Biodiversity and Energy Online Mapping

About the layers

Layer: Priority Large Forested Areas
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Layer developed by: The Nature Conservancy

Short Description: This layer depicts the matrix forest blocks selected by The Nature Conservancy as the most viable examples of the dominant forest communities throughout the state. Matrix sites are large contiguous areas whose size and natural condition allow for the maintenance of ecological processes, viable occurrences of matrix forest communities, embedded large and small patch communities, and embedded species populations. The goal of the matrix forest selection was to identify viable examples of the dominant forest types that, if protected and allowed to regain their natural condition, would serve as critical source areas for all species requiring interior forest conditions or associated with the dominant forest types.

For most of the ecoregions in New York, these matrix-forming ecosystem targets were selected as part of their extensive Ecoregional Planning process. This was never conducted for the Great Lakes Ecoregion and thus the Nature Conservancy in New York and the New York Natural Heritage Program identified a small set of blocks (nine additional) for this ecoregion. In total, there are 114 matrix forest blocks occurring at least in part in New York State.
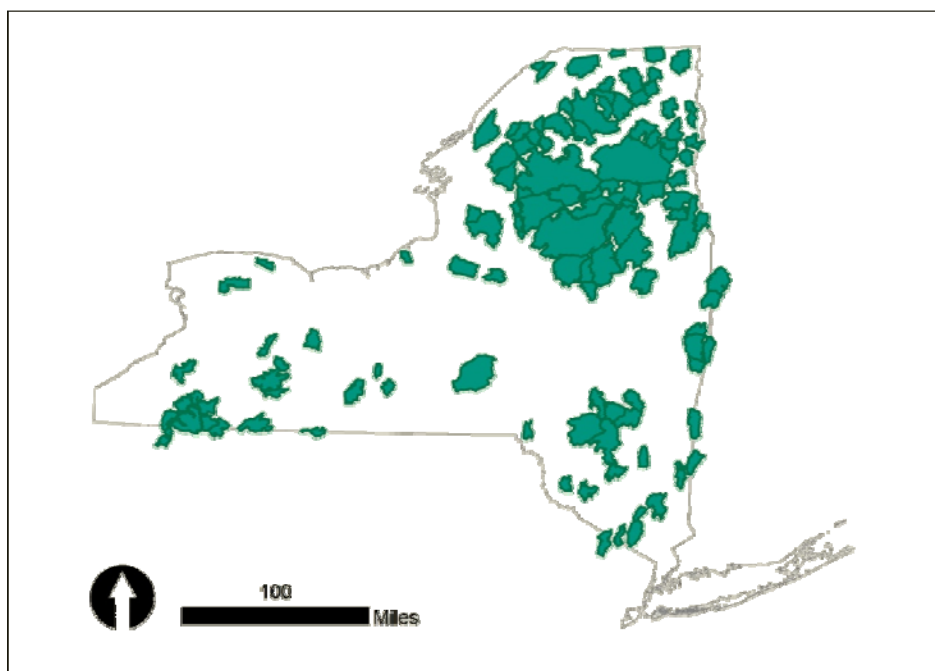
Source and Methods: For general information about the methods for identifying matrix forest blocks see this document:
http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/ecs/lne/docs/matrix_methods/view.html

With the exception of the Great Lakes ecoregion, each ecoregion has specific information and data availability. All of these ecoregional plans are available at this location:
http://conserveonline.org/workspaces/ecs/plans

For the New York portion of the Great Lakes Ecoregion, we developed a set of candidate blocks based on the extent of forest and the patterns of fragmenting features such as roads, railroad corridors, and other development. Scientists from the Central/Western New York, Eastern New York, and New York State offices of The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Heritage Program reviewed these candidate blocks individually and then together at a meeting to come up with a final set of blocks that met both condition and representation standards.

Matrix Forest Blocks for New York State