



Wharton State Forest

Visiting Vehicle Use Map



NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION



Wharton State Forest Overview

- 124,350 acres
- 800,000+ annual visitors
- 2 historic villages
- 9 campgrounds
- 1 swimming area
- 750 plant species

Timeline



Sept. 27, 2022: Wharton State Forest Visitor & Vehicle Use Survey Announced



Sept 27. - Nov. 11, 2022: Survey Open for Visitor Input



Feb. 8, 2023: Visitor & Vehicle Use Survey Results Presented



Feb. - Dec. 2023: Map Development aided by survey results and natural & historic resources



Jan. 24, 2024: Draft Visiting Vehicle Use Map Released



1,508
TOTAL WRITTEN RESPONSES



Significant number of survey respondents indicated they visit Wharton for scenic driving, followed by other expected uses.



Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times this activity was selected.

scenic driving (1321)	hiking (1226)	historic sites (1204)	photography (1174)	day to day travel (1154)
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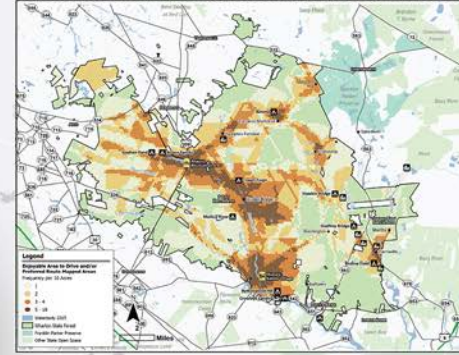
1,610

TOTAL SURVEYS SUBMITTED

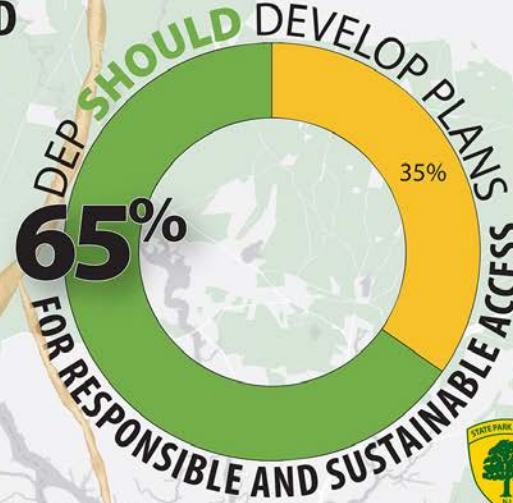
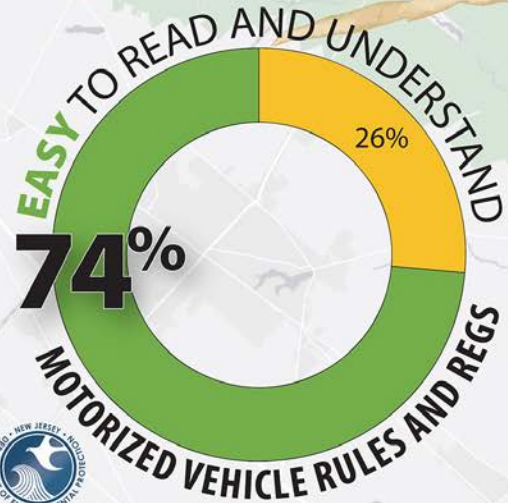
Key Vehicle Use Findings

- Most popular driving area identified from the data received was Atsion through Quaker Bridge to Batsto.
- Other less popular driving areas were also identified.
- Areas of known illegal off-road vehicle activity were not identified as important driving routes.

ENJOYABLE AREA TO DRIVE OR PREFERRED ROUTE MAP



- 52,000 acres were highlighted by survey respondents on average.
- Smaller areas of concern were easier to interpret.

