



NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

MONTHLY REPORT



Early morning sunbeams in Brendan T. Byrne State Forest in the New Jersey Pinelands,
as photographed in March 2026

MARCH 2026

1 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

1.1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1.1A COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- **Personnel & Budget (P&B) Committee:** The Committee met on March 17, 2026. The Committee adopted the minutes from its August 19, 2025 meeting. Staff reviewed financial updates, including check registers, electronic disbursements, and application fees and provided a summary of recent employee actions. The Committee approved the deletion of fixed assets. Finally, the Committee went into closed session to discuss bids received for the Fenwick Manor Rehabilitation Project and the Executive Director’s recommendation. A resolution authorizing the Executive Director to execute a contract with the selected contractor will be on the April 10, 2026 Commission meeting agenda.
- **Policy & Implementation (P&I) Committee:** During its meeting on March 27, 2026, the Committee received a report on stewardship monitoring visits to five properties preserved with the Commission’s Pinelands Conservation Fund. The site visits found all five to be in good condition, with minimal waste dumping, damage from offroad vehicles, or other disturbance. Additionally, the Committee heard a presentation on AI Data Centers within the context of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). Staff reviewed municipal flexibility for zoning in Regional Growth Areas and emphasized the very limited ability to permit data centers in other Pinelands management areas. The presentation also covered some aspects of development application reviews on various environmental standards within the CMP, such as stormwater, wetlands, water management, and other standards in chapters 5 and 6. The Committee further discussed concerns with the lack of a definition for light industrial use, the decommissioning and disposal of assets when a data center is closed or becomes obsolete, the need for onsite energy production, the level of noise data centers produce, and the number of employees that might impact transportation, air quality, and wastewater volumes.
- **Audit Committee:** The Committee met on March 20th and reviewed the FY2022 Audit report issued by the State Auditor. The Committee discussed the two findings in the report. Staff provided details regarding the planned implementation of corrective actions in response to the two findings. Committee members provided several suggestions to prepare for future audits.

1.1B OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

- A total of thirteen Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests were received in March. Six were sent responsive material, six were advised that the requests were overly broad and did not contain the specificity required by OPRA and one was advised that there was no responsive material.

1.1C OTHER

- **Legal Notice Requirements:** To implement the state’s new legal notice requirements (P.L. 2025, c. 72), the Commission revised its website to include a new [Legal Notices](#) page. A link to the

Commission's new webpage now appears on the Department of State's [Statewide Legal Notices Listings](#).

- **Executive Order 5:** In March, staff reviewed and discussed the template (spreadsheet) received from the Governor's Office for use in responding to [Executive Order 5](#). This order establishes a Cross-Agency Permitting Team charged with streamlining and expediting the state agency permitting process, in partnership with state agencies and impacted stakeholders. Information to be provided in the template includes a description of all permits issued by the Commission, associated timelines and approval procedures, fees, completeness determinations, and recommended strategies for improvements. The Commission's response is due to the Governor's office on April 20, 2026.

1.2 LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

1.2A LITIGATION

- **In Re Challenge of Clayton Sand Company to December 4, 2023 Amendments to N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.1 et seq., A-001476-23** – Clayton Sand Company filed a Notice of Appeal of the amendments to the Water Management Rules at N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.86(d)2 of the Pinelands CMP (i.e. the Kirkwood-Cohansey rules). The appeal challenges the rule adoption as procedurally and substantively defective. Briefing of this appeal concluded on February 14, 2025 with the filing of Clayton's reply to the Pinelands Preservation Alliance's brief. On July 10, 2025, Winslow Township filed a motion to supplement the record. Opposition to the Township's Motion was filed on behalf of the Commission on July 18, 2025. The Court issued an Order denying Winslow's motion on July 28, 2025. Oral argument occurred on October 29, 2025. We continue to await the Court's decision.
- **Hovsons, Inc. et.al. v. Babbit, et. al., Civil Action No. 00-3943 (MLC/TJB)** – In 2024, Hovsons, Inc. filed a motion with the Federal Court seeking to enforce the terms of the 2004 settlement agreement between Hovsons, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Commission related to development of the Heritage Minerals tract in Manchester Township. The tract is located in the Pinelands National Reserve, outside the Pinelands Area. Multiple mediation sessions occurred between September 2024 and July 2025. On October 24, 2025, Hovsons submitted a revised concept plan for development of the site and a draft of updated settlement terms. Hovsons submitted the same concept plan to the court as part of its challenge to Manchester Township's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan to satisfy the municipality's fourth round affordable housing obligation. Mediation sessions were conducted on December 8, 2025, January 5, 2026 and January 12, 2026 to discuss Hovsons' proposed settlement terms and changes made by NJDEP and the Commission. Additionally, the Pinelands Alliance (PA), which was a participant in the 2004 litigation but not a signatory to the settlement, requested to participate in the mediation. In February, Hovsons agreed to permit PA to review and provide comments on the final draft of an amendment to the 2004 settlement agreement once it has been negotiated. The parties continued to discuss amendments to the 2004 settlement agreement in March.
- **Southampton Twp., N.J., Letter of Interpretation #2256, Block 1903, Lots 40 & 40.01 - OAL Docket No. EPC-17684-2024S** - This is an appeal of a Letter of Interpretation (LOI) regarding

a wetlands boundary determination for Block 1903, Lots 40 and 40.01 in Southampton Township. The matter has been placed on the inactive list, pending resolution of the Chancery matter involving Artistic Materials (see below).

- **Artistic Materials, Inc. and Michael J. Finnegan, Southampton Township (App. No. 1997-0010.002)**: This litigation involves a parcel in the Pinelands Agricultural Production Area that is subject to a Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) deed restriction. On January 2, 2025, the Attorney General's office filed a complaint in Superior Court on behalf of the Commission and the NJDEP. The two agencies are jointly seeking: (1) declaratory judgement finding that the current industrial and commercial use of the property and wetlands disturbances violate the PDC deed restriction and the CMP; (2) an order enforcing the PDC deed restriction and the CMP, specifically requiring the defendants to immediately cease non-agricultural industrial and commercial activity on the parcel and to restore the property in accordance with the PDC deed restriction and the CMP; (3) an order compelling the defendants to restore wetlands on the parcel in compliance with the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act and pay civil penalties; and (4) an order compelling the defendants to remove the stockpiled solid waste and properly dispose of it in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Act and pay civil penalties. The defendants filed their answer on February 12, 2025. A Case Management Conference was conducted on May 27, 2025. Discovery was served by both parties and responses exchanged. The Court ordered that the parties engage in mediation and a mediator was retained. The first mediation session occurred on October 14, 2025. At that session, the parties agreed to exchange updated settlement proposals. Settlement proposals were exchanged in mid-November, after which the Chancery Court allowed the parties another week and a half to continue settlement discussions. A case management conference with Judge Nocella was conducted on December 2, 2025. The parties advised the Judge that the mediation had failed and that the litigation would need to proceed. The Court issued a new Case Management Order on December 4, 2025, extending the time limits within the original July 21, 2025 Case Management Order and allowing the parties to exchange a small number of additional interrogatories and requests for production of documents. This additional discovery was served on the Commission on December 8, 2025 and the Commission's responses were sent to the Defendants on or about December 19, 2025. Commission and NJDEP staff conducted another site inspection on January 7, 2026. During that site inspection, Commission staff took 17 soil borings and numerous photographs. Additionally, depositions of Commission and NJDEP staff as well as of the Finnegans occurred in mid-January. During the depositions of the Finnegans, it became apparent that business documents requested by the Commission during written discovery had not been provided. Counsel for the Finnegans directed Mr. Finnegan not to answer questions about real property he owns outside New Jersey. The DAGs representing the Commission and NJDEP filed a Motion to Compel Deposition Testimony. Counsel for Defendants filed a motion for a protective order on the out of state ownership question. Argument on both motions occurred on February 20, 2026 with the Court issuing an order granting the State's motion to redepose Mr. Finnegan on the question of whether he owns property outside of New Jersey and permitting three follow up questions and denying the Defendants' motion for a protective order. On February 6, 2026, the Commission provided its expert report to the Defendants. On February 13, 2026, the Commission's DAG filed a motion to compel production of documents that had been repeatedly requested during the discovery process and which the Finnegans, during their depositions, indicated they had in their possession. Oral argument on this motion was initially scheduled for March 13, 2026.

