

CHAPTER V -

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Public input has been central to the creation of this Plan. In accordance with the legislation requiring the preparation of the plan, every effort has been made to construct the plan “from the bottom up.”

A. Origin and Organization

1990 legislation added Article 49 of the Environmental Conservation Law which in part called for the establishment of Regional Advisory Committees to advise the Department and the Office on the creation and implementation of an open space conservation program. See ECL §49-0209. Each Regional Advisory Committee consists of at least thirteen but not more than twenty-three appointed members. Those named to serve were chosen for their knowledge of and concern for land preservation, conservation, historic, cultural, recreational and acquisition goals as expressed in Article 49 of the ECL. No employee of DEC or OPRHP may serve on a regional committee.

Each county outside the City of New York or the City of New York for those counties contained within the city, appointed members to its Regional Advisory Committee in a manner designed to provide equal representation for all counties within that region. The total number of local government appointees for a Regional Advisory Committee cannot exceed one-half of the committee's membership. The Commissioners of DEC and OPRHP are permitted to appoint additional members equal to one more than the total number of members eligible for appointment by local governments.

Members of Regional Advisory Committees must be residents of that region, except that the Commissioners may appoint to each regional advisory committee no more than two members who are not residents of that region.

The agencies made the Regional Advisory Committees an important part of the planning process. In several Regions, the committees have applied considerable effort in providing true public participation in government decision making. To a great extent the ideas presented in this Plan come directly from the work of the Regional Advisory Committees.

B. Purpose and Function of Regional Advisory Committees

The legislation which established the Regional Advisory Committees, identified these committees as the initial means to provide the Department and the Office with advice and recommendations from the public on the implementation of the Open Space Conservation Plan.

The Committees provide advice and recommendations on policies and priorities, studies and assessments, setting guidelines for project selection, the consideration of economic impacts, the ecological value of projects, the recommendation of properties to be considered for conservation and acquisition, and other relevant matters. The committees serve as the primary mechanism for the general public, local governments and other interested groups to advance potential projects for consideration.

C. Regional Summaries

The summaries received from each of the Regional Advisory Committees contain both deliberations and recommendations. For this revision of the Plan, the regional committees were asked to submit their reports in a standardized format. This was intended to both help the committees in reporting their deliberations and also to provide consistency in the format of reports. Also, that readers may understand the diversity of issues and concerns which were discussed and to show how the recommendations of the committees became a foundation for the recommendations of the Plan, these documents are reproduced essentially as received.

Region 1 Regional Advisory Committee 2006 Revision

The Region 1 Regional Advisory Committee convened on April 8, May 6, May 20, June 3 and June 17, 2005 with the purpose of establishing careful and understandable priorities for state action to conserve specific open space parcels and cultural resources. The priorities were established through the combination of objective measurements of land conservation needs and broad-based citizen opinion. The following is the Committee's report to the State.

2002 Priority Projects Revisited

The 2002 Priority Project list was reviewed by the Committee and revised as follows:

Pine Barrens {1}

Chardonnay Woods: the largest parcels have been acquired, so this project is deleted from the priority narrative. North Shore Properties 1,2,3: remains a priority, renamed Rose-Breslin Parcels 1, 2, 3. Fox Lair-Yaphank: has been protected by the Town of Brookhaven and Suffolk County.

Peconic Pinelands Maritime Reserve {2}

Coram Woods: is deleted from the priority narrative. Tuckahoe Woods, Long Pond Greenbelt, Great Hill and Noyack Hills: are combined under the new South Fork Critical Wildlands and Groundwater Protection Area. Montauk Peninsula: projects now fall under either Atlantic Coast Beaches or Peconic Pinelands Maritime Reserve. Gardiner's Island: has been protected with a 20 year conservation easement. Cow Neck /Sebonac: remains a priority. Accabonac Harbor: is deleted from the priority narrative. Shelter Island Groundwater Area: remains a priority. Peconic River Greenway: has been moved to Long Island Trail and Greenway System. Broad Cove: remains a priority and is grouped with two additional parcels under Western Flanders Bay Assemblage. Stony Hill: remains a priority.

Western Suffolk/Nassau Special Groundwater Protection Area {3}

Now renamed "Long Island Special Groundwater Protection Areas." Pineaire: has been lost to development. Underhill: has been partially protected and partially developed. Camp Kaufman/USDAN: remains a priority. Whitney Estate: remains a priority. Arthur Dean, LaSelva, Pulling and Held: remain priorities but are now grouped with additional SGPA parcels under new project names.

Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve {4}

Shinnecock Bay: remains on the priority list with clarified boundaries. Beaverdam Creek: has essentially been protected by Suffolk County and so is removed from the priority narrative. Barrier Islands: remains a priority but now falls under Atlantic Ocean

Beaches. Cedar Swamp Creek: remains a priority but now falls under Nassau Tributary/Bay Buffer Sites.

Long Island Sound Coastal Area {5}

Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor: remains a priority and is now included under Sagamore Hill Additions. Keyspan/Shoreham: remains a priority. Keyspan/Jamesport: has been acquired by OPRHP.

Long Island Trail System / Greenways {6}

Now renamed “Long Island Trail and Greenway System.” The Glenwood Landing Trail is now included under the new, broader project heading “Hempstead Harbor Shoreline Trail System.”

Funding and 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, and makes the following observations and recommendations:

Climate and Trends

Long Island has some of the most immediately threatened open space in New York State. Current trends indicate that Long Island will reach full build-out within the next ten years; Nassau County even sooner. As a result, conservationists and developers are competing in a high-priced, fast-paced market to secure the last remaining open spaces. At risk is the quality of Long Island’s drinking water and air, the health of its beaches, bays and rivers, the long-term economic vitality of its farming, fishing and tourism industries, its unique natural areas, treasured historic sites, critical wildlife habitat, and general quality of life.

To meet this challenge, local governments on Long Island are spending unprecedented amounts on land acquisition. In 2004 alone, Nassau County voters approved a \$50 million bond act, the first in County history. Town of Oyster Bay voters passed a \$30 million bond act (\$15 million for acquisition/ \$15 for park improvements), Suffolk County voters passed a \$75 million bond act, and Town of Brookhaven voters passed a \$100 million bond. In addition, voters in the five East End Towns of Riverhead, Southold, Shelter Island, Southampton and East Hampton elected to institute the “Community Preservation Fund,” a dedicated land protection fund financed by a 2% transfer tax on certain real estate transactions. The CPF has generated nearly \$275 million for land protection across the East End of Long Island since its inception in 1999.

Even with substantial conservation funding, the price tag for a given project can easily exceed the funding capacity of a single agency. As a result, acquisition partnerships are on the rise. Many recent projects on Long Island involve Village,

Town, County, and non-profit partners. The State, too, has participated in several joint acquisitions. This is likely to be a growing trend in coming years as property values continue to escalate. Increased State funding together with increased State participation in joint acquisitions will greatly leverage local conservation dollars; many more priority acquisitions will be completed as a result.

Long Island's existing public land needs more effective protection too, from neglect, misuse, underutilization and a general lack of management caused by insufficient staffing and funding. This is true at every level of government. Though the need for management funding is difficult to balance with the current pressing need for acquisition funding, existing public holdings must not be allowed to deteriorate. This will require an increase in funding for both acquisition and management, not just a shifting of existing funding levels between the two needs.

Goals and Recommendations

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:

- **Development of a ten-year strategic plan** for the protection of Long Island's last remaining open spaces should be undertaken. Considering impending buildout, 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.
- **Increased funding of the EPF.** The Committee noted that 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.
- **Increased funding for Long Island.** The Committee also noted that local conservation spending on Long Island exceeds the State level many-fold. To meet the special urgency of the impending ten-year buildout and to better leverage local conservation dollars, the Committee feels fully one-third of the statewide funding, or \$50 million per year, should be allocated to Long Island for the next ten years.
- **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.

- **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. If DEC and/or OPR 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 more easily achieved.
- **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.
- **Environmental Facilities Corporation.** The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation can provide a low cost method of supporting local conservation efforts is by offering 0% conservation loans. This would encourage local municipalities to borrow against future revenue, to buy land now while it is still available and before prices escalate further. Any new State bond issue or expanded EPF should include a new category for local government financing assistance.

Region 1
2006 Priority Projects

The Committee reviewed the definition of “Open Space” and familiarized itself with the Resource Areas and Land Protection Categories and Sub-Categories set forth in the Plan. Each potential acquisition was screened and rated for minimum eligibility and then considered by the Committee for Plan recommendation. The following is a list of acquisition projects recommended by the Committee for State action.

LI Sound Coastal Area {1}

Mitchell Creek Wetlands
Red Spring Woods
Sagamore Hill Additions
Shu Swamp Natural Area
Davison Preserve Additions
Mill Pond Overlook
Keyspan/Glenwood Landing
Morgan Estate
Seminary / State Assemblage
Nissequogue River System
Flowerfield
Crane Neck Point
Conscience Bay Watershed
Mount Sinai Highlands
Key Span/Shoreham
Nassau County 4H
Baiting Hollow Additions
Peconic Dunes Additions

LI South Shore Estuary Reserve {2}

Nassau Tributary/Bay Buffer Sites
Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area
Mastic Woods Watershed
Connetquot River System
Carlls River Watershed Addition
Shinnecock Bay

LI Trail and Greenway System {3}

Shoreline-to-Shoreline Trail
Hempstead Harbor Shoreline Trail System
Muttontown Preserve Trail System
SUNY Old Westbury Trail System
Trailview State Park Addition
Long Island Motor Parkway Trail

Glacial Ridge Trail

Long Island Trail and Greenway System con't

Shore to Core Trail
Pine to Bay Trail
Peconic River Greenway

Peconic Pinelands Maritime Reserve {4}

Western Flanders Bay Assemblage
North Fork Preserve
South Fork Critical Wildlands and Groundwater Protection Area
Cow Neck / Sebonac Creek
Shelter Island Groundwater Area
Pipe's Cove Complex
East Hampton Pine Barrens
Camp Blue Bay
Stony Hill Woods

Central Pine Barrens {5}

Southampton Core, CRA and CGA
North Shore Properties 1, 2, 3
Overton Preserve
Pine Ridge Preserve

Special Ground Water Protection Areas {6}

Whitney Estate
Old Westbury Gardens Enhancement Area
Route 25A Heritage Area
Planting Fields State Park Additions
Tiffany Creek Preserve
Camp Kaufman/USDAN
Pineridge Park and Additions
Laurel Lake Additions

Atlantic Coast Beaches {7}

Barrier Islands

Montauk Moorlands

2005 Priority Project Narrative

Long Island Sound Coastal Area: 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 increased 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 to Hempstead Harbor.
- **Red Spring Woods** - one 11 acre parcel in the City of Glen Cove. This towering oak-tulip forest is home to red fox and red-tailed hawk and is the source of Red Spring, which flows directly into Long Island Sound. This is the last sizable green space within City limits, a sanctuary for both people and wildlife.
- **Sagamore Hill Additions** - 17 parcels totaling 342.1 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 104.5 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 and brook lamprey and three state-vulnerable plant species.
- **Davison Preserve Additions** - 17 parcels totaling 190.4 acres between the Kate Trubee Davison Preserve, City of Glen Cove Parkland and Village of Lattintown Wetlands on the Long Island Sound in the Town of Oyster Bay. Includes an historic dairy and a monastery with pristine wetlands and formal gardens.
- **Mill Pond Overlook** - One 4.7 acre parcel fronting the 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. Currently proposed for intensive development, this property's preservation is essential for protection of the Mill Pond's thriving wetland habitat.
- **Keyspan/Glenwood Landing** - One 7.8 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 Old 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.
- **Flowerfield** - approximately 100 acres in the Smithtown Hamlet of St. James. A combination of rolling hills, woods and open fields, this land has long served the community as a site for outdoor public events.
- **Crane Neck Point** - 5 acre parcel fronting Long Island Sound just west of DEC's Flax Pond tidal wetland and SUNY's Flax Pond Environmental Research Center. The site's notable geologic features include a stepped topography dating to the last glacial retreat.
- **Conscience Bay Watershed** - two heavily wooded parcels totaling 40 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.
- **Key Span/Shoreham** - 893.2 acres in the Hamlets of Shoreham and Wading River with a 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** - One parcel, 137.9 acres in the Hamlet of Roanoke, Town of Riverhead. This camp property would provide a new public access point on Long Island Sound and provide excellent camping, environmental education and passive recreational opportunities.

- **Baiting Hollow Addition** - One parcel, 89.5 acres in the Hamlet of Baiting Hollow, Town of Riverhead, would greatly increase public access to DEC's Baiting Hollow Tidal Wetlands fronting Long Island Sound. Parcel includes a mapped freshwater wetland.
- **Peconic Dunes Additions**- Three contiguous parcels totaling 58.3 acres with 1400' frontage on the Sound in the Town of Southold. Includes unique primary and secondary dunes and a rare cranberry bog community; links to three County Parks.

Long Island South Shore Estuary Reserve - 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 ocean 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**: grouping of four small waterfront parcels (Harbor Isle Waterfront Site, Baldwin Harbor Waterfront Site, Waterview at Baldwin Creek, Brooklyn Waterworks at Milburn Creek) that provide critical buffer for SSER tributary corridors and bay front in the densely developed Town of Hempstead.
- **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.
- **Mastic Woods Watershed** - an assemblage of parcels totaling 154 acres at the headwaters of the Forge River in the Brookhaven Hamlets of Mastic and Manor Park. The wetlands and upland woods drain directly into the Forge River at Swift Stream and contribute to the health of Moriches Bay and its important shell- and finfish habitat.
- **Connetquot River System** - a 26.5-acre addition to Connetquot River State Park north of Sunrise Highway, and a grouping of five parcels totaling 7.3 acres for addition to the Connetquot State Wetlands, at the mouth of the Connetquot River on the Great South Bay in the Town of Islip.
- **Carlls River Watershed Addition** - 50 small parcels totaling 22.2 acres along the headwaters of the Carlls River north of Belmont Lake State Park in North Babylon and Wyandanch, in the Town of Babylon.

- **Shinnecock Bay** - 300 acres of back-barrier salt marshes extending for five miles between the Villages of Quogue and Southampton on the Shinnecock Bay. Includes open water, dredged material islands and intertidal flats critical for fish and shell fish, waterfowl, migratory shorebirds, rare plants and federally listed sea turtles.

Long Island Trail and Greenway System - 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 258 acres adjoining the Muttontown Preserve. This heavily used horse and foot trail network 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** - acquisition of parcels adjoining the SUNY/Old Westbury Campus would maintain connectivity of this popular horse and foot trail system in the Oyster Bay SGPA.
- **Trailview State Park Addition** - protection of this steep 5-acre parcel is imperative to maintain existing trail continuity and safety. Acquisition would also enhance access to Trailview State Park and protect its viewshed.
- **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. Several privately owned parcels along the corridor 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 Trail** - parcels in the trail corridor linking Wildwood State Park (on

Long Island Sound), Camp Wauwepex, DEC's Calverton Conservation Area, and publically-owned land in the Pine Barrens Core, including DEC's Otis Pike Preserve and Robert Cushman Murphy County Park. This trail links with the Pine-to-Bay Trail in Manorville (below) to create a shore-to-shore trail from Long Island Sound to the Great South Bay.

- **Pine to Bay Trail** - linkage and buffer parcels along this seven mile trail beginning at the Pine Barren's Visitors Center in Manorville and terminating at the southern edge of Terrell's River County Park on the Great South Bay. This trail links with the Shore- to- Core Trail in Manorville (above) to create a shore-to-shore trail from Long Island Sound to the Great South Bay.
- **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.

Peconic Pinelands Maritime Reserve - 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:

- **Western Flanders Bay Assemblage** - Three parcels totaling 190.4 acres including Broadcove, Hubbard Duck Farm and the River Club, in the Hamlets of Riverhead and Aquabogue in the Town of Riverhead. All three parcels front or drain into Flanders Bay, near the mouth of the Peconic River.
- **North Fork Preserve** - 133 acres in the Hamlet of Northville, Town of Riverhead, contains an especially rich diversity of habitat types, including numerous freshwater wetlands draining to both the Long Island Sound and an extensive drainageway to the south known as the Long Swamp. Threatened and special-concern species documented on site.
- **South Fork Critical Wildlands and Groundwater Protection Area** - 1,100 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 1200-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 Islands's sole source aquifer and are critical to drinking water quality. The St. Gabriel's additions are in close proximity to DEC's Fox Point State Tidal Wetlands.
- **Pipe's Cove Complex** - 225-acre wetland complex including 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.
- **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 is dotted with kettlehole ponds and is important for deep groundwater recharge. Suffolk County Water Authority wells are nearby. The forest is a rich habitat for diverse wildlife, including many forest-interior bird species, and is traversed by the Paumanok Path.

Central Pine Barrens {5} - 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 any Core, CRA or CGA parcel within Southampton Town will help maintain the hydrological and ecological integrity of the area while protecting the value of the existing public and private investment already made to protect land in the region.
- **Rose-Breslin Parcels 1, 2, 3** - 400 contiguous acres of oak-pitch pine dry forest in single ownership. The property bridges DEC's Rocky Point Preserve to the north, DEC's Longwood Conservation Area to the east and Suffolk County's Warbler Woods to the South. Sitting atop the groundwater divide, the property

drains to both the Peconic and Carmens River systems.

- **Overton Preserve** - 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.
- **Pine Ridge Preserve** - 800 acres of highly intact contiguous upland pine barrens forest containing significant wildlife habitat. Home to rare Lepidoptera, including coastal barrens buckmoth and several NYS natural heritage rank species. Remarkably free of invasive plant species.

Special Ground Water Protection Areas {6} - 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** - One 500-acre parcel of rolling hills, meadows, woods, marshes and open water. This is the last large tract of undeveloped land in the Town of North Hempstead. It contains a giant glacial ledge and is well suited for hiking, biking and historic preservation of the mansion.
- **Old Westbury Gardens Enhancement Area** - 11 parcels totaling 344 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** - 15 parcels totaling 232 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 State Park Additions** - 21 parcels totaling 605 acres near or abutting Planting Fields State Historic Park in the Oyster Bay SGPA.
- **Tiffany Creek Preserve** - 14 parcels totaling 223.5 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.

- **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.
- **Laurel Lake Additions** - 3 parcels totaling 52 acres in the Southold SGPA, in the North Fork Town of Southold. The parcels front Laurel Lake and are adjacent to public land and an existing trail network. High-value consolidation parcels.

Atlantic Coast {7} - acquisition of parcels fronting the Atlantic Ocean for active and passive recreation, habitat and endangered species protection. Representative projects include:

- **Barrier Islands** - oceanfront parcels on the barrier islands protecting Long Island's south shore from the Atlantic Ocean. Several small parcels on Fire Island are currently available for sale, as is the Foundation Block parcel on Long Beach Island in Nassau County. Foundation Block consists of 5 acres
- **Montauk Moorlands** - a 265-acre area on the Montauk Peninsula between Ditch Plains and Camp Hero, including the newly protected Amsterdam Beach. The area includes globally rare maritime moorland, freshwater and tidal wetlands, oceanfront bluffs and frontage on the Atlantic Ocean. The wetlands support several state rare herptiles, chiefly the blue spotted salamander, as well as southern leopard frogs and spotted turtles. Acquisition of four additional parcels will consolidate public ownership within this unique ecosystem.

2005 Regional Advisory Committee

Nassau County Appointees:

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|-------------------|--|
| Thomas Maher | Nassau County Environmental Coordination |
| Lisa Ott | North Shore Land Alliance |
| Patricia Randolph | Rauch Foundation |
| Katie Schwab | Nassau County Planning |
| Robert Weltner | Operation SPLASH |

Suffolk County Appointees:

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|-----------------|---|
| Michael Deering | Suffolk County Environmental Affairs* |
| Ronald Foley | Suffolk County Parks, Recreation and Conservation |
| John Halsey | Peconic Land Trust |
| Thomas Isles | Suffolk County Planning |
| Kevin McDonald | The Nature Conservancy* |

Commissioners' Appointees:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Charles Bevilacqua | Conservation Fund Advisory Board* |
| Barbara Blass | Town of Riverhead Councilwoman |
| Jeff Fullmer | South Shore Estuary Reserve* |
| Betsy Gulotta | Friends of Hempstead Plains |
| Thomas Knobel | Town of East Hampton* |
| Lee Koppelman | Long Island Regional Planning Board* |
| Margo Myles | Town of Huntington |
| Martin Shea | Town of Southampton* |
| Melissa Spiro | Town of Southold |
| John Turner | Town of Brookhaven* |
| Lloyd Zuckerberg | Nassau Land Trust |

* Returning Members

DEC Contacts:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Peter A. Scully | Regional Director |
| Charles Hamilton | Natural Resources Supervisor |
| Heather Amster | Real Property Supervisor |

OPRHP Contacts:

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| John Norbeck | Regional Director |
| Linda Spahr | Deputy Director |
| Michelle Somma | Land Management and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator |

Region 2 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

Meeting dates: February 23, 2005; March 16th, 2005; April 20th, 2005; May 18th, 2005 and June 15th, 2005

Summary

Thirteen private parcels are newly identified in this 2005 revision as priorities for acquisition. There are currently 58 parcels included in the 15 priority projects in this region. As in years past, the opportunities identified for open space enhancement in New York City were concentrated in privately owned parcels that could be bought outright. There is an overall decrease on the priority list, due to two main factors; those being, [1] the twelve acquisitions from the 2002 priority list and [2] the limited sources of available open space in this urban community. Purchases of twelve parcels recommended for acquisition in the 2002 plan have been completed and several more are near completion. Seven priority recommendations were lost to development. Numerous parcels identified on the region's "Long List" were likewise acquired with only a small percentage lost for development. The committee has met five times since completing the 2002 Open Space Plan to review the progress of 2002 plan recommendations and to present and discuss new prospects and policies for acquiring or protecting open space. During the public comment period, Sharrotts Road Shorelands was mentioned twice for acquisition, while Port Mobil Swamp and Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve Additions each were noted for acquisition. How fortunate that all three of these properties were already nominated for the Priority List.

Priority List - New Nominations

1. North Brooklyn Waterfront Access - Located in Kings County in the South Williamsburg and Greenpoint neighborhoods. This new resource area replaces Eastern District Terminal and Bushwick Inlet. North Brooklyn is characterized by a decaying industrial waterfront, with virtually no public access. The recent residential rezoning of the area will involve the remapping and acquisition of land by New York City in Northside [Williamsburg Park], the conversion of the MTA lot for parkland, and the expansion of Barge Park. Category: Inner City/Underserved Community Parks
2. 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. Category: Historic Preservation
3. Brooklyn Navy Yard - Officers' Row - Located in Kings County on Flushing Avenue. This is a small section of the Brooklyn Navy Yard that was home to high-ranking officers and their families. The ten houses, seven of which remain, were built between 1864 and 1901. Category: Historic Preservation

4. 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. Category: Historic Preservation
5. Camp St. Edward's Campground - Located in Richmond County on Raritan Bay. This property would serve to connect other properties owned by New York City Parks and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation [Mt. Loretto] and would enhance public access to Raritan Bay shoreline. Category: Long Pond/Butler Manor Woods
6. Goodhue aka 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. Category: Staten Island North Shore
7. Wycoff-Bennett House - Located in Kings County on E. 22nd Street and Avenue P, in the Marine Park/Flatlands section of southern Brooklyn. This house is a rare example of a Dutch Colonial farmhouse in excellent condition with excellent historical documentation back to 1766. It is on the National Historic Register and New York City Landmarks List. Category: Historic Preservation
8. Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve Additions - Located in Richmond County 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. Category: Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex
9. Blazing Star - Located in Richmond County 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. Category: Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex
10. Sharrotts Road Shorelands - Located in Richmond County. This 42+/- acre site consists 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. Category: Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex
11. Outerbridge Shorelands - Located in Richmond County. This 30+/- acre site consists of forested upland and tidal wetland shoreline along the Arthur Kill, north and south of the Outerbridge Crossing. Category: Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex
12. Kriescher Cove - Located in Richmond County. This property consists of 25+/- acres of woodland, ponds, salt marsh and mud flats along the Arthur Kill. The property provides habitat for colonial waterbirds, songbirds, amphibians and reptiles. Category: Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex
13. Port Mobil Swamp Forest and Tidal Wetlands - Located in Richmond County. This site consists of 50+/- acres of forest [with rare Blackjack Oak, Persimmon & River Birch], ponds and shoreline surrounding ExxonMobil's tank farm along the Arthur Kill. The property provides significant habitat for amphibians and reptiles. Category: Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex

Issues

Many of the same issues that were highlighted in the last report within this Region, are ongoing. The various governmental and nonprofit agencies have worked together to produce this plan and indeed, this continued cooperation over the past three years, has produced some outstanding priority acquisitions.

Community Gardens /Underserved Communities- Probably the greatest achievement in the Region as of the last Open Space Plan. An Agreement announced on September 18th, 2002, resolved three years of lawsuits over the 838 community gardens held by the City of New York. Three hundred ninety one were preserved;one hundred and fourteen were subject to sale or development;thirty eight went for immediate development; two hundred and ninety five were not covered by the settlement. The Trust for Public Land and numerous nonprofits were able to acquire a substantial amount of these gardens. Community gardens have been established by local residents on undeveloped lots and often serve as de facto parks.

Transfers of public land - Another triumph for Region 2 has been the transfer of Governor's Island. In early 2003, it was returned to the public after two centuries of restricted military use when the Federal Government transferred the island to the City and State of New York and the National Park Service (NPS). This 175-acre island in New York Harbor offers unique historic, open space and waterfront resources. The island includes a National Historic District (also designated a New York Historic District) covering half its area, hundreds of historic structures, a golf course, tennis courts and ballfields, all in park-like settings with panoramic waterfront views. Although New York City is much in need of recreational open space, the cost of land is often prohibitively high. Within the New York City region are environmentally and historically significant sites, owned and managed by federal, state and local government agencies, which have great value to the community as open space resources. Transfer of these properties from the registers of the agencies now holding them to other governmental agencies or to nongovernmental organizations that manage land for recreation or resource conservation, would present unique opportunities for the city to create parks and historic and recreational facilities and for the public to benefit from them. The primary benefits of such property transfers include public access to the waterfront [The Brooklyn Navy Base-located in Kings County and once known as America's premier shipbuilding facility was built in 1781 and became United States property in 1801. It was closed in 1966 and purchased by the City of New York in 1967. There are extraordinary opportunities for historic preservation and open space development within the tall fences that surround the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The former hospital grounds on the North-east corner of the yards has a park-like canopy of mature trees on a generous campus and should also be acquired as parkland. Perhaps the former hospital buildings can be recycled for school use or for a not-for-profit center similar to the one in Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco.], preservation of open space [Thurston Basin-located in Queens County is predominately tidal wetlands and is owned by the City of New York][The Staten Island Greenbelt - one of the largest urban nature preserves in the US. Its 2,500 acres include woods, wetlands, glacial ponds, open fields, scenic vistas, more

than 50 different species of birds, and 19 species of trees including several Class I mapped freshwater wetlands which run through the Richmond Parkway Right of Way. If New York State Department of Transportation transferred the surplus Richmond Parkway Right of Way for use in the Greenbelt trail, the benefit to New York State as a whole would be the acquisition of 139+/- acres at a savings of millions of dollars.] within developed communities as community gardens [W 119th St., Adam Clayton Powell Blvd. and St. Nicholas Ave. in Manhattan, and Webster Ave. Near 210th St. and the Williamsbridge Stop on the Metro-North in the Bronx] or pocket parks and the preservation of historic, cultural and archaeological sites.

Other government-owned sites identified as having value for open space enhancement are listed in Appendix II.

Policy Recommendations

The policy recommendations for Region 2, is for all City, State, and nonprofit agencies to continue to cooperate in the acquisition of land and historic preservation sites as set forth on the Open Space Priority List.

Appendix I

New York City Land Protection Priorities (2005)

The Region 2 Open Space Advisory Committee recommends the following 15 projects, most of which include multiple parcels, as priorities for funding with monies under the state Environmental Protection Act of 1993 and the Clean Air/Clean Water Bond Act of 1996 . As in years past, the recommendation was adopted by majority, not unanimous vote. The Staten Island Borough President, James P. Molinaro, has formally requested that his opposition to two Priority Nominations be noted: (1) Camp St. Edward's Campground and (2) Clay Pit Ponds State Preserve Additions. All of the priority projects consist in whole or part, of privately owned properties that could be purchased in fee or as conservation easement.

Bronx River Trailway

Creation of a greenway/trailway along the Bronx River from the East River (Long Island Sound) to East 180th Street. This corridor will connect with existing 17 mile greenway/trailway to the Kensico Reservoir in Westchester County. See Appendix II for a prioritized list of properties in this project .

Eastchester Bay Waterfront

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

Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex

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 on Staten Island 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.
- Merrill's Creek - A tidal wetland system north of Saw Mill Creek on the Arthur Kill on Staten Island.
- Saw Mill Creek - Tidal and fresh water marsh complex adjacent to Prall's Creek on Staten Island; includes critical habitat for State threatened species.
- South Brother Island - An island in the East River that is linked to other rookeries in the area. This island serves as a waterbird roosting and feeding area in the Bronx.
- 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 in Richmond County 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 in Richmond County 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 - Located in Richmond County. This 42+/- acre site consists 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 - Located in Richmond County. 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 - Located in Richmond County. This property consists of 25+/- acres of woodland, ponds, salt marsh and mud flats along the Arthur Kill. The property provides habitat for colonial waterbirds, songbirds, amphibians and reptiles.
- Port Mobil Swamp Forest and Tidal Wetlands - Located in Richmond County. This site consists of 50+/- acres of forest [with rare Blackjack Oak, Persimmon & River Birch], ponds and shoreline surrounding ExxonMobil's tank farm along the Arthur Kill. The property provides significant habitat for amphibians and reptiles.

Harlem River Waterfront

This project will provide pedestrians and cyclists with a unique opportunity to enjoy the banks of the Harlem River on both sides and will create a continuous trail within the city's developing 350-mile greenway system. Bronx and Manhattan components of this greenway are connected by existing bridges.

- Bronx Harlem River Greenway - Includes the Fordham Landing expansion of Roberto Clemente State Park to increase open space in an underserved community in the Bronx, the five-acre Spuyten Duyvil/Penn Central Triangle properties that will provide waterfront access at the junction of the Hudson and Harlem Rivers, and Regatta Park, which will extend the greenway south to Roberto Clemente State Park. XIII.

- Manhattan Harlem River Greenway - Four privately owned industrial lots along the Harlem

River in the Inwood section of Manhattan that would form a waterside promenade with fishing access.

New York City Historic Preservation Sites

- Olmsted House - Built in 1720 and remodeled in the 19th Century, this house was home for many years to Frederick Law Olmsted, creator of New York's best-known parks

- Brinkerhoff Cemetery - Site of an old Queens family cemetery in Fresh Meadows

- Wycoff-Bennett House - Located in Kings County on E. 22nd Street and Avenue P, in the Marine Park/Flatlands section of southern Brooklyn. This house is a rare example of a Dutch Colonial farmhouse in excellent condition with excellent historical documentation back to 1766. It is on the National Historic 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.

- Brooklyn Navy Yard - Officers' Row - Located in Kings County on Flushing Avenue. This is a small section of the Brooklyn Navy Yard that was home to high-ranking officers and

their families. The ten houses, seven of which remain, were built between 1864 and 1901.

- 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.

Inner City/Underserved Community Parks

This project will provide open space and recreation opportunities in densely populated urban areas with limited or no open space resources.

- Corporal Irwin Fischer Playground - A much needed playground in a densely populated and growing Bronx neighborhood with a low amount of open space.

- Con Edison 15th St Ballfields - A much-valued recreational resource, now in private hands, in an underserved area of Manhattan near the East River.

- Greening Gray Neighborhoods - Ten 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 underserved neighborhood.

- Red Hook Waterfront - Three abandoned industrial properties that could be molded into a maritime heritage cultural park on the Brooklyn waterfront.[Red Hook Grain Elevator, Fishport Piers, and Ikea Site]

- North Brooklyn Waterfront Access - Located in Kings County in the South Williamsburg and Greenpoint neighborhoods. This new resource area replaces Eastern District Terminal and Bushwick Inlet. North Brooklyn is characterized by a decaying industrial waterfront, with virtually no public access. The recent residential rezoning of the area will involve the remapping and acquisition of land by New York City in Northside [Williamsburg Park], the conversion of the MTA lot for parkland, and the expansion of Barge Park.

Jamaica Bay Protection Area

A premier coastal habitat including important marine and terrestrial ecosystems and bird sanctuary. Located in Brooklyn and Queens, it is also an important element in the Atlantic flyway.

- 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 in Queens 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.

Long Pond/Butler Woods

- Long Pond - 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.

- Butler/Brookside Woods - Approximately 18 acres of forest connecting Mt. Loretto Unique Area and Long Pond.
- North Mt Loretto Woods - Nearly 100 acres of mature forest, adjacent to Long Pond, containing some of the few beech-oak stands remaining in the city and mapped wetlands as well. Probably the largest continuous tract of forest still available in Staten Island.
- Camp St. Edward's Campground - Located in Richmond County on Raritan Bay. This property would serve to connect other properties owned by New York City Parks and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation [Mt. Loretto] and would enhance public access to the Raritan Bay shoreline.

Northeastern Queens Shoreline

Unique and critical natural resources areas representing some of the last contiguous coastal habitats in this area.

- 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.

Putnam Railroad

A greenway through the northern Bronx utilizing an abandoned railroad right-of-way.

Staten Island Bluebelt

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.

- Last Chance Pond - A pond known for its wildlife and habitat diversity, flood control and open space values to the community.
- Lemon Creek - A freshwater creek flowing into a tidal system and into Princes Bay at Lemon Creek Park.
- Mill Creek Wetlands - Tidal and freshwater wetlands at the mouth of Mill Creek, which flows into the Arthur Kill.
- Richmond Creek Acquisitions - A major drainage corridor; part of a freshwater wetland system.
- Great Kills Harbor - Nelson Avenue Waterfront addition - Eight acres of low-lying vacant natural land near the waterfront with an additional 4 acres [Ott, Crescent Beach] to expand Nelson Seaside Park.
- 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.

