

2025–2030 NEW YORK STATE DRAFT Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



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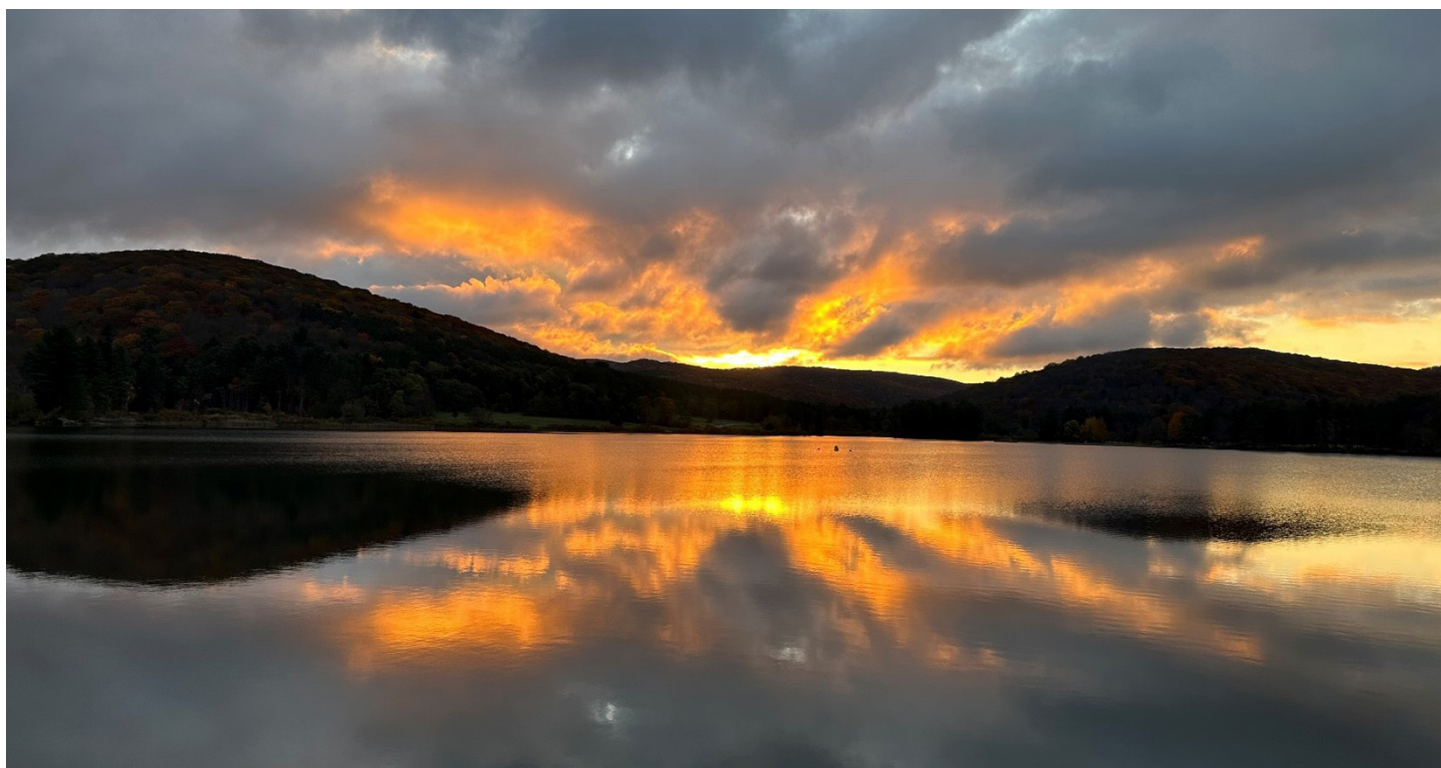
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The preparation of this plan was financed in part through a planning grant from the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Public Law 88-578, as amended).

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Red House Lake, Allegany State Park, Allegany Region

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The New York State

**Draft Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan
and
Draft Generic Environmental
Impact Statement**

2025 – 2030

Prepared by: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Draft Published: September 17th, 2025

Comments Due: October 26th, 2025

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**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**



SEQR
POSITIVE DECLARATION
NOTICE OF COMPLETION OF A DRAFT GEIS

Date of Notice: September 17, 2025

Lead Agency: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Title of Action: **Adoption and Implementation of the 2025-2030 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

SEQR Status: Type I

Location of Action: Statewide

This Notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

OPRHP, as lead agency, has determined that the proposed action described below (Draft 2025-2030 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan) may have a significant impact on the environment, and has prepared a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS).

Brief Project Description: The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared periodically by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to provide statewide policy direction and to fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate. The updated SCORP serves as a status report and as an overall guidance document for recreation, resource preservation, planning, and development from 2025 through 2030. The document is also used to guide the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects. The direction for recreation in New York State is guided by several priorities, with associated goals and recommendations. OPRHP seeks to broaden and improve the visitor experience by cultivating an outdoor recreation system that is welcoming, safe, inclusive, affordable, and accessible. OPRHP seeks to restore, enhance, and transform its facilities with an emphasis on conservation, restoration, and resiliency of natural and historic resources. OPRHP can fulfill its obligation to provide the general public with quality and equitable access to outdoor recreation and education opportunities, while celebrating diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the plan, as well as mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce potential impacts, are included as a part of the Plan which, in its entirety, constitutes a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

Public Comments: Persons may provide comments in writing no later than the **end of the comment period – October 26, 2025**. All comments should be forwarded to the agency contact person.

OPRHP will hold two public webinars to provide information on SCORP and offer the public an opportunity to comment on the Draft SCORP/DGEIS. The webinars will be held on **Thursday, October 2, 2025, at 1:00 PM and 6:30 PM**. People wishing to attend a webinar should send an email requesting registration to SCORP2025.Plan@parks.ny.gov with their name, title, and organization (if applicable) and which webinar they plan to attend. A registration confirmation email will be sent. The webinar link and information on how to join the event will be sent three working days prior to the webinar. **The deadline to register is Monday September 29, 2025, at 5:00 PM.**



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AVAILABILITY OF DGEIS: Copies of the Draft SCORP/DGEIS are available for review at the office of the agency contact and the document can also be reviewed on OPRHP's website at: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.

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ACRONYMS

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Definition</u>
ABA	Architectural Barriers Act	JBNC	Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center
ACS	American Community Survey	LAMP	Lakewide Management Plan
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	LISS	Long Island Sound Study
AGM	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets	LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
APA	Adirondack Park Agency	LWRP	Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle	M&RV	OPRHP Bureau of Marine and Recreational Vehicles
Bond Act	Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act	NASORLO	National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers
CFA	NYS Consolidated Funding Application	NASPD	National Association of State Park Directors
CLCPA	Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act	NAWCA	North American Wetland Conservation Act
CMP	Coastal Management Program	NERR	National Estuarine Research Reserve System
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program	NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
CRRA	Community Risk and Resiliency Act of 2014	NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
CSC	Climate Smart Communities	NPS	National Park Service
DEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
DEIA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility	NRPA	National Recreation and Park Association
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement	NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
DESP	OPRHP Division of Environmental Stewardship and Planning	NYS	New York State
DOH	New York State Department of Health	NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
DOI	United States Department of the Interior	OCFS	New York State Office of Children and Family Services
DOS	New York State Department of State	OEJ	DEC Office of Environmental Justice
DOT	New York State Department of Transportation	OFA	New York State Office for the Aging
ECC	Excelsior Conservation Corps	OGS	New York State Office of General Services
ECL	Environmental Conservation Law	OPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
EEC	DEC Environmental Education Center	OPSP	Open Project Selection Process
EJ	Environmental Justice	OPWDD	New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	ORDA	Olympic Regional Development Authority
EO 22	Executive Order 22	ORFIS	Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency	OSI	Open Space Institute
EPF	Environmental Protection Fund	OSP	Open Space Conservation Plan
EST	Empire State Trail	PORS	Public Outdoor Recreation Survey
EV	Electric Vehicle	PPS	Park Professional Survey
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement	PTNY	Parks & Trails New York
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	REDC	Regional Economic Development Council
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	REDI	Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	RGGI	Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
FLP	Forest Legacy Program	RFIS	Recreation Facilities Inventory System
FSP	Forest Stewardship Program	RIN	Relative Index of Need
FY	Fiscal Year	SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
GIS	Geographic Information Systems	SFIA	Sports & Fitness Industry Association
GLNPO	Great Lakes National Program Office	SFY	State Fiscal Year
GLWQA	Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement	SHS	State Historic Site
GLRI	Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	SHP	State Historic Park
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SHPP	State Historic Park Preserve
GEIS	Generic Environmental Impact Statement	UMP	Unit Management Plan (DEC)
GWP	Global Warming Potential	USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
HAB	Harmful Algal Blooms	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
HCR	New York State Office of Resilient Homes and Communities	USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
HREP	Hudson River Estuary Program	WMA	Wildlife Management Areas
HRVG	Hudson River Valley Greenway		
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development		
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act		

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) would like to acknowledge the many people who provided their time, expertise and support to the development of New York State's 2025-2030 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

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The 2025-2030 New York State Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is a product of the continuing planning process of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Division of Environmental Stewardship and Planning (DESP) has primary responsibility for developing the plan. However, the development of this report would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of other agency staff; other State agencies, park, recreation, and preservation organizations and the general public.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York State Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) helps guide statewide decision-making on outdoor recreation projects, such as grant administration and facility expansion. It is also a tool that identifies trends in outdoor recreation and stewardship and offers specific recommendations on how recreation providers can maintain and support an active outdoor recreation culture.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) prepares the SCORP to provide policy direction and fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate. OPRHP is the state agency with the authority to represent and act for the State in dealing with the Secretary of the Interior for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965, as amended. A new SCORP is required to maintain the State's eligibility to receive funding from the LWCF. This Plan serves to guide the State's LWCF program from 2025 through 2030. Below are this report's objectives:

- describe the demand for, and supply of, recreation resources in New York State (NYS);
- establish public participation in recreation through outreach and surveys;
- identify needs, trends, and opportunities for recreation improvements;
- set achievable goals that align with State and Federal priorities on outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship;
- provide an implementation program that will help NYS meet its goals;
- establish a statewide recreational planning framework to guide regional and local agencies in formulating plans, program policies, and priorities;
- develop and maintain adequate information in support of OPRHP's planning, development, administration, coordination, and review functions for SCORP.



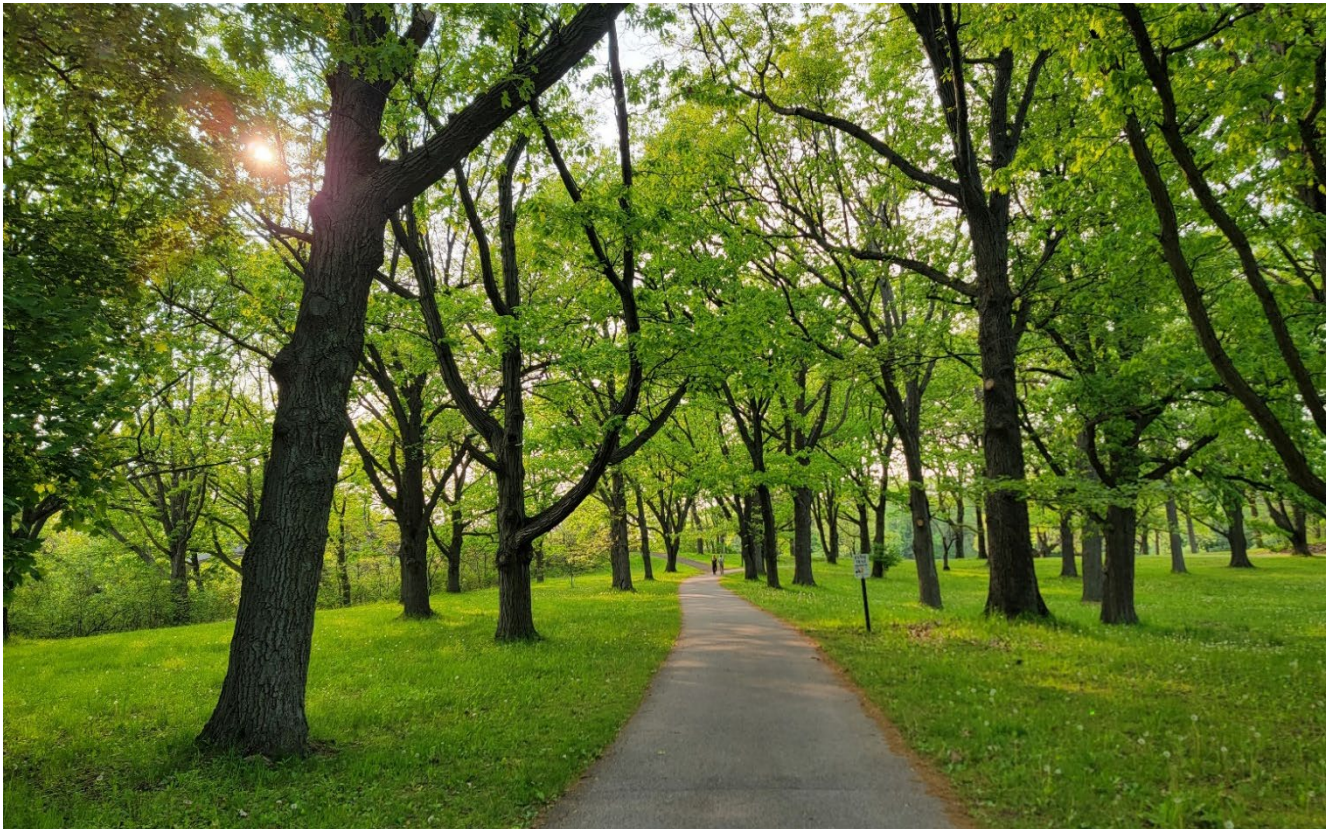
Cabin at Betty and Wilbur Davis State Park, Central Region

Plan Content

The SCORP identifies the key benefits of outdoor recreation at the individual and community levels. Outdoor spaces are vital to keeping people and their communities healthy, happy, and prosperous. Spending time outdoors is connected to scientifically tangible and observable benefits. This plan shows the merit of stewarding open space for universal public use. The aims of the SCORP are to understand the current state of outdoor recreation and use this information to proactively plan for the future.

The Outdoor Recreation System

The State's recreation system comprises a diverse array of parks, open spaces, boat launches, trails and other types of recreational space. These areas are operated by numerous entities at federal, state and local levels. The majority of publicly owned recreation land is operated by several state agencies including OPRHP, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), the Canal Corporation, the Office of General Services (OGS), and the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA), among others. This document sets the baseline for future actions and recommendations proposed in Chapter 6 of the SCORP by first describing the current management and extent of state-operated recreation spaces.



Genesee Valley Greenway, Genesee Region



Allegany State Park, Allegany Region

Recreation and Resilience

OPRHP faces growing challenges from the effects of a changing climate. As the northeastern U.S. experiences increasingly extreme weather, the state's parks and irreplaceable historic properties are suffering more physical damage to buildings, recreation amenities, utilities, and other support infrastructure. Severe weather and seasonal shifts also endanger the natural ecosystems that are the backbone of the state's outdoor recreation facilities. More frequent heat waves, flooding, strong winds, and wildfires all affect the health and safety of the people who visit and work at the parks, as well as impact the plants and animals that call parks home.

In response to these changing conditions, climate-related planning in New York's public agencies has become more common. Statewide efforts have included funding initiatives, such as the **Environmental Bond Act**, stronger policies for carbon reduction and climate adaptation planning, and increased solar development. Regional efforts and partnerships include multiple Great Lakes initiatives, Long Island coastal management programs, and large-scale flood control projects in NYC.

The state's wetlands are an essential component of climate adaptation and mitigation, providing water quality improvement, flood protection, and shoreline erosion control.¹ **DEC's wetland programs** engage with private landowners, local government, state and federal entities to protect and enhance these vulnerable habitats.² Natural restorations in coastal areas and inland wetlands are being implemented across the state.³ Chapter 3 of the SCORP describes the intersection of stewardship and management concerns when aiming to provide resilient outdoor recreation in a changing climate.

Increased demand for public green space has resulted in higher park usage, causing more wear and tear on infrastructure and stretching staff workloads.⁴ These impacts, along with increasing concerns of climate change, environmental justice, and facility management, will continue to affect outdoor recreation providers across the state. In urban areas, public parks and green open space help cool and

filter the air, enhance public health, and foster social cohesion.⁵ However, these critical components of infrastructure are not always readily available to everyone, and some underserved communities lack access to these beneficial spaces.

FINDINGS HIGHLIGHTS

Part of the 2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey aimed to identify recreational activities of interest and barriers to participation.

Respondents reported they participated the most in the following five outdoor recreation activities:

1. Park Day Use
2. Walking/Running
3. Swimming
4. Nature Interpretation
5. Court Games

The most popular outdoor recreation activities require minimal training and equipment to participate in. About 34% of respondents did not agree that they can access the resources, skills, information, and equipment needed to participate in outdoor recreation.

Trends in Recreation Supply and Demand

The SCORP's value lies in its use by recreation decision-makers, managers, staff and administrators to improve and protect the State's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The planning principles used to guide its development have been in place for many years; what is new is how people recreate today. To better understand the state's outdoor recreation needs over the next five years, OPRHP collected and analyzed statistical, census, and outdoor recreation data down to the county level. To assure maximum opportunity for public participation, OPRHP has:

- collected more than 10,000 survey responses to evaluate public preferences for recreation;
- surveyed and inventoried recreation providers statewide;
- coordinated with other state agencies and interested parties.

Gathering input and feedback about the public's recreation experience across NYS is an ongoing process. Throughout the year OPRHP conducts visitor surveys at state facilities to understand who is visiting State Parks, describe the influences, reasons, and motivations behind the visit, measure visitor satisfaction, and identify gaps in service and amenity needs. This information helps lay the groundwork needed to understand user preferences and needs and to maximize the public benefit of dollars spent for recreation in the state. In 2023, OPRHP also coordinated with the Open Space Institute (OSI) to conduct **The Centennial Pulse of the Parks** to gain deeper insight into State Park visitors using both a 27-question survey and long-form interviews with park visitors.

One of the key opportunities of developing the SCORP is to re-evaluate and update the demand for, and supply of, outdoor recreation in NYS through the distribution of surveys such as the Park Professional Survey, Public Outdoor Recreation Survey, and Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey. This process, as outlined in Chapter 4, helps to ensure that the State is providing adequate and relevant recreational opportunities and facilities for its residents. Below are several key takeaways from each of the three surveys.



People playing historic arcade games at Midway State Park, Allegany Region

Park Professional Survey (PPS)

Park Professionals reported *Trails*, *Low Impact Activity Areas* (i.e. day use, picnicking, and playgrounds), and *Courts* as the three most-needed facility types. For respondents who selected *Other*, the majority indicated that upgrades to current facilities were needed.

Most Park Professionals agree that increased financial assistance and spending to maintain, create, and manage current and new recreational facilities is warranted. Adequate funding to provide safe and clean recreational facilities for park visitors is also a priority for Park Professionals.

Public Outdoor Recreation Survey (PORS)

More than half of the residents surveyed reported that more outdoor recreation facilities are needed within 30 minutes of their home. The top five facility types reported as needed were *Picnic Areas*, *Swimming Pools or Beaches*, *Trails*, *Open Space*, and *Playgrounds*.

The top outdoor recreation activity remains park day use, with 85% of survey respondents participating in one day or more of the activity per year. The next four top outdoor recreation activities for residents were walking/running, swimming, nature interpretation, and court games. The five activities with the highest number of participation days were Walking/Running, Park Day Use, Swimming, Nature Interpretation, and Biking. The total number of participation days, for all outdoor recreation activities asked about in the 2024 PORS, total to nearly a billion participation days, statewide.

Most residents (73%) agreed that outdoor recreation is available and accessible to all New York State residents and visitors. Most residents (73%) also agreed that they feel welcome and safe when participating in outdoor recreation, and that they see other people like them when participating in

outdoor recreation (71%). Less residents agreed that there is a way to provide feedback on outdoor recreation and that they can access the resources, skills, information, and equipment to enjoy outdoor recreation opportunities.

Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey (ORFIS)

The Recreational Facilities Inventory System database is updated with new information, as reported by Park Professionals, the managers of the recreation facility sites identified in the database. Privately and commercially operated recreation sites—as well as publicly operated sites that have no public access—were purged from the database. Following this database clean-up, approximately 8,000 records of publicly operated sites that contribute to the public supply of outdoor recreation remain.

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

The 2025-2030 SCORP seeks to identify barriers to outdoor recreation and address them by outlining what outdoor recreation providers can do to mitigate these issues. By engaging in public outreach, maintaining knowledge of current events and changes in outdoor recreation trends, and providing holistic and comprehensive planning and implementation strategies, the 2025-2030 SCORP identifies concrete and achievable solutions to overcoming experienced barriers.

Outdoor recreation providers nationwide have noticed a rise in “casual” participation in outdoor recreation. While more people are recreating than ever before, participants are recreating less frequently. To understand why this might be the case, OPRHP explicitly asked New Yorkers in the 2024 PORS what barriers to outdoor recreation they experience.



Gorge at Taughannock Falls State Park, Finger Lakes Region



Niagara Falls State Park, Niagara Region

The barriers most frequently reported in 2024 PORS include *Work, housework, or school taking too much time, Lack of money or transportation, Health or physical limitations, and Changing weather patterns*. Chapter 5 analyzes each of these barriers, places them into a larger national context, and shows how these experienced barriers vary across age groups. For example, younger adults report work, housework, or School as their primary barrier to participating in outdoor recreation, whereas seniors report their physical health as the top barrier. As demographics in NYS change, outdoor recreation providers should continue to update their understanding of who is or is not recreating at their facilities and why.

Goals and Recommendations

This plan establishes ten programmatic and operational goals based on the State's mission, recreational and stewardship needs, and demographic trends. These goals inform the plan's recommended actions, which provide a path toward realizing the State's long-term vision for recreation. **New York State's priorities** are to expand access to natural spaces, invest in safety measures, and make the state more affordable for all. The goals and recommendations in this plan reflect these priorities.

OPRHP seeks to broaden and improve the visitor experience by cultivating an outdoor recreation system that is welcoming, safe, inclusive, affordable, and accessible. OPRHP seeks to restore,

enhance, and transform its facilities with an emphasis on conservation, restoration, and resiliency of natural and historic resources. OPRHP can fulfill its obligation to provide the general public with quality and equitable access to outdoor recreation and education opportunities, while celebrating diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

The SCORP goals are meant to be aspirational and achievable by outdoor recreation providers of all means. Each goal responds to the barriers and issues described in Chapter 5 and is accompanied by a non-exhaustive list of recommended actions that can be taken by recreation providers to achieve the goal. Some of these actions are also used to inform the Open Project Selection Process, the process by which OPRHP disperses grant monies to eligible organizations, agencies, and other outdoor recreation providers.

Keeping the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in mind, the SCORP planning team created goals that not only suit the needs of today's outdoor recreationist, but balance those needs with the capacity and capabilities of outdoor recreation providers and the limitations of the natural landscape.

Access to Outdoor Recreation

1. Provide equitable access to outdoor recreation facilities for people of all backgrounds.
2. Ensure physical and programmatic access for visitors with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities.

Access to outdoor recreation is an issue of equity that can be solved by meaningfully planning for those with varying needs and means to access outdoor recreation. Finding gaps in access to recreation and gaps in participating in outdoor recreation can begin to address these goals.

Comprehensive Planning

3. Diversify channels of communication with the public about outdoor recreation opportunities.
4. Engage the public through interpretive programming to cultivate pride of place.
5. Employ comprehensive planning for the future of the NYS outdoor recreation system.

Outdoor recreation providers can create a more cohesive community by providing meaningful opportunities for the public to share their concerns and ideas. Building rapport with people who enjoy and care about open space strengthens community bonds and results in better planning. Through comprehensive planning, which includes public engagement, the longevity and integrity of open spaces can be maintained and preserved for future generations to enjoy.

2025 SCORP GOALS OVERVIEW

1. Provide equitable access to outdoor recreation facilities for people of all backgrounds.
2. Ensure physical and programmatic access for visitors with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities.
3. Diversify channels of communication with the public about outdoor recreation opportunities.
4. Engage the public through interpretive programming to cultivate pride of place.
5. Employ comprehensive planning for the future of the NYS outdoor recreation system.
6. Promote energy-efficient operations and renewable energy sources.
7. Build, operate, and retrofit climate-resilient outdoor recreation facilities.
8. Develop and operate outdoor recreation resources in a manner that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
9. Expand and protect natural connections between parks and open space.
10. Protect, conserve, and restore biodiversity in NYS.

Sustainable Operations and Management

6. Promote energy-efficient operations and renewable energy sources.
7. Build, operate, and retrofit outdoor recreation facilities for climate-resiliency.
8. Develop and operate outdoor recreation resources in a manner that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

Pursuing sustainable operations and management strategies for outdoor recreation not only benefits recreation providers, but the natural landscape and the people who enjoy it, too. Higher quality outdoor recreation opportunities can be provided by investing in technologies and establishing practices that simultaneously enhance operations and protect open space.

Preserving the Natural Environment

9. Expand and protect natural connections between parks and open space.
10. Protect, conserve, and restore biodiversity in NYS.

The natural environment is the basis of character for many open spaces and is home to ecologically necessary flora and fauna. Protecting these spaces and expanding connections between them not only provides more avenues for outdoor recreation but also protects the natural character of the state for generations to come.

Environmental Review

The SCORP provides a review of the potential environmental impacts of implementing these recommended actions. The appendices support the plan's findings with more detailed information, including an up-to-date look at the many programs, recreational index of need, initiatives, and organizations that are active in supporting recreation, environmental action, and resilience efforts in New York State.

Conclusion

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, OPRHP facilities have regularly seen record-breaking attendance numbers. People understand the idea that open, green, and blue spaces are crucial to living happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives. Keeping these spaces accessible and available to the public not only safeguards the relationship people have with each other but also the relationship people have with the natural world around them.



Allegany State Park, Allegany Region

Executive Summary

Support for maintaining, investing in, and expanding outdoor recreation space is high. In recent years, the OPRHP recreation system has expanded to meet this growing interest and to preserve the state's natural character. Keeping people engaged in outdoor recreation requires maintaining up-to-date knowledge on trends, issues, and needs and establishing common goals on how best to meet these changing factors.

The goals and recommendations in this plan have been carefully crafted to build on this momentum. Public input and feedback from other state agencies have all provided an important framework for ensuring that the 2025-2030 SCORP helps our invaluable public facilities to thrive in the future.



Visitors walking along the Glen Iris Estate at Letchworth State Park, Genesee Region

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

What is the SCORP?

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), prepared by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), is New York's guide for how to preserve and promote opportunities for outdoor recreation. It is the culmination of in-depth research, analysis, and input from outdoor recreation providers, other state agencies, and residents who participated in the general citizens' survey or submitted comments to the draft plan. The SCORP helps guide strategy for the State, local governments, and other outdoor recreation providers. It establishes goals and priorities for recreation facilities and provides recommendations for how these might be achieved. By delineating a clear course of action, the SCORP helps the State determine where to make recreation investments over the next five years.

Content for this plan was developed by a workgroup comprised of OPRHP staff and representatives from the NYS Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Health, State, Civil Service, the Canal Corporation, Hudson River Valley Greenway, the Adirondack Park Agency, and other interested parties (see *Acknowledgements* for a complete list of contributors).

Purpose

The SCORP is prepared to fulfill two primary objectives. First, the plan serves as a status report and general guidance document for the planning, preservation, and development of the State's outdoor recreation resources. It is the State's assessment and policy statement on the state of recreation in NYS to the executive and legislative branches of State government, other units of government, recreation and preservation interest groups, and the public. Goals and recommendations in the SCORP help inform the allocation of State, federal, municipal, and nonprofit funds for recreation and open space projects. The information and analysis presented become criteria for evaluating projects.



Volunteers at a 2024 "I Love My Park" Day at Gantry Plaza State Park, New York City Region

The second purpose for developing the SCORP is to fulfill a federal recreation mandate under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act. At least once every ten years, each state must provide an outdoor recreation plan prior to consideration by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior for financial assistance for outdoor recreation acquisition and development projects.^a As the agency with the authority to represent and act on behalf of the State of New York with the Secretary of the Interior for the purposes of the LWCF Act, it is the obligation of OPRHP to create and update the SCORP. This plan fulfills the State's LWCF obligation for federal fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

As a comprehensive plan developed by a State agency, the SCORP is required to consider potential environmental impacts under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act.^b For more information on these impacts please see Chapter 8.



2024 Pinkster Festival at Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site, Saratoga/Capital District Region

^a Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended (54 U.S.C. §200305) and further detailed in Chapter 2 of the LWCF State Assistance Program Federal Financial Assistance Manual (April 21, 2025).

^b In New York State, most projects or activities proposed by a State agency or unit of local government and all discretionary approvals (permits) from a NYS agency or unit of local government require an environmental impact assessment as prescribed by 6 NYCRR Part 617 State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) [Statutory authority: Environmental Conservation Law Sections 3-0301(1)(b), 3-0301(2)(m) and 8-0113]. SEQR requires the sponsoring or approving governmental body to identify and mitigate the significant environmental impacts of the activity it is proposing or permitting.

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNING TERMS

Park: spaces that may or may not contain open, green, and/or blue space. These spaces are programmed as places to gather and recreate.

Green Space: land that is partly covered in trees, shrubs, or grasses.

Blue Space: space dominated by bodies of water, like riverfronts or beaches.

Open Space: green or blue space without programming

What is Outdoor Recreation?

For the purposes of the SCORP, outdoor recreation refers to activities that a person chooses to engage in outdoors for pleasure, fun, or exercise, during time that is not otherwise obligated by work or other necessities. The term may initially trigger images of a bicyclist on a paved path, a football team practicing on a field, or a jogger running along a neighborhood sidewalk. While such pursuits are common types of outdoor recreation, other less physically intensive activities like birdwatching, picnicking, and walking, also fall within this scope. Activities that occur under partial enclosure, such as ice skating on a covered rink or baseball within a seasonal inflatable dome, are also considered outdoor recreation.

No matter the activity, outdoor recreation generally happens within some form of open space, whether a park, field, forest, or waterway. The activities themselves determine where they are practiced. Fishing can only occur on water bodies that support fish, outdoor rock climbing on cliff faces, and backpacking on lands that allow hiking and camping. These have become our outdoor recreation resources. It is the responsibility of outdoor recreation providers—whether State, Federal, municipal, nonprofit, private, or other—to ensure that these open spaces are healthy and safe, with clean land, air, and water. Only then can the benefits of outdoor recreation be fully realized.



People walking along a northern segment of the Empire State Trail, Thousand Islands Region



Jones Beach State Park, one of the most visited OPRHP facilities, Long Island Region

Planning Process

Planning efforts undertaken by OPRHP and DEC have evolved in slightly different directions to effectively protect and manage the State's natural, cultural, and recreation resources. The framework for planning that OPRHP employs is based on the following hierarchy:

1. SCORP/Statewide Parks and Recreation Plans—Broad policy and assessment document that provides a vision for recreation in New York State and in the State Park system.
2. Statewide trails plan/open space plans—Statewide plans that focus on an aspect of natural, cultural, and recreational resource management.
3. Regional planning initiatives—Plans wherein OPRHP is a partner in achieving regional management goals, such as the Great Lakes and the Lake Champlain basin programs.
4. Park/Historic Site Comprehensive Plans, stewardship plans, and special studies—Site-specific plans that analyze natural, cultural, and recreation resources, evaluate alternative management strategies, and recommend a preferred management and/or development direction.
5. Park development and management plans (Five-Year Capital Investment Plan)—Outlines projects (i.e., new development and rehabilitation projects; management actions) scheduled to be undertaken within five years. These plans often implement projects identified in the Park/Historic Site Comprehensive Plans and special studies.

Resource planning is, therefore, a progression from statewide policy and goals to system management directions, to park and site plans, and finally to implementation of capital projects and resource management actions. All planning is undertaken within the context of public participation.

Statewide plans like SCORP and the Open Space Conservation Plan are the product of multi-agency collaborations. The plan also incorporates the recommendations of partner agencies, builds on the findings of previous plans, and develops recommendations for future action based on public input. DEC's planning process differs from OPRHP's, primarily in its focus on land use and management. DEC follows a similar structure for developing State land development, unit management plans and other policy documents, also within the framework of public participation.

The programs and statewide initiatives outlined in this SCORP have a five-year horizon; as a result, the content is an evolving response to changing conditions and new information. Policies and recommendations in the SCORP reflect an extensive effort to collect and analyze information, engage with recreation experts, and compile original collected research. Together with public input, these provide an accurate representation of outdoor recreation usage and needs in NYS.

Public Participation

To effectively identify recreation trends, the model used for data collection was kept consistent with previous SCORP reports, with only minor modifications to accommodate new types of recreation activities. A more detailed description of data collection instruments and methodology is available in Chapter 4 and in Appendix E.

Data

In 2024, three surveys were deployed to assess outdoor recreational supply and demand in NYS: the Park Professional Survey (PPS), the Public Outdoor Recreation Survey (PORS), and the NYS Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey (Supply Survey).

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

OPRHP Planning Teams are guided by three planning principles:

1. Planning is a continuous process.

Subject to a changing environment, an effective plan requires that assumptions, methods, and objectives are periodically reexamined, and new factors and information are incorporated as conditions change.

2. Planning must be comprehensive.

Planning for recreation facilities, programs, and services must consider the context of both the natural and built environment. Recreation planning also analyzes potential environmental impacts, socio-economic factors, and demographic changes within the population.

3. Planning must be a coordinated process with public participation.

Effective planning for public agencies must include the opportunity for citizen participation and input. Coordination at all levels of government, and with both public and private sectors, is essential. The plan and the process must also be responsive to modification, as warranted, to meet changes in societal needs and values, in the context of existing environmental conditions.

Sent to State, County, City, Town/Village, and Tribal park professionals across New York’s 62 counties, the PPS inquired about perceptions of need for outdoor recreation funding and facilities in the communities of NYS park professionals. Queries in the PPS were designed to gauge the range in the professional perception of need for recreational variety as well as feelings towards current environmental and recreational issues. Responses represented the majority (58 out of 62) of NYS counties.

The PORS, offered in English and Spanish, received over 10,000 responses from NYS citizens. The responses were analyzed to assess key attitudes towards outdoor recreation including participation levels, perception of barriers to participation, and potential need for additional outdoor recreation facilities. In conjunction with census data, survey results revealed trends across demographic groups such as age, race, and educational attainment.

The Supply Survey was distributed to update the Recreational Facilities Inventory System, which contains data on the types and quantities of recreation amenities available at over 8,000 parks and recreational facilities statewide. The survey was deployed to State, County, City, and Town/Village park professionals with the request that respondents update or add their community’s recreational facilities. No response was necessary if no updates were needed.

Supplementary to the 2024 surveys, in 2023, the Open Space Institute conducted **The Centennial Pulse of the Parks Survey** with support from OPRHP in preparation for **OPRHP’s Centennial Celebration**. This survey aimed to have volunteers and park staff interface directly with OPRHP patrons to understand what they enjoy about OPRHP parks and what they would like to see in the future.

Evaluating the feedback from these sources lays the groundwork for understanding recreation in NYS and maximizing the public benefit of dollars spent for recreation and open space in the state.



Springtime at Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park, Long Island Region

OPRHP DEIA DEFINITIONS

Diversity

a quality that reflects the full range of human identity, including but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, culture, and sexual orientation.

Equity

to provide fair and just opportunities for all individuals, aiming to eliminate structural barriers and increase equal participation and leadership at OPRHP facilities.

Inclusion

practices that encourage and value authentic participation and cultivate a sense of belonging within OPRHP's outdoor recreation system for all individuals.

Access

opportunities for all individuals regardless of physical, intellectual, sensory, or linguistic ability to engage with park programming, facilities, and natural, historic, and cultural resources.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

OPRHP is committed to advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) within the outdoor recreation system for the betterment of the various communities it serves. These concepts are directly incorporated into the 2025-2030 SCORP goals and guides for implementation.

Of the over 20 million people living in New York, 22.3% are born outside the United States.⁶ 45% of our residents identify as a race other than white alone according to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS).⁷ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 25% of people living in NYS have a disability.⁸ Diversities like these necessitate comprehensive and inclusive planning that creates and allows for multiple avenues of recreation and interpretation.

Sustainability

OPRHP is committed to the development and implementation of a statewide sustainability program to eliminate or minimize negative environmental and health impacts from our operations. Aspects of this initiative include, but are not limited to, climate change mitigation, waste diversion, single-use plastics management, decarbonization, green purchasing, and energy efficiency measures.

Environmental Justice

OPRHP has an obligation to both steward and protect the natural landscape of New York State while providing all communities equitable access to outdoor recreation. Historically, disadvantaged communities within NYS have had inequitable access to green space and are disproportionately affected by climate change. **Environmental Justice** is a concept or lens through which the unique environmental burdens and challenges affecting disadvantaged communities can be understood and addressed. Addressing these inequities is a goal of the 2025-2030 SCORP, further discussed in Chapter 6.



Schoolkids enjoying a trip to a state park. Trips such as these are supported by the Connect Kids program.

Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Open Space

Parks and other outdoor recreation facilities are neither work nor home. Like public libraries, urban plazas, or community centers, they are “third places” where people naturally congregate, socialize, and play. Third places and the programming that can occur at them, or social infrastructure, bring communities closer. While this infrastructure is less tangible than infrastructure for utilities such as water, communications, or power, these spaces can have as pronounced an effect.

The layered effect of third places has been noted by many institutions and cited as critical to community building. The U.S. Forest Service lists three key benefits of outdoor spaces:⁹

1. Physical Wellness
2. Mental Wellness
3. Community Wellness

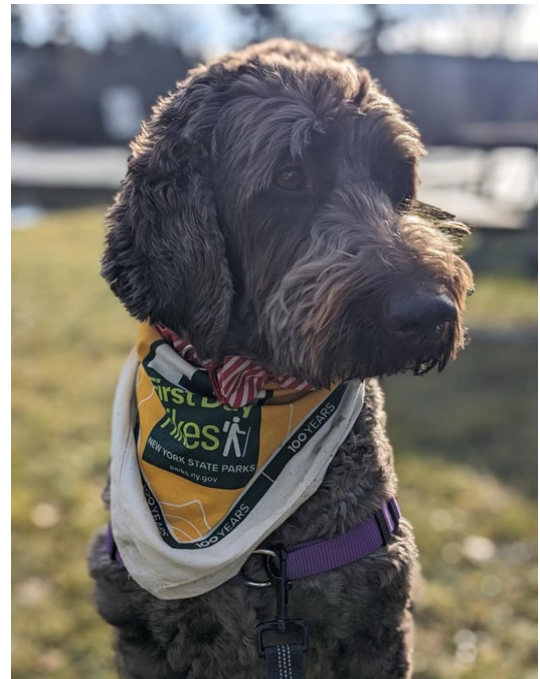
Physical Wellness

It is well documented that spending time outdoors has positive effects on human bodies, with benefits such as improving the immune system by reducing cortisol levels and increasing vitamin D intake.¹⁰ Other benefits include improvements in sleep and cognitive function. According to the DEC¹¹, participating in nature-based recreation has positive physical health benefits for adolescents¹² and adults.¹³

Mental Wellness

Isolation due to social distancing requirements during COVID-19 disproportionately affected youth¹⁴ and the elderly.¹⁵ During this time, it was also observed that those with access to green space managed their stress and isolation levels better than those without.¹⁶ Parks and open spaces are observed to have positive effects on combatting loneliness by providing affordable and public places for face-to-face interaction.¹⁷

“Outdoor therapy” has become an international trend, with billions of people looking to alleviate stress through outdoor recreation.¹⁸ Though participating in outdoor recreation is not a replacement for mental health services, the National Library of Medicine does cite participation in nature-based recreation to improve overall mental health.¹⁹ Some OPRHP facilities offer “Forest Therapy Walks” to promote mental wellness.



Participant at the 2024 First Day Hike at Glimmerglass State Park, Central Region



Visitors at Hamlin Beach State Park using beach access mats, Genesee Region

Research indicates a link between access to open space and happiness.²⁰ This connection may be particularly important for older New Yorkers, as studies have shown that “seniors who use or live near parks report better physical and mental health, including happiness.”²¹

Community Wellness

Community wellness describes the quality of life achieved when social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political factors are fostered, through individual action and input, for the benefit of the larger community.²² Research shows that, in urban areas, parks “provide opportunities for restoration, social integration and bonding” and have been used to “increase social cohesion.”²³

Why The Benefits Matter

According to the American Psychological Association, there is a strong correlation between increased time spent in nature and increases in empathy and cooperation. This concept, “**Nurtured by Nature**,” shows that exposure to nature fosters a sense of reciprocity. People exposed more often to nature are also more likely to engage in sustainable practices, like sustainable fishing and hunting.

In Setha Low’s book, *Why Public Space Matters* (2023), third spaces, like parks, are shown to influence and foster a sense of community pride and kinship through accessible and accommodating public space. These qualities contribute to “community capacity”. Community capacity is the ability of communities to respond to public and social health concerns.²⁴ Communities with higher capacities are more resilient to adversities such as climate change.²⁵

The COVID-19 Pandemic further highlighted the need for public green space at a community level. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, “[the value of parks] was rediscovered through the pandemic, serving as spaces for physical and mental well-being, and reminding us of the vital role that accessible green spaces play in our collective health and overall quality of life.”²⁶ During the pandemic, New York’s State Parks rose to the challenge – entrance fees were waived, and despite reduced capacity, parks were kept open as a refuge from the isolation of the pandemic lockdown. Several parks also served as testing, vaccination, and supply distribution centers.

Parks, Open Spaces, and Hazard Mitigation

The benefits of open space conservation, including spaces dedicated for outdoor recreation, are varied and interconnected. Urban parks in densely developed areas provide important habitats for native plants and animals and help reduce the danger posed by heat waves. The State's wetlands, forests, and vegetated barrier islands help mitigate storm surges and flooding, and capture carbon from the atmosphere. For a more in-depth discussion on the benefits of open space, as well as recommendations for outdoor recreation providers, please see the [2016 Open Space Conservation Plan](#).

In recent years, inclement weather has had a significant impact on many American communities. As climate patterns become less predictable, there is a pressing need for communities to bolster their infrastructure against climate disasters. Outdoor recreation facilities are included in this effort as they are an important part of community infrastructure.

Part of a community's capacity is measured by resilience against unpredictable climate events. Parks contribute to this overall capacity for resilience by providing natural shade and stormwater infrastructure.²⁷ [Resilience planning](#) helps communities understand their vulnerabilities, advance resilience measures that reduce risk, and avoid investments not highly adapted to a changing climate. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has also cited parks and open spaces as a key factor in resiliency.²⁸

In 2023 alone, intense storms and flooding caused extensive damage to Bear Mountain and Harriman State Parks.²⁹ In addition to heavy storms, most of New York State was engulfed in smoke in the aftermath of a series of Canadian wildfires.³⁰ Areas with more natural, open space, that are holistically planned, are more resilient to events like this. For more examples and information on resilience planning, see Chapter 5.



Bear Mountain State Park in the Palisades Region, 2023. The park suffered extensive damage from flooding during an unusually severe storm.



A freshwater swimming beach at Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Palisades Region

Carbon Sequestration

An overall goal to combat climate change is the reduction of carbon emissions. Carbon is released primarily from the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas, with additional contributions from deforestation, soil erosion, land use changes, and agriculture. A 2018 report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change projected that if emissions continued at current levels, temperatures were likely to increase by 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052. This outcome has since changed as the 1.5-degree threshold is approaching sooner than originally thought³¹, making efforts to sequester carbon more important than ever.³²

Outdoor recreation facilities play a significant role in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Forests and other vegetated areas become “carbon sinks,” as plants draw carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as they grow. Of the 30 million acres of land in NYS, 61%—or 19 million acres—are forested.³³ As these lands, many of which are used for outdoor recreation, help sequester carbon, they contribute to the State’s efforts to mitigate or defer global warming and slow climate change.

New York State is pioneering a path to environmental sustainability and equitable treatment with legislation such as the **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)** and **Executive Order 22 (EO22)**. Both community- and nature-based initiatives, the CLCPA and EO22 are looking to enact necessary climate action while safeguarding residents and visitors in New York. For more information on the CLCPA and EO22, see Chapter 5.

Stewardship and Conservation

New York State’s varied geology is part of the state’s natural heritage, and it creates habitats that support a rich species diversity. Unfortunately, habitat loss and fragmentation across the state have been a cause of decline for many native plants and animals. As sea levels rise along the Atlantic coast, the Great Lakes, and in the tidal Hudson River, many of these native species are under

increased threat. Higher temperatures due to climate change contribute to the increase in invasive species, further displacing native species³⁴. Outdoor recreation providers play an important part in stewarding the remaining interconnected lands that are both critical to the long-term viability of native species and a valuable public recreation resource.

Recreation planning should be undertaken with an eye toward maintaining unfragmented open space and habitat corridors. This requires coordination between outdoor recreation providers, conservation groups, biologists, and local experts to identify essential habitats and corridors. Planning efforts must take into consideration pressures on specific species and ecological communities from development (both outside and within outdoor recreation areas), invasive species, and climate change. Long-term recreation planning needs to consider that sea-level rise will trigger inland, upland, up-slope, and northward migrations of native species and ecosystem types.

Planning tools for this purpose are provided by the [NYS Natural Heritage Program](#), which maintains an inventory of, and [conservation guides](#) on, the state's rare animals, plants, and significant natural communities, as well as an online [mapping tool](#) to identify general areas where these species and communities have been documented.



Cyclists at Fahnestock State Park, Taconic Region

Economic Impacts of Outdoor Recreation

In 2023 the Bureau of Economic Analysis announced that outdoor recreation accounted for 2.3% of the current gross domestic product (GDP). GDP for outdoor recreation increased by 3.6%, indicating stronger growth than the overall U.S. economy which experienced a 2.9% increase. Across all 50 states, including the District of Columbia, employment in outdoor recreation increased overall. In NYS alone, employment in outdoor recreation increased by 4.1%. In the U.S., NYS ranked 9th in growth with an increase of 11.6% in value added from 2022-2023 and ranked 4th in value added to the overall economy with \$33.9 billion.

CHAPTER 2 – THE NEW YORK STATE OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM

Recreation in New York State

The NYS outdoor recreation system includes all lands directly owned by the state, and its municipal subdivisions, that are intended for, or in direct support of, public outdoor recreation. This includes state, county, city, town, and village parks, historic sites, recreation areas, canal trails, greenways, the Empire State Trail, boat launches, scenic byways, water trails, and state-owned winter recreation facilities. The NYS outdoor recreation system is a subset of the state’s broader recreation “estate,” which encompasses *all* lands devoted to public outdoor recreation, regardless of their owner or manager. Federally operated national historic sites, wildlife refuges, multiple use areas, and the Finger Lakes National Forest provide additional opportunities for recreation. Pocket parks, nature preserves, and other privately managed spaces that are open to the public further contribute to the total number of acres dedicated to outdoor recreation in NYS.

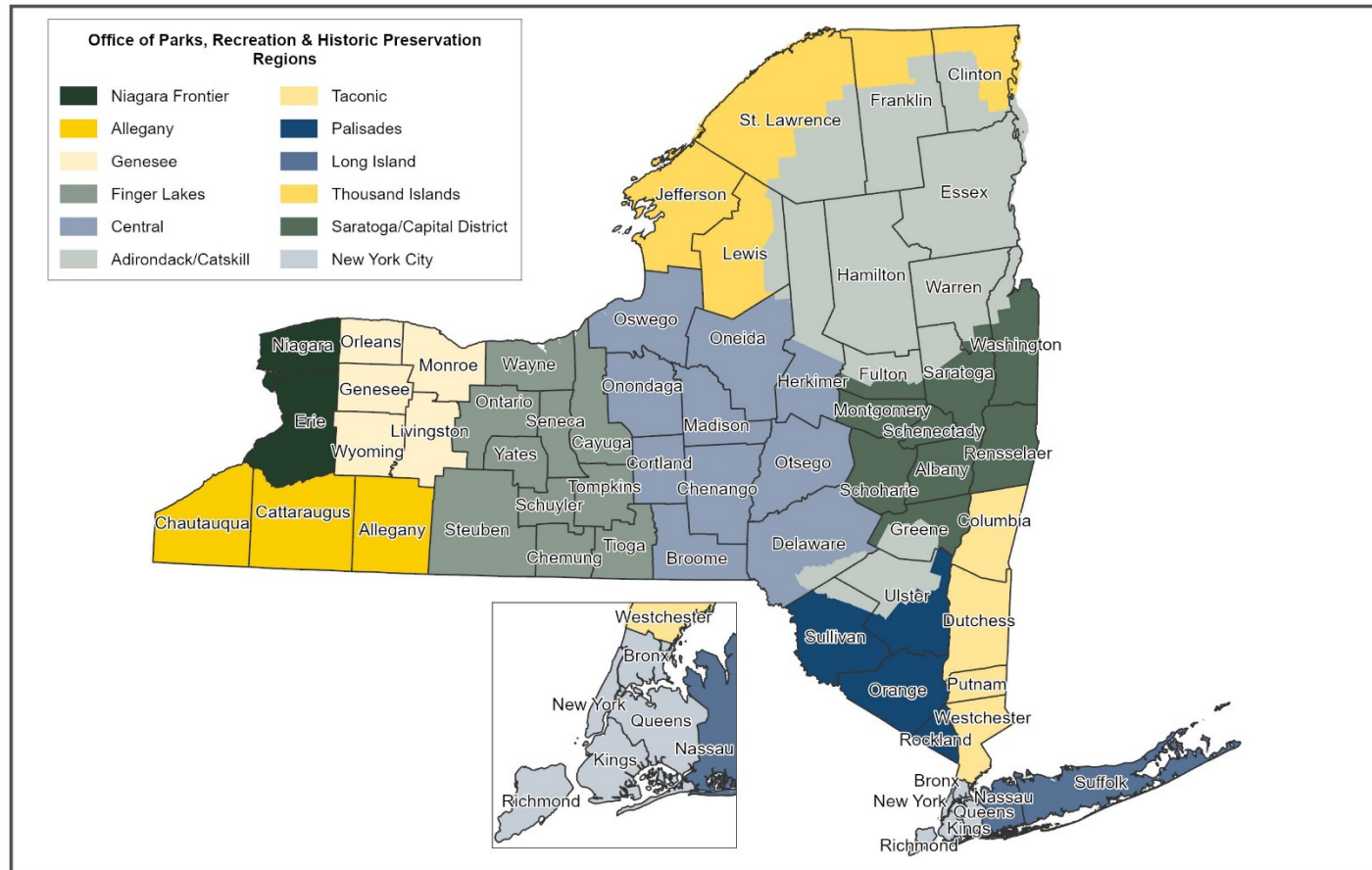
OPRHP and DEC manage the majority of publicly owned outdoor recreation facilities in the state. Other land managers include the Canal Corporation, the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Office of General Services (OGS). Additionally, New York’s municipal subdivisions—counties, towns, cities, and villages—provide outdoor recreation opportunities that are equally vital to the state’s recreation resources.

Under the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, the state is divided into twelve State Park regions, eleven of which are under the jurisdiction of OPRHP: Niagara, Allegany, Genesee, Finger Lakes, Central, Taconic, Palisades (operated jointly with the Palisades Interstate Park Commission), Long Island, Thousand Islands, Saratoga/Capital District, and New York City. The region comprised of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, as defined by the Environmental Conservation Law, is administered by DEC.



View Across the Gorge at Letchworth State Park, Genesee Region

Figure 2.1 - Map of New York State Park Regions



Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The mission of OPRHP is to provide safe and enjoyable recreation and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic, and cultural resources. Within this capacity, OPRHP manages the State Park system, which includes State Parks and State Historic Sites. The Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law created the State Board for Historic Preservation in 1980 to protect historic resources in the state. The Board provides advisory services and acts as the federally mandated review body in the nomination of sites for listing on federal and state registers of historic places.

OPRHP administers more than 360,000 acres of land, 180 State Parks, 36 Historic Sites, 30 nature centers, and 73 boat launch sites. The agency also oversees 54 swimming beaches; 18 swimming pools; 6 spray pads; 21 marinas; 28 golf courses; 68 campgrounds (featuring 8,179 campsites, 136 full-service cottages, 825 cabins, and 18 yurts) and more than 2,000 miles of trails. Land under OPRHP's jurisdiction is approximately 91% natural, 4% managed, 2% developed and 3% open water (National Land Cover Database 2021).

The New York State budget for Fiscal Year 2025 allocated \$200 million in New York Works capital funding to OPRHP to further expand the ongoing investment to restore and repair Parks and Historic Sites across the state and an additional \$100 million in funding to celebrate the New York State Parks' Centennial. Past New York Works projects include the transformation of Buffalo Harbor State Park, enhancements to Bear Mountain State Park, site improvements to the John Jay State Historic Site, and revitalization of beaches and swimming facilities statewide. New York Works funding can be used as match for LWCF.

Accessibility at OPRHP Facilities

In line with the agency's mission, OPRHP is committed to making all reasonable efforts to ensure that the agency's facilities, programs, and services are accessible to all visitors, recognizing individual needs and abilities (see [OPRHP Accessibility Policy](#)). The agency makes ongoing efforts to comply with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#), the [Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 \(ABA\)](#), the [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), and the [NYS Building Code](#). Through the physical design of its facilities, use of multi-modal interpretive material, adaptive recreation equipment, and reasonable accommodations, OPRHP continues its commitment to providing access to all aspects of the State Park system.

Accessible design creates a more inclusive experience for all parkgoers and ensures equal opportunities to explore, engage, and participate in programs and activities. People with disabilities, their families, friends, and caregivers; visitors with children in strollers; and older New Yorkers all benefit from improvements to accessible features at State Parks and Historic Sites. As OPRHP continues to make its facilities and programs more accessible, information is made available through news publications, signs and posters, and on the [OPRHP website](#). See Appendix C (page C-9) for more information on accessibility at NYS Parks and Historic Sites.

New York's State Parks and Historic Sites Centennial

2024 marked the 100th anniversary of the New York State Parks and Historic Sites system. Though several state parks and regional commissions existed by the early 1920s, no single body was responsible for directing park and recreation policies statewide. A restructuring of the New York State government in 1924 resulted in the first unified state park system in the country – the New York State Council of Parks. The Council was tasked with creating a comprehensive outdoor recreation system, which included providing recreational motor routes, or parkways, for an increasing number of automobile tourists. Subsequent changes to state government in the 1970s resulted in the creation of OPRHP, the state agency now responsible for the daily operation of New York State Parks and Historic Sites. The [State Council of Parks](#) remains an important fixture of the State Parks system and serves as an advisory council that helps to guide the direction and operation of state facilities.

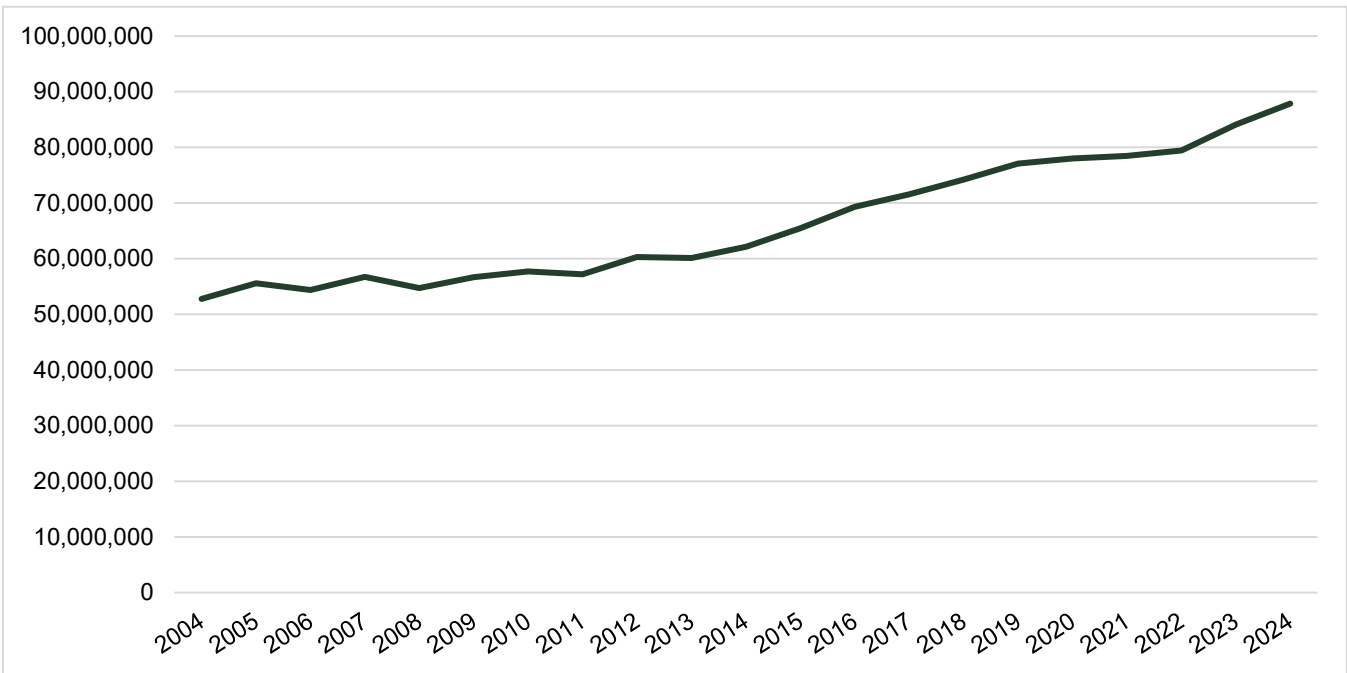
Leading up to the celebration, "[The Centennial Pulse of the Parks](#)" survey was conducted at 22 Parks across the state during the summer of 2023 to better understand visitor preferences and demographics. The data gathered from over 2,600 individual survey responses will help to shape future planning efforts and capital improvements. Throughout the year-long [Parks 100](#) initiative, special programming at parks and sites across the state celebrated and reflected on the past one hundred years while looking forward to the next century.

Expanding Outdoor Recreation

Over the past five years, many of New York State’s parks and historic sites have been energized with new and updated facilities and expanded recreation opportunities. These improvements help promote healthy outdoor activity and encourage residents and visitors to explore parks across the State.

Improvements and additions include the new Sojourner Truth State Park in the City of Kingston; completing the final phase of a \$47 million multi-year project at Hempstead Lake State Park on Long Island with new trails, observation areas, and resiliency updates; opening the new \$46 million Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Welcome Center at Niagara Falls State Park; a new \$6.8 million multi-use trail at Allegany State Park; and \$3 million in improvements at Green Lakes State Park in Onondaga County.

Figure 2.2 - Growth in New York State Park attendance statewide since 2004



The results are clear: OPRHP has seen record numbers of visitors at its campgrounds, parks, historic sites, and trails. In 2024, an estimated 88.3 million people visited its facilities, the twelfth consecutive year of rising attendance. Over the last two decades, State Parks’ attendance has climbed steadily, increasing 66 percent. Overall State Park attendance increased by 30 percent over the July 4th holiday weekend, from 2.2 million visitors in 2023 to 2.8 million in 2024.

State Parks and Preservation Areas

The New York State Park system consists of natural areas with varied geologic features and ecological habitats. Notable landscapes include the:

- waterfalls and gorges of the Finger Lakes,
- Genesee River Gorge at Letchworth State Park (the “Grand Canyon of the East”),
- old growth forests of Allegany,
- islands of the St. Lawrence and Hudson Rivers,
- cliffs at Minnewaska and John Boyd Thacher State Parks, and
- the sandy beaches of Long Island.

Article 20 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law gives OPRHP's Commissioner the authority to designate parks with significant natural, scenic, historical, and archeological elements, including assemblages of rare flora and fauna, as Park Preserves. Among other requirements, a Park Preserve must limit the intensity of development on the site to no more than 15% of the land area of the facility. The Article also allows for the creation of Park Preservation Areas, to conserve areas of State Parks, Parkways, Historic Sites, and recreational facilities that possess outstanding ecological values in instances where the entire facility does not qualify for Park Preserve status. The Park Preserve system currently consists of eight Park Preserves and eight Park Preservation Areas comprising more than a third of the land under OPRHP's jurisdiction.

State Historic Sites

Historic properties offer a view into the past, as well as opportunities for outdoor leisure and educational experiences by providing recreational uses on historic carriage roads, trails, interpretive walks, picnic areas and, hunting and fishing on historic estates. New York's State Historic Site (SHS) system was initiated in 1850 with the acquisition of General George Washington's headquarters, a Dutch stone house overlooking the Hudson River in the City of Newburgh that he occupied near the end of the Revolutionary War. The acquisition was the genesis of the State Historic Site system, which grew incrementally over the years, always with the intent to preserve important places in the state's history. Now known as Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site, this property was the first publicly owned historic site in the country.

The SHS system has evolved over the decades; early historic sites focused on military forts, battlefields, homes of Founding Fathers, and the great estates of New York's prominent industrialists. More recent additions to the SHS system have expanded the breadth of histories and perspectives



Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site, Palisades Region

represented at official state historic sites. In Victor, NY, Ganondagan State Historic Site, a National Historic Landmark, has educated visitors on Haudenosaunee culture, history, and living traditions since 1987. In June 2016, the Stonewall Inn was designated as a State Historic Site, the first LGBTQ+ site in the SHS system. Other new sites with connections to notable New York women help to further broaden the range of histories told within the SHS system.

OPRHP is committed to telling **Our Whole History** – an agency initiative that “seeks to reveal and share historically under-told stories of ordinary and extraordinary people across New York State.” The goal of the initiative is to expand exhibits, interpretation, and programming to better highlight the role that traditionally underrepresented communities have played in NYS history. State Historic Sites at Staatsburgh, Clermont, Senate House, Washington’s Headquarters, and Schuyler Mansion provide examples of interpretive programming reflective of this initiative.

Archaeological sites, ranging from Native American fishing encampments to twentieth-century Cold War military installations, can be found across the state. Identifying, preserving and interpreting these archaeological resources helps to ensure their long-term protection. See the **2021-2026 New York State Historic Preservation Plan** for more information on Historic Preservation and NYS Historic Sites.

Figure 2.3 - Map of New York State Heritage Areas



Heritage Areas

The **NYS Heritage Area** system is a state-local partnership established to promote special areas of significance in the state. From the Great Lakes to the eastern tip of Long Island, Heritage Areas represent some of the state's most significant natural, historic, and cultural resources, along with the people and programs that interpret and preserve these resources. As of 2025, the State Legislature has designated twenty-two State Heritage Areas. Eighteen of these have OPRHP Commissioner-approved management plans and active management entities, two elements that are required in order to be eligible for grants through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Parks, Preservation and Heritage Program.

LINEAR PARKS ADMINISTERED BY OPRHP

- Black Diamond Trail
- Black River Trail
- Catharine Valley Trail
- Genesee Valley Greenway
- Harlem Valley Rail Trail
- Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail
- Niagara Gorge Rim Trail/River Greenway Trail
- Niagara Scenic Parkway Trail
- Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park
- Old Erie Canal State Historic Park
- Pat McGee Trail
- Trail View State Park
- Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park
- Washington County Rail Trail/Slate Valley Rail Trail
- West River Shoreline Trail (opened in 2018, former West River Parkway)

The Heritage Areas highlight significant themes in state history, including reform movements, military history, industrialization, transportation, agriculture, architecture, engineering, African American culture, immigration, landscape, and maritime history. Several NYS Heritage Areas, such as the Concord Grape Belt, Susquehanna, and Long Island North Shore, encompass wide swaths of land, offering parks, water trails, and long-distance pedestrian/cycling trails, providing ample opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Linear Parks

Beyond providing communities with access to the outdoors, linear parks typically offer all-season recreation opportunities, including hiking, jogging, biking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing, depending on specific rules and permitted activities. Linear parks often feature shared-use paths (also called greenway trails) and can be found from Long Island's Trail View State Park—a 7.4-mile link between State Parks in Cold Spring Harbor and Bethpage—to the Finger Lakes' Black Diamond Trail spanning 8.4 miles, which offers woodland and pastoral views of rural Tompkins County, and vistas across Cayuga Lake.

OPRHP administers 14 linear parks that have been developed on former railroad beds (e.g., the Black River Trail in Jefferson County), on canal towpaths (Old Erie Canal State Historic Park), and on former utility corridors (Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park). Linear parks such as these form the backbone of the statewide trail system.

Parkways

The State's parkway system originated in the first half of the 20th century as a series of four-lane, 25 mph roads—then considered high-speed—designed to provide scenic routes from New York City. The first was the Bronx River Parkway, built in 1908. Beginning in the 1930s, public official and urban planner Robert Moses greatly expanded the parkway system to provide downstate residents with

access to Long Island and upstate parks, completing the Ocean, Meadowbrook, Lake Ontario and Bethpage State Parkways, among others. Most of these parkways have been redesigned to accommodate higher speeds and greater capacity than was initially envisioned. Today, aside from a few idiosyncrasies such as narrow shoulders and curbs, they closely resemble highways built in other parts of the country. Most NYS parkways are owned by OPRHP and managed by the NYS Department of Transportation. Due to an increased demand for alternative modes of transportation, some parkways are being converted to multi-use trails for non-vehicular uses.



The Empire State Trail at Buffalo Harbor State Park, Niagara Region

Empire State Trail

Completed in December 2020, the Empire State Trail (EST) is a multi-use path designed to accommodate shared use by pedestrians and bicyclists. The EST spans north-south from New York City to the United States-Canada Border, and east-west from Albany to Buffalo. The 750-mile-long trail celebrates the diversity of New York's cultural and natural landscapes.

The funding to create the EST improved existing sections and established new trail segments between many existing trails—the Hudson River Greenway Trail, Dutchess County Rail Trail, Walkill Valley Trail, Erie Canalway Trail, and more—which serve as the backbone of the overall system. More than 80% of the EST is fully off-road and much of the route is surfaced and graded providing full accessibility to users of all ages and abilities.

The primary goals of the railway system are to:

- connect residents and visitors to the state's natural, historic, and cultural treasures;
- promote healthy lifestyles by providing safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational opportunities for all ages and physical abilities;
- support regional economic development strategies by providing recreational and history-based tourism opportunities;

- help to develop a nonmotorized transportation network, providing local and regional transportation options and contributing to the development of Complete Streets design in NYS.

Trail user counts between 2021 and 2024 by Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) have captured over 4 million trail users at 65 locations along the Erie Canalway Trail and Hudson River Valley Greenway segments of the EST. These and other trail counts support estimates from the [Final Report for the EST](#) which anticipated over 10 million users for the full Empire State Trail annually.

Empire State Water Trail System

The [Empire State Water Trail](#) is a 1,700-mile series of interconnected, locally managed, water trails spanning the state from the Canadian border in the north to New York City and Long Island in the south and from Albany in the east to Buffalo in the west.

Though water trails have existed for centuries for travel and trade, in recent years they have gained popularity as recreational resources. The first water trails in NYS were canoe routes established in the late 1800s by trappers and hunters in the Adirondacks. Modern-day water trails—defined by [North American Water Trails, Inc.](#) as “recreational waterway[s] on a river, lake, or ocean between specific points, containing access points and day use and camping sites for the boating public”—began to gain national attention starting in the 1990s and have continued to increase in popularity in recent decades.

According to [PTNY](#), water trails are “similar to land trails in that they host a constant flux of outdoor adventure seekers—kayakers, canoeists and other forms of non-motorized boaters—and come in a variety of shapes and sizes to accommodate paddlers of all different skill levels. They offer a fun alternative to walking, cycling, and hiking.

The benefits of water trails are comparable to those of any outdoor recreation resources; offering users the opportunity to enjoy nature, lead healthier lifestyles, and learn about history. Trails also support local businesses, bringing people to outfitters, shops, and restaurants along the route. When the [Hudson River Greenway Water Trail](#) was first conceived, for instance, there was only one outfitter on the Hudson River south of the Federal Dam in Troy, NY—now there are at least fifteen.

Water trails also promote stewardship of the state’s water resources; clean water and a litter-free environment are crucial to attracting users. Since water trails often flow through multiple communities and regions, including urban and rural areas, and both public and privately owned lands, they foster partnerships, both within and outside the State.

NYS WATER TRAILS

NYS has approximately 1,900 miles of operational water trail, of which over 1,700 miles are interconnected as the **Empire State Water Trail**. The Trail extends from the Canadian border through NYC to Long Island and from Albany to Buffalo.

Two of the first nine **National Water Trails** designated by the U.S. Department of Interior were the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail (256 miles) and the Bronx River Water Trail (8 miles).

International and interstate water trails: Crossing into Quebec, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (147 miles in NYS), spans from the Adirondacks to Maine. The Lake Champlain Paddlers’ Trail (120 miles) extends from Whitehall, NY, to the Canadian border and is shared with Vermont. The Delaware River Water Trail (75 miles in NYS) stretches from Hancock, NY, to Trenton, New Jersey.

The NYS Canalway Water Trail: (450 miles) consists of the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca Canals;

Other water trails include the NYC Water Trail (160 square miles) and the South Shore Blueway (Long Island).

New trails are proposed in the Finger Lakes, St. Lawrence River, Lake George, Chemung River, and the Susquehanna River, among others.

The Empire State Water Trail effort is led by the Hudson River Valley Greenway and a Steering Committee including water trail managers, OPRHP, DEC, Department of State (DOS), Canal Corporation, the National Park Service (NPS), and many County and municipal governments. More information can be found here: <https://www.empirestatewatertrail.org/aboutthetrail>.

