



# Highlands Lookout

www.njhighlandscoalition.org

Newsletter of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition

Fall/Winter 2012

## Message from the Executive Director


For one member of our staff, Hurricane Sandy was the third instance of one-to-two weeks without power in the space of twelve months. How many weather related catastrophic disruptions does it take for us to figure out that something has to change? At least one State level effort where such a reconsideration should apply is the State Strategic Plan.

The State Strategic Plan, also known as the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, is the guidance document and investment strategy for all State agencies, aligning all of the State's resources towards a unified vision. It is where the State might assert a policy of not allowing development in flood plains or in wetlands, or that we should not rely on remote power sources brought to us by a single massive extension cord, such as the Susquehanna to Roseland Transmission Line.

It was good news on November 13 when the State Planning Commission,

which was poised to adopt the final draft State Strategic Plan, chose instead to delay action because of the latest damaging storm. We are certainly appreciative of a number of improvements in the draft final Plan regarding the Highlands in response to our comments. The preliminary draft had minimal linkage to the Highlands Regional Master Plan. The final draft Plan defers to the Highlands Land Use Capability Zone Maps for identifying preservation and development priorities in the Preservation Area and conforming municipalities in the Planning Area. It is, after all, the best mapping the State has available. The final draft State Strategic Plan, however, unlinks any Highlands mapping from State policy consideration in the non-

conforming Planning Area. This is a huge mistake. It is one thing to have Highlands conformance in the Planning Area be voluntary, but it is another thing altogether to ignore any relevancy of detailed data and GIS mapping. It is as ill-advised and short-sighted as ignoring the reality of changing weather conditions in determining where and how the State grows.

Warmest regards,  
*Julia Gomez* 



Rutherford Hall in the 1920's. Story inside.

## Coalition News *Elliott Ruga, senior editor*

Legal appeals have been filed on more than a few major projects. This includes the appeal of the NJ Board of Public Utilities' approval of PSE&G's Susquehanna-Roseland Transmission Project filed on our behalf by the Eastern Environmental Law Clinic (EELC) and the joint appeal filed by EELC and EarthJustice against the National Park Service for its approval of the same project through

the Delaware Water Gap and other National Park units. The Columbia Environmental Law Center (CELC) represents a number of organizations including the Coalition appealing the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approval of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP) Northeast Upgrade Project (NEUP). We have joined with the Delaware Riverkeeper Network in its appeal to FERC for an

*We have never before engaged this amount of legal talent, in concurrent legal actions, in representing Highlands environmental matters.*

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## Coalition News *cont'd*

injunction against TGP for construction on the NEUP. We await a decision of the NJ Appellate Court on our challenge to the NJDEP approval for a JCP&L electrical substation in an historic district of Tewksbury, also represented by CELC. EELC will be appealing the FERC approval of the Transco Pipeline through several southern Highlands towns. CELC represents a number of organizations including the Coalition in a court challenge to the NJDEP Waiver Rule. We have never before engaged this amount of legal talent, in concurrent legal actions, representing Highlands environmental matters. Whew!

As part of our joint campaign with the Pinelands Preservation Alliance to educate the public and elected officials on the economic and quality of life contributions of the Highlands and Pinelands, we have been advertising on a billboard outside of NJDEP in Trenton. It's a communication platform direct to Commissioner Martin. Our latest billboard is a riff on the familiar "Got Milk?" advertising campaign. It asks, "Got Water?" and responds "Thank the Pinelands and Highlands." It features a woman holding up a glass of water in front of a wetlands landscape. Do you recognize the woman? It is former Highlands Council Executive Director, Eileen Swan. ☺

## Highlands History and Recreation: Rutherford Hall *Elliott Ruga*

Our Annual Meeting, held in October, was our best attended meeting to date. One reason the meeting drew so many of our members was the location—the National Historic Landmark tudor manor, Rutherford Hall, in Allamuchy.

In its day Rutherford Hall was a country retreat, where the New York Guilded Age society friends of Winthrop Rutherford, a direct descendant of Lewis Morris and Peter Stuyvesant, came to play. The current day Allamuchy State Park encompassed the estate's 5,000 acre hunting grounds. Hunting parties went after imported game such as wild boar and elk bred on the Rutherford game farm.

Known by the Rutherfords as "Big House," the Tudor and Jacobite style brick mansion was built in 1902. It was designed by Whitney Warren, celebrated Beaux Arts architect of Grand Central Station and the New York Yacht Club. The landscape was by Frederick Law

Olmstead, iconic designer of New York City's Central Park and the Washington Mall. With its game farm, produce gardens, sprawling backyard lake, and its own hydroelectric dam, Big House was self-sufficient.

The Rutherfords were prominent in New Jersey history. Tranquility Farm became the Rutherford homestead in 1787 as a wedding gift to John Rutherford when he married Helena Morris, daughter of Declaration of Independence signer, Lewis Morris. John Rutherford served as a U. S. Senator and later as president of the East Jersey Proprietors. At the time he was one of the State's most powerful figures.



