



Municipal Land and Water Conservation

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Finger Lakes Land Trust - History

- The Finger Lakes Land Trust was founded in 1989 to protect those lands that define the character of the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York.
- To date, the Land Trust has protected more than 16,000 acres of the region's wetlands, forests, farmland, grassland, and gorges.





Finger Lakes Land Trust – What do we do?

- Establish Conservation Areas open to the public.
- Hold Conservation Easements (voluntary agreements on private land)
- Provide technical assistance and educational programs to local governments, landowners, and the public.



Land and Water Conservation

Why?

Assessing Your Natural and Social Resources

Socio-Ecological System

Water and air quality

Tourism

Hazard prevention and mitigation

Recreation

Working lands (Agriculture and Silviculture)

Cultural identity

Aesthetics (scenic corridors)

Trail ways

Food production

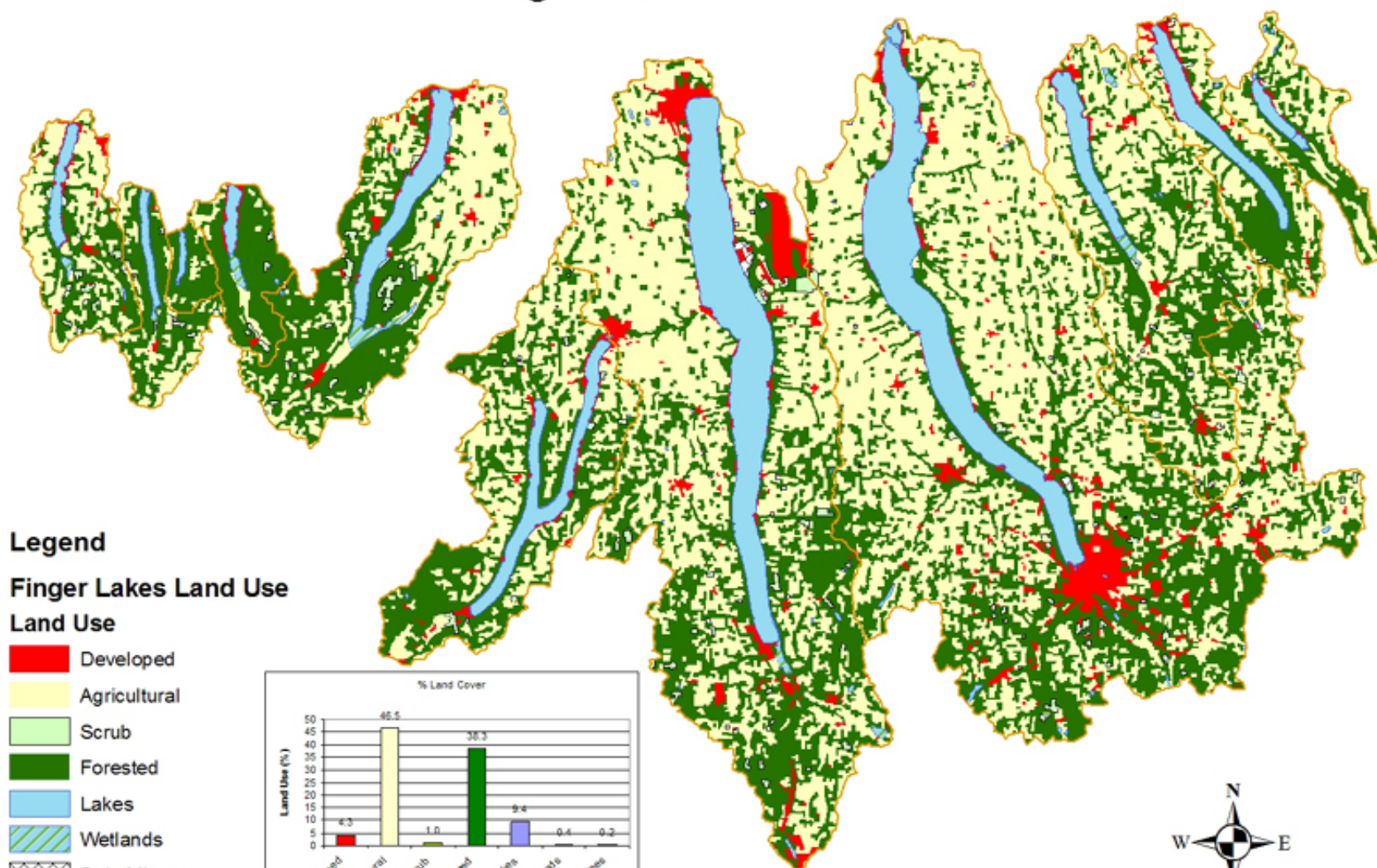
Renewable energy production

“Why” will direct the “How.”





