



Driving the Pace of Possibility

New York Impact Report 2025



Dear Friends,

Nearly 75 years ago, a visionary group of conservationists protected Mianus River Gorge in Westchester County, New York. That 60-acre project—The Nature Conservancy’s first land deal—launched the private conservation movement, which spread across the United States and around the world.

Early champions, led by scientist Gloria Hollister Anable, proved what’s possible when people act together for nature. That same tenacious and collaborative spirit lives on today, across New York, thanks to your support.

From the mossy ravines of the Hudson Valley to the wetlands that anchor the Finger Lakes, from Fire Island’s dunes to the backcountry of the Adirondacks, from Niagara Falls to the parks and streets of New York City, you help keep New York’s lands and waters thriving—for wildlife and people.

This year, your generosity helped us pair clear strategy with decisive action and deliver extraordinary results amidst challenging times. Together, we launched a bold effort to reforest New York with 25 million trees, advanced an initiative to connect wildlife habitat across the

Appalachians, created a first-of-its-kind course for boaters to reduce collisions with whales in the waters off our shores, and opened the 14,600-acre Follensby Pond landscape for scientific and cultural uses for the first time in a century.

Each of these gains moves us closer to a livable climate, healthy communities and thriving nature. Your support also reaches far beyond New York, protecting Mongolia’s grasslands, safeguarding forests in Gabon, and restoring coral reefs in the Caribbean and Indo-Pacific. As a global hub and center of innovation, New York has an outsized responsibility to foster an exchange of ideas that strengthens both our local conservation work and our global impact.

With your partnership, we will continue to drive the pace of possibility—testing and proving solutions across the United States and in more than 80 countries and territories worldwide.

As you explore this report, I hope you see the essential role you play in making this vision reality. Every tree planted, every acre protected, every river reconnected, and every policy advanced happens because of you. Thank you for making a real and lasting difference for today and for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Bill Ulfelder
Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy in New York

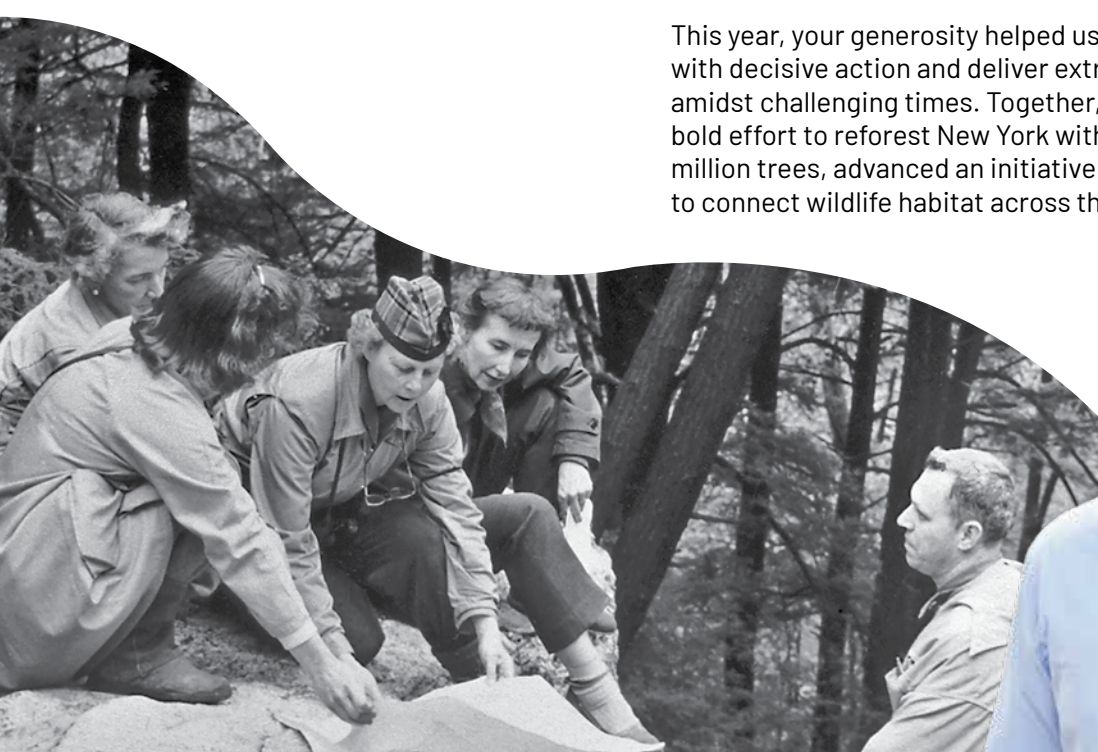
Cover: Red fox © Jessica Kirste/TNC Photo Contest; This page top © iStock/ South_agency; Gloria Hollister Anable rallied her neighbors to save Mianus River Gorge from development, leading to The Nature Conservancy’s first land deal. © TNC; Bill Ulfelder © Jonathan Grassi

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Underwater scenery at the dive site Two Tree, Raja Ampat, Indonesia © Purwanto Nugroho/TNC Photo Contest



FROM THE DIRECTOR

What you made possible in 2025, and what comes next

“Policy can transform daily life—and your advocacy is delivering clean water, clean air and healthy lands.”

~ Jessica Ottney Mahar,
policy and strategy director



You Secured Historic Policy Wins

Policy success looks like wetlands absorbing floodwaters, clean water flowing from taps and public lands protected for generations. This year, thanks to your support, New York took meaningful steps toward that future.

Expanded Protections for One Million Acres of Wetlands

After years of dedicated advocacy, we reached a breakthrough achievement: New York adopted new state regulations that will protect an estimated one million additional acres of freshwater wetlands. These wetlands filter drinking water, reduce flood risk and provide critical wildlife habitat—and now they are legally recognized and safeguarded at a level never before achieved in New York.

Record Levels of Conservation Funding Achieved in the State Budget

Strong protections need strong investment to succeed. In 2025, New York enacted a state budget with record environmental funding, including \$425 million for the Environmental Protection Fund and continued historic funding of \$500 million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act. These wins protect drinking water, restore habitats and strengthen communities across every region of the state.

