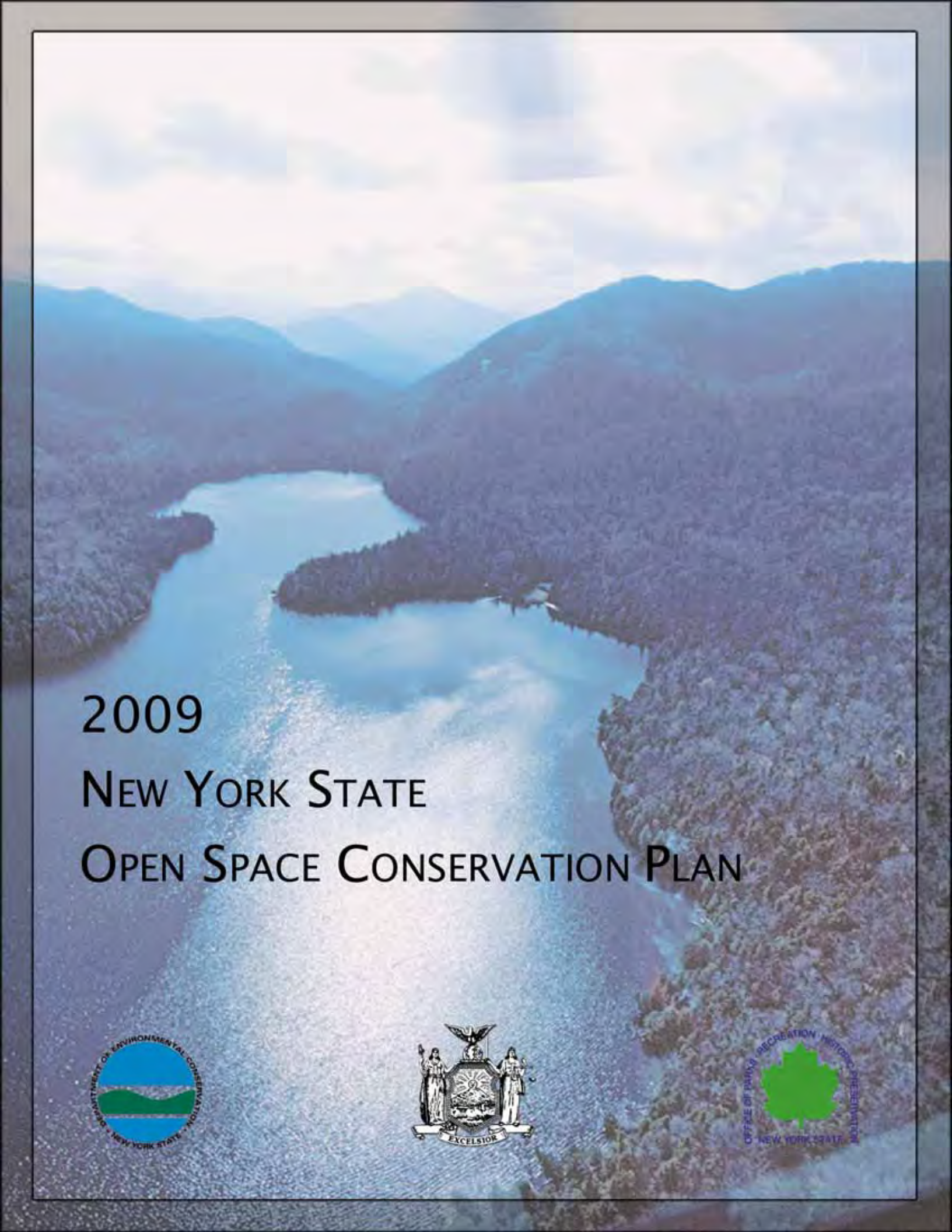

2009
New York State
Open Space Conservation Plan

David A. Paterson, Governor

Lead Agencies:

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
Alexander B. Grannis, Commissioner

The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)
Carol Ash, Commissioner

Partnering Agencies:

The Department of Agriculture & Markets

The Department of Transportation

The Department of State

DEFINITION OF OPEN SPACE

Open space is defined as land which is not intensively developed for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional use. Open space can be publicly or privately owned. It includes agricultural and forest land, undeveloped coastal and estuarine lands, undeveloped scenic lands, public parks and preserves. It also includes water bodies such as lakes and bays. What land is defined as open space depends in part on its surroundings. A vacant lot or a small marsh can be open space in a big city. A narrow corridor or pathway for walking or bicycling is open space even though it is surrounded by developed areas. And while not strictly open space, this Plan also discusses cultural and historic resources which, along with open space, are part of the heritage of New York State.

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

DAVID A. PATERSON
GOVERNOR

June 8, 2009

Dear Fellow New Yorker:

I am very pleased to approve the 2009 Final New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, which serves as the blueprint for continuing the State of New York's great open space conservation legacy. This Plan maintains New York's longstanding tradition of open space conservation that makes our State a wonderful place to live and attractive to businesses, and it is one of the key elements of our economic competitiveness. The Plan has been developed, pursuant to 1990 legislation, through a grassroots process involving local government officials and citizens as members of Regional Advisory Committees, and an extensive public comment process.

I would like to thank the members of the Regional Advisory Committees; this Plan would not be possible if not for their volunteered time and efforts. I would also like to thank the Commissioners and staff from the Department of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation – in partnership with the Department of State and Department of Agriculture and Markets – for their work to incorporate the input of the Regional Advisory Committees and public comments into the revised Plan.

Extensive public comments on the draft Plan demonstrated broad support for the State's Open Space Conservation Plan and Program. For well over a century, New York State has led the nation in open space conservation policy, and the final 2009 Plan carries on that legacy.

Sincerely,

David A. Paterson

David A. Paterson

STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Carol Ash
Commissioner

June 17, 2009

Dear New Yorkers:

We are pleased to share with you the State's 2009 Open Space Conservation Plan which provides an important agenda for moving the State's Open Space Program forward with guidance for open space planning and protection at the State, regional and community level.

This visionary plan contains a list of outstanding, priority conservation areas across the State which were identified by the nine Regional Advisory Committees with citizen input. It also contains comprehensive policy and program recommendations to expand the number and scope of the tools in the conservation toolbox. Our goal is to encourage our state and local government partners, landowners, non-profit conservation organizations, and land trusts to take advantage of the many opportunities to implement these recommendations as they develop their own strategies for achieving conservation goals.

The Plan includes many sensible and cost effective recommendations that can help protect our outdoor heritage in affordable ways. We are engaging the Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet, the Ocean and Great Lakes Council, the Climate Smart Community Network, and the Hudson River Estuary Program to assist New Yorkers and local government officials in implementing these recommendations with technical assistance to protect and enhance open space and its environmental benefits.

Today there is a well-deserved sense of urgency as we face the challenges of climate change, to prevent further warming and adapt to the changes already occurring, and to plan for those to come. There is a clear link between climate change and open space conservation. To this end, the Plan includes recommendations on how state and local governments can protect and enhance riparian, coastal and flood plain areas and forests as part of the adaptation to these climate changes, all while improving wildlife habitat and creating new outdoor recreational activities.

As we work to recover from the current financial crisis, we can use the Open Space Plan and our Smart Growth program to green our communities, create jobs, and conserve open spaces close to where people live, connected by a variety of transportation options that will help us improve our health, decrease our carbon emissions and protect the well-being of our ecosystems.

We must do all we can to reconnect ourselves and our children to the natural world, which is so important to our health and survival. Our generation has the responsibility to protect our environment and to develop the next generation's stewards of the earth, who will carry forward New York's proud stewardship legacy.

We extend our thanks to the members of the volunteer Regional Advisory Committees who devoted their time and expertise, as well as the dedicated and talented staff at the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and to the Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Patrick Hooker and New York Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, and the professional support of their teams to develop this excellent and far reaching Plan.

Sincerely,

Alexander B. Grannis

Carol Ash

Enclosure

FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

COVER SHEET

Title . . . . . .2009 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan &
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

Lead Agencies . . . . . New York State Department of Environmental Conservation &
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

Project Location . . . . . Statewide

Prepared By . . . . . Staff of Lead Agencies

Contact Persons . . . . . DEC, Francis Sheehan, (518) 402-9405
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Date of Completion. . . . . June 17, 2009

Address . . . . . Open Space Conservation Plan
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Albany, NY 12233-4250

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks go to the extensive volunteer efforts of the members of the nine Regional Advisory Committees, without whose contributions and support in partnership with DEC and OPRHP's hard-working regional staff this Plan would not be possible.

Thanks also go to DEC central office staff lead by Heather Carl, Jeffrey Mapes and Francis Sheehan, with assistance from Karin Verschoor and Dylan Walrath, for their efforts bringing together the work of the Regional Advisory Committees and giving the Plan a fresh look.

Thanks also go to: Debra Nelson and Janine Simonsen from the Department of Transportation; Jerry Cosgrove and Christina Grace from the Department of Agriculture and Markets; Erik Kulleseid and Robert Reinhardt, Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation; and Andrew Labruzzo and Paul Beyer from the Department of State.

Inside Cover:
View of Henderson Lake, Tahawus Tract
acrylic by Lauryn Kashdan-Schrom

Cover:
Aerial photo of Upper Preston Pond
looking south to Mount Adams, Tahawus Tract
taken by Maggie Barie

2009
NEW YORK STATE
OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN

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OUR STATE'S OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN

It starts with the land. New York has one of the largest public land bases in the country, with some of the most spectacular scenery and terrain representing every major ecosystem. Ranging from the salt marshes of Long Island to the alpine tundra of the Adirondack High Peaks, these are lands which are held for our State's citizens and represent a legacy of more than 100 years of land conservation and stewardship. Privately held lands, including farms and forests also contribute to open space protection and are part of the rich fabric of the State's outdoor heritage.

High Peaks from the Hudson ***www.nature.org***
Photo: © Carl Heilman ***The Nature Conservancy***

New York's formal Open Space Conservation program began in 1990, and was designed to ensure citizen input into the land acquisition decisions made by the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Since its beginning, the program has developed a comprehensive statewide Open Space Conservation Plan (Plan) that represents current open space conservation actions, tools, and programs administered by DEC, OPRHP, the Department of State (DOS), the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), the Department of Agriculture & Markets (DAM) and the Department of Transportation (DOT); and has become an important and popular advocacy voice for conserving our State's open spaces – and the quality of life which they provide us.

Open Space Conservation Goals

Central Park ~ Manhattan

New York's Open Space Conservation Goals:

- ✓ To protect habitat for the diversity of plant and animal species in order to ensure the protection of healthy, viable and sustainable ecosystems.
- ✓ To protect our State's water quality, including surface and underground drinking water supplies, lakes, streams and coastal and estuarine waters needed to sustain human life and aquatic ecosystems.
- ✓ To combat global climate change by encouraging more compact community design patterns.
- ✓ To combat global climate change by sustainable stewardship of our State's forests for carbon sequestration and air quality enhancement.
- ✓ To combat climate change by protecting our State's coastlines, and broad riparian corridors and wetlands.
- ✓ To combat global climate change by adding to the tree canopy in our urban centers and urban communities in order to moderate temper-

ature fluctuations, thereby lowering our energy consumption.

- ✓ To maintain an interconnected network of protected lands and waters allowing wildlife to be able to shift range with climate change to follow natural migration patterns.
- ✓ To improve quality of life and overall health in our State's communities, especially those with limited current access to open space.
- ✓ To maintain critical natural resource industries such as farming, forest products, commercial fishing and tourism.
- ✓ To protect habitat to sustain the traditional pastimes of hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
- ✓ To provide accessible, quality outdoor recreation and open space to all New Yorkers.
- ✓ To provide places for education and research relating to ecological, environmental and cultural resources.
- ✓ To protect and enhance scenic, historic and cultural resources considered to be valued parts of the common heritage of our State's citizens.

Open Space Conservation Principles

New York's Open Space Conservation Principles:

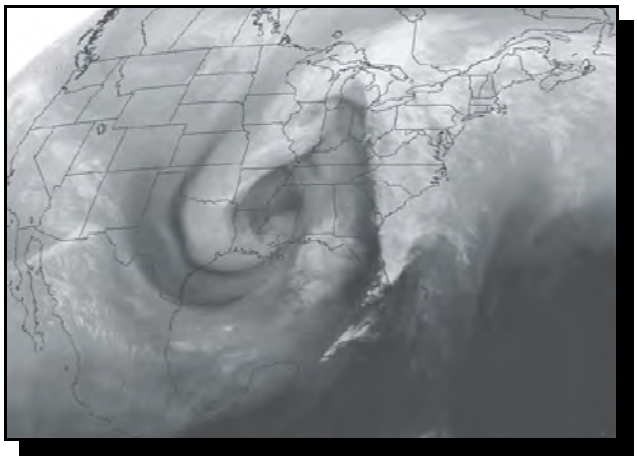
- ✓ Work in partnership with other levels of government, community groups, not-for-profit conservation organizations and private landowners to establish and achieve land conservation goals.
- ✓ Expand the conservation tools available to communities and to individuals for undertaking complementary action at the local and regional level.
- ✓ Establish focused and achievable priorities for state action to conserve specific open space parcels and cultural resources.
- ✓ Identify various conservation tools, methods strategies and actions for protecting a variety of open space resources.
- ✓ Establish conservation priorities through the objective measurement of urban and rural land conservation needs and broad-based citizen opinion.
- ✓ When utilizing land acquisition as a conservation tool, deal fairly and openly with property owners on a *willing seller/willing buyer* basis and work cooperatively with local governments and citizens.
- ✓ Identify future funding needs and stewardship expenses when proposing acquisition as a tool for land conservation.
- ✓ Strive to combat sprawl through smart growth planning at the local, regional and state planning level.

www.landtrustalliance.org/community/Regions/northeast
Northeast Land Trust Alliance

The Revised Plan

The Open Space Plan has been revised every three years since 1992 in order to adapt to shifting conservation priorities. This 2009 revision is refocused and reorganized; it is streamlined to deliver relevant priorities without altering the purpose of land conservation for which the Plan was originally created.

'Our' Actions



US Global Change Research Group
www.usgrcp.gov

The very real effects of global climate change remind us that our individual actions accumulate and create collective repercussions. Now, a wake-up call has come to all of us to take action to protect the environment in order to maintain our quality of life in New York State, for ourselves and for our youth who will live in the environment we create.

As our State faces severe budget restraints, we will need to adapt our strategies accordingly. Fortunately we have a wide array of methods to achieve our open space conservation goals. On the following pages is a list of conservation tools that we can use in order to continue to meet our open space needs during these challenging times.

These tools have expanded and become an important part of our State's Open Space Conservation program. Public land acquisition remains a necessary tool for conservation throughout our State, but alternative methods for land protection can also be utilized. These tools include: involvement of citizens and their communities; collaboration among landowners; regional and Statewide coordination and cooperation in ecosystem-based management and Smart Growth efforts; townwide comprehensive planning; establishment of local open space funding sources; careful management of development incentives; local land use planning; the efforts of non-profit organizations; and practical changes in zoning. *Protection of open space, in as many ways as possible, is perhaps the most important investment we can make to counter the effects of climate change. Increasing protection for privately-owned open space is especially important to help keep more of New York's 7.6 million acres of farmland as farms, and more of New York's 14.4 million acres of privately-owned forest land as forests.*

The underlying goals and principles of protecting our State's resources through the Open Space Conservation program remain the same, but now as our State - and country - are faced with severe economic constraints, our actions, our focus, and our methods of conservation need to be more creative than ever.

This version of the Plan provides an integrated statewide strategy for land conservation, a more holistic view of the inter-connections between our State's natural resources. Beyond simply identifying individual parcels or areas of land within political boundaries, regional conservation projects and other programs will become prioritized within in a landscape context. Conservation goals also have been identified for sustaining New York's ecological integrity and rich biodiversity by maintaining viable and representative samples of all ecosystem types in the State, linking State lands to create large scale biodiversity reserves, maintaining evolutionary and ecological processes (i.e. disturbance regimes, hydrological processes, nutrient cycles, increasing effectiveness of conservation actions by considering site or parcel location on the landscape, and accounting for human use and impact).

There is significant public support for this type of large scale, integrated approach because it can be more effective than piece-meal, small scale efforts, and it considers natural resources at an effective ecological scale; as such, we will become better stewards of our land, infrastructure, and

natural resources. By conducting planning, acquisition, and restoration projects at the landscape level, we will accelerate the protection of air, land and water quality; build partnerships to foster an understanding of how to use and protect the environment; and provide a public role in planning, implementation, and evaluation of resource programs.

The Next 5 Years

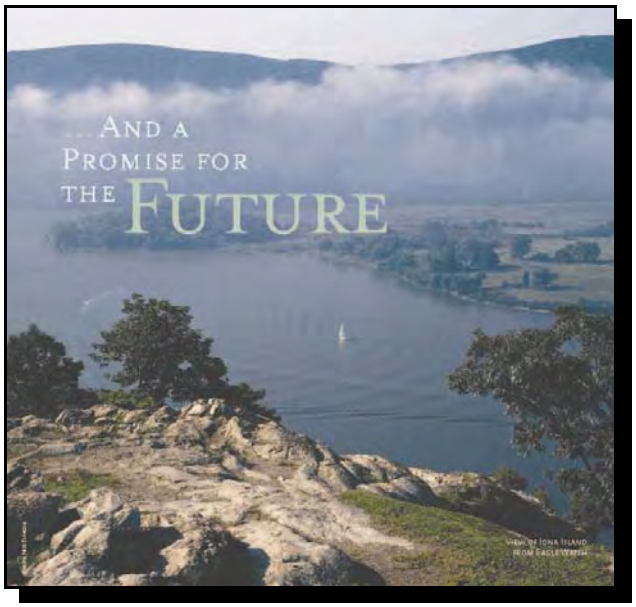
The 2009 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan identifies specific actions that need to be undertaken to pursue these urgent priorities:

- ✓ Responding to Climate Change;
- ✓ Fostering Green, Healthy Communities;
- ✓ Connecting New Yorkers with Nature & Recreation; and
- ✓ Safeguarding our Natural & Cultural Heritage.

For each objective, we identify recommended actions for reaching our objectives. Many of the actions are already in progress. They have been identified by the public and experienced, professional staff of various conservation programs assisting us in our open space conservation efforts.

Many of the actions which we identify will be undertaken through the efforts and offices of our State agencies, partnerships and local governments. These civic and conservation actions can guide and inspire each of us in our own realm of influence. Little steps add up; even small changes we make in our commute, our choice of home site, our use of energy, and our consumption can help make a difference for New York's future. Through personal engagement in open space conservation, there are many actions that we can undertake or initiate at every level.

We invite you to look at each objective, see what is needed in your community and use this Plan as a resource and a guide to reach attainable and important goals.



View of Iona Island from Eagle Watch, Hudson River Valley
Photo: Nick Zungoli ***Open Space Institute***
www.osiny.org

EXAMPLE of TOOLS AVAILABLE for OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION

For more information on these tools, see the NYS Department of State's Local Planning Guide
www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/pdfs/OpenSpaces.pdf

TAX INCENTIVES & CREDITS

State Forest Tax Laws
State Agricultural Value Assessments
Federal Historic Structure Rehabilitation
Federal Tax Credit For Gifts of Fee and Conservation Easements
State Conservation Easement Tax Credit
State Brownfield Redevelopment

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Agricultural Districts
Forest Stewardship
Designation Programs
Heritage Areas
Scenic Districts
Scenic Byways
National/State Registers
Natural Landmarks

PLANNING

Adirondack Smart Growth Grants
Catskill Smart Growth Grants
Coastal Management Planning
Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan
Transportation Planning
Watershed Planning
Local Planning
Regional Planning
Infrastructure Development
Heritage Development
Smart Growth Grants
All-Hazard Mitigation Planning

OTHER POLICIES
to Sustain Natural Resource Industry

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Land & Water Conservation Fund
Farm Bill - EQUIP, Community Forestry, etc.
Forest Legacy
State Wildlife Grants
Federal Endangered Species Act
North American Wetlands Conservation Act
National Heritage Areas
Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation
Federally Administered Wetlands

FEDERAL PROGRAMS (cont.)

FEMA Hazard, Pre-Disaster & Flood Mitigation

LAND USE PROGRAMS

Local Land Use Zoning
Subdivision Regulations
Municipal Comprehensive Plans
Site Plan Approval
Cluster Development
SEQR Critical Area Designation
Historic Preservation
Transfer of Development Rights

STATE ADMINISTERED

Adirondack Park Agency Act
Freshwater Wetlands Act
Tidal Wetlands Act
Coastal Erosion Hazard Area
State Endangered Species Act
Wild, Scenic & Recreational Rivers Act
Mined Land Reclamation Act
Water Quality Standards

STATE & LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Albany Pine Bush Commission
Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning & Policy Commission
Hudson River Estuary Program/Greenway
Tug Hill Commission
Adirondack Steering Committee
Long Island Sound Stewardship

FINANCING

Environmental Protection Fund
Community Preservation Act
Local Bond Act
State Revolving Loan Fund

PROTECTION BY FEE, ACQUISITION, EASEMENT OR LEASE

Land Trusts, Not-for-Profits & Community Interest Groups
Local Government
Federal Government
State Government

A LEGACY OF CONSERVATION

Our State's Conservation Ethic

New York State can truly be called the cradle of the modern conservation movement. Beginning with the influence of *the Hudson River School* whose paintings transformed the way people viewed nature, our State is where the ideals of conservation first developed.

Land stewardship and management in New York first started with *Native American tribes* who protected sites that were considered sacred, as well as, important hunting grounds. They cleared lands for agricultural purposes, becoming the State's first inhabitants utilizing land management techniques to support themselves.

Before the middle of the 19th century, much of our State's lands were covered by forests, which had been viewed primarily as an obstacle to European settlers; they were something to be cleared to allow agriculture, or to be cut and exploited for profit.

The paintings of the Hudson River School and growing literature of nature writing gave people a new appreciation of nature for itself, for its wild beauty and remoteness. The public was eager to read about the adventures of Verplanck Colvin, known for surveying the Adirondacks. Publications such as *Forest and Stream,* published by George Bird Grinnell, who founded the first *Audubon Society* in 1886 in New York City, brought awareness of the outdoors to a wider audience.

President Teddy Roosevelt: National Forests, Parks & Monuments

President Theodore Roosevelt was deeply affected by the power and beauty of nature, and it became a defining force in his life. He and like-minded New Yorkers sought to reverse the exploitation of nature such as uncontrolled logging, commercial hunting, and extermination of birds such as egrets for their plumes to adorn hats. As president, he established a conservation legacy of national forests, parks and monuments.

Olmsted: Our Urban Parks

Photo: www.visitnyc.com *Central Park ~ Manhattan*

The recognition of the healthful benefits of nature led to the building of magnificent urban parks to bring the healing beauty of natural scenery to city dwellers. *Frederick Law Olmsted* brought a new vision to park design, creating naturalistic landscapes, rather than traditional formal gardens. His parks transformed many of New York's cities, such as Buffalo with its green necklace of exquisitely landscaped parks. Olmsted's most famous park – *Central Park* – is a stunning 840 acre rectangle of green in the heart of Manhattan.

Our State Forest Preserve Act

By the 1880s, *less than 25% of our State was forested*, and the remaining uncut forests in the Catskills and Adirondacks were being quickly logged. In 1885, our State created the Forest Preserve Act to protect portions of our State's lands in the Catskills and Adirondacks from further exploitation. This Act was strengthened in 1894 by the "forever wild" amendment to the New York State Constitution, creating the first state protected wilderness in the world, ensuring that Forest Preserve lands...

> "shall not be leased, sold or exchanged, or be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."

Today, New York's Forest Preserve is the largest state-designated wilderness in the country.

Our State Parks

Recognition of the scenic value of New York's unique natural features also led to the establishment of the first State Park at *Niagara Falls*, established as a State Reservation in 1883. It was soon followed by other State Parks such as the Palisades along the Hudson River, the natural springs at Saratoga Springs, and the Genesee River Gorge at Letchworth State Park, known as the "Grand Canyon of the East."

Letchworth State Park

New York City: A Need for Clean Water

New York City's need for drinking water led to the development of a huge water supply infrastructure upstate, beginning with the construction of the Croton Aqueduct in 1842. The first reservoirs were built in Westchester and Putnam counties, and were followed by the development of the Catskill watershed, beginning with the building of the Ashokan Reservoir in 1907. The value of forests for the protection of our State's water supplies was one of the early incentives for preservation of forest land – with the City of New York buying thousands of acres adjacent to its reservoirs.

The Conservation Department

In 1911, *The Conservation Department*, the predecessor of today's Department of Environmental Conservation, was created by legislation in order to consolidate the functions of the Forest, Fish and Game Commission, the Forest Preserve Board, the Water Supply Commission and the Water Power Commission. By combining these commissions into a single department, our State greatly enhanced its ability to protect the environment, and to respond to new environmental challenges, such as the rapid abandonment of farmland that began in the 1920s.

Restoring Productive & Viable Lands

Much of our State's farmland was on marginal land, and as better land became available out west, agriculture began to decline in New York. When the *Great Depression* hit, many farmers could no longer make a living on their worn out, unproductive land. The 1929 *State Reforestation Act*, and the 1931 *Hewitt Amendment*, authorized the State's Conservation Department to buy land for reforestation purposes. These lands were known as State reforestation areas, and were the beginning of today's *State Forest system*, which now encompasses more than 770,000 acres. The Conservation Department began a massive tree planting program to restore these lands for watershed protection, flood prevention and future timber production. Today, these areas are covered with healthy forests.

During the Depression, the federal *Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)*, founded by *President Franklin D. Roosevelt* in 1933, planted millions of tree seedlings on the barren soil of the new State reforestation areas; work that provided employment for thousands of young men.

Our State's Private Forest Lands

As early as 1912 there have been provisions for tax concessions on forest lands to promote private forest land ownership. Various laws and amendments have been passed over the years, culminating in the present law, Section 480-a of the Real Properly Tax Law (480a) which has been in effect since 1974. 480a remains instrumental in focusing conservation efforts to 14.4 million acres of privately-owned forest lands, encouraging the long-term ownership of woodlands to produce forest crops, and thereby increasing the likelihood of a more stable forest economy. This early expression of "sustainable" forest policy has had a major impact on the growth and development of New York's forests. For a state with such a high population, it is an impressive achievement to have so much well-managed forested land, particularly in comparison to other states in the Northeast.

CCC enrollees planted thousands of trees throughout New York State, www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/42768.html.

Robert Moses: Access to Nature & Recreation

As New Yorkers' growing interest in outdoor recreation led to the establishment of dedicated recreation areas such as campgrounds, public beaches and golf courses, these areas began to be managed more for recreation and scenic beauty, rather than strictly for natural resource production. By the 1920s, cars had already become an important part of the recreational experience. More people were driving their own cars to outdoor recreational destinations, providing ordinary citizens with the freedom and mobility that had formerly been available only to the very wealthy.

Robert Moses, the State executive charged with development and maintenance of State parks, created a new recreational infrastructure based on cars and began a massive development program of new parks, beaches, and camp-grounds. Between 1924 and 1968, Robert Moses transformed much of New York State with his vision of the automobile society.

Founding of The Nature Conservancy

After World War II, there was a growing recognition of the importance of preserving natural areas for their intrinsic ecological value. *TNC (The Nature Conservancy)*, founded in New York City in 1951, undertook its first land preservation project by saving the *Mianus River Gorge* in Westchester County from development. This was the beginning of *New York's land trust movement*, where private citizens and conservation groups banded together to acquire significant land parcels. Land trusts, environmental groups and environmental lawyers, with the support of local citizens, stopped many environmentally destructive projects.

In 1970, on the *first Earth Day*, the *New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)* was established. This new agency joined the mission of the former Conservation Department with the missions of various State environmental quality bureaus. Soon after, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation was split from the Conservation Department and elevated to full agency status as the new Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR), since renamed the *Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)*. The *Park and Recreation Land Acquisition Act* of 1960, the *Environmental Quality Bond Acts* of 1972 and 1986, and also the 1996 Clean Air, Clean Water Bond Act, provided funds for the acquisition of additional State Parks and forest lands, including inholdings or parcels adjacent to existing State forests and parks.

A Tradition of Recreation

New York's Recreational Pastimes

Nature is home to many traditional sports as well as more modern pastimes. Most of us see the outdoors as a place to relax, unwind and exercise in one form or another. Although hunting is one of the most venerable outdoor sports, the number of hunters in New York has been declining. One of the reasons for fewer hunters is the lack of nearby places to hunt. As more and more private land is posted, public lands managed by DEC and OPRHP may be the only local areas open to hunters.

Like hunting, fishing is a traditional outdoor sport and our State is recognized around the world for having an amazing range of fishing opportunities. On public lands and easements, it is possible to fish for native brook trout, landlocked salmon, striped bass, bluefish and many other species. Stocking of many streams and lakes with a variety of game fish is supplied and managed by 12 DEC fish hatcheries.

Our Public Lands & Easements

Our State's public lands have more than 4,500 miles of trails for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Some of these trails are also designated for snowmobiles, horses and bicycles. In the Adirondack Park, there are 2,700,000 acres of Forest Preserve; and over 600,000 acres of public recreation rights under conservation easements on private forest lands. The Catskill Park contains 281,000 acres of Forest Preserve lands.

State Forests

Additionally, there are 776,000 acres of State Forests across New York, originally acquired for reforestation and now for open space and watershed protection, timber production and recreation. New York also has more than 85 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) managed by DEC and designated for hunting, trapping and fishing. They include forests, open fields, streams, ponds, wetlands and scenic vistas. WMAs make up 200,000 acres of DEC land, 124,000 acres of upland, and 53,000 acres of wetland.

New York City Watershed Lands

New York City (NYC) Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has acquired 59,000 acres of fee and 32,000 acres of conservation easements in the NYC watershed to protect the quality of the drinking water for more than 8 million residents of NYC. In 2008, NYC DEP and NYS DEC signed an agreement to ease existing recreational access restrictions to approximately 13,000 acres of DEP lands in the Catskill Watershed. DEC will help patrol and manage these lands.

Our State Parks

OPRHP administers about 330,000 acres of land including 178 state parks. Nearly 80% of the park system is in natural areas with a wide range of geological features, ecological habitats and species of plants and animals. These include the extensive forested areas of Allegany and Sterling Forest State Parks, the gorges of the Finger Lakes parks, islands in the St. Lawrence and Hudson Rivers, cliffs at Minnewaska, and the beaches and sand dunes of Long Island.

Our Town Parks

For many people, local parks may be the only nearby open space. New York State has over 1,040 municipal parks and 250 county parks, as well as many small local recreational areas. Almost every town, no matter how small, has at least one green space. They range from simple sports fields to elegantly landscaped spaces funded by wealthy donors. In addition, many communities are connected by greenways, long distance hiking trails and bike trails.

Ensuring Environmental Justice

Providing For All Our State's Communities

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

To achieve environmental justice, we must ensure that all communities enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and public health threats, as well as, equal access to the decision-making process. Fostering environmental justice in New York involves a range of activities that both reduce environmental burdens and target benefits to underserved populations or areas struggling with disproportionate burdens.

The work of the Environmental Justice Interagency Task Force, a wide network of professionals at DEC, OPRHP, DOS and DAM, will remain focused on reinvigorated efforts to integrate environmental justice principles into our agencies' activities.

The pressing need for open space in underserved neighborhoods across New York City and the City of Yonkers, as well as theAlbany area, Syracuse, Binghamton, Rochester and Buffalo, requires a continued focus on conservation acquisition and preservation of smaller sites. The acute lack of open space in these communities makes every square foot of land that is saved an extremely significant, public amenity.

Enhancing Our Approach

Ecosystem-based Management via Open Space Conservation

Ecosystem-based management (EBM) is a growing approach to managing our human activities and natural resources in a manner that fosters healthy, productive and resilient ecosystems able to deliver the resources and services we need and want. The goal of this approach is to move towards a more holistic way of how we manage and view managing our State's natural resources, shifting our traditional management that often focuses on a single element, to a management system that evaluates and considers the myriad of factors interacting across an ecosystem (e.g. forests and air quality; streams and watersheds with our need and desire to utilize these resources).

'Landscape' Management

EBM seeks to focus on the interactions of natural systems, species and human activities occurring across broad regions such as the Great Lakes, Hudson River Estuary or the ocean ecosystems. By emphasizing "place-based" management decisions, EBM can help tailor implementation measures and decisions to the issues that exist within *specific communities, landscapes or ecosystems.*

Threats to Ecosystem Health

Loss of habitat, urbanization and the increase of invasive species are just three of the biggest threats to ecosystem health. Critical habitats include freshwater wetlands, tidal wetlands, low-lying areas adjacent to tidal wetlands that offer the potential for wetland migration; riverine, ocean and estuarine shoreline habitats, including beaches, protective dunes, maritime forests and associated buffers; and streams and their corridors, throughout our State's watersheds.

Over the years, our State and local governments have been working to ensure the protection of our State's tidal wetlands for habitat preservation. Through publicly-identified, significant property acquisitions and through protective regulations, we have begun to slow some of the destruction of these wetlands, thus proving the necessity of these measures and likely need for their expansion in the future.

Ocean & Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council

Through the work of the Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council and other existing regional efforts, our State is adopting collaborative approaches that will improve the management of our State's natural resources and human activities in ways that enhance and protect the health of ecosystems.

As we continue to learn more, we must adapt our approach to enhance our conservation tactics. Our goals ultimately remain the same, while our means of getting there change. Through the State's Open Space Conservation Plan, developed nearly 20 years ago, we continue to identify New York's landscapes and ecosystems that are under significant threat and in need of priority conservation action. To sustain our State's existing ecological integrity, we will continue to work towards:

1. maintaining viable populations of all native species in their original habitats;
2. representing, within protected areas, all native ecosystem types across their natural range of variation;
3. maintaining evolutionary and ecological processes (i.e. disturbance regimes, hydrological processes, nutrient cycles, etc.);
4. managing over periods of time long enough to maintain the evolutionary potential of species and ecosystems; and
5. accommodating human use and occupancy within these constraints.

Continuing New York's Conservation Legacy

More than a century ago, our New York predecessors, in and outside of State government, had the wisdom and forethought to preserve land for the future benefit of all New York citizens. Today, the return on this investment in land is far greater than could ever have been imagined 100 years ago. These lands, originally bought to protect water supplies, prevent floods, preserve habitat for wildlife and provide recreational opportunities have become economic drivers for our rural communities and one of our State's greatest legacies. Summarized by the phrase, "ecosystem services," they have fulfilled their original purpose magnificently and have been providing other benefits that we have only recently begun to understand and value; such as carbon sequestration, climate moderation, coastal and riparian area protection, habitat for rare and endangered species, groundwater recharge and filtration of significant amounts of air pollutants.

If we are to fulfill our State's mission of protecting ecosystems, preserving open space, preserving a sustainable quality of life, providing for future environmental benefits and recreational benefits on some of the most heavily used public lands, we will need to continue to work in partnerships, saving and maintaining our land for our ecosystem health – for our own well-being.

Let's continue building on this legacy.

www.milliontreesnyc.org

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

PROTECTING OUR COASTLINES

ESTABLISHING RIPARIAN BUFFERS & WETLAND PROTECTIONS

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

PROMOTING URBAN FORESTRY & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

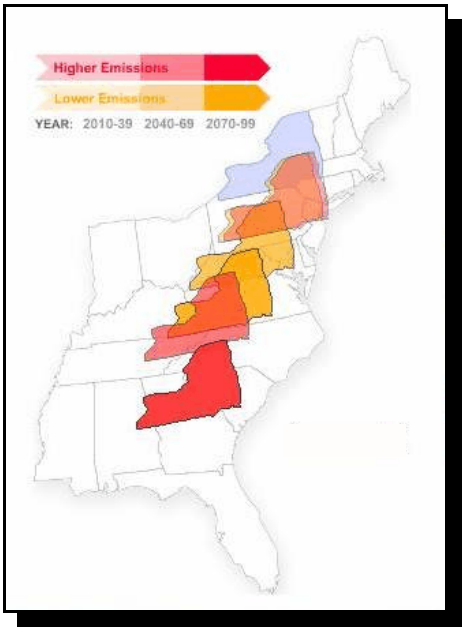
OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

www.dec.ny.gov/energy/44992.html

Scientists have documented changes in the climate of the Northeast United States that correlate with changes in temperature across the globe. The best current information on our area's climate change is found in two reports. "Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast" *(www.climatechoices.org/assets/documents/climatechoices/NECIA_climate_report_final.pdf)* is a report of the "Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment," a collaboration between the Union of Concerned Scientists and a team of independent experts. This study estimates the effects of climate change under two scenarios: high emissions (continued heavy reliance on fossil fuels, with rapid growth of greenhouse gas emissions), and low emissions (a shift away from fossil fuels, with a decline in greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century). The report stresses that, while some additional global warming is unavoidable, how much climate change we experience will depend on energy choices we make *now* and in the next decade.

The second report, "Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change – Metro East Coast" (*www.usgcrp.gov/usgcrp/nacc/metro.htm*), is one section of a national study carried out by the U.S. Global Change Research Program. It outlines the potential effects of climate change on resources and infrastructure in southeastern New York, Long Island, northeastern New Jersey, and western Connecticut.

- *Rising temperatures.* The average annual temperature in the Northeast has risen 1.8 degrees F over the last 100 years. Winter temperatures have risen even faster, as much as 4.4 degrees in the last 30 years. In the coming decades, summer days also are expected to become hotter, increasing evaporation of soil moisture and leading to drier conditions between rain events.



www.climatechoices.org
Summer in Upstate New York could feel like summer in South Carolina or Georgia by the year 2070 unless we take action to reduce heat trapping emissions today.

- *More heavy rains and stronger storms.* While average annual precipitation is expected to increase only slightly, precipitation more often will occur as events heavy enough to cause local flooding. Paradoxically, the studies also suggest that short-term droughts (1-3 months) will be more frequent, as dry spells between heavy rains grow longer and hotter.

- *More hurricanes and tropical storms.* When water vapor in the atmosphere condenses, energy is released and becomes added fuel for hurricanes and tropical storms. Because warmer water evaporates faster from the ocean surface, there is more condensing vapor available to energize the storms that arise over the open ocean. The number of strong storms in the Northeast has shown relatively little change yet, but warmer water temperatures are expected to feed stronger storms in the coming decades.

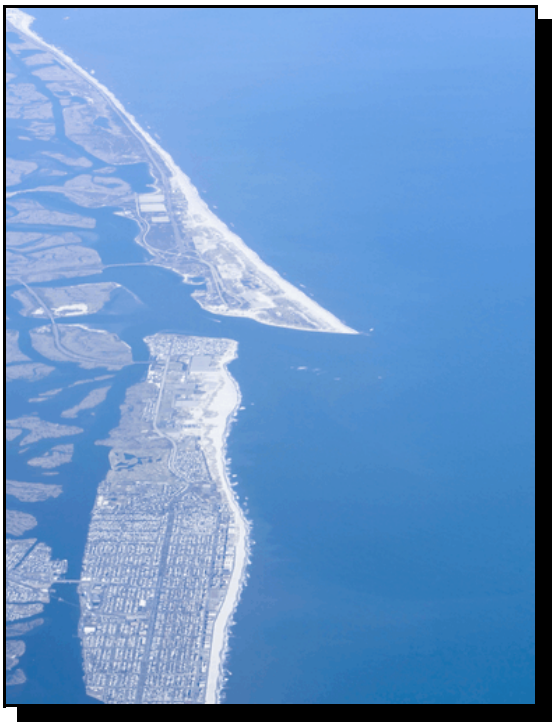
- *Shorter winters and longer growing seasons.* Data from the last 30 years indicate that much of the Northeast already has seen a change in the winter snow season. In the Adirondacks, total annual snowfall has decreased by 40 to 60 inches (more winter precipitation now falls as rain). During the same time, the period with

snow on the ground has decreased by as much as 20 days in some parts of the State. By the end of the century, parts of New York could see only 5 to 10 days of snow cover during the winter season.

- *Change of winter freeze and thaw dates.* Lake Champlain now freezes over, on average, 11 days later than it did when records began in the early 1800s. It also thaws earlier in the spring, and in 16 of the last 31 years it hasn't frozen over at all. In the Great Lakes region, later ice-in dates appear to be increasing the frequency of "lake effect" storms, very heavy snowfalls that occur when open water in the lakes is warmer than the surrounding land surface. If the lakes freeze over later in winter (or not at all), more lake effect events are expected.

- *The timing of spring bloom.* Plants bloom in response to the temperature, sunshine, rainfall and humidity, all factors that determine climate. Spring bloom dates in the Northeast are now, on average, 4 to 8 days earlier than in the 1960s. Across New York, the last frost is now 8 days earlier than in the 1970s. By the end of the century, New York's growing season is projected to be four to six weeks longer.

- *Sea level rise*. Measured at tidal gauges in New York Harbor, sea level today is more than 15 inches higher than it was 150 years ago. Some of this change is due to geological forces. The remainder comes from the expansion of ocean water as it warms and from the melting of glaciers and polar ice sheets, both factors that will increase as global temperatures warm. With so many forces at work, it is difficult to predict future sea level rise. Instead, scientists offer a range of possible levels, depending in part on whether CO_2 emissions are stabilized or continue to increase. By mid-century, a conservative projection puts global sea level between 2.5 and 13 inches higher than today. By the end of the century, scientists estimate a rise of between 4 and 33 inches, or higher. Scientists predict that this higher sea level could double the likelihood of a storm that produces a 100 year flood in New York City.



Long Island Sound

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Shorter, warmer winters and longer growing seasons will affect the types of species that survive in our region, both on the ground and in the water. As temperatures rise, some plants and animals will move north or to higher elevations to find cooler conditions. In particular, New York's fisheries could undergo significant change. Today, New York's marine waters are home to a seasonal mix of cold and warm/temperate species, and our inland fresh waters support thriving populations of cold water fish like trout and salmon. In both marine and freshwater fisheries, warming waters may tilt the balance toward warm water species, diminishing the State's biodiversity.

It may also become too warm for traditional New York plants, such as sugar maple trees. The maple syrup season decreased by 2 to 4 days in the last 30 years; at some point in the future, maple syrup production may no longer be viable in our region. Increased local flooding will expand flood plain areas and increase the number of high velocity flows. Unchecked development in frequently inundated areas will increase the cost of replacement or relocation and the loss of natural flood absorption.

Rising sea waters may increase saltwater intrusion into drinking water supplies near the coast, making it harder to meet the high demand for water that accompanies development. The sea also could inundate tidal marshes and sensitive shallow habitats that support many species of fish and wildlife. While these critical aquatic habitats naturally migrate inland with rising water, attempts to buttress shorelines against rising seas will prevent lost habitat from replacing itself.

TAKING ACTION to PROTECT COMMUNITIES & PRIVATE PROPERTY

New York's communities and resource managers need to prepare for the inevitable changes in climate that are occurring. Protecting forests helps to store carbon, which helps mitigate the effects of climate change. Open space conservation programs and strategies that focus on protecting wetlands, forests, flood plains and the State's extensive coastlines, including the Great Lakes, should be our first line of defense to protect adjacent private property and communities from the increased storm intensity, flooding and rising coastlines.

These natural resource-based programs are usually far cheaper than "engineered" solutions that often shift the negative impacts down stream or to adjacent property owners, as well as not being sustainable for the long term nor protecting natural resources. While resource-based programs are usually cheaper and a worthy investment, they require a commitment of resources at the state and local level for implementation.

While it will be challenging for New York's communities to address climate change, acting *now* can avoid huge losses to private property and community resources later. Sensible land use regulations and incentive programs can help protect private property, save communities money and conserve valuable wildlife habitat and create recreational opportunities.

Several state agencies are working together with the State Smart Growth Cabinet to enhance the technical and financial assistance available to local governments to prepare communities for climate change.

How can the State's Open Space Conservation program respond to the effects of global climate change?

By acting upon and implementing strategies for:

- Protection of Our Coastlines;
- Protection of Riparian Areas & Wetlands;
- Promotion of Sustainable Forestry Practices; *and*
- Promotion of Urban & Community Forestry, & Green Infrastructure.

Protecting Our Coastlines

Great South Bay, Suffolk County

New York's coastlines are the third longest in the nation with over 15 million people, *85% of our State's population*, living and working in marine coastal counties. It is an area that accounts for 12% of the State's land mass. By 2010, an estimated 700,000 additional people will join them.

New York's coastal and estuarine lands provide great diversity of fish and wildlife habitats, bluffs, barrier islands, and other natural protective features. Enormous economic benefits are derived from the coast each year. New York's commercial fishing industry, ports and marinas, and coastal farming areas contribute billions annually to the State's economy.

As the warming of our climate continues, rising seas and increased storm surges will put New York's coastlines at a significant risk. Rising sea levels pose serious threats to coastal communities and natural resources around the globe, altering natural ecosystems and affecting the habitability of coastal cities and towns. According to the Northeast Climate Impacts Assessment conducted in 2007 by the Union of Concerned Scientists, as seas rise:

- Beaches and bluffs will suffer increased erosion, while the risk of severe flooding and storm damage will increase.
- Low-lying areas will be inundated, with potential for saltwater to infiltrate into surface waters and aquifers.
- Sewage and septic systems, as well as transportation infrastructure, are at risk from flooding and erosion.

NYS SEA LEVEL RISE TASK FORCE

www.dec.ny.gov/energy/45202.html

The Task Force was created in 2007 by the State Legislature to assess impacts to our State's coastline from rising seas and to recommend protective and adaptive measures. A DEC staff steering committee is organizing the research, analysis and writing to support the effort. Two technical work groups were established: 1) Infrastructure and Community Resilience; and 2) Natural Resources. Both groups are comprised of experts with essential knowledge of our State's coastal environments. The goal is to provide a useful report to help guide the State Legislature in taking action to assist local governments, public authorities, businesses and communities develop and implement effective strategies to address the potential impacts of sea level rise.

ACTIONS

- ***Gather data on baseline condition of habitats and species, population trends, and projections of impacts from climate change, especially in coastal, and riparian areas, in order to assess potential impacts, draft protective and adaptative strategies, monitor impacts, and mitigate expected impacts (DEC, NYS Sea Level Rise Task Force and partners). Implement the recommendations of the Sea Level Rise Task Force to protect our coastline and adapt to rising sea level.***
  - *Integrate sea level rise and other climate considerations into the DEC-Environmental Facilities Corporation assessment of water infrastructure needs and criteria for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds (DEC, EFC & NYS Sea Level Rise Task Force).*
  - *Install Sediment Elevation Tables (SETs) in select tidal wetland complexes to establish long-term sedimentation datasets to monitor marsh elevations and identify marsh responses to sea level rise and natural subsidence.*
- ***Work in partnership with the Gateway National Recreation Area to assist in the development of a new General Management Plan to guide the resource preservation and visitor use within the Jamaica Bay. Develop & implement short-term management, restoration and research priorities for tidal wetlands, as identified and developed in Jamaica Bay by the Jamaica Bay Task Force.***

JAMAICA BAY

Jamaica Bay, under the primary stewardship of the National Parks Service and Gateway National Recreation Area (Gateway), has seen a steady decline in the size of its marsh islands since 1974, when these tidal wetlands gained regulatory protections through the State's Tidal Wetlands Act (ECL Article 25). DEC's Jamaica Bay Task Force has been working in collaboration with the Parks Service, Gateway, NYCDEP and its partners in guiding the restoration of the marsh islands to 1974 acreage, including research of the causes of marsh loss and restoration efforts.

Establishing Riparian Buffers & Wetland Protections

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

Riparian (streamside) zones are biologically diverse vegetated ecosystems and often provide critical habitat for wildlife species, and also perform many important ecological functions, including temperature regulation, flood control, and stream bank stabilization. They are critical to maintaining healthy streams and waters and their conservation is a major element of any holistic watershed program. Riparian areas are often severely damaged during the land development process, leading to unintended negative impacts to our streams and rivers. Vegetated buffers help to reduce pollution entering waterways by slowing down and filtering runoff, thus extending retention time and improving water quality. Buffers also help to reduce flooding and erosion by stabilizing shorelines and absorbing high velocity flows. In addition, they serve an important role for wildlife as a shoreline transition zone and travel corridor.

Maintaining riparian buffers in the face of climate change, especially in the most critical areas prone to flooding and development pressure, will help protect human life and health and allow streams to move naturally. Modeling the "floodplain of the future" may be needed to accommodate the new hydrology likely to occur with more intense storm events.

The most detailed information on riparian buffer widths in NY come not from laws or regulations, but from guidance and voluntary programs encouraging best management practices (BMPs) in agriculture and timber harvesting.

While the ecological value of maintaining buffer zones is well understood and accepted, considerable debate exists over appropriate buffer zone width. Most regulatory buffer widths were designed for maintaining water quality and may not be adequate to protect fish and wildlife. Most of the research concludes that buffers solely designed or maintained to protect water quality are insufficient for protecting most fish and wildlife habitat. The best approach is to integrate goals for protection and restoration with site characteristics such as slope, soil characteristics, vegetation, land use, stream size, and nearby wildlife resources, and analyze buffer width on a site by site basis.

Conserving Natural Areas & Wildlife in Your Community: *Smart Growth Strategies for Protecting the Biological Diversity of New York's Hudson River Valley*
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/50083.html

One hundred feet should be considered an absolute minimum buffer width for streams regardless of site-specific characteristics. Whenever possible buffers greater than 100 ft, and preferably 300 ft or more, should be used for the protection of stream function, as well as fish and wildlife resources.

