

INVESTING IN A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

2022

Agency Highlights and Accomplishments



NEW
YORK
STATE

Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Governor Kathy Hochul
Commissioner Basil Seggos



Investing in a Sustainable Future



Letter from Commissioner Basil Seggos

For more than a half century, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has been a national leader of the environmental movement. Today, as New York and the world confront the serious threats caused by climate change, our core mission to preserve, protect, and enhance the State's environmental quality and natural resources is being tested like never before. Thankfully, the 3,000 talented and dedicated experts who comprise DEC continue to rise to the challenge in communities across the state, delivering sustainable solutions to protect the state and improve quality of life for future generations.

In the past year alone, DEC staff were instrumental in finalizing the Scoping Plan to advance the landmark 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). This was a massive undertaking more than three years in the making that will guide New York's ambitious plan to reduce harmful emissions that disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities and fuel severe weather events like flooding and wildfires that have become the face of climate change in New York. It's a bold plan that reflects the urgency of the climate crisis. I am enormously proud of the leadership our agency has provided to meet the moment and place New York on the path to a cleaner and greener future with shared prosperity for all.

DEC experts in every field and across all regions of the state continue to advance innovative initiatives and science-based solutions that protect and improve our vital air, water, land, and natural resources. DEC's impact is undeniable.

The past year also saw voters' overwhelming approval of the \$4.2 billion Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, the largest environmental bond act in state history and a generational opportunity to fund critical environmental restoration projects throughout the state. Other notable highlights of DEC's work in 2022 include our launch of the first-of-its-kind Community Air Monitoring Initiative in 10 disadvantaged communities that are home to an estimated five million New Yorkers, adoption of regulations requiring all new passenger cars and trucks sold in the state to be zero emissions by 2035, more than \$1 billion in grants delivered to improve water infrastructure across the state, and \$150 million secured for the city of Mount Vernon to address its longstanding water infrastructure crisis.

Additionally, DEC welcomed 38 new Forest Rangers and 18 Environmental Conservation Officers (ECO) who graduated from the 23rd Basic School. DEC responded to 9,579 hazardous material or petroleum spills, inspected more than 350 dams and conducted 230,687 boat inspections state-wide. We also appointed our first-ever Deputy Commissioner for Equity and Justice and established the Office of Indian Nation Affairs, which assisted in the return of more than 1,000 acres of land to the Onondaga Nation - one of the largest returns of land by any state to an Indigenous Nation. New York also designated 31 municipalities as Certified Climate Smart Communities and awarded \$14 million to help 25 municipalities undertake projects to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Our staff look forward to continuing these and countless other initiatives into 2023, maintaining our role as the foremost environmental agency in the land.



Commissioner Seggos at Adirondack Rail Trail announcement

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Basil Seggos'.

Basil Seggos, Commissioner

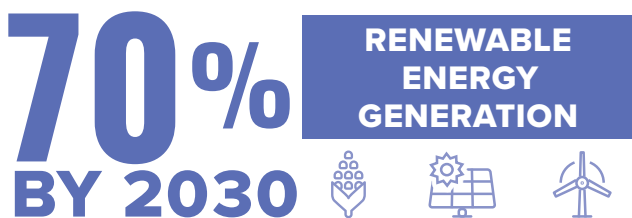
Making Environmental Quality a Top Priority



Tackling Climate Change and Cleaning the Air

New York's Nation-Leading Climate Agenda

New York is advancing one of the nation's boldest and ambitious climate and clean energy agendas in the nation, and is setting an example for other states to follow. Under the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, New York is on a path to achieving its required goal of a zero-emission electricity sector by 2040, including 70 percent renewable energy generation by 2030. Under the Climate Act, New York will also reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 85 percent from 1990 levels and achieve economy-wide carbon neutrality by 2050. The Climate Act prioritizes equity and climate justice by requiring at least 35 percent of clean energy investment benefits go to disadvantaged communities, with a goal of 40 percent.



Climate Justice Working Group

DEC's Office of Environmental Justice continues to facilitate the [Climate Justice Working Group](#) in its efforts to establish the criteria that will define "disadvantaged communities" under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. In 2022, the working group released the draft criteria for public review and held 11 virtual and in-person meetings over the course of the more than 120-day comment period. In March 2023, the working group finalized the criteria to ensure equitable implementation of the Climate Act provisions that prioritize disadvantaged communities by requiring reductions in air pollution and climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions and targeting clean energy and energy efficiency investments.

Climate Action Council Scoping Plan

In 2022, the 22-member Climate Action Council, co-chaired by DEC and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), launched a robust public engagement process after the release of a draft Scoping Plan in 2021 that laid out a strategic plan to achieve the Climate Act's emission reduction requirements. This public engagement included a six-month public comment period with more than 35,000 comments received, as well as nine in-person public hearings across the state and two virtual public hearings.

Convened in 2020, the Council met 31 times by the end of 2022. In addition to the Council, more than 100 meetings were held between seven sector-specific Advisory Panels, the Climate Justice Working Group, and the Just Transition Working Group to ensure equity, system reliability, and a just transition. During their 13 meetings in 2022, the Council considered public comments and updated analytical data, and deliberated further on key issues. In December 2022, the Council approved and released the final [Scoping Plan](#), which provides a recommended roadmap to guide New York's climate action in the years to come. The final Scoping Plan will set the course for New York to advance a clean energy future, support healthier communities, and combat climate change.

Climate Act Policies Finalized

DEC finalized two policies – [Commissioner's Policy 49](#) and [Division of Air Resources Policy 21](#) – that will help DEC continue to implement the Climate Act by helping guide the agency's permitting to ensure facilities and other regulated entities are complying with its stringent requirements to reduce greenhouse gases.

Driving New York's Transition to Clean Transportation

In December 2022, New York adopted new requirements to reduce climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution from the transportation sector. The Advanced Clean Car II regulations will require all new passenger cars and trucks sold in New York State to be zero-emissions (ZEV) by 2035. This step will accelerate zero-emission car sales, resulting in improved air quality statewide, particularly in communities disproportionately impacted by transportation-related pollution. It builds upon the 2021 adoption of the Advanced Clean Trucks rule, which will drive an increase in the number of medium- and heavy-duty ZEV models available for vehicle purchasers and fleets, and provide more than \$1 billion in New York investments in ZEVs of all weight classes over the next five years.

Climate Smart Communities

In 2022, DEC designated 31 municipalities as Certified Climate Smart Communities for the first time or renewed their existing certifications, following a rigorous review of their actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. As of September 2022, more than 100 communities in New York received Climate Smart certification. In addition, DEC designated 23 new municipalities as Registered Climate Smart Communities after they passed the 10-point pledge and committed to act on climate change.

MORE THAN 100 CERTIFIED CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES



Since 2009, the interagency [Climate Smart Communities](#) program has provided resources to help local governments meet the economic, social, and environmental challenges posed by climate change. More than 9.43 million New Yorkers now live in the 373 communities that have taken the pledge. In 2022, DEC awarded \$14 million to help 25 municipalities afford projects that will likely save taxpayer dollars

over the long term, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping communities adapt to the ongoing impacts of climate change, including reducing flood risks, relocating or retrofitting critical infrastructure, and increasing community resilience to extreme weather. In addition, \$5.75 million was made available via the Municipal Zero-Emission Vehicle Program. Funding for the 2022 rounds of these programs was the largest offered since the programs began in 2016.

Extreme Heat Action Plan

Governor Kathy Hochul directed DEC action to help address extreme heat impacts. DEC and NYSERDA convened a workgroup to develop an extreme heat action plan to build community capacities and reduce extreme heat impacts and vulnerabilities in disadvantaged communities, areas of employment, and recreational areas. In July 2022, in a first, immediate step, this workgroup released a [set of actions](#) to be implemented across 22 participating State agencies and authorities. In prioritizing equity in planning and action, the State is directly engaging with impacted communities, local governments, experts, and other stakeholders to collaboratively develop a focused, outcomes-oriented action plan.

Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado joined by DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos, NYSERDA President and CEO Doreen Harris, and local leaders to announce New York now has more than 100 Climate Smart Communities



Wetlands Research Advances Greenhouse Gas Inventory

DEC is teaming up with Cornell University and the New York Natural Heritage Program to understand how freshwater wetland ecosystems contribute to the sequestration of carbon dioxide and an emission balance sheet in the State's greenhouse gas inventory. Fieldwork that began in the summer of 2022 will provide measurements of carbon sequestration rates in 64 representative wetlands from each of the state's four major ecoregions. To date, research suggests that wetlands have a net cooling effect on the climate. This is the first time this question will be addressed across the diverse wetland ecosystems within New York.



