



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**New Yorkers Call on Legislators  
to Continue Historic Revitalization of State Parks System**  
*—Grassroots Friends groups travel to Albany to support state parks—*

ALBANY, NY—New Yorkers from across the state are coming together today at the State Capitol for the 14th annual Park Advocacy Day to urge policymakers to protect and preserve New York’s state parks. Nearly 85 representatives from more than 40 park Friends groups and environmental and educational organizations will make the case for state park funding. Parks & Trails New York and the Open Space Institute jointly organize Park Advocacy Day.

Park advocates will urge state lawmakers to support the Governor’s \$110 million capital investment in the state park system in this year’s executive budget, and continue to support the Park and Trail Partnership Grants program - a competitive grants program for grassroots Friends groups that support and strengthen the state’s parks, trails and historic sites.

Park supporters will also call upon legislators to maintain or expand the \$300 million for the state’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and reject language that would allow EPF funds to be used for state agency staffing. The EPF provides critical funding for state land stewardship, public access, open space land protection, and municipal parks.

Thanks to Governor Cuomo’s Parks 2020 Initiative, New York’s state parks are undergoing an unprecedented revitalization.

“We are extraordinarily grateful to Governor Cuomo and the legislature for transforming New York’s state park system and the spectacular natural and cultural treasures it contains,” said Kathy Moser, Open Space Institute’s Senior Vice President of Parks and Policy. “This significant and sustained infusion

of resources is helping our parks assume their rightful place as sources of pride, community vitality and economic strength.”

“Our state parks and historic sites are public treasures that belong to all New Yorkers,” said Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin. “We applaud the Governor and the legislature for continuing to breathe new life into New York’s great outdoor places.”

Included in the Governor’s executive budget for the EPF is \$1 million for the Park and Trail Partnership Grants program. The program enhances park, trail and historic site stewardship by fostering local public/private partnerships and enabling grassroots organizations to more effectively leverage multiple resources. These partnerships lead to greater economic benefits from outdoor recreation, improved access to outdoor resources and healthier, more economically resilient communities.

“Active and engaged grassroots organizations already contribute significantly to the stewardship of the state’s parks, trails and historic sites,” said Dropkin. “The Park and Trail Partnership Grants complement the state’s historic investment in parks by enabling groups to leverage more private and federal funding and marshal more volunteer power.”

Through NY Parks 2020, \$900 million from public and private funding is being reinvested in parks. Investments in New York’s park system create strong local jobs and encourage growth in the state’s economy, while simultaneously restoring and reinvigorating treasured state parks and historic sites.

Visitation to New York State Parks continues to grow, increasing year-upon-year since 2011. With more than 77 million visits in 2018, New York’s state parks and historic sites are anchors for the state’s regional tourism efforts, particularly in upstate communities.

According to a 2017 independent study commissioned by Parks & Trails New York, the state park system boosts the state’s economy to the tune of nearly \$5 billion annually—a \$9-to-\$1 return on the state’s investment while creating and sustaining 45,000 jobs, exclusive of state parks employees. The study also shows that total spending by local and non-local visitors was about \$4 billion, with the money going to park entrance and use fees, sporting equipment, food and drink, transportation, lodging, and other expenses.

Parks & Trails New York advocates statewide for New York’s parks and multi-use trails, working with grassroots groups for 35 years to improve New Yorker’s health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space.

The Open Space Institute’s Parks and Policy program 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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