



PINELANDS
PRESERVATION
ALLIANCE

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Number 2

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INSIDE THE PINELANDS



Pinelands Commission approves the South Jersey Gas Pipeline in February 2017.

South Jersey Gas Pipeline is Defeated!

by Carleton Montgomery, Executive Director

The South Jersey Gas pipeline has been defeated. This is a huge victory for the Pinelands. It is also a potent statement about the power of public activism, because the most powerful forces in our state pushed to get this pipeline built. Those forces included then-governor Chris Christie, then-Senator Jeff Van Drew, and South Jersey Industries together with its unions and fellow utilities.

The people fighting for the Pinelands were a majority of the public, PPA and our partner groups - particularly Food & Water Watch, Sierra Club, NJ Conservation Foundation, Rethink Energy NJ, Citizens United for Renewable Energy, and Environment New Jersey. Four former governors - Byrne, Kean, Florio and Whitman - and the original leadership of the Commission joined the fight. Special thanks go to PPA's attorneys at Dechert LLP, one of the country's major law firms, whose lawyers put in untold hours of work pro bono on this case.

How did this victory happen? In the end, the Pinelands Commission justified the

pipeline on the grounds it would send all its gas to a new power plant at the BL England site on Great Egg Harbor. But our collective opposition bought enough time (six years) for the BL England owner to abandon any plans to build that power plant. With no power plant, the basis for allowing the pipeline simply disappeared.

There are lessons in the last six years of struggle. Especially when you consider all the things the Pinelands Commission and politicians did to push the pipeline through despite public opposition and numerous setbacks.

The project came to public attention in 2013, when South Jersey Gas (SJG) filed its application with the Pinelands Commission. The Commission staff at that point correctly determined that it violated the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) because it would go through the protected Forest Area of the Pinelands and was not "intended to primarily serve only the needs of the Pinelands." Succumbing to political pressure, however, the

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Pinelands Adventures Kicks Off Another Season!

Pinelands Adventures is your ticket to exploring the Pine Barrens! The Pine Barrens National Reserve is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, home to distinctive plants and animals and bursting with hidden history. See it all, from beaver lodges to bog iron, with Pinelands Adventures.

An initiative of the nonprofit Pinelands Preservation Alliance, Pinelands Adventures has shared the Pine Barrens with thousands of visitors since our founding in 2014. Join us on a self-guided river trip or naturalist guided paddling trip, hike or small group bus tour to learn more about the region's ecology, culture and history.

Pinelands Adventures has programs for explorers beginning at age six, from our Pine Barrens Discovery Tour to our Steel Wheels walk for participants with limited mobility on an ADA trail. Learn how to canoe or kayak with a lesson or visit the places John McPhee described in his landmark book *The Pine Barrens*.

We operate trips on the Mullica and Batsto Rivers, the most pristine rivers in the Pine Barrens. While paddling along these rivers, you'll have the chance to see many aquatic and terrestrial species and a variety of specialized habitats. Our tea-colored waters are known for their narrow winding nature, passing through dense sections of pitch pine, red maple and Atlantic white cedar. Throughout the season, you have the chance to see a variety of flowering plants including unique orchids and carnivorous plants! If you paddle silently, you could be greeted with the sight of wildlife along the rivers. No noisy car campsites line our rivers and limited automobile access contributes to the peace and serenity you'll experience while on a Pinelands Adventures expedition.

Although we offer a variety of naturalist guided adventures, most visitors to Pinelands Adventures join us for a self-guided river trip. We offer 2, 4, 5 & 8

hour day trips everyday from April through October (conditions permitting). Canoes, single kayaks and double kayaks are available or you can bring your own boat and let us handle the transportation. Advanced reservations are required and you can book your trip at www.PinelandsAdventures.org or by calling 609-268-0189

Call us to book an adventure today. We can't wait to see you here!

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*Pinelands Adventures is an initiative of the
Pinelands Preservation Alliance and our members
get 10% off all trips and programs.*



Barn Renovation Nears Completion

by Carleton Montgomery, Executive Director

PPA is close to completing the renovation of the historic barn at the Bishop Farmstead, our headquarters since 2004. The Robbins family built the barn in 1930 using a kit manufactured by the Loudon Machinery Company that was shipped by train to Mount Holly. At 80 feet by 34 feet wide, the barn is huge, but so well built it has survived with no real damage for almost ninety years.

