



## PRESS RELEASE

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**Parks & Trails New York Applauds Governor Cuomo and State Legislature for Significant Funding for Environment and Parks**

***Investment in State Parks and the Environmental Protection Fund Underscores New York's Environmental Leadership***

ALBANY, NY (April 3, 2018)— Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) today praised Governor Andrew Cuomo and members of the State Legislature for their extraordinary leadership in supporting state parks and protecting clean water and other vital shared green spaces. The 2018-19 state budget agreement secures New York's position as a national leader in the protection of natural resources, and the advancement of tourism and outdoor recreation.

The agreement includes \$90 million in critical funding for capital projects for the New York State park system, and \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), including an increase for state land stewardship to \$32.6 million, and \$500,000 for the Park & Trail Partnership Program, a grant program for grassroots Friends organizations. The Park and Trail Partnership Program supports projects that strengthen Friends Groups and enhance public access and recreational opportunities at parks and historic sites across the state. The EPF also includes another \$1 million for the Connect Kids to Parks Program that reimburses transportation costs for school children visiting the many state parks, historic sites and other environmental education facilities.

“We are in the midst of an unprecedented revitalization of the State Parks system, thanks to a multi-year \$900 million capital commitment from the Governor and Legislature,” said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of PTNY. “The State's support for the Environmental Protection Fund, including grants for grassroots Friends Groups, perfectly complements these investments. The capacity-building grants enable groups to leverage other sources of funding, marshal more volunteer power, and augment the State's historic investment in parks. We look forward to seeing the transformational results from these innovative and important projects.”

More than 700 park improvement and enhancement projects have been completed, or are currently underway, at 176 parks and historic sites in every region of the state thanks to the Governor's NY Parks 2020 initiative. The \$90 million in State Parks capital funding included in the final budget agreement includes \$15 million to transform a former landfill into a 407-acre state park in Jamaica Bay (Brooklyn). These funds will also continue to address the \$1 billion backlog in infrastructure needs and critical health and safety repairs, such as replacing aging water, sewer and electrical systems, rehabilitating restrooms, and repairing bridges, roads, pools, as well as modernizing visitor experience, which will promote tourism, and enhance the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

***Parks & Trails New York** is the leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving the health and quality of life of all New Yorkers by working with community organizations and municipalities to envision, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks, greenways and trails throughout the state for all to use and enjoy.*

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