

High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) Assessment

Purpose:

New Jersey Audubon's HCVF Assessment document is to be utilized internally by the Group Manager to determine the presence of new and existing HCVF's within the Group's base of certified forestland owners. The document will also provide guidance with respect to assigning appropriate management and monitoring protocol when applicable. More tract specific forest management guidance will be found within the Descriptions and Prescriptions portion of each cooperator's plan.

New Jersey Audubon's HCVF Assessment document has been prepared in conformance with FSC-US's July 2007 Version: High Conservation Value Forest Assessment Framework, originally prepared by Gary Dodge – FSC Director of Science and Certification. The below assessment, to be completed by the Group Manager before lands are enrolled into Group Certificate, covers all six FSC HCVF Values one section at a time. If during the assessment it is determined the forest contains one or more of HCVF Values that area will be considered a HCVF and managed as written within the FSC Forest Management Plan.

All FSC compliant forest management plans prepared by New Jersey Audubon and/or its preferred service providers shall include a section(s) dedicated to addressing the findings of the Group's HCVF Assessment .

HCV 1: YES

Definition:

Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refugia).

NJ Audubon Data Sources:

1. New Jersey Natural Heritage Program
2. New Jersey Audubon Society Publications
3. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish & Wildlife
4. Direct inquiries with land owner and neighbors

HCV1 Group Manager Questions:

1. Does all or part of the FMU contain an area that is legally protected or managed primarily for concentrations of biodiversity values that are significant at the eco-region or larger scale, or is such an area proposed for protection? If yes, then explain.

Yes, the majority of the property is managed primarily for protection of biodiversity values. Developed areas will not be included in the plan.

2. Does all or part of the FMU contain an area with significant concentrations of rare, threatened or endangered species or rare ecological communities, endemic (range restricted) species and/or natural communities that are significant at the eco-region scale? If yes, then explain how this will be addressed in the management plan.

Yes, there are a number of listed rare species (plants and animals) that are being fostered on the Property.

HCV 2: YES

Definition:

Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

New Jersey Audubon Data Sources:

1. New Jersey Audubon's forest inventory data collected for specific forest
2. New Jersey Natural Heritage Program
3. New Jersey GIS Web Clearinghouse for federal, state, and municipally protected open spaces
4. Sierra Club's State Level Old Growth Forest Survey

HCV2 Group Manager Questions:

1. Does all or part of the FMU contain a globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape-scale forest where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance?

Yes, the Property is located on the Northern Piedmont Ecoregion and represents a significantly large forest patch relative to other forests within the ecoregion. Particular areas of the Property contain concentrations of rare plants and animals.

2. What would happen to regional biodiversity if the characteristics of this forest (e.g., age class structure or relative species abundance) were significantly altered?

Regional biodiversity has limited secondary habitat in the vicinity and ecoregion and would therefore suffer from negative.

3. Does all or part of the FMU contain a landscape-scale forest recognized as being significant to biodiversity conservation at the ecoregion scale because it contains landscape-scale biodiversity values that are not present on other forests due to landscape-scale habitat modifications on surrounding lands, (such as land use conversion or forest management practices that have significantly altered forest biodiversity values)?

Yes, the site represents the largest contiguous forest patch in Hopewell Township and was recognized as a critical resource in central New Jersey by the Raritan-Piedmont Wildlife Habitat Partnership. The Property is located on the Northern Piedmont Ecoregion and represents a significantly large forest patch relative to other forests within the ecoregion. Particular areas of the Property contain concentrations of rare plants and animals.

4. What would happen to regional biodiversity if the characteristics of this forest (e.g., age class structure or relative species abundance) were significantly altered?

Any planned forestry activities on the Property would be designed to improve overall forest health and mitigate past human impacts to restore natural age class structure and relative species abundance.

HCV 3: YES

Definition:

Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.

New Jersey Audubon Data Sources:

1. New Jersey Natural Heritage Program
2. New Jersey GIS Web Clearinghouse for federal, state, and municipally protected open spaces
3. Sierra Club's State Level Old Growth Forest Survey
4. New Jersey Audubon Society's Publications
5. New Jersey Audubon's forest inventory data collected for specific forest

HCV3 Group Manager Questions:

1. Does the FMU contain old growth stands? If yes, geo-reference via map to be included within management plan.

No

2. Does the FMU contain or is it part of a roadless area >500 acres in size or that has unique roadless area characteristics? If yes, geo-reference via map to be included within management plan.

Yes, the largest patch is greater than 1,500 acres. The existing paved entrance driveway and dirt roads associated with the developed area reduce this patch size to approximately 1,200 acres. Private property located to the east of the Property are included in the overall patch size, but do not represent more than 200 acres of the patch.

3. Does the FMU contain any other rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystem? If yes, explain.

No

HCV4: NO

Definition:

Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control).

New Jersey Audubon Data Sources:

1. Stakeholder input via addition of property to Audubon's website within Forest Stewardship Program. Also, as new property becomes certified New Jersey Audubon's Group Certificate a press release will be generated which will offer opportunity for stakeholder input.
2. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish & Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program's (ENSP). Focuses on ecosystem integrity.

3. New Jersey Audubon's forest inventory data collection notes section. This section pertains to signs of cultural and historic significance as well as important ecological observations such as riparian zones and classified/non-classified US bodies of water.
4. New Jersey Best Management Practices for Forestry and Wetlands.

HCV4 Group Manager Questions:

1. Is all or part of the FMU owned or managed for the primary purpose of providing a source of community? If so what is the purpose and identify the community.

No

2. Does all or part of the FMU play a 'critical watershed role' in protecting community drinking water supplies? If so explain which community and how to mitigate adverse effects of future management activity within FSC Forest Management Plan. Create a map depicting mandated management buffers.

No

3. Does all or part of the FMU include extensive floodplain or wetland forests that are critical to mediating flooding or in controlling stream flow regulation and water quality? Explain.

No

4. Is all or part of the FMU critical to control erosion, landslides, or avalanches that would threaten local communities? If yes, explain. Follow New Jersey Best Management Practices for Forestry and Wetlands.

No

HCV5: NO

Definition:

Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health, well-being).

New Jersey Audubon Data Sources:

1. New Jersey Department of Community Affairs – Office of Recreation
2. New Jersey GIS Web Clearinghouse for federal, state, and municipally protected open spaces
3. Stakeholder input via addition of property to Audubon's website within Forest Stewardship Program. Also, as new property becomes certified New Jersey Audubon's Group Certificate a press release will be generated which will offer opportunity for stakeholder input.

HCV5 Group Manager Questions:

1. Is all or part of the FMU fundamental to the basic needs of a local community? If yes, explain how.

No

HCV6: NO

Definition:

Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

New Jersey Audubon Data Sources:

1. Archeological Society of New Jersey – asnj.org
2. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Historic Preservation Office
3. New Jersey GIS Web Clearinghouse for federal, state, and municipally protected open spaces
4. Stakeholder input via addition of property to Audubon's website within Forest Stewardship Program. Also, as new property becomes certified New Jersey Audubon's Group Certificate a press release will be generated which will offer opportunity for stakeholder input.
5. US Gen Net via web to determine possible Native American Tribal Lands.

HCV6 Group Manager Questions:

1. Does all or part of the FMU contain specific forest area that is critical to the tribe and local community's cultural identity? If yes, explain.

No

2. Are significant cultural features created intentionally by humans present? If yes, explain.

No

3. Are outstanding natural landscapes present that have evolved as a result of social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative? If yes, explain.

No