

The

PINELANDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION/WINTER 2006

Federal judge halts construction of proposed solid waste transfer facility in the Pinelands

A federal judge has granted the Pinelands Commission's request for a preliminary injunction, halting the construction of a proposed solid waste transfer station in the Pinelands.

Judge Jerome B. Simandle of the U.S. District Court granted the injunction in a ruling issued on December 22.

In his decision, Simandle recognizes the Pinelands Commission's jurisdiction over the trash transfer facility being proposed in Mullica Township, Atlantic County. Additionally, the court concluded that the development would cause immediate, irreparable harm to the critical and valuable resources of the Pinelands because the proposed facility would not meet the requirements of the Pinelands Comprehensive

Management Plan, the rules that govern land use, development and natural resource protection in the state-designated Pinelands Area.

What's more, the decision requires that the applicant, J.P. Rail Inc., seek and obtain Pinelands Commission approval before it can move forward with its proposal to develop the waste transfer facility, or until further Order of the Court.

"The Pinelands Commission is thankful that the court recognized and acknowledged the clear threat to the unique resources of the Pinelands Area attributable to the proposed facility," said John Stokes, Pinelands Commission Executive Director.

Judge Simandle denied J.P. Rail Inc.'s motion

for a preliminary injunction barring the Commission from preventing the construction of the proposed facility. J.P. Rail had argued that the Commission was pre-empted by federal railroad laws and that the regulation of the proposed facility is exclusively within the jurisdiction of the federal Surface Transportation Board.

However, in his ruling, the judge found that the proposed waste transfer station probably will not involve "transportation by a rail carrier," and therefore the Commission would likely succeed in its claim that the Surface Transportation Board does not have exclusive jurisdiction over the regulation of the proposed facility.

Longtime Vice-Chair of the Pinelands Commission steps down

Avery ends 21 years of service on the Pinelands panel; new Ocean County representative fills position

Alan W. Avery, who served as Ocean County's representative on the Pinelands Commission for the past 21 years, officially tendered his resignation as a member of the Commission in November.

Avery's legacy, however, will not be forgotten by his former colleagues on the Commission.

"Alan Avery spent countless hours volunteering his service and considerable skills as a member of the Pinelands Commission during the past 21 years, including the last 10 years as vice-chairman," Commission Chairperson Betty Wilson said. "I have valued his prudence and his wisdom during the years that I have served on the Commission. We are disappointed to see him leave, but we wish him well."

A resident of Toms River, Avery had served on the Commission since January 6, 1984 and had been the Commission's vice-chairman since

1995. Avery was appointed the Administrator of Ocean County in July 2005, a move that followed many years of service as Ocean County's Planning Director and Director of Solid Waste Management.



Alan W. Avery

Avery's successor, John A. Haas, attended his first meeting as Ocean County's representative on the Commission on December 15. Haas has served as the District Recycling Coordinator in Ocean County for the past 20 years.

A resident of Seaside Park, Ocean County, Haas was appointed to the Pinelands Commission in mid-November by the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

"I certainly appreciate being appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders," Haas said. "The Pinelands Commission was set up to protect a significant natural resource of the State of New Jersey, and I'm very pleased to be

appointed to the Commission."

Haas has worked in the Ocean County Department of Planning and Solid Waste Management for the past 25 years. He also has experience as a former member of the Borough Council, Board of Education and Planning Board in Seaside Park.

Haas holds a bachelors of science degree in biology from Monmouth University and a masters of arts degree in environmental education from Rowan University. Haas is the current president of the Church Council of the Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Toms River. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Association of New Jersey Recyclers and on the Board of Trustees of the Barnegat Bay Watershed and Estuary Foundation.

The Pinelands Commission consists of 15 members: seven appointed by the Governor of New Jersey, one appointed by each of the seven Pinelands counties and one appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Members of the Commission serve staggered, three-year terms and are uncompensated for their service.



Restoring a historic gem

Pinelands Commission staff moves back into newly renovated Fenwick Manor offices

Fenwick Manor, a picturesque farmstead that is home to the Pinelands Commission's office complex, has been fully reoccupied by the Commission's staff after undergoing major renovations to the historic buildings onsite.

Located on a 4.5-acre parcel in Pemberton Township, Burlington County, Fenwick Manor contains a farmhouse, a carriage house, a barn and an outbuilding, as well as the recently constructed Richard J. Sullivan Center. Several of the properties were seriously deteriorated prior to the renovations that were approved by the New Jersey Legislature and were funded and managed by the New Jersey Building Authority.

