



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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Contact: Paul Leakan

Phone: 609.894.7300

E-mail: info@njpines.state.nj.us

Pinelands Commission certifies changes to Berkeley Township's master plan

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its regular meeting today, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission agreed to certify changes to Berkeley Township's master plan and land use ordinances that significantly reduce development potential and protect important natural resources on a 290-acre tract in town.

The amendments to the township's master plan incorporate a number of zoning changes on land that is commonly known as the Margaret Major Haines tract and is located on the northeastern section of the Pinelands Area in Berkeley.

Under the revised master plan, the portion of the tract previously zoned as a Regional Growth Residential Zone will be reduced from 185 acres to approximately 50 acres. Meanwhile, the portion of the site that was zoned as a Forest Area Residential Zone will be expanded from 105 acres to 240 acres and will encompass the entire Jake's Branch watershed.

As a result of the zoning changes, maximum zoning capacity in the Regional Growth Residential Zone of the property is 150 units, or approximately 350 units less than the township's previously certified master plan would have permitted on the site. The Forest Area Residential Zone is limited to one single-family unit per 30 acres.

The original Forest Area boundary had intended to encompass all of the areas of the site located within the highly sensitive Jake's Branch watershed. Berkeley Township adopted the zoning changes based on the fact that updated information shows the boundary between the Jake's Branch and Davenport Branch watersheds is actually further north than was thought when the Township's zoning plan was certified by the Commission in 2001, thereby justifying an expansion of the Forest Area on the site. The management area change is entirely consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and the Commission's goal of precluding intensive development or disturbance in the Jake's Branch watershed.

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