



State of New Jersey

Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council
100 North Road (Route 513)
Chester, New Jersey 07930-2322
(908) 879-6737
(908) 879-4205 (fax)
www.nj.gov/njhighlands



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

CARL J. RICHKO
Chair

LISA J. PLEVIN
Executive Director

Contact:

Carole Ann Dicton, Manager of Communications
(908) 879-6737 ext. 105 or caroleann.dicton@highlands.nj.gov

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Mobile Map and Enhanced Signage Coming for New Jersey Highlands Trail

CHESTER, N.J. — At its July meeting, the Highlands Council voted to award a contract to the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (NY/NJ Trail Conference) to provide digital mapping and to create a trail and roadside signage system for the New Jersey portion of the Highlands Trail. The project is expected to be finished by early 2021.

“The New Jersey portion of the Highlands Trail stretches from the Delaware River in Pohatcong Township to the New York border in West Milford,” explains Lisa Plevin, Highlands Council Executive Director. “It travels right through the heart of the region, showcasing the diversity and beauty of our landscapes and communities. The Highlands Trail represents an untapped opportunity to connect trail users with local businesses and expand tourism in the region.”

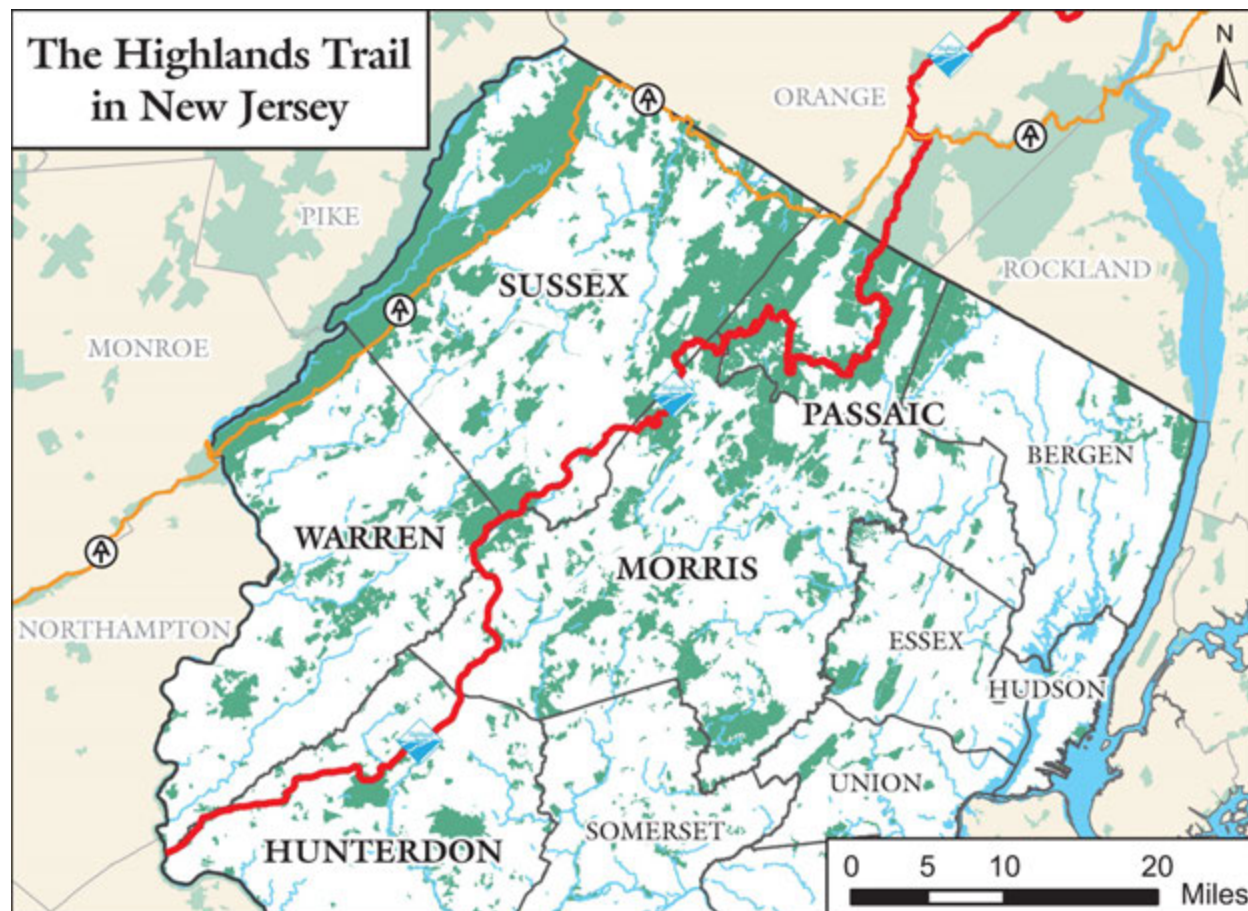
The Highlands Trail is a long-distance trail created by the NY/NJ Trail Conference in 1993. It currently runs 180 miles from the Delaware River in New Jersey to the Hudson River in New York, just north of Bear Mountain. Plans are to eventually continue the trail to the Connecticut border. Today, the trail route is mapped and partially blazed along established trails through existing parks and preserved open spaces with some road walking to provide connections. The route is designed to highlight the natural beauty of the Highlands and emphasize its critical importance to the region.

