



Volunteers (and Governor) roll up their sleeves

PTNY spearheaded two very successful park and trail clean-up and beautification events this spring: I Love My Park Day and Canal Clean Sweep

First-ever I Love My Park Day

Thanks to the thousands of volunteers who pitched in on May 5, PTNY's inaugural [I Love My Park Day](#) was a huge success.

Volunteers took part in cleanup, improvement, and beautification projects at 40 state parks and historic sites around the state. At [Allegany State Park](#), volunteers and park staff worked together to restore the historic Sweetwater Spring. At [Thacher State Park](#), young and old helped clear trails, plant flowers and build a bridge. At [FDR State Park](#), volunteers - including [Governor Cuomo](#) - put together dozens of new picnic tables.



PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin with NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo



Governor Cuomo's [participation](#) and [invitation](#) to all New Yorkers to volunteer put our state parks system, its needs, and the strong public support for parks in the public eye. Read some of the [media accounts](#) of the event.

A big thank you to Governor Cuomo, our partners at [State Parks](#), our [sponsors](#) and all the wonderful volunteers who

May 2012

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

Celebrate spring - support the parks and trails you love.

Support Parks & Trails New York today with a [secure online donation](#). Or send a tax-deductible contribution to Parks & Trails New York, 29 Elk St., Albany, NY 12207.

TrailFinder Trail of the Month

Harlem Valley Rail Trail

came out, rolled up their sleeves, and helped make I Love My Park Day a huge success!

Weather doesn't dampen Canal Clean Sweep enthusiasm

Earth Day weekend saw rain and chilly temperatures over much of the state, but that didn't deter more than 1,000 volunteers from joining in Clean Sweep events throughout the NYS Canal



System. While many of the 85 events focused on the shores of the canal or the Canalway Trail, more than a few also used the event as an opportunity to celebrate the canal's heritage. In Montezuma, Rotterdam, and Clifton Park, volunteers cut back brush from historic locks while canal-focused museums prepared for the coming tourist season. A few communities, such as Fairport, Lockport, and Tonawanda, took the spring cleaning idea one step further, hosting community-wide Sweep and Earth Day clean-ups.

Thanks to everyone who donated their time to help ready both the canal and the Canalway Trail for the coming season. For photos and event summaries check out our [Clean Sweep](#) page.

Finger Lakes water trails focus of America's Great Outdoors in NYS

As an acknowledgement of both the assets and challenges in water trail development in the region, the Finger Lakes Regional Water Access & Water Trail Project was selected in late 2011 as one of two projects in New York State to be a part of the national [America's Great Outdoors](#). The project is building upon a number of existing local efforts in water trail and access planning and implementation in the region. A core working group of stakeholders, including PTNY, met recently in Seneca Falls with project manager Karl Beard of the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. The group reviewed existing water trail resources and access points as well as a framework for water trail planning and implementation. Results from the meeting, including a draft Water Trail Vision Map, will be released in July and serve as a basis for further efforts to "build-out" the water trail. To share information about



Now that spring is finally here, get outside and enjoy the [Harlem Valley Rail Trail](#). Open year round from dusk until dawn, this trail offers two sections of paved surface for a total of 15 miles to bike, walk, jog, or skate.

Enjoy gorgeous scenery in the Harlem Valley and Taconic Hills as the two paved sections of the trail take you from the Dutchess County hamlet of Wassaic up to the village of Millerton, then from Under Mountain Rd in the Town of Ancram to the Taconic State Park entrance in Copake Falls. Though only two sections of this trail are currently available for use, 5 miles from Copake Falls to Hillsdale in Columbia County are in the planning stage. When complete the trail will be 46 miles long from Wassaic to Chatham.

For more information on this trail and others like it, visit [TrailFinder](#), PTNY's interactive guide to multi-use trails throughout New York State.

Internship Opportunity at PTNY

Are you or someone you know looking for experience in the environmental field? Parks & Trails New York is

padding opportunities in the Finger Lakes region, contact Karl Beard at karl_beard@nps.gov or (845) 229-9115, ext. 2034.

Schumer endorses bike/ped access on Albany bridge



PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin joins Senator Schumer and a host of politicians and advocates at the riverside press event.

