



By Ellen Bidell

Susan Shafer

I remember camping trips as a child. Everyone loaded into the station wagon, slept on the ground in thin sleeping bags, ate hot dogs around the campfire, and swatted bugs. I've changed since then and camping has "grown up" too. Now you can enjoy the outdoors in style and comfort. Today's camping families bring boats, fishing tackle,



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sporting equipment, and comfortable sleeping gear (the invention of the air bed has revolutionized tent camping). More people use "campers" and small RVs, while others still prefer to "rough it" in tents. There are a variety of campgrounds to choose from, many attracting visitors with similar interests, such as serious hikers, anglers or kayakers. Camping food has evolved from cooking hot dogs over the fire to preparing gourmet meals in a Dutch oven. Food draws people together, and neighboring campers sometimes share impromptu meals.

If you haven't been camping in a while, why not consider a trip for your family's summer vacation? If you are new to camping, take a look through the *New York Camping Guide* (see page 10) to find a destination that piques your interest. Best of all, camping is economical (most sites cost \$20-\$22 per

night) and a great way to reconnect with your family and nature. DEC runs 52 campgrounds and seven day-use areas that are visited by more than 1.6 million visitors each year. These campgrounds are located in rural and sometimes remote areas in the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, but that doesn't mean that civilization is far away. Both areas offer a multitude of activities and events within an hour or two of DEC's campgrounds.



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## Activities at DEC Campgrounds

DEC's campgrounds offer on-site activities to make sure you and your family have a great experience. Boat rentals are available at a number of campgrounds if you want to explore the pristine lakes. About half have swimming beaches to cool off on hot summer days. Most have hiking and nature trails to explore without getting too far into the wild. Some of the larger campgrounds have recreational programs for children, including daily hikes, canoe trips, orienteering and team sports. Larger sites also have the Junior Naturalist program, where students participate in individual and family activities, and earn a patch upon completion.

## Out and About

While vacationing in your own state may not sound glamorous, there is no



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limit to the exciting activities and events that the Adirondacks and Catskills have to offer.

The Adirondack Park covers more than six million acres (larger than the state of Vermont). The High Peaks are some of the most beautiful in the country, but there are also many mountains that are easy enough for novice hikers to tackle. You can hike to the summit for a panoramic view or just take a walk through peaceful forests. There are more than 3,000 lakes and ponds to kayak or canoe, and many have trophy fishing opportunities. Two thousand miles of hiking trails take you through hardwood forests, alpine meadows, by picturesque waterfalls and hidden caves. Nature trails are a great way to view wildlife in its natural habitat.

The Catskill region may be smaller, but the adventures can be just as big. While Mount Marcy in the Adirondacks is the state's highest peak at 5,305 feet, Slide Mountain in the Catskills is still a pretty good climb at 4,180 feet. There are four major river systems in the Catskills—the Delaware, Hudson, Mohawk and Susquehanna—and numerous tributaries. These excellent fishing opportunities helped the southern Catskills earn the moniker “birthplace of American fly-fishing.”

# SCAROON MANOR

DEC's newest campground

Located on the west shore of Schroon Lake at Taylor's Point in the Adirondacks, Scaroon Manor first opened to the public as a day-use area in July 2006. A former resort, it is the first new public recreational facility constructed in the Adirondack Forest Preserve since 1977. The facility has a 200-foot-long supervised beach and swimming area, picnic pavilions and picnic sites, boat docks and a fishing pier. Many of the amenities are accessible for people with disabilities. Beginning this July, and running through early September, camping will be allowed at sixty newly constructed campsites.

A photograph of a stone archway leading to a building. In the foreground, there is a stone well with a wooden bucket hanging from it. The scene is surrounded by trees and greenery.

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For those who prefer a different kind of adventure, the Catskills and Adirondacks have world-class museums, performing arts centers, colonial forts, amusement parks, art galleries, antique shops, farmers' markets and plenty of shopping. There are hundreds of events scheduled throughout the summer to keep campers busy. Festivals, fairs, concerts, war re-enactments, theatre performances and athletic competitions draw people from around the Northeast.

For more information about events and activities in the Adirondacks and Catskills, click on the "Events" link under the "What to Do" tab at <http://visitadirondecks.com>, and the calendar link at the top of [www.visitthecatskills.com](http://www.visitthecatskills.com).



Jonathan Drezner

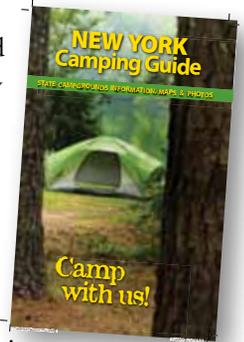
### Information/Reservations

The *New York Camping Guide* provides detailed information about all the state's campgrounds, including activities, amenities and photos. For more information about camping

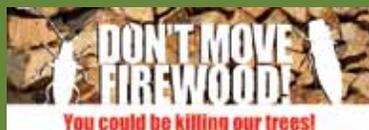
rules, regulations and rates, or to get a copy of the guide, please visit DEC's website at [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/camping.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/camping.html).

If you are interested in making a campground reservation, please visit the ReserveAmerica website (<http://newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com>), or phone 1-800-456-CAMP. Campers who like to make their plans early can reserve a specific site up to nine months in advance. Those who are more spontaneous can take their chances with unreserved sites that are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

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Regulations currently prohibit the importation of firewood into New York unless it has been heat-treated to kill pests. This regulation also limits the transportation of untreated firewood to within 50 miles of its source. It is best to leave all firewood at home; do not bring it to campgrounds or parks. See "Tiny Beetle Big Problem" on page 24 and also visit [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28722.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28722.html) for more information about firewood and invasive insects.



## By Douglas Bernhard & Jessica Tompkins

Ask a seasoned camper what the value of camping is and you'll likely hear stories of self-sufficiency and "roughing it," or getting close to nature and spending quality time with family. Ask that same question of a store-owner near any one of DEC's 52 campgrounds in the Forest Preserve and you'll likely hear a different answer, one based in economic opportunity.

Located in rural and sometimes remote areas in the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, DEC's public campgrounds and day-use areas are visited by more than 1.6 million visitors annually. When campers arrive, local business owners take notice.

"The campground is an economic engine for the local community and it gives us a regular, dependable customer base that we can count on each summer. This allows us to

employ local people, further helping our community," says Joe Cavallaro, owner of Twilight General Store in Haines Falls, New York.

Numerous studies have shown that the further people travel to get to their vacation destination, the more money they will spend in that area. During camping, essentials like firewood, ice, food, marshmallows and bug spray are often purchased at local businesses. All totaled, these items add up to big revenue—between \$28 and \$57 million dollars annually.

But some of the benefits that campgrounds bring can't be measured in dollars. A Parks & Trails New York study noted "The State Park System generates significant additional economic benefits to the state, including maintaining the natural environment, providing an escape for millions of New Yorkers and others from around the world,

and protecting the state's heritage for future generations."

With more and more people looking for less expensive ways to recreate, camping is becoming a more popular alternative for the family vacation. DEC campgrounds make great vacation destinations. Each location is unique, and so are the experiences to be had. There truly is something for everyone, including island camping, tent and trailer camping, boat launching facilities, hiking trails, beaches and day-use areas. Plus, when you visit a DEC campground, you're supporting the local businesses and economy, and that makes dollars and sense!

For more information on DEC campgrounds, please visit [www.dec-campgrounds.com](http://www.dec-campgrounds.com).

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