

**N.J.A.C. 7:5A**

**Natural Areas and the Natural Areas System Rules**

Statutory authority: N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.4 et seq. and 13:1B-15.12a et seq.

Date last amended: June 1, 2023

For regulatory history and effective dates see the New Jersey Administrative Code

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## **N.J.A.C. 7:5A**

Name of rule: **NATURAL AREAS AND THE NATURAL AREAS SYSTEM RULES**

Statutory authority: **N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.4 et seq. and 13:1B-15.12a et seq.**

Date last amended: June 1, 2023

For regulatory history and effective dates see the New Jersey Administrative Code

### **7:5A-1.1 Scope**

- (a) This subchapter constitutes the rules and regulations of the Department of Environmental Protection concerning the identification, classification, and management of natural areas and administration of the Natural Areas System pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.4 et seq. and 13:1B-15.12a et seq.
- (b) This subchapter shall be deemed to be supplemental to existing Departmental rules and not in derogation thereof.

### **7:5A-1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this subchapter is to provide detailed procedures, standards, and criteria for the administration and public use of natural areas and the Natural Areas System in order to protect and preserve the natural and ecological resources thereon for present and future generations.

### **7:5A-1.3 Definitions**

The following words and terms, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Administering agency" means the Division of Parks and Forestry or Fish and Wildlife, in the Department, or any other group or organization managing land designated as part of the Natural Areas System.

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of the Department or his or her designated representative.

"Conservation easement" means an interest in land less than fee simple absolute, stated in the form of a right, restriction, easement, covenant, or condition, in any deed, will or other instrument, other than a lease, executed by or on behalf of the person vested with a greater

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interest therein, appropriate to retaining land or water areas predominantly in their natural, scenic, open or wooded condition, or for conservation of suitable habitat for plants or animals.

"Construction of new trails" means the physical creation or alteration of a trail corridor or path to serve a function not formerly served by the trail, path or underlying land. Creation of the trail corridor or path can be undertaken by a variety of means including cutting, clearing or removing vegetation, and alteration of the ground surface to encourage trail use.

"Department" means the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

"Designation study" means a written report or analysis of an area or portion of an area listed on the Register that assesses the appropriateness for designation of that area to the Natural Areas System.

"Division" means the Division of Parks and Forestry within the Department.

"Ecological community" means an interacting assemblage of plants, animals and other organisms, their physical environment and the natural processes that affect them.

"Interim classification" means a category reflecting the type of habitat management permitted within the natural area prior to approval of a management plan.

"Interim management practice" means any use, activity, or management conducted within a natural area prior to approval of a management plan.

"Interpretive structures" means those structures and/or trails the sole purpose of which is to support the interpretation of natural features or the education of visitors and users of a natural area. Such structures may include, but are not limited to, buildings, blinds, kiosks, wayside trail exhibits, and signs.

"Invasive species" means nonindigenous plant and animal species that have been intentionally or accidentally introduced into habitats and geographical areas outside of their natural geographical range and that have the ability to reproduce and spread, thereby threatening native biological diversity and/or the integrity of natural ecosystems.

"Maintenance of existing trails" means routine activities conducted on an existing trail corridor or path to maintain the intended use of that trail. Maintenance may include, but not be limited to, signing or blazing, routine vegetation control such as trimming or brushing, and trail path grooming, provided that the vegetation control and trail grooming does not enlarge the existing width of the ground surface used as a trail.

"Management objective" means the stated purpose or goal of designating an area to the Natural Areas System to which management of the area is to be directed.

"Natural area" means an area of land or water, owned in fee simple or held as a conservation easement by the Department, which has retained its natural character, although not necessarily completely undisturbed, or having rare or vanishing species of plant and animal

life, or having similar features of interest, which are worthy of preservation for present and future residents of the State.

"Natural Areas Council", hereafter "Council", means that body consisting of seven members including the Administrator of the Office of Natural Lands Management and six members of the public appointed by the Governor in accordance with N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.7.

"Natural Areas System," hereafter "System," means those lands designated as natural areas pursuant to this subchapter, identified at N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.13, and consisting of lands that serve as habitat for rare plant species or animal species, or both, or ecological communities representative of the State of New Jersey or the nation.

"Natural Heritage Database" means the manual and computerized file maintained by the Division that includes continuously updated information on the location and status of rare plant and animal species and ecological communities in New Jersey. Information on the Natural Heritage Database is available at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforestry/natural/heritage/index.htm>.

