



The Catskills - New York State's Gem

OUR REGION

The Catskill region is a New York State treasure like no other. The area is many things: home to generations of farmers and small business owners, a place for renewal and recreation for city-dwellers, the source of drinking water for more than eight and a half million New Yorkers, and an exquisite wildlife habitat boasting beautiful vistas, myriad forests, lakes, and abundant trout fishing streams.

Southern Albany, Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties make up the Catskills.



OUR COMMUNITIES

The Catskill region is made up of every type of community imaginable. From small rural farm towns to hot vacation spots to cities on the rebound, we've got it all. Each Catskill community has its own unique personality, advantages, and challenges, and we are working to help all of them thrive.

OUR WILD PLACES

The Catskill Park and Forest Preserves--the crown jewels of our region--make up one of the largest and most ecologically diverse natural areas in the East. The Park contains the headwaters of some of the cleanest rivers in the Eastern United States and includes over 287,500 acres of forever wild preserve. Additionally, it's one of only 10 areas east of the Mississippi River that contain a contiguous wild area of over 50,000 acres.



BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

Catskill communities have a long history of balancing protection of our wild places with efforts to build a healthy economy, for the benefit of all who live and visit here. Our region has:

- History that lives on today in our historic districts and buildings, covered bridges, and scenic byways;
- Thriving arts and cultural assets:
- The Catskill Park--more than 705,000 acres of public and private meadows, lakes, rivers, wetlands, waterfalls, and cliffs;
- A booming travel and tourism economy;
- The New York City Watershed, the largest unfiltered drinking-water system in the US, rooted in Catskills lands, rivers, and reservoirs; and
- Our people are strong and independent, and live in diverse communities.

ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGES

With all we have, there's still so much to do. State, regional, and federal partners must work to address:

- Climate change. Our region has already been hit hard by warming temperatures, floods and fires, and changes in rainfall patterns brought on by climate change. We must build a just and equitable transition to New York's clean, renewable energy future;
- Food insecurity. Far too many communities in our region live without access to healthy, affordable food;
- Large scale/high density development; and
- Threats to our wild places including overuse and invasive species.





FOOD & FARMS

While addressing both food insecurity and food waste in the Catskills is a complicated challenge, it's one that Catskill Mountainkeeper takes on every day. To help communities stay healthy and thrive, we:

- Run farmers markets in Monticello and Liberty. Our communities need fresh, accessible food from thriving local farms. Our urban farmers markets have done that for five seasons, each one bigger and better than the last. We honor WIC and SNAP benefits to ensure that produce goes to everyone who needs it.
- Manage school and community gardens throughout Sullivan County, which is ranked the second most unhealthy county in the state. Getting kids in the garden gets healthy food in their hands and their bellies, and that benefits everyone.
- Support the Food Recovery and Recycling Act. 18% of New York's municipal waste stream consists of good, edible food that could be recovered rather than sent to rot in landfills. This proposal provides the way forward, and we're calling on the state legislature to enact this law so that nourishing food isn't wasted.











CATSKILL PARK

Protecting and enhancing the Catskill Park for residents and visitors requires substantial investment to ensure it is safe and accessible for all. In 2018 we're working to conserve our wild places and keep them open to the public for responsible use. But we can't do it alone. We need New York State to invest in our park, and we're calling for a \$14.5 million budget package to meet the most urgent needs:

- Forest rangers to keep the park safe for those who hike, ride, ski and swim:
- Upgrades to our campground facilities;
- Strong sound management for our lands and forests;
- Staff and funding for the Department of Environmental Conservation to get the job done; and
- Significant resources to fight the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. This invasive bug threatens our vital hemlock trees, which provide shade for our trout streams. If we don't beat back the adelgid now, our entire ecosystem is at risk--and as goes our ecosystem, so goes our Park... and our economy.



Close up of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid--the little bug with a big appetite. If we don't stop it, the adelgid could destroy the Catskills' hemlock population.



CATSKILL REGION

In addition to advocating to fund our park, Mountainkeeper supports projects and initiatives throughout to help our communities thrive and grow.

