

Canistear Reservoir, Vernon Township, Sussex County



# Highlands Council Meeting

Thursday, September 17, 2026



# Chairman's Report



# Executive Director's Report



# Audit Review Committee

Resolution



# RMP Amendment Committee



# Monitoring Program Recommendation Report

*The RMP Monitoring Program and associated Report evaluates the progress in achieving the goals of the RMP through implementation of policies and programs to ensure the RMP remains effective and current.*

The 2026 ***Regional Master Plan Monitoring Program Recommendation Report*** provides a continuing evaluation of the Highlands RMP based on an updated analysis of indicators identified in the 2018 MPRR combined with an examination of implementation activities.

**Updated recommendations being released for public comment following this meeting.**



# Accomplishments: Policy and Planning

- Functional Ecosystem Valuation Methodology
- Forestry Best Management Practices
- Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory
- Lake Management Planning
- Active Stream Monitoring
- Watershed Management Plans



# Accomplishments: Policy and Planning *(continued)*

- Establish Agriculture Advisory Committee
- Agricultural Sustainability Grants
- Region-wide Municipal Zoning Map
- Updated Land Use Capability Map
- Economic Sustainability Plan
- Marketing and Tourism- County Coalition



# Accomplishments: RMP Amendments

- RMP Amendment Procedures
- Highlands Redevelopment Procedures
- Plan Conformance Procedures
- Warehouse Standards
- LUCZ Map Technical Report Update
- Affordable Housing Amendment



# Recommendations: Natural Resources

- Establish Practical Application of FEV Methodology
- Incentivize Stream Corridor and Watershed Protection/Restoration Plans
- Evaluate Critical Habitat Goals, Policies, and Objectives
- Model Steep Slope Protection Ordinances
- Model Ridgeline Protection Ordinance
- Monitoring and Maintenance of Small and Private Lakes



# Recommendations: Water Resources

- Evaluate WUCMP Program for Effectiveness
- Promote Conservation of Water Resources Outside the Highlands Region
- RMP Standards for Impervious Surfaces
- Reforestation Guidance and Stewardship Along Stream Corridors
- Develop Discharge Standards for High-Volume Water Users



# Recommendations: Water and Wastewater

- Water and Wastewater EAS Mapping
- Inventory Existing Septic System Maintenance Plans and Ordinances
- Septic System Best Management Practices and Education
- Residential Loan Program to Replace Failing Septic Systems
- Prohibit Utility Expansion in Protection and Conservation Zone



# Recommendations: Agricultural Resources

- Promote Sustainable Agriculture
- Integrated Crop and Pest Management
- Promote Value-Added Facilities
- Expand Agritourism
- Assist Young and Emerging Farmers
- Pesticide Container Recycling Facility
- Revolving Fund to Support Stewardship and BMPs for Water Quality Protection on Preserved Farms



# Recommendations: Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources

- Incorporate HCAS Resource review into Plan Conformance
- Update Scenic Resource Inventory
- Update Procedure for Nomination, Evaluation, and Inventory of Highlands Regionally Significant Scenic Resources



# Recommendations: Transportation and Air Quality

- Evaluation Criteria for Transportation Projects
- Update RMP for Transportation Projects Identified
- Evaluate Stormwater Runoff Pollution from Roadways
- Establish a Clean Energy Infrastructure Implementation Plan
- Establish EV Charging Network with Focus on State Parks and Trailheads



# Recommendations: Future Land Use

- Update RMP Smart Growth Strategies
- Amend Redevelopment Procedures
- Develop Mitigation Standards for Resource Impacts
- Develop Highlands Specific LID Standards
- Establish Center Implementation Guidelines
- Develop Guidance for ADUs



# Recommendations: Landowner Equity

- Incentivize Creation of TDR Receiving Areas
- Seek Funding for Direct HDC Purchases
- Promote Establishment of a Highlands Water User Fee
- Improve Highlands Open Space Preservation Program
- Incorporate Priority Rankings and Goals of Open Space and Recreation Plan
- Secure Allocation of Funding from CBT



# Recommendations: Sustainable Economic Development

- Continue Coordination with Highlands Counties and DMOs
- Gather Data Related to Tourism, Spending, and Investments
- Establish Cross-County Initiatives
- Establish Dedicated Staff Position to Guide Economic Sustainability



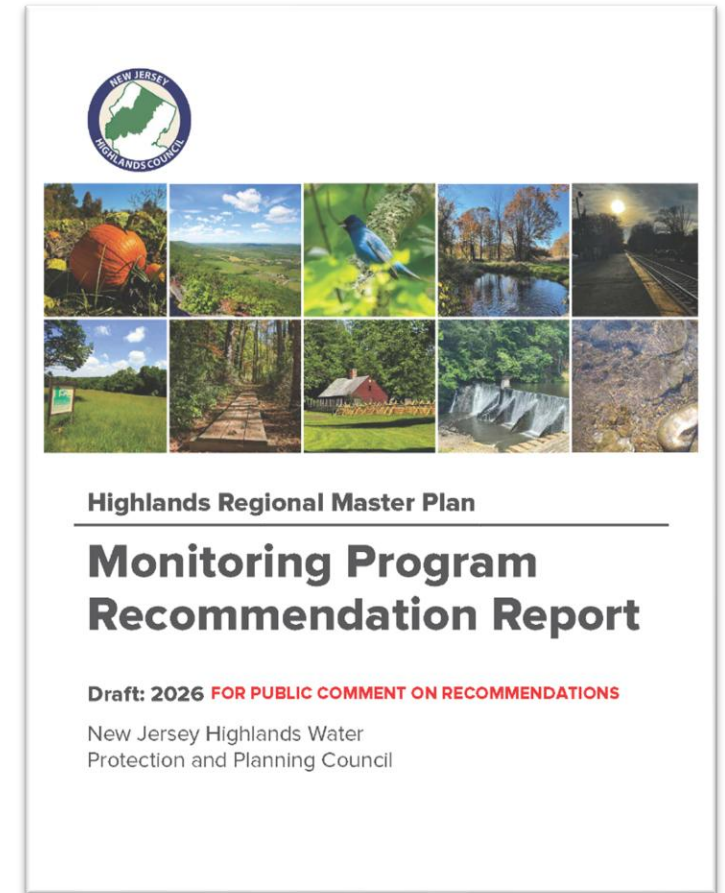
# Recommendations: Implementation

- Establish Policies and Procedures for Plan Conformance Grant Recipients
- Request Additional Highlands Council Staff Resources
- Continue Implementation of SPC Consistent with Plan Endorsement
- Evaluate Integrity Scores and Methodology
- Deepen Engagement with Educational Institutions and Establish Comprehensive Education Program



# Next Steps & Timeline

- Updated recommendations being released for public comment following this meeting.
- 60-Day Public Comment Period
- Comment Response
- Final report will include updated indicator analysis.
- Anticipated release: January 2027



# 2027 Meeting Schedules

Resolutions



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