



Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey



Last updated April 2019

Chapter 4. Guidance for CHANJ Cores and Corridors - Habitat Protection, Restoration, and Management -

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PRIORITIZING CONSERVATION ACTIONS

The Cores, Corridors, and Road Segments depicted in the CHANJ Mapping are meant to highlight the most advantageous places to implement conservation actions for wildlife connectivity, as they represent New Jersey's most contiguous remaining habitat areas and the best opportunities to keep those areas functionally linked. But when viewing this mapping from a broad, even statewide scale, tackling the connectivity challenge can seem very daunting. With resources being limited, it is important to prioritize our actions to have the greatest positive impact.

One approach is to prioritize areas based on high Biological Value and Opportunity or Need. Figure 4.1 offers scenarios from the CHANJ Mapping where conservation action – **Habitat Protection, Habitat Restoration and Management, or Road Mitigation** – would be most beneficial to terrestrial wildlife connectivity based on criteria of Biological Value and Opportunity or Need. The [CHANJ Web Viewer](#) provides supplemental mapping layers, detailed in the About section, to inform decision making as well. Revisit Chapter 2 of the full [Guidance Document](#) for details on how the mapping was developed.




Conservation Action Guidance for Habitats		
Biological Value		Opportunity or Need
<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>CHANJ Core or Corridor supports occurrences of priority terrestrial wildlife, such as Federal or State listed species or Species of Greatest Conservation Need (see Appendix B of NJ's Wildlife Action Plan). Look for intersections with NJDEP Landscape Project mapping.</p>		<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Parcel intersects with other conservation planning tools (e.g., NJ Conservation Blueprint).</p>
<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Corridor features small Cores (CHANJ Stepping Stones) that can be used as live-in habitat for wildlife moving between larger Cores.</p>		<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Core or Corridor contains un-protected land adjacent to a Road Segment where safe passage for wildlife exists or could be created.</p>
<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Core or Corridor contains land that is currently un-protected.</p>		<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Opportunities exist closer to the center of a Corridor. (Habitat quality may decrease along the margins of a Corridor, as shown in darker brown in the Corridor Gradients layer.)</p>
<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Smaller Core or Corridor features unique or high-quality habitat or great restoration potential.</p>		<p><i>Protect/Restore/Manage habitat when...</i></p> <p>Only a single Corridor option exists between Cores.</p>

Figure 4.1. Guidance for prioritizing areas for conservation action. Implementers can take strategic action for habitat connectivity by prioritizing CHANJ-mapped areas of high *Biological Value* and *Opportunity or Need* that fall within the region of interest or jurisdiction. (Adapted from [CorridorDesign](#), accessed 11/2017)

TAKING CONSERVATION ACTION

*The three types of conservation actions – **Habitat Protection, Habitat Management and Restoration, and Road Mitigation** – are not only important on their own; they are critically intertwined in the effort to secure and improve functional habitat connectivity. A wildlife tunnel will not function well if the land on one side is not protected and gets converted into a parking lot, just as a large protected area may become an “island” if it’s surrounded by unsuitable land uses or bisected by a high-traffic roadway, preventing wildlife from getting from one side to the other. Indeed, taking effective action for wildlife connectivity requires a great deal of thought and collaboration.*

Once the opportunities for conservation action have been evaluated and priorities set, the next step is to find the resources to protect, restore, and/or manage those habitats that we've identified as important to New Jersey's landscape connectivity. Fortunately, New Jersey has a large and well-established network of land trusts and stewardship organizations ready to guide and assist with land acquisition and management. Some of these potential partners are listed below, by Conservation Action category, under Habitat Protection or Habitat Restoration and Management. These partner lists are surely not comprehensive; there are a great many additional municipal and county open space agencies as well as local land trusts and conservation groups with which to connect.

To further coordinate proactive, collaborative conservation amongst implementers, we are developing CHANJ Action Teams for the northern, central, and southern regions of New Jersey. The CHANJ Action Teams are a network of partners from the land use, conservation and transportation fields who can be alerted to important opportunities for land acquisition, habitat restoration, and other conservation actions as they come up. See Chapter 5 for more information on the CHANJ Action Teams framework.



CONSERVATION ACTION: HABITAT PROTECTION

Permanently protecting habitat through acquisition or easement is often the first step in securing or restoring connectivity for wildlife. The following agencies and organizations are some of New Jersey's best resources when it comes to preserving land.

