

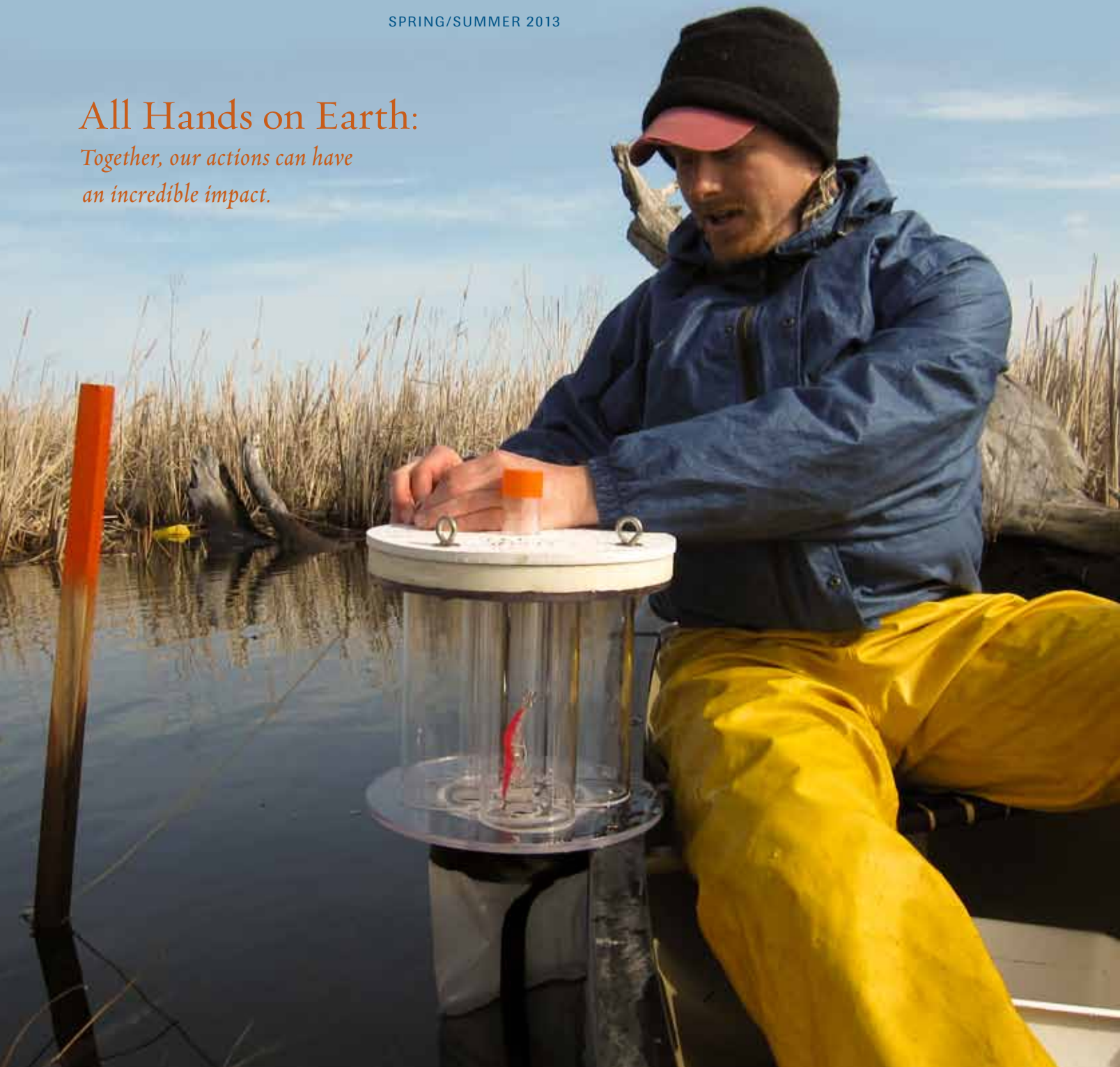
Nature

central & western new york

SPRING/SUMMER 2013

All Hands on Earth:

*Together, our actions can have
an incredible impact.*





Board Chair Clayton Millard and Chapter Director Jim Howe. © JAN MILLER/TNC.

It's no secret that nature provides us with amazing goods and services. Wetlands filter our water and absorb storm surges. Forests remove CO₂ and pump oxygen into the atmosphere. Every day, lands and waters provide us with food and fiber.

