

APPENDIX G

Timber Rattlesnake Habitat  
Assessment



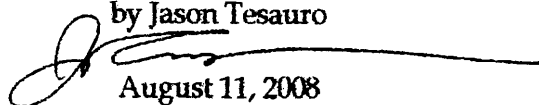


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**Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) Habitat Assessment for the Proposed Patrick Farm  
Land Development, Ramapo, New York**

by Jason Tesauro



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On July 31, 2008 I visited the proposed Patrick Farm land development project site located between Routes 202 and 306 in the Town of Ramapo, New York to evaluate the habitat for timber rattlesnakes (*Crotalus horridus*), a state-endangered species. The entire site was surveyed on foot, focusing on the presence of open, rocky terrain (i.e., ledges, outcrops, talus) that would be suitable for timber rattlesnake denning and basking (NYNHP, 2008).

The Patrick Farm tract consists of a mosaic of disturbed upland deciduous forest, mowed fields, utility line right-of-ways (ROW), and two large wetlands (Figure 1). The southwestern portion of the property contains residential dwellings, outbuildings, and horse paddocks. The terrain of the tract consists generally of rolling hills and low-lying areas with little exposed outcrops or rock structures other than stone walls or scattered piles of glacial till. Deer browse was very heavy in the forest and exotic vegetation was abundant. The southwestern corner of the tract closest to Route 202 contains a steep, westerly facing slope that terminates in a series of grassy balds with areas of exposed bedrock. This portion of the property was the closest to resembling anything indicative of timber rattlesnake habitat; however, other than openness of the balds, which are typically used by timber rattlesnakes for foraging and basking, this area was closed-canopy and lacked rocky crevices or other outcrop structures preferred by timber rattlesnakes for denning and other life histories.

During the survey one species of snake was observed, the eastern black racer (*Coluber constrictor*). This common species was observed near an old horse barn in the southern portion of the tract. An eastern screech owl (*Otus asio*) was also observed roosting in the barn.

This habitat investigation was commissioned by Isaac Lebovits in response to correspondence from the New York Natural Heritage Program, which stated that timber rattlesnakes have been documented within the vicinity of the project site. Through an analysis of the surrounding landscape, it is likely that the nearest timber rattlesnake denning habitat is in the Ramapo Mountains, west of the project site. Timber rattlesnakes are known to disperse up to 2.5 miles from their dens (New York Natural Heritage Program, 2008). While the Patrick Farm project is within this dispersal distance, the forest community is marginal in habitat quality and furthermore, it is isolated from the Ramapo Mountains by state highway 202 (Figure 2). Timber rattlesnakes are unlikely to occur on the project site.

**References**

New York Natural Heritage Program. 2008. Timber Rattlesnake.  
<http://www.acris.nynhp.org/guide.php?id=7536%E2%88%82=6>

