



# NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

508 Main St., Boonton, NJ 07005  
973.588.7190 | 973.588.7193 (fax)  
www.njhighlandscoalition.org

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation  
14 Maple Avenue  
Suite 400  
Morristown, NJ 07960

## Online Application

## Amount Requested

Please note: If applying for Project Support, you will need to enter the total amount of the project and submit the project budget as an attachment.

- \$40,000

## Type of Support

Please select either General Operating Support or Continued Project Support or New Project Support.

- General Operating Support

If you are applying for project support, please provide your Total Project Budget Amount.

If you are applying for project support, please provide your project timeline.

(Up to 500 words)

## Narrative

· **For existing grantees only, please describe the results of the outcomes you projected on your prior year application. Note any changes in what you proposed, opportunities and hurdles you encountered, and partnerships you developed. Highlight any adjustments that were made due to Covid-19.** (Up to 500 words) Please refer to your prior application and review the outcomes your organization's staff noted. 0 of 30000 Characters

A) Our nominees are seated on Highlands Council:

The nominees are: Dr. Daniel Van Abs, a foremost expert on NJ's water

## YOUR WATER YOUR FUTURE

### Board of Trustees

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John Thonet, P.E., P.P.

Lee Wallace

Dr. Sara Webb

Candy Ashmun  
*In Memorium*

Senator Rice has released his courtesy block, but Senator Gill still holds Wynn timer back. Senator Doherty continues to block Bill. Bill and Wynn timer's appointments to the Council are important because two members of the Highlands Council who were appointed by Governor Christie, for the express purpose of undermining it, remain on the Council and they continue to obstruct implementation of the Highlands Act. The Council is frozen in time, still influenced by a former governor who strived to weaken the Highlands Act.

B) Protecting Highlands forests:

We continue to press NJDEP to end their current forest management practices on State lands and pursue a more ecologically based program. At our Annual Meeting, author Leslie Sauer spoke about the importance of pro-forestation, techniques that protect maturing forests. Recent peer-reviewed science finds that maturing, not young, forests absorb the maximum amount of carbon, an important consideration for NJ's climate mitigation efforts. Leslie Sauer's presentation is available on our YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjQddUmUc\\_HE6G2wtNA6C1Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjQddUmUc_HE6G2wtNA6C1Q)

We have presented several webinars and workshops promoting ecologically-based forestry. We are also promoting an awareness that a single, intact, ecologically high-valued, 260 square mile forest thrives in northern NJ, rather than a balkanized patchwork of State Park, State Forest, W.M.A., county, and municipal park, water supply management areas, privately owned, etc.

C) Require RMP consistency in permit decisions in Highlands Planning Area, regardless of conformance status:

Consistent with the RMP, DEP's rules, the Highlands Act, the Appellate Court in NJHC v. Bellemead and DEP, continue to discuss with DEP Senior Management and the Highlands Council a return to reviewing projects in the entire Planning Area abandoned during the Christie Administration. Demonstrated to Parsippany Town Council how a former municipal attorney misled them about the ramifications of conformance, resulting in the Council's decision not to conform. Raised concerns with Highlands Council and DEP about abuses of Highlands Municipal Exemption Determination Program. Supported C -1 upgrades for 600 miles of stream segments statewide (351 miles in Highlands,) and collaborating with EELC on amicus brief supporting DEP in Appellate Court challenge to the upgrades. Discussing with DEP a "Highlands Water" designation under Surface Water Quality Standards, equivalent to FW1. Rallied and educated community resulting in abundant comments and testimony at hearing in opposition to extension of sewer service to accommodate 300-unit development in a rural community adjacent to the Musconetcong River in Hunterdon County. (497)

2. Briefly describe the primary activities planned for the next year, including details about the important partnerships and the constituencies you serve. (Up to 500 words)

- Led multiple organizations in opening dialogue with DEP to reverse rollbacks of water resource protections initiated under Christie Administration, including FHACA, FWW, WQMP and Stormwater

Rules. We are also discussing promulgating regulations for development in carbonate rock (limestone, karst) areas.

We continue to provide guidance and support to multiple grassroots organizations fighting inappropriate development (on karst, in farm fields, lakes, forests, and quarry expansions, or impacting our cultural resources.) We oppose massive-scale warehouses on farms and other projects with little to no public infrastructure to serve them—but we support legitimate redevelopment project proposals . We are discussing a regional planning solution to the numerous warehouse proposals in Warren County with our new champion, Warren County Freeholder Jim Kern, who addressed our Plenary at our Virtual NWNJ Rivers Conference this year.