WETLANDS

Although wetlands and their shores, banks, and edges are sometimes included in the definition of riparian zones, wetlands are more often treated independently of riparian zones in the literature and in state and federal regulations. In general, *wetlands* are areas characterized by hydric soils that are inundated or saturated for part of the growing season and dominated by specific wetland plants. They are known by many names, such as marshes, swamps, bogs, and wet meadows. Wetlands are invaluable to the people and environment of our State, performing many crucial functions and providing multiple benefits.

However, for many years, their values have gone unrecognized and consequently, we have lost almost half of our State's wetlands to activities such as filling and draining, although in parts of the State, we are regaining wetlands due to abandonment of agricultural land.

Wetlands have an important position in the cycle of water within a watershed. They often serve as groundwater discharge sites to maintain base flow in streams and rivers, and to support ponds and lakes. In some places, wetlands are needed to recharge groundwater supplies. Wetlands help control erosion by slowing water velocity and filtering sediments, protecting reservoirs and navigational channels. They cleanse water by filtering out natural and many manmade pollutants, which are then broken down or immobilized. In wetlands, organic materials are also broken down and recycled back into the environment, where they support the food chain.

Stewart State Forest ~ East of Drury Swamp

Wetlands are one of the most productive habitats for for fish and wildlife, including many rare and endangered species, and, provide areas for recreation, education and research. They are also valuable open space, especially in developing areas where they may be the only remaining natural green space.

ACTIONS

- ***Establish and enhance riparian buffers and wetland protections to mitigate the effects of greater intensity rain events caused by climate change and to protect and improve water quality.***
  - *Provide increased protection of the State's freshwater and tidal wetlands laws by increasing penalties for violations, updating existing wetlands maps, and expanding the reach of the State's wetlands laws to include smaller wetlands.*
  - *Expand protection of aquatic habitat by regulating activities in more New York streams.*
  - *Enhance stream and floodplain/riparian protection by identifying appropriate river segments and, where appropriate, incorporating them into the State's Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers program.*
  - *Complete comprehensive trends analysis of wetlands in New York State to track acreage losses and gains of various wetland types.*
  - *Provide technical assistance and model ordinances that can be implemented during the next five years by local and regional governments to expand vegetative buffer requirements and limit inappropriate development along river and stream corridors, wetlands, flood plains and riparian areas. The program will focus on providing the tools to local governments to address this critical need, to protect private property and community resources in this era of increased storm intensity and flooding. By acting now, workable, community-based solutions can be developed that avoid the need for top-down, State driven regulations. (DOS & DEC)*
  - *Develop a long-term statewide program to prioritize high risk floodplain areas for conservation through acquisition and easement. Include plans to facilitate tidal wetland migration in response to sea level rise.*
  - *Identify properties in danger of flood impacts and provide technical assistance to municipalities to establish zoning laws to ensure that only appropriate development occurs around identified floodplain areas (DEC& DOS).*
  - *Assist communities in modeling the "floodplain of the future" to accommodate the new hydrology likely to occur with more intense storm events due to climate change.*

- *Work to provide targeted training to stream professionals and contractors on in-stream project practices; and to public and to local governments on stream dynamics and methods and tools for responding to flood emergencies and post-flood problems in watershed.*

- *Vigorously enforce stream and wetland protection laws and provide authority for injunctive relief.*

- *Continue to support state, local government and non-profit acquisition of priority projects (listed in Chapter V) that protect wetlands and riparian areas identified by the Regional Open Space Advisory Committees.*

❑ ***Provide technical assistance to local governments.***

- *Provide assistance to communities to develop and implement comprehensive plans, local open space, biodiversity and watershed protection programs, and develop Community Preservation Acts. (DEC & DOS)*

- *Encourage communities to sign the Climate Smart Communities Pledge and provide assistance for implementation.*

- *Enhance the State's Smart Growth web site to better deliver technical assistance to local governments in the areas of smart growth, open space protection, carbon management, adaptation to climate change and the Climate Smart Communities pledge. (DOS)*

- *Develop a webpage resource for local governments on a wide variety of environmental topics including open space planning, stormwater management, urban & community forestry,SEQR, Ecosystem Based Management, pesticides, riparian buffers, roadside ditch management, barrier mitigation (dams/ culverts), floodplain management, training opportunities, watershed planning, and implementing the Climate Smart Communities pledge, including implementation and adaptation measures. (DEC)*

- *Build upon the successful natural resource-based outreach and technical assistance activities of the Hudson River Estuary Program. (DEC)*

Ocean & Great Lakes Conservation Council
www.nyoglecc.org

On April 8th, 2009, the New York Ocean & Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council completed a report, "Our Waters, Our Communities, Our Future." The Council's nine-member State agencies collaborated to detail opportunities to protect and enhance New York's shoreline waters through an "ecosystem-based management" approach to decision-making within their respective missions. This is a clear break from traditional, often segmented resource management methods; shifting to recognize the inter-connections among various ecosystems; and the need to manage our human activities to ensure ecosystems can deliver what we will need.

Promoting Sustainable Forestry

TREES – THE CARBON STORAGE EXPERTS
CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Scientists are continuing to study ways of pulling carbon out of the atmosphere and storing it long-term elsewhere in order to slow the increase of carbon dioxide which is trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere and causing temperatures to rise across the globe. This process is called carbon sequestration, and high-technology methods to achieve this are being explored worldwide.

We can, however, increase carbon sequestration now by working with some resident experts. They're called trees, and they have almost 350 million years experience in sequestering carbon. Trees, like other green plants, use photosynthesis to convert carbon dioxide (CO2) into sugar, cellulose and other carbon-containing carbohydrates that they use for food and growth. Trees are unique in their ability to lock up large

amounts of carbon in their wood, and continue to add carbon as they grow. Although forests release some CO2 from natural processes such as decay and respiration, a healthy forest typically stores carbon at a much greater rate than it releases it.

Typical carbon sequestration rates for managed forests in the Northeast average from 1 to 3 tons of carbon per acre per year. The actual rate of carbon sequestration will vary with species, climate and site, but in general, younger and faster growing forests have higher annual sequestration rates. Considering that one half of the weight of dried wood is carbon, trees in a forest hold a lot of carbon. *When the enormous amount of carbon stored in forest soils is added to the trees' carbon, the inescapable conclusion is that forests are one of our major carbon storage reservoirs working for us today.*

The main strategies for using forests for carbon sequestration are listed below in order of their potential for carbon sequestration in New York:

- *Active forest management.* Enhancing forest growth through sustainable forestry.
- *Avoided deforestation.* Reducing the loss of forested land by promoting smart growth, and limiting sprawl.
- *Forest preservation.* Leaving forests un-disturbed as is done in the 3 million acre Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve.
- *Afforestation.* Adding forest to previously unforested land, as was done on State Forest land during the Great Depression.

Although forests alone can't sequester all of the excess carbon added by burning fossil fuels, they clearly play a significant role. Wisely managed forests can sequester carbon and also provide a sustainable source of fuel and lumber, help clean our air and water, preserve wildlife habitat, provide recreation opportunities and preserve the beauty of trees in their natural setting for generations to come.

NEW YORK'S PRIVATE FORESTS

More than 62% of New York State is forest land, which amounts to 18.6 million acres of land covered by trees. Approximately, 14.8 million acres or 80% of New York's 18.6 million acres of forest lands are privately owned. Approximately 12 million acres of private forest land is left unmanaged and could contribute significant carbon sequestration under active forest management.

NEW YORK'S FOREST PRESERVE

Large forests have the capacity to capture large amounts of atmospheric carbon dioxide, providing front-line defenses against the many impacts of global warming. The approximate 3 million acres of the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve are conservatively estimated to sequester 3 million tons of carbon per year.

"The cost of U.S. forest-based carbon sequestration," Pew Center on Global Climate Change. Stavins and Richards (2005).

ACTIONS

- ***Promote sustainable forestry by providing technical assistance and incentives to private forest landowners.***
  - *Work to update and modernize assistance programs to private land owners who retain their lands in forest, flood plains and other open space.*
  - *Continue to provide State funding and pursue federal funding through the programs in the 2008 Farm Bill for private land forest and habitat management, and land conservation programs in partnership with the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service and State Technical Committee, local governments and land trusts.*

- ***Ensure that climate change policies support sustainable forestry as a carbon positive climate solution and support the use and development of new, environmentally friendly bio-based energy sources.***
  - *Explore ways that the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and other state, federal and local government programs can help provide financial assistance and education to private forest land owners to promote long-term sustainable forestry (DEC).*
  - *Encourage RGGI and related federal initiatives to recognize forest management, avoided deforestation, afforestation and reforestation as legitimate offset categories (DEC).*
  - *Examine and develop new initiatives to establish financial assistance mechanisms for private forest landowners to calculate and manage the value of sequestered carbon in a market situation, in order to encourage sustainable forest management practices that result in enhanced carbon sequestration and long-term forest retention (DEC).*

Promoting Urban Forestry & Green Infrastructure

Open space initiatives and conservation efforts can effectively address climate change impacts unique to poor communities and communities of color. These environmental, health and socio-economic impacts such as heat related mortality, elevated asthma rates, economic and cultural displacement due to flooding and rising energy costs, air pollution, water pollution, and loss of traditional medicinal plants and animal species relied upon for subsistence, can all be mitigated through open space planning and prioritization of open space initiatives that target these impacts. For instance, more green open space and green infrastructure in Environmental Justice (EJ) communities can ensure overall carbon reductions, mitigate urban heat island effect, improve air quality, reduce combined sewer overflows that compromise water quality, and enhance quality of life in these communities.

URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY

All of the trees within a town, village, or city make up the "community forest." The community forest can include street and yard trees, parks, cemeteries, golf courses, school grounds, and undeveloped green spaces. Urban and community forestry is the management of community forests to establish and maintain healthy trees for air and water quality benefits, energy savings, environmental health, as well as to enhance the quality of life in our urban areas where a majority of our State's citizens live and work.

Trees have numerous effects on human health and quality of life. They add aesthetic benefits which soften the gray infrastructure of urban landscapes. When people utilize parks and shady tree-lined streets, they are more likely to meet and establish bonds with their neighbors, which helps to create a sense of community. When people enjoy spending time in their neighborhoods, they develop pride and a sense of ownership in their communities.

The presence of trees and the proximity to parks has been shown to increase residential and commercial property values. Thus, 'greening' our urban areas and communities helps to enforce our State's Smart Growth initiative (*see Fostering Green, Healthy Communities*) to combat urban sprawl, to make our existing urban areas and communities more attractive; and to respond to the concern of open space conservation areas in

rural areas attracting sprawl developments by targeting these locations to increase real estate values.

www.milliontreesnyc.org

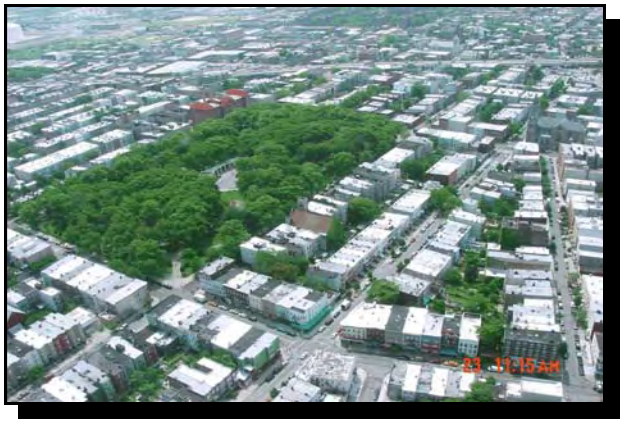
Social benefits are supplemented with environmental and health benefits. Trees remove air and water pollutants through both their root systems and their leaves. Tree canopies shade buildings, sidewalks, streets and other structures keeping them cooler, reducing air conditioning and other energy needs in the summer; and reducing the overall *"urban heat island effect."* Strategically placed trees of appropriate species will shelter buildings from cold winds in winter months, reducing heating costs.

URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

The heat island effect is a term used to describe the effect caused by a concentration of buildings, concrete and asphalt, such as those in urban areas, which absorb and then radiate the heat of the sun, causing temperatures to be higher for an extended period of time compared to surrounding rural areas. Where there are fewer trees in cities and large communities, solar energy is more readily absorbed into manmade structures, causing higher urban area temperatures. Trees and urban green spaces help to reduce the urban heat island effect, while providing additional benefits which improve the quality of life in urban areas.

Trees act as nature's air conditioners by helping to cool the surrounding air in two ways: (a) providing shade to keep street and building surfaces cooler; and (b) through evapo-transpiration, the process by which trees transpire from both the leaves and the root systems. As the water evaporates it dissipates heat in and around the tree leading to cooler air around the tree.

Higher urban temperatures along with increased air pollution can result in the formation of smog, which has been shown to cause severe respiratory problems for many, leading to increased health costs. Tree leaves can help reduce air pollution by "capturing" airborne particles found in smog such as nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbons, sulfur dioxide and other particulates, while at the same time releasing oxygen.



New York State Energy Research & Development Authority
www.nyserda.org/programs/Environment/EMEP/home.asp

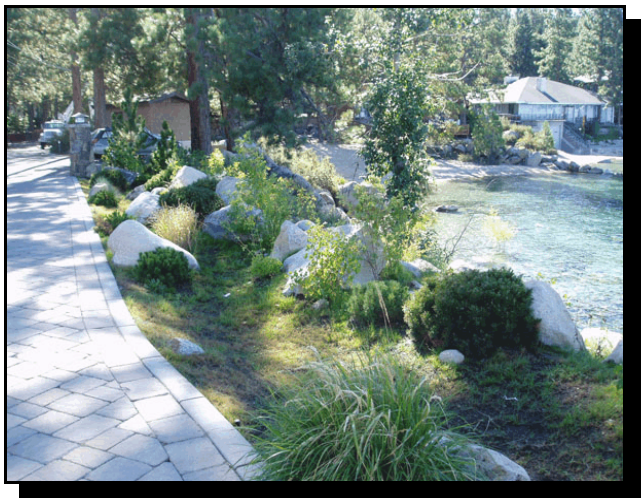
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

www.greeninfrastructure.net

Increasing the utility and benefits provided by trees and their leaf foliage has led to the coining of a new term, *"Green Infrastructure,"* to describe the concept of strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions, providing associated benefits to human populations.

Although green infrastructure is a landscape scale enterprise, smaller scale implementation of this approach is being recognized at the urban level. Within our cities, "green infrastructure" uses plants and natural systems versus man-made, typical concrete-and-steel structures, to perform functions of cooling, air and water purification, stormwater management, and physical aesthetics. In the form of green roofs, green infra-structure reduces the urban heat island effect; in rain

increases property values – it's the closest thing to a cure-all for a myriad of problems that we have in our urban areas; and it may be cheaper than traditional engineered solutions.



http://efc.syracusecoe.org/projects/index.aspx

Environmental Finance Center, Syracuse University

A thick garden of vegetation absorbs stormwater and protects the quality of our water sources.

One of the most popular and extensively used forms of green infrastructure seen throughout Europe are vines used to shade and cool buildings. With the development of modern trellis systems made with stainless steel cables or modular screen structures, it is now possible to use vines on tall modern buildings, keeping them away from the wall. Along with green roofs and vegetated green walls, green facades (the term for walls that use vines), provide a quick way to enhance the effectiveness of urban forests by providing additional foliage coverage on the vertical structures that make up our urban landscape.

Perhaps most importantly, green infrastructure treats fresh water as the valuable resource that it is, rather than as a waste product to be drained away and disposed of.

ONONDAGA COUNTY

The need for infrastructure improvements for water quality in Onondaga County has provided an opportunity to explore the use of green alternatives. A collaborative effort among state agencies, local governments, educational institutions and non-profits is underway to address the various questions that come with new solutions to old problems. Lessons learned in Onondaga County will assist us in a Green Infrastructure initiative statewide.

THE COST OF MANAGING STORMWATER

www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/costs07/documents/reducingstormwatercosts.pdf

The cost effectiveness of green infrastructure techniques concerning stormwater management has been thoroughly documented by the USEPA's 2007 report "Reducing Stormwater Costs through Low Impact Development (LID) Strategies & Practices." This report offers detailed financial information on benefits of LID. In the majority of 17 case studies of various municipalities in the country, the cost of LID techniques were 15 to 80% cheaper than conventional techniques used to manage stormwater. Similarly, Riverkeeper's 2007 Report,"Sustainable Raindrops," (www.riverkeeper.org/special/Sustainable_Raindrops_FINAL_2008-01-08.pdf) demonstrates the effectiveness of stormwater source controls

ACTIONS

- ***Expand State assistance programs for urban and community forestry to increase the tree canopy in New York's communities.***
  - *Establish, research and support the propagation and use of native tree, shrub and vine species at our State's Saratoga Tree Nursery to provide native species in the commercial market especially for use in urban forestry and green infrastructure applications (DEC).*

- *Develop a comprehensive green infrastructure program including technical assistance and web-based resources to local governments, state agencies and commercial nurseries and private citizens.*

Online Resources

The Conservation Fund
www.greeninfrastructure.net

United States Environmental Protection Agency
http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/greeninfrastructure/technology.cfm#greendev

NYC Department of Parks & Recreation
www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/trees_greenstreets.html

FOSTERING GREEN, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PROVIDING WATERSHED & WATER QUALITY PROTECTIONS

PROVIDING URBAN WATERFRONT ACCESS, URBAN GREENWAYS & TRAILWAYS

CONNECTING OUR OPEN SPACE CORRIDORS

PROMOTING SMART GROWTH & IMPROVING OUR TRANSPORTATION USES

FOSTERING GREEN, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

We have tremendous capacity to use the preservation of open space to enhance the cities, towns, communities and neighborhoods where we live. *Conserving natural places is one of the essential elements of being a green and sustainable community.*

Preservation and establishment of urban parks, greenways, trailways, and waterfront access help maintain and improve our quality of life. Environmental remediation allows cities and towns to clean up and safely redevelop contaminated land, a key component of "smart growth." Smart growth redirects economic development into existing communities and away from the open space periphery. Open space corridors complement community forestry to help densely populated towns and cities maintain green spaces and streetscapes. Watershed and water quality protection help prevent pollution of rivers and streams and maintain a safe water supply. New models of community design and transportation efficiency contribute to quality of life, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and lower energy use.

Village of Phonecia, Catskills

Providing Watershed & Water Quality Protections

Our cities depend upon the surrounding countryside for their water supplies. We must continue to protect our State's water quality through acquisition of land and easements, appropriate regulation, and innovative means such as management agreements – executed by the City of New York, upstate watershed communities, the State, certain environmental groups and EPA. These measures need to be accomplished with appropriate cooperative planning with local governments, as accomplished with the historic watershed agreement.

NYCDEP Watershed Protection Program
www.nyc.gov

Planning for the protection of lands for quality water supplies also protects important natural areas and maintains areas of open space around cities, which in turn provides places for recreation and buffers the impacts of urban development. As the vast majority of aging infrastructure impacts (current and potential) lie in more densely populated coastal areas, the failure to act on this impending threat will make it difficult to maintain, improve or restore water quality in coastal waters.

The Plan's priority conservation projects *(see Chapter V),* identify some of our State's most significant areas critical in protecting healthy

communities. These projects fall under three specific categories: *Water Resource Protection* projects which use open space to protect vital watersheds and aquifer recharge areas from pollution and degradation of biological capacity; *Watershed Protection* projects which protect lands within the watershed of a publicly owned water supply reservoir – the lands are protected from uses which have the potential to pollute the water supply either through surface runoff or flow through ground water which discharges to reservoirs and streams; and *Aquifer Protection* projects which protect either lands through which water enters the soil and moves to the water table to replenish the underlying groundwater reservoir – or lands needed for wellhead protection zones which protect water supply wells.

Partnering with Local Governments

There remains a need for local government planning and education. Most small municipalities lack the knowledge and resources in proper planning and open space preservation. In these tough economic times, more resources should be devoted to educating local municipalities, giving them the tools to preserve open space and assistance needed for land use planning.

The question is: How can we improve the capacity of local governments around the State to develop and implement local open space protection programs? *The answer is: With partnerships between land trusts, local, county and State governments.*

ACTIONS

- ***Support and provide technical assistance for comprehensive watershed planning at the State, regional and local government level (DEC, DOS & partners).*** *See also recommendations for Climate Change.*
  - *Promote forest land use statewide as the preferred land use for attaining high water quality resources, as identified in the NYC Watershed (DEC, DOS & partners).*
  - *Implement comprehensive sub-watershed management plans to restore beneficial uses in pathogen impaired water bodies.*
  - *Finalize Target Ecosystem Characteristics for New York/New Jersey Harbor to assist in establishing watershed habitat restoration goals.*
  - *Consider the functions and values of wetlands within construction project areas, and seek opportunities to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts to these valuable and fragile areas.*
  - *Provide training and technical assistance on how to conduct stream restoration, dredging and stream corridor management projects in a manner consistent with best flow management principles, and that are protective of aquatic and wildlife habitats (DEC & partners).*
- ***Work to enhance funding opportunities available to protect watersheds and improve water quality.***
  - *Support efforts to increase federal funding to help address the critical need for repair and improvements to aging water and wastewater infrastructure in our State over the next 20 years (DEC & EFC).*
  - *Expand use of the State Revolving Fund by State and local governments, and qualified non-profit conservation organizations to acquire open space with direct influence on non-point source water quality (DEC, EFC & DOB).*
- ***Provide technical assistance and training on implementation of environmentally friendly stormwater control measures (See also recommendations for urban and community forestry and green infrastructure in Climate Change).***
  - *Enlist all Ecosystem-based Management partners in the continued public education and implementation of the EPA-mandated Phase II Stormwater practices in order to reduce water quality impacts.*
  - *Promote Low Impact Development programs for reducing stormwater runoff volumes and pollutant loads (DEC, DOS & partners).*

- *Develop guidance for state and local officials, and not-for-profit partners on how increased attention to stormwater management in urban areas would affect the design, acquisition, and conservation of open space.*

- *Promote statewide legislation and regulations to require the use of Green Infrastructure (see for example NYC Local Law 5 of 2008, which requires the development of a Sustainable Stormwater Management Plan) to address stormwater control needs (DEC & DOS).*

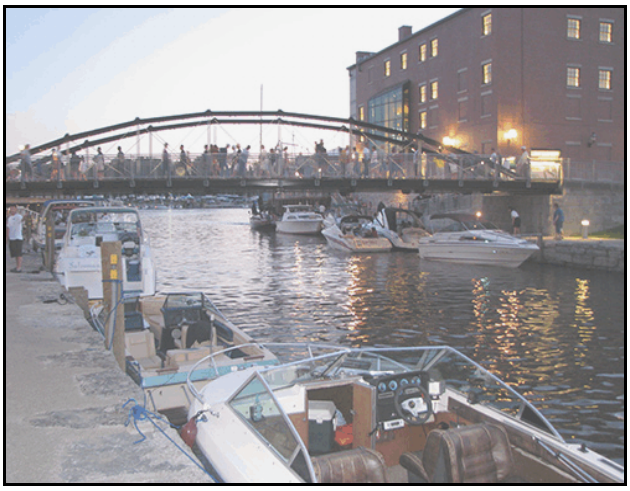
- *Incorporate Smart Growth site design and Green Infrastructure to enhance stormwater reduction and management practices into development projects in watershed and particularly, coastal areas.*

Providing Urban Waterfront Access, Urban Greenways & Trailways

Meeting the Open Space Needs of our Urban Communities

Major urban areas contain 48% of New York's population within 1% of the State's total land area, with 40% of the State's residents living in New York City. Recent estimates project that the population of New York City's five boroughs will increase to nine million by 2030, generating unprecedented development pressure and with the potential to having a profound effect on the amount and quality of open space, parkland, and historic preservation resources provided in our New York City communities.

In 2007, the Mayor of New York City released a critically important report and planning document called "*PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York*," see *www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030/html/home/home.shtml*. PlaNYC emphasizes that the supply of land is a fixed - and scarce - commodity in New York City, with a range of sustainable development issues arising from the rapidly growing population. The Plan proposes a series of actions and recommendations to protect and improve the environment and quality of life in the five boroughs: actions which can also be undertaken in the urban areas of Syracuse, Buffalo, the Albany Area, Rochester, Binghamton, Utica, and Rome.



www.buffalowaterfront.com

Urban Waters & Waterfront Access Recreation

New York's lengthy, diverse shorelines have nurtured marine and lake-based industries for centuries. The harvest of aquatic resources, the recreational use of the waters, and the commercial sight-seeing and tourist boats have made significant contributions to the culture and economy of these areas. However, the high real estate values accorded waterfront property threatens to displace commercial and public access to the waterfront. Waterfront access in minority or low-income communities is especially critical since waterfronts in these communities are often industrialized, or classified as a brownfield, or gated, all of which prohibit access to this natural resource. Protection of our waterfronts by state coastal policies ensures the perpetuation of their multiple resource values.

Providing New Yorkers with access to waterfronts should be done in an environmentally friendly manner. State coastal and waterway policies and regulations ensure the perpetuation of their multiple resource values. An example of regulatory protection is under 6NYCRR Part 608, "Use and Protection of Waters," which considers the environmental impacts, safe recreational and commercial use of water resources, and also natural resource management objectives, in the review of development permits.

Fishing and boating are well-established means of providing outstanding opportunities for our citizens to get back in touch with the natural world. Given the fact that public access to New York's waterfronts is not guaranteed and the availability of waterfront property for public access projects is limited, we must focus on developing new public access to waters in areas that are currently private, improving access on waterfront lands the State currently owns, and modernizing existing public access sites. In addition to ramps and hand launching facilities for boats, waterway access must incorporate universal design principles to recreation structures such as fishing piers, so that these shoreline improvements are accessible to *all* our State's citizens.

www.brooklyngreenway.org

New York's System of Urban Greenways & Trailways

Our State's trailways & greenways provide recreation routes and linear parks, which connect open space and natural resource areas. These green corridors conserve irreplaceable scenic and cultural resources, and accommodate a variety of trail uses, water- oriented recreation, and other forms of recreation. A recreation corridor functions as a recreational facility in itself, providing access between recreation destination points, and opportunities to enjoy scenic and natural open spaces, shorelines, highland areas, and chances to see wildlife that benefit from these corridors. A greenway designation provides a more regional approach to land use planning, tourism and recreational trail development, which relies on local interest, participation and various collaborative initiatives.

Connecting our Urban Parks

Linear parks and greenways serve an important function in connecting residential areas to the larger urban parks, and to the small neighborhood parks, both of which are highly utilized and valued in our densely populated urban areas. Continuing efforts to reclaim or "repurpose" State land, and federal land once used by the military, and also to rezone former industrial areas along the waterfront, have created a rare opportunity to design and build large new public spaces. For example, redevelopment proposals for Governors Island, and, also large sections of the Brooklyn waterfront in Red Hook and Sunset Park, have featured significant open space components. As redevelopment of these sites goes forward, it is important to monitor implementation of the commitments to provide public amenities, such as open space and recreational areas.

Intergovernment Land Transfers

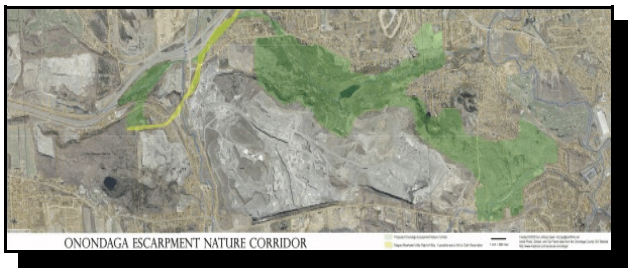
Although the acquisition of privately-owned lands for the purpose of open space conservation remains critical, many properties that are already publicly owned by federal, state, and city agencies could be formally and permanently "repurposed" for recreational use. The relatively high cost of land in several areas of the State makes this kind of land transfer from public agencies an especially important mechanism for open space conservation and often entails little or no cost. Such transfers should be undertaken with care to overcome potential obstacles such as: possible rights of reversion, environmental remediation problems, or public safety and security concerns.

ACTIONS

- ❑ *Ensure availability of resources for environmental remediation of open space properties and public access to recreation, especially for waterfront access.*
- ❑ *Request local transit systems to add needed routes to reach local open space resources.*
- ❑ *Enhance the connections between park lands, places of work and residential neighborhoods.*

Connecting Our Open Space Corridors

Urban sprawl and associated development has fragmented many of our State's ecosystems and has created isolated environmental islands. There is an urgent need to connect public parks, forests, wildlife management areas and other open spaces to restore wildlife corridors and trails. Development of "connections" of protected lands, greenways, and trails is needed so that people and wildlife can continue to move across New York's landscapes.



Onondaga Escarpment Nature Corridor
Manilus Greenspace Coalition
www.manilusgreenspace.org

Creating a Greenway in Oneida County

www.ocgov.net/oneida/planning/greenwayproject

An example of a corridor plan that links many areas across the State and builds on existing plans,is the Oneida County Greenway helping to link the NYS Canal Recreationway, the Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor, the Mohawk valley Heritage Corridor and other initiatives.

ACTIONS

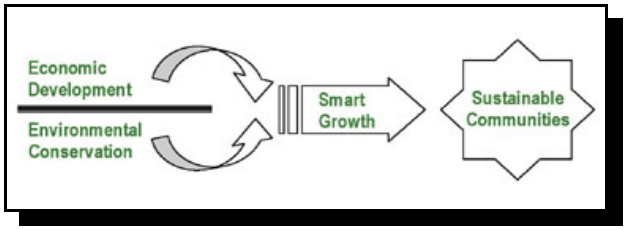
- ***Place priority on connecting open space corridors to improve habitat connectivity and recreational opportunities.***
  - *Identify and prioritize land parcels adjacent to State, municipal and conservation not-for-profit lands that are suitable for acquisition based on their potential to maintain connectivity between natural areas within the landscape and their potential to buffer these lands from adjacent land use impacts, in order to protect and enhance species of greatest conservation need threatened with habitat fragmentation.*
  - *Utilization of TNC's 2007 Protected Lands Dataset as the core foundation to identify critical open space corridors, expected to be updated annually.*
  - *Enhance habitat connectivity and conservation efficacy in the Forest Preserves through the purchase of available in-holdings and intervening properties.*
  - *Conduct a three year study within the Hudson Valley to determine current and potential future habitat connectivity of species in need of the greatest conservation under current and future climatic changes - PATHWAY (Planning Along the Hudson for Warming & Animal Connectivity) Project.*

Promoting Smart Growth & Improving Our Transportation Uses

Transit oriented development draws growth towards mass transit corridors

SMART GROWTH

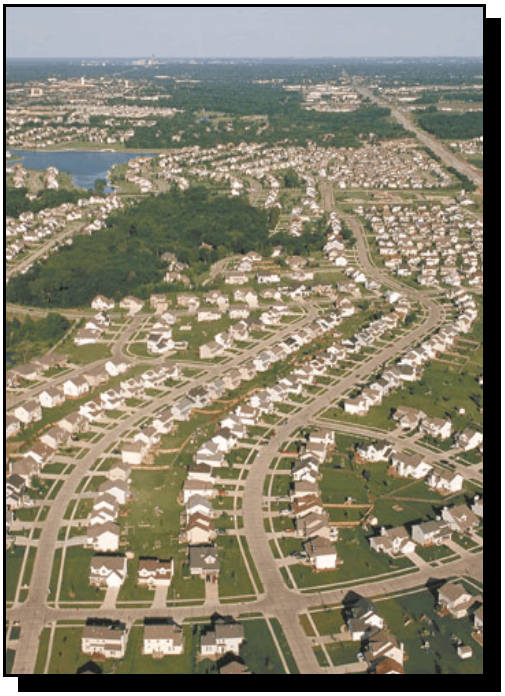
Smart Growth is planned growth that balances the need for economic development with the desire to enhance our natural and built environments. As an overriding principle, Smart Growth promotes, directs, and provides incentives for growth in populated, developed areas with infrastructure and amenities to sustain such growth. By focusing growth in appropriate areas we protect our forest, agricultural and habitat resources.



The Smart Growth Network was created in 1996 by the US Environmental Protection Agency along with several non-profit and government organizations. It was developed in response to the increasing community concerns about the need for new ways to grow that boost the economy, protect the environment, and enhance community vitality. The Network's partners include environmental groups, historic preservation organizations, professional organizations, developers, real estate interests, and local and state government entities. The following Smart Growth Principles were adapted from those developed by the Network:

- ***Mix land uses*** – A mix of land uses can convey substantial fiscal and economic benefits by placing commercial uses in close proximity to residential areas as a critical component of achieving viable places to live.
- ***Take advantage of green building design*** – Smart Growth involves energy conservation measures such as proper building placement for passive solar heating and the use of locally produced building materials.
- ***Create a range of housing opportunities and choices*** – Provide quality housing with efficient access to resources for people of all income levels.
- ***Create walkable neighborhoods*** – Walkable communities make pedestrian activity possible by mixing land uses and building compactly, thus expanding transportation options, and creating a streetscape that better serves a range of users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles.
- ***Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place*** – Smart Growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.
- ***Preserve open space, forests, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas*** – Open space preservation bolsters local economies, preserves critical environmental areas, improves communities' quality of life, and guides new growth into existing communities.
- ***Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities*** – Smart Growth directs development towards existing communities already served by public infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer and conserve open space and irreplaceable natural resources on the urban fringe.
- ***Provide a variety of transportation choices*** – Providing people with efficient and alternative transportation choices fosters greater community opportunities for housing, shopping, and jobs compliant with Smart Growth principles.

- ***Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective*** – It is important to create a fertile environment for innovative, pedestrian oriented, mixed-use projects, where government can provide leadership for Smart Growth.
- ***Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions*** – Collaborative efforts can lead to creative resolutions of development issues and greater community understanding of the importance of good planning and investment which results in great places to live, work, shop and play.
- ***Foster long-term comprehensive planning*** – Smart Growth involves reconciling local and regional plans to better protect natural and cultural resources and foster more efficient development and maintenance of infrastructure.
- ***Foster strong, sustainable businesses in community centers*** – Smart Growth involves fostering sustainable economic developments in urbanized areas as opposed to scattered economic development.



Sprawl development consumes more acreage per household

Sprawl Without Growth

A 2003 land use study of upstate New York showed a 30% increase in land development between 1982 and 1997, but only a 2.6 % growth in population during the same period. The study was appropriately titled "Sprawl Without Growth."

Brookings Institution, Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy, October 2003, Survey Series
www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/reports/2003/10demographics_pendall/200310_Pendall.pdf

TRANSPORTATION USES

Transportation and land use are inexorably connected. Every land use decision has transportation implications and in turn, every transportation action affects land use. The NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) is required by State and federal law (State Environmental Quality Review Act, Federal Clean Air Act & many others) to consider the impact of transportation decisions and improvements on the environment, quality of life and open space. DOT routinely includes specific environmental elements in its projects and activities, has developed programmatic approaches to ensure compliance and meet environmental objectives, partners and coordinates activities with localities and other governmental agencies, and has instituted a cultural change throughout DOT to adopt an environmental ethic.

Special considerations for underserved, minority and low-income populations include: access to open space within close proximity to their communities; availability of public transportation to existing open space; and elimination of obstructions that limit access to existing open space such as roadways, fences and environmental hazards.

ACTIONS

- ***Implement the State's Smart Growth policies to use State spending and infrastructure funding as an incentive to promote Smart Growth reform.***

- ***Expand enabling legislation and encourage communities to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to boost local planning***

and open space conservation. The CPA allow localities to designate up to 2% of the real estate transfer tax revenues to an open space acquisition account, approved by local residents.

- *Incorporate Smart Growth into the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund to avoid funding sprawl inducing projects.*
- *Promote park-wide planning and hamlet revitalization in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks.*
- *Implement the 2005-2030 Statewide Transportation Master Plan. The Master Plan discourages sprawl and encourages energy efficiency and emission friendly activities and mode choices such as bicycling and walking. The use of public transit is especially encouraged to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled and lessen delays due to traffic congestion.*
- *Work collaboratively with planning partners at the regional and local levels as a means of coordinating land use planning and transportation investment strategies.*
- *Encourage localities to adopt land use plans that adequately guide future growth and help conserve open spaces.*
- *Encourage transportation operators to support community planning efforts that promote higher population densities, transit friendly development and preservation of farmland. Transportation projects will only be carried out if they are compatible with the affected community's land use plans.*
- *Support local land use planning efforts to ensure that transportation implications of specific local plans are appropriately considered.*
- *Promote transportation connecting communities to open space, including low cost and easily accessible public transportation.*
- *Implement Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), a design approach wherein safe transportation solutions are designed in harmony with the community and the environment. CSS strives to balance environmental, scenic, aesthetic, cultural and natural resources, and community and transportation service needs. Context sensitive projects recognize community goals and are designed, built and maintained to be sustainable, minimizing disruption to the community and the environment (DOT).*
- *Support eco-tourism, which is a growing and sustainable part of our State's economy, by developing new or rehabilitated fishing access and trailhead parking areas, historic markers and other interpretive signing, improved bikeway and pedestrian facilities, and new scenic overlooks (DOT).*
- *Implement the policy recommendations contained in the State Energy Plan, including quantified greenhouse gas reductions and energy use goals by institutionalizing energy efficiency considerations, planning, construction & maintenance practices (DOT).*
- *Ensure that our State's Energy Plan goals and recommendations are adopted throughout the transportation sector (DOT & partners).*

STATE SMART GROWTH CABINET

http://smartgrowthny.org/index.asp

In December 2007, New York State established a Smart Growth Cabinet to determine how best to discourage sprawl and promote smart land-use practices. The Cabinet coordinates cross-agency activities and develops Smart Growth policies that cater to New York's unique regional needs. The Cabinet is comprised of policymakers from the Empire State Development Corporation, DEC, OPRHP, DOS, DOT, and the Department of Housing & Community Renewal, among others. Recognizing both the environmental and economic benefits of Smart Growth, the cabinet is co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary for the Environment and the Deputy Secretary for Economic Development and Infrastructure.

CONNECTING NEW YORKERS WITH NATURE & RECREATION

CONNECTING OUR CHILDREN WITH NATURE

COMMUNITY GREENING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

BUILDING URBAN FARMS & COMMUNITY GARDENS

ENSURING ACCESSIBLE RECREATION

CONNECTING NEW YORKERS WITH NATURE & RECREATION

Connecting our Children with Nature

The 19th Century conservationists recognized the importance of nature as a refuge from the noise and bustle of city life. Today, understanding the environment is critical to our future. But the sad irony is that as the natural environment becomes more important, fewer and fewer people, especially children, are in contact with it.

Earlier generations of New Yorkers played outdoors much of the time. Today, most children spend far less time outdoors than did their parents. Kids are learning about nature indirectly, from television and the internet, rather than directly from contact and observation. Their outdoors experience is often limited to the artificial environment of groomed lawns and playing fields.

We conserve our environment not just to protect our health and enforce the law, but to ensure that we, and future generations, can experience the joy of a hike or a hunt in the woods, the thrill of a swim at a clean beach, or the beauty of an unspoiled view.

Whether it is a stroll in an urban waterfront park or a paddling trip in the wilderness, these connections to nature can refresh, teach, and sustain us. While use and demand for our State's campgrounds, education centers, and youth camps remains high, participation in hunting, fishing and trapping has declined. Meanwhile, research has documented a shift away from outdoor activities in the general population. We can reverse this trend by helping more families rediscover the natural world.

Our efforts to connect New Yorkers to nature will be conducted with the goal of providing access, increasing environmental literacy, enhancing public health and quality of life, and building the interest and involvement of the next generation of New Yorkers to carry on the traditions of caring for the environment and protecting our State's open spaces.

Camp Colby

ACTIONS

- ***Continue to support partnerships that multiply the State's efforts to inform the public about natural resource and environmental quality topics, such as those with the Student Conservation Association AmeriCorps program and the Naturalist Intern programs at Five Rivers, Stony Kill Farm, Rogers and Reinstein Woods Environmental Education Centers.***
  - *Continue offering regularly scheduled public interpretation and outreach programs by DEC & OPRHP State Parks and environmental educators, including special events such as fall festivals and Earth Day celebrations.*
  - *Develop and implement an environmental interpretive and education to guide OPRHP State Parks.*
  - *Enhance existing aquatic and water-related programs such as Project WILD Aquatic and Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) by developing information specific to New York and by linking with the I FISH NY program.)*
- ***Design improvements to DEC's Environmental Education Centers and Camps, including constructing a new environmental education facility at Five Rivers and in the Catskills, making Rogers accessible to persons with disabilities, maximizing green features and their educational value, and making improvements at summer youth camps.***
- ***Continue to expand youth programs within DEC's education centers, such as offering weekly after-school outdoor discovery programs and family-friendly programs on weekends.***
  - *Expand the number of children able to attend DEC's summer residential environmental education summer camps.*
  - *Expand the number of educator workshops using standards-based, national environmental education programs such as Project WILD, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers), and Project Learning Tree.*
  - *Continue to offer Nature Recreation and Junior Naturalist Programs at campgrounds.*
  - *Expand DEC's After School Conservation Club by training urban area educators and youth service providers in this 10-week environmental education program that teaches elementary students about natural resources and environmental quality through fun, educational activities and stewardship projects.*
  - *Maintain partnership programs such as the After School Conservation Club (in New York City, Buffalo, and Beacon), Naturalist Intern Program with the four friends groups of DEC education centers, and the AmeriCorps program with the Student Conservation Association.*
  - *Enhance DEC's Campership Diversity program by partnering with local schools and after-school program providers. The Diversity Program connects urban youth, who would not have the opportunity to participate in outdoor educational or recreational experiences, to the natural environment through hands-on activities and stewardship projects. Participants then go to one of DEC's four summer camps for a free, one-week residential experience and post-camp activities offer career exploration in natural resources and environmental quality.*
  - *Expand environmental education facilities and programs to train young people in safe and ethical hunting practices; expand opportunities for hunting, fishing and trapping on appropriate public lands to encourage a new generation of outdoors men and women through junior mentoring programs.*

- *Continue DEC's Cooperative Forestry conservation education which focuses on providing rural, suburban and urban youth with activities such as county level Conservation field days, county fairs, and school Arbor Day and seedling programs.*

- *Work for the passage of the No Child Left Inside Act of 2008. This Act would provide grant funds for state educational agencies to develop a K-12 plan to ensure environmental literacy among elementary and secondary school students along with environmental education for professional teacher development and student programs.*

- ***Continue and enhance I Fish NY and other fishing programs.***
  - *Continue angler education programs at water-based DEC campgrounds and selected summer youth camps.*

  - *Provide in-school fishing/aquatic resource training, along with fishing clinics and other programs to teach fishing skills and increase knowledge of the State's aquatic resources.*

  - *Continue collaborative efforts with the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation on the angler recruitment program, Angler Legacy, in addition to encouraging these efforts among local governments to increase fishing participation in New York State.*

- ***Gather quantitative & qualitative information in partnership with SUNY/CESF about recreational use and impacts in the Forest Preserve to better inform our future planning.***

- ***Continue to improve public access to NYC Watershed lands in partnership with NYC Department of Environmental Protection.***

Community Greening for Environmental Justice

www.cenyc.org

Community greening efforts, such as tree planting and community gardens, are valuable to minority and low-income communities particularly in urban areas where green open space is scarce. Community greening offers a significant impact with smaller scale efforts. It can help to revitalize and beautify neighbor-hoods, and at the same time: serve as carbon sinks to reduce local carbon dioxide levels; help alleviate urban heat island problems associated with concrete and stone structures, and serve as a filtration system for storm water. In addition to being beneficial to the environment, such activities foster good stewardship and community commitment from which cultural and economic benefits can follow.

ACTIONS

- ***Develop new and enhance existing programs to provide equitable open space and recreational resources for underserved communities.***

  - *Continue to implement the Environmental Justice (EJ) Community Impact Grant Program to assist community organizations in addressing environmental and human health impacts in their neighborhoods.*

- *Continue to partner with government, non-government organizations and local community groups to develop and implement green infrastructure and green street initiatives.*

- *Support community centered environmental learning for urban youth in conjunction with colleges, trade schools and job training programs that provide training in green roof installation and maintenance, urban farming, and green collar jobs.*

- *Complete mapping to identify environmental justice issue areas to inform policy making and to prioritize open space conservation in EJ communities.*

- *Establish a set of criteria or benchmarks by which to measure progress achieved in the equitable distribution of open space in underserved communities. Prioritize and increase purchases of small parcels or open space in urban EJ communities.*

Building Community Gardens & Urban Farms

CONNECTING TO OUR FOOD & OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

State law defines community gardens as "public or private lands upon which citizens of the State have the opportunity to garden on lands on which they do not individually own." There are well over 1,000 registered or permitted community gardens in New York's cities and many more cases where residents have rescued derelict private or public lots in an effort to build more livable neighborhoods. In many of New York's cities, not-for-profit urban farms provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables, knowledge of agriculture and nutrition, economic opportunities and healthier environments to the communities they serve.

Buffalo, NY ***Massachusetts Avenue Project www.mass-ave.org***

FARMERS' MARKETS

Urban agriculture has benefitted from the rapid growth and popularity of our State's nearly 400 open-air farmers markets, many of which operate in low-income neighborhoods with support from the State's Farmers Market Nutrition Program. Farmers' markets are frequently located in public open spaces such as parks, school yards, and even at community gardens and urban farms, and are typically sponsored by municipalities and community-based organizations. They can provide: urban farms with marketing opportunities that encourage youth and adult entrepreneurship in agriculture; infrastructure programs that enable construction and improvement of permanent farmers' market facilities; and can create new semi-permanent open air market sites to ensure community access to fresh, nutritious locally-grown produce while supporting both rural farmland and community gardening, open space protection efforts.

Community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, urban farm stands, and mobile markets that bring local produce to underserved neighborhoods also have proven critical to preserving rural and urban farmland. The majority of New York's community gardens and urban farms are in low-income and minority communities. However, there is also increasing interest in food producing community gardens in rural areas where land is available, but access to retail outlets for fresh fruits and vegetables is limited.

Community gardens and urban farms provide precious green space in areas where public parks are scarce, provide urban families with a way to grow nutritious fresh foods, and can serve as emergency food sites, provide food for farmers' markets and local restaurants. Community supported agriculture programs help educate community members about the natural world, the value of local foods, good nutrition and that environmental stewardship is relevant to neighborhood urban areas not just far-off wilderness forests. These green spaces also provide safe spaces for exercise in communities with poor access to physical activity outlets. They deliver environmental benefits such as reduced city heat, decreased storm water run-off, safer soil, composting sites and natural habitats. And they bring community members together, filling an important social function in neighborhoods where gathering spaces are limited.

ACTIONS

- ***Continue to educate urban children about sources of food and demonstrate sound agricultural practices at Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center, which has a Community Supported Agriculture program, community garden plots and raised beds for persons with disabilities. As part of Operation Explore, upper elementary school students from New York City visit Stony Kill and learn about sustainable agriculture practices and how plants grow, and have an opportunity to see farm animals up close (pigs, cows, sheep and chickens) to learn where their milk, eggs, bacon and hamburgers come from.***

- ***Promote local food production and development of a conservation ethic by providing and maintaining opportunities and resources to facilitate the initiation and continuation of urban farming and community gardening.***

  - *Continue to fund grant programs that support community gardens and urban farms, especially focused on low income communities.*

  - *Encourage the dedication of vacant private and publicly owned land in low-income communities for community gardening and urban farming, including the use of "underutilized" park land for productive community gardening and educational farming purposes.*

  - *Promote brownfield remediation in low income communities with dedicated reuse for open space with raised-bed planters for community gardens and urban farming opportunities.*

  - *Collaborate with State and municipal agencies to provide adequate technical assistance to assess the toxicity of potential community garden and farm sites.*

  - *Assist in extending land trust opportunities (e.g. Trust for Public Land's New York City land trust gardens) to community gardens with limited or no municipal protections and at risk of losing sites to development or sale of public or private land.*

  - *Extend the State's matching Community Parks Grants and Acquisition Program, administered through OPRHP, to better assist community-based gardening organizations in the acquisition of private or public land. (This is especially important in cases where municipal park agencies have limited resources and community-based not-for-profits lack the funding match requirement yet have the labor resources to maintain successful permanent community garden sites.)*

  - *Encourage the inclusion of community gardeners in municipal open space planning, as gardeners are natural partners for "greening the cityscape."*

  - *Allocate resources to existing urban farm sites and community gardens to expand environmental stewardship efforts. As small, nimble organizations, community gardeners are often able to take the lead on best practices such as rainwater harvesting & decentralized city composting programs.*

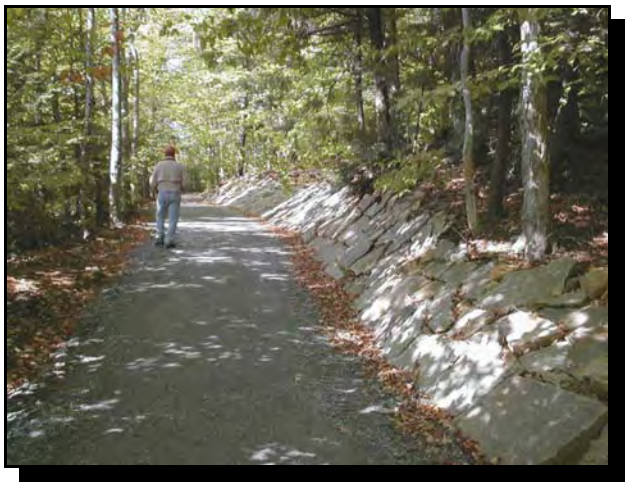
Ensuring Accessible Recreation

Indian Carry, Saranac Lakes Wild Forest

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Approximately one in five Americans has a disability and much needs to be done to enable people with disabilities to fully participate in our communities and in New York's outdoor environments. Many people with disabilities have not traditionally sought the benefits of outdoor recreation because they have been deterred by its challenges. Many have yet to discover for themselves the enjoyment and ease of access that Universal Design provides.