"Prescribed burning" means the open burning of plant material under such conditions that the fire is confined to a predetermined area and accomplishes the environmentally beneficial objectives of habitat management and prevention or control of wildfires.

"Preservation" means any measures, including no action at all, which are required in order to avoid injury, destruction or decay of a natural resource feature within a Natural Area or otherwise maintain or protect those features indicated in the management objective.

"Rare species habitat" means habitat for any plant and/or animal species listed, proposed or of candidate status by the Federal government as endangered or threatened throughout the United States pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. § § 1531 et seq., and its implementing regulations, 50 CFR § § 17.11 and 17.12; any plant species listed as endangered or as a species of concern pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.151 et seq. and its implementing rules, N.J.A.C. 7:5C; any animal species listed as endangered, threatened or as a priority wildlife species pursuant to N.J.S.A. 23:2A-1 et seq. and its implementing rules, N.J.A.C. 7:25-4; and any rare plant and/or animal species and/or ecological community recorded in the Natural Heritage Database.

"Register" means the registry, required by N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.12a6, of all lands, public and private, which are suitable for inclusion within the System. See also N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.4.

"Register site summary" means a written report, on file with the Division, summarizing site-specific information on the suitability for inclusion of a site on the Register, and containing a map indicating the boundary of the site.

"Right-of-way" means a less-than-fee interest in property held by another over which the Department has no control, such as, but not limited to, use of property for pipelines, transmission lines, and roads.

"State" means the State of New Jersey, or any of the departments or agencies in the executive

branch of government with the lawful authority to engage in contracting.

"Timber" means trees sold, removed or destroyed for commercial, non-ecological purposes. Timber does not include trees harvested or removed solely for the purpose of furthering the management objective of a Natural Area.

#### **7:5A-1.4 Register of Natural Areas**

- (a) The Register of Natural Areas, hereinafter "Register", is a list of sites which serves as:
  - 1. The official recognition of the site's important natural features which are worthy of preservation by the property owner; and
  - 2. The list of sites from which to draw new areas for designation to the System.
- (b) Listing on the Register does not, in itself, alter land use or ownership, nor does it impose any regulatory authority.
- (c) Any individual or organization may suggest that a site be included on the Register by submitting a Register site summary to the Department or the Council. Potential sites may also be studied and Register site summaries presented to the Council by the Department's Office of Natural Lands Management.
- (d) Upon review of the Register site summary by the Council, and subsequent to the recommendation of the Council, the Commissioner may approve the listing of a site on the Register. The site must include rare species habitat or at least one ecological community, as defined at N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.3.
- (e) The Division shall maintain the Register together with copies of the Register site summary.
- (f) The Commissioner may remove a site from the Register upon a finding and recommendation by the Council that the site no longer satisfies the criteria enumerated in (d) above.

#### **7:5A-1.5 Natural Areas Council**

- (a) The Natural Areas Council shall advise the Commissioner in matters relating to the administration of the Natural Areas Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.4 et seq.) and the Natural Areas System Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.12a et seq.). The specific functions of the Council include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - 1. Recommending sites to be studied by the Department for possible listing on the Register;
  - 2. Evaluating studies conducted by the Department and providing a recommendation to the Commissioner for listing on the Register;

3. Evaluating those lands owned in fee or easement by the State that are listed on the Register, and recommending to the Commissioner their inclusion within the System;
4. Evaluating management plans prepared by the Department and recommending to the Commissioner revisions, or approval, or both;
5. Evaluating rules developed by the Department for implementation of the acts; and
6. Recommending for acquisition specific lands or interests in lands that are suitable for designation to the Natural Areas System.

#### **7:5A-1.6 Natural Areas designation**

- (a) To qualify for designation to the System, a site must be:
  1. Listed on the Register; and
  2. Wholly or partially owned in fee or held as a conservation easement by the State.
- (b) Upon request of the Commissioner or a majority vote of the Council, the Department shall undertake a study of a Register site to assess appropriateness of designation as a natural area. This designation study shall include, but not be limited to, the following analyses:
  1. The overall quality of the site including:
    - i. The inherent ability to perpetuate the feature(s) of concern;
    - ii. The size of the site necessary to perpetuate the feature(s) of concern;
    - iii. The size of the population(s) at the site sufficient to assure perpetuation of biotic features of concern; and
    - iv. The integrity of the site in terms of its ability to significantly illustrate the feature(s) of concern;
  2. The significant diversity of biotic features and the number of plant or animal species, or both, per community;
  3. The relative scarcity or uniqueness of plant and animal species, community types, and wildlife habitats;
  4. The presence and quality of surrounding buffer areas to provide protection and insure the integrity of the site;
  5. The degree of disturbance or potential threat, directly or indirectly, from one or more of the following:

