



NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION
MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT



Native pickerelweed blooming in the Pinelands in July

JULY 2021

1 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

1.1 ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1.1A COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- **Pinelands Climate Committee:** The Committee met on July 14, 2021 and received a presentation from the New Jersey Forest Service entitled Forest Carbon & Climate Information.
- **Policy & Implementation Committee:** The Committee met on July 30, 2021 and reviewed a final draft of the comments to be submitted to the Legislature on several forest stewardship bills. The Commission's letter and comments will next be forwarded to the Governor's office for review and coordination. The Committee also discussed the goals drafted by staff for the Greenwood Forest Stewardship Plan at the request of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Staff provided an update on the Commission's Electric Transmission Right-of-Way Maintenance Pilot Program and emphasized the need to complete an evaluation of the program and draft appropriate amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. Finally, the Committee continued its discussion of the utility distribution line application exemptions in the CMP and the possible development of standards for Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). Susan Lockwood from the Division of Watershed Management and Restoration at NJDEP made a presentation on the Department's draft HDD rules.
- **Personnel & Budget Committee:** The Committee's July 20, 2021 meeting was canceled and rescheduled for August 24, 2021.

1.1B PINELANDS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

- **Pinelands Municipal Council:** The Pinelands Municipal Council held its July 27, 2021 meeting as part of the Commission's Municipal Officials Orientation; however, there was no quorum. The Council's next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2021 at the Weymouth Township Municipal Building.

1.1C RULEMAKING

- **Stormwater management:** The proposed CMP amendments were published in the July 19, 2021 issue of the New Jersey Register. A remote public hearing has been scheduled for September 1, 2021 and written public comments will be accepted through September 17, 2021. The proposed amendments were distributed to the Pinelands Municipal Council, all Pinelands municipalities and counties and a long list of interested parties on July 15, 2021. Staff made a presentation on the proposed amendments at the Municipal Officials Orientation on July 27, 2021.

1.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Retirement/Separation:** Retirement of one staff member effective July 1, 2021, was processed.

- **CWA Contractual Increases:** The contractual increases effective July 1, 2021, were implemented.
- **Evaluations:** Employee self-evaluations were due to be completed and submitted to supervisors by June 15, 2021. Final Evaluations were due to be completed and submitted to Human Resources by July 15, 2021.
- **Flexible Schedule Program:** Staff members are participating in the Flexible Schedule Program from May 10, 2021 to September 10, 2021.
- **Return to Office:** In accordance with the Pinelands Commission Return to the Office plan, staff members are to report to the Commission office at least two days per week in July. When working in the office, staff members are required to take their temperature and complete the Employee COVID-19 Daily Self-Screening form.

2 PLANNING

2.1 CONFORMANCE ACTIVITY

	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Master Plans/Ordinances Received		
Adopted	22	90
Drafted or Introduced	10	67
Total ¹	22	106
Master Plans/Ordinances Reviewed		
Substantial Issue Finding ²	0	2
No Substantial Issue Finding	1	25
No Issue Finding	5	35
Total	6	62
Finding Letters Issued³	6	39

Notable Conformance-Related Activities:

¹The total accounts for unique master plans and ordinances received (i.e., it does not double count drafted, introduced, or adopted submissions for the same ordinance).

² Ordinances and Master Plans that are found to raise substantial issues with respect to the standards of the CMP require formal review and approval by the full Commission.

³ A single finding letter can pertain to multiple master plans/ordinances from the same municipality.

- Cannabis Related Ordinances:** In response to the provisions of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory, Enforcement Assistance, and Marketplace Modernization Act (P.L. 2021, c. 26), municipalities across the state are weighing whether to prohibit any of the six cannabis classes of business established by the law within their jurisdiction. The law requires that municipalities act to prohibit any of the six classes by August 22, 2021. The law prevents any municipality from enacting prohibitions on any class not prohibited by the August 22, 2021 deadline for a period of five years.

Staff is monitoring municipal actions within the Pinelands Area in response to this legislation and providing comment and guidance to municipalities as needed. To date, the Commission has issued no issue finding letters for 13 municipalities that have adopted an ordinance enacting municipal-wide prohibitions on all classes of business. Additional ordinances have been submitted and are under review. Of the Pinelands Area municipalities:

- 35 municipalities have adopted or introduced an ordinance to prohibit all classes of cannabis businesses within their jurisdictions.
- 16 municipalities have adopted, introduced, or intend to introduce an ordinance(s) to permit one or more classes of cannabis businesses.
- Two municipalities have not provided information to the Commission on any cannabis-related ordinances adopted or drafted.

