



# THE GUARDIAN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW YORK STATE LIFEGUARD CORPS Dennis M. Kane, Editor April 24, 2010

## Contract Negotiations

On April 12, the NYSLC contract negotiation team went to NYSUT headquarters in Albany for a contract negotiations meeting. We met with 13 representatives from Parks & Rec., GOER (the Governor's Office of Employee Relations), OMRDD (Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities), and DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation).

The NYSLC team of Ron Roaldsen, Bob Adler, Rich Malen, Chris Tappan (Finger Lakes region), Bruce Meirowitz and Dennis Kane, was joined by Peter Martineau, NYSUT Liaison to GOER, and John Marino, Head Negotiator.

After introductions, Dennis Kane gave a ten minute Powerpoint presentation entitled "To Serve and Protect: An Inside Look at the JBLC".

These 64 slides show the Corps in action: rescues, training, crowds, erosion, and other challenges we face daily. Please view it at [jblc.net](http://jblc.net).

We presented our analysis of the impact the UUP raises would have had on our past and future salaries, and Rich Malen gave a brief overview about how the report was crafted.

Specifics of our meeting need to remain confidential for now, but we remain hopefully optimistic. Contract negotiation is a process that has a specific number and sequence of events. This meeting was the next step in that sequence. We are confident that we are one step closer to the successful resolution of our long-standing contract issues with the State.

L-R: Dennis Kane, LI Region; Chris Tappan, Finger Lakes Region; Ron Roaldsen, Rich Malen, Bob Adler and Bruce Meirowitz, all from the LI region; John Marino, UUP; and Peter Martineau, NYSUT.



# Pressure Mounts

(Editor's Note: The articles on pages one and two appeared in the Albany Times-Union.)

## Lawmakers: Need Cash Now!

Friday, April 16, 2010.

By JIMMY VIELKIND, Capitol Bureau.

As the state enters its third week without a budget, two legislators are calling for parks funding to be included in the emergency spending bills Gov. David Paterson is drafting to fund the bare necessities of the state.

The budget was due April 1, and delays mean that the 41 parks and 14 historic sites that Paterson proposed for funding cuts do not have money for staff. The Assembly and Senate passed budget proposals that restored the \$6.3 million Paterson hoped to save through the closures, but an overall budget agreement has not been finalized.

"While we remain confident that a budget agreement will soon be reached in a manner which will prevent closures to state parks and historic sites, in the interim we must adequately fund" the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Sen. Jose Serrano and Assemblyman Steve Englebright wrote in a joint letter to Paterson.

"The continued passage of extender bills (or the lack of a current state budget) could prevent the opening of 34 state parks come May unless future extender bills provide sufficient funding to allow OPRHP to begin preparing for the upcoming summer season."

A spokesman for Paterson confirmed he had received the letter, but the Governor doesn't seem ready to budge.

"I'm not putting anything into that appropriation other than what is absolutely needed," he said Thursday morning on WOR 710-AM. The Governor also criticized federal officials, who threatened last month to withhold billions of dollars of funding to the state if Paterson closes the parks, claiming his action is unallowable under rules attached to federal funding

used to fund the purchase and improvement of some of the parks. "It was a very disappointing letter, coming from the federal government, intruding on how we run New York state and how we balance our budget, when in fact it's the same federal government that collects \$86.7 billion more in taxes than we get back," Paterson said. "When is somebody going to get that we're in a recession? Of all people, I would have thought that the federal government would have known that."

The federal threat – communicated by the National Parks Service – was made at the public urging of Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Ulster County. "The federal government isn't interfering," Hinchey told the Times Union on Thursday. "The federal government is just reminding the governor that there are places like the state park in New Paltz that were helped to be initiated by federal contributions." Hinchey, a former assemblyman, repeated his position that parks are an economic driver.

Finally, a group representing companies who hope to drill for natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation recommended parks funding be restored by selling drilling leases on state land. A moratorium on gas drilling is in place in the region as the state develops environmental guidelines associated with the drilling.

Gas drillers recommended proceeds from the sales could be invested in the Environmental Protection Fund, which has been raided in recent years to plug budget deficits.

Several environmental groups, who are lobbying for the strictest regulation of drilling, called the drillers' proposal a "stunt."

(Jimmy Vielkind can be reached at 454-5081 or by e-mail at [jvielkind@timesunion.com](mailto:jvielkind@timesunion.com).)

We encourage you to get into the habit of viewing each website. Some of the same information will appear on both sites. But each will also have content specific to its intended viewers.

