



PINELANDS
PRESERVATION
ALLIANCE

2021 STATE OF THE pinelands

AN ANNUAL REPORT BY THE PINELANDS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE
[PINELANDSALLIANCE.ORG](https://pinelandsalliance.org)

The New Jersey Pinelands

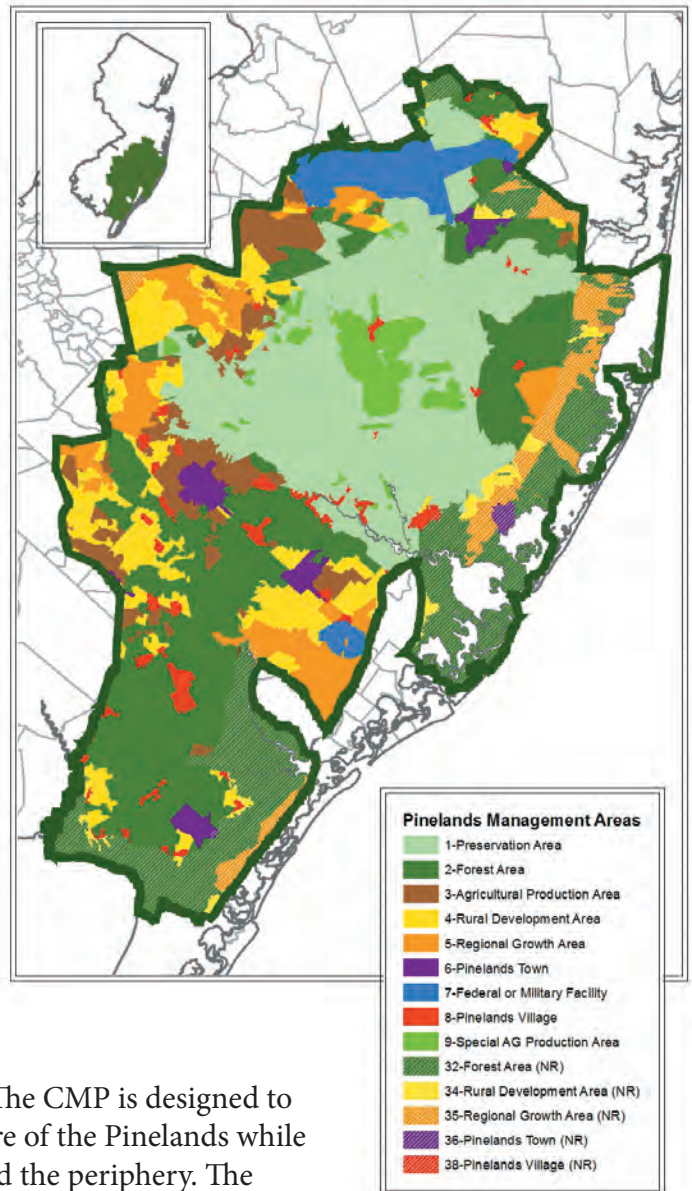
The Pine Barrens is a vast forested area extending across South Jersey's coastal plain. This important region protects the world's largest example of pitch pine barrens on Earth and the globally rare pygmy pine forests. One of the largest fresh water aquifers, the Kirkwood-Cohansey, lies underneath its forests and wetlands. The Pine Barrens is home to many rare species, some of which can now only be found here having been extirpated elsewhere.

During the 1960's construction of the world's largest supersonic jetport and an accompanying city of 250,000 people was proposed for the Pine Barrens. This proposal galvanized citizens, scientists and activists to find a way to permanently protect the Pinelands. In 1978 Congress passed the *National Parks and Recreation Act* which established the Pinelands National Reserve, our country's first. In 1979 New Jersey adopted the *Pinelands Protection Act*. This Act implemented the federal statute, created the Pinelands Commission, and directed the Commission to adopt a Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) to manage development throughout the region.

Many residents do not know that all new development in the Pinelands is controlled by the nation's most innovative regional land use plan. The CMP is designed to preserve the pristine conditions found within the core of the Pinelands while accommodating human use and some growth around the periphery. The Pinelands Commission's staff of approximately 40 professionals is directed by 15 Commissioners who serve voluntarily. Seven Commissioners are appointed by the Governor with approval of the state Senate, seven by the counties in the Pinelands, and one by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also plays a key role in protecting the Pinelands. In addition to its job of implementing the CMP in the coastal zone, the DEP regulates the distribution of fresh water from the aquifers that lie beneath the Pinelands.

The Pineland Commission and DEP's accomplishments in the Pinelands are remarkable. But this region faces an onslaught of threats in the form of unnecessary pipelines, political interference to benefit development projects, and the failure of state agencies to enforce Pinelands rules on a consistent basis. Through public education and advocacy the Pinelands Preservation Alliance works to protect this great wilderness and give the public a voice in its preservation.



