

2025 Annual Report



March 13, 2026

2025 Annual Report

- Required by the Pinelands Protection Act and Executive Order.
- The 40-page report highlights the Commission's work during the 2025 calendar year.



Protecting the New Jersey Pinelands

The New Jersey Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency whose mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Pinelands National Reserve, and to encourage compatible economic and other human activities consistent with that purpose.

The Commission was created by the passage of the Pinelands Protection Act in 1979.

To accomplish its mission, the Commission implements a comprehensive plan that guides land use, development and natural resource protection programs in the 938,000-acre Pinelands Area of southern New Jersey. The Commission's 15-member board consists of state, county and federal appointees who volunteer their time and expertise. The panel meets monthly and receives guidance from its Executive Director and staff.



Above: The state Pinelands Area is a million-acre mosaic of forests, farms, and towns, crisscrossed by rivers and streams and teeming with wildlife. It also boasts extraordinary scenic beauty, as shown in this photo of the 50-mile-long Mullica River. Photo/Paul Leakan

Commissioners:

Laura E. Matos, Chair
Alan W. Avery, Jr., Vice Chairman
Nicholas Asselta
Deborah Buzby-Cope
Daniel Christy (Jan. 1, 2025 - Jan. 28, 2025)
John Holroyd, Jr. (Jan. 1, 2025 - May 20, 2025)
Jerome H. Trick
Theresa Lettman
Mark S. Lohbauer
Gaetano Matro (August 25, 2025 - current)
Mark Mauriello
Jonathan Meade
William Pikolycky
Jessica Rittler Sanchez
Ryck Signor (Jan. 28, 2025 - current)
Doug Wallner

Susan R. Grogan, Executive Director
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2025 Planning Activities

On October 10, 2025, the Pinelands Commission adopted a package of amendments to the Pinelands CMP, including:

- A change to the Pinelands Land Capability Map to redesignate 2,440 acres from a Rural Development Area to a Forest Area, thereby greatly reducing permitted development intensity in the Black Run watershed in Evesham Township
- New or increased fees for wetlands-related LOIs and applications involving resolution of identified CMP violations
- Establishment of expiration dates for old waivers of strict compliance and Certificates of Filing





2025 Planning Activities

- The Commission received nearly 500 public comments on the rule changes, with almost all of the commenters supporting redesignation of the Black Run Watershed and further protection of the Pinelands.
- The new rules took effect on January 5, 2026.

2025 Planning Activities

Climate Resilience

- Commission staff continued to participate in the State's Interagency Council on Climate Resilience (IAC), which held 11 meetings in 2025. Commission staff also participated in the IAC's Vulnerability Assessment Workgroup, which met 10 times during the year. Through this participation, staff contributed to interagency coordination on climate-related planning and resilience initiatives.
- The Commission's ongoing work in support of climate resilience was highlighted in the IAC Flood Resilience Initiatives Report issued in 2025 and will also be highlighted in the IAC's 2025 Annual Report.





2025 Planning Activities

- In 2025, the Commission received and reviewed 137 municipal master plan and ordinance amendments. Much of this activity reflected municipal efforts to meet their fourth round affordable housing requirements, as evidenced by the Commission's review of 39 Housing Element and Fair Share Plans.
- The Commission also continued to review a significant number of zoning amendments related to the emerging adult-use cannabis market, including 14 such ordinances in 2025. Commission staff worked closely with municipalities to ensure that cannabis establishments, whether for cultivation, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, delivery, or retail, are permitted in appropriate Pinelands management areas consistent with the CMP.

2025 Planning Activities

- In November 2025, the Commission issued its Alternate Design Wastewater Treatment Systems Pilot Program Implementation Report, which evaluates the advanced wastewater treatment systems that are currently being piloted for residential use in the Pinelands Area. Four technologies will continue to be piloted and monitored for two additional years.
- The rebuild of the Commission's internal Zoning System was completed in September 2025 and rolled out to Commission staff in early October 2025. The system tracks approximately 600 Commission-certified municipal zoning districts and redevelopment areas across 53 Pinelands Area municipalities, including data on permitted uses, minimum lot size requirements, and Pinelands Development Credit (PDC) requirements.



