

PINELANDS CLIMATE COMMITTEE MEETING

This meeting was conducted in-person and available remotely.

The public could view/comment through Pinelands Commission YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/PinelandsCommission>

Zoom Meeting ID: 850 9782 1311

April 19, 2023

MINUTES

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chairman Mark Lohbauer, Commission Chair Laura E. Matos, Alan Avery, Theresa Lettman, Edward Lloyd

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jerome H. Irick

STAFF PRESENT: Susan R. Grogan, Charles Horner, Gina Berg, Brad Lanute, Steven Simone, John Bunnell, Ernest Deman, Paul Leakan, and Dawn Holgersen. Also present were Tom Holl and Janice Venables, with the Governor's Authorities Unit.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Lohbauer called the Pinelands Climate Committee meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

2. Adoption of the February 15, 2023 Climate Committee meeting minutes

Commissioner Avery moved the adoption of the minutes of the February 15, 2023 Committee meeting. Commission Chair Matos seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

3. Update on state initiatives

Ms. Grogan delivered a presentation on state and office initiatives (*attached to these minutes and on the Commission's website at:*

<https://nj.gov/pinelands/home/meetings/documents/2023%20April%2019%20Committee%20presentation.pdf>)

Ms. Grogan said the Commission is participating in the Interagency Council on Climate Resilience (IAC). She said the current task is an extreme heat resilience action plan.

She said that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) conducted a survey and hired consultants. She said the consultants analyzed the information received in the survey. She said there were few responses to the survey. She said the agencies were asked to compile a list of actions and recommendations.

Ms. Grogan said that a draft of the actions and recommendations will be due on May 17, 2023. She said the agencies were provided with a template for the draft. Drafts from all the agencies will be compiled into a single document. She said that expert advisory groups were assembled to review the information and provide advice.

In response to Commissioner Avery's question regarding an example of a potential action item, Ms. Grogan said that native plant species lists could be reevaluated to identify those that are more resilient to extreme heat. She said that the recommendations are not all based on rules; some will focus on education and outreach.

Chairman Lohbauer inquired as to the Pinelands specific information for extreme heat, as it may differ from other areas of the state. Ms. Grogan indicated the IAC document may have separate chapters to identify concerns for different areas of the state. She said the document will be broad and that the expert group will be working to organize the information.

Ms. Grogan said the Natural and Working Lands Strategy (NWLS) is a combined effort from NJDEP and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. She said the goal is to increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in and on farms, forests, grasslands, wetlands, and urban lands. She said the intent is to identify solutions and long-term actions.

She said the scoping document was released in December 2021. She said the targeted stakeholder sessions were held in spring 2023. She said the sessions were for aquatic habitats and wetlands, developed lands, agricultural lands, and forested lands. She said Commission staff attended each session. Ms. Grogan said that a final NWLS document is due to be released in September 2023.

She said the sessions were conducted by NJDEP and had many people in attendance. She said there is a NWLS website (<https://www.nj.gov/dep/climatechange/mitigation/nwls.html>) that details the numerous recommendations presented in the sessions. She said the presentations included targets for the recommendations.

She said that while there may not be information listed as Pinelands specific, there will likely be recommendations that will be helpful to the Commission.

In response to Chairman Lohbauer's inquiry as to the topic of cannabis cultivation during the agricultural session, Ms. Berg, the Commission's Planning Specialist, said that the only mention was regarding water use concerns.

In response to Chairman Lohbauer's question as to whether Commission action will be required in response to this strategy, Ms. Grogan said that formal action may not be necessary.

Commissioner Avery expressed concern that some recommendations may conflict with Pinelands standards.

4. Update on office initiatives

Ms. Grogan said that a request for quotes (RFQ) was issued for the purchase of two vehicles. She said the RFQ outlined the specifications required, such as electric or hybrid powered. She said the responses are due April 21, 2023. She said the RFQ was issued to vendors on state contract and a variety of other dealerships in the area. She said the RFQ also specifies the need for the vehicle to be available within 90 days to prevent an offer for a vehicle with a long wait.

