

Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Task 14: Interpretive Plan

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1. Introduction

This chapter presents an inventory of the existing interpretation that will be the basis for developing thematic ideas and a framework for an interpretive program for the Byway. The chapter begins with thoughts on the context of the interpretive challenge facing this byway. This is followed by a summary of the existing Pinelands Interpretation Plan (1998) and then a review of existing interpretive facilities and materials along the byway as well as websites that offer perspectives on the Pinelands and thus are now part of the interpretive landscape.

The Challenge of Interpreting the Pinelands

The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail offers travelers an experience with one of the most unusual ecosystems on the planet -- the Pine Barrens, an international biosphere reserve. This region is characterized by some of the following qualities:

- Thin, sandy soils atop one of the largest aquifers in the country;
- A distinctive pine forest ecosystem shaped by frequent fire disturbances ;
- The rare pygmy pine forests;
- A rare underlayment of iron rich soils that drive up the acidity of the water and give it a distinctive tea color ;
- Unusually rich habitats for over 1,000 species of plants and animals ;
- A delicate mixing of species from the northern and southern climates of North America;
- A complex lacework of rivers, streams, ponds and lakes that offer silent passage to natural areas not seen by most people;
- The interaction of habitats ranging from inland pine and oak forests to the tidal estuaries and marshes of the Atlantic coast;
- An interesting human heritage characterized by groups of people who, either by choice or due to circumstance, lived lives closely connected to nature and somewhat removed from the mainstream of society;
- All within one of the most extensively protected open land areas on the Atlantic Seaboard.

And yet, for many automobile travelers, unless this byway is well organized, mapped, signed and interpreted, the experience could instead be characterized by the following reactions:

- Boring, lengthy sections of road with nothing but pine trees on each side;
- Very few places to stop and walk around;
- Somewhat eerie sand roads that seem to extend into the wilderness;
- A difficult landscape in which to orient oneself due to the flat topography;
- Very few signed locations where the traveler knows for sure that he or she is welcome;
- Occasional crossings of small rivers with no clear indication of whether or where one can access the water.

Therefore, the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail must find ways to get people out of their cars or find ways to bring the qualities and heritage of this region into the car via audio or written materials. This chapter reviews the existing Pinelands Interpretation Plan (1998) and interpretive facilities to assess how well this objective is accomplished.

2. The Pinelands Interpretation Plan

In 1998, the National Park Service completed an interpretive plan for the full Pinelands National Reserve. The document presents an organizing theme, interpretive topics and actions to be considered.

The interpretive plan suggests that the significant environmental qualities of the Pine Barrens be the focus for the region's interpretive theme. Within that broad theme, the plan also recognizes the important role that cultural heritage should play, but those stories will be within the context of the environmental theme. Specifically, the themes chosen by the interpretive plan are the following:

1. *The Environment: New Jersey's Pinelands is a unique natural environment.*
2. *The People: People have inhabited New Jersey's Pinelands for centuries and created traditions that continue today.*
3. *Interaction: The diversity of Pineland's landscapes and man's interaction with this land is continually evolving.*

The Pinelands Interpretation Plan developed a set of guiding principles that reflect the public's preferences from a lengthy public involvement process. These same principles are used within this corridor management plan.

- Provide enhanced interpretive opportunities through the region, protecting significant natural and historic sites, as well as traditional *lifeways*, privacy and quality of life for Pinelands residents.
- Create a regional, cooperative approach to providing needed interpretive and educational experiences for visitors and residents that builds on existing efforts and seeks to avoid abuse or overuse of the region's resources.
- Describe a long-term vision which plans for visitation at sites and facilities best able to sustain such use without environmental degradation, respects private property rights and is financially feasible or self-sustaining where possible.
- Adhere to the land use and development standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan.
- Provide interpretive and educational opportunities for visitors, Pinelands residents, and those in the surrounding region to encourage an understanding and appreciation of Pinelands natural and cultural resources, promote and enhance ongoing efforts and coordinate sites, facilities and programs to create a cohesive identity and interpretive experience.

The 1998 interpretation plan also defined a framework that is relevant to this corridor plan:

■ **Framework for facilities:**

- One **Interpretive Center** to concentrate interpretation and coordinate regional interpretive and educational programs. This center's potential location was not discussed.
- A series of **Visitor Information Centers** to mark the eastern and western entries into the region. The plan estimated that one center would be best placed at Double Trouble State Park while the other site should be on the western edge of the region, although the location was not projected.
- A network of **Interpretive Resource Sites** using existing state park and forest facilities to provide hands-on experiences which complement those at the main center.

■ **Interpretive exhibits and signage to define a regional identity using:**

- Freestanding, strategically placed **orientation kiosks** to provide introductory information about the region.
- **Wayside exhibits** to mark and explain resources of regional importance.
- A comprehensive **sign system** to orient travelers to the region and its communities and facilitate travel.

■ **Printed materials and publications** to disseminate information about regional facilities and programs for interested users.

In summary, the basic structure from 1998 still makes sense for the region. This byway effort can help add significantly to the overall interpretive experience for the region while also providing an integrated experience for the byway itself.

3. Review of Existing Interpretation Sites

The following review of existing interpretive installations and resources along the byway summarizes what the traveler can find today, notes weak points or missing links in the interpretive experience, and suggests ways to strengthen the existing materials in order to create a stronger, more integrated experience. The overview is presented according to the three main segments of the route: the Northern Loop, the Central Segment and the Southern Loop. Within each segment, the sites are further classified as primary interpretive sites, secondary interpretive sites (“interesting places along the way”), and scenic drives and trails.

Existing Interpretation – Overview

Northern Loop

Primary Interpretive Sites

- Batsto State Park
- Tuckerton Seaport Museum / Jacques Cousteau NERR Exhibit
- Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

Secondary Interpretive Sites

- Bass River State Forest
- Noyes Museum

Scenic Drives and Trails

- Batona Trail
- Great Bay Boulevard Drive

Central Segment

Primary Interpretive Sites

- Estell Manor Park

Secondary Interpretive Sites

- Weymouth Furnace
- Lester C. MacNamara (Tuckahoe) Wildlife Management Area

Scenic Drives and Trails

- Lester C. MacNamara (Tuckahoe) Wildlife Management Area – Auto Drive

Southern Loop

Primary Interpretive Sites

- Belleplain State Forest

Secondary Interpretive Sites

- Eldora Nature Preserve
- Cape May National Wildlife Refuge
- Dennisville Schoolhouse Museum
- Sam Azeez Museum

