

Natural Heritage Trust

Executive Staff

Sally Drake

Executive Director

Sally Drake is the Executive Director of the Natural Heritage Trust (Trust). Sally was appointed to this position by the Board of Directors in October 2020. The Executive Director serves under the direction of, and is accountable to, the Board of the Trust. Sally is responsible for directing all aspects of the Trust's operations, fundraising and programs.

Sally has over two decades of public sector experience, with the last thirteen years at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation where she served as Director of Community Relations. In that role, she developed and implemented a variety of programmatic and policy initiatives to engage the communities served by State Parks and welcome new and underserved visitors to the State Park system. Among the programs she launched was the Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program which has served over 300,000 youth; the free Learn-to-Swim program which has taught thousands of children to swim at state parks; and together with partner Parks & Trails New York, she oversaw the agency's implementation of the state's largest state park volunteer event, I Love My Park Day. At State Parks, Sally worked to leverage private funding to support new programs, strengthen outreach and engage diverse and inclusive partners in communities throughout the state.

Sally received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Bard College in 1991 and a Master of Art in Public Policy from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the State University of New York, Albany in 1997.

Sarah Purcell

Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer

Sarah is the Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer of the Trust. She has served in these capacities since December 2014. Sarah is responsible for oversight of the Trust's administrative functions and finances.

Sarah has a background and education in policy and financial management. She started her career at the New York State Comptroller's Audit Bureau as a Program Examiner. She later worked as an Analyst for the New York Authority Budget Office. Prior to being named Deputy Director and CFO of the Trust, Sarah served as a Program Manager for six years and was responsible for compliance and financial reporting on programs and projects funded through the Trust.

Sarah received a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Sociology from Hofstra University in 2003 and a Master of Arts in Public Policy from the Rockefeller College at the State University of New York in 2005.