2026 New York State Great Outdoors Summit

Get Informed, Get Inspired, Get Involved

Proud partner of I ♥ NY iloveny.com

Event Hosts: New York State TOURISM Industry Association; Canal New York

Host DMO: Visit Syracuse .com

Presenting Partner: airbnb

TOURISM® It's Everybody's Business!



Ben Walsh

Director
New York State Canal Corporation

NEW YORK STATE | NY Power Authority | Canal Corporation

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Danny Liedka

President & CEO
Visit Syracuse

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GREAT OUTDOORS SUMMIT

November 12, 2026









2025 Visitation & Economic Impact

- **Record-high** visitation and visitor spending
- New York State's **second largest private sector employer**, supporting 1 in 9 jobs
- Visitor-generated taxes offset an average of **$1,540** annually per New York household
- Visitor spending **increased 3.9%** in 2025, outpacing the NYS inflation rate of 3.4%



Source: Economic Impact of Visitors in New York 2025, Tourism Economics

Outdoor Recreation in New York State

- **4th in the nation** for GDP generated by outdoor recreation
- Contributed **$37.25B** to New York State's GDP in 2024
- Supported **over 264,000 jobs** with **$19B** in compensation
- Guided tours grew 11.2% in New York in 2024, ahead of 9.4% nationally
- Water-guided tours and charters grew about 12% in New York



*Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (2024 report)

2025 Visitor Profile- Outdoor focus

Travel Party Composition

- **42% with children**, 23% solo
- **22%** needing accessibility services

3.1
Avg. travel party size

Main Purpose of Trip

- **7% Outdoors**, up from 5.0% in 2019
- **53% Marketable Leisure Travelers**
- 36% Visiting friends/relatives

Top Outdoor Activities (53% did recreational activities, +4 pts vs. 2023)

12%	Swimming
11%	Local Parks / Playgrounds
9%	National / State Park
9%	Beach / Waterfront
9%	Nature Tours / Wildlife / Birding

Traveler Type

- **11% outdoor & adventure seekers**
- 16% family travelers, 17% budget-friendly

Where They Stay & Travel

- 7.6% campground / RV park (4.7% in 2019)
- 54% drive their own car, 8% camper / RV

How They Plan

- 68% online, 52% social (30% Instagram)
- 24% friends and family, 14% destination websites

Visitor Retention

- 73% “very satisfied” with their NY experience
- 66% “very likely to return”, 87% repeat visitors

Source: 2025 Longwoods International Travel USA ® - Overnight Visitation, NYS.

What Outdoor Travelers Told Us

2024 Outdoor Recreation Survey

Travelers interested in outdoor activities and in visiting New York: NY residents, border states, as well as Ontario and Quebec

3,003
Travelers surveyed

Key Findings

91% Enjoy just being outdoors in nature

47% Say being outdoors is key to trip decisions

63% Rate NY best or above average for outdoors

60% Will definitely or probably visit NY next year

Activities

- **7.5 activities** enjoyed per trip
  - beaches/swimming & hiking were top activities
- **3.4 more** activities they want to try
  - Rafting, horseback riding, bird watching

What Drives the Decision

- **Budget fit and affordability** top the deciding factors
- Sustainability is a nice-to-have

Responsible Recreation

- **81%** say it is very or extremely important
- **29%** could explain it to someone else

Empire State Development

Source: ESD Outdoor Recreation Program research, March 2024 (n=3,003). Respondents were interested in outdoor activities and in visiting NY, so results do not represent all visitors.

New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

NEW YORK STATE PARKS & THE GREAT OUTDOORS

GREAT OUTDOORS SUMMIT | NOVEMBER 12, 2026



Letchworth State Park

250+

State parks, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, campgrounds, and more!

360,000

Acres of protected public lands



Taughannock Falls State Park









Empire State Trail

750 MILES

Showcasing New York's special places, diverse history, and iconic landscapes









Empire State Trail

$1.87 BILLION

In statewide economic output annually

The Economic Impact of the Empire State Trail, Parks & Trails New York, 2026

45

Historic sites and state parks with a tie to the American Revolution



Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site



Wellesley Island State Park

80 MILLION+

Visits at state parks, historic sites, campgrounds, and trails annually



Wellesley Island State Park

$5.8
BILLION
In sales

$2.5
BILLION
In labor income

$3.7
BILLION
In state GDP

The Economic Benefits of State Parks in NY, Parks & Trails New York, 2021

You May Know Us For …





JAN 1

First Day Hikes

America's State Parks

- 100+ hikes hosted across New York State lands
- Part of a larger, nationwide movement
- Focused on encouraging wellness and reminding residents/visitors that the outdoors is always open

NEW YORK STATE | Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation | Department of Environmental Conservation | Canal Corporation

You May Also Know Us For …





I LOVE MY PARK day

www.ptny.org

PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

NEW YORK STATE | Department of Environmental Conservation

- Hosted annually on the first Saturday in May
- More than 150 events statewide with 5,000+ volunteers
- Focused on highlighting ways to give back and support our public lands

GRANT PROGRAMS

EPF

Matching grant program for the acquisition, planning and development, and improvement of parks, historic properties, and heritage areas located within New York State

Connect Kids

Connects New York school-age children (pre-K through grade 12) with nature, outdoor recreation, and history by reimbursing transportation costs for field trips to eligible locations

NY PLAYS

Matching capital grant program that supports the design, construction, and renovation of public playgrounds across New York State

