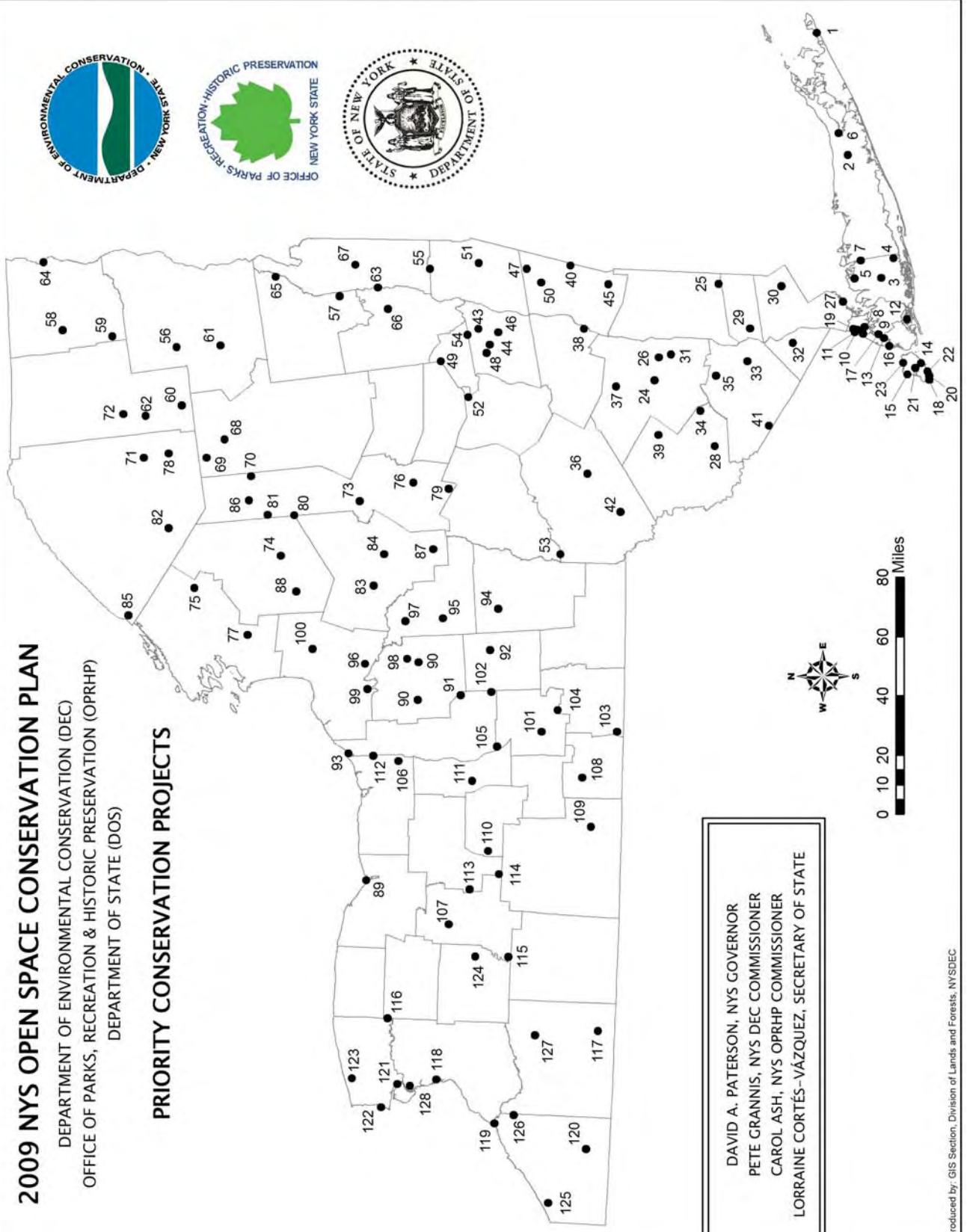


2009 NYS OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN

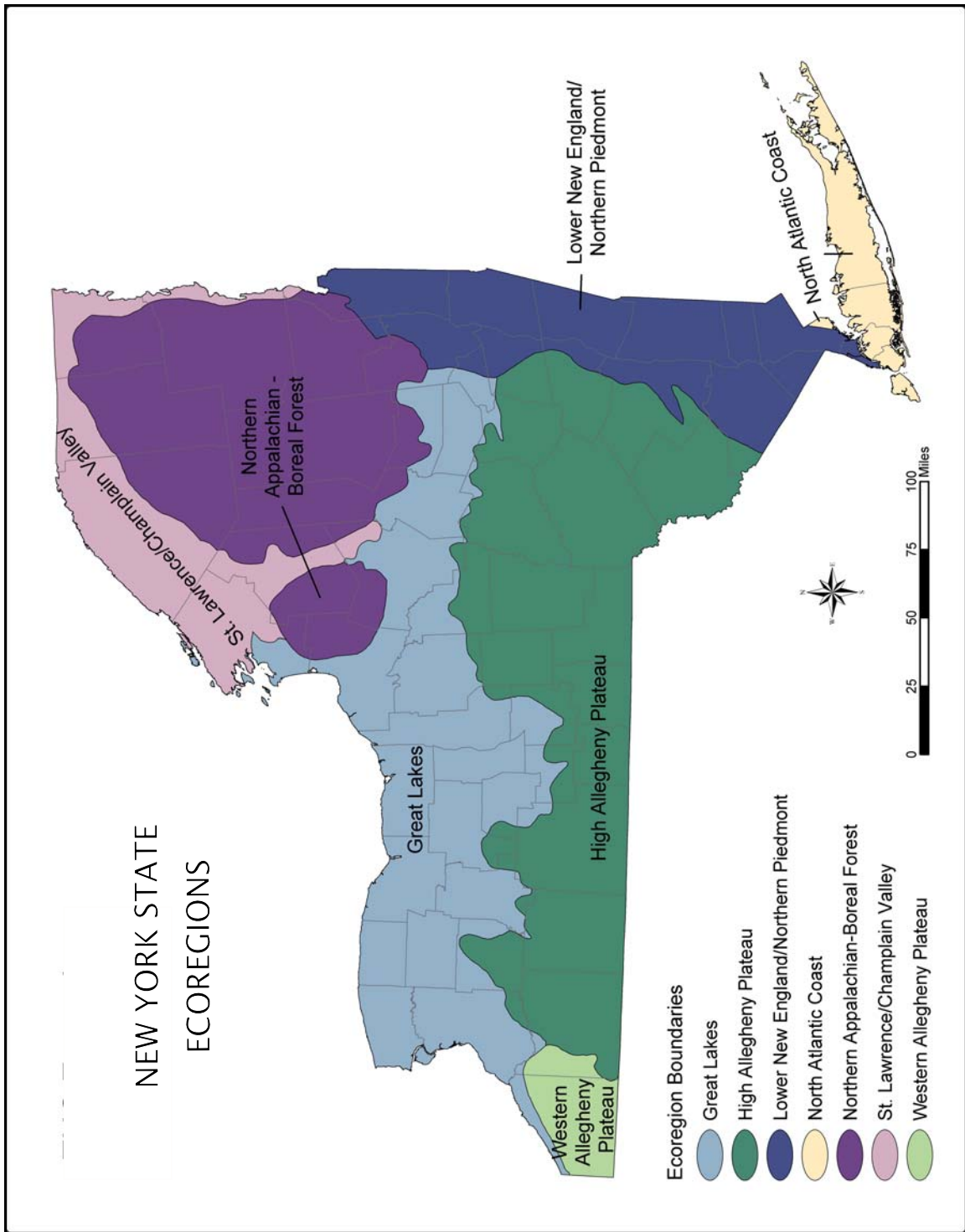
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (DEC)
OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION (OPRHP)
DEPARTMENT OF STATE (DOS)

PRIORITY CONSERVATION PROJECTS



DAVID A. PATERSON, NYS GOVERNOR
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Map produced by: GIS Section, Division of Lands and Forests, NYSDEC



The identification of seven (7) distinct ecological systems or 'ecoregions' within New York State will assist DEC in achieving a more unified ecosystem-based approach to managing our state's natural resources. For more information on ecoregions, see the www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/item1847.html.

New York State Ecoregions
 identified by The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

REGIONAL PRIORITY CONSERVATION PROJECTS

OUR STATE'S REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The following conservation projects have been identified through the nine Regional Advisory Committees (Committees) and public comments received through the Plan's review process. It represents the unique and irreplaceable open space resources of our State that encompass exceptional ecological, wildlife, recreational, scenic, and historical values. The identification of these projects is a result of extensive analysis of our State's open space conservation needs by the RACs, in consultation with DEC and OPRHP staff. These projects are filtered through a wide spectrum of professional expertise found on each of the Committees through a consensus-based process.

The Committees are also crucial in providing advice and recommendations on policies and priorities, studies and assessments, the consideration of economic impacts, the ecological value of projects, and other relevant matters. These recommendations along with regional project narrative descriptions are summarized in reports provided by each Committee.

Abridged versions of the Committee reports listing Committee members and Committee recommendations can be found in Chapter VII. Unabridged versions of the reports containing the regional priority project narratives and information on the identification process of the priority projects can be found in the Plan's electronic appendices (A-C) located on DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

OUR STATE'S PRIORITY OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Since the development of the State's first Open Space Plan in 1992, the list of conservation projects has grown from 75 to 135. Many of these projects involve conservation work that has gone on for decades and which will require work far into the future. Though much work is ahead, the increase of projects is indicative of the broad public support that exists throughout our State for an open space conservation program, and for the many environmental and economic benefits such a program delivers to its communities.

Priority projects included on this list are eligible for funding from the State's Environmental Protection Fund, and other State, federal and local funding sources. For most of the project areas identified, a combination of State and local acquisition, land use regulation, smart development decisions, land owner incentives and other conservation tools used in various combinations, will be needed to succeed in conserving these open space resources for the long term. Many of the priority project areas are large and will require a balance between conservation and compatible, natural resource sensitive economic development.

Species of Greatest Conservation Need

As New York's varied geology creates habitats which support a rich species diversity, many of these habitats are being lost and fragmented to development, causing a decline of many of the State's native plants and animals. Protection of habitat through the open space planning process is a key strategy in securing the future of the State's biological diversity. This year for the first time, the Plan identifies projects that will help sustain habitats for species of greatest conservation need, which have been identified

through the State's conservation planning process.

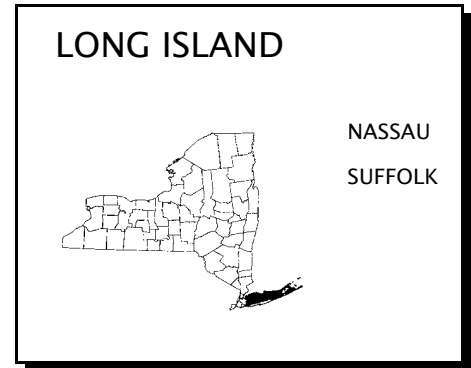
{#} Refers to the location identified on *Regional Priority Conservation Projects* map.

❖ Refers to priority projects which support *Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)* as identified in our State's *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy Plan*.

^ Refers to critical *Important Bird Areas* or (IBAs) identified by Audubon NY (National Audubon Society) through a global partnership led by BirdLife International: Fort Edward/Washington County Grasslands IBA (Region 5); Calverton Grasslands in the Long Island Pine Barrens IBA (Region 1); St. Lawrence Valley IBAs (Region 6), especially Point Peninsula, Perch River Complex, Lisbon Grasslands, Indian River/Black Lakes IBAs; and Tug Hill IBAs (Region 6).

REGION 1 / LONG ISLAND

Here is where the glacier finally stopped. The glacier acted like a great bulldozer, pushing rocky debris ahead of it. When it stopped its advance and began to retreat, it left a ridge of rock and sand, the great terminal moraine that became Long Island. Today, Long Island is best known for its magnificent barrier island sandy beaches on the south shore. Salt water wetlands fringe the coastline in quiet protected bays and provide habitat for hundreds of species such as waterfowl. The wetlands also provide vital protection for many marine species, serving as sheltered nurseries for fish, shellfish and crustaceans. The interior landscape of Long Island contains starkly beautiful pine barrens, rich deciduous forests and a great many planted landscapes on the historic estates. Because of its location, Long Island is especially rich in marine history.



* To read the Region 1 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

ATLANTIC COAST {1} ❖ – Acquisition of coastal parcels for active and passive recreation, habitat and endangered species protection. Representative projects include:

- **Barrier Islands** – Parcels on the barrier islands protecting Long Island's south shore from the Atlantic Ocean. Currently for sale are the 5-acre Foundation Block parcel on Long Beach Island and several small parcels on Fire Island, including waterfront lots in Davis Park, Water Island, and Ocean Bay Park. These parcels provide protection of dunes and critical buffer from the shore.
- **Montauk Moorlands** – A 265-acre area on the Montauk Peninsula between Ditch Plains and Camp Hero comprised of globally rare maritime moorland, freshwater and tidal wetlands, and Atlantic oceanfront bluffs. The wetlands support the state rare herptiles including blue spotted salamander, southern leopard frogs and spotted turtles. Acquisitions will consolidate public ownership within this unique ecosystem.

CENTRAL PINE BARRENS {2} ❖ – Acquisition of vacant land within the legislatively designated boundary of the Central Pine Barrens (ECL 57-0101(11)). Available privately owned parcels within the Core and Critical Resources Areas (CRA) should be acquired as well as select projects in the Compatible Growth Areas (CGA). Representative projects include:

- **Southampton Core, CRA and CGA** – Acquisition of Core, Critical Resource Area and Compatible Growth Area parcels within Southampton Town will help maintain the hydrological and ecological integrity of the area.
- **Rose Parcel 2** – The final 35 acres of a 400-acre acquisition. The parcel is comprised of oak-pitch pine dry forest. Because it is zoned multi-family residential, this developer-owned parcel can support 7 units per acre.
- **Overton Preserve** – 280 acres remain to be acquired in this 500-acre assemblage of fields, wetlands, and woodlands; home to hundreds of plant and animal species including forest interior birds, American woodcock, Great Horned owls, and the state-endangered tiger salamander.
- **Calverton Grasslands ¹** – This is the largest contiguous grassland habitat on Long Island and one of the most significant in the entire state. The grasslands and its ten kettlehole ponds are habitat for several state threatened, endangered, and special-concern species including the short-eared owl and the Eastern tiger salamander. The Grasslands are located on the east side of Wading River Road between Middle Country Road and Swan Pond Road in the Hamlet of Calverton, Town of Riverhead. This property was conveyed by the federal government to the Town of Riverhead in 1994, pursuant to a law requiring that the property be used for economic development in accordance with a redevelopment plan to replace all or part of the economic activity lost at the site. In accordance with that conveyance, the Town, with the support of Suffolk County and the State of New York, has solicited development proposals. Accordingly, conservation project opportunities will be available only for those portions of the site that are not eligible for development, and inclusion of this site in the Open Space Plan is not intended to preclude or limit development consistent with the federal government conveyance and the Town's land use plans.
- **Pine Ridge Preserve** – Development under consideration for this parcel should recognize the ecological importance of 800 acres of highly intact contiguous pine barrens forest containing significant wildlife habitat. Home to rare Lepidoptera, including coastal barrens buckmoth and several NYS natural heritage rank species. Remarkably free of invasive plant species.

LONG ISLAND SOUND COASTAL AREA {3} ❖ – Acquisition of open space within the boundaries of the federally designated Long Island Estuary. Includes Sound-front property and parcels along creek and river corridors draining into the Estuary. Acquisitions protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and water-based industry, and provide increase opportunities for public access to the Sound. Representative projects include:

- **Mitchell Creek Wetlands** – A combination of tidal and freshwater wetlands which drain directly into Manhasset Bay. The project will protect important wildlife habitat, provide erosion control, and secure an import link in the Shoreline-to-Shoreline Trail which connects Manhasset Bay and Hempstead Harbor.
- **Sagamore Hill Additions** – 19 parcels totaling 358 acres, flanking Sagamore Hill National Park on the Cove Neck peninsula in the Town of Oyster Bay. Most parcels front either Oyster Bay or Cold Spring Harbor.
- **Shu Swamp Natural Area** – 9 parcels totaling 80 acres on either side of Shu Swamp Preserve in the Town of Oyster Bay. The area is a Class I freshwater wetland within the Oyster Bay SGPA. Home to endangered brook trout, brook lamprey and water otter as well as several unusual or regionally rare plant species.

- **Kate Trubee Davison Preserve Additions** – 16 parcels totaling 188 acres between the Kate Trubee Davison Preserve, City of Glen Cove Parkland and Village of Lattintown Wetlands on the Long Island Sound in the Town of Oyster Bay. Includes an historic dairy and a monastery with pristine wetlands and formal gardens.
- **Port Washington / Manhasset Bay** – Three parcels totaling 8 acres on Manhasset Bay in Port Washington will provide new opportunities for public access to the water.
- **Oyster Bay Mill Pond Area** – One 6-acre parcel fronting Oyster Bay Mill Pond, an 8-acre stream-fed pond within the boundaries of the Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge that flows directly into Oyster Bay Harbor.
- **Oyster Bay Harbor Area**– 36 parcels totaling 294 acres surrounding Oyster Bay Harbor, home to New York State’s largest oyster fishing area. This popular area provides outstanding recreational opportunities and includes a large concentration of both saltwater and freshwater wetlands.
- **Keyspan/Glenwood Landing** – One 8-acre waterfront property fronting Hempstead Harbor and consisting of woods, sandy open space, and almost 4 acres of underwater land. The property is adjacent to the Town of Oyster Bay’s Tappan Beach Park, which includes a picnic area, pool, playground, fishing pier and boat launching area.
- **Morgan Estate** – 452.5 acres on the Eaton’s Neck peninsula in the Town of Huntington; over a mile of shoreline, mature woodlands, high quality freshwater and tidal wetlands and rolling grasslands. This single property encompasses nearly every habitat type existent in the Town of Huntington.
- **Seminary / State Assemblage** – 374.5 acres stretching between Lloyd Harbor and Cold Spring Harbor. The project encompasses a 225-acre Seminary as well as five parcels owned by OPRHP in the un-built section of the Bethpage right-of-way which have NOT been designated as parkland.
- **Nissequogue River System** – 138.6 acres adjoining Nissequogue River State Park, Sunken Meadow State Park and DEC’s King’s Park Greenbelt property. All drain into the Nissequogue River watershed and Long Island Sound. High-value consolidation parcels.
- **Crane Neck** – Two parcels near DEC’s Flax Pond State Tidal Wetlands and SUNY’s Flax Pond Environmental Research Center are available for purchase. A 5-acre parcel west of Flax Pond and fronting Long Island Sound has notable geologic features including a stepped topography dating to the last glacial retreat. A 1-acre wooded site has 300 feet of frontage on Flax Pond and could greatly improve public access to the water.
- **Conscience Bay Watershed** – Three heavily wooded parcels totaling 30 acres within the immediate drainage of Conscience Bay and within the zone of capture of nearby public water supply wells. Preservation is necessary to prevent ground and surface runoff into this still quite pristine ecosystem.
- **Mount Sinai Highlands** – 115 acres of hardwood forest in the Mt. Sinai Harbor watershed. The area contains some steep topography, with slopes up to 30% and elevations up to 220 feet above sea level. Exceptional views and wildlife habitat.
- **Wading River Assemblage** – Several sound-front parcels totaling 500 acres in the Town of Riverhead Hamlet of Wading River, including land owned by Little Flower Children Services and the Boy Scouts of America.
- **Vassilaros** – 64 acres between Miller Place Pond and Woodhull’s Landing Road with extensive oak-hickory-beech woodlands, expanses of grassland habitat and old orchard. Topography on the eastern edge is severe with slopes near 30 degrees. Site is also archaeologically significant.
- **Key Span/Shoreham** – 893.2 acres in the Hamlets of Shoreham and Wading River with one mile of Sound frontage and 2000 feet along Wading River Marsh. Links with the 1500-acre Brookhaven State Park to the south.

- **Nassau County 4H** –138 acres in the Hamlet of Roanoke, Town of Riverhead. This camp property would provide new public access to Long Island Sound and opportunities for camping, environmental education and passive recreation.
- **North Bergen Avenue Soundfront** – 95 acres of woodland and meadow with over 2100 feet of frontage on Long Island Sound in the Hamlet of Mattituck, Town of Southold. These scenic parcels are adjacent to hundreds of acres of farmland and combine steep bluffs with gently rolling hills.

LONG ISLAND SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE {4} ❖ – Conservation of open space within the boundaries of the state designated South Shore Estuary Reserve. The SSER is a 326 square mile area encompassing south shore bays and their watersheds from the East Rockaway Inlet approximately 75 miles east to Heady Creek at the eastern end of Shinnecock Bay. The SSER extends from the mean high tide line on the bay side of the barrier islands to the inland limits of the mainland watersheds that drain into Hempstead Bay, South Oyster Bay, Great South Bay, Moriches Bay, Quantuck Bay and Shinnecock Bay. Representative projects include:

- **Nassau Tributary/Bay Buffer Sites:** Waterfront parcels, such as Harbor Isle Waterfront Site, Brooklyn Waterworks at Milburn Creek, and Camp DeBaun, that provide critical buffer for SSER tributary corridors and bays and increased opportunities for public waterway access in the densely developed Town of Hempstead.
- **St. John’s University / Oakdale Campus** – As the largest privately held upland parcel on the Great South Bay, this 175 acre compound contributes greatly to the water quality of the Bay, which is currently designated as a eco–system based management demonstration project for the New York Oceans and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council.
- **Patchogue River Maritime Park** – Small but critical, the 2.5 acre parcel would provide much needed public access to this tidal river in a densely developed and under–served community in the Village of Patchogue. The site is improved and will require demolition and restoration or redevelopment.
- **Mastic–Shirley Conservation Area** – An assemblage of small lots within a 500–acre wetland complex on the Great South Bay. Exceptional habitat as well as critical flood protection to the low–lying communities of Mastic, Mastic Beach and Shirley.
- **Forge River Watershed** – An assemblage of parcels encompassing 225 acres in the Brookhaven Hamlets of Mastic and Manor Park. The Forge River drains to Moriches Bay and directly contributes to the health of the Bay’s important shell and finfish habitat.
- **Carlls River Watershed Addition** – Small parcels at the headwaters of the Carlls River, north of Belmont Lake State Park in North Babylon and Wyandanch.
- **Haven’s Point Additions** – Two parcels totaling 11 acres adjacent to DEC’s tidal wetlands in East Moriches will enhance public access and buffer the wetlands and Seatuck Cove from residential runoff.
- **Shinnecock Bay** – 150 acres of back–barrier salt marshes extending for five miles between the Villages of Quogue and Southampton on the Shinnecock Bay. Includes open water, dredge islands and intertidal flats critical for fish and shell fish, waterfowl, migratory shorebirds, rare plants and federally listed sea turtles.

LONG ISLAND TRAIL & GREENWAY SYSTEM {5} – Acquisition of parcels along trail corridors and greenways to provide non–motorized travel corridors for people and wildlife, and to link recreational, natural and cultural attractions. Representative projects include:

- **Shoreline–to–Shoreline Trail** – Acquisition of linkage and buffer parcels along this 12 mile trail corridor connecting the western shore of Manhasset Bay to the eastern shore of Hempstead Harbor across the Port Washington peninsula in the Town of North Hempstead. Will connect with the Hempstead Harbor Shoreline Trail System (below).

- **Hempstead Harbor Shoreline Trail System** – Acquisition of linkage and buffer parcels along this interconnected system of trails around Hempstead Harbor, a State designated Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat. When complete, 21 communities will be linked by the trail system.
- **Muttontown Preserve Trail System** – 11 parcels totaling 295 acres adjoining the Muttontown Preserve. This popular horse and foot trail system is heavily used and is threatened with fragmentation. It is located in the Oyster Bay SGPA and contains rare plants, tiger salamanders, and glacial kettle-hole ponds.
- **SUNY Old Westbury Trail System** – 103 parcels totaling 720 acres adjoining the SUNY/Old Westbury Campus. Acquisitions will maintain connectivity of popular horse and foot trails and strengthen groundwater recharge within this portion of the Oyster Bay SGPA.
- **Trail View State Park Additions** – Acquisition of parcels to enhance access to Trail View State Park and protect its viewshed. Specifically, one steep 5-acre parcel is imperative for maintaining existing trail continuity and safety.
- **Long Island Motor Parkway Trail** – This proposed historic and recreational trail along the former Motor Parkway right-of-way could become Long Island’s longest trail system. Several privately owned parcels will be needed to achieve trail continuity.
- **Glacial Ridge Trail** – Linkage and buffer parcels along this five mile trail which runs east-west along the Ronkonkoma terminal moraine between Brookhaven Town Hall and public land on the Carmen’s River.
- **Shore-to-Core-to-Shore Trail** – Acquisition of private parcels along this cross-island trail corridor which runs from the Long Island Sound at Wildwood State Park, to the Pine Barrens Visitor’s Center in Manorville, to Terrell’s River County Park on the Great South Bay. Several state and county preserves are linked along the way.
- **Peconic River Greenway** – Acquisition of land and trail easements over 70+ parcels affecting about 150 acres of land along the Peconic River Trail in an urban area of Riverhead. The project includes a half mile linkage trail to heavily-used Stotsky Park and will greatly enhance public access to the Peconic River, a State-designated Scenic and Recreational River. Due to the urban nature of the project area, some target acquisition parcels may be improved and in need of demolition and restoration.
- **Tesla Property** – Historic preservation of the site of Nikola Tesla’s internationally significant Wardenclyffe laboratory at the corner of Route 25A and Randall Road in the Hamlet of Shoreham, Town of Brookhaven. This 16.2 acre property is the site of Tesla’s visionary wireless telecommunication tower constructed around 1900. The site, the first to be listed on the Town’s registry of historic places in 1967, is located in the State-designated Long Island North Shore Heritage Area and will provide an important link and destination point along the soon-to-be-constructed Port Jefferson to Wading River hiking and biking trail.

