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Dear Friend:

Earlier this summer, I had the pleasure of spending time with both the [Friends of Philipse Manor Hall](#) in Yonkers and the [Friends of Caleb Smith Preserve](#) on Long Island, the two groups selected for the inaugural year of PTNY's [Park Friends Technical Assistance Program](#). Like many of you, these organizations are made up of dedicated volunteers who have a passion for place, history and nature.

Over the next year, I will be working with both Friends groups on increasing and engaging members and volunteers, communications, fundraising planning, and board development to strengthen their organizations and, ultimately, their efforts in support of these two treasured places.

PTNY strives in its work to strengthen all park Friends groups. I hope this eNewsletter - along with [all the resources](#) we offer Friends groups - provides you with tips, resources, and encouragement in your work to protect and promote the special place in your community. Or, if you're not already involved with a Friends group, maybe you'll find the inspiration to get involved.

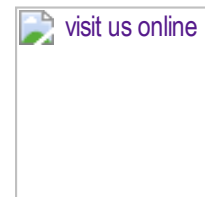
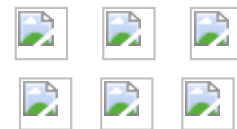
Summer 2013



Celebrating more than 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 of PTNY

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



Best regards,

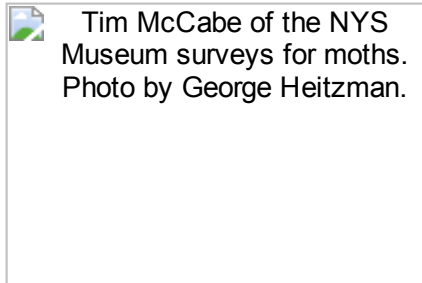


Laura DiBetta
Director, Parks Program & Government Relations

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BioBlitz on I Love My Park Day a huge success

During this year's [I Love My Park Day](#), small teams of scientific professionals and experts from several organizations took part in an exciting new initiative at two New York State Parks. The goal was to document as many animal, plant and insect species and communities as possible while looking for rare species during a 24-hour inventory of the parks' biodiversity. The BioBlitz took place at [Taconic State Park](#) in the Hudson Valley and [Schodack Island State Park](#), located just south of Albany. The teams were coordinated by the [NY Natural Heritage Program](#).



Tim McCabe of the NYS Museum surveys for moths. Photo by George Heitzman.

The BioBlitz was a huge success at both parks. At Taconic State Park, a total of at least 493 plants and animals and 12 significant natural communities was documented. This includes rare species such as the Violet Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis violacea*), the protected timber rattlesnake, and a female Four-toed Salamander (*Hemidactylium scutatum*). The results at Schodack were also impressive: 273 plants and animals and 4 significant natural communities were documented. A rare and threatened plant, Yellow Giant-hyssop (*Agastache nepetoides*, S2S3, G5) was discovered in the park.

The valuable work of the volunteer teams on I Love My Park Day will help the state's efforts to document rare species and natural communities in State Parks, as well as the wealth of biodiversity our park system protects and supports.

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PTNY capacity grants coming soon

enhance advocacy efforts. With continued economic constraints, it is more important than ever that the network of Friends groups grows and strengthens.

Some of the tools PTNY offers include spearheading [I Love My Park Day](#), publishing the *You Gotta Have Friends* eNewsletter, and providing [capacity grants](#), [technical assistance](#) 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!](#)

Are you on our list of over 60 Friends Groups?

PTNY has a [list of over 60 Friends groups](#) that work with parks in New York. Make sure your group is on the list of Friends! Contact [Laura DiBetta](#) to add your Friends group to the list.

You really gotta have Friends!

Vibrant park friends groups are crucial to our state park system! Read a great [article](#) on the [Friends of Saratoga Spa State Park](#). And read our [letter to the editor](#) encouraging more volunteers and supporters to get involved in parks.

PTNY parks program and Friends resources

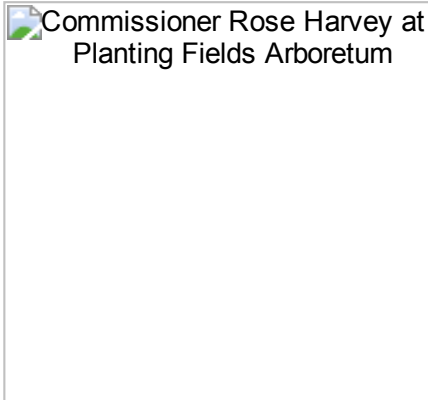
PTNY was founded in 1985 to be an advocate for the state park system. More than 25 years later we are still at it. Our [parks program](#) - including groundbreaking reports,

Watch for the September edition of PTNY's [E-News](#) for information on [Growing the Grassroots](#) capacity-building grants.