Staten Island Greenbelt

One of the largest urban nature preserves in the United States, this 2500 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

Moist hardwood forest in southern Staten Island that forms an intermediate community between maritime shrub forest and forested uplands. These properties contain ponds, streams, and wetlands.

- 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.
- Paw-Paw Hybrid Oak Woods - Located on the south shore of Staten Island, this is the only site in the State where these tree species occur.
- 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 North Shore Greenbelt

- Goodhue aka 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.

Upper Hudson River Waterfront

This project would provide public access to the Hudson River along former pier lines above 125th Street in Manhattan and link Riverside Park and Riverbank State Park.

Region 2 "Long List"

New York City Land Protection 2005
Properties with potential for fee purchase

* Also on the Priority List

Bronx County

Bronx River Trailway*

Bronx Queen boat landing [Aquadog Ltd.]
Bruckner Boulevard and Bronx River Avenue
Lafayette Avenue fur factory

South Brother Island

City Island Wetlands

1219 Gilbert Place*

1264 Lafayette avenue*

740 Manida Street*

Harlem River Waterfront:

Fordham Landing
Exterior Street
Spuyten Duyvil (Penn Central Triangle)
Regatta Park
Harlem River Esplanade

Sedgwick Avenue

Kingsbridge Crescent

High Island

Hudson River Greenway

Melrose Commons

Putnam Railroad*

South Bronx Greenway

Westchester Creek

Pugsley's Creek

Success Garden - Mott Haven

Riverdale Park Addition

Highbridge Park

Nelson Avenue Playground

Hunt's Point Waterfront Access

Co-op City Easement

Port Morris/Randall's Island Greenway

Community Garden/Webster Ave. near 210 St.

Kings County

Gowanus Creek Public Place

Grand Street Park Extension

1480 Myrtle Avenue

New Lots Park

Jamaica Bay:

Spring Creek/Fresh Creek*

Sunset Park Piers

Loew's King Flagship Theatre

Cross Brooklyn Railroad

Red Hook Waterfront Property *

Red Hook Grain Elevator

Red Hook Fishport Piers

Red Hook Ikea Site

Todd Shipyard

A. Chairantano Park Addition

Midwood Site

1710 Newkirk Avenue

**S. Brooklyn Marine Terminal/Red Hook Cont
Port**

New York County

217, 221, 225, 227, 231 West 122 Street

226, 228 West 123 Street

Upper Hudson River Waterfront Harlem Piers (in
lots)

Harlem River Waterfront*

Esplanade Gardens

Con Edison site, 201-203 Street, Harlem River

Bannock, Burn Realty site

Paragon Cable site

15 Street Con Edison Ballfields

Community Gardens

W. 122nd St. between Frederick Douglas Bl

Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.

Queens County

Hunter's Point (Queens West)

Northeastern Queens Shoreline:

Udall's Cove *

Udall's Ravine *

Alley Pond Park Addition (Douglaston Pond)

Flushing Bay Marine Promenade (Willet's Point)

Downtown Flushing Waterfront (Willet's Point)

Jamaica Bay:

Hook Creek (prioritized)

Sea Girt Avenue Wetlands*

Spring Creek/Fresh Creek *

Call-A-Head Properties

Beach 90th Street

LILCO Property at Beach 116th Street

Rockaway Shoreway

Dubos Point Addition

Rockaway Beach (Arverne Urban Renewal Area)

RKO Keith's Theatre

Steinway Mansion

Brinkerhoff Cemetery*

Brooklyn/Queens Greenway:

Cypress Hills Cemetery Easement

Steinway/Ravenswood Cemetery Easements
Creedmoor Hospital Easement
Forest Park Gateway Greenway
Flushing Airport Wetlands

Richmond County

North Mt Loretto Woods*
North Shore Greenbelt:
West Brighton Historic Houses
North Shore Greenway Addition
Block 185, 187
Harbor Herons Wildlife Complex:
Graniteville Swamp/Old Place Creek*
Saw Mill Creek *
Merrill's Creek *
Staten Island Industrial Urban Renewal
Area
Isle of Meadows
Teleport Swamp Woods
Neck Creek (Travis Wetlands)
Little Fresh Kills
Cable Avenue Woods
Port Mobil Woods*
Jones Woods*
Butler Woods/Brookside wetlands*
Long Pond *
Sandy Ground Historic Site
Serpentine Art and Nature Commons
Oakwood Beach Wetlands
Goodhue Property *
Staten Island Bluebelt:*
Mill Creek Wetlands
Lemon Creek
Arbutus Woods Watershed
Last Chance Pond
South Beach Northern Wetlands
Richmond Creek Easements
Richmond Valley
Wolfe's Pond Park Addition
Great Kills Harbor:*
Nelson Avenue Waterfront
Ott
Crescent Beach
Staten Island Greenbelt:*
Pouch Camp
Reed's Basket Willow Swamp
Manor Road lots
Great Swamp Forest Hill Green
Staten Island Wet Woods:*
Hybrid Oak /Paw-Paw Woods
Arden Heights Woods
Outerbridge Ponds
Canada Hill Forest

Blue Heron Park Additions
Clove Lakes Park Addition
West Shore Expressway Interchange
Gabler's Creek (North & South)
Poillon-Seguine-Britton House
Clay Pit Ponds State Park Addition
Conference House Park Addition:
Killie's Creek
Twin Streams
Tussock Sedge Pond
Olmsted House

Staten Island North Shore Greenway

Government properties with potential for
transfer to public recreational use

Bronx County

Bronx River Trailway
Lafayette Avenue terminus
LORAL site City lots
Edgewater Road/cement plant site
Bruckner Boulevard NYCDBS parcel
Croton Aqueduct Trail Linkage
Highbridge Peace Park
Kingsbridge Armory

Kings County
Brooklyn Navy Base
Eastern District Terminal Site (Williamsburg
Waterfront)
562 Gates Avenue
Marion Street
Newtown Barge Terminal Playground
addition
Saratoga Square Urban Renewal Area
New York County
59-63 St. East River Esplanade
Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse at 113th
Street
Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse at 135th
Street
Hamilton Grange and Park
Harlem Beach
Success Garden - Harlem
Upper Hudson River Waterfront Harlem
Piers (piers)

Community Gardens

- W. 119th St. between Adam Clayton
Powell Blvd.& St. Nicholas Ave.
- St. Nicholas Ave. & Frederick

Douglass Blvd. between 119th and W. 120th Sts.

•W. 127th & W. 128th Sts. - St. Nicholas Ave. & Frederick Douglass Blvd.

•W. 122nd St. between Frederick Douglas Blvd. & Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.

Queens County

Bergen Basin

Elmhurst Gas Tank Site

Fort Totten

Port Authority Ballfield

Creedmoor Historic Buildings

Notts Landing

South Jamaica Neighborhood Park

Langston Hughes Library Open Space

Thurston Basin

Richmond County

Arlington Marsh

Willowbrook State School Woodlands

North Shore Railroad

Old Farm Colony

Richmond Parkway/Willowbrook Parkway

ROWs Northern Sea View

**NEW YORK STATE OPEN SPACE PLAN REVISION, 2005
REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE - NEW YORK CITY**

City Appointments

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Organization</u> |
|------------------|--|
| Jane Cleaver | NYC Parks and Recreation |
| Nick Dmytryszyn | Staten Island Borough President's Office |
| Bill Tai | NYC Parks and Recreation |
| Sam Goodman | Bronx Borough President's Office |
| Karen Koslowitz | Queens Borough President's Office |
| Rick Muller | Manhattan Borough President's Office |
| John McLaughlin | NYC DEP |
| Elizabeth Ernish | Brooklyn Borough President's Office |
| Susan Chin | NYC Cultural Affairs |
| Bill Woods | NYC Planning |

State Appointments

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Organization</u> |
|-------------------|---|
| Peg Breen | Landmarks Conservancy |
| Maura Lout | Parks Council |
| Page Cowley | Page Ayers Cowley Architects |
| Dominick Durso | Protectors of Pine Oaks Woods |
| John Hnedak | National Parks Service - Gateway National Recreation Area |
| Dave Lutz | Neighborhood Open Space Coalition |
| Robert Pirani | Regional Plan Association |
| Erik Kulleseid | Trust for Public Land |
| Craig Wilson | Waterfront Park Coalition/League of Conservation Voters |
| Cecil Corbin-Mark | West Harlem Environmental Action |
| Jorge Santiago | Bronx Council on the Environment |

Advisory

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| Robert Nyman | NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program |
| Don Riepe | Jamaica Bay Guardian |
| Chris Zeppie | Port Authority of New York/New Jersey |

Ex officio

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Louis Oliva | New York State Department of Environmental Conservation |
| Mary Ellen Kris | New York State Department of Parks and Historic Preservation |

Region 3 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

TABLE 1 - Priority Projects as listed in the 2002 Plan, with a summary of committee recommendations:

Summary of Priority Projects solely in Region 3.

| No. | Project & Recommendation |
|-----|--|
| 24 | Fahnestock State Park - Incorporate into new New York Highlands Project |
| 25 | Galeville Grasslands - Revise description, rename Walkkill Valley |
| 26 | Great Rondout Wetlands - no change |
| 27 | Great Swamp - Revise description |
| 28 | Highlands Greenway Corridor - Revise, rename New York Highlands Project |
| 29 | Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area - no change |
| 30 | Neversink Highlands - Revise |
| 31 | Northern Putnam Greenway - Incorporate into new New York Highlands Project |
| 32 | Plutarch/Black Creek Wetland Complex - Revise |
| 33 | Rockland County Highlands - Revise, rename Rockland Riverfront Communities / Palisades Ridge |
| 34 | Schunnemunk Mountain / Moodna Creek /Woodcock Mountain - no change |
| 35 | Shawangunk Mountains - Revise |
| 36 | Sterling Forest - Incorporate into new New York Highlands Project |
| 37 | Turtle Conservation Sites - minor revision |
| 38 | Westchester Marine Corridor - Revise, rename Long Island Sound Coastal Corridor |

Summary of New Priority Projects proposed in Region 3:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Northern Westchester Watershed and Biodiversity Lands |
| 2 | Karst Aquifer Region |

Summary of Priority Projects in Region 3/4:

| | |
|-----|--|
| 39 | Beaverkill/Willowemoc - Incorporate into new Catskill River and Road Corridors project |
| 40 | Catskill Unfragmented Forest - Revise, rename Catskills Unfragmented Forest |
| 41 | Catskill Mountain/Delaware River Region - Revise, rename Catskill River and Road Corridors project |
| 42 | Hudson River Corridor Estuary/Greenway Trail - Revise |
| 43 | Long Path - Expand description, rename Long Distance Trail Corridors |
| 44 | New York City Watershed Lands - Revise |
| 45 | Taconic Ridge/Harlem Valley - Revise |
| New | Hudson Valley Farmland |

Priority Projects - Region 3

FAHNESTOCK STATE PARK {24} – Delete, Incorporated into new New York Highlands Project

WALLKILL VALLEY {25} - One of only a few rivers that run north, 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.

GREAT RONDOUT WETLANDS {26} - 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. Recognized 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 {27} - 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 inholdings but also the surrounding uplands need to be conserved. Large parts of the Great Swamp's 63,000-acre watershed have been identified by the Forest Service as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.

NEW YORK HIGHLANDS {28} - 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 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, Schunmunk Mountain and NYC Watershed Lands which lie within and adjacent to the Highlands Region. 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 1,500-acre, wooded Goosepond Mountain State Park in Chester, Orange County, are threatened by immediate and intense development pressure. 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 Arrow Park. 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.

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 Forest Service as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.

Fahnestock State Park/Hudson Highlands State Park/Fishkill 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 uplands forests. Included are reservoirs for several municipalities and the watershed of the Clove/Fishkill Creek, which is a principal aquifer. The 14,000-acre Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park in Putnam County, much of which has been undisturbed for over 100 years, provides exceptional ecological and recreational value. 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 5,500 acres including Bull Hill and parts of Breakneck Ridge. There are significant undeveloped, upland forest tracts adjacent to 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 would provide an important link on the northern end of Hudson Highlands and protect the scenic viewshed of both the Highlands and the Hudson River. The 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.

Northern Putnam Greenway - Extending from the Taconic Ridge on the east to the Hudson River on the west, this proposed greenway is critical to maintaining the ecological integrity of the Highlands Region and to protecting the rural character of one of New York’s fastest growing counties. Acquisitions in this area of Putnam County would provide important linkages for passive recreation and wildlife corridors, preservation of scenic viewsheds, and protection of critical water supplies. Representative parcels include those areas that would link and are adjacent to Ciaiola County Park, Cranberry Mountain, the Great Swamp, Ice Pond, Wonder Lake State Park, Big Buck, White Pond, Horse Pound Brook, Ninham Mountain, Lockwood Pond, California Hill, and Fahnestock/Hudson Highlands State Parks.

MONGAUP VALLEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA {29} - The Mongaup River drainage 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 utility-owned reservoir lands to the north and undeveloped parcels in the south.

NEVERSINK HIGHLANDS {30} - 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 focus on four primary areas, as follows:

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 offers 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 and scenic viewshed of the Basha Kill Wetland area and the Shawangunk Ridge. Open areas extending west from the Basha Kill toward the Neversink Unique Area, and northwest, toward and along Rt.17, should be protected.

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.

NORTHERN PUTNAM GREENWAY {31} – Delete. Incorporate into new New York Highlands Project.

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 COUNTY HIGHLANDS {33} - portions incorporated into new New York Highlands Project, rename and replace with the following:

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. The Palisades Ridge cuts through the eastern sections of Rockland County with altitudes ranging from 500-700 feet. It is located within five watersheds: 1) the Lower Hudson River Watershed, 2) the Minisceongo Creek Watershed, 3) the Eastern Branch Hackensack River Watershed, 4) the Western Branch Hackensack River Watershed, and 5) the Sparkill Creek Watershed.

The Ridge begins in New Jersey and as it travels north the water drains to the west into the Sparkill Creek and to the east into the Lower Hudson River. As it continues north, water continues to drain to the east into the Lower Hudson River and to the west, now into the eastern branch of the Hackensack River. Around High Tor State Park, at the pivot where the Palisades Ridge turns inland near its northern terminus, the water flows east to the Lower Hudson River, north to the Minisceongo Creek, and down its south face to the Western Branch of the Hackensack River. The Ridge heads west from High Tor State Park towards its end near the Palisades Interstate Parkway. This western tributary is consolidated in a major Class A wetland

at the foot of the southern slope of the Palisades Ridge. Class A wetlands are used for public water. Both the Eastern and Western branch of the Hackensack flow into Lake DeForest, a United Water drinking water reservoir, which serves Rockland County, NY and Bergen County, NJ. Therefore, all five 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.

The Long Path and the Appalachian Trails intersect and follow along 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. Opportunities exist to secure additional sections of prominent, steeply sloping talus and woodlands adjacent to High Tor State Park.

SCHUNNEMUNK MOUNTAIN / MOODNA CREEK / WOODCOCK MOUNTAIN {33} –

Schunнемunk Mountain, in Orange County, provides habitat for two rare plant 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. A spectacular ridgeline trail reaching peaks of almost 1,700 feet provides unparalleled views up and down the Hudson River. Lands at both sides of the ridge, which includes Woodcock Mountain, Tobias Hill, and Woodberry Creek are vulnerable to development and should be protected. The Schunнемunk Mountain State Park was established in 2004 with the acquisition of 2,467 acres that included Schunнемunk Mountain. This is the northern-most boundary of the Highlands West of Hudson and also connects to Storm King Mountain State Park.

SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS {34} - The Shawangunk Mountains contain exemplary natural communities including the globally rare dwarf pine ridge community, over 7,000 acres of pitch pine-oak-heath rocky summit, the largest chestnut oak forest (30,000 acres) in New York, extensive northern hardwood forests, and cliff, talus and ice cave communities. Within these communities are over 30 known rare plant and animal species. Taken together these elements of biodiversity make the Shawangunks one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States. The Northern and Southern Shawangunks also have extremely high watershed protection value and high scenic and recreational value.

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. Together public and private entities have protected 30,000 acres in the Northern Shawangunks, including Minnewaska State Park Preserve (14,000 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, Palmaghatt Ravine-Millbrook-Bayards-Near Trapps Escarpment, Sam's Point Preserve (the Ellenville tract), and the Verkerderkill Falls area.

Protection of the Southern Shawangunks in Orange and Sullivan County, will enable a greenway corridor for recreation and biodiversity conservation extending from Sam's Point 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 Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway, jointly sponsored by 11 municipalities surrounding the ridge in two counties, Orange and Ulster, will be designated by New York State DOT. Pursuant to the Byway Corridor Management Plan, protection of the mountains and key surrounding scenic and natural lands is basic to the success of the Byway. The Byway Plan recommends using local open space plans, inter-town planning, transportation planning and funding opportunities within an 80-mile loop roadway corridor system to link recreational, cultural and natural focal points while conserving open space.

STERLING FOREST {36} – Delete, Incorporated into new New York Highlands Project.

TURTLE CONSERVATION SITES {35} - 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 Dutchess, Putnam, Ulster, and Orange Counties. Some important concentrations include the Fishkill Creek, Walkkill 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 Walkkill River National Wildlife Refuge as well as the creation of new preserves, and encompasses the Dutchess Meadows project.

WESTCHESTER MARINE CORRIDOR {38} - Revise, rename and replace with the following:

LONG ISLAND SOUND COASTAL CORRIDOR {36} - 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 Reed Buffer, David's Island and Huckleberry Island.

Edith Reed Buffer: Also known as Manursing Island, this fourteen acres is important for protecting the Edith Reed Wildlife Sanctuary in Westchester County.

Huckleberry Island: Lying northeast of New Rochelle Harbor in Westchester County, the island serves as a waterfowl refuge.

David's 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 and approximately 125 buildings in various states of deterioration. Acquisition by the County will protect the island from the threat of development, provide a unique recreational opportunity, enhance the quality of the Long Island Sound, and protect an exceptional piece of open space in a densely developed portion of Westchester County.

NORTHEASTERN WESTCHESTER WATERSHED AND BIODIVERSITY LANDS {NEW, 37} -

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.

KARST AQUIFER REGION {NEW, 38}- 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.

Priority Projects, Regions 3 & 4

BEAVERKILL/WILLOWEMOC {39} - Delete. Incorporate into new Catskill River and Road Corridors project.

CATSKILLS UNFRAGMENTED FOREST {40} - 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. Priority should be given to protecting individually large parcels that border, connect, or provide better access to existing State land; connect valley bottoms to mountainsides and peaks or ridges; are of scenic, cultural, or recreational importance; and/or contain particularly diverse, unique, or

threatened natural species or communities.

Region 3 conservation efforts should focus on the following sites:

Overlook Mountain Wild Forest: 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.

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.

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.

CATSKILL MOUNTAIN/DELAWARE RIVER REGION {41} - portions incorporated into Catskills Unfragmented Forest Project, rename and replace with the following:

CATSKILL RIVER AND ROAD CORRIDORS {41} - Thousands of people use major travel corridors such as Rt. 28, Rt. 23, Rt. 23A, Rt. 30, Rt. 10, Rt. 17 (future Interstate 86), and Rt. 97 to gain their first impressions of the Catskill/Delaware region and Catskill Park, and to continually access Catskill region communities and recreation destinations. Major travel corridors generally follow major river corridors. Some of these river corridors are particularly important as fisheries resources, and they are exceptional recreational resources that provide immeasurably to the region's nature-based economy. Many sections of these river and road corridors are experiencing increased development pressure. Land protection priority should be given to parcels that protect riverine habitat and riparian buffer land, scenic areas and vistas along principle road corridors and on visible ridgelines, and properties that enhance public access and recreational opportunities.

Region 3/4 focus areas include the following:

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.

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 Kingston and Oneonta. Priority areas along this route include the following.

- A) *Gateway Properties*: Land adjacent to, and visible from, the easternmost 5-6 miles of Rt. 28, and bordering the Blue Stone Wild Forest in Ulster County. This area may be suitable for the creation and promotion of mountain bike trails close to the Hudson Valley;
- B) *Ticateneyck 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;
- C) *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.
- D) *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.

HUDSON RIVER CORRIDOR ESTUARY/GREENWAY TRAIL {42} - 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, and to provide public recreational opportunities with physical or visual access to the Hudson River, as well as habitat conservation as described in the Hudson River Estuary Plan.

The project includes, but is not limited to, the 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, that could include but not be limited to: Ossining shoreline trail, Bethlehem/Coeymans waterfront lands.

Hudson River Access. Sites which provide recreational or visual access to the Hudson River, including but not limited to: Petersens boatyard (Upper Nyack), Highland Falls Marina, Tarrytown asphalt plant, Sleepy Hollow Waterfront, Castle Oil, 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), Va Hospital (Montrose), Highland Falls Marina (Highland Falls), Highland Landing (Lloyd), Poughkeepsie Pirate Canoe Club addition and Sand Dock Road, Lent's Cove Addition (Buchanan), 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 Waterford, with direct or at a minimum visual access to the Hudson River, including but not limited to: Locally- or county-approved greenway trail/access plans, such as, but not limited to, the Westchester County Riverwalk 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 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, Idylwild Creek (Cornwall), Fishkill Creek, Fallkill Creek, Sawmill (Neperhan) Creek (Yonkers), Wappinger Creek, Casperkill Creek, Pocantico River, Annsville Creek, Black Creek, Esopus Creek, Binnenkill Creek, Coxsackie Creek, Stockport Creek, Roeliff-Jansen Kill, Macgregorys Brook (Peekskill), Hudson South Bay.

Scenic. Sites which provide scenic vistas or protect scenic views, including but not limited to: Snake Hill, Illinois Mountain, Mid-hudson Bridge Viewshed/blue Point Bluffs/hudson Valley Winery, Camp Smith, Olana Viewshed, Peebles Island State Park Viewshed, Franklin Roosevelt Home Viewshed, Hudson River National Historic Landmark District Viewshed, Lands Within Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance, Scofield Ridge / Fishkill Ridge / Mt. Beacon, Highland Falls Ridgeline.

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, Peebles Island State Park, Clermont State Historic Site Buffer, Little Stony Point, Lyndhurst North Buffer, Tivoli Bays North and South Buffers, Locust Grove Buffer/Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Lands, John Burroughs Sanctuary Buffer.

Historic Sites Related to the American Revolution: Governor George E. Pataki declared that the State of New York would celebrate 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, 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 a number of small parcels.

Fish and Wildlife Management. Sites which provide estuarine and upland habitat, including but

not limited to: Constitution Marsh, Papscaenee Island and Marsh, Con Ed Lands (Dutchess and Columbia Counties), 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.

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.

LONG DISTANCE TRAIL CORRIDORS {43} - Trail Corridors provide important connections between communities, existing open space, natural and cultural resources, They offer recreational opportunities for millions of hikers, bikers, joggers, equestrians, cross-country skiers, and others who simply enjoy a leisurely walk in a natural setting. They also create significant travel corridor habitat for wildlife. New York State hosts a number of long distance trails of statewide and national significance that will require additional protection through acquisition of easement, including the following:

The 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.

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 City extending through the Catskill Park and north into Albany County, some 330 miles. Increased public ownership of the Long Path will protect this valuable and unique hiking experience. 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. Changing private ownership patterns and increased development threaten the integrity of the hiking trail and has forced sections to be rerouted onto roads. The Long Path is the main north/south trail corridor in New York State; protection by public ownership will insure continued recreational opportunities and watershed protection for generations to come.

The Finger Lakes Trail is a primitive foot trail which connects the Allegheny Mountains with the Catskills by passing through remote areas of the Southern Tier of New York State. While public land agencies have worked to accommodate the trail on state park lands, reforestation areas, forest preserve lands and other public lands along its 562 mile route across NY, the majority of the trail traverses private lands. Increased public ownership and easements will protect this valuable and unique hiking experience.

NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED LANDS {44} – New York City expects to continue acquisition efforts under the 1997 Watershed Agreement (signed by local communities, counties, and the State) and the 1997 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 with the Region 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 system overlaps with, and has been identified by the USDA Forest Service as part of, a Highlands

Conservation Focal Area.

TACONIC RIDGE/HARLEM VALLEY {45} – A multiple parcel area comprising the Taconic Mountain Ridge where it straddles the New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont borders in Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia and Rensselaer Counties. 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 north to the Taconic State Park. From here it extends northerly through Columbia and Rensselaer Counties, westerly to include the Route 22 Corridor and northward along the eastern borders of Massachusetts and Vermont.

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, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, 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 Schein Parcel as 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; 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, 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.

HUDSON VALLEY FARMLAND {NEW, 39}- Over 17% of the land in the Hudson Valley - almost 1,000 square miles - remains in agricultural use on 4,000 farms, according to the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture. This land provides fresh produce, scenic open space, vital wildlife habitat, and the economic backbone to many rural communities. A 1997 report by the American Farmland Trust ranked the Hudson Valley as part of the tenth most threatened agricultural region in the country, where prime agricultural soils and suburban development pressures are on a collision course. Although increased substantially from 2002, state farmland protection grants were only sufficient to fund less than 15% of the \$86 million in 2004 EPF applications submitted. It should be noted that the funding requested has almost doubled from 2002, when it stood at \$45 million. Also, many municipalities in the Hudson Valley have generated local funding for farmland protection which could be augmented with State funding. New York's per capita funding of farmland protection remains significantly less than that of other states in the region. The Region 3 Open Space Advisory committee recommends that Hudson Valley Farmland be made a Priority Project in the Open Space Plan and urges greater state funding to purchase development rights on farmland.

TABLE 2 - Summary of Region 3 Proposed Priority Projects for 2005

| Region | No. | Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Open Space Conservation Objective |
|---------------|------------|---|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 3 | 25 | Wallkill Valley | Ulster & Orange | | USF&WS, DEC | Watershed, Habitat Protection, Recreation |
| 3 | 26 | Great Rondout Wetlands | Ulster | Hudson River Valley | DEC | Watershed, Habitat Protection |
| 3 | 27 | Great Swamp | Dutchess & Putnam | Taconic Ridge & NY Highlands | ECL, Some NFP, DEC, Putnam Co. | Watershed, Habitat Protection |
| 3 | 28 | New York Highlands | Rockland, Orange, Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess | New York Highlands | OPRHP, PIPC NYCDEP, DEC | Watershed, Habitat Protection, Recreation |
| 3 | 29 | Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area | Sullivan & Orange | Catskill - Delaware | Some DEC | Watershed, Habitat Protection, Recreation |
| 3 | 30 | Neversink Highlands | Sullivan | Catskill - Delaware Region | DEC owns some parcels | Habitat Protection, Recreation |
| 3 | 31 | Plutarch/Black Creek Wetland Complex | Ulster | Hudson River Valley | | Watershed, Habitat Protection |
| 3 | 32 | Rockland Riverfront Communities / Palisades Ridge | Rockland | Hudson River Valley & Estuary | PIPC, County. | Recreation; Watershed, Habitat Protection |
| 3 | 33 | Schunneunk Mt./Modena Creek & Woodcock Mt. | Orange | NY Highlands & Sterling Forest | PIPC, NFP partial ownership | Recreation; Watershed, Habitat Protection |
| 3 | 34 | Shawangunk Mtns. | Ulster, Sullivan & Orange | Shawangunk Ridge | PIPC, DEC, Local Grant, NFP | Biodiversity/Habitat Recreation |
| 3 | 35 | Turtle Cons. Sites | Ulster & Dutchess | Hudson River Valley & Estuary | Some NFP | Habitat |
| 3 | 36 | Long Island Sound Coastal Corridor | Westchester | LI Sound Shoreline | | Habitat, Recreation |
| 3 | 37 | Northern Westchester Watershed and Biodiversity Lands | Westchester | | Some County | Watershed Protection, Habitat |

| Region | No. | Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Open Space Conservation Objective |
|--------|-----|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| 3 | 38 | Karst Aquifer Region | Ulster | Shawangunk Mtns | | Watershed Protection, Habitat, Recreation |
| 3/4 | 39 | Hudson Valley Farmland | Dutchess, Ulster, Orange, Westchester | Hudson River Valley & Estuary | some CE | Open Space |
| 3/4 | 40 | Catskill Unfragmented Forest | Sullivan, Ulster, Greene | Catskill - Delaware | Some DEC, NYCDEP | Habitat Protection, Recreation, Watershed |
| 3/4 | 41 | Catskill River and Road Corridors | Delaware, Sullivan, Ulster, Greene | Catskill - Delaware | Some DEC, NYCDEP | Habitat Protection, Watershed, Recreation, Scenic |
| 3/4 | 42 | Hudson River Corridor Estuary & Greenway Trail | Multiple | Hudson River Valley & Estuary | some public | Scenic, Recreation, Habitat |
| 3/4 | 43 | Long Distance Trail Corridors | Multiple | Catskill - Delaware; Hudson River Valley; Shawangunk | DEC, PIPC, OPRHP | Recreation |
| 3/4 | 44 | NYC Watershed Lands | Multiple | Catskill - Delaware Region; NY Highlands & Croton Watershed | NYCDEP, DEC | Watershed Protection |
| 3/4 | 45 | Taconic Ridge/ Harlem Valley | Putnam Dutchess Columbia Rensselaer | Taconic Ridge | DEC, OPRHP | Habitat Protection Recreation |

2005 OPEN SPACE PLAN REVISION REGION 3 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL COMMENTS.

1. The Region 3 Committee wants to acknowledge the great amount of progress that has been made in protecting priority project parcels in the Region. The Committee commends state agency staff for their commitment to the goals of the Open Space Plan and their initiative in its implementation.
2. The Region 3 Committee also wants to express its appreciation for the efforts that have been made since the last revision of the Plan to respond to and advance some of the key recommendations made by the Committee. These include in particular, the restoration of fire towers in the Catskill Park, State funding of land trust capacity building grants, and the passage of legislation authorizing state payment of taxes on state-owned conservation lands in Putnam County.
3. The Committee recommends that the Open Space Plan can become a stronger tool to educate the public and communicate its goals if it can be enhanced through stronger graphics, maps and illustrations.

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.
2. *Stewardship Funding.* The Committee continues to be concerned with efforts to address stewardship needs on State lands. The Committee urges the State to implement the recommendations contained in Chapter VII of the 1995 Plan. A specified amount for this purpose should be included in the State budget.
3. *Park Development Funding.* The amount of funding provided through the EPF needs to be increased, to ensure that municipalities and not-for-profits have the resources necessary to leverage their own investments in park development improvements and infrastructure.
4. *Habitat Restoration Project Funding.* Habitat restoration is a critical complement to open space preservation. This is particularly important on lands that have been formally protected and on lands that otherwise materially enhance or contribute to the ecological health of major resource areas and priority projects. The Committee encourages State policy makers to increase funding for these purposes to state agencies and for grants to municipalities and not-for-profit organizations.
5. *Incentives for Local Open Space Funding.* The Committee recommends that the scoring for state funding of local open space projects be implemented in a way that credits communities who provide their own funding for the project. Scoring should not penalize economically distressed communities, however, that may not have the means to invest significantly in open space projects.

6. *Land Trust Alliance Re-grant Program.* The Committee appreciates and supports the State's \$500,000 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.
7. *Local Environmental Assistance Program.* The Committee recommends that the State reinstitute funding of this program, which provides reimbursement to towns and counties for funds given to EMCs for their work. This program provides a meaningful low-cost incentive for local investment in conservation planning, but it is not currently being funded and therefore cannot achieve its intended benefits.
8. *Soil and Water Conservation Districts* require additional funding to fulfill their mandate of inventorying all agricultural lands within the counties they serve.

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 reforestation areas, and taxes are not paid on most other state-owned conservation lands. 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.
2. *Conservation Easement Tax Credit and Conservation Donor Tax Credit.* The Committee strongly supports proposals made by the Land Trust Alliance which provide incentives to landowners who are considering voluntary private land conservation. A principle of the Open Space Plan is that it is neither practical nor desirable to purchase all land that merits 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 conserved land 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. *End Property Tax As Primary Funding Source For Schools.* The Committee is concerned about continued reliance on the local property tax to fund schools because it pressures communities to encourage the development of lands that should be conserved. The Committee urges State policymakers to move towards the funding of schools and other locally-provided public services from the property tax to the income tax. As currently structured, local officials are forced to make land use decisions based on concerns about what uses they perceive will provide the highest rates, rather than what land uses will result in the kind of community their citizens would like to have. This results in the excessive loss of open lands for new developments that do not necessarily advance communities' long-term goals.

5. *Community Preservation Act.* The Committee strongly supports the Community Preservation Act legislation that would enable 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.
6. *Require Assessors To Recognize Diminution In Value Resulting From Conservation Easements.* The Committee urges New York policymakers to enact legislation which requires local property assessors to take into account the diminution of property value resulting from conservation easements. This is the case in a number of states, but in New York, assessors are not required to do so, and the result is that a landowner may place a conservation easement on their land which severely restricts it in perpetuity with little if any resulting reduction in their local property taxes.

OTHER POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *Protecting Waterfronts.* All waterfront development projects should include meaningful public access. Prioritize habitat restoration along Hudson River corridor. Density limits for proposed projects and siting guidelines for waterfront development projects outside of cities, villages, hamlets and designated community centers. LWRPs need to include stronger public access requirements. Greater funding for local waterfront planning and technical assistance also will help to advance these goals.
2. *Stronger SEQRA Review* is needed for Large-scale Projects in Major Resource Areas. The Committee is concerned about the impacts on open space that will result from the increasing number of large-scale development projects in Major Resource Areas. The Committee believes it is important for state agencies to be fully coordinated and vigilant in enforcing their obligations to review large-scale projects. 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.
3. *Lease, Sale Or Other Transfer Of State And Federal Surplus Land.* The Committee is concerned about the lease, sale or other transfer of state and federal land without a process for determining whether the land falls within a priority project area. The Committee recommends that before state or federal lands are considered for transfer, they should be reviewed to determine whether their protection would advance the goals of the state Open Space Plan. If protecting the lands would advance these goals, then the lands should be offered to an appropriate state or federal agency which can manage the land for conservation purposes. Recently, this issue has come into focus, because there has been public discussion about a possible lease of federal land at West Point for commercial/industrial purposes, without formal consideration of its conservation values.
4. *Utility Company Dispositions.* The recent proposed sale by Central Hudson Gas and Electric of surplus lands highlights the need for the state public service commission to review conservation values of utility company dispositions and create a mechanism for their protection. In Red Hook, for example, the town's full price offer to acquire an unused utility corridor being offered for sale was rejected by the utility because the utility had received a higher offer from a neighboring landowner. The Committee recommends that strong consideration be given to the land's value to the public, so that the utility company will be able to negotiate to sell the land at a fair price to interested public agencies.
5. *Improve Process For Protecting Tax Sale Lands With Conservation Values.* The

Committee is concerned that no uniform statewide procedure exists to require that county government review proposed tax sale lands for their conservation values before they are auctioned. Several Hudson Valley counties have instituted procedures which can be looked to as models for statewide application, including: Rockland, Orange, and Albany Counties, where parcels that are proposed for tax sale are vetted by county open space committees.