Your backing helped power the relationships behind these wins. At Environmental Protection Fund Lobby Day, more than 100 advocates met with legislators in Albany, making the case for conservation funding that delivers benefits county by county and borough by borough.

Trustees and volunteer leaders played a critical role—championing practical fixes to stalled land-conservation programs and advancing climate funding designed to deliver results on the ground.

Millions Secured for Clean Water

Your support translated into cleaner water with immediate impact. New York expanded its Septic System Replacement Program and committed \$30 million in new funding, including \$20 million for Suffolk County. In Oakdale, local voters approved a \$44 million sewer expansion, replacing outdated infrastructure and protecting the ecologically sensitive waters of Great South Bay.

Federal Priorities Advanced Through Unified Advocacy

That momentum extended beyond New York, too. This year, staff and volunteer leaders from around the country—including New York—met with more than 175 Congressional offices to defend

and advance federal conservation priorities. When proposals arose that threatened to sell off public lands, your advocacy helped ensure that those places remained public, protected and accessible for generations to come.

Ocean Action Championed at the UN

With your support, our global team highlighted solutions at the United Nations, including sustainable aquaculture, blue carbon projects and coastal habitat restoration. These efforts link local progress in New York to global commitments for a healthier future.



LEARN MORE

Read [The Nature Conservancy's statement on Governor Hochul's State of the State Address](#) at bit.ly/ny-state-of-state



You Can Shape What's Next

Despite these wins, major obstacles remain. As federal environmental policy and funding levels shift, states need to step up. Instead, New York is facing challenges to our landmark climate law and the state's environmental review process.

Together, we will keep advocating for strong environmental policies and funding and state leadership on the climate crisis.



You Catalyzed a Bold Plan to Reforest New York

On a quiet stretch of farmland in western New York, nursery beds are filling with native seedlings—an essential step toward reforesting 1.7 million acres statewide. Healthy forests are vital to our future. They absorb carbon, protect wildlife, purify drinking water and safeguard communities from the impacts of climate change. But reforesting New York isn't just about planting trees; it's about building the systems that make forests possible, from seed collection all the way to forest management.

Meeting the state's ambitious goal by 2040 requires a steady supply of native seedlings, at a magnitude New York hasn't had before.

This year, with your help, that gap began to close. Through The Nature Conservancy's new Nursery Incubation Program, local growers are scaling up to meet future demand, strengthening New York's reforestation pipeline from the ground up.

"By investing in nurseries and building meaningful partnerships, we're creating a template that can be replicated in other places."

~ Michelle Brown, senior conservation scientist

Planting trees in Jefferson County; black walnut seeds; TNC Reforestation Manager Mandy St. Hilaire; All photos © Nancie Battaglia

A First-of-its-Kind Program to Solve a Supply Chain Problem

Across the country, tree-planting efforts stall when nurseries can't afford to grow ahead of demand. In New York, you helped remove that barrier. The Nursery Incubation Program reduces financial risk for participating nurseries by providing targeted funding and guaranteeing future seedling purchases—giving growers the confidence to invest, expand and plan for the long term.

This year, we partnered with Swiftwater Farmstead in Lockport and Native Forest Nursery in Jamestown to expand their operations and deliver more than 100,000 native trees for Nature Conservancy projects between 2027 and 2028.



New York as a Leader for Nature-Based Job Creation

Reforestation at this scale delivers more than trees in the ground. It strengthens local economies, fosters tens of thousands of jobs—from seed collection to forest management—and helps ensure that the forests we plant today are more likely to withstand pests, disease, drought and extreme weather tomorrow.

With your support, this approach moved from concept to on-the-ground reality in New York this year, positioning the state as a model for how reforestation can happen faster, smarter and at scale.

Planting a Billion Trees

The replicable approach taking root in New York reflects work you're investing in worldwide. Through the Plant a Billion Trees campaign, native forests are being restored—from longleaf pine ecosystems in the southern United States to Brazil's Atlantic Forest and degraded lands in China, Mexico and Guatemala.

In 2025, the campaign reached a major milestone: more than five million trees planted across eight countries, with another million pledged.



LEARN MORE
Read more about reforestation at bit.ly/reforest-ny

You Can Shape What's Next

The work ahead depends on partnership. With continued support, we'll expand collaborations with landowners and communities, plant climate-resilient forests, and offer guidance and incentives that make participating in reforestation accessible and rewarding.



You Kept Wildlife Moving and Made Roads Safer

At night on a rural road, a pair of headlights catches movement at the edge of the woods. For drivers and wildlife alike, roads can be dangerous. And it's not just roads. Outdated culverts (tunnels that carry water under roads) also cut through habitat, fragmenting territory, blocking wildlife movement and increasing flood risk for communities.

Fortunately, with your backing, these risks began to shrink this year across New York and the wider Appalachians.

A Multi-State Partnership to Design Safer Roads

Solving these problems requires coordination across borders, agencies and disciplines. With your support this year, New York helped lead a multi-state effort to make that coordination possible.

Working with transportation wildlife agencies and other local partners in eight states, The Nature Conservancy launched *Northeast Habitats and Highways*, a new video training series designed to inspire collaboration and action. Modeled after Vermont's nationally recognized program, the series provides practical tools and real-world examples, aiming to turn wildlife-friendly road design into standard practice.

A red fox hurries across a road. © iStock/Brittany Crossman

You Can Shape What's Next

The next phase of this work is to identify priority sites in New York and across the Appalachians where wildlife crossings, culvert upgrades and land protection can deliver the greatest benefit. Together, we can help weave a network of connected lands and waters—locally and regionally—designed for life now and into the future.

Restored Rivers and Forests in the Adirondacks

This year, you helped replace outdated culverts in rivers like the Boquet and Cold Brook—reopening habitat for trout and reducing flood risk in Adirondack communities. Now, on a restored stream in the Adirondacks, water flows freely beneath a road where it once pooled and surged. Fish move upstream, and floodwaters spread safely into floodplains instead of spilling into nearby roads and homes.

A Larger Landscape Reconnected

Beyond New York, your support is helping wildlife migrate across the broader Appalachian region. Stretching nearly 2,000 miles from Alabama to Canada, this landscape is one of North America's most important corridors for adaptation—advancing clean water and supporting thriving communities and species on the move as the climate changes.