State of the Pinelands 2021

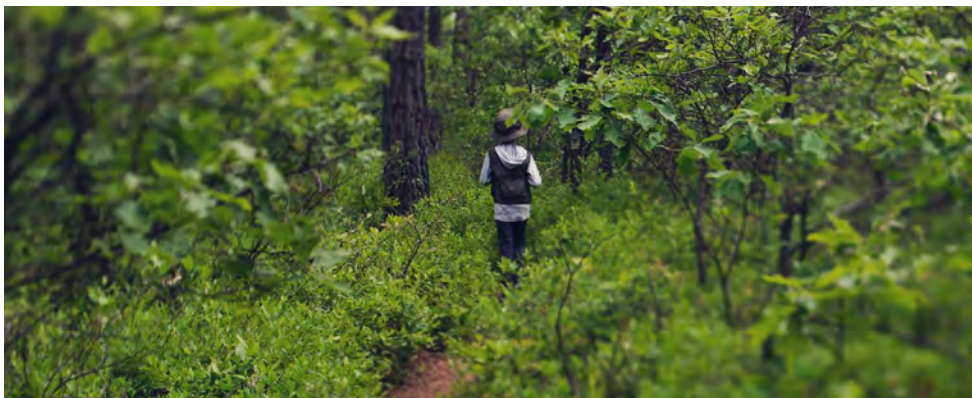
The Pinelands Preservation Alliance presents this annual report in order to sum up the health of the Pinelands preservation efforts by our federal, state and local government agencies. We seek to provide the public and the agencies themselves with a report card that we can all use to move forward and do better in protecting this unique natural treasure.

This annual review of select actions or inactions of the last 12 months is the most comprehensive account of public policy actions that affect the Pinelands National Reserve.

We applied six criteria in assessing each action –namely, whether each action:

1. upholds the integrity of the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP);
2. protects native habitats, for plants and wildlife;
3. safeguards the quality of Pinelands aquifers and surface waters;
4. insures the integrity of the water supply for people and the ecosystem;
5. enhances the cultural and historic resources of the area; and
6. advances education about the Pinelands.

Where a government agency followed its rules and took appropriate action we gave the agency a *thumbs up*. In cases where the agency drifted from its regulatory mandate and took an action that, in our opinion, was detrimental we gave the agency a *thumbs down*.



The Pinelands Preservation Alliance depends on private donations from concerned citizens just like you. You make it possible for us to advocate for the Pinelands each and every day. Thank you for making our work possible!

Board of Trustees

Patricia A. Butenis, *Chair*
Barbara Trought, *Vice Chair*
Michael Gallaway, *Secretary*
Robert L. Barrett, *Treasurer*
James Barnshaw, M.D.
Timothy J. Byrne
Charles M. Caruso
Charles M. Chapin
Emile DeVito, Ph.D.
Bill Fisher
Ivette Guillermo-McGahee
Anne E. Heasley
Joann Held
Ron Hutchinson, Ph.D.
Christopher Kosseff
David F. Moore
John Murphy
Loretta Pickus
Sarah Puleo
William A. Rodio
Jessica Rittler Sanchez, Ph.D.
Amy Vasquez, Esq.
Paula Yudkowitz

Staff Members

Carleton Montgomery,
Executive Director
Isabella Castiglioni
Thomas Dunn
Becky Free
Andrew Gold
Rhyen Grech
Audra Hardoon
Jason Howell
Alicia Plaag
Ryan Rebozo, Ph.D.
Jaclyn Rhoads, Ph.D.
Heather Sampey
Stephen Sebastian

Pinelands Adventures

Rob Ferber, *Director*

Rancocas Creek Farm

Jeff Tober, *Manager*

Dear Friends of the Pinelands,

This past year we lost two vital leaders of the Pinelands protection movement, Candace Ashmun and John Stokes. Candy was a great leader in our statewide environmental movement who served on the Pinelands Commission from its founding until her death. John was the chief planner and later executive director of the Commission who, along with Terry Moore and Bill Harrison, wrote the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), saw it through its adoption and made it work in the real world. They were real environmental heroes.

It is especially disturbing to reflect on the state of the Pinelands Commission today when we have two such extraordinary people as Candy and John in our minds and hearts. We all rely on the Pinelands Commission to implement Pinelands protection laws and policies in a consistent and even-handed manner, and to improve those laws and policies where experience shows they are not achieving their intended goals of protecting the Pinelands. But today the Commission is in a bad way.

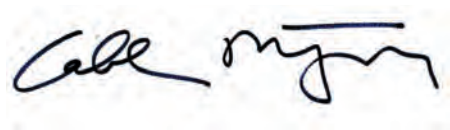
The Commission's governing board has been badly weakened and politicized for years. Seven members of the 15-member board of Commissioners are selected by the governor with state Senate confirmation, seven by each of the seven Pinelands counties, and one by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. But the Commission was dealt serious blows when former Governor Christie and some counties put members in place for the purpose of ensuring approval of the South Jersey Gas pipeline (now a dead deal) and, more recently, by the Senate's failure to confirm Governor Murphy's nominations.

