

The PINELANDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION • WINTER 2009

Betty Wilson steps down after distinguished tenure as the Chairperson of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission

NEW LISBON, N.J. – Betty Wilson, who has served as the Chairperson of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission since 2005, has chosen to step down from the Pinelands panel.

Wilson tendered her resignation to Governor Jon S. Corzine on October 28.

“I have been honored to serve the people of New Jersey as a member and chairperson of the Pinelands Commission,” Wilson said. “There is enormous satisfaction in knowing that our work is preserving and protecting the New Jersey Pinelands. The greatest reward of serving on the Pinelands Commission has come

from the privilege of working with the other Commissioners and our extraordinarily talented and hard-working staff. They are exemplars of the finest in public service.”

Wilson’s accomplishments as the Commission’s Chairperson will have a lasting impact on the future protection of the Pinelands, according to Commission members and staff.

“I found her to be most dedicated, most sincere and conscientious about the opportunity and responsibility in carrying out the federal and state acts to protect the Pinelands,” said Robert

W. McIntosh, who has served as the federal representative on the Commission since 1995.



Betty Wilson

“Whenever anyone ponders the remarkable success of the Pinelands protection program, they have to consider the tremendous contributions and achievements of Betty Wilson,” added John C. Stokes, the Commission’s Executive Director. “Her love and

knowledge of the Pinelands and her dedication to the Pinelands Commission and its staff will be

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Commission approves measure to require clustering of residential development in Pinelands Forest and Rural Development Areas

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its regular meeting on January 16, the Pinelands Commission approved a measure aimed at better protecting Pinelands resources by mandating the clustering of residential development in Pinelands-designated Forest Areas and Rural Development Areas.

The Commission voted to adopt an amendment to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the million-acre Pinelands Area, by requiring municipalities to incorporate the clustering provisions into

their zoning ordinances.

“These changes will be vital in helping to preserve and maintain the essential character of the Pinelands environment, while preventing the proliferation of homes on large lots scattered throughout the Pinelands Forest and Rural Development areas,” said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. “By requiring the clustering of residential development in these areas, we will permanently protect large, contiguous areas of environmentally-sensitive land that

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Commission considering possible changes to Pinelands Management Areas based on recent scientific study of the region's ecological characteristics

The Pinelands Commission is considering changes to the boundaries of Pinelands Management Areas based on a comprehensive re-examination of the region's ecological characteristics.

Commission scientists recently completed a study that evaluates the current status of the Pinelands ecology by analyzing landscape and watershed conditions throughout the million-acre region. The study shows that the Pinelands protection program, which preserves environmentally-sensitive areas while steering growth toward appropriate areas, has successfully maintained characteristic Pinelands habitat in a vast majority of the region. The data also showed that some areas of the Pinelands – approximately 75,000 acres, or

about 7.5 percent of the million-acre region – should be looked at more closely, and the existing land-use management designations may be reclassified in some of these areas.

“In essence, the Commission is considering a refinement of existing Pinelands management areas to reflect current ecological conditions and to ensure that important natural areas are afforded the protection they deserve,” said John C. Stokes, the Commission's Executive Director.

Commission staff detailed the possible management area changes to municipal and county officials during special meetings on October 22 and 23.



Approximately 100 municipal and county officials attended one of two special meetings to learn more about the possible Pinelands Management Area changes.

Photo/Paul Leakan

Maps showing the proposed changes are available on the Commission's web site (www.nj.gov/pinelands).

The Pinelands Commission hopes to authorize a proposal to incorporate the changes later this year.

Commission approves measure to require clustering of residential development in Pinelands-designated Forest and Rural Development Areas

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contains high water quality resources and provides important habitat for characteristic and rare Pinelands plants and animals.”

Clustering is a style of development that allows reduced minimum lot sizes in exchange for the preservation of open space or other desirable features of a property. Clustering does not necessarily change the number of homes, but the individual lot sizes are smaller than that which would occur under a conventional lot layout. Development can be directed toward appropriate locations of a property, such as areas close to roads and other infrastructure, while natural resources

such as critical habitat for rare plant and animal species can be protected.

The Commission will require the clustering of residential development in the Pinelands-designated Forest Areas and Rural Development Areas on one-acre lots. The open space created as a result of clustering will be permanently protected through deed restriction. Generally, the protected land will be owned by a homeowners association, a nonprofit organization or the municipality.

