



**STATE OF DELAWARE**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
& ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL  
DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

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**State Natural Heritage Site Determination**

**February 5, 2009**

The following describes criteria used by the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program ("NHESP") to determine what constitutes a State Natural Heritage Site (SNHS) as referenced in *General Condition 19. Designated Critical Resource Waters* of the Nationwide Permit Program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Determination of SNHS are made on a parcel basis by the NHESP. Applicants are required to provide specific project details to assist in determining whether there will be impacts to areas identified as SNHS. These details should include, at minimum, a brief project description and a map depicting the limits of disturbance.

Data layers maintained by the NHESP will be used to determine whether a site meets the criteria listed below. It should also be noted that not all areas of the State have been surveyed for rare species or natural communities. DNREC reserves the right to determine whether an on-site survey is needed to confirm SNHS designation. The NHESP uses aerial photography, wetlands and soils data layers to determine whether a site visit is warranted.

**SNHS include:**

- Habitat for State listed endangered species as identified in the DNREC Administrative Code of Regulations Title 7 DNREC, 3901 Wildlife, 16.0 Endangered Species.
- Habitat for rare plants and animals, where "rare" means species ranked S1 or S2 as defined by NatureServe methodology<sup>1</sup>. This includes areas that support breeding, feeding and resting or other vital support functions.
- Rare or unique ecological communities or best examples of common communities<sup>2</sup> as determined by the Division's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

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<sup>1</sup> NatureServe. 2002. Element Occurrence Data Standard. In cooperation with the Network of Natural Heritage Programs and Conservation Data Centers. (Appendix E. Element Lists and Ranking, page 186).  
<http://www.natureserve.org/prodServices/eodata.jsp>

<sup>2</sup> The NHESP has developed a classification of Delaware's vegetation communities called the *Guide to Delaware Vegetation Communities*. The Guide and associated maps follow the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) as developed by NatureServe. The Guide and accompanying data layers are continually being updated as field surveys continue throughout the state.