



# NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

## MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT



Freshly fallen snow in the Pinelands, as photographed at the Michael Huber Prairie Warbler Preserve in January

**JANUARY 2024**

# 1 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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## 1.1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### 1.1A COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- **Personnel & Budget (P&B) Committee:** The Committee did not meet in January.
- **Pinelands Climate Committee:** The Committee did not meet in January.
- **Policy & Implementation (P&I) Committee:** The Committee met on January 26, 2024. Thomas Hedden of the East Coast Enduro Association made a presentation discussing the history of enduro riding in the Pinelands, the types of events the Association holds and the goals of the Association. Staff then made a presentation summarizing municipal conformance activities in 2023.

### 1.1B RULEMAKING

- **Water Management (Kirkwood-Cohansey):** Throughout December 2023 and January 2024, staff updated various information on the Commission’s website to reflect the adopted Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) amendments, including the on-line version of the CMP, development application form and application fee calculator. Staff also identified the need for municipal ordinance amendments and will be drafting model ordinances.

### 1.1C OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

- A total of six Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests were received in January. All six were provided responsive material.

### 1.1D PINELANDS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

- The Pinelands Municipal Council did not meet in January.

### 1.1E OTHER

- Dr. Jessica Rittler Sanchez was sworn in as the newest member of the Commission on January 12, 2024.



**Above:** Jessica Rittler Sanchez was sworn in as a member of the Pinelands Commission on January 12, 2024.

## 1.2 LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

### 1.2A LEGISLATION

The 221<sup>st</sup> New Jersey Legislature began on January 9, 2024. Any bills that did not pass during the last legislative session need to be reintroduced for consideration in this session.

#### Pinelands Specific Legislation

<u>Bill No.(s)</u>	<u>Prime Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Synopsis</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
A4/S50	Lopez, Coughlin, Wimberly, Reynolds-Jackson/Singleton, Scutari	Reforms municipal responsibilities concerning provision of affordable housing; abolishes COAH; appropriates \$16 million.	Assembly Bill – Reintroduced, Referred to Assembly Housing Committee, Reported from Committee and referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee  Senate Bill – Reintroduced and referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee, reported from Senate Committee, Second Reading, Referred to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.
S2424	Smith/McKeon	Establishes various programs in NJDEP concerning management of publicly owned forested land; appropriates \$60 million.	Reintroduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee

#### Pinelands Related Legislation

<u>Bill No.(s)</u>	<u>Prime Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Synopsis</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
A682/S600	Kean/Singer	Establishes program, in NJDEP, for acquisition of development easements on privately-owned woodlands.	Assembly Bill - Reintroduced and Referred to Assembly Environment Natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee. Senate Bill - Reintroduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

S257	Smith	Authorizes State Treasurer to appoint Garden State Preservation Trust acting executive director under certain conditions.	Senate Bill – Reintroduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee
A1253	Sauickie	Prohibits planting of non-native species in landscaping at State parks and forests; establishes grant program to support use of native plants at local parks and forests; appropriates \$250,000.	Reintroduced, Referred to Assembly Environment, natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee
A1300	Sauickie	Provides CBT (Corporate Business Tax) credit for construction or retrofitting of warehouses to meet certain green building standards.	Reintroduced, Referred to Assembly Commerce, Economic Development and Agriculture Committee
A1301	Sauickie	Requires State Planning Commission to adopt model buffer ordinances detailing different regulatory options for siting warehouses; allows conforming updates to municipal master plans and zoning ordinances.	Reintroduced, Referred to Assembly Community Development and Women’s Affairs Committee
A1302	Sauickie	Requires certain warehouses to obtain air pollution control permits from NJDEP.	Reintroduced, Referred to Assembly Environment, Natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee
A1303	Sauickie	Requires NJDEP to evaluate cumulative impact of stormwater when reviewing applications associated with warehouses and other high-density development projects.	Reintroduced, and Referred to Assembly Environment, Natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee. Senate Bill introduced and referred to Environment and Energy Committee.

