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Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Parks & Trails New York. Don't forget to add ptny@ptny.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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## Protect parks and trails from hydro-fracking

### Deadline for comments to DEC - January 11

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) released a revised [Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement](#) along with [Proposed High-Volume Hydraulic Fracturing Regulations](#) in September and is accepting comments on both until **January 11**. While the proposed regulations include a recommendation that surface drilling be banned on state-owned lands -- including parks and trails -- oil and gas lobbyists are calling on the Governor and the state to rescind the ban.

[PTNY has submitted its comments to the DEC](#). Now we need your help. [Tell DEC](#) to uphold the public trust and keep fracking out of parks and trails.

PTNY's comments call on the state to:

- Uphold the ban on surface drilling on state-owned lands, extend the ban to all public recreation lands, and prohibit leasing of public recreation lands for sub-surface drilling;
- Create buffers around public recreation lands;
- Analyze the full impact on the tourism and recreation industry;
- Analyze and address public and environmental health impacts;
- Address impacts on statewide plans including NYS's Open Space Conservation Plan; and
- Analyze fracking impacts comprehensively and cumulatively through the creation of a multi-agency commission.

## Parks get boost from state leaders

## JANUARY 2012

MAKE A DONATION

BECOME A MEMBER

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

### Register for 2012 Bike Tours

### Cycling the Erie Canal July 8-15

Everyone's heard about it. This is the year to be part of it. Join PTNY for the 14th annual [Cycling the Erie Canal](#) bike tour. Meet people from all over the world while getting to know the Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany on this 8-day, 400-mile ride.

**Great Hudson Valley  
Pedal  
July 31-August 5**

Governor Cuomo's State of the State address included some exciting news for the state park system. He announced improvements to 48 state parks and historic sites, which are visited annually by 37 million people, as part of the \$1 billion Infrastructure Investment Act announced in December.

While full details are yet to come on these initiatives, PTNY applauds the administration and legislative leaders for recognizing the strong connection between economic vitality and outdoor recreational opportunities.

PTNY's report, [The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State](#), showed that parks annually contribute \$1.9 billion to the state's economy - a five-to one return on investment.

Read our letter to the editor in the [Buffalo News](#) and [Syracuse Post Standard](#) about the inclusion of parks in the new \$1 billion state Infrastructure Investment Act.

## Progress in plugging Canalway Trail gaps



Albany and Buffalo.

A new report from PTNY and the Canalway Trails Association New York (CTANY) cites the [progress being made](#) to close the five remaining gaps in the 365-mile Erie Canalway Trail connecting

[Closing the Gaps: A Progress Report on the Erie Canalway Trail](#) notes that the campaign to "Close the Gaps," initiated by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand in the fall of 2010, has generated dramatically renewed interest in completing the trail among citizens, community leaders, and elected officials at all levels of government. In 2011, more than 200 persons participated in roundtables in Syracuse, Lockport, Utica, and Clyde. Each roundtable has spawned local follow up meetings and a number of working groups focused on discovering "out of the box" solutions to the unique challenges associated with discrete segments of the larger trail gaps.

While no new trail was opened in 2011, the City of Rome and Schenectady County each received NYS Canal Corporation grants to close more than three miles of trail gaps. The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council also launched a study to explore options for a 12-mile trail route through the City of Syracuse.

## Who's on the Canalway Trail?

Experience five fabulous bridge crossings, art museums, historic riverfront mansions, wineries and more on the 8th annual [Great Hudson Valley Pedal](#), a six-day, 200-mile ride from Albany to NYC.

### PTNY partners with Adirondack Rail-Trail group

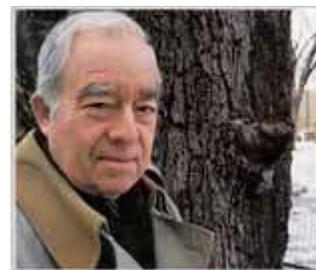
PTNY is working with the [Adirondack Recreational Trail Advocates](#) (ARTA) to advance a multi-use trail between Lake Placid and Tupper Lake. [Read the latest](#) about the project.

### Do you appreciate the information in our monthly e-news?

Then please [support PTNY](#) so we can continue bringing you the most timely and useful news about New York's parks and trails.

We can't do it without you!

