



New Jersey Pinelands Commission



Annual Report 2015

Mission Statement of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission

The mission of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission is to preserve, protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Pinelands National Reserve, and to encourage compatible economic and other human activities consistent with that purpose.

Cover photo: The Halloween pennant (*Celithemis eponina*) is a dragonfly found in some of the natural Pinelands ponds being examined as part of the Pinelands Commission's Pond-vulnerability Study.

Photo by John Bunnell/New Jersey Pinelands Commission

New Jersey Pinelands Commission 2015

Gubernatorial Appointees

Candace M. Ashmun
D'Arcy Rohan Green
Edward Lloyd
Richard H. Prickett

Bob Barr (March 16 - December)
Robert Jackson (January - March 13)
Mark S. Lohbauer, Chairman
Gary Quinn

U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Appointee

Joseph DiBello

County Appointees

Atlantic County

Paul E. Galletta, Vice Chairman*
(*July - December)

Burlington County

Sean W. Earlen

Camden County

Edward McGlinchey

Cape May County

William J. Brown

Cumberland County

Jane Jannarone

Gloucester County

Francis A. Witt (January-December 31)

Ocean County

Alan Avery, Jr., Vice Chairman* (*January - June)

Executive Director

Nancy Wittenberg

New Jersey Pinelands Commission

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Pinelands Commission Highlights for 2015

- **Commission gains new gubernatorial representative.** Pages 1-2.
- **Commission staff continue work on rule changes prompted by Plan Review process.** Pages 2-3.
- **Commission completes work to develop a new software tool that can evaluate risks posed by uncapped landfills in the Pinelands.** Page 4.
- **Commission provides funding to help permanently preserve a 475-acre property in Woodland Township, Burlington County.** Pages 4-5.
- **Commission launches a new round of land acquisition funding.** Page 5.
- **Commission scientists continue to carry out its Long-term Environmental Monitoring Program.** Page 6.
- **Commission scientists monitor water quality and hydrology at 99 ponds as part of the Pond-vulnerability Study.** Page 7.
- **Commission scientists continue field work on the Created-wetland Study.** Page 8.
- **Commission approves 29 public development applications in the Pinelands Area.** Pages 9-10.
- **Commission staff continue to develop a new interactive mapping system that will provide the public with key information about land in the Pinelands.** Page 11.
- **The 26th annual Pinelands Short Course draws 500 attendees and features a new track of family-friendly courses.** Pages 12-13.
- **Commission completes major project to overhaul and redesign its website.** Pages 13-14.
- **Commission receives and review four bids to fabricate and install interpretive exhibits at the Richard J. Sullivan Center.** Page 15.

Commission Gains New Member in 2015

The Pinelands Commission gained a new member in 2015, as Bob Barr joined the Commission as a gubernatorial appointee.

A resident of Ocean City, Cape May County, Barr is a community activist for the disabled. In that capacity, he reviews legislation at the Federal and State level and makes recommendations for legislators through the Regional Family Support Council. He also works one-on-one with other disabled individuals, helping them to access information and support concerning disabilities, their rights and available assistance. Barr is a current member of the Ocean City Council, and he serves as the President of the Ocean City Community Association. He is also a member of the Board of Directors for both the Ocean City Housing Authority and the Ocean City Exchange Club. Mr. Barr holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Communications from Richard Stockton College.



Bob Barr of Ocean City joined the Pinelands Commission as a gubernatorial appointee in March 2015. He was sworn in by Deputy Attorney General Helene Chudzik (left).

Photo/Paul Leakan

Barr replaced Robert Jackson, a Middle Township resident of who served as a gubernatorial appointee on the Commission from June 2008 to March 2015. During his tenure on the Commission, Jackson served on the Policy and Implementation Committee, the Public and Governmental Programs Committee, the Permanent Land Protection Committee and the Plan Review Committee. On May 8, 2015, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt a resolution expressing its appreciation for Jackson's service as a Commissioner.