Over the last several years, there has been an increased focus on providing universally accessible outdoor amenities on DEC public lands and at OPRHP facilities. The result has been the creation of wheelchair accessible trails, designated parking, restrooms, picnic areas, campsites, fishing piers, equestrian mounting platforms, and waterway access sites as well as increased efforts to make all programs and services inclusive. Many of the modified outdoor facilities keep in mind the beauty of the surrounding environment that is sought and display innovative examples of natural and site-sensitive design solutions. This invites and welcomes people of varying abilities to become active in outdoor recreation and find serenity in nature – in turn supporting a healthy quality of life for all of our State's citizens.



Salmon River Falls

We all chase the same dreams, but we have different ways to get there. By creating a universal environment and inviting people to recreate together, we are taking steps toward a more inclusive society that will diminish perceptions of differences.

Northampton Beach Campground

ACTIONS

- ❑ ***Formally assess trails at DEC Education Centers for appropriate designations related to accessibility standards; make improvements where possible.***

- ***Ensure the availability of accessible recreation opportunities throughout the State.***
  - *Complete planned projects and develop new projects to increase access for people with disabilities to State lands and recreational facilities.*
  - *Utilize appropriate DEC administered lands to provide hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities for people with disabilities.*
  - *Initiate training and education for anglers and hunters with disabilities.*

Accessible Hunting Blind

SAFEGUARDING OUR STATE'S NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE

SUPPORTING OUR WORKING FARMS & FORESTS

STEWARDING OUR UNIQUE, NATURAL & WILDLIFE HABITATS

PRESERVING OUR SCENIC, HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE

SAFEGUARDING OUR STATE'S NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE

New York's exceptional natural resources include the coasts of Long Island, the Hudson River, the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve, the Finger Lakes and Great Lakes, the Tug Hill Plateau, the Allegheny River Basin, and the Niagara River Escarpment. Our natural assets encompass the watersheds that provide abundant and clean water supplies, the wetlands that support a rich biodiversity of terrestrial and aquatic species, provide habitat and limit flooding, and the natural heritage and beauty that brings tourism and enhances our quality of life. Our State has a long history of protecting these valuable natural asset, while at the same time utilizing them for the benefit of New Yorkers. Our quality of life stems in part from the quality of our water, which is maintained by healthy coasts, watersheds, wetlands, marine ecosystems and infrastructure, including flood control and wastewater treatment infrastructure.

Supporting Our Working Farms & Forests

WORKING LANDSCAPES

New York's Working Landscapes are important cultural resources. Their preservation is not only economically beneficial, it is also culturally important since it preserves a certain atmosphere that has largely disappeared as a result of the urbanization of our society.

People who use farmlands, forests and shorelines for commercial purposes are not only stewards of the land but also business people who must support families, employees and stockholders. As farmlands and forestlands have always provided multiple resource values to their owners and to all State citizens, productive forest land and prime agricultural soils are valuable and vulnerable resources for all of us.

Our Working Farms

Article XIV, Section 4 of the N.Y.S. Constitution provides in part that "[t]he policy of the State shall be to:

> "...conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural land for production of food and other agricultural products. It is also the declared policy of the State to conserve and protect agricultural lands as valued natural and ecological resources which provide needed open spaces for clean air, watersheds, as well as for aesthetic purposes."

The cornerstone of the Agriculture Districts Law is the provision to create the creation of “agriculture districts,” our State’s “locally initiated mechanism” for protecting and enhancing agricultural lands.

Our Working Forests

Former Champion Paper Company Timberlands
The Conservation Fund
www.conservationfund.org/new_york/adirondack

Supporting New York's forest-based economic development activities offers additional opportunities for promoting sustainable forest management and long-term retention of forested open space, particularly in large tracts that have significant ecological benefits. Additionally, working forests have long been used for hunting, trapping, fishing and other forms of recreation while protecting water and air quality. Markets for wood products provide direct economic returns and incentives to landowners and encourage the practice of sustainable forestry. Viable and diverse markets for a broad range of forest products allows managers and landowners to do a better job of silviculture - managing the establishment, composition, growth and regeneration of forest stands - by providing returns from a variety of timber products, not just the biggest and best trees of a few species.

Supporting and building our local industrial capacity adds value to our forests and management by bringing diverse markets closer to the raw material producers. A "critical mass" of sustainably managed forest land, available for wood products harvesting, is vital to supporting a diverse forest-based industry. Conversely, a viable, diverse forest-based economy is essential to the retention and sustainable management of private forested open space.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Private forestry is essential to the future of our State. It is a practice that remains one of our State's long running, traditional, natural resource based industries, and is now beginning to play an increasingly important ecosystem role in the face of global climate change. In the past few years, our State has acquired more than 600,000 acres of new working forest easements mostly located in the Adirondack Park. With the trend in the last 20 years of major forest product industries selling off large tracts of their land-holdings to private timber investment companies, sustaining this industry and the substantial values provided by our State's forests have become a primary focus of our State's open space conservation efforts at this critical juncture in New York's history. Three elements that have become important to every working forest easement are:

- Sustainable forestry, which can be achieved through a requirement for forest certification through one of several approved certification programs;
- Public recreation rights including hiking, camping, hunting, canoeing and snowmobiling, in balance with private recreation activities where they exist prior to the easement; and
- Extinguishment of residential or *non-forestry* commercial development rights to ensure the lands will be protected in perpetuity from residential and commercial development.

The objective of the working conservation easement program is to allow the purchase of easements over productive forest land so that landowners are paid to limit their right to develop their land, while retaining it as private property dedicated to resource use. To be most effective, expenditures for protection of these landscapes should take place on blocks of land so that the resource uses, such as forestry and recreation can continue over the long run without interference from other land uses.

Protecting working forests and other important habitats through conservation easements can also be a viable solution to the problems of rising property taxes, suburban and recreational development, high inheritance taxes, short-sighted forest management and a lack of management information. In addition to

providing an immediate cash flow to the landowner, easements can also relieve some of the property tax burden if subsequent assessments reflect a reduced property value.

Easements are not, however, a "free-ticket" to open space conservation. Using conservation easements to protect working forests requires the administrative oversight to enforce and manage these often-complex agreements. Recent DEC experiences in the Adirondacks with large scale working forest easements have shown that major time and staff investment is necessary to verify that the easement agreements are being followed by the parties and that unauthorized public use or private actions are not taking place. Publicly-held conservation easements require a corresponding investment of resources for staffing and non-personal resources for administration and management to protect all parties' rights and interests.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

The demand for goods and services from private land requires long-term appropriate use and scientific, sustainable management. Resource professionals have a key role in providing technical advice and assistance to landowners in the stewardship of their lands. Landowners and managers must be informed decision makers to be able to meet their objectives and insure the sustainability and quality of their valuable lands.

When open space retention and sustainable resource management can be a profitable proposition, then landowners will more readily support this land use, and resist invitations to convert their open space to other uses. Private landowners who are motivated, assisted and supported to actively manage their lands can significantly improve or enhance the personal and public benefits those lands provide. Financial incentives have proven to be an effective means of encouraging and supporting sustainable land management practices and retention of forested open space.

ACTIONS

- ***Provide support for programs that protect farmland from conversion and support a robust agricultural economy.***
  - *Continue to streamline administration of the farmland protection program to reduce turnaround time and complete projects sooner.*
  - *Continue to provide technical assistance to Farmland Protection program participants and help build capacity of its municipal and nonprofit partners.*
  - *Support the work of municipalities to develop or update local Agricultural and Farmland Protections Plans through the County Farmland Protection Planning Grants.*
  - *Support farmland preservation programs in your county by attending county and town planning meetings.*
- ***Working Forests***
  - *Support tax incentives and regulatory relief for forest-based industries.*
  - *Support technology transfer, technical assistance and financial support for new forest product development, industry modernization and the adoption of new higher-yield, environmentally-friendly manufacturing technologies.*
  - *Improve skill-building initiatives within forest-based industries to improve competitiveness, safety and economic viability .*
  - *Continue to support state, local government and non-profit acquisition of or easements on priority forest lands (listed in Chapter V) identified by the Regional Open Space Advisory Committees.*
  - *Develop an income tax credit program that incorporates broader ecosystem goals and more landowners, encouraging sustainable*

management of private forest lands and related resources that provide environmental benefits to the public.

Stewarding Our Unique, Natural & Wildlife Habitats

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

Protection of our State's open space is essential for the perpetuation of our State's varied ecosystems. New York is unique and remarkable in the diversity of its habitats and the diversity of living things which depend upon those habitats. Fish, wildlife, marine resources, and plants are important parts of the web of living things on the planet. Undeveloped open spaces deliver ecosystem services that our society depends on by protecting forests, soils and wetlands, which in return provides the benefits of clean air, clean water, flood control, erosion control, carbon sequestration, natural cooling, drought mitigation, aquifer recharge and a steady source of fresh oxygen from plant photosynthesis. Providing stewardship and "ecosystem services," which help to sustain our State's natural resources and their many contributions to our well-being, is an important, if often overlooked, function of open space, whether in public or private ownership.

SPECIES & HABITATS OF GREATEST CONSERVATION NEED

In New York, our varied geology creates habitats which support a rich species diversity that is part of our natural heritage. Unfortunately, in many parts of the State, the loss and fragmentation of habitat has been a cause of decline of many native plants and animals, and protection of habitat through open space planning is a key strategy in securing the future of this biological diversity. For the first time, the 2009 Open Space Plan's regional project listing identifies projects that will help sustain species of greatest conservation need (SGCN), identified through state conservation planning processes.

The importance of habitat connectivity is critical and needs the cooperation of state agencies, conservation groups, biologists, and local experts to identify and protect lands critical to habitat connections, providing corridors through valleys between key areas, such as the Adirondacks, Vermont's Green Mountains, the Tug Hill Plateau, Ontario to the Catskills, and lands along water courses. Such areas of continuous protected forest will be critical as global warming forces some species to move northward or upward to adapt, especially the vulnerable boreal and cold-water species.

Wild Pink

New York Natural Heritage Program

New York Rare Plant Status Lists
www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/nynhprpsl.pdf

New York Rare Animal Status List
www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/2007_animal_list.pdf

TOP THREAT TO BIODIVERSITY: INVASIVE SPECIES

Early in the 20th Century, chestnut blight arrived in North America and has since wiped out the American chestnut, one of the most valuable trees in our forest. Zebra mussels arrived here from their native Caspian Sea in the late 20th Century and have altered ecosystems, clogged pipes, and ruined bathing beaches in some of our largest waters. Near the start of the present century, West Nile Virus came here from Africa and has harmed both birds and humans. Asian Longhorn Beetle arrived within the lumber used for packing crates and has forced us to cut down thousands of prized shade trees in our cities and suburbs with the hope that it can be stopped from spreading into our forests.

Invasive species are primarily non-native species that can cause harm to the environment or to human health. Only habitat loss is a greater threat than invasive species to biodiversity. Invasive species come from all around the world and the rate of invasion is increasing along with increasing international trade that has accompanied globalization.

Invasive species have caused many problems in the past, are causing problems now, and pose threats to our future. A wide variety of species are problems for many sectors of our world. Our ecosystems, including both all natural systems and managed forests, are becoming increasingly damaged. Our food supply, including not only agriculture but also harvested wildlife, fish and shellfish is in serious danger. Our built and cultural environments, including landscaping, infrastructure, industry, gardens, and pets are also becoming affected. Invasive species also have implications for recreation and for human health, as seen with the recent spread of Lyme disease-carrying ticks.

MARCELLUS SHALE

The Marcellus Shale is a black shale formation extending from Ohio and West Virginia from Pennsylvania and into southern New York. Geologists have long known about the natural gas resources of this formation. With new developments in horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, interest in gas exploration of Marcellus Shale has increased significantly.

In 1992, DEC released a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), applicable to oil and gas drilling operations which specifically addressed the impacts from hydraulic fracturing. However, at that time, a typical hydraulic fracturing job used less than 100,000 gallons of water per well. Now, exploration of Marcellus' long lengths of horizontal wells, hydraulic fracturing may use up to five million gallons per well. DEC has thus initiated a formal public review process to supplement the 1992 GEIS, in order to ensure that any issues unique to Marcellus and other horizontal shale formation drilling are adequately addressed.

As our State is rich in mineral and natural gas resources, it is critical that local municipalities take into account existing and potential areas identified when planning for both open space and development. With proper planning, natural resource exploration and mining activity impacts can be mitigated. A comprehensive local open space plan should consider potential sources of economic industry, and examine surrounding land use conditions, as local governments have the authority to determine where certain industrial activity is allowed within the municipality. Proper long-range planning and zoning techniques can help ensure that adequate economic development will be reserved and that the public will be protected from the undesirable impacts of such development.

ACTIONS

- ***Support implementation of the recommendations of the April 2009 EBM report, "Our Waters, Our Communities, Our Future: Taking Bold Action Now to Achieve Long-term Sustainability of New York's Ocean and Great Lakes."***
  - *Design & promote training workshops for state and local government officials and employees, nonprofit staff and the general public on ecoystem-based management (EBM), as well as, provide specific information on the benefits of EBM including economic, environmental, cultural and societal benefits.*

- *Continue and expand regional EBM programs such as the Hudson River Estuary, Long Island Sound and Lake Champlain programs; using the Hudson River Estuary Program as a model to develop similar programs in other regions of the State, especially the Great Lakes basins, Long Island South Shore, Mohawk Valley and Upper Hudson Valley.*

- ***Support achievement of the goals of the Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda 2005-2009 and its update to be released in 2010.***

- ***Provide Connectivity***
  - *Work to identify and protect lands critical to wildlife habitat connections throughout the state including the Southern Lake Champlain Valley, the Black River Valley, northwest from Adirondack Park to Ontario's Algonquin Park, Mohawk Valley and along water courses. Areas of continuous protected forest will be especially critical as climate change forces some species to move northward or upward to follow their climate "envelopes" and puts boreal and cold-water species at risk.*

- ***Fight Invasive Species***
  - *Develop invasive species emergency response plans and regulations.*

- ***Steward New York's Natural Resources***
  - *Maintain certification of State forests through the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative.*
  - *Redesign the State Forest Unit Management Planning process to streamline the process and incorporate landscape ecology and ecosystem management strategies.*
  - *Continue the preparation of master plans to guide the management and development of State Parks and incorporate ecosystem-based management.*
  - *Improve Land Management Capability to provide sufficient dedicated positions in State and local government agencies for the management of their public open spaces; and to provide initial EPF stewardship funding at the time of acquisition for immediate parcel needs such as boundary marking, debris removal, and proper public access.*
  - *Educate landowners on the benefits of green infrastructure and low-impact development and encourage implementation of these technologies.*
  - *Promote private forest owner participation in New York's Forest Stewardship Program.*
  - *Continue to support state, local and non-profit acquisition or easements on priority habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need; and sites that contain Significant Natural Communities identified by the NY Natural Heritage Program; and Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats identified by the NYS Department of State's coastal program.*

- ***Integrate aquatic conservation objectives into NYS road planning & maintenance work within the Adirondack Park.***
  - *Work in partnership with the Adirondack Nature Conservancy & NYS DOT to develop GIS tools that delineate the most important aquatic and adjacent upland habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need as well as the most critical barriers for restoration.*

- ***Continue to assess forest stewardship outcomes on private lands by maintaining the Stewardship Analysis Project and its attendant geo-database in order to focus limited program resources on those lands exhibiting the highest potential for stewardship outcomes.***

- ***Habitat Protection***
  - *Advocate for a plan that restores natural conditions and habitats to Lake Ontario, while attenuating possible flood impacts.*
  - *Prepare recovery plans for endangered species; evaluate feasibility of restoring extirpated species.*

- *Prioritize inventory on our State's rare plants, animals, and significant natural communities identified as species of greatest conservation need. Maintain and update a comprehensive database on the locations and status of our State's most imperiled animals and plants, and significant natural communities.*

- *Produce on-line Conservation Guides (www.guides.nynhp.org) that provide biological and conservation information on NY's rare species and communities.*

- *Gather existing data on baseline condition of habitats and species, population trends, and projections of impacts from climate change in order to draft adaptation strategies, monitor impacts, and mitigate expected impacts.*

❑ ***Local Government***

- *Support local governments to enact laws or ordinances that directs where mining occurs or prohibits mining through zoning by enacting zoning ordinances or laws which determine permissible uses in zoning districts, under the Mined Land Reclamation Act.*

Preserving Our Scenic, Historic & Cultural Heritage

Hudson River

The archaeological, historic and cultural resources of our State provide our State citizens, and our country, with tangible reminders of the importance of our region's rich and varied heritage. Whether they are rural communities, urban streetscapes, historic working landscapes, or archaeological sites, the presence and knowledge of such resources provide a community and its citizens with continuity and context for their daily lives, and contribute to the overall quality and enjoyment of life. They also can give our communities unique characteristics and a special sense of place, fostering our pride in the places where we live.

Palace Theater, Albany

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The preservation of New York's historic places contributes to the cultural values of New York and its citizens. The ability to understand our past, through experiencing it at a historic site, provides all New Yorkers with an appreciation of their diverse cultural heritage, and an ability to deal with the present day and the future. Ever since the Legislature designated Washington's Headquarters at Newburgh as an historic site in 1850, the State has recognized the importance of preserving historic resources. Thirty-five historic places are operated as State Historic Sites by OPRHP.

Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, NY

PRESERVING OUR STATE'S INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONT HISTORY

Oyster Bay ***www.nylcvef.org***

The re-zoning of industrial sites along waterfronts gives us an opportunity to memorialize the industrial age in many of New York's cities. A model for this is the implementation and development of the High Line Park, which makes use of elevated and abandoned rail lines to create a striking public amenity on Manhattan's West Side. By marrying existing historic buildings and structures with open space and recreational uses, our waterfront and maritime history could be approached in the same creative manner.

For example, the former Brooklyn Navy Yard, located in Kings County, was once known as America's premier shipbuilding facility. It was purchased by the City of New York in 1967. Today, the Navy Yard operates as a thriving industrial park with over 40 buildings, 230 tenants and 5,000 employees. As it undertakes the Yard's greatest expansion since WWII, the Brooklyn New York Development Corporation (BNYDC) is pursuing its mission to create and retain industrial jobs in New York City with a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and the celebration of the Navy Yard's rich history – *www.brooklynnavyyard.org*.

PRESERVING OUR STATE'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

As our archaeological data base is finite in nature, many areas of our State contain no prehistoric sites remaining to tell future generations the story of important segments of our State's past. Listing in either the National or State Register provides only limited protection. Additional protection is needed through management agreements, conservation easements, deed covenants, permit conditions or acquisition to assure long-term protection. In addition, looting of important or artifact rich sites, particularly human burials, in public and private ownership has become a serious problem. Existing legislation protecting such resources is outdated and weak compared to federal law and the laws of neighboring states.

Archaeologic sites require protection because of their religious, cultural, educational or historic values. They must be protected from disturbance when changes are made in the use of the land, and guarded against pilferage and unauthorized collecting. Information on these sites is in the care of the State Museum, DEC and OPRHP. OPRHP coordinates statewide historic preservation efforts, administers State owned historic sites and facilities. The New York State Museum maintains an inventory of archaeological sites.

The protection, preservation, appropriate use and management of the rich archaeological, historic and cultural resources on the land and under the waters of New York State are integral parts of our responsibility to safeguard our State's unique historic and cultural heritage.

ACTIONS

- ***Preserve our Historic, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage***
  - *Encourage the training of park, historic site and land managers in best management practices for protection of natural and cultural resources as well as for operation and maintenance of facilities to ensure public health and safety.*
  - *Engage park managers in developing a sustainability plan identifying long-range goals and best management practices for park and historic site operation, maintenance and management, and provide benchmarks for measuring success.*
  - *Support the Natural Heritage Trust and Legislative Assistance Programs that seek to expand the provisions of recreation services and resource protection.*
  - *Encourage the listing of buildings sites and districts both urban and rural on the State and National Register of Historic Places.*
  - *Encourage the establishment and effective operation of municipal landmark and architectural review commissions.*

CONCLUSION

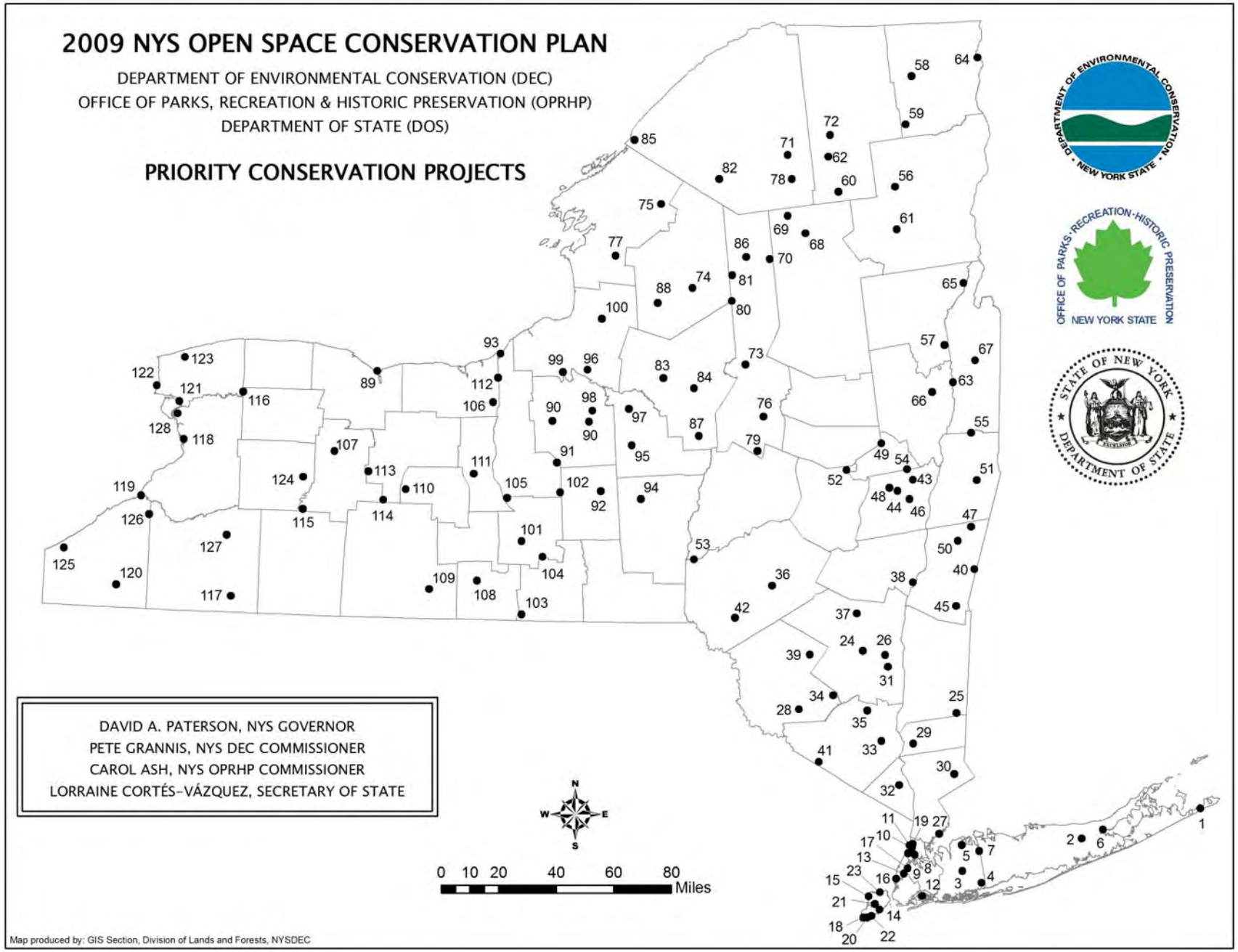
On both the state and national level we are facing historically difficult financial times, which result in budget constraints. Accordingly, full funding for the many programs discussed in this Plan may not presently be available. Yet the benefits of open space conservation are so important to our quality of life, and to preserving irreplaceable ecological systems, that to the full extent possible funding should be continued, and as circumstances change funding should be restored and expanded.

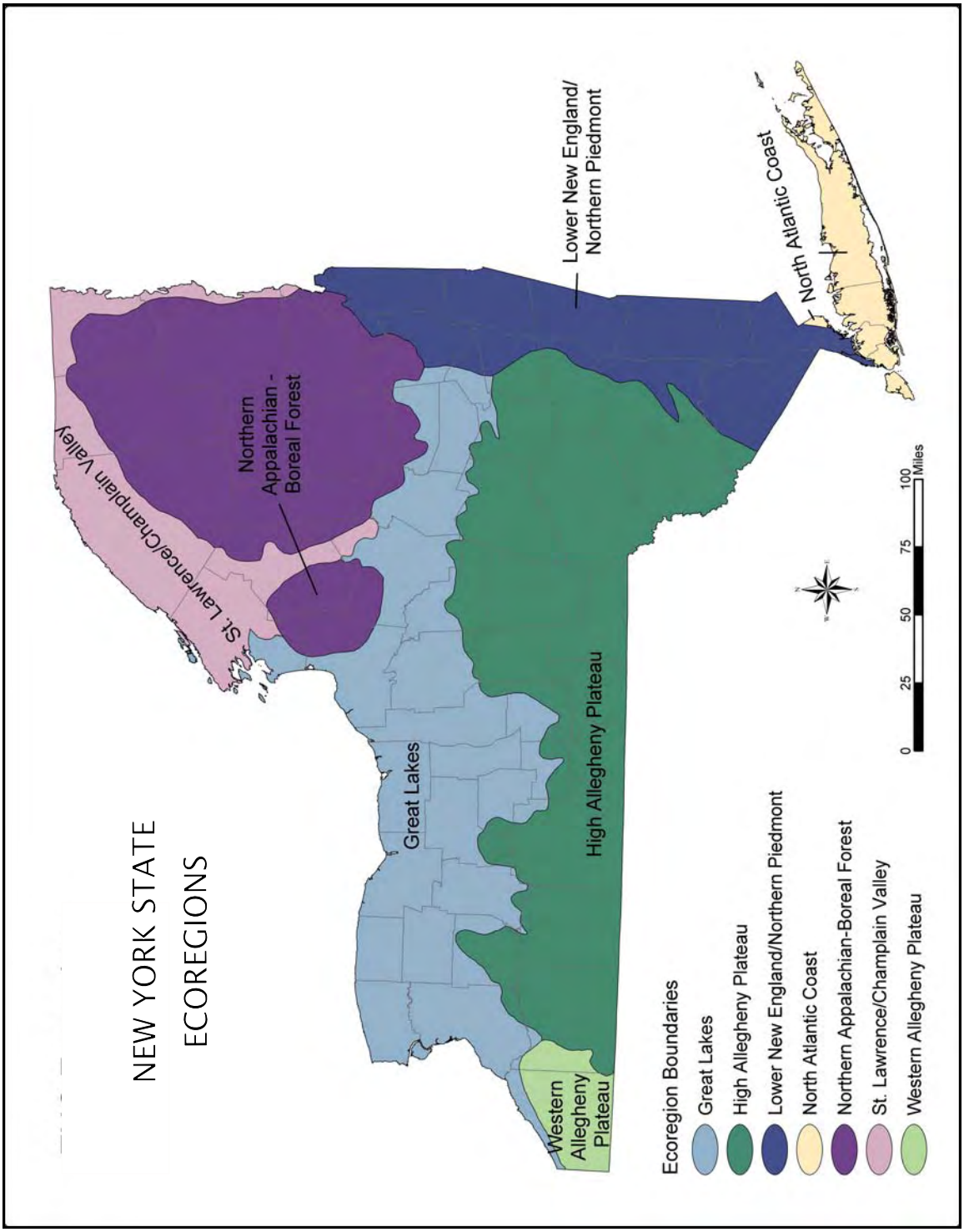
While State land acquisition is the statutory foundation of this Plan (see e-Appendix B – Legislative Mandates) – and remains a major demand on funding needs for open space conservation – other conservation tools must be equally considered and utilized in order for us to be successful in protecting New York's magnificent open spaces.

> *"The conservation of lands and waters that make our State and our nation great should always be recognized as a societal priority, even during economically difficult times. Protecting our natural heritage is not a luxury but a vital necessity." ~*
>
> *Adirondack Council*

2008 NEW YORK STATE GOVERNMENT MANAGED LANDHOLDINGS

Managing Government Agency	ACRES (Rounded to Nearest Thousand)		Additional Information
DEC	Adir & Catskill Forest Preserve State Forest, Reforestation, Multiple Use Areas & Wildlife Management Areas Conservation Easements	3,000,000 776,000 179,000 600,000	DEC Regional and Central Offices *www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45478.html*
OPRHP	State Parks (178) Historic Sites (35)	324,000 7,000	OPRHP Regional and Central Offices *http://nysparks.state.ny.us/*
Thruway Authority	Barge Canal Lands Reservoirs Underwater Lands	19,000 4,000 13,000	NYS Thruway Authority Office of Canals 200 Southern Blvd Albany, NY 12201 *www.nyscanals.gov/index.html*
Federal	Wildlife Refuges Historic Sites Recreational Facilities National Forest	140,000 16,000	US Fish & Wildlife Service 300 Westgate Center Drive Hadley, MA 01035 *http://fws.gov/northeast* Finger Lakes National Forest 5218 State Route 414 Hector, NY 14841 *www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/greenmountain/htm/fingerlakes/f_home.htm*
Local	County City/Village Town	100,000 51,000 45,500	Appropriate County Clerk
NYC Watershed	Fee Conservation Easement	59,000 32,000	NYC Department of Environmental Protection *www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/watershed_protection/home.html*
Agriculture and Markets	Farmland Protection (e.g. Purchase of Development Rights)	29,000	NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets *www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/farmprotect.html*
Total NYS Land Acreage	**31,106,541**	**5,804,000**	**Total Gov't Managed Landholdings**


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
PETE GRANNIS, NYS DEC COMMISSIONER
CAROL ASH, NYS OPRHP COMMISSIONER
LORRAINE CORTÉS-VÁZQUEZ, SECRETARY OF STATE
N
W
E
S
0 10 20 40 60 80
Miles
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

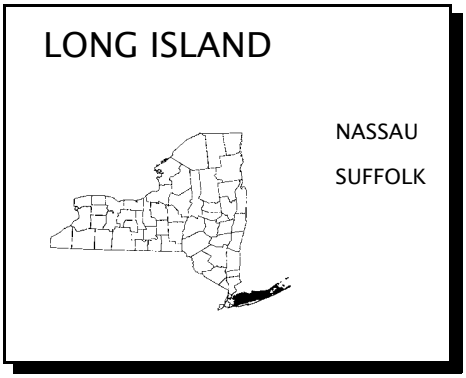
through the State's conservation planning process.

{#} 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 Wildife Conservation Strategy Plan*.

Λ 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** Λ –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 Lepidotera, 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 Lattingtown 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 Addition**s – 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:

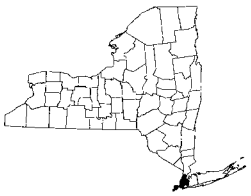
- **Whitney Estate** – Located in Manhasset, one 325-acre parcel and several surrounding parcels are the last large tracts of undeveloped land in the entire Town of North Hempstead and the North Hills SGPA. The area consists of rolling hills, meadows, woods, marshes, open water and the largest glacial 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 BOROUGHS

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.

NEW YORK CITY



BRONX
KINGS
BROOKLYN
NEW YORK
MANHATTAN
QUEENS
RICHMOND
STATEN ISLAND

** 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 88 th 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.

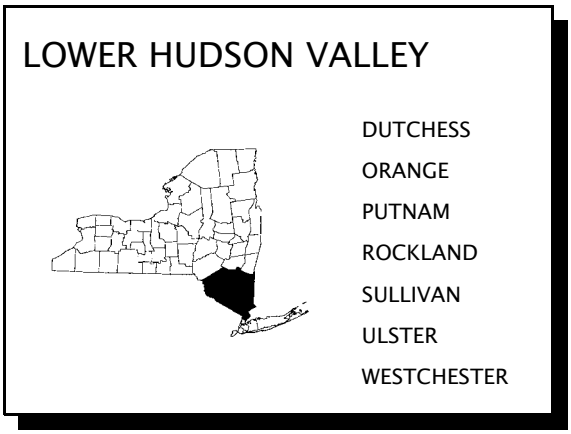
QUEENS COUNTY

- 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
- Willowbrook Parkway Right of Way
- Northern Sea View

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 120acre 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 in-holdings 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 Butterville 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./Kenozia 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, Idlelwild 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, Coxsackie 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, Papscanee 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

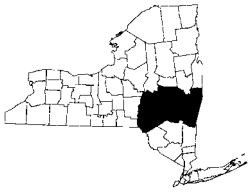
density greater than 1 person per square kilometer, within 15 km of a road or major river, occupied by urban or agricultural land uses, within 2 km of a settlement or a railway, and/or producing enough light to be visible regularly to a satellite at night. Additionally, 98% of the areas where it is possible 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 Uppper Delaware Highlands Region, remaining equal to recreational tourism. Including poulty, 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 ❖). *

CAPITAL REGION



ALBANY
COLUMBIA
DELAWARE
GREENE
MONTGOMERY
OTSEGO
RENSSELAER
SCHENECTADY
SCHOHAIRE

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.

RENSSELAER 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.

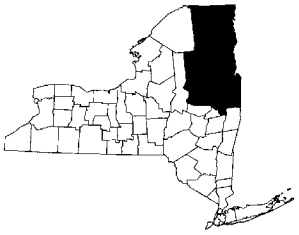
REGIONS 4 & 5

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 ADIRONDACKS / 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.

EASTERN ADIRONDACKS – LAKE CHAMPLAIN



CLINTON
ESSEX
FRANKLIN
FULTON
HAMILTON
SARATOGA
WARREN
WASHINGTON

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 theThree 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 Quadricentennial 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 undertake 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** ❖ ⅄ – 4,000 acres of the 13,000 acre Washington County Important Bird Area (IBA) located in the Towns of Fort Edward, Argyle and Kinsgbury 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.

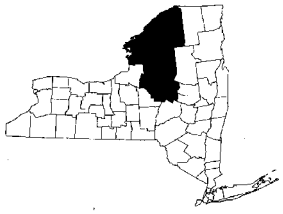
RECREATIONAL TRAIL LINKAGES & NETWORKS {72} – Long distance trail linkages, greenways, scenic byways and networks, (including water routes) for a variety of motorized and non-motorized

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.

WESTERN ADIRONDACKS – EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO



HERKIMER
JEFFERSON
LEWIS
ONEIDA
ST. LAWRENCE

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 build 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 o 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.

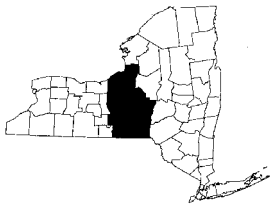
REGIONS 6, 7, 8 & 9

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.

CENTRAL NEW YORK



BROOME
CAYUGA
CHENANGO
CORTLAND
MADISON
OSWEGO
ONONDAGA
TIOGA
TOMPKINS

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.

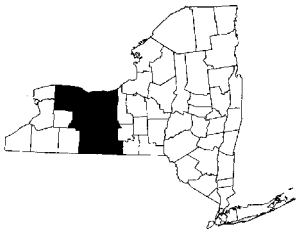
- **Owasco Flats** – a 2,000 acre project area along Owasco Inlet at the south end of Owasco Lake has several opportunities for acquisitions or cooperative management agreements.
- **Camp Barton** – a Boy Scout camp with extensive frontage on Cayuga Lake (Region 7). NYS Parks is interested in acquiring 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.

WESTERN FINGER LAKES



CHEMUNG	SCHUYLER
GENESEE	SENECA
LIVINGSTON	STEUBEN
MONROE	WAYNE
ONTARIO	YATES
ORLEANS	

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 biodiverisity 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.

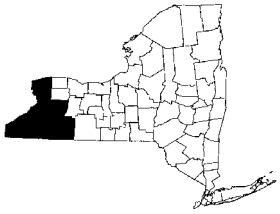
TONAWANDA CREEK WATERSHED {116} ❖ – This project would serve to protect one of the major tributaries of the Niagara River in Genesee, Erie and Niagara Counties. The Tonawanda Creek and its four major tributaries – Ellicott Creek, Mud Creek, Murder Creek and Ransom Creek, plus a number of minor tributaries 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.

WESTERN NEW YORK



ALLEGANY
CATTARAUGUS
CHAUTAUQUA
ERIE
NIAGARA
WYOMING

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 Tifft 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 it's 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.

RESOURCE INVENTORIES

PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

RESOURCE INVENTORIES

Our State, along with various federal agencies, develops and maintains resource inventories that can be used by local governments, interest groups and others to assist in conserving open space. Decisions about open space conservation must be based both on analysis of resource data and on citizen opinion. The inventories below identify the natural, cultural and recreational resources and protected lands maintained by federal and state agencies, which aid in decisions about what lands and resources may need further protection. This data has been available to, and used by, the staffs of DEC, OPRHP, DOS and the Regional Advisory Committees throughout the development of this Plan.

NYS GIS CLEARINGHOUSE

www.nysgis.state.ny.us

The clearinghouse contains extensive information about New York's Geographic Information System (GIS) coordinating body, the Data Sharing Cooperative, applications to view and download digital orthographic photographs, information on, and links to, GIS education and training opportunities, other state and federal GIS resources, GIS user groups throughout New York, and GIS-related list servers. Organizations and individuals interested in open space planning and conservation are encouraged to visit the web site and to join the Data Sharing Cooperative.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MAPPER

www.dec.ny.gov/imsmaps/ERM/viewer.htm

DIGITAL GIS DATA

Cornell University Geospatial Information Repository

http://cugir.mannlib.cornell.edu

LAND RESOURCES

LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

www.landtrustalliance.org

The Land Trust Alliance (Alliance) of the Northeast serves as a resource center for many of the more than 80 land trusts that operate in New York State. Since 2002, the Alliance has invested $3 million to build strong land trusts across New York State. Combined, land trusts in New York hold about 185,000 acres of land through fee and easement acquisitions. To learn more about the Alliance's work in New York State, see the New York State Conservation Partnership Program under *Programs & Partnerships* within this Plan's chapter.

CONTACT:

Land Trust Alliance - Northeast
112 Spring Street, Suite 205
Saratoga, NY 12866
Ph: (518) 587-0774
northeast@lta.org

SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL & WILDLIFE RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MAPPER

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html
www.dec.ny.gov/imsmaps/ERM/viewer.htm

The Environmental Resource Mapper is an interactive mapping application that can be used to identify some of New York State's natural resources and environmental features that are state protected, or of conservation concern.

NY NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM DATA

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/29338.html
www.guides.nynhp.org
http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/newyork

NY Natural Heritage provides detailed information on the location, conservation, and management of rare species and significant natural communities to a broad audience of natural resource decision-makers, including land managers, local governments, and landowners. Since information on the locations of rare species is considered sensitive, data release guidelines guide the level and type of data made available in different circumstances. Subject to the provisions of these data release guidelines, NY Natural Heritage data can be obtained from NYS DEC Regional Offices as well as from the Information Services section of the NY Natural Heritage Program.

CONTACT:
Information Services
NY Natural Heritage Program
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4757
Ph: (518) 402-8935
or
NYSDEC Regional Offices
www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html

COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30483.html

New York State's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy addresses species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) not traditionally funded for management purposes. Critical habitats, stressors/impacts to natural resources, research, survey, and restoration needs, and priority conservation actions are identified. As such, the strategy is the primary vehicle for biodiversity conservation in New York for years to come. Continued federal funding to states, begun in 2001, is critical to implementing this effort.

The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, which has identified more than 530 species that require conservation efforts, including birds, mammals, mollusks, freshwater and marine fish, and crustaceans identifies the role of private landowners in these conservation efforts, and recommends the creation of a habitat conservation program. The program will encourage landowners to make land use decisions that protect and preserve important habitats, and also expand opportunities for the public to access and enjoy the abundant natural resources located on private lands.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC-DFWMR
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4753
Ph:(518) 402-8920

NYS BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE NYS MUSEUM

www.nysm.nysed.gov/bri

BIODIVERSITY HERITAGE LIBRARY

www.biodiversitylibrary.org

AUDUBON'S IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

http://ny.audubon.org/BirdSci_IBAs.html

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites that have been formally recognized by National Audubon Society as providing essential habitat to one or more species of breeding or non-breeding birds. The sites vary in size, but are usually discrete and distinguishable in character, habitat or ornithological importance from surrounding areas.

CONTACT:
Audubon New York
Important Bird Areas Program
c/o Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Woods
Ithaca, NY 14850
Ph:(607) 254-2437

DEC'S BIRD CONSERVATION AREAS

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30935.html

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Division of FWMR
Nongame and Habitat Unit
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Ph: (518) 402-8924

WETLANDS

NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAPS

www.fws.gov/wetlands
www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/index.html

The most comprehensive survey of wetlands at this time is through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory; recently updated for the lake plains region and parts of the Hudson Valley. Mapping was not done within the Adirondack Park.

CONTACT:
Comprehensive Survey U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory

PROTECTED WETLAND MAPS

http://cugir.mannlib.cornell.edu.

Digital data is available for those with GIS capabilities through Cornell University's Geospatial Information Repository (CUGIR).

STATE REGULATORY FRESHWATER WETLANDS (Outside of Adirondack Park)

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4937.html

NYS regulates and has mapped freshwater wetlands that are 12.4 acres in size or larger, and certain smaller wetlands of unusual local importance. Wetland maps are available at DEC offices, local government offices, and are shown on the Environmental Resource Mapper *(www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html)* on the DEC web site.

ADIRONDACK PARK FRESHWATER WETLANDS

www.apa.state.ny.us/Research/epa_projects.htm

CONTACT:
Adirondack Park Agency
P.O. Box 99
Ray Brook, NY 12977
Ph: (518) 891-3938

TIDAL WETLANDS

Inventory information for tidal wetlands was collected for the Tidal Wetlands regulatory program using 1974 aerial imagery. Limited tidal wetlands trends analysis work has been completed for tidal wetland complexes in the marine district, and efforts are currently underway to advance the trends analysis work.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N Belle Meade Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733
Ph: (631) 444-0465

PUBLIC FOREST LANDS

ADIRONDACK & CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE MAPS

www.apa.state.ny.us

The Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve consists of lands owned by New York State within the Adirondack and Catskill regions under the management of DEC's Division of Lands & Forests. Forest Preserve lands are protected as "forever wild" by Article XIV, Section 1 of the State Constitution. Forest Preserve lands are acquired for the preservation of open space and for public recreation. In the Adirondack Park, there are 2,700,000 acres of Forest Preserve. The Catskill Park contains 281,000 acres of Forest Preserve lands.

CONTACT:
DEC offices in Regions 3, 4, 5 and 6
and
NYS DEC, Division of Lands & Forests
Forest Preserve Bureau
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 473-9518

NYS ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY

www.apa.state.ny.us

In 1971 the NYS Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was created by the State Legislature to develop long-range land use plans for both public and private lands within the Park. Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (APSLMP) legislative mandate to provide long-range planning for State lands within the Park. The APSLMP provides guidelines for acquisitions of State lands within the region.

CONTACT:
www.apa.state.ny.us
NYS Adirondack Park Agency
P.O. Box 99
1133 NYS Route 86
Ray Brook, NY 12977
Ph: (518) 891-4050

STATE FORESTS

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/40672.html

State Forests are lands owned by New York State under the management of the DEC's Division of Lands and Forests. These lands are acquired pursuant to Title 5 of Article 9 of the ECL for open space and watershed protection, timber production and recreation. There are 776,000 acres of State Forests across New York State.

CONTACT:
NYS DEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 402-9428

RECREATION

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html

Our State has more than 85 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) across the state that are designated for hunting, fishing, hiking and wildlife watching. These are public lands managed by DEC; and are among our State's forests, open fields, streams, ponds, wetlands and scenic vistas, which includes more than 200,000 acres - including 124, 000 acres of upland and 53,000 acres of wetland.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4755
Ph: (518) 402-8924

MOTORIZED ACCESS PERMIT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (MAPPWD)

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html

NYSDEC, 625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 402-9428

STATE OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/hist/

NYS OPRHP - Bureau of Planning
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 1223
Ph: (518) 486-2909

STATE LANDS INTERACTIVE MAP

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45415.html

The State Recreational Lands Interactive Mapper shows most recreational trails, parking lots and access points in DEC regions 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9, along with a statewide trail dataset for MAPPWD (Motorized Access Permit for People With Disabilities). Trails shown are DEC officially recognized trails on lands managed by the Division of Lands and Forests, mainly on State Forests and Forest Preserve lands.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STATE & NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES

The State and National Registers of Historic Places programs provide listings of historic resources of national, state and local significance. In New York State, OPRHP coordinates statewide historic preservation efforts, administers State owned historic sites and facilities, and along with the New York State Museum, maintains an inventory of archaeological sites. Historic site and historic preservation data may be accessed by:

CONTACT:
http://nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/
http://nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/state/map.htm
NYS OPRHP - Bureau of Historic Sites
Peebles Island, Waterford, NY 12188-0189
Ph: (518) 237-8643

STATE HERITAGE AREAS

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/heritage/herit_area.asp

Over 25 years after the development of the Urban Cultural Park system, there are 18 active Heritage Areas encompassing over 400 municipalities. The system remains the oldest and one of the largest, statewide heritage systems in the country.

CONTACT:
NYS OPRHP - Heritage Areas
Peebles Island, Waterford, NY 12188-0189
Ph: (518) 237-8643

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/FAQ/INDEX.HTM

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/hist/

Archeological data may be accessed through NYS OPRHP. Many local museums, universities and colleges can also provide information on archaeological resources.

CONTACT:

NYS OPRHP
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Peebles Island, NY 12188-0189
and
New York State Museum
Anthropological Services, CEC 3097
Albany, NY 12230

GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

www.nysm.nysed.gov/gis/

The State Geologist, in cooperation with the NYS Geological Society and the geology departments at many of the state's colleges and universities, has identified many areas of geologic importance for study and research.

CONTACT:

State Geological Survey
State Education Department
Albany, New York 12230
www.nysm.nysed.gov/staff

PRIVATE WORKING LANDS

CONSERVATION EASEMENT DATABASE

A database of conservation easements held by not-for-profit organizations and by DEC are maintained by:

CONTACT:

NYS DEC - Bureau of Real Property
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4256
Ph:(518) 402-9442

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT & MAPS

Inventory and maps of agricultural districts and area under Agriculture & Markets Law Article 25-AA *(see Programs & Partnerships).*

CONTACT:

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235
www.agmkt.state.ny.us.
and
Cornell University's Institute for Resource Information Systems
County Planning Offices
County Cooperative Extension
County Soil and Water Conservation District
Natural Resources Conservation Service Offices

WATER RESOURCES

ADIRONDACK LAKES SURVEY

www.adirondacklakessurvey.org

Water analysis on chemical and biological parameters have been conducted by the Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation (ALSC) on 1,469 waters in the Adirondacks and 223 waters in the Hudson Highlands, Catskills and Rensselaer Plateau regions of the state. ALSC was originally developed as a cooperative effort between DEC and The Empire State Electric Energy Research Corporation in 1983. In addition to the Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation's efforts, chemical, biological and physical data, collected in field surveys since the 1930's for each of the state's 18 watersheds, serve as the basis for development of DEC's Biological Survey database of the state's aquatic resources.

WILD, SCENIC & RECREATIONAL RIVERS

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/32739.html

The Wild Scenic and Recreational River System Act establishes a means of providing protection for river corridors from development through land use controls. Rivers are placed in the system by legislative enactment. Regulated corridors are administered by the DEC except for private lands within the Adirondack Park where the Adirondack Park Agency has administrative responsibility. DEC regulations implementing the program are found at 6 NYCRR Part 666.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC - Bureau of Habitat
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph:(518) 402-8920

ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY WILD, SCENIC & RECREATIONAL RIVERS

www.apa.state.ny.us/Regulations/index.html

www.apa.state.ny.us/Documents/Flyers/WSR%20rivers.pdf

PROTECTION OF WATERS

www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6042.html
www.dec.ny.gov/regs/2485.html
www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html

STREAM CLASSIFICATIONS

www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6033.html

The policy of New York State as set forth in Title 5 of Article 15 of the ECL is to preserve and protect state waters including streams. The Protection of Waters Program regulates four categories:

1) Disturbances of the bed or banks of a protected stream (streams classified as AA, A, B, or C(t) or C(ts);
2) construction and maintenance of dams or Impoundment structures;
3) construction, reconstruction, or repair of docks and installation of mooring structures in, on or above navigable waters lying above underwater lands not owned by the State; and
4) excavation and/or filling in navigable waters.

Any regulated activity described and to be undertaken on a protected stream requires a permit from DEC.