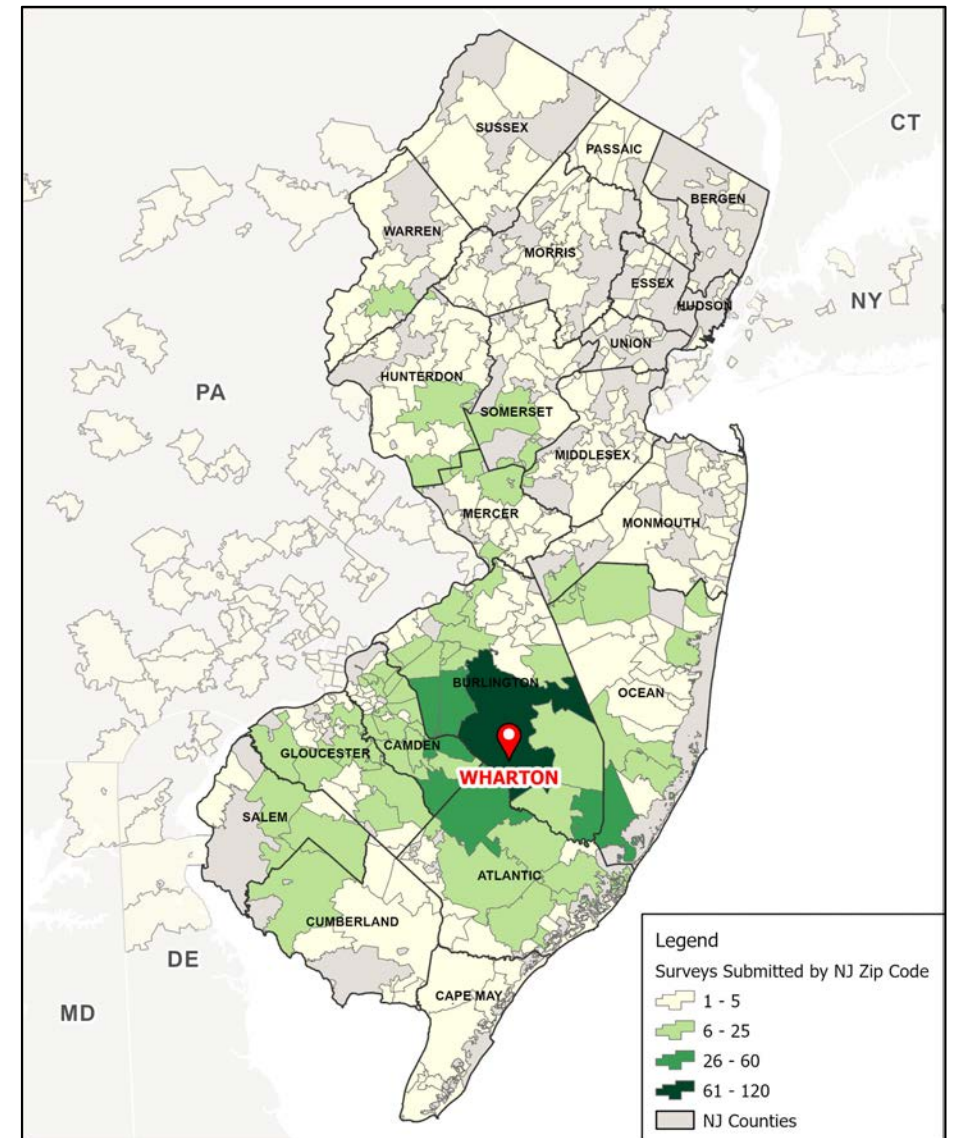


Survey Responses by Zip Code

- 301 Zip Codes in NJ
- Responses from every county in NJ
- **Burlington County** had the most responses, with **08088** being the most frequently used zip code.

Top 5 Zip Code Frequencies		
Zip Code	Municipalities	Frequency
08088	Indian Mills, Shamong, Southampton, Tabernacle, Vincentown	111
08055	Medford, Medford Lakes	58
08037	Ancora, Batsto, Braddock, Blue Anchor, Elm, Folsom, Hammonton, Mullica, Nesco, Rosedale, Sweetwater	56
08004	Atco, Waterford	48
08053	Evesboro, Evesham, Kresson, Marlton, Marlton Lakes, Pine Grove	31

Out of 1371 NJ Surveys

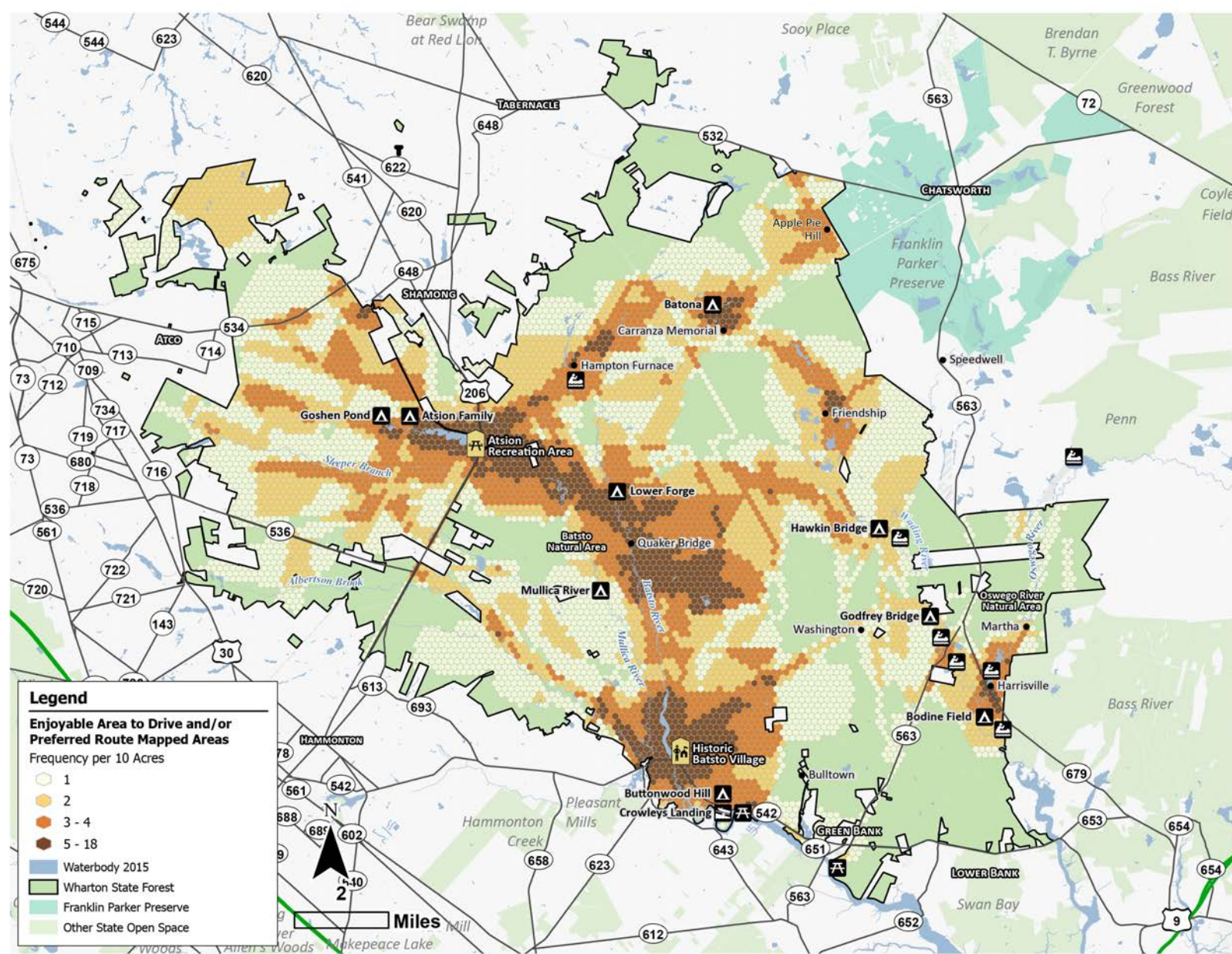


Enjoyable area to drive and/or preferred route (under 5,000 acres)

