

NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS WATER PROTECTION
AND PLANNING COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAY 22, 2008

PRESENT

JOHN WEINGART)	CHAIRMAN
)	
KURT ALSTEDE)	COUNCIL MEMBERS
ELIZABETH CALABRESE)	
TRACY CARLUCCIO)	
WILLIAM COGGER)	
MIMI LETTS)	
JACK SCHRIER)	
)	
VIA TELECONFERENCE)	
JANICE KOVACH)	
DEBBIE PASQUARELLI)	
ERIK PETERSON)	
)	
ABSENT)	
TIM DILLINGHAM)	
GLEN VETRANO)	
TAHESHA WAY)	
SCOTT WHITENACK)	

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman of the Council, John Weingart, called the 69th meeting of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council to order at 4:10 pm.

ROLL CALL

The members introduced themselves.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Chairman Weingart announced that the meeting was called in accordance with the Open Public meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 and that the Highlands Council had sent written notice of the time, date, and location of this meeting to pertinent newspapers or circulation throughout the State and posted on the Highlands Council website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was then recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2008

Mr. Schrier introduced a motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Cogger seconded it. Ms. Calabrese abstained and all other members present and on the telephone voted to approve. The minutes were approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Swan reported that there had been a County Planner's meeting on May 16th and that staff had met with Hampton Borough this morning. Ms. Swan stated that the Regional Master Plan discussion items would be discussed later in the agenda.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Weingart reported that the TDR Committee had met on May 15th and that the Council's TDR Consultant Charlie Simon was present along with John Stokes from the Pinelands Commission and Monique Purcell from the Department of Agriculture. He noted that the Chair of the TDR Committee Scott Whitenack was unable to attend today's meeting to give his report. He announced that the next Highlands Council meeting will be held on June 5th at 10 am.

Ms. Letts complimented the work of Jeff LeJava and any other Council staff and members that had been involved in the preparation of the TDR materials. She expressed her appreciation for the detailed analysis of these complex issues.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION - APPROVAL OF CERTAIN PLANNING ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR BOROUGH OF HAMPTON AND BOROUGH OF HOPATCONG

Ms. Swan introduced the Resolution of two Initial Assessment Grants for the Boroughs of Hampton and Hopatcong. Ms. Swan noted that Hopatcong had been awarded a \$7,500 COAH grant in October of 2005. She also noted that Hampton had been awarded a \$12,500 COAH in April of 2006 and that this grant was still open as there is a pending court issue.

Mr. Schrier moved the motion and Mr. Cogger seconded it. There was discussion amending the motion to clarify the language that there were two separate grants not to exceed \$15,000 each and Mr. Schrier and Mr. Cogger agreed to the amendments. All members present and on the telephone voted to approve the motion as amended. The Resolution was APPROVED.

REGIONAL MASTER PLAN DISCUSSION

Ms. Swan began a presentation on the Regional Master Plan items.

Highlands Open Waters and Riparian Areas GPOs

Ms. Swan outlined the revisions to the Goals, Policies and Objectives (GPOs) regarding the Highlands Open Waters and Riparian Areas discussing the need to continue the 300 foot buffer requirement for all Highlands Open Waters (HOW) for the Preservation and Planning Areas. She reviewed the need to address disturbed buffer use and restoration in the Planning Area in the RMP, for example, she pointed out that it may be appropriate to have public access to some urban streams in disturbed areas, while requiring a measurable and scientific approach to ensure no net loss of stream buffer functional value.

She stated that the policies revised for the Planning Area included provisions that proposed disturbances shall only occur in previously disturbed areas and there would be a sequence of low impact best management practices to be employed if any disturbance is allowed: 1) to avoid the disturbance of HOW buffers; 2) minimize impacts to HOW buffers; and 3) mitigate all adverse modification to the HOW buffers resulting in no net loss of the functional value of the buffer. Included in the revisions would also be a clarification that key functional values of buffers would include but not be limited to: habitat, water quality, temperature moderation and channel integrity. She then discussed a new objective that would include a policy through Plan Conformance to have

municipalities develop and implement a municipal wide or subwatershed wide Stream Corridor Protection/Restoration Plan that would protect the functional values broadly, not just on a site by site basis. Stream corridor planning can also identify remedial or mitigation opportunities providing a systematic procedure for evaluating specific stream reaches in the subwatershed. These plans would help achieve the Act's goals of Protect, Restore and Enhance. She finished this section by commenting that the changes proposed were based on comments received.