Defendants’ counsel filed a letter with the Court on March 9, 2026 indicating that in its opinion the motion to compel was moot given they had produced 20 boxes of materials. The Court rescheduled oral argument on the motion to compel discovery to March 27, 2026. Defendants’ counsel subsequently filed a cross motion for a protective order on March 19, 2026. A reply brief thereto was submitted on behalf of the Commission on March 23, 2026. Oral argument on the Commission’s discovery motion was again rescheduled to April 2, 2026.

1.2B LEGISLATION

The 222nd Legislature was sworn in on January 13, 2026 and resumed sessions. All bills that were not passed by both houses of the Legislature and signed by Governor Murphy before the end of his term must be relisted to be considered during the new legislative term.

A summary of any legislation specific to the Pinelands Area or Commission is provided below. A summary of other pending legislation potentially related to the Pinelands is attached at the end of the document (Attachment 1).

Pinelands Specific Legislation

<u>Bill No.(s)</u>	<u>Prime Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Synopsis</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
S662	Smith, McKeon	Establishes various programs in the NJDEP concerning management of publicly owned forested land; appropriates \$60 million.	Senate Bill - Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
S935	Testa, Bucco	Establishes Forest Fire Preparedness Commission in NJDEP. The new Commission would be comprised of 20 members, including a member of the Pinelands Commission.	Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A1287/S1743	Inganamort/ Space	Establishes minimum acreage goal and schedule for prescribed burns in the Pinelands Area and Statewide.	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 1/13/2026

1.2C INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

- **Evesham Township:** The Township is proposing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that would accommodate surfacing of an existing trail and parking improvements within wetlands and wetlands buffers in the Black Run Preserve. The MOA also proposes to address a number of outstanding violations in the Preserve, where development was undertaken without application to, or approved by, the Commission. Staff met with Township representatives in mid-January 2025 to discuss the status of grant funding associated with the trail project. On March 24, 2025, Evesham Township submitted a revised threatened and endangered species (T&E) survey protocol for the proposed accessible trail and associated parking areas. Additionally, the Township indicated that it had reduced the size of the proposed accessible trail. Commission staff sent a letter to the Township in early May, providing comments on the revised T&E survey protocol and guidance on additional survey work that should be undertaken at the Preserve. Evesham Township submitted a revised T&E protocol on July 2, 2025. Staff reviewed the revised protocol and issued an incomplete letter on August 11, 2025, providing additional revisions that need to be made to the T&E protocol. Staff also spoke with the Township to discuss continuing concerns with the T&E protocol and reiterate the Commission’s commitment to working with the Township to complete the MOA process. On March 18, 2026, Evesham Township reached out to Commission staff for meeting dates to continue discussions concerning an MOA for the Black Run Preserve. A meeting has been scheduled for May 14, 2026.
- **South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA):** Future development at the Atlantic City International Airport is the subject of a 2004 MOA between the Commission and SJTA. An amendment to that MOA was executed in 2019. Both the MOA and the 2019 Amendment allow deviations from the CMP’s threatened and endangered species protection standards. Additional development is now being proposed in the northwest quadrant of the Airport property, necessitating discussion of another MOA Amendment. At the Executive Director’s request, a meeting was held on July 7, 2025 with SJTA and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) staff to discuss the proposed project and anticipated timeline. Subsequently, SJTA requested a meeting with the Commission Chair and Executive Director as the first step in consideration of an amendment to the MOA. That meeting was held on July 21, 2025. Upon SJTA’s submission of a concept plan and related information about the project, including proposed offsetting measures that might be incorporated in the MOA Amendment, a presentation will be scheduled at a P&I Committee meeting. On October 8, 2025, SJTA advised that it would provide a detailed proposal to the Commission after gathering additional information through a habitat assessment study as part of the Environmental Impact Statement required by FAA. At FAA’s request, staff participated in a coordination meeting with SJTA representatives on November 20, 2025. Subsequently, FAA scheduled quarterly status meetings with representatives of SJTA, the Commission and FAA staff. The last quarterly meeting occurred on February 3, 2026. On March 25, 2026, SJTA submitted a T&E survey protocol for the 450-acre Northwest portion of the airport. Commission staff advised SJTA that it would need to submit a public development

application before the T&E protocol could be reviewed. However, in an effort to provide some assistance, the Regulatory Programs staff did a cursory review of the protocol and provided initial feedback on March 30, 2026. Staff also reiterated that a more detailed review of the T&E protocol could not commence until SJTA filed a public development application and application fee because the proposed development is not covered by the existing MOA and an MOA amendment was neither in place nor in process.

1.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Recruitment:** In March, recruitment efforts concluded for the Environmental Specialist and Business Assistant positions. Two candidates were selected and accepted the positions, with a start date of April 13, 2026.
- **Medicare Reimbursements:** Medicare Part B first quarter reimbursements were processed and submitted to Business Services.

2 INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection:** On March 3, 2026, staff met with representatives of the Bureau of NJPDES Stormwater Permitting & Water Quality Management to discuss pending changes to the New Jersey Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual in response to the adoption of the REAL rules and to coordinate around the distribution of municipal stormwater model ordinances for Pinelands Area municipalities.
- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection:** The Bureau of Surface Water Permitting met with Land Use Programs staff for the purpose of helping Bureau staff better understand the applicability of CMP standards in the Pinelands National Reserve (PNR), outside the Pinelands Area. The Bureau reviews applications for discharge of treated effluent from wastewater treatment facilities to surface water. For purposes of this meeting, the Bureau was particularly interested in development in the PNR that would contribute to wastewater flow at an existing treatment facility with an existing surface water discharge.
- **State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC):** On January 20, 2026, Governor Murphy signed PL 2025, c.287, establishing a Woodland Easement Purchase Program to be administered by the SADC. The new program is expected to largely mimic the state's existing Farmland Preservation Program, including establishment of easement values and use of a Statewide Formula. In response to a request from SADC on March 12, 2026 about partner involvement in this effort, the Executive Director confirmed that Commission staff will participate and provide input.

