



JON S. CORZINE
Governor

State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322
(908) 879-6737
(908) 879-4205 (fax)
www.highlands.state.nj.us



JOHN R. WEINGART
Chairman

EILEEN SWAN
Executive Director

Contact: Craig Garretson, Manager of Communications
(908) 879-6737 ext. 105 or craig.garretson@highlands.state.nj.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council to Vote on Regional Master Plan

Meeting to be held Thursday at 10 a.m. at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum

CHESTER, N.J. – The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council will vote Thursday, July 17, on approval of its Regional Master Plan. The Plan, if approved, would establish the policies and procedures that will be used to fulfill the requirements of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act.

In addition to Goals, Policies and Objectives, the Regional Master Plan includes information about the history, resources and character of the Highlands Region, maps and pictures and plan programs.

The Plan incorporates suggestions from the public made in more than 3,600 written comments from more than 1,000 individuals and organizations since it was released in draft form in November 2006. Council members considered comments from the public hearing portion of all Council meetings and the 12 public hearings on the Plan.

“This document is a dramatic step forward in regional land use planning, not just for protection of New Jersey’s Highland resources, but at a national level,” Highlands Council Chairman John Weingart said. “We have met the mandates of the visionary and complex Highlands Act but using sound science, the skills of an extraordinary staff, and the input of constituents from throughout the Highlands Region.”

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act mandated the Highlands Council to develop a Regional Master Plan to protect, enhance and restore the resources of the Highlands Region, including open waters, streams, wetlands and wellheads, as well as farmland, historic sites and scenic vistas. The Plan also was required to promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment, a balanced transportation system and residential, commercial and industrial development consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and Smart Growth strategies.

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“The Regional Build Out Analysis based on the Regional Master Plan shows that the plan, when implemented, will protect the resources of the Highlands Region for the benefit of New Jersey’s residents,” Highlands Council Executive Director Eileen Swan said.

The Highlands Council has 14 members, and eight affirmative votes are required to adopt the plan.

The meeting will be held Thursday, July 17, at 10 a.m. in the Morris County Haggerty Education Center at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 53 East Hanover Ave., Morristown. The Council set the July 17 date as its goal for adoption at its meeting on March 27.