



Highlands Lookout

www.njhighlandscoalition.org

Newsletter of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition

Fall/Winter 2015

Message from the Executive Director

On October 27, the “Save the Highlands” campaign was launched on the State House steps, just a few yards from the Governor’s office. Joining us at the rally and as campaign partners were ANJEC,

since the Highlands Act was passed. It has much to do with that individual whose office is only a few yards away from the State House steps.

We are doubling down on ways to foster a more widespread understanding of the values that the natural and cultural resources the Highlands contribute to the quality of life for all of New Jersey. This past year we have introduced people to the Highlands

through craft beer—making the connection between high quality beer and naturally clean water; to participants in our recent 75-mile Road Rally—exposing many people for the first time to natural beauty they never thought existed in New Jersey; and through our recent 3rd Annual Highlands Festival at Waterloo—bringing all kinds of people together for a two-day, outdoor celebration, surrounded by the Highlands natural splendor, next to a carefully restored canal village. Whatever it takes to reach new people, and if we can have fun in the process, all the better. I welcome your ideas!

Warmly,
Julia Gonzalez 



The “Save the Highlands Rally” on the State House steps in Trenton

Raritan Headwaters Association, NJ Conservation Foundation, NJ Clean Water Action, Environment NJ, NJ Sierra, NJ Audubon and Pinelands Preservation Alliance. In his Policy Update column below, Elliott will have details on the most dangerous threat

Policy Update *Elliott Ruga, Policy Director*

In June, NJDEP proposed sweeping new Flood Hazard Area (FHA) rules concerning development in the flood plain, with related proposed amendments to the Coastal Zone Management and Stormwater Management Rules. Statewide, the most egregious of the many rollbacks, that clearly favor development interests at the expense of sound flood control measures, are the amount of prohibited disturbances that will be now be allowed inside of the floodway. But for the Highlands in particular, where water quality should be an over-arching concern, the small streams and water features that are characteristics of headwaters will no longer have the protection of a regulated

riparian buffer.

The USEPA has written a letter to the DEP expressing concerns that the rules might be in violation of the federal Clean Water Act, including aspects of “source water,” or headwater protection. On October 22, the NJ Senate passed a

rarely used legislative action, a Concurrent Resolution, that if also passed in the Assembly, can force the proposed rule to be withdrawn.

You can read our comprehensive

comments submitted to DEP on the proposed FHA rules by hitting the “Comments to Agencies” button on our homepage

In another development with potentially disturbing consequences for the Highlands, DEP Chief Advisor Ray



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NJ Highlands Coalition
508 Main Street
Boonton, NJ 07005
www.njhighlandscoalition.org
973.588.7190

Advocacy News *cont'd*

Elliott Ruga at Rally on the steps of the State House in Trenton

Cantor called the Coalition to a meeting to advise us about the Department's intention to amend the DEP rules that restrict development in the Highlands Preservation Area. In a rule proposal later this Fall, DEP intends to revise the septic system density allowed in the Preservation Area. Currently, the minimum lot size required to construct a residential home on a septic system in a forested area is 88 acres, in a non-forested area, 25 acres. Using the Highlands Land Use Capability Zones instead of forested and non-forested areas, the proposed minimum lot sizes are 11 acres in the Existing Community Zone, 12 acres in the Conservation Zone and 22 acres in the Protection Zone. On average, this amounts to an almost 400% increase in the amount of development allowed in the Preservation Area. USEPA is watching this closely. We have begun discussions with the Columbia Environmental Law Clinic. And watch for an active "Save the Highlands Campaign"! 



Festival-goers at the Concert Stage on Sunday

Highlands Festival 2015: A Smash!

Jennifer Sneed, Festival Coordinator

Thank you to all who helped make our 3rd annual Highlands Festival at Waterloo a success! Your support helps to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources of the Highlands. Whether an attendee, a volunteer, a vendor, one of our musicians, a festival partner, or a generous sponsor, each played a vital role in furthering the mission of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition. Not only does the festival help raise awareness of the importance of protecting Highlands resources, revenue helps to fund the Small Grants Program that benefits grassroots and local non-profits.

The blend of fun and advocacy is apparent throughout the Festival. One not only enjoys the beautiful outdoors, historic buildings, numerous activities, the local vendors, and terrific performers from the area, but also learns about the important initiatives at the various Coalition member organization tables.

