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**Inside this issue:**

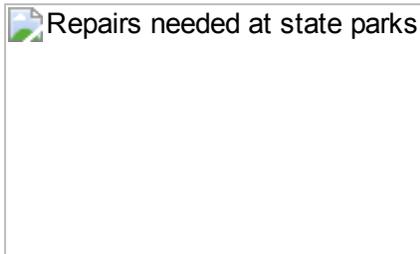
- [Parks and the environment get boost from Governor](#)
- [We need you to support NY's parks!](#)
- [Show parks some love on May 5! First-ever I Love My Park Day](#)
- [Resources for Friends groups](#)
- [Capacity-Building Grant winners](#)
- [Protecting parks and other natural resources from hydrofracking](#)
- [News from Friends groups](#)
- [Agency seeks public-private partnerships](#)
- [That's What Friends Are For: Volunteer profile](#)
- [You Gotta Have Tips: Recruiting and Keeping Good Volunteers](#)

**Also Inside:**

- [Stay connected!](#)
- [Walkway Over Hudson among "10 Record-Breaking Bridges"](#)
- [State Council of Parks Chair honored](#)
- [PTNY in the Field](#)
- [Hundreds of Ash trees removed from Greenway](#)
- [The one that didn't get away](#)
- [Iconic Letchworth State Park bridge to be demolished](#)
- [Down to the wire](#)
- [Hempstead Lake State Park cleanup a success](#)

## Parks and the environment get boost from Governor

Governor Cuomo's [executive budget](#) released last month includes positive news for New York's parks and the environment. The budget includes \$89 million for infrastructure improvements at 48 state parks and historic sites as part of the New York Works Fund. Details about which park projects will see improvements are still emerging. [See the list of Hudson Valley projects.](#)



*Thanks to Gov. Cuomo, state parks will get much-needed funds for repairs.*

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) holds steady at \$134 million, with \$16 million slated for state land stewardship and \$13 million for municipal parks. In addition, the proposed budget minimally cuts the operating budget for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

[Thank the Governor](#) for making a smart investment in New York

## WINTER 2012



**Celebrating 25 years of advocacy for New York's parks and trails**

### Keep In Touch!

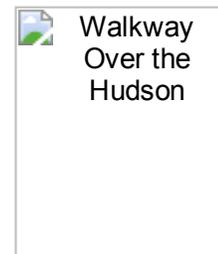
If you're not already on our email list, visit our [website](#) to join.

### 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. Follow us:



### Walkway Over Hudson among "10 Record-Breaking Bridges"



One of New York's own made it on a list of the ["10 Record-Breaking Bridges"](#)

State by providing funding for infrastructure needs at state parks and historic sites and maintaining the EPF.

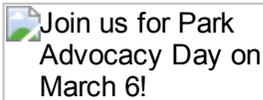
### Learn More

- [Read the Governor's Budget Briefing Book](#). (See pages 29 to 32 for the parks and environment section.)
- [Read PTNY's testimony on the Governor's proposed budget](#).
- [Learn more about the EPF](#).
- [Read PTNY's letter to the editor in the Albany Times Union](#).

[back to top](#)

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## We need you to support NY's parks!



Join us for Park Advocacy Day on March 6!

The Governor's budget proposal is good news for parks. Now it's up to the Legislature, and they need to hear from YOU. It's important that legislators

know their constituents support the Governor's proposal to provide \$89 million for state park repairs and improvements at 48 state parks and historic sites.

Join Parks & Trails New York and our partner, the Alliance for New York State Parks, in Albany for the 6th Annual [Park Advocacy Day on Tuesday, March 6](#) and help send a message of support for New York's 213 state parks and historic sites.

Park supporters from throughout the state will meet with policymakers and stress the importance of supporting Governor Cuomo's budget proposal, particularly the \$89 million slated for state park repairs and improvements under the New York Works Fund. Your efforts will have a lasting impact on legislators as they make important decisions about parks. RSVP today by emailing your name, address and phone number to [Laura DiBetta](#) or calling 518-434-1583.

[back to top](#)

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## Show parks some love on May 5! First-ever I Love My Park Day

around the world. The list, featured in [Yahoo Travel](#), highlighted 10 engineering marvels from around the world that feature a variety of shapes and sizes. The [Walkway over the Hudson](#), a State Historic Park, was selected because it's the longest pedestrian footbridge in the world.

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### State Council of Parks Chair honored

The Foundation for Long Island State Parks honored [State Council of Parks](#) Chair Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, M.D. in December with its 14th Annual Robert Moses Master Builder Award. A portion of the proceeds from the awards dinner are going towards restoration of the historic [mosaics](#) at Jones Beach, a project of [Jones Beach Rescue](#).

