



Natural Heritage Trust



2020 Annual Report



Projects & Programs
April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020

Message from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

We are pleased to present our FY2019-2020 Year in Review. This report highlights the ways which the Trust continued to successfully raise, manage and administer funds to benefit public projects and programs in parks throughout New York State.

At the close of our fiscal year (March 31, 2020), the Trust held just over \$52 million in total assets, including more than \$25.9 million for permanent endowments. We received \$12 million in program and activity revenues, donations, grants and corporate sponsorships, while expending approximately \$11.5 million in support of a wide variety of exemplary projects.

This reporting includes the 11 months *pre*-COVID19, however as you are reading this, our state, country and world are all very different places. New York State has been navigating and responding to this pandemic on every level, and our parks and open spaces have provided a constant and continuous outlet for respite, relaxation and relief. Since the beginning of the crisis, New York State Parks have been kept safely open thanks to dedicated staff and with the help of supportive and committed partners.

Our success has always been made possible by the steadfast commitment of our friends and patronage of our donors, and during this challenging time that has become more evident than ever before. We are deeply grateful to our agency partners—the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and the NY Department of State (DOS)—and to the many individuals, businesses, foundations and communities for their investment in the Trust.

You have been there for us and we are here—and will continue to be here—for you.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Allen G. Payne
Executive Director

July 1, 2020

Board of Directors

Erik Kulleseid, *Chair*

Commissioner, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Erik Kulleseid has been serving as Parks Commissioner and as the Chair of NHT since 2019. Previously, Mr. Kulleseid served as Senior Vice President, Parks and Policy Program for the Open Space Institute. He co-founded the Parks Program (originally the Alliance for New York State Parks) at OSI, along with State Council of Parks Chair Lucy Waletzky and former State Parks Commissioner Carol Ash in 2010. During his tenure at OSI Mr. Kulleseid secured \$30 million in private and public funds to support improvements and expand recreational access to state parks, including the Jones Beach Revitalization Plan, the Humphrey Nature Center at Letchworth State Park, Thacher Park Center, Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park, and a number of transformational projects at Minnewaska State Park Preserve. Commissioner Kulleseid graduated from Yale College, has a Law degree from Stanford Law School and a Forestry Master's degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

Basil Seggos

Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

Since his appointment in 2015, Commissioner Seggos has managed programs promoting a clean, healthy and accessible environment and supporting world-class outdoor recreation on state lands and waters. In addition to advising the Governor on environmental policy and issues, he serves on a variety of boards including the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), Delaware River Basin Commission, the Great Lakes Commission, Hudson River Park, the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC), the NYS Drinking Water Quality Council, the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA), the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, NYS Energy Planning Board. He received his B.A. from Trinity College and earned his law degree from Pace University. Commissioner Seggos is a Captain in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Lucy R. Waletzky, M.D.

Chair, State Council of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (SCOP)

Dr. Lucy Waletzky has been Chair of the Taconic Region Parks Commission since 2004 and Chair of the State Council of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (SCOP) since March 2007. Under her leadership at SCOP, the Council's role has expanded with regional commissioners becoming more engaged in private fundraising, helping to build stronger community relationships and advocating to support and protect parks. Dr. Waletzky founded the Open Space Institute's Alliance for New York State Parks program in 2010, an initiative devoted to the restoration and support of New York's state parks. Through this partnership and her enduring support of other groups and organizations, Dr. Waletzky is, and continues to be, an unfailing and powerful voice in conservation, earning her numerous environmental awards. Most recently she was the 2018 recipient of OSI's Land Conservation Award.

Rossana Rosado

Secretary of State, Department of State (DOS)

Prior to being named the Secretary of State in 2016, Secretary Rosado was the first woman to serve as Editor and Publisher of the largest Spanish-language newspaper in the country, *El Diario La Prensa*, for which she earned numerous awards including an Emmy and a Peabody Award for Journalism. Secretary Rosado is equally accomplished in her roles in public service as she served on the board of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey from 2012 to 2015 and was recently reappointed to that role in 2017. She also chairs Governor Cuomo's Council on Community Re-entry and Reintegration of New Yorkers returning from prison, and served on Governor David Paterson's Task Force on Juvenile Justice. In addition to being a member of John Jay College's Foundation Board of Trustees since 2012, she was a Distinguished Lecturer at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice prior to joining the Cuomo administration. Secretary Rosado received her B.A. in journalism from Pace University.

