



NY's Outdoors: *Open for Everyone*

Photos by DEC
unless otherwise noted



Jim Gallop courtesy of Take Me Fishing



courtesy Geoffrey Rhett



New York State provides unparalleled opportunities for outdoor recreation. From our lush forests and spectacular mountains to our beautiful beaches and world-famous cultural and historic attractions, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

That is why we have put together this *Open for Everyone* booklet—because reasons for exploring our natural environment are as varied as the makeup of our state. By providing a glimpse at what New Yorkers from diverse communities love most about outdoor recreation we can help to open nature's doors to the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.

Let New York's great outdoors inspire, excite and even spark new interests in you and your family this summer. With our thousands of lakes and ponds, stunning natural wonders, unlimited miles of hiking trails, more than 500 public boating access sites, and 46 mountain peaks above 4,000 feet everyone should take the opportunity to experience the thrill and beauty of our state's natural and cultural resources.

So take a moment to learn more about all that New York State has to offer in the great outdoors. I promise you won't be disappointed.

—Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

Fishing



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New York has some of the finest fishing in the country. There is world class fishing for a wide variety of coldwater, warmwater and saltwater fish species. Whether it's bass fishing on Lake Erie, brook trout fishing on a crystal clear Adirondack lake, Pacific salmon fishing on Lake Ontario, fishing for stripers on the Hudson River, brown trout fishing on the Beaver Kill or fishing for bluefish in Montauk's surf, there's something special here for everyone. With more than 7,500 lakes and ponds, 70,000 miles of rivers and streams, and hundreds of miles of coastline, fishing opportunities are always nearby!

Grab a pole and get hooked

Lucas Hearl



STEVEN WONG Angler

Growing up near the beach in Los Angeles, Steven Wong's passion for fishing began at an early age.

"I was lucky. Despite our urban setting, both of my parents were very outdoorsy and took me camping and fishing. My mom taught my dad and me to fish. We'd spend hours down at the pier, and except for a brief hiatus, I've been an avid angler ever since.

"When I moved to Brooklyn three years ago, I continued to pursue my passion. I build my own rods, make my own lures and spend most of my free time fishing. I love that you can fish just about anywhere in NYC; a favorite spot of mine is fishing for bass in Prospect Park.

"As part of DEC's I Fish NY team, I get to pass along my passion to other NYC residents who attend our free fishing events. Whether it's a friend or someone I just met, I try and make sure they have a great first experience. That way they'll get hooked on fishing just like me."

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, LaVonda Walton



Anglers catch a wide variety of coldwater and warmwater fish species, including popular game species such as bass, walleye and trout.



New York abounds with fishing opportunities on its more than 7,500 lakes and ponds, 70,000 miles of rivers and streams, and hundreds of miles of coastline.



The marine waters of New York host varied and exciting fishing opportunities for flounder, porgies, mackerel, bluefish, and striped bass.



Fishing is a fun family activity that can be enjoyed by anyone, no matter their age or ability.

courtesy of Howard Goebel



More than 1.8 million anglers fished New York's waters in 2011, contributing nearly \$4.5 billion to the state's economy in pursuit of their sport.

For more information on the Empire State's great fishing, visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishing.html.

Hunting

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Hunting is among the most popular forms of outdoor recreation in New York. That's because New York has an incredible variety of habitats and a wealth of public land. From the Catskill and the Adirondack Parks to the Finger Lakes and Great Lakes regions, from coastal lowlands to agricultural lake plains to craggy mountain peaks, our diverse habitat makes the Empire State an ideal hunting destination. In fact, New York is the seventh most popular hunting destination in the nation.

Whether in pursuit of big game, small game, game birds or waterfowl, New York hunters enjoy great trips afield. Hunters can pursue white-tailed deer from late September into January; from woodlot treestands to forested wilderness. Baymen hunt waterfowl in sneak boats off Long Island. Camo-clad hunters find our combination of woodlands and agriculture ideal turkey habitat. And that's to name just a few of the many available options.



