

Welcome to You Gotta Have Friends

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Win prizes for showing parks love

Summer is almost over but there's still time to spend it outdoors in a park, and now you can win great prizes from REI for doing it!



Win a half-dome tent from REI!

The next time you're in a park this summer, take along a sign that shows why you love your park and take a picture of yourself holding the sign while in the park.

Send the photo to ilovemypark@ptny.org and you'll be eligible for outdoor gear from REI. **But hurry - this contest ends Sept. 4!**

 [Niagara Falls improvement plan](#)

Friends groups can use this photo contest to spread the love for their park or historic site. Invite members and volunteers to submit photos. Make it part of the next cleanup day, Friends meeting, nature walk, fundraiser, or other summer event.

[See complete information on contest rules and prizes along with examples of photos.](#)

Summer 2012

 [banner](#)

 [banner](#)

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

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

Friends groups can connect through the [Discussion Forum](#). You can also follow us:



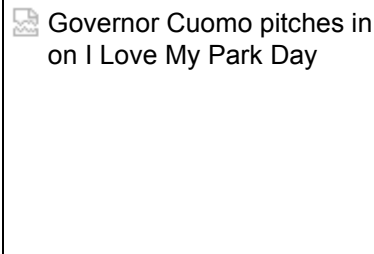
Become a non-profit member

Is your Friends group a member of Parks & Trails New York? PTNY works 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 grows and strengthens.

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State Park visitation soars

The 2011 numbers are in: 58 million people visited New York State Parks and Historic Sites last year. That's second only to California and up 1 million from 2010. So far, 2012 is looking to beat last year's numbers. By the end of May, visitation was up 11% from last year according to State Parks.



Governor Cuomo pitches in on I Love My Park Day

More visitors to parks and historic sites is great news for our state parks system, but also means increased wear and tear on aging facilities and increased maintenance needs on an agency already stretched thin. Upgrades and rehabilitation efforts are happening across the state thanks to Governor Cuomo's NY Works Fund, which supplied the largest infusion of capital funding to state parks in history. PTNY looks forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to keep this momentum going in 2013 and beyond.

Photo: Ric Vrana

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Some of the tools PTNY offers include spearheading [I Love My Park Day](#), publishing the [You Gotta Have Friends](#) eNewsletter, and providing capacity grants and an online [Friends Resource Kit](#). PTNY also gives a voice to Friends groups at the Capitol.

[Become a non-profit organization member of PTNY today!](#)

PTNY in the field

A day at the fair



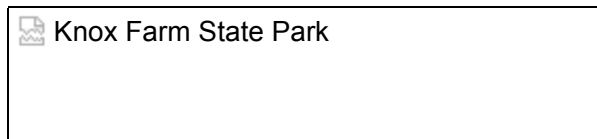
Did you know that the smallest state park in New York is actually part of the [Great New York State Fair](#)? The [State Park at the Fair](#) is a 3-acre sanctuary in the midst of games, competitions, rides, concessions and concerts. If you're headed to the fair, which runs Aug. 23 - Sept. 3, be sure to visit the mini-park, and come by the PTNY exhibit on Sunday, Sept. 2.

Picnic in the park

What better location for a PTNY staff picnic than a state park? This year, PTNY staff spent the afternoon at [Saratoga Spa State Park](#) enjoying lots of good food and a heated game of ladder ball.

New lease on life for Knox Farm buildings

Governor Cuomo signed legislation this summer that authorizes State Parks to enter into agreements with private individuals who are willing to invest private funds to rehabilitate and maintain vacant and at-risk buildings in [Knox Farm State Park](#) near Buffalo. This adds Knox Farm to approximately 50 other properties previously designated by the Legislature as requiring longer term leases in order to attract private funds for repair and rehabilitation efforts. [Read PTNY's memo of support on the bill.](#)



Knox Farm State Park

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Mills Norrie goes organic

A new project will educate the public about healthy foods, agriculture and the history of Hudson Valley farming. State Parks is partnering with The Farm at The Locusts-on-the-Hudson to develop an organic farming project at [Mills-Norrie State Park](#) in Dutchess County.

Moreau Lake State Park Nature Center expansion

The Farm at The Locusts-on-the-Hudson will produce organic crops on 10 acres of the park, restore the historic Huntington Barn, and offer educational programming on agriculture and gardening.