Staff perform wetlands field research for the State's greenhouse gas inventory.

Photo by Katie Gannon, Cornell University

Reducing Methane Emissions from the Oil and Gas Sector

In February 2022, Governor Hochul announced the finalization of [regulations](#) that will require significant reductions in methane and other harmful emissions from any oil and natural gas infrastructure in New York State. The regulations mark a milestone in realizing the State's nation-leading clean energy and climate agenda by reducing methane emissions by more than 14,000 metric tons per year and volatile organic compound emissions by over 2,000 tons per year.



Magnetometer-equipped DEC drone

Locating and Plugging Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells

New York continues to reduce climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions from aging and abandoned oil and gas infrastructure, as well as protect ground and surface waters, by addressing threats from unplugged oil and gas wells abandoned by their original owners or operators. Some of these “orphaned” wells may pose significant risks to public safety and the environment. DEC has successfully used new tools and techniques, including unmanned aerial systems (drones) equipped with magnetometers, to locate orphaned oil and gas wells. DEC partnered with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to procure this cutting-edge technology. DEC's aerial magnetic surveys in 2022 resulted in locating three magnetic anomalies believed to be orphaned wells. In 2022, DEC directed the plugging of 16 orphaned gas wells.

Offshore Wind Energy

DEC continued its significant progress with collaboration on [offshore wind development](#) projects in 2022. In February, onshore construction began for New York's first offshore wind farm, South Fork Wind. In November, the New York State Public Service Commission adopted the Joint Proposal for the Sunrise Wind project, a major milestone in the export cable approval process that included DEC staff contributions. New York is dedicated to renewable energy, and through these review processes, DEC staff from several divisions, including Marine Resources, are working diligently to strike a balance between protecting marine resources, maintaining sustainable fisheries, and achieving New York's ambitious green energy goals.

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

The [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI) is a multi-state effort to cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Created in 2005, RGGI has helped spur additional programs that promote clean, renewable energy and curb harmful emissions. RGGI is the nation's first emissions trading program and is resulting in significant reductions in power plant emissions. To date, the investment of almost \$3 billion in RGGI proceeds is expected to reduce regional carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 49.5 million tons and save consumers more than \$14.8 billion over the lifetime of those investments. Auctions raised more than \$287 million from credit allowance auctions in 2022 to help support New York's emissions reduction efforts.

1 MILLION POUNDS 

OF FOOD DONATED TO NEW YORKERS IN NEED

Helping Feed New Yorkers, Reduce Waste, and Fight Climate Change

In January, the [Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling law](#) took effect, requiring businesses and institutions that generate an annual average of two or more tons of wasted food per week to donate excess edible food and recycle all remaining food scraps if the business/institution is located within 25 miles of an organics recycler. In August, DEC and its partner, Feeding New York State, celebrated hitting the milestone of one million pounds of food donated to New Yorkers in need, and that total continues to climb. DEC is committed to increasing food donations and supporting the organics recycling industry by working with partners to create a free recycling assistance program for businesses and recyclers, by helping food banks manage the increased donations due to the new law, and by helping to fund emergency food relief organizations and food scraps recycling opportunities.



Long Island South Shore wind construction

Resilience – Protecting Our Lands and Waters

Resilient NY Streams

DEC completed 35 flood/ice jam studies through the [Resilient NY Streams Program](#) in high-priority, flood-prone watersheds across the state. These studies will provide a path forward for municipalities and make New York State

more resilient to future flooding and extreme weather due to climate change. These studies have resulted in a number of flood buyouts, dam removals, floodplain restorations, and bridge replacements.

Before (left) and after (right) photos of the Otsego Street Bridge in the Village of Ilion, Herkimer County. The bridge was identified by the Resilient NY Streams Program as being dramatically undersized and causing flooding in the village. The new bridge is now climate-resilient compliant.





Rockaway and Jamaica Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Project

DEC, in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers and New York City, continues to make progress on numerous projects to increase resiliency and flood protection throughout the Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island. In 2022, construction began on a storm damage reduction project along the Atlantic shoreline of the Rockaways in Queens County. This \$625 million project includes the construction of a beach with 2.8 million cubic yards of sand, 19 new and rehabilitated groins, and a rock-reinforced dune system along the Atlantic shoreline of the Rockaways.

Managing New York’s Floodplains

DEC’s [Floodplain Management Program](#) supports communities implementing the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program across the state by providing technical assistance, training, and programmatic reviews for community officials and property owners. Staff met with 196 communities to discuss floodplain management program requirements and community-specific permitting processes in 2022. DEC also responded to 1,270 inquiries from residents, property owners, and community officials on floodplain management development standards and individual property owner insurance requirements.

Lake Ontario Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

Progress continues to be made on projects along the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shorelines as DEC and other agencies work with local partners to benefit communities and improve resiliency. Since the creation of the [State’s REDI program](#) in 2019, 134 REDI funded local and regional projects are underway, including 46 projects in the design phase, 43 projects in the construction phase, and 45 projects completed.

DEC’S DAM SAFETY PROGRAM

INSPECTED MORE THAN

350 dams



Promoting Dam Safety and Healthier Ecosystems

DEC’s [Dam Safety Program](#) inspected more than 350 dams in 2022. Dam safety engineers also reviewed many designs for dam rehabilitation projects, including dam removals. One such dam removal was at Rainbow Lake, a Class C dam in Indian Lake, Hamilton County. The Rainbow Lake project consisted of a complete removal of the dam structure across a trout stream, removal of a barrier preventing trout from moving upstream, and providing access to new areas. With the dam removal, staff discovered that the stream naturally flows under a bedrock outcrop, which provides valuable fish habitat.


Rainbow Lake dam spillway before (left) and after (right) dam removal



Protecting Our Communities

TO DATE

DEC PROVIDED

2,000+ ALTERNATE WATER SUPPLIES 

to New York residents whose existing water supplies were affected by emerging contaminants

Tackling Emerging Contaminants

New York State is leading the nation with a comprehensive, science-based strategy to address sources of toxic contamination in our water, including per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) and 1,4-Dioxane, which have been found to negatively affect human health. With PFAS and other emerging contaminants being discovered in an ever-growing number of New York State communities, DEC continues to work with our partners at the State Department of Health (DOH) to help provide New Yorkers with safe, clean drinking water. To date, DEC provided more than 2,000 alternate water supplies to New York residents whose existing water supplies were affected by emerging contaminants. In 2022 alone, more than 5,000 samples were collected at water treatment systems that were installed as part of the emerging contaminant response to ensure their continued effectiveness. Additionally, in March 2023, DEC issued finalized guidance values for PFAS, PFOS, and 1,4-Dioxane to support New York State's ongoing efforts to protect public health and the environment and prevent exposure to these contaminants through the protection of drinking water sources.



Household point-of-entry water treatment system to remove contaminants

Reducing Toxic Chemicals in Products

New York implemented two laws in 2022 that will reduce the presence of toxic chemicals in consumer products and help reduce the presence of these substances in our bodies and in our environment. Amendments to the Hazardous Packaging Act restrict the sale of food packaging with intentionally added PFAS in paper and other plant fiber-based packaging that is intended to be in direct contact with food took effect on Dec. 31, 2022. This will reduce the public's exposure to PFAS, and also reduce the eventual release of PFAS to the environment during disposal. New York also took action to reduce public exposure to 1,4-dioxane by restricting the sale of household cleansing, personal care, and cosmetic products containing this toxic chemical. The law limits 1,4-dioxane to 2 parts per million (ppm) in household cleansing and personal care products and will limit 1,4-dioxane to 10 ppm in cosmetic products took effect December 31, 2022.



DEC social media campaign announcing the 1,4-dioxane limit for household cleansing and personal care products

Revisiting Legacy Sites for Community Impacts

The Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017 required DEC and DOH to develop a systematic means to identify and prioritize inactive solid waste disposal sites, such as closed landfills, for mitigation and remediation to prevent drinking water contamination and protect public health. DEC continues to conduct preliminary groundwater investigations of high-priority sites to assess impacts to drinking water, and undertakes any potential actions deemed necessary to protect a public drinking water supply. In 2022, DEC completed 66 solid waste site/landfill investigations, 29 drinking water evaluations, three referrals to DEC's Remediation program for further action, and eight requests for alternative water supply coordination with DOH to ensure clean drinking water supplies and prevent exposure to contamination when private well samples exceed the public drinking water standard.



