

23: NJ LANDSCAPE PROJECT AND NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

The New Jersey Natural Heritage Program identifies the state's most significant natural areas through a comprehensive inventory of rare plant and animal species and representative natural communities. Specifically, the Natural Heritage Database compiles information of the distribution, biology, status, and preservation needs of identified species and communities. Imperiled species tracked by the database are identified by Federal and State Endangered Species Act, Endangered Plant Species Act, Endangered and Nongame Wildlife Act, and additional rare unlisted species under investigation. The database is continually updated and serves as the comprehensive source of information on rare plants, animals, and natural communities in New Jersey. This information can be used to identify areas of high natural diversity, locate rare species, and supplement field surveys conducted to assess project impacts on natural diversity and critical areas. The Natural Heritage Data is presented in two formats: as a grid or as identified communities with delineated boundaries known as Natural Heritage Priority Sites. Additional information about the NJ Heritage Program is available online (<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/natural/heritage/index.html>).

In 1994, the Landscape Project was developed by NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP), and was adopted to utilize a landscape level approach to imperiled species protection. The landscape approach focuses on large tracts of land, called landscape regions, which are ecologically similar in regards to their plant and animal communities composed of critical wildlife areas. Critical wildlife areas in New Jersey include forest, grassland, forested wetland, emergent wetland and beach/dune. Utilizing a combination of land cover data and an extensive database of rare species locations, the Landscape Project has identified and mapped areas of critical importance for imperiled species within each landscape region. Critical habitat patches are delineated based on the species present and conservation status; areas with federally threatened or endangered species receive the highest ranking, followed by state endangered, state threatened and finally lands suitable for listed species habitat. Ultimately, these Figures assist state, local and private agencies in prioritizing conservation acquisitions, guide regulators and planners, provide citizens with conservation tools, and identify contiguous habitats. Additional information can be found online about the New Jersey Landscape Project (www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/landscape/lp_report.pdf) and New Jersey's threatened and endangered species (www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/tandespp.htm).

