



**Linking
New York State's
Comprehensive Wildlife
Conservation Strategy**

**and
Open Space Conservation Plan**

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NY Conservation Demographics



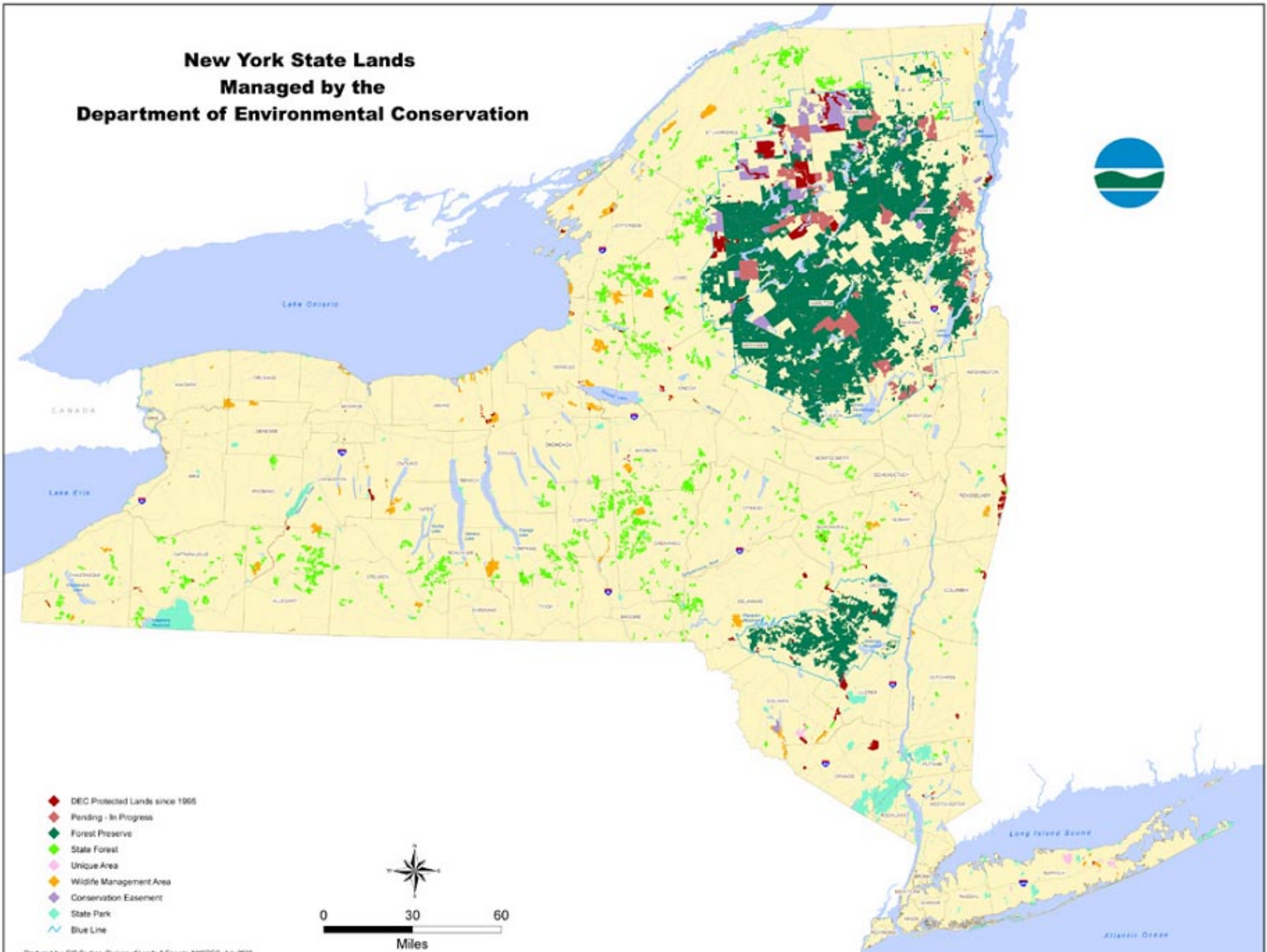
- Total population just over 19M
 - Population in NYC metro area is >12M
- 6,863 mi² of open water (excluding ocean)
- 52,000 miles of rivers and streams
- Less than 15% of 54,077 mi² land area in public ownership



