



REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

& Bog Turtle Conservation in the Upper Salem River Watershed



Introduction to Bog Turtles

- North America's smallest turtle measuring a maximum 4" New Jersey's state reptile
- State endangered and federally threatenedDark brown-black shell, with sculpted patterns decorating the upper shell (carapace)
- Distinctive orange neck patches
- Nesting occurs May-June, hatching occurs August-September

Bog Turtle Habitat

- This secretive species utilizes spring-fed wetlands, bogs, & fens with sparse tree & shrub cover characterized by mucky, saturated soils and abundant herbaceous vegetation
- Need complex wetland features small rivulets and streams to travel between wetlands & hummocks for nesting
- New Jersey remains a stronghold for the northeast population
- Primary threats include habitat loss & degradation, fragmentation of landscapes, changes in land use and illegal collection

Conservation

- Highly disturbance dependent species will not thrive in closed canopy, forested wetlands
- New Jersey Audubon, in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, New Jersey Fish and Wildlife, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service have rolled out a special program for landowners to contribute toward the protection and restoration of bog turtle habitat!
- Farmers and Landowners within the Upper Salem River Watershed are encouraged to apply
- Financial and technical assistance is available for land protection and management



Not ready to commit but still interested in learning how you can support his initiative? There's still time for a habitat survey! Contact NJA or CWF biologists to set up a site visit.

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Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Is led by New Jersey Audubon administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides funding to landowners to protect bog turtle habitat on their property. Contracts can include protection or restoration or both.

Protection: Landowners can be paid to preserve wetlands and surrounding farmland by entering easements providing fair market value for their property.

- No minimum acreage requirement NRCS purchases development rights while property remains in private ownership and is not open to the public
- Land is preserved in perpetuity
- Landowner retains right to management and passive recreation
- Land acquisition contracts are *optional* through this program

Restoration: Partners may help with implementation and/or provide additional funds for practices including but not limited to...

- Stream habitat improvement
- Streambank stabilization
- Wetland enhancement
- Select tree thinning
- Wildlife habitat monitoring
- Brush management
- Herbaceous weed treatment
- Invasive plant removal

Improved management: RCPP will provide cost share funding for whole-farm practices that reduce surface runoff, increase infiltration, and mitigate flood damage such as ...

- Cover crops
- Reduced tillage
- Stream crossings
- Vegetative buffers
- Livestock fencing

How do I enroll my Land in RCPP?

1. Submit an application to your local NRCS office
2. Establish farm records with the Farm Service Agency and complete eligibility forms
3. Your planner will reach out to schedule a site visit to walk your property and learn about your operation, your goals, and management objectives
4. You will be provided with a list of alternatives and recommendations based on those conversations during your site visit
5. Work with your planner to make decisions and develop a contract you are happy with
6. Contract review and signing, then project implementation with partners assistance

