

Find out about the environment and ecology where you live. See page 2 of this summary, and, for more detail, “Physical Setting” in the NRCP itself.

The Ancram Natural Resources Conservation Plan (NRCP) was developed to guide the town’s stewardship of the land and water that supports the people, farms, businesses, and natural areas of Ancram. The Plan provides many maps of the Town’s resources, presents general conservation guidelines for the town, and identifies some of the features of highest priority for protection. The NRCP was prepared by Hudsonia Ltd. and the Town of Ancram Conservation Advisory Council with funding from the Town of Ancram, the Hudson River Valley Greenway, and the Hudson River Bank and Trust Foundation. It was adopted by the Ancram Town Board in 2015.

Promoting the goals of the Comprehensive Plan:

“Encourage farming and the rural, small town, scenic character of Ancram... Develop policies and programs to protect ground water, watersheds, streams, wetlands, woodlands, ridgelines and wildlife habitats...”

Town of Ancram, Comprehensive Plan, 2010

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Blue Heron, Long Lake. Photo © James Thompson 2016

Ancram Conservation Areas

Western Hills and Forests

This encompasses Prospect Hill, the Doodletown Road area and many other forested hills west of Route 3. It includes large forests, many small streams, intermittent woodland pools, hardwood swamps, and most of the high elevation areas west of the Fox Hill/ Round Ball Mountain Ridge.

Roeliff Jansen Kill—Kettles, Lakes, and Farms

The Roe Jan Conservation Area has lakes, flood plain forests, unusual “kettle wetlands” (formed in the glacial period), and the largest areas of prime farmland soils.

Punch Brook Valley Fens

The Punch Brook is a large perennial trout stream that runs through the middle of Ancram. The valley contains Old Croken, the Drowned Lands wetland, and the largest concentration of fens (calcareous wetlands) in the town, all of which are considered important areas for rare plants, animals, and wetland communities.

Fox Hill—Round Ball Mountain

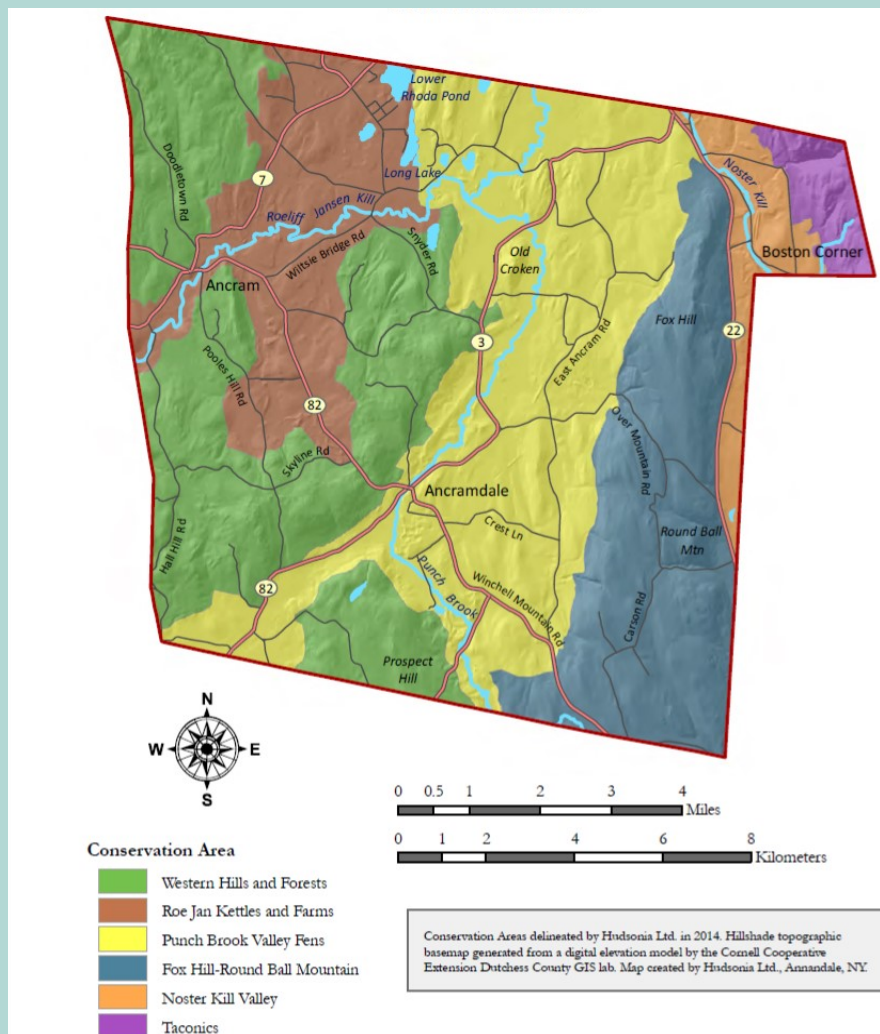
The Fox Hill—Round Ball Mountain corridor has high elevations, a large contiguous forest, exposed ledges, wetlands, and small streams, and is an important scenic asset for Route 22.