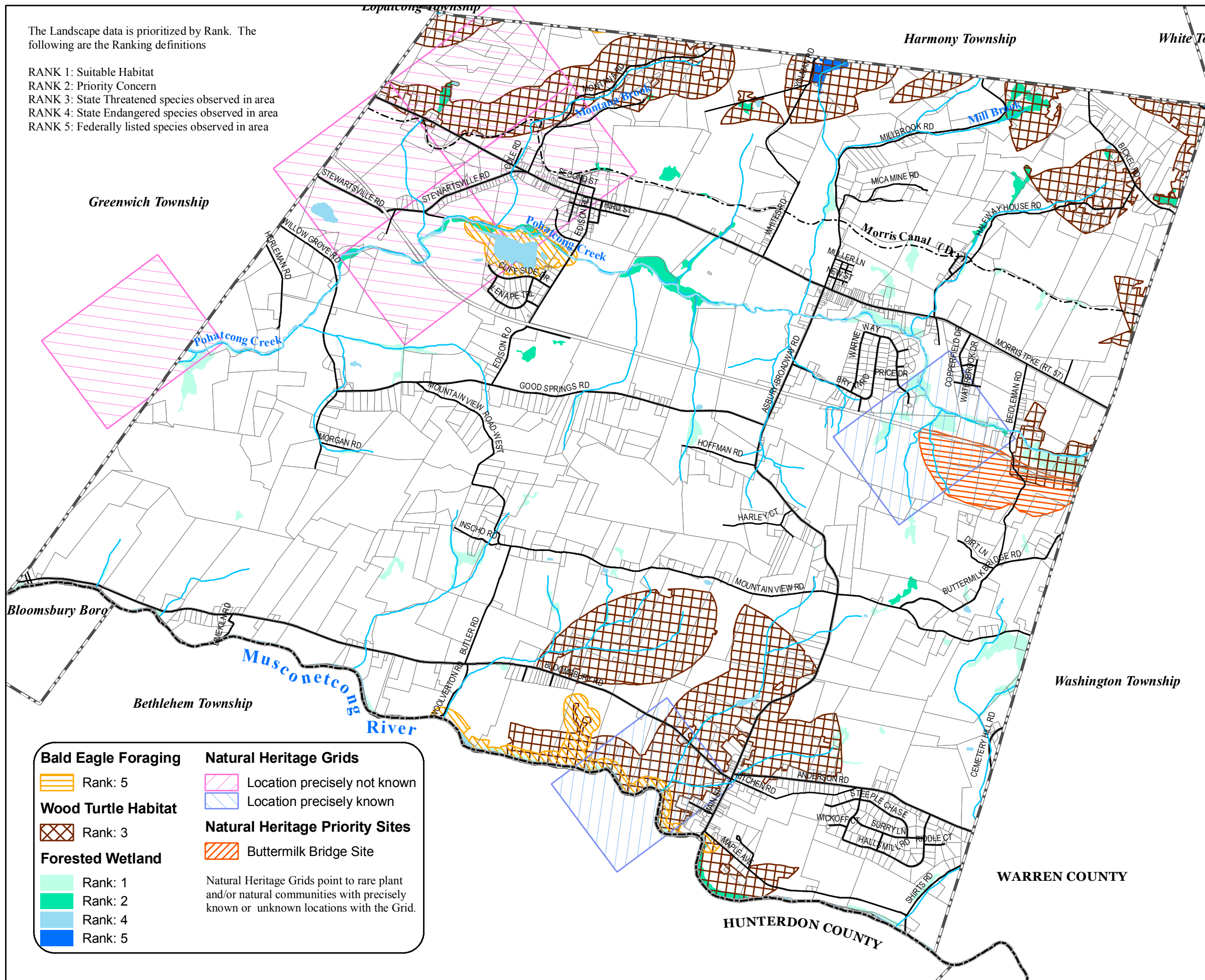
The Landscape Project identifies five habitat types of significance: grassland, forest, forested wetland, emergent wetland and beach/dune. Grasslands must meet a minimum size of 18 hectares to be recognized by the Landscape Project. Forests must meet a minimum core size of 10 hectares to be considered, different criteria apply for Pinelands Preservation Areas. Any size patch of forested wetlands, emergent wetland and beach/dune qualify for consideration for the Landscape Project. The Landscape Project also identifies three wildlife species of significance: bald eagle, urban peregrine falcon, and wood turtle. A ranking system, summarized in the table below, is used to identify areas of habitat and species.

Rank	Title	Description
1	Suitable Habitat	patches that meet habitat-specific suitability requirements such as minimum size criteria for endangered, threatened or priority wildlife species, but that do not intersect with any confirmed occurrences of such species
2	Priority Concern	patches containing one or more occurrences of at least one non-listed State priority species
3	State Threatened Species observed	patches containing one or more occurrences of at least one State threatened species
4	State Endangered Species observed	patches with one or more occurrences of at least one State endangered species
5	Federally Listed Species observed	patches containing one or more occurrences of at least one wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened on the Federal list of endangered and threatened species.

In total, the Landscape Project identified four major critical habitat areas in Franklin Township, comprising 14,926 acres (([Figure 22A](#)) and ([Figure22B](#))). The most critical areas were grassland and forested habitat, 7,429.93 and 5,307.3 acres respectively. Within these categories Rank 4 Grassland (state endangered species observed in area) and Rank 5 Forest (federally listed species observed in area) accounted for the largest areas. State Threatened Wood Turtle and Federally Threatened Bald Eagle habitat types respectively accounted for 1,829.78 and 207.69 acres. This classification represents not the potential value, but the realized value of Franklin Township's varied ecosystems and high quality wildlife habitat. Finally, one Natural Heritage Priority site, listed as Buttermilk Bridge, was identified in the Township at a size of 172.77 acres. This site is the only known location of an undisclosed state listed endangered plant.