3 LAND USE PROGRAMS

3.1 CONFORMANCE ACTIVITY

	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Master Plans/Ordinances Received		
Adopted	33	44
Drafted or Introduced	11	33
Total ¹	20	49
Substantial Issue Finding ²	2	2
No Substantial Issue Finding	22	27
No Issue Finding	3	5
Total	27	34
Finding Letters Issued³	16	19

Notable Activity:

- Fourth Round Affordable Housing Update:** Pinelands municipalities continue working toward the adoption of ordinances implementing Fourth Round affordable housing plans ahead of the March 15, 2026 deadline established under the New Jersey Fair Housing Act. It is anticipated that a number of these ordinances will require the review and approval of the full Commission.
- Monroe Township:** The Township submitted its adopted Hightop Redevelopment Plan, which encompasses approximately 27 acres in the Township’s Regional Growth Area. It permits mixed use development and is a mechanism for addressing a portion of the Township’s affordable housing obligation. A public hearing to receive comment on the redevelopment plan and the Township’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, 2026. It is anticipated that staff will present its recommendation to the P&I Committee in April.
- Jackson Township:** Commission staff continued to evaluate materials submitted by Jackson Township in response to concerns identified with the affordable housing sites included in the Township’s Housing Element and Fair Share Plan that are located in the Pinelands Area. On March 23, 2026, the staff issued a letter to the Township addressing the four affordable housing

¹The 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).

² 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.

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

sites within the Pinelands Area. Given the proposed increases in permitted density, the letter specifically requested additional information be submitted regarding infrastructure capacity and availability for the sites located in the Regional Growth Area.

3.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Applications Reviewed	10	29
Surveys Required	2	3
Surveys Reviewed	1	2
Certificates of Appropriateness Required	0	0

Notable Activity:

- Fenwick Manor Rehabilitation:** On March 10th, the Commission received two bids from construction contractors interested in completing the necessary Fenwick Manor rehabilitation work. An evaluation committee made up of employees from the Pinelands Commission and Connolly & Hickey Historical Architects individually ranked the two bids and recommended that the bid be awarded to Hawley Bros, Inc. The Executive Director and the Commission’s Personnel & Budget Committee concurred with the evaluation committee’s recommendation. Notice of intent to award was distributed on March 18, 2026. A resolution authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Hawley Bros, Inc. has been drafted and will be presented to the Commission at the April 10th meeting.

3.3 PINELANDS DEVELOPMENT CREDIT (PDC) PROGRAM

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
PDCs Allocated ⁴	4.75	6.0
PDCs Severed ⁵	0	1.0
Acres Protected	0	41.08
PDCs Extinguished ⁶	0	8.50
Acres Protected	0	204.68

⁴ **PDC Allocations** are official calculations done by the Commission to determine the number of PDCs to which a parcel of land is entitled. The allocation is identified in a Letter of Interpretation.

⁵ **Severance** is the act of formally separating PDCs from a parcel of land. This occurs after recordation of a deed restriction that permanently preserves the parcel and is documented through issuance of one or more PDC Certificates.

⁶ PDCs are considered **extinguished** when the State purchases a farmland easement or parcel of land to which PDCs have been allocated by the Commission.

PDCs Sold	2.0	5.50
Average Sales Price per PDC	\$100,000	\$97,455
Average Sales Price per right	\$25,000	\$24,364
PDCs Redeemed ⁷	2.0	7.0

Notable Activity:

- **Allocations:** A total of 4.75 PDCs were allocated to two farms in March. A Letter of Interpretation (LOI) was issued, allocating 0.75 PDCs (3 rights) to a 23.67-acre farm in the Agricultural Production Area of Southampton Township. In addition, 4.0 PDCs were allocated to a 91.63-acre farm in the Agricultural Production Area of Tabernacle Township.
- **Redemptions:** In March, PDCs were redeemed for two projects in Egg Harbor Township, one involving development of a commercial use in a residential zone and the other proposing development of two single family dwellings. In addition, 1.50 PDCs were redeemed in association with a 17-unit project in Jackson Township.

3.4 SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Permanent Land Protection:** Rowan University invited a guest lecture from the Commission to students in the University’s Urban and Regional Planning program. The focus of the class was to highlight how regional plans, like the CMP, can facilitate open space and permanent land protection. Staff’s presentation gave an overview of permanent land protection in the Pinelands from the land acquisition targeting directed in the Federal “502” Act, to the Pinelands Development Credit Program, and other CMP provisions that lead to permanent land protection as a condition of a development application. The class also included a lecture from the Highlands Coalition giving a non-governmental perspective on the effectiveness of the Highlands plan in preserving open space.

4 REGULATORY PROGRAMS

4.1 APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Pre-Application Conferences	2	14
Certificates of Filing	28	59
Public Development Reports	5	7

⁷ **Redemption** occurs when the owner of one or more PDC Certificates designates them for use in association with a specific development application. The signature of the municipality in which the development project is located is required. Once redeemed, the PDCs cannot be sold or reused.

NJDEP/PC Forestry Application Complete	0	0
PDC Letters of Interpretation	2	3
Non-PDC Letters of Interpretation	0	0
MOA Consistency Determinations	14	22
Review of Agency Determinations	88	192

4.2 NOTABLE APPLICATIONS

- Agricultural Processing Facility, Waterford Township (Applicant: Emerald Farms, App. No. 2004-0162.003):** On August 6, 2025, an application was initiated with the Commission for the development of an agricultural processing facility on a 44.5-acre parcel. The parcel is located in an Agricultural Production Area. The applicant proposes the growing and processing of cannabis. By letters dated September 11, 2025 and January 16, 2026, the staff identified the information necessary to complete the application. That information included demonstrating that the two dwellings on the parcel would still meet the lot area required by zoning, addressing a deed restriction that was previously imposed on the parcel to allow the two dwellings to meet zoning and provision of a stormwater management plan. Thereafter, the applicant submitted information on February 18, 2026 and February 25, 2026 revising the development to only propose the growing of cannabis in an existing approximately 6,400 square foot building and a proposed 4,000 square foot greenhouse and, at least temporarily, eliminating the proposed processing of cannabis on the parcel. By letter dated March 19, 2026, the staff advised that no application to the Commission was required for the proposed production (growing) of an agricultural plant such as cannabis. In addition, the staff's letter also advised that the construction of any building used exclusively for agriculture does not require an application to the Commission. The staff's letter further advised that the establishment of any agricultural products processing facility use on the parcel or within the existing or proposed buildings continues to require completion of an application with the Commission.
- Single Family Dwelling, Pemberton Township (Applicant: Paetzold Constriction Company, App. No. 2016-0167.002):** On January 14, 2026, an application was initiated with the Commission proposing the development of a single family dwelling serviced by an onsite septic system on a 0.25-acre (11,000 square feet) lot. The lot is located in a Regional Growth Area. By letter dated March 5, 2026, the staff advised the applicant that a prior application for the demolition of a previously existing dwelling, 50 years old or older, on the lot was completed with the Commission and a Certificate of Filing was issued on February 2, 2017. By letter dated July 11, 2019, the staff indicated that a demolition permit for the dwelling issued by the Pemberton Township Construction Code Official on February 9, 2018 could take effect. Both the Certificate of Filing and the July 11, 2019 staff letter indicated that the reconstruction of a single family dwelling, within five years of its demolition, did not require an application to the Commission. Based on available information, the dwelling was demolished prior to issuance of the February 9, 2018 Township demolition permit. Since the dwelling was not reconstructed within five years of the demolition of the previously existing dwelling, a new application for the development of a dwelling on the lot is required. A minimum lot size of one acre is required for development of a

single family dwelling serviced by an onsite septic system. Based on available information, the lot is located within 300 feet of wetlands. The proposed dwelling therefore requires a Waiver of Strict Compliance (“Waiver”). The Waiver regulations allow the development of a dwelling if certain minimum environmental standards are met for this application, the proposed dwelling and all associated development (septic system, driveway, clearing) must not be located in wetlands and the proposed dwelling must be located on a lot containing at least 20,000 square feet. Since this lot only contains 11,000 square feet, the proposed development of a dwelling on the lot does not meet the minimum environmental standards to qualify for a Waiver. If a Waiver application is filed and approved by the Commission, the relief granted would be an allocation of PDCs based upon the fair market value of the lot, rather than approval of any on-site development.