Marine Parks and Boat Launches

New York State offers an abundance of scenic waterways for boaters to enjoy, including the Atlantic Ocean, Long Island Sound, the Hudson and St. Lawrence Rivers, lakes of the Adirondacks, the NYS Barge Canal, the Finger Lakes, Great Lakes, and hundreds of other streams, lakes, and rivers. Boaters have many opportunities to escape on a serene canal cruise, fish a favorite cove, or embark on a family adventure to explore new waters, all while experiencing first-hand the state's natural beauty.

Nature Centers

OPRHP's nature and visitor centers serve a wide range of functions. They are used as classroom spaces for school or scouting groups, formal or informal meeting spaces for Friends Groups or other community-based organizations, and store lending libraries and natural history collections for education and interpretive programming. They also provide a space for parks to store and distribute outdoor gear such as snowshoes, cross-country skis, bikes, and kayaks.

Nature/visitor centers are a hub of activity in their parks, often the home base for large parkwide programs like First Day Hikes, I Love My Park Day, and specific park events like 5K races and seasonal events. OPRHP is working diligently to maintain and grow these valuable resources.

Other Recreational Facilities

In some instances, OPRHP owns parkland that is managed by another entity, such as Friends' Groups, municipalities, or specially designated commissions. The 3,350-acre Albany Pine Bush Preserve in Albany County, for example, is jointly owned by OPRHP, DEC, the City of Albany, and the towns of Guilderland and Colonie. It is managed by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission.



2025 First Day Hike, Gantry Plaza State Park, New York City Region

Department of Environmental Conservation

The DEC's mission is to conserve, improve and protect New York's natural resources and environment and to prevent, abate and control water, land, and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well-being. This means that the DEC has a dual purpose of both land stewardship and environmental regulation. In its management capacity, DEC oversees the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, the State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, State Nature and Historical Preserves and facilities, and land areas that support fish and wildlife programs, environmental education centers, and camps.

DEC MANAGEMENT AREAS

The DEC administers nearly five million acres of land, including:

- **Forest Preserve**—three million acres
- **State Forest**—more than 800,000 acres
- **Wildlife Management Areas**—around 250,000 acres
- **Conservation Easements**—more than 900,000 acres
- **Public Fishing Rights Easements**—approximately 1,300 miles

Other facilities under DEC's jurisdiction include:

- 12 fish hatcheries,
- 400+ boat launch and fishing access sites,
- Three Submerged Heritage preserves,
- 132 accessible sites (including campsites, fishing piers, trails, horse mounts),
- 51 campgrounds
- +/-1700 primitive campsites,
- 300+ lean-tos, several environmental education centers, and summer camps,
- 5,000+ miles of hiking trails on Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, and Unique Areas

Accessibility at DEC Facilities

The goal of the DEC's accessibility efforts is for people with disabilities to be able to participate in and enjoy the benefits of DEC services, programs, and activities. This may be achieved in a variety of ways, including through physical design, alternative forms of communication, inclusive programs, and individual accommodation.

Existing facilities, programs, and services are being assessed to determine compliance with the most recent standards. Newly built and/or renovated facilities, sites, and trails, as well as new programs and services, are designed to adhere to current standards for accessible design, wherever applicable. The Accessibility Advisory Committee, consisting of individuals with disabilities and representatives from organizations that serve people with disabilities, reviews and assesses existing facilities. Further information about the agency's accessibility policy is available on the [DEC's website](#).

The DEC also conducts community outreach to inform the public about accessible recreation facilities and encourage recreation by people of all ages and abilities. Outreach includes events that showcase accessible features, activities, and articles in DEC newsletters, the *Conservationist* magazine, and social media posts. The [DEC Accessible Recreation web page](#) provides the public with synthesized information about accessible facilities and features.

Lands and Forests

The DEC Division of Lands and Forests manages nearly five million acres of public lands and conservation easements across New York State. This includes the Forest Preserve in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks; State Forests which include Unique Areas, Reforestation Areas, Multiple Use Areas, and the State Nature and Historical Preserve; and more than 900,000 acres of conservation easement lands. The Division of Lands

and Forests is responsible for the management, protection, and recreational use of these lands, the care of the people who use these lands, and the acquisition of additional lands to conserve unique and significant resources.

Lands and Forests provides leadership in forestry and forest management on public and private lands. It is also heavily involved in invasive species management statewide with a focus on early detection and rapid response.

Forest Preserve

Of the 4.9 million acres of DEC-managed land, nearly three million acres, or 61%, are classified as **Forest Preserve**. With over 2.7 million acres in the Adirondack Park and over 288,000 acres within the Catskill Park, these lands represent much of all State-owned property within the two regions. These two parks were established by the NYS legislature near the turn of the 20th century, originally including only State-owned Forest Preserve land. In 1912, the description of each park was revised to include *all* lands, both public and private, within what was termed “the Blue Line”—as blue is the color used on State maps to delineate the two parks. The term is still used today.



Porcupine in an ash tree, Central Region

Protected as “forever wild” by Article XIV of the NYS Constitution, NYS Forest Preserve lands have “exceptional scenic, recreational, and ecological value.” Additionally, constitutional protections prevent the sale or removal of timber from Forest Preserve land. Rugged mountains, remote lakes, millions of acres of unfragmented forests, and nearly 2,000 miles of trails provide resources for recreation within a variety of plant and wildlife habitats. Depending on park-wide land classifications and specific unit management plans, the Forest Preserve’s public lands, which range from remote backcountry to DEC-operated campgrounds, offer a variety of opportunities for public enjoyment including hiking, camping, paddling, hunting, fishing, trapping, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, and rock climbing.

Adirondack Park

The Adirondack Park is a six-million-acre patchwork of public and private lands in northeastern New York, roughly corresponding with the boundary of the Adirondack Mountains. The Park was designated in 1892 to protect the region from uncontrolled forest clearing that was common during the 1800s. Today the Park is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States, greater in size than Yellowstone, Everglades, Glacier, and Grand Canyon National Parks combined. Nearly half of that land is public and managed by the DEC; the remaining half is private land including settlements, farms, timber lands, businesses, homes, and camps. Land use and development within the Park is regulated by the Adirondack Park Agency.

Catskill Park

A mountainous region in New York's Ulster, Greene, Delaware, and Sullivan Counties, the Catskill Park was established by statute in 1904. Originally covering 576,126 acres, the Park has since been expanded to 705,500 acres. Like the Adirondack Park, the Catskill Park includes both public and private lands; its administration, however, differs from the Adirondack Park's. Within the Catskill Park, the NYS

Bureau of Forest Preserve Management and Conservation Easements is responsible for the management and administration of 288,000 acres of State land, which comprises the Catskill Forest Preserve. Public lands in the Catskill Park are primarily forested, but also include meadows, lakes, rivers, wetlands, waterfalls, cliffs, and many species of fish, wildlife, and plant life.

State Forests

“State Forest” is a generic term for the more than 800,000 acres of DEC-administered lands outside the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, under the direction of the Division of Lands and Forests. There are approximately 480 State Forest areas, ranging from 100 acres to 9,000 acres, that are generally classified as Reforestation Areas, Unique Areas, Multiple-Use Areas, and State Nature and Historic Preserves.

The State Reforestation Law of 1929 and the Hewitt Amendment of 1931 authorized the DEC to acquire land for reforestation, which makes up approximately 85% of State Forest lands. These areas are to be forever devoted to “reforestation and the establishment and maintenance thereon of forests for watershed protection, the production of timber, and for recreation and kindred purposes” (Article 9, Title 5, Environmental Conservation Law).

State Forests are “working forests,” offering a variety of resources, products, and experiences. Demand for recreational use of State Forests has increased substantially in recent years; snowmobiling, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing, hang gliding, picnicking, cross-country skiing, birdwatching, and hiking are now a major component of State Forest management plans. NY’s State Forests also contain unique features of interest. Rare and endangered plant communities provide the recreational naturalist with the opportunity to observe specialized habitats, and cultural resources such as old homesteads, cemeteries, and historical Native American sites can provide notable experiences for visitors.

State Nature and Historic Preserves

State Nature and Historic Preserves are lands owned by the State, acquired to protect the biological diversity of plants, animals, and natural communities. Preserves may provide a field laboratory for observation and education and are also a place for public recreation. The areas may also provide for the protection of places of historic interest. One example is the Vischer Ferry Nature and Historic Preserve, located along the Mohawk River. With more than 700 acres of wetlands, floodplains, and special bird and amphibian habitats, this linear greenway includes national historic treasures including two Erie Canal towpath trails, and other historic canal infrastructure, as well as an abundance of nature trails. The site is designated both a Bird Conservation Area (DEC) and an Important Bird Area (Audubon NY), where more than 200 bird species have been observed.

Fish and Wildlife

New York is characterized by a mix of landscapes and habitats with abundant fish and wildlife. Varied habitats for people to enjoy fish and wildlife are available, from Long Island’s oceanfront beaches to the 5,344-foot summit of Mt. Marcy, in the Adirondack High Peaks. Native brook trout and the State trout stocking program attract people to small mountain streams. Anglers can fish for migratory striped bass from Montauk’s marine waters, up the Hudson River to Troy, NY. The Great Lakes offer trophy-size Coho salmon and black bass fishing tournaments. Big game hunting is popular in both the Northern and Southern Zones, each offering different hunting experiences.

Wildlife Resources

The state's diversity of wildlife makes a unique contribution to the recreation experience. Recreation resources are often seen as site-specific; habitat and wildlife, however, often extend, and move, beyond property boundaries. As a recreation resource, wildlife is therefore viewed in terms of species and populations, rather than in acreage or sites. In the U.S., jurisdiction over wildlife does not correspond to ownership of real property but is vested in the people of each state. In NYS, the DEC acts as a steward of the people's wildlife. Migratory species are under the authority of the federal government; DEC and analogous agencies in other states are major participants and cooperators. Ecological distinctions determine the distribution of wildlife and opportunities for associated recreation.

Rare species occur in various places in NYS. Encounters with known rare species are most likely to occur in the Adirondacks, the coastal lowlands of Long Island and New York City, the Hudson Valley, and the Catskills. Species such as the bald eagle, the osprey, and the peregrine falcon have increased in numbers and distribution in recent years, stimulating significant recreational interest.

The many waterways and bays in and around New York City include the Hudson River, the East River, Long Island Sound, Great South Bay, and others along the south shore of Long Island, the upper and lower New York City bays, the Jamaica Bay Refuge, the Arthur Kill and the Kill Van Kull. These provide city and suburban residents with the opportunity to view bird species such as gulls, terns, cormorants, herons, waterfowl, and other water-dependent birds.

The Adirondacks and the Catskills offer abundant wildlife observation, hunting, and trapping in wilderness or wild forest settings unique from the rest of the state. Animal life in the Adirondacks differs from the rest of the state, with boreal ecosystems that include a small, seemingly stable, moose population (a viable moose population has wildlife observation and tourism values and might eventually provide limited hunting). Less common species such as spruce grouse, Canada jay, three-toed and black-backed woodpeckers, and loons also contribute to an enjoyable wilderness experience.

The shores and plains south and east of Lake Ontario and along the St. Lawrence River are a destination for those who seek wetland wildlife. Major wetland complexes, such as the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge between Syracuse and Rochester and the contiguous Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Oak Orchard, and Tonawanda Wildlife Management areas, between Rochester and Buffalo are home to varied wetland wildlife. Similar concentrations are found in the Champlain and Hudson River Valleys, and along the coast of Long Island.



Top: Fox kit; above: Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly on a Milkweed flower

Wildlife recreationists and hunters will find bears throughout upstate, as populations have expanded in the Adirondacks, the Catskills, and the Allegheny Plateau. Wild turkey populations have been reestablished across much of NYS, and deer are plentiful, with the highest likelihood of hunting success in western, central, and eastern NYS south of the Adirondacks. Songbirds, squirrels, and cottontails may be found in backyards, neighborhood parks, and along roads and trailways, contributing to the quality of everyday life. Recreation is one of the major aspects of DEC's wildlife program. Achievement of appropriate wildlife population sizes, meeting desires for varying uses, and exchanging information with the public, are the goals most closely related to recreation.

The existence of wildlife enhances everyday living, working, and traveling, in both direct and indirect ways. In general, humans find pleasure in observing, photographing, and studying wildlife. Although they may never have direct contact with them, many get satisfaction from knowing that species such as loons, moose, and bears still exist in places like the Adirondack Park.

While camping, hiking, walking, skiing, or engaging in other outdoor activities, people often encounter wildlife and eventually come to expect it. In some parts of NYS, access to natural areas is declining or severely limited, and, in some cases, political and legal challenges exist. For the public to continue to experience wildlife for recreation, an abundant and diverse wildlife population that includes endangered, threatened, and rare species, must be protected, and restored.

To promote public use of wildlife resources on private lands, wildlife recreationists need to understand and practice standards of ethics, courtesy, and safety. Training and educational programs help promote understanding and develop skills. Income, education level, health, and urban, suburban, or rural living are all factors that can influence the public's involvement with wildlife. To engage the public, programs that develop skills and offer wildlife recreational experiences for potential users are needed.

The DEC is committed to effective and comprehensive outreach about its wildlife programs, and to providing wildlife-related recreation opportunities. Efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters, anglers, trappers, and wildlife observers are a priority focus in the agency's efforts to reconnect people to nature.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)

The DEC Bureau of Wildlife manages approximately 125 WMAs, several Unique Areas and Multiple Use Areas, and other lands. These properties (known collectively as the WMA System) contain around 250,000 acres—including 124,000 acres of forests and grasslands and 53,000 acres of wetlands for public enjoyment. The WMA program is part of a long-term effort to provide permanent access to NYS public lands and ensure the protection and promotion of fish and wildlife resources. Beginning in the



Ice Fishing at Clarence Fahnestock State Park, Taconic Region

early 1900s with the acquisition of abandoned farmlands and fields, the DEC (and its predecessor, the NYS Conservation Department), worked with federal and state governments, and with anglers and hunters, to secure these lands for public use.

A combination of State and federal funding has been used to acquire WMA lands. Established in 1925, the Conservation Fund was the first dependable source, followed by the Federal Resettlement Administration in the 1930s, buying marginal and worn-out farmland, and later donating it to the State for wildlife management and use. Today, the Pittman-Robertson Act also provides federal funding from an excise tax on guns and ammunition to support wildlife restoration and management efforts. In 1984, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wallop-Breaux Amendment captured motorboat fuel excise taxes to provide boaters with new and improved docks and piers, wetlands conservation, and boating safety programs, among many other boating and fishing initiatives. NYS Bond Acts in 1960, 1972, and 1986 have also helped expand the WMA system, providing unique areas where the public can interact with a wide variety of wildlife species. NYS residents have also helped acquire a large portion of the WMAs through license fees and the federal tax on guns and ammunition.

The primary activities on many WMAs are fishing, hunting, trapping, and bird watching. Most also provide the opportunity for hiking, cross-country skiing, or just enjoying nature. WMAs also provide the opportunity for wildlife research. A grouse study conducted at the Connecticut Hill WMA in the state's Finger Lakes region is considered the standard reference on ruffed grouse in the northeast United States. Habitat management methods and techniques such as controlled burns and wildlife food plots have also been established and refined on WMAs. DEC's **Young Forest Initiative** aims to increase "young forest" habitat on WMAs. (While mature forests are home to certain species, others need young forests.) Declining species such as the Golden-winged Warbler and New England cottontail, benefit from younger growth habitats, as do popular game species like American Woodcock and Ruffed Grouse.

Fisheries

The state's freshwater and saltwater resources provide recreational fishing benefits to nearly one million licensed anglers. Freshwater anglers annually take about 21 million fishing trips, while saltwater anglers annually take about four million trips. Hundreds of thousands of young people under the age of 16 are also introduced to fishing activities without any licensing requirements. Four thousand lakes and ponds, 70,000 miles of rivers and streams, and 2.4 million acres of wetlands support abundant and diverse fish populations, offering a broad range of recreational options. Trophy-size salmon, muskellunge, and striped bass are available in Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, and the Hudson River respectively. Many waters across the state provide trout, walleye, bass, and northern pike fishing of a quality that is notable nationwide, while excellent panfish stocks provide sport to all levels of angling expertise.

The state also offers quality experiences for varying angling techniques and preferences. Options include boat trolling for salmon, pond fishing in remote areas for native brook trout, wading in 15,000 miles of stream for trout, and over 50,000 miles of warm-water streams and rivers for shore fishing for smallmouth bass. The state has thousands of lakes and ponds that offer many species of game and panfish via ice fishing, shore fishing, rowboats, bass boats, and cabin cruiser access. DEC's overall fisheries program mission is to maintain the quantity and quality of the state's fisheries resources—and their recreational benefits—for future generations.

Operations

As the centralized support service unit for DEC, the Division of Operations designs, builds, operates, and maintains DEC's infrastructure. Engineering and technical functions are consolidated in the Central Office in Albany, while day-to-day operating and maintenance services are provided through regionalized staff. The DEC's infrastructure consists of more than 1,900 geographically dispersed facilities spread across more than five million acres. This infrastructure includes boat launch sites, a game farm, offices, wildlife areas, flood protection facilities, education centers, fish hatcheries, campgrounds, summer camps, and many more.

Campgrounds

The DEC operates 51 campgrounds located in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks that provide a wide variety of experiences, including island camping, tent and trailer camping, boat launching facilities, hiking trails, beaches, and day-use areas with picnic tables and grills. Campgrounds and Day-Use Areas are critically important elements of recreation-based tourism opportunities in both the Catskill and Adirondack Parks. Like State Park campsites, DEC campground reservations are made using the Reserve America system online or by phone. The DEC also operates four day-use-only areas in the Adirondacks that offer picnicking and/or swimming facilities. Pets are prohibited at all DEC day-use areas.

Volunteers can participate in the DEC Campground Ambassador program throughout the Catskills and Adirondacks. This allows outdoor enthusiasts the opportunity to share their knowledge of the outdoors with new campers. Duties include welcoming campers to DEC facilities, conducting programs such as interpretive walks, crafts, and outdoor cooking, and helping new campers with the basics.

Education

The DEC's environmental educators conduct outdoor education and interpretation programs across the state. The overall goal is to encourage natural resource stewardship, through programs that give children and adults hands-on contact with nature. These efforts are multiplied via partnering organizations and volunteers; special emphasis is placed on training educators to conduct environmental learning activities with their students.

Environmental Education Centers

The DEC has four environmental education centers: Five Rivers (Albany County) and Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve (Erie County) are operated by the DEC, Stony Kill Farm (Dutchess County) is run by the Stony Kill Foundation, and the Friends of Rogers runs Rogers (Chenango County). All have interpreted nature trails, exhibits, on-site programs for schools and the public, and off-site programs for schools, community groups, and environmental organizations.

Summer Camps

The DEC's residential summer camp program began in 1947 as a conservation camp for boys. Today the program welcomes all children ages 11 through 17, for broad-ranging environmental education programs. Four camps—two in the Adirondacks (Pack Forest and Colby), one in the Catskills (DeBruce), and one in Western New York (Rushford)—operate for seven weeks each summer. All camps offer fishing, camping, and hiking that help foster a life-long interest in outdoor recreation activities. Approximately five percent of the campers receive scholarships, called camperships, the majority residing in low-income and minority urban communities. Before attending camp, DEC's Bureau of Environmental Education staff works with community-based organizations to provide youth in

Buffalo, Albany, and New York City, with outdoor education and recreation experiences as part of the Campership Diversity Program. Participating youth receive free transportation to and from the camps.



NYSDEC Summer Camp (Photo: DEC)

Regional Educators

Regional environmental educators in Long Island, NYC, the Hudson Valley, and central NYS, train educators in environmental issues, concepts, actions, and methods for incorporating STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) into class curricula. They also provide programs for schools, community groups, and youth-serving organizations and participate in fishing clinics, fairs, and festivals in local communities. Environmental educators with the Hudson River Estuary Program offer place-based lessons using research data to convey current issues and topics concerning the Hudson. The DEC's regional environmental education efforts generally focus on environmental justice areas and underserved communities.

Training

National environmental education programs, such as Project WILD, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers), and Project Learning Tree, are the cornerstones of DEC's curriculum workshops for teachers and youth-group leaders. These programs address conservation and stewardship of our natural resources. For every classroom teacher trained to use the materials, 20 to 30 students are impacted. Environmental educators also partner with colleges and universities to provide pre-service teachers with the skills and knowledge to incorporate environmental science into their lesson plans as they enter the teaching profession.

Office of Environmental Justice

The Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) serves as a vehicle to address environmental justice concerns across DEC's programs and operations. OEJ runs several programs that benefit communities and has established policies and criteria to guide DEC staff on considering environmental justice impacts on communities in the environmental permit review process and across other DEC operations.

The OEJ offers several competitive grant opportunities for eligible community-based organizations that are located in, and/or serve, environmental justice communities. Grant funding helps to address and mitigate the harms suffered by historically overburdened and underfunded communities across the state. Since 2006, the OEJ has awarded almost \$15 million in funding for 236 projects to support communities facing a disproportionate burden of environmental issues. This funding assists communities in developing and implementing programs that address environmental issues, harms, and health hazards, build community consensus, set priorities, and improve public outreach and education.

Adirondack Park Agency (APA)

Created in 1971 by NYS law, the APA is responsible for protecting Forest Preserve lands and overseeing development proposals for the privately owned lands within the “Blue Line.” The legislation defined the makeup and functions of the APA, and authorized the Agency to develop two plans for lands within its borders: the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan—which regulates land use and development on the approximately 3.2 million acres of privately owned lands in the Adirondack Park—and the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP), which establishes guidelines for DEC management of the remaining 2.8 million acres of public lands. Protecting the Adirondack Park’s outstanding natural resources governs its recreational use, and the APSLMP focuses on the natural resource capacity rather than user demand. This reflects not only the importance of the Park to the state but also its national and international significance.

Together, the APA and DEC create plans to improve recreational opportunities in the Park. Unit Management Plans (UMP) have been created for specific areas, such as popular public campgrounds, remote wilderness areas, and historic sites. Going forward, a primary objective of APA is to work with the DEC to develop a sub-regional planning approach to broaden both “front country” and “back country” recreational opportunities. Plans to expand recreation will balance natural resource protections, consider motorized and non-motorized uses, and strengthen connections to communities.

The APA also administers the State’s Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers System Act for private lands adjacent to designated rivers in the Park, and the State’s Freshwater Wetlands Act within the Park. The APA operates an interpretive center, which serves as the Agency’s environmental education and traveler orientation center.

Canal Corporation

The NYS Canal Corporation (a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority) operates the 524-mile NYS Canal System, a navigable, inland waterway that includes four historic canals: the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga–Seneca. The system includes sections of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and links the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes, and Lake Champlain. In 2020, the New York Power Authority launched the ongoing *Reimagine the Canals* initiative, a \$300 million investment to revitalize the Erie Canal corridor as a tourism and recreation destination while simultaneously boosting economic development and improving the resiliency of canalside communities.

Office of General Services (OGS)

The OGS issues licenses, permits, leases, easements, and grants to land that is currently or was formerly underwater. It disposes of uplands determined surplus to the needs of the State and provides

transfers of jurisdiction to State and local agencies for certain purposes (including recreational uses) subject to special acts of the State legislature. OGS facilitates the transfer of jurisdiction of State lands to county or local governments for listed purposes such as park, recreation, and playground areas. These transfers are subject to reversion to the State if proposed uses are not further pursued. OGS's participation in various programs, such as the Hudson River Valley Greenway and the Heritage Rivers Program, provides the agency with the opportunity to advance recreational objectives.

Additionally, OGS participates in recreational programs by providing local communities with rights to lands underwater or filled (previously underwater), for connection and access. The OGS is a member of the ad-hoc Interagency Committee for Submerged Cultural Resources, whose participants include OPRHP, DEC, the Department of Education (State Museum), the Department of State's (DOS) Coastal Management Program, the Attorney General's Office, and the Canal Corporation. This group reviews proposals and issues affecting submerged historic, archeological, and cultural resources, predominantly shipwrecks. The Committee established the first dive preserves, including the Radeaux Land Tortoise in Lake George, a floating gun platform of the French and Indian War, reputed to be North America's oldest intact warship.

Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA)

ORDA manages and operates ski centers at Gore Mountain in North Creek, Whiteface Mountain in Wilmington, and Belleayre Mountain in the Catskills near Kingston, NY. The facilities and venues that ORDA manages and maintains are not just for elite athletes; they are also a vacation destination for all kinds of winter recreationists. The Sports Complex from the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid has 31 miles of cross-country ski trails available to the public for skiing or snowshoeing. ORDA also offers public skating from December through March on the Speed Skating Oval used in the 1980 Olympics.



View from Gore Mountain, Adirondacks

Others

In addition to the agencies listed above, the Department of Health (DOH), NYS Museum, Office for the Aging (OFA), and Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), among others, provide recreation opportunities and/or offer interpretive programs. For more information on other agencies, initiatives, and programs that influence recreation in New York State, see Appendix C.

CHAPTER 3 – RECREATION AND RESILIENCE

New York State's Parks and Historic Sites are increasingly experiencing larger impacts from extreme weather and the effects of a changing climate. Severe weather over the past decade has been particularly devastating for the agency's coastal facilities. OPRHP's Park and Historic Sites system includes more than 300 miles of shoreline across the state, with facilities along the tidal Hudson River and Long Island Sound and on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and Great Lakes. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Hurricane Isaias in 2020, and Hurricane Ida in 2021, demonstrated the catastrophic impacts of increasingly intense wind and rainfall. With sea level rise, destructive storm surges are anticipated to increase hazardous flooding and continue to threaten OPRHP's coastal facilities. Heat waves, harmful algal blooms, wildfires, and new invasive species are also predicted to occur more frequently, with potential significant impacts on how people recreate outdoors.³⁵

CLIMATE ACTIONS IN NEW YORK STATE

New York State has taken a leadership role in its response to climate change.

2014 - Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRRA)

Requires that some state permitting and funding program applicants must demonstrate that future physical climate risk from sea-level rise, storm surge, and flooding has been considered in project design.

2019 - Climate leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA)

Amended CRRRA to include targets for 100% zero-emission electricity in NYS by 2040 and support for investments to disadvantaged communities.

2022 - Executive Order 22 (EO22)

State agencies must adopt a sustainability and decarbonization program and 100% clean energy use at state facilities by 2030.

2022 - Environmental Bond Act

Provides \$4.2 billion to support habitat restoration, flood risk reduction, and more resilient recreation infrastructure.

2022 - Climate Action Council Scoping Plan

Defines actions needed for NYS to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels of 40% by 2030 and 85% by 2050.

A Changing Climate

Cornell University's Northeast Regional Climate Center data indicates that the northeastern United States has seen an approximately 60% increase in the number of days with extreme precipitation, the largest increase of all U.S. regions.³⁶ Record-breaking rainfall and devastating flooding are also occurring more frequently outside of the hurricane season. As temperatures continue to rise, some impacts, including droughts, wildfires, and extreme rainfall, are increasing faster than scientists previously predicted.³⁷

NYS DEC indicates that the annual statewide average temperature in New York State has warmed 3°F since 1970, and that the state's average temperatures are projected to rise by as much as another 3°F by 2080.³⁸ The sea level along New York's coast and in the Hudson River has risen more than a foot since the year 1900 (about 1.2 inches per decade).³⁹ A growing trend of stronger storms with dangerous flooding have increased potential to damage roadways, bridges, dams, boardwalks, and utilities, and other infrastructure that serves public parks and sites.

Changing climate conditions also endanger the natural ecosystems that are the backbone of OPRHP's facilities. Warming temperatures have caused some plant and animal species present in the region for millennia to extend their range farther north, shift to higher elevations, and/or to disappear entirely. These shifts are increasingly impacting the

industries and economies that depend on them, such as fishing, tourism, and outdoor recreational activities.

In response to these growing impacts, public agencies are mainstreaming climate-related planning, responding with targeted policies, programs, and regulations to mitigate and adapt to anticipated conditions. In 2022, New Yorkers passed the Environmental Bond Act, which included \$1.5 billion for climate change mitigation projects. A range of environmental, recreational, and public health and safety capital projects are eligible for this funding, which provides \$1.1 billion for restoration projects and flood risk reduction and \$650 million for open space land conservation and recreation.⁴⁰

Resilience

Public green space is an essential part of a healthy community's infrastructure. Research from the National Institutes of Health indicates that green spaces are linked to improved health from both increased physical activity and social engagement.⁴¹ Studies consistently show that when neighborhood residents have diverse and meaningful opportunities for outdoor recreation, both physical and social resilience increase.⁴² Public parks and open space are an important component of community support and services. Public parks contribute to public health by encouraging social connection and can also function as part of public safety infrastructure, serving as hubs or shelter for residents during severe storms or other emergencies.⁴³ Since not all communities have sufficient public green space within walking distance, however, the benefits of green outdoor recreation spaces is enmeshed with issues of equity and environmental justice, open space conservation, and other social and public health factors.

Vegetation and undeveloped open space also increase a region's ability to manage and respond to extreme weather conditions. Large, vegetated areas reduce localized temperatures, offer places to cool off, and improve air quality, while woodlands, wetlands, and meadows act as a sponge, soaking up water and helping to mitigate localized flooding.

Climate Change and Outdoor Recreation

State Park attendance has climbed steadily over the last two decades in New York and this trend is continuing. More than 84 million visitors came to OPRHP facilities in 2023, making it the 11th consecutive year of increased attendance and a 6 percent increase from 2022, the previous record year.⁴⁴ While increases between 2020-2023 were largely driven by the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, higher visitation rates are expected to continue, with corresponding changes in recreation patterns and preferences. Extended warmer seasons and prolonged heat waves attract more people to parks and recreation areas, for more of the year. Overcrowding at some facilities has become a challenge for park operations as increased demand for popular beaches, trails, and outdoor sports facilities requires traffic management, temporary closings, and often a greater need for security measures.

Higher usage can also cause infrastructure to deteriorate more rapidly, stretching staff workloads and maintenance demands, at times beyond capacity. Shorter, warmer winters also influence where, when, and how people will use parks.⁴⁵ In NYS, less snowfall and earlier snowmelt are increasingly affecting skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and ice-climbing facilities, with significant economic impacts to important winter recreation industries, particularly in upstate communities that rely on economic support

EXTREME WEATHER IMPACTS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION IN NEW YORK STATE

In July 2023, a severe storm dropped up to nine inches of rain over a three-hour period, devastating historic Bear Mountain State Park. Flash floods washed away roads, damaged hiking trails, and swamped the park's swimming pool at the height of the summer season. Stormwater overtopped a dam, affecting a treatment plant that supplies water to the park, including its zoo.

Other state park facilities in the region were also affected, including Harriman State Park, Storm King Mountain, and Fort Montgomery State Historic Site. Sections of key roads, including Palisades Interstate Parkway, Seven Lakes Drive, and Route 9W, were washed out, and large sections of the Appalachian Trail, which runs through the area, were also damaged. More than a dozen hikers and park users had to be rescued during the storm. Some parts of the park were only reopened after an almost seven-week closure needed for the extensive cleanup and repair.



Bear Mountain State Park after an extreme storm, July 2023, Palisades Region

from these activities.⁴⁶ Snowmobiling and back-country skiing especially are projected to see marked declines in both participation rates and user days.⁴⁷

Health and Safety

As extreme weather increases, the health and safety of visitors at outdoor recreation facilities is a growing concern. Strong thunderstorms with dangerous winds, intense rainfall, hail, and lightning can create hazardous conditions for people engaging in outdoor activities. Longer periods with more intense summer heat and poor air quality can increase the likelihood of heatstroke, serious asthma attacks, and chronic lung or heart illnesses.⁴⁸ Poor air quality due to harmful ground-level ozone, longer seasonal exposure to allergens like pollen, and smoke from large-scale wildfires can affect those with asthma, pulmonary disease, and other breathing issues. In recent years, unprecedented wildfires in North America have emitted smoke and particulate levels able to harm lung and heart health.⁴⁹ While anyone can be impacted by health issues associated with prolonged heat waves and poor air quality, these can disproportionately affect the state's aging population and those living in dense urban areas, putting more vulnerable people at higher risk of heat-related complications or death.⁵⁰

Extended periods of drought lower water levels and raise water temperatures, increasing the likelihood of harmful algal blooms (HABS). More HABS are being reported at state facilities, closing affected beaches, and limiting access to swimming during periods of peak need.⁵¹ Public demand for beach access at state parks during heat waves has been so high in recent years that some facilities have been forced to close by mid-morning when they reach full capacity. Limited access to shaded, natural areas and public pools and beaches where people can cool off are especially hazardous for those who are more at-risk due to age or health issues. Proactive

planning for increases in these types of events helps outdoor recreation providers to address the need for new infrastructure to provide shelter, for example, or to develop more comprehensive emergency planning, staff training, and preparedness protocols.

Equity

Access to public green space and its associated health benefits is not always readily available to everyone. Especially vulnerable are communities in which median household incomes are lower than the state average, and where greater numbers of seniors or recent immigrants may live.⁵²

Socially vulnerable groups often live in dense urban areas with few trees or public parks and higher levels of air pollution.⁵³ Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color also face multiple barriers to accessing green space. A lack of transportation options, poverty, and health constraints can all threaten access in underserved communities. Even when open space access exists, a lack of recognition for user preferences can make public recreation less relevant for some groups.^{54 55}



Selkirk Shores State Park, Central Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: RESILIENCE

OPRHP FACILITY: Fair Haven Beach State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Finger Lakes Region

PROJECT TYPE: Resiliency Enhancement Projects



After the main parking area at Fair Haven Beach State Park was damaged by repeated severe flooding, the lot was rebuilt at a higher elevation. Additional project elements included a new pedestrian bridge and boardwalks.

Bordered by water on three sides, a large visitor parking area at Fair Haven Beach State Park enjoys a scenic location overlooking Lake Ontario, Sterling Pond, and Little Sodus Bay. The park is prone to flooding, and when flooded, high water restricts visitor access to the beach, concession building, and bathhouse.

Within a three-year period, beginning in 2017, the region was struck by two “100-year storms”, which inundated homes, closed roads, and destroyed break walls along the coast. During this time, severe flooding at Fair Haven caused significant damage to the visitor parking lot and other park infrastructure. To make the lot less prone to damage during increasingly frequent flood events, the lot was reconstructed in 2021.

The paved surface was elevated by approximately two feet, and a new parking stall configuration improved circulation. New sidewalks and crosswalk markings were also installed.

A second phase of the project constructed a 275-foot elevated boardwalk, interpretive signage, and restored natural dunes planted with native beach grass to help capture windblown sand and protect the lot’s northern border.

The improvements were supported by \$1.2 million in funds from the Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI), along with State Parks capital funding. The project helps to ensure a more resilient facility, which is an important lakefront destination in Cayuga County.

Resilience Efforts at OPRHP

OPRHP is a diverse agency with facilities across the state that include historic structures, administrative buildings, residences, sports fields, playgrounds, swimming pools, and many other types of supporting infrastructure. For decades, the agency has integrated sustainable practices into its operations, receiving an EPA Clean Air Excellence award in 2005 for “outstanding, innovative efforts in improving air quality through transportation efficiency innovations.”⁵⁶

The agency has **policies and guidance documents** that ensure facilities are developed, managed, and operated in ways that will minimize their environmental impact and ensure the state is a good steward of its public lands. The agency has policies for Pesticide Reduction, Fire Management, and Single-Use Plastic Reduction, among many others.

OPRHP is also working to decrease its environmental impact through carbon reduction policies. Energy efficiency improvements are ongoing at all facilities, and equipment that uses fossil fuels is being systematically replaced with electric vehicles, tools, and machinery. From an operations perspective, OPRHP is implementing an array of progressive programs to advance preparedness, with targeted goals for energy efficiency, best landscape practices, and green procurement. These initiatives improve the functionality of state parks as well as helping to prepare facilities for future climate impacts.

Recognizing that urban parks provide crucial environmental, social, and public health benefits, in recent years, OPRHP has developed new parks in urban areas and upgraded existing facilities. Green spaces help mitigate the urban **heat island effect** while providing access to swimming pools, spray pads, ballfields, and shaded green space where residents can recreate outdoors and cool off during heat waves. When possible, the agency also incorporates bioswales, green roofs, permeable pavement, and other green infrastructure into both new construction and redevelopment projects.

Adaptive re-use of existing buildings and the use of less impactful materials for new construction are both strategies used to reduce the environmental impacts of the agency. Projects that restore historic or deteriorated wetlands, shorelines, and forested lands have been developed at coastal facilities to help buffer them from rising seas, coastal storms, flooding, and wildfires.⁵⁷ Expanding and connecting trails and greenways is an ongoing effort that increases public access to greenspace statewide and provides options for alternative transportation.

To help prepare its Parks and Historic Sites system for future climate impacts, OPRHP is developing facility-specific climate adaptation plans. In 2024 a vulnerability assessment process for OPRHP facilities was piloted at two coastal Long Island parks. The two-step process first collects data on park elements and considers their vulnerability to extreme weather and future sea level rise. This information is then used to develop an adaptation strategy report with specific recommendations to help the facility address anticipated future impacts to its high-risk elements. Once the vulnerability process has been finalized, reports are planned to be developed for all OPRHP parks and sites.

In addition to its recreation facilities, OPRHP is responsible for many of the state's historic properties. Changing weather patterns present challenges specific to the agency's many irreplaceable historic buildings, archaeological elements, object collections, books, artwork, and important landscape elements. Sea level rise and higher tides are an increased threat to historical properties located on waterfronts or inland flood zones. Heavy winds and precipitation increase the potential for damage to historic buildings, which are often comprised of delicate materials or structural elements that make



OPRHP staff constructed a 262kW solar array at Hither Hills State Park on the east end of Long Island. The array generates enough electricity to cover the entire park's annual electric usage using renewable energy.

them particularly vulnerable to icing or high humidity. Driving rain during severe storms can penetrate masonry and wood structures, and rising water can damage aging foundations and the interiors of historic buildings. Interior woodwork, wallpapers, art objects, and furnishings are easily damaged by rapid temperature swings and more extreme freeze-thaw cycles. Elements in the landscape, such as root cellars, barns, gardens, and heritage trees, are highly vulnerable to intense storms and hotter and drier weather patterns, and seasonal shifts are already affecting some plant species used in previous eras.

Carbon Reduction

OPRHP is reducing emissions through policy changes. Greenhouse gas reduction is a central goal and the agency's commitment to low-carbon infrastructure is helping to make the recreation system more efficient and resilient. Buildings are being converted from using oil, natural gas, and propane to all electric, and more energy-efficient systems are being installed.

Acting on directives in EO22, OPRHP has conducted energy audits on over 100 of its largest buildings and implemented recommended energy conservation methods. The agency is also utilizing construction methods and materials with lower embodied carbon, prioritizing the use of materials that reduce energy needs and emissions during the manufacturing and construction phases.

Electric Vehicles (EV) and Equipment

OPRHP ran a pilot project testing a variety of hand-held electric equipment (e.g., leaf blowers, string trimmers), and has begun transitioning to electric landscaping equipment at all its facilities. Planning is underway for electrifying the fleet and EV charging infrastructure.

Electrification and Renewable Energy

To further reduce its emissions, OPRHP is electrifying its building systems and equipment wherever feasible. Much of the electrical infrastructure in state parks was developed in the early to mid-20th century, and upgrades to electrical capacity benefits the present and future functionality of these facilities. As OPRHP electrifies more of its systems, the agency is also working to ensure that its electricity comes from renewable sources. As of winter 2024, OPRHP had constructed 6.1 MW of solar, covering 15% of the agency's annual electric usage. In alignment with state initiatives, OPRHP's goal is to cover all its electricity usage with on-site or purchased renewable energy by 2030 (see the [2023](#)

State of the State Book, Section V: *Safeguarding our Climate and Environmental Future, Make Our Parks Energy-Independent*).

Waste Management

OPRHP has planned numerous sustainability actions which aim to divert greater quantities of waste from landfill and incineration facilities. Elimination of single use plastic items from operations, concessions, and partners has been ongoing since 2019. Waste assessments will be conducted at all facilities to identify areas of improvement in primary waste streams. Waste assessment, mapping, and survey data will be used to expand public access to compost and recycling programs.

Adaptive Reuse

With evolving changes in visitation, health and safety, and recreation preferences, a park or site manager may identify the need for a new building. Many of OPRHP's facilities have aging buildings, some no longer in use. Existing buildings that are appropriately sited and/or have historic or architectural significance may be candidates for repurposing to support a new function, for "adapted reuse." Repurposing an existing building generally has less environmental impact than new construction. It uses a previously disturbed site, and decreases the volume of debris and waste going into landfills, and reduces the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with production and transport of new materials or "embodied carbon," the amount of carbon associated with building construction from extraction, production, transport, and manufacturing products."⁵⁸ According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, it can take 80 years for a new building to overcome the climate change impacts created by its construction.^{59 60}

Making suburban areas more pedestrian-friendly entails revisiting development and transportation practices. This may include re-purposing infrastructure designed for the automobile, such as in the City of Niagara, where OPRHP partnered with state and city agencies to restore portions of Niagara Scenic Parkway (formerly Robert Moses Parkway) to parkland. The new non-motorized trail system is now used exclusively for biking, walking, and other non-motorized activities. This multimodal route also provides links to a regional system of publicly accessible walking trails, parks, and woodlands.



Chimney Bluffs State Park, Finger Lakes Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: URBAN RESILIENCE

OPRHP FACILITY: Shirley Chisholm State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP New York City Region

PROJECT TYPE: Urban Park Development



Shirley Chisholm State Park, New York City Region

Opened in 2018 on a former landfill overlooking Jamaica Bay, Shirley Chisholm State Park represents a success story in urban recovery, environmental justice and remediation. The Park is named in honor of the first African American Congresswoman and both the first woman and African American to run for President.

The two closed landfills are contained within a plastic membrane and an impermeable underground barrier, allowing the 400 acres of reclaimed open space to be safely repurposed as a public park. Over 1.2 million cubic yards of clean soil was planted with over 35,000 trees, shrubs, and native grasses, creating a diverse ecosystem of coastal meadows, wetlands, and

woodlands. The restored habitat quickly attracted a variety of local wildlife and is now a popular spot for birders.

The community served by the park includes large public housing developments that for years had experienced odors and visual impacts from the former landfills. These residents now have access to the waterfront and large swaths of open green space, as well as free public programs year-round. Visitors can borrow bikes from the Park's free Bike Library, take a guided hike, learn about the local wildlife, or fish for striped bass from the Park's pier. The vegetated coastline will also be more resilient in the event of storms or extreme weather.

Land Management

Enhancing wetland habitat, improving shorelines, and targeting invasive species management, help improve ecological diversity and increase resistance to invasive species. OPRHP develops Stewardship Plans to outline environmental stewardship priorities at its Park Preserves, which include Invasive Species Control Plans to help guide treatment, monitoring, and restoration of sites.

Over the past five years, OPRHP has also allocated more than \$25 million in State funding and leveraged over \$10,500,000 in external funding toward environmental stewardship actions at its facilities aimed at restoring habitats, promoting species diversity, and improving ecosystem resilience. Ecological restoration in State Parks includes a large-scale wetland restoration at Bear Mountain State Park on the Hudson River in the Palisades Region and a nature-based shoreline and habitat enhancements at Hamlin Beach State Park in the Genesee Region along Lake Ontario.



The swimming pool at Bear Mountain State Park, Palisades Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

OPRHP FACILITY: Southwick Beach State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Thousand Island Region

PROJECT TYPE: Green Parking Lot Redevelopment and Dune Restoration



Newly planted native grasses help stabilize restored dunes at Southwick Beach State Park, Thousand Islands Region

A parking lot redevelopment project at Southwick Beach State Park replaced a large, deteriorated visitor lot overlooking Lake Ontario with a new lot that incorporates green infrastructure. Located on the Lake's eastern shore, the park features a 3,500-foot sandy beach which is subject to high winds and strong wave action. The new parking lot was designed to decrease beach erosion and reduce the quantity of sand blowing onto the lot and into an adjacent freshwater wetland.

In undeveloped areas along the lakeshore, dune systems form naturally as sand builds up from wind and waves. Built infrastructure and beach maintenance activities have impeded this natural process and sand dunes no longer develop along

Southwick's lakeshore. The parking lot redevelopment project included a restored dune system planted with native beach grass to provide a natural buffer. Bioswales in the lot capture and slow the movement of sand and sections of porous pavement infiltrate stormwater, reducing pollutants and sediments carried in runoff from entering the lake and wetland.

The completed redevelopment project represents one of the largest and most visible green infrastructure applications of its kind in the region, and it serves as a model and educational opportunity for peer communities.

A lawn mowing reduction policy has decreased mowed lawn area at OPRHP facilities statewide. Less mowing means lower fuel consumption, reduced fertilizer use, and increased wildlife habitat. While some state facilities have had reduced mowing schedules since 2009, OPRHP instituted a program in 2021 requiring all facilities to implement reduced mowing programs. By decreasing both the area of mowed lawn and the frequency of mowing the same areas has resulted in 18,000 acres of improved grassland and pollinator habitat.

Future Agency Actions

OPRHP continues to work towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the resilience of its facilities. Ongoing and planned future efforts include:

- Prioritizing acquisition of open space to protect large natural areas; wetlands and creating connected land and water corridors to reduce flooding and filter pollutants, improving species' ability to move with a changing climate, and conserving habitat.
- Building “smarter” before rebuilding in-kind; considering adaptation alternatives and long-term value. In some cases, this may involve changing current management practices, relocating or modifying infrastructure, and re-visioning recreational resources.
- Assessing dams and culverts to meet new safety standards, recognizing that, in some cases, the best course of action may be removal to increase flood capacity and improve natural habitat and aquatic connectivity.
- Restoring and maintaining wetlands, estuarine systems, and salt marshes within OPRHP lands.
- Assessing parks and historic sites for high-risk elements and implementing resilience strategies.
- Relocating and hardening utility lines, phone lines, and septic systems.
- Adding electric vehicles and charging stations.
- Transitioning to electric landscaping equipment.
- Constructing new solar arrays to support the agency's transition to renewable energy.
- Assessing innovative approaches to adapting and retrofitting existing infrastructure.
- Partnering with public and private entities to improve resilience.
- Utilizing annual waste survey data to meet the actions and goals of OPRHP's 5-Year Waste Diversion Plan (2024-2029).
- Conducting comprehensive waste assessments and infrastructure mapping to inform waste diversion projects.
- Expanding the reduced mowing program to increase no-mow areas and pollinator projects.
- Implementing standardized signage for primary waste streams.
- Phasing out disposable plastic items in accordance with the OPRHP Single Use Plastics policy.
- Providing user-friendly green purchasing guidance informed by [GreenNY](#) procurement specifications.
- Applying pilot findings and survey data to expand compost and recycling programs.
- Implementing guidance on the use and reclamation of refrigerants.

SPOTLIGHT ON: NATURAL RESTORATION

OPRHP FACILITY: Beaver Island State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Niagara Region

PROJECT TYPE: Shoreline Restoration



A restored wetland at Beaver Island State Park provides important wildlife habitat along the Niagara River.

Beaver Island State Park sits at the southern tip of Grand Island, NY, in the Niagara River. The 950-acre park offers dramatic views from its shoreline and trails, and a nature center, golf course, paddling, wetlands, and a large, sandy bathing beach.

In 1996, the Niagara River Corridor was designated a Globally Significant Important Bird Area, the first to be jointly identified by cooperating organizations in Canada and the United States. Riparian and coastal wetland habitat zones along the river in this area support the ecological health of important habitat, including the East River Marsh, which is located on the Park's northeastern boundary.

The East River Marsh Habitat Enhancement project restored coastal and in-river wetlands habitats for fish, migrating waterfowl, and songbirds, with additional elements in the river, including fish structures and rocky reefs to

protect the shoreline from wind erosion and boat wakes. The reefs create areas of calm water to support wildlife and provide protected areas for paddlers. Thousands of native plants were hand-planted to develop important fish and waterfowl habitat. The Park's walking trails were also expanded and restored, providing visitors a safer and more enjoyable way to experience the shoreline.

Project funding was provided by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through a \$11.2 million grant from its **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Fund**, which has supported seven large-scale habitat restoration projects in state parks on the Niagara River.

The engineering firm WSP USA provided consulting services for the project and received a Gold Award in Water Resources from the American Council of Engineering Companies of New York for its contributions to the design.

SPOTLIGHT ON: LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

OPRHP FACILITY: Jones Beach State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Long Island Region

PROJECT TYPE: Sustainable Construction



Since 1966, the LWCF has made investments totaling over \$8.7 million to develop and rehabilitate heavily used facilities at Jones Beach State Park. At the Jones Beach Nature Center, LWCF grants have supported a bike path, sidewalks, outdoor interpretive exhibits, and an outdoor education amphitheater. (Photo: Google Maps)

Jones Beach State Park is the most heavily visited beach on the East Coast, with an estimated six million visitors per year.⁶¹ In 2020, a state-of-the-art public environmental education facility, the Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center (JBNC) was opened at the Park. The JBNC offers public programs, special events, and exhibits with the goal of helping visitors better understand and appreciate the coastal environment.

The JBNC is an award-winning net-zero building that serves as a model for sustainable architecture. Built on the foundations of a 1960s bathhouse, its design and landscape help demonstrate how the state is moving toward a carbon-neutral future. Solar energy provides power, geothermal wells heat and cool the building, and energy-efficient and recycled materials lower the building's energy consumption.

The site's landscape was transformed from an existing 10-acre parking lot into a restored beachscape with dunes, native grasses, and maritime scrubland with plant species typical of barrier island habitats. Visitors can walk through topographic and hydrographic zones associated with beach and bay ecologies found in northeastern coastal environments. The restored habitat and outdoor exhibits provide visitors the opportunity to learn about and understand the value of these delicate ecosystems.

The JBNC educates visitors about how energy use and nature shape each other. Recent programs for children aged 8 to 12 years explore topics in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics through experiments and projects. Educational events have featured learning about dunes, geology, spiders, and the history of the park.



Gantry Plaza State Park overlooks the East River in Queens, NY. The East River is tidal, and rising sea levels make parks along the waterfront especially vulnerable to flooding, New York City Region

Sustainability Efforts: DEC

The DEC is committed to leading by example and reducing the environmental footprint of its operations. This includes reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, reducing waste generation, reducing the use of toxic substances, enhancing habitat on lands it maintains, and engaging both employees and the public on ways that they can live more sustainably. In addition, the Department is working both to comply with, and co-lead efforts under, **Executive Order 22**, signed in September 2022.

In May 2023 the DEC released its first ever **Sustainability Plan** which outlines 25 ambitious goals for lowering the Department's environmental footprint, and 70 actions that it will take to achieve them. The plan serves as a road map for the Department's sustainability program from 2023 to 2028 and includes the following commitments:

- Carbon neutral operations by 2050;
- 100% renewable electricity use for operations by 2030;
- 100% zero-emission light-duty non-emergency fleet by 2035;
- 100% zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty fleet by 2040;
- under 50% of employees commuting alone in fossil fuel-powered vehicles by 2028;
- Eliminate single-use plastics in operations by 2025; and
- decrease waste generation 10% by 2028.

Additional Highlights

Ausable Point Campground in the Adirondack Park became the first DEC-owned campground to be maintained entirely using electric equipment. The facility uses electric riding lawn mowers and utility vehicles, push mowers, trimmers, leaf blowers, chainsaws, and power tools. The campground's equipment joins a growing amount of electric equipment in DEC's operations as the agency works to transition all its lawn maintenance equipment to electric models.

Pollinator Gardens

The DEC has planted pollinator gardens and meadows at many of its facilities, including offices, environmental education centers, and campgrounds. The agency will continue to plant more gardens in the coming years.



Ground-mounted solar arrays underplanted with pollinator plant species, DEC Stamford Sub-Office (Photo: DEC)

Solar Development

The DEC has installed several solar projects of various sizes and geographies to increase the amount of renewable energy used by the agency. These include ground mounted systems at offices, roof mounted systems on campground caretaker buildings, and even off-grid systems at administrative outposts in the Adirondacks.

Building Electrification

The DEC has replaced aging HVAC and other building systems with heat pumps and other efficient equipment. This has led to the installation of both air and ground source heat pump systems at facilities ranging from regional headquarters to small maintenance garages. These installations have taken place across the state, demonstrating the versatility of heat pump technology.

The **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative** (RGGI) was the first mandatory market-based emissions trading program in the U.S. to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, and the first anywhere to use a cap-and-invest model for reducing pollution. With this initiative, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont have agreed to set a cap for total emissions of CO₂ from electric generation facilities. Since 2008, these states have collectively decreased CO₂ emissions from RGGI-affected power plants by more than 50%.

Waste Reduction

Waste is the fourth-largest contributing sector of greenhouse gas emissions in New York State, representing 12% of annual emissions. Reducing waste generation helps conserve natural resources, reduces the energy used to produce and transport products, and lowers disposal costs. All of the DEC's offices and facilities have long-established and comprehensive recycling programs, and most collect food scraps and other organic wastes for composting or other organics recycling. As an agency that operates both office and non-office spaces, such as campgrounds, fish hatcheries, environmental education centers, and other facilities, DEC and its Division of Operations successfully manage a

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES (CSC)

NY State's CSC program supports local governments in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Communities undertake a series of actions to gain certification at Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels. As of 2025, 432 communities across the state were registered as CSC, from the City of North Tonawanda, in Niagara County, to the Town of East Hampton, on the eastern end of Long Island. Participants engage in actions to reduce the state's carbon emissions, pledging to:

- Inventory their emissions, set goals, plan for climate action
- Decrease energy use
- Shift to clean, renewable energy
- Use climate-smart materials
- Implement climate-smart land use
- Enhance community resilience to climate change impacts
- Support a green economy
- Inform and inspire the public

variety of waste types. DEC uses the waste management hierarchy to sustainably manage these wastes and prioritizes preventing waste where possible.⁶²

New York State Climate Change Response

Projected climate change impacts to natural resources, public health, transportation, tourism, water supply and quality, public infrastructure, and energy, all have the potential to affect outdoor recreation. The DEC offers NYS recreation providers access to a range of resources and programs that support efforts to address existing and projected impacts. These include:

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (**Climate Act**) sets the State's goals and requirements to address climate change, including actions to achieve a reduction in economywide greenhouse gas emissions of 40% by 2030 and 85% by 2050 from 1990 levels. The Climate Act and the **Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan** established an agenda for an orderly and just transition that creates jobs, fosters a green economy across all sectors and ensures that at least 35 percent, with a goal of 40 percent, of the benefits of clean energy investments are directed to disadvantaged communities.

In 2022, New York's Climate Action Council, co-chaired by the DEC and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), approved and released the **Final Scoping Plan**, which provides a recommended roadmap to guide the state's climate action. Public engagement included a six-month public comment period with more than 35,000 comments received, as well as nine in-person public hearings across the state, and two virtual public hearings. The final Scoping Plan set the course for NYS to advance a clean energy future, support healthier communities, and help to mitigate climate change.

Community Risk and Resiliency Act (CRRA)

Enacted in 2014, CRRA required that applicants for permits or funding in specified programs demonstrate that future physical risk due to sea-level rise, storm surge and flooding had been considered in project design. CRRA was amended in 2019 by the **Climate Act** as described below:

DEC is required to adopt science-based sea-level rise projections via regulation. DEC adopted 6 NYCRR Part 490, Projected Sea Level Rise in 2017, and is required to update projections at least every five years.

DEC must consider incorporating risks due to sea level rise, storm surge and flooding into certain facility-siting regulations.

Amendments to the Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act require that all public infrastructure agencies must consider mitigation of future physical risks from sea level rise, storm surge and flooding before approving, funding, or supporting any public infrastructure project.

DEC and other agencies have developed guidance on CRRRA implementation, including on the use of natural resources and natural processes to enhance community resiliency, as well as the **State Flood Risk Management Guidance** and related guidance documents.

Climate Smart Communities (CSC)

Established in 2016, the CSC Grant Program supports local governments in implementing best practices for adapting to and mitigating climate change. Administered by the DEC, the program's goal is to create a network of communities across NYS that are engaged in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resilience.

The CSC program provides 50/50 matching grants to NYS cities, towns, and villages for eligible climate adaptation and mitigation projects. To obtain CSC certification, a community must take specific actions. These include decreasing energy use and shifting to clean, renewable energy, supporting a green economy, and informing and inspiring the public about climate change impacts and what they can do to help.

NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)

In partnership with leading academic institutions, science organizations, community leaders, and others, in 2024, NYSERDA published **The New York State Climate Impacts Assessment** (Interim Version for Public Release), a comprehensive research effort to better understand and document how climate change is affecting our state.⁶³ The publication describes how climate impacts pose risks to the state's natural systems, communities, economic sectors, industries, and regions as well as current projections of future conditions anticipated in New York State.

Wetlands

Protecting wetlands is a priority in New York, and the State has a strong wetlands conservation program. NYS recognizes that wetlands provide many benefits and functions, including recreational, and works through its agencies to protect and manage this resource. For the purposes of this plan, the broadest concept of wetland is used, to address all wetlands, not just those protected by regulatory programs.

The NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act states that it is: “public policy in the State of New York to preserve, protect and conserve freshwater wetlands and the benefits derived therefrom, to prevent the despoliation and destruction of freshwater wetlands, and to regulate use and development of such wetlands to secure the natural benefits of freshwater wetlands, consistent with the general welfare and beneficial economic, social and agricultural development of the state.”⁶⁴

In 2022, the Freshwater Wetlands Act (Environmental Conservation Law Article 24) **was amended** to make several important changes to the way the program is administered and broaden wetland regulation across the state. On January 1, 2025, the amendments to the Freshwater Wetlands Act went into effect. The newly adopted regulations define key terms, describe the revised freshwater wetland

classification system, present criteria for the identification of Wetlands of Unusual Importance, and describe procedures DEC uses in making jurisdictional determinations to enhance consistency and conservation. Additionally, in 2023, the U.S. federal wetlands policy was amended by the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to reflect a revised definition for regulated wetlands that reduces the scope of waters subject to federal oversight.⁶⁵ These changes may affect environmental review for some wetlands in NYS.

Value of Wetlands

Along with wetlands' many environmental benefits, their importance as a protective mechanism against some impacts of climate change is increasingly recognized. In addition to providing resilience to flooding, storm surge and coastal inundation, wetlands capture CO₂ from the atmosphere, storing more carbon than any other ecosystem. They store carbon in vegetation above ground and underground, in sediment beneath live plants, as dead leaves, branches, and roots containing carbon are buried in the soil or covered by tidal waters.⁶⁶ Coastal wetlands, which include salt marshes, sea grass beds and mangroves, are the most threatened by storm surge and sea level rise.

With the increase in higher-intensity storms, protecting and restoring wetlands is more important than ever. Functions and benefits that wetlands provide include:

- **Biological Diversity** – Local, regional, and global biological diversity are essential to human existence. Wetlands are unique natural communities that contribute significantly to overall diversity, providing habitat for many rare and indigenous plant and animal species.
- **Carbon Storage** – Acting as a “carbon sink,” wetlands help capture and store carbon, keeping it out of the atmosphere.
- **Coastal Storm Protection** – Coastal wetlands help to blunt the force of major storms, protecting developed inland areas.
- **Educational and Scientific Research** – Wetlands provide outdoor laboratories for science and living classrooms for schoolchildren, providing educational resources for a wide range of study.
- **Erosion and Sedimentation Control** – Wetland vegetation decreases water velocities, allowing suspended particles to settle out and keeping them out of navigational channels, lakes, and reservoirs. Wetlands also reduce shoreline erosion and preserve agricultural lands by protecting inland areas from wave action or high stream flows.
- **Flood and Stormwater Control** – In periods of heavy rain or spring snow melt, wetlands serve as natural reservoirs, storing and slowing water. Wetlands along rivers and streams absorb energy, which reduces downstream flood damage and lessens the risk of flash floods. The slow release of water over time can help keep streams flowing during periods of drought. Because of these functions, filling in wetlands can increase flood risk, both locally and far downstream.
- **Nutrient Production and Cycling** – Wetlands are one of the most ecologically productive systems on earth, converting sunlight and nutrients into food for animals. They filter sediment and organic and chemical nutrients, which break down and re-enter the food web.

Nutrients and plant material flushed from some wetland systems during storms provide essential food for plants, fish, and wildlife in estuaries and other downstream ecosystems.

- **Open Space** – Wetlands are an important part of a healthy open space system, and often the only undeveloped areas along developed waterfronts or in urbanized areas. As sea levels rise, protecting open space where wetlands can migrate upland will be critical to their continued existence and function.
- **Recharge of Groundwater Supplies** – Wetlands help recharge groundwater. This function is especially important in communities where groundwater is a primary source of drinking water.
- **Recreation** – In NYS, over 12 million people annually hike, bird watch, hunt, fish, boat, camp, and photograph wildlife, often in natural areas associated with wetlands.
- **Water Quality** – As runoff filters through a wetland system, microorganisms break down and use nutrients frequently found in agricultural runoff, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which can contribute to algal blooms. Wetlands also protect drinking water in coastal areas by preventing saltwater from seeping into groundwater and contaminating the aquifer.
- **Wildlife Habitat** – Many fish and wildlife species need healthy wetlands for critical parts of their life cycle. By providing breeding, nesting, and feeding grounds and cover, both tidal and freshwater wetlands are vital to sustain the health of vertebrate and invertebrate species. Over two-thirds of the fish, shellfish and crustaceans harvested in NYS (both commercial and recreational) depend on wetlands for some portion of their life cycles.

Wetlands Program Implementation

In NYS, the DEC has lead responsibility for wetland conservation. Several organizational units implement the State's wetlands protection program:

- **Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources** – holds primary responsibility for both tidal and freshwater wetlands
- **Division of Lands and Forests** – lead for acquisition activities
- **Division of Environmental Permits** – processes regulatory permits
- **Division of Law Enforcement and Legal Affairs** – supports enforcement efforts
- **Division of Water** – administers Clean Water Act-directed or funded programs that afford additional water quality programs from which wetlands benefit
- **Adirondack Park Agency** – administers the Article 24 permitting program in the Adirondack Park and administers land-use regulations related to wetlands. The APA uses sophisticated GIS approaches to mapping wetlands in a watershed approach, providing the State with important tools for planning and protection

Many interested parties are involved with wetlands conservation in NYS. Following is a list of involved agencies.

State Agencies

NYS Department of State (DOS) – DOS administers the Coastal Zone Management Program and performs coastal consistency reviews on federal projects related to wetlands conservation. DOS also provides grants for Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans (LWRP) and watershed management guidance for localities along the State’s coastlines and designated inland waterways.

Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) – As a significant landowner in NYS, OPRHP conserves and manages wetlands on state parklands, and has a vital role in biodiversity conservation on its public lands. Wetlands help sustain recreation opportunities that are wetland based and water dependent.

Office of the NYS Attorney General – the State’s legal representative; litigates wetlands cases in both federal and state courts to ensure they are afforded the protections available under law. The NYS Attorney General’s Office also advocates for wetlands protection, in consultation with federal, state, and local agencies, and by advancing progressive positions in various legislative and administrative forums.

Department of Transportation (DOT) – affects wetlands through design and implementation of highway construction and maintenance. DOT’s Environmental Benefits Initiative implements beneficial environmental projects in conjunction with ongoing highway work. DOT has constructed, restored, and provided access to wetlands as part of this award-winning program.

Office of General Services (OGS) – administers much of the State’s surplus lands and all underwater lands not explicitly deeded to private or other public entities.

Canal Corporation – owns, operates, and maintains the NYS Canal System under the purview of the NYS Power Authority; implements the Canal Recreationway Plan leading state efforts to develop the Canalway Trail.

Federal Agencies

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Administers Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge of dredged and fill spoil material into U.S. waters, including most wetlands. In recent years, the USACE has become actively involved in restoration of the nation’s waters and wetlands, including efforts on the Hudson River, upper Susquehanna, and Niagara Rivers.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Oversees administration of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into U.S. waters, including wetlands. Supports state and local wetlands programs through funding grants that support research, restoration, education and outreach efforts, watershed planning, monitoring, and water quality maintenance.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Administers the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Federal Endangered Species Act, which helps protect critical habitat. With DEC and other partners, USFWS implements the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which includes wetlands conservation and a variety of acquisition, management, and restoration activities. They cooperate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to restore wetlands and other habitats. USFWS administers the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a voluntary, community-based stewardship program for fish and wildlife conservation on private land. They also map wetlands under the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) program.

U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with the **Farm Service Agency** – Administers the conservation provisions of the 2018 Food Security Act (Farm Bill). Through the Wetlands Reserve Easements component of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, NRCS helps restore, protect, and enhance wetlands and helps reduce agricultural nutrient runoff to surface waters and wetlands.

USDA Farm Service Agency – Administers certain provisions of the Food Security Act, especially the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The latest program elements include the Continuous Sign-Up CRP and the Enhanced CRP, which have become the primary means of establishing riparian buffers in NYS.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERR) – A network of 30 coastal sites designated to protect and study estuarine systems. Established through the Coastal Zone Management Act, the reserves are a partnership program between NOAA and coastal states. NOAA provides funding and national guidance, and each site is managed by a lead state agency or university and local partners.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) – Coordinates and comments on permits that may affect coastal wetlands. In recent years, NMFS has participated in coastal wetlands restoration efforts.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Supports efforts of state transportation agencies; implements the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) as it relates to wetlands and mitigation and provided a \$500,000 planning grant to NYS DOT and DEC to update and digitize National Wetlands Inventory maps to improve capacity for planning to protect wetlands and other aquatic resources.

Local Government

Because most land-use decisions are made at the county, town, city and village levels, local governments are important interest holders in wetlands conservation. With approximately 1,645 local governments in NYS, their effects on wetlands vary greatly. The following organizational units may be involved with wetlands

- planning departments
- tax assessors and zoning boards of appeals
- soil and water conservation districts
- county cooperative extensions
- environmental management councils
- town conservation advisory commissions (or boards)

New York City

There are 5,650 acres of wetlands in New York City, and approximately half of that total is managed by NYC Parks.⁶⁷ The City recognizes the importance of wetlands to the resilience of the region, and uses the following strategies to protect these valuable natural resources:

- Removing contaminated fill material from historical salt marshes, freshwater wetlands, streambanks, and floodplains and replacing it with clean sand or soil, combating erosion and creating new areas for plant life.
- Planting specially adapted native species and removing invasive species.
- Installing green infrastructure upstream of wetlands to absorb and filter stormwater and runoff.⁶⁸

Other Interest Holders

Conservation Organizations – An estimated 50 nongovernmental organizations in NYS participate in wetlands conservation. Some specifically address wetlands issues; others include wetlands conservation as part of their mission. Key participants include The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, local chapters of the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society.

Academic Institutions – Many academic institutions in NYS offer curricula related to wetlands or conduct wetlands research. Key institutions include Cornell University, State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse (ESF), and SUNY School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook. The DEC recently entered into cooperative agreements with several SUNY colleges for interns to assist with wetlands delineations, compliance inspections, and mapping.

Landowners – Private, individual landowners own a majority of wetlands in the State, and their activities can have a significant impact on the quality or quantity of these wetlands. With the advent of federal and state restoration efforts, many landowners have willingly volunteered to restore wetlands on their property and become good stewards of these resources.

Other Citizens – All citizens of the State benefit from wetlands protection. Many people support conservation organizations because of their support for wetlands. Citizens also provide political support or comments for wetlands programs and for site-specific activities, such as permits or acquisitions. In the late 1940s, efforts began on private lands to cooperatively manage for habitat, and over 1,000 small marshes were built for waterfowl.

Wetland Protection Strategies

Programs that affect wetlands in NYS are organized according to their approach, into one or more of the following eight “mechanisms.”

Acquisition

Public acquisition of land with wetlands helps protect or control all or some rights as to the use of the land, usually the right to develop the land, which keeps the property in its undeveloped, natural state. Aside from purchasing land, acquisition can include leases, conservation easements, donations, bargain sales, and transfers of development rights. In NYS, over 12,000 acres of freshwater wetlands were purchased under the 1972 and 1986 Acquisition Bond Acts, and the DEC has also acquired 3,000 acres of tidal wetlands and associated inland buffers. In 1990, a third bond act failed to pass, but

prompted development of the State Open Space Conservation Plan (OSP), now the major guiding document for all open space acquisition efforts in the State, including wetlands. The 2022 Bond Act was passed and includes funding for wetland acquisitions.



Wetland at Buckhorn Island State Park, Niagara Region

Regulation

Governmental oversight and control of actions that could impact wetlands includes laws, rules and regulations, as well as executive orders. In NYS, wetlands are regulated at three levels. Tidal wetlands are protected under the 1973 NYS Tidal Wetlands Act. The 1975 NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act regulates freshwater wetlands, and a limited number of local governments also have local ordinances to protect wetlands. Some regulate wetlands explicitly, others through land use ordinances that target water resources. Some regulate only those wetlands not protected by State law; others regulate wetlands irrespective of State protections. Nonetheless, not all wetlands are protected from all negative impacts, and losses continue to occur.

Planning

To be most effective, wetlands protection should be integrated into other land use protection efforts and not addressed separately. The State has integrated wetlands planning and protection strategies into other plans, such as the Open Space Conservation Plan and the NY Great Lakes Action Agenda, as well as other agencies' plans, including the SCORP and the Coastal Resources Plan.

