

THE NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS



Black River, New Jersey Highlands, Morris County, NJ
© Dwight Hiscano

“The Highlands watersheds are the best in the State in respect to ease of collection, in scantiness of population, with consequent absence of contamination; in elevation, giving opportunity for gravity delivery and in softness as shown by chemical analysis. These watersheds should be preserved from pollution at all hazards, for upon them the most populous portions of the State must depend for water supplies. There has been too much laxness in the past regarding this important matter.”
1907 Potable Water Commission Report.

**2005 Annual Report of the New Jersey
Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council**

A Message from the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

We are pleased to present the 2005 Annual Report of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council. The Highlands Council has been diligently developing the Regional Master Plan for the 850,000 acres of the Highlands Region in order to protect the drinking water supply for over 5.4 million New Jersey residents, some 65% of the State, in 292 municipalities and 16 counties. This regional plan will provide a necessary framework to not only protect the quality and quantity of our precious water supplies, but to preserve important open space and farmlands, to promote economic development, and to provide effective regional planning for the 88 municipalities in the Highlands.

The first full year of operation for the Highlands Council was demanding and productive. The Council's primary focus has been the development of the Regional Master Plan in order to protect the critical natural resources and other significant values in the 850,000 acre Highlands Region. The most important resource is the yield of approximately 379 million gallons of water on a daily basis - water that is a vital

source of drinking water for over five million residents of New Jersey. The Highlands Act calls for the development of the regional plan by first requiring the preparation of a Resource Assessment to maintain the ecological values of the region followed by a capacity analysis to determine the ability of the region to accommodate appropriate growth and still sustain critical natural resources.

The Council is committed to developing a Regional Master Plan that is as comprehensive, scientifically robust, and as transparent as possible. The Council believes that the plan, when complete, will be a living document which will provide guidelines for development and resource protection, based on the best available science and data and will incorporate the input from scientists, planners, community



Sparta Mountains, NJ Highlands
© Dwight Hiscano

leaders, and concerned citizens. The end product of the Council's efforts must not only be fully protective of the important resources of the Highlands, but also must be a plan that can be implemented at the local level for all 88 municipalities and 7 counties in the Highlands.

The Council's activities this year have been guided by the Council's committees, by the Council's outreach programs with local officials and interested parties, and by the Council's professional staff. In addition, the development of the regional plan is advancing with the crucial assistance of sister agencies in the State including the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of Transportation, the Pinelands and Meadowlands Commissions, the Departments of Treasury and Commerce, and the Board of Public Utilities.

The members of the Highlands Council include a broad and representative range of elected officials from Highlands municipalities and counties, as well as individuals with diverse backgrounds and area perspectives. The diversity of the Council is necessary in order to provide insight and guidance in the important regional approach to land use planning and management throughout the Highlands. We are also most appreciative to the many residents and friends of the Highlands who continue to share their expertise, experience, knowledge and advice with us.

John R. Weingart, Chairman

Dante Di Pirro, Executive Director

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

100 North Road (Route 513)

Chester, New Jersey 07930

Phone: (908) 879-6737

Facsimile: (908) 879-4207

www.highlands.state.nj.us

In January of 2006, the Council released *New Jersey Highlands Council Regional Master Plan Scoping Document*, summarizing the technical approach developed throughout 2005 in order to address the following components of the Regional Master Plan: a Resource Assessment to assess the critical natural resources of the Highlands; a Smart Growth component to balance the resource protection needs, infrastructure constraints and opportunities for growth in the Highlands Region; a Transportation component to promote a sound and balanced transportation system; a Coordination and Consistency process to promote local, county, regional and State program coordination to meet the goals of the Highlands Act; a Local Participation process for municipal and county officials and other interested citizens and entities; and a Financial component to evaluate the costs and benefits of the Regional Master Plan.

To support plan development, the Highlands Council contracted with federal, State, and private entities. The United States Geological Survey is conducting a water resource assessment of the quality and quantity of the waters of the Highlands. Rutgers University's Walton Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis is performing crucial spatial analyses of land use and other natural resource information. Civil Solutions is preparing a digital parcel coverage for the region. The National Center for Neighborhood & Brownfields Redevelopment at Rutgers is assisting with a regional build-out analysis. Two private firms are performing planning and a real estate market analysis for the Highlands transfer of development rights program. Hatch Mott MacDonald is conducting a utility capacity analysis for water and wastewater. URS Corporation is assisting with transportation infrastructure analysis. Lastly, AKRF, Inc. and Vertices, LLC are providing planning and data development in support of the regional plan.

