

CREATING  
A LEGACY  
OF CARE  
FOR THE  
OUTDOORS

# 2021

annual report



**PARKS & TRAILS**  
NEW YORK



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**Parks & Trails New York**  
 33 Elk Street, Albany NY 12207  
 518-434-1583  
[www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org)



## Dear Friend of New York's Parks and Trails,

Like generations before us, it seems we are fated to live through unprecedented times.

With so much upheaval, the comfort of a favorite vista along the trail, a beloved stand of trees in a park, or a calming view of the ocean along a stretch of beach can be an anchor in an ever-changing world.

Being part of a committed and connected community that deeply values our parks, trails, and public lands is also a huge source of comfort. Thank you for being part of that community.

You've helped ensure that our premiere state park system is not only surviving but thriving... and on the precipice of some of the most important gains in decades. You've helped create more and better-connected trails, plus increased support for trailside communities to boost local economies. You've helped support the grassroots groups that devotedly steward and champion our outdoor spaces.

You've been right there with us every step of the way, and because of that we've got some incredibly significant wins from 2021 to share with you. So please view this Annual Report as our thank you letter to you, our supporters and partners. We truly couldn't do it without you.

In the midst of trying times, you've been building a legacy of care for our public green spaces that will last generations.

With the deepest appreciation,



**Robin Dropkin**  
*Executive Director*



**Jeffrey Bender**  
*Board Chair*



# Green Spaces Continue to be Vital for New Yorkers

2021 was a strange and shifting year, but one thing was very certain—our public green spaces continued to be a source of solace, recreation, and community. Here are just a few of the highlights for our parks, trails and public lands from the past year:

## 1,500+ Miles

### Of Greenways

New York's multi-use trail network just keeps growing! We are so excited for the expansion of these “linear parks” that increase connectivity and access to greenspace.

## 78 Million+

### Visits in 2021

State Parks continued to see record-breaking use this past year. That's a lot of enjoyment of the outdoors!

## \$900,000

### In Grants

Continuing to make a big difference for local grassroots groups supporting public green spaces, Park and Trail Partnership Grants funded 30 innovative and essential projects. “Stay tuned” for increases in the grant program's impact in 2022.

## 20+

### Trail-Side Communities Supported

From marketing support and Trail Towns initiatives to bike-arounds and detailed ride itineraries, PTNY is boosting the economy of trail-based communities.

## 315

### CTEC Riders

With multiple safety plans in place for riders and the communities they pass through, a smaller CTEC hit the trail in 2021. We are looking forward to a full, safe ride in 2022.

## 6,570

### Volunteers

From I Love My Park Day to Canal Clean Sweep, New Yorkers came out in 2021 to show love for the parks, trails and public lands they enjoy and use.





# New Yorkers Show Up for their Public Lands

*New Yorkers are very committed to their parks, trails and public lands. The spaces that have supported us through the pandemic got a lot of love from our communities in 2021 to keep them welcoming and thriving.*

## I LOVE MY PARK DAY MAKES A COMEBACK IN 2021

With more than 5,400 volunteers at 140 events across the state, New Yorkers came out in force to care for their public lands in 2021! I Love My Park Day—occurring over two days with limits on number of volunteers per site and project for safety—made a huge comeback last year. Volunteers planted more than 360 trees, created and tended over 450 gardens, removed 660 bags of trash and 180 bags of invasive species, created or enhanced 80 miles of trails, and cleaned up over 80 miles of shoreline.

## CANAL CLEAN SWEEP SWEEPS UP

More than 1,100 volunteers participated at 120+ events along the Erie Canalway Trail corridor over Earth Day weekend in 2021. Celebrating its 16th year, Clean Sweep volunteers had a BIG impact. From Scout troops to Rotary Clubs and Friends groups, Clean Sweep teams worked together to celebrate the outdoors and collect trash along the trail.

