

GreenSpace

For members, supporters, and friends of Parks & Trails New York

Winter 2015-2016



The Friends of Letchworth State Park are helping build a Butterfly and Biosphere garden at the new Letchworth Nature Center

State Leaders Heard Your Voice

Thanks for helping secure a new source of funding for Friends of New York's parks and trails

What difference can a little funding make? The Friends of Letchworth State Park found out when they used a *Growing the Grassroots* capacity grant from Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) to expand their all-volunteer board, grow membership, leverage new grants and multiply fundraising by more than 600%. Fueled by success, they launched a successful campaign to include a Butterfly and Biosphere garden at the Letchworth Nature Center, now under construction. Putting funding in the right hands at the right time makes it possible for our grassroots Friends organizations to do big things that benefit us all.

Now, thanks to your support for our transformational *Growing the Grassroots* grants program, the state has decided to invest in this success by creating a new, even more significant source of funding for park and trail projects. In this year's budget, the Governor and state legislators included \$500,000 to be spent on Friends groups' projects that preserve, interpret, and promote New York State parks, trails and historic sites.

PTNY, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, has been entrusted with administering this new capacity-building grants program available to the many grassroots Friends groups across the state.

Friends make a big difference

Active and engaged Friends organizations already contribute significantly to the stewardship of the state's parks, trails and historic sites, raising tens of millions of dollars and logging hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer assistance. This important new source of funding will unlock the potential of Friends organizations across the state to enhance and protect parks, trails and historic sites for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

Applications from Friends organizations are due December 4, 2015 and awards are expected to be announced March 2016.

"The greatest achievement we've seen as a result of PTNY's grant has occurred within our group itself. Our Board has realized more and more that we are positively affecting our beloved park with the projects we are taking on. We are so excited to see how far we've come and what we have been able to accomplish."

—Carol Rathbun, President,
Friends of Letchworth
State Park



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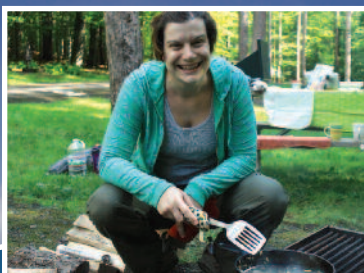
Parks & Trails New York works to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout the state for all to use and enjoy. Parks & Trails New York is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization as defined by the IRS. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Photos courtesy of:

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation;
Tanya Pineau; Christy Jaromack

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“Many of my fondest memories were forged from the great times had in our state and national parks. My family and I hike, ski, camp, and eat in these treasured lands. As an American citizen and a veteran of the U.S. Army, I feel it is my duty and the duty of others who call this nation “home” to speak out against Congress’s defunding of the LWCF.

— Christy Jaromack, Franklin, NY,
PTNY supporter



From Fire Island National Seashore to Niagara Falls, the Land and Water Conservation Fund protects New York's natural treasures

Congress Just Stole \$900 Million from You

Join our fight to revive the Land and Water Conservation Fund

This past October, Congress broke its promise to the American people by allowing our nation’s most successful conservation program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), to expire. For the last 50 years, the LWCF has funded the creation and protection of our iconic national and state parks, city playgrounds, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, and historic sites. Funded with proceeds from offshore oil and gas drilling, the LWCF costs taxpayers nothing. It pumps money gained from developing our natural resources into conservation that benefits all of us.

New York State alone has received \$319 million from the LWCF for the protection of places such as Fire Island National Seashore, Saratoga National Historical Park and the Finger Lakes National Forest. From local community parks to world-class destinations such as Niagara Falls and the Adirondacks, nearly all New Yorkers have benefited from the LWCF. Now this wildly successful program, that for half a century has protected the outdoor places you use and love, has been dropped from the federal budget.

But it doesn’t have to stay that way. Although Congress allowed the LWCF to lapse, there is a movement to fund it permanently. With your help, PTNY will fight to ensure its passage. We’ll also keep watch to make sure that it receives full funding in the future. Please visit www.ptny.org/lwcf for the latest news on the LWCF and information on how you can help.

Help Close the Gaps While Planning Your Next Ride

**Get our updated Cycling the Erie Canal Guidebook —
a great gift for friends and family too!**

PTNY has released the 4th edition of our popular Cycling the Erie Canal guidebook, sales of which support our campaign to Close the Gaps in the Erie Canalway Trail. The guide features updated trail maps, revised lists of trailside attractions and lodging, and new navigation aids, all in an easy-to-use format. The guidebook is organized around 42 full-color maps and corresponding content pages, allowing cyclists and other trail visitors to easily find their way along the 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail. The new edition is spiral bound and easily fits in a handlebar bag or glove compartment.



“My daughter and I study botany and we stop by Wheaton Park often. We even have a favorite tree, a female Kentucky coffeetree that we’ve nicknamed “Madam Café.” It’s a disgrace to sell the park for development at the cost of our green commons, environmental integrity and heritage.”

— Tanya Pineda



Without your help, parks may be lost to development

You’re the Hero Protecting Parks from Development

Without our vigilance, the lure of a quick buck robs future generations of green space

For Tanya Pineda and her family, Wheaton Park in Poughkeepsie is a magical place. She and her daughter study botany and often visit the park to see a rare female Kentucky coffeetree which grows on the hill overlooking the Walkway Over the Hudson. The park includes the historic Pelton Mansion, which Tanya had hoped could become a community center that would attract more people to the park.