PECONIC PINELANDS MARITIME RESERVE {6} ❖ – Acquisition of open space within the legislatively designated boundary of the Peconic Pinelands Maritime Reserve (Article 57 ECL), an interconnected area encompassing both the Central Long Island Pine Barrens and the Peconic Estuary, a federally designated estuary of national significance. Acquisitions will protect the waters of the Peconic Bay, as well as land within the Hither Hills, South Fork, Central Suffolk and Southold SGPAs. Representative projects include:

- **Broadcove** – 94.6-acre property in the Hamlet of Aquebogue, Town of Riverhead. This former duck farm is located on the north shore of Flanders Bay near the mouth of the Peconic River. It contains extensive tidal wetlands and shoreline habitat along Terry’s Creek and Broad Cove as well as upland woods and open fields.
- **North Fork Preserve** – 133-acre parcel in the Hamlet of Northville, Town of Riverhead, contains an especially rich diversity of habitat types, including freshwater wetlands draining to both the

Long Island Sound and an extensive drainageway known as Long Swamp. Threatened and special-concern species documented on site.

- **Riverhead Creeks** – Acquisition of parcels in the Town of Riverhead fronting or draining to Sawmill Creek, Terry’s Creek, Meetinghouse Creek, Reeves Creek and Cases Creek.
- **South Fork Critical Wildlands and Groundwater Protection Area** – 1,000 acres of mostly contiguous forest in the Tuckahoe Woods, Great Hill, Noyack Hills, and Long Pond Greenbelt regions of the South Fork, including pristine deep flow recharge areas and watershed lands critical to preserving the health of the Peconic Bay.
- **Cow Neck / Sebonac Creek** – Consolidation of public ownership in a 1,200-acre complex of beaches, marshes, meadows, maritime forest, freshwater swamp and successional woodland groves. Rich biodiversity and high biological productivity.
- **Shelter Island Groundwater Area** – Sylvester Manor and St. Gabriel’s Additions both sit atop Shelter Island’s sole source aquifer and are critical to drinking water quality.
- **Pipe’s Cove Complex** – Acquisition of 116 acres in the wetlands complex that includes Pipes Creek, Pipes Neck Creek and Pipe’s Cove on Southold Bay in the Town of Southold. This is the largest relatively undisturbed salt-marsh habitat remaining on the North Fork.
- **Hashamomuck Pond** – 2 parcels on Hashamomuck Pond: a 54-acre wooded parcel at the northern end of the pond contains significant freshwater wetlands and a 4-acre parcel at the southern end of the pond has sweeping views over Southold Bay and could provide public boating access.
- **Cutchogue Harbor Access** – 3.25 acres of historic interest on the western shore of Cutchogue Harbor would provide excellent recreational access to the water.
- **Orient State Park Viewshed** – 35 acres of open fields lying directly across Long Beach Bay in the viewshed of Orient Beach State Park. The property is adjacent to DEC’s Long Beach Bay State Tidal Wetlands and is on the market for residential subdivision.
- **East Hampton Pine Barrens** – 21 parcels overlying the South Fork SGPA in western East Hampton near Wainscott and Sag Harbor. This sandy-soil, pine-oak forest is situated atop the most voluminous portion of East Hampton’s potable groundwater supply.
- **Camp Blue Bay** – 171 acre parcel fronting Gardiner’s Bay in the Hamlet of Springs. Primarily old fields, with stands of state-significant red cedar coastal forest. The property’s sandy beaches are backed by coastal bluffs rising to 65 feet in elevation.
- **Stony Hill Woods** – 535 acres in northern Amagansett in the Town of East Hampton. This very special old growth forest on the glacial moraine includes kettlehole ponds and is important for deep groundwater recharge. Suffolk County Water Authority wells are nearby. The forest is a rich habitat and is traversed by the Paumanok Path.

SPECIAL GROUNDWATER PROTECTION AREAS {7} – Acquisition of vacant land within the nine Special Groundwater Protection Areas identified in the 1992 Long Island Comprehensive Special Groundwater Protection Area Plan. The protection of land within SGPA boundaries is directly linked to the long term health of Long Island’s drinking water supply. Representative projects include:

- **Whitney Estate** – Located in Manhasset, one 325-acre parcel and several surrounding parcels are the last large tracts of undeveloped land in the entire Town of North Hempstead and the North Hills SGPA. The area consists of rolling hills, meadows, woods, marshes, open water and the largest glacial erratic on Long Island. Four water supply wells are located in the project area. The parcels are very well suited for hiking, biking and historic preservation.
- **Old Westbury Gardens Enhancement Area** – 11 parcels totaling 311 acres in the Oyster Bay SGPA anchored by Old Westbury Gardens, a 160-acre privately operated historic site and nature preserve.
- **Route 25A Heritage Area** – 16 parcels totaling 231 acres along Route 25A in the State-designated Long Island North Shore Heritage Area and the Oyster Bay SGPA. Parcels will preserve the history of Long Island’s rural past while protecting drinking water for its future.

- **Planting Fields Arboretum Additions** – 21 parcels totaling 606 acres near or adjoining Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park in the Oyster Bay SGPA.
- **Tiffany Creek Preserve** – 18 parcels totaling 221 acres in the Oyster Bay SGPA. Two water district wells are located in project area, as well as spring fed ponds and streams, old growth woods, migratory songbirds, several turtle species and tiger salamanders.
- **Camp Kaufman/ USDAN** – 479.5 hilly and heavily wooded acres in the Hamlets of Wheatley Heights and Half Hollow Hills in the Towns of Babylon and Huntington. This parcel is the largest unprotected open space in the SGPA and is less than 100 yards up-gradient of the Suffolk County Water Authority’s main drinking water well on Circle Drive. Also abuts the proposed Long Island Motor Parkway Trail.
- **Oak Brush Plains Preserve** – In keeping with Chapter 635 of the Laws of 1987, any land surplussed by the New York State Department of Health at Pilgrim State Hospital should be transferred to the jurisdiction of DEC for addition to the Oak Brush Plains State Nature and Historic Preserve, including the proposed Long Island Truck–Rail Intermodal Facility parcel.
- **Pineridge Park and Additions** – 162 acres in the West Hills/Melville SGPA. A high, mounded area atop the Ronkonkoma moraine, characterized by oak–mixed heath forest, low bush blueberry and sandy soils. Adjacent to Old Bethpage Village Restoration and Bethpage State Park.
- **Beagle Club** –150 acres in the Central Suffolk SGPA North and a possible link in the Shore–to–Core–to–Shore Trail. The subject is level and vegetated with woods and old field growth that provide excellent habitat for fox, rabbit, and birds of prey, including Cooper's Hawk. The property is surrounded by protected farmland in the heart of Riverhead's Agriculture Protection Zone. Acquisition will help maintain the integrity of the drinking water supply, preserve rural agricultural vistas and soils, and provide a link in an important trail corridor for both people and wildlife.



REGION 2 / NEW YORK CITY / 5 BOROUGHES

Although it may look solidly urban on a map, New York City has a surprising amount of green space in its many parks and coastal wetlands. The serpentine rock that makes up part of Staten Island is a geologic historical marker from the days when North America and Europe collided hundreds of millions of years ago. More recent natural history in this area is represented by an ecological transition zone which represents the northern limit of many southern tree species, such as Willow Oaks. And it is here that the Hudson River finally meets the sea. Human history dominates the landscape, yet where human endeavors have been abandoned, vegetation has gently reclaimed the area. A surprising number of heron rookeries exist in wetlands and on uninhabited islands, and there is much more wildlife than many people realize. As open green space is very precious in a major urban area where land prices are often calculated in terms of square feet, it remains vital to the well-being of the millions of people who use and often treasure this open space.



* To read the Region 2 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

WATERFRONT ACCESS

BRONX

BRONX RIVER GREENWAY {8} – Creation of a greenway/trailway along the Bronx River from the 172d Street to Hunts Point Riverside Park and Soundview Park. This corridor will connect with the existing 17 mile greenway/trailway to the Kensico Reservoir in Westchester County.

- **City Island Wetlands** – A vacant Bronx shorefront area in its natural state with significant wetlands; will also provide public access to the waterfront.

BRONX / NEW YORK

HARLEM RIVER WATERFRONT {9} – The public access objective for the Harlem River area is to provide pedestrians and cyclists with opportunities to enjoy both banks of the river through expansion of waterfront parks and the creation of a continuous pathway within the city-wide greenway system. Bronx and Manhattan parks and greenways will be connected by existing bridges, including the non-vehicular historic High Bridge.

BRONX HARLEM GREENWAY {10} – The five-acre Spuyten Duyvil/Penn Central Triangle properties could provide waterfront access at the junction of the Hudson and Harlem Rivers as well as wetlands preservation opportunities; the 3.7 acre Fordham Landing property at the end of Fordham road, is a vacant, privately owned parcel that could provide additional waterfront parkland in an under-served community with a waterfront greenway connection south to Roberto Clemente State Park; redevelopment of the waterfront areas at the south end of Roberto Clemente State Park would further extend waterfront parklands and greenway along a particularly scenic portion of the Harlem River Valley (Facing Manhattan's Highbridge Park) south to the Washington and Hamilton Bridges. This would include the Bronx Harlem River Waterfront at Depot Place and Exterior Street – a 25,478 square foot site along the Bronx side of the Harlem River from just south of the High Bridge to just south of the Alexander Hamilton Bridge. (*Note: Adjacent property owned*

by NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services is listed as suggestion for government agency transfer.)

MANHATTAN HARLEM RIVER GREENWAY {11} – Four privately owned industrial lots along the Harlem River in the Inwood section of Manhattan that would form a waterside promenade with fishing access.

QUEENS

JAMAICA BAY PROTECTION AREA {12} ❖ – A premier coastal habitat including important marine and terrestrial ecosystems and bird sanctuary, under the primary stewardship of the National Parks Service and Gateway National Recreation Area. Located in Brooklyn and Queens, it is also an important element in the Atlantic flyway. The area includes, but is not limited to the following parcels, and other resources identified in the Jamaica Bay Watershed Protection Plan:

- **Hook Creek** – A freshwater creek and uplands within a large, city-owned tidal wetland in Queens.
- **LILCO Property at Beach 116th Street** – A large upland parcel that includes waterfront access.
- **Sea Girt Avenue Wetlands** – Tidal wetlands and ponds at the eastern end of the Rockaway Peninsula.
- **Spring Creek/Fresh Creek** – A freshwater creek on the Brooklyn/Queens border.
- **Udall's Cove** – A tidal wetland preserve connected to Long Island Sound through Little Neck Bay.
- **Udall's Ravine** – A ravine and stream corridor that are part of a larger wetland ecosystem.
- **Beach 88th Street on Beach Channel Drive** – Shoreline parcels that were identified in "Buffer the Bay Revisited," published by the Trust for Public Land and New York City Audubon Society in 1992; provides public access to and views of Jamaica Bay.
- **Brant Point** – Parcels adjacent to the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation's Brant Point Wildlife Sanctuary, identified in "Buffer the Bay Revisited," published by the Trust for Public Land and New York City Audubon Society in 1992; would help consolidate and buffer the City's preserve and provide public access to Jamaica Bay while preserving critical wildlife habitat.
- **Dubos Point** – Shoreline adjacent to the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation's Dubos Point Wildlife Sanctuary along Jamaica Bay, identified in "Buffer the Bay Revisited," published by the Trust for Public Land and New York City Audubon Society in 1992; would help consolidate and buffer already-protected City-owned land and provide public access to Jamaica Bay while preserving critical wildlife habitat.
- **Mott Peninsula** – Shoreline parcels on Jamaica Bay that were identified in "Buffer the Bay Revisited," published by the Trust for Public Land and New York City Audubon Society in 1992; would help provide public access to Jamaica Bay while preserving critical wildlife habitat.
- **Norton Peninsula** – Shoreline parcels on Jamaica Bay between NYC's Rockaway Community Park (former Edgemere landfill) and Bayswater Point State Park, identified in "Buffer the Bay Revisited," published by the Trust for Public Land and New York City Audubon Society in 1992; would help consolidate already-protected state and city land, and provide public access to Jamaica Bay while preserving critical wildlife habitat.
- **Northeastern Queens Shoreline** – Unique and critical natural resources areas representing some of the last contiguous coastal habitats in this area.

KINGS / QUEENS

BROOKLYN / QUEENS EAST RIVER WATERFRONT {13} – Open spaces and proposed greenways along the 20 mile waterfront from the Brooklyn Army Terminal to the Astoria Power Station will provide diverse and under-served neighborhoods with waterfront access and recreational

opportunities. Properties include, but are not limited to:

- **Private properties needed to complete Bushwick Inlet Park**
- **Hallets Marina, Vernon Boulevard**
- **Con Edison, Northern Hunters Point.**
- **The Grain Elevator Property**

RICHMOND

GREAT KILLS HARBOR – NELSON AVENUE WATERFRONT ADDITION {14} – Approximately 4 acres of wooded natural land near the waterfront to expand Nelson Seaside Park. The barrier and shoreline of the Great Kills harbor is under primary stewardship of the National Parks Service.

HARBOR HERONS WILDLIFE COMPLEX {15} ❖ – This wildlife complex includes tidal and freshwater marshes, a pond, and creeks located on the west and north shores of Staten Island. The complex also includes four islands in New York Harbor. Together, these support the largest breeding population of colonial water birds in the northeastern United States.

- **Graniteville Swamp/Old Place Creek** – A diverse 30 acre swamp forest which includes a wide range of habitats, a tidal marsh, a cattail marsh, and freshwater ponds as well as feeding grounds for egrets and other wading birds (The New York/New Jersey Port Authority expressed concern regarding inclusion of this property on the priority list, in relation to its plans regarding the Goethal's Bridge).
- **Merrill's Creek** – A tidal wetland system north of Saw Mill Creek on the Arthur Kill.
- **Saw Mill Creek** – Tidal and fresh water marsh complex adjacent to Prall's Creek; includes critical habitat for State threatened species.
- **Gulfport Marsh & Uplands** – Freshwater and tidal wetlands cover about 240 of the 625 acres of this parcel, a combination of two parcels previously known as the "GATX" and "Duke Energy" parcels and now known as the "380 Development" site. The site provides nesting and foraging habitat for several significant species. The site also provides some important open grassland habitat and a "corridor," or link, between Saw Mill Creek and Old Place Creek. Because the site includes a dock area that was used by tankfields in the past, it may be appropriate to establish a corridor for access to that dock to accommodate some future water-dependent use on the eastern portion of the site near Gulf Avenue.
- **Little Fresh Kills** – A portion of 60 acres of upland and marsh buffering the shore against urban development can be protected by acquisition or conservation easement.
- **Neck Creek** – Tidal marsh area off the Arthur Kill.
- **Cable Avenue Woods** – Patchy wet and upland forest community of 28 acres threatened by imminent development.
- **Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve Additions** – Located adjacent to Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve. Northeastern Woodland and Englewood Boundary Tract sites would provide additional buffer for the Park and protect it from development.
- **Blazing Star** – Located off of Arthur Kill Road, this 12+/- acre property consists of shipwrecks, mud flats, salt marsh and upland woods including an historic cemetery. It provides significant habitat for many species of birds.
- **Sharrotts Road Shorelands** – A 17+/- acre site, consisting of woods, salt marsh and mudflats along the Arthur Kill. Tappens Creek, which originates in Clay Pit Pond State Park Preserve, flows through the property. A field of sunken barges lies off the shoreline, providing wildlife habitat.
- **Outerbridge Shorelands** – This 30+/- acre site consists of forested upland and tidal wetland shoreline along the Arthur Kill, north and south of the Outerbridge Crossing.
- **Kriescher Cove** – This property consists of woodland, salt marsh and mud flats along the Arthur Kill. The property provides habitat for colonial waterbirds, songbirds, amphibians and

reptiles. Originally, the site included approximately 25 acres of open space, but much of it has been developed. There remains a 6 acre parcel in its natural state.

- **Port Mobil Swamp Forest and Tidal Wetlands** – This site consists of 50+/- acres of forest with rare Blackjack Oak, Persimmon & River Birch, ponds and shoreline surrounding Exxon Mobil’s tank farm along the Arthur Kill. The property provides significant habitat for amphibians and reptiles.

NEW YORK CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION SITES {16}

- **Brinkerhoff Cemetery** – Site of an old Queens family cemetery in Fresh Meadows.
- **Commandant’s House** – Located in Kings County on Little Street within the former Brooklyn Navy Yard. This house was built in 1807 and is currently on the National Register and New York City Landmarks List.
- **Klein Farm** – Located in Queens County at 73rd Avenue and 194th Street. The Klein Homestead was the last privately owned working farm in New York City. It remains an important vestige of Queens County’s primarily agrarian past.
- **William H. Cornell Farmhouse** – Located in Little Neck, Queens, the site includes approximately 1.3 acres with a house and barn, plus outbuildings on an additional .25 acres on Little Neck Parkway.

INNER CITY/ UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITY PARKS {17} – This project will provide open space and recreational opportunities in densely populated urban areas with limited or no open space resources.

- **Con Edison 15th Street Ballfields** – A much-valued recreational resource, now in private hands, in an under-served area of Manhattan near the East River.
- **Greening Gray Neighborhoods** – Several vacant lots that would provide much needed green space in the communities of Harlem, Hunt’s Point in the South Bronx and Bushwick, Brooklyn.
- **Jones Woods Playground addition** – Wooded 6-acre hillside with scenic views in an under-served Neighborhood.
- **Travers Park Expansion** – The site of the Queens Borough Toyota Car Dealership located at 77–12 Northern Boulevard in Jackson Heights, Queens, in a community that is greatly under-served for open space.

LONG POND {18} ❖ – A 90-acre natural wetland area on Staten Island; features knob and kettle topography and a diversity of habitats. (*Note: NYC Parks & Recreation has recently acquired 18.67 acres of this property.*) – **MIV Triangle** – This 5 acre parcel (block 6765, lot 1) located in Richmond County on Raritan Bay, would enhance public access to Raritan Bay shoreline.

PUTNAM RAILROAD {19} – A greenway through the northern Bronx using an abandoned railroad right-of-way.

STATEN ISLAND BLUEBELT {20} – Located on the South Shore of Staten Island, this area serves as an alternative stormwater management system that incorporates existing streams and wetlands. Protecting these areas for stormwater conveyance will obviate the need for many miles of expensive sewer construction and provide aesthetically pleasing parks and greenways.

- **Richmond Creek Acquisitions** – A major drainage corridor; part of a freshwater wetland system.
- **South Beach Northern Wetlands** – Sixty-five acres of former salt marsh that provide local flood control and wildlife habitat and would enlarge the scope of similar adjacent state land.
- **Oakwood Beach Bluebelt** – Various parcels located in the southeast section of Staten Island, that would be appropriate for inclusion in the NYC Department of Environmental Protection’s program for alternative stormwater management using existing streams and wetlands,

involving reduction in impervious surfaces, increased groundwater recharge and improvements to local habitat.

STATEN ISLAND GREENBELT {21} ❖ – One of the largest urban nature preserves in the United States, this 2,500 acre natural area contains unique woodlands, wetlands, glacial ponds, open fields and one of the last remaining intact watersheds in New York City. The Greenbelt is a haven for wildlife and many migratory bird species.

- **Pouch Camp** – A large contiguous parcel containing the northernmost portion of the Greenbelt Watershed Preservation Area.
- **Reeds Basket Willow Swamp** – A heavily wooded environmentally sensitive site located at the base of a steep ravine; contains streams and a vernal swamp.
- **Great Swamp Forest Hill Greens** – This wooded slope would provide a buffer between a housing development and a protected freshwater wetland.
- **Manor Road** – Acquisition of this two-acre lot on the edge of the Greenbelt would protect wetlands from encroachment and degradation.

STATEN ISLAND WET WOODS {22} ❖ – Moist hardwood forest in southern Staten Island that form an intermediate community between maritime shrub forest and forested uplands. These properties contain ponds, streams, and wetlands and include:

- **Arden Heights Woods Additions** – An addition to a 183 acre wildlife sanctuary.
- **Blue Heron Park Additions** – Freshwater wetlands and wildlife habitat; contiguous with an existing city park.
- **Canada Hill Forest** – Thirty-three acres of scarce “Sandy Ground” oak barrens buffering mapped freshwater wetlands.
- **Outerbridge Ponds** – These 14 acres of pine-oak barrens and sedge ponds represent ecosystems rare in New York City.

STATEN ISLAND NORTHSHORE GREENBELT {23} – Goodhue a.k.a. The Children’s Aid Society – Located in northeast Richmond County. This 42+/- acre site consists of woods, freshwater wetlands and forms a link with Allison Pond, Jones Woods, to Snug Harbor. It is currently under threat of development.

– continued –

*Suggested Region 2 Government Properties with Potential
for Inter-agency Transfer for Public Open Space & Recreational Use*

BRONX COUNTY

- Bronx Harlem River Waterfront DCAS Property on Exterior Street
- Bronx River Trailway Lafayette Avenue terminus LORAL site City lots Edgewater Road
- Croton Aqueduct Trail Linkage
- Highbridge Peace Park

KINGS COUNTY

- Brooklyn & Queens East River Waterfront from Brooklyn Army Terminal to Astoria Power Station (gov't-owned parcels)
- Halleck St. between Court & Clinton Sts.
- Current police impound lot – Erie Basin Pier
- Upland area for Brooklyn Waterfront
- Greenway along Piers 7 – 10
- Wolcott Street end
- “Diverter” property – Degraw & Columbia Sts.
- Division Street end
- DEP Sludge Tank Relocation/Lumber Yard
- Dupont Street, Greenpoint
- MTA lot at Commercial St.
- Former Ports & Terminal Pier & Upland – 44th Dr., Queens
- Vernon Boulevard – 31st Ave, Astoria, Queens
- Brooklyn Navy Yard – Officers' Row
- Bush Terminal Piers (gov'-owned parcels)
- 562 Gates Avenue
- Marion Street
- Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area

NEW YORK COUNTY

- 59–63 St. East River Esplanade
- Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse at 113th St.
- Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse at 135th St.
- Harlem Beach
- Lot formerly containing Hamilton Grange
- Upper Hudson River Waterfront Harlem Piers
- Community Gardens West 119th St. between Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. & St. Nicholas Ave. St. Nicholas Ave. & Frederick Douglas Blvd. between 119th & W.120th Sts.
- W.127th & W.128th Sts. – St. Nicholas Ave. & Frederick Douglass Blvd.

QUEENS COUNTY

- Bergen Basin
- Fort Totten
- Port Authority Ballfield
- Creedmoor Historic Buildings
- Notts Landing
- South Jamaica Neighborhood Park
- Langston Hughes Library Open Space
- Thurston Basin
- Flushing Airport Wetlands
- Nassau Expressway Right of Way (See also Brooklyn & Queens East River Waterfront, listed under Kings County)

RICHMOND COUNTY

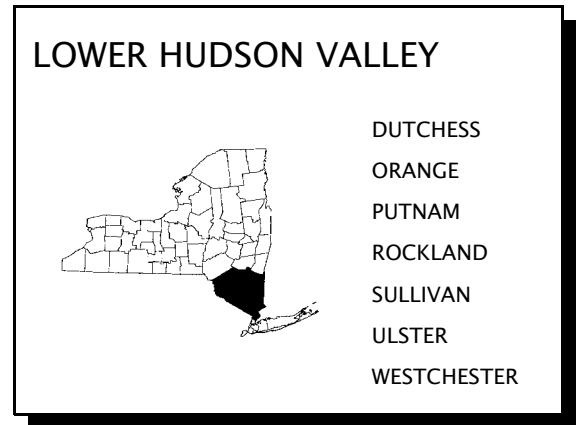
- Arlington Marsh
- Willowbrook State School Woodlands
- North Shore Railroad
- Old Farm Colony
- Richmond Parkway Right of Way

REGION 3 / LOWER HUDSON VALLEY

With the lower Hudson River valley, the Hudson Highlands, the Palisades, Shawangunk Ridge, the Catskill Mountains, the flats of the Wallkill River and the Taconic range, the Lower Hudson Valley has an extremely diverse natural landscape. This region, including the Upper Hudson Valley or Capital Region (Region 4), is rich in wildlife habitat with 22 significant habitat types that support species of greatest conservation need (SCGN ♦).^{*} It is also a remarkable historic landscape which has evolved from the importance of the Hudson River as a natural corridor into New York's interior. Some of the most spectacular scenery of the Hudson River is the bend through the mountains of the Hudson Highlands, scenery which has given the Hudson the nickname of "the Rhine of North America". Lower Revolutionary war sites, enormous river estates with castle-like mansions and the historic remnants of many former industries are testimony to the rich human history of the area.

^{*} 2006 NYSDEC Conservation Framework

^{*} To read the Region 3 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.



