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NEWS RELEASE

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New Tool for Local Trail Advocates Will Help Expand New York's Growing Greenway Trail Network

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) release a new handbook to guide grassroots advocates through the steps to take the vision for a new multi-use path from concept to reality.

ALBANY, NY (Jan. 16) – PTNY and OPRHP today announced the release of the *Trails Across New York: A Grassroots Guide to Developing Greenway Trails*. The new resource provides detailed information to support Greenway trails development in communities around the state. The steps outlined in the guide provide a high-level overview of the various aspects of trail development from initial concept to construction, as well as how participation from a broad range of individuals, agencies, organizations, and landowners will factor in throughout the process.

Greenway trails are shared-use paths that can be used by persons of all ages for healthy, fun recreation. As long linear corridors, they also provide unique transportation opportunities. Often born from old rail lines and canal towpaths, greenway trails are popular local resources and provide essential public health infrastructure for active recreation and connection to nature. Greenway trails

are also valuable tourism generators, attracting thousands of new visitors to New York State each year, especially since the opening of the increasingly popular 750-mile Empire State Trail.

Already home to over two thousand miles of greenway trails, New York State has the potential to nearly double its greenway trail network, thereby expanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and active transportation to millions of New Yorkers. These trails, however, will only come to fruition with the vision and dedication of local advocates, municipal leaders, and planners who recognize the benefits of developing a trail in their community and work devotedly to make it happen.

The trail development process can be challenging even for the most experienced community organizers. The 2021 Statewide Greenway Trails Plan identified the need to provide resources for local advocates to navigate the process for future trail development opportunities. To address this gap, *Trails Across New York: A Grassroots Guide to Developing Greenway Trails* aims to inspire creativity and enthusiasm among various stakeholder groups about the important role that local residents and stakeholders can play in this process.

The new guide walks advocates and trail planners through the steps needed to see a greenway trail to completion. The first section outlines the necessary steps to get a project started: from identifying the corridor to cultivating a vision that will help inspire engagement and public support, eventually leading to buy-in from state and/or local government. The second section walks through the trail planning and development process, including conducting a feasibility study for a trail, securing the corridor through purchase or easements, identifying grant funding opportunities, and finally getting the project designed, permitted and built. Finally, the guide provides guidance for maximizing the ongoing visitation and value of local trails once they are built.

The full *Trails Across New York: A Grassroots Guide to Developing Greenway Trails* can be found at ptny.org/greenwaytrails.

"Greenway trails have the power to transform our environment, economy, and communities. We hope that this guide makes the greenway trail development process more transparent so that local advocates have a clear path to follow. Whether it's an abandoned railroad, canal towpath, neglected waterfront or highway shoulder, we hope for more advocates to be ready to transform these corridors into beloved community assets." said **Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York**.

"Greenway Trails offer New York residents and visitors the opportunity to explore our state's incredible scenery and diverse communities. There's great potential to expand our greenway recreational network throughout New York with the help of community advocates and grassroots partners. I'm excited to make this guide available to help navigate the development process and make more greenway trails a reality," said **State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid**.

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