



# New Jersey Highlands Region

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Regional Branding & Marketing Progress Report  
January 16, 2025

# Branding Process



Stakeholder & Community Education



Insight Gathering & Research



**DNA & Strategy Formation**



Creative Brand & Message Development



Brand Action Ideas & Marketing Plan

# Community Survey

# Community Survey

OVERVIEW

**2,243**

Viewed

**463**

Started

**253**

Completed

# Key Takeaways

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Residents highly value the nature and overall peaceful environment that the Highlands offers.

1

There is a general consensus that the region is not over-touristed. Many say it may even benefit from more tourism.

2

Most of the people surveyed (70%) were familiar with the region and its boundaries. Fewer people were familiar with the Act itself.

3

Critics of the Act primarily cited stunted economic opportunities and a perceived lack of state support / compensation for Highlands communities.

4

# Consumer Awareness & Perception Study

# Consumer Awareness and Perception Study

## RESPONDENT INFORMATION

### 308 Total Respondents

- 126 from the New York City metropolitan area
  - 102 from New York City, NY
  - 24 from Hudson County, NJ
- 182 from Philadelphia metropolitan area
  - 107 from Philadelphia County, PA
  - 50 from Camden County, NJ
  - 25 from Gloucester County, NJ

# Key Takeaways

Among this respondent set, Northern NJ only trails the Poconos in self-reported recognition, visitation, and preference of Northeastern destinations.

1

Just over half of respondents have heard of the New Jersey Highlands. Fewer have heard of the Highlands Act and Council, and their respective roles.

2

Visitors most often come to see friends or family, so preparing local advocates to be good hosts is paramount.

3

Like area residents, visitors also appreciate the peaceful setting of the Highlands and its benefits to food production and outdoor rec.

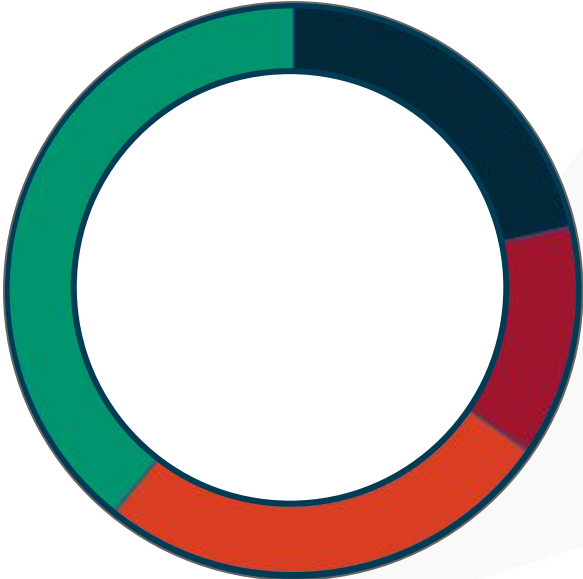
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# Tourism Asset Audit

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Name	County	Activity Type	Description	Address	Cost	Seasonality	Link	Other Notes
2									
3	Morristown National Historic Park	Morris	Historical & Cultural	Morristown National Historical Park commemorates the sites of General Washington and the Continental army's winter encampment of December 1779 to June 1780, where they survived through what would be the coldest winter on record. The park also maintains a museum & library collection related to the encampments & George Washington, as well as items relating to pre- and post-Revolutionary America.	30 Washington Place Morristown, NJ 07960	Free	Year-Round	<a href="https://www.nps.gov/morr/index.htm">https://www.nps.gov/morr/index.htm</a>	
4	Flemington Historic Walking Trail	Hunterdon	Historical & Cultural	"On this self-guided, 30-stop tour you will witness history and major architectural styles spanning four centuries. You will see the home of Samuel Fleming after whom our town was named, and our Historic County Courthouse where the famous Lindbergh kidnaping trial took place. You will see where our forefathers and mothers worshipped by candlelight, and where our most prosperous citizens built their fortunes and legacies. All of the places on this tour are within one square mile. If you are walking, it is about 45 minutes from start to finish."	71 Main St bldg.3, Flemington, NJ 08822 (Historic Hunterdon County Courthouse)	Free	Year-Round	<a href="https://www.explorehunterdonnj.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Flemington-Historic-Walking-Trail-1.pdf">https://www.explorehunterdonnj.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Flemington-Historic-Walking-Trail-1.pdf</a>	
5	Beneduce Vineyards	Hunterdon	Agritourism & Culinary	"Sustainability minded, 4th generation farmers seeking to prove that world class wines can be grown and made here in Hunterdon County. Our wines are handmade in small quantities using grapes from our farm, and nowhere else. We welcome guests from near and far with warm hospitality and an eagerness to exceed their expectations of what New Jersey wine can be."	Beneduce Vineyards, 1 Jeremiah Ln, Pittstown, NJ 08867	\$	Seasonal-Fall Seasonal-Summer Seasonal-Spring	<a href="https://www.beneducevineyards.com/">https://www.beneducevineyards.com/</a>	Offers Saturday Group Therapy (18 Picnics, Ladies Nights, Trivia Nights tastings
6	Beer Trail Passport	Hunterdon	Agritourism & Culinary	Visitors to Hunterdon County can purchase a Spring/Summer Brewery Passport. If they visit each of the 8 breweries in Hunterdon County, they earn a keychain/bottle opener.	Locations vary	\$\$	Seasonal-Spring Seasonal-Summer	<a href="https://hunterdonbeertrail.com/">https://hunterdonbeertrail.com/</a>	Passport is free and can be obtained at brewery. Beer is at cost.
7	Phillips Farms	Hunterdon	Agritourism & Culinary	300-acre farm that produces a variety of fruits, vegetables, and nursery plants. Offers "Pick Your Own" days where visitors can roam the farm and pick their own fruits and vegetables.	564 Milford-Warren Glen Road (Rt. 519) Milford, NJ 08848	\$	Seasonal-Summer Seasonal-Fall	<a href="https://phillipsfarms.com/">https://phillipsfarms.com/</a>	Sells candles, scents, lavender, part etc.
				An artfully designed venue for celebration modeled for earth-kind consciousness with a					

