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Pinelands Juried Photography Exhibit

Submission details for 2024 will be announced soon.

Now is the time to take pictures in the Pinelands for this annual exhibit and contest! For more info visit:

PinelandsPhotoExhibit.org

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PINSIDE THE SINELANDS



PPA held its first Pinelands Science Forum on Climate Change in May.

Climate Change in the Pinelands

by Jaclyn Rhoads, Assistant Executive Director

The climate is changing in the Pinelands. Fire risk is greater. The number of excessively hot days has increased. Snakes are confused by the temperature swings, and the microclimates for the smallest of creatures are changing much more dramatically than we realize. These are just a few highlights of what scientists presented at the First Annual Pinelands Science Forum on Climate Change on May 19th at PPA's Bishop Farmstead. Fortunately, there are solutions, which means there are ways to slow down the progression and prevent a bad situation from becoming worse.

According to Dr. Brenda Ekwurzel, senior climate scientist and the director of climate science for the Climate & Energy Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), there are practical, achievable solutions for climate change. Dr. Ekwurzel was the morning keynote speaker at the forum. She is a co-author of the fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4) Volume II and has found that the number of excessive heat days in the region has increased and will

continue to do so until we significantly reduce and eliminate fossil fuel use. She is still optimistic because countries all over the world are moving quickly to change. The United States is lagging behind, but we have the technology and policies available to make a swift transition to renewable sources of energy.

The Pinelands' unique environment means that our rare and small creatures are the most vulnerable to climate change. Kirk Raper, Dr. Joanna Burger and Dr. Henry John-Alder made that crystal clear in their presentations at the forum. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is studying the changes to the climate and their impacts. Kirk Raper from the DEP's Science Program noted that the average first flowering dates of native plants have advanced by 19 days since 1920. Some species like highbush blueberry — well known in the Pines — are now flowering up to 42 days sooner! Dr. Burger from Rutgers University shared the startling changes in pine snake habits due to climate change, so that the number of

Inside The Pinelands

Memorial & Tribute Bench Program

Honor a loved one with a beautiful bench in a scenic spot.

Published three times a year by the Pinelands

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Distributed to

PPA members & volunteers, state legislators, Pinelands municipalities, elected officials, and planning boards

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Pinelands Preservation Alliance has a limited number of opportunities available for named memorial or tribute benches, picnic tables, and seating areas. These can be a meaningful way to recognize a loved one, honor a special person or memorialize a significant event. Donations to memorial and tribute benches are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Benches are placed in scenic locations on trails, at the Visitor Center, alongside the meadow, on the Rancocas Creek Farm or around the Bishop Farmstead's native gardens. Locations are based on placement opportunities identified in PPA's Bench Program records. Appropriate sites are offered to prospective donors on a first come first served basis with final selection at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Benches are made of sustainably grown plantation teakwood. Benches can be placed within PPA's property with a \$1,500 donation. Each bench is guaranteed to last 10 years and includes an etched brass plaque. After the 10th year, the bench donor will be contacted and given an opportunity to replace their bench or have their plaque returned.

Each bench features a weatherresistant brass plaque with black etched lettering. Each plaque can be inscribed with up to 4 lines of up to 45 characters in length. All copy must be approved by the Executive Director. To see examples please visit www.pinelandsalliance.org. Benches are made of sustainable plantation grown teakwood. Brass plates are weather resistant, 2" x 9" x 1/16", have black etching, and are affixed with brass wood screws at each end.

To learn more about PPA's Memorial and Tribute Bench Program, please call Director of Philanthropy, Kellie Westervelt at 609-859-8860, ext. 124. You can also email her: kellie@pinelandsalliance.org.

Explore the Pinelands National Reserve

with Pinelands Adventures!

Now accepting reservations for paddling trips on the Batsto and Mullica River, guided hikes and sunset programs.

Fun for the whole family!

Visit www.PinelandsAdventures.org to plan your next adventure.

Enjoy self-guided paddling on the Batsto or Mullica Rivers or let one of our expert guides lead you on a paddling, hiking or small bus **tour.**

Pinelands Adventures

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

Ringing in 25 Years at the Helm of PPA

by Kellie Westervelt, Director of Philanthropy

This is a special year for the Pinelands Preservation Alliance as we celebrate Carleton Montgomery's 25th anniversary leading PPA! The Pinelands Preservation Alliance was not quite a decade old when Carleton became executive director in 1998. He had left behind a partnership in a thriving Washington DC law firm to make his home in South Jersey and his mission Pinelands protection. I sat down with Carleton to get his thoughts on the past 25 years leading PPA and his hopes for the future.