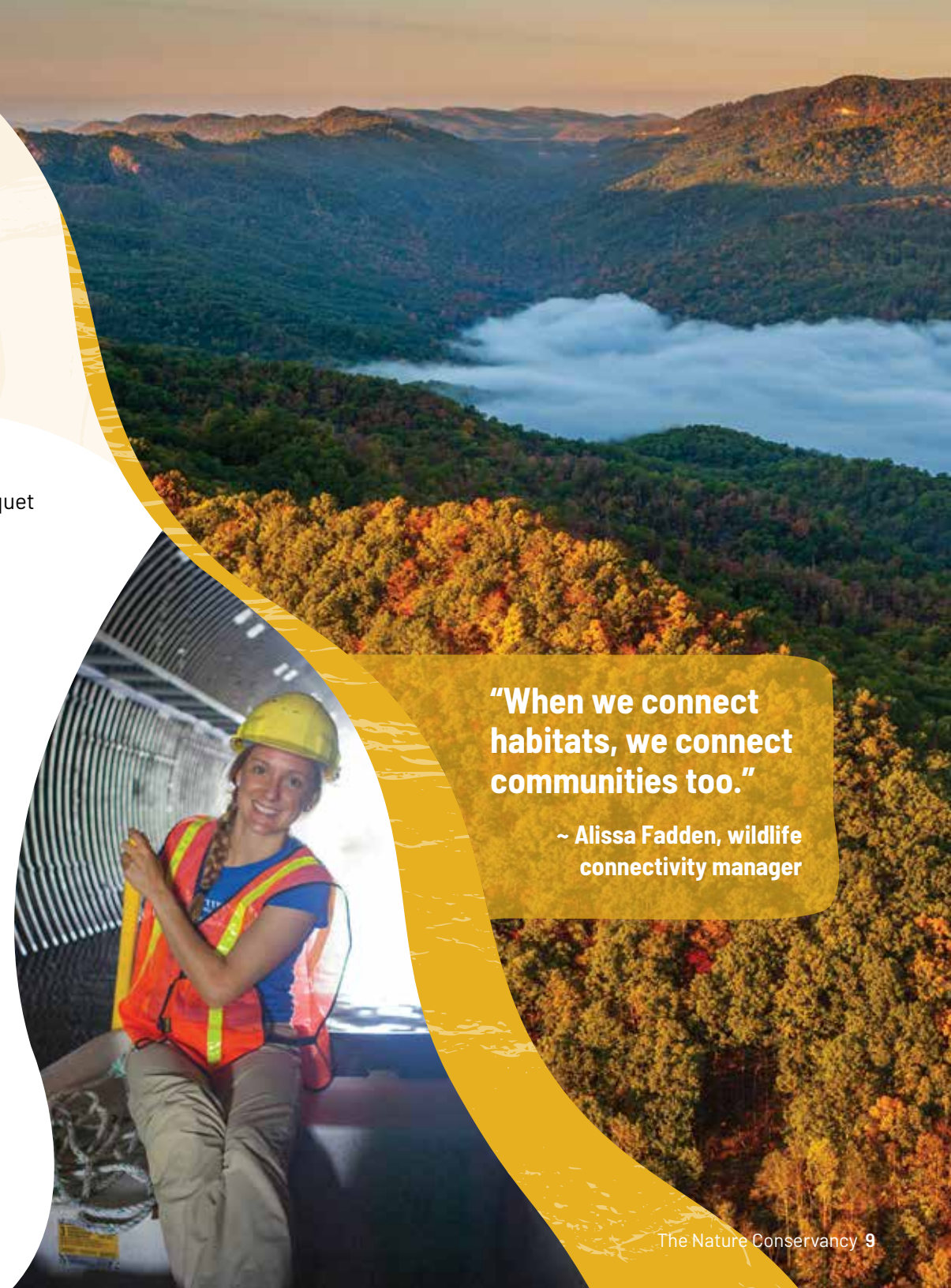
By strengthening connections across this region, your support helped plants and animals migrate, rivers flow and communities remain resilient—far beyond any single road or crossing.



LEARN MORE

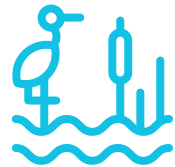
Explore the new *Habitats and Highways* video series at bit.ly/habitats-highways

Left - Right: Wildlife Connectivity Manager Alissa Fadden © Kurt Gardner; Aerial view of the Ataya tract and Cumberland Mountains in Tennessee © Byron Jorjorian



“When we connect habitats, we connect communities too.”

~ Alissa Fadden, wildlife connectivity manager



You Opened the Door to a Rare and Remarkable Place

At first light, loons call across Follensby Pond as a small group of people walks quietly along the shore for the first time in more than a century. Long considered one of the crown jewels of the Adirondacks, Follensby lies within Haudenosaunee and Abenaki homelands and holds a deep cultural and scientific legacy—from the 1858 Philosophers’ Camp to ecological study taking place today.

Your partnership helped protect this nearly 15,000-acre landscape in 2024 through two conservation easements that balance public access with ecological protection. This year, we welcomed scientists, Indigenous Knowledge holders and members of the public to this incredible place for the first time.

A Living Laboratory for Freshwater Science

Follensby’s cold, deep and highly oxygenated waters make it one of the most climate-resilient

lakes in the Northeast and an ideal reference site for understanding how freshwater ecosystems respond to climate change.

With your help, we’ve established a science research consortium of public and private agencies and institutions to guide long-term research and monitoring and to ensure that what we learn informs freshwater conservation here and far beyond the Adirondacks.

Indigenous Cultural Practices Honored

This project also marks a historic first: Indigenous access for cultural practices is recognized in the conservation easement held by New York State.

In collaboration with the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Center for Native Peoples and the Environment, we’re working to reconnect Indigenous Peoples to their ancestral lands and honor Traditional Ecological Knowledge as we care for Follensby.

That commitment took shape this year through a three-day biocultural blitz at Follensby to create an inventory of plants and animals that have cultural significance to Indigenous communities. More than 30 participants visited 13 locations, documenting plants in habitats ranging from forested hillsides to meadows and beaver ponds.

