

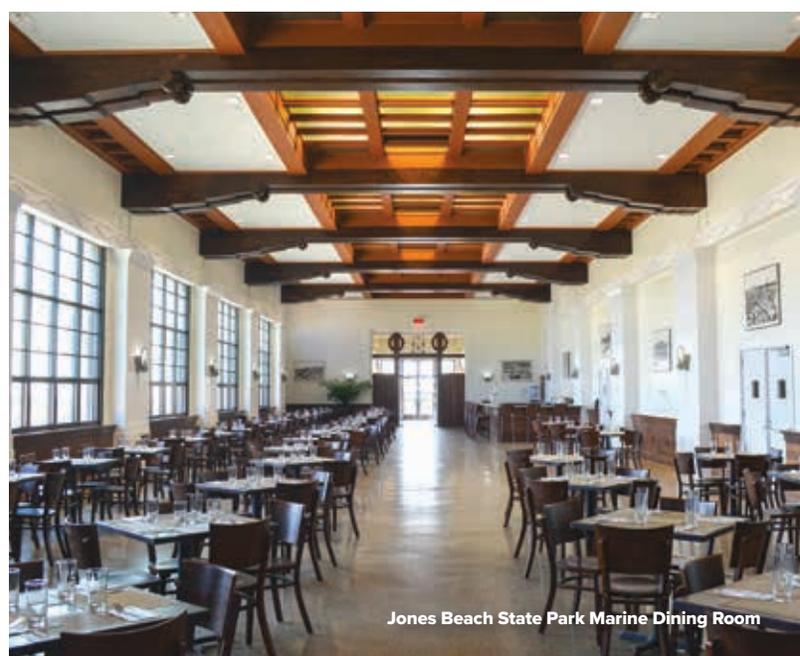
2017

ANNUAL  
REPORT

# New York State Council of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation



Jones Beach State Park West Bathhouse



Jones Beach State Park Marine Dining Room

2017

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## Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

State Council of Parks,  
Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ROSE HARVEY**  
Commissioner

**LUCY R. WALETZKY, M.D.**  
State Council Chair

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor  
Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

February 2018

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The State Council of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is pleased to submit its 2017 Annual Report. This report highlights the State Council of Parks and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's achievements during 2017, and sets forth recommendations for the coming year.

We continue to be enormously inspired by the renaissance of New York's state parks being achieved through your unprecedented capital investment. With more than \$650 million in transformative projects launched over the last six years, we are restoring public amenities, fixing failing infrastructure, adding new trails and upgrading our flagship parks so they are more beautiful, safe and welcoming. And with the 10-year, \$900 million capital funding commitment made through your *NY Parks 2020* initiative, the agency is poised to maintain this momentum.

New Yorkers and tourists, alike, are rediscovering state parks. And with the revitalization so firmly underway, we are working hard to ensure that all New Yorkers, particularly our youth, can fully experience our parks and historic sites. We are especially proud of the *Connect Kids to Parks Transportation Grant Program*. In just one school year, nearly 70,000 underserved students have visited a state park of historic site through this initiative. They are experiencing nature, learning about their state's history, and making new connections in their communities and beyond. We are thrilled with the success of this program and thank you for your continued support to nurture the next generation of park visitors, environmental stewards and active, healthy New Yorkers.

Our free *Learn-to-Swim* program has taught thousands of children to swim over the last four years in areas where such opportunities are limited and has gained national recognition for its success in overcoming barriers to swimming.

The State Council of Parks remains committed to building on the tradition of philanthropic support for state parks and, together with the Open Space Institute and the Natural Heritage Trust, has raised millions in private funds to support, signature projects, exhibits and endowments. And, our park "friends" groups remain an integral part of our system, providing time, resources and partnership on a wide array of projects and programs. Thank you for supporting the *EPF's Capacity Building Grant* program which helps support and strengthen these organizations.

Continued next page

As the agency puts your historic revitalization program to work, we must also commit to maintaining these new and newly restored visitor amenities. We strongly encourage an increase in agency operating funds to ensure that projects completed today are well-cared for into the future. Providing sufficient operational support for State Parks will ensure that the 69 million people who visit our parks annually, receive service commensurate with our inspiring parks and the magnificence of your capital revitalization program.

Finally, the State Council of Parks is deeply grateful for your continued commitment to ensuring that our state's remarkable public lands remain accessible to all New Yorkers and for fighting efforts that threaten our state's natural resources whether through over-development, encroachment or environmental hazards.

Your stewardship is remarkable and your strong leadership is needed now more than ever. We are proud to be your partners in this effort.

Best wishes,



Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky  
Chair, State Council of Parks





**New York State is Connecting Kids to Parks!**

Learn more about Every Kid in a Park and the Connect Kids Field Trip Program at [nysparks.com](http://nysparks.com)

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# The State Council of Parks will advance five priorities in 2018

## 1. Build and Sustain a 21st Century Park System that Is Safe, Affordable and Accessible.

In his *NY Parks 2020*, Governor Cuomo made a multi-year commitment to leverage a broad range of private and public funding to invest approximately \$900 million in State Parks from 2011 to 2020, the largest capital infusion in the history of the park system. This historic investment supports the agency's parallel efforts to rehabilitate, reinvent, and redesign park operations to leverage state resources and provide safe, affordable and high-quality recreational and educational experiences to the 69 million people who visit our facilities annually. The State Council of Parks supports the Governor's commitment to include \$90 million of critical new capital funding in 2018-19 for state park improvements and infrastructure as well as adequate general fund support to maintain park operations, ensure a quality visitor experience and protect the infrastructure investment made possible by NY Parks 2020.

## 2. Connect the Next Generation to the NYS Park System

Compelling anecdotal and sociological research points to the conclusion that youth are less connected to the outdoor environment; absent an effort to reverse this trend, we risk a future of declining park visitation and alienation from the natural environment. The State Council of Parks supports the Connect Kids to Parks initiative to connect the next generation of New Yorkers to their parks through offering increased educational and recreational opportunities aimed at youth, removing barriers to access and encouraging service engagement at State Park facilities.

## 3. Promote and Celebrate our Parks

The State Council will continue to assist the agency in implementing marketing initiatives to create a strong brand for our parks and historic sites. We also support the message of "this parkland is your parkland" to promote stewardship and responsibility among our park visitors and partners and initiatives such as I Love My Park Day and First Day Hikes that encourage volunteerism and pride in our state parks and historic sites.

## 4. Stewardship of Natural Resources

The State Council of Parks recognizes the importance of the stewardship of our natural resources and the need to protect, preserve and conserve them throughout our state park system to ensure that they are left unimpaired for future generations.

## 5. Advocacy

Wherever state parks and historic sites have threatened or actual boundary (or certain visual or toxic) encroachments we will mobilize and form plans to stop them.