African American Heritage

Assists non-profits and local governments in document, interpreting, and preserving places and stories of historical, cultural significance to the African American experience in NYS from 1627-1975

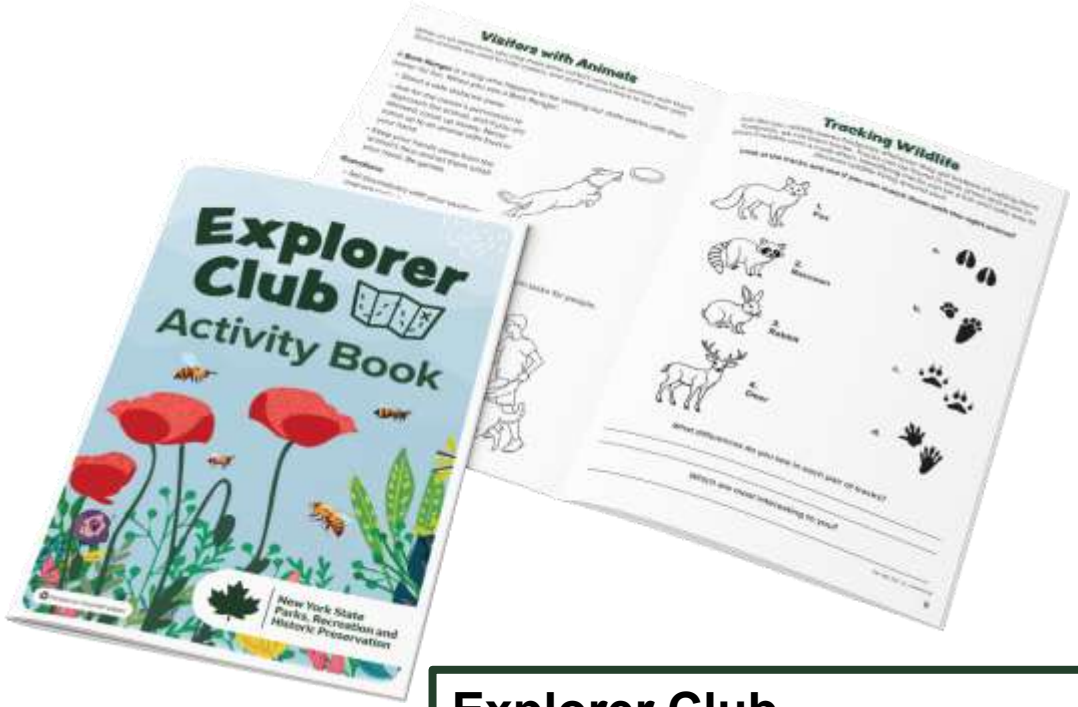
STATEWIDE PROGRAMMING

Junior Ranger

- Geared towards youth ages 5-7
- Encouraging and educating on safe recreation







Explorer Club

- Geared towards youth ages 7-13
- Engage in nature/ recreation connection, leading to environmental literacy and possible environmental stewardship pipeline

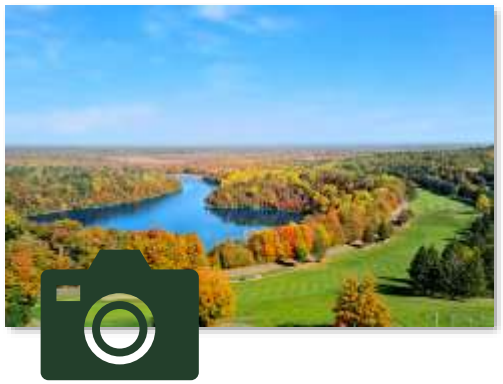
Explorer Club
New York State Parks

RESOURCES GALORE!









Standard, evergreen promotional materials about state parks and historic sites available for visitor centers, welcome centers, and other locations

