



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## State Parks to Remain Open

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS May 28, 2010

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Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins announced that every State park and historic site will be open Memorial Day weekend, for the entire summer and well into next year. Senate Democrats were able to negotiate an agreement to restore full funding for all parks, fulfilling their promise to keep parks, campgrounds, historic sites and botanical gardens open for New York's families.

Parks are also a major economic engine for communities across the State; a recent study indicates that the return on investment for parks operations is five-fold, \$1.9 billion in total revenue. The agreement also maintains funding for the very popular Department of Environmental Conservation campgrounds, which becomes the summer home for thousands of students who learn the importance of environmental protection and wilderness skills.

"This year, State Parks had more than 56 million visitors, an increase of 1.9 million visitors from the previous year, clearly demonstrating that our parks should be protected for families across the State," said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "During a time that affordable alternatives for recreational activities are needed more than ever, closing our State facilities places an unfair burden on working families across the State of New York."

Two months ago, the Senate Democratic Majority approved a budget resolution which included the same funding level for parks operations as last year, preventing 57 State Parks from closing and another 22 State parks from operating at reduced hours and staffing levels.