

# GreenSpace

For members, supporters, and friends of Parks & Trails New York

Winter 2017-2018



## Empowered Park Friends Are Making Great Strides Thanks to You!

New York's state parks and public lands wouldn't be what they are without the passion and dedication of the Friends groups that love and support them. Often made up of a relatively small number of committed individuals—in most cases, volunteers—Friends groups raise millions in private funding for capital projects, log hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteer assistance, and promote public use through special events and educational programs at their parks.

This fall marks the start of the third year of PTNY's Park and Trail Partnership Program, a \$500,000 grants program designed to help park Friends grow into even stronger allies for their parks. In its first two years, this innovative program has awarded grants to 40 Friends groups, which, in turn, have used those funds to enhance their parks for the benefit of all.

### **Dedication + know-how + funding = big improvements for parks**

Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park received a grant to install an informational kiosk and a series of interpretive panels to complement the park's newly rehabilitated trail to the Dickinson Hill Fire Tower in Rensselaer County. Visitors can now sign in at the kiosk, pick up an informational pamphlet, and learn about the history of New York's fire towers through a series of educational panels as they hike through the woods to the tower. In addition to enhancing the experience for visitors, the Friends hope the project will generate excitement and volunteer support from the surrounding community.

Four Freedoms Park Conservancy needed a comprehensive marketing and advertising campaign to bring more visitors and supporters to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park at the tip of Roosevelt Island in New York City.

**Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park were proud to unveil their newly improved Dickinson Hill Fire Tower Trail and hope their interpretive signs and kiosk will enhance the experience for hikers.**



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Parks & Trails New York is a member-supported non-profit working to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout the state for all to use and enjoy. Parks & Trails New York is a 501(c)(3) organization as defined by the IRS. Contributions are tax-deductible.

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**“The Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park received a grant to build a new trailhead kiosk and install a series of interpretive panels along the hiking route to the newly rehabilitated Dickinson Hill Fire Tower. The panels tell the story of the fire tower and Helen Ellett, the first woman fire tower observer in New York State, who staffed it. By providing this historical and cultural information, we hope that visitors will come away with a better appreciation for how important the fire towers were to forest conservation.”**

**— Dorothy Surprise, President,  
Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park**



### Cover Story continued

The Conservancy used its grant to develop a calendar brochure advertising all programs and special events. It hosted a photo contest and a “Manhattanhenge” event, inviting photographers to the Park for a bi-annual occurrence in which the sun sets perfectly in line with the Manhattan street grid.

As a result of its marketing and advertising campaign, the Conservancy reported that the Park received its highest number of visitors in a monthly period in April 2017, with 28,051 visitors, compared to 16,876 visitors in April 2016. Additionally, it received a number of new donors, substantially increased its list of e-mail subscribers, and received considerable positive media attention for its photo contest and “Manhattanhenge” event.

The Friends of Letchworth State Park wanted to expand its volunteer program to be more effective at stewarding the park as well as purchase equipment that would enable the group to offer even more quality programming to the public. The Friends group used its grant to provide chainsaw certification for ten new volunteers and to outfit them with safety gear. Within two months of receiving their training, the volunteer crew had logged more than 200 hours of work clearing trails! A new events tent and storage trailer have helped increase the number of participants in Friends-sponsored events by 100% and the group has grown its membership by 47% since 2016.

The success of projects like these, which enable Friends groups to grow their capacity to improve parks and design programs that promote their enjoyment to the public, is what the Parks and trail Partnership Program is all about. For more information on the program and the projects it has funded to date, go to [ptny.org](http://ptny.org).



# Blazing a Safer and More Enjoyable Trail with Your Support

With your support, PTNY is working to make communities safer for cyclists and pedestrians

PTNY has been working with communities across the state to create new trails since 1985 and now, thanks to your support, we are focusing attention on how to connect and improve those trails by creating better, safer and more efficient sidewalks and roads for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Getting in the car less often is a goal for many of us. We understand that biking to work or walking to the market saves money, provides exercise and physical and mental health benefits, and keeps our environment cleaner and greener. But for many, the safety risks of crowded streets, dangerous intersections and incomplete or inadequate biking and walking features make it hard to reach that goal.

## Troy Trail Connections

Last summer, PTNY teamed up with the City of Troy, local cycling advocacy group Transport Troy, and the Capital District Transportation Committee to help improve walking and biking in the city, which is located across the Hudson River from Albany. The goal is to safely connect the Uncle Sam Bikeway, an existing multi-use trail that spans two of Troy's northernmost neighborhoods and passes several schools, parks, and large housing developments, to the South Troy Riverfront Bikeway, which is currently under development.