Oswego Harbor Spill, Oswego County

On March 8, the US Coast Guard and DEC received a report of a sheen in Oswego Harbor. That night, DEC and its contractor provided initial containment with harbor booms and oil-absorbent pads. DEC determined that oil from Oswego Harbor Power (OHP) entered a storm line and was discharging to the lake. Several federal, state, and local agencies shared jurisdiction of the spill cleanup. OHP immediately shut down the oil line and retained a diver

to install an inflatable plug in the affected storm sewer to prevent further contamination. The release ceased on March 11 when the plug was successfully installed, and site cleanup was completed by the end of August. A total of approximately 1.5 million gallons of contaminated water was treated on-site and discharged, at least 44,500 gallons of oil were recovered, and 1,682 tons of contaminated soil was excavated from the site.

Emergency Spill Response

DEC's Spill Response Program protects public health and the environment by ensuring a timely and appropriate response to spills and unauthorized discharges of contaminants, and by investigating and remediating such incidents. DEC operates a 24-hour spill hotline to receive notification of incidents. More than 96 percent of incidents are addressed by responsible parties under DEC oversight. When a responsible party is not known, or is unable or unwilling to perform an adequate cleanup, DEC uses State-funded standby contracts to address the incident under DEC direction. If State funds are used for this purpose, the State will identify and take legal action against any responsible party for reimbursement of State costs.

DEC emergency personnel responded to

9,579 

**HAZARDOUS MATERIAL/PETROLEUM
SPILLS IN 2022**

helping to protect State lands, waters, and public health.

Restoring Economic Opportunities

Brownfield Cleanup Program

Brownfield sites offer tremendous potential for economic development, community revitalization, and job creation by encouraging the voluntary cleanup of contaminated properties so they can be reused and/or redeveloped. Overseen by DEC's Division of Environmental Remediation, the [BCP](#) remains a powerful tool for transforming former industrial properties, improving quality of life, and revitalizing communities across the state. In 2022, DEC received 84 applications for the program and issued 53 Certificates of Completion (COC). Governor Hochul's 2022-23 Enacted State Budget extended and expanded the Brownfield Cleanup Program to help create healthier communities by encouraging the continued cleanup of contamination throughout the state. The Budget reauthorized the program for 10 years and improves it by incentivizing cleanups in disadvantaged communities. It also expanded the universe of affordable housing programs eligible for program-specific property tax credits, providing vital benefits to incentivize the redevelopment of brownfields as affordable housing. Further, the program now encourages the development of certain renewable energy facility sites, with new tax credits, to help focus BCP-driven redevelopment and meet the State's ambitious climate goals.

Former Pilgrim Village Apartments, Buffalo

The Former Pilgrim Village Family Apartments and Former Pilgrim Village Senior Apartments are two related BCP sites in the city of Buffalo. The sites have both achieved a Track 1 cleanup that allows for unrestricted use. The two sites are currently under construction to build 124 units of affordable family and 98 units of affordable senior apartments. The redevelopment includes parking for residents and visitors, a playground, gardens, outdoor social areas, a community center, and retail space on the ground floor.



DEC APPROVED THE FINAL RECLAMATION OF

164 acres
AT 29 MINES
and **417 ACRES**

OF CONCURRENT RECLAMATION
AT 72 OPERATING MINES

Reclaiming Mines

DEC ensures that when mining is complete, affected lands are reclaimed and returned to productive uses, including forests, agriculture, wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, and recreational, residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. DEC also encourages concurrent reclamation while the mine is still active to reduce environmental impacts and to more quickly return lands affected by mining to productive uses once mining ceases.

DEC currently holds more than \$336 million of financial security for 1,747 permitted mines to ensure final reclamation occurs if the permittee fails to do so. DEC approved the final reclamation of 164 acres at 29 mines and 417 acres of concurrent reclamation at 72 operating mines.

Valley Sand and Gravel

A recently constructed 5.8-acre solar field at Valley Sand and Gravel's Avon Plant in Livingston County produces 1.78 megawatts of electricity annually, which is fed into the grid and results in energy credits for the company. The solar field is located on the same property as the permitted mine and consists of 600 bifacial panels, which produce energy from both

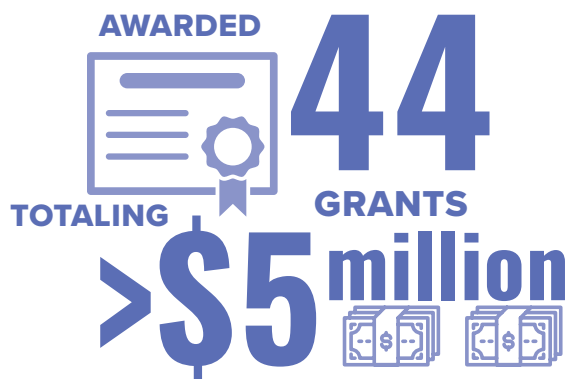


Managing Waste, Promoting Reuse and Recycling

Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Household Hazardous Waste Management Funding

New York municipalities continue to support and fund valuable recycling programs to ensure their long-term viability and reduce the amount of waste being disposed in landfills or combusted. DEC administers a comprehensive funding program to assist municipalities with [waste reduction, recycling, and household hazardous waste management](#). In 2022, DEC awarded 44 grants totaling more than \$5 million to help local governments pay for municipal recycling coordinators and recycling education, coordination, promotion, and planning. In addition, DEC helps localities fund their household hazardous waste management programs through grants designed to reduce the amount of hazardous waste entering the waste stream by removing hazardous compounds and directing them for proper recycling or disposal. In 2022, 113 household hazardous waste grants were awarded to municipalities.

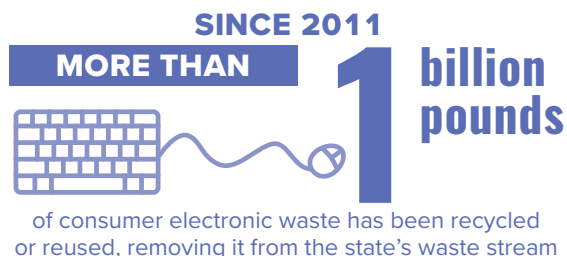
IN 2022, DEC



to help local governments pay for municipal recycling coordinators and recycling education, coordination, promotion, and planning.

Safely Managing Hazardous Waste

DEC is federally delegated to implement the [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act](#) (RCRA) program for New York State. As a delegated agency, DEC adopts and enforces regulations, issues facility permits, conducts inspections, provides technical assistance, and gathers and processes data related to hazardous waste management. During the past year, DEC oversaw the operation, closure, and remediation of 38 permitted facilities, reviewed approximately 1,000 annual reports from RCRA facilities, conducted 396 RCRA compliance inspections, made 18 significant non-compliance findings, issued 158 notices of violation and 15 final orders, and worked with facilities to bring them into compliance.



Reducing Electronic Waste

Since legislation requiring the recycling of electronic waste (e-waste) went into effect in 2011, more than 1 billion pounds of consumer electronic waste has been recycled or reused, removing it from the state's waste stream. Recycling or reusing e-waste protects human health and the environment by keeping toxins from contaminating the environment, and conserves natural resources by reusing the materials in the manufacture of new products. In February, DEC adopted regulations to support the [e-waste Law](#), which prohibits charging program partners, municipalities, or consumers for e-waste accepted as part of a manufacturer's or collective's e-waste acceptance program. The new regulations ensure that New Yorkers have truly free and convenient options for the environmentally responsible end-of-life management of electronic equipment.



Discarded electronic waste at collection event



Collecting and Recycling Postconsumer Paint

In May 2022, the New York State [Postconsumer Paint Collection Program](#) began. Postconsumer paint makes up a large component of the materials collected through household hazardous waste collection programs. These drop-offs are expensive and often unnecessary because most postconsumer paint is non-hazardous latex paint. Supported by a consumer fee on the sale of all new paint in the state, the program will save municipalities and the State money and divert significant quantities of paint to reuse and recycling. Architectural paint producers who sell paint in or into New York State are now required to provide a postconsumer paint collection program, operated by PaintCare, that provides consumers access to a collection network of more than 260 (and increasing) convenient waste paint drop-off sites where they can bring any unwanted architectural paint for proper collection, reuse, and recycling. PaintCare also provides a Large Volume Pickup Service for entities with more than 100 gallons of paint to be properly managed through the program.

