

# The New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council

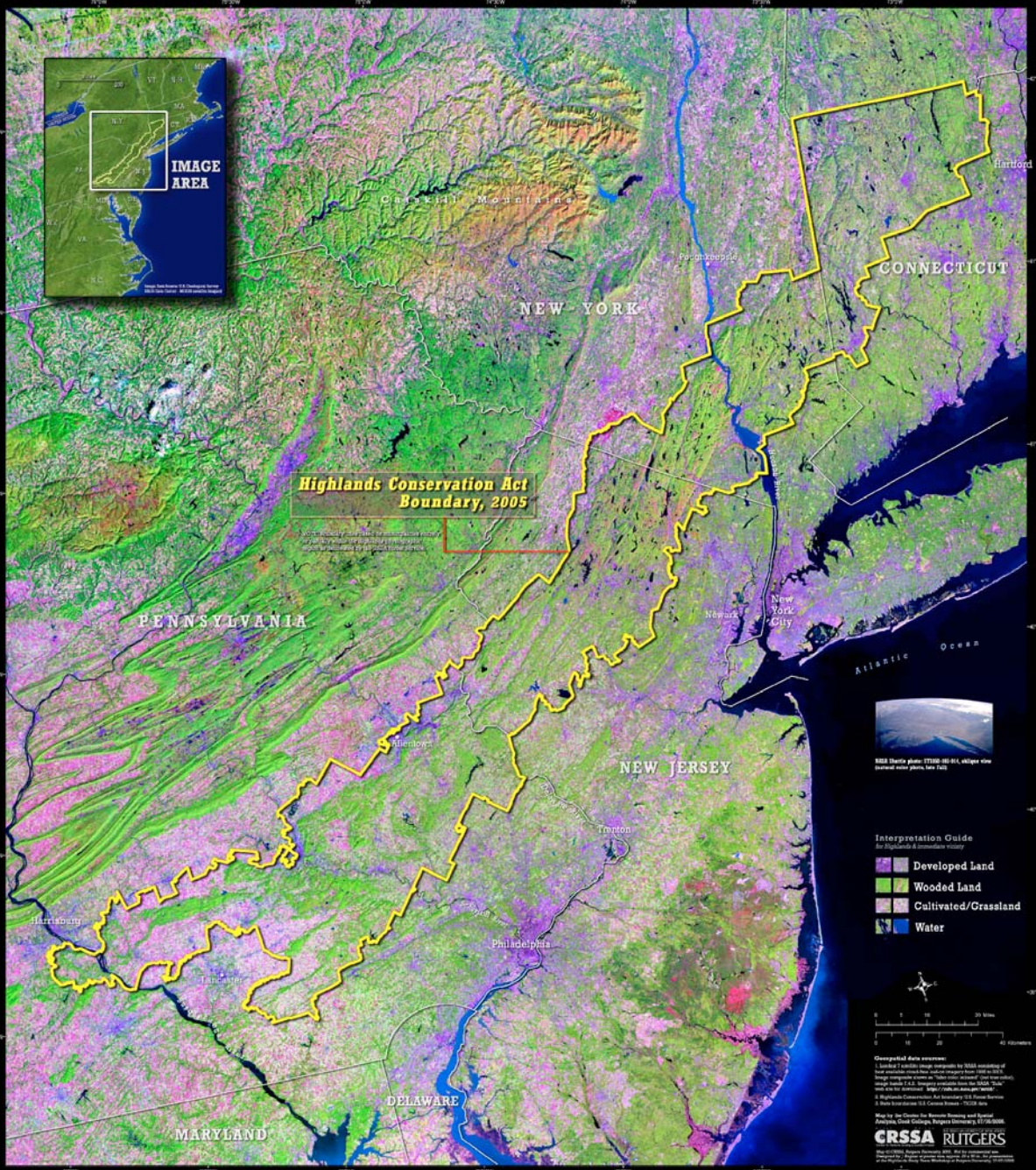
## Highlands Regional Master Plan

*Final Draft*  
*November 2007*



# HIGHLANDS REGION: LANDSAT SATELLITE IMAGERY

Landsat 7 satellite image composite: 1999-2002 of the Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut Highlands Region



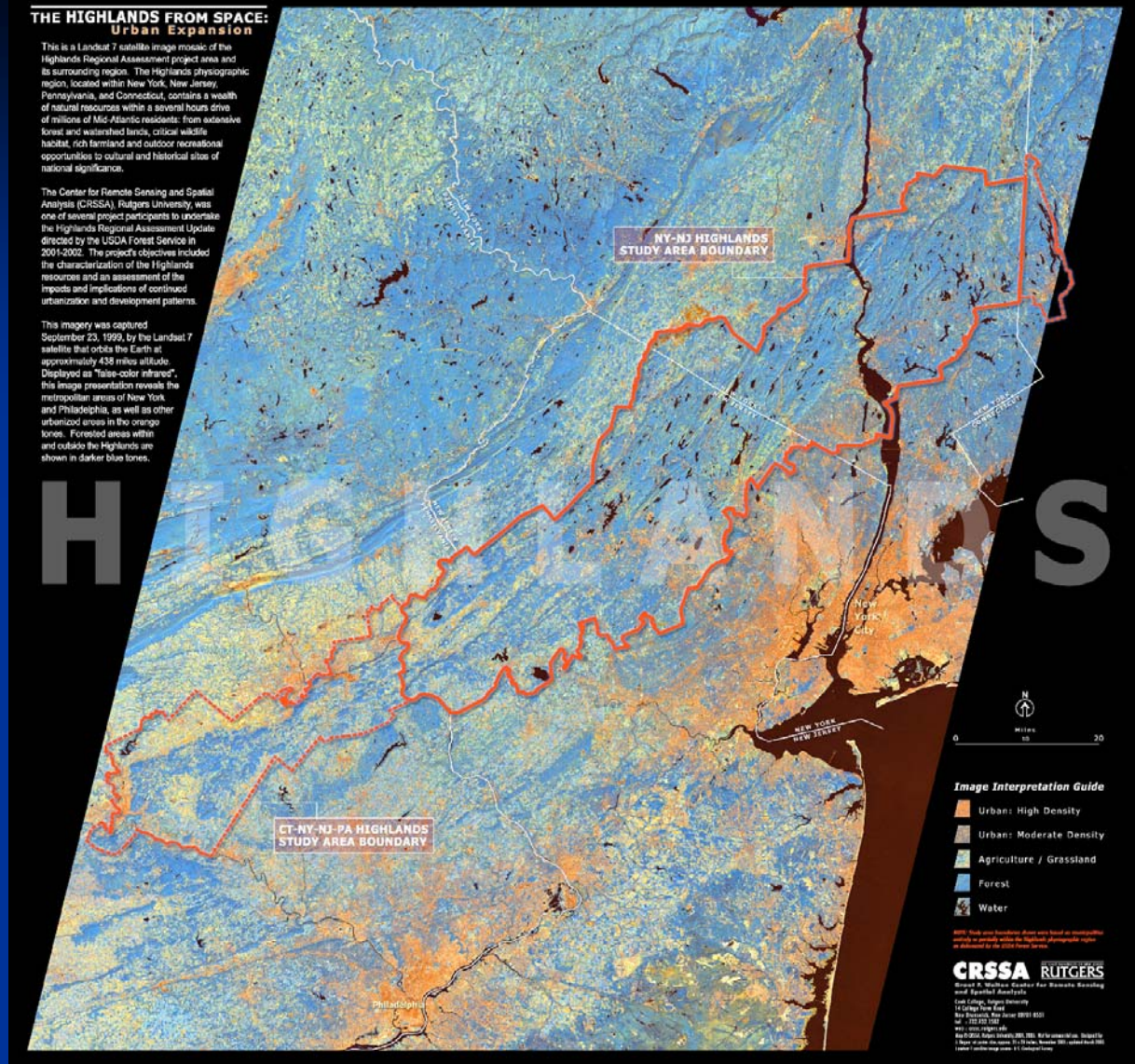
The federal Highlands Region is a 3.5 million-acre region stretching across Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

The US Forest Service, in cooperation with New York and New Jersey, issued a federal study on the Highlands in 1992.

The study was updated in 2002 and found an 11% population increase from 1990 to 2000.

# The Federal Highlands Conservation Act

- The Highlands Conservation Act was signed by President Bush on November 30, 2004.
- The Act is designed to provide federal assistance to Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania to conserve land and natural resources in the Highlands Region.
- The Highlands Conservation Act authorizes \$10,000,000 per year for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2014 to be appropriated to the Secretary of Interior.



# The New Jersey Highlands

- The 859,358-acre region is roughly divided in half into the Preservation Area and Planning Area.
  - 444,394 acres in the Planning area
  - 414,965 acres in the Preservation Area
- 88 municipalities from seven counties are included in the Highlands Region:
  - 5 are entirely in the Preservation Area
  - 36 are entirely in the Planning Area
  - 47 are in both areas

