

# RIDGE TIMES

The Official Newsletter of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Inc.—a 501(c)(3) Corporation



May, 2015 | Vol. V, Issue 1

[ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

## Completed Mural Restoration Is Good Reason To Celebrate



*Descendants of local artist Bernard C. Feldman attended the CRC's Mural Restoration Celebration*

After nearly two years, the Conservancy's ambitious Chestnut Ridge Park Casino Mural Restoration Project is finally complete. To commemorate this great achievement, the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy held a celebration at the Casino on April 21, 2015 to share our success with the public and to thank the generous corporations, foundations, and individuals that contributed to this project's success.

April 21, 2015 was declared **Chestnut Ridge Park/ Bernard C. Feldman Day** by Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, in honor of the artist responsible for creating the five iconic murals. In addition, two commendations were issued by United States Representative Chris Collins (NY 27<sup>th</sup> District): one posthumously to Mr. Feldman, and one to the Conservancy honoring the Casino Mural Restoration Project.

The nearly 250 attendees enjoyed complimentary refreshments, live music from Gregg Sansone, and comments from Conservancy President John Bailey who recognized individuals and organizations that contributed to the success of the mural restoration project; Erie County Parks Commissioner Troy Schinzel; Aaron Ott, Public Art Curator from the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; and two of Mr. Feldman's granddaughters who reminisced about growing up with their grandfather.

The Conservancy is grateful to the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry; the Art Services Initiative of Western New York, Inc.; Cabot Cheese; and the numerous volunteers and other individuals whose generosity and contributions helped to make this event possible.



## Lots Going On In 2015!

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy has a full slate of events scheduled for 2015.

- May 2: **CRC 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting** at the Chestnut Ridge Park Commissioners Cabin; 11:00am - 1:00pm.
- May 30 - July 18: **CRC Benefit Art Exhibition** at Meibohm Fine Arts, 478 Main St., East Aurora, NY. The Open House is all day on May 30, 2015.
- June 26: Free Outdoor Movie—**The Lego Movie** (PG); Sledding Hill (or inside Casino if it rains); 9:30pm.
- June 27: **Fishing Derby** at the Commissioners Cabin Lake; 10:00am - 1:30pm.
- July 19: Free Outdoor Movie—**Big Hero 6** (PG); Sledding Hill (or inside Casino if it rains); 8:50pm.
- August 21: Free Outdoor Movie—**Despicable Me 2** (PG); Sledding Hill (or inside Casino if it rains); 8:15pm.
- November 7: **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservancy Gala** at the Orchard Park Country Club, 4777 S. Buffalo Street, Orchard Park, NY; 6:30pm - 10:00pm.
- December 12-13: **Santaland** at the Chestnut Ridge Park Casino.

For updates and details on all Conservancy events, visit [ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org) or [EverythingOP.com](http://EverythingOP.com).

## Many Thanks to ...

- Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Parks Commissioner Troy Schinzel, Supervisor of Parks J. J. Thomas, and the entire Chestnut Ridge Park staff for their continued support and cooperation.
- Connie Lydon of **Schichtel's Nursery** for designing the proposed wildflower gardens at the park entrances.
- The **Bonadio Group** for donating tax preparation services to the CRC again this year.
- **Arthur's Hardware** for sponsoring our movie nights.
- Coach David Wert and the entire **Orchard Park High School Cross Country Team** for their generous contributions to the CRC in 2013 and 2014. The team practices at Chestnut Ridge in the summer and fall. They also donate a Saturday morning during the cross country season to help clean up the park.
- CRC Director Ronald J. Michnik for spearheading the Conservancy's Mural Restoration Project. Ron's persistence, determination, and genuine love for the park were instrumental in making the project an enormous success.
- Eileen Sullivan of **Aurora Art Conservation** for her beautiful restoration and conservation work on the five Feldman murals in the Casino.



## About the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

### Mission Statement

*The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy was formed to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park.*

### Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Inc.

**P. O. Box 1376**

**Orchard Park, NY 14127**

web: [ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

email: [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy)

Our office is located at the Casino in Chestnut Ridge Park.

