of these Regional Commissions, along with the Commissioners of OPRHP and DEC and the Chair of the State Board of Historic Preservation. The State Council serves as an advisory body - similar to the function a board might play - reviewing policy, budget and statewide plans of OPRHP and making recommendations on all matters affecting parks, recreation and historic preservation. The State Council is currently chaired by [Dr. Lucy R. Waletzky](#), who also chairs the Taconic Regional Parks Commission. This October, the State Council held its 553<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Commissioners are strong allies of New York State Parks and we are grateful for their service. [Learn more.](#)

[back to top](#)

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## Park Profiles: Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks

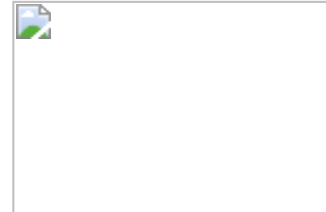
Tucked into the hills of Schoharie County, [Mine Kill](#) and [Max V. Shaul](#) State Parks are home to miles of trails, boat launches, picnic tables, and even an Olympic-sized swimming pool. These hidden gems are just over an hours' drive from Albany. These rural parks provide a quiet respite with beautiful views of the rolling hills of New York's countryside.

Brenda Weaver, president, and other members of [Friends of Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks](#) believe that these two parks have a lot to offer. She shared with Parks & Trails New York a few of her favorite parts of the parks:

*"Recently, I was asked what some of my favorite aspects of the parks were, and I was caught off guard - not because I didn't have any, but because there are so many. My absolute favorite is the Olympic-size swimming pool. The other aspects of our parks I love are the soccer fields where I've watched many of my son's games, and the peaceful overlook, where you*

## Campground

Planning a camping vacation next summer? Now you can take a virtual tour before booking your trip. State Parks just completed virtual tours for 41 of its campgrounds to provide prospective campers a sample of the setting and available amenities at each location. [Take a 360° tour today.](#)



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## New Walkway Over the Hudson app

Henry Hudson may not have had a smartphone, but chances are you do. If so, you can use a new app to tour the environmental and historical attractions of the Hudson Valley. For more on the app, visit [Walkway Over the Hudson's](#) website.

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## Expedition New York

A new pilot program called "[Expedition New York](#)" has just been rolled out in New York's Genesee Region to encourage New Yorkers to visit new state parks. The idea is to get outdoor enthusiasts into parks they might not otherwise visit. For now, [Letchworth](#), [Darien Lakes](#), [Lakeside Beach](#) and [Hamlin Beach](#) are participating. Visitors pick up a free Expedition New York program guide and receive a limited edition keepsake award if they visit all the participating parks and

can see the lower reservoir and investigate the rain garden. Then there is the boating on the reservoir, (where I tried to learn to water ski) and, of course, the fishing."

Interested in visiting Mine Kill and Max V. Shaul State Parks? Plan a day trip to [hike the trails](#) or consider [camping at Max V. Shaul](#) next summer.

[back to top](#)

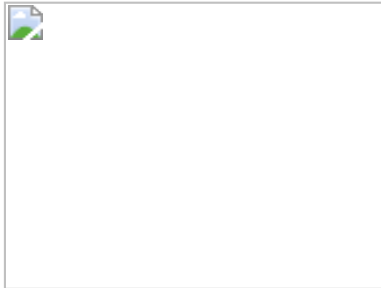
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## News from Friends groups

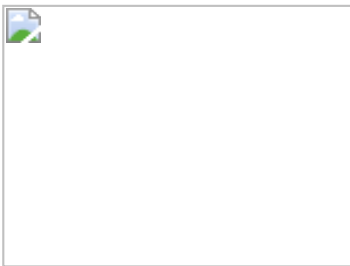
If you have news to share in the next issue of You Gotta Have Friends, [let us know](#).

### 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary party for Queens' only state park

[Friends of Gantry Plaza State Park](#) held a 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary party for the park this May. The Friends had cake and light refreshments just north of the park's main plaza. The Friends honored Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan at the event, thanking her for her support of local parks. The Friends also held a reception at the Riverview Restaurant. Proceeds from ticket sales went to the Friends of Gantry, and all who bought tickets were given complimentary membership in the organization.



### Bannerman Tower stabilized



The ruins of the castle on [Bannerman Island \(part of Hudson Highlands State Park\)](#) were recently under threat of total collapse. [The Bannerman Castle Trust, Inc.](#) has worked over the past few months with design and engineering firms to stabilize the remaining Tower walls of the Bannerman Castle.

Funded by an [Environmental Protection Fund grant](#) and donations by private foundations and individuals, the stabilization of the tower began this August and took around 15 weeks to complete. For photos of the stabilization project, check out the [gallery](#) on the Trust's website.

### Friends of Robert Moses receive grant award

The [Friends of the Robert Moses State Park Nature Center](#) in the Thousand Islands held a fall cleanup day that was doubly productive. Because a particular number of Alcoa employees came to volunteer for four hours each, the Nature Center

present their Empire Passport. The Empire Passport provides entry into all of New York's parks. [Read more](#).

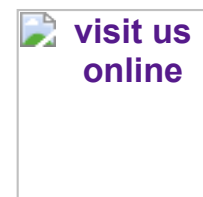
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## PTNY Parks Program and Friends Resources

PTNY was founded in 1985 to be an advocate for the state park system. Nearly 30 years later we are still at it. Our [parks program](#) - including groundbreaking reports, advocacy, and the hugely successful I Love My Park Day - is an effective voice for state parks in the Capitol and around the state. We have also developed a suite of resources for Friends groups. Learn more about our [parks program](#) and [resources](#) for Friends groups.