- **Warehouse, Hamilton Township (Applicant: SunCap Property Group, App. No. 1982-2997.007):** This application proposes the development of a 652,000-square-foot warehouse on a 256-acre parcel. The development is proposed on the portion of the former Atlantic City Racetrack parcel that contained horse stables. The parcel is located in a Regional Growth Area. The application was filed with the Pinelands Commission on January 14, 2025. On September 15, 2025, the staff issued a Certificate of Filing for the proposed development of a 652,000 square foot warehouse building. Thereafter, the applicant indicated that the site design may be revised. On March 9, 2026, the applicant submitted a revised site plan. The revised site plan now proposes a 1,228,000 square foot warehouse building on the parcel. That information is currently under review.
- **Chemical Treatment of Ponds, Waterford Township (Applicant: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, App. No. 1981- 1368.023):** On February 13, 2026, the staff received notification from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Pesticide Control Program of an application for the chemical treatment of three lakes/ponds. That same day, the staff also received from the NJDEP, Fish and Wildlife, a document entitled “Mullica River Northern Snakehead Eradication Plan Summary.” The three lakes/ponds proposed for chemical treatment are located in a Regional Growth Area, a Rural Development Area and a Forest Area. The NJDEP Aquatic Pesticide Permit application proposes the chemical treatment of Tindall Lake (1.44 acres) and two Archway Lakes (6.91 acres). The proposed chemical treatment is for the eradication of an aquatic invasive fish species, Northern Snakehead. In 1991, the NJDEP and the Pinelands Commission entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) formalizing a framework for coordinating the policies and activities of the NJDEP Pesticide Control Element (now known as the Pesticide Control Program). In part, that MOA provides that a formal application to the Commission is not required for the application of pesticides to a lake or pond, provided the requirements of the MOA are met. By memorandum dated March 2, 2026, the staff advised the NJDEP Pesticide Control Program the proposed chemical treatment of three lakes/ponds comprising 8.35 acres did not raise any issues with respect to CMP standards and that the NJDEP, Pesticide Control Program could approve the Aquatic Pesticide Permit. The staff’s March 2, 2026 memorandum also indicated that any proposed chemical treatment of streams located upstream or downstream of the three lakes/ponds required formal application to the Pinelands Commission. The staff held a meeting on March 6, 2026 with NJDEP, Fish and Wildlife staff to further discuss the proposal to chemically treat streams located upstream and downstream of the three lakes/ponds. The staff reiterated that the MOA only addresses the chemical treatment of lakes and ponds and that any proposal to chemically treat streams required formal application to the Commission. On March 13, 2026, the NJDEP, Fish and

Wildlife submitted a revised plan delineating the limits of the lakes/ponds proposed to be chemically treated. By memorandum dated March 18, 2026, the staff advised that the addition of 5.44 acres of ponded areas to the NJDEP, Pesticide Control Program application did not raise any issue with respect to the standards of the CMP and that the NJDEP, Pesticide Control Program could approve the Aquatic Pesticide Permit.

- **Resource Extraction, Woodland Township (Applicant: Robert T. Winzinger, App. No. 1980-0062.001):** On December 20, 2023, the staff received a request to conduct a preapplication conference for a proposed resource extraction operation on a 285-acre lot. The lot is located in the Pinelands Preservation Area District. To facilitate the pre-application conference, the staff sent a letter on January 26, 2024 advising the applicant of the need to delineate all wetlands and the required 300 foot buffer to wetlands on the lot. The letter also advised that there were known sightings of a threatened and endangered (T&E) animal species on the lot. The staff's January 26, 2024 letter further advised the applicant of the requirement to conduct a two season T&E animal species survey. On January 31, 2024, the staff conducted the preapplication conference. On June 2, 2025, the applicant requested a second pre-application conference, which was held on June 26, 2025. The application currently proposes resource extraction on 74 acres located within four proposed non-contiguous mining areas on the lot. On August 4, 2025, the required application fee was submitted, enabling the staff to review a submitted T&E animal species survey. The application proposes to mine all areas on the lot that are not either delineated as wetlands, located with the required 300 foot buffer to wetlands or located within 200 feet of the lot lines where applicable regulations prohibit mining and other mining activities. By letter dated December 5, 2025, the staff advised the applicant that based upon review of the submitted T&E animal species survey, the proposed mining plan did not appear to consider the known presence of the T&E animal species on the lot. The staff letter further indicated that it had not been demonstrated that the proposed mining was designed to avoid an irreversible, adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of the local population of that T&E animal species. On February 20, 2026, the staff met with representatives of the applicant to discuss the staff's December 5, 2025 letter and the required information that must be submitted to demonstrate consistency with the applicable T&E animal species protection regulation. On March 16, 2026, the staff met with the applicant's T&E species consultant to further discuss the specifics of the necessary T&E animal species survey work.
- **Landfill Capping and Solar Energy Facility, Maurice River Township (Applicant: Maurice River Township, App. No. 1984-1326.018 and App. No. 1984-1326.019):** On July 21, 2025, a member of the staff spoke with the Mayor of the Township, and separately to the Township Engineer, regarding an approximately 52-acre Township owned parcel that contains a closed, but uncapped, former Township landfill. The parcel is located in a Rural Development Area. The Mayor inquired about the feasibility of developing a solar energy facility on the parcel. By letter dated August 15, 2025, the Mayor posed several follow up questions and requested confirmation of certain information regarding capping of the existing landfill and the proposed development of a 30-acre solar energy facility on the parcel. By letter dated September 12, 2025, the staff advised that the first step would be the Township's completion of an evaluation of the existing landfill and a determination regarding the required type of landfill cap (e.g. permeable or impermeable). The staff's letter also advised that, thereafter, an application for the capping of the landfill must be completed with the Commission. The Township subsequently filed an application with the Commission to determine the limits of the existing landfill. That application proposes the clearing of approximately 5.5 acres of vegetation. The staff sent a

letter to the Township identifying the information that must be submitted to complete the application for the proposed 5.5 acres of vegetation clearing. The application requirements included addressing certain known T&E animal species sightings in the vicinity of the proposed vegetation clearing. By email dated February 13, 2026, the staff responded to an inquiry from the Mayor regarding the need to address T&E animal species. The staff email indicated that if the amount of vegetation clearing were reduced, it may be possible to defer the need to address T&E animal species until an application to cap the landfill is filed with the Commission. On March 25, 2026, the staff met with representatives of the Township, including the Mayor, to discuss the steps necessary to complete an application with the Commission for the capping of the landfill and the subsequent development of a solar energy facility on the capped landfill. The Township is considering the adoption of a redevelopment plan to facilitate that development.