### Ridge Times Editor & CRC Marketing Consultant:

William C. Even, *The Coming Wave, LLC*.

*The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) corporation.*

### Board of Directors

*President:* John C. Bailey

*Vice President:* William Thornton

*Treasurer:* Ron Smith

*Secretary:* Justine LeFauve

*Chairman Emeritus:* Raymond Fabiniak

<i>Directors:</i> Janet Benjamins	Ronald Michnik
Jack Bertsch	Diane Morse
Elizabeth Cash	Michael Neumeister
Ed Kasperek	Troy Schinzel
Mona Lloyd	Ed Starosielec
Michael Merritt	Peter Swartwout

*Advisor:* Mary Simpson

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## Conservancy Board of Directors Biographies

The CRC board is comprised of sixteen dedicated volunteers who donate their time, talent, and resources to help make our organization and our park the best they can be. We profile several of our directors in each newsletter.

### Michael Merritt

Mike is a retired professional engineer whose career spanned more than 38 years in both the public and private sectors.

Mike earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Louisiana State University in 1970 and received his license to practice Professional Engineering in New York in 1976.

Upon his appointment to the position of Town Engineer in 1979, Mike moved to Orchard Park and has been active in the community ever since. Mike is currently a member of the Lions Club and a founding director of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy. He also volunteers as the Village of Orchard Park DPW Infrastructure Advisor. Mike has been a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Orchard Park Fire Company and Rescue Squad, and the Town Board of Ethics.

Mike has two sons and five grandchildren.



### Troy P. Schinzel

Troy is the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Forestry for the County of Erie. Born and raised in Erie County, Troy graduated from Frontier High School. He earned an A.A.S. in Forest Recreation from Paul Smith's College and a B.S. from Slippery Rock University in Recreation Resource Management.

Troy spent 13 years in Monmouth County, NJ in various roles in the Parks Department and Department of Public Work. In 2011, Troy and his wife Dana moved back to Springville. He was appointed to his position of commissioner in January 2012.



Troy has fond memories of family outings at both Chestnut Ridge and Emery Parks and is anxious to continue building upon the numerous improvements that have occurred at all of the county parks over the past three years.

The Conservancy is grateful for Troy's active involvement in our meetings, projects, and events since officially joining the board in 2014.



### Mona Lloyd

Mona is a Canisius College graduate with an MBA in accounting. She is a CPA and works at M&T Bank as a Risk Manager. When not traveling for business, Mona enjoys hiking at Chestnut Ridge Park with her Chihuahua named Chico.



Mona is very active with the local Boy Scout program. She has worked with many youth in the program as a Den Leader and Scout Master. She is also a member of the Executive Committee for her local council.

Mona's earliest memories of time spent at Chestnut Ridge go back to her adventures with her brothers and sisters on the sledding hill years ago.

She is particularly proud of her involvement in the reopening of the lake at Chestnut Ridge Park, under the support and leadership of the Boy Scouts during the **Legacy '11** service project in 2011. During this project, the scouts performed thousands of service hours in the park as over 800 youth camped and worked on-site. One of these projects included the planning and construction support for the fishing pier on the lake which is handicap accessible.

"I was honored to be associated with the tremendous success of this service work and I look forward to expanding into other projects at the park with local youth," said Mona.

Mona has two adult sons—one is an engineer at Moog and the other will graduate from medical school in 2016.



