



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Community Spotlight: Watertown's Thompson Park Zoo

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE May 1, 2019

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

When I spend time with my grandchildren, I often try to find activities for us to do that are not just fun, but also educational. In our region, we are fortunate enough to have a number of places families can go to enjoy a day together and learn something at the same time. One of those places is the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park.

Located in Watertown, the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park offers visitors the opportunity to see everything from bears and mountain lions to bobcats and otters.

Occupying 32 acres, the zoo is home to a number of animals native to the Empire State, including some—like the Canada lynx—that are endangered or threatened species. This year, the zoo will offer a number of new exhibits and programs for visitors, including a turkey vulture exhibit. In addition, they will be launching a new educational program where volunteers will educate zoo-goers about various animals, the environment and other related topics.

Throughout my time in the State Senate, I have been proud to support the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park and the educational opportunities it makes available to children, families and individuals throughout our region. Last year, I was pleased to secure a \$100,000 grant that helped the zoo renovate an old, unused part of its grounds. The cleaned up space enabled the zoo to create a farm animal exhibit featuring baby goats, hogs, children and more.

With nearly 50,000 visitors annually, the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park is the second most visited attraction in the Thousand Islands region. In the coming months I hope you will take the opportunity to check out the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park to learn about New York's animals, as well as ways we can work together to protect our planet and its wildlife. For more information, visit the zoo's website at www.nyzoo.org.