

From the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions' Municipal Planning Project

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Highlands Herald October 2006

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*Welcome to ANJEC's **Highlands Herald**, the monthly e-mail newsletter for environmental commissions and all interested municipal officials in NJ's Highlands Region. The **Highlands Herald** seeks to provide readers with a periodic sampling of information and resources relating to Highlands environmental issues, updates on Highlands Council and NJDEP activities, information about relevant events, articles, and various odds and ends.*

ACTION ALERTS

Support a Strong Regional Master Plan

As the Draft Regional Master Plan deadline approaches, the Highlands Council is working to strike a balance between a plan that provides strict standards for environmental protection and a plan that provides flexibility to municipalities. As the specific planning language is debated, there have been discussions that strict standards might deter planning area municipalities that might otherwise voluntarily opt-in to the Regional Master Plan.

It is important that the Council hear from municipal officials who support regional planning and have a local commitment to environmental protection. Take a moment and send a brief note of support to

- Highlands Council Chairman John Weingart at john.weingart@highlands.state.nj.us;
and
- Highlands Council Executive Director Dante DiPirro at dante.dipirro@highlands.state.nj.us.

NOTEWORTHY

Highlands Council Update

- The Highlands Council is in midway through a weekly schedule of six-hour work sessions where they discuss draft technical reports that cover a range of resource topics presented by their staff. Go to <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us/njhighlands/master/chronological.html> for a chronological list of the reports. Be sure to check back frequently for updates as the Council

adds new information each week. The Council is soliciting feedback on the technical memoranda and comments should be submitted by email to rmpcomments@highlands.state.nj.us.

- The Highlands Council will release the published draft Regional Master Plan (RMP) on Thursday, October 26th, 2006. Following the release the Council will hold a series of public hearings throughout the seven Highlands counties. Facing many challenges in finishing environmental studies and compiling results by the legislated deadline that has already been extended by six months, the Council will publish the final RMP in December. As such, many describe the RMP as a living document that will be continually updated as more data becomes available.
- Governor John Corzine and NJDEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson attended the September 14th Highlands Council work session. The Governor encouraged the Council to meet its December deadline and promised to work towards the reauthorization of the Garden State Preservation Trust which he plans to have on the ballot in November 2007. A future open space bond will provide a source of funding to purchase land from property owners whose plans to develop may have been hindered by the Highlands Act. Only \$130 million currently remains in the Trust, which started at \$2.5 billion in 2000.
- On September 21st, a Highlands Council letter to Governor Corzine's office requested \$50 million be set aside for the Highlands when the state renews Garden State Preservation Trust. This would enable the Highlands to jump start its Transfer of Development Rights program, which aims to purchase development rights from property owners.
- Two new Highlands Council nominees recently cleared the state Senate.
 - Tahesha Way, a Democratic freeholder from Passaic County, would fill the seat once held by Lois Cuccinello;
 - Erik Peterson, a Republican freeholder from Hunterdon County, will fill the seat once held by Eileen Swan.The Governor's office is seeking a Morris County elected republican to fill the remaining seat formally held by Chester Township Mayor Ben Spinelli.

RESOURCES

The ANJEC Resource Center

The ANJEC Resource Center provides information, research and guidance to help New Jersey environmental commissions and other municipal officials accomplish their environmental goals.

Here are some of the types of assistance you can find at the ANJEC Resource Center:

- Our ANJEC staff, available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer questions by phone or email, do research and provide references to other knowledgeable sources;
- An extensive collection of municipal, state and federal environmental laws, regulations and model ordinances;
- Hundreds of ordinances that municipalities have enacted throughout New Jersey to address a wide variety of environmental issues;
- Research files on more than 1,000 topics, from aquifer protection to environmental justice and zoning for open space;

- A library containing thousands of environmental books, policy documents and research studies;
- Our web site, <http://www.anjec.org> , where much of our most frequently requested information is available in the "Tools and Resources" section (<http://www.anjec.org/html/onlineresource.htm>) or via key word search;

In addition to our library, ANJEC's Resource Center offers an information and referral service, courses and workshops throughout the year, an annual Environmental Congress (go to <http://www.anjec.org/html/workshops.htm#congress06> for the October 28, 2006 program) and a quarterly newsletter, the *ANJEC Report*. (also available at <http://www.anjec.org/html/report.htm>) Become a member of ANJEC today. Join online at <http://www.anjec.org/html/member.htm>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Jersey Highlands Council Meetings

The Highlands Council website (go to <http://www.highlands.state.nj.us> and click on Calendar) lists meetings of the Council and its committees, with links to agendas and minutes.

Thursday October 5, 2006 (Working session, 10 am – 4 pm)

Thursday October 19, 2006 (Working session, 10 am – 4 pm)

Where: Highlands Council Offices, 100 North Road (Rt. 513), Chester

Thursday, October 19, 2006

Transfer of Development Rights Workshop

Where: Morris County Cultural Center

When: 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Sponsored by ANJEC. Topics will include the state TDR rules, a real estate market analysis and the Highlands TDR Program. ANJEC members - \$25; if your commission/committee is on the ANJEC Workshop Plan, there is no charge; Non-members - \$35.

For additional information go to <http://www.anjec.org/html/workshops.htm#Implementing>

Saturday, October 28, 2006

ANJEC 33rd Annual Environmental Congress: "Getting the Job Done!"

When: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Where: The Conference Center at Mercer, West Windsor

Save the Date! Getting the Job Done... a from-the-trenches view of environmental regulation in New Jersey. A day of speakers and workshops on local and statewide strategies for environmental protection. This Congress will highlight successful environmental efforts and programs that others can adopt or emulate. Keynote speaker: New Jersey State Senator Robert Martin and Guest Speaker: NJDEP Commissioner Lisa Jackson. ANJEC members \$50; non-members \$60.

For additional information go to <http://www.anjec.org/html/workshops.htm#congress06>

Friday-Saturday November 10-11, 2006

ANJEC Environmental Leadership Course

When: 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Where: Duke Farms, Hillsborough, New Jersey

ANJEC is pleased to announce its second annual training opportunity to help environmental commissioners hone their leadership skills. This course will focus on the skills that commissioners and other volunteer officials need to bring environmental issues to the forefront in their

municipalities. This course will provide training on a range of topics, including identifying and enhancing leadership style and environmental communication strategies. The registration fee of \$70 for ANJEC members includes two full days of instruction, lunch and materials in a lovely setting at Duke Farms. An optional hike on the Duke Farms Nature Trail will also be available.

For additional information call ANJEC at 973-539-7547 or email to info@anjec.org.

CONTACT US

If you have an event, article, or website you'd like us to cover in the next *Highlands Herald*, please send your information to info@anjec.org.

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