2.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Applications Reviewed	6	45
Surveys Required	1	5
Surveys Reviewed	1	4
Certificates of Appropriateness Required	1	4

2.3 PINELANDS DEVELOPMENT CREDIT PROGRAM

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
PDCs Allocated	0.25	24.70
PDCs Severed	0	17.50
Acres Protected	0	509
PDCs Extinguished	0	4.50
Acres Protected	0	152
PDCs Sold	0.75	27.75
Average Sales Price per PDC	\$73,332	\$52,672

Average Sales Price per Right	\$18,333	\$13,168
PDCs Redeemed	1.50	11.75

Notable Activity:

- **PDC Allocations:** 0.25 PDCs were allocated to 20 acres in the Agricultural Production Area in Galloway Township.
- **PDC Sales:** 0.75 PDCs (3 rights) were sold during July 2021, with sales prices ranging from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per right.
- **PDC Redemptions:** PDCs were redeemed on a total of four projects, all involving the development of single-family detached dwellings. The projects are located in Egg Harbor Township, the Town of Hammonton and Medford Township.

2.4 SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Pinelands Conservation Fund:** A new round of grants was authorized in March and invitations were emailed to municipalities, counties, and non-governmental organizations in May. The email asked for submission of land acquisition projects to be considered for funding through the Pinelands Conservation Fund. The application period closed on July 30, 2021 with only one project submitted. Staff will be reviewing the project and bringing a recommendation to the Policy and Implementation Committee in the coming months.

3 REGULATORY PROGRAMS

3.1 APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Pre-Application Conferences	3	78
Certificates of Filing	8	97
Public Development Reports	0	9
Forestry Certificates of Filing	0	5
PDC Letters of Interpretation	1	19
Non-PDC Letters of Interpretation	0	1
MOA Consistency Determinations	0	25
Review of Agency Determinations	57	534

3.2 NOTABLE APPLICATIONS

- **Landfill Capping and Solar Energy Facility, Pemberton Twp. (App. No 2021-0112.001):** Pemberton Township is pursuing an application to “cap” and develop a solar energy facility on its closed municipal landfill. On July 20, 2021, staff conducted a pre-application conference with the applicant. Because the landfill ceased operation prior to September 23, 1980, the applicant is not required to “cap” the landfill in accordance with CMP requirements. However, the applicant is required to “cap” the landfill in accordance with NJDEP requirements. As “development,” the “capping” requires application to the Commission. The proposed solar facility on the “capped” landfill also requires application to the Commission. The application will be required to address threatened and endangered species standards.
- **Landfill Capping and Solar Energy Facility, Woodbine Borough (App. No 1986-0257.002):** The Borough of Woodbine is pursuing an application to “cap” and develop a solar energy facility on its closed municipal landfill. Because the landfill ceased operation after January 14, 1981, the landfill must be “capped” in accordance with CMP requirements. The proposed “capping” requires application to the Commission. The proposed solar facility on the “capped” landfill also requires application to the Commission. The application will be required to address threatened and endangered species standards.
- **LS Power, Egg Harbor Township (App. No 1981-0479.010):** Staff has scheduled a pre-application conference for August 3, 2021 to discuss this proposal to install approximately 11.7 miles of underground electric transmission cable to deliver electricity generated by future offshore wind turbines.
- **Residential Development, Jackson Township (App. No. 2006-0112.001):** A subdivision creating 5 residential lots served by public sanitary sewer received municipal approval in 2009. A subdivision plan was subsequently filed with the county creating the lots. In 2018, the Commission certified (approved) a municipal ordinance requiring PDCs for 30% of market rate dwelling units in a residential development serviced by public sanitary sewer. Municipal construction permits were issued in 2019 for the dwellings proposed in this application without requiring the purchase of the required 0.5 PDCs. The application is currently the subject of a Commission staff public hearing.
- **Waterford Fire Company Tower, Winslow Township (App. No 1994-0391.007):** This application proposes a 157-foot-high local communications facility (tower) accessory to the existing Waterford Volunteer Fire Company building. Staff has requested information from the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed tower is accessory to the existing Fire Company building.
- **Cannabis Facility, Winslow Township (App. No 1989-0707.004):** This application proposes a 215,000 square foot addition to an existing 35,000 square foot building on a 15.2-acre parcel. On July 29, 2021, staff issued a letter requesting information to complete the application.
- **NJDEP Greenwood Forest Stewardship Plan, Lacey and Manchester Townships (App. No. 1981-0087.004):** On July 1, 2021, staff conducted a pre-application conference with NJDEP to discuss a proposed Forest Stewardship Plan for 3,117 acres of the 32,353-acre Greenwood Wildlife Management Area. NJDEP requested that as a stakeholder, Commission staff identify

