



State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

Friday, October 10, 2025 - 9:30 a.m.

This meeting will be held in-person and virtually.

Richard J. Sullivan Center for Environmental Policy and Education
Terrence D. Moore Conference Room
15C Springfield Road
New Lisbon, New Jersey

Watch the meeting on the Pinelands Commission YouTube channel via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irLLf-Jd3uI>

To Provide Public Comment, Please Dial: 1-929-205-6099 Meeting ID: 842 3845 9493

1. Call to Order

- Open Public Meetings Act Statement
- Roll Call
- Pledge Allegiance to the Flag

2. Adoption of Minutes

- September 12, 2025

3. Committee Chairs' and Executive Director's Reports

4. Matters for Commission Consideration *Where the Record is Closed*

A. Permitting Matters

- Office of Administrative Law
 - None
- Review of Local Approvals
 - None
- Public Development Projects and Waivers of Strict Compliance:

Resolution Approving With Conditions (3) Applications for Public Development:

- Application No. 1985-0087.008 - Egg Harbor Township Board of Education
Construction of a 46 space parking lot at the Alder Avenue Middle School
Egg Harbor Township
- Application No. 1989-0573.012 - Stephen DiDonato, Mayor
Recreational improvements to the Hammonton Lake Park
Town of Hammonton
- Application No. 2001-0084.005 - Galloway Township
Two lot subdivision and no additional development
Galloway Township

Resolution Approving With Conditions (1) Application for Public Development:

- Application No. 1987-0345.019 - Kara L. Huber, Business Administrator & Board
Secretary Lenape Regional High School District
Installation of 13,744 square feet of artificial turf at the Shawnee High School
Medford Township

B. Planning Matters

- Municipal Master Plans and Ordinances
 - None
- Other Resolutions
 - None
- CMP Amendments
 - To Adopt Amendments to the Comprehensive Management Plan in Accordance
with the Administrative Procedure Act (Fees; Certificates of Filing; Waivers of
Strict Compliance; Land Capability Map; Regional Growth Areas; Pinelands
Development Credits)

5. Public Comment on Public Development Applications and Waivers of Strict Compliance ***Where the Record is Not Closed***

A. Public Development Projects

- Application No. 1988-0532.005 – Monroe Township
Demolition of a building, 50 years old or older, and the construction of a playground
and two basketball courts
Monroe Township

B. Waiver of Strict Compliance

- None

6. Master Plans and Ordinances Not Requiring Commission Action

- Corbin City Ordinance 5-2025
- Franklin Township Ordinance O-5-25
- Manchester Township Ordinance 25-27
- Medford Township Ordinance 2025-7
- Monroe Township Ordinance O:22-2025
- South Toms River Borough 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan

7. Presentation: Annual Update on Permanent Land Protection and the Pinelands Development Credit Program

8. General Public Comment

9. Resolution to Retire into Closed Session (if needed) – Personnel, Litigation and Acquisition Matters. *(The Commission reserves the right to reconvene into public session to take action on closed session items.)*

10. Adjournment

Upcoming Meetings

Fri., October 31, 2025
Fri., November 14, 2025

Policy & Implementation Committee Meeting (9:30 a.m.)
Pinelands Commission Meeting (9:30 a.m.)

To ensure adequate time for all members of the public to comment, we will respectfully limit comments to **three minutes**. Questions raised during this period may not be responded to at this time but where feasible, will be followed up by the Commission and its staff.

Pinelands Commission and Committee meeting agendas are posted on the Commission's Website and can be viewed at www.nj.gov/pinelands/ for more information on agenda details, e-mail the [Public Programs Office](#) at Info@pinelands.nj.gov.

PINELANDS COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES
September 12, 2025

All participants were either in-person or present via Zoom conference and the meeting was livestreamed through YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/live/zDfhjE7Y73k>

Commissioners Participating in the Meeting

Nicholas Asselta, Alan W. Avery Jr., Deborah Buzby-Cope, Jerome H. Irick, Mark Lohbauer, Gaetano Matro, Mark Mauriello, Jonathan Meade, William Pikolycky, Jessica Rittler Sanchez, Ryck Signor, Douglas Wallner and Chair Laura E. Matos. Also participating were Executive Director Susan R. Grogan, Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Jay Stypinski and Governor's Authorities Unit representative Michael Eleneski.

Commissioners Absent

Theresa Lettman.

Call to Order

Chair Matos called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

DAG Stypinski read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement (OPMA).

DAG Stypinski administered the oath of office to Camden County's new appointee on the Commission, Gaetano (Guy) Matro.

Commissioner Matro said he looks forward to serving as a Commissioner. He said his father-in-law, Peter Burke, also served on the Commission.

Executive Director (ED) Grogan called the roll and announced the presence of a quorum. Thirteen Commissioners participated in the meeting. Commissioner Meade joined the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

The Commission pledged allegiance to the Flag.

Minutes

Chair Matos presented the open and closed session minutes from the Commission's August 8, 2025 meeting. Commissioner Pikolycky moved the adoption of the minutes. Commissioner Lohbauer seconded the motion.

The minutes from the open and closed session from the August 8, 2025 Commission meeting were adopted by a vote of 11 to 0. Commissioner Matro abstained from the vote.

Resolution for former Commissioner John Holroyd

Chair Matos requested a motion for a resolution recognizing former Commissioner John Holroyd's time at the Commission.

Commissioner Lohbauer made a motion Expressing the Commission's Appreciation to John W. Holroyd, Jr. for His Service as a Member of the Commission From January 20, 2022 to May 20, 2025. Commissioner Asselta seconded the motion (See Resolution # PC4-25-25)

Chair Matos read the resolution. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 12 to 0.

Paul Leakan shared a photograph of Penbryn Lake that was printed onto a canvas and sent to former Commissioner Holroyd.

Committee Reports

Chair Matos provided a summary of the August 29, 2025 Policy and Implementation Committee meeting:

The Committee approved the minutes of the July 25, 2025 meeting.

The Committee heard a presentation from Dave Specca of the Rutgers University Agrivoltaics Program. Mr. Specca provided an overview of their program and trial results from three of their New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Farms. He also reviewed the Board of Public Utilities' Dual-Use Solar Energy Pilot Program's applicant and research requirements and the incentives of participating in the program.

Chief Planner Brad Lanute presented an update on the work of the Interagency Council on Climate Resiliency of which the Pinelands Commission is a member agency. He highlighted a recent report by Rutgers University on the State of the Climate presenting historic and projected trends of New Jersey's climate.

Commissioner Avery provided a summary of the August 19, 2025 Personnel and Budget Committee meeting:

The Committee adopted the minutes from its June 24, 2025 meeting. The Committee heard staff presentations pertaining to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Draft Budgets and Commission Initiatives and voted to recommend Commission approval of the Budgets.

Committee members discussed their concerns with the long-term viability of the State Health Benefit Program given the upcoming significant increases in health insurance costs that will impact staff and the Commission. Staff reviewed financial updates, including Check Registers, Electronic Disbursements and Application Fees. Lastly, staff provided a summary of recent employee actions.

Executive Director's Report

ED Grogan provided information on the following matters:

- The Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Bank recently released and distributed its 2025 Annual Report. At the October Commission meeting, staff will present the findings from the PDC Bank report and the Permanent Land Protection data.
- The consultants continue to prepare design documents for the Fenwick Manor rehabilitation project. Another site visit is scheduled for September 22, 2025.
- The Governor's Authorities Units has requested that the Commission along with other state agencies prepare a Transition Report, detailing staffing needs, ongoing projects and current budget impacts. The report is due on October 17, 2025 in anticipation of the new administration taking office in January 2026.

Chuck Horner, Director of Regulatory Programs, provided information on the following regulatory matters:

- Staff continues to work with Manchester Township regarding its police communication tower. Construction equipment placement and vehicle turnarounds expanded the area that needs to be cleared. Staff is discussing ways in which disturbance can be minimized so that habitat for a threatened and endangered (T&E) animal species is not impacted.
- On August 7th, staff met with a representative from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (DOA) to discuss the status of applications for the conversion of agricultural barns to temporary seasonal employee housing. The development activity does require an application to the Commission. The conversion of the barns must also meet the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) building codes and comply with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) wastewater regulations. The representative from the DOA will encourage the agricultural community to complete their applications with the Commission.
- Staff continues to correspond with representatives of the Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst (JBMDL) on the application submitted by Ocean County for the construction

of the elevated roadway (bridge) on Route 539. JBMDL submitted a statement to the County advising that the easement is on federal property. It still remains unclear who owns the easement.

April Field, Chief Permitting Officer, provided an update on the following two applications:

- Staff completed its field verification of a wetlands delineation for an 800-acre parcel in Evesham Township located next to the Black Run Preserve. On August 27th, staff requested additional revisions be made to the wetlands line. The applicant submitted those revisions, and staff are currently reviewing them.
- Equity Enterprises, a developer proposing a large residential subdivision in Pemberton Township, continues to work on resolving a list of issues related to the Comprehensive Management Plan. In 2005, the Commission issued a Certificate of Filing (CF) for the development. Pemberton Township issued a General Development Plan approval that remains valid through 2027. At this time, the applicant continues to work through the application process and is also having discussions with the NJDEP Green Acres staff about conservation of the property. The parcel is located in both a Pinelands Regional Growth Area and a Forest Area.

Gina Berg, Director of Land Use Programs, provided an update on the following items:

- The public comment period for the rule proposal (Management Area change, CF expiration and application fee enhancements) closed on August 15, 2025. A total of 490 comments were received between the public hearing and the submission of written comments. The majority of those comments were in support of the redesignation of the Black Run watershed. An overview of the response to comments will be discussed at the September 26th P&I Committee meeting. A presentation on the Commission's Long-term Water Level Monitoring Program and an update on Fair Share Housing Plans will be provided at the September P&I Committee meeting.
- The deadline for Pinelands Conservation Fund land preservation grant applications is approaching. Applications are due on Friday, September 19, 2025.

Commissioner Mauriello asked if there is an anticipated adoption date for the rule proposal.

ED Grogan said the adoption notice will be submitted to the Governor's office for their review. The adoption of the proposal is expected to be on the November 14th Commission meeting agenda and it's anticipated that the rules will go into effect in early February.

Stacey Roth, Chief, Legal and Legislative Affairs, provided the following updates:

- Evesham Township continues to work on its T&E Survey protocols for its accessible trails project at the Black Run Preserve.

- The first round of discovery was completed on the Artistic Materials matter. Counsel will meet with the mediator before the actual mediation session, which is scheduled for October 14, 2025.

Brad Lanute, Chief Planner, provided the following updates:

- Staff continued to review adopted Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans in response to the fourth round of affordable housing obligations. As of the end of August, the Commission has received 34 adopted plans. Ten plans have been deemed incomplete due to the absence of adopted and submitted implementing ordinances. Three of the plans deemed incomplete propose zoning changes likely to require review and approval by the full Commission.
- Staff met with Evesham Township to discuss its upcoming master plan reexamination and the redesignation of the Black Run watershed associated with the current rule proposal. Discussions centered around mapping changes and zoning changes that would be required once the rule is adopted.

Commissioner Avery inquired about the recourse that municipalities have if the number of affordable housing units assigned are not possible in the Pinelands Area.

Chief Planner Lanute said the Fair Housing Act amendments provide for vacant land adjustments or durational adjustments based on availability of infrastructure. He said in instances of vacant land adjustments, there is a provision that allows non-Regional Growth Areas to be considered unavailable and units are deferred into the future. He added that if towns propose to increase densities in Regional Growth Areas or change management area designations, they must maintain consistency with the CMP. He said if it's not consistent with the CMP, a municipality would need to amend its housing plan.

Commissioner Avery asked if housing plans are reviewed by COAH (Council on Affordable Housing). He then asked if COAH still exists.

ED Grogan said COAH was disbanded and DCA has taken over per the new affordable housing legislation that went into effect in early 2024. Any disputes are handled through a new Court process established by that legislation.

Commissioner Meade joined the meeting.

Paul Leakan, Communications Officer, provided the following update:

- World Water Monitoring Challenge is scheduled for October 24 at Batsto Lake. This long-standing program is held in partnership with the NJDEP. Approximately 150 students will participate.
- Staff continues to make progress on a project to develop native plant seed mixes for use in the Pinelands. Staff has compiled a series of lists of native seeds that two native plant

nurseries are currently producing and lists of seed mixes that are being used by several public entities.

Public Development Projects and Other Permit Matters

Chair Matos introduced a resolution approving the demolition and reconstruction of bathrooms at Bass River State Forest and the expansion of existing athletic fields in Egg Harbor Township.

Commissioner Buzby-Cope made a motion Approving With Conditions Applications for Public Development (Application Numbers 1990-0868.036 & 1992-0351.006) (See Resolution # PC4-25-26). Commissioner Pikolycky seconded the motion.

Ernest Deman, Environmental Specialist, said the first application is for the demolition of a 670 square foot restroom building that is 50 years old or older and proposes the construction of a 668 square foot restroom building. The restroom services the North Shore Campground located in Bass River State Forest. The restroom that will be demolished is currently located 90 feet from wetlands and the newly constructed restroom will maintain that same buffer.

He said the second application is for the expansion of existing grass athletic fields in Egg Harbor Township. He said 0.6 acres of a wooded area will be cleared to accommodate the expansion of the fields. Also proposed is a concrete sidewalk around the perimeter of the fields.

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez asked if any artificial turf is proposed.

Mr. Deman said no.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 12 to 0. Commissioner Matro abstained from the vote.

Chair Matos introduced a resolution for the Ocean County forestry application.

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez made a motion Approving With Conditions an Application for Public Development (Application Number 1983-4180.005) (See Resolution # PC4-25-27). Commissioner Buzby-Cope seconded the motion.

Director Horner said in July, Commission staff issued a Public Development report recommending approval for forestry activities and a forest fire fuel break in portions of Lacey and Ocean Townships in Ocean County. He said Ocean County requested that the application not be acted on at the August Commission meeting because a few Commissioners raised questions about the application. Ocean County's consultant provided a response to the questions and concerns, and that response was shared with all Commissioners on September 4, 2025. He said the application proposes 1,200 acres of forestry, 850 acres of forest fire fuel breaks, 35 acres of planting and restoration and 133 acres of wildlife enhancements.

Branwen Ellis, Environmental Specialist, reviewed the finer details of the forestry plan and displayed a map depicting the forestry activities to be conducted on the 12,678-acre parcel.

She said thinning is proposed on approximately 953 acres, and that will result in a 34% reduction in trees in those areas (yellow crosshatching areas on map). The plan proposes Atlantic White Cedar regeneration (green crosshatching areas on the map). The plan also includes 35 acres of restoration to an area that has been damaged by off-road vehicles.

Director Horner pointed out the forest fire fuel breaks on the map. He said that they begin at the southern portion of the parcel and head in a northeastern direction and are linear in shape. He said the red portions on the map are areas that are proposed for prescribed burns, which do not require an application to the Commission.

Ms. Ellis said the applicant had to address T&E bird, snakes, frog and plants species. The plan was designed to ensure the protection of T&E species.

Commissioner Wallner said it would have been helpful to have seen the map when the public development report was issued.

Ms. Ellis shared a map (see attached) of the Jones Road Wildfire that occurred in the spring of 2025. The boundary in yellow on the map shows the Forked River Mountain Preserve and the red line depicts the area of the 15,000-acre Jones Road Wildfire.

Commissioner Ritter Sanchez asked if the fire started on private or public land.

An Ocean County representative said the fire started on public land.

Commissioner Meade asked how much of the forestry activities will occur on the land that burned this spring.

Ms. Ellis said she would have to research that but it's important to note that the activities described in the Forestry Plan will take place over a 10-year span.

Commissioner Buzby-Cope asked how much of the Jones Road Forest consumed by wildfire could have been saved if the forestry plan had been in effect 10 years ago.

Jason Hager, Ocean County Environmental Specialist, said many factors play a role in the intensity of a wildfire, including weather conditions and timing. He said the forest fire fuel break associated with this plan are along existing roads and would have allowed the forest fire service and other personnel to have safer, quicker and easier access to extinguish the wildfire. He said the north/south fuel break would have provided more options to intercept the fire.

Commissioner Avery asked about the prior Wells Mills forestry plan that the County undertook and how it stood up to this fire.

Jason Hager said the County saw numerous benefits to having the forest thinned. He said fire crews had improved visibility into the forest, and that helped to address and spot fires. He said ladder fuels were removed, and crews had improved maneuverability in areas where vegetation had been removed.

Commissioner Mauriello asked how the County plans to restrict access to off-road vehicle use post restoration.

Geoffrey Lohmeyer, Senior County Park Manager, said the County will use enforcement to the best of their abilities, but it is difficult because you can't chase off-road vehicles. The County will use gates, barriers and logs to limit access and future damage.

Commissioner Lohbauer said he has a few questions related to the application.

He said in the applicant's memo in response to questions raised by Commissioners, the response did not address the studies that he shared about forestry thinning as a wildfire management tool. He said the studies found forestry thinning to be ineffective and even create a risk of greater wildfire spread. (He noted just one of several links, to an article entitled "*Fuel Reduction' Logging Exacerbates Wildfire Effects and Puts Communities at Greater Risk*," a fact sheet by the John Muir project out west, that cites 39 studies of forest thinning projects ranging from 1940 through 2024 demonstrating the ineffectiveness of forestry thinning. That article is found at <http://www.johnmuirproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/JMP-fact-sheet-thinning-and-fire-29Nov24.pdf>)

Commissioner Lohbauer asked the County to provide reassurance as to why he should trust the legitimacy of the studies the County cited which contradict the studies he shared.

Director Horner said it's important to note that the CMP permits thinning of a forest. He said the memo shared with Commissioners on September 4, 2025 advised that some of the issues raised by Commissioners are not regulations contained in the CMP. He said the applicant is not required to demonstrate that the thinning is necessary or effective as a fire management technique. He reiterated that staff reviewed this application based on the current regulations and did not ask the applicant about the effectiveness of forest thinning.

Vinh Lang, Ocean County Consulting Forester, said the yellow hatched areas on the map outlined in red include both thinning and prescribed burn to mimic what would actually occur during a small-scale fire. He said a fuel break is a good tool to fight a wildfire but because it's linear, it doesn't reflect exactly what would happen in nature. He said the intention of the thinning is to take into account the biodiversity of the specific area.

Commissioner Lohbauer said his next question is related to canopy reduction. He said he is familiar with the Wells Mills Forestry plan and the reduction of the canopy. He asked how much of the canopy will remain once the thinning is completed at the Forked River Mountain Preserve.

Mr. Lang said it is dependant on the specific prescriptions. He said there are similarities to the forestry plan at Wells Mills that would create small shade breaks, which would result in a canopy reduction. He said this plan is more intentional, in that the plan is intended to create a change in the arrangement post thinning. The plan calls for a greater canopy reduction in the Atlantic White Cedar restoration area and for other sun loving species.

Commissioner Lohbauer said he asked that question because he is concerned about the ladder fuels drying up once the thinning is complete, thereby increasing the potential for a wildfire.

Mr. Lang said wildfire is dependant on the weather. He noted that if all the slash was left in the thinned areas, there is an increased risk of fire potential. He said each prescription will dictate the correct approach.

Commissioner Lohbauer said he supports the restoration of the Atlantic White Cedar trees but raised concerns about the removal of a red maple hardwood to make room for the cedar. He asked if there would be reduction in thinning elsewhere in Ocean County to compensate for the loss of red maple in the Forked River Mountains.

Mr. Lang said that's a question for Ocean County but related to this plan, the cedar tree population is fading, and in order to maintain the historic Atlantic White Cedar population for future generations, it must be replanted.

Commissioner Lohbauer asked about time frame that is proposed for forestry activity each year, which extends from April 15th through November 15th. He said in his experience with other forestry projects involving potential snake habitat, that window has been narrower, more like mid-May through mid-October in order to avoid cold days where snakes might be too chilled to move out of the way of forestry activities.

Ms. Ellis said the timeframe from mid-April to mid-November is consistent with the CMP's T&E protection standards for snakes. She said the applicant proposes that any forestry or creation of forest fuel/firebreaks that is undertaken with heavy equipment, shall only occur between April 15 to November 15, the period when the concerned snake species are active. The applicant further proposes that from November 15 to April 15, the period of time when the concerned snake species are hibernating, only low-intensity methods such as thinning on foot, with handheld chainsaws or handsaws, will be utilized for forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks.

Director Horner noted that years ago the professional guidance related to the protection of snakes for forestry applications was that forestry activities could only occur during the winter months while the snakes were hibernating. He said then the professionals changed the guidance and said forestry activities should be conducted only when the snakes are active, because the snakes could move away.

Commissioner Lohbauer thanked everyone for answering his questions. He said the answers addressed all of his reservations with the application.

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 12 to 0. Commissioner Matro abstained from the vote.

Chair Matos thanked staff, Ocean Couty representatives and Commissioners for the work on this application.

Public Comment on Development Applications and Items Where the Record is Open

Chair Matos read the list of Public Development applications. She said Egg Harbor Township Board of Education is proposing a parking lot at the Alder Avenue Middle School. The Lenape Regional High School District is proposing an artificial turf field. Hammonton is proposing improvements to an existing park and Galloway Township is proposing a two-lot subdivision.

Director Horner said Lenape Regional High School District is proposing a 15,000 square foot expansion of an already existing artificial turf field at Shawnee High School.

Jason Howell of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance said he is opposed to poison plastic turf in the Pine Barrens. He said many states are considering banning “forever chemicals” associated with cookware and artificial turf. He said artificial turf is detrimental to human health and natural ecology. He said he hope the Commission votes against it.

Jerry Henger of Baltimore, Maryland, expressed his general dislike of plastic. He said as a society we should be looking for alternatives to plastic. He said plastic ends up in the environment and causes health problems.

Margaret Stephens of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, said there is no reason to use artificial turf. She said grass turf is grown locally and supports the local economy. She said the precautionary principle is an approach in which if its not safe, it should not be used or installed. She urged the Commission not to approve the use of artificial turf.

Ordinances Not Requiring Commission Action

Chief Planner Lanute said staff reviewed one stormwater management plan, two ordinances, and nine housing element and fair share plans that were found to raise no substantial issues with respect to the standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

Other Resolutions

Chair Matos introduced a resolution to adopt the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Budgets.

Commissioner Pikolycky made a motion To Adopt the Pinelands Commission’s Fiscal Year 2026 Budgets for the Operating Fund, Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund, Katie Fund and Pinelands Conservation Fund (See Resolution # PC4-25-28). Commissioner Lohbauer seconded the motion.

Jessica Lynch, Business Services Manager, said the FY26 Budgets consist of four separate budgets: Operating Fund, Pinelands Conservation Fund, Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund and Katie Fund. She reviewed the revenues and expenditures associated which each of the budgets.

Presentation slides can be viewed here:

<https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/home/presentations/FY%202026%20PB%20Budget%20Presentation%20-%20mini%20.pdf>

ED Grogan said the state appropriation only covers a portion of the Commission's operating expenses, and the increased costs of health benefits is of great concern. The Commission leases the buildings from Treasury, and the Commission is responsible for all repairs, maintenance and insurance associated with the property. Funds from the state appropriation are used to pay for these things, including electric bills, cleaning services, grounds maintenance and garbage disposal. The budget process and all unexpected expenses make it extremely complex. The Commission has continued grant funding from the National Park Service for FY26 to fund both economic and environmental monitoring, including a new project to overhaul the Commission's application database.

The Pinelands Conservation Fund (PCF) was created approximately 20 years ago as an offsetting measure when the Commission entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Board of Public Utilities for a Connectivity project. The Pinelands Conservation Fund supports a number of projects, and it includes \$3 million for land acquisition projects. The PCF account is also used to support other projects, including the Science offices studies and the Pinelands Development Credit Bank functions. This fiscal year, money has been designated for the creation of T&E plant data sharing agreement with the NJDEP.

Lastly, ED Grogan reviewed the work that will be supported by the operating fund.

See presentation slides for complete list of all initiatives:

<https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/home/presentations/FY%202026%20Commission%20Budget%20Presentation%20final.pdf>

The resolution was adopted by a vote of 12 to 0. Commissioner Matro abstained from the vote.

Commissioner Avery left the meeting.

General Public Comment

Jason Howell of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance said he has been following the Commission for awhile and the leadership and the amount of work completed is inspiring and demonstrates how effective the staff is. He said a data center being constructed in Vineland is using an air cooling system and no water. He said as more data centers are built, and if they are constructed in the Pinelands Area, a standard should be incorporated that they cannot utilize any Kirkwood-Cohansey water. Lastly, he asked that the Commission move forward as quickly as possible to redesignate the management areas in the Black Run watershed. He said thousands of people are awaiting the adoption of the rule.

ED Grogan advised that the update on the Black Run rule proposal was provided earlier in the meeting. She said the public comment received on the rule proposal will be discussed at the September 26th P&I Committee meeting. The rules are expected to go into effect at the beginning of February 2026.

Chair Matos said the Commission does not determine the rulemaking process. We are required to work within the state process.

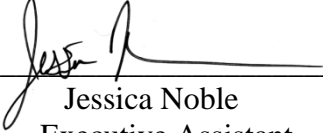
Shary Koenig said we all live in the same home: this planet. She said she would like to see the adoption of the rule proposal move as quickly as possible. She said she hopes the developers won't win and all of the Pinelands will be preserved.

Jerry Henger of Baltimore, Maryland, said he has been to the Pinelands a few times and it's not just for people in New Jersey to explore. He said the Pinelands are great resource, because of the water. He said keep up the great work and hopefully the Pinelands will be around for many generations.

Adjournment

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Buzby-Cope seconded the motion. The Commission agreed to adjourn at 11:42 a.m.

Certified as true and correct:



Jessica Noble
Executive Assistant

Date: September 18, 2025



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25- 25

TITLE: Expressing the Commission’s Appreciation to John W. Holroyd, Jr. for His Service as a Member of the Commission From January 20, 2022 to May 20, 2025

Commissioner Lohbauer moves and Commissioner Asselta seconds the motion that:

WHEREAS, John W. Holroyd, Jr., served as Camden County’s representative on the Pinelands Commission from January 20, 2022 to May 20, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Holroyd brought a wealth of experience in public service and municipal planning and construction to the Pinelands Commission. A longtime resident of Winslow Township, Commissioner Holroyd has been a licensed inspector for electric, fire, plumbing, buildings, and multi-family dwellings, and he has worked as a construction official in several New Jersey municipalities for more than 20 years. He served on Winslow Township’s Planning Board, Environmental Commission and Green Team. He also served as Winslow’s representative on the Pinelands Municipal Council; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the Pinelands Commission adopted amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) that strengthen the protection of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer system while ensuring sufficient water supply for authorized development in the growth-oriented portions of the Pinelands Area.

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the Commission proposed another significant set of CMP amendments, including rule changes regarding fees, certificates of filing, waivers of strict compliance, Regional Growth Areas, Pinelands Development Credits, and the redesignation of approximately 2,440 acres in the Black Run watershed from a Rural Development Area to a Forest Area; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the Commission also executed Memoranda of Agreement that enabled Pemberton Township and Stafford Township to surface existing trails in order to provide accessibility for those with ambulatory challenges; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the Commission instituted annual training seminars targeted to municipal land use administrators, planning and zoning board secretaries and zoning officials; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, the Commission hired a new Executive Director, reviewed and acted on more than 80 public development applications, reviewed and certified more than 420 municipal master plan and ordinance amendments, implemented programs resulting in the permanent preservation of approximately 5,700 acres in the Pinelands Area, completed and launched numerous scientific studies, educated thousands of people about the region’s natural, cultural, and historic resources, and secured the funding and expertise necessary to rehabilitate the historic Fenwick Manor farmhouse, which has served as office space for Commission staff since 1980; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Commission want to recognize Commissioner Holroyd’s significant contributions and express their appreciation for the service that he performed; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Pinelands Commission hereby express our appreciation to our colleague and friend, John W. Holroyd, Jr., for his commitment to the Pinelands and for his service as a member of the Commission from January 20, 2022 to May 20, 2025.

Record of Commission Votes

AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*				
Asselta	X				Lohbauer	X				Rittler Sanchez	X			
Avery	X				Matro	X				Signor	X			
Buzby-Cope	X				Mauriello	X				Wallner	X			
Irick	X				Meade					Matos	X			
Lettman			X		Pikolycky	X								

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission

Date: September 12, 2025



Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director



Laura E. Matos
Chair



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25- 26

TITLE: **Approving** With Conditions Applications for **Public Development** (Application Numbers 1990-0868.036 & 1992-0351.006)

Commissioner Buzby-Cope moves and **Commissioner** Pikolycky
seconds the motion that:

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission has reviewed the Public Development Application Reports and the recommendation of the Executive Director that the following applications for Public Development be approved with conditions:

1990-0868.036	
Applicant:	NJDEP Natural & Historic Resources
Municipality:	Bass River Township
Management Area:	Pinelands Preservation Area District
Date of Report:	August 20, 2025
Proposed Development:	Demolition of a 670 square foot restroom building, 50 years old or older, and the construction of a 668 square foot restroom building; and
1992-0351.006	
Applicant:	Egg Harbor Township
Municipality:	Egg Harbor Township
Management Area:	Pinelands Regional Growth Area
Date of Report:	August 20, 2025
Proposed Development:	Expansion of existing athletic fields and the installation of approximately 1,910 feet of concrete sidewalk.

WHEREAS, no request for a hearing before the Office of Administrative Law regarding the Executive Director’s recommendation has been received for these applications; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby adopts the Conclusion of the Executive Director for each of the proposed developments; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby determines that each of the proposed public developments conform to the standards for approving an application for public development set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57 if the conditions recommended by the Executive Director are imposed; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13A-5h, no action authorized by the Commission shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Commission has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Application Numbers 1990-0868.036 & 1992-0351.006 for public development are hereby **approved** subject to the conditions recommended by the Executive Director.

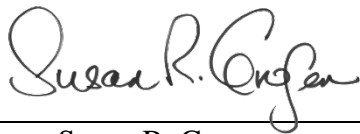
Record of Commission Votes

AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*				
Asselta	X				Lohbauer	X				Rittler Sanchez	X			
Avery	X				Matro				A	Signor	X			
Buzby-Cope	X				Mauriello	X				Wallner	X			
Irick	X				Meade	X				Matos	X			
Lettman			X		Pikolycky	X								

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission

Date: September 12, 2025



Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director



Laura E. Matos
Chair



State of New Jersey

THE PINELANDS COMMISSION

PO Box 359

NEW LISBON, NJ 08064

(609) 894-7300

www.nj.gov/pinelands



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair

SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

August 20, 2025

Edward Mulvan (via email)
NJDEP Natural & Historic Resources
275 Freehold-Englishtown Road
Englishtown NJ 07726

Re: Application # 1990-0868.036
Block 85, Lot 1
Bass River Township

Dear Mr. Mulvan:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for the demolition of a 670 square foot restroom building, 50 years old or older, and the construction of a 668 square foot restroom building. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its September 12, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure

c: Secretary, Bass River Township Planning Board (via email)
Bass River Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Secretary, Burlington County Planning Board (via email)
Frank Little (via email)



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

August 20, 2025

Edward Mulvan (via email)
NJDEP Natural & Historic Resources
275 Freehold-Englishtown Road
Englishtown NJ 07726

Application No.: 1990-0868.036
Block 85, Lot 1
Bass River Township

This application proposes the demolition of a 670 square foot restroom building, 50 years old or older, and the construction of a 668 square foot restroom building located on the above referenced 800 acre parcel in Bass River Township.

The existing restroom building was constructed in 1972. The restroom building services the North Shore Campground located within Bass River State Forest. The Bass River State Forest is comprised of approximately 18,000 acres. The applicant has indicated that the existing restroom building requires replacement. The proposed restroom building will be located in the same approximate location as the existing restroom building proposed for demolition.

The application also proposes a five foot wide concrete walkway around the perimeter of the proposed restroom building and one handicapped accessible parking stall.

The applicant proposes the replacement of an existing onsite septic waste water disposal system. The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.1(a)10 provides that the replacement of any existing onsite waste water disposal system does not require an application to the Commission.

STANDARDS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed development for consistency with all regulations contained in the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The following reviews the CMP regulations that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.22)

The proposed development is located in the Pinelands Preservation Area District. The proposed development is an accessory use to an existing campground. Campgrounds are a permitted land use in the Pinelands Preservation Area District.

Wetlands Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.6)

There are wetlands located on the parcel. The proposed development is located approximately 90 feet from wetlands. The proposed development is located no closer to wetlands than the existing restroom building proposed for demolition. There is an existing paved road located between the proposed development and the concerned wetlands.

Vegetation Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.23 & 6.26)

The proposed development will be located within an existing developed area. The proposed soil disturbance is limited to that which is necessary to accommodate the proposed development. The proposed development is consistent with the CMP vegetation management standard.

Cultural Resource Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.151)

The Commission staff reviewed available information to determine the potential for any significant cultural resources that could be affected by the proposed development. Based upon the lack of potential for significant cultural resources, a cultural resource survey was not required for the proposed development.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The CMP defines the proposed development as “minor” development. The CMP does not require public notice for minor public development applications. The application was designated as complete on the Commission’s website on July 8, 2025. The Commission’s public comment period closed on August 8, 2025. No public comment was submitted to the Commission regarding this application.

CONDITIONS

1. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed development shall adhere to the plan, consisting of eight sheets, prepared by Owen Little & Associates Inc. and dated as follows:

 Sheet 1 - January 30, 2025; revised to May 28, 2025
 Sheets 2, 4 & 8 - April 8, 2025; revised to May 28, 2025
 Sheet 3 - April 8, 2025; revised to May 2, 2025
 Sheets 5-7 - May 28, 2025
2. Disposal of any construction debris or excess fill may only occur at an appropriately licensed facility.
3. Any proposed revegetation shall adhere to the "Vegetation" standards of the CMP. Where appropriate, the applicant is encouraged to utilize the following Pinelands native grasses for revegetation: Switch grass, Little bluestem and Broom-sedge.
4. Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed development conforms to the standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed development subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on September 8, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.