There was discussion regarding exemptions and waivers with Mr. Borden commenting that there are various exemptions under the Highlands Act that would allow activities in HOW buffers. He noted that DEP presently does not need to review certain exemptions and stated that the issue of exemptions and waivers is being addressed in Land Owner Equity rather than repeating the exemptions and waivers in each section. Mr. Alstede asked when the key functional value requirements would come into play and Mr. Borden replied that an exemption is available for a single family home but that if a landowner wanted to construct a commercial building, then the HOW requirements would apply because these provisions apply to non-exempt projects.

Ms. Carluccio expressed her concern that the section detailing the Stream Corridor Protection/Restoration Plan could allow less than a 300 foot buffer if prepared by the municipality. Dr. Van Abs reviewed the process stating that this approach was an attempt to allow a municipality to utilize a science based approach to identify buffers specific for particular stream reaches and apply the buffers accordingly to more detailed drainage patterns. Ms. Swan mentioned *Objective 1D4c* noting that it requires adherence to the minimum stream buffer requirements of NJDEP's Stormwater Rules, Flood Hazard Area rules and Freshwater Wetland rules.

Mr. Cogger asked that historical value be identified as important. Mr. Weingart commented that historic structures would be covered under land acquisition priorities.

Ms. Carluccio asked in *Objective 1D2a* whether there would be onsite testing for soils in Riparian Areas and Ms. Swan replied that the soils were mapped and as part of the Hi-map this information will be available by block and lot. Ms. Carluccio also raised concerns about the *Objective 1D4i* and suggested that Sec. 2 include *Objectives 1D4d* through *1D4b*. She continued to raise concerns that this approach was weakening the 300 foot buffer requirement. Dr. Van Abs discussed this "variable source area technique" as one that has been used successfully elsewhere in the country and provided a science based approach for determining the most effective buffer that gets the best result. It was agreed that staff would add language from *Objective 1D4b* to section 2 of *Objective 1D4i* for clarity. Ms. Swan emphasized that the object of the changes was to strengthen the protections afforded to the streams in a scientific manner and she pointed out the comparison between the 2007 final draft and these revisions as outlined in the ED Report. Ms. Pasquarelli also expressed concern that this section was weakening the 300 foot buffer requirement and advocated for more specific standards. Ms. Swan pointed out that the objective that allowed for the increase of the 300foot buffer where necessary was included in the GPOs.

Ms. Pasquarelli asked what the definition of "previously disturbed areas" was in *Objective 1d4e* and it was agreed that staff would add a definition. She also expressed concern about having more specificity for waivers and noted that wherever there was ambiguity, in her experience, there is opportunity for litigation.

Mr. Alstede asked about whether agricultural development was exempt and Mr. Borden summarized the different exemptions for the Preservation Area and the Planning Area and that the Highlands Act does not exempt agricultural activities. He specified that the Act requires that agricultural uses and development activities in the Preservation Area are not subject to NJDEP's Highlands rules, but if the 3 and 9% impervious cover limits are triggered, they will be subject to Department of Agriculture rules for farm and resource plans. Ms. Swan pointed out that there was language in the Agricultural Resources section on how Ag would be treated.

Ms. Carluccio asked if (in connection with *Objective 1d4i*) every town would prepare a Stream Corridor plan during conformance and if so, could a town come in with a plan that does not follow the 300 foot buffer. She wanted to know if there are minimums for buffers. Dr. Van Abs clarified that the *Objective 1D4e* includes a provision for a minimum of 150 feet and also that staff would develop guidance for municipalities as to how to do the Stream Corridor plans. It was agreed that staff would include *Objectives 1d4b* and *1d4c* in *1D4i* and that *1D4e* and *1D4f* also need to be addressed.

