



Newsletter of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council • Volume 1 • October 2010

Byram Township Takes the Lead!

Sussex County municipality is first to conform to Highlands Regional Master Plan

Byram Township now has the protections of the Highlands Regional Master Plan as well as a Highlands Center Designation.

Mayor James Oscovitch said the approval of the Petition for Plan Conformance will allow Byram Township to protect its extensive natural resources and simultaneously reinvigorate the Route 206 corridor.

“Through the Highlands Center Designation, Byram Township will be adding jobs and new homes – while preserving Byram Township’s community character and quality of life,” he said.

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council unanimously approved Byram Township’s Petition for Plan Con-

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From left: Highlands Council Principal Planner Judy Thornton; Byram Township Mayor James Oscovitch; Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier; and Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan.

Photo by Herbert Scott August/New Jersey Highlands Council

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Borealis to Grow in Highlands

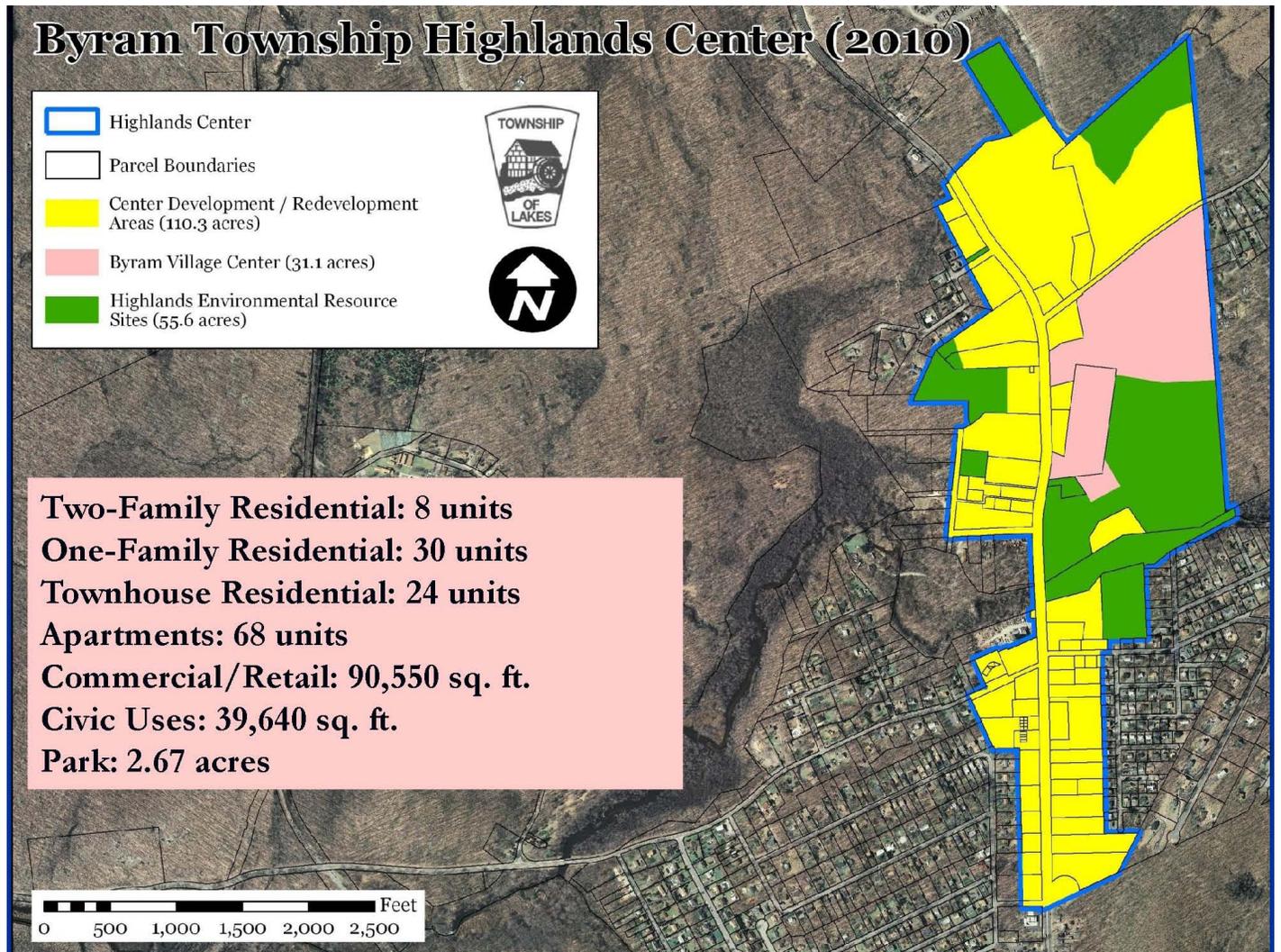
Borealis Compounds, a plastics manufacturing facility located in the Preservation Area of Mansfield Township in Warren County, was given the green light to expand its operations after the Highlands Council approved its Highlands Preservation Area Application this spring — one of five Highlands Redevelopment Area Designations approved for the Preservation Area this year.

Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier said the project was “precisely what the legislature had in mind when they specified the type of redevelopment that should be allowed in the Preservation Area.”

In order to maintain and improve their operations and economic viability, Borealis is proposing to build a container staging area facility on a portion of a lot off Thomas Road. In addition, Borealis plans a new building, additional storage silos, and the construction of additional railroad tracks. The facility is serviced by county roads and an adjacent freight line.

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Byram Township Wins Highlands Council Approval



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formance at its September 23 meeting.

“This approval is a win for the protection of natural resources in the Highlands Region and a win for economic development in Byram Township,” Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier said. “The Highlands Council and Byram Township have demonstrated that, through collaboration and careful planning, it is possible to do both.”

Byram Township, known as the Township of Lakes, has a land area of more than 22 square miles (14,505 acres) with extensive high integrity water resources and forest resources. Over 75 percent of Byram Township is forested and 30 percent is preserved open space.

“Today is a victory for planning and for state and municipal coordination,” Highlands Council Executive Director

Eileen Swan said after the September 23 approval. “The Highlands Council and Byram Township have collaborated on a plan that is a model for the State.”

Council staff worked closely on the project with Byram Township Planning Director Chris Hellwig and with Paul Gleitz of Heyer, Gruel & Associates.

The Highlands Council also approved designation of 197 acres in the Planning Area as a Highlands Center, consisting of more than 30 acres of currently undeveloped lands as the Byram Village Center; another 140 acres would be used for development and redevelopment, and 55 acres would be protected as Highlands Environmental Resource Sites.

The heart of the Highlands Center is the Byram Village Center, which proposes a mixed-use core development area, with a village green, civic spaces, commercial

space, retail, and apartments, townhomes and homes, including 26 deed-restricted low/moderate-income units to address the township’s affordable housing obligation.

Letters of support of Byram’s Petition were received from the New Jersey League of Municipalities, the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, the Pine-lands Commission, New Jersey Future, and former Highlands Council Chairman John Weingart. Representatives of the Regional Plan Association, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, and New Jersey Farm Bureau spoke in favor of the proposal at the Highlands Council meeting.

For more information, go to: http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/planconformance/byram_twp.html

From the Mayor's Office:

Front and Center With Byram Mayor Oscovitch

Elected Mayor in 2009, Mayor Oscovitch has been a life-long resident of Byram Township. With his wife of 17 years and two children, Mayor Oscovitch lives in the Cranberry Lake section of Byram Township. He is a proud alumnus of the Byram Township School system, a 1983 Lenape Valley Regional High School graduate and he attended Ashland College in Ohio where he studied athletic training.

Mayor Oscovitch won his Council seat in 1997 and has since served three terms as a member of the Byram Township Council. He has served on the Byram Township Planning Board and is a past member of the Cranberry Lake Community Club Board of Governors. He is proud of his community work and serves as a Cub Scout Den Leader, a past Cub

Master for Cub Scout Pack 276 and is presently a baseball coach for Hobb Engler Little League. In the past, he coached wrestling at Lenape Valley Regional High School, the Township wrestling clinic, as well as Midget football as coach for the former Andover Arrows of Byram. Mayor Oscovitch is employed by a leader in the process and flow control industry as an account manager.