What are the biggest changes you've seen in the past 25 years?

The number of people advocating for the environment and the number and diversity of organizations who help them have a voice has grown. Today, there is much greater awareness of NJ's extraordinary natural resources. There is the old joke that when talking about any place in New Jersey you ask "which exit is it?" Today, we talk about the Pinelands, the Jersey Shore, the Delaware Bayshore, and Highlands. There is more pride and much better recognition of how special New Jersey is for nature and scenic beauty. The environmental movement accomplished a great deal during the time I've been at PPA.

What are some of your greatest achievements leading PPA?

I've been fortunate to bring together a phenomenal team of staff, volunteers and supporters.

One victory that brought all these people together was defeating the South Jersey Gas Pipeline, an important struggle that PPA led. The pipeline violated the Comprehensive Management Plan and only came close to approval due to all sorts of political shenanigans and a Pinelands Commission. divided Defeating it was a big deal! There are always those seeking to weaken Pinelands protections, but those protections have survived and largely succeeded because PPA is vigilant and the public increasingly believes the Pinelands is sacred.

Disappointments?

The construction of the Sanctuary development in Evesham early in my time here. That led to the fully predictable destruction of the timber rattlesnake population living in that area. We can't afford to lose any population of this iconic and increasingly rare species. The Pinelands Commission had an opportunity to stop it but chose not to.

Another big defeat turned out to be a success in the long run. We fought the redesignation of land in Tabernacle for construction of Seneca High School on protected land. The school district bought the land cheaply because it was reserved for farming under the Pinelands Plan, then went to the Pinelands Commission to change the rules. It was a truly horrendous precedent. We lost that case, but the process and conflict cost the district time, money and reputation that left a lasting mark. Other school districts stepped back from pursuing that strategy, and no one has tried to repeat the gimmick since. It goes to show the value of fighting and losing—not just fighting and winning.

What do you see as our greatest challenge?

When I first came to PPA the people working at the Pinelands Commission and the Commissioners themselves were founders of the Pinelands protection program. They had a level of knowledge and dedication to the Pinelands that maybe only founders are going to have. At the start, I could disagree with the founders about decisions like the Sanctuary deal, but I never questioned for a moment their commitment to the Pinelands. They dedicated their lives to this and created a program that lasted all these decades. Now, though, they've retired, and many have passed away. We are fortunate that today there are many Commissioners and members of the staff who are deeply committed to the Pinelands, but we have also seen how much lasting damage people without that dedication can do to the Pinelands.

You can't take people's level of dedication for granted as you could in the beginning. Part of our job is to help new people in government become genuine champions.

What are you most proud of that gives you hope for the future?

That we are creating new ways to connect with more and more people. We have created Rancocas Creek Farm and Pinelands Adventures. We have launched The Pinelands Is for Everyone initiative. And we are working with great partners in places like Hammonton, Burlington City and Camden. These are all positive, innovative ways that PPA and our partners are making natural resources meaningful and valued by more people. Working with partners across the normal divisions between environmental, social service, agricultural, health, economic and community development fields to find new ways to bring more people into meaningful relationship with the nature around them is essential for the future of the Pinelands. I believe we must expand and deepen the communities of people who care about the Pinelands by providing more people with nature experiences, people who we didn't reach before. Some of these people will be our future Pinelands champions.

Celebrate the Pinelands on October 14th at the Big Red Barn

We hope you will join us on Saturday, October 14, 2023, as we honor Carleton's 25th anniversary, induct conservationist extraordinaire, Michele Byers, into the Pine Barrens Hall of Fame and award The Opportunity League of Burlington City our inaugural "Catalyst of Change" award. It promises to be a wonderful evening as we celebrate the past, present, and future champions of the Pinelands.

For event information or to purchase tickets, please visit our website.