Ms. Letts asked if the buffers could be averaged and Ms. Swan responded that this approach does provide for averaging, but does provide for identifying the functional values. There was additional discussion resulting in the Chair asking staff to write a separate paragraph for Section 2 of *Objective 1D4i* identifying what that section applies to.

Water Resource Availability

Ms. Swan continued the presentation with a discussion of policies and objectives that were consolidated to improve ease of understanding. She noted that the order of GPOs was changed for better transition and that mitigation requirements had been incorporated from the white paper discussed at the May 1st meeting and that details would be included in the Plan Conformance Standards and Highlands Project Review requirements.

Ms. Carluccio asked that an objective for aquatic ecosystems be added and it was noted that staff would add it with respect to *Policy 2B4*. She also raised concerns about *Objective 2B4a* and Dr. Van Abs committed to add clarifying language to it.

The discussion turned to what actions would be taken under the performance bond scenario in *Objective 2B9b*. It was agreed that staff would create a general statement as to the criteria for performance bonds and in what circumstances they would be used.

Land Preservation and Stewardship

Ms. Swan reviewed the changes noting that most of those changes related to clarifying language, removing duplicate language, combining and reorganizing GPOs. She discussed a new *Policy 1H2* that addresses all the coordinating efforts and technical assistance needs for land preservation and stewardship. She also summarized a new *policy 1H7* that was *1H11* that provides for the designation of a Special Environmental Zone to comply with the Act's mandate. She read the language from the Act noting that the zone was in the Preservation Area. She then reviewed the recommended method for the Special Environmental Zone to use parcel clusters within designated Conservation Priority Areas in the Preservation Area and that five indicators were chosen as the most important for protection of water resource and environmentally sensitive lands: forest with the forest resource area, riparian corridor condition high, Highlands Open Water Protection area, critical habitat, and water quality management tier (excluding the developed lake community sub-zone).

The Special Environmental Zone analysis resulted in 360 parcels totaling 19,000 acres. She discussed the use of the confidential list of parcels that has been developed for Green Acres and SADC and said that the Special Environmental Zone took the analysis to the next level. She again noted that the Special Environmental Zone was only in the Preservation Area. Ms. Letts inquired as to whether the exemptions were in place and was told that the exemptions would still apply. Mr. Schrier remarked that there was no monetary compensation attached to the development regulations in *Policy 1H7*. Mr. Borden discussed the two avenues of relief provided for in the Act as exemptions and waivers. He stated that one of Highlands Act waivers authorizes relief to avoid a taking. Chair Weingart commented that development regulations may not permanently preserve the Special Environmental Zone lands given the exemptions and the waivers. Mr. Cogger raised the issue of confidentiality of the lists and felt that they should be shared with municipalities and non-profit agencies. Ms. Swan noted that the list had been completed and that staff had complied with the mandate of the Act to keep the list confidential and submit it only to Green Acres and SADC. Staff has met with John Flynn from Green Acres, Sue Craft from SADC and Monique Purcell from the Department of Agriculture to discuss the methodology to be employed. She pointed out though the Act mandates the confidentiality of the lists, in the case of the Environmental Zone it says that the RMP shall identify zones where development shall not occur. This zone does not have to be confidential. Borden commented that the Special Environmental Zone was analyzed on a regional scale and that map will be available to non profits showing that zone as well as the Conservation and Agricultural Priority Area in the Regional Master Plan. Ms. Letts asked whether appraisals showing value before the Act were possible and Ms. Swan discussed the dual appraisal methodology that was put in place for five years with the passage of the Act. Appraisers are accustomed to this approach. Mr. Alstede did not agree that the list should be kept confidential. Mr. Cogger suggested that maintenance of forested areas be added to *Goal 1j*.

