

## The Legacy of the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is considered civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. The law ensures that the 56 million people with disabilities in the U.S. are able to access, use, and enjoy all the same rights and amenities as people without disabilities, across life domains. One important life domain is recreation.

### Who benefits from the ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act specifically benefits people with disabilities. According to the law, a disability is “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.” The ADA does not specifically name what disabilities are covered, It does list major life activities as: “caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.”

Though the ADA specifically benefits people with disabilities, in actuality it benefits all people. When the mainstream of life becomes more accessible, it helps all of us. Ability level in humans varies widely, and when environments become easier to navigate and use, we all find it easier to live, work, and play without restraint. When we want our family members or friends who may have a disability to join us in our recreation and play, accessibility becomes even more important to our life quality.

### What help is available for implementation of the ADA?

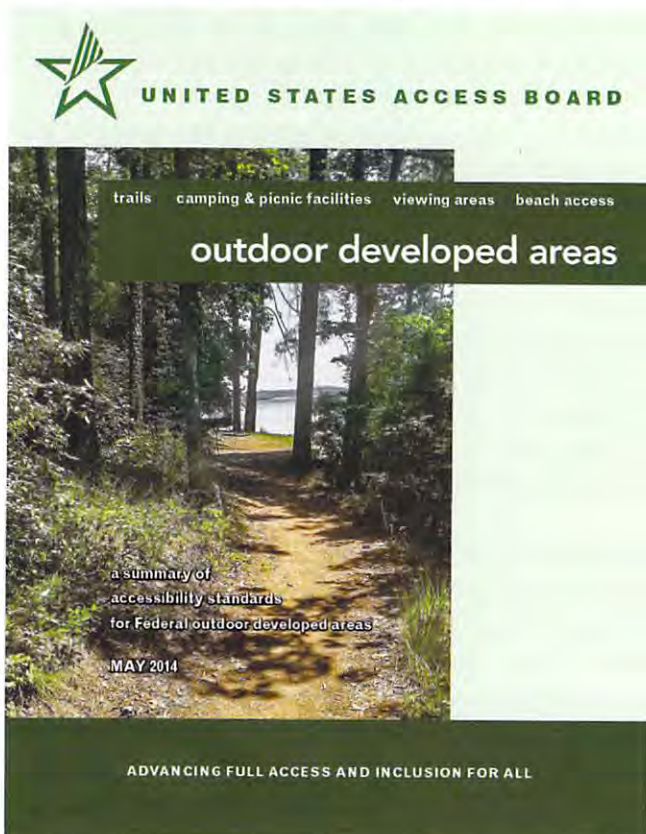
The ADA requires that facilities, programs and services be accessible to all people. In addition to the actual regulations, design guidelines must be met. These can be complicated and confusing to put into practice. As a part of the ADA, many resources are available to assist the public in implementing the accessibility regulations and standards. The U.S. Access Board is a key federal agency that provides training, technical assistance



and other guidance in implementing not only the ADA standards, but also the older Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) standards, which have been in use by federal and federally funded agencies since 1968. The U.S. Access Board website has numerous resources, from the guidelines and standards, to training, enforcement and research. The U.S. Access Board has a monthly newsletter than anyone can subscribe to, as well as monthly webinars, all free. The U.S. Access Board provides guidance in communications and IT, buildings and sites, recreation facilities, streets and sidewalks, transportation, and health care. The web address for the U.S. Access Board is [www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)

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One new and invaluable publication available from the U.S. Access Board is the Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas (GODA). These Guidelines work to achieve accessibility in outdoor recreation environments, including trails, beaches, campsites, and the like. As of now, the GODA are part of the ABA standards, but the U.S. Access Board will be developing very similar guidelines for the ADA. The Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas are available on the U.S. Access Board website.



The ADA National Network is another invaluable resource for implementation of the ADA. The National Network is comprised of Regional ADA Centers located across the U.S. In New York, the Regional ADA Center is the Northeast ADA Center and is located at Cornell University. The Northeast ADA Center provides training, technical assistance, and other projects that help to implement the ADA standards and regulations in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The website for the Center is [www.northeastada.org](http://www.northeastada.org).

### What's happening in New York?

The Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (IRRC), headquartered at SUNY Cortland, is a center focused solely on recreation and inclusion. The IRRC has been working since 2007 to help make recreation more inclusive and accessible in New

York and beyond. The mission of the IRRC is to promote and sustain participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources. We help ALL people play wherever they choose! The IRRC provides several services and resources to bring this mission into reality. Three important initiatives and resources are the current partnership project, the Online Recreation Database, and Inclusion U Online.

