



# PINELANDS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Pinelands Historic Preservation Community  
**FROM:** Carleton Montgomery  
**RE: Report of the March 16, 2007 Pinelands Historic Preservation Summit**

Thanks to all those who attended the summit on March 16, as well as to those wanted to attend and sent good wishes. I have prepared a report of the summit in which I tried to condense and summarize the discussion into key points. Please let me know if I have left anything essential out!

I will be getting in touch in the coming month or so about scheduling a another meeting. In the meantime, please:

- a. if you receive this by mail, it means I do not have an email address for you; if you use email, please send me your address, and
- b. please send me the names and contact information of any additional people you believe would like to be part of this network, but whom I may not know of.

All of us at PPA look forward to a growing collaboration for historic resource preservation!



## Pinelands Historic Preservation Summit – March 16, 2007

### Report of the Summit

April 16, 2007

This report summarizes the ideas and action proposals that arose during the discussions at the Pinelands Historic Preservation Summit on March 16, 2007. Attendees represented a broad range of public and private organizations and experts in the field. A complete list is attached to this report.

**Motivation for the Summit:** Held at the Medford Quaker Meeting House, the Summit was an initiative of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and its Advisory Committee. Since its founding in 1989, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance has focused most of its energies on natural resource protection – on forests, water, and threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. It has devoted much less attention to historic resources and has not developed the staff expertise in historic preservation that it has on environmental issues.

More recently, however, the Alliance has concluded it must do more and better in the field of historic preservation, for two reasons:

- These resources have inherent value as vital and fascinating parts of the Pine Barrens story, and they are intimately linked with the ecological story of the region. One cannot understand today's Pine Barrens ecology without understanding the history of human settlement, use and impacts on this ecology. Our society, therefore, should work to preserve the landscape as a whole, including the artifacts of its human history.
- For many members of the public, the history is what really gets them excited and interested in the Pine Barrens. The Pinelands protection program cannot succeed without broad and deep public support. For many, that journey to supporting preservation begins with learning about the native American cultures, the early colonial settlements, the bog iron industry, or the rich history of ethnic enclaves in the region. Conservationists of all stripes need to reach these people in order to build as strong a constituency as we can for preservation of both natural and historic resources.

The Alliance also believes that its historic preservation work should not be limited by a strict application of the legal Pinelands boundaries. Those artificial, political boundaries do not necessarily match the patterns of human history and historic resources. The Summit, therefore, addressed preservation for the Pinelands and its environs.

The Alliance takes as a premise for organizing the Summit that, while many good things have been and are being done in many places, we are also witnessing a tragic process of loss and destruction of archaeological remains and historic buildings across the region.

**Purpose of the Summit:** The Summit aimed to initiate a more powerful *collective* effort for historic preservation than currently exists – a more assertive push from the public interest sector (Nongovernmental Organizations like PPA, the many historic associations and committees, the academic and consulting experts in the field, and all the many volunteers devoted to the cause) and a broader and more effective partnership between this public interest sector and the state and local

governments. The Summit was intended to be just the beginning of this dialogue and the beginning of a new era of collective action.

**Introductory Presentations:** The Summit began with three short presentations to set the stage for an open discussion of how to proceed.

1. **Barbara Solem-Stull** provided an overview of the threats we see to historic resources of the Pines. Barbara is the author of *Ghost Towns and other Quirky Places of the New Jersey Pinelands*. Through her writing and educational efforts, she is doing a tremendous service in raising awareness of the region's fascinating history among the broader public.

In her presentation, Barbara summarized the different eras of human history that have left their marks on the Pinelands, from archaic Native American societies, through the colonial industries, to the rise of the cranberry industry that is still a vital part of the Pinelands landscape. She then described the different kinds of threats that historic resources face today: Natural elements (weather and overgrowth of the forest), Vandals, Fire (both wild and arson), Neglect, Deterioration, and Development.