Scenic Drives and Trails

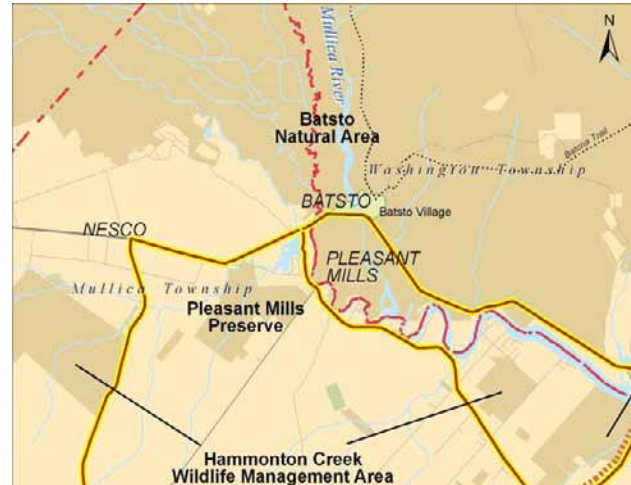
- Jakes Landing Road

Northern Loop: Primary Interpretive Sites

Batsto Village

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor
Intrinsic Qualities: Natural, Recreational, Historic, Scenic

Batsto State Park has an excellent visitor center and interpretive exhibit located in Batsto Village. The visitor center is fully staffed and offers a gift shop and bookstore. The interpretive exhibits provide information on the overall natural history of the Pinelands, the specifics of history of Batsto Village and various focused stories on the lives of interesting residents of the Pinelands. Batsto Village is a living history center consisting of thirty-three historic buildings and structures including the Batsto Mansion, gristmill, sawmill, general store, workers' homes and post office. There are nature trails within the Natural Area and a trail guide is available at the interpretive center at Batsto State Park.



Batsto State Park also offers a guided tour via cell phone. Visitors can call a number on their cell phones and listen to a guided tour at one of 18 stops highlighting the historic sites and buildings in the village, such as the blacksmith shop, gristmill and sawmill. Each pre-recorded message is approximately two to three minutes, and follows a walking tour brochure. Taking the cell phone tour is simple and free, except for the cost of the users' cell phone minutes. Visitors dial the local number (609-503-9377) and then enter the site number that they wish to hear. This project is supported and funded by the Batsto Citizens Committee, Inc., a volunteer group dedicated to preserving and promoting the site.

Considerations

Of all the existing visitors centers along the byway, Batsto Village at Batsto State Park is clearly the most extensive, most recently designed and best equipped to handle higher volumes of visitors. The Byway should consider a structure of interpretive and information centers along the route and use Batsto as the flagship center within that structure.

The Natural Area offers a nice microcosm of preserved Pinelands habitats. While it should be mentioned in the byway program, it should not be subject to overuse due to inappropriate levels of byway promotion.



Interpretive exhibits in Batsto Visitor Center



Outdoor interpretive panels at Batsto Village



Historic site marker and outdoor interpretive panel at Batsto Village.

Tuckerton Seaport Museum and Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Reserve Exhibit

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor, Coastal Trade and Industry
Intrinsic Qualities: Historic, Natural

The Seaport museum is a recreated late 19th and early 20th century maritime village on 40 acres along Tuckerton Creek. The village contains 13 (planned to be 30) historically replicated buildings of the “Bayman’s” era many of which are complete with costumed trade and crafts men and women, including boatbuilders, oystermen and clambers, whalers, lighthouse keepers, ship captains and others who demonstrate the day to day life of the coastal New Jersey village.



An information center is housed within a re-creation of the historic Tuckerton Yacht Club. The “Coastal Learning Center” at the Tuckerton Seaport provides education for teachers, planners and government officials. The center has meeting and dorm rooms, and includes a “wet lab” for field excursions into nearby wetlands and marshlands.

The Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve exhibit has interpretive displays on coastal subjects such as wetlands, fish and wildlife, barrier islands, the Pinelands, the Long-term Ecosystem Observatory at 15 Meters (LEO-15) and culture of people who live along the coast.



Tuckerton Seaport Museum



Interpretive displays at Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Reserve "Life on the Edge" Exhibit

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor

Intrinsic Qualities: Scenic, Natural, Recreational

An eight-mile Wildlife Drive and several short foot trails provide excellent wildlife viewing and photo opportunities. There are also several interpretive panels at the entrance to the property which provide information on the Refuge and its mission. A small art gallery is located at the entrance. An auditorium at the headquarters building is open on weekdays from 8AM to 4PM and provides a display on the flora and fauna of the Refuge.



The entrance fee helps to buy additional wetlands for wildlife refuges.

This is a marvelous facility and experience. The byway should integrate this facility in its overall plan and encourage visitors to go to the Refuge. The Wildlife Drive is a great example of taking the visitor out into the natural environment.

Plans for a new visitor center complex for the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge are underway. Two mirror-image buildings have been designed – one for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the other for New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife. An environmental assessment has been completed, and the preferred site for the complex is on US Route 9 close to Smithville. USFWS' regional Environmental Services and Law Enforcement staffs are planned to move to this location from their existing offices. USFWS has requested \$17.96 million from the 2009 federal "Economic Stimulus" package.



Outdoor interpretive panel at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

The new complex would include a visitor center, and there would also be a new (unstaffed) visitor contact station at the beginning of the Wildlife

Drive with 700 square feet of exhibit area. The primary theme of the center will be migratory birds (which connects to the “Wildlife Migrations” theme of the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail). With the successful completion of the complex, the existing auditorium and headquarters would be razed.

Northern Loop:

Secondary Interpretive Sites – Interesting Places along the Way

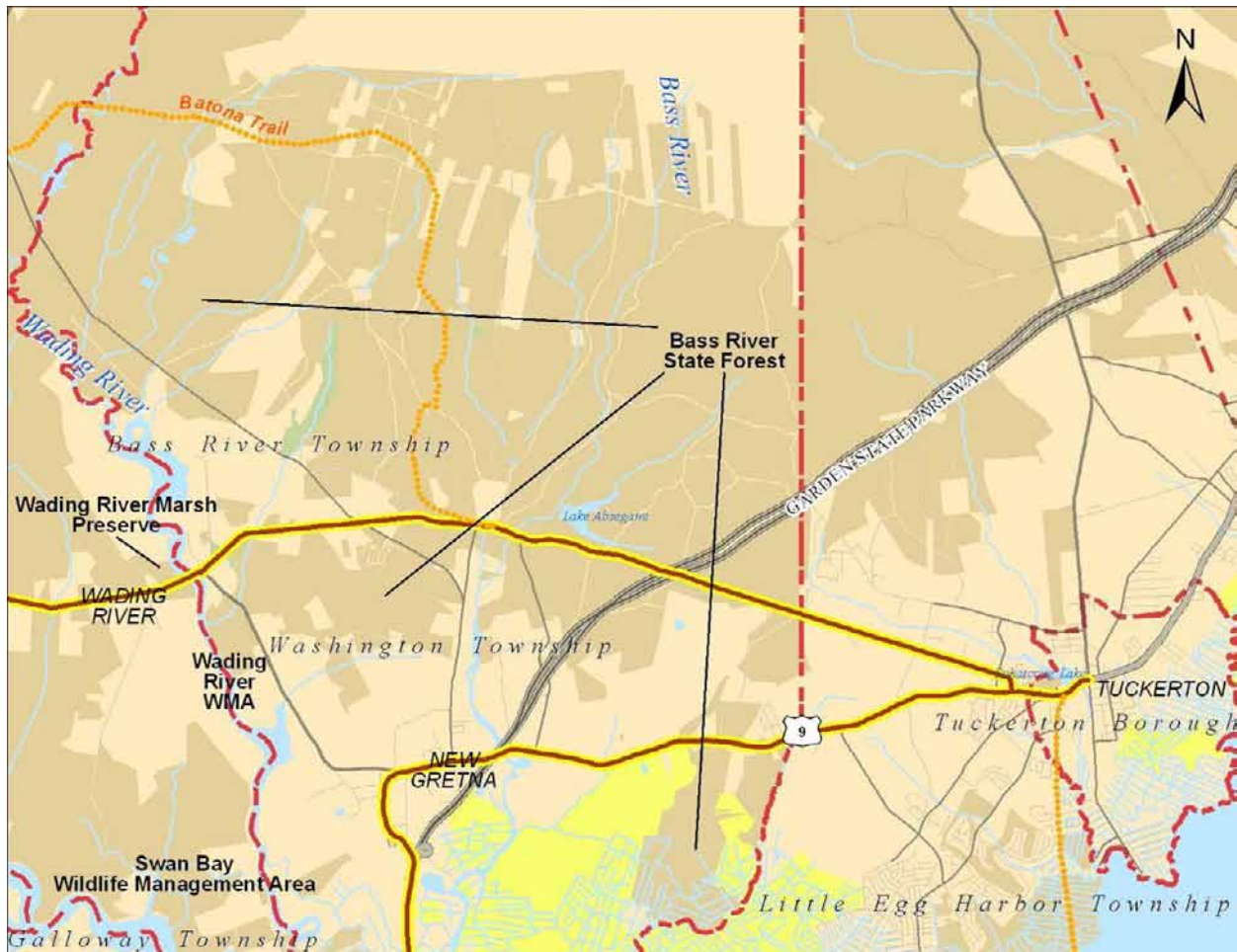
Bass River State Forest

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor

Intrinsic Qualities: Natural, Recreational

The State Forest has an interpretive pavilion along the South Shore Road and there are signs along the trails in the Forest. There is a self-guided nature tour in the Absegami Natural Area.

This area offers the only opportunity along the byway corridor to see and experience the pygmy pine forest. Along with the generally peaceful and beautiful nature of Bass River State Forest, the pygmy pine forest should be an emphasized feature of this site.



Noyes Museum

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor

Intrinsic Qualities: Natural, Cultural

The Museum, located in Oceanville off of Route 9 on Lily Lake Road adjacent to the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, has a collection of southern New Jersey art and interpretive displays, including a decoy collection, regional folk art (including whirligigs, martin houses, etc.). The museum's regional art collection supports a large local art community.



Northern Loop: Scenic Trails and Drives

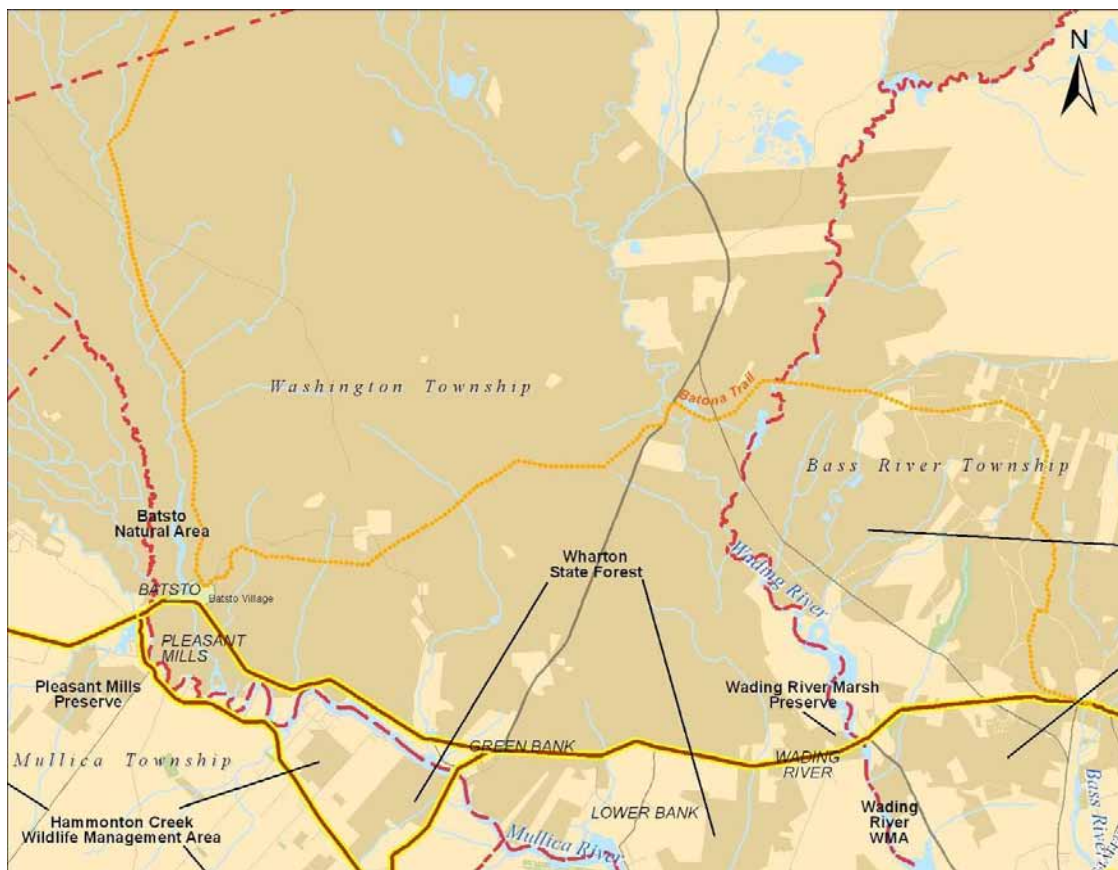
Batona Trail

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor

Intrinsic Quality: Recreational

There are periodic interpretive signs along the trail.

The Batona Trail offers the region's longest uninterrupted hiking experience. It allows visitors to explore into the depths of the Pinelands landscape to a much greater degree than any other area along the byway corridor. Encouraging people to hike some or all of the Batona should be emphasized in byway promotion.



Great Bay Boulevard (Seven Bridges Road)

Theme(s): Mullica River Corridor
Intrinsic Qualities: Recreational, Scenic, Natural

Just down the road from the Tuckerton Seaport is Great Bay Boulevard (also known as Seven Bridges Road), which extends into Little Egg Harbor Township and the salt marshes of the Great Bay Boulevard Wildlife Management Area. The road is off of Route 9 just a few blocks from South Green Street.