Finger Lakes Land Use

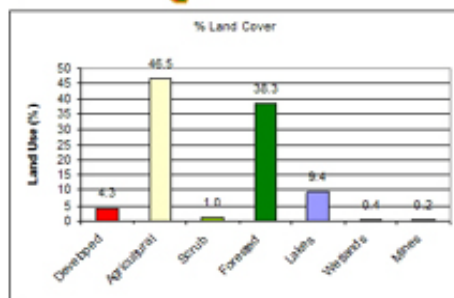


Legend

Finger Lakes Land Use

Land Use

- Developed
- Agricultural
- Scrub
- Forested
- Lakes
- Wetlands
- Strip Mines
- Lakes
- Watershed Boundaries





BEAR SWAMP view north with Skaneateles Lake at top right September 28, 2005 Photo by and copyright to Bill Hecht









Working Lands



Defining Your Focus

- Single or Multiple Resource Priorities
- Context for Land Use Planning
- Projected Financial Resources

Elements of a Comprehensive Approach to Land and Water Conservation

- Comprehensive Plan
- Supportive Land Use Zoning
- Conservation Easements
- Land Purchase
- Subdivision Set-Asides
- Partnerships – Land Trusts, Other Non-Profits, State and Federal Agencies, Other Municipalities
- Policies Supportive of Farming & Forestry
- \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Landowner's Bundle of Rights

- Right to construct buildings
- Right to subdivide
- Right to farm
- Right to harvest timber
- Right to recreational value

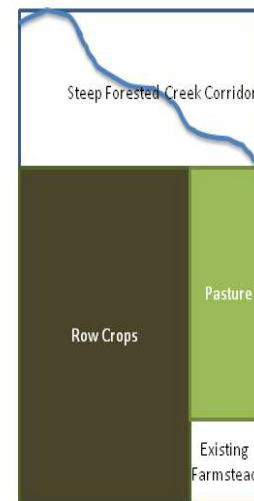
Conservation Easements

- A legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or conservation agency that restricts future activities on the land to protect its conservation values.
- Recorded in land records and binding on future owners.
- Provides permanent protection while allowing land to remain in private ownership and on the tax rolls.
- Generally does not provide for public access.
- May be donated or purchased.

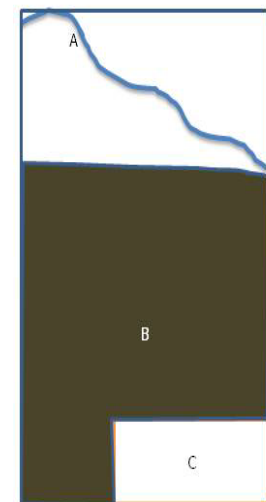
Conservation Land Planning

A land plan (or site plan) is a map and physical description of the Property being protected by a conservation easement. Specific “use areas” are defined in the land plan and integrated with provisions of the conservation easement.

Sample Conservation Easement



Road Front



A: Most restrictive area with focus on protecting stream water quality. Allowable uses may include managed timber harvest.

B: Agricultural practices allowed.

C: Existing farmstead with minimal restrictions.

Charitable Donation Tax Benefits

- New York State Conservation Easement Tax Credit. Landowners receive an annual, refundable state income tax credit equal to 25% of the combined town, county, and school taxes paid on the land during the previous tax year, to a maximum of \$5000. Structures excluded.
- Federal Charitable Tax Deduction: 30% of AGI for up to 6 years. 50% of AGI for qualifying farmers. OR 50% of AGI for up to 16 years. 100% for qualifying farmers.

