

Table 1 - Mandated Open Space Protection

Open Space Land in New York State Protected by Government Ownership, Regulation, and Pre-zoning Regional Designations According to the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan *

The following list is prepared from the final 2006 New State Open Space Conservation Plan. The plan also cites open space protection under the voluntary farmland (Agricultural Areas and Agricultural Districts) and forestland (Real Property Tax Law 480 and 480-a) protection programs.

1. Preservation and Park Land Owned and Preserved by Government in New York State:

DEC - Forest Preserve 3,000,000 ac.; State Forest, Reforestation & Multiple Use 776,000 ac.; Wildlife Management 190,000 ac.; Conservation Easements 690,000 ac.

DEC owns 3,966,000 acres in fee simple, 690,000 in conservation easements, or a grand total of 4,656,000 acres. **

OPRHP - State Parks 318,000 ac., Historic Sites 7,000 ac.; totaling 325,000 ac. in fee simple.

NYS Thruway Authority - Barge Canal Lands 24,000 ac., Reservoirs 12,000 ac.; totaling 36,000 acres in fee simple.

Federal Government - Wildlife Refuges, Historic Sites, 140,000 ac.; National Forest 16,000 ac.; totaling 156,000 acres (assumed in fee simple).

Local Government - County 100,000 ac., City/Village 51,000 ac., Town 45,500 ac.; totaling 196,500 acres (assumed in fee simple).

NYC Watershed - Fee 50,000 ac., Conservation Easements 26,000

NYS Agriculture and Markets - Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) 41,000 ac.

Totals - New York State Open Space Land Protected by Deed:
(Total land in New York State = 31,106,541 acres)

Total State-owned fee simple open space land = 4,327,000 acres

Total under State conservation easement land = 731,000 acres

Combined total State-owned fee simple & conservation easement/PDR open space land = 5,058,000 acres.

Total government-owned fee simple open space land = 4,729,500 acres

Combined total government-owned fee simple & conservation easement/PDR open space land = 5,486,500 acres.

2. Additional Open Space Land Preserved by Statute or Environmental Regulatory Programs:

Wetlands – Vegetated tidal 25,000 ac., Freshwater 2,500,000 ac.; totaling 2,525,000 ac.

Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers - 1,349 miles

Aquifer Recharge Areas under Environmental Conservation Law, no acreage published

Protection of Waters under Environmental Conservation Law (streambanks, impoundments, docks, excavation & filling), no mileage published.

Floodplain Protection under Federal National Flood Insurance Program – no acreage published.

Coastal Erosion Hazard Areas – 562 miles

Designated Significant Coastal Fish & Wildlife Habitats – 246 miles

Natural Heritage Program — DEC/The Nature Conservancy partnership mapping rare species, habitats - no acreage published

Important Bird Areas and Bird Conservation Areas in partnership with National Audubon Society (major new program in Open Space Conservation Plan)– no acreage published

3. Inalienable, Privately Protected Open Space Land

Land trust-owned open space fee simple & conservation easement land – 185,000 acres

4. Designated State & Federal Areas with Pre-regulatory Significance (Include Railway Acquisition Programs)

State Heritage Areas – 18 Heritage Areas

National Heritage Areas – Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (includes entire length of Erie Canal, Finger Lakes area canals, canals to Lake Ontario and Champlain Canalway corridor) & Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (entire acreage of all counties abutting Hudson River from Erie Canal system to New York City line)

Notes:

* Major omissions exist in the section of the 2006 Open Space Conservation Plan chapter entitled “Summary of Resource Inventories...” (which is required by statute), especially the regulatory jurisdiction of the governor-appointed Adirondack Park Agency, which strictly controls the vast majority of private land in the Adirondack region, designated with the Adirondack Forest Preserve land as the 6,000,000-acre Adirondack Park. Also omitted are the lands regulated by the state-designated Long Island Pine Barrens Commission and the entire New York City watershed, which comprises much of the Catskill Mountain region and Putnam County and is strictly regulated by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. Among other controlling agencies that were omitted, interstate and federal entities regulate the Susquehanna watershed, Lake Ontario region, and Great Lakes basin (including the St. Lawrence Seaway, Lake George, and Lake Champlain).

** The 2006 Open Space Conservation Plan does not break down the totals between the Adirondack and the Catskill Forest Preserves any differently than the 2002 breakdown. Assuming that the published figures are accurate, an unverified estimate would be to take the same proportion of the 690,000 acre total easement lands in each preserve as the proportion of fee simple lands. Since the 690,000-acre conservation easement acreage is said to include the International Paper Co. acquisition (257,000 acres total), which is still in progress and involves all but 2,000 acres in conservation easements, then this form of title is largely in the Adirondack Forest Preserve, perhaps 625,000 acres.