

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE  
PARKS IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

An excerpt from the booklet titled "Principles Governing the Establishment, Extension and Development of the Park and Parkway System of New York State." These Principles were first adopted by the State Council of Parks in 1929, were amended in 1955, and became effective January 1, 1956.

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING STATE PARKS

Under the provisions of Article XVI of the Conservation Law, the State of New York has established a unified park system on a regional basis. There are ten park regions including the Forest Preserve. These park principles apply to all regions except the Forest Preserve, the development and control of which are in the main governed by other considerations. The State program for each region has been based primarily upon recreational needs and scenic attraction. An even geographical distribution of parks every fifty miles, or parks for every county, is manifestly impossible on any reasonable theory of scenic and recreational standards, because it is fundamentally unscientific, and because it would be unnecessary and prohibitively expensive.

There is bound to be a continuing increase in the usage of State Parks, due to insistent demands for recreational facilities in the open country and to increases in population and motor vehicles.

A park site should possess both recreational and scenic value. In some instances exceptional scenic values may be sufficient to overcome the lack of recreational possibilities, and in other cases unusual recreational possibilities may make up for a lack of scenic values.

By exceptional scenic value is meant rare natural scenery, which is unlikely to be preserved for enjoyment by the public of this and future generations if the property remains in private hands, and which is sufficiently distinctive to attract and interest people from distant parts of the State as well as local people.

By unusual recreational value is meant features such as topography, trees, vegetation, streams, lakes or ocean shore offering recreational possibilities which would attract and interest people of a wide surrounding area and would not be available to the public if the property remained in private hands.

The State parks should be sufficient in number and size to meet the prospective needs of the people of each region over and above facilities which are or should be provided by local city, county, town and village parks, and without requiring a State park budget which is unreasonable or excessive in the light of other financial demands.

The principles here set forth may not be attainable in all instances. They should, however, serve as a guide to State park officials in planning and advocating parks, parkways and recreation facilities for the public.