## Numerous Improvements Occurring at Chestnut Ridge

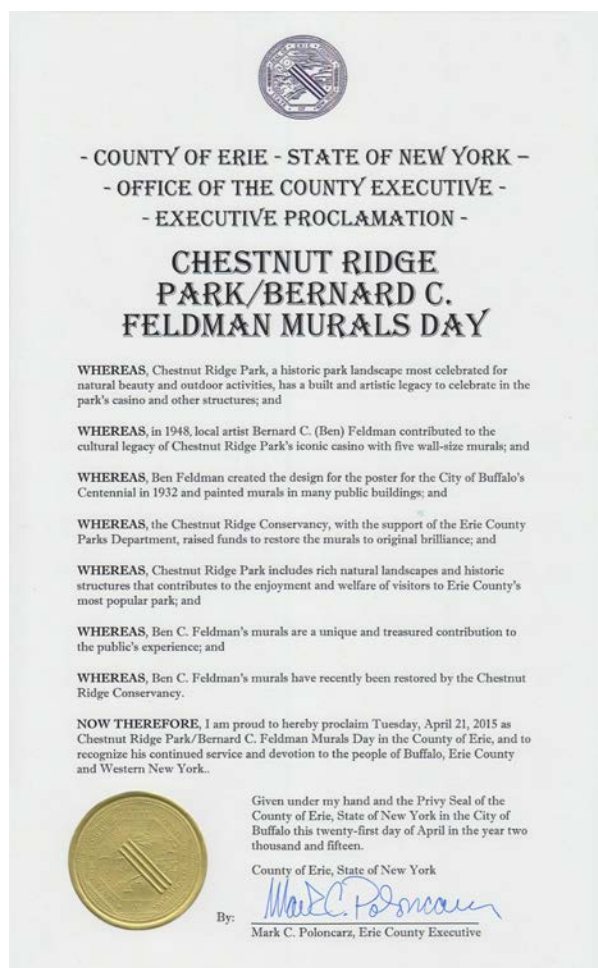
Since 2012, the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry has spent \$1,282,888 on capital improvements in Chestnut Ridge Park including entrance lighting as well as improvements to shelters, roadways, guard rails, and parking lots. More than \$198,150 on the tennis courts alone to resurface, paint, and add new nets and hardware.



*The CRC contributed the new windscreen for the tennis courts*

Since its incorporation in 2010, the CRC has made the following contributions to our beautiful park:

- Casino Mural Restoration Project
- Portable Steel Bike/Sled Racks
- Flowers for the Flag Pole Garden
- Memorial Park Bench Donation
- Boy Scouts *Legacy '11* Project Sponsorship
- Free Summer Outdoor Movies
- Pet Waste Collection Stations
- Park Maps
- American Chestnut Trees
- Tennis Court Wind Screens
- Youth Fishing Clinic Sponsorship
- Firefighting Demonstration Sponsorship
- Santaland and Winterfest Sponsorship/Participation



*The Executive Proclamation presented to the CRC on April 21, 2015*



*The original Chestnut Ridge Park Casino — c. 1927*

## CRC Publications Are Online!

You can view all of the Conservancy's publications on-line. Simply open up your favorite web browser and in the address line at the top of the screen, type:

**Issuu.com**

and hit the **Enter** key. When the site opens, type "*Chestnut Ridge Conservancy*" in the **Search** box and hit **Enter** again. All of our publications are available for both downloading and on-line viewing.



## May '15 Exhibit Brings Local Artists to Chestnut Ridge

In preparation for the upcoming Benefit Art Exhibition at Meibohm Fine Arts in East Aurora, the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy sponsored an Artists' Paint-Out on September 28, 2014 at Chestnut Ridge Park to help the participating artists garner some inspiration for their paintings and photographs.

In addition to the Meibohm participants, Master Roycroft Artisan Tom Kegler held a landscape painting workshop on the same day for fifteen students.

Participants from both groups were treated to breakfast and lunch by the Conservancy at the MacKinnon shelter.



*Master Roycroft Artisan Tom Kegler (top right) paints his interpretation of a pumphouse near the MacKinnon shelter.*

Local artist and CRC member Charlie Houseman helped to organize the event. "The paint-out was a great opportunity to bring a group of talented people together to experience one of Erie County's natural wonders. Beautiful weather helped to make this event a huge success," said Houseman.