The Commission experienced another change in membership when longtime Gloucester County appointee Fran Witt stepped down from the Commission on December 31, 2015. A resident of National Park, Witt had been a member of the Commission since February 13, 2004. During his tenure, he served on the Personnel and Budget Committee, Public and Governmental Programs Committee and the Audit Committee. (Editor's Note: On February 12, 2016, the Commission unanimously adopted a resolution thanking Witt for his service as a Commissioner).

The Pinelands Commission's 15-member board consists of seven members who are appointed by the New Jersey Governor, one member appointed by each of the seven Pinelands counties, and

one member appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Commission members serve staggered, three-year terms and are uncompensated for their service.

Chapter 1: Land Use & Planning

Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) Amendments

Throughout 2015, the Commission’s staff continued to work on a series of possible rule changes that were recommended through the recent in-depth review of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), the rules that govern land use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands Area.

The Commission issued *The Fourth Progress Report on Plan Implementation* in 2014, marking the culmination of the Plan Review process. (The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.nj.gov/pinelands/cmp/planreview/PR%20reports/PlanReviewReportFinalDraft.pdf>.)



In 2015, the Commission continued to work on several proposed rule changes that were identified during the recent Plan Review process. Photo/Paul Leakan

The report includes dozens of suggested changes aimed at strengthening the Commission’s implementation of the CMP. The Commission’s staff took steps to address several of those recommendations in 2015.

Commission staff undertook a thorough review of the CMP’s sign regulations. In recent years, a number of municipalities have adopted ordinances that authorize the use of signs that feature digital technology, including video, flashing lights and changing text. The CMP, however, prohibits the use of motion and changing lights in on- and off-site signs. Staff is reviewing its on-

and off-site sign standards to address whether and where digital sign technology should be permissible in the Pinelands.

Commission staff also continued to work on possible rule changes that would enhance the Pinelands Development Credit Program (see page 6 for more information) and better protect the Black Run Watershed, an area of southern Medford and Evesham townships that contain an abundance of important natural resources.

The Commission also formed two new advisory committees in 2015 to address CMP standards and procedures.

The new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Policy Advisory Committee is an ad hoc committee composed of Commissioners and members of the public. The Committee is charged with examining the intergovernmental memorandum of agreement process described in the CMP, reviewing the history of its implementation, and advising the full 15-member Commission as to whether amendments should be made to provide more clear policy direction on the process and substance of intergovernmental agreements. The MOA Committee met five times in 2015 and drafted revisions to the existing MOA process for the full Commission's consideration.

The new Agriculture Committee reviews agriculturally-related policy issues, including proposed amendments to the CMP, permitting requirements, proposed legislation and rulemaking efforts by other agencies, and makes recommendations to the full Commission. The Committee met four times in 2015. It discussed a wide-range of agricultural issues, including the possible expansion of economic opportunities (recreational and commercial) on agricultural lands in the Pinelands Area.

Long Term Comprehensive Wastewater Plan in Hammonton

In 2015, the Pinelands Commission and the Town of Hammonton continued to make significant progress to reduce the discharge of treated wastewater from the Town's wastewater treatment plant to Hammonton Creek.

The beneficial reuse of treated wastewater by Hammonton will allow the Town to reduce the amount of wastewater that's pumped to its underperforming infiltration lagoons. Those lagoons have failed to infiltrate the large volumes of wastewater as originally anticipated by the system designers. The beneficial reuse of treated wastewater via drip irrigation combined with the reduction of extraneous flows that leak into the sewer system are expected to ease the hydraulic load previously placed upon the Town's infiltration lagoons.

Treated wastewater is being diverted from the infiltration lagoons to a 26 acre overland drip irrigation system that was installed in 2015. The overland drip irrigation system supplies nearly 500,000 gallons of treated wastewater daily to wooded areas at the Town's wastewater facility, which is located along Boyer Avenue.

Also in 2015, the Town installed the first phase of a multiple depth subsurface drip irrigation system to irrigate recreational turf fields adjacent to the infiltration lagoons.