VERDELL WALKER *Hunter*

Originally from Georgia, Verdell Walker now calls Brooklyn home.

"When I was young, I had an interest in hunting, but it was not readily available to me. As I got older and into cooking, my desire to try hunting was renewed. Not because I am a hard-core outdoors person (though I do love taking walks and gardening), but because I want to harvest my own food. I like the idea of being connected to what I eat: making my entire meal from local products, including harvesting my own meat.

"I attended a Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop sponsored by DEC and earned my Hunter Education certificate which allowed me to get my hunting license. I liked pushing myself out of my comfort zone and even got a perfect score on the test! I can't wait to harvest my first turkey and deer."



Millions of acres of Wildlife Management Areas, Forest Preserve, State Forests, and State Parks are open for hunting and trapping during the appropriate seasons.



Long seasons, liberal bag limits and plenty of public land add up to happy hunting days.

Try your hand at finding the perfect game

courtesy of Becoming an Outdoors-Woman



Many novices are surprised to find out how much they enjoy the shooting sports.

Courtesy of Gruttadauro Family



According to a recent federal survey, 823,000 hunters spent 18.4 million days afield in New York in 2011, generating more than \$3.6 billion of economic activity.

Jim Wargo



"Hunters and anglers are the foundation of the state's conservation community, concerned about... the state's habitats, forestland and waterways."
—NYSDEC Commissioner Joe Martens

Camping



NY's Outdoors: *Open for Everyone*

New York State is loaded with public campgrounds and campsites that are available for everyone, no matter their skill level or age. Whether it's pitching a tent in the back country, renting a cabin in the woods, or anything in between, New York has it all.

From the Thousand Islands to the high peaks of the Adirondacks, to the Finger Lake shores and the salt marshes of Long Island, camping lets you experience firsthand New York's tremendous scenic beauty. Campers have their choice of 113 campgrounds and more than 10,000 campsites, with associated activities that range from swimming, paddling, bicycling, fishing, hiking, and boating, to wildlife exploration, winter sports, and much more. Many of the campsites are located near parks, golf courses, historic sites, and other family-friendly destinations. A New York State camping getaway truly has something for everyone.



Backcountry camping is an excellent way to experience the beauty and solitude of New York's forests. It is permitted on most lands managed by DEC including Forest Preserve lands in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks and State Forests.



Whether you're looking for a scenic spot to picnic, or planning a weeklong camping adventure, NYS campgrounds are a perfect choice.



Nothing beats the camaraderie from making S'mores and singing songs around the campfire. Make your memories today.

Get your room with a view



New York campgrounds provide a wide variety of experiences, including island camping, tent and trailer camping, boat-launching facilities, hiking trails, beaches and day-use areas with picnic tables and grills.



GEORGE STEELE Camper

Environmental educator
George Steele loves canoe camping.

"Growing up near the Adirondacks, I had many opportunities to hike and camp. My outdoor exploits stem from a very active Boy Scout troop where we did two hikes a month during the scout year. I got my hiking merit badge and learned a lot of outdoor skills.

"I was introduced to canoe camping as a teenager when I went on a scout trip on the Fulton Chain, from 7th Lake to Tupper Lake. Traveling via canoe allows for carrying more supplies easily, a chance to fish along the way and many opportunities to spot wildlife. Over the last six years, much of my canoe camping has been with my teenage son. We go with another father and son and camp at the state campground on Tioga Point on Raquette Lake. The boys do the fishing while I do the cooking. Ah, fish chowder under the shade of the tall pines on the Point..."

Hiking

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Hiking can be a fun, relaxing way to spend the day outdoors with friends and family.

With more than 4 million acres of land open to the public, and thousands of miles of trails for hikers of all abilities, New York is a hiker's paradise. From breathtaking mountain views to the wooded southern tier, and from remote mountain ponds to miles and miles of coastline, what better way to see and experience New York's diverse landscape than through hiking? Whether you want to hike a section of the Appalachian Trail, hike the Northville Placid trail end-to-end, or just take the family out for an afternoon adventure, New York has it all. Rock climb in the Gunks, stroll the dunes of Long Island or Lake Ontario, take on the Long Path, or follow a path through history on the North Country National Scenic Trail. The possibilities are endless.

