

**UNIVERSITY POLICE | ENCON POLICE**



**PARK POLICE | FOREST RANGERS**

# **2018 Joint Legislative Public Protection Hearing Testimony**

**Submitted on behalf of the Police Benevolent  
Association of New York State**

**By: Arthur Perryman  
New York State Forest Ranger Director,  
DEC Region 5, Warren County  
PBA of NYS Board Member  
February 7, 2018**

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Testimony by: Arthur Perryman, Forest Ranger Director  
New York State Forest Ranger, DEC Region 5,  
Warren County  
PBA of NYS Board Member

Testimony before: 2018 Joint Legislative Hearing Committee  
Environmental Conservation

Date: February 7, 2018

### **Introduction**

Good afternoon members of the legislature. My name is Arthur Perryman and I am a New York State Forest Ranger stationed in DEC Region 5 in Warren County. I am also a board member of the Police Benevolent Association of New York State (“PBA of NYS”). DEC Region 5 is particularly busy in the summer and fall months when millions of New Yorkers and other tourists take advantage of the Lake George area and surrounding Adirondack Park. I am here today to testify about the search and rescue missions that the Forest Rangers routinely embark on. In addition, my testimony will discuss the employment of New York State Forest Rangers to other States and federal emergencies.

To begin, the DEC Forest Ranger Fact Sheet, published on the DEC website, states that in 2016 there were 216 search missions, 131 rescue missions, 9 recoveries, and 1 fugitive search conducted.<sup>1</sup> The search and rescue missions are led by the Forest Rangers because we are part of the communities where we live and part of the larger community of people who share the same love of the outdoors. We are proud of the many diverse ways we serve this community, but our hundreds of life saving search and rescue missions rank paramount. During high usage times, especially in the Adirondack Park and High Peak Region of the State, Forest Rangers respond to multiple emergencies each day. Each year, it seems that more and more of the job responsibilities of Rangers is spent on search and rescue missions.

In the past several months, local newspaper and media outlets have begun to recognize the burdensome effect that numerous search and rescue missions have on a razor thin Forest Ranger workforce. The *Schenectady Daily Gazette* recently wrote an editorial stating: “...Searches are exhausting — mentally and physically.”<sup>2</sup> A

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2369.html>

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://dailygazette.com/article/2017/10/16/editorial-adirondacks-popularity-highlights-need-for-more-rangers>

report by North Country Public Radio revealed that state officials are more and more calling on tired, stressed rangers because they have no other choice...If the state wants to keep encouraging visitors to experience the Adirondacks, it's going to have to invest more money in the number (sic) people whose duty it is to ensure those visitors' safety".<sup>3</sup>

If you or a loved one found yourself lost or seriously injured, there is no substitute for a well-trained, equipped and experienced Forest Ranger. The purchase of more state land and Governor Cuomo's successful tourism campaign have been a great benefit to the state and its people. The success of these two initiatives, however, have unintended consequences of an ever-increasing number of incidents and resulting search and rescue missions.

You may have also heard about the September 2017 high profile search for an injured hiker on Wallface Mt. in the High Peaks Wilderness. Searchers needed to be lowered from helicopters, use chainsaws, stay interior for days at a time, set up communication relays, manage multiple resources, use advanced land navigation and search in extreme terrain. Simply put, it was a job for Forest Rangers. During the period of time that Alex was lost, Forest Rangers responded to 19 other search and rescue missions. In fact, Rangers had to leave the search to respond to some of these. Tragically the hiker died during the search effort. I believe this outcome could have been different if we had more Forest Rangers.

Not only have the local media outlets recognized the lack of Forest Rangers, but many municipalities in the North County have plead for New York State to help protect their residents by providing more Forest Rangers. Attached to the testimony I submitted today, are 14 separate resolutions from local municipalities. Each and every resolution demonstrates how critical Forest Rangers are to the communities and the significant role they play in public safety. I am confident that if the Rangers had the time, we could get hundreds of more resolutions. I bring them to your attention, because they are a real life example of how important the job responsibilities of Forest Rangers are.

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See also: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Some-say-state-s-forest-ranger-force-stretched-12169873.php>

<sup>3</sup> Id.

## **FEMA Emergency Response Deployment**

New York State Forest Rangers have become nationally respected and widely known for our extensive training and expertise. In 2016, the DEC sent 20 Forest Rangers to assist in firefighting efforts for 14 days in Idaho as part of its mutual aid agreement with the US Forest Service. In 2015, two Forest Ranger crews were sent out of state due to other exceptional wildfire occurrences.

Governor Cuomo also deployed the Forest Rangers to fires in Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia.<sup>4</sup> More recently, 20 Forest Rangers were sent to California to combat wildfires.<sup>5</sup> New York Forest Rangers were credited with staying in California for two weeks to help contain the sprawling wild fires that resulted in over 23 deaths.

Other states or the federal government reimburse New York State for the cost of deploying the Forest Rangers. Therefore, Forest Ranger's responses to emergencies outside New York, have no negative impact on the State.

## **Conclusion**

The Forest Rangers have met with many of you to explain these critical issues. We know that you all share the common belief that the people of New York State deserve the very best staffing and resources to respond to incidents requiring search and rescue. They deserve a force of sufficient size that spends its days in the wildlands, ceaselessly training in every discipline of search and rescue and large incident management. <sup>6</sup> In this budget, please provide Forest Rangers with increased funding to improve our staffing levels and provide greater public safety.