6. *Alienation Of Parkland.* The Committee is concerned that there is not strong and effective monitoring of municipal actions which result in the alienation of parkland. The Committee recommends that some formal state oversight mechanism be created.
7. The Committee would like to reaffirm a recommendation it has made consistently over the years, that “surplus” state lands which have conservation value should not be sold into the private market. There was concern that the language of the plan does not state clearly enough that it is the policy of the State to transfer these lands to the appropriate agencies for conservation purposes. That said, the Committee appreciates the successful conversion of a portion of the Hudson River Psychiatric Center property into parkland to be managed cooperatively by Dutchess County and the Town of Poughkeepsie.
8. *Municipally-held Conservation Easements.* Municipalities which require and hold conservation easements as a condition of subdivision approval must be educated and equipped to monitor and enforce such easements or to provide the resources to a qualified conservation organization to do the same.
9. *Prioritize the Acquisition of Significant In-holdings.* Significant in-holdings in major publicly-held conservation lands should be considered high priorities for open space protection. When the state has invested significant public dollars to protect an important open space resource, it is important to protect those investments by acquiring in-holdings, which if developed inappropriately could undermine the land’s public conservation values.
10. *Reforming New York’s Forest Tax Law.* The Committee again wants to reiterate its recommendation that land acquired by land conservation organizations which are subject to forestry plans should be exempted from forest management practices when those practices conflict with the conservation purposes for which the land was acquired. The Committee also supports a recommendation made at the public hearings to broaden the application of section 480a of the Real Property Tax Law so that forest management plans would be expanded to expressly incorporate recreational and habitat protection and restoration goals.
11. *Impacts of Proposed Casinos on Open Space in Orange, Ulster and Sullivan Counties.* The Committee strongly recommends that a comprehensive regional evaluation be conducted of impacts of any proposed casinos to be located in Orange, Ulster and/or Sullivan Counties on open space resources.
12. *Adding the Shawangunks to the Forest Legacy Program.* The Shawangunks and Bashakill are under consideration for addition to the Delaware/Catskill Watershed Forest Legacy Area. This area meets the criteria for Forest Legacy designation due to the unfragmented forest along the ridge, and the increasing development pressure on these areas. Lands proposed for inclusion face intense development pressure due to proximity to New York City, resulting in fragmentation and conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Currently casino development is under consideration in Sullivan and Ulster Counties that may result in impacts on the forested areas of the Shawangunks. The blend of traditional public and private ownership within the areas proposed for inclusion creates the opportunity for continued and expanded public recreational uses of forest land protected through Forest Legacy funding.

13. *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.
14. *Process For Transferring Lands From Not-For-Profits To The State.* 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.
15. *ATVs and Personal Watercraft.* The growing use of motorized all-terrain vehicles on public and private protected lands and personal watercraft on public waterways is destructive of natural areas and wildlife, and incompatible with enjoyment of these lands by others. New York State should actively enforce rules prohibiting such uses on public lands and should support efforts to prohibit such uses on private protected lands.
16. *Preservation of Cultural, Historical and Archeological Resources.* Local communities are often challenged to preserve cultural, historical and archeological resources, because they do not know where they are located. The Committee recommends that greater resources be used to provide information and technical assistance to assist communities to identify and protect important cultural, historical and archeological resources.

PLANNING POLICY.

Chapter VI

1. page 286. A.3. Planning Programs. Consider adding the phrase “Capital improvement planning and ...” to the beginning of the last sentence of this short section for clarity in planning practice terminology and to relate better to the title of the subsection.
2. page 286-287. A.4. Land Use Regulations. This section could be improved with insertion of a new subsection as follows: “A.4.x. Local Planning. Completing and keeping up-to-date municipal comprehensive plans with open space and recreation elements are critically important. Local land use regulations, as well as capital improvements including land acquisition must be “in accordance” with such plans. Quality plans can help to inventory priority resources areas, recreation and parkland needs, and partnership projects. Additionally, such plans are increasingly important in accessing county, state, federal or non-governmental assistance.”
3. page 289. Figure 7: Tools for Open Space Conservation. Table listing should relate better to the prior text. For example, under Land Use Regulations - subdivision regulations are listed in the table but not in the prior text, yet TDR and clustering is in the text but not in the table. Similarly, under the Support program, scenic byways is in the table but not the text.
4. page 287-288. A.5.c. Conservation by Local Government. Mention should be made of the important local government option for “reservation of parkland” requirement with subdivisions of land as well as the ability to set up a dedicated fund for park or recreation purposes, including land acquisition, through payments in lieu of such land reservation (see NYS Town Law 277, Village Law 7-730, General City Law 33).

5. somewhere between pages 286-289. Consider reference to an important, but underused tool, the “official map”, authorized by NYS statutes that can be used by municipalities and counties to define and regulate roads, drainages, parks and other needed space for public development. (see NYS General Municipal Law 239-e and parallel statutes under Town Law, Village Law, and General City Law).

Chapter VIII

1. page 369. paragraph starting with “Increasingly” Add/edit reference to municipalities in Orange and Dutchess (or in Hudson Valley) setting up dedicated funds.

page also needs a reference to the land dedication or payment in lieu of tool via land subdivision approval.
2. page 405-406. D.3. An element of the “matching grants program...: reference in this section should include a return to financial and technical support for local government conservation commissions as well as county environmental management councils.
3. page 406-407. D.7. Local Government Planning Assistance. Consider adding a short sentence as follows: “Modeled after the above programs, such assistance should be prioritized to regional efforts advanced through inter-municipal agreements.”

MISCELLANEOUS PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS. Chapter 5, pages 143-

1. *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.”
2. *Intermunicipal Cooperation and Agreements.* Consideration could be given to inclusion of policy text emphasizing the importance of inter-municipal efforts, the growth of such efforts in Region 3 and elsewhere, and the value of incentives for financial and technical support of such cooperation - given that resource areas and values identified in this Plan typically go well beyond local jurisdictions and local government boundaries.
3. *Capacity-Building Grants.* Given the action, history and range of local governments and NGOs in the region, this reference could include grants to municipal planning efforts, to municipal conservation commissions and environmental management councils, and to local or regional historic preservation NGOs.

Region 3 Open Space Advisory Committee Meeting Dates - (Since 1/02)

August 12, 2002

May 5 and November 17, 2003

May 20 and December 13, 2004

March 14, April 18, May 23 and June 13, 2005

February 15, 2006

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Region 4 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

Region 4: Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Schoharie counties.

INTRODUCTION

This current revision to the original New York State Open Space Conservation Plan represents the fourth 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. 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, including the emphasis on biodiversity that was newly attributed in the 2002 revision.

- 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.

2005 REGION 4 OPEN SPACE PRIORITIES

- **Albany Pine Bush**

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 were established by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission in their 2002 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**

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.

- **Catskill Mountain/Delaware River Region**

The region encompassing the Catskill Mountains and East and West Branches of the Delaware River are 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. Priorities for acquisition within the greater Catskill/Delaware Region should focus on securing sensitive, unprotected high elevation areas and alpine communities; protecting expanses of unfragmented forests; connecting protected areas, particularly in the valleys between high elevations; protecting riverine 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. Specific protection priorities within the Region include the following:

- Bearpen/Vly/Roundtop Mountains - whereas progress has been made to protect Bearpen and Vly Mountains, additional acquisition is needed to complete protection of this area which includes the only unprotected Catskill peaks over 3,500 feet in Region 4.
- Catskill Escarpment North and 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.
- Hunter Mountain Wilderness/Rusk Mountain Wild Forest - these very popular recreation areas lack sufficient access, especially in the Spruceton Valley, and additional protection and access is needed in the western portion of the Wild Forest.
- Indian Head-Plateau Mountain Wilderness - consolidation, improved access, and additional protection are essential to 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.
- Westkill 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.
- Delaware River and Tailwaters - represents a significant recreational resource, supports significant biological diversity including critical bald eagle wintering and nesting habitat, and provides picturesque scenic vistas; additional protection and improved access are the primary objectives.
- New York City Watershed - NYC expects to continue acquisition efforts in accordance with a comprehensive water quality-based watershed acquisition plan under the 1997 Watershed Agreement (signed by local communities, counties, and the State) and a 1997 Water Supply Permit issued by DEC. It is recommended that the State work with the City to identify and protect high priority sites within the Region that are not being pursued by, or protected under, City acquisition programs.
- **Drowned Lands Swamp Watershed**

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**

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. Opportunities currently exist to increase public use areas and to establish protective buffers around the Center. These opportunities, when combined with continued vulnerability to ongoing subdivision and development activity, result in continued priority protection status for this area.

- **Franklinton Vlaie Wildlife Management Area**

This DEC Wildlife Management Area in Schoharie County is located at the headwaters of the Catskill Creek and includes one of the County's largest wetlands. The Vlaie also provides habitat for nesting bald eagles. Recent acquisition activities by the State should continue with attention to securing valuable habitat and wetland areas, adding protective buffers, and enhancing public access.

- **Hand Hollow Conservation Area**

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 lake front and Hand Hollow watershed, as well as contribute to the habitat diversity of the area by adding extensive areas of woodland in addition to streams, upland ponds, and wetland.

- **Helderberg Escarpment**

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 also recognized for its high biodiversity, which includes habitat for endangered and other rare species of flora and fauna and is included on the National Audubon Society's list of Important Bird Areas in New York State. The escarpment and viewsheds to the north and east are currently under pressure from subdivision and development, thereby increasing the need for protection. 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.

- **Hudson River Valley Corridor/Hudson River Estuary**

Several projects have been identified within this regionally significant area that will enhance protection of, and improve access to, the scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Hudson River, its tributaries, and the surrounding Hudson River Valley. These initiatives will also contribute to meeting the goals and objectives established in the Greenway Act of 1991, including creation of linkages between municipalities along the River. Specific priorities within this protection area include the following:

- Hudson River Greenway Trail
- Olana viewshed
- Significant scenic vistas
- River and tributary access parcels
- Proposed and potential Hudson River Water Trail sites
- Significant biodiversity sites
- Inter-agency State land transfer parcels (from OGS to DEC and/or OPRHP)

In addition to the above, the Hudson River Estuary Plan recommends a commitment to secure 4,000 or more acres through fee and easement acquisitions to further on-going conservation efforts within the Hudson River Valley.

- **Long Path**

The Long Path is a 300+ mile corridor extending from New York City through Schenectady County. State acquisitions would protect the trail corridor and allow sections of the trail to be rerouted off public roads thereby enhancing public enjoyment and safety. While significant progress has been made in northern Greene County, further work on this important natural and recreational resource is necessary in Greene County, as well as in Schoharie County.

- **Mohawk River Valley Corridor/Barge Canal**

Priority should be given to protecting significant scenic, cultural, and natural resources along the Mohawk River in addition to securing river and tributary access parcels that would enhance public enjoyment of these resources. It is also important to protect linkage parcels that contribute to the creation of a statewide Canalway Trail System. Acquisition of key parcels along the Mohawk River and Barge Canal will provide a connection between the west terminus of the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway at Rotterdam Junction in Schenectady County and the OPRHP Mohawk River Trailway in Montgomery County. These acquisitions would essentially secure more than 70 miles of public ownership for the development of a multiple-use trail extending from Albany County to Herkimer County (in Region 6). In addition, acquisition of riverfront parcels in the City of Schenectady would allow portions of the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway to be rerouted off of City streets.

- **Oomdsdale Farm and Surrounding Landscape**

The focal point of this project area is Oomdsdale 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 is 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**

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, and other recreation and environmental education facilities.

- **Schoharie Valley Corridor**

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 is important throughout Montgomery and Schoharie counties. Of particular concern is protecting farmland throughout the Valley; 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**

This major watershed, 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 ridge line that separates the Susquehanna and Delaware River watersheds in northern Delaware County. Franklin Mountain provides significant 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. In addition to impressive totals for bald eagle, northern harrier, peregrine falcons, and several species of hawks, this area has one of the highest annual counts of golden eagles in the east. Publicly-owned parcels at critical overlook sites could provide secure access with relatively small acreage acquisitions.

- **Taconic Ridge/Harlem Valley**

Since this area's inclusion in the initial State Open Space Conservation Plan, over 10,000 acres have been protected in Rensselaer and Columbia 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 continues to be a high priority 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.

- **Woodlawn Pine Barrens-Wetlands Complex**

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 wetland areas 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.

2005 REGION 4 OPEN SPACE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **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 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.

- **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 Plan might be achieved.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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 from its current \$350,000 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 the more modestly endowed communities (both rural and urban) to actively participate in this program.

- **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 and protect their holdings is of critical importance. Therefore, programs such as purchase of development rights (PDR) for farmland and working forests must 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, have been 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 plans for new State-funded acquisitions.

- **Inclusion of Accountability and Responsiveness Summaries in the Plan**

The Committee recommends that the updated NYS Open Space Conservation Plan and all subsequent updates to the Plan contain a section that summarizes the progress of project implementation since the preceding Plan. As this program is publicly funded, the residents of the State deserve a full accounting of the progress made since the previous update to the Plan. Similarly, 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.

- **New Statewide Priority Project**

The Committee recommends a new statewide priority project area, Enhancement of Public Lands. The 2002 Plan has this project as a subcategory under # 139, Statewide Small Projects. This unduly restricts an enhancement project to no more 200 acres and a maximum of \$250,000. There are important opportunities to consolidate and enhance existing State land holdings that are either larger or more costly than the limits of Small Projects.

REGION 4 OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Commissioner Appointees:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Mark King, Co-Chairman | The Nature Conservancy - Eastern NY Chapter |
| Judy Anderson | Columbia Land Conservancy |
| Betty Lou Bailey | Adirondack Mountain Club |
| Robin Dropkin | Parks & Trails New York |
| Donald LaValley | Columbia County Sportsmen Federation |
| Carmella Mantello | Hudson River Valley Greenway |
| Chris Olney | Catskill Center for Conservation & Development |
| Steven Strichman | City of Schenectady |
| David Tobias | NYC Department of Environmental Protection |
| Alan White | Land owner |

County Appointees:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Mark Fitzsimmons, Co-Chairman | Albany County |
| Nancy Gallup | Delaware County |
| Warren Hart | Greene County |
| E. Ken James | Rensselaer County |
| Donald Snell | Schenectady County |
| Dominick Stagliano | Montgomery County |
| Carl Stefanik | Schoharie County |
| Roland Vosburgh | Columbia County |
| David Wightman | Otsego County |

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Peter Innes, Natural Resources Supervisor

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Robert Kuhn, Assistant Regional Director

COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| July 24, 2003 | August 17, 2004 |
| January 20, 2005 | May 17, 2005 |
| June 22, 2004 | October 20, 2004 |
| April 12, 2005 | July 12, 2005 |



REGION 4
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ALBANY - COLUMBIA - DELAWARE - GREENE - MONTGOMERY
OTSEGO - RENSSELAER - SCHENECTADY - SCHOHARIE



May 26, 2006

Mr. Francis Sheehan, Assistant Director
Division of Lands and Forests
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
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Dear Mr. Sheehan:

At the last officially convened meeting of the Region 4 Advisory Committee, it was decided that the Committee would review public input received in writing and at the public hearings on the 2005 Draft NYS Open Space Conservation Plan and submit our feedback on those comments for your consideration. Toward that end, the following reflects a consensus of the Region 4 Committee's response to public comments submitted on the Draft Open Space Plan.

With regard to Open Space Priorities for Protection, we support recommendations for the addition of a new Priority Project Area to cover the Hoosic River Corridor, as described below:

- **HOOSIC RIVER CORRIDOR** – this river corridor and its tributaries, located in Rensselaer and Washington counties, drains an extensive area encompassing lands in three states and forms a significant portion of the upper Hudson River drainage north of the estuary. This corridor includes productive farmland and timberland, as well as important ecological, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources. In addition, a portion of the corridor overlies a major aquifer and includes several key recharge areas. In the long term, this area 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.

The Committee also supports the following suggested revisions to priority project area descriptions already included in the Plan:

- Regarding **CATSKILL MOUNTAIN/DELAWARE RIVER REGION {36}** – the last bullet in this description addressing New York City Watershed would appear to be redundant given inclusion of **NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED LANDS {41}** as a separate Priority Project.
- Regarding **HELDERBERG ESCARPMENT {49}** – the Committee recommends revision of the existing description to add specific reference to protecting karst geology and cave formations associated with the Escarpment, which provides habitat for rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, as well as unique recreational opportunities.
- Regarding **MOHAWK RIVER VALLEY CORRIDOR/BARGE CANAL {50}** – the Committee recommends revision of the existing description to add reference to the importance of securing additional buffer land surrounding the Schenectady Museum property recently acquired by NYS OPRHP for creation of the

first State Park in Schenectady County.

- Regarding **RENSSELAER PLATEAU {52}** – the Committee recommends revision of the existing description to add specific reference to Dickinson Hill Fire Tower as a point of interest along the trail system described at the end of the project area narrative, as in: “...trail system across the Plateau connecting Dyken Pond Center, Grafton Lakes State Park, Pittstown State Forest, Capital District Wildlife Management Area, Dickinson Hill Fire Tower, and other recreation and environmental education facilities.”
- Regarding **HUDSON RIVER ESTUARY/GREENWAY TRAIL CORRIDOR {39}** – the Committee expressed concern over the differing approaches taken by the respective Regions (3&4) to discuss this inter-regional priority project area. Specifically, whereas Region 4 relied on a more generic description for each of the 10 individual categories, Region 3 elected to include an extensive, itemized list of examples for these categories. While there is nothing inherently wrong with either approach, the Region 4 Committee is concerned that when various ranking criteria is applied to awarding grants, preference will be given to project proposals which include specific examples of, for example, Hudson River Access or Tributaries; as currently presented, this would constitute a distinct disadvantage to Region 4 grant applications. Notwithstanding language which states, “including but not limited to...” it appears that unless an individual tributary or access point or urban waterfront, etc. is specifically cited in the Plan, then a particular Region 4 grant project will not be rated as highly as a comparable project proposed in Region 3, which involves a listed example. Since the Region 4 Committee did not consider individual examples in its report, and since it is unrealistic to list all such examples, it is recommended that descriptions for each of the categories be treated in general terms with the elimination or substantial reduction of examples. However, if this recommendation is deemed unacceptable, then we request that the following examples that did receive Committee and/or public support be included in the Plan:
 - **Hudson River Access:**
Rensselaer Hollow Environmental Area
 - **Hudson Tributaries:**
Quackenderry Creek, Claverack Creek, Klime Kill, Stony Kill, Roeliff Jansen Kill, Kinderhook Creek, and Agawamuck Creek
 - **Urban Waterfronts:**
City of Rensselaer Waterfront

Also, please note that Coeymans Creek is referenced twice under examples of Hudson Tributaries.

- Regarding **State Forest and Wildlife Management Area Protection {129}** – the Committee recommends that allowance be made for the protection of new or expanded State Forests or Wildlife Management Areas, in addition to the current wording, which addresses only “protection and enhancement of existing State Forests or Wildlife Management Areas.....”

Finally, regarding public comments and suggestions not supported by the Region 4 Committee, the following are NOT RECOMMENDED for inclusion in the updated Plan:

- Creation of a new Priority Project Area for the **Tomhannock Reservoir Watershed**, since much of it is already covered under the Rensselaer Plateau priority area, and with the exception of New York City Watershed Lands {41}, no other surface water supply watershed has been included thus far in Region 4 on that basis. This issue will, in all probability, be revisited during the course of the next revision to the Plan.

- Individual mention of the buildings or facilities for protection, including recommendations for inclusion of the **Freihofer Bakery** and **Dickinson Hill Fire Tower**, since protection of structures was deemed not consistent with the intent of the Plan. It should be noted, however, that the Committee supported reference to the **Dickinson Hill Fire Tower** as a point of interest along the trail system described in the Rensselaer Plateau project area.
- Inclusion of smaller stream corridors such as the **Alplaus Creek**, **Lisha Kill**, and **Indian Kill**, among others, since it was the general sense of the Committee that several other comparable streams and creeks would also qualify, and the Committee could not justify the addition of that great a number of new priority project areas to the Plan.

One final editorial comment relates to consideration of hunting in **Appendix D – Projected Relative Index of Recreational Needs**. As presented, this table is potentially misleading in the absence of a note explaining why hunting carries a value of 0 points statewide. Unless such a note is added as a footnote to the table in Appendix D, hunting should perhaps be eliminated from inclusion in the table.

On behalf of the Region 4 Committee, we appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments as a supplement to our previous contribution to NYS Open Space Conservation Plan. Should you have any questions on these comments or require additional assistance, please feel free to contact either of us at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Mark Fitzsimmons and Mark King
Co-Chairs

Region 5 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

Region 5 Eastern Adirondacks (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties)

I. 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 2,702,425 acres or 45.6% are in fee title and 254,896 acres or 4.3% are in easements all administered by NYSDEC. The Adirondack Park also contains the vast majority of the State's wild, scenic and recreational river system, over 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 (a unanimous vote), unless noted otherwise, 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.

Issues stated below by the Region 5 Committee which continue to be relevant are listed below (A-M).

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.

Adopted July 19, 1991

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.

Adopted April 15, 2005

NOTE: For the sole purpose of reducing the size of this report, many statements from the 2000-2002 Revision of the Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee Report will be referenced in the current report, rather than reprinting the complete text. The referenced statements, which may be found on pages 170 to 209 of the 2002 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (2002 Open Space Plan), remain relevant and maintain the support of the Region 5 Committee.

Taxes

- A. Taxes on State Lands (Page 172 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- B. Recommendations Regarding Timber Tax Exemption Programs (Page 172 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- C. An Amendment to the State Real Property Tax Law addition Additional Protection to Ensure State Payment of Taxes for Forest Preserve Lands (Pages 172 & 173 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- D. An Expansion of the State's Existing Forest Tax Abatement Program (Page 173 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- E. Payments in lieu of taxes for state lands outside the Forest Preserve (Pages 173 & 174 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- F. An Amendment to the Forest Legacy Program (Page 174 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- 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.

Adopted April 15, 2005

- 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 than to quiet title to property offered for sale by a willing seller. This resolution has the unanimous approval of the Committee.

Unanimously Adopted April 15, 2005

Agriculture

J. Framework for Agricultural Recommendations (Pages 179 to 181 of the 2002 Open Space Plan with the following modifications.)

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.

Revised March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted April 15, 2005

Public Access

K. Public Access to Adirondack Forest Lands (Pages 181 & 182 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)

Detached Parcels

- L. Sale or Exchanges of Small Detached Parcels of Existing Forest Preserve Lands In the Adirondack and Catskill Parks (Page 182 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)

Recreation

- M. Recreational Trail Linkages & Networks (Pages 182 & 183 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)

II. 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-Q). These positions were adopted unanimously, unless stated otherwise.

- A. Continuation of Region 5 Open Space Conservation Advisory Committee (Pages 190 & 191 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- B. Representatives on Region 5 Committee (Pages 191 & 192 of the 2002 Open

Space Plan)

- C. General Criteria Recommendation for Open Space Conservation (Pages 192 to 194 of the 2002 Open Space Plan with the following modifications:)

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.

Revised April 15, 2005

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.

Revised April 15, 2005

- D. A Balanced Approach To Open Space Conservation In Region 5 (Pages 194 & 195 of the 2002 Open Space Plan with the following modifications:)

9. The need for future use of natural resources such as gravel, sand, mineral deposits, and aquifers.

Revised February 18, 2005

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.

Adopted February 18, 2005

- E. Consultations with Local Governments on Priority Open Space Projects (Pages 195 to 197 of the 2002 Open Space Plan with the following modification:)

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

Modified April 11, 2006

- F. Method for Implementation of the 9/20/91 Committee Resolution (Recommendation "E") on Consultation with Local Governments (Pages 197 & 198 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)

- G. Lands Outside the Blue Line (Pages 198 & 199 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)

- H. Easements (Pages 199 & 200 of the 2002 Open Space Plan with the following

modification of the last paragraph:)

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.

Revised March 18, 2005

- I. Resource Inventory Mapping (Pages 200 & 201 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- J. Consistent Open Space Conservation Policies for Adirondack Park Lands in DEC Regions 5 and 6 (Page 202 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- K. State Purchase of Tax Sale Properties (Pages 202 & 203 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- L. Study of the long-term viability of the Adirondacks' commercial forest. (Page 203 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- M. Increased consideration of open space conservation efforts other than acquisition in fee or easement. (Page 203 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- N. Annual report documenting all open space conservation successes. (Pages 203 & 204 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- O. Recognition and endorsement of Sustainable Forest Certification Programs (Page 204 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- P. Request for full appropriation of the Environmental Protection Fund in 2001 (Pages 204 & 205 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)
- Q. Support of the Batten Kill Corridor Project (Pages 205 & 206 of the 2002 Open Space Plan)

III. 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.

IV. MEMBERS AND AFFILIATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Rodney Brown | Clinton County |
| Ron Jackson (Dale French*)..... | Essex County |
| Nellie Staves | Franklin County |
| Carol Hart (Stephen Barker*)..... | Fulton County |
| Robert Morrison (John Risley*) | Hamilton County |
| Julie Stokes (Pieter Litchfield*)..... | Saratoga County |
| Ralph Bentley (Larry Bennett*)..... | Warren County |
| Robert S. Banks | Washington County |
| Ralph Charles..... | Forest Industry |
| Brian Houseal (Jaime Ethier)..... | Adirondack Council |
| David Gibson (Dan Plumley)..... | Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks |
| William McCaughin (Bernard Beebe*) | Essex County Farm Bureau |
| David Miller (Graham Cox*) | National Audubon Society |
| Duane Ricketson | Independent Appointee |
| Frank A. Clark (Virginia Brandreth) | Adirondack Landowners Association |
| Neil Woodworth (Jack Freeman*) | Adirondack Mountain Club |
| Teri Ptacek | Agricultural Stewardship Association |

*** Indicates alternate representative**

V. MEETING DATES

(See Page 209 of the 2002 Open Space Plan for a complete list of committee meetings)

2002 April 26, and July 26

2003 January 23, and April 24.

2004 January 12, and June 8.

2005 January 28, February 18, March 18, April 15 and May 20.

2006 March 3, April 11.

VI. PROJECTS

Northern Flow River Corridors - (Regions 5 and 6) Preserve the open space character and enhance public use of important northern river corridors and adjacent lands. The following four sub-projects have been chosen for conservation action at this time: Deer River, St. Regis, Grasse and Oswegatchie Rivers within the Adirondack Park, all of which contain significant stretches of high quality recreational water particularly well suited for canoeing and angling.

Bog River/Beaver River Headwater Complex - 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.

Follensby Park - A 14,600 acre forested tract is located in the Towns of Altamont 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.

Whitney Park - 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.

Boeselager Forestry - Three parcels. One in the Town of Black Brook which is 2,038 acres and the second in the Towns of Saranac and Dannemora which totals 3,426 acres, both of which border State Forest Preserve lands as well as existing timber easements. These 2 projects are proposed as working forest easements with public recreation rights. The third parcel is 16 miles of Railroad bed equaling 200 acres. The third proposed project calls for the acquisition of a recreational easement for public access. The Railroad connects the Village of Dannemora and the Hamlet of Lyon Mountain.

Roden Property - A 340 acre Forest Preserve addition in the Essex County Town of Moriah that supports the only private frontage on Trout Pond. The acquisition of these lands would provide consolidation of State lands in the Hammond Pond Wild Forest and would enhance public access and recreational opportunities to Trout and Ensign Ponds and Harris Hill.

Douglas Property - 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.

Big Cedar Swamp - 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."

National Lead/Tahawus - An approximately 10,300 acre tract extending to the High Peaks Wilderness Area that includes a portion of the Upper Hudson watershed. This area is of historic significance of which approximately 260 acres are on the national register of historic places. Sites include the Masten House, the Mt. Adams Fire Tower, the Tahawus Club and the McIntyre Iron Works. This property is the southern gateway to the High Peaks, located in the Town of Newcomb, Essex County. Currently owned by the Open Space Institute the intent is to sell more than 6000 acres of land to the State for eventual inclusion in the Forest Preserve. Another 3000 acres will be kept as a working forest with a conservation easement. The historic areas, sites and structures will be protected as well.

Revised March 18, 2005

Floodwood (Northern New Jersey Council Boy Scout Camp) - 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.

Revised February 18, 2005

International Paper Fee Lands - 11 parcels totaling 2000 acres - only four of which are larger than 100 acres - that will be bought in fee as part of the International Paper land deal and will become part of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

Adopted March 18, 2005

Domtar/Lyme Fee Lands - Approximately 20,000 acres of land on various parcels in the Towns of Ellenburg, Dannemora, Saranac and Black Brook in Clinton County which will be purchased in fee by the State as part of the Domtar/Lyme Forest Land Deal. 3,042 acres in the Town of Dannemora will become State Forest land. The remainder, including Lyon Mountain and its State fire tower, the highest peak in the northern region of the Park, and a portion of Ellenberg Mountain, will become part of the Forest Preserve.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted May 20, 2005

Adirondack Mountain Club Lands - 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 aforesaid Visitor's Service Facility and parking lot and that conveyance is approved by the Board of Directors of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

Adopted May 20, 2005
Revised March 3, 2006

May's Pond Tract - A 350 acre triangular shaped in-holding that extends into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. A portion of the parcel is located in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County and a portion is in the Town of Long Lake, Hamilton County. The parcel includes half of Mays Pond - the other half is in the Pigeon Lake Wilderness - and a roadway to a seasonal camp on the shore of the pond. Protection of this property will help maintain the continuity of the Forest Preserve holdings, and ensure continued access to Mays Pond and the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. The committee strongly encourages the State to use the roadway to allow motorized access to Mays Pond for persons with disabilities if the State does gain an interest in the property.

Adopted April 11, 2006

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.

LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED

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.

Adopted April 15, 2005

Lake George Waterway Access - parcels along the Lake George shoreline that provide public access to the lake.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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

LAKE CHAMPLAIN WATERSHED

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 II" 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' as identified in the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for New York State.

Adopted March 3, 2006

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.

Adopted April 15, 2005

Upper Saranac Lake/Bartlett Bay - Bartlett Bay is a largely undeveloped bay on Upper Saranac Lake. It is the location of the public carry between Upper Saranac Lake and Middle Saranac Lake. A 25 acre property on the shores of Bartlett Bay will consolidate existing Forest Preserve and provide public recreational opportunities while preserving 2,000 feet of scenic shoreline in a natural condition. The project will further enhance previous acquisitions including the Bartlett Carry acquisition by preserving a mostly undeveloped bay on the lake that experiences significant public use for boating, fishing and canoeing between the lakes.

Adopted May 20, 2005

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.

Adopted March 3, 2006

HUDSON RIVER PROJECTS

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

SARATOGA COUNTY

Dwaaskill 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.

Kayaderosseras Creek Corridor - The Kayaderosseras Creek flows through several towns in central Saratoga County, finally flowing into Saratoga Lake. The Creek is an outstanding resource for activities such as fishing and canoeing. Current public access is spotty, although new access is being developed along the southern boundary of Saratoga Spa State Park.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

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.

Adopted March 18, 2005

Wilton Wildlife Preserve and 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.

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.)

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.)

Adopted April 15, 2005

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.

Adopted April 11, 2006

NOTE: Additional projects were presented to and considered by the committee but were not approved by the committee during this cycle. The committee asked the sponsors of some projects - e.g.the Split Rock Wildway and the Hoosick River Watershed - to first obtain support from the local governments and return to the committee for consideration in the next update of the Open Space Conservation Plan.

Region 6 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

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 and 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.**

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 \$250,00 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.

State Forest, Unique Area and Wildlife Management Area Enhancement Priority Project

The Regional Open Space Committee supports the addition of a statewide priority project which would give DEC flexibility to acquire lands to enhance existing holdings. This new statewide priority project would be similar to the "State Park and Historic Site Protection" statewide priority project. The local government notification requirements would apply in every case where these enhancement properties are considered for purchase.

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 new statewide "State Forest, Unique Area and WMA Enhancement Priority 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.

Removal of Projects from Priority Project list

The committee feels strongly that an explanation is warranted when a project is removed from the priority project list. One priority project was dropped from the Region 6 Priority List. The Cogar Parcel in Herkimer County was subdivided and without the large contiguous aspect of the property and lack of local government support for the project, the committee felt it did not need to be listed.

2. 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

1. 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.

2. 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.

Acid Rain

The Region 6 Open Space Committee strongly supports New York State's need to continue to deal aggressively on the state and national level with reducing the impacts of acid rain. Forest ecology has been negatively impacted and acidification of some rivers, ponds and lakes has severely altered the plant and animal life in and around these water bodies. Two examples of research on the ecological effects of acid rain which document the negative impacts are:

Driscoll, C. T. 2002. "Effects of acidic deposition on forest and aquatic ecosystems in New York State". *Environmental Pollution*. In press.

Driscoll, C. T., et. al. 2001. "Acidic Deposition in the Northeastern United States. Sources and Inputs, Ecosystem Effects and Management Strategies". *Bioscience* 51:3, pp. 180-198.

The need for education about this issue continues.

Recreational Trail Linkages

The Region 6 Open Space Committee supports development of recreational trail systems through the region.

