



Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

January, 2017

Dear Friends:

As a new year begins I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to you for your unwavering dedication, commitment and partnership to making our State parks and historic sites the very best they can be.

We have so much to celebrate. Our visitors are experiencing first-hand the renaissance and transformation of our magnificent park system. Throughout the summer, Governor Cuomo and Lieutenant Governor Hochul visited State parks and historic sites nineteen times to dedicate and admire new and improved park facilities from athletic fields, trails, visitor and nature centers to restored historic sites, reopened bathhouses, gardens and re-established dunes, forests, and meadows. All of these improvements have been made possible by our collective efforts and funding.

And with this capital revitalization, it is your programs, ambassadors, events and expertise that leverage our ability to teach outdoor recreational skills, to interpret our history, to provide amenities like concerts, food and lodging so that everyone can fully enjoy and connect to our parks and historic sites. Our partnership helps deepen the visitors' experience, connect parks and people and incorporate recreation, nature and history into our daily lives.

Last year we launched Connect Kids, a program focused on connecting youth to parks in communities of need. Together we have accomplished:

- Expansion of our Learn-to-Swim programs which are teaching over 15,000 youth to swim at our parks; and our targeted free program has doubled, reaching children in rural and urban communities with little swim opportunity.
- We welcome all New York State 4th graders and their families to visit state parks and historic sites for free and we are providing transportation grants to all public school classes in communities of need for field trips to our facilities. Over 4 years we have increased classroom attendance from 75,000 to 250,000 and we hope to continue this growth.
- The Governor's Conservation Corps programs provided stipends and room and board for almost 100 youth who live, work and learn in our parks and historic sites.
- Volunteerism thrives as our Friends Groups give to our parks and historic sites each day throughout the year, and act as a driving force for the thousands who take part in I Love My Park Day, an event which epitomizes the values of stewardship, community and service that are the very backbone of our remarkable state park system.

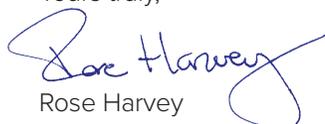
We look forward to continuing to advance and enhance this program, nurturing and supporting the next generation of park visitors and environmental stewards.

This summer, Governor Cuomo said: "Today we are recapturing the bold vision and determination that created the most ambitious parks system in the nation, and preserving and enhancing our natural resources for generations to come."

Thank you for being a part of this moment in our great history and for all you do throughout the year to ensure we are the very best we can be for our visitors—creating experiences and bonds that last a lifetime.

My very best wishes for a happy, healthy New Year.

Yours truly,



Rose Harvey