



**Preservation League Names Olmsted Bridges of
Genesee Valley Park to Seven to Save endangered list for 2014-15**

ALBANY, February 26, 2014 – The Preservation League of New York State has named the three Olmsted pedestrian bridges in Rochester’s Genesee Valley Park to its list of the Empire State’s most threatened historic resources, ***Seven to Save***.

These handsome concrete bridges were built in 1916 and 1919 and designed by the influential Olmsted Brothers firm. They link regional and statewide trails including the Erie Canalway and are functional and historic assets. Limited funding, deferred maintenance, and uncertainty about rehabilitation responsibilities have put these bridges at risk.

“Since 1999, Seven to Save has mobilized community leaders and decision-makers to take action when historic resources are threatened,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “A Seven to Save designation from the League delivers invaluable technical assistance, fosters increased media coverage and public awareness, and opens the door to grant assistance for endangered properties.”

In late 2011, the New York State Department of Transportation (Region Four) released a Conditions Assessment and Concept Study for the three bridges which identified structural deficiencies, erosion issues, and other concerns. Even without a study, the deterioration of concrete surfaces and details are obvious. The report identified five treatment alternatives, three of which call for replacement.

With this announcement, the League hopes to launch a collaborative effort with local stakeholders such as the City of Rochester, Monroe County, the NYS Department of Transportation and The Landmark Society of Western New York, to devise a plan for stewardship of these bridges.

“Through the Seven to Save program, we provide targeted support to seven of New York’s most important and endangered historic resources,” said Tania Werbizky, the Preservation League’s regional director for technical and grant programs for the Southern Tier and Western New York. “Whether sites are threatened by insensitive, ineffective or insufficient public policies, general neglect, or, in some cases, outright demolition, we have a proven record of working with community advocates to save a number of significant properties.”

“These Erie Canal pedestrian bridges, designed by the renowned Olmsted Brothers firm, are a unique community asset and a highly visible feature in one of our most important historic landscapes, Genesee Valley Park,” said Wayne Goodman, Executive Director, Landmark Society of Western New York. “They are part of The Landmark Society Five to Revive List and now inclusion

on the Preservation League's Seven to Save list will increase awareness of these resources across the state as we partner with other stakeholders on funding opportunities to assist in the repair and maintenance of the structures."

"The Olmsted Bridges are unique to the Canal System, adding to the beauty and heritage that visitors and residents of the Erie Canalway value," said Bob Radliff, Acting Director of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. "We applaud the Preservation League of New York State, the Landmark Society of Western New York, and the citizens of greater Rochester who are working to save these treasured landmarks."

"Arching so gracefully over the Erie Canal, these bridges are a key component of the 360-mile Erie Canalway Trail and the 90-mile Genesee Valley Greenway Trail as well as a defining feature of the Olmsted landscape in Genesee Valley Park," said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director, Parks & Trails New York. "We commend the Preservation League of New York State and the Landmark Society of Western New York for bringing attention to the critical need for rehabilitation of these threatened historic structures and look forward to the start of a collaborative effort to ensure their long-term preservation."

Since 1999, publicity and advocacy resulting from Seven to Save designation has led to the rehabilitation and reopening of the **Oswego City Public Library**, the rebirth of **Montauk Manor** on Long Island, and the rededication of the once-abandoned **George Harvey Justice Building** in Binghamton along with successes at several other locations.

The Preservation League of New York State is a not-for-profit membership organization founded in 1974. The League invests in people and projects that champion the essential role of preservation in community revitalization, sustainable economic growth, and the protection of New York's historic buildings and landscapes. It leads advocacy, economic development, and education programs all across the state.

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