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From: Masser, Michelle
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2015 9:45 AM
To: Harris, Laura
Cc: Gouveia, Susan; Lattner, Jennifer
Subject: FW: DEP Release: Christie Administration Invites Residents And Visitors To Take Park In First Day H

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Subject: FW: DEP Release: Christie Administration Invites Residents And Visitors To Take Park In First Day Hikes.



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 28, 2015

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CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION INVITES RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO TAKE PART IN SPOTLIGHTING NEW JERSEY'S SPECTACULAR SCENERY AND RICH HI

(15/P121) TRENTON – The Christie Administration and the Department of Environmental Protection's State Park Service invite residents and visitors to get 2016 started on the right foot by taking part in fun, invigorating and educational outdoor activities as part of the annual America's State Parks First Day Hikes initiative.

State Park Service staff and volunteers will conduct 18 guided hikes, walks, and interpretive tours, as well as two bike rides at various state parks, forests and historic sites at locations from the Highlands to Cape May. Most of the events will be held on Friday, December 30, and Sunday, January 3. Princeton Battlefield State Park will take place Wednesday, December 30, and Sunday, January 3.

Not only do these events provide opportunities to enjoy spectacular scenery and appreciate offerings that will take them back to important events in American history, but they also provide a chance to connect with nature and state and offer a way to soak in their spectacular scenery and appreciate offerings that will take them back to important events in American history.

Commissioner Bob Martin. "Activities are scheduled conveniently throughout the year to showcase our parks and give the public an opportunity to enjoy the state and offer a way to soak in their spectacular scenery and appreciate offerings that will take them back to important events in American history," Commissioner Martin said. "Our experienced park staff and volunteers will provide a great outdoor experience, to show off our state park system, and to answer questions from participants will not only do these events provide opportunities to enjoy spectacular scenery and appreciate offerings that will take them back to important events in American history."

Some unique offerings include hiking around vast



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riding along scenic trails of the Kittatinny Valley, following the hallowed paths the Continental Army used during Christmas Night 1776 as part of its historic victory at Trenton, and walking in the footsteps of the Continental Army at Monmouth Battlefield State Park.

All of these events are free. Most do not require pre-registration, but some do. For details on times, how to dress, length and difficulty ratings for each hike, what to expect to experience, and how to register, visit: http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/first_day_hikes.

Some of the events are weather-dependent. The website will provide updates in the event of weather changes.

The state version of this national initiative offers individuals and families an opportunity to connect with the outdoors and learning about New Jersey's natural resources and diverse history. These events allow residents to get outside, exercise, enjoy nature and learn local history, while doing so in a healthy manner with family and friends.

First Day Hikes originated more than 20 years ago at the Blue Hills Reservation, a state



Massachusetts. The program was launched to promote both healthy lifestyles throughout the year and year-round recreation. New Jersey State Park Service has been participating in First Day Hikes since this became a nationwide event in 2012.

“This is New Jersey’s fifth year participating in the initiative and each First Day event will offer an opportunity to explore the treasures of your favorite state parks, forests and historic sites,” said Mark Texel, Acting Director of the Division of Parks and Recreation. Park rangers and volunteers will lead the hikes, which will range from mile-long, accessible walks to a 15-mile-long, all-day hike. Enjoy the quiet beauty of our parks and historic sites in winter with the company of a knowledgeable state park guide or volunteer.

“Last year, we hosted nearly 41,000 people who hiked 79,442 miles in our state parks across the country as part of America’s First Day Hikes,” said Priscilla Geigis, President of the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD). “Think of it as a healthy lifestyle, for the whole family. Whether you’re staying close to home or traveling, join us at one of America’s State Parks.”

Jan. 1 hikes in New Jersey will take place at Bass River State Forest, Belleplain State Forest, Brendan T. Byrne State Park, Kittatinny Valley State Park, Monmouth Battlefield State Park, Rancocas State Park, Ringwood State Park, Round Valley State Park, Run Recreation Area, Stokes State Forest, Warren Grove Recreation Area (Bass River State Forest), Washington Crossing State Park, Village and Wharton State Forest. Princeton Battlefield State Park will host hikes on Dec. 30 and Jan. 3.

For more information about New Jersey State Parks and Forests, please visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests>

The Official Facebook page for New Jersey State Parks, Forests and Historic Sites can be found at: www.facebook.com/njstateparks

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