



## **NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION**

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For Immediate Release:

**April 24, 2017**

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### **Local Groups Can Get Grants to Protect Environmental and Cultural Treasures in New Jersey Highlands**

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 2017 Small Grants Program. The cultural grants include "bricks-and-mortar" projects for specific historic sites or districts.

Applications must be received by June 16, 2017. Grants will be presented on October 11 at the N.J. Highlands Coalition's Annual Meeting.

"This is the eleventh 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's residents through implementing the Highlands Regional Master Plan or fighting damaging development in the Highlands. Also, this is the third 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](http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org). Click on the red button on the left labeled 2017 Small Grants Program. This is especially true of the new cultural and historic grants where detailed requirements for this third-year program are included on the website.

Groups considering applying for the 2017 program can learn from the types of projects that were funded last year. The following are the grants awarded in 2016.

**Friends of the Musconetcong** in Hampton Borough to retain an environmental professional to provide evidence that there is a regulated tributary to the Musconetcong River on a 77-acre site proposed for a development with more than 300 units. The study would be used during the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection's permitting process.

**Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization (MEVO)** to hire a Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) to survey contamination on Stag Hill Mountain, where illegal commercial, industrial and residential trash dumping is rampant. The group wants to create a long-term strategic plan for addressing the illegal dumping, closing off-roading trails, and remediating the environment.

**Ringwood C.A.R.E.S.** (Community Action to Restore Environmental Sustainability) to fund a Groundwater Education Day to teach the community about the Ringwood Mines/Landfill Superfund Site, where a Ford factory dumped toxic waste, including lead paint and other dangerous materials.

**Rockaway Borough Conservation Alliance** to help the municipality acquire the Ogden Parcel, a two-acre lot that is a prime groundwater recharge area for the region and lies on top of all three municipal wells. While the township would provide the purchase price, the citizens group would use the grant to help cover “soft” costs, such as surveys and legal fees for closing.

**Stop the Quarry Expansion** to fight the rezoning of Federal Hill by Bloomingdale Borough to 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. The rezoning could also threaten the historically-significant site of the Pompton Mutiny.

Applicants seeking more information can contact Julia Somers at 973-588-7190 or [julia@njhighlandscoalition.org](mailto:julia@njhighlandscoalition.org)

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](http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org)

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