Restoration, Creation, and Management

Restoring and creating wetlands adds to the resource base, while management actions improve or maintain the quality of existing wetlands. *Restoration* brings back one or more characteristics of a healthy wetland system that has been lost or impaired by actions such as filling, draining, or polluting. *Creation* means making a new wetland by flooding or excavating upland. *Management* includes:

- *Enhancement* – altering or manipulating an existing functional wetland to increase selected functions. Best management practices are used to avoid negative impacts while undertaking an unrelated activity such as timber harvest.
- *Stewardship* – applying a conservation ethic to the land. Often entails more passive management, e.g., leaving a buffer area around a wetland in a pasture or a cultivated field.
- *Restoration and enhancement* – efforts on municipally owned lands were funded by the 1972 Environmental Quality Bond Act. More recently, programs to restore and manage wetlands have grown dramatically. Under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the DEC and the USFWS are cooperating with landowners and other organizations to restore drained wetlands on agricultural land in the Northern Montezuma Focus Area.

Other restoration efforts are underway in the Lake Champlain basin, the Hudson River, Great Lakes basin, Upper Susquehanna, Upper Chemung, and the Niagara River.

With the roles that wetlands play in mitigating climate change impacts, it is expected that in the coming years restoration will continue to be a focus of resources and attention. Programs that specifically target wetland restoration include the NRCS's Wetlands Reserve Program, and funding sources that support restoration, including New York's Environmental Bond Act, Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve, Peconic Estuary Program, and the 2021-2025 **Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda**.

Incentives and Disincentives

Incentives are proactive, non-regulatory programs that encourage voluntary wetlands protection. In NYS, incentives are delivered through the Food Security Act conservation programs in which landowners are paid an annual rental fee or long-term easement payment for participating in a conservation program, such as the Wetlands Reserve Program.

Disincentives are programs that discourage alteration of or impacts to wetlands because they result in loss of a benefit, such as eligibility for federal funding. Incentives and disincentives are usually financial, but may include recognition, assistance, or good (or bad) public relations. These mechanisms are generally endorsed in discussions on improving wetlands conservation. However, as they usually involve financial motivation, they are difficult to implement.

Research

A primary mechanism for better understanding the function and value of wetlands is engaging in research and making inventories help to identify threats and develop remediation and mitigation techniques. The State occasionally supports research efforts. Since 1990, the EPA's Wetlands Development Grant has been available to increase capacity for wetlands protection. The APA, DEC, and other NYS entities have used these grants to undertake wetlands studies and inventories.

Education, Outreach, and Technical Assistance

Programs work best when developed and implemented in cooperation with all interested and affected parties. Understanding of the value of wetlands helps people make effective decisions and change their behavior. The state provides support to landowners to manage their own wetlands. Hands-on technical



Fresh Pond at Caumsett State Historic Park Preserve overlooking the Long Island Sound, Long Island Region

assistance may include teaching a farmer how to restore a wetland on converted cropland. Partnerships in wetland programs have increased dramatically in recent years and have helped improve conservation.

Inventories

Wetlands comprise about eight percent of the total land in NYS. An estimated 2.4 million acres are freshwater—hardwood, coniferous and shrub swamps, wet meadows, bogs, and fens; about 25,000 acres are vegetated tidal wetlands—salt and coastal marshes. Statewide, approximately 80% of mapped wetlands meet the threshold for protection by the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act. National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, prepared by the USFWS, are available online at [USFWS](#).

State-regulated freshwater wetlands are classified into one of four categories: Class I, which provide the most important functions or are functionally diverse, to Class IV, which provide fewer benefits. Currently, 26% of DEC-mapped wetlands are Class I; 54% are Class II, 17% are Class III, and 2% are Class IV. [The New York Natural Heritage Program](#), a joint venture with SUNY ESF, DEC, and [NatureServe](#), also has a detailed classification system for the state's wetlands, including a determination of the rarity and threat at both global and state levels. NYS does not specifically classify wetlands as rare, threatened, or functionally diverse.

Tidal wetlands are classified solely on their vegetated characteristics, and all tidal wetlands in NYS are considered critical state resources. The [Tidal Wetlands Act](#) requires that all tidal wetlands be mapped, and the 1974 inventory is available online. Currently, some 25,000 acres of vegetated tidal wetlands in the marine district are identified and classified as follows:

- [Coastal fresh marsh](#) – the upper tidal limits of riverine systems. This category accounts for about 5 percent of the vegetated tidal wetlands in NYS.
- [Intertidal marsh](#) – the area between average high and low tidal elevations. Includes about 60 percent of vegetated wetlands.
- [High marsh](#) – the uppermost tidal wetland zone. It includes about 30 percent of vegetated wetlands.
- [Formerly connected](#) – areas where tidal flow has been restricted either by human or natural causes. Includes about 5 percent of vegetated wetlands.

Wetland maps are available to the public at all DEC offices, all local government clerks' offices and on DEC's website. Digital data on DEC-mapped wetlands is available at the [NYS GIS Clearinghouse](#).

Historic and Contemporary Wetland Losses

Since colonization, NYS has lost an estimated 60% of its wetlands to draining, dredging, and filling. A statewide analysis by the NYS DEC that looked at freshwater wetland changes from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s found that, after decades of loss, NYS saw a net gain of an estimated 15,500 acres of freshwater wetlands.⁶⁹ Causes of wetland loss identified in the study included agriculture, urbanization, mining, development, beaver activity, modified hydrology (e.g., increased runoff), and plant succession. Agriculture caused the most loss (50%), but 76% of all gains were from the reversion of agricultural fields, as farmland drained decades ago was abandoned and has reverted to wetland. The study did not attribute significant gains in wetlands to beaver—a statistically insignificant 100-200 acres. However, beaver did cause a change of almost 198,000 acres in cover type, as their damming activities flooded shrub/scrub/forested wetlands, changing them to open water with emergent vegetation.

Finally, the greatest overall dynamic in the State's wetlands resulted from natural ecological succession, the process by which fields change to forests. The study noted a change in cover type in almost 120,000 acres of wetlands statewide. While a net gain of an estimated 15,500 acres of wetlands is wonderful news for the State, this study raises some concerns. For example, most net gains occurred in rural areas, while half the losses occurred in developed urban and suburban areas. The result has been a substantial geographic shift of wetland occurrence, which also results in a shift of the benefits they provide, such as water quality protection and flood attenuation. A landowner living near a stream who now suffers more flooding from wetlands loss upstream will be little comforted by the increase in wildlife habitat in the surrounding rural area. Our urban population is therefore becoming more isolated from the open space and wildlife habitat associated with wetlands.

Significant losses of vegetated tidal wetlands are occurring in the intertidal marsh islands of Jamaica Bay. Between 1924-74, 780 acres of marsh islands were lost due to dredging and filling (unregulated activities up to 1974), and 510 acres were lost for other reasons. Historic maps from 1857-1924 show that the marsh islands would vary in size naturally—during periods with significant storms, there were losses of up to 10 acres per year. In years with less extreme weather, the marsh islands seemed able to rebuild. Since 1974, the loss of marsh islands has accelerated, most likely from dredging, higher storm surges, sea level rise, and erosion. The southern portion of Manhasset Bay, a vegetated marsh island that appears on the 1974 Tidal Wetlands map, is now completely covered by water.

Because intertidal marsh is critical to estuarine health and productivity, it is essential to give priority attention to issues impacting the entire marine district and develop remediation, restoration, research, and monitoring strategies in these critical areas.

New York continues to lose thousands of acres of wetlands to urbanization and development.⁷⁰ An estimated 1 million acres of wetlands in NYS meet the statutory definition to be regulated but are not currently on DEC maps. There is a critical need to update wetland maps so that all are afforded state protection. This includes an increasing emphasis on ephemeral wetlands such as vernal pools.

The State's comprehensive wetland conservation approach includes collaborations with federal and local governmental agencies and with other nongovernmental partners to better protect wetlands. Through its programs, partnerships and regulations, NYS will continue to be a leader in preserving, protecting, and conserving its wetlands. The State's wetland conservation plan's priority components are consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 and the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Services.



View overlooking the Hudson River from Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve, Taconic Region

Looking Ahead

Record numbers of people have visited public outdoor spaces in recent years. Significant capital improvements to the state’s parks and other public open spaces over the past decade, and the unusual circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased the need for safe outdoor places for people to recreate. As weather and seasons continue to change, environmental shifts will increasingly affect outdoor recreation in NYS. To successfully navigate these anticipated changes, both private landowners and public agencies, as well as other entities responsible for outdoor recreation across the state, need to undertake targeted planning to determine more comprehensive methods of successfully connecting with—and providing recreational opportunities for—all communities.



Cayuga Lake State Park, Finger Lakes Region

CHAPTER 4 – RECREATION SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Introduction

Evaluating the demand for different types of outdoor recreation activities and the supply of outdoor recreation resources across NYS assists in allocating resources for public outdoor recreation. This chapter explains the processes used to determine the demand for, and supply of, public outdoor recreation. Surveys developed for the SCORP identify user preferences and needs that allow NYS to understand and respond to the intersection of recreational supply and demand, including the relationship between facilities available, professionals who steward them, and their user base. Data used to describe this relationship include the number of participation days in specific activities, a facility database cataloguing activities offered, and park professionals’ opinions on operational and visitor needs. These resulting data help to inform which outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities are most needed at state and county levels.

Survey Timeline

Three surveys were deployed in 2024 to evaluate outdoor recreation participation trends, recreation facility offerings, and attitudes and values surrounding outdoor recreation of both Park Professionals and NYS residents. These surveys are explained in detail in each of their respective sections. A timeline of when the surveys were opened, redeployed, and closed is provided below.

February 2024	March 2024	May 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024
Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Opens	Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Closes	Park Professional Survey Opens	Park Professional Survey Reminder	Supply Survey Opens	Supply Survey and Park Professional Survey Reminders Supply Survey and Park Professional Survey Closes

Recreation Demand

Park Professional Survey

In spring and fall 2024, OPRHP’s Planning and Analysis Bureau distributed the Park Professional Survey (PPS) to State, County, City/Village, Town, and Tribal Park Professionals. For the purposes of the SCORP, a Park Professional is defined as an individual who manages, maintains, or oversees one or multiple public recreation facilities. The objectives of the PPS were to gain information about outdoor recreation needs in communities and to understand Park Professionals’ attitudes and perceptions on important recreational and environmental issues. The survey results help to inform recreation management professionals where there is a lack of specific recreational facilities, as well as highlight trends and needs of the Park Professionals’ communities.

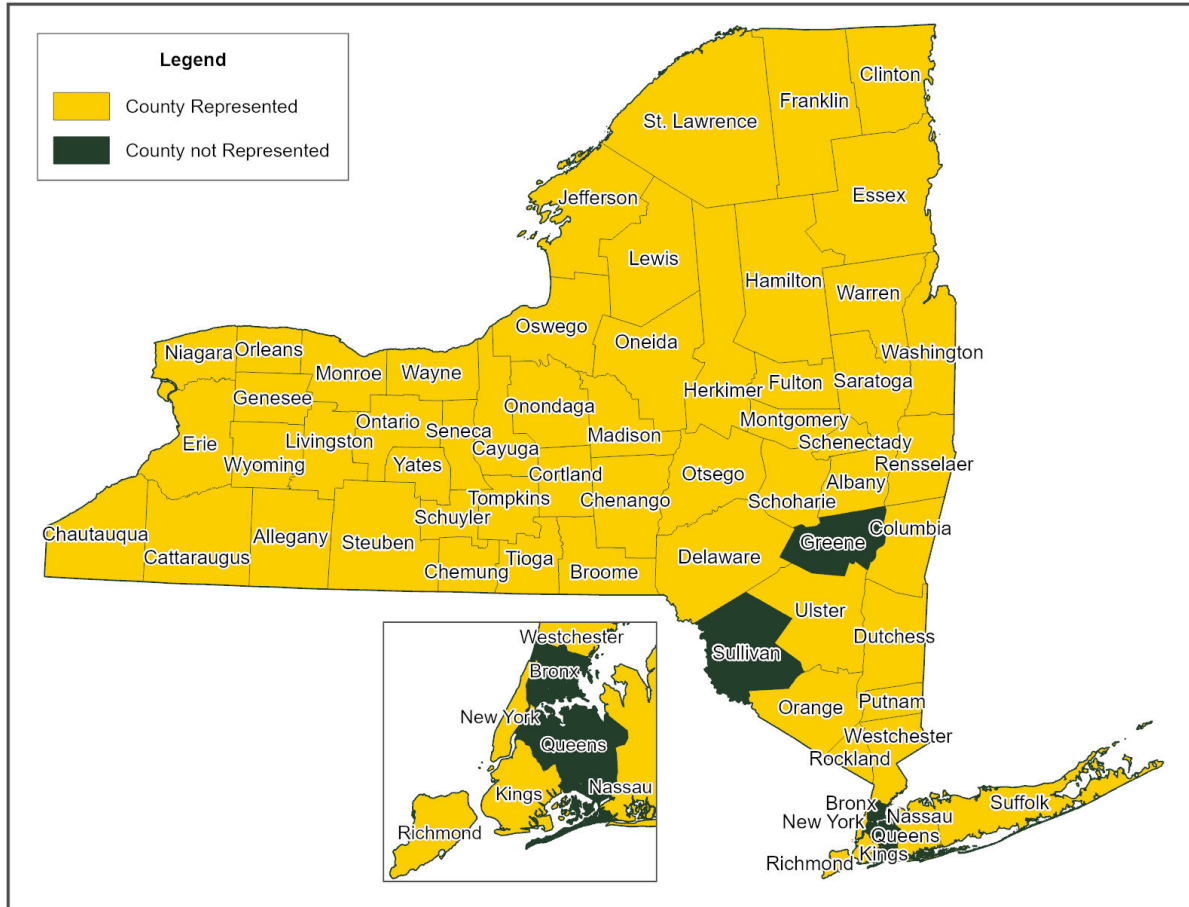
Chapter 4 – Recreation Supply and Demand

The PPS was distributed via e-mail to contacts compiled from existing statewide contact lists. This was the first time Tribal Park Professionals were included in the survey audience. The SCORP team worked with the OPRHP Interpreter of Native American History to compile a list of Tribal Park Professionals. The PPS was also updated with inclusive language to align with the State’s overall Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. The complete PPS survey instrument can be referenced in Appendix E.

In total, OPRHP received 215 completed surveys, from State, County, City/Village, and Town Park Professionals. The majority (58 out of 62) of NYS counties provided a response (Figure 4.1).



Child With a Dog

Figure 4.1 - Map of New York State Counties Represented in the 2024 Park Professional Survey

Note: Counties not represented in the 2024 Park Professional Survey include Bronx County, Greene County, Queens County and Sullivan County.

Park Professional Facility Needs

Park Professionals were asked to select *no need*, *low need*, *moderate need*, *high need*, or *very high need* for a selected list of new facilities in their communities. A facility type was considered in high need if over 50% of Park Professionals reported a moderate or higher need; in moderate need if 40% or more, but less than 50%, of Park Professionals reported a moderate or higher need; or in low need if less than 40% of Park Professionals reported a moderate or higher need for the facility type. There was a need for all facility types.

The majority of Park Professionals surveyed reported a moderate or higher need for Trails (66%), Low-Impact Activity Areas (61%), and Court Sports (61%), and a moderate or higher need for Field Sports (51%), Fishing Access (47%), Boat Launches (46%), Swimming Pools (41%), and Campgrounds (40%). Most Park Professionals did not indicate a moderate or higher need for Ice Skating Rinks (39%), Beaches (29%), Hunting Areas (26%), Golf Courses (23%), Snowmobiling (21%), and Downhill Winter Sport Areas (14%) (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 - Statewide Need for a Selected List of Recreation Facility Types Reported by Park Professionals (2024 PPS)

Recreation Facility Type	Percentage of Park Professionals Reporting Moderate or Higher Need
Trails	66%
Low-Impact Activity Areas	61%
Court Sports	61%
Field Sports	51%
Fishing Access	47%
Boat Launches	46%
Swimming Pools	41%
Campgrounds	40%
Ice Skating Rinks	39%
Beaches	29%
Hunting Areas	26%
Golf Courses	23%
Snowmobiling	21%
Downhill Winter Sport	14%

Note: The facility type categories included the following activities:

Trails (for on and off-road bicycling, skateboarding/rollerblading, walking, jogging, running, hiking, horseback riding, ATV/ORV/4x4, cross country skiing, snowshoeing)

Low-Impact Activity Areas (including picnic and day use areas, playgrounds, nature preserves, gardens, nature study areas)

Court Sports (including tennis, handball, racquetball, basketball, pickleball)

Field Sports (including baseball, soccer, football, softball, volleyball)

Fishing Access (from land or by boat)

Boat Launches (including motorboats, sailboats, kayaks)

Campgrounds (including for tent, RV, primitive, cabin/cottage)

Ice Skating Rinks

Swimming Pools (excluding splash pads and aquatic playgrounds)

Beaches (on oceans, lakes, or rivers)

Hunting Areas

Golf Courses (including disc golf)

Snowmobiling

Downhill Winter Sports Areas (including skiing, snowboarding, ski-board, telemark)

Figures 4.2 through 4.6 display the need for specific types of recreational facilities as reported by Park Professionals in the 2024 PPS. The bar charts are organized by similar activities and color-coded to display level of need reported by Park Professionals. Percentages have all been rounded to the nearest whole number and all reported needs under 0.5% do not have a label displayed.

Figure 4.2 - Statewide Need for Trail, Low Impact Activity Area, and Campground Facility Types Reported by Park Professionals (2024 PPS)

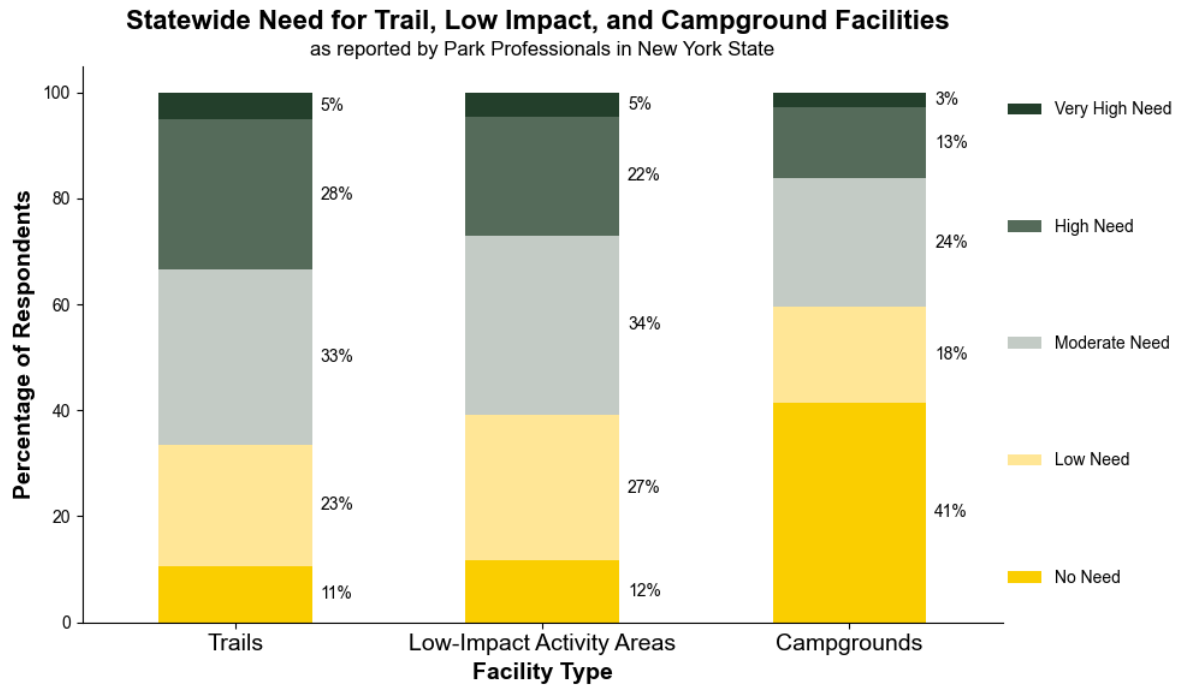


Figure 4.3 - Statewide Need for Winter Facility Types Reported by Park Professionals (2024 PPS)

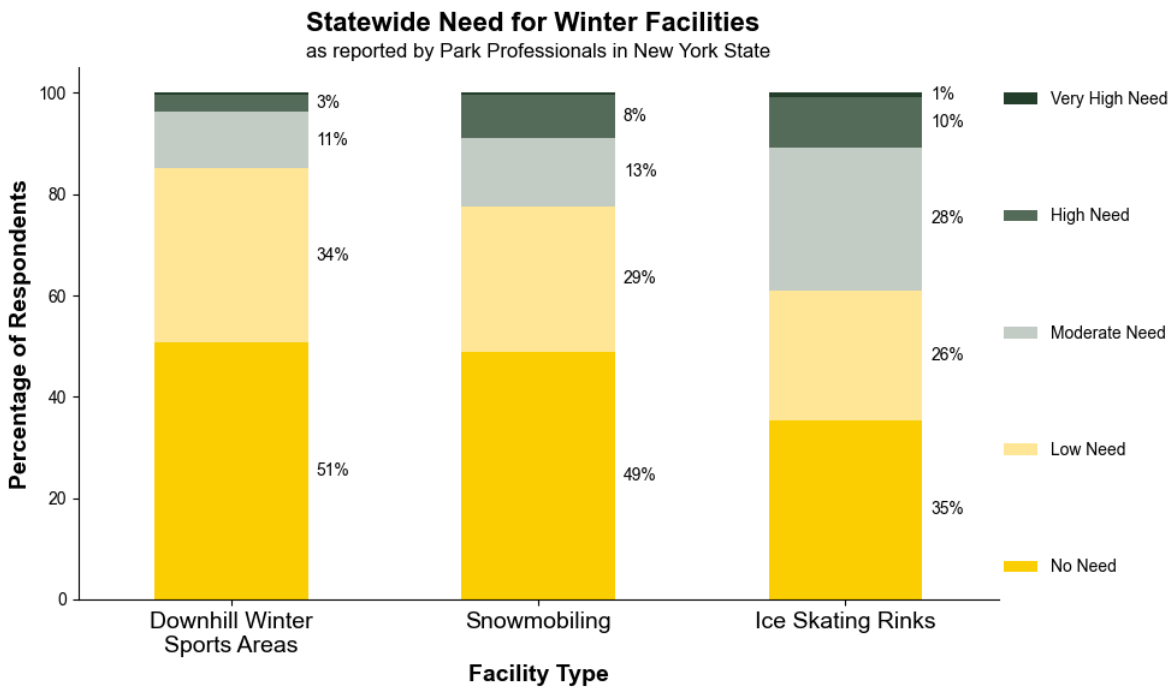


Figure 4.4 - Statewide Need for Water Facility Types Reported by Park Professionals (2024 PPS)

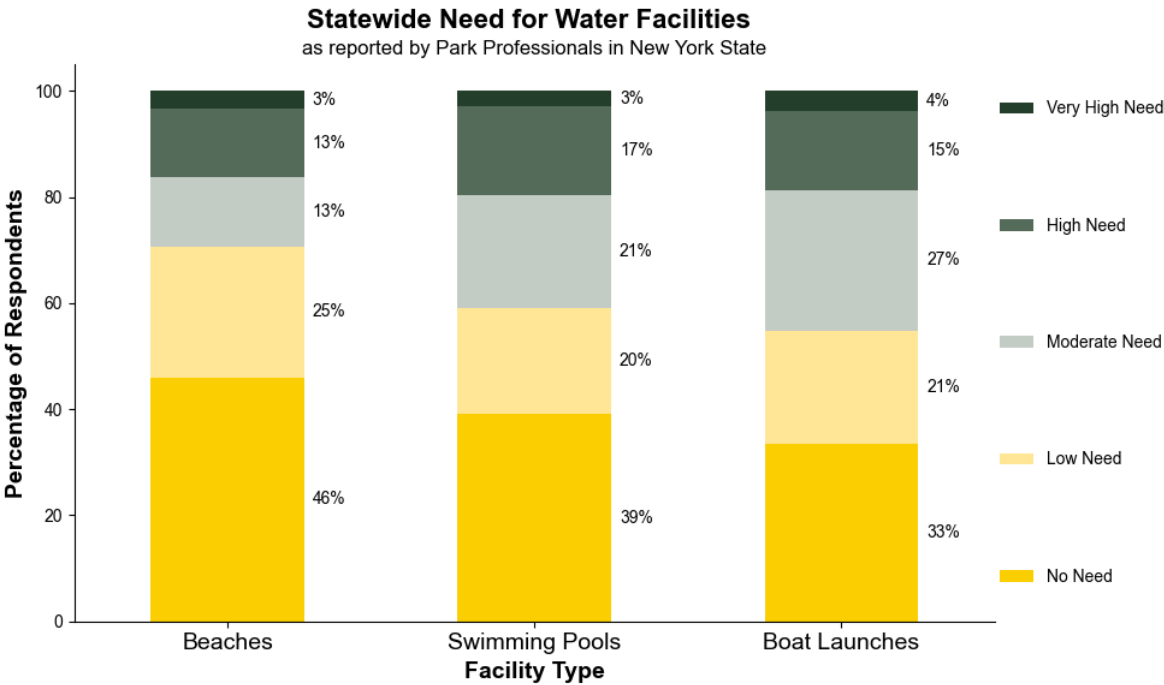


Figure 4.5 - Statewide Need for Field, Court, and Golf Facility Types Reported by Park Professionals (2024 PPS)

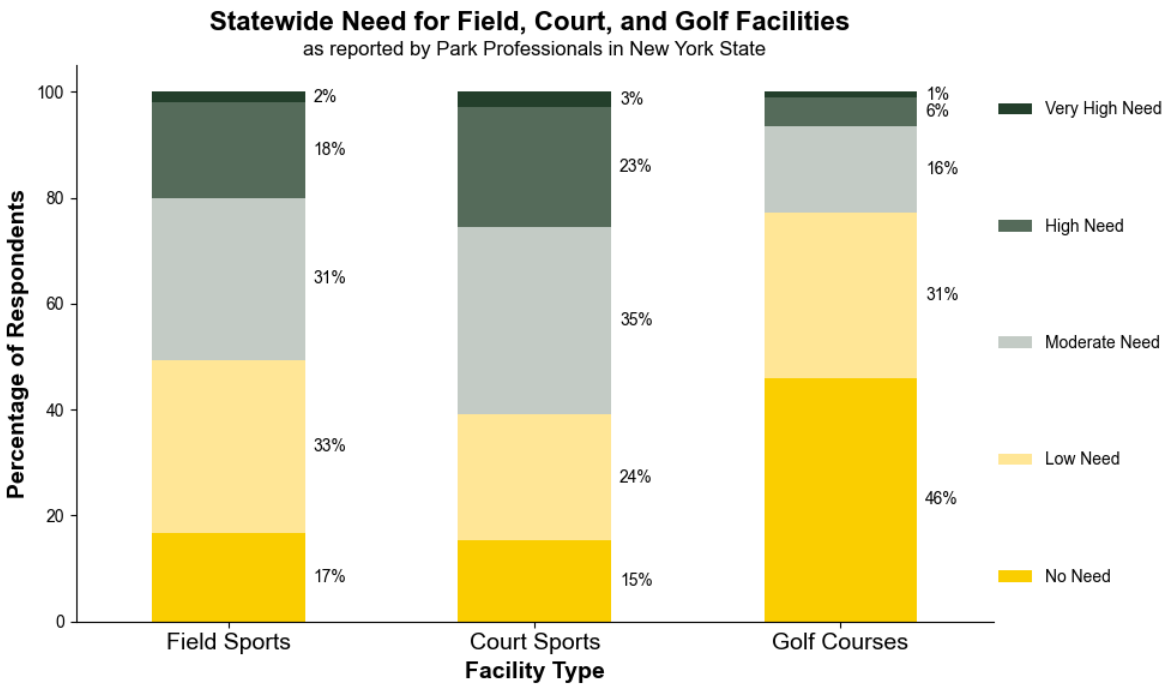
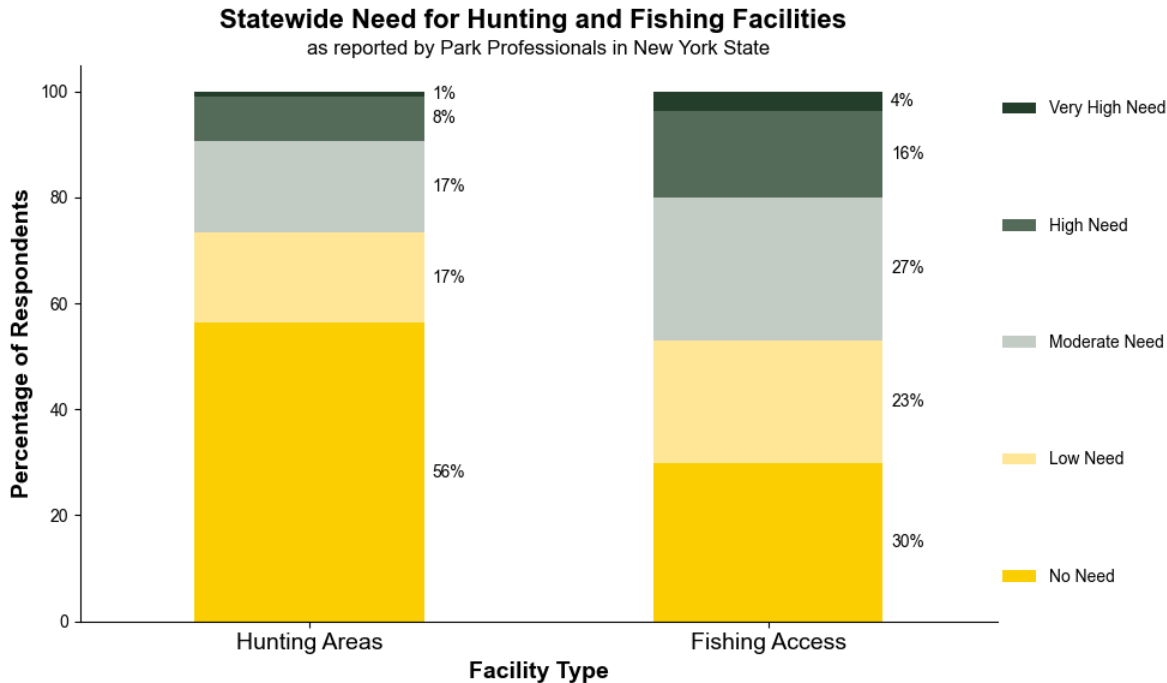


Figure 4.6 - Statewide Need for Hunting and Fishing Facility Types Reported by Park Professionals (2024 PPS)



A Park Professional at Sackets Harbor State Historic Site, Thousand Islands Region

Park Professionals were asked to provide their own response if their community needed new facilities not listed in the survey. The majority of the 85 respondents who wrote in a facility need noted that the facilities in their community needed upgrades, rather than entirely new facilities. These upgrades included adaptive recreation equipment, bathrooms, parking, outdoor shelters large enough for concerts and other public outdoor events, and playgrounds. Large-scale engineering projects to protect facilities, such as drainage systems for storm surges and rehabilitation of fishing

access points, were also noted as needed in the survey. Other facilities reported as needed included dog parks, walking trails, community centers, skate parks, splashpad facilities, boat wash stations, picnic shelters, and indoor gym spaces. Easements to add access points to bodies of water and to complete trail systems were also mentioned as needed by several communities.

Park Professional Key Statements

Survey respondents were presented with nine statements to evaluate their attitudes and perceptions on important state recreational and environmental issues. For each statement, Park Professionals were asked to select if they *strongly disagree*, *somewhat disagree*, are *neutral*, *somewhat agree*, or *strongly agree* with the statement (Appendix E). The top three statements Park Professionals agreed with the most are:

- 1. More money should be spent on public parks maintenance and repair (Figure 4.7).
- 2. Spending for outdoor recreation facilities (e.g. pools, marinas, trails, campgrounds) should be increased (Figure 4.8).
- 3. Financial assistance to support recreation development and land acquisition should be increased (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.7 – Reported Park Professional agreement to the statement “More money should be spent on public parks maintenance and repair.” (2024 PPS)

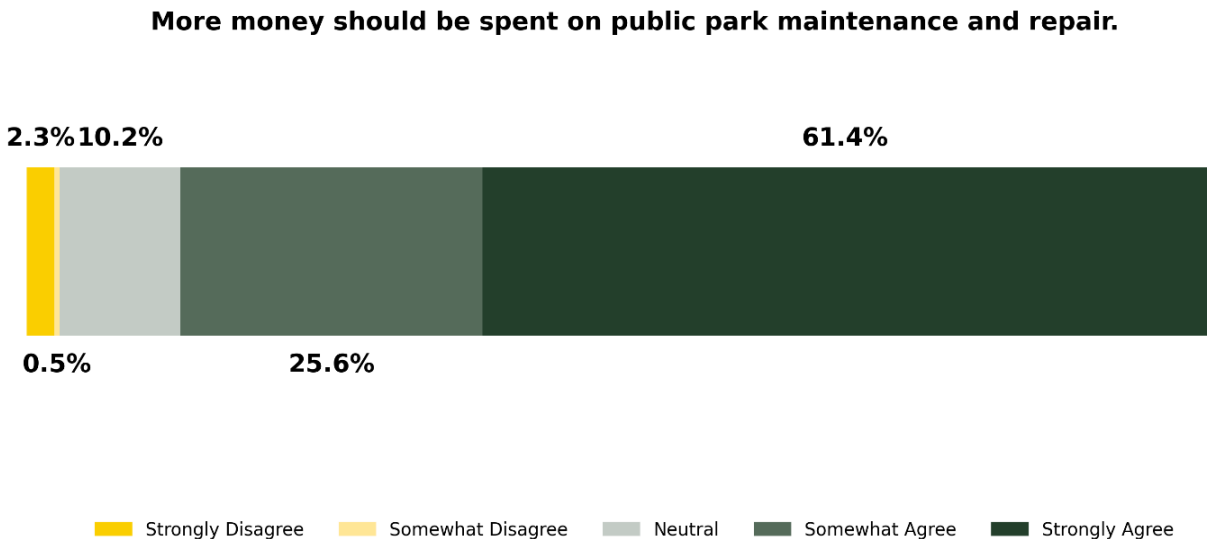


Figure 4.8 – Reported Park Professional agreement to the statement “Spending for outdoor recreation facilities (e.g. pools, marina, trails, campgrounds) should be increased.” (2024 PPS)

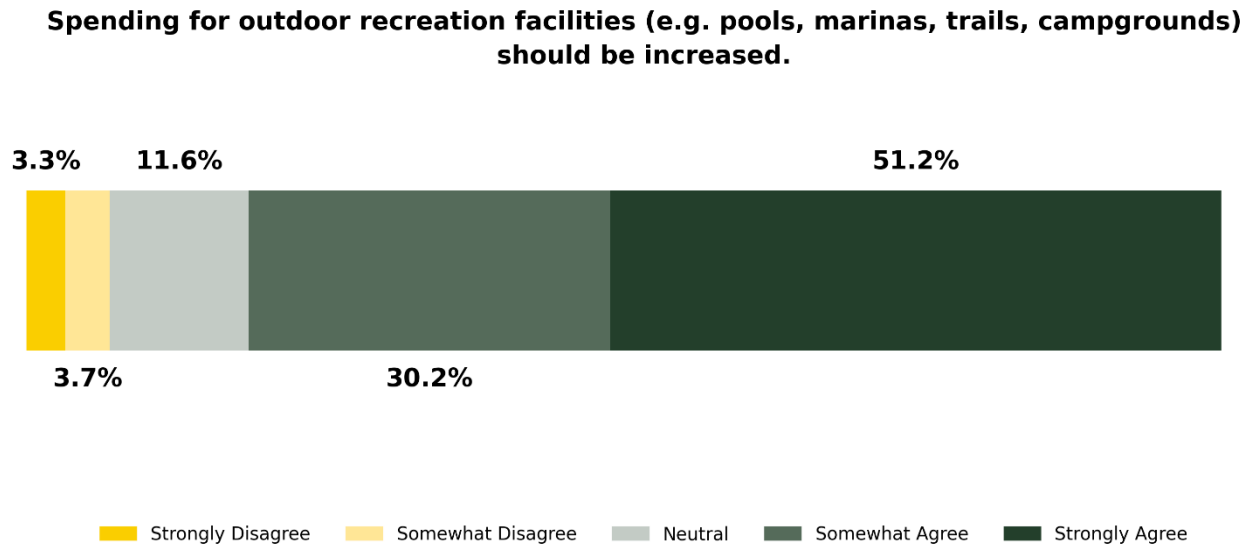
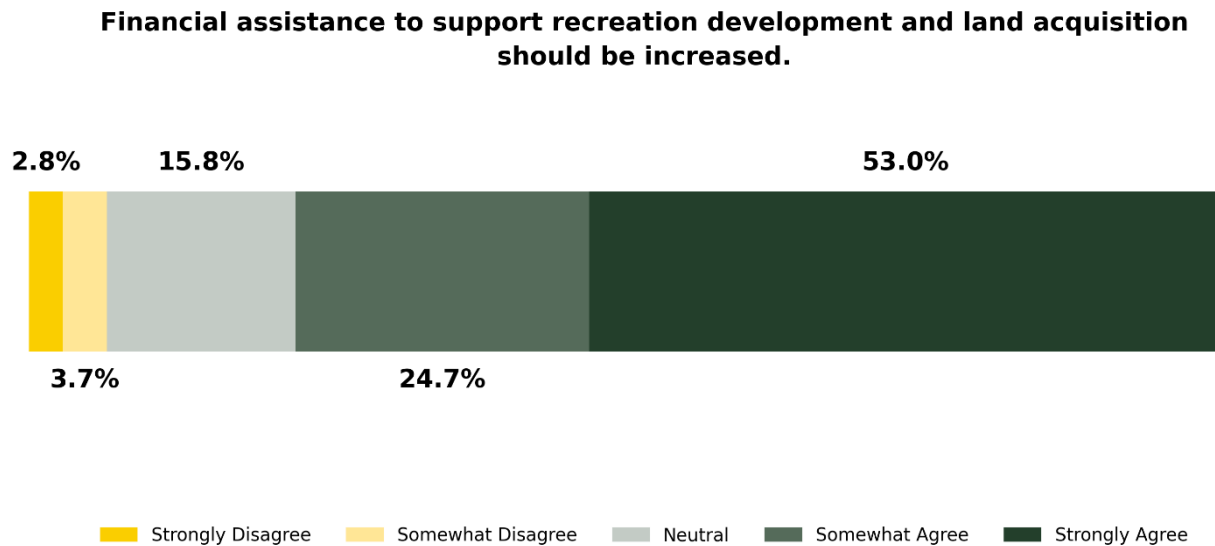


Figure 4.9 – Reported Park Professional agreement to the statement “Financial assistance to support recreation development and land acquisition should be increased.” (2024 PPS)



Strong agreement with these statements indicates that Park Professionals prioritize access to financial assistance, renewed financial commitments, and a steady flow of financial resources to maintain, create, and manage recreational facilities. Adequate funding ensures that Park Professionals can effectively provide their community with access to safe and clean recreational facilities as well as relevant programming to enhance the overall visitor experience.

Public Outdoor Recreation Survey

The 2024 NYS Public Outdoor Recreation Survey (2024 PORS) was distributed through a paid online survey provider. Data was collected from over 10,000 respondents across the State about the following topics:

- participation in eighteen different outdoor recreation activity categories over the past 12 months,
- recreation facility needs for the respondent and their community,
- barriers to participation experienced in outdoor recreation,
- key attitudes about experiences participating in outdoor recreation, and
- demographic information to ensure a representative sample.

The results of this survey contribute to development of the 2025-2030 SCORP by offering key, generalizable insights into the outdoor recreation experience of NYS residents. The complete 2024 PORS survey instrument can be referenced in Appendix E.

Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Demographics

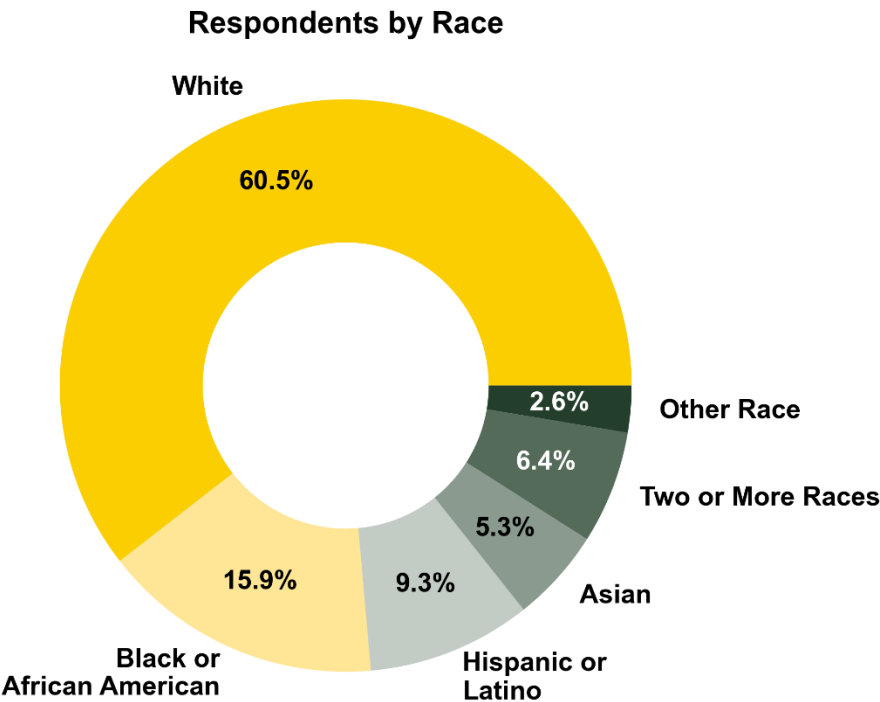
The 2024 PORS was conducted among a geographically stratified sample of NYS residents aged eighteen or older. The survey asked respondents to also report the ages of other members in their household to account for potential recreation activity participation by youth (age 18 or under). Seeking information from a representative sample of the State’s adult general population—rather than from specialized groups such as “friends” groups or activity club members—provides valuable insights about the average New York resident—including the identification of those who may have experienced barriers to participation in recreation in the last calendar year—and helps improve the outdoor recreation experience for all.

Figures 4.10 through 4.22 compare the make-up of the 2024 PORS respondents to the make-up of the NYS adult population from the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) to ensure the results of the survey are considered generalizable.

A few key demographic differences between the 2024 PORS respondent pool and the general NYS population are that 2024 PORS respondents that identified their race as Asian alone were underrepresented by about 4%; 2024 PORS respondents that identified their race as Hispanic or Latino alone were underrepresented by about 5%; the Adult (age 25 - 44) age group was overrepresented by about 8%; and the Senior (age 65+) age group was underrepresented by about 13%. Since the 2024 PORS was distributed online, an underrepresentation of Seniors was expected.

Most of the results from the 2024 PORS are presented in frequencies and percentages, which does not require weighting. Any statements about key differences between two populations (i.e. age groups) has been confirmed with a paired t-test that has weighted the survey responses.

Figure 4.10 – Respondents by Race (2024 PORS)

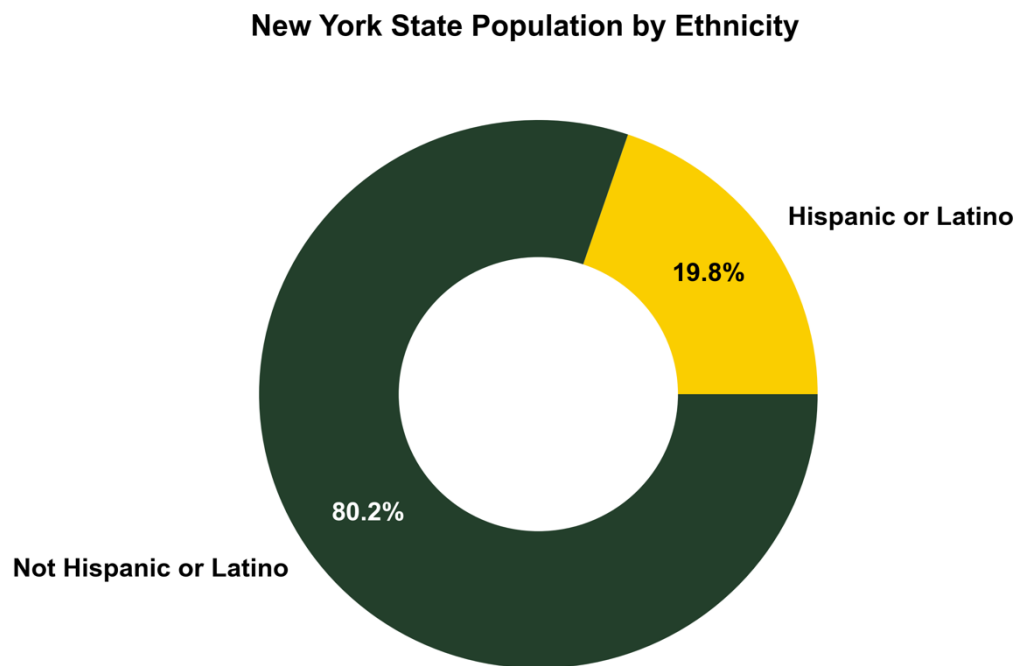


Note. Respondents were asked to select as many races and/or ethnicities that applied to them. The races in this chart, other than ‘Two or More Races, represent the percentage of respondents that selected only that race. Races that included less than 2% of the respondents were aggregated into ‘Other Race’. A breakdown of ‘Other Race’ is provided in Table 4.2.

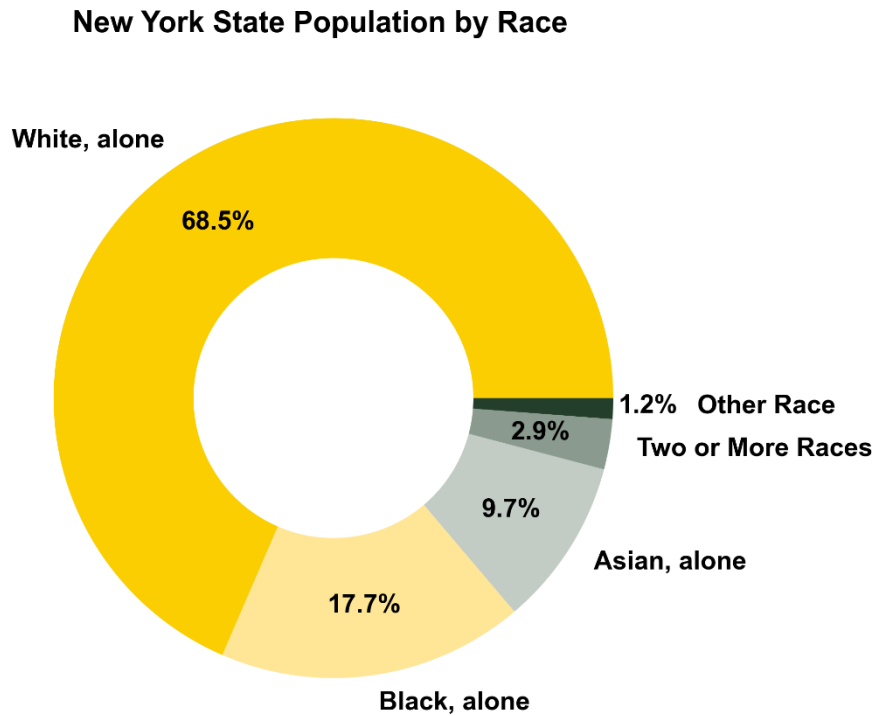
Table 4.2 – Breakdown of ‘Other Race’ (2024 PORS)

Other Race	Percentage
Prefer not to say	0.9%
Other	0.7%
Native American or Alaska Native	0.5%
Middle Eastern or North African	0.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%

Figure 4.11 – New York State Population by Ethnicity (2023 ACS)



Note. The 2020 U.S. Census asked respondents about their ethnicity separate from race.

Figure 4.12 – New York State Population by Race (2023 ACS)

Note. The 2020 U.S. Census asked respondents to select one or more races that applied to them. Hispanic or Latino, Middle Eastern or North African, Other, and Prefer not to say, were not provided as an option in the U.S. Census. Races that included less than 2% of the respondents were aggregated into 'Other Race.' A breakdown of 'Other Race' is provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 – Breakdown of 'Other Race' (2023 ACS)

Other Race	Percentage
Native American or Alaska Native	1.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%

Figure 4.13 – Respondents by Gender Identity (2024 PORS)

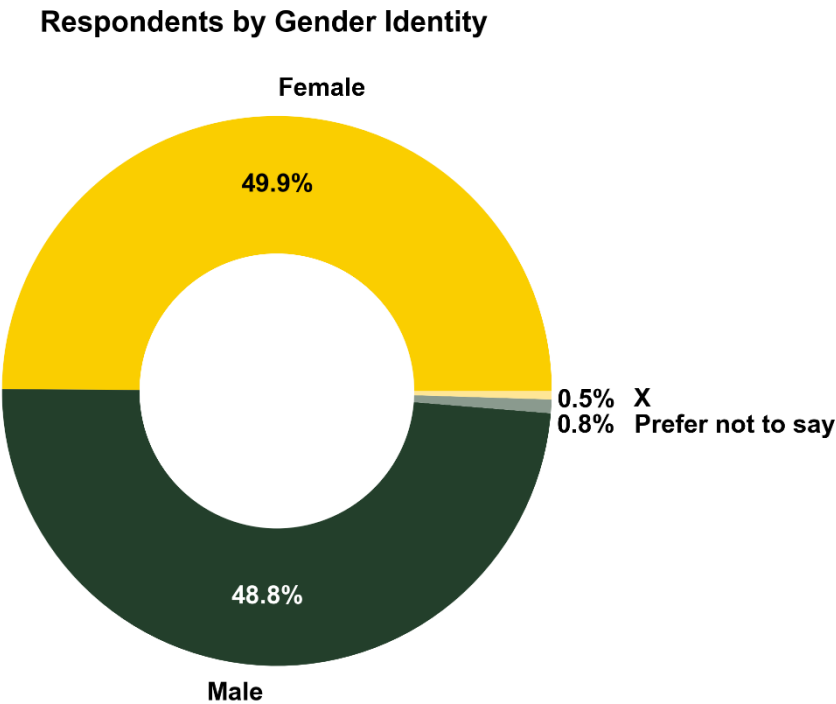
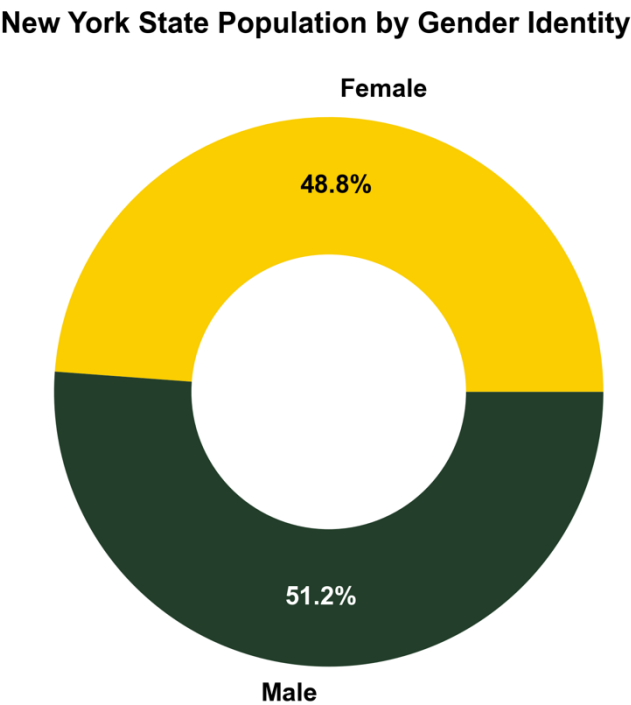


Figure 4.14 – New York State Population by Gender Identity (2023 ACS)



Note. Gender 'X' was not provided as an option in the 2020 U.S. Census.

Figure 4.15 – Respondents by Education Attainment (2024 PORS)

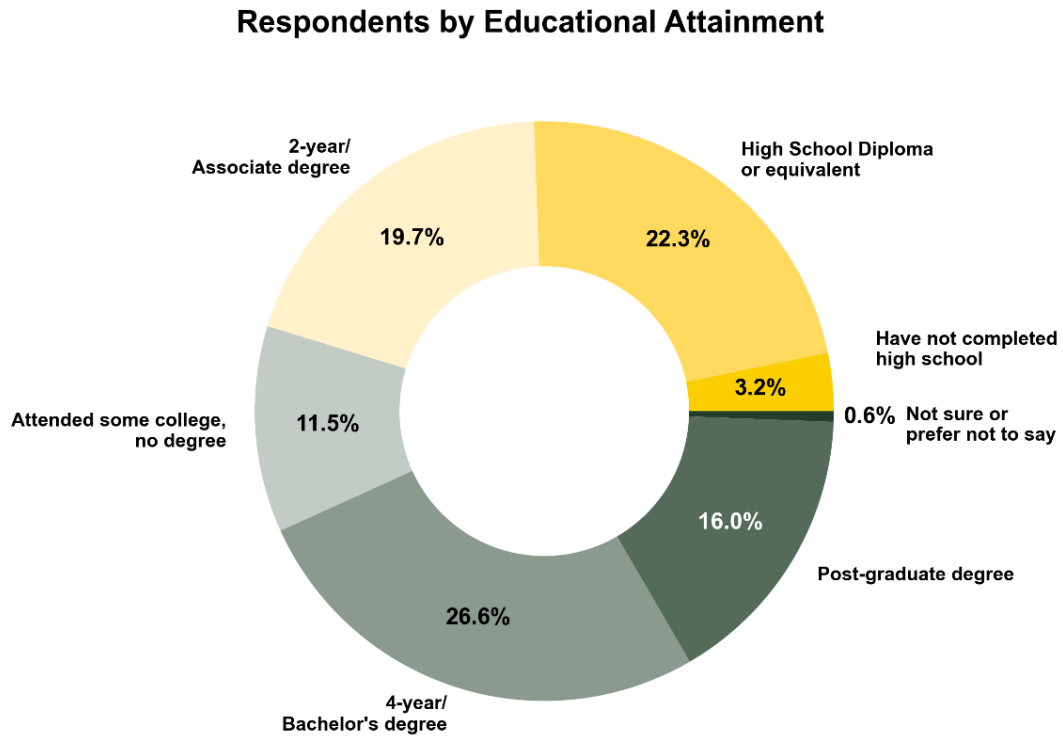


Figure 4.16 – New York State Population by Educational Attainment (2023 ACS)

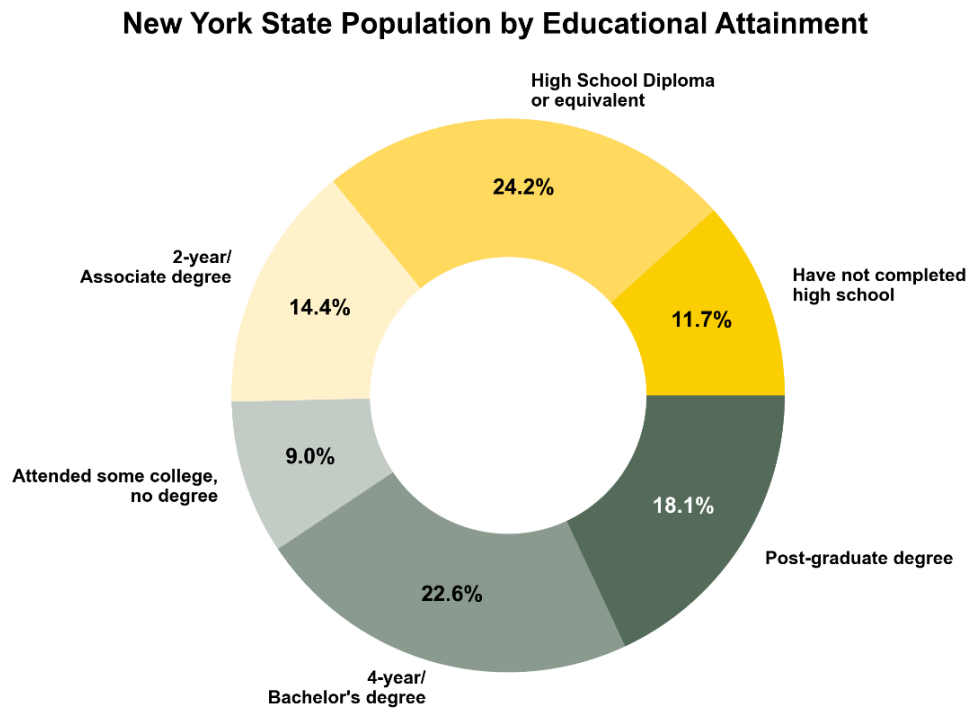


Figure 4.17 – Respondents by Household Income (2024 PORS)

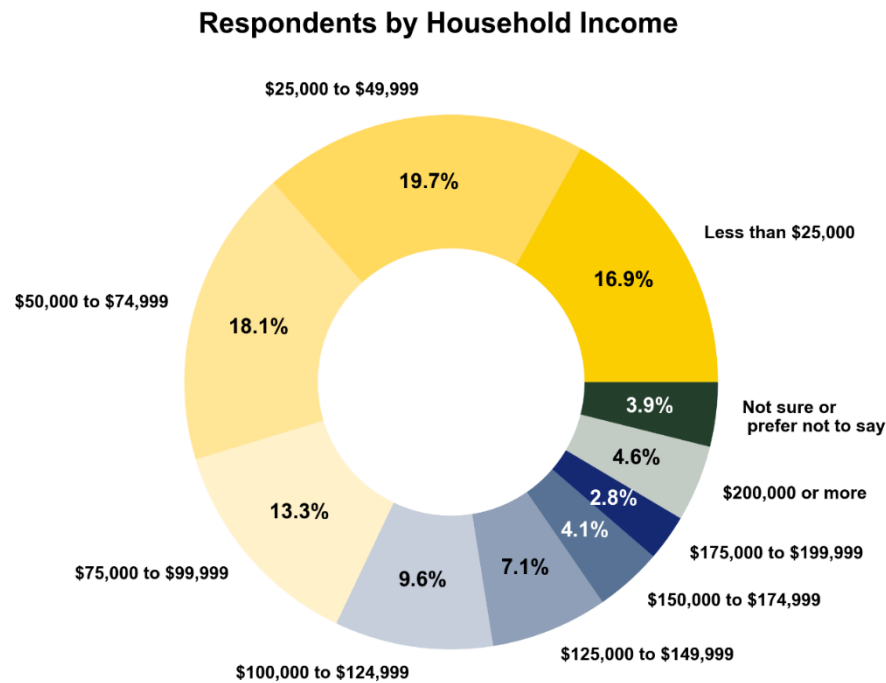
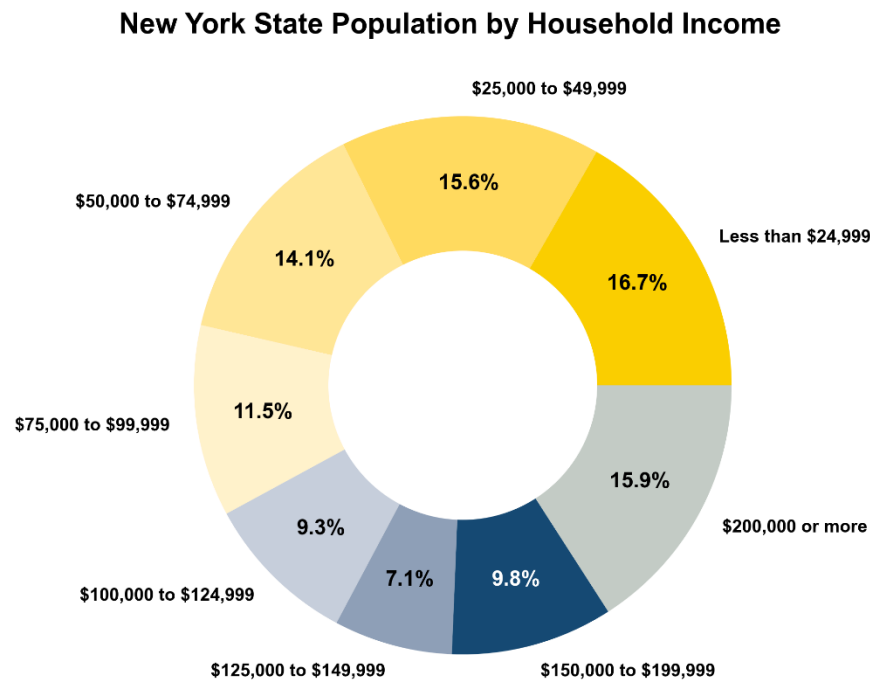
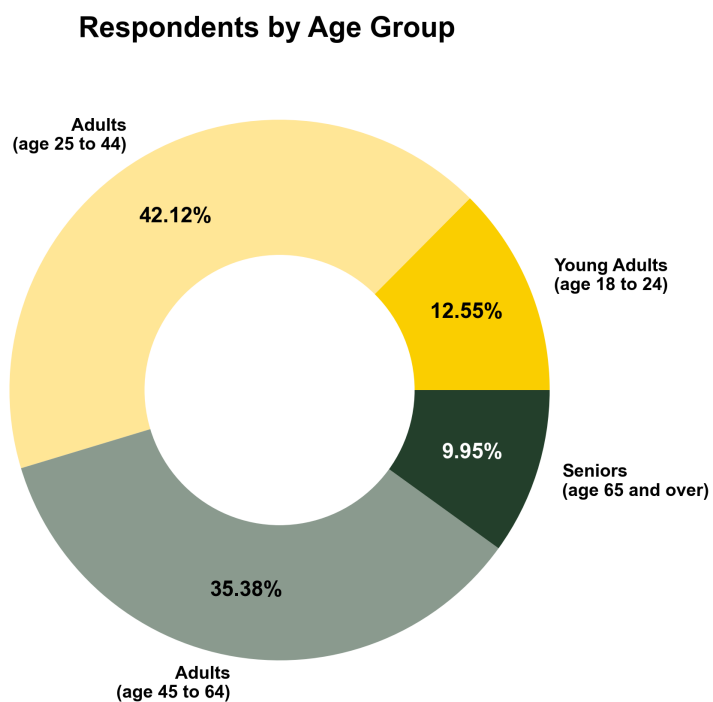


Figure 4.18 – New York State Population by Household Income (2023 ACS)



Note. \$150,000 to \$174,999 and \$175,000 to \$199,999 are reported as one category in the 2020 U.S. Census.

Figure 4.19 – Respondents by Age Group (2024 PORS)

Note. Only adults 18 years of age or older were surveyed in the 2024 PORS.

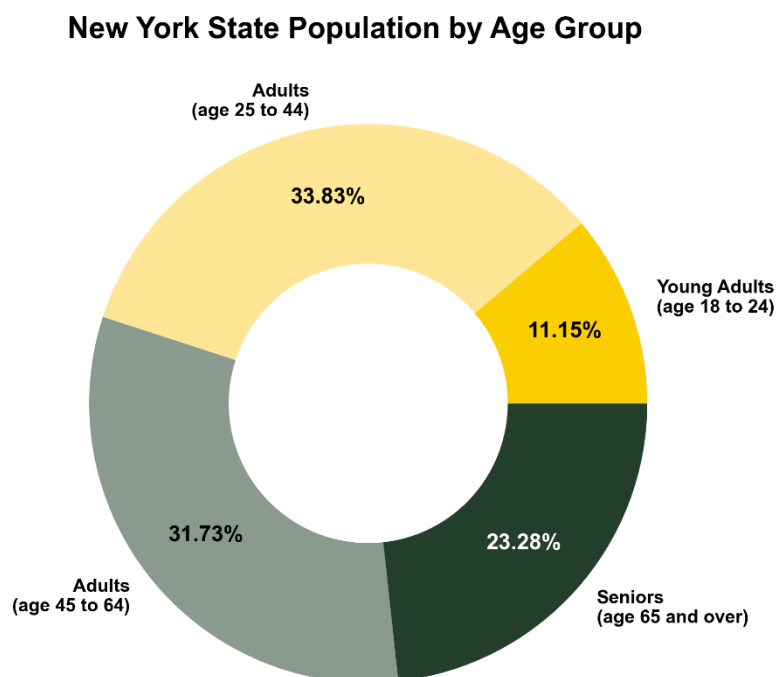
Figure 4.20 – New York State Population by Age Group (2023 ACS)

Figure 4.21 – Respondents by Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) (2024 PORS)

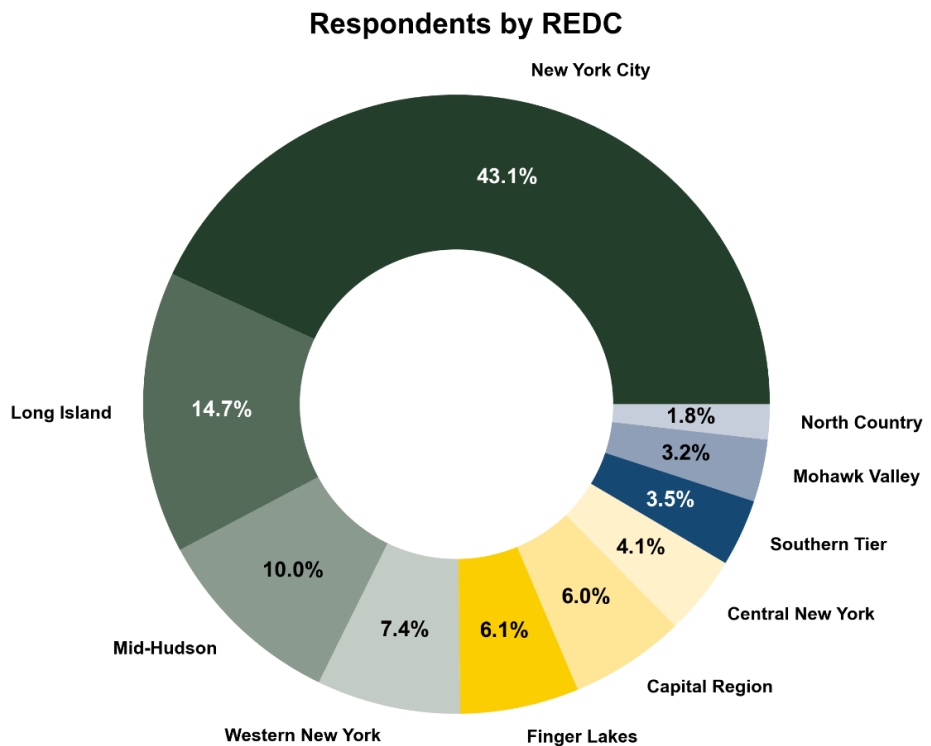
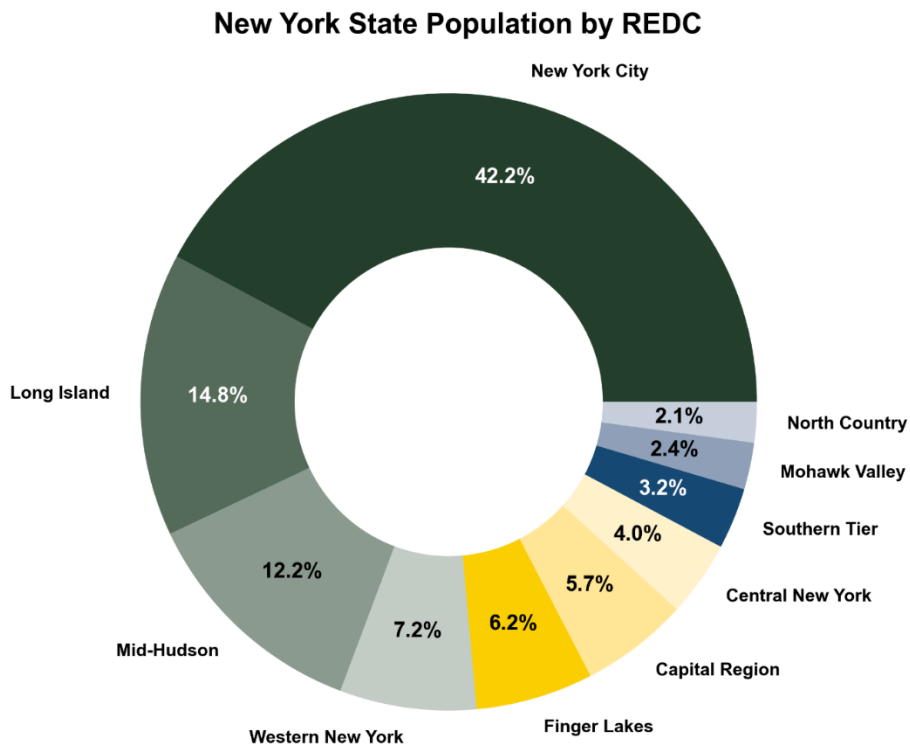


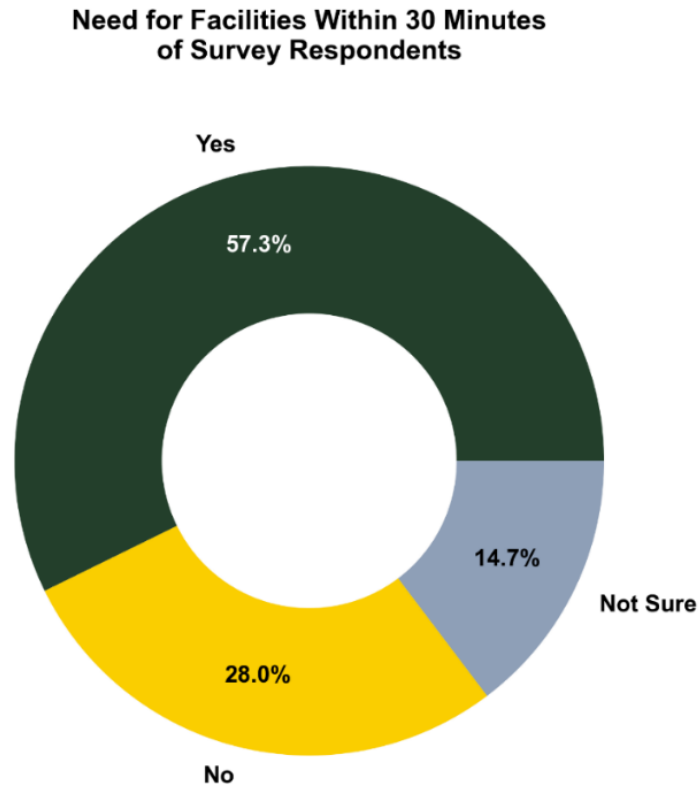
Figure 4.22 – New York State Population by Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) (2023 ACS)



Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Reported Facility Needs

The 2024 PORS asked survey participants if more recreation facilities were needed within 30 minutes of their home and the types of outdoor recreation facilities they felt were needed within that range. Figure 4.23 presents the responses to this question as a percentage of the respondents.