PTNY staff studied and took inventory of existing conditions in Troy, met with community groups working to improve bikeability, and surveyed local residents. Based on progressive national transportation guidelines, PTNY will release its findings and recommendations in the **Troy Trail Connections Plan** later this year. The plan will guide city officials as they grow a more robust network of features and amenities



such as wayfinding signage, bike lanes, and strategically placed bike racks – improvements that will make bicycling and walking more convenient, safe, and enjoyable for all.

We're glad to be working with Parks & Trails New York on the Troy Trail Connection Plan. Providing better access to trails, building protected bike lanes, and improving signage in communities across the state makes cycling safer and more enjoyable for people of all ages.

— Donna Liquori, Programs Specialist, AARP

## Connecting to the Tappan Zee

PTNY has also been chosen to help the Town of Orangetown in Rockland County in the Hudson Valley with a community planning process to build bicycle-friendly infrastructure, programming and policy to create a connected cycling network and accommodate the increased number of cyclists that are expected with the opening of the new Tappan Zee Bridge Shared Use Path. As a first step, PTNY helped Town staff and volunteers conduct trail counts to determine how many people currently bike in Orangetown and where they're going.

In New York, nearly a third of all roadway fatalities involve cyclists and pedestrians – proportionally, a far greater percentage than the number of cyclists and pedestrians using those roads. With more New Yorkers walking and biking and sharing the road with traffic, safety is paramount. PTNY has been commissioned by the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to create a rating system and easy-to-use checklist to assess the safety of a road and trail intersections based on best design practices. This tool will help city planners decide where and how to improve road and trail intersections for safer travel.



# You Make All the Difference for New York's Parks and Trails



## Save the dates!

**March 5**

**Park Advocacy Day**

**April 21-22**

**Canal Clean Sweep**

**May 5-7**

**7th Annual I Love My Park Day!**

**July 8-15**

**20th Annual**

**Cycle the Erie Canal Bike Tour**

## My Year at Parks & Trails New York

*By Maggie Pugliano, 2017 Arthur Savage Intern*

As PTNY's 2017 Arthur Savage intern, I've had the opportunity to work alongside the staff on many projects that have helped me learn and grow as a professional. My internship has opened doors to the environmental policy world, and has given me first-hand experience with advocacy work, outreach, and lobbying. As an avid hiker and nature enthusiast, I loved that my internship allowed me to advocate for the state parks and trails I care about. I enjoyed collecting stories of outdoor adventure from fellow New Yorkers as part of PTNY's "New York Trail Tales" campaign and felt inspired by their experiences to plan my next adventure.



As I enter my final year at Siena College, I'm glad the experiences I've had at PTNY have prepared me to step confidently into the professional world as an advocate for the great outdoors. I'm extremely grateful to have had this experience and look forward to giving back to New York's parks and trails in my future career.

## What will your legacy be?

It's never too early to begin thinking about your legacy. As someone who appreciates nature and green space, we invite you to share your passion for New York's majestic parks and beautiful trails by making a planned gift to Parks & Trails New York and ensuring that your favorite parks and trails will be protected for generations to come.

To learn more about becoming a member of the Legacy Society of Parks & Trails New York, please contact Meegan Finnegan, Director of Development, at [mfinnegan@ptny.org](mailto:mfinnegan@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583.

"I grew up near the Erie Canalway Trail in the Town of Tonawanda and I am so encouraged by the efforts of PTNY to Close the Gaps in the trail. I rode the 2017 Cycle the Erie Canal tour as a Trailblazer, raising funds and awareness from friends and family to support my ride. My employer, Ingram Micro, matches my donations, enabling me to double my support. Please consider becoming a PTNY member and encourage others to do so. Become a part of the amazing story of New York's parks and trails - whether you bike, hike, paddle, fish or whatever!"

— Warren Bouchane



## Five Ways to Give Back to New York's Parks and Trails

- Become a member of Parks & Trails New York or make a donation online, by phone, or mail
- Double your donation by sending us your employer's matching gift form
- Name Parks & Trails New York as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance, IRA, or retirement plan
- Give at the office via EarthShare New York
- Get involved – join us on I Love My Park Day, Canal Clean Sweep, and Park and Trail Advocacy Days

Visit [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) to learn more