Agricultural Resources

Ms. Swan reviewed the changes to the Agricultural Resource GPOs commenting that they were revised for clarification and to address comments from public, NJDA and NJFB as well as to be consistent with changes to Cluster program policies and objectives and the white paper on Conservation Plans. She highlighted *Policy 3D2* and *Policy 3D3* that amended the policy from “encourage” conservation plans for 3%/9% triggers to “require” in the Planning Area. She also spoke to new *Policy 3E4* and *Objectives 3E4a* and *3E4b* which address agricultural and horticultural use and development through Plan Conformance in coordination with NJDA, SADC, and CADBs and are consistent with the Right to Farm Act. The intent is to have one place to address the applicability of the resource protection requirements of the RMP.

She also mentioned that the new objective addresses the confidential list of preservation priority parcels, agriculture retention/farmland preservation plans and development regulations that prioritize the preservation of agricultural lands in the agricultural priority areas and limit non-agricultural uses. These objectives, she noted, also cover regional coordination with all groups to maximize agricultural preservation efforts as well as coordination with SHPO on historic agricultural structures.

Several Council members questioned the use of the terms credits in *Policy 3B4* and it was agreed that staff would clarify that language. There were some questions from Council members on acquisition and whether the farm acquired in fee simple is maintained as a farm. Mr. Schrier mentioned that the farms acquired as a preservation project and sell off the development rights are deed restricted as a farm even if they are auctioned by SADC. That restriction runs with the land whoever owns it. Mr.

Cogger gave Chubb Farm as an example. Mr. Cogger also commented that some municipalities have Right to Farm ordinances and that they can be more liberal than the Right to Farm act, but are necessary if a farm is to be preserved.

Map Adjustments and Future Land Use

The presentation continued by Ms. Swan discussing the distinction between RMP Updates, which are factual updates, and Map Adjustments, which address policy issues. The processes had been separated in revisions in response to comments. She emphasized that Map Adjustments can only be used after waivers, exemptions, and RMP Updates have been examined. She remarked that priority for Map Adjustments will be given to conforming municipalities and that municipal coordination will be encouraged when appropriate. There will also be criteria established for different zones, standards and digital submissions. She then summarized the various adjustments to the Protection Zone, Conservation Zone or Environmentally constrained Sub-Zones and the adjustment proposed to change an Existing Community Zone to another zone or sub-zone.

She continued the review with Future Land Use GPOs and that the policies and objectives have been consolidated. She highlighted the model for local build out analysis that would be required through Plan Conformance would be provided to municipalities and would be sufficient to address build out needs for all levels of government including local, county, regional and State as well as for Plan Endorsement.

She finished the discussion with a brief review of LUCM zone policies. As a result of questions from Council members, Chairman Weingart asked staff to clarify that the build out analysis is a tool that municipalities can use to meet various build out needs and Ms. Swan also mentioned that developable lands would be a part of the analysis as an example. Ms. Carluccio asked that *Policy 6B5* say “such as clustering” instead of “including clustering”.

Landowner Equity

Ms. Swan stated that for consistency and to avoid repetition, this section will address the Act’s exemptions and waivers as applicable throughout the RMP. She then noted that three new goals were added covering issuance and monitoring of exemptions, issuance, tracking and monitoring of permits and waivers, and mitigation to the maximum extent possible of the impacts of exempt development on the ecosystem integrity of the region through use of innovative land use programs.

Chair Weingart asked why the section started with “Additionally” and Mr. Borden stated that TDR language is the first part of Part 7 and this language would follow that introduction. Mr. Borden discussed the fact that the primary focus exemption activities are now in the Preservation Area and that the Council staff needs to develop guidance on exemptions for the Planning Area as the Highlands Council will be processing these exemptions. Ms. Letts asked that in *Objective 7F1a* that the exemptions be annotated with the applicability in the Planning Area and Preservation Area. Staff will address her request.

Conformance Standards

The last issue discussed was guidance for Steep Slopes with respect to conformance standards. Ms. Swan noted that this section was to illustrate for Council Members the approach to developing conformance standards and in response to comments on details necessary for Conformance. Ms. Carluccio commented that this effort was a huge piece of work. Council members questioned when

this would be ready for Plan Conformance and were told that the work was being done now so that it would be completed in time for adoption.