Chairman Lohbauer suggested the Commission should consider selecting an electric vehicle. He said an electric vehicle supports the mission of the Committee. He also said the selection of a

hybrid vehicle would add additional years of fossil fuel consumption. He mentioned that the Ford F-150 Lightning and Rivian R1 meet the specifications needed for field use.

Ms. Grogan said the RFQ specifies both electric and hybrid vehicles to gain insight on the availability of those vehicles.

Commission Chair Matos agreed on the significance of selecting an electric vehicle. She commented that the current inability to charge the vehicle on the Commission grounds and limited charging locations in the area may be an issue.

Ms. Grogan said that a grant application will be sent to the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to fund the purchase and installation of electric vehicle charging stations. She said the BPU recommended the Commission apply for and install a community charging station that would be available to the public. She said the Commission is seeking funding for the installation of two fast-charging stations.

She said the grant application is due by May 12, 2023 but it is not clear when the grant decisions will be made.

She also said fast-charging stations in the area are few and far between. She expressed concern regarding the difficulty that may arise if the staff needs to use an off-site, slow-charging facility for charging Commission field vehicles on a daily basis.

Commissioner Avery inquired about the cost of installing a community charging station. Ms. Grogan said the grant would provide funding for the charging station itself as well as \$25,000-\$35,000 in make ready costs. She said there will be other expenses for improvements associated with the installation of the stations.

In response to Commissioner Avery's question regarding protocol for installing a charging station, Ms. Grogan said that other agencies have already installed charging stations that can be used as an example of the process. She also said there is a list of state-approved contractors for the installation of the stations.

Commission Chair Matos said there is also guidance being provided to municipalities that could be used to guide the Commission in the process.

Chairman Lohbauer said a community charging station may encourage more people to visit the Commission. He mentioned that the process to install a private charging station at his home took about five weeks.

Ms. Grogan said that the Commission may be financially responsible for associated improvements to facilitate the installation of the chargers. She said funds have been set aside in the Energy Conservation Reserve for this expense.

At 10:09 Janice Venables from the Governor's Authorities Unit joined the meeting and Tom Holl exited.

Ms. Grogan outlined the proposed topics for upcoming meetings. She said that dual-use solar legislation and identification of Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) amendments for solar facilities could be discussed at the May 17, 2023 meeting. She said the

July 19, 2023 meeting could focus on the results of the management area boundary analysis and discuss recommendations. She said that proposed CMP solar facility amendments could be discussed at the September 20, 2023 meeting.

She said that there are less staff resources available for additional research due to a staff member's retirement. She said the Commission is seeking to hire a Climate Resiliency Coordinator.

Chairman Lohbauer commented that he was impressed to see the use of solar facilities on active farmland. Ms. Grogan said that the staff would like to have BPU make a presentation to discuss the possibility of dual use solar in the Pinelands.

In response to Commissioner Avery's question regarding presentation of proposed CMP amendments, Ms. Grogan said they could be presented to this Committee or to the Policy and Implementation (P&I) Committee due to the committees having most of the same members.

Chairman Lohbauer commented that while the members are similar for both committees, there is a difference in the matters each committee focuses on.

5. Pinelands management area boundary analysis

Ms. Berg delivered a presentation on the Pinelands management area boundary analysis (*attached to these minutes*).

She said that an analysis of Pinelands management area boundaries was identified as a fiscal year 2023 priority for the Committee. She said the purpose of the analysis is to identify areas within Regional Growth Areas (RGA), Pinelands Towns (PT), and Pinelands Villages (PV) that are vulnerable to climate change.

She said the analysis would be based on maps of risks, uses and threatened and endangered (T&E) species. She said the categories of data are flood hazards, wildfire hazards, T&E species, preserved land, existing land use/land cover, and municipal zoning.

Ms. Berg said the flood hazard map is provided by NJ Flood Mapper/Rutgers University. She said the data is from 2020. She said it includes flood insurance rate map data. She said the map also has inundation data for a five-foot sea-level rise used to assess flood risk.

In response to a question from Chairman Lohbauer, Ms. Berg said the five-foot sea-level data was obtained from an identified "perfect storm" scenario. She said the Flood Mapper tool allows the user to select storm scenarios for mapping. She said the parameters were discussed during prior Committee meetings.