The group exhibition entitled *The Ridge* will commence with a day-long open house on May 30, and then run through July 18, 2015. Part of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

Participating artists include: Monica Angle, Rita Argen Auerbach, Sandra Bartz, Ray Bonilla, Priscilla Bowen, John Brach, Judson Brown, Todd Chalk, Nancy Treherne Craig, Kateri Ewing, Jane Foley Ferraro, Angela Ginnitti, Irene Haupt, Karl Heerdt, Natalie Hoffert, Charles Houseman, John Hughes, Tom Kegler, Nancy Miller, Coni Minnecci, Fran Noonan, James Sedwick, Norine Spurling, and Sarah Zak.



*Pumphouse (2014)*  
by Thomas Kegler



*Two Above (2015)*  
by Charles Houseman

The Exhibition runs May 30 - July 18, 2015

Houseman encourages everyone to attend the May open house, meet the artists, and view what we expect will be a historic exhibition, filled with terrific artwork.

Thanks to Grace Meibohm for her support in this exciting project. More details on both the exhibition and the artists can be found at [MeibohmFineArts.com](http://MeibohmFineArts.com).



*Paint-out organizer Charlie Houseman (seated) paints while CRC Director Ron Michnik and two others admire his technique.*

## Good Things Come in Threes—3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gala a Big Success

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Gala Event was held on Saturday, November 1, 2014 at the Orchard Park Country Club.

In keeping with tradition, the event was a huge success, with record attendance and the addition of almost \$30,000 to the Conservancy coffers. Funds raised will be used to help pay for future Conservancy projects.

Peter Krog, CEO of Krog Corporation served as the 2014 Honorary Chairperson. This year's master of ceremonies was Don Paul of WIVB-TV. Live music was provided by the Mark Mazur Quartet.



Don Paul

All gala attendees were given wildflower seed packets as a memento of the evening. The Conservancy is working with the county to plant wildflowers along the main entrances of the park in an effort to make a better "first impression" with visitors entering the park.



### 2014 Guardian Award Given to John C. Bailey

Congratulations to the 2014 Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Guardian Award recipient Conservancy President and Founding Member John C. Bailey. John has served as the president since the organization's incorporation in 2010.



CRC Chairman Emeritus Ray Fabiniak (center) introduces Founding Director and President John Bailey (right) as the 2014 Guardian Award winner. 2014 Master of Ceremonies Don Paul (left) looks on.

### Thanks to All Those Who Supported the Gala

The Conservancy wishes to acknowledge:

- Honorary Chairman Peter Krog, CEO of Krog Corporation
- Bill & Colleen Baker and the Orchard Park Country Club staff for great food and a wonderful evening
- Entercom Communications and the Buffalo News for helping us to publicize the event in the media
- Ellicott Development and Jack Bertsch of Polymer Conversions Inc. for their generous donations of the door prizes that were given away during the evening
- The entire Gala planning committee led by CRC Director Mike Neumeister
- All of the sponsors, volunteers, and attendees who helped to make this event a success



### Our 2014 Gala Sponsors

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy wishes to thank all of the very generous companies and individuals that sponsored our highly successful 2014 Gala event.

#### Platinum Sponsors



#### Gold Sponsors



#### Silver Sponsors



Jimmy & Melissa Jerge  
and Family



#### Patrons

- The Buffalo News
- Evenhouse Printing, LLC
- M J Mechanical Services, Inc.
- West Herr Automotive Group
- Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry

If you or your organization would like to be a sponsor of the 2015 Gala on November 7, 2015, please contact CRC President John Bailey at 716.662.0236 or email us at [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org).



## The CRC Makes the Most of the Winter Weather

The Winter of 2015 gave Western New Yorkers plenty of opportunities to participate in cold weather fun.

The Conservancy was delighted to be both sponsor and active participant in two great winter events run by the Erie County Parks Department, in conjunction with the Orchard Park Recreation Department—Santaland in December, 2014 and the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Winterfest held on January 25, 2015.

More than 4,500 families attended the Santaland event in December; 1,690 children were given an opportunity to share gift ideas with the jolly old elf himself; 2,200 marshmallows were roasted; and 2,000 crafts were made. While there are no official statistics on Winterfest, it is estimated that the turnout was comparable.

