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January 1992

# **Skylands Greenway A Plan for Action**

**Governor's  
Skylands Greenway  
Task Force  
501 East State Street  
Trenton NJ 08625**



# Skylands Greenway—A Plan for Action

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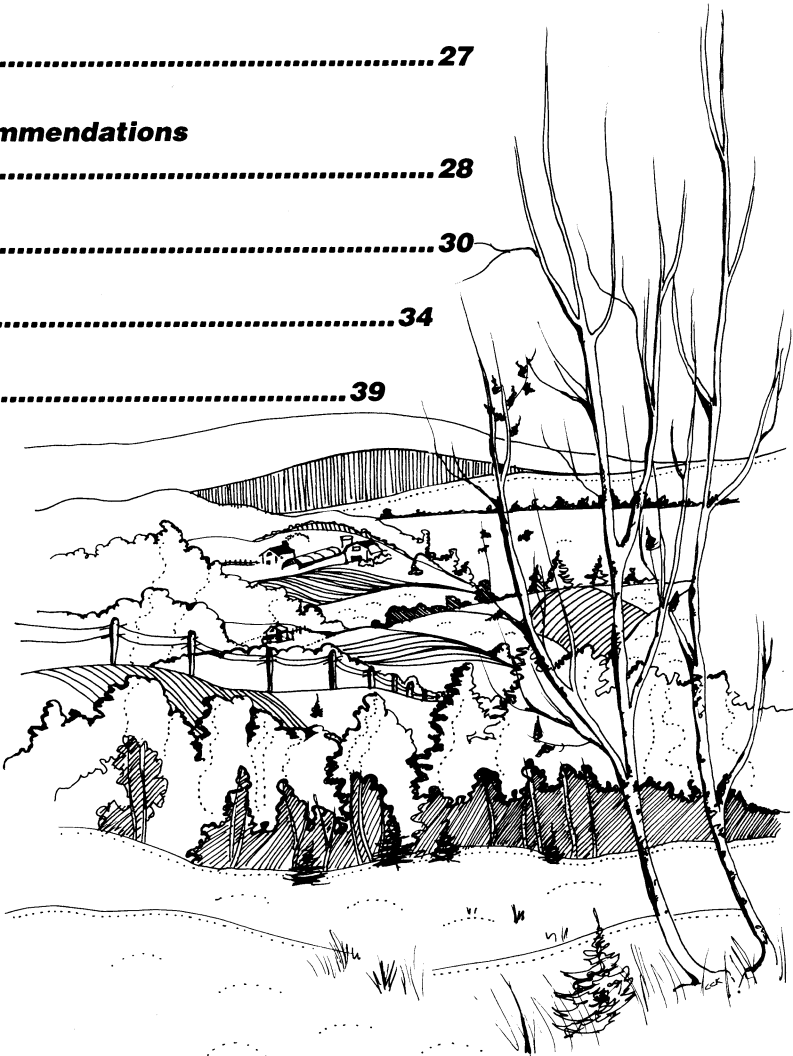
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**Cover Photo—**

View of the New York skyline from the heart of the Skylands. The Skylands may sit at the edge, but they are certainly part of one of the world's great metropolitan regions.

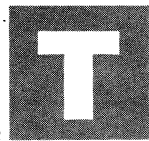


# The Skylands Greenway— The Preservation of a Sense of Place

## Executive Summary

**“The Task Force’s recommendations offer the gamut of good suggestions to involve all segments of government and to deal with the absence of substantial acquisition funds.”**

**Robert C. Wagner,  
Director  
American Farmland  
Trust**



The Skylands of New York and New Jersey embody the most elemental and timely questions about the quality of life and the nature of our environment. Unless action is taken soon, those who live there today will be faced with the certain destruction of a sense of place that has shaped their history and created one of the richest and most complex landscapes in the United States. Here a person can stand in what feels almost like wilderness and see the New York City skyline, only an hour’s drive away. Natural lands, pastoral countryside, and urban and suburban development all occur side by side and adjacent to the most developed corridor in the country.

Recent trends in the Skylands are very disturbing. According to the Regional Plan Association, more land in the region has been consumed by development in the last 25 years than in all the preceding 300 years of settlement. Although the area population grew by only 16-18% in that time, the land area developed grew by over 68%. In 1989, Governor Kean set up a bi-State Task Force “to study the viability of establishing a Skylands Greenway—to protect the unique qualities of the Skylands region.”

**A Plan for Action** is needed to maintain a balance of open space and natural areas with the intense developmental pressures. The Plan is not a detailed prescription but rather a broad brush approach to a process that will require detailed refinement.

The framework of the Action Plan recommended by the Task Force rests on two major conclusions from the public forums: *first, that nothing short of a comprehensive regional approach to planning and*

*coordinated efforts by federal, state, local, and private groups will be effective in the face of current trends; and secondly, that there is a significant planning and regulatory gap with regard to the protection of contiguous forest lands and the resources they support, including water supply, air quality, and habitat values.* The Governor’s Task Force proposes that the recommendations in this report be implemented where applicable and feasible at state, regional and national levels.

The core recommendations of the Skylands Greenway Task Force include:

1. The designation of the **Skylands National Greenway** at both state and federal levels and the **Skylands Greenway Council** to plan for a comprehensive network of protected open space and connecting corridors encompassing the major parks and cultural sites in the Skylands.
2. The **enactment of the Highlands Commission** at both state and federal levels with the planning and regulatory authority to protect and manage the crucial lands and critical natural resources of the section of the Skylands within the Highlands Physiographic Province.

The Task Force would like to note, that the recommendations contained within this report represent a consensus of the Task Force members, achieved through discussion, compromise and addressing the sentiments put forth by the public during the four public forum sessions and the comments received during the review period of the draft report. However, there are specific aspects of the report where consensus was not reached and recommendations were not endorsed unanimously.

# The Skylands Task Force

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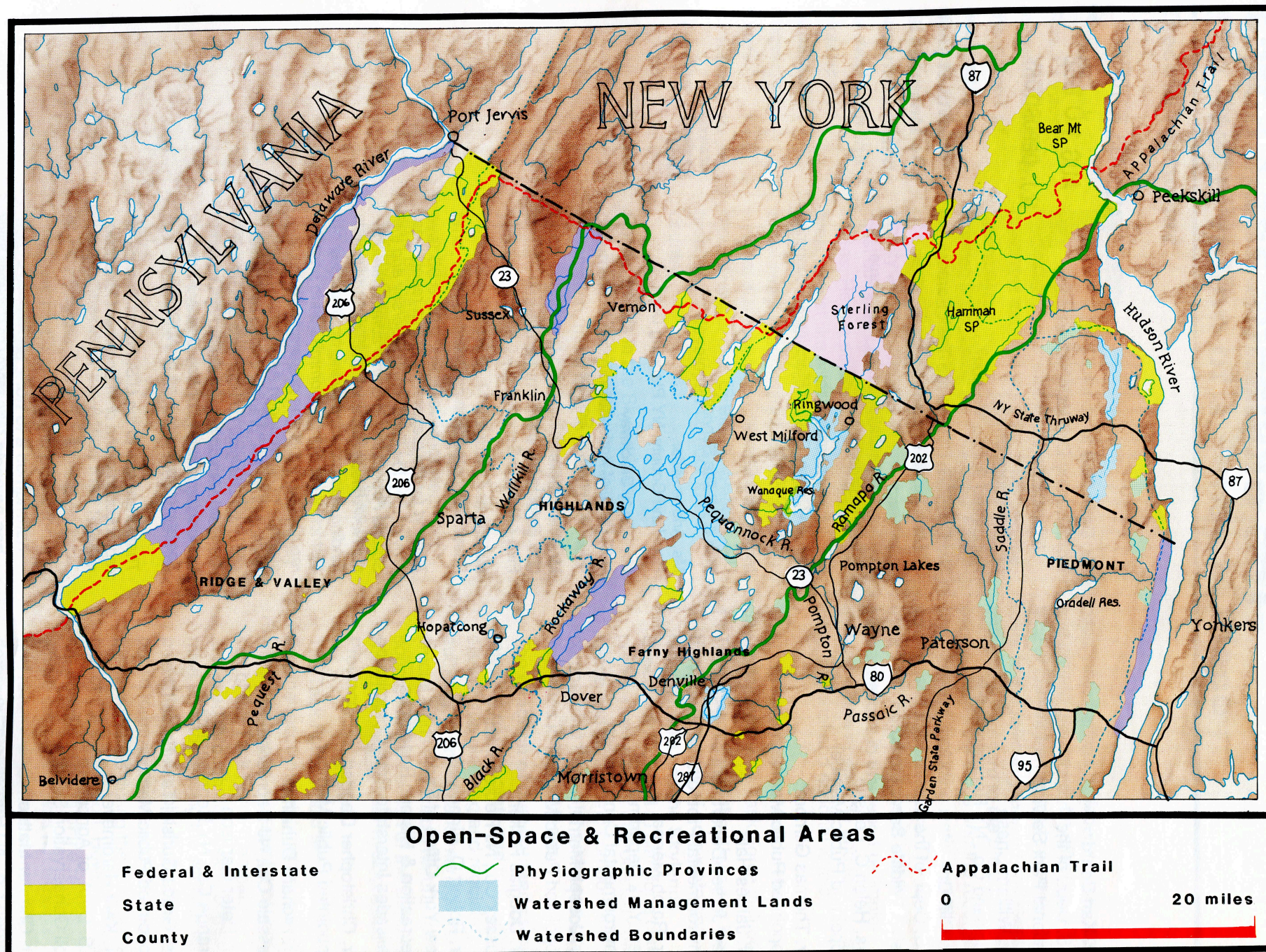
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*Support for the preparation of this report was provided by the Fund for New Jersey and the Surdna Foundation in grants administered by the New Jersey Audubon Society. Additional funding was provided by the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission to print the report. The report was prepared with the assistance of Andropogon Associates, Ltd., Philadelphia, PA, graphic design by Middle Mountain Designs, photographs by George Aronson. Map on page 4 drafted by Joseph LeMonnier, courtesy of New Jersey Audubon Society; revisions to map by NJDEPE.*

*Thanks are due to the U.S. Forest Service for reproduction of the draft document for public review.*

\*Also serving on Highlands Study.







# Introduction

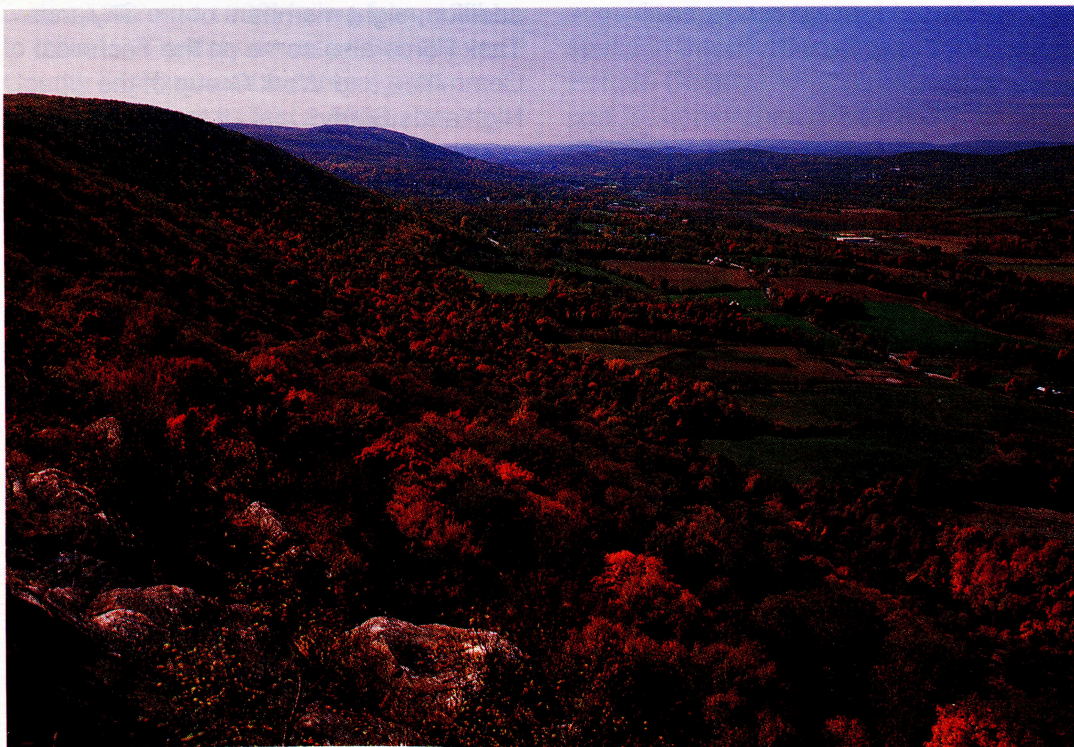
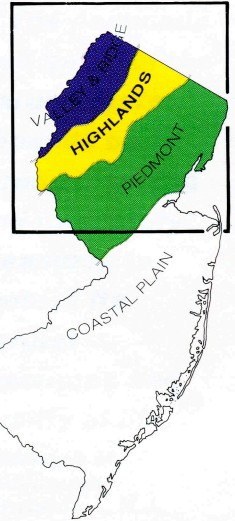
**T**he Skylands sweep the length of the New Jersey/New York border from the Delaware River to the Hudson River, and include such public treasures as the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Bergen County-Ringwood State Park continuum, 66 miles of the Appalachian Trail and the Palisades Interstate Park System. Over **364,000** acres of parks, preserves, historic sites and open spaces provide an unparalleled wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources. There is extensive private and quasi-public open space, including the Pequannock Watershed and Sterling Forest which alone total over 50,000 acres. Agricultural activities also occupy a significant portion of the outer limits of the Skylands region.