Key Issues for Future – Easement Holder

- Stewardship
- Stewardship
- Stewardship
- Monitoring to ensure compliance
- Education of future landowners
- Enforcement if necessary

Assessing Resources

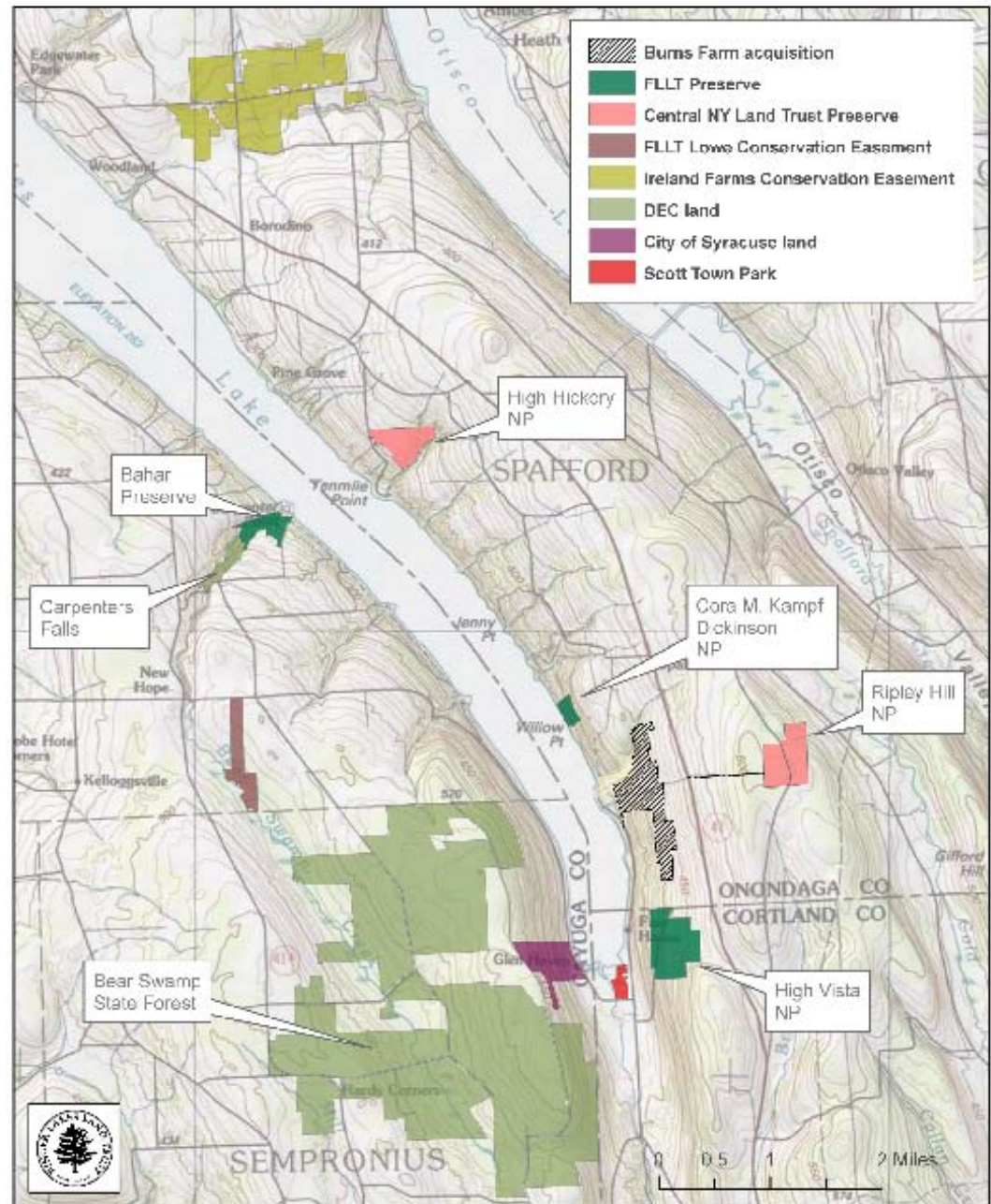
Spafford – Aesthetic,
Enhanced Recreational
Access, Trail ways

