

Highlands Conservation and Stewardship

USDA Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry



Description: The Highlands Region of New York and New Jersey contains about one and a half million acres stretching from the Lower Hudson River Valley to the Delaware River. This is an environmentally unique and important region that provides clean drinking water, serves as important wildlife habitat and hosts more than 14 million recreational visitors every year.

Key Issues:

- Protecting the drinking water supply for more than 11 million people.
- Conserving the landscape for wildlife habitat, biodiversity and environmental quality.
- Sustaining critical environmental components for long-term forest health.
- Retaining a working landscape to ensure economic viability and livability.

Accomplishments: The following are key outcomes of the USDA Forest Service:

- Completion and distribution of the New York and New Jersey Highlands Regional Study: 2002 Update and Technical Report.
- Accelerated Forest Stewardship Planning.
- Identified 300,000 acres of priority conservation areas for protection and management through directed assistance.
- Improved knowledge of resource conditions and trends, using science-based information.
- Used conservation easements and land purchases as a voluntary means to protect 257 acres of the Highlands Greenway, bringing the total protected lands to nearly 3000 acres.



Budget History: USDA Forest Service funding provided for the Highlands region.

Highlands Conservation and Stewardship (\$ Thousands)				
Program	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
Forest Stewardship	\$750	\$0	\$350	\$37
Urban Forestry	50	0	0	0
Forest Legacy	1,031	5,000	2,981	2,499
Totals	\$1,831	\$5,000	\$3,331	\$2,536

Future Direction: These activities are planned to continue the USDA Forest Service role:

- Partnering with federal, state, and local entities to implement the conservation strategies contained in the New York and New Jersey Highlands Regional Study: 2002 update.
- Providing comprehensive and updated information on the region's land, water and people.
- Continuing public dialogue on important issues and opportunities for resource protection and land management.
- Providing access to non-regulatory, assistance programs to support land stewardship.
- Serving as a convener, coordinator and catalyst for positive change.

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