



New Jersey Pinelands Commission

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Pinelands Commission adopts new stormwater regulations that will enhance the protection of Pinelands resources

NEW LISBON, N.J. – The Pinelands Commission has adopted new rules that will better protect Pinelands resources by requiring the use of green infrastructure and other more stringent standards to manage stormwater.

During its meeting of December 10, 2021, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt the amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), the rules that govern land-use, development, and the protection of resources in the state Pinelands Area.

The amendments integrate and expand on stormwater management rules that were adopted by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The NJDEP's regulations took effect on March 2, 2020, and they focus on the use of green infrastructure to meet groundwater recharge and stormwater runoff quantity and quality standards.

Stormwater runoff is managed to reduce waterborne pollution from sources such as trash, nitrogen, phosphorus, bacterial pathogens and deicing salts, and to minimize local flooding.

The Commission's new stormwater management rules follow the NJDEP's regulations in that they require green infrastructure to manage the stormwater close to the source, treat stormwater through infiltration into the subsoil, treat stormwater through filtration by vegetation or soil, and/or store stormwater runoff for reuse.

In order to provide enhanced protection to Pinelands resources, the Commission's new rules will, for the first time, require stormwater management for minor development. Minor residential development will be required to retain and infiltrate clean stormwater generated from the roof of a house by using green infrastructure measures, which include dry wells, pervious paving systems and small-scale bioretention systems such as a rain garden. Minor non-residential development will be required to treat, infiltrate and recharge stormwater generated from new motor vehicle surfaces of greater than 1,000 square feet in size.

Prior to the new rules, stormwater management in the Pinelands Area was generally required only for major development, defined in the CMP as any division of land into five or more lots; any construction or expansion of any housing development of five or more dwelling units; any construction or expansion of any commercial or industrial use or structure on a site of more

than three acres; or any grading, clearing or disturbance of an area in excess of 5,000 square feet.

The new CMP amendments also include stricter standards for nitrogen removal for major development in the Pinelands. The new rules require all major development to implement stormwater management measures to achieve a minimum 65% reduction of total nitrogen loads in stormwater runoff. The Pinelands' ecosystem is particularly vulnerable to damages caused by elevated levels of nitrogen, including the proliferation of invasive plant and animal species that outcompete and displace native species that are adapted to low levels of nitrogen.

Lastly, the new rules clarify standards for variances, exceptions, and mitigation.

“These new regulations build on the significant improvements made by the NJDEP with respect to the use of green infrastructure and include additional measures that afford enhanced protection of Pinelands resources and address the impacts of climate change on stormwater runoff. The Commission’s new rules will reduce the volume of stormwater runoff, lower the potential for localized flooding and help to maintain water levels in the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer, which underlies the Pinelands, provides fresh drinking water and supports the region’s special ecosystem,” said Susan R. Grogan, the Commission’s Acting Executive Director.

The new stormwater management rules will become effective upon publication in the New Jersey Register on January 18, 2022. Pinelands municipalities will then have one year to incorporate the new rules into their own master plans and land use ordinances. The Commission will draft and provide model ordinances to assist the municipalities with this effort.

The Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency that is charged with protecting the 938,000-acre state Pinelands Area, which includes parts of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Ocean counties.

***** ATTENTION REPORTERS/EDITORS:** High-resolution photos of a rain garden can be obtained by contacting Paul Leakan at info@pinelands.nj.gov, including the photo below.



Above: A rain garden installed at the Hammonton Lake Park in the New Jersey Pinelands.