Land Cover Statistics

- 43.9% of state is forested
 - (=62% of the total land mass)
- Only about 2% is wetland
- 17.3% agricultural
 - (down from >80% a century ago)
- 10.4% open water
- 5.4% developed hardscape
- 0.6% developed greenspace

New York State Lands Managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation



- ◆ DEC Protected Lands since 1965
- ◆ Pending - In Progress
- ◆ Forest Preserve
- ◆ State Forest
- ◆ Unique Area
- ◆ Wildlife Management Area
- ◆ Conservation Easement
- ◆ State Park
- ~ Blue Line



Source: DEC, National Wetlands Inventory, 2000



NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Structure

- Combined natural resources and environmental quality responsibilities.
- All natural resources management under one "roof".
 - Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources
 - Division of Lands and Forests
 - Division of Water



Other executive agencies involved

- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
 - Manage over 170 state park facilities, including state park preserves.
- NY Department of State
 - Delegated responsibility for Coastal Zone Management Act at the state level.
 - Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program

New York State Open Space Conservation Program





Open Space Conservation Plan

- For the past fifteen years the Plan has served as the blueprint for conservation of open space in NYS
- The Plan is an important part of the State's enduring conservation legacy.
- Grassroots, bottom-up approach to open space conservation.
- Broad based support – county, region and state input.



Chazy Lake



Principles

- Work in partnerships to establish and achieve land conservation goals.
- Regional and state planning to grow intelligently.
- Fitting the appropriate strategy to the resource.
- Establish careful and understandable priorities

Principles cont'd

- Land conservation needs and broad based citizen opinion.
- Deal fairly and openly with property owners/
Willing seller, willing buyer
- Define costs of implementation and propose methods for meeting those costs.
- Management and stewardship
- Maintain working landscapes
- Economic value of open space



Goals

- Protect water quality
- Provide outdoor recreation
- Protect scenic, historic and cultural resources
- Protect habitat for the diversity of plant and animal species
- Protect endangered species, threatened species and species of special concern.
- Sustain the traditional pastimes of hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing fish and wildlife.
- Maintain critical natural resource based industries



Goals cont'd

- Provide places for education and research on ecological, environmental and appropriate cultural resources to provide a better understanding of the systems from which they derive.
- Preserve open space, particularly forest lands, for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

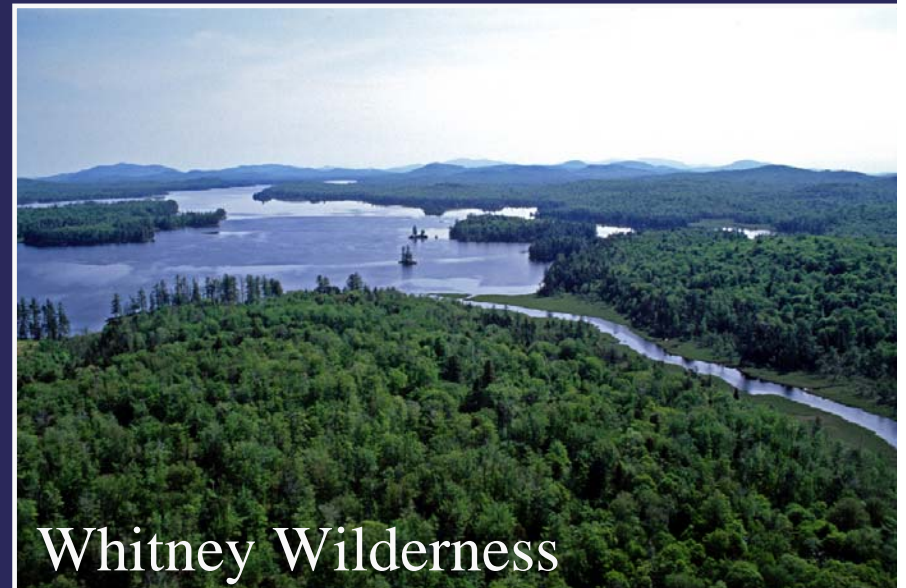


Champion



Overview

- Chapter I – foundations of the State Open Space Conservation Plan.
- Chapter II – benefits of open space and open space conservation successes.
- Chapter III – natural and cultural resource inventory data and resource categories.
- Chapter IV –project eligibility and evaluation process



