

# The Economic Benefits of New York's Environmental Protection Fund



The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is New York's funding source for critical environmental programs. The EPF supports a diverse number of programs in the broad categories of Open Space; Solid Waste; and Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Trust for Public Land conducted research summarizing and quantifying the significant economic benefits to local communities throughout the state of EPF investments to protect New York's environment.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

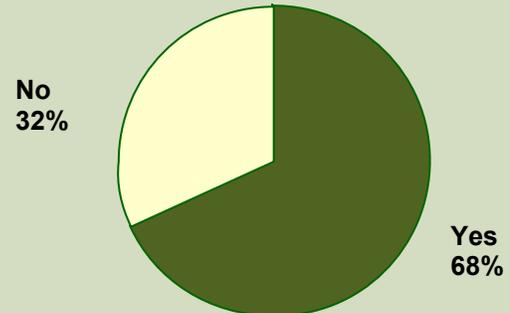
Through its various programs, the EPF supports hundreds of thousands of jobs in New York State across a broad spectrum of industries, including outdoor tourism, forest products, and agriculture. EPF supported industries generate billions for the state's economy every year. Additionally, according to The Trust for Public Land for every \$1 of EPF funds invested in land conservation, \$7 in natural goods and services is returned to the State of New York. Nearly 70 percent of New Yorkers believe that we can have a clean and strong economy at the same time.

### Generate Jobs and Strengthen Local Economies by protecting Open Space

Between 1998 and 2008 the EPF protected 358,000 acres, helping to create jobs and business, increase tourism, support the agriculture and forest products industries, and provide natural goods and services.

- Outdoor recreation is a major component of New York State's economy contributing \$11.3 billion to the state's tourism economy each year –over 25 percent of the state's total tourism industry.<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 130,000 jobs in New York State are supported by active outdoor recreation activity which includes biking, hiking, and canoeing. Active outdoor recreation generates annual tax revenues for the state of nearly \$800 million.<sup>2</sup>
- EPF protected lands support wildlife-associated recreation in New York. In 2006, over 4.5 million residents and visitors participated in fishing, hunting, or wildlife watching in the state. This activity generated over \$3.5 billion in sales.<sup>3</sup>

New York voters believe we can promote a strong economy and clean environment at the same time.



Source: June 2011 public opinion poll of 812 voters

- Rural communities rely especially on visitor spending to create local jobs. In the Adirondack Park tourism generates 17 percent of all employment and brings in \$1.2 billion in visitor spending each year.<sup>4</sup>
- **Support New York's Agriculture and Forest Industries**  
Working farmland and forests are two critical industries protected by the EPF. Farmland preservation programs protect farms from being developed and enable farmers to reinvest in their businesses and hire additional workers. Protection of timber lands helps maintain a competitive forest products industry.
- Agriculture is big business in New York. In 2007 there were 36,400 farms in New York State with annual sales of \$4.4 billion. These farms provided almost 120,000 jobs directly.<sup>5</sup>
- Farm production combined with agri-service and food manufacturing sectors generates \$22 billion annually for New York's economy.<sup>6</sup>
- Forest-related manufacturing and logging contribute \$4.5 billion to New York's economy and employ 39,000 New Yorkers.<sup>7</sup>

## A VALUABLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

### NATURAL GOODS AND SERVICES

Natural lands and water resources protected by the EPF provide a host of benefits that have a measurable economic benefit to the State of New York and its communities. They include services such as drinking water protection, flood control, air pollution removal, and stormwater management.

- The Trust for Public Land analyzed the economic value of natural goods and services provided by EPF protected lands between 1998 and 2008. For every \$1 of EPF funds invested, \$7 in economic benefits is returned to the state of New York.<sup>8</sup>

### PROTECTING NEW YORK'S DRINKING WATER

One specific example of natural goods and services provided by EPF protected lands is the New York City watershed, where open space protection in the Catskills saves the city \$300 million annually, operating as a natural water filtration system for the area's 7 million residents. A water filtration plant would have cost the city \$6 billion to construct, saving the city another \$4.5 billion in one-time costs. *Source: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2004. The Economic Value of New Jersey State Parks and Forests.*

### CREATING JOBS THROUGH RECYCLING & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Recycling is a significant industry in New York and employs thousands of workers. EPF grants support municipal waste reduction, waste prevention, landfill closure, and local recycling programs and projects. This investment creates jobs and businesses, and reduces the cost burden for local municipalities.

