PARKS & TRAILS NEW YORK

NEW YORK'S STATE PARKS: ECONOMIC ENGINE FOR THE STATE

Prepared for Parks & Trails New York by Political Economic Research Institute

PARKS PAY OFF

Using one year of data from January 2021 to December 2021, the study finds that **New York's State Park System, due to substantial multi-year increases in visitation, is now a major anchor for the New York State economy**. In terms of GDP, labor income, and overall economic importance, the state park system has a comparable impact to the agricultural sector.

ABOUT THE NEW YORK STATE PARK SYSTEM

The mission of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards of our valuable natural, historic, and cultural resources. OPRHP's mission is carried out through its operation of 250 parks, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, boat launches and more, providing safe and attractive facilities, accessible and affordable services, and quality visitor experiences.

78 MILLION visits

to State Parks in 2021 resulted in

$5.6 BILLION in visitor spending

Of the estimated 78 million visits, **47 million came from non-locals** traveling from beyond their home community. All visitors spent an estimated $5.6 billion in total on a variety of expenses, including: park entrance fees; gift shops; recreational equipment; food and beverages; gas stations; local transportation; lodging; and other visitor-related expenses.

Total visitation to New York's State Park system generated*:

$5.8 BILLION in sales

$2.5 BILLION in labor income

$3.7 BILLION in state GDP

* From combined visitor spending and government investment

New York's investments create economic benefits in communities across the state.

In 2021, NYS OPRHP's capital and operating expenditures totaled $557 million. Capital and operating investments funnel millions of dollars directly into local economies, benefiting engineering and design firms, local suppliers, small businesses, and service providers that support the ever-growing number of visitors.

Every $1 MILLION invested in New York's State Park system results in:

- **$10 MILLION** IN SALES
- **$4 MILLION** IN LABOR INCOME
- **$7 MILLION** IN STATE GDP

The park system is a significant contributor to the state's tourism economy.

Non-local visitors to the park system:

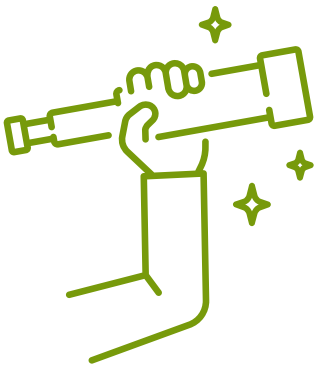
- GENERATE **$2.9 BILLION** IN SALES
- CONTRIBUTE **$1.9 BILLION** TO THE STATE'S GDP
- PROVIDE WORKERS WITH **$1.3 BILLION** IN INCOME

Methodology

Data for this report was sourced from the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, I Love NY/Empire State Development, and comparable regional and national studies on the impact of tourism and outdoor recreation on localized economies. PERI utilized Input-Output (I-O) Models via the IMPLAN service to provide a comprehensive overview of the economy. They document linkages between different sectors, including businesses engaging in inter-industry transactions and purchases made by households and the government. Such models are used to measure the direct effects of a set of purchases and indirect effects throughout the supply chain. I-O Models can provide accurate and detailed analysis of economic impacts from a particular set of purchases or actions by incorporating a more holistic vision of their ties to other industries and localities.

Looking Ahead

Parks & Trails New York is committed to conducting a deeper analysis of the economic impact of our beloved parks system during its Centennial Year. We remain focused on expanding our thought leadership at the intersection where public lands, economic resiliency, and fostering livability in the Empire State converge. Throughout 2024 we will release economic impact summaries on various regions across the state, sharing summaries of park and historic site visitation–including demographic and socioeconomic indicators–and develop draft policies to ensure our park system is accessible and welcoming to all residents and visitors.



About PTNY & Our Partners

Parks & Trails New York is New York's leading statewide advocate for parks and trails, dedicated since 1985 to improving our health, economy, and quality of life through the use and enjoyment of green space. Our mission is to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails, and open spaces throughout our state for use and enjoyment by all.

The Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) promotes human and ecological well-being through our original research. Our approach is to translate what we learn into workable policy proposals that are capable of improving life on our planet today and in the future. PERI is an independent unit of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The Natural Heritage Trust has worked to preserve New York's public lands and enhance programs at state parks and historic sites for over 50 years. Our mission is to receive and administer gifts, grants and contributions to further public programs for parks, recreation, cultural, land and water conservation and historic preservation purposes of the State of New York.

To learn more about the economic impact of our state park system, including methodology, key outcomes and to access the full report please, visit our website at ptny.org.

For questions regarding the Executive Summary and the implications on visitation, usage, and policy development, please email Will Coté at wcote@ptny.org.