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### PTNY in the Field



Friends of Schodack Island State Park Board Meeting

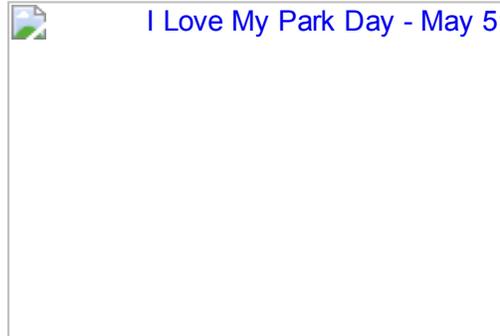
PTNY Park Program Director Laura DiBetta (top row, third from right) attended a recent [Friends of Schodack Island State Park](#) board meeting to talk about I Love My Park Day and other updates and news affecting state parks.

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### Hundreds of Ash trees removed from Greenway

OPRHP removed hundreds of Ash trees from the Genesee Valley

Show state parks and historic sites some love! [I Love My Park Day](#) is an exciting new statewide event to bring visibility to the entire state park system and its needs. On Saturday, May 5, you can join with volunteers across the state to help celebrate and improve park lands and beaches, plant trees and gardens, restore trails and wildlife habitat, and carry out site-improvement projects at state parks and historic sites.



PTNY, in collaboration with OPRHP, will coordinate the event at the statewide level, with cleanup, improvement and beautification projects organized by local state park and historic site friends groups and park staff.

Visit the [I Love My Park Day website](#) to find an event near you and stay tuned: we'll be adding more sites, project and event details, and online registration soon!

[back to top](#)

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## Resources for Friends groups

We've been busy working on ways to build the capacity of friends groups, expand outreach and communications, and enhance advocacy efforts. With continued economic constraints, it is more important than ever that the network of friends groups grow and strengthen. In addition to [Park Advocacy Day](#), [I Love My Park Day](#), and the *You Gotta Have Friends* eNewsletter, PTNY offers two new tools for friends groups.

### New Friends Discussion Forum Launched

To help facilitate greater networking and communications among friends groups, PTNY has started an [online discussion forum](#). The discussion forum is an opportunity for friends organizations across the state to communicate with each other - sharing ideas, asking advice, learning from one another and building the strength of our parks movement. [Join the discussion today](#) (once there, click on "Join this group" in the right-hand column) and share your ideas on the current topic: volunteer recruitment and retention. For more information, [visit our website](#).

Greenway in December. These trees had suffered, or were susceptible to, infestation by the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive beetle species. While the removal will impact the natural appearance of the Greenway, it was needed in order to slow the spread of the destructive Emerald Ash Borer. [Learn more](#).

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### The one that didn't get away



Since 2005, students from Public School 148 in Jackson Heights, Queens have been fishing in the springtime at [Gantry Plaza State Park](#) with the DEC Region 2 [I FISH NY](#) program with little to show for their efforts. After switching the fishing trips from spring to fall, when plenty of feisty bluefish ("snappers") and other hungry fish are more abundant in the salt waters of New York City, their luck changed. Each of the three classes caught fish, and the final class ended up running into a feeding blitz of striped bass with one fish after another and sometimes two at a time being hauled over the railing. In three hours, more than 60 fish were caught and released - a record for saltwater days.

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### Iconic Letchworth State Park bridge to be demolished

An iron railroad viaduct towering 245 feet above the Genesee River has

## New Online Friends Resource Kit

We've just made available a new online [Friends Resource Kit](#) - your go-to resource for building and strengthening your organization and networking with other groups. We will be building this site over time, so check back often for new information and [let us know](#) if you have ideas for ways to improve and expand it.

[back to top](#)

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## Capacity-Building Grant winners

PTNY's [Capacity-Building Grants](#) program recently awarded over \$18,000 to strengthen not-for-profit organizations that are working to build and protect parks and trails in communities across the state. Among the 11 winners in this round were three state park Friends groups. Congratulations to [Friends of Gantry Plaza State Park](#) in Queens, Friends of [Mine Kill](#) and [Max V. Shaul State Parks](#) in Schoharie County, and [Friends of Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks](#) in Dutchess and Putnam counties. [Read more about these and all the winners.](#)

[back to top](#)

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## Protecting parks and other natural resources from hydrofracking

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) comment period on the revised draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement and proposed regulations for high-volume hydraulic fracturing (fracking) ended January 11; more than 40,000 comments were received by DEC. While the proposal includes a ban on surface drilling in state parks, the regulations do not go far enough to protect our state park system. For example, the proposed regulations do not include buffers for state parks nor do they address impacts to water resources in parks, or to historic sites or other properties in the state park system. [Read PTNY's comments](#) submitted to the DEC.