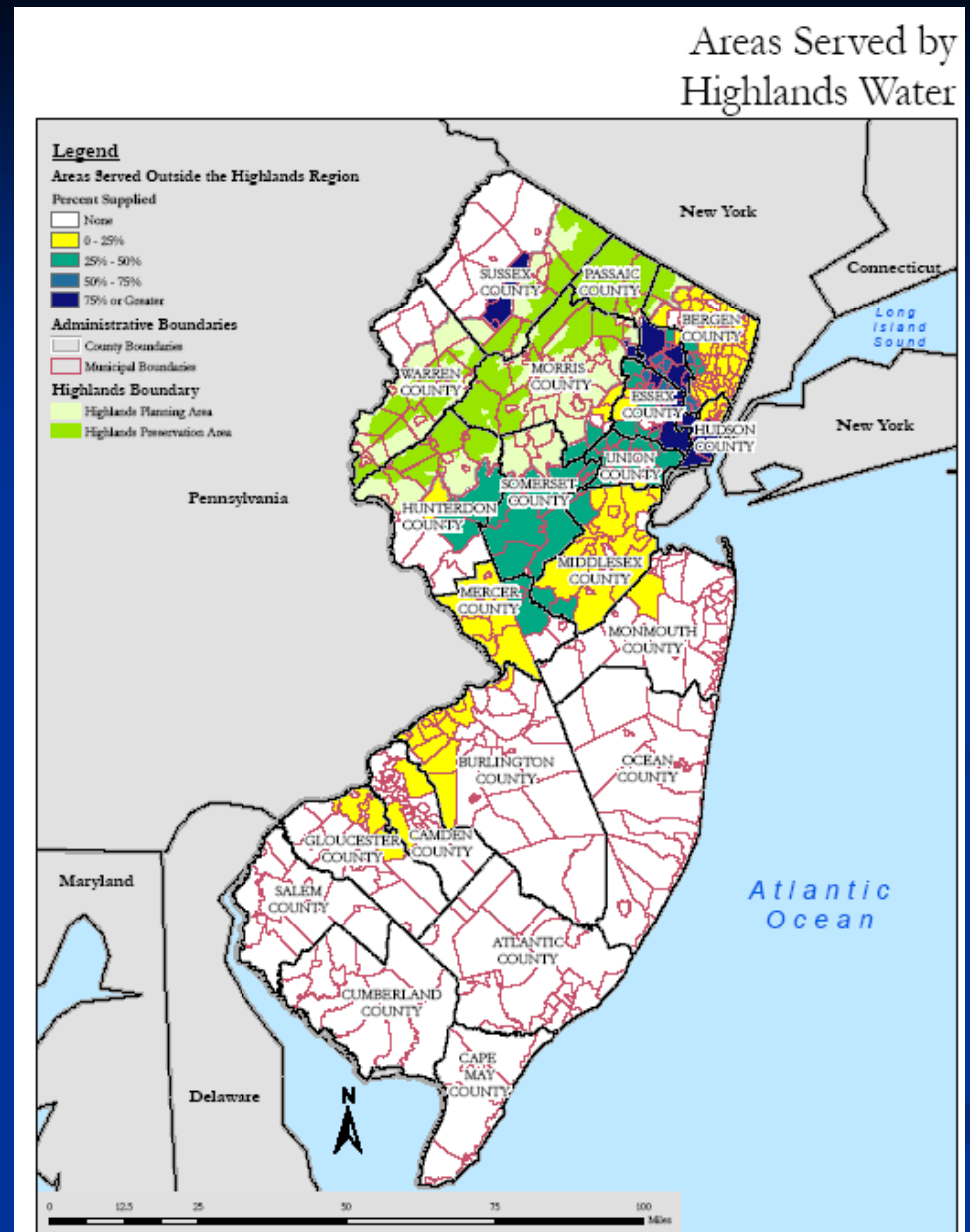
# Resource Assessment

- Determine the amount and type of development that can be accommodated while sustaining the overall values of the Highlands:
  - ✓ Surface and Ground Water
  - ✓ Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecology
  - ✓ Scenic and Aesthetic
  - ✓ Cultural and Historic
  - ✓ Open Space
  - ✓ Farmland
  - ✓ Recreation
- Establish land use policies required to maintain and enhance such resources.



# Water Supplies of the Highlands Region

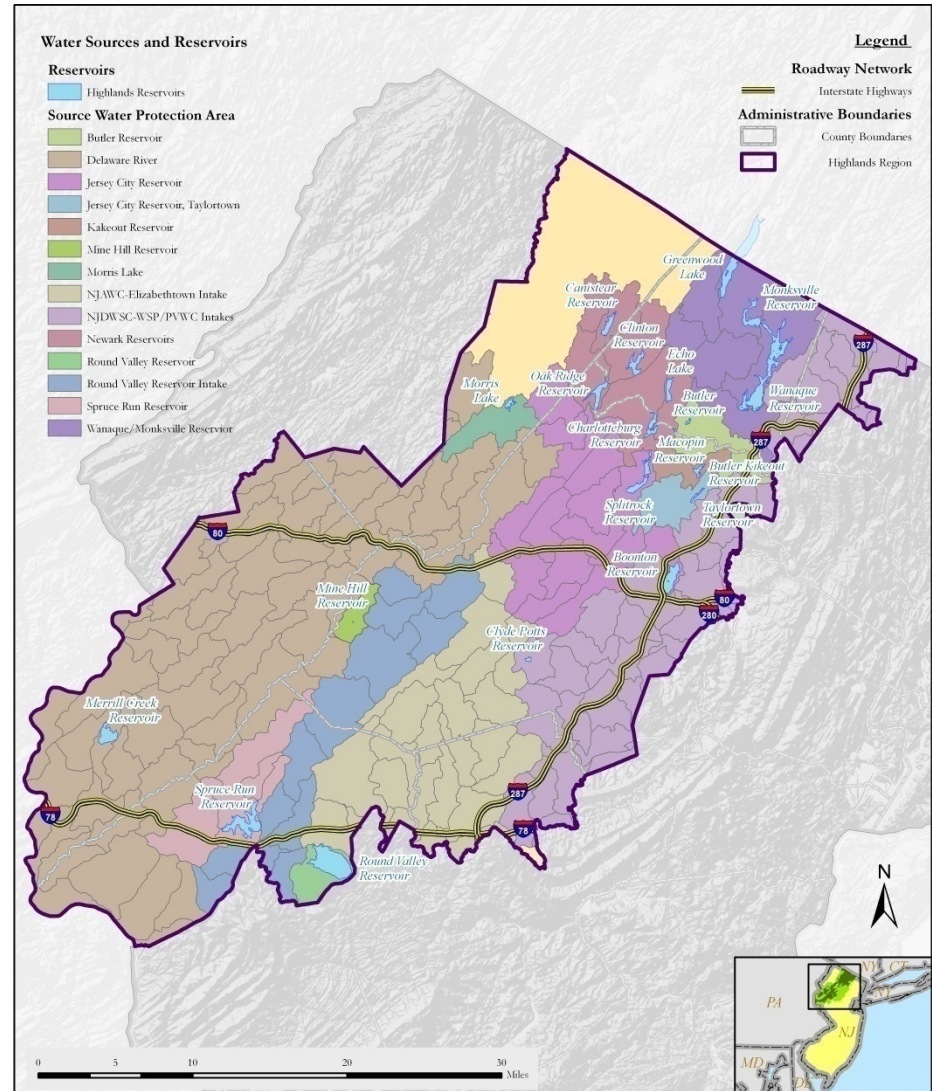
- The Highlands Region includes 18% of the State's land base. The Highlands supplies 65% of the State's drinking water supplies for 5.4 million residents.
- Public water supply service includes the greater New Jersey Metropolitan Area, as well as, portions of Middlesex, Mercer, Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties.
- The needs of Highlands residents and municipalities are largely met through withdrawals from groundwater wells tapping local aquifers.



# Source Water Protection

- More than 115 billion gallons are consumed each year by residents both within and outside the Highlands Region.
- The reservoir systems that supply water to major urban areas outside the Highlands Region account for the vast majority of potable use, almost 626 million gallons per day.
- The demand for water through 2030 may exceed the safe yields (the amount of water that can be safely withdrawn from a reservoir over time) of several Highlands reservoirs.

# Source Water Protection Areas and Reservoirs



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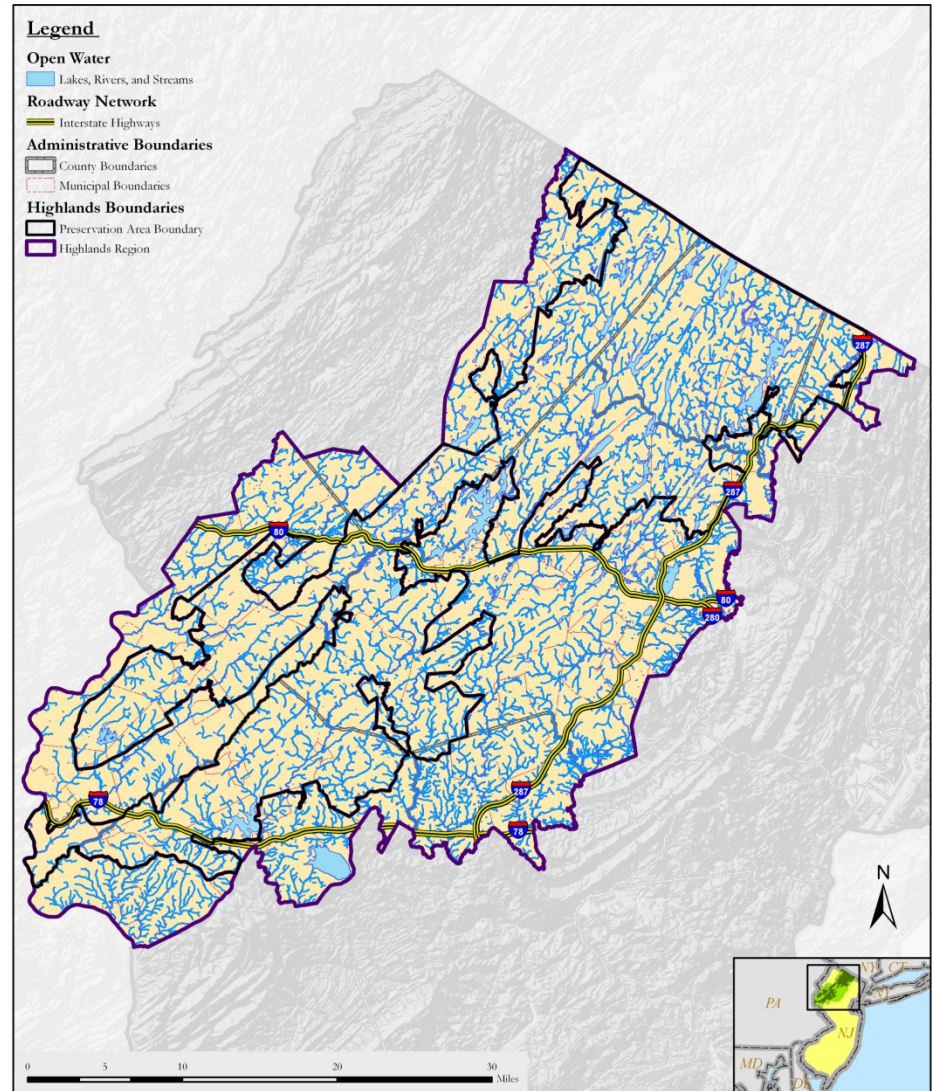


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2006

# Lakes, Rivers & Streams

- More than 75%, or 2,700 miles, of streams within the Highlands Region are afforded high levels of protection by the State.
- The Highlands Region includes more than 90,000 acres of wetlands which serve as important habitat for the Region's wildlife and an important filter for the Region's drinking water supplies.

