NYS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND

AT WORK IN THE ADIRONDACKS

The Adirondacks is a globally significant ecological refuge and model of how people and nature can thrive together. The importance of the Adirondacks grows ever more vital in a changing climate and it inspires new and diverse advocates for conservation. New York State's Environmental Protection Fund is a critical resource to help ensure that current and future generations can benefit from the clean air, clean water, healthy forests and resilient communities that are the hallmarks of this part of the state.

The Adirondack Land Trust, founded in 1984, works to forever conserve the forests, farmlands, waters and wild places that advance the quality of life for our communities and the ecological integrity of the Adirondacks. We are thrilled to highlight some of our Environmental Protection Fund stories.

Thirteenth Lake, Johnsburg

Thirteenth Lake, in the town of Johnsburg, is a popular place for outdoor recreation. It has 13 primitive campsites, and a public beach and canoe launch that are accessible to people who use wheelchairs.

The Environmental Protection Fund enabled New York State to purchase a strategic 17-acre parcel from the Adirondack Land Trust to conserve the last unprotected piece of shoreline on Thirteenth Lake. Local support for this project was strong every step of the way.

“Protection of year-round outdoor recreation is vital—not only to the local economy, but to benefit the health and well-being of residents as well. We are grateful for the rural and scenic character of our region, and to the organizations that partner with us in preservation,” said Andrea Hogan, Town of Johnsburg Supervisor.

30

years of Adirondack conservation aided by Environmental Protection Fund resources

2,270

acres of farmland conserved by the Adirondack Land Trust and its partners with Environmental Protection Fund support

Image: Thirteenth Lake in Johnsburg by Nancie Battaglia

Farmland Access Outreach, Champlain Valley

In Essex County, maintaining agricultural uses on an estimated 523 parcels totaling 39,000 acres is important to the future of local farming and food, according to the county's Farmland Protection and Food System Plan (2022). The Adirondack Land Trust is opening lines of communication about conservation easements as a land protection tool to help farmland owners plan for the future of their fields, pastures and cropland.

A Farmland Access Outreach Grant through NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, funded by the Environmental Protection Fund, is enabling us to work in partnership with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County to support farmland transition to help achieve the following goals:

- Keep land in agriculture
- Provide financial security for retiring farmers
- Create opportunities for a stable start for new farmers

Three Sisters Preserve, Wilmington

The 98-acre Three Sisters Preserve is a gem of a property. Its 1.2-mile trail is a destination unto itself for some visitors. For others, Three Sisters serves as a connector between the town's bike skills park and Hardy Road, where a nearby nine-mile trail system on state land draws mountain bikers, trail runners and walkers. The Environmental Protection Fund was instrumental in helping the Lake Placid Land Conservancy acquire and protect this property in 2017. It came under the Adirondack Land Trust's ownership on January 1, 2023, as part of our merger with the Lake Placid Land Conservancy. (Through a NYS Conservation Partnership Program grant, the EPF also provided support to help with the merger.)

"The nice thing about Three Sisters is that it brings groups of people together, which creates community involvement and civic commitment to the town where we live," says Roy Holzer, Town of Wilmington Supervisor.

Image: Three Sisters Preserve in Wilmington by Jamie McGiver

Chris Spaulding, owner of Maple Lawn Farms. Image by John Davis

The Spaulding Family: 200 Years of Farming

In 1801, Stephen Spaulding cleared a three-acre fallow in southern Essex County. A year later, he and his wife and their three children left their home in Vermont, crossed Lake Champlain, and moved into a small log cabin.

Today, Chris Spaulding, a descendant, works closer to 700 acres with some help from his two sons and one full-time employee at Maple Lawn Farm. You can find milk from their 160 grass-fed cows in supermarkets, in Organic Valley cartons.

Farming in Essex County is a challenge. "Dairy farms are under siege," Chris says. Low milk prices, trade disputes and other factors cut the number of small and midsize dairy farms across New York State by 25 percent between 2012 and 2017, according to the most recent agricultural census data.

Chris has made sure that at least 113 acres of his land will stay in farming through a conservation easement with the Adirondack Land Trust made possible through New York's farmland protection program funded through the Environmental Protection Fund. The easement helps ensure continued agricultural use of the land, including raising and pasturing cows, haying and some timber harvesting.

ADIRONDACK LAND TRUST

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