The amendment also establishes bonus density provisions for clustered development in the Forest and Rural Development Areas in order to encourage the consolidation of small lots and the protection of larger areas

of open space. Permitted residential densities average one unit per 28 acres in the Forest Area and one unit per 5 acres in the Rural Development Area. The density bonuses depend on the size of the tract and the municipal zoning designation.

In those rare cases where agricultural lands exist within that portion of the property to be protected through clustering, an agricultural easement may provide for continued agricultural use and expansion of that use up to 50 percent if certain conditions are met.

The CMP has guided land-use and development in the state-designated Pinelands Area since it took effect on January 14, 1981.





Betty Wilson steps down after distinguished tenure as the Chairperson of the Pinelands Commission

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sorely missed.”

A resident of Burlington City, Wilson had served on the Commission since 2002 and was appointed as the Commission’s Chairperson by then-Acting Governor Richard J. Codey on June 9, 2005.

During her tenure as Chairperson, Wilson led the Commission’s efforts to:

- Adopt 17 amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands. The changes bolster the Pinelands protection program and the Commission’s mission to protect, preserve and enhance the region’s significant and unique resources;
- Complete a comprehensive scientific study that evaluates the current status of the Pinelands ecology

by analyzing landscape and watershed conditions throughout the million-acre region. The study shows that the Pinelands protection program, which preserves environmentally-sensitive areas while steering growth toward appropriate areas, has successfully maintained characteristic Pinelands habitat in a vast majority of the region. The data is being used to re-examine and possibly refine existing Pinelands management areas to reflect current ecological conditions and to ensure that important natural areas are afforded the protection they deserve;

- Authorize an agreement to extend public sanitary sewer to the Ancora Psychiatric Hospital in Winslow Township, Camden County and eliminate a failing wastewater treatment plant located onsite. The agreement permanently protected open space, decreased demand on Pinelands water supplies and removed a significant

source of pollution from a Pinelands watershed;

- Approve funds toward the preservation of approximately 3,000 acres in the Pinelands through the Pinelands Conservation Fund;
- Win a major legal victory when a federal judge signed an order that permanently barred the construction of a proposed solid waste transfer station on a 20-acre property

in Mullica Township, Atlantic County;

- Complete a comprehensive examination of housing demand in the Pinelands;
- Complete a natural resource conservation plan for an environmentally-sensitive area of southern Medford and Evesham townships;
- Reach an agreement to end the direct discharge of treated wastewater into a Pinelands stream in Buena Borough, Atlantic County;
- Approve an agreement that enabled the environmentally-safe closure of landfills at the Stafford Business Park;
- Complete a wildfire safety planning project in Barnegat and Stafford townships; and
- Launch and expand numerous public education projects. This includes the creation of the first-ever National Park Service brochure for the Pinelands National Reserve, a regional road sign system and a new series of educational seminars, as well as organizing the annual Pinelands Short Course, which has drawn record crowds during the past three years.

The Pinelands Commission consists of 15 members: seven appointed by the Governor of New Jersey, one appointed by each of the seven Pinelands counties and one appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Members of the Commission serve staggered three-year terms and are uncompensated for their service.



Betty Wilson, pictured center, steered the Commission’s efforts to bolster the Pinelands protection program during her tenure as the Commission’s Chairperson. Photo/Paul Leakan





20th annual Pinelands Short Course to feature 24 new presentations, including first-ever, all-day bus tour

Popular education event to be held on March 7 at Burlington County College

NEW LISBON, NJ -- The 20th annual Pinelands Short Course will feature a record total of 34 presentations, including 24 new programs that will explore the region's unique history, ecology, culture and music.

"The Pinelands Short Course has been phenomenally successful in educating thousands of people about the Pinelands during the past 20 years," said John C. Stokes,

For a list of course titles and presenters, please see Page 8

Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission.

"Attendance has soared to new heights in recent years, including

last year's record of 622 people. We're thrilled to see such a strong interest in the Pinelands, and we're proud to offer so many informative and entertaining courses this year."

The Pinelands Short Course is sponsored by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, the Pinelands Institute for Natural and Environmental Studies and Burlington County College (BCC), which has hosted the event for the past five years. To be held at BCC's Pemberton Township campus on March 7, the program is open to all who are interested in learning about the Pinelands.

This year's event features three live musical performances and three field trips. Among the new courses is the first-ever, all-day bus tour of the Pinelands. The guided tour will take participants to cedar

swamps at the Brendan T. Byrne State Forest, as well as other natural gems such as the Franklin Parker Preserve, historic sites such as Batsto Village and the Carranza Memorial, forested areas affected by recent wildfires and dwarf pine forests.