- Rail Trails provide opportunities for biking, running, walking and skiing; preserve green space; increase property values; and tie communities together. Our region has a growing number of rail trails, including the Kingston Green Line and Ashokan Reservoir--investing in them and connecting them with the Empire State Trail will benefit locals and visitors alike:
- Right sized development is critically important. We are faced with a number
 of large scale projects and proposals, including casinos, resorts and theme
 parks. These come with opportunities and challenges, and all levels of
 government must work together to grow our future coherently and
 sustainably; and
- The Catskills have much to offer and Mountainkeeper promotes our region and our vision. We run trailkeeper.org to help Sullivan County residents and visitors access the great outdoors. We support ecotourism attractions like historic tourist trains and we're helping to develop a new TravelStorys GPS tour, connecting people to places.



BUILDING OUR CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Healthy communities need and deserve clean energy solutions built around renewable resources and energy efficiency. Working toward this vision means accelerating our transition away from dirty and dangerous fossil fuels.

We call on New York State to enact:

- The Climate and Community Protection Act (CCPA, A8270-A/S6617-A), a bill to slash our state's contribution to climate pollution from all human-produced emissions sources by 100% below 1990 levels, and build climate resilient communities by providing a just transition to renewable energy; and
- The Climate and Community Investment Act, a proposal to to invest in affordable, renewable energy in our communities and create local jobs by making corporate polluters pay their fair share for the damage they're doing to our health and our climate.

To make our vision a reality, we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground and prevent a massive planned build-out of gas and oil pipeline and infrastructure.

Our state and federal government must stop permitting new fossil fuel pipelines, compressor stations, and power plants, while investing in the clean energy solutions we need.

The Delaware River Basin Commission must ban hydraulic fracturing, as proposed in draft regulations. The Commission must go further and also ban wastewater storage and treatment along with water withdrawals designated for fracking.

Conclusion



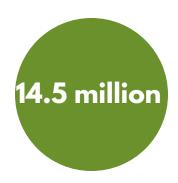


The Catskills are unlike any other place on earth, with unique wild beauty, clean air and pristine water resources, abundant wildlife, a rich farming tradition, and a long history of serving as a place where people from all over can come to play, relax, heal, and recharge. Mountainkeeper is dedicated to protecting everything that makes the Catskills so special while charting the way forward to a more healthy, prosperous, and sustainable future for our communities.

The only way forward is together, and change begins at home. Mountainkeeper is committed to working with our partners to make our vision for the Catskills a reality. We are also proud collaborators with more than 40,000 individual supporters and donors. Together we're working to invest in our park and region, fight climate change, and build healthy and sustainable communities.



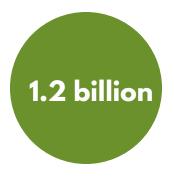
By the Numbers



Investment needed from New York's 2018-2019 Budget to support the Catskill Park and Region



'Forever wild' acres in the Catskill Forest Preserve



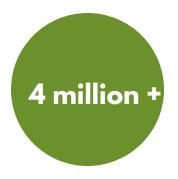
Gallons of clean drinking water sent to New York City each day, 90% of which originates in the Catskills and west of the Hudson



Jobs created annually statewide by the Climate and Community Investment Act



Homes that went solar through Mountainkeeper's RenewableNY program



Number of people who visit the Catskills every year.



Megawatts of solar power added to New York's grid through our RenewableNY Program



Miles of interconnected trails created by the Empire State Trail



The number of Catskills high peaks above 3,500 ft.

Getting There in 2018

Our Vision for the Catskills

A region of healthy, thriving, diverse, and sustainable communities where wild places are conserved for people and nature.

• To bring our vision to life we need partners at all levels--local, regional, state, and federal--to work together to make the Catskills and New York State a healthy and sustainable place for all who live and visit.

To move towards this vision in 2018:

- New York State must enact the Climate and Community Protection Act and the Climate and Community Investment Act.
- The Delaware River Basin Commission must ban fracking along with water withdrawals and wastewater storage associated with gas drilling.
- The Legislature must embrace the Food Recovery and Recycling Act, as included in Governor Cuomo's Executive Budget.
- The Governor and Legislature need to fully fund the Catskills in the 2018-2019 budget.
- We need to collaborate on further developing initiatives to fund and support access to healthy, local foods, and expand our farmers markets reach.
- Our communities need support and resources to develop sustainably and responsibly.

The Catskills is an amazing place. We can and must work together to protect and conserve this New York State treasure for generations to come.



Catskill Mountainkeeper protects our region's wild lands and natural resources, supports smart development to sustainably grow our economy, nurtures healthy communities, and accelerates New York's transition to a 100% clean energy future.