



New Jersey Pinelands Commission PRESS RELEASE

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Pinelands Commission awarded \$82,500 grant from the William Penn Foundation; Funds will be used to implement Natural Resource Protection Plan in southern Medford and Evesham

NEW LISBON, N.J. – The William Penn Foundation has awarded an \$82,500 grant to the New Jersey Pinelands Commission to help Medford and Evesham townships implement a plan to protect significant natural resources and avoid future development conflicts in the southern portion of the townships.

The grant will fund efforts to undertake a series of tasks outlined in a Natural Resources Protection Plan that was developed for an ecologically sensitive area that encompasses the 22-square-mile southern portion of the two municipalities.

“This grant will be crucial in carrying out a multitude of integrated strategies that were specifically designed to better protect natural resources such as water and habitat for rare plants and animals in southern Medford and Evesham townships,” said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission.

The Pinelands Commission received a \$73,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation in 2004 to fund efforts to develop the Sub-Regional Natural Resources Protection Plan, which was a collaborative project between the Commission, Evesham Township, Medford Township and the NJDEP.

Although primarily rural in character, almost 75% of the Plan’s study area is currently designated for modest amounts of residential development under local zoning. However, data compiled in recent years has shown that this area has significant natural resources, including undisturbed sub-watersheds, as well as rare plants and animals. Among other things, the strategies contained in the Sub-Regional Natural Resources Protection Plan recommend reducing the project area’s future zoning capacity by 53%. Additionally, strategies in the Plan call for land acquisition, reducing water consumption and promoting land stewardship through public education for homeowners, builders and planning and zoning boards.

Funds disbursed under the latest grant from the William Penn Foundation will be used by the Commission to provide technical assistance to Medford and Evesham townships in helping them craft zoning regulations, including provisions for clustered development, density transfer (in Evesham), and

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the expansion of forest-area zones. The grant also will be used to develop a backyard habitat protection program and outreach plan with municipal environmental commissions and the New Jersey Audubon Society, and to develop best management practices at two private golf courses in the project area, with the golf course owners, the Evesham Municipal Utilities Authority and the NJDEP. These best management practices seek to reduce water consumption, storm water runoff and the application of fertilizers.

The Sub-Regional Natural Resources Protection Plan is available on the Home Page of the Pinelands Commission's Web site (www.nj.gov/pinelands). A jpeg image (map) of the project area can be obtained by contacting Paul Leakan at (609) 894-7300.

The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Greater Philadelphia region through efforts that foster rich cultural expression, strengthen children's futures, and deepen connections to nature and community. In partnership with others, the Foundation works to advance a vital, just, and caring community. Learn more about the Foundation online at www.williampenfoundation.org.

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