Sampson Lake State Park Cottages Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



Connect Kids to Parks



I Love My Park Day



Minnewaska State Park



The State Park System\* is one of New York's greatest treasures. Today, the system totals 250 State Parks and Historic Sites encompassing nearly 350,000 acres. New York's Parks and Historic Sites provide affordable outdoor recreation and education opportunities to 69 million visitors each year. These facilities contribute to the economic vitality and quality of life of local communities and directly support New York's tourism industry. Parks also provide a place for families and children to recreate and exercise, promoting healthy lifestyles and helping combat obesity, diabetes caused by the twin evils of a sedentary life and unhealthy food.

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks) is responsible for the operation and stewardship of the state parks system, as well as advancing a state-wide parks, historic preservation, and open space mission. The agency has an "all funds" operating and capital budget of approximately \$333 million and is staffed by 1749 permanent employees and more than 4,500 seasonal positions during peak operating season. Approximately 69 million people visit State Parks annually.

State Parks is responsible for managing a vast array of public facilities. New York has one of the most developed state park systems in the nation, encompassing a huge inventory of public facilities including 180 state parks and 35 historic sites, 5,000 buildings, 29 golf courses, 36 swimming pools, 67 beaches, 27 marinas, 40 boat launch sites, 18 nature centers, 817 cabins, 8,355 campsites, more than 2,000 miles of trails, 106 dams, 604 bridges, hundreds of miles of roads, and dozens of historic structures listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

New York's State Park system has long been recognized as one of the best and most diverse in the nation. Among the fifty states, we rank first in the number of operating facilities and first in the total number of campsites. We are fifth in total acreage and second in total annual visitation. Attendance at Niagara Falls State Park is greater than that of Grand Canyon and Yosemite National Parks combined, and more than twice as many people visit Jones Beach each year than visit Yellowstone. Niagara Falls is the oldest state park in the nation and Washington's Headquarters is

the first property acquired with public funds for the express purpose of historic preservation and patriotic visitation.

**\*The term "State Park system" as used in this report refers to New York's 250 state parks, historic sites, recreational trails and boat launch sites.**



East River State Park - Blue School Day of Service



Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site



Bear Mountain State Park Preserve



Gilbert Lake State Park



Niagara Falls State Park

## State Council of Parks

LUCY WALETZKY,  
Chair and Taconic Commission

DALTON BURGETT,  
Allegany Commission

CORNELIUS B. MURPHY,  
Central Commission

W. DAVID BANFIELD,  
Finger Lakes Commission

PETER HUMPHREY,  
Vice-Chair and Genesee Commission

BRYAN ERWIN,  
Long Island Commission

LEISLE LIN,  
New York City Commission

CINDY ABBOTT LETRO,  
Niagara Frontier Commission

DAVID MORTIMER,  
Palisades Commission

HEATHER MABEE,  
Saratoga-Capital District Commission

HAROLD JOHNSON II,  
Thousand Islands Commission

ROBERT MACKAY,  
State Board for Historic Preservation

## Roles and Responsibilities: Members, State Council of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The State Council, created by Article 5 of PRHPL, consists of the Chairs of the eleven Regional Parks Commissions (including a representative of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission), the Chair of the State Board of Historic Preservation, the Commissioner of State Parks, and the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation. The Governor appoints the Chair and Vice Chair of the State Council. The Council meets at least four times per year through in-person meetings and conference calls. The Council's statutory responsibilities include:

- Act as a central advisory agency on all matters affecting parks, recreation, and historic preservation.
- Review the policy, budget, and statewide plans of the agency and make appropriate recommendations regarding their amendment or adoption.
- Submit reports to the Governor, not less than once each year, concerning progress in the area of state parks, recreation, and historic preservation.

### To advance these responsibilities, State Council of Parks members shall:

1. Endeavor to attend all State Council of Parks meetings.
2. During State Council meetings and through other channels, educate other Council Members, the State Parks Commissioner, and other Executive and OPRHP Staff about issues, priorities, challenges, and opportunities within their respective regions.
3. Communicate State Council and agency priorities and initiatives to all Regional Commission members. Encourage, motivate, and support fellow Regional Commissioners to enable them to fully engage in state parks issues.
4. Become educated about statewide parks, recreation, and historic preservation issues.
5. Develop and submit a written annual report to the Governor.
6. Undertake all responsibilities of Regional Parks Commissioners.



Allegany State Park



Roberto Clemente State Park



Grafton Lakes State Park

## Roles and Responsibilities: Members, Regional Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commission

The ten Regional Park, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissions, created by Article 7 of PRHPL, represent each State Parks region, with the exception of the Palisades (represented by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission) and the Adirondack/Catskill park region. Each Regional Commission consists of seven to fourteen members (the number for each commission is set in law). All Commission members, who must be residents of the state, are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for seven-year terms. The Governor designates the chair of each Commission. Each Regional Commission meets at least four times per year. The Regional Commissions are charged with acting as a central advisory body on all matters affecting parks, recreation, and historic preservation within their respective regions, with particular focus on the operations of the state parks and historic sites.

### To advance these responsibilities, Regional Parks Commissioners shall:

1. Endeavor to attend all Regional Parks Commission meetings.
2. Learn about the operations, priorities, and programs of the region, and participate in the annual review and approval of the regional budget. Remain in regular contact with the Regional Director. Visit as many state parks and historic sites in the region as possible, and become acquainted with regional staff and park managers.
3. Serve as an advocate for the state parks and historic sites within the region, including:

- “Adopt” one or more state parks, or historic sites, so that every park and site in the region has a Regional Commissioner with whom they have a special relationship. Actively participate in the formation or enhancement of Friends Groups, including considering making personal financial contributions, and assisting in fundraising efforts.

- Meet with State Legislators and other elected officials to educate them about issues, challenges and opportunities facing State parks and historic sites and advocate for state park funding and policy priorities.

4. Enlist the support of parks user groups, environmental and historic preservation organizations, land trusts, local community and business leaders, tourism officials, and other partners to advance State Parks’ goals and priorities.

5. Become educated about parks, recreation, and historic preservation issues throughout the region, with particular emphasis on issues – such as inappropriate development, sprawl, illegal ATVs, climate change, invasive species, etc.– that threaten state parks and historic sites. Testify or appear as appropriate at environmental review hearings, local planning meetings, etc. regarding proposed projects that impact park and historic site resources.

6. Participate as appropriate in continuing education opportunities such as: attending the annual Facilities Managers conference; participating in park master planning, trailway development, and parkland designation efforts (such as Bird Conservation Areas and Natural Heritage Areas) for individual parks; and attending parks, open space, and historic preservation conferences and training programs.

