

# ADVENTURE NEW YORK

Connecting New York State  
families and visitors to the great outdoors



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

## A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR CUOMO



No matter where you are in New York, an outdoor adventure awaits you. With nearly five million acres of public lands, there are countless opportunities to connect with nature: hiking in the Catskills or Adirondacks; swimming at public beaches; camping in wilderness areas; hunting in the woods; or boating, paddling or fishing on scenic streams and lakes.

We must protect and enhance the natural resources that allow people to access and enjoy outdoor recreation, view birds and wildlife in action, and explore our state's and nation's history. Over the past several years, we have made strong investments in our environment, including fully funding the state's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) at a record \$300 million in each of the past two years.

In 2017, I announced a new initiative to further build on our efforts to provide a high quality outdoor experience for those who live in or visit New York. The newly launched Adventure NY program includes \$50 million in funding to enhance access to state lands, rehabilitate and improve campgrounds, and upgrade DEC recreational facilities.

This multi-year initiative will support the completion of more than 75 projects over the next three years, ranging from improvements to youth camps and environmental education centers to new boat launches, duck blinds, and hiking trails. This investment recognizes that our environmental resources are vital to state and local economies—and will help ensure that New York continues to have some of the best recreation sites and attractions in the nation.

Outdoor recreation is an important part of our state's rich heritage, and we will continue to provide opportunities to ensure that current and future generations can fully experience New York's unique and diverse resources.

Sincerely,  
Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

# ADVENTURE NY

Connecting New York State's families and visitors to the great outdoors



The Adventure NY initiative, announced in Governor Cuomo's 2017 State of the State message, is a multi-year outdoor recreation campaign to connect more New York families and visitors to the great outdoors. This new initiative included \$50 million in FY 2017 to expand on existing efforts.

DEC will use this funding to make strategic investments to improve access to state land and water, upgrade campgrounds and facilities,

and increase public awareness of all the outdoor recreation opportunities available in New York State.

Adventure NY will support initiatives to address four strategic priorities:

1. Expand access to healthy, active outdoor recreation.
2. Connect people with nature and the outdoors.
3. Protect New York's natural resources.
4. Boost local economies.

Adventure NY will be funded through NY Works and the state Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), and will leverage federal and private dollars such as funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Program (Pittman-Robertson Act).





**PRIORITY**

**1**

# Expanding Access To Healthy, Active Outdoor Recreation

DEC manages nearly 5 million acres of lands, most of it open for public enjoyment. This land base is larger than the state of Connecticut and represents 95% of total public land holdings in New York State. Many of these lands serve as gateways to large recreation areas, and interest in New York’s outdoors is booming; in the Adirondacks alone, visitation is up 15% since 2010. Planning and managing this huge land base focuses on promoting ecosystem health and biodiversity, while safely accommodating public recreation.

At the same time, New York boasts 7,500 lakes, ponds and reservoirs, over 70,000 miles of rivers and streams and 975 square miles of saltwater, providing endless opportunities for water-based recreation. DEC is exploring opportunities to increase public awareness and enjoyment of these lands and waters. **Adventure NY will:**

- Refurbish our campgrounds to enhance the user experience by providing clean, modern sites with new or expanded amenities such as shower facilities, beautiful beaches and boat-launch facilities.

- Build or rehabilitate over a thousand miles of trails, providing access to millions of acres of public lands.
- Construct and repair duck blinds, boat launches, fishing access piers, wildlife viewing platforms, and other infrastructure that provides public recreation access to people of all skills and abilities.
- Improve signage to better inform the public of available recreational opportunities.

**DEC-MANAGED LANDS**

- 3 million acres in the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve
- 800,000+ acres of State Forests
- 900,000+ acres of conservation easements created in partnership with private landowners to protect natural resources
- 230,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas.