# Relative Proportion of Assets Inventoried

- Outdoor Recreation
- Agritourism & Culinary
- Festivals & Events
- Historic & Cultural



# Audience Analysis & Qualitative Insights

# Key Takeaways

## AUDIENCE ANALYSIS & QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

The Highlands appeals to both heritage- and nature-based travel audiences, but holds a stronger competitive edge in nature tourism.

1

There is a feeling that the Highlands is overlooked or underestimated on a state tourism level.

2

The Highlands offers a delightful surprise, contrasting beautifully with New Jersey's typical reputation.

3

The Highlands offers experiences that are more unspoiled and less crowded than competing regions.

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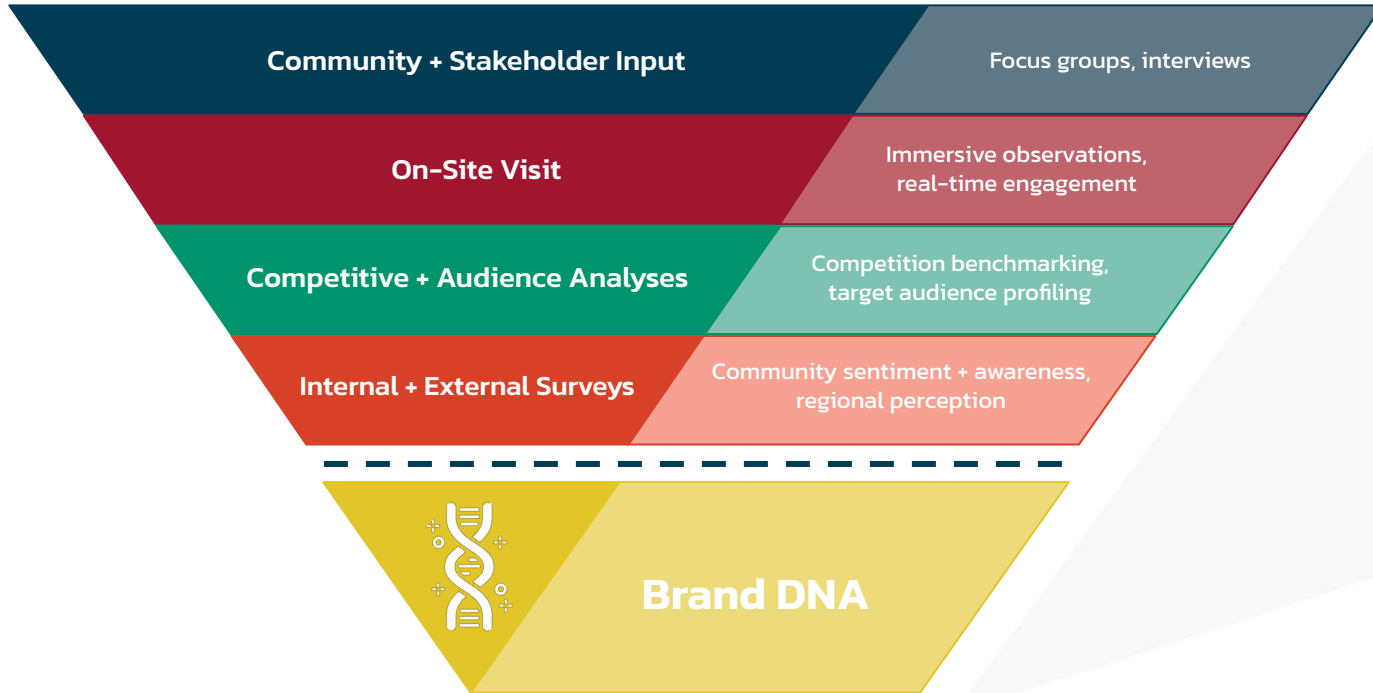
# Target Audience Analysis