### A Great Loss - "Connie" Sidamon-Eristoff



We sadly note the recent passing of a giant of environmental conservation, Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff, 81, a long-time member of PTNY's Advisory Council.

## Report cites Erie County section for record-setting visitation

In August and early September volunteers stationed along the Erie Canalway Trail tallied the number of walkers, cyclists, joggers, and other users as part of the seventh annual Canalway Trail Count. This year's Count revisited the popular Sims Store and Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct sites in Camillus east of Syracuse and two new sites -- Henpeck Park in the Town of Greece near Rochester and Niawanda Park in the City of Tonawanda in Erie County.



Using the [National Bike and Pedestrian Documentation Project](#) methodology, PTNY produced annual use estimates for each site. While all four locations exhibited significant use, Tonawanda's Niawanda Park far exceeded expectations. Located between the Niagara River and a residential area, this portion of the Canalway Trail set the record for the highest traffic estimate for any portion of the Trail--605,000 users annually. This is more than double the amount determined in 2010 at Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct, the previous record holder.

A complete analysis of this year's trail count can be found in the 2011 edition of [Who's on the Canalway Trail?](#)

## Park and historic site Friends get together



More than 60 state park and historic site enthusiasts from Friends groups in the Saratoga/Capital Region met at [Saratoga Spa State Park](#) in December. Like the three gatherings held across the state in October, this meeting was an opportunity for networking and information sharing. Participants

exchanged ideas and discussed ways to build capacity and to work more collaboratively to promote the park system.

## Keeping the conversation going

Members of state park and historic site Friends groups can now keep the conversation going all year long. PTNY has started an online discussion forum for Friends organizations across the state to communicate with each other - sharing ideas, asking advice, learning from one another and building the strength of

A lifelong New Yorker, Mr. Sidamon-Eristoff was a tremendously influential force for environmental protection at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as in the nonprofit sector, having served under NYC Mayor John Lindsay, three governors, and the senior President Bush. In the 1990s, he became chairman of Audubon New York, the first state office of the National Audubon Society

## Thank you to our Green Partner - E.T. Techtonics



[E.T. Techtonics](#) specializes in the design and construction of lightweight, maintenance-free fiberglass pedestrian and trail bridges and boardwalk structures. Components are designed to be person-portable (weighing less than 90 lbs. each) and assembled with standard hand tools. The company's fiberglass bridge system can easily be constructed by volunteer groups.

E.T. Techtonics has been a sponsor of PTNY conferences since 2005. Thank you E.T. Techtonics!

## Read the new issue of Canalway Trail Times

our parks movement. [Join the discussion today](#) (once there, click on "Join this group" in the right-hand column).

## Copenhagen trail starts the New Year on a great note

Nearly 40 people braved sub-zero temperatures to attend the first public meeting for the Munger's Mills Trail in the Lewis County [Village of Copenhagen](#) on January 3rd. The Copenhagen Trail Committee presented the first concepts for the 1.5-mile loop trail, which will use village sidewalks, a utility line, and school grounds to connect to a Village-owned parcel on the Deer River that will serve as a trailhead and gateway park.

PTNY's Elijah Yearick was on-hand to assist the committee and to dispel some common concerns voiced by the citizens. PTNY has been working with Copenhagen since 2010 as part of its [Healthy Trails, Healthy People](#) program.

Along with the fantastic interest of the residents, the project has been garnering the attention of local [press](#) and [media](#) outlets.

## Parks and trails receive funding through Regional Economic Development Councils

PTNY has worked hard to establish that parks and trails are good for the economy. And we're succeeding. Many park and trail projects, as well as canalway and historic preservation projects, were funded through the Regional Economic Development Councils initiative, which distributed \$785 million statewide to drive economic growth and create jobs.



As part of the Regional Council process, a Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) was created to give businesses and organizations streamlined and expedited access to economic development funding from nine state agencies and 29 existing programs.

Find out which [park, trail, canalway, and historic preservation projects](#) were funded. View [all the awards](#) here.

## Mark your Calendars!



Learn more about the Close the Gaps Campaign, Canalway Trail Count, Adopt-a-Trail groups, and other Canalway Trail news in the Winter issue of [Canalway Trail Times](#).

