



Hudsonia

a nonprofit institute

PO Box 5000, Annandale, NY 12504-5000

Phone: (845) 758-7053

Fax: (845) 758-7033

www.hudsonia.org

HABITAT MAPPING IN THE TOWN OF CLINTON, DUTCHESS COUNTY, NY

The Town of Clinton and Hudsonia have received grants from public and private agencies for a townwide habitat mapping project. The purpose of the project is to provide information to help identify and protect important biological resources.

Hudsonia uses geology maps, soils maps, topographic maps, and aerial photographs to predict the occurrence of ecologically significant habitats and prepare a preliminary habitat map. Then we obtain landowner permissions and visit as many areas as possible to verify, correct, and refine the map and to assess habitat quality.

"Ecologically significant habitats" include those that are rare or declining in the region, those that may support rare species or other species of conservation concern, as well as other habitats that help to support local ecosystems as a whole. They include common habitats such as hardwood swamps, shrubby oldfields, and upland forests, as well as uncommon habitats such as kettle shrub pools and calcareous ledges. Because most wildlife species need to travel among different habitats to satisfy their basic needs for food, water, cover, nesting and nursery areas, and population dispersal, landscape patterns can have a large influence on wildlife populations. The size, connectivity, and juxtaposition of habitats in the landscape all have important implications for biodiversity.

Land use decisions in the region are often made on a site-by-site basis, without the benefit of information on surrounding lands. A habitat map illustrates the ecological context of any particular land parcel, and enables users to better understand the role of that land in the larger landscape. With access to good information about biological resources, landowners, town agencies, and other local decision-makers will be better equipped to protect the most important and sensitive habitats when considering new land uses.

The Clinton habitat mapping project began in spring 2011 and will be completed in 2012. Upon completion, Hudsonia will give a public presentation about the habitats, the plants and animals that may use the habitats, and some recommendations for conservation, and will work with town agencies to help them understand how to use the information for land use planning and decision-making.

If you are a Clinton landowner who is willing to grant Hudsonia biologists walking access to your property, please contact biologist Chris Graham (cgraham@bard.edu; 914-213-3657). General questions about the project may be directed to Chris or to Gretchen Stevens (stevens@bard.edu; 845-758-7053).

Hudsonia Ltd. is an independent, non-advocacy, non-profit institute for research, education, and technical assistance in the environmental sciences. We are based in Annandale, NY, and we work all over the Hudson Valley and elsewhere in the Northeast. Funding for the Clinton habitat mapping project has been provided by the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program and the Millbrook Tribute Garden (through the Dutchess Land Conservancy).