



## NBII Northeast Information Node

The Northeast Information Node adds new geographic perspective to the NBII Program.

### Background

The National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) <[www.nbio.gov](http://www.nbio.gov)> is an electronic information network that provides access to biological data and information on our nation's plants, animals, and ecosystems. Data and information maintained by federal, state, and local government agencies; non-government organizations; and private-sector organizations are linked through the NBII gateway and made accessible to a variety of audiences including researchers, natural resource managers, decision-makers, educators, students, and other citizens.



*The diversity of ecosystems throughout the northeast is evident in Boston harbor and skyline, and a typical New England village in autumn.*



Implementation of the NBII is being accomplished through the development of nodes that serve as interconnected entry points to the NBII and the information held by partners. These nodes function as fully digital, distributed, and interactive systems that focus on developing, acquiring, and managing content on a defined subject area (thematic nodes)

or a geographic region (regional nodes). One of the newest regional nodes is the Northeast Information Node (NIN).

### NIN

Are you interested in the spread of *Elaeagnus umbellata* (an invasive weed) in the forests of Vermont? Do you need information on urban wildlife populations in the Greater New York metropolitan area? The recent creation of NIN adds a new geographic perspective to the

NBII Program that will help you find the answers to these questions and many more. With a regional focus on the states of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, NIN extends and complements the existing NBII regional nodes. Key issues it will address are the protection of drinking water supplies; the conservation of natural landscapes critical as wildlife habitat and important to the long-term environmental health of the region; and the retention of a working landscape providing farmland and forest products, green space for outdoor recreation, and important buffer lands between urbanizing areas.

To create and manage this node, the NBII has partnered with the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) <[www.ciesin.columbia.edu](http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu)>, a component of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. This partnership builds on previous work CIESIN has done assisting the NBII in



building Web resources for the NBII Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Node.

## Initial Projects

A prime example of the new node's planned activities is the work NIN has begun in New York with the National Park Service to create an online searchable guide to research conducted at the Jamaica Bay complex within the Gateway National Park. This urban estuary provides critical habitat for migratory birds alongside upland areas that are part of the John F. Kennedy International Airport. Its waters, uplands, and barrier beaches also provide invaluable respite and recreational opportunities for the New York City metropolitan community. The bay is the frequent subject of research for improved management of its wildlife, fisheries, waters, and marshes. This searchable database makes accessible the myriad of management and research activities occurring in the Bay including the latest research, descriptive information on the many Bay stakeholders, highlights on future activities, and links to other related sites.

Work with Hudsonia <[www.hudsonia.org](http://www.hudsonia.org)> in Annandale, NY, is another



Camden, Maine

example of how NIN is assisting partners to distribute information on biological diversity within the northeast. Since 1981, Hudsonia has conducted environmental research, education, training, and technical assistance to protect the Hudson River Valley's natural heritage. Their work includes education, basic and applied research on Hudson River wetlands, habitat and rare species ecology, and the study of nonnative plants and other threats to biodiversity. NIN's work with Hudsonia will help local agencies, citizens, developers, and others with an interest in biological diversity to identify and protect ecologically significant habitats.

Among the node's planned partnerships is the Vermont Monitoring Cooperative (VMC) <<http://vmc.snr.uvm.edu/>>, a collaborative organization in which scientists collect and pool information and data for the purpose of improving our understanding, protection, and management of Vermont's forested ecosystems. The centerpiece of the VMC is the data library and card catalogue system that allow data to be shared, archived, and accessed by scientists and other interested parties. NIN will also be working with the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England <<http://invasives.eeb.uconn.edu/ipane/>>, whose mission is to create a comprehensive, Web-accessible database of invasive and potentially invasive plants in New England.

As NIN develops, it will have a special focus on the effects of growth on the nation's urban and suburban regions. NIN will provide information about urban impacts on the environment and



Manhattan, New York

health to strengthen local capacity for making sound land-use decisions to retain the region's environmental qualities. The primary goal is to build effective partnerships between stakeholders, government agencies, and the research community and to elevate public awareness to ensure the economic viability and livability of the Northeast.

## For More Information

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<<http://nin.nbii.gov>>.