



PINELANDS
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ALLIANCE

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INSIDE THE PINELANDS



CREATING A TRULY INCLUSIVE OUTDOORS

A view of the Pinelands from Apple Pie Hill by Ernest Cozens III.

Creating a Truly Inclusive Outdoors

by Jaclyn Rhoads, Assistant Executive Director

We believe that the Pinelands National Reserve will only survive in the long run if people of all backgrounds know, love, and speak out for preserving it. Right now, Pinelands Preservation Alliance and many other conservation groups in New Jersey are not representative of our region’s racial and ethnic diversity. We have not yet connected with all the people who should see the Pinelands as theirs to enjoy and protect.

Some of our members, followers, and supporters may not understand our approach, but speaking from the perspective of a Latina, this problem exists. I know what it is like to be called various derogatory names by people that I called my friends and to feel like I didn’t belong in certain professional settings. Even if a person of color is not directly called out or belittled publicly, there is a sense or feeling of exclusion in many spaces. It is that feeling of exclusion that we need to eliminate everywhere, but especially in our outdoors that belong to all people

regardless of race, color, gender, culture or religion. Data from US Forest Service, National Park Service, and US Fish and Wildlife Service “suggest deep inequality in the ethnic/racial mix of visitors to our public land.”¹

The consequences of this lack of diversity are important to consider. It restricts our political power, deprives environmental groups of ideas that would help them succeed and sends a message that conservation is pretty much a white endeavor.

For the Pinelands Preservation Alliance to be successful in protecting the Pinelands we must engage the whole community, including groups that have been historically excluded. If we don’t, the issues that are critical to preservation of the Pinelands will become irrelevant in the minds of a large portion of voters, visitors and supporters.

We are starting to examine how racial inequality impacts our work and our

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A Giant in the Protection of the New Jersey Pinelands

By Carleton Montgomery, Executive Director

In July, we lost another friend and a pioneer of the Pinelands protection movement, John C. Stokes.

John was the planner among the trio of founding managers of the Pinelands Commission, along with executive director Terrence Moore and regulatory lawyer William Harrison. In that key role John was a principal architect of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), and he deserves enormous respect for shaping America's strongest, most innovative regional growth management program. That the Pinelands CMP has been able to protect vast swathes of forests, swamps and waters over more than 40 years in the nation's most intensively developed state is due to the vision and regulations that John and his colleagues created.

John joined the Pinelands Commission staff at its founding in 1980 as chief planner and assistant director. He was promoted to become the Commission's third executive director in 2003, where he served until his retirement in 2011. Throughout the years between 1998, when I came to PPA, and his retirement in 2011, I spent countless hours in conversation, debate and occasionally argument with John. And after his retirement, John recruited me to help him and others promote better understanding of the Pinelands protection program among officials in the federal government.

John was very smart, and always had thoroughly reasoned positions on policy and development issues. But he was also genuinely open-minded in listening to different perspectives, whether mine or those of an

applicant for development. Even when we disagreed strongly – which happened on several important issues – I never for a moment doubted John's deep personal commitment to preserving the Pinelands and making the CMP work for this region's unique natural resources. And his creative thinking led to important new initiatives – I think particularly of the Toms River and Oyster Creek plans that resulted in better protection of important watersheds – and often enabled the Commission to make the best of a bad situation.

“John Stokes was a giant in the protection of the New Jersey Pinelands,” to quote Betty Wilson, who helped found the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and served as the Chairperson of the Pinelands Commission from 2005 to 2008. John was a superb public servant and a model of those special people who dedicate their career to an important but very challenging public good.



John was always generous with his time helping people understand how the Pinelands are protected. This image shows John presenting to teachers during our 2008 teacher training institute.

Protecting the Pinelands During a Pandemic

by Rhyan Grech, Policy Advocate

During an unprecedented global pandemic, it feels that everything from “normal life” has been interrupted. Online food shopping, home schooling and Zoom meetings have become the new normal for countless families, and the sad reality of illness and loss has impacted too many lives. Nationally, life as we knew it has ground to a halt as COVID-19 draws our focus. With all the closures, working from home and social distancing measures, it is easy to assume that construction and development projects have paused. In the Pinelands however, applications to build are still moving forward while New Jersey residents are understandably distracted. This results in circumstances that favor development applicants, as public participation is more difficult right now.