Currently, users must navigate the route by stitching together multiple trail maps and guides. This project will create one consistent Highlands trail map from end-to-end that will be published as a digital, interactive map available on the free Avenza Maps mobile app. Users will be able to download the map for use in areas with poor or no cell service. Additional trail blazes will help clarify the route, and road crossing signs will assist hikers along the way. Roadside signage will also direct users to trailheads along the route. Promotional maps and materials will be created and available for viewing at established kiosks. The Highlands Council resolution specifies that the project is expected to be completed for an amount not to exceed \$29,755.

“The Highlands Act, first and foremost, directs us to protect the water resources of the region,” says Carl Richko, Chairman of the Highlands Council. “But it also clearly acknowledges the natural beauty of the region and the importance of protecting it for our enjoyment. Accordingly, the Regional Master Plan includes several goals related to promoting and encouraging tourism and that’s exactly what we are doing here.”

With more than 85 years of experience mapping and promoting trails in New Jersey, the NY/NJ Trail Conference is uniquely qualified to complete this project. By leveraging existing digital content and platforms, along with a vast network of experienced volunteers, the Trail Conference anticipates completing the project on or ahead of schedule.

“Municipal and county officials throughout the region are looking for opportunities to elevate recognition of the New Jersey Highlands,” says Plevin. “The Highlands Trail will provide the backbone of a trail network through the Highlands, with interconnections to existing municipal and county trails, and the communities they serve. We look forward to working with the Trail Conference on this project.”



Actions taken by the Council at this meeting will take effect following the Governor’s review and consideration of the meeting minutes, up to 10 business days from receipt of the minutes. Materials related to this meeting including resolutions, presentations, audio and minutes will be posted at: www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend/index.html (click on July 18, 2019 meeting).

The Highlands Council is a regional planning agency established in 2004 with the passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act and charged with implementation of the Act. More information is available at www.nj.gov/njhighlands.

The NY/NJ Trail Conference is a volunteer-powered organization that builds, maintains, and protects public trails. Together with its partners, NY/NJ Trail Conference strives to ensure that the trails and natural areas it manages are sustainable and accessible for all to enjoy for generations to come.

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References:

Highlands Council RFP detailing complete Scope of Services:
www.nj.gov/njhighlands/news/rfps/trails/trails_rfp.pdf

Highlands Council Resolution:
www.nj.gov/njhighlands/about/calend/2019/jul18/2019_12.pdf

NY/NJ Trail Conference Highlands Trail information:
www.nynjtc.org/region/highlands-trail-region

Additional map available upon request:

- Highlands Trail with state park labels