Adaptive Programs at Pinelands Adventures

By Sean Kane-Holland, Access Nature and Disability Advocate & Andy Giles, Director of Pinelands Adventures

Summer is around the corner, and we are all heading out for another great season of outdoor adventures. Pinelands Adventures has been collaborating with partners to design nature programs that are inclusive of people with disabilities. We have purchased rugged adaptive mobility equipment like all-terrain wheelchairs and we have been running pilot programs to evaluate trip locations and activities. This is part the Pinelands of Preservation Alliance's "Pinelands is for Everyone" project launched in 2021 and funded by an Inclusive Healthy Communities Grant from the Division of Disability Services, New Jersey Department of Human Services and our members.

This April, Pinelands Adventures conducted three trial adaptive eco-tour programs with Kingsway Learning Center. For these programs, our Pinelands Adventures staff took between 6 to 8 clients from Kingsway, and their companions, on the ADA-nature trails at Atsion Recreation Area and Batsto Historic Village. The ADAnature trails at these sites are named the Red/Blue Trail and Red Trail respectively and are in Wharton State Forest in Burlington County. They have accessible marked trails, parking, and restroom facilities. The trails are wide enough and have stabilized surfaces using compacted crushed stone to permit mobility devices such as strollers, wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers to have access.

The first trial program we ran was based on Pinelands Adventures' Pinelands 101 Program which is an introduction to Pinelands ecology. The group met at Atsion Recreation Area and learned about the soil, water, and plants and animals of the

New Jersey's Pinelands National Reserve.

The second program was held at Historic Batsto Village. The group learned about the area's natural resources and their importance to establishing early European settlements and prosperous local industries like those found at Batsto Village.

The third trial program took place at the Atsion Recreation Area. This was based on Pinelands Adventures' Nature Rx program. The group immersed themselves in the forest's sights, sounds, and smells. This is a euphoric program designed to rekindle our relationship with nature. We were blessed with fantastic weather on all three occasions. All three groups had a delightful time accessing naturebased recreation and educational programs in places they may not have been able to visit without the guidance of Pinelands Adventure staff or the adaptive mobility equipment we provided.

These trial programs helped us assess how to use the mobility equipment we acquired. Individuals were able to evaluate each mobility device and provide feedback. They filled out surveys on the equipment and shared suggestions with the Pinelands Adventures team.

We discovered that our adaptive equipment has great flexibility for the terrain. In addition, this equipment can help individuals with differing mobility abilities. Our electric wheelchair accommodates individuals with low mobility while people with greater mobility and upper body strength can use our Grit Freedom chair. A companion or caregiver can also steer this equipment.

In conjunction with these eco-tour trials, we have been collaborating with state parks, local authorities, and volunteers to create better access to trails, modifying trail materials, improving signage, and identifying further ADA enhancements where needed.

These developments are truly exciting for Pinelands Adventures and the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. It is exciting to make it possible for an entire family to enjoy the mental, physical, and educational benefits of nature. We are grateful to New Jersey's state park superintendents for helping to support our trials, providing access, and joining us in a collaborative spirit that will improve access to parks for everyone. Stay tuned as Pinelands Adventures finalizes plans for these programs later this season!

To get involved with this project you can sign up for the Access Nature Forum e-newsletter. You will be informed about Access Nature zoom meetings, volunteer opportunities and other programs. Our next Access Nature Forum discussion will be held July 12th at 7:00 pm via zoom. Sign up at PinelandsAlliance.org/natureaccess.

If you have questions or would like to get connected with the Access Nature initiative or Pinelands Adventures, please reach out to Sean at sean@pinelandsalliance.org or Andy, Director by email at andy@pinelandsadventures.org.

Thank You!

To our members and volunteers who support the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. You really make a difference! We are so lucky to have your support.

Climate Change

continued from cover

times they are entering and leaving their dens have dramatically increased. According to Dr. John-Alder from Rutgers, warmer winters and springs may result in shifts in phenology (timing in life cycles) in gray and green tree frogs. The adjustments by these species will either need to become permanent to adapt to the shift in temperature or these species will eventually disappear from the region.

Fire is probably the most wellknown problem associated with climate change and is no stranger to the Pinelands, but an increase in fire comes with risks even though the Pinelands benefit from its occurrence. This natural phenomenon poses problems but also potential mitigation against climate change. According to Ken Clark, Research Forester with US Department of Agriculture, burning at 5 to 8-year intervals results in positive carbon accumulation. This means that with increased prescribed burning we may see more carbon reduction from the atmosphere and a reduction in wildfire risk.