Further, the Town is implementing a program to identify and prioritize for repairs areas of the sewer system that are prone to inflow and infiltration of stormwater and groundwater to further reduce extraneous hydraulic loading of the infiltration lagoon system.

All of these improvements are the direct result of the Commission's efforts to fully implement the CMP requirements that prohibit the discharge of treated wastewater into surface water bodies in the Pinelands Area.

Assessment of Uncapped Landfills in the Pinelands Area

In 2015, the Commission completed its work with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to develop a software tool that can be used to preliminarily evaluate the potential ecological and public health risks associated with uncapped landfills in the Pinelands Area. The groundwater transports model provides information necessary to characterize the "level of concern" posed by potential leachate plumes from 61 Pinelands landfills to nearby wetlands, surface water bodies, streams, ponds and drinking water wells. The screening-level analysis provides information that will help the Commission review proposals for the closure and reuse of landfills.

The study expands a pilot project that Commission staff completed in 2010. Under that project, staff reviewed the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) files on select, uncapped landfills in the Pinelands and compared leachate contaminant levels in landfill monitoring wells to various regulatory standards. The USGS work built upon this pilot study and included fate and transport modeling to determine likely leachate contaminant levels at nearby receptors.

Review of Municipal Ordinances

Amendments to certified county and municipal master plans and land use ordinances must be submitted to, and approved by, the Commission. During 2015, the Commission received and reviewed 70 ordinance and master plan amendments from 29 different municipalities.

Chapter 2: Permanent Land Protection

Pinelands Conservation Fund

In June 2015, the Pinelands Commission helped to preserve a 475-acre property that has expanded one of the Pinelands' ecological gems.

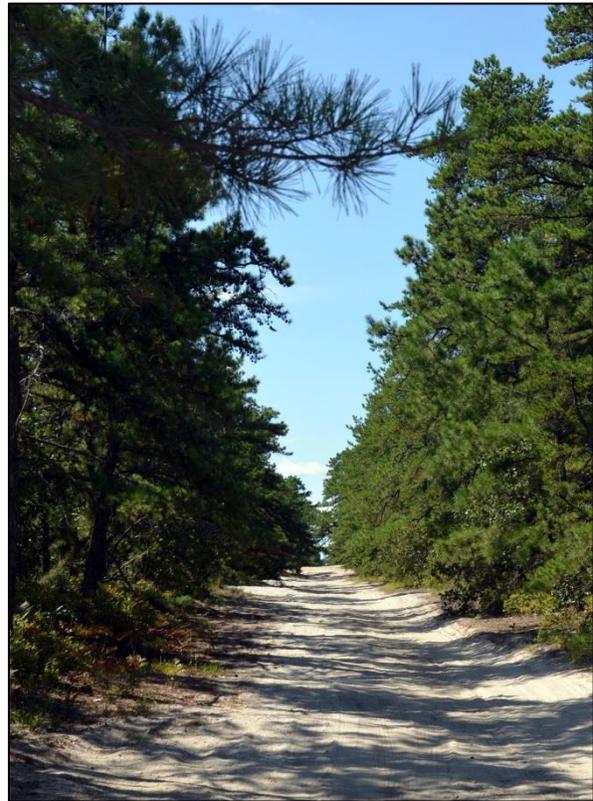
The Commission provided \$28,597 of the total \$418,142 cost to acquire the Zemel property, which is located in the Pinelands Preservation Area District along Route 72 and Route 532 in Woodland Township, Burlington County.

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) purchased the property with funding from the Pinelands Commission, the state Green Acres Program, the Victoria Foundation, the William Penn Foundation, the Open Space Institute, the Helen & William Mazer Foundation,

Conservation Resources Inc. and through private fundraising. NJCF then annexed the Zemel property to its Franklin Parker Preserve, increasing its size from 9,770 to 10,243 acres. The Franklin Parker Preserve was named after the Pinelands Commission's first Chairman.

The Zemel property features woodlands, streams and a series of trails. It provides habitat for dozens of threatened and endangered species.