Next winter's events have already been scheduled, so mark your calendars:

- Santaland 2015: December 12-13, 2015
- Winterfest 2016: January 24, 2016



*Do you want to build a snowman?*



*Winterfest guests try their hands with a two-person cross-cut saw*



*Santa makes a new friend at this year's Santaland*



*2015 was a great year for sledding*

## Mary L. Simpson Joins the Conservancy

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy has selected Mary L. Simpson as its first Not-For-Profit Organization Advisor.

Mary was chosen from an outstanding pool of candidates who had applied for the position in late spring of 2014. Her extensive experience with numerous not-for-profit organizations in the region made her the Conservancy's first choice in the selection process.

Mary has a B.A. in Psychology from SUNY at Buffalo and a certificate in Public Relations. Mary's advocacy for parks began in 1988 when she moved to Days Park. Located in the Allentown National Historic District, Days Park was one of Buffalo's first public parks, donated in 1859 as perpetual parkland by its namesake, Thomas Day. From the 1850s until the Great Depression, Days Park was a beautiful and welcoming greenspace, featured on 19<sup>th</sup> century postcards.



Mary L. Simpson

Unfortunately, as the urban landscape changed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, so did the park, losing its trees, its families, and finally its sense of refuge. By uniting a multi-ethnic, diverse-income community through vision, innovation, collaboration, and cooperation, nearly \$1 million has been raised in funds and volunteer time, resulting in numerous awards including the City of Buffalo Civic Empowerment Award, Project for Public Spaces Great Parks/Great Community Place Award finalist and 2013 Preservation Buffalo Niagara Stewardship Award.

Mary serves on the board of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, as the appointee of the City of Buffalo's Common Council.

Most recently, Mary served as the Executive Director of the Carnegie Art Center in North Tonawanda. She initiated new community based exhibitions, built collaborations with other cultural organizations, and created positive relationships with funders, public officials, and the community of North Tonawanda. This has resulted in more than \$376,000 in scheduled capital improvements for the restoration of the former library, home to the art center and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Even Pens Article for WNY Heritage Magazine

Conservancy Marketing Consultant William C. Even has authored an article for the Summer 2015 edition of **WNY Heritage Magazine**.

As Chestnut Ridge Park celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, the article examines the beginnings of the Erie County Park System, the creation of Chestnut Ridge Park, and a brief look into the establishment of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

The article, featuring numerous vintage photographs of the park in its early days, will be published in early July.



## CRC Board Changes

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy welcomes new board members Troy Schinzel, Peter Swartwout, and Ed Kasperek to our organization.

We also wish to thank Justin Kahabka and Daniel Glowacki for their service to the Conservancy board.

## Questions About the Park?

While the Conservancy is always happy to address your questions about the park, very often the best place to go for answers is the **Erie County Parks Department**.

If you ...

- have questions about park trails, landmarks, or features
- need to reserve a shelter for a private affair
- want to share your ideas or concerns about the park itself ...

You can contact the Erie County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department at **(716) 858-8355**, or visit the Erie County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry website at **[www2.Erie.gov/parks](http://www2.Erie.gov/parks)**





# The Year In Pictures



CRC Director Ron Michnik (center), Mural Conservationist Eileen Sullivan (right) and guests at the June 23, 2014 Casino Open House.



Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Troy Schinzel reads an Executive Proclamation declaring April 21, 2015 **Bernard C. Feldman Day** in Erie County. L to R: Mural supporter Mary Flickinger; Aaron Ott, Albright-Knox Art Gallery Public Art Curator; Eileen Sullivan, Aurora Art Conservation; Troy Schinzel; CRC President John C. Bailey; and CRC Director Ron Michnik.



A full house for the April 21, 2015 Mural Restoration Celebration.



Sleds safely stored in the Conservancy's multi-purpose bikesled racks during Winterfest on January 25, 2015.



David and Joseph Even explore a creek on the western end of Chestnut Ridge Park.



Guests at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Gala held at the Orchard Park Country Club enjoy music from the Mark Mazur Quartet.