The Commission's Administration, Planning, Communications and Business Services departments were relocated to the adjacent Richard J. Sullivan Center

A history of Fenwick Manor Page 7

before the \$1.8 million renovation project began in 2004. The upgrades were completed in October 2005, enabling the Commission's staff to move into the farmhouse, barn and carriage house.

"The staff is thrilled to return to these unique and historic facilities and is appreciative of the improvements that have breathed new life into these magnificent buildings," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission.

Fenwick Manor was built in the 1820s and is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.



After undergoing major renovations, the historic buildings at Fenwick Manor were reoccupied by the Pinelands Commission's staff in early November 2005. Photo by Paul Leakan

The buildings needed the upgrades in order to correct technical problems, meet historical accuracy, improve functional operations and to address code, safety and

Continued on Page 7

Pinelands Housing Task Force releases preliminary report

The Pinelands Housing Task Force, which has been meeting since July 2004, has released a Preliminary Report showing that more than adequate capacity to meet future housing demand exists within and outside of the Pinelands to the year 2020.

The Pinelands Commission created the Pinelands Housing Task Force to review and update projections of housing demand within the Pinelands and to determine whether zoning capacities within and outside of the Pinelands Area were appropriate to serve demand.

The 20-person Task Force is composed of governmental and non-governmental organizations, including state, county and municipal officials, as well as representatives from the Coalition for Housing and the Environment, the New Jersey Builders Association and the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. The Task Force undertook a rigorous examination of the development needs for all of Southern New Jersey and development capacity in the Pinelands.

The Task Force's Preliminary Report was released in late October. The report shows that, as of 2000, there were 41,460-acres of vacant developable land within the Pinelands Regional Growth Areas, Towns and Villages within sewer services areas and a projected housing demand of 37,530 dwelling units for the period of 2000 to 2020.

"This report illustrates that capacity does indeed exist to meet future housing demand in areas of the Pinelands most suited to accommodate future growth," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission.

Stokes noted that the housing estimates contained in the report are based upon a preliminary analysis of vacant, developable land and do not reflect development that has been constructed or approved since 2000.

The Task Force's Preliminary Report has been posted on the Pinelands Commission's Web site (www.nj.gov/pinelands).

The Commission took public comment on

the preliminary report during a public meeting on Dec. 6 in Southampton Township, Burlington County.

Once the Task Force report is finalized, the Pinelands Commission will then determine whether any adjustments in Pinelands land-use policies need to be made. The Commission will look at the size and zoning densities of these development areas, taking into account:

- Development needs and available land beyond 2020;
- How to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for development transfers;
- Whether local zoning plans make efficient use of available land;
- Whether water supply will be adequate to meet demands in growth areas;
- How to most effectively minimize conflicts between higher density development areas and areas that support populations of threatened and endangered species.





Nine new presentations highlight Pinelands Short Course

Popular educational event to be held March 4 at Burlington County College

NEW LISBON, N.J. – The 17th annual Pinelands Short Course will feature nine new presentations while still offering attendees the opportunity to enjoy numerous popular presentations from the past.

“Since its inception, the Pinelands Short Course has provided an abundance of insightful and enlightening information about the unique natural, cultural and historic treasures of the Pinelands,” said John C. Stokes, Pinelands Commission Executive Director. “This year’s Short Course promises to continue that tradition.”

The Pinelands Short Course is sponsored by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and Burlington County College (BCC), which has hosted the event for the past two years. The Pinelands Institute for Natural and Environmental Studies, a program of BCC, is also a sponsor of the event.

To be held at BCC’s Parker Center on March 4, the program is open to all who are interested in learning about the Pinelands. Last year’s event featured 19 presenters and attracted approximately 375 people.

The nine new presentations for this year’s Short Course will cover the following topics: a tribute to the work of Pinelands folklorist Herbert Halpert, environmentally-conscious art education, an indoor Pinelands field trip, threatened and endangered wildlife, the forgotten town of Cedar Bridge, wildlife photography and programs on black bears, butterflies and fish in the Pinelands.

In addition to the new presentations, popular programs from the past will continue to be offered at this year’s event. These include a Pinelands overview, traditional uses of native Pinelands plants, Pine Barrens photography, traditional Pinelands music by the Sugar Sand Ramblers, long-distance migratory songbirds of the Pinelands, a history of the Pinelands, turtles of the Pinelands, the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer and its effect on the Pinelands environment, Pinelands fire safety, and an educational walking tour of the historic Whitesbog Village.

