

## **Poestenkill Natural Resources Inventory**

### **Appendix I: Ecological Site Descriptions**

This appendix contains individual descriptions of the sites with important ecosystem complexes, exemplary natural communities, rare plant concentration areas, and important animal habitat listed in Sections 11.4.1, 10.2, 11.4.3, and 11.3, respectively. These sites are displayed on Maps 16A and 16B.

Many sites are important ecosystem complexes; see Section 11.4.1 for definitions of the different ecosystem complex types. Each ecosystem complex is made up of one or more ecosystem types as described in the overview section of each site description. Each ecosystem type in turn is made up of natural community types. An ecosystem complex may also support rare plant concentration areas and important animal habitats, and be part of an aquatic network and/or a large forest block.

## **Barberville Gorge Forest**

Mature forest ecosystem complex, **100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

Barberville Gorge Forest represents one of 15 putative old-growth or incipient old-growth patches known and mapped from the county as of 2017. Mature forest is very limited in extent in Rensselaer County due to the widespread logging history in the region, thus it is tracked as a restricted ecosystem complex type. The patch of mature forest at this site consists of upland forest, possibly only one community type, Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest, a conifer to mixed forest type. The Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest here is part of the larger occurrence of this community type on the Rensselaer Plateau, which is designated as state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program. Field observations at this site indicate many forest-grown trees of large girth and the initial development of large standing dead and large coarse woody debris layers.

### Landscape Context

The mature forest patch is part of (or at the edge) of the larger Poesten Kill Barberville ecosystem complex (see separate site description) and embedded within the relatively large and intact Davitt Pond Forest Block.

### Ecological Integrity

In very good condition and progressively undergoing natural recovery to a more mature state.

### Conservation Status

The site is a nature preserve held by a non-profit conservation organization.

## **Bernie Pond Brook**

**40%** in Poestenkill, 60% in Brunswick and Grafton

### Overview

Bernie Pond and three adjoining stretches of Bernie Pond Brook are components of the Bernie Pond Outlet Important Aquatic Network.

### Important Animal Habitat

Bernie Pond Brook is considered a county-important animal habitat due to its classification as trout spawning habitat by NYSDEC.

## **Coopers Pond Complex**

Mineral soil wetland ecosystem complex, **100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

The Coopers Pond Complex consists of a small central wetland, Pine Bowl Road Bog, apparently a peatland, in close proximity to three small ponds and multiple associated mineral soil wetlands, all aggregated into one ecosystem complex. Although the embedded Pine Bowl Road Bog ecosystem identity is uncertain, it is treated as a peatland, not a mineral soil wetland, based on the CONUS land cover datalayer classification, and supported by a rapid casual air photo interpretation. This single peatland patch is classified (NWI datalayer) as a forested/shrub wetland with a "peat modifier", and is suspected to be Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket community type. The larger Cooper Ponds Complex ecosystem complex type, the presence of a peatland, and the potential inclusion of the associated ponds within this complex need field confirmation. The expanded site contains three ponds of 6 acres (Coopers Pond), 6 acres, and 2 acres.

### Regional Importance

This complex is important due to its suspected unusual peatland type for the Taconic Foothills region (i.e., off the Rensselaer Plateau). It is one of only four CONUS datalayer peatland patches in the county outside of the Rensselaer Plateau, and the 19th largest peatland patch in the county.

### Landscape Context

Although the surrounding landscape, Coopers Pond Forest Block is essentially fragmented forest, dissected by residential structures and associated clearings, it is moderately large and somewhat intact for the portion of the county outside of the Rensselaer Plateau; this forest block serves as a good natural landscape for large wetland examples in good to fair condition.

### Ecological Integrity

2017: apparently in good condition from air photos; 2019: expanded site delineation includes some bisecting dirt roads and small altered wetland segments.

### Conservation Status.

In private ownership, and four parcels owned by the Town of Poestenkill.

## **Davitt Pond**

**100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

A moderate-sized lake complex, not diverse enough to warrant regional importance as an ecosystem complex, but with multiple known rare plants, thus important as a rare plant concentration area. Serves as a good local example of a lake complex, especially within the context of the Central Rensselaer Plateau. It qualifies as an acidic and dimictic lake with typical associated natural community types such as Inland Non-Calcareous Lakeshore. County-important community examples include the pond, which is a county-exemplary example of Oligotrophic Dimictic Lake; and the lakeshore, an Inland Non-Calcareous Lakeshore. Although no fisheries information was found, local anglers report taking small mouth bass, rock bass, perch, pickerel, sunfish, crappie, bullhead and eel. Thus the site is considered a fish concentration area. Snapping turtles and eastern painted turtles are also known from the lake. The site is currently limited to the lake and its immediate shoreline. Nearby uplands support more common plant species.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The lake complex supports three County-rare aquatic plants characteristic of the littoral zone of lakes, and three county-rare plants on the lakeshore. The rarest species are Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) and Sharp-Scaled Mannagrass (*Glyceria acutiflora*).

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the lake complex is essentially unfragmented forest within a large roadless block, and much larger forest landscape.

### Ecological Integrity

In very good condition, with only minor disturbances, the largest of which is a small cultural/artificial beach made from imported sand.

### Conservation Status

Owned by Boy Scouts organization and private lakeshore residents.

## **Dustin Swamp Complex**

Peatland ecosystem complex, **55%** in Poestenkill, 45% in Grafton

### Overview

Dustin Swamp Complex is a peatland complex situated in a headwater basin. Peatland patches have developed along Marsh Headwater Stream within the basin. Although the site contains small streams, the complex is dominated by peatland features and is most strongly influenced by peatland characteristics, thus it is not treated as a riparian wetland complex. Dustin Swamp Complex contains several patches of the following ecosystem types: acidic open peatland, acidic forested lowlands, and acidic forested peatland/acidic boreal swamp. It includes Dustin Swamp proper and several additional undisturbed, hydrologically-linked peatlands and boreal swamps that flow into the nearby Poesten Kill. Individual wetlands vary from an open peatland complex, a forested peatland complex, and a peatland complex with a mosaic of open and forested patches.

