

For Immediate Release  
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## **State Parks Welcome Visitors for Memorial Day Weekend**

*Commissioner directs staff to open the gates to all facilities immediately  
Urges New Yorkers to take full advantage of wonderful system of parks and historic sites*

State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Carol Ash today directed agency staff to open the gates at all state parks for the Memorial Day weekend and expeditiously get campgrounds, golf courses and historic sites into full operating status.

“The agency staff is thrilled to get back to doing what they do best – which is running the finest state park system in the nation. I know that New Yorkers across the state worked very hard to support their public parks over the last few months. Now I hope they will get out and enjoy these beautiful places this Memorial Day weekend and throughout the upcoming season,” Ash said. “I am grateful to Governor Paterson and the Legislature for finding a way to fully open our great park system this summer, which was an extremely difficult challenge in this struggling economy.”

Ash said staff will immediately reopen gates to parking lots and unlock the facilities to make them available for normal day-use activities, including picnicking, hiking, cycling and fishing. Other amenities will become available over the next few days as workers who have been reassigned return to their regular work sites and normal levels of seasonal park workers and lifeguards are hired.

To coincide with the full opening of the state park system, the holiday weekend also marks the beginning of a new summer campaign to encourage New Yorkers to visit their state parks and historic sites and take full advantage of the more than 213 properties across the state. The initiative will utilize the agency website, [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com), as well as Facebook and Twitter.

**Beaches and pools:** Park beaches and pools are expected to open on-schedule. Beaches and pools open between Memorial Day weekend and late June. Efforts are being made to open all facilities on schedule.

**Campgrounds:** Fifty-five campgrounds encompassing 9,400 campsites, cabins and cottages are open for the season. Ash noted that those campgrounds are 85 percent booked for the Memorial Day weekend. At 11 other campgrounds, with about 285 sites, park managers will take immediate steps to comply with health and safety regulations to allow the campgrounds to open for visitors. Reservations at Canoe Point, Cedar Island, Eel Weir, Hunt’s Pond, Keewaydin, Macomb Reservation, Mary Island, Max V. Shaul, Newtown Battlefield, Oquaga Creek and Rudd Pond will be accepted beginning Friday, May 28. Check the agency website for campground availability. Reservations are accepted for campsites and cabins from one day to nine months in advance of the planned arrival date by calling toll free 1-800-456-CAMP or online, [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com).

Ash noted that there are over 74,000 campsites, cabins and cottages reserved for nearly 313,000 nights so far for the 2010 season, a level that is slightly ahead of last year’s record pace. Advance reservations at state parks campgrounds have been steadily increasing in recent years.

**Historic sites:** Tours at historic sites shut by the fiscal crisis will resume the week of June 6, but the grounds will be open for Memorial Day weekend.

**Golf:** Bonavista and Springbrook Greens golf courses will open on or about June 7.

**Riverbank State Park:** The park will return to normal operating hours of 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. beginning this weekend. The outdoor pool will open on schedule on June 28. Senior classes will resume at a date to be determined.

Park visitors are advised to call the parks directly for information on the availability of specific services. Information on each of the 178 state parks and 35 historic sites operated by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is available at [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com).