



## New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Pinelands Commission approves \$867,666 expenditure to preserve 450 acres in Atlantic, Burlington, Gloucester and Ocean counties** *Money to be disbursed from the Pinelands Conservation Fund*

NEW LISBON, N.J. – The New Jersey Pinelands Commission’s Permanent Land Protection Committee has dedicated \$867,666 to preserve 450 acres in Atlantic, Burlington, Gloucester and Ocean counties in the Pinelands. During its meeting today, the Committee approved the expenditure from the Pinelands Conservation Fund to preserve the land in partnership with local governments and nonprofit organizations.

“These properties contain exceptional Pinelands habitat that connects adjacent properties that are already preserved and will form a large, contiguous area of undisturbed land in each of the four counties,” said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. “Preserving these properties in perpetuity will further strengthen the Pinelands protection program, which has successfully safeguarded the region’s environmentally sensitive areas while steering growth toward appropriate areas.”

The Permanent Land Protection Committee approved funding for the preservation of nine properties in multiple planning areas that it has deemed to have significant environmental resources. The funding is contingent upon the execution of a purchase contract, supported by a certification of fair market value, by September 26, 2008. These areas include:

- **The Clarks Landing Area in Galloway Township, Atlantic County** (one project totaling 20 acres, up to \$11,667 allocated to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation);
- **The Elwood Corridor Area in Mullica Township, Atlantic County** (one project totaling 63 acres, up to \$116,667 allocated to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation);
- **The Agricultural Production Area** (one project totaling 30 acres in Buena Borough, Atlantic County and Franklin Township, Gloucester County, up to \$93,333 allocated to the Unexpected Wildlife Refuge);
- **The Preservation Area in Bass River Township, Burlington County** (two projects totaling 161 acres, up to \$78,333 allocated to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation);
- **The Medford and Evesham Sub-regional Planning Area in Burlington County** (one project totaling 73 acres in Medford Township, up to \$233,333 allocated to the Rancocas Conservancy); and
- **The Forked River Mountains in Ocean Township, Ocean County** (three projects totaling 103 acres, up to \$334,334 allocated to the Ocean County Natural Land Trust).

Including the \$867,666 expenditure from the Pinelands Conservation Fund and the cost-share

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funding from local governmental and nonprofit organizations, more than \$2.6 million worth of properties will be preserved.

Specific details regarding each property will be released upon completion of contraction negotiations.

The nine properties represent the second round of funding that the Commission's Permanent Land Protection Committee has allocated for land acquisition through the Pinelands Conservation Fund (PCF). In September 2007, the Committee approved funding for the preservation of 12 properties. Since that time, purchase of three of those properties have either closed or are in the process of being closed. They include:

- **The Capri property in Buena Vista Township, Atlantic County**, a 70-acre parcel located south of U.S. Route 40 in the headwaters of the South River. (\$10,000 from the PCF to Buena Vista Township);
- **A 700-acre parcel located on Cologne Avenue north of U.S. Route 322 in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County**. (\$300,000 from the PCF to Atlantic County); and
- **The Sarama Homes property**, an 11-acre parcel located on County Route 571 in the Toms River Corridor in Jackson Township, Ocean County. (\$175,000 from the PCF to the Ocean County Natural Land Trust).

Of the remaining nine properties targeted for acquisition through the first round of the Pinelands Conservation Fund, three have been withdrawn because purchase contracts could not be negotiated with the property owners and six are close to being acquired. During its meeting today, the Permanent Land Protection Committee agreed to give the grantees for the six latter properties an extension to satisfy grant conditions by July 25, 2008. These projects include three properties totaling 1,591 acres in the Forked River Mountains in Lacey and Ocean townships in Ocean County, as well as a 163-acre parcel in the Toms River Corridor in Jackson Township, Ocean County, a 5-acre parcel in the Toms River Corridor in Jackson Township, Ocean County and a 10-acre property in the Medford and Evesham Sub-regional Planning Area in Medford Township, Burlington County.

The Pinelands Conservation Fund was created in 2004 as part of an agreement with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to permit the construction and upgrade of an electric transmission line through eastern portions of the Pinelands. Under the agreement, the special fund was established to further the Pinelands protection program and ensure a greater level of protection of the unique resources of the Pinelands Area. The utility that built the transmission lines, Atlantic City Electric (formerly Conectiv), provided \$13 million to establish the Fund.

The Fund is dedicated to three types of projects: \$6 million for permanent land protection (\$4.2 million of which has been allocated); \$3.5 million for conservation planning and research projects; and \$3.5 million to support community planning and design initiatives.

In 2006, the Commission hired a program facilitator, Conservation Resources Inc. of Chester, N.J., to assist in the land acquisition program and to identify land preservation projects.

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