

Landscape Project & Natural Heritage Priority Site Mapping

Their Use in the Water Quality Management Planning Process

WQMP Rule

- The WQMP rule (N.J.A.C. 7:15) utilizes the Landscape Project and NHPS mapping to determine environmentally sensitive areas.
- Sewer service area is, generally, not permitted in areas of environmental sensitivity.
- Environmentally sensitive lands area defined at 7:15-5.24 as based on a GIS composite of any contiguous area of 25-acres or larger consisting of the following features alone or in combination:
 - Threatened or endangered wildlife species habitat, based on the Landscape Project maps;
 - Areas mapped as Natural Heritage Priority Sites;
 - Category One waters and their associated 300' buffers;
 - Wetlands as mapped in the 2002 Land Use/Land Cover data.

SSA Delineation Process

- An Environmentally Sensitive Area of contiguous 25-acres or larger (ESA25) was developed utilizing 4 GIS data layers.
- “Urban” land use from 2002 Land Use/Land Cover data was removed from ESA25.
- ESA25 was then removed from the Adopted SSA.
- Modified SSA was “smoothed” to allow for infill development or create a linear boundary relating to a recognizable feature (road, parcel, stream, etc.).
- Updated draft SSA was sent to the Counties and municipalities for ground- truthing. Looking for areas where DEP data was inaccurate or out of date (areas already built, have approvals, no longer forested, etc.).
- Process is on-going.

Inclusion of ESA25 in SSA

- WQMP rule allows ESA25 to be included in SSA based on the following circumstances:
 - Data correction
 - Habitat Suitability Determination
 - LOI demonstrating area is not wetlands
 - Already permitted
 - Site has necessary local approvals and all necessary DEP permits, including Treatment Works Approval
 - Promotes center-based planning
 - Area is designed to accommodate center based development and is an element of an endorsed plan approved by the State Planning Commission
 - Endorsed plan adequately addresses the protection of environmentally sensitive areas located outside of the SSA

Example

- Habitat Suitability Determination
- St. Paul's Abbey, Andover Twp., Sussex County
- Proposed affordable housing project
- Area identified as ESA25 due to Muckshaw Ponds NHPS and value as Rank 4 Forest and Grassland habitat
- Site reviewed by DLUR, ENSP, and ONLM
- Determined that forested area at southern end of site should remain outside of SSA due to its value as habitat for an endangered species.