7. Assist in identifying qualified individuals to fill vacant Regional Commission positions.



Thacher State Park - Visitor Center



## New York Parks 2020

Since Governor's Cuomo's historic NY Parks 2020 initiative began, New York State Parks has completed infrastructure projects in every region of the state that have enhanced the visitor experience and launched a renaissance in the state park system. **With leveraged funds, in five years the program has invested nearly \$700 million in projects that have or will improve 176 state parks and historic sites; over 700 projects have been completed or are underway.**

## NY Parks 2020 Capital Highlights from 2017

### Transforming Flagship State Parks

NY Parks 2020 is transforming thirty of the most-visited parks and those serving underserved communities throughout the state. Significant transformations of iconic Jones Beach and Niagara Falls State Parks are nearly complete, with a combined investment of \$135 million. Roberto Clemente and Denny Farrell Riverbank State Parks in New York City have received over \$50 million in renovations to athletic facilities, expanded and enhanced waterfront access, new playgrounds and infrastructure repairs. Gateways that ad-

equately reflect the majesty of their natural settings are being constructed at Watkins Glen State and on each side of the Walkway over the Hudson State Park. Transformative projects completed in 2017 include:

### Buffalo Harbor's \$15 Million Transformation Completes First State Park in City of Buffalo

The transformation of the new Buffalo Harbor State Park, the City of Buffalo's first state park, is now complete. Governor Cuomo designated the neglected property on Buffalo's waterfront a State Park in 2013 and directed the state to invest \$15 million across 3 phases to remediate the brownfield and transform all 190 acres into a vibrant state park. Today, more than 240,000 people visit the park annually. The park includes paved walking and bike paths; a great-lawn with beautiful vistas of Lake Erie and the Harbor; open air picnic pavilions, nautically themed destination playground; sled-riding hill; stage area for live music and movies in the park; fishing platforms; and modern public marina and boat launch.

### New \$7 Million Year-Round Cave of the Winds Experience Opens at Niagara Falls State Park

A newly opened pavilion leading to the famed Niagara Falls Cave of the Winds attraction highlights Niagara Falls' significance as the first state park in the nation and site of the first large-scale hydroelectric generating plant. Part of Governor Cuomo's \$70 million revitalization of Niagara Falls State Park, the revamped pavilion features three new experiences. "Drawn to the Edge" presents interactive and virtual exhibits that tell the story of why visitors and innovators came to Niagara Falls and showcases the way beauty and power co-exist.

In the “World Changed Here” space, a theatrical film and object theater introduces viewers to famed visionaries such as landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and inventor Nikola Tesla and how their work impacted the world. Finally, visitors will enter the “Prepare for Power” room, where they receive a pair of souvenir sandals before descending 175 feet into the Niagara Gorge to the Cave of the Winds and the Hurricane Deck. When the decks close for the season, this space will offer a video wall where visitors can see the Falls throughout all the seasons.

**Jones Beach State Park Completes \$8.8 Million in Improvements**

This summer, Jones Beach State Park unveiled the latest round of improvements that are transforming and reinvigorating the public space. The project includes a complete renovation of the historic Marine Dining Room, now operated as The Landing, which offers daily lunch, dinner service, and brunch on weekends and will host events such as weddings and birthday parties. Other improvements include a new East Games Area, featuring shuffleboard courts, concrete table tennis, and bocce courts. Visitors are also greeted by new “Welcome to Jones Beach” monuments that honor the grand design of the park. The work is all part of Governor Cuomo’s \$65 million overall revitalization initiative of historic Jones Beach State Park.

**Hallock State Park Preserve on Long Island’s North Fork Opens**

This summer, New York State formally opened Hallock State Park Preserve in Suffolk County including a \$4.5 million visitor facility. The new facilities provide public access to the 225-acre park on the North Fork of Long Island for the first time since the park was acquired by the state in 2003. Hallock State Park features one mile of pristine, undeveloped beach on Long Island Sound as well as woodland trails, scenic bluffs, hoodoos and Hallock Pond. The project, funded by Governor Cuomo’s NY Parks 2020 initia-

ive, helped construct a new 3,000-square-foot visitor center, two new parking areas and new trails. Hallock State Park Preserve is the fifth Park Preserve in the state park system.

**Lakefront Improvements Cap \$16.9 Million Transformation of Green Lakes State Park**

Construction began this year on a new environmental education center at Green Lakes State Park. The project is the next phase of a \$16.9 million transformation of Central New York’s most-visited State Park. New York State Parks is converting a deteriorated 1940s boat house on Green Lake into an environmental education center and related improvements. The historic boathouse will be moved back from the water’s edge, where it is exposed to flooding, and renovated. The new center will include new indoor classroom/multipurpose space, kitchenette and restrooms as well as an outdoor classroom, lakefront boardwalk and canoe/kayak landing, new boat rental booth and storage racks, and a fishing pier. Other major improvements completed at the park include renovation of the golf course clubhouse, Pine Woods Campground, and park entrance.



Green Lakes State Park



Hallock State Park Preserve - Grand Opening



Niagara Falls State Park - Cave of the Winds Ribbon Cutting



Saratoga Spa State Park - Creekside Classroom

## Public-Private Partnership Opens New \$4.3 Million Thacher Park Center Opens

A new 8,240-square-foot facility opened at Thacher State Park in May, providing visitors a central place to discover all the park on Albany County's Helderberg Escarpment offers. Set next to the trailhead and picnic area for the popular Indian Ladder Trail, the Thacher Park Center will help introduce visitors to park's many features, including an expansive trail network; opportunities for hiking, biking, camping, and environmental education. The center includes a grand lobby and exhibit area highlighting the park's fossil-rich geological history; multipurpose space; and an outdoor patio where visitors can take in the park's dramatic views. Funding from Governor Cuomo's NY Parks 2020 initiative, as well as private funds raised by the Campaign for the Thacher Park Center, spearheaded by the Open Space Institute and the Saratoga-Capital Region Park Commission, made the project a reality.

## Improving the Visitor Experience

NY Parks 2020 is investing in facilities and programs that will better connect visitors, schools and communities to parks and historic and sites.

### Nature Centers

New and revitalized nature centers throughout the state are supplementing State Parks' renewed focus on environmental education and the Connect Kids to Parks initiative. This year, the Creekside Classroom opened at Saratoga Spa State Park, providing a space near the park's Geyser Creek to learn about the unique natural area and for environmental educators to conduct programs. The state's oldest nature center, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center at Wellesley Island State Park in the Thousand Islands Region has been renovated and the Friends Group raised substantial private funds to install new interpretative panels and displays. And,

an environmental center will be constructed at Green Lakes State Park allowing that park to more fully connect its visitors to its unique natural resources. Work is also underway at a new visitor center at Grafton Lakes State Park that will highlight the park's natural resources and provide program gathering space. Major improvements to more than a dozen nature centers will take place as part of NY Parks 2020.