## City of Albany supports walkway over Hudson River Rail Road Bridge



After a December 19th hearing at which PTNY's Martin Daley made a [presentation](#), Albany's [Common Council](#) passed a [resolution](#) that if the Livingston Avenue [Railroad Bridge](#) be reconstructed, a walkway be included.

Advocates for re-establishing this critical link across the Hudson River will soon be reaching out to Albany and Rensselaer counties, as well as the City of Rensselaer, to request similar supporting measures.

## EPF Lobby Day - February 13

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is New York State's dedicated source of funding for critical environmental programs that protect what we love about New York - including our magnificent parks. The EPF is overdrawn and a new cash infusion is needed to make good on state promises. Join the Friends of New York's Environment - a coalition of more than 100 environmental, public health, agricultural, recreational and urban groups, including PTNY - for the annual EPF Lobby Day on **Monday, February 13** in Albany. [Click here](#) for more info.

## Park Advocacy Day - March 6

Are you looking for a way to show your support for state parks and historic sites? Join Parks & Trails New York, the Alliance for NYS Parks and park supporters from throughout the Empire State at our 6th annual [Park Advocacy Day](#) on Tuesday, March 6 in Albany.

This is a great opportunity to advocate for the protection and funding of New York's magnificent but struggling state park system. Your participation will help bring home the importance to lawmakers of keeping ALL New York state parks open, well-maintained, and protected.

## Canal Clean Sweep - April 20-22

Your home isn't the only thing that warrants a spring cleaning. Grab some friends and neighbors and join in the [Canal Clean Sweep](#) the weekend of Earth Day, April 20-22. Last year over 90 community clean-up events were held throughout the NYS Canal System.

Not only will your community benefit from a beautiful waterfront, but soon visitors will again be flocking to the corridor. Company is coming; how will they remember your piece of the Canal?

Already planning an event? [Please let us know](#).

## I Love My Parks Day - May 5

Show state parks and historic sites some love! [I Love My Park Day](#) is an exciting new statewide event to bring visibility to the entire state park system and its needs. On Saturday, May 5, volunteers will celebrate and improve park lands and beaches, plant trees and gardens, restore trails and wildlife habitat and carry out site-improvement projects across the state.

PTNY, in collaboration with State Parks, will coordinate the event at the statewide level, with cleanup, improvement and beautification projects organized by local state park and historic site friends groups and park staff.

Stay tuned to the PTNY website and ENews for more information

Capital Region residents can help by contacting [their representatives](#) and letting them know that they support the walkway reconstruction. Here are some [talking points](#).

## Congress gives the gift that keeps giving: outdoor recreation.

The efforts of [coalition partners](#), including PTNY, staved off program cuts and built momentum and bipartisan support in Congress for full Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding. LWCF saw a 7% funding increase from 2010, bringing program funding to \$322.9 million in the Interior appropriations portion of the FY2012 Omnibus bill - a remarkable achievement.

The LWCF was established in 1965 to use royalties from offshore oil and gas drilling to provide recreation opportunities for all Americans. The LWCF helps create and protect national parks and forests and provides matching grants for the acquisition and development of state and local parks and trails.

[Learn more](#) at the LWCF Coalition website.

## A bit of silver lining from Hurricane Irene

on these and other ways you can preserve and celebrate the parks and trails you love!

## Trail Works accessible trail allows everyone to enjoy nature

[Trail Works](#), a Wayne County trails organization, has been involved in much trail construction, but its latest effort is special. The Leigh Ann's Butterfly Trail, a quarter-mile stone dust trail located behind the Lyons community center, is a fully accessible trail and thus able to be used by people like Leigh Ann, a young nurse who is wheelchair-bound as a result of an accident.



Since Trail Works broke ground on the trail in March, in partnership with [Forever Wild for Everyone](#), local businesses have donated almost \$10,000 in materials and 100 volunteers have helped construct the trail and plant flowers, herbs, trees, and a community garden.



*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](http://www.earthshareny.org).*



Severe flooding scoured away the soil under a parking lot at Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, located 35 miles northwest of Albany, uncovering long-buried remnants of Fort Hunter, built by the English in 1712 near a Mohawk Village.

[Read more](#) about what archaeologists found.



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Help us start 2012 at a highpoint and join our [Facebook community](#).

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