### Regional Importance

The site was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes due to its large wetland size and excellent quality/condition, as confirmed from numerous field studies. It is one of 12 county-important acidic peatlands and boreal swamps of the Rensselaer Plateau, and one of the 12 largest acidic riparian wetlands in the county. The site fifth largest single peatland patch in the county, per the CONUS land cover datalayer.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The acidic open peatland is dominated by Inland Poor Fen, Dwarf Shrub Bog, Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog, Sedge Meadow, Shallow Emergent Marsh, and Marsh Headwater Stream, with other characteristic natural communities in this ecosystem including various wetlands, small lakes, and small stream types. The acidic boreal swamp is dominated by Spruce-Fir Swamp (several small patches), with Balsam Flats and Hemlock-Hardwood Swamp. The acidic forested lowlands is dominated by Spruce Flats, with other characteristic natural communities in this ecosystem including many lowland and boreal forest types, plus forested to shrub wetland types. The site is important especially for its relatively large and intact examples of boreal wetland community types: Balsam Flats, Dwarf Shrub Bog, Inland Poor Fen, Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog, and Spruce-Fir Swamp, as well as good examples of other more common types: Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket, Sedge Meadow, and Shallow Emergent Marsh. Inland Poor Fen is indicative and characteristic of this complex type and is a dominant feature in at least one patch of the complex. The Inland Poor Fen, Dwarf Shrub Bog, Spruce-Fir Swamp, and Sedge Meadow are all county-exemplary occurrences for their community type, and the Sedge Meadow is designated state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program.

### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The site supports seven county-rare plants, including Bog Rosemary (*Andromeda glaucophylla*) and Bog Laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*).

This site is considered a county-important animal habitat, with a high diversity of dragonflies and damselflies in high numbers documented there, including the state-rare Forcipate Emerald (*Somatochlora forcipata*). Great Blue Herons have nested at Dustin Swamp in the past, and may return in the future.

### Landscape Context

The site is contained within the broader Central Rensselaer Plateau Forest, mostly in the Spruce-Fir Core of the plateau. It is situated within the Dyken Pond Forest Block (Towns of Berlin, Grafton, and Poestenkill), where it is surrounded mostly by recovering forest.

### Ecological Integrity

In very good condition, with very few unnatural disturbances noted.

### Conservation Status.

The site is partially on county conservation land (Dyken Pond Environmental Center), apparently intended as forever-wild land, and partially on private land, apparently used primarily as working forest.

## **East Poestenkill Flats**

Riparian ecosystem complex, **100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

East Poestenkill Flats is a small riparian wetland complex situated in a flat valley around the Upper Poesten Kill in East Poestenkill. It is situated along the mainstem of the Poesten Kill Aquatic Network, the largest network of the Rensselaer Plateau and one of several important networks on the plateau. It contains open riparian wetland ecosystem patches, representing portions of a relatively intact headwater stream with associated riverside terraces.

### Regional Importance

The site was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes, due to its large wetland size and high quality/good condition, as confirmed from roadside observations and limited field studies. It is one of 12 important riparian complexes of the Rensselaer Plateau, and one of the five largest basin wetlands in the county (all over 200 acres).

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The open riparian wetland ecosystem is very diverse, dominated by Rocky Headwater Stream, Floodplain Forest, and Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest, with several other characteristic associated riparian communities, mostly wetland types. Floodplain Forest is indicative and characteristic of this complex type and is a dominant feature at the site, reflecting a strong hydrological influence from the adjacent large headwater stream (a mosaic of Rocky Headwater Stream and Marsh Headwater Stream).

Important and county-exemplary examples of two natural community types, Rocky Headwater Stream and Floodplain Forest, occur at the site.

### Important Animal Habitat

The site includes part of the Upper Poesten Kill, which is considered a county-important animal habitat, with concentrations of riverine fish (including longnose dace, tessellated darter, creek chub, and eastern blacknose dace) and of aquatic macroinvertebrates indicative of good water quality (including mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies). The Upper Poesten Kill is classified as trout spawning habitat by NYSDEC.

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the complex is partially fragmented forest within large roadless blocks, and within a much larger forest landscape.

### Ecological Integrity

In moderately good condition, but with some non-native invasive species spreading and some hydrological alterations.

### Conservation Status

The site is in private ownership.



## **Hicks Pond**

**100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

A small lake complex, not large and diverse enough to warrant regional importance as an ecosystem complex, but with multiple known rare plants, thus important as a rare plant concentration area. The site serves as a good local example of a lake complex, especially within the context of the Poesten Kill Headwaters Aquatic Network and Central Rensselaer Plateau. It qualifies as an acidic and monomictic lake with typical associated natural community types such as Inland Non-Calcareous Lakeshore, Deep Emergent Marsh, Shallow Emergent Marsh, and Shrub Swamp, all supporting aquatic and lakeshore species. A narrow zone of pine-dominated dry, sandy woods bordering the southeast side of the lake represents a good regional example of the lakeshore variant of Pine-Northern Hardwood Forest, a boreal forest type. County-important community examples within this site include the lake, which is a moderately large (23-acre), county-exemplary Oligotrophic Pond; a small Inland Poor Fen; the lakeshore, a moderately small Inland Non-Calcareous Lakeshore; and the dry forest, a small Pine-Northern Hardwood Forest. Other wetland types associated with this site include Hemlock-Hardwood Swamp. Fisheries information (Adirondack Lake Survey) suggests that the lake supports both a good diversity of fish species and abundance of fish. The site is currently limited to the lake, bordering wetlands, and the adjacent dry sandy-soil pine co-dominated forest southeast of the lake. Upland areas outside of this forest support more common plant species.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The lake complex has records of one county-rare aquatic plant characteristic of the littoral zone of lakes and two county-rare plants of dry, sandy-soil forests. There are also two historical records of rare aquatic plants from 1894, Slender Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum tenellum*) and Water Lobelia (*Lobelia dortmanna*); for the latter, Hicks Pond would be the only location in the county if it still occurs here. The current presence of these two species is unknown, but probably depends on the water quality changes since 1894.

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the lake complex is essentially unfragmented forest within a large roadless block and a much larger regional forest landscape. The site also forms a small headwater part of the Poesten Kill Headwaters Aquatic Network.

### Ecological Integrity

Apparently in very good condition.

### Conservation Status

In private ownership.