# Domestic Travel in NJH Drive Markets

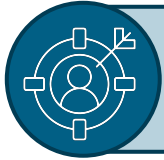
Population Behavior	Market A	Market B
Valid Driver License	14,459,785	7,247,479
Domestic Trip in Last Year	9,655,173	4,679,056
Spent \$1-999 on Vacation	2,013,425	963,951
Spent \$1K-1,499 on Vacation	1,139,973	549,148
Spent \$1.5K-1,999 on Vacation	752,088	369,715
Spent \$2K-2,999 on Vacation	822,927	428,460
Spent \$3K+ on Vacation	1,570,816	799,669

# Brand DNA



# DNA Platform Framework

DNA STATEMENT



**Target Audience:** To whom the NJ Highlands has the most appeal



**Frame of Reference:** Geographic context of the New Jersey Highlands



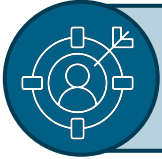
**Point-of-Difference:** What makes the New Jersey Highlands special



**Benefit:** Why it should matter to the consumer

# New Jersey Highlands DNA Platform Statement

DNA STATEMENT



For urbanites open to explorations off the beaten path,



the New Jersey Highlands Region, a vast, peaceful, and protected watershed 40 miles west of Manhattan,



defies preconceived notions of New Jersey, granting new discoveries and a natural retreat from the most densely populated areas in the nation



so you can pick a getaway from "leisure as usual."

# Organizational Strategy Recommendations



A regional approach to tourism **enriches rural and urban communities by pooling resources and expertise**. It allows for cohesive strategies to develop a compelling tourism offer, sustainable growth and local economies.

Regional collaboration **maximizes potential**, making rural areas more attractive and viable for residents and visitors.

# What would a regional tourism program do?

Develop and promote tourism in the region

Support communities and stakeholders in creating and implementing individual tourism plans and marketing programs

Foster partnerships to coordinate tourism efforts across the region

Establish and maintain a strong regional identity with a distinctive tourism brand.

Market and position the region as a unified destination for visitors

Ensure efficient and equitable distribution of public funds and grants to partner communities

Promote sustainable tourism that preserves natural, historic, and cultural resources

Build community support for tourism development initiatives

Provide tourism-related education and professional development for stakeholders and leaders

# NJ Highlands Tourism Alliance

The NJHTA, established by the Highlands Council, would oversee and guide the region's cooperative tourism program.

Acting as a collaborative marketing partnership, it would unify municipalities and DMOs to promote the Highlands as a destination.

The NJHTA would include:

- Representatives from DMOs or tourism agencies across the seven Highlands counties.
- Key stakeholders (e.g., lodging, attractions, restaurants, historic sites, outdoor recreation).
- A liaison from NJ Highlands Council staff.

# NJ Highlands Tourism Alliance



**Paid Tourism  
Coordinator**

# Tourism Coordinator

## RESPONSIBILITIES



- Overseeing the NJHTA program of work
- Coordinating marketing efforts for NJH as a regional destination
- Representing NJH to tourism professionals, travel planners, media
- Organizing familiarization tours for planners, writers, and influencers
- Attending travel shows and marketplaces
- Managing the Alliance's online and social media platforms
- Supporting tourism efforts in NJH communities
- Acting as liaison to the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism
- Managing grants for members' tourism development and marketing initiatives

# Tourism Coordinator

## BENEFITS



- Provides dedicated responsibility and accountability for the program of work
- Ensures the program is managed effectively without overburdening existing Council staff
- Allows Council staff to focus on their primary full-time responsibilities

## FUNDING



Funding for the position could come from either the NJH Council general budget or from contributions by NJHTA members.

# Next Steps

**Winter / Spring**

**Spring**

**Summer**

**Creative Ideation +  
Action Planning**

**Final Report**

**Creative +  
Organizational  
Implementation**

**Thank You, New Jersey Highlands!**