

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "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

Title2009 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

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Date of Completion..... June 17, 2009

Address Open Space Conservation Plan
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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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