Park visitors will be able to buy produce at the Farm's greenmarket. Produce will also be incorporated into the menu of the Taconic Outdoor Education Center in [Fahnestock State Park](#). [Learn more.](#)

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Dickinson Fire Tower opens at Grafton Lakes



Motorola awards \$30K to State Parks

Environmental education programming is coming to 3,000 underserved students on Long Island thanks to a grant from the Motorola Solutions Foundation. State Parks received \$30,000 as part of Motorola's [Innovation Generation grant program](#). Many school districts across Long Island have been forced to cut environmental classes from their budgets. This grant will enable State Parks to provide hands-on field oriented research courses to kindergarten through 12th grade students from Long Island districts with a high proportion of minorities and girls. [Learn more.](#)

Mile-a-Minute threat

There's a reason the invasive species *Persicaria perfoliata* is better known by the name Mile-a-Minute Vine: the plant has the ability to grow over 6 inches in a day, and up to 20 feet in a year. With such growth, Mile-a-

Thanks in large part to the dedication of the all-volunteer [Friends of Grafton Lakes](#), visitors to [Grafton Lakes State Park](#) can now enjoy panoramic views of the Adirondacks, Green



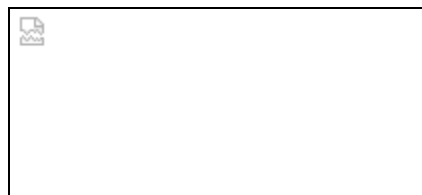
Mountains and Taconic Range. The newly restored Dickinson Hill Fire Tower opened in June and was recently added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey, the Friends, and others were on hand for a [ribbon-cutting ceremony](#).

The Friends, under the leadership of Dick Gibbs, spearheaded the restoration of the 60-foot tower, originally constructed in 1924. The tower was largely rehabbed with volunteer labor and donated materials. ([Read a profile of Dick Gibbs](#) that ran in the Winter 2012 issue of *You Gotta Have Friends*.)

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Ensuring parks are part of regional sustainability planning

Governor Cuomo has set in motion a new regional sustainability planning effort. The initiative is part of the [Cleaner, Greener Communities Program](#), a \$100 million competitive




grant program to encourage communities to develop regional sustainable growth strategies. There are two stages of the program: in stage one, 10 regions of the state will develop comprehensive sustainability plans; in stage two, funding will be provided on a competitive basis for implementation of specific projects that help achieve the goals of the plans.

PTNY is working to ensure that expanding, promoting, and protecting a network of parks (including state parks), trails, and greenways is an integral part of all the regional sustainability plans. All regions will also provide the public with the opportunity to provide input and some have already begun. The [Southern Tier, Capital Region](#) and [Hudson Valley](#), for example, all have interactive websites where the public can comment on draft goals or suggest specific strategies. [Contact your regional planning team](#) and find out how you can get involved.

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Minute is an aggressive plant that is out-competing native species wherever it takes hold. To complicate matters further, it produces voluminous quantities of seeds that can remain viable in the soil for up to seven years.

 **Mile-a-Minute**
invasive species

The Mile-a-Minute vine has a unique combination of traits that make it fairly easy to identify:

1. Trangle-shaped leaves.
2. Downward facing barbs or prickles on the vine and underside of leaves.
3. Ocrea (saucer-shaped leaves) that surround stem at nodes (branching points).

The [Mile-a-Minute Project](#) of the Hudson Valley, based out of Bear Mountain State Park, was set up in 2005 to stop the spread and eliminate existing populations of this invasive vine. You can help this project by identifying sites infested with this invasive. If you have any information relating to a site you believe may harbor this plant, please [contact](#) the Mile-a-Minute project. [Learn more about this plant and how to correctly identify it.](#)

LWCF dropped from transportation bill in final hours

The House and Senate finally passed a new two-year federal surface transportation bill in June that will have a profoundly negative effect on funding for trails, bicycling and walking. The bill cuts funding for Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School, and Recreational Trails programs by 40%. Plus, these programs, which previously benefitted from dedicated funding, must now compete for funding with programs such as environmental mitigation and boulevard construction, and states now have the ability to opt-out of funding for Recreation Trails.

Another disappointment was the removal of Land and Water Conservation (LWCF) funding as part of the final conference deal. The Senate version of the transportation bill had provided \$700 million of dedicated funding for the LWCF over the next two years. The House bill did not include the provision. In the final hours of negotiation, the LWCF provision was traded for the removal of the House's XL Pipeline and coal ash demands.

The [LWCF Coalition](#), of which PTNY is a member, had secured tremendous bi-partisan support in both houses for the LWCF provision and more than 1,000 organizations, businesses, and groups from all 50 states had signed on to a letter in support of the provision.

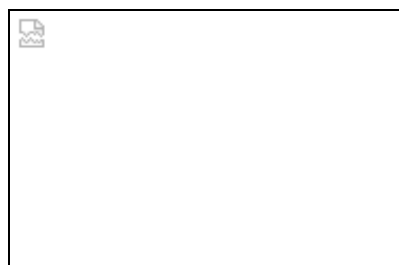
While we are disappointed that LWCF funding was not part of the final negotiated deal, PTNY and the LWCF Coalition will continue to work with a growing list of bipartisan congressional supporters to secure funding for LWCF.

