



NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

508 Main Street, Boonton, New Jersey 07005

973-588-7190 (office)/973-588-7193 (fax)

www.njhighlandscoalition.org

For Immediate Release:
April 25, 2016

Contact:
Julia Somers
973-588-7190 (office)
973-525-2768 (cell)

N.J. Highlands Grassroots Groups Can Apply for Grants for Environmental Protection and Cultural Preservation Projects

BOONTON, N.J. - Local grassroots organizations protecting water and other environmental resources or preserving cultural and historic treasures in the New Jersey Highlands can apply for grants up to \$5000 through the New Jersey Highlands Coalition's 2016 Small Grants Program. The cultural grants include "bricks-and-mortar" projects for specific historic sites or districts.

Applications must be received by June 24, 2016. Grants will be presented on October 5 at the N.J. Highlands Coalition's Annual Meeting.

"This is the tenth year of our Small Grants Program for environmental projects," said Julia Somers, Executive Director of the N.J. Highlands Coalition. "We continue to help groups working on protecting the water supply for 70 percent of New Jersey by implementing the Highlands Regional Master Plan or fighting damaging development in the Highlands. This is the second year that generous supporters have allowed us to add new grants for projects that protect cultural, historic, and archaeological resources in the Highlands, an important part of the Master Plan."

Grassroots organizations are defined as non-governmental organizations with a total annual operating budget of less than \$200,000. It is not necessary that the organization be incorporated. Grants from the Highlands Coalition cannot be used for political purposes.

Grant applications should meet at least one of five criteria, with the items at the top getting more weight than those below:

1. Focus on implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan, such as projects that identify, map or verify Highlands natural or cultural resources;

2. Establish a precedent advancing strong environmental or cultural protection in the Highlands ;
3. Assist an organization to fight against development in the Highlands that seriously threatens or damages natural or cultural resources;
4. Support capacity building of Highlands Region grassroots organizations;
5. Educate the public about Highlands cultural resources or water and other natural resources.

Applicants are advised to view the full guidelines for the program on the Coalition's website at www.njhighlandscoalition.org. Click on the red button on the left labeled 2016 Small Grants Program. This is especially true of the new cultural and historic grants where detailed requirements for this second-year program are included on the website.

Groups considering applying for the 2016 program can learn from the types of projects that were funded last year. The following are the grants awarded in 2015.

Environmental Grants

Committee to Save Federal Hill to fund legal and other professional costs to prevent the Borough of Bloomingdale from vacating a conservation easement and adopting a mining overlay zone that would allow Tilcon Quarry to expand their mining operations into the adjacent Meer tract, 180 pristine, forested acres that contain endangered species, exceptional resource value wetlands and trout production streams.

Fred S. Burroughs North Jersey Chapter of Trout Unlimited to restore Sparta Glen Brook to the wild trout production stream it was prior to being devastated in 2000 by a microburst 16-inch rain event. The project restores the brook's ecosystem to its natural state, stabilize the stream's banks and stop future bank erosion.

Roxbury Environmental Action Coalition (REACT) to continue their efforts to ensure a proper closing of the Fenimore Landfill, which was intended to have a solar generation field built on it until it started emitting harmful gasses. The grant helps to continue legal intervention, to hire an independent environmental expert if needed, and to perform testing on the air, soil and water surrounding the landfill.

Stop Somerset Hills Power Plant to fight a proposed industrial scale solar power plant development in Bedminster's rural residential zone, on the 108-acre Kirby Farm that is designated as "highest priority for farmland preservation" in Bedminster's Master Plan.

Trout Unlimited East Jersey Chapter to partner with Oakland Borough on a major restoration project on the Ramapo River. The grant funds a study of the presence of endangered Eastern Lamp Mussels by an environmental engineering firm on a nearly three-mile stretch of the river to ensure the mussels are not threatened by the restoration work.

Cultural/Historic Grants

Ferromonte Historical Society of Mine Hill to help restore the Bridget Smith House, built as miner's housing around 1855 when there were 13 working iron mines in the area. The house is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

Friends of Holland Highlands to engage a consultant to prepare a nomination for the Bunn Valley Rural Agriculture and Historic District in Holland Township to be included on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, recognizing a farming landscape that still reflects its appearance in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Friends of Wallisch Homestead to pay for the removal of lead paint by a licensed professional as the first step to protecting this historic building in West Milford. With ties to the nearby Long Pond Ironworks from the early 1800s and to the Morris Canal Company, the 99-acre farm is one of the last sites to remain virtually the same as it looked 200 years ago.

"Groups that received grants last year made some amazing progress toward their goals," said Ben Spinelli, chairman of the Coalition's Small Grants Committee. "We view our funding as priming the pump, but it's really the dedication of concerned local citizens that makes these projects successful."

Grassroots organizations wishing to be considered for a grant in October should submit applications by June 24, 2016. For more information, contact Julia Somers at 973-588-7190 or julia@njhighlandscoalition.org, or visit www.njhighlandscoalition.org and click on the red button on the left labeled "2016 Small Grants Program."

The Highlands Coalition Small Grants Program is funded by the NJ Highlands Coalition along with supporting grants from The Investors Foundation, and private individuals.

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition represents a diverse network of organizations working to protect the Highlands, ranging from small citizens groups working in one community to large state-wide organizations. The Coalition works to protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands and to preserve the quality and quantity of the region's drinking water. More information is available at www.njhighlandscoalition.org

#