### Cabins and Cottages

The camping experience is transforming at State Parks with the addition of cabins and cottages throughout the state. From primitive to luxurious the state park system now offers a range of cabin and cottage camping facilities. Some offer impressive amenities encouraging longer vacations and providing enhanced experiences to visitors in areas like the Finger Lakes where state of the art cottages in Sampson State Park connect to that region's thriving tourism sector. This year, Long Island received its first ever cabins and more will open to the public in 2018. Allegany State Park continues to improve cabins throughout the park which has the most cabins of any park in the state. Six new vacation cabins opened at Moreau Lake State Park in 2017. NY Parks 2020 will improve or construct 200 cabins and cottages across the state.

### Playgrounds

In 2017, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced New York has committed \$2.6 million to build or improve 12 playgrounds at 10 State Parks across New York - as part of a goal to modernize 100 State Park playgrounds as part of the NY Park 2020 initiative. With this year's announcement, that goal is nearly 80% reached.

### Stewardship and Sustainability

The Agency's investment in stand-alone sustainability projects has been significant. Since 2012, energy audits have



Moreau Lake State Park - New Cabins



Peebles Island State Park - Solar Panel Installation

## Preserving Historic and Cultural Assets

NY Parks 2020 is preserving our State's historic and cultural assets, protecting our connection to the past and contributing to a vibrant historic tourism economy in New York State. In 2017, the Agency joined with the City of Auburn as part of Governor Cuomo's Upstate Revitalization program to build a \$10 million Heritage Center to be built in the South Street National Register Historic District. The center will emphasize New York State's progressive history of promoting social and equal rights, while encouraging tourism at the region's many destinations. In Buffalo, a \$50 million restoration of the Darwin Martin House—an international destination for tourists, scholars and historians—was completed this year. Funding for the restoration came from a unique partnership of public and private sources.

## Energizing Local Economies

In October, Parks & Trails, New York released an update to its 2010 study on the Economic Impact of Parks that found parks continues to have a robust and significant impact on local economies. State parks create jobs throughout New York and increase state GDP because of spending by park visitors and by the state government on park operations and capital improvements. Parks also contribute to increased property values, improved health outcomes and social capital, and cleaner air and healthier environments. This study uses data provided by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) as well as findings from studies of other state parks to quantify the level of employment and state GDP that is supported by the New York State park system. Using one year of data from April 2015 through March 2016, the study finds that:

- New York State parks received 67 million visits at the time of this study
- Total spending by local and non-local visitors was about \$4 billion
- Including all visitor spending, the park system supported about 45,000 jobs and added \$2.4 billion in state GDP
- State spending of \$543 million plus visitor spending resulted in total spending of about \$5 billion, which supported nearly 54,000 jobs within the state of New York and generated about \$2.9 billion in state GDP
- Each dollar of New York State Parks spending led to about 9 dollars in sales statewide

been conducted at 28 parks and historic sites and \$12.5 million has been invested in energy reduction projects.

Land acquisition has also been an important part of the stewardship initiatives to fill-in parks, create linkages and connections between parks and protect open space and preserve natural resources. Since 2011, State Parks has closed on 85 acquisition projects and acquired more than 13,000 acres most notably in the Hudson Valley and Palisades regions where open space is an important as habitat corridors and protective buffer to existing parks and increased development. Land acquisition not only results in more open space, it also creates buffers and protection to existing parks from all types of encroachment.

## Trails

New York State Parks feature more than 2,000 miles of trails, from challenging mountain climbs to gentle bicycle paths. Visitors can hike the popular Indian Ladder Trail in Thacher State Park then stop in the new Thacher Park Center, or ride along the new 8-mile Black Diamond Trail near Ithaca, or explore back country trails in thousands of acres of protected open space in the rugged Hudson Highlands. In 2017, NY Parks 2020 invested \$2 million in funding for projects to improve and expand State Park hiking trails and outdoor recreational access projects in State Parks across New York. The funding improves and expands 12 hiking trails and outdoor recreational access projects across New York

## 2018-19 Capital Recommendation

*The State Council of Parks is proud to support Governor Cuomo's NY Parks 2020 initiative which will continue to invest \$90 million a year over the next four years into the transformation of the New York State Park system.*

PARTNERS & PROGRAMS



Hempstead Lake State Park - I Love My Park Day Volunteers

# I LOVE MY PARK days

The sixth annual **I Love My Park Day** hosted with **Parks & Trails New York** on Saturday, May 6, 2017 saw 8000 volunteers who contributed 16,000 hours to 250 cleanup, improvement, beautification and stewardship projects at 125 state parks and historic sites and an expanded number of national parks and forest lands in the Adirondacks and Catskills. Save the Date for the 7th Annual I Love My Park Day, Saturday, May 5, 2018.



**Audubon in the Parks** currently works in almost 20 state parks and is actively exploring work at more than 20 other sites. With 27 Audubon Chapters, Audubon New York staff and centers, and 213 State Parks

and Historic Sites located across the state, this initiative has a strong impact on New York's priority birds and habitats.

### First Day Hikes



are part of a national initiative led by America's State Parks to get people outdoors, with over 400 hikes scheduled in all 50 states. Kids and adults across America participated in First Day Hikes, getting their hearts pumping and enjoying the beauty of a state park. In New York, nearly 4000 participated in hikes at 49 parks on January 1, 2017.

### New York State Park Friends Groups

continue to be an integral part of the success of the state park system. Over 90 friends' groups provide funding and volunteers for park and historic site programs, events and special projects.



Friends of Fahnstock State Park - Winterfest Audubon



First Day Hikes - Taconic State Park



2017 Friends Group Conference

To leverage the grassroots support for State Parks, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo created the **Park and Trail Partnership Grant Program** in 2016. Funded through the Environmental Protection Fund, 20 partner organizations received \$450,000 in 2017 to advance their work to raise private funds for capital projects; perform maintenance tasks; provide educational programming; and promote public use through hosting special events. Grants will be matched by over \$200,000 in private and local funding. In December, Parks & Trails, New York and State Parks hosted a statewide conference of Friends Groups, with nearly 50 groups participating in a weekend of workshops and conversation on how to strengthen their organizations and the partnership with State Parks.



## OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE

The **Open Space Institute** (OSI), through its Alliance for New York State Parks program, is leveraging public investments by raising private funds and enhancing park projects to make them more welcoming, engaging and exciting. Examples of successful OSI campaigns include: Carriage Road Restoration at Minnewaska State Park Preserve; a renovated Canopus Lake beach complex at Fahnestock State Park; the new Humphrey Nature Center at Letchworth State Park and the new Thacher Park Center at John Boyd Thacher State Park.