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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

August 20, 2025

Donna Markulic, Administrator (via email)
Egg Harbor Township
3515 Bargaintown Road
Egg Harbor Township NJ 08234

Re: Application # 1992-0351.006
Block 3201, Lots 34 - 36
Egg Harbor Township

Dear Ms. Markulic:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for the expansion of existing athletic fields and the installation of approximately 1,910 feet of concrete sidewalk. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its September 12, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure

c: Secretary, Egg Harbor Township Planning Board (via email)
Egg Harbor Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Egg Harbor Township Environmental Commission (via email)
Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development (via email)
Adam Warburton (via email)



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

August 20, 2025

Donna Markulic, Administrator (via email)
Egg Harbor Township
3515 Bargaintown Road
Egg Harbor Township NJ 08234

Application No.: 1992-0351.006
Block 3201, Lots 34 - 36
Egg Harbor Township

This application proposes expansion of existing athletic fields and the installation of approximately 1,910 feet of concrete sidewalk located on the above referenced 91.73 acre parcel in Egg Harbor Township. There is an existing Township recreational facility located on the parcel.

The proposed development will allow for the expansion of the existing athletic fields at the recreational facility. Eight existing soccer fields and one existing baseball field will be reconfigured and expanded to ten grass soccer fields.

STANDARDS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed development for consistency with all standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The following reviews the CMP standards that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a))

The proposed development is located in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area. The proposed expansion of the existing recreational facility is permitted in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area.

Wetlands Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.6)

There are wetlands located on the above referenced parcel. All development, including clearing and land disturbance, will be located at least 300 feet from wetlands.

Vegetation Management standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.23 & 6.26)

Approximately 0.6 acres of wooded area will be cleared to accommodate the expansion of the existing athletic fields. The proposed clearing and soil disturbance is limited to that which is necessary to

accommodate the proposed development.

The Landscaping and Revegetation guidelines of the CMP recommend the use of grasses that are tolerant of droughty, nutrient poor conditions. To stabilize the disturbed areas beyond the limits of the proposed grass athletic fields, the application proposes to utilize a seed mixture which meets that recommendation.

Water Quality Standard (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.83)

The existing recreational facility is serviced by public sanitary sewer.

Stormwater Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.84(a)6)

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent with the CMP stormwater management standards. To meet the stormwater management standards, the application proposes to construct five stormwater infiltration systems.

Cultural Resource Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.151)

The Commission staff reviewed the application for evidence of significant cultural resources on the parcel. Based upon the lack of potential for significant cultural resources on the parcel, a cultural resource survey was not required.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant has provided the requisite public notices. Notice to required land owners within 200 feet of the above referenced parcel was completed on May 16, 2025. Newspaper public notice was completed on March 8, 2025. The application was designated as complete on the Commission's website on July 25, 2025. The Commission's public comment period closed on August 8, 2025. No public comment was submitted to the Commission regarding this application.

CONDITIONS

1. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed development shall adhere to the plan, consisting of 25 sheets, prepared by Colliers Engineering and Design, all sheets dated January 9, 2025 and revised to May 16, 2025.
2. Disposal of any construction debris or excess fill may only occur at an appropriately licensed facility.
3. Any proposed revegetation shall adhere to the "Vegetation" standards of the CMP. Where appropriate, the applicant is encouraged to utilize the following Pinelands native grasses for revegetation: Switch grass, Little bluestem and Broom-sedge.
4. Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.
5. All development, including clearing and land disturbance, shall be located at least 300 feet from wetlands.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed development conforms to the standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed development subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on September 8, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25- 27

TITLE: Approving With Conditions an Application for Public Development (Application Number 1983-4180.005)

Commissioner Rittler Sanchez moves and Commissioner Buzby-Cope seconds the motion that:

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission has reviewed the Public Development Application Report and the recommendation of the Executive Director that the following application for Public Development be approved with conditions:

1983-4180.005
Applicant: Ocean County
Municipality: Lacey Township
Ocean Township
Management Area: Pinelands Forest Area
Pinelands Preservation Area District
Date of Report: July 18, 2025
Proposed Development: Forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks on 2,200 acres.

WHEREAS, no request for a hearing before the Office of Administrative Law regarding the Executive Director's recommendation has been received for this application; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby adopts the Conclusion of the Executive Director for the proposed forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby determines that the proposed public forestry and creation of forest fuel/firebreaks conforms to the standards for approving an application for public development set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57 if the conditions recommended by the Executive Director are imposed; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13A-5h, no action authorized by the Commission shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Commission has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Application Number 1983-4180.005 for public forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks is hereby approved subject to the conditions recommended by the Executive Director.

Record of Commission Votes

Table with 16 columns (AYE, NAY, NP, A/R* repeated 4 times) and 6 rows of member votes.

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission Date: September 12, 2025

Susan R. Grogan

Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director

Laura E. Matos

Laura E. Matos
Chair



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

July 18, 2025

Geoffrey Lohmeyer (via email)
County of Ocean
129 Hooper Ave, First Floor
PO Box 2191
Toms River, NJ 08754-2191

Re: Application # 1983-4180.005
Forked River Mountain Wilderness Area
Lacey Township
Ocean Township
See Attachment A for Tax Blocks and Lots

Dear Mr. Lohmeyer:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks on 2,200 acres of a 12,678 acre parcel located in Lacey and Ocean Townships. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its August 8, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure
Attachment A: Blocks and Lots

c: Secretary, Lacey Township Planning Board (via email)

Lacey Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Lacey Township Environmental Commission (via email)
Secretary, Ocean Township Planning Board (via email)
Ocean Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Ocean Township Environmental Commission (via email)
Secretary, Ocean County Planning Board (via email)
Vinh Lang (via email)
Anthony Stivale (via email)
Susan C. Parris (via email)
Richard Rogers (via email)
Mary Fahner & Anne Schmidt (via email)
Mike P. (via email)
Dawn Trembly (via email)
Bill Moore (via email)
Holly Marks McQuade (via email)
John Hamilton (via email)
Timothy Kier (via email)



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Governor
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NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

July 18, 2025

Geoffrey Lohmeyer (via email)
County of Ocean
129 Hooper Ave, First Floor
PO Box 2191
Toms River, NJ 08754-2191

Application No.: 1983-4180.005
Forked River Mountain Wilderness Area
Lacey Township
Ocean Township
See Attachment A for Tax Block and Lots

This application proposes forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks on 2,200 acres of a 12,678 acre parcel in Lacey and Ocean Townships. Approximately 10,180 acres of the parcel are located in Lacey Township and approximately 2,498 acres of the parcel are located in Ocean Township.

Forestry

The application proposes forest stand improvement on 953.48 acres of Pine-dominated, Pine-oak and Oak-pine dominated forest types on the parcel. The proposed forest stand improvement will consist of forest thinning. There are currently approximately 4,114 trees per acre in the area proposed for forest thinning. The applicant represents that the acreage subject of the proposed thinning contains an abnormally high density of tree and shrub layer and is classified as overstocked. The applicant further represents that this overstocking creates a very high forest fire fuel load and encourages the persistence of ladder fuels, which in turn lead to a very high risk of wildfire. After the proposed thinning, there will be approximately 2,704 trees per acre in the area proposed for forest thinning. Depending upon market demand, the cut trees and slash may be left onsite to decompose.

The application proposes additional forestry on a total of 227.11 acres to encourage the regeneration of Atlantic white cedar (AWC) in older cedar stands. The purpose of this forestry is to facilitate the return of AWC to low land hardwood swamps which were formerly cedar swamps. This additional forestry is comprised of single tree selection harvest (98.16 acres), seed tree harvest with reserves (98.29 acres) and clearcut harvest with reserves (30.66 acres). These forestry techniques are intended to retain individual and clumps of mature trees, improve the health and vigor of the remaining trees, provide a seed source for natural regeneration, reduce brush and canopy cover and, in the single tree selection harvest, maintain an uneven-aged stand structure.

This application further proposes planting of thirty-five (35) acres of uplands on the parcel with a mixture of Pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) seedlings and native warm season grasses (Broomsedge, switchgrass, little bluestem). The area proposed to be planted is sparsely vegetated. A single pass site preparation to a minimum depth is proposed as necessary to remediate areas within the 35 acres that have been subject to off road vehicle compaction. The area will be monitored for seedling survival success. If necessary, replanting will occur until a minimum of +/- 300 trees per acre are established.

This application proposes to enhance wildlife habitat within two areas on the parcel, containing 132.41 acres and 1.56 acres, respectively. The proposed wildlife habitat enhancements are the creation of wildlife brush piles (up to 12 feet in diameter and 3 feet in height) and opening of understory. The wildlife habitat enhancements are intended to provide prey and shelter favored by threatened and endangered (T&E) animal species and reduce brush and canopy cover.

Approximately 1.5 acres of the proposed wildlife habitat enhancement is located within wetlands. The wetlands consist of Atlantic white-cedar, red maple, high bush blueberry and sweet pepperbush. The proposed reduction in brush and canopy cover is intended to promote habitat for early successional T&E plant and animal species.

No herbicide will be utilized for the proposed forestry.

The proposed forestry is consistent with the forestry regulations contained in the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

Creation of Forest Fuel/Firebreaks

Approximately 850 acres will be subject of treatment to create primary and secondary “shaded” forest fuel/firebreaks. The forest fuel/firebreaks will be located adjacent to existing sand/gravel roads (Bryant Road, Old Road, Jones Road and two unnamed roads originating at Lacey Road) located on the parcel.

The primary forest fuel/firebreak are proposed adjacent to the existing sand/gravel roads. The secondary forest fuel/firebreaks will start at the edge of the primary forest fuel/firebreak. A “shaded” forest fuel/firebreak does not remove all vegetation, rather it reduces the density of trees and shrubs that act as “ladder fuels” relative to areas outside of the forest fuel/firebreaks.

The proposed forest fuel/firebreaks will range in width between 100 and 300 feet. Variability in width and vegetation removal within the fuel/firebreak is intended to meet multiple objectives including recreational aesthetics, limiting off road vehicle access, increasing habitat suitability, averting human-wildlife conflict and enhancing/maintaining wildland fire considerations.

The forest fuel/firebreaks will result in general hazard fuel reduction, emergency response access and increasing safety and efficiency of operations, including wildland fire response, prescribed burn operations and safety zones.

There are currently approximately 33,840 trees per acre in the areas that will be subject of the proposed forest fuel/firebreaks. After creation of the proposed forest fuel/firebreaks, there will be approximately 20,303 trees per acre.

No herbiciding is proposed to create or maintain the forest fuel/firebreaks.

The proposed forest fuel/firebreaks are consistent with the regulations contained in the CMP.

Prescribed Burning

Prescribed burning is proposed on 2,754.72 acres of the parcel. Prescribed burning does not require application to the Commission.

Proposed Forest Road Maintenance Activities

The applicant proposes road maintenance of existing sand/gravel forest roads (Jones Road, Bryant Road, Old Road and two unnamed sand/gravel roads originating at the parcel boundary with Lacey Road) located within the boundaries of the parcel.

All proposed road maintenance activities will occur solely within the limits of the existing sand/gravel roads, depicted on the submitted forest stand map.

Proposed road maintenance activities include the grading of the existing sand/gravel roadways. Routine and customary road maintenance activities do not require application to the Commission.

Prior to undertaking any road maintenance activities, the applicant must obtain the permission from the owner of any road right-of-way not owned by Ocean County.

REGULATIONS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks for consistency with all regulations of the CMP. The following reviews the CMP regulations that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.22(a)3 and 5.23(a)5)

The parcel is located partially in the Pinelands Preservation Area District (approximately 6,362.15 acres) and partially in a Pinelands Forest Area (approximately 6,315.81 acres). Forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks are permitted throughout the Pinelands Area.

Wetlands Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.9 and 6.14)

There are wetlands located within the area proposed for forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks. The CMP permits forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks in wetlands and the required buffer to wetlands.

Threatened and Endangered Species Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.27 & 6.33)

There are known sightings of T&E animal and wetland associated plant species on and in the vicinity of the proposed forestry and forest fuel/firebreaks.

The Commission staff reviewed the proposed forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks to determine whether they are designed to avoid irreversible adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of any local populations of T&E animal species and irreversible adverse impacts on the

survival of any local populations of T&E plant species.

To avoid potential irreversible adverse impacts on any T&E avian species that may be present, the applicant proposes to conduct visual surveys prior to any forestry or the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks. The visual surveys will identify and mark any trees containing potential T&E avian species cavities or nests. Any identified and marked trees will not be removed.

To avoid any irreversible adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of any local populations of T&E snake species, the applicant proposes that any forestry or creation of forest fuel/firebreaks that is undertaken with heavy equipment, shall only occur between April 15 to November 15, the period when the concerned snake species are active. The applicant further proposes that from November 15 to April 15, the period of time when the concerned snake species are hibernating, only low intensity methods such as thinning on foot, with handheld chainsaws or handsaws, will be utilized for forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks.

The application identified potential Pine Barrens treefrog breeding habitat on the parcel. To avoid potential irreversible adverse impacts on habitat critical to the survival of any local populations of Pine Barrens treefrog, the applicant proposes that a 100 foot buffer shall be maintained between the proposed forestry and the forest fuel/firebreaks to potential Pine Barrens treefrog breeding habitat.

There are known sightings of wetland associated T&E plant species on the parcel. To avoid potential irreversible adverse impacts on the survival of any local populations of wetland associated T&E plant species, the applicant proposes to maintain a 100 foot buffer to any known T&E plant species. A condition is included in this Report requiring that, prior to undertaking the proposed forestry or creation of the forest fuel/firebreaks, the applicant shall conduct visual surveys to identify any additional wetlands associated T&E plant species located within 100 feet of the proposed forestry and forest fuel/firebreak.

With the conditions included in this Report, the proposed forestry and the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks are designed to avoid irreversible adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of any local populations of T&E animal species and irreversible adverse impacts on the survival of any local populations of T&E plant species.

Cultural Resource Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.151)

No new or temporary access roads are proposed as part of this application. The proposed forestry and forest fuel/firebreaks will result in minimal soil disturbance. As a result, a cultural resource survey was not required for the proposed forestry or forest fuel/firebreaks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant has provided the requisite public notices. Notice to required landowners within 200 feet of the above referenced parcel was completed on March 12, 2025. Newspaper public notice was completed on May 27, 2025. The application was designated as complete on the Commission's website on June 13, 2025. The Commission's public comment period closed on July 11, 2025. The Commission received 11 written requests to clarify the purpose of the application, provide a copy the application file or a copy of this Public Development Application Report. No public comments were received regarding the proposed forestry or the creation of forest fuel/firebreaks. The 11 commenters are copied on this Public Development Application Report containing the Executive Director's findings and recommendation.

CONDITIONS

1. Prior to any forestry or forest fuel/fire breaks, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.
2. The proposed forestry and forest fuel/fire break activities shall adhere to the Forest Stewardship Plan for Forked River Mountains Wilderness Area, prepared by Pine Creek Forestry, LLC dated April 1, 2025.
3. No forestry or vegetation clearing for the forest fuel/firebreaks shall occur on any privately owned lands without the written consent of the property owner.
4. To avoid irreversible adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of any local populations of T&E snake species, all forestry and forest fuel/firebreak activities shall occur between April 15 and November 15, the time period when the concerned snakes are active. Only low intensity forestry or forest fuel/firebreak activities, such as thinning on foot, with a handheld chainsaw or handsaw, shall occur between November 15 to April 15, the time period when the concerned snakes are hibernating.
5. To avoid potential irreversible adverse impacts on any T&E avian species, prior to undertaking the proposed forestry and forest fuel/firebreaks, visual surveys to identify and mark any trees containing potential T&E avian species cavities or nests shall occur. Any marked trees shall not be removed.
6. To avoid irreversible adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of any local populations of T&E Pine Barrens treefrog, a 100 foot buffer to potential treefrog breeding habitat shall be maintained.
7. To avoid irreversible adverse impacts on habitats that are critical to the survival of any local populations of wetlands associated T&E plant species, prior to undertaking the proposed forestry and forest fuel/firebreaks, visual surveys to identify and mark any wetlands associated T&E plant species located within 100 feet of the proposed forestry and forest fuel/firebreaks shall occur. A 100 foot buffer shall be maintained to any identified wetlands associated T&E plant species.
8. No forestry shall occur after August 8, 2035 unless a new application has been completed with and approved by the Commission.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed forestry and the forest fuel/firebreaks conform to the regulations set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed forestry and the forest fuel/firebreaks subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on August 5, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.

Attachment A

F-2322 Forked River Mountains Block and Lots

Township	Municipality	Block	Lot	Tax Acres
Lacey Township	1513	2500	7.01	403.00
Lacey Township	1513	3400	13	30.87
Lacey Township	1513	3400	7	17.76
Lacey Township	1513	3500	1	5855.00
Lacey Township	1513	3500	2.05	530.00
Lacey Township	1513	3500	2.06	1213.00
Lacey Township	1513	3500	2.09	1364.06
Lacey Township	1513	3500	2.11	100.03
Lacey Township	1513	3500	2.13	56.03
Lacey Township	1513	3500	6	43.79
Lacey Township	1513	4010	2	566.43
Ocean Township	1521	1	1	1.69
Ocean Township	1521	11	1.01	42.45
Ocean Township	1521	11	1.02	43.00
Ocean Township	1521	11	1.03	17.85
Ocean Township	1521	11	10	0.55
Ocean Township	1521	11	12	23.78
Ocean Township	1521	11	13	0.70
Ocean Township	1521	11	14	10.01
Ocean Township	1521	11	7	30.28
Ocean Township	1521	11	8	155.89
Ocean Township	1521	11	9	36.81
Ocean Township	1521	13	3	53.14
Ocean Township	1521	13	4	24.41
Ocean Township	1521	13	5	18.35
Ocean Township	1521	13	6	6.31
Ocean Township	1521	14	1.01	3.89
Ocean Township	1521	14	1.02	0.29
Ocean Township	1521	14	2	122.90
Ocean Township	1521	14	3	3.53
Ocean Township	1521	14	4	5.14
Ocean Township	1521	2	1	245.15
Ocean Township	1521	3	1	3.42
Ocean Township	1521	4	1	6.02
Ocean Township	1521	5	1	128.92
Ocean Township	1521	6	1	1141.85
Ocean Township	1521	6	19	72.43
Ocean Township	1521	6	2.01	229.85
Ocean Township	1521	6	2.02	3.15
Ocean Township	1521	7	7	17.29
Ocean Township	1521	7	8	48.94
			Total:	12677.96



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25- 28

TITLE: To Adopt the Pinelands Commission’s Fiscal Year 2026 Budgets for the Operating Fund, Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund, Katie Fund and Pinelands Conservation Fund

Commissioner Pikolycky moves and Commissioner Lohbauer seconds the motion that:

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Pinelands Protection Act, the Pinelands Commission is charged with the continuing implementation and monitoring of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has appropriated \$3,899,000 to support the Commission's operations during Fiscal Year 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Treasury has informed the Commission that \$687,000 (28%) of budgeted health benefits and pension costs will be covered through the State’s interdepartmental accounts in Fiscal Year 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has also been informed of the Treasury Department’s commitment to providing additional funding in the amount of \$95,000 to support the Commission’s salary program, as specified in the Collective Negotiations Agreements with the Communication Workers of America, Local 1040, for FY23-FY27, ratified March 3, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Commission anticipates that additional funding sources of \$1,364,000 will be available to further support the Commission's operations, including grants from the National Park Service and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, interest income and development application fee and escrow revenue; and

WHEREAS, the Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund Budget includes the FY23 special state appropriation of \$500,000, the \$575,000 capital grant awarded by the New Jersey Historic Trust in October 2023, an additional appropriation of \$69,000 in the state’s FY26 budget and all remaining funding in the Commission’s Fenwick Manor Painting Reserve; and

WHEREAS, the Katie Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 anticipates expenditures of \$4,550, which will be drawn from the Fund Balance and used for maintenance of the rain garden on the Commission’s property, the installation of a native grass/seed mix demonstration garden and merchandise, supplies and postage to support the Commission’s online store; and

WHEREAS, a financial plan for the Pinelands Conservation Fund (PCF), which includes four programs (Land Acquisition, Conservation Planning and Research, Community Planning and Design and Education and Outreach), was approved by the Commission in April 2005 and last revised in August 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the PCF Land Acquisition program totals \$3,026,300, including anticipated allocation and expenditure of \$3,000,000 for specific land acquisition and preservation projects in the Pinelands Area; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the PCF Conservation Planning and Research program totals \$539,627 and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the PCF Community Planning and Design program totals \$198,640; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the PCF Education and Outreach program totals \$37,770; and

WHEREAS, the total Fiscal Year 2026 budget for the Pinelands Conservation Fund is \$3,802,337; and

WHEREAS, the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 totals \$7,377,086; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget reflects the continuation of the Energy Conservation Reserve established in Fiscal Year 2023 at the request of the Pinelands Climate Committee, with funds to be used for projects and capital expenditures that foster the Commission’s mission toward improved energy conservation, sustainability and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with Pinelands Commission Resolutions PC4-20-37 and PC4-22-15; and

WHEREAS, in order to accomplish these and other important initiatives and to continue to carry out the Commission’s regulatory responsibilities, the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget anticipates the need for a \$940,086 draw from the Commission’s unreserved, undesignated fund balance; and

WHEREAS, the remaining unreserved, undesignated fund balance amount is sufficient to cover unforeseen or emergency expenditures in the near future; and

WHEREAS, the Commission’s Personnel & Budget Committee has reviewed the FY 2026 budgets for the Operating Fund, Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund, Katie Fund and Pinelands Conservation Fund and has recommended their adoption by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:18A-5h, no action authorized by the Commission shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Commission has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Pinelands Commission hereby adopts the attached Fiscal Year 2026 Budgets for the Operating Fund totaling \$7,377,086, the Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund totaling \$1,264,000, the Pinelands Conservation Fund totaling \$3,802,337 and the Katie Fund Budget totaling \$4,550.

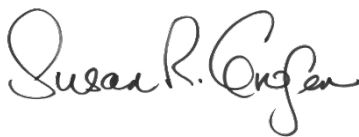
Record of Commission Votes

AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*				
Asselta	X				Lohbauer	X				Rittler Sanchez	X			
Avery	X				Matro				A	Signor	X			
Buzby-Cope	X				Mauriello	X				Wallner	X			
Irick	X				Meade	X				Matos	X			
Lettman			X		Pikolycky	X								

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission

Date: September 12, 2025



Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director



Laura E. Matos
Chair

**PINELANDS COMMISSION
OPERATING BUDGET REVENUES
GENERAL FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2026**

Revenue Source	FY2026 Anticipated	Notes
State Appropriation	\$3,899,000	1
State Supplemental Funding (Salaries)	\$95,000	2
State Supplemental Funding (Fringe Benefits)	\$687,000	3
Interest Income	\$125,000	4
NPS - Long Term Environmental Monitoring	\$149,000	5
NPS - Long Term Economic Monitoring	\$149,000	5
NJDEP Box Turtle	\$90,000	6
Wetlands Permitting	\$1,000	7
Development Application Fees and Escrows	\$850,000	8
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,045,000	
Energy Conservation Reserve	\$363,000	9
Regulatory Programs Shelving Reserve	\$20,000	10
Administrative Assessment (PCF)	\$9,000	11
Undesignated Fund Balance Anticipated	\$940,086	12
TOTAL OTHER INCREASES	\$1,332,086	
TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER INCREASES	\$7,377,086	

PINELANDS COMMISSION
OPERATING BUDGET EXPENDITURES
GENERAL FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2026

Expenditure Account	FY2026 Anticipated	Notes
PERSONNEL		
Salaries & Wages	\$4,069,287	13
Fringe Benefits	\$2,448,185	14, 15
TOTAL PERSONNEL	\$6,517,472	
SUPPLIES		
Printing & Office Supplies	\$33,725	16
Vehicular Supplies	\$9,600	17
Household Supplies	\$11,500	18
Fuel & Utilities	\$49,500	19
Other Supplies	\$39,352	20
TOTAL SUPPLIES	\$143,677	
SERVICES		
Travel	\$14,750	21
Telephone	\$46,600	22
Postage	\$2,850	23
Insurance	\$80,275	24, 25
Information Processing	\$160,774	26
Household Services	\$5,700	27
Professional Services	\$271,500	28
Other Services	\$23,625	29
TOTAL SERVICES	\$606,074	
MAINTENANCE & RENT		
Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds	\$41,500	30
Maintenance - Equipment	\$26,000	31
Maintenance - Vehicular	\$8,800	32
Rent - Other	\$6,763	33
TOTAL MAINTENANCE & RENT	\$83,063	
IMPROVEMENTS & ACQUISITIONS		
Acquisitions - Equipment	\$9,800	34
Acquisitions - Information Processing Equipment	\$17,000	35
TOTAL IMPROVEMENTS & ACQUISITIONS	\$26,800	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	7,377,086	36,37,38

**PINELANDS COMMISSION
OPERATING BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2026 NOTES
August 19, 2025**

1. The adopted state budget includes a FY 2026 State Appropriation to the Commission in the amount of \$3,899,000.
2. The Commission has been informed of the State Treasury Department's commitment to providing additional funding in the amount of \$95,000 to support the Commission's salary program, as specified in the Collective Negotiations Agreements with the Communication Workers of America, Local 1040, for FY23-FY27.
3. State Supplemental Funding (Fringe Benefits) totaling \$687,000 helps to offset the Commission's health and pension costs. In FY 2004, the Department of the Treasury agreed to help the Commission finance its escalating health benefits premiums through an Interdepartmental Account. Beginning in FY 2009, the amount of assistance was calculated using projected health and pension costs not funded through other sources. Using this calculation, the Commission requested \$838,218 in FY 2012, \$837,927 in FY 2013, \$844,809 in FY 2014 and \$840,455 in FY 2015 but was only approved to receive \$687,000. No increase in funding occurred between FY 2016-FY 2025. The FY 2026 budget once again anticipates receipt of only \$687,000 from the state.
4. Interest Income is earned from the Commission's checking account and the cash management fund designated for general use. Interest income for the Pinelands Conservation Fund is reflected in the budgets for those programs. Interest rates have fluctuated in recent years, greatly affecting interest income. The Federal Reserve is expected to cut interest rates beginning in September 2025.
5. The Commission is entering its 30th year of the Environmental and Economic Long Term Monitoring programs, funded in part by a \$298,000 from the National Park Service.
6. The Commission is awaiting grant funding from NJDEP for the continuation of the Box Turtle study that began in FY 2022.
7. The anticipated revenue from the NJDEP Wetlands Permitting program that the Commission helps to administer reflects estimated permit fees to be received and is authorized through language in the Appropriations Act.
8. Development application fees and escrow payments of \$850,000 are anticipated to be received during FY 2026. This important component of the Commission's Operating Budget fluctuates tremendously from month to month and will be closely monitored throughout the fiscal year.
9. FY 2026 will be the third year of the Commission's Energy Conservation Reserve. This reserve is for projects and capital expenditures that foster the Commission's mission toward energy conservation and sustainability. Potential projects include installation of an electric vehicle

charging station and necessary electrical upgrades, development of a long-term plan for replacement of the Commission's existing HVAC systems, purchase of new or replacement energy efficient supplies (e.g., LED light bulbs) and other initiatives recommended in the Local Government Energy Audit reports or by the Commission's Policy & Implementation Committee. Grants available to state agencies for such projects will also be pursued.

10. The FY 2024 budget reflected establishment of the Regulatory Programs Shelving Reserve. The current automated shelving system has reached its life expectancy of twenty years. An additional \$20,000 is being added to the reserve in FY 2026 so that the Commission will be prepared when the shelving needs to be replaced.

11. In April 2005, the Commission adopted a financial plan for the Pinelands Conservation Fund, which was amended in 2014. Included in the original plan was an annual administrative assessment of \$60,000 (see Pinelands Conservation Fund budget note #3). FY 2026 will see the continued reduction of the administrative assessment to \$9,000.

12. The projected amount needed from the Undesignated Fund Balance to balance the FY 2026 budget deficit is \$940,086.

13. The Commission's authorized staffing level is 66 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs). Since FY 2007, unfilled vacancies have steadily increased to a total of 22 unfilled FTEs, or more than 33% of the authorized staffing level. The FY 2026 salaries and wages budgets (Operating and Pinelands Conservation Fund) finance only 44 of the 66 authorized full time equivalent positions.

14. The fringe benefits budget includes expenditures for the employer's share of Social Security (\$240,000), Medicare (\$60,000), disability insurance (\$500), flexible savings accounts (\$1,500) and miscellaneous administrative charges (\$750). The employer liability of pension related funds is estimated at \$725,000. The Commission's escalating health benefit premiums for active and retired employees are estimated at \$1,675,000 with a \$275,000 reduction for coinsurance payments from staff members. Also included is \$15,000 for dental insurance premiums and \$500 for participation in the Employee Advisory Service.

15. Upon Commission approval of the FY 2026 Operating Budget, the Executive Director will be authorized to pay the employer share of Social Security and Medicare at an amount not to exceed the budgeted funding of \$300,000.

16. The printing and office supplies budget includes expenditures for printing; office, computer, mailing, copying, and meeting supplies; office and computer equipment with an item cost of less than \$1,000; reference materials; scientific report printing/publication; and staff and Commissioner service awards. Grant-related expenses account for \$2,000 of this budget.

17. The majority of the vehicular supplies budget covers gasoline for Commission vehicles. Other costs budgeted in this account include replacement tires, supplies used for routine vehicular maintenance and other miscellaneous supplies such as keys, mats, scrapers and first aid kits.

18. The household supplies budget provides for the purchase of materials to perform minor buildings and grounds maintenance, cleaning supplies, household paper products, basic kitchen supplies, household equipment costing less than \$2,000 and other operating supplies.
19. The fuel and utilities budget covers expenditures for heating fuel, electricity, water and sewer.
20. The other supplies budget covers expenditures for supplies and equipment (less than \$1,000) supporting map-making, scientific research, fieldwork, and photographic needs. Grant related expenditures are a significant portion (over 97.5%) of this account, totaling \$38,402 for FY 2026.
21. The travel budget covers reimbursements to Commissioners and staff for business mileage on their personal vehicles, tolls and parking, and meal allowances.
22. The telephone budget includes basic service, toll charges, the service cost of a data circuit, conference calls, and cellular phone service.
23. The postage budget finances general postage fees, parcel delivery charges and post office box rental charges. Over the last several years, this account has decreased as more correspondence is sent electronically, including letters, reports, and public outreach materials. However, in FY26, increased funds for postage are included in the budget in recognition of the need to notify applicants and property owners of the upcoming expiration dates for Certificates of Filing and Waivers of Strict Compliance in the Commission's proposed CMP amendments. Due to the age of these applications, email contact information is unavailable, thereby requiring mailing of hard copies of hundreds of letters.
24. The insurance budget covers estimated premiums for automobiles, general liability, fire, theft, workers compensation, volunteers, and the umbrella liability policy.
25. Upon Commission approval of the FY 2026 Operating Budget, the Executive Director will be authorized to pay the State's insurance broker an amount not to exceed the budgeted funding of \$80,275 to cover the Commission's insurance premiums.
26. The FY 2026 budget for information processing includes \$101,550 for software maintenance agreements and data purchases, \$8,500 for payroll processing, \$1,723 for database administration services and \$1,000 for online legal services. The Commission will be seeking a new payroll processing service in FY26. Also new for FY 2026 is the NJOIT chargeback for Zscaler (remote access) and storage services anticipated to be \$48,000 per year.
27. The household services budget covers trash removal, alarm (security and fire) monitoring, and exterminating services.
28. The professional services account covers expenditures for legal fees, technical and consulting services, and other miscellaneous services. Anticipated costs include \$75,000 for legal fees associated with DAG services; \$3,000 for legal fees associated with mediation in a litigation

matter; and \$2,500 for publication of the Commission's rulemaking documents by the Office of Administrative Law and \$50,000 for a stormwater consultant. Grant-related technical services totaling \$12,000 are budgeted for such services as printing of the annual Pinelands calendar. The budget also anticipates expenditure of funds for professional services associated with review of proposed new well applications and cell tower plan amendments, both of which will be funded via escrow payments from applicants. Finally, \$25,000 has been budgeted for the services of a new outside accountant. It should be noted that the FY26 budget does not include funding for the Commission's outside labor counsel as sufficient encumbered funding from FY25 remains available for the limited amount of work anticipated this fiscal year.

29. Expenditures in the other services budget include annual subscriptions (\$3,000), required memberships and professional licenses (\$4,475); meeting expenses (\$1,700); legal advertising (\$4,650), research-related fees (\$1,100), training (\$8,000), and banking fees (\$700).

30. The maintenance buildings and grounds budget for FY 2026 includes an estimated cost for implementation of Energy Efficiency measures and installation of an Electric Vehicle Charging Station (the cost of which may be partially offset by grant funding). The remaining amount is available for minor maintenance services (plumbing, electrical, HVAC, etc.).

31. The maintenance - equipment budget provides for the inspection, maintenance and repair of certain building systems and other equipment.

32. The maintenance vehicular budget finances routine maintenance, vehicular fees, and repairs, including any needed body work not performed by the Commission's Maintenance Technician.

33. The FY 2026 budget includes \$400 for the postage meter and \$2,863 for the lease of one black and white copier. Leasing of a Large Format Scanner for \$2,500 per year is also included to facilitate continued scanning and saving of site plans and zoning maps. Finally, \$1,000 is included for repair and maintenance of an older copier that is out of lease.

34. The acquisitions - equipment budget contains \$7,800 for scientific equipment supporting grant-related projects and \$2,000 for unanticipated telephone system expenses.

35. The acquisitions - information processing equipment budget includes the replacement of outdated computers and laptops.

36. The total estimated Operating Budget expenditures for FY 2026 equal \$7,377,086. During the fiscal year, certain unforeseen and/or emergency expenditures may become necessary. The Personnel and Budget Committee has discussed this issue and recommends that the Executive Director be authorized to exceed the budget of an expenditure category (personnel, supplies, services, maintenance/rent, improvements/acquisitions) by no more than 10% provided that funds are available in other expenditure categories to ensure that the total Operating Budget is not exceeded and provided further that the combined salary budgets for the Operating Fund and the Pinelands Conservation Fund do not exceed \$4,509,706.