The Commission launched a new round of acquisitions through the PCF in 2015. The Commission allocated a total of \$750,000 for the new round, and it received a total of 11 applications for funding. The Commission's staff evaluated the 11 projects based on a series of established criteria, including project size, development threat, habitat quality and project feasibility. Staff also conducted site visits. The Commission's Policy and Implementation Committee approved grants for five projects in three counties. (Editor's Note: Three of the five projects were acquired in 2016.)



From 2007 to 2015, the Commission approved the allocation of \$10.44 million to 38 projects in the Pinelands Area. Thirty-three of these projects have been completed (as of December 31, 2015), resulting in the permanent protection of 7,700 acres.

In 2015, the Pinelands Commission helped to preserve the 475-acre Zemel property (above) in Woodland Township, Burlington County.

Photo/Paul Leakan

The PCF 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 policies for the PCF originally set forth three principal objectives: permanent land protection, planning and research activities and community planning and design.

Pinelands Development Credit Program

The Pinelands Development Credit Program is a regional transfer of development rights program that preserves important agricultural and ecological land. Pinelands Development Credits (PDCs)

are allocated to landowners in Pinelands-designated Preservation, Agricultural and Special Agricultural Production Areas, which are the sending areas. These credits can be purchased by property owners and developers who are interested in developing land in Pinelands-designated Regional Growth Areas, which serve as the receiving areas, and can be used to increase the densities at which they build. Once those credits are “severed” from a sending area property, the property is permanently protected by a conservation or agricultural deed restriction and credits on the property can be sold. Credits are bought and sold in one-quarter credit units called “rights.”

During 2015, 15 rights were severed, protecting 158 acres of land. A total of 6,012 rights were severed from 1982 to 2015, protecting 51,581 acres. In 2015, the mean sales price of PDCs was \$8,582 per right.

Chapter 3: Science and Research Activities

Long-term Environmental Monitoring Program

In 2015, Commission scientists continued to carry out parts of its Long-term Environmental Monitoring Program.

Since the 1990s, the Commission has conducted surveys at hundreds of sites in the Pinelands in an effort to characterize the effect of existing land-use patterns on aquatic and wetland resources and to monitor long-term changes in these resources. Commission scientists sampled water quality, vegetation and fish in streams and impoundments, and frogs and toads in impoundments in the Mullica River, Rancocas Creek, Great Egg Harbor River, and Barnegat Bay watersheds. Staff has completed two rounds of surveys in each of the four watersheds and has prepared the survey data for analysis.

Since 2005, Commission scientists have measured water quality at 47 stream sites on a monthly or bimonthly basis. In 2015, Scientists completed a draft trend analysis of pH and specific conductance at the 47 stream sites to determine whether or not these parameters were changing over time. Specific conductance is a measure of dissolved solids in the water, and pH refers to the level of acidity in water.

Each month, scientists record water levels at 35 forest plots and 30 ponds, and maintain continuous water-level recording devices installed in seven other ponds. The Commission has monitored calling frogs and toads at 20 ponds since 1996.

Pond-vulnerability Study

Commission scientists continued to make progress on a study to characterize the vulnerability of Pinelands ponds to surrounding land uses. Scientists began the first phase of the project by using aerial photography to compile an inventory of approximately 3,000 natural Pinelands ponds. Ninety-nine of these ponds were selected for the study. In 2015, scientists continued to monitor water quality and hydrology at all 99 ponds and completed plant and animal surveys at 24 of the ponds.



In 2015, Commission scientists completed plant and animal surveys as part of the pond-vulnerability study. This included surveys of native Carpenter frogs. Photo/John Bunnell

These ponds are typically called “intermittent” because they are not usually connected to streams and occasionally dry out, creating largely fishless environments that serve as important breeding grounds for frogs and toads such as the rare Pine Barrens treefrog. Intermittent ponds also provide habitat for many rare plants.

During the course of the research project, Commission scientists will quantify the impact of land use on these ponds.

The Commission will identify and prioritize ponds that need enhanced protection and may evaluate potential planning and regulatory measures to better protect these ponds.