**THANK YOU**

## Attachments

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<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2371.html>

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/new-york-sends-crew-california-combat-wildfires-article-1.3564966>

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.npr.org/2017/10/25/559987030/more-americans-head-into-the-wild-unprepared-for-the-wild>



## Essex County Board of Supervisors

Resolution No. 336

December 5, 2017  
Regular Board Meeting

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT  
ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS)  
PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER  
STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

The following resolution was offered by Supervisor Tyler, who moved its adoption.

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including

supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Essex County Board of Supervisors hereby supports the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

This resolution was unanimously seconded and adopted.

STATE OF NEW YORK, COUNTY OF ESSEX )ss:

I, JUDITH A. GARRISON, Clerk of the Essex County Board of Supervisors, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy with the original resolution filed in this office on the 5th day of December, 2017, and that it is a correct and true copy thereof.

IN TESTIMONY THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 5th day of December, 2017.



  
Judith A. Garrison  
Clerk of the Essex County Board of Supervisors



# TOWN OF NORTH ELBA

## Resolution 10 of 2017

### RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATE WIDE TOTAL OF 175

At the Regular meeting of the North Elba Town Board held on November 14, 2017 the following resolution was unanimously approved and adopted.

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which gratefully, has been well promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

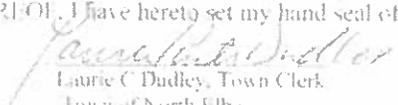
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of [ ] does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, State land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS 11 North Pearl Street, suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

I DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that I have compared the foregoing with the original minutes of the Town Board of the Town of North Elba at a Meeting of said Board of the Town of North Elba held on the 14th day of November, 2017 and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of said original resolution and of the whole thereof, and that said original resolution is on file in my office.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that each of the members of said Town Board had due notice of said meeting and that Supervisor Robert Politi, and Town Councilmen, Jack Favro, Bob Miller, Derek Doty, and Jay Rand were present at such meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereto set my hand seal of the Town of North Elba, this 14th day of November, 2017.

  
Laurie C. Dudley, Town Clerk  
Town of North Elba

**NEIL PICKERING**  
Supervisor  
P.O. Box 155  
Piercefield, NY 12973

**DONALD MAUER**  
Town Clerk  
P.O. Box 177  
Piercefield, NY 12973



48 Waller Street  
Piercefield, NY 12973  
Phone (518) 359-7544 Fax (518) 359-9409  
TDD 800 662-1220  
Email: prcfd177@gmail.com

**TIMOTHY FULLER**  
Supt. of Highways  
P.O. Box 160  
Piercefield, NY 12973

**FLORA MCCUEN**  
Assessor, Code Enforcement  
9799 SH 3  
Childwold, NY 12922

**RESOLUTION NO. 03-01-2018**

**DATED: January 11, 2018**

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING 175 NYSDEC FOREST RANGERS**

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists using state land, and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands without staffing increases has resulted in nearly double the acreage that each ranger must patrol, and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in the number of recreationists has resulted in a corresponding increase in search-and-rescue operations, and

**WHEREAS**, the current number of 135 forest rangers, including supervisors is woefully insufficient to effectively carry out their mission, and

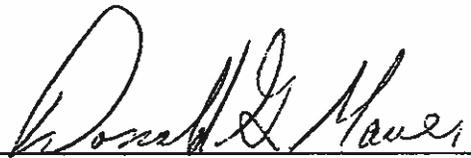
**WHEREAS**, the proposal of the Police Benevolent Association of NYS to increase the number of forest rangers to 175 has wide public, local government, recreational group, and bipartisan support, now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Piercefield hereby strongly supports the PBA of NYS proposal, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany, NY 12207.

A motion to adopt the foregoing Resolution was made by Councilman Larry Boeye and seconded by Councilwoman Amy Lalonde. The following each voted in favor of the Resolution: Supervisor Neil Pickering, Councilpersons Larry Boeye, John Lewis, and Amy Lalonde. Councilwoman Lorraine Lewis was absent.

This is to certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Piercefield on the 11th day of January, 2018.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donald G. Mauer, Town Clerk  
Town of Piercefield

## TOWN OF ARIETTA

At a regular meeting of the Arietta Town Board at the Piseco Common School on 1722 State Route 8 in the Town of Arietta, Hamilton County, New York on:

December 4, 2017 at 6:00pm

Resolution # 17 – 12 – 45

Subject: **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

Resolution Offered By:           *M. Knapp*          

**WHEREAS:** NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS:** forest rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS:** the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS:** the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS:** Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS:** forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS:** the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS:** the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS:** this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** that the Town Board of the Town of Arietta does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

Seconded by: B. Baker and put to a vote, which resulted as follows:

AYES:

Barry Baker	<u>K</u>
Sarah Rudes	<u>✓</u>
Michael Knapp	<u>✓</u>
Christy Wilt	<u>✓</u>
Richard Wilt	<u>✓</u>

NOES:

Barry Baker	_____
Sarah Rudes	_____
Michael Knapp	_____
Christy Wilt	_____
Richard Wilt	_____

Kenneth Perlow, Town Clerk

Date 12/4/1 2017

TOWN OF FRANKLIN  
Lauren Le Febvre  
Town Clerk  
PO Box 209  
Vermontville, NY 12989

518.891.2189 (ph)  
518.891.6389 (fax)

**RESOLUTION #48 SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

On a motion by Councilman Don Hamm, second by Councilman Cliff Smalley the following resolution was offered and moved to adoption

WHEREAS, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

WHEREAS, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

WHEREAS, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

WHEREAS, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

WHEREAS, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

WHEREAS, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

WHEREAS, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

WHEREAS, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

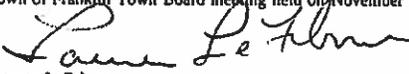
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Franklin does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

Those voting aye: Supervisor Art Willman  
Councilman Cliff Smalley  
Councilman Don Hamm

Those voting no: None

This is to certify that I, Lauren LeFebvre, Town Clerk of the Town of Franklin in the County of Franklin, New York, DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that I have compared the foregoing Resolution, adopted at a regularly scheduled Town of Franklin Town Board meeting held on November 8, 2017, and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript the original on file in my office.