Commission objectives for the proposed forest Stewardship Plan. On July 30, 2021, staff reviewed the draft objectives with the Commission's Policy and Implementation Committee. Staff will be forwarding the recommended Forest Stewardship Plan objectives to the NJDEP.

- **Mixed Use Development, Wrightstown Borough (App. No. 2007-0301.004):** On July 22, 2021, an application was submitted proposing 419 dwelling units, a hotel and 20,000 square feet of retail commercial space on a 43-acre parcel. The application is currently under review.

4 SCIENCE

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- **Water Level Monitoring:** In July, staff measured water levels at forest plots and ponds in the Commission network of long-term monitoring sites. This work is completed each month. Staff also maintained access trails to several of the sites.

4.2 LONG TERM STUDIES

- **Kingsnake Study:** Staff continued to radio track kingsnakes in July. A total of 22 kingsnakes in several different study areas are currently being radio tracked as part of the study. In 2021, four kingsnakes were killed by mammal or raptor predators and one died from being egg bound. Egg binding occurs when a female reptile is unable to pass her eggs or fetus. It is a reasonably common problem in reptiles and can be life threatening.
- **Joint Corn Snake Study:** Staff continued to monitor the drift fence for animals found under the wood and metal cover, in box traps, and in the pitfall traps established along the fence array. The entire drift fence array is checked seven days per week from April to November. In 2021, a total of 1,403 reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals have been captured or detected at the fence array.
- **Rare Snake Monitoring:** Staff continued to track rare snakes for long-term monitoring. In July, staff tracked 24 corn snakes, 6 pine snakes, and 2 hognose snakes. An additional corn snake appears to have been predated by a raptor because the transmitter is high up in a pine tree and has been in that location for many weeks. Several snakes were gravid, or pregnant, when found and their eggs are being held in the laboratory until they hatch.



Above: A pine snake blending in naturally with its surroundings.

The hatchlings will then be PIT tagged for permanent identification and the adults will be tracked to locate their winter dens.

- **Eastern Box Turtle**
Study: Staff continued to track box turtles with the hope of obtaining Environmental Protection Agency funding to initiate a robust box turtle study in 2022. In 2021, staff captured 15 box turtles within several different areas of the Pinelands. Radio transmitters were attached to 14 of the turtles and one turtle was marked and released without a transmitter because it was suspected to spend most of its time on private land. One of the radio tracked turtles was killed by an automobile, which is the first reptile tracked by Commission staff to have died from a vehicle collision. Staff met virtually with New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Endangered and Nongame Species Program staff to continue to coordinate future controlled burns where box turtles are being tracked.



Above: An eastern box turtle (bottom left of photo) utilizing a forest that was burned by wildfire several years ago. The land owners are cutting the regenerating pine in an effort to restore oak trees.

5 COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Website:** The Pinelands Commission’s website was viewed 16,367 times in July 2021.

Inquiries/Correspondence: The Communications Office received and responded to 108 inquiries from the public in July 2021, including phone calls, e-mails, and media inquiries.

- **Pine Barrens Byway Brochures:** In July 2021, staff distributed hundreds of copies of the newly printed Pine Barrens Byway brochures at various destinations along the 130-mile route. More brochures will be delivered at various sites in August.
- **Office Support:** Communications Office staff reformatted PowerPoint presentations for the Planning and Regulatory Programs Office in July 2021, and also hosted virtual meetings of the Pinelands Climate Committee in Policy & Implementation Committee on Zoom/YouTube.

5.2 EVENTS, OUTREACH & INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

- **Pinelands Summer Short Course:** Staff carried out the fifth annual Pinelands Summer Short Course at Whitesbog Village and Wells Mills County Park on July 15, 2021. More than 50 people attended the event, which featured guided hikes, history tours, a canoe trip, live music and a demonstration of the Commission’s ground-penetrating radar equipment. The event was co-sponsored by Stockton University.