Senator Charles Schumer urged that any reconstruction of the railroad bridge connecting Albany and Rensselaer include bicycle and pedestrian access at a press conference on May 7 on the shores of the Hudson River. PTNY has been leading a [coalition](#) to gain traction for the idea for the past year and

we're thrilled that the Senator has lent his support to the effort. Watch a [news clip](#) in which PTNY Project Director Martin Daley, who has been heading up the coalition, talks about the future of the bridge. Read the Senator's [press release](#).

Thank you to our Green Partner: CHA

[CHA](#) (formerly Clough Harbour Associates), one of the sponsors of PTNY's I Love My Park Day 2012, is a diversified firm in both market and service delivery. CHA provides expertise in civil engineering, landscape architecture, sports architecture, transportation, environmental, and building system design to clients across New York and the U.S.



Recent New York projects include the [Dutchess Rail Trail](#), a multi-use 11.8-mile greenway linking several towns in the Hudson Valley; and the [TOBIE Trail](#), a multi-use 14-mile greenway connecting several hamlets within the Adirondack Park.

"To say sustainability is in our genes is an understatement," says CEO Ray Rudolph Jr. "Our work respects and flows with the natural environment, and our calling as a firm is not just to design and build, but to enhance quality of life. This is why we are strong supporters of the good work of Parks & Trails New York."

looking for a [summer intern](#) to assist with a variety of program, communication, and outreach tasks. Interns get hands-on experience, while working to protect and expand parks and trails in New York State. Apply by **May 25**.

Join us this summer for bicycling adventure



Making summer plans? Check out Parks & Trails New York's two bike tours: [Cycling the Erie Canal](#) and the [Great Hudson Valley Pedal](#).

Whether you join one of our tours or not, you can sport one of our eye-catching bicycle jerseys. The hi-tech wicking fabric will keep you dry and looking great! Order your [Cycling the Erie Canal](#) or [Great Hudson Valley Pedal](#) jersey today.

Need another reason to explore the Erie Canalway Trail this summer?

Complex Magazine has recently named the Erie Canalway Trail one of the [top fifty bike trails](#) in America. Check it out!

May is National Bike Month

Federal trails funding still in limbo -- four NY lawmakers key to solution

The future is still uncertain for federal transportation funding and programs that support bicycling and walking such as Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School, and Recreational Trails. On May 8, the House and Senate conference committees began meeting to try to resolve their differences and finally advance new transportation legislation. [Senator Charles Schumer](#) and [Representatives Richard Hanna](#), [Jerrold Nadler](#), and [Tim Bishop](#) are key players as they have been appointed to their respective conference committees.

You can help make a difference. Contact these lawmakers and let them know that you and most Americans support maintaining or growing the federal funding streams that pay for sidewalks, bikeways, and bike paths. A just released [survey](#) of 1,003 U.S. adults shows 83%, including 80% of Republican respondents and 88% of Democrat respondents, think Congress **should maintain or increase** federal funds for biking and walking

News from State Parks

Niagara Falls State Park to get \$25M upgrade



Niagara Falls State Park--with 8 million visitors, the top tourism destination in western New York--is slated to get a \$25 million facelift. The revitalization will include upgrades to viewing areas, walking paths, and other facilities throughout the park.

Frederick Law Olmsted designed much of the original park and the goal of the revitalization, according to State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey, is to make sure the park's public use facilities fit the grandeur of Niagara Falls. [Read more](#) about the plans for the park.

Thacher State Park master plan public meetings

Voice your thoughts about the future of [John Boyd Thacher](#) and [Thompson's Lake State Parks](#) at two public meetings: May 22 in Berne and May 24 in Bethlehem. Written comments will be accepted until **June 16**. [Read more](#).

Parks go smokefree



To find National Bike Month events taking place in your area, visit the League of American Bicyclists [website](#).

If you like to bike on trails, check out Parks & Trails New York's [TrailFinder](#) guide to more than 100 bike trails throughout the state.

A taste of Saratoga



PTNY's Board of directors spent two days at the historic [Gideon Putnam Resort](#) in [Saratoga Spa State Park](#) for a spring board meeting. Board members enjoyed a tasting tour of the park's famous mineral springs led by park naturalist Allison Schweizer.

Spare Seat kayak expedition crossing NYS

Smoking is now prohibited at pools and playgrounds at state parks and historic sites, plus state parks in NYC are completely smoke-free. What a breath of fresh air - way to go, state parks!