## 1.2B INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

- **Pemberton Township and the NJDEP:** This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) authorizes a deviation from CMP wetlands and wetlands buffer standards to accommodate surfacing of an existing trail at Pemberton Lake for accessibility purposes. The Commission approved execution of this MOA at its January 12, 2024 meeting.
- **Stafford Township:** This proposed MOA would authorize a deviation from CMP wetlands buffer standards to accommodate paving of an existing trail around Forecastle Lake for accessibility purposes. The Township delivered a presentation at the Commission's July 14, 2023 meeting regarding the project and the need for a deviation MOA. Following the presentation, the Commission authorized the staff to begin working with Stafford Township to develop the draft MOA. Staff is waiting for Stafford Township to submit additional information.
- **Evesham Township:** The Township is proposing an MOA that would accommodate surfacing of an existing trail and parking improvements within wetlands and wetlands buffers in the Black Run Preserve. Township representatives met with Chair Matos and the Executive Director on January 17, 2024 and provided an overview of their proposal. A presentation to the P&I Committee is tentatively scheduled for February 23, 2024.

## 1.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Contract Negotiations:** A meeting with legal counsel and management was held on January 16, 2024. The next negotiation meeting will be held on February 13, 2024.
- **Recruitment:** Donna DiPalma was selected as the new Applicant Services Representative in the Regulatory Programs office. Her start date was January 29, 2024. Interviews continue for two Planning Specialist vacancies.
- **State Health Benefits Program:** The new 2024 plan rates were implemented for health and dental deductions.
- **Benefit Time Records:** Employee records were reviewed and adjusted as necessary.
- **Interim Evaluations:** The 2023-2024 interim evaluations were due to Human Resources by January 31, 2024.
- **Training:** Staff participated in a webinar: The Keys to Creating a Thriving Team Culture.

## 2 INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

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- **New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBP):** NJBP staff issued its straw proposal for the dual-use solar program on November 15, 2023 and conducted a virtual stakeholder meeting on that proposal on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Staff provided a brief overview of the straw proposal at the Commission's January 12, 2024 meeting. Staff will be meeting with BPU staff to continue discussions concerning how to make the Dual-Use Solar Pilot Program available to Pinelands

farmers in light of the siting prohibitions of the Dual-Use Solar Act and the CMP.

- **Interagency Council on Climate Resilience (IAC):** Commission staff attended the January 9, 2024 meeting of the Council, at which updates on the Council’s Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan were provided and discussions of the upcoming two-year work plan were held.
- **New Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy (NJOPA) Interagency Workgroup:** Commission staff attended the January 4, 2024 meeting of the NJOPA Interagency Workgroup, at which NJOPA provided updated timelines for the adoption of a preliminary State Development and Redevelopment Plan by the State Planning Commission and the subsequent cross-acceptance process involving State, County and Municipal agencies.
- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP):** Commission staff met with Assistant Commissioner John Cecil and other NJDEP staff on January 8, 2024 to receive an update on the Department’s plans for release of a draft Wharton Visiting Vehicle Use Map at a public open house on January 24, 2024, followed by a 45-day public comment period.

### 3 LAND USE PROGRAMS

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#### 3.1 CONFORMANCE ACTIVITY

	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
<b>Master Plans/Ordinances Received</b>		
Adopted	0	0
Drafted or Introduced	4	4
Total <sup>1</sup>	4	4
Substantial Issue Finding <sup>2</sup>	3	3
No Substantial Issue Finding	2	2
No Issue Finding	0	0
Total	5	5
<b>Finding Letters Issued<sup>3</sup></b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup>The total accounts for unique master plans and ordinances received (i.e., it does not double count drafted, introduced, or adopted submissions for the same ordinance).

<sup>2</sup> Ordinances and Master Plans that are found to raise substantial issues with respect to the standards of the CMP require formal review and approval by the full Commission.

<sup>3</sup> A single finding letter can pertain to multiple master plans/ordinances from the same municipality.

### 3.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Applications Reviewed	16	16
Surveys Required	4	4
Surveys Reviewed	2	2
Certificates of Appropriateness Required	0	0

- Fenwick Manor:** On January 16, 2024, Governor Murphy approved the appropriation of funds from the Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund to the New Jersey Historic Trust to support the recommended grants for historic preservation projects, including the rehabilitation of Fenwick Manor. On January 18, 2024, the Pinelands Commission cultural resources specialist attended the Capital Grantee Workshop hosted by the New Jersey Historic Trust. A meeting between Pinelands Commission staff, the New Jersey Historic Trust, and the Division of Property Management and Construction has since taken place and the process of hiring a consultant to complete the rehabilitation work has been initiated.