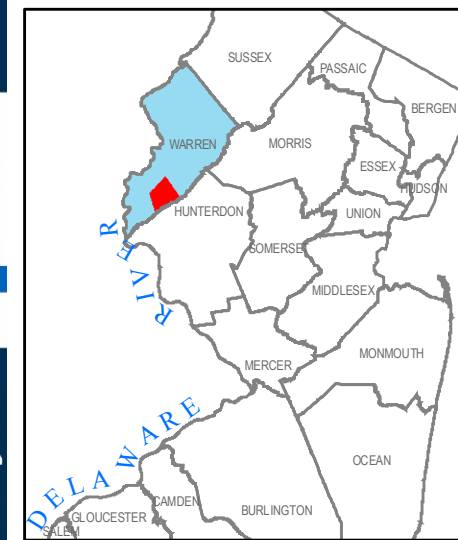
The Landscape data is prioritized by Rank. The following are the Ranking definitions

- RANK 1: Suitable Habitat
- RANK 2: Priority Concern
- RANK 3: State Threatened species observed in area
- RANK 4: State Endangered species observed in area
- RANK 5: Federally listed species observed in area

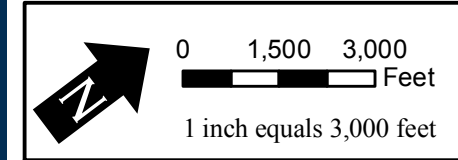


Bald Eagle Foraging	Natural Heritage Grids
Rank: 5	Location precisely not known
Wood Turtle Habitat	Location precisely known
Rank: 3	Natural Heritage Priority Sites
Forested Wetland	Buttermilk Bridge Site
Rank: 1	Natural Heritage Grids point to rare plant and/or natural communities with precisely known or unknown locations with the Grid.
Rank: 2	
Rank: 4	
Rank: 5	

NEW JERSEY COUNTY MAP



PRINCETON HYDRO, LLC.
1108 OLD YORK ROAD, SUITE 1
RINGOES, NEW JERSEY, 08551



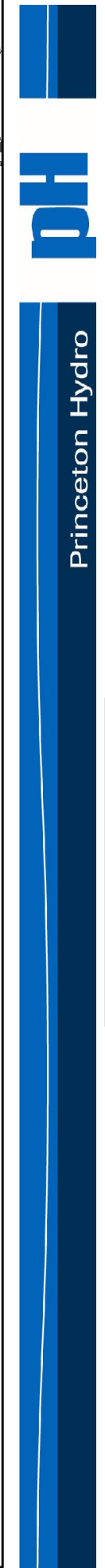
- SOURCES:
- Parcel, roads and the Franklin Township Boundary data obtained from Warren County Planning Dept. "This map was developed using the Warren County New Jersey, Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by Warren County and is not county-authorized."
 - Surface water data obtained from the NJDEP, Division of GIS.
 - Landscape data obtained from the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Endangered and Non-Game Species Program.