  
Lauren LeFebvre  
Town Clerk

Michelle Brown Garcia  
TOWN JUSTICE

Laurie McGill, TOWN CLERK

Richard S. Lyon

John Murray, DIDS

Thomas Kimpton

Andrew McGill  
HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

## TOWN OF SANTA CLARA

Marcel Webb, SUPERVISOR

David Perry  
TOWN COUNCILMEN

### Resolution No 19 of 2017

#### **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

The following resolution was offered by Rick Lyon, Town of Santa Clara.

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Santa Clara does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175

rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

ADOPTED Ayes 5 Webb, Lyon, Kimpton, Perry, Murray  
Nays 0

State of New York  
County of Franklin SS:  
Town of Santa Clara

I, Laurie McGill, Town Clerk of the Town of Santa Clara, Franklin County, New York

DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that I have compared the forgoing with the original minutes of the Town Board of the Town of Santa Clara at a Meeting of the said Board of the Town of Santa Clara held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2017 and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of said original minutes and the whole thereof, and that said original minutes are on file in my office.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that each of the members of said Town Board had due notice of said meeting and the Town Supervisor, and Town Councilpersons, Thomas Kimpton, John Murray, Richard Lyon and Dave Perry were present at such meeting.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereto set my hand seal of the Town of Santa Clara, on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2017.



Laurie McGill, Town Clerk

Resolution No.

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC.  
(PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST  
RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

The following resolution was offered by Charles Lustig who moved its adoption.

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

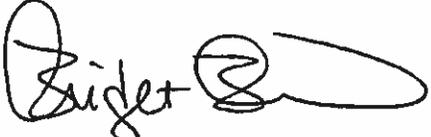
**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Willsboro does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

 11/11/18

**BOARD RESOLUTION**  
**The Town Board of the Town of Belmont**

At a regular meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Belmont, a municipality with offices at 9 Hill Road, Brainardsville in Belmont, New York, duly called (a quorum being present) and held at the Town Hall in the Town of Belmont, County of Franklin, State of New York on November 20, 2017 the following Resolution was duly adopted and is now in full force and effect:

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS)  
PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A  
STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

A Motion was made by Wayne Rogers & Seconded by Greg Langelon  
To be known as Resolution No. 61

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**BOARD RESOLUTION**  
**The Town Board of the Town of Belmont**

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

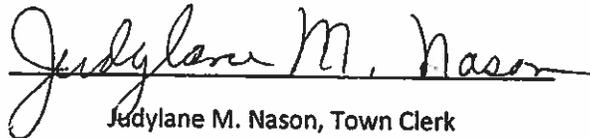
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Belmont does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

**Motion Carried.**

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand as Town Clerk of The Town of Belmont,

on this 20 day of November, in the year 2017.

  
Judy Lane M. Nason, Town Clerk

**Supervisor**  
John B Frey  
315-357-2204  
[supervisor@inletny.com](mailto:supervisor@inletny.com)

**Town Clerk**  
Patricia Wittmeyer  
315-357-5771  
[clerk@inletny.com](mailto:clerk@inletny.com)

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
EMPLOYER**



**PO Box 179, Inlet, New York 13360  
315-357-5771 fax 315-357-6264  
TDD #711**

**Town Board**  
Herbert Schmid  
Tim Brownsell  
Daniel Levi  
**Assessor/Codes**  
Aimee VanWie  
357-5726  
**Superintendent of  
Highways**  
Shawn Hansen  
315-357-4541

**RESOLUTION NO: 72.17 SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE,  
INC., PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST  
RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

On a motion offered by Councilman Schmid, seconded by Councilman Levi, the following resolution was ADOPTED by VOTE:

WHEREAS; NYS Forest Rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there, AND

WHEREAS; Forest Rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are Police Officers, wild land firefighters and Wilderness First Responders that patrol these lands year around, AND

WHEREAS; the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands in the last several decades, with staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,156 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today, AND

WHEREAS; the dramatic increase in recreational use on State lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016, Forest Rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the Rangers' previous 130 years of existence, AND

WHEREAS; Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism, associated with State land recreation, which gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration, AND

WHEREAS; Forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing State land, AND

WHEREAS; the current level of Forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission, given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to, AND

WHEREAS; the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase Forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people, AND

WHEREAS; this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it,

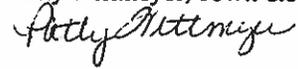
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; that the Town Board of the Town of Inlet, does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase Forest ranger staffing to 175 statewide, which is deemed critically important to our Community, State land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; AND

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED;** that a certified copy of the Resolution be forwarded to the Police Benevolent Association of New York, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200, Albany, New York 12207

By Order of the Inlet Town Board

November 14, 2017

Patty Wittmeyer, Town Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patty Wittmeyer", written in black ink.