Sempronius – Working lands,
Enhanced Recreational
Access, Water Quality

Niles – Water Quality,
Enhanced Recreational Access

*Cultural Identity

Southern Skaneateles Conservation Lands



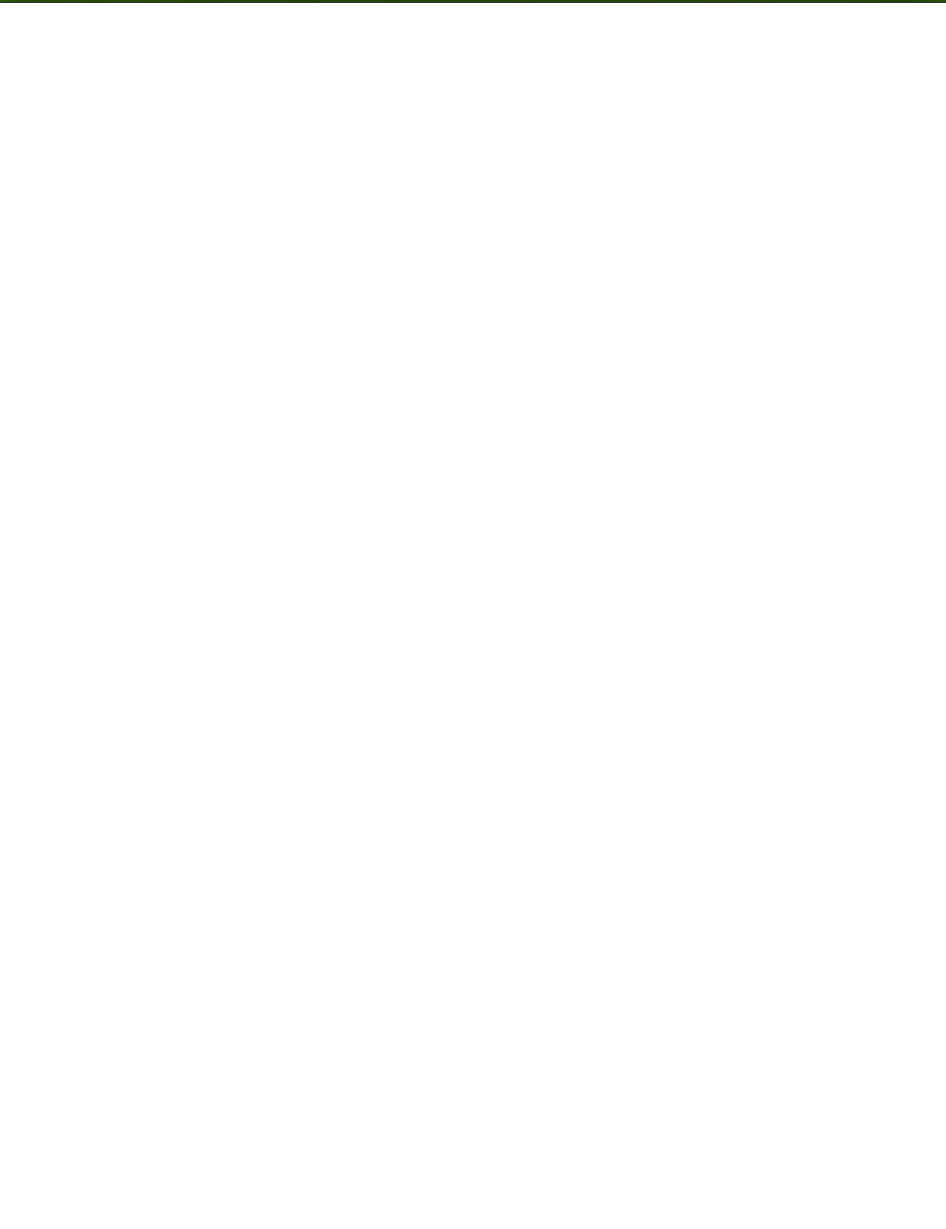
Cross-Municipal Planning

Cortland County

Towns of Preble, Truxton, Homer,
Cortlandville

City of Cortland

Water Bodies
Protected Land
Cover Type



Social and Ecological...

Cross-Municipal Planning

Cortland County

Towns of Preble, Truxton, Homer,
Cortlandville

City of Cortland

Water Bodies

Protected Land

Cover Type

Impervious Surface

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Water Bodies

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Cover Type

Impervious Surface

FEMA Floodplain

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Active River Area - TNC

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