

## The New York State Conservation Partnership Program

In 2018, the Land Trust Alliance and New York land trust community are celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the New York State Conservation Partnership Program, funded through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). To date, the Conservation Partnership Program has invested \$14.9 million to strengthen a variety of land trust programs and services across the state. This funding has leveraged \$17 million in additional local support for initiatives and projects ranging from community gardens to landscape-scale land conservation collaborations.

New York is a national leader with 85+ land trusts operating across the state. In all, these organizations have permanently conserved over 2.1 million acres through conservation easements, direct land acquisition and transfers to local communities and the state of New York.

### Looking Ahead

- **Governor Cuomo's 2018-19 Budget Proposal includes \$300 million for the Environmental Protection Fund, including \$2.5 million for the New York State Conservation Partnership Program.**
- **We support and applaud this strong investment in environmental protection and community-supported conservation.** Sustained funding is necessary to ensure that local communities can meet growing demand for clean water, farmland for local food, access to outdoor recreation, and habitat for wildlife.

### Overview

- The Conservation Partnership Program provides competitive, matching grants through the Environmental Protection Fund in order to leverage local efforts and funding to develop land conservation, stewardship and community outreach programs. As well, the program enables local organizations to hire staff and interns, increasing the professionalization amongst New York's 90+ land trusts.
- The 2016 New York State Open Space Conservation Plan provides a forward-looking blueprint for investments that protect water quality, preserve wildlife habitat, and enhance opportunities for healthy outdoor recreation. The plan recognizes a central role for New York land trusts as allies, partners and advocates for community-based, collaborative land conservation.
- A comprehensive program evaluation in 2013 concluded that the Conservation Partnership Program's investments and approach have been "transformational" for the land trust sector across the state.
- This EPF program is a model of efficiency: appropriated dollars are awarded annually in coordination with the state Department of Environmental Conservation, delivering tangible outcomes for communities and directly advancing New York's Open Space Conservation Plan.
- Land trusts understand their role in advancing the state's open space and public access priorities as well as regional economic development goals tied to water quality, farming, forestry, outdoor recreation, tourism, climate resilience, community health.

### About the Land Trust Alliance

The mission of the Land Trust Alliance is to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance's services and programs serve over 1,000 land trusts nationwide, including 85+ local and regional organizations around New York state. The Alliance is based in Washington DC and maintains a New York program office in Saratoga Springs.

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# NEW YORK



**2,729,829**

Total acres protected

**87**

Number of active land trusts

**30**

Number of accredited land trusts



- 294 full-time and 122 part-time staff
- 1,057 board members
- 9,724 volunteers
- 73,898 members/financial supporters

## Acres of Land Protected

	2010	2015
Under easement	618,481	706,534
Owned	483,686	505,275
Acquired and reconveyed	902,151	976,984
Protected by other means	359,526	541,036
Total acres protected	2,363,842	2,729,829

A conservation easement (also known as a conservation restriction or conservation agreement) is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Acres conserved by other means refers to land protected as a result of the activities of the land trust, but which the land trust did not directly acquire in fee or under easement. In some instances, the total may be greater than the sum of the separate categories due to organizations that provided total acres not broken down by category.

## Percent of Conserved Land

Held by an accredited land trust (i.e., total acres under easement and owned)



## Land Service Area Breakdown

(Respondents could select more than one category)



**25%**  
URBAN



**41%**  
SUBURBAN



**78%**  
RURAL



## Public Access

Acres owned by land trusts with public access

**88%**

Number of visitors to land trust properties per year

**487,952**

Every parcel of land conserved by land trusts provides a benefit to the public. While the majority of land owned by Alliance-member land trusts allow public access for outdoor recreation and educational uses, not all land is suitable for public access. For example, when protecting sensitive habitats for wildlife or plant species, public access could damage the resource that is being protected. If a land trust owns working lands—farms, ranches, or forest land—that are under active management, it may not be safe or consistent with resource management to provide public access. Public access figures are estimated, reflecting data from Alliance-member land trusts.

## TOP 3 Conservation Priorities

- 1** Important natural areas or wildlife habitats
- 2** Water quality, including wetlands
- 3** Recreation lands

## Land Trust Maturity



Oldest: 1931



Youngest: 2014



Median age: 25