2019—2020 Highlights & Accomplishments

Robert Frederick Smith Center for the Performing Arts at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park

The performing arts center at Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park has been revitalized and renamed in recognition of Robert Frederick Smith, the philanthropist and founder of Vista Equity Partners who donated \$1 million toward the facility's renovation. The fully renovated



Artists perform at the Center's Grand Opening

Cultural Performance Center opened officially to the public in April 2019 and an Opening Night Gala was held for the community on April 5.

The cultural performance center, although outdated, has always been recognized as one of Riverbank's greatest assets, drawing tens of thousands of visitors to social, educational, and performing arts events. With essential functional and technical upgrades, the new Center now offers superior production values, as well as a variety of new, high-quality programs and activities available to people of all ages.

In partnership with the Open Space Institute and the New York City Regional Parks Commission, the NHT was involved in raising \$2.8 million in public and private grants and donations towards the Center's renovations. The NHT now holds an operating fund of approximately \$400,000 for specialized maintenance and upgrades at the Center as needed.

Autism Nature Trail at Letchworth State Park

The Autism Nature Trail (ANT) will be a permanent feature within Letchworth State Park, providing a safe and inclusive setting that makes nature uniquely accessible to visitors with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The mile-long, self-paced trail loop is comprised of eight stations that address various sensory needs. As the only outdoor recreation experience of its kind in the nation, the ANT will be a vital resource for individuals and families living with ASD and other disorders, allowing them to enjoy the physical, emotional, and social benefits of safely being outdoors and engaging with nature.



Commissioner Kulleseid at ANT's Press Event



ANT station rendering

On January 30, a public announcement event was held in Rochester with all project partners, including NYS Parks Commissioner Kulleseid and representatives from the Natural Heritage Trust, Genesee Region, Letchworth State Park, Camp Puzzle Peace, and Perry Central School District. As a result of wide press coverage, the NHT received an unsolicited donation of \$150,000. The campaign has now reached \$2.4 million of the \$3 million

interim goal to proceed with ground-breaking, and a final project goal of \$3.9 million. This initial investment will fund construction of the trail, the establishment of a specialized maintenance endowment, and an initial five years of support for operations and programming.

\$13.7 Million in Record-Setting Support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

A 2020 grant of \$862,100 from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation will establish the Ladders to the Outdoors program at seven state parks in Western New York, teaching recreational skills to youth in partnership with local schools, youth organizations and communities. The NHT continues to administer a \$6.5 million grant from the Foundation, awarded in 2018 for the Western New York Greenways initiative. Along with \$16 million in state support, funding from the Foundation is bridging the gaps in the Niagara River Greenway, envisioned more than a decade ago as an unbroken trail along the Niagara River. The grant also supports the 750-mile Empire State Trail, which includes various trail segments around Buffalo and Niagara Falls. The NHT is additionally administering a \$6.4 million grant from the Foundation awarded in 2019, which will ensure completion of 30 miles of the Genesee Valley Greenway and allow planning and assessments for the Niagara Shoreline Trails network.



Cyclists enjoy the Genesee Valley Greenway

Connect Kids to Parks

Connect Kids to Parks continues as a key element of Parks' work to introduce children to New York State parklands and historic sites through free recreation programs. Many schools have integrated the program into their curricula, offering popular annual field trips to parks and historic sites. The NHT has raised over \$450,000 in support of Connect Kids, and the Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant program has awarded 2,344 field trip grants and served over 108,000 public school students to date. Funded through the Environmental Protection Fund with support from the New York State Department of Transportation, the growing Transportation Grant program covers the field trip transportation costs and all program fees for schools in Title 1 districts. Meanwhile, Every Kid in a Park offers free day-use entry to parks and historic sites for all fourth-grade students and their families. Together, these programs have served over 100,000 children in New York.

