

# New Jersey Highlands: Critical Habitat Mitigation Strategies

New Jersey Highlands, New Jersey



The New Jersey Highlands Region spans nearly 860,000 acres of the state’s northwestern land. With a vast range of geographic and geologic features and natural habitats, the Highlands Region provides a significant green belt around the metropolitan East Coast.

To protect this region, the New Jersey Highlands Council, in its 2008 “Highlands Regional Master Plan,” established a goal of no net loss of critical habitat value. To assist the Council in working towards this goal, Biohabitats developed a series of Mitigation Strategy guidance

documents. The guidance documents are intended to help the Council and the municipalities it directs restore ecological function and processes to impaired or disturbed critical habitat, and ensure that no net loss of existing critical habitat value occurs given future development and infrastructure maintenance.

To produce the Mitigation Strategy guidance documents, Biohabitats performed a literature review, developed innovative mitigation techniques, and generated three examples which applied the guidance to specific types of

*Well-researched guidance and innovative mitigation techniques will help bring a master plan to life and protect critical habitat in the stream valleys, rolling hills, steep ridges and diverse forests of the New Jersey Highlands.*

critical habitat found within the Highlands Region. The literature review involved analysis of current scientific standards, protocols, peer-reviewed research and currently accepted theories.

To ensure that the most up-to-date research and practices were captured, industry experts were interviewed regarding their latest assessment and mitigation techniques and ongoing research.

Biohabitats developed mitigation techniques which recognize the unique nature and locational dependency of the Highlands region’s critical habitats and the need to approach mitigation from various scales. This included

a framework for making landscape-level decisions that concurs with the Council’s Master Plan, integrates participatory planning and recognizes environmental uncertainty such as climate change.

Biohabitats then provided three examples of how the strategies could be applied to a freshwater wetland area, grassland area and forested area. These included step-by-step instructions for future users to assess potential impacts to habitats and values and create mitigation that results in no net loss.

#### SERVICES

- Inventory & Assessments
- Design
- Public Outreach

*conservation planning*  
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Upper Passaic, Whippany, Rockaway, and Mid-Passaic Watersheds