**Fast Facts**

The New Jersey Highlands Region:

- **#1:** Encompasses more than 850,000 acres
- **#2:** Stretches 60 miles from Mahwah in the northeast to Milford in the southwest
- **#3:** Lies within portions of 7 counties (Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren)
- **#4:** Includes 88 municipalities
- **#5:** Supplies drinking water to 5.4 million people, only 821,000 of whom live inside the Highlands region
- **#6:** Includes 90,091 acres of wetlands and 32,213 acres of lakes and streams, with a total stream length of 3,605 miles
- **#7:** Is considered largely riparian, that is, more than two-fifths of its lands lie close to bodies of water
- **#8:** Provides habitat for more than 200 threatened, endangered or rare plant and animal species
- **#9:** Contains some of the most important and largest forest areas in the state, whose existence helps clean the air we breathe but whose health is threatened by fragmentation from development
- **#10:** Includes 3,651 acres of preserved farmland, but is losing unprotected farmland at a rate of about 1,700 acres per year, which means fewer local farm products, such as milk, produce, field crops and nursery stock

The Highlands Act, passed by the New Jersey Legislature in 2004, mandates the preservation of the New Jersey Highlands Region and its water supply.
Water
Protecting our water requires protecting our air, our trees and our open spaces. Why? In much the same way as we depend on clean water to keep us alive, water depends on the air, soil and trees to keep it clean.

Water Supply
While the total amount of water on Earth (both salt and fresh) is the same as 3 billion years ago, the amount of freshwater available to us can change if we do not protect its sources.

When we pave over our open spaces, we block rainwater from reaching the soils that both filter this freshwater and provide underground pathways for it to feed back into our lakes, rivers, reservoirs and wells.

Trees
Protecting our trees means protecting large, uninterrupted areas of forest. It also means protecting the trees in our backyards, the trees bordering our sidewalks and the trees by our riverbanks and reservoirs.

Why do we need trees? Trees take the water up from the ground and return it to the air, help keep the soil in place along banks, and help clean the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and other pollutants.

Wildlife
Protecting large areas of forest is critical to the survival of wildlife, including many threatened and endangered species.

As Highlands forests become fragmented by development, we lose the habitat necessary to support wildlife and plant species.

Air
Protecting our air keeps pollutants from entering our water supply. As rain or snow falls to the ground, it carries with it the pollutants released into the air from our cars, our workplaces and our homes.

Quality of Life
Protecting air, water and trees protects our quality of life. We retain not only the natural resources necessary to our survival but also the scenic vistas that everyone can enjoy. People who live in or visit the Highlands can take advantage of the following opportunities:

- Farming – Take a farm tour or visit farmers markets, roadside stands and pick your own farms featuring local products such as vegetables, milk, eggs, tree fruits and berries
- Outdoor Activities – In the many state, county and municipal parks you can experience favorite activities year round, from bird watching to kayaking, biking, hiking and more
- Historical Heritage – Restored villages, national landmarks, abandoned mines and archeological sites are among the hundreds of known historic resources in the Highlands

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition is a nonprofit organization made up of groups and individuals committed to helping preserve the Highlands.

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