For years the staff leadership of the Commission, abetted by members of the Commission itself, has used this weakness to approve developments – like the South Jersey Gas and New Jersey Natural Gas pipelines – which the Pinelands Protection Act and CMP were expressly designed to prevent; has fought hard to prevent the Commission from addressing problems like destruction of habitats and recreational areas by illegal off-roading; has refused to advance reforms which the Commission itself identified as important, like new standards to protect the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer; and has tried to keep the public out of the Commission's work as much as they can.

Luckily, the development and public exclusion efforts have met with only mixed success, due entirely to the advocacy of the public, PPA and allies like the Sierra Club, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Environment New Jersey, Save Barnegat Bay, Food and Water Watch and New Jersey League of Conservation Voters. All these organizations have supported the public's demands for Pinelands protection.

The great priority in 2021 is for the Senate President to move Governor Murphy's nominations to confirmation so the Pinelands Commission can begin moving forward. The Pinelands Commission needs to start taking real action in response to Climate Change impacts, wanton destruction of public lands by illegal off-roading, water supply protection, and public participation. We also need the state courts to ensure Pinelands rules are respected even when agencies like the Pinelands Commission give powerful development interests a pass – a practice that has become all too common, but gradually undermines the entire system of protecting our natural resources for the benefit of all.

Best wishes,



Carleton Montgomery
Executive Director



Issues Spotlight – Climate Change

Thinking back on 2020, COVID-19 is clearly the predominant issue that has impacted all our lives. Too many have lost loved ones, have been ill, or have watched friends and family struggle to heal from the virus. Directly or indirectly, we were, and continue to be, affected by this pandemic in the ways we work, go to school, and move through daily life. The virus has also exacerbated and brought into focus several other issues, including the importance of outdoor spaces for gatherings and for healing. The communities disproportionately impacted by COVID are the same groups that feel disproportionate pollution impacts and will be hit hardest by climate change.

Most, if not all, of the issues highlighted in this report relate to climate change. Protection of an adequate and clean water supply will become more important as saltwater intrusion and flooding increase. Continued development of fossil fuel infrastructure not only hinders New Jersey's progress towards goals for clean energy, but also harms carbon-capturing forests and wetlands that are key players in the fight to slow climate change. Laws to protect threatened and endangered species, regulate pollution, and mandate cumulative and climate impact considerations for permitting are more important than ever. The Pinelands Commission, and its Land Use Climate Impacts and Sustainability committee, is now called upon to investigate the ways activities in the Pinelands play a role to either mitigate the impacts of climate change or are making things worse.

With vast swaths of forest, the Pinelands provides hundreds of thousands of acres worth of carbon sinks. In addition to the trees, carbon is stored in understory vegetation, leaf litter on the forest floor, and even in the soil. In the Pinelands where forest fires are a part of the normal, functioning ecosystem, even areas ravaged by fire re-capture any carbon emitted by the fire itself within two years as regrowth occurs. Wetlands function to store and slow down water flow that would cause erosion from increasingly intense storms. Wetland plants and soil also filter polluted stormwater runoff before it infiltrates back into our aquifer and becomes our drinking water.

New Jersey's sea level has risen between 12 and 16 inches since 1900. In the same timeframe, our average temperature has risen 3° F, a greater increase than most other states in the country. The average minimum winter temperature has risen even faster, by up to 8° F in South Jersey. These changing conditions can influence the plants and animals that thrive in our state. The Department of Environmental Protection warns that NJ may become unsuitable for native crops such as blueberries and cranberries, and that Atlantic white cedar, a globally rare species, could lose habitat here. Pests such as the Southern pine beetle, already present due to warmer winter temperatures, could expand their ranges in our new climate conditions and wreak havoc on our native species.

The Pinelands will be vital moving forward, and the Pinelands Commission will need to amend the Comprehensive Management Plan to include scrutiny through the lens of the climate crisis. Many proposals are already sitting on the Pinelands Commission desk, including a Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer study to support stronger protections. These plans and drafts have been around for years, if not a decade or more. Nothing less than scientific rigor, strong leadership and intra-agency coordination must guide the Commission moving forward to address this existential challenge. We are out of time. Climate change is here, and those in charge must act now or step aside.

The Governor

Expectations: *The governor should propose and support statewide and regional initiatives that have a positive impact on the Pinelands and its environs. It is imperative that the governor appoint people to the Pinelands Commission who believe in the bedrock environmental mission of the Pinelands. The governor should not use his/her authority and power to bypass Pinelands protections or make exceptions for special interests.*

Pinelands Commission

Appointments

Governor Murphy nominated four qualified individuals to the Pinelands Commission in March 2020: Jennifer Coffey, Robert Jackson (previously served from 2008-2015), Theresa Lettman and Jessica Rittler Sanchez. These are the same excellent candidates that he nominated last year, but whom the Senate never moved to confirm. The Governor also re-nominated Ed Lloyd, who has served on the Commission since 2002. For the second year in a row all five nominations are still pending an affirmative vote in the Senate. The failure of the Senate to move these nominations is incredibly disappointing as the Commission has been unable to act on crucial measures to protect the Pinelands due to having insufficient will to take action.