- **The North Country National Scenic Trail** from Erie Canal Village - City of Rome to the Adirondack Park Blue Line in the Town of Forestport. The importance of this trail is described in the 2002 Open Space Conservation Plan on pages 307 and 335.
- **The Northern Forest Canoe Trail** is a mapped, 748 mile-long trail from Old Forge, NY to Fort Kent, ME. This is a national effort that will in time become a very significant source of eco-revenue for the Adirondacks. There are no acquisition needs currently in the Region 6 portion of the trail, but to be included as a continuous trail route, Region 6 supports needed land purchases as outlined in the 2002 Open Space Conservation Plan on page 335.

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.

PRIORITY PROJECT SUMMARY - NEW PROJECTS

Mays Pond Tract (Sweet) (Joint Region 5 & 6 Priority Project)

The project would consist of the acquisition of the Mays Pond property for addition to the Forest Preserve and enhancement of the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. The property is owned by the Sweet family who has offered the property for sale. It is a 350 triangular shaped in-holding extending into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. It includes 1/3 of Mays Pond, an undeveloped pond, and stocked by NYS DEC with brook trout. The balance of Mays Pond is in public ownership. Acquisition of the property will help consolidate the Forest Preserve holdings, consolidate the ownership of Mays Pond, and provide better public access into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area.

Fort Drum Conservation Partnership Project

Fort Drum encompasses more than 100,000 acres of land, 80% of which is undeveloped, including a mix of forests, grassland and abandoned farmland reverting to forest which is

frequented by wildlife from bald eagles to bear. At the same time, these lands are being used extensively for military training for primarily the 10th Mountain Division light infantry units. Lands adjacent to Fort Drum are comprised of a similar mix of habitats and cover types and, in addition, active farmland. Together, these lands comprise a very large sparsely developed rural area where residences are few and the public road network sparse. Fort Drum lands are managed for military use but with a very strong natural resource conservation ethic. In addition, much of the lands are open to public recreation in cooperation with DEC.

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

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

Black Creek Watershed

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 Corridor

Preserve the open space character and public recreational use of the lands along the Black River, including headwater lands and lands along the Black River from North Lake in the Adirondack Forest Preserve to Lake Ontario. Approximately ½ of the corridor is within the Tug Hill Region. Tree-lined banks along the length of the river currently protect water quality, maintain fish and wildlife habitat and provide the public with scenic and

recreational opportunities. This Black River Corridor is recognized as an economic asset by the towns, and hamlets and villages, who have already begun efforts to preserve the resource. Current recreational uses include fishing, canoeing, hiking, skiing and other recreational uses associated with a New York State Blueway Trail designation. In addition, 37 communities along the corridor have been integrating these objectives into their comprehensive plans, land use regulations, and strategic plans for projects in the corridor. Tools may include the acquisition of small forested tracts with high public values, riparian buffers, public access multiple use trails and other recreation opportunities.

PRIORITY PROJECT SUMMARY - EXISTING PROJECTS

Northern Flow River Corridors (Joint Region 5 & 6 Priority Project)

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 within the Adirondack Park, all of which contain significant stretches of high quality recreational water particularly suited for canoeing and angling. Significant progress has been made in Region 6 with the acquisition of 6,100 acres of fee lands and 22,000 of conservation easements on the S. Branch of the Grass River in St. Lawrence County and 3,300 acres of fee lands and 13,000 acres of conservation easements on the W. Branch of the Oswegatchie River in Lewis and Herkimer Counties.

Bog River/Beaver River Headwater Complex (Joint Region 5 & 6 Priority Project)

Preserve the open space character of the remaining private lands bordering Bog River Flow in St. Lawrence County through the acquisition of fee and/or easement parcels.

Recreational Trail Linkages & Networks (Joint Region 5 & 6 Priority Project)

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 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 of interest include North Country National Scenic Trail and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. The intent of this project is not to achieve broader acquisition.

Massawepie Mire

A unique ecological community consisting of the Adirondacks' largest fen, adjacent eskers, lands and ponds. The more 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.

Rome Sand Plains

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, 1,600 acres have been acquired in fee.

Working Forest Lands

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.

Maumee Swamp

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.

State Park Battlefields

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.

Inman Gulf

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.

Moose River Corridor

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.

St. Lawrence River Islands, Shorelines and Wetlands

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 connective-ness across

the Frontenac Arch, an area extending from the Adirondacks to Algonquian Park in Ontario.

Great Lakes Shorelines and Niagara River (Joint Region 6, 7, 8 & 9 Priority Project)

A major Central and Northern New York resource consisting of islands, sand dunes, bluffs, wetlands, major tributaries, opportunities for shoreline and island access and other significant natural, historic and cultural features. This area contains 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.

Tug Hill Core Forests and Headwater Streams (Joint Region 6 & 7 Priority Project)

The Tug Hill Plateau is a large, undeveloped forested area that serves as 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, Lansingkill, Deer River, Salmon River, East Branch of 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 recreational opportunities.

Region 6 Priority List - Project Summary

| Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Threat/Resource Need |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Massawepie Mire | St. Lawrence | Adirondack Park | Currently held in large tracts for timber production and recreation. | Subdivision & development of surrounding lands. State to acquire, own and manage a combination of fee & easement 10,000 ± acres of land to prevent future development and provide for long-term public use & enjoyment. |
| Maumee Swamp | Herkimer | Exceptional Biological & Natural Site | Historically held in private ownership by several landowners. | Pollution and development of upland. State to acquire, own and manage approximately 1,000 acres of upland & wetland in fee to enhance public use & protect this exceptional biological site. |
| State Park Battlefields (Sackets Harbor & Oriskany) | Jefferson Oneida | | Core park area is state-owned. Adjoining areas are unprotected. | Intensive development on adjoining parcels. State to acquire & manage adjoining parcels. Sackets Harbor - 70 acres, Oriskany - 145 acres. |
| St. Lawrence Islands, Shorelines and Wetlands | Jefferson St. Lawrence | St. Lawrence Recreationway and Access | State of New York and Thousand Island Land Trust own minimal land and easements. | Future development. T. I. Land Trust & State of New York will independently acquire fee and easement on critical open space parcels within the St. Lawrence River corridor. |
| Rome Sand Plains | Oneida | Exceptional Biological & Natural Site | Portion of the area owned by the Nature Conservancy & State. Balance of area currently held in private ownership. | Development and sand mining. State and The Nature Conservancy will jointly acquire in fee separate parcels totaling approximately 3,000 acres extending from Huckleberry Swamp south to Wood Creek and west to East Branch Fish Creek, to adequately protect and provide for public use of this exceptional site. The project area includes the Wood Creek, Brandy Brook and lower Fish Creek Corridors. |

| Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Threat/Resource Need |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|--|
| Great Lakes Shoreline and Niagara River | Jefferson | Great Lakes Shoreline | Private ownership | Undeveloped islands, shorelines, lands adjacent to State Parks and wetlands properties are a scarce resource and represent natural habitats, scenic beauty and potential recreational areas. |
| Northern Flow River Corridors: Grass, Oswegatchie, St. Regis, Deer, Raquette Rivers and Little Rivers (located in Town of Fine, St. Lawrence Co.) | St. Lawrence | Adirondack Park | Currently held in large tract for timber production. Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers Act. | Development of the shoreline in the corridors. State of New York to acquire, own and manage a mixture of fee and easements in river corridors from headwaters downstream to Adirondack Park boundary. |
| Working Forest Lands | Herkimer Lewis Oneida St. Lawrence | Adirondack Park and Tug Hill | Currently held in large tracts for timber production and recreation. | Subdivision and development of timber lands. State to acquire, own and manage working forest easements on large tracts of available timber land to minimize development, provide for public recreational opportunity where appropriate and maintain timber producing lands in private ownership. |
| Bog River/Beaver River Headwater Complex | St. Lawrence | Adirondack Park | Large tracts in private ownership, managed for timber production. | Subdivision and shoreline development. Acquire remaining private lands bordering Bog River Flow in fee and/or easement. |
| Inman Gulf | Jefferson Lewis | Tug Hill Plateau | Mixed parcels of State Reforestation, County reforestation and private lands. | Subdivision and development. Acquire in fee and/or easement 2000± acres along Inman Gulf from Barnes Corners downstream to Rodman. |
| Moose River Corridor | Herkimer Oneida Lewis | Adirondack Park | Large tracts in private ownership, managed for timber production. | Subdivision and shoreline development. Acquire in fee/and easement lands along Moose River from Rondaxe Lake and Fulton Chain downstream to confluence with Black River. |

| Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Threat/Resource Need |
|---------|-----------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|---------|-----------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Tug Hill Core Forests and Headwater Streams | Herkimer Jefferson Lewis Oneida | Tug Hill Plateau | Mixed parcels of State Reforestation, and private lands. Large tracts in private timber production. | Subdivision and development. Acquire key parcels in easement and/or fee to maintain timber producing lands in private ownership. |
| Recreational Trail Linkages & Networks | Herkimer, Oneida | Trailways & Greenways and Waterways | | Long distance trail linkages and networks are important as a way for local communities to benefit from neighboring state lands. |
| Fort Drum Conservation Partnership | Jefferson | Wildlife habitat and biodiversity | Existing State reforestation and private ownership. | Protect the current open character of the area. |
| Black Creek Watershed | Herkimer | Recreationway and watershed | Existing State lands on Hinckley Reservoir. | Over development of shoreline/protection of habitat. |
| Black River Corridor | Jefferson Lewis Oneida | Black River Recreational access and wildlife habitat | State fishing access sites and boat launches. | Over development of shoreline/protection of habitat. |
| Mays Pond Track | Herkimer | Adirondack Park | Long-term, private stewardship has kept the property mostly undeveloped with the exception of a seasonal camp. The remote location of the property and limited access has helped to prevent development of the property. | The property adjoins a large protected wilderness area (Pigeon Lake). Even limited subdivision and development in this sensitive area would have a significant impact on the public lands and wilderness area. |

REGION 6 - OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST

| MEMBER | AFFILIATION |
|------------------------------------|--|
| County Appointments | |
| Bruce Armstrong | Jefferson County Planning Office |
| L. Kelley Dickinson | Lewis County Legislator |
| Randy Kerr | Lewis County appointment |
| J. Claude LeCours | Landowner/Forest Products - Herkimer County |
| Alex MacKinnon | St. Lawrence County Legislator |
| Lloyd Moore | St. Lawrence County Legislator |
| Charles Nevin | Retired DEC - Jefferson County |
| Peggy Rotton | EMC - Oneida County |
| Robert Seager | Oneida County appointment |
| Bruce Weakley | Herkimer County Legislator |
| Commissioners' Appointments | |
| John Bartow, Jr | Tug Hill Commission |
| Robert Boice | Commission on Adirondacks in 21 st 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 | Residence Committee to Protect Adirondacks |
| Clarence Petty | Association to Protect the Adirondacks |
| Robert Sauer | Forest Products Industry |
| Daniel Tickner | Outdoor Recreation Outfitter |
| Aaron Vogel | Thousand Islands Land Trust |

| STATE AGENCY SUPPORT STAFF | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| NAME | TITLE | AGENCY | LOCATION |
| Sandra LeBarron | Regional Director | NYSDEC | Watertown |
| Kevin Kieff | Regional Director | OPRHP | Alexandria Bay |
| Mike Geiss | Assistant Regional Director | OPRHP | Alexandria Bay |
| David Smith | Regional Forester | NYSDEC | Watertown |
| Stephen Litwhiler | Citizen Participation Specialist | NYSDEC | Watertown |
| William Gordon | Regional Wildlife Manager | NYSDEC | Watertown |
| Albert Schiavone | Natural Resources Supervisor | NYSDEC | Watertown |
| Michael Contino | Real Property Supervisor | NYSDEC | Watertown |
| John Gibbs | Forester II | NYSDEC | Potsdam |
| Fred Munk | Forester II | NYSDEC | Lowville |
| Patrick Whalen | Forester II | NYSDEC | Herkimer |

Meetings of the Regional Advisory Committee were held on the dates and locations as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| August 2, 2002 | Town of Webb, Town Hall |
| November 13, 2002 | Utica College, Utica |
| December 4, 2003 | Dulles State Office Building, Watertown |
| May 26, 2004 | SUNY Ranger School, Wanakena |
| August 18, 2004 | Town of Webb, Town Hall |
| February 8, 2005 | Italian American Civic Association, Watertown |
| March 8, 2005 | Italian American Civic Association, Watertown |
| March 22, 2005 | Italian American Civic Association, Watertown |
| April 12, 2005 | Italian American Civic Association, Watertown |
| April 26, 2005 | Italian American Civic Association, Watertown |
| July 26, 2005 | Town of Webb, Town Hall |
| March 21, 2006 | Lowville DEC Office |

Region 7 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

I. ISSUES

Waterbody Access Major Resource Area

The Advisory Committee recognizes that access to and buffers of streams, river corridors, and lakes have exceptional multiple resource values and should be specifically designated as a Major Resource Area. Opportunities for acquisition of waterfront properties must be acted on very quickly or they are lost to private development. The Advisory Committee recognizes that a long-term waterfront access plan needs to be developed, and that the State needs to develop a mechanism to accomplish very rapid, direct acquisition of such properties by NYS DEC and OPRHP.

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 and 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 enactment of new legislation that encourages private landowners to donate land and easements for conservation of open space through a one-time State income tax credit equivalent to a portion of the fair market value of the gift, and/or an annual, refundable income tax credit equal to a portion of the combined local taxes paid on lands that are restricted by a conservation easement. These incentives would 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.

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 of. 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.

Rapid Process to Address Projects that Suddenly Become Available For Sale

The State Open Space process needs to develop contingency fund allocations that may be flexibly utilized to rapidly pursue a purchase contract for lands in an identified project that suddenly become available for sale. A streamlined process for approving initiation of a purchase contract should be developed for use in such transactions to attempt to avoid loss of the property in an open market sale. While vulnerability is recognized as an important factor to consider in evaluating the need to more quickly conserve a resource, caution must be exercised to avoid substituting simple vulnerability for analysis of a project's open space values.

Alternatives to Fee Acquisition

The Advisory Committee endorses the use of easements and other alternatives to fee simple acquisitions where they can accomplish the program goals, are agreeable to the owner and do not create undue hardship on the parties involved.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY

The project summary describes priority projects for Region 7. Immediately following the title of the priority project, the agency or agencies involved and whether it is a new, modified or continuing project are shown in parentheses. Supplemental projects for Region 7 are described following the summary of priority projects.

2002 Projects That Are No Longer Listed

Priority:

Long Point State Park - completed

Rice Creek - incorporated in the Great Lakes Shorelines and Niagara River Priority Project (which formerly was called the Eastern Lake Ontario Shoreline and Islands Priority Project).

White Lake Complex - incorporated in Onondaga Escarpment Nature Corridor Supplemental Project

Supplemental:

Cayuga Lake Eastern Shore - included in Finger Lakes Shorelines Priority Project

Lakeport Park Property - purchased by the Town of Sullivan

Sandy Beach State Park - sold and being developed

Virgil Creek - purchase opportunity has been lost

Regions 3, 4, and 7

- Delaware River Branches and Main-stem Corridors (DEC, modified)

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.

Regions 6, 7, 8 and 9

- Great Lakes Shorelines and Niagara River (DEC and OPRHP, modified)

A major New York State resource consisting of islands, sand dunes, bluffs, embayments, wetlands, major tributaries, opportunities for shoreline and island access, and other significant natural 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. 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. This area features the Sacketts Harbor Battlefield Historic Site, the largest freshwater dune system in the northeastern United States, Galloo Island (largest undeveloped island on Lake Ontario), the Braddock Bay Complex and Niagara Falls.

Region 6 & 7

- Tug Hill Core Forests and Headwater Streams (DEC, continuing)

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.

Region 7

- Camillus Valley/Nine Mile Creek (DEC, continuing)
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 (DEC, continuing)
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.
- Clark Reservation State Park (OPRHP-Central, continuing)
The park 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 environmental resources.
- Develop a State Park In Cortland County. (OPRHP - Central, new) 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 (OPRHP-Finger Lakes, continuing)
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 (DEC & OPRHP, continuing)

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.

- Minoa Lakes/Green Lakes State Park (OPRHP - Central, continuing)

This project encompasses acquisition of surrounding open space adjacent to Green Lakes State Park and Minoa Lakes. These acquisitions will not only protect existing park resources and provide recreational opportunities but also provide a linkage to the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park.

- Nelson Swamp (DEC, continuing)

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 (DEC, continuing)

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 and Historic Protection (OPRHP - Central, continuing)

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.

- Peter Scott Swamp (DEC, continuing)

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 (DEC, continuing)

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 (OPRHP-Finger Lakes, modified)

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 and Forest Complex (OPRHP and DEC, new)

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 Audubon 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 (OPRHP - Finger Lakes - continuing)

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.

Region 7 & 8

- Emerald Necklace (DEC & OPRHP - new)

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 and Wetlands (DEC & OPRHP - new)

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. Wetland complexes associated with inlets, outlets and other tributaries to the Finger Lakes

provide important fish and wildlife habitats. The area covered by this project includes Otisco, Skaneateles, Owasco, Cayuga, Seneca, Keuka and Canandaigua Lakes with the western edge meeting project 112.

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:

Owasco Flats - a 2000 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.

The 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 (DEC - continuing)
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.

Statewide Priority Projects

- State Canal System (OPRHP, continuing)
The committee recommends that the State Canal System should continue to be a statewide priority project.
- State Forest, Unique Area, Multiple Use Area and Wildlife Management Area Enhancement Priority Project (DEC, new)
The Regional Open Space Committee supports the addition of a statewide priority project which would give DEC flexibility to acquire additional lands in the vicinity of existing State Forests, Unique Areas, Multiple Use Areas and Wildlife Management Areas for improved land management, public access, watershed protection and wildlife habitat. This new statewide priority project would be similar to the "State Park and Historic Site Protection" statewide priority project. The local government notification requirements would apply in every case where these enhancement properties are considered for purchase.

Supplemental Projects

- Baltimore Woods - Town of Marcellus, Onondaga County.
Acquisition of lands adjacent to the Baltimore Woods Nature Center for use in

educational activities and to buffer existing lands from conflicting land uses.

- Beaver Brook Wetlands Complex - Town of Cortlandville, Cortland County, Towns of Dryden and Groton, Tompkins County. Expansion of efforts for the protection of several fens and other rare ecological communities along Beaver Brook and its tributaries.
- Beaver Lake Nature Center - Town of Lysander, Onondaga County. Completion of efforts to acquire ecological and physical buffers to existing lands at the Nature Center and to gain holdings of additional habitat types.
- Caughdenoy Dam - Town of Schroepfel, Oswego County. Acquisition of fishing access on the Oneida River.
- Chenango River - Town of Lebanon, Madison County. Acquisition of fishing access at Randallsville on the Chenango River.
- Chenango Valley State Park - Broome County. Acquisition of small inholdings and parcels immediately adjacent to the park to protect from potential private development, secure viewshed protection, and allow for the potential expansion of recreation facilities.
- Fall Creek Fens and Forests - Town of Cortlandville, Cortland County, Towns of Dryden and Groton and Village of Freeville, Tompkins County. Expansion of efforts for the protection of the exceptional grouping of ecological communities and geological features along Fall Creek and its tributaries. The area contains numerous and varied fens, bogs, swamps and glacial landforms.
- FLLT Biodiversity Site - Town of Danby, Tompkins County. State acquisition of a conservation easement over the Finger Lakes Land Trust's Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve.
- Fischer Old Growth Forest - Town of Newfield, Tompkins County. Protection of old growth forest on slopes above Cayuga Inlet.
- Fort Ontario Historic Site - Oswego County. Acquisition of lands or easements to provide protection of scenic vistas, provide for potential trail connections, and protect existing holdings from objectionable development.
- Lorenzo State Historic Site - Madison County. Acquisition of lands and/or structures associated with one of the most popular historic sites in Central New York. To protect scenic vistas, provide buffer to developed areas and potential preservation and use of additional historic facilities.
- McDonalds Point - Town of Springport, Cayuga County. This site has over a mile of undeveloped shoreline on Cayuga Lake. The shoreline and adjacent upland have

potential for public recreational use.

- Michigan Hollow -Town of Danby, Tompkins County. Acquisitions to protect additional habitat and enhance existing state park, state forest and multiple use area lands.
- Mud Pond Fen - Town of Oswego, Oswego County. Protection of rare plant and animal habitat at Mud Pond (Silver Lake).
- Muskrat Creek Canoe Trail Project - Town of Cato, Cayuga County. Acquisition of access points to create or enhance canoing and kayaking opportunities between Parker's Pond and the Seneca River as proposed by Cayuga County.
- Old Fly Marsh - Town of Pompey, Onondaga County. Acquisition of additional lands at Save The County's preserve at this site.
- Onondaga Escarpment Nature Corridor - Towns of Dewitt and Manlius, Onondaga County. Protection of existing open space in the suburbs of Syracuse in a corridor running from Clark Reservation State Park through White Lake to the Three Falls Woods. The area contains an exceptional number of natural heritage elements and outstanding geological features.
- Owasco Flats - Towns of Moravia and Venice, Cayuga County. Protection of forested and open wetlands south of Owasco Lake along the Owasco Inlet.
- Owasco Lake Watershed, Stream and Lakeshore Buffer Initiative - The watershed is in Cayuga, Tompkins and Onondaga Counties. This project will reduce delivery of sediments and nutrients to Owasco Lake by increasing the amount of permanently preserved riparian buffer areas along the Lake and its tributaries. Methods of protection may include conservation easement, fee acquisition, landowner education, and streambank stabilization through planting of vegetative buffer strips.
- Paine Creek Old Growth Forest - Town of Ledyard, Cayuga County. Protection of old growth forest in the ravine along Paine's Creek on the east side of Cayuga Lake.
- Purchase and reclamation of Homer Man-made Ponds - Town of Homer, Cortland County. Purchase and reclaim the man-made ponds in Homer to create fishing and recreational opportunities. These ponds were created when NYSDOT mined the gravel needed to construct Interstate 81, and have little or no access for swimming or canoeing.
- Tioughnioga River Access - Cortland County. Develop access points along the Tioughnioga River in order to create fishing and recreational opportunities in conjunction with local government development of a trail along the river to access one of the most

important natural resources in Cortland County.

- Tracey Lake - Town of Tully, Onondaga County. Protection of remaining open space around the Tully Lakes, a group of kettlehole lakes in a segment of the Valley Heads moraine.

III. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Development and 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. As an example, the Governor recently announced a goal of acquiring 1 million additional acres of land for Open Space and 20 more state parks in the next 10 years. 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, nonprofit organizations or other agencies.

Acquisitions, such as inholdings, that reduce management or stewardship costs or enhance stewardship capabilities should receive some additional recognition in the priority rating system.

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.

Expansion of US Forest Legacy Program

The committee passed a resolution to recommend expansion of the US Forest Legacy Program to include a Finger Lakes/Northern Plateau Forest Legacy Area in Central and Western New York. Expansion of this program will make another revenue source available in this planning area for land protection of “exceptional forest for traditional uses.”

Distribution of Funding

The Committee recognizes that substantial improvements have occurred in the distribution of Open Space funding on a statewide basis in recent years, eliminating previous shortages of funding caused by spending the vast majority of available funds in concentrated areas. We fully support and encourage the continuation of a fair distribution of Open Space funds statewide.

Small Projects Funding

Small project funding has increased from an initial annual statewide allocation of \$500,000, through \$1.0 Million, to a current allocation of \$3.0 Million. These increases have helped to address the grossly inadequate initial funding level for this important category for acquisition of inholdings and parcels that provide valuable access to an existing open space framework of lands. We recommend that the allocation be increased to \$5.0 Million annually statewide to continue to provide appropriate protection of resources and to take advantage of targets of opportunity.

Regional Open Space Committee

The Regional Open Space Advisory Committee should begin meeting at least one full year in advance in order to adequately prepare an update of the draft Open Space Plan. The Region 7 Committee would like to establish inter-regional meetings on a once per every two year basis with adjacent Advisory Committees, as appropriate, to exchange information on projects that are shared between or among the regions in order to ensure

optimum coordination of acquisitions and protection of open space. In addition, an expanded public outreach program should be undertaken to ensure that the general public is made more aware of the Open Space process and has the ability to participate in some fashion. Internet distribution was considered an especially attractive, effective, and efficient way to provide extensive information to the public so that it is available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week.

R.A.C. Expenses

Each Region should receive an appropriate annual allocation to cover the direct member and agency expenses associated with meetings and field trips for the Regional Advisory Committees.

IV. CONCLUSION

The committee has a strong interest in the many facets of open space preservation and intends to continue its ongoing meetings through the next three-year cycle, meeting at least twice per year and incorporating field trips to noteworthy existing and potential Open Space projects.

| V. REGION 7 OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP LIST | |
|---|-------------------------|
| MEMBER | AFFILIATION |
| Merwin Armstrong | 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 |
| Trish Ottley Riter | Cayuga County |
| Wayne Outwater | Chenango County |
| Charles Parker | Oswego County |
| James Pasco | DEC State Appointment |
| James Petreszyn | Madison County |
| Sandra Souder | DEC State Appointment |
| Douglas P. Thompson | DEC State Appointment |
| Andrew E. Zepp | OPRHP State Appointment |

| STATE AGENCY SUPPORT STAFF | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| NAME | TITLE | AGENCY | LOCATION |
| Dan Bishop | Regional Fisheries Manager | DEC | Cortland |
| Dave Bradford | Land Manager | OPRHP | Jamesville |
| Diane Carlton | Citizen Participation Specialist | DEC | Syracuse |
| Dan Davis | Assistant Regional Director | OPRHP | Trumansburg |
| Edward Heinrich | Regional Director | OPRHP | Jamesville |
| Robert Hiltbrand | General Park Manager | OPRHP | Jamesville |
| Marie Kautz | Regional Wildlife Manager | DEC | Cortland |
| Kenneth Lynch | Regional Director | DEC | Syracuse |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------|
| Teri Phelps | Secretary | DEC | Cortland |
| Sue Poelvoorde | Natural Resources Planner | OPRHP | Trumansburg |
| Jerry Rasmussen | Natural Resources Supvr. | DEC | Cortland |
| David Sinclair | Regional Forester | DEC | Cortland |
| Ron Stewart | Regional Director | OPRHP | Trumansburg |
| Glenn Wolford | Real Property Supvr. | DEC | Syracuse |

VI. MEETING DATES

MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE WERE HELD ON THE DATES AND LOCATIONS AS FOLLOWS:

OCTOBER 15, 2004 DEC SALMON RIVER HATCHERY
APRIL 25, 2005 CORTLAND DEC OFFICE
MAY 19, 2005 CORTLAND DEC OFFICE
JUNE 1, 2005 CORTLAND DEC OFFICE
JULY 19, 2005 CORTLAND DEC OFFICE
SEPTEMBER 15, 2005 NORTHERN MONTEZUMA WETLANDS SITE
MARCH 2, 2006 CORTLAND DEC OFFICE
MAY 11, 2006 CORTLAND DEC OFFICE

**REGION 7 ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PROJECT SUMMARY
Region 7 Priority Projects**

| PROJECT | CATEGORY | COUNTY(S)/TOWN | RESOURCE AREA | EXISTING PROTECTION | OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|---|
| Camillus Valley/Nine Mile Creek | Greenways | Onondaga County Towns of Camillus, Marcellus and Geddes | NYS Canal Recreationway | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| Carpenter Falls/Bear Swamp Creek Corridor | Watershed Protection | Cayuga County Towns of Niles and Sempronius | Finger Lakes | Partial | Watershed Protection and Public Recreation |
| Clark Reservation State Park | Parklands | Onondaga County Town of DeWitt | Resource of Statewide Importance | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| State Park in Cortland County | Parklands | Cortland County | Resource of Statewide Importance | None | Public Recreation |
| Fair Haven Beach State Park | Parklands | Cayuga County Town of Sterling | Great Lakes Shoreline, Islands and Tributaries | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| Genny Green Trail/Link Trail | Trailways | Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga Counties | North Country National Scenic Trail/Trails | Partial | Public Recreation |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---------|---|
| Minoa Lakes/Green Lakes State Park | Parklands | Onondaga County Town of Manlius | Resource of Statewide Importance | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| Nelson Swamp | Unique Area | Madison County Towns of Cazenovia, Fenner, and Nelson | Exceptional Biological and Natural Sites | Partial | Protection of Area of Ecological Significance |
| North Shore Oneida Lake | Enhancement of Public Lands | Oswego County, Towns of Constantia, West Monroe and Hastings | NYS Canal Recreationway | Partial | Shoreline Protection, Public Access and Wildlife Management |
| Old Erie Canal | Parklands | Onondaga and Madison Counties, Towns of Manlius and Sullivan | NYS Canal Recreationway | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| Peter Scott Swamp | Freshwater Wetlands | Oswego County Town of Schroepfel | NYS Canal Recreationway | Partial | Protection and Management of Wildlife Habitat |
| Salmon River Corridor | Greenways | Oswego County, Towns of Albion, Orwell, Redfield, and Richland | Salmon River Corridor | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| State Parks Greenbelt | Parklands | Tompkins County, Towns of Enfield, Ithaca, Ulysses and City of Ithaca | Finger Lakes | Partial | Protective Buffer and Public Recreation |
| Summerhill Fen and Forest Complex | Exceptional Forest and Plant Community | Cayuga County Towns of Locke and Summerhill | Exceptional Biological and Natural Sites | Partial | Protection of Area of Ecological Significance |
| Two Rivers State Park | Parklands | Tioga County | Resource of Statewide Importance | None | Public Recreation |

**REGION 7 ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PROJECT SUMMARY
Projects Shared with Other Regions**

| REGION | PROJECT | CATEGORY | COUNTY(S)/TOWN | RESOURCE AREA | EXISTING PROTECTION | OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 3, 4, 7 | Delaware River Branches and Main-stem Corridors | Watershed Protection | Delaware, Broome, Sullivan, and Orange Counties | Catskill-Delaware Region | Partial | Public Recreation, and Habitat and Watershed Protection |
| 6, 7, 8, 9 | Great Lakes Shorelines and Niagara River | Shoreline Protection | Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Monroe, Wayne, Cayuga, Oswego, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence Counties | Great Lakes Shoreline and Island | Partial | Public Recreation and Protection from Development |
| 6, 7 | Tug Hill Core Forests and Headwater Streams | Watershed Protection | Oneida, Oswego, Jefferson, and Lewis Counties | Tug Hill Plateau | Partial | Public Recreation and Protection from Development |
| 7, 8 | Emerald Necklace | Enhancement of Public Lands | Tompkins, Tioga, and Schuyler Counties | Resource of Statewide Importance | Partial | Public Recreation and Protection from Development |
| 7, 8 | Finger Lakes Shoreline | Shoreline Protection | Cayuga, Onondaga, Tompkins, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, and Yates Counties | Finger Lakes | Partial | Public Recreation and Protection from Development |
| 7, 8 | Northern Montezuma Wetlands | Freshwater Wetlands | Cayuga, Seneca, and Wayne Counties | Montezuma Marshes | Partial | Wildlife Management and Public Recreation |

Region 8 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

Introduction

The Region 8 Open Space Committee (Committee) met nine times at various locations on the following dates:

1. January 19, 2005, DEC Region 8 Headquarters, Avon
2. February 9, 2005, Finger Lakes Community College Muller Field Station, Honeoye
3. March 3, 2005, DEC Region 8 Sub-Office, Bath
4. March 24, 2005, DEC Region 8 Headquarters, Avon
5. April 14, 2005, DEC Region 8 Field Office, Montezuma
6. May 12, 2005, DEC Region 8 Headquarters, Avon
7. May 25, 2005, Mount Morris Dam Visitor Center, Mount Morris
8. June 14, 2005, DEC Region 8 Sub-Office, Bath
9. July 12, 2005, Ontario County Planning Office, Canandaigua

The goals of the committee were to review the *New York State Open Space Conservation Plan 2002 (2002 Plan)*, to evaluate the status of all previously listed projects and to develop a new regional priority list, to explore protection alternatives to state acquisition; to review stewardship and partnership ideas and; to review the topic of small projects.

The first meeting was introductory in nature and outlined how the nomination process would be administered. The Committee decided to adopt an updated version of the nomination form used during the 2002 Open Space planning process. A general format for meeting agendas was also discussed. Stewardship issues were brought up at the first meeting and became a strong theme throughout the process. The impacts of the 2003 and 2005 retirements in Region 8 could not be emphasized enough and how they affected available resources. Staff from the Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) presented success stories generated by the 2002 Plan. When practical, success stories were highlighted at each meeting.

A review of the 32 projects contained in the 2002 Plan began and carried into the second meeting. This review created the foundation for establishing recommendations for the 2005 Open Space Plan. Members were asked to present issues at the meetings that would be incorporated into the Regional Report

The committee invited Dr. Michael Burger of Audubon New York to present the second edition of the Important Bird Areas of New York. Region 8 contains 20 Important Bird Areas, the majority of which are located on open space projects identified by the Committee.

Issues

The retirement incentive of 2003 took a heavy toll on Department Regional staffing levels involved with state land acquisition, management and operations. The situation was compounded during 2005 as several key staff also chose to retire. With resources being stretched, it was discussed on several occasions the importance of developing long-term partnerships as a means to properly manage and maintain state-owned lands. The Committee also recommended increasing funding needed for stewardship to protect natural resources and to utilize best management practices.

During early 2005 the Department proposed a restructuring of the hunting season for deer in the Southern Zone. The initial proposal would have lengthened the entire season from early October to late December (bow, muzzleloader and gun season). The Committee discussed the relevance of the extended season and how increased conflict might arise between State land users. In the end, the deer season was not significantly changed. However, the discussion did lead to a comprehensive analysis of recreational activities when planning for the conservation and management of open space (see Policy Recommendations).

The Committee examined and discussed the Junius Ponds Complex in Seneca County and recommended that it be given the Region's highest priority. Junius Ponds was listed as an additional project in 2002. Since then the Department has executed a conservation easement on roughly one-third of the complex and the Village of Lyons is currently selling their interest in the complex (core property including the ponds) The Committee passed a resolution on March 24, 2005, supporting acquisition of the complex and urging that the process begin prior to the finalization of the 2005 Open Space Plan.

