



Bill Ulfelder © Theo Morrison

From Our Executive Director

New Yorkers want solutions. At The Nature Conservancy we're doing all we can to provide them—mitigating climate change to keep ocean temperatures from rising, cleaning Long Island's waters and creating resilient communities. Two big wins this past year were the Public Service Commission's approval of the Clean Energy Standard, mandating that 50% of New York's electricity comes from renewable sources by 2030, and the state's \$1.5 billion commitment to environmental funding over the next five years to improve clean water; conserve working farms, forests and parks; and help coasts serve as a natural defense against sea level rise and storm surges for future generations. As we round the corner on a new year, I am filled with pride when thinking about all we've achieved together and excited about what the coming year holds. Thank you for your support of our work, making it possible to deliver these important solutions!

Bill Ulfelder, Executive Director

DONATIONS:

Go to nature.org/nydonate to donate. Or you can email natureny@tnc.org for more information.



Scene from low lying Mastic Beach on Long Island © Red Vault Productions

Flood-Smart Communities

Learning to adapt to a changing climate is challenging, especially for communities along coasts and large water bodies. The Nature Conservancy is dedicated to helping these communities build resiliency in areas that are vulnerable to flooding while considering the long-term health of the natural environment. However, a one-size-fits-all solution doesn't exist, and even within New York State, our strategies vary depending on the needs of the local communities and environments.

For instance, in the towns of Hilton, Greece and Parma, which share Lake Ontario tributaries and regularly experience flooding, we have formed a council comprised of local municipal representatives to empower local governments to make flood-smart decisions. The results have been inspiring. Our data is being used to demonstrate the urgency of the issue to elected officials. With an enhanced understanding of how connected their ecosystems are, the representatives have also developed a newfound commitment to not only protecting their own towns, but to

considering the wellbeing of neighboring towns.

Places like Hilton, Greece and Parma have a number of options to weigh when determining how to best increase resiliency. However, not all communities have that luxury. In Mastic Beach on Long Island, you'll find houses built before modern building codes existed—on small lots near the water's edge. Although some homes have been elevated, it has become clear that solution won't be sustainable in the low lying areas where tidal flooding is worsened by rising sea levels. Together with the state and local community, the Conservancy successfully implemented a voluntary buy-out program returning developed land back to nature. The goal is to strategically expand programs like this that reduce risk to people while enhancing natural systems to increase resiliency.

If we keep development out of flood-prone areas, fully utilize green infrastructure like wetlands or install rain gardens to absorb storm water, we can create flood-smart communities, where everyone—from farmers to scientists to teachers to outdoor enthusiasts—can thrive.



(clockwise) Catching a wave on Long Island © Kenton Rowe; New York Board of Trustees Chair, Dan Chung © Jonathan Grassi; Woman in Haiti transports mangrove seedlings to a nursery © Tim Calver

Diving Deeper

Meet New York Board of Trustees Chair and Oceans Enthusiast, Dan Chung

What motivates you to support The Nature Conservancy? The Nature Conservancy’s goal is to create a better, healthier, more prosperous and resilient world by protecting and investing in nature. I am personally committed to this goal and consider it an obligation, as a business leader, a New Yorker and as a father. It is, by far, my highest philanthropic priority.

What Conservancy project inspires you? The Conservancy is tackling the biggest environmental and social issues of our time on a local and global level. Locally, the Conservancy is helping reduce nitrogen pollution in Long Island’s bays and harbors, where my family and so many friends enjoy swimming, fishing and kayaking, and have witnessed the devastating effects of excess nitrogen. Globally, I’m inspired by the Conservancy’s efforts to protect the communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and pollution. For instance, Conservancy scientists are providing expertise to assess the health of coral reefs in the Caribbean and restoring reefs for the communities that depend on them.

If you could solve one environmental issue, what would it be? Our oceans are in crisis and too little is being done globally to save them. First, we must recognize the inter-connectedness of coral reefs, water quality, fisheries management, tourism and protected areas management. I am proud to support The Nature Conservancy’s work to protect and sustain coastal communities.

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NEW YORK

1 Billion

The number of gallons per day of fresh, clean water distributed to New York City from large reservoirs upstate.

New York City Department of Environmental Protection



Boy enjoys a lake swim © Michael D-L Jordan

Helping New Yorkers Sip and Swim Safely

One of the things that New Yorkers can count on is an abundant supply of clean, fresh water. Or can they? For three days in 2014, almost a half-million people on the shores of Lake Erie—one of the world’s greatest freshwater resources—found the water from their faucets unsafe. Could a toxic algae bloom like the one that left people without tap water in Toledo, Ohio, happen in New York? In two Finger Lakes, we are working alongside local watershed groups to restore wetlands and reconnect stream flows to their floodplain so that nature can filter out sediment and nutrients before flows reach the lakes. If successful, these projects will provide a model for water quality improvement strategies in other lakes, ensuring that clean water remains available to local communities.