GREAT RONDOUT WETLANDS {24} ♦ – Several large, mostly unprotected wetlands occur in the Rondout River watershed, in the Ulster County towns of Marbletown, Olive, Rochester and Wawarsing. Acquisition and/or easement projects should be pursued to protect these unique and important habitats. Most of these wetland areas contain unique or rare species or communities, and most are surrounded by extensive tracts of undeveloped forest land that could also be acquired as buffer areas. Conservation efforts should focus on the following areas:

- **Great Pacama Vly** – When considering biodiversity in the Catskill region, this wetland stands out as being a critical area in need of protection. Encompassing approximately 315 acres at the intersection of the Towns of Marbletown, Olive and Rochester, the Great Pacama Vly is the only site in the Catskills where black spruce is known to be found, and it harbors rare species and communities found nowhere else in the State. There is currently a 50-acre parcel of detached State Forest Preserve in the center of the wetland, which should be expanded to include the whole wetland and any buffer areas.
- **Cedar Swamp** – These forested wetlands, totaling over 800 acres, lie to the east and west side of Dawe Road (also called Brandy Brook Road), south of the east end of the Rondout Reservoir. Perhaps the largest wetland of its kind in the Catskills, it contains trees that are 480 years old, as well as unique and rare communities and species. This site is recognize as a unique and important conservation area by the NYS Natural Heritage Program.
- **Beer Kill Wetlands/Cape Pond** – A large area of wetlands and open water south of Ulster Heights and the Cedar Swamp. Almost 600 acres of marsh areas surround the Beer Kill Creek, which can be canoed, flowing into the west end of Cape Pond. Cape Pond is predominantly undeveloped, with buildings only on the far eastern end. This area hosts wide diversity of aquatic habitats and has great potential as a Wildlife Management Area, including waterfowl hunting and furbearer trapping opportunities.

GREAT SWAMP {25} ❖ – The largest and highest quality red maple hardwood swamp in southern New York is located in the Towns of Pawling and Dover, Dutchess County and the Towns of Patterson and Southeast, Putnam County. Much of the Great Swamp is within the Croton River Basin and flows directly into the East Branch Reservoir, a New York City reservoir. It contains critical habitat for bird and aquatic species—nine of which are rare, protects and purifies the water supply for millions of New York residents, is an aquifer recharge area, reduces flooding, and provides outstanding educational and recreational opportunities. This vital and fragile natural resource needs to be safeguarded from further development and associated runoff. In order to protect the unique habitat of the Great Swamp, the diverse range of wildlife it supports, its scenic value, and its critical function of water purification, not only the in-holdings but also the surrounding uplands need to be conserved. Nearly all of the Great Swamp's 63,000-acre watershed has been identified by the USDA Forest Service as one of several Highlands Conservation Focal Areas, where three conditions coincide: a large contiguous tract or major cluster of land; a high priority composite conservation value; and an absence of permanent protection.

KARST AQUIFER REGION {26} – The Karst Aquifers are situated in a narrow band of carbonate rocks that extend throughout Ulster County, generally parallel with the Hudson River and trending south-southwest, through portions of Saugerties, Kingston, Esopus, Marbletown, Rosendale, Rochester and Ellenville, continuously outcropping just northwest and along the flank of the Shawangunk Mountain Ridge. This region is characterized by such features as caves, sinkholes, mines, springs, lakes and sinking streams. The area is rich in biological, geological and historical resources, provides diverse outdoor recreational opportunities and critical water reserves.

LONG ISLAND SOUND COASTAL CORRIDOR {27} ❖ – The corridor extends along Westchester County's marine shoreline from the Bronx River Parkway east to the Connecticut border on Long Island Sound. The area includes, but is not limited to, an array of natural and historical resources and public access and recreation opportunities on Long Island Sound including those recommended in the Long Island Sound Coastal Management Program, Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs and DEC's "Marine Recreation Fishing Access Plan." Representative sites within this area include but are not limited to: Edith Read Buffer, Davids Island and Huckleberry Island.

- **Edith Read Buffer** – Also known as Manursing Island, this fourteen-acre parcel is important for protecting the Edith Read Wildlife Sanctuary in Westchester County.
- **Huckleberry Island** – Lying northeast of New Rochelle Harbor in Westchester County, the island serves as a waterfowl refuge.
- **Davids Island** – Located in the City of New Rochelle, Westchester County, this 120-acre island property (77.8 acres above water) on the Long Island Sound is characterized by a shoreline of tidal wetlands. It formerly served as the site of Fort Slocum, an army facility, the remnants of which were recently removed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Remediation of subsurface environmental hazards, followed by the implementation of a land-use plan that emphasizes public access and recreation, conservation of natural resources, and environmental sustainability would enhance the quality of the Long Island Sound and protect a unique open space asset in a densely developed portion of Westchester County.

NEVERSINK HIGHLANDS {28} ❖ – Portions of the Neversink Highlands 'eco-region' contain significant natural attractions and resources, hunting and fishing opportunities and wildlife habitat (including bald eagle nesting areas). State acquisitions should include but not be limited to the following four primary areas:

- **Tomsco Falls** – A Sullivan County area attraction consisting of beautiful waterfalls, hemlock forest, meadows/lawn, viewing areas, two buildings, and rail bed with a former trestle site. The 200-plus acre property also includes significant access to Sandburg Creek, an excellent trout

fishing stream. This site would also help create a connection between the Shawangunk and Catskill regions. Several miles of railroad bed offer great opportunities for multiple-use trail linkages.

- **Neversink Gorge vicinity** – The Neversink River Unique Area in Sullivan County encompasses a portion of the Neversink River that flows through a narrow channel and over beautiful waterfalls. Opportunities still exist to greatly expand the Unique Area to include a large wetland and headwater stream area to the east, open areas to the south, potentially extending north to Holiday Mountain Ski Area along Rt.17.
- **Basha Kill vicinity** – Significant development pressure along Rt.17 and Rt.209, Sullivan County, threatens the water quality, vital habitat and scenic viewshed of the 3,000– acre Basha Kill Wetland area, the largest freshwater wetland in southeastern New York. The surrounding valley, largely unprotected, is the “gateway to the Catskills” and contains some of the largest intact and globally important forest blocks with some of the highest incidence of amphibian diversity in the state. Those lands that make up the viewsheds directly north of Route 209 and west of Route 17, and that extend directly west of the Bashakill Wildlife Management area and north of Route 209 should be protected as should those properties within the Pine Kill Creek Corridor for habitat protection and flood prevention.
- **Harlen Swamp Wetland Complex** – There are several mapped and regulated wetlands located on the border of the towns of Thompson and Mamakating, Sullivan County (between Wild Turnpike and County Route 56) that together provide important habitat for a variety of wetland species. Several large, undeveloped parcels are currently threatened with development in this area.

NEW YORK HIGHLANDS {29} ❖ – The Highlands are a unique physiographic region running through the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. The USDA Forest Service has analyzed and documented this area as a high priority for conservation efforts. The New York Highlands are characterized by forested ridges, rocky outcrops, pristine streams and wetlands, special geologic features, and exceptional scenic vistas. They also contain numerous historic sites and State Parks including Sterling Forest, Harriman, Bear Mountain, Storm King Mountain, Hudson Highlands, Wonder Lake and Clarence Fahnestock. The Highlands are located in the densely-populated New York metropolitan area, and three of the five counties in which they fall are among the fastest growing in the State. They provide and protect water for millions of New York and New Jersey residents. Priority will be given to connections of existing protected lands on both sides of the Hudson River and to the creation of a corridor comprised of State Parks, DEC Forests and other lands that span the length of the Highlands in New York. These preservation efforts would also provide additional protection for the Shawangunk and Taconic Ridges, which are adjacent to the Highlands, and the Great Swamp, Schunnemunk Mountain and NYC Watershed Lands which lie within and adjacent to the Highlands Region. Priority also will be given to lands identified as Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (New York State Department of State), and Biologically Important Areas (BIA—NYS DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program), which in the Highlands include the following estuarine and terrestrial BIA’s: Fishkill Creek, Moodna Creek, Breakneck Ridge, Constitution Marsh, Con Hook, Camp Smith, Anthony’s Nose, and Annsville Creek. Some of the most important and representative areas within the New York Highlands include but are not limited to:

Highlands West of Hudson River –

- **Goosepond Mountain** – Lands adjacent to the 1,650-acre, wooded Goosepond Mountain State Park in Chester, Orange County, are threatened by immediate and intense development pressure. The recent acquisition of the McNeill Farm expanded the State’s holdings by 149 acres. Goosepond Mountain is also part of the Moodna Creek Watershed, which is a biodiversity hotspot.
- **Ramapo Mountains and Watershed** – The Ramapo Mountains are Rockland County’s Highlands, and parts of the Ramapos are permanently protected as Harriman State Park. The Ramapo River

Watershed is an irreplaceable regional water supply, recreational resource and key ecosystem in the Highlands. The Ramapo Valley Aquifer—listed as a Federal Sole Source Aquifer in 1992—supplies a third of Rockland County’s public water supply and over 2 million people derive all or part of their water supply from the Ramapo River Basin. The Forest Service has identified this as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.

- **Greater Sterling Forest** – In Orange County, nearly 20,000 acres of contiguous open space has been preserved through public/private partnerships. Additional targets for protections include inholdings and buffers such as the Shirazi property. Continuation of successful preservation efforts in Sterling Forest is critical to maintain the rich biodiversity and diverse habitats that this ecosystem and vital watershed provides. The 575-acre “hole in the donut” inholding was purchased in November of 2006, and the preservation of Arrow Park on the northern Park border will add nearly 340 acres of buffer lands, 260 of which will be added to Sterling Forest State Park.
- **Torne Valley** – Part of the Ramapo River Watershed, this valley in Rockland County is under intense development pressure. This area includes historic Torne Mountain and is adjacent to Harriman State Park. The Forest Service has identified this as a Highlands Conservation Focal area.

Highlands East of Hudson River –

- **Croton-to-Highlands Biodiversity Area** – The Towns of Putnam Valley in Putnam County, and Cortlandt, Yorktown, and New Castle in Westchester County have been recognized for their high biodiversity value by the Wildlife Conservation Society/Metropolitan Conservation Alliance (MCA). MCA’s biodiversity plan, published in 2004, delineates those areas it determined are suitable for development and those areas that contain species vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and should be a priority for acquisition. This area of the Croton Reservoir system has also been identified by the USDA Forest Service as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.
- **Fahnestock State Park/Hudson Highlands State Park/Fishkill Ridge/Scofield Ridge** – Located in the northwest and central portion of Putnam County and the southern edge of Dutchess County, this area contains large blocks of nearly contiguous upland forests, significant reservoirs for several municipalities, and the watershed of the Clove/Fishkill Creek, which is a principal aquifer. The 14,154-acre Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park in Putnam County, much of which has been undisturbed for over 100 years, offers exceptional ecological and recreational value, and provides habitat for a variety of species, some threatened, that could otherwise not exist in such a developed region of New York State. More than 10,000 acres of the park have been designated as a Bird Conservation Area and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail passes through the park. Fahnestock lies in close proximity to Hudson Highlands State Park, which encompasses 7,231 acres including Bull Hill and parts of Breakneck Ridge. There are significant undeveloped, upland forest tracts adjacent to, and inholdings within, both parks that would enhance and expand the natural resource protection objectives of these areas, and establish linkages with other upland parcels along Breakneck, Scofield and Fishkill ridges. Protection of lands in this ecologically rich area is necessary to provide important linkages, especially between Fahnestock and the northern end of Hudson Highlands, as well as protect the scenic viewshed of both the Highlands and the Hudson River. The USDA Forest Service has identified this as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.
- **Hudson Highlands State Park South/Camp Smith** – This area provides panoramic views across the Highlands and of the New York City skyline. Straddling the Putnam and Westchester County lines, this area is a State-designated scenic area and is a critical viewshed for numerous parks, Revolutionary War historic sites, and the US Military Academy at West Point. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail traverses a portion of this area on lands protected by the National Park Service. The southern portion of Hudson Highlands State Park connects the Appalachian Trail to Anthony’s Nose and to the Camp Smith Trail extending into Westchester County. Additional

opportunities to protect and expand these resources to the east, north and south will further enhance the recreational opportunities in this area. The Camp Smith Reservation is a candidate for inclusion in the New York State Nature and Historical Reserve Trust.

- **Northern Putnam Greenway** – Extending from the Taconic Ridge on the east to the Hudson River on the west, this proposed greenway is a necessary connecting step within the Highlands Region. It would help maintain the ecological integrity of the Highlands Region by protecting wildlife bio-corridors, preserving scenic viewsheds in an area of high growth pressure, protecting the purity of the area’s groundwater and of the headwaters of the NYC Croton water supply system, and by helping to meet the increasing demand for outdoor recreational and education opportunities. It would allow for the completion of the Highlands Trail, creating a connected network of long distance and local trails. By connecting the following protected properties the Northern Putnam Greenway can be realized: Ciaiola County Conservation Area – Cranberry Mountain WMA – Great Swamp WMA – Ice Pond Preserve – Wonder Lake State Park – Horse Pound Brook Area – Big Buck MUA – White Pond MUA – Ninham Mountain MUA – Lockwood Pond Area – California Hill MUA – Boyd Corner North Area – West Branch Headwaters Area – Fahnestock State Park – Hudson Highlands State Park.

NORTHEASTERN WESTCHESTER WATERSHED & BIODIVERSITY LANDS {30} ❖ – The towns of Lewisboro, Pound Ridge, Bedford, and North Castle in Westchester County contain important public water supply watersheds, covering approximately 23,000 acres, for the village of Mount Kisco and for Norwalk, Stamford and Greenwich, Connecticut. These watershed lands drain into seven reservoirs and the Silvermine, Rippowam, Mill, and Mianus Rivers. This area includes:

- approximately one quarter of the Eastern Westchester Biotic Corridor (EWBC), a regionally-important biodiversity area of 22,000 acres defined by the Wildlife Conservation Society/Metropolitan Conservation Alliance (approximately three quarters of the EWBC is encompassed in the Open Space Conservation Plan’s New York City Watershed priority area);
- the 738-acre Mianus River Gorge Preserve, which was the first Natural Historic Landmark designated by the federal government;
- approximately 2,000 acres of water supply protection lands, mostly held by the privately-owned company that supplies Stamford’s water. Acquisition of strategic parcels would further protect the public water supplies; keep the EWBC intact and prevent it from being severed from its hub (Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, a 4,700-acre county nature preserve); and provide links to trail networks throughout the area. Voters in each of the four towns approved open space ballot propositions in recent years. In addition, each town has compiled a land protection priority list and has indicated a willingness to work with New York State and other funders on acquisition projects.

PLUTARCH / BLACK CREEK WETLANDS COMPLEX {31} ❖ – This project encompasses a very large wetland complex in the Ulster County towns of Esopus, Lloyd and New Paltz, which is important because of its size and variety. It includes the Plutarch Swamp and other nearby wetlands associated with the Swarte Kill and Black Creek drainages as well as associated uplands for buffers, access and management. These wetlands provide habitat for numerous wetland-dependent wildlife species, including critical habitat for the threatened northern cricket frog. The area is important for breeding and migrating waterfowl and river otters. It includes significant and rare ecological communities, including one of the largest dwarf shrub bog occurrences in the Hudson River Valley. The area also could provide significant recreational opportunities including canoeing, hiking, wildlife observation, fishing, hunting and trapping.

ROCKLAND RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES / PALISADES RIDGE {32} ❖ – The Palisades Ridge is a narrow ridge located along the western shore of the Hudson River in northeastern New Jersey and southeastern New York. It begins in New Jersey and continues north within the villages/hamlets of Palisades, Sparkill, Grandview, Upper Grandview, Nyack, and Upper Nyack. It passes through Rockland Lake State Park then goes north through Haverstraw where it pivots westward through High Tor State Park and South Mountain County Park. It then terminates in Gurnee County Park. The Palisades Ridge ranges in altitude from 500 to 700 feet. It is located within two main watersheds: 1) the Hudson River Watershed, 2) the Upper Hackensack River watershed and four subwatersheds: 1.) the Sparkill Creek, 2.) the West Branch Hackensack River, 3.) the Lower Branch Hackensack River, and 4.) the Minisceongo Creek.

The Hackensack River watershed, along with the sub watersheds of the same name, flow into Lake DeForest, a United Water NY public drinking water reservoir, which serves Rockland County, NY and Bergen County, NJ. Therefore, all watersheds and sub watersheds of the Palisades Ridge need special consideration and protection because they drain into 1) the Hudson, a NYS DEC designated Priority Waterbody, 2) class A wetlands, or 3) Lake DeForest, a critical drinking water supply.

There are many other values of the Palisades Ridge. The Long Path Hiking Trail follows along the entire length of the Palisades Ridge. Along the Ridge are important wildlife habitat areas, Hudson River and inland wetlands (Class A wetland mentioned above), and scenic vistas including the Tappan Zee Scenic District and designated Critical Environmental Areas. The Palisades Ridge and its scenic vistas, recreational uses, important watershed for public water supply and Lower Hudson River drainage must remain the focus of preservation efforts. High Tor connects the Palisades Ridge and the Rockland Highlands and opportunities exist to secure additional sections of prominent, steeply sloping talus and woodlands adjacent to High Tor State Park.

Agriculture

Located on the western flank of the Palisades Ridge adjacent to Rockland Lake State Park in the hamlet of Congers is the Dr. Davies Farm, which is the only working farm left in Congers and one of four remaining in Rockland County. The farm is owned by Niles Meriwether Davies, an 11th-generation descendent of Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clarke Expedition. The 110-acre farm on the eastern side of Lake DeForest produces corn, squash and 20 varieties of apples. Every summer thousands of New York City residents come to pick your own apples sales. Efforts should be made to ensure the protection of this farm from development.

SCHUNNEMUNK MOUNTAIN / MOODNA CREEK / WOODCOCK MOUNTAIN {33} ❖ – Schunnemunk Mountain, the tallest in Orange County, supports rare plants, animals, and ecological communities while parts of the Moodna Creek and its watershed have been designated as “irreplaceable” Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats by the NY State Coastal Zone Management Program. The marsh at the mouth of Moodna Creek is significant habitat for rare plants and contains rare natural communities including brackish intertidal mudflats and brackish tidal marsh. This area is also a mecca for hikers and outdoor enthusiasts and contains a seven-mile stretch of the Long Path. It has exceptional scenic value, particularly where the Moodna Viaduct crosses through the valley at the north end of Schunnemunk Mountain. The ridgeline of this Mountain provides unparalleled views up and down the Hudson River. The Schunnemunk Mountain State Park was established in 2004 with the acquisition of 2,467 acres that included Schunnemunk Mountain. This is the northern-most boundary of the Highlands West of Hudson; nearby to the east are Black Rock Forest and Storm King Mountain State Park. Access to Schunnemunk Mountain is made possible by the Long Path and a series of other public trails, some of which pass through a unique collection of large ridgetop rocks known as “megaliths.” Orange County is developing a county park on the 216-acre Gonzaga Property at the

southern tip of Schunnemunk Mountain, but this is an isolated, though substantial, tract of protected land. A large portion of the Mountain remains unprotected, including much of the portion between Gonzaga and the State Park as well as land along both sides of the ridge, including Woodcock Mountain, Tobias Hill, and Woodbury Creek.

Agriculture

The Moodna Creek is flanked by hundreds of acres of farmland clustered within the Towns of Cornwall and Blooming Grove where highly productive agricultural soils are found. The Woodbury Creek corridor is also actively farmed, though to a lesser extent than the Moodna. Farms are varied and range from orchards to livestock farms. This agricultural landscape contributes greatly to the scenic and ecological value of the area.

SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAIN REGION {34} ❖ – The Shawangunk Mountains are the 50 mile northern section of a 256 mile long Kittatinny–Shawangunk Ridge and Corridor that runs from Pennsylvania through New Jersey to Southern New York and is part of the Appalachian Raptor Migration Corridor. The centerpiece of the Shawangunk Mountain Region in New York is the Shawangunks themselves, which are home to exemplary natural communities including the globally rare dwarf pine ridge community, over 7,000 acres of pitch pine–oak–heath rocky summit, one of the largest chestnut oak forests (38,000 acres) in New York, extensive northern hardwood forests, and cliff, talus and ice cave communities. Within these communities are over 57 known rare or imperiled plant and animal species. Sam’s Point Preserve and Minnewaska State Park Preserve are both designated Important Bird Areas Taken together these elements of biodiversity make the Shawangunks one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States. Together, the Northern and Southern Shawangunks also have extremely high watershed protection value as well as high scenic and recreational value.

The Shawangunk Mountains are in close proximity to other significant biodiversity areas that are identified as priorities in this plan, including the Karst Aquifer Area, The Catskills, the Great Rondout Wetlands, the Shawangunk Grasslands, the Plutarch/Esopus Wetlands and the Wallkill River Valley. Stream corridors, flood plains areas, forest blocks, wetland complexes and agricultural lands that can provide natural linkages between the Shawangunks and these features should be considered as priorities for protection, in order to create wildlife migration corridors, and to provide flood control, habitat and trail connections across an increasingly developed landscape. A 8,000 acre goal for protection of agricultural lands in the Rondout and Wallkill Valleys has recently been established.

Examples of these linkages include a Catskills/Shawangunk connection in Wawarsing (*NYS Department of Correctional Services – Wawarsing farmlands*), a Shawangunk/Karst Aquifer connection surrounding the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail in Rosendale, a Shawangunk/Wallkill River connection in the Buttermilk Canaan Foothills in New Paltz and a Verkerderkill/Shawangunkill/Shawangunk Grasslands connection in Shawangunk.

Protection of the Northern Shawangunks in Ulster County is critical to maintaining the input of high quality water to the Rondout and Wallkill Valleys. More than 500,000 visitors annually use the more than 100 miles of trails and 90 miles of carriage roads for hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, horseback riding, and nature study. The 36–mile Shawangunk Ridge Trail connects the Appalachian Trail near High Point State Park in New Jersey with the 330 mile Long Path, shortly before the Long path enters the Catskills. Together public and private entities have protected more than 30,000 acres in the Northern Shawangunks, including Minnewaska State Park Preserve (21,000 acres), the Sam’s Point Preserve (a 5,000 + acre National Natural Landmark managed by The Nature Conservancy and owned by Open Space Institute), and the 6,600 acre Mohonk Preserve. The Mohonk Mountain House resort (2,200 acres) is a National Historic Landmark and a regional anchor for heritage and ecotourism.

A public-private consortium, the Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership, provides a forum for sharing scientific and land management information for conservation. Protection of approximately 14,000 additional acres of land is needed to protect biodiversity, scenic and recreational values of the Northern Shawangunks. Highest priority projects include Peterskill Gorge, Sanders Kill Area, Witch's Hole/Stonykill Falls Area, Palmaghatt Ravine-Millbrook-Bayards-Near Trapps Escarpment, Trapps Gateway, and the Verkerderkill Falls area.

Protection of the Southern Shawangunks in Orange and Sullivan counties, will enable a greenway corridor for recreation and biodiversity conservation extending from Sam's Point Preserve to the New Jersey state line, completing the protection and buffer for the 30-mile long Shawangunk Ridge Trail corridor. Efforts continue to protect the ridge top and both its western and eastern slopes and bases which contain the 2,200 acre New York State Bashakill Wildlife Management Area, an important site for biodiversity conservation. Important projects are linkages between the Shawangunk Ridge State Forest through the Roosa Gap to the Wurtsboro Ridge State Forest lands including protection to Route 17; linking Wurtsboro Ridge to the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area; linking south of Bashakill to Guymard Lake; and links south to Highpoint State Park in NJ. The ridge contains remnants of the historic Delaware and Hudson Canal and the New York, Ontario and Western Railroad, offering opportunities for rail trail projects and historic/cultural tourism. The most vulnerable portion of the ridgetop is a 20 mile stretch from Route 17 to the New Jersey State Line, east of Route 209, in the towns of Greenville, Mount Hope and Deer Park. Scenic values are threatened by the planned extension of the Route 17/86 highway, and the proposed NYRI power transmission line.

The Shawangunk Mountains Byway Region is a distinctive 134,000 acre area encircling the northern Shawangunk Mountains defined as the corridor of the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway, an 82-mile network of highways designated a NYS Scenic Byway in the fall of 2006. The Byway goals are to provide economic growth through a tourism distribution strategy, to improve transportation, and to preserve the scenic, natural, recreational and historic resources of the region. Implementation of the Corridor Management Plan is the responsibility of the Shawangunk Mountains Regional Partnership, an intermunicipal organization of the nine towns and two villages that participate in the byway. The Corridor Management Plan, and the Regional Open Space Plan, developed by the partnership with the cooperation of many conservation and community groups, identifies goals, key strategies and projects for preservation of the region's intrinsic resources. Particular importance is given in these plans to protection of the northern Shawangunks, which is the centerpiece of the byway, and key scenic and natural lands in the Wallkill and Rondout valleys of the region.

WALLKILL VALLEY {35} ❖ – The Wallkill River begins in the mountains of northern New Jersey and enters New York via the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge on the NY/NJ border. From there it flows through the fertile black dirt region of southern Orange County and then winds through a variety of landscapes, some amazingly rich in biodiversity, joining the Rondout just south of the City of Kingston, Ulster County, a short distance from its confluence with the Hudson. It provides excellent opportunities for recreational fishing and boating. A recently completed Southern Wallkill Biodiversity Plan (Wildlife Conservation Society/Metropolitan Conservation Alliance) identifies critical areas in need of protection. In addition, Counties and local municipalities are beginning to plan for its protection and restoration through a Wallkill River Watershed Planning program. Through these planning processes open space priorities will be identified for future protection measures.

The Shawangunk National Wildlife Refuge (Galeville Grasslands) and surrounding agricultural landscape in southern Ulster and northern Orange County provide an area of rare grassland habitat large enough to support a suite of grassland-dependent birds including short-eared owls, northern harriers, upland sandpipers, vesper sparrows, grasshopper sparrows and many others. This area also

provides significant recreational opportunities including hiking, bird watching and hunting. Opportunities to conserve additional lands in this area should be pursued.