182 Areas Under 5,000 Acres

357 Areas Over 5,000 Acres

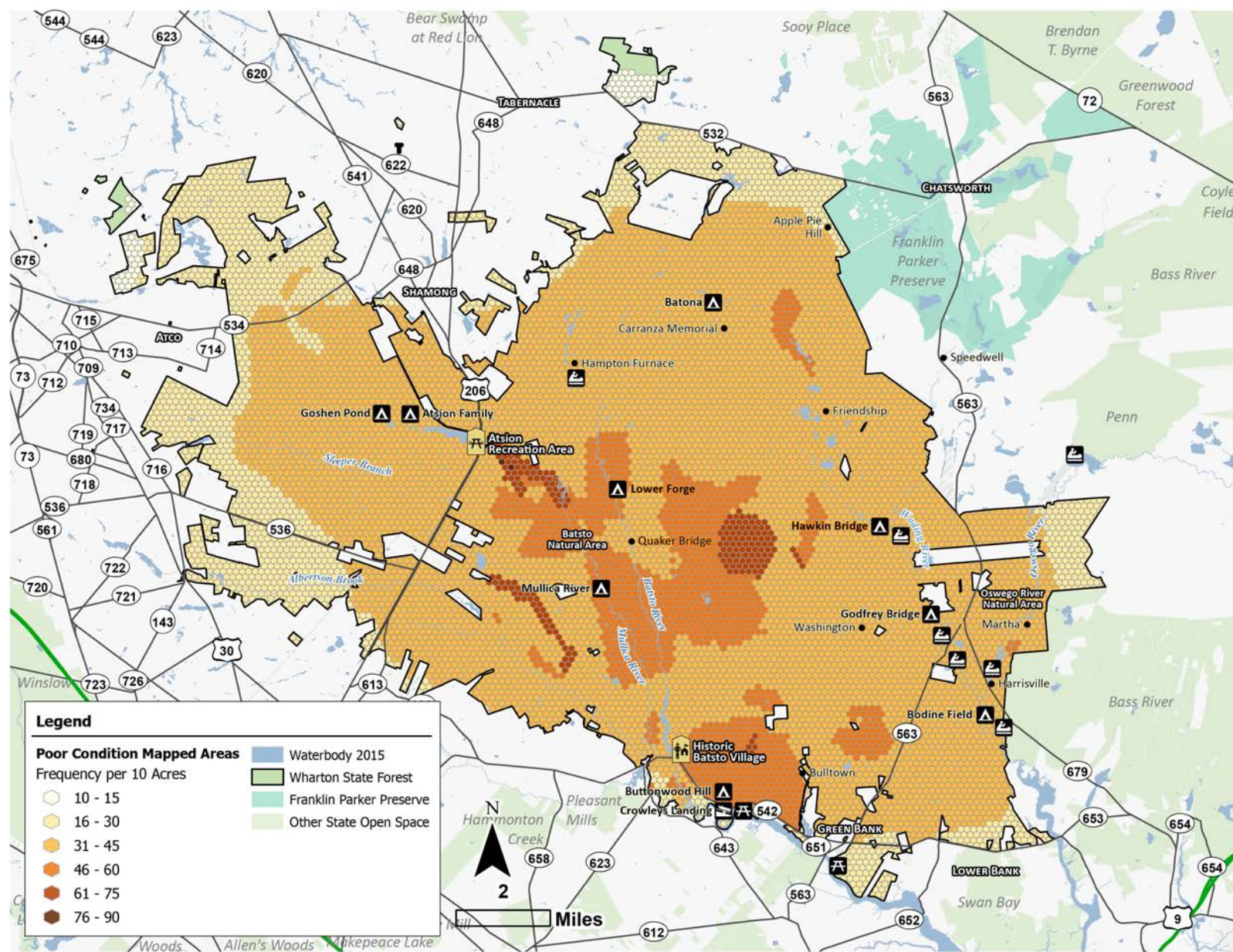
539 Total Areas



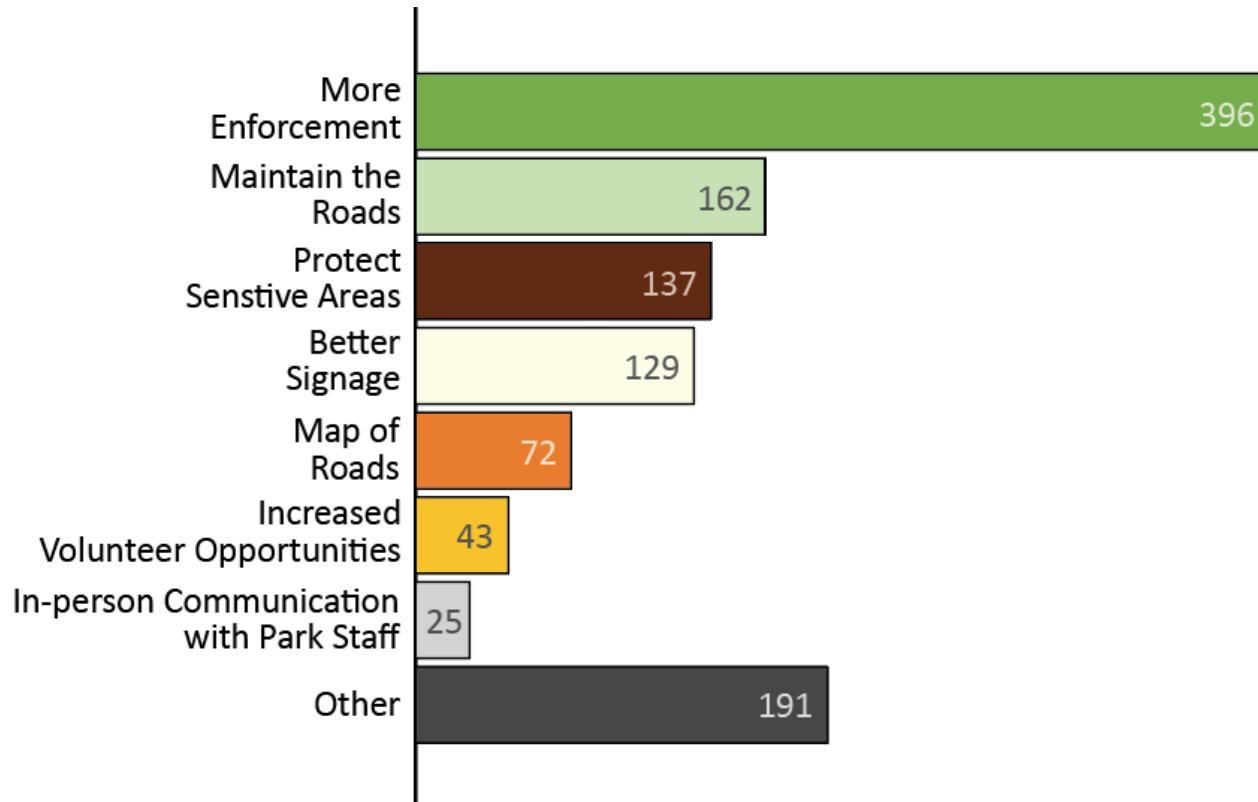
Poor condition (ex. road or facility conditions)

336 Total Areas

35 Areas Over 90,000 acres (Areas identifying all of Wharton)



Out of 1508 Written Responses



Other Suggestions:

- Barriers
- Better reporting option
- Designated ORV area/trails
- Increase fines
- Management committees
- More parking
- More horseback riding trails
- Public education
- Refund permit holders who obey rules
- Stakeholder engagement



Increased Fines

- In 2021, the State Attorney General's Office was successful in securing an increase in fines for illegal off-road vehicle use and damages.
- \$250 - \$500 for a first offense
- \$500 - \$1,000 for a second offense
- A minimum of \$1,000 for a third or subsequent offense
- If a violation results in damage to or destruction of natural resources, an additional fine of five times the cost of the damage may be assessed.



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Wharton State Forest
Visiting Vehicle Use Map



1 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

PINELANDS COMMISSION ROADS & TRAILS MAP

In 2017, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission passed a resolution that adopted the 1997 USGS topographical maps which identified existing roads within Wharton State Forest that were appropriate for motor vehicle use.

Further review by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection determined that 120 miles of "roads" on the Commission's map were not roads at all, they were misidentified boundary lines, misidentified fire control lines, or nothing existed on the ground. Misidentified "roads" are shown as brown dashed lines on the Pinelands Commission Roads & Trails Map.

1 Pinelands Commission Roads & Trails
Wharton State Forest - Draft

CONSIDERATION OF WETLANDS