A New Era for Public Engagement

This summer, thanks to your generosity, we also launched the first-ever public educational tours at Follensby in partnership with The Wild Center. Small groups of visitors ranging in age from 13 to 80 explored the area’s geology; the deep history of the Penobscot, Abenaki, Oneida and

Mohawk Nations who hunted, fished and lived in this region; the legacy of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Philosophers’ Camp; the return of bald eagles; and why protecting freshwater ecosystems matters worldwide.



LEARN MORE

Discover how you can explore Follensby at nature.org/follensby

You Can Shape What’s Next

With your ongoing support, Follensby will continue to grow as a blueprint for conservation that brings together science, culture and access—advancing freshwater protection and Indigenous partnership in New York and beyond.



“Follensby is now a sanctuary for wildlife, a hub for climate science and a place where people can experience its power, beauty and history.”

~ Peg Olsen, Adirondacks director



You Set Good Fire to Create Safer, Healthier Forests

On a clear March morning, smoke rose through the oak forest at Mashomack Preserve. Crews had been waiting for just the right wind and weather. Today, conditions were perfect and they moved methodically to apply fire to the spots where it could do the most good. For years, prescribed fire was missing from Mashomack's stewardship. This year, because of you, that changed. Two carefully planned burns restored 170 acres of forest, bringing fire back as a tool for protecting people and nature on Shelter Island.

A Welcomed Return

Fire has long been used successfully in places like the Albany Pine Bush, where it helps sustain rare habitats. At Mashomack, reintroducing fire required months of meticulous planning. In coordination with trained fire teams and state experts, crews avoided nesting seasons, protected sensitive areas and moved only when exact conditions were right.

"Prescribed fire is one of the most powerful tools we have to restore forests and protect communities."

~ Cody-Marie Miller, conservation and stewardship manager

Conservation and Stewardship Manager Cody-Marie Miller at Mashomack © Rebecca Kusa/TNC



Mashomack's progress is part of a broader effort. In 2024 alone, planned burns helped restore more than 1,100 acres of natural landscapes across the state.

A Nationwide Prescribed Fire Movement

Across much of the United States, decades without fire have left forests overcrowded and unhealthy, fueling pests like ticks, increasing wildfire risk and putting communities in danger. Indigenous Peoples have long understood fire's benefits, using it for millennia to maintain healthy ecosystems and encourage the growth of food and medicinal plants. Policies that excluded Indigenous communities from fire management disrupted this balance. Today, The Nature Conservancy is working with partners to restore this practice and elevate Indigenous leadership in fire stewardship.

Restoring Landscapes with Fire Around the World

For more than 60 years, prescribed fire has been part of our conservation work around the world. From Zambia's savannas to Brazil's Cerrado and across the United States, fire is being used to protect biodiversity, bolster communities and reduce wildfire risk—guided by science and Indigenous and local knowledge.



LEARN MORE
Explore why we work with fire at bit.ly/work-with-fire

Women-in-Fire Prescribed Fire Training Exchange brings together people of all genders from TNC and partner organizations, state and federal agencies, Tribes and universities. © Roberto Gonzalez

You Can Shape What's Next

This year, a major science review confirmed that prescribed fire reduced future wildfire severity by more than 60% in dry western U.S. forests. As the climate warms and rainfall patterns shift, prescribed fire will be essential to clearing dry brush and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

Your continued support can help us bring prescribed fire to places that need it.



You Kept Lands Healthy and Ready for What's Next

Beside a flood-prone neighborhood, a newly protected stretch of land now acts like a natural sponge, soaking up storm water, reducing flood risk and creating a haven where birds and pollinators feed on native plants. Conservation means more than setting land aside. It means ensuring that these places stay healthy and thriving as the climate shifts—cleaning our air, filtering our water, storing carbon and sustaining the wildlife that depends on them.

Thanks to you, two key efforts are advancing this vision in New York: the Climate Resilience Grant Program and our invasive species work with the St. Lawrence–Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM).

Balance Restored Where It Matters Most

Invasive species threaten biodiversity across New York, but your partnership is helping turn the tide. Through SLELO PRISM, volunteers contributed more than 1,000 hours in 2025, removing invasives and restoring native plants at priority sites.

At El Dorado Preserve in central New York, years of management transformed a monoculture of swallow-wort into a haven for pollinators. By planting milkweed and other native species, our team joined volunteers to restore a critical stop along the monarch butterfly migration route, an effort sustained through community planting events that bring volunteers back year after year.

Local Climate Resilience Strengthened

In 2025, your generosity helped us award \$500,000 through the Climate Resilience Grant Program, backing 12 projects that will

protect more than 1,200 acres statewide while strengthening community climate resilience.

Highlights include the acquisition of 388 acres of forest and wetland in Madison County by the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation; a 276-acre preserve in Allegany County by Western New York Land Conservancy that safeguards drinking water, enhances flood resilience and expands public access; and a key parcel in Mamaroneck that completes a 3.1-mile greenway through a flood-prone neighborhood.

The program also awarded six planning and capacity-building grants to help communities prepare for climate impacts before they occur. These investments support flood-risk assessments, community-led stewardship planning and regional outreach in places like Lake Erie, the Adirondacks and the Onondaga Nation.



LEARN MORE

Read about this year's grant recipients at bit.ly/2025CRGP



You Can Shape What's Next

Whether through land protection grants or hands-on restoration, your support is helping New York lead the way—keeping landscapes healthy, resilient and ready for the future. With continued partnership, we can expand these proactive approaches, ensuring that the lands New Yorkers depend on continue to deliver clean water, cooler temperatures and thriving ecosystems in a changing climate.

2025 Climate Resilience Grant Program Recipients



"If you want to see the direct impact of your contributions, come visit the sites we're working in!"

~ Brittany Rogers, SLELO program director

The eastern cucurbit bee (*Peponapis pruinosa*) is a picky eater who sticks with their preferred host plants, which include squash. © Logan Stearns/TNC Photo Contest



You Helped Whales Return—Now You’re Keeping Them Out of Harm’s Way

Just off New York’s coast, whales now surface and lunge, following the schools of fish that are their food supply. Not long ago, this wasn’t a common sight. The key to this comeback is Atlantic menhaden—often called the “most important fish in the sea” for their role in anchoring the coastal food web. In 2019, New York banned purse seining for menhaden, a

practice that removed massive quantities of these fish at once. Backed by baymen, scientists and conservation advocates, this policy helped menhaden populations rebound, drawing whales back to feed in these waters.