REGIONS 3 & 4

CATSKILL RIVER & ROAD CORRIDORS {36} ❖ – On a daily basis, thousands of people use major travel corridors such as Rt. 28, Rt. 212, Rt. 214, Rt. 23, Rt. 23A, Rt. 42 Rt. 30, Rt. 10, Rt. 17 (future Interstate 86), and Rt. 97 to access numerous Catskill communities and popular recreation destinations. Because these major travel corridors generally follow major river corridors, they provide visitors with a startling first impression of the Catskill/Delaware region as a vital riverine habitat. Some of these river corridors are not only particularly important as fisheries resources, but they are also exceptional recreational resources that provide immeasurably to the region’s nature-based economy. Unfortunately, many sections of these river and road corridors are experiencing an increase in development which has resulted in severely damaging flood incidents, some of which have proven fatal. Land protection priority should be given to parcels that protect riparian buffer land, preserve or restore flood plain areas, protect scenic areas and vistas along principle road corridors and on visible ridgelines, protect flood prone areas and enhance public access and recreational opportunities. Conservation focus areas include:

- **Beaverkill/Willowemoc / Route 17 (future Interstate 86) Corridor** – The watershed for these two famous trout streams is located in western Sullivan and southern Delaware Counties. The watershed is currently largely forested with development limited to areas in the vicinity of villages and hamlets. Providing expanded access to the headwaters area of both streams would enhance the recreational and economic value of these resources to the local communities and the region. Protection of the watershed is important for the high quality trout fisheries here, which are dependent on abundant, cold pure water.
- **Delaware River Branches and Main-stem Corridors** – The region encompassing the Delaware River corridor is identified in the Open Space Plan as a Major Greenway and Recreationway in Regions 3, 4 and 7, and the entire Delaware River corridor from Hancock (Delaware County) to Cherry Island (Orange County) is designated as a National Scenic and Recreational River. The East and West Branches of the Delaware River, as well as the Main Stem of the Delaware River, are exceptional cold-water fisheries, with the Main stem Delaware also being critical as a waterway open to fish migrating to and from the ocean. These rivers also offer numerous recreational opportunities, such as fishing, canoeing, rafting, and eagle watching, which bring in many visitors and boost the regional economy. These rivers and their watersheds are also critical biological resources, from both aquatic and terrestrial standpoints, with many rare, unique, threatened, and endangered species living in this area, including the bald eagle, timber rattlesnake, American shad, and several plant species. The East and West Branches of the Delaware River are part of the New York City Water Supply System, which is the nation’s largest unfiltered municipal water supply, and protection of these watersheds is critical for the continuation of a clean drinking water supply for millions of people. Currently only a tiny percentage of land along the Delaware River Branches and Main-stem corridors is permanently protected, especially that area outside and downstream of the New York City Watershed.
- **Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area** – The Mongaup River drainage, a tributary to the main stem, Delaware River, in Sullivan and Orange County is a critical nesting and wintering area for bald eagles, and also provides numerous public hunting and fishing opportunities. Opportunities for expansion exist in several areas adjacent to the current Wildlife Management Area, especially the large privately-owned reservoir lands to the north and undeveloped parcels in the south. Consideration should be given towards preserving habitat, water quality and

viewshed on large contiguous vacant parcels held by private hunt clubs through conservation easement acquisitions.

- **Route 28 Corridor** – New York State Route 28 is the primary road corridor through the central Catskill high peaks region, connecting population centers and major interstates in metropolitan Kingston and Oneonta. Because of this already existing transportation infrastructure, it is well suited for sustainable small-scale economic development to draw visitors, support local businesses and preserve the natural environment. This area provides an opportunity to simultaneously protect land and promote growth in the Catskills using an outdoor recreation-based tourism that focuses on land preservation and controlled recreational use of public natural areas. Environmentally sound economic development initiatives here are very sustainable. It is a potential State Scenic Byway and includes eastern and western gateways to the Catskill Park. Priority areas along this route are known as Gateway Properties, lands adjacent to, and visible from, the easternmost five or six miles of Rt. 28, and include, but are not limited to:
 - **Blue Stone Wild Forest** – Just west of Kingston in Ulster County, covering and connecting four towns, this area is actively used by mountain bikers, hikers and birders but holds great potential for expansion and further development of its trail system as a mountain biking destination. The topography, terrain and precipitation pattern in this part of the Catskills are conducive to more intensive recreational uses with minimal damage to the natural resources. Within the boundaries of Bluestone Wild Forest are areas of significant historical and cultural significance including the bluestone quarry industry. Significant portions of several historic roads and trails connecting area towns: Jockey Hill Rd., Evergreen Road and the Waughkonk Trail lie within Blue Stone Wild Forest. State lands within the core area between Route 28 and Sawkill Road should be consolidated and those parcels along Route 28 should be acquired to provide trailhead access points, protect historic trails and roads where possible, as well as preserve this impressive scenic viewshed. It is recommended that the Blue Stone Wild Forest boundaries be extended to incorporate numerous, now isolated DEC tracts increasingly used for recreation: two lie south of Route 28 in the Towns of West Hurley and Ulster, seven lie north of Sawkill Rd in the Towns of Woodstock and Kingston (one of which adjoins one of the last intact large woods tracts (500 acres, currently for sale), Protecting, connecting and potentially expanding some of these tracts as part of the overall protection plan for Blue Stone Wild Forest will facilitate their consolidation into larger, coherent open space planning within and between these communities facing ever increasing development pressures.
 - **Ticeteneyck Mt./Tonshi Mt./Kenoza Lake** – The first highly visible, mountainous, open space area along Rt. 28 in Ulster County; no State land has been acquired to date in this area. Large private land-holdings make significant acquisitions possible;
 - **Catskill Interpretive Center Area** – Opportunity to connect the proposed Ulster County Interpretive Center Site with existing Forest Preserve lands situated on Mt. Tobias. Acquisition of key parcels along Rt. 28 and Wittenberg Rd. will protect the views of mountains, forests, and meadows from the proposed Visitor Center.
 - **Meade Hill/Fleischmann Mountain** – A large, highly visible, completely unprotected mountain ridge immediately adjacent to Rt. 28 in the Town of Middletown; critical to the continuity of mountain habitat and vistas between Dry Brook Ridge and the Belleayre Mountain Ski Area.

CATSKILLS UNFRAGMENTED FOREST {37} ❖ – The region encompassing the Catskill Mountains is identified in the Open Space Plan as a Major Resource Area in Regions 3 and 4. The Catskill Park, which is a mosaic of State Forest Preserve lands and private property, comprises a large, central part of this region. Large, unfragmented areas of forest land in the Catskill high peaks area are excellent candidates for addition to the Forest Preserve. Priorities for acquisition within the greater Catskill

Mountain/Delaware River Region should focus on securing sensitive, unprotected high elevation areas and alpine communities; protecting expanses of un-fragmented forests; connecting protected areas, particularly in the valleys between high elevations; protecting reverence habitat and riparian buffer land; preserving areas demonstrating high biological diversity; preserving significant cultural and scenic resources; and improving access and recreational opportunities on public land. Special consideration should also be given to protecting and providing access to the Region's water resources, including specific attention to protecting the watershed supplying New York City's public drinking water.

Region 3 conservation efforts should focus on the following sites:

- **Overlook Mountain, Mount Guardian** – Priority should be given to properties identified in the Overlook Mountain Wild Forest Unit Management Plan. Land acquisition is important to create a usable and viable wild forest in an area that has long influenced painters, writers and musicians, and played a prominent role in creating America's perspective on nature and wilderness. Significant areas include the slopes and high elevations of Mt Guardian. Headwater streams that flow off of the northern and southern slopes of this highly-visible mountain feed the Sawkill Creek, which is the drinking water supply for the City of Kingston. The Ridgeline extending from Overlook Mountain Wild Forest to Meads Mountain and Mount Guardian provides a dramatic backdrop to the village of Woodstock and viewsheds from the many parts of the Town and beyond. The Town of Woodstock owns an extensive forested tract of land extending along the southern face of Meads Mountain westward to include the upper slopes of Mt. Guardian up to the ridgeline, The northern and western slopes of Mt Guardian are still largely forested, including at least one unbroken large, privately owned tract covering much of the western face extending to the ridgeline. There is increasing use of the hiking trails leading from the historic Byrdcliffe Art Colony to the ridgeline across town lands. The Woodstock Land Conservancy's (WLC) protection of Mt. Guardian began in 2000 with the outright gift of two ridgeline parcels totaling 18 acres. WLC expanded the area of protected forestland on Guardian by purchasing 19 acres in 2003 and nearly 12 acres in 2005 helping to protect dramatic viewsheds from the west, including Cooper Lake.
- **Indian Head Wilderness Consolidation** – Improved access, and additional protection can preserve wilderness attributes, enhance recreation value, and protect scenic vistas. Improved public access is especially important due to rugged terrain and lack of road frontage; increased development pressure is also a concern in this area. Examples of opportunities to improve access and protect scenic vistas include the acquisition of Little Rocky and Olderbark Mountains.
- **Balsam, Graham and Doubletop Mountains/Dry Brook Valley** – Several large tracts including the summits of the last three Catskill peaks over 3500' in elevation still in private ownership lie adjacent to the Big Indian Wilderness. These lands provide habitat for a distinctive assemblage of bird species, especially those that prefer subalpine coniferous forests, as well as at least one known federally threatened plant species. They play a critical role in the wilderness character of the area. Lying within New York City's watershed, they contribute clean drinking water to both the Catskill and Delaware systems. Dry Brook is also an excellent trout stream.
- **Peekamoose Gorge** – An approximately 3300-acre tract of land in Ulster County surrounded on all sides by Forest Preserve; very rugged and remote with numerous seasonal waterfalls. Rondout Creek drains this property and is a significant trout stream and an important contributor to the New York City drinking water supply. Property harbors at least one known federally listed endangered species.
- **Frost Valley** – Large forested tracts in the east and west valleys protect the source waters of the Neversink River and merge the two highest quality forest blocks in the High Allegheny Plateau. Protection of these tracts will prevent impacts to the Neversink River, reduce the

potential for forest fragmentation and improve access between the Big Indian Wilderness, the Slide Mountain Wilderness and the Sundown Wild Forest.

- **Fir Brook / Round Pond / Black Bear Road Vicinity** – This area includes tracts of land in the Willowemoc headwater areas along Flugertown Rd.; in the vicinity of Fir Brook and Blue Hill along Pole Rd., as well as hunting club lands along Black Bear Rd. and in the vicinity of Round Pond in Ulster County. The Willowemoc Creek is a renowned Catskill trout fishing stream, and listed separately in the Open Space Plan as a Priority Area. The Fir Brook wetland is a unique, scenic, remote, and wild area of the Catskills, and the Willowemoc Wild Forest is an important resource for hunting, snowmobiling, and other forms of outdoor recreation in the Catskills.
- **West Shokan / Sampsonville Area Lands** – Opportunities to expand the Forest Preserve holdings on the eastern side of the Slide Mountain Wilderness in Ulster County should be explored; including areas around Maltby Hollow, and Hanover, South, High Point, and Mombaccus Mountains.

Region 4 conservation efforts should focus on the following sites:

- **Bearpen / Vly / Roundtop Mountains** – Substantial progress has been made to protect the higher elevations of Bearpen, Roundtop, and Vly Mountains; however, additional acquisition is needed on the lower elevations of these mountains.
- **Catskill Escarpment North & Windham High Peak** – Includes the dramatic landscape between the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill peaks; principal concerns are protection of significant scenic vistas and ecologically unique areas; enhancement of recreational opportunities and improved public access; and consolidation of State holdings.
- **Rusk Mountain Wild Forest** – This very popular recreation area lacks sufficient access, especially in the Spruceton Valley, and additional protection and access is needed in the western portion of the Wild Forest.
- **Hunter West Kill Wilderness** – Consolidation, improved access, and preservation of wilderness character are the primary concerns.
- **Catskill Mountain Heritage Trail** – Includes significant historic sites and scenic views from the John Burroughs Homestead, Burroughs Memorial site, and Woodchuck Lodge near Roxbury on Route 30, continuing easterly along the Route 23 and 23A corridors, and extending to the Thomas Cole House in the Village of Catskill. Very few acres of the original Burroughs Homestead are permanently protected, and there is a critical need to protect the pastoral setting surrounding Woodchuck Lodge and the Burroughs Memorial site.

HUDSON RIVER CORRIDOR ESTUARY / GREENWAY TRAIL / QUADRICENTENNIAL LEGACY TRAIL {38}

❖ – The Corridor includes a number of significant projects in Regions 3 & 4 to create new links in the Greenway Trail, as described in the Greenway Act of 1991, Quadricentennial Legacy Trail (existing and new trails as designated as part of the 2009 Quadricentennial Celebration), and to provide public recreational opportunities with physical or visual access to the Hudson River. The project includes significant opportunities to promote habitat conservation, watershed and tributary protection and adaptation needed in response to climate change, as described in the Hudson River Action Plan. The project includes, but is not limited to, the following representative sites, grouped in the following categories:

- **State Land Transfers** – State lands with natural resource and river access values which would be transferred to DEC, OPRHP or local entities for management, these could include but are not be limited to: Ossining shoreline trail, Bronck Island, Bethlehem/Coeymans waterfront lands.
- **Hudson River Access** – Sites which provide recreational or visual access to the Hudson River, including but not limited to: Petersen's boatyard (Upper Nyack), Highland Falls Marina, Sleepy Hollow Waterfront, Castle Oil in Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow, , Fort Montgomery Marina, Island Dock (Kingston), Hudson River Islands, Gorman and White Beach (Verplanck), Brockway

Brickyard, Beacon Long Dock, Tivoli Village Waterfront, Milton Agway Overlook Park, Town of Newburgh (Anchorage), Poughkeepsie Pirate Canoe Club addition and Sand Dock Road, Lent's Cove Addition (Buchanan), and Hudson South Bay access.

- **Hudson River Greenway Trail Links** – Properties along both sides of the Hudson River that would establish a continuous trail from New York City to Saratoga County, with direct or at a minimum visual access to the Hudson River, and regional trails that link to riverside trails, including but not limited to: Locally- or county-approved greenway trail/access plans, such as, but not limited to, the Westchester County RiverWalk, the Walkway over the Hudson and the Dutchess County Greenway Trail.
- **Hudson River Water Trail Sites** – Sites along both sides of the Hudson River that would contribute to the Hudson River Valley Greenway's Hudson River Water Trail. These sites provide opportunities for day and overnight use by canoes and kayaks along the shoreline of the Hudson River.
- **Hudson Tributaries** – Sites which protect habitat and provide access to stream banks of tributaries, especially in proximity to their estuarine waters, including but not limited to: Croton Gorge, Rondout Creek, Quassaick Creek, Idlewild Creek (Cornwall), Fishkill Creek, Fallkill Creek, Sawmill (Neperhan) Creek (Yonkers), Wappinger Creek, Little Wappinger Creek, Casperkill Creek, Pocantico River, Annsville Creek, Black Creek, Esopus Creek, Binnenkill Creek, Cocksackie Creek, Stockport Creek, Saw Kill, Roeliff Jansen Kill, MacGregory's Brook (Peekskill), Moodna Creek, Landsmankill, Stony Creek, and tributaries feeding Hudson South Bay.
- **Scenic Viewsheds** – Sites which provide scenic vistas including but not limited to: Snake Hill, Illinois Mountain, Stissing Mountain/Thompson Pond, Scofield Ridge, Fishkill Ridge, Mt. Beacon, Highland Falls Ridgeline, and viewsheds visible from publicly-accessible places, points including but not limited to the Mid-Hudson Bridge /Blue Point Bluffs/Hudson Valley Winery, Camp Smith, Olana, Peebles Island State Park, Walkway Over the Hudson, Franklin Roosevelt Home, Hudson River National Historic Landmark District; and Lands Within Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance.
- **Buffer, Access or Addition to Historic Sites, Conservation and Park Lands** – Properties which protect the integrity of existing conservation lands or historic sites, including but not limited to: Ft. Montgomery State Historic Site, Hudson North Bay, Stuyvesant Riverfront, Poughkeepsie Waterfront Trail, Schodack Island State Park, Areas adjacent to Roosevelt/Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, Hudson River National Historic District (Rhinebeck/Redhook area), Bear Mountain State Park, Harriman State Park, Hudson Highlands State Park, Peebles Island State Park, Clermont State Historic Site Buffer, Little Stony Point, Lyndhurst North Buffer, Tivoli Bays Buffer, Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center, Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Lands, John Burroughs Sanctuary Buffer.
- **Historic Sites Related to the American Revolution** – The State of New York celebrates the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution from 2000–2009. The Hudson Valley played a pivotal role in the winning of American freedom. The protection and enhancement of sites such as the New Windsor Cantonment, Fort Montgomery, Washington's Headquarters at Newburgh, Stony Point Battlefield, Fort Hill At Peekskill, Bennington Battlefield at Hoosick Falls, and Camp Ramapough in Suffern can be accomplished through the protection of land adjacent to and contiguous with these historic sites.
- **Fish and Wildlife Management** – The sites identified here conserve the habitats of species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in three categories of priority habitats identified by NYSDEC: *a) shoreline corridors* that provide essential habitat for river otter, wood turtle, cerulean warbler, wading birds, trout, stream salamanders and Hudson River nymph; *b) unbroken forests* needed by scarlet tanager, wood thrush, warblers, wide-ranging mammals, hawks, owls, box turtles, and fringed polygala flower; and *c) unique natural areas* that support at-risk plants and animals such as smooth cliff brake fern, grass pink orchid, bog turtle, peregrine

falcon, and bald eagle. In addition, these sites provide estuarine and upland habitat, significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats as identified by the Department of State, lands adjacent to these habitats that will allow these habitats to migrate upslope as sea level rises, or significant wildlife corridors that will allow species to move to higher ground as temperatures rise due to climate change, including but not limited to: Constitution Marsh, Papscaanee Island and Marsh, Shaupeneak Ridge, Scofield Ridge, Mouth of Annsville Creek, Hudson South Bay, Four Mile Point/Vosburgh Swamp/west Flats, State Estuarine Sanctuary Additions, Ramshorn Marsh, Minisceongo/Grassy Point Marshes, Eddyville Dam, Esopus Lakes, Bronck Island, and all estuarine and terrestrial “Biologically Important Areas” as designated by the Hudson River Estuary Program.

- **Urban Waterfronts** – Sites which implement a local plan for mixed use waterfront revitalization, including but not limited to: Poughkeepsie Waterfront, Beacon Waterfront, Newburgh Waterfront, Hastings Waterfront, Tarrytown Waterfront, Sleepy Hollow Waterfront, Dobbs Ferry Waterfront, Croton Waterfront, Ossining Waterfront, Peekskill Southern Waterfront and “Peekskill Landing,” Hudson Waterfront, Kingston/Ulster Waterfront, Yonkers.

NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED LANDS {39} ❖ – New York City expects to continue acquisition efforts under the 1997 Watershed Agreement (signed by local communities, counties, and the State) and the 2007 Water Supply Permit issued by DEC, and in accordance with a comprehensive water quality-based watershed protection plan. It is recommended that the State work with the City to identify and protect high priority sites within the regions that are not being pursued by or protected under City acquisition programs. In particular the State should focus acquisition efforts on lands that (1) have potential for development, forestry, or fisheries and are (2) relatively large and/or (3) link areas already protected by private or public entities and/or (4) allow for improved long term management of land and water resources. All such work by the State should naturally conform to established criteria for protection under the State Open Space Conservation Plan. Roughly 70% of NYC's east-of-Hudson reservoir basin area overlaps with, and has been identified by the USDA Forest Service as part of, a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.

TACONIC RIDGE / HARLEM VALLEY {40} ❖ – An area comprising the Taconic Mountain Ridge and its viewsheds, where it straddles the New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont borders in Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia and Rensselaer Counties, and the Harlem Valley and its viewsheds. At its southern end it is anchored by the Cranberry Mountain State Wildlife Management Area and extends through eastern Dutchess County along the Connecticut border, west to include the Harlem Valley and lands to the west including West Mountain, and north to the Taconic State Park. From here it extends northerly through Columbia and Rensselaer Counties, westerly to include the Route 22 Corridor and its viewsheds, and northward along the borders of Massachusetts and Vermont. The viewshed includes the Taconic Ridge, Harlem Valley, Route 22 corridor, farmlands of central Dutchess, and Stissing Mountain.

Protection of this area continues to be a high priority due to the region’s high biodiversity, scenic views, substantial recreational value, thousands of acres of intact/unfragmented forestland, steeply sloping hillsides, unique geologic segments, historic architecture, working farm landscapes, and multiple connection opportunities to land currently protected by the State, Federal Government, Counties, Towns and private land conservation organizations.

Numerous trail systems including the Appalachian Trail, Taconic Crest Trail and South Taconic Trail extending beyond the New York border, and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail continue to be important projects for this area and will increase recreational opportunities for the public and provide permanent public use and access of the Taconic Ridge area. In addition, acquisition of properties in the Taconic

Ridge/Harlem Valley and Route 22 corridor will protect important open space, scenic viewsheds, working farm landscapes, watersheds and water quality, and preserve critical wildlife habitat for several threatened and endangered species. Specific projects include the Shaker Swamp, an almost 500-acre wetland complex supporting a high biodiversity and serving as an important aquifer recharge area; surrounding active farmland, formerly owned by the Shakers and regarded as historically significant; Schein Parcel, a connector between Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Conservation Area and Ciaiola County Park; Nuclear Lake–West Mountain connectors, Depot Hill and Taconic State Park additions; various intact camp properties; Wassaic Multiple Use Area buffers including Taconic DDS/Wassaic State School; Appalachian Trail, Taconic Crest Trail, South Taconic Trail and Harlem Valley Rail Trail connectors and viewshed protection; Little Whaley Lake; Crane Pond and Depression Pond area; Route 22 corridor viewshed protection; prime farmland soils and designated wetlands along the Webatuck Creek and Ten Mile River; unique geologic segments of the Taconic Ridge such as East Mountain, Rattlesnake Mountain, Stissing Mountain/Thompson Pond, West Mountain, Seven Wells and Nellie Hill and Stone Church buffers; and exceptional plant and wildlife habitat areas ranked on the State Natural Heritage Inventory such as rattlesnake and bog turtle habitat, limestone wet meadows, graminoid fens and sedge meadows.

Since this area’s inclusion in the initial State Open Space Conservation Plan, over 14,500 acres have been protected in Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia and Rensselaer counties. Nonetheless, since key portions of the area demonstrating high biodiversity, scenic views, recreational value, working forests and farmland, and potential connections to other protected lands remain unprotected, the Taconic Ridge/Harlem Valley and associated viewsheds continue to be high priorities for protection. In addition, extensions of the Taconic Crest Trail and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, as well as protection of the Route 22 corridor, which includes scenic vistas, productive farmland, and habitat supporting endangered and threatened species, continue to be important considerations within the overall area.

TURTLE CONSERVATION SITES {41} ❖ – These wetlands and associated uplands provide habitats for a high diversity of turtles including some of New York’s most imperiled species. The wetlands are scattered across Columbia, Dutchess, Putnam, Ulster, and Orange Counties. Some important concentrations include the Fishkill Creek, Wallkill River, Sprout Creek, Housatonic River, Great Swamp and Wappinger Creek drainage basins. This area supports the highest diversity of turtles in New York State and provides habitat for 5 species of State-listed endangered, threatened and special concern species, including the bog turtle (State endangered, Federally threatened) and Blanding’s turtle (State threatened). These sites include rare and significant ecological communities such as calcareous fens, dwarf shrub bogs, shrub swamps and floodplain forest. This project includes additions to James Baird State Park and the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge as well as the creation of new preserves, and encompasses the Dutchess Meadows project.

UPPER DELAWARE HIGHLANDS {42} ❖ – Few of the large globally significant forest ecosystems remain intact today in the continental United States. One of these key remaining ecological regions, the High Allegheny Plateau, covers land areas in both New York and Pennsylvania. Those portions in Sullivan and Delaware Counties are known as the Upper Delaware Highlands where the geology, soils, climate, elevation and landform configuration/ownership define the ecological potential of this system for providing significant water quality preservation and unmatched wildlife habitat. With such close proximity to major Metropolitan areas such as New York City, Trenton and Philadelphia, this ecoregion is a critical hub for other collections of nearby smaller forests, river corridors and ridge tops to provide contiguous natural resource protection.

The “human footprint” analysis by Wildlife Conservation Society indicates that 83% of the land’s surface in the High Allegheny Plateau is influenced by one or more of the following factors: human population

density greater than 1 person per square kilometer, within 15 km of a road or major river, occupied by urban or agricultural land uses, within 2 km of a settlement or a railway, and/or producing enough light to be visible regularly to a satellite at night. Additionally, 98% of the areas where it is possible to grow rice, wheat or corn in this ecogregion are similarly influenced. As such the Upper Delaware Highlands is a critical area to protect as it remains one of the last large globally important forest ecosystems within the High Allegheny Plateau that can provide connective wildlife corridors, produce important food crops, preserve water quality and quantity and retain a quickly diminishing unique wild landscape. Conservation efforts should focus on preserving, through both easement and fee acquisition, large stretches of contiguous undeveloped or minimally developed lands.

