



US State Park Systems

- All 50 states
 - dozens to hundreds of parks each
- Variably organized and managed
 - often embedded in natural resource agencies
- Strong emphasis on public service*
 - > 64,000 km of trails
 - > 200,000 campsites
 - est. 725 million visitors per yr
- What about their conservation missions?

*<http://www.naspd.org/>

NY State Parks (OPRHP) Profiles

- 219 units, including historic sites
- < 1% of state land cover
- Parks of all sizes in many unique locations
- 150 with biodiversity inventories by the Natural Heritage Program

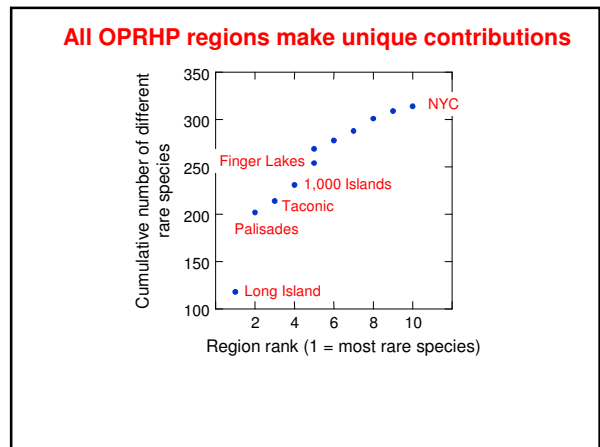
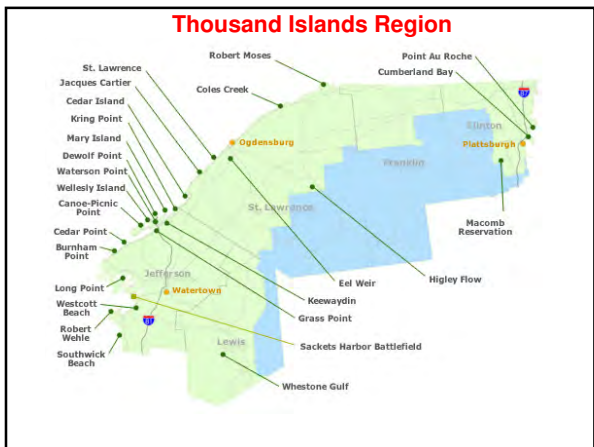
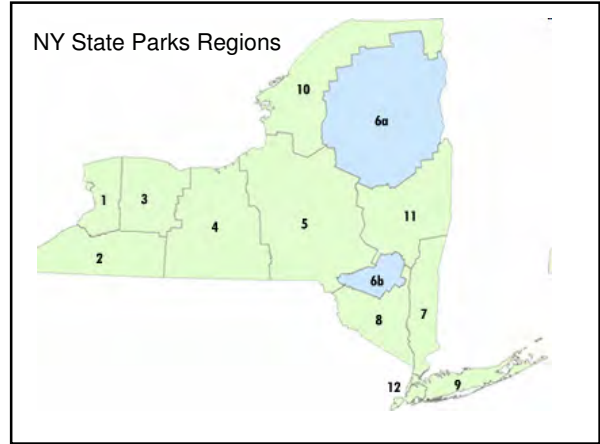
State Parks protect biodiversity

- 44% of all NY rare species are found in one or more State Park.
- 30 NY rare species depend on State Parks for most or all of their known habitat.
- Many parks contain some of the best examples of significant ecological communities in NY.



NY State Parks (OPRHP) Profiles

- Professional science staff
 - 12 regional and statewide biologists
 - 8 environmental analysts
 - Seasonal and year-round naturalists and educators
- Planning group with expertise in resource management





Translating science into stewardship

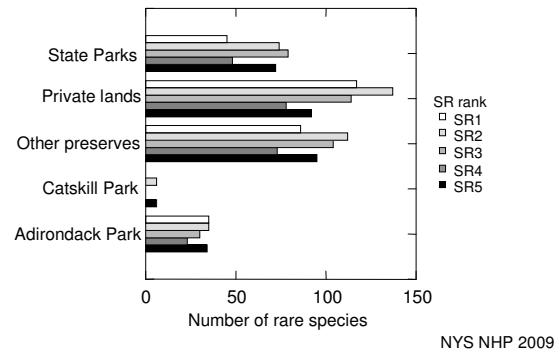
- Within OPRHP
 - site-specific protection policies and habitat enhancement projects (Envir. Mgmt. Bur.)
- Stewardship responsibility rankings
 - direct measure of redundancy
 - among parks
 - statewide comparisons

Stewardship Responsibility Rankings

SR rank	Criterion
1	Found in only one or two locations
2	Found in 3-5 locations
3	Found in 6-9 locations
4	Found in 10-14 locations
5	Found in 15 or more locations

Modified from: Bunnell et al. 2009. *Nat. Areas J.* 29:79

Distributions of statewide SR rankings



Translating science into outreach

- Individual park profiles
 - drawn from NHP records
- For general public
 - NHP Biodiversity Profiles
 - emphasis on special features

NHP Biodiversity Profile

Allegheny State Park

Natural communities **16**
 Significant communities **8**
 Rare species **15**

Setting:
 High Allegheny Plateau
 Ecozone
 Mississippi River Basin

Highlighted Significant Communities

	Other St Park locations	Other NYS locations	% of NYS acreage
Allegheny oak forest	3	17	31.3
Rich mesophytic forest	1	25	86.8

Rare species status

- 2 species found nowhere else in NY state
- 7 species found in fewer than five other State Parks

Acknowledgments

NY OPRHP Environmental
Management Bureau



NYS Natural Heritage Program



UAlbany Program in Biodiversity,
Conservation and Public Policy