Figure 4.23 – Need for Outdoor Recreation Facilities within 30 Minutes of Survey Respondents (2024 PORS)



Respondents were also asked to select up to three facilities that were most needed within 30 minutes of their home. The top facilities identified as needed by NYS residents were *Picnic areas* (32%), *Swimming pools or beaches* (30%), *Trails* (27%), *Open space* (25%), and *Playgrounds* (24%) (Table 4.4). These selections align with the top five outdoor recreation activities that NYS residents reported participating in over the course of the last 12 months. More discussion on facilities needed by age group is provided in Chapter 5.

Table 4.4 – Percentage of New York State adult residents that selected a specific facility needed within 30 minutes of their home (2024 PORS).

Facility Type	Percentage of Respondents
Picnic Areas	32%
Swimming Pools or Beaches	30%
Trails	27%
Open Space	25%
Playgrounds	24%
Tennis or Pickleball Courts	17%
Ball Fields	12%
Boating and Other Water Access	11%
Winter Activities	10%
Disc Golf	6%
Other Court Games	4%

Participation Rates and Activity Days

Another use of the 2024 PORS is to rank the types of outdoor recreation activities that the general NYS population participates in. The top outdoor recreation activity remains *Park day use* with 85% of survey respondents participating in one day or more of the activity. *Park day use* includes relaxing in the park, playing croquet and other lawn games, picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas, gardens, historic sites/museums, carousels, community gardens, and dog parks.



Park Day Use

The next four top outdoor recreation activities for NYS residents were *Walking or Running* (80%), *Swimming* (61%), *Nature Interpretation* (50%), and *Court Games* (45%) as represented in Table 4.5. Activity descriptions may be found in the notes of Table 4.5 or in the 2024 PORS survey instrument in Appendix E.



Walking/Running



Nature Interpretation

Table 4.5 – Percentage of New York State adult residents that participated in at least one day of a specific activity within the last 12 months (2024 PORS).

Activity	Statewide Participation Rate
Park Day Use	85%
Walking/Running	80%
Swimming	61%
Nature Interpretation	50%
Court Games	45%
Biking	44%
Adventure Activities	42%
Field Games	36%
Boating	35%
Fishing	34%
Camping	32%
Golfing	30%
Off-Road Vehicles	29%
Winter Activities	28%
Downhill Skiing	17%
Hunting	14%
Snowmobiling	14%
Equine	13%

Note: The activity categories included the following activities:

Park Day Use: relaxing in the park, playing croquet and other lawn games, picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas, community gardens, historic sites/museums, carousels, and dog parks.

Walking/Running: includes walking for enjoyment/jogging/running/rollerblading (in-line skating) on paths and trails, and day hiking.

Swimming: includes outdoor swimming, in either a pool, lake, ocean or river; also includes surfing, spray pools, splash pads.

Nature Interpretation: includes bird watching and identification, tree and plant identification, and scenic viewing.

Court Games: includes basketball, handball, tennis, racquetball, pickleball, volleyball and similar sports.

Biking: includes use of bicycles for recreational purposes, whether on trails, established paths, off-road or on roads.

Adventure Activities: includes skateboarding, skateboard parks, technical skill courses (pump tracks), expert level mountain bike trails, ropes/adventure courses, rock climbing.

Field Games: includes baseball, football, soccer, field hockey, disc golf and other similar sports.

Boating: includes canoeing, kayaking, sailing, motorboating, row boating, paddle boarding, jet skiing, etc.

Fishing: includes salt and freshwater fishing from land or by boat, and ice fishing.

Camping: includes tenting, primitive, RV, cabins and backpacking/long distance hiking (multi-day activity, staying overnight), NOT hotel or lodge stays.

Golfing: includes either regulation 18 or 9-hole courses, par 3 courses, miniature golf, driving ranges, pitch and putt courses.

Off-Road Vehicles: includes ATVs, 4x4s, motorcycles.

Winter Activities: includes ice skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, ice hockey, ice biking and other miscellaneous local winter activities, but NOT ice fishing.

Downhill Skiing: also includes snowboarding, ski boarding, telemark, etc.

Hunting: includes big and small game.

Snowmobiling

Equine: includes equestrian activities, like dressage, show jumping, polo, trail riding, campsites.



Swimming



Court Games

The results of the 2024 PORS, along with U.S. Census data, were used to calculate the number of participation days for all 18 outdoor recreation activity types surveyed. The equations used and an explanation of the calculations are provided in Appendix E.

The number of participation days for all 18 activity types are presented in descending order in Table 4.6. The total number of participation days, for all outdoor recreation activities asked about in the 2024 PORS, total to nearly a billion participation days, statewide.

Table 4.6 – Outdoor Recreation Activity Participation Days (2024 PORS)

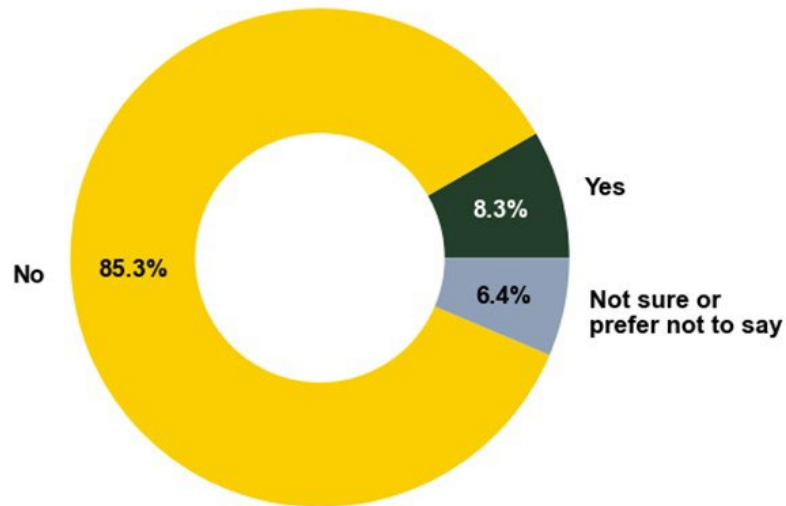
Activity	Participation Days
Walking/Running	356,675,435
Park Day Use	163,990,979
Swimming	88,434,420
Nature Interpretation	73,239,185
Biking	61,076,260
Court Games	51,689,035
Field Sports	28,402,819
Fishing	25,076,656
Boating	24,464,384
Camping	22,865,601
Adventure Activities	22,780,955
Golfing	20,269,586
Winter Activities	16,571,986
Off-Road Vehicles	12,062,591
Hunting	9,962,062
Downhill Skiing	8,795,466
Equine	6,413,898
Snowmobiling	5,450,863
Total	998,222,181

Accessibility and Accommodations

There is a historical lack of accessible recreational space and adaptive programming. As communities work to acknowledge the need for greater accessibility in outdoor recreational spaces and to advance adaptive recreation opportunities, greater numbers of people can enjoy the benefits of the outdoors. Respondents to the 2024 PORS were asked to identify if they have a disability that requires an accommodation while participating in outdoor recreation (Figure 4.24).

Figure 4.24 – Respondents by Disability that Requires an Accommodation to Participate in Outdoor Recreation (2024 PORS)

Do you have a disability that requires an accommodation while participating in outdoor recreation?



Respondents were then asked to identify the accommodation they need, or would like to see offered, to have greater access to the outdoors. Of the accommodations identified, mobility-related concerns represented the majority of responses. Respondents requested more even, paved, or hard-surfaced paths and trails, as well as benches at frequent intervals. Access to wheelchairs and/or scooters was a frequently mentioned accessibility equipment need.

A need for quieter spaces where people who are neurodivergent, have sensory challenges, and/or mental health concerns was also identified. With increasing efforts to provide outdoor opportunities such as meditation, yoga, forest bathing and “low stimulation” spaces or hours of operation, this need is better addressed.

Playgrounds that are universally accessible with adaptive playground features is another commonly seen request.

By assessing survey results to this question and its follow-up, recreation providers can enhance the outdoor recreation experience for all people by improving accessibility through accommodations.

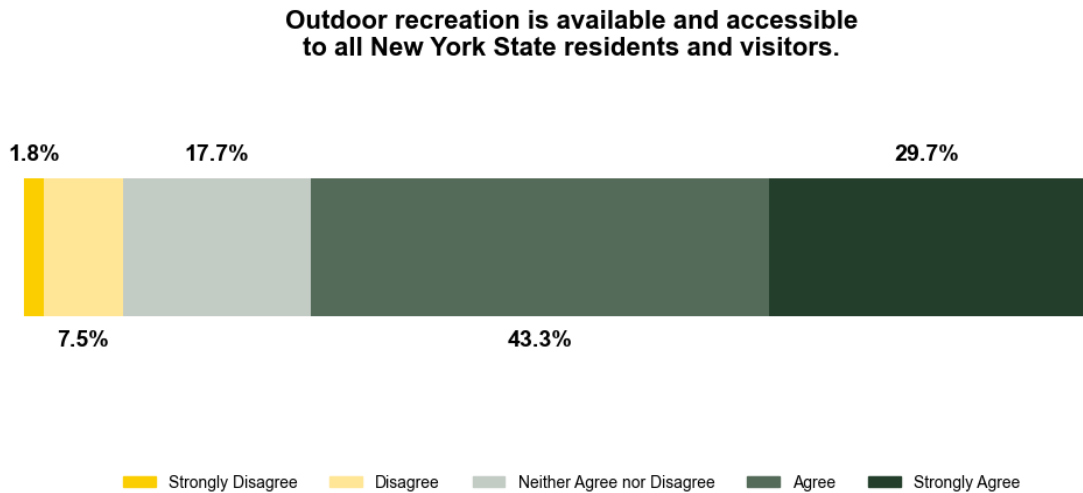
Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Key Attitudes

A new addition to the 2024 PORS included asking respondents about key attitudes surrounding their experience participating in outdoor recreation opportunities (Figures 4.25 – 4.29).

Most respondents (73%) reported outdoor recreation as available and accessible to NYS residents and visitors (Figure 4.25). 9.3% of respondents disagreed, which is similar to the percentage of respondents that require an accommodation to recreate (8.3%, Figure 4.24). Concerns about safety and equitable

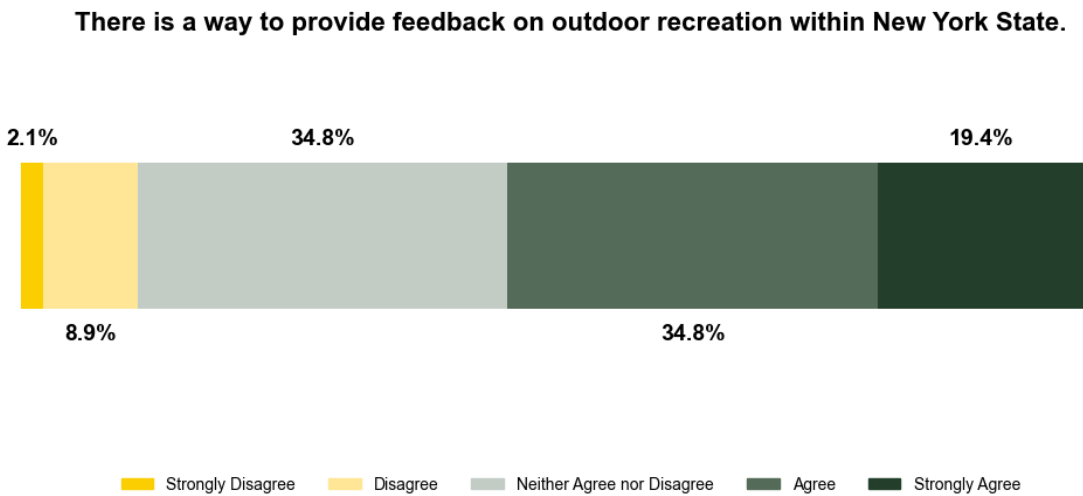
access, including accessible recreation opportunity for people with disabilities and health conditions, may be at the root of this key attitude.

Figure 4.25 – Key Attitude 1 (2024 PORS)



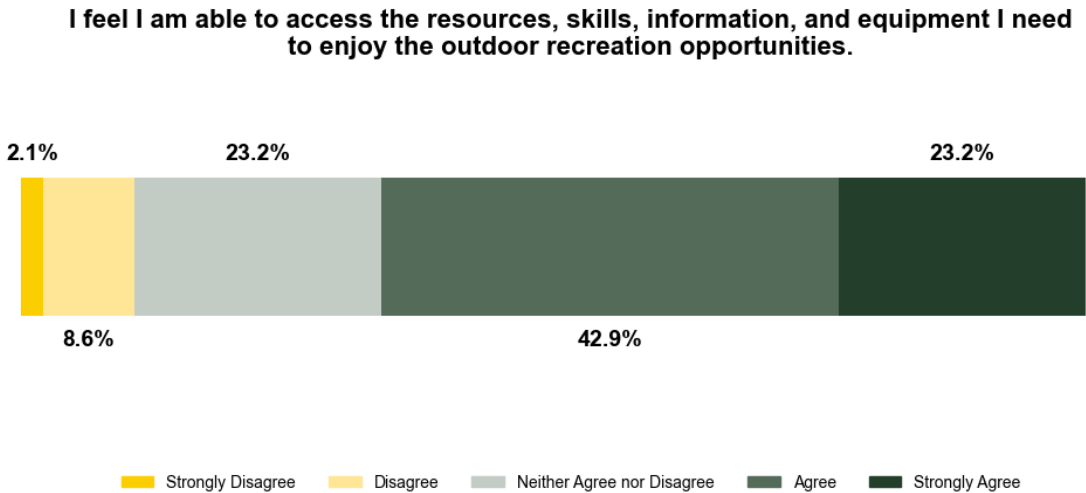
There is about an even split between respondents that are neutral or disagree with the ability to provide feedback on outdoor recreation and those that agree (Figure 4.26). Many recreation/outdoor areas do not have designated staff with whom to provide feedback. While other methods to provide feedback exist, they may be lesser known by the general public.

Figure 4.26 – Key Attitude 2 (2024 PORS)



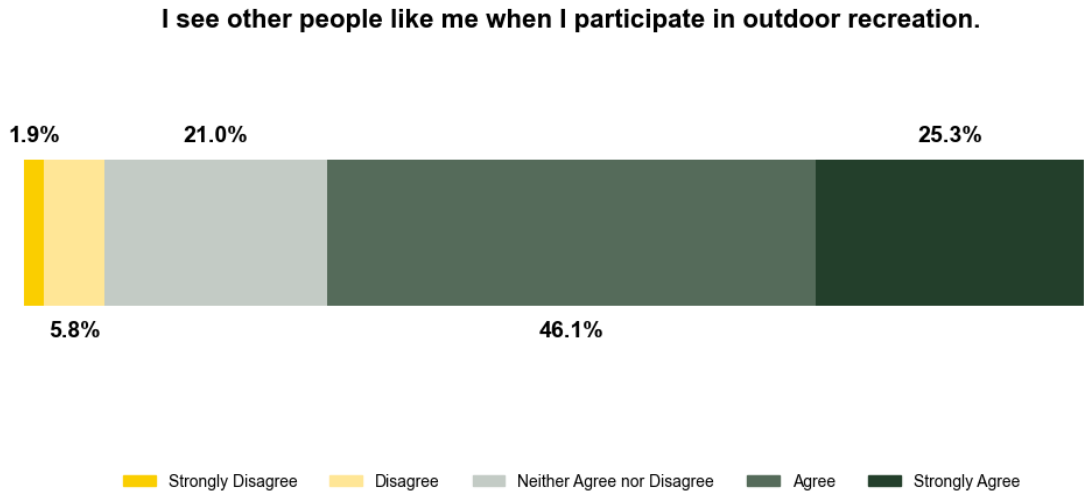
Over 65% of survey respondents feel they have access to the resources, skills, information and equipment necessary to enjoy outdoor recreation opportunities. 10.7% of respondents, however, report ‘Disagree’ or ‘Strongly Disagree,’ anecdotally attributing the inability to access opportunities because of a lack of transportation; lack of programming; lack of equipment, either personal or rental; and/or limited access due to personal disabilities or health concerns (Table 4.27).

Figure 4.27 – Key Attitude 3 (2024 PORS)



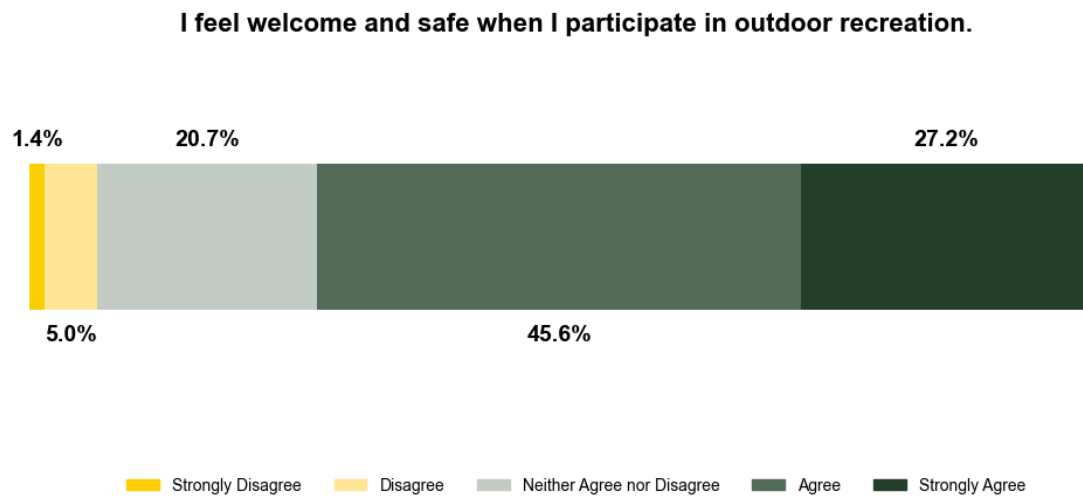
Most respondents (71.4%) agree that they see other people like them when recreating outdoors. For the 7.7% that disagreed, there are many factors that limit diverse populations from enjoying outdoor recreational spaces, including those mentioned in previous key attitudes (Figure 4.28). The geographical location, proximity to public transit, and travel cost will often limit who accesses the area.

Figure 4.28 – Key Attitude 4 (2024 PORS)



While the majority of survey participants felt welcome and safe (73%), there is a concern related to safety and a sense of welcome or belonging for 6.4% of respondents (Figure 4.29). Many parks and recreation areas are not staffed in a way that provides patron interaction, immediate medical assistance, or regular oversight of activities, which would all offer a sense of security.

Figure 4.29 – Key Attitude 5 (2024 PORS)



Recreation Supply

Recreation Facilities Inventory System

The Recreation Facilities Inventory System (RFIS) is an internal database that maintains facility information and types of activity offerings on several thousand (~7,800) Federal, State, County, City/Village, Town, non-profit, community, and school district operated recreational facilities. Privately and commercially operated recreation facility types have been retired from the database since they do not contribute to the public supply of outdoor recreation facilities.

The information in the database includes facility names, geographic information, operator type, and site acreage. The activity information includes types of activities offered and the quantity of specific amenity types at the facilities that contribute to its recreation capacity. The information maintained in the RFIS database contributes to evaluating the supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities by provider type and county.



Cabin



Marina



Nature Center

Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey

The RFIS goes through regular update cycles to keep the database current and useful for determining communities' recreational facility needs for different types of activities. A key tool in updating the RFIS is deploying the NYS Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey (ORFIS). The ORFIS was sent to the same group of Park Professionals as the PPS. The survey requested Park Professionals to update their facility/facilities information, including activities available and key recreational infrastructure on site. The complete ORFIS survey instrument can be referenced in Appendix E. An example of how the RFIS database contributes to evaluating the supply of recreation facilities, statewide, is provided in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 – Public Day Use Facilities in New York State by Provider

Provider	Facilities with Picnicking	%	Facilities with Tennis	%	Facilities with Basketball	%	Facilities with Playgrounds	%
State	474	25.3%	91	7.4%	123	7.2%	232	7.9%
County	270	14.4%	95	7.7%	69	4.1%	160	5.4%
City Or Village	529	28.3%	611	49.4%	1058	62.1%	1685	57.2%
Town	592	31.6%	438	35.4%	453	26.6%	868	29.5%
Federal	7	0.4%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	1872	100%	1237	100%	1703	100%	2946	100%
Provider	Facilities with Baseball	%	Facilities with Football	%	Facilities with Soccer, Rugby and Multi-Use Fields	%		
State	105	5.8%	66	20.0%	53	14.0%		
County	117	6.5%	51	15.5%	13	3.4%		
City or Village	892	49.5%	124	37.6%	141	37.3%		
Town	684	38.0%	89	27.0%	171	45.2%		
Federal	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		
Total	1801	100%	330	100%	378	100%		

Supply table exports from the RFIS similar to those that appeared in the 2020-2025 SCORP are available for reference in Appendix F to provide an overview of statewide supply in several different activity groups.

Interpreting Need

Relative Index of Need (RIN)

For 50 years, information from the PORS, RFIS, and U.S. Census have been transformed into an index called the ‘Relative Index of Need,’ otherwise known as the RIN. Select activities at the county-level are assigned a value on a scale from 1 to 10. A higher value on the index indicates a greater need for facilities to participate in a specific activity, and a lower value on the index indicates that participation levels were generally being met with current facility inventories. The index creates an easy reference to determine if a county is in high or low need for a given facility type.

The conceptual model for the RIN, however, is based entirely on the quantitative economic concepts of supply and demand, whereas more recent research attributes qualitative factors such as environmental justice, health, and psychology of the recreation consumer, as key influences on one’s decision to recreate and would produce a more relevant model.

Two key input issues with using the RIN model to determine modern-day recreation need include a need to update and diversify travel time data to account for higher travel speeds and various modes of transportation, and that the current RIN model does not allow geography to be broken into different categories of ‘urban status’ due to changes in how the 2020 U.S. Census defines an urban area.

For these reasons, the RIN mathematical model will be retired in 2027, and a new measure of need for recreation facilities will be released in an update to the 2025-2030 SCORP. The 2025-2030 SCORP will discuss recreation need qualitatively using responses to the PORS and PPS. The RIN table from the 2020-2025 SCORP is provided in Appendix F for reference as it is phased out of grant rating mechanisms.

County Need for Facilities

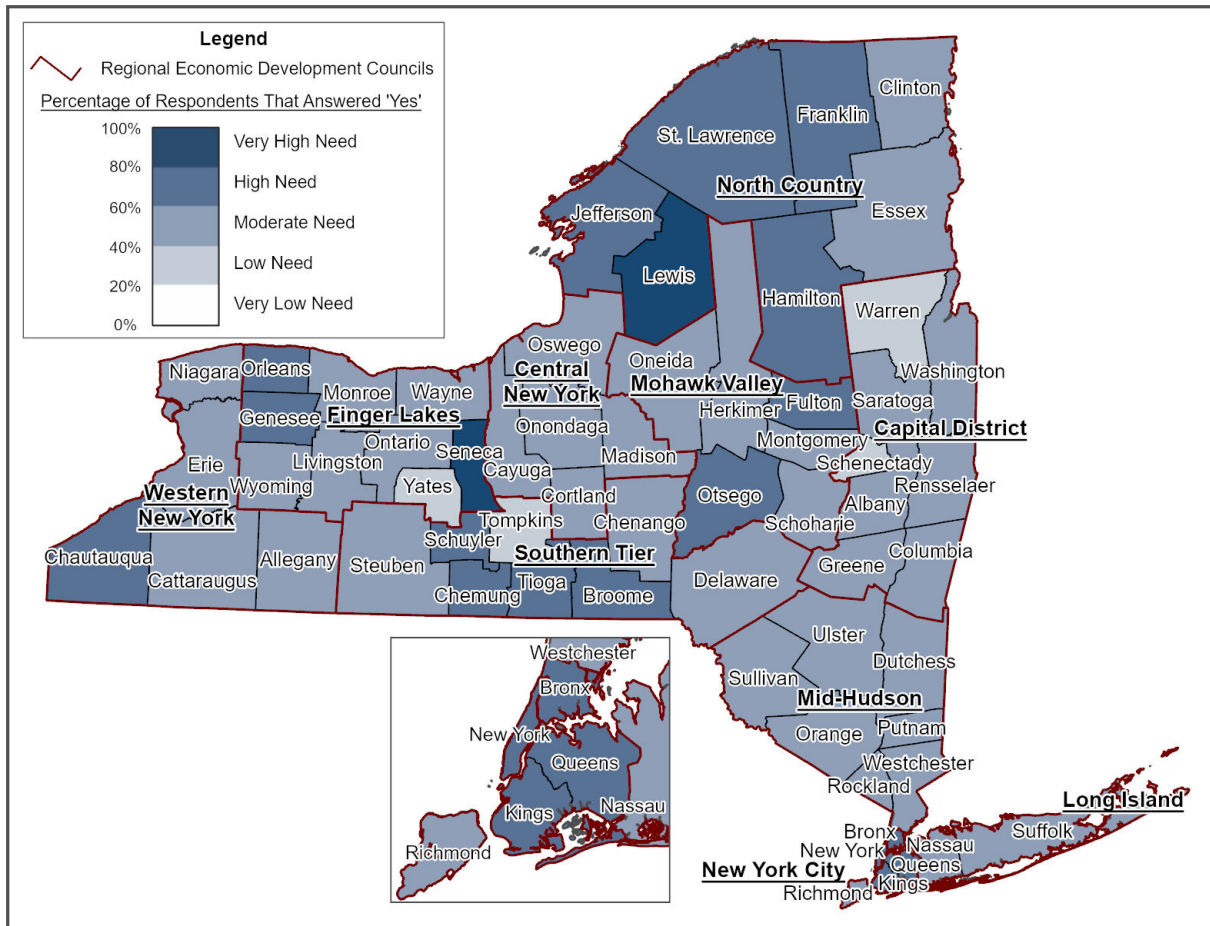
Responses to the need for facilities were grouped by county to calculate the percentage of respondents per county that answered ‘Yes’ to more facilities needed within 30 minutes of their home. Each NYS county was assigned as having ‘Very Low Need’, ‘Low Need’, ‘Moderate Need’, ‘High Need’, or ‘Very High Need’ to identify their level of need for local outdoor recreation facilities. These percentages and respective levels of need are provided in the legend of Figure 4.30.

As presented in Figure 4.30, most of the State has a moderate need for more local outdoor recreation facilities. The highest level of local outdoor recreation facility need exists in Lewis and Seneca counties. A high need has also been indicated in the North Country, Southern Tier, and New York City Regional Economic Development Council areas. A mix of high and moderate need can be noted in Western New York. The lowest need for more local outdoor recreation facilities is in Tompkins, Warren, and Yates counties. No counties indicated a very low need of local outdoor recreation facilities.

While the 2024 PORS responses alone can provide an interpretation of county-level facility need by the public, a comparison between the 2024 PORS and 2024 PPS responses is required to identify facility

need statewide. These two sources of reported facility need provide insight into alignment of available resources and perceived need for different types of recreation facilities across the State.

Figure 4.30 – Map of Level of Local Outdoor Recreation Facility Need Across New York State Counties



Statewide Need for Facilities

The PORS and PPS provide generalizable results from surveyed NYS residents and Park Professionals to inform recreation managers, policymakers, and the public, about the most requested recreational facilities, and the top activities that the public participates in statewide based on both popularity (percentage of the survey respondents who participate in a given activity at least once a year) and participation days (number of days the population participates in a given activity in one year). Comparing the results of these two surveys can deliver an interpretation of need, statewide. This interpretation serves as a bridge between retiring the RIN and the aforementioned 2027 update.

The relative need for facilities, statewide, was determined by considering the activities most frequently selected by the public; how popular these activities are; how often such activities were participated in by NYS residents in the last calendar year reported in the 2024 PORS; and Park Professionals' indication of facility needs in their communities reported in the 2024 PPS (Figures 4.2 – 4.6 and Tables 4.4 – 4.5). The comparisons and relative statewide need are summarized in Table 4.8.

The current supply of these activities and facilities is not considered since this assessment is based on current usage of and reported need for facilities indicated in both demand surveys. The majority of PORS respondents requested similar recreation facility categories to those they already participate in. The most commonly participated in activities were park day use and walking/running, corresponding with the top requested public recreation facilities of picnic areas, trails, open space, and playgrounds. Opportunities for swimming were also highly requested and popular.

It is notable that participation percentage in an activity does not necessarily correlate with the number of activity days that the public participated in a given activity. For example, 'Adventure Activities' was the 7th most popular activity by statewide participation percentage, but ranked 11th in statewide participation days, indicating that it is a popular activity, but does not have as frequent engagement. Conversely, fishing ranked 10th in popularity but 8th in participation days, suggesting more frequent participation among fewer respondents.

Comparing the PORS results to the PPS results, trails were the number one need according to Park Professionals and the third most requested facility by the public. Low-impact activity areas, such as picnic areas, open space, and playgrounds, were also highly requested by both surveyed groups. Winter activities were categorized as low need by both groups as well.

There is generally an alignment between the top public-requested activities and the Park Professionals' selection of facility need; however, some differences did emerge such as Park Professionals indicating a higher need for field sports as the fourth most selected need, while the public indicated field sports as their seventh most selected need. Boating and fishing access were also selected as needed by park professionals more often than the public.

Table 4.8 – Level of Facility Need Determined by Comparing Select Results of the 2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey and 2024 Park Professionals Survey (2024 PORS and 2024 PPS)

Facility Type	Statewide Need	Rank			
		Statewide Participation Percentage (Table 4.5)	Public Participation Days (Table 4.6)	Public Facility Need (Table 4.4)	Park Professionals Facility Need (Figures 4.2 – 4.6)
Park Day Use – Picnic Areas, Open Space, Playgrounds	HIGH	1	2	1, 4, 5	2
Trails – Walking, Running, Biking	HIGH	2	1	3	1
Swimming	HIGH	3	3	2	7, 10
Low-Impact Activity Areas, Nature Interpretation	HIGH	4	4	3	2
Court Games	HIGH/MEDIUM	5	6	6, 11	3
Adventure Activities	MEDIUM	7	11	N/A	N/A
Field Games	MEDIUM	8	7	7	4
Boating	MEDIUM	9	9	8	6
Fishing	MEDIUM	10	8	8	5
Camping	MEDIUM/LOW	11	10	N/A	8
Golfing	LOW	12	12	N/A	12
Off-Road Vehicles	LOW	13	14	N/A	N/A
Winter Activities	LOW	14	13	9	9
Downhill Skiing	LOW	15	16	9	14
Hunting	LOW	16	15	N/A	11
Snowmobiling	LOW	17	18	9	13
Equine	LOW	18	17	N/A	N/A

Note. Biking has been added to the Trails activity category. ‘N/A’ indicates missing categories in a survey question. The statewide need was based on available survey data and acceptable comparisons that could be made between the datasets.

Conclusion

The constant evolution of the State's population underscores the necessity for an iterative planning process, such as the SCORP, that is informed by relevant and recent data. By assessing changing recreational demands impacted by demographic shifts, recreation managers and policy makers can ensure that the State is providing adequate recreational resources that are most needed or requested by NYS residents and Park Professionals.



An Adaptive Kayak Launch at Green Lakes State Park, Central Region

CHAPTER 5 — TRENDS AND ISSUES

Introduction

Current events that influence public perception, experience, and opinion—such as climate change, economic factors, population changes, and shifts in cultural priorities and needs—are essential factors to consider when providing recreation at the state level. For the purposes of the SCORP, “trends” is used to refer to observable increases in a particular type of recreational activity, equipment or, more generally, the method by which the public is engaging with recreation spaces. “Issues” refers to challenges experienced by recreation providers and are described at both the national and state level in the pages that follow. A goal of holistic planning, and of the SCORP, is to analyze these factors to better adapt to new trends and issues and provide relevant and up-to-date recreational opportunities in the future.

Chapters 1-4 of this document describe the NYS outdoor recreation system—and the ecological context in which it exists—as it operates today as well as key findings from the public and recreation providers on recreational components needing improvement. The state specific context provided by these chapters helps lay the foundation for Chapter 5 and subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5 examines trends in—and potential barriers to—outdoor recreation. Exploring trends and issues is intended to contextualize participation in outdoor recreation and guide efforts to increase nationwide participation in outdoor recreation. This chapter also describes recent NYS initiatives designed to improve availability, access, and quality of parks and open spaces in the state and ultimately aims to identify the issues that will be addressed by the goals and recommended actions in Chapter 6.



Roberto Clemente State Park Swimming Pool, New York City Region

Trends in Outdoor Recreation Across the Nation

State parks across the country provide invaluable recreation opportunities for millions of people. Across the United States there are over 867 million visits to state parks annually, according to the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD).⁷¹ With over 250 facilities, New York is home to one of the most expansive state park systems in the country; visits to OPRHP facilities make a significant contribution toward the total number of visits to state parks nationwide, comprising close to 10% of total state park visits. In New York, attendance at OPRHP facilities has been increasing steadily for more than a decade. In 2023, NYS Parks welcomed more than 84.1 million visitors and, in 2024, visits to New York State Parks and Historic Sites rose to more than 88.3 million people.

Research conducted at the national level shows similar increases in participation. According to the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) 57.3% of all Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2023 and, for the first time ever, more than half of American women participated in outdoor recreation, reaching 51.9% (up 1.9% from 2022).⁷² Moderate increases in participation rates among Black (up from 9.4% in 2022 to 10.3% in 2023) and Hispanic (up from 12.6% in 2022 to 13.4% in 2023) outdoor recreation participants were also observed.⁷³ These increases, however promising, do not bring the participation rates up to the current composition of the U.S. population. More remains to be done to expand the breadth of facilities, programming, and accessibility to invite visitors of all backgrounds to parks and open spaces.

Activities

According to the Public Outdoor Recreation Survey (PORS), facilities needed statewide include picnic areas, swimming pools/beaches, trails, playgrounds, open spaces and tennis and pickleball courts. See Chapter 4, Table 4.1 for more detail. Nationally, similar trends have been observed by outdoor recreation providers across the country, including increased demand for pickleball courts and electric bicycles, and a growing interest in arts programming.

Pickleball

According to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), pickleball has been the fastest growing sport in the country for the past four years.⁷⁴ There were an estimated 19.8 million pickleball players in 2024 in the United States, according to the [SFIA Topline Participation Report for 2025](#), a 45.8% increase from 2023. Pickleball's "cross-generational appeal" is evidenced by the sports "versatility and its ability to bring together diverse groups of people."⁷⁵

One explanation for pickleball's newfound popularity is the low barrier to entry to purchase or rent equipment. Pickleball paddles start at around fifteen dollars per paddle and the wiffleball-like balls are about three dollars each.



A former tennis court is now used for Pickleball at James Baird State Park, Taconic Region

As the state's population ages, providing recreational opportunities with broad generational appeal will help meet identified recreation needs. Sports such as pickleball provide an excellent opportunity for inter-generational interactions, and the organized clubs and leagues that form around these activities offer an important "third place" where people can meet for healthy activities and socialization.

Courts are being added across the country to address pickleball's increased popularity yet demand for facilities is still high.⁷⁶ Recreation providers are working to meet demand by repurposing underutilized or deteriorated tennis courts and converting them to pickleball courts as an adaptive reuse strategy. Indoor pickleball courts have also opened across the state, particularly in New York City and other major population centers, including the Capital District and the upstate cities of Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester.

Electric Bikes (E-bikes)

Bicycles with electric assist, often referred to as electric bicycles or e-bikes, have been increasing in popularity in the U.S. over the past 5 years. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, in 2022 over one million e-bikes were sold in the U.S., a trend which is predicted to continue through 2030.⁷⁷ Though e-bikes have been in existence for close to 130 years, their recent increase in popularity coincides with advances in lithium-ion batteries which allow the bikes to be lighter, more efficient, and charge more quickly.⁷⁸ COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and a preference for commuting outdoors over taking public transportation further spurred the e-bike trend.⁷⁹

E-bikes help to expand the availability of casual bicycling, or biking. According to a literature review prepared for the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), e-bikes have "potential to support independent mobility for older populations or those with otherwise limited physical ability, enabling bicycle transportation to be feasible for more people".⁸⁰ E-bikes, therefore, can play an important role in expanding access to the outdoors.

Regulating e-bikes in outdoor recreation spaces has proven challenging. Bike technology, lack of information or confusing signage can often leave e-bike users unsure as to when, where, and what types of e-bike use is permitted. The capability for higher speeds can also result in conflicts between trail users. At OPRHP facilities, class 1 and 2 electric bicycles are permitted on park roads with speed limits of 30 mph or less and on most paved and improved trails, paths, and on boardwalks. E-bikes are not currently permitted on unimproved natural surface trails and may be further restricted in certain locations. As the technology develops, and e-bikes become more prevalent, clear regulations, signage, and considerate use can help to ensure safety and prevent conflicts between user groups.

Arts Programming

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) notes that a recent trend in recreation is the proliferation of arts programming in parks. As business leaders, developers, and civic leaders across the country are realizing, community centered art can play a remarkable role in creating a sense of place and revitalizing downtowns, trails and parks.

In 2024, during the NYS Parks Centennial Celebration, poetry was installed in several facilities throughout the Taconic State Park Region, including FDR State Park, Lake Taghkanic State Park, and Clermont State Historic Site. Through a partnership with the Poetry Society of America, poems were affixed to buildings using vinyl lettering. The selected poems evoke a sense of connection between patrons and the beauty found at NYS parks and historic sites. The inaugural year featured curated

works by notable New York State poets as well as the 24th Poet Laureate of the United States, Ada Limon, whose words appear at Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park.



Poetry in the Parks, seen at Lake Taghkanic State Park, Taconic Region

Technology

Parks and open spaces provide an opportunity to disconnect from computers, cell phones and other devices, and to reconnect with nature. At the same time, the use of technology is increasing, both by recreation providers and recreationists, to improve the visitor experience and enhance the safety of adventurers into the outdoors. Some examples of technologies used in outdoor recreation include:

- **Monitoring systems** – Security cameras, license plate recognition systems, and other monitoring technologies are increasingly being used in parks. A survey conducted by the NRPA during the summer of 2024 indicated wide support for the use of monitoring technologies like cameras, counters, and/or visitors' cellphones to prevent and lower crime in park and recreation spaces, understand how people are using park and recreation spaces and improve access for all community members.⁸¹
- **Automated Counting Technologies** – Automated counting devices can be used for a broad range of applications, including collecting visitation numbers, planning and design, management and operations, economic impact, and equity.⁸² Devices that monitor facility use include “beacon counters,” which use inexpensive blue-tooth technology to detect a person’s presence via their cell phone signal. The devices can be mounted indoors or

outdoors, at strategic locations including poles, signs, trees, or on walls and light fixtures. Infrared trail cameras are another way to count trail users.

- Drones – For Park Managers, drones can aid in ensuring patron and staff safety. At parks and cultural, historic, or archeological sites, drones are used for monitoring usage, wildfire management, search-and-rescue, public safety, security, and environmental assessment. Drones provide aerial images of sites and structures for assessment when human access is deemed unsafe.
- Wi-Fi – Park Managers are seeing an increase in requests for Wi-Fi at parks, campsites and other recreation areas. Wi-Fi can be essential for wayfinding and for those looking to work remotely, get in touch with family or friends, especially in areas where cellphone network connectivity is limited.
- Mobile Apps – Used to find outdoor recreation opportunities, wayfinding, bird and plant identification, stargazing, reservations, weather forecast, geocaching, and more.



Barcelona Lighthouse, overlooking Lake Erie, Allegany Region

National Issues

Although the SCORP is a document designed by and for NYS, the state of outdoor recreation is affected by national and global trends and events. According to the NPRA's [“Top Trends in Parks and](#)

Recreation 2025,” climate change and the “loneliness epidemic” are two of the most pressing modern concerns. The U.S. Census Bureau has also made note of a nationwide declining birthrate, indicating future demographic changes. These factors have great implications for the operations and management and the viability of outdoor recreation in the future.

Climate Change

Climate change is affecting parks across the country, regardless of geographic region or climate zone. Extreme weather events such as wildfires, droughts, heat waves, windstorms, floods, hurricanes, and torrential rains, pose a threat to critical infrastructure and open spaces. Extreme weather events necessitate a more comprehensive approach to planning and budgeting for climate change preparedness.⁸³ Whether at the state or municipal level, governmental agencies are increasingly incorporating climate change planning and mitigation strategies into day-to-day operations to create a more resilient and adaptable park system.

Loneliness Epidemic

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated a trend that was already observable in 2019: more and more Americans are experiencing loneliness and isolation due to a lack of social connection and more time spent online.⁸⁴ NRPA highlights parks and other recreation spaces as well-positioned to help combat the loneliness epidemic. Free or low-cost park programming can be designed to be relevant for a broad range of audiences and therefore provide an essential “third space” for social interaction.

Birthrate Decline

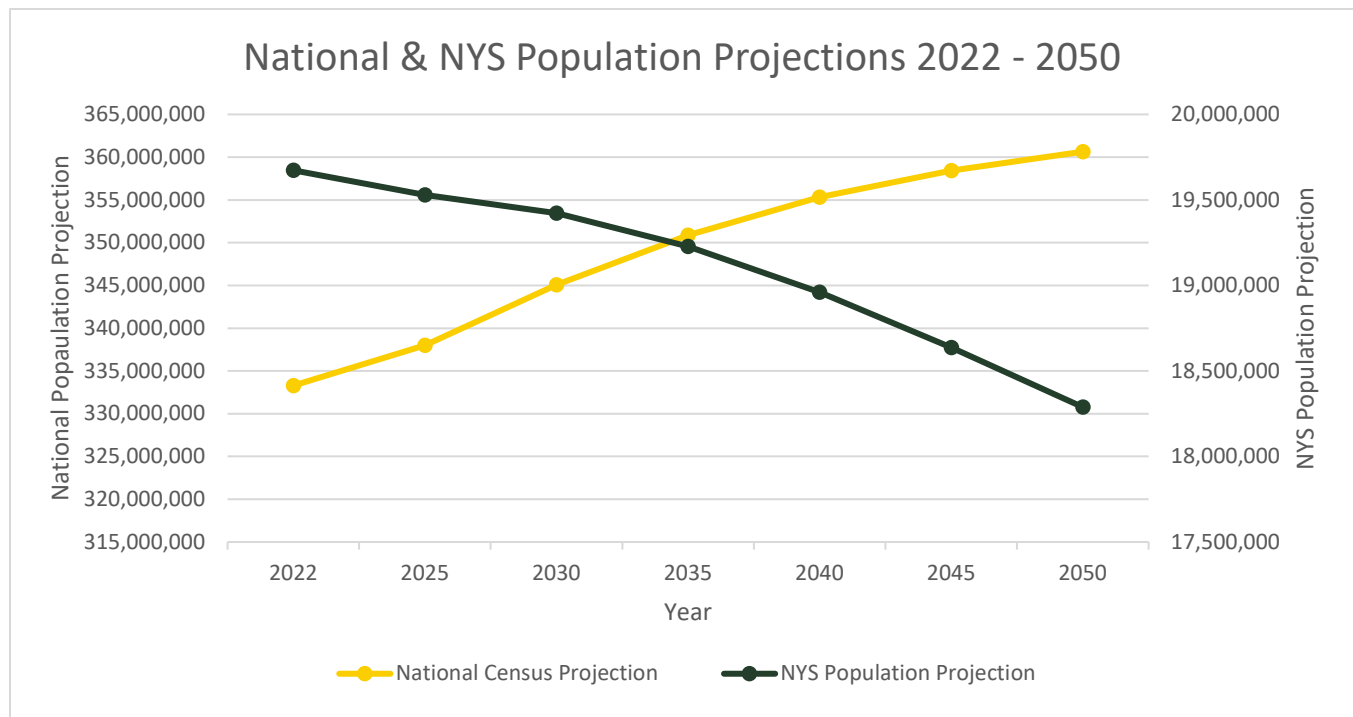
In 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau published its **first-ever report on the “Childless Older Adult Population”**. More adults are abstaining from having children. Data show that nearly 16.5% of adults aged 55 and older are childless and that this number is expected to increase. According to the Pew Research Center in 2023, 47% of adults under 50 said “they’re unlikely to ever have kids”.⁸⁵ The shift of this peak will present challenges to outdoor recreation providers to cater to an aging population. In 2022, the average age of NYS residents was 35.9. The average age is projected to rise to as high as 44 by 2050.⁸⁶

New York Population Composition: Present and Future

With an estimated 19.8 million residents, New York is the fourth most populated state in the country.⁸⁷ The total population is projected to total 20.6 million in 2030, a 5% increase.⁸⁸ However, the NYS population is estimated to have decreased by about 630,000 residents between 2020 and 2023 due to movement to other states and a slower natural increase (births minus deaths) in population.

Since 2020, the State’s high amount of domestic out-migration has resulted in a declining rate of population growth in all economic regions except for the Capital Region. It is important to keep in mind that this period encompasses the COVID-19 pandemic, which inflates the number of deaths, decreases the number of births, and showcases out-flow migration from urban centers such as New York City. Population growth rates for New York, along with the rest of the country, are projected to continue decreasing (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 – New York State and U.S. Total Population Projections



Regional Migration Patterns

Counties with urban centers of more than 100,000 people experienced the highest population growth in NYS between 2010-2020. That trend reversed, however, between 2020 and 2022. Five of the six cities in NYS with over 100,000 people decreased in population: Buffalo (-0.7%), Rochester (-0.9%), Yonkers (-1.6%), Syracuse (-2.8%), and New York City (-5.3%). Albany was the exception, growing by 1.6%.⁸⁹

NYS counties that are suburban or with smaller urban centers, such as Orange and Tompkins counties, experienced population growth between 2020-2022 ([USA Facts](#)). Even though the populations of four of six cities with over 100,000 people in NYS are declining, their rates of decline are lower than the State's overall population loss rate of 2.6%.

The decrease in New York City's population between April 2020 and July 2022 was largely due to the high number of domestic out-migration and COVID-19 pandemic deaths.⁹⁰ The Capital Region was the only area of NYS to have experienced an overall increase (0.4%) in population during the same timeframe. The Capital Region, Long Island, and Mid-Hudson areas experienced population gains until 2020, whereas populations in Central New York, Mohawk Valley, North Country, and Southern Tier have been declining.

These trends signal that the NYS population is moving from cities to towns and suburbs. One reason for these migrations may be that less dense areas are closer to natural open areas. Other factors to consider for this migration pattern are remote work opportunities and the cost of living.

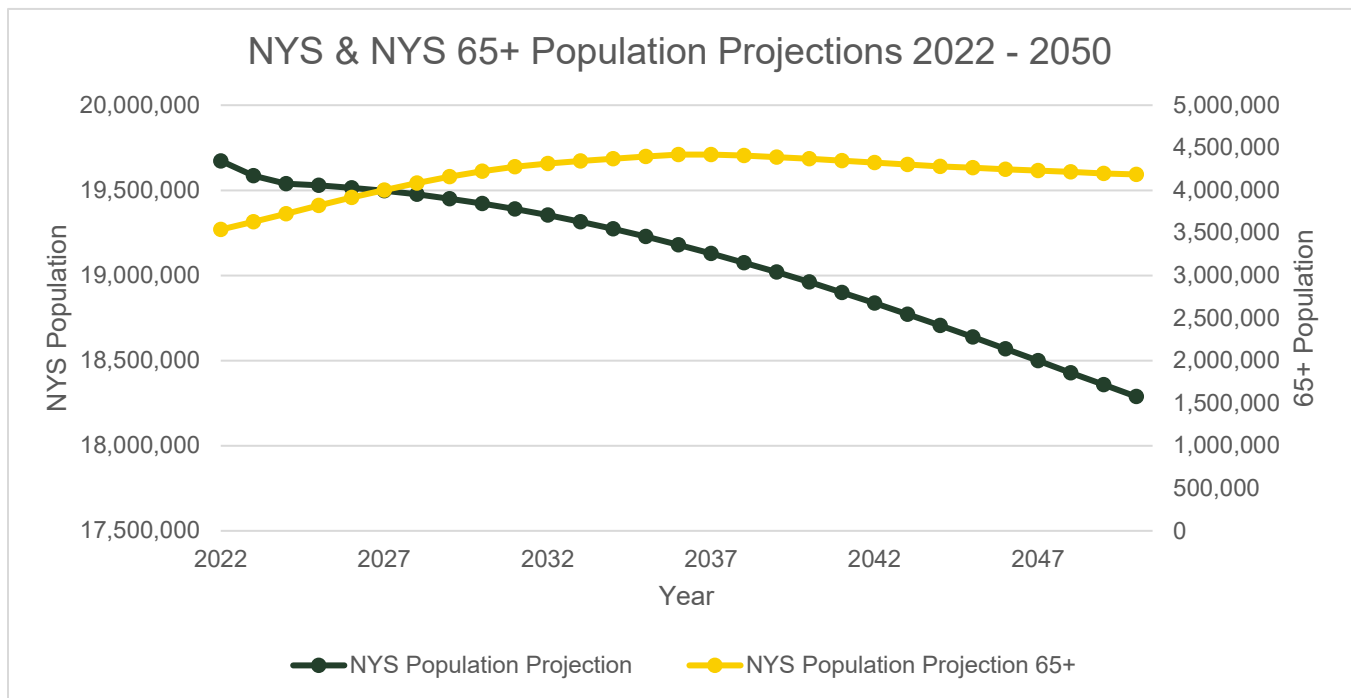
General Demography

Aging Population

The 2030s are expected to be a transformative time for the make-up of the NYS population. An increasing elderly population will emerge, a result of both longer life expectancy and, most significantly, the aging of the baby boomer generation (those born from 1946 to 1964). By 2030, all people in the baby boomer generation will be over the age of 65. The rising senior population means that by 2030, the number of residents over the age of 65 is projected to increase by 30% when compared to the total percentage of seniors that comprise the current population.⁹¹

Figure 5.2 displays the senior population increase expected, with the peak occurring in 2035, compared to the NYS population projection. The older adult population distribution in 2020 is typical when compared to the rest of the United States.⁹² The most notable part of the distribution is the aging of the baby boomers, currently 60 to 78 years old.

Figure 5.2 – New York State Population Projection Age 65 +



Although the State's total population will increase only slightly over the projected period, the percentage of seniors is increasing at a greater rate. According to the [U.S. Census](#), by 2030, adults over age 65 will exceed the number of children in NYS. This will have a dramatic effect on the quantity and types of outdoor recreation taking place statewide.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

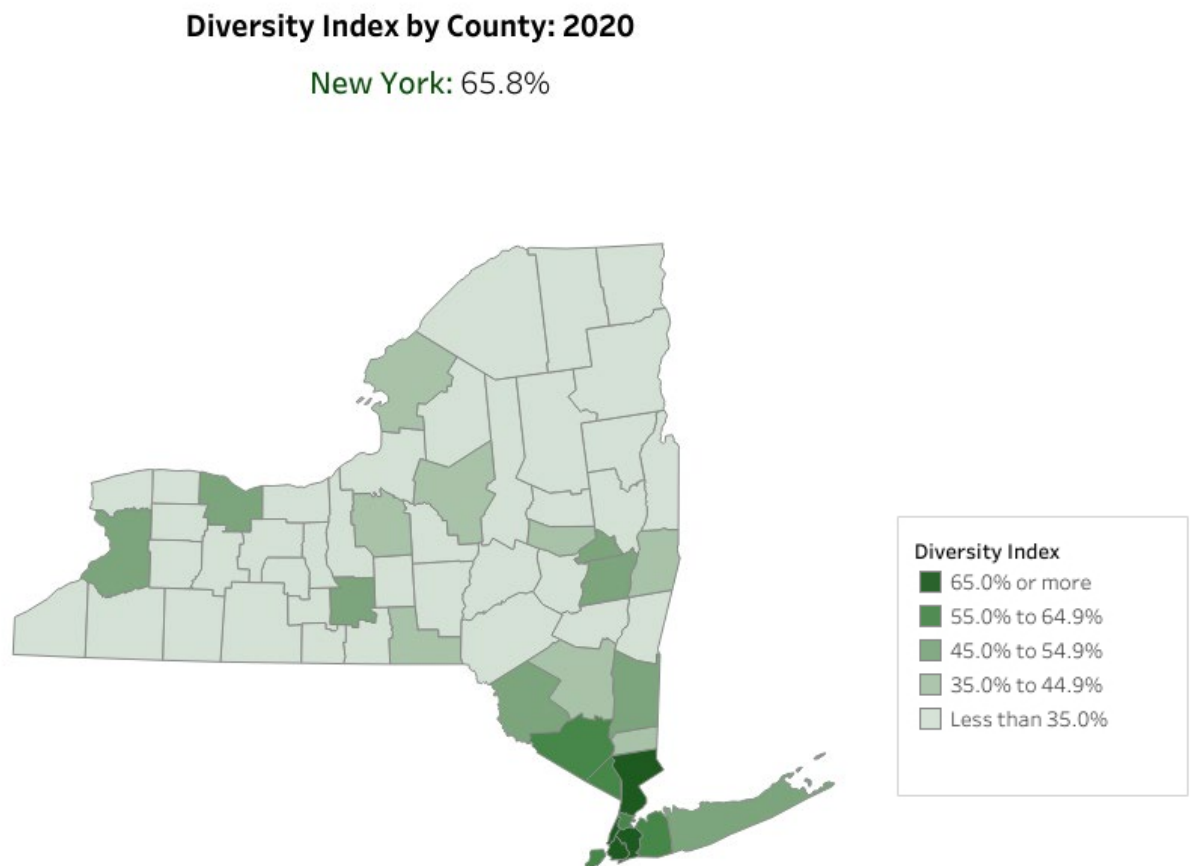
While the largest racial or ethnic group in NYS continues to be White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, the State's population is expected to become more ethnically and racially diverse. Currently, NYS ranks as the eighth most diverse state when measuring the racial and ethnic diversity index, meaning the chance that two people chosen at random from the population will statistically be from different

racial and ethnic groups (Figure 5.3). At the NYS county level, Queens County (27.8%) and Bronx County (54.8%) have Hispanic or Latino as their largest racial or ethnic group.

In the rest of NYS, the second largest racial group reflects the growing diversity of the State. The second largest racial or ethnic group is Hispanic or Latino in 24 counties, two or more races, not Hispanic or Latino in 23 counties, Black or African American alone, not Hispanic or Latino in 12 counties, Asian alone, not Hispanic or Latino in two counties, and American Indian and Alaska Native alone, not Hispanic or Latino in one county.⁹³

The geographic distribution and demographic changes in the State's population, more than the change in total population, will have the greatest impact on recreation patterns. Growing diversity will lead to observable impacts on recreational need.

Figure 5.3 – Racial and Ethnic Diversity Index of New York State. Exported from the U.S. Census Bureau.



Trends in Providing Recreation in New York

Participants of public surveys (PORS and Pulse of the Parks) have indicated that while they appreciate having access to open, public green space, they would like to see greater capital investments applied to aging infrastructure within the parks system. Overall, Park Professionals and patrons have indicated statewide need for different types of facilities with great emphasis placed on a need for blue space.

Youth and Outdoor Recreation

Over time, social media use has grown in popularity among Americans⁹⁴, and particularly with American youth. While there is no conclusive or comprehensive definition for what “social media” entails⁹⁵, there is still an observable uptick in teen online usage. According to the American Psychological Association, teenagers spend almost five hours online daily⁹⁶. Of the teenagers with the highest online use, 41% “rate their overall mental health as poor.” Efforts to engage younger people in outdoor recreation are key in combatting this issue. As explained in Chapter 1, a key benefit of outdoor recreation is the ability to interact with other people in face-to-face interaction.

OPRHP joins with other partners in accepting the National Park Service’s Every Kid Outdoors pass. Established in 2015, this program grants fourth graders and their families free access to over 2,000 federal lands and waters. This is one of several State initiatives to encourage youth to visit state parks, historic sites, and public lands. In NYS, the Governor initiated the Get Offline, Get Outside campaign and the Unplug and Play initiative, both of which aim to get more New Yorkers, particularly families with children, engaged in activities that do not involve social media.



A tour boat in the Niagara River at Whirlpool State Park, Niagara Region

Changes in Types of Participation

According to a 2024 report on outdoor recreation trends by the Outdoor Industry Association, participation in outdoor recreation has been on the rise; this does not mean, however, that people are going outside more. Total outdoor outings have increased, but the average number of outings an individual experiences has decreased. This means that more people are participating in outdoor recreation than ever recorded, but they are going out less than before. Americans are more likely to participate in outdoor recreation than they are to see a movie in theaters. The report also noted that the outdoor recreation base is more diverse than ever. People of multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds are recreating more now than in 2020.

This larger participation base that recreates with lower frequency has been named the “casual outdoor participant,” in contrast to the “core participant”, people who frequently spend time recreating outdoors. Most casual participants are motivated to get outdoors to “spend time with friends, build community, boost mental health, connect with nature, and have awe-inspiring experiences (especially shareable ones).”⁹⁷ These casual participants are also “not interested in high tech gear, perfecting outdoor skill sets, winning races” or “setting speed records.”⁹⁸ This type of participant is also more likely to be younger than 24 or older than 55.



Walkway over the Hudson, Poughkeepsie, Taconic Region

Trends in Facility Needs

The five outdoor recreation activities with the highest number of participation days—Walking/Running, Park Day Use, Swimming, Nature Interpretation, and Biking—correlate with the five most needed facility types as reported by PORS respondents. Though the order differs slightly, the top five needed facilities are the same across all four age groups asked.

Table 5.1 - Most requested facility types by age group

Rank	Young Adults (18-24)	Adults (25-44)	Older Adults (45-64)	Seniors (65 and older)
1	Swimming	Swimming	Picnic	Picnic
2	Picnic	Picnic	Trails	Trails
3	Open Space	Playgrounds	Swimming	Open Space
4	Playgrounds	Trails	Open Space	Swimming
5	Trails	Open Space	Playgrounds	Playgrounds

These activities, which, for the most part, do not require specialized training or equipment, have a low barrier to entry and are largely accessible to the public. They are also mostly low-impact activities, which speaks to their broad appeal across age groups. This state level trend toward low-impact recreation activities with minimal gear requirements can also be seen at the national level.

Figure 5.4 – Facility Types Reported as Needed by Young Adults

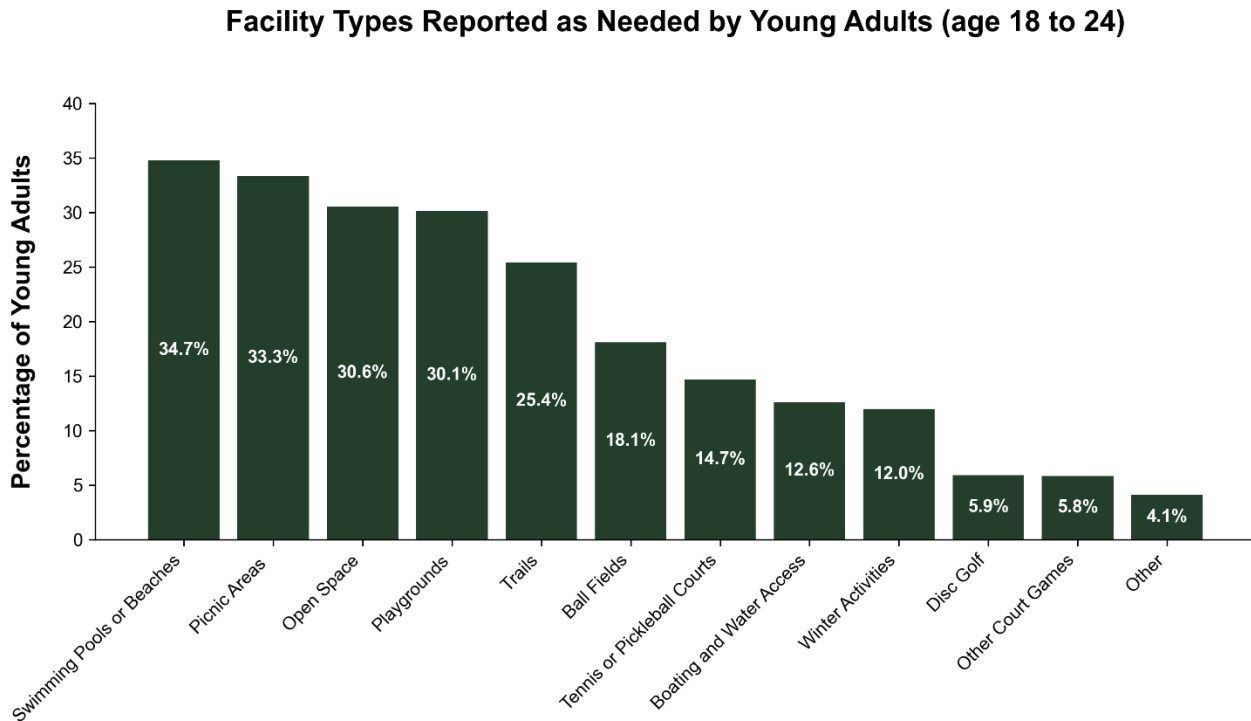


Figure 5.5 – Facility Types Reported as Needed by Adults

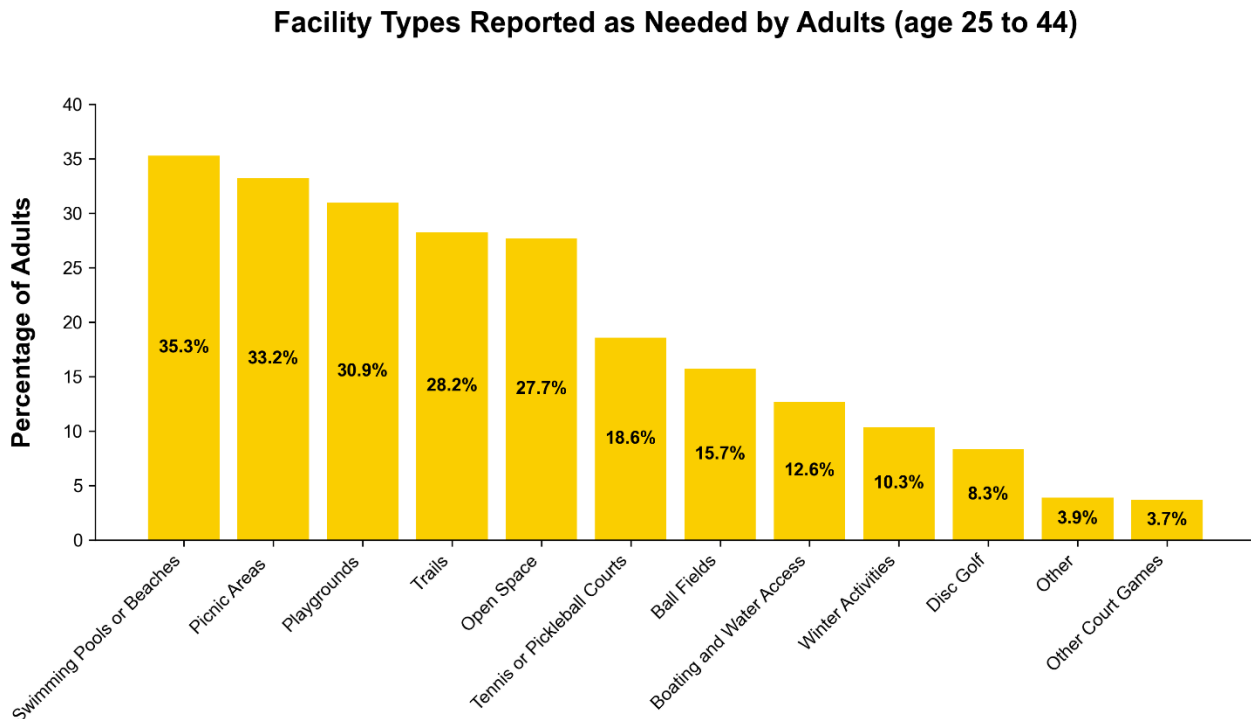


Figure 5.6 – Facility Types Reported as Needed by Older Adults

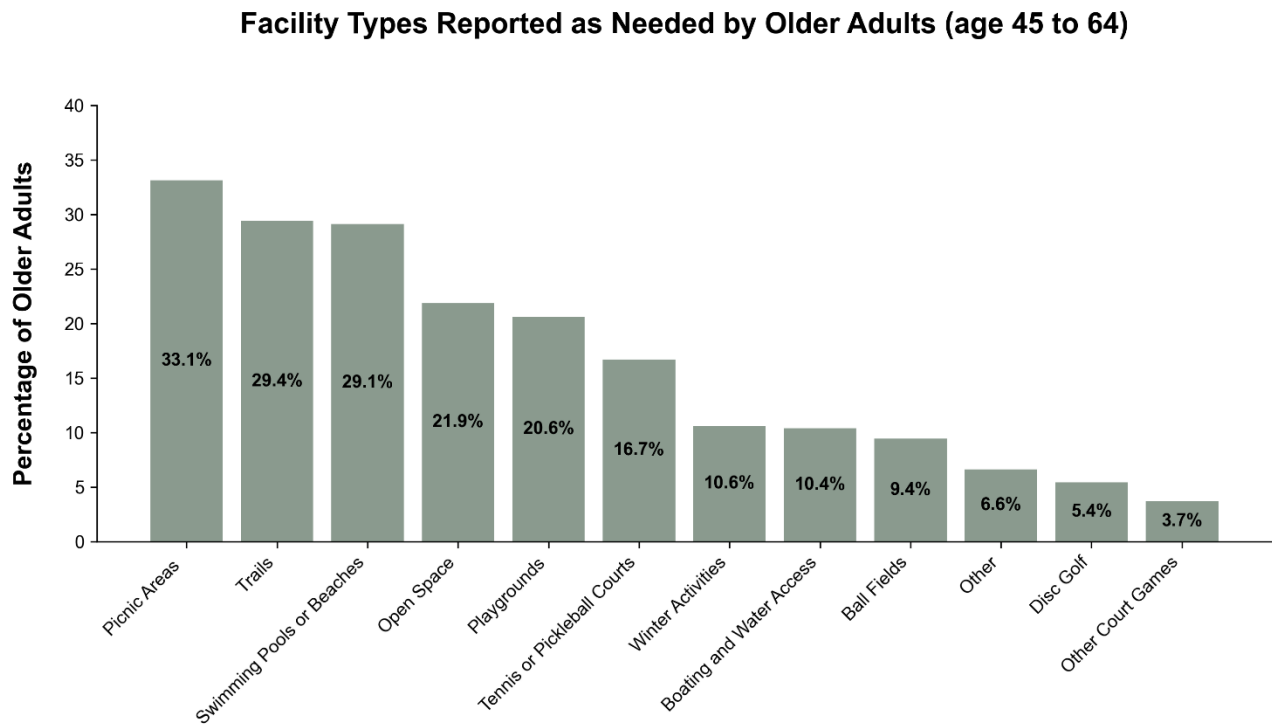
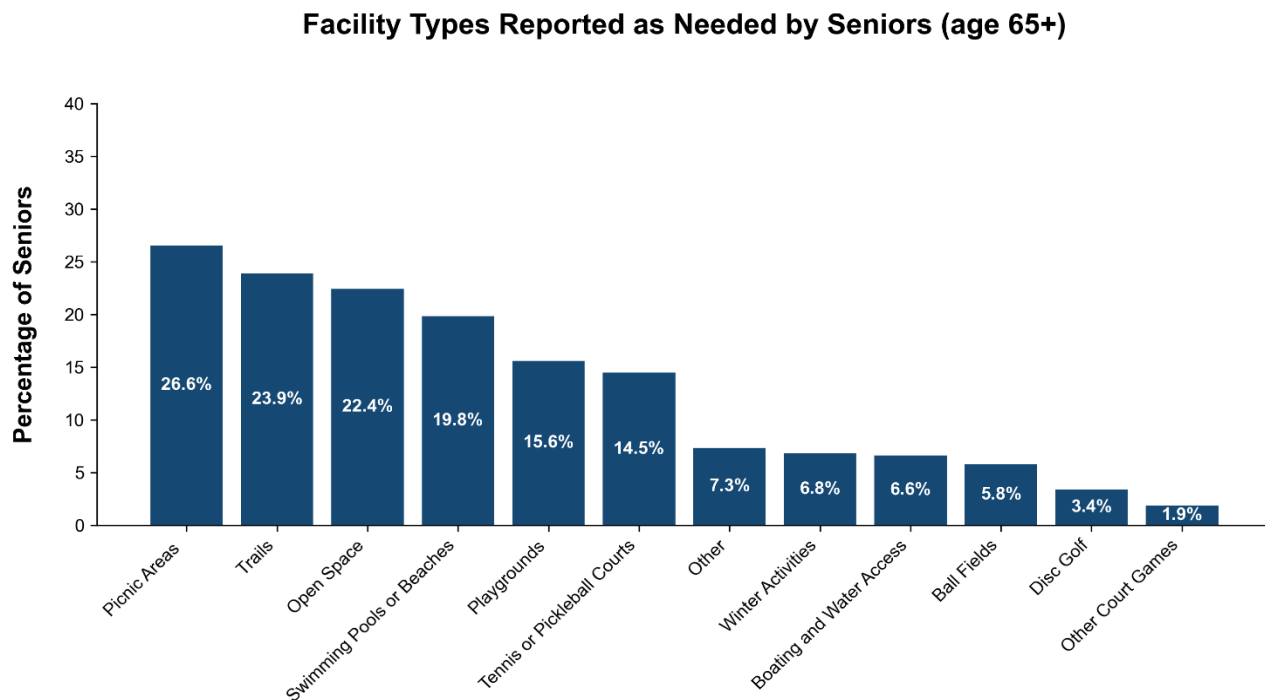


Figure 5.7 – Facility Types Reported as Needed by Seniors



Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

While there is a great desire to participate in outdoor recreation, as shown by the PORS, socioeconomic and climate factors prevent many from doing so. For the SCORP, “barriers to outdoor recreation” refers to obstacles to participation in outdoor recreation reported by PORS participants. These barriers include, but are not limited to, financial constraints, transportation, and work-life balance.