37. Several expenditure account budgets include funding for various services and benefits that are reimbursed to the State of New Jersey and are over the Executive Director's authorized contracting limit of \$304,000 (OMB 26-02-DPP). These consist of employee health benefits and the employer liability assessed by the Division of Pensions.

38. Upon Commission approval of the FY 2026 Operating Budget, the Executive Director will be authorized to pay the State of New Jersey for the aforementioned items in an amount not to exceed the budgeted funding.

**PINELANDS COMMISSION
PINELANDS CONSERVATION FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET**

Revenue Source	FY2026 Anticipated	Notes
Interest Income - Land Acquisition	\$100,000	1
Interest Income - Conservation Planning & Research	\$45,000	1
Interest Income - Community Planning & Design	\$30,000	1
Interest Income - Education & Outreach	\$4,500	1
Total Revenue	\$179,500	
Reserves for Pinelands Conservation Activities	\$3,622,837	
Total Revenue/Other Sources Anticipated	\$3,802,337	

Expenditure Account	FY2026 Anticipated	Notes
<u>Land Acquisition</u>		
Salaries & Wages	\$15,000	
Fringe Benefits	\$10,650	
Land Acquisition	\$3,000,000	2
Printing & Office Supplies	\$650	
Total Land Acquisition Expenditures	\$3,026,300	4

<u>Conservation Planning and Research</u>		
Salaries & Wages	\$295,419	
Fringe Benefits	\$209,748	
Printing & Office Supplies	\$3,500	
Other Supplies	\$23,300	
Travel	\$4,000	
Information Processing	\$610	
Other Services	\$50	
Administrative Assessment	\$3,000	3
Total Conservation Planning/Research Expenditures	\$539,627	5

<u>Community Planning and Design</u>		
Salaries & Wages	\$114,000	
Fringe Benefits	\$81,540	
Postage	\$100	
Administrative Assessment	\$3,000	3
Total Community Planning/Design Expenditures	\$198,640	6

<u>Education and Outreach</u>		
Salaries & Wages	\$16,000	
Fringe Benefits	\$12,320	
Travel	\$200	
Other Supplies	\$5,750	
Other Services	\$500	
Administrative Assessment	\$3,000	3
Total Education and Outreach	\$37,770	7

Total Expenditures	\$3,802,337	
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PINELANDS COMMISSION
PINELANDS CONSERVATION FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET NOTES
August 19, 2025

1. The funds provided from Atlantic City Electric (formerly Conectiv) and other related revenue sources are kept in four separate cash accounts, one for each program of the Fund. The FY 2026 estimated interest income totals are anticipated to reach \$179,500 and are comprised of interest income from the four cash accounts. All interest income stays within the specific program and is available to help fund the associated projects.
2. This revenue results from the SJTA MOA Amendment executed in April of 2019, under which SJTA was required to contribute a total of \$3,000,000 to the Commission for land acquisition in the Pinelands Area. All of the required funding was provided in accordance with that MOA Amendment and deposited in the Land Acquisition account of the PCF.
3. The financial plan that designated the three original programs within the Fund (Land Acquisition, Conservation Planning & Research and Community Planning & Design) was approved by the Commission in April 2005 and included a \$20,000 annual assessment from each program to cover administrative expenses as described in Operating Budget note #12. The Commission amended the PCF policies in 2014 to include a fourth program, Education & Outreach, from which a \$20,000 annual administrative assessment was also to be drawn. The annual assessment from the Land Acquisition program was eliminated in FY 2019. Assessments from the other three programs were reduced to \$3,000 in FY 2024. The FY 2026 budget continues that reduced administrative assessment.
4. The Land Acquisition program budget for FY 2026 totals \$3,026,300. Personnel costs (salaries/wages and fringe benefits) are estimated at \$25,650 in support of the Commission's permanent land protection initiatives, which include completion of a new round of land acquisition, PCF deed restriction monitoring and the fourth annual permanent land protection summit. The budget reflects allocation of all available land acquisition funds (\$3,000,000) to specific acquisition projects. An additional \$650 is included to cover meeting supplies.
5. The Conservation Planning and Research program budget for FY 2026 totals \$539,627. Personnel costs (salaries/wages and fringe benefits) are estimated at \$505,167 to support the following initiatives and special projects: continued implementation of the alternate septic system pilot program; continued implementation of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer water management CMP amendments; work on a data sharing agreement with NJDEP related to rare plants and consideration of an expanded protected plant list; and data maintenance and reporting related to permanent land protection. In addition, the Science Office will be continuing to conduct its corn snake, king snake and box turtle research projects, which are also partially funded by the National Park Service as part of the Commission's Long Term Environmental Monitoring Program. An additional \$31,460 is budgeted for related expenses, including printing of scientific journal articles, scientific supplies, permits, software maintenance and travel (mileage). Rounding out the budget is the \$3,000 administrative assessment mentioned in Note 3 above.

6. The Community Planning and Design program budget for FY 2026 totals \$198,640. Personnel costs (salaries/wages and fringe benefits) are estimated at \$195,540 to support the following initiatives and special projects: CMP amendments related development of accessible trails; administration of the Pinelands Development Credit Bank; PDC supply and demand; administration of the Pinelands Infrastructure Trust Fund; technical assistance related to implementation of the state's new affordable housing legislation; and completion of the new Local Conformance and Zoning System. Also reflected in the budget are funds to support a variety of climate change initiatives and efforts, including participation on the state's Interagency Council on Climate Resilience, coordination with NJBPU on a dual-use solar program in the Pinelands Area, research on artificial turf, implementation of any adopted NJDEP REAL rules (particularly with respect to stormwater management), and research to support future CMP amendments. A total of \$100 is budgeted for office supplies and postage for the PDC Bank. Rounding out the budget is the \$3,000 administrative assessment mentioned in Note 3 above.
7. The Education and Outreach program budget for FY 2026 totals \$37,770. Personnel costs (salaries/wages and fringe benefits) are estimated at \$28,320 to support the two annual Pinelands Short Courses and the World Water Monitoring Challenge. A total of \$5,750 is included for photographic equipment and supplies related to the Visitors Center, the World Water Monitoring Challenge, maintenance of the bog and native species gardens on the Commission's property and additional plant/tree markers. Miscellaneous expenses supporting the program total \$700 and include honoraria for participants in the Pinelands Speakers Series and mileage. Rounding out the budget is the \$3,000 administrative assessment mentioned in Note 3 above.

PINELANDS COMMISSION
Fenwick Manor Preservation Budget
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET

Revenue	FY 2026 Anticipated	Notes
NJHT Capital Grant	\$575,000	1
Fund Balance - Commission Match	\$575,000	1
Fund Balance from Fenwick Painting Reserve	\$45,000	1
FY26 State Appropriation	\$69,000	2
Total	<u>\$1,264,000</u>	

Expenditure Account	FY 2026 Anticipated	Notes
Partial Exterior Restoration	\$436,013	3
Structural Reinforcement/Maintenance	\$315,805	3
Partial Interior Restoration	\$297,583	3
Non Construction Costs	\$102,100	4
Other	\$112,500	5
Total Expenditures	<u>\$1,264,000</u>	

**PINELANDS COMMISSION
FENWICK MANOR PRESERVATION BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET NOTES
August 19, 2025**

1. Revenue includes a \$575,000 Preserve New Jersey Capital Improvement Grant for Fenwick Manor, awarded to the Commission by the New Jersey Historic Trust in late 2023. The Fund Balance includes the Commission's match of \$575,000, primarily provided through a \$500,000 special state appropriation to the Commission in the State of New Jersey FY 2023 Budget (Pages 79-80 of P.L. 2022, Chapter 49). All remaining funds in the Fenwick Manor Painting Reserve (\$45,000) are also included. The Commission executed a contract with Connolly & Hickey Historical Architects in May 2025 for the Historic Fenwick Manor Rehabilitation project.
2. The State of New Jersey FY 2026 Budget appropriates \$69,000 to the Commission for Fenwick Manor Capital Improvements. In addition, the FY 2026 State Budget states that "there are appropriated to the commission such additional amounts as are required to complete necessary structural and safety repairs to the Fenwick Manor administration building, subject to the approval of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting".
3. Costs associated with Exterior Restoration, Structural Reinforcement/Maintenance and Interior Restoration are based on the estimates provided in the Fenwick Manor Preservation Plan prepared in FY23 by the Commission's consultant, Connolly & Hickey.
4. Non-construction related costs are based on the Commission's May 2025 contract with Connolly & Hickey and include engineering services, design development, and contract administration.
5. Other expenditures are not detailed in the budget but are expected to be necessary due to increased construction costs and unanticipated issues identified after the rehabilitation work commences.

**PINELANDS COMMISSION
KATIE FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET**

Revenue	FY 2026 Anticipated	Notes
Katie Fund Available Balance 7/1/2025	\$30,410	
Revenue Needed for FY26 Projects	\$4,550	1

Expenditure Account	FY 2026 Anticipated	Notes
Rain Garden Supplies	\$100	2
Grounds Supplies Plants, Mulch and Pavers	\$750	3
Pinelands Online Store Merchandise and Supplies	\$3,500	4
On-Line Store Postage	\$200	5
Total Expenditures	\$4,550	

Notes:

- 1 This is the anticipated amount needed to support Katie Fund projects and activities planned for FY26. The Katie Fund was established in memory Kathleen M. Lynch-van de Sande, a Pinelands Commission Environmental Specialist who died in a car accident in June 1989. It funds the planting of native Pinelands species and projects that raise awareness of native Pinelands plants.
- 2 Supplies and replacement native plants that may be needed for the Rain Garden.
- 3 Supplies include native seeds, grasses and plants, mulch and stone and/or pavers leading to a new Native Grass/Seed Mix demonstration garden between the RJS building and Springfield Road.
- 4 For purchase of merchandise needed to replenish the Commission's online store and mailing/display supplies.
- 5 For postage associated with filling orders from the Commission's online store.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

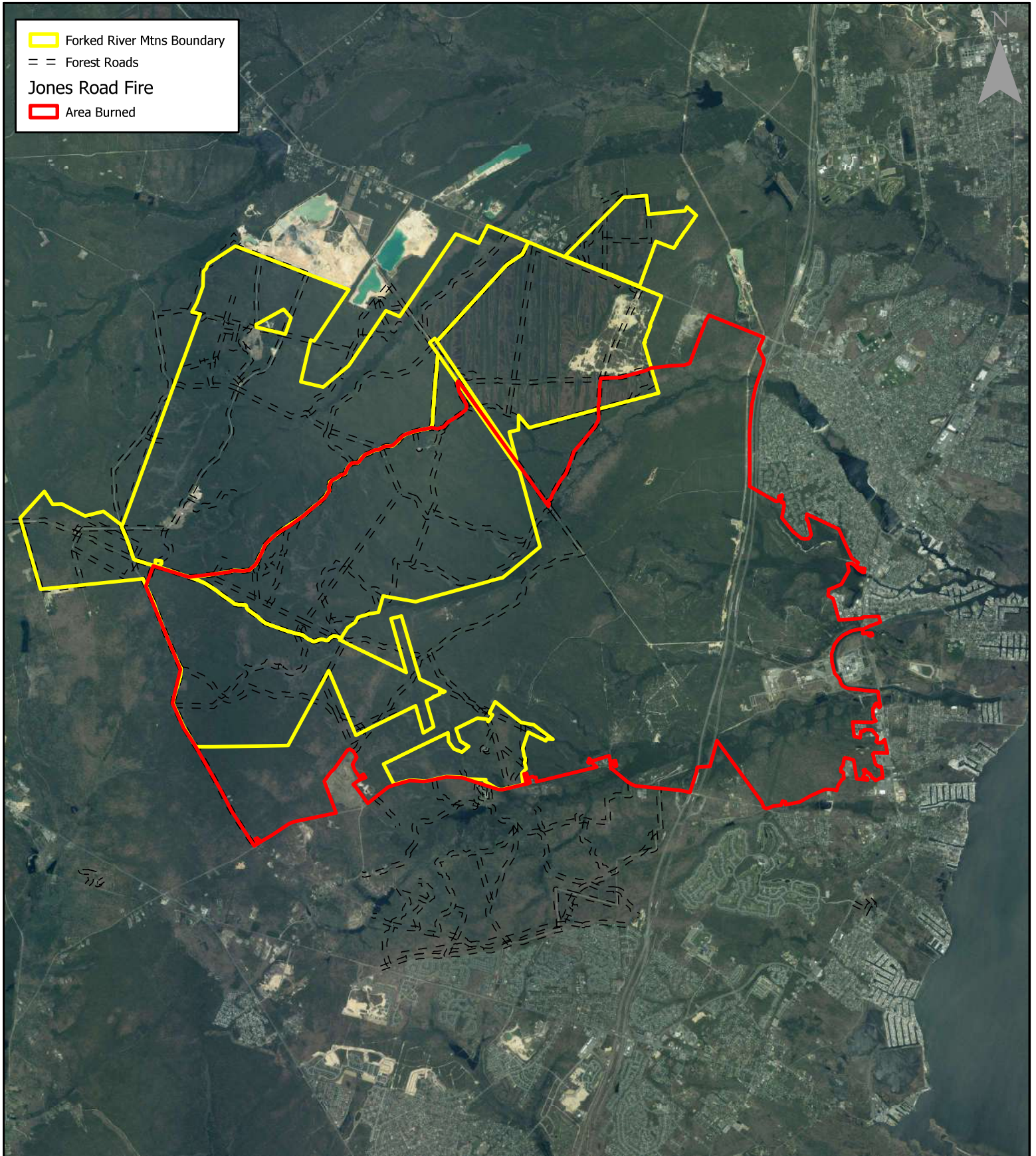
State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

Due to the file size, the map that was displayed during the discussion on Ocean County's Forestry and Forest Fire Fuel Break Application (Application # 1983-4180.005) at the September 12, 2025 Commission meeting has been uploaded and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).



Forked River Mtns Boundary

Forest Roads

Jones Road Fire

Area Burned

SEE ATTACHED LIST OF BLOCKS AND LOTS
LACEY AND OCEAN TOWNSHIPS
OCEAN COUNTY, NJ

Jones Road Wildfire Map

1 inch = 7,000 feet

PINE CREEK FORESTRY, LLC

STATE APPROVED & CERTIFIED FORESTERS
1405 CHEWS LANDING ROAD, SUITE 31
LAUREL SPRINGS, NEW JERSEY 08021, (856) 352-2090

County of Ocean
1198 Bandon Road
Toms River, NJ 08753
Map created: 9/10/2025

*This product is for forest management information use and has not been prepared for/is not suitable for engineering or surveying purposes.

74°16'13"W 39°49'40"N F-2322

Personnel & Budget Committee Fiscal Year 2026

August 19, 2025

FY 2026 BUDGETS

- Operating Fund - \$7,377,086
- Pinelands Conservation Fund - \$3,802,337
- Fenwick Manor Preservation Fund -\$1,264,000
- Kate Fund Budget - \$4,550

Operating Fund FY26 Revenue

	FY26 Anticipated
State Appropriation	\$3,899,000
State Supplemental Funding (Salaries)	\$95,000
State Supplemental Funding (Health Benefits)	\$687,000
Application Fees and Escrow Payments	\$850,000
Grants/Special Purpose	\$389,000
Interest Income	\$125,000
Fund Balance & Reserves	*\$1,332,086
TOTAL	\$7,377,086

* Includes:

- \$940,086 from the Undesignated Fund Balance
- \$383,000 from Designated Reserves – Energy Conservation and Shelving
- \$9,000 PCF Administrative Assessment

Operating Fund FY26 Expenditures

	FY26 Anticipated
Salary and Wages	\$4,069,287
Fringe Benefits	\$2,448,185
Supplies	\$143,677
Professional Services	\$271,500
Other Services	\$334,574
Maintenance/Rent	\$83,063
Improvements and Acquisitions	\$26,800
Total Expenditures	\$7,377,086

Pinelands Conservation Fund

FY26 Expenditures

	FY25 Anticipated
Land Acquisition	\$3,026,300
Conservation Planning & Research	\$539,627
Community Planning & Design	\$198,640
Education and Outreach	\$37,770
Total PCF Expenditures	\$3,802,337

Fenwick Manor Preservation FY26 Budget

	FY26 Anticipated
New Jersey Historic Trust Capital Grant	\$575,000
Fund Balance - Commission Match	\$575,000
Additional Painting Reserve Funding	\$45,000
FY26 State Appropriation	\$69,000
Total Expenditures	\$1,264,000

Katie Fund FY26 Budget

	FY26 Anticipated
Rain Garden Supplies	\$100
Grounds Supplies - Plants, Mulch and Pavers	\$750
Pinelands Online Store - Merchandise and Supplies	\$3,500
On-Line Store Postage	\$200
Total Expenditures	\$4,550



Pinelands Commission Fiscal Year 2026 Initiatives

September 12, 2025

FY2026 Initiatives: National Park Service

Project/Initiative	Account
Local Conformance & Zoning System Database (through 9/30/2025)	NPS – Economic Monitoring
Historic cemetery mapping and GPR surveys (through 9/30/2025)	NPS – Economic Monitoring
PDC supply and demand methodologies (through 9/30/2025)	NPS – Economic Monitoring
Annual Pinelands calendar	NPS – Economic Monitoring
PCIS 2.0 – application tracking and reporting database (beginning 10/1/2025 for FFY26)	NPS – Economic Monitoring

FY2026 Initiatives: National Park Service

Project/Initiative	Account
Water Quality Monitoring	NPS – Environmental Monitoring
Forest and pond water level monitoring	NPS – Environmental Monitoring
Annual Anuran surveys	NPS – Environmental Monitoring
Rare Snake Monitoring	NPS – Environmental Monitoring
Snake Fungal Disease and Adenovirus Monitoring	NPS – Environmental Monitoring
Box Turtle study	NPS – Environmental Monitoring

FY2026 Initiatives: Energy Conservation Reserve

Projects and Capital Expenditures

Electric vehicle charging station(s) and electrical upgrades

New and replacement energy efficient office equipment

Office composting supplies

Stormwater management: technical assistance

FY2026 Initiatives: Pinelands Conservation Fund



Project/Initiative	Account
4 th annual land preservation summit	Land Acquisition
Stewardship and monitoring report on PCF-funded properties	Land Acquisition
Acquisition funding round	Land Acquisition

FY2026 Initiatives: Pinelands Conservation Fund



Project/Initiative	Account
Corn snake research/study	Conservation Planning & Research
King Snake research/study	Conservation Planning & Research
Box turtle research/study	Conservation Planning & Research + NJDEP \$

FY2026 Initiatives: Pinelands Conservation Fund



Project/Initiative	Account
Septic pilot program	Conservation Planning & Research
Kirkwood-Cohansey water management rule implementation	Conservation Planning & Research
T&E Plants: data sharing agreement and protected plant list	Conservation Planning & Research
Permanent land protection data and reporting	Conservation Planning & Research

FY2026 Initiatives: Pinelands Conservation Fund

Project/Initiative	Account
Local Conformance & Zoning System (starting 10/1/2025)	Community Planning & Design
PDC Supply & Demand (starting 10/1/2025)	Community Planning & Design
PDC Bank administration, legislation, funding and rules	Community Planning & Design
Pinelands Infrastructure Trust Fund administration	Community Planning & Design
Affordable Housing: tracking and technical assistance	Community Planning & Design
CMP Amendments - Accessible Trails	Community Planning & Design



FY2026 Initiatives: Pinelands Conservation Fund

Project/Initiative	Account
<p>Climate Change initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IAC/Reports and Resilience Action Plans• BPU dual use solar program and CMP amendments• Research for CMP amendments• Climate Change curriculum (w/Stockton University)• Artificial turf research and recommendations• Implementation of any adopted NJDEP REAL rules (e.g., stormwater management, wetlands general permits, MOAs, etc.)	<p>Community Planning & Design</p>

FY2026 Initiatives: Pinelands Conservation Fund



Project/Initiative	Account
Pinelands Short Course(s)	Education & Outreach
World Water Monitoring Challenge	Education & Outreach
Pinelands Speakers Series	Education & Outreach
Bog and native species gardens maintenance; tree/plant identification	Education & Outreach
Visitors Center programs and supplies	Education & Outreach

FY26 Fenwick Manor Preservation Budget

	FY26 Anticipated
New Jersey Historic Trust Capital Grant	\$575,000
Fund Balance - Commission Match	\$575,000
Additional Commission Reserve Funding	\$45,000
FY26 State Appropriation	\$69,000
Total Expenditures	\$1,264,000

Fenwick Manor



FY26 Katie Fund Budget

	FY26 Anticipated
Rain Garden Supplies	\$100
Grounds Supplies - Plants, Mulch and Pavers	\$750
Pinelands Online Store - Merchandise and Supplies	\$3,500
On-Line Store Postage	\$200
Total Expenditures	\$4,550

FY2026 Ongoing Work: Operating Fund

Review and processing of development applications, including Letters of Interpretation, general permits, CAFRA permits, landfill closure assessments and resolution of violations

Review and processing of municipal master plans, land use ordinances and redevelopment plans

CMP amendments

- Adoption and implementation: application fees; expiration of waivers and CFs; PDC/RGA codifications; Black Run watershed redesignation
- Proposal: “gap” application and approval process

Memoranda of Agreement and Understanding

- Evesham Township - accessible trail
- South Jersey Transportation Authority – AC Airport development
- Monitoring of existing agreements
- Annual update on status and accomplishments

Local communications facility (cell tower) plan amendment

FY2026 Initiatives: Operating Fund

Project/Initiative
Legal advertising: implementation of new state law (website, archive, rules, etc.)
Escrow policies and procedures
AI data centers: research and identification of issues
Municipal training seminar(s)
Development/marketing of native seed mix(es) for landscaping
Cape May County MUA five-year waste flow report
WQMP amendments
Interpretations database
Grant research and identification of opportunities
Biosphere Region designation: 10-year report (?)

FY2026 Ongoing Work: Operating Fund

Litigation
Legislation tracking
Committee and Commission meeting support
Reports (annual and monthly)
Website and social media
OPRA forms and responses
Financial management (audits, budget, insurance, purchasing)
Personnel management (recruitment, training, evaluations, telework, payroll)
Facilities management (buildings and grounds)
Development/enhancement of databases, tracking systems and mapping (GIS)
User support, hardware/software, cyber security

FY2025 Initiatives: Operating Fund

Project/Initiative
Updated Personnel Policies
Updated Purchasing Policies
Review and recommendations related to State Health Benefits Program
Updated job descriptions
Emergency response policies and procedures
RFP for new payroll service
RFP for new outside accountant
Temporary relocation of staff due to Fenwick Manor rehabilitation
Transition report for new Administration
Unanticipated Projects



Questions?



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25-_____

TITLE: **Approving** With Conditions Applications for **Public Development** (Application Numbers 1985-0087.008, 1989-0573.012 & 2001-0084.005)

Commissioner _____ **moves and Commissioner** _____ **seconds the motion that:**

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission has reviewed the Public Development Application Reports and the recommendation of the Executive Director that the following applications for Public Development be approved with conditions:

1985-0087.008
Applicant:
Municipality:
Management Area:
Date of Report:
Proposed Development:

Egg Harbor Township Board of Education
Egg Harbor Township
Pinelands Regional Growth Area
September 19, 2025
Construction of a 46 space parking lot at the Alder Avenue Middle School;

1989-0573.012
Applicant:
Municipality:
Management Area:
Date of Report:
Proposed Development:

Stephen DiDonato, Mayor
Town of Hammonton
Pinelands Town
September 19, 2025
Recreational improvements to Hammonton Lake Park; and

2001-0084.005
Applicant:
Municipality:
Management Area:

Date of Report:
Proposed Development:

Galloway Township
Galloway Township
Pinelands Village
Pinelands Regional Growth Area
September 16, 2025
Two lot subdivision and no additional development.

WHEREAS, no request for a hearing before the Office of Administrative Law regarding the Executive Director’s recommendation has been received for any of these applications; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby adopts the Conclusion of the Executive Director for each of the proposed developments; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby determines that each of the proposed public developments conform to the standards for approving an application for public development set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57 if the conditions recommended by the Executive Director are imposed; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13A-5h, no action authorized by the Commission shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Commission has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Application Numbers 1985-0087.008, 1989-0573.012 & 2001-0084.005 for public development are hereby **approved** subject to the conditions recommended by the Executive Director.

Record of Commission Votes

AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*				
Asselta					Lohbauer					Rittler Sanchez				
Avery					Matro					Signor				
Buzby-Cope					Mauriello					Wallner				
Irick					Meade					Matos				
Lettman					Pikolycky									

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission

Date: _____

Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director

Laura E. Matos
Chair



State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

September 19, 2025

Kimberly Gruccio, Superintendent (via email)
Egg Harbor Township Board of Education
13 Swift Drive
Egg Harbor Township NJ 08234

Re: Application # 1985-0087.008
Block 2902, Lot 1
Egg Harbor Township

Dear Ms. Gruccio:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for the construction of a 46 space parking lot at the Alder Avenue Middle School. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its October 10, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure

c: Secretary, Egg Harbor Township Planning Board (via email)
Egg Harbor Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Egg Harbor Township Environmental Commission (via email)
Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development (via email)
Nick DiCosmo (via email)



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

September 19, 2025

Kimberly Gruccio, Superintendent (via email)
Egg Harbor Township Board of Education
13 Swift Drive
Egg Harbor Township NJ 08234

Application No.: 1985-0087.008
Block 2902, Lot 1
Egg Harbor Township

This application proposes the construction of a 46 space parking lot at the Alder Avenue Middle School located on the above referenced 44 acre parcel in Egg Harbor Township.

STANDARDS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed development for consistency with all standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The following reviews the CMP standards that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28)

The parcel is located in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area. The proposed development is a permitted land use in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area.

Wetlands Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.6)

There are wetlands located on the parcel. The proposed development will be located greater than 300 feet from wetlands.

Vegetation Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.23 & 6.26)

The proposed development will be located within a maintained grass area and a wooded area. The proposed development will disturb approximately 7,000 square feet of wooded lands. The proposed clearing and soil disturbance is limited to that which is necessary to accommodate the proposed development.

The Landscaping and Revegetation guidelines of the CMP recommend the use of grasses that are tolerant of droughty, nutrient poor conditions. To stabilize disturbed areas, the applicant proposes to

utilize grass species which meet that recommendation.

Stormwater Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.84(a)6)

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent with the CMP stormwater management regulations. To meet the stormwater management regulations, the application proposes to construct a stormwater infiltration basin.

Cultural Resource Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.151)

The Commission staff reviewed available information to determine the potential for any significant cultural resources that could be affected by the proposed development. Based on the lack of potential for significant cultural resources within the area to be developed, a cultural resource survey was not required.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant has provided the requisite public notices. Notice to the required land owners within 200 feet of the above referenced parcel was completed on August 1, 2025. Newspaper public notice was completed on July 24, 2025. The application was designated as complete on the Commission's website on August 1, 2025. The Commission's public comment period closed on September 12, 2025. No public comment was submitted to the Commission regarding this application.

CONDITIONS

1. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed development shall adhere to the plan, consisting of eight sheets, prepared by Remington & Vernick Engineers and dated as follows:

Sheets 1 & 4-6 - October 23, 2024; revised to March 13, 2025
Sheets 2, 3, 7 & 8 - October 23, 2024
2. Disposal of any construction debris or excess fill may only occur at an appropriately licensed facility.
3. Any proposed revegetation shall adhere to the "Vegetation" standards of the CMP. Where appropriate, the applicant is encouraged to utilize the following Pinelands native grasses for revegetation: Switch grass, Little bluestem and Broom-sedge.
4. Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.
5. All development, including clearing and land disturbance, shall be located at least 300 feet from wetlands.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed development conforms to the standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed development subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on October 7, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.



State of New Jersey
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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

September 19, 2025

Stephen DiDonato, Mayor (via email)
100 Central Avenue
Hammonton NJ 08037

Re: Application # 1989-0573.012
Block 3801, Lot 15
Town of Hammonton

Dear Mayor DiDonato:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for recreational improvements to the Hammonton Lake Park. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its October 10, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure

c: Secretary, Town of Hammonton Planning Board (via email)
Town of Hammonton Construction Code Official (via email)
Town of Hammonton Environmental Commission (via email)
Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development (via email)
Marianne Risley (via email)



PHILIP D. MURPHY
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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

September 19, 2025

Stephen DiDonato, Mayor (via email)
100 Central Avenue
Hammonton NJ 08037

Application No.: 1989-0573.012
Block 3801, Lot 15
Town of Hammonton

This application proposes recreational improvements to the Hammonton Lake Park located on the above referenced 35.57 acre parcel in the Town of Hammonton.

The proposed recreational improvements include construction of a 2,000 square foot playground, a 2,010 square foot maintenance building, four docks in Hammonton Lake, a 1,200 square foot pavilion and an 875 square foot restroom building. The application also proposes approximately 3,000 linear feet of a six foot wide concrete walkway and 1,000 linear feet of a ten foot wide paved bike path.

The application further proposes the paving of approximately 2,700 linear feet of an existing internal dirt circulation road to its existing width of fifteen feet, paving of 124 existing dirt parking spaces and a new paved parking lot containing 17 spaces.

The application also proposes the demolition of four small accessory recreational buildings that are 50 years old or older.

STANDARDS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed development for consistency with all standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The following reviews the CMP standards that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.27)

The parcel is located in the Pinelands Town of Hammonton. The proposed development is a permitted use in a Pinelands Town.

Wetlands Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.6 & 6.12)

There are two wetland areas located on the parcel. Both wetland areas are associated with Hammonton Lake. One wetland area is located along the easterly side of the 35.57 acre parcel. There is a second

narrow band wetland area located along the northerly side of the parcel. The CMP requires that no development shall be carried out within 300 feet of wetlands unless the applicant demonstrates that a lesser buffer will not result in a significant adverse impact on the wetlands.

There is extensive existing recreational development within 300 feet of the wetland area located along the easterly side of the parcel. An existing dirt internal circulation road and an existing 1,300 square foot pavilion are located approximately 20 feet from this easterly wetland area.

There is also extensive existing recreational development within 300 feet of the narrow band wetland area located along the northerly side of the parcel. An existing paved parking area and an existing daycare building are located approximately 30 feet from this wetland area.

Except for the four proposed docks, the proposed recreational improvements will be located no closer to wetlands than existing recreational development on the parcel. Based upon the extent and proximity of the existing recreational development to wetlands on the parcel, the proposed development will not result in a significant adverse impact on the wetlands.

The CMP (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.12) permits public docks (water dependent recreational facilities) in wetlands and the required buffer to wetlands provided certain CMP specified conditions are met. One of those conditions requires that the proposed development not result in a significant adverse impact to wetlands. There are approximately 16 existing docks in Hammonton Lake. The four proposed docks have a combined surface area of approximately 1,000 square feet. The proposed docks will extend a maximum of 40 feet into Hammonton Lake. Based upon the size of the proposed docks and their maximum extension of 40 feet into Hammonton Lake, the proposed docks will not result in a significant adverse impact to wetlands.

Threatened and Endangered Plant Species Protection Standard (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.27)

The CMP requires that no development shall be carried out unless it is designed to avoid irreversible adverse impacts on the survival of any local population of those plants designated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and those plants identified in the CMP as threatened or endangered (T&E).

There are known populations of Reversed bladderwort (*Utricularia resupinata*), a State and Commission endangered plant species, Humped bladderwort (*Utricularia gibba*), a Commission only threatened plant species, and Purple bladderwort (*Utricularia purpurea*), a Commission only threatened plant species, in Hammonton Lake. The three concerned bladderworts are aquatic plant species.

As part of a prior application to the Commission to apply aquatic herbicides to Hammonton Lake, the Commission required the establishment of a 6.5 acre Lake conservation area and a 6.2 acre Lake conservation area to protect the three concerned T&E plant species. The application of herbicide within the two Lake conservation areas is prohibited.

The four proposed docks will be located in the 6.5 acre Lake conservation area. Two of the concerned T&E plants, Reversed bladderwort (*Utricularia resupinata*) and Purple bladderwort (*Utricularia purpurea*), are located in the 6.5 acre Lake conservation area.

The four proposed docks have a combined surface area of approximately 1,000 square feet. The development of the four docks in the 6.5 acre (283,140 square foot) Lake conservation area is designed

to avoid irreversible adverse impacts on the survival of any local population of those plants designated by the NJDEP and those plants identified in the CMP.

Vegetation Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.23 & 6.26)

The proposed development will be located within existing developed and grassed areas. The proposed soil disturbance is limited to that which is necessary to accommodate the proposed development.

The Landscaping and Revegetation guidelines of the CMP recommend the use of grasses that are tolerant of droughty, nutrient poor conditions. The application proposes to utilize a seed mixture which meets that recommendation.

Water Quality Standard (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.83)

The existing and proposed development will be serviced by public sanitary sewer.

Stormwater Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.84(a)6)

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent with CMP stormwater management standards. To meet the stormwater management standards, the application proposes the construction of fifteen stormwater infiltration basins.

Cultural Resource Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.151)

The Commission staff reviewed available information to determine the potential for any significant cultural resources that could be affected by the proposed development. Based upon the lack of potential for significant cultural resources within the area to be developed, a cultural resource survey was not required.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant has provided the requisite public notices. Notice to required land owners within 200 feet of the above referenced parcel was completed on June 26, 2024. Newspaper public notice was completed on July 2, 2024. The application was designated as complete on the Commission's website on September 2, 2025. The Commission's public comment period closed on September 12, 2025. No public comment was submitted to the Commission regarding this application.