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- i. Highways, roads, or railroads;
    - ii. Housing or commercial development;
    - iii. Industrial use;
    - iv. Military use;
    - v. Utility lines or rights-of-way;
    - vi. Visitor use;
    - vii. Active recreational use;
    - viii. Flooding or erosion; and
    - ix. Invasive species;
  6. The ability of an administering agency to adequately manage the site or enter into a management agreement with others, to preserve the integrity of the natural features including such factors as cost, usability, boundaries, and accessibility;
  7. The degree of threat to the public health, safety, and welfare which may be encountered as a result of terminating existing uses or activities; and
  8. The identification of preliminary boundaries of the area in the form of a site map to be refined upon approval of a management plan.
- (c) Upon review of the designation study and comments from the administering agency, the Council shall submit a recommendation to the Commissioner for designation of the land in question to the System. The Council's recommendation shall include:
1. A management objective for the area;
  2. A summary of qualifications of the site related to quality, diversity, and scarcity of the feature or species and potential management practices which may be necessary to ensure preservation; and
  3. An interim classification for the area as provided in N.J.A.C. 7:5A- 1.7.
- (d) If the Commissioner agrees with the Council's recommendation, the Department shall publish a notice of public hearing in the New Jersey Register and hold a public hearing on the proposed designation, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.12a4.
- (e) The Commissioner shall review the comments from the public, if any, and shall take the following action on the proposed designation:
1. Approve, subject to Gubernatorial concurrence;
  2. Make changes to the proposed designation in consultation with the Council and approve subject to Gubernatorial concurrence; or
  3. Request the Council's reconsideration of the recommendation for designation.
- (f) The Department shall publish in the New Jersey Register a notice of administrative change revising N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.13 each time a natural area or portion of a natural area is designated in accordance with this section.

- (g) The process set forth at (c) through (f) above for designation of a natural area to the System shall apply when a natural area, or portion of a natural area, is removed from the System.

#### **7:5A-1.7 Classification of natural areas**

- (a) Interim classification of natural areas shall be related to the management objective of the area.
- (b) Upon designation to the System, each natural area shall be categorized into one of the following interim classifications:
  - 1. Ecological reserve: an area managed to allow natural processes to proceed with little or no habitat manipulation; or
  - 2. Conservation preserve: an area where habitat manipulation is permissible in order to preserve a plant or animal species, community type, or ecosystem.
- (c) Upon approval of a management plan for a natural area, the interim classification assigned to the area shall be superseded by the specific management practices prescribed by the management plan.
- (d) As part of an approved management plan, specified zones within the natural area may be categorized as buffer areas. A buffer area serves the purpose of protecting ecological reserves and conservation preserves.

#### **7:5A-1.8 Natural area management plans**

- (a) Management and uses of natural areas shall be subject to:
  - 1. Interim management practices conducted by the administering agency as provided in N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.9;
  - 2. Management practices requiring approval by the Commissioner as provided in N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.9; or
  - 3. A management plan approved by the Commissioner specifying uses, activities, or management.
- (b) The Department, with the cooperation of the administering agency, shall prepare a management plan for each natural area in the System. The primary purpose of a management plan is to describe the natural features of the area and prescribe management practices and public uses to ensure preservation in accordance with the management objective of the natural area.
- (c) An approved management plan may supersede the interim management practices listed at N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.9, if the Commissioner determines through his or her approval of the

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management plan that the practices in the management plan more specifically address the requirements of the management objective for that area. Any interim management practice listed at N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.9 and not specifically addressed or superseded by the approved management plan for the area shall remain in effect in a natural area following approval of the management plan.

(d) Each management plan shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A site description identifying the physical features, natural communities, and species composition of the area;
2. A description of the existing uses and activities;
3. A description of existing rights-of-way which are to be expected from the boundaries;
4. Any management practices that will contribute towards preservation in accordance with the management objective;
5. An analysis of public uses and their impact on the natural area including:
  - i. Ecological research and study;
  - ii. Public interpretation, observation, and study of the natural communities, species, and ecosystems; and
  - iii. Recreational activities; and
6. An evaluation of the current boundaries and changes, if necessary, to achieve preservation in accordance with the management objective.

(e) A draft management plan shall be reviewed by the administering agency and the Department prior to submission to the Council.