## Chestnut Ridge Park Images from the 1920s

Thanks to Aurora Town Historian Rob Goller for graciously sharing vintage photos of Chestnut Ridge Park from the 1920s.







# CHESTNUT RIDGE *Conservancy*

In an effort to assist the County of Erie in restoring and maintaining Chestnut Ridge Park in the midst of budget cuts and rising expenses, a dedicated group of concerned citizens has come together to form the ***Chestnut Ridge Conservancy***.

This not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization was established to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise our own Chestnut Ridge Park.

We are working with the Erie County Parks Department to:

- Define projects that need to be completed
- Raise funds through the generosity of corporations, community groups, and citizens
- Sponsor events to raise awareness and encourage county residents to take advantage of the park's facilities and scenery

**We need your help to carry out our mission!**

*Please consider donating to our worthy cause. Simply complete the form below and include it with your check made out to ...*

## Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

P. O. Box 1376  
Orchard Park, NY 14127

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please add me to your email mailing list.

Email: [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

Web: [ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy)

## Will You Help Us Revitalize Chestnut Ridge Park?

The **Chestnut Ridge Conservancy** is working to restore our local treasure. Your assistance is very important! Please select a membership level and return this slip with a check for your tax-deductible contribution made payable to ***Chestnut Ridge Conservancy***.

**Thank you for your support!**

Join on-line at:

[ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org/membership](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org/membership)

### Annual Membership Levels:

Chestnut Family Membership	\$100
Family Membership	\$50
Individual	\$30
Senior Membership (55 & up)	\$25
Community Groups	\$125
Conservationist	\$500
Preservationist	\$2,500
Park Benefactor	\$5,000

### *I Would Like to Volunteer!*

I am interested in helping with:

- ☐ Fund Raising
- ☐ Events Planning
- ☐ Event Setup, Cleanup, and Activities
- ☐ Administrative Tasks





Erie County Department of  
Parks, Recreation, and Forestry



# Chestnut Ridge Park

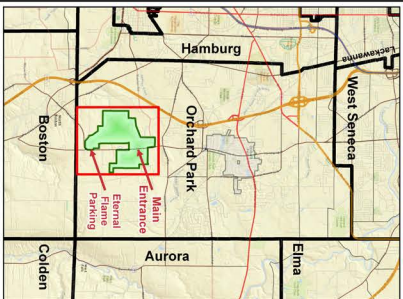
## Please Follow All Park Rules

### • Park Hours:

Summer : 7 AM - 9 PM (Memorial Day- Labor Day)

Winter : 7 AM - Dusk

- Campfires are prohibited
- Cutting or destroying of any trees, plant life, or disturbance of wildlife is prohibited
- Leash dogs at all times
- Stay on marked trails
- Use Carry-in/ Carry-out Principle on trails
- Alcohol by permit only
- No glass containers allowed
- Speed limit on Park roads: 15 MPH



**Mark C. Poloncarz**  
Erie County Executive

**Troy P. Schinzel**  
Commissioner of Parks



May 2015



Scan this QR code for  
more information on  
Chestnut Ridge Park

**For Emergencies: Call 911**

All other County Park  
Department questions:  
Please Call: 716 - 858 - 7037

Mapping Provided by the  
Erie County Office of Geographic Information Services

Hiking Trails	One-Way Distance
Trail	
Boy Scout Trail	2.3 miles
Eternal Flame Trail	0.56 miles
Orienteering Trail	2.6 miles
Reservoir Trail	0.65 miles
Seufert Trail	0.23 miles
Snowmobile Trail	0.34 miles
Ward Hill Trail	0.9 miles
Ward Hill Walkway	1.15 miles
XC Ski Inner Loop	0.58 miles
XC Ski Outer Loop	0.86 miles

● EASY: Well-maintained or paved, shorter trails intended for casual walking  
■ MODERATE: Longer trails with some grades/obstructions intended for hiking  
◆ CHALLENGING: Long, more primitive trails, with steep grades or obstructions, intended for highly experienced hikers

