

NEW YORK STATE
Conservationist

for
Kids!

**Connect
with Parks**



Welcome to NEW YORK STATE Conservationist

for
Kids!



Tom Hughes

Do you spend too much time indoors and in front of electronic devices? Recent studies show that you are not alone! Called “nature deficit disorder” by author Richard Louv, this lack of exposure to nature and the outdoors is an issue that has gotten much attention over the last few years. In fall 2015, President Obama unveiled the “**Every Kid in a Park**” initiative, which allows fourth-grade students and their families free access to all national parks (and other federal properties) for one year. Early in 2016, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo unveiled the **Connect Kids** initiative, which will allow fourth-graders and their families free access to state lands as well.



photo courtesy of USFWS

Want to receive *Conservationist for Kids* at home? Subscribe to *Conservationist* magazine! You'll get six issues of the award-winning *Conservationist* magazine each year, plus *Conservationist for Kids* in the October, February and April issues. Call 1-800-678-6399 for information about how to subscribe.



NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Conservationist for Kids, 625 Broadway, 4th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-4502
kidsconservationist@dec.ny.gov

Featured on the cover is a DEC nature hike
by Susan Shafer



Public Lands in New York State

photo courtesy of National Park Service



Did you know there are 22 national parks right here in New York State? You can find them at nps.gov/ny. These National Park Service sites are yours to explore and offer something for everyone. In addition, there are 11 national wildlife refuges managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, (fws.gov/refuges) and one national forest, operated by the U.S. Forest Service. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) manages the Adirondack and Catskill parks, which include 52 campgrounds and many miles of trails. DEC also operates many wildlife management areas and state forests. New York State Parks operates 180 state parks, more than 65 of which offer camping, as well as 35 historic sites.

In New York's many public lands you may:

photo courtesy of USFWS



- Get close to roaring waterfalls or walk to the edge of the ocean
- Climb up inside a lighthouse or to the top of the Statue of Liberty
- See how presidents and immigrants lived and where battles for freedom and women's rights took place
- Discover the fun of camping, fishing, paddling, hiking, bicycling, birdwatching, painting, and more!

This year the National Park Service turns 100 and we want you to **Find Your Park** and be part of the celebration. Special events like art contests and workshops, family festivals and picnics, and

volunteer days are planned throughout the state and are listed online at findyourpark.com.

Get your free pass

With the **Every Kid in a Park** pass, you and your family get free access to hundreds of parks, lands, and waters for an entire year.

Start your adventure at everykidinapark.gov by choosing the "Get Your Pass" link. After answering a couple of questions, download and print a personalized paper voucher. This voucher can be exchanged for a plastic pass at numerous places in New York State. Visit the Every Kid in a Park website for a complete list.

Next, plan your trip to one—or all—of the more than 200 parks, national wildlife refuges, historic sites, and other public lands in New York State. For information about how to use your Every Kid in a Park pass at New York State Parks, visit nysparks.com.



NEW Y.O.

ONTARIO

Which Federal and State Nature Centers in New York State have you visited?

Federal

- Finger Lakes National Forest Visitor Center
- Fire Island Wilderness Visitor Center
- Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center
- Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center
- Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center
- Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center

