



PRESS RELEASE
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New Special Report: "20% in 2023: An Assessment of the New York State 30 by 30 Act"

Across New York State 6,220,150 acres, some 20% of the state, have been protected by state and local governments, private organizations, and the federal government, and another 3,190,806 acres need to be protected to meet the 30 by 30 goal.

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North Creek, NY. In 2022, Governor Kathy Hochul signed the “30 by 30” law that establishes a conservation goal for New York State of protecting 30% of the State’s “lands and inland waters” by the year 2030. This landmark environmental protection legislation enjoyed broad bipartisan support, passing the State Senate by a vote of 58 to 3, and the State Assembly by a vote of 137 to 8. The 30 by 30 law commits New York to do its part to reach a similar national goal established by President Joe Biden in 2021, to protect 30% of the nation’s lands and waters by 2030, and is a major step forward to protect New York’s open spaces, forests, and wetlands, which are cornerstones of the State’s long-term climate resilience and mitigation efforts.

Protect the Adirondacks released a new special report *20% in 2023: An Assessment of the New York State 30 by 30 Act* that assessed the level of protected lands and waters in New York State in 2023, the types of lands protected, what constitutes protected lands, and the amount of land that needs to be protected by 2030 to reach the goal of protecting 30% of New York State’s lands and waters as set out in the 30 by 30 Act.

See the complete report here: <https://www.protectadks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Protect-the-Adirondacks-30-by-30-Report-web.pdf>

New York State encompasses 31,369,853 acres of land and inland waters. Protect the Adirondacks’ analysis concludes that 6,220,150 acres of lands and waters are currently

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protected in a variety of ways, creating a legacy and heritage of ambitious land conservation. These wild places include 2.9 million acres of Forest Preserve in the Adirondack Park and Catskill Park; over 850,000 acres of state-held conservation easements; over 700,000 acres of State Forests; nearly 350,000 acres of State parklands; and over 235,000 acres of municipal park lands, county forests, and watershed lands. Other protected areas include conservation easements and lands owned by land trusts and conservation organizations, totaling approximately 500,000 acres, and agricultural easements held by the State totaling over 100,000 acres. Changes to the State's Freshwater Wetlands Act in 2022 could also add significant wetland acreage to protected areas in New York. The Department of Environmental Conservation has a deadline of July 1, 2024 to release a report about how to achieve the goals in the 30 by 30 Act.

In order to reach the goal of protecting 30% of New York's lands and waters, a total of 9,410,956 acres, some 3,190,806 acres will need to be protected by 2030. Reaching this goal will be a monumental challenge for New York State and requires a sustained commitment from State leaders, State agencies, land trusts and conservation organizations, and local governments in all corners of the state.

"The 30 by 30 report set out an ambitious goal for New York, in concert with the federal government and many other states," said Charles Clusen, Chair of Protect the Adirondacks. "Meeting this goal is vital for mitigating climate change impacts and for preserving our heritage and open spaces for future generations of New Yorkers to enjoy."

The new special report also lays out recommendations for needed actions by the State of New York and includes tables for all 62 counties that details the types of lands and total acreages currently protected in each county.

"Protect the Adirondacks identified 12 types of land ownerships across New York that enjoy permanently conserved status. From the Forest Preserve to state parks to conservation easements to county forests and municipal parks to lands protected by land trusts and conservation organizations, over 6.2 million acres have been protected. The goal now is to focus on a variety of strategies that include existing and new land protection programs," said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

"There is a path for achieving the goal of the 30 by 30 Act , and it requires state leaders, state government, private conservation organizations, land trusts, and local governments across New York to work together to tackle this monumental challenge," said Claudia Braymer, Deputy Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks is an IRS-approved non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park. Our mission is to protect the Adirondack Park's wild character for current and future generations. PROTECT pursues this mission through a combination of advocacy, grassroots organizing, independent public oversight, research, water quality monitoring, education, and legal action. Protect the Adirondacks was formed in 2009 as the result of a merger between two long-standing environmental conservation groups in the Adirondack Park,

the Resident's Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (est. 1991) and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (est. 1901).

Protect the Adirondacks is managed by a 22-member Board of Directors of Adirondack leaders with expertise in environmental law, local government, Adirondack environmental and cultural history, state agency management, and small business. Protect the Adirondacks maintains an office in a 100% energy efficient, solar-and wind-powered office in Johnsbury in the central Adirondacks. For more information see www.protectadks.org and @ProtectAdkPark.

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