FLOODPLAIN - MAPS

http://msc.fema.gov

Article 36 of the ECL requires the State and local communities to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. For the purpose of reducing flood hazards and losses and to enable communities to regulate development in floodplains, the federal government has identified flood prone areas. There are 1,419 flood prone communities with over 26,000 miles of rivers, streams and shorelines affected. Maps and a status listing of all affected communities are on file in:

CONTACT:

NYSDEC Regional Offices
www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html
DEC, Bureau of Flood Protection
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8151

AQUIFER RECHARGE AREA - MAPS

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/36064.html
www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/water/swap.htm

Article 15 of the ECL calls for the prohibition of incompatible uses over federally designated sole source aquifers. Map sets locating the boundaries of the 18 primary aquifers as designated by the NYS Department of Health can be viewed at:

CONTACT:

NYSDEC
Bureau of Water Resource Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-3508
Ph: (518) 402-8086

LONG ISLAND AQUIFER - MAPS

NYS DEC, Region 1
SUNY @ Stony Brook
50 Circle Road
Stony Brook, NY 11790-3409
Ph: (631) 444-0405

COASTAL & ESTUARINE RESOURCES

www.nyswaterfronts.com

The Department of State has developed a variety of GIS data to support the State's Coastal Management Program and Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRPs), which are prepared and implemented in cooperation with local governments. GIS digital data sets for the State's coastal area boundary, the coastal non-point pollution control program boundary, designated significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats and scenic areas of statewide significance (SASS), and benthic habitats of the south shore estuary of Long Island can be viewed at:

NYS GIS Clearinghouse

www.nysgis.state.ny.us
and
NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

COASTAL EROSION HAZARD AREA – MAPS

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/28923.html
www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/draftguidprotshoreline.pdf

Natural protective features are found in coastal erosion hazard areas as defined pursuant to Section 34-0104 of the ECL. These natural protective features include beaches, dunes, bluffs, shoals and barrier islands and serve to maintain and stabilize the quality of contiguous and associated saline and fresh waters. Maps of coastal erosion hazard areas are **on file** in:

NYSDEC Regional Offices
www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html
and
DEC, Bureau of Flood Protection
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8151

PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

Many of the programs and partnerships listed below overlap in addressing the recommended actions for the four focused priorities identified in the 2009 Plan.

LAND TRUST ALLIANCE NEW YORK STATE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

www.landtrustalliance.org/community/Regions/northeast/nyscpp

Created in 2001, the New York State Conservation Partnership Program is a collaboration between Land Trust Alliance and DEC that provides competitive matching grants and technical assistance to New York land trusts. Through this program, non-profit land trust organizations operating in New York State are eligible to receive competitive matching investments in four categories:

- Capacity & Excellence Grants;
- Conservation Catalyst Grants;
- Transaction Grants; and
- Professional Development Grants.

Funded projects help preserve land and natural resources prioritized in this Plan. To date, the Partnership Program has leveraged millions of dollars for land conservation, conserving more than 10,000 acres and creating a national model for capacity building and community-based conservation.

CONTACT:
Land Trust Alliance – Northeast
112 Spring Street, Suite 205
Saratoga, NY 12866
Ph: (518) 587-0774
northeast@lta.org

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Adaptation Strategy for Natural Resources

Potential impacts of climate change on our natural resources include habitat loss, habitat degradation, change in timing of biological functions, and harm to populations of fish and wildlife. State fish and wildlife agencies will be challenged to manage populations and ecosystems in the face of these changes and uncertainties about how ecological systems will adapt. The Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources needs to gather existing data on baseline condition of habitats and species, population trends, and projections of impacts from climate change in order to draft adaptation strategies, monitor impacts, and mitigate expected impacts.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8877

Protecting Our Coastlines

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Hudson-Raritan Ecosystem Environmental Restoration Study & Map
www.nan.usace.army.mil/harbor/links/pamphlet.pdf
www.nan.usace.army.mil/harbor/maps/graphics/hrel.pdf

The Hudson-Raritan Estuary of New York and New Jersey is more than 42,000 square kilometers, making it one of the largest estuaries on the East coast. With more than 20 million residents living nearby, it is also one of the most urbanized, and home to the Port of New York and New Jersey, a major hub of commerce vital to the regional economy. An estuary is defined as an area where fresh water from rivers mixes with the salt water of the sea. Fresh water is supplied to the Hudson- Raritan Estuary from its major tributaries: the Hudson, Hackensack, Passaic and Raritan Rivers, which drain major watersheds of New York and New Jersey. For almost 400 years, the estuary and its watershed have been transformed by industrialization and residential growth, resulting in adverse physical, chemical and biological impacts on both the waters of the estuary and its surrounding land.

In 1999, Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct an estuary-wide environmental restoration study throughout the New York and New Jersey estuary. This study, known as the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Ecosystem Restoration Study, or simply the HRE Study, is co-sponsored by the Corps and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The goal of the study is to develop a long-term Comprehensive Restoration Plan of environmental improvements that would help restore the ecological value and richness of this nationally important resource.

The Hudson-Raritan Estuary Ecosystem Restoration Project (HREERP) is being carried out under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers General Investigations (GI) Program in coordination with The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. The goals of the study are to establish, restore, and enhance ecological systems throughout the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary to self-sustainable levels.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

NYS SEA LEVEL RISE TASK FORCE
www.dec.ny.gov/energy/45202.html

The NYS Sea Level Rise Task Force was created by the state Legislature in 2007 to assess impacts to the state's coastlines from sea level rise and to recommend protective and adaptive measures for coastal communities and natural

habitats. A report of recommendations will be complete by December 31, 2009.

HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html

The Hudson River Estuary Program leads a unique regional partnership to restore the Hudson in ways that support the quality of life so valued by Hudson Valley residents. The mission of the program is to: conserve the natural resources for which the Hudson is legendary; promote public use and enjoyment of the river; and clean up the pollution that affects our ability to use and enjoy it *[See USFWS, DEC, TNC & Cornell University's PATHWAY partnership project under Responding to Climate Change – Establishing Riparian Buffers & Wetland Protections' – Recommended Actions] .*

CONTACT:
The Hudson River Estuary Program
NYSDEC Region 3
21 S Putt Corners Rd
New Paltz, NY 12561
Ph: (845) 256-3016

HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY BIODIVERSITY OUTREACH

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html

Since 1996, the DEC Hudson River Estuary Program has focused on the biologically rich uplands of the Estuary's watershed. To help combat development sprawl, the Hudson River Estuary Biodiversity Project expanded its earlier mission of conducting biological inventories to community outreach in 2001. The Projects helps partners identify their biological resources, helps them understand their importance, and identify tools and techniques for conservation. Most often information is integrated into an existing local initiative, like a comprehensive plan, open space or watershed plan. The Estuary Biodiversity Project currently has partnerships with more than 70 town governments, land trusts, county agencies and conservation groups. The Program focuses on the 10 counties that border the Hudson from Troy to New York City.

CONTACT:
The Hudson River Estuary Program
NYSDEC Region 3
21 S Putt Corners Rd
New Paltz, NY 12561
Ph: (845) 256-3016

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAMS

PECONIC ESTUARY

www.peconicestuary.org

The Peconic Estuary, located on the eastern tip of Long Island, has been designated as an "Estuary of National Significance" under the USEPA National Estuary Program, and the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) was formed to help protect and restore the estuary and its natural resources. The program implements a watershed-based Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). Through implementation of the Peconic CCMP, partners work together to carry out several nutrient, pathogen, and toxic management, habitat and living resource, and critical land protection initiatives. The PEP maintains a Critical Land Protection Plan (CLPP) and strategy which prioritizes all available properties in the watershed by assessing their conservation and ecological value.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resource
205 N Belle Meade Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0871

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY HARBOR ESTUARY

www.harborestuary.org

The NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program was established as a National Estuary Program in 1987 as cooperative effort between New York, New Jersey and USEPA to develop and implement a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP). The CCMP focuses on efforts to preserve, restore and protect habitat and water quality, promote stewardship and public access, education and involvement among other priorities. Since the inception of the program, over 97 million dollars have been dedicated for land acquisition and restoration.

CONTACT:
NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program

290 Broadway, 24th Floor
NY, NY 10007-1866
Ph: (212) 637-3889

LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY & STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

www.longislandsoundstudy.net
www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship/index.htm

The Long Island Sound Study (LISS) is a collaborative effort with the State of Connecticut and EPA to protect and restore the Sound. Through the Long Island Sound Study's Stewardship Initiative, 33 areas of exemplary scientific, educational, biological, and/or recreational values were identified along the coastline of Long Island Sound in both NY and CT; 16 of the sites identified were in NY. Projects for developing partnerships with communities and landowners to protect these areas through land acquisitions and other activities have begun. In 2006, Congress passed and signed into law the 2006 Long Island Sound Stewardship Act. Through this act, money can be appropriated to activities that protect these important recreational and ecological areas in Long Island Sound.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N. Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0467

LONG ISLAND SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE

www.estuary.cog.ny.us/

The South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) and guiding Council were established in 1993 by NYS Executive Law in an effort to help better protect and manage Long Islands southern bays (Hempstead Bay to Shinnecock Bay) and their watersheds. Administered by DOS, the 2001 SSER Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) focuses on nonpoint source remediation, water quality monitoring, biological studies, brown tide, habitat restoration and shellfish restoration. DEC and DOS are developing an Ecosystem Based Management Plan for Great South Bay, as a pilot project under the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Based Management Initiative.

CONTACT:
South Shore Estuary Reserve Office
300 Woodcleft Avenue
Freeport, NY 11520
Ph:(516) 470-BAYS
email:staff@estuary.cog.ny.us

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

COASTAL & INLAND WATERWAYS

www.waterfronts.org

The Department of State (DOS) administers New York State's Coastal and Inland Waterways Program, which was established to conserve and properly use coastal and inland water resources. In 1981, the Department developed a Coastal Management Program and enacted implementing legislation. The program is based on a set of 44 coastal policies that guide management actions at all levels of government in New York and assists in ensuring appropriate use and protection of coasts and waterways. Under the following coastal programs, DOS works with federal, state, and local agencies:

- Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs
- Harbor Management Plans
- Inter-Municipal Watershed Management Plans
- Coastal Erosion

CONTACT:
NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

Establishing Riparian Buffers & Wetland Protections

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

TIDAL WETLAND REGULATORY INITIATIVE

Under the Tidal Wetlands Act, Article 25 of the ECL, NYSDEC implements a regulatory program designed to protect and preserve NY's tidal

wetlands. Through the Tidal Wetlands Regulatory Initiative, NYSDEC seeks to coordinate consistent regulatory implementation between Regions. Policy and guidance documents are currently being developed through this initiative to improve the overall delivery of the regulatory program and support more effective protection of tidal wetlands.

CONTACT:
Marine Habitat Protection
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0430

FRESHWATER WETLANDS PROTECTION

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5124.html
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5138.html

The policy of New York State as set forth in Title 23 of Article 24 of the ECL is to preserve and protect freshwater wetlands. The NYS Freshwater Wetlands Program protects all wetlands of 12.4 acres or greater in size, as well as wetlands that are smaller than 12.4 acres but are designated as of Unusual Local Importance. In addition a 100 foot buffer around each wetland is protected. Wetlands regulated under this program are shown on maps available at DEC Offices, and local government offices. These maps show the approximate location of regulated wetland boundaries. Final wetland boundaries are determined through an on site delineation. Any regulated activity to be undertaken in a regulated freshwater wetland requires a permit from DEC. Potential activities in close proximity to mapped wetland boundaries should check with the DEC Regional Office to confirm the activity is outside the regulated wetland. Information on permit requirements for particular wetlands may be obtained at the local DEC Regional office:

CONTACT:
DEC Regional Offices
- See Appendix -
or
NYSDEC - FWMR
Bureau of Habitat
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8903

SENTINEL TIDAL WETLAND MONITORING

DEC's Bureau of Marine Resources is installing Surface Elevation Tables (SET's) in 6 tidal wetland complexes, as part of an interdisciplinary long term monitoring project to research wetland loss. Recent work by Bureau staff have indicated vegetated wetland loss rates of ½ - ¾ of an acre per year in each wetland complex. Additional SET's are being installed by other partners throughout the marine district to gain a better understanding of the sedimentation rates in our tidal wetlands, identify migration rates, and assess how wetlands are being affected by sea level rise.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0430

FEDERAL WETLANDS RESERVE

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program of the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS). The program provides financial incentives to private landowners and Tribes for restoration and protection of up to 3.04 million acres of wetlands. Technical assistance is also provided to help develop restoration and management plans. Three contract options are available: 1) permanent easement where 100% of the easement value and up to 100% of the restoration costs are paid; 2) a 30 year easement where up to 75% of the easement value and up to 75% of the restoration costs are paid; or 3) a restoration agreement where an easement is not purchased, but up to 75% of restoration costs are paid and the landowner agrees to maintain compatible practices for 10 years or more. Further, an easement can not be created on land that has changed ownership in the last 7 years.

RIPARIAN BUFFERS

NYSDEC-FWMR, Bureau of Habitat
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8874

OCEAN & GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION COUNCIL
www.nyoglecc.org

HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN
www.lcbp.org

LONG ISLAND SOUND RIPARIAN TOOLBOX
www.hydroqual.com/projects/riparian/index.htm

NYS GREAT LAKES
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25562.html

LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED CONFERENCE OFFICE
c/o Lake George Village
26 Old Post Road
Lake George, NY 12845
Ph: (518) 461-2200
e-mail: lg2000@nycap.rr.com

Promoting Sustainable Forestry

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

GREEN CERTIFICATION
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/42947.html

In January 2008, State Forests managed by DEC'S Bureau of State Land Management became "green certified" from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI); two organizations internationally recognized for establishing forest management standards. With this recognition, DEC has demonstrated that the forests under its care are managed to the highest sustainability requirements. More than 780,000 acres have been set aside as State Forests throughout New York. Green certification means that the millions of dollars of forest products harvested annually from these acres are eligible to carry the FSC and SFI labels, which are in increasing demand in the marketplace. Along with growing some of the best timber in New York, DEC foresters continue their long tradition of managing State Forests to benefit everyone in a variety of ways.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 408-0978

FOREST STEWARDSHIP
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/45934.html

The Forest Stewardship Program authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978, encourages the long-term stewardship of non-industrial private forest lands by assisting owners of such lands to more actively manage their forest and related resources by utilizing State, Federal and private sector resource management expertise and assistance programs. A cornerstone of the program is the availability of technical assistance to help private forest owners develop a Landowner Forest Stewardship Management Plan to guide them in the use and management of their lands. These plans are based upon goals and objectives that individual owners have for their properties. DEC'S Division of Lands & Forests cooperates with the USDA Forest Service to implement New York's Forest Stewardship Program, becoming one of the most significant initiatives in providing technical and educational assistance to over 80,000 private forest owners who collectively control 14.4 million acres of forest lands in our State. To date, over 2 million acres of Forest Stewardship Plans have been developed by foresters and natural resource professionals for private forest land owners.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - Bureau of Private Land Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4253
Ph: (518) 402-9425

Promoting Urban Forestry & Green Infrastructure

URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY COST-SHARE GRANTS

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4957.html

DEC's Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF Program) provides the leadership, in cooperation with states, for improving and expanding urban forest ecosystems in the nation's 45,000 towns and cities where 80% of the population of our country resides. The program provides leadership for state of the art technology and grants to urban areas to improve their quality of life through tree planting, maintenance and urban tree protection actions.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC - Bureau of Private Land Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4253
Ph: (518) 402-9425

NYS URBAN & COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

www.nysurbanforestrycouncil.com/

The New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council is an organized volunteer group. The Council's major funding is supplied through the USDA Forest Service and supplemented by membership dues and independent contributions.

NYS ENERGY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (NYSERDA)

www.nyserda.org
www.nyserda.org/programs/Environment/EMEP/project/6681_25/6681_25_project_update.pdf
www.nyserda.org/programs/Environment/EMEP/home.asp
http://ccir.ciesin.columbia.edu/nyc/links_impacts_heat.html

FOSTERING GREEN, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Providing Watershed & Water Quality Protections

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

WATERSHED CONSERVATION

Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) strove to fulfill the original goals of the 1972 Clean Water Act - fishable, swimmable, and safe waters for all Americans. The initial purpose of the WRAPS was to develop/compile and document a strategy for a watershed that brought together all appropriate agencies and stakeholders to focus support in the form of grant dollars, technical assistance, and other resources to address the priority water and natural resource needs in that watershed.

The Watershed Conservation Program in the Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources has since built on the successful partnering effort of the WRAPS and collaboratively expanded the scope of Strategies and similar planning processes. Specifically, stakeholder involvement has been increased, natural resource components have been expanded beyond water quality issues, strategies for implementation beyond remediation/restoration have been identified, and strategies have been developed from a landscape, rather than site specific, perspective.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC DFWMR
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8877

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater management focuses on controlling the flow of water from rain or melting snow from rooftops, paved areas, sloped lawns and bare soil and into rivers and streams. Left unchecked, such runoff transports a variety of substances -

soil, animal waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, debris and other potential pollutants – to streams and lakes where their impacts reduce fish and aquatic life, threaten drinking water supplies and discourage recreational use. The US EPA estimates that urban/suburban and construction sources of stormwater runoff contributes to half of all impaired waterways. Stormwater permits which rely on a wide range of practices to reduce and control stormwater runoff are the cornerstone of the DEC stormwater management program.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC Division of Water
Bureau of Water Permits
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8111

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Under the Environmental Protection Fund, New Yorkers have worked together to restore, preserve and protect our state's valuable environmental resources by funding Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP). The Department periodically issues a call for projects, evaluates applications, and ranks projects for funding under the WQIP process. Funds are used for projects that demonstrate direct environmental benefits that will help reduce polluted runoff, improve water quality, and restore habitat in New York State waters.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC Division of Water
Bureau of Program Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8236

MUNICIPAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL

Any discharge of wastewater – including municipal wastewater – to the waters of the state requires a discharge permit. These permits are necessary to limit the impact of these discharges on the receiving waters and insure that aquatic life, recreation and other uses are protected. Municipal wastewater permits require a minimum level of wastewater treatment for all facilities, and enhanced treatment where necessary to meet water quality standards. Technical assistance, as well as compliance and enforcement programs, help assure that permit limits are being met.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC Division of Water
Bureau of Water Permits
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8111

PECONIC ESTUARY

www.peconicestuary.org

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resource
205 N. Belle Meade Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0871

NY/NJ HARBOR ESTUARY

www.harborestuary.org

CONTACT:
NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program
290 Broadway, 24th Floor
NY, NY 10007-1866
Ph: (212) 637-3889

LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

www.longislandsoundstudy.net

CONTACT:
NYSDEC – Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N. Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0467

LONG ISLAND SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE

www.estuary.cog.ny.us/

CONTACT:
South Shore Estuary Reserve Office
300 Woodcleft Avenue
Freeport, NY 11520
Ph:(516) 470-BAYS
email:staff@estuary.cog.ny.us

HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4920.html
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html

CONTACT:
Hudson River Estuary Program
NYSDEC Region 3

21 S Putt Corners Rd
New Paltz, NY 12561
Ph: (845) 256-3016

NYS GREAT LAKES
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25562.html

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS

AGRICULTURAL NONPOINT SOURCE ABATEMENT & CONTROL

Our State's Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grant Program (Ag NPS Grant Program), administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM) in conjunction with the DEC, is a competitive program that assists farmers in abating and preventing water pollution from agricultural activities by providing technical assistance and financial incentives. County Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are the only entity eligible to apply for the Ag NPS Grant Program Funds.

CONTACT:
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235
Ph: (518) 457-2713

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN
www.lcbp.org

NEW YORK OCEAN & GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION COUNCIL

www.nyoglecc.org

The New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Conservation Council, created by state law, is charged with defining and implementing an adaptive, ecosystem-based management approach to improve the health of coastal ecosystems. The Council consists of nine member agencies with responsibility for managing a broad range of human activities that impact ecosystem health. The Council's main activities include integrating ecosystem-based management principles into agency programs and building management tools and the capacity to use them among agencies, stakeholders and other parties.

CONTACT:
New York Ocean & Great Lakes
Ecosystem Conservation Council
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12231
Ph: (518) 474-6000

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

COASTAL NONPOINT POLLUTION CONTROL

www.nyswaterfronts.com

NY's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (CNPCP) unites DEC's water quality management expertise with DOS's coastal land use management expertise in addressing nonpoint pollution from a broad array of sources that impact or may impact coastal water quality. The contribution of open space to controlling non-point source pollution is recognized in this program.

INTERMUNICIPAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Municipalities may apply for funding under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to prepare intermunicipal watershed management plans to control non-point pollution and foster appropriate development and open space protection in a watershed. Implementation grants are available to municipalities under the Environmental Protection Fund.

CONTACT:
NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

*- See **Protecting Our Coastlines** for additional program information -*

Providing Waterfront Access, Urban Greenways & Trailways

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

WATERFRONT RECREATION

Fishing and boating (both motorized and non-motorized) have been demonstrated to be an outstanding mechanism to get New Yorkers back in touch with the outdoor world. Given the fact that public access to the waters of the state are not guaranteed and the availability of waterfront property necessary for public access projects is limited, focus must be given to developing new public access to waters that are currently private, developing access on waterfront lands the DEC currently owns and modernizing existing public access sites. In addition to ramps and hand-launching facilities for boats, waterway access must also include fishing piers and shoreline improvements accessible to all New Yorkers regardless of their physical abilities.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8924

FEDERAL SPORT FISH RESTORATION

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7923.html

The Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration act, commonly known as the Wallop-Breaux Act, provides Federal aid to the States for management and restoration of fish having "material value in connection with sport or recreation in the marine and/or fresh waters of the United States." In addition, amendments to the Act provide funds to the states for aquatic education, wetlands restoration, boat safety and clean vessel sanitation devices (pumpouts), and a nontrailerable boat program. The fund is derived from an excise tax on certain types of sportfishing tackle and boating equipment, an import duty on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft, and a portion of motorboat fuel tax revenues and small engine fuel taxes. Funds are allocated to the states based on the number of licensed anglers and land area in particular state. New York receives about $9 million annually which is currently committed to the management and protection of aquatic resources, development and rehabilitation of boating and fishing access sites and aquatic education.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8924

PUBLIC FISHING RIGHTS

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7746.html

Purchasing permanent fishing easements (or in some cases fee title) on privately owned streambanks make critical contributions to providing public access to some of the best salmonid fisheries in the northeastern United States. Fisherman parking areas as well as "rights-of-way" are also needed to complement the easements.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8924

I FISH NY

The I FISH NY program was developed by DEC with the primary goal of increasing fishing participation in New York State. This will be accomplished by increasing public awareness of the outstanding fishing opportunities available in New York; providing information on the fishing techniques/skills necessary to make best use of these opportunities; increasing knowledge of the fish and aquatic resources of New York State; and improving fishing opportunities in suburban and urban areas of New York State where the bulk of the State's population resides.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - Bureau of Fisheries
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233
Ph: (518) 402-8924

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION & HARBOR MANAGEMENT

www.nyswaterfronts.org

The Department of State is involved in a wide variety of programs and initiatives that help revitalize, promote and protect New York's waterfronts. Over the past 20 years, the Division has worked with hundreds of local governments and communities to prepare Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRPs). A LWRP is a locally prepared, comprehensive land and water use plan for a community's natural, public, working waterfront, and developed waterfront resources. It provides a comprehensive frame-work within which critical waterfront issues can be addressed.

HARBOR MANAGEMENT PLANS

Harbor Management Plans (HMPs) are prepared as components of LWRPs to improve management of their harbors. HMPs by taking a take a hard look at the resources, conflicts, congestion and competition for space in New York's harbors and balance the interests of all uses of harbor resources. These plans consider local and regional needs and address issues related to commercial shipping and fishing, dredging, recreational boating and fishing, natural resource protection, and other matters affecting harbors.

CONTACT:

NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NYS HERITAGE AREAS

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/heritage/herit_area.asp

The Heritage Area System (formerly known as the Urban Cultural Park System) is a state-local partnership established to preserve and develop areas that have special significance to New York State. From the Great Lakes to the eastern tip of Long Island, the Heritage Areas encompass some of the state's most significant natural, historic, and cultural resources, as well as the people and programs that keep them vital.

NYS HERITAGE TRAILS

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/heritage/trails/

A series of thematic Heritage topics have been established in New York State to connect historic sites and museums and help visitors discover the unique history of the state. This program of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, was developed to highlight significant statewide historical themes - the Revolutionary War, Women, Underground Railroad and Theodore Roosevelt. A major goal of the program is to promote heritage tourism by strengthening existing tourist destinations and fostering new ones.

By linking and interpreting sites thematically, visitors will gain a more comprehensive understanding of the state's important role in the history of our nation and will be encouraged to visit more sites. The program also promotes collaboration among local communities and regional organizations to make the sites more accessible and marketable.

CONTACT:

NYS OPRHP - Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1
Albany NY, 12238
Ph: (518) 474-0456
Ph: (518) 486-1899 TDD

NYS Historic Preservation Office
Peebles Island Resource Center
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189
Ph: (518) 237-8643

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY

www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is an innovative state agency created to facilitate the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and

maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision-making. Through voluntary participation in the Greenway community planning program, communities in thirteen counties in the Hudson River Valley can receive technical assistance and funding for local land use planning projects which support the goals of the Greenway program.

CONTACT:
Capitol Building
Capitol Station, Room 254
Albany, NY 12224
Ph: (518) 473-3835
Email: hrvg@hudsongreenway.state.ny.us

Promoting Smart Growth & Improving Our Transportation Uses

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

SMART GROWTH

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/45970.html

In 2008, the Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet along with the partnerships with state agencies and the private sector, began promoting and implementing smart growth principles. The promotion of park-wide planning and hamlet revitalization in the Adirondacks and development and implementation of capital projects in the Catskills have been proposed by the eligible local municipal applicants. DEC has initiated EPF funding towards the awarded proposed projects submitted by towns, villages and not-for-profit organization partners located in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. This funding is intended to help park communities capitalize on the historic and cultural assets of existing settlements to cultivate economic growth within the framework of highly protected forest preserve lands.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Division of Lands & Forests
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4250
Ph:(518) 402-9405

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

www.nysdot.gov
www.nysdot.gov/smartplanning

The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) is to enrich the State's many communities by investing in transportation improvements that promote sustainable economic growth and contribute to their overall quality of life. These objectives are pursued through a statewide program integrating land-use and transportation planning including the provision of training, educational materials and hands-on planning assistance.

DOT maintains a web site that provides direct links to DOT activities and programs relating to transportation and land-use in our communities; to planning tools and information provided by the Department and other organizations; and to potential sources of funding.

CONTACT:
NYS DOT
50 Wolf Road
Albany, NY 12232
Ph: (518) 457-6195

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS

www.nysdot.gov/programs/tep

The Transportation Enhancements Program (TEP) is a federal reimbursement program administered by DOT. In recognition that transportation systems are influenced and impacted by more than the condition of the traditional highway and bridge infrastructure, the program enables funding for transportation projects of cultural, aesthetic, historic and environmental significance.

BICYCLES & PEDESTRIANS

DOT maintains a system of three signed, long distance, on-road bicycle routes for experienced cyclists, State Routes 5, 9 and 17. In addition, New York has a system of bicycle routes for both short and long trips. DOT s constantly working to improve accessibility.

SCENIC BYWAYS

www.nysdot.gov

The New York State Scenic Byways Program was created in 1992 by the State Legislature. The program encourages both economic development and resource conservation, recognizing that each of these aspects of a byway must be fostered and sustained to ensure the success of the other. The program is administered by DOT and is guided and implemented by the NYS Scenic Byways Advisory Board. Various state agencies are represented on the Board, as are private organizations with specific interests: tourism, the motoring public, resource management, and preservation of scenic quality.

CONTACT:

SmartPlanning@dot.state.ny.us

CONNECTING NEW YORKERS WITH NATURE & RECREATION

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/agency/scorp/

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), produced every five years, is the principal tool in an ongoing planning process to assess existing and future recreational demands, evaluate current recreational opportunities and estimate present and future recreational needs.

Connecting Our Children to Nature

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTERS & CAMPS

DEC's Bureau of Environmental Education operates four environmental education centers and four environmental education summer camps across the state. These facilities and programs serve an important role of connecting New Yorkers to nature. The proximity of some of the sites to urban and suburban areas suggests the need to ensure that adequate buffer zones exist to insulate them from encroachment. Each of the education centers is supported by a corps of volunteers through their "friends" group. The friends groups provide manpower for education programs for schools and the public, trail maintenance, greeting visitors, hosting special events, and more. They also raise funds for special programs, projects and purchases.

STONY KILL FARM ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

www.dec.ny.gov/education/1833.html

The Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Center partners with the Stony Kill foundation and Verplanck Garden Club.

CONTACT:
DEC Stony Kill Farm
Environmental Education Center
79 Farmstead Lane
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
Ph: (845) 831-8780
skfarm@gw.dec.state.ny.us

FIVE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

www.dec.ny.gov/education/1835.html

The Five Rivers Environmental Education Center partners with Friends of Fiver Rivers/Five Rivers Limited.

CONTACT:
DEC Five Rivers
Environmental Education Center
56 Game Farm Road
Delmar, NY 12054
Ph: (518) 475-0291
5Rivers@gw.dec.state.ny.us

ROGERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

www.dec.ny.gov/education/1831.html

The Rogers Environmental Education Center partners with Friends of Rogers.

CONTACT:
DEC Rogers
Environmental Education Center
2721 State Highway 80
Sherburne, NY 13460
Ph: (607) 674-4017
rogers@gw.dec.state.ny.us

REINSTEIN WOODS NATURE PRESERVE & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER

www.dec.ny.gov/education/1837.html

The Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and Environmental Education Center partners with Friends of Reinstein Nature Preserve.

CONTACT:
Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and
Environmental Education Center
93 Honorine Drive
Depew, NY 14043
Ph: (716)683-5959
rwnp@gw.dec.state.ny.us

LONG ISLAND & NEW YORK CITY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS

www.dec.ny.gov/education/1839.html
www.dec.ny.gov/education/38184.html

CONTACTS:
Long Island
Regional Environmental Educator
DEC Region 1 Office
SUNY @ Stony Brook
50 Circle Road
Stony Brook, NY 11790-3009
Ph: (631) 444-0347
education1@gw.dec.state.ny.us

New York City
Regional Environmental Educator
DEC Region 2 Office
47-40 21st Street
Long Island City, NY 11101
Ph:(718) 482-6404
r2ed@gw.dec.state.ny.us

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CAMPS

www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html

Four camps are currently in operation: Camp Colby (Saranac Lake), Camp DeBruce (Livingston Manor), Camp Rushford (Caneadea), and Camp Pack Forest (Warrensburg). Together, they serve close to 1,900 youth from 12 to 17 years old from across the state annually; and receive camper sponsorships from local garden clubs, hunting/fishing clubs and nature-study groups. Programs at the camps focus on natural resource and environmental studies. Interested campers may participate in hunter safety training. Efforts will be made to increase the number of opportunities which exist for youth to attend a DEC environmental education camp.

CONTACT:
DEC Camps Administrator
Bureau of Environmental Education
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4500
Ph: (518) 402-8043
edcamps@gw.dec.state.ny.us

DEC CAMPS DIVERSITY

www.dec.ny.gov/education/39627.html

The DEC Camps Diversity program partners with the Hudson River Foundation for the New York

City program to provide urban minorities and underserved youth a free week at one of DEC's summer camps (called a "campership"). The program also incorporates pre-camp and post-camp activities to engage the youth in their environment, prepare them to attend the camp, and keep them enjoying nature after the week at camp has ended.

CONTACT:
camprshp@gw.dec.state.ny.us

TEACHER WORKSHOPS

www.dec.ny.gov/26.html
www.dec.ny.gov/education/1913.html

Professional development workshops for educators and youth leaders are offered throughout the state. Participants receive a curriculum guide, an opportunity to try activities and a variety of support materials. E-mail individual program contacts provided on the webpages.

CONTACT:
DEC Bureau of Environmental Education
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4500
Ph: (518) 402-8043
DPAEweb@gw.dec.state.ny.us

NYS ENVIROTHON

www.nysenvirothon.net

The NYS Envirothon is a hands-on environmental education competition where a team of five high school students work together in hopes of winning scholarships and awards. The teams compete in five different environmental categories (i.e., soils/land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, and wildlife) and a current environmental issue. NYS Environthon is conducted on a county level basis with Soil & Water Conservation Districts being the lead for incorporating efforts from the many natural resource agencies at the federal, state and local levels. It is directed to promote knowledge and understanding of natural resources among students.

CONTACT:
New York State Envirothon
c/o Sandy Huey, Chair
7413 County House Road
Auburn, New York
Ph: (315) 252-4171 Ext. 3
Email: blanche_13335@yahoo.com

AFTER SCHOOL CONSERVATION CLUB

www.dec.ny.gov/education/38184.html

The After School Conservation Club partners with the Student Conservation Association, United Neighborhood Houses and the After-School Corporation to bring environmental education to and foster a sense of stewardship in inner-city elementary-school-aged children involved in after-school programs.

CONTACT:
DEC Regional New York City
Environmental Educator
Ph: (718) 482-6404
r2ed@gw.dec.state.ny.us

NATIONAL ARCHERY IN THE SCHOOLS

www.nasparchery.com/activea.asp

In January 2008, New York became the 44th state to participate in the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). The program promotes student education, physical education, and participation in the life-long sport of archery. Since the program began in New York, 43 schools have expressed interest in the program and 18 are participating in the Pilot Program.

JUNIOR BIG GAME HUNTER MENTORING

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/46245.html

In July 2008, Governor David A. Paterson signed into law a bill that created a special "junior hunter" mentoring program which will allow persons aged 14 and 15 to hunt big game with a firearm while accompanied and supervised by an experienced adult hunter. This new law will provide new opportunities for young people to get out of the house and experience the outdoors. The bill includes additional supervision and safety requirements for the new program to help ensure that the junior hunting experience occurs safely.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Ph: (518) 402-8883

SPECIAL YOUTH HUNTS

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/52495.html

To help provide young hunters a high quality experience under adult supervision, special weekends have been designated for youth hunters to pursue waterfowl, pheasants, and wild turkey prior to the general openers for these species.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Ph: (518) 402-8924

Conservationist for Kids MAGAZINE

www.dec.ny.gov/education/40248.html

This magazine encourages outdoor exploration and discovery. It is written for fourth-grade students in New York State and is distributed directly to all fourth-grade public school classes in the state. It is also inserted in *Conservationist* magazine and available on the internet.

CONTACT:

cforkids@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Outdoor Discovery ONLINE NEWSLETTER

www.dec.ny.gov/public/43355.html

This electronic newsletter encourages New Yorkers to explore the outdoors and learn about the environment. Each issue introduces subscribers to a seasonal environmental or nature topic, suggests a related activity, and lists family-friendly events at DEC's environmental education centers.

CONTACT:

outdoor@gw.dec.state.ny.us

BECOMING AN OUTDOORSWOMAN

www.dec.ny.gov/education/68.html

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) and Beyond BOW are programs designed to teach women outdoor skills. These national programs provide women with information, encouragement and hands-on instruction in outdoor skills such as fishing, shooting, archery, hunting, trapping, outdoor photography, map and compass, survival, camping, canoeing and outdoor cooking. Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshops are designed primarily for women who have little or no experience with outdoor activities. Beyond BOW workshops are classes for women who have completed a beginner class at a BOW workshop.

SPORTSMEN EDUCATION

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html

All first-time hunters, bowhunters and trappers must pass one or more courses before they can get a license in New York State. Trained instructors certified by the Department of Environmental Conservation teach safe and responsible outdoors practices and the important role of hunters and trappers in conservation. All courses are free of charge, but space may be limited. Courses develop skills and attitudes which help students to be better hunters and trappers, support conservation, and pursue outdoor sports in a safe, responsible and ethical manner.

Community Greening for Environmental Justice

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

www.dec.ny.gov/public/333.html

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Efforts are focused on improving the environment in communities, specifically minority and low-income communities, and addressing disproportionate adverse environmental impacts that may exist in those communities.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC
Office of Environmental Justice
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-1500
Ph: (518) 402-8556

Community Gardens & Urban Farms

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS

COMMUNITY GARDENS CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS
www.agmkt.state.ny.us/RFPS.html

GARDENING ON PUBLIC LANDS
There are a number of gardens and urban farms in NY growing on state-owned land, including Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and NY State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation property. If you are interested in gardening on a state-owned parcel you have identified, contact us to find out the availability and viability of the site.

CONTACT:
Ph: (718) 722-2834
christina.grace@agmkt.state.ny.us

Regional Community Gardening Resources
Capital District (Albany, Troy & Schenectady)
Capital District Community Gardens
www.cdcg.org
Ph:(518) 274-8685 / info@cdcg.org

Binghamton - Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments (VINES)
www.binghamtonneighbors.org/communitygardens/tabid/117/default.aspx
Ph:(607)748-9849 / jon@myedst.org

Buffalo - Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo
www.grassrootsgardens.org
Ph:(716) 851-4647/ grgbuffalo@hotmail.com

Ithaca - Cornell Cooperative Extension
counties.cce.cornell.edu/Tompkins
Ph:(607) 272-2292 / mr55@cornell.edu

New York City - GreenThumb
City of New York Parks & Recreation
www.greenthumbnyc.org
Ph: (212) 788-8070

NYC Community Gardens Coalition
www.nyccgc.org
Ph: (212) 926-8648

Rochester - City of Rochester Horticulture Technical Assistance
Ph: (585) 428-8820
estrichs@cityofrochester.gov

Syracuse - Cornell Cooperative Extension
counties.cce.corenll.edu/Onondaga
Ph: (315) 424-9485

Yonkers
Greyston Community Gardens Program
www.greyston.org
Ph: (914) 375-9002

General Resources
American Community Gardening Association
www.communitygarden.org

Cornell Cooperative Extension
counties.cce.cornell.edu

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Gardening Portal
www.gardening.cornell.edu

National Gardening Association
www.garden.org

Cornell University Cooperative Extension
counties.cce.cornell.edu

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

COMMUNITY PARKS
www.nysparks.com/grants
Municipalities or not-for-profit entities can apply for matching funds to acquire or preserve, rehabilitate or restore land for community gardening purposes.

CONTACT:
NYS OPRHP
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1
Albany NY, 12238
Ph: (518) 474-0456

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS

www.dec.ny.gov/public/31226.html

Community gardening organizations are eligible to apply for grants to fund projects that address environmental and related public health issues. Projects must address multiple harms and risks to communities and communicate project results to the community residents.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC
Office of Environmental Justice
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-1500
Ph: (518) 402-8556

Accessible Recreation

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html

DEC is committed to providing an ever-increasing range of access opportunities to programs on New York State public lands. In recent years, DEC has created wheelchair accessible campsites, fishing piers, picnic areas, equestrian mounting platforms, trails and waterway access sites across the state and has increased efforts to make all programs and services inclusive. This Universal Design approach invites people to become active in outdoor recreation. Many of DEC's facilities are innovative examples of natural, site sensitive, accessible design.

CONTACT:

NYS DEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 402-9428

SAFEGUARDING OUR STATE'S NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE

US FOREST SERVICE

OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION STRATEGY

www.fs.fed.us/openspace/

In December 2007, the US Forest Service published the Open Space Conservation Strategy, which charts a path forward for the Forest Service to work in partnership with states, local governments, landowners, and non-profit organizations to address the loss of open space threat. The strategy provides a framework to strengthen and focus existing and new Forest Service conservation actions across the agency.

The four priorities of the Strategy that will guide future Forest Service actions to conserve open space are: 1) Convene partners to identify and protect priority open space; 2) Promote national policies and markets to help private landowners conserve open space; 3) Provide resources and tools to help communities expand and connect open spaces; and 4) Participate in community growth planning to reduce ecological impacts and wildfire risks.

The vision for the 21st century is an interconnected network of open space across the landscape that supports healthy ecosystems and a high quality of life for Americans. The Strategy emphasizes collaborative approaches and partnerships to achieve this vision. Of course, the Forest Service will work with willing landowners, states, and local governments to promote voluntary land conservation. The Forest Service is only one stakeholder among many dedicated landowners, governments, and organizations working to conserve open space across the country. The next step is implementation – which will occur at the national, regional, and local levels of the agency as we work together to conserve open space across the landscape.

OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE

www.osiny.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Issues_Farms

Supporting Our Working Farms & Forests

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & MARKETS

FARMLAND PROTECTION

www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/farmprotect.html

The State, through the Department of Agriculture and Markets, has provided matching funds for the development and implementation of local farmland protection efforts, including a purchase of development rights (PDR) program described elsewhere in this Plan. PDRs are a form of easement that restricts the use of lands under easement. State assistance payments are available to counties or municipalities to cover up to 75% of the total costs for implementation activities to protect viable farmland. These grants are awarded pursuant to a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP contains eligibility guidelines and criteria by which all projects are scored and ranked for funding.

CONTACT:

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235
Ph:(518) 457-2713

CONSERVATION RESERVE

www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides assistance to farmers and ranchers in complying with Federal, State, and tribal environmental laws, and encourages environmental enhancement.

STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Through the State Technical Committee, DEC is collaborating with the USDA agencies to help guide working land programs under the 2008 Food, conservation, and Energy Act the Farm Bill).

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES

www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality, forestry management and energy conservation as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the program.

The program's activities are carried out according to an environmental quality incentives program plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. The practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. The local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) approves the plan.

EQIP may cost-share up to 50 or 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided to encourage producers to carry out management practices for three years. and socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers may be eligible for cost-shares up to 90 percent. It further allows these individuals to receive in advance up to 30% of the amount needed for purchasing materials or contracting Farmers and

ranchers may elect to use a certified third-party provider for technical assistance.

An individual or entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, cost-share or incentive payments that, in the aggregate, exceed $300,000 for all program contracts entered during the term of the Farm Bill. A cap of $450,000 is set for projects of special environmental significance.

EQIP projects have been implemented throughout our state since its inception in 1997. Since the authorization of the 2002 Farm Bill, New York has written approximately 960 contracts. About 11 million federal dollars came into the state through this program in 2006.

CONTACT:
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
The Galleries of Syracuse
441 South Salina Street, Suite 354
Syracuse, New York 13202-2450
Ph: (315) 477-6508

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

A workable conservation easement program must be flexible and preclude land use changes while providing for the continuation of forest management and timber harvesting capability on forests in private ownership. Our state would acquire development rights with or without the recreation rights, depending on the landowner's needs and interests and the public interests identified. Such a program is authorized through the Environmental Protection Fund and the Forest Legacy Program.

CONTACT:
NYS DEC
Division of Lands & Forests
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4250
Ph: (518) 402-9405

PRIVATE FOREST LAND UNDER SECTIONS 480 & 480-a

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5236.html
www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2422.html

Section 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law was developed to provide forest owners with an incentive to retain and manage forest land. Owners of qualifying woodland can apply for a partial property tax exemption of up to 80% by committing their forest land to an approved forest management plan. Prior to RPTL Section 480-a, the Forest Tax Law was RPTL Section 480. RPTL 480 provides for a freeze of property value assessment but does not require a management plan. It is no longer open to new registrants.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Bureau of Private Land Services
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-4253
Ph: (518) 402-9425

COOPERATING FORESTER

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5230.html

DEC's Cooperating Forester program is designed to encourage landowners to work with private foresters in managing their woodlots. Increasing contact between landowners and professional foresters will promote wise stewardship of forest land in New York. Since the results of forest management decisions can be both long lasting and hard to reverse, it is important to make these decisions carefully and intelligently. Cooperating foresters can provide valuable information and advice critical for landowners to make long range or large scale land management decisions. In many cases however, the professional assistance a landowner receives from a forester will pay for itself by increasing financial returns and other benefits from the woodlot.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Bureau of Private Land Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4253
Ph: (518) 402-9425

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/45934.html

NYSDEC's Division of Lands & Forests cooperates with the USDA Forest Service to implement the Forest Stewardship Program. The Forest Stewardship Program is authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978. Technical and educational assistance is provided to help private forest owners develop and implement Forest Stewardship Management Plans guiding them in the use and management of their forest lands and associated resources.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC- Bureau of Private Land Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4253
Ph: (518) 402-9425

FOREST LEGACY

www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp.shtml

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP), administered by the US Forest Service in partnership with the States, is a voluntary land conservation program that provides financial assistance to the states to prevent forest fragmentation and enhance conservation of forest lands. The FLP has ensured that important forests remain intact and continue to contribute to the community, local economy, the landowners and the environment. FLP re-authorization is necessary as pressure to develop forest lands continues to increase.

COMMUNITY FOREST & OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION

Provides federal matching grants, up to 50%, to help county or local governments, Indian tribes, or non-profit organizations acquire private forests that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses and are economically, environmentally and culturally important to communities. Community Forests will be managed as "working forests" to generate economic benefits and provide jobs and economic stability to communities.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC - Division of Lands and Forests
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4250
Ph: (518) 402-9405

MASTER FOREST OWNER

www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/mfo/

The Master Forest Owner program is implemented by Cornell Cooperative Extension and provides basic forestry information to land owners who then act as mentors to their neighbors, promoting appreciation of natural resources and wise stewardship of forest lands and related resources.

CONTACT:

Master Forest Owner Office
108 Fernow Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Ph: (607) 255-2115
Email: dlt5@cornell.edu

Stewarding Our Unique, Natural & Wildlife Habitats

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ADIRONDACK & CATSKILL FOREST PRESERVE

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4960.html

The Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve consists of lands owned by New York State within the Adirondack and Catskill regions under the management of the Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Lands and Forests. Forest Preserve lands are protected as "forever wild" by Article XIV, Section 1 of the State Constitution. Forest Preserve lands are acquired for the preservation of open space and for public recreation. In the Adirondack Park, there are 2,700,000 acres of Forest Preserve. The Catskill Park contains 281,000 acres of Forest Preserve lands.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC
Bureau of Forest Preserve Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4254
Ph: (518) 473-9518

FOREST PRESERVE EXPANSION FUND

An amendment to Article 14, Section 3 of the New York State Constitution, effective January 1, 1974, allows the State to sell isolated parcels of Forest Preserve land that lie outside of the Catskill and Adirondack Park boundaries, providing that they are 100 acres or less in size and further providing that revenues obtained from such sales will be used to purchase Forest Preserve land within the two parks.

CONTACT:

Bureau of Forest Preserve Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4254
Ph: (518) 473-9518

STATE FORESTS

State Forests are lands owned by New York State under the management of DEC'S Bureau of State Land Management Division of Lands and Forests. These lands are acquired pursuant to Title 5 of Article 9 of the ECL for open space and watershed protection, timber production and recreation. There are 776,000 acres of State Forests across New York State.

CONTACT:

NYS DEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 402-9428

UNIQUE AREAS

www.dec.ny.gov/regs/13942.html#13948

A state project to acquire lands of special natural beauty, wilderness character, geological, ecological or historical significance for the state nature and historical preserve and similar lands within a forest preserve county outside the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. Funds received by the state from the 1972 Environmental Quality Bond Act for unique area preservation projects. Unique area preservation projects outside forest preserve counties shall be undertaken only upon the recommendation of the state nature and historical preserve trust and shall be recommended by the commissioner for inclusion in the state nature and historical preserve.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC
Bureau of State Land Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4255
Ph: (518) 408-9428

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are lands owned by New York State under the management of DEC's Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources (DFWMR). These lands have been acquired for the conservation of wildlife and for public use including hunting, trapping and fishing. There are 104 wildlife management areas across New York State totaling 190,000 acres.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC - DFWMR
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4755
Ph: (518) 402-8924

DEC BIRD CONSERVATION AREAS

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30935.html

The DEC Bird Conservation Area (BCA) program, modeled after the National Audubon Society's Important Bird Areas Program, seeks to provide a comprehensive, ecosystem approach to conserving birds and their habitats on state lands and waters, by integrating bird conservation interests in agency planning, management, and research projects, within the context of agency missions. Subsequent to passage of the BCA program, the legislature also authorized the State Natural Heritage Areas program to designate Natural Heritage sites on state-owned lands. To date, 50 BCAs have been designated.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC-DFWMR
Nongame and Habitat Unit
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Ph: (518) 402-8924

NEW YORK NATURAL HERITAGE

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/29338.html

The NY Natural Heritage Program is a partnership between DEC and The Nature Conservancy. Our mission is to facilitate conservation of rare animals, rare plants, and significant natural communities such as, unique forest types, wetlands, grasslands, etc. We accomplish this mission by combining thorough field inventories, scientific analyses, expert interpretation, and the most comprehensive database on New York's distinctive biodiversity to deliver the highest quality information for natural resource planning, protection, and management. NY Natural Heritage was established in 1985 and is a contract unit housed within DEC's Division of Fish, Wildlife, & Marine Resources. The program is staffed by more than 25 scientists and specialists with expertise in ecology, zoology, botany, information management, environmental review, and geographic information systems.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC-DFWMR
NY Natural Heritage Program
625 Broadway, 5th Floor
Albany, NY 12233-4757
Ph: (518) 402-8935

STATE WILDLIFE GRANTS

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7179.html

In fall 2001, federal legislation and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) established the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program. The program provides funds from offshore oil and gas leasing to state wildlife agencies for conservation of fish and wildlife species in greatest need of conservation and their associated habitats. The program is implemented with funding provided as a direct result of 'Teaming with Wildlife' efforts sustained for more than a decade by fish and wildlife conservation interests across the country. The SWG program is unique in that it provides funds for species not traditionally hunted or fished. The USFWS apportions the funds to the states via a formula based on land area and population size.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC - DFWMR
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4753
Ph: (518) 402-8920
swgidea@gw.dec.state.ny.us

INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6989.html
www.dec.ny.gov/animals/33358.html
www.dec.ny.gov/animals/32861.html

Invasive species are non-native species that can cause harm to the environment or to human health. As a threat to our biodiversity, they have been judged second only to habitat loss. They come from all around the world with the rate of invasion is increasing along with the increase in international trade accompanying globalization. It is a concern that has plagued our past native ecosystems and is expected to do so into our future. In response, a statewide comprehensive strategic plan was released by the Invasive Species Task Force in 2005. It began to establish a uniform method for how the state will need to begin addressing this problem through prevention, early detection, rapid response, control management, and education. Since then, additional response plans have been developed from this strategy to address the unique measures needed to be taken for specific types of infestations.