# Lakes, Rivers and Streams



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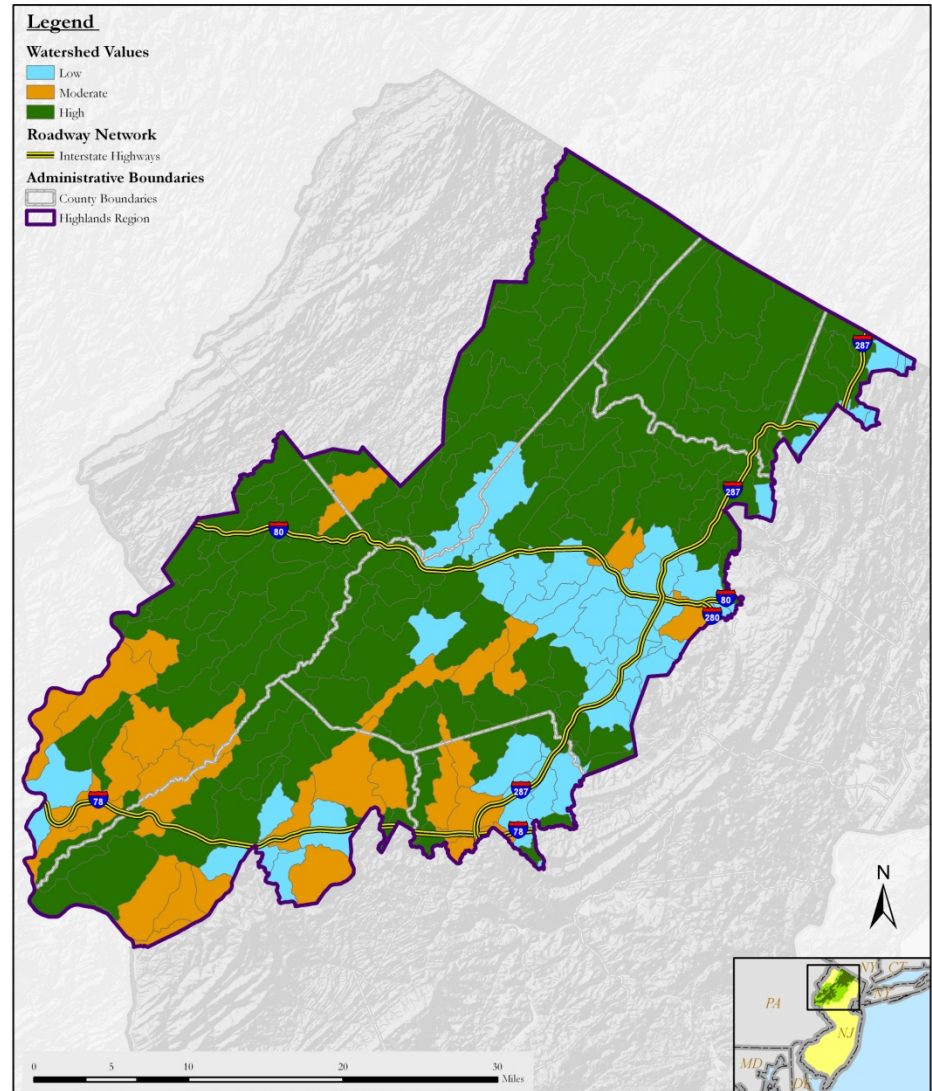
Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2006



# Watershed Integrity

- The Highlands Council utilized a watershed-based assessment to evaluate the integrity and protection needs of Highlands Open Waters.
- The 183 subwatershed boundaries were used for this analysis.

## Watershed Values by HUC14



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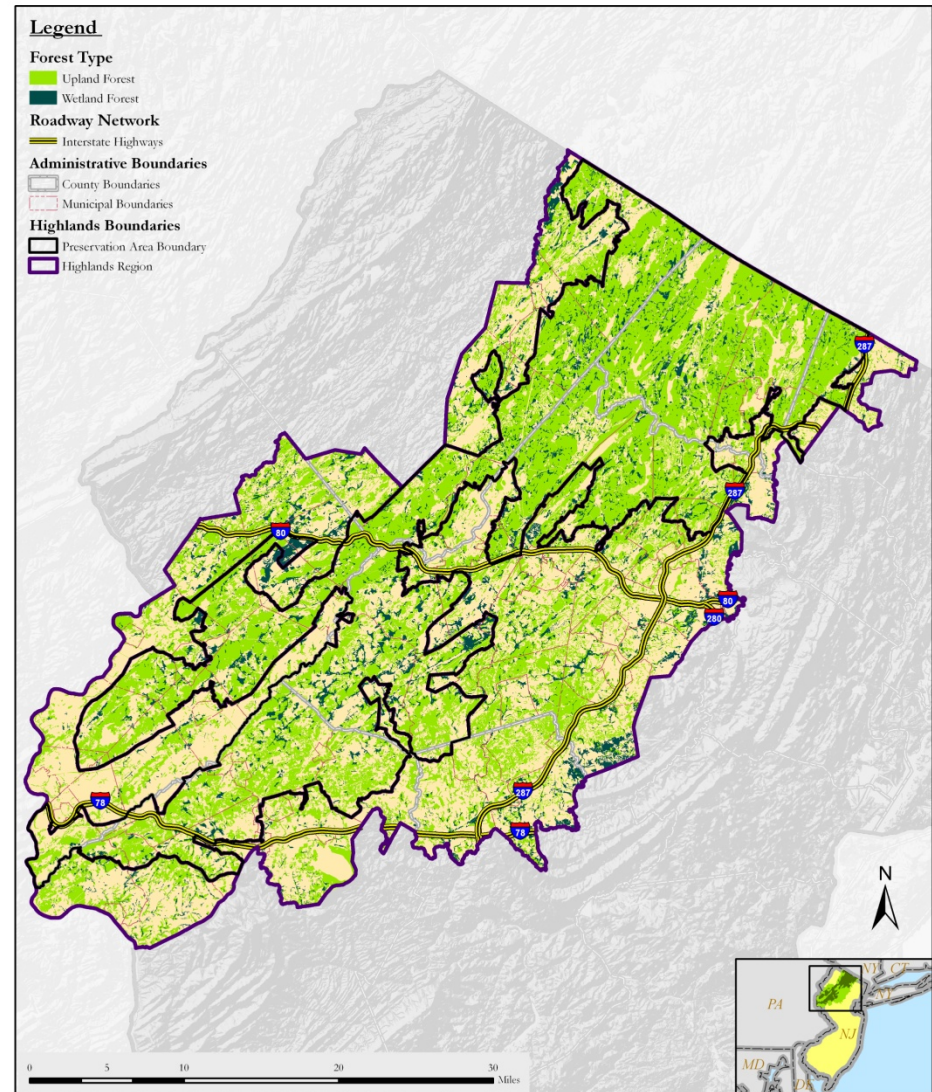


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2006

# Forest Resources

- Forests account for more than one-half the total land area in the Highlands Region. Upland and wetland forested areas are on 464,200 acres or 54% of the total of land area.
- Forests provide essential ecosystem functions, including surface water filtration, which is important to protecting essential drinking water supplies for the Highlands Region
- Forests serve as habitat for animal and plant species and are critically important to the maintenance of biodiversity in the Highlands Region.

## Forested Areas



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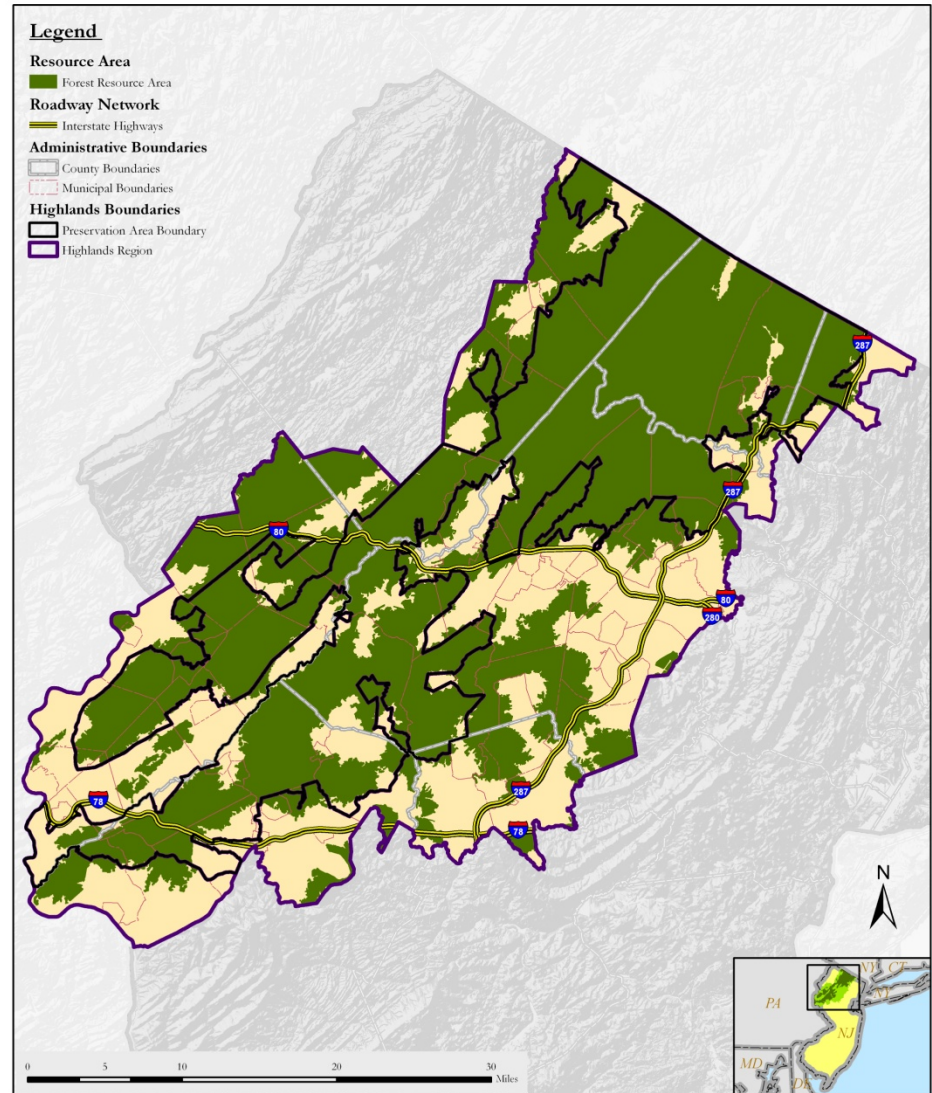


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2006

# Forest Resource Area

- The Forest Resource Area includes high ecological value forest areas, including those forested areas that exhibit the least fragmentation and vital for the maintenance of ecological processes.

