

Judge's Statement on 2019 Pinelands Photography Exhibit:

Not long ago only a handful of photographers ventured out into the Pinelands. The work of those pioneers has inspired many others allowing the Pinelands Preservation Alliance to hold a photography exhibition of this caliber. The 3rd Annual Pinelands Exhibition has a diverse body of work from a large number of talented photographers.

Walking into the gallery, I was struck by the beauty of the photographs showing a wide variety of subjects and individual artistic vision. Needless to say, it was a challenge to pick the very best out of this grouping of great photography. When judging I look for a high level of technical skill and use of composition. But more importantly for this exhibition, the winning photographs had to strongly show the true spirit of the Pinelands.

It was an honor to be able to judge this show on the 40th anniversary of the Pinelands National Reserve and the 30th anniversary of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. As someone who was seduced by the beauty of this place many years ago, it is amazing to see so many inspiring photographs showing a place like no other, the New Jersey Pinelands.

Comments on the first place photograph

This photograph of a morning at Whitesbog caught my eye right away. The geese anchor a simple scene of quiet beauty and peace. The delicate morning light was perfectly handled in post processing to bring out just the right amount of contrast and tonality. In addition, the decision to create a sepia-toned image was a good one. No matter where I was in the gallery, this photograph caught my eye. It makes one feel that they were there with the photographer sharing the peace and tranquility of that particular morning.

Comments on the second place photograph

A wildlife photographer's job is not easy because their subjects usually do not sit still, let alone pose. Yet this powerful image of a Timber Rattle Snake looks to be perfectly posed. I love how the head and the rattle are in sharp focus while the rest of the snake's body forms a series of beautiful curves that draw the viewer into the photograph. The composition looks like an abstract piece of art as well as a photograph of a rare Pinelands creature.

Comments on the third place photograph

One of the things a Pinelands photographer lives for is capturing the morning mist rising above a body of water. Add to that the sun rising through the mist and you have a very special scene. I love everything about this image. The warm and cool tones of the mist, the symmetry of the reflection in the water, and the sun, perfectly placed, in the composition. This photograph beautifully shows a perfect Pinelands morning.

Richard Lewis

