



**Parks & Trails**  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NYS PARK SYSTEM CLOSE TO \$2 BILLION, PLUS 20,000 JOBS, NEW STUDY FINDS

**—Analysis reveals Park System gives back more than five times state investment—**

ALBANY, NY—A new economic analysis released by Parks & Trails New York, the leading statewide park and trail advocacy organization, shows that the New York State Park System is a valuable economic asset to the Empire State. It supports up to \$1.94 billion in output and sales for private businesses, plus 20,000 jobs.

The analysis also demonstrates that the economic benefits exceed the direct costs of operating and maintaining the State Park System many times over. The benefit-to-cost ratio is more than five to one—more than \$5 in benefits for every \$1 in costs.

The study reveals how these benefits are distributed among the 11 regions that constitute the State Park System according to the number, size, and nature of the parks and historic sites in the various regions.

“New York’s State Park System produces substantial revenue for New York’s businesses and jobs for New Yorkers. The Governor and Legislature should reinvest in our state parks to put money in New Yorkers’ pockets today and for the state’s economic future,” says Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York.

The study focuses on two key channels through which the State Park System impacts New York’s economy: public spending on parks for operations and capital improvements and spending by visitors in parks and surrounding areas. Last year, the State Park System had 55.7 million visitors.

According to the study, the State Park System produces about \$1.9 billion in annual sales for private businesses in the areas around the parks. About \$744 million of visitor expenditure—around 40 percent of total visitor spending of \$1.9 billion—comes from visitors living outside the communities in which the parks are located. This non-local spending is key for generating net benefits.

The State Park System also generates about 20,000 mostly private-sector jobs, with state spending producing about 6,600 jobs and visitor spending producing about 13,500 jobs.

The State Park System in fiscal year 2008-2009 is supported by \$341 million in state government expenditures, including \$253 million in operating budget and \$88 million in capital investments.

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## **Additional Economic Benefits**

The analysis also highlights significant additional economic benefits to the state generated by the State Park System, including maintaining ecosystems and biodiversity, providing close-to-home recreation and an escape for millions of New Yorkers, reducing the negative effects from pollution, improving health, and preserving areas of historic importance. Plus, the Park System influences business location decisions by contributing to a better quality of life for employees.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) operates and maintains 178 state parks and 35 state historic sites, covering a total of 325,000 acres. The park system represents a valuable collection of natural and recreational assets, including 1,350 miles of hiking trails, over 8,000 campsites, numerous swimming pools, beaches, boat launches, nature centers, and golf courses.

After decades of underinvestment in parks, which has created a backlog of more than \$650 million in needed capital projects, last year OPRHP received an infusion of capital funding that enabled it to begin a long overdue revitalization of the system.

“Additional capital funding this year is critical if OPRHP is to continue the revitalization of our State Parks, which are more important than ever to New Yorkers, especially families, as people stick closer to home for recreation, vacations, and respite,” says Dropkin.

She adds, “OPRHP has more than \$100 million worth of shovel-ready revitalization projects ready to go, including health and safety projects such as dam and sewage system repair, road construction and maintenance, facility refurbishment, and habitat restoration. Unfortunately, there is no federal stimulus money for state parks. Therefore we call on the state to reinvest in our state parks, put money into our communities, put New Yorkers to work, and restore our parks for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.”

Parks & Trails New York commissioned the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) of the University of Massachusetts to conduct the economic impact study, *The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State*.

Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving the health and quality of life of all New Yorkers through the use and enjoyment of green space. Parks & Trails New York has worked with hundreds of community organizations and municipalities to develop, maintain, and promote a network of parks, trails, and greenways throughout New York State.

For the full report, visit the Parks & Trails New York website at [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org) or call 518-434-1583.

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