A Fragile Comeback That Still Needs Protection

That success now needs defending. Last year, fishery managers failed to adopt science-based limits for Atlantic menhaden catches, which means that this species could once again be over-fished. With your support, we’re working with partners to push for stronger protections in upcoming decisions—aiming to secure new rules by 2027. The goal is straightforward: protect the species that feed whales, sustain fisheries and keep the food web intact, now and into the future.

Teaching Boaters to Navigate a Busier, Riskier Ocean

But whales face an additional risk. New York’s waters are among the busiest marine corridors in the world, crowded with cargo ships, fishing vessels and recreational boats.

For animals that spend much of their time near the surface, this traffic can be deadly.

To reduce collisions, we worked with partners to create and launch *Eyes on the Water: Boating with Whales*—a free course in English and Spanish that teaches boaters how to recognize whale behavior, avoid strikes and report sightings—a strategy recently recognized in *The New York Times* as the most cost-effective way to reduce whale strikes.

Whales Cross Oceans and Your Impact Does Too

The humpback whales that visit our coast each summer migrate thousands of miles to the Caribbean—where some of the world’s most diverse marine ecosystems and most vulnerable coastal communities intersect.

For more than 40 years, we’ve protected Caribbean reefs and shorelines alongside the people who depend on them. This year, scientists and local partners tested new restoration methods and expanded proven approaches. Restored reefs now buffer U.S. Virgin Islands coasts and sustain local fisheries. In Belize, expanded marine protected areas safeguard key spawning sites. And in Grenada, new mangrove plantings stabilize shorelines and create habitat for marine life.



LEARN MORE
Get the story behind our new course at nature.org/boatingwithwhales

“It’s not just about avoiding collisions. It’s about building a community of people who understand the ocean and want to protect it.”

~ Carl LoBue, ocean program director



Humpback whale double breach © Danielle Smith

You Can Shape What’s Next

With your help, we’ll keep advancing protections for Atlantic menhaden and other small fish that are essential to ocean life, from New York’s coast to the wider Atlantic.

We’ll also expand outreach to boat operators through our new *Boating with Whales* course to build a culture of awareness that keeps whales safer as they return.



You Delivered Cleaner Air and Cooler Neighborhoods

On a scorching summer day in New York City, newly planted trees now offer shade where there once was none. Upstate, community solar fields quietly deliver clean power. With your backing, climate solutions are taking root across New York. From clean energy projects to expanded urban forests, your partnership helped cut carbon, cool neighborhoods and reduce flooding.

Together, we advanced proven solutions that protect nature and improve lives—acre by acre, watt by watt and tree by tree.

Clean Low-Cost Energy Expanded Across the State

With your support, we helped advance New York’s goal of a net-zero economy by 2050. This year, state leaders launched the Sustainable Future Program, a \$1 billion investment—the largest climate commitment in New York history—to cut pollution, improve public health and create good-paying jobs. This will lower energy bills, reduce emissions from buildings and transportation, and make communities healthier and safer.

You also helped ensure that the clean energy transition protects nature. Working with the energy-modeling firm Evolved Energy, we developed the Power of Place

New York analysis, which will ultimately provide clear, cost-effective pathways to site clean energy while minimizing impacts to land and wildlife and maximizing benefits to people.

Growing New York City’s Urban Forest for Everyone

In New York City, trees are essential infrastructure. They cool streets, clean the air and reduce flooding. Yet too many neighborhoods lack the tree cover needed to protect community health.

The Nature Conservancy is helping change that. We are working with local partners and the Mayor’s Office to support New York City’s first Urban Forest Plan, with a goal of increasing canopy cover to at least 30% citywide, up from 23% in 2021. The Mayor’s Office is expected to release the plan in 2026.

With your help, we also lead Forest for All NYC, a coalition of nearly 200 organizations working to ensure every neighborhood benefits from a greener city. This year, we helped engage thousands of New Yorkers—through focus groups, community sessions and a citywide survey.

“We’re making sure NYC’s first Urban Forest Plan reflects the voices of those it will serve.”

~ Tami Lin Moges, cities program director

Nature-Based Solutions in Cities Worldwide

Nature-based solutions aren’t just protecting New Yorkers from heat, flooding and water insecurity—they’re improving lives in cities worldwide. This year, The Nature Conservancy helped launch the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund, Africa’s first water fund connecting city water users with upstream farmers. By reducing erosion and runoff, it now strengthens water security for four million people and positions Nairobi as a model for climate-smart resilience.

In Shanghai, supporters like you helped transform dense neighborhoods into green refuges. Working with volunteers, we created habitat gardens across the Changning District, boosting biodiversity, reducing heat and giving residents much-needed access to nature.



LEARN MORE

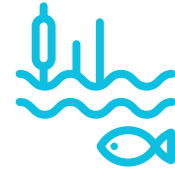
Get the latest on our work to care for and expand the NYC urban forest at bit.ly/forest-for-all



You Can Shape What’s Next

Your continued support will help advance clean energy across New York while protecting nature and addressing affordability and reliability. In New York City, you’ll help grow the urban forest so every neighborhood can experience shade and cleaner air.

And your impact won’t stop here. By sharing New York’s successes globally, we’ll help communities around the world adopt climate solutions that blend science, equity and nature.



You Drove Clean Water Breakthroughs

After a thunderstorm on the South Shore, a fisherman slips his skiff into Reynolds Channel. The water runs clearer than it has in years, evidence that change is taking hold. From Long Island's bays to the Finger Lakes, your support this year advanced practical solutions to improve water quality and protect communities. By cutting nitrogen and phosphorus, you helped secure cleaner drinking water, safer places to swim and fish, and greater climate resilience.

Smart Infrastructure Delivered Results for Long Island's Bays

For decades, the Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant discharged 50 million gallons of treated wastewater daily into Reynolds Channel, fueling algae blooms and degrading marshes. Thanks to you, that story is changing.

