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Highlands Council Appoints Lisa J. Plevin as Executive Director *Experienced Environmental Leader to Join Staff*

CHESTER, N.J. — On Thursday, July 19, the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council appointed Lisa J. Plevin of Parsippany to the position of Executive Director. Plevin has more than 35 years of experience in government and nonprofit leadership roles, with a focus on environmental issues.

“The Council and I are thrilled to have someone as qualified as Lisa to lead the staff,” said Council Chairman Carl Richko. “Her background in environmental protection and her understanding of the importance of the Highlands region to New Jersey is really exceptional.”

Plevin’s professional experience includes 16 years working with US Senator Frank Lautenberg on a number of significant environmental issues and projects in New Jersey. Most notably, while working with Lautenberg, Plevin was involved in the development of the 1992 US Forest Service Highlands Regional Study, which was among the reports that provided the framework and foundation for both the federal Highlands Conservation Act and the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act. During this time, Plevin also was involved in the preservation of thousands of acres in the Highlands region, including 22,000 acres spanning the New York-New Jersey border in Sterling Forest, which was under the threat of development at the time.

“It was during that time that I first came to appreciate how unique and special the Highlands region is,” said Plevin. “One of the highlights of my career with Senator Lautenberg was working to protect this area.”

Plevin’s background also includes working as Deputy Director of Governor Phil Murphy’s Environment and Energy Transition Committee, and Chief of Staff for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2, which includes New Jersey. She also has held several roles in the nonprofit sector, supporting organizations focused on community development, environmental advocacy, and public policy. Plevin has been a resident of Parsippany for over 20 years.

“As a long-time Highlands resident, I am very aware of all this region has to offer and I’m excited about the opportunity to contribute to its protection,” said Plevin. “Most critically, protection of the water and natural resources, but also protection of the vitality of Highlands communities, which means consideration of all resources - agricultural, cultural, historic, recreational, and much more.”

Plevin is expected to take over the role in August following the retirement of current Executive Director Margaret Nordstrom, who has held the role since 2014. Prior to that, Nordstrom served as Deputy Executive Director for two years. Under her leadership, the Council advanced numerous significant projects, including the first-ever review of the Highlands Regional Master Plan and the development and implementation of an Open Space Matching Grant program. Nordstrom also worked to increase the Council’s outreach efforts with municipal, county, state and community partners and its presence at state and local events.

“Margaret’s contributions to the work of the Highlands Council have been noteworthy,” said Richko. “During my tenure on the Council, she consistently demonstrated a genuine commitment to advancing the goals of the Act and RMP. Her efforts are greatly appreciated.”

Actions taken by the Council at this meeting will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes. Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend/ (click on July 19 meeting).

The Highlands Council is a regional planning agency, established in 2004 with the passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act, and is charged with implementation of the Act. More information is available at www.nj.gov/njhighlands.

Photo:

Lisa J. Plevin, [hi res](#) (4 MB)

Lisa J. Plevin, [lo res](#) (210 KB)

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