What is the Landowner Incentive Program?

Most rare species in New Jersey can be found on – and depend upon – privately owned lands. In fact, here in New Jersey many plants, animals and habitat types are in serious decline. As development pressures increase, we are losing much of what makes New Jersey so beautiful. In fact, there are over 70 endangered and threatened species in NJ that need our help. Since much of the land in our state is privately owned we can only protect our natural resources through active and thoughtful partnerships with willing landowners.

The N.J. Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP), within the Department of Environmental Protection diligently works to protect the habitats of such rare wildlife as the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, bog turtle, bobcat, tiger salamander, Northern pine snake, and other animals that struggle for survival every day in the most densely populated state in the nation. State biologists work with private landowners to enhance and protect important habitats across New Jersey.

The New Jersey Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is one partnership that can provide private landowners interested in conserving threatened and endangered species on their property with financial and technical assistance. It is the goal of LIP to work with private landowners to protect important habitats so our children and great grandchildren can witness our enormous conservation efforts.

What are Some of the Criteria for Applying?

- Your property must provide potentially suitable habitat for the targeted species. You can determine your property's Landscape Project rank by using i-MapNJ at http://www.nj.gov/dep.
- Your project must contribute to the enhancement of at least one rare animal or plant species or its habitat in a significant way. (includes species that are federally or state listed as threatened or endangered, as well as species of special concern in New Jersey).
- The results of the project must be measurable. So you must agree to allow biologists onto your property for both a pre-agreement survey and periodic progress checks.
- You must sign a project agreement and management plan with the Division of Fish & Wildlife. These plans will be designed to meet each landowner's unique conservation and land use needs and objectives.
- Project duration of 5 years is required and more is preferred.
- A 25% cost share provided by the landowner is required (typically this cost share is labor and materials).
- Property must be owned by a private landowner.

What Types of Projects are Eligible for Funding?

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) encourages creative, innovative and cost-effective projects for conserving rare species. The types of projects that might qualify for the Landowner Incentive Program are as varied and diverse as the many rare species and the habitats that they depend upon. Some examples of potential projects that could benefit rare New Jersey species include:

Habitat Improvements

- Native vegetation restoration
- Vernal pool restoration
- Invasive species control

Habitat Management

- Changing haying or grazing regimes
- Prescribed burns
- Implementing sustainable forestry practices

Habitat Protection

- Constructing enclosure/exclosure fences
- Gating caves
- Fencing off streams

For the foreseeable future, LIP is focusing its efforts on:

- Grassland within regional priority areas.
- Protecting critical migratory bird stopover areas on the lower 20 kilometers of Cape May peninsula; and
- Projects adjacent to state Wildlife Management Areas and other permanently protected areas.

Why Should I Participate in LIP?

You can implement important and creative management activities on your property on a cost share basis for the benefit of endangered or threatened species. Direct monetary payments may also be made to you to manage your land. You may be awarded funds to help with legal fees for developing a conservation easement. Other innovative projects not listed here are encouraged and will be considered.

There are some projects that LIP will not fund including pond dredging, research efforts, and mitigation projects that are required by any land use regulatory program.

You will also have the satisfaction of being an active partner in working to protect NJ's rare and fragile wildlife. Animals do not recognize property boundaries and protecting contiguous habitat for our imperiled species is the critical link in their continued survival.

Is there a Minimum Acreage Requirement?

While there is no minimum acreage requirement, most projects will require larger acreage (greater than 6 acres) to achieve the desired management objectives. Of course some projects can be successful on an acre or less (i.e. protection of a bat cave or vernal pool).

How Will Projects be Selected?

Applications will be reviewed by ENSP staff for the overall benefit to rare species and their habitats. Those that meet the criteria developed specifically for LIP will be ranked based on the project's potential benefit to the target species or habitat. Funding decisions will be made based on the ranking score of the proposal and final review and recommendations of the LIP Advisory Committee.

What do I do Next?

First, visit i-MapNJ at (www.nj.gov/dep) to determine the Landscape Project ranking of your property. If your property has a rank of a 1 or above, go to our web site (www.njfishandwildlife.com) where you will find project examples, an application available for download, ranking criteria, and important dates. If your property meets the program criteria call ENSP at 609-292-9400 and ask for a LIP biologist. A LIP biologist will assist you in developing a proposal and if necessary, schedule a site visit to further discuss appropriate management activities for your property.

Information Resources:

List of New Jersey's endangered and threatened wildlife:
http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/tandespp.htm

List of New Jersey's species of special concern:
http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/spclspp.htm

For maps of critical wildlife habitat in your area please refer to the Landscape Project Map or i-MapNJ at http://www.nj.gov/dep

For more information about the Landowner Incentive Program contact:

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Division of Fish & Wildlife
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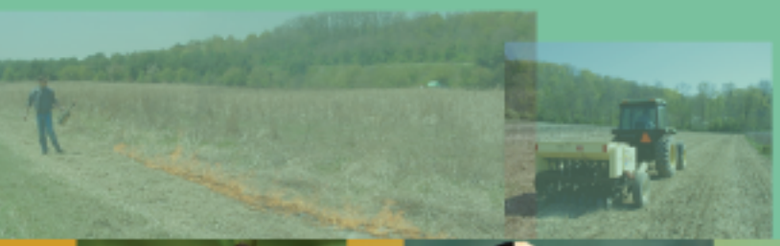

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

Conserve Wildlife

LIP Landowner Incentive Program

Become a Partner in Protecting New Jersey's Rare Wildlife in Your Own Backyard