Find a trail and venture out



New York has thousands of miles of recreational trails available for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Yusuf Burgess



Many hiking trails in New York lead to a waterfall, a cool respite on a summer day.



Hikers can explore abundant trails located throughout the state's nearly 3 million acres of Forest Preserve: 2.6 million acres are in the Adirondacks, and 286,000 acres are in the Catskills.



For those serious hikers, consider becoming an Adirondack 46er or a member of the Catskill 3500 club. To find out more, visit adk46er.org and catskill-3500-club.org.

Dina Mohamed-Aly



PALOMA SPINA *Hiker*

Brazilian native Paloma Spina studies environmental engineering at Cornell.

"Outdoor recreation connects me with nature. In the forest or atop a mountain, I take in my surroundings and feel nature all around me. Such simple pleasures relieve everyday stresses and give me energy and confidence.

"You can never go wrong with a nice hike. You can do it anywhere and you don't need specialized gear. It's easy to convince friends and family to go, and it's good for you! I love feeling my heart pounding strong in my chest as I push harder and harder to make it to the top or to finish my goal.

Being outdoors allows me to be me and to lose myself in the moment. "

Wildlife Watching



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Courtesy of NYS Tourism Industry Association



MARKLY WILSON *Wildlife Watcher*

Barbadian native Markly Wilson is Director of International Marketing for I Love New York.

"Having been born in the Caribbean, becoming passionate about the outdoors was almost natural. It began when I caught a little grouper on a hand line. There's also tremendous joy in watching the life, colors and ballet of underwater plants and animals, petting a live octopus which responds by changing colors, and even cleaning, cooking and sharing my catch with those I love.

"I'm always happy to guide anyone who crosses my path. I've helped communities understand the value of bringing people to their area to view wildlife. We are now working with small communities in Washington and Madison Counties to help them become formidable wildlife viewing destinations.

"I find walking on a beach and smelling the ocean soothing, enlightening, and battery-charging."

Want to see soaring eagles, spectacular moose, playful river otters, skeins of migrating waterfowl, lounging seals or breaching whales? They're all here for you to enjoy. New York has some of the most diverse wildlife habitat in the nation. From the rocky peaks of the Adirondacks to the coastal lowlands along Long Island Sound, the Great Lakes to the Appalachian highlands, New York's fields and forests, mountains and marshes, beaches, lakes and rivers are home to hundreds of species of watchable wildlife. Wherever you are in the state, be it Manhattan's Central Park or thunderous Niagara Falls, wildlife can be found in abundance and enjoyed with binoculars or camera in hand.

*Viewing opportunities
wherever you go*



Wildlife watching is a popular recreational activity that can be enjoyed year-round anywhere in the state by people of all ages and abilities.



With thousands of acres of open space and natural habitat set aside, New York is the perfect place for people to enjoy observing, studying or photographing wildlife.



Each year, millions of people head into New York's outdoors to view or photograph wildlife. In so doing, they spend more than \$4 billion in equipment purchases and trip expenses.



New York State has more than 135 official watchable wildlife sites scattered across the state. For a list of sites, visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/55450.html.

Universal Access



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TIM BARNETT *Recreationist*

Tim Barnett grew up in Westport, NY on Lake Champlain where spending time outdoors was a way of life. He especially loved downhill skiing, and did ski patrol for a number of years.

“When I was director of the Adirondack Nature Conservancy (a position I held for 25 years), I loved introducing people to the outdoors. It was the best part of my job. After my accident at age 57, I still continued to enjoy the outdoors, but had to adjust to my new situation. I like visiting our preserves, and as an Adirondacker have been pleasantly surprised by the wheelchair accessible trails available to me. I’ve been to Camp Santanoni in Newcomb via horse-drawn wagon a number of times, and was fortunate to assist with the design and construction of Dillon Park, a fully-accessible wilderness facility in Long Lake.