- We work to increase public awareness of water quality and conservation issues through the Highlands Council’s Economic Task Force, through Highlands 2023 (a region-wide economic assessment), our advocacy for passage of a Green Amendment to the NJ constitution, led by DRK Network, and implementation of our 2023 Strategic Plan.
- With Pinelands Preservation Alliance we oversee the website [www.saveh2onj.org](http://www.saveh2onj.org). The vision has expanded to include ANJEC, the American Littoral Society, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, and New Jersey Conservation Foundation. We continue to lease a billboard outside the NJDEP offices in Trenton, to directly communicate with DEP management.
- We are working to create a new Newark friends of/watchdog group to better steward and utilize the educational and experiential opportunities of 35,000 acres of NJ’s most pristine forest, on lands owned by the City in the Highlands. This forest buffers Newark’s five reservoirs, which provide drinking water to the City and also sold to its neighboring communities. This new group will be led by a Newark resident, to join the staff of NJHC, ideally a person who is BIPOC and already recognized as a leader within the Newark community. We will effectively amplify our strength by uniting under a common objective of protecting Highlands resources.
- Expand our new, popular webinar series, while continuing to build on our library of webinar recordings hosted on our YouTube Channel. Conduct the 2021 Northwest New Jersey Rivers Conference. Continue our Lopatcong Creek Initiative work as part of the DRWI.

Constituencies served include 6.2 million New Jersey residents who receive some or all of their water from the New Jersey Highlands; nearly 100 member organizations (see some of them at <https://njhighlandscoalition.org/member-organizations/>) for whom we provide services as needed to assist them in successfully meeting their missions; people who take advantage of our educational programs; groups and individuals whom we advise on how best to protect the environmental resources of the areas of the Highlands they live in. We are working to bring more services to communities of color, particularly in the City of Newark, which depends on the Highlands for 100% of its water supply (487).

3. List the top three anticipated outcomes you hope to achieve and how you will know if you have achieved them. (Up to 500 words)

1. Advocating at NJDEP to protect the landscapes and forests of NJ, protecting clean air and water, stopping inappropriate development, supporting adoption of the Green Amendment, filling vacant seats and replacing others on the Highlands Council with members who fundamentally support the goals and objectives of the Highlands Act, and forming new partnerships with Newark residents and groups focused on the City's forests and reservoirs in the Highlands.

2. Produce high quality environmental outreach and education programs, currently virtually, to a larger audience. Continue to expand our YouTube Channel with webinar and virtual event recordings and other in-house productions, including the workshops, plenary and keynote talks from our 2021 Northwest New Jersey Rivers Conference.

3. Continue to offer some financial support to our grassroots member organizations through our Small Grants Program, helping groups in Highlands communities protect the region's vulnerable resources (138).

4. Have you experienced any significant achievements or setbacks we should know about related to your organizational issues? Please highlight any needs. (Up to 500 words)

We awarded 11 small grants addressing issues that impact recreational, natural and cultural resources in the New Jersey Highlands. Grantees were : the Canal Society, Citizens for Sustainable Development, Friends of Long Pond Iron Works (FOLPI), Friends of the Musconetcong (FOTM), Friends of Sparta Mountain/NJ Forest Watch (FOSM), Highlands Nature Friends, Inc., Preservation of the Washington Valley Historic District Area (POWA), Skylands Preservation Alliance, Stephens State Park Alliance, Wallkill Headwaters Association (WHA), and Water for Our Future. The Small Grants program reaffirms our commitment to Coalition members (presently more than 100 organizations) to help them do their work and meet their missions. The Coalition dedicates up to 10% of its general operating budget for small grants.

Our staff slightly expanded this year to include a part-time Events Manager and expanded hours for our new Manager of Membership and Administration (Cathy Hungerford retired after 12 years with us.) We have invested in a sophisticated membership software platform (Raiser's Edge NXT) to help us grow to the next level our development and membership programs. Due to term limits, Michael Henderson, former Superintendent of the Morristown National Historical Park, rotated off our Board, several trustees signed up for a second term and were re-elected at our October Annual Meeting, and two new trustees joined the Board at that meeting: Chief Vincent Mann, Chief of the Turtle Clan of the Ramapough Tribe, and Dr. Sara Webb, Professor Emeritus of Biology from Drew University, a noted forest ecologist.

