

Communities Benefit When Planning with Nature in Mind

Open space and wildlife habitat in the Hudson Valley is being consumed at a much faster pace than the population is growing. This is placing increasing pressure on the plants and animals that live here. By guiding development patterns now, towns can conserve the sensitive wildlife habitats that support the Valley's plants, animals and unique places. At the same time, they can realize the many benefits of planning with nature.

In addition to providing a home to hundreds of plant and animal species, conserving habitats like wetlands, grasslands, and forests can:

- reduce flood damage;
- protect air and water resources;
- protect public health;
- create hunting, bird-watching, and hiking areas;
- provide opportunities to experience the wonder of nature;
- leave a quality environment for future generations; and
- create outdoor educational opportunities.



Chestnut oak forest. Photo by Andy Finton.

Nature we have always with us, an in-exhaustible store-house of that which moves the heart, appeals to the mind and fires the imagination — health to the body, a stimulus to the intellect, and joy to the soul.

*John Burroughs
Hudson Valley Naturalist
1837-1921*

The Hudson River Estuary Program

is a unique regional partnership designed to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance the estuary's natural resources for the benefit of the people who live here. The Hudson River Estuary Action Plan, first adopted by Governor Pataki in 1996 and updated regularly, identifies priority actions to conserve the natural resources of the estuary and its upland watershed. One of those priorities is conservation of biodiversity in the Hudson River Valley. Partnerships, like the one described here, are essential to realizing our goals.



Hudson River Estuary viewed from the Palisades. Photo by Steve Stanne. Front Cover: Grass pink, photo by Troy Weldy; Eastern box turtle, photo by Geoff A. Hammerson; Seining on the Hudson River, photo by Fran Dunwell.

For more information, contact:

Hudson River Estuary Program
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, New York 12561-1696
Phone: 845-256-3016
www.dec.state.ny.us/website/hudson/hrep.html

Protecting Nature in the Hudson Valley:

What your community can do to protect its plants, animals, and habitats. . .



. . .for our future

New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation
George E. Pataki, Governor
Erin M. Crotty, Commissioner



The great beauty and wonder of the Hudson River Valley has inspired Americans for centuries.

Now, through the Hudson River Estuary Program and its partners, Hudson Valley municipalities that want to conserve their natural heritage can get the support they need.

Blue crab on the Hudson's shores. Photo by Gregg Kenney.



John Boyd Thatcher State Park. Photo by Elizabeth Hill.

The varied habitats of the Hudson Valley — the cliffs, marshes, meadows, and forests — create its scenic landscape. Celebrated long ago by the Hudson River School painters, nature has long been part of the allure of the Hudson Valley. Today, it continues to be the foundation of a vibrant local economy and a healthy natural environment.



Calcium-rich wet meadow. Photo courtesy of NY Natural Heritage Program.



Wide-ranging species like the bobcat need large, interconnected forest lands to survive. Photo courtesy of Wildlife Conservation Society.

By planning for better growth, towns can decide their own future and the future of the Hudson Valley.

What Hudson Valley communities can do:

Create local plans and programs - Include wildlife habitat in your comprehensive plan. Consider less sensitive habitat for future development. Conserve key open space and protect sensitive habitats.

Contact neighboring towns - Where possible, think about connecting habitat across town and county boundaries. Working with your neighbors to conserve habitats can better protect shared resources.

Call us - The Estuary Program and its partners may already be working with your county, your neighbor, or your local land trust. Contact us to learn more about how the Hudson River Estuary Partners program can benefit your community.



Green frog. Photo courtesy of Cornell University.

Can we help you?

The Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation sponsors three programs that provide Hudson Valley communities with science-based information, land use tools, and technical assistance for biodiversity conservation. Assistance is available to all towns, cities, and villages in the counties that border the Hudson from Troy to New York City.

For useful information and technical assistance:

Hudson River Estuary Biodiversity Initiative (845) 256-3016

Helps towns understand and make use of existing information for land use planning and identifies methods for protecting sensitive habitats. Provides maps from NY Natural Heritage Program. Offers Estuary Grants for financial support.

For training to identify important habitats in your community:

Hudsonia, Ltd. (845) 876-7200

Works with local agencies to collect new habitat information and develop skills in biodiversity assessment and habitat mapping. Training based on the Biodiversity Assessment Manual for the Hudson River Estuary Corridor. Competitive grants are available.

For planning and technical assistance:

Metropolitan Conservation Alliance - A Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society (914) 925-9175

Develops tools to conserve biodiversity within local land use planning processes. Helps communities to distinguish sensitive habitats from areas more suitable for development, and to balance economic growth with environmental health.



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