



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **New York State, PTNY Announce \$450,000 in Grants to State Parks, Forests and Historic Site Partner Organizations**

New York State and Parks & Trails New York today announced \$450,000 in state grants to 21 organizations dedicated to the stewardship and promotion of New York State parks, historic sites and public lands. These dedicated groups raise private funds for capital projects, perform maintenance tasks, provide educational programming, and promote public use through hosting special events.

**State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey said**, “Friends Groups and volunteers are key partners in the success of our park system. I applaud Governor Cuomo for helping these grassroots Friends organizations become stronger and more effective stewards of New York’s treasured public spaces.”

**DEC Commissioner Seggos said**, “Across New York, volunteers are bolstering DEC’s work. From our new Campground Ambassadors program to longstanding trail stewardship efforts, volunteers are assisting DEC to protect natural resources and helping to connect more New Yorkers with nature. Thanks to Governor Cuomo’s leadership in sustaining the Environmental Protection Fund at \$300 million this year, for the first time these grants are being awarded to DEC Friends groups to continue their efforts supporting our work.”

**Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin said**, “It’s inspiring to see the transformational effect of the Park and Trail Partnership Program grants and

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how they are enhancing the ability of Friends groups to make an even greater contribution to the stewardship of New York's great outdoor spaces," said PTNY Executive Director Robin Dropkin. "These grant funds will enable groups to leverage more private and federal funding, marshal more volunteer power, and augment the state's historic investment in parks, trails and other public outdoor places."

The Park and Trail Partnership Program grants, funded through the Environmental Protection Fund, will be matched by almost \$200,000 in private and local funding, which will support projects. The Park and Trail Partnership Program grants are designed to:

- Enhance the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, maintenance and promotion of New York State parks, trails, historic sites and public lands;
- Increase the sustainability, effectiveness, productivity, volunteerism and fundraising capabilities of not-for-profit organizations that promote, maintain and support New York State parks, trails and state historic sites; and
- Promote the tourism and economic development benefits of outdoor recreation through the growth and expansion of a connected statewide network of parks, trails and greenways.

The grants are administered by the State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, and Parks & Trails New York, a statewide non-profit group. This year for the first time, grant awardees include Department of Environmental Conservation Friends groups.

**Senator Tom O'Mara, Chair of the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation, said,** "This important state investment will strengthen the grassroots organizations and volunteers that collectively make up an amazing corps of citizens dedicated to the quality of New York State's nationally recognized system of state parks, historic sites, parks and trails. I can't say enough about these efforts to beautify and promote these attractions."

**Senator Rich Funke, Chair of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, said,** "I am proud to support a record investment in the Environmental Protection Fund, which provides important grants and programs like the \$450,000 in micro grant funding for our state parks friends groups. The work of these organizations is vital for the continued promotion and stewardship of our state parks, historic sites and trails, as well as enhancing efforts to promote outdoor tourism and recreation opportunities for all New Yorkers."

**Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation, said,** "Stewardship organizations are the unsung heroes of our State's parks and public lands. Born out of a deep and collective caring for our natural areas, these Friends organizations are powered by volunteers who roll

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their sleeves up to perform maintenance, lead educational programs and nature walks, and raise funds for special projects. Grants to these homegrown stewardship groups earn a windfall return in helping to augment the work of State Parks and the DEC. “

**Assemblyman Daniel J. O’Donnell, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Tourism, Arts, Parks, and Sports Development, said,** “As New Yorkers, we know that our parks and green spaces are of utmost importance. I’m proud that New York State Parks & Trails New York is recommitting to preserving and promoting these treasures by announcing \$450,000 in grants. As Chair of the Committee on Parks, I look forward to visiting all 21 sites to participate in the beauty.”

The awardees are:

### **Capital Region**

**Friends of Clermont:** \$4,000 to create a planned giving program to raise funds to provide more programs, including marketing materials, a planned giving and named endowment policy, and training for the board of trustees.

**Friends of Thacher Park:** \$4,080 to design and procure promotional materials to promote the Friends group and build capacity through outreach.

**The Friends of U.S. Grant Cottage:** \$19,500 to provide critical administrative support and focus on acquiring and maintaining sustainable income sources for the organization.

### **Central Region**

**Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum:** \$20,400 to create a new education program entitled “The Story of the Water STEM Program: Erie Canal Connections.” The program will allow the museum to research water systems related to the Erie Canal and create STEM educational programming. Additional components of the new STEM program will be a summer STEM camp, and a "Story of the Water" series of talks. The new education program will enable visitors to explore how humans impact the canal water system today.

**Council of Park Friends:** \$8,500 to make many needed updates to the Clark Reservation State Park Nature Center, specifically the geology exhibit, which explains the geologic formation comprising the main attraction at the park. Additional updates include the wildlife and flora exhibits, replacing the book collection, and purchasing new tables and display cases.

### **Finger Lakes**

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**Friends of Ganondagan:** \$50,000 to fund the restoration and replacement of the Seneca Bark Longhouse roof using new, “flexbark/Elm Bark” roofing panels. The existing roof is leaking and the new roof is necessary and critical to ensure the viability of the Seneca Bark Longhouse structure, and safety of the artifacts, reproductions, and interpretive materials housed within.