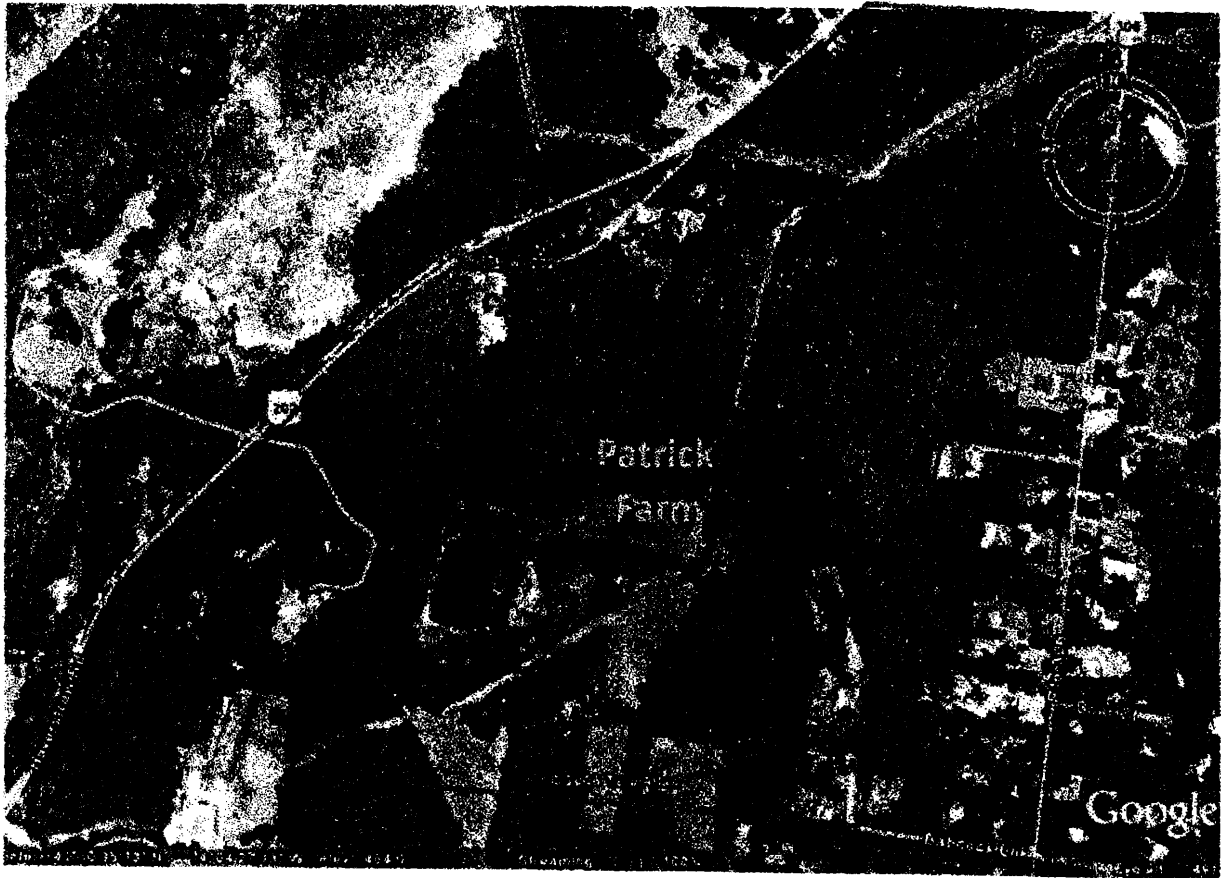


Figure 1. Approximate location of the Patrick Farm project site, Town of Ramapo, New York

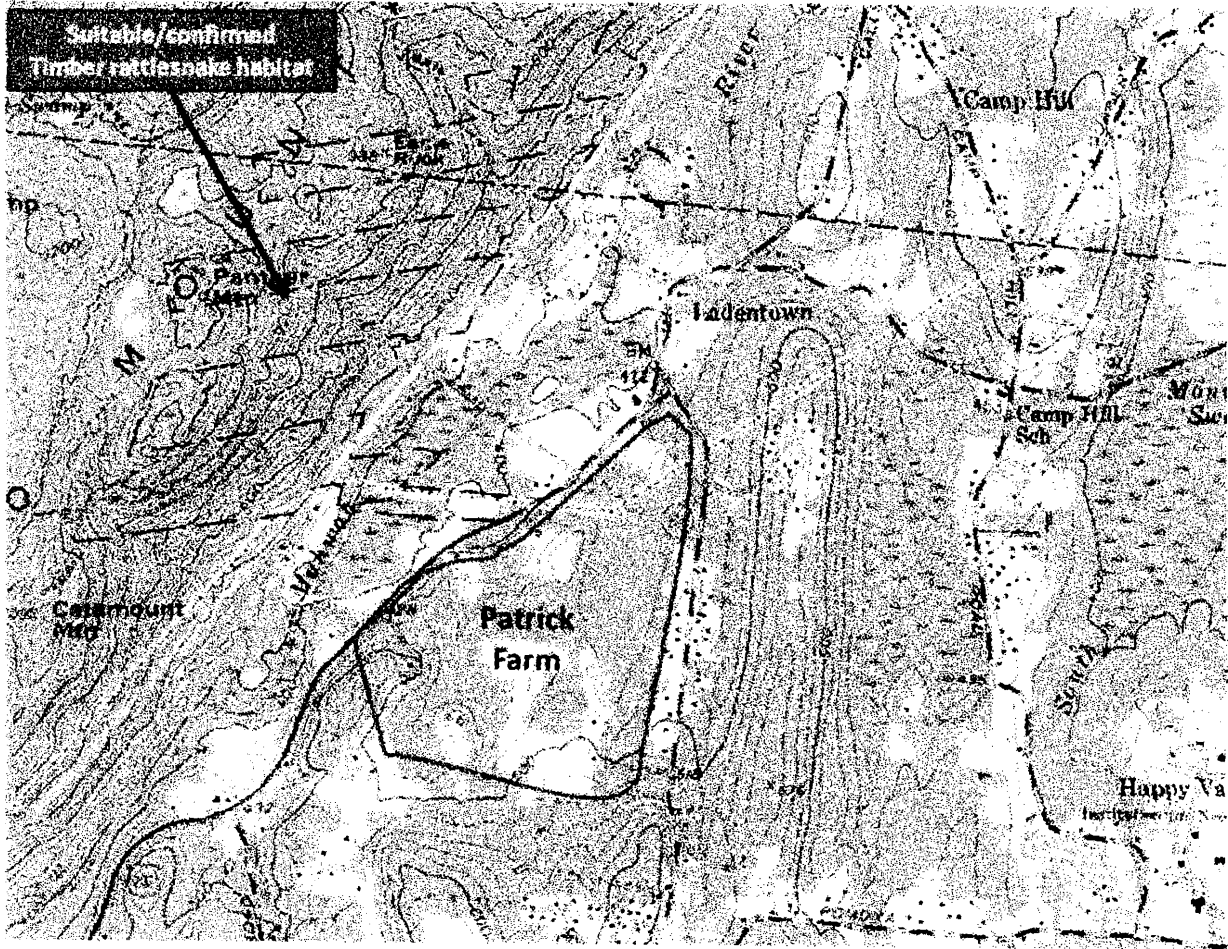


Figure 2. USGS topographic map of Patrick Farm site (approx.) and suitable/confirmed timber rattlesnake habitat west of the site in the Ramapo Mountains

