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Parks & Trails New York 33 Elk Street, Albany NY 12207 518-434-1583 www.ptny.org

Steve Tomb



Dear Friends of New York's Parks and Trails,

When we wrote you last year, celebrating some record-breaking milestones for New York's outdoor spaces, we couldn't have known that this year's missive would be so bittersweet.

2022 saw some truly amazing wins for New York's parks, trails, and public lands... as well as for the communities and groups that love and advocate for them. It is important to say that we could not have come this far, with such amazing partnerships, if it weren't for our former and long-time Executive Director, Robin Dropkin. Robin's tireless work last year—with partners, staff, and advocates—led to the doubling of our Park & Trail Partnership Grant program, a game-changing budget for our public lands in 2023, and the passing of the momentous \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act.

The outpouring of remembrances after Robin's passing in early 2023 has been a testament to her impact on our greenways, state parks, the PTNY Staff and Board, and all New Yorkers who visit our public green spaces for joy, adventure, connectivity, or peace. It's hard to fathom the hole created by her loss, but its ripples will be felt for a long time, both for us as individuals and for the world of green space advocacy. Her legacy is etched across the face of the entire state: from the Empire State Trail to the public lands served by grassroots Friends groups, and the many parks still open due to her tenacity.

While there is certainly grieving at her loss, Robin would have wanted us to—above all—continue our critical work. So, as we approach the Centennial Year of our NYS Parks System in 2024, we wanted to look back at the many achievements during Robin's decades-long tenure that were instrumental in creating the amazing network of green spaces we enjoy today. You'll also see her impact written all over the PTNY community achievements from 2022, found in this Annual Report.

Robin will be missed, but it is a solace to know that whenever I step into a NYS Park, or onto one of our many trails and greenways, I am connected to her life's work. I hope this provides you, as one of our treasured partners, some peace and joy as well.

May her memory be a blessing,



In Honor Of:





If you've seen our Annual Report before, you know this space is for listing our accomplishments—in numerical form—from the year. We thought this time around we'd much rather share the incomparable impact of our former Executive Director, Robin Dropkin. Below you'll find a timeline highlighting some of PTNY's "greatest hits" in the world of environmental advocacy and conservation; milestones that were achieved under Robin's leadership. We are so grateful to share just a few of the impacts from Robin's decades of service to NY's public green spaces... and the communities who use, love, and fight for them.

As Robin would want, we extend a hearty "thank you" to all the supporters, advocates, partners, organizations, and individuals who fought beside Robin to turn our vision into the following advances for our mission:

1991

PTNY launches the Genesee Valley Greenway project—which will become the Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway—a key partner in PTNY's Trail Towns initiative for western New York.

1993

Robin spearheads the pivotal report, *Preserve & Protect:* Challenges Facing New York's State Park System, which—with Parks at a Turning Point published in 2006—will function as the basis for statewide advocacy to re-invest in New York's State Parks for decades.

1999

PTNY launches *Cycle the Erie Canal*, our iconic cross-state bike ride celebrating 25 years in 2023. CTEC, paired with the later *Close the Gaps* campaign (2010), provides an anchor for advocacy to create a more connected and complete Erie Canalway Trail.

2009

PTNY releases the first *Economic Impact study of the New York State Park System*. This report, with subsequent follow-ups, will be a critical document in arguing for NY State Parks' impact on local and state economies, not to mention job creation.

2010

Robin and PTNY organize a grassroots coalition to prevent 88 State Parks from closing due to the budget crisis. This watershed campaign demonstrates, for the first time, the enormous public support for parks... and the political class notices.

2014

PTNY pilots grant funding for grassroots groups caring for public lands, advocates for \$500,000 in state funding—secured in 2015—and forms what we now know as the Park & Trail Partnership Grants program (currently funded at \$2 million).

2020

Decades of advocacy for trail connectivity in the state come to fruition with the opening of the longest greenway in the nation—the Empire State Trail.

2022

Under Robin's leadership, PTNY rights for—and secures—a historic, forward-looking budget investing in New York's public lands. 2022's advocacy plan also sees the success of the \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act, first of its kind passed since the 90s.



Great news for Empire State Trail lovers, or just greenway-curious folks ... if you want an amazing EST experience, we've got you covered.

Are you an experienced cyclist looking for a "choose your own adventure" resource? New to the world of cycling and want a fully supported, immersive trip for your first long ride? An avid walker looking for your next long weekend of exploration? Need a digital map to check accessibility on NYS greenways?

Whatever your flavor, preference, or need ... Parks & Trails New York has you covered. Just as we keep advocating—from the grassroots to Albany—for a fully-connected network of NYS greenways, we are also committed to providing all the resources you might need to visit and enjoy these trails. Never an organization to rest on our laurels, we have expanded our printed resources with an updated Cycling the Hudson and Champlain Valleys guidebook—a north-south guide to pair with our recently updated east-west guide, Cycling the Erie Canal. Selling in the thousands, both guidebooks have already become staples for any Empire State Trail adventure, regardless of length or intensity. But, if you're more of a digital buff, you can check out our Trailfinder Map online and get a taste of these indispensable resources!