***“It was a cold sunny day, but beautiful! We got to plant at the entrance to our favorite beach. All season we will be able to see our work blossom and grow. How special is that?”***

—I Love My Park Day Volunteer at Robert Moses State Park

***“Walkway Over the Hudson is incredibly grateful for PTNY for its true partnership and community-driven ethos. Continuing this partnership and collaborative work in our shared communities is invaluable.”***

—Elizabeth Waldstein, Walkway Over the Hudson

## FRIENDS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL & GATEWAY PROMOTE CONNECTIVITY AND IMPACT

With support from the newly-formed Leadership Council for Friends groups, PTNY is building our new Friends Group Gateway! Set to launch in January 2022, “The Gateway” is an all-inclusive virtual community for grassroots groups supporting New York’s parks, trails and public lands. The Gateway provides a virtual space for groups to access best practices, technical assistance, and resources and knowledge through a peer-to-peer network. Friends groups get support in expanding capacity, welcoming new volunteers and members, and becoming better stewards of our most treasured public green spaces.

If your Friends group is interested in how to access the Gateway—and its benefits—check out [www.ptnyfriends.org](http://www.ptnyfriends.org)

***“Over the last four years we’ve undergone a massive transformation—all with the support of PTNY. Funding from PTNY has had a huge impact for us: membership has doubled, the number of organized recreational events we hold throughout the year has also doubled, and revenue from these events has increased by 300%. We now host one of the biggest snowshoe races in the country, which takes place on a trail that was developed and maintained with funding from the Park & Trail Partnership Grants administered by PTNY.”***

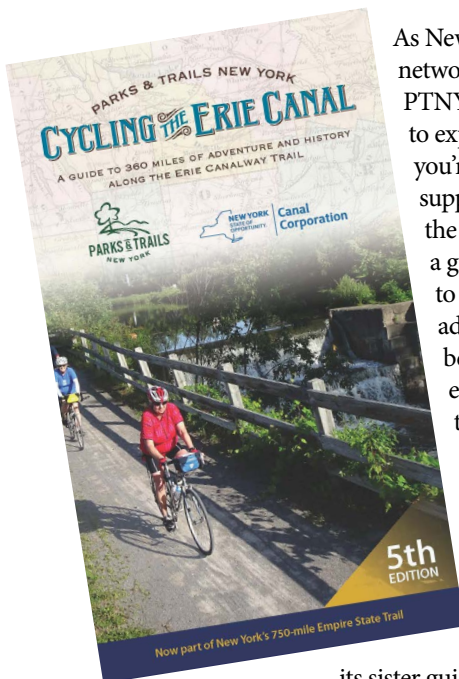
—Matt Westerlund, President of Friends of Winona State Forest



# 2021: The Year of Building Trail Towns



## LOOKING TO EXPLORE NYS TRAILS? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!



As New York's greenways network grows, so do PTNY's offerings for you to explore them. Whether you're looking for a fully-supported, 8-day ride on the Erie Canalway Trail, or a guidebook and website to help you plan your own adventure, PTNY has been working hard to ensure all visitors have the opportunity to enjoy our 1,500+ miles of multi-use trails.

Check out our recently updated *Cycling the Erie Canal* guidebook,

its sister guidebook *Cycling the Hudson and Champlain Valleys* (out later in 2022), join our Cycle the Erie Canal ride, or go online to access our TrailFinder site to plan your next adventure.

## COLLABORATING FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Partnering with the Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, State Parks, and Letchworth Gateway Villages—and with generous funding from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation—PTNY launched its Trail Towns initiative in 2021. Currently focused on the Genesee Valley Greenway State Park—which spans 90 miles and travels through 16 towns—PTNY and partners have been working with 10 Trail Town Steering Committees to boost economic development around trail-based tourism in Western New York. To support communities, PTNY has conducted bike-arounds, placed trail counters to capture baseline trail use, surveyed trail users, helped develop marketing and branding strategy, and held a “Trail Towns Summit” with partners.

In 2022 we'll be identifying a partner town along the Erie Canalway Trail corridor to expand our Trail Towns work, and we couldn't be more excited! Cycle-based tourism can be a huge economic driver for communities, especially rural areas that have faced many challenges over the past decades. Developing community-specific approaches to trail-based tourism is a great way to highlight local character, better serve cyclists, and ensure our local towns are flourishing.







