New Jersey Highlands Quick Facts

- Total area: 859,267 acres (approximately 1,343 square miles).
- Provides drinking water to more than 300 municipalities that are home to 70% of New Jersey's population.
- 88 municipalities (within 7 counties) have lands within the New Jersey Highlands Region.
- The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, passed in 2004, divided region into a "Preservation Area" and "Planning Area."
- Development is more strictly regulated in the Preservation Area than the Planning Area.
- Implementation of the NJ Highlands Act is guided by the *Highlands Regional Master Plan*, adopted in 2008.
- Part of the four-state federal Highlands Region, which also includes Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut.













All photos by Nathan McLean. (Top) Clinton Township, Hunterdon County. (Second row, I to r) Bedminster Township, Somerset County; Mahwah, Bergen County. (Third row, I to r) Hopatcong Borough, Sussex County; Bloomingdale Borough, Passaic County; Hackettstown, Warren County. (Bottom) Chester Township, Morris County.



State of New Jersey

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The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

The New Jersey Highlands Region (orange outline on the map below) covers less than 15% of the state, but provides drinking water for 70% of its residents. Recognizing the significance and value of this Region and a desire to ensure protection of both the natural resources and the economic viability of communities within the Region, the State Legislature of New Jersey passed the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (Highlands Act) in 2004.

The Highlands Act advocated for a regional approach to land use planning, requiring stringent resource protection policies while acknowledging that development, redevelopment, and economic growth in certain appropriate areas of the Region were also in the best interests of the state.

The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (Highlands Council) is a regional planning entity established in the Highlands Act and charged with its implementation. The Highlands Council is a 15-member appointed body assisted in its duties by a professional staff of planning, science and GIS experts.

The Highlands Council works in partnership with municipalities and counties in the Region to encourage a

comprehensive regional planning participating in the Plan Conformapproach to implementation of the ance process have access to planning Highlands Act. Implementation is and environmental science expertise, guided by the Highlands Regional technical support, and materials for Master Plan (RMP), adopted by the use in updating local regulatory and Council in 2008. The Highlands planning documents to ensure Council Plan Conformance process alignment with the Highlands Act provides municipalities and counties and RMP. Grant funding is available with a framework for this implemento support the reasonable expenses tation. Municipalities and counties associated with this work.



