



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

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Contact: Paul Leakan

Phone: 609.894.7300

E-mail: [info@njpines.state.nj.us](mailto:info@njpines.state.nj.us)

### **Pinelands Commission approves \$1.9 million expenditure to preserve 1,612 acres in Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May 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 more than \$1.9 million to preserve 1,612 acres in Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May and Ocean counties in the Pinelands.

The Committee approved the expenditure from the Pinelands Conservation Fund to preserve the land in partnership with local governments and nonprofit organizations during its meeting on Jan. 29.

"Permanent land protection has been a critical part of our efforts to protect the Pinelands' unique resources for the past 30 years, and it will continue to be vital as we enter a new decade of Pinelands protection," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. "These properties contain outstanding natural resources such as habitat for rare Pinelands plants and animals, and they connect large, adjacent properties that also have been permanently preserved."

The Permanent Land Protection Committee approved funding for the preservation of 13 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 May 31, 2010. These areas include:

■ **The Medford and Evesham Sub-regional Planning Area in Burlington County:** (one property totaling 688 acres, up to \$115,000 allocated to the Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program);

■ **The Toms River Sub-Regional Planning Area in Jackson Township, Ocean County:** (two projects totaling 357 acres, up to \$17,325 to the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust and up to \$1,000,000 to the Trust for Public Land);

■ **The Forked River Mountain Area in Ocean Township** (one project totaling 268 acres, up to \$363,000 to the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust)

■ **The Preservation Area of Bass River Township, Burlington County:** (three projects totaling 112 acres, and a total of up to \$65,825 allocated to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation);

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■ **The Special Agricultural Production and Infill Development areas of Woodland Township, Burlington County:** (one project totaling 61 acres, up to \$74,250 allocated to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation; **Requires concurrent approval by the Pinelands Commission**);

■ **The Preservation Area of Woodland Township, Burlington County:** (two projects totaling 56 acres, and a total of up to \$67,500 allocated to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation);

■ **The Batsto River Headwaters in Shamong Township, Burlington County:** (one project totaling 39 acres, up to \$200,713 allocated to Shamong Township);

■ **The Forest Area of Dennis Township, Cape May County:** (one project totaling 25 acres, up to \$57,750 allocated to The Nature Conservancy);

■ **The Forest Area of Estell Manor, Atlantic County:** (one project totaling 5 acres, up to \$5,445 allocated to The Nature Conservancy);

Including the \$1.9 million expenditure from the Pinelands Conservation Fund and the cost-share funding from local governmental and nonprofit organizations, more than \$8.8 million worth of properties will be preserved.

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

The 13 properties represent the fourth round of funding that the Commission's Permanent Land Protection Committee has allocated for land acquisition through the Pinelands Conservation Fund (PCF). In the previous three rounds, 18 properties totaling 3,027 acres have been allocated funding from the PCF. The total fair market value of those properties is \$18,077,700. The properties are located in the Pinelands in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Ocean counties.

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.

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The photo above shows a 688-acre property in the Medford and Evesham Sub-regional Planning Area that the Pinelands Commission allocated funds to preserve under the fourth round of the funding from the Pinelands Conservation Fund.

**Newspapers can obtain a high-resolution copy of this photo by contacting Paul Leakan at (609) 894-7300.**

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