

Environmental Impact Assessment Outline

As part of the Green Acres funding proposal, each applicant must collect, evaluate, and present pertinent environmental information necessary to ascertain the suitability of the site for the activities proposed. Please review and consider the applicable Landscape Project maps and reports, developed by DEP Fish and Wildlife, during the preparation of the environmental assessment. Information can be found at the [Landscape Project](#) website or by emailing the [Fish and Wildlife](#).

OUTLINE

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

a. Briefly describe the project

The proposed project includes the trail development and landscaping of the “Bird Sanctuary” region of James J. Braddock Park in North Bergen, NJ. This is a County-owned public park which offers approximately 167 acres of parkland and recreational amenities including tennis courts, basketball courts, bocce ball courts, handball courts, ball fields, volleyball courts, and an exercise/cross country course. The Bird Sanctuary is located along the southeast edge of the park and is one of the only undeveloped areas of the park and as such is currently not accessible to the public. The area runs along a steep embankment and is one of the only remaining natural areas along the palisades remaining in Hudson County. As such, it is vital to maintain this area’s natural elements through proper park maintenance and trail development. The scope of work for this project includes vegetation and tree maintenance and removal, trail installation, erosion control and landscaping. The trail will be built with stabilized crushed stone. Native trees and plants will be prioritized in the revegetation efforts after trail construction.

b. State objectives of the project

The objective of this project is to improve park goers experience within Hudson County’s J.J. Braddock Park. The proposed facility will be designed to meet the demand for additional and improved nature trails within the park.

c. Fully describe multi-phase projects

Not applicable; this is not a multi-phase project.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Describe existing environmental features:

a. vegetation

There is a wide variety of tree, shrub, flower, and grass species that can be found in this area. A tree inventory of this area was completed in Summer 2024 by licensed ArborPro arborists. Many of the trees in Bird Sanctuary were reported to be in ‘fair,’ poor,’ ‘very poor,’ or ‘dead’ condition and a large portion of these trees were recorded as invasive or undesired species. Further, the inventory revealed that many of these trees are recommended for removal. Some of the common invasive or non-native plant species found in the project site include tree of heaven, black locust, Norway maple and cotton woods. The tree inventory does not include other vegetation types, though much of the area is covered by thick undergrowth and vines.

b. wildlife, including State and federal threatened and endangered species and critical habitats

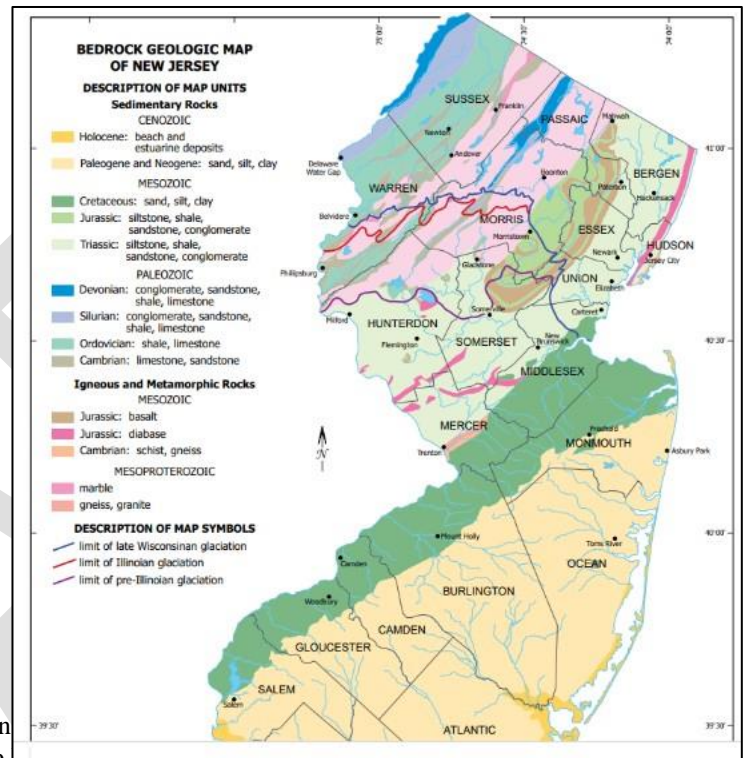
This project is intended to improve the existing bird habitat of the project site. Currently the site is occupied by a variety of bird species that can be heard from the adjacent sidewalk. Our inventory does not include wildlife species, however, according to iNaturalist, a crowdsourcing species identification system four species have been observed in the project site, namely DeKay’s brownsnake (*Storeria dekayi*), common eastern bumble bee (*Bombus*

impatiens), small-eyed sphinx (*Paonias myops*) and white tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

c. geology, topography, and soils

According to the Bedrock Geologic Map of New Jersey, provided by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and NJ Geological and Water Survey, JJ Braddock Park sits on top of a historic bedrock from the Mesozoic period. The Bird Sanctuary project site is primarily a steep slope within the Palisades formation. As shown on the map to the left it is a mixture of Diabase bedrock, shown in bright pink on the map, and Triassic rock, a sedimentary mix of siltstone, shale, sandstone, and conglomerate, shown in light green on the map. Today, the rock embankment is covered in overgrown vines, vegetation, and trees in need of maintenance.