**Friends of Hamlin Beach State Park:** \$15,740 to enhance the self-guided interpretive tour to educate visitors about the role Hamlin Beach State Park CCC/POW Camp played during the Depression and World War II. The enhancements will include a stone dust path to follow the interpretive sign tour, five new interpretive signs, and new locator signs within the park directing patrons to the CCC/POW site.

**Friends of Letchworth State Park:** \$12,530 to fund a planning document along with two architectural project reports that will allow the Friends group to more effectively manage and fund projects that will move forward the ongoing effort to preserve the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) legacy in Letchworth State Park.

**Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Park:** \$18,688 for the restoration of the Vinery Greenhouse. The scope of the restoration project includes repairs to masonry, skeletal framework, sashes, roof, glass and gutters.

## Long Island

**The Caumsett Foundation, Inc.:** \$20,000 to fund the construction of a courtyard between two classrooms to enhance the education complex at Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve. It will provide additional public space if the classrooms are occupied for lectures, break-out sessions and lunch breaks. It will be the primary space for other groups to meet and will complement the overall design between the classrooms, restrooms and Park offices, all of which are new spaces.

## Mid-Hudson

**Basha Kill Area Association:** \$7,792 will fund professional reformatting and printing of 500 copies of a revised book (the third edition) entitled “A Birding Guide to Sullivan County New York.” This project will generate more interest in this valuable, state-owned natural resource by specifically educating visitors about the 250+ bird species who inhabit this wetland during the year.

**Friends of Mills Mansion:** \$48,000 to fund the purchase of historically-accurate, custom-made fabric, trim, and as well as decorative trim, tie-backs and hanging hardware needed to reproduce the historic draperies in Staatsburgh's formal dining room. These will replace the existing drapes that have been hanging for over 100 years and are in very poor condition.

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**Friends of The Old Croton Aqueduct:** \$27,200 to cover the cost of a coordinator to support the needs of the recently opened Keeper's House Education and Visitor Center. The coordinator will develop and manage the volunteer docent program, including recruiting new volunteers to assist with all the activities at the Center and improve the visitor's experience.

**The Little Stony Point Citizens Association, Inc.:** \$39,946 to fund a solar installation on the Volunteer Center to power activities there, which will increase volunteer presence at Little Stony Point. A portion of the energy generated will be stored in a mobile battery, which will be used to support volunteer activities throughout the Park. Additionally, installing a simple "green" incinerating toilet at the Center will provide better amenities for visitors.

### **Mohawk Valley**

**Friends of Johnson Hall:** \$9,905 for of a historic floor cloth, a "painted carpet" for the Front Hallway of Johnson Hall State Historic Site. This reproduction floor cloth will help protect the original wooden floor from heavy wear by visitors, and will complete the restoration of the decorative finishes on the first floor of this site. Funds will also be used to produce a detailed color booklet, postcards and a website update to summarize all the restorations projects that have been completed or are underway.

### **New York City**

**Four Freedoms Park Conservancy:** \$15,750 to redesign and install clear, direct, and inviting entrance signage that incorporates messaging of the Park's rules in the park, which are unique due to the park's entirely engineered environment.

### **North Country**

**Azure Mountain Friends:** \$7,225 to initiate a publicity campaign and fund necessary repairs. The publicity campaign will improve communications to the public about the work of the Azure Mountain Friends, the history of the tower, expand interest, and ultimately increase the number of volunteers and supporters. Most importantly, the increased exposure and publicity will help to insure the continuation of educational programs.

**Friends of the Nature Center:** \$50,000 to create a new forest exhibit that will be located at the entrance of the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. This exhibit will include interactive graphics that explain what each part of the tree does. This modern, state of the art exhibit will draw the attention of new visitors, while also giving returning visitors a reason to return and explore the new elements.

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**Winona Forest Recreation Association:** \$19,082 for the rehabilitation of multi-use trails in the Winona State Forest, designed specifically to increase public access and significantly enhancing users' experience. This rehabilitation of the trails will attract new users, increase tourism dollars, and grow the local economy.

## **Western New York**

**Friends of Allegany State Park:** \$4,250 for the construction of approximately two miles of new, narrow tread trail, as part of the park's master plan. Funds will cover the materials for the trail, new signage, and informational kiosks and maps. The trail will be created in collaboration with a mountain biking group to attract bikers, a new user group, to the park.

**Friends of Reinstein Nature Preserve:** \$47,411 to hire a Development Manager to cultivate a sustainable donor base and expand the organization's funding sources in the areas of corporate giving, foundation giving, and planned giving. These actions will increase the long-term viability of Friends of Reinstein Woods, and foster improvements to the educational and stewardship programs supported by Reinstein Woods.

The Parks and Trail Partnership Program is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund. In the 2018-19 Executive Budget, [Governor Cuomo maintained EPF funding](#) at \$300 million -- the highest level of funding in the Environmental Protection Fund's 25-year history. These major investments continue New York's national environmental leadership, and advance essential projects to protect the state's water, air, and natural resources and help communities capitalize on the economic returns of environmental funding.

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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