Question: *What are the most important qualities of Byram Township?*

Answer: Byram Township is really a collection of a half-dozen or so small communities, most of which are clustered around beautiful lakes. Between these small communities lay large areas of open space, with steep, rocky slopes and gently babbling streams – a distinctly

rural character that is the definition of a “Highlands landscape.” Our residents appreciate this rural character, and we have gone to great lengths to protect and preserve it. Whether it is kayaking on Cranberry Lake or water skiing on Lake Mohawk, hiking the Highlands or Sussex Branch trails through Allamuchy Mountain State Park, or exploring the rich history of our region and our nation at Waterloo Village. Byram residents enjoy a quality of life that is second to none in New Jersey, in my opinion.

Question: *In your term as Mayor, what are the Township Council's most important achievements?*

Answer: While I've only been Mayor for 15-months, I would have to say that achieving Highlands Council approval of our petition for conformance, and our designation as the first Highlands Village Center, is one of the proudest moments in my 13-plus years as an elected official. Many years of hard work and planning by dozens of dedicated residents on our Planning Board, Environmental Commission, Smart Growth Task Force and Master Plan Review Committee helped us to get to where we are today. I believe that this achievement establishes the character and quality of life for our community for generations



Byram Mayor James Oscovitch

to come, and I was proud to be in attendance representing all of Byram's residents when this historic event took place.

Question: *With the Highlands Council's approval of a Highlands Center, what are the anticipated economic benefits to Byram Township?*

Answer: The bottom line is that we now have perhaps the most valuable piece of property along Route 206 in Sussex County available for development; all we need now is for the national economic conditions to improve and an interested developer to take on the project with the property owners. Had we not conformed to the RMP in the Planning Area portion of our town, renewal of our state-designated center would have been difficult, if not impossible. Using Form-Based Code and the information available to us through the Regional Master Plan, our intention is to create a vibrant, compact, walkable, human-scale village business

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Remembering Chris Hellwig

The Highlands Council and Byram Township honored the memory of Township Planner Christopher George Hellwig, who played a key role in preparing Byram Township's Petition for Plan Conformance and Highlands Center.

Chris, 34, a resident of Piscataway, died April 16 after a valiant 10-year battle with inoperable brain cancer.

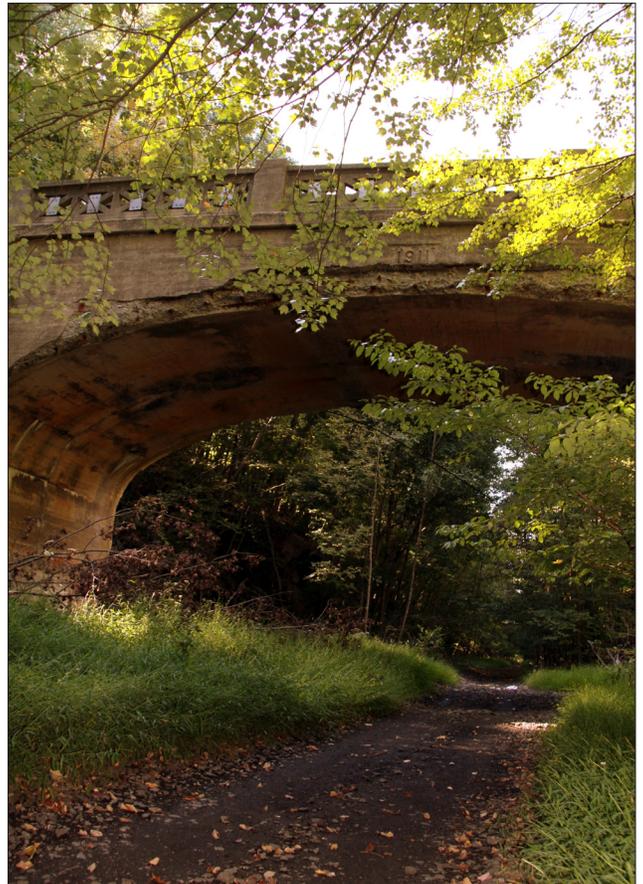
At the Sept. 23 meeting when his work saw fruition with the approval of petition and Highlands Center, the Highlands Council and staff donated a tree in his



