



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Secures \$100,000 To Boost Wellesley Island Nature Center

PATTY RITCHIE June 27, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced she has secured \$100,000 in special funding to help expand and enhance exhibits at Wellesley Island's Minna Anthony Common Nature Center.

Senator Ritchie made the announcement Tuesday at the Nature Center, which is currently undergoing a complete structural renovation. Funds she has secured will help the "Friends of the Nature Center," a nonprofit group that works to improve the facility to expand exhibits and improve offerings for patrons.

“Situated on the St. Lawrence River, the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center is not only a scenic gem, but also helps people to get outside and learn about the importance of protecting the environment,” said Senator Ritchie. “I am pleased to be able to deliver this funding, which will help the Friends of the Nature Center promote the beauty and wildlife of the North Country.”

“The Minna Anthony Common Nature Center prides itself on delivering diverse programming that helps to educate the public about wildlife and environmental conservation,” said Kerry Roberge, Friends of the Nature Center board president. “We cannot thank Senator Ritchie enough for recognizing the importance of strengthening the Nature Center and providing people with increased opportunities for enjoying—and learning about—the outdoors.”

“No matter the season, the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center offers people opportunities for experiencing the natural beauty of the Thousand Islands region,” said Peyton A. Taylor, Regional Director, NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation-Thousand Islands Region. “Through funding secured by Senator Ritchie, we can improve this awesome facility, which helps not only to enjoy nature, but also learn about the importance of protecting the environment.”

One of the largest nature centers in the state park system—and in New York State—the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center boasts 8 miles of hiking trails, as well as 7 miles of cross-country ski trails. It is also home to exhibits about wildlife and the center hosts special programming throughout the year. School districts throughout the North Country bring students to the Nature Center on field trips to teach the importance of protecting the environment.

In addition to securing this funding to strengthen outdoor education, a measure sponsored by Senator Ritchie (S.3019) recently received final passage and heads to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. The legislation calls for the Commissioners of Health and Environmental Conservation to promote and encourage outdoor recreation and environmental education for kids across the state.

Dedicated in 1969, the Nature Center was named for Minna Anthony Common, a leading authority on the birds, flowers, trees, animals and grasses who also did pen and ink illustrations and written work on natural history.

*(Attn. photo editors: Pictured from left to right in the above photo at Tuesday's announcement are Senator Patty Ritchie, Allan Newell, Peyton Taylor, Director of the Thousand Islands State Park Region, Barbara Butts, Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Friends of the Nature Center, Inc., Matthew Elliott, Board Member, Molly Farrell, Nature Center Director, Kerry Roberge, Board President and Harold Johnson, Chair of the Thousand Islands State Parks Commission)*