We have created Sandy's Fund in honor of Sandy Batty, our former President, long-time Mountain Lakes municipal volunteer, hard-working community supporter, and much-loved environmental activist.

Sandy's Fund will serve as a "Rainy Day" fund to be available when the Coalition is experiencing challenges above and beyond its approved annual budget. Examples might include something dear to Sandy – emergency small grants to grassroots groups fighting damaging developments that threaten the environmental and/or cultural resources of the New Jersey Highlands (323).

5. Is there anything else you would like us to know? (Up to 500 words)

Urban sprawl and uncontrolled development plans did not halt during the pandemic and continue to be a threat to both the quality and quantity of the New Jersey Highlands waters. Our newest members seek the advice and expertise of the Coalition now more than ever before. The Coalition today is made up of many inspiring and experienced people, resulting in an organization that is nimble and quick to address threats to the Highlands, collaborating with member organizations and partners.

These last several months of the pandemic have taught us to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. The staff has been working from home since March 16, with some spending hours here and there singly in the office, but we check in with each other daily and at our weekly Staff meetings, and support each other in the ways we would do when we were in the office. We are communicating through emails and social media with our member organizations, supporters, and funders about upcoming virtual webinars, events, and the status of environmental regulations, and have become much more sophisticated in our use of social media. The Coalition recognized that our educational events had to be offered virtually to protect the health and safety of our attendees. Our YouTube Channel also offers recordings of past and recent educational webinars and videos that easily can be shared.

As of now, the Coalition is in sound financial health; however, we are concerned about the next three years and the potential for instability of both our national politics and the financial markets.

#### Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Equity Overview

In 2020, as the dual crises of racial injustice and the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the racial inequities in our systems and policies, Dodge made a commitment to become an actively anti-racist organization.

We are continuing to live our vision of an equitable New Jersey through creative, engaged, sustainable communities. The Foundaion is adapting our grantmaking, programming, internal operations, and investments to align with our diversity, inclusion, and racial equity goals and strategies.

For Dodge, equity means aligning our resources to address historical, institutional, and structural impediments so that New Jerseyans of all races and communities have what is needed to realize a quality life. The Foundation supports achieving equity in its many different forms, including but not limited to income, race, gender, disability, and neighborhood. This phase of our work places an emphasis on people and communities of color, and yet equity requires the inclusion of all people and organizations. Therefore, our strategies and processes will include and benefit all of New Jersey and will change and evolve over time.

We are sharing with you our equity framework: <https://www.grdodge.org/apply/equity-framework/> and a link to the presentation of this equity framework: <https://vimeo.com/466377021> to further clarify how we at Dodge are thinking about diversity, inclusion and racial equity. We expect that organizations will be in different stages of learning and implementation. Regardless of if you have not started, are early in the process, or are years into this work, we appreciate your honest reflection.

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We are asking the following questions that reflect Dodge's equity framework and to better understand our non-profit applicant organizations; thinking and approaches relative to diversity, inclusion, and racial equity.

1. How is your organization working internally to advance diversity, inclusion, and racial equity?

(Up to 500 words) Please include any applicable reflections on the first three focus areas of the Dodge Equity framework: Leadership and Staff Diversity; Equity Goals and Equity Mindset.

Supported by a small grant from the Dodge Foundation, the Board and Staff participated in a Retreat in October, led by a LaSalle Non-Profit Center facilitator, on the topic of diversity, inclusion and equity. The Coalition's Board plays a critical role in creating an organization that prioritizes, supports, and invests in diversity, inclusion, and equity. Over time, this includes filling leadership positions, Committee involvement, partnership development, program scheduling, employee hiring, vendor selection, member and volunteer recruitment, educational outreach, and donor acquisition. In addition, we will work to position ourselves as providing more support and value to individuals representing different races, cultures, genders, and generational groups. We as an organization look to pursue a higher commitment to social justice, understanding and ameliorating the politics of identity and the dynamics of power and privilege. But we fully recognize this work is just beginning, that we as an organization and as individuals, and mostly white people, have much to learn. We embrace the need to influence social change to achieve an equitable NJ and be guided by the values of learning, equity, collaboration, respect, and stewardship. The Coalition, as a trusted and leading source of information about and advocacy for the NJ Highlands' environment, is committed to elevating the voices and power of communities most affected by systemic marginalization and exclusion from investment and opportunity.

