PINELANDS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

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January 29, 2016

To: Chairman Mark Lohbauer, Pinelands Commission

From: Jaclyn Rhoads, Ryan Rebozo and Jason Howell, Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Re: Motor Vehicle Damage in Wharton State Forest

Due to the anthropogenic damage that currently exists in certain locations of the state forest, and the potential for further degradation of these sites and others, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance respectfully suggests the region in Wharton State Forest as identified in the attached maps to be designated as inappropriate for motor vehicle use.

The following provision in your regulations gives you the authority to designate such an area:

7:50-6.143 (a)3 -The Commission shall from time to time designate areas which are inappropriate for use of motor vehicles. Such designation shall be based upon the following considerations and upon consultation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and other interested persons:
i. A need to protect a scientific study area;
ii. A need to protect the location of threatened or endangered plant or animal species;
iii. A need to provide a wilderness recreational area;
iv. A need to prevent conflicts with adjoining intensively used recreational areas;
v. A need to protect historic or archaeological sites;
vi. A need to protect critical wildlife habitats;
vii. A need to address a situation of public health and safety;
viii. A need to protect extensively disturbed areas from further impact; and
ix. The extent to which such road closure would substantially impair recreation access to and uses of surrounding resources.

All sites on the accompanying list occur either in or within one mile of the Natural Heritage Program priority site known as Sand Ridge Pond. Sand Ridge Pond is described by the Natural Heritage Program as having an "excellent population of a globally imperiled, state endangered plant species" and is given an overall biodiversity rank of B2 which is defined as a site whose

biodiversity is of "very high significance on a global level, such as the most outstanding occurrence of any ecological community. It also includes areas containing other occurrences of elements that are critically imperiled globally, a good or excellent occurrence of an element that is imperiled globally, an excellent occurrence of an element that is rare globally, or a concentration (4+) of good occurrences of globally rare elements or viable occurrences of globally imperiled elements." The area proposed is also noted for its high ecological and wetland integrity by your agency. For these reasons alone, these proposed sites should be a priority for restoration and/or protection efforts.