One egregious example is the Jaylin property in Manchester. Located on Route 37, some may remember the old proposal to build a Walmart on this site years ago. This property is valuable habitat for the Northern pine snake and Pine Barrens treefrog, both state-threatened species. It also serves as a sink for nutrient runoff and stormwater in an otherwise highly developed section of Toms River township. PPA and Save Barnegat Bay successfully opposed prior development proposals because they would harm or destroy rare species habitat and create too much impervious cover (building roofs, and pavement) for such a site. PPA provided the state with scientific reports on the threatened and endangered species and advocated for enforcement of relevant environmental protections. Eventually Walmart withdrew from the project and the application fell apart.

The developer, Jaylin, re-applied to build two commercial buildings and

a restaurant, with no specific building tenants identified, and the public comment period opened in May 2020. In response, PPA submitted a series of Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to receive the development application and all related documents. A complete file is necessary to fully examine and comment on a potential project. Since DEP staff are working remotely, access to any paper document proved challenging, and incomplete records were sent. Back and forth conversations with DEP, attempting to obtain all relevant documents, extended beyond the public comment deadline.

In the meantime, PPA requested a public hearing, which would have provided the opportunity to submit expert testimony and evidence backing up our arguments. DEP denied our hearing request, citing COVID difficulties, even though many other agencies and local governments have been holding public hearings remotely since the shutdowns. DEP did agree to a phone conversation to talk through our comments and concerns with the application, including threatened and endangered species habitat destruction, infringement on a wetlands buffer, and mathematical mistakes in the application dealing with the allowable impervious cover on the site. But our arguments fell on deaf ears, and the project was approved the same day.

While the applicant was allowed to move through the process unimpeded, the public was shut out: first, with incomplete responses to OPRA requests and the inability to fully examine the application; second, with the denial of a public hearing that could have easily been held over

Zoom. PPA is considering next steps with our partners.

This extraordinary time calls for extraordinary vigilance, and PPA staff are working to ensure the public’s voice is heard. You can stay engaged with the issues and make your voice heard by on our issues pages at www.pinelandsalliance.org. Click “Protect” on the home page.

State of the Pinelands Report Coming Soon!

This annual review of state, federal and local agencies is a thorough account of the public policy actions that affected the Pinelands National Reserve over the last year.

Available online and mailed to our members in December.

www.PinelandsAlliance.org

Pinelands Commission

The Commission’s offices are closed due to the COVID-19 crisis. Their monthly meetings are open to the public via livestream on their YouTube channel.

You can call in and comment during that part of the agenda.

Next meeting dates:

Nov. 13th, 9:30 am

Dec. 11th, 9:30 am

The link to livestream meetings can be found on their website:

www.nj.gov/pinelands

Questions? Contact Rhyan at RhyanG@pinelandsalliance.org

Science and Stewardship in the Pinelands

by Jason Howell, Public Lands Advocate and Ryan Rebozo, Ph.D. Director of Conservation Science

One of the misconceptions around stewardship and forest management is the idea that our wild, natural areas need human intervention to survive. This is generally not correct. In fact, stewardship work is often being done to make up for the damage caused by humans intentionally and unintentionally.

Humans have become the equivalent of a geological force on the land and this especially true when considering the impacts of global warming. Our stewardship program is working to address these impacts in the Pinelands. Some of the projects we have planned for this year will aid in the protection of rare and endangered species like Pickering's Morning Glory, Northern Pine Snake, and habitat for Pine Barrens Treefrogs and other rare species. We are working, albeit slowly, with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to protect sites that have suffered from serious damage.

In the coming months, stewardship volunteers will be protecting riverbanks, intermittent ponds, and dunes with the installation of signage and wooden guardrail vehicle barriers. It is no secret that the serious stewardship challenges in the Pinelands result from the multitude of access paths from extinct historic industries like logging, bog iron extraction, and charcoal production. This has made it too easy for vehicles to access sensitive sites and harm rare species of plants and animals. The NJDEP has so far been unable to solve this problem comprehensively and so we are left to deal with individual sites on a triage basis.