Little Stony Point Volunteer Center



I Love My Park Day



Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site - Connect Kids to Parks

In 2017, New York State launched the “Connect Kids to Parks” program to enhance educational and recreational opportunities for schoolchildren and help promote parks and historic places in every corner of the state. The program has four main goals:



1. Remove barriers to access
2. Bring more youth to state parks for environmental education programs
3. Focus on youth-friendly recreation and teaching youth the skills necessary to be active in parks
4. Support and encourage youth service to nurture the next generation of stewards

A key program in this initiative is the Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant program. Since the program launched in the spring of 2017, over 1400 field trip grants have been awarded serving over 60,000 public school children who have visited state lands in every region of the state. The grant, funded through the Environmental Protection Fund, covers the costs of transportation and all program fees for any grade from a Title 1 school district.

New York also continues its to extend free State Park day-use entry to all fourth-grade students through acceptance of the Every-Kid-in-a-Park pass. Together, these programs have served nearly 100,000 New York youth in just two years.



Jones Beach State Park - Connect Kids to Parks



East River State Park - Connect Kids to Parks



Roberto Clemente State Park - Learn To Swim Program



Lake Taghkanic State Park - Learn-to-Swim

The New York State Parks **Learn-to-Swim Program** continued for a fifth year in 2017 at more than 30 parks across the state, teaching thousands of youth to swim. The program was featured in the New York Times as a model of innovative efforts in NYS to address the racial disparity in swimming ability. Learn-to-Swim continues to be supported through a partnership with the New York State Department of Health, the American Red Cross, the National Swimming Pool Foundation and the Northeast Spa and Pool Foundation.

In 2017, 500 foster families received free State Park camping gift cards and Empire Passes, affording them the opportunity to enjoy state parks and outdoor recreation together. The **Foster Family Park Access** program is a partnership with the Office of Children and Family Services and was announced as part of Foster Care Appreciation Month last spring and we launched the **First-Time Camper Program** in partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation which offered free camping to 40 families at select parks over eight summer weekends. The new campers were provided with a family tent, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, camp chairs, lantern, and even firewood. A Camping Ambassador met families at the campsite and help them get camp set up with a camping 101 lesson. Campers also had the opportunity to learn from experts how to fish, hike, bird watch, paddle and more, all while having fun and making memories that last forever.



First-Time Camper Program

# 2017 Empire State Conservation Corps Programs

## ECC PROGRAMS



Excelsior Conservation Corps AmeriCorps (ECC)



In 2016, Governor Cuomo launched the Excelsior Conservation Corps AmeriCorps (ECC) to build upon the legacy of President Franklin Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps, providing 50 young men and women the opportunity to serve together as they restore, protect and enhance New York's natural resources and recreational opportunities that are the backbone of the state's outdoor experience.

The ECC is creating the next generation of conservation leaders in New York State by empowering young people of all backgrounds through education, hands-on experience and training. The program will enroll up to 50 members (including vets), ages of 18 to 25, to volunteer 10 months of their lives to serve their country as AmeriCorps members. In its first year, ECC students improved over 100 miles of trails; 376 acres of public lands; built or maintained over 320 structures in parks; and reached over 2600 individuals through environmental outreach programs.

In year two, to date, ECC students improved 65 miles of trails; 595 acres of land; built or maintained 214 visitor-use structures and reached over 2800 individuals through environmental outreach programs.

Starting in 2017, the Student Conservation Corps (SCA) New York State Parks Corps program expanded to engage enthusiastic conservationists to provide criti-

cal environmental education and stewardship in the Allegany, Finger Lakes, and Thousand Islands regions of New York State. The New York State Parks Corps program is a ten-month residential program focusing on environmental education, trail maintenance and construction, and wildlife management. Projects include new trail construction, environmental education and interpretation, volunteer coordinator, nuisance wildlife control, and much more. In its first year, the Park Corps program improved 10 miles of trail and 4 acres of land; restored 225 feet of shoreline and reached over 6100 individuals through environmental outreach programs.

The Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship (FORCES) program is cooperatively funded by State Parks, the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and donor support from the Alliance for New York State Parks, a program of the Open Space Institute. The FORCES Program is currently affiliated with 28 academic institutions. The program supported over 80 stewards (interns) in 2016 and over 4,400 volunteer service hours. FORCES reenergized efforts in the Niagara Region with the recent hire of a Program Specialist. Momentum also increased in the Taconic and Allegany Regions With assistance from 4 Excelsior Conservation Corps members, over 30 FORCES stewards once again joined with the NYS Bluebird Society and the State Office of Children and Family Services to construct about 1,700 bluebird houses at the State Park at the NYS Fair.



As part of the promise to invest and build infrastructure to support New York's economy, Governor Cuomo is creating the Empire State Trail, which when completed in 2020 will create a 750-mile trail bike and walking pathway from New York City to Canada and from Albany to Buffalo. Once the Empire State Trail is complete, it will attract more hikers, bikers, and cross country skiers than ever before and provide access to destinations, heritage areas, and historic sites and districts. The Empire State Trail will connect the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail and the Erie Canalway Trail, creating the largest state multi-use trail in the nation. Currently, the Hudson River Valley Greenway is nearly 50 percent complete and crosses the Appalachian Trail, spanning over 260 miles between the Manhattan Battery and Lake George. The trail closely, and in many places parallels State Bike Route 9, which extends the Greenway an additional 130 miles along Lake Champlain to the Canadian border. The Erie Canalway is nearly 80 percent complete and runs approximately 360 miles along the storied Erie Canal, connecting Buffalo to Albany. A draft plan released in August details the proposed trail.

The first project under the Governor's Empire State Trail initiative was completed on October 4, 2017, when the Town of New Paltz held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly repaired and reopened Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Bridge which spans the Wallkill River. The bridge, which spans the Wallkill River, had been closed since Spring of 2017 due to safety concerns over the deteriorated bridge.







Verona Beach State Park - Splash Pad

## Allegheny Region

7 parks, 1.8 million visitors

In 2017, **Allegheny State Park** launched a volunteer trail steward program resulting in hundreds of volunteers contributing over 2300 hours of time to construct new and improve existing trails throughout the park. At **Midway State Park**, members of the Friends Group and Allegheny Commission Chair Dalton Burgett continue to fundraise for historic amusement park rides. Allegheny Regional Commission members have started interpretive hike programs at **Lake Erie** and **Long Point State Parks**, enhancing the environmental and recreational programs offered at those parks. A new friends group continues to form at the **Barcelona Lighthouse**.

