

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

Media Fact Sheet

Highlands Region

- Total area: 859,267 acres (approximately 1,343 square miles).
- Provides drinking water for 70% of New Jersey residents.
- Highlands Act, passed in 2004, divided region into Preservation Area and Planning Area.
- Approximately 415,000 acres in the Preservation Area.
- Approximately 444,000 acres in the Planning Area.
- Development is more strictly regulated in the Preservation Area than the Planning Area.

Highlands Communities

- 88 municipalities (within 7 counties) have lands within the Highlands Region.
- 47 have lands in both Planning and Preservation Areas.
- 36 have lands only in the Planning Area.
- 5 have lands only within the Preservation Area.

Regional Master Plan Conformance

- The Highlands Act requires counties and municipalities to align local master plans and development regulations with the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) for Preservation Area lands.
- Conformance for Planning Area lands is voluntary.

Municipal & County Plan Conformance Status (see table inside)

- 62 of the 88 municipalities in the Region are engaged in the Plan Conformance process (70%). Of the 62, 50 have approved petitions (80%).
 - 30 petitions include only Preservation Area lands (26 approved)
 - 20 petitions include Preservation and Planning Area lands (18 approved)
 - 12 are from municipalities that have only Planning Area lands (6 approved)
- Of the 62 municipalities petitioning, 32 have chosen to voluntarily include planning area lands (52%).
- 6 of the 7 counties in the Region have submitted Petitions for Plan Conformance. Of the 6 petitions, 2 have been approved by the Highlands Council.

Timeline of Highlands Act and Regional Master Plan

- 1992, 2002 – U.S. Forest Service releases studies recognizing the significant natural, agricultural, recreational, and cultural resources of the four-state federal Highlands region. These reports serve as an impetus for efforts to protect the New Jersey Highlands.
- 2004 – The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act is enacted by the State of New Jersey (August) and the Federal Highlands Conservation Act is signed into law (November).
- 2008 – The New Jersey Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) is approved by the Highlands Council and becomes effective.
- 2014 – The Highlands Council commences its first-ever review of the RMP with launch of the RMP Monitoring Program.
- 2017– The Highlands Council releases a Fiscal Impact Assessment as part of the Monitoring Program.
- 2018 – The Highlands Council releases its first-ever Monitoring Program Recommendation Report including more than 100 recommended action items, and 25 suggested science and research priorities, and providing a road map for the Council’s work for the next several years.

Plan Conformance Petition Status

as of April 2019

Petition Status indicated by color <i>(see key at end of chart)</i>	Petitioning for:		Exemption Certification	Center Designation
	Preservation Area	Planning Area		
BERGEN COUNTY	✓			
Mahwah Township	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oakland Borough	✓		✓	
HUNTERDON COUNTY	✓	✓		
Alexandria Township	✓		✓	
Bethlehem Township	✓	✓	✓	
Bloomsbury Borough	✓	N/A		
Califon Borough	✓	N/A	✓	
Clinton Town	✓	✓		
Clinton Township	✓	✓	✓	
Glen Gardner Borough	✓	N/A		
Hampton Borough	✓			
High Bridge Borough	N/A	✓	✓	
Holland Township	✓	✓		
Lebanon Borough	N/A	✓		✓
Lebanon Township	✓	✓	✓	
Milford Borough	N/A			
Tewksbury Township	✓	✓		
Union Township	✓	✓		
MORRIS COUNTY	✓			
Boonton Town	N/A			
Boonton Township	✓			
Butler Borough	N/A			
Chester Borough	N/A	✓		
Chester Township	✓	✓	✓	
Denville Township	✓			
Dover Town	N/A			
Hanover Township	N/A			
Harding Township	N/A			
Jefferson Township	✓		✓	
Kinnelon Borough	✓	✓		
Mendham Borough	N/A			
Mendham Township	N/A			
Mine Hill Township	N/A			
Montville Township	✓		✓	
Morris Plains Borough	N/A			
Morris Township	N/A			
Morristown Town	N/A			
Mountain Lakes	N/A			
Mount Arlington Borough	✓		✓	
Mount Olive Township	✓		✓	
Netcong Borough	N/A			
Parsippany-Troy Hills Twp.	N/A	✓		
Pequannock Township	✓			
Randolph Township	✓	✓		✓
Riverdale	N/A			
Rockaway Borough	N/A			
Rockaway Township	✓	✓		
Roxbury Township	✓			
Victory Gardens Borough	N/A			
Washington Township	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wharton Borough	N/A	✓		✓