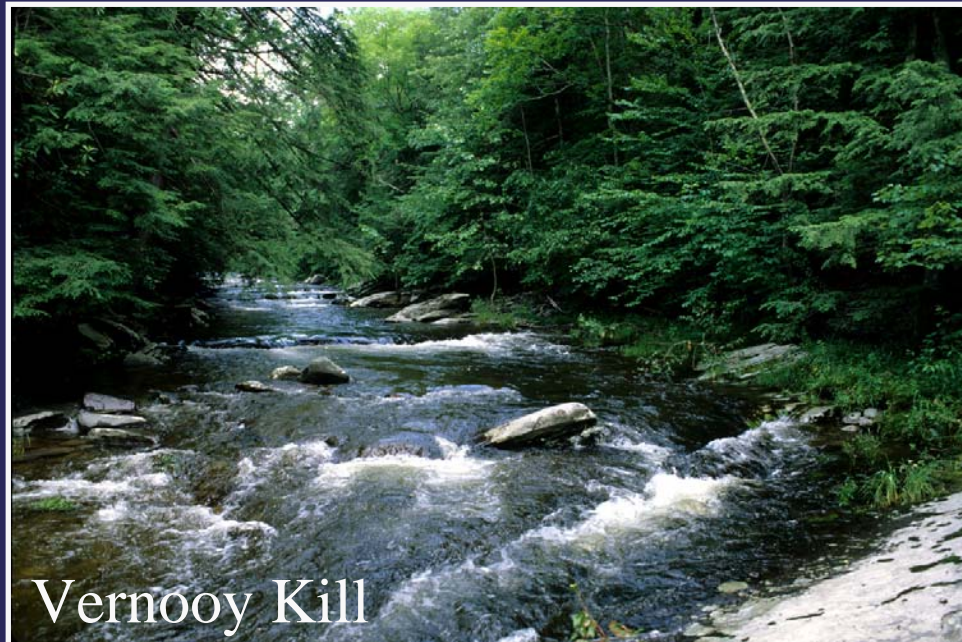
Whitney Wilderness





Overview cont'd

- Chapter V – recommendations of the nine Regional Advisory Committees (RACs).
- Chapter VI – Priority Open Space Conservation projects.



Vernooy Kill

Overview cont'd

- Chapter VII –stewardship of both private and publicly held open space resources.
- Chapter VIII – recommendations to maintain New York's leadership role on our Open Space program for the future.



Great South Bay





Overview cont'd

- Chapter IX – Generic Environmental Impact Statement.



Turkey Point

Accomplishments

- More than 1 million acres has been protected since 1993. About a 20% increase in public land opportunities.
- Plan has succeeded in building public support for the State's Open Space Program
- Since 1993 invested more than \$735 million from the EPF and Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act.



Turkey Point



Recommendations

- Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy
- Promote Local Open Space Planning/Quality Communities Program
- Community Preservation Act
- Empire State Greenway



Lundy Pond

Recommendations cont'd

- Forest Legacy Expansion
- Funding needs for the future
- Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program
- Focus on Local Capacity Building



Vernooy Kill



Open Space Plan Process

- Based on:
 - Partnerships
 - Grassroots efforts
- Process is as valuable as the product



Genesee Valley
Greenway

2007 NYSCPP
Grantees

New York's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy





Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy



- Mandated by congress to remain eligible for State Wildlife Grant funding
- States had to commit to write a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy by Oct. 2005
 - Targeted toward “species of greatest conservation need”
- Accepted by USFWS in February 2006



CWCS development process:

- Species of Greatest Conservation Need identified through staff & public process
- 537* species organized in 131 taxonomic groupings
- Lead staff identified within DFWMR for each taxonomic group
- Status of species, threats and critical habitats identified for each group