She said that the wildfire risk mapping was provided by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and closely matches Commission data.

She said that wildfire risk is assessed based on several factors including vegetative cover and remoteness/ease of access. She said the five categories are extremely low, low, moderate, high, and extremely high. She said the evaluation focused on high and extremely high areas.

In response to a question from Commissioner Avery regarding mapping from NJDEP, Ms. Berg said the NASA data was used because it is more defined.

Ms. Berg said the location, ranges and migration of T&E species will be considered in the analysis.

She said additional factors will be included in the analysis, such as preserved land, land use/land cover data, and zoning.

She said that an overlay of all the data will be used to identify potential management area boundary changes. She said potential actions that may result from this analysis are amendments to the Pinelands Land Capability Map, municipal zoning boundaries, reductions in permitted development intensities, new or amended CMP environmental standards, and targeted land acquisition/preservation.

She said the next steps are to complete identification and analysis of areas potentially impacted with information being presented at the July Committee meeting. She said priorities will be identified for a round of permanent land protection. She also said any potential CMP amendments for management area boundary changes would be brought to the P&I Committee for review.

Charles Horner, the Commission's Director of Regulatory Programs, delivered a presentation on CMP fire hazard mitigation standards (attached to these minutes).

Mr. Horner said the CMP requires all residential development of 100 dwelling units or more in high or extremely high hazard areas to have a 200-foot perimeter fuel break between all structures and the forest. Within the fuel break, shrubs, understory trees and bushes, and groundcover are to be selectively removed, mowed or pruned and maintained. He said that it does not require clear cutting.

He said the application that was mentioned in a previous management report is in the RGA. He said the fire hazard mitigation standards apply to all management areas. He said when the application was initiated in 2001 there was less development in the area. He said at the time, the 200-foot fuel break was required for the application. He said the proposed development consists of about 250 dwelling units on 115 acres of land.

He said that in the years after the application, other development consistent with CMP rules has occurred in the area.

Mr. Horner said the town contacted the Commission with concerns about the fuel break. He said the town implemented it through an easement. The town inquired as to whether relief could be sought from the easement. The Commission's review determined that the town would be responsible for granting relief.

He said the Commission receives many questions regarding CMP language requiring the fire break to be between all structures and the forest. He said the question arises as to what is considered a forest. He said that the issue concerns the current status of the proposed 115 acre development in regard to the location of forests in the area, as the area has changed over time due to other development.

He said that the fuel break determination is made on a case-by-case basis. He said some municipalities have determined that a fuel break would not be required. He said that Commission staff also contact fire officials for guidance in making the determination.

Chairman Lohbauer expressed concern regarding the maintenance of a fuel break in a high risk area being the only requirement for a large residential development. Mr. Horner replied that there are additional fire hazard mitigation standards such as development of 25 units or more requiring at least two access points. He mentioned another standard being the requirement for turn-around areas at dead-ends of roads to be large enough to accommodate emergency vehicles.

Commissioner Avery asked how often the perimeter fuel break standard is applied to large residential development. Ms. Grogan replied that the Commission receives relatively few proposals of that size; most applications for residential development are for much smaller numbers of units.

Chairman Lohbauer suggested that consideration be made when analyzing management area boundaries to avoid locating large residential development projects in a high fire risk area.

6. Public comment


Heidi Yeh, from the Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA), suggested the Commission pursue both community and residential type electric vehicle charging equipment. She said it may encourage staff to purchase electric vehicles for personal use that could be charged while they work.

Ms. Yeh also recommended the Committee work with the Pinelands Municipal Council to help town leaders to discuss climate matters. She said NJDEP provides information to towns but the Council seems to be underutilized.

She encouraged the Commissioners to attend a climate forum being hosted by the PPA on May 19th.

There being no further discussion, Commission Chair Matos moved the closing of the meeting. Commissioner Avery seconded the motion. The meeting concluded at 10:56 a.m.

