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Geog 1101

3/31/2018

New York through a Geographical Lens

New York is in the northeastern region of the United States in North America. New York State is a part of the Mid-Atlantic region, this region defined by New York in the north, Virginia in the south, and West Virginia in the west. New York State is in a unique location by many states; three states make up the eastern border, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. To the south lies Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The northern and western border serves as an international border, made by Lake Ontario and Lake Erie which runs up to Canada.

New York State is abundant with, mountains, forests, and waterways. New York is in the Appalachian Mountains where most of the land positioned at different levels, the northern and western part of New York State is proof of this. For example, the Adirondack Mountains, Mount Marcy, Mount Haystack, and Algonquin peak are located in this part of New York. Some of the well-known waterways run through here as well, the Hudson River Valley, Lake Champlain, and St. Lawrence River valley are located here as well. In NYC there are parts of the city that has maintained their forest roots for generations in the past and have become parks, such as, Pelham Bay, Inwood Hill, and Van Courtland; however, NYC has their own waterways, such as, the Bronx River, Westchester Creek, and the Long Island Sound.

To add on, according to a study done by the National Centers for Environmental Information (under NOAA) between the months of January-March 2018, the total precipitation percentiles in most of New York State areas was above average in southeast areas. Eight years before that, Current Results, a weather and science website, found that over a 29-year period (1981-2010) Brooklyn, Central Park, and White Plains had some of the highest averages in rainfall. Despite all this Slide Mountain, the highest peak in the Catskill Mountains had the most rainfall yearly at 62.5 Inches. With the abundance of waterways and above average rainfall it should be noted that New York has watersheds that hold water for us and supply water to our communities, in New York State we have four of them, Croton, Catskill, Catskill/Delaware, and Delaware watersheds. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation states that between the three there is a total of 19 reservoirs that we get our water supply from and their located throughout the state.

Over millions of years, glaciers have transported rock fragments through glacier erosions and left their impact on New York State. The Wisconsin ice sheet is an example of how glaciers shaped New York: over thousands of years, the ice sheet moved south and started to melt at the rate it was moving. When it melted it left rock debris at the southern tip of New York, this was the result of the terminal moraine and without this, a lot of hills in the boroughs would not exist and Brooklyn and Queens would still be underwater. When describing New York climate, it falls into the category of Mild Mid-latitude climate. Mild Mid-latitude climates are described as, an average temperature that is above 50°F for at least one month, above 32°F in the coldest month, but not above 64.4° F, and ongoing changes in the average conditions. New York falls under the human subtropical climate (Cfa) in the Koppen climate classification because of its warm temperature and rainfall.

One park in NYC that is unique compared to other parks is Inwood Hill Park. The biome of the park is a temperate deciduous forest. Inwood Hill is abundant with Red oak and tulip trees some of the tallest trees in Manhattan exist in the eastern part of the park called the Clove. Despite many humans inhabiting the area and using the resources for recreational use this has not stopped the abundance of wildlife from migrating to the park in throughout the seasons. The New York City Audubon organization reported that in a single year, 150 bird species migrate to the park. The Bald Eagle migrates here in the wintertime, the eastern bluebird migrates here from March to November, and the Eastern Screech Owl sets up a nest in the Clove. However, the wildflower separates themselves from other city parks. Since they are under the temperate deciduous forest biome in North America. The soil falls under the Alfisol soil Taxonomy, more specifically in the Udalf section (a suborder of Alfisols soil that is common in the humid climates, such as New York State) because the soil “developed only a thin humus-enriched A horizon, underlain by a light-colored E horizon” (Mason et al. 2016). This type of soil is common in parks throughout New York City, but Inwood Hill has an abundance of May apple, jack-in-the-pulpit, and Dutchman’s-breeches plants unlike any other park in New York City.

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