Other new courses include a new documentary film about Emilio Carranza, a famous Mexican aviator whose plane crashed in the Pinelands in 1928, as well as courses about the region's botanical treasures, ghost towns, archaeology, ethnic settlements, the history of Double Trouble State Park, tundra swans, vultures and other birds, fungi, a review of the Pinelands' ecological integrity, the lifestyles and culture of native Pinelands residents, the plight of honey bees in the Pinelands and elsewhere, beneficial uses of native plants, how to create a dragonfly/wildlife pond and attract butterflies, a discussion of author John McPhee and a half-day field trip to Whitesbog Village to tour "Holly Haven."

Two other new courses are geared specifically for teachers, with one focusing on recently published educational resource materials pertaining to Wharton State Forest and another focusing on a new Pinelands-themed, interactive DVD that can be used to raise awareness and appreciation of the Pinelands.

The event also will feature popular courses from previous years,



Last year's Pinelands Short Course attracted a record of 622 registrants.

Photo/Paul Leakan

including presentations about hiking, canoeing, native frogs, toads, fish, hawks, owls and live snakes.

Participants are highly encouraged to register early to help ensure that they receive their first course selections. There will be limited seating (50 people) on the all-day bus tour, so early registration is crucial for those who are interested in that program. An early registration discount of \$5 is in effect until Feb. 2, 2009.

The Pinelands Short Course is registered with the New Jersey Department of Education, and professional development credits are available to New Jersey teachers who attend. Discounted registration fees are offered to senior citizens and students.

To request an event brochure/registration form or for more information, please call (609) 893-1765 or (609) 893-1783. The registration form also can be printed from the Commission's Web site. The address is: www.nj.gov/pinelands.



Commission approves new fee schedule for reviewing development applications

New schedule took effect on December 1, 2008

During its September meeting, the Pinelands Commission adopted amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan that established a new fee schedule for reviewing development applications in the Pinelands.

“The new fee schedule accomplishes two important things,” said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. “First, it more equitably distributes the review costs amongst the many different types of development applications the Pinelands Commission is obligated to review. Secondly, a higher percentage, about

half, of the Commission’s permit review costs will be recouped through fees.”

The amended fee schedule took effect Dec. 1. Through the new schedule, the Commission began assessing a \$200 fee for single family dwellings; increased rates for residential subdivisions; increased rates for linear development; increased rates for mining operations; began assessing a moderate fee for public development; began assessing a surcharge for “alternative” wastewater technology reviews and maintained current rates for commercial and industrial developments.

Stokes noted that the application fees to review single-family dwellings can be eliminated through the institution of a Local Review Officer Program, which expedites the approval process by having municipal officials review certain applications, without the need for Pinelands review first. Additionally, costs to review public development applications for many projects can be eliminated through streamlining agreements.

The full fee schedule is available at www.nj.gov/pinelands/appli/fees/.



Commission, Wharton State Forest and local students test water quality, learn about Pinelands resource protection during World Water Monitoring Day event

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, N.J. – More than 160 students gauged Pinelands water quality and learned about the importance of protecting the region’s unique natural and historic resources during World Water Monitoring Day on October 16.

Sponsored by the Pinelands Commission and Wharton State Forest, the event was held at the historic Batsto Village here.

“This event provides students with a tremendous, hands-on experience that helps them discover the critical role that water plays in sustaining a world-class ecosystem that is located right in their backyard,” said Paul Leakan, the Commission’s Communications Officer. “By educating these students about water quality and issues facing water supplies, we can hopefully foster a sense of environmental stewardship and empower these students with the knowledge that they can have a positive impact on an essential resource.”

Approximately 80 students from Hammonton Middle School in Atlantic County, 55 students from Pinelands Regional Junior High in Ocean County, and 30 students from Sterling High School in Camden County obtained and tested water samples from Batsto Lake.

The students measured the levels of pH or acidity in water, as well as water clarity, temperature and dissolved oxygen. Water in the Pinelands is generally undisturbed, has a low pH and low dissolved solids, enabling it to support uniquely adapted Pinelands plants and animals. The students’ findings were posted on the World Water Monitoring Day Web site (www.worldwatermonitoringday.org), where test results can be compared over time.

In addition to assisting with

the water tests, Commission staff helped students to use nets to catch native Pinelands fish, and demonstrated how the Commission protects wetlands, historic resources and habitat for rare plants and animals.

World Water Monitoring Day is an annual, global event coordinated by the Water Environment Federation and the International Water Association.



Students used nets to catch fish from Batsto Lake during World Water Monitoring Day on October 16.