# Forest Resource Area



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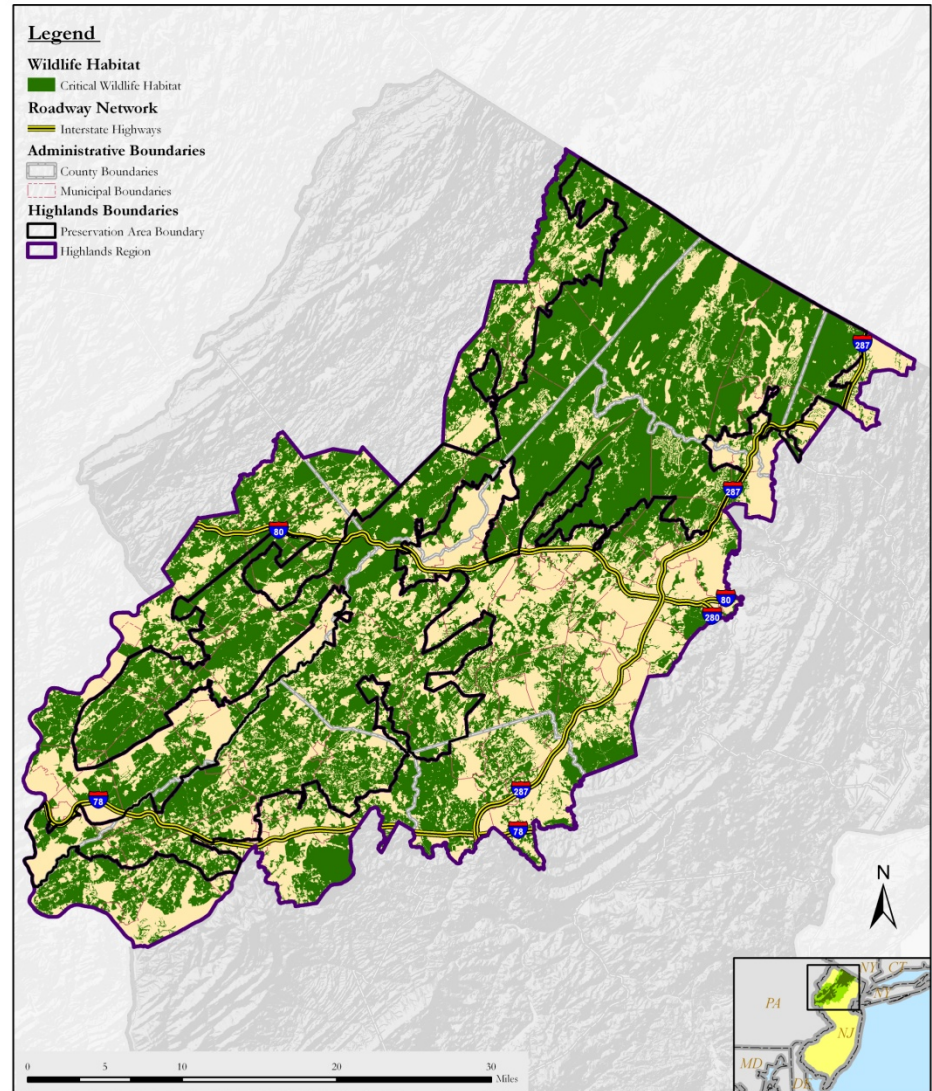


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006

# Critical Habitat Area

- Three types of habitats are defined as “critical habitat areas” for:
  - 1) Animal species identified as rare, threatened, or endangered;
  - 2) Significant Natural Areas, including habitat for rare and endangered plant species, unique or regionally significant ecological communities, and other significant natural sites or features; and
  - 3) Vernal pools - confined wet depressions that provide important breeding habitat to many species of amphibians.

# Critical Wildlife Habitat



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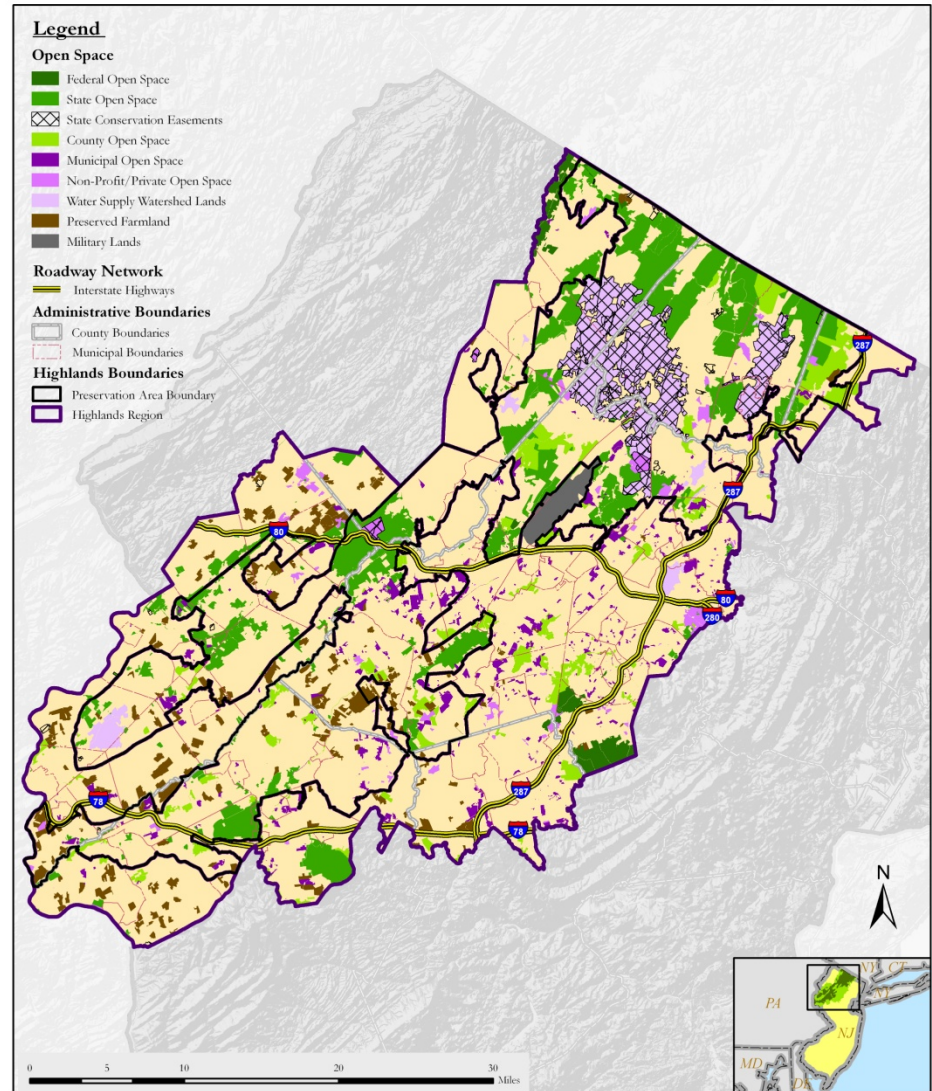


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2006

# Highlands Open Space

- Of the nearly 860,000 acres in the Highlands Region, a total of 274,675 acres (32%) are considered open space lands or preserved farmlands.
- These lands are held in a combination of federal, State, county, municipal, nonprofit, and private ownership.
- 186,211 acres (68%) of these lands are located in the Preservation Area and the remaining 88,464 acres are situated in the Planning Area.

# Highlands Open Space



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Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007  
Hunterdon County Division of GIS 2005  
Green Acres Program, NJDEP, 2007  
Morris County Planning, Development & Technology, 2005  
National Park Service, 2001  
New Jersey Conservation Foundation, 2005

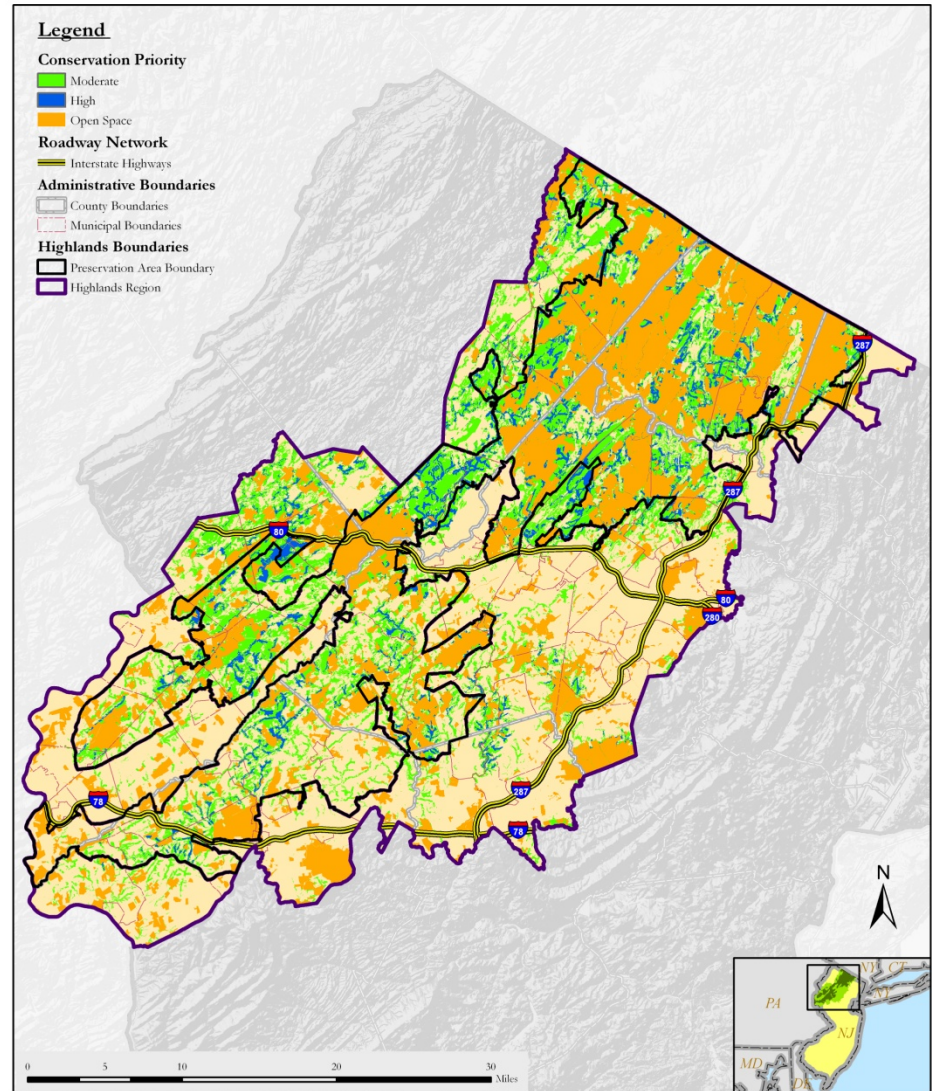


New Jersey Department of Agriculture SADC, 2007  
Somerset County GIS, 2005  
Sussex County Office of GIS Management 2005  
The Nature Conservancy, 2004  
US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2001  
County of Warren Department of Planning, 2005  
NJDEP, 2007

# Conservation Priority Area

- The results of the Resource Assessment were used to identify those lands in the Highlands Region which have the highest ecological resource value.
- The Conservation Priority Area will assist in the prioritization of open space acquisitions.

