

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**New Trail Website for Outdoor Enthusiasts**

**Tompkins County, New York**

**April 3, 2017**

Outdoor enthusiasts have a new resource to find trails in Tompkins County for hiking, biking, skiing, or simply viewing the multitude of gorges and falls in the area. Funded by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program, a new website, called *Out on the Trails* at [IthacaTrails.org](http://IthacaTrails.org), allows people to search for trails based on the type of experience they seek. Users can search for trails by criteria such as distance, difficulty, scenic views, dog walking, or picnicking, and also access directions to trailheads and information on parking. "We want to make it easy for residents and visitors to enjoy the many hidden gems we have here in Tompkins County," said project leader and Ulysses Town Supervisor Liz Thomas.

Tens of thousands of people come to Ithaca and Tompkins County to experience state parks, majestic gorges, and waterfalls. But the area also has many trails that are not as well known, where people can experience gorgeous views, unique natural areas, peaceful wetlands and forests, mountain biking thrills, and off-street biking opportunities.

With appealing descriptions, photographs, and a clean user-friendly layout, the site is designed to entice more visitors to come to the Tompkins County area, and encourage them to explore the County's outdoor recreation offerings more deeply.

"Making all of our natural areas and trails more accessible to visitors is a great opportunity to grow tourism sustainably by showcasing our existing natural assets," said Tompkins County Tourism Program Director Tom Knipe.

Tourism is big business in Tompkins County, with visitors spending close to \$200 million in local shops, restaurants, and hotels annually. They also leave behind nearly \$650 in local tax revenues per Tompkins County household, which funds programs and services. Trails in New York State generate an impressive \$232,000 in economic growth per mile each year. The site's many partners hope the website will further promote sustainable growth in tourism, while also being a great new resource for residents.

"I had lived in Ithaca five years before I finally discovered the Cayuga Trail in the Cornell Botanic Gardens Fall Creek South Natural Area and the trails around Lick Brook Gorge—these are now two of my favorite places to hike with my family," said Knipe.

Todd Bittner, Director of Natural Areas at the Cornell Botanic Gardens and one of the key grant managers, said, "Our County boasts 240 miles of public trails, but since they span 15 different organizations, many residents and visitors find trail information in bits and pieces. The beauty of the new *Out on the Trails* website is that it provides comprehensive information on all the trails, regardless of ownership." The site links to each partner organization's website for more information on the organization and its park or trail. It is optimized and GPS enabled for use on a mobile device, such as a smartphone, as well as on computers and tablets for viewing on a larger screen.

A special event Monday, April 17th, features National Geographic Adventurer of the Year Jennifer Pharr Davis. The event begins at 10:30 a.m. at The Space @ Greenstar followed by a family hike with Jennifer on the new Black Diamond Trail beginning at 1:30 p.m. at Ithaca Children's Garden. See more about the event and Jennifer and her remarkable hiking experiences on [Facebook under "Families on Foot."](#)

Hikes are planned throughout the month of April by trail partners to celebrate the County's trails and the launch of the new website. Go to [IthacaEvents.com](http://IthacaEvents.com) for details on times and locations.

April 4, 5:00 p.m. - [Cayuga Trail East](#), Ithaca

April 11, 5:00 p.m. - [Roy Park Preserve](#), Dryden

April 13, noon. - Adopt A Trail Ribbon cutting. [Cayuga Waterfront Trail](#) near the Space at Greenstar.

April 13, 5:00 p.m. - [Black Diamond Trail](#), Slow Roll Bike Ride. Leave [Stewart Park](#) (large pavilion) at 5:00 p.m.

April 15, 8:00 a.m. - [Stevenson Preserve](#), Enfield, [RSVP](#) requested

April 17, 1:30 p.m. - [Black Diamond Trail](#), Ithaca Children's Garden

April 20, 9:00 a.m. [Black Diamond Trail North](#) Ulysses/Trumansburg

April 23, 1:00 p.m. - [Earth Day Hike on the Cayuga Trail](#), Ithaca

April 29, 10:00 a.m. - [Fischer Old-Growth Forest](#), Cornell Botanic Gardens, Newfield. [Registration required.](#)

April 30, 7:00 a.m. - [Jim Schug Trail](#), Dryden Lake Park

IthacaTrails.org is a partnership of the Tompkins County Parks and Trails Network. Partner organizations include the Cornell Botanic Gardens, Town of Ulysses, Tompkins County Tourism Program, Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability, Ithaca Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Finger Lakes Land Trust, NY State Parks, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Ithaca College Natural Lands, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, City of Ithaca, Town of Ithaca, Town of Lansing, Town of Dryden, Town of Danby, the Nature Conservancy, and user groups, including Bike Walk Tompkins, the Cayuga Trails Club, and Finger Lakes Trails Conference.

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