# Town of St. Armand

1702 NYS Route 3

P.O. Box 338

Bloomingtondale, NY 12913

Tel. 518-891-3189 / Fax 518-891-6092 / TTD 711

starmand1903@yahoo.com

www.townofstarmand.com

*Supervisor*

*Charles Whitson, Jr.*

*Deputy Supervisor*

*D. Joseph Bates*

*Town Council Members*

*Dean Montroy*

*Jennifer Fuller*

*Donald Amell*

RESOLUTION 38 of 2017 –

SUPPORT OF POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION  
OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL  
TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A  
STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175

Councilperson Dean Montroy, who moved its adoption, offered the following resolution:

WHEREAS, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

WHEREAS, forest rangers are unequalled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

WHEREAS, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28, 516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

WHEREAS, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016, forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

WHEREAS, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

WHEREAS, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

WHEREAS, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

WHEREAS, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

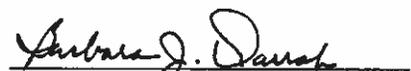
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE Town Board of the Town of St. Armand does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200., Albany, NY 12207.

This Resolution was duly seconded by Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates and adopted by Roll Call vote as follows:

Supervisor Charles Whitson, Jr.	AYE
Deputy Supervisor D. Joseph Bates	AYE
Councilperson Donald Amell	AYE
Councilperson Jennifer Fuller	EXCUSED
Councilperson Dean Montroy	AYE



  
Barbara J. Daffrah  
St. Armand Town Clerk

Dated: December 12, 2017



ELAINE W. SATER  
(518) 327-3202

TOWN CLERK  
**TOWN OF BRIGHTON**  
FRANKLIN COUNTY

PO BOX 260  
PAUL SMITHS, NEW YORK 12970

**RESOLUTION # 58-2017**

Motion made by Brian McDonnell, second by Supervisor Peter Shrope,

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Brighton, Franklin County, New York, does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Supervisor Peter Shrope	AYE
Council Member Brian McDonnell	AYE
Council Member Amber McKernan	AYE
Council Member Steve Tucker	AYE
Council Member Lydia Wright	AYE

RESOLUTION #58 declared duly adopted.

I certify that the above is a true and exact copy of the Resolution recorded in the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Town of Brighton Board dated November 9, 2017.

Elaine W. Sater, RMC  
Brighton Town Clerk

# TOWN OF KEENE

*Ellen S. Estes, Town Clerk*

P.O. Box 89

Keene, New York 12942

Phone: 518-576-4444

Fax: 518-576-4676

## CERTIFICATION

I, Ellen S. Estes, Town Clerk of the Town of Keene, Essex County, New York, DO HEREBY CERTIFY, that I have compared the following with the original resolution adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Keene, at a meeting of said Board, held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2017, and that the following transcript is a true and accurate transcript of the said original resolution and of the whole thereof, and that said original resolution is on file in my office.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that each member of said Town Board had due notice of said meeting and that Joseph P. Wilson, Supervisor, Paul R. Martin, Robert M. Biesemeyer, Michael J. Buysse and Jerry D. Smith, Members of Council were present.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the Town of Keene, this 21<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2017.



Ellen S. Estes, Town Clerk  
Town of Keene, Essex County

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

The following resolution was offered by Mr. Biesemeyer, who moved its adoption.

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increases has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Keene, does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

This resolution was seconded by Mr. Martin.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Wilson:	Yes
Mr. Martin:	Yes
Mr. Biesemeyer:	Yes
Mr. Buysse:	Yes
Mr. Smith:	Yes

# TOWN OF STRATFORD

Fulton County  
120 Piseco Road  
PO Box 186  
Stratford, New York 13470  
Phone: (315)429-8612 Fax: (315)429-0527

December 14, 2017

## **RESOLUTION 16-2017**

### **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATEWIDE TOTAL OF 175**

Offered by Councilwoman Ploss, Seconded by Councilwoman Rumrill

**ADOPTED**      Ayes    5            Rice, Rumrill, Fogarty, Ploss and Perkins  
                     Nays    0

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protecting the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands the last several decades without staffing increase has caused the ratio of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1970 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers' previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which, gratefully, has been well-promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a simple reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people;

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are critical to the Town of Stratford since 70% of the land in the Town is state owned.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Stratford does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, state land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBA of NYS, 11 North Pearl Street, Suite 1200, Albany, NY 12207.

REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY- NOVEMBER 14, 2017  
7:00 PM- COMMUNITY CENTER

Town Board Members Present: Supervisor-Randy Preston  
Councilman-Darin Forbes  
Councilman-Steve Corvelli  
Councilwoman-Dawn Stevens  
Councilwoman-Rarilee Conway

**RESOLUTION 40-17 THE TOWN OF WILMINGTON SUPPORTS THE POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE, INC. (PBA OF NYS) PROPOSAL TO INCREASE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION FOREST RANGER STAFFING TO A STATE-WIDE TOTAL OF 175.**

The following resolution was offered by Randy Preston who moved its adoption.