Chair Weingart announced that the next Council Meeting would be June 5th at 10 am.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Betty Schultheis, Councilwoman Allamuchy Township

She expressed concern that the TDR process could fall into the same category as Regional Contribution Agreements. She noted that her township has had a vacant low income rental unit for 2 years and questioned the validity of the COAH numbers recently presented.

David Shope, Lebanon Township

He asked for a clarification of ecological uses for water availability and said he was interested in landowner equity not equity for species. He believes that the Highlands Act is like the imposition of the Napoleonic code. He also expressed concerns, using laboratory testing of animals to illustrate, that denial of equity was unfair and unethical.

Eliot Ruga, NJ Highlands Coalition

He commented on the map adjustments presentation asking that non-conforming municipalities not have the same status of conforming municipalities with respect to request for non-regional planning purposes. He believes that even if no net loss is required within the HUC14 that it sounds like horse trading.

Helen Heinrich, NJ Farm Bureau

She brought and submitted an article on what farmers sell in farmers' markets. She asked that a definition of sustainable agriculture be included in the glossary noting that some defined it narrowly as organic, but the Farm Bill defines it more broadly. She remarked that she would review the Agricultural Resources section but that she was opposed to amending the farmland assessment statute for forest management and explained her concerns. She commented that some Council members wanted more rigid standards versus flexibility and that she believed that more rigid standards that did not apply to a given site would give rise to more litigation.

Frank Minch, NJ Department of Agriculture

He expressed concern regarding the many difficulties associated with the functional value analysis for stream buffers. He supported the Council's efforts in support of agricultural practices.

Deborah Post, Chester Township

She spoke against flexibility in developing standards and turned to a discussion of the TDR analysis of the initial offering price. She disagreed with the tax-based methodology that was used to develop the initial offering price of \$16,000 and remarked that \$500 million dollars of credit according to her calculations was not close to a report that had estimated that the loss to landowners amounted to \$15 billion dollars. She believed that market data should have been used instead of tax data and that the initial offering price was 75% below fair market value. She advocated that actual comps and appraisals should be used for the TDR program.

Julia Somers, NJ Highlands Coalition

She continues to be concerned that the mitigation program in deficit subwatersheds had not been dropped and believes it should be. She expressed gratitude for the Special Environmental Zone. She

commented that she would need more time to review the map adjustment program. She did comment that she approved of the hierarchy of Avoid, Minimize and Mitigate and that it should be reflected in map adjustment protocols and the same functional analysis should be included in map adjustments. She felt that the build out analysis being used for multiple agencies made sense.

Andrew Drysdale, Chester Township

He commented that environmental extremism had created the Highlands Act and that the current high price of gas is one more example of that extremism.

Wilma Frey, NJ Conservation Foundation

She commented that she thought the Special Environmental Zone was good, but questioned the small acreage versus the total acreage in the Preservation Area. She thought that the Policy 1I3 was good, but that land trusts were not mentioned and should be. She described the lack of monitoring by municipalities and that NJCF monitors annually and recommended that land trusts would be better suited to monitoring because of the staffing constraints that exist in municipalities and thus they should be included in the GPOs. She also noted that the contributions of land trusts were not noted and should be. She then remarked that in Policy 1J1 that DEP or Green Acres was better suited than the SADC to administer a Forest Preservation Easement Program because of the ecological and wildlife values involved. In Objective 1J1a, she advocated that DEP administer the program and thought that it should be expanded to include threatened and endangered species, management of invasive species and the management of water resources – quality and quantity. With respect to Agricultural Resources, she said that NJCF would be sending in comments. In Policy 3B4, she thought there should be an impervious cover limit in place. She also asked that forest management should be called forest stewardship. She expressed concern about cluster and supported Ms Carluccio's comments. She also said she would be sending in a written correction to her comments at the last meeting as she felt the minutes did not accurately capture them.