To access the **Jones Beach Lifeguard Corps** website, click here

[www.jblc.net](http://www.jblc.net)

To access the **New York State Lifeguard Corps** website, click here

[www.nyslc.net](http://www.nyslc.net)

# Feds: Risk millions if state parks close. State move to shut facilities draws warning from National Parks Service.

By JIMMY VIELKIND, Capitol Bureau.  
Friday, April 9, 2010

ALBANY – Federal officials are threatening to withhold millions of dollars in funding to the state if the Paterson administration pushes forward with its plan to close parks around the state.

In a letter dated March 31, National Parks Service Northeast Regional Director Dennis Reidenbach wrote that the move would put New York in "non-compliance" with the requirements for taking funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Federal Land for Parks Program.

"Also, NPS may initiate suspension and debarment procedures to have all Federal funds (e.g. Recreation, Housing, Transportation, Education etc.) withheld from the State of New York," Reidenbach wrote. "In addition, closure of any park acquired through FLP could result in reversion of the property to Federal ownership and subsequent sale of the property."

Gov. David Paterson proposed the closure of 41 parks and 14 historic sites – the majority of which, Reidenbach wrote, have received federal funds. The cuts are slated to save \$6.3 million.

Eileen Larrabee, a spokeswoman for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said they don't believe the proposed closures put the state in violation.

"We are as committed to these parks and these public spaces as anybody else. We are dealing with the current fiscal crisis, and we simply do not have the funding to open all of these parks right now," she said. "Ultimately we believe that these closures are temporary and not permanent, and we're not converting the land. We would assert that the funding is not jeopardized."

New York received \$1.4 million from the LWCF last year, and is slated to receive just under \$1.9 million this year. Larrabee said that has been "diminished" from around \$20 million a year, which has made it difficult to keep up with needed maintenance.

OPRHP Commissioner Carol Ash did not raise the federal threat during a Thursday meeting of the state Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation. She told the committee that if the new state budget is delayed beyond early May, it could threaten state plans to open 34 parks that now depend on added funding from the state Environmental Protection Fund under Paterson's proposed budget. Parks officials are currently hiring seasonal workers for the parks.

Capital Region parks on the list include Grafton Lakes State Park, Cherry Plain State Park, and Fort Crailo State Historic Site, all in Rensselaer County; Minekill State Park in Schoharie County; and Peebles Island State Park in Saratoga County. Also, the Victoria Pool in Saratoga Spa State Park would be closed.

Parks Service spokesman Phil Sheridan said the law was clear that lands needed to stay open for public recreation "in perpetuity," and the principle was important.

"Our only recourse is that there is a significant penalty if you fail to live up to that pledge," Sheridan said. "It is very tough budgetarily. However, the fact remains that people accept these and accept certain responsibilities. As private citizens, if we accept money for certain things it would annul the contract if we did things with it that we didn't say we were going to do."

He said Reidenbach's letter was prompted by U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Ulster County, who questioned Parks Service officials about the LWCF provisions and requested they communicate their position to the Paterson administration. The letter, which Hinchey posted on Facebook earlier this week, was the result.

The public has no less need for recreation opportunities and access to open space in times of economic hardship," Reidenbach concluded. "If anything, the need for recreational opportunities is greater now, not only due to leaner economic times but also because of the increasing personal, community, and environmental health issues associated with more sedentary lifestyles and lack of contact with the nature."



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**MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby enroll as a member of the New York State Lifeguard Corps, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and its national affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO. I understand that my membership will become effective on the first day of the month indicated on this signed enrollment form.

Union dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal Income Tax purposes. Dues paid, however, may qualify as business expenses and may be deductible in limited circumstances subject to various restrictions imposed by the Internal Revenue Code. Dues for membership in NYSUT and AFT are as specified in each respective organization's Constitution and Bylaws, and may be amended from time to time.

New York State United Teachers maintains dual affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO and the National Education Association where applicable. Membership in the State and National organizations must come through a local unit of NYSUT.

Membership in NYSUT or any successor organization begins, and eligibility for benefits is effective, as of the month/year indicated on this signed enrollment form. Membership is continuous and carries over automatically from year to year. Re-enrollment is not necessary unless the member changes employers; except that membership shall be deemed continuous where there is: (a) merger or consolidation of employing entities or governmental units; (b) an accretion of any existing local or bargaining unit; and/or (c) a successor employer. NYSUT reserves the right to recognize continuous membership in any other instance or circumstance.

*Membership dues include subscriptions to the publications of NYSUT and AFT. NYSUT includes a \$12.00 for a subscription to New York Teacher for one year. AFT dues include \$20.00 for a subscription to American Teacher.*

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