**WHEREAS**, NYS forest rangers have provided care, custody and control of the Forest Preserve and all DEC managed lands throughout the state since 1885, protection the valuable natural resources and the people who recreate there; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are unequaled stewards of the land who are police officers, wildland firefighters and wilderness first responders that patrol these lands year round; and

**WHEREAS**, the addition of over 1 million acres of DEC managed lands per ranger to grow from 1 ranger per 28,516 acres in 1960 to 1 ranger per 53,752 acres today; and

**WHEREAS**, the dramatic increase in recreational use on state lands has led to a corresponding increase in the number of search and rescue operations. In both 2015 and 2016 forest rangers participated in over 300 incidents annually. Those numbers had not been surpassed in the rangers previous 130 years of existence; and

**WHEREAS**, Adirondack communities rely heavily on tourism associated with state land recreation which gratefully, has been well promoted by this administration; and

**WHEREAS**, forest rangers are essential to providing a safe and positive recreational experience for tourists utilizing state land; and

**WHEREAS**, the current level of forest ranger staffing, 135 statewide including supervisors, is not adequate to fulfill their unique mission given the amount of land they patrol and the number of incidents they respond to; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal by the PBA of NYS to increase forest ranger staffing has wide public and bi-partisan support from local governments, business groups, environmental groups and outdoor recreation clubs for a single reason: It protects the people from the land and the land from the people; and

**WHEREAS**, this proposal represents the best solution to address the increase in public lands and those utilizing it.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Town Board of the Town of Wilmington does hereby support the PBA of NYS proposal to increase forest ranger staffing to 175 rangers statewide, which is deemed critically important to our community, State land, the environment and the People of the State of New York; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the PBWA of NYS 11 North Pearl Street, suite 1200 Albany NY 12207.

Supervisor Preston-	AYE
Councilman Forbes	AYE
Councilman Corvelli	AYE
Councilwoman Stevens	AYE
Councilwoman Conway	AYE

(5 AYES- 0 Nays Carried)

**I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF THE RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD, HELD ON 11/14/2017, TOWN OF Wilmington.**

DATE 11/15/2017

TOWN CLERK



GERALD L. BRUCE

UNIVERSITY POLICE | ENCON POLICE



PARK POLICE | FOREST RANGERS

# **2018 Joint Legislative Public Protection Hearing Testimony**

**Submitted on behalf of the Police Benevolent Association of New York State**

**By: Drew Cavanagh, Director of the Forest Ranger Superior Officer's Association of the PBA of New York State**

**February 7, 2018**

Suite 1200 11 North Pearl Street, Albany New York 12207

(518) 433-5472

[www.pbanys.org](http://www.pbanys.org) / [pio@pbanys.org](mailto:pio@pbanys.org)

Testimony by: Drew Cavanagh  
Director of the Forest Ranger Superior Officer's  
Association of the PBA of New York State ("PBA of  
NYS")  
PBA of NYS Board Member

Testimony before: 2018 Joint Legislative Hearing Committee on  
Environmental Conservation

Date: February 7, 2018

Good afternoon respected members of the joint committee. My name is Drew Cavanagh, and I am the Director of the Forest Ranger Superior Officer's Association of the PBA of New York State ("PBA of NYS") and a current PBA board member. The PBA of NYS was established in 2011, and is the law enforcement labor union representing the interests of approximately 1,200 members of the New York State Agency Police Services Unit ("APSU"). I have been a New York State Forest Ranger for 25 years. Currently I am a Forest Ranger Captain assigned to DEC Region Six ("6") which covers the western Adirondacks.

My testimony today will focus on the budget priorities of the New York State Forest Rangers. Today there are 137 Forest Rangers in New York State. The 137 Forest Rangers are responsible for 4,934,951 total acres of DEC administered lands. By comparison, in 1970, there were 140 Forest Rangers and only 3.5 million total acres of DEC administered land. This is evidence that over the past half century the number of Forest Rangers has remained stagnant while DEC has acquired roughly 30 percent more landmass. The Legislature and Governor's efforts to drive tourism have been successful in increasing usage of DEC administered land. The good news is more people are using the wilderness and great outdoors. The bad news is that more people are using the wilderness and great outdoors. It is truly a double edged sword.

The PBA of NYS respectfully submits that a more appropriate number of New York State Forest Rangers is 175 and not the current 137 force size. Increasing the number of Forest Rangers to 175 is justified by weighing public safety, outsourcing Forest Rangers to emergency response needs outside of New York State, and examining the historical amount of acreage that a Forest Ranger has been accustomed to patrolling.

Today, DEC administered landmass is equal to approximately 5 million acres, and assuming the state had 175 Forest Rangers, each Forest Ranger would be responsible for approximately 28,500 acres. The reduced size of the territory for each Forest Ranger will lead to faster response times to search and rescue missions and help curtail overtime costs for New York State. In addition, a force of 175 will give the Forest Rangers more flexibility and a work force to respond to out of state needs which generates revenue for New York State since the costs are reimbursed by the other state and/or federal government.

A comparison of the National Park Service data on Rangers and acreage statistics highlights the inadequacy of the current staffing levels in New York State. For instance, Yellowstone National Park is approximately 2.2 million acres of land and has 330 rangers assigned to it.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Yellowstone Park, which is less than one-half of the size of DEC Administered Land, has 60% more rangers than all of New York State. The national ratio of rangers to all National Park Service administered land is no different. Collectively, National Parks across the country equate to approximately 84.9 million acres. In total, there are 3,800 permanent rangers assigned to the National Parks. This amounts to approximately one ranger for every 22,000 acres of National Park land. By contrast, New York State Forest Rangers must currently cover approximately 40,000 acres.

Given the lack of Forest Rangers, the New York State legislature should include funding for a robust academy of new Forest Rangers. More academies will allow New York State to explore other cost saving initiatives such as reducing overtime costs and seeking reimbursement from federal emergency response initiatives. Of course, this will also provide enhanced public safety for tourists and New Yorkers who enjoy the great outdoors within New York State.