## **Hosford Pond Bog**

Peatland ecosystem complex, **50%** in Poestenkill, 50% in Grafton

### Overview

Hosford Pond Bog Complex is a peatland complex situated in a kettlehole basin. The core of the site, Hosford Pond Bog (proper), represents an undisturbed open peatland complex of special regional significance, associated with surrounding areas of spruce and fir. Also included in this site concept is Madonna Lake Road Swamp, an undisturbed peatland complex with a mosaic of open and woodland patches, which drains across Madonna Lake Road south into Hosford Pond Bog (proper). The larger site contains both acidic open peatland and acidic forested lowlands ecosystem types, and has many boreal species. The site was a favorite biological study site for local colleges in the 1970s to 1980s.

### Regional Importance

The site was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes, due to its large wetland size and excellent quality/condition, as confirmed from numerous field studies. It is one of 12 important acidic peatlands and boreal swamps of the Rensselaer Plateau; and contains the 8th, 14th, and 24th largest peatland patches in the county, per the CONUS land cover data.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The acidic open peatland is dominated by Bog Lake, Inland Poor Fen, Dwarf Shrub Bog, Sedge Meadow, and Marsh Headwater Stream, with other characteristic natural communities in this ecosystem including various wetland types. The acidic forested lowlands is dominated by Hemlock-Hardwood Swamp, Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest, and Intermittent Stream. The Dwarf Shrub Bog example at the site is typical of the community type and represents a large occurrence for the county. Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket occurs within the Madonna Lake Road Swamp subsite and is represented by a small example. The site is important especially for its Bog Lake, fringed by wide open peatlands. Bog Lake is indicative and characteristic of this complex type and is the dominant feature at the site, and is an exemplary occurrence for this community type in the county. The Bog Lake and Inland Poor Fen are designated as state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program.

### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

Hosford Pond Bog supports 17 county-rare plants, one of the greatest concentrations of county-rare plants on the entire Rensselaer Plateau (and all are in the Poestenkill portion of the ecosystem complex). Among the rarer species are Water Clubrush (*Scirpus subterminalis*), Northern Yellow-Eyed Grass (*Xyris montana*), and the only known location in the Rensselaer County for Bog Rush (*Cladium mariscoides*).

This site is considered a county-important animal habitat, with concentrations of several lake fish species (including pickerel, yellow perch, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, and golden shiner) and of several dragonfly and damselfly species. Freshwater sponges have been observed here.

### Landscape Context

The site is contained within the broader Central Rensselaer Plateau Forest and is surrounded by the typical Hemlock-Beech Forest of the plateau. It is located mostly within the relatively large and intact Dyken Pond Forest Block.

Ecological Integrity

The site is generally in very good condition. A small Reedgrass (*Phragmites*) Marsh has become established as a disturbance within this ecosystem.

Conservation Status

The site is entirely private land and its natural features are apparently relatively undisturbed, but the site is vulnerable to future subdivision and residential development.

## **Legenbauer Road Wetlands**

**100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

A small peatland ecosystem complex at the Poestenkill Community Forest, commonly known as "Big Beaver Bog", not large enough to warrant regional importance as an ecosystem complex, but with multiple known rare plants, thus important as a rare plant concentration area. Serves as a good local example of a peatland complex, especially within the context of the Poesten Kill Headwaters Aquatic Network. It qualifies as an acidic (boreal) peatland with typical associated natural community types such as Dwarf Shrub Bog. County-important community examples include 1) two patches of Sedge Meadow, one of which forms the core of the Big Beaver Bog complex on the tract, and 2) a series of five Oligotrophic Pond patches, two of which occur within Big Beaver Bog on the tract. Community examples of suspected more local significance include a patch of Dwarf Shrub Bog, also within the Big Beaver Bog complex. Other wetland types associated with this concentration area include Hemlock-Hardwood Swamp, a forested mineral soil type represented by one isolated patch. The site contains two associated wetlands known to date to contain multiple rare plants. No rare plants are known in Little Beaver Bog, but if any are there, the site might be expanded to include that area; nearby uplands with moderately rare plants (on sandy soils) are currently excluded from the site.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The wetland complex supports seven county-rare plants characteristic of peatlands including Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Pale Coralroot (*Corallorhiza trifida*), Bog Clubmoss (*Lycopodiella inundata*), and Common Down Liverwort (*Trichocolea tomentella*). Some of the rare species are indicative of open peatlands, others are suggestive of slightly enriched forested wetland conditions (in the Hemlock-Hardwood Swamp) and acidic forested wetland conditions (in the Spruce-Fir Swamp).

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the wetland complex is essentially unfragmented forest within a large forest-interior area, larger roadless block, and much larger forest landscape.

### Ecological Integrity

Only minor human disturbances were noted in association with the peatland including a small confined population of the invasive wetland plant common reedgrass (*Phragmites*).

### Conservation Status

Well protected as a community forest owned by a regional conservation organization but with surrounding uplands reportedly partly maintained as working forest.

## **Moules Lake**

Peatland ecosystem complex, **50%** in Poestenkill, 50% in North Greenbush

### Overview

The Moules Lake peatland complex is one of the largest of only a few peatlands in the Rensselaer County outside of the Rensselaer Plateau. The peatland complex consists of one patch with a central pond (Bog Lake community type), another patch with a peatland basin, and another patch with an open mineral soil wetland, all roughly surrounded by a forested wetland zone. It represents a locally unusual circumneutral wetland complex, uncommon in the Taconic Foothills region (i.e., outside of the Rensselaer Plateau).

### Regional Importance

The importance of the Moules Lake complex is due to its large wetland size and high quality/good condition, as confirmed from multiple field studies. It is one of 26 important peatland complexes in the county, and one of nine important circumneutral peatlands in the county.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The Bog Lake at this site is indicative and characteristic of peatlands and dominant within this complex, and is an exemplary occurrence for the county.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The peatland complex supports 19 county-rare plants characteristic of circumneutral bogs/fens including trees, shrubs, herbs, graminoids, aquatic macrophytes, and ferns. Among the rarer species are Butternut (*Juglans cineria*), Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Yellow Bartonian (*Bartonia virginica*), and New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*).

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the peatland complex is a mix of residential land and fragmented forest, with forest concentrated as buffer around wetlands.

