



New Jersey Pinelands Commission **PRESS RELEASE**

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Pinelands Commission to offer free educational programs during new “Pinelands Speaker Series” at the Richard J. Sullivan Center

NEW LISBON, N.J. – Beginning in June, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission will host a series of **free** educational presentations on a variety of Pinelands topics at its headquarters in Pemberton Township.

The new “Pinelands Speaker Series” features three presentations – one on seasonal changes in the Pinelands, one on threatened and endangered animal species and one on the Jersey Devil – that will be held at the Richard J. Sullivan Center for Environmental Policy and Education on 15 Springfield Road. Organized and sponsored by the Pinelands Commission, the “Pinelands Speaker Series” is a new educational initiative that seeks to raise awareness and appreciation of the natural, cultural and historic resources of the New Jersey Pinelands.

“The Pinelands Commission has experienced great success in carrying out educational programs such as the annual Pinelands Short Course, which attracted a record crowd of nearly 450 people this March,” said John C. Stokes, Executive Director of the Commission. “The new Pinelands Speakers Series will provide another great opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about this special part of our country.”

The first presentation will feature a pictorial overview of the **botanical transformation associated with the changing of the seasons in the Pinelands**. It will be delivered by Lynn Chase Shoemaker on Thursday, June 14 at 2 p.m. Shoemaker taught biology at Southern Regional High School and Ocean County College and has served on the Governor’s School on the Environment at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. A graduate of Rutgers University with a master’s degree in ecology, Shoemaker authored the “Rain Forest Resource Guide for Teachers,” a National Audubon Society publication.

The second presentation will provide an overview of **threatened and endangered animal species of the Pinelands**, and will include several species of **live snakes**. It will be delivered by Matthew McCort of Herpetological Associates, Inc. on Thursday, July 12, at 2 p.m. Specializing in the ecology of reptiles and amphibians of the northeastern United States, McCort is recognized as a qualified bog turtle surveyor in New Jersey. He has assisted in research on, and conducted surveys for, endangered, threatened, and rare wildlife species throughout the northeastern states as well as in South Carolina,

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Georgia, Florida and Aruba. McCort holds a bachelor's of science degree in environmental studies from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

The third presentation will trace the **history and folklore of the Jersey Devil**, a creature said to have hooves, a horse's head, bat wings and forked tail that some believe has haunted the area for centuries. It will be delivered by James F. McCloy on Thursday, August 16, at 2 p.m. McCloy holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Rowan University and is an adjunct professor of history at Wilmington College. He co-authored "The Jersey Devil" in 1976 and "Phantom of the Pines: More Tales of the Jersey Devil" in 1998, and has appeared on many radio and television programs and in numerous newspaper articles.

Anyone interested in attending the presentations must pre-register by calling (609) 894-7300 or sending a message to info@njpines.state.nj.us. Seating will be limited to approximately 60 per program.

All of the speakers are members of the Pinelands Speakers Directory, a listing of presenters who have extensive experience and knowledge of various Pinelands topics such as plants, animals, culture, archaeology, folklore, recreation and ecology. The Pinelands Speakers Directory can be downloaded from the Commission's Web site (www.nj.gov/pinelands/edu/speakers).

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