The event is registered with the New Jersey Department of Education, and pro-

fessional development credits will be available to New Jersey teachers who attend the Pinelands Short Course. Discounted registration fees are offered to senior citizens and students. The program runs from 8 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.

To request a brochure/registration form or for more information, contact the Pinelands Commission at (609) 894-7300, ext. 125.

The Short Course brochure and registration form can also be printed from the Pinelands Commission’s Web site: www.nj.gov/pinelands.



2006 Pinelands Short Course Topics and presenters

■ **Pinelands Overview:** William Dunscombe, Chairman of the Department of Biology at Union County College;

■ **Eco-Art Education:** Artist Kate Lemay;

■ **Pinelands Fish:** John Bunnell, Pinelands Commission Research Scientist;

■ **Traditional Uses of Native Plants of the Pinelands & New Jersey Coast:** Terry O’Leary, Education Coordinator at the New Jersey Forest Resource Education Center;

■ **Threatened and Endangered Wildlife of the Pinelands:** Russell Juelg, Director of Outreach at the Pinelands Preservation Alliance;

■ **Cedar Bridge: A Forgotten Town:** Tim Hart, President of the Stafford Historical Society and Thomas Franer, author;

■ **The Pine Barrens: An Indoor Field Trip:** Maria Peter of the P.I.N.E.S. Program;

■ **Down a Sugar Sand Road:** members of the Sugar Sand Ramblers;

■ **Pine Barrens to Tropical Forest: Long Distance Migratory Songbirds:** Emile DeVito, Director of Conservation and Biology at the NJ Conservation Foundation;

■ **Firewise in the Jersey Pines:** Maris Gabliks, State Fire Warden, NJ Forest Fire Service;

■ **A History of the Pinelands:** Barry Brady, Archaeologist;

■ **A Sheltered Existence: Turtles of the Pinelands:** Christina Watters, Researcher, Wetlands Institute;

■ **Photography and Wildlife Photography of the Pine Barrens** (two courses): Photographer Michael Hogan;

■ **Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer: the Pinelands Water:** Claude Epstein, Professor of Environmental Studies at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey;

■ **Butterflies of the Pinelands:** Joanna Burger, Professor at Rutgers University;

■ **A Tribute to the Work of Herbert Halbert:** Angus Gillespie, teacher of American Studies and Folklore at Rutgers;

■ **Be Black Bear Aware:** Liz Jackson, Public Information Assistant, NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife;

■ **Whitesbog Village History Tour:** Ginnette Pompeo and Susan Girard of the P.I.N.E.S. Program.



Commission releases annual report charting financial health of Pinelands communities

During its regular monthly meeting on Dec. 15, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission released an annual report that gauges the economic health of the Pinelands region.

A cooperative project administered by the Pinelands Commission and funded by the National Park Service, the annual report is a product of the Pinelands Long-Term Economic Monitoring Program.

The program monitors, collects and analyzes data such as population demographics, property values, economic growth and municipal finances, with the fundamental goal of evaluating the economy of the Pinelands region in an objective and reliable way.

"The Pinelands Long-Term Economic Monitoring Program provides essential data that empowers the Pinelands Commission with a greater understanding of how the Pinelands regulations and programs affect communities' economic status over time," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. "This report shows that municipalities in the Pinelands are generally outpacing many municipalities outside of the Pinelands in several key economic indicators."

Data collected in 2005 reveals some key findings about the economy in the Pinelands*, including the following:

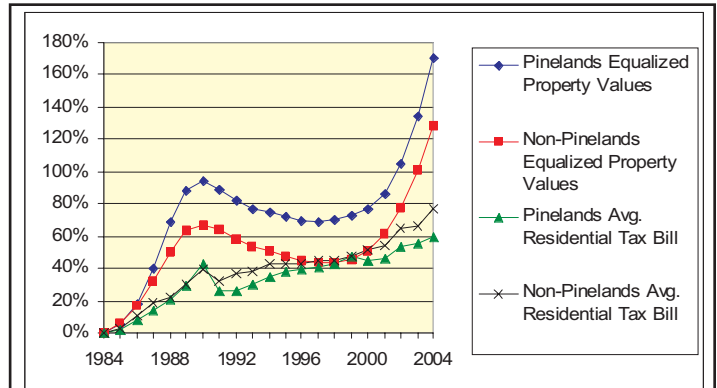
- The average inflation-adjusted residential property tax bill for municipalities in the Pinelands is \$700 lower than in municipalities in the non-Pinelands region of South Jersey and \$2,085 lower than the state as a whole.
- After three consecutive years of modest increases, the unemployment rate dropped in all

regions of the state in 2004. For 2004, the unemployment rate in the Pinelands was 4.8 percent, compared to 5.4 percent for the non-Pinelands municipalities.