The study is being funded, in part, by a \$350,524 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Commission is supplementing the EPA grant funding by contributing \$116,841 from its Pinelands Conservation Fund (please see pages 4-5 for more information about the Fund).

Created-wetland Study

Like natural wetlands, created wetlands can provide the habitat necessary for wetland-dependent plants and animals, especially in human-dominated landscapes where natural wetlands may have been degraded or eliminated. As part of another study, Commission scientists mapped the location of two types of created wetlands commonly found in the Pinelands, shallow excavations that intercept the groundwater (excavated ponds) and excavations designed to receive stormwater (stormwater basins). About 2,000 excavated ponds and 1,700 stormwater basins have been mapped. Fifty-two excavated ponds and 46 stormwater basins were selected for the study.



Marsh seedbox (*Ludwigia palustris*) is one of the plants often found in stormwater basins, which are being investigated as part of the Created-wetland Study. Photo/Kim Laidig

As part of the study, scientists will compare water-quality, hydrologic, and biological attributes between both types of created wetlands and the natural ponds from the Pond-vulnerability Study described above. In collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey and Montclair University, sites that represent a subset of each type of wetland are being sampled for current-use pesticides and emerging-amphibian pathogens. In 2015, scientists monitored water quality and hydrology at all 98 created wetlands and surveyed plant and animal assemblages at 14 of the excavated ponds and 20 of the

stormwater basins. In 2015, eight more sites were sampled for these parameters.

The study is being funded by a \$361,317 grant from the U.S. EPA and a \$120,439 match by the Commission through the Pinelands Conservation Fund (please see pages 4-5 for additional information about the Fund).

Pinelands Research Series

The Pinelands Research Series was initiated in 2012 to provide a regular forum for scientists to present and discuss Pinelands-related research. This is a free event that is open to the public and hosted by the Commission.

In 2015, the Commission hosted nine presentations that covered a wide range of research topics, including the private well testing act, mercury monitoring, cranberry research, timber rattlesnake genetics, bat monitoring, Barnegat Bay research, lichens, climate change in New Jersey, and the new species of Atlantic Coast leopard frog.

A full listing of previous and upcoming presentations can be found on the Commission's website at:

<http://www.nj.gov/pinelands/science/pineseries/>



The Commission hosted nine presentations as part of the Pinelands Research Series in 2015, including a talk that focused on timber rattlesnake genetics.

Photo/John Bunnell

Chapter 4: Regulatory Activities

Permitting

The Commission's staff reviews municipal and county permitting decisions and development approvals to determine potential impacts on Pinelands natural resources. In 2015, the Commission's Project Review Office received 381 new applications (including public and private applications).

During the year, actions were taken on 1,586 applications. A total of 29 actions were taken on applications through the Local Review Officer Program, which expedites the approval process by having municipal officers review certain applications, without the need for the Commission's review first, and through streamlining agreements.

The Pinelands Commission approved 29 development applications from local, county and state entities in 2015. Among other noteworthy applications, the Commission approved:

- the construction of a 195-foot-high local communications tower in Monroe Township;
- the construction of a 551-square-foot sanitary sewer pump station and force main in Egg Harbor Township;
- road restoration activities, forestry and a forest fire fuel break in Washington Township;

- the construction of a 485-square-foot building addition at Seneca High School in Tabernacle;
- recreational improvements at the Michael Debbi Park in Buena Vista Township;
- the construction of a 996-square-foot potable water treatment building in Pemberton Township;
- the construction of a 50-acre solar facility at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst;
- the construction of 2,353-square-foot addition to an existing water treatment facility in Stafford Township;
- the construction of two traffic deceleration lanes in the Route 72 right-of-way in Barnegat Township;
- the construction of a 180-foot-high local communications tower in Manchester Township;
- forestry and forest fire management activities at Double Trouble State Park in Berkeley and Lacey townships;
- the construction of a 1,440-square foot equipment storage building, a 9,000-square-foot asphalt walking track and associated recreational improvements at the Chatsworth Elementary School in Woodland Township;
- construction of two 64-foot-high local communications facilities towers accessory to an existing emergency service building in Tabernacle;
- the construction of a 2,446-square-foot storage building in Winslow Township;
- improvements to the existing New Jersey Turnpike Authority Maintenance Facility in Barnegat Township; and
- the construction of a 3,312-square-foot municipal salt barn, a 1,657-square-foot vehicle wash building and a 1,424-square foot addition to an existing municipal garage in Upper Township.