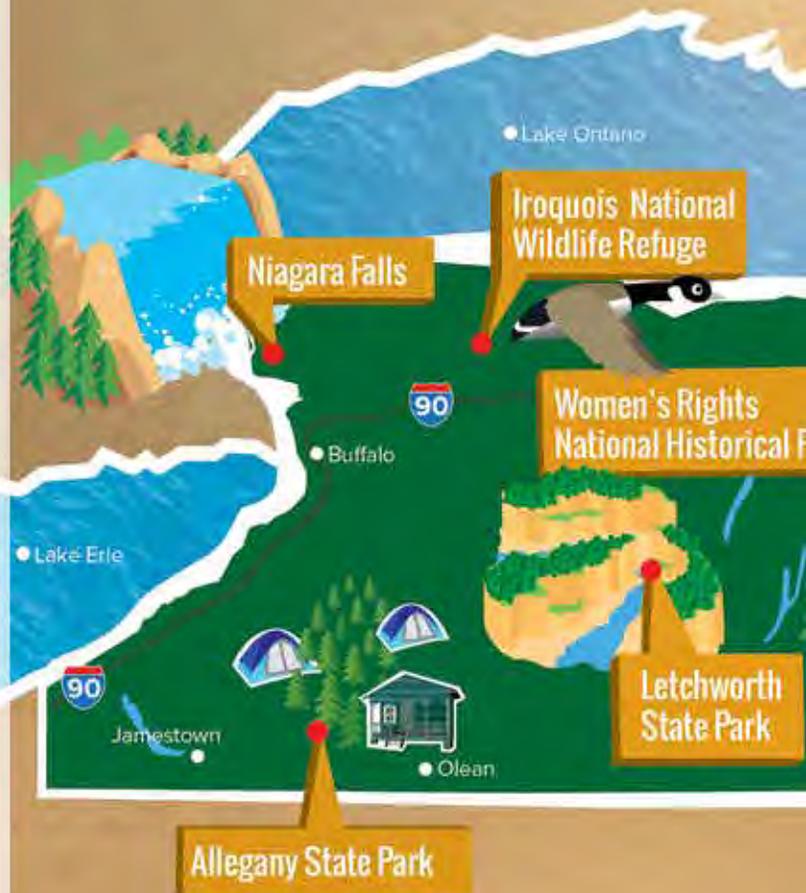
NYSDEC

- Five Rivers Environmental Education Center
- Reinstein Woods Environmental Education Center
- Rogers Environmental Education Center**

NYS Parks

- Beaver Island Nature Center
- Caleb Smith SP Preserve Nature Museum
- Clark Reservation SP Nature Center
- Clay Pit Ponds Interpretive Center
- Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center
- Evangola Nature Center
- Fort Niagara Nature Center
- Glimmerglass Nature Center
- Green Lakes SP Nature Center
- Hither Hills SP Interpretive Center
- Long Island Environmental Interpretive Center at Connetquot River SP Preserve
- Minna Anthony Common Nature Center at Wellesley Island SP
- Minnewaska SP Preserve Nature Center
- Moreau Lake Nature Center
- Niagara Gorge Discovery Center
- Point Au Roche SP Nature Center
- Red House Natural History Museum at Allegany SP
- Robert Moses SP Nature Center
- Rockland Lake Nature Center
- Sam's Point Preserve at Minnewaska
- Taconic Outdoor Education Center at Clarence Fahnestock Memorial SP
- Theodore Roosevelt Nature Center at Jones Beach SP
- Trailside Museum at Bear Mountain SP
- U. S. Senator Frank R. Lautenberg Visitor Center at Sterling Forest SP

**Operated by Friends of Rogers by agreement with DEC



Public Lands in New York State

This map shows just a sample of the many parks and public lands found throughout New York State. For a larger map showing all public recreation lands in the state, visit www.dec.ny.gov/education/105231.html.

Find all of the national parks in NY at nps.gov/ny and visit fws.gov/refuges to learn more about the national wildlife refuges in the state. With more than 4 million acres of public land open to recreation in NYS, there are many opportunities to **Find Your Park!**

RK

QUÉBEC



VERMONT

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MASSACHUSETTS

CONNECTICUT

RHODE ISLAND

PENNSYLVANIA

NEW JERSEY

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Potsdam

Plattsburgh

Watertown

Long Lake

Syracuse

Utica

Albany

Elmira

Binghamton

Newburgh

Middletown



Adirondack Park

Saratoga National Historical Park

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge

Thacher State Park

Finger Lakes National Forest

Catskill Park

Gateway National Recreation Area

Fire Island National Seashore

Getting Active in Public Lands

*Try a tour indoors or stroll outside,
Walk a loop trail or take a bike for a ride.
Whether hiking or biking is more your style,
You can hop on a trail and move for miles.
If being on the water is most fun for you,*

*Paddle with a park ranger in a kayak or canoe.
There is fun for everyone each and every day,
So visit New York's parks and get out and play!*

photo courtesy USACE



Grab a friend or family member and become active in public lands in New York. You can paddle with a park ranger (and a parent or guardian) on a kayak or canoe tour at Gateway National Recreation Area, Moreau Lake State Park, or Tivoli Bays. If you prefer to remain on land, take a bicycle tour at Saratoga National Historical Park or go biking along the trails at Green Lakes State Park or Stewart State Forest.

photo courtesy NPS



Throughout NYS, public lands offer many opportunities for outdoor recreation. Take a hike in the Adirondacks, Catskills, or Finger Lakes; go fishing or birdwatching at one of New York's many parks, wildlife refuges, or day-use areas; or join the **Learn to Swim** program at many state parks' pools and lakes. Some parks have playgrounds, and others offer trails, waterways, and disc golf courses. No matter where you go in New York State, it is a great place to explore the outdoors!



