

The PINELANDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY PINELANDS COMMISSION / SUMMER 2011

Three new gubernatorial appointees join Pinelands Commission

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission welcomed three new gubernatorial appointees who participated in their first regular meeting on July 8, 2011.

New Commissioners D'Arcy Rohan Green of Bay Head, Ocean County, Mark S. Lohbauer of Pennsauken, Camden County and Gary Quinn of Lacey Township, Ocean County, took the oath of office as members of the agency's 15-member board. Candace McKee Ashmun, a resident of Basking Ridge, Somerset County, who has served on the Commission since its inception in 1979, was also sworn in.

Gov. Chris Christie nominated Rohan Green, Lohbauer, Quinn and Ashmun to serve three-year terms

on the panel. The New Jersey Senate approved all four appointments in late June.

"New Jersey's foresight in saving such ecologically sensitive areas as the Pinelands will help to ensure a sustainable future for the entire state," said Ashmun, who is the Commission's Acting Chair. "I'm pleased that the Governor saw fit to reappoint me, as much important work lies ahead. I welcome the new Commissioners and look forward to working with them to safeguard this special area."

Rohan Green fills a seat on the



(From left to right): Gary Quinn, D'Arcy Rohan Green, Deputy Attorney General Jean Reilly, Candace McKee Ashmun and Mark S. Lohbauer. Photo/Paul Leakan

Commission that was held by the Rev. Dr. Guy Campbell Jr., who resigned in 2010.

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■ Presentations about black bears and southern pine beetles highlight this year's "Pinelands Speaker Series." Page 6.

Commission releases new report highlighting successful efforts in Fiscal Year 2010

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission has issued a new report that details the panel's accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2011.

The report, entitled "A Year in Review," highlights many, but by no means all, of the Commission's efforts during the past fiscal year (July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011), including the permanent preservation of thousands of acres of land.

"With fewer staff, several vacancies on our board and an abundance of complex issues, the Commission continued

to advanced its mission to preserve this special part of New Jersey," said Nancy Wittenberg, the Commission's Executive Director. "The Commission can be proud of its accomplishments, which will have long-lasting benefits to the Pinelands environment."

Wittenberg highlighted the Commission's accomplishments during a press conference held at the agency's headquarters on June 23.

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She currently serves on the Bay Head Borough Council, and is a former member of the Borough's Environmental Commission and Planning Board. A former dune consultant/inspector and former newspaper reporter/columnist, Rohan Green serves on the Board of Directors for Save Barnegat Bay and is an advisory member of Clean Ocean Action and the New Jersey Environmental Federation. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from New York University.

"I am tremendously honored and privileged to be appointed by Governor Christie to serve on the Pinelands Commission," Green said. "We live in very challenging times when the threat of overdevelopment is greater than ever, and so preserving our natural resources is increasingly critical. Since its inception, the Pinelands Commission has played a vital role in protecting our precious Pine Barrens. I am looking forward to the work ahead."

Lohbauer replaces Judith Y. Link, who had served on the Commission since 2009. Since 2004, Lohbauer has been a principal of JGSC Group, a retail market-making firm that focuses on revitalizing downtown commercial corridors. Prior to joining JGSC, he served as the Director of Policy & Communications for the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, following several years as the Assistant State Treasurer and practicing law in Philadelphia. A former member of

the Pennsauken Township Committee and Camden County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Lohbauer has long been active in environmental issues, primarily in the promotion of alternatives to waste incineration. He holds a Juris Doctor degree from Rutgers University.

"I'm very excited about this opportunity, and I look forward to joining the Commissioners and becoming a part of this tradition of preserving the water and the unique flora and fauna of the Pinelands," Lohbauer said.

Quinn fills a seat on the Commission that was held by Lloyd Henderson, Jr., who resigned in January 2011. Currently the Mayor of Lacey, he has served on the Township Committee since 2003. He is the President and Owner of Eastport Builders, a real estate development company that specializes in developing single-family residential developments, multi-family senior housing and commercial site plans throughout southern Ocean County. A long-time member of the Lacey Township Chamber of Commerce, Quinn serves on the Ocean County Workforce Development Committee and the Lacey Planning Board, as well as the township's Municipal Alliance and Economic

Development Committee. He holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from Ramapo College.

"The Pinelands has always been something that I have a deep-rooted interest in," Quinn said. "It's one of New Jersey's most valuable resources. I think the Commission over the years has done an outstanding job. I look forward to learning and becoming a part of the team. I hope that my background brings a little more balance to the Commission and that my contributions can be positive."

The Pinelands Commission consists of 15 members: seven appointed by the Governor of New Jersey, one appointed by each of the seven Pinelands counties and one appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Members of the Commission serve staggered, three-year terms and do not receive compensation for their service.



