



The Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area Forest Stewardship Plan was developed by New Jersey Audubon, in partnership with the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife. Since 2011, New Jersey Audubon has conducted successful forest stewardship projects at Sparta Mountain. These projects have occurred on both New Jersey Audubon property and in the Wildlife Management Area while partnering with the Division of Fish and Wildlife. These efforts have produced healthier forest habitats and have provided resources for wildlife of conservation concern. Simultaneously, the projects have protected water resources and enhanced passive recreational opportunities for current and future New Jersey residents.

The original Forest Stewardship Plan was introduced in 2009. New Jersey Audubon recently updated and expanded upon the plan. The new revisions reaffirm our commitment to create a healthier forest habit for wildlife, while abiding by the strict guidelines provided by third-party certification along with agency regulations.

The update to the plan includes the following:

- Improve the health, structure, and diversity of the forests
- Create a young forest habitat for birds and other wildlife that are of conservation concern
- Enhance foraging, nesting, and roosting habitat for cavity dwelling birds and bats
- Suppress the spread of invasive species
- Create basking habitat for turtles
- Protect and maintain views and vistas
- Improve passive recreational opportunities
- Protect water resources
- Monitor and evaluate stewardship activities



New young forest habitat at Sparta Mountain

Why this project is so important?

The resident and migratory birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians that rely on young forest habitat are struggling to maintain themselves in places they were once commonly found. Throughout the Northeast, young forest habitat has diminished as forest land has been converted to development and abandoned farms and homesteads matured to woodlands. As a consequence, a wide variety of wildlife have experienced the loss of the scrubby, patchy, disturbed portions of the forest that they rely on for food and cover. These are not just the fragmented edges along utility rights-of-way or rural and suburban yard edges, but the needed gaps in intact forest.

It's not too late if we act now!

We have an opportunity to restore young forest patches, create vibrant habitat and help numerous birds and other wildlife recover, while protecting the water and esthetic resources for all to cherish at Sparta Mountain. Additional



Native Pink Lady's-Slipper Orchids at Sparta Mountain WMA

activities implemented under the guidance of the new Forest Stewardship Plan will make the forest more resilient from pests, disease and the changing climate. We are grateful for the support from the National Forest Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and generous donations by New Jersey Audubon supporters. It is because of this support that we have been able to chart the course for another decade of forest, wildlife and habitat stewardship. The stewardship of public land is essential to ensure wildlife that have called New Jersey home can continue to do so and for current and future residents of the State to enjoy the beauty and diversity of this forest.

The Stewardship Plan

The Sparta Mountain Forest Stewardship Plan proposes to create approximately 20 acres of young forest habitat per year for the next ten years. This relatively small area will be created annually out of a wildlife management area that totals more than 3,400 acres. In time, each forest patch will grow and mature, attracting a diversity of plants and animals.

The plan for the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management was developed under the guidance and review of third-party certification standards. This certification standard has been endorsed or supported by:

- Sierra Club
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Greenpeace
- The Nature Conservancy
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- National Wildlife Federation

The plan is subject to annual audits, and review, approval and oversight by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. The implementation of the plan requires adherence to a set of best management practices.