■ Both the inflation-adjusted median selling price of homes and the volume of residential housing transactions posted double-digit percentage increases in the Pinelands in 2004. The median sales price for a home in the Pinelands was \$176,000 in 2004 – a 14.3 percent increase for the year.

■ Residential building permit activity dropped 19 percent in the Pinelands in 2004, marking only the second decline in permits for the region in the last 9 years. The drop in activity is primarily due to a slowdown in four municipalities that had previously combined for nearly half of all building activity in the Pinelands. Barnegat, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton and Jackson combined issued 1,095 fewer building permits in 2004 than they did in 2003, a decrease of 42.3 percent. The other 43 Pinelands municipalities as a group increased permits by 1.1 percent in 2004.

■ Residential housing transactions increased 15.3 percent in the Pinelands municipalities, compared to 12.4 percent in the non-Pinelands municipalities in 2004. That figure marks the



This graph shows that municipalities in the Pinelands compare favorably with those in the non-Pinelands towns with respect to equalized property values and residential tax bills during the past 20 years.

Illustration by Tony O'Donnell, Pinelands Commission economist

fifth consecutive year that the Pinelands real estate market grew at a quicker rate than the rest of Southern New Jersey. The bulk of home sales occurred in the northern, eastern and western edges of the Pinelands.

■ Per capita retail sales grew by 21 percent in the Pinelands from 1997-2002 while remaining essentially unchanged in the non-Pinelands municipalities.

* NOTE: The "Pinelands" is defined as the entirety of the 47 municipalities in Southern New Jersey that have at least 10 percent of their land area within the state-designated Pinelands Area. "Non-Pinelands" is defined as the remaining 155 municipalities located within the eight southernmost counties of New Jersey, including Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem.



A kayaker paddles along the Batsto Lake on a picture-perfect fall day in the Pinelands.

Photo by Paul Leakan



Pinelands Commission applies for federal grant to fund management plan for the new Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail

The Pinelands Commission has applied for a \$250,000 federal grant on behalf of the 16 municipalities through which the new Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail passes.

In late December 2005, the grant was submitted to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) for review as part of the National Scenic Byways Program. Funds disbursed under the grant would be used to hire a consultant to prepare a Corridor Management Plan addressing the planning and management strategies and permanent organizational structure needed to develop the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail. The management plan also is a necessary first step toward nominating the trail as a National Scenic Byway.

Officials from the Pinelands Commission announced the NJDOT's designation of the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail as a New Jersey State Scenic Byway during a special ceremony on October 27.

"It is my hope that the trail enables residents and visitors alike to enjoy all that the Pinelands has to offer while also increasing awareness and appreciation of the Pinelands and the need to protect this special part of the state," Pinelands Commission Chairperson Betty Wilson said during the ceremony at Crowley's Landing Recreation Area in the Wharton State Forest.

Situated on the banks of the Mullica River, Crowley's Landing is one of the many scenic sites located along the trail. The 122-mile trail passes through Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland and Ocean counties, including portions of Bass River Township, Corbin City, Dennis Township, Egg Harbor City, Estell Manor City, Galloway Township, Hamilton Township, Little Egg Harbor Township, Maurice River Township, Mullica Township, Port Republic City, Tuckerton Borough, Upper Township, Washington Township, Weymouth Township and Woodbine Borough.

Officials in all five counties and 16 municipalities have passed resolutions in support of the trail.

The trail traverses existing roadways in the southern region of the 1.1-million-acre

Pinelands National Reserve. It has a northern loop that travels the lower Mullica River basin of the eastern Pinelands; a southern loop that travels the Delaware Bayshore region of the Pinelands and a central segment that wends its way through Atlantic and Burlington counties.