Another critical project involved the Lake Ontario Shoreline. Wayne County presented several key open space projects along that shoreline, so the committee quickly recognized the need to address the entire Lake Ontario shoreline in Region 8. A review of the 2002 Open Space Plan found that Regions 6 and 7 had an Eastern Ontario Shoreline and Islands multi-region project and that Region 9 had a Great Lakes & Niagara River Access, Shore lands & Vistas project. The Committee will recommend that a revised Multi-Region Project (6 - 9) to include the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie

Shoreline and Islands and Niagara River.

Region 8 Projects would include but not limited to:

1. Lake Shore Marshes and Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Areas,
2. Chimney Bluffs, Beechwood, Hamlin Beach and Lakeside Beach State Parks.
3. Oak Orchard and Irondequoit Bay State Marine Parks (and other state-owned boat-launch sites)
4. Monroe County Projects such as Irondequoit Bay
5. Wayne County Projects such as Cornwall Estate, Camp Demolay, Parson Property, Pier Point Marina and Sodus Bay
6. Orleans County Projects such as Camp Troutburg and Oak Orchard River

During the last two meetings the Committee discussed the concept of a Finger Lakes Shoreline Project. Although parts of the Finger Lakes are contained within several projects in the 2002 Open Space Conservation Plan the vast majority of their shorelines are not addressed. 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. However, 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. Accordingly the Committee will recommend that a Finger Lakes Shoreline Project be developed.

Further discussion of other projects resulted in a recommendation to consolidate several 2002 Open Space projects into one proposal. The Chemung River Greenbelt was listed as an additional project on the 2002 Open Space Plan. The Committee recommended that the project be redefined and be given priority status. The Chemung River Greenbelt would include the following 2002 projects: 1. West Hill Lands (priority project), 2. Mossy Bank (additional project), 3. Steege Hill (additional project) and 4. Valley Rim Trail (additional project). The Braddock Bay and the Genesee Valley Greenway Priority Projects were also modified to reflect the current status of each complex.

Policy Recommendations

The Committee raised concerns regarding the appropriate use of state-owned lands and developed a statement that should be incorporated into this edition of the Open Space Plan as follows:

The committee recommends and encourages that all recreational activities be considered when planning for the conservation and management of Open Space. The stewardship and conservation of these resources does not end with acquisition but often includes active management for the use and enjoyment of these lands by the public. Recreational activities that are identified as compatible with a site's natural and cultural resources should be considered and allowed.

On March 16, 2005, the Department released a draft policy for ATV access on state lands. Public information meetings were held across New York and comments were encouraged. The committee discussed the issue and provided written comments to the draft policy. The Committee supported the intent of the draft policy in that ATV use is not a program offered on public lands. In addition, the Committee endorsed the implementation of stringent controls on those short sections of roads on state land that could be used to connect legitimate ATV trails on adjacent properties. The Committee stressed the importance of separating ATV trails from those trails used by hikers, cross-country skiers and equestrians. The Committee recommended that more detail be provided, including but not limited to speed limits, noise and emission controls and tire specifications. The committee also agreed that the opening page "summary" could be made stronger if the document stated that generally ATV use is not permitted.

The Committee discussed the importance of land donations and conservation easements to open space planning. Both the New York State Senate and Assembly were considering bills that would provide annual income tax credits to land owners whose property is restricted by a conservation easement. Similarly bills have been introduced to the Senate and Assembly for a one-time income tax credit to landowners who donate their lands to a land trust organization or governmental agency. The committee passed two resolutions on May 25, 2005, in support of the bills under consideration by the legislature.

The Committee also passed a resolution on May 25, 2005, recommending that the Finger Lakes Region be nominated for inclusion into the Forest Legacy Program.

On April 1, 2005, Central Office suggested the development of a Generic State Forest/Wildlife Management Area priority project for the 2005 Open Space Conservation Plan modeled after the generic State Parks priority project already included in the 2002 Plan. (priority project No.137). The purpose of this generic priority project would be to provide flexibility and allow consolidation and expansion of existing State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas without specific listing in the Plan or constraint by the existing small projects category

The following description (as drafted by Region 7) was been reviewed by the Committee which recommends its support:

State Forest, Unique Area and Wildlife Management Area Enhancement Priority Project:

The Regional Open Space Committee supports the addition of a statewide priority project which would give DEC flexibility to acquire additional lands in the vicinity of existing State Forests, Unique Areas and Wildlife Management Areas for improved land management, public access, watershed protection and wildlife habitat. This new statewide priority project would be similar to the "State Park and Historic Site Protection" statewide priority project. The local government notification requirements would apply in every case where these enhancement properties are considered for purchase.

Every Region 8 Open Space Conservation Plan meeting stressed the need for sustainable resources for stewardship and staff at both the Department and OPRHP to ensure effective management of New York State's public lands and natural and historic resources. Continual effort is needed to secure funding on an annual basis for better attention to routine maintenance and infrastructure upkeep.

Lastly, the Committee recommended that revenue generated from royalties collected from natural gas wells continue to be used to fund personnel whose time and activity is significantly dedicated to processing seismic and well drilling permit applications and subsequent monitoring of activities including additional enforcement needs to prevent illegal motorized travel on pipeline right-of-ways.

REGION 8 OPEN SPACE PRIORITY PROJECT LIST

LAKE ONTARIO AND LAKE ERIE SHORELINE AND ISLANDS AND NIAGARA RIVER (Regions 6, 7 ,8 AND 9)

A major New York State resource consisting of islands, sand dunes, bluffs, wetlands, major tributaries, opportunities for shoreline and island access and other significant natural 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. 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 where Lake Ontario enters 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. This area features the Sacketts Harbor Battlefield Historic Site, the largest freshwater dune system in the Northeast, Galloo Island (largest undeveloped island on Lake Ontario), the Braddock Bay Complex and Niagara Falls.

NORTHERN MONTEZUMA WETLANDS (DEC, Regions 7 and 8) - 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, located in Wayne, Seneca and Cayuga Counties, 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 USFWS, 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.

EMERALD NECKLACE - (Regions 7 and 8) The Emerald Necklace is an arc of forested hills and valleys stretching from east to west in the vicinity of Ithaca in Schuyler, Tompkins and Tioga Counties. Within this necklace 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 Necklace 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 Necklace 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 - (Regions 7 and 8) 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 goals for shoreline protection include public access and wildlife protection. 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 (especially Pied-billed Grebes, Redheads, Mallards, Common Goldeneye, Canvasback, and the threatened American Black Duck). Forested areas along and above the lakeshores provide habitat for raptors and neotropical songbirds, including the threatened Cerulean Warbler (especially southern Skaneateles Lake). The shorelines are also important to geese, gulls, shorebirds, pipits, and Snow Buntings for feeding, and even nesting for wetland species. There is a woeful lack of publicly accessible shoreline from which to observe these avian species, with birders often stopping along shoulderless roads or busy state highways to view portions of the flocks between cottages, creating traffic safety hazards. Projects to preserve portions of the shoreline of any of these lakes, either for public access or for wildlife, could include acquisition, easements, or additions to existing public segments. Parties including New York State, towns, and non-profit organizations need to be prepared to capitalize on these 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:

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.

The 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.

CATHARINE VALLEY COMPLEX (Region 8) - This unique Southern Tier complex extends from the southern end of Seneca Lake in Schuyler County, south to the Village of Horseheads in Chemung County. The complex is composed of three major environmental areas with varying habitats and recreational opportunities. Just south of Seneca Lake are towering shale cliffs bordered by **Rock Cabin Road**. This site harbors a rare plant community and an uncommon plant that is the exclusive food source for three butterflies considered rare in this region. The Wild Nodding onion, a rare species and listed on the NYS list of protected plants, grows in profusion on the cliffside. In addition more than 120 wildflower species have been identified on this site. Adjacent to Rock Cabin Road is the Queen Catharine wetland, identified as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The second environmental area in this complex is the **Horseheads Marsh**, a Class 1 wetland and the largest freshwater wetland in Chemung County. The marsh is the headwaters for Catharine Creek, a world class trout stream and provides the stream with water quality and flood control functions. In addition, the marsh provides habitat for many species of birds (some on the endangered species list), wildlife and reptiles. The third focus in this complex is the abandoned **Chemung Canal** property, which passes through Horseheads Marsh. Purchase of this property will allow the Catharine Valley Trail connection to the Village of Horseheads by developing a trail along the historic Chemung Canal towpath. This complex offers opportunities to treasure and protect the biodiversity present in the area and to expand recreational and educational opportunities in the valuable open space lands of the Southern Tier.

HI TOR/BRISTOL HILLS (Region 8) - 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 (Region 8) - 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.

SONNENBERG GARDENS (Region 8) - This project consists of a 50-acre parcel in the City of Canandaigua, Ontario County. The focal point on this historic property is a Queen Anne style Victorian mansion. The mansion is surrounded by nine formal gardens originally created between 1902 and 1916. Today the gardens are recognized by the Smithsonian Institution as “one of the most magnificent late Victorian gardens ever created in America.”

WESTERN FINGER LAKES: CONESUS, HEMLOCK, CANADICE AND HONEOYE Region 8) - 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.

JUNIUS PONDS (Region 8) - Located in the Town of Junius, Seneca County, the Junius Ponds complex is a unique assemblage of bogs, fens, meromictic ponds and other wetland types that support an endangered reptile population, rare plants, and unusual ecological communities. The major landowners have expressed interest in conservation easements, possibly with third party conservation organizations, to protect the resource values the complex possesses. Threats include peat mining, sand and gravel mining, illegal specimen collections, Thruway and agricultural runoffs, and commercial development pressures adjacent to the complex. The Town of Lyons once utilized the complex as a public water supply.

CHEMUNG RIVER GREENBELT (Region 8) 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 New York State Natural Heritage Program) and the Town of Erwin's Green Infrastructure Plan.

INDIAN HILLS GOLF CLUB - (Region 8) The property consists of groomed golf course (18-hole and a junior course) and shrub/scrubland. The eastern portion of the property, located east of County Route 73, is adjacent to the Tioga River in the Towns of Lindley and Erwin in Steuben County with approximately 2,400 feet of river front access. While the site currently functions primarily as a golf course, if it was under State Park ownership, additional recreational opportunities could be advanced, including fishing and boating access to the Tioga River and winter sport activities including cross country skiing and ice skating.

WOLF GULLY - (Region 8) Located in the Town of Naples, Ontario County this site was identified in The Nature Conservancy's 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.

WESTBURY BOG (Region 8) This project, located in a large wetland complex in the Town of Butler, Wayne County, is intended to protect the habitat of an endangered reptile. This species was recently documented at this site. 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.

GENESEE GREENWAY/RECREATIONWAY (Regions 8 and 9) - 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. 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.

TONAWANDA CREEK WATERSHED (Regions 8 and 9) - 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 over 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 8 OPEN SPACE ADDITIONAL PROJECT LIST

GANONDAGAN HISTORIC SITE (Region 8) - Located in the Town of Victor, Ontario County, Ganondagan was the largest Seneca Native American settlement in the mid and late seventeenth century, with an estimated 4,500 residents. Future acquisition efforts will focus on preserving the viewshed of the site. The site is currently vulnerable to increased residential development. Future targeted acquisitions would protect and enlarge the only New York State Historic Site dedicated to the interpretation of the history and culture of the Native American people who originally populated the area.

LEEDY'S ROSEROOT (Region 8) - The isolated shoreline cliffs on the west side of Seneca Lake in Yates County, encompassing approximately 5 acres, exhibit well defined, highly fractured shale rock layers. These fractured shale cliffs and talus slopes

support a population of plants, Leedy's Roseroot, listed as "threatened" on the federal level and "endangered" on the State level. In recent years these shale cliffs have become development targets, as more suitable lake front lands are already developed.

LITTLE LAKES CORRIDOR (Region 8) - This corridor is comprised of six parcels of land in Steuben and Schuyler counties, currently owned by New York State Electric and Gas Corp. (NYSEG), and connecting Waneta, Lamoka and Keuka lakes. The properties include an abandoned generation plant and surrounding land on Keuka Lake; a canal connecting the plant and Waneta Lake; parcels on and around Waneta and Lamoka Lakes and Bradford Dam and surrounding wetlands. This corridor is an important open space project because of the habitat it provides, the glacial geologic features present and the opportunity to develop a trail along the corridor to Keuka Lake and connecting with the Finger Lakes Trail.

MONROE COUNTY PATHWAYS (Region 8)- These linear trails will connect several public open space areas in Monroe County. The lands include the Rochester Running Track, a 7.5 mile multi-use trail connecting High Falls Park, Seneca Park, Seaway Trail and Sea Breeze Trail. The Falls Road Branch is a 16 mile multi-use trailway, south and parallel to the NYS Canal, connecting historic villages. These former railway lands provide an opportunity to develop trails that will connect several cultural resources and provide scenic areas along the NYS Canal system.

ZURICH BOG (Region 8)- This property is owned and managed in part by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, Inc. The unique wetland/bog community includes sphagnum muskeg, shrub bog, bog forest, and swamp forest vegetative types. It is located in Wayne County in one of the two outstanding drumlin fields in North America. It is also the resident habitat of an endangered species. Wetland drainage activities have threatened the natural values of this area. Proposed is the purchase of easements and land in fee to provide additional protection to this unique resource.

PINNACLE HILL (Region 8) - Pinnacle Hill is comprised of about 33 acres within the City of Rochester and the Town of Brighton. This site is a kame developed during the last glacial period in this area. It is part of the Pinnacle Range which includes Cobb's Hill, Highland Park, and Mount Hope Cemetery. This hill is characterized by steep and erodible slopes that are held in place by a mature deciduous woodland. Pinnacle Hill has the highest elevation in the Town of Brighton. Because of its natural characteristics, the danger of erosion from development and the magnificent view to the south from its slopes, Pinnacle Hill was listed as a "High Priority" site for preservation measures in the report, Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Monroe County.

GREAT BEND (Region 8) - This project is located in the Town of Mendon and is bordered on the north and east by a Lehigh Valley railroad bed right-of-way and adjacent to the Totiakton Native American site on the west. A drumlin is present on the site and Honeoye Creek runs through the more than 230 acre parcel. The parcel has a diversity of environmental features ranging from dense woodlands, some on steep

slopes, to open meadow found along the railroad bed. These features provide excellent habitat for plants, birds and animals. Protection of this site by county, town or land trust acquisition is recommended.

BERGEN SWAMP (Region 8)- Located just twenty miles from Rochester in Genesee County, Bergen Swamp is a 2300-acre system of wetlands that harbors an incredible diversity of plants and animals, including 40 species of rare, threatened, or endangered plants and the endangered Massasauga Rattlesnake. Although more than 1600 acres of the swamp is owned by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, there is a need to complete protection of core areas and to acquire upland buffer that can protect the swamp from residential development.

CALEDONIA SPRINGS (Region 8)- This project is to provide protection to the high-quality water source that supplies the Caledonia Fish Hatchery in Livingston County, the oldest in the nation. Locally known as Spring Brook, this resource and the associated wetlands are surrounded by development. It also provides a significant wintering habitat for thousands of waterfowl.

DRESDEN FLATS (Region 8) - The Dresden Flats consists of about forty acres of land in the Town of Torrey and Village of Dresden, in Yates County. These lands are within the federal flood plain and designated as wetlands by NYSDEC. Located on the north side of the Keuka Lake Outlet, this property is critical to extending the Outlet Trail and the Outlet Park Greenway the last mile to Seneca Lake. Acquisition will create new public access to the shore of Seneca Lake, to the first two locks of the historic Crooked Lake Canal, to the mouth of the Outlet Creek and to many other recreational, historic and environmental assets of the property. Local support for the project is evident with participation from local corporations, the two municipalities, Dresden and Torrey, and several not-for-profit organizations and private individuals.

B&H RAILROAD PROPERTY, KEUKA LAKE - (Region 8) This 11.7 acre greenspace on Keuka Lake is located in the Village of Hammondsport, Steuben County and is one of only a few remaining properties available for public access to the lake. This property contains Cold Brook a natural spawning run for rainbow trout. The southern shoreline boasts a spectacular view of Keuka Lake and surrounding hillsides. The property has the potential to links trails from the Curtis Museum and Finger Lakes Trail connecting the entire southern Keuka Lake shoreline from Depot Park to Champlin Beach making the area a prime recreational site. There is a great deal of public support for maintaining this property as open space.

FOSSIL CORAL REEF - (Region 8) This 100 plus-acre property located in the Town of LeRoy, Genesee County has been on the US Department of Interior, National Park Service's Registry of National Natural Landmarks since 1967. It is known locally as the "Bradbury Quarry." It contains an abandoned limestone quarry and woodlands. It is abundant with ancient fossils, wildlife and trails. Specimens of fossils date back 350 to 400 million years ago. Geologically, the quarry contains the only preserved and well

exposed Middle Devonian Onondaga Coral Reef in Western New York. Rare fossil and flank deposits are abundant in the reef and include numerous tabulate and rugose corals, crinoids, gastropods and trilobites. The site is visited on a regular basis by paleontology groups from local colleges.

BUTTERMILK FALLS ON OATKA CREEK - (Region 8) Buttermilk Falls is an approximately 70 foot waterfall in Oatka Creek. It is the point where the creek drops over the Akron-Bertie Onondaga Dolomite and Limestone Formation in the Town of LeRoy, Genesee County. During periods of low rainfall (perhaps several weeks during the summer) the creek "disappears into the bedrock upstream of the falls and reappears either at the base of the falls or at points on the rock face. It is a very scenic area, but currently unavailable for public viewing.

REGION 8 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

County Representatives

Chemung County-No Appointment

Genesee County - George Squires

Livingston County - David Woods (Heather Ferrero served as alternate)

Monroe County - Paul A. Johnson

Ontario County -Kristen Mark Hughes

Orleans County - Wayne Hale

Seneca County - Harriet Haynes

Schuyler County - Danielle Hautaniemi

Steuben County - Amy Dlugos

Wayne County - Sharon Lilla

Yates County - Judson Peck

At-Large Committee Members

Organization

Irene Brown

Friends of Queen Catherine Marsh

Bruce Gillman

Finger Lakes Community College

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Edward D. Holmes | Genesee Valley Greenway |
| Jim Howe | The Nature Conservancy |
| James D. Howell Jr. | Schuyler County Watershed Manager |
| Betsy Landre | Finger Lakes Land Trust |
| Evelyn Gay Mills | Genesee Land Trust |
| William Ostrander | Chemung Valley Audubon Society |
| Mona J. Ryneerson | Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, Inc. |
| Irene Szabo | Finger Lakes Trail Conference |
| John VanNeil | Friends of Montezuma |

STATE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Department of Environmental Conservation

Randall C. Nemecek, Supervisor for Natural Resources, Region 8

Linda J. Vera, Citizen Participation Specialist

David C. Woodruff, Senior Wildlife Biologist*

James R. Peek, Regional Forester, Region 8*

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Jack Clancy, Regional Director, Finger Lakes Region*

Sue Poelvoorde, Natural Resources Planner, Finger Lakes Region

Dan Davis, Assistant Regional Director, Finger Lakes Region

Richard Parker, Regional Director, Genesee Region

Charles King, Park Engineer, Genesee Region

* Now Retired

Region 9 Regional Advisory Committee Report 2006 Revision

Region 9: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara and Wyoming Counties

The Regional Open Space Advisory Committee (RAC) got off to an early start for the update of the Open Space Conservation Plan by conducting a series of RAC meetings that were held throughout the Region. These meetings served to showcase individual county projects and priorities, plus reach out to interested parties that might not otherwise have been able to attend on of the previous RAC meetings traditionally held at more central location in Erie County. County members of the RAC hosted their own meeting, developed personalized agendas for discussion and invited a variety of guest speakers. The public was also encouraged to attend in order to learn more about the Open Space Conservation Plan, ask questions and to express their ideas and concerns.

The first of the county meetings was held at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute in Jamestown, Chautauqua County in March of 2002. Additional meetings were held in Allegany County in June 2002 at the Cuba-Rushford Central School, in Niagara County in September 2002 at Bond Lake County Park and in Cattaraugus County in December 2002 at the Southern Tier West Natural Resources and Environmental Center in Salamanca.

Each of the county meetings involved representatives of the hosting counties government, plus an update and review of the current Open Space Conservation Plan by DEC and OPRHP staff. The update included a report of the accomplishments in the county under the Plan. Speakers provided input on current initiatives and suggested additional targets of opportunity for the RAC to consider.

2002 OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN ACQUISITIONS - Region 9

Implementation of the 2002 OSP brought about several successful acquisitions of priority projects.

Chautauqua Lake Access, Shore Lands & Vistas {126}

In December 2002, with the assistance of the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy, the DEC acquired the 16.729 acre Stow Farm property in the Town of North Harmony. The property includes 1101 feet of lake frontage and some of the last wild habitats on Chautauqua Lake. The waterfront includes the second longest band of water lilies on the lake, providing excellent habitat for largemouth bass and other fish. Chautauqua

Lake is designated as a Statewide Important Bird Area and the protection of this acreage is vital to maintaining critical bird habitats.

Eighteen Mile Creek/Hampton Brook Woods {127}

In May 2002 the DEC added a one acre parcel along 400 feet of Eighteen Mile Creek to the 55 acre Hampton Brook Woods site acquired in 2001. Located in the Town of Hamburg and bordering the southern bounds of the Village of Hamburg, the Hampton Brook Woods area possesses over 4500 feet of Eighteen Mile Creek frontage with scenic high bank overlooks, hardwood forests, wetlands, trails and a variety of plant life and wildlife habitat.

Great Lakes & Niagara River Access, Shore Lands & Vistas {129}

In June of 2004, with the assistance of Invitrogen Corporation, the DEC acquired the Spicer Creek parcel on Grand Island. The 34.29 acre site included Letters Patent to a portion of the bed of the Niagara River and over 1600 feet of the river shoreline at the outlet of Spicer Creek. The overall area is made up of mainly wooded wetland cover for habitat to a variety of wildlife.

Randolph Swamp {131}

In 2003, two parcels totaling nearly 26 acres were added to this State wetland complex located in the Town of Conewango. The DEC now manages over 975 acres of this significant wetland area which includes both the Conewango and Little Conewango Creek drainage.

2005 Regional Advisory Committee Meetings

Issues:

In more recent months, the RAC met to update the Region 9 Plan for 2005. Part of the process involved back filling nearly half of the seats vacated on the committee over the past 2 years. During that time, four State appointed members had left and both Allegany County and Wyoming County chose to appoint new representatives.

The RAC also repeated the desire to meet more frequently during the period between Open Space Conservation Plan updates. The county meeting format was suggested as well as less formal RAC only meetings. The RAC was essentially inactive during 2003-04.

Central to the discussion on Open Space Conservation Plan categories for the Regional update was the committee desire to combine some existing categories from the 2002 Plan and create new categories that would better represent existing needs in protecting critical habitats and species for which there is concern. Interest in increased use of easements rather than acquisition was also expressed.

The first meeting of the RAC for 2005 was held on **April 5, 2005 at Woodlawn Beach State Park.**

The meeting opened with introductions of all in attendance. DEC staff gave an update on all the "A" List acquisitions that had been completed under the 2002 OSP. An open discussion followed that focused on the current makeup of both the "A" and "B" project lists. Suggestions were noted to remove certain projects from the lists that clearly had already been completed. Recommendations followed to move some long standing "A" List projects back to a "B" List priority for lack of activity. This was seen as a means to open up slots for new priority projects on the "A" List while still allowing for acquisition off the "B" List at a later date if the status of a particular project changed. It was agreed that more thought be given to this recommendation and discussed at another meeting.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to presentations of two possible projects for consideration under the new OSP. Mr. Rick LeFeber, Cattaraugus Local Development Corp. spoke on the Start Trail. The Friends of J.N. Adam followed with a presentation on the J.N. Adam Memorial Hospital.

A second meeting took place at **Woodlawn Beach on April 27, 2005.** Following introductions , three presentations were made. The first was a short followup to the "Start Trail" project by Mr. Rick LeFeber. Next, Mr. Jim Fincher, Chautauqua Rails to Trails, spoke on the organizations trail accomplishments and their need for assistance under the State OSP in developing additional trails in the county. Mr. Ralph Vanner concluded with a presentation on Midway Park and the need to preserve this historic amusement park on Chautauqua Lake before the property is lost to private development.

DEC staff closed out the formal part of the meeting with information on the federally funded Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program and a proposal by the Region 6 RAC to include in the 2005 OSP a new priority project titled, Generic State Forest/Wildlife Management Area.

A third meeting was held at **Woodlawn Beach on May 27, 2005.** The meeting started with individual introductions. A committee member asked that information on tax incentives and easements be included in the opening segment of the Region 9 portion of the Open Space Conservation Plan update. Support for the new statewide category for enhancement of State Forests, Wildlife Mgt. Areas and Unique Areas was voiced by the committee. It was also mentioned that under the Forest Legacy category the Forest Legacy map needs to be amended - this requires identification (State designation). Under this category easements would maintain as forest land.

Discussion of "A List" Categories

A committee member recommended that Alder Bottom Pond/French Creek {121} and Randolph Swamp {131} be included under the new enhancement category that will

cover State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas and Unique Area classifications.

Chautauqua Lake Access, Shore Lands & Vistas {126} will remain but add “and tributaries” to the category.

It was suggested that a category titled “Inland Lakes and Tributaries” be added to the Regional “A List” so as to allow protection of shore lands, vistas, provide public access and protect wetlands and tributaries.

Urban Wetlands {133} will remain. The Niagara County representative mentioned her need for help with the Klydel wetland acquisition. She was encouraged to continue to work with OPRHP in the acquisition process and OPRHP staff agreed to look into the continuance of the process.

A category described as “Significant Wetlands” was proposed and supported by the committee. The description will be developed and reviewed by the committee.

A category described as a “Diversity” category - which would protect areas such as those found along the Niagara Escarpment was proposed and agreed to.

Category {129} Great Lakes & Niagara River Access, Shore Lands and Vistas, agreed to leave as is and combine with Category {123} Buffalo River Corridor.

Discussion about combining categories {127} Eighteen Mile Creek/Hampton Brook Woods, {130} Lake Erie Tributary Gorges and {132} Shumla Falls/Canadaway Creek Gorge. Committee agreed to this and suggested that Hampton Brook be moved to the “B” list or even be considered under the new enhancement category.

Category {125} Cattaraugus Creek and Tributaries - leave as is. Importance of potential additions and protection of Zoar Valley.

Category {128} Exceptional Forest Communities - leave as is- potential to protect sites with shellbark hickory, and Pine Lodge site.

Discussion on where the J.N. Adams site would fit in with the existing categories. The committee agreed to discuss after all the categories were settled.

Discussion of the need for a Working Forest Category. It was noted that there is already a Multi-Region Category to cover this {136}. However it was noted that the current description of the Multi - Region category doesn't clearly indicated forests in Western New York and it was suggested that language including the Niagara Frontier and Alleghany Highlands be included. DEC staff agreed to propose that change to the Open Space Conservation Plan Advisory Committees in the other Regions. If we are unsuccessful we can consider our own Regional category.

Discussion about a category to protect ecological greenways, lineal parks, railways, etc.

Results of discussion on "A List Categories"

A List Categories from 2002 Plan that will remain:(6)

Cattaraugus Creek and Tributaries {125}

Chautauqua Lake Access, Shore Lands and Vistas {126} - add tributaries

Exceptional Forest Communities {128}

Great Lakes & Niagara River Access, Shore Lands and Vistas {129} combine with {123}

Buffalo River Corridor

Lake Erie Tributary Gorges {130} combine with category {127} and {132}

Urban Wetlands {133}

Proposed New Categories (best of 8)

Habitat Diversity

Other Inland Lakes

Significant Wetlands

Ecological Corridors

Tonawanda Creek and tribs. (potential Region 8 and 9 category)

Alleghany River and tribs.

Conewango Creek and tribs.

Working Forests - a possibility if agreement on proposed change to Multi-Region category doesn't fly

Major Streams?

Current A List Categories proposed to be moved to B List

Alleghany State Park {122}

Carter Farm {124}

Hampton Brook Woods {portion of 127}

Wag Trail {134}

Categories proposed to be moved to Multi- Region Enhancement Category

Alder Bottom Pond/ French Creek {121}

Randolph Swamp {131}

Discussion on Midway Park

- Site will be up for sale fall of 2005
- New Open Space Plan update won't be available until 2006.
- Midway Park has 1200' of shoreline on Chautauqua Lake.
- Several members of the committee voiced objection to a committee resolution supporting the purchase of Midway Park. A letter was suggested instead.

- Committee agreed that a letter to OPRHP Commissioner Castro stating that Midway Park fits within a current OSP category and that it was up for sale should be drafted and sent. John Jablonski agreed to draft the letter and submit it to Russ Biss for committee approval.

2005 PROJECT SUMMARY CHARTS

Priority "A" List

| Category | Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Open Space Conservation Objective |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Significant Ecological Areas | Ecological Communities/ Habitat Diversity | Region Wide | All | | Habitat protection, Species diversity |
| Water Resource Protection | Inland Lakes | Region Wide | All | | Access, habitat protection |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Significant Wetlands | Region Wide | Wetlands | | habitat protection, species diversity |
| Recreational Opportunity | Ecological Corridors | Region Wide | All | | access, habitat protection |
| Water Resource Protection | Allegheny River Watershed | Cattaraugus | All | | Habitat protection, Access, Species diversity |
| Recreational Opportunity / Significant Ecological Areas | Cattaraugus Creek and Tributaries | Erie Chautauqua Cattaraugus | Waterway Access / Wildlife Habitat | 3.29 acre Sunset Bay Marina Zoar Valley MUA | Access, Habitat Protection |
| Recreational Opportunity | Chautauqua Lake Access, Shore Lands & Vistas | Chautauqua | Waterway Access | Cheney Farm Tom's Point Stow Farm Long Point SP | Access, Habitat Protection |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Exceptional Forest Communities | Region Wide | Unique Areas | Deveaux Woods | Habitat Protection |

| Category | Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Open Space Conservation Objective |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|
| Significant Ecological Areas / Recreational Opportunity | Buffalo River Corridor | Erie | Waterway Access / Wildlife Habitat | Harlem Road Ohio Street | Access, Habitat protection |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Lake Erie Tributary Gorges | Erie Chautauqua Cattaraugus | Unique Areas | | Access, Habitat protection |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Urban Wetlands | Region Wide | Wildlife Habitat / Wetlands | | Habitat protection |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Grassland Preservation and Restoration | Region Wide | Wildlife Habitat / Biodiversity | | Habitat protection |
| Significant Ecological Areas / Recreational Opportunity / Water Resource Protection | Tonawanda Creek Watershed | Erie Niagara | Biodiversity | | Habitat, Wetland & Watershed protection, Public fishing |
| Distinctive Character | Cultural/ Historical | Region Wide | Heritage Areas / Historic Preservation | | Preservation of distinctive and culturally significant properties |

Priority “B” List

| Category | Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Open Space Conservation Objective |
|--|--|-----------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Recreational Opportunity | Trails and Trailways | Region Wide | Trailways & Greenways | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | Bullhead Point | Niagara | Parklands | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | Letchworth SP Parcels *Everett Farm | Wyoming | Parklands | | |
| Water Resource Protection | Ellicott Creek Corridor | Erie | Watershed Protection | | |
| Water Resource Protection | Tonawanda Creek Corridor | Erie Niagara | Watershed Protection | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | Bob’s Pond | Cattaraugus | Waterway Access | | |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Buckhorn Island State Park Parcels | Erie | Wildlife Habitat | | |
| Water Resource Protection / Significant Ecological Areas | Little Canadaway Creek Corridor | Chautauqua | Watershed Protection / Wildlife Habitat | | |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Erie Canal and Niagara Escarpment | Erie Niagara | Unique Areas | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | Cherry Farm | Erie | Waterway Access | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | Cuba Lake Access | Allegany | Waterway Access | | |

| Category | Project | County(s) | Resource Area | Existing Protection | Open Space Conservation Objective |
|---|---|-------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Recreational Opportunity | Silver Lake SP Parcels *Cook Farm *CSX Chessie RR | Wyoming | Parklands | | |
| Significant Ecological Areas | Hanging Bog WMA | Allegany | Wildlife Habitat | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | Allegany State Park | Cattaraugus | Parklands | | Inholdings & Mineral Rights |
| Recreational Opportunity / Significant Ecological Areas | Hampton Brook Woods | Erie | Waterway Access / Wildlife Habitat | 56 acres acquired | 5 acres under negotiation |
| Recreational Opportunity | Carter Farm | Niagara | Parklands | | |
| Recreational Opportunity | WAG Trail | Allegany | Trailways & Greenways | Purchase Agreement in progress | |

THE “A” LIST

Ecological Communities/ Habitat Diversity - This project is intended to provide protection by easement or acquisition of habitats which are necessary to maintain the ecological diversity of areas. The need may be to provide protection for flora or fauna, significant habitats or geological sites. Specific examples include but are not limited to sites along the Niagara Escarpment, isolated woodlands, wetland, riparian, grassland and flood plain habitat.

Inland Lakes - 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.

Significant Wetlands - 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.

Ecological Corridors - Protection of existing lineal corridors and creation of greenway corridors to link existing public lands, historic sites or protect important fish and wildlife habitats. Recreational access and habitat protection for areas that may also be contiguous to water bodies or existing lineal corridors. Examples include the Niagara River Corridor and abandoned railway corridors.

Allegheny River Watershed - 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.

Cattaraugus Creek and Tributaries - This system is the single most important Lake Erie tributary for the salmonid fishery within New York 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 has 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 is desired.

Chautauqua Lake Access, Vistas, Shore Lands & Tributaries - 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.

Exceptional Forest Communities - 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 and Zoar Valley.

Buffalo River Corridor - This project will not only enhance access to Lake Erie, but also protect the vital wildlife habitat within the corridor. By providing access to the Buffalo River/Lake Erie, anglers will be assured the ability to utilize the vast fisheries resources of the Great Lakes. A secondary benefit of this access will be for the casual users to utilize the Canoe Trail in the Buffalo River. The flood plain forest area within metropolitan Buffalo is critical for the enjoyment of birds and/or mammals by low mobility citizens. Without protection from further development, the relatively undisturbed forests in the urban Buffalo area can be further degraded by continued development.

Lake Erie Tributary Gorges - 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 is 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.

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

Grassland Preservation and Restoration - 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 as well as 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.