This road was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

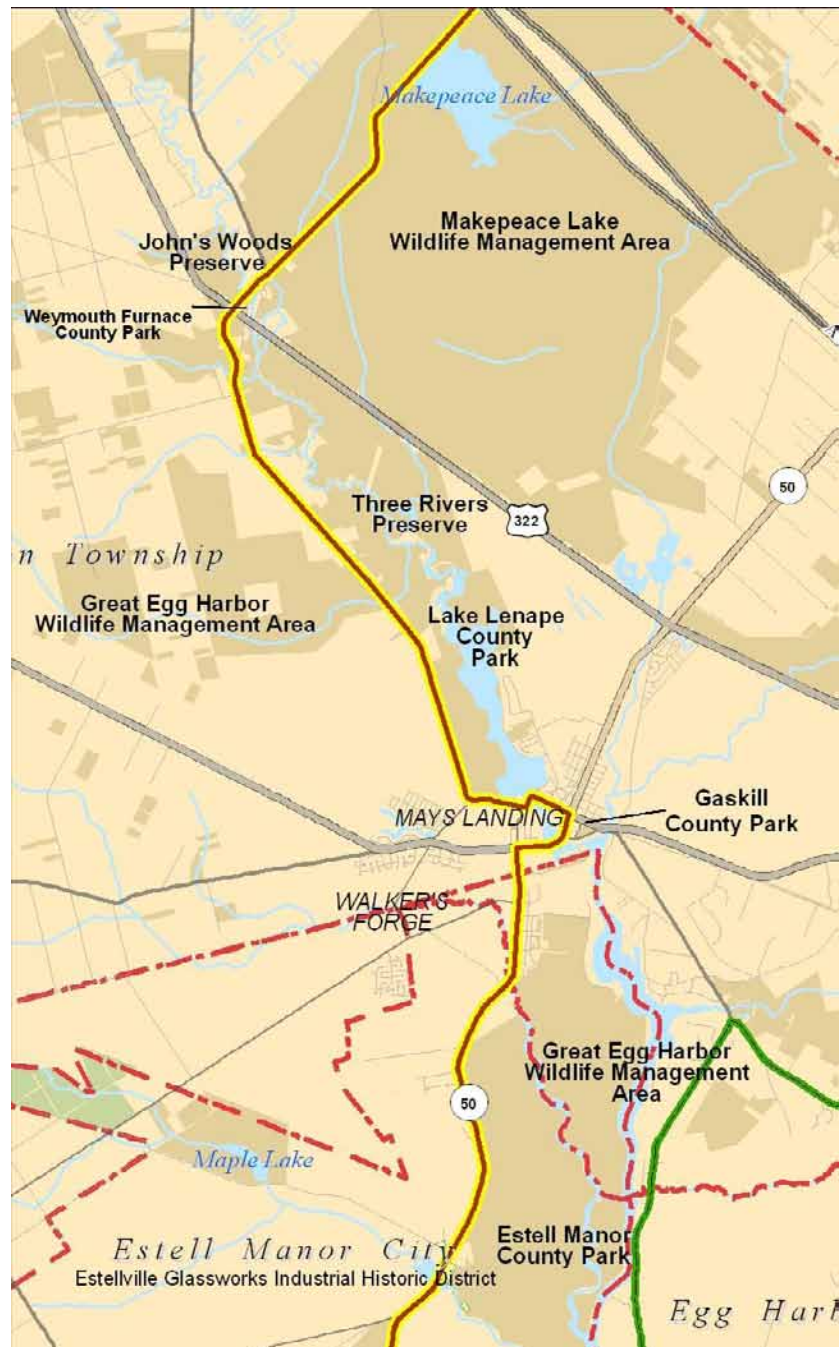


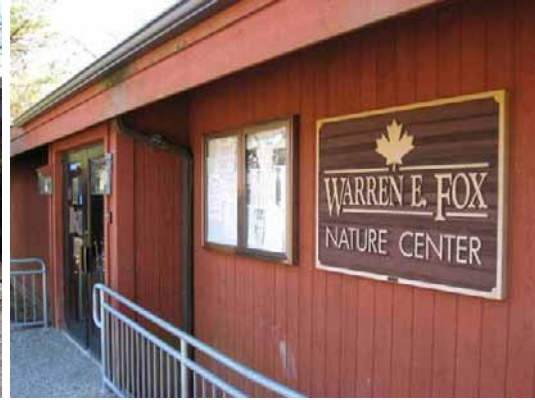
Central Section: Primary Interpretive Sites

Estell Manor Park

Theme(s): Great Egg Harbor
River Corridor

Intrinsic Qualities:
Recreational, Historic,
Archeological





Warren E. Fox Nature Center at Estell Manor Park

A primary feature of the Estell Manor Park is the Warren E. Fox Nature Center, built in the 1980's using a passive solar design. The Center provides education and recreation programs, live animal and environmental displays, maps, brochures, and rest room facilities. A Backyard Habitat education area is part of the site and it includes a natural playground, campground, constructed pond and native vegetation plantings. A wide variety of staffed interpretive walks are presented by the Center. Classes and trainings are provided for children, the general public and school teachers.

The Swamp Boardwalk trail is a significant interpretive facility that offers access to interior wooded areas for those with movement challenges, as well as offering a route to access a variety of habitats without causing direct damage to the areas from foot traffic.



Swamp boardwalk at Estell Manor Park

Estellville Glass Works Industrial Historic District is located in the southern portion of the county park. There are interpretive panels near the ruins of the glass works. In 1995-1996, the ruins of the Estellville Glassworks were stabilized. General erosion, vandalism, and acid rain were the main factors leading to the decision to help save what is left. Sidewalks and interpretive signs were placed at the sites, so this site is now more visitor-friendly.



Interpretive panel at Estellville Glass Works Industrial Historic District

The County recently approved a master plan for Estell Manor that will involve investments in a wide variety of facilities and improvements. Some of the major recommendations with relevance for the byway include the following:

- develop a narrow gauge rail line through the property on abandoned rail beds;
- expand the Fox Nature Center;
- build an overlook platform along the South River;
- make trail connections to the wildlife management area;
- improve Gaskill Park in Mays Landing and other open space properties;
- improve signage; and
- further restore and interpret the Manor House.



Interpretive panel and historic site marker in Estell Manor Park

Central Section:

Secondary Interpretive Sites – Interesting Places along the Way

Weymouth Furnace (Atlantic County Park System)

Theme(s): Great Egg Harbor River Corridor

Intrinsic Qualities: Historic, Archeological, Recreational

There is one interpretive sign relating to the furnace and its history. There is also a sign that conveys information on the archeological site and ruins and future plans. The site lies right on the Great Egg Harbor River and is a very pleasant, peaceful place to stop and walk around. No trails extend from this property. Canoers and kayakers do launch from this site.

This site should be highlighted as a stop for all byway visitors given its easy access to the river. Interpretation should be upgraded and expanded regarding the Furnace history.

Consideration should be given to another panel or interpretive technique that provides information on the Great Egg Harbor River. The canals at Weymouth furnace are also archaeological resources.