### Ecological Integrity

Moderately good condition, especially for the Taconic Foothills region (i.e., outside of the Rensselaer Plateau).

### Conservation Status

Apparently very vulnerable to expanding development, especially in the North Greenbush part of the site and especially since the 1980's. Adjacent to Rensselaer County's Vanderheyden Hall.

## **Newfoundland Creek Headwaters**

Mineral soil wetland ecosystem complex, **90%** in Poestenkill, 10% in Sand Lake

### Overview

The Newfoundland Creek Headwaters is a mineral soil basin wetland complex composed of eight patches. It has a central stream system with surrounding open to forested wetlands. The complex is situated on acidic to circumneutral substrate in a riparian setting along a small headwater stream. Although it contains a central stream system, the complex is dominated by permanently-inundated wetland features with little or no floodplain features, thus it is not treated as a riparian complex. Natural communities include Deep Emergent Marsh, Shallow Emergent Marsh, Shrub Swamp, and Red Maple-Hardwood Swamp.

### Regional Importance

The site is important due to its relatively large wetland size and relatively high quality/good condition, as confirmed from partial field studies. It includes the 12th and 17th largest wetland complexes and the 12th largest single wetland patch in the county, per the CONUS land cover datalayer.

### Important Animal Habitat

Newfoundland Creek is classified as a trout spawning stream by NYSDEC.

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the complex is partially fragmented forest within several moderate-sized roadless blocks, some at the edge of a much larger forest landscape.

### Ecological Integrity

In good condition, with some non-native species at low abundance including a small patch of Reedgrass (*Phragmites*) Marsh.

### Conservation Status

The site is entirely private; one tract has a conservation easement with a non-profit conservation organization.

## Poesten Kill Barberville

Riparian ecosystem complex, **100%** in Poestenkill

### Overview

Poesten Kill Barberville is a large river riparian complex situated in the gorge upstream and downstream of Barberville Falls, at the transition between the Upper Poesten Kill (a relatively intact headwater stream) and the Poesten Kill Midreach. It is situated along the mainstem of the Poesten Kill Aquatic Network, the largest network of the Rensselaer Plateau and one of several important networks on the plateau. It extends along the Poesten Kill from just upstream of the hamlet of Barberville west to the base of the plateau escarpment near the town center of Poestenkill. In this stretch, the Poesten Kill cuts through the escarpment, leaving much exposed rock along the stream channel and banks, including Barberville Falls, the largest waterfall in Rensselaer County. The Poesten Kill Barberville ecosystem complex contains patches of very diverse open riparian wetland ecosystem, dominated by Confined River, Floodplain Forest, and Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest.

### Regional Importance

Poesten Kill Barberville was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes, due to its large size and high quality/good condition, as confirmed from many field studies. The site is one of 12 important riparian complexes of the Rensselaer Plateau, and one of two moderate-sized circumneutral confined river gorges in the county.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

Associated with Poesten Kill are relatively intact adjacent riparian communities and a relatively intact but rather narrow buffer of rich upland forests. Associated riparian communities lining the stream include Floodplain Forest, Riverside Sand/Gravel Bar, Cobble Shore, and Shoreline Outcrop, most occurring as narrow strips within the stream channel or along the banks of the stream. These riparian communities support a high diversity of native plant species that are adapted to the natural disturbance patterns of flooding and scouring and thus not found in typical upland forested communities of the county. The lower slopes of the valley bordering the stream are covered with rich forest types (mostly Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest). These forests support a high diversity of calciphilic native plant species, many of which are spring ephemerals. Floodplain Forest is scattered in patches along the course of the Poesten Kill. The Poesten Kill in this stretch is part of the exemplary occurrence of the Confined River community type in the county, and the only example of Confined River on the Rensselaer Plateau. It likely serves as a habitat for common native species of fish, aquatic macroinvertebrates, and freshwater algae of the county.

### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The site has four county-rare plants, including Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*), among the rarest of plants on the Rensselaer Plateau; and naturally occurring Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*).

The site includes part of the Upper Poesten Kill, which is considered a county-important animal habitat, with concentrations of riverine fish (including longnose dace, tessellated darter, creek chub, and eastern blacknose dace) and of aquatic macroinvertebrates indicative of good water

quality (including mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies). The Upper Poesten Kill is classified as trout spawning stream by NYSDEC.

#### Landscape Context

The site is embedded within the moderately large and relatively intact Davitt Pond Forest Block at the uppermost reaches of the Poesten Kill Midreach Corridor, which extends downstream from the Town of Poestenkill into the Town of Brunswick off the Rensselaer Plateau. The stretch of the Poesten Kill at this site is fed upstream by the Upper Poesten Kill, flowing through an intact forest landscape and thus with high water quality.

#### Ecological Integrity

The river corridor, including the stream and uplands, is in very good condition.

#### Conservation Status

The site is entirely private, and includes a nature preserve held by a non-profit conservation organization and an easement property held by another conservation organization.



## Poesten Kill Bott Lane

1% in Poestenkill, 99% in Brunswick

### Overview

A moderate-sized riparian complex, not diverse enough to warrant regional importance as an ecosystem complex, but with multiple known rare plants, thus important as a rare plant concentration area. Serves as a good local example of a riparian complex, especially within the context of the Poesten Kill Midreach Aquatic Network and the Middle Poesten Kill. The larger Middle Poesten Kill site contains a moderately large river with silty to gravelly substrate, and a wide, flat associated riparian buffer. The local Poesten Kill Bott Lane site includes an undeveloped river floodplain and calcareous to circumneutral soils typical of the middle to lower segments of the Poesten Kill Valley. The site qualifies as a circumneutral variant of a riparian complex, with typical associated natural community types such as Floodplain Forest and Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest on river terraces plus rich soil and a few riparian species. Besides the large central river, a Confined River community type, county-important community examples include moderately small examples of Floodplain Forest and Backwater Slough. The bordering uplands are dominated by Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest and narrow strips of Riverside Sand/Gravel Bar line the stream. Although the Poesten Kill bisects the site, the site concept is intended to be focused on riparian wetlands, upland terraces, and lower slopes of the river valley adjacent to the Poesten Kill. The site consists of only one riparian patch known to date to contain multiple rare plants. Nearby riparian patches upstream and downstream have not been surveyed, but if any rare species occur there, the site might be expanded to include those areas. The river and especially uplands outside of the immediate river corridor apparently support more common and non-native species.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The riparian complex supports seven county-rare plants characteristic of rich river terraces, including Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), Long-Stalked Sedge (*Carex pedunculata*), and Cut-Leaf Toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*).