2. **Ron Emrich**, executive director of Preservation New Jersey, introduced advocacy priorities and tools for historic preservation. Preservation New Jersey is the leading, state-wide advocacy organization for historic preservation. PNJ also chairs the Heritage Partnership Project, a task force of public and private agencies that are working together to improve the stewardship of historic resources on protected open space and agricultural lands.

Ron highlighted the growing challenge of building support for historic preservation – evidenced, for example, by the facts that fewer families are going to museums and historic sites and that grants from private funders appear to be drying up. Ron described the short list of legal and funding tools that currently exist for historic preservation. He focused on the need to renew the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT), which has provided funding not only for the Green Acres and farmland preservation programs, but also funds the New Jersey Historic Trust. Without renewal of this essential funding mechanism, there will be virtually no funding available for the preservation and care of historic properties and buildings in New Jersey. Ron urged the audience to get involved in the renewal effort and to help the public understand that the GSPT also funds historic preservation.

Ron also argued that New Jersey needs a mechanism, such as the proposed Historic Properties Reinvestment Act, which would give a tax credit against the costs of rehabilitation, in order to authorize and stimulate the use of the private sector to manage and restore historic assets on public lands.

3. **Cathy Goulet**, principal historic preservation specialist, described the work and resources of the New Jersey Historic Trust. Cathy administers grant funded projects and prepares the Trust's publications, newsletters, and web site materials. She is particularly interested in working with grant applicants and grantees on improving site interpretation and creating opportunities for heritage and cultural tourism.

Cathy summarized the grant programs administered by the NJ Historic Trust:

- The Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund provides matching grants for preservation planning and capital projects to stabilize, repair, restore and rehabilitate historic property.

- The Revolving Loan Fund provides low-interest, long-term financing for the preservation, improvement, restoration, rehabilitation, and acquisition of historic properties.
- The Emergency Grant and Loan Fund provides small grants or loans for the stabilization of historic property.
- The Cultural Trust Capital Preservation Grant Program provides grants for the repair, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and improvement of historic properties owned by organizations with a history or humanities mission.

Cathy pointed out that the Trust's funding manual is available on its web site, [www.njht.org](http://www.njht.org).

Cathy also explained that grants may be available from private sources (such as the History Channel's Save Our History grant program) and federal sources (particularly Department of Transportation programs.)

**Discussion:** The heart of the Summit was a two-hour open discussion of key issues and what we should do collectively and individually to advance the cause of historic preservation. The following is a highly-condensed summary of our very stimulated discussion of three basic questions, in the form of propositions that were advanced during the discussion and around which there appeared to be strong (if not universal) consensus.

#### **General:**

- Collaborate: work together:
  - Create a directory of historic organizations
  - Get local historical associations involved in the collective effort
- Create a professional staff position at PPA – a person with expertise in the field who can help to convene and will serve as a resource for the network of agencies and organizations involved in preservation, as well as press for policies and funding to advance historic preservation.
- Use the internet and other electronic communication means creatively to promote interest in the cause, share information and inspiration, and appeal to younger members of society.
- Read, use and promote the New Jersey Historic Preservation Plan for 2002-07, which is available at [www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/njhpp.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/njhpp.htm).
- Support Burlington County's upcoming historic summit, and spread this kind of meeting to other counties.

#### **Funding:**

- Renew the GSPT and educate people about its role supporting historic preservation.
- Streamline the NJ Historic Trust grant application process and make it more user-friendly to those who do not have professional expertise in the process.

- Create an endowment for historic preservation and ask people to leave bequests to the endowment.
- Develop a “history-share” workplace giving alliance like the Earth Share organization
- Develop relationships with United Way organizations to promote workplace giving to historic preservation causes.