To compliment the stewardship work, our science projects

document population trends in rare species and explore how changes in management can improve the conditions for some priority species. For example, PPA and Raritan Valley Community College have been protecting critical dune habitat along New Jersey's coast by implementing "compromise management" techniques along the upper beach. This is done by establishing plant protection zones at the foot of the dune where no beach raking or driving is allowed. Raking and all recreational uses are permitted outside of these zones. This allows for the natural development of dunes and the enhancement of habitat for several threatened and endangered plants and animals that depend upon these areas for survival while not having a measurable impact on recreational uses of the beach. Our work has shown significant accretion of sediment and rare species utilizing the areas of beach under compromise management strategies which totaled approximately 25% of the coastline in 2020.

PPA is also working at the species level on recovery plans for two federally listed species, Seabeach Amaranth and American Chaffseed through US Fish and Wildlife grants, and two state listed species, Pickering's Morning Glory and Pine Barren Gentian in partnership with the NJDEP. Strategies for the protection of these species include excluding human disturbance, reintroducing fire into the system and, where appropriate, propagation. We will be using our understanding of the local ecology and species-specific life history traits to help ensure these populations remain viable into the future.

We are fortunate that the natural

resources of New Jersey's Pinelands are protected by a strong set of rules called the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). New Jersey continues to protect land in and around the Pinelands through the work of the New Jersey Green Acres program. As long as we have lands in public ownership there will be an opportunity to make things better.

Native Plants, Healthy Planet Podcast

Presented by Pinelands
Nursery

*Episode 23 - Meet the Pinelands
Preservation Alliance*

Hosts Fran Chismar and Tom Knezick talk with Carleton Montgomery and Ryan Rebozo about the unique importance of the NJ Pine Barrens, how this area affects local water quality, recreation in the pines, major challenges in protecting this land and how you can help.

Find links to the podcast:
nativeplantshealthyplanet.com

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Creating a Truly Inclusive Outdoors

continued from cover

responsibilities. In June we published a blog titled “We are Listening” following the murder of George Floyd. We asked people to share their thoughts and ideas with us and they did. Nearly 60 people sent us messages and we really appreciated the feedback. For example:

“Thanks for your efforts and for asking for input. Three years ago a kayaking and camping trip to the Pinelands was my first experience camping ever, and I am a college-graduate black man in his 40s . . . Could you find camp counselors and guides and ecology experts who are People of Color (they ARE out there)? This could be a potentially life changing experience that could open a door to a completely different field of possibility for one of these kids. Exposure is key...and with privilege comes a plethora of exposure, whereas those without as much privilege lack exposure and therefore a limited vision of how they can construct a life during their time on this planet. Your organization can play a part in addressing this. Thanks again.”

“I am Latino, I visit the Pinelands for kayaking trips several times a year. Your post really touched me almost to tears, finally the questions are being asked and hopefully solutions are soon to follow. In my opinion if we could come up with some type of plan within our communities to show the adults how beautiful New Jersey is, their families and children will follow. I respect the conversations being had and I’m willing to be a part of the solution if I can. Thank you Pinelands Alliance and all that support a good cause.”

We need to learn more from people of color in our region about their experiences in the outdoors. We

decided to hold an online town hall to learn more and hear more from our supporters and friends, so we can begin to understand what role we can play in addressing racial equality through our work.

Lamar Gore, Refuge Manager for the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, graciously agreed to facilitate this online discussion on September 10, 2020, called *Creating a Truly Inclusive Outdoors*. Lamar started as refuge manager at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at the end of 2014. He has been working with partners to connect the communities of the greater Philadelphia area to the refuge and brand the refuge as America’s First Urban Refuge. He has worked to build connections with communities, community organizations, city partners, and develop grounding partnerships with Audubon Pennsylvania and the Student Conservation Association that form the foundation of the Philadelphia Urban Refuge Partnership.

The discussion was wide-ranging and covered both the need for more people of color in the field of conservation and the real barriers that exist in accessing the outdoors. Lamar emphasized the critical role that mentors play in supporting people of color as they enter professional fields in conservation. He also discussed how conservation must include the entire community including people who have been systematically left out. Failure to do this effectively will result in decreasing support for conservation over the long run. It also means the places we protect are not serving all the people – only the people who can freely access it. It is more critical than ever that conservation of our natural areas is relevant to all people.

PPA Director of Conservation Science, Dr. Ryan Rebozo, also facilitated the discussion. Almost 300 people registered and over 100 people attended the live presentation and question and answer session. Watch the recording and share your feedback with us. A link to the recording is on our homepage under “Upcoming Events”.

