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For Immediate Release

37th annual Pinelands Short Course to feature 39 presentations

Daylong event to include 20 new, educational programs

NEW LISBON, N.J., January 12, 2026 – The 37th annual Pinelands Short Course will feature 39 presentations, including 20 new programs that will explore the region’s unique history, ecology, culture, and music.

Registration is now open for the daylong event, which will be held at Stockton University’s main campus in Galloway Township, NJ, on March 7, 2026. The event is co-sponsored by the Pinelands Commission and Stockton University. **To register online and read the full course descriptions, please click [here](#).**

“From box turtles to blueberries and meteors to muskrats, this year’s Pinelands Short Course boasts a wide range of topics that showcase the region’s extraordinary resources,” said Susan R. Grogan, the Commission’s Executive Director.

The Short Course features several sessions taught by Stockton faculty and staff, including Birding the Pinelands of Stockton University by John Rokita, the assistant supervisor of the university’s Vivarium, and Stewardship of the Stockton University Forest by Matthew Olson, assistant professor of Environmental Studies.

“For nearly four decades, the Pinelands Short Course has inspired learners of all ages to discover the natural and cultural wonders of the South Jersey Pine Barrens,” said Patty Weeks, director of the Southern Regional Institute and Educational Technology Training Center at Stockton University. “Each year, we aim to provide engaging, hands-on programs that deepen participants’ understanding of the Pinelands and connect them with experts who are passionate about preserving this remarkable region.”

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This year's Short Course includes the following new presentations: Box Turtles (covering the life history of eastern box turtles and the Pinelands Commission's ongoing radiotracking study of box turtles); Keeping Up with New Jersey's Changing Climate and Extreme Weather in the Pinelands and Elsewhere; Wish Upon a "Shooting" Star (exploring Meteoroids, Meteors, Meteorites and "Meteor-Wrongs"); Taking the Devil Out of the Devil's Tooth & Other Pine Barrens Mushrooms: Illuminating the Hidden Kingdom of Fungi; Marsh Hares and Tidal Meadows (covering muskrats and their habitat); Skywatching Stars, Clouds, Birds and More; Lenni-Lenape History and Culture in South Jersey; Ospreys and Menhaden: A Shared History of Abundance and Decline; Preserving, Promoting and Protecting Timbuctoo (one of the free Black settlements established during the antebellum period); Eel-luminations: Exploring the Journey of the American Eel through Science, History, and Art! (van tour); Making the Documentary *John Bacon*; Uncle Ruben C. Corlies (a well-known hunting guide, boatbuilder and member of the U.S. Coast Guard in the Barnegat Bay); Native Planting in the Pinelands: A Jersey-Friendly Approach; Stewardship of Stockton University Forest: A Field Tour Showcasing Forestry in the Pine Barrens (indoors and outside); Hunting the Wild Blueberry (including a new collection of photographs and artifacts associated with Whitesbog Village); the Revolutionary Pine Barrens: Celebrating America's 250th Birthday at Wharton State Forest; the Origin of the Jersey Shore: A Groundwater Mystery; Beautiful Butterflies and Crazy Caterpillars; Pine Barrens Child Ballads, Local Songs, and New Compositions (new material during a live musical performance by Jackson Pines); and Moths of the Pinelands: A Mosaic of Nature and Neighborhoods.

The day will also include popular presentations from the past, including the Raptors of the Pinelands (with live raptors); Birding the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (van tour); Anomalies of the Pines (van tour); the Obscure and Beautiful World of Swamp Pink from Seed to a Bouquet of Flowers; the Still Family Story: its Significance and Relevance to the History of South Jersey; Trees of the Pine Barrens; Orchids of the Pinelands; Exploring Soils of the Pines (indoors and outside); a Pinelands Road Trip; the People of Double Trouble Village; Seven Bridges Road: From the Past to the Future; Mosses: An Introduction, To Tucker's Island and Beyond: The Lyrical Tales of New Jersey by Valerie Vaughn (live musical performance), Drawing the Pine Barrens; New Jersey's Best Kept Secret: Biodiversity; Confessions of A Wildlife Photographer; Birding the Pinelands of Stockton University (indoors and outside); the Batona Trail – the Premier Walking Path of the Pinelands; and Paddling the Pines: An Overview of Kayaking and Canoeing the NJ Pine Barrens.

Participants should register early to help ensure that they receive their first course selections. The Pinelands Short Course is registered with the New Jersey Department of Education, and professional development credits are available to New Jersey teachers who attend.

***** ATTENTION EDITORS/REPORTERS:** Digital photos of the Pinelands Short Course and the Pinelands can be obtained by contacting Paul Leakan at Info@pinelands.nj.gov, including the photos below.

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Above: This year's Pinelands Short includes a new course about native eastern box turtles and the Pinelands Commission's ongoing scientific, radiotracking study of box turtles.

Photo/Paul Leakan



Above: This year's Pinelands Short features a new course exploring the connection between ospreys and menhaden.

Photo/Paul Leakan

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Above: This year's Pinelands Short Course includes a new program on beautiful butterflies and crazy caterpillars. A spicebush swallowtail butterfly caterpillar is shown here. Photo/Paul Leakan



Above: This year's Pinelands Short Course includes a van tour at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, which is home to hundreds of bird species, including secretive American bitterns. Photo/Paul Leakan

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