CONTACT:

NYS DEC
Office of Invasive Species Coordination
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8924

NEW YORK INVASIVE SPECIES INFORMATION

The New York Invasive Species Clearinghouse
http://nyis.info/

INVASIVE PLANT COUNCIL OF NEW YORK STATE

www.ipcnys.org
195 New Karner Road, Suite 200
Albany, NY 12205
Ph: (518) 690-7871

NYS LANDOWNER INCENTIVES

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/32722.html

The Landowner Incentive Program, partially funded by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, is New York's premier program for the protection of at-risk species habitat on private lands.

Grassland Protection & Management

www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/32891.html

Through the Landowner Incentive Program for Grassland Protection and Management, private landowners are able to participate in the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of grassland habitats. Agricultural grasslands are one of the most important and imperiled habitats across our state. They need to be regularly managed to remain suitable for grassland birds. Since virtually all of the grasslands in our state are agricultural fields under private ownership and control, it would be impossible to protect these habitats and the species they comprise without the voluntary assistance of private landowners.

Since 2006, private landowners have been able to apply for technical and financial assistance to benefit this critical habitat and the species that depend on it. In partnership, DEC and Audubon NY reviewed and prepared a detailed site management plan. To maximize the program's effectiveness, key grassland focus areas have been delineated based on the birds that breed there. To date, nearly 2,000 acres of high quality grasslands have been enrolled in five-year contracts for protection and management. Landowners must refrain from mowing during the nesting season and must mow part of their fields and remove shrubs and trees in the fall in compliance with their site management plans. This management regime allows for birds to nest undisturbed and mimics a natural mosaic of vegetation height and density. Landowners are free to sell and utilize most of the hay that they harvest. In return, they receive a yearly rental payment to offset lost revenue from hay or crop sales. Everyone wins - birds are able to reproduce and prosper, landowners are compensated for their labor and efforts, and the land is kept as open space working grassland.

Management & Protection of Bog Turtle Habitat

www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/48707.html

The Landowner Incentive Program is also involving private landowners in the conservation of unique critical wildlife habitat. The LIP for Management and Protection of Bog Turtle Habitat addresses the need to protect and manage habitat for this endangered species. Most bog turtle habitat occurs on private land and relies on the voluntary protection and management of landowners. Through this program, landowners and not-for -profits will be able to participate in habitat conservation, receiving funding to address invasive species, hydrological changes, habitat fragmentation, and other threats to the species and its habitat. The first round of funding for the project is expected for December 2008 and will be announced through the DEC website and press releases.

Gating of Indiana Bat Hibernacula

Since 2005, the Landowner Incentive Program has been protecting bat hibernacula on private lands through the gating of cave entrances that help to prevent disturbances to overwintering bats. One of the properties protected has historically protected over 200,000 bats. Typically, the DEC establishes Cooperative Agreements with the landowner to perform the required work. Eligibility is limited to landowners having large caves or underground mines which serve as bat wintering areas.

CONTACT:

NYSDEC, Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Ph: (518) 402-8924

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES

www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/whip.shtml
www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/

The USDA Forest Service's Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) provides technical assistance and cost-sharing to private agricultural and nonindustrial forest landowners as well as tribal lands to help them enhance wildlife habitat areas on their lands. Each year $85 million will be available through 2012. Contracts are generally 5 - 10 years in length.

WHIP complements other cost share/incentive programs and provides a mechanism capable of overcoming two major obstacles to increasing wildlife habitat area: 1) compensates landowners for the lack of market incentive to invest in public goods; and 2) encourages landowners to make long-term investments in maintaining the natural resource base.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4755
Ph: (518) 402-8924

STATE ACRES FOR WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a special practice under CRP that addresses critical habitat needs of the states. The NYSDEC Bureau of Wildlife is working with the Farm Service Agency and Audubon NY to prepare Site Conservation Plans for landowners wishing to enroll. Eligibility to the SAFE-CRP program is restricted to the grassland focus areas identified for the Landowner Incentive Program. This geographical focus will maximize the efficiency of limited resources and is a first for CRP. Working together with LIP, CRP, WHIP, and other Farm Bill programs, SAFE-CRP will safeguard land, soil, agriculture, and wildlife habitat for the future.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Ph: (518) 402-8924

GRASSLAND RESERVE

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp/
www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=grp

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property through long-term rental agreements or easements. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and Forest Service are coordinating implementation of GRP, which helps landowners restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland and prairie lands, and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands. An additional 1.22 million acres have been authorized for enrollment in 2009-2012. Tracts must be at least 40 contiguous acres to enroll. Landowners can receive up to 50% cost-sharing on restoration of grasslands.

NYS HABITAT CONSERVATION & PUBLIC ACCESS

www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4771.html

In May, 2006, legislation was introduced to create a New York State Habitat Conservation and Public Access Program, which would encourage landowners to voluntarily designate and conserve critical habitats for wildlife, fish and marine life. Private landowners would be eligible for modest incentives under this program if they conserve important habitat and/or allow public access for fishing, hunting, trapping, or other outdoor wildlife-related recreational activities.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Bureau of Fish & Wildlife Services
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4751
Ph: (518) 402-8924

HABITAT/ACCESS STAMPS

www.dec.ny.gov/permits/329.html

The Habitat/Access Stamp is available to people who want to support DEC's efforts to conserve habitat and increase public access for fish and wildlife related recreation. The 2008-2009 stamp may be purchased for a $5.00 donation at license issuing outlets and online beginning August 18, 2008. All monies raised through purchases of the Habitat/Access Stamp are deposited in the State's Conservation Fund in the Habitat Account. Habitat/Access Grants are awarded annually to fund projects that improve fish and wildlife habitat and public access for hunting, fishing, trapping and other fish and wildlife related recreation.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC DFWMR
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4750
Ph: (518) 402-8845

CONSERVE HABITAT LICENSE PLATES

www.nydmv.state.ny.us/org.htm

Sales from the "Conserve Habitat" custom license plate program are dedicated to improve habitat and to increase habitat access throughout the state. Revenues are deposited in a special account within the Conservation Fund and overseen by DEC. The habitat account is used solely to protect, restore, and manage habitat, and to develop public access for fish and wildlife-related recreation and study.

CONSERVE OPEN SPACE LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5067.html
www.nydmv.state.ny.us/org.htm

Roger Tory Peterson, the foremost naturalist of the 20th century, graciously donated a bluebird painting, which was used as the basis of New York's beautiful bluebird license plate. Anyone concerned about open space conservation should consider purchasing the bluebird plate.

CONTACT:

To Order Conservation License Plates:
NYS Department of Motor Vehicles
www.nydmv.state.ny.us/org.htm
Ph: (518) 402-4838

MINED LAND RECLAMATION

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5020.html

The NYS Mined Land Reclamation Law requires that sound environmental principles be applied to reclaimed areas affected by minerals development to a condition that allows productive use of the land. Regulated mining operations have an approved mining plan that specifies how mining will take place, and an approved reclamation plan that provides for the land to be returned to productive use. Financial security submitted by the mining permit applicant ensures that the land will be reclaimed. Since the state Mined Land Reclamation Law was enacted in 1975, more than 2,500 mines have been reclaimed, most of these by the mine operators. In the small number of cases where the operators have defaulted on their obligation to reclaim, DEC has seized the financial security and used it to carry out the reclamation. Today, sites in New York State that were once mined are used as farms, wetlands, wildlife habitats, residential developments and public recreation areas. In addition, DEC's Division of Mineral Resources, along with the NYS Geological Survey, provides assistance to municipalities with their efforts to define and protect mineral resource aggregate areas within their jurisdictions.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Division of Mineral Resources
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-5600
Ph: (518) 402-8072
Email: *dmnmine@gw.dec.state.ny.us*

ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY

www.apa.state.ny.us

The Adirondack Park was created in 1892 by the State of New York amid concerns for the water and timber resources of the region. Today the Park is the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous United States, greater in size than Yellowstone, Everglades, Glacier, and Grand Canyon National Park combined. The boundary of the Park encompasses approximately 6 million acres, nearly half of which belongs to all the people of New York State and is constitutionally protected to remain “forever wild” forest preserve. The remaining half of the Park is private land which includes settlements, farms, timber lands, businesses, homes, and camps.=

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) was created in 1971 by the New York State Legislature to develop long-range land use plans for both public and private lands within the boundary of the Park. The APA is a New York State governmental agency with an eleven-member board, and a staff consisting of 60 people. The Agency Board meets monthly to act on Park policy issues and permit applications. Agency Board meetings take place the second Thursday and Friday of each month and are open to the public.

CONTACT:
NYS Adirondack Park Agency
P.O. Box 99
1133 NYS Route 86
Ray Brook, NY 12977
Ph: (518) 891-4050

FISH & MARINE RESOURCES

NEW YORK OCEAN & GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION COUNCIL

www.nyoglecc.org

New York State has a strong foundation of planning, regulatory and technological tools to manage the State's fisheries and marine resources. The Council is working to manage ecosystem impacts, promote habitat protection and restoration, and achieve a sustainable fishery with participation by both the commercial and recreational fishing industries and the improvement of data collection efforts.

CONTACT:
New York Ocean & Great Lakes
Ecosystem Conservation Council
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY HARBOR ESTUARY

www.harborestuary.org

CONTACT:
NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program
290 Broadway, 24th Floor
NY, NY 10007-1866
Ph: (212) 637-3889

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN

www.lcbp.org

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

PECONIC ESTUARY

www.peconicestuary.org

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resource
205 N Belle Meade Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0871

LONG ISLAND SOUND STUDY

www.longislandsoundstudy.net

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N. Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0467

NYS GREAT LAKES

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25562.html

WILD, SCENIC & RECREATIONAL RIVERS

www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6033.html
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/32739.html

The Wild Scenic and Recreational River System Act establishes a means of providing protection for three major classifications of river corridors from development through land use controls. Rivers are placed in the system by legislative enactment. Regulated corridors are administered by DEC except for private lands within the Adirondack Park where the Adirondack Park Agency has administrative responsibility. The three river classifications are: Wild, Scenic and Recreational with Wild having the most restrictive limitations and Recreational having the least.

PROTECTION OF WATERS

www.dec.ny.gov/regs/2485.html

CONTACT:
NYSDEC
Bureau of Water Assessment & Management
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-3502
Ph:(518) 402-8180

FRESHWATER WETLANDS PROTECTION

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5124.html
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5138.html

CONTACT:
DEC Regional Offices
www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html
or
NYSDEC Bureau of Habitat
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8903

TIDAL WETLAND REGULATORY INITIATIVE

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N Belle Mead Road, Suite 1

East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0430

TIDAL WETLAND MONITORING

CONTACT:
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0430

EASTERN BROOK TROUT JOINT VENTURE

www.easternbrooktrout.org/
www.easternbrooktrout.org/docs/EBTJV_Conservation_Strategy_July_08.pdf

Brook trout are an important recreational and cultural species, regional icon, and indicator of high water quality. However, brook trout populations are declining across their historic eastern United States range. In New York, only 5% of watersheds that historically contained brook trout in streams and rivers remain intact. Brook trout have been lost from almost all of the large lakes in the Adirondacks that historically supported brook populations, leaving brook trout to survive in a small percentage of smaller lakes and ponds.

The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) was formed in 2004 to address regional and range-wide threats to brook trout. The EBTJV is comprised of Fish and Wildlife agencies from 17 states and a number of federal agencies, conservation organizations, and academic institutions. The EBTJV has completed a detailed, sub-watershed scale assessment of brook trout status and threats throughout its eastern range. Based on this assessment, a range-wide conservation strategy was prepared that lays out specific goals, objectives, and target dates for brook trout protection and restoration.

For New York State, top priorities include the protection of intact brook trout populations through land acquisition, easements, or other methods to ensure the perpetuation of healthy brook trout populations into the future. These opportunities should be identified through the open space planning process.

CONTACT:
NYSDEC - DFWMR
Cold Water Unit
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-4756
Ph: (518) 402-8959

NYS SEAGRASS TASK FORCE

http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/suffolk/habitat_restoration/seagrassli/conservation/managers/seagrass_taskforce.html

Chapter 404 of the Laws of 2006 Laws, established a Seagrass Task Force within DEC's Bureau of Marine Resource; acknowledging the importance of seagrasses and seagrass habitat in NY's waters and the necessity to protect and restore this valuable natural resource. The Task Force is charged with developing management, research, monitoring and regulatory recommendations to the NYS Governor and state officials by December 31, 2009.

CONTACT:
Marine Habitat Protection
NYSDEC, Bureau of Marine Resources
205 N Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, NY 11733-3456
Ph: (631) 444-0430

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SIGNIFICANT COASTAL HABITATS

www.nyswaterfronts.com

Many habitats that are vital to the survival of New York's coastal fish and wildlife resources exist along New York's 3,200 mile shoreline. To protect these important natural areas, DOS, in cooperation with DEC, has designated 250 Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats (SCFWHs) across the State. The designations are designed to protect and offer guidance on management activities within the habitats with important natural resource values, including recreational fishing and other passive natural resource-related activities.

CONTACT:
NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

*– See **Protecting Our Coastlines & Establishing Riparian Buffers & Wetland Protections** for additional program information –*

Preserving Our Scenic, Historic & Cultural Heritage

OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STATE HERITAGE AREAS PROGRAM

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/heritage/herit_area.asp

The New York State Heritage Areas Program fosters unique working partnerships between the state and local governments and the private sector for the preservation, economic development, recreational and educational use of natural and cultural resources of statewide significance. This program and model planning process has received national recognition and deserves continued inter-governmental support. Over 25 years after the development of the Urban Cultural Park system, there are 18 active Heritage Areas encompassing over 400 municipalities. The system remains the oldest and one of the largest, statewide heritage systems in the country.

NEW YORK STATE HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

The NYS Heritage Commission administers the New York State Heritage Trails Program. The program administers a series of thematic trails which will link historical sites together, bringing history to life and giving New Yorkers and visitors an opportunity to learn about and discover our State's rich heritage.

NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST PROGRAM GIFTS & DONATIONS

The Natural Heritage Trust is a public benefit corporation of our state that can accept private sector gifts and funds for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of the natural and historic resources for parks, recreation and historic preservation purposes. This provides an opportunity for OPRHP and DEC to promote public/private cooperation.

NYS HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/
Peebles Island Resource Center
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189
Ph: (518) 237-8643

STATE & NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES

Historic site and historic preservation data may be accessed by contacting:
NYS OPRHP – Bureau of Historic Sites
Peebles Island
Waterford, NY 12188
For archeological data:
CONTACT:
NYS OPRHP
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Box 189
Peebles Island, NY 12188
or
New York State Museum
Anthropological Services
CEC 3097
Albany, NY 12230
http://www.nysm.nysed.gov

OPRHP – NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST

http://nysparks.state.ny.us/nht/default.asp

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SCENIC COASTAL AREAS

www.nyswaterfronts.com

The Department of State's Coastal Management Program assists the state in designating scenic areas of statewide significance (SASS), recognizing and providing additional protection for coastal landscapes important in the natural, historical, and cultural history of the state. Six SASS have been designated in the Hudson River corridor covering over 50% of the shorelands between New York City and Troy. Each scenic

area encompasses unique, highly scenic landscapes which are accessible to the public and recognized for their scenic quality. Designation provides special protection to the landscapes.

HISTORIC MARITIME COMMUNITIES

DOS also assists in continuing our state's maritime legacy by preserving historical elements, supporting contemporary maritime uses in waterfront communities, and making both more accessible to the public to foster an appreciation of our maritime history.

CONTACT:

NYS Department of State
Division of Coastal Resources
99 Washington Avenue, Suite 1010
Albany, NY 12231-0001
Ph: (518) 474-6000

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

LONG ISLAND – REGION 1

2009 REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES

NASSAU & SUFFOLK

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NASSAU COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Thomas Maher – Co. Environmental Coordination*
John McNally – Rauch Foundation
Lisa Ott – North Shore Land Alliance*
Brad Tito – Co. Environmental Coordination
Robert Weltner – Operation SPLASH*
* Returning Member

COMMISSIONERS' APPOINTEES

Charles Bevilacqua – Conservation Fund Advisory Board*
Adrienne Esposito – Citizens Campaign for Environment
Jeff Fullmer – South Shore Estuary Reserve*
John Halsey – Peconic Land Trust*
Ann Marie Jones – Town of Babylon
Michael Levine – Town of North Hempstead
Neal Lewis – Neighborhood Network
Margo Myles – Town of Huntington*
Martin Shea – Town of Southampton*
Melissa Spiro – Town of Southold *
John Turner – Town of Brookhaven*
* Returning Member

SUFFOLK COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Robert DeLuca – Group for the East End
Thomas Isles – Co. Planning*
Kevin McDonald – The Nature Conservancy*
Carrie Meek-Gallagher –Co. Environmental Affairs
John Pavacic – Co. Parks, Recreation & Conservation
* Returning Member

DEC REGIONAL CONTACTS

Peter A. Scully – Regional Director
Charles Hamilton – Natural Resources Supervisor
Heather Amster – Real Property Supervisor
Bill Fonda – Regional Citizen Participation Specialist
Aphrodite Montalvo – Citizen Participation Specialist

OPRHP REGIONAL CONTACTS

Ronald Foley – Regional Director
Michelle Somma – Land Management & Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

March 27, 2008; April 17, 2008; May 15, 2008

LONG ISLAND FUNDING & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee discussed Long Island's political, economic, conservation and real estate climates as they relate to the missions of DEC and OPRHP. A Funding and Policy Subcommittee compiled the following report:

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROJECTS ON LONG ISLAND

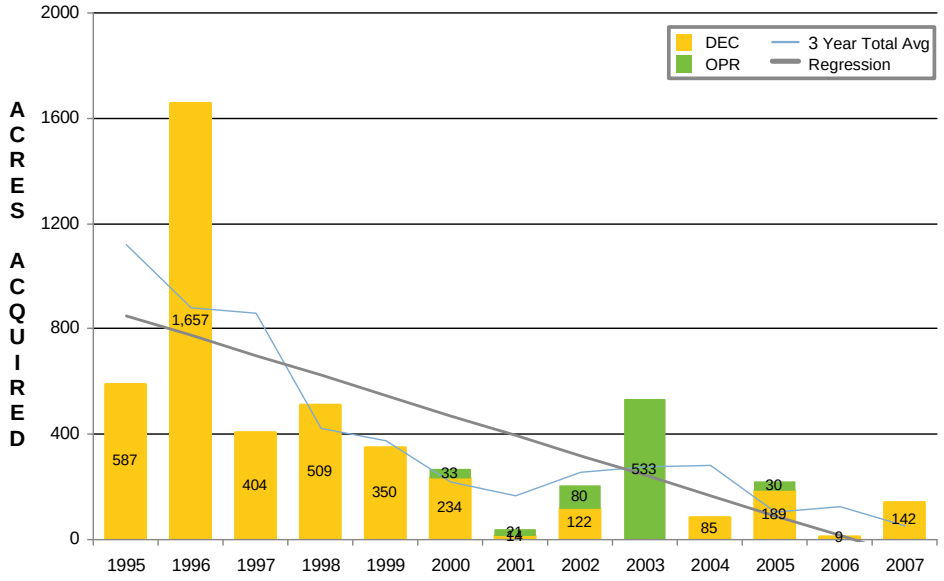
In the three years since the last update of the New York State Open Space Plan, more than 5,000 acres of natural areas, critical wildlife habitat and farmland have been protected on Long Island. The vast majority of these properties were purchased by Town and County Government with little or no financial assistance from the State of New York. In 2006 and 2007, the State spent $11,810,400 to acquire 145 acres, while local government spent a combined $484,438,845 to acquire 3,568 acres. The extraordinary commitment of Long Island's Town and County governments remains un-matched anywhere else in the state. The Long Island Open Space Regional Advisory Committee is deeply troubled by the land acquisition trends shown in the following chart and in the acreage and dollar totals detailed above. Considering that this is a State Open Space Plan, the State should invest more heavily in the successful implementation of its stated goals. Today, the minimal extent of the State's capital investment in environmental acquisitions on Long Island fails to honor the contract implicit in the creation of a State Open Space Plan.

1995 – 2007 NEW YORK STATE LONG ISLAND LAND ACQUISITION

STATE LAND ACQUISITION HAS DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY IN RECENT YEARS

DEC & OPRHP ACRES AQUIRED ON LONG ISLAND

3 YEAR AVERAGE TREND



KEYSTATISTICS & NOTES

*CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of NYS acquisition over the period is about -**25%***

- The state is averaging approx. 75 fewer acres preserved each year.
- OPR purchases, especially in 2003, provided some key acquisitions, but not enough to offset the declining trend.
- Long Island's Last Stand goals require the State to protect approx. 500 acres each year, similar to levels seen in the late 1990s.

In order to conserve the rapidly disappearing open space on Long Island, NYS needs to return to a rate of acquisition that characterized activity in the late 1990s.

Note: 1999 DEC acquisition bar excludes a 3000 acre DOD donation to DEC (NWIRP runway approach zones)

For the State to regain its role as a partner in implementing the Long Island portion of the statewide Open Space Plan, New York must increase its investment level to around $50 to $65 million annually, protecting 500 acres of land per year. This level of commitment would match State contributions seen during the mid and late 1990's and show a renewed State commitment to the Long Island conservation priorities included in the NYS Open Space Plan. Without this firm and steady funding from New York State, Long Island will lose critical pieces of land identified in this Open Space Plan – New York State is an essential partner for success on Long Island.

This committee recognizes that the past administration in Albany was more focused on numbers of acres protected than equitable distribution of NYS funding to address real conservation urgency. And it is true that protection of farmland and natural areas on Long Island costs more than similar properties in other parts of the state; however, note again the extraordinary local commitment to these conservation needs. In calculating which land to protect, New York must also weigh the risk that critical parcels in the Plan might be lost forever to development in the near future. This risk of lost parcels to future development is no-where greater than here on Long Island.

After a decade of protecting places that might not actually be at risk, places where there was no critical urgency to act before losing the lands and waters forever, NY State must now refocus its resources to protect the remaining tracts of our unique Long Island landscape before they are irreversibly lost to fast-paced development. The time here is short; in ten years or less the targeted Long Island parcels in this Plan will either be protected or lost to development. **It is imperative that the Long Island delegation and the Commissioners of DEC and OPRHP come together to address this matter now**. At the end of the ten-year period, the State can redirect available protection funds to other parts of the State because the large scale conservation work on Long Island will be finished.

As the second-largest land owner of public lands on Long Island, the State of New York needs to enhance its commitment to maintaining the health and well-being of the natural areas it owns. It also needs to step up to the plate with significant resources and catalyze cooperative management of areas where other entities share ownership and management responsibilities with it, notably in the Long Island Central Pine Barrens; but in other places around Long Island as well, including the Peconic Estuary, the South Shore Estuary Reserve and the waters of the Long Island Sound. Protection of critical wildlife habitat and natural areas is but the first step to a sustainable natural world. Human impacts can diminish the natural values that moved us to protect these lands in the first place. Good stewardship represents a sensible insurance policy to assure the continued health of our natural investments on Long Island.

ADDITIONAL LONG ISLAND POLICY ITEMS

The Committee has adopted the goal of protecting 25,000 acres of environmentally sensitive open space and 12,000 acres of working farmland in the next decade. Large scale participation by the State of New York is required if these goals are to be met. To that end, the Committee recommends:

1. **Development of a ten-year strategic plan** for the protection of Long Island's last remaining open spaces should be undertaken. Considering impending build-out, a prioritized Long Island Open Space Plan is key to protecting the hoped-for 25,000 acres of open space and 12,000 acres of farmland over the next 10 years.

2. **Increased funding of the EPF**. If the objectives of the Open Space Plan are to be truly met, the statewide funding level for acquisition must be $150 million per year. While this number may seem high, especially in light of recent funding levels of only $32 to $40 million, it is much closer to the true cost of protecting New York's natural heritage.

3. **Increased funding for Long Island**. Local conservation spending on Long Island exceeds the State level many-fold. To meet the special urgency of the impending ten year build-out and to better leverage local conservation dollars, the Committee strongly recommends and urges the State to allocate to Long Island $50 million to $65 million per year for the next ten years.

4. **Surplus State land and undedicated parkland** meeting Open Space Plan objectives should be transferred to DEC or OPRHP jurisdiction or moved to open/active status. Furthermore, a more reliable and transparent process for the transfer of jurisdiction between state agencies for land that

would be appropriate for preservation is critically necessary so that situations such as the proposed Long Island Intermodal Truck-Rail Facility adjacent to the Oak Brush Plains Preserve can be avoided in the future.

If DEC and/or OPRHP is unable or unwilling to accept jurisdiction over surplus land that meets a conservation objective, such land should be offered for transfer to the County or municipality in which the land is situate, regardless of whether the local agency owns adjacent land. Policies and procedures should be streamlined to make such transfers to local government agencies more easily achieved.

5. **Environmental Facilities Corporation.** The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation can provide low- or no-interest loans to government for certain conservation projects. This program encourages government to borrow against future revenue to buy land now before it is lost to development. Any new State bond issue or EPF should include specific language promoting government financing assistance through this program.

- **Streamline Slow State Processes**. State assistance is too slow for the swiftly moving Long Island real estate market, often forcing local government to move ahead alone or allowing preservation opportunities to be lost to development. This pertains to both State land purchases and grant programs.

- **Wetlands mapping amendments** are urgently needed in many areas. Lands that should be protected by regulation are falling prey to development simply because DEC is years behind in its mapping and is forced to issue letters of non-jurisdiction for unmapped wetlands.

- **Amendment of wetlands law.** First written in the 1970's, some portions of New York State's wetlands laws have proven inadequate in protecting the resource. The law should be revisited in light of the science and new technologies that have emerged since the laws originated.

- **Unit Management Plans** should be more actively applied to management of State lands. In practice, actual management sometimes has little resemblance to that called for in the UMP's.

- **Farmland preservation**. Long Island enjoys a rich agricultural history that is being lost to development. In terms of revenue, Suffolk County is the top agricultural county in the State. Both Nassau and Suffolk Counties and several towns have very active farmland preservation programs. Though farmland preservation is not within the purview of either DEC or OPRHP, the Committee recommends substantially higher levels of funding in the EPF for the farmland preservation programs of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

- **"Un-development."** Many properties on Long Island that are worthy of preservation are improved with various types of structures. In certain instances, "un-development" is required to return properties to their natural state or to provide public access to open space and waterways in densely developed areas. The State should not disallow acquisition of improved properties when a conservation objective can be achieved. There are many successful examples of this type of "return to nature" acquisitions across Long Island.

- **Increased funding for "Care of State Lands"** is highly recommended. Increased staffing and funding are necessary for proper maintenance and management of new and existing facilities. The Committee recommends that Care of State Lands be fully funded for statewide use at $20 million.

- **State University campuses** should undergo a master planning process with the goal of identifying,

mapping and preserving significant natural areas on State University lands, including forests, wetlands, streams, water tables, steep slopes, habitat and other sensitive natural areas. The 65 S.U.N.Y. campuses around the state represent a very significant public asset comprising many thousands of acres. A protection strategy must be created and implemented.

- **Eminent Domain** should be an available acquisition tool in Nassau and Suffolk Counties for the acquisition of inholdings when agreement with a landowner cannot be reached *and* when continued private ownership impedes proper and necessary management of the surrounding public land.

NEW YORK CITY – REGION 2

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March 25, 2008; April 15, 2008; April 28, 2008; May 19, 2008

INTRODUCTION

The New York City – Region 2 Advisory Committee (RAC) for the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan convened four times over an eight week period to review the status of previously listed properties and identify additional parcels to be included in a new regional Priority List for potential purchase under the State Land Acquisition Plan. In meetings hosted by the regional offices of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), the Region 2 RAC also discussed the strategic importance of measures other than acquisition for preserving open space in New York City (NYC), where the cost of land is at a premium, noting in particular the successes that can be achieved through land transfers between public agencies.

Recent estimates project that the population of the five boroughs will increase to nine million by 2030. In 2007, the Mayor of New York City released a report and planning document called "*PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York*," which emphasizes that the supply of land is a fixed commodity in New York City, describes a range of issues related to sustainable development in the context of a growing population, and sets forth a proposed series of actions and recommendations to protect and improve the environment and quality of life in the five boroughs. Certainly, this projected population growth would generate unprecedented development pressure and could have a profound effect on the amount and quality of open space, parkland, and historic preservation resources within the City.

In preparing its recommendations for the 2009 Open Space Conservation Plan, the Region 2 RAC reviewed the successes and missed opportunities over the previous open space conservation planning cycles. Based on this review, there is increased concern that, due to the rising costs of securing waterfront land, inner city parks, and historic buildings for public use, the region will lose properties on its Priority List at an ever accelerating pace. A significant dilemma for Region 2 is that the initial

investment of public funds associated with securing lands for open space typically is not accompanied by adequate resources to maintain and manage the newly-acquired sites. This is particularly important when dramatic inflationary pressures continuously escalate the stewardship costs for these newly preserved properties.

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Region 2 RAC took note of significant open space successes achieved since the last open space plan update was published in 2006. The Committee estimates that since the last report, at least 210 acres of land have been protected through acquisitions and/or transfers of government land for conservation purposes.

One of the key benefits of the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan process is that it not only guides the land conservation efforts of state agencies, but also provides a framework for cooperation with partners in other sectors of government and the nonprofit and philanthropic communities. Since the 2006 updated plan was adopted, tremendous progress has been made in protecting the properties listed on the 2006 Region 2 Priority List. While the State of New York, through DEC and OPRHP, took a strong leadership role on most of these projects, these land conservation efforts were greatly enhanced by the work of other organizations.

The Committee notes that no New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) dollars have been spent in New York City for land acquisition since the year 2000, with the purchase of Mt. Loretto Unique Area. In this context, the amount of open space conservation that has been achieved is even more remarkable, and can be attributed to the work of the partners noted below as well as the resourcefulness of the state agencies in Region 2 in using federal grants, private financing, and environmental benefit funds linked to consent orders and legal settlements to successfully acquire land. The efforts of the following partners were instrumental in achieving these remarkable successes:

The City of New York: The City, through the Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) and the Department of Environmental Protection, has its own robust land acquisition program that often overlaps with and complements the State's efforts. Since 2006, NYCDPR has acquired 176 acres for open space and recreational use in the five boroughs.

The Port Authority of NY & NJ: In 2001, the Port Authority initiated the Hudson Raritan Estuary Resources Program, allocating $30 million in New York and $30 million in New Jersey for habitat protection purposes. To date, the Port Authority has helped protect nine sites totaling 210 acres in the two states, including five important sites in New York (four of which were on the Open Space Plan's Priority List for Region 2).

National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency: Through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) has provided matching funds with a grant to acquire land within Region 2, in partnership with state and city agencies.

The Trust for Public Land: Acting as an intermediary in conservation real estate transactions, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) has worked with the State and the City to protect more than 100 acres of land for open space and recreational use since the last cycle. Also, TPL stewards 64 community gardens across the City and is working with the City Department of Parks and Recreation to help revitalize 185 playgrounds and neighborhood parks on city-owned land.

Specific land conservation successes include, but are not limited to:

A. ACQUISITIONS

Bronx River

- Aquadog – .38 acres acquired by DEC as an addition to the Bronx River Trailway.

Harbor Herons Complex

- South Brother Island – a seven acre island now owned by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation; partners involved in the acquisition included TPL, The Point Community Development Corporation, and the Wildlife Conservation Society.
- Neck Creek – 16 acres acquired by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Sharrotts Road – a 25 acre portion acquired by DEC.

Long Pond/Butler Woods–2 properties acquired

- Butler Manor – 18 acres acquired by DEC; partners included the Port Authority, NOAA, TPL, and members of the New York Congressional Delegation.
- North Mount Loretto – 75 acres acquired by DEC; partners included the Port Authority and TPL

Staten Island Bluebelt

- A four acre acquisition of South Beach Northern wetlands now owned by NYC DEP; partners included the Port Authority and TPL.
- A .25 acre acquisition in Great Kills Harbor that is now owned by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation; partners included the Port Authority and TPL.

B. TRANSFERS

Bronx River Trailway

- Lafayette street end
- Cement Plant

Harbor Herons Complex

- Saw Mill Creek
- Merrill's Creek

OPEN SPACE PLANNING ISSUES

1. **Improving Land Management Capability.** The 2006 Open Space Plan includes a map of the State's "Conservation Successes," which shows an impressive cluster of sites in Region 2. In many instances, however, "success" describes only the acquisition of property, not the upkeep. One of the guiding principles of the Plan is that the need for adequate management and stewardship must be taken into account in efforts to preserve open space. Unfortunately, the fiscal and human resources needed to properly manage new property assets have not been adequate. While Region 2 agencies such as the State OPRHP's Regional Office and NYCDPR may have large operations programs, they face significant challenges in absorbing new properties and providing a standard level of care without commensurate increases in maintenance program resources. Others, such as Region 2 DEC, play an important role in acquiring open space priority parcels yet have significant needs for staffing to address property management. Support for land management activity must improve if we are to rightfully label our open space conservation accomplishments as "successes."

2. **Conserving Precious Natural Resources.** In Region 2, the dynamic tension between environmental protection, natural resources management, and development pressures is an especially complex and delicate challenge. For example, the Staten Island Borough President's representative objected to inclusion of the Gulfport Marsh and Uplands as a priority site, based on the site's value as a location for potential economic development. The nomination of this site, it should be noted, included a recognition that some part of the upland (non-wetland) property may be suitable for development, noting that it may be appropriate to establish a corridor for access to an existing dock on the

property that would accommodate some future water-dependent use on the eastern portion of the site near Gulf Avenue. The Borough President's objections illustrate that some careful balancing of economic and open space values is likely to be needed at this site. Similarly, the Port Authority, which serves in an advisory capacity to the Region 2 RAC, notes that future plans for the Goethal's Bridge may need to be considered in the context of preservation efforts for the Graniteville Swamp area, another priority site on Staten Island.

Over the past 20 years, large industrial operations across the City have been closing, prompting land use and zoning changes that facilitate a variety of new development activities. A significant number of these sites are located on the waterfront or along inlets that provide ideal opportunities for public access to the shoreline and, in some cases, they have become wildlife habitat. In many of these areas, bird habitats have begun to revitalize, and in certain water channels increased fish populations have been detected. Potential opportunities to preserve or create waterfront open space in Region 2 continue to increase, particularly along the eastern shore of the East River, where local parks and pathways can be created. Establishment of bike and pedestrian trails along New York City's shoreline has long been a priority of Region 2, as successful acquisitions in the five boroughs have amply demonstrated.

A matter that merits further analysis and discussion is the importance of considering open space conservation goals in the context of the potential impacts of climate change. As concerns over sea level rise and extreme climatic events mount in light of the scientific consensus surrounding climate change, the Region 2 RAC notes the need to evaluate the potential roles that open space conservation could play in protecting or preserving natural systems that could help buffer the City from harmful impacts.

3. **Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Open Space.** As the built environment increases to the maximum allowed by zoning across New York City, the higher population density that comes with it places more burdens on existing playgrounds and parks. Many of these amenities are already very heavily utilized, and they need significant cyclical maintenance and improvement to handle increased use. The amount of acreage devoted to public gardens and small parks must also increase to keep pace with this rise in the number of households. Fortunately, in Region 2 there has been continued interest in increasing the number of community gardens and expanding the amount of open space in underserved communities. The pressing need for open space in underserved neighborhoods across the City necessitates a continued focus on conserving, acquiring, or preserving smaller sites. While expending time and energy on securing such sites may not initially appear to be an efficient use of relatively scarce resources, in fact the acute lack of open space in these communities gives every square foot that is set aside far greater value as a public amenity, proportionally, than larger parcels in less densely populated areas.

4. **Connecting and Augmenting Larger Urban Parks.** Continuing efforts to reclaim or "repurpose" federal land once used by the military, and to rezone former industrial areas along the waterfront, has created a rare opportunity to design and build large new public spaces in the City. For example, redevelopment proposals for Governors Island, large sections of the Brooklyn waterfront in Red Hook and Sunset Park, all have featured significant open space components. It is important that, as redevelopment of these sites goes forward, implementation of the commitments to provide public amenities, such as open space and recreational areas, be closely monitored. Linear parks and greenways serve an important function in connecting residential areas to large urban parks, and similarly to small neighborhood parks, have a particularly high value in densely populated urban areas.

5. **Protecting Historic and Cultural Resources.** The rezoning of industrial sites along the waterfront presents an opportunity to memorialize the industrial age here in New York City. A model for this is the sequential implementation and development of the High-Line Park, which makes use of elevated and abandoned rail lines to create a striking public amenity on Manhattan's West Side. By marrying existing historic building and structures with open space and recreational uses, our waterfront and maritime history could be approached in the same creative manner. For example, the former Brooklyn Navy Yard, located in Kings County, was once known as America's premier shipbuilding facility. It was purchased by the City of New York in 1967. Extraordinary opportunities remain for historic preservation and recreational use within the property that are in keeping with the use of this 300 acre site as an industrial park. In particular, preservation of the remaining historic buildings, especially as they relate to open space conservation and waterfront access, should be made a priority by the City as it plans the redevelopment of the site.

. **Facilitating Land Transfers.** Although the acquisition of privately-held lands for the purpose of open space conservation remains critical, many properties that are already publicly-owned through federal, state, and city agencies could be formally and permanently "repurposed" for recreational use. The relatively high-cost of land in Region 2 makes this kind of land transfer from public agencies an especially important mechanism for open space conservation – often entailing little or no cost for hundreds of acres. For instance, rail corridors such as the North Shore Railroad could be excellent candidates for conversion to recreational trailway use. While obstacles sometimes exist to such transfers in the Region, such as the need to remediate environmental contamination or address public safety and security concerns, no process is currently in place to facilitate the transfer of the properties identified in Appendix 3 of the Region 2 report. Models for this kind of facilitation do exist, such as the City of New York's Wetlands Transfer Task Force, which is charged with analyzing and identifying which city-owned properties should be transferred to other public agencies for open space uses. Some properties on the Priority List could be made even more attractive and valuable as open space assets by coupling them with strategic land transfers.

While consensus exists regarding most parcels on this list, it should be noted that the Staten Island Borough President, through his representative, objected to inclusion of the Richmond Parkway Right-of-Way and Willowbrook Parkway Right of Way on the list of Suggested Government Properties with Potential for Transfer for Public Open Space/Recreational Use (Appendix 1 of Region 2's Report), preferring that they remain available for potential future use as roadways. The Port Authority of New York/New Jersey objects to listing of Bergen Basin and the Port Authority Ballfield in Queens County, noting that these parcels are already being managed as open space. Although the Committee chose not to remove the parcels from the Government Transfer list, the members discussed their appreciation of the Port Authority's management of these parcels at the meeting at which that matter was raised.

NEW YORK CITY FUNDING & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Region 2 RAC recommends the following:

A. Improve Land Management Capability

1. Provide sufficient dedicated positions in Region 2 City and State agencies for the management of their public open spaces.
2. Increase EPF stewardship funding to the Region by:
    a. Developing a companion program to the Open Space Conservation Plan to provide an initial EPF stewardship award at the time of property acquisition for immediate property needs (i.e. boundary marking, debris removal, proper access); and

   b. Giving priority to EPF stewardship funding requests for parcels acquired through the Open Space Conservation Plan.
3. Implement a campaign to foster public participation in land management by:
   a. Encouraging formation of dedicated advocacy groups (i.e. "alliance", "conservancy" or 'friends of..." organizations);
   b. Promoting existing stewardship programs such as DEC's Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Stewardship program; and
   c. Conducting a regular public program of site management activities such as clean-ups, planting or ecological surveys.
4. Ensure availability of resources for environmental remediation of open space properties as needed.

B. Conserve Precious Natural Resources
1. Review the Open Space Conservation Planning Process to determine how the possible impact of anthropogenic climate change should be incorporated into future cycles, particularly with respect to buffering the potential impacts of sea level rise and extreme climatic events such as floods and hurricanes.
2. Develop guidance on how increased attention to stormwater management in urban areas should affect the design, acquisition, and conservation of open space in New York State.
3. Allocate Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) money in a systematic way to ensure that Region 2 obtains a fair share allocation of EPF funds.

C. Ensure Equitable Distribution of Open Space.
1. Develop policy guidance to facilitate the establishment of dedicated funding revenue streams from State-authorized 'payments in lieu of taxes" for the acquisition and management of open space parcels in underserved communities.
2. Establish a set of criteria or benchmarks by which to measure progress achieved in the equitable distribution of open space in underserved communities.
3. Increase the purchase of sufficient smaller parcels in underserved communities to achieve the benchmarks for equitable distribution of open space. [The State should expand or develop flexible cooperative models with the City to manage these smaller parcels, where appropriate and mutually beneficial, while ensuring accountability for proper management.]
4. Allocate EPF money in a systematic way to promote equitable distribution of open space based on community and population needs.

D. Connect and Augment Larger Urban Parks
1. Promote development of greenways that connect park lands.
2. Enhance the connections between park lands and residential neighborhoods.
3. Improve mass transit access to open space resources (for example, through strategic extension of bus routes).
4. Promote further establishment of greenbelts and bluebelts.

E. Protect Historic and Cultural Resources
1. Allocate EPF money strategically to protect historic and cultural resources within or adjacent to open space areas.

F. Facilitate Land Transfers
1. Establish Regional Interagency Working Groups that meet regularly to evaluate state-owned lands within each region to determine whether they could be transferred to DEC or ORPHP (or appropriate local agencies) for use as open space.

2. Explore appropriate ways to maximize public access to publicly owned open space, including where those parcels are owned by agencies that are not specifically parks or environmental agencies.

LOWER HUDSON VALLEY – REGION 3

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

January 11, 2008; March 3, 2008; April 21, 2008; May 8, 2008

LOWER HUDSON VALLEY FUNDING & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lower Hudson Valley – Region 3 Open Space Advisory Committee wants to reiterate its acknowledgment of the great amount of progress that has been made in protecting priority project parcels in the Region and commend state agency staff for their commitment to the goals of the Open Space Plan and their initiative in its implementation. Some of the following recommendations are updated from the 2006 Open Space Plan. The committee continues to endorse the policy recommendations from the previous plan. Recommendations from the 2006 plan that have been updated are included below with updates in italics.

A. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee's highest priority policy issues (more fully described below):

- Environmental Protection Fund – full and dedicated funding;,
- Stewardship – increase in funding;
- State Land Taxes – property taxes should be paid on all state lands;
- Climate Change – protect natural coastlines, provide riparian buffer protections

B. FUNDING NEEDS

1. **State Open Space Funding.** Continuous, full funding of the Environmental Protection Fund at an annual level of $250 million is crucial to carrying out the stated goals of the Plan. With development pressure being felt in Region 3 as never before, the window of opportunity to

preserve critical open space resources is narrowing. Only if sufficient resources are available for direct state acquisition of priority projects and leveraged support for county, municipal and not-for-profit land conservation initiatives can we hope to preserve the essential network of "green infrastructure" that defines and supports the region's open space resources. Any funds generated by the Bottle Bill, the Real Estate Transfer Tax, and other sources that contribute the Environmental Protection Fund should remain in the fund.

2. **Conservation Partnership Program.** The Committee appreciates and supports the State's $1.5 million funding of the Land Trust Alliance re-grant program to support the work of land trusts in carrying out the goals of the Open Space Plan. The Committee urges the state to continue to do so.

3. **Soil and Water Conservation Districts** require additional funding to fulfill their mandate of inventorying all agricultural lands within the counties they serve.

C. FISCAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Taxes on State-owned Land.** In Region 3, there is a patchwork of differing policies, where taxes are paid on most lands managed by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, the state pays taxes on state-owned lands in Putnam County, the state pays taxes on forest preserve and reforestation areas, but taxes are not paid on some other state-owned conservation lands, such as DEC's multiple use areas and wildlife management areas. The Committee recommends that the state pay taxes on all state-owned land in a uniform manner, based on the legislation recently adopted for Putnam County. The Committee's recommendation is not intended to extend to other levels of government, but is focused specifically on state-owned lands. The recent New York State Supreme Court decision concerning state-owned lands in western New York (Dillenburg) emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to taxation of state lands.

2. **Conservation Easement Tax Credit and Conservation Donor Tax Credit.** The Committee strongly supports continuation of the law which provides incentives to landowners who are considering voluntary private land conservation. The process should be amended to include mandated and purchased easements in the credit. A principle of the Open Space Plan is that it is neither practical nor desirable to purchase all land that merit protection. Only through voluntary private land conservation will other significant open space resources be preserved. These measures make it possible for a broader range of landowners to consider protecting their land.

3. **Not-For-Profit Conservation Lands Must Remain Tax Exempt.** From time-to-time, legislative proposals are made which would restrict or do away with the right of non-profit conservation organizations to secure a tax exemption for conservation lands. The economic value of land conserved for public benefit has been well established in numerous studies. Furthermore, at this time when pressure on land and natural resources is as great as ever, and funding for conservation projects is at a premium, it would be counter to the goals of the State Open Space Plan to further burden not-for-profit conservation organizations with the obligation to pay property taxes on lands acquired for conservation purposes.

4. **Community Preservation Act.** The Committee strongly supports a Community Preservation Act legislation that enables cities, towns and villages in New York State to impose a real estate transfer fee of up to two percent of the sale price of real property to fund the establishment and preservation of parks, nature preserves, recreational areas, open spaces, agricultural areas, wetlands and marshes, watershed areas, beaches and shorelines, rivers, forest lands, waterfronts,

historic places and wildlife habitat. In support of regional planning efforts, the Committee further recommends that the act be extended to enable similar powers to counties.

D. GENERAL PLANNING, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Protecting Waterfronts and Waterways.** All waterfront and waterway development projects should include meaningful floodplain protection, habitat conservation, and public access. Provide siting and planning guidelines for development projects on waterways outside of cities, villages, hamlets and designated community centers. Prioritize habitat restoration along waterfronts and waterways. LWRPs need to include stronger public access requirements. Greater funding for local waterfront and waterway planning and technical assistance will also help to advance these goals. Recent flooding emphasizes the need for floodplain remapping and buyouts of flood-prone areas and have the potential for federal-state-regional-local partnerships, statewide policies, and matching grants involving regulating development in addition to purchase. There are parcels for acquisition that meet this need.

2. **SEQRA Review for Large-scale Projects in Major Resource Areas.** The Committee continues to be concerned about the impacts on open space that will result from the increasing number of large-scale development projects in Major Resource Areas. A fully coordinated, vigilant, and enforced SEQRA process among state agencies should be required. The Committee also recommends that agency policymakers create and enforce development siting guidelines for all new development within Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance to protect scenic resources while guiding the creation of well-designed and appropriately-scaled development. In addition, the process should be more consistent with the values associated with projects in Priority Project Areas. Accordingly, the Full Environmental Assessment Form should include a question regarding whether the project is within Priority Project Areas. Encourage local designation Critical Environmental Areas within Priority Project Areas to ensure that open space values are considered in local project reviews.

3. **Adding the Shawangunks to the Forest Legacy Program.** It is recommended that the Shawangunk Mountains, from New Jersey to Rosendale, NY be designated as a Forest Legacy area. The US Forest Service's Forest Legacy program is designed to protect "working forests" those that protect water quality, provide habitat, forest products, opportunities for recreation and other public benefits. The program supports state efforts to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands that are threatened by the encroachment of development and fragmentation. It is a voluntary program designed to protect privately owned forest land and focuses on acquisition of partial interests, such as conservation easements. Once designated as a Forest Legacy area, projects in the region would be eligible for up to 75% of the costs of protection. In order to secure designation, New York State must nominate the Shawangunks to the US Forest Service. The Shawangunks meet the criteria for Forest Legacy designation due to the presence of a globally significant forest matrix block, sensitivity of the forest resources and the potential impacts on those resources by development and fragmentation. The Shawangunks support the second largest chestnut oak forest in New York State. This forested area provides water quality protection, supports over 57 rare and imperiled plant and animal species and is renowned as a recreational mecca. Many forested properties that border more than 30,000 protected ridgetop acres have already been evaluated in terms of their biodiversity and habitat values.

4. **Forest Rangers.** The Committee urges state policymakers to provide funding for more forest rangers, and recommends that forest rangers should be distributed more evenly across geographic areas. Furthermore, the distinction between Forest Ranger and Conservation Officer

should be reexamined to emphasize the importance of Forest Rangers in public education and stewardship of public lands.