2025 Planning Activities

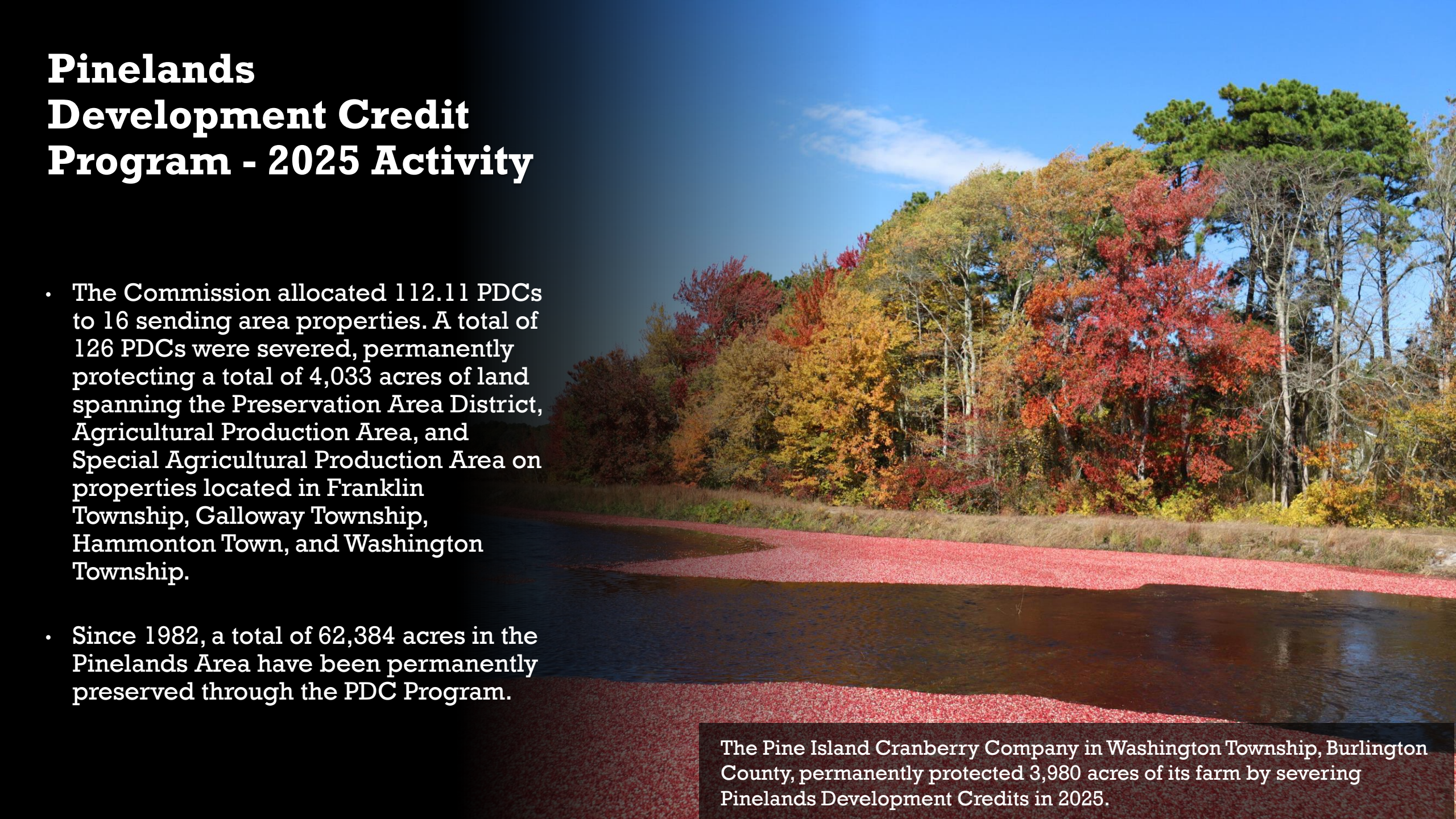
Cultural Resources

- In 2025, the state Historical Commission accepted the Pinelands Commission's application for a historical marker to be installed at the former location of the Brotherton Reservation in Shamong Township.
- The Pinelands Commission continued to conduct ground penetrating radar studies (GPR) in the Pinelands in 2025.
- Ground penetrating radar is a non-invasive survey technique that uses electromagnetic pulses to produce images of the subsurface.



Pinelands Development Credit Program - 2025 Activity

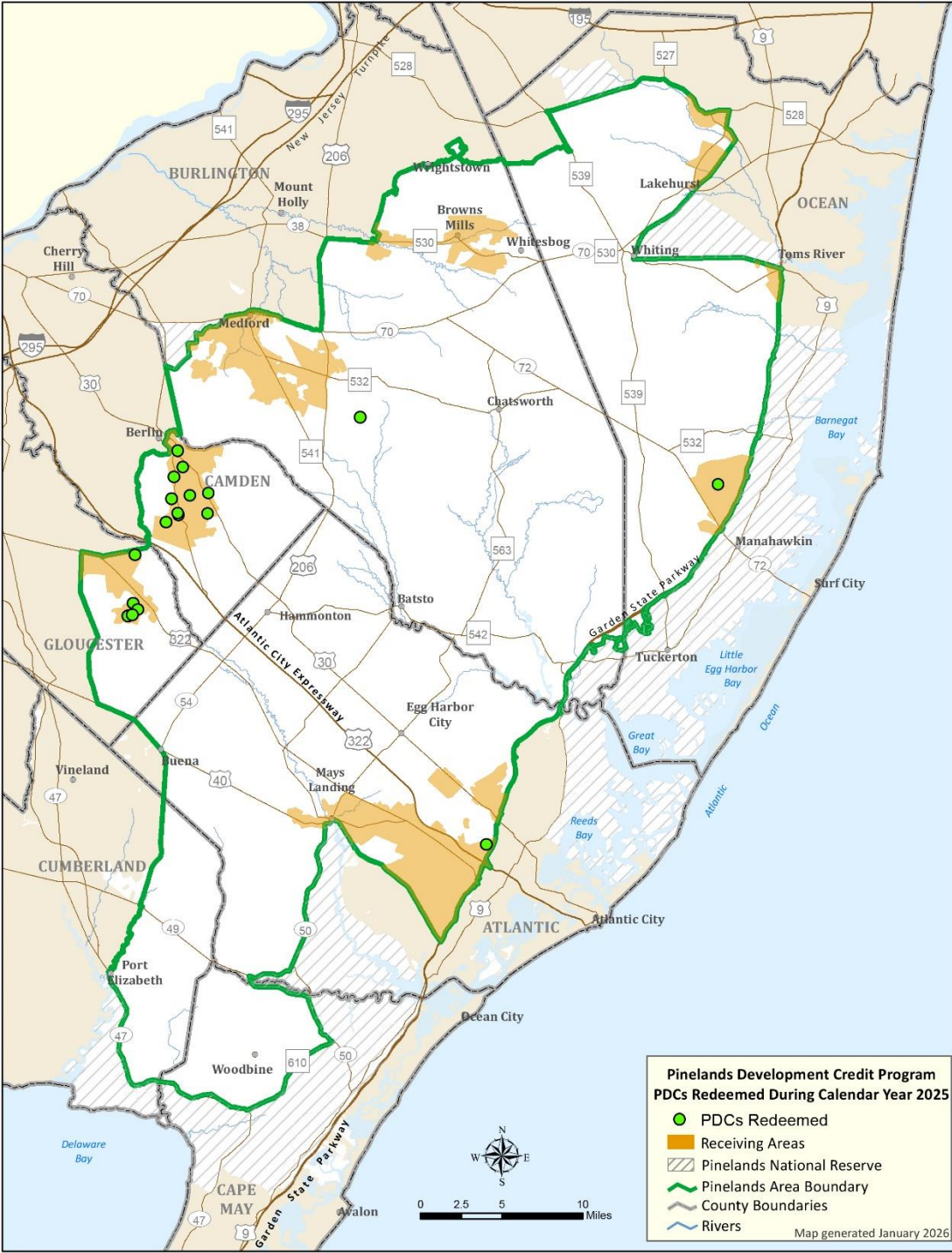
- The Commission allocated 112.11 PDCs to 16 sending area properties. A total of 126 PDCs were severed, permanently protecting a total of 4,033 acres of land spanning the Preservation Area District, Agricultural Production Area, and Special Agricultural Production Area on properties located in Franklin Township, Galloway Township, Hammonton Town, and Washington Township.
- Since 1982, a total of 62,384 acres in the Pinelands Area have been permanently preserved through the PDC Program.



