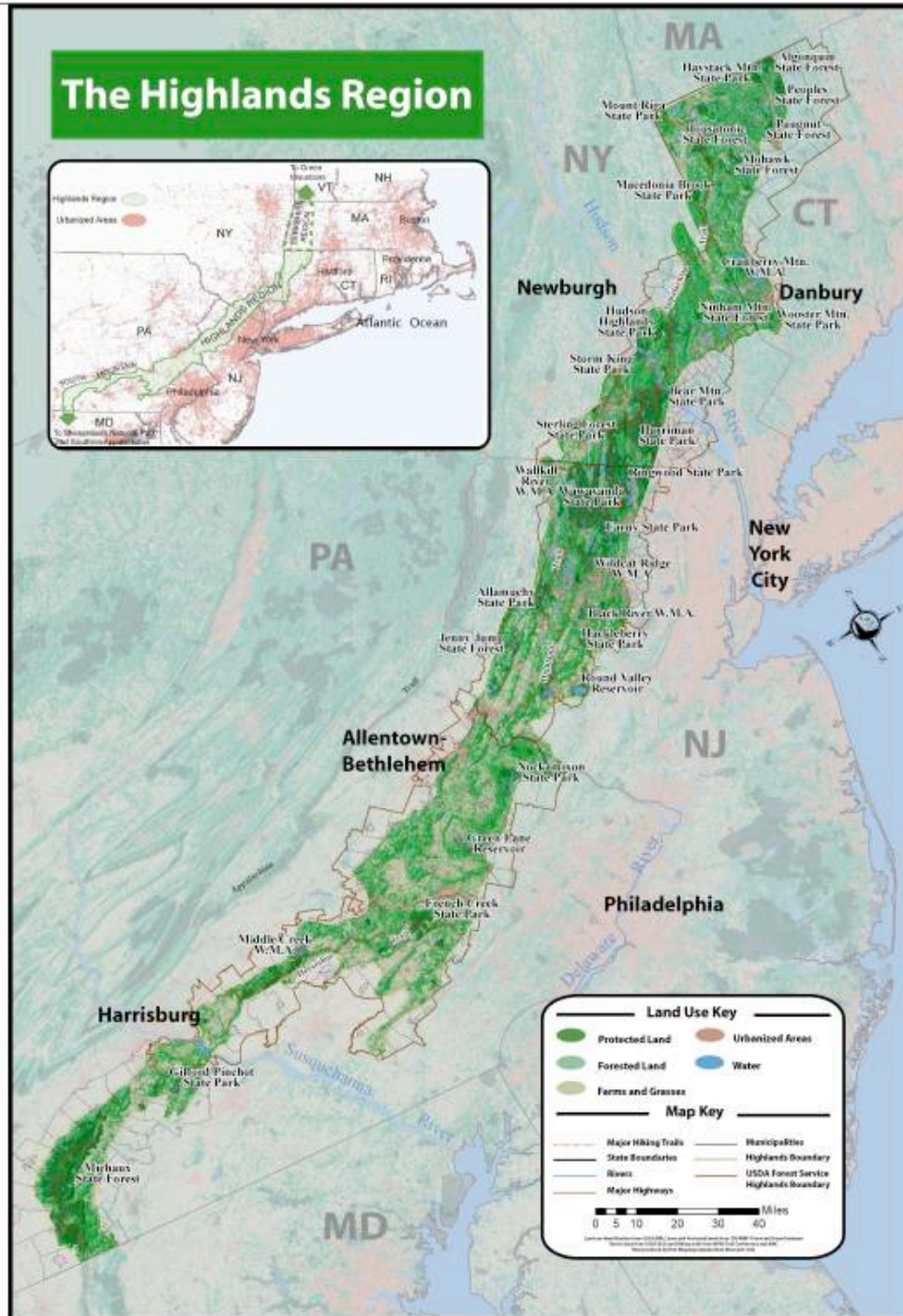
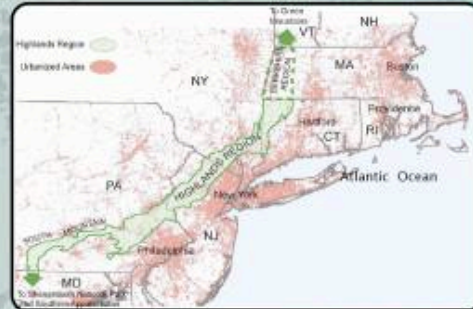