The trail passes through the Bass River State Forest, Belleplain State Forest and Wharton State Forest. Historic villages, hamlets, churches and schoolhouses can be found at various locations along the trail. Efforts to create a Scenic Byway in the Pinelands are a major outgrowth of the Pinelands Commission's Rural Economic Development Program. Legislation passed in 1997 appropriated \$250,000 to the Pinelands Commission to help rural communities identify and plan economic development strategies to stimulate environmentally suitable growth.

Expert consultants worked with seven municipalities in limited-growth areas in the Pinelands, and a number of potential planning initiatives and projects were identified, including the suggestion for a New Jersey and National Scenic Byway that would bring widespread awareness and

appreciation of the natural and cultural assets of the Pinelands.



Barry Brady, former Cultural Resource Planner for the Pinelands Commission, discusses his favorite spots along the trail during a press conference held in October at Crowley's Landing. Photo by Joel Mott



Students test water quality in the Pinelands as part of global water monitoring day

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, NJ – Dozens of students got a hands-on lesson in gauging Pinelands water quality and learned about the importance of protecting waterways by participating in the World Water Monitoring Day on Oct. 18 at the historic Batsto Village here.

The event attracted approximately 105 students who conducted water quality tests while interacting with, and receiving guidance from, staff with the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Rutgers University/Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve.

"It's great to work with these students as they learn firsthand how they can have a positive effect on the environment in which they live and how to avoid negative impacts on Pinelands ecology," said Joel Mott, the Pinelands Commission's Public Programs Specialist.

"These students are tomorrow's environmental and community leaders, and this experience will foster their commitment to environmental stewardship," DEP Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell said. "This is a unique opportunity to give students a hands-on sense of one of the country's most significant ecological resources, the New Jersey Pinelands."



Leslie McGeorge of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, pictured left, and Joel Mott of the Pinelands Commission hold a map during World Water Monitoring Day at Batsto.
Photo by Paul Leakan

Students from Pinelands Regional Middle School in Ocean County, Manalapan High School in Monmouth County, Monroe Township High School in Monmouth County and Sterling High School in Camden County obtained and tested water samples from Batsto Lake, which is located in the heart of the

Pinelands in Wharton State Forest. The students measured the levels of pH or acidity in water, as well as water clarity, temperature and dissolved oxygen. Water in the Pinelands is generally undisturbed, has a low pH and low dissolved solids, enabling it to support uniquely adapted Pinelands plants and animals.

George Young, who teaches life science and biolo-

gy at Pinelands Regional Middle School, led a group of 7th grade students in the school's Gifted and Talented Enrichment Program during the event.

"Education is a three-tier process," said Young, who also serves on the Pinelands Education Advisory Council. "The learning starts in the classroom and is aided by hands-on experiences in field gathering data, and experiencing the environment firsthand. This process is completed and taken to a higher level of understanding by following up with these memorable experiences in the classroom and beyond. World Water Monitoring Day is a great example of this process."

After conducting the tests, students reported their findings on the World Water Monitoring Day Web site (www.worldwatermonitoringday.org), where test results can be compared over time.

America's Clean Water Foundation, in partnership with the International Water Association and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, plans and coordinates World Water Monitoring Day on October 18 of each year to raise public awareness and involvement in the protection of water quality world wide.



Pinelands Commission Research Scientist Nick Procopio, pictured right, collects a water sample from Batsto Lake as students look on.

Photo by Paul Leakan



A history of Fenwick Manor

The main building at Fenwick Manor was built in the late 1820s as a modest farmhouse. Early on, the current entry facade was added on the west end. The rich, ornamental detailing -- ornate doorway, ionic corner pilasters, and thick, projecting eaves -- was applied during a major rebuilding phase in the early 20th century.

Located on Springfield Road in Pemberton Township, Burlington County, the farmstead included other structures, of which three survive: a barn, an outhouse, and the carriage house, which was built somewhat later, perhaps in the early 20th century.

For more than 125 years, a succession of related individuals owned Fenwick Manor. Benjamin Jones, owner from 1827-1844, was a colorful entrepreneur who had an interest in three iron furnaces and built a railroad.

Jones' cousin, Col. James Fenwick, the next owner of Fenwick Manor, was a gentleman farmer who experimented in cranberry cul-

ture.

Upon Col. Fenwick's death in 1882, his son-in-law, Joseph Josiah White, acquired the farm and expanded cranberry operations at nearby Whitesbog, another historic site located in Pemberton Township.

Joseph Josiah White's daughter, Elizabeth White, developed the cultivated blueberry in collaboration with Dr. Frederick V. Coville, in 1916 while she was living at Fenwick Manor.