We are thankful for the actions of Assemblyman Steve Englebright, chair of the environmental conservation committee, and Senator Rich Funke, Chair of the Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation committee, who have publically stated that more Forest Rangers are needed in New York State and wrote to Governor Cuomo asking for increases in Forest Ranger staffing.<sup>2</sup> We urge the entire legislature to take action and increase Forest Ranger staffing.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.nps.gov/yell/faqs.htm>

<sup>2</sup> See *attached* Letter to Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo by Assemblyman Steve Englebright, Chairman of the NYS Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee dated January 2, 2018;

Letter to Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo by Senator Rich Funke, Chairman of the NYS Senate Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation committee dated January 26, 2018.

In addition, the PBA of NYS will advocate for A.1459 (Jenne) / S.3987 (Funke) entitled “An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to protecting newly acquired state land”. The proposed legislation is attempting to reduce the amount of acreage that each Forest Ranger is responsible for patrolling. The bill would add one new full time equivalent forest ranger position for every thirty thousand acres of land that is acquired. The justification for the legislation is that it would ensure Forest Rangers are granted the appropriate resources necessary to meet their expanded responsibilities, and protect environmentally preserved land within the state's jurisdiction.

It should be remembered that Forest Rangers wrote over 2,500 tickets for violations of the Environmental Conservation Law and other related offenses. In addition, Forest Rangers are responsible for managing, investigating and directing resources assigned to wildfire emergencies. This is a statewide function no other police officer or state fire official is mandated to perform. The diverse skillset of a Forest Ranger is also demonstrated by their statewide service as incident managers and first responders. Arthur Perryman’s testimony will focus more on those topics.

In closing, the New York State Forest Rangers ask that the Legislature increased staffing levels by dedicating funding in this State Budget process to provide 175 Rangers. Since DEC administered landmass is equal to approximately five million acres, and assuming the State had a Forest Ranger staff size of 175 would essentially mean that each Ranger would be responsible for approximately 28,500 acres. This small increase in staffing will provide a more robust Forest Ranger workforce that will allow us to better serve and protect all New Yorkers. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.

**CHAIRMAN**  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**  
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION  
AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
AGING  
AGRICULTURE  
CITIES  
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
& SMALL BUSINESS  
CONSUMER PROTECTION  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
HIGHER EDUCATION

**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**RICH FUNKE**  
Senator, 55TH District

**ALBANY OFFICE:**  
ROOM 905  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
PHONE: (518) 485-2215  
FAX: (518) 426-6315

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
PACKETT'S LANDING  
SUITE 230  
FAIRPORT, NEW YORK 14450  
PHONE: (516) 223-1800  
FAX: (516) 223-3157

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:**  
FUNKE@NYSenate.GOV  
**WEBSITE:**  
FUNKE.NYSenate.GOV

January 26, 2018

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor  
NYS Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As you put forward your 30 day amendments to the 2018-19 State budget proposal, I urge you to consider increasing the staffing levels at the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and at the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). For several years DEC and OPRHP have been models for doing more with less – a theme you mentioned prominently. The current staffing levels are, however, insufficient.

Greater enforcement through additional staffing would provide significant benefits including: increased security for our citizens and visitors alike; a cleaner environment; less cost to State and local governments; and ensuring that polluters and litterers, and not taxpayers, are forced to pay for cleanups. As tourism has increased and the natural wonders of New York's open spaces have become more recognized, forest rangers have been called upon with increasing frequency, and Park Police officers are being spread very thin.

Currently, there are less than 140 forest rangers responsible for approximately 5 million acres of land, with responsibilities ranging from fugitive apprehension to search and rescue. To put this in perspective, the number of forest rangers is roughly the same as it was in the 1970's, but the amount of land they patrol has increased by approximately 1.4 million acres.

At present, there are 250 Park Police Officers responsible for more than 250 parks encompassing 350,000 acres, concert venues, historic sites, recreational trails, golf courses, boat launches and more. These sites are visited by 69 million people annually. Park Police are responsible for the safety of the millions of visitors while patrolling on foot, ATVs, vehicles, 4WD's, bicycles, snowmobiles, jet ski's and vessels. These officers provide anti-terrorism

protection, arrests for serious felonies and other crimes, conduct criminal investigations, wilderness/marine/high angle cliff and gorge rescues and other emergency services and responses.

While I understand the constraints faced in this year's budget, I believe it necessary to increase staffing levels both at DEC and OPRHP because of the important work they do and the fact that they continue to see an increase in responsibilities with reduced or steady staffing levels, in some cases due to attrition. Undoubtedly, there are many other areas of both of these departments that would also benefit from additional staff, and I ask that you please consider such an increase. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Rich Funke, Chairman  
NYS Senate Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation Committee

CC:

Senator Flanagan, Majority Leader, NYS Senate  
Senator Young, Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
David Previte, Majority Counsel/ Program  
Shawn MacKinnon, Senate Finance  
James Curran, Majority Counsel/ Program  
Nicole Fosco, Senate Finance



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

STEVEN ENGLEBRIGHT  
4<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Suffolk County

CHAIRMAN  
Committee on Environmental Conservation

COMMITTEES  
Education  
Energy  
Higher Education  
Rules

COMMISSIONS  
Science and Technology  
Water Resource Needs of Long Island

MEMBER  
Bi-State L.J. Sound Marine Resource Committee  
N.Y.S. Biodiversity Research Institute  
N.Y.S. Heritage Area Advisory Council

January 2, 2018

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor  
NYS Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Thank you for your visionary State of the State message earlier today in which you rightly emphasized the importance of focusing on environmental challenges that threaten public health and safety as we go forward into what will be a challenging year. As you put the finishing touches on your 2017-18 State budget proposal, I urge you to consider increasing the staffing levels at the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). For several years DEC has been a model for doing more with less – a theme that you mentioned prominently. The current staffing levels are, however, insufficient. Such an assessment would be true based solely on a review of DEC’s State obligations; however, in light of the dramatic adverse environmental impacts taking place at the federal level, staff support at the State level has become increasingly important to fill the gaps left behind.