## Central Region

20 parks, 7 historic sites, 2.6 million visitors

The Regional Commission, led by Chair Neil Murphy, has begun work on a private fundraising campaign to support the environmental center at **Green Lakes State Park**. The project will convert a deteriorated 1940s boat house on Green Lake into an environmental education center and related improvements. The new center will include new indoor classroom/

multipurpose space, as well as an outdoor classroom, lake-front boardwalk and canoe/kayak landing, new boat rental booth and storage racks, and a fishing pier. At **Verona Beach State Park**, park staff designed and installed a 2,000-square-foot splash pad includes: 17 spray fountains underground; and 6 spray fountains above ground; and a natural plant and beach theme. The splash pad is connected to the municipal Onondaga County Water Authority system, providing a safe and clean water source for children and families to enjoy.

## Finger Lakes

25 parks, 2 historic sites, 4 million visitors

The Finger Lakes region continues to advance projects that connect the state parks to the area's thriving tourism industry. The luxury cottages that opened this summer at **Sampson Lake State Park** will allow visitors to experience the beauty of the park as they tour the wine trail nearby. At **Watkins Glen State Park**, the transformation of the entrance area currently underway will better connect the park to the Village and the myriad of activities that take place there year-round. The new visitors center at **Taughannock Falls State Park** is hugely popular, and in 2017 it served over 30,000 travelers from 73 countries and all 50 states.



Allegheny State Park - Allegheny Trail



Robert H. Treman State Park



Hallock State Park Preserve -New Visitors Center Opening



Letchworth State Park - Nature Center



Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park - New Greenhouse Ribbon Cutting

The Commission's efforts to support Friends Groups is also advancing, with the Friends of Two Rivers continuing to grow and the successful efforts of the Friends of Robert Treman to restore the exterior of the beloved Old Mill through a capacity building grant the group received from Parks & Trails, NY.

### Genesee Region 8 parks, 1.2 million visitors

Partnerships at the **Letchworth Nature Center** continue to strengthen its role in environmental education and research in the Rochester area. Through a cooperative agreement with SUNY Geneseo the college is developing and identify educational opportunities, research and environmental restoration projects, programming, and exhibits at the new center. The park is also expanding a new partnership with Houghton College where students and professors will deliver one of the programs for the winter lecture series and develop student internship/research projects. The Friends of Letchworth also have been active with several grants projects to restore/ preserve some CCC structures in the park such as a "lean-to" on a trail, large stone chimneys which are remnants from buildings at former CCC campsites and stone picnic tables in various areas.

### Long Island Region 26 parks, 1 historic site, 18 million visitors

This summer, **Hallock State Park Preserve** formally opened a new visitor center that welcomes people to the park that offers woodland trails, saltwater fishing and hand-powered boating on Long Island Sound, scuba-diving and horseback riding. Trail connections to the Hallock Museum Farm will help foster visitor's appreciation of the North Fork's agricultural heritage. This beautiful park preserve greatly expands access to some of the most beautiful areas of Eastern Long Island. Governor Cuomo visited **Jones Beach State Park** to officially open the restored Marine Dining Room in the West Bathhouse. The elegant dining room, featuring carved ceiling beams, will offer rentable space for catered weddings, reunions, proms and other events. Renovation of the dining room, which had been partitioned into offices and space for an ice cream parlor, caps a \$19.7 million renovation of the West Bathhouse. The region welcomed millions of visitors at some of the largest public events in the state, including the Bethpage Air Show; the 4th of July Fireworks and the Magic of Lights Holiday display at Jones Beach State Park.

## New York City Region

7 parks, 7.5 million visitors

In September, Governor Cuomo visited Riverbank State Park to officially rename the park the **Denny Farrell Riverbank State Park** in honor of Assemblyman Farrell represented Harlem, Washington Heights, Hudson Heights, Sugar Hill, and Hamilton Heights in the Assembly for 42 years, making him the third longest-serving member in the history of the New York State Assembly. The Regional Commission is engaged in a private fundraising campaign to renovate the cultural theater at Riverbank State Park; and, in late September the park opened the first public greenhouse in New York City in a unique partnership with the Horticultural Society of NY to provide community programming. At **Roberto Clemente State Park**, local elementary school children continue to learn about the park's unique natural environment through a program offered by the Bronx Children's Museum using art to teach about the ecosystem of the Harlem River. Environmental education is a priority in the Region, with a new pop-up program proving very popular at East River State Park with local public school groups. Corporate volunteerism continues to thrive in the NYC region, with large groups completing projects at **Riverbank, Bayswater** and **Gantry Plaza State Parks** this year.

## Niagara Region

18 parks, 2 historic sites, 11.7 million visitors

The Niagara Region celebrated the completion of the final stage of development at **Buffalo Harbor State Park** this fall. The park is the first state park in City of Buffalo and connects visitors to the Outer Harbor and to the nearby environmental center, creating an expansive connection between residents and the unique waterfront environment. More than 240,000

people visit the park annually. The Regional Commission continues to work on efforts to expand the FORCES program. At **Niagara Falls State Park**, Lt. Governor Hochul visited Niagara Falls State Park in October to announced the opening of the new \$7 million pavilion at the Cave of the Winds at Niagara Falls State Park. The interactive facility, which highlights the natural and cultural history of Niagara Falls, will provide a new year-round attraction in the park and help extend the tourism season.

## Palisades Region

20 parks, 7 historic sites, 4.8 million visitors

At **Minnewaska State Park**, a partnership with the Open Space Institute continues to advance work on the new visitor center that will help the park accommodate the growing number of visitors to the stunning park. Construction and fundraising efforts also continue to restore the network of Carriage Roads in the park. At Rockland Lake State Park, construction is nearing completion of the newly renovated north pool. This renovation includes a zero-entry pool for increased accessibility, a new slide and spray pad area for younger children. Renovation is underway of the bathhouse and office complex adjacent to the north pool. The addition of 400 acres to **Schunnemunk State Park** in Orange County will expand year-round trail-based recreation and protect natural habitat in the Hudson Valley. The property was purchased from the Open Space Institute. Now at more than 3,300 acres, Schunnemunk State Park offers ridge-top views of the Hudson Highlands to the east, and the Shawangunks and Catskills to the west. The new parcel will expand the region's recreational trail network, preserve scenic views and protect the area from overdevelopment.



Buffalo Harbor State Park



Schunnemunk State Park



Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park - Visitor Center Ribbon Cutting

## Saratoga-Capital District Region 12 parks, 8 historic sites, 4.7 million visitors

Work began this fall to restore one of the most popular destinations in **Saratoga Spa State Park**. The Peerless Pool Bathhouse project will create more green space near the pool complex and provide updated and improved facilities for pool visitors. Friends Groups throughout the region continue to work on projects that improve the visitors experience. At **Grafton Lakes State Park**, volunteers designed and installed beautiful new signage along the trail to the Fire Tower to better direct hikers and provide interpretation of the area. At **Moreau Lake State Park**, volunteers constructed an osprey nest platform to allow visitors to observe these remarkable creatures. Partnerships at the park with user groups and the Open Space Institute continue to expand access to the newly acquired Palmerton Ridge area. Historic preservation efforts are strong in the region. Newly installed exhibits at the visitors center at **Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site** offer visitors more historical context as they explore the site along the Erie Canal. And, the historic staircase leading to the front entrance of **Schulyer Mansion State Historic Site** has been restored, again allowing visitors to enter the home as its original residents did.

