

DEC Announces 'Regenerate NY' Forestry Cost Share Grants \$450,000 in Grants Now Available for Eligible Private Forest Landowners through New Grant Program

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced that \$450,000 is now available in the first round of the State's new 'Regenerate NY' Forestry Cost Share Grant Program. The grant program is designed to assist private landowners growing the next generation of forests, which are crucial for mitigating climate change, providing wildlife habitat, protecting air and water quality, and supplying an important renewable resource.

"Nearly 75 percent of New York's 18.7 million acres of forestland is privately owned," **said Commissioner Seggos.** "Each year, New York's private forests remove CO2 from the atmosphere at a rate equal to the emissions from two million gasoline-powered automobiles, underscoring the importance of partnering with landowners to sustain our forests and fight against climate change. The Regenerate NY grant program supports the renewal of our forests and will help New York State meet our ambitious carbon-reduction goals, and I encourage interested landowners to take advantage of this new program."

"The benefits of forests continue after they are harvested, as well," **said New York State Forester Robert Davies.** "Products made from wood require significantly less energy to make than their CO2 intense counterparts like aluminum and plastic, and solid wood products continue to store carbon well beyond a tree's lifetime. Supporting regeneration efforts on private lands will help build this vital resource during a time when the benefits of forests are more valuable than ever."

The regeneration of New York's forests is dependent on the successful establishment and survival of tree seedlings. Over the past several decades, the ability of New York's forests to regenerate has been diminished due to widespread damage caused by white-tailed deer, excessive competition from native and non-native vegetation, and the impacts of climate change.

Grant funds are available through New York State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and managed by DEC's Division of Lands and Forests. Private landowners who own between 10 and 1,000 acres of forest land in New York State may apply for grant awards ranging from a minimum of \$3,000 to a maximum of \$50,000, with a required 25 percent match. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, planting trees, soil scarification, removing competing vegetation that would interfere with seedling establishment and growth, and installation of deer fence. Applicants must work with a private forester to develop their project. Up to two applications may be submitted per applicant, provided the applications are for separate properties.

"Regenerate NY has been a priority of ESFPA for a couple of years and we are glad to see the release of the first round of funding" **said John Bartow, Executive Director of Empire State**

Forest Products Association. "Regenerate NY is the most significant commitment to private family forestland stewardship since the enactment of the Forest Practices Act in 1946."

"The New York Forest Owner's Association applauds the Regenerate NY Forestry Cost Share Grant Program," **said the organization's President, Stacey Kazacos.** "Funding stewardship and regeneration efforts will help ensure our forests continue to support New York's rural economy, protect our water and air quality, and sequester carbon, for generations to come. We look forward to the long-term improvements this initiative will contribute to our communities throughout the state."

"Climate change is already affecting thousands of New Yorkers, and in the months and years ahead, more and more of us will face flooding, droughts, and extreme heat," **said Michelle Brown, Senior Conservation Scientist, The Nature Conservancy.** "New York's trees are a powerful tool in the fight against climate change as healthy forests absorb and store carbon. Ensuring our forests can thrive will not only help combat climate change, it will also protect clean drinking water, preserve wildlife habitat, and strengthen local economies. The Nature Conservancy commends Governor Cuomo, the State Legislature, and the Department of Environmental Conservation for protecting nature and people with continued, historic investments in Regenerate New York and other programs in the Environmental Protection Fund."

New York State's EPF has grown from its original appropriation of \$31 million in fiscal year 1994-1995 to \$300 million. The Fiscal Year 2022 Enacted Budget sustains the EPF at \$300 million, the highest level of funding in the program's history. Appropriations include \$40 million for solid waste programs, \$90 million for parks and recreation, \$151 million for open space programs and \$19 million for the climate change mitigation and adaptation program. This investment will provide funding for critical environmental programs such as land acquisition, farmland protection, invasive species prevention and eradication, enhanced recreational access, water quality improvement, and an aggressive environmental justice agenda.

Applications can be submitted through the [NYS Grants Gateway](#) and will be accepted until 3 p.m. on October 8, 2021, or until funds are depleted, whichever comes first. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis. Applicants need to establish an account in the Grants Gateway System. During the COVID-19 emergency, only registrations submitted via email will be accepted. Per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.7, NYS notarization services may be performed remotely using audio-visual technology. Please contact a notary for additional information and instructions. Once registered, applicants can search the Grants Gateway for "Regenerate NY." DEC is holding a webinar for interested applicants on Friday, May 21, at 10 a.m. For [instructions on how to access the webinar via phone or computer, or for details about the grant opportunity including application criteria](#), visit DEC's website.

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/press.html>