Certified as true and correct:



Dawn Holgersen
Office Assistant
June 21, 2023

Climate Committee Update: State and Office Initiatives



1

Interagency Council on Climate Resilience

- Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan
 - Analysis of survey results (DEP consultants)
 - Compilation of initial actions identified by state agencies
 - “50% draft homework” due May 17

2

Natural and Working Lands Strategy

- Partnership between NJDEP and the NJ Department of Agriculture
- Goal: increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in and on farms, forests, grasslands, wetlands and urban lands
- Identify and prioritize near-term, cost-effective and pragmatic solutions, as well as longer-term actions

3

Process and Timeline

- Scoping Document released – December 2021
- Targeted Stakeholder Sessions – Spring 2023
 - Aquatic Habitats, Tidal and non-Tidal Wetlands
 - Developed Lands
 - Agricultural Lands
 - Forested Lands
- Final NWLS Strategy released –September 2023

4

March 2023 Stakeholder Sessions

- Numerous recommendations listed
- Targets for 2030 and 2050 identified
 - (e.g., # of new rain gardens)

5

Office Initiatives

- Electric/hybrid field vehicles (2)
 - RFQ issued
 - Specifications identified
 - Responses due by April 21
- EV charging station
 - Community charging facility
 - Two DCFC (fast charging) stations
 - Grant application due to BPU by May 12

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Upcoming Committee meetings

- May 17
 - Discussion of new dual use solar legislation
 - Identification of CMP amendments for solar energy facilities
- July 19
 - Results of management area boundary analysis
 - Discussion of recommendations
- September 20
 - Proposed CMP solar facility amendments

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Pinelands Management Area Boundary Assessment for Climate Risks

PINELANDS CLIMATE COMMITTEE
APRIL 19, 2023

1

FY 2023 CLIMATE COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

- ▶ Amendments to CMP solar energy facility standards
- ▶ Analysis of Pinelands Management Area boundaries to identify areas within Regional Growth Areas, Pinelands Towns and Pinelands Villages that are vulnerable to climate change

2

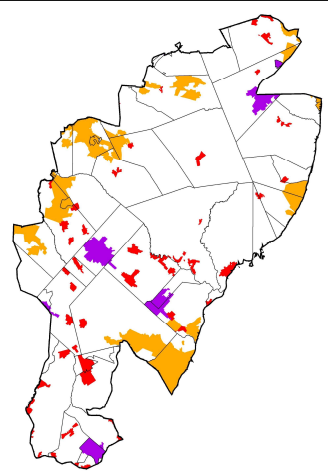
GIS-based analysis: Risks, Uses, T&E

Flood Hazards	Wildfire Hazards	Threatened & Endangered Species
Preserved Land	Existing Land Use/Land Cover	Municipal Zoning

3

Growth-Oriented Management Areas

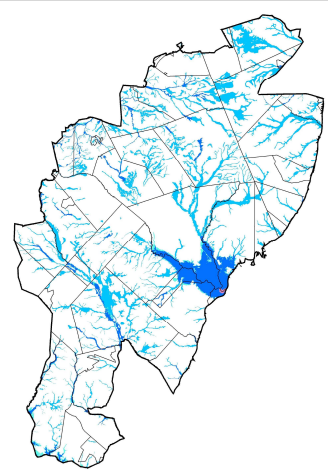
- 24 municipalities with Regional Growth Areas (orange)
- 7 Pinelands Towns (purple)
- 47 Pinelands Villages (red)



4

Flood Hazard Layers

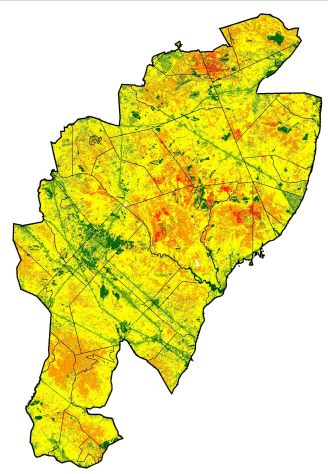
- Source: NJ Flood Mapper/Rutgers University
- Composite FIRM Data 2020 (shown)
 - Combination of effective and preliminary mapping data from 2020
 - Produced by FEMA for Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs)
 - National standard for quantifying current flood hazards
- Mean Higher High Water
 - Inundated coastal areas under future sea level rise scenarios
 - Inundation in hydrologically disconnected low-lying areas
 - The 5-foot SLR scenario mapping



