



NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION

MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT



A variegated fritillary butterfly on native sweet goldenrod blooms at the Pinelands Commission's headquarters in August

AUGUST 2021

1 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

1.1 ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

1.1A COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- **Pinelands Climate Committee:** The Committee canceled its August 18, 2021, meeting.
- **Policy & Implementation Committee:** The Committee canceled its August 27, 2021, meeting.
- **Personnel & Budget Committee:** The Committee met on August 24, 2021, and reviewed the check register and electronic disbursements for January through June 2021. The Committee discussed and endorsed the staff's submission of an application to the Board of Public Utilities for a Local Government Energy Audit of the Commission's offices. The Committee also reviewed and recommended Commission approval of the draft budgets for Fiscal Year 2022. Finally, Commissioner Alan Avery provided an update on the process and schedule for recruitment of a new Executive Director.

1.1B PINELANDS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

- **Pinelands Municipal Council:** The Council will hold its next meeting on September 28, 2021, in Weymouth Township.

1.1C RULEMAKING

- **Stormwater management:** The proposed Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) amendments were published in the July 19, 2021, issue of the New Jersey Register. A remote public hearing has been scheduled for September 1, 2021, and written public comments will be accepted through September 17, 2021. As of August 31, 2021, no comments have been received.
- **Electric Transmission Right of Way Maintenance Pilot Program:** Staff is preparing a comprehensive evaluation of the Pilot Program, as well as draft amendments to the CMP, for discussion at the September 24, 2021, Policy & Implementation Committee meeting.

1.1D OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

- A total of three Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests were received in August. Of the three requests, one was provided responsive material, one was responded to with the cost of the plans requested, and the remaining request will be responded to in September.

1.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Flexible Schedule Program:** Staff members are participating in the Flexible Schedule Program. The program has been extended through October 18, 2021.

- Return to Office:** In accordance with the Pinelands Commission Return to the Office plan, staff members are to report to the Commission office at least three days per week in August. When working in the office, staff members are required to take their temperature and complete the Employee COVID-19 Daily Self-Screening form. The office remains closed to the public and all meetings continue to be conducted remotely. These policies and procedures will remain in place through October 18, 2021.

2 PLANNING

2.1 CONFORMANCE ACTIVITY

	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Master Plans/Ordinances Received		
Adopted	11	101
Drafted or Introduced	2	69
Total ¹	8	114
Master Plans/Ordinances Reviewed		
Substantial Issue Finding ²	0	2
No Substantial Issue Finding	14	39
No Issue Finding	4	39
Total	18	80
Finding Letters Issued³	12	51

2.2 CULTURAL RESOURCE ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Applications Reviewed	8	53
Surveys Required	0	5
Surveys Reviewed	0	4
Certificates of Appropriateness Required	0	4

¹The total accounts for unique master plans and ordinances received (i.e., it does not double count drafted, introduced, or adopted submissions for the same ordinance).

² Ordinances and Master Plans that are found to raise substantial issues with respect to the standards of the CMP require formal review and approval by the full Commission.

³ A single finding letter can pertain to multiple master plans/ordinances from the same municipality.

2.3 PINELANDS DEVELOPMENT CREDIT PROGRAM

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
PDCs Allocated	32.75	57.45
PDCs Severed	0	17.50
Acres Protected	0	509
PDCs Extinguished	0	4.50
Acres Protected	0	152
PDCs Sold	0.50	26.00
Average Sales Price per PDC	\$92,500	\$52,604
Average Sales Price per right	\$23,000	\$13,151
PDCs Redeemed	0.50	12.25

Notable Activity:

- PDC Allocations:** 0.25 PDCs were allocated to a 5-acre parcel in the Preservation Area District and Special Agricultural Production Area in Woodland Township. 32.50 PDCs (130 rights) were allocated to 1,156 acres in the Special Agricultural Production Area in Bass River Township.
- PDC Sales:** 0.50 PDCs (2 rights) were sold during August 2021 at a price of \$23,000 per right. This marks the highest sales price since August 2008.
- PDC Redemptions:** 0.50 PDCs (2 rights) were redeemed on a residential project in Jackson Township.
- The PDC Bank's Annual Report:** The Bank's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021 was completed and distributed. The report is available on the Bank's website: [https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/pdcbank/reports/PDC%20Bank%20Annual%20Report%202021%20\(Final\).pdf](https://www.nj.gov/pinelands/pdcbank/reports/PDC%20Bank%20Annual%20Report%202021%20(Final).pdf)

2.4 SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Septic pilot program:** In early May 2021, the Pinelands Commission solicited applications from advanced onsite wastewater treatment technologies that have received nitrogen-reduction performance certifications from the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) and/ or the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) Environmental Technology Verification (ETV)

programs. The Commission is seeking to add up to five new technologies to its successful Alternate Design Wastewater Treatment Systems Pilot Program.

