



NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT



Pine Barrens gentians blooming in September

SEPTEMBER 2020

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1 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

1.1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1.1A COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- **Policy & Implementation Committee:** During its meeting on September 25, 2020, the Policy & Implementation Committee reviewed and recommended Commission approval of redevelopment plans from Manchester Township and Winslow Township. The Committee received a briefing on the Commission's 1990 hydrologic monitoring agreement with the Monroe Township Municipal Utilities Authority. Finally, Commission staff presented its recommended stormwater management amendments.
- **Land Use, Climate Impacts & Sustainability (LUCIS):** The LUCIS Committee meeting originally scheduled for September 25, 2020 was moved to October 7, 2020 so that New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Acting Assistant Commissioner Vince Mazzei would be able to attend and make a presentation on NJDEP's climate change initiatives.
- **Personnel & Budget Committee:** During its meeting on September 29, 2020, the Personnel & Budget Committee discussed the preparation of the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget. Staff advised the Committee that the FY 19 Audit has been postponed until the spring of 2021. Staff reviewed financials and provided an update on employee matters. Staff also made a presentation on application fees and recommended that, for budgeting purposes, projected fee revenue be based on an average of the fee revenue received in the prior five years.

1.1B RULE MAKING

- **Septic System Pilot Program:** Staff conducted a virtual public hearing on proposed amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) on September 2, 2020. The Commission did not receive any testimony or any written comments by the September 18, 2020 deadline. Staff is preparing a draft adoption notice for the Policy & Implementation Committee's review at its October 30, 2020 meeting.
- **Stormwater Management:** A final set of recommended CMP amendments was developed and discussed with NJDEP on September 22, 2020. Staff made a presentation at the September 25, 2020 Policy & Implementation Committee, highlighting the key differences between NJDEP's recently amended regulations and the recommended CMP standards and procedures. Please click [here](#) for the presentation, which has been posted on the Commission's website. A draft rule proposal is now being prepared and will be provided to the Policy & Implementation Committee for review at the November 20, 2020 Committee meeting.

1.2 LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

1.2A OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

- **Open Public Records Act:** A total of seven Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests were received in September 2020. Of the seven requests, four were provided responsive material, two were advised that we had no responsive material and one was advised that staff will provide copies of any paper records once the Commission's Offices reopen.

1.3 HUMAN RESOURCES

- **NJECC 2020:** The New Jersey Employees Charitable Campaign kicked off on September 15, 2020. The Commission's Human Resources office participated in the Coordinator Training.
- **Training:** Staff participated in the following Pension webinar: "A Closer Look at Social Security Benefits."
- **Learning Management System:** Staff completed various courses including the "NJ Policy on Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace 2020."

2 INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

- **Biosphere Working Group:** The Executive Director joined and attended the September 2, 2020 meeting of the Biosphere Working Group (BWG). The group was established to serve as a way to encourage communication and collaboration among the Biospheres. The BWG communicates input from local Biospheres to be used in developing the U.S. strategy and also deliberates on local and national issues and goal-setting.

The Pinelands was designated as a Biosphere Reserve in 1988. There are currently 28 Biospheres in the United States and 701 worldwide.

- **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Division of Fish and Wildlife:** On September 16, 2020, Commission staff met with staff from the NJDEP, Division of Fish and Wildlife to discuss an existing 1988 Memorandum of Agreement between the two agencies and to improve permitting coordination of development activities at Wildlife Management Areas located within the Pinelands Area.

3 PLANNING

3.1 CONFORMANCE ACTIVITY

	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Ordinances/Master Plans Received	13	76

Notable Ordinances:

- Manchester Township Ordinance 20-031:** Manchester Township adopted a revised Redevelopment Plan for a 6-acre lot located in the Pinelands Town of Whiting. Permitted uses in the new 2121 Lake Road Redevelopment Area include mini warehouses, self-storage units, and all other uses permitted in the underlying WTO-P District. Planning Office staff assisted Township Planners with revising a previously adopted version of the Redevelopment Plan that permitted solar facilities as a principal use. While solar facilities may be permitted as a principal use in Pinelands Town management areas, the Redevelopment Plan had not incorporated the necessary CMP solar standards. Ultimately, the Township opted to permit solar only as an accessory use in the Redevelopment Area. The Commission issued a no substantial issue finding letter for the ordinance on September 18, 2020.

