



**Town of Poughkeepsie
Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC)**

**Monday September 23, 2019 at 7:30 PM
Main Meeting Room, Town Hall**

Present: CAC Members Pam Kingsley, Susan Karnes Hecht, Kerstin Cruger, Margaret Slomin
Lorraine Mirabella, Ward 3
Students from Arlington High School Participation in Government class

- Presentation of the recently completed Poughkeepsie Habitat Summary
Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Conservation and Land Use Specialist
Hudson River Estuary Program/Cornell University
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

The Poughkeepsie Habitat Summary provides a starting point for recognizing important natural areas in the Town, City and surrounding areas. By identifying areas with high-quality resources, this summary will be especially useful for setting priorities to inform municipal planning. Habitat summaries like this have been used by communities for open space plans, comprehensive plans, natural resource inventories, and other conservation and planning actions. The presentation introduced the summary to attendees by highlighting the most important habitats and the wildlife that call them home. This document contains maps, figures and accompanying text that describe known habitats in Poughkeepsie and their value to the vulnerable plants and animals.

Includes a list of all known species in town, some may be endangered
Data from numerous sources including state, Vassar College, Cornell, Hudsonia

Nate showed several maps and reviewed highlights of each map and answered questions:

1: Regional context

Watersheds (areas that drain to a single point)

Significant biodiversity areas identified by state

Hudson River is a unique setting because of varying salinity impacting drinking water source

Will be impacted by sea level rise and large precipitation events

2: Significant ecological features

Bat habitat, endangered, trees crucial for summer habitat

Limestone woodland - supports many rare species, most is near/in Locust Grove and Cemetery

Blanding's turtle - a threatened species, habitat loss and roads

Hudsonia maps from 2008 show priority conservation areas for this and other species

"Umbrella species" - preserving habitat for this species includes many others

3: Hudson River coastal habitat

Significant biodiversity area

Submerged aquatic vegetation - important fish habitat

Migratory fish habitat

Tidal wetlands - especially freshwater tidal wetlands, are rare globally
Hudson is unique for river depth, spawning for Atlantic sturgeon, federally endangered, making a comeback in Hudson, doing better here than in most places found along coast

4: Streams

Especially Fallkill and Wappingers Creek

Home to important floodplain forest habitat - a great place to save since not good for building anyway and absorbs floods

American eel - barriers can be a problem, eels normally get way up into tributaries

The DEC has identified places where barriers exist - dams and culverts, they are working with munis to map every road crossing for this reason, then can start to prioritize and plan for fixing.

Eels breed in Caribbean and come here to live, unlike herring and alewife which spawn here.

Wappinger Creek has a lot of spawning habitat. These species bring nutrients in from the ocean e.g., if a bird eats an eel that came from Caribbean.

NYS "trees for tribs" program modeled 50 year storms and adjacent wetlands

(See HV natural resource mapper tool www.dec.ny.gov/gis/hre/)

** Carbon sink and flood absorption - biggest intersection with Climate Smart goals

Add to existing forest or link forest areas - work strategically - this can help us identify best locations for afforestation

5: Wetlands

A single acre of wetland can store 1-1.5 million gallons of floodwater

Known pools are temporary breeding sites e.g., for spotted salamander

Freshwater tidal marsh and intertidal mudflats at mouth of Wappinger Creek

6: Large forests

Priorities for conservation

Forest cores

Bat habitat especially near water

Hawks

Other: there is not much to map in Poughkeepsie for grassland, shrubland, and young forest but various birds live in these areas

There are hyperlinks throughout report for species info, specific to NYS

- Finalized plans for 9/28 event at Peach Hill Park
- For next meeting: (again) go into NRI docs as agreed in August
Margaret will follow up with 2 individuals who signed sheet at street fair
Susan will follow up with individual who contacted via Climate Smart member
- Next meeting: Monday 10/28/19 at 7:30 pm

Minutes recorded by Susan Karnes Hecht