NJ PACT

Early this year, Governor Murphy announced sweeping regulatory reforms known as Protecting Against Climate Threats (PACT) in Executive Order 100. The Department of Environmental Protection is directed to adopt rule changes that establish a greenhouse gas monitoring and reporting program to reach the target 80% reduction of emissions by 2050. The new regulations will establish criteria to reduce carbon dioxide and other climate pollutants and will incorporate climate change considerations into permitting decisions. These reforms will further the state's goals of resilient communities, smarter planning and clean energy.

PINELANDS ACTION NETWORK

Pinelands Action Network (PAN) is an activist network run by PPA. The goal is to help you get involved and make a difference. We keep you up to date on important issues and help you advocate for Pinelands protections.

To join the Pinelands Action Network and get updates on important actions contact Rhyan at RhyanG@PinelandsAlliance.org.

Federal Government

Expectations: *In 1978 Congress created the Pinelands National Reserve, the country's first Reserve. As provided in the federal law, Governor Brendan T. Byrne established the Pinelands Commission, and a Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) was prepared and approved by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus on January 16, 1981. The federal government's primary roles in the Pinelands protection effort are to provide a representative on the Commission, to finance public land acquisition and to monitor the implementation of the CMP. At a minimum, the federal government should enforce federal environmental laws, vote responsibly on actions before the Commission, support the CMP, and provide the necessary funding for land acquisition through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).*

Great American Outdoors Act

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was permanently funded through the Great American Outdoors Act in August 2020. The Act dedicated \$900 million annually and provided \$9.5 billion over five years to fix maintenance problems that are plaguing America's public lands. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is America's premier conservation and recreation program. For more than 50 years, it has protected millions of acres of irreplaceable lands across our country, including national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, lakes, rivers, trails, state parks, community parks and more. New Jersey has received more than \$180 million from this fund, supporting everything from the Delaware Water Gap to Cape May to the land on the Appalachian Trail. This is a huge win for every state in the country.

Rollbacks of Environmental Protections

According to research from Harvard and Columbia Law Schools, the Trump administration has rolled back, or is in the process of rolling back, 99 Environmental Protection Agency and Department of the Interior rules as of mid-October 2020. More specifically, 72 existing rules have already been rolled back with another 27 slated to be diminished in some form. This includes rules to address climate change, clean air, clean water, and protections for wetlands and wildlife. This is at a time when we have more information than ever on the national decline in biodiversity, the localized threats posed by climate change and unregulated chemicals in our drinking water. The Pinelands benefit from New Jersey's strong water quality standards and the CMP's protections for wetlands and limited protections for rare species but it will continue to face climate related issues resulting from federal agencies that ignore the current and modeled threats.



The roots of Atlantic White Cedar trees can't tolerate salt, so sea level rise is leading to stands of dead white cedars along the coast known as ghost forests. These trees are typically found in the Pinelands and the plant communities dominated by this tree are globally rare and provide homes to other threatened species.

New Jersey Court System

Expectations: *The judicial system is the branch of government responsible for interpretation and application of the law. This includes environmental laws and the Pinelands Protection Act as well. Laws are implemented through regulations. Environmental laws and regulations are routinely a source of controversy; the root causes typically being the interpretation of their necessity, fairness or cost. The long-term integrity of the Pinelands and its resources depends on the strict interpretation of its laws and regulations. The judiciary should uphold the spirit and the letter of the law.*

Superior Court, Burlington County Conflict of Interest Ruling

In June 2020, the Superior Court for Burlington County ruled against PPA in its conflict of interest challenge to the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders' 2018 vote to close county roads for construction of New Jersey Natural Gas' Southern Reliability Link (SRL) pipeline. Two of the then-Freeholders' day jobs were with Operating Engineers Local 825 and associated entities. Local 825 is a large labor union whose members were working to build SRL at the very time of the Board's vote. The union's leaders, its membership, and even one of the Freeholders, vigorously and publicly advocated for the SRL's construction, including at the road closures meeting itself. Under New Jersey's government ethics laws these two Freeholders had a conflict of interest and should not have participated in the vote. We think it is obvious a public official cannot ethically vote on a resolution his or her employer is supporting (or opposing). PPA has appealed the trial court's decision to the Appellate Division.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Expectations: *The DEP is responsible for protecting the state's environmental resources. It does this by developing and enforcing regulations that protect water quality, threatened and endangered species, and air quality; by overseeing state parks and wildlife management areas; by ensuring that there is enough water for both people and environmental needs; and by setting standards for contaminated site cleanup. Since there is significant overlap with Pinelands regulations, it is imperative that the DEP develops programs and enforces rules that are protective of the Pinelands.*



Drilling for the New Jersey Gas Southern Reliability Link pipeline in Upper Freehold Township June 2020.