Statewide Partners

Please contact the CHANJ team if your organization should be added to a list.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection – Green Acres Program

The Green Acres Program serves as the real estate agent for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), acquiring land that becomes part of the system of state parks, forests, natural areas, and wildlife management areas. Its mission is to achieve, in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces, whose protection will preserve and enhance New Jersey's natural environment and its historic, scenic, and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment.

Green Acres also provides open space grants and low interest loans to local governments and works with them through project completion. Green Acres also provides matching grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to acquire land for public recreation and conservation. See a list of Green Acres partner organizations [here](#).

Property owners can offer their land for sale by completing an Application for Sale of Real Estate form, available on the Green Acres website. Land and easement interests can be donated or left through bequests as well.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's NRCS in New Jersey offers easement programs to landowners to preserve or enhance their land for agriculture and/or the environment. All NRCS easement programs are voluntary.

The Conservation Fund

The Conservation Fund believes that protecting valuable, conservable land is essential to America's environmental health and economic vitality. Through land acquisition, sustainable programs, and leadership training, the Conservation Fund and its partners work to safeguard properties for wildlife, recreation, historic significance, or to help balance our built environment.

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is an accredited land trust that preserves land and water resources, conserves open space, and inspires and empowers individuals and communities to protect our natural land and environment. They work with municipalities and nonprofit organizations throughout New Jersey by providing planning, land stewardship, and open space advising services.

The Land Trust Alliance

The Land Trust Alliance is a national advocate for land trusts and land conservation. They can be used as a resource to connect with local land trusts across America.

The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey

The Nature Conservancy's global mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

New Jersey Audubon Society

New Jersey Audubon fosters environmental awareness and a conservation ethic among New Jersey's citizens; protects New Jersey's birds, mammals, other animals, and plants, especially endangered and threatened species; and promotes preservation of New Jersey's valuable natural habitats. In addition to active management, restoration and enhancement of public and private lands throughout the state, New Jersey Audubon maintains a network of sanctuaries and visitor centers.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation preserves land and natural resources for the benefit of all. Their land preservation plan envisions a network of interconnected open space and farmland, using Garden State Greenways as a guide. NJCF preserves land with fee simple acquisition, conservation and agricultural easements, reserve life estate or remainder interest, and bequest.

New Jersey Natural Lands Trust

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust preserves land in its natural state for enjoyment by the public and to protect natural diversity through the acquisition of open space. The Trust manages its properties to conserve elements of natural diversity, such as habitat for rare plant and animal species and rare ecological communities.

Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land helps communities raise funds, conduct research and planning, acquire and protect land, and design and renovate parks, playgrounds, trails, and gardens across the United States.



Local Partners

Please contact the CHANJ team if your organization should be added to a list.

D&R Greenway Land Trust

D&R Greenway's mission is to preserve and care for land and inspire a conservation ethic, now and forever. Their land preservation focuses on protecting interconnected greenways in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Hunterdon Land Trust

The mission of the Hunterdon Land Trust is to preserve the integrity of the rural landscapes in the Hunterdon County region. Hunterdon Land Trust works with landowners who wish to permanently protect the ecological, agricultural, scenic, historic, or recreational qualities of their land. They also work in partnership with municipal, county, and state governments as well as other nonprofit organizations to acquire and manage environmentally sensitive properties and farmland.

Monmouth County Park System

The Board of Recreation Commissioners is committed to improving the quality of life of the citizens of Monmouth County by providing open space, park and recreation areas, facilities, programs, and services of the highest quality and to furnishing these opportunities in the most effective, efficient, and economical manner possible.



Natural Lands

Natural Lands is a non-profit organization with the goal of protecting our region's natural assets by building a network of interconnected open space throughout the Delaware Valley of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund

The Natural Lands Trust Fund was established to acquire and maintain environmentally sensitive lands, natural areas and open spaces in Ocean County. The program generates over \$10 million per year for natural lands acquisitions and farmland preservation.

Pinelands Preservation Alliance

The Pinelands Preservation Alliance is dedicated to preserving the NJ Pinelands through advocacy and education.

Ridge and Valley Conservancy

Ridge and Valley Conservancy is a private, non-profit accredited local land trust that preserves natural areas within the Appalachian Valley and Ridge Region of northwestern New Jersey for the benefit of people and wildlife. They protect forests, meadows, farmland and watercourses, and practice sound ecological management of their preserves. RVC acquires both land and conservation easements. They also assist in the stewardship of public land and advise landowners as to their conservation options.

Together North Jersey

Together North Jersey (TNJ) was created to help develop a regional plan for North Jersey. TNJ brought together a coalition of nearly 100 diverse partners—counties, municipalities, educational institutions, nonprofits, businesses and other groups—to develop the first comprehensive plan for sustainable development for the 13 northern New Jersey counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren. The plan includes a broad range of topics such as housing, economic development, education, land use, energy, water, arts, stewardship and transportation.

