



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## Senate Passes Bill to Provide Search and Rescue Training for Volunteers Helping Forest Rangers

STEPHEN M. SALAND April 20, 2012

| ISSUE: **CONTINUING EDUCATION, STATE PARKS**

The New York State Senate today passed legislation that allows for the creation of a training program for volunteers interested in assisting the search and rescue operations of state forest rangers. The bill (S.553) will enhance the safety of volunteers and the public during search and rescue operations in the Adirondacks, Catskills and other forested communities across the state.

Each year, the state Department of Environmental Conservation's forest rangers conduct over 200 search and rescue operations in remote and forested areas of the state. The assistance of trained and credentialed individuals and groups who volunteer to assist in searches would be highly valuable in providing additional resources to respond to emergency situations where lost or missing persons are in need of immediate assistance.

The bill enables the forest rangers to establish, direct and maintain a program for the purposes of training and credentialing volunteer wild land search and rescue personnel to assist and respond with forest ranger forces to search for lost and missing people in remote and forested areas of the state. The New York State Federation of Search and Rescue Teams requested the legislation.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.