## Taconic Region 14 parks, 6 historic sites, 4.2 million visitors

The **Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park** will soon have welcome centers on each end of the linear park to welcome the millions of people who visit this tourist destination annually. The visitor centers will orient visitors not just to the park but to the Hudson Valley region, connecting them to the many state parks, historic sites and other attractions in this part of the state. At **Bannerman Island**, in **Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve** a volunteer



Saratoga Spa State Park - Peerless Pool Bathhouse

project by an engineering class at West Point resulted in new bridge to better connect visitors to this unique historic site. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on the in May when Bannerman Castle Trust Inc. board members, local politicians, New York State Parks officials and Beacon Chamber of Commerce members met with West Point Military Academy faculty, cadets and their families to officially open the new trail bridge The Little Stony Point Citizens Association received a Park and Trail Partnership grant to replace an existing storage shed and create new space to support volunteer activities at **Little Stony Point State Park**. The accessory structure will provide space for meetings, event planning and support, equipment, materials, and volunteer amenities plus a covered porch for hikers.



Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site

## Thousand Islands

26 parks, 1 historic site, 1.6 million visitors

The Friends of the **Minna Anthony Common Nature Center** with the help of Thousand Island Regional Commission Chair Harold Johnson have conducted a robust private fundraising campaign to design and install new interpretative panels and displays for the renovated nature center. The fun, interactive displays, and new museum exhibits will teach, provide entertainment and offer a link between the museum and the Nature Center trails. The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center has educated thousands of eager learners along the Saint Lawrence River for 50 years. At **Sackets Harbor Battlefield**, the acquisition of Horse Island adds an important historic resource to the site. Horse Island is a 24-acre island in Lake Ontario. It sits just off-shore of Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site. The island played a pivotal role in the British attack on Sackets during the War of 1812, and was identified by the Civil War trust as one of their top 5 national priorities for acquisition of 1812-significant properties. It is their first 1812 acquisition in the country, and their first acquisition of any kind on New York State. The region is



Minna Anthony Common Nature Center

working in partnership with them to acquire this property, which also has a beautiful 1870 lighthouse.



Richardson Olmsted Campus/Hotel Henry

## 2017 Historic Preservation Awards

Established in 1980, the state preservation awards are given by the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation each year to honor excellence in the protection and rejuvenation of New York's historic and cultural resources. This year's awards were presented at a ceremony held at the New York State Museum on December 7th.

### **The Residences at PS 186/Boys & Girls Club of Harlem, Manhattan, New York County**

PS 186, designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style in 1903, was a centerpiece of its Hamilton Heights community. After the school closed in the 1975, the building became a community eyesore. With the assistance of state and federal historic tax credits, the development team and the Boys & Girls Club have completely rehabilitated the building and created 78 units of mixed income residential housing that are co-located with a new 11,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art clubhouse.

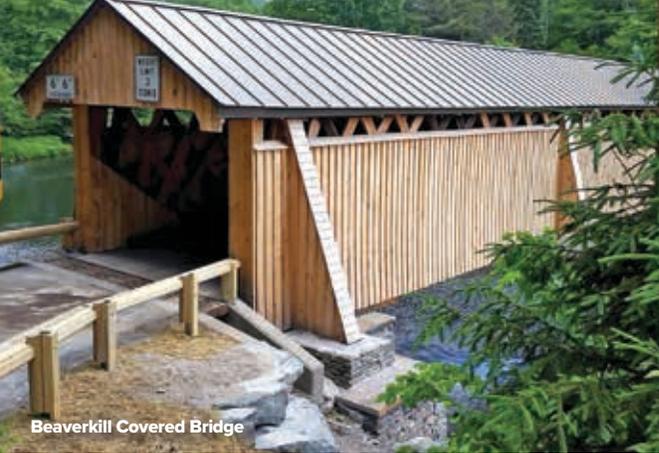
### **Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory, Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County**

The Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory was constructed in 1874 and has long stood as a beacon of industry in Poughkeepsie, serving as the location for several manufacturing enterprises. By the late 20th century the brick factory was vacant and in desperate need of rehabilitation and reuse. Thanks to the outstanding commitment and cooperation of Hudson River Housing, Inc. and its state and local partners, the former factory has been trans-

formed into a vibrant community hub. Using state and federal historic tax credits, the project is a vital blend of commercial and residential space in the downtown Middle Main neighborhood with a growing food and arts scene. The Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory aligns the many facets of Hudson River Housing's work, providing affordable housing, training and employment opportunities, and accessible community spaces that bring people together.

### **Beaverkill Covered Bridge Rehabilitation, Town of Rockland, Sullivan County**

The Beaverkill Covered Bridge was built in 1865 to span the upper Beaverkill Creek and helped provide access to a region that was nearly unpassable until its construction. In the 1990s, the Friends of the Beaverkill Community formed to advocate for the preservation of several threatened historic sites in the Beaverkill Valley. The covered bridge, a critical element of the community's identity, was the group's top priority. A detailed inspection in 2013 revealed major structural problems and the bridge was closed to traffic. At that point, an extraordinary team came together, led by the Friends, the Open Space Institute, and the Catskill Riverkeeper, which together provided essential support and coordination, assisted by Sullivan County and the town of Rockland, and supported by the Departments of Environmental Conservation and Transportation, all of whom worked with the State Historic Preservation Office to implement a preservation plan for the bridge. The newly restored bridge preserves one of the town's most beloved landmarks, and shows the value of multiple public and private partners working together for the public good.