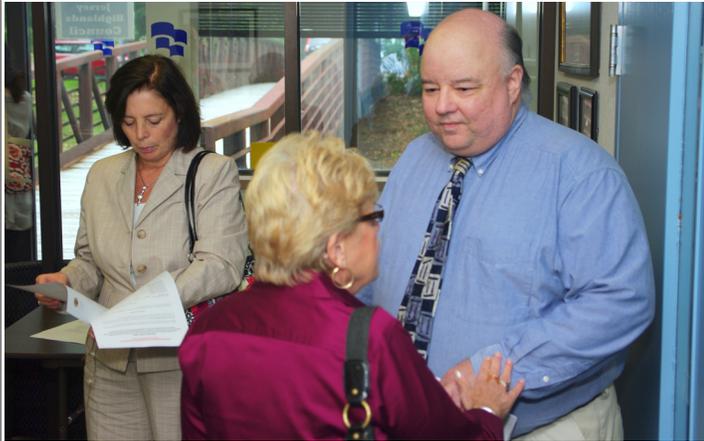
memory to be planted in the new Village Center.

For further information or to send condolences to the family, please visit www.obrienfuneralhome.com.

Byram Township Photo Tour



Highlands Council Meeting



From left, Byram Township Clerk Doris Flynn, Highlands Council Member Mimi Letts, and Byram Township Deputy Mayor Scott Olsen prior to the start of the September 23 meeting.



From left: Highlands Council Member Janice Kovach; Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier; and Highlands Council Member Bill Cogger.



Byram Township Clerk Doris Flynn, left, examines the Byram Township Highlands Center with Township Planner Paul Gleitz of Heyer, Gruel & Associates.



From left: Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan; Highlands Council Principal Planner Judy Thornton; Byram Township Mayor James Oscovitch; Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier; Byram Township Deputy Mayor Scott Olsen; Byram Township Council Member Marie Raffay; Byram Township Attorney Thomas Collins; Byram Township Planner Paul Gleitz; Byram Township Manager Joseph Sabatini; and Byram Township Clerk Doris Flynn.

Byram Township photos by Nathan McLean; Highlands Council meeting photos by Herbert Scott August

Much Accomplished, Much To Do

Highlands Council releases Land Preservation Report, showing one-third of Region is preserved

Tremendous progress has been made in preserving the critical resources of the Highlands Region – but there is still much to do, according to a recent report released by the Highlands Council.

The report found 290,214 acres of open space and farmland in the Highlands Region are preserved, representing over one third of the entire Highlands Region. It also represents approximately 46 percent of the undeveloped land in the Highlands Region. A total of 7,690 acres has been preserved since the adoption of the Regional Master Plan in July 2008; of those, 5,694 acres were identified for priority acquisition in the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP).

Significantly, 194,344 acres – nearly 47 percent of the Preservation Area – is now preserved in perpetuity and off limits to future development. This includes lands preserved through purchase by State, federal, county or municipal government or by non-profit agencies, as well as the purchase of development rights through farm preservation or Transfer of Development Rights programs.

“Preserving this land is a necessity, not only for our drinking water and for our children and grandchildren, but also for



Hacklebarney State Park in Chester Township.

Photo by Nathan McLean/New Jersey Highlands Council

the economy of the State as much of our industry relies on water from the Highlands Region,” Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan said.

The report estimates that, using average per acre costs, to purchase the 290,214 today would cost between \$2.2 billion and \$3.38 billion.

The report also found the per acre values for properties participating in the

Highlands Council’s Transfer of Development Rights program (\$8,967) are similar to those being offered through the farmland preservation (\$9,816) and Green Acres (\$10,265).

The report, released August 18th, can be downloaded from the Highlands Council website at: http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/news/publ/land_pres_report_081910.pdf.

Borealis, Four Other Redevelopment Projects Approved

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The Highlands Act allows for relief from the Act’s protective standards where redevelopment is proposed to expand existing disturbed areas. In its consistency determination report, the Council found the proposed project will require waivers from the 300-foot Highlands Open Waters buffer and the requirements to protect critical habitat.

The Highlands Council found that the proposed project “enhances and promotes economic development in the Region,” and that without the ability to expand, Borealis Compounds would be forced to relocate outside the Highlands

Region. Not only would this mean a loss of jobs, but it also would create a vacant industrial site.

Borealis’s proposed project also includes restoration of a stream on the property; the Highlands Council approval also allows for continued agricultural use of an adjoining field.