The Bay Park Conveyance Project—a \$500 million partnership among the federal government, New York State and Nassau County—reroutes wastewater three miles offshore through a new ocean outfall, paired with nitrogen-cutting upgrades. Together, these investments are expected to restore water quality and help revive coastal ecosystems, and your support powered the science, advocacy and public momentum behind this breakthrough.

Baymen harvesting crabs on the waters of Hewlett Bay © Courtesy of The Bay Park Conveyance Project

After Superstorm Sandy flooded Bay Park and released 2.2 billion gallons of sewage, the system's vulnerability became impossible to ignore—unlocking federal recovery funds and accelerating action. "We were watching the ecosystem unravel in real time," says Carl LoBue, oceans program director. "We knew we had to act."

Today, the Bay Park Conveyance Project is mechanically complete and nearing full operation, marking a major milestone for cleaner water and healthier coastal ecosystems.

A Historic Win Achieved for Clean Water in Suffolk County

To the east in Suffolk County, you helped deliver another landmark water-quality win decades in the making. The Suffolk County Water Quality Improvement Act was signed into law this year, creating a dedicated funding stream to upgrade septic systems and reduce nitrogen pollution.

This victory will protect drinking water, restore bays and harbors, and strengthen coastal communities—safeguarding families, wildlife and local economies for generations. Your advocacy helped ensure Suffolk County took bold, lasting action.

Protected Land Will Safeguard Drinking Water in the Finger Lakes

In the Finger Lakes, Owasco Lake supplies drinking water for more than 44,000 people, but runoff fuels harmful algal blooms.

© Craig Dingle

Protecting land, in the right places, is one of the most effective ways to protect water.

Guided by science, you helped protect 725 acres of forests, wetlands, stream corridors and slopes in the watershed—natural systems that clean water, stabilize habitats and reduce flooding. Local partners strengthened this impact through water monitoring and native plant restoration.



LEARN MORE
Read the full Bay Park story at bit.ly/concrete-solutions

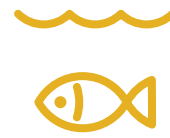
You Can Shape What's Next

Your continued support will help close critical water quality gaps. On Long Island, communities like Long Beach still rely on outdated treatment plants, and many sewer lines have exceeded their lifespan, posing ongoing risks to public health and coastal ecosystems.

With your help, we'll advocate for comprehensive wastewater upgrades through the Environmental Protection Fund, the Bond Act and federal infrastructure programs. And together, we'll expand land and water protection statewide, restoring forests and wetlands that filter pollution and absorb floodwaters.

"Forests, wetlands and other natural areas act like filters, protecting the clean water people depend on."

~ Olivia Green, freshwater resilience specialist



You Advanced Reef Research and Unlocked Creative Habitat Solutions

Just offshore, a diver steadies herself beside a pile of boulders. What looks like rubble is, in fact, the beginning of a reef that could bring native fish back. Because of you, researchers are rethinking how underwater infrastructure—both natural and human-made—can become better habitat.

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes, you helped us advance how we study, design and restore underwater ecosystems. Off Long Island, you helped reimagine ports, bridge pilings and wind turbines as marine habitat. In Lake Erie, you helped clear buried spawning reefs—giving native fish that people eat a chance to recover.

Learning How Marine Life Responds to Underwater Infrastructure

Shipwrecks and other human-made structures often attract fish, but not all designs create lasting habitat. That's why The Nature Conservancy and Stony Brook University are studying how to build structures that mimic nature and host marine life over time. Using underwater cameras, DNA sampling and tracking tags, researchers are learning how species interact with different reef designs. Early findings show that some fish return repeatedly to the same rock pile, a strong signal of healthy habitat.

As material accumulates on the ocean floor, these new reefs can become thriving habitat for commercially important fish like blackfish, sea bass and fluke. Crabs find shelter in the crevices, while barnacles, sponges, anemones, corals and mussels attach to reef surfaces.

"Every time we build underwater infrastructure, we have the chance to support life," says Stephen Heck, a postdoctoral researcher at Stony Brook. "This study helps us learn what's worth the investment."

Using different monitoring methods, like remote underwater cameras, scientists hope to detect small differences in how marine animals use various materials and designs to make their homes. © Carl LoBue/TNC

"If we want native fish to recover, we must protect the places where life begins."

~ Philippa Kohn, Great Lakes fisheries project director

Great Lakes Reefs Mapped for Commercially Important Fish

Your impact also reached the Great Lakes, where native whitefish and lake trout have declined as spawning reefs were buried by sediment and invasive mussels. This year, divers mapped and assessed reef conditions—many for the first time—and tested innovative restoration techniques. At Brocton Shoal in Lake Erie, we used hydraulic jets to clear sediment and mussels from reef surfaces, reopening critical habitat for spawning fish.

We're still learning where these reefs are and what condition they're in, but we know they're essential.

Rebuilding Reefs and Generating Clean Energy in Europe

Europe's native oyster beds once spanned 1.75 million hectares in the North Sea but have nearly disappeared due to overfishing, pollution and development—taking with them vital habitat and natural water filtration.

Now, with your support, offshore wind projects are helping restore these ecosystems. As turbine foundations are stabilized with rock, we're seeding those surfaces with oyster larvae, turning renewable-energy infrastructure into new marine habitat.



LEARN MORE
Dive deeper into reef research at nature.org/newreefs

Off-shore wind turbine, Block Island © Ayla Fox

You Can Shape What's Next

The breakthroughs you made possible this year are just the beginning. Off Long Island, your support can help expand reef design research and pilot new habitat projects that bring us closer to a future where infrastructure sustains life instead of replacing it. And on the Great Lakes, you can help us scale restoration techniques that revive spawning reefs, giving native fish the chance to rebound and strengthening freshwater systems that millions of people depend on.

Your support allows us to move faster: testing new technologies, deepening partnerships and applying lessons learned across both coastal and fresh waters.





You Made Global Progress Possible

New Yorkers' commitment to conservation is felt in places around the world where healthy ecosystems directly shape daily life—from coastal Indonesia to forested Gabon to Caribbean Island communities. Your support helped advance practical, science-based progress and community leadership across the globe.