The Pine Island Cranberry Company in Washington Township, Burlington County, permanently protected 3,980 acres of its farm by severing Pinelands Development Credits in 2025.

Pinelands Development Credit Program - 2025 Activity

- In 2025, a total of 41.25 PDCs were sold, with an average sales price of \$23,109 per PDC quarter-credit.
- A total of 40.75 PDCs were redeemed as part of 18 development projects. Fourteen of the projects were for residential development, including single-family homes and townhouses. Four of the projects were for non-residential development, including a warehouse and a solar energy facility. These projects are located in Barnegat Township, Chesilhurst Borough, Egg Harbor Township, Monroe Township, Tabernacle Township, Waterford Township, and Winslow Township.





Permanent Land Protection

Pinelands Conservation Fund - Land Acquisition Grants:

- On October 31, 2025, the Commission's Policy & Implementation Committee approved an award of \$3 million from the agency's Pinelands Conservation Fund (PCF) to support the preservation of an approximately 835-acre parcel in the Medford-Evesham Priority Acquisition Area in Burlington County. The funds were awarded to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), which has a one-year timeframe to complete the grant agreement.
- **Update:** On March 3, 2026, NJCF announced that it has entered into a binding contract of sale with the owners of the property.

Permanent Land Protection



PCF - Permanent Land Protection Monitoring:

In 2025, Commission staff continued to conduct site visits at properties that have been permanently preserved through the PCF.

Since 2023, staff has visited 11 sites to monitor conditions at the properties and ensure compliance with the terms of conservation restrictions. The visits also enable staff to identify any potential issues, such as the removal of sand, gravel or rock; significant erosion or flooding; trash accumulation or dumping; construction of non-permitted structures; and evidence of damage caused by the illegal use of off-road vehicles. Staff reports any issues to the property owners.

Permanent Land Protection



Land Preservation Summit:

More than 20 people attended the Pinelands Commission's third annual Permanent Land Protection Summit on April 3, 2025.

The summit focused on accessible trails in the Pinelands, including funding, resources, construction guidance and potential CMP standards.



