

The PINELANDER

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Pinelands Commission appoints Nancy Wittenberg of Toms River as its new Executive Director

Nancy Wittenberg of Toms River, Ocean County, has joined the Pinelands Commission as its new Executive Director.

Commission members appointed Wittenberg to the post during a special meeting on November 30.

Wittenberg had served as the Assistant Commissioner of Climate and Environmental Compliance for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) since May 2006. She officially began her new post on January 3rd at an annual salary of \$135,000.

"I am honored to be chosen as the new Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission, and I look

forward to working with the Commission and its staff to carry out the Pinelands Protection Program," Wittenberg said. "I will always look fondly on my experiences working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and its talented staff of professionals who share my passion and commitment for preserving New Jersey's environment."

Wittenberg replaced John C. Stokes, who retired from the post on January 1, 2011 (please see page 3 for more information). Stokes had served as the Commission's Executive Director



Nancy Wittenberg, (on right), attended her first meeting as the Commission's Executive Director on January 14, 2011. Photo/Paul Leakan

since April 2003. After voting to accept Stokes' resignation, the Commission formed a

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Robert W. McIntosh, Jr. steps down after 15 years of service on the New Jersey Pinelands Commission

NEW LISBON, N.J. – Robert W. McIntosh, Jr. has stepped down from the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, ending 15 years of service as the U.S Secretary of the Interior's appointee on the panel.

"Participating in the creation and administration of the Pinelands National Reserve and the Comprehensive Management Plan has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career," McIntosh said. "Nowhere in this country and maybe the world is there a 1.1-million-acre protected area involving governments at the local, state, and Federal level, private

property owners and non-profit organizations. "For 30 years, the Pinelands Commission has

sought the appropriate mix of resource protection and wise development," McIntosh added. "Its ongoing success is a lasting tribute to the citizens of the Pinelands. The New Jersey Pinelands serves as model for others to follow."

A resident of Beverly, Massachusetts, McIntosh retired from the United States Department of the Interior on January 1, 2011 after 43 years of service with the Department.



McIntosh

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Pinelands Commission appoints Nancy Wittenberg of Toms River as its new Executive Director

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Search Committee for his successor.

The Search Committee was composed of several Commission members and three other people who are knowledgeable of the Commission and its programs. Committee members interviewed six highly qualified candidates for the Executive Director position and recommended that two of those candidates be interviewed by the full Pinelands Commission. After conducting the interviews, the Commission appointed Wittenberg to the post.

"As much as we regret losing John Stokes, we feel that Nancy Wittenberg is highly qualified and will fill the position of Executive Director admirably," said Candace Ashmun, the Pinelands Commission's Acting Chair.

In her position at the DEP, Wittenberg

was responsible for all aspects of direction and oversight of statewide programs covering air quality permitting and planning, climate change, energy, solid and hazardous waste planning and regulation, pollution prevention, radiation protection, nuclear safety and pollution and release prevention. She also was responsible for a staff of 530 people and a budget totaling approximately \$60 million.

Wittenberg served as the Director of Environmental Affairs for the New Jersey Builders Association from August 1994 to April 2006, providing technical support, training and guidance to the Association's membership relative to environmental, land use and other related matters. She served as the Director of the Division of Environmental Quality for the DEP from November 1990 to August 1991, a position in which she oversaw 400 employees who are responsible for State programs that cover

air quality planning, enforcement and permitting, radiation protection, pesticides, emergency response, release prevention, right to know, and the analytical laboratory. Wittenberg served as the DEP's Director of the Office of Energy from August 1991 to 1994. In that position, she directed all activities related to the State's energy policies and programs that included the development and implementation of the State Energy Master Plan. Prior to being employed by the DEP, she worked as the Assistant Vice President of Health and Safety for the Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority in New York City and as a Director, Manager and Environmental Specialist with the New York City Transit Authority. Wittenberg holds a master's degree in environmental engineering from Duke University and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Vermont.

McIntosh steps down after 15 years of service on the Commission

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He attended his last meeting as a member of the Commission on December 10, 2010.

"Bob McIntosh has always been there for the Pinelands, from the early stages of the federal planning entity to today," said Candace Ashmun, the Commission's Acting Chair. "He understood from the beginning that the New Jersey Pinelands Area is a national treasure. He put his beliefs into action by making himself available and never shirking the hard work of serving as an active Pinelands Commissioner. We will miss him, and we wish him well in his

retirement."

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt first appointed McIntosh to the Commission in July 1995. However, McIntosh's involvement with the Pinelands protection effort stretches back to the 1970s.

In 1981, as the Regional Director of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, McIntosh participated in the development and approval of the Federal Environmental Impact Statement and the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands Area.

McIntosh has served as an Associate

Regional Director for the National Park Service's Northeast Region since 1990. Prior to that, he served as the General Superintendent of the Gateway National Recreation Area from 1982-1990 and was the Regional Director, Northeast Region, of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service from 1979-1981. From 1967-1978, he served in progressively responsible positions in the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in Philadelphia, Albuquerque, San Francisco and Washington.