CleanSweepNY had a record-setting year in 2022, collecting more unwanted pesticides and other chemicals than in any other year in the program's 21-year history.



Contractors load compromised pesticide containers into overpack drums at an apple orchard

Preventing Pesticide Contamination

[CleanSweepNY](#) is a program designed to safely and economically dispose of canceled, unwanted, unusable, or otherwise obsolete pesticides and other chemicals from agricultural or non-agricultural business activities, such as schools, golf courses, and cemeteries. CleanSweepNY had a record-setting year in 2022, collecting more unwanted pesticides and other chemicals than in any other year in the program's 21-year history. Contributing to this accomplishment was the planning and execution of three collection events instead of the previous practice of two events per year. The collaboration of CleanSweepNY with the newly enacted PaintCare paint-recycling program also allowed CleanSweepNY to collect significant amounts of eligible paint and paint-related coatings for recycling, in addition to the target pesticides, without using CleanSweepNY funds to pay for these items.

Cleaning up Contaminated Sites

State Superfund Progress

Under New York's [State Superfund Program](#), the State identifies, investigates, and cleans up sites where significant amounts of hazardous waste may exist. Superfund sites go through an extensive, multi-phase process that includes investigation, evaluation, cleanup, and monitoring using the best available science and resources to protect public health and the environment. DEC continued to make significant progress on the cleanup of State Superfund sites in 2022:

- 929 State Superfund registry sites are being addressed, are due to be addressed, or are being monitored by DEC:
 - 428 Class 2 sites with investigations or cleanups ongoing
 - 42 Class 3 sites not designated as significant threats to public health or the environment
 - 459 Class 4 sites currently designated as properly closed, with ongoing management
- \$21.7 million recovered from parties responsible for contamination of a Superfund site

Cleaning up the Northrop-Grumman Plume

In July 2022, Governor Hochul and Attorney General Letitia James announced the filing of a consent decree with the court that formally requires Northrop Grumman to advance a comprehensive plan to contain and clean up the groundwater plume associated with the Northrop Grumman Bethpage Facility and Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant sites in Bethpage. Work is underway to investigate and fully contain the Navy Grumman groundwater plume—including construction of three groundwater extraction and treatment systems, and remediation program to address contaminated soil at the Bethpage Community Park—which will prevent the further spread of contamination to water supplies and neighboring communities, and provide peace of mind to residents.



Former Saranac Lake Gas Company Site Cleanup, Essex County

Under the Superfund Program, cleanup of the former Saranac Lake Gas Company site located adjacent to the Adirondack Rail Trail was completed in June. Cleanup of the site included the removal of approximately 8,000 cubic yards of impacted soil and the in-place treatment

of an additional 39,000 cubic yards of soil. Completion of this successful cleanup was a significant milestone that ensures the construction of the nearby Adirondack Rail Trail is unobstructed by remedial work.



Working to Achieve Environmental Justice



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

August

Pay to the
order of

VINES

One Hundred Thousand Dollars & 00/100

\$100,000

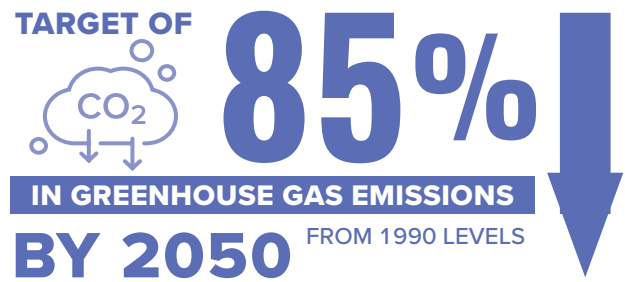
Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Community Air Monitoring Initiative

In July, Governor Hochul announced the launch of the historic statewide air quality and greenhouse gas mobile monitoring initiative that is being deployed in 10 disadvantaged communities across the State that are home to approximately five million New Yorkers—25 percent of the State’s population—in areas overburdened by environmental pollution.

Working in partnership with community-based organizations, the effort to map hyperlocal air pollution and greenhouse gases statewide at the community level is the largest ever undertaken by New York State. The air monitoring program will identify hyperlocal information about air quality impacts in these overburdened areas and help the State identify mitigation activities. This first-ever statewide mobile monitoring complements DEC’s existing efforts to measure levels of outdoor air pollution at more than 50 sites across New York, using continuous and/or manual instrumentation. These efforts are part of the State’s actions under the nation-leading Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, with the Climate Action Council Scoping Plan recently approved and adopted, to achieve the required climate targets, including an 85 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 from 1990 levels. The initiative is bolstered by an estimated \$3 million in State grant funding: \$1 million for Community Air Monitoring Capacity Building Grants, and an additional \$2 million in new funding to support community-led air monitoring to complement the State’s efforts.



Addressing Mount Vernon’s Water Infrastructure Crisis

In April, DEC joined Governor Hochul, Mount Vernon Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard, and Westchester County Executive George Latimer to announce New York State’s historic \$150 million investment to address long-standing water infrastructure and related public health challenges that have plagued Mount Vernon for decades, and advance environmental justice in the city. The innovative State-County-City partnership will expedite priority projects and outline roles, responsibilities, and available funding for this citywide effort to fund and maintain Mount Vernon’s water quality infrastructure over the long-term.

Commissioner Seggos (second from right) joined Governor Hochul and local officials at a ceremony announcing historic water infrastructure investment





Environmental Justice Grants

Since 2006, DEC has awarded more than \$12 million in [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Community Impact Grants](#) to 214 projects statewide. These grants have helped empower communities to address and understand local environmental justice issues, and have helped to improve community health, safety, and sustainability. The 2022 grants resulted in an additional \$3.1 million being awarded to 32 community-based organizations across the state to address community exposure to environmental harms and risks. In 2022, the Office of Environmental Justice partnered with the Division of Air Resources to implement a new \$1 million grant program for the Community Air Monitoring Capacity Building Program. The program is focused on reducing exposure to air toxins and improving public health in communities most impacted by air pollution. The grants will enable organizations to monitor air quality in disadvantaged communities and educate the public about air quality issues.



Commissioner Seggos (second from left) at Environmental Justice Community Impact Grants announcement in Endicott



Historic Return of Indigenous Nation Land

In June, Governor Hochul, joined by US Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and Onondaga Nation s Tadodaho Sidney Hill to announce an historic agreement as part of the Onondaga Lake Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program that will return more than 1,000 acres of scenic land to the Nation. Honeywell International, Inc., will transfer the title to the land in Central New York’s Tully Valley to the Onondaga Nation - one of the largest returns of land by any state to an Indigenous Nation. Under the agreement, the Onondaga Nation will restore and manage the property using traditional ecological knowledge-based planning and sound science.

Tully Valley land returned to the Onondaga Nation

Indian Nations Affairs and Consultation

In August, DEC created a new Office of Indian Nation Affairs to enhance the agency’s capacity to consult with Indigenous Nations that reside in the state and/or have cultural ties to the lands or waters of New York. The office supports DEC’s mandate to protect the environment by including the Nations’ concept of stewardship in accordance with their traditional teachings and ecological knowledge. Led by the Deputy Commissioner of Equity and Justice, the office will work closely with the Office of Environmental Justice to advance DEC’s mission equitably.

In May, DEC cohosted the 8th Annual Indian Nations Leadership Meeting with the US Environmental Protection Agency. During the meeting, Commissioner Seggos met with Indigenous Nation leaders to advance the protection of shared natural resources and enhance communication between DEC and the Nations. Following up on commitments made at the leadership meeting, Commissioner Seggos and the EPA Administrator met with the Tuscarora Nation Council in October to address illegal dumping and environmental contamination.



Meeting with the Tuscarora Nation Council

Protecting Natural Resources



Species and Habitat Management

Lead Ammunition Working Group Helps Minimize Risks to Wildlife

DEC convened experts from multiple disciplines to analyze risks to people and wildlife associated with lead ammunition use. Lead fragments left behind after a game animal is harvested can remain in processed meat or the discarded carcass, potentially exposing people and scavenging wildlife to lead. After incorporating input from a wide swath of user groups, DEC's Lead Ammunition Working Group produced a [series of recommendations](#) to improve human and wildlife health, a number of which are now being undertaken by DEC.