Above: The fifth annual Pinelands Summer Short Course featured a guided nature walk through Whitesbog Village.

- **Pinelands Orientation for Newly Elected or Appointed Municipal Officials:** Staff organized and carried out the first-ever virtual Pinelands Orientation on July 27, 2021. The event featured a Pinelands Overview presentation, as well as presentations on Conformance, Regulatory Programs and the newly proposed stormwater management amendments. The recorded and archived video of the presentations has generated more than 150 views, while garnering 10 thumbs up. The Communications Office has since posted and shared links to the individual presentations and video of the presentations on the Commission’s website. The links have been shared with more than 1,400 recipients.
- **Pinelands Speaker Series Webinars:** Staff hosted two webinars as part of the Pinelands Speaker Series in July 2021. The webinars included “The Civilian Experience of the American Revolution in South Jersey” and “Barnegat Bay: Where Pine Barrens Rivers Meet the Sea.” The Commission will host an additional webinar in August 2021.

- **Science Office Assistance:** A member of the Communications/Public Programs Office collected pond and well data for the Science Office on July 6th and July 7th.
- **Education Programs:** A member of the Communications/Public Programs Office participated in the Montclair University Summer Sustainability Institute’s visit to the Rutgers Pinelands Field Station on July 19, 2021. Approximately 70 students from Montclair University attended the education event, which included a staff-led presentation on the Pinelands.
- **Social Media Enhancements:** Staff continued to enhance the Commission’s social media pages in July 2021. Staff posted 79 photos and three videos on the Commission’s Instagram site. Unfortunately, due to authentication issues, the Commission has been unable to post on its Facebook page since the second week of April 2021. The Commission has contacted Facebook about the issue dozens of times.



Above: Staff shared 79 photos on the Commission’s Instagram site in July 2021, including this photo of a native orange fringed orchid in bloom.

6 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- **Pinelands Commission Information System Upgrades:** The Pinelands Commission Information System (PCIS) is the internal system of record for all applications to the Pinelands and associated transactions. Staff implemented enhancements and bug fixes to streamline operations and facilitate remote work. The Publics and Waivers notification system process was evaluated by a cross-functional team that identified several areas for improvement. These enhancements are anticipated to be completed within the next month. Staff is also working with the New Jersey Office of Information technology, the Treasury Department, and IBM on issues related to the archival document retrieval tool, FileNet.
- **Cybersecurity:** Vigilance to protect the internal networks, hardware, and data of the Pinelands Commission is critical in today’s networked world, especially due to the added complexities of supporting employees working from home. The Information Systems office participated in the periodic New Jersey Cybersecurity Communication and Integration Cell (NJCCIC) monthly

meeting. The Pinelands Commission staff exhibited cybersecurity awareness by passing a test Phishing campaign with better than 95% effectiveness.

- **Office 365 Migration:** The Information Systems Office provides a stable and secure desktop environment. Staff continues to roll out Office 365 and continued migration of local user data to OneDrive to replace the local file share.
- **Permanent Land Protection (PLP) Data System:** The PLP system manages the data related to all the preserved land in the Pinelands National Reserve. Staff has successfully completed migration of existing PLP data into the new database. A temporary ad hoc process is conducted while developing database integration with the Pinelands Commission Information System. Staff continues to work with the Planning Office to refine the Deed Restriction data entry tool. A draft version of the PLP Annual Report was generated from the new system. Transparency and accessibility of the new data is also being expanded by the addition of Microsoft Excel integration utilizing Active Directory to authorize the viewing and reporting of data.
- **Pinelands Development Credit Bank:** The Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Bank is the processing agency for the Pinelands Development Credit Program, one of the oldest and most successful transfer of development rights (TDR) programs in the world. The Information System staff provides operational support and reporting to the PDC Bank. Staff worked to produce draft tables, charts, and maps for inclusion in the PDC Bank Annual Report.
- **Technology Enhancements:** Staff members continually evaluate emerging technologies for how they can impact or enhance the office environment. To support Governor Murphy’s “Return to Office” Plan, staff released a new Teams based version of the monthly report to streamline editing of the document. Teams was also used to host the daily COVID checklist required for staff in the office to complete.

7 BUSINESS OFFICE

7.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- **Application Fees:** July 2021, Net Total: \$141,712.47; Year to Date Total: \$141,712.47.
- **Audit:** The Data Sampling for the Fiscal Year (FY) 19 Audit has ended and the FY20 Audit data sampling began on August 2, 2021.