



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

August 14, 2009

Contact: Paul Leakan

Phone: 609.894.7300

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

Pinelands Commission directs the use of more than \$5 million addition to the Pinelands Conservation Fund

New funds allocated for land preservation, conservation planning, research and community design

NEW LISBON, N.J. – During its meeting today, the Pinelands Commission directed the use of \$5.3 million in funds that have been added to the Pinelands Conservation Fund to support permanent land protection, conservation planning and research and community design projects.

The Commission allocated \$2.5 million toward the permanent preservation of land, \$2.3 million toward conservation planning and research projects and \$577,089 to support community planning and design projects.

"This infusion of money into the Pinelands Conservation Fund will boost our ongoing efforts to permanently preserve environmentally-sensitive land, while helping to ensure that this million-acre treasure is protected for future generations," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. "What's more, a portion of these funds will be made available as grants to help Pinelands municipalities defray the costs to implement recent and pending rule changes that better protect Pinelands resources."

The Pinelands Conservation Fund was increased by \$5,385,000 that became available as a result of a 2006 amendment of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands. The amendment permits landfill operations to occur on an additional 74 acres of land on the 486-acre property operated by the Cape May County Municipal Utilities Authority (CMCMUA) within Upper Township and Woodbine Borough. Landfilling was previously authorized on 93 acres of the property. In exchange, the CMCMUA was required to deed-restrict the remaining portions of its land from future landfill activities while prohibiting any development on a roughly 90-acre portion of the property. The amendment also required the CMCMUA to hold \$4.6 million in escrow (now standing at \$5.3 million, including interest). Those funds can now be released and allocated to the Pinelands Conservation Fund because the Commission and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection have issued permits for the landfill's expansion.

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.

(MORE)

Pinelands Press Release

Page 2...

The \$13 million was dedicated to three types of projects: \$6 million for permanent land protection; \$3.5 million for conservation planning and research projects; and \$3.5 million to support community planning and design initiatives. Since its establishment, the Fund has been increased with additional money coming from other agreements.

Thus far, the Commission has allocated more than \$5.7 million from the Fund toward the permanent preservation of 3,461 acres of environmentally-sensitive land in the Pinelands. The Commission also has allocated \$100,000 from the Fund toward ongoing research of treated wastewater infiltration lagoons in Hammonton, and additional funding for other research and community planning projects.

####