Reinstatement of Drilling Permits for Pipeline Construction

After a series of drilling accidents that contaminated wetlands and forests, and ultimately cracked the foundation of a home, DEP suspended New Jersey Natural Gas' (NJNG) permits, halting drilling associated with the construction of the Southern Reliability Link pipeline. This July victory was bittersweet, since PPA and partners

have been warning of this possibility for years, and in this case, a woman was given two minutes to evacuate her condemned home because of the damage. Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) has an industry-accepted failure rate of 50%, yet was seen by DEP as a way to avoid harming the environment by drilling under wetlands and streams. After four months of suspension, DEP accepted NJNG's revised drilling plan and reinstated the permit, despite the company's pattern of construction accidents and without conducting a formal permit review.

2020 Scientific Report on Climate Change

In June 2020, the DEP released its first Scientific Report on Climate Change. The first step to solving a problem is understanding what is at stake. And, while this report may be a day late thanks to the previous administration's refusal to deal with climate change, it is certainly not a buck short. The 2020 Scientific Report on Climate Change explains in detail the effects that climate change will have and is having on New Jersey's environment, including some specific implications for the Pinelands. Through rising temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, sea level rise, and ocean acidification; climate change threatens New Jersey's natural resources and ecosystems, as well as our economy, infrastructure, and public health.

Approval for Ocean County Retail Development

In September 2020, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection approved an application to develop several Ocean County parcels straddling Manchester and Toms River Townships into a retail location with several stores and restaurants. Jaylin Holdings is the property owner and had previously proposed a Walmart at this location. The site is documented as being home to multiple threatened and endangered species, and lies within the CAFRA-regulated zone, meaning restrictions on impervious cover and other aspects of the project should be stricter under the applicable rules. DEP ignored all scientific data in granting its approval. PPA has fought against various attempts to over-develop this site for over a decade, and

the site remains undeveloped. This time around, PPA struggled to obtain the complete application documents or get a hearing before DEP, who denied our hearing request solely based on COVID-19. This a problem we have experienced in general as government agencies seem unable or unwilling to fully adapt their operations in the age of COVID when so much work must be done remotely. Nevertheless, PPA submitted comments on this application and will appeal DEP's decision.

Land Management

It has been a tumultuous time for public land management agencies in the Pinelands. In State Parks, Forests, and Wildlife Management Areas many amenities like camping, swimming, and nature centers were not available for much of this year due to the COVID-19 crisis. County Parks, Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, and non-profit conservancies have struggled but have fared well overall. Understaffing, an already acute problem within the DEP who oversees much of the public land in the Pinelands, has gotten worse with pandemic related staffing shortages and pending budget cuts. Much of PPA's public land advocacy was stalled because of these events, but now many agencies seem to have more breathing room, and we are hopeful that work to better protect and enhance the public spaces of the Pinelands will move forward soon.

Pinelands Commission

Expectations: A Commission whose members, although of diverse viewpoints, have a shared commitment to the purposes of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), the courage to debate tough issues at meetings, and a respect for public process.

By statute, the Pinelands Commission has fifteen commissioners who make up the governing body of the agency: seven appointed by the Governor; one appointed by each of the seven Pinelands counties; and one person appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. The gubernatorial appointees are subject to the review and consent of the New Jersey Senate. Members of the Commission serve staggered three-year terms. The commissioners have final say on all activities regulated by the CMP and, through the Executive Director, guide a staff of approximately 40 people.

The Commission today consists of the following fifteen members: **U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Appointee:** Vacant. **Gubernatorial Appointees:** Edward Lloyd, Mark Lohbauer, Richard Prickett (Chair), Gary Quinn, and D'Arcy Rohan Green. Two seats are vacant. **County Appointees:** Jerome Irick (Atlantic), Jordan Howell (Camden), William Pikolycky (Cape May), Jane Jannarone (Cumberland), Daniel Christy (Gloucester), Alan Avery, Jr. (Vice-Chair, Ocean), and Sean Earlen (Burlington). The Executive Director is Nancy Wittenberg, who reports to the commissioners.

LOOKING TO VOLUNTEER IN THE PINE BARRENS?

Contact Public Lands Advocate Jason Howell (Jason@PinelandsAlliance.org) to get involved.

Volunteers help to restore damaged areas, protect the forest from ORV abuse, clean up trash and assist with monitoring projects.



Pipeline Spills Concealed 🗨️

This year, the Commissioners and the public were surprised to hear that in the beginning of 2019 there had been a number of spills in the Pinelands of drilling mud, chemicals and liquid during construction of the Southern Reliability Link (SRL) pipeline. These only came to light after a series of SRL drilling accidents in June in Upper Freehold, outside of the Pinelands, culminated with the condemnation of a home after the drilling sludge cracked the foundation and basement floor. While discussing this highly publicized incident, the Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission casually mentioned the Pinelands spills more than a year and a half after the fact. The Commissioners and public learned that a total of six so-called “inadvertent returns” had discharged more than 1300 gallons of drilling sludge into the wetlands and forests of the Pinelands, and the pipeline’s owner, New Jersey Natural Gas, suffered no penalties or repercussions but was allowed to proceed with construction. By concealing the accidents, the Commission staff avoided taking actions that might have prevented the later damage caused by the company’s drilling. After this revelation, several Pinelands Commissioners are now investigating the incidents.



