



STOCKTON CENTER ON SUCCESSFUL AGING

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For Immediate Release

Pinelands Summer Short Course to Feature 11 Presentations and Four Field Trips that Showcase the Pinelands' Natural, Cultural and Historic Treasures

NEW LISBON, N.J., May 27, 2025 – The ninth annual Pinelands Summer Short Course will feature 11 educational presentations and four guided field trips, including a course with live animals, a hands-on search for fossils, and a guided kayak trip.

Registration is now open for the event, which will be held at [Stockton University's Kramer Hall](#) in downtown Hammonton from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, July 18, 2025.

The event is co-sponsored by the [New Jersey Pinelands Commission](#) and [The Stockton Center on Successful Aging](#).

“From basketmaking to Batsto, this year’s event offers a diverse lineup of presentations that will help to heighten awareness and appreciation of the Pinelands,” said Susan R. Grogan, the Pinelands Commission Executive Director.

“Join us for a day of learning and exploration of New Jersey's treasured Pinelands. With classroom sessions, hands-on art projects, and field trips, this is an opportunity to enjoy the beauty and mystery of the pines in a brand new way,” said Christine Ferri, director of the Stockton Center on Successful Aging.

Educators can earn four professional development credits for attending the event. To register, please log on to: <https://stockton.edu/aging/events/summer2025pinelandscourse.html>.

Here is a full description of each course offering:

Classroom Programs at Kramer Hall:

Prehistoric Life of New Jersey, Dig It! (Dinosaurs, Mammoths & Sharks, Oh, My!)

Presented by Marc Rogoff, Education Specialist, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

New Jersey's wildlife has always been diverse and interesting. Attendees will examine one billion-year-old fossils that are from New Jersey, along with current endangered and threatened species. Attendees will also learn about the changes in terrain, sea level and climate that influenced our native species over geologic history. Attendees will also sort through 15 million-year-old sediments to find fossils, which they can keep!

Wildlife of the NJ Pine Barrens

Presented by Jim Hansen, After-School Coordinator and Educator, Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge

The New Jersey Pine Barrens is a unique environment that is home to a wide variety of wildlife. The Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge sits on 171 acres of preserved Pine Barrens forest and takes in over 7,000 wild, native New Jersey animals per year at its Wildlife Hospital. Attendees will learn about common and rare animal species, while seeing a select few Wildlife Ambassadors (live animals).

Drop Out Zone

Presented by Blaine Rothauser, Senior Ecologist, GZA, GeoEnvironmental, Inc.

New Jersey is situated perfectly along the Atlantic Flyway – a pathway that hundreds of bird species follow during northward and southward journeys to and from their wintering and breeding grounds. The state is a prime “stopover” area for birds to refuel their tanks during their long peregrinations. This presentation is designed for adult audiences who want to become more familiar with New Jersey's many natural areas, avian biology and behavior and how a state's geology can drive its natural heritage.

Confessions of A Wildlife Photographer

Presented by Blaine Rothauser, Senior Ecologist, GZA, GeoEnvironmental, Inc.

Have you ever perused a wildlife magazine and tripped on some amazing image of an animal doing something crazy, or posed in perfect light, or caught in the act of a bizarre behavior and wondered, “how'd that guy or gal get that shot?” The presenter will go “full disclosure” while delivering a presentation that will be entertaining, insightful, and revealing of a trade he continues to hone. Rothauser will discuss the advantages of learning the latest technology and equipment, while also challenging attendees to push limits and boundaries and think outside of the box. In turn, attendees can learn how to become better wildlife photographers.

Experiencing the Estuary Through Art, Science and Storytelling

Presented by Kaitlin Gannon, Education Coordinator, and Amy Plantarich, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (JCNERR)

This course provides a two-part session that explores how art, science, and storytelling help us connect with and communicate about the natural world. In Part 1, attendees will discover how the Jacques Cousteau Reserve uses these elements in its programs and take part in a storytelling activity (bring a photo you've taken of your favorite natural space!). In Part 2, attendees will get hands-on with creative activities that deepen their connection to the estuary. Attendees will walk away with creative inspiration to enrich both your work and personal life. No art experience needed!

Jersey Friendly Yards

Presented by Caroline McFarland, Stewardship Specialist, Barnegat Bay Partnership

Attendees will learn about the Barnegat Bay Partnership's successful Jersey Friendly Yards Program. The presenter will demonstrate how to use the Jersey Friendly Plant Database, while discussing how schools, homeowners, and municipalities can become Jersey Friendly Yards Certified.

Orchids of the Pinelands

Presented by Robert Sprague, President, Native Orchid Conference

The Pinelands is home to more than two dozen species of wild orchids. Although some are flamboyant, many are small and inconspicuous. This presentation will employ the magic of macro-photography to provide close-up views of all of them. In addition, attendees will learn about the amazing life histories of some of these fascinating plants and why the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center has chosen the Pinelands as an important study site.