Water is the region's most valuable resource. The Skylands encompasses the

watersheds and the headwaters for most of the surface water supplies for Northern New Jersey, which include twelve major reservoirs. The quality and quantity of much of this water supply is currently maintained by extensive tracts of contiguous forest cover which supports as great a diversity of plants and wildlife as found anywhere in the two states.

The Skylands is also rich in cultural, historical, and archaeological resources. Many aboriginal sites have been located and the area abounds with artifacts from its early industrial history—including iron mines, furnaces, canals and railroads.

The Skylands are home to 3.5 million residents. Recent population growth has been moderate, around 20% in the last 25 years and is projected to continue at about the same rate. The rate at which open space is being consumed by new



**Appalachian Trail—**  
*The Skylands are a combination of urban, suburban, rural and forested resources. This view of the Appalachian Trail crossing the agricultural lands of the Wallkill Valley is representative of the vistas in the western Skylands.*



# Introduction (cont.)

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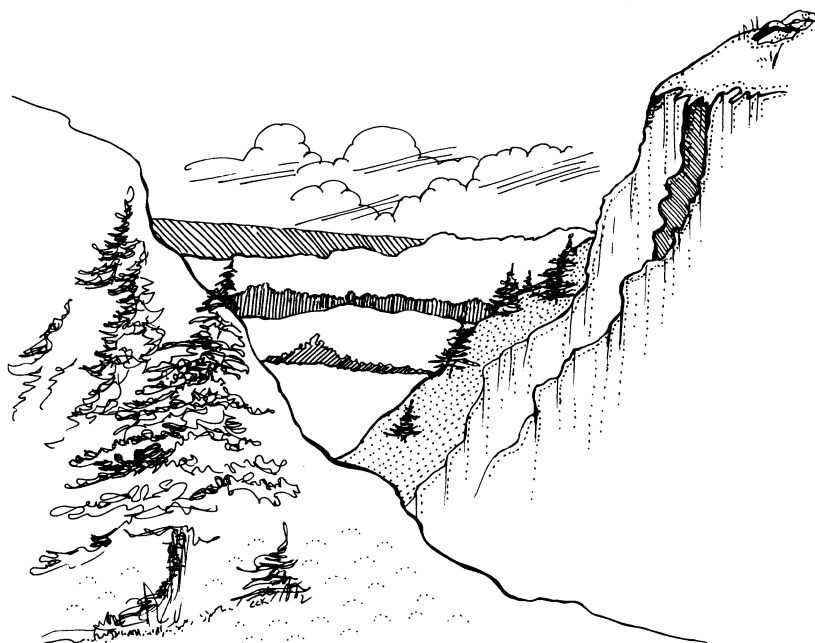
development however, has increased five-fold as suburban sprawl proceeds unchecked. Water supply, recreation and habitat values would be irrevocably compromised by suburban sprawl.

Despite broad consensus on the need to revitalize existing urbanized areas, the opposite is actually occurring. Even if this expansion could be stopped today, what has already happened will continue to be felt for decades as services expand and contract to meet the needs of a mobile population. *The impacts of human use are cumulative over time and space, and unless current trends are reversed, the quality of life in the Skylands will be forever degraded with no chance of recapturing the values lost.* Policy makers must immediately address the critical importance of open space in determining the region's future social, cultural and economic vitality. **Future growth and development patterns must complement essential natural resource needs, not compete with their preservation.**

On December 20, 1989 Governor Thomas H. Kean of New Jersey signed Executive Order No. 224 creating a Skylands Greenway Task Force. Comprised of representatives and officials from both New York and New Jersey, the Task Force was charged with studying "the viability of establishing a Skylands Greenway to protect the unique qualities of the Skylands region." Thus the Greenway itself is seen as a primary vehicle for achieving resource protection in the five counties which form the New York-New Jersey borderlands between the Delaware and Hudson Rivers.

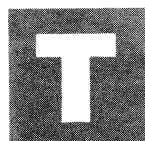
The Task Force has met monthly during the past year and held four public forums to provide for effective community input and public comment. During the same time period, the Task Force benefitted from eight public forums and the inventory information collected by the U.S. Forest Service's Highlands Study. In addition, eight members of the Skylands Task Force also serve on the Technical Committee and Work Group of the Highlands Study.

This report includes an overview of the natural and cultural resources of the Skylands and summarizes the recommendations for the establishment of the Skylands National Greenway made by this Task Force.



# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands

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he Skylands area encompasses dramatically different terrains that have shaped

the landscape and local land use history and are integral to determining the character of the Skylands Greenway. The juxtaposition of developed, rural, and natural landscapes found in the Skylands affords a compelling vision of a way-of-life and a quality of environment worth saving.

## **The Piedmont**

To the east, in Bergen County, New Jersey and portions of Rockland County, New York the Skylands lie in a physiographic province, known as Piedmont, which literally means “foothills”. Residential communities extending outward from the New York metropolitan area now blanket this gently rolling terrain, having replaced the earlier farms and forests. Remaining open space in Bergen County, for example, was halved between 1982 and 1988, falling from 12% to 6% of the county. In response, the County has financed a campaign to permanently protect its last 2,500 acres of mountainous open space. Development, however, is still going to increase. Before New Jersey’s Preliminary Development and Redevelopment Plan’s Cross-Acceptance process was undertaken between the State and the counties, Bergen County was presumed to be largely developed. However, the county’s review of development potential inventoried zoning and land capacity for up to 118,000 new jobs, 46,000 new homes and 112,000 more people by 2010. Bergen County is currently developing a Draft Growth Management Plan as an extension of the 1970 Master Plan and is drafting new

model ordinances to support open space preservation in close coordination with four towns in the county.

The impact of traffic has come to be a prominent issue in the minds of the public. In the recent Growth Capacity Straw Polls taken by the Bergen County, Department of Planning and Economic Development, for example, over 90% responded that traffic congestion is or will shortly become a problem in their community. In response, the County has developed a traffic/land use model which projects traffic from various zoning environments. The greatest single traffic inducer, the model shows, is commercial development. Faster than any other use, its presence drives up the price of remaining land and of existing housing stock.

Today, Bergen and Rockland counties are implementing local greenways and acquiring some of the last remaining open space in the counties. Polls taken in Bergen County reveal strong citizen support for comprehensive environmental planning. Large majorities favored zoning to protect open space, critical habitats, watersheds, steep slopes, stream corridors, and scenic resources and over 93% of the residents polled expressed the desire to manage growth to control burgeoning congestion. The importance of these concerns was reiterated strongly in the public forums.

## **The Highlands**

The central portion of the Skylands, including some of Passaic County and

**“The economic well-being of the Garden State depends on strong planning and regulatory measures to protect its natural resources and quality of life.”**

**Catherine M. Cavanaugh  
Morristown, N.J.**



# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands (cont.)

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## ***Wanaque Reservoir—***

*The Skylands region contains 12 major reservoirs, numerous smaller reservoirs and lakes. This is a view of the Wanaque Reservoir, the state of New Jersey's second largest.*



parts of Bergen, Morris and Sussex Counties in New Jersey and parts of Orange and Rockland Counties in New York, lies in the Highlands Physiographic Province, which, outside the Skylands, includes the famed Blue Ridge and Berkshire Mountains. Locally this formation is called the Reading Prong and extends from the Pennsylvania border across New Jersey into New York and across the Hudson River. Although the Executive Order only designated Rockland and Orange Counties in New York and Sussex, Passaic and Bergen Counties in New Jersey, the Task Force also included in the Skylands boundary area the northern portion of Morris County in New Jersey (known as the Fanny Highlands).

The rugged Highlands terrain supports extensive tracts of contiguous forest so

dramatic and remarkable that it has dominated our perception of the Skylands region. The terms Highlands and Skylands are sometimes used synonymously. Here, adjacent to the nation's major metropolitan complex, is a vital forest expanse of national significance sheltering black bear, beaver, river otter, bobcat, brook trout, some 120 resident bird species, and two-thirds of New Jersey's breeding birds and 23 threatened and endangered species.

For the 60 species of long distance migratory birds which travel to and from South or Central America, these are literally "skylands", biotic greenways that link directly with tropical forests. Any impacts which occur locally to these habitats must be summed with impacts over their vast migratory territories, and we in the Skylands bear a hemispheric responsibility for their preservation.

# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands (cont.)

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The forest lands have also protected the *quality and quantity of both ground and surface water which is the Highland's most valuable resource*, supplying most of Northern New Jersey. Much of this forest however, is in private ownership and largely open to development under current zoning. Two of the largest tracts of forest—the Pequannock Watershed and the New York portion of Sterling Forest—totalling over 50,000 acres, although having had conscientious stewardship, have no permanent protection as open space.

The soon-to-be-completed extension of I-287 in New Jersey connecting to Route 87 (the New York Thruway) will pass above Route 80 through the most undeveloped portions of the Highlands. This will spur growth causing adverse environmental consequences and increased demand for local services. An analogous situation is found in New York with the once proposed interchange 15A on the New York Thruway. This interchange was originally intended to serve the southern portions of Orange County, and which now has been revived to service the proposed development of Sterling Forest. Policy decisions concerning roadway improvement, like other infrastructures such as water and sewer tend to be driven more by perceived demand for the service than by consideration of the impacts on local and regional land use planning. The consequences of these infrastructure expansions often run counter to other policies of the states.

The need to protect the extensive natural landscapes of the Highlands and the plants, animals, recreational opportunities and water supply they support was

the most frequently reiterated concern of the public forums. Despite regulation and management, the replacement of contiguous forest with development will lead inevitably to water quality and quantity degradation, and loss of critical habitat. Even relatively low levels of development can have profound effects on vital biological connections. Once a landscape is isolated from other natural areas, species diversity typically declines.

The U.S. Forest Service is currently undertaking the New York/New Jersey Highlands Regional Study, which includes significant overlap with the Highlands portion of the Skylands area. The study, authorized under the 1990 Farm Bill, Section 1244, is directed to develop alternative conservation strategies to protect the long term integrity and traditional land uses in recognition of the national significance of the region. The draft report released in November, 1991 will be followed by the final report in March, 1992.

## **Ridge and Valley**

The western section of the Skylands lies in the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province and includes most of Sussex County in New Jersey and portions of Orange County in New York. There are two broad valley systems—the Delaware and Wallkill Rivers—both of which are still largely agricultural in character. These river corridors are the major local areas of federal involvement and funding, including the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, the Appalachian Trail and the newly enacted Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge. The landscapes of

***“Implementation of the recommendations in this report would represent a giant step forward in protecting and preserving this priceless resource.”***

***William Leaning  
Stirling, NJ.***



# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands (cont.)