As part of Connect Kids, Learn to Swim celebrated its seventh season in 2019, with support from the American Red Cross, the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance and the Northeast Spa and Pool Association Foundation. Offering free swim lessons and free transportation to New York State Parks, this program largely benefits low-income urban and rural populations statewide where swimming options and instruction are limited. Summer programs included intermediate-to-advanced swim lessons and pre-school and parent-child programs at 27 locations throughout the state. In the past seven years, this program has helped over 6,500 children learn to swim. Governor Andrew Cuomo has made Learn to Swim a signature program of his commitment to serving more youth at state parks. 2019 also marked the first time that adult swim lessons were offered in select locations.



A Parent-and-Toddler class through the Learn to Swim program

Emily Timbrook Camperships

The NHT is celebrating 10 years of partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for the Emily Timbrook Campership program. The Emily Timbrook Campership, a scholarship to cover the cost of attendance at DEC Camp Rushford, is awarded to one camper annually based on an essay contest. The Campership program is supported by the parents of Emily Timbrook, a former DEC Camp Rushford attendee and volunteer who tragically died in a car accident in April 2009. Emily's family created the campership program to honor their daughter's love for nature and commitment to environmental conservation, which were fostered during her time at Camp Rushford.

The DEC offers unique, week-long residential camp programs for ages 11 to 17 providing experiences in conservation education and environmental stewardship. There are four residential camps for youth ages 11-13 or 14-17: Camp Colby in Saranac Lake, Franklin County; Camp DeBruce in Livingston Manor, Sullivan County; Pack Forest in Warrensburg, Warren County; and Camp Rushford in Caneadea, Allegany County. The NHT is proud to partner with DEC in providing camperships to these programs, especially in honor of Emily Timbrook.



Campers fishing at DEC Camp Rushford

Nature and Environmental Education Centers

New and revitalized nature and environmental education centers demonstrate New York State's renewed focus on environmental conservation, stewardship, and sustainability. When more children are connected to the internet than to nature, environmental education prepares the next generation of leaders for the future they will inherit.

This year, the Natural Heritage Trust has been actively involved in fundraising for the Cohasset Nature Museum and the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center.

Cohasset Nature Museum at Harriman State Park: A Partnership with The Boy's Club of New York



A 1934 photo of the Lake Cohasset Museum

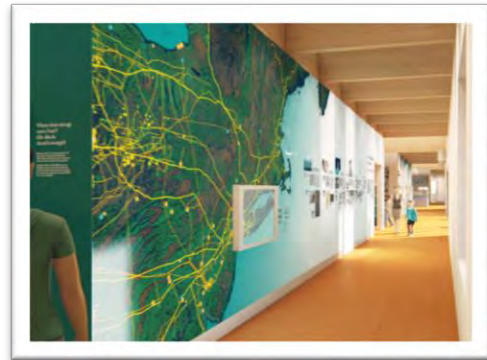
There are currently four operating Regional Nature Museums in Harriman State Park. These iconic structures, now 100 years old, provide hands-on, experiential nature programming to youth in the group camps. Hundreds of thousands of young people have first encountered nature through these facilities: holding snakes, birdwatching, playing environmental games and learning scientific principles. In 2019, museum programs and activities reached more than 8,000 youth and adults, many of whom were new to the outdoors, homeless, or would otherwise not have access to these resources.

In the early 1980s, a fifth nature museum located at Lake Cohasset was closed due to budget cuts. In 2020, in celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Regional Nature Museum program and Lake Cohasset Camp, NHT is partnering with the Boys' Club of New York to support the renovation and reopening of the fifth museum. Additional partners including

Palisades Interstate Parks Commission and the Trailside Museum & Zoo are helping to bring all five regional nature museums back to full operation.

Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center

New York State Parks has partnered with PSEG Long Island, the Long Island Power Authority, New York Power Authority, the Natural Heritage Trust, and other state and local groups to create and build a \$32 million, year-round facility at Jones Beach State Park. The Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center continues the State's revitalization of the historic park and will highlight the unique aspects of the park's topography, wildlife habitats and ecosystems. Visitors will learn about New York State's ongoing clean energy initiatives through exhibitions and programming, and will be encouraged and empowered to practice environmental stewardship. Working collaboratively with the Long Island Commission of State Parks, the NHT is involved in efforts to secure \$4 million for exhibits and operations. As of March 2020, construction of the Center is underway, and exhibits and programming are in their final design and planning phases.



An exhibit rendering at the new Center

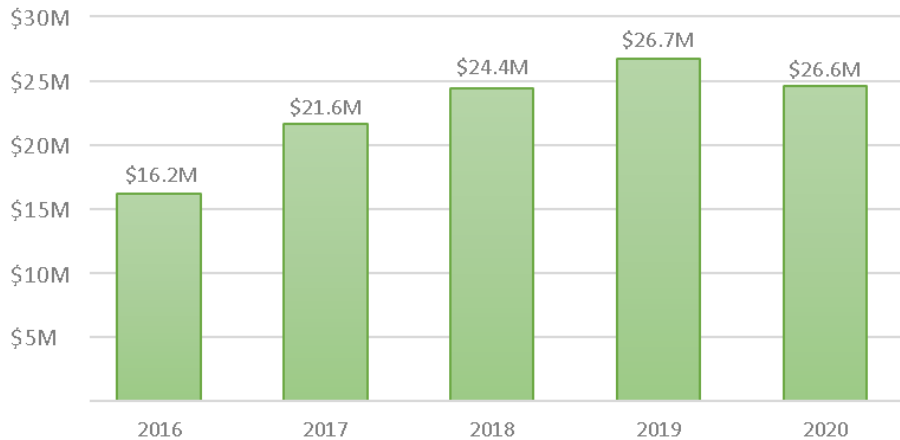
Financial Highlights

BALANCE SHEET - ALL FUNDS

As of March 31, 2020

| ASSETS | 2020 | 2019 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | \$ 4,483,866 | \$ 6,168,821 |
| Investments (including Endowments) | 48,087,766 | 45,354,928 |
| Accounts & Other Receivables | 104,298 | 77,045 |
| Total Assets | \$ 52,677,950 | \$ 51,602,813 |
| LIABILITIES | | |
| Due to Fiduciary Fund: State Parks & Environmental Conservation | 47,402,454 | 46,648,982 |
| Accounts & Other Payables | 69,919 | 55,890 |
| Long-Term Liabilities | 3,168,939 | 2,860,497 |
| Total Liabilities | \$ 50,641,312 | \$ 49,565,369 |
| NET POSITION | | |
| Deferred Outflows/Inflows of Resources (Net) | (238,261) | 96,851 |
| Net Position | 2,272,879 | 1,938,574 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Position | \$ 52,675,930 | \$ 51,600,794 |

ENDOWMENTS MARKET VALUE



The NHT administers funds for twelve permanently endowed parks and sites. Annual endowment distributions support the cost of operating, maintenance and public programming.

Financial Highlights

SUMMARY OF CHANGES - FIDUCIARY FUNDS

As of March 31, 2020

ADDITIONS

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|-------------|----|------------|
| Gifts and Private Grants | \$ | 8,114,333 | \$ | 10,947,873 |
| Government Grants and Contracts | | 3,572,089 | | 3,497,932 |
| Activity & Program Income | | 1,068,531 | | 1,123,951 |
| Mitigation | | 657,796 | | 1,083,126 |
| Investment Income | | 630,732 | | 536,170 |
| Sponsorships | | 286,299 | | 416,638 |
| Merchandise & Other | | 111,761 | | 1,340,628 |
| Realized Gains on Investments | | 284,824 | | 1,583,224 |
| Unrealized Losses | | (2,299,217) | | (909,317) |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Total Additions | \$ | 12,427,148 | \$ | 19,620,225 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|

