

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*"The Highlands is the last area of contiguous greenspace in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area. Ringwood is in the center of it and the threats of development are greater every day. We must preserve the undeveloped tracts that are left to protect our water, biodiversity, and quality of life."*

-- Comment from Borough of Ringwood 2003 Open Space Survey

Located in northwestern Passaic County, Ringwood Borough is 28 square miles of forested land and pristine streams in the New Jersey Highlands. This community embodies the characteristics of the Highlands—rich in water resources, habitat, steep slopes, spectacular vistas, and outdoor recreation. The community surrounds a drinking water resource upon which more than 2 million New Jersey residents rely. More than a quarter of the town (4,784 acres) consists of North Jersey District Water Supply Commission property bordering Wanaque and Monksville Reservoirs. Development, primarily residential in nature, surrounds these critical water supply properties and other, smaller public and private lakes that dot the town's mountainous landscape. Ringwood takes seriously its role as a steward of a clean, plentiful water supply, an important factor contributing to the economy, sustainability and quality of life in New Jersey.

In December 2002, the majority (73%) of Ringwood residents overwhelmingly supported the establishment of an Open Space Trust Fund to preserve land in their hometown. An Open Space, Conservation, Recreation, Farmland and Historical Preservation Advisory Committee (OSC) was established to advise Ringwood's governing body on the use of the Borough's Open Space Trust Fund. The Committee worked with Morris Land Conservancy (now The Land Conservancy of New Jersey) to develop an Open Space and Recreation Plan to shape the future of the landscape in Ringwood, which was completed in February of 2004. The OSC is updating the original Plan and its goals to meet the Green Acres recommendation that Plans be updated every six years, consistent with the Master Plan updates.

Based on input from the OSC and the public, the following areas are identified to promote the vision encompassed in the goals and objectives of the updated Open Space Plan:

- West Brook/Burnt Meadow Brook Greenway
- Wanaque Preservation Area
- Long Pond/Ringwood Greenway
- Ringwood Park Connection
- Community Gateway
- Meadow Brook Greenway
- Natural Heritage Area
- Trails and Connections