Process

- Steering committee
- Species and species groups
- Staff input
- Peer review
- Partnership group





Collaboration

Scientists & Managers

- DEC staff
- University staff
- State Museum
- AMNH
- Others

Conservation Groups

- The Nature Conservancy
- Audubon New York
- Am. Fisheries Society
- Environmental Defense
- The Wildlife Society

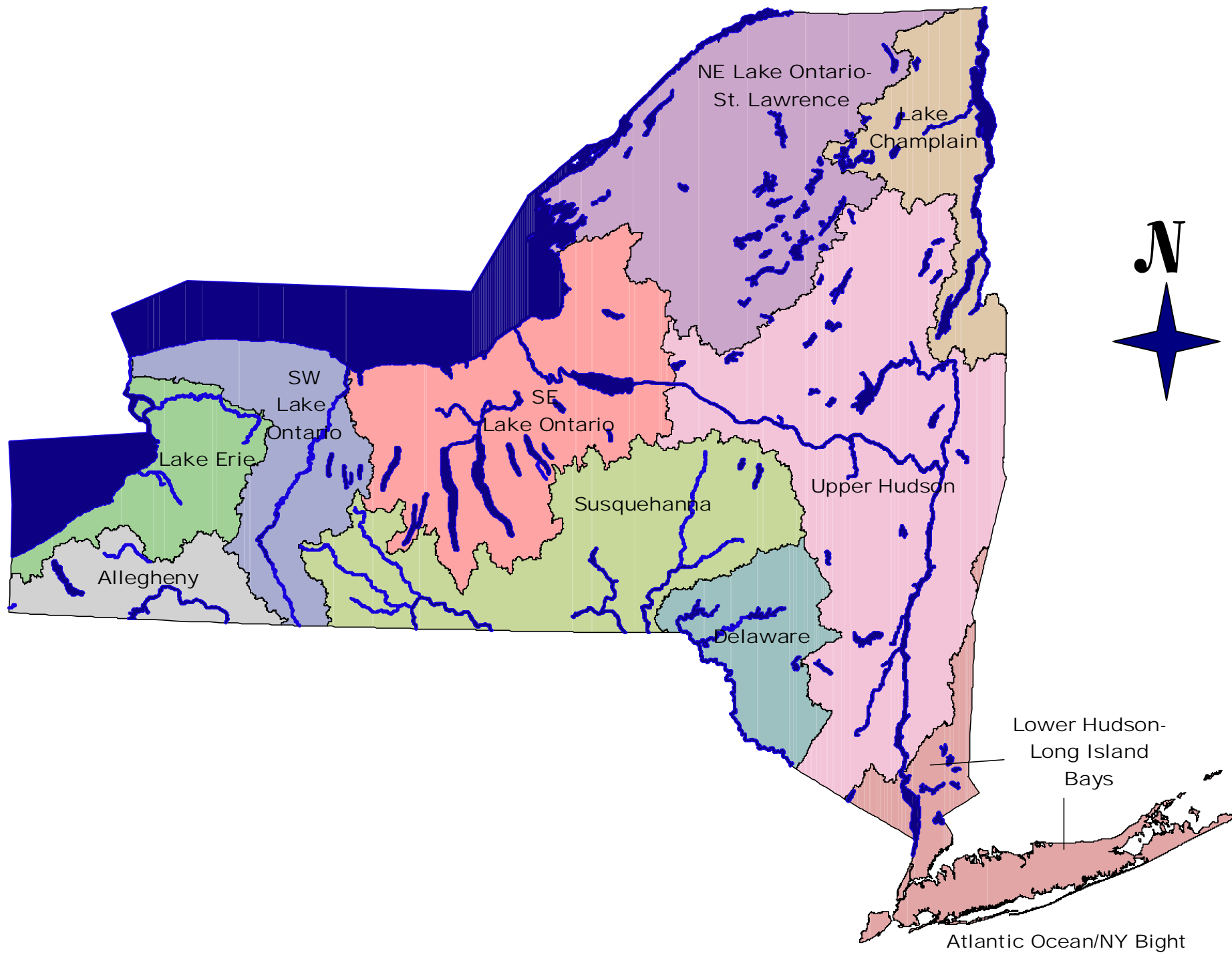
User Groups

- Trout Unlimited
- Marine Resources Advisory Council
- Others

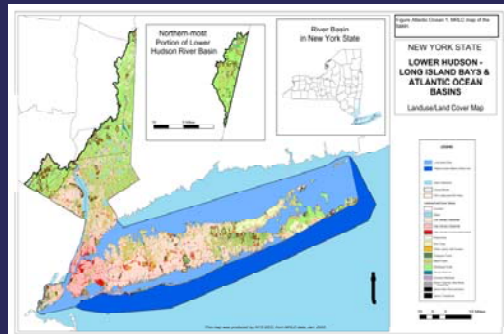


CWCS Structure

- Organized by major watersheds of the state
- Species information analyzed by each watershed
 - List species occurring in the basin
 - List critical habitats of the basin
 - Priority conservation actions in the basin
- Information from other planning documents reviewed and included.



Multi-step review



- Species review
 - Subject experts
 - Conservation/ sportsmen's groups
- Geographic review
 - Watershed analysis
 - Watershed review teams
- Statewide review
 - Partnership group



Highlights of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Full List)

- Birds (118)
- Freshwater fish (40)
- Marine & Diadromous fish (51)
 - Forage species
 - Anadromous fish
 - Sharks, skates, rays
- Invertebrates
 - Mollusks (59)
 - Insects (197)
 - Crustacea (7)
- Mammals (21)
- Herpetofauna (44)

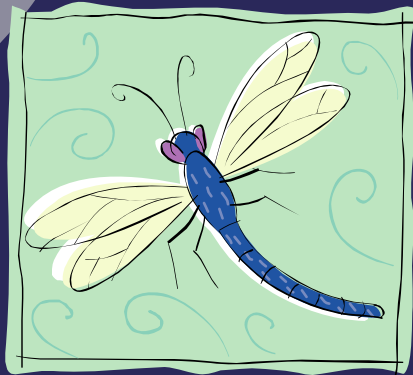
