

## **Anthropocene**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

During this trip we will talk about ways to characterize sites concerning human impacts or interactions, thinking about spatial and temporal contexts. We will visit several example landscapes, discussing “Can we standardize anthropogenic characterization and will it help to plan the future?”

Southwest New York continues to undergo a great set of transitions. First the region was invaded and developed by Europeans beginning in mid-1700s, but especially during the 1800s. The climax of deforestation reached across the late 1800s into the early 1900s, similar to much of eastern North America. At the peak we had about 10% to 20% remaining forest cover. Secondly, for the past 70 or 80 years we have experienced erratic but sustained reforestation, mostly as a gradual succession, and much of the region is now 70% or more forest. Third, the region has undergone population loss and impoverishment for about a half century, with the contrast of an increase in rural estates. Much of the economy of the region is based on tourism.

For this field trip the locations and route will be finalized just before the trip and hand-outs provided. All sites will be accessed from vehicles by foot paths, but sturdy footwear is expected of participants.

## **TALKING POINTS**

While we anticipate the discussions will vary widely, several questions will be promoted for discussion:

1. Doesn't biodiversity require geodiversity? Do we need to protect the diversity of environments of deposition and erosion? What constitutes a "geospecies"? Is there a simple proportionality constant between the number of biospecies and the number of geospecies?
2. What is the history of each site visited in the previous hours, days, seasons, decades, and centuries? What is our prediction for the same time frames in the future?
3. How do environmental ethics affect our past interpretation of the site and our future prognosis for the site: utilitarian, conservation, preservation?
4. We will characterize several of the climate features of the region, and ponder a possible future climate and its affects.
5. Economic considerations will be discussed.