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Friends of Connetquot Receive \$2,500 Grant from Parks & Trails New York

Oakdale, NY --- The Friends of Connetquot Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the Friends were awarded a Parks & Trails New York Capacity Building Grant of \$2,500. The grant will fund educational signage that will describe the workings of the historic Nicoll Grist Mill at the Connetquot River State Park Preserve in Oakdale, New York.

The Friends have been spearheading the restoration of the Mill. To date, the structural and exterior finish work is complete; work on the interior and the Mill mechanisms is scheduled to begin this summer. Once complete, the Mill will be a functioning mill and a museum dedicated to increasing the public's understanding of the social and industrial history of Long Island and the Preserve's role within that framework.

The educational signs funded by Parks & Trails New York will be used to both highlight the Friends' activities at the Preserve, particularly the Mill restoration, and the Mill's history from its construction in the 1700s until now, its internal mechanisms, including a description of how the horizontal tub wheels grind and operate, and the natural aspects that are necessary for Mill functions, such as hydro power. There will be five signs in all, posted on both the exterior and interior of the Mill.

Friends Board Chair Robert Labuski, speaking on behalf of the Board, has said that the Friends "are grateful to Parks & Trails New York for their support of the Mill restoration. Such support is crucial to our success."

About the Friends of Connetquot: The Friends of Connetquot, a 501(c) (3) organization, is dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and continuation for future generations of the Connetquot River State Park Preserve. In over fifteen years, the Friends have successfully completed many projects at the Preserve to protect and improve its historic structures--such as the Club House where they funded the renovation and restoration of an original bedroom and commissioned a fire safety study for the installation of a fire suppression system. Other projects include the acquisition of the South Side Sportsmen's Club archive, the reconstruction of the Rainbow Bridge, installation of new interpretive signs, and the development of a self-guided tour along Park trails through the use of a cellular phone. Their programs, such as the *Friends Lecture Series*, present topics related to the Friends' projects and the Preserve's history and natural resources by noted speakers, free of charge, to the general public. The Friends have produced educational videos (available via You Tube and the Friends' website) that narrate the Preserve's historical and environmental story. The Friends are continually striving to help maintain the integrity of the Preserve's grounds and historic structures and to add unique programs to enhance the experience of its visitors

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