3.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Applications Reviewed	6	67
Surveys Required	0	4
Surveys Reviewed	0	7
Certificates of Appropriateness Required	2	6

3.3 PINELANDS DEVELOPMENT CREDIT PROGRAM

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
PDCs Allocated	16.50	28.03
PDCs Severed	0.50	0.50
Acres Protected	32	32
PDCs Extinguished	0.25	1.50
Acres Protected	56	151

PDCs Sold	0	35.50
Average Sales Price per PDC	n/a	\$43,648
Average Sales Price per Right	n/a	\$10,912
PDCs Redeemed	0	8.00

Notable Activity:

- **PDC Allocation:** 16.50 PDCs were allocated to 480 acres in the Special Agricultural Production Area in Bass River Township.
- **Severed PDCs:** 0.50 PDCs were severed, protecting 32 acres in the Preservation Area District in Tabernacle Township.
- **NJDEP Green Acres:** Green Acres acquired 56 acres in the Preservation Area District in Bass River Township, thereby extinguishing 0.25 PDCs that were allocated to the property by the Commission in 2019.

3.4 SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **Pine Barrens Byway:** Staff reviewed and provided suggested improvements to the draft website and overview book prepared by the New Jersey Department of Transportation’s marketing consultants. In anticipation of a National Scenic Byway designation this fall, Commission staff created an ArcGIS StoryMap for the Byway. Please see the Communications Office section for specific details about the StoryMap.

3.5 OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

- **Barnegat Bay Partnership’s Advisory Committee:** The Planning Office staff attended the Barnegat Bay Partnership’s Advisory Committee meeting on September 8, 2020.
- **Barnegat Bay Partnership:** The Planning Office staff also participated in the virtual kickoff meetings held by the Barnegat Bay Partnership to develop Watershed Protection and Restoration Plans for two Barnegat Bay sub-watersheds: Toms River and Cedar Creek/Forked River/Oyster Creek. The Toms River sub-watershed contains all or portions of several Pinelands Area municipalities, including the Boroughs of Beachwood, Lakehurst and South Toms River and the Townships of Berkeley, Jackson, Manchester and Toms River. The Cedar Creek/Forked River/Oyster Creek sub-watershed includes portions of Barnegat, Berkeley, Lacey, Manchester and Ocean Townships.

4 REGULATORY PROGRAMS

4.1 APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Pre-Application Conferences	9	98
Certificates of Filing	22	137
Public Development Reports	0	25
Forestry Certificates of Filing	0	20
PDC Letters of Interpretation	1	9
Non-PDC Letters of Interpretation	0	1
MOA Consistency Determinations	1	32
Review of Agency Determinations	71	581

4.2 NOTABLE APPLICATIONS

- **Chatsworth Volunteer Fire Company, Woodland Township (App. No. 1981-0162.002):** On July 27, 2020, the Commission staff issued a Certificate of Filing for the construction of a 120 foot high communication tower on a parcel currently occupied by the fire company station. The applicant has represented that the proposed tower is necessary to facilitate and improve emergency communications. The tower is proposed as accessory to the existing fire station use on the parcel. The Commission received four public comments, including a signed petition, expressing concerns about the proposed tower. The site plan application is currently being considered by the Woodland Township Land Use Board.
- **Sims Place Properties PDC Letter of Interpretation (App. No. 1996-1602.005):** On September 23, 2020, the staff issued a Letter of Interpretation allocating 16.5 PDCs to a 479.6 acre parcel. The applicant has expressed concern regarding the in-office wetlands and uplands mapping utilized by the Commission staff to determine the number of PDC that are allocated to the parcel.
- **Single Family Dwelling, Hamilton Township (App. No. 1990-0191.001):** The Commission staff previously issued several letters to a property owner in Hamilton Township and attended a Municipal Court hearing regarding the clearing of land and the placement of a trailer on a parcel in violation of the application requirements, and the wetland and threatened and endangered species protection standards of the Hamilton Township land use ordinance and the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. Staff attended a virtual Municipal Court hearing on September 10, 2020. A resolution of the violation was not reached at that hearing and a trial has been scheduled for November 10, 2020.

