

CONSERVING NATURE IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Hudson River
Estuary Program

Tools and Resources from the Estuary Program and Partners

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell University are partnering with communities to encourage habitat conservation at the local level to sustain the health and resiliency of the entire estuary watershed. By providing technical assistance, information, and training, the Conservation and Land Use Program offers strategies for "smart planning" that support economic growth and quality of life while keeping nature in mind. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5094.html for more information.

STEPS FOR CONSERVING HABITAT AND NATURAL AREAS

- Identify resources. (What do you have?)
- Prioritize resources. (What's most important?)
- Plan, protect, and manage resources. (How will you preserve them?)

LOCAL CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- Consider habitat conservation *early* in the planning process.
- Use town or regional conservation plans to guide land-use decisions.
- Take a broad perspective to preserve habitat connections and ecosystem services.



Hundreds of volunteers have been trained to identify significant habitats in planning and project review. Conservation priorities for the estuary watershed include Hudson River shorelines, stream corridors, wetlands, and large forests. Photo: Laura Heady

Publications

Hudson River Estuary Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Framework

The Framework provides a regional overview of biodiversity resources in the Hudson River estuary corridor, describes key plant and animal habitats, includes a map and descriptions of Significant Biodiversity Areas, and proposes various strategies for their conservation. Available at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5096.html and on CD-ROM upon request.

Conserving Natural Areas and Wildlife in Your Community

This handbook offers conservation guidance and smart growth strategies to local governments in the Hudson River Valley. Available in print or on CD-ROM and on the NYSDEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/50083.html.

Creating a Natural Resources Inventory

This guidebook outlines how to inventory natural and cultural assets and presents case studies and strategies for using an NRI in local planning. Available in print and on the NYSDEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/100925.html.

Biodiversity Assessment Manual for the Hudson River Estuary Corridor

The Manual was written by Hudsonia and published by NYSDEC to offer guidance in identification, assessment, and protection of habitats, plants, and animals of conservation importance. See www.hudsonia.org.

Maps, Data, and Conservation Guidance

Habitat Summaries

The Hudson River Estuary Conservation and Land Use Program can provide municipalities with a report and maps of documented significant ecological communities, rare plants and animals, and other available data on local natural resources. Complementary water resource and climate summaries are also available upon request.

Important Areas Data

Developed by the NY Natural Heritage Program in partnership with the Estuary Program, this GIS data set includes areas of known importance to populations of rare plants and animals and significant ecosystems. The Important Areas GIS data are available to county agencies and municipalities from the Estuary Program for use in open space planning, development of natural resources inventories and comprehensive plans, and other regional land-use planning efforts.

Conservation Guides

The NY Natural Heritage Program maintains online animal, plant, and community guides that include descriptions, habitat, distribution, places to see, conservation issues, and other information on the rare species and natural communities they track in their database. See www.guides.nynhp.org.

Guidance for Management of Priority Birds

This Audubon New York website offers guidance on priority bird species of the Hudson Valley and species-specific management guidelines. See <http://ny.audubon.org/udson-river-valley-conservation>.

Additional Online Data

NYS Breeding Bird Atlas: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7312.html

NYS Amphibian & Reptile Atlas: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7140.html

NYSDEC Environmental Resource Mapper: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html

New York Nature Explorer: A Gateway to Biodiversity Information: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/57844.html

Training and Education

The Hudson River Estuary Conservation and Land Use Program and its partners offer education and training opportunities to increase the capacity of conservation advisory councils (CACs), planning boards, and others involved in land-use planning and conservation in the estuary watershed. Programs focus on building understanding of habitats and natural areas and developing skills in using tools and procedures that support conservation of natural resources during municipal-scale decision-making.

Funding

Hudson River Estuary Grants are offered periodically and can support projects that foster conservation planning and stewardship of natural areas. See details at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html.

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