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***“Few question the need for additional housing in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York. However, we must challenge the land consuming and wasteful development practices that have occurred. New Housing must be directed towards existing builtup areas to keep our open space for the benefit of the public. It’s unconscionable to allow the precious natural resources of the Skylands Greenway to be frittered away by large lot residential development. The recommendations of this report must be advanced, to do anything less is irresponsible.”***

**Randy Brockway,  
ASLA Soil  
Conservation  
Service**

the ridges are steep and wooded, and also have some measure of protection in New Jersey state, county and local parks. Although Sussex County does not have any County parkland, nearly one fifth of its land area is protected as state and federal parks.

The presence of pastoral landscapes is integral to the nature of the Skylands. In addition to food production, these farms provide a scenic landscape character of significant economic value to existing and future recreational development, they sustain a rich cultural heritage, as well as provide remnant natural landscapes at little public expense. An important consideration for landowners is to assure appropriate compensation for preserving such public values as open space and habitats through strategies such as conservation of scenic easements or transfer of development rights.

*Almost 60% of all New Jersey’s woodlands are sustained on farmland.* Some landowner compensation for forest protection is provided by the New Jersey Farmlands Assessment and New York Property Tax Law Section 480-A, however participation is only 26% in New Jersey and 6% in New York.

On 4 July, 1991 New York passed a Farmland Protection Trust Fund which will extend eligibility for farmland protection beyond the Agricultural District’s Law which now covers 8.4 million acres in all 50 counties. This legislation begins a process to establish a Purchase of Development Rights Program. The passage

of this bill which meets the requirements of the Federal Food, Agriculture, Conservation Trade Act of 1990, authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture to guarantee loans to qualifying states and provide interest assistance to help finance farmland protection programs. Unfortunately at this time, New York has not appropriated any money to implement the program. In New Jersey, the Farmland Preservation Program, which funds farmland easements, has been overwhelmingly supported by the voters; the last bond issue passed by a 70% margin. To date, over 70,000 acres have been protected and an additional 23,000 acres are under limited term restrictions. However, during the past two years, applications have increased ten-fold, far exceeding the availability of funds. In 1989, 346 farms applied, totalling 38,500 acres. Unfortunately, it is likely that funding will allow the preservation of only 57 farms and 10,000 acres.

Participation in the Farmland Preservation Program in the Skylands area is currently restricted by the diverse character of agriculture locally. Farmland in Sussex County does not compete well with other counties under the program’s current criteria and there is no minimum allocation made to each County. Because the process depends on applications from individual land owners there is also no prioritization of acquisitions, making it difficult to plan for protection of critical areas or scenic corridors.

While uncontrolled growth represents a serious threat to regional farming by raising property values and introducing conflicting land uses, there is equal concern that rural development might be inhibited

# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands (cont.)

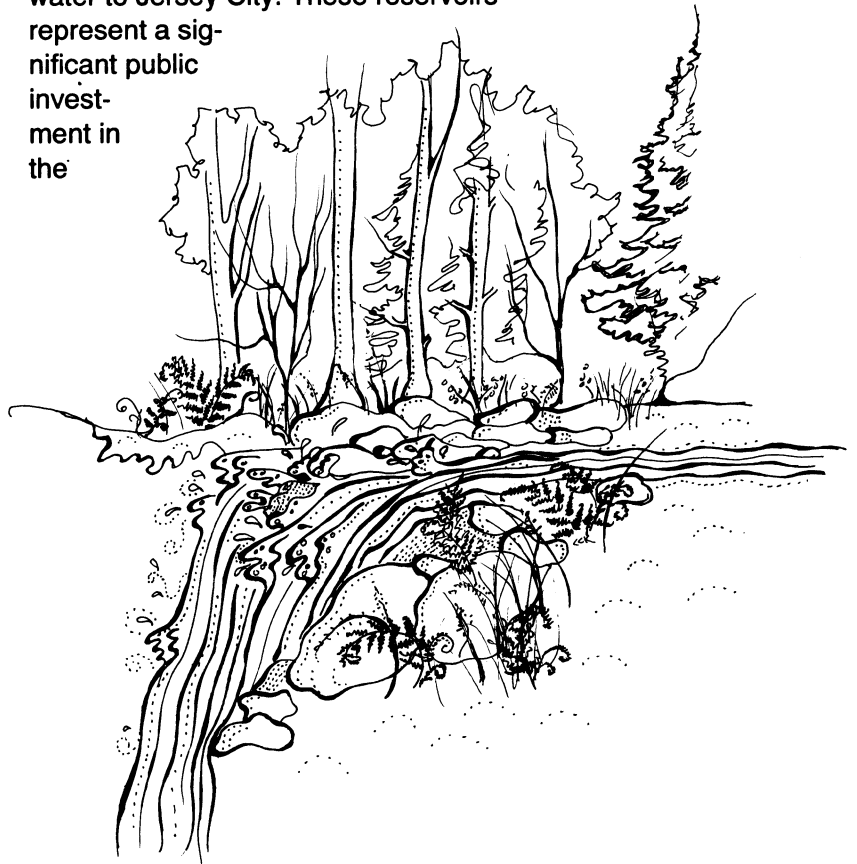
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by a lack of investment in the infrastructure needed by today's farms such as water supply and transportation. Similarly, there are real fears that efforts toward resource protection such as down zoning may lower the value of farmland and a landowner's equity and hence restrict access to capital for investment. On the other hand, *the underlying zoning for this magnificent landscape predicts a future pattern of scattered suburban sprawl capable of dismembering these privately owned woodlands and agricultural expanses.*

## Water and Watersheds

**The Skylands area is the major source of Northern New Jersey's water supply.** As waterborne disease ravaged communities near the turn of the century, New Jersey's major cities began to follow the lead established by Rome 2,000 years before—to *protect drinking water quality by moving the water supply upstream above the sources of pollution and constructing aqueducts to carry the water to the developed areas.* Today, the Skylands region contains nine major reservoirs in the Passaic Basin, three reservoirs in the Hackensack Watershed, numerous smaller reservoirs, and many lakes, both natural and man-made. The reservoirs management lands also provide cover for groundwater and aquifer recharge systems. In addition to the reservoirs, the Ramapo, Pompton and Passaic Rivers provide sources from which supplies are directly pumped and for which there are no alternate sources. The Wallkill River, with headwaters in New Jersey provides water supply to New York.

On the easterly side of the Skylands Greenway, the Hackensack River Watershed supplies much of Bergen County, parts of Hudson County and several areas in New York State. These water supplies were developed through the decades by the Hackensack Water Company and its New York subsidiary, the Spring Valley Water Company. Moving westward, the Wanaque Reservoir, the State's second largest, and the Monksville Reservoir, both on the Wanaque River, provide resources to five counties in metropolitan New Jersey. Twenty-five percent of the state's residents obtain all or part of their water from the Wanaque Reservoir. The Pequannock Watershed, owned by the City of Newark, supplies that urban area, while the Boonton Reservoir on the Rockaway River furnishes water to Jersey City. These reservoirs represent a significant public investment in the





# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands (cont.)

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**“We firmly believe that New Jersey’s ability to compete economically depends on the preservation of its natural and cultural resources and its quality of life.”**

**David F. Moore,  
Exec. Director N.J.  
Conservation  
Foundation**

region. The replacement value of the Wanaque Reservoir alone, if built today, would be in excess of \$400 million. In addition to water supply, some of these reservoirs have broad multiple uses, including recreation and potential hydro-power. The Monksville Reservoir, built with water supply funding on land provided by Green Acres Funds, provides drinking water, as well as opportunities for hunting, fishing, sailing, trapping, hiking and swimming.

A primary strategy in the Interim Development and Redevelopment Plan for the state of New Jersey is to “conserve the state’s natural resources by planning the location, intensity and design of new development, maintaining the integrity and capacity of natural resource systems, and by investing in infrastructure and natural resource protection programs to guide growth in accordance with this planning.” *The report notes that “the Pinelands, the ‘Highlands’ (which includes the ‘Skylands’) and the Jersey Shore are but a few of the natural assets of the Garden State that translate into vast recreational and economic opportunities for today’s and tomorrow’s New Jerseyans.* The surface waters of the Highlands, for example, are irreplaceable sources of water supply for the state and they are the headwaters for many of the State’s rivers.”

Water quality is dependent upon the intensity of surrounding land use. Indeed, it is a summation of all of the land uses in a given drainage basin. The extensive forest tracts, both public and private, have protected the quality of this resource to date but are threatened with develop-

ment as the megalopolitan region continues to expand outward with few effective tools in place for managing growth, except for purchasing open space.

Even where surface water supplies can be partially protected by chemical treatment, expensive water filtration and sewage treatment facilities, water quality is vulnerable to funding cut-backs, enforcement gaps and aging facilities. Groundwater, too, is an important resource protected by forest cover. Numerous communities such as Mahwah are dependent on sole source aquifers and much of Passaic and Sussex Counties, New Jersey and Rockland County, New York are dependent on groundwater (wells) for water supply.

The water supplied by these watersheds subject to this expansion does not recognize the artificial boundary between New York and New Jersey. However, rules and regulations established for the protection of this resource can differ vastly from state to state. While most of the border rivers flow southerly from New York to New Jersey, the Wallkill River and in part the Sparkill River flow from south to north from New Jersey into New York State. This highlights **the necessity for both states to protect these vital resources from the ravages of unchecked development and its accompanying pollution by consolidating their regulations.** The current agreement between New York and Connecticut to classify all border streams ‘Class Double A Special’ offers an appropriate model.

There is strong public support for a “no-degradation” policy for water quality and for the maintenance of the exceptional water quality which still exists in the Skylands and especially the Highlands

# The Nature of Place— An Overview of the Skylands (cont.)

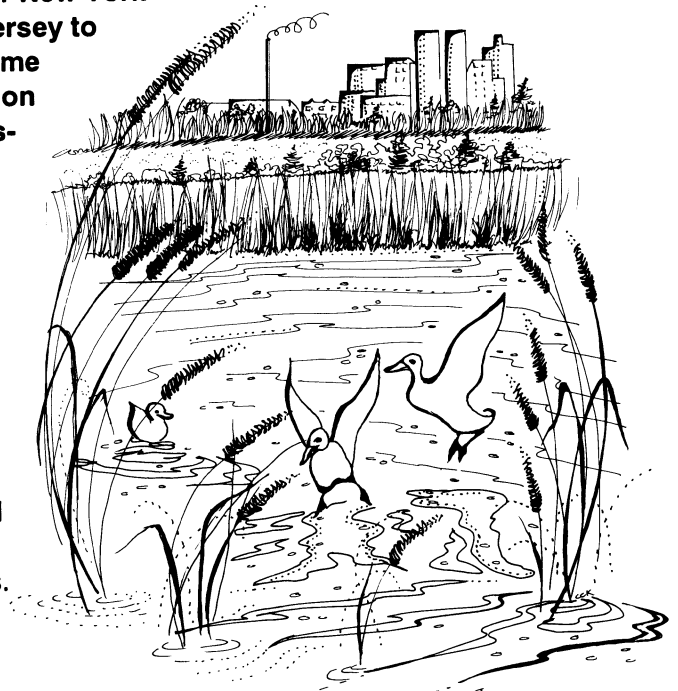
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section. Despite increasing levels of regulation, there are still planning and regulatory gaps related to planning for water quality and quantity, especially with regard to growth management. *Testimony in the public forums recommended that planning for infrastructure development should be more consistent with watershed protection and greater reinvestment in already urbanized areas.* The state's jurisdiction over, and participation in, the water quality management planning process may be one of the most effective legal tools for addressing the problems of the Skylands. At present, however, the needs for water treatment are based largely on population projections, restricted only by the State and Federal regulations for maximum contaminant levels in the supply, and without incorporating the constraints that environmental and other relevant factors in water quality planning might legally impose. Funding for new and upgraded facilities should be yoked to good resource management and watershed protection.

Water quantity management is as important as quality. Despite extensive regulation requiring infrastructure that is expensive to build and maintain, even controlled development severely disrupts the natural hydrologic regimens of streams and wetlands and inevitably increases downstream flooding and channel erosion. Disruption of natural drainage patterns has already resulted in drainage projects costing hundreds of millions of dollars in the Skylands, and more will be spent as remaining open land is developed. Where development does occur, stormwater management regulations should be assessed and modified to rely

more heavily on vegetation for pollutant removal, runoff attenuation, and groundwater recharge. Regulation of the two-year-storm is also recommended to reduce the negative impacts of the high frequency storm on stream channels. Wherever watersheds are poorly managed and water quality deteriorates or flooding occurs, it is inevitably the taxpayer's dollar that is called upon to solve the problems, some of which are, in fact, irreparable.