Permanent Land Protection

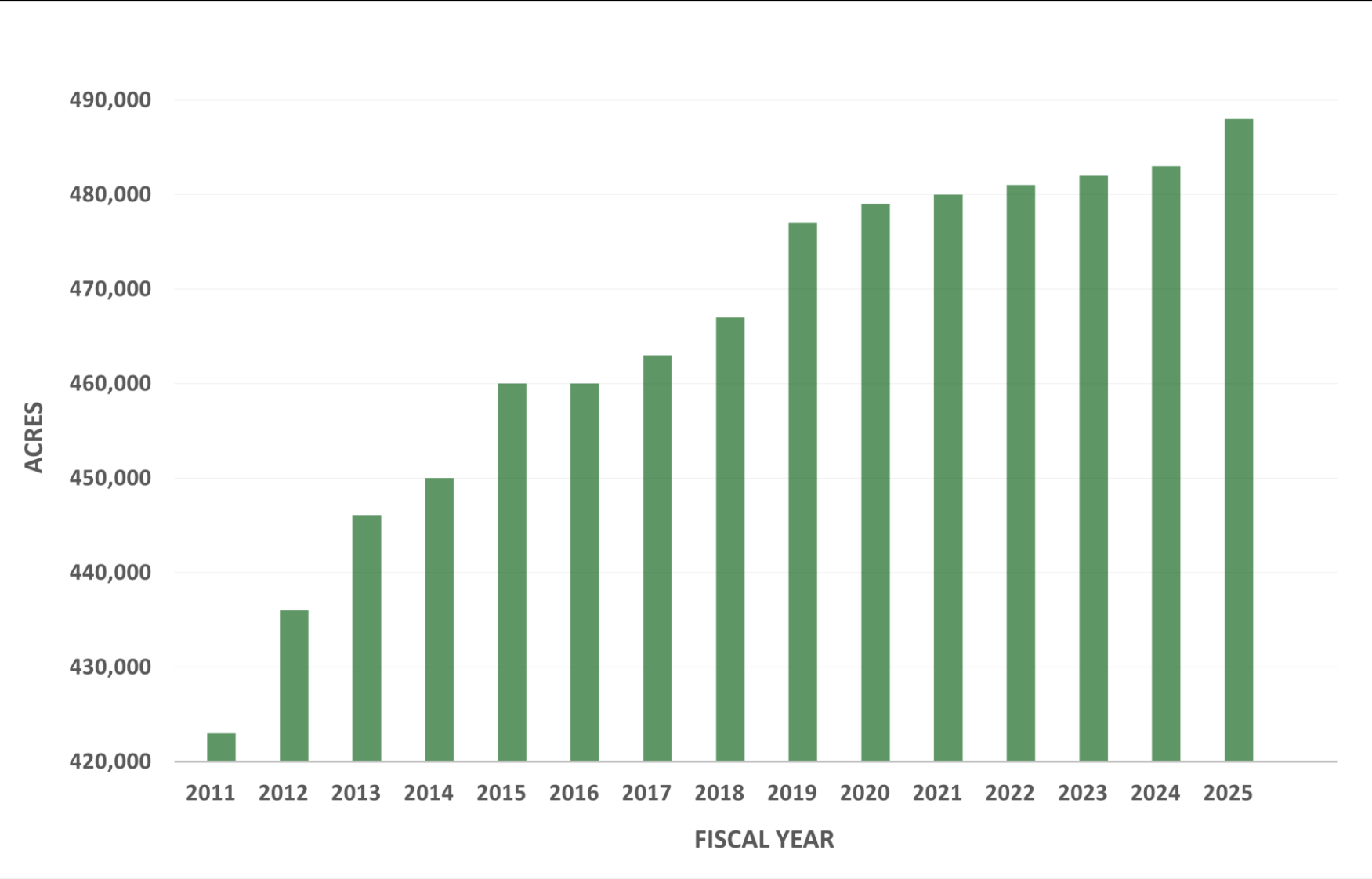
Annual Permanent Land Protection Update:

More than 488,000 acres have been permanently preserved in the state Pinelands Area of New Jersey, including 5,367 acres that were protected in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.

A total of 4,301 acres were preserved through the Pinelands Development Credit Program in FY2025, as well as 366 acres from state acquisitions, 269 acres by non-governmental organizations, 159 acres in farmland preservation, 147 acres through Pinelands programs, and 126 acres in county open space.

A 700-acre property that was preserved through the Commission's Pinelands Conservation Fund in 2009.

