



2019 Advocacy Agenda



About Parks & Trails New York

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) is the leading advocate for New York's parks and trails. The organization provides a voice for park and trail users and supporters with decision makers and the environmental community. Parks & Trails New York works every day to keep parks and trails across New York accessible, safe, clean and beautiful.

Join Parks & Trails New York in supporting New York's great outdoor spaces!

Here's how you can help:

- Become a member
- Volunteer with a park or trail friends group
- Attend a park or trail clean up event
- Advocate for your favorite outdoor spaces locally or at a lobby day in Albany

For more information, visit www.PTNY.org.



29 Elk Street
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New York State: A National Leader in Outdoor Stewardship & Recreation

From beach parks on Long Island to waterfalls in the Finger Lakes to the cross-state Erie Canalway Trail, New York's outdoor destinations are significant economic drivers and critical contributors to community health and sustainability.

Thanks to the Governor and Legislature, State Parks have undergone an unprecedented renaissance through the NY Parks 2020 plan, a 10-year commitment to revitalizing critical park infrastructure.

The state's multi-use trail system, providing vital connections to parks, historic sites, and communities, has also benefitted from investment, most notably \$200 million dollars secured in 2017 to complete the Empire State Trail. By linking the Erie Canalway Trail, Champlain Canalway Trail, and Hudson River Greenway to form a 750-mile super trail, New York will become the nation's premier trail destination. *Closing the Gaps* in the trail network has been a priority for PTNY for more than a decade. Seeing that dream come to fruition, and then some, is gratifying for our members and partners!

With NY Parks 2020 set to expire and the Empire State Trail slated for completion - both in 2020 - now is the time to plan for the future. For State Parks, a new program of infrastructure and operations funding can continue the positive momentum, and the growing trail network needs planning and reliable funding to reach its full potential.

As it has done for more than 30 years, PTNY looks forward to working with Governor Cuomo and legislators to enhance New York's role as a national leader in environment and outdoor stewardship.



*Robin Dropkin
Executive Director
Parks & Trails New York*

State Parks

Protect and revitalize state parks for future generations

- Support the final installments of NY Parks 2020 capital investments, and plan for future appropriations to continue the restoration and reconstructions of State Parks' aging and dilapidated infrastructure.
- Increase OPRHP's operations budget to meet increased demand so that State Parks & Historic sites can more fully realize their potential as treasured destinations and economic engines for local communities.

Statewide Trail Network

Continue to develop the state's trail network by completing the Empire State Trail, creating a statewide trails plan, and securing additional funding for more trails

- Create a coordinated, statewide trails plan that identifies priority projects in each region.
- Create a dedicated fund for maintaining and enhancing New York's growing multi-use trail network, and for developing new facilities.
- Contribute to development of the state trail network by educating legislators about the positive impacts of trails, participating in local and regional planning efforts, and encouraging local Complete Streets policies and planning.





Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)

Support a fully-funded and sustainable EPF

- Support a \$300 million appropriation for the EPF, securing New York's position of national leadership, and addressing environmental needs across the state, including: land acquisition for trail corridors and parks; municipal parks and waterfront revitalization grants, and land stewardship that improves access to parks, historic sites, forest lands, and recreation facilities.
- Unlock the potential of grassroots organizations that support and strengthen state parks, trails, historic sites, and public lands by increasing funding for the NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program. This will enable the matching grant program to reach more recipients, including both OPRHP and DEC-associated friends groups.
- Provide state agencies responsible for administering the EPF and implementing important environmental and public health programming with sustainable operations funding

Trails & Active Transportation

Strengthen local economies, promote public health, and increase clean transportation options

- Establish a dedicated, state funding source for infrastructure that supports bicycling such as multi-use trails and on-street bicycle facilities
- Strengthen the New York State Complete Streets Act, passed in 2011, by closing a loophole that exempts maintenance and resurfacing projects, which account for most roadway projects.
- Incorporate funding mechanisms for active transportation (biking/walking) infrastructure and policies that support greater use of non-motorized transportation into climate change resiliency planning at all levels.
- Institute roll-on bicycle service on all New York Amtrak routes, supporting trail-related tourism on the Erie Canalway Trail/ Empire State Trail and other routes.



Local Parks

Enact legislation to protect communities from a loss of parkland

- Establish a more rigorous process for the taking of parkland, or park “alienation,” that holds government accountable and provides transparency. Legislation should include:
 - » A requirement that all alienation legislation includes a detailed description of the parcel to be alienated and the replacement parkland;
 - » A requirement that alienation authorization not become effective until a municipality has first acquired and dedicated replacement parkland, or other land of equal or greater value for park improvements;
 - » A process to track alienation actions once they have been approved;
 - » Provisions for enforcement of the terms of the alienation.
- Provide sustainable funding for OPRHP to track parkland alienation and ensure adherence to regulation.

Local Stewardship

Remove obstacles to volunteerism

- Support the creation of a standard, universal registration form for volunteers working on lands owned and managed by state agencies, and remove complicated permitting processes and other obstacles.

Increase recreational opportunities

- Expand the number and kinds of recreational uses that are covered by the Recreational Use Statute in order to provide increased recreational opportunities throughout the state.
- Encourage park and trail development by extending liability protection for recreational use to landowners of railroad and utility corridors.

Federal Priorities

- Ensure that programs that fund active transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, safety programming, and research are increased or, at a minimum, maintained at existing levels in the federal transportation budget.
- Provide full, dedicated, permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million, and make permanent the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant program to create and revitalize urban parks.
- Oppose reductions in appropriations to other agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which would cut funds for programs that are critical to New Yorkers, such as Energy Star, Superfund sites, air-quality monitoring, and cleanup of the Great Lakes.
- Implement a national Complete Streets standard, and support new funding mechanisms for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, with a special focus on advancing funding equity in low-income communities.
- Improve the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians by including specific goals and performance measures in Federal transportation funding bills.
- Support the work of the U.S. Climate Alliance and Powering Past Coal coalitions to maintain U.S. commitments under the Paris Agreement and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



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