



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

May 7, 2009

Contact: Paul Leakan

Phone: 609.894.7300

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

Two environmentally-sensitive properties in Atlantic County permanently preserved with money from the Pinelands Conservation Fund

NEW LISBON, N.J. – Two properties that are home to pristine Pinelands habitat in Atlantic County have been permanently preserved through funds administered by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission.

The Pinelands Commission is contributing \$116,000 from the Pinelands Conservation Fund to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, which is using the monies toward its recent purchase of a 64-acre property off Columbia Road in the Elwood Corridor area of Mullica Township and a 20-acre property on Leipzig Avenue in the Clarks Landing area of Galloway Township.

"The permanent preservation of land is among the most powerful tools we have to ensure that important natural resources in the Pinelands are protected forever," said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. "Both of these properties are adjacent to land that is already permanently preserved, creating a vast, unbroken forest of ecologically-valuable land. These properties also contain exceptional habitat for Pine Barrens tree frogs, a threatened animal species that is afforded special protection in the Pinelands."

The Commission has transferred \$106,000 in funds for the land in Mullica, commonly called the Wharton properties, and will transfer \$10,000 for the land in Galloway, commonly called the Lee property. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation closed on the properties on May 1 and April 6, respectively.

Funding partners for the Mullica property also include the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Green Acres program and DEP's Office of Natural Resource Restoration, which is a funding source from natural resource damage settlements and was administered by Conservation Resources Inc. Funding partners for the land in Galloway also include a grant from the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a new funding source for land-preservation projects in the Pinelands.

"I feel that we're very fortunate to still have some sources of funding such as the Pinelands Conservation Fund and the NOAA money, given that the state has run out of money (for land preservation)," said Chris Jage, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Assistant Director for South Jersey. "These are some of the few sources that we have at any level to do our work, and it enables us to do things that we couldn't do otherwise."

(MORE)

Pinelands press release

Page 2...

To date, a total of approximately 900 acres of land in the Pinelands area in Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean counties have been permanently preserved with funding from the Pinelands Conservation Fund. An additional 2,511 acres of land in the Pinelands are in the process of being preserved through monies provided from the Fund.

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; \$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.

####

*****ATTENTION EDITORS:** High-resolution, digital photos of the Wharton property in Mullica Township can be obtained by contacting Paul Leakan at (609) 894-7300.



Above: Dense vegetation is reflected on a pond located at the recently preserved, 64-acre Wharton property in the Pinelands in Mullica Township. Photo by Paul Leakan

(MORE)

Pinelands press release

Page 3...



Above: A sand road winds through the Wharton property in the Pinelands in Mullica Township. Photo by Paul Leakan



Above: Chris Jage of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation hangs a marker on the newly-preserved Wharton property. Photo by Paul Leakan