Photo/Paul Leakan



Pinelands Commission approves agreement that authorizes widening the Garden State Parkway

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its regular meeting on Nov. 14, the Pinelands Commission voted to approve a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that authorizes widening the Garden State Parkway in the Pinelands.

The agreement was reached among the Commission and the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. It permits the Turnpike Authority to widen the Garden State Parkway between Interchange 30 in Somers Point, Atlantic County and Interchange 80 in South Toms River, Ocean County to respond to traffic demands and to improve public safety within the corridor.

The 50-mile widening project will occur mostly within the median and primarily within the Parkway's existing right-of-way. All but approximately one mile of the project will occur in the Pinelands. It will add a third traffic lane and wider shoulders in the northbound and southbound directions. The project also will include the construction of new parallel spans and rehabilitation of existing bridges over the Mullica and Bass rivers, as well as widening the existing bridge over Patcong Creek.

Because it may impact habitat for certain threatened and endangered plant and animal species, the Commission felt the project might not be fully consistent with Pinelands regulations. However, the Commission also determined that the MOA, which will allow activities that may not be in strict compliance with Pinelands regulations, is accompanied by measures that will, at a minimum, afford an

equivalent level of protection of Pinelands resources than would be provided through the strict application of Pinelands standards.



In order to provide an equivalent level of protection of Pinelands resources, the Turnpike Authority has agreed to purchase and deed restrict against future development almost 143 acres of land to offset potential threatened and endangered plant and animal species habitat impacts associated with the project. The Authority will provide a portion of this offset at a 259-acre site known as the Turtle Creek site in Washington Township, Burlington County. The site contains expanses of Atlantic White Cedar forest that have substantially recovered from historical logging. The site has been studied over the years and has been documented to contain numerous State threatened and endangered species, including Pine Barrens tree frog, various bird species, timber rattlesnake, New Jersey rush and Pine Barrens boneset.

Although the entire Turtle Creek site will be preserved as part of the Authority's overall mitigation package for the proposed project, 44 acres of the site will be specifically earmarked for Pinelands threatened and endangered species habitat offsets. The remaining acreage will be utilized for New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection freshwater wetland mitigation and to address Coastal Area Facility Review Act wildlife habitat mitigation.

The Authority will address the remaining 99 acres of threatened and

endangered species offset through the future acquisition of land elsewhere. That land will also be deed restricted against future development to ensure that suitable and characteristic habitat for the northern pine snake and red-headed woodpecker is preserved.

A conservative, landscape-based approach combined with field verification of potential habitat was used to identify threatened or endangered species habitat that may be impacted by the project. No direct impacts to plants or animals are expected as a result of the project.

The project is consistent with all other environmental standards of the Comprehensive Management Plan, including stormwater management, wetlands requirements and standards for public development.

Acting as technical consultants on behalf of the Pinelands Commission, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) undertook a study of the proposed project's potential to generate secondary, growth-related impacts that might induce changes in land use that would be inconsistent with the Pinelands land use program. The DVRPC concluded that only the induced impacts in the vicinity of Interchanges 58 and 69 could have the potential to be inconsistent with the Pinelands program.

Under the MOA, steps will be taken under a separate agreement through which the Authority will address the secondary impacts. That agreement must remain confidential at the present time because it addresses the purchase of specific properties.





Barnegat and Stafford townships ready to implement strategies aimed at mitigating wildfire safety hazards

Barnegat and Stafford township officials are set to begin implementing a series of strategies that were developed as part of a special initiative aimed at reducing wildfire risk and enhancing fire safety in the two Pinelands municipalities.

Barnegat's Township Committee and Stafford's Township Council unanimously adopted resolutions approving the program of strategies in late October, and will now work to carry them out with assistance from the Pinelands Commission and the New Jersey Forest Fire Service.

The strategies were identified as part of a special wildfire safety initiative that was launched by the Pinelands Commission and the state Forest Fire Service in March 2008.

As part of the project, a working committee appointed by both municipalities held numerous meetings with representatives of the Commission and Forest Fire Service to assess known wildfire hazards and risks in their communities and to identify specific measures to mitigate those hazards and risks.

The project will serve as a model for improving forest fire management and fire safety in communities throughout the Pinelands, according to John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission.

The strategies call for:

■ **Creating and maintaining fuel breaks.** Fuel breaks are areas where vegetation has been selectively thinned to remove combustible fuels and help suppress the spread of wildfires. This includes establishing and maintaining a 200-foot fuel break

along a 2.3-mile section of Pancoast Road where dense forest abuts residential development. Also, new fuel breaks would be created and maintained around the Brighton at Barnegat and Pinewood Estates residential communities, as well as the Scrubbie Pines Campground on Route 72.



