



Bill Ulfelder © Theo Morrison

Thoughts from the Executive Director

When Hurricane Sandy struck last year, it changed New York forever. Sandy left a wake of destruction, establishing a “new normal.” Sandy revealed just how vulnerable we are to climate change, as well as how nature—wetlands, parks, forests, dunes, reefs—plays a critical role in protecting us. Since the storm, many New Yorkers now rank climate change as their number one environmental concern. With this in mind, the Conservancy is applying powerful lessons we learned from places like South Cape May, New Jersey, where restored dunes and wetlands helped protect the community from waves and flooding during the storm. This and other examples will help guide future projects in New York, and continue influencing policy. We are using our science-based approach to conduct research in vulnerable areas of Queens and Staten Island to show how investments in nature, often combined with built infrastructure, can provide significant benefits. Right now, we have a unique opportunity to talk about disaster readiness—and we have the analyses to prove that nature should be a part of the discussion. It's this insight that will guide us to a more resilient New York.

BILL ULFELDER

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Make a donation with the enclosed envelope or at nature.org/donate.



Brooklyn Bridge Park © Jonathan Grassi

Promise to the Future

By 2050, there will be 9 billion people on Earth—and two thirds of these people will live in cities. With this in mind, The Nature Conservancy has launched an Urban Strategies initiative. By encouraging cities to maintain a healthy connection to nature, we will continue protecting key forest and water habitats, as well as mitigate the effects of climate change and improve the quality of life for billions of people.

In New York, one of our urban conservation priorities is coastal resilience. Following on the lessons learned from Hurricane Sandy, the Conservancy is developing a case study in Howard Beach to assess the effectiveness of natural infrastructure like saltwater marshes and sand dunes as safeguards against future storms. The findings will inform recommendations to local officials for new resiliency strategies. Ultimately this pilot will be one of many urban conservation projects that will bring nature closer to people and create a more sustainable world for New Yorkers to come. Learn more at nature.org/nyurban.

See For Yourself



Cape May Meadows © TNC

See natural defenses in action at South Cape May Meadows

Location: The southernmost tip of New Jersey's Cape May peninsula

Great for: Birders. This coastal preserve provides critical habitat for shorebirds. Spring is the best time to see piping plovers, least terns, and American oystercatchers.

Look for: Restored wetlands and dunes that may have helped spare surrounding towns from significant damage and flooding during Hurricane Sandy. A one-mile loop trail leads from the entrance through the wetland to the beach front, and back. The trail sits atop the wetland's levees providing a stable surface and a raised perspective for wildlife viewing.

Plan your visit: Get directions and download a trail map at nature.org/capemay.



Q&A

Meet Stevie Adams

Freshwater Specialist in New York's Central and Western chapter



What are you working on right now? My latest project, Stream Smart, Flood Safe, is about three communities coming together to tackle the challenge of living with a lot more water. Greece is a suburb of Rochester. Parma is a rural farming community. Hilton is a densely populated village. But they all share Lake Ontario tributaries and regularly experience flooding. Our goal is to help these towns become better prepared for a future with more frequent and intense storms.

What's unique about this project? It integrates both social science and conservation science methods to develop solutions. We'll look at which roads and buildings experience flooding, but we'll also explore the real-life ripple effects of damage: If my road to work is washed out, what does that mean for my business? What are the repercussions of my town firehouse or grocery store routinely flooding?

How will this impact New Yorkers? Historically, haphazard land use has caused challenging situations for flood-prone towns. As development pushes westward from Rochester, this project gives communities a chance to consider their futures and create shared, flood-ready land-use plans. This could include keeping development out of flood-prone areas, restoring green infrastructure like wetlands, or installing rain gardens to absorb storm water. We hope to generate solutions that last because they were developed with everyone's input—from transportation experts to emergency personnel to historians to farmers. If we're successful, the model could be applied across New York and beyond.

Eastern Lake Ontario © Mat Levine / TNC; Stevie Adams © TNC

News and Events



Oksana Lane looks for the right place to take blood from a songbird © Axel Baumann

SONGBIRDS: THE KEY TO AIR QUALITY?

When you think of mercury contamination, you probably think of fish. But scientists now know that mercury affects many species on land—and even the air we breathe. The Conservancy has teamed up with the Biodiversity Research Institute using innovative techniques to track mercury levels in songbirds. The data collected will help us better understand the problem of mercury pollution in New York. Watch a video at nature.org/nyairquality.

TAKE ACTION FOR LONG ISLAND'S WATER

Long Island's creeks, bays and harbors support a multi-billion dollar tourism industry and underground aquifers provide clean drinking water for its nearly 3 million residents. But increasing pollution from sewage, pesticides and toxic chemicals threaten these waters. Aging sewer and septic systems leak too much nitrogen, leading to "red tides" and other problems that choke sea life, kill fish and poison shellfish that people eat. Scientists have developed proven solutions but action is needed now to implement these fixes. We all have a good reason to make sure our water supply is clean and healthy, and we each have a part to play in protecting Long Island's water for the future. To take action, visit longislandcleanwaterpartnership.org

Get Involved

Want to know more about what The Nature Conservancy is up to in New York? There are lots of ways to connect with us!

- Email us: natureny@tnc.org
- Sign up for our free, e-newsletter: nature.org/nyemail
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- Find volunteer opportunities: nature.org/nyinvolved