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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Winona Forest Recreation Association Receives Grant to Launch Next Phase of Trail Rehabilitation Project

Boylston, NY – Winona Forest Recreation Association was awarded a \$36,182.26 matching grant from the Environmental Protection Fund’s (EPF) Park and Trail Partnership Program to launch Phase II of a trail rehabilitation project that will transform the Winona Forest Recreation Area into a four-season outdoor destination.

Winona Forest Recreation Association (WFRA) will work to raise an additional \$6,385.10 in matching funds, for a total of \$42,567.36. Winona Forest Recreation Association is a not-for-profit organization, dedicated to promoting healthy and safe outdoor recreational activities within the Winona Forest Recreation Area.

The grant, announced on March 19, is one of 22 awards totaling \$450,000 for organizations dedicated to the stewardship and promotion of New York’s State Parks and Historic Sites. The grants, funded through the EPF, will be matched by almost \$150,000 in private and local funding and will support projects to strengthen friends’ groups and enhance public access and recreational opportunities at state parks and historic sites across the state.

The Park and Trail Partnership Program grants are administered by the State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and Parks & Trails New York, a statewide non-profit group.

“It’s inspiring to see the transformational effect of the Park and Trail Partnership Program grants and how they are enhancing the ability of Friends groups to make an even greater contribution to the stewardship of New York’s great outdoor spaces,” said Parks & Trails NY Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “These grant funds will enable groups to leverage more private and federal funding, marshal more volunteer power, and augment the state’s historic investment in parks, trails and other public outdoor places.”

The WFRA’s New Vision’s rehabilitation project fits into the overall mission of positioning Winona Forest as a world -class destination for year-round recreational users.

“Because of our well-groomed snowmobile trail system, and wide range of outdoor events, folks from around the country, and internationally, are visiting rural Upstate NY, which has a dramatic effect on the local economy,” said Matt Westerlund, WFRA president. “The PTNY Grant has given WFRA the opportunity to continue the New Vision Trail Rehabilitation Project that will transform the Winona Forest Recreation Area into a four-season outdoor destination. These enhancements will help us appeal to not only winter users, which we have done for many years, but also to non-winter users such as bikers and trail runners. We are excited for this opportunity.”



The 9,233-acre Winona State Forest is in northern Oswego County and southern Jefferson County on the western edge of the Tug Hill Plateau.

“We commend the members of the WFRA for their efforts to organize dynamic events and continually enhance the trail system at Winona,” said Dave Turner, Director of the Oswego County Department of Community Development, Tourism and Planning. “Prospective visitors frequently ask us about places to hike, ski, ride fat bikes, snowshoe, ride horseback and enjoy other outdoor activities. We are blessed to have more than 50,000 acres of public land in Oswego County and thanks to the dedicated efforts of the WFRA, we are able to direct people to Winona to enjoy these activities.”

Winona State Forest contains more than 18 miles of non-motorized trails and more than 30 miles of snowmobile trails in both Oswego and Jefferson counties.

To become a member and for more information on Winona Forest Recreation Association, visit <http://www.winonaforest.com/>.

Dropkin said Friends groups—nonprofit organizations often made up entirely of volunteers—are essential to the stewardship and promotion of the New York State park system. These dedicated groups raise private funds for capital projects, perform maintenance tasks, provide educational programming, and promote public use through hosting special events.

The Park and Trail Partnership Program grants are designed to:

- enhance the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, maintenance and promotion of New York State parks, trails, state historic sites and public lands;
- increase the sustainability, effectiveness, productivity, volunteerism and fundraising capabilities of not-for-profit organizations that promote, maintain and support New York State parks, trails, state historic sites and public lands; and
- promote the tourism and economic development benefits of outdoor recreation through the growth and expansion of a connected statewide network of parks, trails, greenways and public lands.

Park and Trail Partnership Program grants are open to organizations that support parks, trails, historic sites and public lands, and are administered by PTNY, in partnership with OPRHP. More information about the grant program is available at <http://ptny.org/our-work/support/park-trail-partnership-program>.

The Park and Trail Partnership Program, in addition to other grassroots efforts, complements the exciting revitalization and transformation of the entire State park system through Governor Cuomo’s *NY Parks 2020* plan.

Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving the health and quality of life of all New Yorkers by working with community organizations and municipalities to envision, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks, trails, and greenways throughout the state for all to use and enjoy.



More information on the Park and Trail Partnership Program can be found at www.ptny.org or by calling 518-434-1583.

Photo caption:

Events such as the Deer Fly Run give visitors to the chance to experience year-round trails at Winona Forest Recreation Area in northern Oswego and southern Jefferson counties. This year's Deer Fly Run will be Aug. 24. To become a member and for more information on Winona Forest Recreation Association, visit <http://www.winonaforest.com/>. (Photo by Brad Smith.)

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