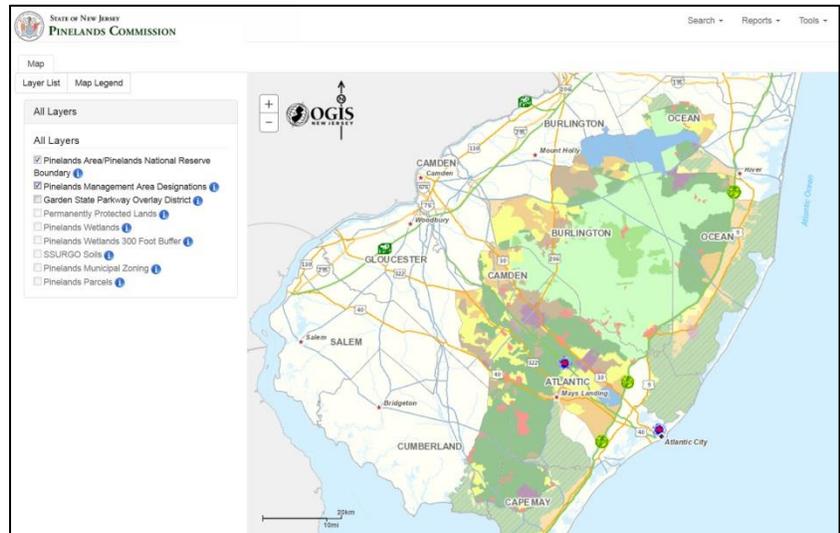
The Commission also has the authority to issue Freshwater Wetland General Permits in the Pinelands Area on behalf of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Commission issued seven such permits in 2015.

New Interactive Mapping Tool

In 2015, the Pinelands Commission's staff continued its work to develop a new interactive mapping system that will provide applicants and other members of the public with key information about land in the Pinelands.

Commission staff members are working with the New Jersey Office of Information Technology to develop the system, which will be accessible on the Commission's website.

Users will be able to perform both a quick search and a more detailed search. In the first case, the public will be able to search a parcel by selecting the county and municipality, then entering the block and lot. Once the search is complete, the system will provide an instant determination on whether the parcel is located in the Pinelands Area. Users have the option to then run a report that will provide detailed information such as the Pinelands Management Area designation and the possible presence of wetlands. In the second case, users can choose to run a more detailed search of a parcel. By doing so, users will have access to additional features such as the ability to search by address and other data layers.



Above: The Commission's new interactive mapping system will enable the public to determine whether a parcel is located in the Pinelands. The system will also provide more detailed information, such as the Pinelands Management Area, municipal zoning, soils data and the possible presence of wetlands.

Commission staff members continue to refine and test the system, which is anticipated to be available to the public by the end of 2016.

Violations

The Pinelands Commission continues its efforts to provide assistance to municipalities in pursuing and resolving violations of the local land use ordinances and Pinelands regulations. A total of 74 violations were identified in 2015.

Chapter 5: Public Information, Participation & Education

Outreach and Education

The Commission's Communications and Public Programs Office staff handled 150 press inquiries and responded to more than 1,000 public inquiries regarding the Pinelands in 2015.

Staff organized and carried out its ninth annual, Pinelands-themed World Water Monitoring Challenge event. Held at the historic Batsto Village, the event attracted more than 200 students and teachers who gauged Pinelands water quality and learned about the importance of protecting the region's unique natural and historic resources.