Nature works hard for us. And as a society, we need to do better at acknowledging and sustaining the myriad services it generates—here in Central and Western New York and around the world. Still, just as we work to protect these life-essential benefits, we should also take time to celebrate the countless ways nature makes our lives richer and fuller.

We hope this newsletter will help you do both. This issue features some of the results you've made possible. But you'll also discover opportunities to get outside and connect with your family, your neighbors and *your* Nature Conservancy.

What's needed to protect and restore local natural resources? Greater awareness? More funding? Better laws? Yes, yes and yes. Whether you join us for a work day, visit a preserve, connect with us on Facebook or write a check to The Nature Conservancy, your support and involvement are critical.

We're fond of saying that partnerships are fundamental to our success. You—our members—will always be our most important partners.

Jim Howe
Clayton Millard

Cover: Darran Crabtree, director of conservation programs, surveys for newly born northern pike in Lakeview Wildlife Management Area © MAT LEVINE/TNC.

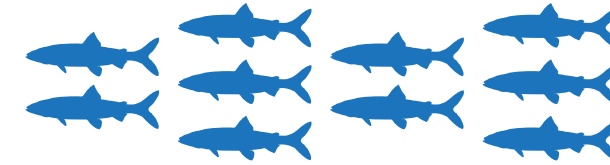
YOUR IMPACT

FRESH WATER

With your help, we're ensuring there is clean water, enough water and connected waters for all who depend on them.

1,500

POUNDS OF WATER CHESTNUT removed from Eastern Lake Ontario streams and bays.



10,000

ONE-YEAR-OLD CISCO, an essential prey species for salmon and lake trout, were released into Irondequoit Bay by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and U.S. Geological Survey as a result of our research.



8 COMMUNITIES

in Northern New York will benefit from a new payment in lieu of taxes program in our 15,000-acre Tug Hill Conservation Area.

LAND You've helped us protect nearly 100,000 acres in Central and Western New York, including a 27,000-acre network of preserves. We care for these lands through science-based stewardship while adding strategic new parcels.



19,778

TREES PROTECTED LAST YEAR in a 107-acre oak-hickory forest near Canandaigua Lake through a purchase made possible by a grant from TD Bank.



\$30 MILLION

IN PUBLIC FUNDING SECURED for invasive species prevention, early detection and strategic management in the Finger Lakes and throughout New York.

COASTS With your help, we're restoring coastal habitats and assisting people and nature in adapting to the impacts of climate change.

64,000

ACRES OF COASTAL WETLANDS in Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River function as the lungs of the lake and help protect shoreline communities. We're restoring the natural characteristics that keep these wetlands healthy.



40%

MORE YOUNG NORTHERN PIKE in the lower St. Lawrence River if more natural levels and flows are restored in Lake Ontario.



2 DOLLARS IN ECONOMIC BENEFITS to the economy of the Great Lakes region are generated from each dollar invested in coastal restoration.



\$1 MILLION secured through a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant to acquire 480 acres along Sodus Bay.

INTERNATIONAL

Thanks to you, we share our expertise and resources with the world to help combat environmental problems globally.

1st NATURE CONSERVANCY PROJECT DIRECTOR for Lake Tanganyika in Tanzania hired thanks to Central and Western New York supporters.



5 Ways to Enjoy Nature in

Central & Western New York

Feeling the call of the wild? We've selected some hidden treasures that will show you a secret side of our region. So grab your outdoor gear, and get out there!

ON THE WEB »

Discover more lands you've helped protect at nature.org/cwnypreserves

Search for Flowers and Fossils in Jefferson

Visit New York's only natural prairie, a landscape unlike any other in the Northeast. Characterized by windswept vegetation, Chaumont Barrens is home to rare and uncommon plants like prairie smoke, reindeer lichen and yellow lady's slipper. The preserve also features a self-guided, 1.7-mile trail. Look closely as you walk! The bedrock found throughout Chaumont Barrens is 450 million years old, and you can sometimes find the remains of primitive marine animals, such as cephalopods.

Explore Forests and Fresh Water in Ithaca

New interpretive signs at Eldridge Wilderness will introduce you to its history and natural features—from shelf fungi, to stone walls, to pileated woodpeckers. You'll notice the forest change from second-growth hardwood with chestnut oak, shagbark hickory and white ash to an upland area that was farmed until the 1950s. You'll then hike alongside a gorge through a mature beech and sugar maple forest before discovering a grove of large hemlocks and a stream that drains into Six Mile Creek, the source of drinking water for the city of Ithaca.