Tonawanda Creek Watershed - This project would serve to protect one of the major tributaries to the Niagara River in Genesee, Erie and Niagara Counties. The Tonawanda

Creek and its four major tributaries- Ellicott Creek, Mud Creek, Murder Creek and the 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 over 20 species of freshwater mussels. The Tonawanda Creek also has a 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.

Cultural/Historical - Protection and preservation of distinctive properties which contribute to the cultural history of New York State and the inhabitants of the Region 9 area. Protection will provide opportunities to future generations to experience the rich cultural history of the area through hands-on site visits and educational opportunities through interpretive efforts of the managers of such properties.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

State Appointments

Rebecca L. Nystrom (Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy)
Rock Termini (Buffalo Audubon Society)
Harry Probst (Chautauqua County Sportsman Federation)
Art Klein (Adirondack Mountain Club/Sierra Club)
Patrick McGlew (The Nature Conservancy)
Chris Schotz (Niagara County Federation of Conservation Clubs)
Fred Langdon (New York Conservation Fund Advisory Board)

County Appointments

Charles G. Krause (Cattaraugus County)
Elizabeth Kasubski (Niagara County)
John Jablonski III (Chautauqua County)
Lawrence Rubin (Erie County)
Kier Dirlam (Allegany County)
John Copeland (Wyoming County)

NYSDEC REGION 9 REPRESENTATIVES

Gerald Mikol (Regional Director)
Abby Snyder (Acting Regional Director - Regional Attorney)
Russell Biss (Natural Resource Supervisor)
Jeffrey Nyitrai (Real Property Supervisor)

NYSOPRHP REPRESENTATIVES

Edward Rutkowski (Asst. Deputy Commissioner, Niagara Region)

Raymond Goll (Deputy General Manager, Niagara Region)

Charles King (Park Engineer, Genesee Region)

George Wyman (Regional Manager, Allegany Region)

Roelf Steck (Senior Park Engineer, Niagara Region)

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CHAPTER VI -

PRIORITY CONSERVATION PROJECTS

A. Priority Conservation Projects

An important part of the State Open Space Plan is the identification of priority conservation project areas that have been identified through the work and input of the nine Regional Advisory Committees. Through this process, which involves an extensive analysis of each region's open space resources, the Committees have identified a series of projects, many of them large geographic areas, deserving of conservation attention. The list that follows is largely the product of the work of the Committees, in consultation with the staffs of DEC, OPRHP and DOS. It demonstrates the value of a consensus-based process that includes a wide spectrum of expertise, interests and enthusiasm for the State's open space legacy.

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. While the list of deserving projects is large, it does focus attention on the need to employ different tools and partnerships to conserve these special places. For most of the project areas identified, a combination of State and local acquisition, land use regulation, land owner incentives and other conservation tools used in various combinations, depending on the exact circumstances of each project, will be needed to succeed in conserving these open space resources for the long term. (The tools and partnerships discussed in Chapter VIII of this Plan are intended to acquaint the public with the myriad ways that open space can be conserved).

Critical to this strategy is involvement of many stakeholders, from outdoor enthusiasts, to local, state and federal government, to private land owners, to concerned citizens working together to achieve the open space goals of these projects. The sum of these partnerships will be much greater, and much more effective, than the uncoordinated actions of individual stakeholders acting alone.

Since the development of the State's first Open Space Plan in 1992, which listed 75 priority projects, the list of eligible projects has grown in many instances to incorporate the resource areas, linear systems and areas of Statewide significance listed in previous Plans. During this period, the capacity of the State and its partners in local government and conservation organizations to conserve our common outdoor heritage has also grown. Since 1995, for example, the State has announced the

preservation of more than 965,000 acres of land across the State, as documented in Chapter 2 of this Plan. The 2006 Plan contains 136 projects, many of which involve conservation work that has gone on for decades and which will continue far into the future. This is indicative of the broad public support that exists throughout New York State for an ambitious open space conservation program, and the many environmental and economic benefits such a program delivers to communities across the State.

The list of priority project areas described below was developed through a thorough, disciplined analysis of open space and natural resource conservation needs in New York State. It is not a state land acquisition list, but rather is a list of unique and irreplaceable open space resources that include exceptional ecological, wildlife, recreational, scenic, and historical values. Likewise, listing of lands in the Plan does not imply that such lands are for sale. State acquisition is only one strategy – albeit an important one – for protecting these priority sites.

As evidenced in the accomplishments section in the Chapter 2 of the Plan, many of these sites will be protected through mechanisms other than state purchase, including: acquisition (including conservation easements) by local governments or non-profit organizations; regional and local land use planning initiatives; enrollment in open space tax incentive programs (forestry and agriculture); and wise, informed stewardship by private landowners. Because of their ecological and open space importance, however, listed projects receive priority attention and, where appropriate, funding for State acquisition when they are offered for sale.

The projects are listed alphabetically within region and numbered sequentially; **no priority** should be inferred by the listing order. The numbers following the name refer to the map showing priority project locations (Figure 8). Some progress towards conservation has been accomplished for many of these projects.

SYMBOLS: (following descriptions)

- A project originally listed in the 1992 Plan.
- A project that was listed in the 2002 Plan, which may have been modified since the 2002 Plan, either by a change in geographic definition and/or by a listing of different representative parcels.
- △ A new project in the 2006 Plan.

2006 Open Space Plan
Department of Environmental Conservation,
Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
and Department of State

Priority Projects

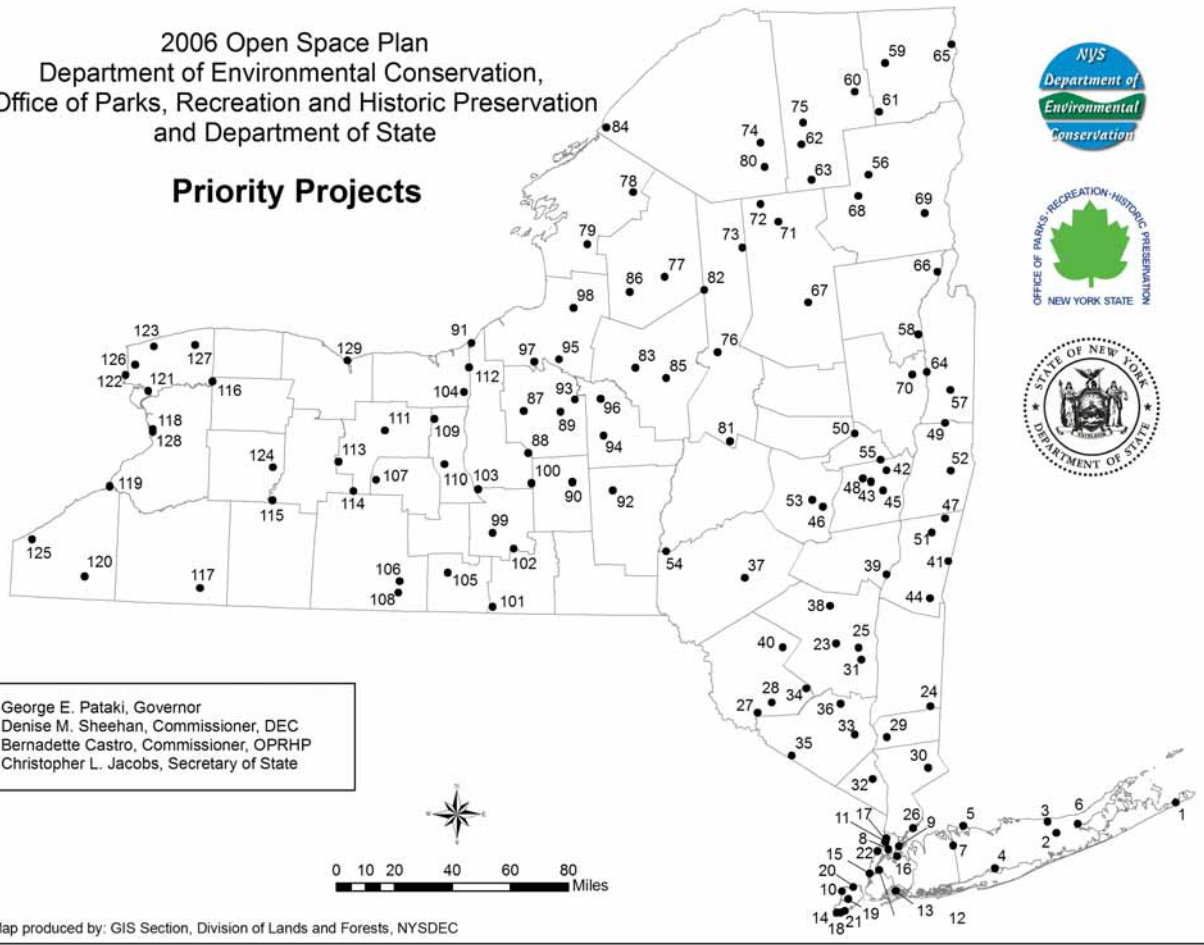
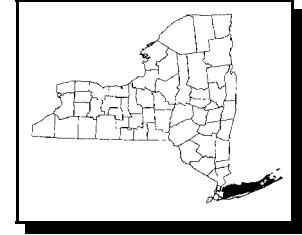


Figure 9: Priority Projects

PRIORITY PROJECT LIST



Region 1

ATLANTIC COAST {1} – acquisition of parcels fronting the Atlantic Ocean for active and passive recreation, habitat and endangered species protection. Representative projects include:

Barrier Islands - oceanfront parcels on the barrier islands protecting Long Island's south shore from the Atlantic Ocean. Several small parcels on Fire Island are currently available for sale, as is the Foundation Block parcel on Long Beach Island in Nassau County. Foundation Block consists of 5 acres.

Montauk Moorlands - a 265-acre area on the Montauk Peninsula between Ditch Plains and Camp Hero, including the newly protected Amsterdam Beach. The area includes globally rare maritime moorland, freshwater and tidal wetlands, oceanfront bluffs and frontage on the Atlantic Ocean. The wetlands support several state rare herptiles, chiefly the blue spotted salamander, as well as southern leopard frogs and spotted turtles. Acquisition of four additional parcels 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 any Core, CRA or CGA parcel within Southampton Town will help maintain the hydrological and ecological integrity of the area while protecting the value of the existing public and private investment already made to protect land in the region.

Rose-Breslin Parcels 1, 2, 3 - 400 contiguous acres of oak-pitch pine dry forest in single ownership. The property bridges DEC's Rocky Point Preserve to the north, DEC's Longwood Conservation Area to the east and Suffolk County's Warbler Woods to the South. Sitting atop the groundwater divide, the property drains to both the Peconic and Carmens River systems.

Overton Preserve - 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.

Pine Ridge Preserve - 800 acres of highly intact contiguous upland pine barrens forest containing significant wildlife habitat. Home to rare Lepidoptera, including coastal barrens buckmoth and several NYS natural heritage rank species. Remarkably free of invasive plant species. ■

LONG ISLAND SOUND COASTAL AREA {3} – Acquisition of open space within the boundaries of the federally designated Long Island Sound Estuary. Includes Sound-front property and parcels along creek and river corridors draining into the Estuary. Acquisitions protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, water-based industry, and provide increased 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 important link in the Shoreline-to-Shoreline Trail which connects Manhasset Bay to Hempstead Harbor.

Red Spring Woods - one 11 acre parcel in the City of Glen Cove. This towering oak-tulip forest is home to red fox and red-tailed hawk and is the source of Red Spring, which flows directly into Long Island Sound. This is the last sizable green space within City limits, a sanctuary for both people and wildlife. **Sagamore Hill**

Additions - 17 parcels totaling 342.1 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 104.5 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 Special Groundwater Protection Area (SPGA). Home to brook trout and brook lamprey and three state-vulnerable plant species.

Davison Preserve Additions - 17 parcels totaling 190.4 acres between the Kate Trubee Davison Preserve, City of Glen Cove Parkland and Village of Lattintown Wetlands on the Long Island Sound in the Town of Oyster Bay. Includes an historic dairy and a monastery with pristine wetlands and formal gardens.

Mill Pond Overlook - One 4.7 acre parcel fronting the 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. Currently proposed for intensive development, this property's preservation is essential for protection of the Mill Pond's thriving wetland habitat.

Keyspan/Glenwood Landing - One 7.8 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 Old Bethpage right-of-way which have not been designated as parkland.

Key Span/Shoreham - 893.2 acres in the Hamlets of Shoreham and Wading River with a mile of Sound frontage and 2000 feet along Wading River Marsh. Links with the 1500-acre Brookhaven State Park to the south.

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.

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.

Flowerfield - approximately 100 acres in the Smithtown Hamlet of St. James. A combination of rolling hills, woods and open fields, this land has long served the community as a site for outdoor public events.

Crane Neck Point - 5 acre parcel fronting Long Island Sound just west of DEC's Flax Pond tidal wetland and SUNY's Flax Pond Environmental Research Center. The site's notable geologic features include a stepped topography dating to the last glacial retreat.

Conscience Bay Watershed - two heavily wooded parcels totaling 40 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.

Nassau County 4H - One parcel, 137.9 acres in the Hamlet of Roanoke, Town of Riverhead. This camp property would provide a new public access point on Long Island Sound and provide excellent camping, environmental education and passive recreational opportunities.

Baiting Hollow Addition - One parcel, 89.5 acres in the Hamlet of Baiting Hollow, Town of Riverhead, would greatly increase public access to DEC's Baiting Hollow Tidal Wetlands fronting Long Island Sound. Parcel includes a mapped freshwater wetland.

Peconic Dunes Additions- Three contiguous parcels totaling 58.3 acres with 1400' frontage on the Sound in the Town of Southold. Includes unique primary and secondary dunes and a rare cranberry bog community; links to three County Parks. ●

LONG ISLAND SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE (SSER) {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 ocean 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: grouping of four small waterfront parcels (Harbor Isle Waterfront Site, Baldwin Harbor Waterfront Site, Waterview at Baldwin Creek, Brooklyn Waterworks at Milburn Creek) that provide critical buffer for SSER tributary corridors and bay front in the densely developed Town of Hempstead.

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.

Mastic Woods Watershed - an assemblage of parcels totaling 154 acres at the headwaters of the Forge River in the Brookhaven Hamlets of Mastic and Manor Park. The wetlands and upland woods drain directly into the Forge River at Swift Stream and contribute to the health of Moriches Bay and its important shell- and fin fish habitat.

Connetquot River System - a 26.5-acre addition to Connetquot River State Park north of Sunrise Highway, and a grouping of five parcels totaling 7.3 acres for addition to the Connetquot State Wetlands, at the mouth of the Connetquot River on the Great South Bay in the Town of Islip.

Carlls River Watershed Addition - 50 small parcels totaling 22.2 acres along the headwaters of the Carlls River north of Belmont Lake State Park in North Babylon and Wyandanch, in the Town of Babylon.

Shinnecock Bay - 300 acres of back-barrier salt marshes extending for five miles between the Villages of Quogue and Southampton on the Shinnecock Bay. Includes open water, dredged material islands and intertidal flats critical for fish and shell fish, waterfowl, migratory shorebirds, rare plants and federally listed sea turtles. 📍

LONG ISLAND TRAIL AND 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 258 acres adjoining the Muttontown Preserve. This heavily used horse and foot trail network 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 - acquisition of parcels adjoining the SUNY/Old Westbury Campus would maintain connectivity of this popular horse and foot trail system in the Oyster Bay SGPA.

Trailview State Park Addition - protection of this steep 5-acre parcel is imperative to maintain existing trail continuity and safety. Acquisition would also enhance access to Trailview State Park and protect its viewshed.

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. Several privately owned parcels along the corridor 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.

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.

Shore-to-Core Trail - parcels in the trail corridor linking Wildwood State Park (on Long Island Sound), Camp Wauwepex, DEC's Calverton Conservation Area, and publically-owned land in the Pine Barrens Core, including DEC's Otis Pike Preserve and Robert Cushman Murphy County Park. This trail links with the Pine-to-Bay Trail in Manorville (below) to create a shore-to-shore trail from Long Island Sound to the Great South Bay.

Pine to Bay Trail - linkage and buffer parcels along this seven mile trail beginning at the Pine Barren's Visitors Center in Manorville and terminating at the southern edge of Terrell's River County Park on the Great South Bay. This trail links with the Shore- to- Core Trail in Manorville (above) to create a shore-to-shore trail from Long Island Sound to the Great South Bay. ■

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:

Western Flanders Bay Assemblage - Three parcels totaling acres 190.4 acres including Broadcove, Hubbard Duck Farm and the River Club, in the Hamlets of Riverhead and Aquabogue in the Town of Riverhead. All three parcels front or drain into Flanders Bay, near the mouth of the Peconic River.

North Fork Preserve - 133 acres in the Hamlet of Northville, Town of Riverhead, contains an especially rich diversity of habitat types, including numerous

freshwater wetlands draining to both the Long Island Sound and an extensive drainageway to the south known as the Long Swamp. Threatened and special-concern species documented on site.

South Fork Critical Wildlands and Groundwater Protection Area - 1,100 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 1200-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 Islands's sole source aquifer and are critical to drinking water quality. The St. Gabriel's additions are in close proximity to DEC's Fox Point State Tidal Wetlands.

Pipe's Cove Complex - 225-acre wetland complex including 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.

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 is dotted with kettlehole ponds and is important for deep groundwater recharge. Suffolk County Water Authority wells are nearby. The forest is a rich habitat for diverse wildlife, including many forest-interior bird species, and is traversed by the Paumanok Path. ■

SPECIAL GROUND WATER PROTECTION AREAS (SGWPA) {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 - One 500-acre parcel of rolling hills, meadows, woods, marshes and open water. This is the last large tract of undeveloped land in the Town of North Hempstead. It contains a giant glacial ledge and is well suited for hiking, biking and historic preservation of the mansion.

Old Westbury Gardens Enhancement Area - 11 parcels totaling 344 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 - 15 parcels totaling 232 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 State Park Additions - 21 parcels totaling 605 acres near or abutting Planting Fields State Historic Park in the Oyster Bay SGPA.

Tiffany Creek Preserve - 14 parcels totaling 223.5 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.

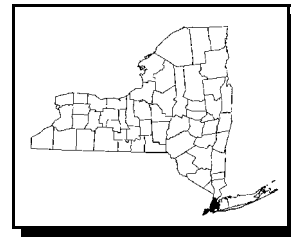
Pineridge Park and Additions - 162 acres in the West Hills/Melville SGPA. A high, mounded area atop the Ronkonkoma moraine, characterized by oak-mixed heath forest, low bush blueberry and sandy soils. Adjacent to Old Bethpage Village Restoration and Bethpage State Park.

Laurel Lake Additions - 3 parcels totaling 52 acres in the Southold SGPA, in the North Fork Town of Southold. The parcels front Laurel Lake and are adjacent to public land and an existing trail network. High-value consolidation parcels. ■

Region 2

BRONX RIVER TRAILWAY {8} –

Creation of a greenway/trailway along the Bronx River from the East River (Long Island Sound) to East 180th Street. This corridor will connect with existing 17 mile greenway/trailway to the Kensico Reservoir in Westchester County. ■



EASTCHESTER BAY WATERFRONT {9} –

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

HARBOR HERONS WILDLIFE COMPLEX {10} –

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 on Staten Island 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.

Merrill's Creek - A tidal wetland system north of Saw Mill Creek on the Arthur Kill on Staten Island.

Saw Mill Creek - Tidal and fresh water marsh complex adjacent to Prall's Creek on Staten Island; includes critical habitat for State threatened species.

South Brother Island - An island in the East River that is linked to other rookeries in the area. This island serves as a waterbird roosting and feeding area in the Bronx.

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 in Richmond County 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 in Richmond County 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 - Located in Richmond County. This 42+/- acre site consists 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 - Located in Richmond County. 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 - Located in Richmond County. This property consists of 25+/- acres of woodland, ponds, salt marsh and mud flats along the Arthur Kill. The property provides habitat for colonial waterbirds, songbirds, amphibians and reptiles.

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

HARLEM RIVER WATERFRONT {11} –

This project will provide pedestrians and cyclists with a unique opportunity to enjoy the banks of the Harlem River on both sides and will create a continuous trail within the city's developing 350-mile greenway system. Bronx and Manhattan components of this greenway are connected by existing bridges.

Bronx Harlem River Greenway - Includes the Fordham Landing expansion of Roberto Clemente State Park to increase open space in an underserved community in the Bronx, the five-acre Spuyten Duyvil/Penn Central Triangle properties that will provide waterfront access at the junction of the Hudson and Harlem Rivers, and Regatta Park, which will extend the greenway south to Roberto Clemente State Park. XIII.

Manhattan Harlem River Greenway - Four privately owned industrial lots along the Harlem River in the Inwood section of Manhattan that would form a waterside promenade with fishing access. ●

INNER CITY/UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY PARKS {12} –

This project will provide open space and recreation opportunities in densely populated urban areas with limited or no open space resources.

Corporal Irwin Fischer Playground - A much needed playground in a densely populated and growing Bronx neighborhood with a low amount of open space.

Con Edison 15th St Ballfields - A much-valued recreational resource, now in private hands, in an underserved area of Manhattan near the East River.

Greening Gray Neighborhoods - Ten 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 underserved neighborhood.

Red Hook Waterfront - Three abandoned industrial properties that could be molded into a maritime heritage cultural park on the Brooklyn waterfront.[Red Hook Grain Elevator, Fishport Piers, and Ikea Site]

North Brooklyn Waterfront Access - Located in Kings County in the South Williamsburg and Greenpoint neighborhoods. This new resource area replaces Eastern District Terminal and Bushwick Inlet. North Brooklyn is characterized by a decaying industrial waterfront, with virtually no public access. The recent residential rezoning of the area will involve the remapping and acquisition of land by New York City in Northside [Williamsburg Park], the conversion of the MTA lot for parkland, and the expansion of Barge Park. ●

JAMAICA BAY PROTECTION AREA {13} –

A premier coastal habitat including important marine and terrestrial ecosystems and bird sanctuary. Located in Brooklyn and Queens, it is also an important element in the Atlantic flyway.

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 in Queens 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.



LONG POND/BUTLER WOODS {14} –

Long Pond - 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.

Butler/Brookside Woods - Approximately 18 acres of forest connecting Mt. Loretto Unique Area and Long Pond.

North Mt Loretto Woods - Nearly 100 acres of mature forest, adjacent to Long Pond, containing some of the few beech-oak stands remaining in the city and some mapped wetlands as well. Probably the largest continuous tract of forest still available in Staten Island.

Camp St. Edward's Campground - Located in Richmond County on Raritan Bay. This property would serve to connect other properties owned by New York City Parks and New York State DEC [Mt. Loretto] and would enhance public access to the Raritan Bay shoreline. ■

NEW YORK CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION SITES {15} –

Olmsted House - Built in 1720 and remodeled in the 19th Century, this house was home for many years to Frederick Law Olmsted, creator of New York's best-known parks

Brinkerhoff Cemetery - Site of an old Queens family cemetery in Fresh Meadows

Wycoff-Bennett House - Located in Kings County on E. 22nd Street and Avenue P, in the Marine Park/Flatlands section of southern Brooklyn. This house is a rare example of a Dutch Colonial farmhouse in excellent condition with excellent historical documentation back to 1766. It is on the National Historic 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.

Brooklyn Navy Yard - Officers' Row - Located in Kings County on Flushing Avenue. This is a small section of the Brooklyn Navy Yard that was home to high-ranking officers and their families. The ten houses, seven of which remain, were built between 1864 and 1901.

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. ■

NORTHEASTERN QUEENS SHORELINE {16} –

Unique and critical natural resources areas representing some of the last contiguous coastal habitats in this area.

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. ■

PUTNAM RAILROAD {17} –

The abandoned Putnam Rail Line provides a unique opportunity for a new pedestrian greenway linking the Harlem River to Van Cortlandt Park. The trail would extend from the Harlem River just south of the Broadway Bridge along abandoned rail lines that extend into Van Cortlandt Park alongside the Major Deegan Expressway. Currently NYC Parks is acquiring the Putnam Railroad R.O.W. between the city line and the Harlem River for development as a greenway of approximately 3.5 miles; 100-feet in width. ■

STATEN ISLAND BLUEBELT {18} –

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.

Last Chance Pond - A pond known for its wildlife and habitat diversity, flood control and open space values to the community.

Lemon Creek - A freshwater creek flowing into a tidal system and into Princes Bay at Lemon Creek Park.

Mill Creek Wetlands - Tidal and freshwater wetlands at the mouth of Mill Creek, which flows into the Arthur Kill.

Richmond Creek Acquisitions - A major drainage corridor; part of a freshwater wetland system.

Great Kills Harbor - Nelson Avenue Waterfront addition - Eight acres of low-lying vacant natural land near the waterfront with an additional 4 acres [Ott, Crescent Beach] to expand Nelson Seaside Park.

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. ■

STATEN ISLAND GREENBELT {19} –

One of the largest urban nature preserves in the United States, this 2500 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 NORTH SHORE GREENBELT {20} –

Goodhue aka 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. ■

STATEN ISLAND WET WOODS {21} –

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.

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.

Paw-Paw Hybrid Oak Woods - Located on the south shore of Staten Island, this is the only site in the State where these tree species occur.

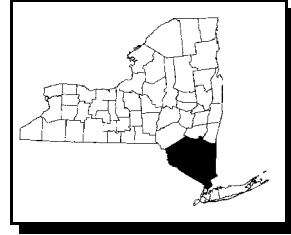
Canada Hill Forest - Thirty-three acres of scarce "Sandy Ground" oak barrens buffering mapped freshwater wetlands

Outerbridge Ponds - These 14 acres of pine-oak barrens and sedge ponds represent ecosystems rare in New York City. ■

UPPER HUDSON RIVER WATERFRONT {22} –

This project would provide public access to the Hudson River along former pier lines above 125th Street in Manhattan and link Riverside Park and Riverbank State Park. ■

Region 3



GREAT RONDOUT WETLANDS {23} – 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. Recognized 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 {24} – 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 inholdings but also the

surrounding uplands need to be conserved. Large parts of the Great Swamp's 63,000-acre watershed have been identified by the Forest Service as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area. ■

KARST AQUIFER REGION {25} – 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, Marletown, 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 {26} – 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 Reed Buffer, David's Island and Huckleberry Island.

Edith Reed Buffer: Also known as Manursing Island, these fourteen acres are important for protecting the Edith Reed Wildlife Sanctuary in Westchester County.

Huckleberry Island: Lying northeast of New Rochelle Harbor in Westchester County, the island serves as a waterfowl refuge.

David's Island: Located in the City of New Rochelle, Westchester County, this 120-acre island property (77.8 acres above water) on the Long Island Sound is characterized by a shoreline of tidal wetlands and approximately 125 buildings in various states of deterioration. Acquisition by the County will protect the island from the threat of development, provide a unique recreational opportunity, enhance the quality of the Long Island Sound, and protect an exceptional piece of open space in a densely developed portion of Westchester County. ■

MONGAUP VALLEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA {27} – The Mongaup River drainage 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 utility-owned reservoir lands to the north and undeveloped parcels in the south. ■

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 focus

on four primary areas, as follows:

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 and scenic viewshed of the Basha Kill Wetland area and the Shawangunk Ridge. Open areas extending west from the Basha Kill toward the Neversink Unique Area, and northwest, toward and along Rt.17, should be protected.

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 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, Schunemunk Mountain and NYC Watershed Lands which lie within and adjacent to the Highlands Region. 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 1,500-acre, wooded Goosepond Mountain State Park in Chester, Orange County, are threatened by immediate and intense development pressure. 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 Arrow Park. 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.

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, which should be a priority for acquisition. This area of the Croton Reservoir system has also been identified by the Forest Service as a Highlands Conservation Focal Area.

Fahnestock State Park/Hudson Highlands State Park/Fishkill 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 uplands forests. Included are reservoirs for several municipalities and the watershed of the Clove/Fishkill Creek, which is a principal aquifer. The 14,000-acre Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park in Putnam County, much of which has been undisturbed for over 100 years, provides exceptional ecological and recreational value. 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 5,500 acres including Bull Hill and parts of Breakneck Ridge. There are significant undeveloped, upland forest tracts adjacent to 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 would provide an important link on the northern end of Hudson Highlands and protect the scenic viewshed of both the Highlands and the Hudson River. The 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.

Northern Putnam Greenway - Extending from the Taconic Ridge on the east to the Hudson River on the west, this proposed greenway is critical to maintaining the ecological integrity of the Highlands Region and to protecting the rural character of one of New York's fastest growing counties. Acquisitions in this area of Putnam County would provide important linkages for passive recreation and wildlife corridors, preservation of scenic viewsheds, and protection of critical water supplies. Representative parcels include those areas that would link and are adjacent to Ciaiola County Park, Cranberry Mountain, the Great Swamp, Ice Pond, Wonder Lake State Park, Big Buck, White Pond, Horse Pound Brook, Ninham Mountain, Lockwood Pond, California Hill, and Fahnestock/Hudson Highlands State Parks. △

NORTHEASTERN WESTCHESTER WATERSHED AND 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. The Palisades Ridge cuts through the eastern sections of Rockland County with altitudes ranging from 500-700 feet. It is located within five watersheds: 1) the Lower Hudson River Watershed, 2) the Minisceongo Creek Watershed, 3) the Eastern Branch Hackensack River Watershed, 4) the Western Branch Hackensack River Watershed, and 5) the Sparkill Creek Watershed.

The Ridge begins in New Jersey and as it travels north the water drains to the west into the Sparkill Creek and to the east into the Lower Hudson River. As it continues north, water continues to drain to the east into the Lower Hudson River and to the west, now into the eastern branch of the Hackensack River. Around High Tor State Park, at the pivot where the Palisades Ridge turns inland near its northern terminus, the water flows east to the Lower Hudson River, north to the Minisceongo Creek, and down its south face to the Western Branch of the Hackensack River. The Ridge heads west from High Tor State Park towards its end near the Palisades Interstate Parkway. This western tributary is consolidated in a major Class A wetland at the foot of the southern slope of the Palisades Ridge. Class A wetlands are used for public water. Both the Eastern and Western branch of the Hackensack flow into Lake DeForest, a United Water drinking water reservoir, which serves Rockland County, NY and Bergen County, NJ. Therefore, all five 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.

The Long Path and the Appalachian Trails intersect and follow along 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. Opportunities exist to secure additional sections of prominent, steeply sloping talus and woodlands adjacent to High Tor State Park. ■

SCHUNNEMUNK MOUNTAIN / MOODNA CREEK / WOODCOCK MOUNTAIN {33} – Schunnemunk Mountain, in Orange County, provides habitat for two rare plant 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. A spectacular ridgeline trail reaching peaks of almost 1,700 feet provides unparalleled views up and down the Hudson River. Lands at both sides of the ridge, which includes Woodcock Mountain, Tobias Hill and Woodberry Creek, are vulnerable to development

and should be protected. The Schunneunk Mountain State Park was established in 2004 with the acquisition of 2,467 acres that included Schunneunk Mountain. This is the northern-most boundary of the Highlands West of Hudson and also connects to Storm King Mountain State Park. ■

SHAWANGUNK MOUNTAINS {34} – The Shawangunk Mountains contain exemplary natural communities including the globally rare dwarf pine ridge community, over 7,000 acres of pitch pine-oak-heath rocky summit, the largest chestnut oak forest (30,000 acres) in New York, extensive northern hardwood forests, and cliff, talus and ice cave communities. Within these communities are over 30 known rare plant and animal species. Taken together these elements of biodiversity make the Shawangunks one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States. The Northern and Southern Shawangunks also have extremely high watershed protection value and high scenic and recreational value.

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. Together public and private entities have protected 30,000 acres in the Northern Shawangunks, including Minnewaska State Park Preserve (14,000 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, Palmaghatt Ravine-Millbrook-Bayards-Near Trapps Escarpment, Sam's Point Preserve (the Ellenville tract), and the Verkerderkill Falls area.

In addition, the Shawangunk National Wildlife Refuge (Galeville Grasslands) and surrounding agricultural landscape 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.

Protection of the Southern Shawangunks in Orange and Sullivan County, will enable a greenway corridor for recreation and biodiversity conservation extending from Sam's Point 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 Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway, jointly sponsored by 11 municipalities surrounding the ridge in two counties, Orange and Ulster, will be designated by New York State DOT. Pursuant to the Byway Corridor Management Plan, protection of the mountains and key surrounding scenic and natural lands is basic to the success of the Byway. The Byway Plan recommends using local open space plans, inter-town planning, transportation planning and funding opportunities within an 80-mile loop roadway corridor system to link recreational, cultural and natural focal points while conserving open space. ■

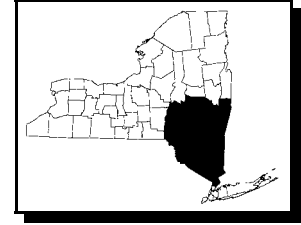
TURTLE CONSERVATION SITES {35} – These wetlands and associated uplands provide habitats for a high diversity of turtles including some of New York’s most imperiled species. The wetlands are scattered across Dutchess, Putnam, Ulster, and Orange Counties. Some important concentrations include the Fishkill 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. ■

WALLKILL VALLEY {36} - One of only a few rivers that run north in the area, 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 AND ROAD CORRIDORS {37} – Thousands of people use major travel corridors such as Rt. 28, Rt. 23, Rt. 23A, Rt. 30, Rt. 10, Rt. 17 (future Interstate 86), and Rt. 97 to gain their first impressions of the Catskill/Delaware region and Catskill Park, and to continually access Catskill region communities and recreation destinations. Major travel corridors generally follow major river corridors. Some of these river corridors are particularly important as fisheries resources, and they are exceptional recreational resources that provide immeasurably to the region's nature-based economy. Many sections of these river and road corridors are experiencing increased development pressure. Land protection priority should be given to parcels that protect riverine habitat and riparian buffer land, scenic areas and vistas along principle road corridors and on visible ridgelines, and properties that enhance public access and recreational opportunities.



Region 3/4 focus areas include the following:

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 – Regions 3,4 and 7:

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.

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

Kingston and Oneonta. Priority areas along this route include the following.

A) Gateway Properties: Land adjacent to, and visible from, the easternmost 5-6 miles of Rt. 28, and bordering the Blue Stone Wild Forest in Ulster County. This area may be suitable for the creation and promotion of mountain bike trails close to the Hudson Valley;

B) 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;

C) *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.