**52** campgrounds

**1,280 miles** of public fishing rights on 350 streams

**5** day-use areas  
(unique beaches and picnic areas in addition to those in our campgrounds)

**5,000+** miles of formal trails

**132** universally accessible sites  
(campsites, fishing piers, trails, horse mounts, etc.)

**1,700** primitive campsites for backcountry camping

**300+** lean-tos

**357** trail-heads

**396** fishing access facilities  
(358 boat launches, 30 shoreline fishing locations and 8 fishing piers)

**12** fish hatcheries

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Kaaterskill Falls, Greene County



The crown jewel of the Catskill Park is the highest cascading waterfall in New York State—Kaaterskill Falls. Dropping in two tiers over 260 feet, Kaaterskill Falls has been one of the region's most popular destinations for centuries, inspiring artists, poets and those just seeking an escape to a majestic and awe-inspiring landscape.

The popularity of Kaaterskill Falls coupled with the steep cliffs and slippery rocks require a good deal of caution.

To improve safety and public access, over the past two-and-a-half years, DEC has:

- Installed a 115-foot hiking bridge spanning Spruce Creek and connecting Haines Falls to the Escarpment Trail and North/South Lake Campground.
- Constructed a new foot trail and stone staircase from the base of the falls to the middle pool of the falls, continuing to the Escarpment Trail at the top of the falls. These improvements eliminate a dangerous bushwhack between the two locations.
- Expanded and improved two local parking areas.
- Constructed a wide, smooth surfaced trail with level resting areas leading to a new accessible overlook platform at the top of the falls.
- Installed 500 feet of split rail fencing.
- Installed additional warning signs reminding the public to stay on marked trails, avoid cliff edges and wear proper footwear.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Statewide Improvements to Boat Launches



New York is a water-rich state, and these resources are enjoyed by over 2 million anglers and boaters each year. Over the past few years, DEC has made outstanding progress in updating the DEC network of boat launch and fishing access facilities across the state. DEC constructed new sites on Lake George in Warren County, Meacham Lake in Franklin County, and Round Lake in Saratoga County. DEC completed major upgrades at the Forge Pond boat launch in Suffolk County and the Upper Saranac Lake and Second Pond boat launches in Franklin County. DEC constructed a new fishing pier on Green Lake in Greene County, and rebuilt the existing deteriorating pier at Dunkirk Harbor on Lake Erie.

Adventure NY will allow us to continue this progress. DEC is planning to rebuild the Mud Lock boat launch on Cayuga Lake for the 2018 boating season. Additional plans in upcoming years call for new boat launches on eastern Oneida Lake and Otisco Lake, along with major upgrades to the Lake Bonaparte boat launch, Bemus Point boat launch (Chautauqua Lake) and Port Bay South boat launch on Lake Ontario.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Mount Loretto Unique Area, Staten Island



The Mount Loretto Unique Area complex is a 362-acre oasis overlooking Prince's Bay and the gateway to the Atlantic Ocean. At Mount Loretto, visitors experience nature at its finest without ever leaving New York City. Its five distinct habitats—forest, grasslands, tidal and freshwater wetlands, and coastal seashore—provide an exceptional opportunity to observe migratory birds, and to hike, bike and commune with nature.

Situated on land that once served as a dairy farm and orchard for the historic Mount Loretto Orphanage, the Mount Loretto Unique Area will undergo significant improvement in the coming year to improve access for all visitors and provide an overall better visitor experience. When complete, a new pavilion will allow expanded educational programming and provide a shady spot to watch bald eagles fish along the coastline. A re-engineered trail will eliminate the current uneven surface and allow universal access to more areas of the facility, resolve road flooding, and improve access to the shoreline entrance. An already expanded parking area includes better access to the trails and the fishing and observation deck located on Mount Loretto Pond.



PRIORITY

# 2

## Connecting People with Nature and the Outdoors

Governor Cuomo’s investments come at a critical point in time, as the need for outdoor recreation has never been greater. Childhood obesity has doubled over the past 20 years, and the average American child spends as few as 30 minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day, as compared to more than seven hours each day in front of an electronic screen.