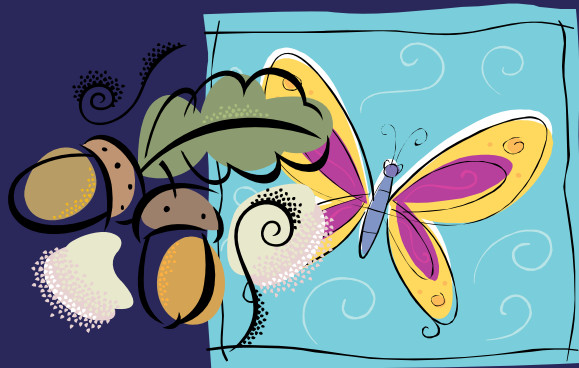


Outcomes – Conservation Recommendations

- Data Collection
- Planning
- Management and Restoration
- Land Protection
- Regulatory and Legislative
- Information Dissemination
- Incentives



Outcomes – Policy and Practice



- Moving away from single species management.
- Integrating fish and wildlife management with environmental quality.
- Dealing with species metapopulations
- Integrating fish and wildlife disciplines through habitat management.



Linkages



Current Policy Linkages

- Recommendation in 2006 OSCP to implement CWCS and link into land conservation priorities
- Limited linkage currently due to tandem development of OSCP and CWCS



Ongoing Practice Linkages

- Implementation of Plans by DEC staff
 - Public and private land stewardship
 - Land conservation tools
 - Land conservation priorities
- Outreach to land trusts and other conservation organizations
 - New York State Conservation Partnership Program



Linkages in the Future

- Further linkage of CWCS and OSCP
 - CWCS information provided to RACs for decision making on priority projects in OSCP
 - Proactive shift in conservation efforts



Information

www.dec.ny.gov
Open Space Plan

- www.dec.ny.gov/lands/317.html

CWCS

- <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30483.html>

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Carpenters Falls