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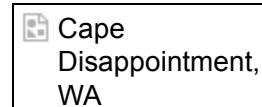
A new way to tour parks and historic sites

It's a sign of the times, and also a whole new way to explore state parks and historic sites: cell phone audio tours. By placing a call to a designated phone number, you begin an audio tour. By entering into your phone a trail marker number, you'll hear information about where you are and what you're seeing.

Several cell phone audio tours are now in place at New York State Parks. The [Friends of Connetquot](#) are behind an "[OnCell Walking Tour](#)" of [Connetquot River State Park Preserve](#) on Long Island. Visitors can



Western state parks face uncertain future



Cape Disappointment, WA

State park systems in other parts of the country continue to face severe budget cuts, even the entire elimination of state funding. In [Washington](#), all state parks must begin operating with no state funding in 2013. The primary source of funding is to be the new Discover Pass parking permit; however, the permit has brought in less than half the funds expected during the last year. This has left it up to the parks - and the Friends groups that support them - to figure out what to do. In [Wyoming](#), state parks face a possible 8% budget cut in fiscal year 2014 due to continued fiscal constraints.

Capacity grants coming soon

PTNY's [Growing the Grassroots](#) capacity-building grants have helped dozens of park and trail groups strengthen their organizations. The next round of applications will be announced on

learn about the history behind the landmarks of the park, the various bridges along the trails, and other spots. (See [volunteer profile](#) for more on how it came about.) Park-goers in the Hudson Valley can enjoy a "Talkway Over the Hudson," a 21-stop audio tour of the [Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Site](#).

Photo: Ohio State House

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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](#).

I Love My Park Day sprouts Friends garden club

On [I Love My Park Day](#) in May, volunteers from around the state gave back to the parks and historic sites they love by rolling up their sleeves and pitching in with needed projects. In many cases, the outpouring of support on that day spurred ongoing efforts to improve and enhance the parks.

That's the case at [John Boyd Thacher State Park](#) near Albany. Several members of the [Friends of Thacher and Thompson's Lake State Park](#) worked with park staff to plan a project for [I Love My Park Day](#) involving replanting park planters along the road through the park. An army of volunteers showed up on [I Love My Park Day](#) and the planters were all redone and weeded to perfection.

"It was from this causal group and phone calls that a very spontaneous idea happened," says Friends member Bonnie Schaller. "Wouldn't it be nice to have a garden club to keep up all the work that we had just done? We all said sure!"

Park Manager Chris Fallon gave the idea a big thumbs up and the first meeting of the garden club was held at the park's nature center followed by its first work days in June. Despite the hard work, the volunteers all enjoy giving back to the park.

Schodack Island anniversary bash a success

More than 1,900 visitors came out for the 10th anniversary celebration of [Schodack Island State Park](#), just across the

September 18. Be on the lookout for an email, or [visit our website](#) for updates.

Dates to remember

Sept. 4: Deadline to enter [I Love My Park Because](#) photo contest.

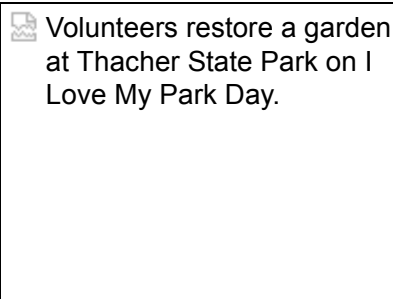
Sept. 29: [National Public Lands Day](#). Organize an event or participate in one as part of the nation's largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands.

May 4, 2013: Save the date for [I Love My Park Day 2013!](#) More info coming soon!

Resources for Friends groups

Every month the NYS Assembly publishes [Grants Action News](#), providing Information on available state, federal and private grants. The newsletter also includes a list of upcoming workshops. [Sign up to receive the newsletter via email](#) or request to receive mailed copies by writing: Grants Action News, New York State Assembly, Alfred E. Smith Building, 80 S. Swan Street, Suite 1710, Albany, NY 12248. [Read the latest issue](#).

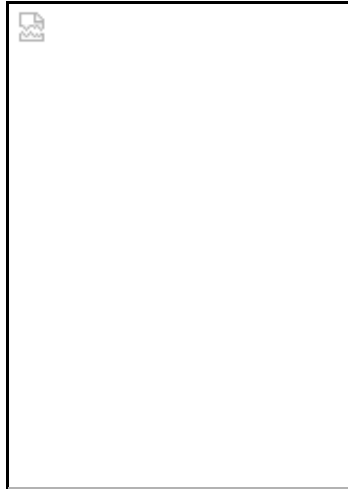
You Gotta Have Tips: Reaching



Volunteers restore a garden at Thacher State Park on I Love My Park Day.