The Council’s approval is conditioned upon the development of a mitigation plan to ensure no net loss of water quality, buffer quality, or habitat value.

In fact, Borealis has a long-standing commitment to the protection of water – its *Water for the World* project is aimed at

creating sustainable water and sanitation projects to address the global problem of water scarcity.

The Borealis project is one of five redevelopment projects approved this year in the Preservation Area of the Highlands Region. The others include the expansion of the Heath Village Retirement Community in Washington Township (Morris County) and a new public library in West Milford (Passaic County).

For more information about projects, go to the Highlands Council’s Project Review page at: <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/projectreview/>

The View From the Highlands:

Chester's Alstede Farms Wins Grower Award

Chester Township's Alstede Farms – whose owner, Kurt Alstede, serves as a public member of the Highlands Council – has been named the winner of *American Vegetable Grower's* 2010 Grower Achievement Award.

Kurt's 500-acre vegetable, fruit, and flower farm also has a pick-your-own operation, a new community supported agriculture program, and an "agri-tainment" business. He also supplies produce to 25 farmers markets in the area, and is in the process of having 10 acres of crops certified organic.

He said the secret to his success is listening to his customers.

"This area is a hotbed of locally produced food and people are looking for oddball things," Kurt told the magazine. "When our seed salesmen come calling, they tell us about the exciting things they are offering."

For example, Kurt said, he offers orange beets along with the traditional red, and purple string beans in addition to the usual green.



In addition to the Highlands Council, Kurt served on Governor Chris Christie's transition team for agricultural issues; he also was appointed by President George W. Bush to the New Jersey State Committee of the Farm Service Agency from 2000 to 2006, was director of the New Jersey Farm Bureau in 1988 and 1989, and was president of the Morris County Board of Agriculture from 2003

to 2004, the magazine reported.

It's not the first award for Alstede Farms: Kurt received the New Jersey Grower of the Year Award in 2008, the Tony Russo Marketing Award from the New Jersey Agricultural Society in 2005, and the Good Citizen Award from the Boy Scouts of America in 1999.

Nominations for the 2010 Grower Achievement Award came from across the country and were evaluated by a panel of judges. Kurt received the award, which recognizes operations that are industry role models, during the United Fresh Public Policy Conference on September 16 in Washington, D.C.

For more about the Grower Achievement Award, see the September issue of *American Vegetable Grower* magazine or read the story at <http://www.growingproduce.com/americanvegetablegrower/?storyid=4311>.

To learn more about Alstede Farms, go to their website at <http://www.alstedefarms.com/>.

Q & A With Byram Township Mayor James Oscovitch

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district that will be a great place to live and work for our residents. And since most people live in Byram because of our rural charm and natural resources, it is even more important that we will be able to achieve all this while still protecting the environmentally sensitive natural resources within the Village Center.

Question: *Byram Township has extensive natural resources, lakes and forests, what are your long term plans to foster, protect and enhance these resources?*

Answer: Byram Township has long been a champion of good planning and land conservation, and I do not see that changing any time in the future. Our Township is blessed with vast areas of open space and abundant natural

resources. Through collaborative projects with Green Acres, the Sussex County Open Space Trust and other land trusts, we have already established several "greenway corridor" projects that connect parks and trails within our community and beyond. Our Open Space Committee will continue to work to acquire lands with high natural resource value, to permanently protect the rural character of our town for future generations.

Question: *Mayor, any final thoughts you would like to add?*

Answer: I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Eileen Swan, Tom Borden, Judy Thornton and the entire Highlands Council staff for the intense amount of time and effort that went into

this process.

Byram was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time to take the lead on Highlands Plan Conformance, but this could not have been achieved so quickly without their assistance. Despite over a dozen years of local planning for our designated center, the depth of the data available through the Highlands Council Regional Master Plan gave us a much more detailed look at the township's resources – something that we could not have done on our own. The end result is the perfect example of municipal government and a state agency working hand-in-hand to achieve a mutual goal. I believe we have shown the conformance process works, and hopefully we have set an example for other municipalities to follow.

Governor Extends Dual Appraisal Method

Governor Chris Christie last month signed legislation extending the “dual appraisal method” for properties in the Highlands Region for an additional five years.