New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

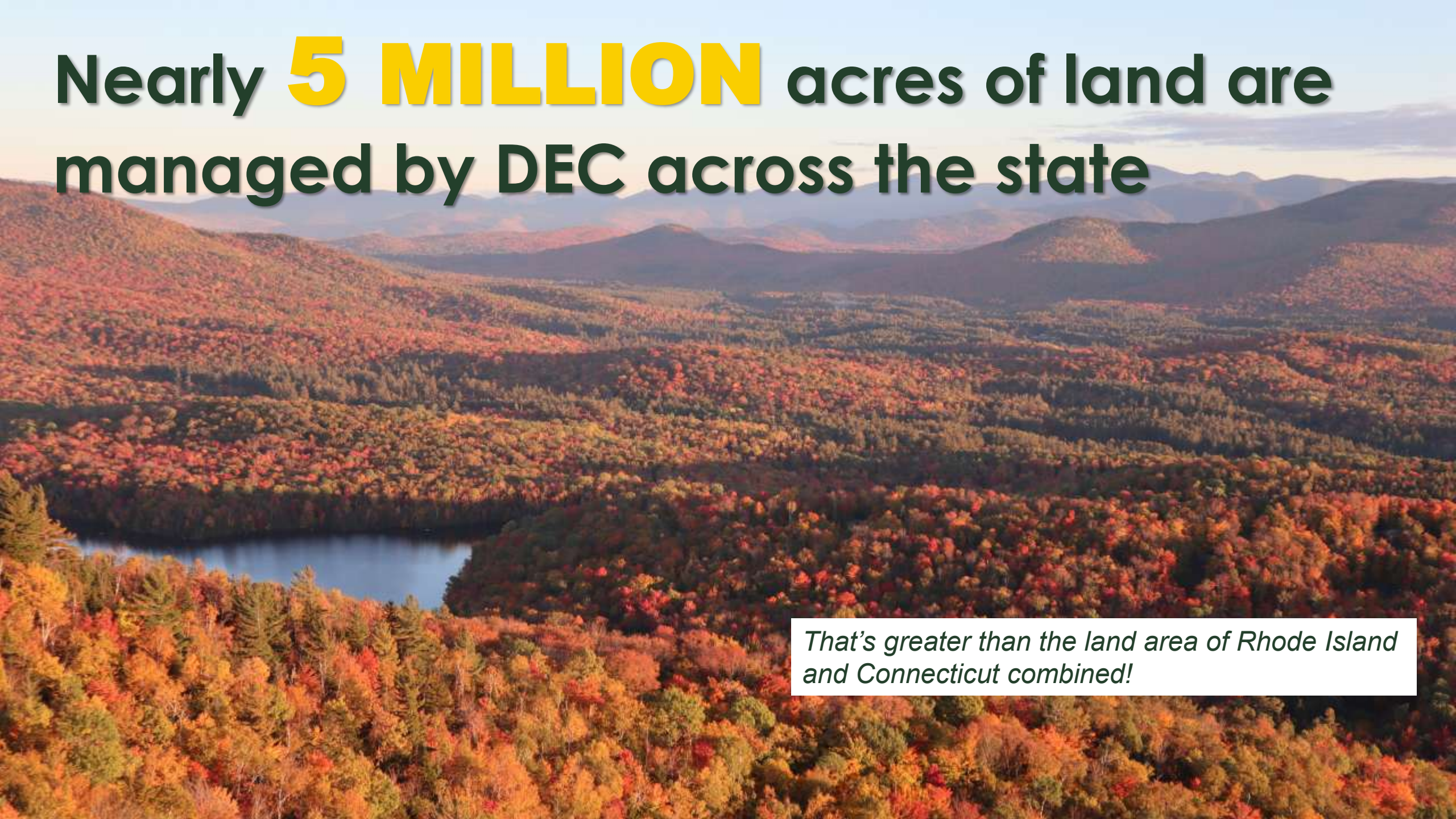
NEW YORK STATE

Department of Environmental Conservation

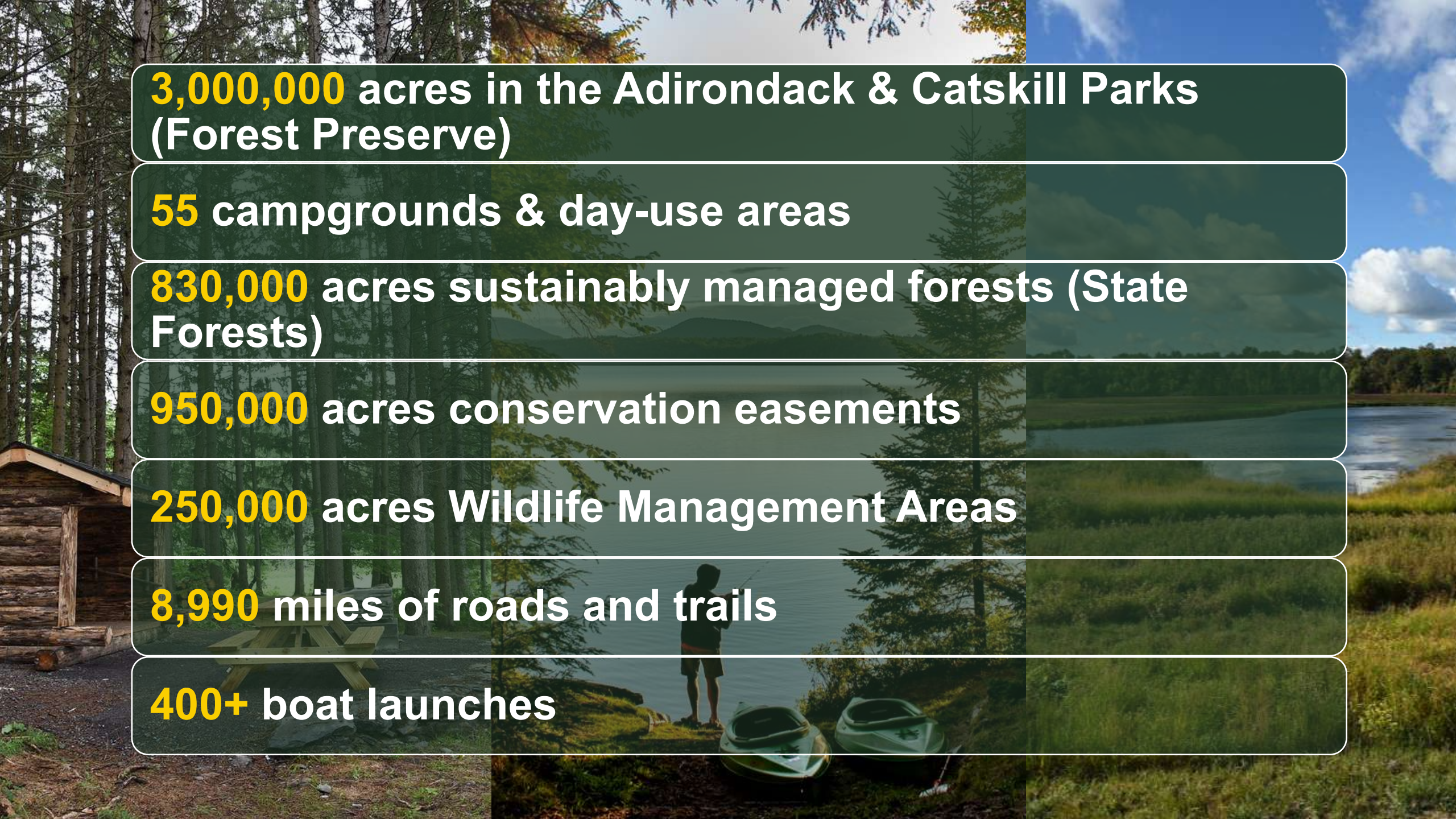
NYS DEC & THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Laura DiBetta
Director of Outdoor Recreation

