



PRESS RELEASE
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Protect the Adirondacks Applauds Historic Environmental Funding in New York State Budget

The New York State Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 marks a major investment in the Adirondack Park, funding numerous critical needs and institutions that will protect the environment and meeting challenges around diversity and public lands management.

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Albany, NY — Protect the Adirondacks, Inc. (PROTECT) today praised Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Senate, and the Assembly for enacting a landmark state budget that delivers critical investments in conservation, land stewardship, and environmental justice. The new State Budget for FY2026 being finalized in the State Legislature provides significant funding for Adirondack programs that will meet key challenges for the Adirondack Park and Adirondack communities.

“We’re thankful to Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Deborah Glick and the Assembly for leading the charge on the need to include funding for a carrying capacity study of the Saranac Chain of Lakes, and we’re glad that Governor Hochul, Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Pete Harckham, and the Senate agreed that this study needed to be funded through the State Budget” said Claudia Braymer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

“This is a major victory for New York’s environment and future generations,” said Christopher Amato, Conservation Director and Counsel. “We applaud Governor Hochul, the Senate, and the Assembly for this landmark budget that boosts the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) to \$425 million and provides desperately needed funding for land conservation, acquisition, and stewardship of our precious state lands.”

The newly approved budget includes a \$1 million allocation for a carrying capacity study of the Saranac Chain of Lakes, an increasingly popular recreation destination in the Adirondacks. The study will assess sustainable use levels to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and visitor experiences.

Protect the Adirondacks!
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The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is a cornerstone of New York's conservation efforts, supporting programs ranging from open space preservation and state land stewardship to climate resilience, research and environmental education. This year's EPF includes targeted funding for programs that are essential to the long-term protection of the Adirondack Park and its communities, including:

- \$42 million for land conservation and acquisition;
- \$10 million for state land stewardship, including \$10 million for Adirondack and Catskill Wilderness;
- \$2 million for the Survey of Climate Change in Adirondack Lake Ecosystems (SCALE);
- \$1 million for a Carrying Capacity Study of Saranac Chain of Lakes;
- \$1.25 million for the Timbuctoo Summer Climate and Careers Institute;
- \$250,000 each for the Paul Smith's, Newcomb, ADK, and Catskills visitors centers;
- \$750,000 for AARCH for management of Camp Santanoni;
- \$200,000 to the Adirondack Watershed Institute;
- \$200,000 to the Whiteface Atmospheric Research Station;
- \$1.5 million for the SUNY ESF Applied Forestry Institute.

In other budget sections, the Clean Water Fund was funded at \$500 million, \$1 million for the African-American Experience exhibit at the Adirondack Experience in Blue Mountain Lake, and funding for the Adirondack Diversity Initiative.

"Special thanks are due to Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Deborah Glick and Senate Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Pete Harckham for championing this important investment in the EPF," said Claudia Braymer.

In addition to land protection efforts, the EPF continues to support diversity initiatives and scientific research — a move Protect the Adirondacks says is especially vital. "We are especially pleased that during this time of increasing federal attacks on diversity initiatives and science, New York remains committed to inclusion and evidence-based policymaking," said Christopher Amato.

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 19-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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