In order to solicit input on the development of the Regional Master Plan, the Council made its outreach efforts a priority throughout the year. The Council created three public participation groups, the Partnership for local officials, a series of meetings with Technical Advisory Committee members for technical input, and the Network for public information. During May and October, the Highlands Council held two sets of Partnership meetings to involve municipal and county officials in the development of the Regional Master Plan. These meetings helped to identify key issues for the development of the Regional Master Plan. In response to the Partnership meetings, the Highlands Council prepared two Partnership reports which can be found on the Council's website. The Council also created a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of eighteen groups of experts from an array of subject areas which must be addressed during plan development. The TAC was formed to ensure that the plan will be based upon sound science and informed, practical experience. Lastly, the Council created a public information Network to provide education and outreach to residents, business entities, and other groups impacted by the Highlands Act. Last year, the Council's staff held nearly 100 constituent meetings, handled over 600 constituent inquiries, and made over 250 presentations to convey the process and intent of the Council.

In 2005, the Highlands Council provided nearly \$875,000 in grants to municipal and county governments in order to assist with planning activities that are essential to the development of the RMP. Over \$400,000 was provided to municipalities under the Municipal Partnership Pilot Projects for pilot projects in Byram, Califon, Dover, Greenwich, Oxford, Randolph, Ringwood, Washington Borough, and West Milford in order to assist municipalities working on targeted issues, such as stewardship of open space, brownfield redevelopment, innovative approaches to affordable housing, and transit center development. In addition, the Council provided over \$150,000 in grants to Highlands counties in the development of the regional plan. Lastly, the Council recognized the need for grant funding to support planning for municipal affordable housing obligations and provided over \$300,000 in grants to local government planning efforts.

Chairman John Weingart, *Associate Director, Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University*

Vice Chairman Jack Schrier, *Freeholder, Morris County*

Treasurer Deborah Pasquarelli, *Former Committeemember, Greenwich Township*

Kurt Alstede, *Founder, Alstede Farms*

Liz Calabrese, *Freeholder, Bergen County*

Tracy C. Carluccio, *Director of Special Projects, Delaware Riverkeeper Network*

Lois A. Cuccinello, *Freeholder, Passaic County*

Tim Dillingham, *Executive Director, American Littoral Society*

Janice Kovach, *Councilmember, Town of Clinton*

Mimi Letts, *Former Mayor, Parsippany*

Mikael Salovaara, *Councilmember, Borough of Bernardsville*

Ben Spinelli, *Mayor, Chester Township*

Glen Vetrano, *Freeholder, Sussex County*

Scott Whitenack, *Morristown Planning Board*

**New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
Statement of Activities and Financial Report - December 31, 2005**

General Operating Budget FY05 - July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005

REVENUES:

State of New Jersey Appropriation FY05	<u>\$ 2,000,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,000,000.00

EXPENDITURES:

Salaries	\$ 516,711.65
Materials and Supplies	\$ 22,250.76
Other operating expenses	\$ 142,442.08
Maintenance and Repairs	\$ 31,238.80
Equipment, Additions and Improvements	\$ 361,693.67
Balance through June 30, 2005	<u>\$ 925,663.04*</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,000,000.00

* \$222,414.31 allocated to FY06 Operating Budget and \$703,248.73 allocated to FY06 Regional Master Plan Budget.

General Operating Budget for portion of FY06 - July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005

REVENUES:

State of New Jersey Appropriation FY06	\$ 2,000,000.00
Balance from FY05	<u>\$ 222,414.31</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,222,414.31

EXPENDITURES:

Salaries	\$ 833,819.42
Materials and Supplies	\$ 33,546.44
Other operating expenses	\$ 50,108.11
Maintenance and Repairs	\$ 59,193.66
Equipment, Additions and Improvements	\$ 45,634.49
Balance through June 30, 2006	<u>\$ 1,200,112.19</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,222,414.31

Regional Master Plan Budget for portion of FY06 - July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005

REVENUES:

Transferred funds from Treasury and NJDEP	\$ 808,505.49
Balance from FY05	<u>\$ 703,248.73</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,511,754.22

EXPENDITURES:

Contracts approved for the Regional Master Plan	\$ 1,311,059.00
Regional Master Plan balance through June 30, 2006	<u>\$ 200,695.22</u>
TOTAL	\$ 1,511,754.22