

Pinelands center to open Saturday

Carol Comegno, Cherry Hill 6:02 p.m. EDT April 29, 2015



(Photo: Provided)

7
CONNECT | TWEET | LINKEDIN | COMMENT | EMAIL | MORE

SHAMONG – The first comprehensive recreation center in the Pine Barrens opens Saturday to promote nature tourism by offering history tours and launching for canoes and kayaks.

Visitors to the new Pinelands Adventures can take a hike led by a naturalist or kayak or canoe the Mullica or Batso rivers — with or without a guide — from the former Adams Canoe Rental, 1005 Atsion Road in Wharton State Forest.

The Pinelands Preservation Alliance, a nonprofit group advocating protection of the state's Pinelands, is launching the center to encourage further outdoor exploration of its heartland.

The alliance received grants from a half-dozen foundations to make the center possible. Some of the money was used to buy the Adams property, which provided canoe and kayaking services for more than 40 years.



Tabitha Padilla, a junior at UrbanPromise Academy in Camden, christens the SS Brendan T. Byrne canoe as part of the the launch of Pinelands Adventures in Shamong. Avoiding the spray are (left to right) Rob Ferber, director of Pinelands Adventures, Rob Auermuller, superintendent of Wharton State Forest and Carleton Montgomery, executive director of Pinelands Preservation Alliance (Photo: Provided)

"By expanding our outdoor programs we are introducing more people to the unique natural resources of the Pine Barrens through low-impact recreation and education trips," said Carleton Montgomery, alliance executive director.

He said visitors can experience its beauty up close and "truly understand what is at stake" in the wake of encroachments and the struggle against a gas pipeline in the Pine Barrens.

He said the alliance also is interested in helping more young people and underserved communities get into the outdoors for healthy, nature-based recreation in New Jersey's last true wilderness.

"I am confident that Pinelands Adventures will provide the personalized experience that will leave visitors with a greater appreciation of the Pinelands," said Rob Auermuller, Wharton superintendent, at a pre-opening event Wednesday.

Reach Carol Comegno at (856) 486-2473 or ccomegno@courierpostonline.com or [@carolcomegno](https://twitter.com/carolcomegno)

7
CONNECT | TWEET | LINKEDIN | COMMENT | EMAIL | MORE