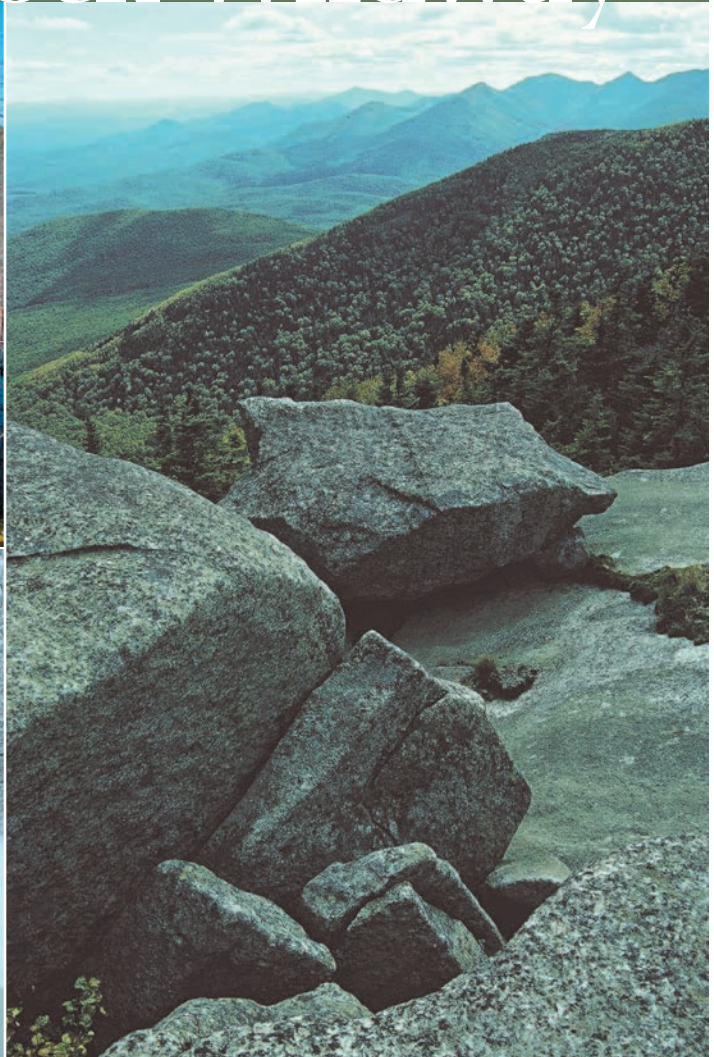


NORTHEAST  
WILDERNESS  
TRUST



*Linking wild nature from the Adirondack Coast to the High Peaks*

# Split Rock Wildway



**In the Champlain Valley** of the eastern Adirondacks, the Northeast Wilderness Trust is working with local residents to help protect a wildlife movement corridor from the Lake Champlain shoreline to the High Peaks, so that future generations of bears, bobcats, and people will have room to ramble.



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### **A green dream**

The six-million-acre Adirondack State Park in upstate New York is the largest protected natural area in the Lower 48, and is often touted as a global model for how wilderness and human communities can coexist. Roughly half of the park is “forever wild” public land protected by the state constitution; the other half is privately owned. The eastern-most portion of the park, the Champlain Valley, is a landscape of diverse forests, fertile farmlands, and scenic hamlets. The rich soils and milder climate here support the greatest diversity of plants and animals in the park—but because of the relative scarcity of public land, the valley’s natural habitats and the creatures that depend on them are at risk.

Responding to recent escalating development, local citizens launched an ambitious effort to preserve a continuous swath of wild forest through this long-settled, largely agricultural region.

**The ultimate goal?** Connect existing conservation lands and protect new areas to form a wildlife movement corridor linking Lake Champlain to the High Peaks.

**The means to this end?** Land purchases from willing sellers, conservation easements on private land that prevent development and assure safe passage for wildlife, and strategic additions to public land. The Northeast Wilderness Trust is a leading partner in the coalition of groups and individuals working to save this extraordinary place.

### **A vital linkage**

The Champlain Valley is a major flyway for hawks, songbirds, and waterfowl. Of the 193 birds that breed in the Adirondacks, 155 are



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above: Lake Champlain from Coon Mountain; right: at Beaver Falls; left: hermit thrush, skunk cabbage



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found in the valley. Mink, otter, deer, fisher, and bobcats are thriving in the proposed Split Rock Wildway. Moose are slowly recolonizing the area. The northernmost population of eastern timber rattlesnakes, an endangered species in New York, survives in the rocky outcrops of the Split Rock Wild Forest. Occasional cougar sightings suggest that North America's largest cat may be returning to the East's wildest strongholds. Over the past century, a resurgence in wildlife has occurred here. *Protecting a wildlife corridor now is the best way to assure that these creatures will still have a home a century from now.*

The Wildway captures a diversity of natural communities that vary with elevation, from low-lying clayplain forests to the sub-alpine flora that survives on the Jay Range's rocky summits. Designing a wildlife corridor that captures the area's topographic diversity is a key part of our conservation strategy, as it offers the best opportunity for plants and animals to migrate to suitable habitats in response to global warming and other disturbances over time.

### **The threat**

Excellent progress protecting lands within the Wildway has been made but much more work remains, and conservationists are in a race with time to preserve key properties before they are lost to development and fragmentation. Factors driving this new wave of land subdivision include a decline in the regional agricultural economy, relatively low land values compared to the eastern side of the Champlain Valley, and a year-round ferry that makes the area within commuting distance of Burlington, Vermont.

**The Northeast Wilderness Trust** is working with a coalition of partners to preserve the Split Rock Wildway. Connecting the Split Rock Wild Forest with the Jay Range Wilderness and High Peaks Wilderness would result in roughly 250,000 acres of connected conservation land. It is an unprecedented opportunity to save:

- 🦋 the most biologically rich area of the Adirondack Park, the Champlain Valley
- 🦋 contiguous habitat ranging in elevation from 1005 feet above sea level along the shores of Lake Champlain, to 3368 feet at the summit of Hurricane Mountain in the Jay Range Wilderness
- 🦋 a movement corridor for wide-ranging mammals such as bear, bobcat, moose, mink, otter, and fisher
- 🦋 critical habitat for a diversity of plants, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians
- 🦋 wilderness recreation opportunities in the eastern Adirondacks

### **We need your help.**

Please join us in our efforts to link wild nature across the eastern Adirondacks. The Split Rock Wildway has elicited a groundswell of support, but much more work remains. We need your help to purchase critical properties within the Wildway. To protect the future quality of life for wildlife and people, the time for land conservation in the eastern Adirondacks is right now! Please contact us for more information and to find out how you can help translate this vision into reality.



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*The Northeast Wilderness Trust is a regional land trust working to preserve and restore forever-wild landscapes for wildlife and people.*



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### **Split Rock Wildway at a Glance**

#### **Location**

Eastern Adirondack Park,  
New York

#### **Habitats**

Northern hardwood forest, wetlands, Boquet River floodplain forest, clayplain forests, montane spruce-fir forests

#### **Creatures**

Black bear, bobcat, fisher, otter, mink, songbirds, rattlesnake, bald eagle, osprey

#### **Threats**

Land subdivision and development, habitat fragmentation, unsound logging practices, industrial agribusiness

#### **Values**

Wildlife movement corridor, quiet recreation, rare plants and animals, diverse natural communities



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