Go Birding in Ellisburg

El Dorado preserve provides excellent migratory bird watching. From July through September you can see large and diverse concentrations of migratory shorebirds. Impressive groups of migrating flycatchers, warblers, vireos and sparrows can be seen from early August through early October. The preserve also offers a 1.4 mile trail and the chance to explore a beautiful, undeveloped shoreline shaped by retreating glaciers tens of thousands of years ago.

Discover Unusual Species in Rome

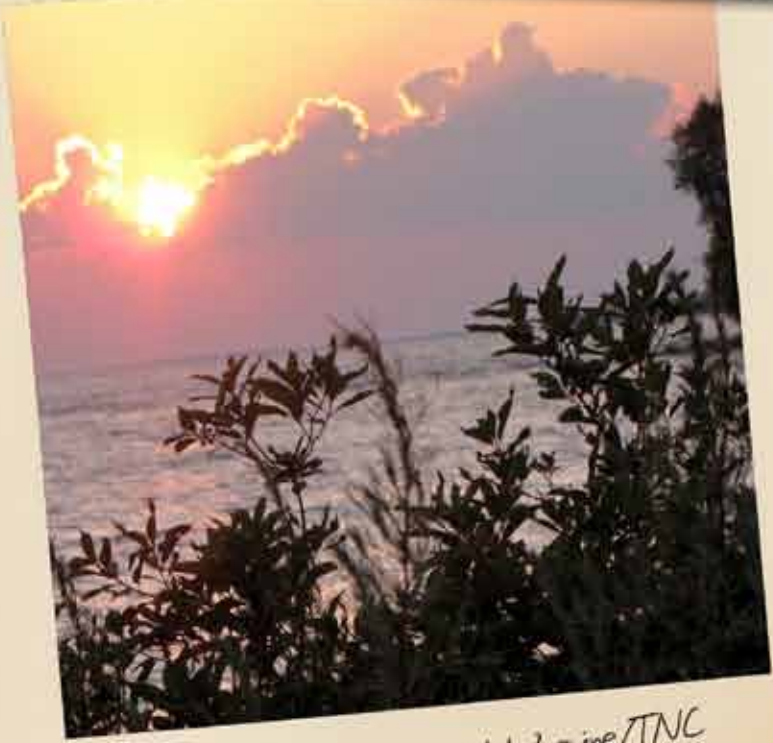
This site is one of only a handful of inland pine barrens left in the US, and gives you the chance to see rare and unusual species up close, including sphagnum moss, cinnamon ferns, grass pink orchid, wild lupine and carnivorous plants like sundew and pitcher plant. Be on the lookout for animals such as the Fisher and red-shouldered hawk. Rome Sand Plains is also a restoration site for the Frosted elfin butterfly, a threatened species in New York.



Prairie smoke at Chaumont Barrens ©Mat Levine



Eldridge Wilderness ©Ari Moore/Flickr under a Creative Commons license



El Dorado Preserve ©Mat Levine/TNC



Frosted elfin ©pondhawk/Flickr under a Creative Commons license

Trek through Canyons In Gowanda

Deer Lick preserve boasts dramatic gorges and ancient trees over 100 feet tall. You'll get striking views of the South branch of Cattaraugus Creek and catch glimpses of striking shale canyon walls. Black bear and bald eagles have been spotted here, too. Eleven miles of trails—from short, easy ventures to more challenging treks—provide something for everyone. For more rugged beauty, nearby state lands provide access to the creek bed and a unique opportunity to view deep gorge canyons from the bottom up.



Bald eagle ©Larry Keller

What's Our Fresh Water Future?

We know the ingredients of healthy lakes and rivers: abundant and diverse native fish, clean and naturally flowing waters and a healthy fringe of coastal marshes and dunes providing shoreline protection. But in many cases our rivers and lakes have been heavily altered. We can't go back to wilderness past, but with your help we can rethink some outdated decisions for a better future—and use science to work with nature rather than against it.



Above: El Dorado Preserve on Lake Ontario during high water © MAT LEVINE/TNC.

Securing New York's 'North Coast'

BY STUART GRUSKIN

At the direction of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the New York State 2100 Commission has responded swiftly to the severe damage caused by Hurricane Sandy with concrete recommendations for lessening the impact of future storms on New York's coastal communities. A proposed plan for regulating the levels of Lake Ontario offers the opportunity to apply these recommendations to our own coastline.

