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Highlands Council Awards \$150k to Byram, *Township of Lakes*, for Lake Management and Protection *Additional grants approved for stormwater management, redevelopment, and economic development planning in the Highlands Region*

CHESTER, N.J. — At its most recent meeting, the Highlands Council approved multiple resolutions to award grant funding that will help advance the goals and objectives of the Highlands Act and Regional Master Plan (RMP) throughout the Highlands Region. Awards were approved for work in Chester Township (Morris County), Hunterdon County, Washington Borough (Warren County), and Byram Township (Sussex County).

“Byram Township holds the distinction of being the very first municipality to have a Petition for Plan Conformance approved by the Highlands Council,” said Lisa J. Plevin, Highlands Council Executive Director. “Since then, the Township has made tremendous progress toward implementing the land use management and natural resource protection provisions of the Highlands Act and RMP. This Lake Management Plan is the latest project that Byram is undertaking to protect their valuable water bodies.”

The proposed project will focus on developing an assessment of the watersheds surrounding 15 of the more than 50 small- and medium-sized lakes in the Township. The work will include desktop modelling, historic data review, pollutant removal analysis, a stream/watershed water quality sampling event, in-lake water quality monitoring, trophic state analyses, and final reporting. This regional approach to lake management is similar to projects recently implemented in Ringwood Borough, West Milford Township and Rockaway Township. The grant award cap is \$150,000.

Byram Township first began working with the Highlands Council shortly after the RMP was released. The Township’s Petition for Plan Conformance in 2010 was approved along with a Highlands Center Designation. Planning for the Center was later recognized with a 2011 New Jersey Future Smart Growth Award. The Highlands Council has subsequently provided funding to support Master Plan updates and revisions, Sustainable Economic Development Planning, Open Space and Recreation Planning, among other efforts.

“Byram Township has led by example among our Highlands municipalities,” said Carl Richko, Highlands Council Chairman. “It’s wonderful to see them embark on this lake management project, which we know will reap great benefits for the overall Highlands region, since watersheds don’t care about municipal boundaries.”

Other grant awards approved by the Council at the October 21 meeting:

- **Washington Borough, Warren County – Plan Conformance Implementation**

Not to exceed \$105,000

Washington Borough has taken a proactive role in completing Plan Conformance tasks since receiving Petition approval in January 2021, with Master Planning, Redevelopment Planning, and Center Planning already underway. The Borough expects to complete additional implementation tasks in FY2022 including a Stormwater Management Plan, Economic Development Plan, Highlands Master Plan Element, and Land Use Plan Element of the Master Plan. Each of these activities will be completed consistent with the Goals, Policies and Objectives of the Highlands Regional Master Plan and Municipal Land Use Law.

- **Chester Township, Morris County - Stormwater Management**

Not to exceed \$50,000

Chester Township is seeking funding to complete a Stormwater Management Plan that will address the Highlands requirements as well as the revised NJDEP Stormwater Management Rules. Funding will allow the Township to identify and schedule maintenance for all stormwater inflows and outfalls as well as identify opportunities for green infrastructure and municipally important areas for groundwater recharge.

- **Hunterdon County - Economic Development Grant**

Not to exceed \$75,000

In continuing to address priorities identified in Hunterdon County’s Plan Conformance Petition approved earlier this year, the County is seeking funding to conduct corridor planning associated with Routes 78 and 22. This will be done with an expectation to develop inter-municipal policies aimed at appropriate land uses along the corridor. Grant funding will also be used to further the County’s tourism planning and help implement the action agenda to be released as part of the Economic Sustainability Plan.

Actions taken by the Council at this meeting will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes. Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio, and minutes will be posted at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend/ (click on October 21, 2021 meeting).

The Highlands Council is a regional planning agency established in 2004 with the passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and charged with implementation of the Act. More information is available at www.nj.gov/njhighlands.