Hudson River and south of Albany. The event, organized by the [Friends of Schodack Island](#) and park staff, included a rededication of the park, live music, food vendors, entertainment, games, historical displays, and outdoor recreation and safety demonstrations. A fireworks display over the Hudson River concluded the festivities. [Watch YNN Channel's news report on the event.](#)

The activities and entertainment offered in the park, other than normal park entrance fees and food and beverage vending, were provided free to the public. These and other event costs were met by the Friends through the sale of advertising in a 32-page printed souvenir program. A total of \$7,300 was raised. In addition to advertising, the program included information on the day's activities, feature stories, and information about the park and how to join the Friends.



The Friends and park staff were able to meet several important goals in undertaking this successful event, including: making some lasting park improvements, thanking the community for years of past support, and introducing the park to new visitors. The event would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of local fire companies and law enforcement agencies, the NYS Department of Transportation, other municipal and state government agencies, as well as many local businesses, community organizations, and individuals who provided "in-kind" services.

Friends of Midway recognized

The Chautauqua County Legislature recently paid special recognition to the work of the [Friends of Midway State Park](#). The Legislature passed a commendation giving "special applause" to the Friends for their work in support of [Midway State Park](#), including the revival of July 4th fireworks, restoration of the Chautauqua Choo-Choo miniature train, acquisition and exhibition of a restored 1957 Pony Tractor vintage ride, money raised toward the restoration of the 1946 Herschell Carousel (\$4,000 so far), and overall efforts to raise interest in the long-term restoration and beautification of the park. Kudos!

Friends of East River ride the waves

The newly formed [Friends of East River State Park](#) is already bringing enhancements to [East River State Park](#) in Brooklyn. The Friends recently secured a donation of two large wave bike

out to the media

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



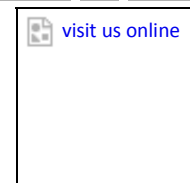
Newspaper, radio and television coverage is invaluable in generating public awareness of your group, your park or historic site, and your events or projects. If your organization has not yet done much media outreach, an upcoming event - such as a cleanup day or a fundraiser - is a good opportunity to introduce your organization to the media.

[Keep reading for steps your organization can take to begin to cultivate relationships with the media.](#)

Visit us on-line at
www.ptny.org

Check out our [blog](#)

Connect with us



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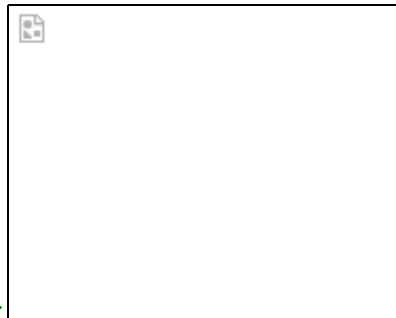
(fax) 427-0067

www.ptny.org ptny@ptny.org

From l-r: Vince Horrigan (Chautauqua County Legislator), Bob Wooler (Friends President), Kevin McNallie (Lake Erie State Park Manager), Kate Gross (Long Point and Midway State Park Manager), Brad Whitcomb (Allegheny Regional Director), Lori Cornell (Chautauqua County Legislator), Bill Locke (Friends Board Member)

racks. The bike racks, donated by [Brooklyn Flea](#), were added to the 7th Street entrance adjacent to the Brooklyn Smorgasburg and Flea weekend venue, where cyclists have arrived en masse this summer.

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From l-r : Dan Przestrzelski and Pawel Szulinski, park staff; Andrew Bogardt, Park Manager; Pedro De Los Santos and Eric Demby, Brooklyn Flea

That's What Friends Are For Volunteer Profile: Richard Remmer

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.

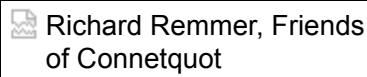
With nearly 3,500 acres of land and water abundant with wildlife, 50 miles of hiking, horseback riding, cross-country ski and nature trails, as well as fishing on the Connetquot River, the [Connetquot River State Park Preserve](#) on the south shore of Long Island is an outdoor enthusiast's dream.

"I had first been to the property when I was 8 years old, in 1963, and fell in love with the fishing, the history, the ecology and the sense of wildness," remembers Richard Remmer. "My passion is fly fishing, both in fresh and saltwater. I have caught all types of

fish on a fly rod, from trout to Blue Marlin and it all started almost 50 years ago at Connetquot."

Richard first became active in the [Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve](#) when he joined the board in 1998, and he's been making things happen at the park ever since.

One project has been the restoration of the Nicoll Grist Mill, constructed between 1697 and 1751.

 Richard Remmer, Friends of Connetquot

Richard Remmer

[Keep reading about Richard Remmer and the Friends of Connetquot River State Park Preserve.](#)

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 Earthshare logo

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.