Ruins at Weymouth Furnace County Park

Lester C. MacNamara (Tuckahoe) Wildlife Management Area

Theme(s): Great Egg Harbor River Corridor

Intrinsic Qualities: Natural, Recreational

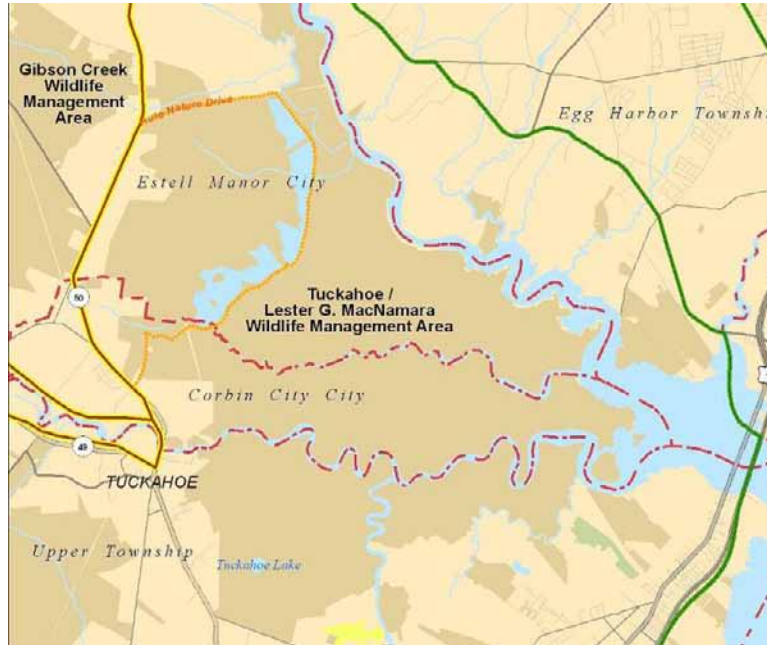
The coastal settings underline the degree to which the Pinelands exist in such close proximity to the ocean and the degree to which the saltwater and freshwater ecosystems intertwine in this region. The open landscapes of these coastal drives will also provide people with a psychological break from the closeness of the thick pine-oak forests and shrub forests of the Pinelands.



Wildlife observation platform at Tuckahoe WMA

Central Section: Scenic Trails and Drives

Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area - Auto Drive



This 8-mile Drive travels along the dikes used to impound the brackish and fresh waters. Interpretive signage can be found in several locations along the route. The views are spectacular. Along with the nature drive at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, this drive is one the critical side routes that byway travelers should be encouraged to take.

Signage to the nature drive is poor and can be improved significantly. Overall signage to the site along Route 50 should be improved. Interpretive signage along the driving route is wearing and in need of replacement and repair. The viewing platform along the route needs repair. Walking trails need better signage.



**Interpretive panel for
the Auto Nature Drive at
Tuckahoe WMA**

Southern Loop: Primary Interpretive Sites

Belleplain State Forest



Theme(s): Tuckahoe River

Intrinsic Qualities: Natural, Recreational

The state forest has a visitor center at the forest entrance off Highway 550. Three interpretive signs are placed in front of the visitor center. They focus on the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Highway, the State Forest and the Pinelands National Reserve. In addition, there is a staffed visitor center with basic brochures, maps and books on the Forest and on the Pinelands.

There are interpretive trails running through Belleplain State Forest. They highlight the natural features of the Forest including species of trees, shrubs, wildflowers and animals native to the area. Sights or signs of deer, bobcat, coyote, fox, and other mammals are common. An audio tour on cassette tape is also available for these trails.



Interpretive panels and trail marker at Belleplaine State Forest

Southern Loop:

Secondary Interpretive Sites – Interesting Places along the Way

Eldora Nature Preserve

Nature Conservancy's Delaware Bayshore Office / Visitor Site

Theme(s): Insects, birds and plants of the southern Pinelands

Intrinsic Qualities: Natural

The Eldora Nature Preserve, site of the chapter's Delaware Bayshores Center, is the first preserve established by the Conservancy expressly for the protection of rare moths. Historically, the land has been farmed, and a house existed on the site from at least 1872. Renowned entomologist and author Dr. C. Brooke Worth lived here from 1965 to 1981. In 1981, he donated

177 acres to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, which in turn transferred the property to the Conservancy to manage as a nature preserve. The interpretive trail at Eldora allows the public to enjoy the natural treasures of this special place and learn about moths and supporting species.

In 1998, the Conservancy renovated the existing structure and opened the Delaware Bayshores Center. The Bayshores program focuses on conservation in a larger area. Spanning two states, the Delaware Bayshores is a relatively intact natural area acknowledged as one of the Earth's most important stopovers for migratory birds. Each spring, a natural phenomenon that has been repeated for millennia occurs, when countless horseshoe crabs come ashore to spawn. Migratory birds that travel up to 9,000 miles on the Atlantic Flyway feed on the eggs of these ancient animals. For many birds, the Bayshores' beaches and marshes are the only stop on an annual odyssey from their winter feeding grounds in South America to Arctic breeding sites. Preserving the health and quality of this key stopover for migratory birds has global conservation implications.

The primary opportunity for this facility is to make its message known to a wider audience through the byways program. Other byway visitor centers along the route should provide information on Eldora and encourage visitors to stop at the site.



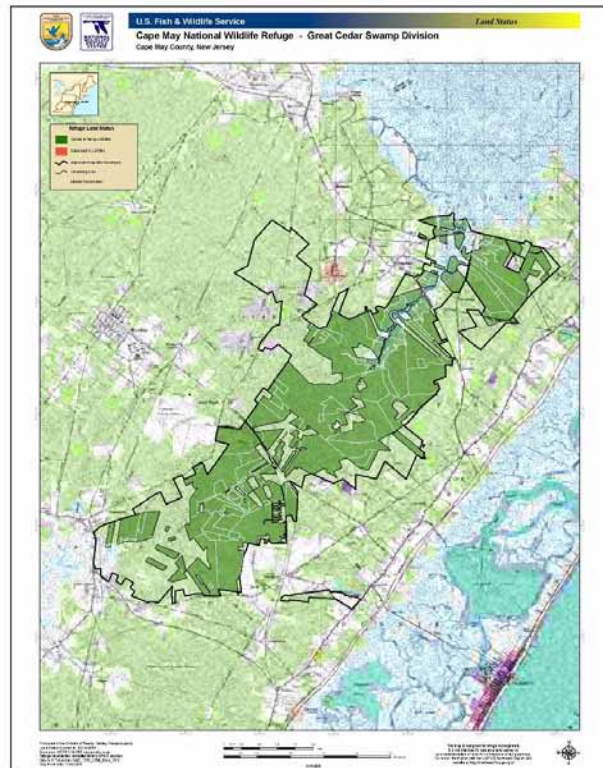
Eldora Nature Preserve

Cape May National Wildlife Refuge (Great Cedar Swamp Section)

Theme(s): Ecosystem of the cedar swamps
Intrinsic Qualities: Natural, Recreational

This portion of the Refuge offers the Cedar Swamp Trail on Tyler Road for hiking and some interpretive panels on the Swamp. This trail provides excellent opportunities for birding, nature photography, and environmental education.

The Cedar Swamp section offers an exceptionally under-visited area for byway travelers. Signage, parking and interpretation are all opportunities at this site.



Dennisville Schoolhouse Museum

Theme(s): small town life
Intrinsic Qualities: Historic

Dedicated to collecting, recording and preserving the history of the Dennis Township area. It is located within the National Historic District of Dennisville at 681 Petersburg Road and is open year round, Saturdays 10am to 2pm. The museum offers a collection of photographs and materials collected from Dennisville and the nearby communities. There is some interpretive information provided, but funding should be obtained to more fully tell the stories of Dennisville and the area.