- **South Jersey Gas (App. No. 2020-0083.001):** On September 21, 2020, the Commission staff issued a letter indicating that the replacement of 5,900 linear feet of natural gas main in the Hamilton Mall area of Hamilton Township did not require an application to the Commission. No application to the Commission was required because the proposed main would serve development which has received all necessary approvals and permits (N.J.A.C. 7:50-4.1(a)6). The September 21, 2020 letter requested that South Jersey Gas prepare a contingency plan to address any potential inadvertent return of drilling fluid that may occur during the installation of approximately 1,135 linear feet of natural gas main by horizontal directional drilling under the Atlantic City Expressway. The letter indicated that the contingency plan should provide for the immediate notification of the Pinelands Commission regarding the inadvertent return of drilling fluid.

4.3 OFF-ROAD VEHICLE EVENT ROUTE MAP APPROVALS

- **Application # 2005-0459.032**
Meteor Motorcycle Club
Approval Issued: 9/30/2020
Event Name: Fall Brawl
Event Date: October 3 and 4, 2020
Municipality: Maurice River Township
Lands Utilized: Ormond Farms located on Hesstown Road
Route Length: 12 miles

5 SCIENCE

5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- **Water-level and Water-quality Monitoring:** In September 2020, staff measured water levels at forest plots and ponds in the Commission network of long-term monitoring sites. Staff also cleared brush and fallen trees from forest roads and foot paths used to access these remote sites.
- **Rare Snake Monitoring:** Little data exist for long-term trends of most rare snake species in New Jersey, especially in natural settings. During a recently completed corn snake study and an ongoing kingsnake study conducted by the Commission, Herpetological Associates, and The College of New Jersey, researchers used radio telemetry to locate a network of important shed areas, nest areas, and winter dens for corn snakes,

kingsnakes, and other rare snakes, such as pine snakes. These areas will be monitored to find new snakes and snakes that have already been captured and to establish additional areas in other study sites. Small tags will be implanted into each snake for permanent identification.

Monitoring the

winter dens will allow all snakes that emerge from hibernation to be evaluated at the beginning of the growing season. Monitoring shed stations will allow researchers to find new snakes from unknown dens in the vicinity. Finding hatchlings at nest areas will allow researchers to monitor their long-term growth, health, and survivorship. In September, staff scientists found several new and previously captured corn snakes, kingsnakes, and pine snakes. Multiple clutches of corn snake, kingsnake, and pine snake hatchlings were also tagged at study sites.



Above: Corn snake hatchlings from a nest area located in a long-term study area.



Above: A clutch of eastern kingsnakes hatching. Hatchlings were weighed, measured, tagged for permanent identification, and released back at long-term study sites.

5.2 LONG TERM STUDIES

- **Endocrine Disruption Study:** Commission scientists and New Jersey and West Virginia U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists are investigating the potential effect of endocrine disrupting compounds from surrounding land use and sewage treatment plants on water quality and fish and frogs in the Pinelands. Ponds, stormwater basins, and stream and lake sites were sampled for over 150 organic and inorganic contaminants and fish and frogs were examined for measures of endocrine disruption, which include sex ratio, prevalence of intersex or egg cells in males, female hormones in male largemouth bass, and immunosuppression. In September 2020, using rods and reels, bluegills, black crappie, and largemouth bass were targeted in two lakes above and one lake below the Medford Lakes sewage treatment plant. All field work has been completed for the study. A presentation on the preliminary results of the study will be delivered at a virtual conference held by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University on October 22, 2020.



Above: Commission staff members with a largemouth bass (top) and a black crappie (bottom). These two fish species were targeted during the September sampling of lakes above and below the Medford Lakes sewage treatment plant.

6 COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Website Activity:** The Pinelands Commission’s website received a total of 11,757 page views in September 2020.
- **Inquiries/Correspondence:** The Communications Office received and responded to 260 inquiries from the public, including phone calls, e-mails, and media inquiries.
- **Presentation Assistance:** The Communications Office helped the Planning Office to create the Permanent Land Protection Update PowerPoint presentation that will be delivered to Commissioners on October 9th. It includes numerous new photos of various Pinelands properties that have been permanently preserved.

