Open Space Conservation Grant Program Awards

In October 2026, DEC awarded more than $25 million from the 2022 Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act and the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

Awards are divided by New York State Region:

Capital Region: **$4,325,800**

Albany County

- **Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy:** $825,800 to purchase 55.7 acres of forests and wetlands to protect pitch pine-scrub oak barrens habitat. The goal of this project is to improve and expand this globally imperiled ecological community, which is critical for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly and other Species of Greatest Conservation Need, while also providing for public recreation access.

Columbia County

- **Columbia Land Conservancy:** $3.5 million to purchase 560 acres of forest, stream, and wetland habitat, which includes approximately 2,250 feet of shoreline along Cranse Creek—a trout spawning stream—and an additional 3,000 feet along a separate unnamed stream. The property is part of a large intact forest patch that is largely unprotected and critically important for providing wildlife habitat, improved water quality, and climate resiliency. Existing trails and roads will be used to develop public access opportunities and a parking area and signage will be installed.

Long Island: **$7,996,995**

Nassau County

- **North Shore Land Alliance:** $3.5 million to purchase 18 acres on Long Island that abuts the Congressman Lester Wolff Oyster Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The property contains at least 11 different forest and wetland communities that provide habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species. The property will be open to the public for passive recreation.

Suffolk County

- **Niamuck Land Trust:** $3,093,810 to purchase 4.21 acres of rare maritime grasslands on Long Island. The property is also considered an important cultural landscape. The public will have access to a rose garden.
- **Town of Brookhaven:** $1,403,185 to purchase 9.2 acres on Long Island. The property includes a mature pitch pine stand representative of the globally rare pine barren ecological community and provides habitat for the federally and state-listed endangered northern long-eared bat. The property is also located within a deep groundwater recharge area that contributes directly to the protection of Long Island's sole-source aquifer, which supplies drinking water to the Town of Brookhaven. Opportunities for passive recreation, such as hiking and wildlife watching, will be made available.

<u>Mid-Hudson:</u> $8,184,561

Dutchess County

- **Town of Wappinger:** $2,716,627 to purchase 326.34 acres of forested and wetland habitat that support the pied-billed grebe —a NYS Species of Special Concern—and the federally and state-listed endangered Indiana bat. The property also includes streams that contribute to an aquifer and Wappinger Creek. After purchase and preparation, the property will be used for passive recreation, including hiking and nature viewing.

Orange County

- **Town of Warwick:** $3.5 million to purchase 313 acres of forests, meadows, rocky ridges, and wetlands. The property contains three streams that flow to Wawayanda Creek and ultimately the Wallkill and Hudson Rivers. Protecting these headwaters will in turn protect portions of the Wallkill River that are currently listed as impaired and protect groundwater resources for residents who rely on well water. The property will become a Town Preserve and be accessible to the public for hiking, wildlife watching, and other recreation opportunities that are compatible with the land.

Ulster County

- **Open Space Institute Land Trust:** $712,550 to purchase 82.90 acres on Rondout Creek—a major tributary of the Rondout-Wallkill watershed—and approximately 2,300 feet of shoreline on both sides of the Peter's Kill—the largest mountainous stream draining the Shawangunk Ridge. Conserving these riparian and floodplain-adjacent areas will enhance flood mitigation and protect surface and groundwater in a community where many residents rely on private wells for drinking water. The project will be added to Peter's Kill Forest. Hiking and other recreational opportunities will be allowed along an old towpath after preparations have been completed.

Westchester County

- **Friends of Buttonhook Forest:** $1,255,384 to purchase 20.36 acres of forested habitat that supports nine species of bats, including the federally and state-listed endangered long-eared and Indiana bats. The land is considered an important tribal cultural landscape and is also within the NYC watershed, which provides drinking water to more than 8.5 million New York City residents. Due to the sensitive resources on the property, public access will be restricted to guided tours.

New York City: **$2,150,000**

Bronx County

- **Bronx Land Trust:** $2,150,000 to purchase 0.5 acres located between the Throgs Neck and Bronx-Whitestone bridges. The site will be converted into a community garden to create a much-needed green urban space for community gatherings, food growing, and environmental education opportunities for Bronx and Queens residents.

Southern Tier: **$671,288**

Tompkins County

- **Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE-Tompkins):** $671,288 to purchase 73 acres of high-quality forest, streams, wetlands, and fields that will expand environmental and agricultural education opportunities for children that

attend the adjacent 4-H camp operated by CCE-Tompkins. The property includes streams that flow into Fall Creek, which provides drinking water to Cornell University and is a backup source for the Town and City of Ithaca water systems. Future public access will include walking trails, education programming, and interpretive signage.

Western NY: $1,842,312

Cattaraugus County

- **Western New York Land Conservancy:** $1,321,420 to purchase 402 acres that contain extensive northern hardwood and hemlock-hardwood forests, as well as several streams that flow into the Little Conewango River and ultimately the Allegheny River. The property connects with South Valley State Forest, Allegheny State Forest, and Allegheny National Forest. The Conservancy plans to make improvements for better public access, including the installation of an educational kiosk and a parking area.

Chautauqua County

- **Buffalo Bat Habitat Inc:** $393,942 to purchase 62.8 acres that include fields, forest, streams, and Lake Erie shoreline, which support an established colony of little brown bats—a NYS High-Priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Protection of the shoreline will also prevent future development and the associated shoreline erosion and negative water quality impacts. When ready, existing trails will be accessible to the public for recreation and education.

- **Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy Inc:** $126,950 to purchase 46 acres to protect a critical floodplain, wetland, and riparian habitat along approximately 0.6 miles of the Chadakoin River. The site is near existing NYSDEC-protected lands (Clay Pond and Hartson Swamp Wildlife Management Areas) as well as source water protection areas. Protection of the property will also help reduce downstream flooding and enhance public access to outdoor recreation opportunities, such as hiking, wildlife watching, and paddling.