



Outdoor Recreation Alliance

Common Ground for Parks Campaign

New Jersey's city, county and state parks are chronically under funded despite their critical importance to our state's economy, environment, public health, and quality of life. Decades of inadequate funding has resulted in a steady decline in services and maintenance, including a \$250 million backlog in repairs, fewer conservation officers, closure of park facilities and lost educational opportunities.

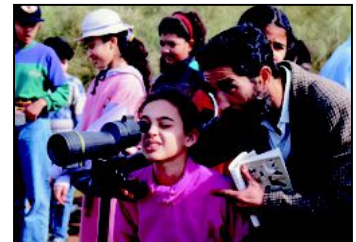
That's why the Outdoor Recreation Alliance (ORA), a coalition of environmental and sportsmen's groups, affordable housing advocates and environmental justice activists urge the Governor and State Legislature to:

- 1) **Support the constitutional amendment (ACR195 and SCR105)** to create a stable source of funding for maintenance and repairs at state and local parks and natural areas;
- 2) **Add \$24.5 million to the Divisions of Fish & Wildlife and Parks & Forestry and the Office of Natural Resource Restoration** in the FY07 budget; and
- 3) **Retain the \$40 million for parks capital repairs** in the Governor's proposed FY07 budget.

Stable Source of Funding

The ORA urges the State Legislature and Governor Corzine to support the constitutional amendment (ACR195 and SCR105) creating a stable source of funding for the improvement, construction, renovation and repair of state and local parks and natural areas. This amendment would dedicate an existing surplus of constitutionally-dedicated environmental funds from the corporate business tax. More specifically, the amendment, which would require voter approval in November, would dedicate \$15 million per year through 2015 and \$32 million per year thereafter and would provide an essential down payment towards the significant need that exists to improve and modernize urban and rural parks across the state.

The ORA will be calling on the legislative leadership and Governor Corzine to introduce similar landmark legislation to establish a long-term dedicated funding source for land acquisition and operations of state and local parks and natural areas.



Fiscal Year 2007 Budget Requests

ORA supports the Governor's proposed \$40 million appropriation for emergency capital repairs to New Jersey's parks, wildlife management areas and forests. We also support the passage of the State Green Acres Parks Development Board Act (A2694), which authorizes bonds for \$75 million.

However, we also need to increase the FY07 budgets for the Divs. of Fish & Wildlife (F&W) and Parks & Forestry (P&F) and the Office of Natural Resources Restoration in order to provide adequate stewardship of the state's open space and wildlife resources. More specifically, ORA requests the following increases:

Category	Proposed FY07	ORA Request FY07
State Wildlife Grants Program	\$362,000	\$1.5 million
F&W Inland Programs	\$4.2 million	\$8 million
F&W Saltwater Programs	\$1.4 million	\$5 million
Ceiling for F&W Inland Programs	\$11.3 million	\$15 million
P&F Operating Budget	\$37.5 million	\$48 million
Capital Repairs	\$40 million	\$40 million
Office of Natural Resource Restoration	\$1.5 million	\$3 million
TOTAL	\$96.3 million	\$120.5 million

ORA Partners: Association of NJ Environmental Commissions • Association of NJ Rifle & Pistol Clubs, Inc. • Cape May County Zoological Society • Clean Ocean Action • Coalition for Affordable Housing and the Environment • Conservation Resources, Inc. • Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ • Delaware Riverkeeper

Network • Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association • Hunterdon Coalition • Jersey Coast Anglers Association • Morris Land Conservancy • NJPIRG • NJ Audubon Society • NJ Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation • NJ Conservation Foundation • NJ Division Society of American Foresters • NJ Environmental Federation • NJ Environmental Justice Alliance • NJ Forestry Association • NJ Outdoor Congress • NJ Recreation & Park Association • NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs • NJ Work Environment Council • North Byram Concerned Citizens • NY/NJ Baykeeper • NY/NJ Trail Conference • Passaic River Coalition • Pinelands Preservation Alliance • Regional Plan Assoc. • Sierra Club, NJ Chapter • Skylands CLEAN, Inc. • The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey • Upper Raritan Watershed Assoc. • Weequahic Park Association

For more information, please visit our website at www.outdoorrecreationalliance.org.

Protect NJ Parks & Natural Areas Today!

The Importance of Our Parks & Natural Areas

- **A Right Not a Privilege** – Every person from urban to rural areas deserves a high-quality, accessible neighborhood park and wildlife area. New Jersey communities rely on these natural areas for quality of life, livable neighborhoods and sustainable economies.
- **A Wise Investment** – Investing in our parks and natural areas protects New Jersey's \$3.9 billion wildlife-related recreation industry. Each year, fishing, hunting and wildlife-watching activities create over 37,000 jobs and generate nearly \$150 million in sales tax revenue.
- **Urban Revitalization** – Well-maintained urban parks and natural areas are a critical component of any urban revitalization strategy. They create a high quality of life that attracts tax-paying businesses and residents and redirects growth back into urban areas.
- **Public Health** – Our parks and natural areas provide opportunities for hiking, jogging and other physical activity, which increases fitness and reduces obesity. These areas also reduce air and water pollution impacts on public health.
- **Economic Development** – Parks support the growth of our state and local economies by enhancing property values; increasing revenue from property taxes and additional retail and tourism activity; and attracting new industries and skilled workers to communities across the state.
- **Protecting the Environment** – Parks and natural areas significantly improve air and water quality and provide important habitat for wildlife.



Reasons for Concern

- **History of Insufficient Funding** – New Jersey's parks and natural areas have suffered a steady decline in services and maintenance due to decades of inadequate funding.
- **Reductions in Staff** – Despite increasing the state's open space acquisitions by 350,000 acres, or 1/3 of the total amount in the last decade, the Division of Parks and Forestry staffing fell by 1/3 from 550 to 418 over the same period with more retirements expected this year.
- **Overdue Repairs** – Decades of insufficient funding has resulted in a \$250 million backlog in overdue repairs. This situation will worsen each year unless we reverse the current funding trend.
- **Park Closures** – The inability to maintain our state parks has led to the closure of portions of these areas for long periods of time. For example, Worthington State Forest campgrounds closed indefinitely due to flooding of the Delaware River.
- **Loss of Programs** – The continuation of current funding trends could lead to the closure of park facilities and the loss of urban fishing and derby programs that serve over 10,000 children.
- **Urban & Newly Acquired Parks Shortchanged** – Due to the backlog of repairs at our existing parks, the need to develop much of our newly acquired parkland and achieve equity for our urban parks often has been shortchanged.
- **Need for Stewardship** – State forest and parklands are being adversely impacted by invasive species replacing native vegetation and by insect and disease outbreaks that will change their character for generations.

For more information, please visit our website at www.outdoorrecreationalliance.org or contact:

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