This year the musicians who graced our stage at Waterloo included: The Lost Ramblers, Penn Johnson, Turkey Farm 5, Atlanta Café Band, Billy Hector, Occidental Gypsy, The Craig Thatcher Band, Nadine LaFond, Brown Rice Family, Hub Hollow, Marafanyi, Joe Cirotti, Milkweed, Garland Jeffreys and Willie Nile. Many thanks to JCP&L, our main stage sponsor!

The festival came together with the generous support of the NJ

Division of Travel and Tourism, Hudson Farm, Intercar, Sussex Honda, Investors Bank, Thonet Associates, Thorlabs, Inc., Ag Choice, Andrei Jackamets Photography, Daniel E. Somers, Esq., Gene Sheninger Border Collies, Morris Museum, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority, New Jersey American Water Company, Robinson Drug Store, The Merrill G. & Emita E.

Hastings Foundation, Vidhi D. Designs, Whole Foods and Home Grown Radio.

Each year the festival continues to build a stronger partnership with the State Park Service.

Waterloo has a rich historical legacy. We enjoy holding our festival at this location, which brings together people who share a love for our environment, culture and history.

This year Festival events took place simultaneously in two venues: the Waterloo Concert Field in Allamuchy and the historic Waterloo Village. We hope to expand the activities we offer in each location so that we can offer festival-goers even more options throughout the weekend. Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed as we plan ahead for the 4th Annual Highlands Festival at Waterloo. We are already seeking musicians, activities, vendors, volunteers and sponsors for next fall. Recommendations on ideas and those interested in participating in the festival next year should reach out to jennifer@njhighlandscoalition.org. We look forward to having you all join us again Saturday, September 17 and Sunday, September 18 in 2016! 



Willie Nile performing on Sunday

Annual Meeting Awards *Elliott Ruga*

This year's Annual Meeting of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition was held October 14 at the impressive, new headquarters of the NY-NJ Trail Conference—the restored, historic Darlington Schoolhouse in Mahwah.

It was a time for celebration. Aside from the business of voting in new board members and new member organizations of the Coalition, it is also when the Small Grants Program awards are given to the grassroots organizations that are helping us protect the natural and cultural resources of the Highlands. It is also the occasion to recognize those

- **Fred S. Burroughs North Jersey Chapter of Trout Unlimited** to restore Sparta Glen Brook.
- **Roxbury Environmental Action Coalition (REACT)** to continue their efforts to ensure a proper closing of the Fenimore Landfill.
- **Stop Somerset Hills Power Plant** to fight a proposed industrial scale solar power plant development in Bedminster.
- **Trout Unlimited East Jersey Chapter** to partner with Oakland



Trustees Ben Spinelli and Mike Keady with the 2015 Small Grants recipients

Environmental Law Clinic was presented with the Leadership and Vision Award for his tireless advocacy for the Highlands.

State Senator Nia Gill was also a recipient of the Leadership and Vision award for her support in the Legislature for the Highlands and her stances against political interference.

Former Bethlehem Mayor **John Graefe** was awarded the Vision and Leadership for effective leadership as Mayor and for promoting municipal conformance with the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

The Wilma Frey Volunteer Awards were presented to:

- **Rilda and Basil Hone**, for their decades of effective volunteer environmental advocacy in their community of Tewksbury Township.
- **John Gattuso of New Jersey Environment News** for providing a free, daily, compilation of essential New Jersey environmental news and information. 



Ed Lloyd discusses legal challenges after receiving the Vision & Leadership Award

in the community who have truly made a difference towards the long term protection of the Highlands region.

Small Grants awards were presented to:

- **Ferromonte Historical Society** of Mine Hill to help restore the Bridget Smith House.
- **Friends of Holland Highlands** to engage a consultant to prepare a nomination for the Bunn Valley Rural Agriculture and Historic District in Holland Township.
- **Friends of Wallisch Homestead** to protect this historic building in West Milford.

- **Committee to Save Federal Hill** to help prevent the Borough of Bloomingdale from adopting a mining overlay zone that would allow the Tilcon Quarry to expand.

Borough on a major restoration project on the Ramapo River.

Eileen Swan was presented with the 2015 Capstone Award for her innovative leadership while Executive Director of the Highlands Council and her bold stance against political interference.

Ed Lloyd, Director of the Columbia



Eileen Swan bids NJ farewell after accepting the Capstone Award in recognition of her extraordinary achievements in protecting the New Jersey Highlands



New Jersey Highlands Coalition
508 Main Street
Boonton, NJ 07005

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Your water
Your future

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* View trustee bios at www.njhighlandscoalition.org/about_us/trustees



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____

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

Yes! I am interested in volunteering for the Coalition.