Wetlands are valuable ecosystems where the land is regularly saturated with water for an extended period of time. There are a variety of types of wetlands, including bogs, marshes and swamps.

All wetlands have three essential characteristics in common: water, saturated soils and specially-adapted plants.

Joseph Wharton understood the significance of the water in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The freshwater aquifers beneath the Pine Barrens provide drinking water for residents of the area. The shallow Kalkreuth-Coburn Aquifer provides safety reserves of the water in streams, rivers and wetlands. Water in this aquifer often occurs less than a few feet beneath ground surface and directly supplies water to the trees, shrubs and plants some of which are rare, threatened and endangered.

2 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

Consideration of Wetlands
Wharton State Forest - Draft

3 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

Consideration of Natural Lands Management Data
Wharton State Forest - Draft

New Jersey State Natural Area boundaries, represented by black dots, are protected lands that remain in a natural condition, including areas that support rare and endangered plants and animals.

These Natural Areas encompass 12,743 acres of Wharton which include the Hanco, Charge River and West Branch Wading River. These Natural Areas are open to the public for passive recreational use that does not compromise natural features and biodiversity resources of the site. (N.J.A.C. 7:5A-1.13)

Natural Heritage Priority Sites represent some of the best remaining habitat for rare "plant" species and ecological communities in New Jersey. Refer to the map legend for the 11 sites within Wharton.

Additionally, the Department of Environmental Protection's Endangered and Nongame Species Program assisted with routing sites that include significant habitats for rare animals. These sites are of top priority for the preservation of biological diversity in New Jersey.