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the riparian complex is a mix of agricultural land and heavily fragmented forests, with forests concentrated along the river corridor. The site is also integrally situated within the Poesten Kill Midreach Aquatic Network.

### Ecological Integrity

Moderately good local condition, especially for the Taconic Foothills region (i.e., outside the Rensselaer Plateau).

### Conservation Status

In private ownership, with protection commitment by one landowner.

## **Poesten Kill Headwaters**

Peatland ecosystem complex, **5%** in Poestenkill, 95% in Berlin

### Overview

The Poesten Kill Headwaters Complex is a very large peatland complex situated in a high-level headwater basin. It is located primarily in Berlin, with only a small portion in the Town of Poestenkill that includes Bucks Corner Swamp and a small bog along Plank Road at the Poestenkill/Berlin town line. The following description is for the site as a whole, with most features located in Berlin. The Poesten Kill Headwaters complex contains acidic open peatland, acidic forested lowlands, and acidic forested peatland/acidic boreal swamp ecosystem types. Peatland patches have developed along small Marsh Headwater Streams within the basin. Although it contains small streams, the complex is dominated by peatland features and is most strongly influenced by peatland characteristics, thus it is not treated as a riparian wetland complex. The Poesten Kill Headwaters complex is a flatter area with slower river flow than the Poesten Kill Headwaters Outlet complex just downstream to the west. Poesten Kill Headwaters is important especially for its concentration of several county-exemplary boreal wetland and forest community types, including the largest spruce-fir complex in the county. The site supports scattered patches of moderate-sized open peatland surrounded by abundant areas of red spruce-dominated forest communities. The broad area of moist upland forests that surround the open and forested wetlands represents the most pronounced area of "boreal flats" on the plateau and in the county.

Regional Importance. The site was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes due to its very large wetland size and excellent quality/condition, as confirmed from many field studies. It contains the largest peatland in the Rensselaer County, and is one of 12 county-important acidic peatlands/boreal swamps of the Rensselaer Plateau.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The acidic open peatland is dominated by Inland Poor Fen, Dwarf Shrub Bog, Sedge Meadow, Shallow Emergent Marsh, Shrub Swamp, and Marsh Headwater Stream, with a diverse set of other wetland and lake community types such as Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog and Backwater Slough. The acidic boreal swamp is dominated by Spruce-Fir Swamp and Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog, with other wetland and stream community types. The acidic forested lowlands is dominated by Spruce Flats, Balsam Flats, and Spruce-Fir Swamp, with Spruce-Northern Hardwood Forest and other upland forest, wetland, and stream community types. Marsh Headwater Stream runs through all three ecosystem types. Dwarf Shrub Bog is indicative and characteristic of this complex type and is a dominant feature in the complex.

Eleven of the community types listed above, all except for Inland Poor Fen, have county-exemplary occurrences at the Poesten Kill Headwaters site, the largest concentration of exemplary communities among important peatland complexes of the Rensselaer Plateau. The Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog is designated as state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program.

### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The peatland complex supports 14 county-rare plants. Among the county-rare species in the Poesten Kill portion are bog sedge (*Carex paupercula*) and Snowberry (*Gaultheria hispidula*).

This site is considered a county-important animal habitat, with habitat for mammals requiring extensive boreal forest habitat such as moose and snowshoe hare. The Berlin portion also has records of boreal forest birds.

#### Landscape Context

The site is contained within the broader Central Rensselaer Plateau Forest, specifically, the Spruce-Fir Core of the plateau, and is situated at the upper reaches of the Poesten Kill. The site is relatively undisturbed as it spans the central part of two large forest blocks, the Poesten Kill Headwaters Block and Perigo Hill Block.

#### Ecological Integrity

Generally in very good condition, although with heavy logging in many areas, as a long-term working forest.

#### Conservation Status

The site has been entirely private land, with large tracts previously owned by a private timber company. Much of the site is pending acquisition by NYS as a working forest.

## **Poesten Kill Headwaters Northwest**

Boreal flats ecosystem complex, **70%** in Poestenkill, 30% in Grafton and Berlin

### Overview

Poesten Kill Headwaters Northwest is a boreal flats complex adjacent to the large peatland of the Poesten Kill Headwaters peatland complex just to the east. The boreal flats complex type is more typical of the Adirondacks and in Rensselaer County is restricted to the central zone of the Rensselaer Plateau. Boreal flats is a moist forested complex with subtly rolling topography, often with hummock-hollow microtopography.

### Regional Importance

The boreal flats ecosystem complex type is very restricted within the county. This site is very large and in excellent quality/condition, as confirmed from many field studies.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

Spruce Flats community type is indicative and characteristic of this complex type, and is dominant at this site. The Spruce Flats here is a county-exemplary occurrence, and the Spruce-Fir Swamp is designated as state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program.

### Landscape Context.

In very good condition. The local landscape surrounding the complex is essentially unfragmented forest within two large forest blocks, Poesten Kill Headwaters and Dyken Pond Blocks, and within a much larger forest landscape.

### Ecological Integrity

In good to very good condition, much as working forest.

### Conservation Status

The site is entirely private; much of the site is pending NYS easements that will sustain the private lands as working forest.

## **Poesten Kill Headwaters Outlet**

Peatland and Mineral Soil Wetland ecosystem complexes, **80%** in Poestenkill, 20% in Berlin

### Overview

The Poesten Kill Headwaters Outlet Complex is a diverse and intricate ecosystem with a mosaic of two ecosystem complex types: a central riparian mineral soil wetland complex along a large, relatively intact headwater stream (the upper reaches of the Poesten Kill), plus a surrounding peatland complex. Each of the two complex types consists of multiple ecosystem types. The most characteristic ecosystem type is an open unconfined riparian wetland, but the site also contains multiple peatland ecosystem types (similar to the connected Poesten Kill Headwaters peatland complex just upstream to the east, however much smaller here). Peatland ecosystem types are: acidic open peatland, acidic boreal swamp, and acidic forested lowlands. The site is situated at the outlet of a very large high-level headwater basin, where the gradual slope results in an increased river flow rate as compared to the Poesten Kill Headwaters peatland complex just upstream.