D) *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 {38} – 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. Priority should be given to protecting individually large parcels that border, connect, or provide better access to existing State land; connect valley bottoms to mountainsides and peaks or ridges; are of scenic, cultural, or recreational importance; and/or contain particularly diverse, unique, or threatened natural species or communities.

Region 3 conservation efforts should focus on the following sites:

Overlook Mountain Wild Forest: 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.

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.

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 Conservation 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 -whereas significant progress has been made to protect these mountains, the peaks of all three are now in State ownership, additional acquisition is needed to protect, consolidate, and buffer this area.

Catskill Escarpment North and 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.

Hunter Mountain Wilderness/Rusk Mountain Wild Forest - these very popular recreation areas lack sufficient access, especially in the Spruceton Valley, and additional protection and access is needed in the western portion of the Wild Forest.

Indian Head-Plateau Mountain Wilderness - consolidation, improved access, and additional protection are essential to 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.

Westkill 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 ESTUARY/GREENWAY TRAIL CORRIDOR {39} – 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, and to provide public recreational opportunities with physical or visual access to the Hudson River, as well as habitat conservation as described in the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda.

The project includes, but is not limited to, the 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, that could include but not be limited to: Ossining Shoreline Trail, Bethlehem/Coeymans waterfront lands, Stuyvesant OGS lands.

Hudson River Access. Sites which provide recreational or visual access to the Hudson River, including but not limited to: Petersens boatyard (Upper Nyack), Highland Falls Marina, Tarrytown asphalt plant, Sleepy Hollow Waterfront, Castle Oil, 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), Va Hospital (Montrose), Highland Falls Marina (Highland Falls), Highland Landing (Lloyd), Poughkeepsie Pirate Canoe Club addition and Sand Dock Road, Lent's Cove Addition (Buchanan), Hudson South Bay access, Rensselaer Hollow Environmental Area.

Hudson River Greenway Trail Links: Properties along both sides of the Hudson River that would establish a continuous trail from New York City to Waterford, with direct or at a minimum visual access to the Hudson River, including but not limited to: Locally- or county-approved greenway trail/access plans, such as, but not limited to, the Westchester County Riverwalk 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 stream buffers and hydrology or 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, Idylwild Creek (Cornwall), Fishkill Creek, Fallkill Creek, Sawmill (Neperhan) Creek (Yonkers), Wappinger Creek, Casperkill Creek, Pocantico River, Annsville Creek, Black Creek, Esopus Creek, Binnenkill Creek, Cocksackie Creek, Stockport Creek, Fitting Creek, Coeymans Creek, Roeliff-jansen Kill, Coeymans Creek, Macgregorys Brook (Peekskill), Hudson South Bay, Wallkill River, Sawkill Creek, Normans Kill, Sparkill Creek, Patroon Creek, Indian Brook, Peekskill Hollow Brook, Foundry Cove Brook, Moodna Creek, Peekskill Hollow Brook, Quackenderry Creek, Slaverack Creek, Klime Kill, Stony Kill, Roeliff Jansen Kill, Kinderhook Creek, Agawamuck Creek.

Scenic. Sites which provide scenic vistas or protect scenic views, including but

not limited to: Snake Hill, Illinois Mountain, Mid-hudson Bridge Viewshed/blue Point Bluffs/hudson Valley Winery, Camp Smith, Olana Viewshed, Peebles Island State Park Viewshed, Franklin Roosevelt Home Viewshed, Hudson River National Historic Landmark District Viewshed, Lands Within Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance, Scofield Ridge / Fishkill Ridge / Mt. Beacon, Highland Falls Ridgeline, Livingston Shoreline, Greenport to Stockport Greenway.

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, Peebles Island State Park, Clermont State Historic Site Buffer, Little Stony Point, Lyndhurst North Buffer, Tivoli Bays North and South Buffers, Locust Grove Buffer/poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Lands, John Burroughs Sanctuary Buffer, Tivoli Bays Central Hudson Corridor, Papscaene Island Buffer.

Historic Sites Related to the American Revolution and the Hudson River's continuing role in American military history:

Governor George E. Pataki declared that the State of New York would celebrate the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution from 2000-2009. The Hudson Valley played a pivotal role in the winning of American freedom, a role which has continued for centuries. The protection and enhancement of sites such as the Saratoga Battlesite Buffer, New Windsor Cantonment, 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 a number of small parcels. Other sites allowing interpretation relating to the River's role in the War of 1812, the Civil War and World War II, include the Watervliet Arsenal and the Cold Spring Foundary.

Fish and Wildlife Management. Sites which provide estuarine and upland habitat, including but not limited to: Constitution Marsh, Papscaene Island and Marsh, Con Ed Lands (Dutchess and Columbia Counties), 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, Campbell Island

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, City of Rensselaer Waterfront. ■

NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED LANDS {40} – New York City expects to continue acquisition efforts under the 1997 Watershed Agreement (signed by local communities, counties, and the State) and the 1997 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 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. Roughly 70% of NYC's east-of-Hudson

reservoir system overlaps with, and has been identified by the USDA Forest Service as part of a Highlands Conservation Focal Area. ●

TACONIC RIDGE/HARLEM VALLEY {41} – A multiple parcel area comprising the Taconic Mountain Ridge where it straddles the New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont borders in Putnam, Dutchess, Columbia and Rensselaer Counties. 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 north to the Taconic State Park. From here it extends northerly through Columbia and Rensselaer Counties, westerly to include the Route 22 Corridor and northward along the eastern borders of Massachusetts and Vermont.

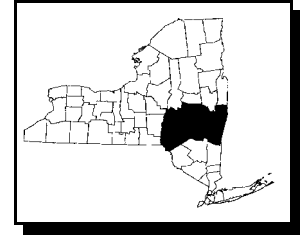
Protection of this area continues to be a high priority due to the region's high biodiversity, scenic views, substantial recreational value, thousands of acres of intact/unfragmented forestland, steeply sloping hillsides, unique geologic segments, historic architecture, working farm landscapes, and multiple connection opportunities to land currently protected by the State, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, 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 Schein Parcel as 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; 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, 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 10,000 acres have been protected in Rensselaer and Columbia 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 continues to be a high priority 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. ●

Region 4

ALBANY PINE BUSH {42} – 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 were established by the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission in its 2002 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 {43} – 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 {44} – 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 {45} – 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 more than 100,000 visitors annually and serves as an important wildlife preserve and popular birding area. Opportunities currently exist to increase public use areas and to establish protective buffers around the Center. These opportunities, when combined with continued vulnerability due to ongoing subdivision and development activity, result in continued priority protection status for this area. ■

FRANKLINTON VLAIE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA {46} – This DEC Wildlife Management Area in Schoharie County is located at the headwaters of the Catskill Creek and includes one of the County's largest wetlands. The Vlaie also provides

habitat for nesting bald eagles. Recent acquisition activities by the State should continue with attention to securing valuable habitat and wetland areas, adding protective buffers, and enhancing public access. △

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 lake front and Hand Hollow watershed, as well as contribute to the habitat diversity of the area by adding extensive areas of woodland in addition to streams, upland ponds, and wetland. △

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 also recognized for its high biodiversity, which includes habitat for endangered and other rare species of flora and fauna and is included on the National Audubon Society’s list of Important Bird Areas in New York State. The karst geology and cave formations associated with the Escarpment provide habitat for rare and endangered species of flora and fauna, as well as unique recreational opportunities. The escarpment and viewsheds to the north and east are currently under pressure from subdivision and development, thereby increasing the need for protection. 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. ■

HOOSIC RIVER CORRIDOR {49} – This river corridor and its tributaries, located in Rensselaer and Washington Counties, drains an extensive area encompassing lands in three states and forms a significant portion of the upper Hudson River drainage north of the estuary. The corridor includes productive farmland and timberland, as well as important ecological, cultural, recreational, and scenic resources. In addition, a portion of the corridor overlies a major aquifer and includes several key recharge areas. In the long term, this area 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. △

MOHAWK RIVER VALLEY CORRIDOR/BARGE CANAL {50} – Priority should be given to protecting significant scenic, cultural, and natural resources along the Mohawk River in addition to securing river and tributary access parcels that would enhance public enjoyment of these resources. It is also important to protect linkage parcels that contribute to the creation of a statewide Canalway Trail System. Acquisition of key parcels along the Mohawk River and Barge Canal will provide a connection between the west terminus of the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway at Rotterdam Junction in Schenectady County and the OPRHP Mohawk River Trailway in Montgomery County. These acquisitions would essentially secure more than 70 miles of public ownership for the development of a multiple-use trail extending from Albany County to Herkimer County.

Acquisitions should include securing additional buffer land surrounding Mohawk River State Park, formerly the Schenectady Museum property recently acquired by NYS OPRHP for creation of the first State Park in Schenectady County. In addition, acquisition of riverfront parcels in the City of Schenectady would allow portions of the Mohawk-Hudson Bikeway to be rerouted off of City streets. ■

OOMSDALE FARM AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE {51} – 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 is 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 {52} – 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 more than 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 {53} – 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 is important throughout Montgomery and Schoharie counties. Of particular concern is protecting farmland throughout the Valley; preserving Native American archaeological sites and the remains of pre-Revolutionary War forts; and securing bald eagle nesting habitat south of Middleburgh. ■

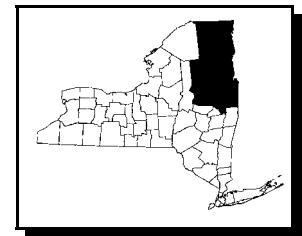
SUSQUEHANNA RIVER VALLEY CORRIDOR {54} – This major watershed, which encompasses portions of Otsego and western Delaware counties, is an important component of the federal priority Chesapeake Bay drainage basin. Continued open space protection within this area contributes to maintaining high water quality 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 ridge line that separates the Susquehanna and Delaware River

watersheds in northern Delaware County. Franklin Mountain provides significant 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. In addition to impressive totals for bald eagle, northern harrier, peregrine falcons, and several species of hawks, this area has one of the highest annual counts of golden eagles in the east. Publicly-owned parcels at critical overlook sites could secure access with relatively small acreage acquisitions. ■

WOODLAWN PINE BARRENS-WETLANDS COMPLEX {55} – 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 wetland areas 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 worthy of protection. △

Region 5

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 Hoesenberg 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 aforesaid Visitor's Service Facility and parking lot and that conveyance is approved by the Board of Directors of the Adirondack Mountain Club. △



BATTEN KILL WATERSHED {57} –

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. ■

BIG CEDAR SWAMP {58} – 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 {59} – Three parcels. One in the Town of Black Brook which is 2,038 acres and the second in the Towns of Saranac and Dannemora which totals 3,426 acres, both of which border State Forest Preserve lands as well as existing working forest easements. These 2 projects are proposed as working forest easements with public recreation rights. The third parcel is 16 miles of Railroad bed equaling 200 acres. The third proposed project calls for the acquisition of a recreational easement for public access. The railroad right of way connects the Village of Dannemora and the Hamlet of Lyon Mountain. ■

DOMTAR/LYME FEE LANDS {60} – Approximately 20,000 acres of land on various parcels in the Towns of Ellenburg, Dannemora, Saranac and Black Brook in Clinton County which will be purchased in fee by the State as part of the Domtar/Lyme Forest Land Deal. 3,042 acres in the Town of Dannemora will become State Forest land. The remainder, including Lyon Mountain and its State fire tower, the highest peak in the northern region of the Park, and a portion of Ellenberg Mountain, will become part of the Forest Preserve. △

DOUGLAS PROPERTY {61} – 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. ■

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. ■

FOLLENSBY PARK {63} – A 14,600 acre forested tract is located in the Towns of Altamont 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. ■

HUDSON RIVER PROJECTS {64} – This project will be accomplished through the purchase from willing sellers or donation of fee or conservation easements of key parcels along the river that maximize appropriate multiple use and conserve the scenic and recreational character of the river.

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, Rogers Island and the protection of the historic viewsheds of the Battlefields, Siege and Surrender of Saratoga in 1777. This project is within the Erie Canal Greenway.

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 {65} –

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 II” were endorsed by the Committee. 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’ 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. The majority of the parcel is wetland, much of it NYS Regulated Class I freshwater wetland.

Upper Saranac Lake/Bartlett Bay - Bartlett Bay is a largely undeveloped bay on Upper Saranac Lake. It is the location of the public carry between Upper Saranac Lake and Middle Saranac Lake. A 25-acre property on the shores of Bartlett Bay will consolidate existing Forest Preserve and provide public recreational opportunities while preserving 2,000 feet of scenic shoreline in a natural condition. The project will further enhance previous acquisitions including the Bartlett Carry acquisition by preserving a mostly undeveloped bay on the lake

that experiences significant public use for boating, fishing and canoeing between the lakes.

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. △

LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED {66} –

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 lake’s 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.△

INTERNATIONAL PAPER FEE LANDS {67} – 11 parcels totaling 2000 acres - only four of which are larger than 100 acres - that will be bought in fee as part of the International Paper land deal and will become part of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.△

NATIONAL LEAD/TAHAWUS {68} – An approximately 10,300 acre tract extending to the High Peaks Wilderness Area that includes a portion of the Upper Hudson watershed. This area is of historic significance of which approximately 260 acres are on the National Register of Historic Places. Sites include the Masten House, the Mt. Adams Fire Tower, the Tahawus Club and the McIntyre Iron Works. This property is the southern gateway to the High Peaks, located in the Town of Newcomb, Essex County. Currently owned by the Open Space Institute the intent is to sell more than 6000 acres of land to the State for eventual inclusion in the Forest Preserve. Another 3000 acres will be kept as a working forest with a conservation easement. The historic areas, sites and structures will be protected as well. ■

RODEN PROPERTY {69} – A 340-acre Forest Preserve addition in the Essex County Town of Moriah that supports the only private frontage on Trout Pond. The acquisition of these lands would provide consolidation of State lands in the Hammond Pond Wild

Forest and would enhance public access and recreational opportunities to Trout and Ensign Ponds and Harris Hill. ●

SARATOGA COUNTY {70} –

Dwaaskill 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.

Kayaderosseras Creek Corridor - The Kayaderosseras Creek flows through several towns in central Saratoga County, finally flowing into Saratoga Lake. The Creek is an outstanding resource for activities such as fishing and canoeing. Current public access is spotty, although new access is being developed along the southern boundary of Saratoga Spa State Park.

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 Preserving Land And Nature (P.L.A.N.) properties.

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 the NYS Canal Corporation, has wetland and forest habitats as well as Mohawk River shoreline. There is opportunity for additional parcels to be added to the Preserve complex from private landowners. Continued acquisition of available parcels are part of Town's open space plan and would provide increased river access. This project is within the Erie Canal Greenway.

Wilton Wildlife Preserve and 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 area also provides an important habitat for the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly.

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 Priority 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.

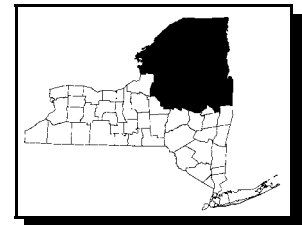
Southeastern Adirondack Foothills - The Palmertown and Luzerne Ranges lie immediately west of booming “Northway Corridor” towns such as Wilton and Queensbury, and in close proximity to the tourism centers of Saratoga and Lake George. This area is the ecological transition zone between the Adirondacks 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.

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. △

WHITNEY PARK {71} – A 36,000 acre property in Hamilton County that has been devoted to forest and wildlife management for more than 100 years and contains enormous outdoor recreational potential. ■

Regions 5 & 6

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 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 {72} – The Bog River/Beaver River Headwater Complex consists of forestland along lakes and streams that flow 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. This area is recognized for its scenic beauty and public recreational value. Ownership within the complex is primarily Forest Preserve and large private land holdings and protection can be accomplished through a combination of "Working Forest Easements", Forest Preserve Additions and Private Stewardship. ■

MAY'S POND TRACT {73} - A 350 acre triangular shaped in-holding that extends into the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. A portion of the parcel is located in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County and a portion is in the Town of Long Lake, Hamilton County. The parcel includes half of Mays Pond - the other half is in the Pigeon Lake Wilderness - and a roadway to a seasonal camp on the shore of the pond. Protection of this property will help maintain the continuity of the Forest Preserve holdings, and ensure continued access to Mays Pond and the Pigeon Lake Wilderness Area. The committee strongly encourages the State to use the roadway to allow motorized access to Mays Pond for persons with disabilities if the State does gain an interest in the property. △

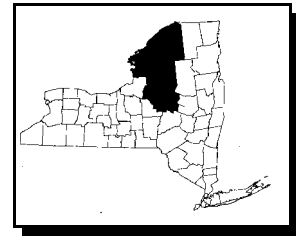
NORTHERN FLOW RIVER CORRIDORS {74} – Preserve the open space character and enhance public use of important northern river corridors and adjacent lands. This project will be accomplished through the implementation of the management plan for the recently acquired Northern Flow River area and "working forest" easement the State now holds. Preservation will continue through the purchase of conservation and access

easements and fee title directly along rivers including the various branches of the Grasse and St. Regis Rivers, Deer River, the Oswegatchie River, the Little River and Raquette River. The following four sub-projects have been chosen for conservation action at this time: Deer River, St. Regis, Grasse and Oswegatchie Rivers within the Adirondack Park, all of which contain significant stretches of high quality recreational water particularly well suited for canoeing and angling.■

RECREATIONAL TRAIL LINKAGES & NETWORKS {75} – 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 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 of interest include North Country National Scenic Trail and the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. The intent of this project is not to achieve broader acquisition, but to focus on completing or enhancing trail systems through the use of easement, fee title acquisition and other conservation tools from willing sellers. ■

Region 6

BLACK CREEK WATERSHED {76} – This project will focus on enhancing existing public lands 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 to Hinckley Reservoir in the Towns of Russia and Ohio in Herkimer County where the State owns lands along the Black Creek. The project would include working cooperatively with the Canal Corporation on acomodating non-motorized recreational access to the Creek, without impinging upon the Canal Corporation’s ability to manage these lands and water for Canal operational purposes. △



BLACK RIVER CORRIDOR {77} – Preserve the open space character and public recreational use of the lands along the Black River, including headwater lands and lands along the Black River from North Lake in the Adirondack Forest Preserve to Lake Ontario. Approximately ½ of the corridor is within the Tug Hill Region. Tree-lined banks along the length of the river currently protect water quality, maintain fish and wildlife habitat and provide the public with scenic and recreational opportunities. This Black River Corridor is recognized as an economic asset by the towns, and hamlets and villages, who have already begun efforts to preserve the resource. Current recreational uses include fishing, canoeing, hiking, skiing and other recreational uses associated with a New York State Blueway Trail designation. In addition, 37 communities along the corridor have been integrating these objectives into their comprehensive plans, land use regulations and strategic plans for projects in the corridor. Conservation tools may include the acquisition of small forested tracts with high public values, riparian buffers, public access multiple use trails and other recreation opportunities. △

FORT DRUM CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PRIORITY PROJECT {78} – 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 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 undertaken on lands adjacent to the development. Addressing these training and conservation needs provides a unique opportunity to enhance the Fort while also enhancing the conservation values the Fort and adjacent lands provide. Establishing a conservation partnership between Fort Drum, local governments, the State and private conservation organizations is one way to address these challenges.

There are three ways a conservation partnership could provide significant benefits to the 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. 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.

All local government real property taxes should be paid for fee and easement lands acquired by the State. △

INMAN GULF {79} – 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 {80} – A unique ecological community consisting of the Adirondacks' largest fen, adjacent eskers, lands and ponds. 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 {81} – A unique, undisturbed area consisting of Weaver Lake and the extensive wetland area surrounding it. Protection will preserve and ensure 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 {82} – 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. ■

ROME SAND PLAINS {83} – This on-going project area seeks to preserve the unique pine barrens and wetland and wetland system of the Rome Sand Plains, a partnership project between the State, the City of Rome, Oneida County, The Nature Conservancy, the Izaak Walton League and others. Rome Sand Plains is one of only a handful of inland pine barrens in the nation. Its unique combination of high sand dunes and low peat bogs makes it a truly rare natural feature. Mixed northern hardwood and pine barrens forests opening abruptly into meadows, wetlands and peat bogs characterize the habitat. Several rare vegetative community types are contained within the area being protected which include rare and uncommon species such as the frosted elfin butterfly, the spotted turtle and the red shouldered hawk. In addition, the project area encompasses part of the historic Wood Creek, used by Native Americans and early American settlers as a major canoe route linking the Mohawk River to the Great Lakes. To date, 1,600 acres have been acquired in fee. ■

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER ISLANDS, SHORELINES AND WETLANDS {84} – 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, including Native American groups, lands trusts, the 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 Algonquian Park in Ontario. ■

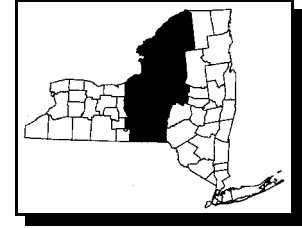
STATE PARK BATTLEFIELDS {85} – Acquire parcels adjacent to State Park Lands at the Oriskany Battlefield in Oneida County and Sackets Harbor Battlefield in Jefferson County to protect from subdivision and development. At Oriskany there are two (2) parcels with an acreage of 175 acres, and at Sackets one (1) parcel of 75 acres. ■

Regions 6 & 7

TUG HILL CORE FORESTS AND HEADWATER STREAMS {86}

The Tug Hill Plateau is a large, undeveloped forested area that serves as 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

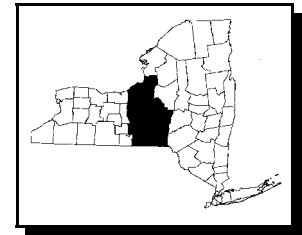
are the Mohawk River, Lansingkill, Deer River, Salmon River, East Branch of Fish Creek, Sandy Creek and the Mad River to the north of the Salmon River Reservoir. The integrity of these core forests and headwaters should be protected through a combination of easement and fee acquisition of key parcels. 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 recreational opportunities. ■



Region 7

CAMILLUS VALLEY/NINE MILE CREEK {87} – 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 {88} – 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. ■

CLARK RESERVATION STATE PARK {89} – The park, located in the Town of Dewitt, Onondaga County, 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 environmental resources. ■

CORTLAND COUNTY STATE PARK {90} – 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 {91} – 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 {92} – 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. ●

MINOA LAKES/GREEN LAKES STATE PARK {93} – This project encompasses acquisition of surrounding open space adjacent to Green Lakes State Park and Minoa Lakes in the Town of Manlius, Onondaga County. These acquisitions will not only protect existing park resources and provide recreational opportunities but also provide a linkage to the Old Erie Canal State Historic Park. ●

NELSON SWAMP {94} – 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 {95} – 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 include Henslow's sparrows and northern harriers. ●

OLD ERIE CANAL STATE HISTORIC PARK TRAILHEAD DEVELOPMENT, BUFFER AND HISTORIC PROTECTION {96} – 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. ●

PETER SCOTT SWAMP {97} – 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 {98} – 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. The State will acquire the important holdings of Niagara Mohawk/National Grid in the corridor as part of a settlement of outstanding air quality issues reached in 2005. ●

STATE PARKS GREENBELT/TOMPKINS COUNTY {99} – 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. ●

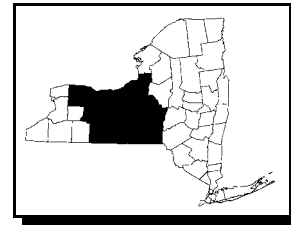
SUMMERHILL FEN AND FOREST COMPLEX {100} – This project will acquire upland forests, wetlands and adjacent upland buffers along Fall Creek, using fee ownership and conservation easements to secure lands recognized for both their biological and recreational significance. Extensive wetlands along Fall Creek 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 Audubon 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 Forests' 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 {101} – 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 OPRHP 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 {102} – 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 AND WETLANDS {103} – While the Finger Lakes Region is identified in the 2002 Plan as a Major Resource Area, 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. Wetland complexes associated with inlets, outlets and other tributaries to the Finger Lakes provide important fish and wildlife habitats. The area covered by this project includes Otisco, Skaneateles, Owasco, Cayuga, Seneca, Keuka and Canandaigua Lakes with the western edge meeting Priority Project 113.

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 the 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:

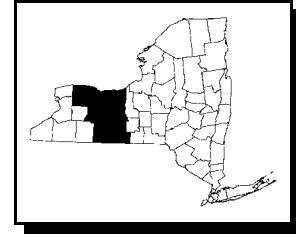
- Owasco Flats - a 2000 acre project area along Owasco Inlet at the south end of Owasco Lake has several opportunities for acquisitions or cooperative management agreements.
- Camp Barton - a Boy Scout camp with extensive frontage on Cayuga Lake. NYS Parks is interested in acquiring this property.
- On Cayuga Lake, 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.
- The B&H railroad property at the south end of Keuka Lake in Hammondsport 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.

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 {104} – This 36,000 acre multiple ownership land conservation project is New York State’s Flagship Project under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. 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 USFWS, 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 also have been committed to the development of a new environmental education facility here. ■

Region 8

CATHARINE VALLEY COMPLEX {105} – This unique Southern Tier complex extends from the southern end of Seneca Lake in Schuyler County, south to the Village of Horseheads in Chemung County. The complex is composed of three major environmental areas with varying habitats and recreational opportunities. Just south of Seneca Lake are towering shale cliffs bordered by **Rock Cabin Road**. This site harbors a rare plant community and an uncommon plant that



is the exclusive food source for three butterflies considered rare in this region. The Wild Nodding onion, a rare species and listed on the NYS list of protected plants, grows in profusion on the cliffside. In addition more than 120 wildflower species have been identified on this site. Adjacent to Rock Cabin Road is the Queen Catharine wetland, identified as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. The second environmental area in this complex is the **Horseheads Marsh**, a Class 1 wetland and the largest freshwater wetland in Chemung County. The marsh is the headwaters for Catharine Creek, a world class trout stream and provides the stream with water quality and flood control functions. In addition, the marsh provides habitat for many species of birds (some on the endangered species list), wildlife and reptiles. The third focus in this complex is the abandoned **Chemung Canal** property, which passes through Horseheads Marsh. Purchase of this property will allow the Catharine Valley Trail connection to the Village of Horseheads by developing a trail along the historic Chemung Canal towpath. This complex offers opportunities to treasure and protect the biodiversity present in the area and to expand recreational and educational opportunities in the valuable open space lands of the Southern Tier. ●

CHEMUNG RIVER GREENBELT {106} – 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 river's 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 New York State Natural Heritage Program) and the Town of Erwin's Green Infrastructure Plan. △

HI TOR/BRISTOL HILLS {107} – Located in the Finger Lakes 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. ■

INDIAN HILLS GOLF CLUB {108} – The property consists of groomed golf course (18-hole and a junior course) and shrub/scrubland. The eastern portion of the property, located east of County Route 73, is adjacent to the Tioga River in the Towns of Lindley and Erwin in Steuben County with approximately 2,400 linear feet of river front access. While the site currently functions primarily as a golf course, under State Park ownership, additional recreational opportunities could be advanced, including fishing and boating access to the Tioga River and winter sport activities including cross country skiing and ice skating. △

JUNIUS PONDS {109} – Located in the Town of Junius, Seneca County, the Junius Ponds complex is a unique assemblage of bogs, fens, meromictic ponds and other wetland types that support an endangered reptile population, rare plants, and unusual ecological communities. The major landowners have expressed interest in conservation easements, possibly with third party conservation organizations, to protect the resource values the complex possesses. Threats include peat mining, sand and gravel mining, illegal specimen collections, Thruway and agricultural runoffs, and commercial development pressures adjacent to the complex. The Town of Lyons once utilized the complex as a public water supply. △

SENECA ARMY DEPOT CONSERVATION AREA {110} – 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. ●

SONNENBERG GARDENS {111} – This project consists of a 50-acre parcel in the City of Canandaigua, Ontario County. The focal point on this historic property is a Queen Anne style Victorian mansion. The mansion is surrounded by nine formal gardens originally created between 1902 and 1916. Today the gardens are recognized by the Smithsonian Institution as “one of the most magnificent late Victorian gardens ever created in America.” ●

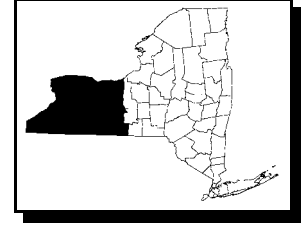
WESTBURY BOG {112} – This project, located in a large wetland complex in the Town of Butler, Wayne County, is intended to protect a rare natural community and its associated wildlife recently documented at this site. Long term conservation of the site through a variety of tools is proposed, including 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 AND 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 and passive recreation. Nearly 3000 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 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. The goal of this project is to permanently protect lands via easements or fee acquisition within the watersheds of the lakes, to protect water quality, perpetuate the undeveloped nature of the lake shores, promote compatible recreation and protect wildlife habitats. Acquisition would serve to connect important open space land owned by the City of Rochester, OPRHP, DEC and land trust organizations. The areas support endangered species and are considered an important fishery resource. Hemlock and Canadice Lakes are the only Finger Lakes with nearly pristine, undeveloped shorelines. ●

WOLF GULLY {114} – Located in the Town of Naples, Ontario County this site was identified in The Nature Conservancy’s 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

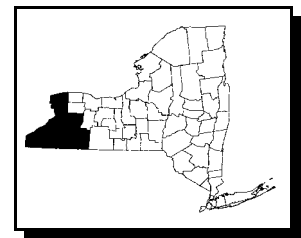
GENESEE GREENWAY/RECREATIONWAY {115} – The Genesee Valley Greenway (GVG) is a 90 mile long corridor that extends from the city of Rochester in Monroe County through to the Village of Hinsdale in Cattaraugus County. It passes through woodlands, wetlands, river and stream valleys and rolling farmlands 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 announced by Governor Pataki in 2005. ▣



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

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/NIAGARA RIVER CORRIDORS {118} – This project will not only enhance access to Lake Erie and the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers, but also protect the vital wildlife habitat within the corridor. The Niagara River Greenway will increase public access to the Niagara River via a corridor trail system with connections to land access points. By providing access to the Buffalo River/Lake Erie, anglers will be assured the ability to utilize the vast fisheries resources of the Great Lakes. A secondary benefit of this access will be for users to utilize the Canoe Trail in the Buffalo River. The flood plain forest area within metropolitan Buffalo is critical for the enjoyment of birds and/or mammals by low mobility citizens. Without protection from further development, the relatively undisturbed forests in the urban Buffalo area can be further degraded by continued development. ◐

CATTARAUGUS CREEK AND 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. ◐

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. ◐

ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS {121} – Protection of existing lineal corridors and creation of greenway corridors to link existing public lands, historic sites or protect important fish and wildlife habitats. 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: Start Trail (now the Senator Pat MaGee Trail) in Cattaraugus County, the Chautauqua Rail to Trail in Chautauqua Co. and the Niagara River Corridor. △

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 and Zoar Valley. ◐

GRASSLAND PRESERVATION AND 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 are not limited to: the Towns of Porter, Wilson, Hartland, Newfane and Somerset in Niagara County, and the Towns of Covington and Middlebury in Wyoming Co. △

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. Projects include but are not limited to:

Improved public access - Findley Lake and Bear Lake (Chautauqua County)

Shoreline protection - Bear (Chautauqua County), Silver (Wyoming County) and Cassadaga Lakes (Chautauqua 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. ●

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT {126} – This project will provide protection by easement or acquisition for a diversity of ecologically significant habitats along the length of the Niagara Escarpment in Niagara County. Preservation will focus on forested tracts, protection of shellbark hickory wetland forest, abandoned farmland, wetland and floodplain habitats. △

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

URBAN WETLANDS {128} – Urban wetlands, because of their size, habitat type and quality, provide resident and migration habitat for wildlife which would otherwise be absent from urban landscapes. Valuable wildlife viewing and outdoor teaching

opportunities are obtained from these natural communities. Two examples are the Klydel and Tiffet wetlands, which provide habitat for forest birds such as Cooper's Hawk, and marsh birds such as Least Bittern within urban settings. The protection of wildlife habitat associated with urban wetlands often requires wetland acquisition and the establishment of a protected upland buffer zone through acquisition or easement of adjacent properties. Other examples exist in Tonawanda, North Tonawanda, Amherst, Cheektowaga, Lackawanna and the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls. ■

Regions 6, 7, 8 and 9

GREAT LAKES SHORELINES AND NIAGARA RIVER {129} – A major New York State resource consisting of islands, sand dunes, bluffs, embayments, wetlands, major tributaries, 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. 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. This area features the Sacketts Harbor Battlefield Historic Site, the largest freshwater dune system in the northeastern United States, Galloo Island (largest undeveloped island on Lake Ontario measuring approximately 3 ½ miles by 1 ½ mile or 1,934 acres), the Braddock Bay Complex and Niagara Falls as well as smaller, but important areas such as Camp Trumansburg. △

Multi-Region

STATE FOREST AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA PROTECTION {130} – State Forests 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 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 {131} – 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. Governor Pataki has committed extensive funding 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.

In May, 2005, Governor Pataki announced the creation of the Erie Canal Greenway. The new Canal Greenway initiative will be the first key step in realizing Governor Pataki's long-term plans to create an "Empire State Greenway." The Empire State Greenway will be comprised of three distinct parts - the Erie Canal Greenway, Niagara Greenway and Hudson Valley Greenway. Each of the Greenways, while continuing to operate separately, will collectively represent one of the largest Greenways

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 {132} - 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:

1. 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;

2. The lands must be of a size and character that are suitable for long-term forest management use;
3. The purchase must be from a willing seller; and
4. 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 AND STATE HISTORIC SITE PROTECTION {133} - 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, eliminate in-holdings and provide buffers to protect the resources as well as to enhance recreational and cultural opportunities. ●

STATEWIDE FARMLAND PROTECTION {134} - 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 rural communities. A 1997 report by the American Farmland Trust ranked the Hudson Valley as part of the tenth most threatened agricultural region in the country, where prime agricultural soils and suburban development pressures are on a collision course. Many municipalities in the Hudson Valley as well as Saratoga and Washington Counties, and the Agricultural Stewardship Association, a land trust, have generated local funding for farmland protection which could be augmented with State funding. Many regional advisory committees, including particularly the Region 3, Region 5, Region 8 and Region 9 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 3, Region 5, Region 8 and Region 9 committees support that 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. The Governor's Quality Communities Task Force reached the same conclusion and has made many recommendations to improve the viability of farming in New York, which are discussed in the Plan. The Plan has long recognized the importance agriculture and how it contributes to the protection of open space in New York State. ●

LONG DISTANCE TRAIL CORRIDORS {135} - Trail Corridors provide important connections between communities, existing open space, natural and cultural resources, They offer recreational opportunities for millions of hikers, bikers, joggers, equestrians, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers and others who simply enjoy a leisurely walk in a natural setting. These corridors also create significant travel corridor habitat for wildlife. New York State hosts a number of long distance trails of statewide and national significance that will require additional protection through acquisition of easement. Changing private ownership patterns and increased development threaten the integrity of many long distance hiking trails in the state and in some cases has forced sections to be rerouted onto roads. This project is intended to provide permanent public access and safe travel routes for long distance trails including the following:

The 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.

