



New Jersey Pinelands Commission

PRESS RELEASE

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Pinelands Commission provides funds to help permanently preserve 200-acre parcel next to Camp Ockanickon in Medford and Shamong

NEW LISBON – An environmentally-sensitive, 200-acre parcel in Medford and Shamong townships has been permanently preserved with funds administered by the Pinelands Commission.

The Commission has transferred a total of \$436,563 from the Pinelands Conservation Fund to YMCA Camp Ockanickon Inc., which used the money toward its purchase of the property, located adjacent to the camp on McKendimen Road.

“We’re thrilled to participate in a project that will help protect the Pinelands on two fronts,” said Nancy Wittenberg, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. “First, this acquisition protects land with extensive forests and swamps that serve as the headwaters of the Rancocas Creek. Secondly, the Camp will use this property to expand its educational and recreational programs, which will further raise awareness and appreciation of the Pinelands.”

YMCA Camp Ockanickon Inc. bought the parcel for \$1.1 million, using funds from the Pinelands Commission, Burlington County, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Green Acres Program and the Haines Family Foundation, Inc. of Chatsworth, NJ.

The land contains the headwaters of two large bodies of water that the camp uses for recreational and ecological studies. Approximately 160 acres of the property are located in Medford, with the remaining acreage in Shamong.

“We are committed to providing opportunities for our community to learn, grow and thrive,” said Keith VanDerzee, Chief Executive Officer of YMCA Camp Ockanickon Inc. “This purchase is a reflection of that commitment, and we’re grateful, honored and proud that these entities have chosen to support us in this project.”

YMCA Camp Ockanickon Inc. is a nonprofit organization that operates Camp Ockanickon, Camp Matollionequay and Lake Stockwell Day Camp on 565 acres in Medford. It works to help children, teens and families discover their full potential by providing and supporting opportunities to learn, grow and thrive amidst caring, supportive adults.

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VanDerzee said the forests, swamps and streams on the newly-preserved property will enhance and expand the camp's environmental education and recreation offerings. Approximately 100 schools throughout the state bring classes to the camp to complement their science curriculum by learning about the special ecosystem in the Pinelands, he said.

Including this parcel, the Commission has now paid out a total of \$5,697,995 from the Pinelands Conservation Fund toward the permanent preservation of approximately 3,915 acres of land.

The Pinelands Conservation Fund was created in 2004 as part of an agreement with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to permit the construction and upgrade of an electric transmission line through eastern portions of the Pinelands. Under the agreement, the special fund was established to further the Pinelands protection program and ensure a greater level of protection of the unique resources of the Pinelands Area. The utility that built the transmission lines, Atlantic City Electric (formerly Conectiv), provided \$13 million to establish the Fund. Conservation Resources Inc. of Chester, NJ, serves as the facilitator of the program, helping to identify worthy land preservation projects.

***** ATTENTION EDITORS/REPORTERS:** To obtain a photo or map of the property (see below), please contact Paul Leakan at (609) 894-7300, ext. 124 or info@njpines.state.nj.us.



Above: The Commission provided funds to help preserve a 200-acre property in Medford and Shamong townships. Photo by Paul Leakan/Pinelands Commission

(MORE)



ABOVE: The Commission provided funds to help preserve a 200-acre property (outlined in red) adjacent to YMCA Camp Ockanickon.

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