The current renovations, scheduled for completion in June, are needed to make the towering, beautiful hayloft usable for public events. We are installing a fire suppression (sprinkler) system, HVAC driven by our geothermal system, and an elevator. We also have to make changes on the property, like expanding the parking area. This allows us to meet municipal requirements for the larger events we will be able to hold and host in the barn. I hope you will agree that our renovations are very sensitive to the materials, look and structure of the original barn.

This phase of renovations will cost over \$900,000 all in. How could PPA pay for that? Only by being creative!

PPA decided to enter an agreement with a well-known caterer, Jeffrey Miller, who specializes in working in historic properties and with nonprofits like us. Jeff works in numerous venues in Philadelphia and its suburbs and at Waterloo Village in New Jersey's Allamuchy Mountain State Park. Under our agreement, PPA will rent the barn and grounds for catered events like weddings through Jeffrey A. Miller Catering.

You may ask, what is PPA doing hosting weddings? I want to explain how arrangement made the renovations possible and advances PPA's mission:

First, it will generate revenue to take care of the Bishop Farmstead and to expand our outdoor recreation and education programs. We take school and community groups on guided nature trips regardless of their ability to cover the

costs, and this program must be funded by grants, gifts and earned income. And maybe some of the happy couples and their guests will get interested in the Pinelands when they come here.

Second, the revenue-generating arrangement enabled PPA to raise funds from foundations and individuals who are interested in helping nonprofits diversify their fundraising base through earned income. The William Penn Foundation, in particular, gave PPA an extraordinary \$500,000 grant for this project because they know it will support PPA's work for many years to come. It's like teaching a person to fish, rather than just giving them a fish!

Third, PPA and other organizations will now have an exceptional venue for larger events than we could do before, like lectures, symposia and film-showings. In fact, generous donors have endowed a fund in honor of Michael and Caroline Huber to pay for the costs of holding scientific and policy events in the barn. This will enable us to bring experts from around the country to discuss big policy issues like fire management, water supply protection and responses to climate change. (Michael Huber, who passed away several years ago, was PPA's founding board chair, and Caroline remains an activist for the Pinelands.)

Finally, we will be saving an historic building that is increasingly rare. Most big hayloft barns like ours do not survive because their original economic purpose no longer fits today's farming practices. This barn will have several uses that are valued by PPA and others, so it will always be lovingly cared for.

The renovation process has been long and arduous, but we are close to saving an historic building and giving ourselves and the region a very special place to gather, celebrate and strategize about protecting the Pinelands.

Barn Renovation began in 2016.
The lower level of the barn was renovated in 2016 and the loft will be completed this summer.



Workers in the barn loft. ©Jim Briggs



A view of our barn. © Ernest Cozens



Building a new stairwell. © Jim Briggs

Raptors of the New Jersey Pinelands

by Frank Pignataro, guest writer

Usually when people today hear the term “raptors” they immediately think of rapacious dinosaurs that are popularly portrayed in movies as having once existed during the prehistoric Jurassic period but now, miraculously, interact with people in modern day circumstances. The true definition of the word instead refers to “birds of prey.” The vast New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve is home to many of these birds; two of which are now a common occurrence within the myriad woods, meadows, marshlands, and lakes of the Pine Barrens.

One of the most beautiful and smaller (13 – 20 inches) of the two being discussed is the Cooper’s Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*). Although more conspicuous in recent years, it is one of the least sighted due to its preferred habitat of aged forests and spacious woodlands. But due to their preferred diet of small birds such as doves, jays, pigeons, and song birds, particularly robins, they can now be found closer to developed areas.

A long, bluish-gray, slightly white-tipped rounded tail with several black bands running horizontal across its surface is its most distinguishing feature while sitting and in flight. Adults have red eyes projecting beneath a feathered, darkened cap atop a shortened head that drops below into a white neck and breast with thin, horizontal brown streaks that extend throughout down to its leg feathers. Its short wings and lengthened body and tail have caused it to be nicknamed the “flying cross” in flight.