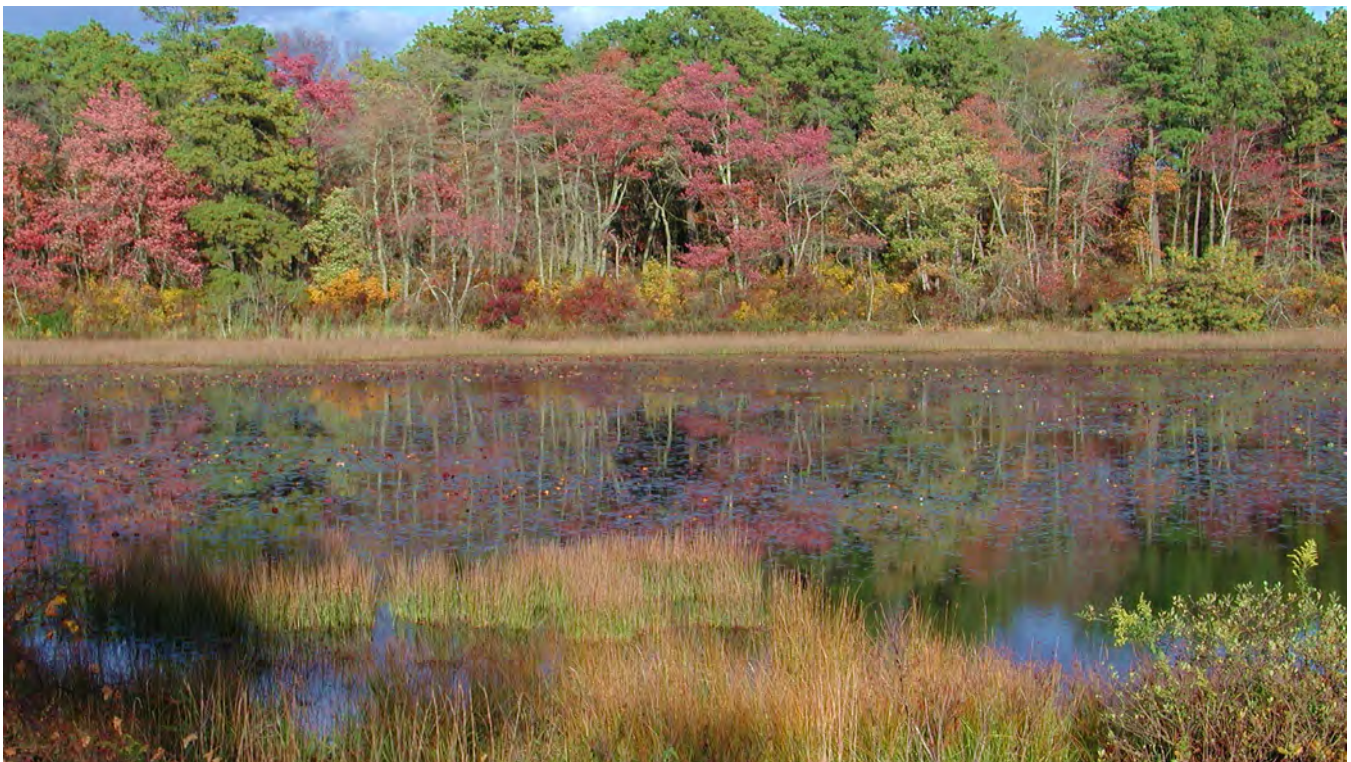
Wetlands Law

New York's 2022–2023 Enacted Budget included landmark amendments to the State's Freshwater Wetlands Act. The legislation is the culmination of a collaborative effort among the Governor's Office, DEC, the State Legislature, and advocates, and will help New York adapt to increased flooding and severe storms fueled by climate change. In total, the amendments will protect an additional million acres of valuable wetlands, which will provide important environmental benefits, including flood protection, water quality enhancement, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Tackle Box Fishing App

In 2022, DEC added a new feature called "The Tackle Box" to its official mobile app, [HuntFishNY](#). The HuntFishNY app provides hunters and anglers mobile access to their sporting licenses, privileges, and permits, as well as the ability to report game harvests immediately while afield. The free Tackle Box feature provides one-stop shopping for waterbody-specific information throughout New York State on freshwater fishing regulations, stocking, fishing and boating access sites, and other useful features like photos to help identify fish within an easy-to-use, map-based interface with many features available both online and offline.

Wetlands provide many important environmental benefits





Humpback whales and dolphins breaching between Fire Island and Hempstead artificial reefs

Monitoring for Endangered Marine Wildlife

DEC continues to work with its partners, the New York Marine Rescue Center and the Atlantic Marine Conservation Society, along with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to monitor and respond to endangered marine wildlife in New York State waters. New York's beaches, bays, estuaries, and nearshore ocean provide habitat and food for a large number of whales, dolphins, seals, and turtles, many of which are endangered or threatened. Marine mammals and reptiles are potentially challenged in our waters by vessel strikes, fishing gear entanglements, and climate change. DEC and its partners respond to sick, injured, and deceased animals, which can include crowd control, outreach, investigations, sample collection, rehabilitation, and humane euthanization. Far beyond our state's waters, DEC is currently developing plans for long-term scientific [monitoring of whale use](#) of the New York Bight so that our marine conservation goals can successfully coexist with fishing, shipping, and renewable energy industries.

Summer Shark Sightings Response

New York State's marine waters provide valuable habitat to more than 13 different shark species that migrate, pass, or inhabit our shores during the warmer months of the year. Beginning in June 2022, shark sightings and interactions began to increase as coastal waters warmed and large baitfish populations formed off New York's shores in the Atlantic Ocean. Throughout the summer, DEC organized and participated in multiple interagency meetings with park managers, lifeguards, law enforcement, and

shark researchers to discuss shark ecology and research, best practices for the prevention of negative interactions, and protocols for responding to these types of events. Staff also assisted park managers and law enforcement with shark species identification from drone images and video taken over bathing beaches. In addition to live shark sightings, DEC also responded to four deceased sharks that washed up on Long Island beaches in 2022. Biological samples and data collected from the shark carcasses were distributed to shark researchers to facilitate and support their research, and necropsies and pathology exams were performed, when possible, to help determine the cause of death in each case.



Great white shark that washed ashore on Long Island

Invasive Species Management

[Invasive species](#) threaten nearly every aspect of our world and are one of the greatest threats to New York's biodiversity. They cause or contribute to the loss of habitat and native fish, wildlife, and tree species, threaten recreational opportunities and income, and cause diseases that endanger crops, humans, and livestock.



Northern Snakehead

The invasive northern snakehead fish established itself in the Delaware River watershed. In 2022, using traditional fisheries and environmental DNA sampling, DEC discovered that these fish were on the verge of utilizing the old Delaware and Hudson Canal to move from the Delaware River Watershed to the Hudson River watershed, where snakeheads are not currently present. DEC worked with the local community to install a temporary barrier to thwart the snakehead's advance and started planning a more permanent solution.

Responding to the Invasive Round Goby

DEC and the New York State Canal Corporation began a comprehensive effort to combat the potential spread of the round goby, an aquatic invasive species, to the Lake Champlain Basin following the discovery of the fish in the Hudson River near Troy in July 2021. The round goby is one of the biggest threats to New York waters, particularly Lake Champlain. It reproduces quickly, outcompetes native benthic fish species for food and habitat, eats the young and eggs of other fish, and can transport botulism up the food chain to waterfowl. As part of the effort, DEC and Canals developed a rapid response plan and will conduct a full evaluation of the potential ecological and economic impacts of aquatic invasive species, including the round goby, to the public, canal users, municipalities, and New York State.



