

State parks

Albany must support valued system

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2009

A recent study of New York's state parks system verified what many people already know: the parks are a tremendous asset to the state.



New York's parks make ample use of the state's natural resources to provide outdoor recreation areas of great beauty and accessibility. There are 178 state parks, and each region of the Empire State can boast of some beautiful spots. Indeed, Jefferson, St. Lawrence and Lewis counties have a total of 23 state parks.

The parks provide opportunities for New Yorkers and visitors from other states and countries to enjoy the great outdoors at affordable prices.

The new study by Parks and Trails New York shows what an economic boost the system provides: more than 20,000 jobs statewide and more than \$1.94 billion in "output and sales for private businesses."

In the Thousand Islands region alone, park facilities employ 882 people and generate \$63 million for the local economy. During the 2007-08 season, some 1.72 million people visited parks in the TI region — 21.4 percent from outside the local area.

When people visit state parks, they purchase food, gasoline and other necessities; they spend money in local bars and restaurants. The benefit for the state and local economies is substantial. As the report noted, "The benefit-to-cost ratio is more than 5-to-1 — more than \$5 in benefits for every \$1 in costs."

During these tough economic times, many New Yorkers are likely to vacation closer to home. Many will visit state parks: already there are more than 45,300 reservations for campsites, cabins and cottages this season, according to the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Bookmark & Share

Email
Print
Digg
MySpace
Facebook
Twitter