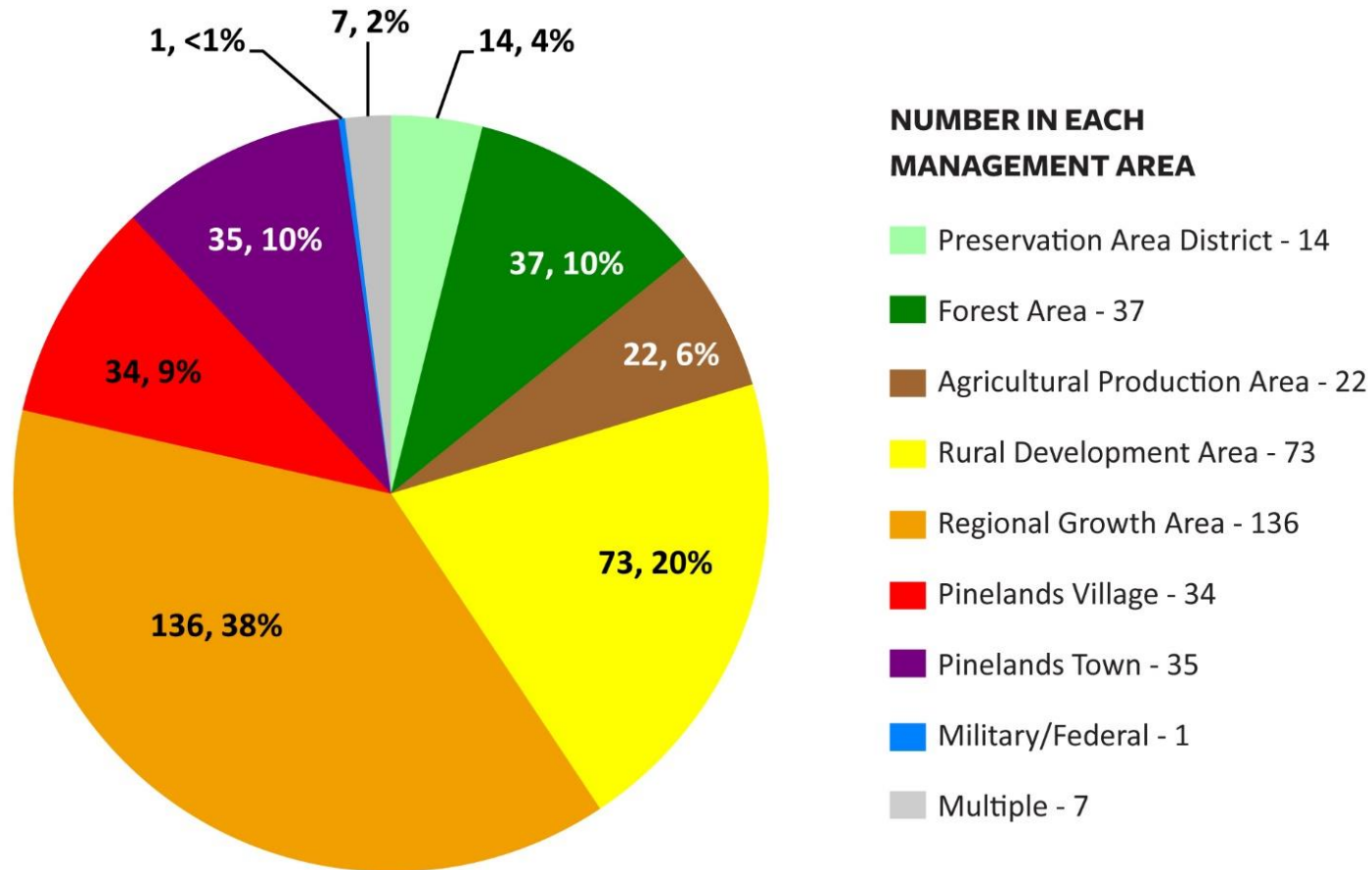
Permanent Land Protection



As of June 30, 2025, 52 percent of the Pinelands Area has been permanently protected

2025 Regulatory Activities

Development Applications Received in 2025 by Management Area

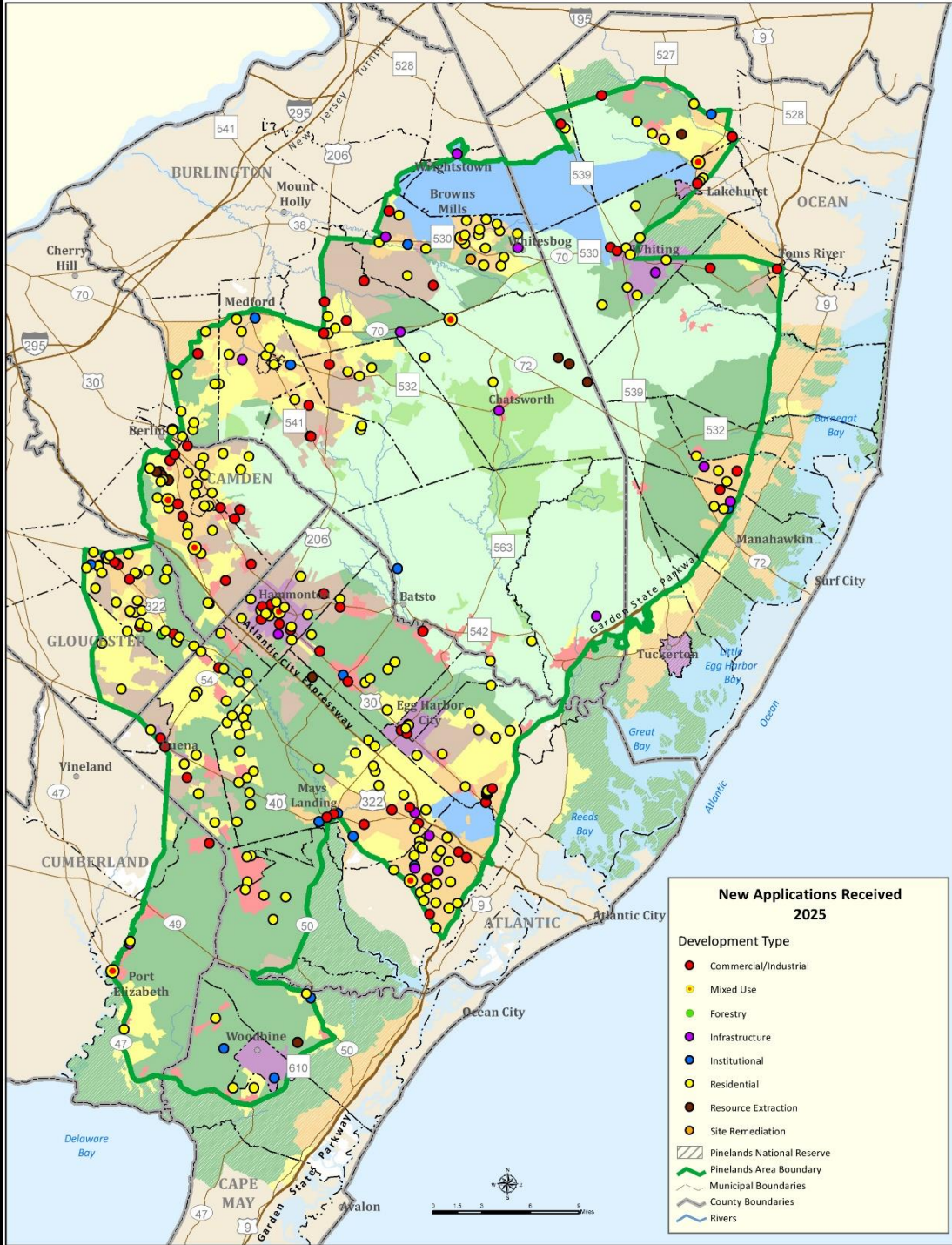


The Commission received a total of 359 new applications for development in 2025, with the highest percentage of the applications (38%) proposing new development in Pinelands Regional Growth Areas (or RGAs).