# Conservation Priority Area



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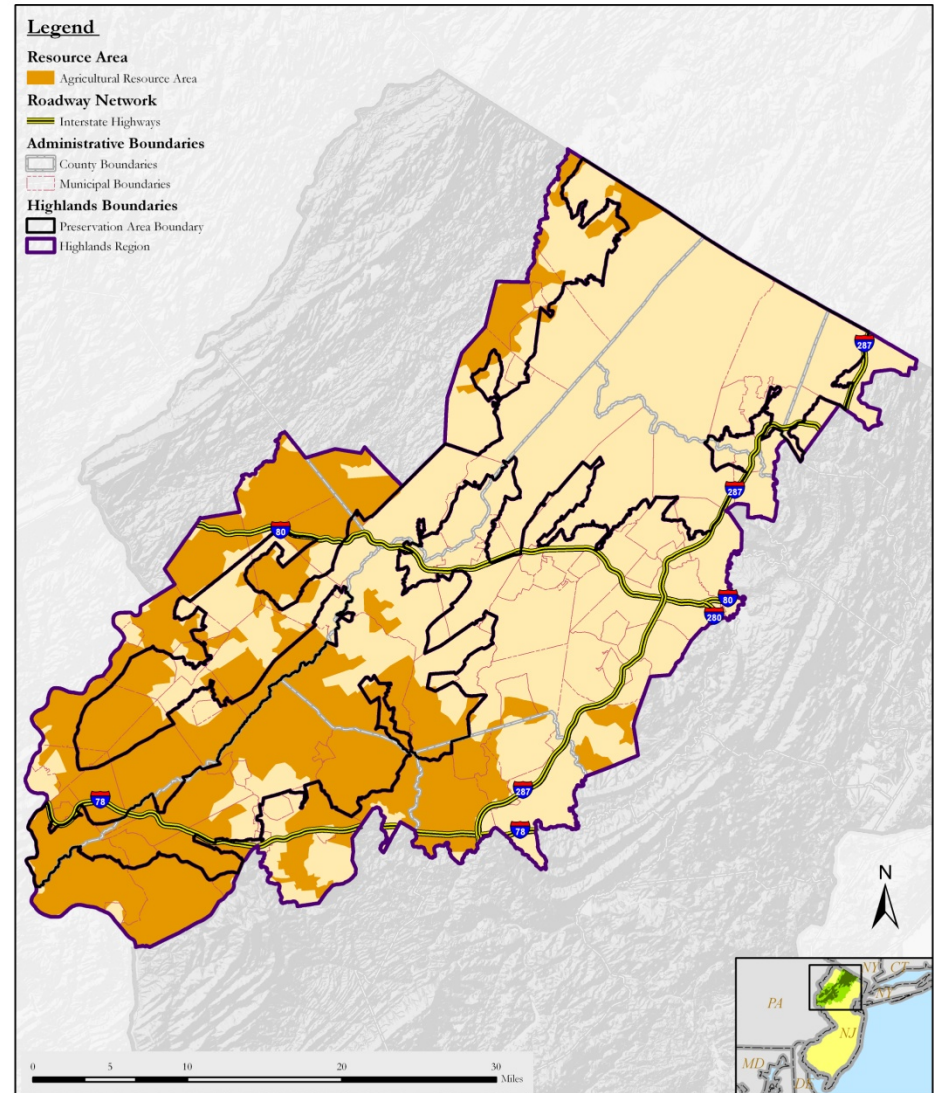


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007

# Agricultural Resources

- The Highlands Region has experienced a steady loss of agricultural lands of 1,700 acres per year - a 19% decline between 1986 and 2002, representing over 27,500 acres.
- The Farmland Preservation Program has preserved 26,123 acres in the Highlands Region - 16,099 acres in the Planning Area and 10,024 acres in the Preservation Area.
- The Agricultural Resource Area was based on 250 acres or more of contiguous farmland, important farmland soils, adjoining lands that is in agricultural use, and concentrations of Preserved Farmland.

## Agricultural Resource Area



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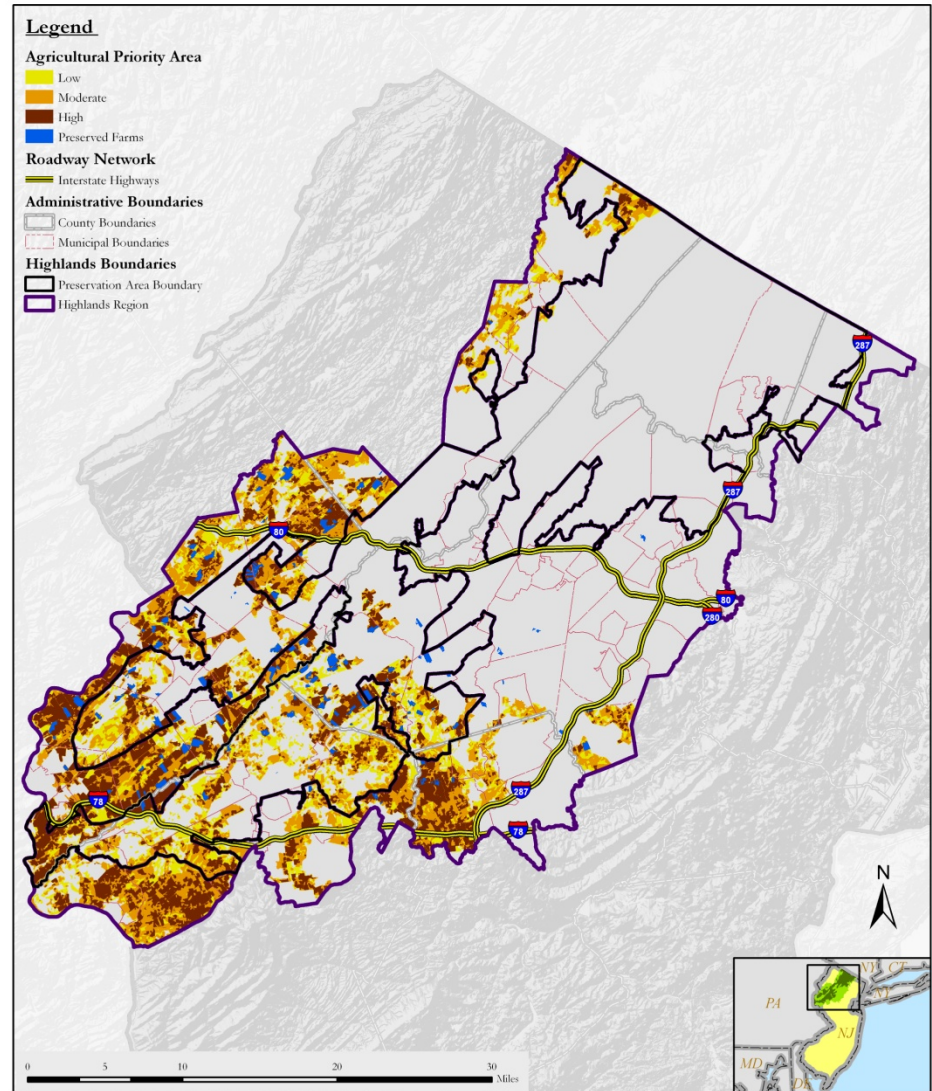


Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006

# Agricultural Priority Area

- The results of the Agricultural resource assessment were used to identify those lands in the Highlands Region which have the highest agricultural resource value.
- The Agricultural Priority Area will assist in the prioritization of farmland preservation.

# Agricultural Priority Area



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Sources:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007  
State Agriculture Development Committee, 2006



# A Regional Master Plan

- The Highlands Act mandates the Highlands Council to develop a Regional Master Plan with the goals to protect, enhance and restore the significant values of the abundant and critical resources in this area.
- The first draft was released in November 2006.
- More than 3,600 comments were received The final draft of the RMP was released in November 2007.

# Major RMP Changes from 2006 -2007

## ■ Organization

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II. ANALYSIS OF THE HIGHLANDS REGION

Part 1. Natural Resources

Part 2. Water Resources

Part 3. Agricultural Resources

Part 4. Historic, Cultural, Archaeological and Scenic Resources.

Part 5. Transportation

Part 6. Community Character

Part 7. Landowner Fairness

Part 8. Sustainable Economic Development

Part 9. Air Quality

CHAPTER III. REGIONAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY CHARACTER

CHAPTER IV. GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

CHAPTER V. PROGRAMS

CHAPTER VI. IMPLEMENTATION

# Major RMP Changes from 2006 -2007

- Land Use Capability Map
- Septic System Densities
- TDR Potential Receiving Zones
- Lake Management Areas and Lake Community sub-zone
- Forest Management
- Karst Topography
- Agricultural Preservation Priorities

# Major RMP Changes from 2006 -2007 Continued

- Cluster Development
- Net Water Availability and Water Deficit Mitigation
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Plan Conformance
- Regional Master Plan Update and Map Adjustments

# Land Use Capability Map

The Highlands Act requires that the Council prepare a Land Use Capability Map. To address this requirement, the Council created a Land Use Capability Map Series that includes the following maps:

1. Land Use Capability Zone Map
2. Land Use Capability Water Availability Map
3. Land Use Capability Public Community Water Systems Map
4. Land Use Capability Domestic Sewerage Facilities Map
5. Land Use Capability Septic System Yield Map

# Three Primary Zones

- The **Protection Zone (PZ)** consists of high resource value lands that are important to maintaining water quality, quantity, and sensitive ecological resources. Land acquisition is a priority in the Protection Zone and development activities will be extremely limited.
- The **Conservation Zone (CZ)** consists of areas with significant agricultural use lands interspersed with associated woodlands and environmental features that should be preserved when possible. Non-agricultural development activities will be limited.
- The **Existing Community Zone (ECZ)** consists of areas with regionally significant concentrated development signifying existing communities. These areas may have existing infrastructure that may support development and redevelopment provided that it is compatible with the protection and character of the Highlands environment, at levels that are appropriate to maintain the character of established communities.
- The LANDS model utilized a 75 acre minimum mapping threshold for the delineation of the three Primary Zones.

