

NATURE

NEW YORK

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Bill Ulfelder © Jonathan Grassi

From Our Executive Director

Climate change is the most urgent challenge of our time. Our actions now will determine if we can slow climate change enough to avoid its worst impacts.

In New York, we're using policy, science, creative funding, collaboration and innovation to reduce emissions, remove carbon and help communities adapt. We're supporting the state in helping New Yorkers move out of harm's way—work that will serve as a national model for adapting to climate change. We're also leveraging nature—from thriving forests to eelgrass beds and salt marshes—to absorb greenhouse gases and protect communities and wildlife.

With your help, we are enacting bold solutions for a resilient future for every New Yorker. Thank you for your support.

Bill Ulfelder, Executive Director



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We are part of a massive endeavor to plant nearly two million acres of trees to absorb carbon and restore wildlife habitat. © Anthony Graziano

Harnessing the Power of Trees

The Nature Conservancy harnesses the power of trees for many reasons. Forests absorb and store carbon, filter our water and air, cool our neighborhoods, offer places to enjoy nature and provide critical wildlife habitat.

Relative to other natural climate solutions, planting trees, or reforestation, offers the most effective opportunity to store large amounts of carbon. Recognizing this, New York State set an ambitious goal of planting 1.7 million acres of trees by 2040—an area bigger than the state of Delaware. Our role is essential in helping the state reach this goal.

“New York State established a bold climate agenda that includes scaling up tree planting,” says Michelle Brown, senior conservation scientist for The Nature Conservancy in New York. “To reach this audacious goal, we need to think expansively about seed collection, nursery capacity, workforce training, tree planting and maintenance, and landowner incentives and outreach.”

To accelerate reforestation, we are partnering with New York landowners, tree service providers and nurseries to plant up to 300,000 trees over the next year. In tandem, we'll use our learnings to build a model that will allow us to drastically increase tree planting in the years ahead to reach the state's 2040 goal.

Climate change demands that we think big and work faster than ever before. This is an approach we are piloting and hope to scale nationwide. With your support, we can tackle climate change and plant trees that absorb tons of carbon for years to come.



Above: NY Trustee Scott Kleinman © TNC; Inset: New York Division Board Retreat in Niagara Falls © Dana Geller/TNC

Meet Scott Kleinman: New York Trustee and Champion of Climate Action

What motivated you to get involved with The Nature Conservancy?

Energy, climate and the economy are so inextricably intertwined, and I have always wanted to be more involved. What drew me in, many years ago, was The Nature Conservancy's expansion beyond land conservation to focus on a number of climate solutions, including the energy transition, lowering carbon emissions, and community resilience ranging from the hyperlocal to regional, national and international levels.

You've fostered incredible opportunities for catalytic change in New York. What is one success that makes you proud?

Finding solutions that lead to large-scale carbon mitigation and sequestration are critical to address climate change. When I heard about our New York team's newly launched reforestation program, I embraced the opportunity to support this innovative work. And I'm excited to see how the team learns and advances their strategy in the months ahead.

What's one hope you have for the future?

The Nature Conservancy is doing amazing work on climate adaptation, and we are seeing the benefits of carbon reduction. However, as a state, a nation and a globe, we are woefully underprepared for what's coming. Climate events like hurricanes, forest fires and coastal flooding are getting more extreme. How do we change the way we live and operate so that we can get ahead of climate change's ever-increasing impacts? I hope that by lending my expertise and support, I can move these important programs forward.

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New York supports conservation initiatives around the globe. Here's a recent highlight:

16,850

corals planted in Bahamas and the U.S. Virgin Islands



© John Melendez

Restoring Caribbean Coral Reefs

Coral reefs are vital, vibrant ecosystems that provide habitat for a quarter of all marine life. Reefs protect people as well: healthy reefs reduce wave energy by an average of 97%, shielding communities from storm surge, flooding and erosion. In the Caribbean, coral reefs support key fisheries and draw billions of dollars in tourism each year.

Despite their value, coral reefs have dramatically declined due to threats such as heat waves, which cause widespread bleaching. The Nature Conservancy established three Coral Innovation Hubs in the Bahamas, U.S. Virgin Islands and Dominican Republic to tackle reef decline. At these hubs, we develop, test and implement techniques to breed corals with greater survival rates. We have produced millions of coral embryos, and hundreds of thousands are now growing at restoration sites, including critically endangered species like elkhorn coral. By restoring reefs, we are investing in the future of our oceans and the well-being of coastal communities.