4 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

Consideration of Endangered and Nongame Species
Wharton State Forest - Draft

The Endangered and Nongame Species data outlines habitat for animals which includes State Threatened, State Endangered or Federally Listed Species Habitat within New Jersey. This information is depicted on the map by three shades of green: Rank 3 - State Threatened (light green), Rank 4 - State Endangered (dark green), Rank 5 - Federally Listed (red).

Of the 390 miles of Pinelands Commission Roads and Trails, there are 387 miles (or 99.9%) of routes that intersect State Threatened, State Endangered or Federally Listed Species Habitat.

5 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

Consideration of Historic Preservation Office Data
Wharton State Forest - Draft

The Historic Preservation Office data includes archaeological sites, historic properties, and historic districts which are represented in light orange on the map.

These locations include the following sites with archaeological value, properties with buildings, sites, structures or objects deemed historically significant, and districts possessing a significant concentration, linkage or continuity buildings, sites, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. It should be noted there may be other sites, properties or districts that have not yet been identified, recorded or documented.

4 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

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4 Consideration of Endangered and Nongame Species
Wharton State Forest - Draft

5 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

CONSIDERATION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE DATA

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6 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

NATURAL & HISTORIC COMBINED RESOURCES

The Natural & Historic Combined Resources map depicts how many natural and/or historic resource layers overlap a route segment. This analysis included Wetlands, Natural Areas, Natural Heritage Priority Sites, Archaeological Sites, Historic Districts, Historic Properties, State Threatened, State Endangered and Federally Listed Species. These overlaps vary from 1 to 7. The map shows routes with the lowest number of overlaps appearing as yellow to orange lines and the routes with the highest number of overlaps as darker orange to red lines. Areas with even one affected resource could still be critically important to protect, yet routes with multiple resource overlaps may remain open to accommodate public use.

This inset map shows routes with high, medium and low resource overlaps. The map provides examples of why a road map be designated as suitable for vehicle use, using the resource data and road functions as an aid in decision making.

6 Natural & Historic Combined Resources
Wharton State Forest - Draft

7 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

Wharton Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey - Enjoyable Area to Drive or Preferred Route
Wharton State Forest - Draft

Data derived from the Wharton Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey was used to determine where the public enjoys driving within the forest. The orange shaded 10-acre sections show a count of how many respondents identified that area as an enjoyable area to drive or a preferred route. Visitors are most interested in driving within the darkest orange areas with less interest in the lighter shades.

1610 TOTAL SURVEYS SUBMITTED

74% ENJOYABLE AREA TO DRIVE

65% PREFERRED ROUTE

7 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

WHARTON VISITOR AND VEHICLE USE SURVEY

Data derived from the Wharton Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey was used to determine where the public enjoys driving within the forest. The orange shaded 10-acre sections show a count of how many respondents identified that area as an enjoyable area to drive or a preferred route. Visitors are most interested in driving within the darkest orange areas with less interest in the lighter shades.

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7 Wharton Visitor and Vehicle Use Survey - Enjoyable Area to Drive or Preferred Route
Wharton State Forest - Draft

8 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

COMPARISON MAP

The Comparison Map includes misidentified "roads", routes removed for natural and historic resource concerns and the 200 miles of proposed visiting vehicle use routes.

Various colored misidentified "roads" were initially removed from the Pinelands Commission Roads & Trails Map: each color represents why the route was not considered for vehicle use. Examples of misidentified "roads" are shown below. Brown routes were removed due to natural or historic resource concerns, based on the natural & historic resource data.

Yellow routes are proposed for visiting vehicle use. The next map and poster show these routes only.