FIGURE 22A
LANDSCAPE PROJECT DATA & NATURAL HERITAGE DATA

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

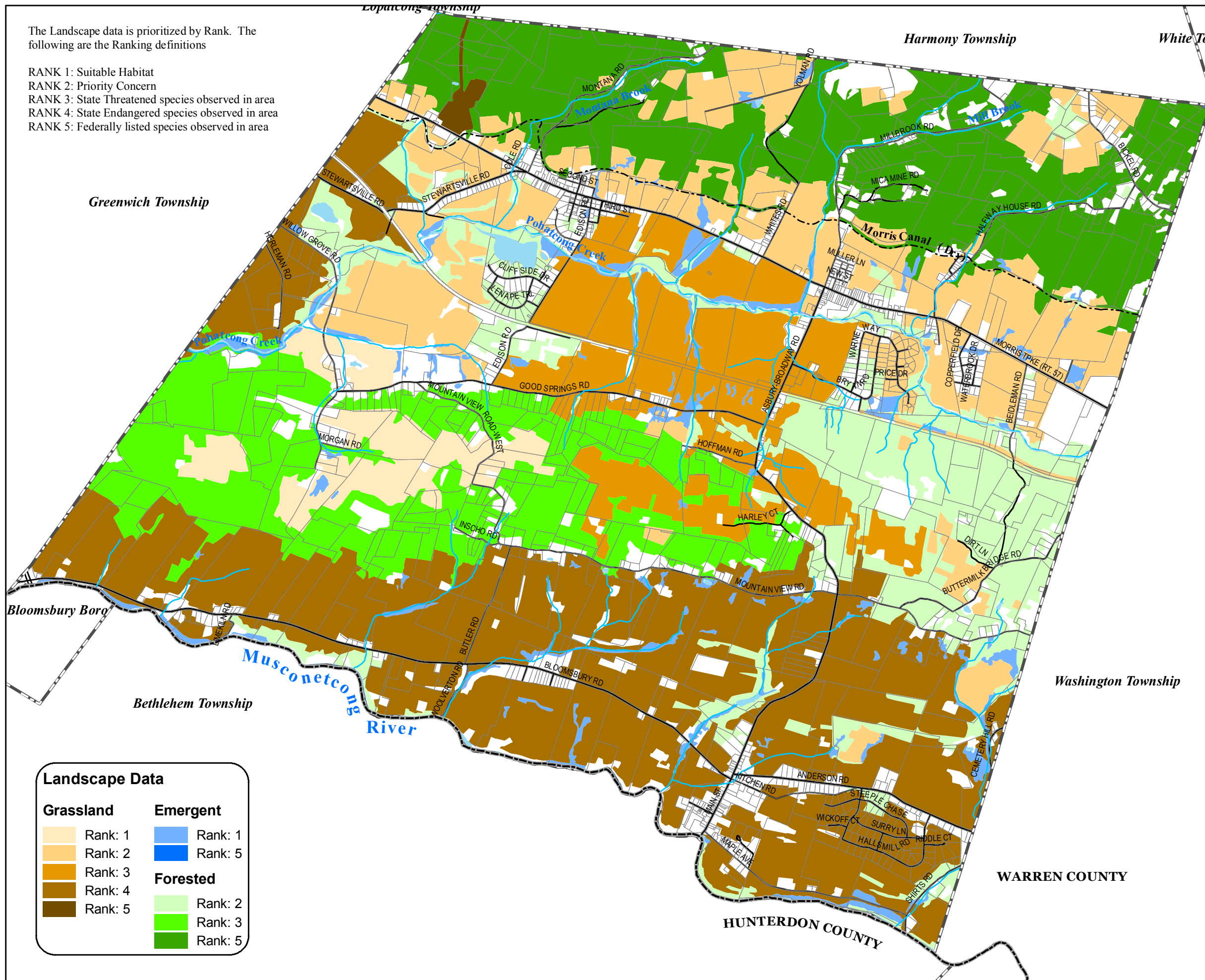
Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Roads
- Parcels
- Ponds/Lakes
- Streams**
- Streams
- Morris Canal (Dry)



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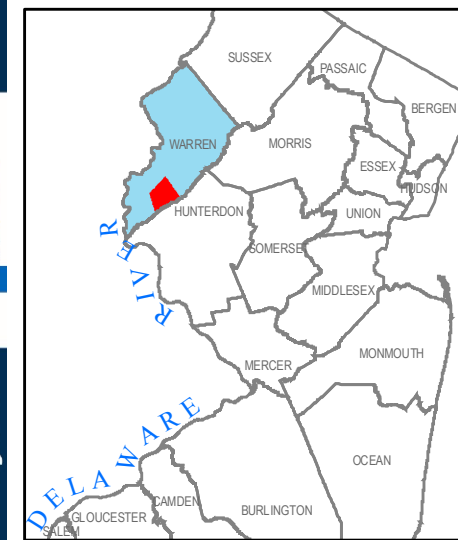
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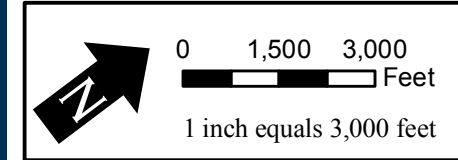
Landscape Data

Grassland	Emergent
Rank: 1	Rank: 1
Rank: 2	Rank: 5
Rank: 3	Forested
Rank: 4	Rank: 2
Rank: 5	Rank: 3
	Rank: 5

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**FIGURE 22B
LANDSCAPE PROJECT DATA**

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Parcels
- Roads
- Ponds/Lakes
- Streams**
- Streams
- Morris Canal (Dry)