## PTNY PILOTS SEED GRANTS FOR TRAIL TOWNS

Based on our model for Friends groups grants, piloted in 2015 and now grown into the \$1 million annual Park & Trail Partnership Grant program, PTNY is excited to be offering Trail Towns seed grants starting in 2022. These grants will support initiatives to enhance outdoor recreation and increase connectivity between the Genesee Valley Greenway and neighboring communities. Genesee Valley Trail Towns will have the opportunity to increase and benefit from visitation to the Greenway and other outdoor recreational resources in the area, foster place-making efforts, create safer streets for cyclists and pedestrians, and implement other projects identified in community action plans.








# Build a Stronger Future for New York's Parks and Trails with Us!

## 6 WAYS TO SUPPORT:

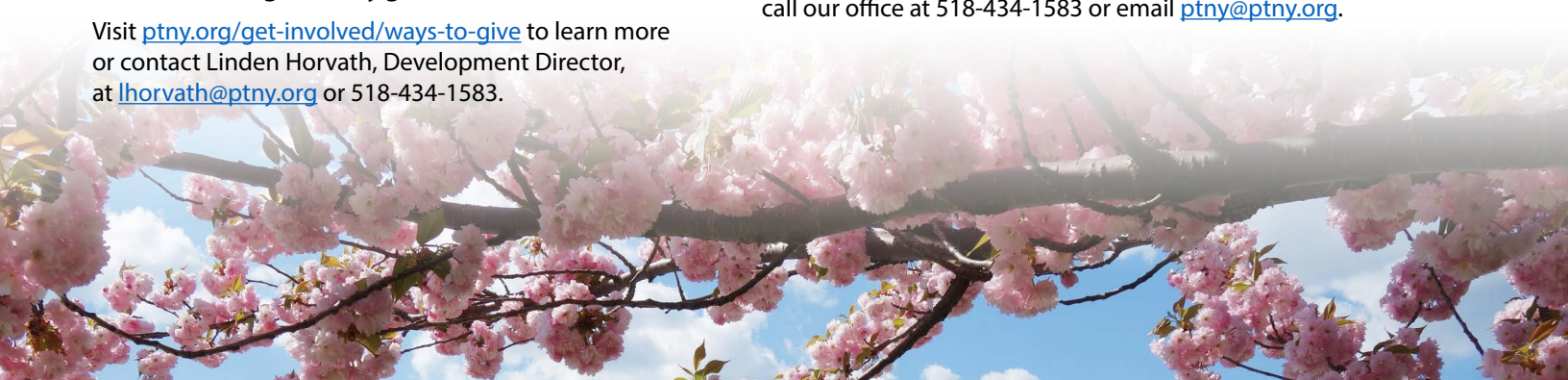
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-  **Join our Legacy Society**
-  **Become a Park & Trail Champion with a recurring monthly gift**

Visit [ptny.org/get-involved/ways-to-give](https://ptny.org/get-involved/ways-to-give) to learn more or contact Linden Horvath, Development Director, at [lhovath@ptny.org](mailto:lhovath@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583.

## 5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

-  **Volunteer for I Love My Park Day or Canal Clean Sweep**
-  **Join us in advocating for your favorite places**
-  **Join a Park or Trail Friends Group**
-  **Adopt a Trail**
-  **Sign Up: Receive updates on important park and trail issues and newsletters full of new outdoor places to explore**

Visit [ptny.org/get-involved/volunteer](https://ptny.org/get-involved/volunteer) or [www.ptny.org/enews-signup](https://www.ptny.org/enews-signup) to learn more, call our office at 518-434-1583 or email [ptny@ptny.org](mailto:ptny@ptny.org).



## 2021 Financial Summary

The charts represent overall income and expenses for Parks & Trails New York for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

**OPERATING EXPENSES**  
**TOTAL: \$1,779,476**

**OPERATING SUPPORT & REVENUE**  
**TOTAL: \$1,831,134**





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in nature to calm the soul."*

— Barbara, PTNY Supporter

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Look inside to see how your support is making a difference  
for our most treasured parks, trails, and public lands.



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