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Press Release

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Highlands Council to Select New Executive Director

Chester, NJ- The New Jersey Highlands Council will be voting to select a new executive director at Thursday's Council meeting. The Council's personnel committee, after reviewing numerous resumes and interviewing three finalists, is recommending Eileen Swan for the position.

Ms Swan currently serves as the State's director of the Office of Smart Growth, managing more than 30 people including professionals in planning, policy, GIS, finance and administration within a \$5M operating budget. Council Chairman John Weingart, who led the search, said, "Eileen Swan represents the perfect blend of organizational leadership and experience in multiple facets of environmentally sensitive land use planning. She has a strong track record of success both inside and outside of government and is passionate about the mission of the Highlands Council. I will enthusiastically recommend her to my fellow Council members."

Ms Swan was an original Highlands Task Force member and Council member, providing her a strong foundation in the history of the organization. She has served as mayor, committeewoman and planning board member in her municipality, Lebanon Township. "Eileen's experience at the state and local level make her ideally suited to guide us through agency coordination and the municipal conformance process," explained Chairman Weingart, "two critically important agenda items in the next phase of the Council's work."

A recognized leader in land preservation, Ms Swan was tapped by Governor Corzine's transition team to co-chair his environmental policy team. Her background includes serving as the liaison to the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board where she was responsible for all aspects of open space and farmland acquisition in Lebanon Township. She also worked for the New Jersey Conservation Foundation managing programs to help coordinate the open space and farmland preservation efforts of private groups and government agencies. Ms Swan was the 2005 recipient of the New Jersey Department of Environment Protection Award for Government Leadership in Land Preservation.

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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