Croton River Hydrilla Control Success

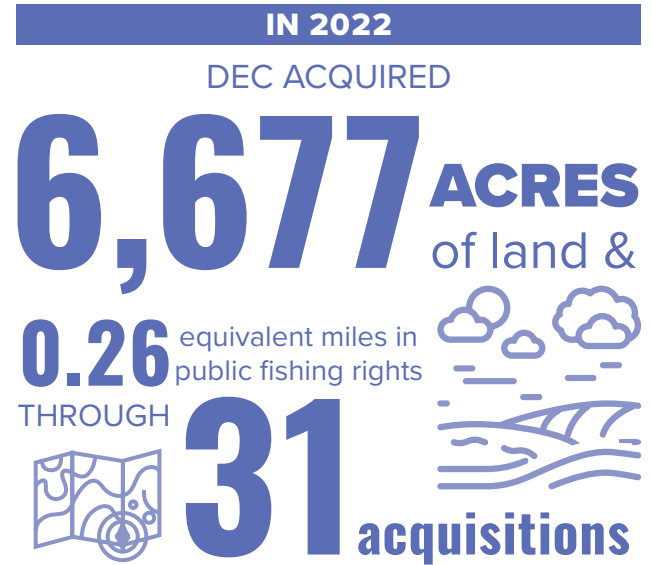
The federally listed and state-prohibited aquatic invasive plant hydrilla was first discovered in the Croton River in 2013. Nine years later, no hydrilla has been found as the result of an intensive DEC control project. This effort has proven successful in preserving the Croton River and its multiple uses, as well as protecting the Hudson River Estuary and its unique habitats. The Croton River is an important recreational fishery, popular for swimming and paddling, and the source of drinking water for the Village of Croton-on-Hudson. Prior to DEC efforts, hydrilla was found at 190 of 446 aquatic plant survey points within the Croton River. In 2022, as a result of DEC control measures, hydrilla was not found at any of the same 446 survey points. The control project also surveyed and documented that no hydrilla has been found in the Hudson River.



Protecting Open Space

In 2022, DEC acquired 6,677 acres of land and 0.26 equivalent miles in public fishing rights (PFR) through 31 acquisitions that included additions to:

- Big Flats Wildlife Management Area (WMA)
- Big Indian Wilderness (Catskill Forest Preserve)
- Black Creek Marsh WMA
- Capital District WMA
- Catharine Creek WMA
- Cold Brook PFR
- Cold Brook WMA
- Conewango Swamp WMA
- Cranberry Mountain WMA
- Danby State Forest
- Dry Run State Forest
- Fire-Fall State Forest
- Goose Egg State Forest
- Great Vly WMA
- Klipnocker State Forest
- Lesser Wilderness State Forest
- Middle Grove State Forest
- Oquaga Creek PFR
- Poverty Hill WMA
- R. Milton Hick Memorial State Forest
- Stid Hill Multiple Use Area
- Taconic Ridge State Forest
- Vandermark State Forest
- Willowemoc Creek PFR



Fly fishing on Willowemoc Creek



Capital District WMA Acquisition

DEC acquired 2,585 acres of land to add to the Capital District WMA in Rensselaer County. The WMA surrounds Cherry Plain State Park along the Rensselaer Plateau, which makes up one of the largest remaining unfragmented tracts of land in New York State. The acquisition will conserve a wide variety of biological diversity and protect a portion of the Tomhannock Reservoir watershed, which provides drinking water to more than 100,000 Rensselaer County residents.

Forest Preserve and State Forest Management


Of the 4.8 million acres of land managed by DEC's Division of Lands and Forests, nearly 3 million acres are classified as [Forest Preserve](#) and comprise over 2.6 million acres in the Adirondack Park and more than 287,000 acres within the Catskill Park. DEC also manages more than 800,000 acres of State Forests located outside of the Adirondacks and Catskills, which include Reforestation Areas, Multiple Use Areas, Unique Areas, and State Nature and Historic preserves.

Partnerships

To assist DEC with managing its vast network of public lands, DEC partners with organizations that place stewards on state lands to educate recreational users about the proper use of New York's natural resources, and conduct trail construction and maintenance. In 2022, DEC partnered with the Adirondack Mountain Club, the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, and the Student Conservation Association on multiple projects in the Adirondacks and Catskills. These stewards interacted with 42,000 visitors in 2022.

Sustainable Certifications

In 2022, DEC harvested timber on 6,291 acres of state forests, producing \$8.3 million in revenue. In addition, the program underwent its annual [certification audit](#) and is in compliance with both the Forest Stewardship Council® and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® standards for the 15th consecutive year. Certification to these management standards reflects DEC's commitment to manage public lands in a sustainable manner that preserves biological diversity and ecosystem services, while also providing societal benefits to local communities and contributing to the economy.

 **4.8 million**
ACRES OF LAND MANAGED BY DEC'S
DIVISION OF LANDS AND FORESTS,
~3 million acres
CLASSIFIED AS FOREST PRESERVE



Student Conservation Association staff replacing a boardwalk in the Adirondacks

DEC TIMBER HARVESTS ON

6,291 acres
OF STATE FORESTS PRODUCED
\$8.3 MILLION IN REVENUE

Private Forest Management

Private lands account for 74 percent of the forests in New York State, and DEC is responsible for assisting the state's nearly 700,000 woodland owners to sustainably manage their woods. In 2022, DEC Foresters assisted and educated more than 900 people on forest management and forestry. DEC Foresters also oversee the 1.4 million acres enrolled in the state's Forest Tax Law, which provides a tax incentive for property owners to adhere to a DEC-approved forest management plan.

DEC FORESTERS OVERSEE

1.4 million



acres enrolled in the state's Forest Tax Law

Regenerate NY Cost Share Program

The [Regenerate NY program](#) helps private landowners establish, enhance, and protect forest regeneration on their lands. The latest round of funding included 20 projects encompassing more than 1,000 acres of forests, and included establishing new forests, enhancing the health and productivity of existing forests, removing competing vegetation to allow for natural forest regeneration, and protecting forest regeneration from deer browse.

Tree City USA

The Arbor Day Foundation partners with each state to manage the Tree City USA Program, which recognizes municipalities for having certain urban forestry accomplishments each year. In 2022, 170 New York communities were recognized for their urban forestry work. Two-thirds of New Yorkers live in a Tree City USA community, where 34,732 trees were planted in 2022.

TWO-THIRDS

OF NEW YORKERS LIVE IN A TREE CITY USA
COMMUNITY, WHERE

34,732

TREES WERE PLANTED IN 2022



DEC Foresters provide free guidance to landowners on sustainable forest management



Volunteers help plant trees during an Arbor Day event

Sustainability Highlights



Executive Order 22

Governor Hochul signed [Executive Order 22](#) in September to accelerate New York's efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of state government and transition to a clean energy economy. DEC is taking a leadership role in implementing this new order as a co-chair of the GreenNY Council. This directive sets new targets for greening DEC's operations and ensures that State operations will not have a disproportionate burden on disadvantaged communities.

Commissioner's Policy 75

In January 2022, Commissioner Seggos issued DEC's sustainability policy in the form of Commissioner's Policy 75. The policy includes internal goals for reducing the environmental impact of DEC's operations, creates a structure to carry out sustainability projects, reinforces the notion that DEC employees have a responsibility to align their actions to meet DEC's environmental goals, and calls for the creation of a department-wide sustainability plan to be issued by January 2023. Below are some examples of sustainability actions taken by DEC in 2022.

First Electric Boat in State Government

DEC put the first all-electric boat in State government into service this past spring. The boat is being used on the Finger Lakes for water quality sampling. Staff are monitoring the performance of the vessel to determine the environmental benefits of the electric powertrain and how well the technology is suited for other uses.

Boonville Air-Sourced Heat Pump

DEC continued its efforts to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by installing an air-sourced heat pump at its Boonville Field Headquarters. The system will significantly reduce the amount of propane needed to heat the facility, while increasing occupant comfort. In addition, the installation will allow staff to evaluate the performance of air-sourced heat pumps in one of the coldest parts of the state.

First Electric Riding Lawn Mower

DEC put its first electric riding lawn mower into service in 2022. The lawn mower will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and noise levels. Staff are evaluating the mower's performance to see what additional uses this technology is suited for.



Newly installed Boonville heat pump



First DEC electric lawn mower

Protecting Public Safety



Environmental Conservation Police Officers (ECOs)

In the past year, DEC's Division of Law Enforcement received 120,000 calls from the public and ECOs responded to 26,000 calls for service. ECOs issued more than 14,000 tickets and 1,700 written warnings, and executed 56 search warrants. ECOs also attended nearly 1,500 outreach events, educating and informing New Yorkers on a range of environmental concerns, including hunting safety and ethics, protecting environmental quality, and environmental and natural resource education for school-aged children.

ECOs also continue to serve as an important component of New York's emergency and homeland security response capability. In 2022, ECOs and other DEC staff assisted efforts in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona, bolstered security at the United Nations General Assembly, and participated in Operation Aegis, a multiagency, maritime-based preventative radiological/nuclear detection and enforcement initiative focused on the New York State Canal System and contiguous waters of the Hudson River below the Troy locks.