Pinelands Commission staff helped students sample for fish in Batsto Lake during the ninth annual Pinelands-themed World Water Monitoring Challenge. Photo/Janet Pierce

The students measured the levels of pH or acidity in water, as well as water clarity, temperature and dissolved oxygen. Water in the Pinelands is generally undisturbed, has a low pH and low dissolved solids, enabling it to support uniquely adapted Pinelands plants and animals. The students' findings were posted on the World Water Monitoring Day Web site, where test results can be compared over time. In addition to assisting with the water tests, staff from the Pinelands Commission used nets to catch native Pinelands fish and demonstrated how the Commission protects wetlands and habitat for rare plants and animals. Commission staff members educated approximately 1,040 students during in-class education programs and field trips in 2015.

Pinelands Short Course

The 26th annual Pinelands Short Course featured 35 presentations that explored the unique history, ecology, culture and music of the Pinelands. The daylong event was held at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Galloway Township, Atlantic County on March 14, 2015.

More than 500 people attended the Short Course. The event included 22 new programs, including a new track of family-friendly courses aimed at instilling a sense of stewardship among younger people. The new courses included presentations on the Pinelands Jetport, Pinelands Lichen Ecology, the Neonate Ecology of the Northern Pine Snake, the Jersey Devil and the Origins of New Jersey, Lost Towns of the Pines, Investigating the Pygmy Forest, the Battle of Chestnut Neck, Wetlands and Hydrologic Gradients, From Tidal Freshwaters to the Ocean: Fishes of the Mullica River - Great Bay Estuary, From the Lens: Learning to Appreciate the Pinelands through Photography, Wilderness Survival Fundamentals, Waste Management/Recycling in the Pinelands, Thomas Wesley Stern Band (live music), Land Use Planning for Barnegat Bay, A Trip Down the Great Egg Harbor River, Birding the Pinelands at Richard Stockton College, Still Days: A Biographical Presentation on Dr. James Still, Using GIS to Identify the Patterns of Land Use Change in the Pinelands, Sea Creatures with Amazing Features, Lenape Living in the Pines, Birding 101: Learning the Basics of Birdwatching and Get Youth Hooked on Fishing.



The 26th annual Pinelands Short Course featured 35 presentations, including one on birding (shown above).

Photo/Paul Leakan

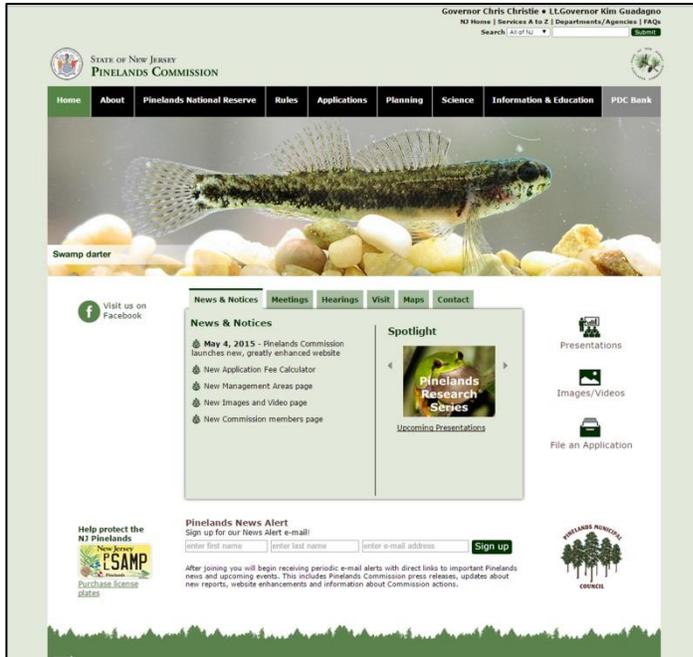
The event is registered with the New Jersey Department of Education, and professional development credits are available to New Jersey teachers who attend.

New Pinelands Commission website:

In 2015, the Commission completed a major project to overhaul and redesign its official website (<http://www.nj.gov/pinelands>).

The Commission last redesigned its website in 2005. The State of New Jersey's website technology has improved significantly since that time, providing for more flexibility and new features that can increase the ease of navigation.

