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## Highlands Council Names Christine Danis Director of Planning and Science

CHESTER, N.J. — At its most recent meeting, the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council voted to approve the appointment of Christine M. Danis, PP/AICP, as the Director of Planning and Science, a position vacated in June following the retirement of Dr. Daniel Van Abs. Danis is a resident of the Highlands Region and has been a member of the Highlands Council staff since its inception in 2004, most recently holding the position of Lead Principal Planner.

“We were quite fortunate to have a number of highly qualified candidates already on staff that were interested in the position,” explains Gene F. Feyl, Executive Director. “After conducting interviews we determined that Chris has the strongest combination of both planning and science skills, critical to this role. We’re delighted to be able to promote from within.”

Prior to joining the Highlands Council staff, Danis served for five years as the Program Director at the National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment, a nationally recognized non-profit at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. During her tenure in this role, Danis led a project with NJ Department of Community Affairs, to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) based model, for analyzing utility capacity and land use conditions in the State of New Jersey.

Danis’s experience also includes work as a Senior Environmental Scientist with International Technology Group, where her clients included the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York City Department of Sanitation, US Department of Defense, US Department of Energy, and the US Environmental Protection Agency, Region II. Among her notable project work during that time, Danis led the NYSDEC Fresh Kills Landfill Surface Water and Sediment Program component of

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the 2001 Fresh Kills Landfill Closure Plan. She also developed “Surface Water Quality Parameter Profile” for evaluating and monitoring surface water quality conditions associated with the 8 nautical miles of the tidal Raritan River and Fresh Kills Creek system. Danis holds a BS in Biology from Stockton State College, a MS in Environmental Science from Rutgers, and a MCRP (Master of City and Regional Planning) from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

As with all Council decisions made at the meeting, the resolution regarding the Director of Planning and Science position will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes.

Also at the June 21 meeting, the Council received a report regarding updates to the web-based suite of Highlands Interactive Maps. Staff member Roger Keren, Director of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), presented a demonstration and details of the first major update to the interactive maps since they were originally launched in support of the release of the Regional Master Plan in 2008. Specifically, the Highlands Interactive Map applications have been updated with the most current data available regarding land use, and now feature improved and enhanced reporting information that clarifies how the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) affects individual parcels of land.

“Enhancements to the web-based tool were driven largely by user input and requests for specific information,” explains Gene Feyl, Executive Director of the Highlands Council. “GIS data is vital to the work of the Council and the municipalities we work with, so we’re pleased to be able to share this very robust resource.”

The Council also passed a resolution clarifying the delineation of authority between the Council and the Executive Director.

Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at: <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/about/calend/> (scroll to 6/21/2012 meeting)

Highlands Council Suite of Interactive Maps:

Highlands Interactive Mapping Tool: <http://maps.njhighlands.us/hgis/>

Highlands Consistency Review Application: <http://maps.njhighlands.us/consistency/>

Highlands Development Credit Estimator Tool: <http://maps.njhighlands.us/hdc/>

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