



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**10<sup>th</sup> I Love My Park Day Celebrates New York’s State Parks, Historic Sites and Public Lands**

*—Over 5,000 Volunteers pitch in at over 140 events—*

ALBANY, N.Y. – More than 120 New York State parks, historic sites and public lands are hosting volunteer events this weekend, Saturday, May 1 and Sunday, May 2, as part of the tenth annual I Love My Park Day. I Love My Park Day, organized by the statewide nonprofit Parks & Trails New York is a popular statewide event that improves and enhances New York’s beloved outdoor spaces, while bringing visibility to the entire state park system, and its needs. More than 5,000 volunteers are expected to roll up their sleeves on cleanup, improvement, and beautification projects.

New York State is a leader in parks and conservation because of a long history of stewardship and generosity by private citizens who believed in the importance of parks and public lands. With ever increasing visitation, including a record 78 million park visitors last year as people sought outdoor recreational opportunities during the pandemic, grassroots Friends groups and volunteers are more important than ever to keep parks beautiful, clean, and welcoming for all to visit and enjoy.

This year volunteers of all ages will work on more than 135 improvement projects ranging from general park cleanup and invasive species removal, to beautification efforts such as flower and tree planting, painting, installation of benches and picnic tables, trail maintenance, and much more. All projects will be limited to a maximum of 50 people, ensuring that safety and social distancing guidelines can be observed.

“We are excited to be hosting this event after having to cancel in 2020. Giving back to our public green spaces is more important than ever as increased use has led to more wear and tear”, **said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York.** “New York’s park legacy is a responsibility handed down from one generation to the next. Through I Love My Park Day, New Yorkers are able to step up and do their part for their parks and public lands, which help us all stay healthy and active. By working together, we can make them even better.”

I Love My Park Day is organized at the statewide level by Parks & Trails New York in partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Other statewide partners include the New York State

Commission on National and Community Service, and at the park level, Friends groups. Park staff oversee cleanup, improvement and beautification projects and work with volunteers.

**State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid said,** “Thank you to our partners at Parks & Trails New York for organizing and supporting 10 years of I Love My Park Day. Our volunteers are crucial to making our park system a success and during the height of the pandemic, State Parks served as a vital resource for the public to safely recreate and enjoy the outdoors. I am grateful for the volunteers celebrating the stewardship of I Love My Park Day and who continue to inspire our need to protect, preserve and responsibly promote New York's amazing natural resources.”

**Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said,** "I Love My Park Day is the largest single-day volunteer event in New York State, providing opportunities for environmental stewards to help clean up, restore, and enhance the State's parks, historic sites, and public lands. During the State's ongoing response to the pandemic, more New Yorkers than ever before are venturing outdoors in search of recreation and I encourage them to consider giving back to our environment by participating in preserving and improving these very special places and remembering to take care of public lands all year long."

I Love My Park Day would not be possible without the support of our committed statewide sponsors and partners. CHA and Con Edison continue their championship of this event, while Harney & Sons Fine Teas continues its leadership support for I Love My Park Day, ensuring a positive experience for thousands of volunteers as they give back to their cherished parks.

I Love My Park Day is also supported by new and continued corporate sponsors: Bergmann Associates; T.Y. Lin International; Beardsley Architects + Engineers, Corning Incorporated; M&T Bank; Saratoga Associates; Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation; Creighton Manning Engineering; Angry Orchard; and Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects, PC.

For more information on I Love My Park Day and a complete list of participating locations and event contacts, visit <http://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park>

**About Parks & Trails New York:** Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide advocate for New York’s parks and trails, working with grassroots groups for 35 years to improve New Yorker’s health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. For more information, visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).

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