Interior of the Dennisville Schoolhouse Museum



Dennisville Schoolhouse Museum

Woodbine and Sam Azeez Museum

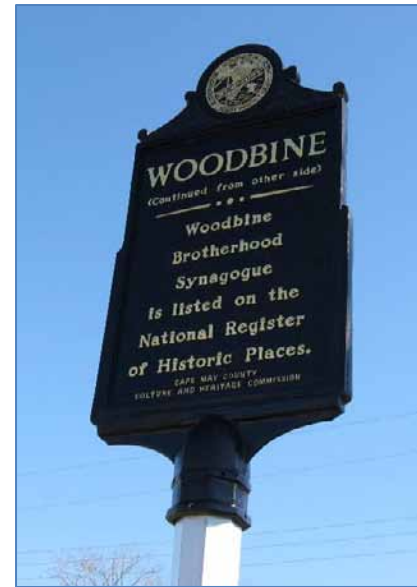
Theme(s): Coastal Trade and Industry, Churches and Cemeteries

Intrinsic Qualities: Historic, Cultural

The Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine Heritage, housed in the 114 year-old Brotherhood Synagogue, celebrates the history of Woodbine. The interpretive displays are professionally designed and do a good job of relating the history of the community's formation as a Jewish farming settlement and then subsequently a town with a diverse economy.



Interpretive panels in Sam Azeez Museum of Woodbine Heritage



Historic place marker at Woodbine Brotherhood Synagogue

Southern Loop: Scenic Trails and Tours

Road to Jakes Landing

Dennis Creek Wildlife Management Area is designated an Important Birding Area by NJ Audubon. Existing parking, boat access and a portable toilet are available at the end of the access road at Jakes Landing.

This site offers a very nice introduction to coastal, marsh habitat along the byway. Better signing will be needed from Route 47 to alert travelers to this location. The drive/walk down Jakes Landing Road is scenic and peaceful. A trail extends into the woods along the road. The parking and boat launching area at the end of the road are highly scenic. Additional interpretation is needed in this area to more fully tell the story of the marshes and the wildlife that visits the area.

3. Interpretation and the Internet

The Internet plays an important interpretive role for all travel destinations including the Pinelands. Obtaining first impressions of a place, absorbing an overall image, developing an itinerary, researching particular interests before a trip – each of these aspects of one’s learning and relationship with a place is impacted by the Internet. This section presents an overview of the interpretive information presented on the major websites that most visitors will encounter when searching for information on the Pinelands. Please note that the tourism websites are not covered in this section; they are reviewed in the tourism chapter of the plan. Also, we have only covered the major websites related to the Pinelands here. There are many specialized sites on specific aspects of the region, but for this chapter, the focus is on web sites that might provide an interpretive overview.

The Pinelands Commission

When one Googles the word “Pinelands,” the top site that comes up is sponsored by the Pinelands Commission:
<http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands/>.

How does this site impact the interpretive foundation for the byway?

First, the site is not oriented to travelers. This is due to the fact that the Commission’s home page should provide an overview of its core mission of protecting the Pinelands. But where does this leave the traveler?

Consideration should be given to creating a Commission-sponsored site that clearly focuses on visitors and gains a top-of-page appearance on the major search engines.

Second, based on a quick scan of this page, the Commission site does not offer a structured presentation regarding the Pinelands, their distinctiveness or other qualities related to the regional interpretive plan. Therefore, a visit to this page site sends the message that the region is well-managed and those interested in a mailed packet of information on the region can order the packet by mailing \$6 to the Commission.)

However, a click on “The Pinelands National Reserve” link in the left navigation bar will yield much information on the region.

As indicated below, there are pages devoted to the region’s geography, history, plants, animals, people and economy and water resources. In most cases, the pages offer several layers more of information on each topic.



Thus, most of the foundation information for the region's interpretive program is already posted to the web on the Commission's website but, it is not an obvious and easy find, and it is not presented in a manner that invites a traveler to visit the region or suggests how this information might be presented within the region in an engaging, fun manner.

The screenshot shows the New Jersey Pinelands Commission website. At the top, there is a logo for the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and a 'New Jersey 0000' logo. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: 'Employment Opportunities | Contact Pinelands Commission | Site Map | Links'. On the left side, there is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: Home, The Pinelands National Reserve (with sub-links for Size, History, Ownership, People and Economy, Plants, Animals, Location, Geology, Climate, and Water Resources), The Comprehensive Management Plan, About the Commission, Municipal Council, Land Use and Planning, Permitting & Applicant Services, Science, Information Center, Educational Resources, and Pinelands Pastimes. The main content area is titled 'The Pinelands National Reserve' and has a sub-section for 'Animals'. Under 'Animals', there is a sub-section for 'Wildlife of the New Jersey Pinelands' with a paragraph of text: 'The animals of the Pinelands have been effected greatly by the region's ecosystem. The existing animal communities are shaped by many environmental factors including vegetation, fire, moisture, and water chemistry. Many of these unique species are dependent upon the special conditions present in the New Jersey Pinelands. Maintaining this fragile environment is essential for the preservation of the characteristic Pinelands, fish, bird, reptile, amphibian, mammal, and invertebrate species.' To the right of this text is a photograph of a treefrog. Below the photo is the caption 'Photo by John Bunnell'. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a 'More Information' section with links for 'Wildlife Images', 'Threatened & Endangered Animals of the New Jersey Pinelands', and 'The Pine Barrens Treefrog'. At the very bottom of the page, there is a paragraph: '39 species of mammals, 299 Bird, 59 reptile and amphibian species and 91 fish species have been identified as occurring within the Pinelands. They include 43 animal species listed as threatened or endangered by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife.'

PineyPower.com

Then under the "pinelands" search, appearing at position #8 is the following listing:

"NJ Pine Barrens - A Visitor's Guide to the NJ Pinelands! A colorful narrative of the Pine Barrens and surrounding coastal areas in the southern Ocean County area, including parks, nature, dining, nightlife"

The PineyPower site is jam-packed with information on the region and its events for a full year. The site provides a lot of information, but the organization is not particularly well-designed for the first-time traveler or visitor. For example, the home page begins with a "What Is It?" photo contest rather than introductory information to draw in the traveler.

MOUSEOVER FOR MENU

- Sign up For PineyPower's Monthly E-Newsletter! [CLICK HERE](#)
- Need a Phone Number? **CLICK HERE** for a telephone listing of most parks, forests and other attractions in the Pine Barrens
- PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS!**
- [Tee Shirts!](#)
-
- PAYPAL ACCEPTED**
- BOOKS ABOUT the PINE BARRENS and The JERSEY DEVIL!**
-
-

Pine Barrens Info

- Lodging
- Dining
- Family Fun
- Nightlife
- Pine Barrens Tours
- Parks
- Nature
- Sports
- Shop Pine Barrens
- Books
- Piney Interviews
- Links
- Homes for Sale
- The Cranberry
- Long Beach Island
- The Pinoy Hound
- Home Page

PINEYPOWER.COM
It's All About the Pine Barrens!
Eleven Years and Still Growing!