8 Comparison Map
Wharton State Forest - Draft

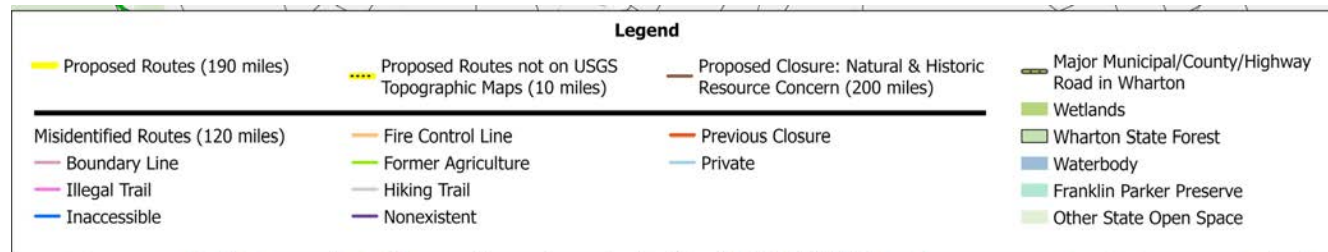
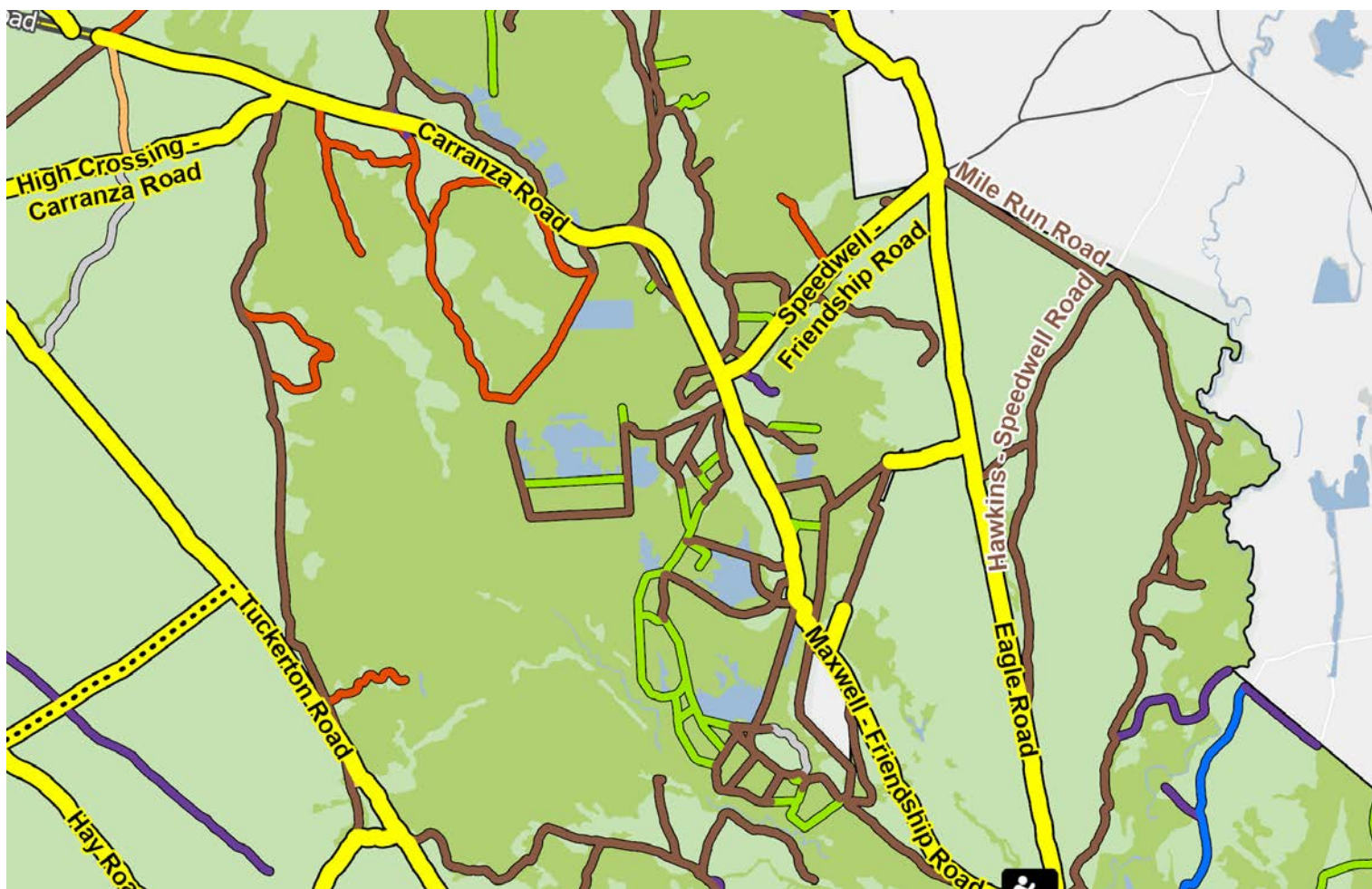
9 WHARTON VISITING VEHICLE USE MAPS