Greater enforcement provides one compelling example where additional staffing would provide significant benefits including: a cleaner environment; less cost to State and local governments; and, ensuring that polluters, and not taxpayers, are forced to pay for cleanups. Illegal dumping on Long Island remains a problem, contaminating public parks and the environment, and more environmental conservation officers could help decrease such activities. Also related to enforcement, as tourism has increased and the natural wonders of New York’s open spaces have become more recognized, forest rangers have been called upon with increasing frequency. Currently there are less than 140 forest rangers responsible for approximately 5 million acres of land, with responsibilities ranging from fugitive apprehension to search and rescue. To put this in perspective, the number of forest rangers is roughly the same as it was in the 1970’s, but the amount of land they patrol has increased by approximately 1.4 million acres.

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In addition, we are all too well aware of the challenges faced by potential water contamination. Additional DEC staff in the remedial and permitting divisions would help address not only legacy contamination, but also to identify potential future contamination prior to any human or environmental harm.

These are just a few examples of the important work DEC performs. Undoubtedly, there are many other areas of the Department that would also benefit from additional staff and I again ask that you please consider such an increase. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Englebright". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steve Englebright, Chairman  
NYS Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee

**UNIVERSITY POLICE | ENCON POLICE**



**PARK POLICE | FOREST RANGERS**

# **2018 Joint Legislative Public Protection Hearing Testimony**

**Submitted on behalf of the Police Benevolent  
Association of New York State**

**By: Jason DeAngelis  
PBA of NYS Vice President & CCO  
Environmental Conservation  
Police Officers Director**

**February 7, 2018**

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Testimony by: Jason DeAngelis  
NYS EnCon Police Officer  
DEC Region 4

Testimony before: 2018 Joint Legislative Hearing Committee  
on Environmental Conservation

Date: February 7, 2018

### **Introduction**

Good afternoon respected members of the joint committee. My name is Jason DeAngelis, and I am a New York State Environmental Conservation Police Officer and current Vice President of the Police Benevolent Association of New York State ("PBA of NYS") and a current PBA board member.

My testimony today will focus on the budget priorities of the New York State Environmental Conservation Police Officers, which include Three Quarter Accidental Disability benefits and on Staffing Levels of Bureau of Environmental Crimes Investigation within the Division of Law Enforcement. The mission of the Environmental Conservation Officers ("ECO") is to protect and enhance the environment and natural resources of the State of New York while also protecting the health and safety of its people through the enforcement of Environmental Conservation and related laws and public education." This mission is currently being accomplished by over 330 sworn members of the Division of Law Enforcement.

Our officers and investigators respond to a wide range of emergencies and special details throughout the year. DLE staff performs with dedication and professionalism, whether responding to heavy snows on Long Island, the Hoosick Falls drinking-water crisis, or multi-million dollar ivory seizures. DLE's unique mission, wide-ranging expertise and specialized equipment continue to play an integral part in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's statewide operations, as well as DEC's own Emergency Response Team.

### **Three-Quarter Disability Legislation**

S.5594B Golden  
Same as A.7600B Abbate

A top budget priority for the New York State Environmental Conservation Offices is the enactment of three-quarter accidental disability legislation. Three-quarter disability is a benefit that is enjoyed by almost every other branch of law enforcement. Parity is desperately needed for the PBA of NYS membership. The job responsibilities are equally dangerous and present identical risk of injuries due to the wide range of incidents they respond too. These risks and dangers are completely out of our members' control which is no different from other branches of law enforcement.

Currently, three-quarter accidental disability legislation is not available to Environmental Conservation Officers. This must be changed. The legislature should immediately include three-quarter disability benefits in the one house budget proposals and ensure it is included in the final budget due April 1, 2018. There is no better justification than the recent shooting tragedy of New York State Environmental Conservation Officer James Davey who sustained a gunshot while investigating a call for "shots fired" in rural Columbia County, which was ultimately two men attempting to poach deer in a field at night. These types of terrible incidents demonstrate the risks that Environmental Conservation Officers, Forest Rangers, Regional Park Police and State University Police encounter on a day-to-day basis in performance of their job duties. They should receive the same accidental disability benefits as other law enforcement members.

There is '*same as*' standalone legislation in both houses that grant members of the PBA of NYS with three-quarter disability legislation. S.5594B sponsored by Senator Golden same as A.7600B sponsored by Assemblyman Abbate. Last session, the Senate passed S.5594A. The Assembly failed to bring this legislation to the floor.

However, we remain confident that both houses will include Three-Quarter Disability legislation in their one house budget proposals. The fiscal impact of the legislation there would be an immediate past service cost of \$2.1 million and an annual cost to New York State of \$350,000. The fiscal note's estimated costs are based on 724 members having an annual salary for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 of approximately \$60 million.