Applications were received from four NSF Standard 245 / US EPA ETV certified technologies prior to the August 6, 2021, application deadline. Three of the technologies would be new to the pilot program, including the Fuji Clean USA, Pugo, and Waterloo Biofilter systems. The fourth technology is the Busse GT system, which previously participated in the program but whose participation was terminated due to a lack of system installations. An escrow fee of \$2,500 was submitted by each technology to cover the cost of staff time devoted to the review of each application.

All applications have been determined to be administratively complete. Technical review of each application is currently underway. Staff will provide its recommendations for acceptance of the technologies into the pilot program at the October 29, 2021, Policy & Implementation Committee meeting.

- Pinelands Conservation Fund Land Acquisition Program:** One project was received and reviewed in response to the Commission’s offering of land acquisition grants that closed July 30, 2021. Due to the unexpectedly low number of projects, staff conducted telephone interviews with several organizations that routinely preserve land in the Pinelands Area. We discussed where the focus of their land acquisition activities is, whether the goals of their programs remain unchanged, and how the acquisition priorities set by the Commission for the recent Pinelands Conservation Fund offering matched their goals. Three counties and two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) summarized their activities as focused on areas outside of the Pinelands Area or focused on issues other than land acquisition. One other NGO informed us that land values offered by developers significantly outstripped appraised values and that hindered acquisitions by the NGO. All discussions noted support for the priorities set for land acquisition in the recent PCF offering. Staff plans to bring recommendations about the PCF land acquisitions grants to the Policy & Implementation Committee in September.

3 REGULATORY PROGRAMS

3.1 APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Monthly Total	Calendar Year to Date
Pre-Application Conferences	13	91
Certificates of Filing	14	111
Public Development Reports	3	12
Forestry Certificates of Filing	0	5
PDC Letters of Interpretation	2	21
Non-PDC Letters of Interpretation	1	2

MOA Consistency Determinations	0	25
Review of Agency Determinations	80	614

3.2 NOTABLE APPLICATIONS

- LS Power, Egg Harbor Township (App. No 1981-0479.010):** On August 3, 2021, the Commission staff conducted a pre-application conference to discuss this proposal to install approximately 11.7 miles of underground electric transmission cable to deliver electricity generated by future offshore wind turbines. The proposed underground electric transmission cable is located entirely in a Pinelands Regional Growth Management Area.
- Cannabis Facility, Winslow Township (App. No 1989-0707.004):** This application proposes a 215,000 square foot addition to an existing 35,000 square foot building on a 15.2-acre parcel in the Rural Development Area. On August 10, 2021, the Commission staff issued a Certificate of Filing for the proposed development. On August 11, 2021, the Township Planning Board granted preliminary and final site plan approval.
- NJDEP Greenwood Forest Stewardship Plan, Lacey and Manchester Townships (App. No. 1981-0087.004):** On July 1, 2021, the Commission staff conducted a pre-application conference with NJDEP to discuss a proposed Forest Stewardship Plan for 3,117 acres of the 32,353-acre Greenwood Wildlife Management Area. The NJDEP requested that as a stakeholder, the Commission staff identify for NJDEP Commission objectives for the proposed forest Stewardship Plan. On July 30, 2021, the Commission staff reviewed the draft objectives with the Commission’s Policy and Implementation Committee. On August 12, 2021, the Commission staff forwarded the recommended Forest Stewardship Plan objectives to the NJDEP.
- Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst (App. No 1991-0820.122):** On August 23, 2021, the Acting Executive Director, after consultation with the Chairperson of the Pinelands Commission, issued an emergency authorization letter for the establishment of temporary shelter for up to 4,500 Afghan Special Immigrants for a minimum of six months at JB MDL. The temporary shelter will be developed on a 26.4-acre portion of an existing grass parade field. The letter noted that an after-the-fact application for development of the temporary shelter must be completed with the Commission.
- NJDEP, NJ Forest Service, Bass River Township and Little Egg Harbor Township (App. No. 2007-0318.001):** This application proposes the thinning of approximately 1,304 acres of forested uplands and the creation of approximately 13 miles of 60 foot wide forest firebreak within the rights-of-way of Oswego Road and Allen Road. By memorandum dated August 19, 2021, the Commission staff requested certain information to complete the application.
- PDC Letter of Interpretation, Bass River Township (App. No 1996-1602.001):** On August 9, 2021, the Commission staff issued a PDC LOI for a 1,156-acre parcel. The PDC LOI allocated a total of 32.50 PDCs to the parcel, a number that would be reduced to 32.25 if the eight individual lots comprising the 1,156-acre parcel are considered separately.