PTNY's Growing the Grassroots grants enhance the long-term sustainability of park and trail not-for-profit organizations by helping them better fulfill their missions; improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact; leverage resources; and increase community support for and involvement in park and trail planning, development and/or stewardship. [Learn more.](#)

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NY Works improvements continue



Commissioner Rose Harvey at Planting Fields Arboretum

Commissioner Rose Harvey at Planting Fields Arboretum

Several projects across the state are moving forward thanks to New York Works funding. At [Letchworth](#) and [Hamlin Beach](#) State Parks, new campground and cabin improvements were [completed](#). On Long Island, a new 3,500-square-foot [sensory garden and entrance pavilion](#) will soon provide visitors of [Planting Fields Arboretum](#) with new ways to enjoy nature while also providing accessibility for the disabled. Golf courses at state parks across New York are also

getting a [boost](#), with \$2.6 million slated for enhancements.

These projects are part of a total of \$179 million in total funding - \$90 million in 2013-14 and \$89 million in 2012-13 - committed by the Governor and Legislature through the NY Works initiative to rehabilitate [dozens](#) of state parks and historic sites across the state, addressing a backlog of capital needs and spurring job creation and economic development.

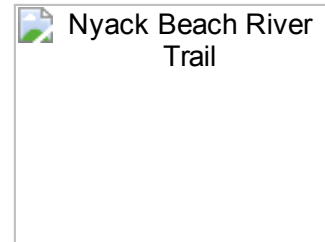
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Midwestern, other state parks struggle

While the news for New York State Parks has been positive for the last two years thanks to a supportive Governor and Legislature, state parks in other parts of the country are not faring as well. Infrastructure backlogs plague aging systems in states with shrinking budgets. More and more, states are reducing general support for state parks and turning to fees and

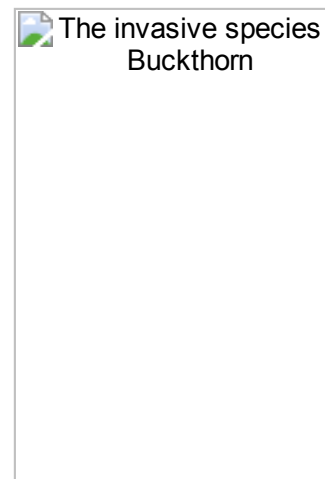
advocacy, and the hugely successful I Love My Park Day - is an effective voice for state parks in the Capitol and around the state. We have also developed a suite of [resources for Friends groups](#). [Learn more](#) about our parks program and resources for Friends groups

Parks continue post-Sandy recovery



Nearly one year after Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on New York, state parks continue to make progress toward recovery. [Nyack Beach State Park](#) was among the state parks hit hard by the storm. The River Trail from Rockland Lake to Nyack Beach has just reopened. Crews have been working 10-hour days six days a week in order to complete park improvements. [Read more.](#)

Invasive species strike team



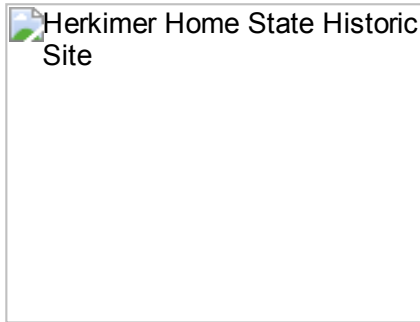
Did you know that State Parks

other funding mechanisms. In Kansas, for example, no general state tax dollars are going toward state parks this year. [Read more.](#)

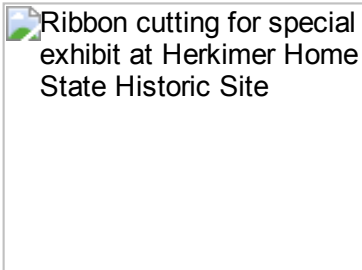
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Park Profiles: Herkimer Home State Historic Site

Located just off the Erie Canalway Trail and banks of the Mohawk River in Little Falls, the [Herkimer Home State Historic Site](#) offers visitors a glimpse into life in the 1700s. The Georgian-style mansion was the home to [General Nicholas Herkimer](#), a Revolutionary War hero. He completed construction of his mansion in about 1764 in the Mohawk Valley frontier.



The site remains remarkably unchanged from that time and provides visitors the chance to see the Herkimer [family burial ground](#), an 18th century [kitchen garden](#), and a [root cellar](#). The site also includes a visitor center with exhibits and audio tour.