- **Forest Lands** – The Upper Delaware Highlands is home to dozens of hunt clubs who own, en masse, more than 30,000 acres. Privately managed and used for more than a century, these hunting organizations have practiced sound stewardship standards primarily focused on approved forestry management through the Forestry Tax Law 480A program. Concerned about the shrinking wildlife habitat in surrounding Catskill communities, the expanding pressures of residential and commercial development, risks to water quality and quantity, and enticing offers for natural gas exploration, these hunt clubs want to preserve their forest lands in their natural pristine state through the sale of conservation easements to prevent further development, subdivision and incompatible use. Conservation efforts by the State and private organizations should focus on protecting this unique contiguous swath of wild lands that will preserve critical wildlife habitat, preserve the underlying watershed and maintain a rural community character.
- **Farmlands** – Agriculture is one of the leading economic sectors in Sullivan County’s Upper Delaware Highlands Region, remaining equal to recreational tourism. Including poultry, dairy, livestock, horticulture and aquaculture, this agricultural industry produces more than \$72 million on 385 active farms covering more than 63,000 acres. To preserve important agricultural lands not only furthers this economic base for this Catskill region but retains a rural community character and protects critical water and wildlife resources. The best soils in Sullivan County are predominantly located in the Beechwoods, an area that encompasses the Towns of Bethel, Callicoon, Conchecton and Delaware, and along the Delaware River. This has yielded the most dense concentration of active farming operations in the County and has been designated as Agricultural District One by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. The concentration of operations here is an asset to make local farms economically strong and culturally important. As such, particular focus should be placed on encouraging the continued use of farmland for agricultural production in this area by purchasing development rights on farmland, as well as in the neighboring towns of Freemont and Rockland. Agricultural District Four – encompasses portions of the towns of Bethel, Liberty, Fallsburg and Neversink that have also historically been important farming areas and is currently home to several working farms. As inactive farms are often targets for development in towns facing increased growth pressure, viable agricultural lands, whether operative or not, should be preserved in this district through easement purchase.
- **Upper Delaware Scenic Byway** – A linear corridor running along State Route 97 in Orange, Sullivan and Delaware Counties that encompasses the Upper Delaware River and it’s river communities, the byway connects communities, scenic, recreational, natural, cultural and historical resources throughout the valley.



REGION 4 / CAPITAL REGION

Many of the geographic features in the Lower Hudson River Valley continue north into our Capital Region. The Hudson River ends being a tidal estuary at the Troy Dam and north of the dam becomes a regular freshwater river. The Capital Region and the Lower Hudson Valley (Region 3) are rich in wildlife habitat with 22 significant habitat types that support species of greatest conservation need (SCGN ♦). *

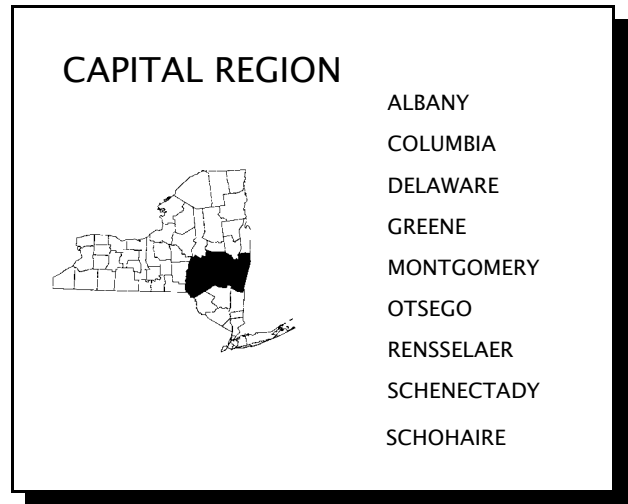
The Hudson River Valley is broad and much more flat in the Capital Region, legacy of the sands and clays left by an enormous glacial lake. The limestone Helderberg escarpment is a prominent landscape feature on the west side of the River.

The Albany Pine Bush is one of the world's few inland pine barrens. The Taconic Range along the eastern border of the State has a complex geologic history which provided some of the evidence for modern plate tectonic theory. The Northern Catskill Mountains are perhaps most famous for their role in art. Kaaterskill Clove, a steep gorge cut into the massive wall of the Catskill Mountain front, was one of the key inspirations for the artists of the Hudson River School. The Catskill Forest Preserve, established in 1904 has helped protect much of the scenic beauty of the Catskill Mountains.

History is everywhere in the Hudson Valley, one of the first areas colonized by the Dutch, following Henry Hudson's 1609 discovery of the Hudson River. The development of the present Capitol District area was driven by the strategic location where the navigable Hudson River ended, and the Mohawk River began its course to the west. After dams, canals and locks were built, Albany was a hub for Erie Canal/Mohawk River traffic from the west and Champlain Canal traffic from the north.

* 2006 NYSDEC Conservation Framework

* To read the Region 4 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.



ALBANY PINE BUSH {43} ♦ – This area of Albany County and a small portion of eastern Schenectady County support a rare and endangered inland pine barrens ecosystem. Protection guidelines for much of this area are established by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission in their management plan with the overall objective of establishing an ecologically viable and manageable preserve. While tremendous success has been achieved with the protection of over 3,000 acres to date, the Commission currently estimates that an additional 1,600 acres will have to be secured to satisfy its Preserve objectives. The Region 4 Advisory Committee supports the work of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission toward meeting its goals and encourages conservation efforts directed at areas of existing and restorable Pine Bush habitat not included within the area designated by the Commission.

BLACK CREEK MARSH / VLY SWAMP {44} ♦ – These two adjacent wetland systems, located directly below the Helderberg Escarpment at John Boyd Thacher State Park in Albany County, support a significantly high biological diversity, including an amphibian species diversity that rivals the entire New England region. The area also supports multiple-use recreation and is included on the National

Audubon Society's compilation of Important Bird Areas in New York State. DEC has continued its efforts to acquire parcels that would enhance public use and access opportunities associated with the Black Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area, and some protection efforts have recently been initiated in Vly Swamp; however, certain additional parcels associated with this wetland complex and important buffer areas remain vulnerable and should be protected before opportunities to do so are lost due to residential subdivision and development pressure.

DROWNED LANDS SWAMP WATERSHED {45} ❖ – This significant area of Columbia County, which constitutes one of the largest wetland complexes in southeastern New York, is surrounded by high quality farmland and striking scenic vistas. To date, protection of wetland and adjacent farmland and forest has been achieved through the concerted efforts of State agencies and private conservation organizations. Continuation of land acquisition and/or conservation easements remain a high priority in order to safeguard the ecological diversity of the wetlands, as well as the agricultural viability and pastoral views of the surrounding countryside.

FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER {46} – The Five Rivers Environmental Education Center is located between the rapidly growing suburban towns of Bethlehem and New Scotland in Albany County. The Center receives over 100,000 visitors annually and serves as an important wildlife preserve and popular birding area. Given that the entire area surrounding Five Rivers remains vulnerable to subdivision and development activity, opportunities for protection of public use, public access, and buffer areas remain a priority. One such opportunity includes the Phillipinkill stream corridor located north and east of the Five Rivers property, which presents potential for continued trail development already initiated by the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy.

HAND HOLLOW CONSERVATION AREA {47} ❖ – This Columbia County property, which is the Town of New Lebanon's only public conservation area, now encompasses 384 acres, including a 21-acre lake, smaller ponds, perennial and seasonal streams, a great blue heron rookery, and more than 5 miles of trails. There exists the potential to enhance this conservation area if a number of key parcels are acquired. These parcels would secure a portion of the lakefront and Hand Hollow watershed, as well as contribute to the overall habitat diversity by adding extensive areas of woodland and meadows, in addition to streams, upland ponds, and wetlands.

HELDERBERG ESCARPMENT {48} ❖ – The Helderberg Escarpment is the most prominent natural feature in Albany County and is well known for its geological and paleontological significance in addition to outstanding scenic vistas. It is the home of John Boyd Thacher and Thompson Lake State Parks, which provide numerous recreational opportunities. The Escarpment area is characterized by karst geology, including several cave formations, which provide habitats for a variety of rare and endangered species of flora and fauna. The Escarpment is also included on the National Audubon Society's list of Important Bird Areas in New York State. The southern extent of the escarpment, which also supports significant ecological communities, is considered to be an integral part of this area and should also be afforded high priority for protection.

MOHAWK RIVER VALLEY CORRIDOR / BARGE CANAL {49} – Priority should be given to protecting significant scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources along the Mohawk River in addition to securing river and tributary access parcels that would enhance public enjoyment of these resources. Areas of particular concern in the Mohawk River corridor include "The Noses," two prominent landmarks of significant scenic and cultural value; Wolf Hollow, which exhibits unique geological, botanical, and cultural importance; and the Great Flats Aquifer in Schenectady County, designated by the EPA as one of just five Sole Source Aquifers in upstate New York. Protection efforts should also be directed toward securing buffer land adjacent to the newly created Mohawk River State Park in

Schenectady County. Finally, it is also important to protect linkage parcels that contribute to the continuity of a statewide Canalway Trail system.

OOMSDALE FARM & SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE {50} ❖ – The focal point of this project area is Oomsdale Farm, which occupies approximately 350 acres in Chatham, Columbia County, and includes high quality farmland, significant habitat for grassland nesting birds, and spectacular scenic vistas from the high open fields. Also included in this landscape complex are the Kinderhook Creek corridor and associated floodplains, forestland, and open grassland fields. This area represents an outstanding opportunity to preserve a productive working landscape while protecting a sizeable expanse of nesting habitat for increasingly uncommon grassland birds, as well as the significant contributing features of the surrounding landscape.

RENSELAER PLATEAU {51} ❖ – This area of Rensselaer County includes the fifth largest unfragmented forest in New York State and a portion of the Tomhannock Reservoir Watershed, which provides water to over 100,000 County residents. In addition to the expansive forest, the Plateau supports several unique wetland communities (including sedge meadow, dwarf shrub bog, spruce–fir swamp, and kettle hole bog), an impressive mammal diversity not typical of the greater Capital District (including black bear, fisher, otter, bobcat, and moose), and is included on National Audubon Society's list of Important Bird Areas in New York, which specifically mentions a high diversity and abundance of forest breeders, including many State listed species. Protection activities in this area would not only serve to secure these significant features, but would also contribute to a long–term vision shared by a number of organizations to establish an open space corridor and trail system across the Plateau; connecting Dyken Pond Center to Grafton Lakes State Park, Pittstown State Forest, Capital District Wildlife Management Area, Dickinson Hill Fire Tower, and other recreation and environmental education facilities.

SCHOHARIE VALLEY CORRIDOR {52} ❖ – The Schoharie Valley Corridor is one of the oldest settled landscapes in the State and a setting of dramatic scenery and significant agricultural production. While the highest priority areas for protection are located from the Town of Esperance south to Gilboa, provision of public access and protection of Schoharie Creek and its tributaries are important throughout Montgomery and Schoharie counties. Of particular concern is conserving farmland throughout the Valley; protecting unique karst formations and associated aquifers; preserving Native American archaeological sites and the remains of pre–Revolutionary War forts; and securing bald eagle nesting habitat south of Middleburgh.

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER VALLEY CORRIDOR {53} ❖ – This major river valley corridor, which encompasses portions of Otsego and western Delaware counties, is an important component of the federal priority Chesapeake Bay drainage basin. Continued open space protection within this area contributes to maintaining high water quality and secures a significant warm water fishery and public recreational area. Protection of **parcels along the Susquehanna corridor** would also provide needed public access to the river and its tributaries thereby enhancing recreational opportunities, while providing economic benefits to the local communities. Also within this area is **Franklin Mountain**, which encompasses a ridgeline separating the Susquehanna and Delaware River watersheds in northern Delaware County. Franklin Mountain provides outstanding opportunities for viewing seasonal raptor migrations, as evidenced by the area's inclusion in National Audubon's list of Important Bird Areas in New York State. Publicly–owned parcels at critical overlook sites could provide secure access with relatively small acreage acquisitions. Finally, the 1,200–acre **Meridale Farms** project area, which presents a unique opportunity to integrate agriculture with conservation of grassland habitat, scenic vistas, and water resources, is recommended for protection within this corridor.

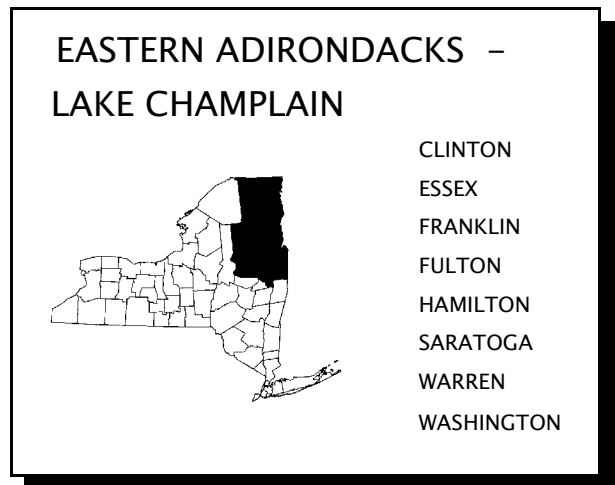
WOODLAWN PINE BARRENS–WETLANDS COMPLEX {54} ❖ – This area of Schenectady County is situated immediately northwest of the Albany Pine Bush Preserve and includes several remnant features of the Pine Bush, including sand plain and dune formations, pitch pine–scrub oak barrens, and historic Karner blue butterfly habitat, which while currently unoccupied, may be restored as a future reintroduction site. The area also supports several important wetlands forming a unique complex of pine barrens and wetland habitats. Although this area is outside of the protection area designated by the Albany Pine Bush Commission, its attributes have been recognized by the Commission as complementary to the Pine Bush Preserve and protection worthy. Owners of public lands in this area are encouraged to cooperate with state and other agencies to protect this habitat.

REGIONS 4 & 5

HOOSIC RIVER CORRIDOR {55} ❖ – This inter–regional river corridor and its tributaries, located in Rensselaer and Washington counties, drain an extensive area encompassing lands in three states and form a significant portion of the upper Hudson River drainage north of the Hudson River estuary. This project will assist in conserving the variety of open space resources, such as working farmland and timberlands, scenic views, wetlands, unique areas and significant fish and wildlife habitats; and work to enhance public recreation, such as hunting fishing, birding and canoeing, in this river corridor; particularly in the towns of White Creek and Cambridge in Washington County. State fee acquisitions and easements will be only two of the numerous means used to conserve open space, protect natural resources and enhance public recreation. Open space conservation, including protection of working farmland within the corridor, may also be accomplished by utilizing the means and methods, such as purchase of development rights, identified in Washington County's Agricultural and farmland Protection Plan. The area also has the potential for the development of a major greenway across northern Rensselaer and southern Washington counties linking the Rensselaer Plateau with the Green Mountains in Vermont and the Taconic Mountains along the Massachusetts–NY state line. Local initiatives toward such a greenway have already been commenced by the Town of Hoosick and Village of Hoosick Falls. Further, the Hoosic River is a DEC designated Public Fishing River, and as such, the DEC will continue to seek to obtain public fishing rights.

REGION 5 / EASTERN ADIRONDAKS / LAKE CHAMPLAIN

The northern Hudson River runs from its source Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondacks, as a sometimes wild whitewater river, now largely controlled by dams. The lowlands of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Champlain flank the massive Adirondack Mountains. The legendary High Peaks in the eastern Adirondacks, famous lakes such as Lake George, Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, and ski areas such as Whiteface Mountain, draw millions of visitors to this area. Lake Champlain and Saratoga are also popular destination areas for visitors from around the world. The natural beauty of the Adirondacks led to the protection of the first wilderness areas in 1885 to leave lands as forever wild. This was the beginning of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.



The forts and battlefields from the French and Indian War, the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War, highlight the strategic importance of this area during America's battle for independence. Centuries of maritime history have been preserved in the many wrecks in Lake Champlain. During the 19th century, Saratoga and the Adirondacks were summer resorts for the wealthy who built mansions and rustic Adirondack great camps.

* To read the Region 5 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN CLUB LANDS {56} – The state and the Adirondack Mountain Club are currently engaged in discussions regarding the construction of a new Visitor's Service Facility and approximately 300 car parking lot to be located on the Club's Heart Lake property, in order to provide public access to the Van Hoevenberg and Indian Pass hiking trails. It is currently envisioned that this new facility will be effectuated by means of a long term lease instead of a fee or easement. However, the property is being proposed as an addition to this version of the Open Space Plan in the eventuality that state acquisition of an easement from the Adirondack Mountain Club is determined to be necessary for the completion of the Visitor's Service Facility and parking lot and that conveyance is approved by the Board of Directors of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

BIG CEDAR SWAMP {57} ❖ – This large contiguous Class I wetland complex in Warren County features a variety of wetland habitat types. The habitat diversity throughout the 900+ acre area supports more than 149 species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, at least five of which are designated as "species of special concern."

BOESELAGER FORESTRY {58} – Three parcels: One 2,038 acre parcel in the Town of Black Brook and one, 3,426 acre parcel in the Towns of Saranac and Dannemora, both bordering State Forest Preserve lands and existing timber easements, are proposed for working forest easements with public recreation rights. A third parcel, equaling 200 acres and 16 miles of Railroad bed that connects the Village of Dannemora and the Hamlet of Lyon Mountain, is proposed for acquisition of a recreational easement for public access.

DOUGLAS PROPERTY {59} – A 140 acre Forest Preserve addition with 3000' of frontage on Silver Lake in the Clinton County Town of Black Brook. This parcel encompasses the last undeveloped shoreline stretch of Silver Lake and would greatly enhance the recreational opportunities and protection of this water body.

FOLLENSBY PARK {60} – A 14,600 acre forested tract is located in the Towns of Tupper Lake and Harrietstown, Franklin County. The area contains the 920 acre Follensby Pond, a historic bald eagle nesting site, and is bordered by the Raquette River, a classified scenic river, for approximately ten miles.

FINCH WOODLANDS {61} – Approximately 161,000 acres with 144 miles of rivers, 16,000 acres of wetlands, more than 90 mountains and 70 lakes and ponds, now owned by The Nature Conservancy and a private forest management company. The lands are spread across numerous parcels in 6 counties and 31 towns in the Adirondacks. The property, once owned by paper manufacturer Finch, Pruyn & Company, includes notable natural features such as OK Slip Falls, Essex Chain of Lakes, Boreas Ponds, and portions of Snowy, Panther and Buell Mountains. These extensive lands are remarkable for their ecological diversity, astounding beauty, productive timberlands and location in the heart of the Adirondack Park. Much of the land adjoins the Forest Preserve and contains intact large expanses of ecologically and economically important forests, the benefits of which range from mitigating the impacts of climate change to enhancing the Adirondack Park's draw as a world-class tourist destination.

The northern portion of the woodlands consists of over 134,000 acres located in the Towns of Newcomb, North Hudson and Minerva in Essex County and Long Lake and Indian Lake in Hamilton County. New York State will purchase approximately 59,000 acres in fee and will purchase conservation easements on approximately 75,000 acres. The Nature Conservancy is withholding approximately 1,110 acres to be used for community enhancement projects, such as affordable housing.

The project also includes the 1500 acre Casey Brook Tract, currently owned by Elk Lake Lands, Inc., which will be swapped for the 1600 acre Three Brothers Mountain Tract, currently owned by the Nature Conservancy. The Casey Brook Tract is proposed for fee acquisition by State and inclusion in the forest preserve, and the Three Brothers Mountain Tract, which will include a conservation easement to be purchased by New York State.

The souther portion of the woodlands consists of approximately 27,000 acres in 30 tracts in 22 towns. New York State will purchase approximately 8,000 acres in fee for inclusion in the forest preserve, managed by DEC as state forests, or, possibly, managed by OPRHP. Additionally, the State will purchase conservation easements on 19,000 acres. In total, New York State will purchase approximately 67,000 acres in fee and a conservation easement on about 93,000 acres.

FLOODWOOD (Northern New Jersey Council Boy Scout Camp) {62} – This project includes two parcels of land, one 120 acres situated on the West side of Rollins Pond and the other 260 acres situated on the west side of West Pine Pond in the Town of Tupper Lake, Franklin County. Both parcels are surrounded by Forest Preserve, and are owned by the North Bergen County Council Inc./Boy Scouts of America, Inc.. The state has first option with the Boy Scouts to acquire the land because of an earlier agreement when the state acquired 4,990 acres in 1990. This additional 380 acres will be added to the Forest Preserve. The Town of Tupper Lake has approved this project.

HUDSON RIVER PROJECTS {63}

- **Champlain Canal/Hudson River Corridor** – From Waterford to Whitehall, the Champlain Canal is an underused resource serving Saratoga and Washington Counties. The majority of public ownership along its length is under the jurisdiction of the NYS Canal Corporation. Additional open space acquisitions should focus on recreational water access, habitat protection along the Hudson River, completion of the Canal Recreationway Trail and the protection of the historic viewsheds of the Battlefields, Siege and Surrender of Saratoga in 1777.
- **Hudson River Access & Wildlife Habitat** – Lands that will improve public access to the Hudson River and its shoreline, as well as, protect wildlife habitat in the river corridor.
- **Bossert Property** – A parcel of land in the Town of Indian Lake, Hamilton County, which abuts the Hudson Gorge Primitive Area on the southeast. Acquisition of this parcel, which would be suitable for a parking lot and foot trail, would provide the only access into the southeastern portion of the primitive area.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN WATERSHED {64}

- **Lake Champlain Shoreline & Wetlands** – In addition to these projects the Region 5 Committee had previously endorsed 5 priority wetland projects along the Lake Champlain Plain which were to have been acquired through funding from the North American Wetland Conservation Act. Two of these projects (**Poultney River Complex** and **Webb Royce Swamp**) have been completed and a third is in progress (Kings Bay). The two remaining projects include **The Narrows** and **Freedom Marsh**. Additional Lake Champlain wetlands projects which are being contemplated as a “Phase III” were endorsed by the Committee at their October 25, 1996 meeting. These include **Monty Bay**, **Dead Creek**, **Bulwagga Bay**, **Huckleberry Mountain Marsh** (also known as Freedom Marsh) and **South Bay**. These wetland projects reflect priorities along the Lake Champlain Plain only, and are not intended to represent the wetland protection needs of the rest of Region 5.
- **Lake Champlain Watershed Natural Communities and Important Species** – The Lake Champlain Watershed contains many diverse natural communities and important plant and animal species. Conserve high quality examples of the Watershed’s natural communities and habitat for endangered and threatened species, species of special concern, and ‘species of greatest conservation need’ such as identified in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New York State.
- **Fort Montgomery and Associated Uplands** – Approximately 300 acres of land within the Village of Rouses Point, at the extreme northeast corner of New York State, bordered by Canada to the north and Lake Champlain to the east. Property contains significant remnants of a stone fort constructed in 1844, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The majority of the parcel is wetland, much of it NYS Regulated Class I freshwater wetland.
- **Sherman Property** – 445 acres located in the Town of Westport, includes a Forest Preserve addition of 300 acres and a conservation easement on the remaining 145 acres of farmland and forest. The protection of these lands will advance the development of a hiking trail between Westport and Essex, provide a trail to the summit of Twin Hill, preserve rare plants and an important natural community, conserve an historic farm, and protect the view from Coon Mountain Preserve, owned by the Adirondack Land Trust.
- **The Saddles on South Bay** ❖ – This 2,465 acre tract lies on the east shore of Lake Champlain's South Bay in the Town and Village of Whitehall in Washington County. The tract contains approximately 3,650 feet of shoreline on Lake Champlain, a 70 acre cliff community with endangered species habitat, and a hemlock–northern hardwood forest in good to excellent conditions with pitch pine–oak heath rocky summits. Eight streams, all tributaries to Lake Champlain, can be found on the property – one includes the Devil's Den waterfalls. The tract borders the Adirondack Park and is currently owned by the Nature Conservancy. DEC will

purchase the tract in fee from a willing seller and the lands will be managed as a State Forest. This project is a Hudson–Champlain Quadracentennial Legacy Project.

- **Tub Mills Pond Forest** – 1,215 acre property in the Town of Moriah, Essex County, is adjacent to forest preserve lands in the Hammond Pond Wild Forest. The property contains a large lake, a number of smaller ponds and wetlands. There are significant shorelines along the lake and islands and a healthy naturally reproducing fish community. Bald eagles are regularly sighted on the property. The property is an excellent addition to the forest preserve, in a scenic but under-appreciated area of the Adirondack Park.

LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED {65}

- **Undeveloped Lake George Shore** – Lake George is the “Queen of the American Lakes.” Its eastern shore and sections of its western shore still remain undeveloped and represent significant ecosystems and scenic panoramas.
- **Pilot Knob** – Located in the Town of Fort Ann, Washington County, this 400 acre tract will provide public access to the summit of Pilot Knob Mountain from Pilot Knob Road on the southeast side of Lake George. It has an infrastructure of trails with panoramic views of the lake and will add recreational opportunity to the Lake George area.
- **Lake George Watershed** – Undeveloped upland tracts within the Lake George watershed that need to be protected to ensure the protection of the lakes water quality, view shed, and rare or threatened plants, animals, and natural communities.
- **Lake George Waterway Access** – Parcels along the Lake George shoreline that provide public access to the lake.
- **Prospect Mountain Tract** – This 1,450 acre parcel is located on the southern slopes of Prospect Mountain in the Town of Lake George. It borders the Forest Preserve and Town recreation lands. The development of this parcel, much of which lies within the West Brook drainage, could increase stormwater runoff and sedimentation in Lake George. The Town of Lake George supports this project.