Heavier in weight and larger in adult size (18-25 inches) with up to a 3 to 4-foot wingspan is the Red-Tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). A personal favorite of mine, this

partial migrator is a remarkable bird with the popular misnomer of “chicken-hawk.” Very commonplace, it is found throughout the Pine Barrens and neighboring areas in woodlands, meadows, fields, and open roadsides. It is extremely adaptable and legally protected throughout most of the continent. Its diet is different than the Cooper’s Hawk and most often consists of ground mammals such as field mice, chipmunks, squirrels, and rabbits.

I had the good fortune to see one in action last summer. While leisurely traveling in my car just outside of Chatsworth, I noticed a mature adult sitting atop a tall telephone pole near a grassy meadow.

It looked magnificent with its bright white, speckled-brown breast and reddish-orange, tinted tail perched above me. I came to a slow halt some thirty yards away on the side opposite its lofty perch and gazed in awe as the bird intently perused the aforementioned field hardly noticing my presence. Within moments it dropped headlong from the pole, its wings tight to its body, just before unfurling them with outstretched feathers into the tall grass. With complete indifference to my astonished perusal, I saw the hawk’s beautiful, motley-brown head suddenly strike below out of sight. Moments later it adroitly sprung back into the air with a foot and a half long black snake lifelessly dangling from its talons. With a few powerful flaps of its wings this proficient hunter slowly disappeared into the adjoining forest no doubt relishing the thought of chowing down on his freshly annihilated snake!

If you want to catch these birds in action keep your eyes peeled to the skies. They are easily identifiable

and once recognized, are a joy to behold stationary, gliding around, or hunting.

For more detailed descriptions and colorful pictures of these raptors search your local library for any number of books illustrating their appearance and habits.

In coming issues we’ll cover the remarkable resurgence of the Pinelands’ largest raptor, the Bald Eagle.



Red-tailed Hawk



Cooper's Hawk, photo credit: Susan Jarnagin

South Jersey Gas Pipeline Defeated

continued from cover

Commission staff decided that the pipeline could be approved through a process called an “intergovernmental memorandum of agreement” between the Board of Public Utilities and the Pinelands Commission – even though this process is only available for “public” development by government agencies, not private commercial ventures.

In January 2014, this memorandum of agreement came up for a vote before the Pinelands Commission. Pipeline supporters were shocked when the Commission voted it down. But they did not give up.

Two things happened next. First, Gov. Christie managed to replace a Commissioner who had voted “no” with someone guaranteed to vote “yes”. Cumberland County Freeholders did the same with their designee on the Commission. These changes ensured they would have the votes for approval. Second, the Commission staff reversed its finding that the pipeline violated the CMP. They issued a report stating that the exact same pipeline complies and can be built. That 180-degree reversal has to tell you there was something deeply wrong in the state of New Jersey.

The Commission also made two mistakes this time around. First, the executive director decided to approve the pipeline without a vote by the full Commission. Second, she premised her approval on the idea that the pipeline would exclusively serve a power plant to be built at the BL England site, a parcel of land at the very eastern edge of the Pinelands. Saying that any one user anywhere in the Pinelands is enough to show that a pipeline “primarily serves only the needs of the Pinelands” is a dangerous twisting of the rules. But that seems to have been the only way its supporters could approve this project.

The Commission staff and Board of Public Utilities repeated SJG’s unsupported claims that a power plant at BL England was needed for reliable electric service to people on the Shore. We hear these arguments a lot, and are always skeptical. In this case, we pointed out that the claim had no factual basis and that the BL England owners had not even promised to build a new power plant, so the whole justification was theoretical in addition to its other faults.

We also found that it was technologically absurd to claim that the entire capacity of this pipeline could be used by the proposed power plant. In fact, the pipeline was designed to carry four times as much gas as the proposed new power plant could use. But facts rarely seem to matter when developments have this kind of power behind them.

We challenged the executive director’s decision on the merits and on the grounds that she doesn’t have the authority to approve major projects on her own. The Appellate Division of the Superior Court agreed she lacked the authority. In November 2016, the court sent the matter back for consideration by the full Commission.

So we fought the project all over again before the Commissioners. The Commission refused to hold a proper evidentiary hearing to air out the real facts regarding this project and proceeded to a vote based on the executive director’s recommendation. In February 2017, at a meeting attended by more than 1,000 activists, the Commission approved the pipeline on the basis that it would serve a power plant to be built at BL England.

Again we appealed, along with Sierra Club and Environment NJ. Governors Byrne, Florio and Whitman filed a friend of the court brief opposing the Pinelands

Commission actions.