### Regional Importance

The site was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes due to its large wetland size and excellent quality/condition, as confirmed from field studies. It is one of 12 important riparian complexes on the Rensselaer Plateau. The site contains the mainstem of the Poesten Kill Aquatic Network, the largest network of the Rensselaer Plateau and one of several important networks identified from the plateau.

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

A prominent feature of the site is large examples of the characteristic mineral soil wetland community types Shrub Swamp, Shallow Emergent Marsh, and Sedge Meadow. These communities are surrounded by moist upland flats forests such as Spruce Flats. These four community types are county-exemplary at this site, with the Sedge Meadow, Shallow Emergent Marsh and Spruce Flats designated as state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program. The open unconfined riparian wetland ecosystem is moderately diverse, dominated by Marsh Headwater Stream, Sedge Meadow, Shrub Swamp, and Red Maple-Hardwood Swamp, with other characteristic riparian communities including Flow-Through Pond. Dominant and characteristic communities of the peatland complex at this site are similar to those of Poesten Kill Headwaters to the east, but not as diverse.

### Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The site has is considered a county-important animal habitat, with concentrations of riverine fish (including longnose dace, creek chub, eastern blacknose dace, and northern hog sucker); and of aquatic macroinvertebrates indicative of good water quality (including mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies).

### Landscape Context

Generally in very good condition. The local landscape surrounding the complex is essentially unfragmented forest. The site is situated within the boreal Spruce-Fir Core of the much larger Rensselaer Plateau Forest landscape, surrounded by a matrix of spruce- and fir-dominated

forests. It is contained within the Perigo Hill Block, a large forest block of several thousands of acres, essentially unbisected by public roads.

Ecological Integrity

In good to very good condition, much as working forest.

Conservation Status.

The site is entirely private; much of the site is pending NYS easements that will sustain the private lands as working forest.

## **Poestenkill Center Bog**

Peatland ecosystem complex, **100%** in Poestenkill

The Poestenkill Center Bog peatland complex consists of a wide central open peatland surrounded by a forested wetland zone. It is situated in an isolated kettlehole, separated from any nearby important aquatic networks. It represents a locally unusual wetland complex, uncommon in the Taconic Foothills region, specifically a Lower New England peatland variant. A key community type at the site is Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket, indicative and characteristic of Lower New England peatlands and dominant within this complex. The site was initially inferred from its air photo signature plus a historic description as a peatland. A recent field evaluation confirmed the ecosystem complex type as a peatland, as well as its size and species diversity. The community type and peatland variant were identified as the Lower New England variant of Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket, with a circumneutral substrate more typical of the Taconic Foothills region than the corresponding acidic variant characteristic of the Rensselaer Plateau.

### Regional Importance

The importance of this complex is derived from its moderately large wetland size and high quality/excellent condition, as confirmed from field studies. It is one of 26 important peatland complexes in the county, and one of the few sizeable peatlands in Rensselaer County outside the Rensselaer Plateau. It is one of nine important circumneutral peatland examples in the county, and one of only two sizeable circumneutral peatlands in the Town of Poestenkill.

### Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The site supports two county-rare peatland community types, Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket and Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog. The Highbush Blueberry Bog Thicket at this site is near-exemplary for the county.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The site three county-rare plant species. Swamp Azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*), a county-rare plant, has a large, healthy population in this peatland.

### Landscape Context

The landscape surrounding the bog is essentially fragmented forest, dissected by residential structures and associated clearings.

### Ecological Integrity

Only minor human disturbances were noted in association with the peatland including a small confined population of the invasive wetland plant purple loosestrife.

### Conservation Status

Moderately well protected through private landowner efforts

## **Quacken Kill Brunswick**

**5%** in Poestenkill, **95%** in Brunswick

### Overview

The Lower to Middle Quacken Kill is mostly in Brunswick but just extends into Poestenkill. This stretch of the Quacken Kill is a component of the Quacken Kill Important Aquatic Network. Siltation from the Quackenkil/Grafton quarries has impacted stream habitat throughout much of the reaches of this site in recent decades.

### Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The Quacken Kill is considered a county-important animal habitat, with concentrations of aquatic macroinvertebrates indicative of good water quality (including mayflies, caddisflies and stoneflies). This stretch of the Quacken Kill is classified as trout spawning habitat by NYSDEC.



## **Reicherts Lake**

Peatland ecosystem complex, **40%** in Poestenkill, 60% in Sand Lake

The Reicherts Lake peatland complex represents one of two complexes within an ecological aggregate (Reicherts Lake in the broader sense) that also contains an adjacent lake complex to the south (all in the Town of Sand Lake). The peatland complex consists of a central pond, Reicherts Lake (a Bog Lake community type), with a surrounding open peatland zone, then a forested wetland zone. It represents a locally unusual wetland complex, uncommon in the Taconic Foothills region and off the Rensselaer Plateau, and is presumed to be a circumneutral variant of the complex type. A key community type at the site is Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog, indicative and characteristic of peatlands and dominant within this complex. Although it is adjacent to Reicherts Lake, the complex is dominated by features more characteristic of peatlands than a lake complex, thus it is distinguished and treated separately from the adjacent lake complex.

### Regional Importance

The importance of this complex is derived from its large wetland size and high quality/excellent condition, as confirmed from field studies. It is among the largest 100 wetland complexes in the county per the CONUS wetlands datalayer.

### Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The Black Spruce-Tamarack Bog and Red Maple-Hardwood Swamp at this site are near-exemplary for the county.

### Rare Species Synopsis

The peatland complex supports 12 county-rare plants characteristic of open bogs, including trees, shrubs, herbs, graminoids, plus floating and submergent aquatic macrophytes. Among the rare species are Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) and Tufted Loosestrife (*Lysimachia thrysifolia*).

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the peatland complex is a mix of residential land and fragmented forest, with forest concentrated as buffer around wetlands.

### Ecological Integrity

Good local condition, especially for the Taconic Foothills region.