Richard L. Harris, the Associate Regional Director of Natural Resources and Science for the Northeast region

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John C. Stokes retires after more than 30 years of service with the Pinelands Commission

NEW LISBON, NJ -- John C. Stokes, who served as Executive Director of the Pinelands Commission since 2003, retired from the agency on January 1, ending a career that spanned three decades with the agency.

Shortly after Stokes informed them of his decision to retire, Commission members voted to accept Stokes' resignation with regrets. They also expressed their appreciation for his many achievements as the Commission's director.

"John Stokes has been a critical part of a truly unique state and federal effort to preserve the Pinelands' ecology from the very beginning," said Candace Ashmun, who is the Commission's Acting Chairperson and has served on the panel since its inception in 1979. "His knowledge and expertise in strengthening the Pinelands Protection Program will be sorely missed."

In announcing his retirement, Stokes noted that he had "the extraordinary privilege of working to conserve one of New Jersey's and the nation's treasures." As for his retirement plans, Stokes indicated that he hopes to pursue civic and business challenges outside of government.

The Pinelands Commission is an independent state agency that is governed by a 15 member board of directors. It is charged with protecting the million-acre Pinelands Area, which includes parts of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Ocean counties.

Stokes was appointed as the Commission's Executive Director in April 2003, after serving 23 years as the panel's Assistant Director. The Haddonfield, Camden County resident was one of the chief authors of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands.

Under Stokes' leadership, the Pinelands Commission:

- Established the \$18.5 million Pinelands Conservation Fund, which is helping to permanently protect more than 5,000 acres of environmentally-sensitive land in the Pinelands and is financing more than 15 critical Pinelands research and planning projects;
- Instituted innovative conservation measures in the Toms River and Oyster Creek Basins (Ocean County) that serve to better protect more than 7,000 acres of ecologically-important lands in those areas;
- Adopted 15 amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, including state-of-the-art stormwater management and on-site development clustering standards;
- Launched a \$6 million, multi-year study of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer system that lies beneath the Pinelands and contains an estimated 17 trillion gallons of water. The study will be used to



John C. Stokes retired as the Commission's Executive Director, ending more than 30 years of service with the Pinelands panel.
Photo/Paul Leakan

ensure that future water supply needs of the Pinelands can be met without adversely impacting the region's unique natural resources. The study is scheduled to be completed within the year;

■ Won a federal lawsuit that prevented an unregulated waste facility from being constructed in Mullica Township, Atlantic County under the guise of a federal railroad transportation law. That federal law was later amended to provide greater protection against these unregulated facilities throughout the country;

■ Completed the first comprehensive reassessment of Pinelands natural resources since the Pinelands Plan was originally adopted in 1980. Based upon a wealth of environmental data collected through the Commission's environmental monitoring program, the assessment found that 83% of the Pinelands ecosystem still retains its

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McIntosh steps down after 15 years of service on the Commission

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of the National Parks Service (NPS), has been appointed as McIntosh's successor on the Commission.

"Having been with the National Park Service for almost 30 years, I know the dedication to service that Bob McIntosh has provided, both as a representative to the Commission and to the Pinelands during his career," Harris said. "I look forward to carrying on the tradition of excellence that Bob has established during his tenure. Although I served most of my career with the National Park Service in the West, I am in awe of what the Pinelands Commission has accomplished in working to preserve the biological diversity and cultural significance of this Atlantic Coastal Pine Barrens Ecoregion. I look forward to working with the Commission and partners to help ensure its protection, while



Richard L. Harris, (left), became the new federal representative on the Pinelands Commission in January, replacing Robert W. McIntosh Jr., (right), who stepped down from the Commission after 15 years of service. Photo/Paul Leakan

continuing to educate the public about its significance as the nation's first National Reserve and as an International Biosphere Reserve."

A resident of Philadelphia, Harris holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in Natural Resources Management and Public Policy from Oregon State University. He began his federal career

in Wilderness Management with the U.S. Forest Service in 1976, and he joined the NPS in 1983 as a vegetation restoration team leader at Mount Rainier National Park. He has held resource management positions at numerous national parks in the western U.S. and was the recipient of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Superior Service Award in 2006. Harris joined the NPS' Northeast Region in 2008, and he manages a staff of 150 natural resource and recreation professionals.

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.



John C. Stokes retires after more than 30 years with the New Jersey Pinelands Commission

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natural qualities. This assessment is helping the Commission continue to improve its land use and environmental policies;

- Secured the environmentally safe closure of two landfills at the Stafford Township (Ocean County) Business Park by authorizing a redevelopment project in which a private developer paid for the landfills' closure in return for the approval to redevelop the business

park; and

- Reactivated the Pinelands Short Course, a day-long educational program on the Pinelands that is held in cooperation with Burlington County College and now serves more than 800 teachers and other participants each spring.