You Helped Put Human Health at the Center of Global Conservation

The Nature Conservancy launched the Senator Bill and Tracy Frist Initiative for Planetary and Human Health this year, bringing medical, public health and conservation experts together to understand how climate and ecosystem change affect daily well-being—from water quality to food security. The initiative aims to embed human-health metrics across all Nature Conservancy conservation programs by 2030.

Your continued support helps advance research and practical strategies that address emerging health challenges tied to climate and nature loss.

You Advanced Long-Term Protection in Gabon and Strengthened Community Leadership in Kenya

Thanks to you, Gabon and The Nature Conservancy advanced a Project Finance for Permanence designed to secure up to \$200 million over the next decade to conserve forests, rivers and marine areas while supporting community development. Additional commitments announced at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity support Gabon's plan to protect 30% of its land, ocean and freshwater by 2030. This work spans more



than 24,000 km² of forest, 8,000 km² of ocean and 4,800 km of rivers. And in Kenya, your generosity helped advance community-run conservancies, where local leaders manage wildlife corridors, grazing lands and tourism enterprises.

These community-driven models continue to demonstrate how conservation can strengthen local economies while safeguarding critical habitat.

You Helped Protect Indonesia's Coastlines and the Communities That Depend on Them

Your support strengthened our efforts with Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara, The Nature Conservancy's primary in-country partner in Indonesia, to restore mangroves, seagrasses and coral reefs—natural systems that reduce storm damage, sustain fisheries and store carbon. This work is improving the design and management of marine protected areas, including the 3.35-million-hectare Savu Sea National Park, and connecting a network of protected sites across the Lesser Sunda region.

These efforts protect both biodiversity and the coastal communities that rely on healthy ecosystems for safety, food and livelihoods.



This page: Gorilla gaze © Sean Bellon/TNC Photo Contest; Opposite page: Flashlights and vuvuzelas are some of the everyday items that have become part of a creative toolkit to deter elephants from raiding crops in Taita-Taveta, Kenya. © Roshni Lodhia; The Nature Conservancy has supported seaweed farms in Indonesia that bring new sources of income and take pressure off local fisheries. © Kevin Arnold

Global Progress Continued

You Strengthened Coral Restoration Across the Caribbean

Through CoralCarib, your generosity expanded coral restoration and monitoring in Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Teams trained marine managers, restored high-priority reefs and launched new collaborative approaches, including coral spawning work, 3D reef mapping and a new national restoration hub in the Dominican Republic.

This regional network is helping countries revive coral systems that are essential to coastal protection, fisheries and local economies.

You Helped Bring New Sources of Capital Into Conservation

Your flexible funding strengthened The Nature Conservancy's Impact Finance & Markets work, which designs tools such as Nature Bonds, blended finance structures and impact-investment vehicles, which help countries meet conservation and climate goals. Our NatureVest initiative now manages \$3.5 billion in committed capital across forests, oceans, water systems and community-run projects.

Your ongoing support can unlock financial solutions that bring global conservation ambitions within reach at a time when the world must close an annual biodiversity financing gap estimated at \$598-\$824 billion by 2030.



LEARN MORE
Explore the connection between planetary health and human health at bit.ly/frist-initiative



You Supported Brazil's Move Toward Deforestation-Free Beef

In Pará, you helped advance Brazil's first mandatory traceability policy, which will track each cow by 2030. Analyses by The Nature Conservancy and Bain & Company show that stronger traceability and sustainable land management could increase the value of the cattle sector by up to \$1 billion annually within three to five years.

By improving transparency in one of the world's largest cattle-producing regions, you are helping reduce pressure on the Amazon while strengthening economic opportunities for ranchers who are committed to deforestation-free production.



Opposite, top to bottom:
Seaweed farmer © Anthony Into/TNC Photo Contest; Hawksbill sea turtles are an important part of Caribbean reef ecosystems. Without the turtles grazing, reefs could become overrun by sea sponges. © Shane Gross; This page: Cattle grazing in a sustainably managed ranch in São Félix do Xingu, Brazil. © Christian Rodriguez/Prime Collective

Why I Support The Nature Conservancy

People invest in The Nature Conservancy for different reasons, and our trustees embody that diversity of vision. Here's what three of them had to say about why they give so much of themselves to The Nature Conservancy.



"I believe in environmental education."

Ishmael Akahoho

My journey into sustainability began with a question: How can we build a future that's innovative and equitable? That led me to solar energy, sustainable engineering—and back as a trustee to The Nature Conservancy.

Today, I'm a Senior Environmental Health and Safety Specialist at Tesla, advancing solar installations across Long Island, New Jersey and Chicago. But my path started at Brooklyn Academy for Science and the Environment, where I joined The Nature Conservancy's Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future (LEAF) program. That experience was transformative.

LEAF didn't just teach conservation—it empowered me. I trained volunteers in biological monitoring, assessed street tree health, and designed a rain garden project for vacant lots. I saw how nature could thrive in urban spaces.

Since then, I've earned degrees in Environmental Sustainability and Sustainable Engineering and completed a capstone on off-grid solar systems in Ghana. But LEAF laid the foundation. It gave me the tools, confidence and community to pursue a purpose-driven career.

What inspires me most about The Nature Conservancy is its commitment to education and equity. Environmental education opens doors, builds careers and creates lifelong stewards of the planet. I'm proud to be part of a growing network of LEAF alumni leading in science, policy and sustainability.

Family-friendly event involves kids in environmental conservation © Hannah Letinich



"I invest in climate solutions that work."

Scott Kleinman

Climate change is the defining challenge of our time—and we have both the responsibility and the tools to act. That's why I back The Nature Conservancy's science-based, impact-driven work that delivers real-world solutions.

Energy, climate and the economy are deeply connected, and I've long wanted to engage more directly. Years ago, I was drawn to The Nature Conservancy's evolution—from land conservation to leading-edge climate solutions. Their work on energy transition, carbon reduction and community well-being at every level—from local to global—spoke to my values and vision. Supporting solutions that drive systemic carbon mitigation and sequestration is essential. When I learned about our New York team's new reforestation initiative, I jumped at the chance to help. It's an innovative approach, and I'm excited to see how the team refines and expands the strategy in the months ahead.

