



Press Release

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For Immediate Release:

Pinelands Commission launches new, greatly enhanced website

Site showcases the Pinelands, improves communication with the public

NEW LISBON, N.J., May 4, 2015 – The Pinelands Commission has launched a new, greatly enhanced website that will heighten awareness of the Pinelands while improving communication with the public.

Commission staff created the new website (<http://www.nj.gov/pinelands>) with designers and programmers from the New Jersey Office of Information Technology (OIT). The site went live today.

“Our website is a critical tool for interacting with the public, and we recognized the need to improve it,” said Nancy Wittenberg, the Commission’s Executive Director. “The Commission’s staff spent months scouring through hundreds of pages of information while updating the website. The results of their efforts are clear. It is vastly easier to find information on the new site. The site dramatically enhances our ability to communicate with applicants and other members of the public, while also showcasing the region’s ecological treasures. Both are vital for the future protection of the Pinelands.”

Prior to building the new website, Commission staff conducted an online survey to ask applicants, officials, residents and other members of the public about what they like or dislike about the agency’s old site. The public requested that the new site be reorganized to make it easier to find information. They also wanted meeting dates to be displayed more prominently, and they wanted a better mechanism to submit written comments or questions.

“The new site was specifically designed to satisfy the public’s requests,” Wittenberg said.

The Commission last redesigned its website in 2005.

Three versions of the website have been created: one formatted for use on desktop computers, as well as versions that are formatted for use on cellphones and tablets.

The new site features a slideshow of Pinelands plants, animals and landscape scenes that rotate at the top of the page. The slideshow images will be swapped out twice per season, and a total of 56 different images will be displayed throughout the year.

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Website users can now use place their cursor over each main topical section, prompting all of the subsections and/or documents to drop down. The feature enables users to access those subsections and other documents with one click of a mouse. For example, meeting agendas and the online version of the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) can now be downloaded directly from the Home page. Previously, it took several clicks to access those documents. (Please see the photo on page 4 for an illustration.)

The new site also includes a new Image/Video library with nearly 200 high-resolution, digital photos of Pinelands agriculture, animals, history, landscape and plants. All of the photos were taken by Commission staff.

New form-based e-mail systems have been created for the public to submit formal, written comments on various matters, such as pending resolutions or proposed amendments to the CMP. The public can also use the form-based e-mail system to send questions or comments regarding development applications or Commission decisions.

In addition, a new Fee Calculator that applicants can use to determine their development application fee also has been created. Applicants simply type in their proposal, such as the number of dwelling units, and the new system calculates their fee.

Commission staff is currently working to create a new interactive mapping system that will enable the public to view zoning, wetlands and other information by block and lot.

****** ATTENTION REPORTERS/EDITORS:** High-resolution .jpeg images of the new website, including those shown on the next two pages, can be obtained by contacting Paul Leakan at (609) 894-7300 or info@njpines.state.nj.us.

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The screenshot shows the home page of the Pinelands Commission website. At the top right, it features the names of Governor Chris Christie and Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, along with navigation links for 'NJ Home', 'Services A to Z', 'Departments/Agencies', and 'FAQs'. A search bar is also present. The main header includes the State of New Jersey logo and the text 'STATE OF NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION'. Below this is a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'About', 'Pinelands National Reserve', 'Rules', 'Applications', 'Planning', 'Science', and 'Information & Education'. A large banner image shows pine branches with cones, with the text 'Pitch pine female cones' overlaid. A secondary navigation menu includes 'News & Notices', 'Meetings', 'Hearings', 'Visit', 'Maps', and 'Contact'. The 'News & Notices' section lists 'New Application Fee Calculator' and 'New Management Areas page'. A 'Spotlight' section features a 'Pinelands Research Series' image and a link to 'Upcoming Presentations'. On the right, there are icons for 'Presentations', 'Images/Videos', and 'File an Application'. A 'Pinelands News Alert' section offers an email sign-up form with fields for first name, last name, and email address, and a 'Sign up' button. Below this is a 'Help protect the NJ Pinelands' section with a 'Purchase license plates' link and the 'New Jersey LSAMP' logo. The footer contains the 'OPRA | Open Public Records Act' logo, contact information, and copyright notice: 'Copyright © State of New Jersey, 2015 Pinelands Commission 15 Springfield Road'.

Above: The Home page of the Commission's new website.

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The screenshot displays the Pinelands Commission website interface. At the top right, it identifies Governor Chris Christie and Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, with links for NJ Home, Services A to Z, Departments/Agencies, and FAQs. A search bar is located below this information. The main header features the State of New Jersey logo and the Pinelands Commission name. A horizontal navigation bar includes links for Home, About, Pinelands National Reserve, Rules, Applications, Planning, Science, Information & Education, and PDC Bank. The central content area is titled 'Pinelands National Reserve' and features a large image of a pine tree at sunset. A dropdown menu is open, listing sub-sections: Size, History, Ownership, People and Economy, Plants, Animals, Location, Geology, Climate, and Water Resources. To the left of this menu is a 'Visit us on Facebook' link. Below the main content, there are tabs for News & Notices, Meetings, Hearings, Visit, Maps, and Contact. The 'Meetings' tab is active, showing a list of upcoming meetings for the Pinelands Commission, Policy and Implementation Committee, Personnel and Budget Committee, MOA Policy Advisory Committee, and Agriculture Committee. To the right of the meetings list are icons for Presentations, Images/Videos, and File an Application. At the bottom left, there is a 'Help protect the NJ Pinelands' section with a 'PSAMP' logo and a 'Purchase license plates' link. In the center bottom, there is a 'Pinelands News Alert' sign-up form with fields for first name, last name, and e-mail address, and a 'Sign up' button. At the bottom right, there is a logo for the 'PINELANDS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL'.

Above: The new site allows users to place their cursor on each main topical section, which then prompts the subsections to drop down.

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