

# Creating A Culture Of Conservation



New York has an incredible land conservation history, from Theodore Roosevelt to Nelson Rockefeller. However, what has occurred in the past five years has been phenomenal. New York state, over that time period, has invested more than \$300 million in land acquisition and added more than 300,000 acres of land to be protected by the state.

This program has had great successes from Niagara Falls to Montauk. The list includes protection of the Long Island Pine Barrens to acquisition of Sterling Forest, to additions to the Catskill Preserve and Hudson Valley Greenway, to expansion of Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, to the historic Adirondack Land Initiative including the Whitney tract, Champion Lands and miles of Lake George shoreline.

The good news is that with the ink barely dry on some of these deals, Governor Pataki has announced the permanent protection of an additional 26,500 acres of International Paper Land in the Adirondacks. Furthermore, the governor announced in his budget address a permanent \$25 million increase to the Environmental Protection Fund with the bulk of additional funds going to land protection. The annual Environmental Protection Fund allocation to land protection would increase from approximately \$32 million to close to \$60 million annually. The total Environmental Protection Fund would be at \$150 million annually, as proposed in the Executive Budget.

Now, if the story ended there, we would have a lot to celebrate with these historic, permanent funding levels for land protection. Well, there is more. The Assembly, under the leadership of Richard Brodsky, and the state Senate, under the leadership of Carl Marcellino, are working to build upon Pataki's proposal and increase land protection funding further. In addition, the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund will have meaningful dollars earmarked for New York for the first time in many years to match some of these state funds for open space protection.

Our greatest challenge will be to sustain our advocacy for these programs and make sure support for land protection remains a bipartisan issue.

Fifty years from now, our children could look back on the mid-1990s to the year 2010 and beyond as the most significant era of land conservation in the state's history. Our advocacy each year will determine if this prediction comes true. Now that's truly for the birds, as well as for other critters and us humans.

In conservation,

David J. Miller  
Executive Director

## AUDUBON NEW YORK'S UPCOMING EVENTS

### March 31-April 1

Audubon Council of New York State's Spring Meeting will be held in Elmira. 2001 Legislative Resolutions, the annual Hoyt Award Dinner, workshops and business meetings are on the agenda. For further information, contact Audubon New York at (518) 869-9731.

### April 23

Smart Growth Conference 2001 at the Empire State Plaza in Albany. Call Alison Heaphy at (518) 869-9731 for more information, or check out Audubon New York's website, <http://ny.audubon.org>.

### April 28

Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary Gala at the Nassau Contry Club, in Glen Cove on Long Island. To purchase tickets or to receive information on leadership packages, call Marilyn England or Devon Daniel at TRS at (516) 922-3200.

### May 1-May 25

Birdathons will be held throughout the

month. For more information about Capital District Birdathons, call (518) 869-9731. In other regions, contact your local chapter.

### May 2-3

The conference, Acid Rain: Are the Problems Solved?, will be held at the Holiday Inn Capitol in Washington, D.C. Call the Center for Environmental Information Inc., (716) 262-2870 or (716) 262-4156; <http://www.awa.com/nature/cei>.

### Date to be decided

Corporate Gala will occur at Chelsea Piers. The date and time are to be announced. Call (518) 869-9731 for more information.

### Coming this spring

The third round of revisions to the state open space conservation plan will be published this spring, and a statewide round of public hearings will follow. For information about the latest draft of the open space plan and specific hearing dates and locations, go to the state DEC web page at [www.dec.state.ny.us](http://www.dec.state.ny.us).



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