With storms like Sandy expected to increase in frequency as our climate changes, the report outlines a common sense path toward resilient coastlines through a combination of engineered and "living shoreline" techniques, with nature as a partner rather than an adversary.

In implementing the Commission's recommendations on New York's "north coast"—the 700-mile Great Lakes shoreline—we must recognize the critical role of natural variation in water levels in shaping and maintaining our shores.

Similar to ocean tides on the ocean shore, the natural ebb and flow of water levels in a Great Lake builds beaches and maintains healthy, diverse wetlands. Since 1960, water levels in Lake Ontario have been regulated by a dam in the St. Lawrence River. This regulation has stifled the ebb and flow of water levels, and degraded the wetlands and natural protections of a living shoreline.

A new proposed regulation plan—Plan Bv7—will partially restore the long-term cycles in Lake Ontario's water levels while continuing to dampen the extreme levels that may cause economic damage. This new plan is the essential ingredient in the "green infrastructure" of a resilient Lake Ontario coast.

Stuart Gruskin is chief conservation and external affairs officer for The Nature Conservancy in New York

ON THE WEB »

Read more about Plan Bv7, watch video testimonials and learn how you can get involved at nature.org/bv7.



We're using data collected on invasive species to develop computer models that predict the spread of aquatic invasives and help determine the best management approach. © GREG CHAPMAN.



After we restored natural features favored by fish, like meandering channels and potholes, at Lakeview Wildlife Management Area in Jefferson Co., young-of-the-year northern pike as well as largemouth bass, yellow perch and bowfin were found emigrating from the new channels. © MAT LEVINE/TNC.



LEAF interns perform essential stewardship work in Central and Western New York waters each summer while gaining exposure to environmental careers. © MAT LEVINE/TNC.

The entire Mad River Swamp region is protected by our 15,000-acre Tug Hill Conservation Area. © MAT LEVINE/TNC, AERIAL SUPPORT BY LIGHTHAWK.



Purple trillium © MAT LEVINE/TNC.



TNC's Scott Kruger and DEC's Dave Gordon check nets for spawning cisco (lake herring) in Chaumont Bay. The Conservancy is partnering with Cornell University to figure out how to bolster the Eastern Lake Ontario cisco population. © MAT LEVINE/TNC.

Conservancy Member Invites You to ‘Fold the Flock’

Five North American birds have become extinct in modern times: the great auk, the Carolina parakeet, the heath hen, the Labrador duck and the passenger pigeon.

Nature Conservancy member Andy Stern recently accompanied his brother-in-law, artist Todd McGrain, on a quest to memorialize these lost species. Stern and McGrain spent two years seeking out the locations where the birds were last seen in the wild to give them a presence in the places they once lived.

Now, Stern is on a mission to involve others in the memorial, visiting schools and other groups in Rochester and around the country to symbolically recreate a flock of passenger pigeons using an origami pattern.

Nature.org: How did this all begin—the sculptures, the journey to find these places and making this film?

Stern: Todd always had a fascination with birds. His father was a birder, and as a sculptor I think Todd was always intrigued by the shapes of birds. He spent a decade creating these large bronze sculptures of the lost birds. When we set off to try and place them where the birds were last seen, we didn't have a plan. We were just following the birds and discovering their stories as we went.

Nature.org: Now you're working on a project to build a flock of one million origami pigeons? What made you choose this unusual activity?

Stern: 2014 is the 100-year anniversary of the passenger pigeon's extinction. Our mission with The Lost Bird Project is to help people connect more deeply to the world through art. Origami fits with this goal because it's physical; you're focused and connecting with the activity. It's a way of connecting to the loss, too.

“Our mission with The Lost Bird Project is to help people connect more deeply to the world through art.”

—Andy Stern

Nature.org: How does The Nature Conservancy's work connect to this project?