Nearly 5 MILLION acres of land are managed by DEC across the state



That's greater than the land area of Rhode Island and Connecticut combined!



- **3,000,000** acres in the Adirondack & Catskill Parks (Forest Preserve)
- **55** campgrounds & day-use areas
- **830,000** acres sustainably managed forests (State Forests)
- **950,000** acres conservation easements
- **250,000** acres Wildlife Management Areas
- **8,990** miles of roads and trails
- **400+** boat launches



- **7** environmental education and visitor centers
- **4** environmental youth camps
- **700+** historic structures
- **12** fish hatcheries
- …and much more!


Endless opportunity
for adventure for all skill
levels and interests



13 MILLION

NYS residents and nonresidents participated in wildlife-associated recreation in New York State in 2022

$21.2 BILLION

Amount spent by NYS residents and nonresidents on wildlife-associated recreation in New York in 2022

1.595 MILLION

Campground and day-users in 2026 (Adirondacks & Catskills)

$96 MILLION

Estimate of economic activity generated by 1,175,000 campers and 420,000 day-users in 2026 based on NPS calculations

BALANCING STEWARDSHIP WITH OUTDOOR RECREATION

DEC’s mission is "To conserve, improve and protect New York's natural resources and environment and to prevent, abate and control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well-being.”





ANNUAL STATEWIDE EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

GET OUTDOORS & GET TOGETHER DAY

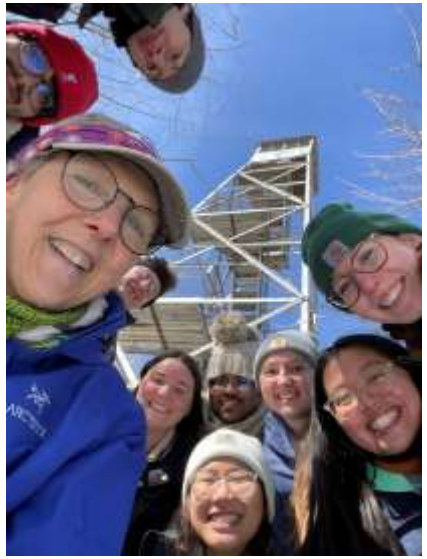
I ♥ NY®

CATSKILLS FIRE TOWER CHALLENGE NYSDEC 2026

First-time Camper Program

