



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT FROM PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK ON FY2023 EXECUTIVE STATE BUDGET PROPOSAL

(ALBANY, NY) - Governor Kathy Hochul's FY 2023 State Budget proposes the most ambitious investment in parks, trails, and the environment in decades by increasing the Environmental Protection Fund to a record \$400 million, increasing the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Bond Act to \$4 billion, and proposing a \$200 million capital investment in State Parks. The proposed budget also includes a 15% increase in the operating budget for State Parks, ensuring that all visitors continue to have access to safe and welcoming outdoor places for recreation and respite. Governor Hochul's support for preserving open space and our natural environment underscores the importance of public green space, made more apparent during the pandemic.

"We applaud the Governor for historic investments in our great outdoors," said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York. "The budget acknowledges the value of our parks, trails and public lands to the local economies, the health of our communities and as part of a thriving natural environment, and ensures that the state can continue to respond to the needs of the growing number of visitors to our unparalleled green spaces and trails. This budget reflects many years of hard work by park and trail advocates, and we are grateful to have a strong ally in Governor Hochul."

The increased Environmental Protection Fund doubles funding for the Park & Trail Partnership Grant program to a total of \$2 million, which will further advance private partnership efforts to steward the state's parks and public lands and address barriers to diversity, equity and inclusion. The proposed budget includes an increase to \$26 million for the Municipal Parks program, providing critical support to local parks projects. State Land Stewardship funding, which goes towards improving trails and infrastructure on public lands, is expanded by 45%, to \$50 million. Funding is also increased for important environmental justice efforts, with an increase to \$13 million, including \$4 million for community impact grants and \$3 million for the Connect Kids program. The Environmental Protection Fund supports more than 350,000 jobs across New York, adding \$40 billion to the state's economy every year, and for every \$1 invested, \$7 in economic benefits are returned to the state.

We look forward to working with the Governor and State Legislature to ensure that this historic proposal for the state's parks, trails and public lands is included in the FY 2023 Adopted Budget, and that New York continues to provide the nation's premier outdoor recreational opportunities to its citizens and visitors.

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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. With the support of 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.