(f) The Council shall review the draft management plan and the comments of the administering agency at a meeting for which notice has been provided in the New Jersey Register. Based on the meeting, the Council shall request additional information or recommend to the Commissioner that the plan be approved.

(g) If the administering agency disagrees with the recommendation of the Council, the recommendations of each shall be forwarded to the Commissioner for a final decision.

(h) The Commissioner shall review the draft management plan, the recommendation of the Council, and the recommendation, if any, of the administering agency and shall take the following action on the draft management plan:

1. Approve the draft management plan as the management plan for the natural area; or
2. Request the Council and the Division's reconsideration of the draft management plan,

after which the Council and the Division may resubmit the draft management plan for the Commissioner's approval.

- (i) An approved management plan for a natural area may be revised subject to the following:
  - 1. The Council shall review any proposed revisions to an approved management plan, and the comments of the administering agency on the proposed revisions, at a meeting for which notice has been provided in the New Jersey Register. Based on the meeting, the Council shall request additional information or recommend to the Commissioner that the proposed revisions be approved.
  - 2. If the administering agency disagrees with the recommendation of the Council, the recommendations of each shall be forwarded to the Commissioner for a final decision.
  - 3. The Commissioner shall review the revised management plan, the recommendation of the Council, and the recommendation, if any, of the administering agency, and shall take the following action on the revised management plan:
    - i. Approve the revised management plan as the management plan for the natural area; or
    - ii. Request the Council and the Department's reconsideration of the revised management plan, after which the Council and the Division may resubmit the revised management plan for the Commissioner's approval.

#### **7:5A-1.9 Interim management practices**

- (a) Interim management practices shall be implemented by the administering agency, provided that:
  - 1. The practice will have no direct or indirect adverse impact on natural features of concern and will further the management objective of the natural area;
  - 2. Approval of the Commissioner is not required by provision elsewhere in this subchapter; and
  - 3. The practice is consistent with terms of any conservation easement held by the Department.
- (b) Interim management practices listed at (e) or (f) below that require the approval of the Commissioner shall first be submitted to the Council for its review and recommendation.
- (c) Upon finding that an interim management practice listed below at (e) or (f) would be detrimental to achieving a specific management objective, the Council shall recommend to the Commissioner the substitution of a more appropriate interim management practice. Should the Commissioner concur with the recommendation of the Council, the Commissioner may approve substitution of a more appropriate interim management

practice.

- (d) Where there are conflicts between general practices described below at (e) and practices specific to a natural area classification described below at (f), the latter shall apply.
- (e) The following interim management practices apply generally to all natural areas upon designation to the System unless and until superseded by the provisions of an approved management plan:
  - 1. Natural area boundaries shall be made clearly evident by posting signs at a maximum density of 10 signs per mile; entrance points shall be posted to indicate to users that they are entering a natural area; boundary signs shall be of a standard size and format as provided by the Department;
  - 2. Boundary fences that are needed to protect the natural area may be installed provided the fence shall not have a detrimental effect on the movement of wildlife, or other natural conditions;
  - 3. Vehicular access lanes may be maintained within a natural area but may not be enlarged in any manner except upon approval of the Commissioner.
  - 4. Existing firebreaks within a natural area may be maintained for public health and safety purposes; temporary firebreaks made by mowing, raking, plowing or wetting, may be used in conjunction with prescribed burning for habitat management;
  - 5. Existing structures may be maintained in a natural area; new structures and enlargement of existing structures may be undertaken upon approval by the Commissioner, provided the structures directly or indirectly contribute to the management objective; new structures, of a temporary nature, may be constructed for research purposes in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.10;
  - 6. No measures, such as cutting of grass, brush, or other vegetation, thinning of trees, removal of fallen logs, opening of scenic vistas, or planting, shall be taken to alter natural processes or features for the purpose of enhancing the beauty or neatness of a natural area;
  - 7. No measures, such as control of annoying or biting insects, shall be taken solely to alleviate nuisances or annoyances to visitors of natural area, except when approved by the Commissioner;
  - 8. Except as otherwise provided in this section, there shall be no introduction, removal or consumptive use of any material, product, or object to or from a natural area; prohibited activities include grazing by domestic animals, farming, gathering of plants or parts thereof, mining or quarrying, and dumping, burying, or spreading of garbage, trash, or other materials; structures or materials may be removed as follows:
    - i. Old interior fences may be removed, giving consideration to leaving posts to mark boundaries between former land uses;