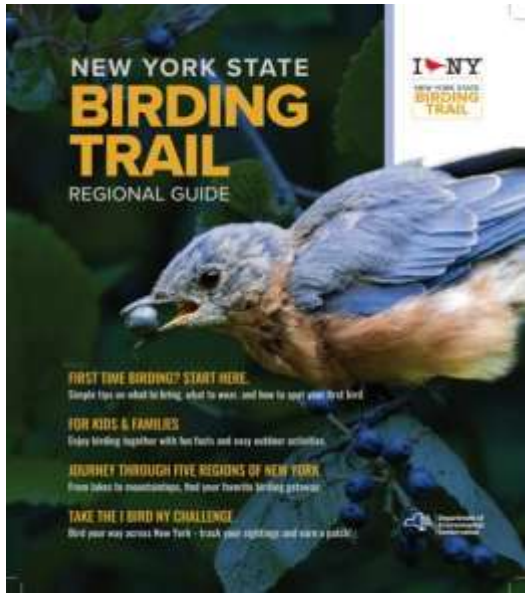


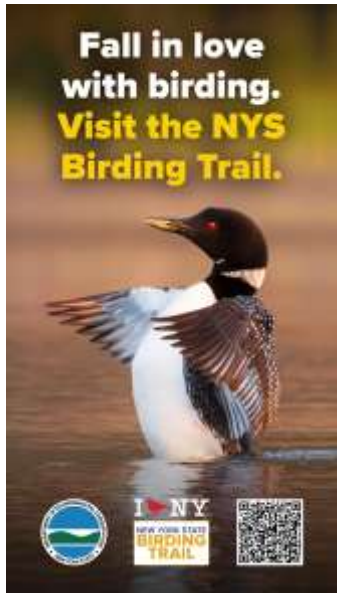






ONGOING PROGRAMS & PROMOTIONS

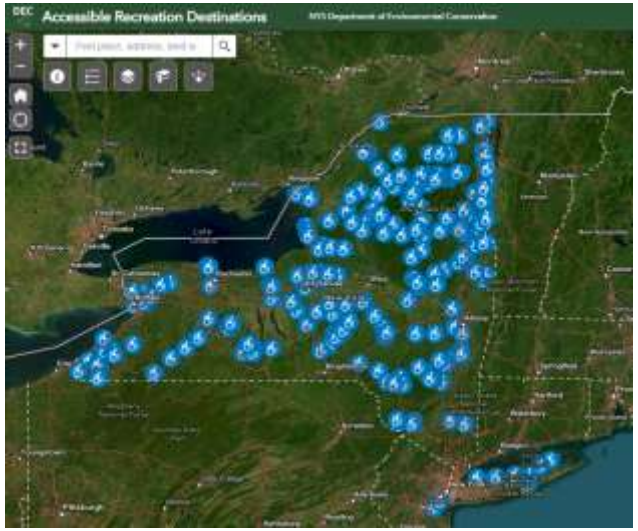


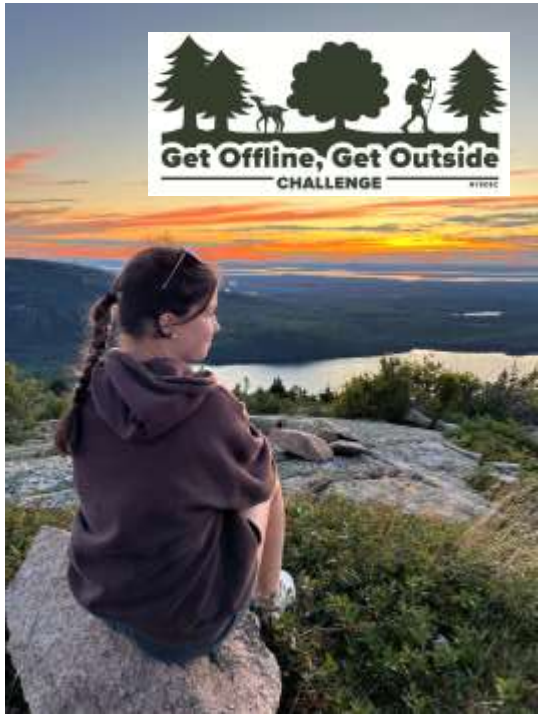












THESE LANDS ARE FOR EVERYONE

- Governor Hochul announced the *These Lands are for Everyone Initiative* in the 2026 State of the State
- The These Lands initiative seeks to make DEC-managed destinations more welcoming, inclusive and accessible to people with diverse abilities, needs, and backgrounds.
- Projects include accessible recreation opportunities and sensory-inclusive experiences for people of all ages and abilities to reduce barriers and foster meaningful connections with nature.
- For example, DEC recently installed 50 new viewscopes at 36 campgrounds powered by EnChroma







RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- **Grant programs**
  - Adirondack & Catskill Park Smart Growth Grants
  - Environmental Justice Grant Programs
  - Community Forest Conservation Grant Program
  - Urban and Community Forest Grants
  - Hudson River Estuary Grants
  - Mohawk River Watershed Grants
  - Climate Smart Community Grant Program
  - Environmental Bond Act

- **NYS Birding Trail**
  - Promote current locations on the trail
  - Work with destinations in your communities to nominate new sites to the trail

- Because everyone loves a patch…**tap into annual and ongoing challenges** and tailor to your communities

- **Printed materials** available include I BIRD NY and trail guides, promotional rack cards, and more





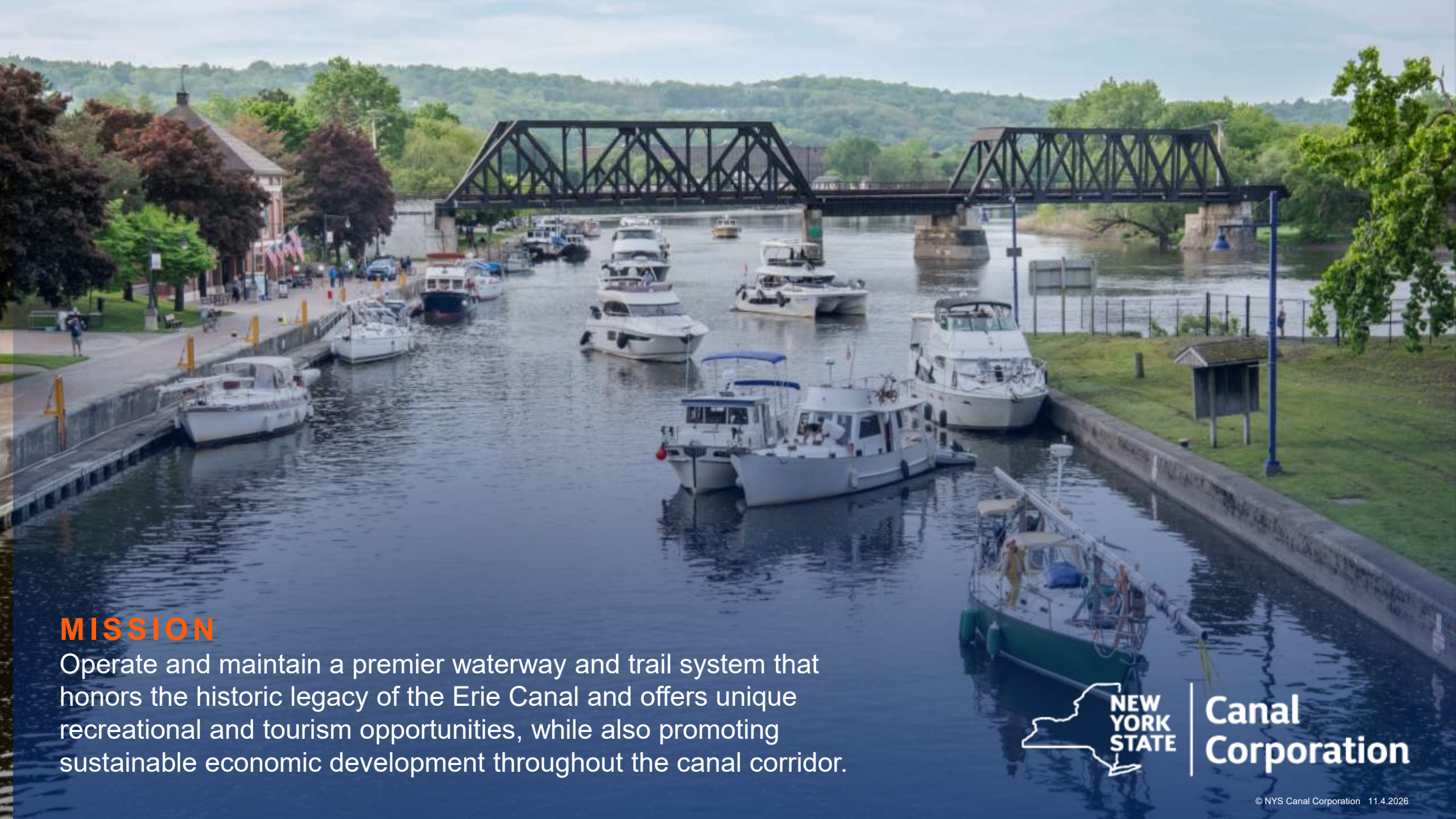
Department of Environmental Conservation



