

[The Enhancement of Land, Water, and Wildlife Habitat at Troy Meadows](#)

Troy Meadows is a US National Natural Landmark located in the central Passaic basin, in northern New Jersey. It is owned by a private, nonprofit organization - Wildlife Preserves, Inc. and managed as a natural area and wildlife sanctuary.

Troy Meadows is a mix of meadows, fields, and forests containing a variety of common and endangered plant and animal communities and many biological features, ponds and vernal breeding pools. It is part of the Atlantic flyway and serves as a staging area for migratory waterfowl. It is an exceptional resource for many species of fauna and flora and contains a dense population of avian and amphibian species, a particular haven for frogs, salamanders, and marsh birds.

Troy Meadows was once rated the "highest quality inland wetland in the State of New Jersey" by the US Department of Interior (published in its 1954 nationwide inventory of wetlands resources) but has since been degraded by encroaching suburban development, water and silt pollution, and invasive species of plants that are taking over its once native, natural habitat.

Recently, Wildlife Preserves began the first phase of an aggressive campaign to remove invasive species of plants from the meadows and woodlands at north-end of Troy Meadows in an effort to enhance the freshwater marsh, woodlands, and wildlife habitat there. The project includes installing over two miles of deer exclusion fencing around woodland habitat and replanting the meadows and woods with native plants species.

All the invasive species - from phragmites reed grass, Japanese barberry, to stilt grass - have been located and mapped and scheduled for eradication. Studies have shown that the dense stands of reed grass have raised the level of the marsh by several feet, displacing the water that was once so prevalent and important for marsh and migratory birds at Troy Meadows. And of course barberry and stilt grass fill the land and smother the seed-bearing flora that provides food, shelter, and habitat for indigenous fauna. All these invasives have created an imbalance in the ecosystem and this is the blight that many environmental organizations and individuals are attempting to heal.

The Troy Meadows project is a five to twenty-year plan that includes the establishment of a wetland mitigation bank, deed restricting the mitigation area in perpetuity, eradicating all the invasive species of plants, replacing them with native species, and restoring the meadows to its previous pristine condition. The story begins with a fight and ends with a positive outcome.

In 2013, PSE&G upgraded its electric transmission lines from Susquehanna, Pennsylvania to Roseland, New Jersey. The project was known as the S-R electric transmission line project. It increased the electric transmission from a single 230,000 volts - 230kV line to a dual line of 230kV and 540kV. It replaced the old 95-foot lattice towers with new 195-foot monopoles and increased the conductors running between the poles from 5 wires to 18.

The PSE&G line happens to run through Wildlife Preserves' property at the north-end of Troy Meadows. It encompasses a corridor 1-1/2 miles long and 150 feet wide and it includes eight towers. Wildlife Preserves is the largest, single private landowner over which the S-R power line project traversed.

In the process of building the project, PSE&G replaced its old, dilapidated boardwalk with a new, elevated, fiberglass walkway over the marsh (dubbed the "Green Mile" by its contractors). The project also required building a construction yard and helicopter landing area at Troy Meadows, which has since been restored.

In an effort to mitigate and help alleviate the disturbance to the environmental that the S-R transmission project was expected to cause at Troy Meadows, PSE&G agreed to fund a water and wildlife enhancement project at Troy Meadows. It was first proposed and studied to restore an old trap skeet range at the end of Troy Meadow Road, but the project proved to be too expensive because there were substantial costs to remove the spent clay skeet, shotgun wads, and lead pollution before any enhancement could even begin. Wildlife Preserves and PSE&G finally settled on a plan that Wildlife Preserves would build a wetland mitigation bank and PSE&G would fund its initial start up cost.

As part of its avian mitigation, PSE&G also installed wood duck boxes in the marsh under its line, but when Wildlife Preserves objected to the location, PSE&G provided Wildlife Preserves with additional wood duck boxes that are being installed along the woodland fringes.

In October, 2014, after over a year and a half of study and reports, Wildlife Preserves was issued its NJ DEP General Permit No. 16 to eradicate invasive species of plants at Troy Meadows. Wildlife Preserves hired Allied Biological to spray the phrag, which they did using two swamp track vehicles - an Argo and a Marsh Master. The initial application encompassed the treatment of 100 acres of phragmites and took two weeks to treat.

In the springtime Wildlife Preserves intends to remove 28 acres of barberry and 131 acres of stilt grass. Eventually Wildlife will install 100 acres of deer exclusion fencing and plant 14 acres of native, woodland plants and 16 acres of

wetland plants. Ultimately when the Troy Meadows Wetland Mitigation Bank is approved, Wildlife Preserves will grant a conservation restriction easement to the DEP on 560 acres of land at the north end of Troy Meadows, in Parsippany-Troy Hills between Troy Meadows Road and the interstate highways (Route 80, Route 280, and the 80/280 interchange).

See: WildlifePreserves.org for more information.

Any questions or concerns can be directed to Len@WildlifePreserves.org