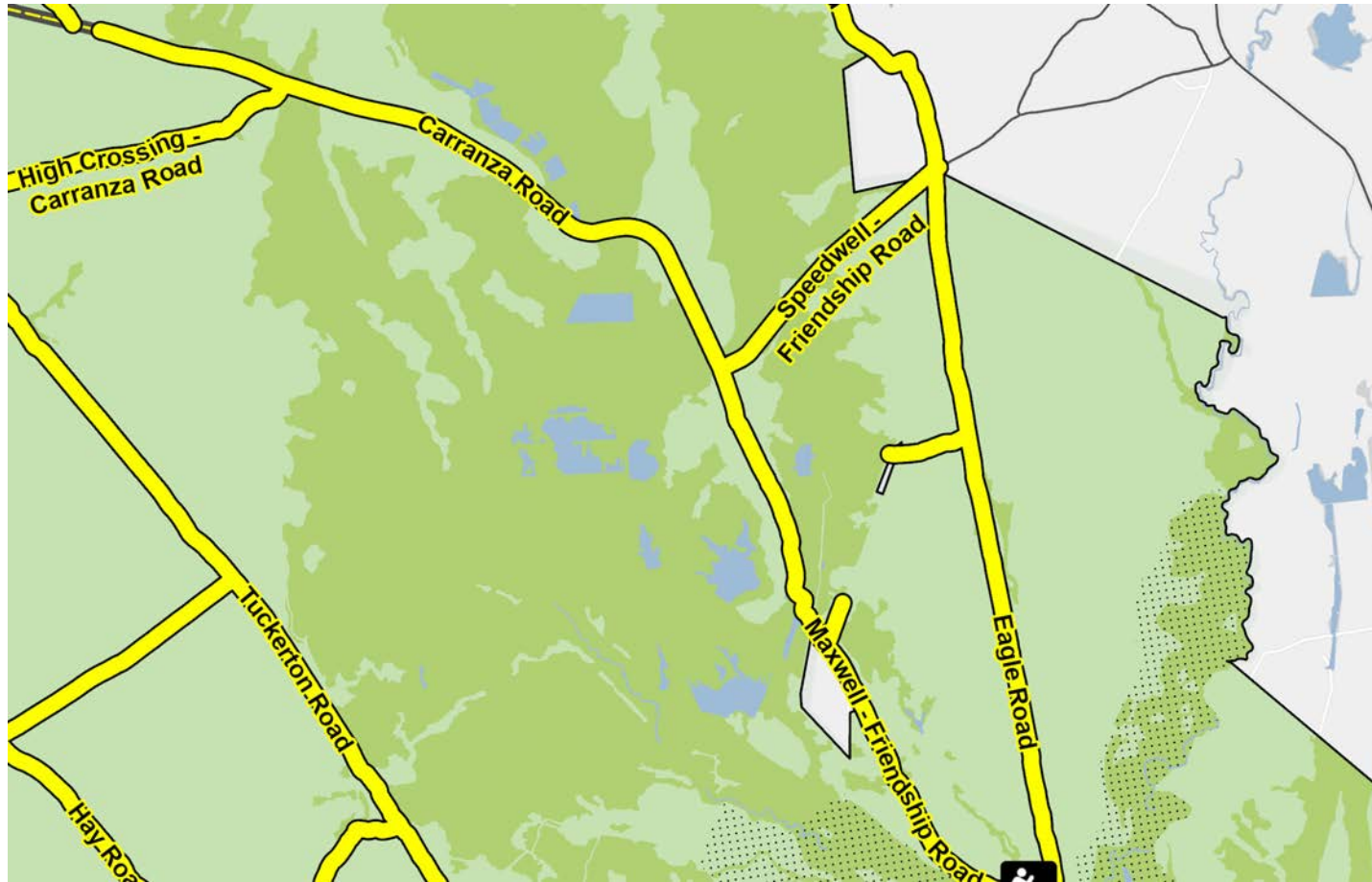
PROPOSED VISITING VEHICLE USE MAP

The Proposed Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map consists of 200 miles of routes for vehicle use. Natural and historic resources, emergency access, recreational access, and traditional uses were factors in selecting these routes.

Having a well-defined network of routes available to visitors will allow for protection of natural and historic resources and routine maintenance, resulting in safe enjoyment of the forest, efficient enforcement and most importantly, visitor safety.

9 Proposed Visiting Vehicle Use Map
Wharton State Forest - Draft





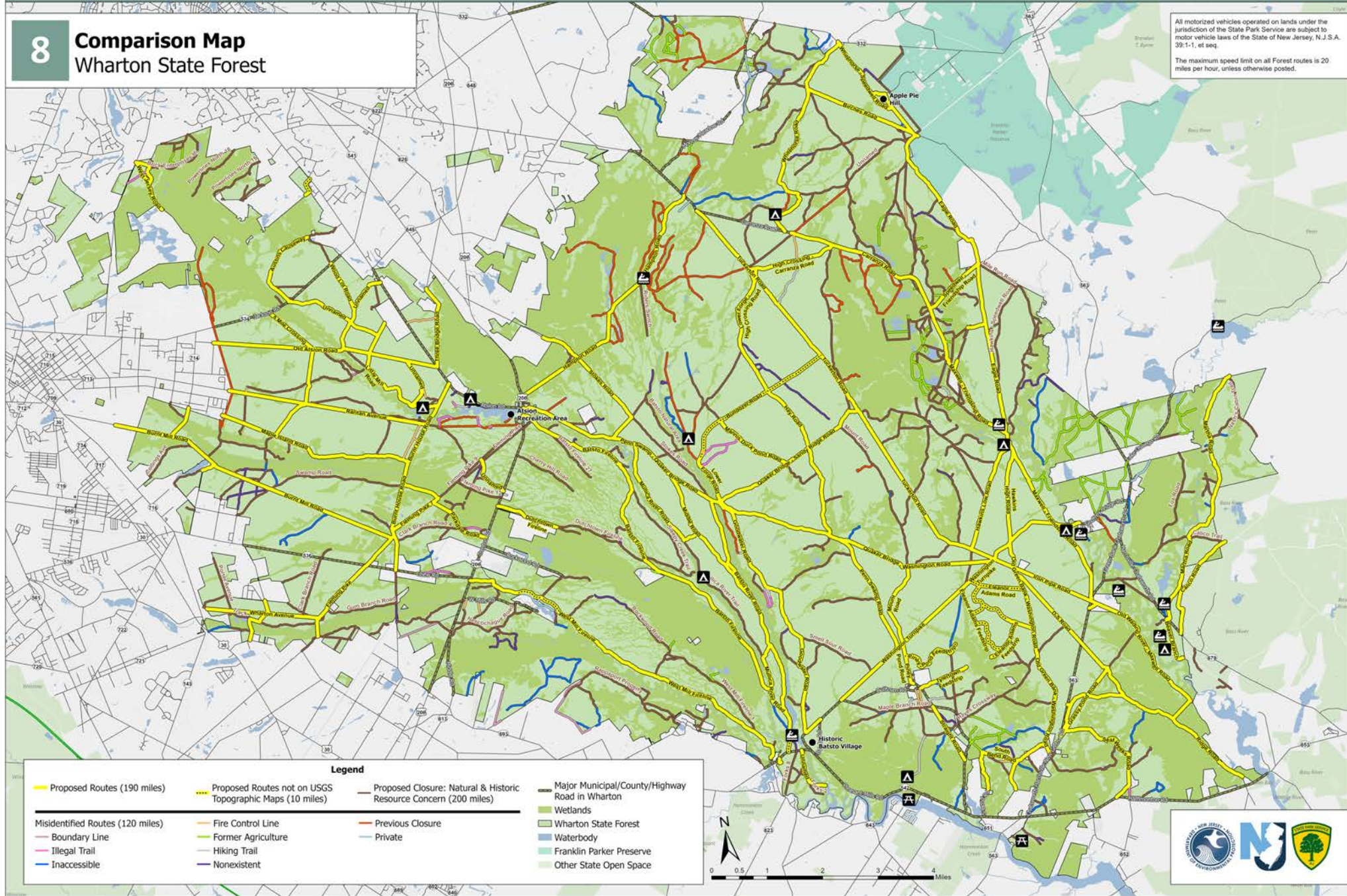
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Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map



Comparison Map Wharton State Forest

All motorized vehicles operated on lands under the jurisdiction of the State Park Service are subject to motor vehicle laws of the State of New Jersey, N.J.S.A. 39:1-1, et seq.
The maximum speed limit on all Forest routes is 20 miles per hour, unless otherwise posted.