The 2019 US Topography map shows the elevation of the project site ranges from about 190 feet above sea level to about 10 feet above sea level.



d. water resources/hydrology

There is no water body located directly on the 16-acre Woodcliff Lake located to the north east of the project site. The Bird Sanctuary area is located approximately 1100 feet from the lake to its closest location. The Bird Sanctuary's eastern edge is parallel to the coastline and is between 200 feet to 1040 feet from the shore of the Hudson River.

e. historic/archeological resources

The project site does not appear to be within a historic district or an archeologically important area.

f. transportation/access to site

Nearby bus stops are serviced by NJ Transit bus lines including #159, #156, #22, #84, #89, #128, and #23. The park also has various pedestrian pathways connecting it to nearby neighborhoods. There are multiple on-street parking spots throughout the park and several parking lots to accommodate visitors traveling by car.

g. adjacent land uses/description of the surrounding neighborhood

The surrounding area consists of dense urban development. The land use surrounding the park is primarily residential. Bergenline Avenue runs along the western border of the park and is a business corridor. The east side of the park is on Boulevard East, a major roadway in the area.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION

Impacts are defined as direct or indirect changes to the existing environment, whether beneficial or adverse, that are anticipated to result from the proposed action or related future actions and uses. Any off-site impacts, such as increased traffic on neighborhood roads or increased noise levels in surrounding areas, should be described. Whenever possible, environmental impacts should be quantified (i.e., number of trees to be removed, cubic yards of cut/fill, etc.).

a. Discuss all affected resources and the significance of each impact

The project site will be carefully designed to mitigate erosion issues in the area. Some vegetation including trees will be removed, as recommended by professional arborists. The project will include replanting the area with native trees and plants to help improve the existing bird habitat and stabilize the sloping terrain to reduce the risk of erosion.

b. Discuss short-term and long-term project impacts

The short-term impact is to make this space accessible to the public and to improve the existing habitat. Long-term, this area will be more easily maintained to ensure public access and bird habitat into the future.

c. Discuss anticipated increase in recreation and overall use of site over time

This will significantly increase recreation and overall use of the project site, since it is currently a noncurated space and closed to the public. The project is also likely to increase overall use of the JJ Braddock Park, expanding its use to include a bird watch nature path.

d. Identify adjacent environmental features that may be affected by the proposal

Run off from the project site may enter the Hudson River given the topography and proximity.

e. List any permits required for project and brief status (i.e., waterfront development)

The proposed project will require a soil conservation permit from the Hudson Essex Passaic Soil Conservation District. The County will apply for this permit following the completion of final design plans.

f. For development that would impact an undisturbed portion of the project site, the local government must submit a [Natural Heritage Data Request Form](#) to the DEP's Office of Natural Lands Management (form available at the website or by writing to Natural Heritage Program, PO Box 404, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0404). Please attach and discuss the results of the search.

Not applicable; this project does not impact any undisturbed areas.

g. Discuss if/how the project may be impacted by sea level rise and any related design considerations.

Due to the steep sloping topography of this site, it is unlikely to be impacted by sea level rise. The entire project site sits outside of the current FEMA NFIP designated flood zone, meaning it is also not expected to flood during storm events.

4. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

a. Identify alternate sites

Because this is a renovation of an existing park area, no alternative sites were considered.

b. Discuss alternate levels and types of development

The no-action alternative would result in the Bird Sanctuary area continuing to be unusable and closed to the public. This no-action alternative would allow for this unused park area to fall into further disrepair, with increasing concerns about erosion and invasive vegetation.

c. Compare environmental impacts of each alternative

The improvement project alternative will reduce the environmental impact caused by unchecked erosion, hazardous trees, and invasive vegetation. The construction phase may cause temporary noise pollution, and there may be a change to the landscaping, with the planting of new vegetation for aesthetic and habitat purposes, but no negative long-term environmental impacts are expected.

5. MITIGATING MEASURES

Describe the measures that will be undertaken to mitigate adverse impacts

The County of Hudson is dedicated to ensuring that its park facilities are diligently cared for and are clean, well-maintained, and welcoming to all visitors. In this spirit, the County resolves to take all proper measures during and after this renovation project to ensure that the surrounding environment is not adversely impacted. Additionally, the County is committed to continued compliance with any and all rules and regulations promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and/or any other regulatory agencies and to retain all necessary permits as required by these agencies.

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE (FOR RESTORATION/ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS)

a. Identify specific and measurable on-the-ground outcomes; and

The existing vegetation in the area will be restored to a native wooded area with appropriate erosion controls in place to ensure long term stabilization of the steep terrain.

b. Briefly describe the applicant's monitoring plan, including long-term maintenance of the project site. The applicant must monitor the project site for a minimum of three years to ensure project viability and success. For example, if the project includes tree planting, the applicant must be able to replace any lost trees or take other measures to achieve the desired outcome. Please note that monitoring expenses are not an eligible cost.

All long-term maintenance will be conducted by the dedicated park forestry and facilities maintenance teams. This includes watering newly planted trees, and ensuring our tree inventory remains up to date by recording any tree planting, maintenance and/or removals.

7. AUTHORS(S) AND QUALIFICATIONS

Preparation by an environmental professional recommended but not required

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