Susan Shafer



Experience the Natural World

Fish for first place in Fire Island National Seashore's Annual Snapper Derby, or wade in the shallows to net fish or seine during summer "Catch of the Day" programs. Sleep beneath the stars and wake to the sound of gentle waves while camping at Wellesley Island State Park or Mongaup Pond campgrounds. Explore everything from heritage to biology at the many historic sites, parks, and recreation areas found throughout New York State.



Jim Clayton

Become a National Park Service **Junior Ranger**. Travel back in time at Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty and experience what it was like to be an immigrant arriving in the New World, or build your own fort at Fort Stanwix. Learn more about the **Junior Ranger** program online at nps.gov/kids/jrRangers.cfm



J Wickersty



Jim Clayton

New York's public lands offer kids and their families many opportunities for watching wildlife, exploring nature centers and nature trails, and taking self-guided tours. Many national wildlife refuges and state parks offer kid-friendly nature activities throughout the year. Some of DEC's and NYS Parks' campgrounds offer a **Junior Naturalist** program that teaches kids about nature and the environment through a series of activities and a *Junior Naturalist Journal*. At the end, participants earn a patch for having participated in the program. More information about this program can be found online at www.dec.ny.gov/education/21673.html. To find the locations of all DEC and State Parks campgrounds, visit newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com. DEC also operates two staffed environmental education centers—Five Rivers and Reinstein Woods. State Parks operates 24 nature centers. Find more information at arcg.is/1fFUjmw.



photo courtesy USFWS

Visit the *Conservationist for Kids* webpage at www.dec.ny.gov/education/40248.html for links to more information about discovering and exploring your public lands in New York State.



Exploring Your Own Environment

Stewardship Caring for Our Public Lands

**What does a park mean to you?
What can you do at home or at school
to help protect them?**



photo courtesy NPS

There are many ways you can help the National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and New York State protect and preserve our national and state treasures:

- Share your photos and stories on social media.
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can join National Park Service Scout Ranger programs.
- Volunteer at a park or nature center.

You and your family can also help care for our public lands (and the creatures that live on them) by becoming citizen scientists. Many different agencies and organizations offer exciting opportunities! Use apps to document the plants and animals you see, take and share pictures, keep track of wildlife, or join

a park-led citizen science program. For more information about citizen science, check past issues of *Conservationist for Kids*, especially the “Becoming an Outdoor Explorer,” “High-Tech Nature,” and “Birds are Cool!” issues, all of which are available at www.dec.ny.gov/education/100637.html.



photo courtesy NPS

Year-round, there are many opportunities for you to become involved in projects or special service days that help preserve, protect, and enhance New York’s public lands. Some of these include:

- National Park Week – April 16-23, 2016 – nationalparks.org/national-park-week
- I Love My Park Day – May 7, 2016 – ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day
- National Trails Day – June 4, 2016 – nationaltrailsday.americanhiking.org
- International Coastal Cleanup – September 17, 2016 – oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup
- National Public Lands Day – September 24, 2016 – publiclandsday.org

Sign up today and do your part to help your parks!

This issue was a collaborative effort of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The New York State Parks Connect Kids program is supported by the generosity of: Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, MetLife Foundation, Foundation for Long Island State Parks, Alfred P. Sloane Foundation, New York Community Trust, and Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Additional funding for this issue was provided by Eastern National and DEC’s Division of Operations, Bureau of Recreation.

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Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Basil Seggos, Acting Commissioner
Sean Mahar, Director of Communications

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION SERVICES
Harold Evans, Director
Jeremy Taylor, Editor
Jennifer Peyser, Designer
Maria VanWie, Designer



CONSERVATIONIST FOR KIDS

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway, 4th Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4502
P: (518) 402-8047 | F: (518) 402-9036 | kidsconservationist@dec.ny.gov
www.dec.ny.gov

Conservationist for Kids

Supplement for Classroom Teachers – Connect with Parks

Understanding Parks

A field trip can be an unforgettable educational experience and a treasured childhood memory. New York State's public lands offer a wide range of learning opportunities for children – and a wealth of education resources for the classroom. Whether you go on a field trip or an armchair tour, take advantage of local federal and state lands and help your students connect with nature.

This year the National Park Service turns 100. With free access for fourth-graders through the **Every Kid in a Park** initiative and special programming to celebrate the National Park Service Centennial, there is no better time than now to get out and find your park. National parks and heritage areas in New York can serve as informal classrooms and as inspiration for in-classroom learning. Check the list of National Park Service sites in New York at www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm. New York State Parks and DEC also are supporting efforts to get kids into parks through the **Connect Kids** initiative. This program gives fourth-graders and their families free access to *state* lands, such as the many state parks throughout NY and DEC's day-use areas. For a map showing the location of all public recreation lands in NYS, visit www.dec.ny.gov/education/105231.html.

