



## HIGHLANDS COUNCIL



The **Highlands Council** collaborates with municipalities and counties to implement the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (2004). Covering about 1,300 square miles across 88 municipalities in Northern New Jersey, the Highlands region supplies drinking water to over 7 million residents. The Highlands Act established the Highlands Council and directed it to create a regional master plan designed to protect the region's natural, cultural, and agricultural resources while ensuring a sustainable economy.

### Agency Resilience Program in Action

When the **Highlands Act** was passed, it wasn't seen as a climate change mitigation measure. However, over time, the role of the Highlands region in addressing climate challenges has become evident. The natural resources of the Highlands region are among the best assets the state has for addressing a changing climate. Ecosystem services range from ensuring a clean drinking water supply to flood and heat-related hazard mitigation provided by forests and wetlands to supporting agricultural production in the region. Environmental protection of the Highlands region is essential to the state's climate resilience.

More than 70% of New Jersey's residents get some or all of their drinking water from the New Jersey Highlands.



Recognizing that effective stormwater management is critical to maintaining water quality, the Highlands Council allocated nearly \$1 million of its grant budget to help municipalities meet **new stormwater permit requirements** and continues to consider funding requests.



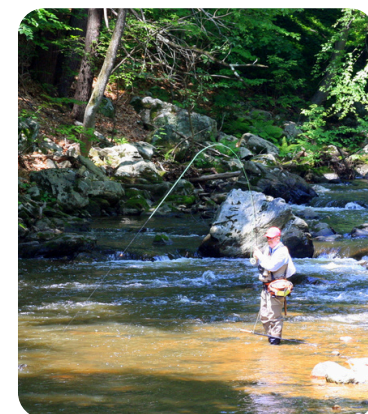
Since 2020, the Highlands Council has allocated over \$2.5 million in funding to **Lake and Watershed Restoration Planning** to enhance water quality and resilience to severe storms.



The Council is actively engaged with the farming community to help ensure long-term economic viability of the industry. The Council's **Sustainable Agriculture grant program** funds initiatives to promote sustainable farming practices in the Highlands.



The Highlands Council is developing **climate resilience guidance and a grant program** to help municipalities implement climate change considerations into their municipal master plans.



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Brought to you by

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