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THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
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Job Vacancy Announcement

Position: Planning Specialist – Land Use and Climate Resilience

Classification: Planning Specialist 2; Full-time, Exempt, Union

Posting Period: October 16, 2026 - December 13, 2026

Salary Range: \$85,000 - \$107,000

Planning Specialist – Land Use and Climate Resilience

Position Description

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency whose mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Pinelands National Reserve, and to encourage compatible economic and other human activities consistent with that purpose. The Commission implements a comprehensive plan that guides land use, development, and natural resource protection programs in the 938,000-acre Pinelands Area of southern New Jersey.

The Commission's Land Use Programs Office seeks a full-time Planning Specialist to independently manage complex planning projects and support ongoing programs and emerging regional planning, land use and natural resource management, infrastructure, and climate resilience priorities. Under the direction of the Land Use Programs Director, the Planning Specialist will have a significant role in coordinating the Commission's climate resilience initiatives while also contributing to the broader planning and policy responsibilities of the Land Use Programs Office.

Responsibilities may include independently identifying appropriate tasks, research, and analyses necessary to accomplish specified goals; supporting work plan and budget development; preparing and delivering both oral and written reports on assigned projects; conducting research and policy analysis; developing and evaluating amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP); reviewing municipal plans and ordinances; engaging in intergovernmental planning initiatives; and developing recommendations to address emerging regional land use and resource management issues.

The position will also coordinate climate resilience initiatives and assist in identifying, evaluating, and recommending climate resilience strategies, regulations, policies, and implementation measures. Responsibilities may include researching climate change impacts and potential resilience strategies; evaluating the relationship between climate change and land use, natural resources, infrastructure, and Commission regulations; representing the Commission in state and interagency climate resilience initiatives; and communicating climate-related planning and policy issues to government officials, stakeholders, and the public.

Skills and Qualifications

Well-qualified candidates will have excellent communication, analytical, organizational, and project management skills and considerable knowledge of professional planning, land use, environmental or natural resource management, climate resilience, public policy, or related principles and practices.

Demonstrated project management experience is particularly important. Candidates should have experience independently managing complex projects, coordinating interdisciplinary teams or outside partners, managing competing priorities and deadlines, and communicating project findings and recommendations. Experience managing projects involving multiple governmental agencies, organizations, or professional disciplines is highly desirable.

Candidates must have the ability to read, analyze, and interpret land use regulations, municipal plans and ordinances, scientific and technical reports, and other planning and policy documents. Duties may include data and policy analysis, professional writing, public presentations, development of planning and regulatory recommendations, preparation and coordination of CMP amendments, and development of solutions to complex regional planning and local land use issues.

The successful candidate should be able to independently define problems, evaluate alternatives, develop practical recommendations, and exercise sound professional judgment. The position requires the ability to communicate complex planning, regulatory, scientific, and policy issues effectively to Commissioners, Commission staff, governmental officials, professional organizations, stakeholders, and members of the public.

Knowledge of climate resilience, adaptation, or mitigation principles and their relationship to land use and natural resource planning is important. Relevant experience may include climate-related land use planning, hazard vulnerability assessment, water resource management, renewable and alternative energy planning, sustainable infrastructure, or other climate resilience initiatives. Candidates should be able to interpret scientific and technical information and translate it into appropriate planning and policy recommendations.

Experience leading project teams, mentoring or providing guidance to professional staff, or reviewing the work of other professionals is desirable. Prior formal supervisory experience is a plus but is not required. The position has no formal supervisory responsibilities at the time of hire.

Required skills include proficiency with Microsoft Office tools such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook, as well as the ability to use Teams to facilitate collaboration. Familiarity with ArcGIS or other GIS applications, analytical tools, municipal zoning, and state or regional regulatory frameworks is desirable. Some local travel may be required to attend meetings or visit sites within the Pinelands Area. A driver's license is required.

Requirements:

Education and Experience: A bachelor's degree in planning, environmental science, natural resource management, geography, public administration, public policy, sustainability, engineering, social science, or a closely related field and a minimum of seven years of relevant professional experience is required. A master's degree in a related field may substitute for one year of required experience.

The Commission is particularly interested in candidates with progressively responsible professional experience demonstrating the ability to independently manage complex projects in the domains of land use or regional planning, environmental or natural resource management, climate resilience, regulatory or policy development, or related fields. Experience providing project leadership, mentoring or guidance to professional staff, or supervising professional staff is also desirable.

Residency: The New Jersey First Act (P.L. 2011, c. 70) requires all new employees to reside in the State of New Jersey, unless exempted under law. If you do not reside in New Jersey, within one year of hire, you must either establish residency in the State of New Jersey or successfully receive an exemption from the Employee Residency Review Committee.

INTERESTED CANDIDATES:

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and writing sample via e-mail to humanresources@pinelands.nj.gov by the closing date, December 13, 2026.

Only candidates selected for interviews will be notified. The starting salary range is \$85,000 to \$107,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications. Opportunities for hybrid work and flex schedule are available. Full benefits package offered.

EOE

For more information, see the Pinelands Commission website.