



## New Jersey Pinelands Commission PRESS RELEASE

**April 13, 2007**

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### **Pinelands Commission approves agreement to end the direct discharge of treated wastewater into Pinelands stream**

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its regular meeting today, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission approved an agreement to end the direct discharge of treated wastewater into a Pinelands stream in Buena Borough, Atlantic County, a long-standing violation of Pinelands environmental regulations.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was reached among the Commission, the Buena Borough Municipal Utilities Authority (BBMUA) and Buena Vista Township.

Under the agreement, the Commission will permit the BBMUA to build a wastewater infiltration-percolation facility on a 61-acre parcel in Buena Borough, upon which the BBMUA would land apply treated wastewater and ultimately cease discharge of treated wastewater into the Deep Run. The BBMUA operates a wastewater treatment facility that currently discharges wastewater into the Deep Run, which flows easterly to the Great Egg Harbor River. Discharge of wastewater to surface water bodies is prohibited under the water quality standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), and the BBMUA has been obligated to cease the discharge since 1995.

The 61-acre property in question is located in a Pinelands Agricultural Production Area, where such a facility normally would not be permitted under the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. However, the Commission determined that the MOA includes measures that will ensure an equivalent level of protection of Pinelands resources.

“This agreement contains specific milestones that will eliminate all discharge of treated wastewater into the Deep Run by 2014, which will reduce pollution in the Deep Run, the Great Egg Harbor River and ultimately the Great Egg Harbor Bay,” said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. “Other measures included in this agreement will reduce development potential in sensitive areas, thereby strengthening the protection of important natural resources.”

As part of the agreement, Buena Vista Township will permanently deed restrict 232 acres

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of municipally-owned land in its Pinelands Forest and Rural Development Areas against future development. These lands include large parcels in sensitive subwatersheds, including the Deep Run subwatershed. The amount of land to be preserved is sufficient to offset the 61-acre parcel that will be developed for the infiltration-percolation facility in Buena Borough. In exchange for providing the necessary offset, the BBMUA will grant Buena Vista Township a share of the total wastewater flow allocation to facilitate the extension of sewer service in the Township along U.S. Route 40. This will also enable Buena Vista Township to eliminate wastewater discharge from septic systems in the area.

Lastly, the BBMUA will seek to implement a program for the beneficial reuse of treated wastewater, which will benefit the local surface and groundwater system by allowing recharge to occur at approved locations.

Upon execution of the agreement, a proposed new middle school in Buena Vista Township will be permitted to immediately connect to the BBMUA wastewater system.

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