This year marks the 100th anniversary of the acquisition of Herkimer Home State Historic Site. Earlier this month, that anniversary was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a special

exhibit that was installed in the mansion (see photo).

The future looks bright for the site; a mansion restoration and refurbishment is planned as well as interactive exhibits that will showcase the history of the property through modern technology.

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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.](#)

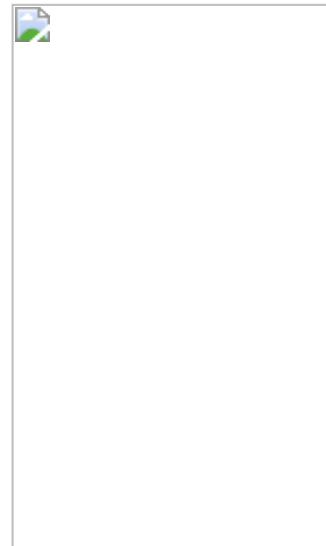
Reason to celebrate (times two) at Old Croton Aqueduct

has a statewide invasive species strike team? The four-member strike team was in [John Boyd Thacher State Park](#) in early July, working to remove the non-native Common Buckthorn tree from its roots which will prevent any future intrusive growth along the park's popular Escarpment Trail. The project will improve the park's Bird Conservation area - specifically hawk habitat - as well as improve the view for visitors.

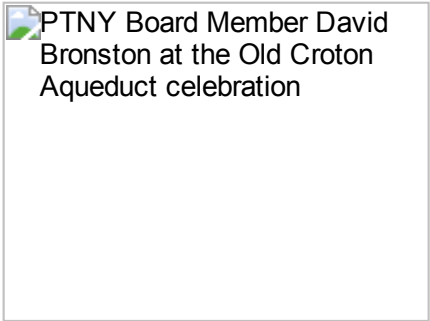
The dense growth of buckthorn, a small tree, blocks visitors' view over the escarpment, the main reason for the park's original development, and prevents the growth of larger trees which hawks and other raptors use for habitation and as shields while hunting for food. [Learn more.](#)

How to write an annual fundraising appeal

Suffering from writer's block? Check out this [infographic](#) to help get that annual fundraising appeal letter started and for tips on how to ensure it's as effective as possible.



Public comment



PTNY Board Member David Bronston at the Old Croton Aqueduct celebration

There was double the reason to celebrate last month for the [Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct](#). The Friends celebrated both the completion of preservation work on the Old Croton Aqueduct at the Double Arch Bridge and the Bicentennial of the Village of Ossining. Friends,

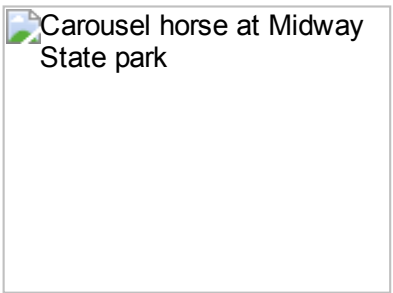
elected officials, park staff, and others - including PTNY board member [David Bronston](#) (pictured in middle) - delivered remarks to honor the occasion.

Friends of the Letchworth awarded national grant

The [Friends of Letchworth](#) was one of 25 organizations from across the country selected to receive a [Every Day Capacity Building Grant](#) from the [National Environmental Education Foundation](#). Over 160 organizations applied for this national grant sponsored by Toyota. The Friends received a \$3,000 grant for office equipment, software and training to send e-newsletters, track and acknowledge donations, recruit volunteers, and manage membership and volunteer interests. Congratulations to the Friends!

Trains and horses and carousels, oh my!

The [Friends of Midway](#) have had a busy summer making [progress](#) on several projects in Chautauqua Lake's [Midway State Park](#), one of the oldest continually operating amusement parks in the nation.



Carousel horse at Midway State park

Following two seasons of restoration work, the park's beloved Chautauqua Choo-Choo returned to the park and is again circling the perimeter just as it has each summer for the past six decades. Then, in less than four weeks, the Friends were able to secure sponsors for all 30 of the 1946

Herschell Carousel horses so that they can add colors for saddles, tack, trim, accents, and manes and tails.

The Friends show no sign of slowing down; up next is a new train station for 2014.