At this time also only point sources of pollution are regulated. However, non-point source and stormwater discharges, which have significant negative impacts, are not specifically exempted from control. A non-point source control program is currently being developed by the NJDEPE. Higher levels of protection could also be provided by reclassifying streams in designated watersheds and making use of biotics as an indicator of the health of a stream. **Most critical is the need for New York and New Jersey to come to some agreement on stream classification and water management policies and standards.** This will require full support at the gubernatorial and state legislative levels.



# The Skylands Greenway Concept

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**“Given the proximity of the Skylands to major urban centers and the fact there is extensive development pressure on any open lands in the northern part of the State, there is a very real sense of urgency for all levels of government as well as the private sector to safeguard this magnificent resource for the enjoyment of both present and future generations.”**

**John O'Bennett  
N.J. Senator —  
12th District**

**F**rom its inception, the Skylands Greenway was perceived to be far more than a network of linear corridors connecting existing areas of open space. Hence, the Task Force was challenged with preserving the character of a region faced with imminent losses of its natural and cultural heritage. The public forums highlighted the fact that the overwhelming majority of those who live in the Skylands, as well as in the adjacent New York/New Jersey metropolitan complexes, want to have truly natural areas and rural countryside nearby to visit or to preserve as a welcome neighbor. Indeed this is crucial to their very idea of the American landscape.

*The Skylands' greatest opportunity to counter the impacts inherent in virtually any picture of anticipated future growth is a comprehensive open space and greenway system, embracing and connecting the region's natural, historic, scenic and recreational resources and preserving a sense of place in the Skylands as a major focus of area development.* Economic opportunities based upon an imaginative and sensitive regional conservation plan offer an attractive alternative to suburban sprawl. The realization of the Skylands Greenway must effect the preservation of a sense of place and therefore must be shaped by the nature of the place.

The kind of greenways that now exist and that can be created vary significantly in the different physiographic provinces of the Skylands with the dramatic contrasts in terrain and land use. Much of the open space in the Highlands section of the Skylands now supports extensive contiguous forest. These recovered forests are truly **biotic greenways** whose primary value is related to their expanse and connectedness. The rural Skylands landscape of fields and crossroads villages against a backdrop of wooded ridges, in addition to supporting remnant natural habitats provides **scenic greenways** that virtually define the region's character. In areas presently developed, where natural landscapes are fragmented, **corridor greenways** can be created to protect and restore critical habitats and to link parks and provide connections to rural and wild lands.

## **Biotic Greenways**

The highest priority for regional conservation is protection of contiguous areas of forest, which is perhaps the region's most endangered resource because of its closeness to an expanding metropolitan area. Over 130,000 acres of relatively intact forest still remain, supporting close to 50% of New Jersey's endangered species. The extensive hemlock and hardwood forest of the Highlands supports all of North Jersey's common animals, including black bear and the endangered bobcat. It also supports native trout populations that depend on the cold water temperatures that occur only where streams are shaded by intact forest



# The Skylands Greenway Concept (cont.)

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cover. Among the 120 resident bird species are many breeding raptors including dense populations of hawks and owls. Rare native plants also abound on the ridge tops and in the forested wetlands. Many of these species are dependent on the continuity of forest cover and find habitat only in the irreplaceable forest interior. There is at present no protection for the ridgetop landscapes for scenic character and habitat preservation. The Institute for Development Planning and Land Use Studies, S.U.N.Y., New Paltz, is currently developing a model series of overlay regulation to protect the ridges of the Shawangunks.

The stream channels, floodplains, headwaters, and wetlands also provide irreplaceable biotic corridors necessary in sustaining regional biodiversity. These features, unlike forests, have recently been afforded a measure of protection at the federal, state and occasionally local levels, although losses still occur and this protection must be continuously defended and upgraded.

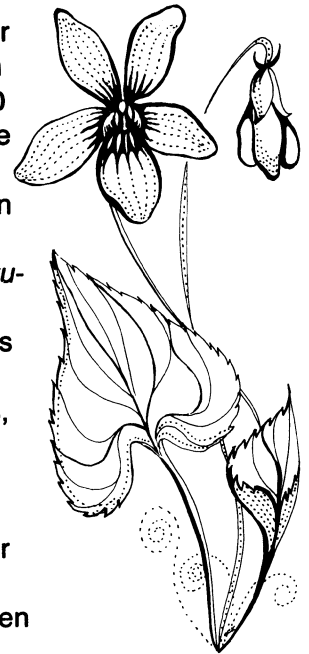
## Corridor Greenways

Corridor greenways, or narrow rights-of-way along trails, such as those existing along the Appalachian Trail, certainly do not in and of themselves make any major contribution to the preservation of habitat areas. They are however, an important part of a strategy for preserving partial connectedness among larger tracts of viable natural habitat and are an important part of the aesthetic and recreational aspects of the regional landscape. Strong testimony was given that establishing corridor greenways in urban areas can and should be a key factor for revitalizing areas of urban blight. There is cur-

rently a strong political constituency for the establishment of such trails, and for other well-organized initiatives, both public and private, such as Rails-to-Trails.

Walking is the number one leisure time activity in this country. Bicycling, another trail-related activity, is growing rapidly in popularity; there are at present over 100 million bicycles in the United States. The creation of more extensive networks throughout the region is feasible if action is taken now. *The Skylands Greenway concept envisions a final network of natural and cultural resources on a scale equivalent to a national park.* The goal is to create corridors that will join existing parks and protected areas, rivers, lakes, parks, historic sites, and scenic resources.

Where new development occurs greater efforts should be made to address greenway concerns and to integrate open space protection in area development patterns. The wide-spread extension of natural habitat protection easements, scenic and public-access easements, and planned open space could buffer and diminish negative impacts from new development. Where development has occurred, greenway connections can often be partially restored by planting corridors of native vegetation. *Such actions should be coordinated at the regional level.*



# The Skylands Greenway Concept (cont.)

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## **Scenic Greenways**

*The scenic aspects of the landscape are as important to the Skylands Greenway concept as the ecological considerations and are dependent on the maintenance of both agriculture and remnant natural landscapes, such as forests, stream valleys, steep slopes and wetlands. The Appalachian Trail corridor would be forever changed were it set in a developed rather than pastoral context. The tourist industry, moreover, is dependent not only on the creation of recreation sites but also on the whole pattern of open space to preserve the rural resort atmosphere of the countryside for aesthetic and recreational enjoyment. The Skylands Greenway concept depends heavily on finding ways to foster maintenance of agriculture as an important local industry. Integral to this is recognizing the other, larger values that are sustained by farming at little public cost, such as the conservation of scenic and aesthetic character and important local habitats.*

**These working landscapes are the most cost effective tool for maintaining open**



**space.** Even in more suburban communities, such as Rockland County, the few remaining farms evoke an important sense of history and play a pivotal role in sustaining a rural landscape character disproportionately to preserving local character. The preservation of the pastoral landscape can only be achieved by maintaining a viable rural economy. Farmers face slumped commodity prices for traditional basic crops, rising fuel costs, changed market conditions, and increasing taxes as land values rise with development pressures. Over 100,000 acres of farmland were lost between 1983-1985 in New Jersey and over 1 million acres of farmland have been lost in New York in the past 10 years.

The creation of a greenway is, in part, dependent on sustaining agriculture, which itself is a state and national issue that goes well beyond the limits of the Skylands National Greenway. However, the continuing presence of farmland in the region is integral to realizing the Greenway's objectives. **The Skylands Greenway Council can provide a wider base of support, integrating natural and cultural resource concerns with the goals of farmland preservation.**

**T**wo very different kinds of change threaten the Skylands today: the cumulative impacts of the continuing growth and the possible loss of several large tracts of open land which are critical to maintaining regional character. Of the approximately 364,000 acres of open space currently in the Skylands, nearly one-third are afforded no adequate measure of long term protection. At least four of these areas are crucial to the protection of area resources, and two single-ownership tracts are sufficiently large as to be irreplaceable within the region. These lands have been identified as requiring a greater degree of protection, and strategies to effect these ends should be implemented as soon as possible.

## **1 Pequannock Watershed – 35,000 acres**

This tract owned by the City of Newark for water supply protection includes 86% of the 64 square mile watershed of the Pequannock River and provides habitat for a multitude of species, both plants and wildlife, not found in such profusion in any other part of the state. Unlike many of the larger tracts which are concentrated on the ridge tops, the Pequannock Watershed encloses both higher and lower elevations and is a vital relict of the former connectedness of the whole natural system. According to the New Jersey Audubon Society, this area has some of the best hawk, owl and warbler nesting habitat to be found along the entire eastern seaboard. Virtually everything that can be said about the Highlands can be said about the Pequannock Watershed. Home to bobcat and bear,

these lands support nearly two thirds of the breeding birds in the State of New Jersey and 50% of the state's endangered species. Newark has served as an excellent custodian through the years and has practised reforestation while logging the area. Today, with the completion of water filtration facilities, there is pressure on the city to divest itself of these holdings and the associated tax burden.

## **2 Sterling Forest – 18,000 acres**

The recently proposed development of this property for over 35,000 residents offers the clearest example of what is at stake today in the Skylands. Like the Pequannock Watershed, it is of sufficient size that, once fragmented, even by sensitive development, its value as contiguous forest cannot be replaced in the region. The proposed development of Sterling Forest, which comprises 25% of the Wanaque Reservoir's watershed, would have negative impacts with regard to both water quality and quantity; the only question is how much. The two thousand acres of the New Jersey portion of Sterling Forest (now know as Tranquility Ridge of Passaic County) have been protected by Passaic County which recently condemned the land for open space.

Sterling Forest remains as a high priority for the land acquisition in the state of New York even though the 1990 State Environmental Quality Bond Act was narrowly rejected by voters. The Palisades

**“There is a need for interstate coordination on watershed management, water quality, recreation and other issues which have open space preservation as a common denominator... We also recognize the desirability of federal participation in this work. The National Park Service and the Forest Service have a potential role, one which could be important for obtaining adequate funding for an oversight body, for land acquisition, land use planning and other purposes.”**

**Robert L. Bendick, Jr.  
Deputy  
Commissioner,  
NYDEC**





Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) and New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation have been designated by the State of New York to maintain contact with Sterling Forest Corporate representatives regarding possible options for permanent protection of the tract as open space. The PIPC, an existing bi-state park management entity with 85,000 acres of parkland, has already utilized funds from both states to acquire and maintain land.

## **4 The Farny Highlands – 30,000 acres**

The section of the Highlands Physiographic Province in Morris County adjacent to Farny State Park is pivotal to the larger Skylands and Highlands conservation goals for the region. Unlike Sterling Forest and the Pequannock Watershed which are large single ownership properties, the Farny Highlands is more like a microcosm of the Skylands itself—a mosaic of developed lands and open space, only a portion of which is adequately protected. The Farny Highlands represents headwater sources of five major water supply rivers, servicing 25% of the state's population. The area also feeds three federally designated Sole Source Aquifers and nearly 80 lakes and ponds, including the 500 acre Green Pond, one of the largest natural lakes in New Jersey. The remaining forest habitats, still largely contiguous, are a critical

component of the greater Highlands System. The realization of this greenway network relies on creating key linkages between the large public holdings such as the Mahlon Dickerson Reservation and Farny State Park. The Picatinny Arsenal, a 6,000-acre, federally-owned property that may be subject to future divestment, is central to this goal. Recently, the Farny Highlands Coalition, representing all the major local and regional conservation organizations, was formed to undertake a major acquisition and protection initiative in the Farny Highlands in the face of tremendous growth with the expansion of Routes 15, 80 and 287.

## **5 Walkkill River National Wildlife Refuge – 7,500 acres**

The recently enacted Walkkill River National Wildlife Refuge is a key open space link between the Delaware and Hudson Rivers. The Refuge was identified as one of the few high quality waterfowl concentration areas remaining in the Northwestern portion of New Jersey, supporting sixteen of New Jersey's listed threatened and endangered species. It was also ranked among the top five priority wetland areas prioritized for protection in New Jersey under the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The area has also been identified as a focus area under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, established in 1986, to reverse the decline of wetlands and waterfowl by establishing goals for conserving wetland habitats and for restoring waterfowl populations. The loss and degradation of waterfowl habitats has been identified in the Plan as the major waterfowl management problem in North America.