EXPENSES

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| Program Support & Staff | | 5,306,654 | | 6,127,720 |
| Activity & Event Support | | 1,895,190 | | 2,677,793 |
| Capital Construction & Maintenance | | 1,832,218 | | 1,661,134 |
| Endowment Transfers | | 1,575,023 | | 907,024 |
| Professional Services | | 387,648 | | 585,195 |
| Merchandise Resale | | 343,394 | | 838,232 |
| Other | | 346,703 | | 101,175 |

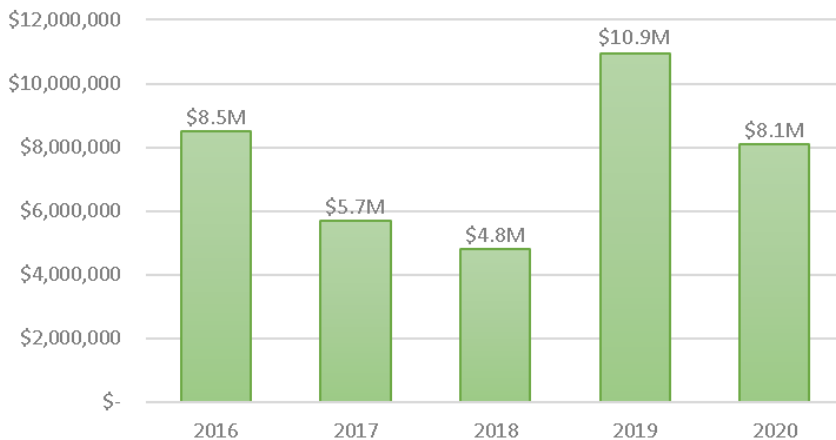
| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Total Expenses | \$ | 11,686,830 | \$ | 12,898,273 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|

NET POSITION

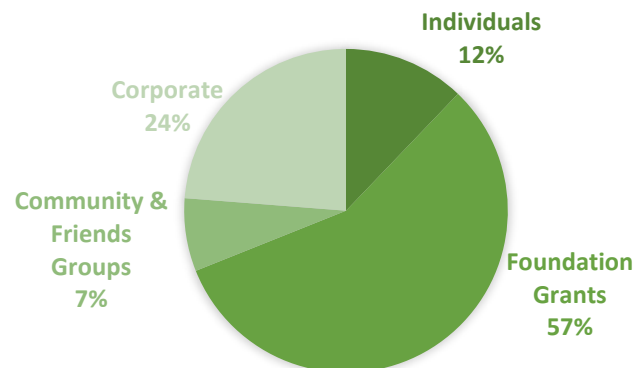
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|--------------------------------|--|------------|--|------------|
| Change in Net Position | | 740,318 | | 6,721,952 |
| Net Position Beginning of Year | | 46,887,184 | | 40,165,232 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Net Position End of Year | \$ | 47,627,502 | \$ | 46,887,184 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|