SARATOGA COUNTY {66}

- **BLANDING'S TURTLE RECOVERY AREA** ❖ – Blandings turtles are a threatened species in New York that have recently been found in areas in central and eastern of Saratoga County. These lands are outside of the boundaries of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park project. Some of these areas, particularly those in the Towns of Wilton and Northumberland, are facing significant pressure from subdivisions and retail development. DEC will acquire properties, in fee or under easement, containing Blanding's turtle and the properties will become part of the Saratoga Sandplains Wildlife Management Area.
- **DWAAS KILL NATURAL AREA** – This proposed nature preserve features a complex of aquatic, wetland, and upland habitat associated with the middle reaches of the Dwaas Kill stream system and its tributaries. The preserve will protect approximately 500 acres within the rapidly growing Town of Clifton Park in Saratoga County. The preserve will afford approximately 5 miles of stream corridor protection, assist in preservation of water quality and protect one of the Town's major aquifers. Hemlock-laden ravines, a large wetlands complex and relatively undisturbed riparian habitat provide a solid diversity of native flora and fauna plus important wildlife habitat and travel corridors.
- **KARNER BLUE BUTTERFLY RECOVERY UNITS** ❖ – Three areas in Region 5 support by far the majority of the remaining populations of the state and federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. These areas have been designated recovery units in a draft state recovery plan and are also sites for recovery goals under the draft federal recovery plan for this species. Acquisition and easements will be needed in conjunction with management agreements and other land protection tools to halt the decline of the Karner blue and to create the long-term

self sustaining populations necessary to remove the species from the endangered list. The recovery units in Region 5 include, but are not limited to:

- **Saratoga West Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Unit** – This area contains the largest single remaining Karner blue butterfly population as well as several smaller populations. The Unit includes habitat and areas suitable for habitat restoration which can be used to link populations.
- **Saratoga Sandplains Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Unit** – This Unit includes the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park (WWPP), which has already been included as an Open Space Project. The WWPP includes only part of the Unit, the rest being in the Town of Northumberland. The Northumberland portion contains a particularly good Karner blue population as well as several smaller ones, which can be linked to those in the WWPP.
- **Queensbury Sandplains Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery Unit** – This area contains the northern most populations of the Karner blue in the state. The Unit includes habitat and areas suitable for habitat restoration which can be used to link populations. Management over the long term is necessary to increase and preserve Karner blue butterfly populations. (This project is located in Warren County.)
- **KAYADEROSSERAS & FISH CREEK CORRIDOR / SARATOGA LAKE** ❖ – One of the major tributaries of the Hudson River is the Kayderosseras, Saratoga Lake and Fish Creek. They flow through five towns, three villages and the City of Saratoga Springs in Saratoga County. This major water corridor through the center of the county is important for recreation, fishing, water shed protection as well as providing significant wetlands and natural habitat. Increased public access to both the creeks and the lake are goals of the surrounding municipalities and the County's Green Infrastructure Plan. Protection efforts can be undertaken by state, county and municipal jurisdictions or by other organization and could take the route of either fee or easement acquisitions.
- **MID-COUNTY TRAIL SYSTEM** – A designated county trail system traverses four towns and a village in the center of the Saratoga County and has the potential to link some of the major residential populations centers. Protection of the wetlands and natural corridors along the trail and establishment of trail linkages into residential areas will advance recreational use and enjoyment. There are opportunities to link the trail to existing DEC, county, town, and Saratoga P.L.A.N. properties.
- **SACANDAGA CORRIDOR** – Lands in the Town of Hadley adjacent to the Stewart's Bridge Reservoir and the Sacandaga River below the Stewart's Bridge Reservoir Dam that are currently owned by the Open Space Conservancy and National Grid. The properties include acreage near the shoreline of the reservoir adjacent to FERC required public recreational access to the water; and along the river adjacent to the Town of Hadley Whitewater Recreation area. State ownership of the properties will enhance the existing recreational opportunities and protect the viewshed from the river corridor. The Open Space Conservancy is currently seeking the sell all of its properties – four parcels totaling 281 acres – to the State. National Grid has offered to sell their properties – totaling 197 acres – in the past.
- **SARATOGA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LANDS** – Throughout Saratoga County, an active farmland conservation easement program has been created with assistance from the County Farmland Preservation and Open Space Fund. Throughout the county, important farmland protection projects have been initiated under the umbrella of a county wide program. These projects maintain the character of the county and also provide vital grassland habitats. NYS should focus commensurate attention and resources in NYS Region 5 to the protection of agricultural lands for working farms – similar to the protection of forested lands for working forests. Any reasonably viable farmland under consideration should be protected, whenever possible, by the purchase of an easement rather than fee simple acquisition, in order to enhance future use of the land for agriculture.

- **SOUTHEASTERN ADIRONDACK FOOTHILLS** ❖ – The Palmertown and Luzerne Ranges lie immediately west of booming “Northway Corridor” towns such as Wilton and Queensbury, and in close proximity to the tourism centers of Saratoga and Lake George. This area is the ecological transition zone between the Adirondacks and the Hudson Valley, resulting in high biodiversity and includes the Moreau Lake Forest Important Bird Area. Existing public lands include Lincoln Mountain State Forest, Moreau Lake State Park, City of Glens Falls watershed, Luzerne State Campground, and Prospect Mountain. (Portions of this project are located in Warren County.)
- **STONY CREEK RESERVOIR NATURAL AREA** – Stony Creek Reservoir and its watershed lands cover over 1000 acres in the Town of Clifton Park, represent a significant, large block of a natural area in the eastern, more developed part of the Town. The reservoir and surrounding land is owned and protected by the Latham Water District (Town of Colonie) as a back-up public water supply, but no public access is available to any of it. This open space area includes the northern reach of the Stony Creek as it flows into the reservoir, surrounding wetlands, Stony Creek groundwater aquifer recharge lands, fish and wildlife habitat, woodlands and opportunities for passive recreation. A significant fisheries habitat is associated with the Stony Creek reservoir and Stony Kill (stream – class A). The Stony Creek Reservoir is the largest water body in Clifton Park and is identified as a specific plan goal and long-range opportunity for protection of water supply and natural resources in the Town of Clifton Park Open Space Plan.
- **VISCHER FERRY PRESERVE / MOHAWK CORRIDOR** – Located in Southern portion of Saratoga County, the Vischer Ferry Preserve is a priority open space area for the Town of Clifton Park as well as designated as an Important Bird Area by Audubon. The Preserve, managed by the Town and owned by Canal Corporation, has wetland and forest habitats as well as Mohawk River Shoreline. There is opportunity for additional parcels from private landowners to be added to the Preserve complex. One such additional took place in 2004 and other acquisition is planned for 2005. Continued acquisition of available parcels are part of Town's open space plan and would provide increased river access.
- **WILTON WILDLIFE PRESERVE & PARK** ❖ – The town of Wilton has developed a plan to create a 2,500 acre park in the center of the town which will provide recreational and aesthetic open space to complement future development in the fastest growing county (Saratoga) in New York State. A mixture of acquisitions and easements, involving the participation of local, state and federal programs and dollars is contemplated to accomplish this ambitious project. The Town of Wilton is outside of the Adirondack Park. The area also provides an important habitat for the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly.

WASHINGTON COUNTY {67} ❖

- **BATTEN KILL CORRIDOR** – Preserve the variety of open space resources, such as working farmlands and timberlands, scenic views, wetlands, unique areas and significant fish and wildlife habitats; and work to enhance public recreation, such as hunting, fishing, birding, and canoeing, in this river corridor in the Towns of Salem, Jackson, Greenwich and Easton in Washington County. State fee acquisitions and easements will be only two of the numerous means used to preserve open space, protect natural resources and enhance public recreation. Open space conservation, including preservation of working farmlands within the corridor, may also be accomplished by utilizing the means and methods, such as purchase of development rights, identified in Washington County’s Farmland Protection Plan. The Batten Kill is a DEC designated Public Fishing River, and as such, the DEC will continue to seek to obtain public fishing rights.
- **WASHINGTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL LANDS** – For more than 200 years agriculture has played an important role in shaping the settlement patterns, working landscapes and rural

heritage of Washington County. Throughout the county important farmland protection projects have been initiated under the Washington County Purchase of Development Rights Program that was established in partnership with Washington County and the Agricultural Stewardship Association, a local land trust that operates an active conservation easement program. These projects support the region's agricultural industry, maintain its agricultural character and provide vital wildlife and grassland habitats. NYS should focus commensurate attention and resources in NYS DEC Region 5 on the protection of agricultural lands for working farms – similar to the protection of forested lands for working forests. Existing farmland under consideration should be protected by the purchase of an easement rather than fee simple acquisition in order to enhance future use of the land for agriculture.

- **WASHINGTON COUNTY GRASSLANDS** ❖ ^Λ – 4,000 acres of the 13,000 acre Washington County Important Bird Area (IBA) located in the Towns of Fort Edward, Argyle and Kingsbury in Washington County. The grasslands provides wildlife habitat for endangered, threatened and declining grassland nesting birds; lands for agriculture; open space for public recreation and hunting; and the rural character and scenic vistas of the three towns. Protection of the grasslands will be achieved through a combination of land acquisition and voluntary grassland stewardship strategies. This approach will utilize: 1) Purchase of parcels by fee title and purchase of conservation and management easements from willing landowners; 2) Voluntary agreements between the State, conservation and agricultural land trusts and land owners to include farm properties throughout the Washington County Grassland Important Bird Area; and 3) Town land use planning and zoning ordinances to encourage open space conservation in the Towns of Fort Edward and Kingsbury. Approximately 2,000 acres of land in the core of the grasslands will be purchased in fee by the State of New York, and will be managed to sustain a grassland ecosystem. Another approximately 2,000 acres surrounding and buffering the core will remain private land protected under conservation and management easements. Grassland stewardship agreements with willing property owners will be sought throughout the Important Bird Area.

WHITNEY PARK {68} – A 36,000 acre property in Hamilton County that has been devoted to forest and wildlife management for over 100 years and contains enormous outdoor recreational potential.

REGIONS 5 & 6

Low Elevation Boreal Heritage Reserve & Wilderness and Bob Marshall (Oswegatchie) Great Wilderness Area

While several Priority Projects have been added to the Adirondack Park by both Regions 5 & 6 it is helpful from a larger planning perspective to include overall conservation strategies for both the Low Elevation Boreal Forest and the Oswegatchie areas of the Park. These were identified through public comment as important to the future of the Park. The State has taken several steps in recent years in the protection of these areas, including addition of the William C. Whitney Wilderness Area, International Paper Lakes and IP Lands, John Dillon Park, the former Champion lands and the largest reclassification in State history of the Raquette–Boreal Wild Forest, to the Raquette River WF and the Raquette–Jordan Boreal Primitive Area. The following Conservation Strategies from the 2002 and 2006 Plan are included to help guide conservation of these areas.

The Low Elevation Boreal Forest area within the Adirondack Park consists of a combination of spruce–fir forest and wetlands more common of areas much farther north. It includes rare combinations of plant and animal species some of which are protected by ownership by The Nature Conservancy, by inclusion in the Forest Preserve, by easements over private land and by private

landowner stewardship. Because of its unusual character, the low elevation Boreal Forest in the Adirondack Park should be protected through a combination of additional state and private conservation ownership, conservation easements and incentives for private landowners to manage their land to support and protect boreal species.

The Oswegatchie drainage in the western portion of the Adirondack Park includes extensive forested, roadless areas including large amounts of Forest Preserve Land. The Open Space Plan endorses permanent conservation of the wild, roadless character of this area through a combination of additional state land acquisition, the protection of large private holdings via the donation or purchase of conservation easements, cooperative agreements with landowners, tax incentive programs for forestry, the continued implementation of the Adirondack Park Agency Act and the cooperative efforts of State agencies.

BOG RIVER / BEAVER RIVER HEADWATER COMPLEX {69} – The Bog River/Beaver River Headwater Complex is an assemblage of remote forestland and lakes with streams and wetlands that flow primarily into the Bog and Beaver Rivers. The large lakes in this complex, including Lows Lake, Bog Lake, Round Lake and Lake Lila are recognized for their scenic value and recreation opportunities. Smaller ponds and large wetland assemblages offer important aquatic habitat and hydrologic connectivity. These vast forests hold the landscape together in a way that is rare in the highly developed Northeast. It also enhances the region’s ecological integrity, and provides economic returns through both timber management and recreational opportunities. Ownership within the complex is primarily Forest Preserve and large private holdings, including land acquired by The Nature Conservancy from International Paper. Natural resource protection within the complex should be accomplished through a combination of “Working Forest Easements,” Forest Preserve additions and private stewardship.

MAY’S POND TRACT (SWEET) {70} – This project, located in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County and the Town of Long Lake, Hamilton County, provides for protection of the May’s Pond property for addition to the Forest Preserve to ensure continued access to May’s Pond and enhance the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area (which almost surrounds the property), or to maintain its current condition by limiting development and timber removal. This 350 acre triangular shaped in-holding, which is now owned by The Nature Conservancy, extends into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area and includes 1/3 of Mays Pond, an undeveloped pond stocked by NYS DEC with brook trout. The balance of Mays Pond is in public ownership. Acquisition of the property in fee or easement will help consolidate the protection of Mays Pond, and insure important public access by use of the existing trail system across the property into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area and continued access to May’s Pond. The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee strongly encourages the State to use the roadway to allow motorized access to May’s Pond for persons with disabilities if the State gains an interest in the property.

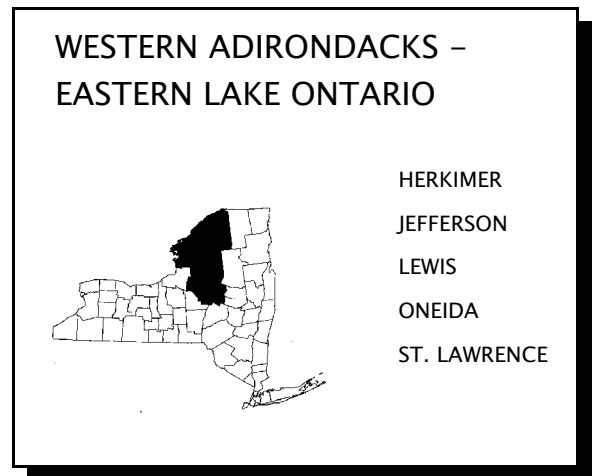
NORTHERN FLOW RIVER CORRIDORS {71} – Preserve the open space character and enhance public use of important northern flow river corridors and adjacent lands. The following corridors have been chosen at this time: **Deer, St. Regis, Grass, Oswegatchie, Raquette and Little Rivers Corridors** within the Adirondack Park, all of which contain significant stretches of high quality recreational water, particularly suited for canoeing and angling. Progress has been made in Region 6 with the recent addition of 51,000 acres of conservation easement lands on the Middle and North Branches of the Grass River and 33,000 acres of conservation easement lands on the Raquette River.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL LINKAGES & NETWORKS {72} – Long distance trail linkages, greenways, scenic byways and networks, (including water routes) for a variety of motorized and non-motorized

recreational uses (such as hiking, skiing, biking, snowmobiling, canoeing and other appropriated uses) are important as a way for local communities to benefit from neighboring State lands. The State has an obligation to adequately maintain and police such trails and to protect adjacent private landowners from illegal trespass, poaching and other nuisances resulting from the inappropriate use of such trails. Trails and networks of interest include North Country National Scenic Trail, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, the Barge Canal and Mohawk River, Black River Blueway Trail, and the Black River, Central Adirondack, Maple Traditions, Olympic and Seaway Trail Scenic Byways and the Mohawk Valley Heritage Trail. The intent of this project is not to achieve broader acquisition but is focused on creating linkages to existing resources.

REGION 6 / WESTERN ADIRONDACKS

The varied landscapes of our State's north-western region include the western Adirondack Mountains and the Tug Hill Plateau, which have some of the most remote areas in the State. The Lake Ontario shoreline has a wealth of beaches, rocky shores and wetlands. Inland from the lakeshore are many unusual ecological communities, notably the strange barren limestone pavements with their unique plant communities. In the southern part of the Region, in the Mohawk Valley, is a remarkable remnant of the Ice Age, the dunes of the Rome Sand Plains which harbor pockets of ice age plant communities.



The Mohawk Valley did not become fully settled until the Erie Canal was built to provide a transportation corridor linking Albany with the Great Lakes. The shallow rocky, Mohawk River was difficult to navigate and was largely bypassed by the Erie Canal – which in places actually crossed over the river as navigable aqueducts. Before the first Erie Canal, west-bound travelers on the Mohawk had to stop at what is now the City of Rome, in order to portage over to Wood Creek, the next link of the route to the Great Lakes. Fort Stanwix was built to guard this portage which became of great strategic importance during the wars for independence.

* To read the Region 6 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

BLACK CREEK WATERSHED {73} – This project will focus on enhancing or consolidating existing public lands under the jurisdiction of the New York State Thruway Authority on Black Creek. These lands are important for watershed protection and for public recreation such as canoeing and fishing. The project runs from County Rte 112 down to Hinckley Reservoir in the Towns of Russia and Ohio in Herkimer County where the State owns lands along the Black Creek. Any DEC or OPRHP land acquisition would be done in concert with or with the approval of the Town.

BLACK RIVER VALLEY CORRIDOR (formerly Black River Corridor) {74} ❖ – Preserve the open space character, public recreational use and ecological connectivity values of the land within the Black River valley and along the Black River corridor. The Black River Valley is a unique river valley within New

York State which supports a broad range of working and ecologically significant landscapes and separates the unique forested landscapes of Tug Hill and the Adirondacks. Protection of key parcels of forest and farm lands to facilitate movement of wildlife and plant species between the Adirondacks and Tug Hill is important for a variety of reasons including genetic exchange within a species, biodiversity and providing corridors as avenues for species movement in the event of long term climatic change. Studies underway will help to better identify the important areas in this valley needed to maintain, protect and enhance existing connectivity.

The Black River flows from its headwaters in the forested southwestern Adirondacks, through the rural agricultural lands between Tug Hill and the Adirondacks, through the urban settings of Watertown and into Lake Ontario. It provides a riverine corridor used for fishing, canoeing, white water rafting, kayaking and scenic viewing along its 114 mile length, as well as energy generation and water supply. It links, economically, socially and environmentally, the communities that line its banks. The Black River is a designated New York State Blueway Trail with the support of 37 communities along the corridor. These communities and State agency partners, have developed integrated objectives for the future use and development of the corridor including open space projects to protect small forested tracts with high public values, riparian buffers and adjacent productive agricultural lands, and public access and multi-use trails to enhance tourism and public enjoyment of the river.

A beginning has been made through the acquisition of an 1850 acre conservation easement on the Black River in the Towns of Boonville and Forestport which provides public recreational access, and helps enhance wildlife movement while continuing the lands productivity in a working landscape.

FORT DRUM CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT {75} ❖ – Fort Drum encompasses more than 100,000 acres of land, 80% of which is undeveloped, including a mix of forests, grassland and abandoned farmland reverting to forest which is frequented by wildlife from bald eagles to bear. At the same time, these lands are being used extensively for military training for primarily the 10th Mountain Division light infantry units. Lands adjacent to Fort Drum are comprised of a similar mix of habitats and cover types and, in addition, active farmland. Together, these lands comprise a very large sparsely developed rural area where residences are few and the public road network sparse. Fort Drum lands are managed for military use but with a very strong natural resource conservation ethic. In addition, much of the lands are open to public recreation in cooperation with DEC.

The conservation/open space value of Fort Drum is, of course, only part of the value of the Fort to the North Country. The economic and cultural values of the Fort and its soldiers, military families and employees greatly benefit the entire region. Recent increases in the number of soldiers highlights the need for more areas for training. In addition, existing training areas need to be protected from activities on the adjacent private lands, such as housing development, that could end up limiting the kind of training that can be done on lands adjacent to the development. Addressing these training and conservation needs provides a unique opportunity to enhance the Fort while also enhancing the conservation values the Fort and adjacent lands provide. Establishing a conservation partnership between Fort Drum, local governments, New York State and private conservation organizations is one way to address these challenges.

There are three ways a conservation partnership could provide significant benefits to dual goals of maintaining/enhancing training capabilities and open space/conservation values. First, purchase of lands in fee or easement for conservation purposes, adjacent to the Fort, would provide a buffer to development. This development, if not controlled, would in time encroach upon or otherwise interfere with military training along the base periphery. Training on these lands would only be allowed if it is compatible with conservation/open space values. Also, land could be acquired in fee or easement as mitigation opportunities for wetlands and other environmental values impacted by development of

facilities on the Fort so serve a dual purpose of mitigation and buffer. Second, communities could establish land use controls which only allow development compatible with the Fort's training activities. Finally, purchase of land not adjacent to the Fort in fee, or as working forest easement, in holdings generally larger than 4,000 acres could include a reserved right for light infantry or similar military training where compatible with conservation values. *(As previously recommended in the report, all local government real property taxes should be paid for fee and easement lands acquired by NYS.)*

HERKIMER HOME VIEWSHED {76} – The project is designed to protect the vistas to the north of the historic General Nicholas Herkimer Home and buffer properties. Herkimer Home Historic Site currently contains the house where General Herkimer lived until his death, after being wounded in the important Battle of Oriskany in 1777, and 165 acres around the parcel.

INMAN GULF {77} – The gulf is a unique geological and biological site on the Tug Hill Plateau in Lewis and Jefferson Counties from Barnes Corners to Rodman. Acquisition in fee and/or easement of private parcels bordering the gulf is needed to protect the integrity of the area.

MASSAWEPIE MIRE {78} ❖ – Preserve this unique ecological community consisting of the Adirondacks' largest fen, adjacent eskers, lands and ponds. The mire and adjoining properties may be subject to development pressures should they become available on the real estate market. Subdivision and development of the parcels currently in private ownership would compromise the ecological integrity of the area. Currently the remaining private landowners are not interested in selling, and are providing an excellent level of stewardship.

MAUMEE SWAMP {79} ❖ – A unique, undisturbed area consisting of Weaver Lake and the extensive wetland area surrounding it. Protection will preserve and insure future public enjoyment of this unique area. The area, consisting of 1,000 acres, is located in the Town of Warren, Herkimer County.

MOOSE RIVER CORRIDOR {80} – Preserve the open space character and enhance public use of the Moose River Corridor in Herkimer, Oneida and Lewis Counties from Rondaxe Lake and the Fulton Chain downstream to the Black River. Acquisition may consist of a combination of fee and easement holdings.

NORTH POND TRACT {81} – This block of 1,474 acres of private land is bordered by the Independence River Wild Forest to the West and South, and the Ha-De-Ron-Dah Wilderness to the Southeast. It includes the 12 acre North Pond, large areas of wetlands, and North Pond Inlet which feeds directly into Big Otter Lake. The project area has been historically used as a private hunting club with little development and with responsible forest management under the Forest Tax Law(480a). This property may be subject to development or subdivision pressures should it become available on the open market. Protection would ensure maintaining the integrity of the adjoining Wild Forest and Wilderness areas, in addition to further safeguarding the tributaries feeding into Big Otter Lake.

PORTAFERRY LAKE {82} – This Tract has a total of approximately 465 acres of land in the Towns of Pitcairn and Fine, St. Lawrence County, including 215 acres within the Adirondack Park Blue Line. This site has been enjoyed by the public through a cooperative agreement between the Boy Scouts of America and NYSDEC for many years. The goal is to preserve its open space character and insure continued public recreational use by acquiring a car top boat launch, parking areas, designated camping areas and public fishing rights on the property. Public fishing and boating on the 100 acre Portaferry Lake is of primary interest. The acquisition of a conservation easement and/or fee would also limit future development and subdivision of the property and would provide for sustainable forestry practices.

ROME SAND PLAINS {83} ❖ – Acreage owned by the DEC and The Nature Conservancy should be added to in order to protect the unique ecological, historical, geological and scenic characteristics of the area and provide for public use opportunities. To date, 1,372 acres have been acquired in fee by NYS. A successful lupine restoration program and new trail development supported by volunteers are recent accomplishments in this area.

STATE PARK BATTLEFIELDS {84} – Acquire parcels adjacent to State Park Lands at the Oriskany Battlefield in Oneida County and Sackets Harbor Battlefield in Jefferson County to protect from subdivision and development. At Oriskany there are two (2) parcels with an acreage of 175 acres, and at Sackets one (1) parcel of 75 acres.

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER ISLANDS, SHORELINES & WETLANDS {85} ❖ – On the St. Lawrence River, including the Thousands Islands portion of the river, conservation priority should go to lands adjacent to existing State Parks; undeveloped islands and shoals, large tracts of forest, grassland, and wetland habitat adjacent to tributaries to the St. Lawrence River; lands with high recreational potential, and scenic, undeveloped shoreline. A relatively small portion of lands on and near the St. Lawrence River today are in public ownership. Different land protection strategies may be required including but not limited to fee ownership and conservation easements accomplished by one or more parties. Additional conservation along the St. Lawrence River requires close cooperation with local governments and provides opportunities to work with a number of partners, to include Native American groups, lands trusts, New York State, private landowners and others. The Canadian side of the St. Lawrence River Thousand Islands has been recognized for its international ecological importance by being designated a biosphere reserve. All open space conservation efforts in this area will enhance the ecological connectivity across the Frontenac Arch, an area extending from the Adirondacks to Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario.

WORKING FOREST LANDS {86} – Acquire, own and manage working forest easements on large tracts of available timber production lands to minimize development, provide recreational opportunities where appropriate, and maintain timber producing lands in private ownership.

REGIONS 4, 6 & 7

CENTRAL LEATHERSTOCKING – MOHAWK GRASSLANDS AREA {87} – Multi-Regional priority project which includes significant grassland habitat extending from Western Montgomery, Northwestern Schoharie, and Northeastern Otsego Counties in Region 4 west thru Herkimer, Oneida, Madison and Southeastern Onondaga Counties in Regions 6 and 7. This area, which is referred to as, "Grassland Breeding Bird Focus Area #4" in, "A Plan For Conserving Grassland Birds in New York" is regarded by Audubon as the most significant of such habitat in any portion of Region 4. According to the above grassland bird conservation plan, focus area #4 supports several of the State's bird species of greatest conservation need; is a particularly important nesting area for NYS threatened upland sandpipers and northern harriers; and provides wintering habitat for the NYS endangered short-eared owl. Additionally, one of only four possible breeding records for the NYS endangered loggerhead shrike during the 2000–2005 NYS Breeding bird Atlas was reported from this area. Protection of large grasslands in this area by fee or easement acquisition is desirable under this project or under the multi-regional State Forest, Unique Area and Wildlife Management Area Protection Priority Project.

