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Press Release

For Immediate Release
Contact: Eileen Swan
July 26, 2007

Daniel Van Abs named Senior Director of Science and Planning for the Highlands Council

Chester, NJ – The New Jersey Highlands Council announced today that Dan Van Abs, Director of Watershed Protection Programs for the New Jersey Water Supply Authority since March 1999, will join the staff of the Highlands Council as Senior Director of Science and Planning. At the New Jersey Water Supply Authority, Dan managed the Authority's activities in source water and watershed protection in the Raritan River Basin and Manasquan River watershed, and also represented the Authority on various watershed and statewide public advisory committees for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection. He holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and is also a licensed Professional Planner in New Jersey, and a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Highlands Council Chairman John Weingart said, "Dan's extensive experience will be critical in helping to frame the policy decisions that the Council will need to make to complete and implement the Regional Master Plan. As our paths have crossed many times over the years I have been very impressed by Dan's work and his commitment to wise, sensible land use planning in New Jersey. The Council is fortunate to be gaining the benefit of his services."

Dr. Van Abs' prior experience includes working with the NJDEP for over 12 years, with six of those in coastal planning and ground water planning. For six years, he was Assistant Administrator of the Office of Environmental Planning, with responsibilities for statewide water resources planning along with administrative management. During that time he was responsible for the Ground Water Quality Standards, the Well Head Protection Program Plan, and the Statewide Water Supply Plan. Dr. Van Abs was Technical Director of the Passaic River Coalition, a non-profit watershed association, for four years prior to joining NJDEP. He has been a guest lecturer and adjunct professor at Cook College, Rutgers University, and has been guest lecturer at the Bloustein School for Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, Rowan University and the New Jersey Institute of Technology. He has published many peer reviewed and conference papers in the watershed management field. He has also served as a member of the New Jersey Clean Water Council.

"Dan is a great addition to our professional team bringing with him valuable expertise in water resource planning and his skills as a professional planner. His experience in working with municipalities is an added bonus", said Eileen Swan, Executive Director of the Highlands Council.

In August 2004, the New Jersey Legislature enacted the Highland Water Protection and Planning Act in order to protect nearly 860,000 acres which supply drinking water for more than sixty-five percent of New Jersey's residents. The Highlands Act created the Highlands Council as a regional planning entity charged with protecting the water resources and natural beauty of the New Jersey Highlands while allowing for planned, sustainable development and redevelopment of the region. The Council members include a broad and representative range of elected officials from Highlands municipalities and counties, as well as individuals with diverse backgrounds and area perspectives.

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