[back to top](#)

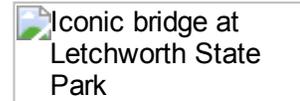
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## News from Friends groups

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

### Friends groups gather in Saratoga Springs

been a destination spot since it was built in 1875 and a [Letchworth State Park](#) landmark from the time the park was created in 1907, but the historic structure may soon be gone. The NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) was awarded \$15 million in federal TIGER III funding and NYS has pledged \$3.5 million to assist Norfolk Southern with the \$39 million cost of removing the rail bridge and constructing a new one at approximately the same location.



As it serves an active rail line, the public is not allowed on the bridge, but it nevertheless has always attracted visitors because it offers the best view of the falls and river gorge. Despite the bridge's popularity with the public and its ability to link the east and west sides of the 14,000-acre park, often called the Grand Canyon of the East, the railroad has declined to install a pedestrian walkway on the new bridge and there are no plans to retain the existing bridge and use it as a pedestrian walkway and viewing platform.

With more than \$20 million in public funding being directed to this project, PTNY strongly encourages Norfolk Southern and DOT to include a pedestrian walkway in any bridge solution so the public can at last legitimately and safely enjoy the



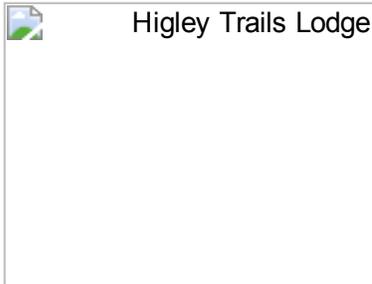
Friends group gathering in Saratoga

More than 60 state park and historic site enthusiasts from Friends groups in the Saratoga/Capital Region met at [Saratoga Spa State Park](#) in December. Like the three gatherings held across the state in October, this meeting was an opportunity for networking and information sharing. Participants

exchanged ideas and discussed ways to build capacity and to work more collaboratively to promote the park system.

### Friends groups among winners of first Regional Economic Councils grant awards

Over \$785 million in grants was awarded in December through the [Regional Economic Development Council](#) initiative. Several were awarded to park and historic site projects including [Friends of Higley Flow State Park](#) (\$60,000 for the Higley Trails Lodge), [Walkway Over the Hudson](#) (\$400,000 for elevator and other site improvements) and [Friends of Fahnestock and Hudson Highlands State Parks](#) (\$400,000 for repairs to the bathhouse and café buildings at the Canopus Lake Beach).

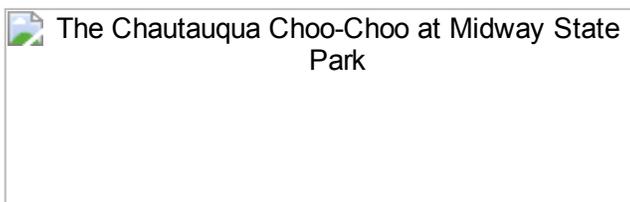


Higley Trails Lodge

PTNY compiled a [list](#) of all park, historic preservation, trail and canalyway grant winners. [See the full list of winning projects.](#)

### All aboard! Friends of Midway campaign for historic train

The Chautauqua Choo-Choo, a product of the [Miniature Train Company](#), has been circling [Midway State Park](#) for 55 years. The miniature train suffers from deteriorating floors and body and is in need of a fresh coat of paint. The [Friends of Midway](#) has arranged for the work to be done locally for \$8,000 and are using a membership appeal to raise the funds. It turns out the little train has big emotional appeal, possibly linked to the whistle that is heard everywhere on the east side of Lake Chautauqua during the park season. Supporters have responded generously and the Friends are in the process of raising the final \$1,000. Donors of \$500 or more will be recognized with small name plates on the train's refurbished cars. All aboard!



The Chautauqua Choo-Choo at Midway State Park

magnificent views of the Genesee River gorge that it has sought for years.

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### Down to the wire



[Nik Wallenda](#), who set Guinness World Records for high-wire walking and bicycling, has set his sights on walking across the 1,800-foot Niagara River gorge while balancing on a two-inch-diameter steel cable. New York State approved the walk last year but, after Canadian officials denied the request, released a statement that the walk was contingent on Canadian approval and could therefore not move forward. Wallenda didn't give up though, and his persistence paid off; Canadian officials reversed their decision in February and the wirewalk is back on.

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### Hempstead Lake State Park cleanup a success

After a local paper brought attention to pollution problems at [Hempstead Lake State Park](#), OPRHP worked with the local operator of equestrian trail rides through the park to organize a cleanup. More than 100 volunteers worked with park staff on a Saturday in November to collect enough trash and debris to fill one and a half dumpsters. [Watch a news report](#) on the cleanup effort.