REGIONS 6 & 7

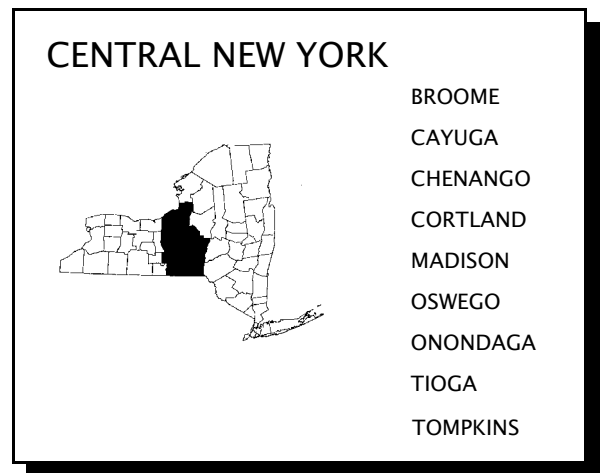
TUG HILL CORE FORESTS & HEADWATER STREAMS {88} ❖ – The Tug Hill Plateau is a large, undeveloped forested area that serves as the headwaters for several major water courses. These headwaters make a significant contribution to high quality drinking water supplies and the Tug Hill Aquifer as well as wildlife habitat. Major river systems that originate on the Plateau are the Mohawk River, Deer River, Salmon River, East Branch of Fish Creek, Fish Creek, Sandy Creek, and the Mad River to the north of the Salmon River Reservoir. The integrity of these core forests and headwaters should be protected through a combination of easement and fee acquisition of key parcels. Of particular importance is the maintenance of large private tracts managed for forest products to prevent subdivision and development. These forest tracts support a major regional forest products industry, provide important habitat for wide ranging and migratory species, and offer a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities.

REGIONS 6, 7, 8 & 9

GREAT LAKES SHORELINES & NIAGARA RIVER {89} ❖ – A major New York State resource consisting of islands, sand dunes, bluffs, embayments, wetlands, major tributaries, escarpments, lake plain, significant bat and avian migratory flyways, opportunities for shoreline and island access, and other significant natural, recreational and cultural resources. The near shore areas provide spawning and nursery habitat for the various fish species including those that are threatened and endangered such as the lake sturgeon. This area also provides nesting, feeding and resting habitat for waterfowl. The lake plain and escarpment, especially where the escarpment is relatively close to the lake, define important avian and bat migratory flyways, providing important resting and feeding areas during migratory periods and critical airspace for migrating birds and bats. The lake plain and escarpment also provide important and unique nesting and wintering habitats for critical avian species, including the American Bald Eagle and other species of conservation concern. The Lake Erie and Niagara Escarpments are noted geographical features that provide a diversity of ecologically significant habitats along their shore, as well as important historic, cultural and scenic assets. Recreation in the waterways continues to be a primary concern as urban areas demonstrate increasing demand for swimming, boating and fishing opportunities. This system begins at the St. Lawrence River in Jefferson County and extends to New York/Pennsylvania border on Lake Erie. The Niagara River corridor with its tributaries is featured in the “Niagara River Greenway” project. The western end of Lake Erie lake plain has been designated as part of the Lake Erie Concord Belt heritage area. This area also features the Sackets Harbor Battlefield Historic Site, and Sandy Pond, the largest freshwater dune system in the northeastern United States. Galloo Island, the largest undeveloped island in Lake Ontario measuring approximately 3 ½ miles by 1 ½ mile or 1,934 acres is just one of the undeveloped islands worthy of attention. Braddock Bay Complex and Niagara Falls, as well as smaller, but important areas such as Camp Trumansburg, are also at the risk of development.

REGION 7 / CENTRAL NEW YORK

Although the topography is more gentle than the rougher mountainous terrain in the eastern part of the State, the landscapes of our state's central region contain some of the most beautiful examples of traditional agricultural landscapes, where open land provides exceptionally wide scenic vistas. The moderating effect of Lake Ontario has gentled what would otherwise be a cold climate, and the northern part of the Region is dominated by farmland. There are many large wetlands which are important stopping areas for migratory waterfowl. The remarkable Finger Lakes are the legacy of the ice age when ice-gouged valleys were dammed with glacial debris. Today they are the heart of New York's famous wine industry, as well as being a resort and destination area.



The Erie Canal corridor supported development of many local industries. Natural salt deposits near Syracuse were mined to supply not only table salt but also raw material for early chemical industries. Agriculture, however, was the mainstay of the area, once the national top producer of crops such as hops and apples. Cornell University started out as an agricultural school located in the heart of prime farmland country. The elaborate 19th century buildings in many small towns are testimony to the great wealth once brought by agriculture and offer future Smart Growth opportunities as we seek to revitalize these economies.

* To read the Region 7 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

CAMILLUS VALLEY / NINE MILE CREEK {90} – Onondaga County, Towns of Camillus, Marcellus, and Geddes. Expansion of recent acquisitions by DEC and a local land trust to preserve this ecologically sensitive valley that supports a wide diversity of breeding bird and migratory bird species as well as being the most esteemed and widely used trout stream in Central New York. This project encompasses the Nine Mile Creek Valley running from Otisco Lake to Onondaga Lake, including enhancing the DEC-administered Camillus Forest, the Nine Mile Creek Critical Environmental Area, the Erie Canal Corridor, and the Water Trail in the Towns of Camillus and Marcellus, which are under immediate development pressure. The project will buffer important attributes from development and provide public waterway access.

CARPENTER FALLS/ BEAR SWAMP CREEK CORRIDOR {91} – Bear Swamp Creek contains a significant portion of the watershed of a drinking water supply for the City of Syracuse. The corridor includes about 6,000 acres of woods and high quality wooded wetlands containing a number of rare and protected plant species, of which 3,300 acres are managed by DEC as the Bear Swamp State Forest. The creek corridor also contains a pristine ravine with a 90-foot high waterfall (Carpenter Falls) and a series of cascading falls and rapids leading to Skaneateles Lake. The project would protect water quality, preserve scenic resources and expand the trail system in Bear Swamp State Forest.

DEVELOP A STATE PARK IN CORTLAND COUNTY {92} – Cortland is one of only two counties in New York State outside the Adirondack and Catskill parks that does not host a state park facility. Within Cortland County there are many natural assets. Excellent accessibility from Interstate 81 would enable vacationers, eco-tourists, and recreationists from this and the surrounding regions to access and enjoy the splendor of Cortland County.

FAIR HAVEN BEACH STATE PARK {93} – Fair Haven Beach State Park in Cayuga County is a highly utilized facility that serves as a key access point on Lake Ontario with exceptional scenic and wildlife resources. Additional parcels would fully integrate the water access site with the park proper and enhance recreational opportunities.

GENNY GREEN TRAIL / LINK TRAIL {94} – The project would provide for major trail connections between existing trails and state-owned lands in Chenango, Madison, Cortland, and Onondaga Counties, including the Finger Lakes Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Old Erie Canal trail, the statewide snowmobile corridor trail route and other smaller trails in the area. Utilizing Bowman Lake State Park and state forests and wildlife management lands in the area, more than 150 miles of continuous trails and trail loops could be developed and managed jointly by DEC, OPRHP and local governments.

NELSON SWAMP {95} – A biologically significant area with special natural beauty and rare flora. This northern white cedar swamp contains ancient trees in excess of 400 years old and approximately 369 species of vascular plants, including the threatened spreading globeflower and the endangered striped coral root. Nelson Swamp is currently the only site in New York State where the coral root has been identified. Further protection of this 1,500-acre swamp will reduce the fragmented ownership pattern, further the management objective of perpetual protection of this unique natural resource and enhance compatible public use opportunities.

NORTH SHORE OF ONEIDA LAKE {96} ❖ – The North Shore Oneida Lake Open Space project is located in the Towns of Constantia, West Monroe and Hastings in Oswego County. Its primary goals are to provide additional recreational access sites to Oneida Lake and the protection and enhancement of wetlands in Big Bay Swamp and Toad Harbor Swamp. The wetland acquisitions would be incorporated into the Three Mile Bay Wildlife Management Area. The acquisition area contains high value wetlands consisting of deep emergent marsh, maple-ash swamp, maple-hardwood swamp, and northern white cedar swamp. It also contains some valuable upland forests. Threatened or special concern species occurring in the area included Henslow's sparrows and northern harriers.

OLD ERIE CANAL STATE HISTORIC PARK TRAILHEAD DEVELOPMENT, BUFFER & HISTORIC PROTECTION {97} – Includes several properties adjacent to the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park within the Central New York Region where acquisition will provide opportunities for trailhead development and/or historic site protection buffering from future encroachment.

ONONDAGA ESCARPMENT {98} – A group of hard limestones and dolostones of Devonian age, the formation extends from the Hudson River, passing south of Syracuse, to southern Ontario. Within the Syracuse area, the escarpment is prominent with unique natural features that should be protected. This section includes Clark Reservation State Park that contains a meromictic lake and rare species of flora and fauna. Conservation measures are needed in areas outside and upstream from the park in order to protect these critical resources. The formation also encompasses Green Lakes State Park and Minoa Lakes. Acquisition of surrounding open space will not only protect existing park resources and provide recreational opportunities, but also provide linkages to the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park.

PETER SCOTT SWAMP {99} – A large Class I wetland of approximately 1,000 acres adjacent to and hydrologically linked to the Oneida River and the Erie Canal. It consists of several wetland types: cattail marsh, shrub swamp, wooded swamp, wet meadow and open water. Peter Scott Swamp is an important migratory stopover for thousands of waterfowl, contains a great blue heron rookery, and provides valuable spawning habitat for fish. Public ownership will provide increased and perpetual protection and enhance compatible public use of this valuable wetland.

SALMON RIVER CORRIDOR {100} – A scenic and recreational corridor in Oswego County. The Salmon River is a nationally recognized fisheries resource, containing trophy size trout and salmon. Presently, there are areas of private ownership which interrupt use of the 17 miles of acquired public land and easements along a 20 mile stretch of the Salmon River from Redfield downstream to Pulaski.

STATE PARKS GREENBELT / TOMPKINS COUNTY {101} – A greenbelt of four state park facilities connected by the Black Diamond Trail Corridor is experiencing impacts from encroaching moderate to high-density development. Acquisition of inholdings and large parcels adjacent to the parks is necessary to protect these valuable open space recreational resources.

SUMMERHILL FEN & FOREST COMPLEX {102} ❖ – This project will acquire upland forests, wetlands and adjacent upland buffers along Fall Creek using fee ownership and conservation easements to secure lands recognized for both their biological and recreational significance. Extensive wetlands along Fall Creek provide habitat for a variety of birds and other wildlife as well as 18 orchid species. Plant diversity is especially high due to the presence of wetland fens, and a number of rare plants are documented there, including the globally rare Spreading Globeflower. Forests in and around nearby Summerhill State Forest also have been recognized for biological significance through the National Audobon Society's designation of the Greater Summerhill Important Bird Area. This area encompasses one of the region's larger remaining blocks of contiguous forest. The State Forest's fragmented ownership pattern, however, makes it particularly vulnerable to habitat fragmentation due to conversion of adjacent private lands. In addition to their biological significance, this area also offers significant recreational resources. Public access to Fall Creek's trout waters is already provided through several DEC-maintained sites. Hiking opportunities include trails within Fillmore Glen State Park as well as a one-mile loop within the Finger Lakes Land Trust's McIlroy Sanctuary. The State Forest is a popular destination for hunters and snowmobilers. Conservation of key parcels would ensure the continued protection of natural and recreational resources while creating new opportunities, such as a network of hiking trails that could link Fillmore Glen State Park with McIlroy Bird Sanctuary and Moravia with Lake Como.

TWO RIVERS STATE PARK {103} – Tioga County was one of four counties in New York State outside the Adirondack and Catskill parks that did not host a state park facility. County and town officials worked with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to locate property within the Susquehanna and Chemung River Corridors Resource Area that highlights the county's natural assets and helps support the growing tourism industry in the county. Approximately 480 acres were acquired near the village of Waverly that form the core of the new state park. Additional parcels that will provide more acreage to expand recreational program development and buffer the new park from adjacent residential development will be acquired.



REGIONS 7 & 8

EMERALD NECKLACE {104} ❖ – The Emerald Necklace is an arc of forested hills and valleys stretching from east to west in the vicinity of Ithaca. Within this crescent lie more than 50,000 acres of public land, including nine state forests, Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area, Cornell University's Arnot Forest, and Finger Lakes National Forest. These forested lands serve as the headwaters for streams draining into the Finger Lakes as well as the Susquehanna Watershed. Approximately 55,000 acres of the Crescent are identified in the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan as important Natural Features Focus Areas for resource, recreation and open space protection. Two Audubon designated Important Bird Areas (Greater Connecticut Hill and Finger Lakes National Forest) are located within this area as well as at least 22 sites designated as Unique Natural Areas by Tompkins County's Environmental Management Council. A diversity of wildlife species utilize this area, ranging from a full array of nesting neotropical songbirds to an increasing number of black bears. Public lands within the crescent have a long history of recreational use and in recent years, use has increased dramatically. In addition to traditional activities, such as hunting, these lands are seeing growing use for mountain biking (particularly at Shindagin Hollow SF), cross country skiing (particularly at Hammond Hill SF) and hiking on the Finger Lakes Trail. For many years, private lands adjacent to these public holdings have traditionally been managed for compatible uses such as firewood cutting and deer hunting. With increasing residential development in the Ithaca area, however, these lands are increasingly being sought out as home sites. In some cases, such development fragments forested habitat while limiting recreational uses on adjacent state lands and increasing administrative costs. By consolidating existing state holdings while also ensuring linkages between these sites, there is the potential to create a world class ecological, recreational and educational resource. A long-term grassroots approach to conserving these lands could achieve this vision while ensuring the ecological viability of existing state land and also enhancing recreational opportunities. It is recommended that development of a plan for educational interpretation and enhancement of access to these sites be developed concurrently with any land protection conservation plans for the area.

FINGER LAKES SHORELINES {105} ❖ – While the Finger Lakes Region is identified in the 2002 Plan as a Major Resource Area (pg. 296), and strategies such as acquisition of additional public access and consolidation of existing State projects are mentioned, the shorelines of these unique lakes are tied up in private ownership to a degree seldom seen in other states, so that most citizens have little direct experience of these beautiful lakes, even though their length provides hundreds of miles of shoreline. Public access for swimming, photography, shoreline fishing, and canoeing is minimal. Natural, forested shoreline is itself a scarce resource, incrementally lost over time to home site development.

The Finger Lakes support a large and diverse population of waterfowl and raptors, which in turn generates significant public interest and educational opportunities. Seneca, Cayuga, Canandaigua and Southern Skaneateles Lakes are all designated Important Bird Areas by New York Audubon. They are a significant wintering area for waterfowl. Forested areas along and above the lakeshores provide habitat for raptors and neotropical songbirds.

Projects to preserve portions of the shoreline of these lakes for public access or wildlife could utilize acquisitions, easements, or additions to existing public segments. Parties including New York State, local governments, and non-profit organizations need to be prepared to capitalize on opportunities which will become increasingly critical as shoreline development and prices continue to climb. While it is not possible to predict future opportunities, several potential lakeshore protection projects can be listed now:

- **Finger Lakes Water Trails** – a network of strategically spaced open shoreline parcels to support low intensity and passive recreational uses, including: kayaking, boating, birdwatching, angling,

hunting, and simply seeking solitude by the water.

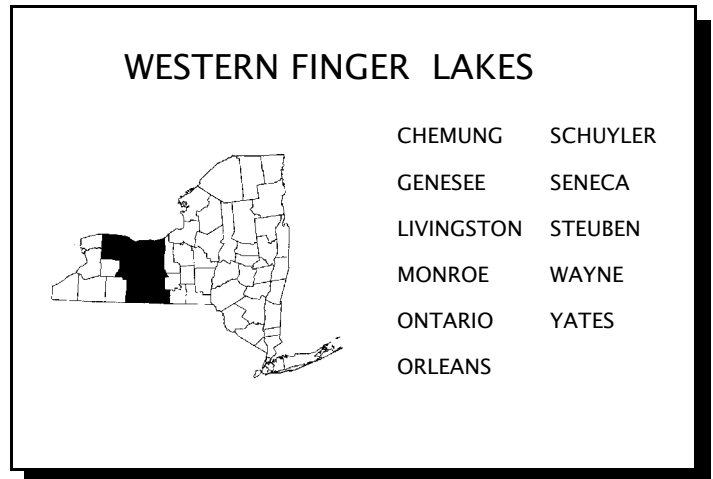
- **Owasco Flats** – a 2,000 acre project area along Owasco Inlet at the south end of Owasco Lake has several opportunities for acquisitions or cooperative management agreements.
- **Camp Barton** – a Boy Scout camp with extensive frontage on Cayuga Lake (Region 7). NYS Parks is interested in acquiring this property.
- **On Cayuga Lake** (Region 7), a tract owned by NYSEG and including 500 acres and 3,000 feet of undeveloped lake frontage in the Town of Lansing has already been identified as a priority.
- **B&H railroad property at the south end of Keuka Lake in Hammondsport** (Region 8) – which lies between a pocket park and a protected wetland, and next to a small public beach, the only such beach on that lake besides others at the far north end of Keuka Lake.
- **Extending the eastern terminus of the Outlet Trail to the Seneca Lake shoreline at Dresden** (Region 8).
- Additional analysis is needed in order to identify other priority sites, especially on **Seneca Lake** where some of the greatest opportunities for currently **undeveloped shoreline may exist**.

NORTHERN MONTEZUMA WETLANDS {106} ❖ – This 36,000 acre multiple ownership land conservation project is New York State's Flagship Project under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This project lies within its own Major Resource Area: The Montezuma Marshes. Partners involved are the US Fish and Wildlife Service (US FWS), Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, and many others. The Montezuma Wetland Complex is a registered National Natural Landmark and is New York's first Audubon Society designated Important Bird Area. Strategies to conserve this premier wetland complex include fee acquisition by DEC and the US FWS, purchase of conservation easements by government and not-for-profit partners, and execution of Cooperative Management Agreements between partners and landowners. State funding can be matched with federal funding through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. State funds have also been committed to the development of a new environmental education facility here.



REGION 8 / WESTERN FINGER LAKES

The rolling hills of our State's Western Finger Lakes varied landscape, rich agricultural lands, the Montezuma Marsh area, the westernmost Finger Lakes, the Erie Canal Corridor and the coastline of Lake Ontario are all part the Southern Tier's varied landscapes. And there is also the Genesee River, and its associated canals, which were once an important transportation corridor. Not all of the Genesee was navigable. At Letchworth State Park, known as the "Grand Canyon of the East", the Genesee has cut a magnificent gorge down through hundreds of feet of rock. At the bottom of the canyon the river races through rapids and hurtles over many scenic waterfalls.



Rochester and Corning are two of the region's early technology centers where innovative researchers made companies like Eastman Kodak in Rochester and Corning Glass in Corning, world leaders in their fields, and today are becoming the leaders in new technologies, such as the Pollution Prevention Institute.

* To read the Region 8 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

GENESEE RIVER CORRIDOR {107} ❖ – This project will protect the variety of habitats and landscapes found along the Genesee River as it flows north from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario. From the Waterfalls of Letchworth State Park, the verdant valley of open grasslands and farm fields along Nations Road in Geneseo (both listed by Audubon as New York State Important Bird Areas) to the gorge in the heart of the City of Rochester, nearly the entire length of the Genesee River is in New York. Protection of this lineal corridor along 150 miles of river as it flows north providing links to existing public lands, enhancing public access points, protecting migratory and resident bird habitats supporting farmland protection and advancing environmental justice projects.

CATHARINE VALLEY COMPLEX {108} ❖ – This unique Southern Tier complex extends from the southern end of Seneca Lake in Schuyler County, south to the Village of Horseheads in Chemung County. The complex is composed of three major environmental areas with varying habitats and recreational opportunities. Just south of Seneca Lake are towering shale cliffs bordered by **Rock Cabin Road**. This site harbors a rare plant community and an uncommon plant that is the exclusive food source for three butterflies considered rare in this region. The Wild Nodding onion, a rare species and listed on the NYS list of protected plants, grows in profusion on the cliffside. In addition more than 120 wildflower species have been identified on this site. Adjacent to Rock Cabin Road is the Queen Catharine wetland, identified as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The second environmental area in this complex is the **Horseheads Marsh**, a Class 1 wetland and the largest freshwater wetland in Chemung County. The marsh is the headwaters for Catharine Creek, a world class trout stream and provides the stream with water quality and flood control functions. In addition, the marsh provides habitat for many species of birds (some on the endangered species list), wildlife and reptiles. The third focus in this complex is the abandoned **Chemung Canal** property, which passes

through Horseheads Marsh. Purchase of this property will allow the Catharine Valley Trail connection to the Village of Horseheads by developing a trail along the historic Chemung Canal towpath. This complex offers opportunities to treasure and protect the biodiversity present in the area and to expand recreational and educational opportunities in the valuable open space lands of the Southern Tier.

CHEMUNG RIVER GREENBELT {109} ❖ – Located in Chemung and Steuben Counties this project expands and enhances significant recreational resources in a unique, scenic landscape while protecting important wildlife habitat. A Chemung River watershed greenway was first proposed in the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning Board's 1976 Comprehensive Plan. The project would include the Chemung River Basin Trail, an existing series of boat launches that is part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways program, and the rivers' flood plains and highlands. In addition to recreational resources provided by both the river corridors and land-based trail, preservation of open space in the area would link valuable wildlife habitats for timber rattlesnakes, black bear, and bald eagles. Several areas of state land would also be linked including the Cameron State Forest, the Cameron Mills State Forest, Tracy Creek State Forest, Pinnacle State Park and Erwin Hollow State Forest. Additional protected lands include 1,200 acres held by the Finger Lakes Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and Tanglewood Nature Center. The Department owns and has permanent easements along the Chemung River for flood control purposes. Increased suburban sprawl in Elmira-Corning area and scattered residential development on the more rural areas threaten the project area. Specific projects would include but not be limited to: 1. Open space protection of undeveloped floodplain with a focus on high quality wildlife habitat, 2. Additional boat launches and fishing access points along the Canisteo and Cohocton as addition to the Chemung Basin River Trail, 3. Protection of the Chemung Palisades, a scenic and wildlife habitat resource, and blocks of contiguous forest on both sides of the river in the Town of Big Flats and 4. Additional hiking, biking trails and camping facilities, connecting existing public facilities. Detailed conservation planning that builds upon existing planning and resource management efforts is needed to prioritize specific projects. This nomination capitalizes on the interest and progress to date of multiple organization and governmental entities in protecting this unique and diverse landscape, with an emphasis on protection of important wildfire habitat, recreational access and scenic vista preservation. Acquisitions have the potential to connect, extend, and/or add value to 2002 Open Space Projects **Steege Hill/Chemung Palisades, Mossy Bank, Valley Rim Trail, West Hill Lands** (considered threatened under the NYS Natural Heritage Program) and the Town of Erwin's Green Infrastructure Plan.

HI TOR/ BRISTOL HILLS {110} ❖ – Located in the Finger Lakes Major Resource Area in Yates and Ontario Counties, the Hi Tor/Bristol Hills area is marked by extensive, and largely unfragmented, forests that blanket the steep hills, gullies and eroded cliffs carved by the glaciers. The area offers exceptional scenic vistas of the Naples Valley, Canandaigua Lake and Honeoye Lake, and provides opportunities to preserve working forest lands. The area also has high ecological values: the NYS Natural Heritage Program, working under contract to The Nature Conservancy, has identified the Bristol Hills as the largest occurrence of an Appalachian oak-hickory forest in all of New York. More than 13,000 acres of this forest type have been identified in the Bristol Hills. The Hi Tor WMA is a popular recreational area attracting visitors from a wide area. Land conservation efforts by the state and not-for-profit organizations, through fee and or easement, will ensure that key tracts of land remain as open space in this area of increasing development pressures.

SENECA ARMY DEPOT CONSERVATION AREA {111} ❖ – Located in the Towns of Varick and Romulus, Seneca County, this project is necessary to protect a unique population of white deer. The lands comprised part of a U.S. Army installation developed in the early 1940s and closed in the 1990's. The land is traversed by tributaries of four streams, and contains a 60-acre pond and nearly 500 acres of

wetlands. The fenced perimeter allowed for the protection and management of the white deer herd, which is believed to be the largest, single herd of white deer in the world with approximately 200 individuals. The area also provides habitat for many species of birds and small game. As plans are devised for the development of the Depot, this project offers a unique open space opportunity.

WESTBURY BOG {112} ❖ – This project, located in a large wetland complex in the Town of Butler, Wayne County. Long term conservation of the site through a variety of tools is proposed, including upgrading the wetland’s regulatory classification, negotiating easements, implementing cooperative agreements and undertaking land purchases. Partnering between state and federal agencies, landowners and local colleges to achieve conservation objectives will likely be more successful than individual actions.

WESTERN FINGER LAKES: CONESUS, HEMLOCK, CANADICE & HONEOYE {113} ❖ – More than 10,000 acres in Livingston and Ontario counties surrounding Hemlock and Canadice Lakes and covering the southern end of Honeoye Lake are included in this unique project. The project includes more than 7,000 acres of land surrounding Hemlock and Canadice Lakes currently owned by the City of Rochester, which manages these lands primarily for watershed protection. Nearly 3,000 acres of land at the southern end of Honeoye Lake include parcels adjacent to existing State holdings (Honeoye Inlet WMA and Harriet Hollister Spencer State Park) and parcels adjacent to holdings by other not-for-profit groups. This project is unique because it contains the only remaining Finger Lakes with shorelines that are wholly or largely undeveloped.

