

Five Natural Areas Named to Register

Five natural areas have been officially recognized as sites of significant natural resource values by designation to the state's Register of Natural Areas. DEP Commissioner Hughey placed the sites on the register through Administrative Order No. 78 on October 31, 1984, upon recommendation by the state Natural Areas Council and DEP's Division of Parks and Forestry (P&F).

The sites, all maintained by P&F, are:

Bear Swamp, Downe and Commercial Townships (Cumberland County). This area encompasses 3,369 acres and is believed to contain the oldest and most well developed lowland hardwood forests in New Jersey. Also, it is a confirmed location for a number of threatened plant species and provides habitat for the state's only pair of nesting Bald Eagles.

Caven Point Cove, Jersey City (Hudson), encompasses 293 acres of one of the last relatively undisturbed shallow water flats of the



JOHNSONBURG NATURAL AREA. More than 15 threatened plant species, including ginseng and queen lady's slipper, grow in this wetlands area.

Hudson River Estuary. The area is a nesting and wintering site for a number of waterfowl species.

Hutcheson Memorial Forest, Franklin Township (Somerset), encompasses 182 acres, of which 65 acres are considered the best example of a mixed oak forest in northern New Jersey. It is one of the few primeval forests remaining in the eastern United States, protected from fires and disturbance for over 300 years.

Egg Harbor Ponds, Galloway/Hamilton/Mullica townships (Atlantic), encompasses approximately 200 acres of habitat which supports populations of several threatened plant species.

Johnsonburg, Frelinghuysen and Green townships (Warren and Sussex), encompasses approximately 850 acres which provide critical habitat for possibly the largest number of state threatened plant species, as compared with any other site of similar size in the state.

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the technical aspects of the plan—what must be removed, from where and how. The meeting was arranged to discuss these plans with officials of the communities, listen to their recommendations, and develop the final plan.”

The draft work plan discusses in technical detail the various activities that must be performed “on-site,” and preparations that must be made before actual work begins. This includes further testing at the sites and field investigations as well as schedule requirements, and it documents the necessary steps leading to the development of the final engineering design. When that information is compiled, reviewed and approved by DEP, contractors will be asked to bid on the actual removal phase of the project.

• **Dioxin**—DEP Commissioner Hughey on January 10 released details of the plan to remove dioxin contamination from offsite areas around 80 Lister Ave. in the Newark Ironbound section. Work was scheduled to begin on or about January 14

under terms of a December 21, 1984 administrative consent order signed by DEP and the Diamond Shamrock Chemicals Company. Diamond Shamrock posted a letter of credit for \$4 million to meet its cleanup obligations. Hughey noted that this brings a total of \$16 million committed by Diamond Shamrock to resolve the Ironbound area dioxin problem. (See *Environmental News*, May/June 1984)

“The cleanup of affected areas will be conducted by Diamond Shamrock, along with extensive sampling, and will be carried out according to standards approved by DEP, and under DEP's close supervision,” Hughey said. “The action will result in the cleanup of various offsite locations which are known to or are suspected of containing dioxin or other chemical contaminants.”

The cleanup stems from discovery in the spring of 1983 of high levels of dioxin on a property at 80 Lister Ave., where the Diamond Alkali Co., now Diamond Shamrock, once manufactured the defoliant Agent

Orange. Subsequent studies by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DEP revealed a number of locations where dioxin was found offsite, which may have resulted from the removal of tainted materials from 80 Lister Ave. or the migrations from there of the contaminated soil. The site at 80 Lister Ave. has been completely stabilized through the installation of a special covering of sheet plastic.

DEP Commissioner Hughey paid tribute to EPA for “the cooperation and support which has been readily forthcoming since discovery of dioxin at 80 Lister Ave. EPA has marshalled enormous technical resources to help bring us near this area cleanup.”

The following areas are scheduled for the sampling and cleanup activities:

MEDIAN STRIPS on various streets will receive earliest attention, with a goal of work completion in the spring of 1985. These strips will be dug up and resurfaced on portions

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