For young adults (age 18-24), the most common barrier to outdoor recreation is that work, housework, or school takes up too much of their time (40.4%). The second most prevalent barrier is lack of money or transportation (38.4%). For adults (age 25-44), work, housework, or school remains the top barrier. Changing weather patterns are the second most common barrier (32.9%) reported by adults, closely followed by lack of money or transportation (32.6%).

For older adults (45 to 64), health or physical limitations are the top barrier to outdoor recreation (32.4%). The second most frequently reported barrier is lack of money or transportation (27.1%). Health or physical limitations remain the top barrier for seniors (age 65+) (45.1%). The second most frequent response for those 65+ was, “Nothing, I participate in as much outdoor recreation as I wish” (22.6%).

Cost

For three of four age groups (Young Adults, Adults, and Older Adults), PORS respondents reported money or transportation as one of the most frequently experienced barriers (within the top 3 most experienced barriers). Even at low-cost facilities,

like state parks, many activities require specialized equipment or training to participate. Snowmobiling and downhill skiing, for example, are expensive sports that present a high barrier to entry. For a backpacking trip, the cost of gear—hiking boots, backpack, tents, sleeping bag, raincoat, etc.—adds up quickly. While discount versions and used gear may be available, a cheaply made tent may not withstand the elements, potentially leading to a negative experience which may deter the recreationist from further pursuing an interest in hiking or camping.⁹⁹

A study conducted by the Aspen Institute found that the high cost associated with youth sports, from soccer to ice hockey, has led to a decline in the number of children participating in sports—in 2018, only 38% of kids aged 6 to 12 routinely participate in team sports.¹⁰⁰ Though the rising cost of living is

BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

The PORS included nine different barrier categories for participants to select:

- Work, School or Housework
- Money or Transportation
- Changing Weather Patterns
- Too Few Recreational Facilities
- Health or physical limitations
- Preference for Indoor Activities
- Disability
- Other
- None



Swimming hole at Robert Treman State Park, Finger Lakes Region

factor largely outside the control of outdoor recreation professionals, the cost of programs and activities can be taken into consideration when planning outdoor recreation space to ensure outdoor recreation experiences are affordable to all.



Biking at Buffalo Harbor State Park, Niagara Region

Transportation

57% of respondents to the 2024 PORs believe there is a need for outdoor recreation facilities within 30 minutes of where they live. This indicates a dearth of accessible and walkable outdoor recreation opportunities in the area. Most adults today believe 20 minutes is an acceptable distance to walk to a destination but do not want to walk beyond that.¹⁰¹ For outdoor recreation further than that, alternate modes of transportation are necessary. This generally includes both mass transit and privately owned vehicles, but many larger outdoor recreation facilities with open space are not accessible by public transportation. This

lack of access by public transit necessitates access to a car, which is not affordable or a viable option for everyone.

Younger Americans are also driving less since the start of COVID-19.¹⁰² Young adults are observed to not only have less access to personal vehicles but also less interest in owning them.¹⁰³ This trend has been attributed to the rising cost of auto insurance and car maintenance, as well as growing interest in environmental protection. This could change as electric vehicles become more accessible to the public.

As the State's population continues to migrate to suburban counties, there will be an increasing need to provide access to green space and opportunities for safe, accessible outdoor activities. OPRHP is working to meet these needs through transportation programs such as the [Adventure Bus in Buffalo](#) and [Nature Bus in Albany](#), which provide weekly bus transportation to recreation facilities that would normally require a car for access.

Health and Physical Limitations

As people live longer lives, and as the statewide average age increases, it is increasingly important that the outdoor recreation needs of an aging population are met. In many communities, however, some barriers prevent older people from recreating. Access to open space, picnic areas, swimming pools or beaches, and trails are the most common responses for "type of new outdoor recreation facilities most needed within 30 minutes of your home" for 2024 PORs survey respondents 65 and older.

By 2030 all baby boomers will be in the 65+ age group. For recreation providers, this means a trend away from activities typically associated with youth: team sports, court games, and other highly

physical activities. Growth of other activities such as walking, relaxing in the park, swimming, and other modified activities such as pickleball, will allow New Yorkers to recreate on their own terms as they age.

These changes in the State’s population will require OPRHP to adapt. Park attendance is expected to increase. Much of the increase may occur on weekdays when some services are provided free or at reduced cost to park visitors age 62 and older, such as OPRHP’s **Golden Park Program**. Rising attendance will increase impacts to the environment and to recreation facility infrastructure. Additionally, to continue to enjoy these facilities and services, an aging population will require that facilities expand the array of accessible features.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Incorporating Universal Design into parks and green spaces improves access for **everyone**. When a pathway meets ADA and ABA standards for accessibility, it improves accessibility for people with disabilities while also helping families with small children in strollers, New Yorkers with mobility aids, and others to access natural spaces comfortably and easily.

Climate Change

Over the next century, changes in precipitation and temperature associated with climate change are likely to affect the timing and availability of seasonal recreational activities.¹⁰⁴ For winter-related recreation in particular, climate change will result in profound negative impacts as “changes in the timing and amount of snowfall and the length of the winter season affect snow-related recreation, including skiing, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing.”¹⁰⁵

Warm-weather recreation may see a positive impact from climate change, as longer summers and milder shoulder seasons increase the number of available days for activities such as swimming and boating. On the other hand, some beach area in New York City and Long Island may be lost due to erosion or other damage to coastal areas caused by rising sea levels.¹⁰⁶ Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and aquatic invasive species fueled by warmer water temperatures are additional impacts likely to be seen from climate change. The ability to meet this rising demand for access to blue space may also be compromised due to staffing challenges, as many lifeguards in NYS are students and return to school in late summer.

Severe flood events such as the 2023 storm that caused significant damage at Bear Mountain State Park are costly and, depending on the extent of the damage, can take parks infrastructure out of commission for weeks, months, or even years. Similarly, storm surges and coastal flooding events can result in disruption of service. As heat waves become more frequent and extreme, demand for pools and natural swimming areas will increase.

In the fall, changes in the timing and length of “leaf peeping” season could potentially impact recreation providers in the Hudson Valley, Catskills, Adirondacks, and Finger Lakes, as studies suggest warmer temperatures may delay the onset of fall colors and more intense storms may cause leaves to drop earlier.¹⁰⁷

Preference for Indoor Activities

An analysis of a 2024 American Time Use Census Survey, conducted by researchers at Princeton University, indicates that Americans have been increasingly spending more time at home, a trend that saw a sharp spike during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰⁸ On average, the amount of time spent at home in 2022 increased by one hour and thirty-nine minutes, or ten percent, from the amount of time spent at

home in 2003.¹⁰⁹ Americans ages 15 to 34 had the largest jump in time spent indoors, now spending approximately two hours more at home on a typical day in 2022 compared to survey responses from 2003.

The percentage of respondents who indicated a preference for indoor activities is highest among young adults. There are many possible explanations for this preference among young people. Societal norms, and how young people interact with their peers, has changed, with some initial research indicating that younger generations prefer to spend time with smaller groups of friends in a familiar setting versus previous generations who spent more socializing out of the home.¹¹⁰ Another explanation is that increased screentime is leading to more time indoors.¹¹¹ Lastly, the high cost of living may be leaving younger generations with less money available to spend on leisure activities, further contributing to a preference for staying in.



A couple walking on the Empire State Trail, Central Region

Figure 5.8 – Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Young Adults

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Young Adults (age 18 to 24)

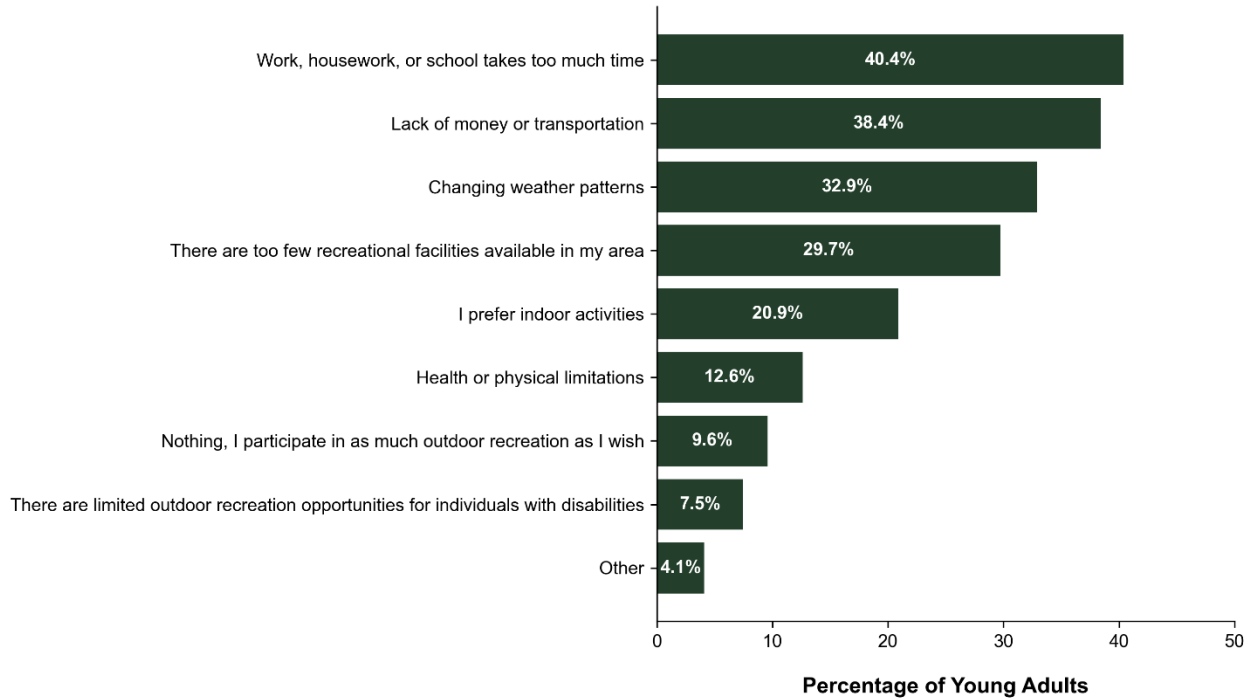


Figure 5.9 – Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Adults

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Adults (age 25 to 44)

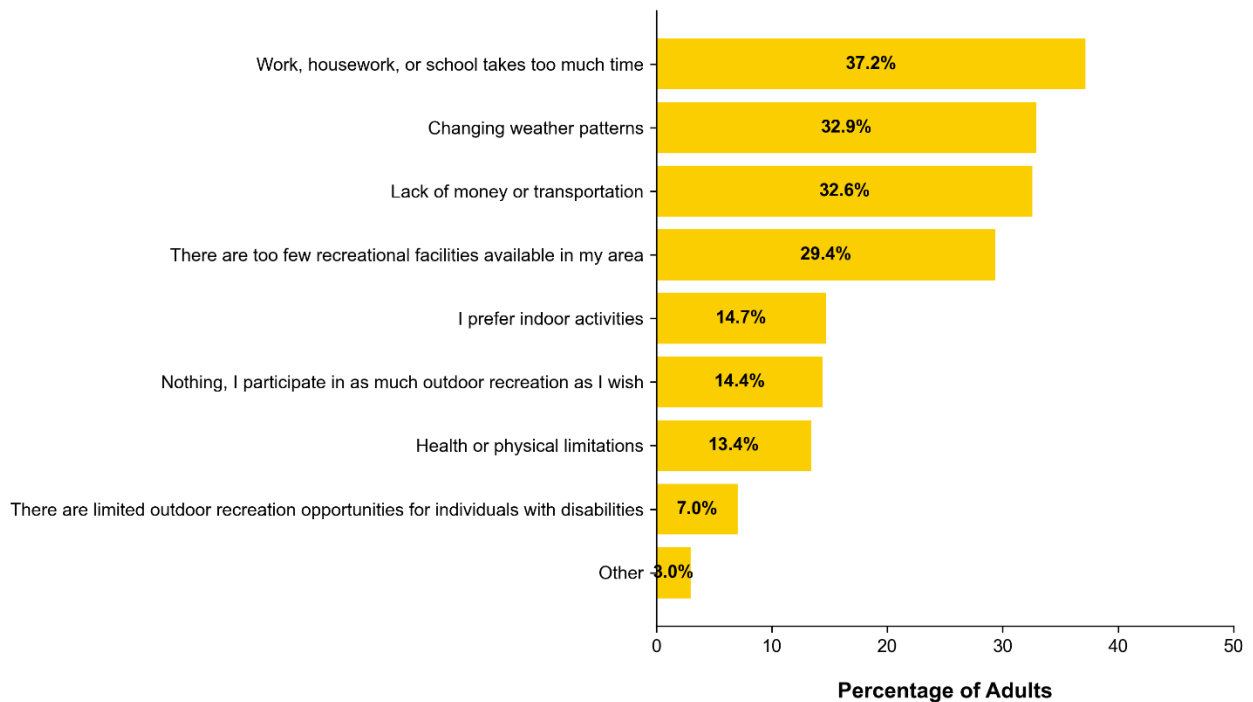


Figure 5.10 – Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Older Adults

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Older Adults (age 45 to 64)

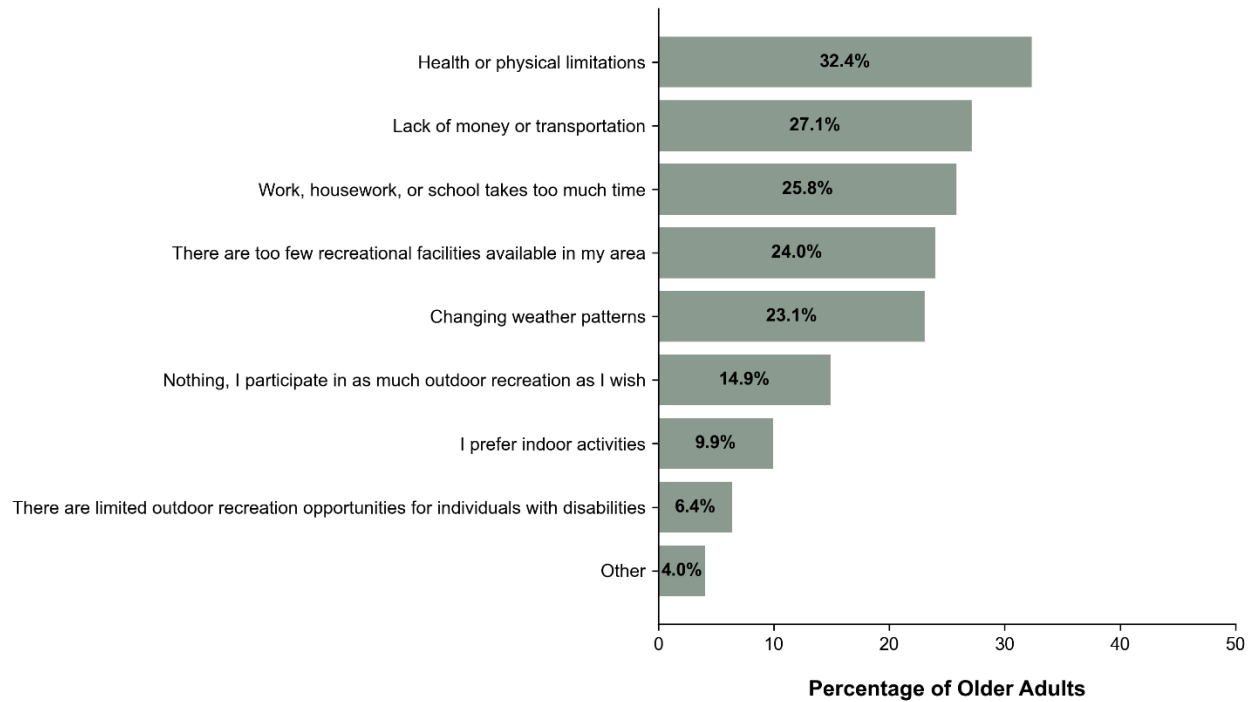
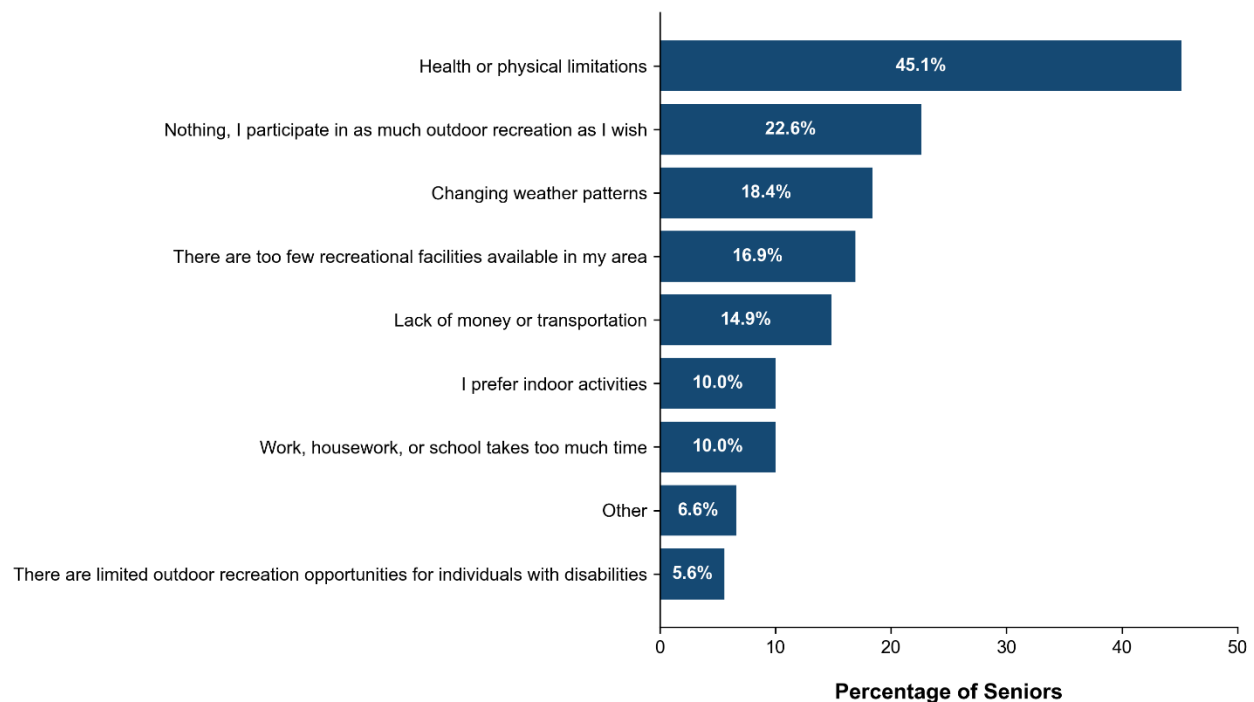


Figure 5.11 – Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Seniors

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation Reported by Seniors (age 65+)

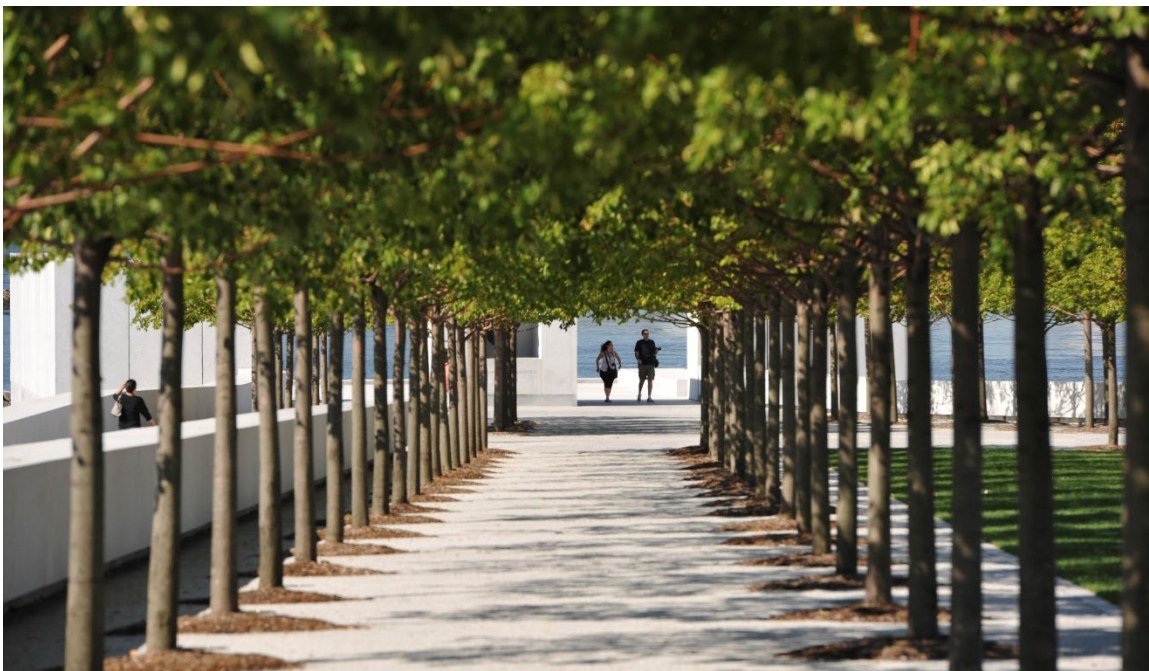


Funding Needs

According to respondents of the 2024 Park Professional Survey, the majority of park professionals (over 50%) agreed with the following statements: “more money should be spent on public park maintenance and repair”; “spending for outdoor recreation facilities (e.g. pools, marinas, trails, campgrounds) should be increased”; and “financial assistance to support recreation development and land acquisition should be increased.” These results indicate that, despite recent emphasis on parks and recreation spaces at the state level, funding for municipal parks and other recreation spaces still falls short of what is required to efficiently and adequately address repairs, park acquisition, and other facility needs. Of the three funding statements, the highest percentage of participants (61.4%) agreed that more funding is needed for maintenance and repair of existing facilities.

The **Centennial Pulse of the Park Survey**, conducted by the Open Space Institute in 2023, concluded that New York’s state parks are a valuable recreational and community resource for residents and visitors. Survey respondents also reported that they would like to see greater capital investment allocated to parks, open spaces, and outdoor recreation, and they would also like to see accelerated acquisition of state land.

A 2024 NRPA article, “From Creation to Care: The Need for Ongoing and Additional Funding to Operate and Maintain Parks,” emphasizes the funding gap as it relates to park operations and maintenance. While grant funding for park acquisition at the federal, state, and non-profit level have traditionally been available for park acquisition, there are fewer funding pools for continued upkeep and operations.¹¹² Failing to fund, plan for, and implement routine maintenance can result in unsafe conditions, trash piling up, vandalism, and other negative consequences, which “not only wastes the initial investment in park development but also deprives communities of vital recreational and environmental resources.”¹¹³



Tree lined pathway at FDR Four Freedoms State Park, New York City Region



Cottages at Wellesley Island State Park, Thousand Islands Region

Recent State Initiatives

"Get Offline, Get Outside" Campaign

Prioritizing mental and physical health, the [Get Offline, Get Outside campaign](#) encourages New York's kids and families to put down their phones and computers, take a break from social media, and enjoy recreation and outdoor social gatherings.

Lifetime Liberty Pass

In 2024, the [Lifetime Liberty Pass](#) Program was expanded to include all Veterans and certain Gold Star Family members who are residents of New York State. A disability rating is no longer required. The expansion of this program helps to ensure that veterans and their families have access to the recreation spaces operated by OPRHP and DEC.

New York Statewide Investment In More Swimming – NY SWIMS

To help New Yorkers learn to swim, address the lifeguard shortage, and invest in parks and pools, [NY SWIMS](#) includes investment to build out municipal pools in high need areas through a capital grant program and increasing access to swimming instruction through a transportation reimbursement grant program.

Parks Explorer Club Activity Book

The Explorer Club Activity Book is a 24-page resource booklet for kids aged 5-13 containing important information and engaging puzzles to detail a variety of outdoor-related topics. Designed to spark

interest in the environment, the Explorer Club Activity Book teaches kids what different wildlife footprints look like, how to prepare for different weather conditions, and whether they should recycle, compost, or throw away their rubbish. This program will continue to grow to become a comprehensive recreational safety awareness program for children and families, with educational programming and a web component and helps to support the goals of the Unplug and Play initiative.

Unplug and Play

Building off the success of the Get Offline, Get Outside Campaign, the **Unplug and Play initiative** was announced in January 2025 to promote kids' physical and mental wellbeing. Designed to get kids off screens and into the outdoors, funding for playgrounds, swimming pools, and recreation centers will be made available for municipalities to invest in critical recreation infrastructure.



Green Lakes State Park, Central Region

CHAPTER 6 – GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2025 and Beyond

As the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted daily life, Americans discovered a renewed appreciation for the outdoors. The pandemic was a reminder “of the vital role that accessible green spaces play in our collective health and overall quality of life.”¹¹⁴ Travel restrictions and recommendations to stay close to home meant that local parks and green spaces became increasingly important to physical, mental, and community well-being. This shift toward increased use and appreciation for parks and open spaces has required a new look at how outdoor recreation facilities are designed and operated.

2025 SCORP GOALS OVERVIEW

1. Provide equitable access to outdoor recreation facilities for people of all backgrounds.
2. Ensure physical and programmatic access for visitors with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities.
3. Diversify channels of communication with the public about outdoor recreation opportunities.
4. Engage the public through interpretive programming to cultivate pride of place.
5. Employ comprehensive planning for the future of the NYS outdoor recreation system.
6. Promote energy-efficient operations and renewable energy sources.
7. Build, operate, and retrofit outdoor recreation facilities for climate resiliency.
8. Develop and operate outdoor recreation resources in a manner that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
9. Expand and protect natural connections between parks and open space.
10. Protect, conserve, and restore biodiversity in NYS.

Parks around the country have adapted to changes in use patterns by installing green infrastructure and shade structures, embracing technology, and centering access as a critical issue to ensure all visitors feel safe and welcome.¹¹⁵ Crucially, in NYS and across the United States, “expanding access to water-based activities in communities traditionally less engaged with them is another more recent stride toward inclusivity in the park and recreation arena,” and an essential tool in the face of extreme heat.¹¹⁶

For outdoor recreation providers in NYS, the challenge of the coming years will be planning, building, and operating resilient and equitably distributed parks and open spaces that meet the needs of a diverse population. Scaling facilities appropriately to meet demand, adjustments to meet the needs and preferences of the public, and updating programming to appeal to a diverse audience, are all important steps to meeting this goal. Ultimately, embracing innovative park features and designs will make for a greener and more inclusive New York, better prepared to withstand future public health and climate events.

System-Wide Goals

To create clear pathways toward sustainable innovation in park design and programming, OPRHP sets goals that align with State and Federal priorities for outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship. These goals are intended to support the future care and development of the State’s outdoor recreation system. The SCORP goals have been established through public input, knowledge and information from interested parties, and recommendations from other state agencies. This non-exhaustive list reflects OPRHP’s mission and priorities.

Goals are intended to:

- Address existing gaps in planning and infrastructure.
- Include current needs, future planning, and other state agency initiatives.
- Inform the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) – see Appendix D.
- Incorporate current trends/conversations in planning practice.

As stewards of the State's many natural and cultural resources, outdoor recreation providers should plan with achievable goals and actions in mind. Each goal in this chapter has accompanying "Recommended Actions," which are intended as guidelines for implementation. These goals are relevant to—and designed to be attainable by—all outdoor recreation providers in New York at state, county, municipal, non-profit, and private levels.



Allegany State Park, Allegany Region

Goal #1: Provide equitable access to outdoor recreation facilities for people of all backgrounds.

It is widely documented that access to open spaces and outdoor recreation keeps people healthier and reduces stress.¹¹⁷ Many disadvantaged populations and communities, however, do not have the same means of accessing outdoor recreation or green space. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted inequitable access to outdoor recreational and natural spaces.¹¹⁸ During the pandemic, access to these spaces was critical to keeping people safe and healthy. This critical infrastructure was unavailable to many disadvantaged communities because of systemic barriers such as a lack of transportation.

The unequal distribution of environmental burdens and challenges facing New York residents must be addressed to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities. Environmental Justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and involvement of people of all backgrounds regarding climate change and open space stewardship.¹¹⁹ Backgrounds include, but are not limited to, race, gender,

sexuality, disability status, socio-economic status, or intersections of these identities. Building relationships with leaders and organizations within EJ communities helps to understand the historical context for barriers to outdoor recreation and to co-develop targeted programming to alleviate restrictions to access.

Initiatives supported by OPRHP, such as the Nature Bus, help connect inner-city residents with popular outdoor recreation destinations for free. Other OPRHP-supported programs such as [Connect Kids](#) and [Ladders to the Outdoors](#) help connect youth to nature. Programs and projects, like these, should be pursued and expanded upon to ensure equitable access to outdoor recreation.

Recommended Actions:

- Identify environmental justice areas and barriers residents may have to access outdoor recreation.
- Create new and targeted outdoor recreation opportunities for disadvantaged communities.
- Connect with local organizations that are well-established within disadvantaged communities to help spread word about recreational opportunities.
- Increase and promote transportation options (e.g., ridesharing, bike sharing, and public transit) to provide all members of the recreating public access to outdoor recreation facilities.
- Promote greenways and water trails such as the Empire State Trail and Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System as a means of urban recreation and transportation.
- Continue to partner with state agencies on programs such as [Creating Healthy Schools and Communities](#) to connect residents with recreation opportunities.
- Encourage the use of public outdoor recreation spaces to increase physical activity and reduce the risk of many chronic diseases.
- Support NYS DOT's efforts with the Safe Routes to School Program, which encourages kids to be more active by walking or biking to school.
- Foster partnerships with like-minded companies and organizations to support outdoor recreation programs for all ages, including "Friends groups," and build ongoing, formal communication channels to remain aligned in goals and strategies.
- Continue to support summer camp opportunities at DEC summer camps and partner organizations that utilize OPRHP facilities.
- Encourage the expansion, creation, and maintenance of green spaces in urban areas, such as pocket parks and greenways.
- Encourage the development of trails within subdivisions to provide pedestrian access to neighboring communities and facilities.
- Support the creation of environmental and recreational education programs that provide guidance on how to interact, engage, and care for facilities (i.e. I Love My Park Day, Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day, and other Love Our New York Lands Days).
- Expand partnership opportunities to include physical and mental wellness organizations.
- Collaborate and partner with NYS DOS as well as Local Waterfront Revitalization Program communities to better promote public access to waterfront revitalization areas.



People bird watching at Marsha P. Johnson State Park, New York City Region

Goal #2: Ensure physical and programmatic access for visitors with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities.

Architect Ronald Mace created the Universal Design concept in 1997 to make spaces widely available to the general public.¹²⁰ Universal Design aims to be flexible, provides appropriate space for approach and use, is free of hazards and protruding objects, and accommodates a “wide range of individual preferences and abilities.”¹²¹

To ensure that parks, open spaces, historic sites, and other places of recreation are accessible to the public, every effort should be made to eliminate barriers to access. According to the National Environmental Education Foundation: “accessibility challenges range from pathways that aren’t wide enough for a wheelchair to [the] lack [of] closed captioning on video exhibits and maps that are not offered in a tactile or audio version for people who are blind or have low vision.”¹²² Stewards of public parks and open spaces should incorporate Universal Design principles, provide adaptive equipment, and develop education programs for a diverse range of abilities.

Recommended Actions:

- Support the implementation of universal access design standards in rehabilitation and new construction for all park facilities, support facilities, and amenities.
- Ensure that the standards of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are met.
- Update facilities to meet the outdoor recreation needs of participants of all abilities.
- Encourage the expansion of universally accessible trails with appropriate trail surface, cross slope, width, and grade, and free of obstacles, where feasible.
- Improve navigational signage to include information on grade, cross slope, distance, etc.

- Continue to assess existing features and trails to create a comprehensive inventory of accessible areas and features within a park or network of parks.
- Provide information about accessible buildings and programs to the public in multiple formats.
- Consider a wide range of abilities and different learning styles when creating programming and educational materials.
- Maintain the functionality of accessible features by proactively monitoring and repairing surface conditions that may be eroded over time by use and weather.
- Ensure accessible features are fully integrated into a park's layout and design, with appropriate access paths.
- Design and construct park features to ensure equitable access, such as accessible kayak launches, accessible playgrounds, and tactile features.
- Provide adaptive equipment, including track chairs, sit skis, beach wheelchairs, and hand pedal bikes.
- Train staff in assisting patrons with a diverse array of needs and abilities.
- Provide auxiliary aids and services that allow people with sensory or cognitive differences to fully engage in park activities and programs and access website content and services.
- Continue to offer the Access Pass to residents with disabilities, which allows free or discounted use of state parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by OPRHP and the DEC.
- Build relationships with area community groups, businesses, and foundations to raise awareness of outdoor accessibility.
- Promote Get Outdoors & Get Together Day in partnership with OPRHP, DEC, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the NYS Department of Veterans' Services.
- Partner with the NYS Disability and Health Advisory Board, when applicable.



OPRHP Staff Participating in local event, 2024, Saratoga/Capital District Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OPRHP FACILITY: Rockefeller State Park Preserve

LOCATION: OPRHP Taconic Region

PROJECT TYPE: Public Engagement and Access



Park patrons and staff participated in the Rockefeller State Park Preserve's April 2024 'Roll and Stroll' event, Taconic Region (Photo: Pierce Johnston)

A 1,771-acre public facility in Westchester County, the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, is a popular destination for those living in the region's highly developed urban and suburban communities, and the New York City Metropolitan area. The Preserve's rolling hills, meadows, and woodlands, and 55 miles of historic carriage roads winding through scenic forests, fields, and wetlands, provide both important habitat for native plants and wildlife, as well as recreation opportunities such as walking, jogging, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

In 2024, the Preserve offered a "Roll and Stroll" event, the first in a series of guided hikes that allowed patrons with mobility issues to explore the site's network of carriage roads. A follow-up survey provided feedback to assess the user experience and guided the selection and purchase of two all-terrain wheelchairs, now available for patron use. A key goal of the Preserve and the agency is to encourage those with limited mobility to return and enjoy the state's trail system and have access to the benefits of nature on their own.

Goal #3: Diversify channels of communication with the public about outdoor recreation opportunities.

Park professionals are encouraged to use as many channels of communication as they can, including but not limited to online websites and mobile apps. Park Rx's "Find a Park" [web tool](#) to help people locate nature and recreation experiences in their communities, and the National Recreation and Park Association's [website](#) has the Local Park Finder app to help connect users to activities, programs, events, and amenities at parks and recreation centers nationwide.

Despite their many benefits, the internet, and other remote forms of communication, cannot replace the benefits of face-to-face interactions. In-person surveys offer another opportunity to engage directly with the public on outdoor recreation. The "Pulse of the Parks Centennial Survey" (see Chapter 2), a standalone effort to gauge public perception of State Parks and Historic Sites, was conducted in the

Summer of 2023 in preparation for the NYS Parks System Centennial. Participating in local festivals and celebrations also provides opportunities to speak directly with patrons about park facilities.

Language access should also be considered. New York is a diverse state representing many cultures and languages. Over 200 languages are spoken in New York City alone. Alternate translations and interpreters should be utilized to ensure access for everyone.

Recommended Actions:

- Focus outreach to demographic segments that have less public access to outdoor recreation.
- Disseminate information about the availability of outdoor recreation facilities and programming through interactive state agency websites.
- Utilize social media, press releases, and additional media platforms to further highlight project initiatives and encourage visitation.
- Continue the promotion of state facilities through the distribution of printed publications.
- Educate the public on convenient ways to explore the outdoors (e.g., shareable Empire Pass, Reserve America, online golf registration).
- Promote the use of the [NY State Parks Explorer mobile app](#) and other interactive software.
- Participate in and encourage local events that promote face-to-face interactions with patrons.
- Train and inform staff on how to promote facility-specific and regional events to reach more OPRHP patrons.
- Provide photo release forms in multiple languages so that various backgrounds can be showcased and uplifted in park promotional material.
- Engage in a wide array of public events such as local festivals and public meetings to encourage participation in outdoor recreation programming.
- Solicit suggestions for programs and initiatives from the general public.



Interpretive Center at Ganondagan State Historic Site, Finger Lakes Region

Goal #4: Engage the public through interpretive programming to cultivate pride of place.

Park programming that reflects local interests can strengthen community bonds and lead to healthy and resilient communities. Programming that seeks to uplift previously neglected histories, like OPRHP’s “Our Whole History Initiative,” and activities available at Nature Centers, offer a comprehensive overview of diverse human and natural histories and opportunities for meaningful community involvement.

Community engagement empowers community members and creates a sense of trust with community organizations and leaders. Since the 1930s, organizations like the Civilian Conservation Corps have directly impacted the nature of NYS’s outdoor recreation system. Events such as I Love My Park Day, where people volunteer to take part in the stewardship of their favorite or local parks, have evolved directly out of OPRHP’s hundred-year legacy of community engagement with the outdoor recreation system.

Recommended Actions:

- Expand environmental and cultural education, interpretation, and volunteerism, such as Citizen Science programs, throughout the State’s public outdoor recreation lands.
- Expand partnerships with colleges and universities to help develop and implement environmental education and interpretation programs.
- Create and expand partnerships with established park, trail, and advocacy groups.
- Continue to foster partnerships with Friends groups to garner support for individual parks and historic sites.
- Strengthen interpretive programming to promote diversity and diverse storytelling.
- Enhance collaborations with local preservation groups to advance historic preservation.
- Improve access to historic sites to better engage the local community and visitors.
- Support training and education on historic trades, skills, and crafts to empower local communities.
- Refocus historic interpretation efforts to depict the full spectrum of human and natural history.
- Invest in infrastructure that is in keeping with, and uplifting to, a facility’s character, history, and natural topography.
- Capitalize on heritage tourism opportunities and develop new tourism-friendly products and engage tourism associations as appropriate.
- Rehabilitate, retrofit, or adaptively reuse existing recreation and historic facilities to satisfy existing and projected recreation, interpretive, and education needs.
- Improve efforts to increase awareness about educational and outdoor programming for K-12 students through grant programs such as Connect Kids to Parks.

Goal #5: Employ comprehensive planning for the future of the State’s outdoor recreation system.

Park professionals should plan to uplift and preserve the legacy of New York’s natural and human histories. Planning, as described in Chapter 1, is continuous, necessitates public input, and must be comprehensive. Planning processes and plans should include clear implementation strategies and accurately gauge progress toward goals.

Understanding issues of environmental justice, inequitable access to green space, and climate change is foundational to providing equitable outdoor recreation opportunities. Grappling with these complex issues

is not only a question of historical research, but of understanding how modern park patrons feel today. Plans should account for climate change and other factors such as economic and demographic changes. To enact and implement comprehensive planning, park professionals should understand the local context surrounding their park and how it is subject to change.

Recommended Actions:

- Facilitate inventories and analyses of park, recreation, natural, and historic resources through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other technologies.
- Develop comprehensive plans, site plans, management plans, and other planning tools to facilitate the reinvention and redesign of the State outdoor recreation system.
- Create clear timelines for plan implementation with benchmarks for success.
- Engage local communities in the planning and decision-making process to ensure that recreational developments meet the needs of the community and visitors.
- Promote multiuse spaces in park facilities.
- Encourage staff training in “best practices” to improve operations and maintenance.
- Invest in capital projects that have proven longevity and depth of planning.
- Continue to develop facility-specific climate plans that synergize with local and state planning.
- Encourage public participation and input from a diverse range of interested parties and entities.
- Incorporate the lens of environmental justice into planning efforts to expand access to outdoor recreation.
- Plan for long-term ecological and environmental viability of facilities.
- Provide opportunities for interested parties to voice their opinions on how state land is managed.
- Report to interested parties on progress towards planning goals and milestones.
- Plan for climate change at the facility and system levels.
- Balance resilience planning with site operations, maintenance, and management activities.
- Continue to adhere to and follow State environmental laws and regulations such as [SEQR](#), [CLCPA](#), and [EO22](#).

Goal #6: Promote energy-efficient operations and renewable energy sources.

By sequestering carbon dioxide and regulating temperatures, parks and other natural areas help to mitigate climate change and its effects. On the other hand, heating and cooling buildings, transportation to and within parks, powering mechanical systems used for facility operations, mowing, and other maintenance and landscaping activities, all contribute to carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. A holistic approach to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas production from infrastructure, maintenance, and operations will ensure the greatest possible net positive effect of parks on the atmosphere.

Recommended Actions:

- Design and construct park infrastructure using “green” building standards and energy-efficient components.
- Switch to energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
- Turn off and unplug appliances when not in use.
- Install occupancy sensors and other lighting controls to turn off lights when not in use.

- Replace fuel-based heating and cooling systems with more efficient systems and choose options that use electricity generated from renewable energy sources, such as solar, geothermal, and heat pump systems.
- Preserve and adaptively reuse historic infrastructure.
- Transition gas-powered operational equipment to electric, whenever possible.
- Encourage transportation options that reduce carbon emissions, including, but not limited to, carpooling, public mass transit, cycling, and walking.
- Transition fleets to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and add EV charging stations, consistent with EO22 requirements for state agencies.
- Provide staff training on solar energy siting, infrastructure upgrades, and other green energy projects.
- Prioritize rooftops, underutilized parking lots, and previously disturbed or contaminated areas for new solar installations.
- Develop guidance documents and support specialized repair training to ensure proper maintenance and long-term viability of renewable energy, electric heating and cooling, and EV charging station technologies.
- Transition from antiquated refrigeration systems to more environmentally friendly, lower Global Warming Potential (GWP) systems.



A large-scale solar installation at Robert Moses State Park, Long Island Region

Goal #7: Build, operate, and retrofit outdoor recreation facilities for climate-resiliency.

Impacts associated with climate change, including inland flooding from severe rainstorms, droughts, heat waves, and loss of snow days, affect outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities across New York. For coastal areas, in New York City, Long Island, the Hudson Valley, and along Lake Ontario, sea level rise and heavy precipitation can have devastating impacts on recreation facilities. In the last century, sea levels rose approximately one foot, further exacerbating other climate change impacts and disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities.¹²³ According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, “[resilient infrastructure] is better able to withstand shocks and effectively deal with severe weather events such as floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures.”¹²⁴ Adapting to climate change requires a comprehensive approach to project design and implementation. Changing climate patterns and sea-level rise must be considered when building, retrofitting, or relocating essential park infrastructure.

Recommended Actions:

- Systematically evaluate coastal facilities to identify vulnerabilities to extreme weather events.
- Ensure that park facilities have appropriate safety or evacuation plans in place in the event of extreme weather.
- Support projects that increase the resilience of coastal parks, such as elevating structures to protect against flooding and storm surges.
- Upgrade infrastructure, including utilities, to better withstand storm events and severe weather.
- Support projects that provide people with opportunities to cool off during extreme heat events, including spray pads, shaded areas, pools, and beaches consistent with the [NY SWIMS](#) initiative.
- Ensure cooling facilities are accessible and affordable, particularly during extreme heat events.
- Incorporate green infrastructure—including green roofs, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and bioswales—into building and landscape design.
- Where appropriate, replace hardscaped shorelines with living shorelines or constructed wetlands.
- Support projects that include environmentally sensitive access features—such as boardwalks or viewing platforms—to wetlands for recreational opportunities.
- Maintain, update, and create new structures to provide sufficient facilities to support the increasing number of park users in the face of climate change.
- Implement, where applicable, projects in-keeping with [NYS DOS Resilience Planning](#) principles.
- Establish partnerships with inland and coastal waterfront communities to address local and regional waterfront issues.

Goal #8: Develop and operate outdoor recreation resources in a manner that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

[Sustainable management](#) of the state’s outdoor recreation programs and facilities is crucial for protecting the environment, supporting community well-being, and promoting long-term economic viability. “Sustainable management” refers to an entity’s capacity to replicate and maintain processes over time without compromising its resources. In 2024, the OPRHP Sustainability Unit and staff at Green

Lakes State Park piloted OPRHP's first **waste reduction initiative**. This initiative, which involved a community engagement process and waste diversion analysis, aims "to create procedures for performing and interpreting waste assessments as well as implementing descriptive signage, giving employees at other facilities a clear baseline to increase their diversion rates."¹²⁵

By integrating sustainability into all aspects of planning, development, and operations, the state ensures the health of ecosystems, the preservation of natural beauty, and access for future generations. This approach enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors while minimizing the environmental impact and fostering a resilient recreation system.

Recommended Actions:

- Prioritize source reduction following the **EPA Waste Hierarchy**, utilizing waste prevention and reuse before recycling and disposal to minimize environmental impact and resource use.
- Implement strategies to reduce waste generation at the source by purchasing products with minimal packaging, choosing durable goods, and encouraging bulk purchasing.
- Establish comprehensive recycling and composting programs at facilities.
- Provide training, funding, project management, and other resources to increase operational sustainability.
- Educate visitors and staff on waste reduction practices, provide clear signage, and strategically place waste disposal stations to encourage proper sorting and disposal of waste.
- Encourage reusable alternatives to single-use plastics by providing incentives, such as discounts on merchandise for using refillable containers or participating in clean-up events.
- Provide training for staff on the safe and proper use, storage, and disposal of materials to minimize environmental risks and ensure compliance with safety regulations.
- Install drinking fountains and bottle-filling stations to aid public health and encourage the use of reusable water bottles.
- Assess dams and culverts to meet current safety standards and increase flood capacity.
- Prioritize the procurement of environmentally preferable products, such as those with recycled content, energy efficiency, and reduced toxicity, to support broader sustainability goals.
- Follow best practices when purchasing materials and products for facilities, such as those established by the **New York State Green Purchasing requirements**.
- Reduce mowing frequency in non-essential areas to conserve resources, plant native species, and enhance wildlife habitat.
- Relocating and hardening utility lines, phone lines, and septic systems.
- Develop funding strategies that ensure long-term financial support for outdoor recreation projects, including public-private partnerships and grant opportunities.
- Invest in infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism and recreation, such as eco-friendly transportation and accommodations.
- Encourage and invest in the adaptive reuse of capital infrastructure through historic preservation.
- Monitor and evaluate the economic impact of recreation projects to ensure they contribute positively to the local economy without overburdening the natural environment.

SPOTLIGHT ON: CONSERVATION

OPRHP FACILITY: Multiple

LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT TYPE: Conservation Corps Environmental Stewardship Training

OPRHP supports two Conservation Corps programs: the [Hudson Valley Corps](#), formed in 1999, and the [NYS Parks Corps](#), created in 2017. Each year, these programs support a combined total of 45 seasonal AmeriCorps volunteers across the state who serve in roles that include environmental education, stewardship, trail building, and GIS. Members gain technical skills to help meet the state's conservation needs while acquiring valuable work experience needed to pursue careers in related fields.

Since 2020, Corps members have monitored and protected over 5,800 acres of OPRHP land, removed invasive plants from over 300 acres, maintained and improved 1,600 miles of trails and shoreline, and helped educate nearly 300,000 people through environmental education programs. In total, 185 members have served more than 355,300 volunteer hours.

Recent projects have included updating and expanding trails at Keewaydin State Park (a waterfront park overlooking the St. Lawrence River), rerouting a segment of the Long Path at Thatcher State Park, participating in the 2024 “Pulse of the Parks” Centennial Survey, and building bog bridges at Sam’s Point in Minnewaska State Park Preserve. Participants who complete these programs often find permanent employment with OPRHP, DEC, and other environmentally focused agencies and non-profit organizations.

From 2016 to 2021 OPRHP also hosted the [Excelsior Conservation Corps \(ECC\)](#). A residential corps program, the ECC focused on young adults between the ages of 18 and 25. The program was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a revised program is under development to ensure successful training and skills in environmental stewardship.



Letchworth State Park, Genesee Region

Goal #9: Expand and protect natural connections between parks and open space.

Outdoor recreation providers are uniquely positioned to develop a network of open space through natural connections. Often referred to as corridors, these natural connections allow for the movement of wildlife and people through the natural environment. Providing critical linkages between parks, preserves, and other green spaces through natural corridors helps to create a more cohesive system, ultimately benefiting plants, animals, and people. Mapping and modeling tools that highlight resilience, connectivity, and ecosystem flow help to illustrate the importance of these corridors at the landscape scale. Enhancing connections between publicly- and privately-owned open space and forests helps to mitigate habitat fragmentation and protect ecosystem integrity, biodiversity, water and air quality, viewsheds, and recreational opportunities.

Recommended Actions:

- Continue to inventory important ecosystems and natural connectors.
- Assess lands adjacent to public outdoor recreation sites for future acquisition potential.
- Continue to promote interstate, regional, and local partnerships to create habitat corridors.
- Encourage acquisition of connections between parks and open space, in-holdings, and important properties adjacent to existing public land to support the State's 30x30 initiative.
- Ensure the acquisition of open space resources is consistent with the approaches and recommendations identified in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan.
- Encourage fee and non-fee acquisition and other techniques to protect important open space, scenic, historic, and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Promote the creation of recreation ways, greenways, and water trails.
- Foster partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, trail groups, private landowners, and volunteers to develop and maintain parks and trails.
- Prioritize the utilization of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions when developing public outdoor recreation areas.

Goal #10: Protect, conserve, and restore the State's biodiversity.

Large-scale issues such as invasive species, climate change, habitat fragmentation, and water quality impairment, impact the biodiversity of parks and open space. To inform decisions related to biodiversity protection and help identify future opportunities for open space protection and habitat connectivity, OPRHP created the Biodiversity Indicator Tool. Protecting biodiversity requires a multi-pronged approach, including invasive species control, habitat restoration, installation of green infrastructure, and open space protection. Conserving and protecting the diversity of flora and fauna within parks is critical to the overall ecosystem health and ensures the continued enjoyment of natural areas for future generations.

Recommended Actions:

- Enhance habitat connectivity and reduce habitat fragmentation.
- Mitigate the adverse impacts of invasive plants, insects, and other animals.
- Promote wildlife management efforts that improve biodiversity in parks and natural areas.
- Preserve and enhance natural areas and ecosystems to improve biodiversity.
- Educate staff and visitors to parks and natural areas about the value of biodiversity and the impacts of threats such as climate change, invasive species, habitat loss, and fragmentation.

- Expand involvement of conservation and service corps, volunteer groups, and other partners to protect natural areas.
- Strengthen consistency of policies and collaboration between state, federal, and local conservation programs.
- Utilize biodiversity information to assist in identifying priorities for acquisition and preservation.
- Right-size culverts, stabilize riparian areas, and monitor and improve water quality, where applicable.
- Prioritize the development of recreational areas that incorporate natural elements and require minimal management.
- Convert underutilized lawn areas into natural meadows, pollinator-friendly gardens, or other low-maintenance areas that support biodiversity.
- Design trails, picnic areas, and other amenities to blend in seamlessly with the surrounding environment, reducing the need for intensive maintenance and promoting a more immersive nature experience.
- Encourage the creation of watershed planning to promote biodiversity and reduction of invasives and other threats to ecological communities and their ecosystem services.



Thacher State Park, Saratoga/Capital District Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: RESILIENCE

OPRHP FACILITY: Hempstead Lake State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Long Island Region

PROJECT TYPE: Environmental Education and Resilience



The Environmental Education and Resiliency Center at Hempstead Lake State Park

The Environmental Education and Resiliency Center (EERC) at Hempstead Lake State Park is part of a \$35 million parkwide project to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and enhance recreational access along the region's Mill River corridor.

The facility is located near the park's western entrance and close to the Hamlet of Lakeview and the Village of Hempstead, two historically underserved and ethnically diverse communities.

The EERC's education programs focus on the impacts of climate change, storm resilience, and environmental stewardship. Programs are available for school and scout groups and cover

geology, botany, meteorology, sustainability, wildlife, and more. The building also provides spaces for community outreach events and serves as an emergency coordination center during disaster response.

Part of the project included adding eight acres of wetlands to the site, one of the largest wetlands projects ever completed by New York State Parks.¹²⁶ For the installation, invasive species were removed, and native plant species were added to create natural habitat. The project also included two miles of ADA-compliant trail and an accessible observation deck, as well as a new kayak launch and fishing piers.

CHAPTER 7 – IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure continued access to New York’s public outdoor recreation system for future generations, existing natural, cultural, and open space resources must be protected and maintained while anticipating the need for new and more inclusive facilities. The SCORP helps to achieve this goal by informing the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects in New York State. While OPRHP is the lead agency responsible for the implementation of SCORP, it is intended to be a guide for all outdoor recreation providers in the state. This chapter describes several components that help to bring the SCORP from concept to reality, including grant allocation, funding sources, and partnerships.

New York State and its partners must ensure that all communities enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and public health threats while affording equal access to the decision-making process. Fostering environmental justice in the State involves activities that both reduce environmental harms and target benefits to disadvantaged communities or areas struggling with disproportionate burdens. The SCORP helps to guide the allocation of funds to areas and facilities with the greatest need.



Pedal Boats at Belmont Lake State Park, Long Island Region

Grant Allocation

The policies, initiatives, areas of need, and goals described throughout the SCORP are translated into criteria for objectively evaluating projects. More specifically, the data and goals in SCORP are used to develop the rating system for the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) for LWCF grants (see Appendix D – Open Project Selection Process and Grant Allocation for specific grant rating criteria). The SCORP is also used to evaluate Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants. OPRHP ranks projects by translating measurements of need and statements of policy to maximize

fulfillment of identified recreation needs while protecting natural assets. To assure continuity throughout the process, all applications are reviewed on a statewide basis, and meetings are held with regional field representatives and technical staff to provide final review, ranking, and approval.

Additionally, SCORP data is used by state agency and municipal partners in the development of rating systems for grant funding opportunities such as NY SWIMS, ORLP, Bond Act grants, and various acquisition evaluation categories consistent with the Open Space Conservation Plan. The NYS Department of State, for example, uses SCORP data to evaluate Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRP). In some cases, a grant award can be used as match for another grant program. Applicants may benefit from exploring funding opportunities that can be used simultaneously or sequentially to bring projects to fruition.

LWCF Grants in Aid Funding History

In the two decades following its passage, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) played a major role in the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation in NYS. Federal funding for State and local grants-in-aid began to diminish in the late 1980s and early 1990s and by 1996 the state side funding program was essentially eliminated. It was not refunded at any level until 2000. In recent years, federal support for the LWCF grants-in-aid program has burgeoned with funding to NYS more than tripling since 2015. The Dingell Act of March 2019 permanently reauthorized the LWCF and in August 2020 the Great American Outdoors Act fully and permanently funded the program.

OPRHP's long-standing partnership with the Land and Water Conservation Fund is a key component of the State's efforts to provide a top-tier outdoor recreation system. With the help of LWCF funding, parks, playgrounds, and historic and cultural sites have been acquired and/or developed in virtually every community in NYS. The LWCF program also helps OPRHP meet its mission by supporting regional projects that provide accessible recreation opportunities to people of all ages and abilities, supporting new parks of state and national significance, and ensuring that the State can meet new demands and trends in outdoor recreation.

Since its inception, the LWCF grants-in-aid program has invested more than \$336 million to protect New York's public outdoor recreation areas, forests, and wetland areas, and to provide recreation opportunities. The program has partially funded more than 1,370 projects statewide.

Partnerships

Partnerships are an essential tool in the acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of the State's recreation facilities. Outdoor recreation providers often enter partnerships to support their efforts to provide safe, high-quality public recreation opportunities, and to protect natural and cultural resources. Partnership agreements may be between governmental agencies or between an agency and a private entity or volunteer group. At parks and other State-owned recreation facilities, partnerships are designed to be mutually beneficial for the administering agency, the partners, the facility, the environment, and the public. Successful partnerships require that:

- the integrity of a park or site and its recreational, natural, and cultural resources are protected and maintained;
- the partnership is designed to supplement—not supplant—resources provided to an agency through its normal budgetary process; and

- ownership, control, or responsibility for the protection of the land and facilities is not relinquished by the administering agencies.

OPRHP, DEC, and the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) engage in a wide range of public-private partnerships to support outdoor recreation opportunities at State recreation facilities. The NHT is a not-for-profit public benefit corporation with a mission to receive and administer gifts, grants, and contributions to further public programs for park, recreation, cultural, land and water conservation, and historic preservation purposes. The NHT works closely with its state agency partners, including OPRHP, DEC, and DOS.

The following pages contain an overview of common types of partnerships at state recreation facilities, including those utilized by OPRHP and DEC.



Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve, Taconic Region

Types of Partnerships

Adopt-a-Resource Programs – Agreements with individuals/organizations for activities that help preserve or enhance natural resources on state lands. NYS Canal Corporation’s Adopt-a-Trail program allows volunteers to register to help maintain a particular trail segment. Tasks may include mowing, maintaining signs, painting, or landscaping. The DEC’s Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Stewardship Program offers a more formalized arrangement that allows individuals and organizations to enter into stewardship agreements to help preserve or enhance natural resources on its lands.

Concession Operations – Some public agencies can enter into concession contracts with for-profit entities to provide patron services and amenities at State facilities. Agencies determine the need for a patron service and select a concessionaire through a competitive public procurement. Typical concession contracts are services for marina operations, food vendors, retail operations, golf operations, recreation equipment rental; or, less commonly, marina operations, adventure courses or activities such as rafting trips or winter sports programs. The objective is to encourage competition for private sector to provide patron services to the public through the operation and investment in public service facilities.

Land Acquisitions – OPRHP and DEC regularly work with not-for-profit conservation groups and land trusts that acquire property and then transfer it to State ownership. A not-for-profit organization's partnership on a project can be beneficial for landowner relationships and the speed with which developable property can be taken off the market. Additionally, partnerships with not-for-profits may allow for the assemblage of related parcels over time, the remediation of environmental concerns, and/or the resolution of title issues.

In 2019, a 500-acre parcel of land in Kingston and the Town of Ulster was acquired by Scenic Hudson and subsequently transferred to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) to create a new State Park in the Palisades Region. Through a collaborative effort between PIPC, OPRHP, and Scenic Hudson, Sojourner Truth State Park—named after the 19th-century African American abolitionist and suffragist—was opened to the public in 2022.

Municipal Park Partnerships – Many State agencies can partner with local governments for the operation of a park or recreational facility on State land. These partnerships provide for the operation of local parks on State property (e.g., Twin Lakes Preserve operated by the Town of Hempstead on Wantagh Parkway buffer lands) and for the operation of State Parks by municipalities (e.g., Amherst State Park operated by the Town of Amherst).

Non-Commercial Program Agreements – Some public agencies can enter into an agreement with a nonprofit group, which provides public programming at a state facility. OPRHP has partnerships for both independently produced programming and programming produced on behalf of and in collaboration with the agency. Program partners are often additionally responsible for the maintenance or capital repair of their licensed premises.

Project Agreements – A public agency can partner with a not-for-profit group or with other government entities to cooperatively fund or undertake a capital project or maintenance responsibility. For example, OPRHP partnered with the Long Island Power Authority to design and construct the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center at Jones Beach State Park.

Research – Individuals, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions regularly conduct inventories and perform research tasks on public lands. Collected data helps improve stewardship and management and is valuable for developing environmental education and interpretive programs.

Sponsors – Events conducted at public facilities may be sponsored by various businesses or organizations. Events generally advance the goals of the sponsor(s) while providing an activity or benefit to the public. Mountain bike and running races, holiday celebrations, and fireworks displays, are examples of activities that may be sponsored by outside entities at some State-owned facilities.

Supporting Organization Agreements – An agency may enter into an agreement with a nonprofit organization, such as a “Friends Group,” to provide volunteer, fundraising, and/or programming

support at specific parks, historic sites, or recreation areas. OPRHP facilities with active friends' groups include Letchworth State Park, Thacher State Park, Saratoga Spa State Park, Chenango Valley State Park, and Connetquot River State Park Preserve.

Volunteers – Formal and informal agreements with volunteers on public lands include projects such as building and/or maintaining trails, or invasive species removal. The annual *I Love My Park Day* brings thousands of volunteers to help clean up and restore state-owned sites. OPRHP's **Camper Assistance Program** offers free camping sites at State-owned campgrounds to seasoned campers who are willing to share their expertise with other people. Similarly, the DEC's **Campground Ambassador** program helps to welcome visitors to select DEC-operated campgrounds throughout the Catskill and Adirondack Parks.



Autism Nature Trail, Letchworth State Park, Genesee Region

Examples of OPRHP’s Partnerships

The agency’s partnerships help to identify, develop, and achieve common goals such as invasive species management, beautification efforts, environmental and cultural interpretation/education, wildlife monitoring, and facility development. Examples include:

Audubon in the Parks

<https://parks.ny.gov/documents/inside-our-agency/PublicDocuments/GuidancePolicies/BirdConservationinNewYorkStateParks.pdf>

Audubon in the Parks is an initiative with Audubon New York and the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation to advance bird conservation in NY State Parks, specifically targeting Bird Conservation Areas (BCAs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs). By joining forces to reach common goals, Audubon in the Parks utilizes the collective strength of both NY State Parks and Audubon to have a greater impact on bird conservation across the state through outreach, interpretation, and habitat enhancement efforts.

Get Outdoors & Get Together Day

<https://www.ny.gov/programs/get-outdoors-get-together-day>

The DEC and OPRHP, in partnership with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the NYS Department of Veterans’ Services, host free and low-cost events to connect people to nature and provide increased access to the outdoors. Typically held in June of each year, Get Outdoors & Get Together Day brings people of all abilities, ages, identities, and backgrounds together for fun, healthful activities as part of the state’s initiative to broaden the diversity of users and ensure inclusivity of access to state public lands.

Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day

<https://www.girlscouts.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/ways-to-participate/camp-and-outdoors/love-state-parks.html>

Each year Girl Scouts partner with State Parks during Girls Scouts Love State Parks Weekend, typically in September. The event offers an opportunity for girls to experience the great outdoors, find adventure, and explore nature. Events range from self-guided tours to watersports, stargazing, clean ups and more. Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day is held at various State Parks across New York.

Parks and Trails New York (PTNY) Love Our New York Lands Events

<https://www.ptny.org/events/love-our-new-york-lands>

PTNY hosts several volunteer days throughout the year, including I Love My Park Day and Canal Clean Sweep. In September 2024, the first-ever Fish and Wildlife Day and Adirondack and Catskill Park Day were held to provide opportunities for the public to participate in stewardship and cleanup projects at various recreation areas throughout the state.

I Love My Park Day is an annual event that brings together thousands of volunteers to enhance and celebrate New York’s parkland and has grown into the largest single-day volunteer event in NYS. I Love My Park Day is a Parks and Trails New York initiative in partnership with OPRHP and DEC. Volunteers clean up parks and shores, plant trees and gardens, restore trails and wildlife habitat, remove invasive species, and other site improvement projects, at over 120 state parks, historic sites, and public lands from Long Island to Western New York and covering all regions in between.

Horticultural Society of New York

Partnered with OPRHP to create an urban greenhouse at New York City's Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park in Harlem. The greenhouse offers nutritional educational programs and improves access to fresh produce in the community.

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

Partners with OPRHP to manage the agency's Watercraft Inspection Program, helping slow the spread of aquatic invasive species and educate the public about cleaning, draining, and drying boats.

NY-NJ Trail Conference's Conservation Dogs Program

Partners with OPRHP to identify wood and box turtle populations, identify New England Cottontail, rare plants, and invasive plant monitoring on State parkland.

Open Space Institute (OSI)

OSI is a national land conservation organization working throughout New York State. Past projects with OPRHP include the Centennial Pulse of the Parks Survey, published in 2024, which examined visitor demographics and experiences at 22 State Parks.

Parks and Trails New York (PTNY)

PTNY is a statewide park and open space advocacy group. PTNY administers the Park and Trail Partnership Grant (PTPG) program in conjunction with OPRHP and DEC.

Public and Private Colleges and Universities in New York State

Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship (FORCES) program fosters volunteerism by providing students the opportunity to gain valuable experience and develop personal connections to NYS parks.



The 2024 total solar eclipse at Point Au Roche State Park, overlooking Lake Champlain, Thousand Islands Region (Photo: Rusty Bascom)

SPOTLIGHT ON: LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

OPRHP FACILITY: Green Lakes State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Central Region

PROJECT TYPE: Green Lakes Destination Playground



Destination Playground at Green Lakes State Park, Central Region

Located on the north shore of Green Lake, the newly renovated and expanded Destination Playground was opened to the public in July 2024. The Playground offers a safe, ADA accessible play area adjacent to the beach with a variety of play spaces. For children 2-5 years old, there is a smaller play structure with mini cottages and slides. A larger structure for children 5-12 years old with an accessible ramp, slides, climbing bars, and other interactive elements, is located nearby.

Several ADA accessible free standing play units, shade canopies, and engineered wood fiber safety surfacing were installed. The pathways connecting the play structures are a mix of poured-in-place and stone dust to improve circulation throughout the playground. Planting and boulder edging was installed to better define the play spaces and to help prevent erosion. To support construction of this universally accessible play area, the facility was awarded an LWCF grant in the amount of \$310,260.

Funding

The following pages contain summaries of funding programs that can be used by outdoor recreation providers in NYS to meet the goals and recommendations of the SCORP. A table of these programs, listed according to the source (Federal, State, or other), then alphabetically, is included in Appendix G. The Table indicates which grants can be applied for through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) which allows an entity to apply for multiple grant funding opportunities with a single application. The table also indicates which entities are eligible for each funding program, what actions the program can support, and the program's focus.

Federal Programs

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/boating-infrastructure/default.aspx>

The Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 established BIG to provide funding to States, the District of Columbia, Commonwealths, and territories to develop and maintain facilities for transient non-trailerable recreational vessels. As the designated State Administrative Agency in New York, OPRHP accepts applications for BIG projects from publicly owned facilities. The **BIG program** is funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Certified Local Government Program (CLG)

<https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/certified-local-governments/>

Each federal fiscal year, New York State sets aside ten percent of the state's allocation of federal historic preservation funds for pass-through to Certified Local Governments. CLG funding may be applied to many different types of projects that address the goals of identifying, evaluating, nominating, and protecting a community's cultural resources. Past grant awards have ranged from \$1,200 to \$29,000, with most in the \$5,000 to \$15,000 range. Funds are available through the National Park Service (NPS) and administered by OPRHP. Only certified local governments may apply.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/osp16d.pdf

Approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 2007, the NYS Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan qualifies the State to receive federal funds under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. It is a federal program established in 2002 to protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses. Priority is given to lands with significant ecological value that can be effectively managed and protected.

Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg-dr>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides flexible grants to help cities, counties, and States recover from Presidentially declared disasters, subject to the availability of supplemental appropriations. Congress may appropriate additional funding for the Community



Lifeguards at Jones Beach State Park, Long Island Region

Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for Disaster Recovery grants to rebuild affected areas and provide crucial seed money to start the recovery process.

The New York State Park and Historic Site system suffered more than \$149 million in damage from Hurricane Sandy, forcing the closure of dozens of State Parks. The CDBG-DR Program provided funding to rebuild, improve coastal defenses, and reinforce vulnerable infrastructure, helping Robert Moses, Jones Beach, and Hempstead Lake State Parks on Long Island, and Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx reopen to the public.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/

CMAQ provides funding to state and local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) continues CMAQ for programs that reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter and for former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance. The program is funded at approximately \$2.7 billion through 2026. The BIL requires states with nonattainment or maintenance areas for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) to use 25% of their CMAQ apportionment for projects targeting PM_{2.5} reductions, including diesel replacements and retrofits. It also requires states to prioritize benefits to disadvantaged communities or low-income populations living in or adjacent to such areas, to the extent practicable.