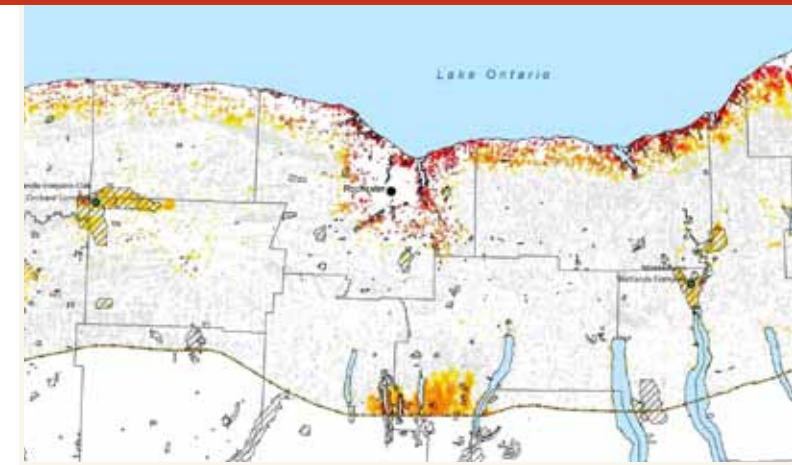
Stern: The Nature Conservancy is working here in New York and around the world to figure out more about where birds go and the habitats they need for survival (see sidebar). But your work goes beyond birds. The Conservancy is also helping to prevent losses of fish and many other species, and you are helping connect people to nature. That's my goal, too.

Nature.org: What is your ultimate hope for the project?

My dream is to get schools and other groups across the country engaged in Fold the Flock. My hope is that by connecting people with these birds' stories we'll collectively gain a new perspective about fragility. It was once unbelievable this species would vanish because they were estimated to number in the billions. There's still much we don't know about the consequences of losses like this. But we know the world is less without them.

ON THE WEB »

For a schedule of screenings of The Lost Bird Project, visit lostbirdfilm.org.



You Can Help Migratory Birds in Central and Western New York

People depend on the great migrations of birds. Migratory birds play an important role in seed dispersal and pollination, and they aid agriculture by eating insect pests. They also inspire and amaze us, connecting us to the natural world in our backyards and much further away. But migration is extremely difficult. For some species, 85 percent of adult bird mortality occurs during migration.

With the help of 50 skilled volunteer birders, The Nature Conservancy conducted a three-year study to discover exactly where migratory birds in the Lake Ontario watershed go. Now, we are disseminating our findings to help protect a network of “stopover” locations along their migratory pathways.

With \$20,000 in funding for our migratory bird project, The Nature Conservancy can:

- Share the results and an accompanying user guide with natural resource managers and landowners
- Work with agencies to get the results incorporated into shoreline management and permitting, energy siting, land management decisions and open space planning
- Conduct outreach to individual, corporate and municipal landowners to enlist their help in protecting and managing important stopover sites.

Above: Areas in yellow, orange and red are predicted to have high abundance and diversity of migratory birds during spring and fall migrations.

GET INVOLVED

See the study results at nature.org/nybirds. To support this project, contact Jan Miller at jan_miller@tnc.org or (585) 546-8030 x 28.



Fold the Flock at the Harley School in Rochester. Download an origami pattern at foldtheflock.org. © FRAN LAKS/LOST BIRD PROJECT.



Take Action for Nature

The Nature Conservancy in Central and Western New York invites you to deepen your engagement with conservation this summer. Take our suggestions of ways to get involved or just get inspired to create your own nature-centric activities. Get started at nature.org/cwny!

JOIN A WORK DAY

This summer, we'll continue to cultivate the next generation of environmental leaders through our LEAF program, hosting three students as they support science and stewardship. We need your help in the field too (see next page)!



© MAT LEVINE/TNC

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Donating is quick, easy and effective. If every member returned \$25 in the enclosed envelope, we could raise more than \$350,000 for nature!



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SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

We depend on striking images to communicate how conservation benefits people and nature in Central and Western New York. Please consider sharing your photos with us and help tell our story!



© NICK HALL

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Join The Nature Conservancy's New York facebook fan page for photos, events, breaking news and discussions on everything nature in New York.



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Work Days

**June 1, 9:00 am
Cattaraugus County**
Deer Lick: Spring cleanup and trail work. (*Rain date: Saturday, June 15*)

June 12, 9:00 am • Oneida County
Rome Sand Plains: Lupine planting to help restore populations of wild blue lupine.

**September 21, 9:00 am
Monroe County**
Thousand Acre Swamp: Autumn cleanup and winter preparation.

**September 12, 9:00 am
Oneida County**
Rome Sand Plains: Trash cleanup.

**September 14, 9:00 am
Jefferson County**
El Dorado Preserve and Bird Sanctuary: Sandy beach cleanup.

To register for work days, contact Mary Ripka at mripka@tnc.org or (315) 387-3600 See a full list of hikes and other events at nature.org/nyeevents

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1148.5 lbs solid waste not generated

2,261 lbs net greenhouse gases prevented



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Celebrating Your Impact for Nature and People

