New Yorkers call on Legislators to Fund State Parks and Historic Sites

Albany NY—

New Yorkers from across the state are coming together at the State Capitol on February 26 for the 8th annual Park Advocacy Day to urge policymakers to protect and preserve New York’s state parks. Representatives from park friends groups, environmental organizations, local parks, and educational organizations will be in attendance.

Park advocates will urge state lawmakers to support Governor Andrew Cuomo’s $90 million capital investment in the state park system, increase operating funds for state parks and historic sites, and enhance the once robust Environmental Protection Fund.

Thanks to the $200 million investment made by the state over the last two years the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has been incrementally addressing an estimated $1 billion in infrastructure needs and critical safety repairs, breathing new life into an aging park system.

“Our state parks and historic sites are a public treasure of New York,” said Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “We appreciate the Governor’s continued commitment to rejuvenating New York’s state parks and historic sites and we look forward to working with the state legislature to ensure that our parks receive the funding necessary for them to operate safely and effectively.”

“Never in the history of the state park system has there been this level of sustained investment to upgrade and restore New York’s state parks,” said Erik Kulleseid, executive director of the Alliance for New York State Parks, a program of the Open Space Institute. “These investments are transforming a once beleaguered system and restoring our greatest natural treasures as sources of pride, community vitality and economic strength.”

Funding for New York’s park system also creates strong local jobs and helps to grow the state’s economy while restoring and reinvigorating treasured state parks and historic sites. With more than 60 million people annual visitors, New York’s state parks and historic sites are primed to anchor the state’s regional tourism efforts, particularly in upstate communities.

According to a 2009 independent study commissioned by Parks & Trails New York, the state park system boosts the state’s economy to the tune of nearly $2 billion annually—a $5-to-$1 return on the state’s investment, while creating and sustaining 20,000 jobs exclusive of state parks employees. The study also shows that about 40% of total visitor spending comes from visitors living outside the communities in which the parks are located.
Parks & Trails New York and the Alliance for New York State Parks organize Park Advocacy Day jointly.

Parks & Trails New York advocates statewide for New York’s parks and trails and has been dedicated since 1985 to improving New Yorkers health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space.

A program of the Open Space Institute, the Alliance for New York State Parks advocates for New York’s state park system, strives to build an organized and effective public constituency for state parks, and seeks to create new public and private funding streams for state park programs and capital projects.

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