



## New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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### ***Pinelands Commission agrees to hire U.S. Geological Survey to study infiltration at wastewater facility in Hammonton***

WOODLAND TOWNSHIP, NJ – During its monthly meeting here Thursday night, the Pinelands Commission voted to hire the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct a study aimed at improving wastewater infiltration at a wastewater treatment facility in Hammonton.

Under the project, the USGS will research the infiltration-percolation lagoons at the Hammonton Land Application Facility on Boyer Avenue. The federal agency will seek to identify the physical, chemical, biologic or hydrologic conditions that inhibit infiltration at the facility and, based upon those conditions, suggest remedial measures and maintenance tasks to improve infiltration.

In addition, the USGS will assess the prevalence of similar environmental conditions that may be encountered at other existing and future infiltration-percolation lagoon facilities in the Pinelands. The Pinelands Commission requires treated wastewater to be infiltrated as a means of replenishing groundwater supplies.

“This research project will not only help resolve environmental concerns related to the wastewater facility in Hammonton, it will provide guidance on how to improve infiltration at existing and future wastewater systems throughout the Pinelands,” said John C. Stokes, the Commission’s Executive Director. “The end result will be better protection of key water resources in the Pinelands, including the 17-trillion-gallon Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer.”

The Town of Hammonton built the infiltration facility in 2001 as part of sewage upgrades that were directed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Prior to the upgrades, the town’s sewage treatment plant discharged treated effluent into Hammonton Creek, a tributary of the Mullica River that also flows into the Pinelands-designated Preservation Area. The DEP in 2002 ordered that Hammonton cease the surface water discharge to Hammonton Creek and convey all of the flow from its sewage treatment plant to the Land Application Facility by October 31, 2003.

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*Pinelands Commission press release continued...*

The Town of Hammonton requested and received an extension of the deadline, citing the Land Application Facility's inability to accept 66 percent of the actual flow in a manner that would comply with DEP permit requirements. Consultants hired by the Town of Hammonton have not yet identified the reasons for the impeded infiltration at the facility.

The research project will be completed in approximately three years. It will be funded by a \$100,000 contribution from the Pinelands Conservation Fund, a \$100,000 contribution from the Town of Hammonton and a \$40,000 contribution from the USGS. The Pinelands Conservation Fund was established earlier this year as part of an agreement with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to permit the construction and upgrade of an electric transmission line through eastern portions of the Pinelands. Monies disbursed under the fund go toward permanent land protection, conservation planning and research projects and community planning and design initiatives.

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