

New York State Parks Announce Expansion of Free Wi-Fi in Four Parks

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NEW YORK (March 30, 2018) – New York Governor Andrew Cuomo today announced an expansion of the New York State Parks free public Wi-Fi program, including new locations in New York City. This season, the much-requested service will be available at Gantry Plaza in Queens, Roberto Clemente in the Bronx, Bear Mountain State Park in the Hudson Valley, and for the millions of visitors to the new facilities on Goat Island at Niagara Falls State Park in Western New York.

The creative public-private partnership is the result of a long-term collaboration between the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks), Toyota and *American Park Network*. This expansion builds on the free public Wi-Fi systems already installed at Jones Beach, Robert Moses, Niagara Falls, Saratoga Spa and East River State Parks which host more than 27 million visitors annually.

“New York’s remarkable state park system welcomes tens of millions each year, and more and more families are looking to explore the outdoors and make the most of precious leisure time by having access to popular conveniences,” Governor Cuomo said. “Working with our partners, we are pleased to expand this valuable service at these treasured parks and destinations for the coming season, building on our commitment to improving the overall visitor experience.”

The service, called *Oh, Ranger!*™ Wi-Fi™, is part of a program made possible through the support of Toyota, with the equipment, installation, programming, monitoring and maintenance all being provided at no cost to taxpayers. Visitors at the participating parks access the free Wi-Fi in two easy steps by simply selecting the *Oh, Ranger!* Wi-Fi network on their device and then accepting the standard terms and conditions.

In addition to providing free connectivity for millions of visitors, the Toyota-supported public Wi-Fi is a digital information portal that can help educate visitors, identify park visitation patterns, generate awareness of upcoming programs and events, serve as an operations management tool, and promote volunteerism and park Friends groups like the Natural Heritage Trust, which supports New York State Parks.

“Thanks to Governor Cuomo, these capital investments and the addition of sought-after comforts like Wi-Fi, State Parks continues to ensure that we are the destination of choice for New York’s families and visitors who love the outdoors and appreciate these valuable upgrades which improve their overall experience,” said Rose Harvey, New York state parks commissioner. “We are grateful for our continued partnership with Toyota and *American Park Network*, whose generous support has allowed us to enhance our parks, including several of our flagship locations, by adding this much sought-after service.”

Wi-Fi is now available for free to the public in parks that receive nearly 40 percent of total state park visitation. The expanded Wi-Fi presence complements many other exciting developments and visitor improvements in the parks, such as the new promenade and picnic area at Roberto Clemente, the Cave of the Winds complex at Niagara Falls, which features the new year-round interactive experience, and the addition of a new ferry stop at Gantry Plaza State Park. These sites will now offer visitors the convenience of free connectivity.

“Toyota is excited to build upon our partnership with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and American Park Network to provide free public Wi-Fi to these four important parks in New York,” said Steven Curtis, vice president, media and engagement marketing, Toyota Motor North America. “We believe our responsibility as a mobility company is to reduce our environmental footprint by developing vehicles like Prius and Mirai. At the same time, we aim to support our partners in their mission to promote greater environmental appreciation and awareness in local communities. We’re grateful for this opportunity and hope that it will enhance the experience of visiting these New York public parks.”

“We’re thrilled that Toyota’s ongoing commitment allows us to bring free internet to millions of visitors to New York State Parks, as well as to other iconic outdoor destinations all across America,” said Mark Saferstein, publisher & editor-in-chief at *American Park Network*. They’ve set a great example of how corporations can

serve the public good. We look forward to collaborating with Toyota to encourage everyone to get outdoors.”

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York is making an historic commitment to improving and expanding access to outdoor recreation. The Governor's NY Parks 2020 program is a multi-year commitment to leverage \$900 million in private and public funding for State Parks from 2011 to 2020. The FY 2019 Executive Budget includes \$90 million toward this initiative.