Legend

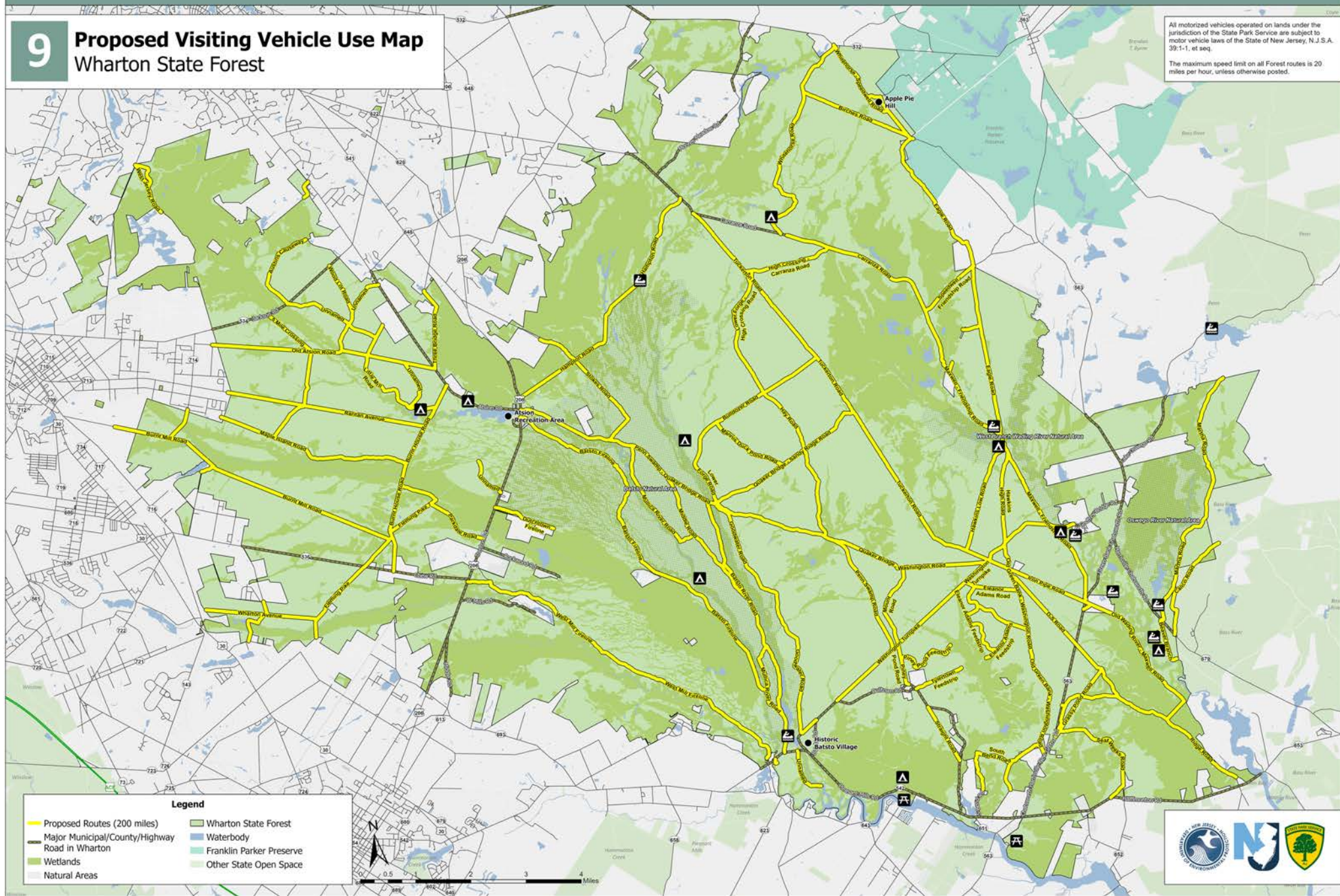
Proposed Routes (190 miles)	Proposed Routes not on USGS Topographic Maps (10 miles)	Proposed Closure: Natural & Historic Resource Concern (200 miles)	Major Municipal/County/Highway Road in Wharton
Misidentified Routes (120 miles)	Fire Control Line	Previous Closure	Wetlands
Boundary Line	Former Agriculture	Private	Wharton State Forest
Illegal Trail	Hiking Trail	Waterbody	Franklin Parker Preserve
Inaccessible	Nonexistent	Other State Open Space	



9

Proposed Visiting Vehicle Use Map Wharton State Forest

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Legend

- Proposed Routes (200 miles)
- Major Municipal/County/Highway Road in Wharton
- Wetlands
- Natural Areas
- Wharton State Forest
- Waterbody
- Franklin Parker Preserve
- Other State Open Space





WHARTON STATE FOREST

VISITING VEHICLE USE OPEN HOUSE

The Visiting Vehicle Use Map, clearly delineates legal routes through the state forest where you can drive your street legal, registered and insured vehicle.



**SCAN or VISIT njparksandforests.org/wharton
to View & Comment on the Map**

View and comment on the proposed Wharton Visiting Vehicle Use Map, along with several other maps that help outline the decision-making process.

njparksandforests.org/wharton