- ii. Rubbish or any other waste material may be removed; and
  - iii. Structures having no historic, scientific or habitat value may be demolished and removed unless such structures are deemed essential for administrative or interpretive purposes;
- 9. Water levels within a natural area shall not be altered except to restore water levels which have been altered due to sudden natural phenomena or man-induced conditions off-site, but routine repairs to existing water control structures may be undertaken;
  - 10. All wildfires shall be brought under control; after a fire within a natural area, there shall be no cleanup or replanting except as approved by the Commissioner to achieve the management objective or for reasons of health and safety;
  - 11. Prescribed burning, to eliminate safety hazards and to manage habitat, may be conducted upon approval of a proposal for prescribed burning by the Commissioner; use of vehicles and equipment shall be specified in the proposal for prescribed burning;
  - 12. Habitat manipulation or restoration may be undertaken if preservation of a particular habitat type or species of native flora or fauna is included in the management objective of the natural area and upon approval by the Commissioner of a specific habitat manipulation or restoration plan;
  - 13. Gypsy moth control activities may be implemented upon a determination by the State Forester that egg mass counts and prior year defoliation will result in severe tree mortality without intervention, and after approval of a gypsy moth control plan by the Commissioner; to the extent practicable, biological controls, rather than chemical means, shall be used to control gypsy moths;
  - 14. There shall be no physical manipulation of a natural area or application of chemicals known as adulticides for the purpose of controlling mosquitoes; the application of larvicides may be permitted in salt marshes only and only as follows:
    - i. The application of *Bacillus thuringensis* var. *israeliensis* (BTI) may be initiated by mosquito control agency anytime; and
    - ii. The application of other larvicides may be initiated upon approval by the Commissioner of a specific mosquito control plan submitted by a mosquito control agency; the plan shall identify the specific area where an application will be made, the types and amount of larvicide to be applied, the need for the application, and the reason why BTI cannot be used for this application;
  - 15. Control of invasive species by biological, mechanical, or chemical methods may be performed upon approval of an invasive species control plan by the Commissioner;
  - 16. Research activities and the collection of specimens may only be conducted in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.10 and upon approval of the administering agency;

17. The introduction of invasive species is prohibited;
18. The sale, removal, or destruction of "timber" as defined at N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.3 is prohibited; and
19. Public use of natural areas shall be allowed only to the extent and in a manner that will not impair natural features; the administering agency may restrict access and use as necessary to protect the natural area. The following are permissible public uses of natural areas:
  - i. Hunting, trapping, and fishing are permitted in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:25-5 and 7:25-6; except for the stocking of fish and game, habitats may not be manipulated for the purpose of enhancing hunting, trapping, or fishing;
  - ii. Occasional camping along trails, boating, including motorized boating, and swimming may be permitted in specified locations of natural areas in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:2-2, 7:2-5, 7:2-7, 7:2-8, and 7:25- 2, and are further limited as follows:
    - (1) No permanent structures may be erected;
    - (2) No motorized methods of camping are permitted;
    - (3) Trailside shelters of the type called lean-tos are permitted, but there may not be two such shelters within three miles of each other; and
  - iii. Trails may be constructed and maintained as follows:
    - (1) Construction of new trails may be initiated subsequent to approval of a trail plan by the Commissioner. Maintenance of existing trails may be conducted upon approval of the administering agency;
    - (2) Rare plants or other significant features, the protection or preservation of which is consistent with the management objective of a natural area, may not be removed for the purpose of maintaining existing or constructing new trails;
    - (3) To the extent possible, natural materials shall be used on and along trails; and
    - (4) Trail blazes may be used to mark trails; and
  - iv. All pets shall be kept caged or leashed and under immediate control of the owner except that dogs used while legally hunting shall be exempt from the leashing requirement.
- (f) The following interim management practices, unless superseded by an approved management plan, apply to the appropriate specified natural area classifications:

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1. Interpretive structures may be installed except within ecological reserves;
2. Existing vehicular access lanes may not be enlarged in any manner within an ecological reserve;
3. New vehicular access lanes may be constructed only within buffer areas and upon approval by the Commissioner;
4. The alteration of natural processes or features for the purpose of enhancing public use of the natural area may be conducted by the administering agency only within buffer areas; and
5. The following management practices shall not be permitted within ecological reserves:
  - i. Construction of new, existing, or temporary firebreaks;
  - ii. Construction of new trails;
  - iii. Alteration or restoration of water levels;
  - iv. Prescribed burning;
  - v. Erosion control measures; and
  - vi. Manipulation of vegetation and wildlife habitats.