## Channel Ganondagan

Friends groups may not have their own TV stations, but at least one has its own YouTube channel. [Friends of Ganondagan](#) launched its YouTube channel, [SeeGanondagan](#), about a year ago. It features videos and playlists the group has created as well its favorite YouTube videos created by others. YouTube users can subscribe to the channel so they can keep up-to-date on new videos.

Does your Friends group have a YouTube channel? [Let us know](#) so we can spread the word.

## Olana Partnership holds red-carpet gala

[The Olana Partnership](#) recently held its annual Frederic E. Church Award Gala at the New York Public Library. The event, co-chaired by State Council of Parks Lucy Waletzky, M.D. and Lulu Wang, honored Morrison Heckscher and Martha Stewart and featured a live auction. [See photos from the event.](#)

[back to top](#)

## Agency seeks public-private partnerships

OPRHP, like many park agencies across the country, continues to look for creative ways to keep park and historic sites and their facilities open and in good repair.

The pool at [Tallman Mountain State Park](#) in the Palisades has been closed for two years due to budget cuts. That could change this summer. The Palisades Interstate Park Commission is reviewing two proposals submitted by developers for the operation and maintenance of the pool. One of the potential pool operators wants to charge a membership fee of \$500 per family with the other possibly charging a seasonal rate while still offering a daily-use rate.

The agency is also looking to the private sector for help in restoring historic Schoellkopf Hall at [DeVeaux Woods State Park](#). The request for proposals looks to find an adaptive reuse for the building, such as a hotel day spa, convention center, corporate offices, or education facilities.

[Read more.](#)



*Schoellkopf Hall*

[back to top](#)

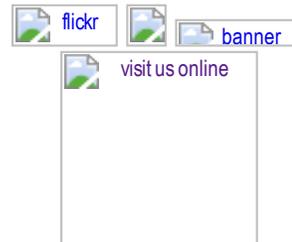


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(fax) 427-0067

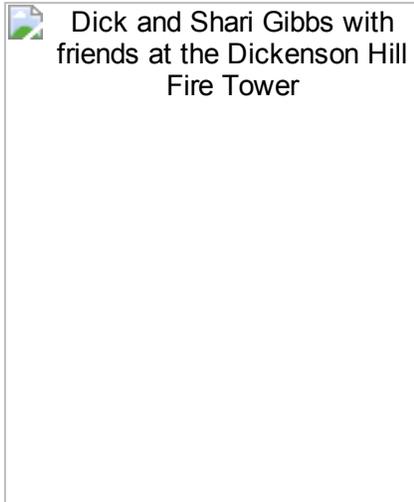
[www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org)

# That's What Friends Are For

## Volunteer Profile: Dick Gibbs

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

Richard "Dick" Gibbs sets tall goals. Dick became involved with [Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park](#) in the early 1990s after meeting Park Manager Tom Conklin. Dick, a retired NYS Department of Environmental Conservation research scientist, had been riding his mountain bike when Tom told him about the Friends group and its Trails Advisory Committee.



*Dick (left) and Shari Gibbs with friends at the Dickenson Hill Fire Tower*

Twenty years later, Dick reflects, "Everyone involved knows that [Grafton Lakes State Park](#) is a special place and the Friends are a special group. Everyone in the group tries to find a niche in which a single volunteer can make a difference. The mutual respect among trail and park users keeps us all working to improve the park."

Like many dedicated volunteers, Dick is involved in several organizations. In addition to the Friends of Grafton, he's a board member of Friends of Cherry Plain State Park. He also volunteers with the Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club, the New York Forest Owners Association, and the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance.

"My wife Shari reminds me that I can't live all of the lives I can imagine living, so I have to edit and prune my myriad interests so that I make real progress in a few rather than being a dilettante at many."

One place where Dick is making real progress is the Dickenson Hill Fire Tower at Grafton. The tower was erected and placed into service in 1924 on the northern slope of the Rensselaer Plateau. It is the only remaining fire tower in Rensselaer County and provides stunning views of Mt. Marcy and the Adirondack High Peaks, the Green Mountains of Vermont, the Taconics and the Helderbergs.

[Keep reading about Dick Gibbs and the Dickenson Hill Fire Tower project.](#)

[back to top](#)

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# You Gotta Have Tips: Recruiting and Keeping Good Volunteers

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

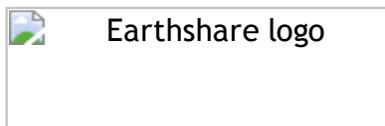
Does your organization struggle to find new volunteers? Do you have trouble retaining and engaging volunteers? Then you are not alone! Most organizations at one time or another have found recruiting and retaining good volunteers a challenge. At the friends regional gatherings this fall, there were great discussions on volunteers. Read on to learn about some of the ideas generated.



[Keep reading about volunteer recruitment and retention.](#)

[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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