[Pine Barrens Calendar of Events](#)

WHERE/WHAT IS IT CONTEST!

On or about the first of each month, a new **WHAT IS IT?** photo is published on the home page of PineyPower.com. If you're not already signed up for the PineyPower E-Newsletter, **sign** now... you'll receive advance notice of the photo publication time and date!

[Click photo to enlarge](#)

If you know the **name** of this building, **where** it's located (street and town), and **what** its current use is, please send an email to cathy@pineypower.com. Be sure to include all required information!

To be notified when the next "WHAT IS IT" photo is posted, sign up for PineyPower's E-newsletter and you'll be notified as soon as it's posted. The photo could be a person, place, plant or animal, and if your answer is the first correct one received, you'll win a prize!

Current contest closes January 14, 2009.

NOTE: Be sure to add cathy@pineypower.com to your address book so PineyPower's Newsletter doesn't get sent to your spam folder by mistake! Many private domains are now totally blocking unknown emails!

* Email Address
* First Name
Last Name
* City
* State
* = Required Field

Click for Alphabetical Directory

Pinelands Stories & News Articles

DECEMBER

12/30/08

Artisans of the Pine Barrens, featuring Marilyn Wenz
[See more](#)

12/30/08
Another Historical Building Dies: The Best Fanny Meyer's Old Time Tavern is Gone
[Read ADD Story](#)

12/27/08

The Affair at Cedar Bridge, the last skirmish of the Revolutionary War, is commemorated in Barnegat
[See Photos](#)

Again, PineyPower is not specifically focused on the travel trade and so therefore, its formatting is understandable. Nonetheless, this underlines the need for such a site. While the PineyPower site offers much interesting information that can enhance one's understanding of the Pinelands, the format is disjointed and doesn't currently mesh with the region's interpretive objectives. (Please note: these observations are not criticisms of the site: it is a private venture and should not necessarily mesh with the interpretive approach.)

With these limitations noted, the site does offer some of the best articles and links to more in-depth information on the region. This site is no doubt popular with people already-familiar with the region who want to learn more.

National Park Service

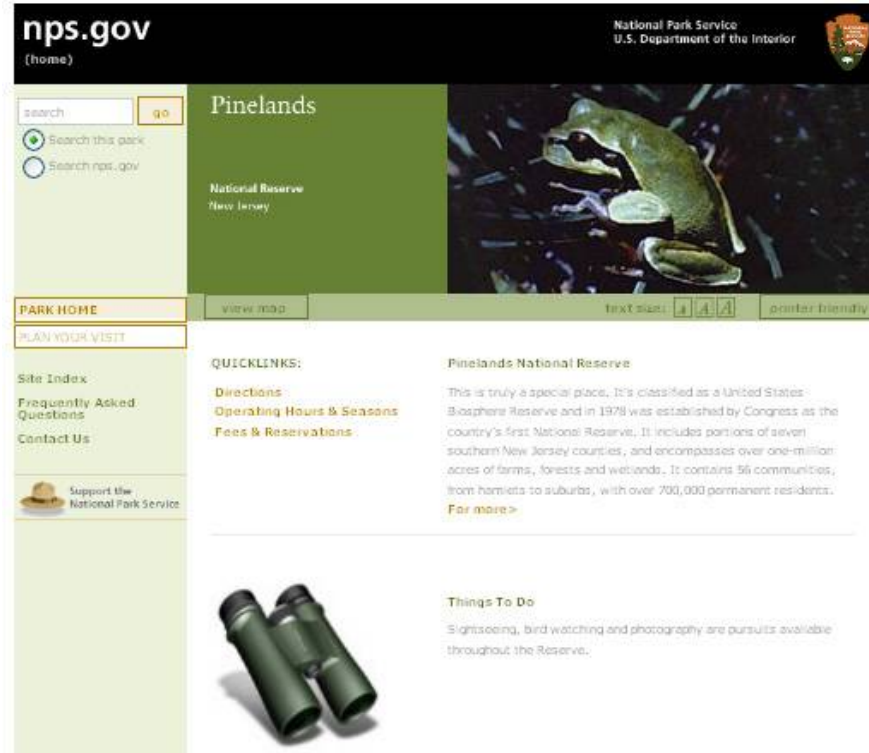
The Pinelands is a National Reserve and as such it has involvement from the National Park Service. Does the Park Service's main web site for the Pinelands offer support for interpretation?

The answer is a partial "yes," as the site offers both a positive image and some information on the character of the place.

The National Park Service's connection to the Reserve sends a strong message that this is an unusual place, probably meriting more investigation and perhaps a visit. Second, the web page provides some information about why the region is unusual. The link for more information takes one to the Pinelands Commission site, to an overview page, which is well written and provides information on the general background of the region's environment. Deeper links, as noted above, can take the user to more information on the region.

The National Park Service also maintains additional sites that provide information on the Pinelands. There is a page for the Great Egg Harbor Wild and Scenic River at <http://www.nps.gov/greg> and a similar page for Maurice Wild and Scenic River at <http://www.nps.gov/maur>.

These rivers and their watersheds are part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program and have voluntary councils comprised of local citizens and officials. These councils receive some staff support from the National Park Service and work to protect and interpret the resources of the river. As such, each of these web sites does provide both a positive image for the rivers and their character, as well as some information on what makes each river distinctive. However, they have limited information about how to experience the place or learn about the resources through interpretation.



http://www.nps.gov/greg/index.htm


nps.gov
(home)

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

search

Search this park
 Search nps.gov


Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River
National Wild and Scenic River
New Jersey



PARK HOME [view map](#) text size: [printer friendly](#)

PLAN YOUR VISIT


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Frequently Asked Questions
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QUICKLINKS:

[Directions](#)
[Operating Hours & Seasons](#)
[Fees & Reservations](#)


Great Egg Harbor National Wild & Scenic & River
Starting as a trickle near Berlin, NJ, the River gradually widens as it picks up the waters of 17 tributaries on its way to Great Egg Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean. Established by Congress in 1992, nearly all of this 129-mile river system rests within the **Pinelands National Reserve**. This National Park Service unit is unusual in that local jurisdictions continue to administer the lands.

 **Things To Do**
One of the top 10 spots in North America for **birding**. Hawks "funnel" into Cape May each fall, making this the best spot on the East Coast for raptors. Fantastic for warblers and other migrating birds in spring and fall.

http://www.nps.gov/maur/pphtml/activities.html

National Park Service
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Maurice
National Wild & Scenic River



ACTIVITIES

Backpacking
Bird Watching
Boating
Camping
Fishing
Hiking
Hunting
Interpretive Programs
Nature Walks
Wildlife Viewing

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Scenic Byways in New Jersey


<http://www.nj.gov/transportation/community/scenic/>

If one searches for “new jersey byway” or a related string of words, the New Jersey Scenic Byway Program website is found. The state scenic byway site offers an overview of byways in New Jersey and the program in general. Thus, the state byway site orients the user to the presence and purpose of the byways in New Jersey – certainly its primary purpose.