At this time, \$4 million has been allocated for acquisition within the refuge boundary area which includes some adjacent uplands as well as wetland and floodplain areas. It is strongly recommended that acquisition proceed in a timely fashion and that some additional protection measures, especially at local planning and zoning levels, including review of proposed development be considered for watershed areas outside the boundary as well as those sites within the refuge which are not yet acquired. Since the area is still largely agricultural, programs and policies which foster sustaining farmland in Sussex County will also be important.

## **6 Picatinny Arsenal - 6,000 acres**

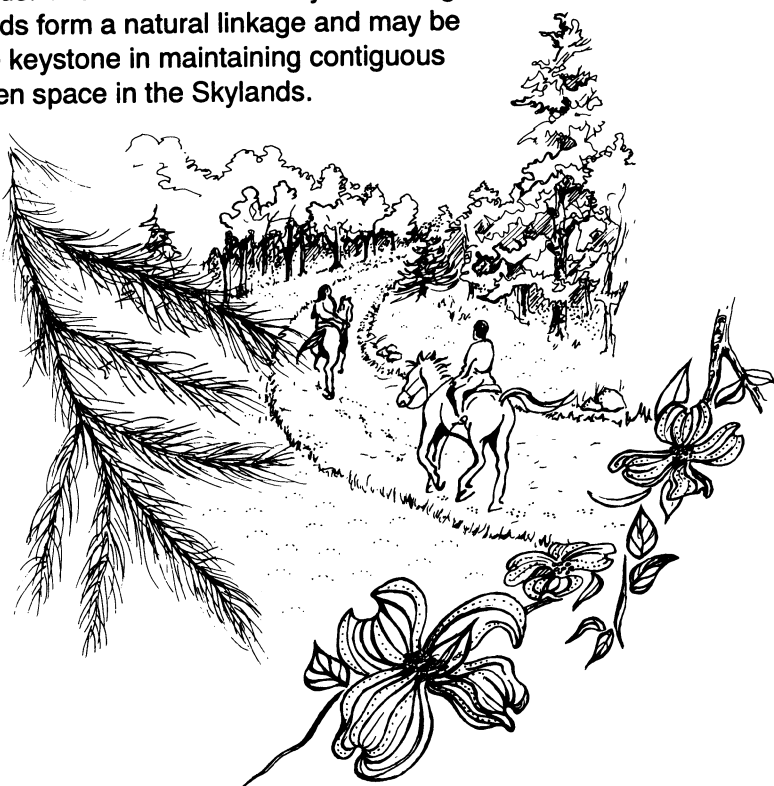
The Arsenal site is a large quasi-public tract *without* permanent protection as open space, and is included on the list of Federal facilities scheduled to be phased-out. Despite the numerous buildings and facilities on the site the forest cover is still relatively continuous and should be protected in any future planning for the site. The Arsenal's location is pivotal—providing key linkages to the Mahlon Dickerson Reservation from numerous existing and proposed park areas.

## **7 Watershed Lands - 16,000 acres**

In addition to the Pequannock Watershed, there are over 16,000 acres held as watershed lands in the Skylands region, comprising 11 separate tracts. All represent water related open space opportunities and are in some form of public ownership although without permanent protection as open space.

## **8 Wyanokie Highlands - 30,000 acres**

This section of the Highlands Physiographic Province located in eastern Passaic County, N.J. is adjacent to Ramapo Mountain State Forest, the Ringwood/Skylands State Park, Wanaque River Wildlife Management Area, Norvin Green State Forest, Abram S. Hewitt State Forest, Greenwood Lake State Park and the Passaic County Sterling Forest lands. The location of the Wyanokie Highlands form a natural linkage and may be the keystone in maintaining contiguous open space in the Skylands.



# Recommendations— The Skylands Greenway Action Plan

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he consensus of the Task Force is that the establishment of the Skylands National Greenway could be a pivotal planning vehicle for economic development, resource conservation and growth management in the region. This will require full support and commitment at federal, state, and local levels of government. There is strong public support for preservation of the existing character and awareness of the need for immediate action while still accommodating change.

## **1 The Skylands National Greenway**

**The Skylands National Greenway should be designated at both state and federal legislative levels and the Skylands Greenway Council established to plan for a comprehensive network of protected open space and connecting corridors encompassing the major parks and cultural sites in the Skylands.**

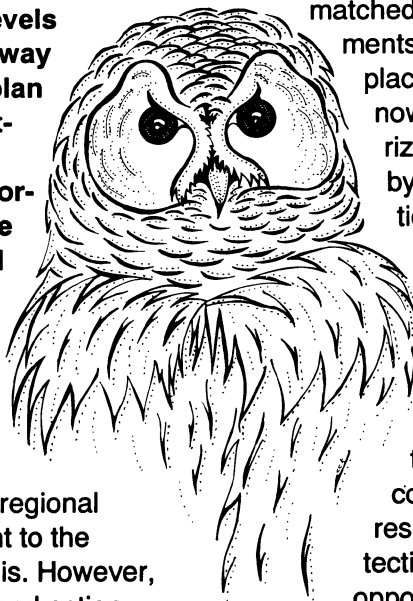
One of the most remarkable aspects of the Skylands is the fact that there is an opportunity to create such a large scale regional greenway system adjacent to the country's largest metropolis. However, unless this is recognized and action taken before anticipated growth occurs by even the next decade, this option may be foreclosed forever.

The Skylands are comprised of over 100 townships and boroughs, six counties and two states. Virtually all of these are involved in some open space protection, and none of which alone can effect the

realization of the Skylands National Greenway. The initial step of recognizing and designating the Greenway at federal and state levels is crucial towards facilitating a coordinated approach to this regional resource.

A major concern reiterated in the public forums was the need for a significantly increased federal role in funding the critical acquisitions necessary to protect the connected open space system that is the core of the Skylands Greenway vision. The Land & Water Conservation Fund provides monies for the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and State grants which are

matched by state and local governments. Each year \$900 million is placed in the fund and there are now almost \$8 billion authorized but never appropriated by Congress for land acquisition and state grants.



What monies are made available are directed disproportionately to the western United States despite the large population of the northeast and the compelling need for natural resource and open space protection and more recreational opportunities. In the current fiscal year, less than 10% of the \$200 million in State grants nationwide is allocated to New York and New Jersey.

Grants to the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service in New York and New Jersey total just over \$31 million out of \$1.7 billion, approximately 2%. Despite its large population and high demand for recreational land and open



# Recommendations— The Skylands Greenway Action Plan (cont.)

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space—over 7 million people visited the Palisades Interstate Park System last year, almost three times the visitation to Yellowstone—open space in the northeast in general is severely underfunded at the national level. The designation of the Skylands National Greenway should help provide a compelling argument for the need for a far greater level of federal funding toward a comprehensive conservation effort of national significance.

The Greenway designation will also bring a regional approach to those issues which go beyond political boundaries. An important benefit of designation is the opportunity to focus attention on bi-state cooperation on environmental issues which has been historically lacking. The Skylands National Greenway should provide a comprehensive context for negotiating agreements for the entire New York/New Jersey border. For county and local governments the Greenway can serve as a regional perspective with which to coordinate local greenway initiatives and open space planning with a comprehensive development plan and cost-effective infrastructure.

A key objective of the Task Force was to recognize and work within existing governmental structures to the extent feasible in order to create the Skylands National Greenway. In the wake of the recent, rapid development there is a high level of local awareness of the issues and support for planning which respects local character. Major components of the Skylands Greenway, in particular the scenic and corridor greenways, can be achieved if existing land-use management entities work together to effect these goals.

There may be existing agencies which have the capability of effecting much of the Skylands National Greenway. However, this is unlikely to happen without comprehensive master planning and a coordinated review process. Therefore, in order to effect the creation of the Skylands National Greenway, the creation of the Skylands Greenway Planning Council is necessary.

The Skylands Greenway Council should be established to be responsible for the comprehensive planning and coordination of the Skylands National Greenway. The Council, supported by a secure funding base, should be comprised of a diversity of representatives from federal, state and local agencies, public and private organizations, and local citizens. The primary objective is to develop a master plan for the Skylands National Greenway as a vehicle for the protection of natural and cultural resources and for the realization of economic development, open space, and recreational opportunities. A key strategy will be to encourage consideration of the natural and recreational resources at the earliest stages of land-use planning and to promote cooperation between the community, state and local reviewing agencies. The Council, however, would not have regulatory authority.

The Skylands Greenway Council should work to establish the regional leadership to continue to promote, coordinate and monitor the action plan and identify “forces that will arise during the next wave of development pressure.”

The Council should also be responsible for identifying and inventorying natural habitat areas, greenway corridors, cultural resources, scenic roads and

**“We concur with your judgment that extraordinary and timely action—at all levels of government—is needed to protect the New Jersey/New York Skylands. The lands and waters of the Skylands are important natural and cultural resources whose location—at the boundary of the nation’s largest metropolitan area—makes their conservation a national significance.”**

**Robert D. Yaro,  
Sr. V.P.  
Regional Plan  
Association**

# Recommendations— The Skylands Greenway Action Plan (cont.)

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***“The Report provides compelling arguments for the application of design principles to create prototype settlement patterns and habitats scaled to the capacity of the resource systems of the host environment and orchestrated to fit the form and scale of the surrounding countryside.”***

***Peter Garrison,  
Commissioner  
County of Orange  
Department of  
Planning***

landscapes. This information should be provided in an up-to-date computerized Geographical Information System (GIS) data base. The Council should recommend priorities and funding options and also identify those lands most suitable for development.

A recurring theme of the public comment is the need to act swiftly to secure permanent protection for the area's remaining open space and critical habitats. The mosaic of existing parklands, while impressive, is not adequately connected and cannot also sustain current levels of biodiversity without the protection of critical private lands. The New Jersey Audubon Society, for example, recommended that at least 20 to 25 large forested private land holdings adjacent to existing parklands would need to be protected in order to create a connected system of forest parks just in the Highlands. Existing and potential hiking, biking and equestrian trails or pathways, abandoned rights-of-way and remaining natural areas should be inventoried and prioritized for protection by the Council in order to create, link and reinforce significant greenway corridors.

The primary goal is long-term protection of these sites as critical habitat and open space for recreation and cultural use, but this goal does not always require a fee-simple transfer. Indeed, the amount of land that can be protected increases to the extent that less costly preservation and conservation methods can be utilized. A major objective will be to prioritize acquisitions and develop alternate protection scenarios. Once development rates increase it is likely to be more difficult to protect land than in the current economic downturn.

Several strategies are recommended for the plan:

- a. Permanent open space protection for all or portions of existing public and quasi-public non-park holdings, such as military properties and city-owned watershed lands.
- b. The use of local planning and zoning to achieve substantial open space and community character goals.
- c. Increased funding for an expanded conservation easement program to include streams, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, forests, and native habitat areas.
- d. Amendment of existing current use and open space tax programs to provide for special protection of large forest tracts and for the enrollment of combined groups of smaller ownership.
- e. Tax law changes, such as open space credits, and extensions of tax-deferred status to foster keeping land open and to recognize the value to the state of open space maintained by the landowner, including privately and city-owned watershed lands.
- f. State-level tax policy changes to provide a market advantage to conservation buyers by allowing state, personal and corporate income tax credits for donations of land or easements to bona fide conservation and educational organizations, both public and private, and by excusing taxes on net gains from conservation land or easement value.
- g. Payments in lieu of taxes as an alternate strategy to acquisition.
- h. Consideration of a regional transfer of development rights program that provides tax and infrastructure support



# Recommendations—

## The Skylands Greenway Action Plan (cont.)

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funds to those places that become foci of development and to reimburse those that lose development opportunities.

- i. The establishment of an installment payment plan for acquisition, easements and other protection options.
- j. A statutory limit to liability and landowner indemnification from bearing the burden of suits related to public access, in addition to protection afforded under the Landowner's Liability Act (N.3.9.A.2A: 42A-2 et seq).
- k. Support of right-to-farm ordinances.
- l. Changes in tax policy such as gross receipts and on-farm sales tax exemptions and property tax relief for farm structures and improvements.
- m. Tax reform and tax credits to promote intergenerational transfer of farms.
- n. Consideration of the Highlands section of the Skylands for the Forest Legacy Program enacted under the 1990 Farm Bill "to effectively protect and environmentally manage forested areas that are threatened with conversion to nonforest uses."
- o. Support to local agencies through the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.
- p. Consideration given to creating a National Heritage Corridor Program to further coordinate the protection of cultural resources, greenway establishment and economic development.