We are not alone in our efforts to address racial inequality in our work and in the Pinelands. The Burlington County Freeholders announced the formation of a Minority and Equality Rights Task Force to “delve into social justice issues and make recommendations on actions the county’s government can consider to promote equality and combat discrimination.” The NJ Department of Environmental Protection has placed renewed emphasis on the work of its office of Environmental Justice. And towns throughout New Jersey have launched their own equity initiatives.

These are important steps. But they won’t matter if they are not supported by real action and real concrete change that makes a difference in the lives of Black and brown people in New Jersey. We are committed to making this real change. We don’t have all the answers, and we will make mistakes. Our goal is to try, be open to change, and welcome feedback, criticism, and suggestions to continue moving us forward towards a truly inclusive outdoors.

¹Askew, R. and Walls, M. 2019. *Diversity in the Great Outdoors: Is Everyone Welcome in America’s Parks and Public Lands?* Resourcesmag.org, accessed October 2020, <www.resourcesmag.org/common-resources/diversity-in-the-great-outdoors-is-everyone-welcome-in-americas-parks-and-public-lands/>

Floyd West - Pinelands Protector

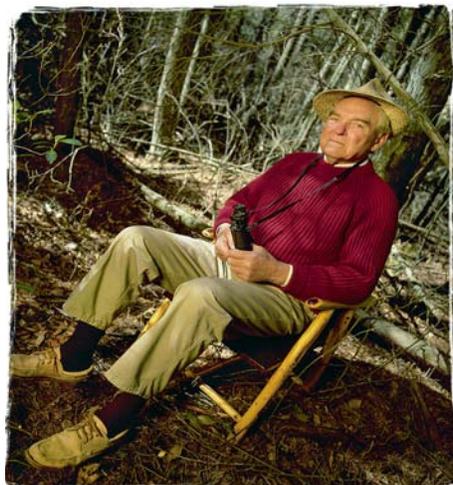
by Jason Howell, Public Lands Advocate

Floyd West, who passed away July 6, 2020, will be remembered as a critical figure in the conservation of the Pinelands. Originally from Texas, Floyd became involved in the movement to protect the Pine Barrens after the proposal to construct a supersonic jetport and new city was circulated in newspapers throughout New Jersey in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Floyd came to the Pine Barrens by way of his wife Betty West, a New Gretna local, when he was stationed in Atlantic City in the Coast Guard. Floyd made his living working for Atlantic City Electric and in Great Bay working in oyster aquaculture. Floyd quickly recognized the impact that such large-scale development would have on the water which flowed from the Pines and into Great Bay's oyster beds. Floyd also sought to maintain the rural character of the area and worked to convince neighbors and other town residents to support efforts to resist any such large-scale development in the area. His concerns drove him to run as a Republican for Mayor of New Gretna, and he served in this position from 1972 to 1984. This position allowed Floyd to maintain an important presence in the media and Burlington County's public life during the critical period when preservation of the Pinelands was at the forefront of New Jersey politics. New Jersey Network and many newspapers drew on Floyd as a primary source to speak on behalf of locals who wanted the Pinelands to be saved.

Floyd had many adversaries in this arena, including Garfield DeMarco, the former boss of Burlington County Republicans, and Steven Perskie, a Democratic State Assemblyman and State Senator from Atlantic County. They were powerful opponents in the effort to

preserve the Pinelands. DeMarco owned thousands of acres in the Pinelands and had numerous other interests that would be directly impacted by regulatory limits on development. Perskie worked as an Atlantic City politician whose interest was in the legalization of gambling in the City and retaining the ability transform the forests and fields of Atlantic County into housing developments and shopping for workers of the resort.



Floyd worked closely with Governor Brendan Byrne in advocating for the preservation of the Pines and even formed a small "Republican's for Byrne" organization for the 1976 election. During his resistance to large-scale development in the Pines, Floyd recounted to me many incidents of either violent attack by a variety of "cronies" in his words, SLAPP suits (strategic lawsuits against public participation) designed to silence him and cost him thousands of dollars, and an attempt at bribery.

Floyd was in the room when Governor Byrne eventually signed the Pinelands Protection Act in 1979. He received a Presidential Environmental Commendation Award from Jimmy Carter, and he served as a founding member of the first Pinelands Commission from

1979-82, before being replaced by the newly elected Governor Kean. Floyd live out the rest of his life peacefully in the Pines in New Gretna, a champion of the Pine Barrens.