Marianne Harris, Morris County Trust for Historic Preservation

She thanked Mr. Cogger for his comments on adding historic resources, but expressed concern about the lack of support from other Council members. She asked that in the riparian section that there should be a cross reference for archaeological resources as they might be found there. She went on to discuss that she believed that the land stewardship policies should address stewardship of historic resources. In Policy 1H4, she wanted to include sites that should be restored for historic purposes. She discussed the Federal tax credit for income producing property with respect to SHPO. She asked for more references for historic preservation in land preservation.

Mark Zakutansky, NJ Highlands Coalition

He encouraged the Council Members to continue to ask questions as the public had little advance notice of the documents. He thanks the staff for clarifying changes and encouraged cross referencing.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

**Vote on the Approval of
these Minutes**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Councilmember Alstede	✓			
Councilmember Calabrese	✓			
Councilmember Carluccio	✓			
Councilmember Cogger	✓			
Councilmember Dillingham			✓	
Councilmember Kovach	✓			
Councilmember Letts	✓			
Councilmember Pasquarelli				✓
Councilmember Peterson	✓			
Councilmember Schrier	✓			
Councilmember Vetrano			✓	
Councilmember Way			✓	
Councilmember Whitenack	✓			
Councilmember Weingart	✓			

PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED

HELEN HEINRICH 3 PGS ①
5/22/07 COUNCIL MTG.

Sustainable agriculture is defined in the 1990 farm bill as "an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having site-specific application that will over the long term - (a) satisfy human food and fiber needs; (b) enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; (c) make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; (d) sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and (e) enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole"

From the 1990 Farm Bill

Starting a farmers' market in a rural area where massive crowds may not be assured offers an opportunity to communicate with residents closer to farms and may encourage more visits to farmer-owned roadside stands.

Photo courtesy Tara Bowers, Foodshed Alliance

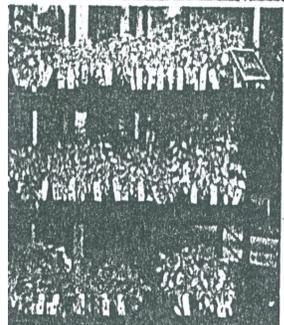
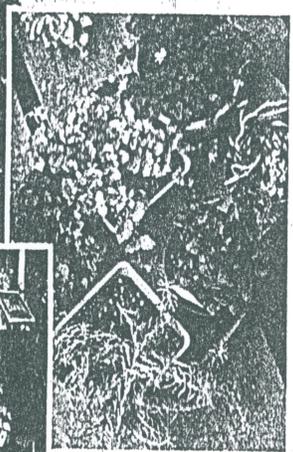
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Sussex and Warren
east one market, and
See RURAL, Page 9

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Rutgers research relays markets' benefits to farmers, communities

By SARAH L. CRANSTON
 AFP Correspondent

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) Food Innovation Center (FIC) and Cooperative Extension hosted three forums in Bordentown, Paterson, and Bridgeton last month to report on the center's findings from research conducted in cooperation with the Food Policy Institute and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture on farm earning opportunities and community farmers' markets (CFMs) in New Jersey.

Through a series of surveys, focus groups sessions and one-on-one interviews, FIC staff and Food Policy Institute researchers investigated the economic impact that CFMs are having on the state's farms. At the forums, FIC focused on how to use markets to make money, promote local agriculture and support community improvement programs that either serve local populations or support the state's extensive tourism industry as agritourism destinations.

Forum presenters included FIC Director Lou Cooperhouse; FIC Associate Director Diane Holtaway; New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles Kuperus; and NJDA Assistant Secretary Albert Murray to name a few.

Staff and researchers conducted the study in order to identify best practices, spotlight models that are meeting farmers' and communities' goals, and give information about how to set up and sell at CFMs.

One catalyst for the study was the fact that the occurrence of farmers' markets in New Jersey grew 158 percent from 2000 to 2006. That's nearly three times the national rate. Initiators of the study also noted that consumer demand for locally-grown, fresh produce is growing and is likely to continue to do so as communities show increased interest in starting markets for a variety of social and nutritional reasons. The benefits for farmers are also there. Some N.J. farmers reported CFM revenues of more than \$110,000.