Robert Jackson, left, and other Commissioners welcomed the new Commission members, including Gary Quinn (on right), during their first meeting on July 8, 2011.

Photo/Paul Leakan



Commission releases new report highlighting successful efforts in Fiscal Year 2010

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As fully outlined in the report, the Commission:

■ Appointed Nancy Wittenberg as its new Executive Director. A former Assistant Commissioner with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Wittenberg brings a wealth of experience to the post;

■ Dedicated more than \$4.3 million to preserve 4,330 acres in Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May and Ocean counties. To date, the Commission has paid out a total of \$4.1 million from the Pinelands Conservation Fund toward the permanent preservation of approximately 3,320 acres of land;

■ Finalized plans to implement new procedures that provide more opportunities for public comment. **(Please see page 5 for more information).** The Commission also took major steps to better inform and notify the public about public development applications, launching a new web page that provides detailed information about the status of these applications;

■ Proposed several changes to ensure the environmentally-appropriate siting of solar energy facilities in the Pinelands;

■ Reviewed 1,602 active development applications to ensure compliance with regulations that protect Pinelands resources, such as water,

wetlands and habitat for rare plants and animals. Commission staff resolved 30 violations and investigated 17 new violations;

■ Worked with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to analyze and expedite measures to combat Southern Pine Beetles, which are killing pine trees in the Pinelands. Approximately 389 potential infestations totaling 14,100 acres were recorded in the Pinelands region in 2010, according to the DEP. Commission staff are reporting potential pine beetle infestations to the DEP. Additionally, the Commission is working with DEP to provide expedited review and permitting processes for pine beetle suppression activities;

■ Partnered with the DEP to conduct water-quality sampling in Barnegat Bay streams as part of Governor Chris Christie's Comprehensive Plan to address the ecological health of the Bay;

■ Adopted amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan regarding the Alternate Design Wastewater Treatment Systems Pilot Program. In May 2011, the Commission announced that it was accepting applications from new technologies to participate in the pilot program. These advanced treatment systems can remove more



The Commission educated more than 2,000 people about the Pinelands' natural treasures, including a presentation with live snakes at the 22nd annual Pinelands Short Course, in Fiscal Year 2010.

Photo/Paul Leakan

than 65 percent of the pollution that is typically generated by standard septic systems;

■ Worked with Monroe Township, Gloucester County to rezone nearly 3,000 acres of land to ensure the appropriate level of protection. The Commission redesignated 2,785 acres from the Rural Development Area to a more environmentally-protective Forest Area, and it redesignated 128 acres in the Rural Development Area to a more development-intensive Regional Growth Area. The new Forest Area consists of mostly forested land, the vast majority of which features exceptional Pinelands habitat. The new Regional Growth Area is established on largely disturbed land, which is not considered Pinelands habitat;

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■ Approved the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's new Master Plan. The Plan sets forth a comprehensive blueprint for the future development and expansion of the College's campus in recognition of increased enrollment and projections of future growth. The Plan permanently protects 1,257 acres of land on and near the college's campus, including 170 previously developable acres. It also increases the size of the College's development area by approximately 450 acres and the amount of developable land by 151 acres;

■ Continued to manage a \$5.5 million, multi-agency study of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer, which are layers of sand and gravel that lie beneath the Pinelands and hold an estimated 17 trillion gallons of pure water;

■ Continued to carry out scientific

surveys of Pinelands watersheds as part of a comprehensive, nationally-recognized, long-term environmental monitoring program. Since the 1990s, the Commission has conducted surveys at hundreds of sites in the Pinelands in an effort to characterize the effect of existing land-use patterns on aquatic and wetland resources and to monitor long-term changes in these resources;

■ Educated more than 2,000 people about the Pinelands' natural treasures. This includes the 22nd annual Pinelands Short Course, the annual Pinelands Speaker Series and the Pinelands-themed World Water Monitoring Day;

■ Authorized agreements that provide for more efficient reviews of certain public development applications proposed by Pinelands counties. The agreements enable the Commission's staff to review and approve small development projects proposed by counties, such as traffic signals, street lights and guide rails, in lieu of a lengthier process that ultimately requires the full 15-member Commission to approve these projects at their monthly meeting;

■ Approved plans to develop solar energy generating facilities on a portion of a capped landfill at the Stafford Business Park. The 6.5 megawatt solar facility is expected to generate up to 70 per-

cent of the park's energy needs. To mitigate for the loss of marginal open space on the landfill, Stafford Township will obligate its redeveloper to provide the Pinelands Commission with a monetary contribution of \$152,900. The Commission will use the contribution to fund a study of approximately 40 existing landfills in the Pinelands that remain unclosed despite Pinelands requirements. Under the study, Commission staff will collect existing data from the DEP, identify public health and environmental receptors, build a geographic database, identify critical leachate parameters and thresholds, and characterize landfills on the basis of health and environmental risks. The study will determine the continuing environmental impacts associated with these landfills, while identifying the appropriate means of landfill closure to ameliorate these impacts; and

■ Achieved status as a State Certified Laboratory. Certification of the Commission's Science Office laboratory enables other agencies such as the DEP to accept the Commission's water-quality data. The Commission has begun contributing the location of 295 monitoring sites and 11,880 data points to DEP's Water Quality Data Exchange database. The data were collected as part of the Commission's ongoing long-term environmental-monitoring program and span from 1999 through 2010. The data can be used by DEP in developing its list of impaired waterways.



