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Paterson, lawmakers agree they want parks open

ALBANY, N.Y. For now the gates at dozens of New York State Parks will remain closed, simply because legislators and environmental groups aren't open to Governor David Paterson's latest plan.

The two groups claim Paterson's proposal would reduce state money specifically set aside for environmental projects.

"I think the governor has put the legislative leaders between a rock and a hard place on this, but I think everybody understands what the game is," said Brian Houseal, the executive director with the Adirondack Council.

Paterson says the \$6 million needed to re-open every state park in time for Memorial Day and for the rest of the summer is there. In coming up with the cash, the Governor also wants to shift \$110 million from the state's Environmental Protection Fund.

"Our responsibility is to ignore even some of the prodding and standard criticism and to do the right thing. There doesn't need to be any finger pointing," said Paterson speaking with reporters Tuesday morning.

Groups like the Adirondack Council and Audubon New York are doing just that, pointing the finger. They spent the day lobbying around the capitol, claiming Paterson is taking a bad situation and making it worse.

"The governor is essentially asking you to cut off your left arm to save your right arm. We don't think that's a choice that needs to be made," added David Haight, New York Director for the American Farmland Trust.

"The Senate and Assembly have proposed other alternatives. The governor's choice that he's trying to ram down the legislature's throat is not the only one and its certainly not the best one."

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