CONDITIONS

1. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed development shall adhere to the plan, consisting of 35 sheets (Sheet 2 omitted), prepared by Adams, Rehmann & Heggan Associates, Inc. and dated as follows:

Sheet 1 – undated; revised to September 11, 2025

Sheets 3-20 & 27-34 – June 19, 2024; revised to July 25, 2025

Sheets 21-26, 35 & 36 – June 19, 2024; revised to September 11, 2025

2. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed development shall adhere to the plan, consisting of 17 sheets, prepared by Taylor Design Group and dated as follows:

Sheets 37-52 – June 19, 2024; revised to July 25, 2025

3. Disposal of any construction debris or excess fill may only occur at an appropriately licensed facility.
4. Any proposed revegetation shall adhere to the "Vegetation" standards of the CMP. Where appropriate, the applicant is encouraged to utilize the following Pinelands native grasses for revegetation: Switch grass, Little bluestem and Broom-sedge.
5. Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.
6. Prior to the construction of any portion of the proposed development which will result in the disturbance of any wetland area, a Freshwater Wetland Permit shall be obtained pursuant to the New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act.
7. Appropriate measures shall be taken during construction to preclude sedimentation from entering wetlands and shall be maintained in place until all development has been completed and the area has been stabilized.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed development conforms to the standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed development subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on October 7, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.



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PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

September 16, 2025

Christian Johansen, Administrator (via email)
Galloway Township
300 East Jimmie Leeds Road
Galloway NJ 08205

Re: Application # 2001-0084.005
Block 346, Lot 15
Galloway Township

Dear Mr. Johansen:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for a two lot subdivision and no additional development of the above referenced 6.36 acre parcel in Galloway Township. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its October 10, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure

c: Secretary, Galloway Township Planning Board (via email)
Galloway Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development (via email)
Jennifer Heller (via email)



PHILIP D. MURPHY
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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

September 16, 2025

Christian Johansen, Administrator (via email)
Galloway Township
300 East Jimmie Leeds Road
Galloway NJ 08205

Application No.: 2001-0084.005
Block 346, Lot 15
Galloway Township

This application proposes a two lot subdivision and no additional development on the above referenced 6.36 acre parcel in Galloway Township. There is an existing 7,675 square foot senior center building and an existing 4,000 square foot recycling drop-off facility located on the parcel.

The parcel is located within Galloway Township's Village Commercial, Village Residential and Highway Commercial municipal zoning districts. This application proposes a 3.86 acre lot containing the existing senior center building and a 2.5 acre lot containing the recycling drop-off facility.

STANDARDS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed subdivision for consistency with all standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The following reviews the CMP standards that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.27 & 5.28)

The parcel is located partially in the Pinelands Village of Cologne (4.17 acres) and partially in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area (2.19 acres). The proposed subdivision is permitted in a Pinelands Village and a Pinelands Regional Growth Area.

Water Quality (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.83)

The existing senior center is serviced by public sanitary sewer.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The CMP defines the proposed subdivision as "minor" development. The CMP does not require public notice for minor public development applications. The Commission's public comment period closed on September 12, 2025. No public comment was submitted to the Commission regarding this application.

CONDITIONS

1. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed subdivision shall adhere to the plan prepared by Polistina & Associates, LLC, dated July 30, 2025 and revised to August 25, 2025.
2. Any other proposed development of the above referenced parcel (lots) requires completion of an application with the Commission and shall be governed by Galloway Township's certified land use ordinance and the CMP.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed subdivision conforms to the standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed subdivision subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
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Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on October 6, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25-_____

TITLE: Approving With Conditions an Application for Public Development (Application Number 1987-0345.019)

Commissioner _____ moves and Commissioner _____ seconds the motion that:

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission has reviewed the Public Development Application Report and the recommendation of the Executive Director that the following application for Public Development be approved with conditions:

1987-0345.019

Applicant: Lenape Regional High School District

Municipality: Medford Township

Management Area: Pinelands Regional Growth Area

Date of Report: September 17, 2025

Proposed Development: Installation of 13,744 square feet of artificial turf at Shawnee High School.

WHEREAS, no request for a hearing before the Office of Administrative Law regarding the Executive Director’s recommendation has been received for this application; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby adopts the Conclusion of the Executive Director for the proposed development; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission hereby determines that the proposed public development conforms to the standards for approving an application for public development set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57 if the conditions recommended by the Executive Director are imposed; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13A-5h, no action authorized by the Commission shall have force or effect until ten (10) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Commission has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Application Number 1987-0345.019 for public development is hereby approved subject to the conditions recommended by the Executive Director.

Record of Commission Votes

AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*					AYE NAY NP A/R*				
Asselta					Lohbauer					Rittler Sanchez				
Avery					Matro					Signor				
Buzby-Cope					Mauriello					Wallner				
Irick					Meade					Matos				
Lettman					Pikolycky									

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission

Date: _____

Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director

Laura E. Matos
Chair



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NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
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Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

September 17, 2025

Kara L. Huber, Business Administrator & Board Secretary
Lenape Regional High School District (via email)
600 Tabernacle Road
Medford NJ 08055

Re: Application # 1987-0345.019
Block 4704, Lot 3
Medford Township

Dear Ms. Huber:

The Commission staff has completed its review of this application for installation of 13,744 square feet of artificial turf at the Shawnee High School. Enclosed is a copy of a Public Development Application Report. On behalf of the Commission's Executive Director, I am recommending that the Pinelands Commission approve the application with conditions at its October 10, 2025 meeting.

Any interested party may appeal this recommendation in accordance with the appeal procedure attached to this document. If no appeal is received, the Pinelands Commission may either approve the recommendation of the Executive Director or refer the application to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing.

Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

Sincerely,

Charles M. Horner, P.P.
Director of Regulatory Programs

Enc: Appeal Procedure

c: Secretary, Medford Township Planning Board (via email)
Medford Township Construction Code Official (via email)
Medford Township Environmental Commission (via email)
Secretary, Burlington County Planning Board (via email)
Joseph Gray, P.E., C.M.E. (via email)
Jason Howell (via email)



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TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REPORT

September 17, 2025

Kara L. Huber, Business Administrator & Board Secretary
Lenape Regional High School District (via email)
600 Tabernacle Road
Medford NJ 08055

Application No.: 1987-0345.019
Block 4704, Lot 3
Medford Township

This application proposes installation of 13,744 square feet of artificial turf at Shawnee High School located on the above referenced 100.6 acre parcel in Medford Township.

The existing 57,600 square foot football field at Shawnee High School is comprised of artificial turf. This application proposes to replace existing grassed areas located at both ends of the existing football field with artificial turf. The existing grassed areas are currently utilized for track and field events.

STANDARDS

The Commission staff has reviewed the proposed development for consistency with all standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The following reviews the CMP standards that are relevant to this application:

Land Use (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28)

The parcel is located in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area. The proposed development is a permitted use in a Pinelands Regional Growth Area.

Wetlands Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.6)

There are wetlands located on the above referenced parcel. All development, including clearing and land disturbance, will be located at least 300 feet from wetlands.

Vegetation Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.23 & 6.26)

The proposed development will be located within the limits of the existing maintained grass areas. The proposed soil disturbance is limited to that which is necessary to accommodate the proposed development.

Stormwater Management Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.84(a)6)

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development is consistent with the CMP stormwater management standards. To meet the stormwater management standards, the application proposes to construct two stormwater infiltration basins beneath the proposed artificial turf.

Cultural Resource Standards (N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.151)

The Commission staff reviewed available information to determine the potential for any significant cultural resources that could be affected by the proposed development. Based upon the lack of potential for significant cultural resources within the area to be developed, a cultural resource survey was not required.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The applicant has provided the requisite public notices. Notice to the required land owners within 200 feet of the above referenced parcel was completed on May 28, 2025. Newspaper public notice was completed on June 1, 2025. The application was designated as complete on the Commission's website on August 27, 2025. The Commission's public comment period closed on September 12, 2025. The Commission received three oral public comments at its September 12, 2025 meeting regarding this application.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Public commenter: | Jason Howell opposed the application because artificial turf athletic fields contain "forever" chemicals that result in negative health effects. |
| Public commenter: | Jerry Henger expressed general opposition to the use of plastic materials, urging the pursuit of alternative solutions due to plastics' tendency to degrade over time and their harmful impact on both the environment and human health. |
| Public commenter: | Margaret Stephens expressed concern that the proposed artificial turf athletic field could pose risks to both human health and the environment. She advocated for the use of natural grass instead, emphasizing that, under the precautionary principle, such installations should not move forward until their potential impacts are thoroughly understood. |
| Staff response: | The Commission has previously approved numerous applications proposing the installation of artificial turf athletic fields in the Pinelands Area. The regulations contained in the CMP address land use and development within the Pinelands Area, but do not extend to or address the composition of construction materials for projects such as roads, buildings or athletic fields. Absent adoption of an amendment to the regulations contained in the CMP, the Commission does not have the regulatory authority to prohibit the use of any construction material that is not otherwise prohibited by the State of New Jersey or the United States. |

CONDITIONS

1. Except as modified by the below conditions, the proposed development shall adhere to the plan, consisting of eight sheets, prepared by CME Associates, and dated as follows:

Sheets 1, 3 & 4- March 20, 2025; revised to July 29, 2025

Sheet 2- July 29, 2025

Sheet 5- June 3, 2025; revised to July 29, 2025

Sheets 6, 7 & 8- March 20, 2025; revised to September 15, 2025

2. All development, including clearing and land disturbance, shall be located at least 300 feet from wetlands.
3. Disposal of any construction debris or excess fill may only occur at an appropriately licensed facility.
4. Prior to any development, the applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits and approvals.

CONCLUSION

As the proposed development conforms to the standards set forth in N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.57, it is recommended that the Pinelands Commission **APPROVE** the proposed development subject to the above conditions.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
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Lt. Governor

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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

PINELANDS COMMISSION **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

The Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91) provides an interested party the right to appeal any determination made by the Executive Director to the Commission in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91. An interested party is someone who has a specific property interest sufficient to require a hearing on constitutional or statutory grounds. Only appeal requests submitted by someone meeting the definition of an interested party will be transmitted to the New Jersey Office of Administrative Law for a hearing. Any such appeal must be made in writing to the Commission and received by the Commission's office no later than 5:00 PM on October 6, 2025 and include the following information:

1. the name and address of the person requesting the appeal;
2. the application number;
3. the date on which the determination to be appealed was made;
4. a brief statement of the basis for the appeal; and
5. a certificate of service (a notarized statement) indicating that service of the notice has been made, by certified mail, on the clerk of the county, municipal planning board and environmental commission with jurisdiction over the property which is subject of this decision.

Within 15 days following receipt of a notice of valid appeal, the Executive Director shall initiate the procedures for assignment of an Administrative Law Judge to preside at the hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq., and the procedures established by the Office of Administrative Law. The time, date and location of such hearing shall be designated by the Office of Administrative Law.



PHILIP D. MURPHY
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LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

Memorandum

To: Members of the Pinelands Commission

From: Susan R. Grogan 
Executive Director

Subject: Adoption of Rule Package #1

Date: October 1, 2025

At its meeting on September 26, 2025, the Policy and Implementation Committee reviewed public comments and staff recommendations for responses to comments on the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) amendments known as Rule Package #1. After consideration of the comments, the Committee recommended the proposed amendments be forwarded to the full Commission for adoption without change. Attached for review are the adoption notice that includes the prepared responses to comments, a resolution to adopt the amendments, the original rule proposal setting forth the amendments, and other supporting information.

Rule Package #1 amendments deal with various sections of the CMP including 1) application fees; 2) expiration of completeness documents; 3) Regional Growth Areas and the Pinelands Development Credit Program (PDC); 4) redesignation of the Black Run watershed in Evesham Township from Rural Development Area to Forest Area on the Land Capability Map; and 5) minor clarifications and updates.

The Commission authorized publication of the rule proposal on April 11, 2025, and the amendments were published in the New Jersey Register on June 16, 2025. Subsequently, a public hearing was held on July 15, 2025, and written comments were accepted through August 15, 2025. A total of 490 commenters submitted comments through written and/or oral testimony. Most comments supported redesignation of the Black Run watershed to Forest Area, either stating specific support of the rule (342) and/or support for added protection of the watershed and its resources (111). Other commenters offered more general support for the proposed amendments, protection of the Pinelands and the natural resources of the Pinelands. The remaining comments discussed application fees, expiration of completeness documents, and the PDC Program in Regional Growth Areas. A summary of the oral comments received is included in this packet. Due to the unwieldy size of the compiled written comments, they are attached as four separate documents to allow easier access.

In addition to the public comment period, staff sent notification by email or hard copy mail, to all applicants who received a Certificate of Filing after January 1, 2004, and have not subsequently submitted a local permit and received a letter from the Commission indicating that the local permit or approval may take effect. Those applicants were notified that the Certificate of Filing will expire within five years of issuance unless a local permit or approval is allowed to take effect by the Commission prior to the expiration date. If the Commission adopts the amendments, staff will also be sending notifications to applicants who received a Waiver of Strict Compliance prior to March 2, 1992 to alleviate an extraordinary hardship. The notifications will inform those applicants that the Waivers will expire within one year of the effective date of the adopted rule. Where a Certificate of Filing or Waiver of Strict Compliance expires, applicants would be required to re-apply for the proposed development before proceeding with applications for local permits or approvals.

Prior to the Policy and Implementation Committee meeting, the Governor's Proposed Rules Office provided authorization for the Commission to proceed with adoption of the amendments. If the Commission adopts these amendments at its October 10, 2025 meeting, publication of the adoption notice in the New Jersey Register would occur on January 5, 2026. Upon adoption, the amended rules will take effect.

Attachments:

- 1) Resolution
- 2) Adoption notice
- 3) Summary of oral comments and compiled written comments
- 4) Rule proposal (PRN 2025-063)
- 5) Maps of area to be re-designated



RESOLUTION OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

NO. PC4-25-_____

TITLE: To Adopt Amendments to the Comprehensive Management Plan in Accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (Fees; Certificates of Filing; Waivers of Strict Compliance; Land Capability Map; Regional Growth Areas; Pinelands Development Credits)

Commissioner _____ moves and Commissioner _____ seconds the motion that:

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5 of the Comprehensive Management Plan sets forth criteria for the designation of Pinelands management areas and depicts the boundaries of these areas on a Land Capability Map, adopted as part of the Comprehensive Management Plan at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.3(a)24; and

WHEREAS, updated information generated by and made available to the Commission concerning natural resources in the Black Run Watershed indicates that a change in the designation of an area in Evesham Township, Burlington County, from a Rural Development Area to a Forest Area is warranted; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is therefore amending the Land Capability Map adopted at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.3(a)24 in order to implement the above-described management area change; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has also identified the need to amend the Comprehensive Management Plan to adjust fees required for certain development applications so as to better reflect staff resources expended on the review of such applications; and

WHEREAS, the Commission also wishes to establish expiration provisions for certain Waivers of Strict Compliance, Certificates of Filing and other completeness documents issued by the Commission in order to ensure that proposed development is consistent with current Comprehensive Management Plan standards and reduce the confusion and administrative burden that results when applicants seek to rely on decades-old documents; and

WHEREAS, the Commission further wishes to update provisions related to development and land use in Pinelands Regional Growth Areas, as well as standards related to the allocation, use and severance of Pinelands Development Credits; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Director has submitted to the Commission proposed amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan to accomplish the above-described objectives in a manner that furthers the goals of the Comprehensive Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, on April 9, 2025, the Pinelands Commission authorized publication of the proposed amendments through adoption of Resolution PC4-25-11; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments were published in the June 16, 2025, New Jersey Register at 57 N.J.R. 1210(a); and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission held a public hearing to receive testimony on the proposed amendments on July 15, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission also solicited written comments on the proposed amendments through August 15, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission received both oral and written comments on the notice of proposed amendments; and

WHEREAS, at its September 26, 2025 meeting, the Commission’s Policy and Implementation Committee reviewed all public comments received on the proposed Comprehensive Management Plan amendments and the responses prepared by Commission staff; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission has reviewed the Notice of Adoption dated September 17, 2025 and all public comments received by the Commission on the rule proposal; and

WHEREAS, the Pinelands Commission desires to adopt the proposed amendments in accordance with the September 17, 2025 Notice of Adoption; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:18A-5h, no action authorized by the Commission shall have force or effect until thirty (30) days, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays excepted, after a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Commission has been delivered to the Governor for review, unless prior to expiration of the review period the Governor shall approve same, in which case the action shall become effective upon such approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The Commission hereby adopts the proposed Comprehensive Management Plan amendments as published in the June 16, 2025 New Jersey Register, and in accordance with the attached September 17, 2025 Notice of Adoption.
2. The Executive Director shall forward the amendments and minutes of this action to the Governor of the State of New Jersey and shall also forward these amendments to the United States Secretary of the Interior for review in accordance with Section 502 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978.
3. The amendments shall take effect as provided in the Pinelands Protection Act and upon publication in the New Jersey Register.

Record of Commission Votes

[illegible]

*A = Abstained / R = Recused

Adopted at a meeting of the Pinelands Commission

Date:

Susan R. Grogan
Executive Director

Laura E. Matos
Chair

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

PINELANDS COMMISSION

Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan

Fees; Hearing Procedures; Action on Applications; Certificates of Filing; Public Hearings; Waivers of Strict Compliance; Map Status; Standards for Development and Land Use in Regional Growth Areas; Pinelands Development Credits; Pilot Program for Alternate Design Wastewater Treatment Systems

Adopted Amendments: N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6, 4.3, 4.15, 4.34, 4.41, 4.70, 5.3, 5.28, 5.43, 5.46, 5.47 and 10.22

Proposed: June 16, 2025, at 57 N.J.R. 1210(a).

Adopted: _____ by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, Susan R. Grogan,
Executive Director

Filed: _____, as R. ____ d. _____, **without change.**

Authority: N.J.S.A. 13:18A-6j.

Effective Date: _____

Expiration Date: Exempt.

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission (Commission) is adopting amendments to N.J.A.C.

7:50-1, General Provisions, 4, Development Review, 5, Minimum Standards for Land Uses and Intensities, and 10, Pilot Programs of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

The amendments were proposed on June 16, 2025 at 57 N.J.R. 1210(a). The adopted amendments more specifically relate to (1) application fees for certain categories of development and Letters of Interpretation; (2) the expiration of completeness documents and waivers of strict

compliance; (3) Regional Growth Areas and the Pinelands Development Credit Program; (4) the redesignation of the Black Run watershed in Evesham Township, Burlington County, from a Pinelands Rural Development Area to a Pinelands Forest Area; and (5) minor clarifications and updates.

The Commission transmitted the notice of proposal to each Pinelands municipality and county, as well as to other interested parties, for review and comment. Additionally, the Commission:

- Sent notice of the public hearing to all persons and organizations that subscribe to the Commission's public hearing registry;
- Sent notice of the public hearing and provided a copy of the notice of proposal to all Pinelands counties and municipalities, and other interested parties;
- Placed advertisements of the public hearing in the four official newspapers of the Commission, as well as on the Commission's own webpage;
- Submitted the proposed amendments to the Pinelands Municipal Council, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:18A-7.f;
- Distributed the proposed amendments to the news media maintaining a press office in the State House Complex; and
- Published a copy of the proposed amendments on its webpage at www.nj.gov/pinelands.

Summary of Public Comments and Agency Response:

The Commission accepted oral comments on the June 15, 2025 proposal at the formal public hearing held in live video format (Zoom) before Commission staff on July 15, 2025, and written

comments by regular mail, facsimile, or e-mail through August 15, 2025. The public hearing was recorded in video format and is on file in the Commission's digital records.

A total of 490 people provided comments on the proposal either by oral testimony at the public hearing or in written comments.

The following individuals and organizations submitted comments:

1. Nicole Wall
2. Joseph DeFeo
3. JR
4. Stephanie Wisenauer
5. Megan Applegate-Wood
6. Jennifer Rubeo
7. Abigail Bierman
8. Valerie Chumbley
9. Sherrie Pearl
10. Nicole Jacobberger
11. Joan Ford
12. Christina Bartnikowski
13. Charles and Beverly Trueland
14. Karina Sandoval
15. George
16. Werner Raff

17. Darren Marcotte
18. Allison Coulter
19. Maria Escalante
20. Christine Mamas
21. Lori Chimento (submitted written and oral comments)
22. Carl Stone
23. Diane Fanucci
24. Thomas Pluck
25. Clark Perks
26. Michael Lippert
27. Julie Alway
28. Jonathan M. Korn
29. Ed Stahl
30. Jillian Lauk
31. Michael Curran
32. Mary Franklin
33. Nancy Carter
34. Carol Arrowood
35. Patricia Kiernan
36. Kandie Press
37. Dr. Howard Press
38. Brandon Tomei
39. Maxwell McClendon

40. Julia Pestalozzi
41. Carly DeGirolamo
42. David C. Patterson, Esq., Maressa Patterson, LLC
43. Steve Malitsky
44. Joshua Dossick
45. Phil Warren
46. Anonymous
47. Edward Ferruggia
48. Marty Lawler
49. Anthony Bombara
50. Dipankar Chatterjee
51. Rick Walsh
52. Deana Siri
53. Sara Pyle
54. Rich & Loretta Lipp
55. Gwenn Albrecht
56. Marcin Kuszynski
57. Robert Talewsky
58. Jeff Alken
59. Evelyn Perkowska
60. Jesmin Mitra
61. Richard Bernstein
62. Roberta Bachman

63. Richard Taylor, Friends of the Black Run Preserve
64. Steven Fenster
65. Tracey Doron (submitted written and oral comments)
66. Brittany Jacobsen
67. Lori Bonfrisco
68. Rachel Read
69. Katharine
70. Andreea Trifas
71. Bruce George Smith
72. Denise L. Lytle
73. Diana Chauca
74. Kathleen Goodman
75. Aimee Prendergast
76. Gia Wizeman
77. Don Vonderschmidt
78. Erica Jackson
79. Serena Jackson
80. Emily Darcy
81. Deborah Larsen
82. Juliana DePasquale
83. Stefania Mis
84. Alexander Bershadsky
85. Rebecca Canright

86. Nancy Reamy
87. Eric Baratta
88. Michael Rothmel
89. Kevin Papa (submitted written and oral comments)
90. Ellen Pedersen
91. Tyler Putman
92. Nicole Belolan
93. Kristie Desousa
94. Robert Paccione
95. Jessica Sautter
96. Alice Houseal
97. Christopher Norulak
98. Kathryn Newell
99. Margaret Harbison
100. Tara Rozanski
101. Darlene Saggiomo
102. Kim DeMeo
103. Jake Matro
104. Tim Batten
105. Thomas J. Carroll
106. Marina Linderman
107. Judith Leshner
108. Jennifer Mcloskey

109. Valerie Rey
110. Perry Capelakos
111. Anna Linderman
112. Christine Panagotopoulos
113. Mary DeLia
114. Erin Panagotopoulos
115. Nancy Raleigh
116. Jenna Romano
117. Alex Linderman
118. Stephanie Horton
119. Michael Pellegrino
120. Chantel Rivera
121. Linda Scholz
122. Sophia Wenzke
123. Mike Paglia
124. Emily Wheatley
125. Olesya Rosner
126. Julia McCay
127. Rajdeep Usgaonker
128. Chris Raab
129. Jen Wolfson
130. Amy King
131. Patrick Doyle

132. Evan Sharko
133. Diana Ryan
134. Autumn Haig
135. Dave Storms
136. Tina Cooper
137. Maegan Kuhlmann, New Jersey Sierra Club (submitted written and oral
comments)
138. Kyle Novoa
139. Jessica Vanliere
140. Jackie Greger, New Jersey Sierra Club
141. Vanessa Marrocco
142. Denise Brush
143. Jessica Bader
144. Lea Dixon
145. Denise Pietsch
146. Julia Gandy
147. Mary Peyerl
148. Leonard Morlino
149. Katie Prutzman
150. Alex Meder
151. Patrick Ditmars
152. Carolyn McCrath
153. Alaina Clune

154. Diane Herbert (submitted written and oral comments)
155. Bill Craig
156. Karen Greenfeld
157. Julie Maravich
158. Claire Joslyn
159. Dominic Sorrentino
160. Kate Brady
161. Jason Howell, Pinelands Preservation Alliance
162. Tom Kenny
163. Sheila Woznuknau
164. Trisha Beling
165. Lisa Berg (submitted written and oral comments)
166. Alaina Bromley
167. Dr. Amy Golden, Friends of the Black Run Preserve
168. William Skinner
169. Nika Svirinazichyus
170. Maureen Toman-Logan
171. Rose Taylor
172. Francesca Martelli
173. Jaylin Baez
174. Christy Steglik
175. Maria Pezzato (submitted written and oral comments)
176. Mandy Skalski

177. Amy Gonzalez
178. Teresa Mullen
179. Olga Koturlash
180. Susan Pettijohn
181. Ahnelizse Solwaczny
182. Rosemary Bernardi
183. Dan Donnelly
184. Vanessa Garcia
185. Jeanette York
186. Tracy Capistrand
187. For Every Child, Student Led Organization
188. Adam C. Warner
189. Brandon Weinberg
190. Joan Nemeth
191. Lidia
192. Christian Bifulco
193. Kaitlyn Buchler
194. Sarah Linehan
195. Shane Heeraman
196. Paul Bartholomew
197. Sandra Myer
198. Brooke C
199. Anne Harrison

200. Tara Turse
201. Brett Greenfeld
202. John Long
203. Don Werder
204. Susan Harrison
205. Sarah Thomasson
206. Nicquelle Denney
207. Lydia Smith
208. Wendy Canzanese
209. Anna Ferster
210. Angelica
211. Zephy Turturro
212. Randy Freed
213. Stephen Nuttall
214. Megan Manogue
215. Edwin Wurster
216. Kevin Kraft
217. Jennifer L. Kraft
218. Christian Corby
219. Brandon Lodriguss
220. Kalista Kraft
221. Sam Lyons
222. Ryan Rupertus

- 223. Anna Paccione
- 224. Mark Midura
- 225. Kollin Hughes
- 226. Nanette Wizov
- 227. Theodore Liu
- 228. Eric Penalver
- 229. Shaina Galley
- 230. Christopher McManus
- 231. Nathaniel Kott
- 232. Marcus Coia
- 233. Elyse Forcier
- 234. Amanda Germain
- 235. Colleen Keyser
- 236. Edward Drakhlis
- 237. Alexander J. Wenner
- 238. Brittney Shepherd
- 239. Willis Scott Moses
- 240. Martha Cannon
- 241. Marjorie Howley
- 242. Nia Diamond
- 243. Dominic Carrea
- 244. Shantic
- 245. Christopher Jardine

- 246. Amber Stone
- 247. Gianna
- 248. Erin
- 249. Beth Beetel
- 250. Sarah Beard
- 251. Racquel Pascucci
- 252. Ranica Arrowsmith
- 253. Sandy Koch
- 254. Siera Carusone
- 255. M
- 256. Heather Weiss
- 257. Kevin Gallardo
- 258. Michael S. Scaramella, Esq.
- 259. Kelsie Busch
- 260. Colleen DePietro
- 261. Ellen Fennick
- 262. Linda Hall
- 263. Hope Hall
- 264. Greg Smith
- 265. Bill Dreisbach
- 266. Jeffrey A. Monico
- 267. Lynda McDonough
- 268. Catherine Herbert

- 269. John Selvaggio
- 270. Valerie Fogleman
- 271. Sven Pfahlert
- 272. Bobbie J. Herbs
- 273. Sheila Nau
- 274. Beth Holt
- 275. Scott Schlafer
- 276. Cary
- 277. Ila Vassallo
- 278. Jennifer Cardoso
- 279. Tom Wall
- 280. Ann Ferruggia
- 281. Connie Evans
- 282. Deborah Kahn
- 283. Emily Iacovoni
- 284. David Taylor
- 285. Holly Widzins
- 286. Christine Todd
- 287. Regina Disco
- 288. Matt McCann, M.S. & Maya K. van Rossum, Delaware Riverkeeper Network
- 289. Rajeev Sharma
- 290. Kathy Emrich
- 291. Melanie Ryan

292. Britt Paris
293. Cheryl Fisher
294. Mike Kaliss
295. Darren Morze
296. Michelle Santore
297. Denise Longo
298. Jessica Franzini
299. Alison Goldberg
300. Colleen Mikolajczak
301. Debbie Bonfiglio
302. Lancelot Jeff-Macauley
303. Robert Miller
304. Richard Woodward
305. Jeanette Basaure
306. Andy Brzozowski
307. Janet Slaven
308. MaryAnne Cotugno
309. Kimberly Corrigan
310. James McGee
311. Louis Surovick
312. Sangita Kansupada
313. Nicolle Krieger
314. Jaime Austino

- 315. Jed Singer
- 316. Nancy Dippolito
- 317. Matt Purcell
- 318. Patrick Violante
- 319. Anne Krieger
- 320. Phyllis Garelick
- 321. John Volpa
- 322. Guy Romaniello
- 323. Vince Santore
- 324. Robert N. Spivack
- 325. Wendy Joan Spivack
- 326. Richard
- 327. Herman Bhasin
- 328. Eric Nelson
- 329. Josh Falcone
- 330. Kevin Krieger
- 331. Terry & David Bongiovanni
- 332. Martha Scull
- 333. Andrew Finn
- 334. Diane M. Foster
- 335. Mr. & Mrs. RP Wolfangel
- 336. Linda Marie Ross
- 337. Natalie Smith

- 338. Julie Gandy
- 339. Steve Rakoczy
- 340. Joseph Planamente
- 341. Lucille Planamente
- 342. Karen Kaplan
- 343. Jordan Mead
- 344. Lisa Swing
- 345. Norma
- 346. Harold Koenig
- 347. Kurt Williams
- 348. Robert Thomson
- 349. Donna & Tuck Marcum
- 350. Elena Grigoryeva
- 351. Joseph D. Beronio
- 352. Natalie Santore
- 353. Benjamin Spalter
- 354. Michael Natale
- 355. Zachary Dunn
- 356. Matt Adler
- 357. Mike Raleigh
- 358. Edward Doescher
- 359. Aimee K. Bentley
- 360. Darren Norgren

- 361. Ann Gillespie
- 362. Stacey Behm
- 363. Elizabeth Quinn
- 364. Sandra L. Perchetti
- 365. Jeanne Mugler
- 366. Shannon May
- 367. Maria T. Byrne
- 368. Richard W. Nixon
- 369. Lesley C. Kirsch
- 370. Gaetano D'Agostino
- 371. Ewa Tzaferos
- 372. Kelly Banks
- 373. Kei Drashner
- 374. Steven Freeman
- 375. Courtney Warner
- 376. Alexander Karpodinis
- 377. Gabrielle Hance
- 378. Alfredo
- 379. Patrick Hennessy
- 380. Thomas
- 381. Kyle Rosencranz
- 382. Maureen Brandau
- 383. Jasmine Starks

- 384. Jeff Greenberg
- 385. David Pavelko
- 386. Eileen Anglin
- 387. Jonathan Lahoda
- 388. Michael J. Calhoun
- 389. Jennifer Cipparone
- 390. Anthony R. Algieri
- 391. Brielle Andrews
- 392. Kristen Roskam
- 393. Ryan Grantuskas
- 394. Diane Hardies
- 395. Nicole Toth
- 396. Melinda Johnson
- 397. Debbie Polekoff
- 398. Edward P. Coyle, Jr.
- 399. John Summer
- 400. Rebecca Corson
- 401. Frederick Smith
- 402. Matthew Duffield
- 403. Michael
- 404. Darcy Oordt
- 405. Robert Cleary
- 406. Liz Prazeres

- 407. Brian Lipski
- 408. William
- 409. Victoria Crowell
- 410. Erica Newsham
- 411. Chris
- 412. Edward
- 413. Jessica Sharick
- 414. Brandon T. Rozelle
- 415. Karyn Tappe
- 416. Sean R. Saunders
- 417. Candace Dare
- 418. Alex Younger
- 419. Holly Jarrett
- 420. Eileen White
- 421. Ashley Cubbler
- 422. Max Weiss
- 423. Daniel Duffield
- 424. Julianne Germain
- 425. Sandra Doyle
- 426. Corey Therrien
- 427. Kyle Dillon
- 428. Ben
- 429. Justin Schlaffer

- 430. Such Patel
- 431. Jay Jones
- 432. Bab Adase
- 433. George Rayzis
- 434. Katie Gatto
- 435. Stephen Klem
- 436. Kristin Wyka
- 437. Erika Frick
- 438. Matthew Zaum
- 439. David Acampa
- 440. Jamie Zaum
- 441. Diane Holzschuh
- 442. Evan Holzschuh
- 443. Chelsea Ward McIntosh
- 444. Kenny
- 445. Alex Charnow
- 446. Victoria Agovino
- 447. Tiffany Shinn
- 448. Philip Andrianos
- 449. Logan Penna
- 450. Arthur Pisko, Jr.
- 451. Chris Toner
- 452. Alexander Houseal, Jr.

- 453. Kyle Sosnicki
- 454. Leonard Rusciani
- 455. Mark J. Matthews
- 456. Emily Kulpa
- 457. Max Perry
- 458. Elizabeth Chen
- 459. Sharon Bennett
- 460. John J. Parker
- 461. David L. Hall
- 462. Waverly Pross
- 463. Dara Purvis
- 464. Nichole Hall
- 465. Michael Logue
- 466. J. Curley
- 467. Ben Brotsker
- 468. William Cavagnaro
- 469. Nicholas Cox
- 470. Katharine Bolton (Kaplan)
- 471. Dennis M. Toft, Esq.
- 472. Alyssa
- 473. Dina Cirignano
- 474. Aslan Basol
- 475. Christine Bresser

- 476. Philip Falcone
- 477. Art Citron
- 478. Kathy King
- 479. Shannon Chau
- 480. Melanie Love
- 481. Austin Carrig
- 482. Amy Noble
- 483. Alexa Guarni
- 484. Rebecca Murray
- 485. Anakaren Michel
- 486. Kathleen Ross
- 487. Heidi Yeh, Pinelands Preservation Alliance
- 488. Erin Dennison
- 489. Gabrielle Mangiamele
- 490. Teresa Mullen

The Commission's detailed response to the comments is set forth below. The numbers in parentheses after each comment correspond to the list of commenters above.

