

NY State and Open Space Institute Protect Adirondack Gateway

The Challenge

At the southern gateway to the Adirondack Park's nearly 200,000-acre High Peaks Wilderness Area lies the 10,000-acre "Tahawus" tract. Privately owned for two centuries, this spectacular landscape was New York State's top acquisition priority for more than a decade. The landowner decided to sell the entire property. New York State was interested in most, but not all, of the property. However, in the Adirondacks, once the State owns the property, it cannot dispose of it. The challenge was to convey the entire parcel from the landowner and convey to New York State only the pieces it wanted.

The site is a mix of natural and historic gems. Henderson Lake, the centerpiece, marks the beginning of the Hudson River, which winds 315 miles south to New York Harbor. The elevation reaches 3,540 feet atop Mt. Adams.

The Solution

In 2003 and 2004, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the Open Space Conservancy (OSC), the acquisition arm of the Open Space Institute, used internal sources and a nearly \$6 million loan from the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation to acquire the Tahawus Tract for \$8.5 million.

The OSC and the NYSDEC developed a detailed plan for the property that covered public access, forest management, and protection of the site's historic resources. In 2007, the OSC launched the plan, conveying nearly 3,000 acres to Finch, Pruyn and Company. A conservation easement ensures sustainable forestry and guarantees public recreational access. In 2008, the NYSDEC used \$1.676 million in Forest Legacy Program funds to acquire more than 6,800 acres at the north end of the property, gateway to the High Peaks region. OSC retained 250 acres of the most significant historic resources.

The Tahawus property, the southern gateway to the Adirondack Park's nearly 200,000-acre High Peaks Wilderness Area, has been protected in part by Forest Legacy Program funds.



The Tahawus tract provides a gateway to the High Peaks Wilderness Area of the Adirondacks. (Photo by Brett Cole, courtesy of the Open Space Institute)

Resulting Benefits

The Tahawus project, thanks in part to Forest Legacy funding, will:

- Provide recreational access to resources that have been off limits to the public for 150 years, including Henderson Lake, Preston Ponds, and the Upper Hudson River
- Prevent fragmentation of a large block of forest land near the High Peaks Wilderness Area
- Ensure long-term private ownership of accessible, high-quality forest lands for sustainable harvest
- Protect some of the Adirondack Park's most significant historic resources

Sharing Success

The partnership that made the Tahawus project possible is a model for the Northern Forest Region and beyond. The Open Space Institute worked closely with the NYSDEC and local representatives from the Town of Newcomb. The partnership was recently extended to the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, which wants to establish a Northern Forest Institute at a pre-existing residence on the property. The Institute will focus on research and management of the northern forest.



USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
 State and Private Forestry

For more information, contact:

Kathryn P. Maloney, Area Director
 11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
 Newtown Square, PA 19073
 Phone: 610-557-4103
 E-mail: kmaloney@fs.fed.us

Anne Archie, Field Representative
 271 Mast Road
 Durham, NH 03824
 Phone: 603-868-7600
 E-mail: aarchie@fs.fed.us