The Commission began building the new site, along with designers and programmers from the New Jersey Office of Information Technology, in October 2014. Prior to building the new website, Commission staff conducted an online survey to ask applicants, officials, residents and other members of the public about what they like or dislike about the agency's old site. The



The Commission redesigned its new website to make navigation far simpler and to improve the agency's communications with the public.

enables users to access those subsections and other documents with one click of a mouse. For example, meeting agendas and the online version of the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) can now be downloaded directly from the Home page. Previously, it took several clicks to access those documents.

The new site also includes a new Image/Video library with nearly 200 high-resolution, digital photos of Pinelands agriculture, animals, history, landscape and plants. All of the photos were taken by Commission staff.

New form-based e-mail systems have been created for the public to submit formal, written comments on various matters, such as pending resolutions or proposed amendments to the CMP. The public can also use the form-based e-mail system to send questions or comments regarding development applications or Commission decisions. In addition, a new Fee Calculator that applicants can use to determine their development application fee also has been created. Applicants simply type in their proposal, such as the number of dwelling units, and the new system calculates their fee.

public requested that the new site be reorganized to make it easier to find information. They also wanted meeting dates to be displayed more prominently, and they wanted a better mechanism to submit written comments or questions.

The new site went live on May 4, 2015. It features a slideshow of Pinelands plants, animals and landscape scenes that rotate at the top of the page. The slideshow images will be swapped out twice per season, and a total of 56 different images will be displayed throughout the year.

Website users can now use place their cursor over each main topical section, prompting all of the subsections and/or documents to drop down. The feature

Pinelands Visitor Center:

In 2015, the Commission continued to make progress on a project to convert a portion of its headquarters into an official Pinelands Visitor Center.

The Commission received four bids to create and install exhibits in the Richard J. Sullivan Center for Environmental Policy and Education, which is located on 15 Springfield Road in Pemberton, NJ. The Commission posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) on its website on September 2, 2015, and prospective contractors had until October 14, 2015 to submit their

bids. An RFP Evaluation Committee composed of staff members and a representative from the Commission's Educational Advisory Council reviewed and scored the bids. (Editor's Note: In February 2016, the Commission voted to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Drill Construction of West Orange, NJ, to undertake the project.)

The exhibits were designed with funding from the National Park Service. The Commission is funding the fabrication and installation of the exhibits with monies from the Education and Outreach component of the Pinelands Conservation Fund.

Chapter 6: Finances

Fiscal & Budget

The Commission's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2016 totaled \$4,641,712. Of this, \$4,013,459, or 86% percent, was budgeted for personnel expenses.

Budgeted revenue sources included \$288,000 in federal grants, a \$2,499,000 State appropriation, \$784,152 in State grants and other State funding, \$425,000 in application fees and \$645,560 from the Commission's fund balance and reserves.



In 2015, the Commission received four bids to build and install Pinelands exhibits (as shown above) as part of the agency's plans to convert a portion of the Richard J. Sullivan Center into a Pinelands Visitor Center. Illustration/Content Design

The 2016 budget for the Kirkwood-Cohansey Study, funded through legislation passed in 2001, was \$225,965. The budget for the Pinelands Conservation Fund was \$2,011,794.

Once it is completed, the Commission's Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2015, which ended June 30, 2014, will be posted on the State Auditors web site. The website address is: http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislativepub/auditreports_department.asp. The report also will be available on the Pinelands Commission's web site: www.nj.gov/pinelands.

Pinelands Application Fees

Since April 2004, the Pinelands Commission has received application fees to partially underwrite the direct costs associated with reviewing development applications in the Pinelands Area. During Fiscal Year 2016, unaudited application fee revenues totaled \$646,000 (\$118,000 more than Fiscal Year 2015).

Certification

As required by State Executive Order #37, all State authorities are required to certify that during the preceding year the authority has, to the best of its knowledge, followed all of the authority's standards, procedures, and internal controls. I hereby certify to the best of my knowledge that, during the 2015 calendar year, all of the Commission's standards, procedures, and internal controls were followed.



Nancy Wittenberg
Executive Director