Application Fees (N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6)

1. COMMENT: Two commenters expressed support for the proposed amendments to application fees. (187, 487)

RESPONSE: The Commission thanks the commenters for their support.

Redesignation of Black Run Watershed, Evesham Township, Burlington County (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.3)

2. COMMENT: A total of 342 commenters supported the amendments to the Land Capability Map redesignating the Black Run watershed from Rural Development Area to Forest Area, citing a wide range of reasons. Many expressed support for increased protection of the watershed's wildlife, habitats, water quality, and ecology. Some cited the need to protect the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer. Others highlighted the importance of protecting open space for health benefits and emotional well-being, or as a means to preserve the watershed and prevent development. (16, 17, 20 – 28, 36, 38, 40, 41, 43 – 47, 50 – 53, 56, 58 – 60, 62 – 66, 72, 77 – 80, 84, 85, 87 – 91, 94, 95, 98, 99, 102, 104, 105, 110 – 113, 115, 117, 118, 125, 127, 130 – 132, 135 - 184, 187, 188, 190, 193, 194, 197, 202 – 204, 206 – 211, 214 – 217, 219, 222, 223, 226, 228, 231, 232, 234 – 236, 239 – 243, 245, 249, 253, 254, 256 – 260, 262 – 268, 270 – 272, 274 – 280, 282 – 284, 287 – 300, 302 – 306, 309 – 331, 333, 335 – 338, 340 – 342, 345 – 369, 371 – 375, 377, 379 – 383, 385, 387, 389 – 392, 394 – 396, 398 – 410, 412 – 428, 430, 431, 435 – 440, 444 – 447, 449 – 454, 457, 458, 460, 462 – 464, 466, 467, 469, 470, 472 – 474, 476, 477, 479 – 481, 484, 485, 487, 490)

RESPONSE: The Commission appreciates the widespread support for the amendment.

Over the past two decades, the Commission has conducted extensive work to evaluate the Black Run watershed's ecological integrity and to identify appropriate measures to

protect its natural resources. The redesignation from Rural Development Area to Forest Area enhances resource protection by reducing development potential within the watershed. However, it should be recognized that the new Pinelands management area designation does not preserve lands in the watershed nor prevent all future development. It merely reduces the range and intensity of permitted land uses. Landowners may still pursue development of their properties consistent with the new Forest Area designation.

3. COMMENT: A total of 111 commenters opposed development in the Black Run watershed or the Black Run Preserve, with some expressing concern that the Black Run Preserve could be developed absent this rulemaking. (1- 19, 21, 29 – 33, 35, 37, 41, 48, 54, 55, 57, 61, 67 – 71, 73 – 76, 81 – 83, 86, 93, 96, 97, 100, 101, 103, 106 – 109, 114, 116, 119 – 122, 128, 129, 134, 175, 186, 191, 195, 196, 198 – 201, 205, 212, 221, 238, 244, 246, 251, 252, 255, 261, 269, 273, 281, 285, 286, 301, 307, 308, 334, 339, 343, 370, 376, 384, 386, 388, 397, 411, 429, 432, 433, 442, 443, 448, 455, 456, 459, 461, 465, 468, 486)

RESPONSE: This rulemaking does not relate to any specific development proposal, nor does it approve or prohibit development or result in the preservation of any land outright. Rather, it redesignates the Pinelands management area of the Black Run watershed from Rural Development Area to Forest Area, thereby imposing stricter land use regulations that reduce the intensity of permitted development. Owners of land within the affected area retain the right to pursue development projects that are consistent with the new Forest Area designation, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.23, and forthcoming amendments

to Evesham's land use ordinance that are required to implement the new management area designation.

Notably, close to 60 percent of the redesignated area, including the area known as the Black Run Preserve, is already permanently preserved through various deed restrictions. The Preserve itself remains subject to a deed restriction that requires protection of all lands in their natural, scenic and open existing state, with only low intensity recreational uses (e.g., hiking and nature study) permitted. All other development in the Preserve is not permitted, either under the prior Rural Development Area designation or the new Forest Area designation.

4. COMMENT: One commenter, identifying themselves as the owner of an undeveloped property in the Black Run watershed without public road access, expressed concern about the effect of the management area redesignation on potential development of surrounding parcels that could provide access if developed. They requested designated legal access to their property and the ability for their family to develop the property in the future or to sell it to another party to develop. (202)

RESPONSE: The identified property and the surrounding lots are not located in the Black Run watershed and are not included in the area being redesignated from the Rural Development Area to the Forest Area. The property and adjacent lots are located in Evesham Township's Rural Development-3 (RD-3) Zone, which is within a Rural Development Area. Residential development in the RD-3 Zone is permitted at a density of 3.2 units per acre, with clustering of residential units on one-acre lots required when

two or more units are proposed. The commenter's property and the surrounding lots may be developed consistent with the minimum standards of the CMP and Evesham Township's land development regulations. The Commission has no authority to grant easements across private lands. Finally, the CMP does not restrict the sale of property or other property transactions anywhere in the Pinelands.

5. COMMENT: Multiple commenters requested that Evesham Township rezone the Black Run watershed to a Forest Area zoning district to protect the watershed and halt development. (482, 483, 486, 488, 489)

RESPONSE: The Pinelands Protection Act and the CMP require Pinelands municipalities to adopt master plans and land development regulations consistent with the CMP and any amendment thereto. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 13:18A-12.b and N.J.A.C. 7:50-3.32, Evesham Township has one year from the effective date of this rule adoption to amend its ordinances to reflect the management area redesignation and submit implementing ordinance amendments, including a revised zoning map, to the Commission for review and certification. It must be noted that while the Forest Area designation effectuated by the CMP amendment and the required municipal implementing ordinances will enhance protection of the watershed, limited residential and nonresidential development will continue to be permitted. Elimination of future development potential can only be accomplished through acquisition and preservation of property or imposition of conservation easements or restrictions.

6. COMMENT: A total of 32 commenters expressed either general support for protecting the Pinelands Area and its resources or general opposition to development in the Pinelands. (15, 34, 49, 92, 123, 124, 126, 133, 185, 192, 213, 218, 220, 224, 225, 227, 229, 230, 233, 237, 247, 248, 250, 332, 334, 344, 378, 393, 434, 441, 475, 478)

RESPONSE: The Commission thanks the commenters for their support in protecting the resources of the Pinelands and affirms that this rulemaking advances the goals of the Pinelands Protection Act and the CMP to preserve, protect, and enhance the resources of the Pinelands.

7. COMMENT: One commenter said the amendments should have included trail management standards for Pinelands open spaces affected by the redesignation to maximize accessibility for non-destructive, inclusive recreation. (476)

RESPONSE: While not the subject of this rulemaking, the Commission recognizes that availability of accessible trails in the Black Run watershed and throughout the Pinelands Area is an important issue. The development of any new recreational trails in the Pinelands Area requires application to the Commission and must meet the CMP's minimum environmental standards. These standards appropriately focus on resource protection and currently do not include special provisions for accessible trails. The Commission will be evaluating appropriate amendments to the CMP related to this issue as part of a future rulemaking effort.

Expiration of Completeness Documents and Waivers of Strict Compliance (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.15, 4.34 and 4.70)

8. COMMENT: One commenter requested a grace period for applicants whose Certificate(s) of Filing will expire on the effective date of this rule adoption to allow submission of information necessary to advance their proposed development. (42)

RESPONSE: The Commission does not agree that an additional grace period is warranted. In all cases, the completeness documents (Certificates of Completeness and Certificates of Filing) affected by this rulemaking are at least five years old and, in most cases, significantly older. Upon the effective date of these rules, all completeness documents issued prior to January 1, 2004 will expire. Likewise, any Certificate of Completeness or Certificate of Filing that is five years old or older will expire unless it has been used to obtain a municipal or county approval and the Executive Director has determined that the local approval does not raise any substantial issues with respect to conformance with the CMP and the municipal land use ordinance. The Commission believes this provides sufficient time for any applicant to obtain at least one local approval that is consistent with the CMP, particularly given the fact that Certificates of Filing clearly identify any inconsistencies an application has with the CMP and often spell out how those inconsistencies may be resolved. The same is true of letters that the Commission issues in response to local approvals when they are determined to raise substantial issues with respect to one or more CMP standards.

The Commission has already completed extensive efforts to notify applicants whose completeness documents were issued since January 1, 2004 for proposed development where no local approvals have been submitted to the Commission and found consistent with the CMP. These individual notices advised applicants that their Certificates of Filing would expire upon adoption of these rules or otherwise provided a future expiration date based on the amendments. Affected applicants were thus provided with an opportunity to obtain and/or submit local approvals and permits to the Commission prior to the effective date of this rulemaking or expiration of the associated completeness document.

The Executive Director retains the ability to determine that a preliminary or final municipal or county approval may take effect because it does not raise a substantial issue with respect to the CMP (see N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.37 and 4.40). This review process provides an opportunity for consideration of the particular circumstances of a development application and associated local approval(s) submitted for Commission review. As an example, such circumstances could include the Commission's receipt of a local approval in the days leading up to the expiration of the associated Certificate of Filing. If the Commission's review determines that approval raises no substantive issues, meaning all CMP land use and environmental standards are met, the Executive Director has the authority to allow the approval to take effect even after the expiration date of the Certificate of Filing. A similar decision could be made for a local approval issued and submitted one or two days after the expiration date of a Certificate of Filing. The Commission believes current CMP procedures provide sufficient flexibility to appropriately address the situations that inevitably arise when expiration dates are

assigned. In other cases, particularly those where substantial issues related to an application and local approval have not been resolved, or CMP standards and/or municipal zoning have significantly changed in the years since a Certificate of Filing was issued, applicants and property owners will need to apply to the Commission for new Certificates of Filing.

9. COMMENT: One commenter said that a Certificate of Filing should remain in effect without expiration while applicants are pursuing local approvals or assembling property for a development project. (471)

RESPONSE: The Commission affirms its rationale for establishing a five-year duration for completeness documents and does not support broad extensions of the type described by the commenter. The purpose of these amendments is to reduce administrative burdens on Commission staff, local permitting agencies, and applicants, while ensuring that proposed development is consistent with current CMP and municipal standards by providing a more efficient and effective way of taking current environmental conditions of lands proposed for development into consideration. Allowing Certificates of Filing to remain in effect based on a subjective determination as to what constitutes “pursuit” of a local approval would be administratively burdensome to document and track, contrary to the intent of the amendments. Likewise, extending the life span of a Certificate of Filing to accommodate an applicant’s timeline for assemblage or acquisition of property would be extremely difficult to implement by regulation and likely impossible to track, given

that the Commission is generally unaware of and uninvolved in such property transactions.

It is also important to note that Certificates of Completeness and Certificates of Filing are not approvals. Rather, these documents signify that a complete application for development in the Pinelands Area has been submitted to the Commission and allow the applicant to move forward with obtaining required approvals from municipal and county permitting agencies. Completeness documents do not provide protection from changes to regulations in the CMP or at the State or municipal level. Expiration ensures that outdated completeness documents are not used to advance applications unlikely to meet current CMP standards. Over time, the likelihood of regulatory changes that could affect consistency of the proposed development with CMP, State, or municipal regulations tends to increase. The practical impact on affected applicants is that they must reapply to the Commission if they wish to pursue development of their property.

Under these amendments, a Certificate of Filing does not expire if the applicant obtains a local approval and the Commission issues a letter stating that the local approval can take effect. An applicant needs only one local permit or approval, followed by a Commission letter allowing it to take effect, to have the associated Certificate of Filing remain in effect in perpetuity. For example, after these amendments take effect, if the Commission issues a Certificate of Filing on May 1, 2026 indicating consistency with applicable standards, the applicant could use that Certificate of Filing to obtain municipal site plan approval on January 15, 2031. Upon timely receipt of that approval and assuming all standards continue to be met, the Commission would complete its review and issue a

letter within 15-30 days allowing the site plan approval to take effect. That effective local approval prevents the Certificate of Filing from expiring on May 1, 2031, and allows the applicant to continue to obtain any other necessary permits and approvals such as septic permits and building permits.

10. COMMENT: One commenter said that automatic expiration of Certificates of Filing constitutes a taking of property. (471)

RESPONSE: The Commission respectfully disagrees. The Commission's issuance of a Certificate of Filing does not confer or remove any ownership or development rights. As described above, it merely documents that an applicant has filed a complete application for development with the Commission, and it identifies any aspects of the proposal that are inconsistent with the CMP or municipal ordinances. Issuance of the Certificate of Filing allows the applicant to obtain necessary municipal or county approvals for the development proposal. If a Certificate of Filing expires in accordance with these amendments, the applicant or property owner will simply need to submit a new application to the Commission for review and processing.

11. COMMENT: One commenter expressed support for expiration of Certificates of Completeness documents and certain Waivers of Strict Compliance granted prior to March 2, 1992. (487)

RESPONSE: The Commission thanks the commenter for their support.

Regional Growth Areas and Pinelands Development Credits (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28, 5.43, and 5.46)

12. COMMENT: One commenter expressed support for the intent of the amendments at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3v but opposed allowing municipal discretion to exempt units made affordable to low- and moderate-income households from Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) requirements. Rather, they requested the rule contain an automatic exemption for such units and advocated that no PDCs be required for any inclusionary development projects, not just the affordable units. (471)

RESPONSE: The Commission appreciates the support for the amendment's intent but does not agree with and cannot implement the requested change. The Pinelands Protection Act (N.J.S.A. 13:18A; L.1979, c111, s. 14, eff. June 29, 1979. Amended by L.1987, c. 267, s.2, eff. Sept. 11, 1987) prohibits the Commission from considering the number of low- or moderate-income housing units as a criterion for approval, rejection, or conditional approval of any municipal master plan or land use ordinance (see N.J.S.A. 13:18A-12a). As such, the Commission does not have the authority to require municipalities to exempt any or all affordable or inclusionary housing units from the requirement to redeem PDCs.

However, the Commission has reviewed and certified municipal ordinances that exempt certain housing types, such as affordable units, from PDC redemption pursuant to the municipal flexibility provisions of the CMP. The amendments codify this successful

practice by expressly allowing municipalities to adopt such exemptions if they so choose and if specified requirements are met. These requirements are intended to ensure that a reduction in the overall number of PDC opportunities that a municipality is required to provide in its RGA zoning plan does not occur. Therefore, any exemption from PDC redemption requirements must be offset by increased and/or guaranteed PDC use elsewhere within the municipality's Regional Growth Area so that the necessary number of PDC opportunities is maintained.

Under these amendments, a municipality may adopt an ordinance exempting 100% affordable housing projects or inclusionary developments from PDC redemption, provided the municipal land use ordinance continues to accommodate the minimum number of required opportunities for the use of PDCs in the municipality's Regional Growth Area zoning plan. Over the past 10-15 years, Pinelands municipalities have accomplished these sorts of amended zoning plans by transferring PDC obligations to other lands or zones in the municipal RGA or adopting mandatory PDC requirements for development of market rate units in one or more zoning districts or redevelopment areas. Broad PDC exemptions for all units in inclusionary developments in one or more RGA zoning districts are likely to be challenging to accommodate. A more limited approach, such as through a redevelopment plan designed to permit a specific project on a specific parcel of land, has and will continue to be more feasible. However, all such proposals will have to be reviewed in the context of the municipality's overall Regional Growth Area plan.

13. COMMENT: One commenter expressed support for the amendments at N.J.A.C. 7:50-28, specifically those providing greater flexibility in the distribution of housing types zoned for in Regional Growth Areas, allowing PDC use for non-residential development, and allowing certain housing types, such as affordable housing, to be exempt from PDC requirements. (487)

RESPONSE: The Commission thanks the commenter for their support.

General Comments

14. COMMENT: One commenter said the rule proposal must be supported. (189)

RESPONSE: The Commission appreciates the commenter's support.

15. COMMENT: One commenter expressed support for a prohibition of deforestation. (39)

RESPONSE: The rulemaking does not expressly prohibit deforestation. However, the redesignation of the Black Run watershed from Rural Development Area to Forest Area reduces development potential and, consequently, the extent of deforestation associated with development. The amendments also include revisions to the PDC program, which incentivize the preservation of sensitive environmental and agricultural lands within the Pinelands.

Federal Standards Statement

Section 502 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. § 471i) called upon the State of New Jersey to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Pinelands National Reserve. This legislation set forth rigorous goals that the plan must meet but did not specify standards governing individual uses or topics, such as those covered by the adopted amendments. The plan was subject to the approval of the United States Secretary of the Interior, as are all amendments to the CMP.

There are no other Federal requirements that apply to the subject matter of the amendments being adopted.

Full text of the adoption follows:

displayed on the meter for a representative number of impulses. If the "hold" setting is employed after measuring an impulse, press the reset button to prepare for measurement of the next impulse. If [the] **there are numerous** impulses [follow each other rapidly as for example in a fusillade], it is not necessary to measure every impulse. [In such a case, measure as many impulses as feasible, estimate the number of impulses occurring, and the time period during which they occur.] **Impulsive sounds that are rapidly repetitive over a duration of one second or longer shall be measured as continuous airborne sound.**

vi. While making sound level measurements, observe whether the meter reading is increased by extraneous sound sources such as passing vehicles, aircraft flying overhead, barking dogs, etc. In such cases, postpone the sound level measurement until the extraneous sound has abated. [This shall not apply, however, if the source of the extraneous sound is located on the facility under investigation.]

vii. There are instances in which the sound propagation from a source is such that the sound level varies significantly with [altitude] **elevation**. In such cases, [connect the sound level meter to its microphone by a long cable and, after calibrating, elevate the microphone with a long pole or other means to measure the sound level at different altitudes.] **the investigator may also conduct measurements at the window or other appropriate elevation of the affected person. A field calibration check of the assembled sound measurement equipment shall be performed in accordance with (f)1ix below.**

viii. (No change.)

ix. [No less frequently than at one hour intervals during the investigation,] **Prior to beginning sound measurements**, and again at the conclusion of measurements, [calibrate] **perform a field calibration check** of the sound level meter, check the condition of the batteries, measure the wind speed, and record the results for inclusion in the Noise Measurement Report. If the sound level meter has drifted more than 0.5 dB off calibration, or if the sound level meter battery check procedure indicates that the battery charge is too low, or if the wind speed has increased to greater than 12 miles per hour (5.4 meters per second), then measurements taken since the previous calibration check shall be considered invalid. A meter with an electronic display showing a "low battery" indication may continue to be operated for the duration specified in the manufacturer's manual without invalidating the previous readings, if a subsequent calibration check is satisfactory. [Wind gusts over 12 miles per hour (5.4 meters per second) that begin after at least one hour of measurements shall not invalidate measurements already collected.] **Periodic wind gusts greater than 12 mph shall not invalidate measurements taken during periods when sustained wind speeds remain at or below 12 mph.**

2.-3. (No change.)

7:29-[2.10]2.8 Calculations

(a) Corrected source sound level: Correct the total sound level for the neighborhood residual sound in accordance with the procedure for using Table 1 to determine the sound level from the sound source of interest. If the difference between the total sound level and the neighborhood residual sound level is greater than 10 dB, no correction is necessary.

TABLE 1

THE DETERMINATION OF SOURCE SOUND LEVEL FROM TOTAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDUAL SOUND MEASUREMENTS

A Sound Level Difference (Decibels)	B Correction Factor (Decibels)
0.5	9.6
1	[7] 6.9
2	[4] 4.3
3	3
4	[1.8] 2.2
5	[1.6] 1.7

A Sound Level Difference (Decibels)	B Correction Factor (Decibels)
6	[1.2] 1.3
7	[1] 1.0
8	[0.75] 0.7
9	0.6
10	0.5
Greater than 10	0.0

Procedure for Using Table 1 (No change.)

7:29-[2.11]2.9 Qualifications of enforcement personnel

For the purposes of this chapter, an employee representing an authorized enforcement agency shall be considered qualified to [make noise] **conduct sound** measurements and enforce [the State's Noise] rules] **this chapter** or a municipal noise ordinance approved by the Department,[as the case may be] if such person completes a noise certification course, and is recertified, at least once every two years, at a **Department-approved** noise certification course [which] that is offered by [the Department of Environmental Sciences of Cook College,] Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, or another **Department-approved institution, found at the Department's noise control website (currently at www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/ncp.html).** The Department [of Environmental Protection] shall provide an extension for recertification on a case-by-case basis beyond the [two year] **two-year** period for a person until the next time the recertification course is offered. Such requests shall be made, in writing, **by submitting a Department-approved form, available from the Department's noise control website**, to the Department at least 10 working days prior to the expiration of the person's certification. **The Department will consider, on a case-by-case basis, a request for an extension for recertification that is submitted fewer than 10 working days prior to the expiration of the person's certification, if the person presents documentation of an emergency or extenuating circumstance that prevented timely submission of the request. If a scheduled recertification course is canceled, the person's certification shall automatically be extended, without making a request to the Department, until the next time the recertification course is offered.**

(a)

PINELANDS COMMISSION

**Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan
Fees; Hearing Procedures; Action on Applications;
Certificates of Filing; Public Hearings; Waivers of
Strict Compliance; Map Status; Standards for
Development and Land Use in Regional Growth
Areas; Pinelands Development Credits; Pilot
Program for Alternate Design Wastewater
Treatment Systems**

**Proposed Amendments: N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6, 4.3, 4.15,
4.34, 4.41, 4.70, 5.3, 5.28, 5.43, 5.46, 5.47, and
10.22**

Authorized By: New Jersey Pinelands Commission, Susan R. Grogan, Executive Director.

Authority: N.J.S.A. 13:18A-6.j.

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to calendar requirement.

Proposal Number: PRN 2025-063.

A **public hearing** concerning this notice of proposal will be held virtually on July 15, 2025, at 9:30 A.M.

A link to the virtual public hearing and more information about the live hearing will be provided on the Pinelands Commission's (Commission) website at <https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/home/hearings/>.

Submit written comments by regular mail, facsimile, or email by August 15, 2025, to:

Susan R. Grogan, P.P., AICP
Executive Director
Pinelands Commission
PO Box 359
New Lisbon, NJ 08064
Facsimile: (609) 894-7330
Email: planning@pinelands.nj.gov or through the Commission's website at <http://nj.gov/pinelands/home/contact/planning.shtml>

The name and email address of the commenter must be submitted with all public comments. Commenters who do not wish their names and affiliations to be published in any notice of adoption subsequently prepared by the Commission should so indicate when they submit their comments.

The agency proposal follows:

Summary

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission ("Pinelands Commission" or "Commission") proposes to amend N.J.A.C. 7:50-1, General Provisions, 4, Development Review, 5, Minimum Standards for Land Uses and Intensities, and 10, Pilot Programs of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The CMP has been guiding land use and development activities in the Pinelands since it took effect on January 14, 1981. Since that time, the CMP has been amended many times, most recently in December 2023, through a set of amendments related to water management, which strengthened the ecological protections of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer (See 55 N.J.R. 247(a)).

The proposed amendments relate to: (1) application fees; (2) the expiration of completeness documents and waivers of strict compliance; (3) Regional Growth Areas and the Pinelands Development Credit Program; (4) the redesignation of the Black Run watershed in Evesham Township, Burlington County, from a Pinelands Rural Development Area to a Pinelands Forest Area; and (5) minor clarifications and updates.

The proposed amendments were discussed and reviewed at multiple public meetings of the Commission's CMP Policy & Implementation Committee between 2022 and 2024. With respect to the proposed amendment to the Pinelands Land Capability Map, a more significant outreach effort was undertaken over an extended period of time. The rulemaking was the subject of discussion at numerous public Policy & Implementation Committee meetings in 2015 and 2016, during which time a series of meetings were also held with Evesham Township officials and representatives of the major property owner in the affected area. A full rulemaking was drafted at that time, but ultimately did not proceed. In more recent years, Commission staff drafted a simpler rulemaking and met with Evesham Township representatives, neighboring residents, legislators, and the non-profit organization charged with overseeing the existing Black Run Preserve. All indicated a strong interest in providing increased protection to the area.

If requested, Commission staff will provide a presentation on the proposed amendments at a public meeting of the Pinelands Municipal Council (PMC). The PMC, created by the Pinelands Protection Act, is made up of the mayors of the 53 municipalities in the Pinelands Area, or their designees. The PMC is empowered to review and comment upon changes to the CMP proposed by the Commission and advises the Commission on matters of interest regarding the Pinelands. The PMC has unfortunately been inactive since late 2022, but could play an important role in the review of these and any future proposed CMP amendments.

Application Fees

Since April 2004, the Commission has assessed application fees as a means to cover a portion of the costs associated with the review of development applications and related services that support the application process (see 36 N.J.R. 1804(a)). The Commission previously amended its fee schedule in June 2006 (see 38 N.J.R. 2708(a)), December 2008 (see

40 N.J.R. 6805(a)), March 2018 (see 50 N.J.R. 969(a)), and December 2023 (see 55 N.J.R. 247(a)).

A series of amendments to the Commission's application fee requirements are now being proposed to better align fees with the staff resources expended on development applications involving: the resolution of an existing, identified violation of the CMP; a Waiver of Strict Compliance to alleviate an extraordinary hardship; or a Letter of Interpretation. The proposed fee increases are reflected in the proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(e), (g), and (h).

Applications Involving CMP Violations

New rules at N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(e)3 and 4 are proposed to address staff resources expended on the review of development applications that are submitted, in whole or in part, to resolve an identified violation of the CMP. Proposed new paragraph (e)3 will assess an additional fee of \$1,000 when a major development application is submitted, in whole or in part, to resolve an identified violation. Proposed new paragraph (e)4 will assess an additional fee of \$500.00 when a minor development application is submitted, in whole or in part, to resolve an identified violation. The terms "development, major" and "development, minor" are defined at N.J.A.C. 7:50-2.11. Major development means any subdivision of land into five or more lots, construction of five or more dwelling units, nonresidential development on a site of more than three acres in size, or grading, clearing, or disturbance of an area in excess of 5,000 square feet. In both cases, this new fee is to be assessed in addition to the application fee already required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(a), (b), (c), (d), or (f).

Violations of the CMP most often involve development that has occurred on a parcel in the Pinelands Area without prior application to the Commission or local approval by the relevant county or municipality. Such development typically consists of clearing, expansion of nonresidential buildings or structures (for example, parking lots), or construction of accessory structures. A violation may also occur when development on a parcel is not in accordance with a previously approved site plan, leading to inconsistencies with the approved stormwater management plan or maintenance of required buffers to wetlands. When such a violation is identified, the landowner is usually required to submit a development application to the Commission for the development that has occurred without approval. Existing violations of the CMP are often identified during the review of a separate and subsequent development proposal for which an application is submitted after the unpermitted development activity has occurred. In such cases, the applicant is required to amend their development application to resolve the violation.

The fee increase is proposed to recognize the additional staff resources required to identify, evaluate, and resolve violations. Multiple site visits are often necessary, as are meetings with applicants, their representatives, and relevant county and municipal officials. Staff must often interpret aerial photography, spanning decades, to identify the extent of violations and the timeframe within which they occurred. In some cases, staff are asked to appear in court in support of municipal enforcement actions. Applicants are often required to design and submit restoration plans that the Commission must review and sometimes monitor. The increased fee is in no way intended to be punitive. It is merely a way of ensuring that fees for various types of development applications appropriately correspond to the staff resources required to review and process them.

Pursuant to the current rules, an applicant, regardless of whether the application involves a violation, is assessed an application fee based on the application fee provisions at N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(a), (b), (c), (d), or (f), as well as the characteristics of the proposed development. This may include any existing development included in the application to resolve an identified violation. For example, if an applicant constructed an accessory structure or cleared an acre of land without prior application to the Commission or approval by the relevant municipality, the applicant would be assessed the same fee as an applicant that applied and received approvals prior to the construction or clearing. Pursuant to the proposed amendment, the application to resolve the violation would be assessed an additional fee of \$500.00 or \$1,000, depending on the size and intensity of the development.

In the 10-year period between 2013 and 2023, there were approximately 1,000 CMP violations reported, of which approximately 650 were pursued by the Commission. The majority occurred on privately

owned parcels. Less than 10 percent were associated with public development, which includes State, county, and municipal lands and projects. Of the 650 violations pursued, 75 percent met the definition of minor development.

The fees assessed for minor development applications involving a violation were generally less than \$500.00 per application. The proposed amendment would require an additional \$500.00 when a minor development application is submitted, in whole or in part, to resolve an identified violation.

Less common are substantial violations involving extensive clearing, soil disturbance, or the construction of new or expanded nonresidential structures at a scale that meets the definition of major development. Examples in recent years include installation of storage buildings, establishment of a composting facility, and expansion of active recreational facilities. In these cases, an application to resolve the violation would be assessed an additional fee of \$1,000.

Given the staff time and effort necessary to review and resolve violations, even those characterized as minor development, the Commission believes these increased fees are justified and appropriate.

Recodified N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(e)6 is proposed for amendment to maintain the existing application fee cap of \$25,000 for applications submitted by a public agency and \$50,000 for all other applications. However, the rule is amended to allow those caps to be exceeded if the application involves an existing violation. Pursuant to the proposed amendment, if an assessed application fee reaches the established fee cap and the application for development involves the resolution of an existing violation, then the proposed rule would allow the cap to be exceeded by as much as \$500.00 for a minor development application and by as much as \$1,000 for a major development application.

The existing rule at N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(g) provides an application fee cap of \$500.00 for applications submitted by a qualified tax-exempt religious association or corporation or a qualified tax-exempt non-profit organization. In similar fashion to the amendment proposed at paragraph (e)6, an amendment is proposed at subsection (g) to allow the established cap to be exceeded if the application involves the resolution of an existing violation. Pursuant to the proposed amendment, if an assessed application fee reaches the \$500.00 fee cap and the application for development involves the resolution of an existing violation, then the proposed rule would allow the cap to be exceeded by as much as \$500.00 for a minor development application and by as much as \$1,000 for a major development application.

Applications Requiring a Waiver of Strict Compliance

The CMP provides procedures and standards by which the Commission is authorized to waive strict compliance with the standards in the CMP (see N.J.A.C. 7:50-4 Part V). If a development proposal is not consistent with all applicable requirements of the CMP, it cannot be carried out without a valid Waiver of Strict Compliance. Waivers granted pursuant to these provisions are intended to provide relief where strict compliance with the CMP will create an extraordinary hardship or where the waiver is necessary to serve a compelling public need.

Proposed new N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(e)2 addresses staff resources expended on the review of development applications requiring a Waiver of Strict Compliance to alleviate an extraordinary hardship. The proposed rule will assess an additional fee of \$250.00 for any application submitted that requires such a waiver. This lump sum fee is assessed in addition to any applicable fee for development assessed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(a), (b), (c), (d), or (f).

The proposed fee is necessary to recognize the additional staff resources required to review and process waiver applications seeking to alleviate an extraordinary hardship in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.63. All such applications involve additional staff resources beyond those that are required of a typical development application, as staff must: ensure that the applicant has properly met all notice requirements provided by the CMP; schedule an opportunity for public comment; review and consider any submitted public comment; draft a report and resolution, along with a recommendation for the Commission's consideration; and schedule the waiver application for final consideration at a Commission meeting. These procedural obligations are in addition to the substantive review that must also occur, requiring historical research

related to ownership of the parcel and contiguous lands and determining the minimum buffers that must be maintained to one or more wetlands areas on a parcel.

The new \$250.00 fee is not expected to impact many applicants. Over the past 10 years, the Commission has approved an average of just three extraordinary hardship waiver applications per year. The increased fee is, therefore, likely to impact only a small number of applicants and is not expected to generate a significant increase in application fee revenue. The proposed fee is also quite modest, in recognition of the fact that waivers to alleviate an extraordinary hardship are almost always associated with an application to develop only one single-family dwelling unit.

It should be noted that, for any waiver granted to alleviate an extraordinary hardship that has expired in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.70, the applicant must resubmit an application for a new waiver if they wish to pursue the development. Such an application will be assessed a fee in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6, including the additional \$250.00 fee if the application still requires a waiver.

If an applicant is seeking a waiver to alleviate an extraordinary hardship for the sole purpose of demonstrating that the parcel is of "limited practical use" pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-9.2(a), the proposed rule will not require the applicant to pay the additional \$250.00 fee. The Limited Practical Use Land Acquisition Program (LPU Program) offers owners of small properties with a limited development potential an opportunity to sell their properties to the State. The regulations associated with the LPU Program were adopted by the Commission in 1995 and are set forth in the CMP at N.J.A.C. 7:50-9. To be eligible for an acquisition pursuant to the LPU Program, the property must be less than 50 acres in size and the property owner may not own 50 or more acres total anywhere in the Pinelands National Reserve. In addition, the Pinelands Commission must have denied an application requesting a waiver for the development of a residential unit on the property. While the staff does devote time and attention to the review and processing of such waiver applications, it is typically somewhat less extensive. More importantly, the Commission does not want to discourage property owners interested in pursuing State acquisition through the LPU Program.

While the Commission may also approve waivers based upon a compelling public need in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.64, no additional fee is proposed for that type of waiver. This latter category of waiver generally involves large, nonresidential development that, pursuant to the existing rules, are assessed an application fee that appropriately aligns with staff resources spent on the review and processing of such applications.

Applications Requesting a Letter of Interpretation

Letters of Interpretation (LOI) are issued by the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4, Part VI, at the request of an applicant. LOIs may be requested for any standard set forth in the CMP and, upon issuance by the Commission, are valid for five years. The majority of LOI applications involve requests for an allocation of Pinelands Development Credits (PDCs) to a particular parcel. Most other LOI applications relate to the extent of wetlands or wetlands buffer areas on specific parcels.

New rules at N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(h)2 and 3 are proposed to establish distinct fees for wetlands-related Letters of Interpretation (LOIs) in order to better reflect the amount of staff time and effort typically required for these types of applications. The existing rules at N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(h) assess a fee of \$250.00 for all LOIs, except there is no fee for an initial LOI involving the allocation of PDCs or an amended PDC LOI after a period of five years. The proposed rule at paragraph (h)2 increases the application fee to \$1,000 for an LOI that determines the presence or absence of wetlands or wetlands transition areas on a parcel. The proposed rule at new paragraph (h)3 increases the application fee to \$1,000, plus \$100.00 per acre of a parcel, or portion thereof, for an LOI that verifies wetlands boundaries or determines the extent of any required wetlands transition area. As an example, an application for an LOI as to the extent of wetlands or required buffers on a parcel of 25.3 acres would be assessed a fee of \$1,000, plus \$2,600 for a total of \$3,600. While such an increase is not insignificant for the applicant, it appropriately reflects the need for site visit(s), fieldwork, and sometimes complex analysis to determine multiple wetlands buffer requirements, given the size of the parcel.