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### Visit the State Parks website:



Visit us online at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)

Check out our [blog](#)

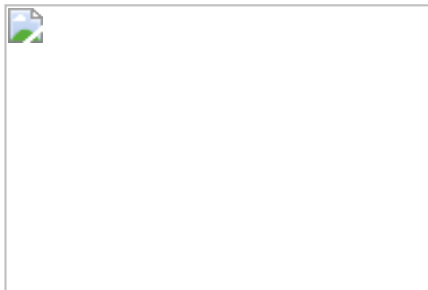
successfully won a \$3,000 Action Grant.

In 2010, a fire destroyed the Nature Center and the equipment inside. This [Alcoa](#) grant will help the Friends continue to rebuild structures and programming to levels before the fire. A second Alcoa grant from the Earth Keepers program awarded the Friends \$20,000 to educate participants about nature and teach them to become environmental ambassadors.



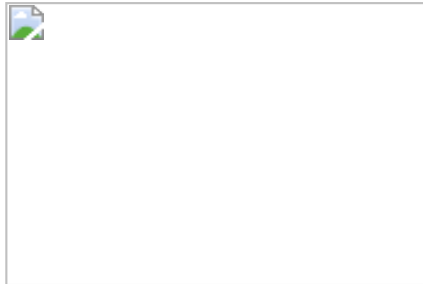
### Chess anyone?

Visitors to Brooklyn's [East River State Park](#) are enjoying a new feature thanks in large part to the [Friends of East River State Park](#). Kids big and small can polish up their chess skills with a giant chess board. The board was donated by a local company, with the Friends providing the huge pieces.



### Friends of Connetquot get creative with fundraising

At [Connetquot River State Park Preserve](#) on Long Island the [Friends](#) have gotten creative with fundraising in their effort to restore the [Nicoll Grist Mill](#). The Friends have used an online crowdfunding platform, [Indiegogo](#), to raise money for the effort. This platform allows anyone to contribute money to a general fund, or to buy a window, a door, a beam, or even a shingle. Check out how the Friends of Connetquot are using Indiegogo on their [fundraising site](#).



### Friends of Knox Farm State Park honored

The [Friends of Knox Farm State Park](#) outside of Buffalo were named Not-for-Profit Organization of the Year by the East Aurora Chamber of Commerce this September. You can learn more about the Friends of Knox Farm at their [website](#) or by visiting their [Holiday Art Festival](#) that runs from November 22 to 24 this year. Congratulations to the Friends!

### Connect with us



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(ph) 518-434-1583  
(fax) 427-0067

[www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org)



*Seymour Knox (right) receives the Not-for-Profit Organization of the Year Award on behalf of the Friends of Knox Farm.*

### **Friends of Thacher make good use of grant**

Earlier this year, the [Friends of John Boyd Thacher and Thompson's Lake State Parks](#) won a [Toyota Every Day Grant](#) for capacity building. A subcommittee of the Friends group worked on the successful grant, which brought in \$5,000 for strategic planning. The Friends hired a consultant with expertise in board development who helped the group create a strategic plan and calendar and an agenda template for meetings. To learn more about how the grant was used, contact [Sigrin Newell](#) of the Friends.

[back to top](#)

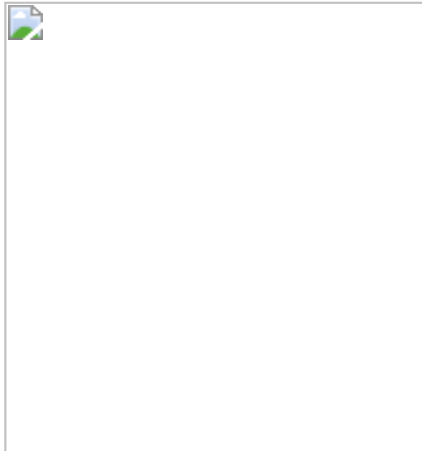
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## **That's What Friends Are For**

### **Volunteer Profile: Karen Scheckells**

*Volunteers are essential to our state parks and historic sites. That's What Friends Are For, in which we profile a dedicated volunteer, is a regular feature in You Gotta Have Friends.*

For the past six years, Karen Scheckells has been instrumental in launching and growing the [Friends of Glimmerglass State Park](#) (FOGSP), helping to create a park that is welcoming and that provides environmental learning opportunities for people of all ages. When you talk with Karen, it becomes clear that education and learning are her passion. But her involvement in the park started with a nudge from her husband.



[Read more about Karen Scheckells and the Friends of Glimmerglass State Park.](#)

[back to top](#)

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## You Gotta Have Tips: Meetup Groups

You Gotta Have Tips *is a regular feature of You Gotta Have Friends in which we provide capacity-building and technical-assistance tips.*

In addition to some of the more traditional methods of publicizing events, many people now use the internet as a way of finding interesting things to do.



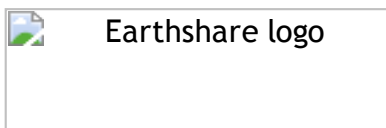
[Meetup.com](#) is a website that allows users to post events and get in touch with new program participants or volunteers. An organization can set up an account and then post events that Meetup.com users can sign up for. The events you post are viewable even by those Meetup.com members who aren't a member of your site, which makes the site a great way to attract new participants and volunteers.

Dorothy Surprise at [Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park](#) has found success in bringing in program participants and new volunteers through posting events on the [Friends' page](#) on Meetup.com. For this issue's tip, Dorothy shares some of the benefits the Friends of Grafton have enjoyed through using the site.

[Read more about using Meetup groups.](#)

[back to top](#)

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*Parks & Trails New York is a member of Earth Share New York, an alliance of leading nonprofit environmental organizations. For more information about workplace giving to Parks & Trails New York and Earth Share, check out [www.earthsharenyc.org](http://www.earthsharenyc.org).*

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