Conservation Reserve Program

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/resources/programs/conservation-reserve-program>

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), is a voluntary program that encourages farmers and landowners to convert highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as native grasses, trees, and riparian buffers. By enrolling in CRP, participants receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving covers. The program helps to improve water quality, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat, contributing to overall environmental health and sustainability. Eligible applicants include farmers and landowners with environmentally sensitive land that meets specific criteria related to cropping history and environmental characteristics. Applicants must demonstrate the potential for significant environmental benefits through the implementation of conservation practices.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives>

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility. Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who own or rent agricultural land are eligible. EQIP assistance can be used on all types of agricultural operations, including conventional and organic, specialty crops and commodity crops, forestry and wildlife, historically underserved farmers, and livestock operations.

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

<https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/programs-access>

The Federal Lands Access Program provides funding for the improvement of transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The Access Program supplements State and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators. The Program is designed to provide flexibility for a wide range of transportation projects in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Funds are distributed through a formula based on road mileage, number of bridges, land area, and visitation.

Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Fund

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/freshwater-fishing/sport-fish-restoration-program>

The Federal Sport Fish Restoration Fund was created in 1950 by the Dingell-Johnson Act and enhanced with the Wallop-Breaux Amendment in 1984. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) administers the Fund as a grant-in-aid program to state fish and wildlife agencies. Monies are to be used by the states for sport fishery management, aquatic education, research, and habitat protection. Fund distributions are nationally apportioned among all 50 states based on each state's number of fishing license holders and the land area of the state. Upon completion of approved work, states are reimbursed from the fund for up to 75% of the project costs.

The Federal Sport Fish Restoration Fund is critical to the NYS DEC's fisheries program. Wallop-Breaux funds account for almost 30% of the total expenditures in the freshwater fishery program

and are essential in providing a balanced statewide fishery management program. In the marine program, Federal Sport Fish Restoration Funds account for a substantial portion of the expenditures, enabling the DEC to manage the vast marine and coastal fisheries resources properly.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/forest-legacy-program>

Initiated in the 1990 federal Farm Bill, the FLP recognizes that most forested lands in the U.S. are owned privately and that forest landowners face growing financial pressure—much of it from demand for residential and commercial development—to convert their lands to uses that would remove them from the forested land base. The primary method of protection is through conservation easements in which landowners sell a portion of the property rights while retaining ownership of the land. This allows the land to remain in private ownership while ensuring that wildlife habitat, forest resources, and outdoor recreation opportunities are protected. Participating landowners may also sell the property to the State, in which case the land would be managed as State Forest land. Participation in the program is entirely voluntary. All acquired easements must meet conservation objectives and goals delineated in the [Open Space Conservation Plan](#).

Forest Stewardship Program (FSP)

[https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/private-forest-management#Forest Stewardship Program](https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/private-forest-management#Forest%20Stewardship%20Program)

The DEC Division of Lands & Forests cooperates with the USDA Forest Service to implement the federal FSP. A cornerstone of the program is the availability of technical assistance to help private forest owners develop Forest Stewardship Management Plans to guide them in the use and management of their lands. These plans are based on goals and objectives that individual landowners have for their properties.



Glimmerglass State Park, Central Region

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

<https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-glri>

Federal agencies use GLRI resources to target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and to accelerate progress toward long-term goals. GLRI is funded through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which partners with nonfederal regional working groups to implement protection and restoration projects. In NYS, projects have included habitat restoration, water quality improvements, invasive species management, and education on state, private, and Indigenous Nation lands. Projects in State Parks along the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie have focused on shoreline habitat restoration, invasive species management, wetland habitat restoration, and **Beneficial Use Impairment** delisting in Federal Areas of Concern.

Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/hfrp-healthy-forests-reserve-program>

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program helps landowners restore, enhance, and protect forestland resources on private and tribal lands through easements and financial assistance. Through HFRP, landowners promote the recovery of endangered or threatened species, improve plant and animal biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration.

Highlands Conservation Act (HCA) Grant Program

<https://www.fws.gov/program/highlands-conservation-act-grant>

The Highlands Conservation Act was passed in 2004 to conserve natural resources in the region. The program is administered by the USFWS and provides funding to support states, non-governmental organizations, and other conservation partners working to sustain key landscapes in the Highlands region for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Four states participate in the program, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. OPRHP is the authorized agency for NYS.

Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)

<http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/>

The LCBP offers grants to support implementation of local projects that benefit Lake Champlain, and funds scientific research that drives resource management in the Basin. Since 1992, LCBP has awarded more than \$8 million in local grants and funded more than eighty important research and demonstration projects about the Champlain Basin.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/Stateside.htm>

The LWCF was enacted by Congress in 1964 as a dedicated fund to provide grants to safeguard the nation's natural areas, water resources, and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities. Funding for the LWCF is from revenues provided by offshore oil and gas leases that are split between the federal agencies and the Stateside grant-in-aid program.

The State may allocate grants-in-aid to both local and State projects, with the provision that the State or locality match at least 50% of the total project cost. Eligible projects include parkland acquisition, development of new parks, and rehabilitation of existing recreational facilities. All designated project areas are protected and cannot be converted to any use other than public outdoor recreation without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. Preparing the SCORP every five years helps the State to prioritize goals, direct LWCF funds, and maintains the State's eligibility to participate in the LWCF

Program. The goals and recommendations in the SCORP provide the framework to allocate the State's outdoor recreation-related spending.

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP)

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/orlp.htm>

The ORLP is a nationally competitive grant program that delivers funding to urban areas (jurisdictions of at least 25,000 people) and to federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native organizations, and Native Hawaiian community organizations regardless of population. These awards help urban communities address outdoor recreation deficits by supporting projects in cities and densely populated urbanized areas that create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors. The ORLP was established by Congress in 2014 and administered through the NPS. It is funded through the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program.

New York State National Maritime Heritage Grant Program

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/maritime-heritage/default.aspx>

A matching subgrant program to fund education programs and historic preservation projects that will preserve sites and objects related to New York's maritime history. The grants are made possible through a partnership between the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD). Local governments, tribal governments, 501(c)(3), and NYS-qualified nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grants

<https://www.fws.gov/program/north-american-wetlands-conservation>

The NAWCA program provides matching grants to wetlands conservation projects. There are **U.S. Standard** and **U.S. Small** grants. Both are competitive grant programs and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. NAWCA grants increase bird populations and wetland habitat while supporting local economies and American traditions such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, family farming, and cattle ranching. Wetlands protected by NAWCA provide valuable benefits such as flood control, reducing coastal erosion, improving water and air quality, and recharging groundwater.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program

<https://www.fws.gov/partners>

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program is a voluntary, citizen, and community-based stewardship program for fish and wildlife conservation on private land. Examples of habitat treatments include livestock exclusion fencing, streambank stabilization, restoration of in-stream aquatic habitats, and riparian reforestation. Since 1987, the program has helped more than 25,000 landowners to complete more than 40,000 projects, restoring more than six million acres of forest, prairie, wetland and stream habitat for wildlife.

Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12229>

The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, initially enacted in 1937 as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, provides funding for states and territories to support wildlife restoration, conservation, and hunter education and safety programs. Funded by an 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition, a 10% tax on handguns, and an 11% tax on bows and archery equipment, funds are apportioned to the states and earmarked for wildlife conservation and hunter education.

Between 2020 and 2023, Pittman-Robertson funds helped expand New York State’s Wildlife Management Area system by over 4,000 acres. Land acquisitions included additions to the Capital District WMA (2,237 acres), Clay Pond WMA (34 acres), High Tor WMA (87 acres), and Honeoye Inlet WMA (709 acres), as well as the creation of the new Poverty Hill WMA (990 acres). These acquisitions permanently protect wildlife habitat, foster healthy populations, and provide opportunities for people to hunt, trap, and observe wildlife.

Recreational Boating Safety Grant Program

<https://uscgboating.org/grants/state-grants-rbs-program.php>

A matching grant program for states to provide safety programming and education. Federal funds provided for a state's boating safety program may be used for any of the following: providing facilities, equipment, and supplies for boating safety education and law enforcement; training personnel in skills related to boating safety and to the enforcement of boating safety laws and regulations; providing public boating safety education, including educational programs and lectures, to the boating community and the public school system; acquiring, constructing, or repairing public access sites used primarily by recreational boaters; conducting boating safety inspections and marine casualty investigations; establishing and maintaining emergency or search and rescue facilities and providing emergency or search and rescue assistance; establishing and maintaining waterway markers and other appropriate aids to navigation; and providing state recreational vessel numbering and titling programs.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM FUNDING

RTP funding to NYS since its inception:

Total Projects Awarded: **412**

Total Federal Funds:
\$45,781,094.57

(Totals as of 1/18/24)

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/recreational-trails/default.aspx>

An assistance program from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the RTP provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized use. Funds support recreation, including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or other off-road motorized vehicles.

The funds, which come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and excise taxes on recreationally used motor fuel, are available to States, municipalities, tribal governments, and private organizations.

In New York, RTP is a program of the NYS DOT, administered by OPRHP. Projects funded by RTP must be consistent with the needs established by the SCORP or Statewide Trails Plan. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 reauthorized the RTP through Federal fiscal years 2022 through 2026 as a set-aside from the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside under the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG).

State Wildlife Grant Program (SWG)

<https://www.fws.gov/program/state-wildlife-grants/what-we-do>

The SWG provides federal funds to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats, including species that are not hunted or fished. Funds may be used to address research, fish and wildlife surveys, species restoration, habitat management, and monitoring, and other areas identified within the State’s Wildlife Action Plan. These funds may also be used to update, revise, or modify a State’s Plan.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/ta.cfm>

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) continues the Transportation Alternatives set aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program. Eligible uses of the set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under the Transportation Alternatives Program under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). This encompasses a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. The BIL sets aside approximately \$1.5 million per year for TAP funding.

Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/wre-wetland-reserve-easements>

The WRE program helps private and tribal landowners protect, restore, and enhance enrolled wetlands. Wetland Reserve enrollment options include Permanent Easements, 30-year Easements, Term Easements, and 30-year Contracts. Easements are administered by the NRCS under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The Inflation Reduction Act included \$1.4 billion in additional funding for ACEP over five years and extended regular program funding through FY 2031.



Kayakers at Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, Central Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

OPRHP FACILITY: Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Taconic Region

PROJECT TYPE: Pool Complex Updates



FDR State Park Pool, Taconic Region (Photo courtesy of CHA Consulting, Inc., Photography by Castle Photography, Inc.)

In June 2021, the Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park Pool was reopened after extensive updates and improvements. As the largest swimming pool in the NYS Park system, the FDR pool has been an important swimming destination for urban New Yorkers for decades.

The new pool, constructed inside the footprint of the old pool, has a surface area of nearly 42,000 square feet and a water volume of approximately 1.3 million gallons. A total of 26 colorful spray features are placed at various depths in the pool's main wading section.

The 328-by-128-foot pool has a zero-depth entry slope leading toward a deep end of nine feet. Other improvements to the pool complex include a new poolside bathhouse, a renovated concession building, a lifeguard locker room, a first aid pavilion, and new modern and efficient water filtration equipment. The project also refurbished lawns within the pool area and added new shade trees.

The pool rehabilitation project was funded in part by \$4.5 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

State Programs

Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program

<https://dos.ny.gov/brownfield-redevelopment>

The BOA Program, administered by the NYS DOS, provides resources to New York communities to establish effective revitalization strategies that return dormant and blighted parcels to productive use. The goal is to work in partnership with local communities and organizations to develop and realize a community vision for redevelopment and community revitalization.

Canalway Grants Program

<https://www.canals.ny.gov/Doing-Business/Grants/Canalway-Grant-Program>

The Canalway Grant Program, administered by the NYS Canal Corporation, awards up to \$1 million annually in competitive grants to eligible municipalities and nonprofit organizations along the NYS Canal System for canal-related capital projects. Projects proposed for funding must demonstrate how they will achieve some or all of the following for the NYS Canal System and Canalway Trail: expand public access, increase visitation and recreational use, stimulate private investment, improve services and amenities for Canalway land and water trail users, and enhance the connections between the canal and the corresponding region consistent with the **Regional Economic Development Councils'** strategic plans. Project awards range from \$25,000 to a maximum of \$150,000. A 50% grant match is required. Grant funding is distributed via reimbursement only. Grant administration and pre-development costs may not exceed 10% of the grant award but may be used as part of the applicant match, with no cap.

Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Grant Program

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/climate-change/resources-for-local-governments/grants-for-climate-action>

Established in 2016 to provide 50/50 matching grants to NYS cities, towns, and villages for eligible climate adaptation and mitigation projects. Funds are available to support implementation projects related to climate change adaptation and for the reduction of greenhouse gases outside the power sector (transportation, methane, and refrigerants). A second category supports planning projects related to Climate Smart Communities certification actions. This program is administered by the DEC.

Complete Streets Program

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets>

In 2011, the Complete Streets Act was signed into NYS law, requiring state, county, and local agencies to consider the mobility of all users when developing transportation projects that receive state and federal funding. A goal is to improve the dialogue between the government, pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, public transportation riders, and motorists, to plan roadways that consider the safe, convenient access of roadway users of all ages and abilities. Municipalities and counties throughout NYS have adopted Complete Streets resolutions to adopt policies that promote a cleaner, greener state. Funding for Complete Street projects is available through several State agencies, including the DOS, Environmental Protection Fund, and the Office of Community Renewal.

Connect-Kids-to-Parks Field Trip Grant Program (Connect Kids)

<https://parks.ny.gov/environment/connect-kids/grant-program.aspx>

The Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program connects New York school age children (pre-K through grade 12) with nature, outdoor recreation, and history by reimbursing travel costs for field trips to eligible locations. Eligible applicants include public schools, BOCES, non-public schools, charter schools, municipalities, public libraries, and not-for-profit organizations that are physically located in a school district receiving Title 1 funding. The grant funds are intended to support underserved, environmental justice, and/or inner-city communities in New York State. Recipients of the grant must cover all initial field trip costs – grant funds are not released until after a field trip has occurred, all incurred expenses have been paid, and proof of payment has been provided to the Connect Kids Field Trip Grant Program team. This program has been funded through the Environmental Protection Fund and administered by OPRHP since 2016.



Connect Kids Program participants on a field trip to Schuylar Mansion State Historic Site, Saratoga/Capital District Region

Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant Program (Connect Kids)

<https://parks.ny.gov/environment/connect-kids/grant-program.aspx#swim-instruction>

In 2024, the Governor announced New York Statewide Investment in More Swimming (NY SWIMS). As part of the initiative, OPRHP administers a reimbursement grant program for expenses related to

transportation to swimming instruction called the “Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant” program. The program connects New York school-age children (pre-K through grade 12) with swimming instruction by reimbursing transportation costs (including parking or vehicle use fees) incurred by eligible entities for travel to facilities in New York State that are operated by State, municipal, and not-for-profit organizations that offer swim instruction using a nationally recognized learn to swim curriculum (e.g., the American Red Cross, YMCA, Starfish Aquatics). This reimbursement grant program is funded through the EPF starting in 2024.

Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/fund>

The NYS Legislature enacted the Environmental Protection Act in 1993, creating a permanently dedicated Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) aimed at meeting the State’s pressing environmental needs. The EPF funds capital projects that protect the environment and enhance communities. These are generally large-scale projects that purchase land or construct facilities. Financed primarily through a dedicated portion of real estate transfer taxes, the EPF has provided more than \$2.7 billion for environmental projects in three categories: Solid Waste, Parks and Recreation, and Open Space.

The acquisition of open space conservation projects is provided for in Title 3 of Article 54 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Title 9 of Article 54 authorizes OPRHP to administer a matching grant program for municipal parks, recreation, and historic preservation projects. This funding enables the State to:

- acquire priority lands identified in the [NYS Open Space Conservation Plan](#)
- improve biodiversity through identification, research, and conservation
- fund municipal and state parks/historic preservation grant programs administered by OPRHP
- implement local farmland protection projects administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets and local waterfront projects administered by the DOS
- provide capital and stewardship funding for DEC and OPRHP lands and facilities, and
- implement the [Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda](#).

When grants become available, they are listed on the [DEC’s Grants web page](#) and [OPRHP’s Grants web page](#).

OPRHP grants funded through the EPF include the following:

EPF Grant – Heritage Areas Program

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/heritage-areas/default.aspx>

A matching grant program to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore lands, waters, or structures identified in approved management plans for Heritage Areas, designated under section 35.03 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, and for structural assessments or planning for such projects. Projects must fall within an NYS-designated Heritage Area.

EPF Grant – Historic Preservation Program

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/historic-preservation/default.aspx>

A matching grant program to improve, protect, preserve, rehabilitate, restore, or acquire properties listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. To ensure the public benefit from the investment

of state funds, preservation covenants or conservation easements will be conveyed to the State (OPRHP) for all historic property grants.

EPF Grant – Parks Program

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/parks/default.aspx>

A matching grant program for the acquisition, development, and planning of parks and recreational facilities, to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore lands, waters, or structures for park, recreation, or conservation purposes, and for structural assessments and/or project planning. Both indoor and outdoor projects are eligible, and projects must reflect the priorities established in the SCORP. Municipal parkland acquired or improved with EPF funding must remain parkland in perpetuity.

Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)

<https://www.efc.ny.gov/GIGP>

A competitive grant program to improve water quality and implement green stormwater infrastructure. GIGP grants are available to cover a minimum of 40% up to a maximum of 90% of eligible project costs. A match from non-federal (state or local sources) is required. The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation administers the GIGP. In 2024, OPRHP received funds from this program to install bioretention and construct a wetland adjacent to Lake Welch (Harriman State Park) to address Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) which caused frequent closures of the beach during the 2022 swim season.



Lake Welch, Harriman State Park, Palisades Region

Hudson River Estuary Program

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program/grants-funding-opportunities>

The Hudson River Estuary Program focuses on the tidal Hudson and adjacent watershed from the federal dam at Troy to the Verrazano Narrows in New York City, including the upper New York-New Jersey Harbor. The program works with many groups to develop knowledgeable and effective stewards of the estuary. Grant funding from this program has allowed counties, towns, and villages in the Hudson River Valley to improve water quality, advance their stewardship of habitat and natural resources, and enhance river access and education.

Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) Community Grants

<https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/grants-funding>

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Grant Program provides matching grants for Greenway and Greenway Compact Communities to develop plans or projects consistent with the five Greenway criteria: natural and cultural resource protection, economic development, public access, regional planning, and heritage and environmental education. Typical grants under the Greenway Communities Grant Program range from \$5,000 - \$10,000. Higher amounts are awarded for inter-municipal projects. Municipalities that voluntarily “opt-in” to their county’s Greenway Compact Plan and that meet other eligibility requirements can receive up to \$25,000 for projects that develop, approve, and implement a compact strategy consistent with the Greenway criteria and the Greenway Act.

Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) Conservancy Trails Grant Program

<https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/grants-funding>

The program is dedicated to funding recreational trail projects. Special consideration is given to projects that seek to implement the goals of the Greenway Trail Program. The application emphasizes connections to the Empire State Trail. Eligible project categories include Trail Construction, Planning and Design; Trail Rehabilitation or Improvement; Trail Education or Interpretation; and Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction on Trails. Grants can be used for projects such as accessible kayak launches on the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail and for increasing the accessibility of trails.

Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) Heritage Development Grant Program

<https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/grants-funding>

The HRVG Heritage Development grant program provides seed money to organizations for the purposes of programming, interpretation and marketing that support the mutual goals of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and applicants. Projects should resonate with the interpretive themes outlined in the HRVNHA Management Plan.

Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG) National Heritage Area Sponsorship Program

<https://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/sponsorships>

This program offers funding for events that further the goals and mission of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area: to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret the nationally significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley for the benefit of the nation. These grants are intended to support event programming and promotion that support the mutual goals of the Heritage Area and applicants. Grant amounts are typically between \$5,000 and \$10,000, depending on the length of the event and the number of participating locations.



Ladders to the Outdoors Program participants

Ladders to the Outdoors Program (LTO)

<https://parks.ny.gov/environment/ladders-to-the-outdoors.aspx>

LTO is an OPRHP program in the Niagara and Central Regions with the mission to strengthen community outreach to youth and expand inclusive and equitable access to the outdoors, including recreational spaces, equipment and skills development, through planning and providing free programs and activities in NY state park facilities such as swimming, hiking, biking, boating, camping, sports, and environmental education. LTO works closely with schools, youth organizations and community-based non-profits in underserved areas to connect kids with state parks, encourage fun and active outdoor recreation, and foster a lifelong love of the outdoors. The mission of LTO is to remove barriers to access, so participation in all programs is free. Transportation is provided to state park and historical sites through Connect Kids to Parks and equipment is provided at the parks for use by LTO program participants.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)

<https://dos.ny.gov/funding-bid-opportunities>

Funded under Title 11 of the EPF, the LWRP provides competitive matching grants to eligible villages, towns, cities, and counties located along NYS's coasts or designated inland waterways. Grants support planning, design, and construction for projects that help revitalize communities and waterfronts in ways that ensure successful and sustainable revitalization. The program is administered by the NYS DOS.

Municipal Parks and Recreation Grant Program (MPR)

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/municipal-parks-recreation/default.aspx>

Funds for the MPR Grant Program are provided by the Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act of 2022 (the "Bond Act"). Successful MPR project applications from the 2025 grant cycle will be funded with up to \$10 million in Bond Act funds from the Open Space Land

Conservation and Recreation category. An additional grant cycle will occur in the future, bringing the program total to \$20 million through two rounds of applications.

MPR funding is available for the construction of recreational facilities and other improvements to municipally owned recreational sites and parks. Examples include playgrounds, courts, playing fields, and facilities for swimming, biking, boating, picnicking, hiking, fishing, camping and other recreational activities. The MPR grant opportunity can fund up to 90% of the total eligible project costs, with a matching share requirement of 10%. The maximum grant award is \$1,000,000. Grants are administered on a reimbursement basis.

New York Statewide Investment In More Swimming (NY SWIMS) Initiative

<https://www.dasny.org/SWIMS>

In 2024 the Governor announced NY SWIMS, a statewide initiative to improve access to swimming opportunities, overseen by OPRHP and administered by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY). NY SWIMS is a matching capital grant program to acquire, design, construct, renovate, improve, modernize, or rehabilitate swimming facilities and natural swimming areas in underserved communities across New York State.

NYS Great Lakes Protection Fund (GLPF)

<https://glpf.org/>

The GLPF is a funding source for projects that protect, restore and improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem in New York. The Fund was created in 1990 by legislation that allows New York to use a portion of the earned interest on an endowment created by seven of the eight Great Lakes states. The Fund supports projects between government, academia, non-governmental and environmental groups to conduct research and exchange/apply information about remediating and sustaining the health of the plant, animal, and human elements of New York's Great Lakes ecosystem.

Snowmobile Trail Grant Program

<https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/snowmobiles/grant-program.aspx>

This grant supports local governments that develop and maintain snowmobile trails designated as part of the State Snowmobile Trail System. Snowmobile registration fees provide program funding. The Trail Grant Program is administered by the OPRHP Snowmobile Unit.

Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquariums (ZBGA)

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/zoos-botanical-gardens/default.aspx>

A non-competitive grant program for collections care and interpretation at municipal or nonprofit institutions that house, care for, and interpret systematically organized collections of living things for the public. Funding for the program comes from the EPF and is administered by OPRHP.

Other Programs

Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP)

<https://www.landtrustalliance.org/what-we-do/our-regional-programs/northeast/new-york-program/new-york-state-conservation-partnership>

The NYSCPP is a public-private partnership between the DEC and the Land Trust Alliance's NY Program. The program offers competitive matching grants to qualified NYS land trusts to advance land conservation, economic development, farmland protection, community conservation, recreation, and

tourism. Over the years, the NYSCPP has awarded 1,208 grants totaling more than \$31 million to 94 land trusts working across the State.

Park and Trail Partnership Program

<https://www.ptny.org/our-work/support/park-trail-partnership-program>

The Park and Trail Partnership Program provides funding to organizations whose primary mission is the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, environmental education, maintenance, and/or promotion of a specific park, trail, historic site, or public land under the jurisdiction of OPRHP or the DEC. The program, which launched in 2015, is administered jointly by Parks & Trails New York and OPRHP, and funded through the EPF. Since 2015, the Park and Trail Partnership Grants program has funded 222 projects through over \$8.1 million of awards with non-profit organizations leveraging over \$3 million of matching private funds.

Preserve New York Grant Program

<https://www.preservenys.org/preserve-new-york>

Launched in 1993, the Preserve New York program provides grants for historic structure, building condition, and cultural landscape reports, as well as cultural resource surveys. Applicants must be a unit of local government or nonprofit group with tax-exempt status. To participate, applicants must provide 20% of the total project cost as a cash match. The program provides support for up to 80% of the project cost. Grants typically range from \$5,000 to \$14,000, though award amounts have been as low as \$2,000 and as high as \$20,000. The program is offered through the NYS Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and the Preservation League of NYS (PLNY) and receives additional funding for projects in Nassau and Suffolk Counties from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation.



Moreau Lake State Park, Saratoga/Capital District Region

SPOTLIGHT ON: LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

OPRHP FACILITY: Southwick Beach State Park

LOCATION: OPRHP Thousand Islands Region

PROJECT TYPE: Expansion of Campground Facilities



A new camping pad installed at Southwick Beach State Park's popular campground

Located along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, Southwick Beach State Park is a popular destination for swimming, fishing, hiking, and picnicking in New York's Thousand Islands Region. In 2021, 31 new sites and a new accessible restroom with showers and changing areas were added.

Prior to the campground expansion project, the park's 110 campsites were frequently at capacity on weekends during the camping season.

A new bathroom building has six single-user restrooms, each with a toilet, sink, shower, and changing station. The buildings have skylights to provide natural light and are ADA-compliant and energy-efficient.

Other improvements include a walking trail to connect the area to existing Camping Loop D, which increases opportunities for healthy activity while improving access to the park's other amenities. The project was partially funded through the LWCF.

CHAPTER 8 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Introduction

New York's State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Act requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental factors in agency decision-making processes and actions, including actions they have the discretion to approve, fund, or directly undertake. SEQR requires agencies to balance environmental impacts with social and economic factors when deciding to approve or undertake an "action." Agencies must assess the environmental impacts of actions which they propose, evaluate alternatives, develop methods for minimizing potential adverse impacts, and provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the planning process when proposals may have significant impacts.

When an action is determined to have the potential for at least one significant adverse environmental impact, development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. The SEQR process uses an EIS to examine ways to avoid or reduce adverse environmental impacts related to a proposed action, including an analysis of all reasonable alternatives to the action.

The action in this case is the adoption and implementation of the SCORP 2025-2030. The updated SCORP will guide future outdoor recreation planning, activities, and development in the State. Its adoption and implementation have the potential for significant effects on the environment. Since the SCORP is a broad-based plan, an EIS that evaluates detailed, site-specific impacts of projects is not possible; thus, a Generic EIS (GEIS) is being prepared. It is more conceptual in nature than a site-specific EIS which addresses a proposed project.

Generic EIS

This document constitutes the draft plan and draft GEIS and discusses the potential impacts and mitigation of impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the SCORP 2025-2030.

The plan describes:

- New York State's (NYS) outdoor recreation resources;
- a recreation needs assessment, including general projections for future recreation needs and activities;
- social and recreational trends and issues;
- recreation in the context of resiliency;
- goals and recommended actions; and
- funding sources, grant allocation, and partnerships.

The GEIS reviews the SCORP in the context of providing needed recreational opportunities while protecting the State's natural and cultural resources. Intended outcomes of the plan are to improve the durability and resilience of the State's recreational opportunities and resources. The environmental analysis of the SCORP focuses on the adequacy, clarity, and appropriateness of the goals and recommended actions underlying the State's vision for outdoor recreation.

The GEIS is not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of each program or project which may be undertaken pursuant to SCORP. It serves as a reference, providing a sound environmental planning base, setting forth the process for evaluation of future actions and related impacts. Evaluation and review processes are incorporated to ensure that resource protection is given

appropriate consideration during the planning and implementation of programs and activities under the SCORP “umbrella.”

The Draft SCORP/GEIS will be made available for public review and will be the subject of a public meeting (webinar), in accordance with the public review process of SEQR. Comments on the Draft SCORP/GEIS will be incorporated and addressed in the Final SCORP/GEIS as part of the SEQR record, prior to adoption of Final SCORP.

Environmental Setting

The environmental setting for SCORP consists of the people and the natural, recreational, scenic, historic, and cultural resources of New York State, as well as social and economic characteristics. Resources potentially affected by the SCORP’s implementation include:

- recreational areas,
- lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, coastal, and estuarine waters,
- significant natural habitats,
- fish and wildlife,
- rare species of plants and animals as well as common species,
- forests,
- agricultural areas,
- parklands,
- historic sites,
- archeological areas,
- scenic areas, and
- communities

The setting also includes the public (residents and nonresidents) and outdoor recreation service providers.

Alternatives

Choosing not to prepare this plan is not a viable option. The State is required to prepare the SCORP which is both pursuant to State law and to maintain eligibility for federal funds under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

In terms of implementation, not preparing the SCORP would mean that there would be no statewide guidance based on current data for the provision of outdoor recreation. If the State continued to use recommendations from the 2020-2025 SCORP, its implementation would not be responding to changing recreation supply and demand or based on updated goals and recommendations.

In addition, without proper identification of recreational need, failure by the State to implement SCORP may result in the loss of opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation. Without the guidance provided by updated goals and recommendations, adverse impacts to the environment could occur. Moreover, without the focus and goals set by SCORP, opportunities for creating and maintaining statewide outdoor recreation facilities and protecting their natural and cultural systems could be hindered.

Another alternative would be a smaller scope, such as a focus on OPRHP actions only, or limited to those actions that may be funded under LWCF. Limiting the SCORP in this manner would not capture the breadth of outdoor recreational resources, programs, and opportunities within the State. Alternatively, attempting to address every outdoor recreational program and facility in the State is beyond the realm of possibility. The SCORP, as proposed, provides a balance between these two extremes. It includes the best information available on state and regional programs, facilities and actions related to outdoor

recreation and open space resources. It also provides a statewide framework to guide the provision of outdoor recreation and open space opportunities into the future.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

This section briefly describes programs and goals and discusses the implication of potential environmental impacts incurred. Where possible, general approaches that mitigate potential adverse impacts are identified.

Planning Process

The planning process described in Chapter 1 assures that recreation planning in the State considers environmental as well as human resources. Continually reevaluating assumptions, methods, and objectives, throughout the planning process helps assure that natural and cultural resources are protected when conditions change, or new information is available.

SCORP goals and planning principles protect the state's recreation resources by guiding agencies in formulating priorities. Adequate information and analysis, coordination, and citizens' participation, are key to the implementation of actions that protect resources and enhance recreation. The planning process considers land and water resources, user impacts, and emphasizes the best use of available resources and knowledge. Public participation in the planning process ensures a balance of interests in plan formulation.

The State Outdoor Recreation System

As discussed in Chapter 2, some of the State's most significant natural and cultural assets are found in Forest Preserves, State Forests, State Parks, and other lands under the DEC's and OPRHP's jurisdiction. NYS also provides natural, cultural, and recreational opportunities on lands administered by other state agencies and provides environmental and recreation programs in areas beyond the boundaries of state-managed lands. Stewardship of state lands and continued provision of services to the public are extremely important to the overall availability of public open space and recreation, as well as for protecting the State's natural and cultural resources.

OPRHP administers State Parks, State Historic Sites, State Parkways, nature centers, and boat launches. Nearly 80% of the State Park system is in natural areas with a wide range of geological features, ecological habitats, and plant and animal species. The system also includes linear parks and trails. The benefits of the system are not only afforded to the park visitor directly—there are multiple benefits for the citizens in protecting natural and cultural resources—but through intrinsic value: knowing the resources exist and are protected. Likewise, the resources themselves benefit through public ownership and protection.

The DEC oversees the Forest Preserves, State Nature and Historical Preserves, Wildlife Management Areas, and State Forests and more, all of which provide extensive recreational opportunities and open space benefits. The Unit Management Plan (UMP) planning process addresses resource issues regarding DEC lands and provides specific guidance for appropriate management. Existing criteria determine whether additional recreational access can be provided within the limitations of the resources to support such use.

The DEC is the State’s regulatory authority for fish and wildlife. Wildlife-related recreation, such as hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife observation and education, is an important part of the State’s outdoor recreation system. As fish and wildlife do not adhere to property ownership boundaries, DEC’s statewide guidance and rules for protection and management of wildlife populations and habitats is critical to maintaining a healthy balance between recreation and wildlife protection across the State.

The NYS Canal Corporation operates the 524-mile NYS Canal System, a navigable, inland waterway that includes four historic canals. The NYS Office of General Services (OGS) promotes preservation and use of State lands for recreational use by facilitating land transfers to municipalities for such purposes. The lands are perpetually protected by requiring reversion to the State if the specific purpose is no longer pursued. OGS also provides communities with access rights in lands underwater to promote coastal uses. Submerged cultural resource protection is also promoted by OGS in cooperation with other agencies.

Chapter 2 also discusses other NYS agencies that enhance open space and recreation opportunities. Together, state agencies provide a wide range of recreation opportunities and resources available to the public.



Buffalo Harbor State Park, Niagara Region

Recreation and Resilience

As discussed in Chapter 3, climate change is having increasing effects on outdoor recreation activities and areas where recreation occurs. Examples include more severe weather events (e.g. flooding, lightning, hail, wind) affecting outdoor activities; damage to shorelines (beach erosion) and recreational structures (winds and high water); a shortened winter season affecting winter activities; and increased pest species, such as ticks and mosquitos, in natural areas.

There are multiple statewide initiatives developed recently that focus on responding to issues related to climate change. These include the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (2019), Executive Order 22 (2020), and the Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act (2022). Additionally, the SCORP highlights many regional efforts related to climate change and resiliency spanning from the Great Lakes (Erie and Ontario in New York) to the Hudson Valley to New York City and Long Island Regions. OPRHP and DEC also have extensive programs focused on sustainability and waste management.

Humans are becoming more creative about resiliency measures and adapting to climate change. Planning for sea level changes and other climate-related impacts has become an integral component of the recreation planning process. Through inventories, research, analyses, and collaboration, projects are being designed to either withstand the impacts (e.g., sustainable shoreline projects; hardening shorelines in high population areas) or adapt appropriately (e.g., coastal marsh restoration; incorporating green stormwater infrastructure into facilities). As our recreation system becomes more resilient, the expectation is that facilities will be better protected, waterfront access will be safer, and wildlife habitat will be maintained and/or enhanced. There may be temporary, minor adverse environmental impacts during the construction of projects. The goal for resiliency, though, is to protect resources, minimize adverse long-term impacts, and, in many cases, benefit the natural and cultural resources and improve the visitors' experience.

Implementing sustainable practices is a key element of improving the State's outdoor recreation resource resiliency. Waste and energy use reduction, adaptive re-use of structures, alternative or renewable energy generation, and water conservation are examples. Through concerted efforts, these types of practices decrease expenditures, reduce the consumption of resources, and extend the life and utility of facilities.

Wetlands

As discussed in Chapter 3, wetlands provide many functions and benefits for both humans and wildlife. Some of these include erosion and sedimentation control, flood and storm water control, and protection of water quality. Wetlands can contain high biodiversity and play a critical role in the life cycles of many fish and wildlife species. They are also a component of many outdoor recreational activities, such as, hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, and photography. In recognition of this importance, state and federal laws and programs are aimed at protecting freshwater and tidal wetlands.

The DEC plays a leading role in wetland mapping, regulation, and protection in the State. Several divisions within the DEC are responsible for various aspects regarding wetlands, including acquisition, permitting, and enforcement. In addition to DEC's efforts, it takes coordination between state, federal and local agencies, and other interested parties to conserve and protect these resources.

Multilevel protection, from acquisition to management (e.g., planning, design, restoration), regulations, education, technical assistance, and inventory, all combine to provide an integrated protection system. More programs are being implemented through new partnerships and cooperation with all interested and affected parties. Management agreements with other entities must be carefully crafted to ensure proper stewardship of the State's fragile wetland resources.

Site-specific reviews, not covered in this GEIS, will identify when wetlands may be impacted. Permitting requirements under state and/or federal law seek alternatives with no or minimal impact, requiring compensatory mitigation when impacts are unavoidable. The SEQR and permitting process is used to identify alternatives and avoid or minimize potential impacts.

The State's Coastal Management Program (CMP) includes a policy specific to the preservation and protection of tidal and freshwater wetlands. The SCORP furthers this policy through numerous goals that include protection of natural resources and biodiversity.



Pixley Falls State Park, Central Region

Recreation Supply and Demand

Chapter 4 describes the processes for measuring the supply of recreation in the State and identifies the needs (demand) for recreation within NYS by activity and county. The results provide an objective framework for evaluating future impacts on the recreation system, as well as providing up to date information to guide the allocation of recreation resources and funding. By continuing to improve communication and coordination among public and private recreation providers, the statewide recreation supply can continue to grow and evolve to accommodate the needs in a logical manner. To

aid and assist with this growth, inventories and analyses will continue to be refined using professional observation, surveys, GIS and other technologies.

Two primary surveys were used in estimating recreational demand, which provide the means for input by the public and park professionals (see Appendix E for survey samples). In some cases, balance is needed between professional judgment regarding recreational needs and the actual desires of the public for additional facilities. Park professionals, for instance, may be biased by aspects such as lack of staffing and maintenance concerns for recreational facilities. Park visitors and the public, though, may not recognize such needs, or consider maintenance costs.

Over 50% of citizen survey respondents indicated that more recreational facilities are needed. The top three issues for park professionals surveyed involved the need for more funding for maintenance and repair, more government spending, and additional financial assistance to support recreational development and land acquisition. To address the increased demand for new facilities, and to maintain existing facilities, public-private partnerships will be key to help maximize availability and use of funding, staffing, volunteering, and other resources.

Levels of participation in recreational activities were determined based on the 2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey (PORS) results and compared to current population demographics of the state. Chapter 5 includes population projections for the NYS population, projected to 2050. Park Day Use - including relaxing in the park, lawn games, picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas, visiting historic sites/museums, carousels, and dog parks has the highest percentage participation rate followed by walking/running, swimming, nature interpretation, court games and biking. The top two activities generally require minimal equipment costs and can have lower impacts on the land than other activities. In urban areas, however, opportunities for participation in such activities may be constrained by limited open space and may require creative solutions to meet demand.

Trends and Issues

Chapter 5 outlines trends and issues in outdoor recreation and puts them in the context of barriers to participation in outdoor recreation. Key takeaways from this Chapter are that different demographic groups participate in outdoor recreation at different levels of participation and experience different barriers.

Facility Needs

Picnicking ranked as the number one activity reported as needed by older adults and seniors and as the second most needed by young adults and adults on the PORS, and is the facility type with the highest need as reported by respondents overall (32%). There are currently 1,872 picnic areas identified in NYS, according to the Recreation Facilities Inventory System (RFIS). Picnic areas are considered low impact activity areas and, in many cases, provides support facilities for a park's higher impact activities. As identified by the Park Professional Survey (PPS) and the 2024 PORS ranking, demand for picnicking continues to be unmet. This may be the result of an increased desire for passive outdoor activities and an overall increase in park usage statewide.

While picnic areas are considered low impact, proposed expansion of picnic facilities should consider climate change issues such as stormwater erosion from increased rainfall intensity, sea level rise, increased wave action from any adjacent waterbodies and increased summertime heat intensity. The

increased threat from climate change related impacts makes the proper siting of picnic areas and their supporting infrastructure key to their long-term use and can reduce maintenance requirements and costs.

Swimming as an activity was defined as occurring in an ocean, lake, river or in a public or private pool. Funding and staffing are required to provide safe and guarded swimming areas. Of those survey respondents indicating their community was lacking recreation facilities, swimming pools/beaches was the second most requested recreation need behind picnicking. As identified by the PPS and the PORS ranking, demand continues to not be met. This may be a result of the intensive and costly development, ongoing maintenance and the management required to provide safe and enjoyable swimming. In other more urbanized areas, while demand may be met, swimming facilities may experience overuse and excessive maintenance needs resulting in a reduced quality of the experience.

Trails are another activity that rank high among all age groups on the PORS – fifth among young adults, fourth among adults, and second for older adults and seniors. Trails were defined as being used for on and off-road bicycling, skateboarding/rollerblading, walking, jogging, running, hiking, horseback riding, ATV/ORV/4x4, cross country skiing, snowshoeing. Trails vary, from wide, multi-use paved paths, to winding singletrack trails through the woods. Use of existing corridors for trails, such as utility or former transportation rights-of-way, can minimize impacts on the land when topography allows. Most natural surface trail facilities can be developed at low cost and with minor adverse impacts to the environment. As with any trails or development, proper siting and design are the most important consideration in minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources. The spread of invasive species should be considered when constructing new trails.

Playgrounds were also reported as needed in the PORS, ranking fourth in need as reported by young adults, third by adults, and fifth by older adults and seniors. Despite data indicating that fewer New Yorkers are having children, playgrounds remain in high demand. Importantly, playgrounds provide a safe environment for children to participate in physical activity while at the same time fostering creativity and developing social skills through play. Playgrounds that are universally accessible with adaptive playground features was frequently identified by PORS respondents when asked to explain necessary accommodations.

Issues and Barriers

Demographic changes, such as an aging population and increased ethnic diversity, may result in an increase in participation in some activities and the need for different or more accessible recreational facilities. In addition to an aging population, there is a marked decline in births across the country and NYS, skewing the average age even higher. Migration patterns have also adversely affected the State's population. Population growth rates for the State are projected to decrease. With these population changes, consideration must be given to facility design, signage, programming, and public awareness to accommodate needs.

The PORS asked respondents what barriers they experience when trying to participate in outdoor recreation. The two most common responses for people aged 18-44 was work or school whereas adults 45 and older reported that their health or physical limitations was their greatest barrier. Other commonly reported barriers were a lack of funds or transportation, changing weather patterns, or a dearth of outdoor recreation opportunities in their area. Many respondents aged 18-44 also reported that they prefer indoor activities, thus stopping them from participating in outdoor recreation more often.

Goals and Recommendations

To maximize the social and economic benefits associated with recreation, while minimizing adverse impacts to the resources of the State, it is critical that while planning for recreation programming and development of recreational facilities, consideration be given to the entire set of the SCORP goals and recommendations. Focus on only a portion of the goals, or giving undue weight to certain recommendations, can result in substantial reduction in the quantity of potential recreation services (and the associated benefits) or in the quality of the State's natural and cultural resources.

The SCORP's goals and recommendations are comprehensive and consistent with the State's desire to conserve and protect its cultural and natural resources, and provide enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities, while enhancing the public's safety and welfare. Resource protection is balanced with other goals to achieve optimal levels of recreational facilities and programs, in view of the capability of resources to support use.

Each time the SCORP is updated, suggestions for additions or revisions are sought from OPRHP and DEC staff, cooperating agencies, as well as the public through surveys and the public participation process. This ensures that the goals and recommendations continue to be responsive to both recreational needs and resource protection. Since SCORP is a broad framework within which more detailed planning must take place, it is not possible to definitively identify adverse effects. It is consequently infeasible to suggest specific mitigation measures.

The State's review processes, including SEQR, assure that due consideration is given to protection of its natural and cultural resources. The processes by which more detailed plans and projects are developed and evaluated should serve to minimize, if not eliminate, potential adverse effects associated with development of recreational facilities.

This SCORP contains goals that reflect major issues and provide a larger context to enhancing existing recreational programs and activities across the State.



2024 Pride in the Sky at Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park, Taconic Region

Goal #1: Provide equitable access to outdoor recreation facilities for people of all backgrounds.

Construction of facilities to support the recommendations within this goal could potentially have both beneficial and adverse impacts on the environment. Examples of recommended actions include:

- **improving access to outdoor recreation through multiple transportation options.**
- **expanding programming and new outdoor recreation resources/opportunities in urban areas and disadvantaged communities; and**
- **increased promotion of greenways, water trails and other outdoor recreation facilities.**

Following the environmental review process helps to identify and avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts. For example, in identifying new outdoor opportunities for disadvantaged communities, agencies and municipalities will follow review processes that ensure open space is conserved and that ecological communities are protected while providing appropriate access. In general, though, these types of actions will not require nor will likely have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

Other recommendations from this goal, such as fostering partnerships and supporting existing programs related to outdoor recreation, are not actions that would generally require SEQR review or that would be likely to have negative environmental impacts. Partnerships are essential to improving outdoor recreation opportunities. Partnerships can also be used to assist individuals in gaining access to the parks, such as, working to improve roads outside the park to include bicycle lanes and bus stops.

To support urban recreation initiatives and outreach to disadvantaged communities, creative use must be made of existing school, community, and park facilities. Outreach, encouragement of public transportation to distant parks, facilitation of pedestrian access and coordination with community groups are all necessities for successful urban recreation programs. Through environmental interpretation and other programs, better use can also be made of urban open space to create an awareness of important natural resources even within the confines of urban areas.

Encouraging physical activity not only improves health but can reduce carbon emissions (walking and bicycling) and increase awareness of the need to preserve open space and recreation.

This goal promotes Coastal Management Program (CMP) coastal policies regarding development, fish and wildlife, and public access, when improvements are made for public access to coastal waters for outdoor recreation. Site-specific review should be conducted as applicable to assure that the manner in which recreation is provided will be consistent with coastal policies.

Goal #2: Ensure physical and programmatic access for visitors with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities.

This goal and recommended actions focus on universal design and the accessibility standards of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to assure that outdoor recreational facilities and programs are available to participants of all abilities. Rehabilitation or retrofitting of existing facilities to meet universal design or accessibility standards can have significant beneficial impacts, and, apart from major expansion or sometimes reconstruction, may have minor adverse environmental effects. Rehabilitation to increase accessibility is generally more cost-effective and sustainable than development of new facilities.

Continued inventory and assessment of existing facilities and programs regarding accessibility allows facility managers to focus on and prioritize where upgrades can be made and where gaps exist that may be remedied. Increased signage and information for the public about accessible facilities and programs allows more of the public to participate. Other recommendations from this goal, such as fostering partnerships and continued use of the Access Pass, are not actions that would generally require SEQR review or that would be likely to have negative environmental impacts.

This goal promotes CMP coastal policies regarding public access when improvements are made for public access to coastal waters for outdoor recreation. Site-specific review should be conducted as applicable to assure that the way recreation is provided will be consistent with coastal policies.

Goal #3: Diversify channels of communication with the public about outdoor recreation opportunities.

The actions of promoting outdoor recreation to a more diverse audience and increasing use of social media will likely have no direct adverse impact on the environment. The effect of increased promotion, however, will be increased use of facilities and open spaces by the public. This requires that facilities be developed and maintained in a sustainable and resilient manner to support the increased use. See Goals 1, 5, and 8 for further discussion.



Renderings of accessible paths constructed at Terrapin Point, Niagara Falls State Park, Niagara Region

Goal #4: Engage the public through interpretive programming to cultivate pride of place.

The goal to expand environmental education and cultural interpretation throughout the State's outdoor recreation estate, and to explore partnerships to help develop and implement such programs, is important for expanding the number of supporters of public facilities. As people learn more about their parks and other facilities, they become more connected to them and may work to protect and preserve them. This, in turn, creates new generations with a greater appreciation of the need to preserve our resources.

The inventory and recognition of natural and cultural resources has increased over time, and this has resulted in a growing demand to make these resources available for interpretation and viewing by the public. Encouraging interpretation and access to natural and cultural resources is not likely to have a negative environmental impact if resources are protected.

There are other important considerations in the provision of interpretive programs. These programs must be geared towards availability to all potential users: persons of all abilities and underserved populations. It's important to have qualified and trained personnel to provide interpretive programs in an appropriate and effective manner for the specific audience. Partnering with other agencies and entities, such as friends and advocacy groups, can enhance and expand interpretive programs. With the State's limited resources, partnerships enable work to be completed while benefiting all groups, with the public as the major benefactor. It is unlikely that entering into agreements with these groups to provide education will result in adverse impacts to the environment, but agreements and understandings should be developed and put in place so that each entity understands their role and responsibilities.

Education and interpretive programs can connect people with nature. They help empower the public with a greater role and involvement in environmental protection and sustainability. Connection to nature among the young, and new connections or reconnections among adults, will increase not only awareness but prompt action on the part of citizens to protect the environment and promote sustainable actions.

Enhancing interpretive and education programming, training, and collaborations regarding historic preservation is expected to have positive impacts on the environment by fostering a better understanding and protection of cultural resources.

Rehabilitation or retrofitting of existing recreation and historic facilities can have significant beneficial impacts, and—apart from major expansion or sometimes reconstruction—may have minor adverse environmental effects. Rehabilitation is generally more cost-effective than development of new facilities. Outmoded facilities can be phased out or adaptively reused where possible and feasible. Adaptive reuse enables the preservation of historic structures, furthering the objective to preserve cultural resources and sense of place.

Actions such as interpretive programs promote CMP coastal policies regarding public access and education. Compatible interpretive programs generally do not adversely impact coastal areas and are thus consistent with coastal policies. Site-specific review should be conducted as applicable to assure that the manner in which interpretive programs are provided will be consistent with coastal policies.



Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Park, Finger Lakes Region

Goal #5: Employ comprehensive planning for the future of the State’s outdoor recreation system.

The recommendation to develop comprehensive, site, and management plans for parks, recreation, natural, and historic areas, recognizes the potential for adverse environmental impacts due to the lack of proper planning. Planning for each facility must be done with careful evaluation of the capacity of resources to accommodate increased or alternative use, and the effects on the quality of recreation, with an emphasis on compatibility of the uses with the resources. Resource inventories and analyses are critical to the planning and design process to assure resource protection while providing suitable recreation opportunities. Public participation in the planning process is key to understanding public needs and desires and will help assure facility development occurs in a manner that addresses the diversity of community members and visitors.

Proper management of recreation resources requires training of park, historic site, and land managers. This should be done on a continuous basis to assure best management practices are being utilized in protection of environmentally sensitive areas. This also includes training for operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure public health and safety. For instance, operators of drinking water and sewage treatment systems at public recreational facilities need ongoing training to ensure safe operation of these systems and to protect the public and water resources.

Resiliency planning and efforts to incorporate climate change considerations into planning are both critical and required by law. To assure continued use of outdoor recreational facilities into the future, managers need to incorporate resiliency measures into existing infrastructure and when planning for new infrastructure. Resiliency measures also need to be incorporated when planning for the protection of natural resources. Rehabilitation and construction related to increasing facility resiliency may have temporary construction impacts but ultimately these measures are for the long-term protection of resources and for the benefit of the public. By following the environmental review process for implementation of plans, this will help to identify and avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts.

This goal furthers CMP coastal policies regarding development, public access, and recreation where facilities are in or near coastal areas. Proper planning for development or rehabilitation, especially regarding climate change, should enhance public access while not hindering natural coastal processes. Site-specific review will assure this occurs.

Goal #6: Promote energy-efficient operations and renewable energy sources.

This goal reflects NYS's commitment to utilizing energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources. The goal and recommendations are focused on reducing impacts on the environment while protecting infrastructure. The potential benefit of new or rehabilitated sustainable infrastructure is that agencies may have the ability to perform and implement these recommendations with little environmental impact to the State's resources. Using "green" building standards result in less impacts to the environment by constructing in already developed areas, using low-carbon and efficient construction materials and practices, using renewable energy sources including solar, geothermal, or heat pump systems, and being energy and water-efficient. Rehabilitating and adaptively reusing existing infrastructure to be more resilient may be challenging, but it is necessary to meet recreation needs and address climate change impacts. Additionally, it may be less impactful than new construction. Improved energy conservation at historic sites will reduce energy use, reducing expenditures. This may also better preserve the historic interior furnishings by allowing improved climate control within historic buildings.

Policies for the reduction of energy use and consumption, and integration of newly developed technologies, are expected to have a beneficial environmental impact. Energy-efficient design standards for new buildings include reduction of impacts on natural resources as well as actions to increase and improve the natural aspects of a site, such as green stormwater control. Assuring that management and operations staff have the appropriate training and maintenance equipment for any new renewable energy or energy-efficient systems and facilities is critical to maximizing the environmental benefits.

Replacing gas-powered vehicles, equipment, and systems, with electric equivalents would reduce dependence on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere.



Robert Treman State Park, Finger Lakes Region

Goal #7: Build, operate, and retrofit outdoor recreation facilities for climate-resiliency.

Some of the recommended actions, including evaluation of coastal facilities, development of safety or evacuation plans, and establishing partnerships with waterfront communities, will not have any direct impacts on the environment. Other recommended actions including enhancing resilience of coastal parks, incorporating green infrastructure into existing buildings and landscaping, and creating new structures to facilitate the increased number of users, have the potential to impact the environment. Following the environmental review process on a site-specific basis will help to identify and avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts. In the long term, investment in resilient infrastructure will mitigate the potential for adverse environmental impacts and associated costs.

Green infrastructure elements such as green roofs, rain gardens, permeable pavement, bioswales, and a reduction in hard-scaped impervious surfaces, allow for reduced stormwater runoff and minimize adverse impacts to water quality. Increased availability of cooling facilities, such as spray pads and pools, will provide a public benefit during extreme heat events.

Overall, the recommendations under this goal are consistent with CMP coastal policies regarding development and public access for projects in coastal areas where redevelopment will enhance resiliency and offer continued access to the public amid climate change.

Goal #8: Develop and operate outdoor recreation resources in a manner that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

The recommended actions include prioritizing overall reduction in waste generation; promoting reuse and recycling of materials; and using procurement efforts to purchase environmentally preferable

products, such as those with recycled content, less packaging, energy efficiency, and reduced toxicity. Enhancing reuse and recycling, as well as procurement of locally produced and green commodities, can reduce the environmental impact of facility operations. Managers may see a reduction in waste generation, consumption of resources, expenditures, and energy use, and extended life and utility of facilities. When more recycled and sustainable materials are used there is less pressure on natural areas: demand for new source materials is reduced and less waste (including manufacturing byproduct waste) ends up in landfills.

Providing training and education to staff and the public about waste reduction practices—and encouraging participation in waste reduction beyond recreation facility confines—helps maximize the benefits for the recreational facility itself and the environment. Reduced mowing programs benefit recreation facilities by decreasing their energy use and the staff time required for maintenance operations. These programs also increase biodiversity in natural areas which benefits the public, too, by creating visual access to more scenic areas and the wildlife that resides within them.

The recommended actions also focus on economic sustainability of facilities. Long-term financial support using a variety of funding sources would likely provide the greatest benefit so as not to depend on one finite source. Investment in infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism and recreation that incorporates climate change considerations would be expected to prolong the useful life of the facility. Adaptive reuse of park infrastructure, such as an existing building, would likely reduce the need for new development in new areas and impacts on the environment, and likely cost less than new infrastructure. For any adaptive reuse or modification of historic structures or landscapes, close coordination with the OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation (DHP) is required by law and will help preserve these resources.

This goal furthers CMP coastal policies regarding recreation and historic resources where facilities are in or near coastal areas. Proper planning and site-specific review for rehabilitation of historic resources will enhance the recreational benefit of the facility to the public while protecting and preserving historic resources.

Goal #9: Expand and protect natural connections between parks and open space.

Recommendations within this goal include:

- inventory of ecosystems and natural connectors.
- partnership approaches to biodiversity protection; and
- acquisition of open space, scenic, historic, and ecologically sensitive areas.

In general, these types of recommendations will have positive impacts on the environment. Acquiring important natural areas and otherwise non-protected lands to encourage open space protection can protect biodiversity. Creating connections between parks and open space is crucial for maintaining ecological integrity, particularly in light of current threats such as climate change, habitat disturbance, and invasive species spread.

This goal recognizes the importance of natural connections in supporting the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity. It fosters the development of connections between protected lands, greenways, and trails so that people and wildlife can move across the State's landscapes.

Implementation will help ensure that landscapes and buffer lands that surround our public open spaces are protected from encroaching development and incompatible land uses.

To protect these natural connectors, it is important first to inventory and identify the ecosystems that should be connected, and then to encourage the protection and/or acquisition of critical connectors. One way in which this recommendation will be promoted is through the identification and prioritization of land parcels adjacent to State Park land suitable for acquisition, based upon their potential to protect and enhance biodiversity. The 2016 Open Space Conservation Plan provides goals and principles for land conservation that form the basis for priority conservation projects across the State. Many of the identified regional priorities for land conservation overlap with this goal.

The overall impact of supplying and preserving open space where it is most needed is beneficial; however, careful consideration, planning, and public cooperation is necessary. If additional land is acquired for the purposes of new recreational development, thoughtful analysis is critical in assuring that the new facilities are needed, and that development will be compatible with existing resources.

This goal furthers CMP coastal policies regarding protection of fish and wildlife resources and potentially historic and scenic resources and wetland resources. Through careful balancing of protection and use of these corridors, recreation and public access goals can be advanced as well.



Gorge at Watkins Glen State Park, Finger Lakes Region

Goal #10: Protect, conserve, and restore the State's biodiversity.

As the caretakers of biological resources, owners or managers of open space are responsible for the stewardship of plants, animals, and their habitats. Protecting species and habitats may not always require active management. For example, siting projects in areas away from known locations of rare species and significant natural communities can avoid negative impacts to biodiversity. In other cases, active management may be appropriate and result in projects that have the primary goal of preserving or restoring biodiversity. Habitat restoration or invasive species removal projects have beneficial impacts on the environment and can enhance recreational opportunities. Other projects, such as right-sizing culverts, stabilizing riparian areas and improving water quality, may directly or indirectly benefit plants and animals in these areas. As noted in Goal 1 above, following the environmental review process for any proposed projects will help to identify and avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse impacts to the environment.



Two Rivers State Park Recreation Area, Finger Lakes Region

The recommendations for achieving this goal are imperative for carrying out the State's stewardship responsibilities. Protection of the State's resources is critical in providing opportunities to use or experience those resources and maintain quality recreation. Comprehensive resource information is necessary to identify threats to natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and assists in preservation efforts by anticipating potential adverse impacts. Ensuring that recreation development is compatible with environmental limitations and carrying capacities of resource areas is accomplished through the various review processes.

Increasing knowledge and awareness of biodiversity, and approaches to biodiversity protection and maintenance, affords people a better opportunity to appreciate their surroundings and become involved in protection efforts. Partnership development is also key to maximizing these protection efforts. For example, partnerships regarding invasive species policy and management, along with education efforts, help enhance awareness and sensitivity to the impact of invasive species. It will also result in expanded measures to reduce the effects of harmful species and improve biodiversity.

This goal furthers CMP coastal policies regarding protection of fish and wildlife resources and wetland resources in coastal areas. As unique natural communities, wetlands contribute significantly to the State's overall biodiversity, and the need for their restoration, conservation, and protection is clearly included and recently updated in [state law](#). Planning and design of recreational access in or near wetlands must be done strategically and carefully to prevent adverse impacts and allow the natural systems to be healthy and resilient.

Statewide Programs

Appendix C describes the numerous programs and initiatives that provide recreation and protect natural and cultural resources of the State. These programs are subject to environmental review processes and balancing of goals and interests. This GEIS is not designed to evaluate the impacts of each of these programs. Where adverse environmental impacts may be significant, the programs are subject to SEQR. Many of the programs are designed to protect specific resources, including cultural resources; wetlands and other water resources; fish and wildlife; biodiversity; and coastal areas. Following is a further discussion of the coastal program and its relationship to SCORP.

The State's Coastal Management and Inland Waterways programs, administered by the NYS Department of State, are carried out in partnership with local governments, state and federal agencies. These programs are designed to better manage coastal resources and advance revitalization of waterfront communities. New York State developed a Coastal Management Program (CMP) and enacted implementing legislation (Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act) in 1981. The CMP is based on a set of **44 coastal policies** that guide coastal management actions at all levels of state government and ensure appropriate use and protection of coasts and waterways. Coastal policies are grouped into the following policy categories:

- Development
- Fish and Wildlife
- Flooding and Erosion Hazards
- General Safeguards
- Public Access
- Recreation
- Historic and Scenic Resources
- Agricultural Lands
- Energy and Ice Management
- Water and Air Resources
- Wetland

Decision-making standards and procedures known as “consistency provisions” ensure coordination of governmental decision-making that affects the implementation and success of the State's coastal policies. Consistency review is the decision-making process through which proposed actions and activities are determined to be consistent (or inconsistent) with the coastal policies of the CMP or approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRP). State agencies are also required to follow certain consistency review procedures for direct or funding actions, and for any action, including permits, for which they are an involved or lead agency pursuant to SEQR and for which an EIS may be necessary.

Implementation

To fully implement the recommendations outlined in the SCORP, specific and programmatic actions will need to be developed. Goals and recommendations will need to be translated into the delivery of recreation services and protection of natural and cultural resources. Implementation mechanisms include state and federal funding, such as the allocation of funds for recreation and open space projects.

A partnership philosophy between all levels of government, the private sector, and the public is supported throughout SCORP, particularly relating to improving cooperation and coordination in

providing recreational opportunities, and in enhancing natural and cultural resource stewardship and education. These dynamic partnerships play an increasingly important role in providing quality recreation and assuring resource protection.

Environmental justice is an overarching goal in providing recreational facilities and services. Its implementation responds to the need to reach underserved communities as identified throughout the SCORP. Through the analysis of recreational needs and thoughtful implementation of the SCORP goals, minority and low-income populations will benefit from increased and enhanced recreational opportunities in their communities.

Implementation strategies advance numerous coastal policies, including those related to development, fish and wildlife, public access, recreation, historic and scenic resources, and wetlands. The Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) is periodically revised to reflect the SCORP's goals and recommendations. The OPSP assures that consideration is given to SCORP goals when evaluating and ranking applications for federal assistance in acquiring or developing recreation or open space resources. In grant rating systems and the OPSP, projects that directly relate or contribute to SCORP or other state programs receive additional considerations (points), and those identified in adopted regional or local plans also receive additional points.

Protection of ecological, historical, and open space, resources is another important ranking factor. Positive impacts on these resources would likely result in a higher rating. Through continuous agency review and input from providers and the public, evaluation assures that a proper balance of goals and interests and fair distribution of monies is achieved.

Cumulative Impacts

The goals and recommendations defined in SCORP 2025-30 will have a positive impact on the environment. The primary effect of SCORP is to promote the goals and recommendations identified in Chapter 6. Including goals which describe processes to protect, conserve and maintain the environment—such as Goal #10: Protect, conserve, and restore the State's biodiversity—brings natural resource stewardship on par with development activities and recognizes that healthy ecosystems mean healthy communities.

SCORP recommendations regarding resource protection are consistent with, and promote, several coastal policies identified in the State's CMP. These policies include development, fish and wildlife, public access, recreation, historic and scenic, and wetlands.

Chapter 4 identifies the levels of local outdoor recreation facility need across NYS's 62 counties, indicating where the greatest levels of need exist. The highest level of need exists in Lewis and Seneca counties. The counties comprising the North Country, Southern Tier, and New York City Regional Economic Development Councils also indicated a high level of need. Rehabilitation of existing facilities, as well as the acquisition and development of new facilities, is required to satisfy demand. Innovative regional and statewide approaches need to be considered to make the facilities more accessible.

Accomplishing this will have cost and environmental implications. Some types of recreation facilities have greater impacts on the environment than others. Trails and informal picnic areas will have less of an impact than swimming pools and RV camping, for example. For some sites, such as brownfields, any recreation development will be an environmental improvement. Public health and safety

considerations must be incorporated into planning for all recreational opportunities, particularly where sites known or suspected to have been contaminated with pollutants are being considered.

The cumulative effects of applying the 2025-2030 SCORP's goals and recommendations in a systematic manner will be substantially beneficial. Existing recreational services to the public will be maintained, and likely enhanced and expanded, while protection of natural and cultural resources will be promoted. Perhaps one of the most important cumulative effects of SCORP is also the least tangible. The implementation of recreational and resource protection programs through the SCORP initiative substantially enhances the physical and psychological well-being—the quality of life—of the State's residents and visitors.

Enhancing the quality and quantity of recreational services and programs has substantial benefits for economic activity, too. Implementation of efficiently designed plans for recreational facilities often contributes to the attractiveness of a municipality for investment by businesses. Thus, the facilities and programs generated by the SCORP are an important adjunct to factors leading to economic recovery and development.

In NYS, these established focal points generally stabilize existing investments and services. Identification of the need for recreational services and facilities is based primarily on current population and growth projections. Additional planning and sustainability recommendations will facilitate proper balancing of the SCORP implementation and the advancement of environmentally sensitive recreational development and use.

The goals stated in SCORP will not result in any significant increase in energy consumption associated with recreation activities. On the contrary, several of the recommendations and initiatives defined in SCORP will promote reduced energy consumption by recreation providers and users.

Since SCORP is a general plan, identification of program-specific or site-specific adverse impacts, including those which are unavoidable, will be accomplished during future planning and environmental review of specific programs and projects.

Applying the goals and recommendations of the SCORP to the development of recreation programs and projects requires a commitment of planning resources. Resources are committed through programs or projects identified within state or federal legislative action or through gifts to the State. SCORP helps determine the priority for use of these committed resources. Implementation of the recommendations defined in SCORP will result in irreversible and irretrievable commitments of time, funds, and energy resources, but the overall benefits of preservation, stewardship, and providing recreational opportunities outweigh these commitments.

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APPENDIX A – LEGAL AUTHORIZATION TO DEVELOP THE NEW YORK STATEWIDE PARKLAND RECREATION PLAN

Authority of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to develop a statewide park and recreation plan is established in the PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION LAW (Chapter 36-B of the Consolidated laws, 1972, and as amended). The Law further designates the Commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as agent for the administration of the Land and Water Conservation fund and the National Historic Preservation Fund.

Sections of the Law applicable to the above functions, duties and responsibilities are presented below.

Title B - Organization and General Powers, Functions and Duties of Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Article 3 - (3.01 - 3.25) Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Commissioner

§ 3.09 General functions, powers and duties. The office by and through the commissioner, shall, among other items:

3. Encourage, facilitate and coordinate the planning and implementation of parks, recreational and historic preservation activities and programs of state agencies.
4. Cooperate in the planning, organization, development and operation of municipal and private park, recreational and historic preservation projects and programs.
7. Undertake surveys or analyses deemed appropriate for the performance of the functions, powers and duties of the office through office personnel or consultants, or in cooperation with any public or private agencies.
- 7-a. Promulgate a comprehensive plan for the establishment of a statewide trails system. For the purposes of this subdivision “trails” shall include footpaths, bike ways, snowmobile trails, horse trails, cross country ski trails, roads and other rights-of-way suitable for hiking, strolling, cycling, horseback riding, skiing and other means of motorized and non-motorized travel for recreational purposes and shall include combinations and systems of trails, including connecting and side trails, and trails leading to scenic and recreational areas. The commissioner, with the approval of the director of the budget, may, within the appropriations made available by the legislature, purchase such abandoned railroad rights-of-way as can be used in the comprehensive plan, and make improvements where necessary, in order to make them suitable and available for use as trails.
11. When designated by the governor, act as the state agent for the receipt and administration of any federal grant or advance of funds for the assistance of any project, program or activity related to the functions, powers and duties of the office, where the designation of a state agent is required under federal law or regulation, regardless of whether the project, program or activity is undertaken by the office or another person.

§ 3.15 Statewide park and recreation plan.

1. The office shall formulate, maintain and from time to time revise a statewide park and recreation plan.

2. The office shall submit such plan and periodic revisions of such plan to the Department of State and to the Governor. The Department of State shall review such plan and such revisions and shall submit a report thereon, together with such recommendations as it may deem appropriate, to the Governor. Such plan and revisions shall become effective upon approval by the Governor and shall serve thereafter as a guide for the development, protection and management of parks and recreation facilities.

2-a. Such plan and revision shall include the results of a survey of local park and recreation programs throughout the state that identify local park or recreation services which are unique, innovative or budget-effective and which may be readily adaptive to other localities. The findings from each such survey shall be maintained by the Office until such subsequent revision and shall be readily available to local governments and their parks and recreation agencies.

2-b. Such plan shall describe the existing natural, ecological, historic, cultural and recreational resources within the state park, recreation and historic site system. It shall also identify any threats to the quality of these resources and the types of actions that will be taken to eliminate or substantially reduce such threats.

3. In formulating such plan and any such revisions, the Office may:

(a) Conduct one or more public hearings;

(b) Consult with and cooperate with:

(i) officials of departments and agencies of the State having duties and responsibilities concerning parks and recreation;

(ii) officials and representatives of the federal government, of neighboring states and of interstate agencies having duties and responsibilities relating to parks and recreation in this state;

(iii) officials and representatives of local government in the state;

(iv) officials and representatives of science, industry, education;

(v) persons, organizations and groups, public, or private, utilizing, served by, interested in or concerned with parks and recreation of the state; and

(c) Request and receive from any department, division, board bureau, commission or other agency of the State or any political subdivision thereof or any public authority such assistance and data as may be necessary to enable the office to carry out its responsibilities under this section.

Title C – Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Article 13 – (13.01 – 13.30) General Provisions

13.23 Land and Water Conservation Fund; state agent.

1. Office designated as state agent. The office is hereby designated to represent and act for the state in dealing with the federal secretary of the interior and other appropriate federal officers, agencies and authorities in connection with the federal land and water conservation fund act of nineteen hundred sixty-five and acts amendatory or supplemental thereto.

2. Powers of the office as state agent. The office, as agent of the state as herein provided, is hereby authorized and empowered:

(a) On behalf of the state or any agency thereof, to apply to any appropriate agency or officer of the federal government for participation in or the receipt of federal aid pursuant to such federal act, and to make such agreements with the federal government or any appropriate agency or officer thereof, not inconsistent with law, as may be necessary as a condition precedent to receiving such federal aid for a project, provided that the office shall not make a commitment or enter into any agreement pursuant to this paragraph until the director of the budget certifies that sufficient funds are available for meeting the state share, if any, of the cost of the project.