It should be noted that the proposed rule includes a cap on the fee for an LOI involving the extent of wetlands or required wetlands buffer areas. In keeping with existing fee caps at recodified N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(e)6, the maximum fee will be \$25,000 if the LOI applicant is a public entity and \$50,000 if the applicant is a private landowner or development. While it is unlikely that there will be many wetlands-related LOI applications on parcels large enough to reach these caps, the Commission, nevertheless, feels that it is appropriate to consider and address that possibility in the rule.

As noted above, these fee increases are proposed to better reflect staff resources expended on the review and processing of applications requesting LOIs where extensive fieldwork and analysis by staff is required. The increased fees are consistent with those currently assessed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at N.J.A.C. 7:7A-18.1(f) for similar types of LOIs. The Commission believes the DEP's LOI fee structure adequately and appropriately reflects the staff resources expended on these types of applications. A 1993 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Commission and the DEP provides additional justification for the Commission's decision to align its LOI fees with the DEP's fees for similar LOIs. Pursuant to the MOA, the DEP delegated to the Commission, its responsibility to fulfill the requirements of the Section 404 program of the Federal Clean Water Act and to establish a framework for the protection of wetlands within the Pinelands Area. Through this agreement, the Commission assumed responsibility for issuing LOIs to verify the presence or absence of wetlands and to verify wetlands boundaries in the Pinelands Area.

Recodified N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(h)4 is proposed for amendment to raise the application fee for all LOIs that do not involve wetlands or the allocation of PDCs from \$250.00 to \$500.00. Such LOIs could involve the clarification or interpretation of any provision of the CMP, such as whether an existing use qualifies for the provisions at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.2 that permits expansion or changes to nonconforming uses. While relatively few such LOI applications are submitted to the Commission, they can require significant staff resources to research and analyze. The increased fee remains quite modest, while better reflecting the necessary level of staff time and effort.

There will continue to be no fee for an initial PDC LOI application or an amended PDC LOI application submitted five years after the prior LOI was issued. Likewise, the application fee for an amended PDC LOI requested within five years of issuance of the original LOI will remain \$250.00, plus \$6.25 per acre of land for which the amended LOI is requested.

The fee increase is not expected to generate a significant increase in revenue, because the Commission receives and processes relatively few non-PDC LOI applications each year. Since January 2014, the Commission has received approximately 35 non-PDC LOI applications, which equates to an average of four per year. All but two of these applications requested LOIs related to wetlands, either for the presence or absence of wetlands or for confirmation of the extent of wetlands and required wetlands buffer areas. Each applicant paid a fee of just \$200.00 or \$250.00 based on the CMP regulations in effect at the time of application. Pursuant to the proposed rules, the required fee would be a minimum of \$500.00, with additional fees assessed for those LOIs seeking confirmation of wetlands delineations or determination of wetlands buffer requirements. While clearly not a major component of the Commission staff's application review workload, the Commission believes it is important that application fees better reflect staff resources expended on applications requesting these types of LOIs.

Expiration of Completeness Documents and Waivers of Strict Compliance

A series of amendments are proposed to establish expiration provisions for completeness documents and certain Waivers of Strict Compliance. The purpose of these amendments is to reduce the administrative burden imposed on Commission staff, local permitting agencies, and applicants, while also ensuring that any proposed development is consistent with current CMP standards and taking into consideration current environmental conditions of lands proposed for development. The proposed changes are reflected at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.15, 4.34, and 4.70.

Expiration of Completeness Documents

The CMP provides procedures and standards for the issuance of completeness documents referred to as Certificates of Completeness and Certificates of Filing. No county or municipal permitting agency is permitted to deem any application for development in the Pinelands Area complete unless it is accompanied by either a Certificate of Completeness or a Certificate of Filing issued by the Executive Director of the Commission.

A Certificate of Completeness, issued in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.15, verifies that a complete application for development has been filed with the Commission for development in a county or municipality whose master plan and land development ordinances *have not been* certified by the Commission. Prior to December 1994, a Certificate of Completeness was referred to in the CMP as a Certificate of Compliance (see 26 N.J.R. 4795(a)). Certificates of Compliance are incorporated in the statistics provided below and are treated as Certificates of Completeness in the existing rules and as amended in this rulemaking.

A Certificate of Filing, issued in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.34, verifies that a complete application for development has been filed with the Commission for development in a county or municipality whose master plan and land development ordinances have been certified by the Commission. As of 2013, the master plans and land use ordinances of all counties and municipalities in the Pinelands Area have been certified in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-3 Parts II and IV.

Once an applicant has received a completeness document issued by the Commission, they may proceed to the local permitting agency to apply for any necessary county or municipal approvals. Pursuant to the existing rules at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.19, 4.22, 4.37, and 4.40, Commission staff must review any preliminary or final local development approval to ensure that the approved development conforms to the minimum standards of the CMP and the relevant certified local land development ordinance. This review process ensures that any previously identified inconsistencies communicated in the completeness document have been resolved and that any other modifications to the proposal since the completeness document was issued are consistent with current CMP standards. As part of that review, staff must also consider whether the proposed development is consistent with any CMP standards that have been amended since the issuance of the completeness document. This aspect of the review can be substantial, depending on the time elapsed since the completeness document was issued, the scope of the project, and whether any significant changes to the environmental conditions of the land proposed for development have occurred.

In the past 15 years alone, significant amendments have been made to CMP standards regulating onsite wastewater treatment systems, residential clustering, stormwater management, and water management. Amendments to CMP standards often render the application review that preceded the issuance of the completeness document obsolete. The more time that has elapsed between the issuance of a completeness document and the local approval, the greater the chance that the proposed development no longer meets current CMP standards. In many cases, decades may have passed, properties may have been sold multiple times, and applicants and local permitting agencies are unaware that a proposed development project is no longer meeting the current standards of the CMP or the municipal land use ordinance.

If Commission staff reviews a local development approval and finds that the approved development does not conform with the minimum standards of the CMP and the provisions of the certified local land use ordinance, then the local approval is called up for review pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.38 or 4.42. This triggers the need to schedule and hold a public hearing, for Commission staff to compile a report to be submitted to the Pinelands Commission, and for the Commission to make a determination on whether to approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the local approval. In almost all cases, the applicant opts to revise their development proposal to resolve any inconsistencies prior to the Commission's rendering a formal decision. Any revised proposal must also be resubmitted to the local permitting agency for review and approval, in some cases triggering additional hearings on the application before the local Planning or Zoning Board.

Amendments are proposed at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.15 to establish expiration provisions for Certificates of Completeness, and amendments are proposed at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.34 to establish expiration provisions for Certificates of Filing. These proposed expiration provisions (new N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.15(b) and (c) and 4.34(c) and (d)) are the same for both types of completeness documents. Pursuant to the proposed new subsections, any certificate issued prior to January 1, 2004, shall be deemed expired and may not be used to obtain local approval or approval by the Commission. Any certificate issued on or after January 1, 2004, will expire five years after it has been issued unless the applicant has obtained local approval and the Executive Director has determined that the locally approved development is consistent with the minimum standards of the CMP.

Pursuant to the proposed new subsections, an applicant seeking local development approval, whose Certificate of Completeness or Certificate of Filing has expired, will need to reapply to the Pinelands Commission to receive a valid completeness document prior to any subsequent county or municipal approval. Through the process of reapplying, the applicant will be made aware of any inconsistencies that the development proposal has with respect to current CMP standards, taking into consideration current environmental conditions of the lands proposed for development. This will allow the applicant to address those inconsistencies prior to receiving local approval and, therefore, reduce the incidence of applicants having to return to the local permitting agency with revised development proposals.

Although the master plans and land use ordinances of all counties and municipalities in the Pinelands Area are certified, the rules for development review in jurisdictions without certification are maintained in the event that county or municipal certification is revoked or suspended in the future, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-3.64. Therefore, the proposed amendments will apply to any future Certificates of Completeness issued in the event that a county or municipality is no longer certified.

Upon adoption of the proposed rulemaking, Certificates of Completeness and Certificates of Filing issued between 1980 and 2003 will be deemed expired. The Commission issued approximately 12,600 certificates during that period. Of those issued, approximately 2,500 certificates were for development that did not obtain a local approval that was reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. Pursuant to the current rules, these 2,500 applications, filed between 20 and 43 years ago, could pursue local development approval at any time, using their now very old certificates as evidence of completion of an application with the Commission. As described above, it is unlikely that the development proposed in these decades-old applications meets current CMP or municipal standards, given the time elapsed. The proposed rules recognize the problems that can and have arisen when property owners attempt to pursue local approvals using such outdated documents, only to subsequently discover that their projects do not comply with current CMP standards and may need to be significantly redesigned. Assigning an expiration date to these old certificates sends an appropriate signal to property owners, applicants, and municipalities that new applications and reviews are necessary.

Certificates of Completeness and Certificates of Filing issued after 2004 will expire five years after their date of issuance pursuant to the proposed rules, unless the applicant received local approval for the development, and the local approval was reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. Between 2004 and 2023, the Commission issued approximately 4,600 certificates. Of those issued, approximately 1,700 certificates were for development that never obtained a local approval that was reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. Of those 1,700 certificates, approximately 1,250 certificates were issued prior to 2018 and would be deemed expired pursuant to the proposed rules. The remaining 450 certificates will expire once five years have elapsed from the date of issuance, unless a local approval is granted and the approval is reviewed and approved by the Executive Director.

It is also noted that, pursuant to the proposed rules, it is not sufficient for an applicant to have received a local approval in order to avoid the expiration of their completeness document. The local approval must also have been reviewed, determined to be consistent with the CMP, and allowed to take effect by the Executive Director. The CMP requires, at

N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.18 and 4.35, that notice of any preliminary or final site plan, subdivision, or other development approval be provided to the Commission within five days of issuance. However, there are instances where the Commission is not notified or does not receive all of the required information associated with a local approval to enable its review for consistency with the CMP. This may include site plans or professional reports. In those instances, the completeness document will not be protected from expiration.

If a completeness document expires pursuant to the proposed rules, the applicant must reapply to the Commission and receive a valid Certificate of Filing prior to proceeding to the local permitting agency for county or municipal approval. In such cases, applicants will have to submit an application fee in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6. Most certificates that will immediately expire pursuant to the proposed rules are for single-family residential units on existing lots. In fact, 94 percent of the certificates issued by the Commission prior to 2004 for residential development were for minor development (for example, applications for four or fewer residential units). Pursuant to the proposed rule, those applicants whose certificates expired will be required to reapply for a new Certificate of Filing, which will be assessed an application fee of \$250.00 per dwelling unit or lot, whichever is greater, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6(b). Some expired certificates were associated with much larger proposed developments involving significant acreage, which will appropriately be assessed larger application fees as they necessitate more comprehensive reviews. For example, an applicant may need to complete updated surveys to determine the presence of critical habitat for a threatened or endangered animal species or reconfigure a project's design in order to accommodate new or additional stormwater management measures.

Expiration of Waivers of Strict Compliance

As described above, the CMP provides procedures and standards for the Commission to waive strict compliance with the minimum standards of the CMP (see N.J.A.C. 7:50-4 Part V). These exemptions, required pursuant to the 1979 Pinelands Protection Act, are called "Waivers of Strict Compliance" (Waivers). Waivers are somewhat similar in concept, although not identical, to zoning variances issued by municipalities. Unlike variances; however, Waivers of Strict Compliance are exemptions from CMP standards and can only be granted by the Pinelands Commission to alleviate extraordinary hardships or to satisfy compelling public needs. The Commission must also determine that granting the waiver will not result in a substantial impairment of Pinelands resources and will not be inconsistent with the purposes, objectives, or general spirit of the Pinelands Protection Act, the Federal Act, or the Comprehensive Management Plan.

In March 1992, the Commission adopted a series of amendments to the CMP waiver regulations that provide greater environmental protections to Pinelands resources by setting stricter waiver standards (see 24 N.J.R. 832(b)). Among those amendments was an expiration provision for waivers granted to alleviate an extraordinary hardship. Pursuant to the current rules, at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.70(c), such waivers, granted on or after March 2, 1992, expire after five years unless all necessary construction permits have been issued and the authorized work was commenced within 12 months of issuance of the permits and no such permit becomes invalid. Notably, the expiration provision did not apply to waivers granted prior to March 2, 1992, that continued to be valid in perpetuity.

Proposed new N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.70(e) establishes an expiration provision for Waivers of Strict Compliance granted prior to March 2, 1992, to alleviate an extraordinary hardship. Pursuant to the proposed rule, these types of waivers will be deemed expired one year from the effective date of the adoption of this rulemaking. The Commission believes it is necessary to periodically reevaluate the conditions through which waivers are granted to ensure that potential environmental changes and amendments to the CMP are given adequate consideration. This responsibility clearly extends to waivers that were granted between 25 and 35 years ago that are currently valid in perpetuity. While the March 1992 amendment did not include such expiration provisions, the Commission feels that it is appropriate to do so, now that at least 25 years have elapsed, allowing affected property owners ample time to proceed with development.

The existing rule, at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.70(e), which provided a limited number of applicants with the option of requesting that their active waiver application be reviewed pursuant to the pre-1992 CMP waiver regulations, is proposed for deletion, as there are no longer any applications for which these provisions could apply.

The Commission estimates that there are approximately 200 waivers approved between 1981 and March 1992 that could be affected by the proposed rulemaking. These waivers were almost exclusively for the development of one residential unit on an existing lot. According to Commission records, these applicants did not subsequently complete a development application or obtain a municipal building permit to develop the proposed residential unit. The Commission will make every effort to contact these affected applicants and property owners and advise them of the pending waiver expiration and their options. Some may be able to complete a development application and receive a municipal building permit within the one-year period. However, it is likely that many will not. If an applicant's waiver expires pursuant to the proposed rulemaking, they must reapply to the Commission if they want to pursue the development for which the expired waiver was approved. This will require the submission of any application fee assessed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-1.6.

There may be instances where the proposed development no longer requires a waiver. Many of the affected waivers were granted in the early 1980s, prior to the Commission's certification of many municipal master plans and land use ordinances. Numerous changes in zoning and Pinelands management area designations were made during that initial certification process. For example, lands originally designated as a Forest Area by the CMP could have been redesignated to a Rural Development Area through the Commission's certification of a municipal zoning map. Permitted density in the Rural Development Area is significantly higher than that permitted in the Forest Area. If a waiver was originally required because a property did not meet the lot area or density requirements for a Forest Area, it may no longer be necessary now that the property is in a management area and zone where more intensive development is permitted.

Applications that still require a Waiver of Strict Compliance will be processed by the Commission in accordance with current CMP waiver standards and procedures. Such applications will also be assessed the \$250.00 fee proposed in this rulemaking, unless the waiver request is solely to demonstrate that the parcel is of "limited practical use" pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-9.2(a). If an application does not meet the current waiver standards, the Commission must deny the requested waiver.

An applicant requesting a new waiver for the same development proposal that previously received a waiver cannot be guaranteed to receive another waiver. The standards at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.63, which provide the conditions that must be demonstrated by the applicant for the Commission to deem an extraordinary hardship to exist, have been amended several times since 1981, and most substantially in March 1992. Those amendments more clearly defined when hardship conditions exist, and narrowed the circumstances that qualify for an extraordinary hardship. Pursuant to the proposed rulemaking, there are likely to be waivers that expire for which the applicant will not qualify for an extraordinary hardship if they reapply pursuant to the current CMP standards. If so, the Commission must deny the waiver request. In cases where a waiver is denied, the land may become eligible for State acquisition through the LPU Program described above.

There may be circumstances where an applicant reapplies for a waiver and demonstrates that an extraordinary hardship exists pursuant to current CMP standards, but where the Commission finds that the waiver would result in substantial impairment to Pinelands resources. As noted above, the Commission cannot waive strict compliance if it will result in a substantial impairment of the resources of the Pinelands. Prior to March 1992, the CMP did not expressly define substantial impairment. The March 1992 amendments set standards, at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.65, that determine whether the requested waiver would result in substantial impairment. The purpose of these amendments was not only to provide clear standards, but also to make them more stringent than the Commission's past practice. Pursuant to the proposed rulemaking, there are likely to be waivers that expire for which the applicant will be able to meet the current CMP standards for demonstrating an extraordinary

hardship, but will not be able to meet the current standards for substantial impairment. In such cases, the Commission must grant the waiver, but instead of allowing any on-site development to occur, the waiver will grant the applicant an allocation of PDCs based on the fair market value of the parcel and the market value of the PDCs at the time the waiver application is completed in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.62(d)2. Such applicants will be entitled to a minimum one-quarter PDC.

In cases where a waiver is approved and it will not result in a substantial impairment to Pinelands resources, the applicant may proceed with the development application. If the waiver granted waives strict compliance with one or more of the standards at N.J.A.C. 7:50-6, then the applicant will be required to purchase and redeem one-quarter PDC in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.62(d)1iii. This PDC requirement was adopted as part of the March 1992 amendments and, therefore, was not a requirement imposed on waivers granted prior to March 1992. The Commission continues to maintain that this provision helps to reduce the overall impact of each waiver on the resources of the Pinelands as it results in the permanent protection of important forested or agricultural land in the Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Areas, and Agricultural Production Areas.

It is important to note that only those waivers granted to relieve an extraordinary hardship will be impacted by these amendments. Waivers granted to satisfy a compelling public need pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.64 will continue to be valid in perpetuity. The Commission believes this distinction is appropriate, given that the development associated with such waivers typically consists of larger municipal or county facilities necessary for public safety or other public purposes (for example, site remediation or infrastructure).

Regional Growth Areas and the Pinelands Development Credit Program

Minimum Standards for Land Use Distribution and Intensities; Pinelands Development Credits; N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28, 5.43, 5.46, and 5.47

A driving force for the establishment of the Pinelands Protection Act in 1979 was the realization that a vast tract of relatively unspoiled land would eventually be lost through the effects of scattered and piecemeal development. While each new development by itself may not have caused irreparable harm to the unique Pinelands ecosystem, the continuation of the development patterns occurring in the 1960s and 1970s would, in time, be the death knell for the Pinelands. The State and Federal Pinelands legislation, and the plan developed in response to that legislation (the CMP), have as a primary purpose, the preservation and protection of the essential character of the Pinelands, which is that of an area with large unbroken landscapes. The CMP seeks to maintain this character by channeling growth to areas already experiencing development and by protecting outlying areas through a variety of management techniques.

Pinelands Regional Growth Areas, generally located on the outer fringes of the Pinelands Area, were designed to accommodate most of the region's anticipated growth. On the other hand, lands within the Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Area, and Agricultural Production Area were afforded protection through rigorous land use policies intended to minimize disturbance and conserve important ecological and agricultural resources. It is estimated that approximately 80 percent of the residential development approved in the Pinelands Area over the past several decades is located within Regional Growth Areas, which comprise only eight percent of the land in the Pinelands Area. Less than one percent of the approved residential units during that same time period is located within the Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Area, and Agricultural Production Area; areas which together represent almost 42 percent of the Pinelands Area's land mass.

One of the key growth management and preservation techniques established in the CMP is the PDC program, a transferable development rights program designed to: (1) shift development away from the Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Area, and Agricultural Production Area; and (2) provide a way for landowners in these three management areas to benefit from increased land values in Regional Growth Areas. The PDC program works by allocating development rights to properties in "sending areas"—the Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Area, and Agricultural

Production Area. These rights can be sold and used to increase the density of residential development in Regional Growth Areas, allow for development on otherwise nonconforming lots in Regional Growth Areas, Pinelands Villages, and Pinelands Towns, and offset the environmental impacts associated with waivers of strict compliance. In order for the rights to be available for sale, they must be severed from a sending area property. The severance process requires recordation of an agricultural or conservation easement on the property to permanently protect it against future residential and non-agricultural development. As of June 30, 2024, nearly 58,000 acres of land in Pinelands sending areas have been preserved in this manner and 4,471 rights have been used for development, predominantly in Regional Growth Areas.

The amendments now being proposed are intended to update provisions related to development and land use in Regional Growth Areas and standards related to the allocation, use, and severance of PDCs. The primary purpose of these amendments is to codify long-standing Commission practice of affording municipalities flexibility in designing their master plans and land use ordinances to accommodate a variety of housing types, higher residential densities, redevelopment designations, and nonresidential and mixed use development opportunities in their Regional Growth Areas. Not only does this sort of flexibility allow municipalities to respond to changing market demands and other State mandates, it also ensures that opportunities for the use of PDCs remain real, which, in turn, provides continued value to sending area property owners with PDCs to sell.

The proposed amendment revises N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)1, which requires that municipalities zone their Regional Growth Areas, so as to accommodate a specific number of dwelling units, based on a prescribed density per acre of developable land. As currently worded, this section indicates that the prescribed number of units must be equal to “and not exceed” the prescribed density. Municipalities will still be required to zone their Regional Growth Area in a manner that accommodates a minimum residential density; however, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)1 will no longer prohibit municipal zoning plans from exceeding the number of required units. This amendment recognizes that the CMP has, for many years, included other provisions that specifically allow for density increases in Regional Growth Area residential zoning capacity. The amendment is also an acknowledgement that it is simply impractical to require that a municipality consistently zone for a very specific number of units in a large geographic area where development and redevelopment occurs or is proposed on a daily basis. The intent of the amendment is to recognize the ability of municipalities to plan for well-balanced communities based on local needs and conditions, which can shift significantly over time.

Additional amendments are proposed to clarify N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3, which sets forth requirements for the accommodation of opportunities to use PDCs. While this paragraph will continue to require that municipal zoning plans provide for a certain number of PDC opportunities, it is being subcodified. Newly codified N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3i will simply specify the number of PDC opportunities that must be provided. The requirement that a reasonable proportion of such opportunities be associated with development of single-family detached homes is being deleted. This amendment is being made to recognize that desired housing types change over time and vary from site to site and municipality to municipality. It is a component of a zoning plan that is more appropriately left to municipal discretion. Furthermore, a requirement to zone for single-family-detached development is not conducive to the efficient use of land as it tends to involve larger lot zoning and “sprawl.”

As newly codified and amended, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3ii will now set forth only the simple requirement that municipal zoning plans ensure all residentially zoned districts are reasonably expected to be developed within their assigned density ranges. The guidelines for such density ranges, codified at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)j, are eliminated. These were included in the CMP as guidance for municipalities only and, over time, have proven to be unnecessary.

Recodified N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3iii is clarified to recognize that both municipal master plans and land use ordinances must provide for the use of PDCs to achieve bonus residential densities.

New N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3iv provides Pinelands municipalities with the express authority to meet their assigned PDC zoning obligations by requiring the use of PDCs for nonresidential development. This amendment does not require any increase or change in the number of PDC opportunities to be accommodated in a municipal Regional Growth Area. Rather, it simply makes explicit that a municipality has the option of shifting requirements for the use of PDCs from one type of development (residential) to another (nonresidential). Whereas, for residential development, PDCs are generally required based on density, the use of PDCs for nonresidential development could be based on floor area, impervious surface, or developed acreage, depending on the type of use that a municipal ordinance or redevelopment plan seeks to accommodate. The amendment recognizes that Pinelands municipalities need the ability to adapt their certified zoning plans to changing conditions or development opportunities. Provided these adaptations are made in a way that does not harm the PDC program, the Commission supports them. In fact, the Commission has certified a number of municipal ordinances in recent years that require the use of PDCs for certain nonresidential uses or in certain zoning districts. This has proven to be an effective way of preserving PDC demand and, in some cases, enhancing it. N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3iv is essentially a codification of this particular example of municipal flexibility.

New N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3v acknowledges that Pinelands municipalities may adopt zoning plans that identify housing types for which no PDC use will be necessary, including housing units made affordable to low- and moderate-income households pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-311. If a municipality makes this choice, its zoning plan must include provisions that guarantee the use of PDCs for other housing types or in the municipality’s other Regional Growth Area zoning districts. This can most easily be accomplished through the imposition of a requirement that a certain percentage of the units to be developed on a parcel in a given zoning district require the use of PDCs, regardless of project density. The minimum number of PDC opportunities required in the municipality’s Regional Growth Area must still be provided, thereby ensuring that there is no overall reduction in PDC opportunities. Many Pinelands municipalities have adopted such provisions over the past 10 to 20 years based on the municipal flexibility provisions of the CMP. N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3v merely codifies this successful practice by expressly stating that municipalities have this option if certain requirements are met.

It is important to note that N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3v should not be construed as an automatic exemption of all low- and moderate-income housing units from the requirement to purchase and redeem PDCs. Such an exemption must be expressly incorporated into a municipal land use ordinance and coupled with a requirement for the use of PDCs for other housing types (for example, market rate units) in order for low- and moderate-income units to be “exempt.” Allowing certain housing types to be exempted, addresses concerns expressed by stakeholders and members of the public that dwelling units proposed to meet affordable housing obligations will be made infeasible by the added cost of PDCs.

N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)4 is amended to clarify that the existing PDC requirements associated with municipal density or lot area variances apply to residential uses only. This has always been the intent of this particular section, but occasional confusion has arisen with variances involving nonresidential development. The addition of the word “residential” will serve to prevent future issues from developing.

New N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)7ii is added to specify the requirements that must be met when a municipality elects to provide for increased residential zoning capacity in its Regional Growth Area in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)1 and 3. This is yet another instance where the CMP is being updated to reflect the Commission’s long-standing practice of providing municipalities with the flexibility to make these sorts of decisions when designing or amending their Regional Growth Area zoning plans, provided certain conditions related to infrastructure, environmental limitations, and the accommodation of PDCs are satisfied. If a municipality wishes to zone for increased residential density in a particular portion of its Regional Growth Area, whether in an existing zone, or in a newly created zone or redevelopment area, infrastructure (that is, roads, water, sewer) must be available or able to be provided to serve the area(s) in question. Such area(s) must be free of significant environmental limitations, such as wetlands or critical habitat for rare

animals. Finally, PDCs must be a required component of zones or redevelopment areas where higher densities than those required by the CMP are to be permitted.

Over the past 10 to 20 years, Pinelands municipalities have proposed and the Commission has approved many redevelopment plans and land use ordinance amendments that permit densities well in excess of what the CMP requires. These plans and ordinances have satisfied the conditions described above, enabling the Commission to approve the changes in zoning based on the flexibility afforded to municipalities by the CMP. In terms of PDC requirements, municipalities have typically incorporated a requirement that PDCs be redeemed for 20 to 30 percent of the market-rate units to be developed in a project. Such a requirement has not resulted in significant changes to the theoretical number of PDC opportunities provided through municipal zoning plans. However, by reframing PDC use as a mandatory element of residential development in a Regional Growth Area zone, rather than as an optional bonus density mechanism, the use of PDCs becomes much more certain, no matter what the ultimate density of any particular project might be. This greater certainty benefits both the developer and the holders of PDCs, while allowing Pinelands municipalities the flexibility they need to make zoning changes and capture new market demand. Codification of this successful practice in the CMP is now appropriate.

Recodified N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)7iii is amended to clarify the ability of municipalities to vary from the residential density assignments set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)1. This section will now only provide municipalities with the ability to implement 10 percent decreases in the number of dwelling units assigned to their Regional Growth Areas. The ability to implement a 10 percent increase is being deleted. Given the amendments discussed above, which explicitly acknowledge the ability of Pinelands municipalities to zone their Regional Growth Areas for higher densities, limitation to and standards for a 10 percent increase are no longer necessary.

Finally, recodified N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)7iv is amended to limit opportunities for municipalities to decrease their Regional Growth Area-assigned residential densities to 2.5 units per acre of developable land. The amendment specifies that this density reduction is available only to those municipalities who have already implemented such decreases, as evidenced through the Commission's prior certification of amended master plans and land use ordinances.

Existing N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)7iii was adopted by the Commission in 2002 in order to provide municipalities with the highest assigned Regional Growth Area densities (3.0 units per developable acre or higher) with the ability to reduce their residential zoning capacities (see 34 N.J.R. 1024(a)). The Commission believed this decreased density prescription could result in more appropriate patterns of development in certain Regional Growth Areas while providing municipalities with increased flexibility in the design of their zoning plans, so as to better achieve local objectives, recognize areas with natural or cultural resource constraints, and accommodate the use of PDCs. The amendment was largely a response to ongoing concerns raised by some municipalities with the impacts of the CMP's assigned densities on their ability to plan for community development.

At the time of adoption of the amendment, the Commission predicted that perhaps four of the 12 municipalities with assigned Regional Growth Area densities of 3.0 units per acre, or more, might seek to implement the density decrease. In the years that followed, only three of the municipalities did so, and their revised zoning plans were certified by the Commission between 2002 and 2008. In subsequent years, numerous development projects were effectively "grandfathered" by various iterations of the State's Permit Extension Act and two of the three municipalities routinely granted extensions of prior approvals, thereby delaying or, in some cases, negating the decreased densities permitted by the revised zoning plans. This meant that development largely proceeded pursuant to the prior zoning plans and densities, with little to none of the benefits the Commission hoped would accrue to the PDC program. It is also noteworthy that, subsequent to the Commission's approval of the density decreases, the three municipalities adopted zoning changes and/or redevelopment plans that permit significantly higher densities, in some cases, to accommodate affordable housing obligations and in other cases

to respond to market demand for housing types other than single-family detached dwellings.

Shortly after adopting the density reduction rule described above, the Commission convened a task force for the purposes of updating housing demand estimates and determining how much demand should be accommodated with Pinelands development areas. The task force's final report, issued in January 2007, made a number of conclusions. Among them were findings that areas within the Pinelands Area that are targeted for residential development (Regional Growth Area, Pinelands Towns, and certain Pinelands Villages) could readily accommodate housing demand well beyond 2020. The task force also recommended that zoning policies in these areas should promote greater land development efficiency to reduce sprawl and meet the diverse housing needs of the population. Specifically, the task force concluded that average densities of at least 4.5 units per acre of developable land were necessary to encourage the efficient use of land and reasonably accommodate future housing needs, largely within Regional Growth Areas. The Pinelands Housing Task Force report is available on the Commission's website at www.nj.gov/pinelands/landuse/recent/housing/Housing%20Final%Rpt.pdf. This density recommendation exceeds the Regional Growth Area assignments set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)1 and illustrates the importance of providing Pinelands municipalities with the flexibility to zone for increased densities in appropriate portions of their Regional Growth Areas. It also highlights the need to limit the ability of municipalities to significantly decrease their permitted Regional Growth Area densities. Given the findings of the Housing Task Force and the demonstrated lack of municipal interest in implementing and maintaining the decreased density offered by the CMP, there is no justification for continuing to allow municipalities to reduce their densities to 2.5 units per developable acre.

The proposed amendments also revise N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(a) by clarifying where and why PDCs may be used in the Pinelands Area. The use of PDCs was traditionally limited to achieving residential density bonuses in Regional Growth Areas; therefore, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(a) has, for years, referenced only that opportunity for PDC use. However, a series of prior amendments to the CMP expanded opportunities and requirements for the use of PDCs to other Pinelands management areas and types of development. Likewise, the amendments now proposed at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3 make clear that municipalities have the ability to incorporate the use of PDCs into their zoning and redevelopment plans in a wide variety of ways. Therefore, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(a) is being amended to more broadly refer to the use of PDCs for development in Regional Growth Areas, as well as for waivers of strict compliance granted by the Commission (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.62(a)), variances granted by municipalities in Pinelands Villages and Pinelands Towns (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.27(c)), variances granted by municipalities for undersized lots that qualify for development of homes pursuant to the CMP's cultural housing provisions (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.32(b)), and development within designated Municipal Reserve Areas (N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.63(b)).

N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(b)5 is amended to clarify that all PDC allocations are rounded to the nearest one-quarter of a credit, not only those exceeding one-quarter (0.25) of a credit. For example, if a parcel is eligible for an allocation of 0.13 PDCs based on the formula at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(b)1 and 2, that allocation will be rounded up to 0.25 PDCs. The one exception to this "rounding rule" will be allocations of less than 0.125 PDCs. Such allocations will not be rounded to the nearest quarter PDC, as that would result in an allocation of zero PDCs. In these situations, allocation of "fractional" (less than one-quarter) PDCs will continue, unless the property owner qualifies for an increase to 0.25 PDCs through the special allocation provisions set forth at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(b)6 or 7. While this amendment is unlikely to affect a large number of PDC allocations, it is consistent with current practice in the calculation of most other allocations and recognizes that obtaining an allocation of at least 0.25 PDCs is important because it is the minimum denomination that can be severed, sold, or redeemed.

Also, amendments are proposed to update the language at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.46 that currently allows PDCs allocated to different parcels of land in sending areas to be aggregated and used to achieve bonus density in a Regional Growth Area. N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43 establishes how PDCs are allocated and other sections, described above, provide for the use of PDCs

for a variety of purposes beyond density bonuses in a Regional Growth Area. As amended, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.46 will now simply state that PDCs may be aggregated for use in accordance with any of the provisions specified at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(a).

Finally, N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.47(b) is amended to clarify the required content of deed restrictions that are recorded for purposes of severing PDCs from a parcel of land in a sending area. The existing CMP at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.47(b) mistakenly uses the word "sold," leading to the perception that severance of PDCs and recordation of the required deed restriction occurs when PDCs are sold. In practice, PDCs must be allocated by the Commission and severed from the land by the property owner through a recorded deed restriction before any sale, transfer, or redemption can occur. Therefore, one word in this section is being changed to indicate that PDC deed restrictions must refer to the number of PDCs allocated to the parcel subject of the deed restriction.