### **Public Outreach & Engagement:**

- Develop and market tourism opportunities that enable the public to discover and understand our historic resources. Responsible tourism can generate funding and support for preservation.
  - Read the State Heritage Tourism study and implement its recommendations.
- Interpretation:
  - Tell the story of the region’s history in a compelling manner that will capture the public’s attention and imagination. This story needs to cross the boundaries of different fields and disciplines, integrating ecology, geology, archaeology, history and civics to capture the human and natural drama of the Pinelands.
  - Create a strong and interesting sense of place through interpretation of the region’s history and unique resources. Address the fact that so much of the population is transient and not well connected to the landscape in which they live by providing connections.
  - Explain the cultural connections between individuals and the Pinelands story. In essence, help people see: what’s in it for me? How does my life and my history relate to this place and its history?
- Develop new interpretive signs, maps and brochures that tell the story. Complete the National Park Service/Pinelands Commission Interpretive Plan
- Promote success stories of historic preservation to show people it can be done and has great social benefits.
- Historical societies need to play a big role:
  - Seek active leadership from the County historic societies.
  - Educate local historical societies about their local town’s relationship to the wider Pinelands region.
- Get the arts community involved in the collaboration.
- Try to involve
  - immigrants to New Jersey, both intra-national and international immigrants
  - retirees
  - the military bases.

- Build relationships with the press to get good coverage of historic preservation and destruction issues.
- Educate developers and builders about the impacts their work may have, and how they can design their projects to better protect, even take advantage of, historic resources.
- Promote citizen activism opportunities for preservation through existing organizations and the internet.
- Mine local knowledge of local history and historic resources and put this information to use in interpretation, education and programming in each town and area.
- Get schools and teachers more involved in spreading knowledge of the region’s history and its historic resources:
  - Develop curriculum materials for teachers
  - Give local context to schools and teachers, through meetings, publications and field trips to local historic sites
  - Create audio tours that teachers and students can use.
  - Creatively link classroom experiences of students with their families.
- Provide outreach and education programs directed to local elected officials who need to know more about the historic resources in their towns, why it is good to preserve them, and what municipal governments can do to protect these resources.
- Develop and deliver educational road shows and tours for various audiences: families, adults, government officials, teachers, etc. Recruit and train docents to help deliver these road shows and tours.
- Borrow strategies from environmental and agricultural advocates, who have been successful in creating constituencies for their causes and organizing the public.
- Strengthen the science of preservation. For example, inventory sites and share information about these sites across the entire region, and create better Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data sets of historic resources.

### **Government & Regulations:**

- Seek strong leadership by our public officials at all levels of government.
- Get local, county, and state governments more involved and working together.
- Move government to fulfill all its roles – “ACID” – in aid of preservation:
  - Advise & educate
  - Control
  - Invest
  - Direct action (e.g., restorations)
- Provide a variety of types and levels of collaborative activities to suit the variety of agencies and organizations that want to be involved

- Reform the Municipal Land Use Law to make a preservation element a required part of each town's master plan.
- Strengthen the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan regulations to better protect historic resources in the development approval process.
- Identify and promote the use of existing historic resource preservation rules that are already embedded in existing environmental laws.
- Develop creative leasing arrangements that enable private restoration and stewardship of resources on public land or owned by state agencies.
- Institute local development charges to fund historic preservation within the town where new development is taking place.

**Next Steps:**

- PPA should convene continuing collaboration:
  - Organize another summit to follow up on ideas from the first meeting.
  - Inventory all the organizations involved in historic preservation in and around the Pinelands
  - Raise funds for cooperative strategic planning by private organizations and cooperation with public agencies.
- All participants should:
  - Advocate for renewal of the Garden State Preservation Trust with funding for historic preservation.
  - Help PPA develop a database of organizations and resources by providing contacts and ideas for other people to include.
  - Participate in the Preservation New Jersey blog and resources, at [www.preservationnj.org](http://www.preservationnj.org).
  - Seek to generate greater foundation interest in funding historic preservation initiatives.
- PPA should seek funding to hire a Pinelands historical resource specialist and advocate.

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