5

Wildfire hazard layer


- Source: NASA/NJPC
- Fire Risk Assessment Map
 - Determines wildfire risk based on several factors, including vegetative cover and remoteness/ease of access
 - Five categories of risk:
 - Extremely Low (dark green)
 - Low (light green)
 - Moderate (yellow)
 - High (orange)
 - Extremely High (red)
 - Evaluation focused on "High" and "Extremely High" areas



6

Threatened & Endangered Species

- ▶ Sources: NJDEP, NJPC
 - ▶ NJDEP's Endangered and Nongame Species Program
 - ▶ Commission Staff Records
- ▶ Ranges
- ▶ Migration

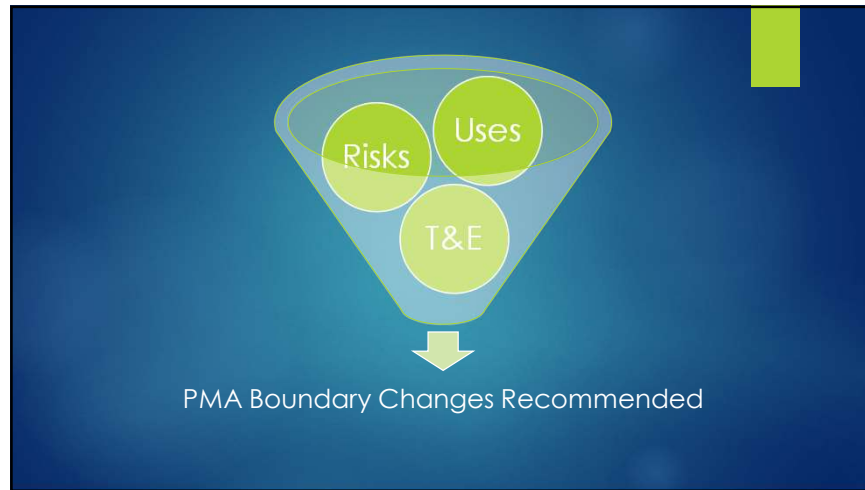


7

Additional factors -Use

 <p>Preserved Land</p> <p>PCF Acquisitions PDC Severances Farmland Preservation Open Space 502 & 20 Target Areas for land protection</p>	 <p>Land Use/Land Cover Data</p> <p>Vacant vs. Developed Wetland vs. Upland</p>	 <p>Zoning</p> <p>Types of Development Redevelopment Areas Adjacent Management Areas</p>
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8



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- ### Potential Actions
- ▶ Amendments to the Pinelands Land Capability Map
 - ▶ Redesignation of management areas from growth-oriented to conservation-oriented
 - ▶ Municipal rezonings or reductions in permitted development intensities
 - ▶ New or amended CMP environmental standards
 - ▶ Targeted land acquisition/preservation
 - ▶ Pinelands Conservation Fund
 - ▶ Green Acres
 - ▶ Non-Profits

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- ### Next Steps
- ▶ Complete identification and analysis of areas potentially impacted – May 2023
 - ▶ Climate Committee discussion of staff findings and recommendations – July 2023
 - ▶ Permanent Land Protection Round priorities
 - ▶ P&I Committee review of potential CMP amendments for PMA boundaries

11

questions & comments?

12

CMP Fire Hazard Mitigation Standards N.J.A.C. 7:50-6.124(a)

5. All residential development of 100 dwelling units or more in high or extreme high hazard areas will have a 200-foot perimeter fuel break between all structures and the forest in which:

- i. Shrubs, understory trees and bushes groundcover are selectively removed, mowed or pruned and maintained on an annual basis;
- ii. All dead plant material is removed;
- iii. Roads, rights-of-way, wetlands and waste disposal sites shall be used as fire breaks to the maximum extent practical;
- iv. There is a specific program for maintenance.

1



2