CONSERVATION ACTION: HABITAT RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT

Habitat restoration and management for wildlife is a broad category of possible actions, ranging from changing the land use (e.g., converting agriculture to forest), to increasing native plant diversity or buffers, to maintaining current conditions that are already favorable to an assemblage of species. The following agencies and organizations are some of New Jersey's best resources to assist with habitat management planning and implementation.



Statewide Partners

Please contact the CHANJ team if your organization should be added to a list.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – NJ Field Office – Partners for Fish and Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners program is a habitat restoration program based on the understanding that the majority of wildlife in the U.S. is found on private land and, therefore, successful wildlife conservation requires engaging private landowners. *Partners* works with private, corporate, municipal, county, and non-profit landowners to pursue voluntary fish and wildlife habitat restoration projects. They do not work on State or federally owned land but do work with State and federal agencies in a variety of ways, including planning and partnering efforts to support habitat restoration.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture's NRCS in New Jersey offers conservation programs to help landowners and agricultural producers to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. Participation in NRCS conservation programs is voluntary, and requests for technical assistance and applications for financial assistance are accepted throughout the year.

National Wildlife Federation

The National Wildlife Federation educates and empowers people to turn their own small pieces of Earth into thriving habitat for birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife. In doing so, people across North America are making a difference in their cities, towns, and neighborhoods—all while deepening their connections to the natural world. NWF's Certified Wildlife Habitat program guides landowners to provide wildlife with food, water, cover, and places to raise young.

New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team

The Invasive Species Strike team's vision is to protect our natural lands, with their full abundance and diversity of native plants and animals, from future damage through coordinated strategic invasive species management involving a team of partners and volunteers. The focus is eliminating threats posed by newly emerging invasive species before they become widespread pests and protecting our most pristine lands and rare species habitats.

Wildlife Habitat Council

The Wildlife Habitat Council promotes and certifies habitat conservation and management on working lands through partnerships and education.

Local Partners

Please contact the CHANJ team if your organization should be added to a list.



Ridge and Valley Conservancy

Ridge and Valley Conservancy is a private, non-profit accredited local land trust that preserves natural areas within the Appalachian Valley and Ridge Region of northwestern New Jersey for the benefit of people and wildlife. They protect forests, meadows, farmland and watercourses, and practice sound ecological management of their preserves. RVC acquires both land and conservation easements. They also assist in the stewardship of public land and advise landowners as to their conservation options.

Wallkill River Watershed Management Group

The WRWMG works to restore, enhance, and protect the surface waters of Sussex County, New Jersey, by conducting water quality monitoring, organizing volunteers to assist with streamside planting projects, assisting local farmers with conservation activities, and helping homeowners better understand the stream conditions on their properties. The WRWMG strives to create a more informed citizenry, foster a greater sense of environmental stewardship, and implement watershed restoration initiatives to help ensure the long-term sustainability of Sussex County's natural resources for future generations.

Private and Smaller-Scale Landowner Resources

Please contact the CHANJ team if your organization should be added to a list.

Small properties matter, too! Particularly within CHANJ-mapped Corridors, smaller-scale parcels and even residential yards can serve as important move-through habitat and help to expand “Stepping Stones” for wildlife in between the larger habitat Cores. There are several great resources aimed at helping private and smaller-scale landowners to manage their land in a meaningful way for wildlife. Here are a few of them:

Duke Farms – Stewardship at Home

No matter how big or small your home landscape, there are always ways to implement habitat restoration. The resources on this page guide homeowners through actions like building a bat roost, creating a perennial meadow, installing a rain garden, and more.

Jersey-Friendly Yards

This page gives a variety of resources to help home and property owners learn about environmentally sound landscaping techniques.

National Wildlife Federation – Designing Your Wildlife Garden at Home

In addition to NWF’s Certified Wildlife Habitat program (listed in the previous section), this page describes some simple ways to provide the essential habitat components of food, water, cover, and places for wildlife to raise young while designing a garden space that appeals to your aesthetics and enhances the natural landscape.

Staying Connected – Management Recommendations for Landowners

The Staying Connected Initiative seeks to conserve, restore, and enhance landscape connectivity across the Northern Appalachian/Acadian region of the U.S. and Canada for the benefit of nature and people. This guide gives landowners an overview of habitat management strategies to enhance wildlife movement and survival.

YardMap

This site encourages the public to turn yards into wildlife habitat and provides articles and resources.