5. **State and Nonprofit Acquisition Partnerships.** The Committee is interested in promoting a better defined and streamlined process for transferring lands from not-for-profits to State agencies. In particular, the Committee suggests that uniform guidelines be created which describe the steps in the process and requirements for completion of projects, as well as guidelines concerning the terms for repayment of costs and expenses associated with transactions carried out in anticipation of transfer to the state. Committee recommends identifying methods to create methods to streamline the closing process for acquisition, including adopting models from other states, such as the NJ Green Acres program, that works with land trusts to facilitate the process. The Land Trust Alliance could provide standards for such a program as part of their accreditation requirements. Appoint a NYS DEC Director of Land Protection with the goal of taking the open space closing process from 36 to 18 months. This additional staff position would be responsible for ensuring smooth hand-offs from regional offices to DEC Albany to the Attorney General and Comptroller's offices. He or she would also be available to track projects through the many stages of land acquisitions, and work to eliminate bottlenecks.

6. **Linking Conservation and Development Issues.** Local comprehensive plans and other plans that are enabled by General Municipal Law (e.g., open space plans) should articulate interdependent relationships between development and conservation issues, such as need for more compact development to protect open space and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as well as need for communities to accommodate density to achieve environmental and socio-economic goals. The 2006 Open Space Plan refers to Smart Growth in the context of directing development away from ecologically sensitive lands. While this is a significant benefit, Smart Growth and related planning techniques have a critical role to play in directing land use thereby protecting open space resources. State open space policies should support and be consistent with policies that promote greater attention to the interdependency of open space and developed areas. The value of recreational resources should be recognized in relation to natural resources, including their role in economic development. For example, existing infrastructure such as Route 28 corridor serves as gateway to Catskill Park, but its scenic values are ignored and could be a greater focus for context-sensitive economic development. Small-scale, contextually-sensitive development should be promoted and the character of transportation corridors should be addressed.

7. **Interagency Planning Consistency.** A significant planning policy issue relates to the current failure of inter-agency "concurrency" or consistency of plans and of all plans for capital projects between municipalities (including counties) and/or state governmental agencies. NYS statutes related to the adoption of comprehensive plans by municipalities note that the effect of adoption includes "All land acquisitions and public improvements, including those identified in the official map … shall be in accordance with a …comprehensive plan , if one exists." And "All plans for capital projects of a municipality or state governmental agency on land included in the comprehensive plan …. shall take such plan into consideration."

8. **Addressing Climate Change.** R3 committee supports efforts to incorporate climate change issues into the revised plan…Need to align os policies with impacts on other land uses that direct affect carbon emissions, such as planning and zoning policies, transportation, housing, and building codes.

9. **Recreation.** The Bluestone Wild Forest area could sustain expanded recreational opportunities and we recommend such consideration as additional lands are added to the state's holdings here.

10. **Environmental Justice.** The state should consciously work toward providing open space and recreation in urban and underserved communities to minimize transportation and improve overall access to these resources.

11. **DEC/DEP Access Agreement.** The committee supports [future] cooperative efforts between DEC and DEP that ensure continued protection of these lands with regards to water quality while allowing for greater public access to the City's watershed lands.

12. **Public Access to Protected Lands.** The plan should acknowledge that the public benefit of protecting open space does not always equal public access. There is benefit to protection without access. Sound, private stewardship can support other important public values, such as community character, wildlife habitats, viewsheds, watersheds, and Smart Growth goals.

13. **We recommend that the New York State legislature enact, with local support, an extension of the "Blue Line" of the Catskill Park** to further and support the purposes of Article 14 of the NYS Constitution. Specifically, an extension of the Blue Line to include he area west and south of Lundy Estate, the upper reaches of the Esopus and west of 209 e.g. Vly, Roosa Pond & heading west toward Mombaccus and south, and the area between the Rondout and Neversink Reservoirs such as Thunder Hill and Lake Paradise. This will incorporate areas that are now outside the Catskill Park but that would be better protected as part of the Forest Preserve to promote habitat integrity, ecosystem-based management and connectivity between areas of ecological significance. Forested landscapes, such as the Lundy Estate property, are one category among those that would benefit from such Forest Preserve designation and offer tremendous benefits for wildlife corridors, water quality protection and other carbon offset opportunities if they were included in the Catskill Park.

E. STEWARDSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 CHAPTER VII)

1. **Methodology for Calculating Stewardship Costs.** The committee identified a need for a consistent methodology to calculate stewardship costs for public and private lands based on a well-established methodology utilized in by counterparts in site and resource management fields. With each update of this plan and its recommendations for acquisitions, funding needs for stewardship increase.

2. **Volunteerism.** Many privately held lands rely to a great extent on volunteerism, which should be included in the calculation of stewardship costs.

3. **Stewardship of Conservation Easements.** The increasing number of conservation easements adds another set of stewardship costs. Violations and enforcement are the most costly part, and although the state's monitoring role is well-meaning, it adds an increasing burden on the state. The Land Trust Alliance accreditation requirements for land trusts (none yet accredited) could help ease this burden.

4. **Municipally-held Conservation Easements.** Municipalities that require conservation easements or other open space set-asides in development review and permitting should be better equipped to track these properties, which at present are not effectively monitored and enforced. Municipalities should be better educated and equipped to monitor and enforce such easements or provide the resources to a qualified conservation organization to do the same.

CAPITAL DISTRICT – REGION 4

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES

ALBANY, COLUMBIA, DELAWARE, GREENE, MONTGOMERY,
OTSEGO, RENSSELAER, SCHENECTADY, SCHOHARIE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Mark Fitzsimmons, Co-Chairman	Albany County
Roland Vosburgh	Columbia County
Nancy Gallup	Delaware County
Ed Diamante	Greene County
Shayne Walters	Montgomery County
Richard Hilary	Otsego County
vacant	Rensselaer County
Donald Snell	Schenectady County
Carl Stefanik	Schoharie County

COMMISSIONERS' APPOINTEES

Mark King, Co-Chairman	The Nature Conservancy – Eastern NY Chapter
Judy Anderson	Community Consultants (at-large member)
Charlie Laing	Scenic Hudson, Inc.
Martin Daley	Parks & Trails New York
Tim Barnard	Region 4 Fish & Wildlife Management Board
Deborah DeWan	Catskill Center for Conservation & Development
Alan White	Catskill Landowners' Association
Peter Paden / David Diaz	Columbia Land Conservancy
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NYC DEP CONTACT – Abbie Duchon & Paul Lenz, Land Acquisition and Stewardship Program

ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE COMMISSION – Chris Hawver, Executive Director

2009 ADVISORY MEETINGS

March 27, 2008; April 17, 2008; May 15, 2008

INTRODUCTION

This current revision to the original New York State Open Space Conservation Plan represents the fifth successive update since the Plan was first completed in 1992. Each update reflected the concerted efforts of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), in addition to the contribution of the nine Regional Advisory Committees established to provide a local perspective on open space conservation priorities and policies.

The following report, which presents the most recent perspective of the Region 4 Advisory Committee, includes an overview of the criteria established by the Committee for determining priorities and brief descriptions of the current list of recommendations for open space protection in Region 4. It should be noted that open space priorities are presented alphabetically and not according to rank or importance value. Finally, as with previous years, the Committee has given careful consideration to both previously proposed and newly formulated Policy Recommendations that address the framework of open space protection in our state.

OPEN SPACE PRIORITY CRITERIA

The following criteria were applied by the Committee to the evaluation of open space areas in Region 4 and determination of priorities for protection. As presented below, these criteria are essentially unchanged from those applied in previous reports.

- Preserving the Region's ecological diversity with emphasis on defining and measuring an area's biological diversity when evaluating priorities for protection.
- Ensuring the quality of the Region's water resources by protection of surface waters, aquifers, and associated watershed and recharge areas.
- Preserving the heritage of the Region by protecting our cultural resources including, but not limited to, areas of historic and archaeological significance.
- Protecting working landscapes including, but not limited to, farmland and forests.
- Providing or enhancing public access to the Region's waterways and water bodies.
- Providing or enhancing access to State holdings including, but not limited to, Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, Reforestation Areas, Multiple-use Areas, and Forest Preserve lands.
- Preserving the heritage value associated with historic uses of our natural resources including fishing, hunting, and trapping.
- Consolidating and connecting public land such as State Wildlife Management Areas, Reforestation Areas, and other protected holdings, which could include lands owned or controlled by other levels of government, not-for-profit organizations, or educational institutions.
- Considering the current level of threat or vulnerability in terms of imminent sale, subdivision, development, or other consequence that would limit or preclude efforts to protect an open space area.
- Considering previous protection efforts and commitments of public and/or private funds that have resulted in only partial protection of a given area for which full protection is justified.

CAPITAL DISTRICT FUNDING & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Anticipating Land Conservation and Energy Policy Conflicts**
   It is important to recognize that current State energy policies, which emphasize developing alternatives to fossil fuels, may directly conflict with key objectives of the State open space planning process, which focus on protecting river and stream corridors; sustaining a high biodiversity; preserving important viewsheds, and conserving productive farmland, among others. Specific

examples of these conflicts include impact of wind farms on scenic vistas and migratory birds and bats; damming of rivers and streams for hydro power; and depleted soil productivity resulting from monocultures of corn and other biofuel sources. It is, therefore, critical that our compelling need for alternative energy sources be advanced within the context of the resource conservation goals identified in this Plan and, conversely, notwithstanding our need for reduced energy consumption, that resource protection be pursued with an appreciation for long-term, innovative energy solutions.

2. Stewardship
Whereas the current objectives of the State's Open Space Conservation Plan appear to focus on acquisition, the long-term effectiveness of land protection programming rests on the State's ability to manage its land resources in a manner that retains or enhances the natural, physical, and cultural integrity of the land, as well as provisions for public use. Furthermore, it is of paramount importance that a comprehensive plan be developed to stabilize and improve stewardship of privately-owned lands that complement the benefits of public lands, as in the case of the mosaic of private and State Forest Preserve lands comprising the Catskill Park. This should include State funding to ensure that private forest owners have the opportunity to work in concert with professional foresters to develop forest management plans that address forest health, sustainable yields, and the long-term viability of their land.

3. New Funding Sources for Land Protection
The importance of open space conservation is clearly demonstrated by the tremendous demand for the State's open space grant programs. It is, therefore, of great importance that new or additional funding for acquisition and stewardship be identified to supplement the current Environmental Protection Fund so that the goals and objectives established in this Open Space Conservation Plan might be achieved.

4. Staff-related Funding Support
The State should allocate sufficient budgetary resources to maintain staffing levels that are commensurate with open space protection activities and stewardship needs. The Committee is sensitive to the constraints of the State's budget; however, it makes no sense to provide land acquisition funds through the EPF and Bond Act programs and not to provide sufficient resources to carry out key functions such as surveying and appraisal work that are prerequisite to protection activities.

5. Enhancement of Public Lands
The need for enhancement of public lands, which includes enhanced access provisions, as well as securing inholdings or parcels adjacent to public lands, is addressed in the 2006 NYS Open Space Conservation Plan as a subcategory of Statewide Small Projects (#136; p. 316). Unfortunately, circumstances may arise when the availability and/or vulnerability of an important parcel represents a unique enhancement opportunity, but because of "Small Project" limits placed on land area (200 acres) and cost ($250,000), such an opportunity may be lost. The Region 4 Committee, therefore, recommends that Enhancement of Public Lands be considered distinct from Statewide Small Projects, much the same as State Park and State Historic Site Protection (#133; p. 314) is considered separate from the Small Projects category.

6. Funding for Small Projects
Small-scale acquisition projects that provide access to State lands and waterways; buffer or consolidate State holdings; link trails and greenways; or protect significant habitats or historic sites are a significant component of the State's open space conservation program. In recognition of this, the State established a "Statewide Small Projects" category to complement priority open space protection. However, it is clear that funding support for this important category is insufficient. In a previous update of the Region 4 Plan, it was estimated that it would take 12-15 years to acquire the parcels on DEC Region 4's Small Project list under the current level of funding at the time.

Furthermore, given the increase in property values over the last few years without commensurate increase in the dollar cap placed on small projects, that unacceptable rate of progress has probably worsened. Therefore, the Committee again strongly urges the State to increase the level of funding support for Small Projects and to give consideration to increasing the $250,000 cap established for small project status to a level reflecting current property valuation.

7. Payment of Property Taxes on State-owned Land
   The Committee recognizes that several categories of land administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation or Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation are not subject to property tax under present NYS Real Property Law and that this may constitute an undue burden on local communities. The Committee is, therefore, supportive of New York State compensating municipal taxing units for property tax on all lands (including easements) owned or otherwise under the jurisdiction of these agencies. As stated in our first policy recommendation recognizing that an open space program must go beyond acquisition to include provisions for stewardship, such a plan must also include fiscal responsibilities to offset potential impact to a local municipality's tax base resulting from open space preservation activity.

8. Opportunities for Local Projects
   The Committee strongly recommends that the State increase support for its Municipal Grants Acquisition Program to allow for continued and greater implementation of locally important projects. Specifically, it is recommended that the State consider increasing the maximum funding cap as necessary to reflect ever-increasing property values. Furthermore, the current 50 percent State share for the Municipal Grants Acquisition Program should be increased to bring it into line with the 75 percent State share for the Farmland Protection Program. In doing so, the State will allow more modestly endowed communities (both rural and urban) to participate actively in this program.

9. Private Landowner Conservation Programs
   While the Committee strongly supports the continuing need to purchase lands for resource conservation and public recreation, it also recognizes that working with owners of private property, who control 85 percent of land in the State, to conserve their holdings is of critical importance. Therefore, programs such as purchase of development rights (PDR) for farmland and working forests must continue to be given high priority with commensurate funding support. The Committee also recommends establishing conservation tax incentive and cost-share programs to assist landowners willing to make long-term commitments to land protection, stewardship, and working landscapes. This should include consideration of State-funded incentives such as property tax relief and/or State income tax credits granted to landowners for conservation easements on their property.

- Reform of Forest Taxation Policies

The current Forest Tax Law requirements for a commercial forestry objective, including mandated work schedules and strict penalties, are viewed by landowners as excessive barriers resulting in low participation. Certain aspects of this law also create negative fiscal impacts for municipalities and heavy reliance on State staffing for forestry program supervision and administration. It is important that the State undertake comprehensive reform of the Forest Tax Law to address these concerns and to expand eligibility for wetlands and other non-forested open space. Such reform would not only increase enrollment in the program, but also make private forests more sustainable as open space.

- Traditional Uses on State-funded Acquisition Land

The Committee recommends that traditional uses of properties including hunting, fishing, trapping, and hiking be afforded equal consideration to other recreational pursuits when developing management and use plans for new State-funded acquisitions.

- **Support for Not-for-Profit Parks and Trails Organizations**

In Chapter 8 of the 2006 Open Space Plan, Section B.2 (pp. 345-346) addresses the importance of providing support to land trusts by creating the New York State Conservation Partnership. This partnership is an EPF-funded grant program, jointly administered by the Land Trust Alliance of New York and DEC, and intended to enhance the capability of local and regional land trusts to perform their function. While the Committee strongly supports this program, we also recognize that a comparable number of not-for-profit parks and trails organizations play a critical role in furthering the contribution of land conservation by developing and managing trails and other public recreational resources. In recognition of this significant complement to open space conservation, the Committee recommends that the concept of the NYS Conservation Partnership be expanded to include a similar EPF-funded grant program, jointly administered by Parks and Trails New York and OPRHP. This new program would be directed toward enhancing the capability of local and regional parks and trails not-for-profit organizations to continue their efforts, which are frequently performed in concert with local government agencies.

- **Inclusion of Accountability and Responsiveness Summaries in the Plan**

The Committee appreciates inclusion of Regional summaries in the chapter on "Conservation Successes" (pp. 21-62) of the 2006 Open Space Plan, as opposed to the long list of accomplishments without Regional reference included in the 2002 Plan. The Committee also reaffirms its recommendation that each successive revised Plan should include a section that explains the outcome of policy recommendations by Regional Advisory Committees. The volunteer members of each Regional Advisory Committee spend considerable time formulating their recommendations, and they deserve to know how their ideas were received and the underlying reasons for acceptance or rejection.

EASTERN ADIRONDACKS & LAKE CHAMPLAIN - REGION 5

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES

CLINTON, ESSEX, FRANKLIN, FULTON, HAMILTON, SARATOGA, WARREN, WASHINGTON

Approved May 23, 2008
Revised July 29, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Ron Jackson (Dale French*).....Essex County
David Howard (Gary Gifford*).....Fulton County
Brian Towers (John Frey*) .....Hamilton County
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Neil Woodworth (Marissa Tedesco*) .....Adirondack Mountain Club
Teri Ptacek (Maria Trabka*).....Agricultural Stewardship Association
*** Indicates alternate representative**

2009 ADVISORY MEETINGS

2008
March 19, April 17, April 30, May 13, May 23

ISSUES

The DEC Region 5 area is very diverse in that it includes roughly 75% of the Adirondack Park as well as outlying areas that are more developed and more typical of other parts of the state. Open space conservation issues in this Region and, in particular within the Adirondack Park, are unique and distinct from any other area in New York State. There are 5,927,600 acres in the Adirondack Park. Approximately 2,732,975 acres (46.1%) are held in fee title by the State and 664,443 acres (11.2%) are under an easement administered by NYSDEC. The Adirondack Park also contains the vast majority of the State's wild, scenic and recreational river system, more than 2,800 lakes and ponds, as well as the highest mountains in the state with 45 peaks rising above four thousand feet. Because of the mixture of public and private lands inside the Park, as well as the more populated private areas outside the Park, community concerns are an important element in open space conservation planning in the Region.

The Region 5 Committee has reviewed a number of contentious issues associated with open space conservation in the Region. Its recommendations embodied in this report try to reconcile many of these issues, including those associated with property taxes, eminent domain policies, agriculture, public access, detached parcels, consultations with local communities about projects and many others. Their recommendations were developed following intensive study and discussion. They reflect a consensus of the Committee (unanimous vote), where noted, and serve as the foundation for the Committee's continued deliberations. Many of these recommendations are carried over from their previous reports because they reflect issues and policies that the Committee still feels strongly about.

Principles developed by the Committee for Open Space Conservation

The open space conservation policies of the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee are based on the following principles:

1. The wild forest, water, wildlife, aesthetic, recreational, social and cultural resources of the region, and its biological diversity and open space character are of statewide, national and international significance.

2. The region's open space is now and should continue to consist of both public and private lands. The publicly owned Forest Preserve "shall be forever kept as wild forest lands", as the State Constitution requires, while the private lands within the Adirondack Park presently dedicated to forest management, agricultural and open space recreation should, largely, remain dedicated to such uses.

3. Land acquisition and open space conservation within the region should be consistent with the housing, social, education, health, and economic needs of residents and with the preservation of its sensitive natural areas, productive forests and farms, and open space character.

4. The Committee recognizes the unique mix of public and private lands within the Adirondack Park and the economic consequences on local communities that result. The Committee further recognizes that open space protection has considerable impact on the economic health of the individual communities. We recommend that the State consider local and regional economic implications of open space protection. The Committee intends to comment further with specifics on this issue.

5. Use of building rights to balance interests of open space protection and ability of communities to develop.

   When the Adirondack Park Agency Private Land Use Map was created, it contained a finite number of building rights based on APA zoning. As land is acquired by the State for protection of open space, the number of building rights that are available to develop private properties is reduced. In order to preserve the capacity of communities to grow and develop in the future, we believe it is prudent to keep track of the building rights lost to local municipalities in a "bank" that the State can use in some way in the future for the benefit of the residents of the Adirondack Park. The Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee will meet with appropriate state agency officials to discuss the "building rights" bank concept and the implementation of such a concept within the Adirondack Park.

6. Habitats of "species of greatest conservation need" should be protected. However, as the habitats may require manipulation to ensure the protection of these species, consideration must be given to selecting the appropriate form of habitat protection. The forms of protection include but are not limited to conservation easements or acquisition of fee from willing sellers by the State, or other arrangement or partnerships with landowners. **Adopted May 23, 2008**

7. The State will acquire land, interest in land, and improvements on land for open space conservation purposes only from willing sellers. Issues Section H of this report, which was approved by this committee in 2005, expounds on this matter. **Adopted May 23, 2008**

Specific Issues

A. Taxes on State Lands

Any land acquisition or easement plan should include an ongoing commitment by the State to continue to pay real property taxes on existing and newly acquired lands within the Forest Preserve on the same basis as currently applied to Forest Preserve lands. This commitment should be confirmed by the legislation which establishes funding for any acquisition program. On the assumption that local assessments on State lands are fair and equitable compared to assessments for similar open space private lands, the State should not attempt to place an arbitrary cap on these payments.

B. Recommendations Regarding Timber Tax Exemption Programs

The Committee unanimously endorses100% reimbursement of taxes be made to local governments for lands enrolled under Section 480 and 480a of the Real Property Tax Law within the Adirondack Park. [Note: This issue was studied by DEC and the New York State Board of Equalization and Assessment as part of an overall review of the forest tax laws. The Committee further recommends that an acceptable funding source be found.]

C. An Amendment to the State Real Property Tax Law addition Additional Protection to Ensure State Payment of Taxes for Forest Preserve Lands

WHEREAS, Real Property Tax Law Section 532(a) provides that all wild or forest lands owned by the state within the forest preserve shall be subject to taxation for all purposes, and

WHEREAS, many towns within the Adirondack Park contain high percentages of state forest preserve lands and are therefore dependent on the continued payment by the state of taxes on state forest preserve lands for their continued ability to provide necessary health, safety and welfare services to their residents, and

WHEREAS, continued payment of real property taxes on all wild or forest land owned by the state within the forest preserve is therefore of crucial importance to the welfare of the residents of the Adirondack Park and to the continued viability of local government within the Adirondack Park and their ability to provide necessary services to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee hereby supports the amendment of Real Property Tax law Section 532 to add a new subsection (h) as follows:

"532(h) No law repealing or amending subsection (a) hereof, shall be effective unless enacted by the legislature at two successive regular sessions by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and the Assembly."

D. An Expansion of the State's Existing Forest Tax Abatement Program

The Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee recommends that New York State's forest tax abatement program be expanded to include certain undeveloped open space lands, such as wetlands, wildlife areas and shorelines, which are not exclusively devoted to forest management purposes, provided New York state reimburses localities for all revenues lost resulting from the tax exemption.

E. Payments in lieu of taxes for state lands outside the Forest Preserve

The Committee would like the State to consider payments in lieu of taxes for lands held by DEC and OPRHP outside the Forest Preserve.

F. An Amendment to the Forest Legacy Program

For any Federal Forest Legacy acquisitions in the Adirondack Park, the title to the property should be structured in such a way that it is acceptable to local communities.

G. Need for State legislation to preserve open space and promote sound resource management on private lands in the Adirondacks.

The Region 5 Open Space Conservation Committee has previously recommended that the Open Space Plan incorporate a wide range of open space conservation methodologies and funding strategies, including strategies designed to encourage and support good stewardship of open space lands by private landowners. The Committee has also recognized the importance of viable and sustainable commercial forestry to maintaining open space and promoting economic growth; and it has recognized that the State's forest tax law program places an undue financial burden on local governments and school districts.

Private open space lands are under increasing pressure from rapidly escalating property values and real property tax costs. This encourages fragmentation and development of those lands and

undermines the objectives of the State's Open Space Plan. It affects non-commercial lands as well as lands devoted to commercial forest management.

Existing State programs are not sufficient to deter development and encourage good stewardship of these important private lands. Incorporating recommendations for new methodologies and funding strategies in the Open Space Plan, by itself, will not change this. New legislation is urgently required. The Committee calls on the Governor and the Legislature to:

- Amend Section 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law (or enact a new program) to expand the approved land uses to include a variety of natural resource management purposes as alternatives to commercial forest management; simplify State oversight responsibilities; and provide for payment by the State of real property taxes on the exempt value of real property tax assessments on enrolled lands; and

- Encourage more private landowners to convey conservation easements through targeted inducements under the State's income tax law, including income tax credits for donations of conservation easements and for real estate taxes paid on lands protected by such easements.

H. **Recommendation to replace conditional restrictions on the use of eminent domain in the State's Open Space Plan with unconditional "willing seller" requirement.** In 1991, this committee unanimously adopted two detailed resolutions relating to constraints on the use of eminent domain to acquire land and interests in land for open space conservation purposes. One of the resolutions prescribed a consultation procedure with the committee, county and town officials, the landowner, and other interested parties prior to institution of unfriendly eminent domain procedures. The other specified categories of properties that should be wholly or conditionally excluded from the application of unfriendly eminent domain.

These resolutions were intended to reduce the fears of residents and landowners within Region 5 regarding the use of eminent domain for open space conservation purposes. They were incorporated into the State's first Open Space Conservation Plan in 1992, and they have been included in every update of the Plan since that time.

Since 1992, the State has not employed eminent domain to acquire land within Region 5 for open space conservation purposes. The State's demonstrated commitment to consensual acquisition and its willingness to incorporate specific constraints on the use of eminent domain in the Open Space Conservation Plan have reduced public fear about eminent domain within Region 5 and helped to pave the way for an unprecedented program of State land acquisition from willing sellers since the Plan's inception.

The record demonstrates that the State can achieve the purposes of its Open Space Conservation Plan without resort to compulsory proceedings under the eminent domain law. For that reason, this committee believes it is now appropriate to eliminate the previously approved conditional constraints on the use of eminent domain in the Plan and to replace them with a simple, broad and unconditional requirement that the State will acquire land, interests in land, and improvements on land for open space conservation purposes *only from willing sellers.*

In making this recommendation, it is the committee's intent to extend and strengthen the limited protection afforded to residents and landowners within Region 5 by the current conditional constraints on eminent domain; and to ensure that eminent domain will *never* be employed to achieve any of the objectives of the State's Open Space Conservation Plan within Region 5 other then to quiet

title to property offered for sale by a willing seller. (This resolution has the unanimous approval of the Committee.)

I. Framework for Agricultural Recommendations

Another Committee activity of particular significance is the formation of an Agricultural Subcommittee composed of representatives of the Farm Bureau, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and other agricultural representatives to look at how agricultural issues are addressed in the Plan. This group developed a framework for agricultural recommendations for the Open Space Conservation Plan which was adopted by the full Committee with minor changes. Inclusion of this recommendation in the updated open space plan will have a significant beneficial influence on the attitude of practicing farmers towards this program.

Preamble

Taxes, compensation and profitability are the biggest issues facing agricultural operations today. To preserve open space, agriculture and forest landowners need relief from taxes.

It shall be the policy of all state agencies to encourage the maintenance of viable farming (Article 25AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law, Section 305(3)). A conservation easement program conducted as outlined below could benefit the continuation of agriculture and the protection of open space. Currently, this program exists in Essex, Saratoga and Washington Counties. Fulton, Franklin and Clinton are in the process of developing this program.

1. All programs must be voluntary.

2. Programs should be considered which offer tax advantages such as current use valuation or assessment reductions for real property, school and / or estate taxes, and the taxable assessed value of any conservation easement or other program offering a property tax benefit for agricultural lands should be paid by the state in a manner similar to that currently used under Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law, where applicable.

3. The following options should be available for agriculture lands on which active agriculture may be practiced: A) Permanent easements; B)Term easements (5 year minimum) or C) Leasing of agricultural lands held for conservation purposes.

4. Programs and projects should be compatible with Articles 25 AAA and 25 AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law and with plans developed by County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Boards and administered in conjunction with these Boards. All proposed agricultural projects will be presented to the local Farmland Protection Boards for review and comment.

5. Objective criteria should be developed with local advice and data for eligibility of any landowner to participate in any programs developed to conserve agricultural lands.

6. There are a variety of different types of owners of farmland that should be taken into consideration in any program offered. Some farms are managed by owners and others are leased for agricultural purposes.

7. Under any program offered, the agricultural operation should remain the sole province of the landowner.

8. Measures should be undertaken to provide the opportunity for local organizations to participate in any agricultural programs offered, such as to monitor and oversee leases.

9. Agricultural programs may be endorsed which make available federal funding for agriculture. However, any federally funded program must meet criteria governing state sponsored projects as outlined in this framework.

10. Properties that are desirable to conserve for open space purposes, may not always be the most productive farmland.

11. Recommendations proposed for agricultural programs need to be reviewed for their potential to negatively impact the competitive market condition of agriculture and the ability of farmers to raise capital.

12. The burden of any program should not be picked up locally.

13. Recreational activities associated with conservation of agricultural lands should be subordinate to agriculture.

14. The State should actively pursue increased funding for the Farmland Protection Trust Fund.

15. Region 5 Working Farmland/Agricultural Lands. From the beginning of settlement in the region, agriculture played an important role in shaping development, creating working landscapes and the establishment of the rural heritage of the region. Throughout the region important farmland protection projects have been initiated under active farmland conservation easement programs that have been created in Essex, Clinton, Saratoga and Washington Counties. Other counties have developed agricultural and farmland protection plans and are in the process of establishing farmland conservation easement programs. These efforts support the region's agricultural industry, maintain its agricultural character and provide vital grassland and wildlife 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.

J. Public Access to Adirondack Forest Lands

The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee believes that the present level of all forms of public access including motorized and non-motorized access in the Adirondack Park should be preserved and enhanced. The acquisition of private lands by the State may, by virtue of land classification or Unit Management planning, change said access and use. Therefore, this Committee recommends a cooperative effort involving all interested parties as part of any State Land Master Plan Amendment process with a view toward preserving and / or enhancing the existing level of motorized and non-motorized access to and use of Adirondack forest lands in connection with any Forest Preserve or open space land acquisition program.

K. Sale or Exchanges of Small Detached Parcels of Existing Forest Preserve Lands In the Adirondack and Catskill Parks

The State now owns many small, isolated tracts of Forest Preserve land presently under DEC jurisdiction within the Adirondack and Catskill Parks that may serve little or no useful purpose, and, in some instances, impose a management burden upon the State. Therefore, the Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee recommends that the status of all small, detached parcels of Forest Preserve lands within the Adirondack and Catskill Parks be evaluated to determine whether or not these isolated parcels should be offered for sale or exchange through a public process.

This proposal is made in full recognition of the need to include necessary safeguards to insure against disposal of parcels of land that have regional or local significance. Criteria for the disposition of such parcels should be firmly established prior to any disposition activities; and any monies derived from the sale of these lands under the jurisdiction of DEC within the Adirondack or Catskill Parks should be dedicated for future Open Space protection within the respective Parks

L. Recreational Trail Linkages & Networks

The Region 5 Committee recognizes the importance of long distance trail linkages and networks, (including water routes) for a variety of motorized and non-motorized recreational uses (such as hiking, skiing, biking, snowmobiling, canoeing, and any other appropriate uses) and as a way for local communities to benefit from neighboring State lands. The Committee further recognizes that 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. The Committee recommends an Adirondack region-wide process that will result in a plan that identifies new or existing trails that need to be protected or established through the use of easement, fee title acquisition and other conservation tools from willing sellers. (It is not the intent of this category to achieve broader acquisition.) The result of this exercise will be a regional plan for long-distance trails that ensures protection for land-owners as well as the trail system and a permanence for the trail.

The Committee recommends that the DEC with assistance from OPRHP, develop an effective plan 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.

The Committee believes the establishment of a special category of funding to support these efforts is appropriate.

FUNDING & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Representatives to the Region 5 Advisory Committee have stressed the need for cautious evaluation of acquisition criteria and the need to develop consensus among Committee members about the future direction of State land acquisition policy in the Adirondacks. They are extremely concerned about impacts of new acquisitions on the local economic base. The Region 5 Advisory Committee has placed emphasis on the need for consensus building and enhanced public participation in the State's Open Space Protection Programs. All members of the public constituent groups and local government officials must develop a better understanding of the State's acquisition goals and objectives in Region 5.

There is a need especially to include local officials in the development and evaluation of the acquisition program through public meetings and hearings, active encouragement to conduct local open space planning, and participation in formal review processes such as the revision of this statewide plan. In this way, local needs and concerns can be better addressed while also gaining support for important resource protection issues in Region 5.

The Committee has had lengthy discussions about the impacts of listing priority projects in the Open Space Plan. There is a general consensus that the property owners of individual priority projects should be notified of the listing process, particularly if the project to be listed refers to an individual landowner. However, the Committee has not come to a consensus about whether properties should be deleted if there is not landowner consent. Currently, landowners of priority projects that are now listed or being considered for listing in the plan are aware of their listing or potential listing status. It does not appear that any of those landowners have objections to being listed in the Plan. (These issues were contained

in a letter dated November 21, 1995 submitted as part of the Committee report for the last Draft Update to the Open Space Plan).

The Region 5 Committee continues to meet regularly, and to take an active interest in open space conservation planning issues. The focus of the Committee's deliberations has been to build on the foundation of recommendations developed for the June 1992 plan, November 1995 update, 1998 update and to review issues not previously addressed by the Committee. The Committee has also been kept up-to-date on activities of the Department, OPRHP, not-for-profit and private landowners with regards to proposed and actual open space conservation planning activities.

Positions taken by the Region 5 Committee which continue to be relevant are listed below (A-). These positions were adopted unanimously, unless stated otherwise.

A. **Continuation of Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee.** The future definition and implementation of a State Open Space Conservation Plan affecting Region 5 is a long-term process demanding continued input by the public and representatives of Adirondack county government. The 1990 Bond Act which established the regional advisory committees omitted any provision as to the longevity of said committees. Therefore, the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee hereby records its desire to remain in existence and the State to recognize and support the Committee for as long as the State of New York continues to plan or to implement any program for acquisition of private lands in Region 5 involving additions to the Forest Preserve and preservation of open space.

B. **Representatives on Region 5 Committee.** The make-up of the Region 5 Open Space Committee has changed from its original membership at the request of the Committee. Recommendations from the Committee which address specific qualifications for Commissioner's appointments have been forwarded as vacancies have occurred as follows:
   1. A representative from the forest industry be included on the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee selected from a nomination from the forest industry.
   2. A representative of private landowners be included on the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee who is either from the Adirondack Landowner's Association or is perceived by the ALA as being representative of the ALA.
   3. Also, in order to provide appropriate agricultural expertise to the Committee prior to extensive discussions and recommendation development during 1993, an agricultural representative was added on June 30,1993.
   4. Members previously expressed interest in adding some economic development expertise to the Committee; the committee decided that when economic development expertise is needed, the committee will bring someone with this expertise into the process.

C. **General Criteria Recommendation for Open Space Conservation.** The geographic area of northern New York contains many incomparable natural and cultural resources that provide significant benefits to residents of and visitors to the greater Adirondack Region and to the environmental integrity of the Region which are therefore worthy of protection.

   The general criteria developed below are meant to provide a guideline for the protection of differing land types and resources. It is not meant to provide an exhaustive list of resources to be acquired; nor is it meant to imply that all examples of lands that satisfy these criteria should be acquired. Before actual acquisition, the development of more detailed and specific criteria than presented here will be required. However, the criteria defined below serves to provide a general outline of land protection needs upon which more detailed criteria can be based.

Lastly, it should be understood that the objectives for protecting critical land, as illustrated by these criteria, can be achieved through a variety of means, such as acquisition of fee simple or easement interests, or voluntary agreements such as registry agreements, management agreements and special purpose deeds. These measures are complimented by local land use planning and the Adirondack Park Agency Private Land Use and Development Plan.

Biological Diversity

Protection of sufficient variety of habitat and migration corridors, including managed, and wild, and riparian areas, to ensure the long-term existence of the native plant and animal species in the Region by providing connectivity among suitable habitat allowing species to migrate when climate or other external forces degrade their existing range.

In light of the recent findings in conservation biology and global climatology, it is a priority of the state to preserve and restore wide, natural forest buffers and corridors along and around water bodies and wetlands, and to ensure that habitat connectivity is maintained throughout our region. A range of approaches from voluntary conservation easements to state land additions is needed to ensure long-term viability of the connections that many species will need in order to adapt to climate change. Lands available for conservation are thus considered state priorities, even if not otherwise listed in this plan, if they are recognized by biologists as integral to a successful regional conservation network.

Examples in Region 5 include potentially safe passages for wildlife across Interstate 87; lands in the Southern Lake Champlain Valley linking the Adirondacks with Vermont's Green Mountains, particularly in the South Bay and Lake George Narrows areas; and undeveloped lands along the Richelieu and Hudson River Valleys. Equally important are connecting wildlands within the region.

Among the many efforts underway that can help protect and restore habitat connectivity are:

1. the transportation corridor management recommendations and larger "Green Book" being developed by the New York Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency;
2. the Smart-Growth principles being advanced by these agencies, the Department of State, and the sustainable development community;
3. the Ecosystem Based Management guidelines being advanced by governmental, academic and not-for-profit planners;
4. the Wildlands Network Designs being advanced by conservation groups.

Protection and restoration efforts of waterways and wildways shall uphold the local tax base.

Water Quality - Protection of bodies of surface and subsurface water, and ecologically fragile upland areas (e.g. steep slopes, shallow soils and unique communities, etc.) within the watershed surrounding those water bodies, to prevent degradation of water quality and to reduce pollutants including toxins, pathogens and nutrients to natural levels.

Administration of Open Space - Acquisition to create boundaries (such as roads, rivers and ridge lines) for which the State holds an interest that is feasible from an ecological and / or management perspective.

Critical Environmental Areas - Protection of critical natural resources including, but not limited to: wetlands, natural river systems, certain shorelines, unique and sensitive geological resources (other than significant mineral deposits) waterfowl nesting and feeding areas, fish spawning areas, and threatened and endangered species.

Recreation –Acquisition in order to maintain and / or enhance recreational opportunities, including: motorized and non-motorized access and access for physically impaired persons to waterways, forest preserve and other natural resources.

Historic & Cultural Resources – Protection of significant cultural and historic resources, including: historical and archeological sites and urban waterfront areas. Special effort should be made to provide for maintenance and preservation of cultural resources present on lands being considered for addition to the Forest Preserve.

Scenic Resources – Protection of existing designated Scenic Vistas within the Adirondack Park and the identification and protection of additional, significant scenic resources visible from areas with public access, including: travel corridors (river, trail and road), State lands, and public bodies of water.

Working Landscapes – Protection of productive farm lands and forest lands, mineral resource areas, and lands that provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

Key Tracts –Protection of properties that satisfy a significant number of the above criteria.

D. **A Balanced Approach To Open Space Conservation In Region 5**. The Region 5 Committee recognizes that there are a variety of economic impacts resulting from an open space conservation plan. A balanced open space conservation plan must include components which strengthen the forest products industry, enhance recreational access and aesthetic values on which the tourism industry depends and respects local economies.

An open space conservation plan must be undertaken with the understanding that there will be a permanent commitment by the State to pay taxes of all kinds on Forest Preserve land in the Adirondack and Catskill Parks (see recommendation F). The same commitment must be evident in the fair apportionment and payment of taxes by the State on conservation easements, as now required by law.

Legislation providing for funding for an open space conservation program must establish a permanent, equitable basis for assuring Adirondack local governments of the continuation of tax payments on State Forest Preserve land and on State interest in land.

When acquiring land or interest in land in Region 5, the State, in consultation with local governments, must consider the following factors relative to short and long-term positive and negative economic impacts:

1. Effect on total assessables within Adirondack municipalities
2. Effect of any proposed reduction, cap, or elimination of State land payments.
3. Effect of total area of Forest Preserve and State interest in land in any given town.
4. The need to study and consider revisions to the method of apportioning taxes on lands where the State has a conservation easement.
5. Effect of any acquisition on future possibilities for local economic growth.
6. Effect on affordable housing.
7. Effect on community infrastructure.
8. Documentation of local government consultation for permanent record in the project file.
9. The need for future use of natural resources such as gravel, sand, mineral deposits, and aquifers.
10. The effect on future needs for related uses such a header, sawmill or wood working facility in conjunction with property with easements that can harvest timber.

E. **Consultations with Local Governments on Priority Open Space Projects.**
Section 49-0209 of the Environmental Conservation Law provides, in pertinent part, that each regional committee shall develop guidelines for use in identifying priorities for open space conservation.
Section 49-0209 (2) d., provides that said guidelines may include:
(I) The priority ranking of properties for the region;
(II) The degree to which an acquisition will help to meet a regional or statewide need;
(III) The future costs and benefits which may be associated with the project;
(IV) The economic impact on adjacent parcels, the community and the local governments therein and;
(V) The ecological value of the project.

Section 49-0209 (2) e., directs the Committee to advise the Commissioners of DEC and OPRHP and the State Land Acquisition Advisory Council annually with respect to plans and priorities for the Region;
Section 49-0209 (2) f., directs the Committee to review and make recommendations concerning the Open Space Conservation Plan as it affects the Region;
Section 49-0207 states that the said acquisition plan shall include an identification of lands of high priority for acquisition;
One letter with four copies will be sent to Town Supervisors with language that encourages them to share with the entire Town Board; with language that says additional copies are enclosed for the use in informing the Town Board of this potential action;

Therefore, the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee hereby agrees to:

1. Consult with the appropriate local governments prior to making Committee recommendations with respect to land areas to be considered for acquisition in fee or easement under the State Open Space Conservation Plan.

2. Actively solicit the participation of appropriate local governments in the consultation process.

3. The said consultations with local governments will be conducted prior to the annual report of the Region 5 Land Acquisition Advisory Committee to the Commissioners and the State Land Acquisition Advisory Council and prior to each three year review of the said plan after 1991.

4. The Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee recommends that acquisitions of land or easements after January 31, 1992 be consistent with the Final Land Acquisition Plan, (also called, Open Space Conservation Plan) with the land areas identified in the plan under Section 49-0207having been reviewed beforehand by the Committee with the appropriate local governments pursuant to the consultation process set forth in Numbers 1, 2, and 3 above.

5. The State will notify local governments in writing when an open space project has been proposed that includes land within their municipality. Additionally, when Environmental Protection Fund monies are being utilized to fund the project and the project was not included in the original 1992 Open Space Plan, the municipality will be given the opportunity to disapprove the proposed project by resolution passed within 90 days of notification of the project.

F. **Method for Implementation of the 9/20/91 Committee Resolution (Recommendation "E") on Consultation with Local Governments.** In order to implement the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee's recommendation to consult with local governments regarding the Open Space Conservation Plan, the Committee developed the following recommendations:

Since the Region 5 Open Space Committee feels that local government involvement is critical to the successful implementation of this statewide program, a high priority should be given to encouraging local open space planning. (Reference to local open space planning handbook).

Examples of local priorities might include working forests and / or farms; community recreation areas; access points or corridors to lakes, rivers, or public lands; areas of outstanding scenic beauty; and critical wildlife habitats, wetlands or sites having rare or unusual plant species.

In order to facilitate and promote such local planning and involvement, funding should be made available through the Environmental Protection Fund or other sources which would provide local planning grants. An example of this is the funding which has recently become available from the Office of Community Development for use by communities for local planning along the canal corridors. Other assistance could be provided by regional open space committees, agency staff, or by example from other communities who have successfully completed planning.

Conservation of identified lands could be achieved by State purchase of fee or easement, by local zoning regulations, by incentive programs such as current use tax abatement, or by other means.

The Towns should be encouraged to make comments regarding Region 5 OSCAC's resolutions and regarding the statewide Open Space Conservation Plan, which they wish us to incorporate in our final comments and recommendations to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

G. **Lands Outside the Blue Line.** The Region's Committee has addressed most of its efforts to the area within the "Blue Line". Region 5 includes lands outside the "Blue Line" that also need a policy for open space conservation and recreation.

The State should encourage the development of local comprehensive plans for conservation and recreation. These plans should be developed after broad based community input and in cooperation with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Department of Environmental Conservation. Planning for Regional resources should be coordinated with adjoining localities. Final plans should identify acquisition opportunities and identify whether fee or easement interests are recommended; and responsibility for ownership and management.

When the plan has been finalized, it should be adopted by the locally adopted land use regulations currently in place. Parcels identified for local acquisition would become eligible for up to 100% State grants with the locality responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the lands or easements. These parcels might include bike paths, walking trails, horse trails, trails for motorized vehicles and areas for passive recreation. User fees would be a local decision, however, the property would be accessible to the general public equally.

Areas identified for State ownership or management would be acquired based upon previous criteria, priorities to be established and policies already recommended.

H. **Easements.** Conservation easements should be the predominant method of acquiring a State interest in private lands, and fee purchase, when under consideration, should be the subject of a detailed written justification.

DEC and the Office should first consider in each acquisition whether the purchase of a conservation and/or recreational use easement would fulfill the purposes for which the particular acquisition is

sought. If an easement would fulfill such purpose, then DEC or the Office should use its best efforts to acquire an easement to achieve the objective of the acquisition, wherever practicable.

Conservation and / or public access easement agreements should include provisions under which the State agrees to defend, indemnify or hold harmless the grantor of the easement or any and all claims arising out of the public's use of the property based on ordinary negligence.

The Committee favors the acquisition by the State of Conservation easements on lands which include productive agricultural or forest lands currently dedicated or suitable for dedication to sound management. Such easements should be crafted to allow such practices to continue. Such easements, in some instances, need not require restrictions on the owner other than the transfer of development rights such as for scenic easements. Recreational access easements should be sought by the State where the property contains important recreational resources.

The DEC began acquiring easements in the late 1960's. To date the DEC in Region 5 holds 50 easements totaling 122,610 acres. Each separate easement is unique and has its own management constraints; for example, public recreational management plans, long-term monitoring of development rights, forest management activities and enforcement of public use and the law. This acquisition tool has become increasingly common in the recent past and has the potential for greater use in the future. Region 5 is uniquely suited to the use of conservation easements due to the high percentage of state land and the need to keep remaining private land in timber production.

The Region 5 Committee believes the State must provide the resources needed to properly administer all of their easements, including but not limited to inventorying, monitoring, stewardship, raising public awareness and enforcing easement provisions.

I. **Resource Inventory Mapping.** The Committee has made the following recommendation on resource inventory mapping as provided for under Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

The Committee believes that policy and decision making for land acquisition requires accurate and complete inventory information on existing resources. Therefore, it recommends that all mapping by State agencies be done on the same base scale map (e.g., 1:24000) or convertible to a base scale through a computerized system (Geographic Information System) and made available to the public.

Mapping should include all of the resources proposed in the draft "Standards and Guidelines for the Northern Forest Resource Inventory" dated May 20, 1991 prepared by the Northern Forest Lands Council and the USDA Forest Service and Northern Forest Land office. The mapping should also include the additional items listed below:

- State owned lands
- Tax exempt lands such as municipal properties and churches (Word of Life)
- Utilities such as NiMo, cables and sewers and right of ways for water and sewers
- Railroad right of ways and other special uses
- Political subdivisions such as school districts and State agency, county and town boundaries
- APA Land use classification of private lands
- USGS and Soil & Water Conservation Service data
- Public and private conservation easements
- Wetlands
- Slopes - Where building is restricted, under current regulations
- All roads open to the public
- Buildings

- Recognized and potential recreation corridors including legal public access to State and public lands such as snowmobile / cross country ski trails, hiking trails, and fishing access sites
- Waterways and rivers capable of sustaining recreational and commercial travel
- Water quality classification – SPDES • Dams • OPRHP Historic Sites and Landmarks
- Principal and primary aquifers • Mining activities – Sand and gravel and other
- Status of Unit Management Planning on State lands
- Air travel corridors including airports and approach routes and military operating areas
- Private contiguous ownerships of 500 acres or more and type of use
- 480 and 480-a lands

J. **Consistent Open Space Conservation Policies for Adirondack Park Lands in DEC Regions 5 & 6**
WHEREAS, the lands within the Adirondack Park are included in both DEC Regions 5 and 6, and
WHEREAS, the Adirondack Park contains a unique mix of public and private lands, and
WHEREAS, the State Open Space Conservation Plan will make recommendations with respect to the acquisition and conservation of lands in the Adirondack Park and,
WHEREAS, the implementation of the Open Space Conservation Plan will have economic and other impacts on the localities and Park residents both from individual as well as cumulative acquisitions,
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Region 5 and 6 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committees recommend that the State Open Space Conservation Plan shall treat the entire Adirondack Park as a Planning Unit for purposes of the Plan, and be it further
RESOLVED that all policies in the Plan, such as those regarding the use of Eminent Domain, economic impact of acquisitions, taxation policies, etc. shall be Park wide policies, and be it further
RESOLVED, that at all times the incremental and cumulative impact of the Plan will be considered Park-wide.

K. **State Purchase of Tax Sale Properties.** At the tax sale of Adirondack private lands, the State of New York should not have the right to acquire such lands for the taxes due. The Committee hereby recommends the current provision of law be amended to provide that the State be required to pay fair market value for any parcels proposed for purchase.

L. **Study of the Long-term Viability of the Adirondacks' Commercial Forest**. As New York State's acquisition in fee or easement of productive, private forest land in the Adirondack Park has increased in recent years, much debate has arisen regarding the impact of these acquisitions on the future viability of the region's commercial forests and forest products industry. Without the steady wood markets provided by the forest products industry, many forest owners would simply find it financially impossible to maintain their lands as open space.

The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee hereby recommends that a study be conducted to independently determine the relationship between Open Space Protection and the maintenance of a globally competitive commercial forest.

M. **Increased Consideration of Open Space Conservation Efforts Other than Acquisition in Fee or Easement**. The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee recommends that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation incorporate into the 2001 Open Space Plan a greater number of potential open space conservation methodologies and funding strategies, including but not limited to public recreational leases, term easements, land exchanges, landowner incentives and restrictive covenants, and to explore funding strategies to implement them.

N. **Annual Report Documenting All Open Space Conservation Successes.** The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee recommends that in conjunction with a 3-year revision of the Open Space Plan

the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation prepare an annual summary of accomplishments documenting all open space conservation efforts undertaken in a given year, not just acquisitions in fee or easement.

