



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Do You “Love Your Park”?

PATTY RITCHIE April 21, 2014

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### Senator Ritchie’s Weekly Column

From camping and hiking to picnics and water sports, New York State parks provide the perfect venue for almost any outdoor activity. Because our parks are such important natural resources, it’s so important that we protect them and keep them pristine. That’s the goal of the third annual “I Love My Park Day,” a statewide event taking place on May 3<sup>rd</sup> that aims to improve and enhance New York’s state parks and historic sites.

Through I Love My Park Day, thousands of volunteers from across the state will head out to beautify participating parks and historic sites by doing things such as cleaning up lands and beaches, planting trees and gardens, restoring trails and wildlife habits and working on other improvement projects.

There are more than 80 I Love my Park Day events taking place across New York State this year. To register to volunteer at a park or historic site near you, visit the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation’s website at [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com).

If you’re someone who enjoys the outdoors and frequents our state’s many parks and historic sites, you’ll be pleased to know that the new State Budget makes key investments that will help to protect and enhance New York’s natural resources as well as support important environmental initiatives that create jobs, boost tourism and benefit communities across our state.

Contained in the new spending plan is a \$9 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), bringing the total funding to \$162 million which will help to protect open spaces, restore historic sites, control invasive species, create and enhance parks as well as support numerous other projects related to the environment. In addition, the new State Budget also includes an additional \$132.5 million in NY

Works funding for improvements to parks and historic sites and environmental resiliency efforts.

While the new State Budget goes a long way to support our state's parks and historic sites, there's a lot more that can be done—and you can lend a hand. By volunteering at I Love My Park Day, you can help to preserve and beautify these important resources for future generations.