



Public Utilization & Appreciation

Objective: Provide access and increase public awareness of the Park System's natural resources.

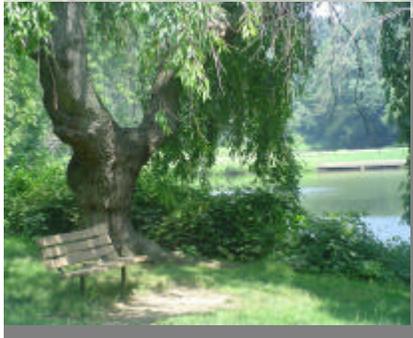


Natural Resources Management

Strategies:

Develop and maintain trails.

Prepare trail plans, develop, maintain, and inspect trail facilities, develop trail information, including signs, site maps, brochures and web site information



Distribute public information.

Write articles, presentations, brochures, and websites about native habitats and species, forest communities, specimen trees, and seasonal items of interest for the public to enjoy.

Natural resources contribute significantly to the beauty, habitat and recreation values of the parks and are the fundamental core of the Park System upon which many facilities are built and programs are founded.

The Monmouth County Park System is committed to managing these resources to ensure their health and sustainability.





Field Management

Objective: Maintain, preserve, and maximize the existing beauty, wildlife habitat, and landscape value of all non-forested land within parks, thus contributing to species richness and recovery and enhancing open space values in the County.

Strategies:



Prepare annual management plans.

Detail objectives, conditions and schedule for actions to achieve goals. 3,226 acres in 28 park areas are managed as fields.

Provide habitat for wildlife and plants.

Establish areas for nature study and appreciation, protect threatened and endangered species habitats, and preserve the open space landscape. 1,372 acres are managed as natural areas.



Reduce maintenance costs. Designate areas that can be allowed to grow with little negative effects; help define and buffer activity areas. 569 acres are managed as low mow.



Forest Health

Objective: Identify forest resources, monitor conditions, and prepare preservation and enhancement strategies. Collaborate with Regional programs to preserve and enhance species richness and species habitat and recovery.

Strategies:



Inventory forest resources. Evaluate and classify forest types within the parks and identify threats to these resources. Over 2,250 acres of forests in 6 parks are currently being evaluated for species richness and floristic quality.

Monitor conditions. Track the response of forest resources to removing deer herbivory. Study 7 deer exclosures with 8 plots within the 10-meter square fenced exclosure and 8 comparative plots outside.



Catalogue species richness.

Conduct spring ephemeral surveys in key areas. Over 2-dozen species have been identified and one endangered orchid species located. Monitor an existing population of Lady Slipper orchids.



Park Restoration & Enhancement

Objective: Restore natural processes by planting native plants, reducing negative impacts and encouraging Best Management Practices wherever possible.

Strategies:



Plant pond shorelines. Protect water quality and improve appearance. Projects have been completed at Holmdel Park, Hominy Hill, Charleston Springs and Pine Brook golf courses, and are planned for Shark River Park.

Native plant appreciation. Plantings with interpretive elements are available at Manasquan Reservoir and Huber Woods Environmental Centers.



Restore floodplains. Allow streams to overflow their banks. A project planned for Turkey Swamp Park will re-grade an entrenched stream to restore natural floodplain processes to the Manasquan River.



Invasive Species Management

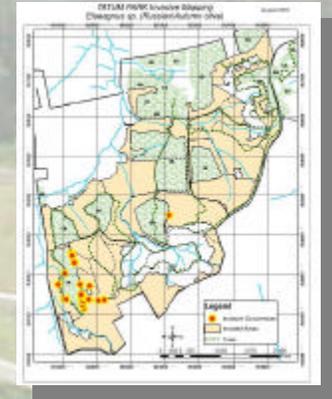
Objective: Identify the threat invasive species have on the open space resource and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate their impact.

Strategies:



Educate staff and public. Provide new ranger training, an identification guide, brochures and other outreach materials. Participate in regional interagency workshops.

Identify and map invasive species. Target efforts on specific species or the leading edge of invasion.



Remove and control invasives. Use both staff and volunteers, depending on treatment methods. Evaluate and refine control methods.



Park Resource Inventories

Objective: Evaluate natural resources within parks and identify short- and long-term management needs to preserve these assets.

Strategies:



Map specimen and estate trees.

GIS-based inventories have been used to map the Thompson Park estate, public areas of Holmdel Park, Turkey Swamp campground, and other sites. Species such as American chestnut are mapped when found in forests.



Evaluate aquatic resources.

Monitor conditions of park lakes, ponds, and streams. Conduct water quality tests on several public features. Future work will characterize water depth and biological components.



Species Specific Management

Objective: Achieve specific goals in the management of species, both to establish and increase desirable species and to reduce populations that are having negative impacts.

Strategies:

Protect threatened and endangered species.

Management plans have been implemented at Seven Presidents Park for Piping Plover, Least Tern, Sea-beach amaranth, and Sea-beach knotweed.

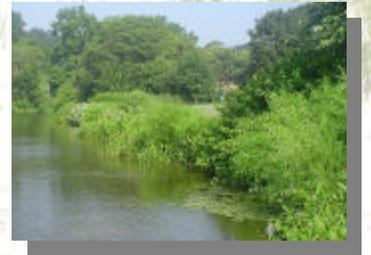


Preserve field-nesting birds.

Management plans include constructing nest boxes, developing nest habitats by removing woody and invasive species, and seeding activities.

Manage Canada goose populations.

Use habitat modification projects, harassment, and reproductive controls that conform to regulatory requirements.



Limit deer populations. Densities should not compromise other resource goals. Conduct aerial counts, ground spotlight counts, and enclosure studies.