Incentive to volunteer at Ganondagan

How to increase volunteer engagement is a question all Friends groups grapple with. The [Friends of Ganondagan](#) are trying something new that may prove to be a model for other sites. The Friends have partnered with State Parks to provide a special opportunity for volunteers helping to remove the invasive Pale Swallow-Wort plant from the [Historic Site](#). To encourage volunteers for this project, Ganondagan is offering

opportunities

State Parks recently kicked off a planning process for the [Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park](#) and is seeking input from the public on the development of a master plan. A Public Information Meeting Packet is available on State Parks' [website](#). Written comments and suggestions may be submitted by August 23, 2013 to: Mark Hohengasser, Park Planner, OPRHP - Planning Bureau, 625 Broadway, 2nd floor, Albany, NY 12207, or submitted via [email](#).

A similar [process](#) has also begun for [Keuka Lake State Park](#) in the Finger Lakes. An open house is scheduled for August 23 from 3PM to 8PM in the park pavilion, with staff presentations on the park and master plan process at 3, 5, and 7PM. An information packet is available [online](#). Written comments will be accepted until September 27, 2013, and may be [emailed](#) or sent to: Salim Chishti, OPRHP - Planning Bureau, 625 Broadway, 2nd floor, Albany, NY 12207.

Dates to remember

August 23: Comments due on Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Site master plan process. [More info](#).

September: [Growing the Grassroots](#) capacity-building grants announcement

September 27: Comments due on Keuka Lake State Park master plan process. [More info](#).

September 28: [National Public Lands Day](#)

Save the date! May 3, 2014: [I Love My Park Day 2014](#)

those volunteering at least 20 hours before October 1 the opportunity for an overnight in its 17th-century bark longhouse replica, accompanied by a guest of their choosing. This is a rare opportunity for individuals and families as well as school groups or scout troops.

"Many kids we met at the Ganondagan's Dance and Music Festival were excited about the overnight because they had just finished a Native American unit in school," said Whitney Carleton, resident site aide from State Parks. "Providing this kind of a hands-on learning experience is a great incentive for such an important cause."

Ganondagan interpretive staff will supervise the overnight, facilitating traditional Native storytelling, teaching and playing Native games, and making s'mores on the fire outside the longhouse.

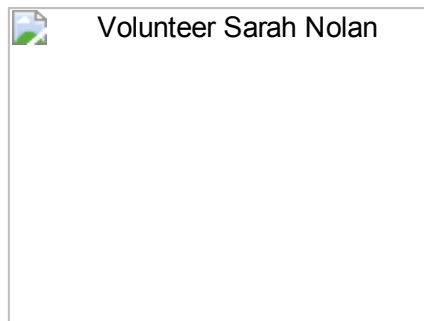
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That's What Friends Are For

Volunteer Profile: Sarah Nolan

Volunteers are essential to our state parks and historic sites. That's What Friends Are For, in which we profile a dedicated volunteer, is a regular feature in You Gotta Have Friends.

When it comes to volunteering, Sarah Nolan proves that it pays to start 'em young. Sarah has been volunteering at [Clermont State Historic Site](#) for 11 years now (since her mother first started working at the site), making her 9 years old at the time. Her mom, Roberta Nolan, is the site's administrative assistant and wedding coordinator.

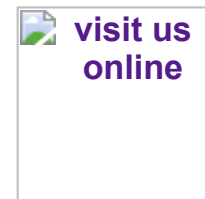


Sarah returned to Clermont this spring to plant flowers around Clermont's road sign on Route 9G.

"My involvement with Clermont started at a very young age," recalls Sarah. "My mom had just been hired there as a housekeeper. When she would work there, she would bring my sister, Molly, and me to the house and we'd help her clean. It was a lot of fun for the both of us, and a good way to pass the time."

For three summers Sarah was an energetic camper at Clermont State Historic Site's History Camp. Sarah had such a memorable experience at camp she decided to become a volunteer. Over the years, Sarah has volunteered at dozens of site events. She staffed the craft tent at many [Chancellor's Sheep & Wool Festivals](#), Dog Days, and summer Sunset Concerts. Sarah can be found scooping ice cream on

Visit the State Parks website:



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Independence Day and carving pumpkins at Halloween.

[Read more about Sarah Nolan and Clermont.](#)

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You Gotta Have Tips: Strategic Planning

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

 Strategic planning is like chess

Strategic planning can sound like an intimidating process, but it doesn't have to be. It's a worthwhile endeavor for any nonprofit of any size, in particular for setting clear goals and priorities for the organization. It's also a great way to engage new

and veteran board members and others in the community and generate creative ideas for moving the organization forward.

You might think you have to hire an expensive consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process. While there are many pluses to hiring an outside consultant to lead such a process, such as maintaining neutrality, a do-it-yourself approach to strategic planning can also be effective in helping the organization lay out a multi-year plan without breaking the bank.

[Keep reading about strategic planning.](#)

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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.earthshareny.org.

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