Noster Kill Valley

The Noster Kill is a perennial trout spawning stream that flows north into Bash Bish Brook, a tributary of the Roe Jan. The valley has good farmland soils, and extensive wetlands that are important areas for rare animals.

Taconic Mountains

The Taconic Mountains are part of a substantially unfragmented forest that extends into Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Two hiking trails into the Taconic Mountains originate in Ancram.



The NRCP describes 24 specific Action Items that will lead to achieving the Conservation Goals, along with some Conservation Tools and Partners to help. The most important Action Items are listed below.

Enduring Features

‘Enduring features’ are bedrock, hills and valleys that are unaffected by humans and natural events.

The Plan recommends taking action to protect intact representatives of all the enduring features of Ancram, by leaving bedrock and landforms undisturbed by roads, houses, mines and other developments



Long Lake. Photo © Choral Eddie 2014

Water Resources

Drinking water for nearly all of Ancram’s residents and businesses is drawn from groundwater. The streams, lakes and ponds support our farms, fish and wildlife. A major goal of the Plan is the conservation of clean ample surface water and groundwater by:

- Maintaining and restoring forest cover
- Promoting groundwater recharge
- Maintaining intact floodplain habitats
- Minimizing applications of hazardous materials (pesticides, fertilizers, etc.) near waterbodies

Biological Resources

Ancram contains many ecologically significant habitats and several state-listed rare plants and animals. The Plan urges that action be taken to protect them by:

- Protecting well-connected, intact habitat areas that allow animals and plants to move safely between them
- Protecting high-quality representatives of all ecologically significant habitats
- Protecting habitat complexes critical to known species of conservation concern
- Avoiding fragmentation of large forests and meadows by roads, driveways and structures
- Encouraging sustainable forestry and agricultural practices

Farmland

The Plan places a high priority on support of active farms and conservation of the best farmland soils to maximize the current and future potential for farming in the town. (See the Ancram Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan, adopted 2011 for more on farming.)

Scenic Areas

The rural character of Ancram is very important to its residents. The Plan encourages the Town to protect its scenic values by discouraging development or land uses that would be visible from public-access lands or would mar the most scenic vistas. (See Ancram Zoning.)

Recreation

The Plan promotes outdoor recreation that takes advantage of the natural landscapes and cultural features while protecting the resources of conservation concern.

Threats to Resources of Conservation Concern

Climate Change

- Climate change is likely to reduce water supplies, stress cold-adapted wildlife, and encourage insect pests

Threats to Water Resources

- Many of Ancram's small, isolated wetlands lack legal protection at the state and federal levels

Habitat Loss, Fragmentation, and Other Degradation

- The "edge effects" of human disturbance can reach well over 300 ft into forests
- Habitat fragmentation hinders wildlife movements and increases the risk of mortality from vehicles and predators

Threats to Agricultural Land

- Twelve percent of Ancram's farmland acreage has been converted to non-farm uses since the 1970s

Threats to Scenic Resources

- The main threat to Ancram's scenic resources is residential sprawl



Punch Brook in the Drowned Lands. Photo © Jamie Purinton 2014

The full plan is available on the Town's website: (www.ancramny.org/ws/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Ancram-NRCP_27-Jan-2015.pdf.)

Hard copies can be obtained from the Town Building Department.

This Summary was prepared by CAC member Claire Arnold with the support of the CAC.

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More about the Conservation Advisory Council (CAC)

The Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) conducts research, disseminates information and advises other town agencies in the management, development and conservation of the town's natural resources. It is the CAC's mandate to provide in-depth information on issues that pertain to the preservation and ecological well-being of the town's flora and fauna. The CAC's mission is also to identify human activities or developments that may pose major threats to environmental quality, and to provide the Town Board with research and comprehensive analyses of the environmental impact of proposed land-use decisions on an "as-needed" basis.

The CAC meets the first Monday of every month at 7:00 P.M. at the town hall. These meetings are open to the public.