The parties filed their briefs and waited for another year and a half until January 2019, when the court notified the parties it would have oral argument on the case in March. PPA had been gathering information. We found that the owners of BL England, a Texas business called Rockland Capital, had actually done nothing to start the process of building the power plant. That made sense because improvements to the electric grid and changing industry economics meant it was no longer going to be so profitable to build a new plant there.

We took this information to the Attorney General, and within hours Rockland Capital was compelled to file papers with the court asking to be removed from the whole matter since it no longer intended to build a power plant. SJG had said nothing. Two hours later, the Attorney General filed papers saying Rockland Capital’s announcement means there is no basis for approving the SJG pipeline. A few days later, the Pinelands Commission wrote to SJG stating that if it wants to build a pipeline, it will have to file a new application.

The collective efforts of citizens, lawyers, technical experts and PPA and our partners gained just enough time for the pipeline rationale to disappear. While the court will not rule on the merits of our challenge to the Pinelands Commission approval, the pipeline will not be built.

Anyone taking on the Pinelands now knows that even if they line up all kinds of political support they are taking on a formidable community of opponents and risk losing their shirt. Our next job is to make sure the Pinelands Commission is never again willing to approve such a damaging development by twisting Pinelands protection laws.

Life Science Field Training Institute: June 24th - 27th

by Ryan Rebozo, Director of Conservation Science

PPA will host its 13th annual Life Science Field Training Institute from June 24th to June 27th. The Life Science Field Training Institute is an intensive four-day long field science experience aimed at improving ecological investigations in the classroom.

Participating educators will be better prepared to incorporate student collected data sets into the lab and lecture components of their curricula. The program will introduce participants to a variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats as various topics in the biological and environmental sciences are explored, including general ecology, population dynamics, community interactions, field sampling technique, biodiversity and biostatistics.

Data collection and analysis will focus on techniques and concepts that can be easily conducted on school grounds and can be tailored to various grade levels. Our investigations will take place at PPA's headquarters at the Bishop Farmstead, the Rutgers Pinelands Field Station and during a canoe trip down the Batsto River.

Interested teachers are encouraged to register soon as space is limited.

A \$50 deposit is required to reserve a space and will be refunded at the end of the course. All participants will receive 35 professional development hours and have the option to pursue graduate credits through Rutgers University (you are responsible for the cost per credit paid to Rutgers University). In addition to professional development credit, participants will receive a packet of the lesson plans covered during our week together and a copy of Howard Boyd's A Field Guide to the Pine Barrens of New Jersey.

The head facilitator of the program is Ron Smith, environmental studies

educator at Haddonfield High School and for Drexel University. Ron Smith developed and has run the Life Science Field Training Institute since its inception. Assisting with the program is Ryan Rebozo, Director of Conservation Science for the PPA.

This program is made possible with funding from the Bonazzi Foundation, whose mission is to provide resources and support for organizations and institutions which offer high quality science education and to provide professional learning opportunities and other support for prospective and practicing teachers of science.

Please contact Ryan Rebozo, ryan@pinelandsalliance.org, or by phone at 609-859-8860 with any questions. Email Ryan for the online registration link.

More information can be found on our website. A course agenda, program flyer and online registration form are also available.

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

SUNDAY, JUNE 9

**BURLINGTON COUNTY
EARTH FAIR**

*Historic Smithville Park
Eastampton, NJ*

JUNE 22 & 23

BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL
*Historic Whitesbog Village
Brendan Byrne State Forest*

JULY 16TH TO 20TH

**BURLINGTON COUNTY
FARM FAIR**

*Burlington County Fair Grounds
Springfield Township, NJ*

This could be YOU!



Bird Watching along a Pine Barrens River



Quadrat study in the fields at the Bishop Farmstead



Seine netting in the Pine Barrens on a beautiful day

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Carleton K. Montgomery
Executive Director, Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Calendar of Events

Pinelands Trips & Events

Spring 2019

Pinelands Adventures opens for paddling trips in April! Make your reservation today.



At Pinelands Adventures you can rent a canoe or kayak, take a guided tour, and so much more. Join us today! Pinelands Adventures is an initiative of PPA.

Learn more on the web: PinelandsAdventures.org

Pre-Registration is required for all trips and rentals and can be done online or by calling 609-268-0189.

