Dahl Winters
BIOL 565 Conservation Biology
April Right-Brain Assignment

I selected to show a Google satellite image of the biggest city in America for this month's assignment, to represent the topics of landscape ecology, fragmentation, and restoration. This image shows New York City, one of the most fragmented landscapes in America, part of the northeastern coast megalopolis of cities that has a sizable percentage of the nation's population. There are just a few green blips of potential wildlife habitat in the center of an otherwise gray, fully urbanized matrix. Such an environment has even caused there to be a new field of ecology to study species interactions in such a fragmented landscape: urban ecology.

This image also brings to mind the subject of restoration, which we touched upon in the last part of the course. When we do restoration, we try to focus on areas that require the least amount of work to return them to a more historical condition (whatever we choose to define that as). However, as population continues to grow and development continues to spread, we are creating areas that we cannot possibly hope to restore. New York City is arguably a habitat that is unrestorable for the foreseeable future. The amount of work that it would take to remove all the buildings and impervious surfaces is unfathomable. When I think of how difficult it is to restore just a few acres of riparian habitat, I'm at a loss for words when trying to imagine the massive scale of human development across America and how we will ever manage to repair the damage we have caused. Even ripping up a roadside and planting a single tree per block of NYC would require a massive undertaking. We may just have to live with the fact that some places are unrestorable.
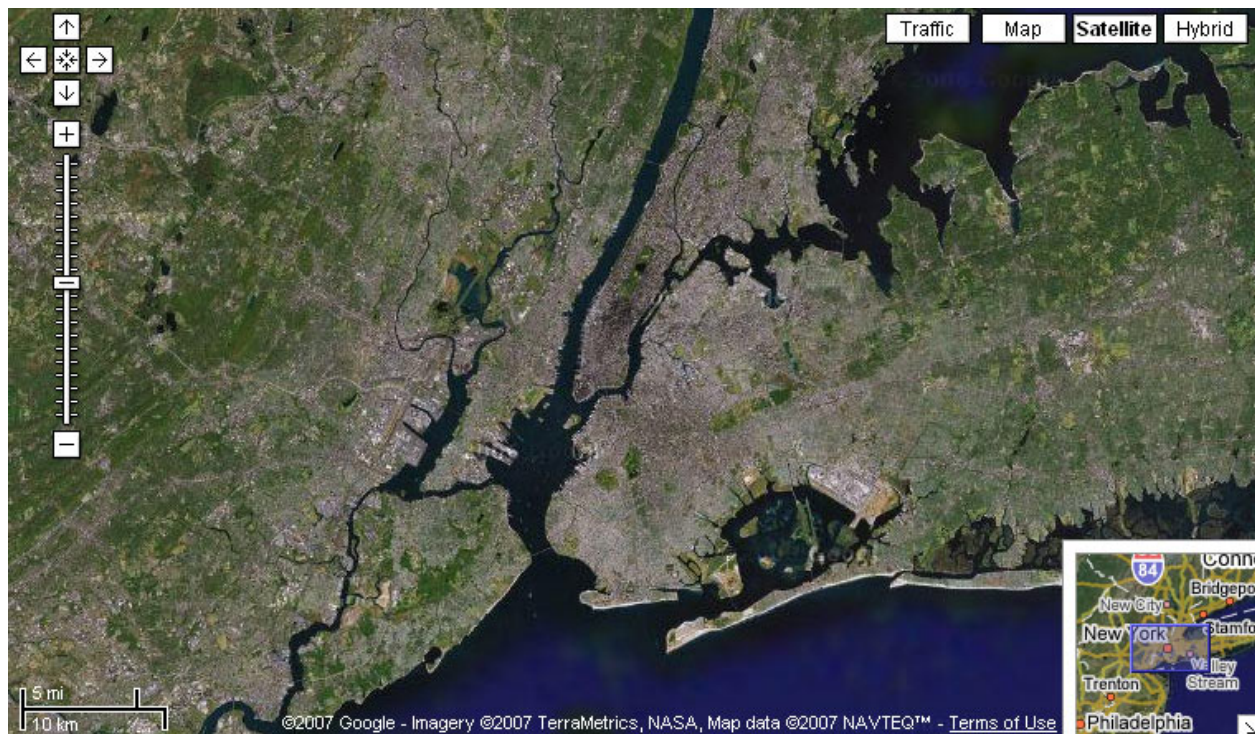

image from Google Maps