Barnegat and Stafford townships have an extensive history of wildfires. Both municipalities were affected by the May 2007 wildfire (shown in an aerial photo above) that burned 15,550 acres near the Warren Grove Gunnery Range. Photo/Paul Leakan

■ **Creating Firewise**

Committees. This includes appointing committees for each municipality that will oversee implementation of the wildfire safety program and will have the principal responsibility to continue these initiatives into the future.

■ **Education and outreach initiatives.** It is critical to inform residents about the types of actions they can take to assume personal responsibility to help reduce wildfire risks for their homes and properties. This strategy includes meeting with homeowner associations and creating a Firewise Association; reviewing and updating elementary school fire safety curricula; holding a special event to raise students' awareness of fire safety; conducting a fire safety cleanup day; conducting homeowner education programs; developing and undertaking an area-wide fuel reduction maintenance program and conducting a regulatory training session for local officials.

■ **Regulatory amendments.** This includes developing model zoning and subdivision regulations based on current fire safety terms and practices that build from the existing fire management provisions contained in the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands. It also includes efforts to streamline the permitting process; instituting fuel break/fire break management compliance measures; updating local codes that incorporate current fire safety terms and practices; and recommending modifications to the State codes for construction materials, access requirements and landscape design.

■ **Community Wildfire Protection Plan.** This includes a comprehensive wildfire protection plan for Barnegat and Stafford townships. The plan would identify implementation resources and would be submitted for Firewise Communities/USA Certification.



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List of course titles and presenters for the 20th annual Pinelands Short Course

- **All Day Tour of the Pinelands** (bus tour; New): Emile DeVito, New Jersey Conservation Foundation
- **Holly Haven, Inc.** (field trip; New): Rick Prickett
- **Whitesbog Village Tour** (field trip): John Joyce, Whitesbog Preservation Trust
- **Seasons of the Pines: An Interactive Guide** (New): Terry O'Leary, NJ Forest Service and Bob Birdsall, Author/Photographer
- **John McPhee: An Appreciation (New)**: Angus Kress Gillespie, professor at Rutgers University
- **Ghost Towns of the NJ Pine Barrens** (New): Barbara Solem-Stull, author
- **Piney Lifestyles** (New): Brenda Conner
- **An Archaeological Review of Prehistoric Pine Barrens** (New): Jack Cresson, archaeologist
- **Lost and Forgotten Towns of the Pine Barrens** (New): Ted Gordon, botanist and historian
- **Goodwill: The Flight of Emilio Carranza** (New film and talk): Robert A. Emmons Jr.
- **Ethnic Settlements in the Pines** (New): Mark Demitroff
- **Pinelands Traveler: Ghost Towns, Bogs and Legends**: Michael Fowler, educator
- **The History of Double Trouble State Park** (New): Andrew J. Anderson, NJ Parks and Forestry
- **Tunes and Tales of the Pinelands**: Valerie Vaughn, musician
- **Piney Hollow Drifters and Home Cookin'** (New): live music bands
- **Botanical Treasures of the Pinelands** (New): Russell Juelg, Pinelands Preservation Alliance
- **Fungi in the Pine Barrens** (New): Dr. John Dighton, Rutgers Pinelands Field Station
- **Pinelands Frogs and Toads and Pinelands Fish**: John Bunnell, Pinelands Commission scientist
- **Pinelands Hawks and Owls**: John D. Rokita
- **Tundra Swans** (New): P.I.N.E.S.
- **Milkweeds for Monarchs** (New) and **How to Create a Wildlife Pond** (New): Pat Sutton, educator and naturalist
- **Birds of the Pinelands** (New): Clay Sutton, writer, naturalist and biologist
- **Native Plants** (New): Lorraine Kiefer, horticulturalist
- **The Benefits of Becoming a Honeybee Hobbyist** (New): Kathleen Truax
- **Vultures in New Jersey** (New): USDA
- **Snakes Alive** (live snakes): George Young, educator
- **Let's Visit Wharton** (New): Gail Hunt
- **Birding, Botany and Canoeing in Atlantic County and How to Assess the Health of a Stream** (New): Michael A. Hogan
- **Hiking in the Pinelands**: Joseph Trujillo and Pat Burton, Outdoor Club of South Jersey
- **An Ecological-Integrity Assessment of the Pinelands** (New): Nick Procopio, Pinelands Commission scientist