- **Communications Tower, Manchester Township (Applicant: Manchester Township, App. No. 2021-0084.002):** This application proposes a 170-foot-high communications tower for the Manchester Township Police Department on a vacant 2.07-acre parcel in the Pinelands Town of Whiting. Originally, the application also included the proposed development of 650 linear feet of road improvements within the unimproved Jefferson Avenue right-of-way, 120 linear feet of onsite driveway, a five-car parking lot and other associated development. There are numerous sightings of a T&E animal species in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. Based upon guidance provided by the staff, the applicant subsequently revised the application to propose only the communications tower and the minimum forest clearing necessary to accommodate the tower. On November 20, 2025, the Commission staff issued a Public Development Application Report recommending approval with conditions of the proposed development. One of the conditions required that a conservation deed restriction be recorded on the 2.07-acre parcel. The conservation deed restriction would prohibit any additional development, including vegetation clearing on the parcel, unless a T&E animal species survey was completed and the staff determined that any such further development would not have a significant, adverse impact on habitat critical to the survival of any local population of T&E snake species. On December 12, 2025, the Commission voted to approve the application for just the communications tower and the minimum forest clearing necessary to accommodate the tower. A subsequent application must be completed with the Commission for the balance of the proposed development. On December 18, 2025, the applicant submitted a draft conservation deed restriction. By email dated December 24, 2025, the staff provided guidance on the submitted draft conservation deed restriction. The Township's consultant submitted emails on January 13, 2026 and January 21, 2026 inquiring as to whether any additional Commission requirements must be met prior to commencement of construction. By email dated January 21, 2026, the staff advised that upon receipt of the recorded conservation deed restriction, construction could commence. On February 6, 2026, a copy of a recorded conservation deed restriction was submitted to the Commission. The staff advised the Township of the need to revise the recorded conservation deed restriction. On February 24, 2026, the applicant submitted a revised conservation deed restriction. By email dated March 4, 2026, the staff advised the Township of its agreement with the revised conservation deed restriction and that no further Commission approval was required. Once construction commenced in March of 2026, the staff received and responded to numerous inquiries from the public objecting to the proposed development of the communications tower.

- Residential Development, Manchester Township (2590 Ridgeway NJ, App. No. 1981-1963.005):** On March 20, 2025, an application was initiated with the Commission proposing 293 dwellings on a 36.57-acre parcel. The parcel is located in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area. By letter dated May 9, 2025, the staff advised of the information necessary to complete the application. The staff's May 9, 2025 letter addressed the presence of a T&E plant species on the parcel. In response to concerns expressed by the applicant, the staff issued several subsequent letters, including a November 7, 2025 letter that delineated the critical habitat that must be protected for the proposed development to meet the T&E plant species protection standard. By letter dated December 2, 2025, the applicant appeared to advise of their agreement with the staff's delineation of the critical habitat for the T&E plant species and submitted additional stormwater management information. On January 27, 2026, the staff issued a Certificate of Filing for the application. The Certificate of Filing noted that the design of the proposed development as depicted on the current plan remained inconsistent with the T&E species protection standards. It was the staff's understanding that the applicant would be revising the design of the proposed development as the application proceeded through the municipal approval process. However, on February 25, 2026, the applicant submitted additional information to the Commission contesting the staff's delineation of the area that must be protected for the proposed development to meet the T&E plant species protection standard. That information is currently under review.
- Single Family Dwelling, Manchester Township (Applicant: Iryna and Aleksey Vdovenko, App. No. 1991-0930.002):** This application proposes the development of one single family dwelling serviced by an onsite septic system on a 4-acre parcel. The parcel is located in the Pinelands Village of Beckerville. By letter dated April 29, 2025, the staff advised of the information necessary to complete the application. By email dated June 6, 2025, the applicants requested that the T&E animal, wetlands protection and stormwater management information requested in the staff's April 29, 2025 letter not be required. The applicant's email also indicated that the staff's request for the application information "could expose the Commission to legal challenges," and "could lead to claims against the Commission for administrative overreach or injunctive relief." By letter dated June 11, 2025, the staff responded that the requested information was typical of that required to complete an application to develop a single family dwelling and the information remained necessary to complete the application. The staff's June 11, 2025 letter also indicated that based upon the threats of litigation against the Commission, all future communication regarding this application must be in writing. By email dated June 11, 2025, the applicants submitted a plot plan for the proposed dwelling and reiterated their request that certain information not be required to complete the application. On June 27, 2025, the staff issued an Inconsistent Certificate of Filing for the proposed single family dwelling. The Certificate of Filing indicated that it had not been demonstrated that the proposed development was consistent with the T&E animal species protection regulations or the wetlands protection regulations. The Certificate of Filing also indicated that, based upon a staff site inspection, it did not appear that the septic system was proposed in an area where the seasonal high water table was located at least 5 feet below the natural surface of the ground, as required by the Township's ordinance and the CMP. By email dated July 9, 2025, the applicant advised that they had retained a new engineer and that a revised plot plan would be submitted to the Commission. By email dated July 16, 2025, the staff reiterated that the information identified in the June 27, 2025 Certificate of Filing must be provided to demonstrate consistency with the applicable regulations. The Certificate of Filing also addressed the prospects for the parcel qualifying for a Waiver if the submitted information did not demonstrate consistency with the

applicable regulations. By email dated July 22, 2025, the applicant posed several questions regarding the Commission's Waiver regulations. By email dated August 13, 2025, the staff advised that the Commission's Waiver regulations are contained in the CMP. The email further indicated that the staff obtains property ownership information from publicly available property tax assessment records. On March 6, 2026, members of the staff met with the applicant to discuss the proposed development and the Commission application requirements, At that meeting, the staff offered to meet with the applicant's engineer on the parcel to determine whether a septic system could be located in an area on the parcel where the seasonal high water table was located at least 5 feet below the natural surface of the ground and 300 feet from wetlands. That field meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2026.

- **Improvements to an Existing Agricultural Access Driveway, Agricultural Production Area, Pemberton Township (App. No. 1983-9180.004):** On February 7, 2024, the staff received a report that an existing driveway providing access to an existing agricultural operation was being improved and widened. On February 21, 2024, the Commission staff issued a letter to the property owner indicating that any widening of the existing driveway would be inconsistent with the wetlands protection standards contained in the Pemberton Township land use ordinance and the CMP. The February 21, 2024 staff letter also indicated that although the CMP provides that improvements to a driveway exclusively for agricultural purposes do not require application to the Commission, the proposed driveway improvements must still meet the wetlands protection standards of the Township land use ordinance and the CMP. The February 21, 2024 Commission staff letter also inquired as to the source of the fill/soil material that was brought to the parcel for the purpose of improving the driveway. The Township land use ordinance and the CMP prohibit the placement of fill/soil material on a parcel that would result in the degradation of ground or surface water quality. The staff letter further advised that if any fill/soil material placed on the parcel contains contaminants that would degrade surface or groundwater, it must be removed from the parcel. By letter dated December 11, 2024, the staff wrote to the property owner seeking clarification of their intent to complete removal of the deposited fill/soil material by December 31, 2024. On January 30, 2025, the staff received an email from the property owner advising the NJDEP that all "unauthorized fill" had been removed from the parcel and requesting that a site visit be scheduled. By email dated April 2, 2025, the NJDEP advised that a site inspection had been completed and that some fill/soil material remained on the parcel. On April 15, 2025, the staff sent a letter to the property owner advising of the outstanding issues regarding the placement of fill/soil material on the parcel. Those issues include wetlands and wetland buffer encroachments, limitations on proposed clearing of wetlands or the required buffer to wetlands for agricultural purposes and agricultural buildings, potential T&E species issues with any proposed clearing for agriculture and forestry activities that may be occurring on the parcel. The April 15, 2025 letter reiterated that, in those instances when the Commission's regulations are more restrictive, the Commission's regulations supersede those of other agencies. The staff letter also requested permission to site inspect the parcel. By email dated April 16, 2025, the property owner advised that the majority of the soil/fill material had been removed from the parcel, no forestry is being conducted, no clearing for agriculture has occurred and no agricultural structure or buildings have been constructed on the parcel. In the email, the property owner denied the staff permission to site inspect the parcel. By letter dated May 20, 2025, the staff requested further clarification regarding the status of removal of the fill/soil material from the parcel. That letter also advised the property owner of the Township's and Commission's wetlands regulations and non-degradation water quality regulations that must be met if it is proposed to retain any of the fill/soil material on the parcel. On June 6, 2025,