Next, it provides an overview of each byway with some information on history and interest and then more detailed information on navigating each route.

There is no particular objective with this material to interpret the heritage and intrinsic qualities of the byway. It is rather an overview of the byway and how to navigate the route.

NJ Home | Services A to Z | Departments/Agencies | FAQs
Site Index | Search: NJ Home NJDOT



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Scenic Byways in New Jersey Overview

Frequently Asked Questions

Designation Process

Scenic Byways

- Delaware River
- Millstone Valley
- Palisades Interstate Parkway
- Southern Pinelands**
- Upper Freehold


Contact Us

Useful Links

Scenic Byways in New Jersey

Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail

The 1.1 million acre Pinelands is the largest body of primarily forested open space on the Mid-Atlantic seaboard between Richmond, VA and Boston, MA and is a natural and cultural environment unique to the world.



This New Jersey Scenic Byway, designated in 2005, meanders through areas of striking and subtle natural beauty and rich historic heritage. Visitors to the Trail will be greeted by natural attributes of the Pinelands that include a pristine and protected estuary; coastal marshes and plants and animals that are unique to the Pinelands; two federally designated wild and scenic rivers; state and national forests and wildlife management areas; recreational opportunities; and a federally administered preserve and research center.

First used by the colonists as a source of bog iron in the late 1700s, a rural version of the Industrial Revolution took hold as iron smelting and glass production became the major source of employment within this area.

With the depletion of the forests caused by fueling the iron and glass furnaces, the area turned to truck farming since at least the early nineteenth century and berry farming a few decades later. With some of the largest cranberry and blueberry operations in the world, this area has been one reason for New Jersey's designation as The Garden State.

The files below are in Portable Document Format (PDF). You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to view these files, which is available at our [state Adobe Access page](#).

Fast facts:
Length: Three different routes - [Northern](#) (pdf 1.6m), [Central](#) (pdf 1.3m) and [Southern](#) (pdf 1.3m) - total approximately 130 Miles
Route: This scenic byway runs from the Mullica River southwest and south to the Maurice River and Delaware Bay through the southern portion of the New Jersey Pinelands.

This excellent, private site provides the strongest support at present for the Pineland's interpretive program. With articles, photos, forums, maps and other information, one can easily browse and find both overview information and detailed postings of specific places and excursions experienced by site participants. Of particular importance, this site is written with a clear voice of connection, concern and advocacy. That voice conveys the emotion of why this place is important to the web site's authors and why it might be important to the potential visitor. The design is professional, user friendly and engaging. This site is a good model for how the byway might want to present itself.

NJPineBarrens
the pine barrens... one click away

Articles Forums Photos Downloads Historic Maps NJPB Live Maps Blog

Image of the Moment

NJPineBarrens.com
Image Gallery

Articles

- Editorials
- Fire in the Pines
- Ghost Towns
- Henry Charlton Beck
- History & Legends
- People of the Pines
- Pine Barrens 101
- Reviews

Gazetteer (Beta)

- Gazetteer Map
- All Entries
- Ghost Towns
 - Burlington County
 - Ocean County

Live Maps (Beta)

- Live Maps

Pages

- About the Pine Barrens
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About Us

Published in:

The Pine Barrens, comprising roughly 22% of the land within the state of New Jersey, is one of (if not the most!) unique environments found on the East Coast of the United States. Over one million acres of pine forest, cedar swamps, sepia colored streams, cranberry bogs and ghost towns combine to make up a unique wilderness environment nestled between two major metropolitan areas - New York to the East and Philadelphia to the West.

The Pine Barrens is a perfect place to escape the boredom of suburban life. Narrow sand trails that once carried stagecoaches and mule trains are perfect places to hike. Restored villages such as Batsto and Allaire State Park provide a glimpse of what life was two centuries ago. Ample rivers and streams provide the perfect place to take a relaxing canoe trip.

This land also serves as a reminder that our precious natural resources are finite, and that only by careful use and preservation will we be able to enjoy them in years to come. While development encroaches all around, the Pine Barrens are (relatively) safe, protected by a variety of state and federal laws.

We believe that an area as majestic as the Pine Barrens deserves the best web site available. This site reflects not only the vision and passion of the designer, but the interests and knowledge of a community of people who are passionate about the Pine Barrens. This site serves to connect not only people who live in the area, but those who have an interest in the Pine Barrens - no matter where they live.

Started in early 2002, this site is one of the largest and oldest community based websites for the Pine Barrens. Through our discussion forums, image galleries that members can publish their own photos to, informative articles, and occasional get-togethers we have built a community of individuals who share a common love - the Pine Barrens.

4. Analysis of Interpretation Techniques

Assessment of existing interpretation

The best way to describe the byway's current interpretive presentation would be "**thematically consistent, but uncoordinated and disjointed.**"

The major theme for 90% of the interpretive materials is the natural heritage of the Pinelands. That theme is covered in various ways in the Southern Loop, the Central Segment and in the Northern Loop. On the one hand, this means that existing interpretive materials focus on one of the already-defined central themes for the region – the natural environment. In many cases, connections are also drawn on the relationship between people and the natural systems, and thus the other interpretive themes are covered.

The interpretation that exists today falls with these categories. Existing interpretation can be categorized as follows:

Visitor Centers

A few, recent, well-designed installations that provide a broad, well-conceived experience. The Batsto Visitors Center, Tuckerton Seaport Museum and Jacques Cousteau "Living on the Edge" Exhibit, and the Woodbine Heritage Museum are examples of this category.

Interpretive outdoor panels

These are located along the byway at various state, county, and federal sites. Many of these are smaller, dated installations that cover appropriate material but must be updated. Estell Manor and Belleplain State Forest are examples.

Signage and site markers

These are dispersed along the byway, but usually lack a cohesive design and organization. Signage along the Tuckahoe Nature Drive is a good example of this category.

Web-sites

Web-sites that were designed from the perspective of providing official overviews of the region, versus being educational or interpretive in flavor.

Self-guided Tours

A recorded tour for cell phones is provided at Batsto State Park.

Analysis of additional interpretive techniques

For the purposes of designing a cohesive byway interpretive program, the following objectives should be considered:

Coordination of a byway-wide interpretation format

- Find ways to connect and cross-promote existing interpretation;
- Identify gaps in the stories that are told

- Find compelling ways to get visitors out into the environment to experience the place;
- Develop a program that is financially and operationally realistic;
- Incorporate long-term and short-term strategies.

Printed material

- Identify existing interpretation sites on a byway visitor map;
- Distribute informational brochures, descriptive educational pamphlets and related interpretive materials at each of the visitor sites.

Events

- Events can help tell the story of the byway. These may include historic re-enactments, wildlife viewing tours, field trips with local school groups.

Multi-media and digital technology

- Create new web content that supports the overall interpretive program and encourages people to come and visit and experience the interpretive program;
- Expand self-guided tours including pod-casts and cell phone call-in tours;
- Produce television and radio programming that highlights key stories of the by-way for distribution to local broadcast networks, school groups, and visitor centers.