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 City extending through the Catskill Park and north into Albany County, some 330 miles. 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 insure continued recreational opportunities and watershed protection for generations to come.

The Finger Lakes Trail is a primitive foot trail which connects the Allegheny Mountains with the Catskills by passing through remote areas of the Southern Tier of New York State. While public land agencies have worked to accommodate the trail on state park lands, reforestation areas, forest preserve lands and other public lands along its 562 mile route across NY, the majority of the trail traverses private lands. Increased public ownership and easements will protect this valuable and unique hiking experience.

Erie Canal Greenway see discussion in NEW YORK STATE CANAL SYSTEM {132}.

The Genny-Green Trail/Link Trail is 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.

The Long Island Greenbelt Trail System is 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.

The North Country National Scenic Trail is a 4,600 mile trail that winds from the plains of North Dakota through Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and into Western New York where it follows the route of the Finger Lakes Trail until the NCT veers northward toward the Adirondacks. The eventual Adirondack route remains a topic of study, but the Congressionally mandated eastern end is at Crown Point.

The Remsen-Lake Placid Travel Corridor is a 122 mile long abandoned railroad corridor which traverses some of the most remote lands of the Adirondack Park.

The Northville-Lake Placid Trail is a long distance hiking and backpacking trail that extends 133 miles from Northville to Lake Placid.

STATEWIDE SMALL PROJECTS {136} - 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.

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. ●

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CHAPTER VII -

STEWARDSHIP OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE LANDS

A major recommendation of the Regional Advisory Committees involves stewardship of private and public open space lands. Continued funding and efforts of stewardship are key to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for all New Yorkers. Our ability to care for our natural resources is key to the State's economic vitality.

A. Stewardship of Private Open Space Lands

Approximately 85 percent of New York's land and water base of 31.1 million acres is privately owned, generally by individual landowners. Clearly, many of the public benefits associated with open space derive from lands held and managed by individuals, clubs, partnerships, corporations, farmers, associations and non-governmental organizations. These same private owners also bear the majority of the costs related to providing these benefits, including initial purchase, investments in cultural operations, protection from insects and disease, management and annual real property taxes.

Most of New York's watersheds are protected by primarily forested open space, comprised largely of privately-owned land. These watersheds provide abundant, clean water for daily consumption, recreation and fish and wildlife habitat. In the New York City watershed, forests and forestry management operations have been declared a "preferred land use" by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, recognizing the positive contributions this land use makes to water quality production and protection. The historic New York City Watershed Agreement reached among the State, New York City, local governments and environmental groups provides substantial funding to keep rural land uses, particularly farming and forestry, as viable economic activities within the watershed. Opportunities for outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing and tourism (e.g.- fall foliage viewing) also depend, in large measure, on private lands and forests. The varied management objectives and practices of nearly 500,000 different landowners perpetuates an ever-changing, and wide diversity of conditions, habitats and ecosystems across the landscape that allows for a broad range of opportunities and benefits to society.

It is unrealistic to expect that the State or Federal government could afford to purchase the majority of this private land, or would ever want to supplant private ownership of property. Yet the public good, benefits, and necessities derived from open space require an expanded set of public programs, assistance, incentives, policies, regulations and other strategies to ensure the retention of our open space resources within a private land ownership context. Critical to the goal of creating a permanent framework of open space, therefore, is state level encouragement and motivation of private land owners to voluntarily contribute to the goals of the Open Space Conservation Plan. The economic benefits of maintaining forested areas are identified in Chapter II.

In most cases, private interests and benefits do not have to be sacrificed to protect and enhance benefits that accrue to society as a whole. Private landowners generally have an affinity for the land and want to “do the right thing” in caring and managing for that resource and asset. Through increased outreach and education, landowners can gain a greater understanding of their stewardship opportunities and how management and protection of their open space can help them achieve more of their desired ownership objectives, while meeting shared community goals as well. Technical assistance and positive reinforcement such as favorable tax policies, cost-sharing and other programs at the Federal, State and local levels can act as strong incentives to promote public interests and have been shown to elicit greater private investments in land conservation and stewardship. These positive, pro-active approaches can be an effective and cost-efficient means to promote the conservation and viability of open space. When open space retention, and sustainable resource management can be a profitable proposition, then landowners will actively support this land use, and resist invitations to convert their open space to other uses.

A.1. Private Land Stewardship Tools and Techniques

A variety of tools and techniques should be developed and applied to help achieve the State’s open space objectives, in partnership with private landowners.

A.1.a. Expanded outreach and education

Outreach and educational efforts need to be expanded targeting landowners, community decision-makers and the non-landowning public (including urban audiences and youth) regarding the importance of forests, wetlands, grasslands and open space, the benefits of renewable resource management and the practice of forest stewardship. Landowners can benefit from an increased understanding of sustainable forestry practices and how sound forest stewardship can help them achieve both their ownership objectives and contribute to broader public goals as well. Greater understanding of the role and practices of sustainable natural resource management among non-landowners, will lead to a better understanding of the benefits forests,

wetlands, grasslands and open space provide, and increased public support for open space conservation and management.

Linkages need to be made in our outreach and open space conservation strategies between the retention and sustainable management of forests and achievement of other public environmental objectives such as watershed protection and restoration, carbon sequestration and mitigation of climate change, conservation of non-renewable resources, particularly fossil fuels, conservation of rare and endangered species, preservation of biodiversity, wildlife habitat enhancement and expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities. Private landowners who are motivated, assisted and supported to more actively manage their lands can significantly improve or enhance the personal and public benefits those lands provide. Wildlife habitat improvements, riparian buffer establishment, stand thinnings to improve growth or reduce insect and disease problems, tree planting and recreational trail development and maintenance are all examples of management activities in which private landowners invest that provide multiple returns and tangible public benefits.

To help private landowners meet these objective New York State participates in the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP), administered by the USDA Forest Service. FSP is implemented by DEC and encourages private forest landowners to manage their lands using professionally prepared forest stewardship plans. These plans consider all associated forest-related resources to meet landowner objectives, including, but not limited to timber, wildlife, fish, water and aesthetics. To facilitate the FSP a Spatial Analysis Project (SAP) is a GIS-based strategic management tool that allows DEC to identify and spatially display their important forest lands, rich in natural resources, vulnerable to threat; tracts currently under Forest Stewardship Plans; and areas of opportunity to focus future FSP efforts.

It is the goal of the State of New York to maintain the quality and quantity of the state's freshwater wetland resource. It is also the goal of the State to increase the quantity and quality of the tidal wetland resource, and when feasible and desirable, increase its freshwater wetland resource. Achieving this goal will require a multitude of non-regulatory and regulatory initiatives undertaken in partnership between all levels of government and in cooperation with the private sector. To help landowners meet these goals the State encourages local conservation of wetlands through local master planning that emphasizes "smart growth" and other techniques to direct development away from ecologically sensitive lands. The State also supports efforts such as the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wetlands Reserve Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Programs, which work with landowners to restore wetlands and habitat on privately owned lands.

A.1.b Increasing Application of Professional Management on Private Lands

The demand for goods and services from private land requires appropriate use and scientific, sustainable management of this renewable resource over the long term. 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 resource sustainability and quality.

Holistic land management, or “forest stewardship” assistance targeted at landowners’ goals is proving to be an effective means of engaging landowners in more active management of their forests, wetlands, grasslands and open space. Management activities can be geared toward owners’ interests in wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, maintaining forest health, conserving rare and endangered species or long-term timber production. The Forest Service’s Forest Stewardship Program, American Forest Association’s Tree Farm Program, the American Forest & Paper Association’s Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council’s “Green Certification” program all are examples of initiatives that promote active, sustainable forest management on private lands and support the retention of forested open space. The USFWS Landowner Incentive Program grants area available for habitat conservation efforts carried out on private lands, to provide technical or financial assistance to private landowners for the purpose of benefitting Federally listed, proposed or candidate species, or other at-risk on private lands.

At the same time, forestry practitioners - foresters, forestry technicians and timber harvesters - must possess knowledge of the complexities of applied forest and natural resource related management, as well as social sciences, to be able to provide effective service and assistance to landowners and society. ***Increased technical training and technology transfer*** is needed to ensure that the latest in sustainable resource management techniques and principles are being applied on the ground by practitioners.

Additional educational opportunities and technical assistance need to be provided for landowners, to help them understand their role in natural resource conservation, open space protection, and how to enhance and sustain the benefits their lands provide them and society. Mechanisms and resources for collecting and disseminating information and data on rare or imperiled plant, fish and wildlife species should continue to be utilized to the fullest potential. This especially includes continuing and fully funding the New York Natural Heritage program and facilitating new and innovative avenues for delivering information to key user groups. Further, it is important that work conducted by the State Museum and New York State Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) funded by the EPF and the New York State Biological Survey be integrated into the Heritage database.

New and expanded partnerships should be formed between private sector professionals, forest-based industries, State, local and Federal government agencies, academia, landowner groups and other interest groups to promote sustainable forestry and extend the influence of professional forestry.

Financial incentives have proven to be an effective means of encouraging and supporting sustainable land management practices and retention of forested open space. Studies have shown that cost-sharing incentive programs also have leveraged significant additional private sector investments in land management activities well beyond the initial public investment. These investments in programs like the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Forestry Incentives Programs (FIP), Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP), Wildlife Habitat Improvement Programs (WHIP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) have achieved positive results in resource protection and enhancement. At the State level, similar investments could be a less-expensive means of motivating and supporting private sector investments in and commitments to sustainable land and forest management and open space retention. In addition to the open space protection benefits, these investments can also enhance forest health, quality, diversity and productivity, adding additional benefits to society from enhanced management of the resource.

✓The Open Space plan recommends the State also explore opportunities to develop a State program (or programs) to provide financial incentives to landowners who invest in sustainable land management practices that will achieve benefits for open space conservation, watershed and water quality protection, greenhouse gas reduction, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat enhancement, conservation of rare, threatened or endangered species, sustainable production of forest products and support of forest-based industries and economic development in New York. Models for this program include the Governor's 2006 legislative proposal 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, and modernizing the Forest Tax Law to take a more holistic approach to forest management.

✓The Open Space Conservation Plan recommends involvement in USFS sponsored stewardship spatial analysis and assessment to determine forest based needs and opportunities to influence wise forest stewardship on private lands.

✓The Plan recommends that greater efforts be made to assist small land owners in finding a cost effective way to achieve third party forest certification.

A.1.c Expanding, Strengthening and Diversifying Forest-Based Industries to Increase Incentives to Hold and Manage Forests

Expanding our forest-based economic development programs 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. As mentioned previously, markets for wood products provide direct economic returns and incentives to landowners and encourage the practice of sustainable forestry. Viable markets for a broad range of wood and 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 for a variety of products, not just the biggest and best trees of a few species. The Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Agriculture and Markets and Empire State Development should work closely with forest industries and other groups, such as the regional Resource Conservation & Development Councils, to maintain existing markets and pursuing new markets for New York wood and wood products that support, complement and strengthen forest-based industries.

Targeting forest-based industries for special tax incentives or regulatory relief can help with Governor Pataki's overall objective of "making New York a better place to do business" while providing additional benefits to open space conservation, forest land retention and sustainable forest management. New York currently offers special economic development tax incentives, targeted tax relief to desired industries and regulatory reforms or assistance for "strategic industries." Combining these efforts with our open space conservation efforts would allow the two to work together and achieve benefits in both arenas. Protection of open space and wildlife habitats sustains natural resource industries such as commercial fishing and trapping, as well as forest management.

Technology transfer, technical assistance and financial support should be available for new forest product development, industry modernization and the adoption of new higher-yield, environmentally-friendly manufacturing technologies. New York is in direct competition for these investments with neighboring States and other regions. Supporting and building our local industrial capacity adds value to our forests and management by bringing diverse markets closer to the raw material producers. Skills-building initiatives within forest-based industries are also needed to improve competitiveness, safety and economic viability. Attracting and retaining skilled labor is a critical ingredient to business success, and is becoming increasingly difficult for all industry sectors.

A.1.d Sustaining a Productive Land Base

Curbing the conversion rate of forest land and wetlands is of local, State and national interest. Statutes, policies and initiatives that promote forestland and wetland retention and sustainable resource management are an important component of a comprehensive open space plan. 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. The two exist and thrive in a symbiotic relationship. Protection of New York’s open space is essential for the perpetuation of the state’s flora and fauna. New York is remarkable in the diversity of its habitats and thus, the diversity of living things which depend on those habitats. Fish, wildlife, marine resources, and plants are important parts of the web of living things on the planet. They also provide important benefits to New Yorkers. Protection of species and their habitats allows for continuation of the important pastimes of hunting and fishing, and other wildlife-oriented recreation such as bird-watching and photography.

The current State budget provides local reimbursement to municipalities with the largest shift of local tax revenue from participation in sections 480, and 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law. Providing a permanent provision for local reimbursement under New York’s Forest Tax Law will enhance the long-term retention of open space, provide an incentive to encourage forest owners to retain their tracts of forest land and practice sustainable management, with an express emphasis on long-term the production forest crops. Forest land retention has been viewed as important since the first forest tax law passed in 1912.

When the current version of the forest tax law took effect, those landowners participating in the Fisher Forest Tax Law, Section 480 of the Real Property Tax Law (RPTL) were allowed to continue certification in that law and to enjoy the benefits it provided. Additionally there are 311 properties containing 815,503 acres committed to RPTL Section 480. As of April 2005, 2,201 parcels covering 595,942 acres were certified by DEC enabling enrollment in RPTL Section 480-a. Consequently one and a quarter million acres of forested open space is currently participating in programs encouraging open space retention. RPTL 480 froze assessments at the time of certification and RPTL, Section 480-a grants up to an 80% reduction in assessment as incentives for committing lands to the programs. There are approximately 9.5 million acres of forest land potentially eligibly for certification under Section 480-a.

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 inflow to the landowner, easements can also relieve some of the property tax burden (if subsequent assessments reflect a reduced property value).

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. The 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. To meet the needs of the Northeast, DEC should work more closely with the NRCS in implementing Farm Bill conservation programs, particularly the Wetland Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Security Program, and the Grasslands Reserve Program. These federal programs provide funding to restore and maintain approximately 150,000 acres of key habitats in New York State through long-term contracts and easements with private landowners. DEC should continue to assist NRCS through building of partnerships and by providing technical assistance. Continued DEC participation in these programs is a critical and effective way to maintain significant amounts of open space of high value to the fish and wildlife of New York.

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 significant 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 an accompanying investment of resources for staffing and non-personal resources for administration and management to protect all parties' rights and interests.

Revisions to State and Federal tax policies have also been cited as essential ingredients of a comprehensive approach to open space conservation and the retention of undeveloped, privately-owned lands. The Northern Forest Lands Council (NFLC), which delivered its report, "Finding Common Ground: Conserving the Northern Forest" in 1994 and its recent 10th anniversary update, identified several tax-related issues that bore on open space retention. The Council noted that changes to the Federal Estate Tax policy were necessary to reduce the pressure on heirs to sell, convert or otherwise change the character of family forest ownerships. The NFLC also recommended changes regarding the capital gains on timber and the IRS' "passive loss" provisions that both work against long-term private sector investments in management and forest retention. The NFLC also called for tax legislation changes to exclude from income taxes a portion of the gain from the sale of "qualified forest lands" and conservation

easements to public conservation agencies. Tax incentive programs to ensure wildlife habitat protection should be provided for landowners, to give private landowners a strong incentive to manage their lands to sustain open space, habitat, and outdoor recreation values. The Open Space Plan recommends legislative action to address these identified concerns and threats to private sector open space conservation.

In 2006, the New York State legislature passed and Governor Pataki signed into law a Conservation Tax Credit, which gives the owner of land encumbered by a conservation easement that was donated to a state or local government entity or a qualifying not-for-profit organization a tax credit of 25 percent of property taxes paid on the eased land up to \$5000. The federal government also in 2006, expanded the conservation tax incentive for lands or conservation easements donated in 2006 and 2007. The new law raises the deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%; allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income and; extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years. This law will sunset in 2007 if it is not made permanent. The Plan recommends that Congress make this incentive permanent.

A.2. Protecting Viable Agricultural Lands

Article XIV, Section 4 of the N.Y.S. Constitution provides in part that “[t]he policy of the state shall be to... encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products.” This Constitutional provision was added in 1969 and in 1971 the Agricultural Districts Law (Article 25-AA , Agriculture and Markets Law) was enacted. Section 300 of the Law provides:

It is the declared policy of the state 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 sheds, as well as for aesthetic purposes.

The cornerstone of the Agricultural Districts Law is the provisions for creation of “agricultural districts,” through the procedure set forth in Section 303 of the Agricultural and Markets Law. This is the “locally-initiated mechanism” by which the State’s agricultural land is protected and enhanced. Further, particular emphasis is placed on encouraging and ensuring the long-term sustainability and protection of “viable agricultural land” (defined in Section 301(7)).

Once an agricultural district is created, the land receives the benefits and protections of not only the general agricultural preservation policies of Section 300 of

the Agricultural and Markets Law, but also the specific protections of Sections 305 and 308. Section 305(1) allows eligible farmers to have their land assessed at its agricultural value rather than its fair market value. Section 305-a(1) limits the power of local governments to enact and/or administer laws that would unreasonably restrict farm practices, structures or operations located within an agricultural district. Section 305(3) mandates the policy of state agencies in regard to agriculture and agricultural districts, and provides that “it shall be the policy of all state agencies to encourage the maintenance of viable farming in agricultural districts and their administrative regulations and procedures shall be modified to this end...” Section 305(4) of the same law limits the exercise of the power of eminent domain, as well as other acquisitions of land, and the advance of funds for construction and the construction of certain projects by state agencies, public benefit corporations and local governments within state certified agricultural districts. Section 305(5) limits the power of special improvement districts to impose assessments or special ad valorem levies for sewer, water or other services, on farmland within a district. Section 308 authorizes protection for farmers who are engaged in sound agricultural practices against private nuisance suits.

The Farmer’s School Tax Credit may entitle an individual or an estate or trust engaged in the business of farming to an income tax credit for the amount of eligible school district property taxes paid on qualified agricultural property. This credit may also extend to the land owner of agricultural land that is rented to a farming operation in which the land owner materially participates. That is, the land owner is directly involved in the production of farm commodities.

In an effort to maintain the economic viability and environmental landscape preservation values associated with agriculture, the Legislature established the State’s Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program (AFPP) by enacting Article 25-AAA of the Agriculture and Markets Law. Section 321 of the Law provides:

“In an effort to encourage further development of agricultural and farmland protection programs, and to recognize both the crucial role that local government plays in developing these strategies, plus the state constitutional directive to the legislature to provide for the protection of agricultural lands, it is therefore declared the policy of the state to promote local initiatives for agricultural and farmland protection.”

Section 323 of the Law authorizes the Commissioner to initiate and maintain a program of providing financial and technical assistance to local governments in the development of agricultural and farmland protection plans and to implement their local farmland protection activities. State assistance payments for this program are authorized from the State EPF.

Agricultural and farmland protection plans, developed by local governments and county agricultural and farmland protection boards (AFPB), examine the complex factors and issues associated with farmland conversion, such as urban growth; farm profitability; government taxes, regulations, and incentives; availability of farm labor; the resale market (i.e., farmer vs. non-farmer); successional ownership; open space; and community attitudes. Local governments and AFPB's develop strategies to implement farmland protection measures identified in the planning process. State assistance payments also are available to local governments to implement farmland protection and preservation initiatives found in approved county agricultural and farmland protection plans or in municipal farmland protection plans, provided the proposed municipal project is endorsed for funding by the county agricultural and farmland protection board. Projects will receive priority for State assistance payments if they (i) intend to preserve viable agricultural land, (ii) are in areas facing significant development pressure, and (iii) serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics.

Eligible applicants for farmland protection implementation funding are: (1) county agricultural and farmland protection boards in counties with an approved county plan developed pursuant to Section 324 of Article 25-AAA of the Agriculture and Markets Law; or (2) any municipality which has in place a local farmland protection plan, provided the proposed project is endorsed for funding by the agricultural and farmland protection board for the county in which the municipality is located. Local land trusts and other not-for-profit agencies concerned with protecting agricultural land are not eligible to apply for implementation funds, but these organizations often work cooperatively with local governments in support of a project. Their participation in project implementation is at the discretion of the local government (under conditions acceptable to the Department) and may include (i) holding or co-holding the conservation easements, (ii) serving as a third party with right of enforcement of conservation easements, or (iii) conducting ongoing monitoring of conservation easements on behalf of the local government.

B. Stewardship of State Lands

Currently, DEC and OPRHP manage more than 4.2 million acres of open space. OPRHP manages 318,000 acres that serve 60 million visitors annually. DEC manages 3 million acres of Forest Preserve, 776,000 acres of State Forests and Multiple Use Areas, and 190,000 acres of wildlife management areas. These open space resources represent an investment and opportunity for existing and future generations.

State lands require major capital expenditures and management actions to address specific conditions. Maintenance is also needed to ensure adequate protection of these publicly owned natural resources. Since 1999, a total of \$74.5 million in EPF resources have been devoted to the stewardship needs of OPRHP and DEC in addition to \$50 million from the Bond Act of 1996. The 2006-07 enacted Budget, includes an

additional \$15 million from the Environmental Protection Fund for stewardship of public lands to complement other available funding sources. This will help both DEC and OPRHP rehabilitate and improve facilities on many State owned lands, benefitting and expanding recreational opportunities for all New Yorkers who enjoy and take advantage of what these lands have to offer, and protecting the natural resources entrusted to the stewardship of the State, for this and future generations. The unprecedented level of funding has improved the ability of both agencies to address critical stewardship needs. There will be a continued need to make improvements for safe access and use of the newly acquired open spaces. While stewardship resource needs continue to grow, both agencies have significant accomplishments to report.

B.1. Accomplishments

OPRHP

OPRHP has recognized that addressing the stewardship needs of the State Park system can be augmented by developing partnerships with the private sector, not-for-profit organizations and other governmental agencies. To provide guidance, the agency invited a group of individuals and interest groups to assist in the development of public-private partnership guidelines. Within this framework of these guidelines, OPRHP entered into a variety of partnerships to improve recreational opportunities and to protect and interpret natural and cultural resources.

More than \$10 million in private investments have been generated in the last 10 years. One example is the Governor's Theodore Roosevelt Nature Center at Jones Beach State Park on Long Island, which provided OPRHP with the opportunity for expanded stewardship by removing 9-acres of pavement to restore habitat for shorebirds and terns in addition to establishing the nature center. Other examples include playgrounds, pavilions and other nature centers.

OPRHP has further fostered environmental stewardship through its planning, project review, facilities/programs and interagency coordination. The agency has developed and implemented a planning process for both day-to-day management and long term guidance. Resource management through the creation of "Interim Management Guides" is provided for new acquisitions to ensure sound management practices and resource protection during the interim period pending more comprehensive long term planning. Long term, or "master" plans are prepared through agency workgroups comprised of regional and central office technical staff that obtains public input through scoping meetings, advisory/study groups and science groups. In addition, the NY Natural Heritage Program (NHP) has conducted surveys throughout the State Park system to identify threatened and endangered species and ecological communities as well as biodiversity in general. This recent effort was a six-year program funded by the EPF through the Biodiversity Research Partnership. This

information has guided resource protection and recreational use recommendations. Water quality is an important part of the open space resources. State Parks has recently established a statewide monitoring program for its 76 bathing beaches. This assures safe and enjoyable swimming.

The agency's Resource Management Group (RMG) was formed to review and assess all capital projects and other agency proposed actions from an environmental, historic preservation, engineering, planning and program perspective.

DEC

An effort to address the long standing back log of Unit Management Plans within the Forest Preserve started in 1999. Additional staff have been added and resources have been dedicated to the completion of all Forest Preserve Unit Management Plans. The completion of these plans begins the process of enhancing the stewardship of these lands by identifying resource stewardship and recreational infrastructure needs in the Forest Preserve. To date, UMP's have been developed and approved by the Adirondack Park Agency for more than 61% of the 2.4 million acres of Adirondack Forest Preserve requiring updated management plans. During the past five years, 14 UMP's have been developed and approved and ten UMP's have been drafted. Planning is underway for an additional 19 units. In addition, five UMP's have been amended to address significant issues related to controlling illegal ATV use on the Forest Preserve and providing opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Outside of the Forest Preserve, the Department has completed 13 UMPs on State Forests and Unique Areas over the past five years. In addition there are 8 draft UMPs in process and early preparations have started on another six units. Current UMPs are dealing with issues related to oil and natural gas leasing, illegal ATV use, Universal Access, invasive species including plants and forest pests, and increased recreational use and popularity.

Bond Act and Environmental Protection Fund resources have been used to implement the High Peaks Wilderness Area and Camp Santanoni Historic Area Unit Management Plans, to develop recreational infrastructure for the Champion Lands as well as the William A. Whitney Wilderness Area and the soon to be protected Tahawus property. In addition improvements have been made in the areas of roads and trails on state land, conservation education facilities, boat launch rehabilitation and the environmental infrastructure of campground and day use facilities.

DEC's Universal Access Program has provided physical access to natural areas across the state that were previously out of reach to people with disabilities and continues to run outreach programs which focus on environmental education and a connection to nature. By creating accessible recreational opportunities, this program is

embracing a new generation of stewards.

The Adopt a Natural Resource program has enabled user groups to assist the Department in the stewardship of the public lands these groups enjoy. The program facilitates the participation and assistance of volunteer individuals and groups in the stewardship of Department lands operating in accordance with existing laws and regulations. It extends liability and workmen's compensation protection to authorized volunteers and provides a formal structure and means of recognizing volunteer assistance. Since its inception in 1998, more than 200 Adopt a Natural Resource agreements have been developed for areas ranging from Wildlife Management Areas, popular trailhead facilities and fire towers, to shipwrecks in Lake George. These agreements have been reached with a variety of civic, landowner, environmental and conservation organizations, and have helped to leverage State stewardship resources in an efficient and community-based fashion.

DEC developed a draft ATV Policy for Public ATV Access to Recreational Programs on the Forest Preserve, Reforestation, Multiple Use, Unique, Wildlife Management Areas, Environmental Education Centers and Conservation Easement Lands. The policy includes a strong enforcement component for illegal ATV use on state lands. Illegal ATV use has been a management issue for several years and is being addressed by DEC law enforcement staff. The draft policy provides guidance for possible future designated ATV access on DEC managed land.

B.2. Stewardship Needs

OPRHP

The mission of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York residents and visitors, and to be responsible stewards of its valuable natural, historic and cultural resources. New York's 176 State Parks and 35 Historic Sites are recognized as unique and irreplaceable public assets.

The New York State Park System encompasses more than 323,000 acres of land and water, which represents more than a 22% increase in acres managed since 1995 including 22 new parks. Nearly 80% of the system is in natural areas with a wide range of geological features, ecological habitats and species of plants and animals. This includes a diverse array of forested, mountain, riverine, wetland, water, marine, meadow and coastal environments which provides the setting for the 176 State Parks, 35 historic sites, 21 marine facilities, 9 featured trails, 20 parkways, 76 developed beaches, 40 vacation rental cottages, 817 cabins, 8,355 campsites, 18 nature centers and over 1,350 miles of trails that serve 60 million visitor days annually.

Parks and Historic Sites also contribute to the enrichment of American culture. All or portions of 56 parks and sites of the New York State Park system are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places which formally document important resources of cultural significance. This includes several worthy of designation as National Historic Landmarks. One of these, Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, resulted from the State's pioneering efforts in historic preservation that culminated in the acquisition of this site in 1849. More than 100 State Parks and Historic Sites are known also to contain important archeological resources. Secondary benefits attributable to public use of parks include providing a stimulus for tourism and a contribute to civic pride and improvement of quality of life.

State Parks and Historic Sites exemplify the evolution of conservation and preservation within the State. This is highlighted by the Native American sites, protection of Niagara Falls, Civil Conservation Corps era development, parkway development and the evolution of the automobile, and the various sites that reflect periods of military history. Sensitive treatment of these resources is needed to preserve their significance.

OPRHP and recreational user groups recognize the need for proper stewardship of park and recreation resources. As the acreage of the park system increases, so has the demand on its natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Several studies were conducted that assessed the condition of New York's Park System. Subsequent joint state legislative hearings documented the need for additional and long-term funding that eventually led to the creation of the State Park Infrastructure Fund (SPIF). The Environmental Protection Fund also provides resources for OPRHP to address rehabilitation needs. While these substantive initiatives improve the State Park System, there is a continuing need for additional funds to rehabilitate and to expand the system so that the future recreational and open space demands of the public are satisfied.

State Parks infrastructure is aging - over 40% of all buildings in the State Parks are over 50 years old. Inherent with any aging system is the need for rehabilitation. This is compounded by the increased recreational demands being placed on these systems. Aquifer protection, safeguarding potable water systems, code compliance and structure renovations are among key priorities for remediation. SPIF and EPF will address many of these needs over the next 5 to 10 years. The magnitude of the system (176 parks and 35 historic sites containing more than 5,000 structures and supporting systems) will require consistent funding. It is equally important to provide adequate levels of preventative maintenance to avoid major rehabilitation in the future. It is also essential to recognize that facilities have a life expectancy, and natural resources can only sustain a finite level of use and still maintain their integrity.

In the last decade beaches and swimming pools have been reopened, sewage and water systems upgraded, roofs and foundations rehabilitated and potential threats identified to the natural and scenic resources.

There is a continuous effort to revisit existing master plans for existing parks and undertake comprehensive planning and preparation of interim management guides for new acquisitions. Interim management guides, although not a substitute for more comprehensive planning, will provide day-to-day guidance for the management of natural, cultural and recreation resources and require less time to prepare.

DEC

DEC is the principal land manager of more than four million acres of publicly owned lands and easements. The Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve together account for about 3 million of those acres. DEC foresters and biologists also administer approximately 750,000 acres of reforestation lands and multiple use areas, 190,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas, 18,000 acres of unique areas, 3,000 acres of tidal wetlands, 20,000 acres of freshwater wetlands, and several thousands acres in other categories. While all of these categories share certain common stewardship needs, such as boundary line maintenance and routine conservation officer and forest ranger patrols, each of these categories has distinct needs as well.

Reforestation, multiple use, unique and wildlife management areas are served by 3,000 miles of unpaved roads while there are 3,200 miles of recreational trails, principally on Forest Preserve lands. The Department operates 50 campgrounds, 6 day use areas, 1 ski center, 4 outdoor education camps, 5 environmental education centers, has 1,000 miles of paved roads, 87 bridges, 215 dams, 250 lean-tos, 930 parking areas, 44 radio facilities, 2 fishways, 2 navigation locks, 12 fish hatchery complexes, 204 fishing access sites, 1,200 miles of public fishing rights easements and 1 tree nursery.

Because of its large and diverse land holdings, the historic properties for which the Department is responsible are numerous and varied. These include a full range of historically significant buildings and structures such as Camp Santanoni, the Caledonia and Adirondack Fish Hatcheries, fire towers, cabins and other buildings built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Depression era of the 1930's. Several hundred prehistoric and historic archaeological sites are located on DEC lands and waters. The Department is also responsible for historic archaeological resources at Crown Point and the Lake George Battlefield. Lakes George and Champlain also contain unique and highly significant shipwrecks. A number of these properties are listed in the state and national Registers of Historic Places and several are National Historic Landmarks.

DEC is responsible for managing billions of dollars of public lands and facilities. This land and accompanying infrastructure is extremely diverse in number and type.

With the wealth of lands and facilities comes the responsibility to protect, preserve, rehabilitate and construct facilities to provide for a safe, sanitary, energy efficient, ecologically rich, accessible and aesthetically pleasing environment for users, visitors and employees. Achieving this mission requires the integration of management, technical, fiscal and administrative services of DEC and sufficient resources to get the job done.

To better address DEC's many stewardship needs, the Department has adopted, as one of its primary strategic goals, a goal, "to become better stewards of our land, infrastructure and natural resources." This strategic goal is focusing the Department's efforts to improve stewardship. This approach underscores the importance of this issue to the future of the agency, and helps align the programs of the Department to meet this need.

These needs include:

Since 1960, state lands administered by DEC increased from 2,500,000 acres to more than 4,000,000 acres.

Public use of the DEC land holdings continues to grow.

DEC must maintain more than 6,000 miles of boundary lines to prevent trespass and timber theft. Other important values associated with public lands may be lost if the lands are not surveyed and signed so the public can identify them. The State's revitalized land acquisition program from the Environmental Protection Act Fund requires additional survey capability, which is being addressed through new stewardship resources.

Unit Management Plans must be kept up to date to guide the long term management of State lands.

DEC's ability to implement an ecosystem management approach to protect and manage natural resources for maximum public benefit requires comprehensive inventories of those natural resources, which are being undertaken with EPF resources.

Strategy

Fostering environmental stewardship requires a multi-phase approach that will occur over several years. It is the cumulative benefits of these actions that will have the greatest impacts in improving stewardship of the State's resources. Some actions require limited fiscal resources while others will require a reoccurring investment and commitment of fiscal resources. This will be difficult in times of competing national and

state priorities but will result in improving the quality of life for all the citizens of the state. See Chapter VIII, section C.1. for details of strategies.