- New York's recycling industry provides 32,000 jobs in 4,000 recycling related businesses according to a 2007 report. This accounts for an annual payroll of nearly \$1.4 billion.<sup>9</sup>
- EPF funds municipal landfill closures and new recycling programs which generate jobs. For every one job needed to operate a landfill, ten jobs can be created to process recyclable materials.<sup>10</sup>

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION, HISTORIC PRESERVATION & URBAN/WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

EPF funds projects that enhance and create state and local parks, preserve significant cultural places, revitalize waterfronts, and support zoos, botanical gardens, and aquaria. These investments create jobs, attract private investment, boost property values, and generate visitor spending.

- The New York State Park System generates visitor spending that contributes \$1.9 billion in output and sales. These benefits exceed the costs of the System by a ratio of five to one. This visitor spending supports 20,000 public and private jobs that account for \$440 million in employment income.<sup>11</sup>

- The EPF funds numerous projects in the New York State Canal System National Heritage Corridor. Visitors here generate \$38 million in sales at local businesses and support over 500 jobs.<sup>12</sup>
- Zoos, botanical gardens, and aquaria receive EPF support to remain effective environmental education institutions. The Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium alone generate approximately \$430 million and 2,600 jobs each year.<sup>13</sup>
- Reviving urban areas through waterfront revitalization and historic preservation stimulates activity and development in urban areas and leverage private investment. As an example, the City of Oswego's downtown was transformed by private investment that followed the creation of a river walk with an EPF grant. The city's vacancy rate declined by 50 percent from this revitalization.<sup>14</sup>
- EPF funds help create and enhance local municipal parks that add value to nearby properties. This increase in value raises property tax revenues for local governments. As an example, the EPF supported Hudson River Park adds \$200 million to property values within two blocks of the Greenwich Village section alone.<sup>15</sup> Central Park in New York City generates about \$656 million in New York City tax revenues, nearly equivalent to the total annual cost of the city's entire park system.<sup>16</sup>

## End Notes

- 1 New York State Office of the State Comptroller, 2010. Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation. March 2010.
- 2 Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2006. The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy: A \$730 Billion Contribution to the US Economy. Fall 2006.
- 3 U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.
- 4 The Economic Impact of Tourism in New York State, 2009. Prepared by Tourism Economics. April 2009.
- 5 New York State Office of the State Comptroller, 2010. The Role of Agriculture in the New York State Economy. February 2010
- 6 Schmitt, T.M and Bills, N.L. 2007. Agribusiness Contributions and Inter-Industry Linkages in the New York State Economy. Cornell University.
- 7 U.S. Census Bureau. 2009 Annual Survey of Manufactures (ASM), U.S. Census Bureau. 2009 County Business Patterns
- 8 See full report for methodology
- 9 Northeast Recycling Council, 2009. Recycling Economic Information Study Update: Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. Prepared by DSM Environmental Services, Inc. February 2009.
- 10 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 2010. Beyond Waste: A Sustainable Materials Management Strategy for New York.
- 11 Excludes Adirondack Park and Catskills. Heintz, James, Robert Pollin, and Heidi Garrett-Peltier. 2009. The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State. Report Prepared for Parks and Trails New York. March 2009.
- 12 Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Economic Impact Report – East Region Case Study. Prepared by Camoin Associates. July 2010.
- 13 Wildlife Conservation Society, 2010.
- 14 Pearson, Rebecca. Oswego, New York: A Community Smart Growth Case Study. Prepared for Great Lakes Commission and NOAA Coastal Services Center.
- 15 The Impact of Hudson River Park on Property Values. 2008. Prepared for Friends of Hudson River Park.
- 16 Valuing Central Park's Contributions to New York City's Economy. 2009. Prepared for the Central Park Conservancy. Prepared by Applesseed Inc. May 2009.

Full report available at [tpl.org/newyork](http://tpl.org/newyork)

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