Fenwick Manor has served as the headquarters for the New Jersey Pinelands Commission since 1980.

In 1990, the Fenwick Manor farm was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In December 2001, the Pinelands Commission opened the nearly 12,500-square-foot Richard J. Sullivan Center for



Fenwick Manor is located amidst a serene setting along Springfield Road in Pemberton Township.

Photo by Paul Leakan

Environmental Policy and Education on the grounds of Fenwick Manor. The building houses a portion of the Commission's staff and is the site of the Commission's regular monthly meetings.



Commission proposing eight amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan

The Pinelands Commission has voted to proceed with a series of proposed changes to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the state-designated Pinelands Area.

The proposed amendments pertain to regulations regarding application review fees, the creation of a new overlay district for the Garden State Parkway, municipal reserve provisions for Pinelands Regional Growth Areas, stormwater management, expansion of the Cape May Landfill, local communications facilities, cumulative costs for waivers and lot size variances and the pilot program for alternative design wastewater treatment systems.

The proposed amendments have been posted on the Pinelands Commission's Web site: www.nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/amend.

The proposed amendment regarding municipal reserves is an outgrowth of the Pinelands Commission's intensive review of

the Comprehensive Management Plan. Concluded in 2003, the 18-month review resulted in numerous strategies and initiatives aimed at addressing matters related to permanent land protection, regional growth and development.

The CMP has guided land-use and development in the Pinelands since it took effect on January 14, 1981. It has been amended a number of times during the past 25 years, including most recently in June 2005 through a set of changes that redesignated the Oyster Creek and Waretown Creek in Ocean and Lacey Townships from a Rural Development Area to a

Pinelands Forest Area, adjusted Pinelands management boundaries to reflect a settlement agreement involving lands in Manchester Township, updated the list of threatened and endangered plant species contained in the CMP and established a pilot program for consumer electronics recycling facilities.



Restoring a historic gem

Continued from Page 2

environmental issues.

The first and second floors of the farmhouse were completely renovated. Repairs were made after extensive termite damage was found. The exterior of the building was repaired according to State Historic Preservation Office requirements. A new roof, an upgraded heating system, a security access system and new electrical and telecommunications systems were installed. Additionally, the building's windows were restored.

The carriage house received a new tile bathroom, new roof, new paint and a new heating system. It also underwent structural reinforcement and window restoration.

The barn was converted from storage space into office space. Workers installed a new workroom, bathroom, heating and air-conditioning systems, a security access system, and communications and data systems.

Lastly, the outbuilding, or outhouse, was converted into storage space.





Preliminary conservation plan unveiled for Southern Medford and Evesham

Members of the steering committee overseeing an innovative conservation project have released a preliminary Sub-regional Resource Protection Plan that includes a series of proposed strategies devised to better protect natural resources in Southern Evesham and Medford townships in Burlington County.

The preliminary plan was detailed to property owners and other interested parties during three public meetings held in November and December 2005.

The southern portions of the Evesham and Medford townships include large areas designated under the Pinelands protection program for modest amounts of residential development. However, data compiled in recent years has shown that the area has significant natural resources, including undisturbed sub-watersheds, as well as rare plants and animals.

In 2004, the Pinelands Commission

received a \$73,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation to fund efforts to develop a detail conservation plan for the 22-square-mile area.

A natural resource inventory was completed in December 2004 and since then, the project's Steering Committee, Project Advisory Committee, and Technical Support Group have met regularly to discuss a series of specific regulatory and non-regulatory strategies that were included in the preliminary protection plan.

The strategies include eight zoning changes, land acquisition and land stewardship. For example, the preliminary plan envisions that the regulatory strategies would reduce development and disturbance levels in high-value natural resource areas. It is estimated that the future zone capacity of the project area would be reduced from 579 homes to 270, a 53 percent reduction. Incentives would be creat-

ed to transfer all development out of high-value natural resource areas to areas where it can be better accommodated.

Under the preliminary plan, any development that does occur would be clustered, resulting in the conservation of more than 80 percent of the properties being developed.

The plan also calls for preserving numerous ecologically-sensitive parcels, conducting surveys to locate additional rare native plant populations and encouraging efforts to protect the resources through land stewardship practices.

Upon reviewing the public comments, the project Steering Committee will consider making any changes to the final version of the plan, which could be completed by early February. It will then be submitted to the two townships and the Pinelands Commission for their consideration.



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