# Three sub-zones

- The **Conservation Zone – Environmental Constrained Sub-Zone (CZ-EC)** consists of significant environmental features within the Conservation Zone that should be preserved and protected from non-agricultural development.
- The **Existing Community Zone – Environmental Constrained Sub-Zone (ECZ-EC)** consists of significant contiguous critical habitat, steep slopes and forested lands within the Existing Community Zone that should be protected from further fragmentation.
- The **Lake Community Sub-Zone (LCZ)** consists of existing community development around lakes within the Existing Community Zone. This sub-zone is where the Existing Community Zone overlaps the Lake Management Area. This zone has unique policies to prevent degradation of water quality and watershed pollution, harm to lake ecosystems, and to protect the community character of lake communities.

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Final Draft

**LAND USE CAPABILITY  
Zone Map**

(Map 1 of 5)

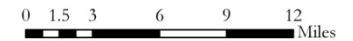
Source:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007

**Legend**

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Preservation Area Boundary | Administrative Boundaries   |
| Highlands Boundary         | County Boundaries           |
| <b>Roadway Network</b>     |                             |
| Interstate Highways        | Municipal Boundaries        |
| U.S. Routes                | Lakes Greater Than 10 Acres |
| State Routes               |                             |

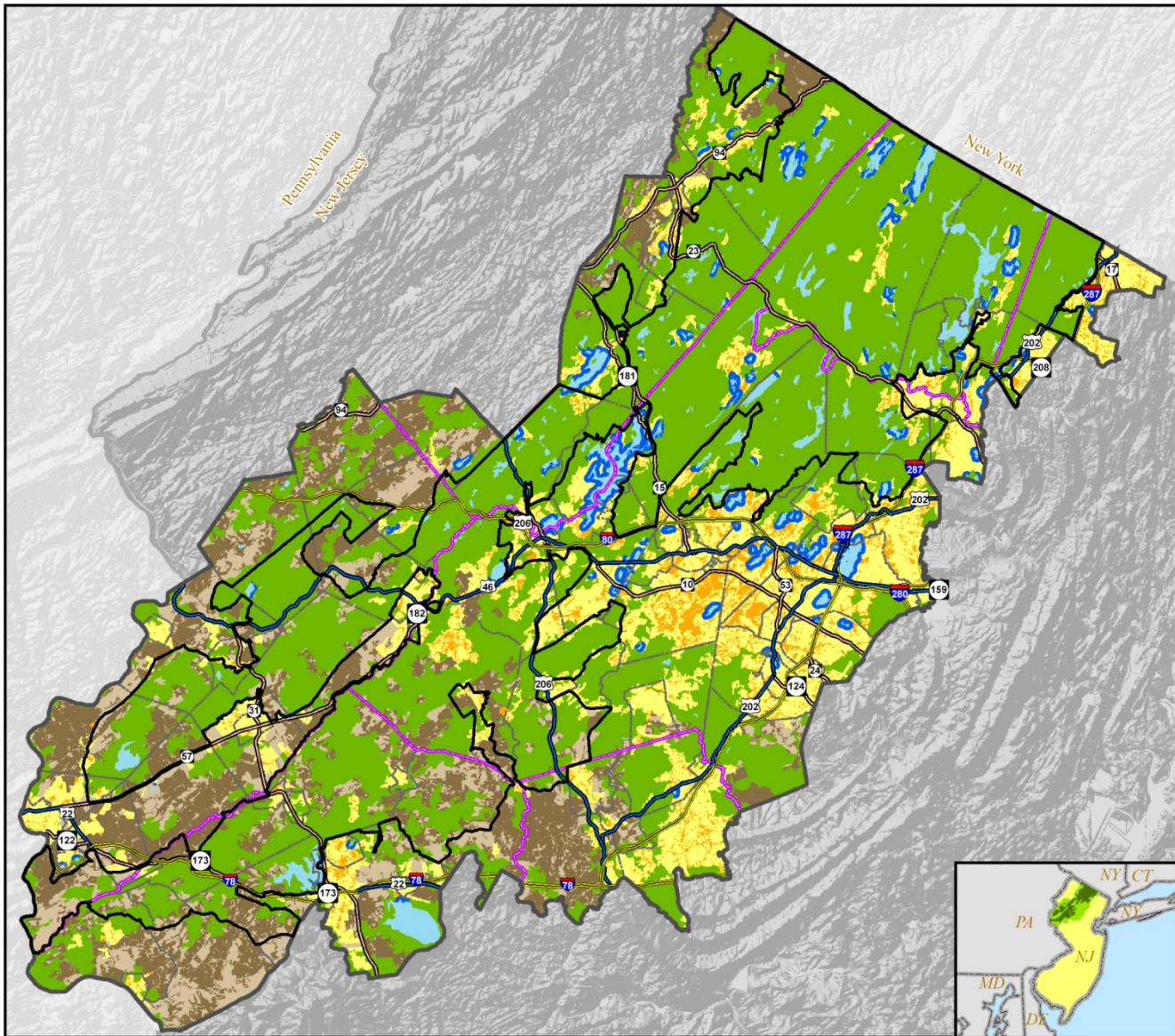
**Regional Master Plan  
Overlay Zone Designation**

- |                    |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Zone</b>        | <b>Sub-Zone</b>                |
| Protection         | Lake Community                 |
| Conservation       | Conservation Constrained       |
| Existing Community | Existing Community Constrained |



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**New Jersey Highlands Council**  
November 2007





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**LAND USE CAPABILITY**  
**Water Availability Map**

(Map 2 of 5)

Source:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007

**Legend**

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Preservation Area Boundary | Administrative Boundaries   |
| Highlands Boundary         | County Boundaries           |
| <b>Roadway Network</b>     | Municipal Boundaries        |
| Interstate Highways        | Hydrologic Unit Code(HUC14) |
| U.S. Routes                |                             |
| State Routes               |                             |

**Net Water Availability By HUC14**

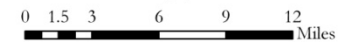
Million Gallons Per Day (MGD)

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
|  | 0.00 - 0.05 |
|  | 0.05 - 0.10 |
|  | 0.10 - 0.39 |

**Conditional Net Water Availability By HUC14**

Million Gallons Per Day (MGD)

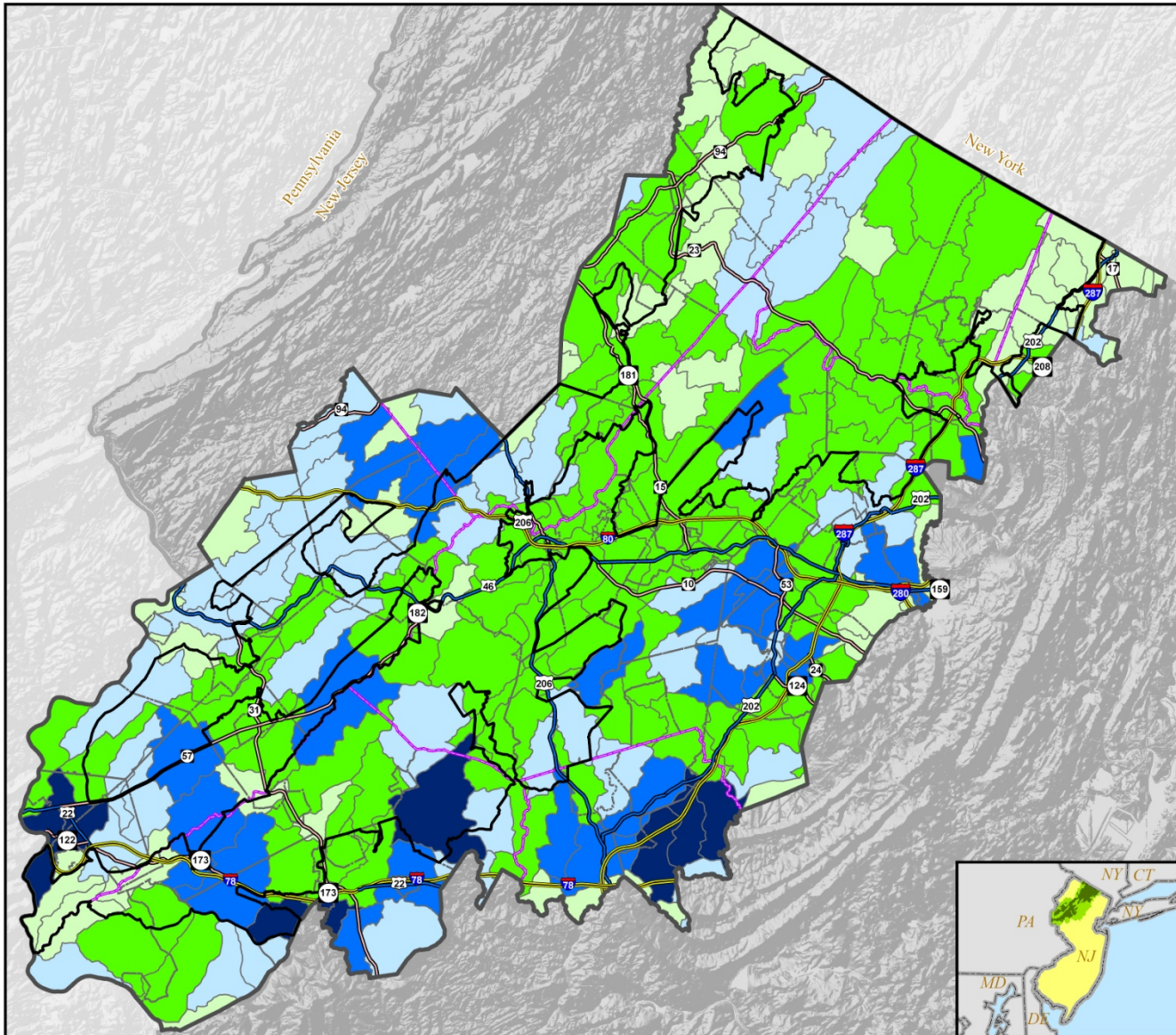
- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
|  | 0.00 - 0.01 |
|  | 0.01 - 0.05 |



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





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**LAND USE CAPABILITY**  
**Public Community Water Systems Map**

(Map 3 of 5)