ECO vessels assisting with a security detail for a presidential visit to the United Nations

14,000

TICKETS
ISSUED



1,700

WRITTEN
WARNINGS



56

SEARCH
WARRANTS



Solid Waste Task Force

Between March and May 2022, DEC's Solid Waste Task Force was activated to gain intelligence into the movement of solid waste in the lower Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island, and to take enforcement action after the illegal disposal of solid waste was observed. The team worked long hours, in plainclothes, driving unmarked vehicles in order to locate, follow, and surveil suspect waste transporters. Brokers, waste transport companies, and drivers were preying on consumers who had no knowledge of the law. Brokers would use social media to offer contaminated fill as DEC-certified clean fill in a classic bait-and-switch scheme. At the close of the operation, DEC had located 26 illegal dump sites and issued 613 notices of violation, including 136 misdemeanors. In total, DEC charged 63 companies, 63 truck drivers, and 11 property owners.



Solid Waste Task Force members at an illegal solid waste disposal site

Forest Rangers

DEC Forest Rangers provide public safety and protect State lands through their expertise in wildland search and rescue, fire management, law enforcement, and incident management. Rangers protect 5 million acres of State-owned, DEC-managed lands and easements, as well as all the people who use these lands. Rangers teach both adults and children how to avoid life-threatening situations, while also promoting natural resource protection. In 2022, Forest Rangers conducted nearly 360 search, rescue, and recovery missions, responded to more than 160 wildfires covering more than 1,300 acres, and participated in more than 50 prescribed fires covering nearly 900 acres.



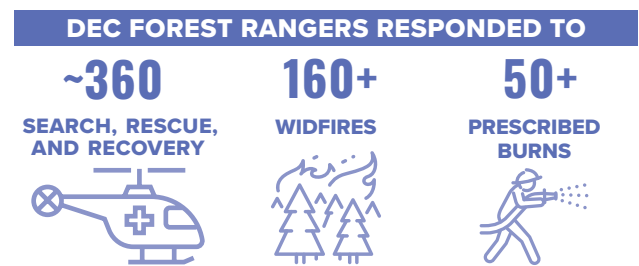
Napanoch Point Fire

In August, Forest Rangers led the multi-agency incident response to a wildland fire caused by a lightning strike at Minnewaska State Park. The Napanoch Point fire burned 142 acres of land. Forest Rangers worked in cooperation with the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, New York State Police, Ulster County, and many other State and local partners. Eight days after the fire started, the teams of firefighters had the fire under control. With Ranger crew bosses, New York State Police and Army National Guard helicopters conducted nearly 500 bucket drops, totaling 129,000 gallons of water. Over the course of the eight days, more than 200 firefighters, bulldozer operators, pilots, other professional staff, and volunteers worked on fire suppression and communication efforts.

Search and Rescue Highlight

On one day in October, Forest Rangers responded to two broken leg incidents with two hoist rescues in less than five hours. First, Rangers received a call for a woman with a broken leg on Mt. Marcy after she slipped on the ice and suffered multiple fractures to her leg. Ranger Lewis splinted the leg, harnessed her, and then with the help of New York State Police aviation, the Rangers hoisted her into the helicopter. When they landed at the hospital, another call came in reporting another broken leg, this time near Basin and Saddleback mountains. The same crew refueled and headed back out. Ranger Lewis helped harness the second subject for another successful hoist rescue.

Aerial view of the Napanoch Point Fire



Saddleback cliffs helicopter rescue

23rd Basic Schools

In May 2022, Forest Ranger and Environmental Conservation Police Officer (ECO) recruits reported to their respective academies for six months of strenuous training to join the ranks of DEC's divisions of Forest Protection and Law Enforcement. ECO recruits trained at the police academy in Pulaski, Oswego County, which has served as the home of these trainings for several years. While the first weeks focused primarily on basic police skills such as physical training, drill and ceremony, and computer lessons, recruits also delved into more intensive instruction, including firearms training, emergency vehicle operation, chemical waste dumping, and identifying poachers, among other skills.

Ranger recruits trained at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry campus in the hamlet of Wanakena, St. Lawrence County, and the Huntington Wildlife Forest in the town of Newcomb, Essex County. The Ranger recruits obtain Division of Criminal Justice Services police certification and undergo training in rescue techniques, wildfire suppression, prescribed burns, water rescues, and wildlife protection, among other skills. In December, 38 new Forest Rangers and 18 ECOs graduated from the 23rd Basic Schools.







Promoting and Expanding Sustainable Outdoor Recreation



Visitors enjoy the newly constructed Fisher Trail at Five Rivers

Expanding Recreational Access

DEC continues to make strategic investments to expand access to healthy, active outdoor recreation, connect more people to the outdoors, protect natural resources, and boost local economies. Highlights from 2022 include:

Carpenter Falls Accessibility Project

DEC completed an exciting project to improve public access and reduce long-term environmental impacts to Carpenter Falls Unique Area in Cayuga County. The project incorporated accessibility features to offer safe and equitable access for visitors. New site features include an elevated boardwalk and observation platform, a bicycle rack, and stone stairs to the base of the upper falls. The new boardwalk and viewing platform are accessible to people with disabilities, allowing visitors the opportunity to traverse through the forest to view this spectacular waterfall. The project also includes sustainable stormwater management practices that promote wildlife habitat and reduce erosion. A wildflower grass seed mixture was used on the site to promote pollinators and limit the need for lawn mowing.



New viewing platform at Carpenter Falls Unique Area



Construction of the new Fisher Trail at Five Rivers

Five Rivers Trail Improvements

In October, the new Fisher Trail was opened at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center in Delmar. The trail traverses an easement with the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy and connects a very populated suburban area to the Center's trails. A nearly half-mile section of the trail complies with DEC accessibility guidelines for people with mobility disabilities. It also includes two parking areas, informational kiosks, an observation deck, and several benches. The completion of the trail is part of the 50th anniversary celebration of both Five Rivers Center and the Friends of Five Rivers.

Reinstein Woods Expansion

DEC announced plans to expand the Reinstein Woods Environmental Education Center, a unique 292-acre complex of forests, ponds, and wetlands in the town of Cheektowaga, Erie County. The approximately 7,000-square-foot addition to the education building will more than double its current square footage and enhance outdoor recreation and environmental education programs offered by Reinstein Woods while improving accessibility for visitors with mobility impairments and other disabilities.



Wading in the cold Salmon River pays off for one lucky angler

Project Healing Waters

Each November, DEC facilitates the Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing program for veterans with disabilities on the Salmon River. The 12 participants are aided by 15 volunteers from a variety of fishing clubs who assist the military personnel in using fly fishing as therapeutic outdoor recreation and as a rehabilitation tool.

Santanoni Wagon

DEC purchased a custom-built, wheelchair-accessible farm wagon to provide horse-drawn access to Camp Santanoni for persons with disabilities. Providing the horse-drawn wagon rides helps DEC meet its goal of providing inclusive recreation in a traditional method that fits in with the historic setting, surrounded by wilderness.

DEC Campgrounds

DEC's Forest Preserve campgrounds hosted more than 1.5 million people in 2022, generating nearly \$10 million in revenue in support outdoor recreation opportunities.

1.5 million



**NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO VISITED
DEC CAMPGROUNDS IN 2022**



Santanoni wagon

Adventure NY: Promoting the Great Outdoors

New York State Birding Trail

The New York State [Birding Trail](#), which was completed in August, highlights the diverse and unique opportunities found across the state and provides information on places anyone can go to find birds at a variety of outdoor locations. The trail is not a physically connected or built trail, but a network of promoted birding locations that can be accessed by car or public transportation, providing an inclusive experience for all. More than 320 locations are included on the Birding Trail, and a nomination process was implemented at the launch of the trail project to allow publicly and privately managed sites to be part of the trail. DEC continually solicits input from a wide range of New Yorkers and organizations that represent Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities, and is making trail information available in English and Spanish.



Participants enjoy new Birding Trail segment in the Rochester area



Participants enjoy Get Outdoors & Get Together Day at Hempstead Lake State Park in Nassau County

Get Outdoors & Get Together Day

DEC and State Parks, in partnership with the State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and the Division of Veterans' Services, offered a revamped Outdoors Day in June 2022. The event had an increased emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, offering free and low-cost events to connect people to nature and

provide increased access to the outdoors for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. DEC hosted 14 events, including at least one in every DEC region, and drew more than 3,000 participants, reaching pre-pandemic participation levels.



Catskills Fire Tower Challenge

This popular hiking challenge returned in January to entice hikers to visit the six public fire towers in the Catskill Park. More than 1,000 finishers from 14 states, Canada, and the United Kingdom completed the challenge.