the staff received a request from an adjacent property owner for a joint meeting with the Commissioner of the NJDEP and the Commission's Executive Director. By email dated June 12, 2025, the NJDEP advised the adjacent property owner that most of the remaining fill/soil on the parcel was contained within an approximately 6,000 square feet on the parcel and that the NJDEP was continuing its efforts to address the matter. The staff held a meeting on July 16, 2025 to discuss the status of the violation with the adjacent property owner's representatives and NJDEP staff. The staff will be following up with NJDEP staff to discuss requirements for testing of fill/soil impacted areas on the parcel for possible contaminants. The staff sent an email to NJDEP and the Township on December 22, 2025 requesting any update that may be available from the two agencies. By email dated December 29, 2025, the Township advised that the matter was scheduled for Municipal Court, but that the property owner did not attend the hearing. By email dated January 12, 2026, the NJDEP advised of their approval of a restoration plan that included removal of the remaining fill from regulated areas on the parcel by March 30, 2026. The staff requested and received a copy of the approved restoration plan from NJDEP on January 21, 2026. By letter dated March 25, 2026, the staff advised the property owner that land clearing, filling and disturbance must meet the regulations of all concerned public regulatory agencies, including the NJDEP, the Township and the Pinelands Commission. In the Pinelands Area, if the Commission's regulations are more restrictive than those of another agency, the Pinelands Commission's regulations take precedence. The staff's March 25, 2026 letter indicated that the proposed restoration plan did not contain all of the information necessary to address the violations of the applicable Township's and Commission's regulations. The staff's letter identified the additional restoration plan information that must be submitted to the Commission. Lastly, the staff's March 25, 2026 letter further indicated that if the information requested in the letter was not submitted within 60 days, the staff would ask the assistance of Township officials in re-issuing all appropriate municipal court summonses.

4.4 OFF-ROAD VEHICLE EVENT APPROVALS

- **Application # 1987-1127.049**
Meteor Motorcycle Club
Approval Issued: 3/2/2026
Event Name: Sandy Lane Enduro
Event Date: March 22, 2026
Municipality: Bass River Township, Washington Township, Woodland Township
Lands Utilized: Wharton, Penn & Bass River State Forests
Route Length: 82 miles
- **Application # 1988-0757.076**
Tri-County Sportsmen Motorcycle Club, Inc.
Approval Issued: 3/5/2026
Event Name: Greenbriar Enduro
Event Date: March 8, 2026
Municipality: Maurice River Township, Upper Township
Lands Utilized: US Silica
Route Length: 43 miles

- **Application # 1988-0071.048**
South Jersey Enduro Riders, Inc.
Approval Issued: 3/9/2026
Event Name: Curly Fern Enduro
Event Date: March 15, 2026
Municipality: Shamong Township, Tabernacle Township, Washington Township, Waterford Township
Lands Utilized: Wharton State Forest
Route Length: 65 miles

5 SCIENCE

5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- **Water Level Monitoring:** Staff downloaded water-level data from a continuous data logger and manually recorded water levels at 33 forest plots and 30 ponds within the Commission’s long-term monitoring network. These measurements are collected monthly with assistance from the Communications Office. Heavy snowfall in late February and early March required substantial effort to clear and maintain the roads and trails providing access to these study sites.

- **Annual Frog and Toad Surveys:** In March, Science Office staff conducted daytime wood frog surveys and nighttime frog and toad call surveys at 22 ponds. These surveys are carried out each spring to monitor temporal trends in calling amphibians at these ponds. Species documented included wood frogs, New Jersey chorus frogs, spring peepers, and southern leopard frogs.



Above: A wood frog found during a daytime call monitoring survey at a monitored pond.

- **Rare Snake Monitoring:** After snowmelt in early March, science staff closed snake doors in all monitored hibernacula corrals to contain emerging individuals. The team constructed 17 new standard corrals and installed three box corrals around new hibernacula identified through radio telemetry. Staff began regularly checking both new and existing corrals as soon as construction was completed.



Above: Newly constructed standard (left) and box (right) hibernacula corrals.

Corn snakes and northern black racers began surfacing early in the month, while northern pine snakes largely remained underground until temperatures increased toward the end of March. In total, the team processed 61 individuals, including a rough green snake encountered during corral installation. Radio transmitters were surgically implanted in five corn snakes and one northern pine snake to identify new hibernacula and nesting sites.



Left: A staff scientist shows off a newly found corn snake. **Right:** A tracked northern pine snake surveys his environment after release outside his den corral.

Staff also continued maintaining and servicing passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag readers at several long-term study hibernacula used by northern pine snakes.

5.2 LONG TERM STUDIES

- **Box Turtle Study:** A member of the science team educated participants at the Pinelands Short Course on box turtle ecology and shared interim results from the Commission's ongoing research.
- **Kingsnake Study:** Staff summarized the results landscape use and microhabitat selection models for inclusion in the final report, which is the last deliverable due to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the study.



Above: A staff scientist teaches participants at the annual Pinelands Short Course how to estimate box turtle age using grooves in their shell called annuli.

- **Snake Fungal Disease Monitoring:** The Science Office continues to collaborate with researchers from Virginia Tech on investigations of snake fungal disease (SFD). Full-body swabs are collected from all snakes encountered in hibernacula corrals and found beneath cover in Commission study areas. Individuals exhibiting skin lesions characteristic of SFD are additionally swabbed at affected sites. Staff plan to revisit hibernacula in early April to collect swabs from entrance holes. To further characterize the fungal pathogen responsible for SFD, the team will begin collecting skin samples from areas where lesions cause scale flaking.

Staff also continue to collaborate with researchers from Rutgers University and Herpetological Associates on fungal disease surveillance at pine snake dens that are excavated and surveyed annually. Snakes encountered are weighed, measured, and, if new to the database, implanted with a PIT tag for future identification.

6 COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Inquiries/Correspondence:** The Communications Office received and responded to approximately 59 inquiries from the public in March, including phone calls, e-mails, and media inquiries.
- **Website:** Commission staff made routine edits to the website in March.
- **Social Media:** In March, staff shared 271 photos and five videos on the Commission’s Instagram site, 114 posts on X, and 90 posts on Bluesky. The Commission’s content (photos and videos) garnered more than 102,000 views on Instagram (while adding 79 followers for the month) and 1,683 views (for a watch time of 170 hours) on YouTube in March. Nineteen of the Commission’s photos were featured on other Instagram sites in March, including Simply Moody Shots, Simply Wildlife Shots, Best of the Globe - Faces, NJ in Bloom, and Best of the Garden State.
- **Annual Report:** The Pinelands Commission adopted the agency’s [2025 Annual Report](#) during its meeting on March 13, 2026. The 40-page report has been posted on the Commission’s website and shared with the Governor’s Authorities Unit.