The Highlands Region:

Partnerships to Conserve Forests & Watersheds

Ramapo Mountains, NJ

The Highlands Region





The region supplies clean drinking water
for nearly 15 million people.

French Creek, Berks County, PA



Wanaque Reservoir, Passaic County NJ



Rich in biological diversity:

Migration corridor for over 70 songbird species

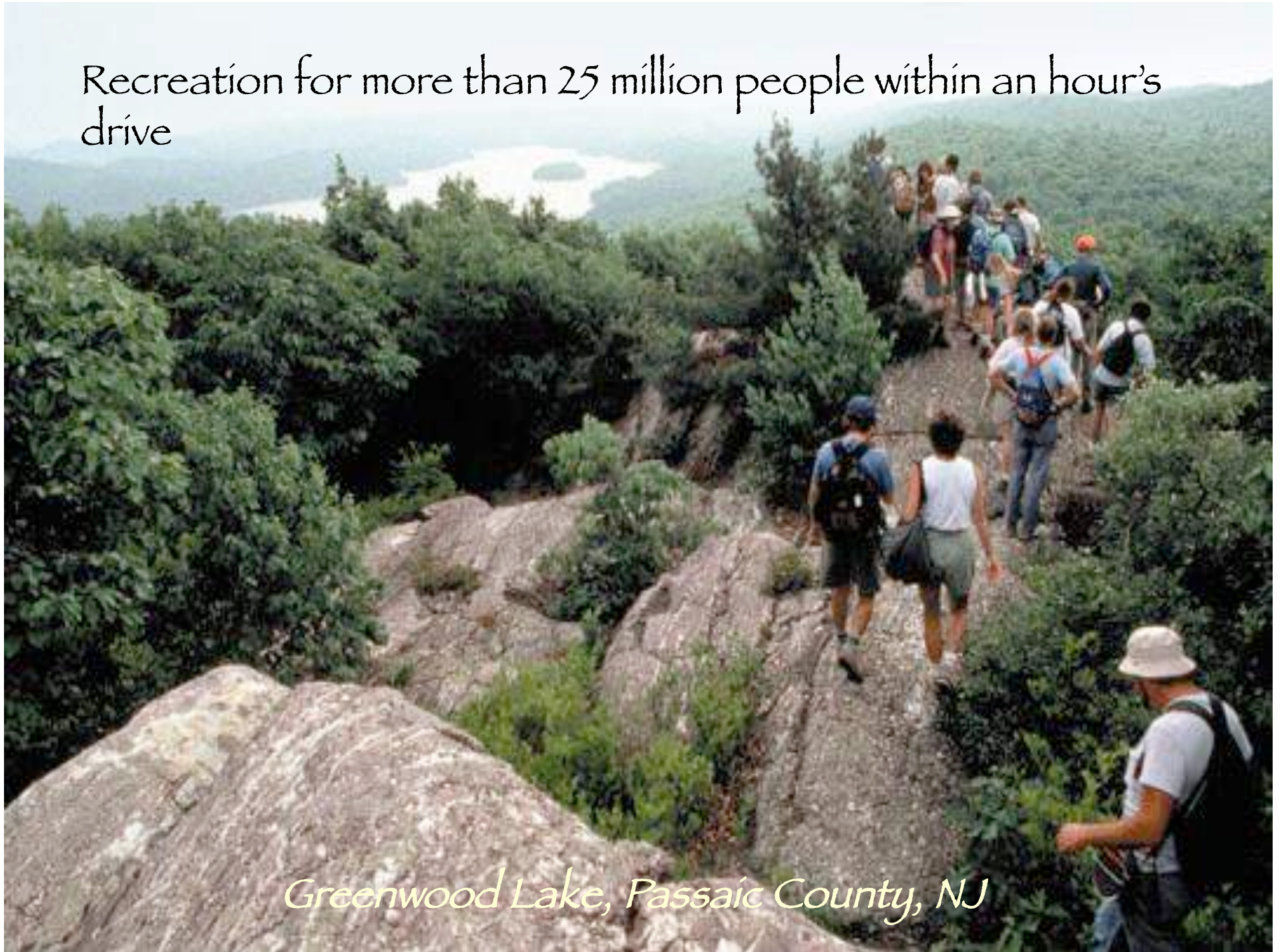
1,860 miles of trout streams

Over 100 plant species on Threatened or Endangered lists

Nearly 50 animal species on Threatened or Endangered lists

Unami Hills, Montgomery County

Recreation for more than 25 million people within an hour's drive



Greenwood Lake, Passaic County, NJ

Major Milestones

- 1990 – New York – New Jersey Highlands Study authorized in the Farm Bill, including the Sterling Forest in Orange County, NY
- 1992 – New York – New Jersey Highlands Regional Study published by USDA Forest Service
- 1998 – Sterling Forest State Park created. 20,000 acres purchased with \$17.5 million from LWCF, state and private funds.
- 2002 – New York – New Jersey Highlands Regional Study: 2002 Update completed

Highlands Conservation Act

- Signed into law on November 30th, 2004.
- Recognized “the importance of the water, forest, agricultural, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources of the Highlands region, and the national significance of the Highlands region to the United States”.
- Authorized \$100 million in federal matching funds over 10 years for land conservation partnership projects in NJ, NY, PA, & CT Highlands.
- Authorized \$10 million over 10 years for U.S. Forest Service to conduct research, and provide technical assistance.

Appropriations to Date

- To date, \$9,221,000 has been appropriated for land conservation partnership projects in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.
- In Federal FY 2007, \$1,971,000 was appropriated.
- In Federal FY 2008, \$1,750,000 was appropriated.