Lower Batsto River Guided Tour (Paddle)

July 4th, 8:30 am about 7.5 hours. Trip meets at Pinelands Adventures, 1005 Atsion Rd, Shamong NJ

Paddle from Quaker Bridge on the Batsto River to Batsto Lake with our knowledgeable Pinelands Guide. You'll explore on water and land while learning about Pine Barrens habitats, history, plants and animals. Once on the river we'll make stops along the way to investigate unique Pine Barrens plants along the river's edge, learn about the role of fire in Pine Barrens ecology, and history of bog iron in the pines.

Cost is \$70 PP in a Canoe/Kayak and \$60 PP BYO Canoe or Kayak. For ages 8 and up.

**Trip is offered on other dates though the summer. Visit PinelandsAdventures.org for a complete list.*

Mullica River 101 (Paddle)

July 7th, 1:30 Meet at Pinelands Adventures, 1005 Atsion Rd, Shamong NJ

Take a 3 hour trip down the Mullica River from First Beach to Beaver Dam with guide and naturalist John Volpa. Participants will get a Pine Barrens Primer by

exploring the river for an overview of Pine Barrens habitats, history and plants and animals.

Cost is \$55 PP in a Canoe and \$60 Kayak and \$50 PP BYO Canoe or Kayak. For ages 8 and up.

**Trip is offered on other dates though the summer and fall. Visit PinelandsAdventures.org for a complete list.*

Kayaking Lessons (Paddle)

June 23rd. Trip starts at 9 am. Meet at Pinelands Adventures, 1005 Atsion Rd, Shamong NJ

Learn the basics of kayaking with ACA instructor John Volpa in our three hour class. This introductory program is designed to help you feel comfortable while learning proper paddling technique. You'll learn to paddle on calm water close to the edge of the lake and kayaking terminology, technique and strokes.

Cost is \$60 per person. Ages 12 & up.

**Trip is offered on other dates though the summer and fall. Visit PinelandsAdventures.org for a complete list.*

36th Annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival

June 22-23 10am to pm. Historic Whitesbog Village, Brendan Byrne State Forest, Browns Mills, NJ

This annual festival celebrates the blueberry. Blueberry baked goods, blueberry picking, wagon rides, craft & food vendors, live music, kids zone, tractor rides, and much more! Open 10-4pm both days. Fun for all ages! Admission is \$5/car.

www.whitesbog.org

Night Hike

June 15th at 8:30pm. Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge, 4 Sawmill Rd, Medford NJ - phone 856-983-3329

Experience the Refuge in an exciting way, at night! Enjoy a guided hike under the light of the full moon to visit nocturnal habitats that are home to owls, raccoons, opossums and other wildlife that emerge after dark. 8:30-10:00 pm. Suitable for ages 8 and up.

\$10/person. Advanced registration required.

www.cedarrun.org

Member & Volunteer Open House (PPA)

June 30th from 1pm to 4pm. PPA Offices, 17 Pemberton Rd, (CR616) Southampton NJ

Our members and volunteers are invited to join us at this special event just for you. Meet the staff, see the barn just before it opens, enjoy refreshments and more. The Pinelands Visitor Center will also be open, with books, DVDs, clothing and other items. Information and a registration link is posted on our website. Questions? Call 609-859-8860.

Pinelands Commission Meeting

June 14th, July 12th, August 9th starting at 9:30 am. Pinelands Commission, 15C Springfield Road, New Lisbon, NJ

The Pinelands Commission is the state agency that oversees conservation and development within the Pinelands boundaries. They meet on the 2nd Friday of the month and the meeting is open to the public. They need to hear from you! You can find the agenda for each meeting on www.nj.gov/pinelands.

Questions? Call us at 609-859-8860.



PINELANDS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

Keeping the Pinelands Green for 30 Years!

Do you have an event that takes place in the Pinelands?

Let us know so we can put it on our calendar.

Email:

becky@pinelandsalliance.org with the details.



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Sponsors receive a copy of *The Pine Barrens: Up Close & Natural* DVD
 Patrons receive John McPhee's seminal book *The Pine Barrens*
 Benefactors receive *The Pine Barrens of New Jersey*, a photographic history of this region
 Chairman's Circle members receive the book *Seasons of the Pines* and a personalized tour of the Pinelands

Our mission is to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of New Jersey's Pinelands.