

EMPIRE STATE TRAILS

Highlights of New York State



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Introduction

Trails have multiple values with benefits that reach far beyond recreation. Trails can enrich the quality of life for individuals, make communities more livable, and protect, nurture and showcase New York State's grandeur by traversing areas of natural beauty, distinctive geography, historic significance and ecological diversity. Trails are important for the State's health, economy, resource protection and education, and to help meet the needs of a changing society.

The formal origins of recreational trail use in the State occurred over 100 years ago when the Legislature appropriated \$250.00 for completing a "public path" to the summit of Slide Mountain in the Catskill Mountains, a trail popularized in the early nature writings of John Burroughs. The Hudson River Valley, the Great Lakes, Long Island, the Adirondack Mountains, the Taconic Range, the Finger Lakes, the Thousand Islands and other physiographic regions of the State offer a diversity of trail experiences in forested mountains, secluded lakes and rivers, farm country, wetlands with their abundant wildlife, and miles of lake and ocean beaches. Trails provide recreation as well as transportation linkages to historic sites, city parks and downtown areas. Trails were transportation corridors of earlier times. Today, increasing numbers of bicyclists, pedestrians, equestrians, snowmobilers, and the disabled seek outdoor recreation opportunities and transportation alternatives through trails.

A complex trail system has evolved on public and private land across the State. There are long-distance foot trails like the Appalachian Scenic Trail, North Country Scenic Trail, Finger Lakes Trail, Long Path and Long Island Greenbelt Trail System which connect communities, counties and New York to other States. Greenways, such as the Genesee Valley Greenway and the Hudson River Valley Greenway, provide multiple use linkages between communities and open spaces. Bike Route 5 and Bike Route 9 provide the foundation of a statewide system of bicycle and pedestrian transportation trails. The Seaway trail, a National Scenic Byway, provides a 454-mile route paralleling Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River for automobiles, bicycles, recreational vehicles and motor coaches. The Canalway Trail, will provide a 524-mile multi-use land trail along side the canal system, a water based trail system. The statewide snowmobile trail system extends over 11,000 miles and is maintained largely by private clubs. These are only a sampling of the various types of trails and resources that comprise the diversity of trail opportunities in New York State.

Many trail opportunities exist within the open space resources managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Department of Environmental Conservation. Over 1,600 miles of trail are maintained within the 178 state parks and 35 historic sites administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Department of Environmental Conservation manages thousands of miles of recreation trails on nearly four million acres of land statewide. One of the best ways to explore and experience the beauty and diversity of New York State is to discover its trails.

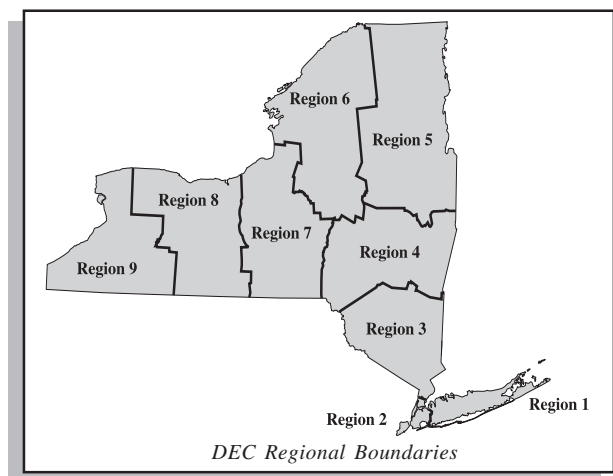
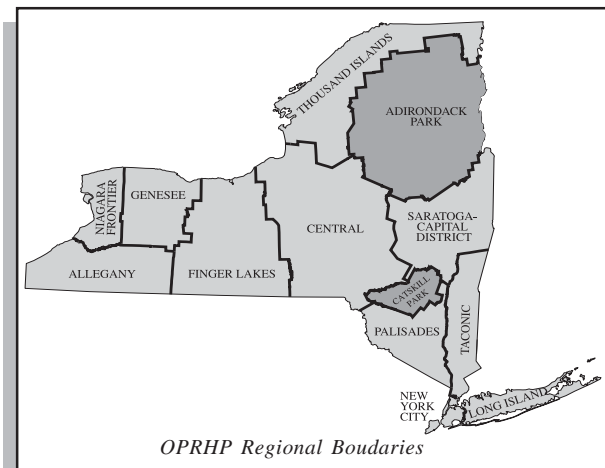
How to Use this Guide

This guide is not meant to be used in the field as a substitute for a detailed trail map-- it is only a sample. It is, however, meant to provide general information about a small sample of the numerous trail opportunities in New York State. This guide's primary focus is on NYS OPRHP and DEC trails. Major statewide trail systems are also described.

