



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## **Ritchie: \$100,000 To Help Visitors "Go Wild" For Learning At NYS Zoo At Thompson Park**

[Patty Ritchie](#)

July 19, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing she has secured \$100,000 for the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park, which will help to improve opportunities for visitors—namely children—to learn about animals and the importance of protecting the environment.

Funds secured by Senator Ritchie will be used to enhance current exhibits, improve animal holding spaces, and create a new bison exhibit.

“One of the best things about making the trip to Watertown to visit the Zoo when my children were young was that not only was it a lot of fun for them, but that they were learning about animals and about the importance of protecting the environment,” said Senator Ritchie, who made the announcement Wednesday at the Zoo.

“Educational opportunities like this are so important—and something that I think we all want to see continue here in the North Country. I am pleased to have secured funding to help improve this regional asset and look forward to visiting in the future with my grandchildren.”

“The quantity and quality of our exhibits is integral to a positive educational experience for our children,” said Zoo Director Lesley Clarke. “Senator Ritchie’s support helps ensure we can continue to be a leader in conservation education for our children and our community and we cannot thank her enough.”

“Connecting our children to the conservation of New York State animals and habitats through interactive education is a key pillar in the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park’s mission,” said New York State Zoo at Thompson Park Board President Mark Irwin. “We would like to thank Senator Ritchie for recognizing how important it is to secure the Zoo’s future as Upstate New York’s leading educational facility for indigenous wildlife.”

Specifically, funding secured by Senator Ritchie will be used in the following ways:

- To repair and revitalize the current fisher exhibit, which is an integral part of the “Phantoms of New York” section of the Zoo;
- Invigorate the Zoo’s American Elk population to create an active herd;
- Enhance off-exhibit holding spaces for the betterment of animals at the Zoo; and

-Create an interactive bison exhibit to celebrate and educate visitors on the species' history, from human development to their successful comeback.

Established in 1920, the Zoo is one of the top tourist attractions in the Thousand Islands Region, attracting nearly 50,000 visitors per-year.

*(Attn. photo editors: Senator Ritchie is pictured in the above photo with children from the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park's Zoofari summer camp program)*