### 3.3 PINELANDS DEVELOPMENT CREDIT (PDC) PROGRAM

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
PDCs Allocated	0.75	0.75
PDCs Severed	0	0
Acres Protected	0	0
PDCs Extinguished	0	0
Acres Protected	0	0
PDCs Sold	3.50	3.50
Average Sales Price per PDC	\$73,143	\$73,143
Average Sales Price per right	\$18,286	\$18,286
PDCs Redeemed	2.75	2.75

#### Notable Activity:

- PDC Allocations:** 0.50 PDCs (2 rights) were allocated to a 27-acre parcel in the Agricultural Production Area in Pemberton Township and 0.25 PDCs were allocated to a 35.52-acre parcel in the Preservation Area District in Woodland Township.

- **Redemptions:** 2.75 PDCs (11 rights) were redeemed for a project in Jackson Township’s Regional Growth Area consisting of 34 single-family detached dwellings and 8 affordable apartment units.

## 4 REGULATORY PROGRAMS

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### 4.1 APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Pre-Application Conferences	4	4
Certificates of Filing	6	6
Public Development Reports	1	1
Forestry Certificates of Filing	0	0
PDC Letters of Interpretation	2	2
Non-PDC Letters of Interpretation	1	1
MOA Consistency Determinations	1	1
Review of Agency Determinations	44	44

### 4.2 NOTABLE APPLICATIONS

- **New Municipal Building, Tabernacle Township (Applicant: Tabernacle Township, App. No. 1993-0010.002):** On February 28, 2022, the staff conducted a pre-application conference with representatives of the Township to discuss possible sites for a new municipal complex. By letter dated March 9, 2022, the staff provided written guidance to the Township on three potential municipal complex sites. On May 1, 2023, the Commission staff conducted a pre-application conference with representatives of the Township in anticipation of the Township’s application to develop a new municipal building on a 20-acre parcel fronting on Carranza Road. The parcel is located in the Pinelands Village of Tabernacle. On January 16, 2024, the Township submitted an application for a new municipal building on that parcel. Pending receipt of the appropriate application fee, the Commission staff will review the submitted application.
- **Stormwater Management Basins, Barnegat Township (Applicant: Paramount, App. No. 2001-0245.003):** This application, approved by the Commission in 2000, proposed the development of 563 single family dwelling units on a 368 acre parcel in a Regional Growth Area. Approximately 330 of the 563 single family dwellings have been constructed. Based on available information, two stormwater basins on the parcel are not functioning as designed. This constitutes a violation of the stormwater management standards of the Barnegat Township land use ordinance and the CMP. Information was submitted to the Commission proposing to modify the two concerned



basins. On December 5, 2023, our staff discussed the issue with the Barnegat Township Engineer. On December 28, 2023, our staff sent a letter to the developer summarizing our understanding of the matter based upon our discussion with the Township Engineer. Our December 28, 2023 letter to the developer asked that the Township Construction Office refrain from issuing building permits for any of the remaining dwellings in this development until the stormwater management issue was addressed. By letter dated January 22, 2024, we advised the applicant that the proposed stormwater basin modifications were inconsistent with the applicable stormwater management standards. This is because the proposed modifications would result in the basins not retaining and infiltrating the required volume of stormwater runoff and controlling the rates of runoff. By letter dated January 24, 2024, the applicant submitted a schedule to the Township and the Commission for preparation and implementation of a stormwater management basin remediation plan. That submission is currently under review.