WOLF GULLY {114} ❖ – Located in the Town of Naples, Ontario County this site was identified in TNCs planning sessions for the Western Finger Lakes Landscape Conservation Area. It is a forested landscape situated around an Ice Age glacial meltwater channel. Wolf Gully has exceptional biological diversity, most notably in ferns where 31 species have been described over the years.

REGIONS 8 & 9

GENESEE GREENWAY / RECREATIONWAY {115} ❖ – The Genesee Valley Greenway (GVG) is a 90 mile long corridor that extends from the city of Rochester in Monroe County through to the Village of Hinsdale in Cattaraugus County. It passes through woodlands, wetlands, river and stream valleys and rolling farmlands providing connections to Letchworth State Park, local parks, major trail systems and historic villages and towns in Monroe, Livingston, Wyoming, Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties. The cinder path of the former rail bed provides a trail for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, nature observation, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. While the State has acquired this corridor, serious encroachments and gaps exist that prevent full use of this significant recreational trail as well as connections to potential support facilities such as the McKinney Stables. In addition, two other corridors (Groveland Secondary and Erie- Attica) offer opportunity to expand this system. Since the Lehigh Valley railroad (which intersects the GVG) was completed in the Fall of 2004, important progress has been accomplished in establishing a network of trails that will improve the quality of life in western New York State. Efforts should be made to include the Genesee Valley Greenway in the Erie Canal and Empire State Greenway.

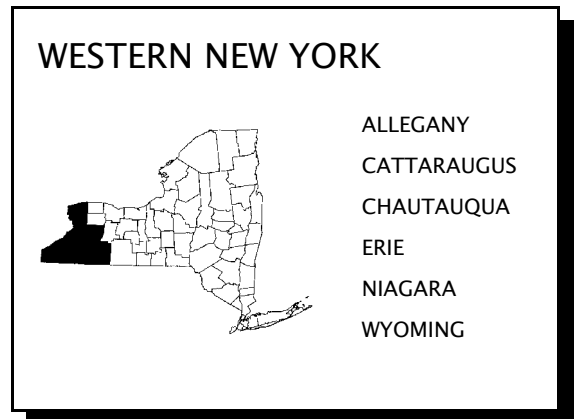
TONAWANDA CREEK WATERSHED {116} ❖ – This project would serve to protect one of the major tributaries of the Niagara River in Genesee, Erie and Niagara Counties. The Tonawanda Creek and its four major tributaries – Ellicott Creek, Mud Creek, Murder Creek and Ransom Creek, plus a number of minor tributaries provide an impressive variety of aquatic life as well as an example of biodiversity that covers a five-county area. The diverse community represented by this watershed includes the

threatened Longear Sunfish, the Brindled Mad Tom, a species of special concern and more than 20 species of freshwater mussels. The Tonawanda Creek also has its own self sustaining walleye population. Associated wetlands and open field habitat are common in the basin. Also of importance is the occasional occurrence of forest with old growth characteristics that are found scattered amongst the second growth forest. The Tonawanda Creek system faces threats from new development, bank erosion, pollution problems and storm water runoff.

REGION 9 / WESTERN NEW YORK

Everyone has heard of Niagara Falls, but there is much more in our state's western region: shorelines of both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario; the southern Genesee River, the western end of the Southern Tier; the bizarre rock formations at Rock City; and Lake Chautauqua. Trees grow big in this part of the state. Huge old trees grow in Zoar Valley, protected by the State from logging. Allegany State Park contains the only area of New York that was never touched by the glaciers.

Cities such as Jamestown were once major industrial centers, home to many foundries and manufacturers. Canals linked many cities with the Erie Canal system and also provided links to rivers which fed into the Mississippi, providing transportation to national markets. The discovery of oil in the 1860s transformed cities such as Wellsville and Olean into boom towns filled with wooden oil derricks. Today, the forested hills show few signs of their oil boom past other than the occasional nodding pump jack.



* To read the Region 9 Advisory Committee's full report, see: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.

ALLEGHENY RIVER WATERSHED {117} ❖ – Because of its geology and ultimate connection to the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, this watershed supports one of the most biologically diverse aquatic systems in the northeastern states. The major tributaries, which include the Conewango, French and Olean Creeks provide diverse faunal communities and associated valuable wetland communities. A number of rare species and habitat communities are present. These areas provide recreational and educational opportunities as well. Additional public access is desired throughout this watershed.

BUFFALO RIVER WATERSHED {118} ❖ – This project will serve to protect the Buffalo River corridor as well as the three primary tributaries: Cayuga Creek, Cazenovia Creek, and Buffalo Creek. A secondary benefit could be improved access for users of the Canoe Trail on the Buffalo River. The remaining undeveloped flood plain forest and meadow areas in the metropolitan Buffalo area, including the towns immediately upstream, are critical for the enjoyment of fish and wildlife for low mobility citizens and for the ecological and green infrastructure functions they provide to the region. Without protection from further development these relatively undisturbed areas could contribute to further degradation of the Buffalo River, rather than fulfilling their promise as source areas for the rivers restoration. Origins of the tributaries include lands in the towns of Holland and Sardinia in Erie County, and the Towns of Arcade, Java and Sheldon in Wyoming County. Protection of upstream habitats and establishing greater connectivity between forested areas should help improve water quality in the

system as well as further our State's response to climate change.

CATTARAUGUS CREEK & TRIBUTARIES {119} ❖ – This system is the single most important Lake Erie tributary for the salmonid fishery within the State. The spring and fall migrations of steelhead (rainbow)trout attracts thousands of anglers to the creek each year and increased public access has become a high priority. The system also provides watershed protection and access to Lake Erie by boaters. The creek and its tributaries includes habitat that is currently utilized by steelhead for spawning and nursery areas. This natural propagation of the primary sport species is helpful in supplementing the overall DEC trout stocking program to create an extraordinary tributary steelhead fishery. The Connoisarauley Creek Tributary and Falls is a unique geological area of public access interest. The Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area is situated on portions of both the main branch and South branch of Cattaraugus Creek and additional protection of this area through land acquisition is desirable. Expansion of the Route 219 Expressway into Cattaraugus County is expected to place additional development pressure on the farmland and forest resources on portions of this watershed.

CHAUTAUQUA LAKE ACCESS, VISTAS, SHORE LANDS & TRIBUTARIES {120} ❖ – Securing adequate public access to Chautauqua Lake is critical due to the extremely developed shoreline. Without open space availability, this superb warm water fishery which includes muskellunge, walleye and black bass will not meet the demands of the angling and boating public to continue the recreational advantages of this resource. Preserving additional shoreline for undeveloped, natural littoral zones should insure adequate fisheries habitats for the continuance of the world-known muskellunge fishery. Surrounding sloping hillsides, susceptible to erosion should they be further developed, provide important scenic value to this tourist area. The lake outlet, which contains extensive wetlands, is an ecological oasis. Water quality issues stemming from activities on the lakes tributaries are a concern and may be addressed by easements or acquisition to protect riparian and upland habitat such as head water forests on the lakes tributaries.

ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS {121} ❖ – Protection of existing ecological corridors to link existing public lands, protect important fish and wildlife habitats such as riparian zones along rivers, wetlands and forested areas and coastal ecological areas to provide recreational access and habitat protection for areas that may also be contiguous to water bodies or existing lineal corridors. Projects include but are not limited to the Niagara River and Genesee River Corridors.

EXCEPTIONAL FOREST COMMUNITIES {122} ❖ – This acquisition project seeks to preserve the region's remaining forest remnants that exhibit old growth characteristics. Examples may be found at Allegany State Park, Reinstein Woods, Zoar Valley; and the Niagara Gorge slope and talus communities.

GRASSLAND PRESERVATION & RESTORATION {123} ❖ – This project will serve to protect existing grassland habitat and also provide for restoration of native grassland species. Emphasis would be placed on sites where protection of endangered or threatened grassland birds is necessary and where additional nesting habitat could be provided for upland game birds and waterfowl. Sites with sufficient acreage to be effectively managed, or situated so as to be subsequently added to in order to achieve management goals would receive primary consideration. Projects include but not are limited to: the Towns of Porter, Wilson, Hartland, Newfane and Somerset in Niagara County, and the Towns of Covington and Middlebury in Wyoming County.

INLAND LAKES {124} ❖ – Protection of undeveloped shoreline, associated wetlands and critical tributary habitat. Provide protection of water quality and important fish and wildlife habitat. Secure adequate public access for recreational use through acquisition or easement. Projects include but are not limited to: 1) Improved public access – Findley Lake and Bear Lake (Chautauqua County); Silver Lake (Wyoming County); Cuba Lake (Allegany County) and 2) Shoreline protection – Bear Lake(Chautauqua County), Silver Lake(Wyoming County) and Cassadaga Lakes (Chautauqua County), Cuba Lake (Allegany County).

LAKE ERIE TRIBUTARY GORGES {125} ❖ – This project seeks to acquire public access to these unique ecological and geological areas. Chautauqua Gorge is the primary public water source for the Village of Westfield. Several hundred acres of this watershed are currently owned by the Village. Gages Gulf and Twenty Mile Gorge are located in the Town of Ripley. Twenty Mile Creek is an important trout stream, provides unusual steep gorge terrain and ecological habitat, has scenic, recreational and educational value. Canadaway Creek which includes Shumla Falls and Arkwright Falls lies in the Town of Arkwright in Northern Chautauqua County. Access to these attractions is primarily limited to crossing private lands and some very steep slopes. Acquisition of this 4 + plus mile trailway/greenway project along Canadaway Creek would not only provide needed access and protection of natural communities, but would also serve to enhance and connect the existing Tarbox and Evanke Trails with the eastside Overland Trail and the Canadaway Creek Wildlife Management Area. Other areas of interest include 18 Mile Creek Gorge and Cazenovia Creek Gorge in the Towns of West Seneca and Elma, Erie County.

TRAILS & TRAILWAYS {126} ❖ – Protect existing linear corridors and provide for acquisition or easement of existing trails and trailways or additional undeveloped linkage to connect existing trails. Examples would be unused or abandoned railroad corridors, and existing trails upgraded by not for profit groups that do not meet the criteria of long distance corridors. An example would be the WAG Trail in Allegany County and the need for additional linkage as well as the Senator Pat MaGee Trail in Cattaraugus county and the Chautauqua Rail to Trail in Chautauqua Co. These trails should promote compatible multi-use in order to meet public demand for recreational trail use

SIGNIFICANT WETLANDS {127} – Protection of significant natural wetland communities which provide ecological diversity for flora and fauna and protection of water quality. Important for the recreational, educational and ecological enhancement opportunities provided. Examples include Keaney Swamp, Bird Swamp and Hartland Swamp.

URBAN WETLANDS {128} – Urban wetlands, because of their size, habitat type and quality, provide resident and migration habitat for wildlife which would otherwise be absent from urban landscapes. Valuable wildlife viewing and outdoor teaching opportunities are obtained from these natural communities. Two examples are the Klydel and Tiffet wetlands, which provide habitat for forest birds such as Cooper’s Hawk, and marsh birds such as Least Bittern within urban settings. The protection of wildlife habitat associated with urban wetlands often requires wetland acquisition and the establishment of a protected upland buffer zone through acquisition or easement of adjacent properties. Other examples exist in Tonawanda, North Tonawanda, Amherst, Cheektowaga, Lackawanna and the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls.



Statewide

STATE FOREST, UNIQUE AREA & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA PROTECTION {129} – State Forests, Unique Areas, and Wildlife Management Areas provide valuable natural, cultural and recreation resources that are enjoyed by millions of visitors each year. Protection and enhancement of existing State Forests, Unique Areas and Wildlife Management Areas is critical to long term stewardship of these resources. It is important to improve access, eliminate in-holdings and provide buffers to protect the resources as well as to enhance recreational and cultural opportunities.

NEW YORK STATE CANAL SYSTEM {130} – An important recreation corridor and primary trail system from Waterford west to Buffalo (with branches from Waterford north to Whitehall and from Syracuse north to Oswego) that provides hiking, bicycling, water access and other recreational opportunities. This canal links the major upstate cities of Albany, Schenectady, Utica, Rome, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. Extensive funding has been committed in the last few years to the completion of the Canal Trail within the Canal Recreationway. Also, federal legislation has been passed that recognizes the national significance of the waterway and adjacent lands.

The Erie Canal Greenway is one part of a long-term effort to create an interconnecting greenway system across New York State. The complete Greenway system would ultimately comprise of three distinct parts – the Erie Canal Greenway, the Niagara Greenway and the Hudson Valley Greenway. Each of the Greenways would continue to operate separately and would collectively represent one of the largest Greenway systems in the nation. A Greenway designation incorporates a more regional approach to land-use planning, tourism, recreational trail development and other collaborative initiatives. The fundamental concept behind a Greenway is to partner with communities and assist them in local grassroots planning that balances their economic and environmental resources. The establishment of the Erie Canal Greenway will strengthen local ties across the Canal Corridor and protect and enhance its natural and cultural resources for future generations.

In December 2000 the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Act (PL 106– 544, title VIII) was adopted by the US Congress. This designation applies to all 234 municipalities adjoining the 524 miles of navigable waterway that comprise the New York State Canal System, including the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga–Seneca and Oswego; the historic alignments of these canals, including the cities of Albany and Buffalo; and related navigable lakes, including Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. The legislation acknowledges the instrumental role the canals played in the growth and development of the United States, and affirms a national interest in the preservation and interpretation of the Corridor’s important historic, cultural, recreational, educational, scenic and natural resources. The National Heritage Corridor will serve as an “umbrella” to unite and coordinate existing federal, state, and local plans and multiple points of view, focusing on partnerships that cross jurisdictional boundaries and build on mutual interests. In June 2005, a Draft Preservation and Management Plan and Environmental Assessment was released for public review and comment.

WORKING FOREST LANDS {131} – Recent trends in the forest products industry suggest that there is an increasing demand for wood products from northeast timber, but for some companies the current economics of long term forest land ownership are difficult. Private forest ownership is essential to the future of rural New York State for sustaining strong natural resource based industries and for continuing the recreational and ecological values produced by working forests. The sale of easements to the State over such lands may improve the long term economic and ecological sustainability of working forest lands.

The Working Forest Lands category relies upon the use of conservation easements (through acquisition, donation, or land exchanges), held by the State and local governments and qualified not-for-profit organizations. These easements combine three specific aspects, 1) the acquisition of development rights whereby any commercial or residential development of those lands is prevented with the exception of that associate with continued timber production; 2) public recreational rights i.e. hiking, wildlife observation, fishing, camping, hunting and trapping, and; 3) sustainable forest management practices, to secure the long-term protection of productive forest lands. State acquisition of conservation easements over working forest lands authorized under this category must meet the following conditions:

- Acquisition projects funded through the Environmental Protection Fund must comply, when required, with the local government notification and review provisions set forth in Articles 54 and 56 of the Environmental Conservation Law;
- The lands must be of a size and character that are suitable for long-term forest management use;
- The purchase must be from a willing seller; and
- Acquisition of fee title to the land or directly adjacent parcels under the same ownership requires separate approval through the Open Space Plan process.

STATE PARK & STATE HISTORIC SITE PROTECTION {132} – State Parks and Historic Sites provide valuable natural, cultural and recreation resource that are enjoyed by millions of visitors each year. Protection and enhancement of the existing parks and historic sites is critical to long term stewardship of these resources. It is important to improve access, protect viewsheds, eliminate in-holdings and provide buffers to protect the resources as well as to enhance recreational and cultural opportunities.

STATEWIDE FARMLAND PROTECTION {133} – Farmland protection is a critical component of the State’s overall efforts to conserve open space. This land provides fresh produce, scenic open space, vital wildlife habitat, and the economic backbone to many communities. The Plan has long recognized the importance agriculture and how it contributes to the protection of open space in New York State. The demand for state funding of through the Farmland Protection Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets, demonstrates the great need for continued support from the EPF and other funding sources. Currently there are more than \$156 million in pending projects across the State. . This does not include the \$547 million in applications that have been turned away by the Farmland Protection Program between 1996 and 2008 due to lack of funding. Many municipalities across the state and several land trusts including Agricultural Stewardship Association, the Columbia Land Conservancy, the Dutchess Land Conservancy, the Finger Lakes Land Trust, the Genesee Land Trust, the Genesee Valley Conservancy, the New York Agricultural Land Trust, the Open Space Institute, Scenic Hudson and the Western New York Land Conservancy, have implemented projects with State funding. The Regional Advisory Committees have noted that the preservation of farmland, in the face of rapid development pressures, is critical to the future of the State. The Region 9 committee recommended the creation of a “farmland preservation board” in each Region which would encourage municipal and regional collaboration on protecting farmland.

- **Urban Community Gardens** – defined by Agriculture & Markets Law Article 2–C, and urban farming provide a variety of benefits to the state’s urban population. Community gardens and urban farms provide needed green space in areas where public parks are scarce; grow nutritious fresh foods for neighborhood families, emergency food sites, schools, farmers’ markets, local restaurants and community supported agriculture programs; educate community members about the natural world, local foods, nutrition and environmental stewardship; provide safe spaces for exercise in communities with poor access to physical activity outlets; deliver environmental benefits such as reduced city heat, decreased storm water run-off, safer soil, composting sites and natural habitats; and bring community

members together, filling an important social function in neighborhoods where gathering spaces are limited. Land trusts are currently underutilized mechanisms for protecting community gardens and urban farms. Trust for Public Land has pioneered community garden land trusts in New York State by acquiring 64 community gardens in NYC and partnering with community gardeners to create three community-based not-for-profits to own and operate the gardens. These are the only land trust community gardens currently operating in New York State urban areas. This project in part aims to provide permanent access to land for use as community gardens and urban farms.

LONG DISTANCE TRAIL CORRIDORS {134} – Land and water trail corridors provide important connections between communities, recreation areas, existing open space, and natural and cultural resources. They offer recreational opportunities for millions of hikers, bikers, joggers, equestrians, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, natural enthusiasts, kayakers, and other motorized and non-motorized users. Wider trail corridors also provide significant travel corridors for wildlife. The function of a trail can range from serving a local community to being part of a statewide or national long distance trail system. Various methods such as fee acquisition, easements and landowner permits are utilized in developing a trail and/or securing the continued continuity of a trail. Unused or abandoned railroads, in particular, provide good opportunities for the development of trails and linkages. The Federal Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) recognizes the need to protect and preserve these abandoned corridors while technologies are created and needs determined, providing for the interim upgrades of the corridor for the creation of multi-use trails. These are generally one time opportunities that need to be carefully evaluated and acted upon. Changing private ownership patterns and increased development continues to threaten the integrity of many trail systems and the opportunities to create new connections. The Appalachian Trail, Long Path Trail, Highlands Trail, Finger Lakes Trail, Erie Canalway, Long Island Greenbelt Trail System and North Country National Scenic Trail are just a few of the many trail systems in which it is important to provide permanent public access and safe travel routes. This project is intended to provide permanent public access and safe travel routes for long distance trails such as:

- **Appalachian Trail** – A continuous 2,100 mile trail from Mount Katahdin in Maine to Springer Mountain in Georgia. In New York it runs from the Wallkill River in Orange County across the Hudson Valley, leaving the state near Dover Plains in Dutchess County.
- **Long Path Trail** – The Long Path is a hiking corridor with the vision of linking New York City with the Adirondacks. Currently the Long Path has been established from the George Washington Bridge extending along the Palisades Ridge, into Harriman State Park and Schunnemunk Mountain. From there it cuts northwest across central Orange County to the Shawangunk Ridge, through Minnewaska State Park Preserve, the Catskill Park and north into Thacher State Park in Albany County, some 330 miles. State acquisitions would protect the trail corridor and allow sections of the trail to be re-routed off public roads, thereby enhancing public enjoyment and safety. The significant progress that has been made in northern Greene County should be continued, and further work is necessary in Schoharie County, including key threatened parcels in the Town of Middleburgh. This project will also provide watershed protection, including the New York City watershed, as well as enhancing access to State Forests and other public lands. The Long Path is the main north/south trail corridor in New York State; protection, by public ownership, will ensure continued recreational opportunities and watershed protection for generations to come. The Long Path is currently the subject of proposed federal legislation which will fund a feasibility study to determine if it is eligible for designation as a National Scenic Trail.
- **Highlands Trail** – The Highlands Trail stretches more than 200 miles from Philipsburg, NJ on the Delaware River northeast into Sterling Forest on the NY border, and north to Goosepond Mountain State Park, Schunnemunk Mountain, and Black Rock Forest and Storm King

Mountain. It crosses the Hudson River and runs east across Putnam County to the Connecticut border. The HT is in the process of extending west through PA and eastward through CT.

- **Finger Lakes Trail** – A primitive foot trail which connects the Allegheny Mountains with the Catskills by passing through remote areas of the Southern Tier of New York State. While public land agencies have worked to accommodate the trail on state park lands, reforestation areas, forest preserve lands and other public lands along its 562 mile route across NY, the majority of the trail traverses private lands. Increased public ownership and easements will protect this valuable and unique hiking experience.
- **Erie Canal Greenway** – See discussion in *NEW YORK STATE CANAL SYSTEM*
- **Genny–Green Trail/Link Trail** – A multiple use, long distance trail system that would provide for major trail connections between existing trails and state-owned lands in Chenango, Madison, Cortland, and Onondaga Counties, including the Finger Lakes Trail, the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Old Erie Canal Trail, the statewide snowmobile corridor trail route and other smaller trails in the area.
- **Long Island Greenbelt Trail System** – A recreational and educational footpath network, which is accessible to approximately 2 million state residents. The Nassau–Suffolk (26 miles) and the Long Island Greenbelt Trails (34 miles) connect the Long Island Sound and South Shore resource areas. Further east, the evolving Paumanock Trail will stretch some 100 miles across the length of the Peconic Bay and Long Island Pine Barrens resource area from Rocky Point to Montauk Point.
- **North Country National Scenic Trail** – A roughly 4,600 mile trail that winds from the plains of North Dakota through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and through Western and Central New York where it follows the route of the Finger Lakes Trail and eventually into the City of Rome. Portions of the trail north of Rome to the Adirondack Park boundary have been completed. The eventual Adirondack Park route remains a topic of study, however, the Congressionally mandated beginning point of the trail is on the banks of Lake Champlain at Crown Point, Essex County.
- **Remsen–Lake Placid Travel Corridor** – A 122 mile long abandoned railroad corridor which traverses some of the most remote lands of the Western and Northern Adirondacks.
- **Northville–Lake Placid Trail** – A long distance hiking and backpacking trail that extends 133 miles from Northville to Lake Placid.

STATEWIDE SMALL PROJECTS {135} – This category includes six subcategories of small projects and brief descriptions of examples of acquired small projects and criteria used to define them: Public Fishing Right Easements, Waterway Access, Enhancement of Public Lands, Significant Rare Habitats, Significant Historic Archeological Resources, and Trail and Greenway Connections. Individual items within this project are not to exceed \$250,000 in cost or 200 acres in size.

1) Public Fishing Stream & River Access Projects: Provide access for angling through easements along rivers and streams. *Example:* Easements on about 3/4 mile of the Ausable River in Essex County, acquired in 2000 for \$24,775 using Bond Act funds.

2) Waterway Access: Provide access to state waters for boating activities, including canoeing and kayaking, and acquisition and development of above grade crossings of active railroad right-of-ways. *Example:* A 1.4-acre parcel was acquired in 1997 in Sullivan County to provide access to the Delaware River, using EPF monies.

3) Enhancement of Public Lands: Provide access to public lands with no access or access severely limited due to geographic barriers; or enhance land management functions by securing inholdings or adjacent parcels to public lands. *Example:* In 1995 the last remaining inholding (4 acres) in J. B. Thatcher State Park was purchased at \$16,000.

4) Rare Habitats: Protects habitats for rare plant or animal species or rare natural communities.

Rarity is defined as 25 or fewer sites in the state. *Example:* Habitat for the endangered bog turtle was protected with a \$40,000 purchase of a 2.8 acre wetland addition to the Bog Brook Unique Area in Putnam County.

5) Historic & Archeological Resources: Protects historic and archeological resources that are eligible for listing or are listed on the state or national register of historic places. *Example:* The Wetterhahn Site is an archaeological site of a small precontact St. Lawrence Iroquois village (circa 1400 AD) in Jefferson County. The site, comprising 11 acres, was jointly acquired by DEC and OPRHP in 2000. Fee ownership of seven acres was purchased for \$16,000. An additional four acres which contains a part of the resource was protected by a donated Conservation Easement. This site represents only the third Iroquois site in protected state ownership.

6) Trail & Greenway Connections: Provide connecting links to fill small gaps in existing trails, such as the Appalachian Trail, Northville – Lake Placid Trail, Long Path, Finger Lakes Trail; to make connections between trails, and fill gaps in greenway corridors such as the Niagara River Greenway. *Example:* A 4-acre parcel in the Town of Arkwright, Chautauqua County was acquired in 2000 to provide a trail connection over the Canadaway Creek linking to State-owned parcels at a cost of \$16,200.

7) Stream Buffer Easements: Provide for maintenance of stream buffers to protect water quality and wildlife habitat. Stream buffers have been shown to protect watersheds from pollution in stormwater runoff and from flooding caused by stormwater. Easements could incorporate vegetation types and conservation plantings. This category could be used as part of a watershed protection program for surface drinking water sources and for aquifer recharge areas.

8) Important Bird Areas: Provide additional protection through acquisition or easement for areas designated as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) which are currently unprotected. These areas have received the recognition of being IBAs under the Audubon Societies program which recognizes that these sites provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds. These sites provide habitat for one or more of the following activities; breeding, wintering, and/or migratory use and generally have unique qualities which them important for birds.