New York State Canal Corporation & The Great Outdoors

NEW YORK STATE | Canal Corporation

© NYS Canal Corporation 3.26.25



MISSION

Operate and maintain a premier waterway and trail system that honors the historic legacy of the Erie Canal and offers unique recreational and tourism opportunities, while also promoting sustainable economic development throughout the canal corridor.

NEW YORK STATE | Canal Corporation

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Who We Are

The New York State Canal Corporation:

- **Oversees the largest state-run inland waterway system** in America, continuously operating for **over 200 years**
- **Operates, maintains, improves and promotes 524-miles** of navigable Canal system, related waterways and two primary reservoirs
- **Employs 500+ employees** year-round and **200 more employees** seasonally
- **Supports** recreation, economic development and historic preservation



© NYS Canal Corporation 11.4.2026



New York State Canal System Map

NEW YORK STATE CANALS

NYS **New York State Canal Segments**

- New York State Canal System
- Canalway Trail – Erie
- Canalway Trail – Champlain
- Interstate Highway
- Canal Lock
- Lift Bridge

Cities

0 25 50 Miles

0 25 50 Kilometers

N



Customers, Communities and Canal Use

The Canalway and its offerings support hundreds of communities and thousands of residents.

80%

Of Upstate New Yorkers **live within 25 miles** of the Canals

200+

Municipalities across the canal corridor

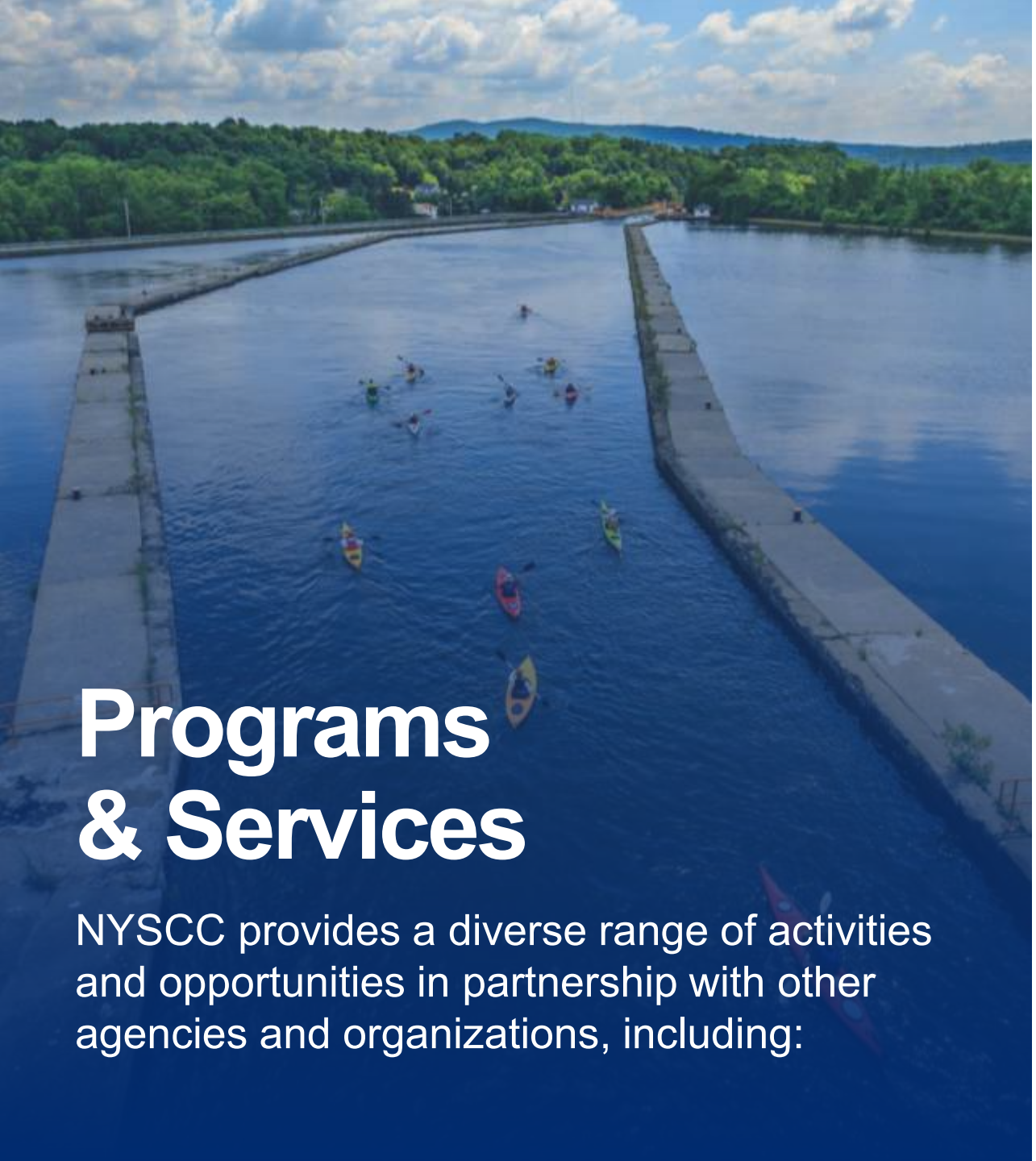
75,000

Average number of lockages per season

4M

Annual users of the Canalway Trail

© NYS Canal Corporation



Programs & Services

NYSCC provides a diverse range of activities and opportunities in partnership with other agencies and organizations, including:

On The Canals

Free and accessible outdoor excursions
Enjoyed by 37,000+ people of all abilities.

Agency Partnerships

Working Together The NYSCC works with Parks & DEC on a variety of programming such as First Day Hikes, and fishing program/clinics.

Canal Grants

Events Grants, Tourism Infrastructure, Capital Improvement Projects The New York State Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor offer competitive grant funding to support tourism and recreation along the New York State Canal System, including canal waterways and Canalway Trail.

© NYS Canal Corporation

Recreation on the
Canalway Trail

Nearly 4 Million People

use the 420+ miles of Canalway Trails annually for recreation.

- Canalway Challenge
- Cycle The Erie
- Empire State Trail Towns
- **Volunteer programs**
  - Canal Clean Sweep
  - Adopt-A-Trail
  - Water Trail Stewardship





© NYS Canal Corporation 11.4.2026

Canalway Trail by the Numbers

3,970
Jobs supported

$767M+
Economic Output

$84M
Tax Revenue

14,474
Acres of off-road land preserved

Buffalo - Albany
360.4 Miles

Waterford – Whitehall
63.4 Miles

4 Million
Trail Visits

$234M+
Employee Earnings

© NYS Canal Corporation

GREAT OUTDOORS SUMMIT