(b) On behalf of any municipality eligible under federal law or regulation, to enter into and administer such agreements with the federal government or any appropriate agency or officer thereof as may be necessary as a condition precedent for receiving such federal aid for a project, provided that such municipality give necessary assurances to the office, in the form of a written agreement, that such municipality has available sufficient funds to meet its share of the cost of the project, and that the project will be operated and maintained at its expense for the required public use.

3. Custody and payment of funds.

(a) The department of taxation and finance is hereby designated as the custodian of all federal funds allotted to the state pursuant to such federal act, and such funds shall be payable only on the audit and warrant of the state comptroller on the certificate of the commissioner, or the commissioner of environmental conservation for projects undertaken by the department of environmental conservation, in accordance with a certificate of approval of availability issued by the director of the budget.

(b) An agreement with a municipality pursuant to paragraph of subdivision two of this section may provide for an advance in the first instance, when funds are appropriated and available therefor, of an amount equal to the federal share of the cost of a local project subject to full reimbursement being made to the state by the federal government. Whenever the federal government shall subsequently disallow or disapprove any portion or all of the federal aid advanced by the state, such municipality shall reimburse the state in full for all expenditures advanced by the state which have not theretofore been reimbursed by the federal government. If such municipality shall fail to repay the state within one year after notice of such disapproval or disallowance, the state comptroller shall cause to be withheld from state assistance to which such municipality would otherwise be entitled, an amount sufficient to reimburse the state in full, and shall credit the same to the capital construction fund in repayment of such advance.

(c) In the event that any appropriations are made to the office or the department of environmental conservation from the capital construction fund for the payment in the first instance by the state of the federal share of the cost of a project, the state comptroller shall be authorized to receive from the federal government an amount of money equal to the amounts of money expended by the state from such appropriations made for such first instance payments and to deposit the same to the credit of the capital construction fund so that the state shall be reimbursed for the full amount of any and all such first instance payments from such appropriations.

4. Allocation of monies. The monies allocated to the state pursuant to such federal act, during each federal fiscal year, shall be apportioned by the commissioner of parks, recreation and historic preservation, with the approval of the director of the budget, between the state and its political subdivisions as the need may appear, provided that the projects of the political subdivisions qualify for federal assistance pursuant to such federal act and any rules and regulations which may be adopted by the commissioner.

Article 19 – (19.01 – 19.11) Historic Sites

19.03 Powers, functions and duties; commissioner.

In addition to the powers, functions and duties provided for in Article 3, section 3.09, the commissioner shall:

1. Act as the liaison officer on historic preservation matters pursuant to the provisions of any applicable federal law or regulation.
2. Develop and maintain a statewide comprehensive survey and plan for historic preservation.
3. Be authorized to establish and maintain a state register of historic sites and objects.
4. Cooperate with the Department of Education and the New York State Freedom Trail Commission in the performance of their duties in connection with the Freedom Trail and Underground Railroad.

New York State Legislature, Laws of New York:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PAR/TC>.

APPENDIX B – STATE NATURE AND HISTORICAL PRESERVES

Lands dedicated as State Nature and Historic Preserves (as referred to in Section 4 of Article XIV of the State Constitution) are state-owned lands acquired to protect the biological diversity of plants, animals and natural communities. They may be used as field laboratories for observation and education, while protecting places of historic and natural interest.

These areas, which may be used for passive recreational pursuits by the public, are intended to be put to their highest, best and most important use, for one or more of the following purposes, which are enumerated in Section 45-0117 of the Environmental Conservation Law:

- As natural communities for maintaining plants, animals and natural communities, including preservation of old-growth forests dedicated to the preserve specifically for that purpose;
- As reservoirs of natural materials and ecological processes that contribute to the state's biological diversity;
- As field laboratories for scientific research and education in the natural sciences, including the fields of biology, conservation, ecology, natural history and paleontology; and
- As places of natural and historical interest and beauty which provide the public with passive recreational opportunities including, where appropriate, fishing, hunting and trapping, or commercial fishing opportunities that are compatible with protecting the ecological significance, historic features and natural character of the area.

NAME	TOWN	COUNTY
Skenoh Island	Canandaigua	Ontario
Showy Lady Slipper Parcel	New Hudson	Allegany
Parish Gully	Italy	Yates
Clark Gully	Middlesex and Italy	Yates
Cicero Swamp	Cicero	Onondaga
Labrador Hollow	Fabius/Truxton	Onondaga/Cortland
Reinstein Woods	Cheektowaga	Erie
Bog Brook	Southeast and Patterson	Putnam
The Oak Brush Plains State Preserve	Babylon and Huntington	Suffolk
David A. Sarnoff Pine Barrens	Southampton	Suffolk
Rocky Point Natural Resource Management Area	Brookhaven	Suffolk
Albany Pine Bush Preserve	City of Albany, Colonie, Guilderland	Albany
Camillus Forest Unique Area	Camillus	Onondaga
Zoar Valley Unique Area	Otto and Persia/Collins	Cattaraugus/Erie

APPENDIX C – PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

New York State offers a wide range of recreational landscapes – from the Adirondack and Catskill mountains to the canals and lakes of Central New York to the sandy shores of Long Island, and myriad natural and built environments in between. As described in Chapter 2, these parks and recreation areas are managed by numerous entities, including counties, municipalities, DEC, OGS, the Canal Corporation, DOT, and OPRHP, among many others.

Listed below are agencies, programs, and initiatives that impact the quality and availability of recreation and open space resources in the State of New York. These include programs traditionally associated with recreation, as well as contemporary initiatives designed to increase physical activity, promote active transportation, and create a more resilient New York State. While this list aims to represent the breadth of recreation providers in NYS, it is not exhaustive, and other programs, agencies, and initiatives are likely to contribute to recreation in the State.

Adirondack Park Agency (APA)

<https://apa.ny.gov>

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was created in 1971 by the New York State Legislature to develop long-range land use plans for both public and private lands within the boundary of the Adirondack Park. The APA is a New York State governmental agency with an eleven-member board, and a staff consisting of 54 people. The Agency Board meets monthly to act on Park policy issues and permit applications. Agency Board meetings are held on the second Thursday and Friday of each month and are open to the public.

Canal Corporation (Canal Corp)

www.canals.ny.gov

The Canal Corp, a subsidiary of the New York Power Authority, is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and promotion of New York's Canal system, which includes four historic canals: the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, and Cayuga-Seneca. Spanning 524 miles, the canal system links the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes, and Lake Champlain. The canals and adjoining Canalway Trails connect hundreds of unique and historic communities across upstate New York and provide a world-class recreation-way and commercial waterway that fosters recreation, tourism, and economic development. Additionally, water resources in the Canal system are used for public water supplies, industrial uses, research and development, agriculture, and hydroelectric power generation.

Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM)

Animals

<https://agriculture.ny.gov/animals>

AGM's Division of Animal Industry ensures animal and public health through the control and eradication of infectious diseases in livestock and poultry. AGM has staff in Albany and inspectors and veterinarians located across the state who administer animal disease programs and conduct periodic inspections for animal diseases that may threaten agriculture in New York.

Plants & Natural Resources

<https://agriculture.ny.gov/plant-industry/plant-health>

AGM's Division of Plant Industry protects New York's plant and crop health by detecting and preventing the spread of diseases and harmful invasive species, promoting integrated pest management, and

regulating the sale of seeds and fertilizers. The Division conducts inspections of nurseries, orchards, greenhouses, sawmills, apiaries, and more to identify and mitigate potential threats to New York's plant industry.

Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

Adventure NY Initiative

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/adventure-ny/infrastructure-improvements>

The Adventure NY initiative was launched in 2017 to connect more New York families and visitors to the great outdoors by making strategic investments to improve and expand access to DEC lands, waters, and facilities. The initiative has also grown to include a suite of programs and efforts that are promoting an inclusive recreation experience for all and showcasing the unique and diverse outdoor recreation opportunities found on DEC lands and waters. These include I BIRD NY, the NYS Birding Trail, Get Outdoors & Get Together Day, the Catskills Fire Tower Challenge, and other statewide recreation and stewardship events.

Environmental Justice

<https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/environmental-justice>

The term “environmental justice” refers to the need for fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, and having a voice regarding the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The State created an Environmental Justice (EJ) Program in 1999 following tremendous advocacy from environmental justice interested parties. Access to outdoor recreational opportunities is essential to quality of life and positive health outcomes. However, many people, especially those in minority and low-income areas have inadequate access to these opportunities. EJ efforts focus on providing opportunities for meaningful involvement of communities that have been historically excluded from environmental decision-making that affects their daily lives.

First-Time Camper Weekend Program

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/camping/first-time-camper-weekend-program>

DEC provides free First-Time Camper weekends throughout the summer. New York families that have never camped before have the opportunity to see if they enjoy the great outdoors before investing in their own gear by registering for their chance to participate at a select DEC campground for a designated weekend. New campers are provided with a tent, sleeping bags and pads, camp chairs, a lantern, and firewood. Camping Ambassadors meet the families at the campsite and guide them through set up with a “Camping 101” lesson. Participants can also learn how to fish, hike, bird watch, paddle, and more from experts. In 2023, over 100 New Yorkers participated in the Program during 9 weekend events at DEC Campgrounds in the Adirondacks and Catskills.

Invasive Species Council and Advisory Committee

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/invasive-species/resources-regulations/invasive-species-council-and-advisory-committee>

The Invasive Species Council (Council) is a statutory body that was created in 2008 by Title 17, Section 9 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL). The Council was created to coordinate among multiple State entities and partners in addressing the environmental and economic threats of invasive species. The legislation defines invasive species as “a species that is: (a) non-native to the ecosystem

under consideration; and (b) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

The Invasive Species Advisory Committee (Committee) was also created in 2008 to provide information, advice, and guidance to the Invasive Species Council. Up to 25 members from interested organizations described or specified in the law constitute the Committee.

Junior Naturalist Program

<https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/education/kids-go/junior-naturalist-program>

Children five through twelve years old can request a Junior Naturalist Journal at participating campgrounds. The journal is separated into two sections: one for younger children (5-8 years old) and one for older children (9 and up). Activities for younger children are usually marked by an acorn surrounding the page number, whereas an oak tree indicates activities for older children. Once completed, children can bring their journals to the appropriate DEC staff person to receive a Junior Naturalist patch.

Ocean Action Plan

The **Ocean Action Plan 2017-2027** (OAP) – A coordinated effort by the DEC to maintain healthy ocean ecosystems and promote sustainable growth while increasing the resilience of ocean resources. Provides guidance on mitigating the effects of shoreline erosion, severe storms, and sea-level rise.

State of the Ocean 2023: A Five-Year Review of Ocean Action Plan Implementation was published five years later.

Universal Access Program

<https://dec.ny.gov/places-to-go/accessible-recreation>

DEC welcomes all visitors to explore outdoor recreation on state lands and is committed to providing an ever-increasing range of accessible opportunities. Currently, visitors to DEC's accessible facilities can enjoy fishing, boating, hunting, picnicking, horseback riding, hiking, visiting historic assets, wildlife observation, and camping at DEC campgrounds and primitive areas.

Department of Health (DOH)

NYS Prevention Agenda

www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2025-2030

Recreation resources contribute to public health by providing opportunities for people to be outdoors and physically active. Regular physical activity can contribute to a decrease in the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, some forms of cancer, osteoporosis, obesity, depression, arthritis, and possibly Alzheimer's disease. The DOH's Prevention Agenda 2025-2030 provides a blueprint for state and local action to improve the health of New Yorkers in five priority areas and to reduce health disparities for racial, ethnic, disability, and low socioeconomic groups, as well as other populations who experience them.

One priority of the Prevention Agenda is the development of environments that encourage healthy physical activity. Increasing the number of municipalities that adopt the **U.S. Department of Transportation's "Complete Streets"** policies, for instance, can create a stronger network of pedestrian, trail and bike routes. Public health can be improved by designing and retrofitting communities in ways that result in safer places to walk and bike. Now in its third cycle, the Prevention Agenda is updated by the NYS Public Health and Health Planning Council.

Executive Order 190

In 2018, the Governor issued **EO 190**, an executive order that directs state agencies to include consideration of the NYS Department of Health’s **NYS Prevention Agenda** priorities, and the **AARP/World Health Organization’s** “eight domains of livability” for age-friendly communities, in federal and state planning and agency policies, procedures, and procurements. The intent of EO 190 is to ensure that the principles of healthy communities are embedded into the fabric of state government—including parks and recreational resources—with a goal of creating communities that support and attract people of all ages.

Water Quality and Safety

<https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/swimming>

NYS has over 8,000 public bathing facilities, including bathing beaches on lakes, ponds, rivers, and the ocean; swimming pools, including kiddie pools, diving pools, wave pools, and others; and spray grounds. Millions of patrons visit these bathing facilities each year. Public swimming pools, bathing beaches, and spray grounds are permitted and inspected by local health departments per the New York State Sanitary Code and must meet specific health and safety requirements. There are also public bathing facilities operated by the DEC and OPRHP. Regulated bathing facilities are regularly monitored for safety and health and are required to provide bather supervision, which may include lifeguards and lifesaving equipment.

Department of State (DOS)

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)

<https://dos.ny.gov/local-waterfront-revitalization-program>

The DOS encourages waterfront communities to prepare a comprehensive land and water use plan, known as a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, to develop a vision and incorporate State Coastal Policies that reflect local or regional needs. Each LWRP outlines the local organizational structure and laws and defines projects necessary to implement the plan, including trails and public access projects. Developing a LWRP allows community members to evaluate local waterfront resources, develop goals and establish a comprehensive strategy for the best use of those resources; propose future projects, and adopt a local program to guide appropriate development while protecting natural and cultural resources. Preparing and implementing an LWRP helps communities develop a consensus-driven, unified vision for the community; receive technical assistance; increase chances for obtaining financial assistance from public and private funding sources, and coordinate reviews between federal, state, and local agencies for projects and government actions within the LWRP boundary.

Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program

Administered by the NYS Department of State (DOS), Division of Coastal Resources and Waterfront Revitalization, the program integrates state and local government capabilities into an enforceable program for the Sound. It complements the Long Island Sound Study Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, which focuses on water quality in the Sound’s deep waters by addressing the upland watershed, harbor, and nearshore waters.

Office of Planning and Development

The DOS partners with local governments, community-based organizations, business leaders, academic institutions, neighborhood associations, and state and federal agencies to advance local and regional economic growth while managing coastal and inland waterway resources. Its programs address waterfront redevelopment; expanding visual/physical public access to the water; protecting

natural and cultural resources, including habitats, water quality, historic and scenic resources, and the provision of water-dependent uses, including recreational boating, fishing, and swimming. The office provides both financial and technical assistance to proactively address issues affecting communities.

Smart Growth Program

<https://dos.ny.gov/nys-smart-growth-program>

The DOS is committed to approaching community planning and development in a way that integrates the economy, equity, the environment, and energy. Together, these form the foundation of the smart growth principles to ensure that land use planning creates livable, sustainable, and equitable communities. This can include making sure communities are walkable and bikeable, ensuring development is focused in areas appropriate for higher densities; using green infrastructure and nature-based stormwater management; encouraging public art; and creating safe, accessible public spaces. By preparing Smart Growth comprehensive plans and zoning regulations communities can set a course for clean, affordable, and reliable energy and transportation; safe and energy-efficient businesses; protection of farmland and forestlands to avoid conversion of lands; and overall create healthy communities.

State Coastal Management Program

<https://dos.ny.gov/state-coastal-management-program>

The NYS Coastal Management Program describes the boundaries of the State Coastal Area; explains how the State coastal uses and resources will be managed; identifies resources and concerns; and provides a set of enforceable policies to be followed by State and Federal Agencies when undertaking actions that may affect these uses and resources. The program includes a list of 44 policies that either promote the beneficial use of coastal resources, prevent their impairment, or deal with major activities that substantially affect numerous resources.

Department of Transportation (DOT)

Active Transportation Strategic Plan (Formerly the DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan)

<https://www.nysdotwalkbikeplan.com>

The federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) recognized the increasingly important role of bicycling and walking in creating a balanced, intermodal transportation system for the country. Subsequent federal transportation bills, including the 2001 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFTEA-LU), MAP-21, FAST Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law have all reaffirmed the importance of promoting increased use of non-motorized transportation modes to the nation's overall health, economy, and transportation choices. It is the goal of the New York State DOT to continue to encourage bicycling and walking as safe, healthy, efficient, and cost-effective modes of transportation. In 2023, DOT embarked on a two-year comprehensive effort to update its 1997 New York State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and 2010 Pedestrian and Bicycle Policy, to provide policy and implementation level direction, guidance, and performance measures to help guide future strategic decisions. The plan will be focused on DOT-owned transportation network and facilities and, rather than being limited to pedestrians and bicyclists, will use the more inclusive term, Active Transportation Strategic Plan.

Scenic Byways Program

www.dot.ny.gov/display/programs/scenic-byways/programs

Since 1992, the NYS Scenic Byways Program, administered by DOT's Landscape Architecture Bureau, has encouraged both economic development and conservation of the State's scenic, natural, recreational, cultural, and historic resources. Since its inception, the program has facilitated partnerships among state agencies, local and county governments, private citizens, business owners, and not-for-profit organizations. The Program fosters extensive public involvement and encourages local communities to become stewards of their byway's resources and enhance tourism and recreation.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau/tap-cmaq/tap-cmaq-2021>

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) was created as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141). The program provides funding for a variety of small-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; turnout construction; overlooks and viewing areas; community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management; environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity; recreational trails; safe routes to school (SRTS) projects and vulnerable road user safety assessments.

TAP funding helps communities deliver safe, transformative, and innovative transportation projects that expand, enhance, and modernize walking and bicycling options and connections to transit. Projects funded by this program offer alternatives to single occupancy vehicle (SOV) transportation and contribute to the revitalization of local and regional economies. Projects are expected to improve mobility, accessibility, and the community's transportation character such that the street network is more vibrant, walkable, and safer for all transportation mode users: pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)

<https://www.ferc.gov>

FERC is an independent agency that regulates interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. The Commission also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, interstate natural gas pipelines, and hydropower projects. Under the Federal Water Power Act of 1920, as amended by the Federal Power Act of 1935 (FPA), licensees of FERC-regulated properties are responsible for operating and maintaining the energy project in a manner that is consistent with the purposes identified in the license requirements, which may include public access and public recreation. Additionally, OPRHP partners with FERC to ensure compliance with FERC-regulated properties that abut State Parks.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve (HRNERR)**

<https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/reserves/udson-river.html>

Designated in 1982, HRNERR is one of 29 reserves established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to promote informed management of the nation's estuaries and coastal habitats. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System works with existing federal and

state authorities to establish and operate research reserves and provide for their long-term protection and stewardship. The DEC is the lead state agency for the NYS Reserve, which includes 5,000 acres of subtidal, intertidal, and upland habitats distributed across four component sites: Piermont Marsh, Iona Island, Tivoli Bays, and Stockport Flats. The Reserve headquarters, located at the Norrie Point Environmental Center in Staatsburg NY, offers public interpretive exhibits, classroom space, and educational programs.

Sea Grant

<https://seagrants.noaa.gov/About>

Sea Grant is a nationwide network, administered through NOAA, of 34 university-based programs that work with coastal communities. Sea Grant's mission is to enhance the use and conservation of coastal, marine, and Great Lakes resources to create a strong and sustainable economy, a healthy environment, and resilient and inclusive communities. The National Sea Grant College Program engages this network of the nation's top universities in conducting scientific research, education, training, and projects designed to inform science-based decisions about the use and conservation of our aquatic resources.

National Park Service (NPS)

National Heritage Areas and Corridors

www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/index.htm

National Heritage Areas and Corridors are aimed at conserving America's rich culture and history. As of 2024, there are 62 Heritage Areas or Corridors around the country. All National Heritage Areas and Corridors must complete a management plan that sets forth its goals, objectives, programs, and management entity. This plan is approved by the Secretary of the Interior and requires local input, review, and approvals before completion. The role of the National Park Service, depending on the enabling legislation, may include providing technical, planning, and staff assistance, funding, and review and approval of the management plan. There are three designated areas located completely within New York State—the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. A fourth heritage area, the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership stretches between the Adirondacks in New York and the Green Mountains in Vermont.

New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP)

<https://www.nynhp.org>

A partnership with the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, the DEC, and OPRHP, the NYNHP's mission is to facilitate the conservation of rare animals, rare plants, and significant ecosystems. This is done by focused field inventories, scientific analyses, expert interpretation, and providing a database on the location and status of rare species and natural communities—the most comprehensive database of its kind in the state. These resources provide information critical for natural resource planning, protection, and management.

iMapInvasives

<https://www.imapinvasives.org/>

The NYNHP also administers iMapInvasives as the official invasive species database for New York State. iMapInvasives is a collaborative web-based mapping system used by community scientists,

members of the public, and resource professionals to report invasive species locations, document management efforts, and track species distributions over time. NYNHP works closely with partners across the state to collect and manage invasive species data and provides analytical tools to empower partners to incorporate invasive species data into management strategies.

New York Power Authority (NYPA)

<https://www.nypa.gov>

NYPA is the largest state power organization in the country, with 16 generating facilities and more than 1,400 circuit miles of transmission lines across the state. OPRHP and NYPA partner at several facilities to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, including Mine Kill State Park, Robert Moses State Park, Reservoir State Park, and the Jones Beach Energy & Nature Center.

Office for the Aging (OFA)

www.aging.ny.gov

The office's mission is to help older New Yorkers be as independent as possible for as long as possible through advocacy, development, and delivery of person-centered, consumer-oriented, and cost-effective policies, programs, and services that support and empower older adults and their families, in partnership with the network of public and private organizations that serve them. Through its network of 59 "Area Agencies on Aging," the agency manages programs and services for health promotion, disease prevention, and recreation that help foster an active, healthy lifestyle for older adults statewide.

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main>

The mission of the OCFS is to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, families, and communities. This is achieved by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services. OCFS is an independent agency and includes the Division of Child Care Services, Division of Child Welfare and Community Services, Division of Youth Development and Partnerships for Success, Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth, Commission for the Blind, and the Bureau of Adult Services.

New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB) Summer Recreation Program

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/nyscb/programs/summer-rec.php>

NYSCB sponsors several summer camps and recreational opportunities for youth who are legally blind. These programs serve both as recreational vehicles and as tools for developing initiative and enhancing social skills and self-esteem. Program participation helps youth who are legally blind to integrate and function independently in a social environment, key to success in future employment endeavors.

Office of General Services (OGS)

<https://ogs.ny.gov>

OGS was established in 1960 to provide essential support services for the operations of state government. The office performs a wide range of functions including managing and leasing real property; designing and building facilities; handling contracts for goods, services, and technology; and delivering a broad scope of critical services for agencies. In terms of outdoor recreation, OGS facilitates

the transfer of jurisdiction of State lands to county or local governments for listed purposes such as park, recreation, and playground areas, among other functions that either directly or indirectly influence outdoor recreation in NYS.

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Accessibility

Accessibility for People with Disabilities

As described in Chapter 2 – The New York State Outdoor Recreation System, OPRHP is committed to continuously expanding the range of inclusive, accessible recreation opportunities at New York State Parks and Historic Sites. Examples include:

- A free hop-on/hop-off shuttle service at Niagara Falls State Park takes passengers along a 14-mile route from the falls to Old Fort Niagara Historic Site. Launched in 2016, the shuttles are wheelchair, stroller, and bicycle-friendly, and offer free Wi-Fi service.
- Beach mats, used at beachfront facilities throughout the NYS Parks system (including multiple oceanfront beaches in the Long Island Region as well as several lakefront facilities in Upstate New York) provide improved access to sandy beaches.
- Accessible playgrounds that include ground-level and transfer features as well as ramps have been installed at numerous facilities throughout the NYS park system.
- The Autism Nature Trail (ANT) at Letchworth State Park invites visitors of all ages and abilities to explore the outdoors. Opened to the public in 2021, the trail is a first-of-its-kind experience in nature designed for visitors on the autism spectrum. The trail was created to encourage inclusivity, combat social isolation, encourage skill-building, and provide a connection to the natural world.
- Accessible trails that meet the United States Access Board's Accessibility Standards in terms of grade, cross-slope, trail surface, gate openings, tread obstacles, passing spaces, resting intervals, protruding objects, and trailheads can be found throughout the NYS park system.
- Adaptive equipment, such as beach wheelchairs that can be used to access beachfront facilities or adapted for cross country skiing, are available at an ever-increasing number of facilities.

For the most up-to-date information regarding accessible features or amenities at a specific state park, historic site, or golf course, contacting the property directly is recommended. General questions regarding accessibility at NYS Parks and Historic Sites can be submitted through the [accessibility page](#) of the OPRHP website.

Equitable Access

Partnerships between public transit providers and OPRHP provide alternative transportation methods to reach New York State Parks and Historic Sites.

On Long Island, a low-cost express bus operated by Nassau Inter-County Express (NICE) runs between the Freeport Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) station and Jones Beach, operating daily from late May through the end of September. Service is available from the Hempstead Transit Center on weekends. One-way fare is \$2.90 and those traveling from NYC can purchase a combo train/NICE bus ticket.

The Albany Nature Bus is a collaborative effort between the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), the Albany Pine Bush Preserve, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, OPRHP, DEC, and Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm. The Nature Bus runs on Saturdays from May through October and is free to all customers. The bus alternates between two routes, the Warbler and Beaver Lines, delivering visitors

to several parks and nature preserves in the Capital Region on a rotating basis, including Thacher State Park on select Saturdays.

In the Buffalo area, the Parks Adventure Bus provides free transportation to one park each Saturday on a rotating basis, including Fort Niagara, Beaver Island, and Evangola State Parks. The Parks Adventure Bus is a partnership between the DEC, OPRHP, Erie County Parks Department, and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA-Metro).

Launched in April of 2024, the Ulster County Nature Bus runs on Saturdays, and alternates between the River, Ridge, and Mountain routes. State Parks accessible by the Nature Bus include Sojourner Truth State Park, Walkway Over the Hudson State Park, and Minnewaska State Park Preserve, depending on the route. Both transportation and admission to the parks are free and all Nature Bus routes include destinations for people of all ages and abilities.

Boating

With the number of recreational boaters on the rise, there is a need to continue boater education and enforcement programs to ensure all boaters can safely enjoy the water. OPRHP is the designated agency responsible for ensuring the coordination of the State's boating safety and enforcement programs.

Anti-theft Program

OPRHP administers a program to assign hull identification numbers (HINs) to vessels that are homemade, unidentifiable, or otherwise do not have valid HINS issued by a boat manufacturer. Vessels with motors (electric or fuel-driven) must be registered with the DMV regardless of the size of the motor or boat. A state-issued HIN is required to register a vessel with the DMV. Vessels without a motor, such as paddle crafts, do not need HINs unless registration is desired.

Boating Safety Courses

Under Brianna's Law, as of January 1st, 2025, all motorboat operators regardless of age need a boating safety certificate. Approved courses include those offered by OPRHP, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadrons, or U.S. Powerboating. Approximately 6,000 boating safety certificates are earned in classroom courses each year. Another 20,000+ certificates are earned each year in NYS through approved online course providers.

Boating Safety Outreach

OPRHP participates in national movements such as the WEAR IT campaign, which encourages the use of lifejackets and educates people about the safety benefits of wearing a lifejacket. OPRHP has also utilized social media, radio, TV, billboards, publications, and promotional items to tailor the program, WEAR IT NEW YORK message. Face-to-face contact with the boating public is made at local events across the state, including the New York National Boat Show, the NYS Fair, and several smaller venues.

Marine Law Enforcement Assistance

OPRHP has two programs to assist marine law enforcement agencies and enhance boating safety efforts throughout the state. The State Navigation program allocates \$2,000,000 a year from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to help fund marine law enforcement patrols. Parks also conducts a Patrol Vessel Leasing Program, where vessels are purchased for and loaned to marine law enforcement agencies.

Marine Law Enforcement Training

OPRHP hosts several marine law enforcement training programs each year. The training is open to police and peace officers from federal, state, and local agencies and includes the following programs:

- Marine Law Enforcement (MLE) – A week-long program for approximately 40 officers per class; attendees learn the basics of the various laws pertaining to marine law enforcement and how to properly conduct a vessel boarding.
- Marine Patrol Vessel Operator Course (MPVOC) – This program builds on what is offered in the MLE but has a much more practical component and instructs officers in proper techniques for operating a patrol vessel as well as towing another vessel.
- Personal Watercraft Operator Course (PWC) – A 2½-day program designed to teach the basics of operating a personal watercraft and the unique challenges of using a PWC as a patrol vessel.
- Tactical Vessel Operations Course (TVOC) – A 2-day program geared toward operating a vessel where high-speed maneuvers or pursuit situations are involved. MSB usually offers 2 courses per year and can accommodate 10-15 officers in each course.
- Seated Battery Course - An 8-hour program that offers specialized training in the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests that can be conducted in the marine environment and focus on enforcement of boating while intoxicated statutes as written in the Navigation Law.

Navigational Aids and Buoys

<https://www.parks.ny.gov/boating/floating-objects.aspx>

OPRHP funds staff, equipment, and materials to place and remove channel markers and danger buoys on New York's sole state waterways. The navigational aids indicate where boats can safely navigate when heading to or returning from open water.

Public Vessel Program

Each year, OPRHP inspects over 400 Public Vessels (i.e., commercial, passenger-carrying vessels) on NYS lakes. These range from Jet Skis and small fishing boats to Lake George's steamboats that can carry over 1,000 passengers. The Marine Services Bureau administers tests and issues licenses to the operators of public vessels.

Regulatory Permit Program

OPRHP issues Regatta (Marine Event) permits on navigable waters of NYS for races, demonstrations, and parades ensuring that events are conducted safely and do not negatively impact navigation in the area. OPRHP also issues floating object permits which include items in the water other than Aids to Navigation, such as mooring buoys, waterski slalom courses, swim floats, swimming area enclosures, and more.

Empire State Games

Sports and athletic competitions encourage citizens of all ages to be physically active; the goal of these programs is to provide a range of organized opportunities for recreation and competition at a variety of levels. These competitions take place across the state at various times throughout the year.

The Empire State Winter Games, held in Lake Placid, offer dozens of sports in Olympic-style competitions in a vibrant, walkable winter destination. Many of the same venues used in the 1980 Winter Olympic Games are enjoyed by the Games' participants and spectators today.

The **Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged** offer opportunities in a variety of sports for young athletes with physical challenges. The games are held on Long Island and in Brockport, with various clinics statewide.

The **Empire State Senior Games** are for men and women 50 years of age or older. Held at SUNY Cortland, seniors compete in a wide variety of sports, activities, and social events. The Senior Games program is the only New York State qualifier for the National Senior Sports Classic.

First Day Hikes

<https://parks.ny.gov/events/first-day-hikes.aspx>

Created in Massachusetts in 1992, First Day Hikes has since spread to all 50 states and has become a popular way to celebrate the 1st day of the year – outdoors. Each year, OPRHP, DEC, and the Canal Corp invite New Yorkers to participate in guided and self-guided hikes at state parks, historic sites, wildlife areas, trails, and public lands across the Empire State.

Heritage Areas

New York State has a rich and varied cultural heritage that is recognized on the federal, state, and local levels through preservation, interpretation, designation, and programming. Good programming helps to preserve our heritage, enrich our communities, and promote cultural tourism.

New York State Designated Heritage Areas and Corridors

<https://parks.ny.gov/grants/heritage-areas/default.aspx>

The Heritage Area System is a state-local partnership established to preserve and develop areas that have special significance to NYS. From the Great Lakes to the eastern tip of Long Island, the Heritage Areas encompass significant natural, historic, and cultural resources. Heritage Area Visitor Centers are found in many regions. Grant funding is available through OPRHP to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore lands, waters, or structures, identified in the approved management plans for Heritage Areas designated under section 35.03 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law and for structural assessments or planning for such projects.

Pass Programs

Access Pass

<https://parks.ny.gov/admission/access-pass>

The Access Pass permits residents of New York State with disabilities, as defined in the application, free or discounted use of state-operated parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities managed by OPRHP and DEC. The pass holder must be present and may have free or discounted use of facilities operated by these offices, for which there is normally a charge. The Access Pass is not valid for amenities, including some services or locations operated by an outside concessionaire. The Access Pass is valid for four years from the date of issuance and provides access to most state parks and DEC-operated day-use areas, state-operated boat launch sites, arboretums, and park preserves.

Empire Pass

<https://parks.ny.gov/admission/empire-passport/default.aspx>

The Empire Pass can be used from the date of purchase through December 31 of the year it expires and provides unlimited day-use vehicle entry to most state parks and DEC-operated day-use areas, state-operated boat launch sites, arboretums, and park preserves. Passes are available to purchase for

different lengths of time: annual (one-season), multi-season, or the Lifetime Empire Pass. New York State and non-New York State residents are eligible to purchase an Empire Pass.

Empire Pass: Patriot Plan Benefit

<https://parks.ny.gov/admission/patriot-plan-benefit/default.aspx>

Pursuant to New York State's Executive Order 125, issued by the Governor's Office, members of the New York State National Guard or Reserves who are currently serving on active duty in support of the war on terrorism are eligible for one free annual Empire Pass for use by their immediate family during deployment and/or their own use when returning home. The member must be a New York State resident. The Empire Pass can be used from the date of issuance through December 31 of the year it expires and provides unlimited day-use vehicle entry to most state parks and DEC-operated day-use areas, state-operated boat launch sites, arboretums, and park preserves.

Golden Park Program

<https://parks.ny.gov/admission/golden-park-program.aspx>

The Golden Park Program provides New York State residents 62 and older, free vehicle entry to most state parks and DEC-operated day-use areas, state-operated boat launch sites, arboretums, and park preserves, as well as a fee reduction to state historic sites and state-operated golf courses.

Lifetime Liberty Pass

<https://parks.ny.gov/admission/lifetime-liberty-pass.aspx>

The Lifetime Liberty Pass permits qualified New York State-resident Gold Star Families, and Veterans, with free or discounted use of state-operated parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by OPRHP and the DEC. Once issued, the Lifetime Liberty Pass will never have to be renewed.

The Lifetime Liberty Pass benefits include free vehicle entry to most state parks and DEC-operated day-use areas, state-operated boat launch sites, arboretums, and park preserves; free golf at state-operated golf courses; free swimming pool entrance at state-operated pools, and discounted camping and cabin rentals at most State Park and DEC campgrounds.

Snowmobiling

<https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/snowmobiles>

The NYS Snowmobile Program was legislated in response to public demand for places to ride snowmobiles. In 1985, the State Legislature mandated that OPRHP be given the responsibility to plan for the development and oversight of a statewide snowmobile program. It is the goal of the Snowmobile Unit to promote the maintenance of a safe and enjoyable statewide snowmobile trail system that works in harmony with the state's natural resources while promoting economic development and tourism.

There are over 10,500 miles in the Statewide Snowmobile Trail System traversing 45 counties, maintained by over 200 clubs, and is funded through 52 municipal sponsors. This vast trail network is comprised of lands under the jurisdiction of OPRHP, DEC, Canal Corp, national forest land, local governments, and many private landowners who have increasingly opened their property to snowmobiling with insurance coverage provided by the state snowmobile program.

Annual Free Snowmobiling Weekend Event

In 2023, the Governor announced the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in March of each year will be free for all out-of-state and Canadian snowmobilers. Out-of-state and Canadian participants must operate a snowmobile that is registered in their home state/Province and must carry any applicable

applicable insurance as required. Outside of this promotion, out-of-state and Canadian snowmobilers are required to register their snowmobiles with New York State before using the state's trails. OPRHP is involved in issuing a special event permit to cover all the out-of-state snowmobilers who have not registered with NYS DMV.

NYS SLEDS

Parks also conducts a five-day snowmobile training called the NYS Snowmobile Law Enforcement Development School (SLEDS). Each year, approximately 40 officers are trained via SLEDS in snowmobile operation, patrol, accident investigation, snowmobile laws, and safety procedures.

Safety Education

Completion of a snowmobile safety course is required for youth aged 10-14 and for those 14-17 years old if they wish to ride unaccompanied by an adult. OPRHP manages approximately 300 volunteer instructors who teach the classes. More than 100 courses are held annually and approximately 2,000 students receive certifications.

Snowmobile Guidance Documents

Reference documents for snowmobilers and trail maintenance entities, including the NYS Snowmobile Trail Signing Handbook, OPRHP Snowmobile Season Reports, OPRHP Snowmobile Units Accident Report, and the New York State Snowmobiler's Guide, are available on OPRHP's website here:

<https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/snowmobiles/documents.aspx>.

Snowmobile Trail Map

An interactive map of NYS snowmobile trails is available digitally through OPRHP:

<https://parks.ny.gov/recreation/snowmobiles/maps.aspx>.

Special Event Permits

OPRHP provides a special event permit to event organizers for them to hold events that require an exemption from certain provisions of law concerning speed, mufflers, lights, and registration. Typically, between 30 and 50 permits are issued annually. During the 2023-24 season, 31 permits were issued.

State Aid: Snowmobile Law Enforcement

OPRHP administers a grant of \$200,000 which reimburses local law enforcement agencies for the necessary resources to enforce snowmobile-related laws across the state.

State Aid: Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance

As of May 2024, the cost to register a snowmobile in New York State is \$135.00 (\$10 registration fee + \$125 Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund fee). If an individual provides proof of membership to an organized snowmobile club or Trail Maintenance Entity (TME) that is a member of the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA) at the time of registration, the cost to register a snowmobile is \$55.00 (\$10 registration fee + \$45 Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund fee). The trail maintenance fund fee is then distributed by OPRHP to approximately 52 Local Sponsors (i.e., counties, and municipalities) for trail grooming and maintenance activities.

Approximately \$4.8 million is awarded annually to these Local Sponsors, who in turn sub-allocate grant funds to over 200 volunteer snowmobile clubs to perform the work.

Office of Resilient Homes and Communities (HCR)

<https://hcr.ny.gov/resilient-homes-and-communities>

In October 2022, a permanent Office of Resilient Homes and Communities was announced, assuming the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery's portfolio. The Office of Resilient Homes and Communities strives to address communities' most urgent needs, while also encouraging the identification of innovative and enduring solutions to strengthen the State's infrastructure and critical systems. The office utilizes approximately \$4.4 billion in flexible funding made available by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. Thirty New York counties, impacted by Hurricane Irene, Tropical Storm Lee, or Hurricane Sandy, were eligible for storm-related financial assistance. A total of \$17 billion has been committed to repairing impacted homes and businesses, restoring community services, and mitigating future storm risks across New York State.

Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA)

<https://orda.org/>

ORDA was created by the New York State legislature to manage the facilities used during the 1980 Olympic Winter Games at Lake Placid. Today, ORDA operates multiple venues including the Olympic Center, Olympic Jumping Complex, Mt. Van Hoevenberg, Whiteface Mountain, Gore Mountain & Belleayre Mountain. ORDA offers complimentary skiing/riding for New York State Residents with disabilities who are holders of a valid New York State Access Pass. The Access Pass can be used to obtain either a daily lift/trail ticket or a season pass for Whiteface, Gore, or Belleayre, or for cross country skiing at Mount Van Hoevenberg.

Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs)

Eight Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs) across New York State work to prevent or minimize the harm caused by invasive species on New York's environment. New York State, authorized under Title 17, Environmental Conservation Law 9-1705(5)(g), formed and funded PRISMs in an effort to address invasive species. PRISMs coordinate invasive species management functions, including coordinating partner efforts; recruiting and training citizen volunteers; identifying and delivering education and outreach; establishing early detection and monitoring networks; and implementing direct eradication and control efforts.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Harbors of Refuge

www.nan.usace.army.mil

Lakes Erie and Ontario are subject to sudden squalls and high winds that can create waves and wakes over 10 feet. Several "harbors of refuge"—landing sites that accommodate transit craft (rather than home ports for local craft)—have been identified by USACE. Initially, the Army Corps recommended providing harbors of refuge every 30 miles. For smaller craft navigating the Great Lakes, however, it was determined that shorter intervals were more appropriate. Harbors of refuge have been established at Barcelona, Dunkirk, Cattaraugus Creek, Sturgeon Point and Buffalo Harbors on Lake Erie and Wilson-Tuscarora State Park, Olcott Harbor, Golden Hill State Park, Oak Orchard Marine Park,

Braddock Bay, Irondequoit Bay State Park, Port Bay, Little Sodus Bay, Mexico Point State Park, Port Ontario, Henderson Harbor and Sackets Harbor on Lake Ontario.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis

A program of the USDA, APHIS works to protect and promote U.S. agricultural health, regulating genetically engineered organisms, administering the U.S. Animal Welfare Act, and carrying out wildlife damage management activities. The APHIS Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) has a national survey program to ensure early detection of harmful or economically significant plant pests and weeds. The program works with states and universities through national, regional, and State-level committees to prioritize and fund projects. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is the coordinator of the CAPS program for New York State.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) Grants

<https://www.epa.gov/beach-tech/beach-grants>

EPA grants awarded under the authority of the BEACH Act aid eligible states, territories, and tribes with beaches on the ocean and Great Lakes coasts to develop and implement programs to monitor their beaches and notify the public when it is not safe to swim. During each swimming season, state and local health and environmental protection agencies monitor the quality of water at the nation's beaches. When bacteria levels exceed acceptable limits, these agencies notify the public by posting warnings or closing the beach.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

Nonindigenous Aquatic Species

<https://nas.er.usgs.gov/default.aspx>

The Nonindigenous Aquatic Species (NAS) is an information resource for the United States Geological Survey located in Gainesville, Florida. Established as a central repository for accurate and spatially referenced biogeographic accounts, the program provides scientific reports, real-time answers to questions, spatial data sets, distribution maps, and general information about introduced aquatic species in the U.S. The data are available for use by biologists, interagency groups, and the public.

Water Resources

The lakes, rivers, streams, and oceanfront areas of New York are all popular recreation destinations. The availability of water-based activities, however, can be constrained by limited public access or unsuitable water quality. A wide range of state and federal programs instated over the years have helped improve both water quality and access to major water recreation destinations. In the Great Lakes, Hudson River, Long Island Sound, and Lake Champlain, and in other smaller waterbodies across the state, better water quality has in turn led to improved quality of life and economic benefit to these regions.

Finger Lakes

The Finger Lakes Watershed

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/watersheds/oswego-river-finger-lakes>

The Oswego River/Finger Lakes Watershed is one of the largest in New York State and includes the drainages of the Oswego, Oneida, Seneca, and Clyde Rivers and most of the New York Finger Lakes. Its headwaters originate in the southwestern Adirondack Mountains in the east and along the northern edge of the Appalachian Plateau and flow across the central lowlands before emptying into Lake Ontario. The Finger Lakes region is characterized by its twelve narrow lakes, containing invaluable natural resources, including freshwater, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, and forests. As a result of these resources, the region is well known for agriculture, recreation, and tourism, highlighting the nexus between resource protection and the regional economy.

Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA)

<https://fllowpa.org/index.html>

FOLLOWPA is a coalition of 25 New York State counties partially or fully within the Lake Ontario Watershed. The organization's mission is to facilitate processes that encourage watershed partnerships and implementation of action plans to protect and enhance water quality. FOLLOWPA does this by promoting the sharing of information, data, ideas, and resources; fostering dynamic and collaborative watershed management programs and partnerships; and emphasizing a holistic, ecosystem-based approach to water quality improvement and protection.

Great Lakes

Preserving, conserving, and protecting the Great Lakes benefits public outdoor recreation use of the region. Improving water quality means better fish habitat, swimming opportunities, boating activities, and other water dependent recreation. The following programs contribute to regional efforts to protect the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Watershed

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/lakes-rivers/great-lakes>

New York State borders on two Great Lakes: Erie and Ontario. About 40% of the State's lands fall within the Great Lakes watershed, and more than 20% of its population resides within the basin. Recreation and tourism continue to be major contributors to the economy of the Great Lakes region. Increasing demand for swimming, boating, and fishing opportunities is placing more pressure on management agencies to clean up, maintain water levels, protect wildlife habitat, restore fish and wildlife populations, and provide more public access for improved public use of lake resources. Recreational use of the Great Lakes waters is often listed as "impaired" by DEC. With the anticipated expansion of recreational interests, greater demands will be placed upon existing facilities and resources in the region, many of which are not in sufficient supply or condition to satisfy increasing needs.

The Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers

<https://gsgp.org>

The Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers is comprised of political leaders from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Québec, and Wisconsin. As a cooperative effort between the public and private sectors among the states and

provinces, members work collectively to ensure that the Great Lakes region is economically sound and environmentally conscious when addressing today's issues and tomorrow's challenges.

Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA)

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/lakes-rivers/great-lakes/action-agenda>

NY's GLAA is a plan to conserve, restore, protect, and enhance NY's Great Lakes lands and waters. GLAA focuses on ecosystem-based management (EBM), a systems approach that balances the needs of people, nature, and the ecosystem through science. Released in 2023, the updated GLAA expands on the progress made with the GLAA 2014. Implementation of the GLAA relies on state and federal funding sources and a variety of partners, including but not limited to the DEC, Empire State Development, DOS, AGM, OGS, OPRHP, NYSEDA, DOT, DOH, and State University of New York (SUNY).

Great Lakes Basin Advisory Council (GLBAC)

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/lakes-rivers/great-lakes/glbac>

The GLBAC, established by statute in 1988, was formed to assist New York State in its effort to protect the environmental, social, and economic health of the Great Lakes Region and functions as a link between state and local governments, private sector businesses, the academic community, and the public.

The Great Lakes Commission (GLC)

www.glc.org

The GLC is a bi-national agency that promotes the orderly, integrated, and comprehensive development, use, and conservation of the water and related natural resources of the Great Lakes Basin and the St. Lawrence River. The Commission was established in 1955 by joint legislative action of the Great Lake States and granted congressional consent in 1968. The GLC is comprised of representatives from the eight Great Lake States and associate members from the Canadian Provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC)

www.glfc.org

Established by the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries between Canada and the United States in 1955, the GLFC has two major responsibilities: to develop coordinated programs of research on the Great Lakes, and, based on the findings, recommend measures that will permit the maximum sustained productivity of stocks of fish of common concern; and to formulate and implement a program to eradicate or minimize sea lamprey populations in the Great Lakes.

Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO)

<https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-great-lakes-national-program-office-glnpo>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) coordinates efforts with Canada under the **Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA)** to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, which includes Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. The GLNPO brings together federal, state, tribal, local, and industry partners under the framework of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to accomplish the objectives of the **GLRI Action Plan**. The GLRI offers grants that include an Environmental Justice Grant Program.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

<https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/great-lakes-restoration-initiative-glri>

As a GLRI participant, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) works with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and 15 additional federal agencies to fund projects that restore the Great Lakes. Since 2010 the multi-agency GLRI has provided funding to 16 federal organizations to strategically target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and to accelerate progress toward achieving long term goals.

International Joint Commission (IJC)

<https://ijc.org/en>

The IJC is an international organization created by and between the governments of the United States and Canada. The role of the IJC is to prevent and resolve disputes between the two countries under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and to serve as an independent and objective advisor to the two governments. Most notably, the IJC makes determinations on projects affecting transboundary air and water quality, including the implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Lakewide Action and Management Plans (LAMPs)

www.epa.gov/greatlakes/lakewide-action-and-management-plans-great-lakes

The development of Lakewide Action and Management Plans stems from the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement originally signed by the U. S. and Canada in 1972 and as amended in 1978 and 1987. In the 1987 amendment, the two governments agreed to develop Lakewide Action and Management Plans to “restore and maintain the chemical, biological, and physical integrity of the waters of the Great Lakes Basin” (Great Lakes Information Network, 2007). The LAMPs are intended to identify critical pollutants that affect beneficial uses of the waters of the Great Lakes and promote ecosystem-based management approaches to restoring the Basin’s integrity.

Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

In recent years, Lake Ontario has experienced record high water levels, which cause significant impacts to communities and outdoor recreation. In response to this extended pattern of flooding along the Lake and the St. Lawrence River, New York State committed up to \$300 million to increase the resilience of communities historically hit by high water and severe weather.ⁱ Five REDI regions, comprised of eight counties were established to identify local priorities, at-risk infrastructure, and public safety concerns. Completed REDI projects have included elevating or relocating recreation infrastructure such as parking lots, walkways, and playgrounds, adding flood-tolerant landscaping, installing green infrastructure, and updating storm drainage to help mitigate the impacts of future high-water events.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)

NOAA serves as co-chair of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement related to Climate Change Impacts. Growing challenges and impacts for both the Great Lakes ecosystem and the region’s residents include predicted increases in precipitation and drought. NOAA’s long-term studies show diminishing duration and thickness of ice each winter, and a decrease in lake water levels since 1980.ⁱⁱ NOAA has developed tools, products, and services to keep the region informed about water levels and help them prepare for impacts from these changes.ⁱⁱⁱ

Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Planning Guide

NOAA developed the Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Guide, a regional toolkit with resources and strategies for addressing flooding, shoreline erosion, and lake-level fluctuations. The guide has data, apps, case studies, and interactive mapping services specific to the region.

Remedial Action Plans

<https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-aocs/remedial-action-plans-great-lakes-aocs>

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement outlines a process for bringing “areas of concern” into compliance through the development of a Remedial Action Plan (RAP). The purpose of the RAP is to develop strategies and consensus approaches to restoring beneficial uses that have been impaired within specific areas of concern.

Hudson River

The Hudson River flows 315 miles from the Adirondack Mountains to New York Harbor and is used by half of the State’s residents for drinking water supply, waste disposal, power generation, and recreation. The 150-mile estuarine section extends from the federal dam at Troy to New York City Harbor. With improvements in water quality in recent years, has come increased interest in the river’s large-scale recreation potential. Public access to the Hudson, however, is limited by private ownership, topography, and high-speed rail lines that run parallel to the river.

The Hudson River is connected to the sea, which is why it experiences tides and contains saltwater in its lower reaches. It is also the reason the river’s water level is rising with global sea levels – 15 inches since 1900. The DEC’s **Hudson River Estuary Program** (HREP) implements restoration projects, education programs, and research, from the Verrazano Narrows in NY Harbor to the Hudson River’s northernmost tidal range near Albany. Scientists project another 4 to 10 inches of sea level rise in the 2020s, and from 9 to 27 inches by mid-century. Higher sea levels will exacerbate flooding and put waterfront communities at higher risk. HREP’s **2021-2025 Action Agenda** has an implementation program based on a shared vision for the region as defined by diverse groups of people who live and work along the river. The agenda delineates actions needed to conserve the Hudson River estuary and its larger ecosystem, including connected ocean and estuarine waters surrounding the estuary (lower New York Bay, the Bight, and Long Island Sound) and the upper Hudson and Mohawk River. See Chapter 7 for more information on funding opportunities available through the Hudson River Estuary Program.

Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP)

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program>

The Hudson River Estuary Program was established in 1987 in response to Section 11-0306 of the Environmental Conservation Law, the Hudson River Estuary Management Act. The program is a regional partnership designed to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance the estuary, associated shorelands as well as related upland resources. DEC serves as manager of the program in collaboration with OPRHP, DOS, OGS, DOT, the Metro-North Railroad, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, the Hudson River Foundation, Cornell University, and NEIWPCC (originally the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission), Soil and Water Conservation Districts and a citizen advisory committee along with municipal governments. The Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee (HREMAC) meets three times per year and provides a forum where the views and opinions of committee members can be shared with state resource managers. The committee serves to

advise DEC on regulatory, policy, and other matters affecting the management, protection, and use of the Hudson River estuary, its tributaries and shorelands.

Hudson River Valley Greenway (HRVG)

<https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/trails>

The Hudson River Valley Greenway was established in 1991, creating a network of multi-use trails along both sides of the Hudson River. The Hudson River Greenway Trail System was completed in late 2020 and includes a multi-use trail from Battery Park in lower NYC to Whitehall, Washington County, a series of land trails, and a water trail for paddling and boating. As of October 2023, the Greenway Trail System consists of 983 miles of trails, including 580 miles of land trails (310 miles on riverfronts), 147 miles of bike trails, and a 256-mile National Water Trail. The single interconnected Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail route from NYC to Whitehall comprises the Hudson Valley portion of the Empire State Trail. The Greenway's mission is to continue and advance the state's commitment to the preservation, enhancement, and development of the scenic, natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources of the Hudson River Valley while continuing to emphasize economic development activities and remaining consistent with the tradition of municipal home rule.

Lake Champlain

With shorelines in New York, Vermont, and the Canadian Province of Quebec, Lake Champlain is a valued destination for recreation and tourism. The health of its waters and ecosystems is crucial for it to remain a recreational and economic engine for the region. Pressures on the lake today, which include the spread of aquatic invasive species, algal blooms, erosion, and sedimentation, will likely increase with more frequent and intense weather events.

Lake Champlain Watershed

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/watersheds/lake-champlain>

The Lake Champlain Watershed drains the area between the Adirondack Mountains in northeastern New York State and the Green Mountains in northwestern Vermont. The long, narrow, and deep lake, which spans 120 miles with a maximum depth of 400 feet, has its outlet at its northern end where it flows through the Richelieu River into Quebec and empties into the Saint Lawrence River.

Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)

www.lcbp.org

The Lake Champlain Basin is a unique and historically significant natural resource that attracts thousands of residents and visitors each year. The mission of the Lake Champlain Basin Program is to coordinate and fund efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin's water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources, in partnership with government agencies from New York, Vermont, and Québec, private organizations, local communities, and individuals. The program funds projects such as dam removals, culvert replacements, aquatic invasive species removal, and endangered species conservation. Increased recreation demand, development, and competing and conflicting uses all affect the Lake's natural and recreational resources. The LCBP is administered jointly by several agencies: US Environmental Protection Agency (New England and Region 2), New York State DEC, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Québec Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, and the Fight against Climate Change, and NEIWPCC.

Lake Champlain General Management Plan

<https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Projects-in-New-York/Lake-Champlain-Watershed>

Developed by the Lake Champlain Basin Program in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Plan serves as a framework for implementing critical restoration projects within the Lake Champlain Watershed. It is a strategic planning tool used to coordinate the efforts of a diverse group of interested parties represented on the Lake Champlain Steering Committee, which consists of representatives from state and provincial governments in Vermont, New York, and Quebec, The National Park Service, citizen groups, educators, and others.

Long Island

Long Island Sound Partnership (LISP)

<https://lispartnership.org/>

A partnership of federal and state agencies, user groups, concerned organizations, and individuals dedicated to restoring and protecting the Sound. The LISP developed a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan in 1994, updated in 2015 with ambitious targets to drive further progress through 2035. Updates were published in 2020 and again in 2025 to reflect progress, new challenges, and evolving science. The 2025 CCMP continues this work with refreshed actions and targets, supporting the long-term vision of a healthy, resilient Long Island Sound for all communities.

South Shore Estuary Reserve Program

<https://dos.ny.gov/long-island-south-shore-estuary-reserve-program>

The Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve Program guides the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the natural resources of the estuary through partnerships with a diverse group of interested parties. Created in 1993 through the Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve Act, the program is focused on implementing actions identified in the SSER Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), which include improving and maintaining water quality; protecting and restoring living resources; expanding public use and enjoyment; supporting the estuary economy; enhancing resiliency effort; and increasing education, outreach, and stewardship. The SSER Program is a partnership that works with state and local government, municipalities, local interested parties, and partner organizations throughout the SSER to help preserve and protect the health of the estuary and its many resources.

Marine Coast

<https://dos.ny.gov/coastal-management>

New York State has over 2,000 miles of marine coastline and one million plus acres of marine surface waters. Development pressures have been progressing at a rapid rate such that significant remaining access to the waterfront is being lost. Programs such as the Open Space Plan and the DOS's Coastal Management Program provide methods and funding sources for access, and to protect and preserve diminishing coastal recreation resources.

Artificial Reef Program

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/saltwater-fishing/artificial-reefs>

Artificial reefs are manmade structures that are "aquatically recycled" to provide habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. In turn, these habitats enhance recreational fishing opportunities on New York's Marine Coast. They are made with a variety of hard, durable materials including rock, concrete,

and steel, selected based on their function, compatibility, stability, and availability. These characteristics ensure that once deployed the material will provide a suitable habitat for marine life that will be safe, effective, and long-lasting.

New York City

As a vital urban center surrounded by water, NY's policymakers and interested parties have taken an increasingly proactive approach to preparing for projected future conditions. NYC has a range of initiatives and resources to help residents, businesses, and public agencies address issues related to climate change. Parks and other green open spaces are also increasingly recognized as a first line of defense against sea level rise and dangerous storms. OPRHP facilities in New York City have a strong waterfront presence along its rivers, bays, and canals, making them vulnerable to storm surge and flooding. Efforts in the NYC area include:

East Side Coastal Resiliency Project (ESCR)

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/escr/index.page>

The ESCR is a coastal protection initiative jointly funded by the City of New York and the federal government aimed at reducing flood risk from coastal storms and sea level rise on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The project includes a 2.4-mile flexible flood barrier consisting of walls, gates, berms, and raised parkland, intended to protect the community from future storms and tidal flooding. Playgrounds and parks in high-risk areas are being protected with floodwalls, floodgates, or shoreline restoration projects. Work began in 2020 and will continue through 2026.

The Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice

<https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/>

This NYC program is designed to prepare for the impacts of climate change and address remediation efforts from an equity and public health perspective. A pilot program launched in 2021 helps to ensure new infrastructure and public facilities are prepared for worsening impacts. Projects selected for the pilot are to be constructed in environmental justice areas. The fifth in a series of climate action plans for New York City, **Plan NYC: Getting Sustainability Done** centers on environmental justice with a focus on taking concrete action towards achieving climate goals. The plan includes recommendations related to climate change, air and water quality, carbon reduction, and open space.

NYC Department of City Planning (NYC Planning)

NYC Planning develops citywide and neighborhood-level plans to enhance resilience. In 2013, the department produced two studies (**Sustainable Communities Climate Resilience Studies**) to help NYC and other urban waterfront communities to improve their resiliency. As part of its 2015 **Resilient Neighborhoods** initiative, the department worked with high-risk communities in all five boroughs throughout the floodplain to identify neighborhood-specific strategies to help prepare for future storms. NYC Planning also developed **Floodplain by the Numbers**, a 2020 report highlighting the long-term recovery progress and resiliency challenges facing the city's waterfront communities, and the critical role that updated zoning and building codes play in reducing vulnerability to coastal flooding.

NYC Parks Design and Planning for Flood Resiliency Guidelines

Published in 2017, the NYC Parks Department developed **an interdisciplinary manual** for creating more resilient waterfront parks. The Guidelines provide design examples to aid in developing

community-scale resilience for waterfront open spaces that can accommodate sea level rise and recover more quickly from large storms while also offering high-quality park experiences.

NY & NJ Harbor & Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study (HATS)

<https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Projects-in-New-York/New-York-New-Jersey-Harbor-Tributaries-Focus-Area-Feasibility-Study/>

With coastal storms having increasing impacts on the New York-New Jersey harbor region, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers investigated measures to manage future flood risk. A draft study was published in 2022 for public comment and tentatively selected a plan that includes both in-water measures (e.g., storm surge barriers) and land-based measures (deployable flood walls, raised waterfront promenades, ecosystem restoration). Estimated project construction time is 14 years, with an anticipated cost of \$52.7 billion. In 2025 the Corps was working to update the study scope, schedule, and budget based on recent funding approvals.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Program

State Legislation

<https://dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/waterways-coastlines-wetlands/wild-scenic-recreational-rivers-permit-program>

The NYS Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Permit Program was enacted in 1972 to preserve, protect, and enhance the State's unique rivers and their immediate environs in a free-flowing and natural condition. The program is administered by DEC throughout the state, except for private land within the Adirondack Park which is subject to separate regulations.

National Legislation

<https://www.rivers.gov/about>

In 1968, Congress passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to create a national system of protected rivers. The only NYS river in the system, the Delaware (Upper) River between Hancock, NY, and Sparrow Bush, NY (73.4 miles), was designated in 1978. The river is listed as both scenic (23.1 miles) and recreational (50.3 miles).

Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI)

www.nps.gov/subjects/rivers/nationwide-rivers-inventory.htm

Managed by the National Park Service, the NRI is an inventory of river segments that are potentially eligible to be designated as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers program. New York State has a total of 174 river segments identified as eligible and listed on the inventory.

Other Statewide Plans and Policies

In addition to the SCORP, numerous statewide plans and policies influence outdoor recreation and open space in New York. These include:

Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act

<https://dec.ny.gov/about/clean-water-clean-air-and-green-jobs-environmental-bond-act>

In 2022, New Yorkers approved the \$4.2 billion Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Bond Act to make funding available for environmental improvement projects. This funding will enable state agencies, local governments, and partners to implement projects that will mitigate climate change impacts, reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and conserve open space.^{iv} The Bond Act provides up to \$1.5 billion to reduce air pollution and fight climate change.

Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act)

<https://climate.ny.gov/>

Passed in 2019, the law commits to 100% zero-emission electricity for NYS by 2040, sets legally binding emissions reduction standards to be completely carbon neutral by 2050, and mandates that 40% of state climate and energy funding be invested in disproportionately disadvantaged communities.

Executive Order 22 (EO22)

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/executive-order/no-22-leading-example-directing-state-agencies-adopt-sustainability-and>

In 2020 the Governor signed Executive Order 22, directing state agencies to adopt a sustainability and decarbonization program. This initiative streamlines the administration of the State's sustainability and climate directives and sets new goals for the environmental performance of state agencies. The Order also prioritizes sustainability upgrades for state facilities in disadvantaged communities to ensure that the state's operations do not place a disproportionate burden on these communities.

Extreme Heat Action Planning

<https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Extreme-Heat-Action-Plan>

The Extreme Heat Action Plan, developed by the DEC and NYSEDA, in collaboration with numerous other agencies, focuses on addressing extreme heat impacts in disadvantaged communities, areas of employment, and recreational zones across the State. The Plan, published in 2024, delivers a first-of-its-kind comprehensive State plan for addressing present and future extreme heat. Places to stay cool during prolonged or extreme periods of heat, including OPRHP pools and swimming beaches, are included as an important resource in the Plan.

New York Outdoor Education and Recreation Plan

In 2017, the New York State Senate passed an act authorizing and directing the Commissioners of Health and Environmental Conservation to study and develop a long-term strategy to encourage and promote outdoor environmental education and recreational opportunities in New York State. The first iteration of the plan is currently under development.

New York State Historic Preservation Plan (SHPP)

The SHPP helps guide preservation efforts at the regional, state, and local levels and serves as a blueprint for identifying and preserving New York's historic and cultural resources. The plan is periodically updated to address current needs, issues, and opportunities. The intended outcomes of the SHPP are 1) to improve historic and cultural resource stewardship and protection, and 2) to help realize the larger vision for preservation in New York State: that residents and visitors will be more aware of and appreciate the many narratives and cultural traditions that have shaped New York's natural and built environment; will understand the importance of preserving and interpreting the places where history happened; and will recognize the significant role New York and its people continue to play in the forming of America.

New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (OSP)

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/open-space/open-space-conservation-plan>

The OSP is a comprehensive statewide plan that describes current open space conservation goals, actions, tools, resources, and programs administered by state and federal agencies and conservation nonprofits. Since 1992, the Open Space Conservation Plan has served as the blueprint for the State's Open Space Program, guiding the investment of land protection funds from the Environmental Protection Fund. New York's Open Space Conservation Plan includes four overarching objectives: to

promote outdoor recreation; address climate change; ensure clean water, air, and land for a healthy public and vibrant economy; and protect, use, and conserve our natural resources and cultural heritage. As required by law, the Plan is updated periodically, relying heavily on the work of the nine Regional Advisory Committees.

New York Statewide Trails Plan

The Statewide Trails Plan was released in 2010 and provides the overall vision, goals, and objectives for the creation of a statewide trail system. The plan identifies a proposed framework for greenway trails, long-distance hiking trails, and water trails along with strategies to address the various issues encountered by trail users, maintainers, and land managers.

New York’s Statewide Greenways Trail Plan

The Statewide Greenways Trail Plan, released in 2021 as a complement to the New York Statewide Trails Plan, provides a vision, goals, and recommendations to guide future planning and development of greenway trails. This includes expanding greenway trails in underserved communities and improving connections between trails and other transportation modes.

State of New York Snowmobile Trail Plan

Published in 1989, the Statewide Snowmobile Trail Master Plan guides the development and maintenance of the statewide system. The concepts described in the Plan serve as the guiding tenets for the OPRHP’s Snowmobile Program.

APPENDIX D – OPEN PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS AND GRANT ALLOCATION

The New York State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan helps to inform the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects. The policies, needs assessment, initiatives and goals described here are translated into criteria for evaluating projects in an objective manner. The SCORP is also used to develop the rating system for the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) projects and contributes to the development of rating systems for state-funded **Environmental Protection Fund** (EPF) grants for municipal and nonprofit projects, **Recreational Trails Programs** (RTP) grants, and various acquisition categories consistent with the Open Space Plan. SCORP guides the allocation of funds to areas and facilities in greatest need within the State Park and Historic Site system.

The State's park and recreation priority-rating systems help rank projects on a statewide basis, translating measurements of need, and statements of policy to maximize fulfillment of recreation needs while protecting natural assets. To assure continuity throughout the process, all applications are reviewed on a statewide basis, and discussions are conducted with regional and technical staff to provide final review, ranking and approval.

Distribution of State and Federal Funding

The OPSP begins with the determination of the appropriate funding source. There are 3 primary funding sources directed at park and recreation facilities in New York. Funding for local park and recreation projects directed at municipal and nonprofit organizations is provided through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In New York State, the RTP is administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

Funding for state park and recreation development, improvement, and renovation projects is provided by the State's LWCF State and Local Assistance apportionment and matched with a special State Budget allocation called New York Works. NYS distributes the LWCF funding among the 180+/- State Park and Recreation facilities through the State Parks Capital Planning Process.

State Funding

Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage (EPF)

The EPF is an annual grant competition that NYS offers through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). The grant opportunities are announced and information regarding eligibility requirements is posted on the NYS Parks website at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/grant-programs.aspx>.

Applications are available annually through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Title 9 NYCRR (sections 439.1–443.4) implements the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Act of 1993 (Title 9 of Article 54 of the Environmental Conservation Law), which created OPRHP's program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage Grants. The EPF is a matching grant program for the acquisition, planning, development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas located within the physical boundaries of the State of New York. This State-funded program distributes approximately \$20

million annually to the improvement of the State's environment and its invaluable natural, recreational and historic resources. Funds may be awarded to municipalities or not-for-profits with an ownership interest. All applicants must use the online CFA to apply. One application covers all three program categories (Parks, Historic Preservation, Heritage Areas) highlighted below.

Parks Program

A matching grant program for the acquisition, development and planning of parks and recreational facilities open to the public to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Funds may be awarded for indoor or outdoor projects and must reflect the priorities established in NY SCORP.

Historic Preservation Program

A matching grant program to improve, protect, preserve, rehabilitate, restore or acquire properties listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects.

Heritage Areas Program

A matching grant program for projects to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures, identified in the approved management plans for Heritage Areas designated under section 35.03 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law and for structural assessments or planning for such projects. Projects must fall within a New York State Designated Heritage Area.

Federal Funding

Recreational Trails Program Grants (RTP)

The RTP legislation requires that States use 30% of funds for non-motorized recreation, 30% for motorized recreation, and 40% for diverse recreational trail use.

A local assistance grant round is held every other year (in odd numbered years) and alternates with a state grant round held in even numbered years. Municipalities and nonprofit corporations must apply through the online New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). State and Federal agencies, public benefit corporations and public authorities must apply through the State Application Solicitation.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

During budget preparations for the upcoming State Fiscal Year (SFY), the LWCF Program Unit works with the Agency's Capital Bureau to request projects and capital funding requirements from the Capital District Managers. Projects can be for park redevelopment, renovation of an existing park or park area, and new construction of recreational facilities within an existing park.

Once all the projects have been received, the Agency identifies projects that are eligible for receiving LWCF. This is done according to the criteria outlined in the LWCF State Assistance Program Manual (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/v72-1.htm>) Chapter 3 – Acquisition and Development Project Eligibility. Eligible projects are then evaluated through the OPSP rating criteria. Rated projects are prioritized by readiness and scoring for inclusion in the Capital Plan and scheduling for grant opportunity submission.

OPRHP attempts to use its entire annual apportionment to avoid unobligated funds. For projects that are completed with expenditures less than the obligated amount or are withdrawn from funding, the unexpended amount reverts to a “special reapportionment account” which the State can request in the following fiscal year.

In some instances, projects that have received awards make requests for increases in funding. This is usually a result of contract bids higher than the estimated costs or if a project has an overrun of costs. These projects can be amended to add or delete project elements and increase or decrease the budget and federal share, accordingly, provided these amendment requests are within the same facility and address the changes in the project scope that pertain to the same type of project. They are not required to recompile in the OPSP.

Environmental Protection Fund Selection Criteria

Applications

The Parks program is for the acquisition, development and planning of parks and recreational facilities to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Examples of eligible projects include playgrounds, courts, rinks, community gardens, and facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping or other recreational activities. Generally, to ensure the public benefits from the investment of state funds, public access covenants, for a specific term, will be conveyed to the State for park development projects undertaken by not-for-profit corporations and perpetual conservation easements will be conveyed to the State for park acquisition projects undertaken by not-for-profit corporations. Parkland acquired or improved by a municipality must remain parkland in perpetuity. For municipal parkland, information is available in the Handbook on the Alienation and Conversion of Municipal Parkland, located at <https://parks.ny.gov/publications/> under “Other Publications”.