Fire is one of a few potential climate change mitigation options. Jeanne Herb, Co-Director of the Climate Change Resource Center, shared opportunities numerous residents, local officials, agencies, and organizations to work towards the ultimate goal of keeping climate change within the lower range of warming from 2 to 4 degrees Celsius. The Climate Change Resource Center website has training opportunities, building code examples, education materials, and links to the latest scientific research. There are plenty of tools and resources for you to enjoy. Visit njclimateresourcecenter.rutgers.edu

Two examples of organizations and individuals addressing climate change include Jessica Ray of Raritan Valley Community College and Virginia Rettig, Refuge

Manager at Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. Jessica Ray is working with multiple partners, including PPA, in restoring our natural shoreline environment. Up and down the Jersey Shore, she and her team are installing temporary string and post fencing to protect the back ends of beaches which allows native and sometimes rare vegetation to return. When vegetation returns it allows sediment to accumulate and builds up dunes. This is a simple and cheap way to protect our residential and wildlife communities. Virginia Rettig at Forsythe is trying to protect the Refuge's wetlands by restoring shoreline sediment where possible. Although her team is looking at ways to resist climate change, they also acknowledge that some places need to transition, since nature doesn't always stay the same.

PPA's first science forum was intentionally focused on climate change, because this is the second greatest threat to the Pinelands' unique (Development is ecosystem. number one.) If we don't use all the resources available to avoid the worst-case scenario, the species we love, the places we visit, and the resources we use might be gone for a very long time, if not forever. PPA plans to use this forum as a launching point to advocate for significant policy and cultural changes. We already started doing our part by geothermal energy, installing purchasing solar panels, creating the Rancocas Creek Farm, a regenerative, carbon absorbing, chemical-free farm farmstead.

The work may be hard, but the choice is easy. If we want the Pinelands and most of New Jersey to remain, then we need to make changes today. Science provides important insights that help us understand our current situation and the changes we will see in the future, but it should never be an

excuse to delay action. If we wait until we have all the science in hand, we will lose our opportunity to stop the change at our doorstep. Please use this article and the resources on the science forum page to change the paradigm. Talk to others and take action, and PPA will do all that it can to provide science-based policy proposals and actions for you and New Jersey's decision-makers.

TOUR DE PINES BIKE RIDE Oct. 5 - 8, 2023

Tour New Jersey's largest wilderness by bike. Ride as many days as you want!

Rides are around 50 miles in length with shorter loops available most days. Organized by Kermesse Sport to benefit PPA. Bicycle through state forests, nature preserves, trails, ghost towns, wineries and farms.

More info at TourdePinesNJ.org

GARDEN STATE PLATE

Saturday, Aug. 5th 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

PPA Headquarters 17 Pemberton Rd. Southampton, NJ 08088

Join us for a unique Farm to Table dinner that showcases fresh, seasonal local food!

Tickets are \$125/person and include a gourmet meal, local beer, fine wine and dessert.

Seating is family-style at long farm tables in the soaring loft of our renovated barn.

Purchase Tickets Online:
Pinelands Alliance.org

Questions? Contact Becky at becky@pinelandsalliance.org 609-859-8860 ext 121

PPA Launches Policy Notes Blog

by Heidi Yeh, Policy Dirctor

If you show up to any meeting of the Pinelands Commission, there's a good chance that you could be the only member of the public in the room. Public engagement with the Commission dropped dramatically during the tenure of the previous executive director, and was further suppressed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through these ups and downs, staff from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance have been steadfastly monitoring the activities of the Pinelands Commission. We use the insights that can be gained in these meetings to inform our advocacy efforts. With the start of our new 'Policy Notes' blog series, we are making these insights available to you as well.

Thanks to government transparency laws, materials from nearly every official meeting that happens at the municipal level and up are already available at your fingertips online. But who has the time to wade through it all or the expertise to make sense of it? Journalists used to serve this public function, but support for local news outlets has been dwindling.

Pinelands Commission meetings are available online through their YouTube channel. However, it can be hard to understand what is going on, or how specific actions fit into the big picture. PPA staff are present at every (non-budget) meeting of the Pinelands Commission, and we bring institutional knowledge from over 30 years of work in the Pinelands. Given our unique position at the interface between the Pinelands Commission and the public, we hope that you will turn to us as a trusted source of information.

