



Greenspaces

Greenspaces include large natural areas, working farms, parks, and protected public and private lands, which combine to create the continuous landscapes of forests, fields, and open countryside necessary for food production, recreation, water protection, scenic enjoyment, and a wide diversity of wildlife habitats. The overall greenspaces categories are represented on the previous [Countywide Map](#) and depicted in much more detail on the individual municipal maps.

The **Biodiversity Block Map** to the left was also prepared to understand broad patterns of natural habitats, after discussions about criteria with scientists at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. First, impact zones on wildlife from developed areas, individual houses, and road corridors were mapped in black. Roads over 25 vehicles per hour pose significant barriers to wildlife movement. Biodiversity Blocks in various shades of green are the remaining continuous areas of natural and agricultural land over 1,000 acres, as required for most area-sensitive species. The results show that the County maintains substantial sections suitable for natural habitats and worthy of protection.

Every community survey of resident opinions in Dutchess County has shown very strong support for preserving natural features, farmland, and other rural characteristics of the countryside. However, most local plan recommendations employ general policy statements, without firm implementation measures, or rely on a piecemeal, parcel-by-parcel approach that just reacts to individual development proposals. The Centers and Greenspaces Guide encourages municipalities as part of their public comprehensive plan process to map their essential greenspaces, work to enact a variety of long-term conservation measures, and identify a priority list for potentially preserving important properties. Some communities like Red Hook designate farmland the highest priority for protection, while others might value specific watersheds, endangered species areas, ridgeline corridors, historic sites, scenic views, or large biodiversity blocks.