O. **Recognition and Endorsement of Sustainable Forest Certification Programs**. The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee recommends that the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation send a clear signal regarding their appreciation for the open space conservation efforts of private forest owners by including the following statement in the Open Space Conservation Plan:

"New York State recognizes that the state's private forest owners, both industrial and non-industrial, play an important role in open space conservation. We salute these landowners for their commitment to protecting our forest resource, especially those who participate in Forest certification programs including but not limited to Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, GreenWood, and others by integrating the reforestation, managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, and aesthetics."

P. **Request for full appropriation of the 2001 Environmental Protection Fund.** The Region 5 Open Space Advisory Committee resolved without opposition the following:
"Recognizing the unusual circumstances brought about by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, as well as, recognizing and congratulating Governor Pataki's commitment to funding for open space conservation in previous years, the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Plan Advisory Committee urges the Governor and the Legislature to fully appropriate funding for the Environmental Protection Fund to enable the implementation of the 2001 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan."

Q. **Support of the Batten Kill Corridor Project**
WHEREAS, the State will only acquire parcels from willing sellers, and
WHEREAS, the Town Government in which a parcel is located will have the right to veto any purchases by the State, and
WHEREAS, the State should pay full town and school taxes on reforestation areas greater then 500 acres in size, and
WHEREAS, the State should make efforts to pay local taxes on any fee acquisitions by classifying parcels larger then 500 acres as reforestation areas or by focusing on smaller parcels contiguous to current reforestation areas, and
WHEREAS, it is recognized that, depending on the project, not all fee acquisitions by the State will lead to full payment of local taxes - wildlife management areas, unique areas, multiple use areas and areas under 500 acres in size are classifications of lands for which the State does not pay full or any local taxes, and
WHEREAS, it is recognized that mechanisms, other then fee acquisition by the State, maybe utilized to protect open space parcels and will not be necessarily pay local taxes on protected parcels, and
WHEREAS the DEC will assist in the development of a Watershed Protection and Management Plan for the Batten Kill.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee supports the inclusion of the Batten Kill Corridor Project, as defined in the Region 5 report, as a "Priority Project" in the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan.

R. **Health and Viability of the Timber Industry in the Greater Adirondack Region**
The Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee recommends a study be undertaken to review, make determinations and recommendations on both the immediate and the long-term health

and viability of the timber industry in the Greater Adirondack Region. The study should focus on, but not be limited to:

- The total acreage of working forest lands on which logging is currently or could potentially occur;
- The volume of timber currently marketed and to identify potential markets including bio-diversified products, as well as, carbon credits marketed for carbon sequestration, that may exist in the foreseeable future;
- An estimate of the acreage of sustainable working forest lands required to ensure a viable timber industry;
- An assessment of the economic impact on the local economy by the elimination of sustainable working forests in our communities; and
- Ways to retain our wood fiber within the region.

[NOTE: See Item M above.] **Adopted May 23, 2008**

SUMMARY

The Committee continues to take an active interest in a wide variety of policies and issues which affect open space. While much of what the Committee has recommended has been incorporated into the previous editions of the Open Space Plan, the Committee feels that there is still a need to emphasize the issues and recommendations contained in this report. In particular, tax issues including state payment of taxes on forest preserve lands and tax reimbursement to local municipalities for 480 and 480a enrolled property are considered to be priorities, along with local planning issues. Agricultural concerns and a continuing need for more complete inventory data are other areas in need of further attention in order to help make informed decisions about open space conservation. Due to the large percentage of open space lands in the regional ready, as well as the number of large private land holdings for timber management and agriculture purposes, these policies have a large impact on the continuation of the existing open space character of the region as well as the health of the local economies.

The Committee plans to continue to meet on a regular basis to stay informed about Department and Office open space conservation activities and to continue to make recommendations on the implementation of the open space conservation plan.

On a final note, the Committee recommends that the State Legislature pass a technical amendment to change the name of Article 49, Title 2, from "State Land Acquisition" to "Open Space Conservation" to reflect the overall planning process that has evolved.

WESTERN ADIRONDACKS / EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO / UPPER MOHAWK VALLEY
REGION 6
REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES
HERKIMER, JEFFERSON, LEWIS, ONEIDA, ST. LAWRENCE

2009 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

J. Claude LeCours. . . . . .Herkimer Co.
Bruce Weakley. . . . . .Herkimer Co.
Bruce Armstrong. . . . . Jefferson Co.
Charles Nevin . . . . . Jefferson Co.
L. Kelley Dickinson . . . . . Lewis Co.
Randy Kerr. . . . . .Lewis Co.
Peggy Rotton. . . . . Oneida Co.
Robert Seager . . . . . Oneida Co.
Alex MacKinnon. . . . . St. Lawrence Co.
Lloyd Moore. . . . . St. Lawrence Co.

COMMISSIONERS' APPOINTEES

John Bartow, Jr. . . . . Tug Hill Commission
Robert Boice. . . . . .Commission on Adirondacks in 21st Century, Conservation Fund Advisory Board
Bruce Carpenter. . . . . New York Rivers United
Ted Comstock. .Adirondack Landowners Association
Brian Dam. . . . . Sportsman – Oneida EMC
Todd Dunham . Adirondack Conservancy/Land Trust
Peter O'Shea. . . .Resident's Committee to Protect the Adirondacks
Clarence Petty. . . . . .Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks
Robert Sauer . . . . . .Forest Products Industry
Daniel Tickner . . . . . Outdoor Recreation Outfitter
Aaron Vogel – Thousand Islands Land Trust

DEC REGIONAL CONTACTS

WATERTOWN

Judy Drabicki, Regional Director
David Smith, Regional Forester
Stephen Litwhiler, Citizen Participation Specialist
William Gordon, Regional Wildlife Manager
Albert Schiavone, Natural Resources Supervisor
Michael Contino, Real Property Supervisor

POTSDAM

Patrick Whalen, Forester II

LOWVILLE

Fred Munk, Forester II

APA REGIONAL CONTACT

Richard Weber, Conservation Director

OPRHP REGIONAL CONTACTS

ALEXANDRIA BAY

Kevin Kieff, Regional Director
Mark Spaulding, Assistant Regional Director

2009 ADVISORY MEETINGS

April 3, 2008 – Lowville DEC Office
May 15, 2008 – Lowville DEC Office

ISSUES

STEWARDSHIP

The Regional committee feels there has been minimal progress on the issue of stewardship funding. The maintenance/stewardship burden is increasing as more people use state lands and more state land is acquired. In addition, when funding for stewardship has been obtained, the means to hire staff to complete a project or even supervise a contractor has been lacking. Acquisition of lands creates special burdens since in many cases significant work must be completed to allow for public use, including boundary surveys. Easement lands in particular require an extra level of effort since the easement terms must be monitored, which add significant effort to stewardship responsibilities. This situation needs to be resolved. The committee recommends the following:

1. Recognition and encouragement of local groups doing maintenance of state lands and waters,
2. Integral stewardship funding provided along with land acquisition projects,
3. The formation of a task force in Albany to address stewardship issues statewide, and
4. Recognize and encourage stewardship on private land.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Traditional hunting and fishing camp leases at times have been eliminated when the state purchases a working forest conservation easement. This can end long periods of occupation by friends and families who enjoy recreating in the north woods. This long standing tradition does not necessarily conflict with the purpose of these easements. Working forest conservation easements should generally provide for permanent retained rights for at least some existing hunting & fishing camps, while also maximizing public recreational use and access that is compatible with the conservation purposes of the easement.

TAXES & OPEN SPACE

State Parks and Historic Sites , Wildlife Management Areas, Unique Areas, Multiple Use Areas and Public Fishing Rights are non-taxable under current Real Property Law (with a few exceptions). State Forests outside the blue line are not taxable for county taxes. This inequitably burdens local taxpayers and subsequently undermines local support for Open Space Protection. The State of New York should pay real estate taxes on all current or future lands and easements under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Committee recommends that legislation be introduced to this effect.

Easement acquisition by the state outside of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks and the Tug Hill Region could result in a lessening of real property taxes to the local community. The success of the easement program outside the Adirondack Park and the Tug Hill Region is dependent upon both landowner and local government support, neither of which may occur if the tax base is eroded by easement acquisitions. The committee recommends that the taxation issue now be addressed on a statewide basis and that the Open Space Plan should make a positive recommendation with regard to payment of taxes by the State of New York on conservation easements outside the Adirondack and Catskill Parks and the Tug Hill Region.

The Forest Tax Law (Sections 480 and 480a of the Real Property Tax Law) is an incentive for the landowner to keep large tracts of land in timber production. However, the resulting increased tax burden falls on the local taxpayers. Reimbursements of lost tax dollars to the municipality would help alleviate this burden. This reimbursement should be made permanent if the transfer in the tax burden within that municipality exceeds 1% of assessed value. Since all the people of New York State benefit from this method of open space preservation, they should all share in the cost.

The existing Forest Tax Law provides tax reductions for landowners willing to commit their forestlands to be managed for timber production for a minimum of ten years. While this provides a secondary benefit of protecting the land as open space there is the potential for protecting more land as open space under a tax incentive program if the purposes were broadened to include incentives for restricting development, providing trail corridors, wildlife protection and management or for other kinds of public purposes. The Committee recommends expansion of the existing Forest Tax Law into a comprehensive Open Space/Forest Tax Law, which would provide broader open space protection through property tax relief. The level of relief would depend on the kind and number of public benefits agreed to by a landowner such as those identified above.

SMALL PROJECTS

This project category is very important to improve and enhance public utilization of the Open Space resources of this region. The Regional Committee has made numerous recommendations for small projects. Current levels of funding are inadequate and have been for years. The Committee believes funding should be increased. Creation of a line item in the State budget with regional allocations or dividing up the available funds among the regions could help solve this.

The Committee feels the acreage limitation and the limitation on value of $250,000 are no longer appropriate. The $250,000 limitation on parcel value is too low considering the significant increase in property values statewide since this limitation was originally set. In addition, the acreage limitation seems unnecessary, as a limitation on value effectively limits the amount of acreage that can be purchased. This dollar limit more simply identifies what might be a parcel significant enough to require extra public scrutiny and approval. It allows actual acreage size of a “small project” to vary in relation to the relative values/acre, so that the typical parcel size that can be acquired in the New York City area as a “small project” will be appropriately small in that area of high cost land, and significantly larger in parts of Region 6 where per acre costs are much lower. All acquisitions should be from willing sellers and with local government approval.

LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

The Committee recognizes that a need exists to identify a reasonable and feasible mechanism to notify affected landowners when a project is added to the Open Space Plan. The Committee further recognizes that this is a sensitive issue for both the landowner and the agencies developing the Plan. The Committee recommends that a map, showing the approximate shape or extent of lands to be preserved, be produced when a project is added to the Region’s priority list.

SURPLUS STATE LANDS

There continues to be instances where state lands are put up for sale, or otherwise made available to other entities, without a systematic review of their value for open space being done by DEC or OPRHP. The Regional Open Space Committees need to be notified before surplus state lands are put on the market or given away. It is vital that the open space values of these lands be evaluated before they are sold or transferred. This would include all lands controlled by state Departments, Agencies and Authorities, with no exemptions and full enforcement.

ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES/PERSONAL WATER CRAFT

Increased use of ATV’s and PWC’s and the resulting water, land and noise pollution is of concern to the Open Space Committee. Any studies outlining the environmental and economic impacts of these recreational vehicles should be brought before the public.

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS CONSIDERATION

The Regional Open Space Committee recognizes the importance of the IBA’s and encourage that the review of projects for open space protection include the occurrence of habitats critical for the survival

of bird species at risk. These habitats coincide with several current priority projects; Great Lakes Shorelines and Niagara River; St Lawrence River Islands, Shoreline, and Wetlands; Tug Hill Core Forests; and the statewide "State Forest and Wildlife Management Area Protection" project. In Region 6 special attention needs to be given to the associated grasslands adjacent to WMA's in the Lake Ontario Plains and St Lawrence River Valley areas to further the protection of the grassland bird species at risk. Open Space protection strategies can include conservation easements and other programs which encourage continued late season hay cutting and grassland maintenance.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

STEWARDSHIP FUNDING

The ability of the state to provide sufficient stewardship of existing and new lands continues to decline. The Committee's recommendations to deal with this situation are as follows:

- Additional funding sources as well as additional staff must be provided in order to properly care for our heritage of conserved lands; a statewide high level task force should be convened to develop solutions to providing sufficient resources to care for our lands, and
- Volunteers and volunteer organizations should be an important component of strategies developed to improve our stewardship of state lands. This is not intended to absolve the state of stewardship responsibilities.

STATEWIDE SMALL PROJECTS

This category of acquisition should be funded through a line item in the budget at an annual level which will provide a viable program in each region. The use of habitat stamp funds should also be considered for small projects.

The current limitation requiring small projects to be 200 acres or less in size should be dropped, with the value limitation left as the only criteria for small project qualification. In addition, due to the increase in land values since the small project category was created the dollar value limitation should be increased to $750,000.

OPEN SPACE PLAN REVISION SCHEDULE

The main body of the plan should be revised every five years instead of the current 3 years time frame. However, the Regional Committee should evaluate project status and policy and program issues on an annual basis, and revise if necessary.

ALL PROJECTS RATING SYSTEM

All projects are rated in one or more of 6 resource categories. Projects that can achieve a high rating (greater than 50 points) in more than one category should be provided extra points in their rating. The rating forms currently in use need to be updated to highlight this modification. The important factor is that a project needs to be rated above 50 points in at least one category before it can be considered. Once a project can be considered, it is pursued for acquisition on its own merits and not compared to other projects which may have scored a few more points.

RIVERS TASK FORCE CREATION

The Region 6 Committee recommends the creation of a statewide task force to study the State's water resources and advise the Regional Committees on strategies for enhancing the protection of those waters and their tributaries. The task force should develop an inventory of significant water resources in each region; identify specific threats to those resources; analyze the costs and benefits of protecting those resources; and recommend a range of strategies and options for achieving protective measures in a cost effective manner. The Committee will not make findings or recommendations on

policy issues relating to recreational use of water resources (that is already done through the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning Process by OPRHP). The major focus will be exclusively on assisting the regional committees to help integrate sound watershed protection strategies in the open space planning process. Membership of the task force should have a broad representation to include scientists, conservationists, businessmen, landowners, citizens and local government officials.

ENERGY GENERATION & TRANSMISSION

The geographic area of Region 6 has a long history of providing for the generation and transmission of energy for all New Yorkers. Water power and hydroelectric generation shaped most of the region's economy and communities. The region is home to many hydro generation facilities, including the state's second largest hydroelectric generation facility at the Robert Moses St. Lawrence power project, the largest wind farm east of the Mississippi River and more than 20 additional proposed wind facilities, has one of the State's three biomass-fired electrical generation facilities, as well as several large transmission corridors of international, statewide and regional significance. Clearly, the region is a major source of carbon free and alternative electrical generation capacity. This energy production and distribution capacity and the potential for future projects are important to New York State and the Northeast as a whole, and the future planning for and siting of electrical generation and transmission facilities has the potential to dramatically affect open space within the region.

In light of the current and future importance and impact to the region of energy generating facilities, the Region 6 Open Space Committee supports the establishment of a statewide planning and siting process that takes into consideration the sustainable development of energy generation and transmission facilities and the impacts that such facilities have on the potential degradation, as well as enhancement of, open spaces within the region. Such a planning and siting process should include broad representation of interests representing statewide and local priorities and needs.

SUMMARY

Open space protection is important to each committee member. Some members strongly support wilderness preservation while others prefer to see the acquisition of small parcels which enhance the public use and enjoyment of New York State lands. Every member of this Committee agrees that the payment of real estate taxes by the State of New York on all public lands and easements administered by DEC and OPRHP is key to a successful open space program. Equally important, funding at appropriate levels for stewardship of State Lands is essential for the protection and use of these lands.

Open Space protection can be accomplished in many different ways; by ownership by towns, villages, counties, the State, land trusts, private individuals or conservation groups. Conservation easements can prevent unwanted development while keeping valuable lands in timber production or for recreational use. The Committee is anxious to meet on a regular basis to learn about the progress that has been made and new opportunities. By reviewing and revising the project priority list on a regular basis, members can keep their constituents informed and OPRHP and DEC can be made aware of local concerns regarding open space projects. This process is felt to be very worthwhile for the communities as they plan for the future.

CENTRAL NEW YORK – REGION 7

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES

BROOME, CAYUGA, CHENANGO, CORTLAND, MADISON,
OSWEGO, ONONDAGA, TIOGA, TOMPKINS

2009 CENTRAL NEW YORK – REGION 7 OSP ADVISORY MEETINGS
OSP REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MEMBER	AFFILIATION
Danny Ross	Cortland County
Charles Banner-Haley	OPRHP State Appointment
Katherine W. Borgella	Tompkins County
Frank Evangelisti	Broome County
Robert Geraci	Onondaga County
Richard Harrington	OPRHP State Appointment
Robert H. Hazelton, Jr.	DEC State Appointment
Gordon Heisler	OPRHP State Appointment
Elaine D. Jardine	Tioga County
Mary Kunzler-Larmann	OPRHP State Appointment
Stacy Merola	DEC State Appointment
Steven Lynch	Cayuga County
Wayne Outwater	Chenango County
Charles Parker	Oswego County
James Pasco	DEC State Appointment
James Petreszyn	Madison County
Sandra Souder	DEC State Appointment
Zachary Odell	DEC State Appointment
Andrew E. Zepp	OPRHP State Appointment

STATE AGENCY SUPPORT STAFF

NAME	TITLE	AGENCY	LOCATION
Dan Bishop	Regional Fisheries Manager	DEC	Cortland
Diane Carlton	Citizen Participation Specialist	DEC	Syracuse
Robert Hiltbrand	Regional Director	OPRHP	Jamesville
Tim Joseph	Regional Director	OPRHP	Trumansburg
Marie Kautz	Regional Wildlife Manager	DEC	Cortland
Kenneth Lynch	Regional Director	DEC	Syracuse
Les Miller	Sr. Engineering Technician	OPRHP	Jamesville
Janet O'Hara	Secretary	DEC	Cortland
Richard Pancoe	Supervising Forester	DEC	Cortland
Sue Poelvoorde	Natural Resources Planner	OPRHP	Trumansburg
Jerry Rasmussen	Natural Resources Supervisor	DEC	Cortland
Dave Sinclair	Regional Forester	DEC	Cortland
Glenn Wolford	Real Property Supervisor	DEC	Syracuse

2009 CENTRAL NEW YORK – REGION 7 OSP ADVISORY MEETINGS

October 20, 2006 – Cascade Grill, Morovia
October 26, 2007– Two Rivers State Park, Waverly
April 22, 2008 – Cortland DEC Office
May 2, 2008 – Cortland DEC Office
May 14, 2008 – Cortland DEC Office
January 21, 2009 – Binghamton
January 22, 2009 – Syracuse
March 17, 2009 – Cortland DEC Office

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

FAST & CERTAIN LAND ACQUISITION

Currently, the mechanisms in place for state agencies, local municipalities and non-profits to access funds to acquire land identified as priorities in the Open Space Plan are lengthy, cumbersome, and highly competitive, not allowing for any degree of certainty that the funds will be forthcoming. Opportunities for these types of acquisition are quickly dwindling and typically must be acted on with great speed, optimally in a climate of certainty of funding. The Advisory Committee recommends that the state develop solutions to these problems to allow all of the land protection partners opportunities to access fast, accountable, and certain funds for land acquisitions identified as priorities in the Open Space Plan.

SHORELINE PROTECTION & WATER TRAILS

The demand for recreational access to Finger Lakes and Lake Ontario shoreline, as well as the need to protect the remaining natural shoreline, continues to increase while opportunities to acquire shoreline become more expensive and harder to find. Additionally, shoreline parcels that are typically isolated from adjoining state-owned land, don't fit neatly into the type of land acquisition work currently being done by OPRHP or DEC, and stewardship of those lands can be more difficult given the high values and normally close proximity of neighbors to the parcels. Access is needed to accommodate a diverse community of shoreline users, including kayakers, boaters, swimmers, bird watchers, hunters, anglers, and those simply seeking solitude by the water. While the character of these shoreline sites might vary along with permitted recreational uses, each would provide opportunities for kayakers and canoeists, at a minimum, to access the shore. It is presumed that these sites would also allow for low-intensity uses such as waterfowling, fishing and bird watching.

In order to effectively conserve remaining shoreline parcels that are of special significance, the Advisory Committee recommends that DEC and OPRHP work together to: 1) clarify, and possibly redefine, their respective priorities within this resource area, 2) creatively identify models and mechanisms that could facilitate land protection along the Finger Lakes and Lake Ontario shoreline, including leveraging resources by partnering with a local municipality or a non-profit land protection partner to acquire and manage threatened shoreline parcels, 3) in conjunction with tourism agencies define and create a network of "water trails" consisting of strategically spaced publicly accessible shoreline open space parcels, and perhaps shoreline businesses, to allow public access to the waterfront and its amenities, and 4) communicate these priorities and strategies to their land protection partners.

REFORM OPRHP PARKS GRANTS PROGRAM

The Advisory Committee recommends that the state implement improvements to OPRHP's Grants Program that were identified in 2007 at a Grants Reform Conference. While the Committee still strongly encourages the state to pursue developing Fast and Certain Land Acquisition options, as

stated above, it is clear that improvements, such as Timing, Communication, Funding and Open Projects can enhance OPRHP's existing competitive grants program. The Committee considers that it is crucial to ease matching requirements as soon as possible.

SUPPORT APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT TO MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION & PROTECTION IN REGION 7

We support creation of open space preservation options, including the Community Preservation Act which funds acquisition through use of a Real Estate Transfer Tax, local bond initiatives, and public-private partnerships, for use in the increasingly critical acquisition, protection and preservation of local municipal open space opportunities.

DEVELOPMENT & STEWARDSHIP

It is critical that the legislature recognize that conservation of Open Space includes the crucially important responsibility for care and protection of the resource once it is acquired. Stewardship of lands and easements is frequently time consuming and expensive and must be funded at levels necessary to fulfill these obligations. There is an on-going and increasing need for maintenance of natural area acquisitions and development of the infrastructure for new parks. While currently stewardship dollars are vastly insufficient for the maintenance and capital improvements needed on existing lands, acquisition of additional critical areas must continue to ensure protection of adequate open space for future generations. In recent years the State has acquired more than 1 million additional acres of land for Open Space. Greatly increased allocations for maintenance and capital improvements on state open space lands must be made available to support the increased acquisitions.

In addition, state agencies should develop management plans that address stewardship concerns and make the most efficient utilization of such alternatives as agency based volunteer groups, intergovernmental agreements, and/or nonprofit organizations

Currently, there are few examples of successful partnerships between the state and a local municipality where the municipality manages and stewards land on behalf of New York State. The Advisory Committee would like to see more of these types of partnerships, as they address the stewardship burden, noted above, which is currently a drain on state resources and staff, while allowing for increased governmental efficiency. One way such partnerships could be encouraged is to create a website that contains sample Memorandum of Understanding that have been used successfully in New York State, so that each time a partnership is formed there is no need to recreate the wheel.

STAFF RESOURCES

To accomplish the goals of Development and Stewardship and achieve timely acquisitions to provide appropriate protection of vulnerable open space priority projects, funding should be substantially increased to support additional staff for these time-consuming and labor intensive responsibilities.

COORDINATE STATE EFFORTS ON OPEN SPACE & FARMLAND PROTECTION

Thousands of acres of productive farmland in the Finger Lakes Region are now under protection through New York State's highly successful Farmland Protection Implementation Program. The Advisory Committee recommends that staff from DEC, OPRHP and Ag & Markets meet annually to review open space and farmland protection programs, and identify opportunities to enhance one another's work. One example of an opportunity to enhance a program is to incorporate model Resource Protection Area language into the standard conservation easement template for the Farmland Protection Program, to encourage farmers and their sponsoring agencies to consider opportunities to protect riparian buffers or other key natural resources while still supporting farm viability.

REAL ESTATE TAX PAYMENTS ON STATE LANDS

The Advisory Committee continues to encourage adoption of legislation that would provide for a consistent state-wide practice for payment of taxes to local taxing entities for state land and/or easements within their jurisdiction. The current system of taxing of state land, with its wide variety of payment levels and exceptions, is confusing, inconsistent and unfair. It often is an impediment to the acquisition and preservation of an otherwise important natural area.

TAX INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO DONATE LAND & CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Private lands are under increasing development pressure that threatens to fragment open space and undermine the State Open Space Plan. The Committee recommends continuation of the recently enacted legislation that encourages private landowners to donate land and easements for conservation of open space. These incentives address the single greatest barrier to easement donations by providing relief from property tax burdens on the donated lands. Where appropriate and possible, public access should be incorporated into any conservation easement. The Region 7 Open Space Committee believes that the heavy New York State Property Tax burden is detrimental to the preservation of Open Space. The Committee therefore requests that NYS address other new, meaningful ways to mitigate the property tax burden.

PROTECTION OF EXISTING CANAL LANDS & WATERS

The State has many miles of shorelines and large acreages of lands associated with the Erie and Barge Canal network, which is a major focus of scenic, historic, ecological, and recreational interests. The Committee views these lands and waters as an extremely high priority resource to protect for the benefits of present and future generations. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the NYS Canal Corporation cease surplusing canal lands and waters, and instead steward them for the benefits and uses of New York State residents and visitors now and in the future.

SURPLUS LAND

There is a need to establish a process for systematic review of surplus state lands for their open space values before the lands are disposed. State agencies should put increased emphasis on identifying and exchanging surplus land with other state, local and federal agencies. Disposition of state land should follow a process similar to acquisitions under the Open Space Plan. The Open Space Regional Advisory Committee should be notified of the availability of the land. Sufficient time must be allowed for a detailed inspection and review prior to disposition. If no level of government seeks ownership of the surplus land after ample time has been provided for review, then sale of the property on the open market should occur, potentially returning the land to the local tax roles. Revenue generated from the sale should be made available for land acquisition under the Open Space Plan.

WESTERN FINGER LAKES – REGION 8

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES

CHEMUNG, GENESEE, LIVINGSTON, MONROE, ONTARIO, ORLEANS, SCHUYLER, SENECA, STEUBEN, WAYNE, YATES

2009 WESTERN FINGER LAKES REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

John Pastrick	Chemung County
Paul Osborn	Genesee County
Heather Ferrero	Livingston County
Paul A. Johnson	Monroe County
Kristen Mark-Hughes	Ontario County
Wayne Hale	Orleans County
Harriet Haynes	Seneca County
Vacant	Schuyler County
Amy Dlugos	Steuben County
Sharon Lilla	Wayne County

DEC REGIONAL CONTACTS

Randall C. Nemecek, – Supervisor for Natural Resources
Linda J. Vera – Citizen Participation Specialist
Michael Wasilco – Regionall Wildlife Manager
John Gibbs – Regional Forester
Webster Pearsall – Regional Fisheries Manager

OPRHP REGIONAL CONTACTS – GENESSEE

Richard Parker – Regional Director

COMMISSIONERS' APPOINTEES

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John Plummer	Town of Greece
Don Root	City of Rochester
Mona Rynearson	Bergen Swamp
Irene Szabo	Finger Lakes Trail Conferenc
David Woodruff	Private Landowner & Sportsmen Preservation Society, Inc.
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2009 WESTERN FINGER LAKES – REGION 8 OSP ADVISORY MEETINGS

March 11, 2008, April 2, 2008, April 16, 2008, April 30, 2008, May 14, 2008, May 28, 2008

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

STEWARDSHIP

The Committee devoted much of its allocated time to discussing stewardship of open space lands, and developing suggestions for improving stewardship of state lands, and by inference, of other open spaces held in trust by other government agencies and private organizations in New York. Acquisition of important open spaces is exciting; stewardship of those spaces is more mundane, but equally if not more important. It is widely accepted that stewardship of New York's open spaces is under-funded and not entirely meeting the public's expectations for the care of open space resources.

The Committee developed a number of suggestions for providing additional resources for stewardship, which are highlighted below. Not all points offered below had unanimous support of the Committee. For example, there was not agreement on the topic of user fees to fund stewardship.

There was agreement within the committee that some of these approaches vary in their potential to work, depending upon the open space application or scenario. A flexible, multi-tiered approach may be needed to reach stewardship goals. Each tract of protected open space offers unique challenges and opportunities to accomplish stewardship needs. Some open space areas have intensive infrastructure development and use (e.g., state parks). Others benefit from community interest and strong local partnerships, for example with a town or county government or nonprofit organization. Other less intensively used but large tracts require more resources for adequate monitoring. The Committee recommends that a host of strategies be considered for meeting the varied stewardship needs of open space lands under the jurisdiction of OPRHP, DEC, local governments and nonprofit organizations.

The Committee's stewardship discussion was important and fruitful, and many ideas were generated. However, due to the time constraints of the 2009 Open Space Plan updating process relative to the significance of the stewardship issue and the implications of some of the suggested measures, the Committee recommends that additional examination of proposed stewardship strategies is needed. This could occur through a task force of representatives from OPRHP and DEC, Committee members from across the state and other key resource people. This task force should spend more time evaluating the practicality, social desirability, fiscal impacts, and potential effectiveness of the suggestions coming from the several Regional Advisory Committee reports across the state, and result in a thoughtful analysis on Stewardship Needs and Practices and Recommendations for Open Spaces in New York State.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS FOR GENERATING RESOURCES FOR STEWARDSHIP

- Agencies and organizations holding open space tracts should consider appointing a volunteer "coordinator" to provide appropriate stewardship activities to areas under their responsibility using volunteers. A cooperative organizational network of volunteers can be developed and implemented to recruit, deploy, and reward volunteers over several tracts of open space to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

- Consider giving volunteers who provide stewardship to appropriate open spaces in New York an income tax deduction or credit. This would require an amendment to the Tax Code.

- The issue of volunteer liability and workmen's compensation insurance while working on public lands should be uniformly addressed across the state, as this is often a disincentive for volunteerism for both the volunteers and the agencies and organizations which host them.

- There is generally little or no support from the committee to charge user fees where such fees are not now collected. Most state parks, historic sites, and marine parks now charge an entrance fee of which a portion is made available for park stewardship. State Wildlife Management Areas, Multiple Use Areas, State Forests, and other lands administered by DEC, typically do not charge an entrance fee, due primarily to the inherent difficulties of enforcement/compliance and administration and general absence of high maintenance infrastructure on these lands. It is noted that user fees may discourage economically disadvantaged people from enjoying open space areas, and probably would reduce attendance at publicly owned lands. The Committee generally supported the concept that public lands should be maintained by public (tax) resources, rather than just the users of those lands.

- Consider, where appropriate, the use of a "services in lieu of payment" approach to provide revenues for stewardship. Revenue from timber sales, agricultural uses, mineral extraction, and other sources that are a normal, approved part of the area's management, could be at least be partially earmarked for stewardship programs on the area affected. If needed, this practice should be formalized by the appropriate administration as an official policy, or if necessary, be sanctioned in statute. The temptation to over utilize a natural resource on public land simply to derive revenues for stewardship benefits needs to be avoided. A balanced use of an area's resources to support stewardship is encouraged to protect the public interest, and such use must be clearly addressed in each area's planning and policy documents to avoid inappropriate uses of resources.

- Agencies and organizations should always undertake the delicate negotiations with land donors to contribute funds to the property's stewardship endowment in advance or as part of the acquisition process. If the stewardship endowment cannot be supported by the land donor, the agency or organization should consider other ways to fund the endowment. Establishment of an adequate stewardship endowment should be considered part of the open space acquisition process.

- A percentage of the land acquisition portion of the Environmental Protection Fund could be allocated annually for stewardship activities. The enabling legislation should be amended if needed to affect this. A dedicated and earmarked source of funding such as this is needed to address on-going stewardship of open spaces in New York State.

- The Committee encourages OPRHP and DEC to continue to seek and utilize partnerships with federal, state, and local governments, private organizations and individuals, to provide stewardship on open spaces. Several successful examples of management agreements now exist (Braddock Bay, Onanda Park in the Town of Canandaigua, Montezuma Wetlands Complex, Oak-A-Wanda Foundation, and others) where agencies and/or organizations have formal written agreements to partner together to steward public lands for the common good. Such partnerships usually are more cost-effective in meeting stewardship needs than each agency going it alone.

- Stewardship activities and costs should be addressed not only as a part of the acquisition planning process, but also integrated into Management Plans that should be prepared for all open space areas. Recognition and priority given to the long-term stewardship requirements of each area should be elevated in the planning processes the agencies undertake both prior and subsequent to acquisition.

- As noted above, the DEC and OPRHP should consider appointing a "task group" at the state level, comprised of representatives having both regional and agency perspectives. This group should review all the Regional Advisory Committee reports regarding stewardship topics, explore the issues in more depth, and develop specific action items to provide better stewardship of public lands under their jurisdiction.

FARMLAND PROTECTION

The Committee recognizes that farmland contains many important open space values worth permanently protecting, such as soil resources, scenic quality, wetlands, habitat protection, food security, implementing Smart Growth and Quality Community initiatives, and the reduction of carbon emissions necessary for the long-haul transportation of crops from the mid-west and west. The committee also recognizes the success of the current NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) farmland protection efforts as created in Article 25-AAA, including the purchase of development rights (PDR) program and funding the creation of county and municipal farmland

protection planning efforts. Unfortunately, the budgeted allocation for these programs is underfunded, and gives preference to those farms that have high quality soils and face significant development pressure. The other values highlighted above are not strongly weighted when selecting recipients of this competitive NYSDAM program.

The Committee recommends continued use and increased funding for the current NYSDAM PDR program. Additionally, DEC and OPRHP should investigate opportunities to include farmland protection as a goal when considering open space conservation. This would act to supplement the NYSDAM program, thus including the other natural values often found on farmland, such as scenic quality, historical and cultural significance and habitat protection.

ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY FOR LAND CONSERVATION

County and other municipal governments are in excellent position to implement many of the policies espoused in this Open Space Plan if we can enhance their capacity to do so. Every effort should be made by the State legislature and regulatory agencies to enable the use of land use tools and partnerships to achieve desired land conservation goals, in the most effective and efficient manner. Counties and other municipalities should be authorized to collaborate in the use of modern and effective land preservation and conservation techniques, particularly to target efforts to high environmental and cultural resource value areas. Additional incentive funding should be provided to stimulate local and non-governmental partnerships that achieve the objectives of Open Space, Agricultural, Conservation, and Cultural Resource Lands Protection.

WESTERN NEW YORK - REGION 9

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COUNTIES

ALLEGANY, CATTARAUGUS, CHAUTAUQUA, ERIE, NIAGARA, WYOMING

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2009 WESTERN NEW YORK - REGION 9 OSP ADVISORY MEETINGS

April 9, April 21, April 28, April 29, April 30, 2008
May 1, May 7, May 15, 2008

COUNTY MEETINGS' TOPICS OF INTEREST

CONSERVING BIRD HABITATS

Several presentations were made regarding the need to protect open space in Chautauqua County in order to preserve bird habitat areas and protection of Important Bird Areas as critical open space.

FARMLAND PROTECTION

Support of farmland protection and support of the Queen City Farm, which would transform 2.25 acres of vacant urban lots in the City of Buffalo into productive vegetable growing property and would give the City of Buffalo the national distinction of having the largest farm located in an urban setting RAC member RockTermini spoke out on farmland and working forest preservation and the need to utilize conservation easements to accomplish these protections.

TAXES

Removal of properties from the tax rolls when purchased by the State and the need to pay property tax on existing State lands were taxes are not paid.

RECREATION

A representative of the Cattaraugus Local Development Corporation spoke in favor of converting former railroad corridors into public trails. His group successfully completed the 12.4 mile Senator Pat McGee Trail that is getting tremendous usage. There is a move to convert a former rail line that runs from Orchard Park to Colden and on to West Valley. There is a real need to identify all unused railroad corridors and their current owners. It was suggested that NYS should apply a uniform tax abatement on former corridors and take them over so local municipalities can turn them into usable trails for public land stewardship.

An officer of the Cattaraugus County Snowmobile Association spoke in favor of snowmobile trails and the need to have a better way to ease the land owner's liability in allowing trails on private property and simplify the process of managing trail systems. His local club needs sign offs from over 370 separate property owners in order to maintain the trail system. It was felt that if liability issues could be reduced, more property owners would be willing to allow trails on their lands.

Allegany County Legislator William Dibble mentioned Allegany County's new Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan and the need for a State Park in Allegany County.

PARTNERSHIPS

Would the State be interested in purchasing wetlands currently enrolled in the federal Wetland Reserve Program? How does the State interact with other agencies and NGO's when it considers buying property? It was suggested that DEC and OPRHP interface with other agencies and NGO's interested in protecting open space so that common goals could be discussed. Additional acquisition along the Genesee Valley Greenway. Several attendees stated that they were recreational horseback riders and that they didn't want to lose any existing horse trails on state land. They are willing to volunteer time to maintain trails and build new ones. RAC member Rock Termini spoke out on farmland and working forest preservation and the need to utilize conservation easements to accomplish these protections.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

There is tremendous, potential partnership opportunities between state, municipal, and local community groups that community garden projects represent. Especially in the Buffalo area, there are multiple groups in which partnership efforts to promote community gardens could be pursued, given the appropriate open space program mechanisms and guidance. Community garden projects in Buffalo are currently completed on properties leased by community groups from the city. Obtaining ownership of these properties continues to be a challenge for local community garden groups and could represent an opportunity for assistance through the state's Open Space Plan.

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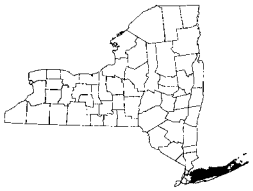
LONG ISLAND



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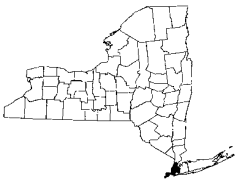

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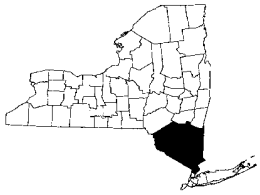
LOWER HUDSON VALLEY



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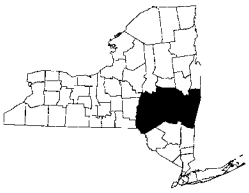
CAPITAL REGION



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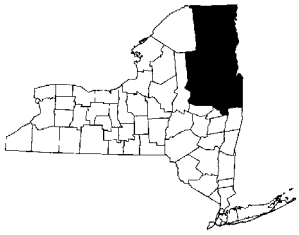
EASTERN ADIRONDACKS – LAKE CHAMPLAIN



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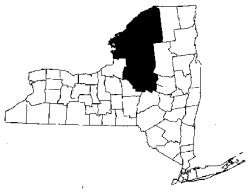

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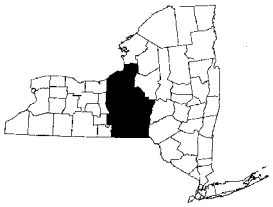

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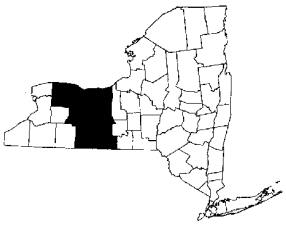

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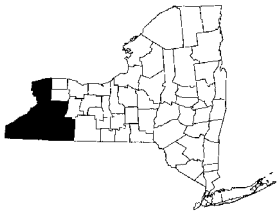
WESTERN NEW YORK



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FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUMMARY

This Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) has been prepared to assess the impacts which may be associated with the development and implementation of the State Open Space Conservation Plan. The environmental setting for this Plan is the State of New York, in particular, natural and cultural resources of statewide and regional significance. The Plan/GEIS relies in part upon information contained in previous DEC and OPRHP generic EISs relating to land conservation and open space protection.

Beneficial impacts include increased protection of significant natural, scenic, recreational and historic resources. Protection of these resources will contribute substantially to the health and safety of our state's citizens from the effects of global climate change, as seen with increased temperatures, rising sea levels, increased storm surges, and increased flooding. Economic benefits of land conservation and acquisition anticipate positive results from the protection of flood plain and coastal areas that are now more prone to these climate impacts. Protection of these vulnerable areas from intense development may assist in maintaining stable property insurance rates while at the same time increasing property values of nearby or adjacent lands. Protection and promotion of urban open spaces such as treelined parks and trailways will assist in counteracting rising urban temperatures and accompanying energy uses. Benefits are expected from the protection of the state's watersheds, ensuring access to clean water by millions of state citizens in New York City and the state's other large urban areas, keeping water filtration infra-structure and costs to a minimum. Adverse impacts may be associated with the development and use of resources acquired for enhanced public access and/or use; however, most if not all of such impacts can be avoided and/or mitigated through the use of standard best management practices during the construction process as discussed in this statement. These impacts on resources resulting from public use include possible short-term erosion and sedimentation problems associated with construction.

The GEIS also identifies category specific beneficial and adverse impacts. The cumulative benefits are associated with the implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, system approach to the conservation of New York's resources. These include protection and maintenance of systems of natural diversity, significant historic and cultural resources, and outdoor recreation resources. The following mitigation measures have been identified to minimize the environmental impacts: use of appropriate design and construction techniques, preparation of master plans or unit management plans based on resource inventories, capacity analysis and appropriate management strategies and a commitment to provide sufficient resources for adequate stewardship.

Alternatives to preparation of the Plan considered in this GEIS are: no action and modification of priorities. The GEIS also lists the types of projects identified by both agencies which will require additional project specific environmental review.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of the 2009 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (the Plan) is an action subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) Act. This chapter, together with the other chapters in the Plan, constitutes the GEIS for the Plan. A GEIS is an assessment of the potential impacts of a broad based action or a group of related actions and is more conceptual in nature than a site specific EIS.

This chapter includes alternatives, impacts associated with implementation of the Plan, as well as the identification of thresholds for various types of projects that would trigger additional environmental review. Many of the issues identified in this GEIS have been previously addressed in one or more earlier GEISs: Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Regulations Establishing Procedures for Selection, Review, Approval and Funding of State Land Acquisition Projects under the 1986 Environmental Bond Act, March 1987; Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Acquisition of Lands by the Department of Environmental Conservation, March 1988; and NYS Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2009-2013 and Generic Environmental Impact Statement 2006. Analysis from these documents is referenced throughout this Final GEIS as appropriate. Complete copies of these reports are available from DEC or OPRHP.

The Draft GEIS and the Draft Plan were made available for public review on January 7, 2009, and were subject to public hearings and the public review process under SEQR. The hearings were held on January 20-22, 2009 throughout the State. Comments on the Draft Plan and GEIS were accepted until February 27, 2009. The response to comments on the Draft Plan can be reviewed in the final Plan's e-appendix F at *www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html*, in addition to a hard copy made available upon request.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The action for review in this GEIS has been defined as the development and update of the State Open Space Conservation Plan by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), in partnership with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM), the New York State Department of State (DOS), and the Department of Transportation (DOT). For the purposes of compliance with SEQR, this appendix of the Plan addresses the action and its implementation on a generic level.

In 1990, legislation was enacted which required DEC and OPRHP to prepare a State Land Acquisition Plan. This Plan was intended to guide the selection of land acquisition projects and to provide for the conservation, protection and preservation of open space, natural, historic and cultural resources and the enhancement of recreational opportunities. However, DEC and OPRHP recognized that the conservation, protection and preservation of the State's resources does not just involve State land acquisition, but rather is a combination of state, local and private efforts to protect these resources. Therefore, the scope of the Plan was broadened and the Plan became the State Open Space Conservation Plan. The first State Open Space Conservation Plan (The Plan) was completed and adopted in 1992. The Plan was updated in 1995, 1998, 2002 and 2006. Each of these plans was the product of extensive public input and

review. The 1993 Environmental Protection Act requires that the Regional Advisory Committees review the Plan every two years. Update and revision of the current plan was begun in 2008 in response to that legislation. This also fulfills the requirements of the 1990 legislation to update the Plan every three years.

This update of the State Open Space Conservation Plan builds upon earlier editions. The Plan has been reformatted to focus the State's Open Space Conservation program on priorities and policies that should be undertaken in the next five years to help address the State's environmental priorities. The new format of the 2009 NYS Open Space Conservation Plan is to provide the public with a user friendly tool, broken down into action, task-oriented categories, which addresses DEC & OPRHP Commissioners' open space-related priorities. The format categorizes the Commissioners' priorities into four overarching goals that can be achieved through open space conservation efforts: Responding to Global Climate Change; Fostering Green, Healthy Communities; Connecting New Yorkers with Nature & Recreation; and Safeguarding our State's Natural & Cultural Heritage. Each of these goals are broken down into open space conservation actions addressed in the Commissioners' priorities that are needed to assist state and local government agencies, non-for-profit organizations and state citizens in responding to these four overarching goals.

The Plan also includes New York's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) which was established to protect important coastal and estuarine areas. In order to qualify for funding under the program, the State must develop a CELCP plan that provides an assessment of priority conservation needs and clear guidance for nominating and selecting land conservation projects. Just as the requirements for a State Land Acquisition plan are incorporated into the Open Space Conservation Plan, so to it was decided to incorporate the CECLP plan into the Open Space Conservation Plan. Approval of the Plan by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration allows the State to compete for federal 1:1 matching funds under CELCP for the acquisition of high value coastal and estuarine lands.

The Plan continues to fulfill the statutory requirements of ECL 49-0207 and includes a comprehensive inventory of protected and unprotected land resources pursuant to the statute *(see Chapter VI – Resource Inventory/Programs & Partnerships)*. The Plan is there "to guide" the selection of projects with a majority of the project eligibility and evaluation process being the role of the Regional Advisory Committees (RAC). The process, through which the priority project areas are identified, involves an extensive analysis of each region's open space resources. Committees receive information on the open space and natural resource needs of their region from individuals, not-for-profit organizations such as Audubon, Open Space Institute, Land Trust Alliance, and The Nature Conservancy, and work in consultation with the staffs of DEC, OPRHP, DOS and DAM.

These priority project areas represent the resource areas considered to be important for protection; and are a refinement and expansion of the statewide resource areas that were identified in previous plans. The project areas range from focused areas such as a specific State Park to broader geographic areas such as the Long Island Sound Coastal Area. After receiving the RAC reports, staff from DEC and OPRHP compile the list of statewide priority projects. The majority of these projects come from the RAC reports. 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.

The request to consider a potential land protection project is an ongoing process in which any citizen, organization, or governmental body in the State can make a proposal. Project proposals are organized at the regional level into comprehensive project inventories. The Agencies consult with each other to determine which agency will conduct the project review and approval process for a proposed project.

The project review and approval process developed and being used by the agencies remains unchanged. The process requires that potential conservation projects be located in a Priority Conservation Area and meet the eligibility criteria of one of the land protection categories. Similarly, for a project to be considered for nomination by the State for CELCP funds, a project must lie within the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program planning area, the State's coastal watershed.

The selection process also includes a determination of a project's "vulnerability or critical need." The remaining steps in the process include an evaluation of alternative protection strategies, resource value rating (of those projects where land acquisition is determined to be the only method of land protection available), qualitative review criteria, and finally executive review.

The 1990 statute required that the Plan identify lands by region and category, having statewide or regional environmental, historic, cultural or recreational significance that are threatened with diminishment of resource value for which acquisition is of a high priority. This includes lands which would not qualify for acquisition under present law. Currently, the land acquisition goals of the statute are accomplished through the listing of the priority conservation projects. This Plan proposes some modifications and expansion of the previous list of priority projects and the definitions of several of the priority projects have been further clarified.

The updated Plan will continue to serve DEC, OPRHP and DOS as a guide for the conservation and protection of important resources. Each agency will continue to protect the types of lands identified in the Plan using the variety of protection mechanisms, including acquisition, and through the procedures outlined in the Plan within the funds available for such purpose.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The environmental setting is the State of New York, for the Plan is designed to identify the resource protection needs of DEC,OPRHP, DOS and DAM for the entire State.

Thus, the environmental setting consists of the natural, recreational, scenic, historic, and cultural resources of New York State including: lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, coastal and estuarine waters, significant habitats, fish and wildlife, forests, agricultural areas, parklands, historic sites, archeological areas, scenic areas, and recreational facilities. Consistent with the definition of environment in 6 NYCRR Part 617, implementing regulations for the State Environmental Quality Review Act, the environmental setting also includes the existing community or neighborhood character.

The project selection process described in *e-Appendix C (see www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html)* of the Plan gives priority to the projects which are within priority project areas and which meet a category definition. Thus, the environmental setting can be further defined by a description of the resources associated with these categories and areas.

e-Appendix C-1 of the Plan provides the description of the categories of resources of concern to the four agencies. Seven major categories identified are: Forest Preserve, Water Resource Protection, Significant Ecological Areas, Recreational Opportunity, Distinctive Character, Enhancement of Public Lands, and Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Areas. In addition, the Plan identifies the geographic location of these resources.

IV. SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The State Open Space Conservation Plan will be used by DEC, OPRHP, DAM and DOS to guide the selection of land conservation projects. The environmental impacts described below focus on the impacts associated with the implementation of the Plan and includes both general and category specific impacts. While it is the intent and stated policy of the Plan to protect the State's open space resources using multifaceted strategies that emphasize public and private partnerships, the Plan also recognizes that land acquisition will likely remain a necessary tool within the array of conservation strategies outlined.