Source:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007

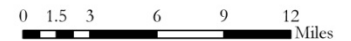
**Legend**

-  Preservation Area Boundary
-  Highlands Boundary
-  Interstate Highways
-  U.S. Routes
-  State Routes
-  Administrative Boundaries
-  County Boundaries
-  Municipal Boundaries

**Highlands Public Community Water Systems**

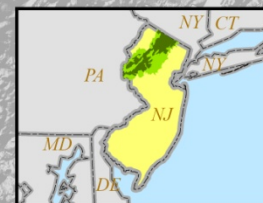
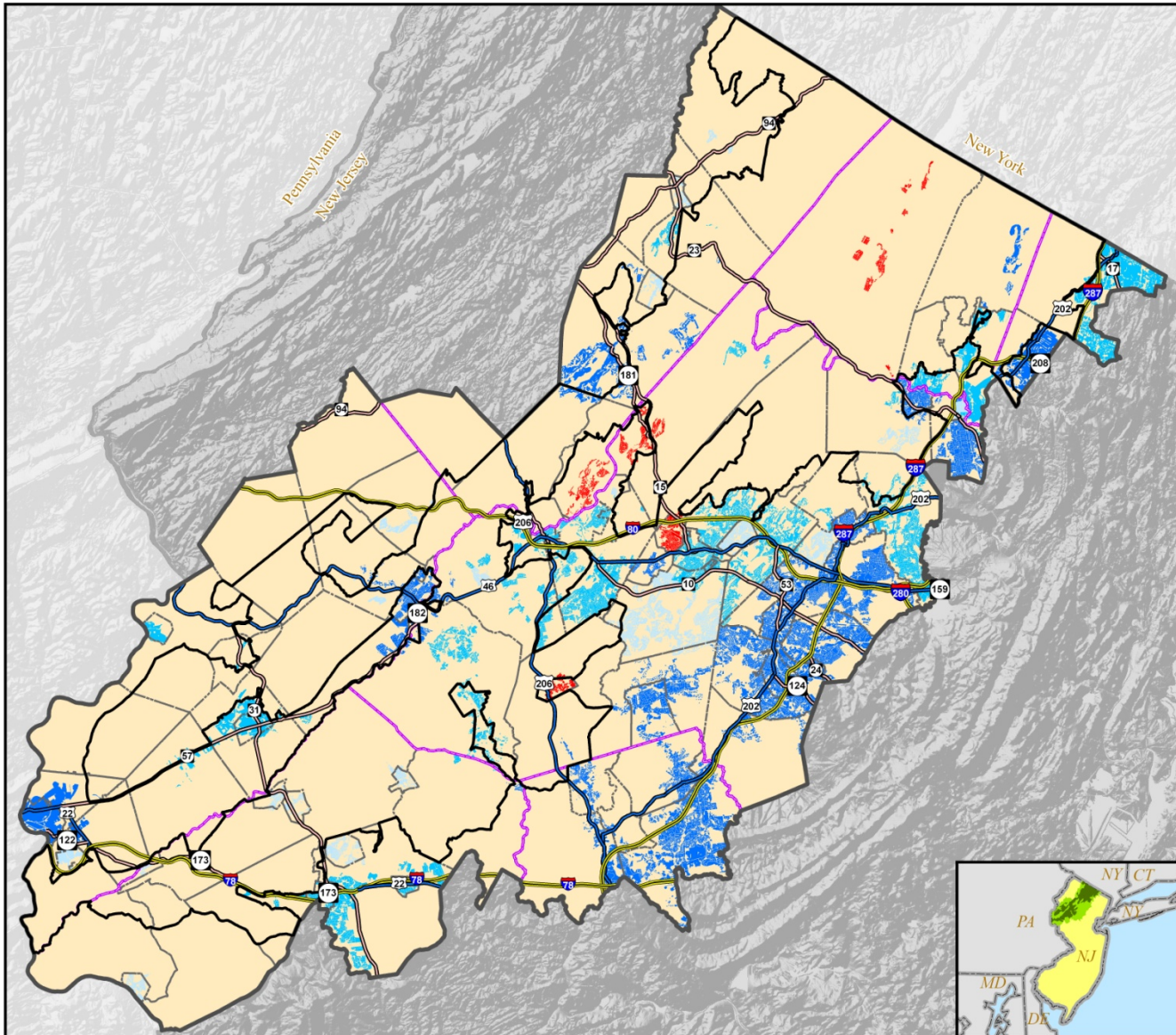
Available Capacity in Million Gallons Per Month (MGM)

-  > 25 MGM
-  5 - 25 MGM
-  0.01 - 5 MGM
-  No Capacity



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**LAND USE CAPABILITY**  
**Domestic Sewerage Facilities Map**

(Map 4 of 5)

Source:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007

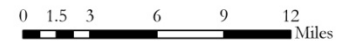
**Legend**

- Preservation Area Boundary
- Highlands Boundary
- County Boundaries
- Municipal Boundaries
- Roadway Network**
- Interstate Highways
- U.S. Routes
- State Routes

**Highlands Domestic Sewerage Facilities**

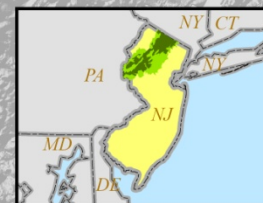
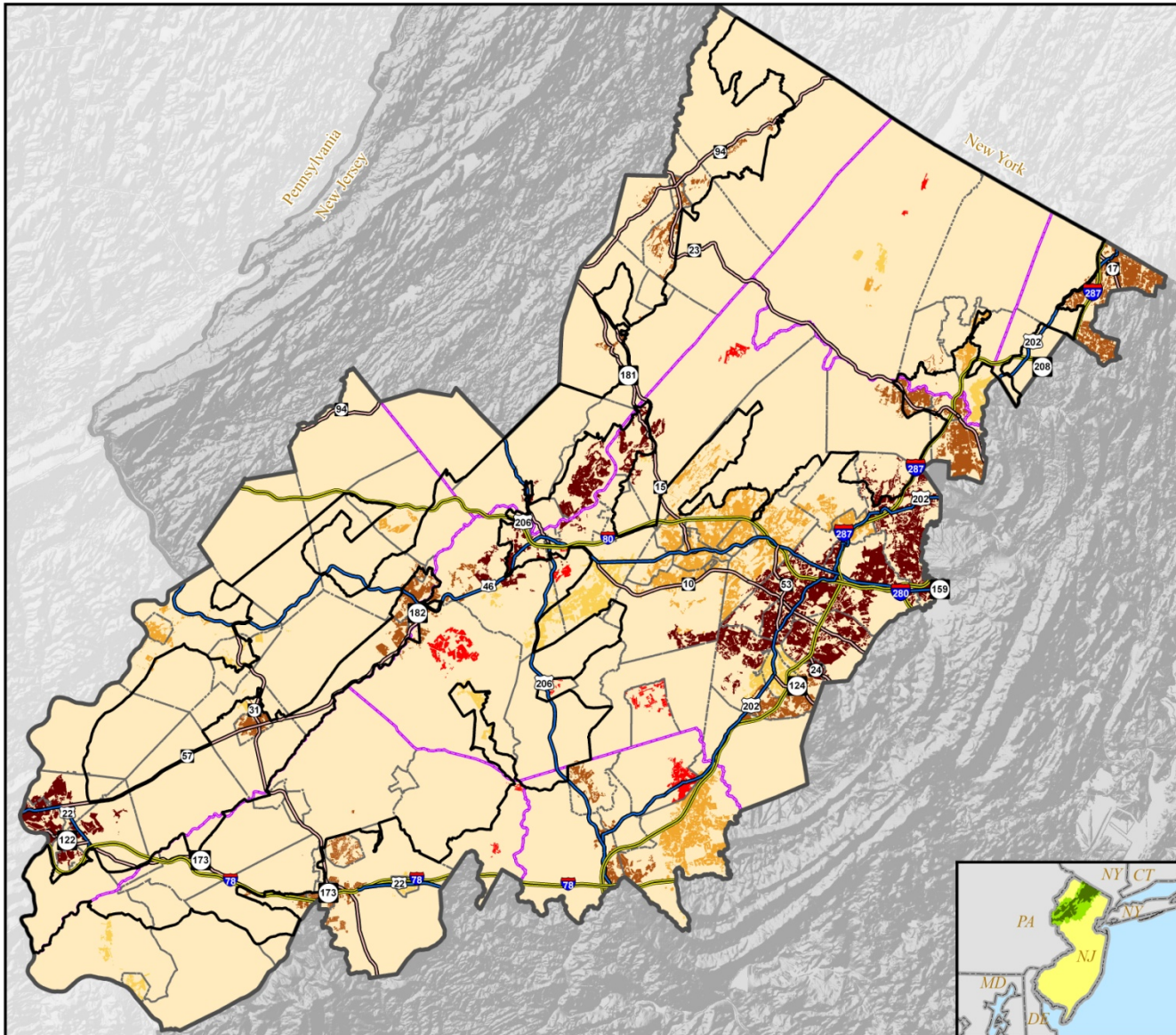
Current Available Highlands Wastewater Capacity in Million Gallons Per Day (MGD)

- 1.0 - 2.52 MGD
- 0.5 - 0.99 MGD
- 0.1 - 0.49 MGD
- 0.01 - 0.09 MGD
- No Capacity



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**LAND USE CAPABILITY  
Septic System Yield Map**

For Planning Area: Conservation and Protection Zones  
(Map 5 of 5)

Source:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2007

**Legend**

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Preservation Area Boundary | Administrative Boundaries   |
| Highlands Boundary         | County Boundaries           |
| <b>Roadway Network</b>     | Municipal Boundaries        |
| Interstate Highways        | Highlands Preservation Area |
| U.S. Routes                | Existing Community Zone     |
| State Routes               |                             |