Jaime Collins, Communications Manager

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Olympic Regional Development Authority

Connecting People to Outdoor Recreation



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Olympic Regional Development Authority

Venues & Opportunities



- Belleayre Mountain
- Gore Mountain
- Whiteface Mountain
- Mt Van Hoevenberg
- Olympic Center
- Olympic Jumping Complex

Alpine Skiing | Snowboarding | Nordic Skiing | Mountain Biking | Hiking| Skating | Hockey | Scenic Experiences

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Olympic Regional Development Authority

Growing Outdoor Recreation



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Olympic Regional Development Authority

Growing Opportunities

- Learn-to-Ski & Snowboard
- School Partnerships
- Youth Programming
- Group Lessons
- Adaptive Pass, Equip, & Lessons
- Community Activities
- NYSEF
- Expanded Beginner Terrain
- Improvements to Support Learning



Fostering Beginner Experiences | Inclusive & Welcoming
Nurturing Life-Long Participation

Turning Interest into Participation

- Experiencing Olympic Sports Firsthand
- Access to World Class Venues
- Introductory Opportunities
- Connecting Spectators with Sport
- New Recreational Experiences Accessible to All



Expanding Access & Accessibility

- Helping More NYers Overcome Barriers to Participation
- Accessible Venues & Programs
- Partnerships for Specialized Instruction/Equipment
- Beginner-Welcoming Improvements
- Affordable Experiences







Beyond Winter

ACTIVITIES

- MTB
- Hiking / Running
- Gondolas / Summits
- Cliffside Coaster
- Climbing

EVENTS

- MTB World Series
- Olympic Day
- Summer Ski Jumping
- Fall Festivals
- Year-Round Programs



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Beyond Winter








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Connecting People to Recreation

- SKI3 Pass – All Alpine Mtns + Perks
- Snow Pass, Snow Triple Play, Mountain Collective
- Campaigns, Event Promotions, Story-Telling
- Collaborations – I LOVE NY & Regional DMOs
- Cross-Promos, Reciprocal Offers, Destination Itineraries
- Athlete & Sport Development Partners

Working With Us

DMOs

- Recreation Opps & Events in Destination Marketing & Itineraries

Hotels & Attractions

- Packages, Extended-Stay Experiences, Cross-Promos

Schools & Community Org

- Connect Youth & Groups with Introductory Programs

Event & Tourism Partners

- Building Activities Around World Cups, Festivals, & Other Events

State Agencies

- Shared Campaigns, Rec. Programming, Connecting Destinations

Working With Us

The Olympic Authority is a tremendous partner for ECAC Hockey. The staff is willing to assist in all capacities including branding, revenue generation, promotion and execution. This partnership has led to record revenues and resulted in our agreeing to a long-term extension for both our men's and women's teams. We are proud to call Lake Placid the Home of ECAC Hockey.

