



New Jersey Pinelands Commission

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Pinelands Commission Approves Agreement that Authorizes Accessibility Improvements at Pemberton Lake Trail

NEW LISBON, N.J., January 12, 2024 – During its meeting today, the Pinelands Commission authorized a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that will enable Pemberton Township to undertake accessibility improvements at the Pemberton Lake Trail.

Pemberton Lake is located in the Pemberton Lake Wildlife Management Area, which is managed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The site consists of three parcels. Pemberton Township owns two of the parcels, and the State of New Jersey owns the third parcel.

The Commission's MOA with Pemberton Township enables the Township to improve a portion of the Pemberton Lake Trail that starts at the site's parking area on Magnolia Road and proceeds proximate to the shoreline of the lake to the trailhead at the NJDEP's parking area on Coleman's Bridge Road. The improvements include placing crushed gravel within the existing length and width of the trail, leveling the trail to no more than a 5% grade along its entire length and installing boardwalks at two areas of the trail that are prone to being wet. The improvements would make the trail firm, stable and flat from side-to-side, so it is more accessible to individuals with mobility issues.

Portions of the Pemberton Lake Trail are located within wetlands and wetlands buffers, necessitating the Commission's authorization of a deviation from the standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) in order to permit the trail improvements. Under the CMP, such deviations may be granted via MOAs between the Commission and other public agencies. MOAs allow those agencies to undertake development activities that may not be consistent with Pinelands regulations, so long as the agreement is accompanied by measures that afford an equivalent level of protection of the resources of the Pinelands as would be provided through a strict application of CMP standards.

To offset the impacts associated with the proposed trail improvements, the Township will:

- Revegetate two wetlands buffer areas within the project site, one (4,980 square feet) adjacent to the Magnolia Road parking area and the other (9,250 square feet) adjacent to the Coleman's Bridge Road parking area, with native Pinelands vegetation;
- Create a rain garden in a portion of the denuded area adjacent to the parking area on Magnolia Road;
- Install a gate at each end of the improved trail that is designed to permit pedestrians, wheelchairs, walkers and electric scooters to enter the trail, while prohibiting entry by off-road vehicles;
- Install wooden rail and post barriers at specific points along the trail in the vicinity of the Pemberton Bypass that are currently used unlawfully by off-road vehicles to access the trail; and

- Create two accessible parking spaces at the existing Coleman’s Bridge Road parking area.

“We are pleased to have successfully cooperated with Pemberton Township to make such a worthwhile project a reality,” said Susan R. Grogan, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. “The Commission is already hard at work with other Pinelands municipalities on similar agreements to facilitate additional accessible trails projects.”

The Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency that is charged with protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the 938,000-acre state Pinelands Area, which includes parts or all of 53 municipalities in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Ocean counties.

Photos of the Pemberton Lake Trail are shown below:





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