Construction of the New Jersey Natural Gas SRL pipeline in Burlington County.

Water Supply Protections 🗨️

The Commission still has not proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) to protect the shallow Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer from unsustainable groundwater withdrawals. Since the inception of the CMP, it has been recognized that groundwater withdrawals can lower stream flows and the water table, harming Pinelands ecosystems. The Commission completed a \$5.5 million study of the shallow aquifer in 2012 and determined that the ecosystem is extremely sensitive to groundwater pumping. Despite holding a stakeholder meeting in recent months to discuss amendments, as well as a presentation on what the Commission might do, the Commission has done nothing to adopt protective measures it has recognized as necessary. The increasing pressure of climate change impacts - acknowledged in the formation of the Commission’s LUCIS committee - will only magnify the importance of water protection in the years to come.

Needed CMP Rule for Pipelines and Similar Developments 🗨️

The Pinelands regulations have an unintended gap which has created huge problems in the Commission’s review of the recent natural gas transmission pipeline proposals. The Commission itself has recognized the problem – that these and similar projects are exempted by other statutes from municipal planning board reviews, and as commercial projects they don’t get hearings before the Pinelands Commission, so there is no clear process for collecting the facts and making a well-informed decision. But, as with all other important reforms identified over the last ten years, the Pinelands Commission has done exactly nothing to adopt a clear, rational procedure for this very important class of developments.

Pinelands Educational Programs 👍

Like all organizations in this strange year, the Pinelands Commission had to pivot and find a safe way to offer educational programs during the statewide shutdown. The COVID-19 crisis meant the cancellation of the 31st Annual Pinelands Short Course in March and

the Summer Short Course in July. The Commission has transitioned nicely offering more than twenty free webinars since June on topics like the Batona Trail, blueberry and cranberry agriculture, the Spotted Lantern Fly and glassmaking in the Pinelands on their YouTube Channel. These programs were recorded and can still be viewed.

State Legislature

Expectations: *The principle function of the State Legislature is to enact laws for the benefit and protection of New Jersey. At a minimum, legislators should not sponsor bills that undermine the intent of the CMP, and at best will sponsor legislation that protects and enhances environmental richness and diversity in New Jersey and the Pinelands.*

Plastic Reduction Act

New Jersey is one of the major leaders on plastic reduction now that S864/A1978 has been signed into law. Key points in the Act include a full ban on all single-use bags, including paper, and polystyrene food service products, strong enforcement power for municipalities, single-use straw exemption for medical reasons, and the designation of the Clean Communities fund for each of the first three years the law is in effect. This last provision is particularly helpful for low income and environmental justice communities. PPA supported the Act because reducing plastic in our waterways and throughout New Jersey is critical to protecting New Jersey's ecosystems.

Environmental Justice Bill

The Environmental Justice Bill, S232/A2212, permits DEP to deny or condition certain permits due to cumulative, disproportionate impacts of pollution in environmental justice communities. Key provisions of the bill are defining “overburdened communities” as those with significant non-white, non-English speaking

or low income populations, requiring major polluters seeking certain permits in overburdened communities to develop “Environmental Justice Impact Statements” with substantive detail, meaningful public input, and real DEP oversight including technical assistance to impacted communities. This is a great first step forward in New Jersey.



PINELANDS ADVENTURES

Pinelands Adventures provides people with a paddling or nature experience in the Pinelands. This includes giving youth and adult leaders from schools and organizations in underserved communities the opportunity to experience its wild beauty.

Learn more www.PinelandsAdventures.org.

Inaction on Pinelands Commission Nominations

When the legislative session ended in January 2020, the attempt to confirm new gubernatorial nominees to the Pinelands Commission started over, after stalling in the Senate last year. Unfortunately, the second time around shows no improvement so far. After Governor Murphy nominated the same slate of excellent candidates, the Senate Judiciary committee has refused to bring them up for a vote. The agendas are controlled by committee Chairman Scutari (D-22) and Senate President Sweeney

(D-3). While other positions nominated by the Governor have moved through the confirmation process, the Pinelands Commission candidates seem to be singled out and blocked. Meanwhile, the Pinelands Commission is paralyzed and ineffective, with three vacant seats. Those vacant seats include one left by the passing of environmental hero Candy Ashmun, who never got to see her replacement, Theresa Lettman, seated on the Commission.



Theresa Lettman is a former trustee of the Natural Lands Trust, and chair of the Manchester Environmental Commission, and had a successful 26-year career at the Pinelands Preservation Alliance before retiring in 2017. Her experience and deep understanding of the regulations governing the Pinelands make her a strong candidate to serve on the Pinelands Commission.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The staff and trustees of Pinelands Preservation Alliance recognize the importance of achieving justice and genuine community among the people of our region, and pledge to work toward that end. Fighting racism is essential to the success of PPA's mission and that of other environmental activists.