- In Federal FY 2009, \$1,500,000 was appropriated.
- In Federal FY 2010, \$4,000,000 was appropriated.
- In Federal FY 2011, no funds were appropriated due to severe cuts to the Land & Water Conservation Fund.

Federal Action Spurs Partnerships



NJ Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (2004)

- Established the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council, charged with preparing and implementing a **regional master plan** for the Highlands Region.
- New Jersey Highlands Region was divided roughly equally into a **Preservation Area** (regional planning would be mandatory and development would be strictly regulated), and a **Planning Area** (regulations would not apply and regional planning would be voluntary).
- Required the DEP to adopt within nine months effective rules and regulations for a permanent Highlands permitting review program, setting **strict standards for reviewing major Highlands development in the Preservation Area to protect water and natural resources.**

Other Highlands Partnerships

- The **Highlands Environmental Research Institute** (HEnRI) established as a clearinghouse to coordinate environmental research & promote its application in the work of conserving the Highlands natural resources.
- Highlands recognized in **NY State Open Space Plan** and as **PA DCNR priority** for grant-making.
- **William Penn Foundation** prioritizes Highlands and recently made \$1.5+ million available for land conservation projects in PA Highlands.

Implications for Eastern Forests

- Approx. 85% of Eastern Forests are privately owned (much by small NIPFs).
- Many Eastern Forests have significant water supply and resource values.
- Opportunities for new National Forests in the East are limited.
- The Highlands offers a model for federal-state-private partnerships to conserve forests and watersheds in the East.

Thank You

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