2025 Regulatory Activities

Development Applications Received in 2025 by Development Type

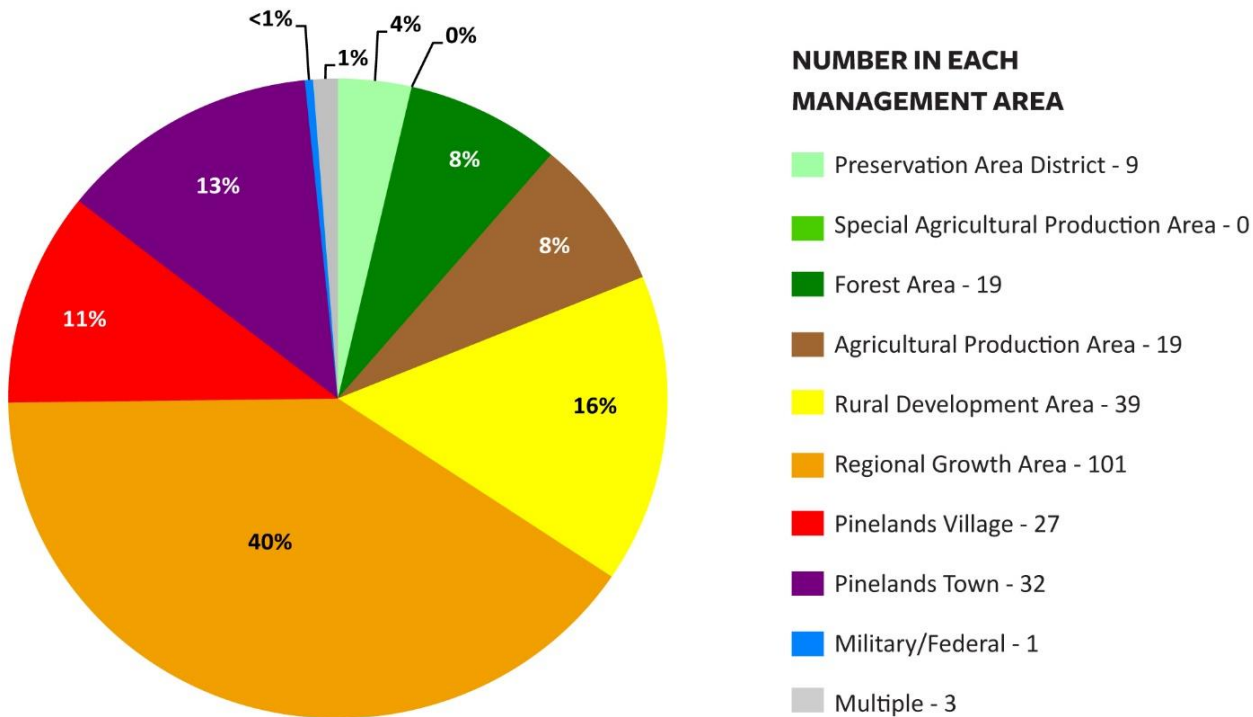
Development Type	Total
Residential	226
Commercial/Industrial	69
Institutional	18
Infrastructure	26
Forestry	1
Resource Extraction	8
Site Remediation	1
Mixed Use	10
Total	359



New Applications Received in 2025

2025 Regulatory Activities

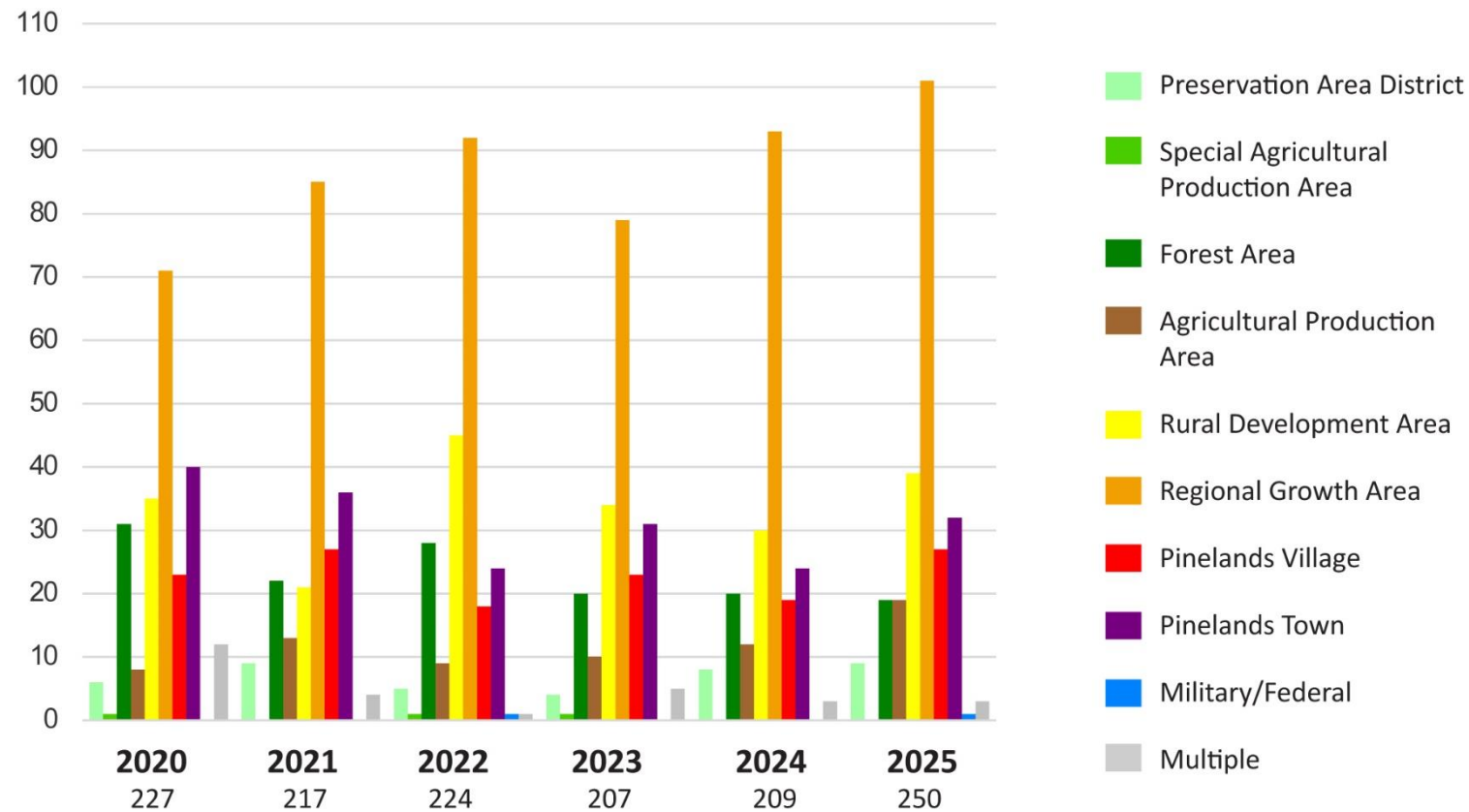
Completeness Documents Issued in 2025 by Management Area



