



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Fort Niagara State Park Goes Green with Solar Photovoltaic System

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The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks) today flipped the switch on a 50-kilowatt solar photovoltaic (PV) system installed by State Park employees at Fort Niagara State Park, which will save \$9,100 annually and brings a clean, modern source of energy to the park and enhances efforts to improve energy efficiency throughout the park system. The announcement is in honor of Earth Week, April 19-25, which Governor Cuomo proclaimed as a weeklong celebration of New York's commitment

and accomplishments to protecting our environment, conserving open space, increasing access to the state's vast and magnificent natural resources, implementing clean energy initiatives and preparing for the effects of climate change.

"State Parks is leading the way in clean, renewable solar energy use and I'm elated that we are helping to power the oldest buildings on the Great Lakes with a clean, 21st century energy source," State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey said. "As we celebrate Earth Week, this project reflects State Parks' commitment to create a green and sustainable park system."

The \$90,000 Fort Niagara project is the ninth installation State Parks has completed to date. The system's 219 solar panels will generate a total of 57,130 kWh annually – enough to power eight full houses. The system will power the entire maintenance facility as well as 10 percent of the remainder of park facilities, including the 18th Century Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site, saving more than \$9,100 annually over the guaranteed minimum 25-year life of the PV system.

State Parks employees installed the PV system after receiving solar installer certification training at Alfred State College and certification by the New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA).

John B. Rhodes, President and CEO, NYSERDA said, "The project at Fort Niagara State Park is a model of how the State is leading by example in using renewable energy to power its facilities and protect the environment. Visitors to the park can see first-hand the state's commitment to increasing solar power under Governor Cuomo's NY-Sun initiative, and we congratulate the State Parks employees that installed the solar system."

**State Senator Rob Ortt said,** "This solar panel project unquestionably brings Fort Niagara into the 21st century by using one of the world's fastest growing energy sources. While this

installation will drive down costs for State Parks, it is clear that it'll also have economic, social and environmental benefits for future generations. We can only hope that this solar panel system can serve as a model for other projects as our region moves toward expanding our energy capabilities."

Assemblyman Ceretto said, "I look forward to Fort Niagara having the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of these new solar panels as they will not only save us money, but also help reduce our carbon footprint. Western New York continues to lead by example when it comes to green energy, and we must continue our efforts to incorporate cleaner sources of energy to our region."

On Thursday, [Governor Cuomo announced](#) that State Parks will install its largest solar PV project at Robert Moses State Park on Long Island. The 500 kW system will create the first energy neutral State Park in the nation. All of the park's net annual energy needs will be generated on-site. In addition, State Parks will install another 300kW of solar-power generating capacity at parks across the state the remainder of this year with projects at Sunken Meadow State Park on Long Island, Peebles Island State Park and Thatcher State Park in the Capital Region, and Alan Treman State Park in the Finger Lakes. Together, these projects will generate \$180,000 in savings annually.

The first installation of a PV system by State Parks employees was at Niagara Falls State Park's Discovery Center. Other locations across the state include Letchworth State Park, Allan Treman in the Finger Lakes, Robert Moses on Long Island and Grafton Lakes in Rensselaer County.

The project highlights Governor Cuomo's NY Parks 2020 to modernize and transform the New York State park system, including projects to prepare for climate change and make State Parks a model of sustainability. [NY Parks 2020](#) is a multi-year commitment to leverage a

broad range of private and public funding to invest approximately \$900 million in State Parks from 2011 to 2020. The 2015-16 State Budget proposes \$110 million toward this initiative.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation oversees 180 state parks and 35 historic sites, which are visited by 62 million people annually. For more information on any of these recreation areas, call 518-474-0456 or visit [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com), connect on Facebook, or follow on Twitter.