Instead, the City intends to sell the land and mansion to a developer for the construction of condo units. Tanya, and more than 600 concerned citizens who’ve signed a petition to protect the park, found that there is very little they can do to save it. She worries that it sets a bad precedent for the slow chipping away of the urban green spaces she holds dear.

State requirements for park alienation are often not met

Across the state, financially strapped local governments see selling parkland for development as a way to make a quick buck. Before taking parkland—a process called park “alienation”—a municipality must get permission from the Legislature. In most cases, the Legislature requires them to either provide replacement parkland or dedicate funding toward buying additional parkland or park improvements.

But each case is unique, not governed by a strict set of guidelines, so the process is often confusing. Some municipalities either don’t realize they need to seek legislative approval, or they just don’t bother to do it. Even when there is legislation governing a particular case, there’s no process to ensure that the terms of the approval have been met and communities lose out.

By PTNY’s count, this year alone there were 22 bills to alienate parkland, 14 of which passed both the Senate and the Assembly and now await the Governor’s signature. Of those that passed, 11 involve the selling of parkland to private interests. In all, local communities will suffer a loss of nearly 40 acres of parkland if the bills are signed.

You are helping PTNY hold cities and towns accountable

Recently, PTNY asked the Office of State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli to audit a sampling of park alienation cases from around the state. Their report revealed that in five out of 11 cases reviewed, municipalities didn’t follow the requirements. To address this, PTNY has worked with the Legislature on a bill that would require municipalities to report on the status of the actions required in the legislation authorizing their taking of parkland.

Unfortunately, legislation to approve the alienation of Wheaton Park was passed. At the least, let’s make sure the City keeps its promise of land or funds to make up for its loss.

Get on Your Bike and Ride!

Your support for the Erie Canalway Trail a powerful boost to Upstate economies

The English Garden Bed and Breakfast, located in the historic Stockade District of Schenectady, was built in 1760 for wealthy fur traders. Now, says owner Virginia Bohn, it's packed with cyclists who come from all over New York, the country and abroad, to experience the beauty and history of the Erie Canalway Trail. Schenectady's compact downtown, historic architecture and cultural richness make it an ideal stop. Virginia sees it as a wonderful opportunity for her business and the community.

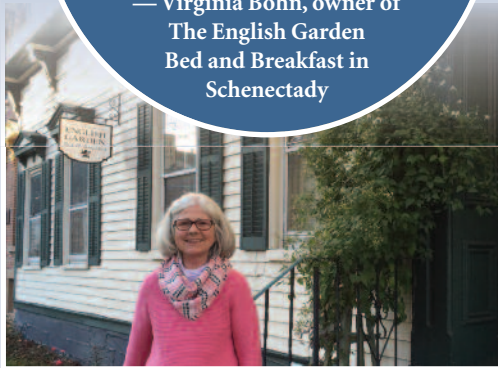
To help locals take advantage of booming bicycle tourism, PTNY and the NYS Canal Corporation presented their 10th annual Bicyclists Bring Business workshop this Fall in Schenectady.

Business owners, community leaders, and citizens were all eager to learn how to capitalize on the growing economic impact of cyclists.

They shared ideas for attracting cyclists and making businesses more cycle-friendly. A group went for a short bike-a-round to evaluate signage, ease of navigation into town and opportunities to create trailside businesses.

"It's amazing what cyclists think of our Canalway Trail, and it's great for business. Of all the places they could go, they come here! Old and young, families and singles, they come from all over New York and the U.S."

— Virginia Bohn, owner of The English Garden Bed and Breakfast in Schenectady



Ways to Support New York's Parks and Trails

- Become a member of Parks & Trails New York or make a donation online, by phone, or mail
- Double your donation by sending us your employer's matching gift form
- Remember Parks & Trails New York in your will
- Give at the office via EarthShare New York
- Get involved – join us on I Love My Park Day, Canal Clean Sweep, and Park and Trail Advocacy Days

Visit www.ptny.org to learn more

Adirondack Rail Trail Dream May Become a Reality

Project receives major boost from state leaders

PTNY has long supported the development of the Adirondack Rail Trail. Now the dream is one step closer to reality. The New York State Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Conservation announced their preferred amendment to the 1996 Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor Unit Management Plan/FEIS (UMP) to allow for the removal of underutilized railroad tracks between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake in the Adirondacks, boosting the chances for construction of 34 miles of the Adirondack Rail Trail.

The development of a 34-mile four-season trail between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake will bring substantial economic and environmental improvements to the region. In the winter, the trail will be open to cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and snowmobilers. Cyclists and hikers will have access to the trail throughout the rest of the year.

Save the dates!

February 2 — Active Transportation Advocacy Day

February 29 — Park Advocacy Day

April 22-24 — Canal Clean Sweep

May 7 — 5th Annual I Love My Park Day



What will your legacy be?

It's never too early to begin thinking about your legacy. As someone who appreciates nature and green space, we invite you to share your passion for New York's majestic parks and beautiful trails by making a planned gift to Parks & Trails New York and ensuring that your favorite parks and trails will be protected for generations to come.

To learn more about becoming a member of the Legacy Society of Parks & Trails New York, please contact Meegan Finnegan, Director of Development, at mfinnegan@ptny.org or 518-434-1583.