Accessible state lands, parks, and other recreational facilities promote physical activity, an important element of overall wellness. Research has

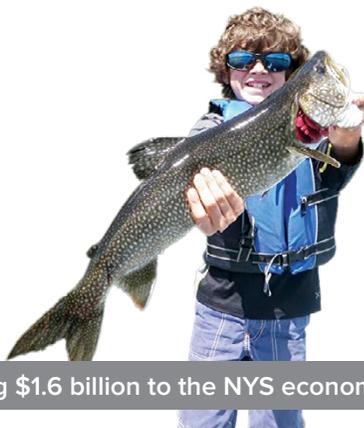
shown that children who have a connection to nature are more likely to do well in school and have increased engagement and focus. Public lands and accessible recreation sites provide low-cost opportunities for children (and adults) to explore the great outdoors and feel part of nature. **Adventure NY will:**

- Reimagine and better utilize our environmental education centers and children’s camps to attract a wider audience, including urban users, to the great outdoors.

- Implement and expand outreach initiatives—such as I BIRD NY, I FISH NY, Connect Kids, and New York’s First-Time Camper Program—to encourage more New Yorkers, especially families from underserved communities, to connect with nature and outdoor recreation.
- Improve accessibility and information about our resources so New Yorkers and visitors of all abilities can enjoy the outdoors.
- Promote the state’s great outdoors by recruiting and re-engaging all outdoor enthusiasts, especially hunters and anglers.



NYS has 823,000 hunters contributing \$1.6 billion to the NYS economy



NYS has 1,882,000 anglers contributing nearly \$2 billion to the NYS economy



NYS has 4,239,000 wildlife watchers contributing \$4.2 billion to the NYS economy

Source: 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar



Beginning as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp and game farm in the 1930s, through its evolution to a wildlife research center in the 40s, the Delmar Zoo in 50s, and an environmental education center in 1972, Five Rivers Center has instilled a strong sense of place and ownership in the local community. For more than 45 years, Five Rivers has served as a living museum of forests, fields, ponds and wetlands for thousands of visitors annually who walk the trails, attend a program or participate with a school group learning about the environment.

Opened in June 2017, the new Visitor Center expands opportunities to engage with families, students and individuals:

- Exhibits and displays encourage a first-hand connection to nature and the development of lifelong outdoor skills.
- Green building features demonstrate energy-saving steps people can take at home.
- DEC's partnership with Friends of Five Rivers is an important public/private model that inspires and trains the next generation of environmental leaders.
- Stewardship and research projects engage volunteers and citizen scientists in contributing real and important data to scientists studying the environment.
- Trails and buildings offer hands-on exhibits and displays that are appropriate to persons with a variety of special needs.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Kenneth Wilson Campground, Mt. Tremper



DEC campgrounds offer a unique, affordable opportunity for New Yorkers and visitors alike to enjoy some of the most beautiful natural resources in the state. As an eastern gateway to the Catskill Park, surrounded by beautiful mountains with panoramic views, Kenneth L. Wilson Campground is one of DEC's most popular campgrounds. Visitors can climb Overlook Mountain or Mount Tremper for outstanding vistas from historic fire towers, or stroll or bike the Promenade along the Ashokan Reservoir's shore, enjoying views of the Catskill high peaks. The nearby hamlet of Woodstock provides an eclectic mix of shopping, eating and entertainment opportunities.

DEC recently added several ADA accessible facilities to the campground:

- Rustic adventure playground
- Nature trail with a wildlife viewing platform
- Fishing platform
- Floating canoe/kayak launch
- Renovated comfort stations
- New signs providing clear direction and a warm, friendly greeting to campers and day users alike

Future improvements include an accessible dog park, accessible features at the day-use picnic area and the pavilion cooking area, and installation of two accessible horseshoe pits.