As an organization, we aim to have decisions we make looked at through a diversity lens. In addition, we will make every effort to include in our work and lives individuals representing different races, cultures, genders, and generational groups. By taking such right actions we hope to ensure that the New Jersey Highlands Coalition also advances its mission.

2. How is your organization working externally to advance diversity, inclusion, and racial equity?

Expanding efforts to connect with younger people, and furthering outreach in communities such as Newark (at 35,000 acres, the largest Landowner in the Highlands), we have started conversations with

several organizations (United Parks As One, Trust For Public Land and coLAB Arts.) Partnering with arts organizations to spread awareness about the Highlands offers the ability to grow all our missions. Ideas being explored include youth exploring the NJ Highlands and NJ Highlands kids exploring Newark, bringing communities together through parks and the Ranger program to engage young people in an appreciation of natural systems, and the responsibilities and rewards of stewardship. We hosted a well-attended, vibrant discussion about the Highlands at this year's Newark's Call for Collaboration, and hosted a shorter discussion on a recent program of CivicStory, Future Health, Community & Justice: Reaching Possibilities by 2025.

The forests Newark owns buffer its five reservoirs, and are part of a 255 square mile, healthy, intact Highlands forest, that provides NJ with innumerable values, including outdoor recreation, a vast reserve of biodiversity (many Highlands resident species could not survive outside the Highlands), and irreplaceable water resources. This forest also plays a huge role in New Jersey's climate resiliency because of its ability to absorb and sequester atmospheric carbon. The Coalition applied for a Mosaic Movement Infrastructure Grant to establish a citizens group to be part of and supported by the Coalition, and to be a watchdog and friends group overseeing management of the property, demanding transparent operations on the part of the City, and a public process in decision-making, designing recreational and cultural opportunities for City residents celebrating the clean and plentiful water resources owned and managed by the City of Newark, and seeking to use these lands as a living classroom for educational programs in forest ecology and environmental science. This group also hopes to participate as a stakeholder in the Governor's NJPACT initiative, and become knowledgeable about the policies of the carbon cap and trade scheme of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), to ensure that Newark receives full credit for the property's carbon sequestration values. The group's Director will develop an advisory board, seeking members from throughout the Newark community. The advisory board will be representative of the full mosaic of BIPOC, LGBTQ, women, physically challenged and other frequently under-represented members of the community. Once the advisory board is formed, led by the Director, it will develop a strategic plan in collaboration with, and supported by, the Policy expertise of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition.

Another subtle connection is a shared goal. If New Jersey continues to pave over its remaining natural landscapes, we will permanently extinguish the State's resource values (mentioned above) and we will have failed at redeveloping our cities in a way that ensures they are vital, vibrant and affordable.

The Coalition recently began work with the Turtle Clan of the Lenape Tribe of Ringwood, led by Chief Vincent Mann who became a trustee of NJHC at our October Annual Meeting. We are supporting Chief Mann and his wife, Mikie Picaro, who share with Clan members traditions and practices of medicine and agriculture that have been important to the wellbeing of the Tribe.

(Up to 500 words)

Please include any applicable reflections on the focus areas Place Strategy; Community Outcomes; and Systems Impact.

## Demographics Data

Please add demographic data for each of the following groups: your organization's Board, Staff, and Leadership. For Board, Staff and Leadership, we recommend that people self-identify and that their results be aggregated here. We ask that you identify the employees' background. You may ask them to self-identify if they wish; however, employees are not required to self-identify. If an employee declines to self-identify, we hope you report their race and ethnic information from employment records, observer identification, or other available information. Note: Leadership includes both staff and board leadership.

Please add any further description of the geographic communities your organization serves.

6.2 million new jersey residents receive some or all of their water from the New Jersey Highlands. They live in 16 counties. Our work particularly affects residents of Essex, Morris, Somerset, Hunterdon, Warren, Sussex, Passaic and Bergen counties.

### **About the New Jersey Highlands Coalition**

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition ([www.njhighlandscoalition.org](http://www.njhighlandscoalition.org)) is the only non-profit organization whose entire focus is on protecting the pristine aquifers, lakes and rivers, rugged forested ridges, rolling farmlands, abundant wildlife, historic treasures and diverse recreational opportunities found in the New Jersey Highlands, the State's prized piece of the Appalachian Mountain chain. We are made up of more than 100 member organizations, small and large, local, regional, statewide and national as well as over 1,000 individual members who have joined together to safeguard and defend this critical area. The Coalition is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.