- Residential Development, Waterford Township (App. No 1987-1138.001):** This application proposes the development of 95 affordable housing units within the Township designated Haines Boulevard Redevelopment Area. The Commission previously certified (approved) an alternative permitting program applicable to the Haines Boulevard Redevelopment Area. The alternative permitting program allows for an applicant to proceed directly to the Township to secure site plan or subdivision approval. The Township is required to provide certain preliminary information to the Commission regarding any proposed development in the Haines Boulevard Redevelopment Area. On August 19, 2021, the Township Planning Board granted preliminary site plan approval. In accordance with the provisions of the Haines Boulevard Redevelopment Area alternative permitting program, the applicant remains obligated to provide a copy of any approval for the proposed development to the Commission. Upon receipt of the Township approval, the Commission staff will review the proposed development for consistency with the standards of the Township land use ordinance and the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan.
- NJDEP, Division of Parks and Forestry, Spot Treatment of Herbicide, Bass River Township (App. No 1990-0868.033):** On June 17, 2021, the Commission staff issued a Public Development Application Report recommending approval of an application proposing the spot treatment of herbiciding to control invasive plant species on 16.4 acres that were previously cleared to restore visibility from the Bass River State Forest fire observation tower. At the August 13, 2021, monthly Commission meeting, the Commissioners discussed the application and requested that NJDEP further address certain aspects of the application. On August 27, 2021, the Commission staff accompanied several Commissioners on a site inspection of the acreage proposed to be herbicided. It is anticipated that the application will be further considered by the Commission at it September 10, 2021, monthly meeting.

4 SCIENCE

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

- Water Level Monitoring:** In August, Science and Communications staff measured water levels at forest plots and ponds in the Commission network of long-term monitoring sites. This work is completed each month in cooperation with the Communications Office.
- Pinelands-wide Water-quality Monitoring:** Staff completed the August round of pH and specific conductance sampling at the 47 stream sites. This work is completed four times each year to monitor temporal trends in these two variables.

4.2 LONG TERM STUDIES

- Kingsnake Study:** Staff continued to radio track kingsnakes in August. One kingsnake was missing for a couple weeks and was later confirmed to be killed by a mammal predator. The transmitter was found with some scat that appeared to be from a fox or coyote. Another tracked kingsnake was observed eating a large black rat snake. This is only the second time during the study when staff directly witnessed a kingsnake feeding.

- **Joint Corn Snake Study:** Staff continued to monitor the drift fence for animals found under the wood and metal cover, in box traps, and in the pitfall traps established along the fence array. The entire drift fence array is checked seven days per week from April to November. A Rutgers University student contacted staff and is interested in inspecting reptiles for ectoparasites, such as ticks and mites. She accompanied staff on a day of snake tracking but did not find any parasites. She will run the drift fence with staff sometime in the early fall to inspect ground skinks for parasites.
- **Rare Snake Monitoring:** Staff continued to track corn snakes, pine snakes, and hognose snakes to locate dens for long-term monitoring. In August, two tracked corn snakes and one tracked hognose snake were killed by mammals. Two new corn snakes large enough to track were also found in August. One corn snake has been implanted with a radio transmitter and released and the other corn snake will be implanted soon.
- **Eastern Box Turtle Study:** Staff was notified by the Environmental Protection Agency that the box turtle grant proposal would not be funded. However, using money from the Pinelands Conservation Fund, staff will continue to track box turtles and will accumulate additional turtles to track in 2022.



Above: The eastern hognose snake often flattens its neck like a cobra and hisses to ward off potential threats.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

- **Pinelands Commission tap water sampling:** The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Environmental Health Program (Ecosystems Mission Area) formed the PFAS Integrated Science Team (IST) to conduct research on the exposure to and potential effects of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) mixtures on ecosystems and the services they provide to human communities. Among other research activities, the PFAS IST is conducting a national reconnaissance assessment of PFAS in drinking water at the point-of-use (i.e., tap water) to address human exposures. This initial reconnaissance includes sampling approximately 200 nationally distributed private and public drinking water locations (2 public and 2 private per state) in the summer/fall of 2021. In August, Science Office staff collected tap water samples from the Commission headquarters and sent the samples to USGS.

5 COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

- **Website:** The Pinelands Commission’s website was viewed 16,511 times in August 2021. Staff launched a comprehensive review of all webpages, documents, and links on the Commission’s website in August. Numerous documents have been updated thus far.
- **Inquiries/Correspondence:** The Communications Office received and responded to 60 inquiries from the public in August 2021, including phone calls, e-mails, and media inquiries.
- **Press Release:** On August 24, 2021, the Communications Office staff wrote and issued a press release about the Commission’s search for an Executive Director. Staff also posted the job announcement on the Commission’s website.