Hikers atop Balsam Lake Mountain as part of the Catskills Fire Tower Challenge.

Photo courtesy Maimouna Abiola

Spanish-Language Newsletter

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, DEC launched its first Spanish-language newsletter in October 2022. A direct translation of the agency's popular monthly newsletter *Find Your Adventure*, *Encuentre Su Aventura*, promotes the many outdoor events and recreational offerings happening across State lands, including information on popular activities like camping, birding, hiking, paddling, and more. Through this newsletter, DEC helps further its mission to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion in outdoor recreation, making New York's lands welcoming and accessible to all. Currently, the newsletter has more than 1,000 Spanish-language subscribers.

First-Time Camper Program

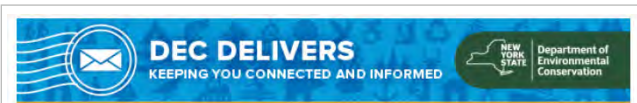
The First-Time Camper Program welcomed two groups of campers to DEC campgrounds this past summer. Both groups consisted of members from the partner group, Outdoor Afro. Members from the Albany chapter enjoyed a weekend of camping in the Adirondacks, which included hiking, birding, and fishing. Members from the New York City chapter camped in the Catskills, where they were introduced to birding, fishing, boating, and hiking. A Forest Ranger also discussed outdoor preparedness and the elements of Leave No Trace™. Post-stay survey results showed that all participants enjoyed the program and the new experiences, and were eager to try camping on their own.

DEC Accessibility Program Public Engagement

DEC continues to expand the involvement of DEC's Accessibility Advisory Committee to further engage people with disabilities in DEC planning and decision-making. Committee members represent a wide range of disability and community organizations, advancing accessibility to DEC recreational facilities for people of all ages and abilities. DEC's [Accessibility Program](#) organized committee field trips this year to the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves and environs. Committee members and partners provide a critical link for DEC to connect with the disability community and the general public in spreading the word about accessibility improvements and opportunities on State lands.



First-time campers enjoy a meal alfresco



Encuentre Su Aventura - Marzo 2023

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation sent this bulletin on 03/14/2023 04:45 PM EDT

Encuentre Su Aventura - Marzo de 2023

Participe en el 2023 I Bird NY Challenge

El reto 2023 I BIRD NY Challenge está de vuelta y mejor que nunca. Animamos a los observadores de aves de todas las edades y niveles a ver u oír y grabar las 10 especies de aves de su elección, con oportunidades de ganar grandes premios para los participantes jóvenes y adultos. Este año, por primera vez, el reto se realizará entre el 1 de marzo y el 1 de noviembre. Los registros de observación se pueden enviar mediante un formulario en línea, y todos los participantes recibirán un parche conmemorativo de este reto. Si desea más información, incluyendo ideas sobre las especies que se pueden observar y los lugares donde aparecen, visite la página web I Bird NY.



Haga hoy mismo su reserva para acampar

¿Sabía que puede reservar su plaza de acampada en ReserveAmerica con una antelación de hasta 9 meses? Ya está abierto el plazo de reserva para todo el verano.

DEC administra más de 50 áreas de acampada en los parques Adirondack y Catskill, donde dispondrá de una amplia variedad de experiencias como acampada en una isla, acampada en tiendas y trailers, instalaciones de embarcación de lanchas, rutas de senderismo, playas y áreas de uso durante el día con mesas de picnic y parrillas. Para encontrar el área de acampada perfecta, visite la guía de acampadas. Encuentra otros consejos para acampadas.



Public Outreach, Education and Involvement



Public Involvement

In 2022, staff from DEC's Bureau of Public Outreach promoted the agency by facilitating more than 100 virtual and in-person public meetings and hearings and participating in outreach events, including the Great New York State Fair and local fairs, National Hunting and Fishing Day events, Earth Day events, environmental fairs, tree plantings, and career fairs.

Virtual meeting technologies have improved accessibility for both language interpreters and language captioning. Staff continue to assist, support, and promote various

DEC programs through public outreach and education, including the paint recycling program, Great Lakes Action Agenda, and an anti-idling campaign.

Regional outreach staff regularly coordinate with regional program staff and DEC's Office of Media Relations, which issued more than 450 press releases and responded to thousands of media inquiries in 2022. Regional outreach staff also hosted webinars and hearings for the Climate Justice Working Group and assisted with regional stakeholder meetings and events.

Digital Public Outreach

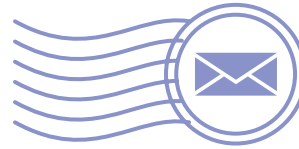
DEC WEBSITE



~29 million pageviews,
with ~80,000 page views each day

DEC DELIVERS

DEC's email subscription platform has more than



600,000 subscribers

SOCIAL MEDIA

Followers of our social media accounts include:



160,000



15,000



65,000



33,000



~2 MILLION TOTAL VIEWS

85 NEW VIDEOS

8,300 SUBSCRIBERS

DECINFO LOCATOR INTERACTIVE WEBSITE MAP

Innovative platform to search for documents, public data, and outdoor recreation information had more than

280,000 page views
with **82 different data sets**



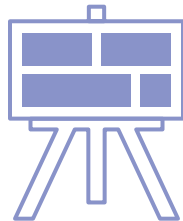
Communication Products

THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION SERVICES PRODUCED

200 reports, posters, signs,

KIOSK DISPLAYS, AND BROCHURES FOR THE PUBLIC

Staff traveled more than 15,000 miles statewide to capture and produce more than



225 videos

Conservationist Magazine

DEC's bimonthly *Conservationist* magazine provides subscribers with information about outdoor sites and activities, tools and tips to protect our natural resources, and updates about pressing environmental issues. In addition, more than 280,000 New York fourth graders received two issues of *Conservationist for Kids* at no cost.

DEC

Working for You

Basil Seggos, Commissioner

Sean Mahar, Executive Deputy Commissioner

Erica Ringewald, Chief of Staff

Louis Alexander, Deputy Commissioner, Hearings and Mediation Services

Megan Allard, Director, Office of Internal Investigations

Tom Berkman, Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel

Jon Binder, Deputy Commissioner, Climate Change, Air Resources, and Energy

Mark Cadrette, Director, Office of Employee Relations

Laura DiBetta, Director, Outdoor Recreation

Catherine Dickert, Director, Division of Mineral Resources

Adriana Espinoza, Deputy Commissioner, Equity and Justice

Harold Evans, Director, Office of Communication Services

Andrew Fischler, Director, Office of Internal Audit

Kevin Frazier, Director, Constituent Relations

Dereth Glance, Deputy Commissioner, Environmental Remediation and Materials Management

Andy Guglielmi, Director, Division of Environmental Remediation

Alanah Keddell-Tuckey, Director, Office of Environmental Justice

Christopher LaLone, Director, Division of Air Resources

Carol Lamb-Lafay, Director, Division of Water

Maureen Leddy, Director, Office of Climate Change

Corey Lehman, Director, Office of Emergency Management

Jacqueline Lendrum, Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife

Nancy Lussier, Director, Division of Management and Budget

Katie McNamara, Director, Office of Legislative Affairs

Andy Niles, Director, Division of Operations

Karen Przyklek, Director, Division of Law Enforcement

Steve Smith, Deputy Commissioner, Public Protection

Julia Socrates, Acting Director, Division of Marine Resources

John Solan, Director, Division of Forest Protection

Jeffrey Stefanko, Deputy Commissioner, Administration

Michele Stefanucci, Chief Administrative Law Judge Office of Hearings & Mediation Services

Katie Stone Petronis, Deputy Commissioner, Natural Resources

James Tierney, Deputy Commissioner, Water Resources

David Vitale, Director, Division of Materials Management

Fiona Watt, Director, Division of Lands and Forests

Daniel Whitehead, Director, Division of Environmental Permits

Maureen Wren, Deputy Commissioner, Public Affairs

Cathy Haas, Regional Director, Region 1

Patrick Foster, Regional Director, Region 2

Kelly Turturro, Regional Director, Region 3

Anthony Luisi, Regional Director, Region 4

Joe Zalewski, Regional Director, Region 5

Randall Young, Regional Director, Region 6

Dereth Glance, Acting Regional Director, Region 7

Tim Walsh, Regional Director, Region 8

Julie Barrett-O'Neil, Regional Director, Region 9





NEW
YORK
STATE

Department of
Environmental
Conservation