The information provided in this guide is organized by four zones, northern, southern, central and western. A contact is identified for each facility so more detailed information can be obtained. Also, phone numbers are listed for both the DEC and State Parks Regional Offices so that trail information for facilities not described in this guide can be obtained. The maps show DEC's and OPRHP's jurisdictional regions.

For the purposes of this guide the Southern Zone incorporates DEC Regions 1, 2, 3 and portions of Region 4 and the Long Island, New York City, Taconic, Palisades and Catskill Park* Regions of OPRHP. The Northern Zone is defined by DEC Regions 4, 5, 6 and portions of Region 3 and the Saratoga-Capital District, Thousand Islands and Adirondack Park* Regions of OPRHP. DEC's Region 7, portions of Region 8 and OPRHP's Central and Finger Lakes Regions make up the Central Zone. Lastly, the Western Zone is made up of portions of DEC's Region 8, all of Region 9 and OPRHP's Genesee, Niagara Frontier and Allegany Regions.

* Note: The recreational facilities within the Adirondack Park and Catskill Park Regions are administered by DEC.



The New York State Trails Council

The New York State Trails Council was formed in 1981 to ensure citizen participation in trail planning and management. The Council is an advocate for trail interests to all levels of government. It also provides a reliable source of information on trail-based recreation; coordinates efforts to develop, construct and maintain recreational trails; fosters trail user ethics, and provides a forum for mediating differences among trail user groups.

The Council consists of delegates representing various trail activities including ATV trail riding, bicycling, cross-country skiing, equestrian trail use, hiking, running, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, trail-bike riding and water trails. These representatives are trail users, not commercial interests.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Canal Corporation, the New York State Department of Transportation, the Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy, the New York State Senate, the

Federal Highway Administration, the New York State Parks and Conservation Association and the *Tourism Advocate* are also represented on the Council. These agency representatives serve as advisors to the council. They do not have voting privileges but may participate in discussions and raise issues for the Council to consider. The Trails Council is provided with technical support through the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

For further information about the New York State Trails Council, please contact:

New York State Trails Coordinator
Bureau of Planning and Design
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
(518)474-0414

Snowmobile Trail System

With over 126,000 registered snowmobilers, winter trails are in demand. To help meet this demand New York State has over 8,000 miles of funded snowmobile trails. These trails are maintained in partnership with individual snowmobilers and snowmobile groups who volunteer their time and efforts. Each trail is marked to provide comfort and an opportunity to discover the rich beauty of our winter wonderlands. Signing trails for this purpose is a monstrous job and many thanks to all who have joined with OPRHP to accomplish this task. With the continued help of all our volunteers, OPRHP will be able to continue to provide enjoyable winter riding experiences.

New York State Parks have several

excellent snowmobile trail systems. One of our most popular systems is within Allegany State Park. As noted later in this document, Allegany State Park is a prime example of a well-maintained trail system that boasts over 60 miles of snowmobile trails. The snowmobile trail network within and surrounding Letchworth State Park is maintained through cooperation among the local snowmobile clubs and park staff.

To learn more about OPRHP's snowmobile trail program within our parks and throughout the state, visit us on our web site at www.nysparks.com/snow, call (518) 474-0446 or call New York's Tourism office at (518) 473-0715.

Partnerships

Many NYS OPRHP and DEC trail systems are managed and maintained through partnerships with a number of trail organizations. Groups such as the NY-NJ Trail Conference, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference and the Adirondack Mountain Club, among others, assist the agencies. This publication contains contact information for some of these groups.