"Anyone who is planning to ride the North/
South arm of the Empire State Trail will find
Cycling the Hudson and Champlain Valleys
invaluable. It is a compact, lightweight, superpacked nugget of information! Explorers from
anywhere will be able to use this guidebook to
tailor an adventure to suit their needs."

If you'd rather join a supported adventure on the EST, all while building community and meeting other cyclists, we have some great opportunities for you! This year welcomed back our iconic *Cycle the Erie Canal* (CTEC) ride in its full force. For 8 days, 750 cyclists traveled from Buffalo to Albany, enjoying history lessons, entertainment, a phenomenal cycling community, and amazing food along the way. Modeled after CTEC, we will be launching a north-south companion ride—*Cycle the Hudson Valley*—in 2023. *Cycle the Hudson Valley* (CTHV) will offer riders a quintessential Hudson Valley experience, from the food and vistas to the culture and history. Starting in Troy and finishing in the Big Apple itself, this inaugural "relaunch" of CTHV is sure to be unforgettable.

Both rides are welcoming to all ages, abilities, and interests. Our fully-supported camping option—offered by partner Comfy Campers—means that you can go as rough or as pampered as you want. Plus, the rides in 2023 will be just two weeks apart... so you can start your summer adventures with CTEC from July 9-16, rest for a bit, and hop right back on the trail with CTHV from July 30 - August 5.

Did we mention we've got your 2023 summer planned for you? Well, we do!

"Cycling the Erie Canal is as good a guidebook as I have ever seen. It is clear and easy to use, packed with information, maps, and pictures.

How could you live in the region and not want—need—a copy. It's a steal. You have given away all your hard-learned secrets and opened up a heritage tourism treasure.

Crossing NYS along the Erie Canal is destined to become an iconic experience."



YOUR ADVOCACY & SUPPORT AT WORK

It's no secret that 2022's investments in public lands were the culmination of years of hard work. This reinvestment in New York's parks, trails, and public lands is a direct result of how vital these spaces were to us during the pandemic, and how important they continue to be. From the \$250 million in capital funding for State Parks to the \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act, 2022 was a game changing year for our treasured public green spaces.

Among the expanded investments in our outdoor spaces, PTNY's pilot grant program—Park and Trail Partnership Grants—grew to \$2 million for the 8th round of applications. This means doubled support for grassroots groups caring for New York's parks, trails, and public lands. Check out some of the amazing impacts PTPG funding has had for our Friends groups over the years, and the communities and green spaces that rely on them.

We can't wait to double that impact for our grant winners in 2023. Thank you to our supporters and partners, as well as the advocates and legislators who made this possible.

Park & Trail Partnership Grants' Impact: From the Friends Themselves

"The PTNY grant program has been an extraordinary help that will eventually bring more visitors to the Park, without changing the recreational use that the Park is known for. We are grateful to PTNY for helping us create this roadmap for the future of Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve."

— Caumsett Foundation, Inc.

GRANT: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM COURTYARD & ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECT

PTPG funding created a courtyard with a terraced garden, and adapted indoor space, to host indoor and outdoor educational programming. Groups, projects, and events served included: annual Christmas bird count; OceansWide marine biology programs and BOCES programs welcoming thousands of students from 14+ school districts.

"PTPG funding has been instrumental to the growth and activities of the Friends of Clark Reservation, and instrumental to helping the public enjoy the wonders of the natural world at our State Park. Without the support of PTNY, our group would not be able to expand our efforts to educate and engage visitors in issues related to nature and the environment."

— Friends of Clark Reservation

GRANT: NATURE CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

With PTPG funding the Friends were able to update their nature center, replacing 40-year-old donated materials and tables and 30-year-old field and nature guides, developing brand new geology exhibits, and updating the children's area to provide more engaging and interactive educational opportunities.

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

6 WAYS TO SUPPORT:

- Become a member
- Donate (and get your employer to match)
- Give at the office through EarthShare.org
- Give stock, mutual funds, or support PTNY through your Donor Advised Fund
- Join our Legacy Society

5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

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



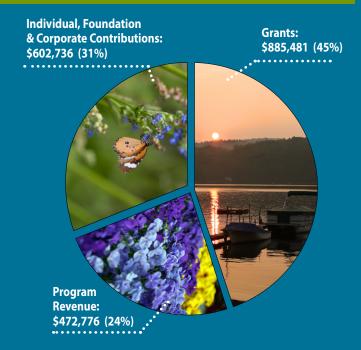
2022 Financial Summary

The charts represent overall income and expenses for Parks & Trails New York for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022.

OPERATING EXPENSES TOTAL: \$1,952,208



OPERATING SUPPORT & REVENUE TOTAL: \$1,960,633



Thank You to Our Members and Donors

Parks & Trails New York thanks all who make our work possible: our supporters giving anywhere from \$1 to \$100 and those volunteering, protecting, and advocating for our parks, trails, and public lands. You keep our green spaces safe, clean, and welcoming today and for future generations.

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33 Elk Street Albany, New York 12207

518.434.1583

ptny@ptny.org

None of our impact would have been possible without PTNY's unparalleled partnership and guidance. We love you guys.

Thank you for supporting our mission!

— Little Stony Point Citizens Association

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