**7:5A-1.10 Procedures for conducting research and collecting specimens**

- (a) In accordance with this section, research or collection within a natural area may be conducted by individuals, groups, or governmental agencies, who, in the opinion of the administering agency, are qualified to conduct such activities and which, in the opinion of the administering agency, will not have a detrimental effect on the natural features of the area.
- (b) A written proposal for research or collection activities within a natural area shall be submitted to the administering agency. The submission shall contain:
  1. The name, address, email address, telephone number and emergency contact information, position, and professional qualifications of the applicant;
  2. The purpose and theme of the research or collecting and benefits to be derived therefrom;
  3. The specific methods and procedures for carrying out the activity;
  4. The location of the research sites;

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5. The duration of the project, the frequency of visitation, and the method of access;
  6. The name(s) and number of participants involved, as well as the email address, telephone number and emergency contact information for each participant; and
  7. Any anticipated direct and indirect impacts on the natural area that may result from implementation of the project.
- (c) The administering agency shall review the submission, consulting with the Office of Natural Lands Management and other offices in the Department, as needed, and shall approve, conditionally approve, or disapprove the application for research or collection. The decision shall be based on:
1. The relationship of the activity to the management objective of the area and the benefits to be derived;
  2. The ability and competence of the applicant to conduct the activity; and
  3. The approved activity having minimal adverse impact on the natural area and the administering agency's ability to adequately manage the area while subject to research and collection.
- (d) Interim and final reports and publications resulting from the research or collection, as specified in the approval, shall be submitted to the administering agency and secretary of the Council.

**7:5A-1.11 Enforcement of rules**

- (a) Remedies for the violation of the provisions of this chapter applicable to those State-owned or leased lands, waters and facilities administered by the Department, other than wildlife management areas or reservoir lands, shall be as provided at N.J.S.A. 13:1L-23.
- (b) Penalties for the violation of the provisions of this chapter applicable to State-owned or leased lands under the control of the Division of Fish and Wildlife shall be as provided at N.J.S.A. 23:7-9.

**7:5A-1.12 Boundaries of natural areas**

- (a) The Department shall maintain, and make available to the administering agency and members of the public, general location maps of each natural area in the System.
- (b) All boundaries of natural areas shall conform with physical features identifiable in the field or the edge of State ownership of the natural area.
- (c) Persons wishing to obtain a list of current boundaries of designated natural areas may contact the Office of Natural Lands Management as provided at N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.14.

### **7:5A-1.13 Natural Areas System**

(a) The designated components of the Natural Areas System are as follows:

1. Absegami Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Bass River State Forest, Bass River Township, Burlington County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of Atlantic white cedar and pine/oak communities, southern swamp habitat, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Bass River State Forest;
2. Allamuchy Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Allamuchy State Park, Allamuchy Township, Warren County, and Byram Township, Sussex County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of a hardwood forest of significant size and successional fields and protection of a rare plant community;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Hopatcong State Park;
3. Batsto Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Wharton State Forest, Mullica Township and Hammonton Town, Atlantic County, and Washington and Shamong Townships, Burlington County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of pitch pine lowland, Atlantic white cedar swamp, Pine Barrens bog, mixed pine-shrub oak barrens, savanna and other habitats, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Wharton State Forest;
4. Bearfort Mountain Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Wawayanda State Park, West Milford Township, Passaic County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of scrub oak and hardwood swamp forests, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;

- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Wawayanda State Park;
- 5. Bear Swamp East Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Downe Township, Cumberland County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of ecological communities and relationships, management of bald eagle nesting site and other known and potential endangered species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Millville Wildlife Management Area;
- 6. Bennett Bogs Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Lower Township, Cape May County;
  - ii. Management Objective: Preservation of a rare coastal plain intermittent pond ecological community which provides habitat for numerous rare plant and animal species;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: New Jersey Natural Lands Trust;
- 7. Black River Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Black River Wildlife Management Area, Chester and Washington Townships, Morris County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of mesic, marsh, floodplain habitat, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Whittingham Wildlife Management Area;
- 8. Bull's Island Natural Area:
  - i. Location: Bull's Island Recreation Area, Delaware Township, Hunterdon County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of a northern floodplain habitat, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Delaware and

Raritan Canal State Park;

**9. Bursch Sugar Maple Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Hope and Knowlton Townships, Warren County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a northeastern hardwoods forest, and sugar maple/mixed hardwood community;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Jenny Jump State Forest;

**10. Cape May Point Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Cape May Point State Park, Cape May Point Borough and Lower Township, Cape May County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of freshwater marsh behind a coastal dune, habitat diversity for migratory birds, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Cape May Point State Park;

