



## **NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION**

# *ACTION ALERT*

### **Highlands Conformance Public Workshop! Attend and Learn What Conformance Is and How It Will Benefit Your Community!**

Do you constantly see articles in the newspapers on Highlands Conformance and want to learn more? Are you a Highlands resident and want to learn how these new regulations will affect your property and the community?

On Saturday November 7, New Jersey Highlands Coalition and the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) will be hosting a public workshop to help citizens understand how conformance with the Highlands Council's Regional Master Plan will affect their municipality, community, and property. Under the Highlands Water Preservation and Protection Act, the legislature required that municipalities with land in the Highlands Preservation Area change their planning and zoning to conform to the requirements of the Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP). Conformance for the Preservation Area is required by Dec.8. 2009. Highlands municipalities with lands outside the Preservation Area may conform these areas voluntarily at any given time.

There is a great deal of public confusion regarding what conformance is, what it isn't and its benefits. Informed citizens are critical to protecting the Highlands Region. Conformance carries with it important benefits, including funding access to planning grants, priority for open space and farmland preservation funding, a "legal shield" that includes a heightened "presumption of validity" and legal defense in the event your conforming planning and zoning are challenged in court. In most cases, the amount of affordable housing that must be built will be reduced dramatically. In addition, whether you choose to conform or not there is a wealth of new environmental data, mapping and mapping tools available to your municipality.

Julia Somers, Executive Director of NJ Highlands Coalition, and Dave Peifer, Highlands Coordinator for ANJEC, will give a presentation about the process and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. The process that each Highlands municipality is currently going through will be described and the benefits of conformance will be discussed. The workshop will run from 10 AM to noon, with registration at 9:30, at 300 Mendham Rd, Morristown. Coffee will be provided. We hope to see you there!

# **HIGHLANDS CONFORMANCE PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

- WHERE:** 300 Mendham Road, Morristown, NJ 07960
- WHEN:** Saturday, November 7, 10:00 am – 12 noon  
Registration and coffee at 9:30 am
- WHAT:** A workshop explaining municipal conformance to the Highlands Regional Master Plan
- WHY:** What conformance is  
What conformance isn't  
Benefits of conformance  
How you can shape it in your town
- WHO:** Dave Peifer, Highlands Coordinator, ANJEC  
Julia Somers, Executive Director, NJ Highlands Coalition

**RSVP to [info@anjec.org](mailto:info@anjec.org), the workshop is free we just ask that you register in advance**

## **Directions: 300 Mendham Road, Morristown, NJ**

**From the North:** Take Interstate 287 South to Exit #35, "Madison Avenue." Turn right at first traffic light and then right again at second traffic light onto South Street, Route 124 (CR 510) (old Route 24). At the Morristown Green, go  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way around. Turn right at traffic light onto Washington Street, which becomes Mendham Road. Go 3.4 miles to 300 Mendham Road, Morris County Cultural Center. Sign on right, driveway is a sharp left up steep hill.

**From the South:** Take Interstate 287 North to Exit # 30B, Bernardsville, 202. Bear right at exit ramp; go over highway to traffic light. Make right on 202 North. Continue on 202 to first traffic light. Take left on Tempe Wick Road. Follow Tempe Wick Road 2.3 miles to the first 4-way intersection. Then go right onto Corey Lane. Follow Corey Lane until it dead-ends at Mendham Road, Route 24 East (CR 510). Turn right and follow Mendham Road for approx. 2 miles. The sign for 300 Mendham Road, Morris County Cultural Center is on the left, the driveway is on the right up a steep hill. There are several mailboxes at the base of the driveway.

## **Unable to Attend but Still Want to Get Involved?**

- Attend Town Council and Planning Board Meetings

Local officials need to know that their citizens support their "opting-in" and conforming to the Regional Master Plan so that they may protect the natural resources and unique character of their community. By attending planning board and town council or committee meetings you can reach out to local officials either during the public comment period, or before or after the meeting, to let them know how important conformance is for your town.

- Become Involved in a Local Environmental or Conservation Group

Connecting with your local community conservation group is another way to become involved. Many of these groups are already working on promoting conformance. If there is no such

group, become involved and form such a group and stress the importance of this issue to others! Local groups across the Highlands are organizing petition drives and hosting informational meetings in town to attract attention to the issue.

Many such groups are members of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition. Check out our list of members and see if there is a group by you:

[http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org/HTML/about\\_orgs.html](http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org/HTML/about_orgs.html)

- Start a Petition Drive
- Hold Meetings to Discuss the Issue with Neighbors
- Invite the NJ Highlands Coalition to Make a Presentation

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition also makes presentations about conformance for local groups, organizations, and associations and would happily visit your community to discuss the benefits of conformance. If your group is interested please call our office at (973) 588-7190.