



**New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

**KATHY HOCHUL**  
Governor

**ERIK KULLESEID**  
Commissioner

**AGENCY NAME:** Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

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## **DELIVERABLES ACHIEVED SINCE 2021**

In furtherance of the agency's Transparency Plan, OPRHP completed a number of steps to improve transparency of the agency's operations to the public.

### **Freedom of Information Law Requests**

The Transparency Plan identified the need to update the instructions for submitting Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL") requests to OPRHP. Accident reports are a frequently FOIL'd record, and the agency's website didn't clearly identify the conditions under which information contained in accident reports would be released after a request. Therefore, OPRHP updated the instructions on the [agency's website](#) accordingly.

Though not identified in the Transparency Plan, OPRHP also updated its regulations to correct the address of where FOIL requests and appeals should be submitted, as the regulations were outdated.

### **Project Sunlight Training**

OPRHP's Counsel's Office also provided a live training opportunity on Project Sunlight in November 2022, and sent a copy of the Project Sunlight training to all designated policy makers and support staff to reinforce the need to make timely reports in the Project Sunlight database.

### **Open Meetings Law**

OPRHP continues to comply with the Open Meetings Law and in 2023, staff have provided logistical support to the Temporary Commission to Prevent Childhood Drowning to assist the Commission in complying with the Open Meetings Law. OPRHP arranged for public hearings, including the necessary public access, drafted public notice and published meeting agendas in advance of scheduled public meetings.

### **Explorer App Upgrade**

OPRHP updated its Parks Explorer App with a new mapping feature that includes offline maps for use when connectivity is a challenge, and live maps for use on Wi-Fi or with good connectivity. The mapping feature allows park visitors mobile-friendly access to a trail map and live maps can indicate your location on a specific trail. This functionality helps improve the general wayfinding and navigation for the public within a park. Additional enhancements to the mobile app are underway, including an events feature that will be available in Spring 2024.

## **Guide to Developing Greenway Trails**

OPRHP and Parks & Trails NY (PTNY) developed a new resource to support Greenway trails development in communities around the state. The new handbook - *Trails Across New York: A Grassroots Guide to Developing Greenway Trails* - provides detailed information to guide the public and grassroots advocates through the steps needed to see a greenway trail to completion.

The trail development process can be challenging to navigate even for the most experienced community organizers. To address this gap, *Trails Across New York: A Grassroots Guide to Developing Greenway Trails* outlines the necessary steps to get a trail project started, walks through the planning and development process, and offers guidance on maximizing visitation and the value of the trail once complete.

This guide will help fulfill the growing need of available resources for local advocates and 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 full guidebook can be found at [ptny.org/greenwaytrails](https://ptny.org/greenwaytrails).

## **Centennial Challenge**

The [Centennial Challenge](#) is part of a year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of the founding of New York's statewide park and historic site system. To enhance public engagement of this event, a year-long celebratory challenge was announced that all New York State residents and visitors can participate in to explore our state parks, learn about New York history, and give back to New York State Parks for the next generation of adventurers.

The Challenge began on January 1, 2024, and includes 100 missions that can be completed at various state parks and historic sites. Participants will need to complete 24 missions throughout 2024 to complete the challenge. The Challenge is designed to be completed by people of all abilities and can be finished by visiting parks and historic sites across the state or keeping with one that's close to home. Participants can get involved by downloading the Goosechase app on their phone or completing a paper checklist and mailing it in.

The paper checklist along and Centennial Challenge video have been translated into Spanish, along with other centennial materials, to help improve agency communications to the diverse groups of users that utilize our facilities.

## **INITIATIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2024**

### **OPRHP New Website**

OPRHP strives to provide exceptional visitor experiences and year-round, affordable, and accessible outdoor recreation and historic interpretation for a diversity of ages, interests, and abilities. The website is one of the keystone public entry points of the agency and serves as inspiration for travel planning and the primary source for useful information about the system's destinations, events, and programs. To meet the needs and expectations of our diverse audience the agency will be redesigning its website over the next two years. The redesign will include a mobile-first design, engaging content, improved site navigation, seamless integrations with the existing Parks Explorer App, and more.

## **GovQA FOIL Requests**

By March 2024, OPRHP will begin use of GovQA, a statewide system used by agencies to receive and respond to FOIL requests. Currently, OPRHP receives FOIL requests via OpenFOIL and electronic mail and the new system will enable OPRHP to better track and report on compliance with FOIL deadlines. Training must be provided to agency staff on how to create a profile, redact information, upload and route records in GovQA and this will be a major undertaking for OPRHP's Counsel's Office in 2024.

## **Share Your Story**

In celebration of the Parks Centennial, OPRHP will launch a multimedia campaign throughout 2024 that invites the public to share stories, photos, and videos reminiscing on their experiences at New York State Parks and Historic Sites. There will be several methods for people to share their stories, which are outlined on the [Share Your Story webpage](#). Text, photos, and videos can be emailed to [stories@parks.ny.gov](mailto:stories@parks.ny.gov). People may post to Facebook, Instagram, or X using the hashtag *#NYStateParksStory*. People may also submit text-only stories of up to 500 words using the submission form at [parks.ny.gov/100/story](https://parks.ny.gov/100/story).

The public will also have the opportunity to hear each other's stories. Stories will be shared on the New York State Parks' Instagram, Facebook, and X channels at [@NYStateParks](https://www.instagram.com/NYStateParks). Stories will also be posted on the New York State Parks Blog at [nystateparks.blog](https://nystateparks.blog); on the New York State Parks website at [parks.ny.gov](https://parks.ny.gov); and in email newsletters.

To prompt memories, "Story Sparks" will be posted regularly on State Parks social media channels ([@nystateparks](https://www.instagram.com/nystateparks)), as well as sent in Centennial email newsletters. Staff from Parks and Sites are sharing their own memories in a video series launching in the coming weeks. Several prominent New Yorkers will also share their memories in a series of videos launching later this year. Participating in Share Your Stories is a mission in the Centennial Challenge announced in December.