- **Single Family Dwelling, Pemberton Township (Applicant: Property Owner, App. No. 1988-0860.004):** On November 8, 2023, a site meeting was held on a parcel with representatives of the property owner, Pemberton Township, and the Burlington County Health Department. The parcel is located in a Pinelands Agricultural Production Area. Available information indicates that between 2010 and 2012, a single family dwelling and a septic system were constructed on the 6.35-acre parcel without application to the Township, the Burlington County Health Department or the Pinelands Commission. The development occurred in wetlands. By letter dated January 30, 2024, the property owner was advised to submit either a development application or a schedule for removal of the dwelling, septic system, agricultural building and other debris on the property. The staff's letter further advised that because the single family dwelling and septic system were both developed in wetlands, a Waiver of Strict Compliance would be required and it was unlikely such a waiver could be approved on this parcel.
- **Resource Extraction, Woodland Township (Applicant: Robert T. Winzinger, App. No. 1980-0062.001):** On December 20, 2023, the Commission received a request for a pre-application conference regarding a proposed resource extraction operation on a 285-acre parcel. The parcel is located in the Pinelands Preservation Area District. The applicant proposes resource extraction on a 107.4-acre portion of the parcel. To facilitate the pre-application conference, the Commission staff sent a January 26, 2024 letter advising the applicant of the need to delineate all wetlands on the parcel. In addition, because there are known sightings of a threatened and endangered (T&E) animal species on the parcel, the staff's letter also advised the applicant that a two-season T&E species survey would need to be completed. The pre-application conference was held on January 31, 2024.
- **Change in Use of Former Elementary School, Bass River Township (Maple River LLC, App. No. 1989-0464.004):** The Commission staff received an email inquiry on November 8, 2023 proposing the use of the former Township Elementary School as a year-round private boarding school. The school is located in the Pinelands Village of New Gretna. The Commission staff issued a letter on November 20, 2023 indicating that, based upon the apparent determination of the Township that the proposal constituted a change in use, a development application must be completed with the Commission. On November 20, 2023, an application for the change in use was filed with the Commission. The Commission issued a Certificate of Filing on January 5, 2024. It is the Commission staff's understanding that the application may be heard by the Township Planning/Zoning Board in March 2024.

- Marina, Washington Township (Applicant: MK3 Holdings, App. No. 2022-0004.001):** On April 6, 2022, the Commission staff received a request for a pre-application conference for the proposed expansion of an existing marina located on the Mullica River. The proposed expansion consisted of approximately 60 boat slips and 15 jet ski slips. The proposed marina expansion also included the dredging of approximately two acres of the Mullica River to a depth of approximately four feet below the existing riverbed. At that time, the Commission received public comment on the proposed marina expansion. A pre-application conference was conducted on May 5, 2022. The proposed marina expansion is located in the Pinelands Preservation Area District. By letter dated May 23, 2022, the Commission staff advised that the proposed development in the Mullica River is subject to the permitted land use standards of the Township's certified land use ordinance and the CMP and that the proposed development appeared to require a use variance from Washington Township. On September 13, 2023, an application was submitted to the Commission for the proposed marina. On October 4, 2023, the Commission received the required application fee to allow for review of the application. By letter dated December 1, 2023, the Commission staff identified the necessary information to complete the application. On January 31, 2024, the Commission staff met with the applicant and the applicant's representatives to discuss the requirements to complete the application. The primary discussion items at that meeting were the proposed dredging and the information necessary to demonstrate that the proposed development qualified for the expansion of a pre-1981 existing intensive recreational use provision contained in the CMP.
- Lake Herbiciding, Hammonton (Applicant: Town of Hammonton, App. No. 1989-0573.006):** This application proposes the herbiciding of Hammonton Lake. The lake is located in the Pinelands Town of Hammonton. By letter dated May 22, 2023, the Commission staff advised the applicant of the potential presence of certain T&E plants species in Hammonton Lake. The Commission staff letter required the applicant to complete a T&E plant species survey to determine whether the concerned T&E plant species were present in Hammonton Lake. Alternatively, the applicant could provide information demonstrating that even if the T&E plants species were present in the Lake, the proposed herbiciding would not have an irreversible, adverse impact on any local populations of the concerned T&E plants. On September 19, 2023, the applicant submitted a T&E plant species survey. The survey confirmed the presence of two T&E plant species in Hammonton Lake. On October 9, 2023, the applicant submitted supplemental information. By letter dated October 31, 2023, the Commission staff provided guidance to the applicant and indicated that information must be submitted to the Commission demonstrating that the proposed herbiciding would not have an irreversible, adverse impact on the local populations of the two identified T&E plants. On November 22, 2023, Hammonton submitted information responding to the Commission staff's October 31, 2023 letter. By letter dated December 22, 2023, the Commission staff identified the information necessary to complete the application. That letter also identified the need for either the applicant to provide additional herbiciding expertise or the Commission could require the applicant to post an escrow enabling the Commission staff to retain such expertise. On January 11, 2024 and January 12, 2024, Hammonton submitted additional information regarding the proposed herbiciding of the Lake. On January 25, 2024, the Commission staff met with members of Town Council, the Mayor and representatives of Hammonton to discuss the matter. The discussion focused on the proposed use of a post emergent herbicide, the method of herbicide application and how the subsurface mobility (drift/migration/dispersal) of the proposed herbicide would be controlled.