County Government

Expectations: In New Jersey, county governments provide essential services such as road and bridge maintenance, wastewater planning, recycling, parks and recreation, social services, and other functions. We expect county governments to implement programs and plan for the future in a manner consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP).

Burlington County Freeholders Pipeline Complacency

The Board of Chosen Freeholders of Burlington County continued to back away from a fight for their constituents and the environment this year when it came to the Southern Reliability Link (SRL) pipeline. After a permit violation in May, New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG) completely ignored a stop work order issued by the County. Instead of imposing a penalty, or revoking the permit altogether, the Freeholder Board ignored the pleas of their residents and construction on the SRL continued. After a highly publicized drilling accident in Upper Freehold which led to the condemnation of a woman's home, the County issued a second stop work order for the drilling, but has allowed trenching and pipe laying to continue. Instead of fulfilling campaign promises to stand up to NJNG, the Freeholder Board issued their permit and shifted the blame to state agencies for the pipeline that puts their residents at risk.

Local Government

Expectations: *There are 56 municipalities entirely or partly within the Pinelands National Reserve. The Pinelands Protection Act envisioned that local governments would be primarily responsible for implementing the CMP. While some things are mandatory such as density requirements, municipalities have flexibility with implementation of resource management goals of the CMP as they revise their land use regulations. PPA therefore expects municipalities to propose ordinances and master plans consistent with the conservation goals of the CMP.*

Towns and Stormwater Management

Six municipalities, five of which are in Burlington County, are now partnering with the Landscape Makeover Program to implement green stormwater infrastructure projects. PPA is the lead organizer of this program, which is a partnership of environmental groups working in South Jersey. Green infrastructure is an innovative way to reduce pollution in our surface water and solve flooding issues. It uses natural systems like native plants to capture stormwater runoff from the surrounding area and allows water to infiltrate into the ground rather than run off downstream. This restores the natural water cycle and helps to recharge the aquifer. Now Evesham, Medford, Lumberton, Pemberton, and Tabernacle in Burlington County, and Hammonton in Atlantic County have committed to building green stormwater infrastructure projects. This would not have been possible without the hard work of supporters in those towns, including mayors, township administrators, and environmental commissioners! Look for brand new rain gardens and other creative solutions to stormwater in these municipalities soon.

Non Governmental Organizations

Hammonton Health Coalition

PPA is grateful to participate in the Hammonton Health Coalition, a collaboration of town government, health care providers, the business community and nonprofits. Hammonton is surrounded by Pinelands farms and forests, and it relies entirely on the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer for its water supply. The Coalition is devoted to improving the health of Hammonton residents by creating a truly inclusive community, where people of all races, ethnicities and walks of life feel welcomed to take advantage of the town's services and civic resources. Among its achievements to date is creating a "community connectors" network of bi-lingual residents who are listening to the town's growing Hispanic population and helping build new relationships that bring their ideas and energies into the civic process. PPA believes this kind of inclusive engagement will bring more people to know and fight for the natural resources on which they depend.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PINELANDS COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

January 2021 marks the 40th anniversary of Governor Brendan Byrne's approval of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP). The management plan, as described in the federal legislation, was to "determine the amount and type of human development and activity the ecosystem can sustain while still maintaining the overall ecological values" as they relate to the Pinelands. The CMP is the foundation on which protection of the Pinelands National Reserve is based. It is the largest and most successful smart growth plan in the United States.



Individuals Who Made a Difference

Jane Wiltshire

Jane worked as Office and Membership Manager for the Pinelands Preservation Alliance for 13 years until her retirement this past July. If you called our offices with a question there is a good chance you spoke with Jane. She spoke to donors, contractors and business partners, members of the public and anyone who needed help with a Pinelands issue. She helped people when a development was proposed in their neighborhood, or there was a northern pine snake in their driveway, or a question about their donation, or perhaps someone very frustrated with our position on a Pinelands issue. She helped all these people with the same unflappable patience and concern. Jane often felt she didn't speak effectively on the many issues impacting the pines or the many reasons why it needs our care. And while she was rarely wrong about anything - she was wrong here. Jane would clearly articulate her answers with passion and caring. She did all this while making sure the lights stayed on, the fire alarm systems worked, the computers were operational, employees were taken care of, our insurance was current, and our operations were running smoothly. We all have that co-worker who seems to be at the heart of our work-life and Jane was that for us. She cares deeply for all her PPA children and we all felt her love and concern. Jane will always be a tireless advocate for social and environmental justice. We congratulate her on her retirement.



Jane and her family on vacation in Cape May.

Tom Gilmore

Tom Gilmore was president of the New Jersey Audubon Society for 30 years and was a founding trustee of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance serving as our first treasurer. He passed away in November at the age of 74. Tom played a key role in protecting land, water, and wildlife throughout the Garden State including helping to pass the strongest wetland protection bill in the nation, The Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, signed by Gov. Tom Kean in 1987. He was the first president of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition and helped this important region gain permanent protections with the passage of the Highlands water Protection and planning Act in 2004. Tom will be missed.