John Bunnell, the Commission's Chief Scientist, samples fish as part of the agency's long-term, environmental monitoring program.

Photo/Robert Zampella



Commission implements new process to increase opportunities to comment on public development applications

The Pinelands Commission has begun implementing new procedures that provide the public with more opportunities to comment on public development applications.

“The Commission greatly values the public’s input because it leads to better, more informed decisions,” said Nancy Wittenberg, the Commission’s Executive Director. “These procedures provide an opportunity for the public to speak directly to Commissioners about public development applications before any decisions are made.

“When you couple these procedures with recent enhancements to our website, the public has never had more opportunities to learn about, and comment on, public development applications in the Pinelands.”

The new procedures were needed to address regulatory provisions which restricted the opportunity to comment on public development applications during Commission meetings.

In July, the Commission began notifying the public when public development applications are found to be complete and ready for public review. The Commission is posting this notice on its website (www.nj.gov/pinelands) at least 10 days prior to the next scheduled Commission meeting. Interested parties can also register to receive notification of these applications via e-mail.

In addition, the Commission will accept written comments on these applications up to, and during, its next scheduled meeting. The comment period will close the day of

the Commission meeting. Following the meeting, the Executive Director will then prepare and issue a report that summarizes and includes responses to relevant public comments, as well as a recommendation for approval or denial of the public development application. The Commission will then take action on the application during its next scheduled meeting.

Under Pinelands rules, the public has 10 days to provide the Commission with written comments on public development applications. This comment period begins after the applicant publishes a notice of its proposed project in the newspaper. The Commission’s Executive Director reviews the application, considers any public comment that is received, then recommends whether the 15-member Commission should approve or deny the application during their regular meeting. At that point, the Commission cannot accept any additional comments, including oral comments presented during its regular meetings, because the comment period has expired. However, the new procedures afford the public an opportunity to comment on



The Commission’s new process allows for the public to voice their support or concerns about public development applications directly to Commissioners. The public can also sign up to receive notification about pending public development applications via e-mail.

Photo/Paul Leakan

these applications during Commission meetings, while adhering to the comment process established in the rules.

Wittenberg said the Commission has taken major steps in recent months to better inform and notify the public about public development applications.

In early January, the Commission launched a new web page that provides detailed information about the status of active public development applications and applications for waivers of strict compliance. The new web page can be found under the “Permitting and Applicant Services” section of the Commission’s web site (www.nj.gov/pinelands).





Black bears and southern pine beetles presentations highlight this year's Pinelands Speaker Series

Free programs to be offered to the public at the Richard J. Sullivan Center

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission will host special presentations about black bears and southern pine beetles during its fifth annual "Pinelands Speaker Series."

Michelle Smith of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife will deliver the first presentation, "Know the Bear Facts," at 2 p.m. on Thursday, July 21.

Participants will learn about the natural history of the Garden State's largest land mammal, as well as black bear research. Since black bears are found statewide, the program also provides practical information about coexisting with bears and tips on how to react if a black bear is encountered. The program includes an audio/visual segment, a question and answer period, and show-and-tell items. Various publications will also be available for

distribution.

For educators, this program discusses key concepts within the current New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and will reference a new film documentary and companion school curriculum developed to educate New Jersey residents about co-existing with black bears.

Lynn Fleming, New Jersey State Forester and Dr. Mark Vodak, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, will deliver a presentation about southern pine beetles at 2 p.m. on Thursday, August 18.

The southern pine beetle is a forest pest that is attacking stands of pine trees in New Jersey. The New Jersey Forest Service has seen a dramatic increase of pine beetle infestations in Atlantic, Cape May, Ocean, and Cumberland Counties.

Participants will learn about these

tiny beetles and the efforts underway to reduce their impact on the Pinelands area.

Both programs 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 an annual educational initiative that seeks to raise awareness and appreciation of the natural, cultural and historic resources of the million-acre Pinelands area. Admission is free.

To register to attend either course, please contact the Commission at (609) 894-7300 or at info@njpines.state.nj.us.



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Visit us on the web at:
<http://www.nj.gov/pinelands>

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