



**Parks & Trails**  
NEW YORK

29 Elk Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
518-434-1583

# NEWS RELEASE

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**Media Contacts:**

Robin Dropkin-518-434-1583, 518-929-5043,  
[rdropkin@ptny.org](mailto:rdropkin@ptny.org)

Shawn McConnell – 518-434-1583, 518-2094599,  
[smcconnell@ptny.org](mailto:smcconnell@ptny.org)

Contacts for regional and local perspective available

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## **57 State Parks to Close Due to Budget Shortfall**

### **Another 34 at Risk of Closure**

At least 57 state parks and historic sites are targeted to close if Governor Paterson's Executive Budget is enacted, according to a list released today. Twenty-two more parks will face severely reduced hours and services.

A list released to the Legislature details another 34 state parks that will close if \$5 million more is not added to the parks budget.

“News of the closings will devastate many communities as their citizens rely on parks for affordable, close to home recreation and their businesses rely on parks to bring in revenue,” said Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York, a statewide advocacy organization.

According to a 2009 report, state parks and historic sites generate \$1.9 billion annually in economic activity statewide. Visitors from outside the community account for about 40% of that activity--visitors and money communities will lose if parks are forced to close.

Additionally, state parks and historic sites account for 20,000 non-park jobs statewide. These are long-term, sustainable jobs that will last as long as our state invests in its parks system. The investment in State Parks is a good one; for every dollar the state spends on parks, it gets back \$5 dollars in economic activity.

The State Parks budget is only one-quarter of one percent of the total state budget. The savings to the state from closing the 57 parks is estimated to be \$6.3 million.

“The miniscule savings from closing 57 parks—four thousandths of one percent of the total state budget— is laughable and pales in comparison to the hardship parks closings will cause New Yorkers, both in spirit and in pocket,” said Dropkin.

In addition to economic benefits, state parks preserve wildlife habitat, provide an escape for millions of New Yorkers in these difficult economic times, and protect the state's heritage for future generations. The NYS Park System is the oldest and most historic state park system in the nation.

“If parks are forced to close it will be the first time in the 125-year history of the System. Even during the Great Depression our parks remained open for people to enjoy and spend time with their families in nature,” said Dropkin.

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“We call on the Legislature to restore the \$11 million to State Parks’ operating budget that will allow parks to remain open and help New York’s communities through the current economic crisis,” said Dropkin.

For more on the economic impact of state parks read the 2009 report from the Political Economy Research Institute, *The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State--*  
[http://www.ptny.org/pdfs/advocacy/peri\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.ptny.org/pdfs/advocacy/peri_full_report.pdf).

*Parks & Trails New York is a statewide advocacy organization that works to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails and open spaces throughout our state for use and enjoyment by all. Learn more at our website: [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).*

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