**11. Cape May Wetlands Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Avalon Borough, Dennis and Middle Townships, Cape May County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of tidal salt marsh ecosystem and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Cape May Coastal Wetlands Wildlife Management Area;

**12. Cedar Swamp Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Brendan T. Byrne State Forest, Woodland Township, Burlington County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of southern swamp and floodplain habitat, Atlantic white cedar, red maple and pine/oak forest communities, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Brendan T. Byrne State Forest;

**13. Cheesequake Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Cheesequake State Park, Old Bridge Township, Middlesex County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of habitat diversity including hardwood forest, cedar swamp, mature white pine stand, freshwater swamp, Pine Barren outlier and salt marsh, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Cheesequake State Park;

**14. Cook Natural Area:**

- i. Location: South Brunswick Township, Middlesex County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of freshwater nontidal flood plain forest habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park;

**15. Dryden Kuser Natural Area:**

- i. Location: High Point State Park, Montague and Wantage Townships, Sussex County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of an inland high elevation Atlantic white cedar swamp, chestnut oak forest and associated forest communities, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through High Point State Park;

**16. Dunnfield Creek Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Worthington State Forest, Pahaquarry Township, Warren County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a hemlock ravine, chestnut oak forest, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Worthington State Forest;

**17. East Plains Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Stafford Forge Wildlife Management Area, Little Egg Harbor, Stafford and Eagleswood Townships, Ocean County;
- ii. Management Objective: Preservation and management of a globally rare dwarf pine plains community in the East Plains, a large occurrence of the state endangered broom crowberry, as well as other rare plant and animal species;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Stafford Forge Wildlife Management Area;

**18. Farny Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Farny State Park, Rockaway Township, Morris County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of northern mixed oak-hardwood forest, hardwood swamp forest, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Ringwood State Park;

**19. Great Bay Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Little Egg Harbor Township, Ocean County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of tidal salt marsh ecosystem and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Assunpink Wildlife Management Area;

**20. Hacklebarney Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Hacklebarney State Park, Chester and Washington Townships, Morris County, Tewksbury Township, Hunterdon County and Bedminster Township, Somerset County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a river ravine and northern hemlock/mixed hardwood forest, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Spruce Run Recreation Area;

**21. Hirst Ponds Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Galloway Township, Atlantic County;
- ii. Management Objective: Preservation of rare coastal plain intermittent pond ecological community which includes occurrences of the globally critically imperiled and State endangered plant Hirst Brothers' panic grass and numerous other rare plant and animal species;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: New Jersey Natural Lands Trust;

**22. Island Beach Northern Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Island Beach State Park, Berkeley Township, Ocean County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of barrier island dune system, plant community associations, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Island Beach State Park;

**23. Island Beach Southern Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Island Beach State Park, Ocean and Berkeley Townships, Ocean County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of barrier island dune system, saltwater marsh, freshwater bogs, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Island Beach State Park;

**24. Johnsonburg Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Frelinghuysen Township, Warren County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a mixed hardwood forest;
- iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Jenny Jump State Forest;

**25. Ken Lockwood Gorge Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Ken Lockwood Gorge Wildlife Management Area, Lebanon Township,

Hunterdon County;

- ii. Management Objective: preservation of hemlockmixed hardwood forest with highly varied understory, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Whittingham Wildlife Management Area;

26. Manahawkin Natural Area:

- i. Location: Manahawkin Wildlife Management Area, Stafford Township, Ocean County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a mature bottomland hardwood forest, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Assunpink Wildlife Management Area;

27. North Brigantine Natural Area:

- i. Location: City of Brigantine, Atlantic County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of salt marsh habitat, coastal dune, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Bass River State Forest;

28. Osmun Forest Natural Area:

- i. Location: Knowlton Township, Warren County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a northeastern mixed hardwood forest;
- iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Jenny Jump State Forest;

29. Oswego River Natural Area:

- i. Location: Wharton State Forest, Washington and Bass River Townships, Burlington County;

