# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program*

## Habitat Restoration Funded with Brewster Wellfield Superfund Site Settlement

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), along with other Federal and State agencies and Indian Nations, are Trustees of natural resources and are authorized by Superfund legislation to restore natural resources that have been harmed by the release of hazardous substances, such as oil and other chemicals. The USFWS and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation settled a natural resource damage claim related to the Brewster Wellfield Superfund Site in Putnam County, New York. A total of $20,000 was negotiated for natural resource restoration. The three projects completed and described in this fact sheet are wetland restoration and enhancement to benefit the Federally-listed as threatened bog turtle.

**Natural Resources and Impacts to those Resources at the Brewster Wellfield Superfund Site**

The Brewster Wellfield Superfund Site (Site) consisted of groundwater, soil, sediment, and surface water contaminated with chlorinated solvents discharged by a dry cleaning business. Actions were taken to restore groundwater quality and clean up contaminated soil and sediment. Natural resources impacted by this Site included aquatic resources of the adjacent East Branch of the Croton River and wetlands disturbed as part of site clean-up.

Scottish Highland cattle at Smith Site. Photo Credit: Environmental Defense

**Bog Turtle Restoration**

Bog turtles are dependent on early successional wetland habitat. Their habitat can become degraded by excessive growth of shrubs and trees or the proliferation of invasive species, such as Phragmites. Wetland restoration projects have been completed by Environmental Defense at the Smith Site, Hammond Site and Harmony Site. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is planning additional bog turtle restoration work at the Bog Brook Unique area.

Bog turtle. Photo Credit: USFWS

**Bog Turtle Restoration Projects Completed by Environmental Defense**

Habitat restoration at the three sites included clearing of trees and other woody debris and construction of livestock fence to allow rotational grazing by Scottish Highland cattle. These cattle maintain early successional wetland habitat needed by bog turtles. Monitoring was conducted, followed by exclusion fencing of bog turtle nests.

Bog turtle researchers collecting data at Hammond Site. Photo Credit: Environmental Defense

Bog turtle nest at one of restoration sites. Photo Credit: Environmental Defense

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