

## WEST BRANCH WADING RIVER

### NATURAL AREAS REGISTER SITE SUMMARY

May 4, 2000

**County:** Burlington

**Municipality:** Washington Township

**Physiographic Province:** Outer Coastal Plain

**U.S.G.S. Quadrangle:** Jenkins

**Coordinates:** 39 42'00" latitude; 74 33'00" longitude

**Acreage:** Approximately 1400 acres

**Ownership:** State of New Jersey, DEP, Wharton State Forest

**Land Use:** The Register Site encompasses a portion of Wharton State Forest in floodplain and adjacent uplands along the lower 6 miles of West Branch Wading River, and the lower 1 mile of Tulpehocken Creek. Private inholdings along the floodplain consist of a 30 ac private campground on the south side of Jenkins Road, a 100 ac partial clearcut north of Jenkins Road, and a 60 ac cranberry bog operation 0.85 miles north of Jenkins road. In the upper 1 mile of the West Branch Wading River adjacent to cranberry operations at Hog Wallow, the areas east of the river are in private ownership (Haines & Haines, Inc.). Public uses include camping, canoeing, hiking, and hunting. Park infrastructure is limited to sand roads in adjacent uplands, and improved river crossings at Hawkins Bridge , Godfrey Bridge (Jenkins Road), and Evans Bridge (Rt. 563). Park facilities include the Godfrey Bridge Camping Area on the west side of West Branch Wading River near Jenkins Road, the Hawkins Bridge Camping Area southwest of the confluence of Tulpehocken Creek and West Branch Wading River, and canoe launches at Hawkins Bridge and Evans Bridge. A section of the Batona Trail passes through the register site near Evans Bridge.

#### **Reason for Inclusion of Area in the Natural Areas Register:**

West Branch Wading River satisfies two of three criteria required for inclusion in the Natural Areas Register (fulfillment of only one standard is sufficient for Register consideration):

1. The site supports a significant viable example of a rare natural community or an extremely high quality representative of other natural communities of the State or nation.

Several examples of the rare pine barrens stream-side savannas are found along the rivers within this Register site. This outer coastal plain community type is dominated by sedges and grasses with scattered trees and shrubs, and is considered globally imperiled. It also provides habitat for numerous rare plant species. The Register site also includes high quality examples of Atlantic white cedar swamp and pitch pine lowland vegetative community types. A severe 1987 summer fire in the pitch pine lowlands and swales at Evans Bridge created high quality post-fire successional communities, with increased species diversity and greater potential for several rare species.

2. The site is verified as supporting a significant, viable natural occurrence of one or more plant or animal species, or both, determined to be rare, threatened or endangered in the State or nation.

The New Jersey Natural Heritage Database contains documented records for the following rare species in West Branch Wading River (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection 1999). Based on the locational precision of the record and the observation date, all of these species are believed to be extant in the Register site. Among these are several high quality occurrences of the globally rare and federal candidate species bog asphodel (*Narthecium americanum*) found in association with pine barren stream-side savannas and other habitats (Breden et al. 1998).

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
<i>Calamagrotis pickeringii</i>	Pickering's reedgrass	SE
<i>Calamovilfa brevipilis</i>	pine barrens reedgrass	LP
<i>Carex barrattii</i>	Barratt's sedge	LP
<i>Celithemis martha</i>	Martha's Pennant (a dragonfly)	SC
<i>Cleistes divaricata</i>	spreading pogonia	SE
<i>Gentiana autumnalis</i>	pine barrens gentian	LP, SC
<i>Hyla andersonii</i>	pine barrens treefrog	SE
<i>Juncus caesariensis</i>	New Jersey rush	SE
<i>Lobelia canbyi</i>	Canby's lobelia	LP, SC
<i>Muhlenbergia torreyana</i>	pine barrens smoke grass	LP, SC
<i>Narthecium americanum</i>	bog asphodel	SE, LP, FC
<i>Panicum scabriusculum</i>	sheathed panic grass	SC
<i>Rhynchospora cephalantha</i>	large-headed beaked rush	LP, SC
<i>Rhynchospora inundata</i>	horned beaked rush	LP, SC
<i>Rhynchospora knieskernii</i>	Knieskern's beaked rush	SE
<i>Rhynchospora oligantha</i>	few-flowered beaked rush	SC
<i>Schizaea pusilla</i>	curley grass fern	LP, SC
<i>Scirpus longii</i>	Long's bullrush	SE
<i>Sphagnum cyclophyllum</i>	a peat moss	SC
<i>Tofieldia racemosa</i>	false asphodel	SE
<i>Xyris caroliniana</i>	sand yellow-eyed grass	SE

Explanation of Status Codes: SE - Listed as State Endangered  
 SC - Species of Concern in New Jersey  
 LP - Listed by Pinelands Commission  
 FC - Federal Candidate Species

#### References:

Breden, T.F., E.A. Williams and E. Goodwin. 1998. De novo surveys for populations of *Narthecium americanum* using GIS. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and

Forestry, Office of Natural Lands Management, Trenton, NJ.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. 1999. New Jersey Natural Heritage Database, Division of Parks and Forestry, Office of Natural Lands Management, Trenton, NJ.