A total of 250 Completeness Documents were issued in 2025, including Certificates of Filing, Preliminary Zoning Permits and Notices of Filing. Most (101 or 40%) were for proposed development in RGAs, with another 24% in Pinelands Towns and Villages.

2025 Regulatory Activities

Completeness Documents Issued by Management Area
(2020 - 2025)



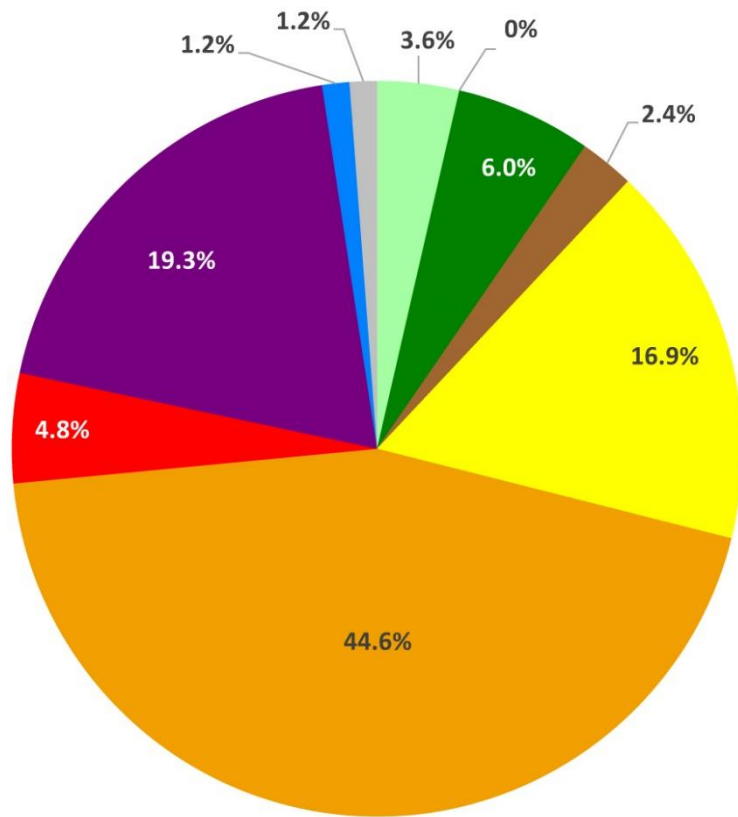
2025 Regulatory Activities

Completeness Documents Issued in 2025 by Management Area and Type of Development

<i>Management Areas</i>	Commercial	Forestry	Infrastructure	Institutional	Residential	Resource Extraction	Mixed Use	Total
Preservation Area District	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	9
Special Agricultural Production Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Area	1	4	0	0	13	1	0	19
Agricultural Production Area	4	2	0	0	13	0	0	19
Rural Development Area	7	1	1	0	28	2	0	39
Regional Growth Area	25	0	1	3	68	0	4	101
Pinelands Village	5	0	2	1	18	0	1	27
Pinelands Town	10	0	2	1	15	0	4	32
Military/Federal Installation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Multiple	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Totals	55	7	9	6	158	6	9	250

2025 Regulatory Activities

Final Municipal Site Plan/Subdivision Approvals Allowed to Take Effect in 2025 by Management Area



NUMBER IN EACH MANAGEMENT AREA

- Preservation Area District - 3
- Special Agricultural Production Area - 0
- Forest Area - 5
- Agricultural Production Area - 2
- Rural Development Area - 14
- Regional Growth Area - 37
- Pinelands Village - 4
- Pinelands Town - 16
- Military/Federal - 1
- Multiple - 1

2025 Regulatory Activities

Final Municipal Site Plan/ Subdivision Approvals Allowed To Take Effect in 2025

Municipality	Number of Applications
Barnegat Township	7
Berkeley Township	1
Buena Vista Township	4
Chesilhurst Borough	2
Egg Harbor City	1
Egg Harbor Township	6
Estell Manor City	1
Franklin Township	2
Galloway Township	5
Hammonton Town	7
Hamilton Township	1
Jackson Township	1
Lakehurst Borough	3
Medford Township	1
Monroe Township	6
Mullica Township	2
Pemberton Township	2
Stafford Township	1
Tabernacle Township	2
Upper Township	1
Waterford Township	5
Winslow Township	17
Woodbine Borough	4
Woodland Township	1
Total Applications	83


2025 Regulatory Activities

- The Commission approved a total of 31 applications for public development in 2025.
- The Commission issued 10 Recreation Permits for organized, off-road vehicle events in the Pinelands Area in 2025.
- The Commission approved 4 waivers of strict compliance in 2025.
- The Commission's staff provided an in-depth, hybrid training for 60 municipal officials on June 11, 2025.