Forestry 101: An Introduction

Presented by John Hooven, CCF, Cape Atlantic Conservation District Forester

What is forestry? Why is it important to manage our forests? What type of forests do we manage on both public and private lands? If you love our forests and trees, and want to learn more about basic forest ecology, this is the program for you! We will discuss the importance of forest management, measurements, forest health, and the consequences of not managing our forests.

Native Berry Farming in the New Jersey Pine Barrens

Presented by Peter Oudemans, Professor and Director, Rutgers University, Phillip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension

Berry farming and harvesting is practiced throughout the New Jersey Pinelands by commercial growers as well as backyard hobbyists, organic and conventional growers, and even wild plant foragers. Attendees will learn about the origins of the industries and the development of farming and harvesting practices. They will also receive guidance for growing berries at home.

Pine Barrens Berry Pickin' Basket Making

Presented by Niki Giberson

In this workshop, students will complete a 6-inch round basket with a stationary oak handle. Both twining and weaving will be used to complete this beginner basket. All materials will be supplied.

Pine Needle Basketry

Presented by Teri Hislop, Many Flowers Pure Spirit Woman Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, Clanmother and Keeper of the Traditional Craft

Students will learn the basic technique of pine needle basketmaking, while hearing the stories and lore associated with this traditional craft.

Half day, outdoor field trips:

Walking Through History on the 1808 Trail

Led by Rosemarie Mason and Diane Mason, Outdoor Club of South Jersey

This course will feature a guided hike along the same road the loggers of the 1700's traveled when they timbered out the majestic cedar trees in Mordecai's Swamp. The walk is approximately 5 miles or less over 13 footbridges and through the middle of an old-age swamp. Attendees should wear sturdy shoes (no sandals or flip-flops) and bring water, a snack and bug repellent. (Participants will drive on their own to Batsto, where they will meet with the guide at the parking area in front of the Visitor Center.)

Batsto Village: Nature and Industry in the Pine Barrens

Led by John Hebble, Historian, and Ally Horan, Naturalist, Wharton State Forest

Explore Batsto with Wharton State Forest's Naturalist and Historian! Topics will include the flora and fauna of the Pine Barrens, notable people who lived and worked in Batsto Village, and the ways in which humans interacted with the natural resources of the Pinelands through different eras of Batsto's history. The tour will also include time in Batsto Mansion. Comfortable shoes and sunscreen are recommended! (Participants will drive on their own to Batsto, where they will meet with the guide at the parking area in front of the Visitor Center.)

Nature Walk around Hammonton Lake Park

Led by Josh Gant, Naturalist, Ocean County Parks and Recreation

Nestled in the middle of suburbia, Hammonton Lake Park is an island of mixed pine and oak upland forest surrounded by Atlantic white cedar wetlands. An Ocean County Parks Naturalist will lead the walk around the trails of Hammonton Lake, and we will discuss topics such as forest fire, Pine Barrens ecology, and the plants and wildlife, including birds that you will find in the area. We will walk approximately 2.5 miles. Attendees should wear appropriate footwear, dress for the weather and bug spray with DEET is highly recommended. Bring binoculars if you have them. (Transportation is provided.)

Padding in the Pines - Batsto Lake from Industry to Ecology

Led by Jeff Larson and/or Monica Cahill, Pinelands Adventures

Join a Pinelands Adventures guide for a unique kayak tour of Batsto Lake, where layers of rich history and vibrant ecology come to confluence. Established in 1776, Batsto played a vital role in the Revolutionary war area as an Iron production center. Its legacy remains a treasure trove of historical and ecological diversity, and outdoor recreational opportunities. As we paddle, we'll explore the aquatic and shoreline habits, with a focus on unique Pine Barrens plants and animals in their natural setting. Attendees will learn how centuries of human activities have shaped and been shaped by this resilient, yet sensitive landscape. (Transportation is provided.)

***** ATTENTION EDITORS/REPORTERS:** Digital photos of the Pinelands can be obtained via e-mail by contacting Paul Leakan at Info@pinelands.nj.gov, including the photos below.



Above: The 9th annual Pinelands Summer Short Course includes a presentation on the native orchids of the Pinelands, including pink lady's slipper orchids. Photo/Paul Leakan, Pinelands Commission



Above: The 9th annual Pinelands Summer Short Course includes a guided tour of Batsto Village in Wharton State Forest. Photo/Paul Leakan, Pinelands Commission



Above: The 9th annual Pinelands Summer Short Course includes a presentation on native berry farming in the New Jersey Pinelands.
Photo/Paul Leakan, Pinelands Commission



Above: The 9th annual Pinelands Summer Short Course includes a guided kayak trip on Batsto Lake.
Photo/Paul Leakan, Pinelands Commission

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