Above: The Commission shared 271 photos on Instagram in March, including this photo of a pine warbler foraging in Wharton State Forest in the Pinelands.



Above: The Commission shared 114 posts on X in March, including this photo of a native painted turtle basking in the Pinelands.

6.2 EVENTS, OUTREACH & INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

- **Pinelands Short Course:** Approximately 450 people attended the 37th annual Pinelands Short Course, which was held at Stockton University's main campus in Galloway Township on March 7, 2026. The event featured 39 education presentations, including 20 new programs. Attendee evaluations are overwhelmingly positive, with 98% of respondents rating the event as either excellent or good. Staff is now working to plan the Pinelands Summer Short Course, which will be held on July 17, 2026 at Stockton University's Kramer Hall in downtown Hammonton.
- **Education Programs:** Joel Mott, Principal Public Programs Specialist for the Commission, coordinated and led a Pinelands field trip for a Science Special Education class from Collingswood High School. Twenty-one students attended the field trip.
- **Pinelands Merchandise:** Commission staff processed 63 transactions while garnering a total of \$1,507 in net sales of Pinelands merchandise in March. Most of the sales occurred during the Pinelands Short Course on March 7th. All proceeds from the sales of the Commission's merchandise go to the Kathleen M. Lynch-van de Sande Fund. 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. Sales and donations will support the planting of native Pinelands plants and projects that raise awareness about native Pinelands plants.



Above: The 37th annual Pinelands Short Course featured 39 programs, including a course with live animals such as this native, red morph eastern screech owl.



Above: Pinelands Commission staff processed record sales of Pinelands-themed merchandise during the 37th annual Pinelands Short Course on March 7, 2026.

7 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- **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. To assist in responding to a media request, staff produced an ad hoc report to show the number of applications with completeness documents, per year, along with associated units since 2005 and provided it to Regulatory Programs for review. Staff participated in the Application Information System redesign meeting to share status updates and review the project schedule. Staff highlighted mock-ups of the graphical user interface, as well as the envisioned online application portal. Staff also participated in a follow up meeting that focused specifically on the Alternate Septic Design process, how it interfaces with PCIS, and how it could be improved with the new system.
- **Pinelands Commission Audit Findings:** The Pinelands Commission undergoes an annual financial audit. The Information Systems office is included as staff supports the accounting software, Edmunds, along with the relevant servers and databases. The most recent State Audit report (for FY2022) included findings related to the Edmunds software system. Staff immediately performed a review and started draft documents to address these findings: Edmunds Formal Risk Assessment, Edmunds Security Plan, and Edmunds User Access Policy.
- **Cybersecurity:** Vigilance to protect the internal networks, hardware, and data of the Pinelands Commission is critical in today's networked world. The Information Systems staff participated in the monthly call hosted by the New Jersey Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC). The focus of this month's call was on the elevated threat levels posed by state sponsored actors aligned with Iran and efforts being made to gain secure access to government systems via phishing and other means. New changes to email security were also highlighted on the call. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is migrating the state email security from Proofpoint filtering to a new tool, Abnormal AI. OIT will be moving agencies, one by one, soon.
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** Staff participated in the New Jersey Geospatial Forum monthly meeting to facilitate GIS collaboration with other state agencies. Staff updated the web-based mapping tools to better support multiple browsers and mobile devices. Staff continued work on a field app for Threatened and Endangered species using ESRI Survey123.
- **Technology Enhancements:** In March, staff continued its efforts to understand the safe use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that is being encouraged for state agencies. Staff learned more about the Microsoft Copilot Professional licenses and how they secure all data and interactions to maintain data privacy. An all-staff email was sent to highlight the risks of AI and how it can (and cannot) be used. Staff also continued configuring new desktops and laptops to replace outdated workstations and comply with the state's mandate to migrate to Windows 11. Staff tested the migration of the Oracle server and the file share making significant progress addressing issues encountered last month. Staff also prepared a list of outdated hardware so it could be removed from inventory.
- **Rutgers Scarlet Service Internship Program (RSSI):** The RSSI program is a program administered by Rutgers University to provide internships at non-profit agencies with a public service mission.

The Information Systems office has participated in the program with great success in the past. We were not matched with any of the three initial candidates. A second round of interviews was conducted and we anticipate final placement of any selected students by the end of April.

8 BUSINESS OFFICE

8.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- **Application Fees:** March 2026, Net Total: \$56,594.43, Fiscal Year to Date Total: \$634,206.61. This equates to 74.61% of the Fiscal Year 2026 anticipated fee revenue of \$850,000. The net total for March includes 38 online application payments totaling \$30,797.71.
- **FY2022 Audit:** The FY2022 Audit has been completed, and the report can be found at: <https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/publications/auditor/2026/03002224.pdf> .

8.2 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

- The main battery on one of the 2023 Hybrid Electric Jeeps experienced battery pack cell damage. This is part of the 2023 Jeep Wrangler recall (68C/NHTSA). The replacement battery is on order. Avoiding replacement could result in potential fire risks, power loss, or stalling.

Attachment 1:

Pinelands Related Legislation

<u>Bill No.(s)</u>	<u>Prime Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Synopsis</u>	<u>Current Status</u>
A1616/ S803	Kean, Fantasia and Bailey/Singer,Burzichelli	Establishes program in SADC for acquisition of development easements on privately-owned woodlands.	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment Natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026. Withdrawn on 1/13/2026 because approved P.L.2025, c.287 Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026. Withdrawn on 1/13/2026 because approved P.L.2025, c.287
A2869/ S1256	Sauickie, Donlon/ Greenstein	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.	Assembly Bill - Introduced, Referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 1/13/2026. Senate Bill – Introduced, referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A4025/ S1901	Sauickie/ Tiver	Requires NJ Clean Energy Program incentives to be made available to commercial farms	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 2/12/2026. Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A4063	Sauickie	Provides CBT (Corporate Business Tax) credit for	Introduced, Referred to Assembly Commerce and

		construction or retrofitting of warehouses to meet certain green building standards.	Economic Development Committee on 2/12/2026.
A2886	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.	Introduced, Referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee on 1/13/2026.
A3966	Karabinchak, Bhalla, Collazos - Gill	Requires DEP to conduct study of long and short effects of water use by large scale data centers	Introduced and referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/26. Reported out of Committee with amendments and referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee on 3/16/26.
A4034	Sauickie	Requires certain warehouses to obtain air pollution control permits from NJDEP.	Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 2/12/2026.
A4035/ S1232	Sauickie/ Greenstein	Requires NJDEP to evaluate cumulative impact of stormwater when reviewing applications associated with warehouses and other high-density development projects.	Introduced, and Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 2/16/2026 Senate Bill introduced and referred to Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A3488/ A3567	Lopez/ Greenwald, Lopez	Concerns development and use of accessory	Assembly Bills– Both Introduced and Referred to Assembly

		dwelling units and related municipal land use regulations.	Housing Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill – Reported from the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee, as a Substitute on 2/15/25. Replaced by Senate Floor Substitute on 2/25/25.
A3658/ S1072	Guardian/ Cruz-Perez, Corrado	Requires State entities to recycle certain materials and provide recycling bins	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026. Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026
A2463/ S3722	McCoy, DeAngelo/ Bucco	Makes \$100 million in federal funds available to NJDEP for grants to local governments for drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure projects	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill – Pending Introduction
A177/ S1857	Fantasia/ Tiver	Excludes farmland from definition of “redevelopment area” and “rehabilitation area” in local Redevelopment and Housing Law	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 1/13/2026. Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Economic Growth Committee on 1/13/2026.
A4033	Sauickie	Expands definition of “qualifying land” to include certain deeds of easement excluding certain portions of farm from preservation	Introduced, Referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 2/21/2026.

