

# Policy Adoption Fact Sheet: Joint Natural Resource Inventory

2020 Comprehensive Plan Review | David Chernack, Joint Environmental Committee Intern

**Why is this action important?** An NRI is a study that comprehensively catalogues the natural resources of an area and analyzes the ways in which they interact with the human environment, identifies the threats posed to them by climate change and other factors, and lays out actionable strategies to protect and sustainably use those resources. Possessing a catalogue of our resources—from our soils, flora and fauna, and public amenities—helps our local government make policy and development decisions that take those resources into account. Additionally, an NRI would present many opportunities for youth input and participation, a key aspect of the Town’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

**How is this action implemented?** An NRI is written by an environmental professional in conjunction with local government—in this case, both the Village’s and the Town’s governments—taking into account various reports about natural resources, amenities such as parks and sidewalks, and the environmental risks facing those resources in the future. After it is written, an NRI will be used to guide judgements about how lands should be used in Rhinebeck, taking into account our understanding of the threats to our natural resources from development, climate change, and other factors.

**What does the Comprehensive Plan say about it?** [The Town’s 2009 Comprehensive Plan](#) includes a chapter concerning natural resources, but this alone does not constitute an NRI. However, much of the work that would go towards writing a fully fledged NRI—such as habitat inventories and rare species assessments—was carried out during the writing of the plan.



## Joint natural resource inventory quick facts:

*CSC points:* 8-10 (Action s6.15)

*Benefits to Rhinebeck:* enhanced understanding of our natural resources

*Cost:* medium; hiring consultant

*Relevant agencies:* Town/Village planning boards, Joint Environmental Committee

**What departments will it involve?** The Town or Village Planning Boards would be involved in passing the NRI as a piece of official policy. Meanwhile, the Joint Environmental Committee will likely supervise the writing of the document. Possible coordinators outside of local government include Hudsonia, an ecological consultation firm in Annandale-on-Hudson, which helped the Town write its 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

**What will it cost?** A moderate amount, but not above \$10,000 and six months of part-time work from an environmental analyst or intern. Much preliminary work has already been done on NRI—see this report prepared by Joint Environmental Committee intern David Chernack [here](#)—and very little original research is left to be done in the field. What work remains is to reach out to the public with surveys and meetings, coordinate the content of the NRI with the Town and Village Boards, and create a few new maps to supplement those that have already been made.