Why Teach About Parks?

- Parks fit into the curriculum! Fourth-grade history includes NYS history plus real world applications of math, science and PE standards. Parks and public lands offer great ways to work all of these topics into your curriculum!
- Explore history at federal and state historic sites (Native Americans, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, women's rights, immigrants, U.S. presidents, etc.).
- Research why sites are important, such as to preserve rare species or beautiful places (Watkins Glen, Letchworth, Fire Island, etc.).
- Mapping activity – What places are near your school? What makes them significant?

This Issue's "Outside Page"

The "Outside Page" in this issue of *Conservationist for Kids* encourages students and their families to participate in many different opportunities for park and public land stewardship throughout the year. Some are one-day cleanup activities, while others are ongoing. Citizen science is an important and interesting way that students can help state and federal researchers gather information about the various plants and animals they see when visiting parks and documenting things like seasonal changes. By getting involved with stewardship and citizen science activities on public lands, students will feel a closer connection to the natural world and will be doing their part to help parks thrive.

Teacher Workshops

For teachers who have participated in a **Project WILD**, **Project WET**, or **Project Learning Tree (PLT)** workshop, the activities listed below complement this issue of *Conservationist for Kids*. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/education/1913.html for information about workshops and how to obtain curriculum and activity guides.

Project WILD: Pay to Play
Planning for People and Wildlife

PLT: I'd Like to Visit a Place Where...
Loving It Too Much
We Can Work It Out

Project WET: Discover the Waters of Our National Parks

National Park Service Teacher Workshops

Educators of all grade levels and disciplines can learn more about National Park Service education materials and your local national parks and heritage areas during on-site teacher workshops. Workshop topics and duration may vary from park to park. Visit the "Learn about the Park" section of each of the parks and areas listed at www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm to find more information on teacher workshops.

National Park Service Teacher-Ranger-Teacher

Develop and deepen your professional practice as a summer Teacher-Ranger-Teacher with the National Park Service. The Teacher Ranger Teacher program is a unique summer-long professional development opportunity for educators to expand their knowledge base, gain first-hand experience with park rangers and researchers in the field, and to spend time developing lesson plans for their own classrooms. This immersive learning experience helps educators infuse national park-based education resources and place-based learning aligned to education standards with their teaching skills.

Do you have an interactive white board in your classroom?

If you use a SMART board or similar interactive white board or projection system in your classroom, consider downloading a PDF of *Conservationist for Kids* and using it along with the printed copies enclosed in this mailing.

Online Resources

DEC Day Use Areas www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7771.html

DEC Education www.dec.ny.gov/26.html

DEC Nature Centers - Statewide Listing of Nature Centers www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/1826.html

DEC Places To Go: Finding State Recreation Lands www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82098.html

DEC State Lands Interactive Mapper www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45478.html

DEC Watchable Wildlife www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/55423.html

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation www.nysparks.com

NYS Parks - Know Your Nature www.pinterest.com/nystateparks/know-your-nature-activities-for-families

NYS Parks - Nature Centers www.nysparks.com/environment/nature-centers

National Park Service Education Portal www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm

National Park Service Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program <http://teacherrangerteacher.org>

National Park Service Web Rangers www.nps.gov/webrangers

National Park Service YAP! Teacher's Guide www.nps.gov/nebe/learn/kidsyouth/upload/YAP-Teachers-Guide.pdf

U.S. Department of the Interior - Every Kid in a Park program www.everykidinapark.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: National Wildlife Refuge System - Education www.fws.gov/refuges/education/

Books

- *National Geographic Kids Get Outside Guide: All Things Adventure, Exploration, and Fun* by Nancy Honovich and Julie Beer (2014)
- *The Kid's Guide to Exploring Nature* by Brooklyn Botanic Garden Educators (2014)
- *The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book* by Glove Pequot Press (2013)

Conservationist for Kids and an accompanying teacher supplement are distributed free of charge to public school 4th-grade classes in New York State three times per school year (fall, winter and spring). If you would like to be added to or removed from the distribution list, need to update information, or if you have questions or comments, please email the editor at KidsConservationist@dec.ny.gov or call 518-402-8047. Limited quantities of some back issues are also available on request. The full archives can be found online at www.dec.ny.gov/education/100637.html