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## **Grassroots Organizations in New Jersey Highlands Eligible for Grants from New Jersey Highlands Coalition**

BOONTON, N. J. – Grassroots organizations working on projects within the New Jersey Highlands or working to protect Highlands resources can apply for grants up to \$5000 through the New Jersey Highlands Coalition’s 2011 Small Grants Program. Applications must be received by March 31, and grants will be awarded in June.

“Our region-wide coalition wants to fund local projects or provide seed money to get things started,” said Julia Somers, Executive Director of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition. “For example, last year we gave a grant to Friends of Fairmount Historic District in Tewksbury to support their opposition to a JCP&L electric substation. We helped get them off the ground, but it was concerned local citizens who carried the ball from there. And that’s the essence of this program.”

Grassroots organizations are defined as non-governmental organizations with a total annual operating budget of less than \$200,000. It is not necessary that the organization be incorporated. Grant awards can be up to \$5,000.

Priority will be given to projects that: focus on implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan; establish a precedent advancing strong environmental protection in the Highlands; assist an organization to fight against an environmentally damaging development in the Highlands; support capacity building of Highlands Region grassroots organizations; or educate the public about Highlands water and resources.

Another 2010 Small Grants Program recipient was the Foodshed Alliance, based in Blairstown, to foster the growth of a sustainable local food system by matching farmers to new markets for their products, and by taking school children to farms in northwest New Jersey and bringing farmers into the classrooms. A grant also went to Trout Unlimited whose New Jersey field office is in Flanders,

to help purchase equipment to monitor water temperature in the Musconetcong River and to identify GPS coordinates for every tributary of the river.

The Musconetcong Mountain Conservancy received a grant to help fund a daily email news clip service of articles about the Highlands compiled by Scott Olson of Byram. Save the Park, based in Hardwick, received a grant to fund efforts to oppose the PSE&G plan to build a power line through the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The Highlands Tourism Partnership, based in Phillipsburg, received a grant for a fundraising event called “The Pumpkin Fling” held in White Township, to support their work promoting ecotourism, agritourism and cultural heritage in the New Jersey Highlands.

“This is the fifth year for our Small Grants Program, and we are proud to have supported a wide variety of projects and to have helped so many local citizens groups take wing and realize their potential. I look forward to the creativity and commitment we’ll see in the 2011 applications,” said the Coalition’s Julia Somers.

Grassroots organizations wishing to be considered for a grant in June should submit applications by March 31, 2011. For more information, contact Julia Somers at 973-588-7190 or [julia@njhighlandscoalition.org](mailto:julia@njhighlandscoalition.org), or visit [www.njhighlandscoalition.org](http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org) and click on the link for “2011 Small Grants Program.”

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