A. Beneficial Impacts (General)

1. Resource Protection. The major benefit associated with the implementation of the Plan is the increased opportunity for the permanent protection of natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources. Protection of these resources will contribute substantially to the health and safety of our state's citizens from the effects of global climate change. While these resources have inherent value of their own, they contribute substantially to the quality of life and the variety of recreation and educational opportunities for all New Yorkers. Further, protection of natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources through a variety of methods will increase the diversity of these resources under the protection of public ownership and thereby contribute to their long-term stability. Biological diversity has been shown to be rapidly declining in various parts of the globe and through the State's Open Space Conservation Plan, New York will be contributing to reversing that trend.

Protection of natural and cultural resources is a primary responsibility for both OPRHP and DEC. It is also one of the "highest" priority policies identified in the SCORP 2009-2013 (OPRHP, 2008) namely, preserve and protect natural and cultural resources. Similarly, land protection is a primary focus of DEC, as demonstrated by its open space conservation programs which have enabled the State to protect wildlife habitats, provide permanent protection for wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands and to preserve indigenous plants and animals.

2. Quality of Life. While the emphasis of the Open Space Conservation Plan is on protection of natural, cultural, scenic, open space and other types of resources of state and regional significance, it is also evident that important benefits will flow to the users of these

resources. Appropriate use of resources is a theme that connects all of the recreation subcategories whether it be related to trails, waterways, greenways or parks. By providing access to these resources, there also will be increased opportunity for residents of the State to utilize these resources as well as find rest and relaxation and enjoyment that would otherwise not be available. These opportunities bring with them considerable non-tangible benefits such as increases in an individual's physical and mental well being. There are also the social benefits that accrue to families, friends, and members of various recreation and education interest groups. The demand for improved and enlarged recreation opportunities at the State level has been established through ongoing SCORP user surveys and is indicated as well by the "1990 Statewide Survey of Boating Use at Public Waterway Access Sites in New York," conducted by both DEC and OPRHP. In addition there has been a continuing increase in attendance at State Park facilities (OPRHP, 2008), and DEC campgrounds (Official records, Bureau of Recreation, Division of Operations, NYSDEC).

3. Intrinsic Value. In addition to the direct use benefits (recreational or commercial use), intrinsic benefits also result from public decisions to protect resources (OPRHP, Lake Minnewaska FEIS, 1986). Intrinsic benefits can be defined in terms of option and existence value. Option value is based on the individual's knowledge that the resource will continue to be available for future use by them and their children. People may benefit from this knowledge even if they are not present users. Existence values are more closely aligned with the feeling of stewardship responsibility and the satisfaction of knowing that others may be able to enjoy a treasured asset. For example, many people would feel a personal loss if Niagara Falls or Letchworth Gorge were to be inundated by massive power projects even if they have no intention or hope of ever visiting these places. Similarly, many people would feel a personal loss if a species such as the Bald Eagle became extirpated, or if the qualities of the Adirondack Park were destroyed. When an investment decision casts uncertainty upon the future availability of an important natural resource, evidence indicates that people are willing to pay to reduce that uncertainty. Thus, there are significant intrinsic as well as use benefits to be gained by the people of the State from steps taken to assure long term protection of these resources (i.e., existence value) and general public access to them (i.e., option value).

4. Cumulative. There are numerous cumulative benefits that arise from the implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and publicly-involved process, that addresses critical conservation demands being placed on New York's resources, including global climate change, water quality protection, increased urban populations, unplanned or unregulated development, ability for all New York citizens to access natural, open space areas, and the need to safeguard our state's biodiversity, and unique historic, cultural and outdoor recreational resources. An expanded explanation of cumulative benefits can be found in this chapter's Cumulative impact section.

5. Economic. Economic benefits of land conservation and acquisition anticipate positive results from the protection of flood plain and coastal areas that are now more prone to increased flooding and sea level rise changes resulting from global climate change. Protection of these vulnerable areas from intense development may assist in maintaining stable property insurance rates while at the same time increasing property values of nearby

or adjacent lands. Protection and promotion of urban open spaces such as treelined parks and trailways will assist in counteracting rising urban temperatures and accompanying energy uses. Economic benefits from the protection of the state's watersheds ensures access to clean water by millions of state citizens in New York City and the state's other large urban areas, keeping water filtration infra-structure and costs to a minimum. Additional economic benefits to the state include tourism, wildlife habitat protection and enhancement of the state's natural resource-based industries, e.g., agriculture, forestry and waterfront harbor industries.

The economic benefits of land acquisition may include increased value of adjacent lands, increased tourism and the associated increase in trip related expenditures. Nearby property may increase in value, thus increasing other property tax revenues, due to the assurance that the property in public ownership will be preserved. Provisions for public recreational use of the open space resource may be a positive impact on the economy of the area, generating increased sales of food, recreational supplies, and other goods. Increased demand for lodging in the area would increase the total dollar revenue. (OPRHP, 2002) Open space has significant economic benefits. Parks, beaches, scenic landscapes, historic sites, lakes, streams and coastal areas are central to New York's State tourism and travel industry. State Parks and Historic Sites alone generate almost $500 million in sales to local area businesses from visitors from out-of-state. Another $20 million is generated through tax revenues. New York State is the 4th largest agricultural state in the country. Our agriculture generates $15.5 billion a year to the State's economy.

As the source of much of the raw material for New York's forest industry, public forests and private forest landowners generate approximately $280 million annually from the sale of various industrial timber products. A portion of this income is captured by the State in income tax and by localities where properties under the Forest Tax Law, Section 480-a, return a 6% yield tax on stumpage sold.

Retaining open land can be the least costly approach to environmental protection. For example, New York City is buffering its watershed from intensive development through the historic watershed agreement, avoiding much of the estimated $8 billion cost to construct treatment facilities for the Delaware and Catskill sources of its drinking water. In fact, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection has stated that "forests are a preferred land use," and is supporting extensive forest land retention, stewardship and sustainable forest management efforts in the watershed by the Watershed Agricultural Council's Forestry Program.

Open space land, scenic and historic sites and the availability of recreation are important to the State's quality of life and thus are a primary factor in attracting and retaining economic investment. The most rapidly growing states in the country rely on quality of life to attract growth. New York State will not be able to compete if it cannot retain its natural and cultural assets.

Protecting open space protects the habitat needed for the State's fish and wildlife, which are a major source of economic activity in the State. The latest survey information available

from the United State Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that 3.4 million New Yorkers and 1.3 million non-residents participated in wildlife-related recreation (hunting, fishing, trapping or wildlife observation), spending a total of $3.5 billion on wildlife recreation in New York.

The protection of open space is vital to conserving and sustaining fish, wildlife and plant species, as well as the overall biological diversity of the State. The economic value associated with protecting open space for the purposes of conserving and sustaining the diversity and richness of the State's fauna and flora species is staggering. Many critical economic goods and services provided by the preservation of open space and the species and habitats contained within serve as an important source of food, fuel, fiber and medicine. Other critical economic services or benefits associated with the conservation and preservation of these species through open space protection include pollination, recycling, nitrogen fixation and homeostatic regulation. For example, most commercially exploited fish and shellfish species depend on tidal marshes and other coastal environments for spawning and development. Furthermore, many wild plant species have important commercial value for medicinal, food and energy sources.

A number of recent studies conducted in the Hudson Valley and elsewhere have demonstrated that undeveloped open space, including forest and agricultural land, generates more in real property tax revenue than it requires in municipal services – representing a net economic benefit to local governments. New residential development in previously undeveloped areas, on the other hand, usually results in a net loss to municipal finances. In other words, the costs for local services (schools, police and fire, roads, solid waste and sewer treatment, etc.) outweigh the increased tax revenue produced by new residential development. Targeting development through careful land use planning and redevelopment of areas already served by existing infrastructure, thereby protecting open space areas, makes economic sense for local governments and helps revitalize urban areas. Parks and open space can also enhance the property values of nearby residences.

Protection of open space can help shape growth in a way which saves money on public services. Clustered development can reduce the costs of utilities, transportation and public works construction and maintenance. Protected open space requires fewer community-supplied services while providing recreational benefits to the community.

Open space and trees in urban environments can significantly reduce residential and commercial heating and cooling costs, reduce air pollution, lower consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels, and make our communities more livable at the same time. Recent studies have documented the pollution reduction potential of trees. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has included tree planting and maintenance in its guidelines to states for development of plans to reduce ozone. In addition to urban tree planting for Air Quality Management, trees reduce storm water runoff and the EPA recognizes the value of trees in agency required municipal storm water management plans. The Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) have partnered to conduct research on the heat island effect in New York City and to develop mitigation strategies for lowering high

temperatures through decreasing sun exposure to impervious infrastructure by planting trees, establishing green roofs and gardens. The study concluded that increases in tree canopy lower temperatures during heat waves.

Heritage Areas enhance and preserve the character and economic vitality of urban areas. Program grants from 1986 to 2004 totaling $33.3 million have generated nearly $100 million in local matching investments.

New York's forest-based manufacturing and service sectors combined employs approximately 55,000 people with a payroll of more than $1.7 billion per year (based on 2002 data). The manufacturing sector (lumber and other wood products, pulp and paper, furniture and related products) generates in excess of $4.2 billion in value-added to New York's economy, accounting for 4.9% of the statewide value for all manufacturing.

Farmland protection provides farmers with immediate economic benefits in the form of property tax reductions and assurance of protection from pubic acquisition, nuisance suits, and restrictive local ordinances.

Health professionals are recognizing that it is important to make the environment conducive to physical activity. That means providing open space areas to exercise and be active which in turn increases the overall health of the population. Healthier citizens can mean lower health care costs.

B. Adverse Impacts (General)

Potential adverse impacts are primarily those associated with the development and use of resources. While a primary purpose of this Plan is the protection of natural, scenic and cultural resources, there nonetheless may be demand for public access to such areas. The potential for adverse impacts is of particular concern with respect to areas acquired for both resource protection and public access.

1. Future Uses. Future uses have both short and long term impacts. Possible short-term adverse impacts related to construction of new facilities or significant rehabilitation and/or cleanup projects include temporary erosion, siltation and turbidity problems in streams. These impacts are generally not significant. Mitigation of short term construction impacts would be done through adherence to such guidelines as DEC's Stormwater Management (DEC, 1990) and erosion and sediment controls (DEC, 1991). Up to date biological and cultural resource inventories will also serve to reduce, if not eliminate, adverse environmental impacts. Long term impacts are those resulting from the permanent change in the character of areas protected under the guidelines of this Open Space Conservation Plan. For example, the construction of a parking facility to provide access to a public park could result in a substantial change in the character of the area acquired. Furthermore, it is possible that lands that do not receive protection through the OSP strategies would be developed and the resource lost forever. Therefore, the OSP will result in significant net environmental benefits.

2. Stewardship. In order to maintain the quality of the existing natural, cultural and recreational resources being acquired, it is necessary that adequate resources for stewardship be provided. Failure to provide adequate management of public use and infrastructure maintenance could adversely impact the attributes that prompted the development of a protection strategy. The conveyance of private land to public land may also result in an increase in use by the public of these lands. The problems experienced on State lands from public use are generally seasonal, limited in nature and similar to the types of problems reported by other municipal and private landowners. Increased public use may also result in increased traffic, littering and vegetative damage to the public property, as well as similar impacts to adjoining property owners. (DEC, 1988) Infrastructure found on State lands range from low maintenance items such as parking lots to structures such as historic buildings that have specialized one of a kind maintenance needs. However, all public use of lands under DEC and OPRHP's jurisdiction is managed through extensive unit management planning, a public process, which is subject to site-specific SEQRA review and implementing best management practices for facility construction such as parking lots and improvements for public access such as hiking trails. Thus, impacts associated with public use of DEC and OPRHP lands is managed to avoid and mitigate any potentially significant impacts to the environment.

3. Secondary Impacts. The protection of a resource to achieve one resource protection goal may adversely impact a second resource. For example, while some species thrive in managed or frequently disturbed forests, others do better in undisturbed areas.

4. Agriculture. The intent and policy of this Plan is to protect and encourage the continuation of farm businesses. Thus, where the protection of other open space values for agricultural lands is also a goal, steps will be taken to mitigate potential impacts. In such cases, the project would be subject to site specific environmental review and as based on current agency policy: 1) any acquisition of actively farmed land will be kept to the minimum amount necessary to ensure accomplishment of the agency's objectives; 2) consideration will be given to purchase of development rights, purchase of easements or other less than fee protection strategies; and 3) any individual acquisition of actively farmed land will include consideration of mitigation measures, including leasing of the land for limited agricultural production where it is appropriate. The "Notice of Intent" requirements under §305(4) of the Agriculture and Markets Law may apply as well. (DEC, 1987)

5. Limited Resources. Because of the limited state resources, it is not possible to address all deserving projects in a timely fashion. Priority setting is necessary in order to protect the most significant resources. The Plan recognizes this and includes an eligibility and evaluation process to guide the selection of open space protection projects. The Plan contains an updated list of priority projects which deserve immediate conservation attention and which will remain the primary focus of State protection efforts.

Projects which are not included on the list of Priority Projects will not be the primary focus of conservation efforts by the State agencies. As a result, resources associated with these projects could be lost or diminished without the implementation of appropriate alternative protection strategies. Protection of natural and cultural resources associated with the

projects not on the Priority Project list will require greater involvement and participation of local governments, interest groups and the private sector with the State. As required by the 1993 legislation, the plan will continue to be subject to biennial review, at which time the list of Priority Projects can be updated.

6. **Economic.** Associated adverse impacts may develop from the potential acquisition of land by the state, resulting in increased property values of adjacent lands within some of our state's rural and lower-income communities, e.g. particularly within the Adirondacks and Catskills with second home developments. In some cases, when the State or a non-profit organization purchases land and takes it off the tax rolls, other taxpayers have to bear an additional burden. Similarly, farm and forest tax laws may shift taxes from those lands to other properties or landowners in the community. Regardless of whether the State pays taxes or not on the land itself, State acquisition precludes development of that parcel, and may, through limitations on resource availability, limit economic development in the affected or nearby communities. This impact may be more significant in municipalities with a high percentage of publicly owned land or those rural communities with fewer residents to share the tax burden.

While the purchase of development right (PDR) easements on farms or forest land may help maintain these economic uses in the short run, easements preclude uses of the land that are inconsistent with farming or forestry. Public acquisition of land or land rights involves expenditure of public funds, raised either through taxes or sale of long-term bonds. Additional public acquisition requires additional expenditures for management and stewardship, increasing the permanent burden on the State's taxpayers. Complex easement transactions result in long term costs to the State for monitoring and enforcement. Intensive public use of a parcel may diminish the value of adjoining properties. Creation of preserves with scenic value may also raise land costs or assessed values in adjacent areas. Some citizens believe that land conservation is not a high priority compared to the other problems of the State; they feel that expenditures for this purpose displace other more important things.

C. Mitigating Measures & Alternatives

These concerns and the benefits derived from open space protection are evaluated throughout the project selection and evaluation process and in the implementation strategies. Several important mitigating measures are suggested:

1. The State continues to pay property taxes on lands that it owns and continues to use alternative land acquisition techniques, such as conservation easements, to reduce the need for large scale State fee acquisition. Upholding these practices will minimize the negative economic impacts of land conservation on resource dependent industries.
2. Programs have been designed to encourage, educate, support and motivate private landowners to practice long-term stewardship of their forests, farms and other open space. This can include outreach, technical assistance and cost-sharing for conservation practices.
3. Conservation of open space resources, whether through fee simple acquisition or through the use of conservation easements, can help funnel growth and economic development in areas where it is more appropriate and less costly on the overall finances of a community.

D. Beneficial Impacts (Specific)

The following is a discussion of beneficial impacts, related to specific land protection categories:

1. Forest Preserve. The following is from the 1988 Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for Acquisition of Lands by the Department of Environmental Conservation. The language in Article XIV keeping the Forest Preserve as forever wild, has remained essentially unchanged since 1894. From 1894 until the present, there have been approximately 131 constitutional amendments proposed to change that language. Only 19 of these proposals have been successful. This clearly indicates that the majority of voters in the State have expressed their desire to protect the Forest Preserve against intrusions and retain these public lands as forest preserve. Forest preserve classification has the following beneficial impacts:

a. As part of the Forest Preserve, lands should retain a permanent forest cover attributable to fewer man-induced actions which will lessen soil erosion and protect watersheds which are important for water quality and control. Since Forest Preserve acquisitions will not be developed, they will probably have fewer man-made influences than perhaps private land, but they will be subject to natural occurrences.
b. Forest preserve classification will create a relatively undisturbed forest habitat which may be beneficial to certain wildlife species or populations.
c. Acquisition of Forest Preserve lands may result in consolidation of separated parcels, improvements of public access and increased opportunities to use and enjoy the fish and wildlife resources of the Preserve.
d. The primitive recreational opportunities provided by the Preserve usually complement privately provided recreational opportunities.
e. Additions to the Forest Preserve provide protection to natural communities, the natural character and usually protect the aesthetic qualities of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks. (DEC, 1988)

2. **Water Resource Protection**. Under this category:
   a. The quality of the State's public water supplies will be further protected.
   b. Important aquifer recharge areas (DEC, 1988) and watershed lands will be identified and protected.
   c. Protection under this category will also help conserve open space and protect the quality of habitat for aquatic species of plants and wildlife.

3. **Significant Environmental Areas.** Under this category:
   a. Implementation of the Plan will provide additional protection to both tidal and freshwater wetlands from drainage, development and deterioration as well as assist in the protection of fish, wildlife, waterfowl and associated recreation opportunities. (DEC, 1988)
   b. Protection of open space for wildlife habitat purposes may contribute to the continued survival or reestablishment of a threatened or endangered species, or will provide good habitat for indigenous species. (DEC, 1988)
   c. Only a limited number of exceptional forests such as pine barrens and old growth forests remain in New York. Continued efforts to protect these through acquisition and other methods is important in assuring these sensitive ecosystem's perpetuation. (DEC,

1988)

d. The Plan will provide protection for significant coastal and inland shoreline areas including waterways designated as wild, scenic or recreational rivers, estuaries, dunes, bluffs, beaches, and sandbars. Shoreline protection will contribute to the preservation of water quality and to the protection of significant natural resources.
e. Unique areas in the State and the significant ecological communities they contain, will be protected from destruction. In those areas where limiting access is not necessary to protect the resource, they will be opened to the public. Protection of unique areas may also increase tourism. (DEC, 1988)
f. Implementation of the plan will also provide additional protection to areas of significant biodiversity. The term biodiversity refers to the variety of life forms including plants, animals and microorganisms and the ecosystems they form. The plan outlines a mechanism for identifying areas important for biodiversity protection.

4. **Ecological Benefits.** Healthy natural systems play an important role in environmental and ecological protection:
   a. Freshwater and tidal wetlands filter and process polluted water.
   b. Forested areas remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby mitigating the threat of global warming; trees and parks in urban settings reduce noise, lower temperatures in the summer, reduce the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels for residential and commercial cooling and heating, and trap pollutants in the atmosphere.
   c. Forests are a primary source of clean water; the Adirondacks and Catskills are the sources of several of the State's major river systems. The Catskills also contain much of New York City's reservoirs critical to the needs of millions of New Yorkers. Similarly, undeveloped land protects the quality of underground water supplies. For example, Long Island's sole source aquifer is being protected through the acquisition of lands above aquifer recharge areas.
   d. Open, undeveloped land is essential if New York State is to retain a diversity of plant and animal species. These species are part of an interrelated web of life on our planet upon which all of our lives depend. Many migratory species use New York for only part of their life cycles; thus ecosystems elsewhere may depend upon protecting habitat here. Certain species also depend on habitats that are rapidly disappearing as many open lands revert to forests and these forests mature, especially the early successional stages and seedling/sapling forests. Retaining the ability to manage such lands, to sustain critical cover types and habitats, is essential for many species of birds, animals and plants.
   e. Open space systems such as wetlands and barrier beaches buffer settled areas from inland and coastal flooding.

5. **Social Benefits.** The open land and historic and cultural sites discussed in this Plan together make up the heritage of the people of New York State. These places have substantial social benefits to all New Yorkers:
   a. Parks and preserves can provide the opportunity for escape and relaxation for every New Yorker. Outdoor experiences provide important social values and are an important

and inexpensive form of relaxation.

b. Open space, in and of itself, provides perceptible benefits to our "built-up" society by its simplicity, quiet, and freedom from roads, traffic, buildings or other human-made structures. It provides the visual and sensory "breathing room" that people need to feel comfortable, even if they never step foot on the property.

c. Any society needs food, shelter and a host of manufactured products in order to survive. New York's productive open spaces - farmlands and forests - can sustainably provide food and wood products to meet the needs of present and future generations.

d. Parks are sites for active recreation which is so important to young people. In New York's communities, court and field sport opportunities offer an important outlet for constructive outdoor activity and enrichment.

e. New York State's natural and historic landmarks are our common heritage; they provide common ground, bind us together, give us a sense of belonging, teach us about the past, and are the foundation for the future. If we can succeed in making parks and other public lands accessible to all New Yorkers, they can provide meeting places which bridge differences among the segments of our society.

f. As many have written, wild land has spiritual value. Many New Yorkers may never visit the Adirondack or Catskill Forest Preserve, a State Park or Historic Site, but are glad to know they are there. The awareness that in this State of more than 19.3 million people, special places that are set aside from man-made change, is a value that is difficult to measure in dollars.

g. Heritage Areas include the historic, natural and cultural resources and activities that tell the story of a region's past and provides an identity for the present creates a "sense of place" and makes a heritage area a special place to live and visit.

h. Forests and fields, beaches and marshes, historic sites and heritage areas, offer unique opportunities for education of people of all ages about our environment and our history.

I. Parks provide opportunities for active recreation and exercise which is important in combating obesity and health issues facing many citizens.

6. **Recreational Benefits.** In addition to the beneficial impacts already described in this GEIS, the Plan will create public access to previously inaccessible or poorly accessible publicly owned water bodies. Emphasis will be given to metropolitan areas and water corridors, since these are the areas of greatest need. Greater access will lead to greater opportunities for recreational use, potentially relieving already highly impacted areas. Any acquisition of additional hunting and/or fishing rights will increase the public availability of those recreational opportunities (DEC, 1988). The protection of trails and greenways will further enhance public access and recreational potential by contributing to a continuum of publicly available lands. The greenway concept promotes water dependent and water enhanced recreation while providing primarily passive uses and minimizing effects related to intensive development.

7. **Distinctive Character Benefits.** The protection of significant historic and cultural resources which have been listed on the State and/or National Registers will assure the preservation of these resources for future generations. Acquisition of easements to protect working landscape lands will help ensure continuance of existing forestry activities while preserving the cultural values associated with these activities. Projects located within the State's designated Heritage Areas will contribute to the advancement of the Heritage Areas System's goals of preservation, education, recreation and economic development. Protection of lands with significant scenic qualities will provide present and future generations with the ability to experience these valuable assets.

8. **Enhancement of Public Lands.** Acquisitions to provide access to existing publicly owned lands will increase the public's use and enjoyment of these lands. Acquisition of buffers will provide additional protection to significant resources already in public ownership. Such acquisitions may also benefit adjacent owners by buffering them from public use areas. Elimination of "in-holdings" will allow for better management of public resources.

E. Adverse Impacts (Specific)

Because management of lands in the Forest Preserve has specific constitutional limitations, this discussion of specific adverse impacts addresses the Forest Preserve lands and lands not in the Forest Preserve.

1. **Forest Preserve.**
   - **a.** Article XIV, Section 1 of the New York State Constitution established a legal mandate that prevents the altering of forest composition through the use of habitat management practices or by harvesting of forest products. State ownership will generally result in a decrease in disturbed habitat. Populations of game and non-game species (e.g., whitetail deer, cottontail rabbit, and snowshoe hare) which thrive in managed or frequently disturbed forests, may decrease.
   - **b.** Acquisition by the State may result in greater concentration of public use with a locally significant increase in littering, noise and vegetation damage. These impacts can adversely effect not only the indigenous wildlife and the aesthetic qualities of an area, but may also interfere with area residents' enjoyment of their property. An increased concentration of traffic may result from a change in land ownership patterns. However, all public use of lands under DEC's jurisdiction is managed through extensive unit management planning, a public process, which is subject to site-specific SEQRA review. Thus, impacts associated with public use of DEC lands is managed to avoid and mitigate any potentially significant impacts to the environment. Furthermore the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan guidelines ensure that these lands be managed to protect the resources and restricts human alteration of natural systems.
   - **c.** The forest products industry may also be adversely impacted through the loss of productive timber producing land and associated forest products.

2. Non-Forest Preserve.
   a. The acquisition of shoreline parks, waterway access sites, trailways and greenways can result in increased localized impacts to water quality depending on the type and extent of access provided to the waterway. Development related to recreation development such as construction of trail parking lots and waterway access facilities may cause erosion, turbidity and sedimentation problems in nearby streams. As identified earlier in this section, suitable erosion and sediment controls will be used to mitigate impacts.
   b. Historic and/or cultural resources considered of local importance but not eligible for inclusion on the State or National Register would not be eligible for acquisition under the Plan. While this may be considered an adverse impact by local officials interested in protection of historic resources in their community, the Register Eligibility criteria is felt to be consistent with the statewide status of the Plan. Localities do have the option of nomination of historic and cultural resources to the Registers and, if successful, thereby meeting the Register eligibility requirement.

F. Cumulative Benefits

Because of the generic nature of the Plan and GEIS, this discussion of cumulative benefits is focused on long term, secondary (i.e., not site specific) effects of Plan implementation. The issue of cumulative impacts comes down to a question of vision. With the adoption and implementation of a State Open Space Conservation Plan, the State of New York will have the opportunity to address the protection of natural, historic, cultural, and outdoor recreation resources on a comprehensive, coordinated, statewide system basis. At all levels of government (state, regional, and local) the implementation of a plan to protect significant natural, cultural, and outdoor recreation resources in New York State will have cumulative impacts that are of substantial benefit to New Yorkers.

The benefits of maintenance of natural diversity are becoming more and more apparent to not only scientists and resource managers, but to the public at large. There is a growing recognition that the well-being of people is intricately and irrefutably intertwined with the natural environment. There is also an increased awareness that the quality of the natural environment is very much dependent on protection of systems and their linkages. One of the major cumulative benefits flowing from the Plan is the opportunity to address conservation of biological diversity in New York State through an approach that is not only comprehensive, but sensitive to the protection of natural resources on a statewide system basis. The benefits accruing to protection of natural systems are both: 1) intrinsic (in the sense that such resources have value in and of themselves); and 2) anthropocentric, or having direct uses for people. With respect to the latter, science continues to identify new "uses" for natural diversity in ways that can benefit people and curtail environmental degradation (Wilson 1988). The Plan will not only protect the values that natural diversity bring to the residents of New York, but will also serve as New York State's contribution to protection of biological diversity on a global basis.

Likewise, there is considerable value and benefit associated with the protection of significant historic and cultural resources on a statewide basis. The history of our State as viewed through these resources, brings into the lives of all New Yorkers greater appreciation and enrichment. These resources can also be linked to form a statewide system, the protection and maintenance of which will be addressed through the plan implementation. Enhancement and maintenance of a statewide system of historic and cultural resources will also contribute to the appreciation of New York's contributions to the development of the nation.

The Plan implementation will also address and protect outdoor recreation opportunities on a statewide system basis. The value of outdoor recreation to all Americans has been well documented, as have the threats to the opportunity for such recreation (The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987). The Plan will provide for greater opportunity to meet the long term demands for outdoor recreation, especially in regard to linear systems such as trailways and greenways. Such recreation requires a systematic approach to management. The Plan's implementation, will over the long term, lead to regional, if not statewide systems of trails, open space and greenways. While these systems will require innovative and cooperative management strategies among local, state and perhaps federal agencies, a significant long term cumulative impact will be to broaden the opportunities for and diversity of outdoor recreation in NYS.

There are substantial social and economic benefits that will accrue to the State and localities through the protection of significant natural, cultural and outdoor recreation resources (The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987; OPRHP, 2002). Over the long term, the plan implementation will assure the continued protection of these benefits through a system approach to the conservation of New York's resources.

G. Adverse Environmental Effects that Cannot Be Avoided if the Project Is Implemented

In the Forest Preserve, some adverse impacts cannot be avoided due to the constitutional prohibition on timber cutting. Certain scenic vistas may disappear and a change in wildlife species may occur. In addition, depending on the number of acres, location, proximity and accessibility to other areas, some adverse effects may result from an increase in public use. These effects are considered negligible. (DEC, 1988)

Physical alteration of sites for park, trail, greenway and/or waterway access development may cause some temporary erosion, turbidity and sedimentation problems. These problems are avoided and mitigated through implementation of best management practices in UMPs. More importantly, such potential impacts would be avoided and/or mitigated through the unit management process required under Section 816 of the Executive law. Some farmland may be lost or its use restricted through the management of properties for other resource purposes. It should be noted, however, that it is the policy of the Plan to encourage preservation of working farms and that any acquisition which would adversely affect working farmlands would have site specific review. Where the acquisition of land results in an increase in use by the public, there may be impacts such as littering, noise, increased traffic and

trespass to adjoining property owners (DEC, 1988).

V. ALTERNATIVES

A. No Action

1. At the Plan level, it should be noted that non-preparation of a plan is not a viable option since the statute requires the preparation of a plan.
2. At the implementation level, it would mean no statewide plan for the protection of open space including no purchase of fee or easement interests by DEC or OPRHP. No action would also mean the continuation of the status quo including: 1) the acceptance of gifts of fee or easements; 2) the continuation of the forest tax law (RPTL 480-a) program; 3) the continuation of the agricultural districts program (AML Art 25-AA); 4) the continuation of local governmental programs aimed at open space preservation; and 5) the continuation of private efforts directed at open space preservation. Acquisition by gift has been a traditional method of acquisition, but has not been extensively used. Whether or not the State purchases land as called for in the Plan, gifts of land will continue.
3. The remaining options for land preservation involve the voluntary cooperation of other governments, groups or individuals. In addition, all of these alternatives currently exist and can be expected to continue to exist, whether or not the State implements the provisions outlined in the Plan. The role of state and federal agencies in facilitating protection through partnerships has been well documented. In the absence of a plan, DEC and OPRHP will not have as active a role in identifying and encouraging the use of these protection strategies.
4. The impacts of acceptance of gifts of fee or some easement interest in land by DEC or OPRHP are the same as those described and discussed in this EIS since neither the manner of acquisition nor the source of funding has any effect on the environmental impacts associated with acquisition of a fee or easement. The impacts of the other options for land preservation are also generally the same as those described in this EIS except that the public use impacts will be lessened or non-existent.
5. In addition, failure by the State to implement a plan may result in significant adverse impacts to the environment. Significant resources, such as a historic structure or habitat of an endangered species, may not be protected and may be lost permanently. Opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation may also be lost if acquisition is precluded. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, without the focus and priorities set by the Plan, the opportunity for creation and maintenance of statewide systems of natural, cultural and outdoor recreation facilities will be substantially hindered.
6. The cumulative environmental effects would also be adverse. Resources of statewide or regional significance would be lost to development. Moreover, some of these resources may be critical to maintaining the statewide system of natural, cultural, and outdoor recreation resources.

B. Modification of Priorities

Another alternative considered was the modification of acquisition priorities by changing the selection criteria so either a certain geographic area or a certain category might receive greater emphasis. This alternative was rejected because DEC, OPRHP and DOS are committed to the acquisition of as broad a range of lands, both in terms of category and geography, as is feasible. To deliberately construct selection criteria to favor one category is not equitable. Likewise, to deliberately target acquisitions in only one or two areas of the State would overlook acquisition in other areas (e.g., acquisition in only New York City or Long Island could preclude acquisition along the Great Lakes Shoreline). In addition this could foreclose acquisitions in some categories, which are only found in certain regions altogether (e.g., tidal wetlands). In addition, these priorities are driven by the regional advisory committees and a public planning process, modifying these priorities would undermine the process as well as undermine the public's trust and support for this plan.

The Plan recommends selection criteria for each category that are designed to rank various projects within each category. The Plan also includes factors to be considered when the commissioners approve individual projects so that no geographic area of the State is either favored or unfavored. Given the statewide nature of the Plan and the wide variety of resources to be protected, the alternative of modifying acquisition priorities to create either a geographical or categorical favoritism was rejected.

VI. MITIGATION MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The following mitigation measures have been identified which would eliminate or reduce the adverse impacts associated with the Plan. While the emphasis of the Plan is protection of resources either through acquisition or other conservation-related approach, there is often a proposed use that may be considered for eventual development. This section identifies the types of mitigation that OPRHP and DEC may employ to assure that short and long term adverse impacts associated with such development are, if not eliminated, then satisfactorily mitigated.

A. DEC Standard Guidelines

Short term construction impacts associated with OPRHP and DEC projects will be mitigated through adherence to such guidelines as DEC's stormwater management (DEC, 1990) and erosion and sediment controls (DEC, 1991). Adverse impacts will also be minimized by adherence to DEC's standards for siting, design and specifications for preservation of a rugged wild character resource. The standards used by DEC are found in Policies and Procedures Manuals, the Trail Construction and Maintenance Manual (Appalachian Mountain Conservancy, 2000), Wilderness Management (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Miscellaneous Publication No. 1365, 1978), and Backcountry Facilities: Design and Maintenance. E. Leonard et al., Appalachian Mountain Club, 1980).

B. Unit Management Plans

As previously noted, all public use of lands under DEC's jurisdiction are managed through extensive unit management planning, a public process, which is subject to site-specific SEQRA review and implementation of BMPs for public access improvements and facilities. Thus, impacts associated with public use and associated development of lands under DEC's jurisdiction is managed to avoid and mitigate any potentially significant impacts to the environment.

C. State Historic Preservation Act of 1980

All properties containing historic and/or cultural resources are subject to the protection provided by the State Historic Preservation Act of 1980. This law requires that all state agencies consider historic resources during project planning. Any work that may affect historic resources will be reviewed by OPRHP's Division of Historic Preservation.

D. OPRHP State Parks & Historic Sites Master Plans

OPRHP's approach to management of State Parks and Historic Sites is through a master plan process (OPRHP, 1997). It also enters into management and operation agreements with localities and not-for-profit groups to manage property acquired under state programs. Both of these processes include environmental impact analysis and opportunity for public participation in planning and environmental reviews.

E. 6 NYCRR § Parts 51, 59 & 190

Impacts associated with the development and use of a property following acquisition will also be mitigated through appropriate management. Lands acquired by DEC for use as wildlife management areas, fishing/boating access and State lands in general are managed by application of 6NYCRR § 51, 59 and 190 respectively pending completion of individual management plans. These regulations address permitted and non-permitted public recreation activities on State lands such as fires, boating, camping, fishing, signs, structures, use of firearms, use of vehicles and other activities.

F. Adirondack & Catskill Park Unit Management Plans

For parcels within the Adirondack and Catskill Park appropriate management and development is determined through the preparation of a unit management plan. A unit management plan (UMP) includes proposed management activities and use of State lands, resource inventories, a proposed management strategy and a schedule for implementation-budget to cover a five-year period. The UMP's are prepared by DEC and subject to public review. UMP's are subject to individual SEQR review; therefore, an environmental impact assessment of proposed activities on State lands is guaranteed through the UMP process. Any necessary site specific regulations are identified through the unit management planning process. For parcels outside of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks appropriate management is determined through a management planning process. The management planning process includes all of the components identified under the UMP process.

G. OPRHP Stewardship Management

Impacts associated with development and use of property acquired by OPRHP will be mitigated through appropriate management using various stewardship mechanisms. These include developing and maintaining inventories of significant biological and cultural resources, and site specific review.

H. Carrying Capacity & Development-based Planning

Potential impacts of new development will be mitigated through proper planning based on the carrying capacity of the environmental resources. Appropriate siting of new facilities will be based on inventory and resource information collected as part of the planning process.

I. DEC & OPRHP Stewardship Funding Committment

Both DEC and OPRHP are committed to providing sufficient resources for adequate stewardship. Funds may be obtained through the State's general fund or by utilizing the funding mechanisms described in *Chapter VI – Programs, Partnerships & Resource Inventory*. Staff for stewardship activities will be provided by the agencies directly or through cooperative programs with resource management groups such as The Nature Conservancy, or with municipal governments.

J. Forest Preserve Managment Measures

Overuse and other land management problems associated with the administration of Forest Preserve lands are addressed in Unit Management Plans being developed for all Forest Preserve lands. In addition, routine patrols are carried out by Forest Rangers and Assistant Forest Rangers to educate the public and enforce the laws and regulations pertaining to the use of the Forest Preserve. This will reduce littering, noise and damage to vegetation which may be associated with an increase in public use. In addition, the DEC can sometimes redirect public use itself by providing information on lesser known and under utilized areas.

K. Non-Forest Preserve Additional Managment Measures

Non-Forest Preserve land acquisitions are managed to benefit the natural resource use for which it was acquired. To the extent possible, properties with resources with conflicting management needs, will be managed to minimize the adverse impacts to the secondary resource.

Some change in public use patterns may result following public acquisition of land. In some cases, the change in use may have a beneficial impact on sites currently overused. At others, the agency which administers the site will explore whatever measures are appropriate to minimize problems that occur. Impacts from the public use of trails can be mitigated by restricting trail head parking, using water bars (designed to divert water off a trail) and dry tread (rocks placed in wet places on the trail) to provide drainage and limit erosion and restricting the use of motorized vehicles.

Acquisition in fee of actively farmed land will include a consideration of such mitigation measures as leasing for agricultural production. Where it is not feasible to assure continued agricultural use of active agricultural land as described in the Exceptions section, the acquisition is not covered by this document.

VII. GROWTH INDUCING ASPECTS

The acquisition of land by DEC, OPRHP or DOS for either conservation or recreational development and use purposes results in the withdrawal from private ownership of lands that would otherwise be available at some future time (immediate or long-term) for development. From this perspective, the acquisition does not contribute to or induce growth. However, the acquisition may induce growth if the land is to be developed for recreational use, such as a boat launch. To the extent that the acquisition provides new or increased recreational opportunity that is utilized by the public, there may be an increase in the number of vendors providing equipment, supplies and services to the public seeking recreational uses. Examples include retailers of fishing tackle, providers of food and lodging, marina operators and outdoor guides. Dedication of an area for open space often creates greater interest in residential development of adjacent lands because of the additional value of being located next to open space.

The recreation usage of protected lands by both DEC, OPRHP and DOS is not expected to increase the consumption of energy. In fact, the increase in the availability of recreational lands in proximity to population concentrations is expected to lead to a net decrease in the consumption of energy; since those wishing to seek recreational opportunities on public lands will not have to travel as far as they would have previously. This was discussed in the final GEIS for the New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Increased recreational opportunities within the State may result in a decrease in recreational travel by State residents to other parts of the country, thereby conserving an unknown amount of energy. (OPRHP, 2008)

VIII. EVALUATION OF COASTAL POLICIES

The process described in the Plan, by which DEC and OPRHP will protect land, will ensure that acquisitions and future uses associated with the lands acquired are consistent with State coastal policies. For each acquisition by either agency, a determination will be made regarding whether the proposed acquisition would be in the coastal area and affect state coastal policies. If so, the proposed acquisition must be shown to be consistent with applicable policies set forth in 19NYCRR 600.5, *Coastal Policies Implementing Provisions of the Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act*. Proposed acquisitions in coastal areas which are located within communities having approved local waterfront revitalization programs must also be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the policies and purposes of those local programs.

Acquisitions will be beneficial to coastal areas. Lands acquired may provide public access to the coastal area, protection for fish and wildlife habitats, protection of watersheds and water supplies, and preservation and enhancement of scenic resources. In addition, acquisitions will provide for public access and recreation in areas best suited for public use. There is not anticipated to be any detrimental effects through implementation in coastal areas.

The Open Space Conservation Plan also includes New York's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) plan, a federal program established to protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by development. Priority is given to lands that can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

The CELCP plan is designed to be consistent with the State's coastal management program and structured in a way that directly advances the goals, objectives, or implementation of the State's coastal management program, the Hudson River NERR management plan, watershed protection plans, and the national objectives of the Coastal Zone Management Act. The integration of the CELCP plan into the Open Space Conservation Plan provides an opportunity to implement the policies and recommendations related to open space protection in coastal areas by incorporating them into the Open Space Conservation Plan and providing a new funding source which targets protection of open space resources in coastal areas.

IX. EXCEPTIONS – PROJECT SPECIFIC REVIEWS

A generic environmental impact statement on a statewide, bi-agency plan that is to guide the future land protection programs of DEC, OPRHP and DOS is necessarily focused on the types of environmental impacts that can reasonably be foreseen in most situations. There are, however, circumstances where a more site-specific environmental review may be warranted for any particular project. This section identifies those circumstances that will require site-specific environmental reviews.

Each proposed project will be evaluated to determine whether or not any of these exceptions are present. If they are present the proposed project will be the subject of a site specific environmental review. If none of the exceptions are present, then the GEIS has adequately discussed the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project and constitutes compliance with the requirements of SEQR.

Site specific environmental review may lead to a negative declaration, if that review discloses that the proposed project will not result in any significant adverse environmental effects other than those discussed in this GEIS. If the review discloses significant adverse environmental effects (other than those discussed in this GEIS), then a supplemental EIS would be prepared.

Even though the Plan identifies different categories which will be used by both DEC, OPRHP, and DOS, each Agency has its own mission and focus in selecting land protection projects. For example, only DEC would implement projects under the Forest Preserve category. Therefore, each agency has developed a separate list of exceptions for the projects they would implement.

A. DEC Project Exceptions

The following exceptions are established for DEC projects:

1. Forest Preserve.

a. Parcels that encompass significant wildlife or fish habitat that would be adversely impacted by Forest Preserve management restrictions. A "significant habitat" is a habitat of special interest or value due to the presence of: endangered, threatened, special concern or rare plant or animal species; unusual concentrations of a variety of wildlife or plants; unusual or unique ecological associations; or a habitat in which relatively intense wildlife or fish values are concentrated in a limited geographic area. Also, its value for wildlife or fish is likely to extend beyond its own borders.

(1) Categories of significant habitat types include:

a) Habitats of unusual, endangered or rare species.

b) Areas supporting high concentrations of wildlife.

c) Areas critical or essential to fish, wildlife or plant populations.

d) Concentrated migration routes.

e) Areas with unusual vegetation supporting unique wildlife.

f) Areas of special value for human enjoyment of fish and wildlife.

(2) Criteria used in evaluating a significant habitat include the following:

a) Distance – The further away a habitat's effects are felt, or the further away one would go to find the same species, the more significant a habitat is likely to be.

b) Dependence – The more essential an area is to providing habitat for many kinds of species, the more significant it is likely to be.

c) Human Use – The greater the human use associated with an area's wildlife or fish habitat (especially the greater distance from which people are drawn to a given area in order to participate in activities associated with the habitat), the more significant the area is likely to be.

d) Concentration – Abundance and/or variety of species (especially if it is unusual in the surrounding region) may be an indication of significance.

e) Irreplaceability – The less replaceable a habitat is (for instance, through migration), the more significant it is likely to be.

b. Parcels that contain significant historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural property values that would be adversely impacted by Forest Preserve management restrictions. A proposed Forest Preserve acquisition will require a site specific environmental review if it contains any historic or prehistoric site, building or structure listed in or declared eligible for listing in the State and/or the National Register of Historic places or in the statewide inventory of historical and cultural resources or any historic building, structure or site that has been formally proposed by the Committee or Register for consideration by the New York Board of Historic Preservation for a recommendation to the State Historic Officer for nominations for inclusion in said register as indicated in Section 14.07 of the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law. In addition to a site specific environmental assessment, any such parcel, where appropriate, will be subject to the procedures outlined in Environmental Conservation Law Section 9-0109 and Section 14.09 of the Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law.

c. **Parcels of 500 acres or more**:
   (1) of which at least 50 percent is rated in the highest forest soil productivity potential class. Forest soil productivity potential classes are defined by the Essex County Soil and Site Productivity Survey, and the rating system will be applied to soil series and associations covering he Adirondack and Catskill Parks (Report of the New York Forest Soils Resources Group to the Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council, February 7, 1987, by Philip J. Craul, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York);
   (2) or of which at least 50 percent is rated in Soil Groups 1 through 7 as identified in the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Soil Classification System (1NYCRR 370); and
   (3) if the acquisition is the purchase of an easement that does not affect the sellers' right to conduct timber harvesting operations, this exception does not apply.

d. **Parcels where substantial improvements exist.** Substantial improvements are defined as any business such as a ski facility, golf course, drive-in theater, campground, summer camp or tourist attraction which provides recreational or other activities to a substantial number of the public, provided such business has been in operation within three years of the intended date of State acquisition.

e. **Parcels that encompass** habitats of rare, threatened or endangered plants or rare natural communities that would be adversely impacted by Forest Preserve management restrictions.

f. **Parcels where acquisition may adversely impact public motorized access.**

2. **Non-Forest Preserve.** Parcels that are rated highly in two or more categories where the individual management strategies would be inconsistent.

3. **Forest Preserve and Non-Forest Preserve.** Any land devoted to the production of crops, livestock, or livestock products, at least two out of the last five years, unless acquisition by DEC does not include purchase of agricultural rights.

   a. "Crops, livestock and livestock products" shall include but not be limited to the following:
      (1) Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans;
      (2) Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries;
      (3) Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions;
      (4) Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers; and
      (5) Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, furbearing animals, milk, eggs and furs.

   b. "Crops, livestock and livestock products" shall not include land or portions thereof used for processing or retail merchandising of such crops, livestock or livestock products.

   c. "Crops, livestock and livestock products" shall not include "farm woodland," land used for the production for sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts, firewood and maple syrup.

   d. "Two out of the last five years" shall mean that the land shall have been part of a single operation of not less than ten acres of land that had an average gross sales value of ten

thousand dollars or more annually for at least two of the last five years.

4. Any acquisition:
   a. That will result in the construction of facilities (including parking areas) that will require the physical alteration of more than three (3) acres.
   b. For flood control purposes.
   c. For hazardous waste remediation purposes.
   d. Identified as, now or in the past, containing hazardous wastes or substances.
   e. Which contains a structure, facility or condition that is in conflict with applicable State environmental laws, rules or regulations, including but not limited to Articles 24, 25, and 34 of the Environmental Conservation Law.

B. OPRHP Project Exceptions

The following exceptions are established for OPRHP projects:

1. A protection project which generates significant public controversy on issues involving the adverse environmental effects of the proposal.
2. Any protection project that includes a proposal for construction of facilities within 12 months. Projects where there is no plan for specific development of facilities for at least 12 months will not require site specific review. However, any significant development proposed in the future will be subject to environmental review.
3. Acquisition of property listed or eligible for listing on the State or National Registers of Historic Places, where the acquisition or future development of the property is not designed for the preservation of the property.
4. Protection projects which may result in overuse or other significant adverse impacts to natural or cultural resources.
5. Any protection project where OPRHP proposes to enter into a management agreement with another public or not-for-profit organization.

X. REFERENCES

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NOTICE OF COMPLETION
FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Date: June 17, 2009

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

A final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) has been completed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) as co-lead agencies; for the proposed action described below.

Name of Action:
Conserving Open Space in New York State - 2009
New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (Plan)

Pursuant to statute ECL §49-0217, DEC and OPRHP held public hearings in each DEC administrative region on the Draft Plan, released January 7, 2009 and took public comments until February 27, 2009. These hearings also served as public hearings on the Draft GEIS pursuant to the applicable SEQR Act (6 NYCRR § 617.9(a)(4)). A response to public comments was prepared and is included in *e-Appendix F* of the Final Plan located on DEC's public website at: *www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html.* In addition, pursuant to 6 NYCRR § 617.11, DEC and OPRHP will file a written findings statement and final decision on this action no less than ten (10) days upon this notice.

The 2009 Plan is an update and revision of the 2006 Plan which includes identification of the types and locations of open space resources and various open space conservation tools and strategies. The revised 2009 Plan addresses the economic restraints placed on all government funding at this time, and refocuses our open space conservation actions on four critical priorities. These priorities are: Responding to Global Climate Change; Fostering Green, Healthy Communities; Connecting New Yorkers with Nature and Recreation; and Safeguarding our State's Natural and Cultural Heritage. The 2009 Plan makes recommendations to our state, federal, and local governments, non-profits, philanthropists, and state citizens on programs and partnerships, education and outreach, policies and regulations, research and funding, many of which have begun to be implemented or will begin to be implemented in the next three to five years. The 2009 Plan continues to list priority conservation projects, publicly identified and reviewed, which are eligible for acquisition under the State Environmental Protection Fund and other state, federal and local sources.

Location: Statewide

Potential Environmental Impacts:
The 2009 Plan will lead to increased protection of our state's significant natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural resources. Intrinsic benefits accrue from public decisions to protect resources. Economic benefits anticipate increased water quality protection, wildlife habitat protection, and enhancement of natural resource-based and tourism industries. Associated adverse impacts may develop from the use of resources acquired for public access with possible impacts of short-term erosion and sedimentation concerns associated with construction. Potential acquisition of land could increase public use with impacts such as littering, noise, vegetative damage, increased traffic, and trespass to adjoining landowners.

Cumulative benefits arise from the implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and publicly-involved process, based on research, resource inventories, and examination of the critical conservation demands being placed on New York's resource - global climate change; water quality protection; increased urban populations; unplanned or unregulated development; ability for all New York citizens to access nature; and the need to safeguard our state's natural diversity, unique historic and cultural resources, and outdoor recreational resources.

A copy of the final GEIS and final 2009 Plan may be obtained from:
Online at *www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html* or by request through email at *osp2009@gw.dec.state.ny.us* or through the lead agencies, DEC or OPRHP.

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