

NYS Department of Veterans' Services to Host First-Ever Veterans Outdoor Recreational Therapy Summit on Friday, June 27

Hosted at the Adirondack Experience, the Summit Highlights the Power of Nature to Heal, Connect, and Restore Those Who Served

ALBANY, NY, UNITED STATES, June 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The New York State Department of [Veterans' Services \(DVS\)](#) today announced the launch of the state's first-ever Veterans Outdoor Recreational Therapy Summit, taking place Friday, June 27, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the [Adirondack Experience \(ADKX\)](#) located at 9097 NY-30, Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812.

The daylong summit, led by DVS, will bring together leaders from the public and private sectors including Veterans' advocates, health care professionals, outdoor recreation providers, nonprofits, and government agencies, to explore the expanding role of outdoor recreational therapy in enhancing the health and well-being of Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families. The Summit will provide a first-of-its-kind opportunity for sharing best practices, establishing new connections, and generating and refining new ideas, all within one of the most beautiful outdoor-focused spaces in New York State.

In addition to expert panels and peer discussions, participants will take part in immersive demonstrations of adaptive outdoor activities specifically designed for Veterans with diverse physical and emotional needs. Media are invited and welcome to attend this historic summit. There will also be an optional fun nature walk led by Adirondack Experience guides following the end of the Summit proceedings.



DVS Logo

“New York is blessed with extraordinary outdoor spaces—and we must ensure those spaces are truly accessible to all who have served,” said Viviana M. DeCohen, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Veterans’ Services. “This first-of-its-kind summit creates space for innovation, connection, and healing. We are proud to unite sectors and communities statewide to expand and improve opportunities for Veterans to experience wellness, recovery, and belonging in nature.”

Held on the scenic grounds of ADKX, the summit will spotlight best practices in outdoor programming, highlight successful therapeutic models, and generate new ideas for collaboration—particularly in rural and underserved areas.



“This summit is about meeting Veterans where they are—on trails, in kayaks, and around campfires,” said Joel Evans, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Department of Veterans’ Services. “Whether it is fly fishing in the Catskills, hiking in the Finger Lakes, or snowshoeing in the Adirondacks, these programs reconnect Veterans to each other and to themselves.”

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*NYS DVS Commissioner
Viviana DeCohen*

“As a combat Veteran who’s seen the healing power of nature firsthand, this event is deeply meaningful. It shows that what we’re doing matters—and that more people understand how time outdoors can restore us physically, emotionally, and mentally. Hosting it at Adirondack Experience, in such a soul-stirring setting, makes it all the more powerful,” said Shane Holmes, Adirondack

Experience Information Technology Manager, USMC and New York Army National Guard Combat Veteran.

The Veterans Outdoor Recreational Therapy Summit’s 36 participating entities include:

New York State Department of Veterans’ Services

Adirondack Experience, The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake
Nipper Knolls Equine Center
EquiCenter
Battle Fish Charters
Capital Region Nordic Alliance
Homeward Bound Adirondacks
Guardian Revival
COMPEER Rochester
Western New York Heroes
Veterans Outreach Center of Rochester
BRIDGES of Rockland County
Veteran Wingman Services
Military Family Foundation
Clear Path for Veterans
The Columbia Lighthouse Project
New York State Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Coalition
Advocates For Human Potential
Paul Smith's College
SUNY Empire State University
North Country Community College
Syracuse University College of Law
Cornell University School of Law
University at Buffalo School of Law
New York State Office of Mental Health
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
New York State Department of Corrections & Community Supervision
New York State Office for the Aging
United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Town of Harrietstown
Livingston County Veterans Service Agency
Franklin County Veterans Service Agency
St. Lawrence County Veterans Service Agency
Schoharie County Veterans Service Agency
Onondaga County Veterans Service Agency
City of Mount Vernon Veterans Service Agency

About Adirondack Experience, The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake

Adirondack Experience, The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake (ADKX) is a 121-acre campus in the heart of the Adirondacks dedicated to preserving and sharing the region's history and culture. With more than 24 historic and modern buildings, ADKX offers immersive exhibitions, outdoor activities on Minnow Pond, and signature events like FallFest and the Adirondack Art Festival. Learn more at www.theADKX.org or call (518) 352-7311.

About the NYS Department of Veterans' Services

The New York State Department of Veterans' Services proudly serves New York's Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families, connecting them with benefits, services, and support. All who served should contact the Department at 888-838-7697 or via its website – veterans.ny.gov – to meet in-person or virtually with an accredited Veterans Benefits Advisor to receive the benefits they have earned. Follow DVS on Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn.

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