### Partnership Project

The partnership project currently underway is a collaboration between the IRRC, the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Now in its second year, the partnership provides training to staff at DEC and OPRHP. The most important ongoing work is the inclusivity assessments that the IRRC is completing at 400 state operated sites over the two year project. After completing an Inclusivity Assessment at a state park or DEC outdoor recreation site, the IRRC is providing recommendations on ways to increase usability for people with disabilities. The follow up reports are being used by DEC and OPRHP to make



improvements and changes across the state that will increase recreation accessibility for all visitors. New York State will truly be a state of opportunity for all people!

### Online Database for Inclusive Recreation

All programs or facilities that are assessed using the Inclusivity Assessment Tool are entered into



an extensive online database. The database is searchable by Google map, activity, venue, and location. The database is a comprehensive bank of information on how inclusive and accessible recreation resources are, to help people with disabilities and their families and friends better plan their recreation.

### **Inclusion U Online**

Since 2007, the IRRC has been providing a training called Inclusion U. When you “graduate” from Inclusion U, you become a CIA! A Certified Inclusivity Assessor (CIA) is anyone who has been trained to use the Inclusivity Assessment Tool by completing Inclusion U and passing the “final exam.” A CIA can then use the Inclusivity Assessment Tool to assess a recreation amenity for its inclusiveness. CIAs are trained to assess physical and social inclusion at a recreation agency. Information collected with the Inclusivity Assessment Tool goes directly into the IRRC Online Recreation Database. The Online Recreation Database can then be used by people with disabilities and their families and friends to plan recreation experiences, so they can “play wherever they choose!”

### **Inclusion U is now an online training!**

Inclusion U Online is nine modules that you can complete at your own pace from the comfort of your home or office. The nine modules cover things like basics of inclusion, disability awareness, universal design, legislation and standards related to inclusion, administrative and programmatic best practices in inclusion, and more. The modules also teach you how to actually use the Inclusivity Assessment Tool. You will earn 10 hours of continuing education and receive both a certificate of attendance and a CIA Card. Inclusion U Online will be available this summer. Just check the IRRC website for details at [www.InclusiveRec.org](http://www.InclusiveRec.org).

### **How is the ADA 25th Anniversary being celebrated?**

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the ADA, many activities and initiatives are underway. One nationwide initiative is the ADA Legacy Project. The purpose of the ADA Legacy Project is to honor the contributions of people with disabilities by preserving the history of the disability rights movement, celebrating milestones, and education the public and future generations of advocates. The vision of the project is that every citizen in the U.S. is accepted

for who they are. SUNY Cortland and the IRRRC are proud members of the ADA Legacy Project. See the sidebar for websites and resources on national and local resources for the ADA Legacy Project. And start planning ways you can celebrate this landmark law that changed how we think about and plan for accessibility and inclusion!

Dr. Lynn Anderson, CTRS, CPRP  
State University of New York and the Inclusive  
Recreation Resource Center

#### ADA Legacy Project

- <http://www.adalegacy.com/>

#### Equal Access, Equal Opportunity: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

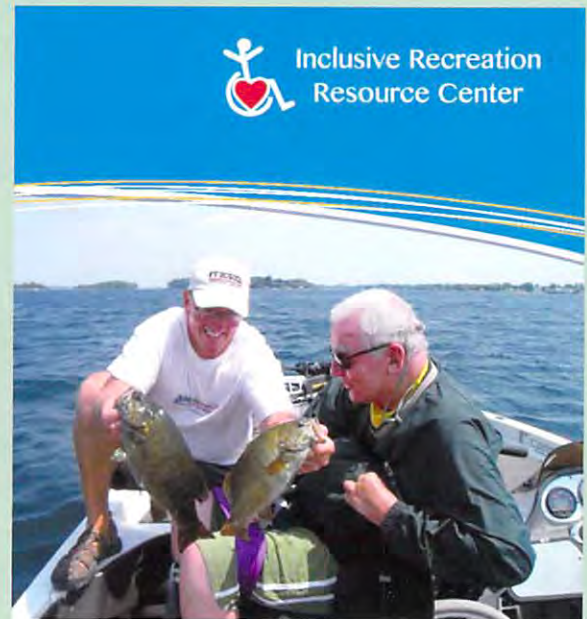
- <http://www.nxtbook.com/faircount/ADA/ADA25/index.php?device=accessible&pg=0>

SUNY Cortland is a sponsor; see  
our presence on this page:

- <http://www.nxtbook.com/faircount/ADA/ADA25/index.php?device=accessible&pg=100>

SUNY Cortland: All People, All  
Abilities: Americans with  
Disabilities Act at SUNY Cortland

- <http://www2.cortland.edu/ada/>



## Ready to play?

YOU CAN NOW FIND ACCESSIBLE  
RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT THE IRRRC  
ONLINE RECREATION DATABASE

The Online Recreation Database contains detailed information about recreation areas, facilities, parks, and programs. The information on both physical access and social inclusion is descriptive and factual.