Granting all members of the PBA of NYS Three-Quarter Disability benefits will also help lower the attrition rates because we will have parity with other branches of law enforcement. For these reasons, Three-Quarter Disability legislation for the EnCon officers should be included as part of the final 2018-2019 State Budget due April 1, 2018.

**Staffing Levels of Bureau of Environmental Crimes Investigation within the Division of Law Enforcement**

Next, I would like to direct the legislature’s attention to the staffing shortfalls within The Bureau of Environmental Crimes Investigation (“BECI”) within the Division of Law Enforcement. Our BECI investigators are currently operating at 50% staffing (40% staffing in the downstate regions). Due to the lack of investigators, it has become increasingly more difficult to properly investigate the most significant criminal complaints received by this Department.

The Bureau staffing numbers as of January 15, 2018, are as follows:

Title	Authorized Fill Level	Current Staffing Level	Deficit	% understaffed
ECI (Investigator)	30	15	15	50% understaffed
ECI 2 (Lieutenant)	11	8	3	28% understaffed
Captain	1	0	1	100% understaffed
Major	1	1	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>45%</b>
			<b>Positions</b>	<b>Understaffed</b>

Due to the approximate 50% understaffing, the following types of cases have been impacted:

- i. **Solid Waste Task Force** – With only 4 Investigators currently assigned in Region 1, 2 and 3 out of 10 positions (a decrease of 60%), the Task Force will use Uniform officers to issue tickets to truck drivers. The necessary follow up at the site of generation will be delayed or not accomplished at all.
- ii. **Bottle Bill Enforcement** – Transshipping of returnable beverages from New Jersey is costing New York State and New York businesses millions (estimates in excess of 100 million) in lost deposit money. Current bottle bill enforcement cases have a possible settlement in excess of \$1 million dollars. Beverage industry representatives have met with DEC program and DLE staff within the last six months requesting investigations into the illegal activity surrounding the transshipping and redemption of empty containers. These

cases will most likely be put on hold or significantly delayed without additional investigative staff to handle the cases.

- iii. **Long Term Undercover Wildlife Investigations** - Between 2007 and 2009, BECI Investigators led a nationally recognized undercover operation into the illegal trafficking in New York's native amphibians and reptiles. This operation ("Operation Shell Shock") uncovered a lucrative trade in New York snakes and turtles. The case involved USFW agents, Canadian game wardens in the province of Ontario, Environmental Canada law enforcement officers and multiple US states. This investigation led to changes in the ECL that halted the overharvesting of New York's native species. Information on similar wildlife poaching cases exist today, they include significant American eel poaching, illegal turtle trafficking, illegal salmon roe sales from Lake Ontario and illegal trafficking of all marine finfish to name a few. USFW has an open glass eel investigation dubbed "Operation Broken Glass". New York has organized an enforcement conference each year for the last three years to coordinate all the east coast state's efforts to crack down on these glass eel poachers. BECI Investigators play a major role in this enforcement and have executed two warrants related to glass eel poaching and have other significant open cases.

Nationally, all turtle species are under increased poaching by foreign interests. USFW Inspectors in NY's JFK airport have never seen this level of illegal activity involving native turtles in the past. Additionally, because of the lack of investigators in the downstate areas DLE is unable to initiate long-term investigations involving the Marine Commercial Fishery including illegal Stripe Bass, Black Fish, Flounder and lobster fisheries. Without investigators, these investigations will not be initiated, will be put on hold or will be significantly impacted.

- iv. **Elephant Ivory Enforcement** - With only 1 Investigator in Region 2, proactive ivory cases will be put on hold or delayed until additional investigative staff are assigned.
- v. **Impact on Background Investigations** - Without a full staff of investigators, background investigations will most likely cost considerably more due to overtime incurred by investigators traveling over two or three regions to complete the investigations. The timeframe to complete these backgrounds will also increase.

- vi. **Department Request For Criminal Investigation of Regulated Entities-** Some examples of recent cases requiring immediate and long-term investigative services: Niagara Falls Water Board sewage discharge, fatal HRSI in Sherman Chautauqua County, illegal disposal of hazardous waste cases, illegal C&D disposal site through New York State, Oil and gas industry investigations in Region 9, and trash net investigations to name just a few.

Timely response to and thorough criminal investigations of these types of significant cases are in jeopardy without additional investigators.

Given these enforcement problems facing the ECO's, the BECI staffing should also be immediately corrected. Since BECI investigations are long term, often taking one to two years to complete, retaining investigators in place would benefit those investigations. Filling only one or two investigator positions at a time is disruptive to the region and often negatively impacts our ability to timely complete an investigation.

To compound the problem, this impact is felt most severely in Regions 1, 2 and 3 where the turnover of staff is most significant. Additionally, this impact is felt in upstate regions because they no longer have the ability to promote local talent because transfers fill their positions. Filling all the positions at one time would benefit the Department by allowing senior officers the opportunity to be promoted within their regions thus retaining local knowledge. It would also stabilize the investigative team in NYC, Long Island and Region 3, and allow for continuity of investigations of our most critical cases. Finally, it would foster a productive working relationship between our investigators and regional program staff and bring stability to the BECI statewide.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, the New York State Environmental Conservation Officers respectfully ask that the Legislature enact Three-Quarter Disability benefits in the upcoming State Budget due April 1, 2018. It is a grave injustice that not all PBA of NYS members have three quarter accidental disability benefits. In addition, we ask the Legislature to encourage the DEC to properly fill all BECI investigator positions as soon as possible so that we can properly carry out our fulfilled mission. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.