*Moon photo by L. M. Rutherford*

John Rutherford's son, Lewis Morris Rutherford, lawyer and founding member of the National Academy of Sciences, was an early astrophysicist. In 1865, using a telescope of his own design that was coupled with a camera, Rutherford made photographs of the moon and stars that were groundbreaking because

of their unprecedented detail. President Franklin Roosevelt came to Rutherford Hall to visit his confidante and special friend, Lucy Mercer Rutherford, second wife and widow of socialite Winthrop Rutherford.

After Lucy Mercer Rutherford's death in 1949, the mansion was given to the Sisters of Divine Charity, an order of Hungarian nuns. Many

*Billboard outside of NJDEP offices in Trenton*

## Rutherford Hall (cont'd):


people remember the fairs held by the nuns featuring traditional Hungarian foods such as stuffed cabbage, noodles and other central European dishes. In 2004, faced with dwindling numbers and unable to afford the upkeep of the mansion, the order put the property up for sale. A plan to develop the property into hundreds of town homes was scuttled in 2004 by the passage of the

Highlands Act.

In 2008, the order sold Rutherford Hall to the Allamuchy Board of Education. Today, the 1950's era infirmary addition houses Allamuchy's Pre K through 2nd grade Mountain Villa School. The main building and grounds, including Allamuchy Pond have been set aside for a museum and a community events space, all currently

under development.

"Piano in the Parlor", a jazz concert series, is scheduled through 2013, with performances by Bucky Pizzarelli, Rio Clemente and others.

An evening dance with live music and an Afternoon Tea are events scheduled in December. For information about these and other programs visit [www.rutherfordhall.org](http://www.rutherfordhall.org). 

## Member Spotlight: NJ Keep It Green Coalition *Erica Van Auken*

In this section we typically feature a member organization. For this issue, however, we write about an organization of which we are a member, the Keep It Green Coalition and the Keep It Green Campaign.

The NJ Keep It Green Campaign represents over 175 statewide, local and regional organizations – including ours – committed to land conservation, agriculture, historic preservation, environmental protection, and outdoor recreation, working together to sustain funding for the preservation and stewardship of New Jersey's waterways, farmland, forests, parks and historic sites for future generations. This work is guided by the belief that every New Jersey resident deserves clean water and access to well-maintained, accessible parks, wildlife and natural areas, locally-grown produce and historic sites. Our communities rely on these necessities for a high quality of life, livable neighborhoods and sustainable economies.

New Jersey has been a national leader in preserving open space, historic sites and farmland since 1961 when the Green Acres Program was established. The Green Acres, Farmland, and Historic Preservation Programs have touched every county in New Jersey enabling critical preservation and park development projects with

significant human health, economic and environmental benefits. In the Highlands region, nearly 47% (194,344 acres) of the core Preservation Area has been preserved, while nearly 22% (95,870 acres) of the Planning Area is preserved. However, significant additional work remains to be done to ensure long-term integrity of the Region's critical resources, including water, forests, farmland, wildlife and biodiversity. The protection of these resources is vital in maintaining the 500 billion gallons/year water supply of the region. The Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP) has identified and mapped 92,360 acres of conservation priority lands and 70,197 acres of priority farmland, for a total of 162,557 acres with significant resources in need of preservation.

But funding for these successful preservation programs will soon run dry, bringing critical preservation efforts to a halt. At the same time, our state continues to face intense development

pressure that threatens hundreds of thousands of acres of important lands and waterways that remain unprotected. Access to fresh, local produce and safe, outdoor recreational opportunities has yet to become a reality for many New Jerseyans, particularly in urban communities, and tremendous historic treasures remain in need of preservation and revitalization. Furthermore, many of the parks, natural areas and historic sites that have been protected are suffering due to a chronic lack of funding to care for these special places, thereby diminishing the ecological, recreational and historic values they are intended to protect.

To address these challenges, we are working with NJ Keep It Green to create a stable source of constitutionally-dedicated funds for the acquisition, capital improvement, and stewardship of state and local natural areas, parks, farmland and historic sites in New Jersey. NJ Keep It Green supports at least \$200 million in annual, dedicated funding for the next several decades to continue critical open space, farmland and historic preservation efforts as well as ensure better stewardship of preserved lands, parks and historic sites. If you want to see these successful programs continue, visit [www.njkeepitgreen.org](http://www.njkeepitgreen.org) and consider supporting this important campaign. 



*Farm field in the Pequest watershed*

# Happy Holidays!

## Fall/Winter 2012 Newsletter

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## Your water Your future

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition is a nonprofit organization made up of groups and individuals committed to a common goal of helping protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands.

*You can help.*

Please return your membership contribution to:

New Jersey Highlands Coalition  
508 Main Street  
Boonton, NJ 07005  
Tel: 973.588.7190  
www.njhighlandscoalition.org

## Won't You Join Us?

Membership Contribution:

\$1,000  \$500  \$100  \$50  \$30  Other \_\_\_\_\_

*(Your contribution is tax deductible and may be eligible for a matching contribution by the company where you work. Please make checks payable to: New Jersey Highlands Coalition.)*

**Or make your donation on line at [www.njhighlandscoalition.org](http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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*(Your email will allow us to inform you of upcoming events.)*

**Yes!** I am interested in volunteering for the Coalition.