The overlapping jurisdictions in the region can contribute to widening the perspective of all concerned, and can foster more community-oriented decision making. All of the New York portion of the Skylands is also within the area of the Hudson River Valley Greenway, for ex-

ample, which has many of the same goals. Other jurisdictions include the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, N.J. Department of Environmental Protection and Energy, New York Department of Environmental Conservation and the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission, among others. Two examples of positive bi-state cooperative efforts include the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and ORBIT, the Orange Rockland Bergen Interstate Transportation Committee. The New Jersey Office of Tourism's boundary for the Skylands should be expanded to include all of the Skylands National Greenway area. Connections with the State of Pennsylvania should also be considered in the Delaware River Valley area. Non-governmental agencies are equally important. The Regional Plan Association, for example, is currently developing greenway plans for the Tri-state region including New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The intent is to establish a process for building consensus by opening a continuous and purposeful dialogue between the various jurisdictions, public and private agencies, as well as local citizens.

The Council's work in New Jersey should build on the New Jersey Interim State Development and Redevelopment Plan of July 12, 1991 to seek an appropriate balance of economic development and environmental protection in the region. The Plan identifies the Skylands, as well as the Highlands and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (which are also in the Skylands), as three of six additional areas of critical state concern for which special statutory treatment may be appropriate. The state plan



# Recommendations—

## The Skylands Greenway Action Plan (cont.)

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states that “the essential elements of statewide policies regarding open space and natural systems are the protection of biological diversity, of recreation and public open space, of critical slopes, and of forested lands.” The Plan also supports other Skyland’s goals, including protection of critical habitats, watersheds, wetland systems and prime forested areas; conserving historic resources; promoting agriculture, and establishing greenways, historic and scenic corridors; and fostering appropriate development. It is crucial however that those lands which are identified as environmentally sensitive are actually given adequate environmental protection. The Cross-Acceptance process recently completed in New Jersey provided an important opportunity for cooperative planning efforts. It is strongly recommended that Orange and Rockland Counties in the New York Skylands undertake a development review process analogous to New Jersey’s Cross-Acceptance process in conjunction with the establishment of the Skylands National Greenway.

### **2 The Highlands Commission**

**The Highlands Commission should be established at both state and federal legislative levels with the planning and regulatory authority to protect and manage the crucial lands and critical natural resources of the section of the Skylands within the Highlands Physiographic Province.**

The most urgent concern raised by the Task Force and in the public forums was the need for greater protection of the natural landscapes of the Highlands portion of the Skylands. The area of the Highlands in New York and New Jersey that is included in the Forest Service’s

Study Area is roughly equivalent in size to the Skylands but is differently configured. (See map on page 4). The Highlands landscape extends roughly SW/NE from South Central New Jersey to southern New York, while the Skylands boundary trends roughly E/W along the border, overlapping the central portion of the Highlands which is also the least developed. It is this overlapping portion of the Skylands and Highlands boundary that is of greatest concern as the last remaining near-wilderness area in the region. In numerous instances, the significant planning and regulatory gaps were large with regard to the protection of contiguous forest lands and the resources they support, including water supply, plant and wildlife habitat, open space values and air quality. The gaps indicated the need for a more specific structured regulatory approach to the vital resources.

Literally tens of millions of people rely upon this de facto forest reserve for the resources that support their quality of life, including those in local communities as well as the adjacent megalopolis. The most unique and threatened aspect of this area is the contiguous forest cover which could be irreparably fragmented by even relatively low levels of development. The proposed development of Sterling Forest, one of the last remaining privately owned major open space within the New York Metropolitan Area, illustrates the magnitude of possible resource losses. Given the tight governmental budgets at this time and the recent failure of New York’s Environmental Quality Bond Act, acquisition and other forms of permanent protection will not likely proceed rapidly enough to preserve the contiguous forest and the resource values it sustains.



# Recommendations— The Skylands Greenway Action Plan (cont.)

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Remarkably over 80% of this forest is privately owned and currently unprotected, much of it on land that is poorly suited for development, with steep slopes and wetlands throughout. In 1972 the average parcel size was twenty-two acres, but this had dropped to under thirteen acres by 1988. Eighty-five per cent of the remaining forest is held in plots of less than nineteen acres and the two largest tracts, the Pequannock Watershed and Sterling Forest are not permanently protected. Forest, per se, is given no protection under existing zoning in local or state level regulations. Privately held forest lands, especially those which connect to other open space areas, must be a critical component of the regional biotic greenway. **The issue of contiguous forest cover protection for water supply and conservation of critical habitats is the single most glaring regulatory gap in this region.**

These crucial forests are not protected by current zoning, and further fragmentation cannot be mitigated elsewhere in the region. The permanent protection of these sites is central to conserving the Skylands' most unique resources. This is a national and regional responsibility. Failure to act now would have incalculable and irreversible consequences as these forests will be simply absorbed by the suburban sprawl that will extend unbroken in a 50-100 mile ring around Manhattan.

Much of the testimony in the public forums confronted the need for a greater level of planning and regulatory protection in the Highlands section of the Skylands in addition to proposed land acquisition. Existing models such as the Pinelands National Reserve, and the Adirondack Park were repeatedly proposed, as was

establishing the first National Ecological Reserve.

While the final recommendations of the Forest Service Study will not be completed until February 1992, a significant level of the public testimony they received endorsed a Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan or similar approach to provide the highest level of resource protection. Despite early difficulties and fears of no-growth, the Pinelands concept has been generally accepted and has successfully demonstrated that development can be managed to protect natural resources. As of September 1991, only 4 of the 52 municipalities within the Pinelands had failed to bring ordinances into conformance with the Pinelands Comprehensive Plan.

Time has shown that the dire economic predictions for the Pinelands did not occur. Average residential tax rates did increase in Pineland municipalities between 1978 and 1984, but they did not rise as fast as residential property tax rates for the State as a whole. In 1984 the New Jersey legislature passed the Pinelands Property Tax Stabilization Act, intending to provide assistance in the form of payments to those municipalities hardest hit by stringent zoning impacts. This Act served as an important interim gesture, especially for townships like Woodland in the middle of the Preservation Zone, but has since proven unnecessary to extend. Nor was development stymied. From 1981-1991, over 22,000 new homes were built within the Pinelands jurisdiction and over 500 commercial and industrial projects were completed. Homeowners within the Pinelands are receiving higher prices for their homes than those just outside the area.

**“The Environmental Commission welcomes efforts to protect the Highlands region of the State through regional planning and preservation of open spaces. We are witnessing pressures for development that, if not balanced and channeled, may cause permanent deterioration of our water resources, migratory birds and many species of endangered plants and wildlife.”**

**Jerome L. Uhrig,  
Chairman  
Environmental  
Commission of  
Mountain Lakes  
Boro, N.J.**

# Recommendations— The Skylands Greenway Action Plan (cont.)

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**“There is a need for increases not only in the size of state parks and forests but for interpretation as well. When people understand the need for open space, as well as the historical role natural resources have played, they will better support measures to acquire and protect that open space.”**

**Paul Tarlowe  
W. Milford, N.J.**

New Jersey's Pinelands Commission has provided a decade's worth of practical, political, administrative and legal experience, and can, **with adjustments**, serve as a prototype for the Highlands Commission. While the Pinelands is perhaps the most successful notable model for balancing resource protection with appropriate growth and development, the creation of a Highlands Commission must also be tailored to the special characteristics of the Highlands region; in particular the need to create an effective bi-state entity and cannot be simply a “*Pinelands Commission North*.” Valuable information has also been gained in New York from experience with the Adirondack Park Agency and the Northern Lands Forest Study on what strategies and techniques most effectively accommodate and direct growth while accomplishing resource protection.

Current information on projected growth in the Highlands developed by the Highlands Study concludes that approximately 32,000 acres of land are likely to be developed by 2010 in the Highlands Physiographic Province, which includes all of the Skylands portion of the Highlands as well as additional land outside the Skylands Boundary. If the Pinelands are a guide, the potential impact will be determined less by the amount of development than by where it occurs. As an example, to address this issue in the Pinelands, the New Jersey Legislature passed, in 1985, a Transfer of Development Rights Bank Bill to set up a program that allows owners of land in highly restricted areas to share in the profits realized by transferring development to designated growth areas. Participation in the Pinelands Development Credit Program has increased steadily, from 11 projects in 1985 to 132 active or built

projects in 15 of the Pinelands municipalities as of June 1991.

The development of a comprehensive plan for growth management is key to the success of a TDR approach and must address the need for regional receiving and sending areas and designated no growth and growth management areas as well as an easement purchase program. This approach is especially important given the feasibility of acquisition of all high quality open space.

Another key to the Pinelands model is its clear mandate to protect natural resources, which led to a comprehensive and extensive base-line inventory of those resources developed to inform and support the plan and the regulatory process. The Forest Service Highlands Study will provide an important foundation in this regard for the Highlands Commission, although significant ongoing monitoring and research will still be necessary. The plan as developed, supported by the monitoring and inventory data, **should form the basis for determining the regulatory needs to implement or effect growth management strategies.** A notable gap in the Pinelands model is any level of enforcement capability, which should be included in the Highlands Commission Authority.

The overall issue here is not which model to use, but the need to create an improved regulatory framework to fill the gaps. The Task Force relies on the collective judgement of the Congress and the two state legislatures to make that decision. **Our recommendation, indeed our urging, is that it be done before it is too late and we lose this spectacular expanse of land.**



# The Need for Action

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**P**erhaps the most remarkable aspect of the public hearings was the broad consensus on overall goals for the Skylands Greenway and the need for **immediate action** if we are to preserve natural and cultural values in the region. There is a strong regional perspective despite the variability of the landscape character, but the opportunities for effective planning are severely hampered by the lack of interstate cooperation and the multiplicity of jurisdictions. The need for regional leadership to promote, coordinate and monitor the policies and actions of state and local governments, as well as private initiatives, was emphasized repeatedly.

Land-use planning and regulation should be better guided by an ethic which sustains the character and diversity of the region for future generations. There must be more consistent and effective strategies to realize long-term goals at every level of government. Existing programs should be re-assessed, revised, and expanded to broaden their perspective of the region and provide better conformance with the goals of the Skylands National Greenway. Of most concern, all policy and action in the Skylands must be informed by an awareness and respect for the importance of this area and its critical water resources, natural habitats, farmlands, and recreational values to the health and vitality of the metropolitan setting.

A corollary to the need for action is the need for funding. While many of the Skylands goals can be accomplished by integrating these concerns into existing programs, the creation of both the Skylands Council and the Highlands Commission will require a new funding source. It may be appropriate and more cost-effective to enact the Skylands Council for a fixed term with the intention that once effective regional coordination is achieved, the Council will no longer be necessary. Finally further coordination with State, county, and local agencies and representatives will be necessary if the Skylands goals are to be achieved. The Task Force members call upon elected and appointed officials in the region to work together to implement these recommendations.

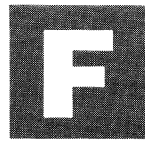


# Summary of Public Forum and Draft Recommendations Report Comments

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***“I am pleased that your Task Force is working to preserve open space in New Jersey as are our Tree Farmers. This is a big task but working together collectively with all groups that have the same goal, I strongly believe open space can be kept a part of New Jersey's landscape.”***

***Ronald J. Sheay  
American Tree Farm  
System***



our Public Forum sessions were held by the Skylands Greenway Task Force. The sessions were well attended with upwards of 114 individuals providing both oral and written comments. Organizations represented by speakers at the Forum sessions included Watershed Watch, N.J. Rails to Trails, Passaic River Coalition, Regional Plan Association, N.J. Audubon, Sierra Club, Appalachian Mountain Club, League to Save Open Space, county and municipal planning agency representatives, sportsmen's organizations, The National Association of Industrial and Office Parks, N.Y. and N.J. League of Women Voters, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, naturalists, and congressional representatives.

