



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

May 31, 2007

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Pinelands Commission's Executive Director signs off on agreement to end direct discharge of treated wastewater into Pinelands stream

NEW LISBON, N.J. – Following Governor Jon S. Corzine's review, Pinelands Commission Executive Director John C. Stokes has signed an agreement to end the direct discharge of treated wastewater into a Pinelands stream in Buena Borough, Atlantic County.

“By signing this agreement, the Pinelands Commission has done its part to end a long-standing violation of Pinelands regulations,” Stokes said. “We expect the Buena Borough Municipal Utilities Authority to sign this agreement immediately, as that will then enable the proposed new middle school in Buena Vista Township to connect to the Authority's wastewater system.”

The Pinelands Commission voted to approve the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) amongst itself, the Buena Borough Municipal Utilities Authority (BBMUA) and Buena Vista Township on April 13. Under state law, actions of the Pinelands Commission are subject to review by the Governor. If the Governor disagrees with an action, he has the authority to veto it.

Under the agreement, the Commission will permit the BBMUA to build a wastewater infiltration-percolation facility on a 61-acre parcel in Buena Borough, upon which the BBMUA would land apply treated wastewater and ultimately cease discharge of treated wastewater into the Deep Run. The BBMUA operates a wastewater treatment facility that currently discharges wastewater into the Deep Run, which flows easterly to the Great Egg Harbor River. Discharge of wastewater to surface water bodies is prohibited under the water quality standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and BBMUA has been obligated to cease the discharge since 1995.

The 61-acre property in question is located in a Pinelands Agricultural Production Area, where such a facility normally would not be permitted under the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. However, the Commission determined that the MOA includes measures that will ensure an equivalent measure of protection of Pinelands resources.

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The agreement contains specific milestones that will eliminate all discharge of treated wastewater into the Deep Run by 2014. Under the agreement, Buena Vista Township will permanently deed restrict 232 acres of municipally-owned land in its Pinelands Forest and Rural Development Areas against future development. These lands include large parcels in sensitive subwatersheds, including the Deep Run subwatershed. This satisfies a legal requirement for an equivalent level of protection. In exchange for providing this necessary offset, the BBMUA will grant Buena Vista Township a share of the total wastewater flow allocation to facilitate the extension of sewer service in the Township along U.S. Route 40. This will also enable Buena Vista Township to eliminate wastewater discharge from septic systems in the area.

Also under the agreement, the BBMUA will seek to implement a program for the beneficial reuse of treated wastewater, which will benefit the local surface and groundwater system by allowing recharge to occur at approved locations.

A full copy of the agreement is available on the Pinelands Commission's Web site (www.nj.gov/pinelands/infor/news).

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