Redesignation of Black Run Watershed, Evesham Township, Burlington County

The Commission is proposing to redesignate an area in Evesham Township, Burlington County, from a Pinelands Rural Development Area to a Pinelands Forest Area. The proposed amendment is an outgrowth of two important Commission initiatives: the 2006 Southern Medford/Evesham Sub-Regional Resource Protection Plan and the 2008 Ecological Integrity Assessment. These initiatives, described in further detail below, confirmed the ecological sensitivity and importance of protecting a largely undisturbed watershed in Evesham Township known as the Black Run. Subsequently, protection of the Black Run and surrounding areas was once again emphasized as a priority during the Commission's 2014 comprehensive plan review process.

Southern Medford/Evesham Plan

In June 2004, the Commission began an innovative natural resource conservation planning project for the southern portions of Evesham and Medford Townships. The Commission organized a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the two municipalities to oversee development of a conservation plan for a 22-square-mile project area. This Steering Committee appointed an 18-person Project Advisory Committee and a 17-person Technical Support Group to help guide the Steering Committee's decisions. With the support of Commission staff, the three committees met regularly throughout 2004 to gather and evaluate data and discuss and formulate a series of strategies that would offer increased protection to the Black Run watershed and surrounding areas. Numerous public meetings were held to gather suggestions and review proposed zoning changes. All potentially affected landowners were notified of the planning project and made aware of their opportunities to participate in public meetings. The recommended strategies were detailed in the Southern Medford/Evesham Sub-Regional Natural Resources Protection Plan authored by Commission staff and issued in 2006. A copy of the plan, and additional information about the Southern Medford/Evesham planning process, is available on the Commission's website at <http://www.nj.gov/pinelands/landuse/recent/medeves/>.

The Southern Medford/Evesham Plan includes innovative zoning, land preservation, resource management, and community design recommendations, all premised on the fact that the Black Run watershed was identified as having high ecological values based on water quality data, rare plant and animal documentation, and landscape, wetlands, and watershed integrity assessments. The plan notes that less than 10 percent of the land in the Black Run drainage area is disturbed. As disturbance in excess of 10 percent of land area is considered a tipping point for ecological impacts, the report urged that this area be protected through a series of regulatory and land preservation strategies. In terms of land preservation, the plan recommended acquisition and deed restriction of properties in the study area by various governmental agencies and non-profit conservation organizations. Land stewardship efforts were to be promoted through public education for homeowners, builders, and planning and zoning boards. In addition, surveys were recommended to identify the area's rare plants with the intent of helping public landowners, homeowner's associations, and the municipalities to protect, manage, and recover native plant populations.

In terms of regulatory strategies, the Southern Medford/Evesham Plan recommended a number of zoning changes to reduce future zone capacity and land disturbance in high-quality natural resource areas. Additional zoning strategies called for creating incentives to transfer development potential out of high-value natural resource areas to areas more capable of accommodating it. Clustering of residential development was also recommended, with the hope that it would result in the conservation of significant acreage. The plan also recommended the creation of a green belt consisting of public lands, preservation areas, and low-density zoning districts through the middle of the study area in Evesham and Medford Townships as a means of further protecting the area's water quality and maintaining biodiversity.

The Pinelands Commission endorsed the Southern Medford/Evesham Plan in 2006 and spent the next several years working to implement many of the plan's recommendations. Notably, the CMP was amended in 2009, to require clustering of residential development in all Pinelands Forest and Rural Development Areas, including those in Medford and Evesham Townships. Both municipalities adopted ordinances to implement the mandatory clustering provisions. Evesham Township designed its clustering provisions in such a way as to offer greater protection to the Black Run watershed, one of the primary goals of the Southern Medford/Evesham Plan. However, neither municipality pursued any of the other recommended zoning changes, so the Commission focused its efforts on education, surveys, and land preservation.

Ecological Integrity Assessment

In April 2008, the Commission completed a report entitled An Ecological-Integrity Assessment of the New Jersey Pinelands: A Comprehensive Assessment of the Landscape and Aquatic and Wetland Systems of the Region ("EIA Report"), which comprehensively and objectively evaluated the ecological status of the entire ecosystem within the Pinelands Area. The EIA Report evaluated three levels of the Pinelands ecological hierarchy: the entire regional upland-forest and wetland landscape; aquatic systems and associated watersheds; and freshwater wetlands and adjacent upland areas. The EIA Report's evaluation of Pinelands ecology was guided by three basic principles concerning landscape, aquatic, and wetland-drainage integrity. The principles were based on the results of various ecological studies conducted both within the Pinelands and elsewhere.

Landscape integrity focuses upon species that move across wetlands and uplands and processes that operate at a regional-landscape level. The guiding principle behind the idea of landscape integrity is that the conservation of characteristic Pinelands plant and animal species and communities, including wide-ranging species, requires the protection of relatively large tracts of Pinelands habitat, including upland forests, wetlands, and water bodies. Thus, landscape integrity is a measure of the extent of Pinelands habitat in an area.

Aquatic integrity primarily focuses upon processes that operate at the watershed level and the species and communities that are influenced by the quantity and quality of surface waters. The guiding principle behind the idea of aquatic integrity is that the conservation of characteristic Pinelands water quality and lake, pond, and stream communities and the indigenous plant and animal species that make up these communities requires the protection of associated watersheds. Thus, aquatic integrity is a measure of the percentage of land within a watershed that is neither developed land nor upland agriculture.

A wetland-drainage unit is a discrete area of wetlands and the adjacent uplands that contribute surface water and groundwater to those wetlands. Wetland-drainage integrity focuses upon land uses that affect the quantity and quality of groundwater flowing to palustrine wetlands. The guiding principle behind the idea of wetland-drainage integrity is that the conservation of characteristic Pinelands palustrine wetlands and the indigenous plant and animal species that inhabit these wetlands requires the protection of adjacent uplands that influence the hydrologic integrity of the wetlands. Thus, wetland-drainage integrity is a measure of the percentage of land within a wetland-drainage unit that is neither developed land nor upland agriculture.

The EIA Report characterized landscape integrity using a moving-window analysis to measure the amount of Pinelands habitat within a circle referred to as a "window." A moving-window analysis moves a

“window” across a layer of rasterized or cell-based spatial data, performs a specified calculation on the data within the window, and assigns the result of that calculation to the center cell within the window. The window then moves to the next cell, performs the same calculation again, and applies the results to the center cell of that window. This process continues until all the cells in the input-raster layer have been analyzed and an output-raster layer with the new values is created. To assess landscape integrity, the EIA Report analyzed 10×10-meter Pinelands-habitat cells using a 1,000-meter-radius window. Pinelands-habitat cells were classified using the 2002 DEP land-use/land-cover data. The result of the analysis was a data layer composed of about 31 million Pinelands-habitat cells, with each cell assigned a landscape-integrity score represented by the percentage of habitat in the surrounding window. High landscape integrity was equated with a high percentage of surrounding Pinelands habitat.

The EIA Report characterized aquatic integrity and wetland-drainage integrity using the same measure of ecological integrity. Aquatic and wetland-drainage integrity scores were assigned by determining the percentage of each watershed or wetland-drainage unit, respectively, that was neither developed land nor upland agriculture. The percentage of each watershed or wetland-drainage unit that was neither developed land nor upland agriculture was then assigned to that watershed or wetland-drainage unit and to every 10×10-meter cell therein. High aquatic and wetland-drainage integrity scores were equated with a low percentage of developed land and upland agriculture.

The overall ecological integrity of the 900,000-plus-acre Pinelands Area was determined by using a composite of all three integrity measures—landscape, aquatic, and wetlands-drainage integrity. The ecological integrity score represents an average of the landscape-, aquatic-, and wetlands-drainage-integrity scores for each 10×10-meter Pinelands-habitat cell. High ecological integrity was equated with a high average score. All three measures of integrity, as well as the composite measure of integrity were determined for the entire Pinelands Area and for each of the Pinelands management areas.

In 2009, the Commission completed an analysis of Pinelands management area boundaries using the EIA Report’s integrity scores as the basis for recommended changes. In particular, areas worthy of protection due to their high ecological-integrity scores were identified as candidates for redesignation from growth-oriented management areas to more conservation-oriented management areas, such as the Pinelands Forest Area. Ultimately, 11 areas large enough to be of regional significance were delineated. Not surprisingly, given the results of the already completed Southern Medford/Evesham Plan, one of the identified areas was the Black Run watershed and surrounding lands in Medford and Evesham Townships. This area, comprising approximately 3,700 acres, was recommended for redesignation from a Rural Development to a Forest Area. Ultimately, the Commission elected not to proceed with proposal or adoption of any of the recommended management area adjustments and instead worked with individual municipalities on rezoning efforts, where appropriate, and when opportunities arose.

Plan Review Process

Since the completion of the Southern Medford/Evesham Plan and the Ecological Integrity Assessment, various efforts to provide increased protection to the Black Run watershed and surrounding areas have been undertaken. Municipal ordinances were adopted to mandate the clustering of residential development. Land acquisition efforts were successful in preserving hundreds of acres in the area. While these efforts were not insignificant, large portions of the watershed remain unprotected, a problem that was emphasized during the Commission’s fourth comprehensive review of the CMP. Completed in 2014, this plan review process involved the establishment of a Plan Review Committee, comprised of five Commission members, and a vigorous effort to solicit public comment on the CMP and its implementation. The Plan Review Committee held 14 meetings throughout 2012 through 2014, all of which were open to the public, and additional public meetings were held during the summer of 2012 for purposes of receiving public comment. Written comments were also encouraged and received on a wide variety of topics. All written comments received by the Commission were posted and

remain available on the Commission’s website at <http://www.nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/planreview/Public%20comments.pdf>.

Ultimately, after review and evaluation of public comment, the Plan Review Committee developed a list of specific recommendations that became the focus of the Commission’s staff’s efforts from 2014 to date. Eight such recommendations were of such high priority to the Commission and interest to the public that they were discussed in detail in the Commission’s Fourth Report on Plan Implementation, issued in 2014 (see <http://www.nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/planreview/PR%20reports/PlanReviewReportFinalDraft.pdf>). One of the eight high priority recommendations involved protection of the Black Run watershed.

Strategies to protect the Black Run watershed and surrounding areas were then discussed at several public meetings of the Commission’s CMP Policy & Implementation Committee in 2015 and 2016 and again beginning in 2022. These discussions identified the need to better recognize the environmental sensitivity of the area through a change in Pinelands management area designations. Details on the proposed management area change, which can only be implemented through an amendment to the CMP, are provided below.

Subchapter 5, Minimum Standards for Land Uses and Intensities, of the CMP establishes requirements that govern the type, location, and intensity of land uses permitted throughout the Pinelands. Part II of Subchapter 5 establishes nine land use management areas and sets forth the goals, objectives, and permitted uses for each. The boundaries of these management areas are provided on the Land Capability Map, adopted as part of the CMP at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.3(a)24.

Although refined over the years through the Commission’s approval of municipal land use ordinances, the boundaries of the management areas were originally established by the Commission in 1980 when the CMP was adopted. The management area delineation procedure began with the Commission’s definition of what constituted the “essential character” of the Pinelands Protection Area (defined as that area located outside the legislatively defined Pinelands Preservation Area). Seven criteria were developed: the presence of ecologically critical areas; undisturbed watersheds; wetlands; cranberry cultivation areas; areas of deep aquifer recharge; unique resources requiring high levels of protection; and public lands managed for resource protection or recreation. Undisturbed watersheds were drainages that had very little development in them (less than five percent), particularly development that degrades surface and groundwater quality and fragments the Pinelands ecosystem. Wetlands included cedar swamps, hardwood swamps, pitch pine lowland forests, bogs, inland marshes, and coastal marshes. Unique resources requiring high levels of protection included the Pine Plains and a surrounding buffer zone and subwatersheds supporting characteristic Pinelands aquatic species. The presence of threatened and endangered species was one of the most important factors in determining the designation of a subwatershed as an ecologically critical area.

These seven components, and their mapped expressions, served as the determinants of the essential character of the Pinelands environment within the Preservation Area. The delineation of areas of essential character provided the basis for the designation of Pinelands Forest Areas, largely undisturbed forest and coastal wetlands adjoining the Preservation Area and extending into the southern portion of the Pinelands. Designation of other management areas followed, including Rural Development Areas, which were generally defined as transitional areas, separating the less developed, forested areas of the Pinelands from growth areas, serving as both buffers and reserves for future development. The identification of conflict areas was the last step. Conflict areas were areas where lands considered suitable for appropriate patterns of development overlapped with areas displaying essential character. When a conflict area that was classified as a Rural Development Area exhibited essential character as an undisturbed watershed or had greater than 75 percent wetlands or critical areas, it was reclassified as a Forest Area. Additionally, areas of less than 1,000 acres that did not exhibit essential character but were entirely surrounded by areas of essential character became Forest Areas.

Upon adoption of the CMP in 1980, the majority of the Black Run watershed within the Pinelands Area in Evesham Township was designated as a Rural Development Area. The area was identified as a conflict area by the Commission in its original delineation procedure but

ultimately designated a Rural Development Area primarily because of the presence of an existing landfill and its anticipated impacts on water quality.

The new information made available to the Commission as a result of the Southern Medford/Evesham planning process and the Ecological Integrity Assessment strongly suggests the presence of the existing landfill was given a disproportionate amount of weight in 1980, resulting in the designation of this area as a Rural Development Area. It is clear that the Black Run watershed area demonstrates the characteristics associated with a Forest Area designation and is worthy of the enhanced protection that would be provided by such a management area designation. Since the Southern Medford/Evesham Plan and Ecological Integrity Assessment were completed, additional lands in the Black Run and surrounding areas in Evesham and Medford Townships have been permanently protected by various non-profit and governmental agencies. More recently, surveys in the area have confirmed the presence of threatened and endangered species. All of these factors emphasize the importance of protecting the area and provide the basis for a change in management area designations to do so.

Rule Change and Impact

To accomplish a management area redesignation of this magnitude, it is necessary for the Commission to amend the CMP. Specifically, it is proposing to amend the Land Capability Map at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.3(a)24 to reflect a revision in Pinelands management area boundaries. The Black Run watershed and nearby preserved, publicly owned, or severely environmentally constrained lands, previously located in a Rural Development Area, will now be located in a Pinelands Forest Area. A map depicting the boundaries of the redesignated area is available on the Commission's website at https://nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/amend/Amended%20Land%20Capability%20Map_archE.pdf.

The redesignated area encompasses approximately 2,440 acres in Evesham Township and is located in close proximity to Evesham's existing Pinelands Forest Area. Close to 60 percent of the redesignated area (1,450 acres) is already preserved or in public ownership. Only 990 acres of privately owned land remain available for development within the area proposed for redesignation. The majority of the undeveloped land in what would become Evesham's new Forest Area is comprised of wetlands and required wetlands buffer areas, making any new development on such lands unlikely, regardless of zoning or management area designation.

Upon the Commission's adoption of the proposed amendment to the Land Capability Map, Evesham Township will be required to revise its master plan and land use ordinances to reflect the new management area designation. Maximum permitted density in the affected area will decrease from one unit per 3.2 acres of privately owned vacant upland to one unit per 15.8 acres of privately owned vacant upland in order to comply with CMP standards for Pinelands Forest Areas. The likely result in terms of municipal zoning is a new Forest Area zone with a residential density of one unit per 25 acres. Mandatory clustering on one acre lots will be required and all development will need to be served by septic systems, as is the case pursuant to the current Rural Development Area designation and zoning. The pattern of permitted residential development, therefore, will not change, nor will the environmental standards that apply to all development. Rather, it is the theoretical zoning capacity of the area that will decrease significantly. The current municipal zoning plan would allow for the development of 249 units, based on currently permitted residential densities. After the redesignation to the Pinelands Forest Area, residential zoning capacity would decrease to 38 units. While a significant decrease in theoretical zoning capacity, much of the redesignated area is so heavily constrained by wetlands and other environmental limitations that development is a virtual impossibility on the majority of vacant lots, regardless of zoning. For the few developable upland properties in the redesignated area, however, development potential will certainly be reduced, which the Commission believes is appropriate, given the environmental sensitivity of the area.

Clearly, the Commission has considered a number of different strategies to increase protection of the Black Run watershed over the years, including the creation of innovative density transfer and off-site clustering programs. While both had merit, they are complex, require

significant cooperation among landowners, and rely on the identification of an available area for development outside the watershed that has access to infrastructure and limited environmental constraints. The Commission's primary goal is to decrease disturbance in, and increase protection of, the Black Run watershed, something that can most readily be accomplished through the management area redesignation discussed above. Evesham Township retains the ability to modify its zoning plan in ways that further encourage cluster development in the area.

Minor Amendments

The Commission is proposing to update internal cross-references and terms and correct a minor omission.

Commission Hearing Procedures (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.3)

Minor changes are being proposed at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.3 to replace the term "freeholder director" with "director of the board of county commissioners" in response to recent legislation that changed the title of "freeholder" and "chosen freeholder" to "county commissioner" and the term "board of chosen freeholders" to "board of county commissioners." (See P.L. 2020, c. 67)

Public Hearings on Local Approvals (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.41)

An internal citation is being updated in the first sentence from N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.35(c) to 4.35(e).

Alternative Design Treatment Systems Pilot Program (N.J.A.C. 7:50-10.22)

A minor, non-substantial change is being made at N.J.A.C. 7:50-10.22(a)5ix to correct the reference to the operation and maintenance manual required as part of this Pilot Program.

As the Commission has provided a 60-day comment period on this notice of proposal, this notice is excepted from the rulemaking calendar requirement, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:30-3.3(a)5.

Social Impact

The proposed fee amendments are expected to have a positive social impact for New Jersey's taxpayers because the increased fees will, on a relative basis, reduce the need for general State funding to support the legislatively mandated permitting responsibilities of the Commission. The proposed amendments to the application fee schedule will help to ensure that the Commission has the resources necessary to undertake its statutorily mandated review of development applications to ensure that such projects adhere to the land use and environmental requirements of the Pinelands CMP.

The establishment of expiration dates for various Commission documents should also have a positive social impact by eliminating any uncertainty that currently exists concerning the continued validity of approvals and documents issued decades ago. The amendments will also provide Pinelands municipalities with a greater ability to address questions from residents and property owners about their ability to rely on old approvals and documents. It is better for municipalities if applicants have up-to-date documents and it is better for applicants to understand how their old development proposals might be affected by current standards. The expiration of old completeness documents and required completion of new applications with the Commission will provide that opportunity and prevent issues from arising only after a municipal construction permit or other approval has been issued.

The proposed amendments relative to zoning plans and the PDC program recognize the importance of municipal flexibility in designing their own Regional Growth Area zoning plans, based on community needs and desires, market conditions, etc. The 24 municipalities throughout the Pinelands Area that contain Regional Growth Areas may find it easier to adjust density requirements and zoning plans to fit local circumstances, provide opportunities for affordable housing, and foster desired development patterns. While municipalities have long had the ability to do so, the provisions being added and amended throughout N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a) will make this explicit. The reaction from both municipalities and property owners in Regional Growth Areas is expected to be positive.

The proposed amendment to the Land Capability Map is expected to have a positive social impact because it recognizes an environmentally sensitive area and appropriately reduces its development potential. The

existing Black Run Preserve (Preserve) is of great importance, not only to Evesham Township residents, but also to the larger Burlington and Camden County communities, as evidenced by the formation and involvement of a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to management and continued protection of the Preserve. Redesignation of the Preserve and surrounding lands from the Rural Development Area to the Forest Area will reduce the potential for future land use conflicts with and negative environmental impacts on the existing Preserve. Although clustered residential development in the redesignated area will still be permitted, the number of units and amount of associated disturbance will be reduced and the amount of protected open space required as part of a cluster development will be increased.

Economic Impact

The proposed amendments make a number of changes to the Commission's application fee requirements. New fees are established for certain applications requiring waivers of strict compliance and for applications involving resolution of identified violations of the CMP. Increased fees are proposed for applications seeking LOIs, with the exception of those related to the allocation of PDCs. It is difficult to predict the exact impact of these fee increases, as the actual amount of revenue generated by the application fees in the future will be a function of the number and type of applications submitted to the Commission each year.

For the most part, the fee changes will result in relatively modest increases of between \$250.00 to \$1,000 for any particular application. In what is likely to be a very limited number of instances involving requests for wetlands-related LOIs on very large parcels, the increase will be more significant. Given the amount of staff resources that must be dedicated to such requests, the Commission believes the increase is warranted. It should be noted that the Commission does not require applicants to secure wetlands-related LOIs. Rather, Commission staff regularly makes determinations as to the extent of wetlands and the size of required wetlands buffers as part of its review of development applications. For those applicants who prefer to obtain wetlands-related LOIs prior to submitting development applications or are required to do so by other agencies, the increased fee will be assessed.

Although in most cases, the proposed amendments will result in modest increases, the Commission recognizes that applicants may view them in a negative light. However, it must be recognized that even with the proposed increases, the Commission's fee schedule does not recapture all of the Commission's permit-related expenses. Rather, the Commission expects that, if current application trends continue, perhaps only 50-60 percent of the Commission's total permit-related expenses could be recouped through application fee revenue.

Upon the expiration of Certificates of Filing and certain waivers of strict compliance in accordance with the proposed amendments, new applications will need to be submitted to the Commission. Such applications will require payment of application fees and completion of new or updated site plans and surveys. While this might mean increased or unanticipated costs, applicants will benefit from the identification of potential inconsistencies with the CMP at the outset of the Commission's review of a new application, rather than later in the review process when an applicant may have relied on a very old waiver or completeness document to obtain municipal approval. The requirement to obtain a new Certificate of Filing will facilitate identification and earlier notice of potential problems and the impact of new or revised standards, perhaps ultimately reducing costs associated with lengthy reviews and multiple redesigns of projects.

The proposed amendments related to Regional Growth Area zoning plans and the PDC program are not expected to have significant economic impacts on municipalities, developers, or property owners. The amendments do not impose new or increased PDC obligations, nor do they require Pinelands municipalities to revise their zoning plans. Rather, the amendments set forth the requirements that must be met if a municipality elects to create new zoning districts, increase permitted densities in existing zoning districts, or seek to accommodate new types of uses through redevelopment plans. When such changes are made, increased opportunities for PDC use may result, as well as more certainty in terms of demand for PDCs, which should have a positive economic impact in

terms of the ability of PDC holders to sell their PDCs for appropriate prices.

The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(b)5 will result in the rounding of PDC allocations of at least 0.125 PDCs to 0.25 PDCs. This will have a positive economic impact on the owners of properties in PDC sending areas to which the Commission has made such allocations. PDCs are severed, bought, sold, and redeemed in one-quarter credit increments, with 0.25 PDCs being the minimum increment necessary for any such transactions. The value of 0.25 PDCs varies over time. In 2024, the average sales price for 0.25 PDCs was \$21,827.

The economic impact of the proposed amendment to the Land Capability Map will be perceived as negative by many of the owners of vacant land in the new Pinelands Forest Area due to the decrease in permitted residential density. Most of these lots are so constrained by wetlands and required wetlands buffers, however, that on-site development is currently infeasible or, at best, highly unlikely, without the Commission's approval of a waiver of strict compliance. These landowners, as well as those who own the few vacant developable properties in the redesignated area, will retain an opportunity for residential cluster development, albeit at lower density than that currently permitted. Owners of vacant undersized lots will also have the opportunity to "transfer" density to developable noncontiguous lots elsewhere in Evesham Township's Forest or Rural Development Areas pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.30.

Owners of developable upland properties in the new Forest Area will experience a significant decrease in development potential, which clearly has a negative economic impact. Given the highly sensitive nature of the area, however, the Commission believes this decreased development potential is fully warranted and necessary.

Evesham Township will incur costs associated with the master plan and ordinance amendment process required to implement the new Forest Area designation. The municipality will be required to amend its master plan and land use ordinance to create a new Forest Area zoning district or assign one of its existing Forest Area zoning district designations and create a revised zoning map. Additional master plan and ordinance amendments will be required if Evesham Township elects to implement a new density transfer program or revise its existing cluster development standards for the new Forest Area zone. These costs might include notification to all property owners of the proposed master plan and zoning changes.

Environmental Impact

As the purpose of many of the proposed amendments is to strengthen the level of environmental protection afforded through the CMP, overall environmental benefits should result. No negative impacts from these proposed amendments are expected.

The proposed amendments to the Commission's application fees schedule are not expected to have any negative environmental impact as they do not modify the land use and environmental standards of the CMP in any way. If anything, the proposed increased fees assessed to applications involving resolution of violations of the CMP may serve as a disincentive to future violations of CMP standards, which would have a positive environmental impact.

The proposed expiration dates for various Commission completeness documents should have a positive environmental impact by alerting landowners and applicants to the current environmental standards of the CMP that must be met. Additional benefits will be realized through establishment of an expiration date for waivers of strict compliance which, by definition, involves development that does not meet all CMP environmental standards.

The proposed amendments related to Regional Growth Area and the use of PDCs are largely a codification of the current Commission practice; however, they may, nevertheless, have a positive environmental impact. Maintaining and enhancing demand for PDCs through changes to municipal zoning plans ensures the existence of an active market for PDCs, which facilitates sales and encourages owners of sending areas lands to participate in the PDC program by deed restricting their properties.

It is unknown how many of the 24 Regional Growth Area municipalities will avail themselves of the flexibility provisions related to

residential density and assignment of PDC opportunities to nonresidential uses. Many have already done so, and the amendments merely codify practices that the towns and Commission have employed for many years based on the existing flexibility provisions throughout the CMP. It is likely that municipalities will continue to make zoning changes and adopt redevelopment plans that provide for higher densities and a variety of housing types within already designated Regional Growth Areas. No negative environmental impacts are anticipated. In fact, making the rules clearer for municipalities who wish to accommodate more housing or development within the existing boundaries of their Regional Growth Areas may ultimately forestall future requests for expansion of these growth areas into portions of the Pinelands Area that the Commission is charged with protecting.

The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(b)5 to round up certain fractional PDC allocations could have a positive environmental impact. It will provide landowners whose properties have PDC allocations between 0.125 and 0.25 with the ability to complete the PDC severance process and subsequently sell or redeem their development rights. Previously, landowners with these fractional allocations were unable to do so, because PDCs are severed and transacted in quarter-credit increments. With an increase to 0.25 PDCs, affected landowners will be able to record the required deed restriction and sever their credits. The severance process results in permanent preservation of forested and agricultural lands in the Pinelands Preservation Area District, Agricultural Production Area, or Special Agricultural Production Area.

The proposed amendment to the Land Capability Map is expected to have a positive environmental impact as it provides the potential for reduced impacts on and increased protection of some of the most environmentally sensitive lands in the Pinelands Area, namely, the Black Run watershed and lands in the surrounding Pinelands Forest Area. Redesignation of the 2,440-acre area from the Rural Development Area to the Forest Area carries with it a reduction in theoretical residential zoning capacity from 249 to 38 potential units. The clustering of residential units on one-acre lots will be required, just as it is in the current Rural Development Area zoning plan, but fewer permitted units will mean smaller clusters of development, less land disturbance, and larger areas of preserved open space in this highly sensitive area.

Federal Standards Statement

Section 502 of the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. § 471i) called upon the State of New Jersey to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Pinelands National Reserve. This legislation set forth rigorous goals that the plan must meet, but did not specify standards governing individual uses or topics, such as those covered by the proposed amendments. The plan was subject to the approval of the United States Secretary of the Interior, as are all amendments to the CMP.

There are no other Federal requirements that apply to the subject matter of the amendments being proposed.

Jobs Impact

The proposed amendments are not expected to have a significant jobs impact.

The amendments do increase certain development application fees on the private and public sectors; however, the added costs are relatively minor and not expected to result in a loss of jobs. The proposed establishment of an expiration date for various completeness documents and waivers issued by the Commission may trigger the need for submission of new development applications to the Commission. If new or revised site plans, updated surveys, or new stormwater management plans are necessary for such applications, increased job opportunities for engineers and other environmental consultants may result. The proposed amendments to the Land Capability Map and the standards related to Regional Growth Area zoning plans and the use of PDCs may affect the number of new homes permitted in portions of the Pinelands Area, potentially impacting the number of jobs associated with new home construction. However, it is impossible for the Commission to estimate the number of jobs that might result.

The remainder of the proposed amendments are not expected to have any impact on the creation or loss of jobs.

Agriculture Industry Impact

The proposed amendments are not expected to significantly impact the agriculture industry.

To the extent that members of the agriculture industry located within the Pinelands Area intend to engage in activities that will necessitate submission of a development application, they may be impacted by the proposed fee increases. It is important to note that, for the most part, principal agricultural activities do not require the submission of development applications and will, therefore, continue to pay no fees to the Commission. The proposed fee increases, including \$250.00 for a waiver of strict compliance application and \$500.00 or \$1,000 for an application involving resolution of a violation, are relatively small and unlikely to affect many farm owners. The same is true for the increased fee for various types of LOIs. More importantly, there will continue to be no fee for the most commonly requested type of LOI, namely, the allocation of PDCs to any particular parcel in a PDC sending area.

The proposed amendments establishing expiration dates for certain waivers of strict compliance and completeness documents issued by the Commission could impact farm owners and operators. They may need to submit new development applications to the Commission and demonstrate consistency with current CMP standards and municipal land use ordinance provisions. Development applications in the Agricultural Production Area and Special Agricultural Production Area, where the vast majority of Pinelands farms are located, most often involve the development of one single-family home. Application fees for such proposals remain modest (\$250.00), as are the costs typically associated with approval for minor development.

The proposed amendments related to Regional Growth Area zoning plans and the PDC program are expected to have a positive impact on the agriculture industry. By providing municipalities with explicit authority to zone for higher densities in their Regional Growth Area if PDC use is mandatory, or to shift PDC obligations from residential to nonresidential uses when warranted, there will be continued and more certain demand for PDCs. The amendments also eliminate the ability of municipalities to implement significant decreases in their Regional Growth Area residential zoning capacities, thereby preserving existing opportunities for the use of PDCs. All of these amendments keep the market for PDCs active, which generates increased prices being paid to the holders of PDCs, a large number of whom are farmers or long-time landowners in the agricultural sending areas of the Pinelands. By helping to ensure that consistent, guaranteed opportunities for PDC use in Regional Growth Area will exist in the future, an economic incentive will remain for sending area landowners to sever and sell PDCs.

The proposed amendment to round certain fractional allocations of PDCs up to equal 0.25 PDCs may also benefit farm owners in the PDC sending areas. Such landowners will now have the minimum PDC increment required for severance and sale. As noted previously, 0.25 PDCs hold significant value, with an average sales price of nearly \$22,000 in 2024.

The proposed amendment to the Land Capability Map is expected to have no impact on the agriculture industry. There is limited active agriculture in the area being redesignated from the Rural Development Area to the Forest Area, where farming will continue to be a permitted use.

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis

The proposed amendments revising the Commission's application fee schedule will not impose any additional reporting or recordkeeping requirements on small businesses, nor will the amendments require small businesses to employ professional services. As discussed in the Economic Impact, the proposed amendments may have an impact on developers and property owners involved or interested in certain development projects within the Pinelands Area. As most businesses in the Pinelands Area may be characterized as small in size and number of employees, the proposed fee amendments may have an impact on "small business" as defined by the Regulatory Flexibility Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-16 et seq. However, because the Commission's fee schedule is based on the type of development application submitted, the proposed amendments are expected to have the same impact on small businesses as on any other entity. The proposed fee increases are also modest and not expected to

impact a large percentage of the Commission's applicants. Given that the resources of the Pinelands are important to all State citizens, and the proposed amendments are necessary to provide revenue for appropriate review and protection of these resources, no lesser requirements for small businesses are provided.

Housing Affordability Impact Analysis

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 52:14B-4, as amended effective July 17, 2008, by P.L. 2008, c. 46, the Commission has evaluated the proposed amendments to determine the impact, if any, on the affordability of housing or on the average cost of housing.

The proposed amendments to the Commission's application fee requirements are unlikely to have any noticeable effect on housing affordability. Increased fees (\$500.00 for minor development; \$1,000 for major development) are proposed to be assessed to resolve a violation of the CMP, which could occur as part of residential development application. Also, the proposed \$250.00 fee for an application requiring a waiver of strict compliance based on extraordinary hardship will, in nearly all cases, involve proposed development of a single-family detached home. The fee increases will have an impact on such applications. However, the amount of the increased fees will constitute a very small portion of the total project cost for all such developments, even those proposing only one unit. Therefore, the Commission believes it is extremely unlikely the economic impacts of the proposed fee amendments would evoke a change in the average costs associated with housing.

Similarly, the proposed amendments to establish expiration dates for certain completeness documents and old waivers of strict compliance are unlikely to have any significant impact on housing affordability. When a waiver or completeness document expires, submission of a new and possibly revised development application to the Commission will be required. Some of these applications will be for residential projects of varying sizes, housing types, and locations. In order for a new waiver or Certificate of Filing to be issued, the payment of application fees will be necessary, as will preparation and submission of new or revised site plans and supporting studies or reports. While there are costs associated with fulfilling these requirements, they are not unreasonable given the importance of ensuring that development in the Pinelands Area meets all current CMP standards. The need to obtain new waivers or Certificates of Filing is unlikely to have a marked impact on housing affordability.

The proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)1 and 7ii acknowledge that Pinelands municipalities have the flexibility to increase permitted densities within their Regional Growth Area in order to permit a wider variety of housing types, which is often necessary to accommodate the provision of affordable housing. The proposed amendment at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28(a)3v expressly provides these municipalities with the ability to relieve affordable housing units from the requirement to redeem PDCs if certain conditions are met. These amendments should have a positive impact on the affordability of housing.

The proposed amendment to the Land Capability Map affects lands in Evesham Township that are currently zoned for single-family residential development. All such development must be clustered on one-acre lots and served by on-site septic systems, pursuant to both the current Rural Development Area designation and the proposed Forest Area designation. The CMP does not permit sewer service in these two management areas, making them unlikely and largely inappropriate targets for the development of affordable housing. Therefore, the proposed amendments are unlikely to evoke a change in the average costs associated with housing in the affected area.