**Planning Area Zones**

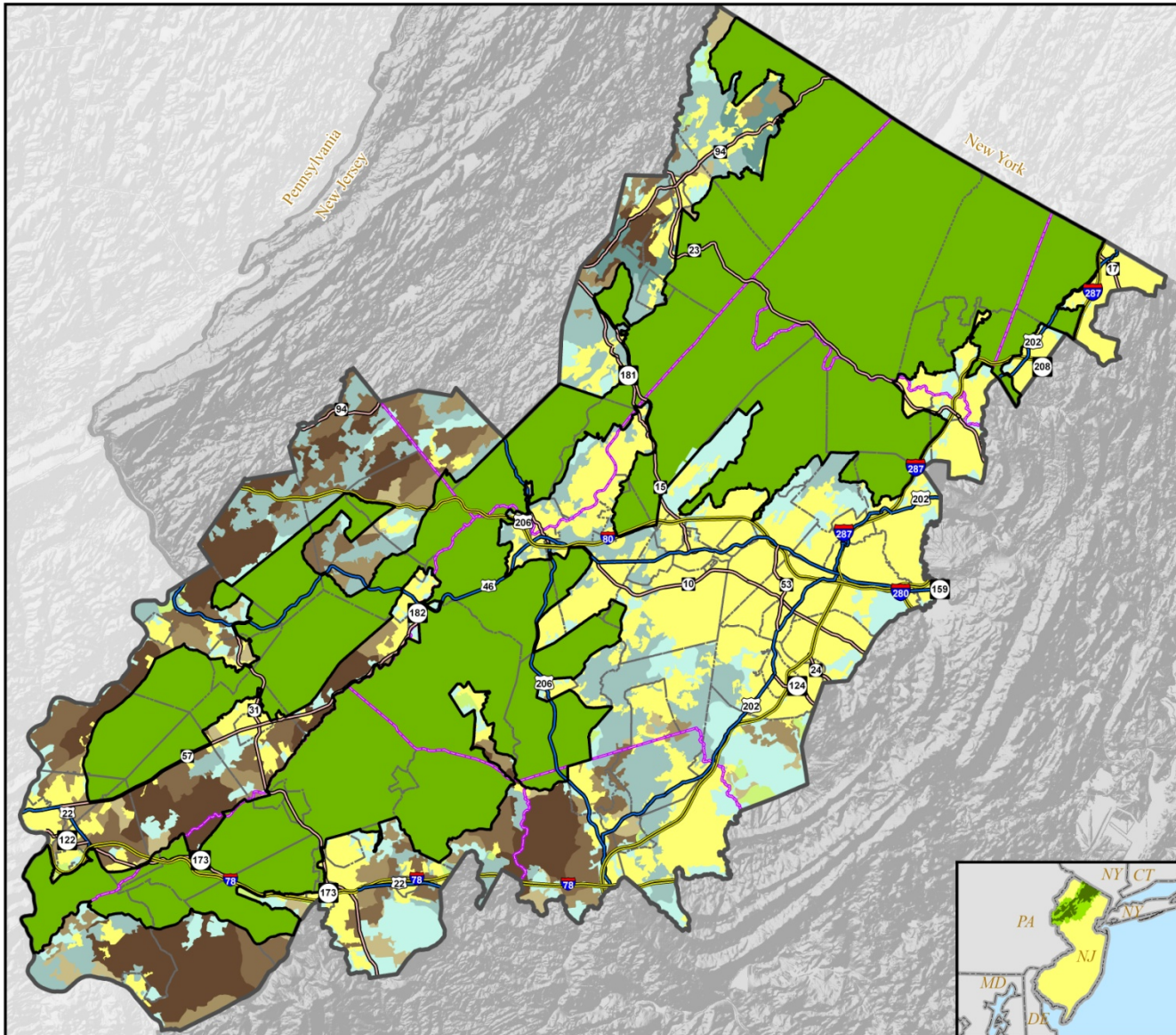
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Septic Yield in Conservation Zone</b> | <b>Septic Yield in Protection Zone</b> |
| 0 - 10                                   | 0 - 10                                 |
| 11 - 34                                  | 11 - 34                                |
| 35 - 77                                  | 35 - 77                                |
| 78 - 132                                 | 78 - 132                               |
| 133 - 297                                | 133 - 297                              |



0 1.5 3 6 9 12 Miles

The information contained on this map is the best available according to the Highlands Council. However, unintentional inaccuracies may occur, particularly where data or information is derived from sources other than the Highlands Council. The Highlands Council cannot be responsible for the misuse or misinterpretation of the information presented herein. Therefore, under no circumstances shall the State of New Jersey or specifically, the Highlands Council be liable for any actions taken or omissions made from reliance on any information contained herein from whatever source nor shall the State be liable for any other consequences from any such reliance. Additional sources of information may include NJDOT and NJDEP GIS digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by NJDEP.

**Prepared By:**  
**New Jersey Highlands Council**  
November 2007

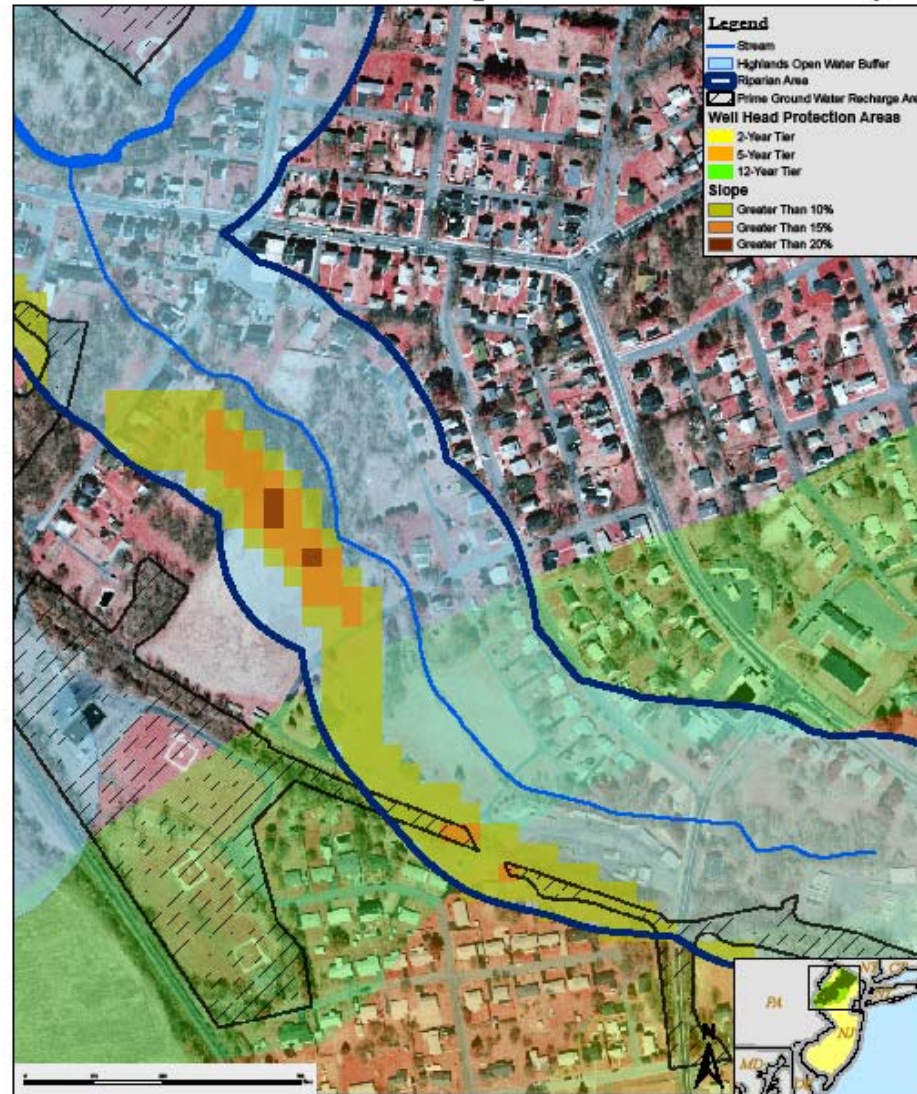


## Region-wide Goals for Preservation Area and Planning Area

Protect, restore, and enhance the quality and quantity of surface and ground waters  
 Preserve farmland and historic sites and other historic resources  
 Preserve outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, on publicly owned land  
 Promote conservation of water resources  
 Promote brownfield remediation and redevelopment

Goals Specific to Preservation Area	Goals Specific to Planning Area
Preserve extensive and, to the maximum extent possible, contiguous areas of land in its natural state, thereby ensuring the continuation of Highlands environment which contains the unique and significant natural, scenic, and other resources representative of the Highlands Region	Preserve to the maximum extent possible any environmentally sensitive lands and other lands needed for recreation and conservation purposes.
Protect the natural, scenic, and other resources of the Highlands Region, including, but not limited to contiguous forests, wetlands, vegetated stream corridors, steep slopes, and critical habitat for fauna and flora	Protect and maintain the essential character of the Highlands environment
Promote compatible agricultural, horticultural, recreational, and cultural, uses and opportunities within the framework of protecting the Highlands environment	Promote the continuation and expansion of agricultural, horticultural, recreational, and cultural uses and opportunities
Prohibit or limit to the maximum extent possible construction or development which is incompatible with preservation of this unique area	Encourage, consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan and smart growth strategies and principles, appropriate patterns of compatible residential, commercial, and industrial development, redevelopment, and economic growth, in or adjacent to areas already utilized for such purposes, and discourage piecemeal, scattered, and inappropriate development, in order to accommodate local and regional growth and economic development in an orderly way while protecting the Highlands environment from the individual and cumulative adverse impacts thereof
	Promote a sound, balanced transportation system that is consistent with smart growth strategies and principles and which preserves mobility in the Highlands Region

# Site Specific Constraints Analysis



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**Highlands Regional Master Plan  
Final Draft, November 2007**



Source:  
New Jersey Highlands Council, 2006  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2006  
New Jersey Water Supply Authority, 2006  
Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2006

# Benefits to Conforming Municipalities

- Legal Shield
- Strong presumption of validity to master plans, land use ordinances and local decisions
- Provides for direct legal representation where needed
  
- Grants
- Provide grants to conform master plans and land use ordinances
  
- State Plan Endorsement
- Any municipal master plan and development regulations approved by the Council are deemed the equivalent of having those plans endorsed by the State Planning Commission and receive all the same benefits
  
- Council on Affordable Housing Obligations
- Requires COAH to consider the Regional Master Plan prior to determining third round obligation for all of the 88 municipalities
- Preserves the protections of substantive certification previously granted to municipalities

# Benefits to Conforming Municipalities

- *Transfer of Development Rights, Impact Fees and Enhanced Planning Grants*
- Financial incentives voluntary TDR receiving zones
  - Enhanced planning grants up to \$250,000
  - Reimbursement for costs of amending local ordinances
  - Impact fees up to \$15,000 per unit
  - Priority status for state infrastructure spending
- *Priority Open Space Acquisition Funding*
- Priority funding under Green Acres and State Farmland Preservation within the Preservation Area and for Planning Area TDR municipalities
- *Tax Stabilization Funding*
- Compensate qualified municipalities for the decline in the aggregate true value of vacant land