Plan Conformance Petition Status

as of April 2019

Petition Status indicated by color <i>(see key at end of chart)</i>	Petitioning for:		Exemption Certification	Center Designation
	Preservation Area	Planning Area		
PASSAIC COUNTY	✓			
Bloomington Borough	✓			
Pompton Lakes Borough	N/A			
Ringwood Borough	✓	N/A	✓	
Wanaque Borough	✓			
West Milford Township	✓	N/A	✓	
SOMERSET COUNTY	✓			
Bedminster Township	✓		✓	
Bernards Township	N/A			
Bernardsville Borough	N/A			
Far Hills Borough	N/A	✓		
Peapack Gladstone Borough	N/A			
SUSSEX COUNTY	✓			
Byram Township	✓	✓	✓	✓
Franklin Borough	N/A	✓		
Green Township	✓			
Hamburg Borough	N/A			
Hardyston Township	✓		✓	
Hopatcong Borough	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ogdensburg Borough	✓			
Sparta Township	✓		✓	
Stanhope Borough	N/A	✓		
Vernon Township	✓		✓	
WARREN COUNTY				
Allamuchy Township	✓		✓	
Alpha Borough	N/A	✓		✓
Belvidere Town	N/A			
Franklin Township	✓		✓	
Frelinghuysen Township	N/A			
Greenwich Township	✓	✓		
Hackettstown Town	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harmony Township	✓		✓	
Hope Township	N/A			
Independence Township	✓			
Liberty Township	✓			
Lopatcong Township	✓	✓		✓
Mansfield Township				
Oxford Township	✓	✓	✓	✓
Phillipsburg Town	N/A	✓		✓
Pohatcong Township	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington Borough	N/A	✓		
Washington Township	✓		✓	
White Township	✓			

Petition approved, whole municipality
Petition approved, Preservation Area only
Petition filed, not approved
No petition filed
No petition filed, petition not required

Additional information, including all petition and implementation materials, is available at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/planconformance/status/

About the Highlands Council

The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council is a regional planning agency that works in partnership with municipalities and counties to incorporate the land use and resource management requirements of the Highlands Act into local planning and regulatory documents.

The Highlands Council is a 15-member appointed body, advised in its actions by a staff of planning, science, geographic information system (GIS) and administrative professionals, based in Chester, NJ.

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004 directed creation of the Highlands Council, outlining its membership, powers, duties and responsibilities. Council members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. [P.L. 2004, c.120 (C.13:20-4, 5, 6)] There are currently three vacancies on the Council.

Current Council Members

Carl J. Richko, *Chairman*
West Milford, Passaic County

Kurt Alstede, *Vice Chairman*
Chester Township, Morris County

Robert F. Holtaway, *Treasurer*
Bedminster, Somerset County

Tracy Carluccio
East Amwell, Hunterdon County

Bruce James
Clifton, Passaic County

Timothy P. Dougherty
Morristown, Morris County

Michael Sebetich
Hawthorne, Passaic County

Michael R. Dressler
Cresskill, Bergen County

James A. Visioli
Dover, Morris County

Michael Francis
Hopatcong, Sussex County

Richard Vohden
Andover, Sussex County

Robert G. Walton
Hampton, Hunterdon County

Additional information about Highlands Council Members is available at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/members/



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