The individuals and organization representatives provided the Task Force with information and recommendations on the identification of unique resources in the region; the definition of the Skylands Greenway, both conceptually and the geographic boundaries; innovative techniques to create the Greenway and to protect the existing resources of the region; the role of the varied agencies, state, local, federal and community and private groups in the oversight and management of the resources in the Skylands Region; and additional issues the Task Force should address in its study of the Skylands.

The Task Force took the information and recommendations from the comments and testimony provided at the Public Forum sessions and drafted its PLAN FOR ACTION. The draft recommendations document was released to the public in November of 1991 for a 45 day review and comment period. There were 190 responses to the request for comments to the draft recommendations report. Of the responses received 182 STRONGLY supported the recommendations of the Task Force including both the formation of the Skylands National Greenway and a Highlands Commission with regulatory authority. The comments received were from individuals and representatives of organizations with large memberships. The organizations submitting letters of support included but are not limited to a Resolution from the Township Council of Mahwah, N.J., New Jersey Audubon Society, Highlands Audubon Society, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, New York Conservation Association, The American Farmland Trust, New Jersey Forestry Association, C.L.E.A.N., Morris County Park Commission, Upper Rockaway River, Delaware River, Paulinskill—Pequest River, and the Musconetcong River Watershed Associations, League of Women Voters, A.N.J.E.C., Boonton Township Environmental Committee, New Jersey Environmental Lobby, Sierra Club, Appalachian Mountain Club, Regional Plan Association, Mountain Lakes Environmental Committee, Appalachian Trail Conference, Passaic River Coalition, Passaic Valley Groundwater Protection Committee, Bergen County Department of Plan-

# Summary of Public Forum and Draft Recommendations Report Comments (cont.)

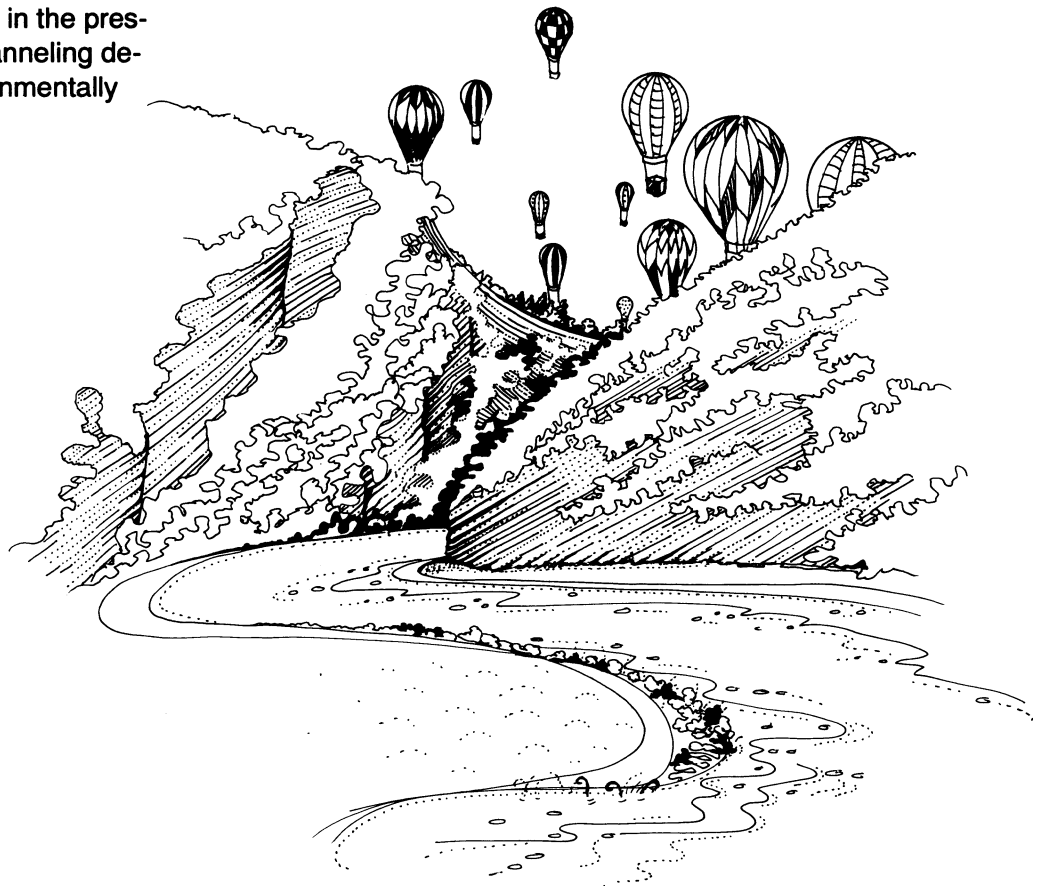
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ning and Economic Development, North Jersey District Water Supply Commission and Green Heritage of Morris County.

The Task Force also received comments from the public and organization representatives identifying concerns centering around the need for the formation of a Highlands Commission and whether there were not already existing entities and regulations to guide development in this area.

Additionally, other comments referred to references in the draft report of the success of the Pinelands as a model for land use planning and its appropriateness to the Highlands region. Concerns were expressed with regard to the suggested use of TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) as a means to assist in the preservation of farmland and channeling development away from environmentally sensitive lands.

All the comments received, whether strongly supporting the recommendations of the Task Force or expressing concerns about the method of implementation and the subsequent affect on landowner equity and rights in the establishment of a Highlands Commission, recognized that the Skylands Region supports resources which are environmentally sensitive, and of tremendous significance to the welfare of the citizens of New Jersey and New York. The need for the protection of open space in this region was not questioned by any individual or organization providing comment.





# Appendix A

## Skylands Greenway Region Open Space and Recreation Inventory

The following list describes the open space and recreational lands identified in the Skylands region, bordering New Jersey and New York.

### FEDERAL LANDS

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area	21,286
Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge	7,500
West Point Military Reservation	100,000
Picatinny Arsenal	<u>6,000</u>
	134,786
	=====

### INTERSTATE PARKS AND TRAILS

Palisades Interstate Park	81,008 acres
Appalachian Trail	96+ miles

### NEW JERSEY—STATE LANDS

#### STATE PARKS

Farney State Park	803
Great Piece Meadow	794
Greenwood Lake	217
High Point S.P.	14,193
Long Pond Ironworks S.P.	1,729
Ringwood Manor S.P.	4,785
Swartwood S.P.	1,718
Wawayanda S.P.	<u>11,332</u>
	35,571
	=====

#### NATURAL AREAS

Bearfort Mountain	1,325
Farney	556
Ramapo Lake	1,417
Tillman Ravine	525
Wawayanda Hemlock	399
Wawayanda Swamp	<u>2,167</u>

\*Note: Natural Areas acreages are included in other State Park acreages.

#### STATE FORESTS

Abram S. Hewitt	2,001
Jenny Jump	1,226
Norvin Green	2,463
Ramapo Mountain	2,894
Stokes	15,482
Worthington	5,939
	30,005
	=====

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Bear Swamp	1,599
Berkshire Valley	1,829
Flatbrook/Roy	2,080
Hainesville	282
Hamburg Mountain	2,422
Pequest	1,613
Walpack	387
Wanaque	2,319
Whittingham	<u>1,514</u>
	14,045
	=====

### COUNTY LANDS—NEW JERSEY

The following inventory of open space and recreational lands is provided by county. Those New Jersey counties in the Skylands Greenway region include Bergen, Passaic and Sussex. A portion of Morris County has been included in this inventory because of the contiguity of the open space and recreational lands to the Skylands Greenway.



# Appendix A (cont.)

## BERGEN COUNTY

Alpine County Parkland	191
Baylor Massacre Burial Site	2
Belmont Hill Rose Gardens	9
Campgaw Mountain Reservation	1,351
Dahnert's Lake	10
Darlington County Park	479
Hackensack River County Park	28
James McFaul Environmental Center	81
Orchard Hills	50
Overbrook Park	3
Overpeck County Park	788
Pascack Brook County Park	72
Ramapo Valley County Reservation	3,620
Riverside County Park	199
Rockleigh Bergen County Golf Course	265
Saddle River County Park	437
Samuel Nelkin County Park	23
Van Saun County Park	145
Wood Dale County Park	<u>118</u>
	7,871
	=====

## PASSAIC COUNTY

Apshawa	412
Garret Mountain Reservation	545
Goffle Brook Park	102
High Mountain *(Wayne Twsp. Project)	1,057
Pompton Aquatic Park	75
Preakness Valley Park	379
Rifle Camp Park	177
Sterling Forest Tract *(In Condemnation)	2,075
Weasel Brook Park	24
West Milford Tract	<u>219</u>
	5,065
	=====

## SUSSEX COUNTY

No County Landholdings.

## MORRIS COUNTY (Including only those lands north of Route 80)

Mahlon Dickerson Reservation/Saffin Rock Hill Res.	2,587
Pyramid Mountain Natural Historic Area	189
Silas Condict Park	266
Sunset Valley Golf Course	150
Tourne Park	<u>547</u>
	3,739
	=====

**“As we plan for the protection of open space, natural resources, wildlife habitat, and clean water we must also view this endeavor as an investment in the quality of life for future generations for which no expense is too much and no effort is too great.”**

**Helen Egan  
Stockholm, N.J.**

# Appendix A (cont.)

**“There is ample land within the Skylands Region that is not environmentally sensitive which can be built upon. It behooves the development community to utilize those lands and thus avoid wasteful battles which seek to undo the protection of the environment. It is equally imperative that landowners derive just compensation, and that implementation of preservation efforts by whatever bureaucracy, takes place to the extent the public agrees to be burdened.”**

**Joseph D. Morris,  
Treasurer  
National Association  
of Industrial and  
Office Parks**

## NEW YORK—STATE LANDS STATE PARKS

Bear Mountain State Park	5,067
Blauvelt	590
Greenwood Lake	2,350
Goose Pond Mountain	1,543
Harriman State Park	46,613
Haverstraw Beach	73
Highland Lakes	3,086
High Tor	565
Hook Mountain	676
Nyack Beach	61
Rockland Lake	1,079
Stony Point	95
Storm King	1,874
Tallman Mountain	<u>687</u>
	64,359
	=====

## COUNTY LANDS—NEW YORK ORANGE COUNTY

Public Park and Recreation Open Space	2,715
Total Public Park/Rec. Open Space in County	45,000

## ROCKLAND COUNTY

Buttermilk Falls	72
Clausland Mountain	513
Dater Mountain	155
Dutch Garden	3
Gurnee Park and Amphitheater	14
Kakiat County Park	353
Monsey Glen	24
Mt. Ivy	270
Mountainview Nature	73
Kennedy Dells	177
Lillian & Frank Schwartz Mem.	10
South Mountain	<u>273</u>
	1,937
	=====
Town and Village parks (over 25 acres)	38,248



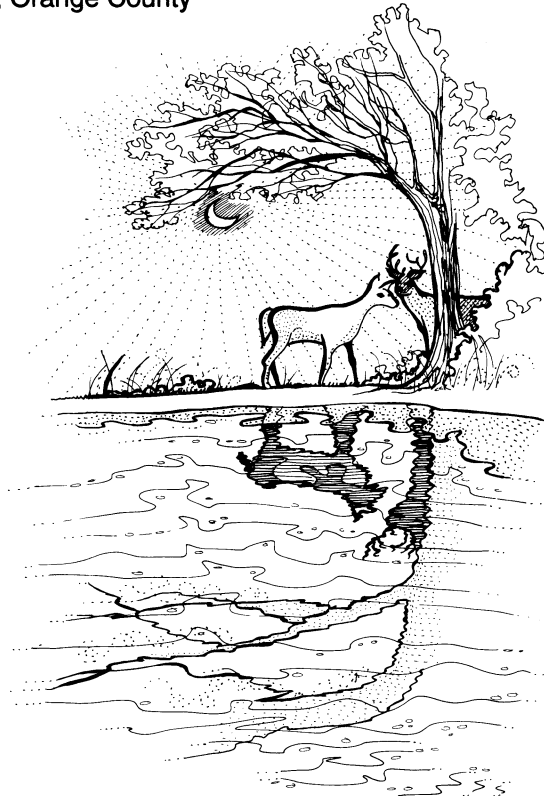
## PRIVATE LANDS

**WATERSHED LANDS** (These areas include land and water acreage managed as reservoirs. The areas are identified by the management entity).