"We believe that the number of CFMs will continue to increase," Cooperhouse said. "Consumers are seeking local foods for purchase and value an interaction with New Jersey farmers. Communities are increasingly seeing farmers' markets as a vehicle for local economic development, and farmers have found this to be an opportunity in which they can earn considerably greater income."

Benefits for communities are varied. For example, CFMs can substitute for town centers in some

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Forum . . .

Continued from Page 4

settings, they appeal to a culturally diverse consumer base, they provide fresh produce and promote healthy eating, and span urban and rural divides. "We have worked hard to link farmers with community farmers markets, and the resulting rapid growth of these markets distinguishes the Garden State," said Kuperus, who spoke at a forum held in Paterson on April 2.

"New Jersey farmers markets play an important role in community and economic development, bolster local farm businesses and provide an additional marketplace for Jersey Fresh produce and New Jersey-prepared specialty foods. In some urban areas underserved by food retailers, these markets may be the only opportuni-

ty, or one of just a few, for residents to access the healthy, nutritious and delicious foods that come direct from our state's farms."

The markets also support N.J.'s agritourism business by extending the reach of farms to communities throughout the state, foster traffic to the farms themselves, and bring traffic to businesses located near the market's location.

Key findings in the study found that in terms of revenue from CFMs, participants can expect reliable cash flow at higher margins, market diversification, which supports risk management, and positive attention for farms and their farmers.

Median revenues per day at markets for survey respondents was \$863, though reported revenues were highly variable — anywhere from \$25 per day into the thousands of dollars. In fact, some farmers reported earning as much as \$6,000 per day at

some popular upscale markets. Also, one-third of farmers earned more than 50 percent of their total income from farmer's markets.

"For some New Jersey farmers, CFMs have become an important distribution channel," Holtaway said. "Our research indicates that some farmers are beginning to rely on direct sales CFMs and other channels for more and more of their income. They are adapting to new demands and finding ways to earn more by selling directly to consumers."

In terms of investment, the study found that the fixed cost of participating in CFMs was \$3,350. This included tables, tents/umbrellas, apparel, merchandising material, Web site development, re-usable cartons and baskets, and a truck.

The variable costs including marketing materials, fuel, stall rental fees, insurance, ice and containers, packaging, labor, and more was ap-

proximately \$6,410 per season.

However, not all benefits to the farmer are quantifiable in terms of revenue.

The study found that participating in markets could extend farmers' product lines, build trust between the consumer and producer, and expand one's ability to deliver on key consumer trends. The forums also offered advice to those wishing to start a market in their area. Tips included researching demographics, identifying competing markets and farm-stands, identifying sponsors and partners, learning about operations and access issues, and more.

Reported challenges included weather, reliable labor, adherence to regulations, competition from "Green grocers and farmers who sell what they buy from distributors", and maintaining consistent, high levels of consumer traffic.

Myers . . .

Continued from Page 5

for easy handling? While food safety concerns can make it difficult to provide samples of your fresh products, don't forget about the sense of smell. Point out fragrant flowers, snap open some cloves of garlic, or crush some fresh herbs to

release a strong scent.

Farmers' markets are destinations. Shoppers must go out of their way to come and shop the market. But in Chrzan's study, location was not the only perceived inconvenience.

If markets don't carry dairy products, meats or other poultry products, customers will have to make another food shopping stop for those items. We must work to

expand the variety of products offered at our markets by establishing protocols and standards for producing, processing and marketing these value-added products.

Many markets provide great socializing and educational opportunities for vendors and customers alike. But new shoppers may be hesitant to become engaged in the market atmosphere. Prominent signage describing the product and the price,

plastic bag dispensers within easy reach, and a quick willingness to smile and share information about your product will help make for a more enjoyable shopping experience.

Remember the primary purpose for forming a farmers' market is to offer consumers a great food retailing experience. Take good care of your market customers, and they'll take good care of your market.



No Labor? No problem.