



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 22, 2026

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

RE: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy MOU

Dear Honorable Members:

Please find enclosed a resolution from the Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry requesting authorization to extend an agreement with the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy to collaborate on capital projects that will revitalize and enhance Chestnut Ridge Park.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Commissioner Troy P. Schinzel at the Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark C. Poloncarz".

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/nr
Enclosure

cc: Troy P. Schinzel, Commissioner, Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry
Re: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy MOU
Date: May 22, 2026

SUMMARY

It is recommended that the Legislature approve the attached resolution prepared by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry to authorize the County Executive to execute the necessary agreements to extend the Memorandum of Understanding between the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and the County of Erie, currently set to expire July 7, 2026. The Conservancy was formed in 2010 and has since partnered with Erie County to identify and fund numerous projects to improve Chestnut Ridge Park, totaling approximately \$1 million to date.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Any dollars raised and contributed by the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy (CRC) will ease the burden on taxpayers.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

It is essential to collaborate with partners to fund various projects needed in our park system rather than relying solely on taxpayer-funded borrowing. The CRC has been a strong partner, raising and investing hundreds of thousands of dollars into Chestnut Ridge Park on projects such as Casino mural restoration (\$40,000), Casino floor refinishing (\$19,000), sensory trail (\$37,000), stone work restoration (\$15,000), tennis court lighting, Playground for All (\$750,000), Eternal Flame Trail improvements (\$135,000), and many others.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Additional tax revenue will be required to secure the capital funds necessary for the maintenance of Chestnut Ridge Park.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The County Executive and the Commissioner of Parks will execute the agreement with Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY

RE: Chestnut Ridge Conservancy MOU

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry is responsible for identifying and funding essential capital projects at Chestnut Ridge Park; and

WHEREAS, the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy (CRC), a 501(c)(3) corporation, wishes to continue to support the success of Chestnut Ridge Park; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry and the CRC have established the scope of CRC involvement at Chestnut Ridge Park; and

WHEREAS, the taxpayers in Erie County will directly benefit from any assistance that the CRC provides to Chestnut Ridge Park.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to enter into an agreement, as well as any ancillary documents, with the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the County Executive's Office, Department of Law, Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry and Division of Budget and Management.