



NEWS RELEASE

David A. Paterson, Governor
Carol Ash, Commissioner

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
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State Parks Approves Kings Park Demolition Plan

Removal of 14 deteriorated buildings will begin clean up of site

Following a public comment period on the first phase of the long-term remediation of the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation today announced plans to move forward with the demolition of 14 buildings at the site.

After carefully reviewing the many comments and suggestions about the plan, as well as making a number of follow-up reviews of specific buildings, we have concluded that the proposed demolition plan is in the public's interest," said State Parks Commissioner Carol Ash. Removing abandoned structures that have deteriorated to the point that there is no possibility of future reuse will eliminate some safety and security risks at the property. "

According to Ash, the initial plan calls for demolition of 14 building along with associated structures such as a smokestack and salt shed; restoring and landscaping demolition sites; removing selected deteriorated roads and parking areas; and implementing an experimental steam tunnel remediation project. A project description and public comment responsiveness summary are available at www.nysparks.com.

Ash noted that follow-up historic preservation and structural reviews were conducted in response to comments received at public information meetings in the community on February 27 and March 26, along with 60 written comments. State Parks reached several conclusions, including:

- New construction would be more cost effective than rehabilitating even those structures with conceivable potential for future uses, such as the marina building and indoor pool in the Buckman Day Treatment Center;
- Several buildings with architectural or historical significance will be photographed and documented prior to removal. After follow up reviews, historic preservation and engineering staff concluded that the buildings have deteriorated to the point where adaptive reuse is not feasible; and
- State Parks will actively monitor the project's demolition contractor to ensure compliance with all health and safety standards, and include funds in the project budget for on-site monitoring during and after demolition.

Demolition is expected to begin in approximately one year, following the completion of detailed demolition plans and the award of the demolition contract through the state's normal competitive bid process. Removal of the 14 buildings is a preliminary step while a more comprehensive remediation study of the entire Kings Park site is finalized. The study will be completed in the summer of 2010.

OPRHP manages 152 acres of the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center transferred in 2000 as Nissequogue River State Park. OPRHP has responsibility for an additional 365 acres transferred in 2006. The former Kings Park Psychiatric Center contains more than 84 abandoned buildings filled with asbestos and lead paint, five miles of underground steam tunnels containing asbestos material, an ash landfill and significant on-site burial of construction and demolition debris.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation administers 178 parks and 35 state historic sites. For more information about state parks and historic sites in New York, please visit www.nysparks.com.

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