NJ Highlands Watershed Cluster

- 5 watersheds
- Highlands, Ridge & Valley
Significant resources

• Drinking water for 5.4 million
• Diverse Ecosystems
• Recreation
• Highlands Act protection
Key Threats to Habitat & Water Quality

- Lack of natural riparian habitat
- Loss of forested headwaters
- Phosphorus
- Fecal coliform/E. coli
- Water temperature

Deforested riparian corridor

Manure source near a C1 Stream
Significant effort: many groups participating

• Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
• Hunterdon Land Trust
• Musconetcong Watershed Association
• New Jersey Audubon Society
• New Jersey Conservation Foundation
• New Jersey Highlands Coalition
• North Jersey RC&D
• The Land Conservancy of New Jersey
• The Nature Conservancy
• Trout Unlimited
• Trust for Public Lands
• Wallkill River Watershed Management Group
• 4 priority “focus areas”
  • Opportunity/threat
  • Capacity & feasibility
  • Sustainability/permanence
  • Replicability & scalability
Strategy Selection

• Potential to impact goals
• Feasibility
• Potential leverage & scalability
Strategies

Improving the science for restoration
Strategies

Land acquisition
Strategies

Floodplain and forest restoration & management
Strategies

Agricultural BMPs
Strategies

Stormwater & septic management
Strategies

River-Friendly Communities Campaign
Strategies

River-Friendly Communities Campaign

RIVER FRIENDLY?

Are you a river-friendly resident? Nonpoint source pollution is a major contributor to the contamination of streams and rivers. It is the result of pollution carried by storm water into our drinking water.

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed, which is the area of land that drains into a common body of water. This means that many of the day-to-day choices you make directly impact the greater community, good or bad.

Being river-friendly is often a matter of being aware of how our actions affect the water quality of Lopatcong Creek.

Here are some tips on the small things you can do to make a big difference:
• Over 30 projects proposed

• Over 20 projects underway
Monitoring

• Water chemistry
  – pH
  – Temperature
  – DO
  – turbidity

• Biologic indicators
  – Macroinvertebrates
  – Freshwater mussels
  – Odonates
Cluster success: the long-term view
Challenges

- Degree of change needed (pollutant reductions)
- Commitment from many landowners
- Many local government entities
- Lack of state funding for land protection
- Committing to shared investments and strategic collaboration
Opportunity

- Highlands Act
- Strong governmental investment
- Lots of non-profit partners
- Momentum from recent successes
- On the ground opportunities to implement complementary strategies
Success

- Intact headwaters and riparian corridors
- Nutrients and bacteria decreasing
- Ability to prioritize action based on pollutant ‘hotspots’ = high return
- A more educated and engaged citizenry
- Sharing lessons learned will lead to higher project efficiency and effectiveness
- Models that can be replicated basin-wide