

How May We Help You? Including People with Disabilities in Outdoor Opportunities



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The New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (NYS IRRC) is a university-based statewide resource center for inclusive recreation. The mission of the NYS IRRC is to promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources throughout the state. Housed at SUNY Cortland in the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department, and funded by the New York State Developmental Disabilities Council, the NYS IRRC is here to help you in many ways.

In our first year, we developed a user-friendly tool, the *Inclusivity Assessment Tool*, and since, have provided training to people across the state on how to use the tool, through our workshop *Inclusion U*. The programs, parks, and recreation facilities that are assessed using the *Inclusivity Assessment Tool* are entered into an extensive online database, which aligns with the *I Love NY* tourism regions. The database is a comprehensive bank of information, sorted by region, on how inclusive and accessible recreation

resources are around the state, to help people with disabilities and their families better plan their recreation. In addition, parks and recreation professionals that need assistance in improving program or facility accessibility, and any individual with a disability that wants help in finding more inclusive recreation, can contact the Center for assistance. Our goal is to help people with disabilities achieve their "recreation dreams and aspirations!"

We have enjoyed working with members of the New York Outdoor Education Association. In October, we provided *Inclusion U* as a pre-institute at the NYSOEA conference in Lake Placid. We hope to do the same in the fall of 2009 in Fishkill. All the participants at our October 2008 *Inclusion U* passed and became Certified Inclusivity Assessors. We have had the wonderful opportunity to visit and assess many outdoor sites, from state parks to nature centers. Through the inclusivity assessment, we are able to help you identify ways to improve physical and program accessibility. If you have become a certified assessor through *Inclusion U*, we are here to help you follow up and put your assessment skills into practice. Let us know if you want assistance as you assess your own or other programs and facilities.

Upcoming dates for *Inclusion U* are posted on our web site, as well as many other resources. We encourage you to contact us and let us know how we can help you open the outdoors to all people, regardless of ability. You can contact us at InclusiveRec@cortland.edu, or call (607) 753-4833. And you can visit our web site at www.cortland.edu/nysirrc.