Under this amendment of the Highlands Act, the dual appraisal method provides that Highlands property owners who preserve their land under the Green Acres or State Farmland Preservation programs will receive two appraisals – one based on the current property value, and one based on the local zoning, State environmental laws, and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection regulations in effect on January 1, 2004 (before the adoption of the Highlands Act). The higher of these two val-

ues will be used as the basis for negotiation. This method was mandated for five years by the Highlands Act and expired in 2009; the new law extends the period for another five years, until June 30, 2014.

The bill was passed by the Senate by a vote of 39-0 and was co-sponsored Senator Steve Oroho and Senator Michael J. Doherty. The Assembly bill, A-2217, was passed 78-0 by the Assembly and was sponsored by Assemblyman John McKeon, Assemblyman Gary Chiusano, Assemblywoman Alison Littell McHose, and Assemblyman Erik Peterson. The Garden State Preservation Trust, which was replenished with a \$400 million bond measure approved by state voters in



Governor Chris Christie

November, funds both the Green Acres and Farmland Preservation programs.

“The Highlands Act created an important process to provide appraisals based on pre-Highlands Act regulations and current day values, and this extension by Governor Christie is a welcome action,”

Highlands Council Acting Chairman Jack Schrier said.

For more information about the Green Acres or Farmland Preservation programs, please see the Garden State Preservation Trust Fund website at: <http://www.state.nj.us/gsp/>.

Landowners, including those that may not qualify for Green Acres or Farmland Preservation, can apply to sell development rights under the Highlands Council’s Transfer of Development Rights program. Hardship applications are being accepted through October 7, 2010. For more information, visit the Highlands Development Credit Bank at: <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/hdcbank/>.

Highlands Happenings

- Oct. 2-3: [Grand Harvest Festival](#), Waterloo Village
- Oct. 2-3: [Drop the Puck Family Weekend](#), Chester
- Oct. 2: [5K Walk for Breast Cancer Research](#), Hackettstown
- Oct. 2: [Autumn Leaves Artisanal Food Festival](#), Long Valley
- Oct. 2: [Oktoberfest](#), Newton
- Oct. 3: [Oktoberfest](#), Belvidere
- Oct. 3: [Fall Festival on the Green](#), Morristown
- Oct. 3: [Hardyston Heritage Society School Tour](#), Hardyston
- Oct. 3: [Stark’s Brigade Hike](#), Morristown
- Oct. 6: [Intro to Sterling Hill Mining Museum](#), Ogdensburg
- Oct. 9-10: [Journey Through the Past](#), Somerset County
- Oct. 9: [Heart of the Highlands Run/Walk](#), West Milford
- Oct. 9: [Hammer Down Poker Run](#), Warren County
- Oct. 9: [Waterloo Canal Heritage Days](#), Waterloo Village
- Oct. 9: [Historic Hike to Fort Nonsense](#), Morristown
- Oct. 14: [History of the Mount Tabor Post Office](#), Parsippany-Troy Hills
- Oct. 15-17: [Morristown CraftMarket](#), Morristown
- Oct. 15-16: [Haunts of Hackettstown Lantern Tour](#), Hackettstown
- Oct. 16: [Tour of Historic Pohatcong](#), Pohatcong Township
- Oct. 16: [Old Fashioned Autumn](#), Phillipsburg
- Oct. 16: [History on Wheels Bike Tour](#), Morristown
- Oct. 19: [Sharing Our World With Raptors](#), Chester
- Oct. 21: [Highlands Council Meeting](#), Chester Township
- Oct. 21: [Ghost Waters](#), Hope Township
- Oct. 23: [Harvest Festival](#), Sussex County Fairgrounds
- Oct. 23: [Harvest Fest and 5K/5M Run](#), Allamuchy
- Oct. 23: [Far Hills Race Meeting](#), Far Hills
- Oct. 23: [Waterloo Canal Heritage Days](#), Waterloo Village
- Oct. 23: [Point Mountain Hike](#), Glen Gardner
- Oct. 24: [1810 Tartan Day](#), Morristown
- Oct. 30-31: [Last Fling Pumpkin Sling](#), Belvidere
- Oct. 30: [“Remains to Be Seen” Lantern Tour](#), Morristown

*If there’s an event you would like to see included in Highlands Happenings, please let us know!
Submissions may be sent to: craig.garretson@highlands.state.nj.us*