Tom Gilmore fishing.

Learn more: njudubon.org/tom-gilmore

A special thank you to this issue's contributing photographers!

Front Cover	Aleja Estronza
Back Cover	Joan O'Brien
Page 3	Amanda Czerniawski
Page 8	Patti Caruso
Page 9	Dennis Abriola
Page 10	Patti Caruso
Page 13	Henry Bossett
Page 14	New Jersey Audubon Society (right)



PINELANDS
PRESERVATION
ALLIANCE

Your Eyes, Ears and Voice for Saving New Jersey's Pinelands

The **Pinelands Preservation Alliance** (PPA) works 365 days a year to protect the land, water, plants and wildlife of New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve. We have unparalleled expertise in Pinelands laws and regulations. This expertise allows us to engage thousands of people each year in actions to protect the wildest place in New Jersey. These accomplishments are funded by generous donors like you. Here is a small sample of our work in 2020. Learn more at www.PinelandsAlliance.org.

Protecting the Pinelands for Over 30 Years

1989

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK IN 2020

2020

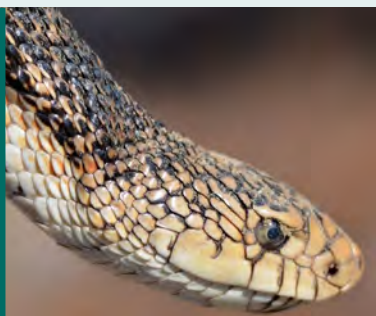
Advocacy



NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS PIPELINE (NJNG)

After a series of drilling accidents that contaminated wetlands, forests and cracked the foundation of a home, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) suspended NJNG's permits, halting drilling for the Southern Reliability Link pipeline. This victory was bittersweet, since PPA and partners have been warning of this possibility for years. Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) has an industry-accepted failure rate of 50%, yet was permitted by DEP. After four months, DEP accepted NJNG's revised drilling plan and reinstated the permit in November, despite the company's pattern of construction accidents and without conducting a formal permit review. Our legal appeal to stop this project is pending.

Science



PROTECTING THREATENED PLANTS & ANIMALS

Our field work included monitoring state threatened Northern Pine Snakes. We record snake activity to protect them from off-roading and from collectors for the pet trade. Snakes get a pit tag (like pet microchips) allowing us to record their size, sex, and behavior. Data collection is critical to their survival. We also help monitor and manage habitat of two federally listed plant species, American Chaffseed and Seabeach Amaranth and two state listed plant species, Pickering's Morning Glory and Pine Barrens Gentian. Pickering's Morning Glory is one of New Jersey's most rare plants. By studying these species, we learn how to best manage their populations to improve their survival.

Stewardship



SOLVING STORMWATER PROBLEMS

Stormwater is one of the main culprits polluting waterways in the Pinelands. Runoff is contaminated with fertilizers and pesticides and changes our water quality impacting plant and animal species. We created the Landscape Makeover Program to build green infrastructure in the Pinelands that captures and treats stormwater in a more natural way. We also help towns investigate other strategies like creating stormwater utilities. To date, PPA has helped install 35 projects covering a drainage area of almost 300,000 square feet or the equivalent of 7-acres of land in 10 communities.

Outreach



HELPING PEOPLE DURING COVID

The Rancocas Creek Farm was created by PPA to demonstrate chemical-free food production, soil conservation, and habitat management on 72-acres of preserved farmland donated to PPA. Grants from the Princeton Area Community Foundation's COVID-19 Relief & Recovery Fund helped us to provide over 15,000 pounds of vegetables to residents. Our healthy produce went to NJ Farmers Against Hunger, the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, Holy Cross Parish Food Pantry (Trenton), AME Church (Beverly), and to residents in Hammonton. We also helped people get away from things for a while when our Pinelands Adventures operation reopened in June. We were able to comply with state and CDC regulations so people could safely take self-guided canoe or kayak trips.



PINELANDS
PRESERVATION
ALLIANCE

Bishop Farmstead
17 Pemberton Road
Southampton, NJ 08088

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Philadelphia, PA
Permit #164

The 2021 *State of the Pinelands Report* was released to our members and the public in January 2021 and covers actions that took place over the course of 2020.

Address Service Requested



The Pinelands Preservation Alliance

The Pinelands Preservation Alliance is the public's leading voice for protecting the water, forests, plants and wildlife of the Pinelands. Founded in 1989, PPA has championed the effort to protect the Pinelands by:

- Fighting bad policies and developments
- Taking legal action when necessary
- Promoting smart growth to help existing communities thrive
- Getting people involved in the cause
- Taking people of all ages into the Pine Barrens to discover its wonders.

Our members are the most important source of support for the preservation of the New Jersey Pinelands.

Members receive a yearly subscription to our newsletter, discounts on Pinelands Adventures field trips, rentals and merchandise, and invitations to members' only events.

To join call us at 609-859-8860 or visit us on the web at PinelandsAlliance.org.