~Doug Christiansen, Commissioner of ECAC Hockey

Our Impact

- 1.24 Million Visits in FY 2025-2026
- 764,453 Alpine Skier Visits
- 128,000 Youth Participant Days Sport Programs
- $484.4 Million Total Economic Impact
- $36.1 Million in State & Local Taxes

Experiences Encourage Return Visits & Lifelong Recreation


Thank you
Lake Placid
STIFEL
I ♥ NY
coop

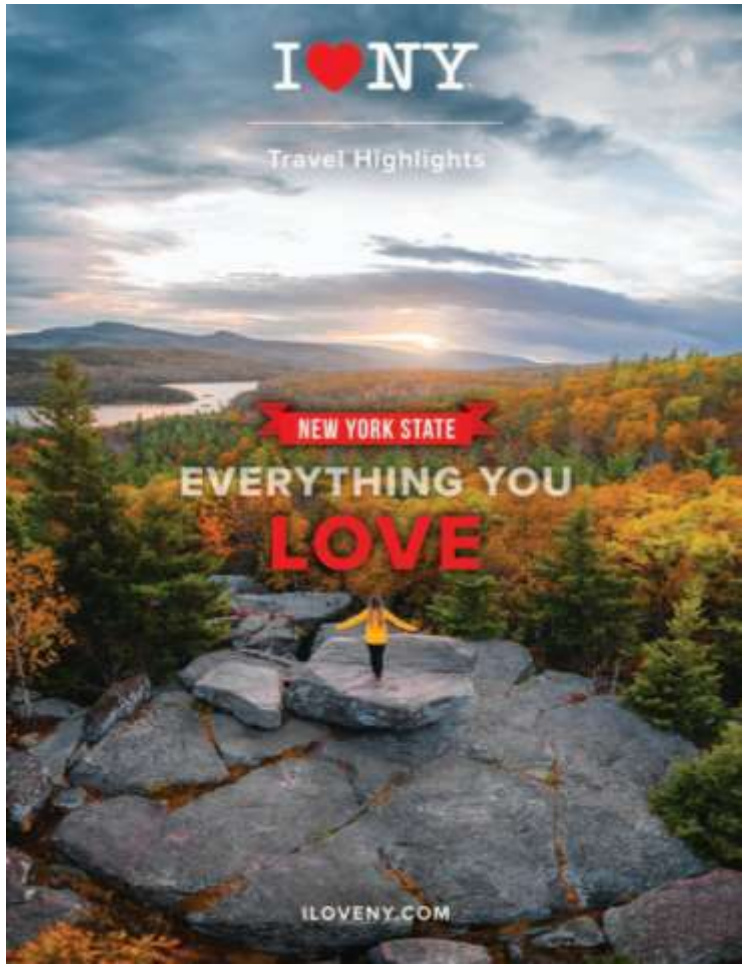
How We Support Outdoor Recreation

Marketing

- Advertising
- Digital & Editorial Content
- Social Media
- Events & Experiential
- Public Relations
- Segment Marketing
- Consumer Travel Tools

Business to Business Sales Work

- International Efforts
- Trade Shows
- Brand USA



Tourism Grant Programs

MARKET NEW YORK

Program has awarded $162.5M for nearly 700 projects



MATCHING FUNDS

Provided to county and regional Tourism Promotion Agencies (TPAs)



Industry Support & Interagency Work

Industry Relations

- TPA & DMO meetings
- TPA Digest and Industry Newsletter
- Conference participation
- Industry memberships and partnerships

Education Programs

Industry Webinars:

- International Updates
- Market NY Grants Roadmap
- Travel Trade

Data + Research

- Annual Tourism Economics Impact Report
- County-level hotel data and trends
- Statewide visitor profile

Interagency Taskforce

- 15 agencies convened throughout the year
- Cross promotion opportunities
- Strengthened communication





EVERYTHING YOU LOVE



STAY CONNECTED

facebook.com/iloveny

x.com/i_love_ny

youtube.com/officialiloveny

tiktok.com/@iloveny

instagram.com/iloveny
instagram.com/ilovenypr

Press Releases: thebeat@esd.ny.gov
Digital Content Pitches: ilovenypitch@esd.ny.gov
Bulk Guide Request: tourism@esd.ny.gov
Market New York Grant Program: regionaltourism@esd.ny.gov
Accessible NY: ilnyaccessible@esd.ny.gov
Path Through History + America 250: paththroughhistory@esd.ny.gov
General Inquiries: info@iloveny.com

*Additional industry resources available at **iloveny.com/industry***

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2026 New York State Great Outdoors Summit

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Mark Luciano

Stakeholder Relations Manager
New York / Minnesota

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- BREAK -

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