



Highlands Coalition hands out grants

BOONTON – A group fighting for the “proper closing” of Fenimore Landfill and a historic miner’s house were among those receiving grants from the New Jersey Highlands Coalition.

The coalition awarded the grants to local grassroots organizations that protect water and other environmental resources or preserve cultural and historic treasures in the New Jersey Highlands, according to a press release from the organization which said the value of the grants ranged up to \$5,000.

“This is the ninth year of our Small Grants Program,” said Julia Somers, Executive Director of the N.J. Highlands Coalition. “We continue to help groups working on protecting the water supply for more than half of New Jersey by implementing the Highlands Regional Master Plan or fighting damaging development in the Highlands. For the first time this year, generous supporters have allowed us to add new grants for projects that protect cultural, historic, and archaeological resources in the Highlands.”

Checks were presented at the N.J. Highlands Coalition’s Annual Meeting on Wednesday. Listed below are the groups selected to receive 2015 grants:

- Ferromonte Historical Society of Mine Hill to help restore the Bridget Smith House, which was 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 Co., the 99-acre farm is one of the last sites that remain virtually the same as it looked 200 years ago.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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 will help 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 a 108-acre 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 will fund 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.