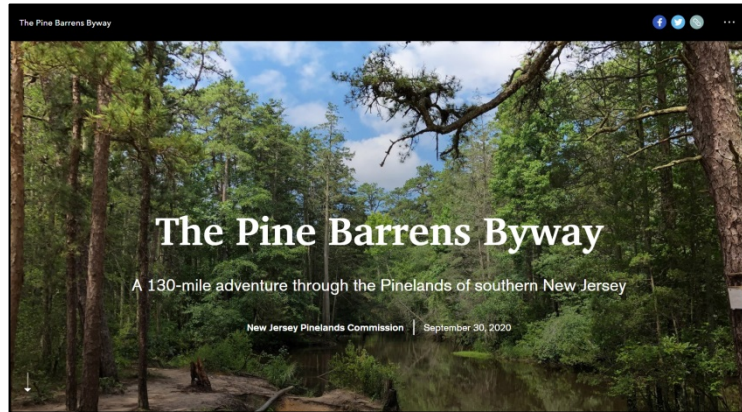
6.2 EVENTS, OUTREACH & INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

- **Social Media Site Enhancements:** Staff continued to enhance the Commission’s social media pages in September 2020. Staff posted 131 photos on the Commission’s Instagram site and 137 photos on the Commission’s Facebook page after taking lunchtime or weekend trips to Belleplain State Forest, the Head of the River Church in Estell Manor City, Stephen Lake, Batsto Village/Wharton State Forest, the Batona Trail, the Mullica River, Hammonton Lake, the Commission’s headquarters, the Piney Hollow Preservation Area, Tabernacle Township, Whitesbog Village, the Winslow Wildlife Management Area, Buena Borough, and the Wading River. Staff also made use of the social media sites to promote Commission meetings and webinars.
- **Pinelands Speaker Series Webinars:** Staff organized, promoted and hosted four webinars in September 2020. The presentations included: “Forgotten Towns of the New Jersey Pine Barrens,” “Exploring the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve,” “Who ‘Really’ Discovered America?” and “What’s in a Name? Names from Nature.” On September 17th, staff announced that the Commission has expanded its schedule of webinars through October. More webinars are being confirmed for November.



Above: In September 2020, staff members posted 137 photographs on the Commission’s Facebook page, including this one of a native meadow beauty blooming at the Winslow Wildlife Management Area in Camden and Gloucester counties.

- **Science Office Fieldwork:** Communications Office staff collected monitoring data for the Science Office on September 8th and 9th and worked to maintain the trails leading to monitoring sites on September 28th and 29th. Communications staff also helped to catch fish for the Endocrine Disruption Study on September 14-17 and assisted with the kingsnake study on September 18th.
- **Pine Barrens Byway Support:** In September 2020, Communications Office staff completed a draft StoryMap for the Byway in ArcGIS. The StoryMap will provide the public with a guided tour of nine highlighted destinations and includes written descriptions, high-resolution photos and miniature maps of the various amenities at each featured site. It is currently under internal review. Meanwhile, Communications Office staff provided detailed comments on a new webpage that a consultant for the New Jersey Department of Transportation has drafted for all Scenic Byways in New Jersey, including the Pine Barrens Byway.



Above: In September 2020, staff completed a draft of a new ArcGIS Story Map that will provide the public with a guided tour of nine destinations on the Pine Barrens Byway.

7 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- **Pinelands Commission Information System Upgrades:** Staff implemented enhancements and bug fixes to enable uninterrupted operation.
- **Windows 10 and Office 365 Migration:** Staff continued deployment of Windows 10 desktops. Staff continued migration of local user data to OneDrive to replace local file share.
- **Permanent Land Protection (PLP) Data System:** Staff started to migrate existing PLP data into a staging database to prepare for the implementation of a new system that will include automated reporting and numerous other enhancements.
- **PDC Bank:** Staff provided support for transactions and reporting for the PDC Bank.

8 BUSINESS OFFICE

8.1 FACILITIES

- **Ivy Removal from Outhouse:** The ivy was removed from the exterior of the historic outhouse. (Pictures available upon request.)
- **Robert J. Sullivan Building Fire Suppression Sprinkler Repair:** The air compressor on the fire suppression sprinkler was repaired by Tri-State Fire Prevention.

8.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- **Application Fees:** September Net Total: \$29,343.42; Year to Date Total: \$148,477.82.
- **Fiscal Year 2019 Audit:** The State Auditors have rescheduled the FY 2019 Audit to April of 2021, when they will perform the annual audit for both FY 2019 and FY 2020.
- **Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Preparation:** Governor Murphy signed the Fiscal Year 2021 for the State of New Jersey; the Commission staff will move forward with preparation of its Fiscal Year 2021 Budgets.