Photo of Floyd West shared with permission image copyright Michael Paras Photography LLC. Watch a short film by PPA that includes public testimony by Floyd West here:

www.pinelandsalliance.org/the-pinelands-project

GREEN TRADING POST

CANCELED

We are sad not be holding our annual holiday event this year.

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www.pinelandsalliance.org

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Calendar of Events

Pinelands Places To Go!

Pinelands Adventures is our outdoor recreation program!



Pinelands Adventures is an initiative of PPA.
PinelandsAdventures.org

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Purchase certificate online at www.PinelandsAdventures.org or call 609-268-0189.

Visit the Pinelands!

Now is a great time to explore the Pinelands. Here is a list of state parks and forest begging for you to visit. Make sure you check with each location before you visit.

Atlantic County

Estell Manor County Park

This is a large, user-friendly park where you can hike, bike, picnic, fish, go sightseeing, exercise, visit the park's nature center, and really enjoy the Pine Barrens. The Fox Nature Center provides programs for enjoying the outdoors as well as displays about the local ecology. With its location on tributaries to the Great Egg Harbor, the park provides an excellent point to launch all manner of water craft. Historic ruins in the park are well-explained in interpretive signs.

Burlington County

Bass River State Forest

Home to one of the first Civilian Conservation Corps

(CCC) camps, Bass River State Forest now provides easily accessible camping, swimming and hiking facilities. In addition to a swimming beach on Lake Absegami, the State Forest has eight walking of 1 to 3.2 miles through typical Pine Barrens habitats. Right now swimming is not open due to the COVID-19 crisis. Bass River State Forest is located at 762 Stage Road, Tuckerton, NJ. This state forest is in Burlington and Ocean County.

Brendan Byrne State Forest

Brendan Byrnes State Forest is over 37,000 acres with lovely trails that crisscross the forest and pass historic sites. A great place to visit is Pakim Pond. A beautiful small pond in the heart of the Pine Barrens, Pakim Pond is a wonderful place to explore forest and wetland habitats. A short trail wraps around the entire perimeter of the pond, and also connects to the Batona Trail. Accessible by paved road, the pond has a gazebo, picnic tables and grills, and restrooms. Another lovely spot is historic Whitesbog Village the historic site of a company town where the blueberry was first cultivated for commercial production by Elizabeth White. The village, now incorporated within Brendan T. Byrne State Forest, includes historic buildings and houses, cranberry bogs, blueberry fields, reservoirs and surrounding woodlands. The village area is managed by the Whitesbog Preservation Trust, and JJ White Cranberry Company, owned by the descendants of Elizabeth White, cultivates some of the cranberry bogs at the edge of the village.

Wharton State Forest

Wharton State Forest is New Jersey's largest state forest at 125,000 acres. There are many trails, roads and historic places to visit. A great place to start is historic Batsto Village. Batsto is one of the most popular stops in the Pinelands. Originally founded as an ironworks in 1766, a restored village surrounds the original ironworks with infor-

mation and displays on site to show how things were done "in the old days". The mill dam in the heart of the village creates Batsto Lake, a beautiful lake on which most Batsto River canoe and kayak trips end. The mansion is restored and open for tours, and the village includes a nature center, saw mill, general store and other early buildings. Batsto's Visitor Center is also the main office for Wharton State Forest, where camping permits, trail maps, and a gift shop can be found.

Ocean County

Double Trouble Village in Double Trouble State Forest

Double Trouble is the site of an old village dedicated to cranberry farming. Many of the historic buildings, including the cranberry packing house and the sawmill are intact and can be toured. Cedar Creek runs next to the village and is one of the Pine Barrens' most beautiful. The State Forest contains excellent hiking trails.

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

The Forsythe Refuge includes more than 47,000 acres of southern New Jersey coastal habitats and represents the fragile estuary ecosystems which are sustained by fresh water flowing from the interior Pine Barrens forests into the coastal marshes and bays. Located on one of the Atlantic Flyway's most active flight paths, the Refuge provides world-class birding opportunities. The Refuge also includes walking trails through increasingly rare coastal pine forest habitats. Start at the Visitor Information Center and Wildlife Drive on Great Creek Road in Galloway Township.

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

Let us know.

Email:

becky@pinelandsalliance.org
with the details.



Pinelands Preservation Alliance

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