



## ***New Jersey Pinelands Commission***

# **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **For Immediate Release:**

#### **Pinelands Commission Mourns the Passing of Robert C. Shinn, Jr., a Founding Member of the Commission and the Commission's first Vice Chairman**

NEW LISBON, N.J., May 9, 2023 – The New Jersey Pinelands Commission is mourning the loss of former Commission member Robert C. Shinn, Jr., who passed away on Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. He was 85.

“We are deeply saddened by Commissioner Shinn’s passing,” said Susan R. Grogan, Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission. “His work to protect New Jersey’s environment spans decades, and his contributions to the Pinelands are immeasurable.”

Mr. Shinn served as Burlington County’s representative on the Pinelands Commission’s 15-member board from the agency’s creation in 1979 until 1985. He also served as a state Assemblyman from 1985 to 1994 and he was the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection from 1994 to 2002. Mr. Shinn also served as a longtime at-large member of the Pinelands Development Credit Bank’s (PDC) Board of Directors.

“I can’t say enough good things about him,” said Stephen V. Lee III, who served on the Pinelands Commission from 1982 to 2010 and served with Mr. Shinn on the Pinelands Environmental Council, which was the precursor to the Pinelands Commission.

“The thing about Bob, he was an engineer by training,” Mr. Lee said, “and that led him to take an engineering approach to problem solving. He would define the problem, figure it out and then propose the solution. And if you’re an engineer, you build a solution. And Bob was always about building things ... I used to say, ‘Bob you’re a great leader and visionary but you’re so far in front of everybody, the people you are leading sometimes lose sight of you because you’re so far ahead of them.’”

“Bob was one of a kind,” said Susan E. Payne, who is the Executive Director of the state Special Agriculture Development Committee and served with Mr. Shinn on the PDC Bank board.

“Foremost, he was a visionary – and able to translate that vision into concrete strategies and see them implemented. He inspired the people who were lucky enough to work with him and remained remarkably humorous and humble through every endeavor. New Jersey is a much better place because of him, and we thank him for being a champion for farmland preservation throughout his long and extraordinary career.”

Mr. Shinn’s history in the Pinelands stretches back to the early 1960s, when he started a business that sold tractors and fabricated grading machines for cranberry bogs. He went on to play a major role in the history of Pinelands preservation, voting to adopt the original Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), the rules that guide the protection of the Pinelands Area, while serving as the Commission’s Vice Chairman in 1980.

“I think there was a lot of mutual respect in developing the plan,” said Mr. Shinn, while recounting the adoption of the CMP during a [virtual interview with the Commission in December 2020](#). “A lot of good folks were working on it with different interests, but it was quite an interesting process.”

The Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency that is charged with protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the 938,000-acre state Pinelands Area, which includes parts or all of 53 municipalities in Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Ocean counties.

The 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 are unpaid volunteers who dedicate countless hours of their time and expertise while serving on the Commission.



**Above:** Robert C. Shinn Jr., shown in a tan jacket, was a longtime member of the Pinelands Development Credit Bank’s Board of Directors.