

ENTERTAINMENT

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New Study could Help with Funding for New York State Parks

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A new study conducted by the Political Economy Research Institute of the University of Massachusetts found that the New York State Park System carries a benefit-to-cost ratio of more than five to one. The study concentrated on the public spending on parks for general operations and money spent by visitors in parks and the surrounding areas because these are the two most important ways the State park system impacts New York's economy.

These beautiful parks of New York had 55.7 million visitors last year. Not only do the parks generate \$1.9 billion in sales for private businesses in the area surrounding the parks every year, they also help to generate about 20,000 jobs. Most of the revenue generated by the park brings money into the communities that surround these parks. In addition to these economic benefits, the parks also protect amazing ecosystems, and provides recreational hiking trails, campsites, swimming pools, beaches, golf courses and so much more.

After decades of struggling with funding, this research is going to make a great argument for investing more funding for the state parks. "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 Robin Dropkin, Executive Director of Parks & Trails New York.

Additionally, "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."

For more information and the full report, check out the Parks & Trails New York website at www.ptny.org (<http://www.ptny.org/>). There is also a great Flickr site linked from the Parks & Trails web site with beautiful pictures of the hiking trails and bike paths.

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