ANNUAL GROWTH IN CONTRIBUTIONS & GIFTS



SUPPORT BY DOLLAR AMOUNT



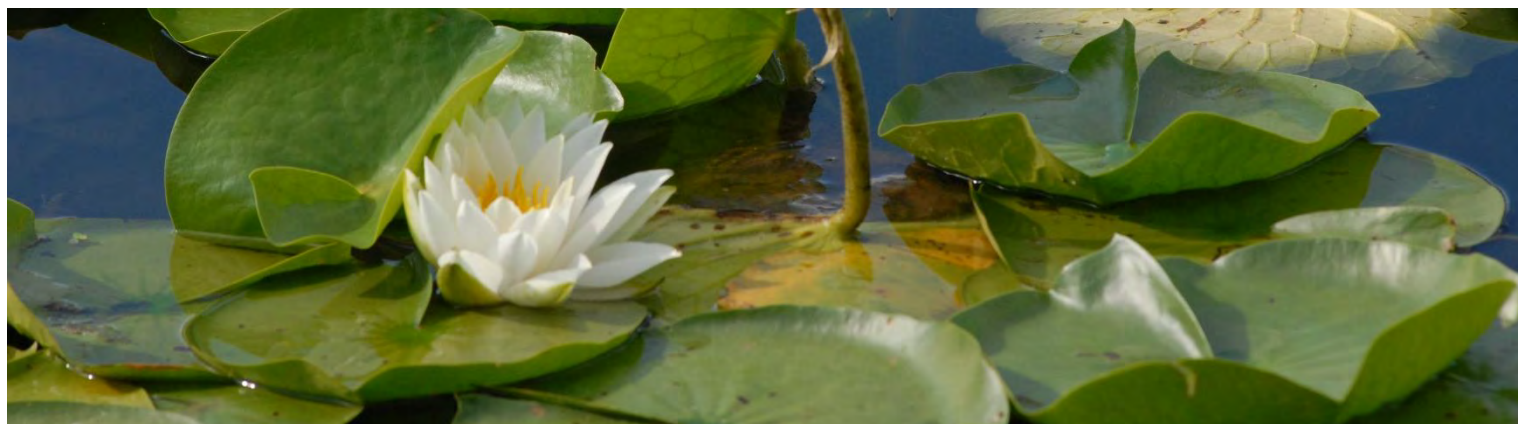
Financial Highlights

SUMMARY OF CHANGES - OPERATING FUNDS

As of March 31, 2020

| REVENUE | 2020 | 2019 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Investment Income | \$ 507,129 | \$ 392,967 |
| Administrative Income | 581,814 | 640,882 |
| Unrealized Gains on Investments | 212,720 | 192,153 |
| Realized Gains on Investments | 45,645 | 43,214 |
| Contributed (In-Kind) Services | 27,911 | 98,408 |
| Total Operating Revenues | \$ 1,375,219 | \$ 1,367,624 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Staffing | 713,320 | 588,560 |
| Professional Services | 175,104 | 109,960 |
| Office & Other | 152,490 | 102,438 |
| Total Operating Expenses | \$ 1,040,914 | \$ 800,958 |
| NET POSITION | | |
| Excess Revenues Over Expenditures | 334,305 | 566,666 |
| Net Position Beginning of Year | 1,938,574 | 1,371,908 |
| Net Position End of Year | \$ 2,272,879 | \$ 1,938,574 |

Careful financial stewardship has guided the Natural Heritage Trust's mission for over 50 years, resulting in a robust organization prepared to expand the impact of private philanthropy and strategic partnerships throughout New York State.



Public and Private Partnerships



The Natural Heritage Trust collaborates with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Department of State (DOS) to identify sources of private investment to supplement state support for our natural, recreational and historic resources. Since 1968 millions of private dollars have been secured to support programming, capital projects, environmental and outdoor education, natural resource protection, and historic preservation throughout the state. The NHT is dedicated to building and sustaining relationships with private supporters to protect and enhance these programs and projects.

Endowments and Major Gifts

As of FY2019-20, the NHT managed over \$25.9 million in separate long-term investment/endowment accounts. The NHT manages 13 dedicated endowments statewide. NHT endowment funds are invested to provide an ongoing source of annual income. Earnings from these accounts support the restricted projects and programs for which the funds were raised. The NHT continues to actively expand its endowment portfolio.

Foundation Support

During FY2019-20, the NHT received support from a wide array of foundations, trusts and not-for-profit organizations. In some instances, the NHT receives annual distributions from entities with funding dedicated for the benefit of specific parks and facilities. In other cases, the NHT is awarded foundation grants in support of specific programs and/or projects. We are happy to continue our partnership with Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation this fiscal year through an additional grant of \$862,100 in support of parks and recreation in Western New York.

Friends' Groups

As part of its overall mission, the NHT builds and maintains partnerships with a variety of Friends and other mission-congruent groups. The NHT collaborates in a number of ways—in some cases acting as a fiscal agent, and in some situations the NHT receives funds raised by the Friends in order to support a specific park or site.

Statewide Programming, Agency Initiatives and Collaborations

The NHT provides support to its state agency partners by soliciting and securing public and private funding via grants, donations, program income and other funds to enhance the agencies' abilities to carry out their respective missions by supplementing limited state resources. Through our cooperative relationships, the NHT provides agencies and friends groups with support in investment management and administrative functions for specific projects and programs.

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