The Commission staff will be further discussing the subsurface mobility of the proposed herbicide with NJDEP staff in the Bureau of Pesticides.

- **Residential/Commercial Development, Manchester Township (Applicant: AASTMA Stavola, App. No. 1981-1470.008 & App. No. 1981-1470.009):** In 2021, the Commission staff met with an applicant to discuss both the proposed development of 1.6 million square feet of office warehouse space and, alternatively, the development of 367 dwelling units on a 225-acre parcel in Manchester Township’s Regional Growth Area. A portion of the 225-acre parcel was previously disturbed as part of a resource extraction operation. The primary issue raised by the proposed development on the parcel is consistency with CMP T&E plant and animal species protection standards. By letter dated August 23, 2021, the applicant submitted a summary of multiple T&E species surveys that had previously been completed on the parcel and on adjacent parcels. A threatened animal species was previously identified on the parcel. The concerned animal species was primarily utilizing adjacent parcels. A threatened plant species was also identified on the parcel. After review of the multiple prior T&E surveys, a site inspection and review of the applicant’s August 23, 2021 letter summarizing the multiple prior T&E surveys, the Commission staff advised by letter dated November 19, 2021 that a follow up one-season, drift fence survey and visual investigation must be completed on the parcel. The results of the one season drift fence survey were submitted to the Commission on December 14, 2021. Based upon the results of the drift fence survey identifying the possible presence of a threatened animal species, the Commission staff required a spring/summer shelter board and visual survey on the parcel for the concerned animal species. On November 16, 2022, the Commission received the results of the spring/summer shelter board and visual survey. The survey indicated that the threatened animal species was observed on the parcel. On December 16, 2022, the Commission staff met with the applicant and the applicant’s representatives to discuss the results of the survey and the applicant’s proposed residential development plan. The proposed development plan reserves an area of the parcel as critical habitat for the concerned threatened animal species. At that meeting, the staff advised the applicant that based upon the location of the observed threatened animal species and the known critical habitat for the species on adjacent parcels, additional survey work was required to determine whether the areas reserved for development by the proposed development plan would protect critical habitat. Subsequently, the applicant and the Commission staff discussed the possible relocation of an existing road (Freemont Avenue) that separates known critical habitat areas on the 225-acre parcel from a larger population of the concerned animal species north of Fremont Avenue. On December 12, 2023, a conceptual plan depicting the relocation of Fremont Avenue and the development of warehousing on the parcel was submitted, along with a request for guidance regarding the location of grading and filling in the vicinity of the relocated road. By letter dated January 31, 2024, the Commission staff indicated its agreement with the proposed minor grading and filling associated with the relocation of Fremont Avenue.

#### **4.3 OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST**

- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)/Timber rattlesnake Habitat:** By letter dated January 31, 2024, the Commission staff responded to a December 22, 2023 email and a January 9, 2024 email from the NJDEP proposing the creation of timber rattlesnake habitat and the relocation of gravid female timber rattlesnakes from “inappropriate habitat.” The Commission staff’s letter indicated that the proposed limited harvesting of trees to create the habitat did not require application to the Commission. The Commission staff letter also

indicated that NJDEP's proposed relocation of a T&E animal species does not constitute development and, therefore, does not require application to the Commission. However, the Commission staff letter expressed concern regarding the determination of what does and does not constitute "inappropriate habitat" for a T&E animal species and the regulatory precedent and implications that might arise from NJDEP's relocation of T&E animal species.