- ii. Management Objective: preservation of hardwood swamp, pitch pine lowland, pine-oak, Atlantic white cedar, and bog communities, which serve as rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Wharton State Forest;
30. Parvin Natural Area:
- i. Location: Parvin State Park, Pittsgrove Township, Salem County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of mixed oak and pine forest on the Pine Barrens fringe with a diversity of plant and animal species, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Parvin State Park;
31. Ramapo Lake Natural Area:
- i. Location: Ramapo Mountain State Forest, Wanaque and Ringwood Boroughs, Passaic County, and Oakland Borough, Bergen County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of northern upland habitats and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Ringwood State Park;
32. Rancocas Natural Area:
- i. Location: Rancocas State Park, Westampton Township, Burlington County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of freshwater marsh and southern floodplain habitat, including one of the largest stands of wild rice in the State;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Brendan T. Byrne State Forest;
33. Readington Natural Area:
- i. Location: Readington Township, Hunterdon County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of mixed hardwood forest, floodplain habitat and early stages of secondary field succession;

- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: New Jersey Natural Lands Trust;
34. Richard J. Sullivan Natural Area:
- i. Location: Liberty State Park, Jersey City, Hudson County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of a salt marsh in upper New York Bay and created uplands;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Liberty State Park;
35. Strathmere Natural Area:
- i. Location: Corson's Inlet State Park, Upper Township, Cape May County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of a dune habitat, plant community associations, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Belleplain State Forest;
36. Sunfish Pond Natural Area:
- i. Location: Worthington State Forest, Pahaquarry Township, Warren County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of a lake of glacial origin surrounded by a hardwood forest, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Worthington State Forest;
37. Swan Point Natural Area:
- i. Location: Brick Township, Ocean County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of tidal salt marsh ecosystem and Atlantic white cedar swamp;
  - iii. Interim Classification: ecological reserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Island Beach State Park;

**38. Swartswood Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Swartswood State Park, Stillwater and Hampton Townships, Sussex County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of rare species and plant communities in sinkhole pond ecosystems;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Swartswood State Park.

**39. Swimming River Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Borough of Tinton Falls, Monmouth County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of habitat diversity including freshwater marsh, saltwater marsh, woodlands, fields and estuary;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Allaire State Park;

**40. Tillman Ravine Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Stokes State Forest, Walpack and Sandyston Townships, Sussex County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a hemlock ravine and associated geologic forms, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Stokes State Forest;

**41. Troy Meadows Natural Area:**

- i. Location: East Hanover and Parsippany-Troy Hills Townships, Morris County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of freshwater marsh habitat northern swamp and floodplain habitat, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Ringwood State Park;

**42. Washington Crossing Natural Area:**

- i. Location: Washington Crossing State Park, Hopewell Township, Mercer County;

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TITLE 7 OF THE NEW JERSEY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE.**

- ii. Management Objective: preservation of natural succession and mixed hardwood forests, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Washington Crossing State Park;
43. Wawayanda Hemlock Ravine Natural Area:
- i. Location: Wawayanda State Park, Vernon Township, Sussex County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of hemlock/mixed hardwood forest and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Wawayanda State Park;
44. Wawayanda Swamp Natural Area:
- i. Location: Wawayanda State Park, Vernon Township, Sussex County, and West Milford Township, Passaic County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of extensive northern swamp and forest habitats, glacially formed, spring-fed pond, and rare species habitat;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Wawayanda State Park;
45. West Branch Wading River Natural Area:
- i. Location: Washington Township, Burlington County;
  - ii. Management Objective: Protection and management of globally rare pine barrens riverside savanna community, and large occurrences of the globally rare and State endangered plant bog asphodel, as well as other rare plant and animal species;
  - iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
  - iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Wharton State Forest;
46. West Plains Natural Area:
- i. Location: Bass River State Forest, Woodland Township, Burlington County;
  - ii. Management Objective: preservation of globally rare ecological communities

within the West Plains Fireshed, including dwarf pine plains, pitch pine-shrub oak barrens, pitch pine-reedgrass savanna and hydric pine plains, as well as numerous rare plant and animal species;

- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iv. Administering Agency: Division of Parks and Forestry, through Bass River State Forest; and

47. Whittingham Natural Area:

- i. Location: Whittingham Wildlife Management Area, Fredon and Green Townships, Sussex County;
- ii. Management Objective: preservation of a northern swamp and floodplain forest on a limestone cliff, rare and exemplary natural communities, and rare species habitat;
- iii. Interim Classification: conservation preserve;
- iii. Administering Agency: Division of Fish and Wildlife, through Whittingham Wildlife Management Area.

**7:5A-1.14 Public Information**

Interested persons may obtain information on the Natural Area System or inspect general location maps of natural areas by contacting:

Office of Natural Lands Management  
Division of Parks and Forestry  
Department of Environmental Protection  
PO Box 404  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0404  
(609) 984-1339  
[NatLands@dep.state.nj.us](mailto:NatLands@dep.state.nj.us)