



2018 Legislative Priorities



About Parks & Trails New York

Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide organization working to preserve and enhance a network of parks, trails and greenways for all New Yorkers for generations to come. Since 1985, we have been dedicated to improving our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space.

Parks & Trails New York has worked with hundreds of community organizations and municipalities to envision, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks and more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, and trails throughout New York State. Our influential reports and advocacy efforts have been critical to keeping parks and historic sites open and protecting New York's natural, recreational, cultural and historical resources.

For more information, visit www.ptny.org.



29 Elk Street
Albany, NY 12207
518-434-1583
www.ptny.org

Keeping the Momentum Going

From beach parks on Long Island to waterfalls in the Finger Lakes to the cross-state Erie Canalway Trail—and hundreds of other parks and trails throughout the state—New York’s outdoor destinations are significant economic drivers and critical contributors to community health and sustainability.



*Robin Dropkin
Executive Director
Parks & Trails New York*

Thanks to the commitment of the Governor and Legislature, state parks, under the visionary NY Parks 2020 plan, are in the midst of an unprecedented renaissance, with six straight years of significant capital funding to build and restore visitor centers, bath houses and other critical infrastructure.

The state’s multi-use trail system, providing vital connections to parks, historic sites, and communities, has been buoyed by a historic \$200 million investment to create the Empire State Trail. By 2020, New York’s trail network will be second to none, with a completed Erie Canalway Trail, Champlain Canalway Trail, and Hudson River Greenway, linked to form a 750-mile super trail. Closing the Gaps has been a priority for PTNY for more than a decade. Now, we see that dream coming to fruition, and then some!

Let’s also keep moving on efforts to slow climate change. After it was announced that the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord, Governor Cuomo formed the U.S. Climate Alliance with Governors from 14 states and Puerto Rico. As a founding member, New York is at the forefront of efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.

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 the protection, promotion and enhancement of parks, trails and greenways, and to ensure that these treasures are an integral part of the state’s economic, transportation, health, and environmental strategies.

State Parks

Protect and revitalize state parks for future generations

- Support NY Parks 2020 investment with an annual capital appropriation of at least \$90 million to restore and rebuild state parks' aging and dilapidated infrastructure.
- Begin to put OPRHP's operations budget on an upward trajectory so that, through more comprehensive annual stewardship and maintenance, our state parks and historic sites can more fully realize their potential as safe and well-maintained destinations for park visitors 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.
- Support funding in the EPF or other sources for developing and enhancing additional multi-use trails.
- 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, which fund many local park and trail projects; and state land stewardship and public access to state 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 from \$500,000 to \$1 million annually. This will enable the matching grant program to reach more recipients, especially now that both OPRHP and DEC groups are eligible.
- Include \$3 million for multi-use trail projects.
- Provide state agencies responsible for administering the EPF and implementing important programs that protect our shared environment and public health with sustainable funding to perform their needed tasks.

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 a majority of road 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.
- Bring greater transparency to the NYS Department of Transportation's capital planning process to increase accountability and encourage a more equitable distribution of funding among all travel modes, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.



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 oppose proposed cuts of percent.
 - » Make permanent the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant program to provide funding 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.
- Develop roll-on service for bicycles on Amtrak trains, supporting trail-related tourism.
- Implement a national Complete Streets standard.
- Improve the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians by including specific goals and performance measures in Federal transportation funding bills.
- Support new funding mechanisms for Complete Streets and encourage funding equity in low-income communities.
- Support the work of the U.S. Climate Alliance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet and possibly exceed their portion of U.S. commitment under the Paris Agreement.



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