## 5 SCIENCE

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### 5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- **Water Level Monitoring:** Due to winter weather conditions in January, Communications staff was unable to measure water levels at the 43 forest plots and 30 ponds in the Commission network of long-term monitoring sites. Science staff downloaded water level data collected from continuous water level recorders installed in three ponds and the one forest plot. Staff investigated a different brand of water level recorders that use a small solar panel and cellular service so that data can be accessed remotely. Staff also met with law enforcement and visited the two ponds in the Commission monitoring program in Brendan Byrne State Forest that were damaged by trucks.
- **Rare Snake Monitoring:** In January, Science staff received approval from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to construct corrals around new snake hibernacula discovered during the radio tracking of snakes in 2023. Staff will begin to build the new corrals as soon as possible. Staff sent an email request to the NJDEP Endangered and Nongame Species Program staff to renew the Commission scientific collecting permit for snakes for 2024.

Science staff capture hundreds of snakes each year. Some of these individuals are new snakes that have never been captured and some are individuals that have been recaptured or found previously. When initially captured, each snake receives a passive integrated transponder tag or PIT tag, which is a microchip inserted under the skin for permanent identification. A series of environmental data are collected each time a snake is captured or recaptured. In January, staff completed digitizing the data collected for each snake found in 2023. These data will be finalized prior to snake emergence, which typically begins in March.

### 5.2 LONG TERM STUDIES

- **Box Turtle Study:** Science and NJDEP ENSP staff met to discuss the overlap between the activity ranges of clusters of radio tracked turtles and areas approved for prescribed burning. Science staff then contacted New Jersey Forest Fire Service staff to begin coordinating for a prescribed burn in an area with a cluster of radio-tracked turtles.

Like the snake capture data, staff entered the data collected during the initial capture of each turtle. The data have not yet been finalized. In the fall of 2023, science staff attached ibuttons to 26 of the radio tracked turtles to record the temperature of the turtle shell during their overwintering period. In January 2024, staff installed ibuttons just above the 26 turtle hibernacula to monitor the air temperature. Data collected by the ibuttons, as well as other

types of data, will be used to develop a statistical model to predict when box turtles would typically emerge from their hibernacula in the spring.

- **Snake Fungal Disease Monitoring:** Science staff are continuing to collaborate with researchers at Virginia Tech to swab Pinelands snakes for snake fungal disease. A second batch of swab samples were shipped to Virginia Tech for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) analysis. PCR is a laboratory technique to amplify or make copies of specific segments of DNA to make the DNA more easily detectable. Staff met with Virginia Tech researchers to plan future sampling for snake fungal disease in the Pinelands.
- **Adenovirus Study:** Science staff are also collaborating with Rutgers University researchers to swab Pinelands snakes for adenovirus. Staff have not yet received any results for this sampling.

### 5.3 OTHER

- The New Jersey State Wildlife Action Plan identifies priority actions that can be implemented over the next five to ten years to address the threats facing wildlife populations and their habitats in the state. Science staff continued to participate in the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan revision by voting individually in multiple rounds for human activities that are thought to be the greatest threats to New Jersey wildlife and also wildlife in the Pinelands.

## 6 COMMUNICATIONS

### 6.1 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Inquiries/Correspondence:** The Communications Office received and responded to approximately 120 inquiries from the public in January, including phone calls, e-mails, and media inquiries.
- **Website:** Commission staff made routine edits to the website in January, while also helping to update fillable .pdf forms.
- **Press Releases:** The Commission issued three press releases in January, including one on Jessica Rittler Sanchez taking the oath of office as a



**Above:** Commission staff shared a total of 149 photos on the agency's Instagram site in January, including this photo of an American coot that was foraging in the Pinelands National Reserve.

Commissioner, one on the Pemberton Lake Trail MOA, and one on the Pinelands Short Course.

- **Annual Report:** Throughout January, staff generated data, gathered information, and wrote and designed the Commission’s 2023 Annual Report. Additional edits will be made before the full draft is finalized in mid-February.

- **Social Media Enhancements:** In January, staff shared 149 photos and eight videos on the Commission’s Instagram site and 52 tweets on X (formerly known as Twitter).



**Above:** Commission staff shared 52 tweets on X (formerly Twitter) in January, including a photo featuring an early morning sunburst in Brendan T. Byrne State Forest in the Pinelands.

- **Pinelands-themed Merchandise:** Staff processed two orders/sales of Pinelands-themed merchandise via the Commission’s online store and at the agency’s office in January, along with a \$100 donation. All of the proceeds from sales and donations benefit the Kathleen M. Lynch-Van de Sande Fund for the Reforestation of the New Jersey Pinelands. The fund was established in memory of Ms. Lynch-van de Sande, a Pinelands Commission Environmental Specialist who died in a car accident in June 1989. It funds projects that support or promote the use of native plants in the Pinelands.

