



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

September 18, 2026

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

Re: NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Recreational Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park Support Award

Dear Honorable Members:

I am enclosing a proposed resolution and accompanying memorandum from the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry requesting authorization to execute a contract with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to accept \$100,000 in grant funding to support the Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park.

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

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/wp
Enclosure

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

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry
Re: NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Recreational Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park Support Award
Date: September 18, 2026

SUMMARY

It is recommended that the Legislature approve the attached resolution prepared by the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry ("Department of Parks") authorizing the County Executive and/or Deputy County Executive to enter into an agreement with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation ("OPRHP") to accept \$100,000 in grant funding, and to establish a project budget to support Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The OPRHP requires 0% local match of the total project cost for this award.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Approval of this resolution will enable the Department of Parks to accept \$100,000 in grant funding for construction of an 1,800 ft. accessible natural-surface hiking trail at Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park. This project will result in expanded opportunities for individuals of limited mobility to engage with parks and the natural world.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While the Parks Department offers many miles of recreation trails, it offers no formally-accessible natural surface trails, limiting individuals with limited mobility to paved surfaces such as roadways or paths. This grant will enable the Parks Department to implement an accessible 1,800 ft. natural surface trail at Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Without the requested authorization, Erie County will be unable to accept OPRHP funding or implement the project of building an accessible trail in the park system.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

An agreement with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will be executed by the County Executive or Deputy County Executive, a project budget will be established and subsequent bids for the construction project will be developed and announced.

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

RE: NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Recreational Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park Support Award

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry ("Department of Parks") maintains over 10,000 acres of park and forest land; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County parks offer a multitude of recreation opportunities such as hiking, biking, and winter sports on trails throughout the park system; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Parks has prioritized accessibility in many aspects of park management and recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Parks has received a \$100,000 Legislative Initiative grant in the New York State Budget to support the Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park; and

WHEREAS, there are specific requirements and regulations governing the expenditures of these funds; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environment has performed a State Environmental Quality Review, and has issued a Negative Declaration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the County Executive or Deputy County Executive is authorized and directed to accept these grant funds in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 for the project described in the grant application; and be it further

RESOLVED, that administration of all funds under this grant will be in accordance with all terms and conditions contained in the GUIDELINES for Projects over \$50,000 or those Involving Construction provided by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (Published October 2021, Updated June 2026); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the governing body of the municipality delegates signing authority to execute the Master Contract and any amendments thereto, any required deed of easement, and any other certifications to the individual(s) who hold(s) the following elected or appointed municipal office(s) or employment position title(s): County Executive, Deputy County Executive; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the County of Erie is authorized and directed to agree to the terms and conditions of the State of New York Contract for Grants Contract Number C21N903 with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Recreational for such development of Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given to establish grant funding in the Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry as a grant in Fund 281, Fund Center 16410 as follows:

Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry
Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Support Grant
164SBNHPS2627
9/01/26-12/31/27

REVENUES

409000 State Aid Revenue

TOTAL

BUDGET

\$100,000

\$100,000

APPROPRIATIONS

516020 Professional Services Contracts & Fees

TOTAL

BUDGET

\$100,000

\$100,000

and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of the Division of Budget and Management is hereby authorized to implement any budget adjustments as required to comply with local funding requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given to the County Executive or Deputy County Executive to amend contracts as necessary to implement any no-cost extension that may be permitted by the grantor; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby given for the Division of Budget and Management to make any technical adjustments necessary to effectuate this resolution; and be it further

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