

The Fjord Trail will protect at-risk species and restore degraded habitats, preserving our beautiful Hudson Highlands environment for years to come.

Fjord Trail planning is guided by a rigorous environmental review process:

Conducted in accordance with New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the Fjord Trail is undergoing a comprehensive environmental review that will:

- **Inventory** flora and fauna present in the project area, especially any of special concern
- **Assess** potential risk to habitat
- Outline how to **avoid** and/or **mitigate** risks to local species

Data is being collected from expert sources including Hudsonia, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and NY Natural Heritage Program.

A Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) is currently being prepared for submission to Lead Agency Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) in early 2024, and is expected to be ready for public review by Spring 2024.

State environmental officials will consider all information collected through the review and public comment period to make the final determination on the project.

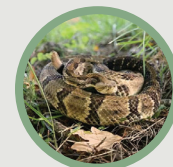
Upper Overlook and Breakneck Connector & Bridge Plan as Case Study:

Phase 1: Breakneck Connector & Bridge, which underwent its own SEQRA process, provides an example of how habitat will be protected and improved as the trail is constructed.

Upper Overlook and the Breakneck Trailhead (completed June 30, 2023):

Experts determined that work at Upper Overlook would take place in potential habitats of the fence lizard, eastern wormsneak, and timber rattlesnake, but that their dens and nests were outside the project's area of disturbance. Care to protect these animals and their habitat included:

- An OPRHP/DEC-approved plan was in place for potential encounters
- Barriers were placed to prevent interaction between animals and trail workers
- A licensed snake and lizard monitor was on site for the duration of work
- Social trails were closed, allowing habitats to be restored



Timber Rattlesnake

Breakneck Connector & Bridge (projected start date: December 2023):

Planning for Breakneck Connector & Bridge includes measures to protect and restore species and habitat:

- Invasive plant species will be replaced with 5.4 acres of native plants including 430 trees and 2080 shrubs
- Wildlife crossings will be constructed to protect small animals
- Tree removal will only occur when northern long-eared bats are hibernating (in caves)
- Site hydrology will be improved to increase capacity to handle seasonal flooding and snowmelt



Northern Red Oak



Sassafras



Fragrant Sumac



Little Bluestem



Pitch Pine



Wildlife Crossing

Plant Palette Highlights

For more information on the Fjord Trail, including upcoming informational events, please visit: hhft.org



Fjord Trail planning considerations for vulnerable species in the region:

HHFT looks forward to receiving the findings of the GEIS review so we can continue to work with involved agencies to ensure habitat protection during trail build-out, as well as use the guidance to create a healthy and ecologically improved trail corridor.

<p>Bald Eagles <i>Threatened (NYS)</i></p>	<p>The Fjord Trail will be routed to avoid impacting any bald eagle nests present within the project area. Bald eagles can travel up to 100 miles a day and often hunt in a range of two to fifteen square miles from their nests, so they may be spotted soaring or perching in trees within the Fjord Trail corridor.</p>
<p>Peregrine Falcon <i>Endangered (NYS)</i></p>	<p>The Fjord Trail will not route through any known peregrine falcon nest sites. In New York State these falcons prefer high mountains, open forests, and tall buildings.</p>
<p>Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Endangered (Federal & NYS)</i></p>	<p>The northern long-eared bat's population is in decline due to white-nose syndrome (rather than habitat loss). Trees will only be removed when long-eared bats are hibernating (in caves). This work will be done under the guidance of Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) experts.</p>
<p>Indiana Bat <i>Endangered (Federal & NYS)</i></p>	<p>There are no caves or mines conducive to Indiana bat hibernation within the Fjord Trail project area. Searches for additional wintering sites are ongoing, and plans will be tailored accordingly.</p>
<p>Fence Lizard <i>Threatened (NYS)</i></p>	<p>Fence lizard populations are found in Putnam County in open areas of oak-hickory-ash forest with blueberry, laurel, scrub oak and pine and open rock faces or talus. Work on the Fjord Trail's Upper Overlook came near to fence lizard habitat, so DEC guidelines were closely followed to ensure minimal disturbance (see reverse).</p>
<p>Timber Rattlesnake <i>Threatened (NYS)</i></p>	<p>The trail will not route through any known timber rattlesnake den sites, but as with work on Upper Overlook, precautions will be taken to ensure that encounters between humans and rattlesnakes are kept to a minimum.</p>
<p>Eastern Wormsnake <i>Special Concern (NYS)</i></p>	<p>Work on the Fjord Trail's Upper Overlook occurred near potential wormsnap habitat, so DEC guidelines were closely followed to ensure minimal disturbance (see reverse).</p>
<p>Atlantic Sturgeon and Short-nosed Sturgeon <i>Endangered (Federal) Endangered (NYS)</i></p>	<p>The majority of the Hudson River is considered sturgeon habitat. HHFT will not do any work in or around the banks of the Hudson during periods of spawning, when sturgeons are most vulnerable.</p>
<p>New England Cottontail <i>Special Concern (NYS)</i></p>	<p>New England cottontail habitat has been identified in the Hudson Highlands region. As a result, planned trail elements have been preemptively relocated to avoid identified habitat locations. Ecological studies will continue to inform the planning process.</p>