PTNY Growing the Grassroots grant boosts park friends group membership



[The Friends of Taconic State Park](#) used a PTNY Growing the Grassroots capacity building grant for design and navigation improvements and social media additions to its website. The group credits PTNY's grant for making it possible to exceed its goal of adding 100 new members during the year.

"We can say emphatically, funding from Parks & Trails New York has been a huge boon to our membership base. The entire Board of Directors joins me in expressing our gratitude for this enthusiastic on-going support (not just financially but programmatically too)," said Deborah Cohen, Friends of Taconic State Park Treasurer.

Taiwanese cyclists make PTNY a stop on cross-country trip

Two Taiwanese cyclists traveling from NYC to Los Angeles by bicycle stopped at the PTNY office in Albany to purchase a *Cycling the Erie Canal* guidebook for their trip westward across NYS. We wish them good luck and safe travels! To plan your own cross-state excursion using our newly revised guidebook, [click here](#).



National Trails Day

Thousands of events will take place across the nation on June 2 in celebration of [National Trails Day](#)®, the annual event that focuses on increasing awareness of America's 200,000 miles of



On May 1 two British adventurers began a 500-mile journey across New York, traveling the entire route by kayak from Buffalo to NYC by water. The first leg of the trip is on the Erie Canal, where they have been stopping to tour the historic towns and sights along the way. At Albany, they will switch to the Hudson River. They will end their journey at the Statue of Liberty on May 20. To get a day-by-day account of their travels, visit their [blog](#).

Submit nominations for National Trails Award

Do you know of an outstanding person, project, or organization that has impacted the world of trails over the last two years? The [National Trails Awards](#) are one way American Trails recognizes the tremendous contributions of volunteers, professionals, and other leaders who are working to create a national system of trails for all Americans.

Upcoming grant opportunities

Upcoming CFA round

NYS is now accepting grant funding applications through the Consolidated

trails and recognizes the many hours of planning, labor, and negotiating it takes to develop them.

Almost 30 events are planned for [New York State](#) including the [dedication](#) of a new Genesee Valley Greenway bridge crossing the Genesee River in the Livingston County village of Mt. Morris and, in celebration of its 50th anniversary, 75 separately led eight-mile [hikes](#) spanning the entire 562 miles of [Finger Lakes Trail](#).

Two Park events May 19

NYC It's My Park Day

Celebrate NYC parks on [It's My Park Day](#), May 19, when community groups organize volunteer and free cultural events in neighborhood parks throughout the city.

Nationwide Kids to Parks Day

Take part in the nationwide [Kids to Parks Day](#), also on May 19. Visit a national, state or local park that day with your kids, grandkids or neighborhood kids. We all know kids spend far too much time indoors so this is a great reason to get them (and you!) outdoors and having fun.

Federal Aid 101 training for DOT grant applicants

For those considering applying for federal aid programs such as Safe Routes to School, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration-New York Division (FHWA) are offering workshops to help applicants better understand the steps, activities, and approvals needed to ensure their projects are developed, designed, and constructed in accordance with federal requirements. The [workshops](#) will be held at four locations across the state beginning **May 23rd**. An overview of the [Safe Routes to School Program](#) will be offered as part of the workshops. [Registration](#) is required.

Funding Application (CFA), an effort to streamline and expedite the NYS grant application process. Up to \$750 million will be made available to implement the priorities of 10 Regional Economic Development Councils.

Find out more about the process and answers to frequently asked questions on the [CFA website](#) or attend one of the [workshops](#) being held across the state in May and June. Application deadline is **July 16**.

National funding opportunity for capacity building

The National Environmental Education Foundation is awarding ["Every Day" capacity building grants](#) to help Friends groups build their capacity to serve public lands. [Application](#) deadline is **May 25**.

Grants available for urban and community forest projects

NYSDEC is offering [matching grants](#) for tree inventories and management plans, tree planting, and maintenance. Communities may request from \$2,500 to \$50,000, depending on municipal population. Quick Start Arbor Day Grants of \$1,000 are also available from DEC with no match requirement to help communities support the beginnings of a tree program by hosting an Arbor Day celebration. [Applications](#) are due **June 21**.



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.earthshareny.org.

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