The Nature Conservancy is doing incredible work in climate adaptation, and we're seeing real progress in carbon reduction. But as a state, a nation and a planet, we're still underprepared for what's coming. Hurricanes, wildfires and coastal flooding are intensifying. My hope is that we rethink how we live and operate—so we can stay ahead of climate change's accelerating impacts.

Forest elephants in Gabon's Loango National Park © Roshni Lodhia



"I see global conservation as essential."

Sabra Turnbull

My journey into conservation began with charitable giving, sparked by a growing awareness of environmental crises. Many causes mattered, but the environment felt fundamental—without it, life itself falters. Although my family wasn't especially nature oriented, Girl Scouts and later a master's degree in plant science nurtured my love of the natural world.

Even as a Manhattan resident, nature remains central to my life. I tend a terrace garden and plan vacations around natural landscapes, over time converting my outdoor-hating spouse to a new appreciation of nature's many benefits.

A transformative moment came during a Nature Conservancy trip to Mongolia. There we encountered vast, healthy landscapes, a small population deeply committed to preservation, and nomadic herders who understand the importance of caring for the land. Supporting Mongolia became our first major conservation investment, and we've watched the country's work with pride to the point where it is on the verge of achieving its ambitious goal of protecting 30% of its territory.

Since then, our philanthropy has expanded across the globe. We've invested in forest preserves in Belize, rainforests in Gabon and the Amazon and broad-based initiatives in the Seychelles. More recently, in Indonesia's Forgotten Islands, I witnessed breathtaking coral reefs alongside the stark reality of overfishing—an encounter that underscored the urgency of conservation.

What inspires me most is how The Nature Conservancy works hand in hand with local communities and governments. Lasting conservation depends on shared stewardship. It endures when people feel connected to the land and actively take part in shaping its future.



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Your Support in Photos

You Advanced the Future of Salt Marshes

You helped us further our approach to salt marsh restoration, using breakthrough tools like drone imagery, historical art and hands-on workshops to protect communities, store carbon and restore wildlife. © Ed Burda/TNC Photo Contest



You Helped Us Highlight Indigenous-led Buffalo Rematriation

Thanks to you, New Yorkers gathered this fall to watch *Bring Them Home*, a documentary produced and narrated by Oscar-nominated actor Lily Gladstone, about the decades-long efforts of a small group of Blackfoot working to return wild buffalo to their land. Attendees also learned from Indigenous leaders behind the buffalo rematriation movement—a powerful effort to restore ecosystems, culture and community well-being. Since 2020, The Nature Conservancy has contributed to the return of more than 2,300 buffalo from its preserves to Indigenous Nations. © Justin Roemer



You Expanded Hunting Access and Protected Forests

Because of you, New York modernized its crossbow laws, expanding access to hunting, advancing forest regeneration and strengthening conservation funding. Healthier wildlife management helps forests recover, protects clean air and water, and bolsters biodiversity. © Andrew Pellitier



You Helped Expand Access to Preserves

At Moss Lake in Allegany County, you helped open western New York's first-of-its-kind wheelchair-accessible trail system—welcoming more people into nature. Expanded access builds stewardship, strengthens communities and protects wildlife for the future. © Phil Cuppernell



Your Support in Headlines

Strategic media coverage plays a vital role in elevating our conservation priorities across New York and beyond. By shaping public discourse, building trust with stakeholders and advancing conservation policy at both the state and national levels, these stories and hundreds of others amplified our collective voice for nature this year.



Keeping Forests Healthy
Deer overbrowsing is the most significant threat to forest recovery. Our work with organizations like Kinfolk is helping to change that while getting more people out into nature.

Improving Water Quality
Our scientists reviewed roughly 3,000 parcels of land in this Finger Lakes watershed to determine which properties should be prioritized to protect Owasco Lake's water quality.



Celebrating Earth Day
This big, amazing planet we share is facing some serious challenges. Earth Day is a chance to connect with nature and each other and amplify the importance of conservation.



Fighting Flooding
Nature-inspired infrastructure upgrades, like those implemented at Green-Wood Cemetery, keep waterways cleaner and cities safer from flooding.



Modernizing Land Conservation
A new agreement streamlines how New York secures and protects critical open spaces.



Protecting Marine Life
The Eyes on the Water: Boating with Whales course is teaching boaters to understand whale behavior and reduce the risk of vessel strikes.



Early fall color surrounds an old logging bridge across the Branch River © Mark Godfrey/TNC

Saltmarsh sparrow © Anthony Graziano



Our 2030 Global Goals

In New York, our work across **climate, land, ocean, fresh water and people** means that every parcel protected, every river restored and every coastal habitat revived contributes to these global goals.



3B

Avoid or sequester 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually—the same as taking 650 million cars off the road every year.



100M

Help 100 million people at severe risk of climate-related emergencies by safeguarding habitats that protect communities.



650M

Conserve 650 million hectares—a land area twice the size of India—of biodiverse habitats such as forests, grasslands and desert.



4B

Conserve 4 billion hectares of marine habitat—more than 10% of the world's oceans—through protected areas, sustainable fishing and more.



1M+30M

Conserve 1 million kilometers of rivers—enough to stretch 25 times around the globe—plus 30 million hectares of lakes and wetlands.



45M

Support the leadership of 45 million people from Indigenous and local communities in stewarding their environment and securing rights.

Common raccoon © Jon Burket/TNC Photo Contest

The Future We're Building Together

For nearly 75 years, The Nature Conservancy in New York—powered by dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters like you—has protected the lands and waters that sustain us. This long arc of progress proves that conservation can endure, adapt and grow stronger through every challenge.

Guided by science and a deep sense of urgency, we are delivering solutions that meet this moment and shaping conservation models that move between New York and the world.

Today's challenges demand bold ambition and strong New York leadership. You help set our pace.

Here in New York, and across more than 80 countries and territories, your support turns bold ideas into lasting results—strengthening forests and rivers, restoring coasts and reefs, and helping communities and economies thrive.

With your help, we're driving the pace of possibility and building what comes next. And with your continued partnership, we can secure a future where nature—and every one of us who depends on it—thrives for generations to come.





GIVE TODAY
nature.org/supportny
Or contact Liz Freirich at newyorkgiving@tnc.org





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