



Inspiring Americans to Protect Wildlife for our Children's Future



2009 Climate Change Safeguarding Workshops

NWF Northeast Regional Center

Montpelier, Vermont

Everyone talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it -Mark Twain

Climate Change: the National Wildlife Federation and regional partners are going to do something about it. NWF, affiliates, and other stakeholders recognize that climate change and wildlife habitat do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. We are eagerly conducting workshops in order to develop and implement strategies and solutions in order to safeguard our natural treasures against the impacts of climate change. Climate change and related stressors pose significant challenges for fish, wildlife and natural systems in the Northeast and nationwide. The National Wildlife Federation, in association with our partners and planning committees, believe that workshops play an essential role in our collective efforts to address climate change on behalf of present and future generations in the Northeast and beyond. Thus far, most attention in response to climate change has understandably focused on actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions (often referred to as climate change "mitigation"). Yet, evidence is growing that climatic changes are already occurring and are likely to intensify in the come years, with resulting impacts on the natural systems, which human communities and the diversity of life on earth depend. It is therefore critical that greater attention be given to climate change *adaptation*; that is, strategies and actions to help natural systems and human communities adapt to the changes that are already underway and are likely to occur.

Safeguarding New York's Wildlife and Natural Systems in a Changing Climate

New York Regional Department of Environmental Conservation Office

Albany, New York– July 28, 2009

Hosted By: National Wildlife Federation; NYSDEC Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources; The Nature Conservancy; Audubon New York; Open Spaces Institute; and Wildlife Conservation Society

The New York workshop proved to be a fantastic event. It served as an opportunity to allow a distinct group of various organizations make a unified stand against the effects climate change will have on New York's natural systems, wildlife and habitat. Freshwater and marine ecosystems are of tremendous concern within the Empire State.



Workshop speakers: Patricia Riexinger, Director of NYSDFWMR; George Gay, National Wildlife Federation; Judith Enck, NYS Deputy Secretary for Environment; Hector Galbraith, Manomet Center for Conservation Science; Jillian Liner, Audubon New York; Rick Bennett, USFWS; Sarah Newkirk, The Nature Conservancy; Robin Schlaff, NYSDEC; Zoe Smith, Wildlife Conservation Society; Rebecca Schneider, Cornell

Department of Natural Resources; Katie Dolan, The Nature Conservancy; John Kostyack, National Wildlife Federation and David Gahl, Environmental Advocates of New York.

Rick Bennett during his lecture stressed that adaptation, mitigation and education is imperative to reducing climate change stressors and impacts. We have to focus on conservation planning, design, delivery, research and monitoring conducted by a network of landscape conservation cooperatives. Species and vulnerability assessments are also an invaluable tool. Hector Galbraith, echoed Bennett's belief that vulnerability assessments are one of four steps necessary for climate change adaptation. Along with vulnerability assessments, a regional focus incorporating science, planning and organization must be adopted. Additionally, on-the-ground tools and solutions must be used properly in order to mitigate effectively.

Zoe Smith introduced the loosely titled "7 R's of Adaptation". These seven items provide an adaptation format to follow; they are as follows: Protect key ecological features (i.e. spawning grounds, land bridges/wildlife tunnels, wildlife corridors); Reduce anthropogenic factors (i.e. increase awareness in rain gardens, storm water management and double the amount of funding for invasive species); Representation; Replication; Restoration; Refugia and Relocation. These 7 R's provide framework that can work locally and regionally and combine both natural systems and anthropogenic factors.



What we can do now is build partnerships, formulate vulnerability assessments, plan, build capacity, educate, communicate, consider climate change in our day to day decisions, reduce our carbon footprint, and work with our partners. Act Locally and think Regionally! John Kostyack shared with us that climate change is an unprecedented opportunity to combat global warming and secure scale funding for conservation. With legislative backing and a unified task force we can accomplish these goals. This workshop has produced a steering committee that is currently under-taking actions to incorporate adaptation into state wildlife action plans.