Boonton Boro Water Department	170
Branchville Water Department	304
Butler Boro Water Department	740
Franklin Water Department	87
Hackensack Water Department	3,982
Haledon Boro Water Department	151
Jersey City Water Works	2,757
Newark Water Utility	34,657
Newton Town Water Department	574
North Jersey District Water Supply	7,255
Orange County Reservoir/Watershed Lands	4,725
Passaic Valley Water Commission	614
Spring Valley Water Co.	2,798
Sussex Boro Water Department	<u>98</u>
	58,914
	=====

## OTHER OPEN SPACE COMPONENTS

Ramapo Land Company, NJ	1,200
Ramapo Land Company, Rockland County, NY	3,000
Sterling Forest Tract, Orange County, NY	18,000
Stewart Airport, Orange County	<u>8,000</u>
	30,200
	=====



# Appendix B

## Proposed Greenway Connections

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***“The “Skylands” is one of this region’s great natural resources comparable to the Hudson River, Atlantic shore line, and Long Island Sound. The Skylands, being a low mountain necklace embracing the inner and outer suburbs, is easily taken for granted. Yet its green hills, flowing streams, lakes, and wild-life enhance the quality of life throughout our region. When the quality of the Hudson, Atlantic or Sound is degraded it affects us all—and so it is with the Skylands.”***

**Bill Chase,  
Director of Planning  
Rockland County,  
NY Dept. of Planning**

Before speaking of the greenways we might like to create, we should clearly recognize that these must begin from greenways that now exist, the remaining connected tracts of natural habitat, both publicly and privately owned. These are the core lands or skeleton from which our future designs can grow. These greenways that now exist must be protected and connected and this should be the foremost strategy for the creation of the Skylands Greenway. Greenway planning set in the context of a vigorous local planning effort is the best opportunity to protect the resource base.

The following is a general summary of the existing greenways and the lands that form the major components of the Skylands Greenway and should be given high priority for permanent protection as biotic and corridor greenways. The strategy is aimed at protecting and enhancing continuity as the primary goal. Lands adjacent to existing public holdings, especially those which connect fragmented holdings, are high priority, as well as inholdings in parklands.

### **The Highlands Greenway**

The largest de facto existing base for a Skylands Greenway overlaps with the Skylands portion of the Highlands Physiographic Province. This area begins at the northern end with the Storm King State Park portion of the Palisades Interstate Park System and extends to the southwest with a degree of connectedness through state and local parks along the Ramapo Mountains and Sterling Forest. It then stretches across Greenwood Lake and along the Appalachian Trail to other public lands which abut the

Pequannock Watershed. This area in New York is also integral to the proposed Hudson River Valley Greenway and connects with the Northern Putnam Greenway as well as along the Appalachian Trail.

### **Recommended Connections:**

- The Pequannock Watershed is in and of itself an outstanding example of a landscape with a full range of habitat types and is the largest natural landscape area in the Skylands.
- Sterling Forest—Sterling Forest by virtue of its location as a central link joining east to west and north to south is literally crucial to the realization of this greenway.
- The Wanaque and Ramapo watersheds, though partially developed, support extensive areas of private forest which presently represent gaps in this large greenway.
- The Appalachian Trail provides the only physical connection between protected lands in some areas and should be widened in such places and scenic protection provided beyond that. Much of the landscape the Appalachian Trail passes through is agricultural in character and provides for a variety of landscape experiences. Protection measures should include fostering agriculture on private land and scenic vista and forest easements.

### **The Kittatinny Ridge—Delaware River**

The combined area of High Point State Park, Stokes State Forest and the Kittatinny Mountain ridge together with the adjacent Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area forms the second largest greenway opportunity of the

# Appendix B

## Proposed Greenway Connections (cont.)

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Skylands, and links to the Pennsylvania Heritage Trail Corridor, along the north end of the Delaware River. This greenway is relatively intact and protected only in New Jersey, and is poorly connected to adjacent open space except via the narrow Appalachian Trail corridor which should be expanded by further acquisitions and easements.

### **Recommended connections:**

- The Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge totalling 7,500 acres has been authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Service and provides a major section of open space between the two larger greenway networks along the Appalachian Trail. The acquisition and easement program here should be accelerated and these lands given the highest degree of protection as habitat. Expansion of protection should be considered into New York. The Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge also connects to the Pequannock Watershed via the Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management Area.
- Pochuck Mountain, which lies adjacent to the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge and Hamburg Mountain Wildlife Management areas along the Appalachian Trail makes a partial bridge connecting parkland along the New York/New Jersey border.
- The Shawangunk Mountains in New York extend from the Kittatinny Ridge in New Jersey but are without any protection.
- Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River (extending for 72 miles above Port Jervis—this is a component of the Federal Wild & Scenic River Designation).
- The Delaware River corridor is an inherent connector and is also the focus of the proposed Delaware River Greenway. A stretch of river above the Water Gap is a designated Wild and Scenic River, offering important opportunities for additional linkages, including those in Pennsylvania.
- A recent National Park Service report proposes to link the Appalachian Trail to High Point and then to connect from High Point north through the Shawangunks to the Catskills.

### **The Farny Highlands**

The third largest area of existing open space is the Farny Highlands which is partially connected to the Pequannock Watershed via Farny State Park. The Farny Highlands, the portion of these Skylands in Morris County, encompasses a mosaic of about 25,000 acres of both public, quasi-public and private lands. There is less connectedness in the public lands and the sustainability of this network is dependent upon the protection of several key sites.

### **Recommended Connections:**

- The Picatinny Arsenal (approximately 6,000 acres) is a heavily forested, federally owned tract which is pivotal to sustaining contiguous open space in the Farny Highlands.
- Watershed lands owned by Jersey City provide a broad greenway connection between the Picatinny Arsenal and the Mahlon Dickerson Reservation. These are given interim protection under the current moratorium of the transfer of lands acquired for protecting surface water.



# Appendix B

## Proposed Greenway Connections (cont.)

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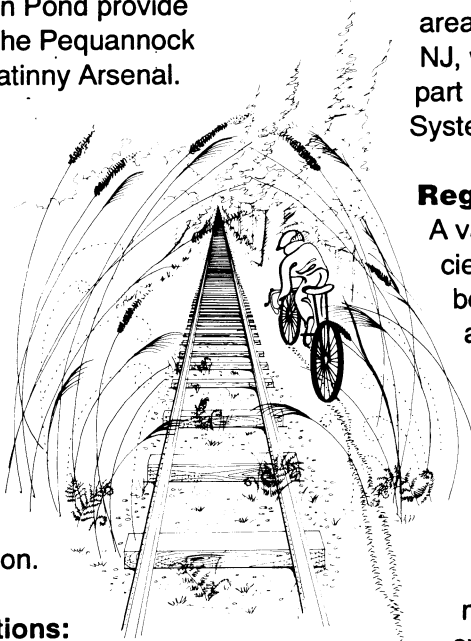
- Boy Scout sites adjacent to Farny State Park, as well as additional land owned by Jersey City, form an important greenway associated with the Split Rock Reservoir.
- The Beaver Brook watershed, which is largely privately owned and supports excellent wildlife habitat, forms a critical gap in the Farny Highlands, and is the subject of a recently completed study by the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The lands around Green Pond provide a connection between the Pequannock Watershed and the Picatinny Arsenal.
- In Orange County the pattern extending through Goosepond Mountains Highland Lakes and Minnewaska State Parks is such a grouping. These are linked already to some extent by the Long Path to join, however tenuously, the Highlands with the Catskills.
- The Sussex Branch Trail running approximately 20 miles from Netcong to Branchville, NJ, can connect with the Paulins Kill Valley Trail and other abandoned railroad lines suitable for trails. It also connects urban areas in Sussex County, NJ, with Cranberry Lake (a part of the NJ State Park System).

### Smaller Networks

Another category of lands deserves special consideration. Some tracts of isolated public protected lands tend to align with each other in the manner of island archipelagos and would therefore be natural sites for both new and improved trail linkages as well as larger scale open space protection.

### Recommended Connections:

- A closely spaced arc of such islands of public lands including Hopatcong State Park, Allamuchy State Park, Whittingham State Wildlife Management Area, Swartswood State Park, and the Bear Swamp Wildlife Management Area extend across southern Sussex County to connect the Highlands with the Kittatinny Ridge-Delaware River greenway.



### Regional Trail System

A variety of different agencies and groups have been working to develop a regional trail system.

The most significant trails are the Appalachian Trail and the Long Path, both of which run roughly on a north/south axis.

There are at present no major east/west axes, except where the Appa-

lachian Trail runs along the state's border. There are also additional candidate corridors that should be considered in the area, in particular a trail following the 18,000 year old terminal moraine of the Wisconsin Glacier which lies generally along the southern limit of the Skylands and would provide a much needed east/west greenway connection. The natural structural grain of the landscape in this area is represented by ridge lines or river valleys generally trending NE-SW. South



# Appendix B

## Proposed Greenway Connections (cont.)

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of the Skylands, portions of the Patriot's Path in Morris County follow the older terminal moraine of the Kansas-Illinois ice sheet, and comprises part of the Cross-Jersey Trail, another east/west link which connects different physiographic provinces.

A regional trail system in the Skylands should include abandoned railroad rights-of-way. There are several lines no longer in service which have been studied for their trail potential and are included in the 1982 Trails Plan and a Special Report of the Trails Council in 1985. Lines within the Skylands area include the New York, Susquehanna and Western (proposed as the Paulins Kill Valley Trail), Lehigh and New England and the Lehigh and Hudson River. These rights-of-way interconnect with other rights-of-way or trails outside of the Skylands region. Acquisition of abandoned rail lines is very practical

for trails because, frequently, tax lots comprise the entire width of the right-of-way and ownership is limited to one of a few entities, making it cost effective to acquire. Also, little additional effort is necessary to construct trail related facilities, making them cost effective to develop as well. Utility rights-of-way offer similar opportunities.

The recently enacted Hudson River Valley Greenway included proposed greenway trails on both sides of the Hudson River from New York City to the Erie Canal as well as the Hudson Walkway and a proposed pedestrian river crossing. Two major trails following old railroad rights-of-way have also been under development in New Jersey since the early 1980s—one owned in part by the city of Newark, running on the eastern side of the Kittatinny Ridge which would provide a valley trail parallel to the Appalachian



### **Hudson River/ Palisades—**

*Two important rivers border the Skylands Region and offer opportunities to link with other Greenway projects. The Hudson River and Palisades Cliffs link the Skylands with the Hudson River Valley Greenway to the north and the Hudson River Walkway effort to the south.*



# Appendix B

## Proposed Greenway Connections (cont.)

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Trail. Some bike links which are only partly trails and often follow secondary roadways, are also being developed.

The role of the counties will be critical with regard to effective greenway acquisition and establishment. Local greenway initiatives are growing in number and if effectively coordinated with adjacent communities can have a regionally significant impact. Rockland County, for example, has launched a greenway program and has approved a \$9 million program. However no expenditures have been authorized because of fiscal difficulties. Protection of the Long Path is a primary goal in Rockland County. The Passaic River Greenway which was initiated by a private group, the Passaic River Coalition, now includes over 9 communities and numerous parks and proposed acquisitions along the east bank of the Passaic River. Bergen County is currently developing three major corridor greenways to protect the best 3,500 acres of open land remaining. These

include key area reservoirs; the Ramapo River Pathway which includes the Ramapo Mountain County Reservation and 1,768 acres of recently acquired parkland; the 21-mile Hackensack River Pathway which links 12 communities in central Bergen; and the East Hill Pathway connecting 800 acres of public and quasi-public lands in northeastern Bergen County. All three of these greenways will, when fully realized, extend to the New York State border. To date, the County has assembled \$30 million to achieve these goals.

Some less than green areas should also be considered for greenway connections, especially in those areas where the least open space remains. Many of the derelict urban lands occur in now abandoned manufacturing sites along the current Amtrak corridor connecting Washington and Boston and form a continuous fabric of land suitable for both redevelopment and greenway creation. Remarkably many remnant natural areas occur along this path as well, both wetlands and forests in need of habitat restoration.



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**“We have regulations for the protection of wetlands and the seashore, water and air quality, but who speaks for the preservation of forests and open space?”**

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North Jersey District  
Water Supply Commission**

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