### Conservation Status

Town of Poestenkill owns four parcels at the site, but management for natural resources is unknown.

## **Snake Hill**

Rocky slope/summit ecosystem complex, **85%** in Poestenkill, 15% in Sand Lake

### Overview

Snake Hill is a rocky slope/summit complex with much exposed Rensselaer Graywacke bedrock substrate, multiple open summits and upper slopes, and characteristic Red Cedar Rocky Summit community. It is situated on the Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment south of the Barberville Gorge along the Poesten Kill. It contains both acidic forested rocky summit and acidic open rocky summit ecosystem types.

### Regional Importance

Snake Hill was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes due to its large size, very good quality/condition, and high diversity for the complex type, as confirmed from many field studies. Snake Hill is one of 14 county-important rocky summit/slope complexes of the Rensselaer Plateau, and it contains the 19th largest exposed bedrock patch in the county (211 acres).

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

The acidic forested rocky summit ecosystem is dominated by Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest and Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest. Red Cedar Rocky Summit is indicative and characteristic of this complex type, although only in one patch of the complex. The northernmost acidic open rocky summit ecosystem patch is diverse, with Red Cedar Rocky Summit, Cliff Community, Acidic Talus Slope Woodland, Calcareous Cliff Community, Chestnut Oak Forest, and Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest.

Snake Hill is one of several sites on the Rensselaer Plateau with a concentration of county-exemplary communities: Red Cedar Rocky Summit, Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest, Acidic Talus Slope Woodland, Cliff Community, and Calcareous Cliff Community. Other important natural community types here also suspected to be state significant are Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest and Maple-Basswood Rich Mesic Forest.

The one moderately globally-rare community type at Snake Hill is Red Cedar Rocky Summit. This occurrence of Red Cedar Rocky Summit is the only known site on the Rensselaer Plateau. It is a very rare community type in the county, otherwise known from only one or two spots in the Taconic Valley. It is more characteristic of traprock areas in the Taconic Valley in counties to the south.

### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

Snake Hill harbors the greatest known concentration of county-rare plants in the Town of Poestenkill (34 species) and possibly on the Rensselaer Plateau. Two of these plants are among the rarest in the county: Silvery-Flowered or Hay Sedge (*Carex argyrantha*) and Four-Leaf Milkweed (*Asclepias quadrifolia*). The rarest plants are found on small cliff and/or open rocky summit patches of less than about one acre. The historic collection of the state-rare plant Slender Knotweed (*Polygonum tenue*) was probably from those areas at Snake Hill.

The site was designated for the county conservation plan as an important animal habitat, with potential habitat for bobcat and porcupine denning.

#### Landscape Context

The site is contained within the broader Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment, one of about eight specific escarpment faces surrounding the plateau. More locally, it is within the moderately large and relatively intact Snake Hill Forest Block.

#### Ecological Integrity

Other than habitat edge displacements, the site appears in very good condition, with scattered minor unnatural disturbances.

#### Conservation Status

The site consists of entirely private land, and is generally vulnerable to increased subdivision and residential development.

## **Southeast Brunswick Grasslands**

Lowland grassland complex, **25%** in Poestenkill, 75% in Brunswick

The Southeast Brunswick Grasslands complex consists of a relatively large assemblage of adjacent land cover patches designated in the National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD) as "pasture/hay". This cover type has been deemed the best habitat in the county for grassland birds. It is designated as a lowland grassland complex, specifically hayfield/pastureland (cultural communities dependent upon agricultural management). The primary habitat at this site, large areas of grassland, was inferred using both the remote NLCD model as well as a preliminary air photo evaluation and rapid distant roadside observations. Although in need of careful field assessment for the presence and longevity of any semi-natural grassland patches as well as the presence and viability of any grassland bird populations, it is assumed that this site is among several in the county with the best chance of supporting populations of grassland birds. The site is roughly centered around NY Route 351 (Brunswick), Dater Hill Road (Brunswick), Dearstyne Road (Brunswick), and Garfield Road (Brunswick/Poestenkill). The size, shape, and naturalness of any semi-natural grasslands are likely to change frequently over time with changing landowners and any rotation of agricultural cover.

### Regional Importance

The site contains the 8th largest pasture/hay patch in the county, as depicted by the NLCD. It is among the few areas in the county suspected to support a viable suite of grassland biota.

### Rare Species Synopsis

No rare species are known to date from this site, however there is good potential for county-rare grassland bird species.

### Landscape Context

The surrounding landscape is essentially fragmented forest, dissected by additional agricultural land, residential structures, and associated clearings.

### Ecological Integrity

In uncertain condition, especially in regard to the naturalness of the habitat and the degree of native biota.

### Conservation Status

Unknown whether any landowners are managing fields for grassland bird nesting.

## **Vosburgh Swamp**

Mineral soil wetland ecosystem complex, **90%** in Poestenkill, 10% in Sand Lake

Vosburgh Swamp is a basin wetland complex with a central pond (Eutrophic Pond) and surrounding open to forested wetlands. Although it contains a lake, the complex is dominated by wetland features.

### Regional Importance

The importance of the site is derived from its large wetland size and high quality/good condition, as confirmed from multiple field studies. Vosburgh Swamp contains one of the only two large basin wetland ponds in the county; it is the 55th largest wetland complex in the county; and it is among the 11th to 16th largest basin wetlands in the county.

### County-Exemplary Communities

Vosburgh Swamp includes county-exemplary occurrences of Deep Emergent Marsh and Eutrophic Pond.

### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The wetland complex supports five county-rare plants characteristic of circumneutral wetlands including trees (e.g., Black Ash, *Fraxinus nigra*), herbs (e.g., Ditch Stonecrop, *Penthorum sedoides*), and graminoids (e.g., Bottlebrush Grass, *Elymus hystrix*).

The site has is also considered as a county-important animal habitat, with concentrations of aquatic mammals (river otter, beaver), lake birds (egret, osprey, wood duck) and lake fish (including pickerel, yellow perch, bluegill, and bass).

### Landscape Context

The local landscape surrounding the wetland complex is a mix of residential land and forest, with the forest representing the dissected edge of the large Rensselaer Plateau Forest. The site is also integrally situated within the Newfoundland Creek Headwaters aquatic network.