**PRIORITY**

# 3

## Protecting New York's Natural Resources

Managing our resources sustainably to ensure they will be available for future generations to enjoy is a priority equally as important as improving our facilities. Whether it's a breathtaking view, a pristine lake, or a rare wildlife species, outdoor recreation is enhanced when our resources are managed and used responsibly. In the Adirondacks and Catskills, while certain areas are sometimes over-

crowded, other areas that offer outstanding outdoor experiences remain underutilized. **Adventure NY will:**

- Promote sustainable use of public lands for use and enjoyment by future generations.
- Stabilize streams and shorelines, rehabilitate trails to prevent erosion and damage to sensitive resources, and protect resources from invasive species.

- Manage habitat for sustainability of New York's wildlife resources.
- Upgrade and enhance the state's 12 fish hatcheries, which produce and stock over 2 million fish in hundreds of lakes and thousands of miles of streams each year.



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Salmon River Fish Hatchery, Owsego County



Lake Ontario, its tributaries, and the Salmon River comprise a fishery that attracts anglers from all over the world with its trophy-sized Pacific salmon, steelhead, brown trout, and Atlantic salmon. None of this would be possible without DEC's Salmon River Hatchery. Built in 1980, the Salmon River Fish Hatchery provides all of New York's portion of Pacific salmon stocked in the Great Lakes. The hatchery attracts 50,000 visitors annually, including student field trips, and provides a fun and educational opportunity for the public to learn about how DEC manages this world-class fishery.

DEC recently improved the facilities with a new aquarium and hatchery roof. A multi-year infrastructure investment, including \$1.2 million in 2017, will provide much-needed updates and repairs to this flagship hatchery, including:

- Complete replacement of the hatchery's windows and doors.
- Replacement of the fish ladder, including a new viewing deck and pathways.
- Design and installation of predator-exclusion structures for outdoor raceways and ponds.
- Groundwater system improvements.
- Visitor center upgrades, including new displays, furniture and flooring.
- Upgrades to exterior and interior interpretive signage.
- Re-design of the hatchery water supply structure, which will include the integration of a modern water reuse system for more efficient fish production.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Spicer Creek Wildlife Management Area, Grand Island



Located on the eastern shore of Grand Island, this 34-acre WMA is renowned for its waterfowl hunting as well as other recreational activities. Anglers can fish the Niagara River for trout, salmon and a wide variety of other fish. Hikers and wildlife watchers can enjoy an accessible trail to the river and an accessible hunting blind/observation deck, spying for song and shorebirds, hawks, reptiles and amphibians along the way. Hunters can bag many different kinds of waterfowl, and trappers can harvest beaver, muskrat, rabbit, mink and raccoon. DEC recently added an accessible trail to the neighboring town park and an accessible fishing/wildlife viewing platform.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



### Trail Crews in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks



DEC recently dedicated two trail crews to maintain and improve trails in the Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness and Catskill Park, protecting natural resources, improving public safety, and enhancing outdoor experiences for tens of thousands of New Yorkers to enjoy.

The Adirondack crew will complete the following projects in the High Peaks Wilderness:

- Avalanche Pass Trail and bridge/ladder replacement.
- Lake Colden-Flowed Lands campsite relocations.
- Marcy Dam campsite relocations.

The Catskill crew will complete the following initial projects in the Catskill Park:

- Gulf of Mexico bridge replacement.
- Overlook Mountain loop and connector trails.
- Winnisook/Denning bridge replacement.
- Elm Ridge Trail connector.
- Colgate Lake Trail/Accessible Feature Rehabilitation.



**PRIORITY**

# 4 Boosting Local Economies

New York State recognizes the importance of ensuring that the Forest Preserve and other public lands are an asset to the communities in which these lands are located. DEC works to create unique recreational opportunities that will attract new users to the great outdoors and provide an enjoyable experience that will keep visitors coming back. These efforts provide a valuable link between state lands and local communities, and can drive economic activity in the region.