A4064	Sauickie	Requires the Office of Planning Advocacy to publish certain information concerning warehouses over 100,000 sq. ft. on its website	Introduced, Referred to Assembly Commerce and Economic Development Committee on 2/12/2026.
S353	Steinhardt/ Tiver	Permits agriculture-related events on preserved farmland	Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Economic Growth Committee on 1/13/2026.
A1529	Calabrese, Conway, Atkins/ Greenstein, Smith	Prohibits sale, distribution, import, export or propagation of certain invasive species without permit from Department of Agriculture; Establishes NJ Invasive Species Council	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 1/13/2026. Withdrawn on 1/13/2026, because approved P.L.2025, c.290
A3486/ S2332	Lopez, Reynolds-Jackson/ McKeon, Smith	Excludes environmentally sensitive and flood-prone lands from designation as vacant or available lands for affordable housing construction	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Housing Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A907/ S1986	Azzariti Jr., Kanitra/ Schepisi	Prohibits collecting of certain costs associated with offshore wind projects from ratepayers	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee on 1/13/2026. Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026

A3301	Sampson	Establishes certification program for zoning officers and land use board administrators	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee on 1/13/2026
A1270	Inganamort, Kanitra, Peterson	Prohibits NJDEP from requiring certain municipalities to adopt ordinance that controls tree removal and replacement	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026.
A3488	Lopez	Concerns development of accessory dwelling units and related municipal land use regulations	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Housing Committee on 1/13/2026.
A4461/ S484	Sauickie/Henry	Requires municipal planning boards and zoning boards of adjustment to incorporate recommendations from certain local environmental commissions on applications for development	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee on 2/24/2026 Senate Bill - Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A208/ S1739	Fantasia/ Space	Requires establishment and implementation of wildlife management plans for open space and farmland, and authorizes use of constitutionally dedicated CBT revenues to finance activities undertaken	Assembly Bill - Introduced, Referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on 1/13/2026. Senate Bill - Introduced, Referred to the Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.

		pursuant to such plans	
A1165	Danielsen	Prohibits procurement of single use plastic beverage containers by State and local government entities	Assembly Bill - Introduced, Referred to the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026.
S3629	Zwicker	The "New Jersey Town Center Microgrid Pilot Program Act"	Senate Bill - Introduced, Referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on 2/19/2026.
A3747/S1662	Collazos-Gill, Alixon/Zwicker, McKeon	Revises requirements for certain greenhouse gas emissions monitoring and reporting activities.	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026. Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026.
A1056/S714	DeAngelo, Egan, Bailey, Simmons/Burzichelli, Greenstein	Requires certain large developments, to be used as retail facility or warehouse, to be designed and constructed to accommodate load associated with solar panels	Assembly Bill - Introduced, Referred to Assembly Commerce and Economic Development and Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill - Introduced, Referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on 1/13/2026
A1059/S668	DeAngelo, Kane, Kennedy/Smith, McKeon	Requires electric public utilities to submit to BPU and implement electric infrastructure improvement plans	Assembly Bill - Introduced, Referred to Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Energy and Environment Committee on 1/13/2026
A803/S745	Bailey, Karabinchak, DeAngelo/Burzichelli	Authorizes construction, installation and	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Commerce and Economic Development

		operation of certain energy project components on preserved farms	Committee on 1/13/2026. Withdrawn because approved P.L.2025, c. 390 on 1/13/2026.
A1553	Calabrese, Dunn	Establishes abandoned mine reclamation program in DOT	Senate Bill – Introduced and referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026. Withdrawn because approved P.L.2025, c. 390 on 1/13/2026 Assembly Bill – Introduced and referred to Assembly Transportation and Independent Authorities Committee on 1/13/2026
A4454/ S3720	Dunn	Establishes abandoned mine reclamation program in DEP	Assembly Bill - Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 2/24/2026 Senate Bill – Pending Introduction
A3852/ S2468	Dunn/Bucco	Requires DEP to designate municipalities with critical headwaters as headwater guardians	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026
S674	Smith, Greenstein	Requires electric public utilities to upgrade certain portions of electric transmission and distribution system with advanced conductors	Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026
S3480	Zwicker	Permits municipalities to adopt more stringent site improvement	Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on 1/13/2026

A1478/ S926	McCellan/Testa, Polistina	standards for stormwater management related to residential developments Requires regional representation for members of BPU	Assembly Bill – Introduced, Referred to the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee on 1/13/2026 Senate Bill - Introduced, Referred to the Senate Economic Growth Committee on 1/13/2026
A4696/ S2274	Pintor Marin/Ruiz, Burgess	Requires owner or operator of data center to submit water and energy usage report to BPU	Assembly Bill – Introduced and Referred to the Assembly Telecommunications and Committee on 3/16/26 Senate Bill – Introduced and Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/26
A1170/S680	Danielsen/Smith, McKeon	Requires energy usage plan for proposed artificial intelligence data centers and cryptocurrency mining facilities; requires all electricity for artificial intelligence data centers and cryptocurrency mining facilities to be derived from new clean energy sources	Assembly Bill – Introduced and Referred to the Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee on 1/13/26 Senate Bill – Introduced and Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/26. Reported from Committee, Second Reading and Referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on 3/16/26.
A4529/ S3870	Miller, DeAngelo, Walker/Scutari, Sarlo, Miller, DeAngelo, Walker	Modifies certain CAFRA permit review requirements for nuclear facilities	Assembly Bill – Introduced and Referred to Assembly Telecommunications and Utilities Committee on 3/9/26. Reported out of Committee, Second

			Reading on 3/16/26. Substituted by S3870 on 3/23/26.
			Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 3/10/26. Reported from Committee, Second Reading and referred to Senate Budget and Appropriates Committee on 3/16/26. Reported from Committee, Second Reading 3/19/26. Passed by the Senate and Received in the Assembly without reference, Second Reading, Substituted for A4529, and passed both houses all on 3/23/26.
S683	Smith, Scutari	Authorizes BPU to provide site approval for small modular reactors; authorizes operators of small modular reactors to store spent nuclear fuel on-site	Senate Bill – Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 1/13/2026
S3639	Amato, Deignan	Requires BPU, DCA, and DEP to establish expedited approval and permitting procedures for artificial intelligence data centers powered by small modular nuclear reactors	Senate Bill – Introduced and referred to Senate Economic Growth Committee on 2/24/2026
SCR106	Scutari, Burzichelli, Tesla	Determines that DEP's "Protecting Against Climate Threats" rules, adopted January 20, 2026, are inconsistent with legislative intent	Introduced, Referred to Senate Environment and Energy Committee on 2/24/2026. Transferred to Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism & Historic Preservation Committee on 3/2/2026