The recreation amenities in the database are searchable by:

- Interactive map
- Recreation activity
- Town
- Region
- Name of the recreation amenity



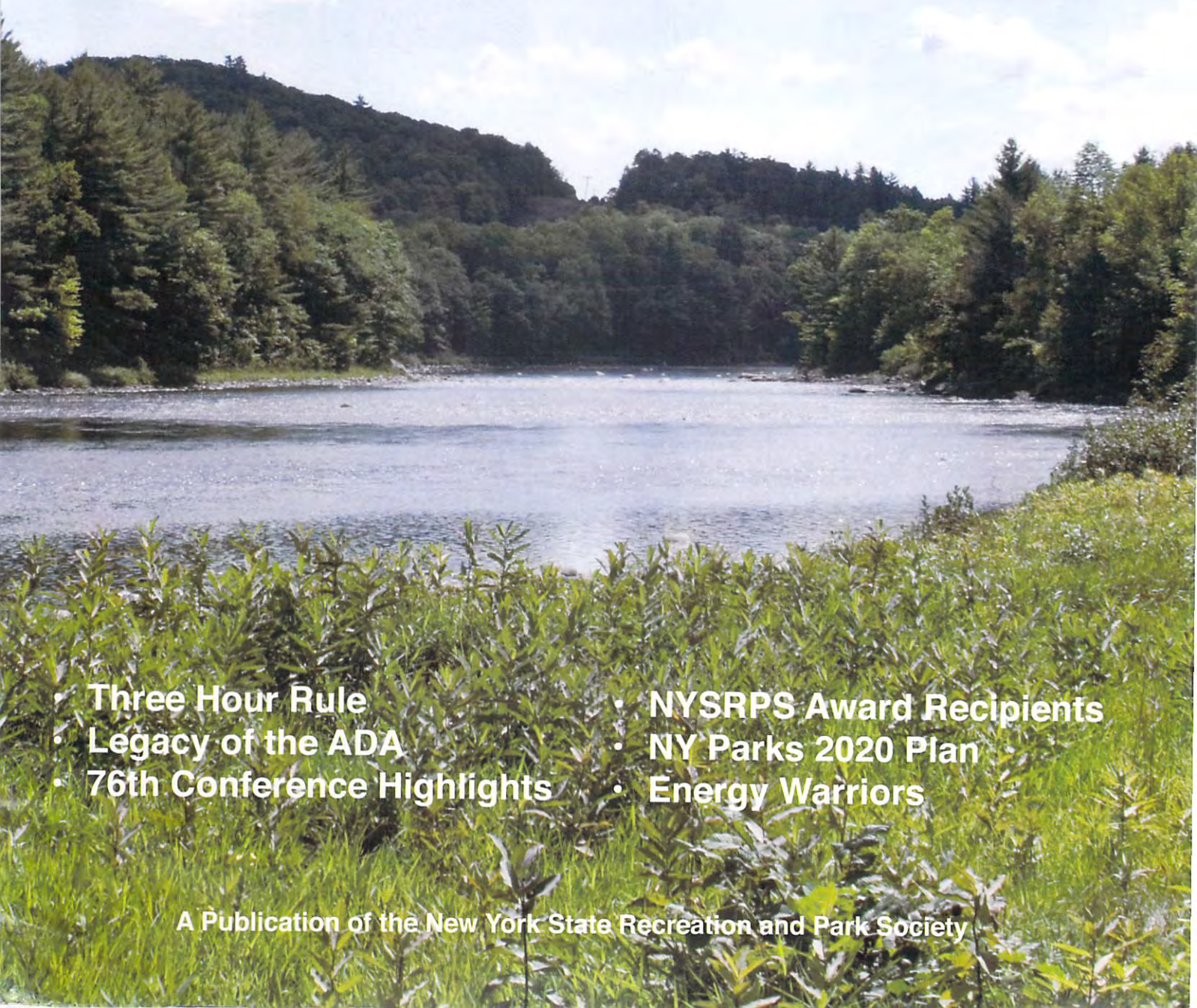
Helping all people play wherever they choose!

**“People who cannot find time for  
recreation are obliged  
sooner or later to find time for  
illness.”**

**John Wanamaker**

Summer 2015

# the Voice



- Three Hour Rule
- Legacy of the ADA
- 76th Conference Highlights
- NYSRPS Award Recipients
- NY Parks 2020 Plan
- Energy Warriors

A Publication of the New York State Recreation and Park Society