“At 74-years young, I still enjoy skiing via adaptive equipment. I am impressed by the number of people who make enjoying the outdoors a priority, especially younger folks who don’t seem to let being in a wheelchair keep them from enjoying the wilderness.”

New York State is committed to enhancing public enjoyment of the outdoors. Many of our facilities are designed for “Universal Access,” providing recreation opportunities for the oldest adult to the youngest child, and everyone in between, including people with disabilities. Visitors to New York’s accessible facilities can enjoy fishing, boating, hunting, canoeing, picnicking, horseback riding, hiking, visiting historic assets, wildlife observation and camping. Improvements on state land invite families with children in strollers and people with mobility issues to visit, and a variety of communication methods are used to include people with hearing or sight impairments. Stated simply, New York’s focus is on inclusion.



New York welcomes visitors of all abilities to explore outdoor recreation on state lands and is committed to providing an ever-increasing range of accessible opportunities which support a healthy quality of life.

Access for all



New York campgrounds, educational centers and lands offer many recreational opportunities for people with disabilities, including camping, picnicking, fishing and nature viewing.



By building new ramps, fishing piers, trails with gentle slopes, walkways, overlooks and observation decks, New York is making outdoor activities readily accessible for people of all ages and abilities.



Visitors are encouraged to contact DEC’s Access Coordinators to discuss their individual needs and recreational pursuits with knowledgeable staff.

For more information on outdoor recreation opportunities for people with mobility impairments in the Empire State, visit: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html.

Canoeing, Kayaking & Boating



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With more than 7,500 lakes, ponds and reservoirs, 70,000 miles of rivers and streams, and two Great Lakes, New York is truly blessed when it comes to aquatic recreation opportunities. Whether you prefer canoeing on a secluded Adirondack pond, kayaking through whitewater rapids on the Upper Hudson, or taking a lazy summer float trip down the Battenkill or the Esopus, a treasure trove of opportunities awaits the water-lover.

Paddleboard on a glass-smooth lake. Explore a Great Lake shoreline in a sea kayak. Take in a bluebird day under sail power. Or windsurf along the Long Island coast. There's also the lock-filled barge canal, with its fantastic history, and the incredible scenery in the Thousand Islands! Boaters can escape on a relaxing cruise, fish a favorite cove, or embark on a family adventure exploring new waters. It's all here in New York State.



YUSUF BURGESS *Kayaker*

Specifically mentioned in Richard Louv's book *The Nature Principle*, Brother Yusuf Burgess was prescribed a kayak for the post-traumatic stress disorder he suffered after his Viet Nam days. He has now been kayaking for nearly 40 years, and is known in his Albany neighborhood as the guy with the kayaks atop his SUV.

Brother Yusuf's personal mantra is "Leave no child inside." He uses boundless energy to engage, inspire, and prepare the next generation of leaders from inner cities and urban communities through exposure to the outdoors. He believes there is something innate in a young person that will not come out if they are not exposed to nature, and that kids who are given outdoor opportunities come away smarter, healthier and more well-balanced.

Yusuf considers himself to have been literally saved by the outdoors, and knows firsthand the restorative power of nature. By working with Boys and Girls Clubs, schools, in gang prevention, and as a family intervention specialist, Yusuf believes it is critical to teach our youth to love nature before they can be expected to heal it.

Get out on the water



Millions of people take to New York's waters each year.

Courtesy of Take Me Fishing



With numerous big waters like the Finger Lakes and Lakes George, Champlain, Erie and Ontario, as well as the coastal waters off Long Island, New York is a boater's paradise.



More than 500 public boating access sites across the state make getting on the water easy.

Justin Hawthorne



NYS provides boat access at many state campgrounds and fishing access spots across the state. Kiosks and gazebos provide information to help you get the most from your recreation experience.



If quiet backwaters interest you, New York has thousands of lakes and ponds to explore. Many lakes, ponds and streams in the Forest Preserves are restricted to non-motorized boating.