Will my proposal meet standards?

Will it meet wetland buffer requirements?

Application Required	No Application Required ("exempt")
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit Application to Commission• Staff will make determination as part of development application• Wetlands delineation and field verification by staff may be required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Rule: 300 feet from wetlands or no closer than existing buildings• Municipal official can determine whether lesser buffer is appropriate• Municipal officials may contact Commission staff for additional guidance



2025 Science & Research Activities

The Commission advanced numerous research projects, including work on:

Long-term Environmental Monitoring (surveys of frogs and toads and water quality and water levels)

Rare Snake Population Monitoring

Snake Fungal Disease

Adenovirus Monitoring

Eastern King Snake Study

Eastern Box Turtle Study



Public Information, Education & Outreach 2025 Activity

- Responded to 749 public inquiries;
- Educated more than 2,600 people while delivering 67 programs, including presentations at schools and other venues, field trips and guided hikes;
- Organized two Short Course events, the Pinelands-themed World Water Monitoring Challenge event, and three Pinelands Speaker Series talks, which educated a total of nearly 800 people;



Public Information, Education & Outreach 2025 Activity

- Maintained and enhanced the Commission's website;
- Took and shared 2,848 photos and 68 videos on the agency's Instagram site, shared 1,102 posts on X (formerly known as Twitter) and 637 posts on the agency's newly created Bluesky site;
- Uploaded/archived 37 videos on the Commission's YouTube Channel. The videos garnered 22,169 views and 2,200 hours of watch time;
- Produced and distributed 1,200 copies of the 2026 Pinelands National Wall Calendar;



PINELANDS
NATIONAL RESERVE
2026 CALENDAR
WATER EDITION

Public Information, Education & Outreach 2025 Activity

- Provided support for the Pinelands Biosphere Reserve, including leading a tour of the Pinelands for representatives from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on January 10, 2025;
- Planted more than 50 native plants at the agency's headquarters, along with installing new interpretive signage; and
- Created new Pinelands merchandise and maintained and oversaw the Commission's online store.



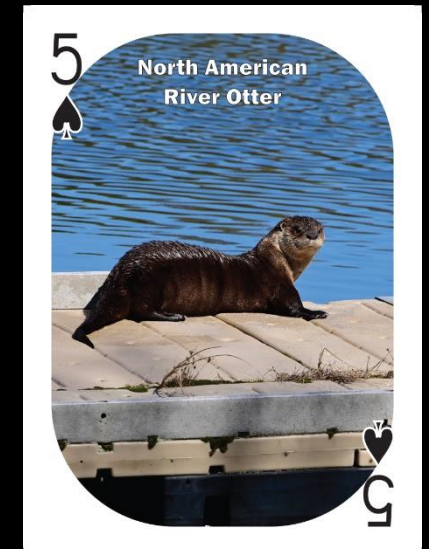
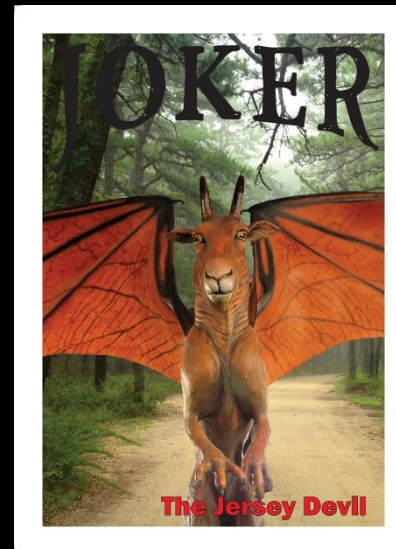
2025 Finances

- During 2025, the State Auditor continued to work on the Commission's audit for Fiscal Year 2022.
- During Fiscal Year 2025, unaudited application fee revenue actually collected totaled \$984,850.75, \$100,261.37 less than Fiscal Year 2024.
- In Fiscal Year 2025, application fee revenue covered 62.72% of the cost of staff review of development applications, including salaries and full fringe benefits.



2025 Finances

- The Commission netted \$2,986.40 in sales of Pinelands merchandise in 2025, while processing a total of 80 transactions.
- Staff designed and started selling new Pinelands-themed playing cards and refrigerator magnets.
- All proceeds from sales go to the Kathleen M. Lynch-van de Sande Fund. The fund was established in memory of Ms. Lynch-van de Sande, a NJ Pinelands Commission Environmental Specialist who died in a car accident in June 1989.



Facilities

- In February 2025, the Commission issued a public request for proposals to hire a historic architectural firm to assist with the rehabilitation of Fenwick Manor. The Commission selected and hired Connolly and Hickey Historical Architects.
- Connolly and Hickey completed the design and architectural plans and specifications for the rehabilitation.
- The NJ Historic Trust pre-qualified four construction contractors.
- **Update:** In February 2026, the Commission released an RFP to the pre-qualified contractors, conducted site visits and is awaiting bids due on March 10th.





Questions?