- **Pine Barrens Byway Brochures:** In August 2021, staff distributed hundreds of copies of the newly printed Pine Barrens Byway brochures (shown above) at various destinations along the 130-mile route. More brochures will be delivered at various sites in early September. After that final delivery, the brochures will be available at more than 20 locations in the Pinelands.

- **Office Support:** In August, a Communications Office staff member toured and took numerous photos of a blueberry and cranberry farm that has been permanently preserved through the Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) program. Staff also took photos of three newly construction housing developments that



Above: The cover of the Pinelands Development Credit Bank’s 2021 Annual Report.

were built with PDCs. The photos were incorporated into the Pinelands Development Credit Bank's 2021 Annual Report, which was designed by Communications Office staff and has been posted on the PDC Bank's webpage. Communications Office staff hosted the Commission's August 13th meeting and the Personnel & Budget Committee's August 24th meeting on Zoom/YouTube. Staff also created a presentation for the Regulatory Programs office. A member of the Communications/Public Programs Office collected pond and well data for the Science Office on August 3rd and 4th and maintained pond and well routes and trails on August 31st.

5.2 EVENTS, OUTREACH & INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

- **Pinelands Speaker Series Webinars:** Staff hosted a webinar entitled, "The Secret World of Plants & Pollinators," on August 26th. The Commission will host a webinar on rare bats of the Pinelands on September 16th.
- **Pinelands Short Course:** Staff has started to plan the Pinelands Short Course, which is scheduled for March 12, 2022.
- **Pinelands-themed World Water Monitoring Challenge:** Staff continued to coordinate plans for this year's event, which will be held at Batsto Lake on October 22, 2021.
- **Social Media Enhancements:** Staff continued to enhance the Commission's social media pages in August 2021. Staff posted 43 photos on the Commission's Instagram site. Staff also created a new Commission account on Twitter. The account can be accessed by clicking [here](#). Unfortunately, due to authentication issues, the Commission has been unable to post on its Facebook page since the second week of April 2021. The Commission has contacted Facebook about the issue dozens of times and noted the issue in a post that was shared on Instagram, which is owned by Facebook.



Above: Staff shared 43 photos on Instagram in August 2021, including this photo of a Luna moth that visited the Fenwick Manor farmhouse.

6 INFORMATION SYSTEMS

- **Pinelands Commission Information System Upgrades:** The Pinelands Commission Information System (PCIS) is the internal system of record for all applications to the Pinelands and associated transactions. Staff provided desktop support, implemented enhancements and bug fixes to streamline operations and facilitate remote work.
- **Cybersecurity:** Vigilance to protect the internal networks, hardware, and data of the Pinelands Commission is critical in today's networked world, especially due to the added complexities of supporting employees working from home. The Information Systems office participated in the periodic New Jersey Cybersecurity Communication and Integration Cell (NJCCIC) monthly

meeting.

- **Office 365 Migration:** The Information Systems Office provides a stable and secure desktop environment. Staff continues to roll out Office 365 and continued migration of local user data to OneDrive to replace the local file share.
- **Permanent Land Protection (PLP) Data System:** The PLP system manages the data related to all the preserved land in the Pinelands National Reserve. Staff has successfully completed migration of existing PLP data into the new database. A temporary ad hoc process is conducted while developing database integration with the Pinelands Commission Information System. Staff continues to work with the Planning Office to refine the Deed Restriction data entry tool. The PLP Annual Report data was generated from the new system.
- **Pinelands Development Credit Bank:** The Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) Bank is the processing agency for the Pinelands Development Credit Program, one of the oldest and most successful transfer of development rights (TDR) programs in the world. The Information System staff provides operational support and reporting to the PDC Bank. Staff delivered the Bank's 2021 Annual Report.
- **Technology Enhancements:** Staff members continually evaluate emerging technologies for how they can impact or enhance the office environment. To support Governor Murphy's "Return to Office" Plan, staff deployed several Teams and Zoom ready workstations at the Pinelands Commission to facilitate teleconferencing with staff, applicants, and others.

7 BUSINESS OFFICE

7.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- **Application Fees Received:** August 2021, Net Total: \$96,152.61; Year to Date Total: \$235,765.08.

7.2 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

- The barn roof was repaired by Hawley Bros. Inc.
- Exterminators were hired to remove a bald-faced hornet nest from the cedar tree between the Richard J. Sullivan Center and Fenwick office buildings.