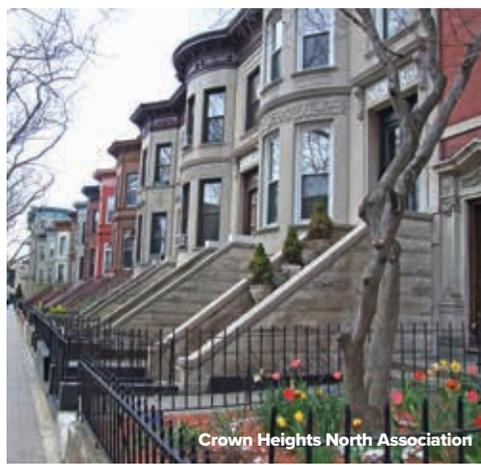
Beaverkill Covered Bridge



New York State Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary Commemoration Commission



Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory



Crown Heights North Association



Residences at PS 186/Boys & Girls Club of Harlem

## Richardson Olmsted Campus/Hotel Henry, Buffalo, Erie County

The Richardson Olmsted Campus redevelopment is a towering success story of adaptive reuse for one of the State's most recognized and challenged buildings. Constructed as the Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane, the iconic copper towers of the signature central building were built as a testament to the influence of Buffalo in the late 1800s. After the facility went out of use in 1974, the deteriorating H. H. Richardson designed buildings and abandoned Frederick Law Olmsted grounds loomed large for decades. Today, this National Historic Landmark is one of the largest historic preservation projects in the nation, and is part of the Buffalo-Niagara region's resurgence as an arts and culture destination and mecca for architecture enthusiasts. The first redevelopment project was completed this year with Hotel Henry Urban Resort Conference Center opening in April 2017 and the anticipated opening of the Lipsey Buffalo Architecture Center later this year.

## Crown Heights North Association, Brooklyn, Kings County

In 2002, a group of neighbors on Sterling Place in Brooklyn met to discuss housing in their community. The neighborhood of fine rowhouses, apartment buildings, free-standing former mansions and large churches was now seeing intense development pressure from outside of their predominantly African and Caribbean American community. The group organized as the Crown Heights North Association and began the process of attaining New York City and National Register of Historic Places status. With the assistance of the New York City-based

Historic Districts Council and the Preservation League of New York, the Crown Heights North Association was able to designate and protect more than 1600 historic properties in their neighborhood. The association aids the community with workshops on predatory lending, landmarking regulations, grant and tax information, as well as community outreach events such as an annual Town Hall meeting, house and walking tours and a holiday lighting contest. Due to their service working and prompting tools for sustainable community planning, the Crown Heights North neighborhood is now the leader in all of New York City in the use of the Historic Homeowner Tax Credit program.

## New York State Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary Commemoration Commission

The New York State Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary Commemoration Commission was created to develop state-wide programs that celebrate women's suffrage in New York State. Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, the 14-member commission is working to promote the anniversary of women's suffrage between 2017, marking 100 years from when women won the right to vote in New York State and 2020, a century after the 19th Amendment was ratified. Legislation establishing the commission the New York State Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary Commemoration Commission was sponsored by Sen. Betty Little and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther and signed into law by Governor Cuomo.

PARK POLICE



## New York State Park Police

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Division of Law Enforcement continues to support the Agency and work closely with our public safety partners to maintain safe parks. The State Park Police deliver the highest quality professional police services to our visitors, our surrounding communities, and our fellow employees. With another year record visitation, and many significant events, New York's State Parks and facilities have been maintained as safe havens of public use by Park Police Officers, Park Forest Rangers, Public Safety Rangers and civilian employees of the Division. Throughout the peak summer season, State Park Police officers provided essential public safety services, including crowd control, major event planning and coordination of law enforcement and emergency management at our State Parks, concert venues and Historic Sites. In remote campsites and secluded day use areas, on our trails and waterways, and in urban parks, State Park Police members serve as guardians of State Parks natural resources and our visitors. With highly visible patrols, the uniformed members of the Division engage with visitors, provide assistance, and maintain control of large crowds that may become unruly. The State

Park Police protect the civil and constitutional rights of persons, and initiate proper and legal enforcement actions when needed, doing the utmost to maintain a high standard of integrity and public trust. The recruiting, hiring, and training of the Division of Law Enforcement staff remains a priority of the Agency at the State Park Police Academy in Rensselaerville, NY. **The 14th Session Basic School graduated twenty-eight State Park Police Officers to assignments in State Parks across New York State in April 2017. These officers were assigned to the patrol force for the peak summer season. The 15th Basic School Session began in October 2017, and is scheduled to graduate twenty-seven new State Park Police Officers for summer 2018 operations.**

### CORE VALUES of the NYS Park Police –

#### P.R.I.D.E

- P – Professionalism**
- R – Respect**
- I – Integrity**
- D – Dedication**
- E – Excellence**



Eastern Invasive Species Strike Team

## Division of Environmental Stewardship and Planning

The Division of Environmental Stewardship and Planning (ESP) brings together the Bureaus of Energy & Sustainability, Environmental Education, Real Property, Geographic Information Systems, Planning and Analysis and Stewardship to balance the recreational needs of 69 million annual visitors to State Parks with operational and ecological sustainability.

Working with partners and volunteers the Division has launched hundreds of initiatives to ensure our iconic landscapes and environments are conserved for the enjoyment of future generations.

### Project highlights across the state over the past year include:

- Completed the installation of a 700 kW solar array at Robert Moses State Park on LI. This system is anticipated to result in \$170,000 annual savings in utility costs.
- Installed additional solar photovoltaic arrays at Peebles Island SHS (144kW) and Lake Taghkanic (38kW) and Grafton Lakes (32kW) State Parks.
- Leading a Federal-State partnership to restore degraded shoreline and wetland habitat at four sites on Grand Island in the Niagara River Corridor.
- Secured over \$8,000,000 in Federal funding to perform critical invasive species rapid response and eradication work and improve fish and wildlife population for ecological and recreational benefit.
- Restored 42 acres of marsh habitat at Iona Marsh in Bear Mountain State Park.
- Restored 80 acres of grassland with native plant species at Ganondagan State Historic Site.
- Restored 15 acres of wetland and expanded the public's ability to experience this unique habitat in Allegany State Park's Red House area.
- 20 Boat Stewards conducted over 23,000 watercraft inspections for aquatic invasive species providing education to over 55,000 boaters.
- Two four-member seasonal invasive species strike teams conducted 67 projects in 39 parks removing over 100,000 invasive plants.
- Two Two-member seasonal forest health teams worked in 53 parks, treating over 1800 trees to protect against Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA).
- Water Quality Monitoring Program collected over 2300 water quality samples across the park system.
- Implemented over \$150,000 in trail improvements at Clay Pit Ponds State Park including construction of a new accessible trail and overlook at Tappen's Pond.
- Completed construction on the Hutchinson Trail and constructed nearly three miles of the new Munsee-Eagle Trail; the completed trail will create a new nine-mile multi-use loop in Sterling Forest State Park.
- Replaced six bridges and constructed tread improvements on Allegany State Park's hiking trails.
- Secured over \$6.5 million in Federal Land, Water and Conservation funds for 6 capital projects in State Parks.
- Completed a Planning Assessment for Minekill and Max V. Shaul State Parks and John Burroughs Memorial State Historic Site.



Iona Marsh Restoration



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic  
Preservation**

**State Council of Parks,  
Recreation and  
Historic Preservation**

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