### Ecological Integrity

Moderately good local condition, especially for the Taconic Foothills region. Only minor disturbances have been noted such as a small boardwalk.

### Conservation Status

Protected to some degree by multiple surrounding private landowners that value this feature for conservation; however, vulnerable to impacts such as septic runoff.

## **Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment**

Rocky slope/summit ecosystem complex, **43%** in Poestenkill, **57%** in Brunswick and Grafton

Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment is a rocky slope/summit complex containing multiple open summits and steep upper slopes. It is situated on the Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment physiographic subdivision, generally between Barberville Gorge along the Poesten Kill (to the south) and Quacken Kill Narrows along the Quacken Kill (to the north). It is one of three well-defined escarpments surrounding the plateau. The site consists of two important subsites, Wheeler Mountain (Brunswick) and Davitt Pond Ledges (Poestenkill, Grafton and Brunswick), each comprised of two patches. The Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment contains both acidic forested rocky summit and acidic open rocky summit ecosystem types, present at both subsites. Acidic Talus Slope Woodland and other community types at the site are typical of a Central Appalachian variant of the rocky slope/summit complex type.

### Regional Importance

The site was identified as a Rensselaer Plateau conservation target for ecosystem complexes. Its importance is derived from its large size, very good quality/condition, and high diversity for the complex type, as confirmed from many field studies. The Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment is one of 12 important acidic rocky slope/summit sites of the plateau, and it contains the third-largest exposed bedrock patch in the county (974 acres).

### Community Composition and Exemplary/Important Natural Communities

A key community type, Acidic Talus Slope Woodland, is indicative and characteristic of this complex type, although scattered in small patches throughout the complex. Rocky, circumneutral Central Appalachian community types are common at the site including patches of Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest and Chestnut Oak Forest. Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest forms the matrix for this site. Local patches of Acidic Talus Slope Woodland and Cliff Community are found on the steepest slopes. The forested rocky summit is dominated by Chestnut Oak Forest, Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest, Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest, and Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest. The open rocky summit is dominated by Cliff Community, Acidic Talus Slope Woodland, Chestnut Oak Forest, and Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest.

The Western Rensselaer Plateau Escarpment is one of several sites on the plateau with a concentration of county-exemplary communities: Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest, Acidic Talus Slope Woodland (2 subsites), Cliff Community (2 subsites), Chestnut Oak Forest, Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest (2 subsites), and Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest. Other significant communities at the site include Beech-Maple Mesic Forest and Intermittent Stream. The Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest at this site blankets the Davitt Pond Forest Block; it is large, with large areas in a mature state, and one of the best examples of this forest on the Rensselaer Plateau. This community occurrence is designated as state-significant by the New York Natural Heritage Program, which maps it throughout much of the northern half of the plateau, including areas surrounding Wheeler Mountain and Davitt Pond Ledges. The Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest centered around Davitt Pond Ledges is thought to be one of the several largest and best examples on the plateau. Although the Cliff Community patches are small, they are relatively large for the county, as this is a county-rare community type.

#### Sub-Site Description. Davitt Pond Ledges (Towns of Poestenkill, Brunswick, and Grafton)

A portion of the Western Escarpment of the plateau W and NW of Davitt Pond with very steep slopes and abundant rock outcroppings, covering ~250 acres. State-significant examples of Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest and Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest cover most of the site. Small examples of open rocky summit communities (Cliff Community and Acidic Talus Slope Woodland) are embedded within the forest. The open canopy rocky summit communities are some of the best developed along this escarpment. Several county-rare plants are known in the Poestenkill part of this site. Some county-rare plants and animals are suspected there.

#### Rare Species and Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

Among 28 county-rare plants reported from the site as a whole, ten are found or suspected in the Poestenkill portion, such as Silvery-Flowered or Hay Sedge (*Carex argyrantha*). The Appalachian Oak-Hickory Forest provides important habitat for rare plants.

One potential county-rare resident animal (bobcat) is reported from the site; more county-rare plants and animals are suspected. The site is designated as county-important animal habitat, with denning habitat for bobcat, black bear, and porcupine, and nesting habitat for raven.

#### Landscape Context

Situated entirely within the relatively large and intact Davitt Pond Forest Block.

#### Ecological Integrity

In very good condition, with very few and minor unnatural disturbances.

#### Conservation Status

The site is entirely private land, with portions under conservation easement with the Rensselaer Land Trust, other areas within the large Boy Scouts of America tract, and other private lands managed using good conservation practices.

## **Wynants Kill Snyder Corners**

Mineral soil wetland ecosystem complex, **10%** in Poestenkill, 90% in North Greenbush

The Wynants Kill Snyders Corners (Wynants Kill Midreach) wetland complex is located along NY Route 150 in the vicinity of the community of Snyders Corners and Snyders Corners Road, with only a small portion in the Town of Poestenkill. The site consists of a central stream apparently surrounded by forested to shrub wetlands. Although in a riparian setting, the complex is classified as a basin wetland, not a floodplain, apparently with permanently-inundated conditions. The stream, the Wynants Kill, consists of a mosaic of a large Rocky Headwater Stream and Marsh Headwater stream. This site is a component of the Wynants Kill Important Aquatic Network.

### Regional Importance

The importance of this complex is derived from its moderately large wetland size and its good to fair quality/condition, as noted from casual field observations. It is the 43rd largest wetland complex in the county, and among the 11th to 16th largest basin wetlands in the county (all 50-100 acres). This site has the best landscape context among large examples of this complex type in the county.

### Important Animal Habitat Synopsis

The site is part of the Wynants Kill Midreach, which was designated for the county conservation plan as an important animal habitat due to the Wynants Kill being a state-designated trout stream and for its potential as a concentration area for riverine fish. No rare species are known to date from the Wynants Kill in the area of Snyders Corners; however, there is potential for rare fish species.

### Landscape Context

This site is integral to the Wynants Kill Important Aquatic Network. Although the surrounding landscape is essentially fragmented forest, dissected by residential structures and associated clearings, it is moderately good as a natural landscape for large wetland examples in the Taconic Foothills region and is in good to fair condition. The surrounding landscape includes the moderate-sized and somewhat intact Coopers Pond Forest Block.

### Ecological Integrity

Apparently in moderately good condition from air photo examination.