Smart Growth Development Impact Analysis

N.J.S.A. 52:14B-4, as amended effective July 17, 2008, by P.L. 2008, c. 46, requires that the proposed amendments be evaluated to determine their impacts, if any, on housing production in Planning Areas 1 and 2, or within designated centers, pursuant to the State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). Planning Areas 1 and 2 do not exist in the Pinelands Area. Likewise, the State Plan does not designate centers within the Pinelands Area. Rather, N.J.S.A. 52:18A-206.a provides that the State Plan shall rely on the Pinelands CMP with respect to the Pinelands. Therefore, the Commission has evaluated the impact of the proposed amendments on Pinelands management areas that are equivalent to Planning Areas 1 and 2 and designated centers (that is, Regional

Growth Areas, Pinelands Villages, and Pinelands Towns), as designated by the CMP.

The proposed amendments related to application fees and expiration of old waivers and completeness documents are not expected to have any impact on housing production. The proposed redesignation of lands from the Rural Development Area to the Forest Area in Evesham Township will have no impact on housing production in Regional Growth Areas, Pinelands Villages, or Pinelands Towns.

The proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.28 may have a positive impact on housing production in the Regional Growth Area. These amendments effectively codify the flexibility municipalities have to make changes to their zoning plans for purposes of accommodating housing of all types and intensities in their Regional Growth Areas. The provision of explicit standards will be of benefit to municipalities, landowners, and developers seeking to increase permitted residential densities in order to facilitate housing projects in the Regional Growth Area.

No other smart growth impacts are anticipated from the proposed amendments.

Racial and Ethnic Community Criminal Justice and Public Safety Impact

The Commission has evaluated this rulemaking and determined that it will not have an impact on pretrial detention, sentencing, probation, or parole policies concerning adults and juveniles in the State. Accordingly, no further analysis is required.

Full text of the proposal follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**; deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

7:50-1.6 Fees

(a)-(b) (No change.)

(c) The application fee for a commercial, institutional, industrial, or other non-residential development application submitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.14, 4.33, 4.52, or 4.66 shall be calculated in accordance with the following, based on typical construction costs, except as provided at (c)1 through 10 below:

Construction Cost	Required Application Fee
\$0 - \$500,000	1.25 percent of construction costs
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	\$6,250 + one percent of construction costs above \$500,000
Greater than \$1,000,000	\$11,250 + 0.75 percent of construction costs above \$1,000,000

Typical construction costs shall include all costs associated with the development for which the application is being submitted, including, but not limited to, site improvement and building improvement costs, but shall not include interior furnishings, atypical features, decorative materials, or other similar features. Supporting documentation of the expected construction costs shall be submitted as part of the application for development, unless the maximum fee pursuant to [(e)3] **(e)6** below is required, in which case, no such documentation shall be necessary.

1.-10. (No change.)

(d) (No change.)

(e) The application fee required at the time of submission of a development application in accordance with (a) through (d) above or (f) below shall:

1. Be increased by \$3,125 if an individual on-site septic system is proposed pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.84(a)5iv(2)[(1)]**(J)** or (3);

2. Be increased by \$250.00 if a Waiver of Strict Compliance is required pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.63, unless the application is submitted solely for purposes of demonstrating that a parcel is of limited practical use pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-9.2(a);

3. Be increased by \$1,000 for any application for major development that is submitted, in part or in whole, for purposes of resolving an outstanding violation of this Plan;

4. Be increased by \$500.00 for any application for minor development that is submitted, in part or in whole, for purposes of resolving an outstanding violation of this Plan;

[2.] **5. (No change in text.)**

[3.] 6. [Not] Except where an increased fee is required pursuant to (e)3 or 4 above, not exceed \$50,000, unless a public agency is the applicant, in which case, the fee shall not exceed \$25,000.

(f) (No change.)

(g) The application fee for a development application submitted by a qualified tax-exempt religious association or corporation or a qualified [tax exempt] **tax-exempt** non-profit organization shall be \$500.00 or the amount calculated in accordance with (a) through (d) above, whichever is less. **If the development application is submitted, in part or in whole, for purposes of resolving an outstanding violation of this Plan, the application fee shall be increased in accordance with (e)3 or 4 above.** For purposes of this provision, the term "qualified tax-exempt religious association or corporation" means a religious association or corporation [which] **that** is exempt from Federal income taxation [under] **pursuant to** Sections 501(c)(3) or (d) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, Title 26, Subtitle A, Chapter 1, Subchapter F, Part I, Sections 501(c)(3) and (d). For purposes of this provision, the term "qualified tax-exempt non-profit organization" means a non-profit organization [which] **that** is exempt from [federal] **Federal** income taxation [under] **pursuant to** Section[s] 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue **Service Code**, Title 26, Subtitle A, Chapter 1, Subchapter F, Part I, Section[s] 501(c)(3).

(h) The fee for a Letter of Interpretation or Amended Letter of Interpretation submitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4, Part VI, shall be determined according to the following:

1. There shall be no fee for a Letter of Interpretation involving the allocation of Pinelands Development Credits, except for an Amended Letter of Interpretation requested within five years of the issuance of the original Letter of Interpretation, in which case, the fee shall be \$250.00 plus \$6.25 per acre of land for which the amended allocation is requested; [and]

2. The application fee for [any other] a Letter of Interpretation or Amended Letter of Interpretation **to determine the presence or absence of wetlands or wetlands transition areas** shall be [\$250.00.] **\$1,000;**

3. The application fee for a Letter of Interpretation or Amended Letter of Interpretation to verify a wetlands line or to determine the extent of any required wetlands transition areas shall be \$1,000 plus \$100.00 per acre of the parcel, or portion thereof, subject to the provisions at (e)6 above; and

4. The application fee for any other Letter of Interpretation or Amended Letter of Interpretation shall be \$500.00.

(i)-(l) (No change.)

SUBCHAPTER 4. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

7:50-4.3 Commission hearing procedures

(a) (No change.)

(b) Notice of public hearing.

1. (No change.)

2. Persons entitled to notice:

i. Notice of public hearings shall be given by the Commission:

(1)-(5) (No change.)

(6) If the public hearing involves an amendment proposed by the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-7, by sending a copy of the notice, by mail, to the mayor of each Pinelands municipality and to the [freeholder] **director of the board of county commissioners** and county executive of each Pinelands county. In addition, a copy of the notice shall be published in all the official newspapers of the Pinelands Commission and posted on the Commission's website.

(7) If the public hearing involves an inter-governmental memorandum of agreement pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.52, by sending a copy of the notice, by mail, to the mayor of each Pinelands municipality and to the [freeholder] **director of the board of county commissioners** and county executive of each Pinelands county that may be directly affected by the memorandum of agreement under consideration. In addition, a copy of the notice shall be published in those official newspapers of the Pinelands Commission having general circulation in the area that may be directly

affected by the memorandum of agreement and posted on the Commission's website.

(8) (No change.)

(9) If the public hearing involves a comprehensive plan submitted to the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.4(c)6, by sending a copy of the notice and the comprehensive plan, by mail, to the mayor of each Pinelands municipality and the [freeholder] **director of the board of county commissioners** and county executive, if any, of each Pinelands county. In addition, a copy of the notice shall be published in all of the official newspapers of the Pinelands Commission and posted on the Commission's website.

ii. (No change.)

3.-4. (No change.)

(c)-(e) (No change.)

7:50-4.15 Action by Executive Director on application

(a) Within 90 days following the receipt of a complete application for development, the Executive Director shall review the application and all information submitted by the applicant or any other person relating to the application and upon completion of such review, issue a Certificate of Completeness stating whether the application should be approved, approved with conditions, or disapproved. The application may be approved or approved with conditions only if the development as proposed, or subject to any conditions [which] **that** may be imposed, conforms to each of the minimum standards for development approval established [by] **at** N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.16. The Executive Director may propose in said Certificate of Completeness any reasonable condition that he or she finds is necessary to achieve the objectives of this Plan. The Executive Director shall provide a copy of the Certificate of Completeness to the applicant, the Commission, all persons who have individually submitted information concerning the application, all persons who have requested a copy of said decision, and any person, organization, or agency that has registered [under] **pursuant to** N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.3(b)2i(2).

(b) Any Certificate of Completeness issued by the Executive Director on or after January 1, 2004, shall expire five years from the date of issuance, unless:

1. The applicant has obtained local approval and the Executive Director has determined that the approval raises no substantial issues with respect to the conformance of the proposed development with the minimum standards of this Plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.19 or 4.22; or

2. The applicant has obtained approval by the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.5.

(c) Any Certificate of Completeness issued by the Executive Director prior to January 1, 2004, shall be deemed expired and may not be used to obtain local approval or approval by the Commission.

7:50-4.34 Certificate of Filing; required for determination of completeness

(a) Upon determining that an application is complete, the Executive Director shall issue a Certificate of Filing.

(b) No local permitting agency shall determine that any application for development is complete unless it is accompanied by a Certificate of Filing issued pursuant to this section. Such certificate may identify any inconsistencies of the proposed development with the standards of this Plan or the local certified land use ordinances and may indicate that if such inconsistencies are not resolved by a local approval, that local approval will be subject to review by the Pinelands Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.37 and 4.40. Any such information [contained] in the Certificate of Filing is for the guidance of the applicant and local permitting agency only. Such information in no way shall be considered a final determination by either the Executive Director or the Pinelands Commission.

(c) Any Certificate of Filing issued by the Executive Director on or after January 1, 2004, shall expire five years from the date of issuance, unless:

1. The applicant has obtained local approval and the Executive Director has determined that the approval raises no substantial issues with respect to the conformance of the proposed development with the minimum standards of this Plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.37 or 4.40; or

2. The applicant has obtained approval by the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.5.

(d) Any Certificate of Filing issued by the Executive Director prior to January 1, 2004, shall be deemed expired and may not be used to obtain local approval or approval by the Commission.

7:50-4.41 Public hearing

If the Executive Director determines that the approval should be reviewed by the Commission, he or she shall, within 45 days following receipt of a completed notice of final determination given pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.35[(c)](e), conduct a public hearing to be held pursuant to the procedures set [out in] **forth at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.3.** The applicant shall have the burden of going forward and the burden of proof at the public hearing. Applications from applicants who do not provide notice for any hearing and do not make a timely request for adjournment shall be recommended for denial. For applicants who do not appear at more than one scheduled public hearing, the Executive Director may determine that no further adjournment of the public hearing will be provided. Following conclusion of the public hearing, the Executive Director shall review the record of the public hearing and issue a report on the public hearing to the Commission. The Executive Director may recommend that the Commission approve the application, approve the application with conditions, or disapprove the application. The Executive Director shall give written notification of his or her findings and conclusions to the applicant, the Commission, the local permitting agency, all persons who have individually submitted information concerning the application, all persons who have requested a copy of said determination, and any person, organization, or agency that has registered [under] **pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.3(b)2i(2).** However, an applicant may, at his or her option, waive all time limits for review imposed by the Pinelands Protection Act or this Plan and request that the hearing be held by an [Administrative Law Judge] **administrative law judge** pursuant to the procedures established [in] **at N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91.**

7:50-4.70 Effect of grant of waiver; expiration; recordation; effective date

(a)-(d) (No change.)

[(e) The N.J.A.C. 7:50-2.11 definitions of "contiguous lands," "fair market value" and "impaired wetlands," and N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.2(b)7 and 4.61 through this section, as amended or adopted effective March 2, 1992, shall apply to all applications except for those applications on which an Executive Director's determination was issued prior to March 2, 1992. For those applications, the above-referenced provisions in effect prior to March 2, 1992 shall govern, provided that:

1. The Pinelands Commission action on the Waiver of Strict Compliance is based on information that was submitted to the Pinelands Commission prior to March 2, 1992;

2. The applicant has not requested that the application be reviewed pursuant to the N.J.A.C. 7:50-2.11 definitions of "contiguous lands," "fair market value" and "impaired wetlands," and N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.2(b)7 and 4.61 through this section, as amended or adopted effective March 2, 1992; and either

3. The Pinelands Commission acts on the application at its next regularly scheduled meeting after the time to appeal under N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91 has expired and no request for appeal has been received; or

4. A timely request for an appeal is received under N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.91 or the Executive Director's determination is referred to the Office of Administrative Law by the Pinelands Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.69 (formerly N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.65).]

(e) Waivers approved pursuant to former N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.66(a)1, repealed effective March 2, 1992, shall expire one year from the effective date of these rules.

SUBCHAPTER 5. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR LAND USES AND INTENSITIES

7:50-5.3 Map status

(a) The following maps, the originals of which are maintained at the offices of the Commission, are hereby designated and established as a part of this Plan and shall be as much a part of this Plan as if they were set out in full in this Plan:

1.-23. (No change.)

24. Land Capability, Plate 28, as amended as of [June 19, 2006] **(the effective date of this rulemaking);**

25.-26. (No change.)

7:50-5.28 Minimum standards governing the distribution and intensity of development and land use in Regional Growth Areas

(a) Any use not otherwise limited pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-6 may be permitted in a Regional Growth Area, provided that:

1. Except as provided [in] **at (a)2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 below and Part IV** of this subchapter, the total number of dwelling units authorized by a municipality for a Regional Growth Area shall be equal to [and not exceed] the following density per acre of developable land:

i.-xxx. (No change.)

2. (No change.)

3. The land use element of a municipal master plan and land use ordinance shall reasonably permit development to occur within a range of densities[.]; provided that [the]:

i. The total amount of residential development permitted [in] at (a)1 above is exceeded by at least 50 percent through the use of Pinelands Development Credits; [that a reasonable proportion of the density increase permits the development of single family detached residences; and that the]

ii. All residentially zoned districts [in which the ranges are established] are reasonably expected to be developed within [the] their assigned density ranges[.];

[i. The following guidelines may be used by municipalities in establishing these ranges:

(1) Less than .5 dwelling units per acre;

(2) One-half to one dwelling units per acre;

(3) One to two dwelling units per acre;

(4) Two to three dwelling units per acre;

(5) Three to four dwelling units per acre;

(6) Four to six dwelling units per acre;

(7) Six to nine dwelling units per acre;

(8) Nine to twelve dwelling units per acre; and

(9) Twelve and greater dwelling units per acre.]

ii. Municipal master plans [or] and land use ordinances shall provide that development at a density [which] that is greater than the lowest density in each range can be carried out only if the increase in density is achieved through a density bonus for use of Pinelands Development Credits[.];

iv. Municipal master plans and land use ordinances may accommodate all or a portion of the Pinelands Development Credit obligation assigned at (a)3i above by requiring the use of Pinelands Development Credits for nonresidential development; and

v. Municipalities may identify housing types for which no PDC use will be necessary, including housing units made affordable to low, and moderate-income households pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:27D-311, provided the municipal land use ordinance includes provisions to guarantee the use of Pinelands Development Credits for other housing types or in other zoning districts within the municipality's Regional Growth Area, such that the minimum requirements at (a)3i above are met.

4. Any local approval, including variances, [which] **that** grants relief from **residential** density or lot area requirements shall require that Pinelands Development Credits be used for all dwelling units or lots in excess of that otherwise permitted, unless a Waiver of Strict Compliance for the dwelling unit or lot has been approved by the Pinelands Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-4, Part V.

5.-6. (No change.)

7. Nothing [in] **at (a) above** is intended to prevent a municipality, as part of a certified master plan or land use ordinance, from:

i. (No change.)

ii. Increasing the total number of dwelling units assigned pursuant to (a)1 and 3 above in order to achieve identified municipal objectives; provided that infrastructure is available or can be provided to serve the areas to be zoned for increased residential density, such areas do not include significant environmental limitations and the use of Pinelands Development Credits is required for a percentage of the

permitted dwelling units. Said percentage shall be established in consideration of the type of dwelling unit permitted, maximum permitted density, and the rate at which Pinelands Development Credits have been used in the municipality's Regional Growth Area as a whole;

[ii.] **iii.** [Increasing or decreasing] **Decreasing** by as much as 10 percent the total number of dwelling units assigned pursuant to (a)1 above[.]; provided that the Pinelands Development Credit program requirements set forth [in] **at** (a)3 above are met relative to the adjusted dwelling unit total and provided further that the adjustment is consistent with land tenure patterns, the character of portions of the regional growth area, the provision of infrastructure and community services, and the natural resource characteristics of the area; or

[iii.] **iv.** Decreasing the total number of dwelling units assigned pursuant to (a)1 above to a density of no less [that] **than** 2.5 units per acre of developable land[.]; provided that **any such decrease is certified by the Commission pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-3 as of (the effective date of this rulemaking) and:**

- (1)-(3) (No change.)
- 8. (No change.)
- (b) (No change.)

7:50-5.43 Pinelands Development Credits established

(a) Except for land which is owned by a public agency on January 14, 1981, land [which] **that** is thereafter purchased by the State for conservation purposes, land [which] **that** is subject to an easement limiting the use of land to [nonresidential] **non-residential** uses or land otherwise excluded from entitlement pursuant to (b) below, every parcel of land in the Preservation Area District, an Agricultural Production Area, or a Special Agricultural Production Area shall have a use right known as "Pinelands Development Credits" that can be used [to secure a density bonus for lands located] **for development** in Regional Growth Areas **and in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.62(d), 5.27(c), and 5.32(b).**

(b) Pinelands Development Credits are hereby established at the following ratios:

- 1.-4. (No change.)
- 5. Pinelands Development Credit allocations [exceeding one-quarter of a Pinelands Development Credit] shall be rounded to the nearest one-quarter of a Credit, **with the exception of any such allocation that totals less than 0.125 Pinelands Development Credits, unless the standards at (b)6 or 7 below are met.**
- 6.-8. (No change.)
- (c) (No change.)

7:50-5.46 Aggregation of Pinelands Development Credits

Pinelands Development Credits may be aggregated from different parcels for use in [securing a bonus for a single parcel of land in a Regional Growth Area, provided that the density does not exceed the limits of the density range specified in the municipal district in which the parcel is located] **accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:50-5.43(a).**

7:50-5.47 Recordation of deed restriction

- (a) (No change.)
- (b) Such deed restriction shall specify the number of Pinelands Development Credits [sold] **allocated** and that the parcel may only be used in perpetuity for the following uses:
 - 1.-4. (No change.)
 - (c) (No change.)

SUBCHAPTER 10. PILOT PROGRAMS

7:50-10.22 General standards

(a) Alternate design pilot program treatment systems shall be authorized for residential use in all municipalities; provided that the following standards are met:

- 1.-4. (No change.)
- 5. Conditions for **the** use of alternate design pilot program treatment systems are as follows:
 - i.-viii. (No change.)
 - ix. The property owner shall record, with the deed to the property, a notice consistent with the sample deed notice approved pursuant to (a)2vi above that identifies the technology, acknowledges the owner's

responsibility to operate and maintain it in accordance with the manual required at [(a)2vi] **(a)2iv** above, and grants access, with reasonable notice, to the local board of health, the Commission, and its agents for inspection and monitoring purposes. The recorded deed shall run with the property and shall ensure that the maintenance requirements are binding on any owner of the property during the life of the system and that the monitoring requirements are binding on any owner of the property during the time period the monitoring requirements apply pursuant to this pilot program or any subsequent rules adopted by the Commission that apply to said system;

- x.-xiii. (No change.)
- (b)-(c) (No change.)

OTHER AGENCIES

(a)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Authority Assistance Programs

Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Program

Proposed Readoption of Specially Adopted Amendments with Substantial Changes: N.J.A.C. 19:31T-1.1 through 1.7, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, and 1.14

Proposed Readoption of Specially Adopted New Rules with Substantial Changes: N.J.A.C. 19:31T-1.8, 1.9, and 1.13

Authorized By New Jersey Economic Development Authority, Tim Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer.

Authority: P.L. 2019, c. 506, P.L. 2020, c. 156, P.L. 2021, c. 160, P.L. 2021, c. 367, P.L. 2023, c. 97, and P.L. 2024, c. 33.

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to calendar requirement.

Proposal Number: PRN 2025-066.

Submit written comments by August 15, 2025, to:

Alyson Jones, Managing Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
New Jersey Economic Development Authority
PO Box 990
Trenton, NJ 08625-0990
Alyson.Jones@njeda.gov

Take notice that in accordance with P.L. 2019, c. 506, P.L. 2020, c. 156, P.L. 2021, c. 160, P.L. 2021, c. 367, P.L. 2023, c. 97, and P.L. 2024, c. 33, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority ("NJEDA" or "Authority") is proposing to readopt the specially adopted amendments and new rules and proposing substantial changes to implement the provisions of the Garden State Film and Digital Media Jobs Act, N.J.S.A. 54:10A-5.39b and 54A:4-12b.

The specially adopted amendments and new rules became effective on February 26, 2024, upon acceptance for filing by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The specially adopted amendments and new rules were to be effective for a period not to exceed 180 days from the date of filing, that is, until August 26, 2024. Concurrently, the amendments and new rules were proposed for amendment in accordance with the normal rulemaking requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq. As the NJEDA filed the original notice of readoption before August 26, 2024, the expiration date was extended 180 days to February 22, 2025, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:14B-5.1.c. The concurrently proposed amendments and new rules would have become effective and permanent upon notice of adoption if filed on or before February 22, 2025. See N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.4(f).

On February 22, 2025, Governor Murphy extended the expiration date of the specially adopted amendments and new rules for one year. The new expiration date is February 22, 2026. See 57 N.J.R. 388(a). The notice of concurrent proposal expired on April 1, 2025, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.4. The Authority is now proposing to readopt the specially adopted



State of New Jersey
THE PINELANDS COMMISSION
PO Box 359
NEW LISBON, NJ 08064
(609) 894-7300
www.nj.gov/pinelands



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

LAURA E. MATOS
Chair
SUSAN R. GROGAN
Executive Director

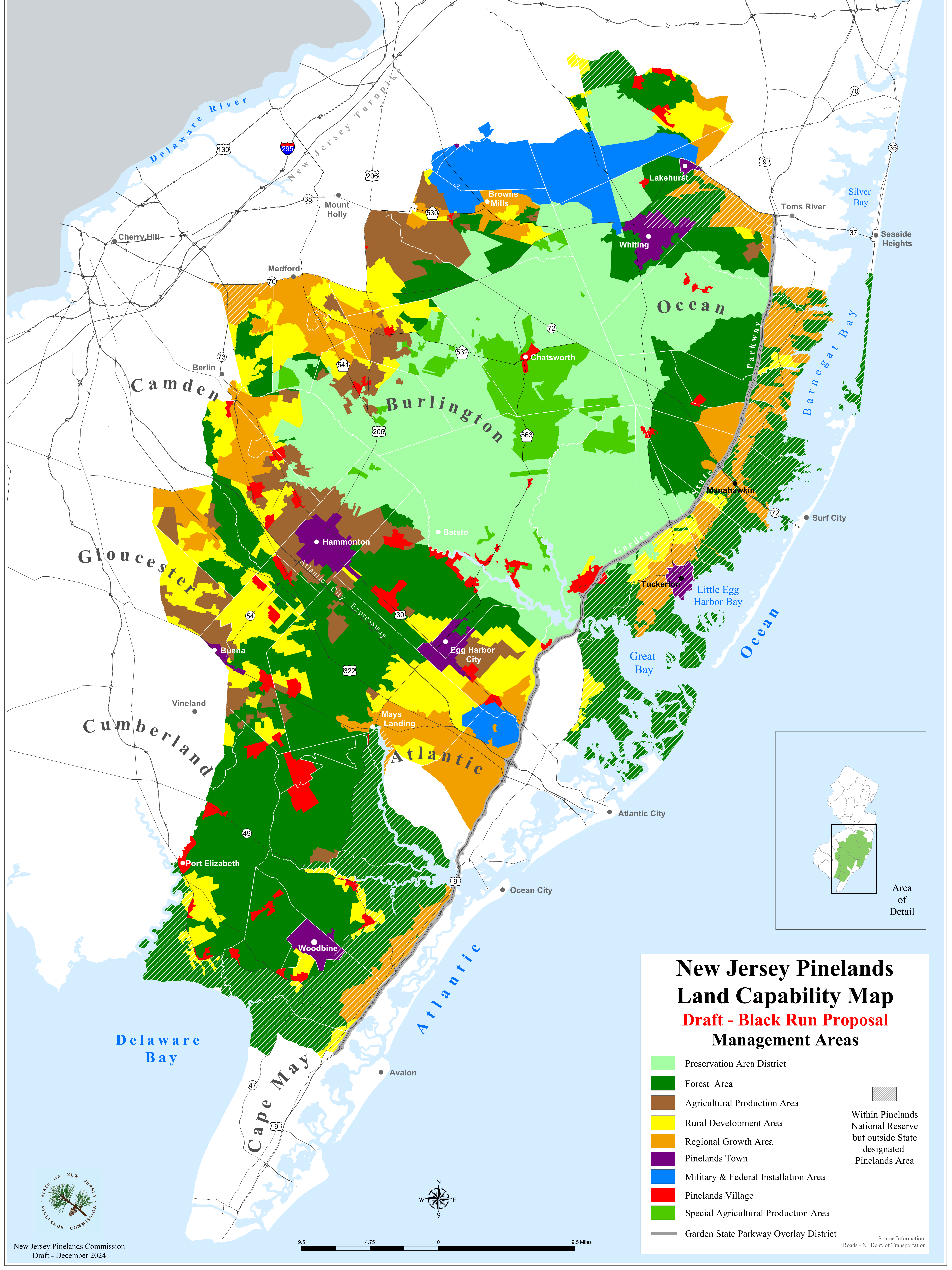
In an effort to decrease the time to download large files, the Pinelands Commission has separated the public comments on the package of Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan amendments into four files. Please click on the links below to access each of the files:

[A. Public Comments 1-99](#)

[B. Public Comments 100-256](#)

[C. Public Comments 257-367](#)

[D. Public Comments 368-490](#)



New Jersey Pinelands Land Capability Map

Draft - Black Run Proposal Management Areas

Preservation Area District

Forest Area

Agricultural Production Area

Rural Development Area

Regional Growth Area

Pinelands Town

Military & Federal Installation Area

Pinelands Village

Special Agricultural Production Area

Garden State Parkway Overlay District

Within Pinelands National Reserve but outside State designated Pinelands Area

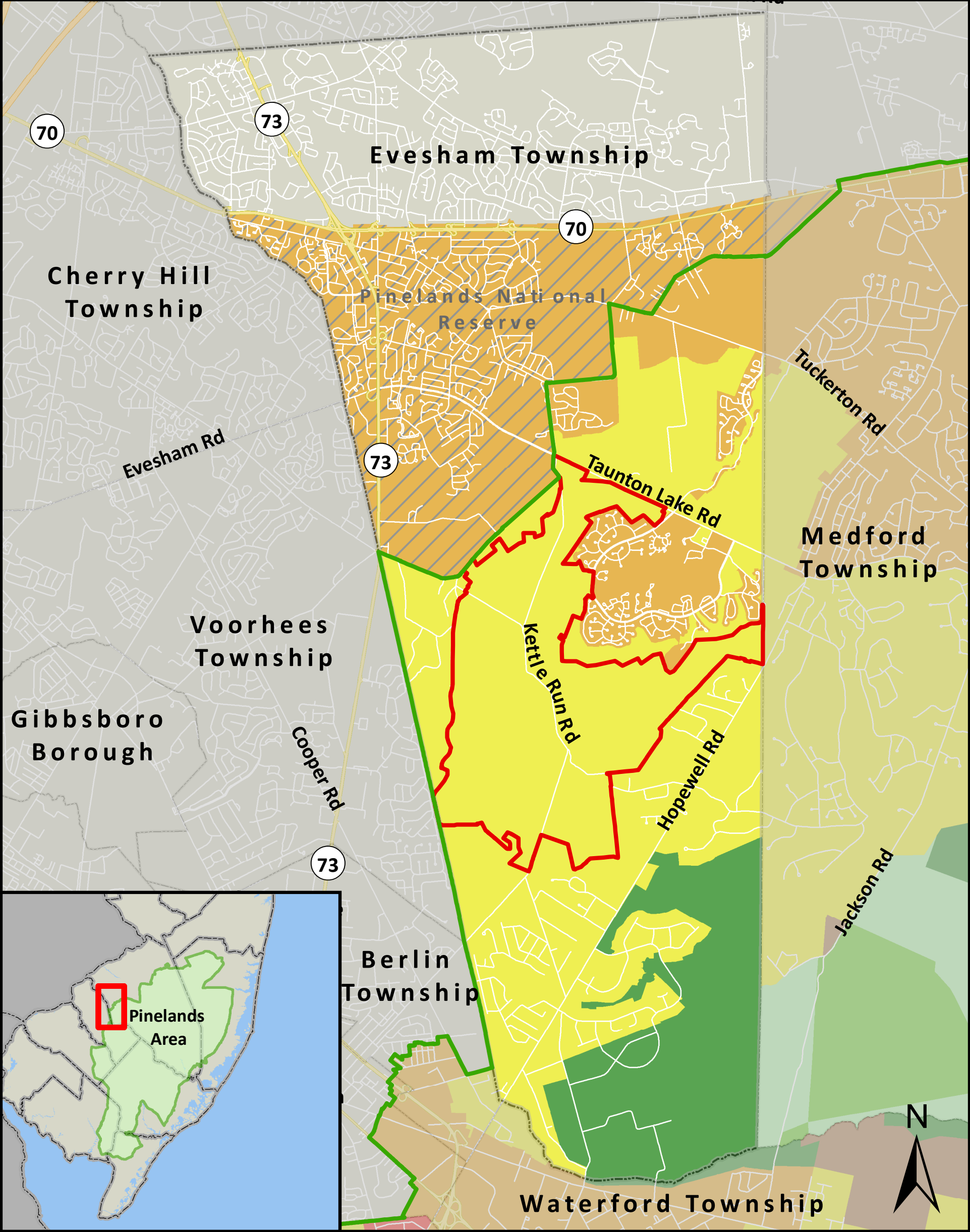
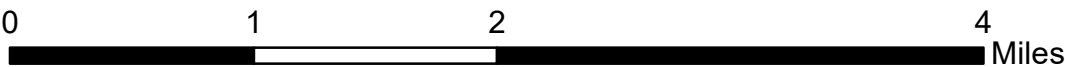
Source Information:
Roads - NJ Dept. of Transportation

Pinelands Commission Draft Black Run Rule Proposal

Pinelands Management Areas

- Municipal Boundaries
-
- Pinelands Area Boundary

February 2025





PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor
TAHESHA L. WAY
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Executive Director

General Information: Info@pinelands.nj.gov
Application Specific Information: AppInfo@pinelands.nj.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Pinelands Commission

From: Katie Elliott *KE*
Planning Specialist

Date: September 29, 2025

Subject: No Substantial Issue Findings

During the past month, the Land Use Programs Office reviewed five ordinances and one housing element and fair share plan that were found to raise no substantial issues with respect to the standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). They included the following:

Corbin City Ordinance 5-2025 – amends Chapter 19, Officers and Employees, and Chapter 102, Zoning, Subdivision, and Site Plan Review, of the Code of Corbin City. The ordinance updates the duties of the Zoning Officer and Code Enforcement Officer, revises the definition of “Zoning Permit” to specify that it is a document signed by the Zoning Official, and clarifies both the circumstances under which zoning permits are required and when the Zoning Officer may issue a permit without City Planning Board approval.

Franklin Township Ordinance O-5-25 – amends Chapter 253, Land Development, of the Code of Franklin Township by revising height, setback, and area standards for private garages and removing the cap on the number of vehicles that can be stored within a private garage.

Manchester Township Ordinance 25-27 – adopts an amended Redevelopment Plan for Block 62, Lots 30 and 31.01, dated July 2, 2025. An earlier version of the redevelopment plan was certified by the Commission on May 10, 2024. The amended redevelopment plan revises the permitted uses within the redevelopment area to include data centers. The plan defines data center and includes additional parking and loading standards for such uses. The ordinance also revises the accessory uses and structures permitted within the redevelopment area to include HVAC equipment, solar panels, security fencing, and electrical equipment. The redevelopment area is located within the Township’s Regional Growth Area.

Medford Township Ordinance 2025-7 – amends the Land Development Regulations of the Code of Medford Township. The ordinance amends the definition of the term “Garage, Private Residential” as well as general standards for garages and carports in residential districts. The ordinance also amends the

bulk, height, quantity and setback standards for private residential sheds and other residential accessory structures in various residential zones within the Pinelands Area.

Monroe Township Ordinance O:22-2025 – amends Chapter 175, Land Development, of the Code of Monroe Township by revising Section 175-163.4, Cannabis. Within the Pinelands Area, the ordinance permits Class 1 indoor cannabis cultivation in the Rural Development Agricultural (RD-A), Regional Growth Light Industrial (RG-LI), Regional Growth Commercial (RG-C), and Agricultural Production (AG) districts. Class 1 outdoor cannabis cultivation is permitted in the RD-A and AG districts and conditionally permitted in the Rural Development Commercial (RD-C) District. The ordinance establishes bulk and area standards for both indoor and outdoor cannabis cultivation. It continues to limit all Class 1 uses in an AG District, whether indoor or outdoor, to activities consistent with the definition of agricultural or horticultural purpose or use and/or agricultural products processing facility. The RG-C and RG-LI districts are located in a Regional Growth Area; the RD-A and RD-C districts are located in a Rural Development Area, and the AG District is located in an Agricultural Production Area.

The ordinance further amends the application submission requirements for proposed cannabis establishments requiring site plan approval, and revises general standards related to buffering, security, lighting, and odor. It also provides additional distance requirements for Class 5 retail cannabis establishments, while clarifying that such uses are permitted in multi-unit retail buildings.

South Toms River Borough 2025 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan – addresses the Borough’s fourth-round affordable housing obligation. The Plan includes updated data and analysis on the Borough’s current and projected demographic, housing stock, and employment characteristics, as well as updated information on the completed and proposed mechanisms to address the Borough’s affordable housing obligation. The Plan indicates a present need of 0 units and a fourth-round prospective need of 35 units. The Plan also incorporates a vacant land adjustment, resulting in a fourth-round realistic development potential (RDP) of 6 units. Accordingly, the Borough has an unmet need of 29 units. The Plan identifies two sites for potential affordable housing development, both of which are located outside of the Pinelands Area. There are no affordable housing sites proposed within the Pinelands Area portion of the Borough.