

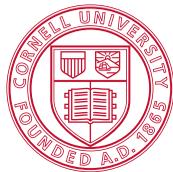


Conserving Natural Areas and Wildlife in Your Community:

Smart Growth Strategies for Protecting the
Biological Diversity of New York's Hudson River Valley

2008

Karen Strong, New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife
Research Unit at Cornell University for New York State
Department of Environmental Conservation's
Hudson River Estuary Program



Cornell University



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

The NYSDEC provided support to the New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell University for the development of this handbook, which implements the 2005 Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda. The Hudson River Estuary Program is a unique regional partnership leading the restoration of the Hudson through implementation of the Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda. Founded on the principles of ecosystem management and implemented in ways that support the quality of life so valued by Hudson Valley residents, the mission of the program is to conserve the natural resources for which the Hudson is legendary, promote full public use and enjoyment of the river, and clean up the pollution that affects our ability to use and enjoy it. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov.

For additional copies, contact:

*New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Hudson River Estuary Program
21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, NY 12561-1696
hrep@gw.dec.state.ny.us*

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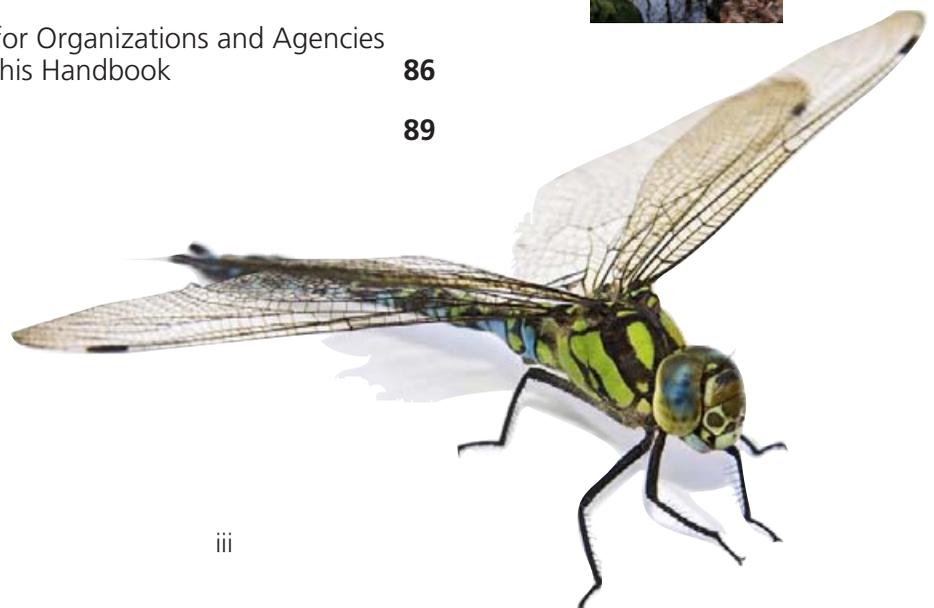
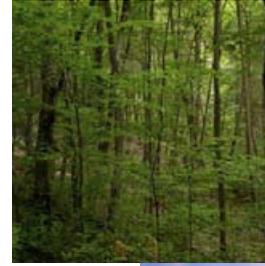
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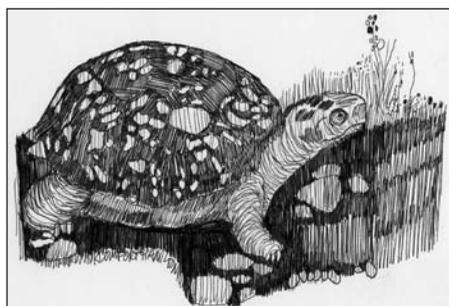
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Foreword



Home of the turtles?
Land of the dragonflies?
Animal migration
highway? The Hudson
Valley is known for
many things—scenery,
history, and art to name
a few—but the land that
feeds the Hudson River
Estuary also harbors a
remarkable diversity

of plants, animals, and habitats that contributes to the region's well-being, quality of life, and economy.

This handbook was designed for local governments that want to use their local home-rule authority to conserve the Hudson Valley's natural heritage. Local governments often rely on state agencies and nonprofit conservation groups to conserve this diversity of natural areas and wildlife. But regulatory and acquisition programs address only a few of the valuable natural assets in a community. Municipalities have at their disposal many tools that complement and augment the efforts of other agencies to conserve a wide variety of beneficial natural areas and wildlife which would otherwise go unprotected. This handbook encourages

municipalities to develop strategies for protecting nature by stressing the importance of nature conservation to human communities, indicating sources of information about natural areas and wildlife, outlining the smart growth strategies that can be used to conserve natural assets, and giving examples of how some Hudson Valley municipalities are conserving their resources.

This handbook was created for the Hudson River Estuary Biodiversity Outreach Program, which began in 2001 as a partnership between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and Cornell University. Regardless of experience, knowledge, or expertise, all Hudson Valley municipalities can receive assistance in conserving their plants, animals, and habitats. This program is entirely voluntary and available to any town, village, or city in the Hudson River Valley.

Although this handbook focuses on the Hudson River Valley, the tools and techniques it describes are applicable across New York State and any state in the country where land-use planning decisions are made by towns, cities, or villages. Please note that for use outside New York State, specific laws regarding land use and planning should be consulted.

Preface and Acknowledgements

The concept of this handbook came from *Protecting Nature in Your Community: A Guidebook for Preserving and Enhancing Biodiversity* by Jason Navota and Dennis Dreher of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC). In the spirit of conservation, the authors and NIPC graciously gave me permission to use the model and the text of their local government handbook, for which I sincerely thank them. Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 13 are based on the NIPC document and borrow language from that text. The text has been extensively rewritten in Chapters 1, 6, and 11. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 12 are original to the present handbook. *Protecting Nature in Your Community: A Guidebook for Preserving and Enhancing Biodiversity* is available online at www.nipc.org/environment/sustainable/.

Special thanks go to Ted Kerpez, Region 3 Wildlife Manager for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; Biodiversity Project Manager Frances Dunwell, Director of the Hudson River Estuary Program for Department of Environmental Conservation; and Milo Richmond, Unit Leader and Associate Professor, New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell University. All three provided support, guidance, and many suggestions over the years of this project that made this handbook possible.

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Karen Strong, New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell University

The New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, located in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University, is one of fifty such units nationwide established for the purpose of enhancing the management of this nation's renewable resources. The unit conducts fish and wildlife research throughout the northeastern U.S. and works closely with resource managers and information transfer and education specialists to ensure that the research results are used in practice. For more information, visit www.dnr.cornell.edu. Primary cooperators include the United States Geological Survey, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Wildlife Management Institute.