Some issues unfold at a glacial pace—such as the ongoing efforts to incorporate climate change into the CMP. Others require constant updates, such as the ever-changing composition of the Pinelands Commission, which continuously

changes as resignations and nominations lead to the periodic replacement of its members. The rare issue that catches national attention typically has a long history that is not captured by one-off reporting efforts, as in the recent case of the Allen and Oswego Road Fire Mitigation and Habitat Restoration Project. Through our blog, PPA will give you the highlights and insights that we collect on a monthly basis.

Each installment includes a deeper dive into background information that is especially useful for understanding the major issues that have emerged over the past month. This has included topics such as affordable housing, fire management, and land preservation. In addition to summarizing past and present actions related to these themes, we also strive to outline areas for improvement that we intend to incorporate into our advocacy efforts. We believe that every action matters, and can be as simple as staying well-informed. A knowledgeable public can be a powerful tool for environmental advocacy, so we encourage you to check out the blog and learn more about the Pinelands Commission through our 'reporting'.

To find all the Policy Notes blog posts go to PinelandsAlliance.org and click on the Blog & News button. Search for Policy Notes by choosing "Policy Notes" from the Topic Category drop down menu.

MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

To honor Carleton's 25 years an anonymous donor challenged us to raise \$100,000 which they will match dollar-for-dollar!

To donate visit: Pinelands Alliance.org/challenge

Contact:

kellie@pinelandsalliance.org 609-859-8860 ext 124

Access Nature Forum

Join the conversation!

Upcoming Zoom TalksJuly 12th at 7 PM
October 11th at 7 PM

Access Nature Forum discussions take place over Zoom with the goal of improving access to natural areas for those with disabilities, their families and caregivers.

Conversations are open to the public, decision-makers and state agencies.

Sign up here: PinelandsAlliance.org/natureaccess

Questions? Email Sean: sean@pinelandsalliance.org

CELEBRATE THE PINELANDS

at the Big Red Barn

Saturday, Oct. 14th 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

PPA Headquarters 17 Pemberton Rd. Southampton, NJ 08088

Enjoy gourmet appetizer and entrée stations, an open bar and a silent auction with amazing items and experiences.

This special event marks Carleton Montgomery's 25 years leading PPA as we induct Michele Byers, retired director of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, into the Pine Barrens Hall of Fame. We will also present the first ever Catalyst of Change Award to The Opportunity League.

For more info & tickets visit pinelandsalliance.org

Calendar of Events

Visit the Pinelands!

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Patricia A. Butenis

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Amy Vasquez, Esq.

Carleton K. Montgomery

Executive Director, Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Visit the Pinelands!

Now is a great time to explore the Pinelands. Here is a list of state parks and forests 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. 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 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 information 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. The Refuge includes walking trails through rare coastal pine forest habitats. Start at the Visitor Center and Wildlife Drive on Great Creek Road in Galloway Township.

Pinelands Commission Meeting

5/12, 6/9, 7/14 starting at 9:30 am. Monthly meetings are open to the public and are held via livestream on

The Pinelands Commission is the state agency that oversees conservation and development within the Pinelands. They meet on the 2nd Friday of the month. You can attend in person or virtually. Meeting agendas, link to livestream and a phone number to call can be found at www.nj.gov/pinelands.

Garden State Plate

August 5th at Pinelands Preservation Alliance, 17 Pemberton Rd, Southampton, NJ.

Join us for a unique Farm to Table dinner that showcases fresh, seasonal local food! Tickets are \$125/person and include a gourmet meal, local beer, fine wine and dessert. Seating is family-style at long farm tables in the soaring loft of our renovated barn. Tickets Online:PinelandsAlliance.org

PPA Gift Shop and Visitor Center

Our new visitor center is handicap accessible and is located in the building adjacent to our farmhouse. Browse our large collection of fiction and non-fiction books about Pine Barrens' history, culture, ecology, and recreation. Learn about the conservation efforts and issues associated with the New Jersey Pinelands. Shop our t-shirts, hats, and locally made /sourced goods!

Store Hours can be found at pinelandsalliance.org/event.

Can't make it in person? Our online store is always open! Visit us online at:

www.pinelandsalliance.org



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