## 6.2 EVENTS, OUTREACH & INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

- **Pinelands Short Course:** Registration for the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Pinelands Short Course opened in early January. The event will be held at Stockton’s main campus on March 9, 2024. The event will feature 30 presentations, including 14 new programs. Staff spent much of the month promoting the event via e-mails, a press release, and numerous social media postings. As of January 30<sup>th</sup>, more than 300 people have registered to attend the event.
- **Education Programs:** A member of the Communications Office educated a total of more than 200 people while delivering Pinelands education programs on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>.
- **Barneгат Bay Coordination:** A member of the Communications Office participated in a Barneгат Bay Partnership Advisory Committee meeting on January 9, 2024.

- **Science Office Assistance:** A member of the Communications Office assisted the Science Office with snake corrals on January 30, 2024.

## **7 INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

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- **Pinelands Commission Information System Upgrades:** The Pinelands Commission Information System (PCIS) is the internal system of record for all applications to the Pinelands and associated transactions. Staff continued to improve the logging features of the PCIS software. Staff prepared final draft summary data and charts for inclusion in the Pinelands Commission Annual Report and provided them to Regulatory Programs staff for review. Staff released the new and improved Application Fee Online Calculator to the public after internal testing and review. Staff updated and posted new versions of the Pinelands Commission fillable forms to the internet. Staff completed a major upgrade to the PCIS system architecture, removing outdated web services to streamline development and support.
- **Geographic Information Systems:** Geographic Information Systems (GIS) allow the Pinelands Commission to manage, analyze, and map relevant data. Staff participated in a meeting with the Department of State (NJ State Museum) and the NJDEP (Historic Preservation Office) to discuss a project to coordinate cultural resources information across state agencies. Staff continued to evaluate the changes to the New Jersey parcel information and integrate necessary changes with our internal GIS systems. Staff worked to migrate users to ArcGIS Pro and upgraded the Pinelands license manager to support this change.
- **Cybersecurity:** Vigilance to protect the internal networks, hardware, and data of the Pinelands Commission is critical in today's networked world. The Information Systems office participated in the monthly call hosted by the New Jersey Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC).
- **Conformance Tracking/Zoning system:** Staff worked with the Planning Office to improve the new SQL Server database that will act as a foundation for the new system through iterative steps of data evaluation and data cleansing. Staff began developing new application interfaces to provide access to the zoning data from the intranet.
- **Pinelands Development Credit Bank:** The Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Bank is the processing agency for the Pinelands Development Credit Program, one of the oldest and most successful transfer of development rights (TDR) programs in the world. The Information System staff provides ongoing operational support to the PDC Bank.
- **Permanent Land Protection (PLP) Data System:** The PLP system manages the data related to all the preserved land in the Pinelands National Reserve. Staff supported the Planning Office in maintaining PLP records.
- **Technology Enhancements:** Staff members continually evaluate emerging technologies for how they can impact or enhance the office environment. Staff continued the required migration of legacy data and Oracle database to new servers. Data mirroring and indexing was completed on the new server prior to the final migration of the Network Attached Storage (NAS) drive. Staff continued to work with Verizon on their project to relocate network services from Fenwick

Manor to the Richard J. Sullivan building, including a detailed site visit to map out all aspects of the final local network for all Pinelands Commission buildings. Staff configured Android tablets for the Communications Office and the Science Office to simplify bringing information to and from the field.

## **8 BUSINESS OFFICE**

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### **8.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- **Application Fees:** January 2024, Net Total: \$73,260.35, Fiscal Year to Date Total: \$519,770.63. This is 74.25% of the Fiscal Year 2024 anticipated fee revenue of \$700,000. The net total includes 30 online application payments totaling \$48,473.49.
- **FY2021 Audit:** On January 31, 2024, the New Jersey State Auditor released its report on the audit of the Commission for Fiscal Year 2021. The report, which contains no audit findings or questioned costs, will be shared with the Audit Committee and scheduled for review and acceptance by the Commission at its March 8, 2024 meeting.