Funding Priorities

Each year the Commissioner establishes program priorities for which projects will receive additional points.

Rating Criteria

The Priority Evaluation Form is based on the following rating criteria:

- A. the extent to which the project site has suffered from physical deterioration, decay, vandalism, neglect or disinvestment or may be threatened with closure, demolition or inappropriate development;
- B. the relationship of the project to a local, regional and/or statewide planning document particularly the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, or other assessment of need;
- C. the extent to which the project protects, enhances or interprets natural, cultural or historic resources;
- D. the ability of the project sponsor to initiate and complete the project on a timely basis, at a reasonable cost, and operate or maintain the completed project;

- E. the degree to which local recreation, conservation or open space deficiencies will be addressed by the project;
- F. the degree to which the project will primarily serve either a densely populated area or an area where a substantial proportion of the population is of low income or otherwise disadvantaged or underserved;
- G. annual programmatic and funding priorities.

Among the rating criteria, the Commissioner may award any of the following factors up to a maximum of ten points. All applications will be reviewed for the relevance of these to the project scope:

- A. the geographic distribution of other fundable projects in any given application cycle; consideration may be given to projects in areas that have or have not received funding in recent cycles or where funding is not commensurate with the population of the area. This will be based on the proximity to other funded sites and the diversity of projects being funded on a regional and local basis, as well as the service area of the developed or planned facilities.
- B. the extent to which the project will maximize the use and accessibility of a facility; consideration may be given to projects where funding will allow underutilized facilities to be accessed or to develop underutilized resources for public use. This will be based on the resources offered by the facility, the use of those resources and whether the proposed project will help the facility expand and enhance its public use.
- C. special engineering, environmental and historic preservation concerns or benefits; consideration may be given to develop particularly significant resources and facilities or to develop innovative approaches to preserve valuable resources. This will be based on the type of resource being developed or rehabilitated; its rarity on a local, regional, statewide and national basis; the ability of an innovative technology to address an emergency or mitigate future problems; how well a technology can be "exported" for use on other properties and resources; and how/if the project will allow public access that would not otherwise be available.
- D. the past performance, if any, of the project sponsor on previous projects; consideration may be given to how timely an applicant completed previous projects, including its reporting requirements; how successful it was in outreach, especially to minority- and woman-owned businesses; the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the property; and its cooperation in allowing OPRHP to complete inspections and other follow-up actions.

Eligible applications will be reviewed, rated and awarded as ranked on a regional basis, competing only against others in their region and category.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

RTP Application Selection Criteria

When award recommendations are finalized, OPRHP submits recommended projects to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. Grant awards are contingent upon Federal approval. The Grant Selection Criteria are listed below. The maximum total score is 100 points.

- A. Project provides for recreational trail corridor sharing for motorized and/or non-motorized use (Maximum 5 points). Key Consideration: The most important concern is that two or more uses are compatible and provide a safe recreational experience for all users.
- (5) Project involves two or more trails in the same corridor that accommodate both motorized and non-motorized trail uses;
 - (4) Project involves two or more trails in the same corridor that accommodate either motorized or non-motorized trail uses;
 - (3) Project involves one trail with motorized and non-motorized concurrent uses;
 - (2) Project involves time sharing of the trail other than on a seasonal basis;
 - (1) Project involves seasonal time sharing of the trail;
 - (0) Criterion is not applicable.
- B. Project provides for motorized and/or non-motorized use that will enhance the quality and quantity of recreational trail opportunities (Maximum 5 points). Key Consideration: An important consideration is that this project will enhance the quality and quantity of recreational trail opportunities available in the community or region.
- (5) Project provides for both motorized and non-motorized use for both summer and winter activities;
 - (4) Project provides for both motorized and non-motorized use for either summer or winter activities;
 - (3) Project provides for either motorized or non-motorized use for both summer and winter activities;
 - (2) Project provides either motorized or non-motorized use for either summer or winter activities.
- C. Project provides urban trail linkages (Maximum 4 points). Key Considerations:
- (a) Project provides linkage to other trail opportunities in urban areas;
 - (b) Project provides linkage to recreational areas, residential communities, places of employment, commerce, schools, parks, or other public places in urban areas;
 - (c) Project is located in a census defined Standard Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA);
 - (d) Project demonstrates advancement of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and Strategic Community Investment.
- (4) Project meets all of the criteria above;
 - (3) Project meets only two of the criteria above;

- (2) Project meets only one of the criteria above;
- (0) Project does not meet any of the criteria above.

D. Project is identified as a component of a statewide or national trail system or furthers a specific goal of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) or the Statewide Trails Plan or a local trail plan (Maximum 5 points). Key Consideration: The degree to which the project is clearly identifiable as a priority for action, ties in with specific goals, priorities and implementation strategies, and/or complies with identified needs of the area.

(5) Project is a component of a statewide or national trail system as identified in the SCORP or the Statewide Trails Plan (e.g., National Scenic, Historic, Heritage Area or Recreational Trails, Millennium Trails, Empire State Trail, Canalway Trail or State Snowmobile Plan);

(4) Project furthers a specific goal of a regional trail plan referenced in the Statewide Trails Plan or the SCORP;

(3) Project furthers a specific goal of a local trail plan referenced in regional or local planning documents.

(0) Project does not further the goals of any trails plan.

E. Index of Need – based on the “Relative Index of Needs” table in the SCORP (Maximum 5 points). Key Consideration: The project satisfies county recreation needs based on a statewide supply and demand assessment.

(0 – 5) points based on the average Relative Index of Need (RIN) for pertinent trail activities.

F. Documentation of community support for the project (Maximum 5 points). Key Consideration: The major concern is that this project is responding to community-identified needs and shows evidence of community support.

(0 - 5) Citizens or community groups where the project is located have participated in the planning of the project, demonstrated support for the project and/or will be involved in project implementation.

G. Project ties into other trails, greenways, scenic corridors, natural, cultural, historical or recreational areas (Maximum 4 points). Key Considerations:

(a) Project ties into the Empire State Trail, Hudson River Greenway, or another major trail

(b) Project ties into a designated scenic corridor of National, State or regional significance

(c) Project ties into other trails

- (d) Project links natural, cultural, historic or recreation areas or resources
 - (4) Project meets at least three of the above criteria
 - (3) Project meets only two of the above criteria
 - (2) Project meets only one of the above criteria
 - (0) Project does not meet any of the above criteria
- H. Project planning, design and schedule demonstrate an understanding of the program requirements and an ability to progress through the necessary phases and approvals appropriately (Maximum 6 points). Key Consideration: The major concern is that the project is planned and designed in compliance with State and Federal requirements and will proceed efficiently through the necessary steps upon receiving Federal authorization for the applicable phases. There is no statutory limit on the number of grants one property or one applicant may receive, but in the interest of equity and fairness and in consideration of applicant capacity, applicants that have three or more open grants with OPRHP should not receive additional awards.
- (3 – 6 points) Project schedule is clear, well planned and logical. Applicant has clearly demonstrated an understanding of the program requirements and an approach to implement the project in a timely, efficient and effective manner.
- (0 – 3 points) Project planning and schedule is unclear, under-developed or unrealistic, either overly ambitious or under-achieving, based upon the information provided. Applicant demonstrates a lack of understanding of the program requirements.
- I. Project will utilize existing corridors, such as existing trail corridors, railroad right-of-way, canal towpath, utility lines, publicly owned river valleys or highland ridges, parkways, etc. (Maximum 4 points). Key Consideration: The major concern is to maximize the use and maintain the integrity of existing corridors.
- (4) The project will utilize only existing corridors;
 - (2) The project will utilize an existing corridor but requires additional right-of-way;
 - (0) The project will not utilize an existing corridor.
- J. Project will improve the continuity of a trail system (Maximum 4 points). Key Consideration: The concern is to encourage the expansion and integration of trails. NON-MOTORIZED USE (Non-Motorized and Diverse Categories):
- (4) Project is part of a trail system over 10 miles in length.
 - (3) Project is part of a trail system 5-10 miles in length.

(2) Project is part of a trail system less than 5 miles in length.

MOTORIZED USE (Motorized and Diverse Categories):

(4) Project is part of a trail system over 50 miles in length.

(3) Project is part of a trail system 5-50 miles in length.

(2) Project is part of a trail system less than 5 miles in length.

K. Project budget is reasonable, justified and cost-effective (Maximum 15 points). Key Consideration: Points are determined by assessing the completeness of the project budget, the eligibility, necessity and cost-effectiveness of the cost items, and the availability of matching share.

(10 - 15 points) A detailed budget has been provided which contains only eligible and necessary costs. Estimates are justified, cost-effective and based on sound principles and experience.

Matching share is identified and will be available for the project term.

(5 - 10 points) A complete budget has been provided but the basis for cost estimates is unclear or not cost-effective. Matching share is identified and will be available for the project term.

(0 - 5 points) A budget has been provided but contains ineligible costs or lacks the necessary details to determine eligibility, cost-effectiveness or matching share requirements.

L. Project addresses State and Federal program initiatives (2 points each, Maximum 8 points).

(2) Project utilizes Youth Conservation or Service Corps.

(2) Project specifically provides enhanced recreational access for persons with disabilities.

(2) Project provides for the redesign, reconstruction, nonroutine maintenance, or relocation of recreational trails to benefit the natural environment or to mitigate and minimize the impact to the natural environment.

(2) Project will address communities currently lacking recreational opportunities.

M. Regional Economic Development Council Assessment (Maximum 20 points)

N. Statewide Assessment Factors (Maximum 10 points)

The Commissioner may award up to ten (10) points for any of the following factors. All applications will be reviewed for their relevance to these factors:

- **Geographic Distribution.** Consideration may be given to projects in areas that have or have not received funding in recent cycles or where funding is not commensurate with the population of the area. This will be based on the proximity to other funded sites and the diversity of projects being funded on a regional and local basis, as well as the service area of the developed or planned facilities.
- **Maximize Use and Accessibility.** Consideration may be given to projects where funding will allow underutilized facilities to be accessed or to develop underutilized resources for public use. This will be based on the resources offered by the facility, the use of those resources and whether the proposed project will help the facility expand and enhance its public use.
- **Special Engineering, Environmental, Preservation Benefits.** Consideration may be given to develop particularly significant resources and facilities or to develop innovative approaches to preserve valuable resources. This will be based on the type of resource being developed or rehabilitated; its rarity on a local, regional, statewide and national basis; the ability of an innovative technology to address an emergency or mitigate future problems; how well a technology can be “exported” for use on other properties and resources; and how/if the project will allow public access that would not otherwise be available.
- **Past Performance.** Consideration may be given to how timely an applicant completed previous projects, including its reporting requirements; how successful it was in outreach, especially to minority- and woman-owned businesses; the ongoing upkeep and maintenance of the property; and its cooperation in allowing OPRHP to complete inspections and other follow-up activities.

LWCF Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) Criteria

SCORP Priorities (4 points)

Eligible projects must demonstrate that they conform to two or more of the SCORP Priorities.

1. Cultivate an outdoor recreation system that is welcoming, safe, inclusive, affordable, and accessible.
2. Broaden and improve the visitor experience.
3. Restore, enhance, and transform park facilities with an emphasis on conservation, restoration, and resiliency of natural and historic resources.
4. Provide and promote equitable outdoor recreation and education opportunities, celebrating diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

Need (6 points)

The project must be an identified need for the park/facility: Evidence of need can include documentation of the: number of similar facilities in the service area; level of use of at the existing facility and anticipated level of use of the proposed facility; condition of existing facilities; emergencies, mandates or development pressure.

Planning (5 points)

The project is consistent with plans for the park/facility. The project must relate or contribute to documented plans. Planning documents must be current and applicable. Relevant documents include, but are not limited to capital development plans, management plans, area development plans, comprehensive plans, regional development plans, and SCORP.

Project Rating Criteria (85 Points)

The project must demonstrate that it furthers one or more of the SCORP Goals.

For Planning Grants Only**(85 Points)****Employ comprehensive planning for the future of the State's outdoor recreation system.**

- Project facilitates inventories and analyses of park, recreation, natural, and historic resources through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other technologies.
- Project develops master plans, site plans, management plans, and other planning tools to facilitate the reinvention and redesign of the State outdoor recreation system.
- Project creates clear timelines for plans with benchmarks for success.
- Project engages local communities in the planning and decision-making process to ensure that recreational developments meet the needs of the community and visitors.
- Project promotes the development of facility-specific climate plans that synergize with local and state planning.
- Project incorporates the lens of environmental justice into planning efforts to expand access to outdoor recreation.
- Project plans for long-term ecological and environmental viability of facilities.
- Project provides opportunities for interested parties to voice their opinions on how state land is managed.
- Project plans for climate change at the facility and system levels.
- Project balances resilience planning with site operations, maintenance, and management activities.
- Project continues to adhere to and follow State environmental laws and regulations such as SEQR, CLCPA and EO22.

For Acquisition and Development Projects (85 points overall)**(15 Points)**

Ensure physical and programmatic access for visitors with a broad spectrum of needs and abilities

- Project implements universal access design standards.
- Project promotes multiuse spaces in park facilities.
- Project updates existing facilities to meet the needs of recreationists of all abilities.
- Project improves navigational signage to include information on grade, cross slope, distance, etc.
- Project improves the functionality of accessible features.
- Project is designed to ensure equitable access for users of all abilities and needs.

(8 Points)

Engage the public through interpretive programming to cultivate pride of place.

- Project invests in infrastructure that is in keeping with, and uplifting to, a facility's character, history, and natural topography.
- Project rehabilitates, retrofits, or adaptively reuses existing recreation and historic facilities to satisfy existing and projected recreation, interpretive, and education needs.

(12 Points)

Promote energy-efficient operations and renewable energy sources.

- Project employs use of energy-efficient components and infrastructure.
- Project explores the use of energy sources such as solar, geothermal, heat pump systems and/or other renewable energy sources for heating and cooling systems.
- Project preserves and adaptively reuses historic infrastructure.
- Project utilizes areas not suitable for public outdoor recreation such as rooftops, underutilized parking lots, and previously disturbed or contaminated areas for new solar installations.

(14 Points)

Build, operate, and retrofit climate-resilient outdoor recreation facilities.

- Project enhances the sustainability of coastal parks, such as elevating structures to protect against flooding and storm surges.
- Project upgrades infrastructure, including utilities, to better withstand storm events and severe weather and protect against erosion.
- Project provides people with opportunities to cool off including spray pads, shaded areas, and swimming pools.

- Project incorporates environmentally friendly infrastructure – including rooftop gardens, rain gardens, permeable pavement, and bioswales – into building and landscape design.
- Project, where appropriate, replaces hardscaped shorelines with living shorelines or constructed wetlands.
- Project includes environmentally sensitive access features – such as boardwalks or viewing platforms – to wetlands for recreational opportunities.
- Project maintains, updates, and creates new structures to provide sufficient facilities to support the increasing number of park users.

(12 Points)

Develop and operate outdoor recreation resources in a manner that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.

- Project installs drinking fountains and bottle-filling stations to aid public health and encourage the use of reusable water bottles.
- Project prioritizes the procurement of environmentally preferable products, such as those with recycled content, energy efficiency, and reduced toxicity, to support broader sustainability goals.
- Project follows best practices when purchasing materials and products for capital facility projects including both State and Federal purchasing guidelines.
- Project invests in infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism and recreation, such as eco-friendly transportation and accommodations.
- Project encourages and invests in the adaptive reuse of capital infrastructure through historic preservation.
- Project monitors and evaluates the economic impact of recreation projects to ensure they contribute positively to the local economy without adversely impacting the natural environment.
- Project invests in capital projects that have proven longevity and depth of planning.

(10 Points)

Expand and protect natural connections between parks and open space.

- Project encourages acquisition of connections between parks and open space, in-holdings, and important properties adjacent to existing public land to support the State's 30x30 initiative.
- Project ensures the acquisition of open space resources is consistent with the approaches and recommendations identified in the NYS Open Space Conservation Plan.
- Project encourages fee and non-fee acquisition and other techniques to protect important open space, scenic, historic, and ecologically sensitive areas.

- Project promotes the creation of recreation ways, greenways, and water trails.
- Project fosters partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, trail groups, private landowners, and volunteers to develop and maintain parks and trails.

(14 Points)

Protect, conserve, and restore the State’s biodiversity.

- Project enhances habitat connectivity and reduces habitat fragmentation.
- Project preserves and enhances natural areas and ecosystems to improve biodiversity.
- Project utilizes biodiversity information to assist in identifying priorities for acquisition and preservation.
- Project right-sizes culverts, stabilizes riparian areas, and monitors and improves water quality, where applicable.
- Project prioritizes the development of recreational areas that incorporate natural elements and require minimal human management.
- Project converts underutilized lawn areas into natural meadows, pollinator-friendly gardens, or other low-maintenance areas that support biodiversity.
- Project designs trails, picnic areas, and other amenities to blend in seamlessly with the surrounding environment, reducing the need for intensive maintenance and promoting a more immersive nature experience.

APPENDIX E – SUPPLY AND DEMAND SURVEYS

Appendix E consists of four survey instruments and the demand equations:

1. 2024 New York State Park Professionals Survey Instrument
2. 2024 New York State Public Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey Instrument
3. 2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Instrument (English)
4. 2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Instrument (Spanish)
5. Activity Day and Participation Day Equations

OPRHP worked with several consultants and vendors to distribute the surveys listed and to collect data from New York State residents and New York State Park Professionals. Summary reports, including more information about these surveys, can be reproduced upon request by emailing surveys.info@parks.ny.gov.

2024 New York State Park Professionals Survey Instrument

Dear Park Professional,

This survey is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. We are seeking information about outdoor recreation needs in your community so that we can better address those needs. If you have any questions about this survey, you may contact the Parks Planning Office at surveys.info@parks.ny.gov.

Thank you for your help,
NYS Parks Planning

*** Select the option that best describes your position?**

- ☐ NYS County Park Professional
- ☐ NYS DEC Park Professional
- ☐ NYS OPRHP Park Professional
- ☐ Tribal Representative

*** What is the name of your facility?**

*** In what county is your facility located?**

Please select the need for the following types of new facilities in your community.

	No Need	Low Need	Moderate Need	High Need	Very High Need
* Trails (for on and off-road bicycling, skateboarding/rollerblading, walking, jogging, running, hiking, horseback riding, ATV/ORV/4x4, cross country skiing, snowshoeing)					
* Downhill Winter Sports Areas (including skiing, snowboarding, ski-board, telemark)					

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

* Low-Impact Activity Areas (including picnic and day use areas, playgrounds, nature preserves, gardens, nature study areas)					
* Swimming Pools (excluding splash pads and aquatic playgrounds)					
* Boat Launches (including motorboats, sailboats, kayaks)					
* Field Sports (including baseball, soccer, football, softball, volleyball)					
* Snowmobiling					
* Ice Skating Rinks					
* Golf Courses (including disc golf)					
* Hunting Areas					
* Campgrounds (including for tent, RV, primitive, cabin/cottage)					
* Court Sports (including tennis/handball/racquetball/basketball/pickleball)					
* Fishing Access (from land or by boat)					

If there are other types of facilities for which your community has need, but were not noted above, please enter those below.

What is the dollar value for needed facilities in your community within the upcoming 12 months?

\$ value

* New Facility Development	
* Land Acquisitions	
* Facility Rehabilitation	

* **Does your office plan to acquire additional open space within the next five years?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

*** Are you aware of a plan (e.g. master or comprehensive plan) that specifically addresses county outdoor recreation facilities?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please describe that plan. What type of plan is it (e.g. comprehensive or master plan)? What is its purpose? Who created it?

Please read each of the statements below very carefully and then indicate whether you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, are neutral, somewhat agree, or strongly agree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
* Additional public access to water resources such as lakes, streams, beaches, and oceanfront's should be purchased.					
* Public/private partnerships should be considered to expand and develop recreational facilities.					
* Easements should be considered whenever possible as an alternative to fee acquisition.					
* More money should be spent on public park maintenance and repair.					
* Financial assistance to support recreation development and land acquisition should be increased.					
* More land and facilities should be purchased for recreation.					
* The quality and condition of programs and facilities are being adversely impacted by budget and staff reduction.					

*** Are actions being taken in the planning and design of recreation programs and facilities in your community to address increased obesity within the population?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

*** Is information about recreation facilities and trails in your community available on the Internet?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

*** If yes, please indicate the web address at which this information can be found.**

Are you aware of the following grants programs that the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation administers?

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

	Yes	No
* Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)		
* Recreation Trails Program		
* Historic Preservation Program		
* Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquariums (ZBGA) Program		
* Connect Kids to Parks Transportation Program		
* Snowmobile Trails Program		
* Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program		
* Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Local Assistance Grants		

*** Does your municipality support the continued funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Sure

Thank you for your time.

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation | 2024

2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey Instrument



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

NYS Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory Survey

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is updating its Outdoor Recreation Facilities Inventory database, which contains data on the types and quantities of recreation amenities available at over 7,800 parks and recreational facilities statewide.

This information is used for determining areas of need throughout the state for different types of recreation, as well as utilized for various reports and publications, including the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan (**SCORP**):

<https://parks.ny.gov/documents/inside-our-agency/20202025StatewideComprehensiveOutdoorRecreationPlan.pdf>

* Required

Instructions

8 Path Solutions is a consultant assisting OPRHP in the collection of this data and this survey is through that contract.

To complete this survey, you will need to have detailed information about the types and number of amenities offered at your recreational facility. If you manage more than one facility, please fill out a survey for each facility individually. Each survey will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete.

Please note that survey responses cannot be saved prior to submitting the form. It is highly recommended to download and review the following PDF file with the survey questions prior to filling out this form online:

[https://drive.google.-com/file/d/1xXcf8to6KzHFNTyK7VxA48BO2BAdFID9/view?usp=drive link](https://drive.google.-com/file/d/1xXcf8to6KzHFNTyK7VxA48BO2BAdFID9/view?usp=drive_link)

To ensure the best quality data possible, please follow these instructions:

1. Open the existing list of sites within the database in a separate window: https://docs.google.com/spread-sheets/d/1u1cUu-j9_f3b1gjiVdCo7AO71lIJbDg_9g_pc1JiPDxLM/edit?usp=sharing
2. Look for your Site ID by scrolling through the pre-sorted columns in the Google Sheet. If you would like to filter any of the columns by their header (Site ID, Provider/Operator, County and Site Name), you must make a copy of or download the Google Sheet.
1. What is the Site ID? Enter N/A if you do not have an existing Site ID.

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

2. Site Name *

3. Street Address *

4. City/Town *

5. Zip Code *

6. County

If the site is located in more than one county, select the county with the majority of the site's acreage. *

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Albany County (001) | <input type="radio"/> Fulton County (035) | <input type="radio"/> Onondaga County (067) |
| <input type="radio"/> Allegany County (003) | <input type="radio"/> Genesee County (037) | <input type="radio"/> Ontario County (069) |
| <input type="radio"/> Bronx County (005) | <input type="radio"/> Greene County (039) | <input type="radio"/> Orange County (071) |
| <input type="radio"/> Broome County (007) | <input type="radio"/> Hamilton County (041) | <input type="radio"/> Orleans County (073) |
| <input type="radio"/> Cattaraugus County (009) | <input type="radio"/> Herkimer County (043) | <input type="radio"/> Oswego County (075) |
| <input type="radio"/> Cayuga County (011) | <input type="radio"/> Jefferson County (045) | <input type="radio"/> Otsego County (077) |
| <input type="radio"/> Chautauqua County (013) | <input type="radio"/> Kings County (Brooklyn) (047) | <input type="radio"/> Putnam County (079) |
| <input type="radio"/> Chemung County (015) | <input type="radio"/> Lewis County (049) | <input type="radio"/> Queens County (081) |
| <input type="radio"/> Chenango County (017) | <input type="radio"/> Livingston County (051) | <input type="radio"/> Rensselaer County (083) |
| <input type="radio"/> Clinton County (019) | <input type="radio"/> Madison County (053) | <input type="radio"/> Richmond County (Staten Island) (085) |
| <input type="radio"/> Columbia County (021) | <input type="radio"/> Monroe County (055) | <input type="radio"/> Rockland County (087) |
| <input type="radio"/> Cortland County (023) | <input type="radio"/> Montgomery County (057) | <input type="radio"/> Saint Lawrence County (089) |
| <input type="radio"/> Delaware County (025) | <input type="radio"/> Nassau County (059) | <input type="radio"/> Saratoga County (091) |
| <input type="radio"/> Dutchess County (027) | <input type="radio"/> New York County (Manhattan) (061) | <input type="radio"/> Schenectady County (093) |
| <input type="radio"/> Erie County (029) | <input type="radio"/> Niagara County (063) | <input type="radio"/> Schoharie County (095) |
| <input type="radio"/> Essex County (031) | <input type="radio"/> Oneida County (065) | <input type="radio"/> Schuyler County (097) |
| <input type="radio"/> Franklin County (033) | | |

- Seneca County (099)
- Steuben County (101)
- Suffolk County (103)
- Sullivan County (105)
- Tioga County (107)
- Tompkins County (109)
- Ulster County (111)
- Warren County (113)
- Washington County (115)
- Wayne County (117)
- Westchester County (119)
- Wyoming County (121)
- Yates County (123)

SECTION: SURVEY RESPONDENT

7. Survey Respondent First Name *

8. Survey Respondent Last Name *

9. Survey Respondent Phone Number. (Format: 999-999-9999) *

10. Survey Respondent Email Address *

SECTION: SITE CONTACT

11. Are you also the Site Contact?

- Yes
- No

12. Site Contact First Name

13. Site Contact Last Name

14. Site Contact Phone Number

15. Site Contact Email Address

SECTION: SITE INFO

16. What is the total site acreage? *

17. Provider (select one) *

- ☐ State
- ☐ County
- ☐ City or Village
- ☐ Town
- ☐ Federal

18. What is the total public parking capacity? (Example: High Falls Park has X parking spots available)

19. Is there WiFi available on site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SECTION: CAMPING

20. Are there camping facilities available at this site? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. How many total acres of camping sites are there?

22. How many car camping sites are there?

23. How many cabins, cottages, and yurts are there?

24. Is group camping available at this site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SECTION: TRAILS

25. Are there trails available at the site? (This includes bicycle, hiking, shared-use, water, winter trails, and OHV/ATV trail types) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

26. How many total miles of trails are there?

27. How many miles allow bicycles?

28. How many miles allow foot travel (hiking/nature/fitness)?

29. How many miles allow equestrian use?

30. How many miles are shared-use paths/Greenway trails/bike paths?

31. How many miles are water trails?

32. How many miles allow snowmobile use?

33. How many miles allow cross-country skiing?

34. How many miles allow snowshoeing?

35. How many miles allow other motorized use (OHV/ATV)?

SECTION: DAY USE

36. Are there day use facilities at this site? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. How many picnic areas are available?

38. How many total picnic tables are available?

39. How many shelters are available?

40. Are there playgrounds at this site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

41. Is there a nature or visitor's center at this site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SECTION: COURT AND FIELD SPORTS

42. Are there court or field sport games available at this site? (This includes soccer, field hockey, baseball, football, little league, softball, running and cross-country track, tennis, basketball, handball, shuffleboard, racquetball, pickleball, volleyball, horseshoe, multi-use courts/fields, and similar sports.) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

TABLE 1: Please indicate how many of the court & field sports facilities are available.

43. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Tennis**

44. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Pickleball**

45. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Volleyball**

46. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Basketball**

47. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Handball**

48. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Baseball**

49. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Softball**

50. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Little League**

51. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Football**

52. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Soccer**

53. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Rugby**

54. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Shuffleboard**

55. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Horseshoe**

56. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Multi Use Court**

57. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Multi Use Field**

58. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Other Court Games**

59. Please indicate how many of the following court and field sports facilities are available: **Other Field Games**

SECTION: SWIMMING

60. Is there swimming available at this site? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

61. How many swimming pools are there on site?

62. What is the total pool area on site, in square feet?

63. Are there splash grounds at this site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

64. How many linear feet of developed beach are there on site?

SECTION: MARINAS AND BOATING

65. Are there marinas and/or boating at this site? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

66. How many cartop/hand launches are there on site?

67. How many launch ramps are there on site?

68. How many pier moorings are there on site?

69. How many anchorage sites are there on site?

70. How many transient docks are there on site?

71. How many slips are there on site?

72. Are there boat rentals available on site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SECTION: GOLFING

73. Are there golfing facilities available on site? (Driving range, miniature, pitch & putt, executive or regulation courses, disc/frisbee golf) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

74. How many 9-hole courses are available?

75. How many 18-hole courses are available?

TABLE 2 - Please specify the kinds of golfing activities available.

76. Is the following golfing activity available: Driving Range?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

77. Is the following golfing activity available: Miniature?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

78. Is the following golfing activity available: Pitch & Putt?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

79. How many holes are available for Pitch & Putt?

80. Is the following golfing activity available: **Executive Courses**?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

81. How many holes are available for Executive Courses?

82. Is the following golfing activity available: **Regulation Courses**?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

83. How many holes are available for Regulation Courses?

84. Is the following golfing activity available: **Disc/Frisbee Golf**?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

85. How many holes are available for Disc/Frisbee Golf?

SECTION: WINTER

86. Is there an ice-skating rink on site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

87. Are there downhill skiing areas on site? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

88. How many lifts are on site?

SECTION: HUNTING & FISHING

89. Is there fishing available at this site? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

90. Is there hunting available at this site? (This includes big game and small game.) *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

91. How many total acres of hunting area are there?

SECTION: ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Please provide the number of the following types of accessible infrastructure available at the site.

92. Accessible Kayak Launches

93. Accessible Fishing Piers

94. Accessible Campsites

95. Accessible Picnic Tables

96. Accessible Restrooms

97. Accessible Car Parking

98. Accessible Van Parking

SECTION: ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT

Please provide the number of the following types of adaptive equipment available at the site.

99. Beach Access Mats

100. All-Terrain Access Mats

101. Trail or All-Terrain Wheelchairs

102. Beach Wheelchairs

103. Fixed or Portable Pool Lifts

104. Accessible Boat Launch/Docking

105. Adaptive Horseback Mounting Platforms

106. Adaptive Fishing Gear

107. Adaptive Kayak Gear

108. Adaptive Birding Gear

109. Adaptive Golf Carts

110. Adaptive Bicycles

111. Other Adaptive Gear

SECTION: COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

112. Are there other activity infrastructures present at the facility that you would like to report?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

113. What other activity infrastructures present at the facility would you like to report?

114. Please use the space below for any additional questions or comments you would like to make that were not addressed in this survey:

2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Instrument (English)

Introduction and Screening

(Note: Subheads, question numbers, input numbers, and italicized text were not visible to respondents.)

At the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation we work hard every day to ensure the quality of your experience at our state parks and historic sites. Our office also assists in the development of parks and cultural facilities at the local level. We are seeking the opinions of New York State residents such as yourself to help us learn how we are doing and how we can best plan for the future.

You are part of a representative sample selected to participate in our latest survey. Your answers are important for this effort to be successful. We wish to hear from you even if you have not participated in an outdoor recreation activity or visited any parks in the past year.

S1. * What is your age? *(Age 18 and up continue.)*

S2. * Do you live in New York State?

- ☐ Yes *(Continue.)*
- ☐ No *(Survey terminates.)*

S3. * In which county do you live?

-- Select --

S4. What is your 5-digit zip code at home?

Current Participation in Outdoor Activities

1. Think about the outdoor recreation activities that you have participated in during the last year. Regardless of where it occurred, how many days did you participate in each of the following activities over the past 12 months? Just give it your best guess. There are 365 days in a year.

Park day use: includes relaxing in the park, playing croquet and other lawn games, picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas, gardens, historic sites/museums, carousels, and community gardens, dog parks.

Swimming: includes outdoor swimming, in either a pool, lake, ocean or river; also includes surfing, spray pools, splash pads.

Of those, how many days did you:

Swim outdoors in pools, spray pools, splash pads?

Swim outdoors in natural waters (lake, ocean, or river)?

Biking: includes use of bicycles for recreational purposes, whether on trails, established paths, off-road or on roads.

Of those, how many days did you:

Bike on paved trails or roads?

Bike off-road or on natural trail surfaces?

Adventure activities: includes skateboarding, skateboard parks, technical skill courses (pump tracks), expert level mountain bike trails, ropes/adventure courses, rock climbing.

Golfing: includes either regulation 18 or 9-hole courses, par 3 courses, miniature golf, driving ranges, pitch and putt courses, and disc golf.

Of those, how many days did you:

Golf on 18 or 9-hole courses?

Golf on par 3 or pitch and putt courses?

Play miniature golf?

Play disc golf?

Use a driving range?

Court Games: includes basketball, handball, tennis, racquetball, pickleball, volleyball and similar sports.

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

Field Games: includes baseball, football, soccer, field hockey, disc golf and other similar sports.

Walking/Running: includes walking for enjoyment/jogging/running/rollerblading (in-line skating) on paths and trails, and day hiking.

Nature Interpretation: includes bird watching/ and identification, tree and plant identification, and scenic viewing.

Camping: includes tenting, primitive, RV, cabins and backpacking/long distance hiking (multi-day activity, staying overnight), NOT hotel or lodge stays.

Of those, how many days did you:
Camp overnight in an RV or cabin?

Tent or primitive camp?

Fishing: includes salt and freshwater fishing from land or by boat, and ice fishing.

Boating: includes canoeing, kayaking, sailing, motorboating, row boating, paddle boarding, jet skiing, etc.

Of those, how many days did you:
Canoe, kayak, rowboat, paddleboard, or sail (non-motorized)?

Motorboat or jet ski (motorized)?

Downhill skiing: also includes snowboarding, ski boarding, telemark, etc.

Snowmobiling:

Winter activities: includes ice skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, ice hockey, ice biking and other miscellaneous local winter activities, but NOT ice fishing.

Hunting: includes big and small game.

Equine: includes equestrian activities, like dressage, show jumping, polo, trail riding, campsites.

Off-Road Vehicles: includes ATVs, 4x4s, motorcycles

Other

2. For any of the activities just listed that you would like to do regularly, what is the farthest you would be willing to travel in minutes?

Future Demand for Facilities

3. * Are more outdoor recreation facilities needed within 30 minutes of your home?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

(If yes):

4. What type of outdoor recreation facilities are needed?

(All):

5. Think about your own experience with outdoor recreation, and what you have heard from other people you know. Please select the type of new outdoor recreation facilities most needed within 30 minutes of your home, if any. (Randomize list.)

Select up to three. If nothing is needed, you can skip this question.

- ☐ Playgrounds
- ☐ Tennis or Pickleball courts
- ☐ Other court games

- ☐ Trails (paved, unpaved, rail trail, equestrian, or mountain bike)
- ☐ Picnic areas
- ☐ Ball fields
- ☐ Open space
- ☐ Swimming pools or beaches
- ☐ Boating and other water access
- ☐ Disc golf
- ☐ Winter activities

- ☐ Other

Barriers

6. Which one or two recreational activities would you most like to participate in, but can't for any reason?

7. * What prevents you from participating in outdoor recreation, if anything? Please select as many answers as apply. (*Randomize list.*)

- ☐ Work, housework, or school takes too much time
- ☐ Lack of money or transportation
- ☐ I prefer indoor activities
- ☐ Health or physical limitations

- ☐ There are limited outdoor recreation opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Please explain.

- ☐ There are too few recreational facilities available in my area
- ☐ Changing weather patterns
- ☐ Other

- ☐ Nothing, I participate in as much outdoor recreation as I wish.

Wake-up

W1. * Please select the image of the fish below. (*Note: The position of these images will be randomized.*)



1



2



3



4

Key Attitudes

(*Scale for this series:*)

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

- 8. * I feel I am able to access the resources, skills, information, and equipment I need to enjoy the outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 9. * I feel welcome and safe when I participate in outdoor recreation.
- 10. * I see other people like me when I participate in outdoor recreation.
- 11. * Outdoor recreation is available and accessible to all New York State residents and visitors.
- 12. * There is a way to provide feedback on outdoor recreation within New York State.

Classification

C1. * Including yourself, how many members of your immediate household are in each category?
Children (under 12)

Teenagers (age 12 to 17)

Young adults (age 18 to 25)

Adults (age 26 to 40)

Adults (age 41 to 65)

Seniors (age 66 and older)

C2. * What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Have not completed high school
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent
- ☐ Attended some college, no degree
- ☐ 2-year/Associate degree
- ☐ 4-year/Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Post-graduate degree
- ☐ Not sure or prefer not to say

C3. * Do you have a disability that requires an accommodation while participating in outdoor recreation?

- ☐ Yes (If yes, please list the accommodations you need or would like to see.):

- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure or prefer not to say

C4. * What is your gender identity? Please select one.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ X (inclusive of, but not limited to gender categories such as Non-Binary, Intersex, Genderfluid and Genderqueer)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

C5. * What is your race or ethnicity? Please choose any that apply to you.

- ☐ **Asian** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.)
- ☐ **Black or African American** (A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)
- ☐ **Hispanic or Latino** (A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.)
- ☐ **Middle Eastern or North African** (A person having origins in the Middle East or North Africa.)

- ☐ **Native American or Alaska Native** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the North and South Americas, including Central America, and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment.)
- ☐ **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** (A person having origins in any of the peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)
- ☐ **White** (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe.)
- ☐ **Other**

- ☐ **Not sure or prefer not to say**

C6. * What was the approximate total income for all members of your household last year before taxes? Just give it your best guess.

- ☐ Less than \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$124,999
- ☐ \$125,000 to \$149,999
- ☐ \$150,000 to \$174,999
- ☐ \$175,000 to \$199,999
- ☐ \$200,000 or more
- ☐ Not sure or prefer not to say

13. * Before we close, do you have any comments about any of the topics on this survey?

That completes the survey. Thank you for your participation. Your responses have been recorded.

2024 Public Outdoor Recreation Survey Instrument (Spanish)

Introducción y prueba

(Nota: Los subtítulos, números de pregunta, números de entradas y textos en cursiva no fueron visibles para los encuestados)

En la Oficina de Parques, Recreación y Preservación Histórica del estado de Nueva York trabajamos duro todos los días para asegurar la calidad de su experiencia en nuestros parques estatales y lugares históricos. Nuestra oficina también apoya en el desarrollo de parques e instalaciones culturales a nivel local. Estamos pidiendo la opinión de residentes del estado de Nueva York, como usted, para que nos ayuden a saber cómo lo estamos haciendo y cómo podemos planificar mejor para el futuro.

Usted forma parte de una muestra representativa seleccionada para participar en nuestra encuesta más reciente. Sus respuestas son importantes para que este esfuerzo tenga éxito. Queremos saber su opinión, aunque no haya participado en alguna actividad recreativa al aire libre ni haya visitado algún parque en el último año.

S1. * ¿Qué edad tiene? *(Continuar si es mayor de 18 años.)*

S2. * ¿Vive en el estado de Nueva York?

- ☐ Sí (*Continuar*)
- ☐ No (*Termina la encuesta*)

S3. * ¿En qué condado vive?

.....
-- seleccione --
.....

S4. ¿Cuál es el código postal de 5 dígitos de su casa?

.....

Participación actual en actividades al aire libre

1. Piense en las actividades recreativas al aire libre en las que ha participado durante el último año. Sin importar dónde las hizo, ¿cuántos días participó en cada una de las siguientes actividades durante los últimos 12 meses? Dé su mejor aproximación. Hay 365 días en un año.

Uso de parques durante el día: incluye relajarse en el parque, jugar croquet y otros juegos de pasto, hacer un pícnic, usar el área de juegos, visitar áreas naturales, jardines, lugares/museos históricos, carruseles y jardines comunitarios, parques para perros.

.....

Natación: incluye nadar al aire libre, ya sea en una piscina, lago, océano o río; también incluye surfear, piscinas con rociadores, áreas recreativas con chorros de agua.

.....

De esos, ¿cuántos días...

nadó al aire libre en piscinas, piscinas con rociadores, áreas recreativas con chorros de agua?

.....

nadó al aire libre en aguas naturales (lago, océano o río)?

.....

Ciclismo: incluye andar en bicicleta con fines recreativos, ya sea en senderos, rutas establecidas, caminos todo terreno o carreteras.

.....

De esos, ¿cuántos días...

hizo ciclismo en senderos o carreteras pavimentadas?

.....

hizo ciclismo en caminos todo terreno o en senderos de superficie natural?

.....

Actividades de aventura: incluye usar patineta, parques para patinetas, cursos de habilidades técnicas (pista de bombo), senderos de nivel experto para ciclismo de montaña, circuitos de cuerdas/aventura, escalada en roca.

.....

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

Golf: incluye campos reglamentarios de 18 o 9 hoyos, campos de par 3, minigolf, campos de práctica, campos de pitch and putt y disc golf.

De esos, ¿cuántos días...

jugó golf en campos de 18 o 9 hoyos?

jugó golf en campos de par 3 o de pitch and putt?

jugó minigolf?

jugó disc golf?

usó campos de práctica?

Deportes de cancha: incluye básquetbol, balonmano, tenis, ráquetbol, pickleball, vóleybol y deportes similares.

Deportes de campo: incluye béisbol, fútbol americano, fútbol soccer, hockey sobre pasto, disc golf y otros deportes similares.

Caminar/Correr: incluye caminar por diversión, trotar, correr, patinar (patines en línea) en senderos y rutas, y senderismo de un día.

Interpretación de la naturaleza: incluye observar e identificar aves, árboles y plantas, y ver paisajes.

Campismo: incluye acampar en tiendas de campaña, campamentos agrestes, cámpers, cabañas y excursionismo/senderismo de larga distancia (actividad de varios días en la que se pasa la noche), NO incluye estancias en hoteles o alojamientos.

De esos, ¿cuántos días...

acampó durante la noche en un cámper o cabaña?

acampó en una tienda de campaña o campamento agreste?

Pesca: incluye pescar en agua dulce y salada desde tierra o en bote y pescar en hielo.

Navegación: incluye navegar en canoa, kayak, veleros, bote de motor o de remos, tabla de surf de remo, moto acuática, etc.

De esos, ¿cuántos días...

navegó en canoa, kayak, bote de remos, tabla de surf de remo o velero (no motorizado)?

navegó en bote de motor o moto acuática (motorizada)?

Esquí alpino: también incluye tabla de nieve, esquiar, telemark, etc.

Paseos en motos de nieve.

Actividades de invierno: incluye hacer patinaje sobre hielo, esquí de travesía, raquetas de nieve, trineos, hockey sobre hielo, ciclismo sobre hielo y otras actividades invernales locales diversas, pero NO incluye pesca en hielo.

Caza: incluye caza mayor y menor.

Equitación: incluye actividades ecuestres, como adiestramiento, salto de obstáculos, polo, montar a caballo, campamentos.

Vehículos todoterreno: incluye ATV, 4x4, motocicletas.

Otra

2. Para cualquiera de las actividades que acaba de listar y que le gustaría hacer con regularidad, ¿cuál es la distancia máxima que estaría dispuesto a recorrer en minutos?

Demanda de las instalaciones en el futuro

3. * ¿Se necesitan más instalaciones recreativas al aire libre a menos de 30 minutos de su casa?
- ☐ Sí
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ No estoy seguro

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

(Si la respuesta es sí):

4. ¿Qué tipo de instalaciones recreativas al aire libre se necesitan?

(Todos):

5. Piense en su propia experiencia con actividades recreativas al aire libre y en lo que escuchó de otras personas que conoce. Seleccione el tipo de nuevas instalaciones recreativas al aire libre que sean necesarias a menos de 30 minutos de su casa. (*Lista hecha al azar*)

Seleccione hasta tres. Si no son necesarias, puede saltarse esta pregunta.

- ☐ Áreas de juegos
☐ Canchas de tenis o pickleball
☐ Otros deportes de cancha

- ☐ Senderos (pavimentados, sin
pavimentar, vías verdes, ecuestres o para bicicletas de montaña)

- ☐ Áreas para pícnicos
☐ Campos para juegos de pelotas
☐ Espacio abierto
☐ Piscinas o playas
☐ Navegación y otros accesorios acuáticos
☐ Disc golf
☐ Actividades de invierno

- ☐ Otra

Barreras

6. ¿En qué actividades recreativas le gustaría participar más, pero no puede por algún motivo?

7. * ¿Qué le impide participar en actividades recreativas al aire libre, si hay algún motivo? Seleccione tantas respuestas como corresponda. (*Lista hecha al azar*)

- ☐ El trabajo, las tareas de la casa o la escuela toman demasiado tiempo.
☐ La falta de dinero o transporte.
☐ Prefiero las actividades en interiores.
☐ Limitaciones médicas o físicas.

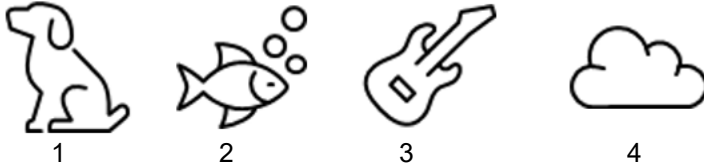
- ☐ Las oportunidades de recreación al aire libre son limitadas para personas con discapacidad. Explique.

- ☐ Hay muy pocas instalaciones recreativas disponibles en mi área.
☐ Cambios en las condiciones del clima.
☐ Otra.

- ☐ Ninguno, participo en todas las actividades recreativas al aire libre que quiero.

Despertar

W1. * Seleccione abajo la imagen del pez. (Nota: La posición de estas imágenes se hará al azar).



Actitudes clave

(Escala para esta serie):

- 1 Totalmente de acuerdo
- 2 De acuerdo
- 3 Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- 4 En desacuerdo
- 5 Totalmente en desacuerdo

- 8. * Siento que puedo acceder a los recursos, competencias, información y equipo que necesito para disfrutar las oportunidades de recreación al aire libre.
- 9. * Me siento bienvenido y seguro cuando participo en actividades recreativas al aire libre.
- 10. * Veo a otras personas como yo cuando participo en actividades recreativas al aire libre.
- 11. * La recreación al aire libre está disponible y es accesible para todos los residentes y visitantes del estado de Nueva York.
- 12. * Hay una manera de dar mi opinión sobre la recreación al aire libre en el estado de Nueva York.

Clasificación

C1. * Incluyéndose a usted mismo, ¿cuántos miembros de su grupo familiar inmediato pertenecen a cada categoría?

Niños (menores de 12 años)

Adolescentes (de 12 a 17 años)

Adultos jóvenes (de 18 a 25 años)

Adultos (de 26 a 40 años)

Adultos (de 41 a 65 años)

Senior (mayores de 66 años)

Appendix E – Supply and Demand Surveys

C2. * ¿Cuál es el nivel de educación más alto que ha completado?

- ☐ No ha terminado la preparatoria
- ☐ Diploma de preparatoria o equivalente
- ☐ Algunos estudios universitarios, sin título
- ☐ 2 años/título asociado
- ☐ 4 años/licenciatura
- ☐ Título de Posgrado
- ☐ No estoy seguro o prefiero no responder

C3. * ¿Tiene alguna discapacidad que necesite adaptaciones para participar en actividades recreativas al aire libre?

- ☐ Sí (Si la respuesta es sí, liste las adaptaciones que necesita o que le gustaría ver):

- ☐ No
- ☐ No estoy seguro o prefiero no responder

C4. * ¿Cuál es su identidad de género? Seleccione una.

- ☐ Femenina
- ☐ Masculina
- ☐ X (incluyendo, entre otras, categorías de género como no binario, intersexual, género fluido y género queer)
- ☐ Prefiero no responder

C5. * ¿Cuál es su raza o grupo étnico? Seleccione los que le correspondan.

- ☐ **Asiático** (Persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios del lejano oriente, el sudeste de Asia o el subcontinente indio, incluyendo, por ejemplo, Camboya, China, India, Japón, Corea, Malasia, Pakistán, las Islas Filipinas, Tailandia y Vietnam).
- ☐ **Negro o afroamericano** (Persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los grupos raciales negros de África).
- ☐ **Hispano o latino** (Persona de cultura u origen cubano, mexicano, puertorriqueño, sudamericano o centroamericano o de otra cultura hispana, sin importar su raza).
- ☐ **Del Medio Oriente o Norte de África** (Persona con orígenes en el medio oriente o el norte de África).
- ☐ **Nativo americano o nativo de Alaska** (Persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios de América del Norte y del Sur, incluyendo América Central, y que mantiene una afiliación tribal o un vínculo comunitario).
- ☐ **Nativo de Hawái o de otras islas del Pacífico** (Persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos de Hawái, Guam, Samoa u otras islas del Pacífico).
- ☐ **Blanco** (Persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios de Europa).
- ☐ **Otro**

- ☐ **No estoy seguro o prefiero no responder**

C6. * ¿Cuáles fueron los ingresos totales aproximados de todos los miembros de su grupo familiar el año pasado antes de impuestos? Dé su mejor aproximación.

- ☐ Menos de \$25,000
- ☐ De \$25,000 a \$49,999
- ☐ De \$50,000 a \$74,999
- ☐ De \$75,000 a \$99,999
- ☐ De \$100,000 a \$124,999
- ☐ De \$125,000 a \$149,999
- ☐ De \$150,000 a \$174,999
- ☐ De \$175,000 a \$199,999

- De \$200,000 o más
- No estoy seguro o prefiero no responder

13. * Antes de terminar, ¿tiene algún comentario sobre alguno de los temas de esta encuesta?

Con esto concluye la encuesta. Gracias por su participación. Sus respuestas han quedado registradas.

Activity Day and Participation Day Equations

Two equations were used to calculate total participation days per activity in **Table 4.5**, the activity day and participation day calculations (**Equations E.1** and **E.2**).

Equation E.1, the activity day calculation, calculated the number of days each of the four age groups stratified in the 2024 New York State Public Outdoor Recreation Survey - Young Adults (18 to 24), Adults (age 25 to 44), Adults (age 45 to 64), and Seniors (age 65 and over) - participated in a given activity. The median number of days participated in an activity was calculated per age group, then it was multiplied by the percentage of respondents in the given age group that participated in one day or more in the specific activity. That total was multiplied by the equivalent percentage of the statewide population in the given age group to retrieve an estimated statewide result for each activity and age group. The results of these calculations are an intermediate result in the process to calculate the number of participation days for each activity displayed in **Table 4.5**.

Equation E.1 – Activity Day Calculation for each Age Group and Activity

A = Median number of days participated in an activity for respondents who participated in at least one day or more of the activity

B = Percentage of the age group who participated in at least one day or more of the activity

C = Population of the age group in New York State

$$\text{Activity Days} = (A * B) * (B * C)$$

Equation E.2 calculated the number of participation days for each activity displayed in **Table 4.5**. The activity day results from **Equation E.1** for all four age groups were summed for each activity. The summation equals the number of statewide participation days in each activity, for adults aged 18 and over in New York State. A total number of participation days for all activities was calculated by summing all of the activities' participation days.

Equation E.2 – Participation Day Calculation for each Activity

i = Activity from list of activities in 2024 PORS

X₁ = Activity days for Young Adults (18 to 24)

X₂ = Activity days for Adults (age 25 to 44)

X₃ = Activity days for Adults (age 45 to 64)

X₄ = Activity days for Seniors (age 65 and over)

APPENDIX F – RELATIVE INDEX OF NEED AND SUPPLY TABLES

Appendix F consists of eight tables, the Relative Index of Need table from the 2020-2025 SCORP and the following exports from the Recreation Facility Inventory System:

1. Public Day Use Facilities in New York State by Provider
2. Public Swimming Facilities in New York State by Provider
3. Public Boating Facilities in New York State by Provider
4. Public Winter Facilities in New York State by Provider
5. Public Camping Facilities in New York State by Provider
6. Public Golf Facilities in New York State by Provider
7. Public Recreation Facility Acreage in New York State by Provider

Relative Index of Need (RIN)

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE RIN TABLE

Park	Relaxing in the park, picnicking, playground use, visiting nature areas and gardens, croquet, dog parks, etc.
Swim	Outdoor swimming, either in a pool (public or private), lake, ocean or river
Bike	Bicycling/mountain bikes whether on trails, established paths, off-road or on highways
Golf	Golfing on either regulation 18 or 9-hole including miniature golf, driving ranges, pitch and putt
Court	Court games, includes basketball, handball, tennis, racquetball, pickleball
Field	Field sports, includes baseball, football, soccer and disc golf
Walk	Walking for enjoyment/jogging/running on paths and trails, and day hiking
Camp	Camping includes tenting, primitive, RV, cabins, backpacking/long distance hiking
Fish	Fishing from land, by boat, or ice fishing
Boat	Boating includes canoeing, kayaking, sailing, motorboating, row boating, paddle boarding, jet skiing, etc.
LocW	Local winter activities include ice-skating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing
DnSki	Downhill winter sports include skiing, snowboarding, ski boarding, telemark, etc.
SnM	Snowmobiling
Hunt	Hunting big and small game
Equine	Equestrian activities, dressage, show jumping, polo, trail riding

Table F-1 – RIN by Activity and New York State County

County	Park	Swim	Bike	Golf	Court	Field	Walk	Camp	Fish	Boat	LocW	Ski	SnM	Hunt	Horse
Albany	4	9	6	7	8	5	5	4	7	7	7	10	6	5	4
Allegany	9	5	3	3	4	4	4	10	5	3	6	3	4	4	4
Bronx	10	5	10	4	5	6	8	4	6	10	3	9	10	7	8
Broome	4	4	5	5	6	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	5	5	4
Cattaraugus	3	5	3	7	5	4	2	4	4	2	10	4	4	4	3
Cayuga	5	4	3	4	6	4	4	5	4	4	10	4	4	4	3
Chautauqua	4	5	3	9	8	6	5	5	4	4	8	4	4	4	4
Chemung	5	8	4	4	6	5	6	4	7	2	7	3	4	4	3
Chenango	4	5	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	3	7	5	4	4	3
Clinton	3	3	3	4	6	4	3	4	4	4	6	2	4	4	2
Columbia	3	3	4	2	9	3	3	5	4	3	4	4	5	5	3
Cortland	4	6	3	3	3	6	4	4	4	3	10	6	4	4	3
Delaware	6	4	4	5	3	3	2	7	4	3	4	6	5	4	3
Dutchess	5	6	6	5	9	5	4	5	6	5	8	10	6	5	4
Erie	3	6	7	7	9	5	8	5	6	6	8	6	5	5	4
Essex	3	3	3	4	7	4	2	3	4	3	3	2	4	4	2
Franklin	4	4	3	3	9	6	3	3	3	2	3	2	4	4	4
Fulton	3	5	4	4	5	3	10	4	5	4	9	9	5	4	3
Genesee	4	6	4	4	6	4	3	10	5	4	4	3	4	4	3
Greene	4	7	4	6	4	5	4	6	7	5	10	5	5	5	3
Hamilton	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	2
Herkimer	4	4	3	3	7	6	4	5	4	3	10	5	4	4	3
Jefferson	4	3	3	6	4	3	3	4	3	3	5	4	4	4	3
Kings	10	6	10	5	5	7	10	4	6	10	3	10	10	7	9
Lewis	4	2	3	3	3	2	3	5	4	3	9	3	4	4	3
Livingston	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	3
Madison	6	3	3	3	4	7	2	3	5	4	7	5	4	4	3
Monroe	4	6	7	5	10	5	8	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5
Montgomery	6	3	4	3	4	3	4	6	4	3	4	3	5	4	3
Nassau	6	6	9	6	5	4	8	4	7	8	3	8	10	7	5
New York	10	6	10	5	5	7	9	4	6	5	3	8	10	7	9

Appendix F – Relative Index of Need and Supply Tables

County	Park	Swim	Bike	Golf	Court	Field	Walk	Camp	Fish	Boat	LocW	Ski	SnM	Hunt	Horse
Niagara	3	4	5	5	6	3	5	3	4	5	6	5	4	4	4
Oneida	4	5	4	6	7	5	6	6	5	4	10	6	4	4	3
Onondaga	4	5	5	7	6	4	4	3	5	5	8	8	5	5	3
Ontario	6	5	4	4	10	6	6	6	5	3	10	5	4	4	3
Orange	6	8	6	6	8	7	4	6	6	4	9	8	7	5	5
Orleans	4	7	3	4	5	6	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	3
Oswego	5	4	4	5	9	6	4	7	4	5	8	4	4	4	3
Otsego	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	5	4	3	4	5	5	4	3
Putnam	6	6	6	3	5	6	3	4	6	5	6	5	7	5	4
Queens	10	6	10	5	5	6	9	5	6	8	2	9	10	7	9
Rensselaer	5	5	5	9	6	7	4	9	5	4	8	3	5	5	3
Richmond	9	5	10	4	4	5	8	4	5	6	3	8	10	7	8
Rockland	5	5	8	5	7	5	4	3	5	8	3	5	8	6	4
St. Lawrence	4	4	3	5	4	5	3	3	4	3	6	9	4	4	4
Saratoga	4	5	5	5	7	4	5	7	5	4	7	2	5	4	4
Schenectady	10	4	5	5	6	4	6	4	5	4	9	4	5	5	4
Schoharie	4	3	3	2	3	3	5	7	4	4	9	3	5	4	3
Schuyler	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	7	3	4	4	3
Seneca	2	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	4	3	3	2	4	4	3
Steuben	4	6	3	4	7	3	4	4	5	4	10	4	4	4	4
Suffolk	5	6	8	6	7	5	5	4	6	8	5	9	10	6	4
Sullivan	4	6	4	6	6	5	2	7	6	4	10	8	5	4	2
Tioga	9	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	6	3	9	4	4	4	4
Tompkins	4	5	4	4	8	3	3	4	4	3	7	5	4	4	4
Ulster	7	5	5	4	10	6	3	6	6	6	10	5	6	5	5
Warren	3	4	4	5	5	3	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	3
Washington	4	3	3	4	5	3	3	2	4	4	6	2	4	4	3
Wayne	5	3	4	4	5	4	8	3	4	4	6	4	4	4	4
Westchester	6	5	8	7	6	5	3	4	5	7	2	7	8	6	4
Wyoming	3	8	3	4	7	7	5	4	6	4	10	3	4	4	4
Yates	4	6	3	2	8	4	6	4	5	3	10	4	4	4	5

Recreation Facility Inventory Exports

Table F-2 – Public Recreation Facility Acreage in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	AREA (ACRES)	%
Federal	45,992	1.0%
State	4,647,135	98.3%
<i>Forest Preserve*</i>	2,958,476	62.6%
Local	33,804	0.7%
Total	4,726,931	100%
*Includes undeveloped recreational lands under jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.		

Table F-3 – Public Swimming Facilities in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH SWIMMING	%	FACILITIES WITH BEACHES	%	BEACHES (LINEAR FEET)	%	FACILITIES WITH POOLS	%	POOLS (SQUARE FEET)	%
State	147	12.4%	182	26.5%	177,152	41.9%	74	11.2%	965,614	27.6%
County	68	5.7%	60	8.7%	70,316	16.6%	37	5.6%	370,009	10.6%
City or Village	497	41.8%	144	20.9%	67,294	15.9%	359	54.3%	1,640,261	46.9%
Town	475	39.9%	299	43.5%	92,679	21.9%	191	28.9%	522,530	14.9%
Federal	3	0.3%	3	0.4%	15,270	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	1,190	100%	688	100%	422,711	100%	661	100%	3,498,414	100%

Table F-4 – Public Day Use Facilities in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH PICNICKING	%	FACILITIES WITH TENNIS	%	FACILITIES WITH BASKETBALL	%	FACILITIES WITH PLAYGROUNDS	%
State	474	25.3%	91	7.4%	123	7.2%	232	7.9%
County	270	14.4%	95	7.7%	69	4.1%	160	5.4%
City or Village	529	28.3%	611	49.4%	1058	62.1%	1685	57.2%
Town	592	31.6%	438	35.4%	453	26.6%	868	29.5%
Federal	7	0.4%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	1872	100%	1237	100%	1703	100%	2946	100%
PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH BASEBALL	%	FACILITIES WITH FOOTBALL	%	FACILITIES WITH SOCCER, RUGBY AND MULTI-USE FIELDS	%		
State	105	5.8%	66	20.0%	53	14.0%		
County	117	6.5%	51	15.5%	13	3.4%		
City or Village	892	49.5%	124	37.6%	141	37.3%		
Town	684	38.0%	89	27.0%	171	45.2%		
Federal	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		
Total	1801	100%	330	100%	378	100%		

Table F-5 – Public Boating Facilities in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH CARTOP LAUNCH AREAS	%	FACILITIES WITH BOAT RAMPS	%	FACILITIES WITH DOCKS OR ANCHORAGES	%	NUMBER OF DOCKS / MOORINGS	%
State	295	84.3%	193	36.3%	105	36.3%	3,429	20.4%
County	14	4.0%	51	9.6%	17	5.9%	1,464	8.7%
City or Village	22	6.3%	108	20.3%	61	21.1%	4,676	27.8%
Town	19	5.4%	178	33.5%	105	36.3%	7,281	43.2%
Federal	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Total	350	100%	532	100%	289	100%	16,850	100%
PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH BOAT RENTALS	%						
State	82	23.4%						
County	37	10.6%						
City or Village	25	7.1%						
Town	25	7.1%						
Federal	0	0%						
Total	350	100%						

Table F-6 – Public Winter Facilities in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH SKI AREAS	%	NUMBER OF LIFTS	%	FACILITIES WITH ICE SKATING	%	SNOWMOBILE TRAILS (MILES)	%
State	11	18.3%	6	33.3%	52	9.3%	1,892	90.4%
County	9	15.0%	3	16.7%	51	9.1%	82	3.9%
City or Village	19	31.7%	1	5.6%	239	42.5%	7	0.3%
Town	21	35.0%	8	44.4%	219	39.0%	112	5.4%
Federal	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Total	60	100%	18	100%	562	100%	2,093	100%
PROVIDER	CROSSCOUNTRY SKI TRAILS (MILES)	%						
State	4,818	78.6%						
County	1,136	18.5%						
City or Village	73	1.2%						
Town	93	1.5%						
Federal	6	0.1%						
Total	6,126	100%						

Table F-7 – Public Camping Facilities in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH CAMPING	%	NUMBER OF CAMPSITES	%	FACILITIES WITH CABINS	%	NUMBER OF CABINS	%	FACILITIES WITH GROUP CAMPING	%
State	159	53.4%	26,983	80.2%	38	70.4%	855	91.5%	39	50.0%
County	71	23.8%	3,629	10.8%	14	25.9%	67	7.2%	28	35.9%
City or Village	18	6.0%	891	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	3.8%
Town	43	14.4%	1,980	5.9%	2	3.7%	12	1.3%	6	7.7%
Federal	7	2.3%	148	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.6%
Total	298	100%	33,631	100%	54	100%	934	100%	78	100%

Table F-8 – Public Golf Facilities in New York State by Provider

PROVIDER	FACILITIES WITH REGULATION GOLF	%	NUMBER OF HOLES	%	FACILITIES WITH MINIATURE GOLF	%	FACILITIES WITH DRIVING RANGES	%
State	20	14.5%	747	27.0%	9	31.0%	16	25.0%
County	29	21.0%	558	20.2%	11	37.9%	18	28.1%
City or Village	50	36.2%	846	30.6%	6	20.7%	14	21.9%
Town	36	26.1%	576	20.8%	3	10.3%	15	23.4%
Federal	3	2.2%	36	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.6%
Total	138	100%	2,763	100%	29	100%	64	100%

APPENDIX G – FUNDING PROGRAMS

FUNDING PROGRAMS	Agencies	CFA	Eligibility					Action						Primary Project Focus					
			State	Municipalities / Local	Tribal governments	Non-Profit	Private/ Individual	Acquisition	Planning/ Design	Construction	Maintenance	Conservation/ Preservation	Outreach	Trails and Access	Water Resources and/or Recreation	Open Space, Wetlands and/or Wildlife	Historic Sites and Cultural Resources	Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and/or Disaster Recovery	Education and/or Research
FEDERAL																			
Boating Infrastructure Grant Program	FHWA/OPRHP		x							x	x		x		x			x	
Certified Local Government Program	NPS/OPRHP			x						x		x	x			x		x	
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program	NOAA/NYSDOS		x	x			x	x	x		x			x					
Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery	HUD/RHC		x	x	x							x					x		
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement	FHWA		x	x					x	x			x					x	
Conservation Reserve Program	USDA/DEC					x					x				x				
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	NRCS												x						
Federal Lands Access Program	FHWA/USDOT/NYSDOT		x	x	x				x	x				x					
Federal Sport Fish Restoration Fund	FWS		x						x	x			x		x				
Forest Legacy Program	USFS/DEC		x								x					x			
Forest Stewardship Program	USDA/DEC									x	x					x			
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative	EPA		x					x	x	x			x						
Healthy Forests Reserve Program	NRCS				x						x					x			
Highlands Conservation Act Grant Program	USFWS/DEC/OPRHP		x	x	x						x					x			
Lake Champlain Basin Program	LCBP		x	x		x				x						x		x	
Land and Water Conservation Fund	NPS/OPRHP		x	x	x			x	x	x			x						
New York State National Maritime Heritage Grant Program	NPS/OPRHP			x	x	x				x		x							
North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants	FWS			x		x					x							x	
Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program	NPS/OPRHP		x	x	x			x	x										
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program	USFWS/DEC					x					x					x			
Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act	FWS		x										x					x	
Recreational Boating Safety Grant Program	USCG/OPRHP		x					x											
Recreational Trails Program	FHWA/OPRHP	x	x	x			x		x	x				x					
State Wildlife Grant Program	USFWS/DEC		x													x			
Transportation Alternatives	FHWA			x	x		x			x				x					
Wetlands Reserve Easements	NRCS		x	x	x		x				x					x			
STATE																			
Beachfront Drone Grant Program	OPRHP			x				x							x				
Brownfield Opportunity Area Program	DOS	x																	
Canalway Grants Program	Canals	x		x			x			x		x		x			x		
Climate Smart Communities Grant Program	DEC	x		x							x						x		
Complete Streets Program	FHWA/DOT			x						x									
Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant	OPRHP			x			x						x					x	
Connect Kids to Swimming Instruction Transportation Grant	OPRHP			x			x							x					
EPF Heritage Areas Program	OPRHP	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x		x	x		x			
EPF Historic Preservation Program	OPRHP	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x		x		x	x			
EPF Parks Program	OPRHP	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x		x	x		x			
Green Innovation Grant Program	EFC	x	x	x	x		x	x	x				x				x		
Hudson River Estuary Grant Program	DEC			x						x				x				x	
HRVG Community Grants	HRVG			x						x								x	
HRVG Conservancy Trails Grants	HRVG			x						x				x					
HRVG Community Heritage Development	HRVG/NPS			x			x							x				x	
HRVG National Heritage Areas Grants	HRVG			x										x				x	
Ladder to the Outdoors	OPRHP/NHT						x							x				x	
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program	DOS	x		x					x	x				x			x		
New York State Investment in More Swimming	DASNY/OPRHP			x	x					x					x				
NYS Great Lakes Protection Fund	DEC			x						x				x					
Snowmobile Trail Grant Program	OPRHP			x					x	x									
Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquariums	OPRHP		x	x			x						x					x	
OTHER																			
Conservation Partnership Program	DEC/Land Trust Alliance						x					x				x			
Park and Trail Conservation Program	OPRHP/PTNY			x								x				x		x	
Preserve New York Grant Program	NYSCA/PLNY			x												x			
	Canals = NYS Canal Corp.																		
	DASNY = Dormitory Authority of the State of NY																		
	DEC = NYS Department of Environmental Conservation																		
	EFC = Environmental Facilities Corporation																		
	US EPA = US Environmental Protection Agency																		
	FHWA = Federal Highway Administration																		

COMPREHENSIVE PHOTO LIST

Below is a list of photographs in the order that they appear in the 2025-2030 SCORP. All photos are from OPRHP unless otherwise noted.

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Geyser Creek at Saratoga Spa State Park	Sara-Cap	OPRHP	Cover
Kids at Rock Island Lighthouse State Park	Thousand Islands	OPRHP	Cover
Black Birders at Marsha P. Johnson State Park	New York City	OPRHP	Cover
Roll and Stroll at Rockefeller State Park Preserve	Taconic	Pierce Johnston	Cover
Inside Cover			
Red House Lake at Sunset, Allegany State Park	Allegany	OPRHP	Inside Cover
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First Day Hikes at Gantry Plaza State Park	New York City	OPRHP	22
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Fox Kit	N/A	OPRHP	26
Butterfly on Milkweed	N/A	OPRHP	26
Ice Fishing at Fahnestock State Park	Taconic	OPRHP	27
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People Playing Basketball at Riverbank State Park	New York City	OPRHP	83
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ⁱ New York State, “Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI): News and Updates,” accessed April 25, 2025, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/lake-ontario-resiliency-and-economic-development-initiative-redi/news-and-updates>

ⁱⁱ NOAA, “NOAA in the Great Lakes,” NOAA, last modified March 13, 2025, <https://www.noaa.gov/regional-collaboration-network/regions-great-lakes/about-regional-collaboration-network/noaa-in-great-lakes>

ⁱⁱⁱ NOAA, “NOAA in the Great Lakes,” NOAA, last modified March 13, 2025, <https://www.noaa.gov/regional-collaboration-network/regions-great-lakes/about-regional-collaboration-network/noaa-in-great-lakes>

^{iv} Environmental Bond Act, “Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act,” New York State, accessed April 25, 2025, <https://www.ny.gov/programs/clean-water-clean-air-and-green-jobs-environmental-bond-act>