**Adventure NY will:**

- Create gateways/recreation hubs that link local and regional resources to recreational opportunities.
- Create world-class, recreation-based tourist destinations and unique recreational experiences in places like Boreas Ponds, the Catskill Interpretive Center at Mt. Tremper, and the Adirondack Rail Trail.
- Protect unique historic and cultural resources and enhance programming to deepen the visitor experience.
- Build stronger partnerships to leverage results.

**Outdoor recreation in New York State generates:**



**313,000**  
direct jobs

**\$41.8 billion**  
in consumer spending

**\$14 billion**  
in wages and salaries

**\$3.6 billion**  
in state and local tax revenue



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Gateway to the Adirondacks/Upper Hudson Recreation Hub, North Hudson, Essex County



With thousands of miles of trails, pristine lakes, forests and breathtaking views, the Adirondack Park is a world-class destination like no other. Located at the base of the Adirondacks, the former Frontier Town theme park site represents a premier point of access into the Adirondack Park and an opportunity to build on our comprehensive efforts to protect the park while attracting tourists to experience the outstanding recreation options this region offers.

DEC intends to construct a public campground, equestrian camping facilities and day-use areas along the Schroon River as part of this public-private partnership. The Gateway to the Adirondacks will connect local and regional resources with peerless and remote forest lands, including the Boreas Ponds Tract. It will be an unrivaled tourism hub at a strategic location to attract new visitors to the Adirondack Park and drive economic growth in the North Country.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



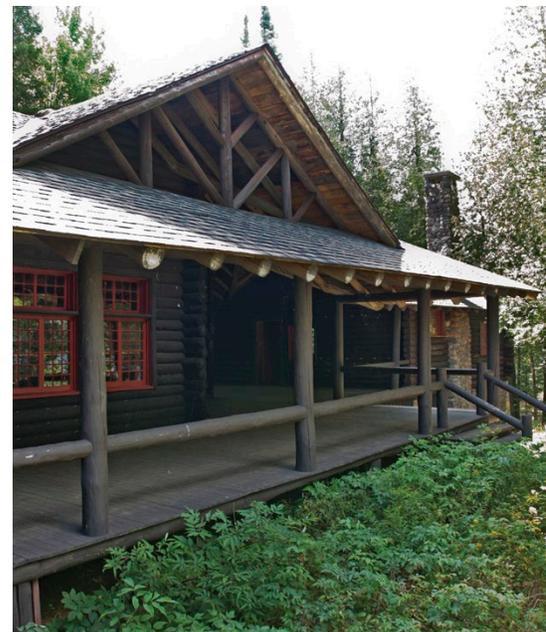
Utica Marsh Wildlife Management Area, Oneida County



The Utica Marsh Wildlife Management Area is a unique urban wetland. Its mixture of cattail wetlands, wet meadows, open water pools and flooded willows create a diverse marsh habitat that harbors a tremendous variety of plants and animals, especially birds.

Utica Marsh creates a wild space within a short distance of tens of thousands of people in the Utica/Rome region. It is a resource seen by every driver using the Rt. 8/12 corridor and is an important part of the overall vision for the area's revitalization, including recreational space intermixed with retail along the Mohawk River Greenway corridor. Utica Marsh is situated on the Erie Canalway Trail and will be part of the Governor's recently announced Empire State Trail, a 750-mile recreation trail that will connect Albany to Buffalo and New York City to Canada.

DEC recently completed the rehabilitation and enhancement of 75 percent of Utica Marsh's one-mile trail, including removing several old structures, creating a secondary overlook/observation area, formalizing the new kiosk access and adding interpretive signage in cooperation with NYSDOT and the NYS Canal Corporation. A new wildlife observation tower was constructed in fall 2017, further enriching the wildlife viewing experience possible here.



# FIND YOUR ADVENTURE

[www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor)



Expand access to healthy, active outdoor recreation.  
Connect people with nature and the outdoors.  
Protect New York's natural resources.  
Boost local economies.