Among other activities, Stokes has served as the Chairman of the Haddonfield Planning Board, as a member of the Haddonfield Environmental Commission, as treasurer of the Camden County

Council of Girl Scouts, as assistant district administrator of the National Little League, and as a member of the Haddon Avenue Transit Corridor Study Committee. He holds a bachelors of science degree from North Carolina State University and is a New Jersey Professional Planner and member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.





Commission proposes rules to encourage the environmentally-appropriate siting of solar energy facilities in the Pinelands

During its regular meeting on February 10, the Pinelands Commission voted to propose several rule changes that seek to ensure the environmentally-appropriate siting of solar energy facilities in the Pinelands.

Solar energy facilities are currently universally-permitted as an accessory use throughout the million-acre Pinelands Area of southern New Jersey.

The Commission is proposing a series of amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) that spell out where and under what circumstances solar energy facilities may be permitted as a principal use. "The development of solar energy facilities will yield significant benefits for the Pinelands' environment, while also providing a boost to its economy," said Candace Ashmun, the Commission's Acting Chair. "These solar facilities will offset the need for new fossil-fuel dependent power plants, thereby reducing atmospheric emissions such as carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, mercury and particulates. Removing these emissions will have a positive impact on public health, crop production, forest health, fish populations and water quality."

Generally, solar energy systems that are accessory uses supply electricity to the principal use on the property, such as a home or a business, and these types of facilities are already permitted throughout the Pinelands. Solar energy facilities that are the principal use on a property are generally larger in scale and supply electricity for regional use. Currently, solar energy facilities are permitted as a principal use only in Pinelands-designated Regional Growth Areas, Pinelands

Towns and, if they meet certain compatibility tests, in Pinelands Villages and Rural Development Areas.

The proposed revisions provide a mechanism to speed the development of accessory solar energy facilities where they would be located on existing structures or installed over existing impervious surfaces. Specifically, the installation of accessory solar energy facilities on existing structures would not constitute development, and therefore would be exempt from the need to file a development application with the Pinelands Commission. Exempting such installations should hasten the local approval process and would eliminate the cost of applying to the Commission for approval.

Among other things, the proposed amendments also would:

- Authorize Pinelands municipalities to permit solar energy facilities as a principal use in all management areas, provided that all Pinelands environmental standards are met. The Commission will have the ability to ensure that these standards are met;
- Stipulate special limitations that apply to solar energy facilities installed as a principal use in the Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Area and the Forest Area. The provisions set forth that such installations in those areas would be limited to three circumstances. First, installation could be authorized on the parcel of an existing landfill which has been, or will be, closed in accordance with the Commission's landfill closure standards. Second, installation could be authorized on a parcel that has been, or will be, envi-

ronmentally-remediated of toxic or hazardous wastes or similar substances, provided the remediation has been, or will be, approved by the Commission. The third circumstance applies to the previously disturbed portions of a parcel upon which resource extraction (e.g., sand and gravel mining) has occurred, and for which there is no obligation for site restoration;

- Require that public service infrastructure necessary to support a solar energy facility be available or capable of being provided without any off-site development in the Pinelands Preservation Area District, Special Agricultural Production Area or Forest Area;

- Require that solar energy facilities and associated off-site infrastructure be located and screened to minimize the visual impacts as viewed from wild and scenic rivers and special corridors;

- Limit clearing for the development of new, or the expansion of, existing on-site or off-site infrastructure to that which is necessary to accommodate the solar energy facility in accordance with the Commission's existing clearing and disturbance standards;

- Stipulate special limitations that apply to solar energy facilities installed as a principal use in the Agricultural Production Area. Based on these limitations, up to 10 acres of any parcel could be used for such installations. Prime agricultural soils and areas of high ecological integrity must be avoided to the maximum extent feasible; and

- Require that solar energy facilities be decommissioned within 12 months of the cessation of their use. This includes removing all energy facilities, structures and equipment from the parcel.





22nd annual Pinelands Short Course to feature 21 new educational presentations, including four field trips

NEW LISBON, N.J. – The 22nd annual Pinelands Short Course will feature 42 presentations, including 21 new programs that will explore the region's unique history, ecology, culture and music.

The event is sponsored by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and Burlington County College's Pinelands Institute for Natural and Environmental Studies (PINES). To be held at Burlington County College's Pemberton Township campus on March 26, the program is open to all who are interested in learning about the Pinelands.

"Last year's event drew a record crowd of more than 800, and it's great to see an event that is now in its second decade continue to grow and expand," said Joel Mott, Public Programs Specialist. "This year's Short Course will continue to build on its legacy of educating, enlightening and exciting the public about the Pinelands."

"Burlington County College is proud to be a hub for the community by sponsoring such an important, educational event," said Christine Lipsack, Director of PINES.

This year's event features live musical performances and four field trips, including the first-ever, guided canoe tour along a 3.3-mile section of the Rancocas Creek.

The new courses include a discussion of Pinelands weather and issues of global climate variability and change, as well as presentations on New Jersey ospreys, American eels and their life history, the last Pine Barrens charcoal makers, the Still family and their inspirational story of survival, service and success, the rise of the blueberry industry from its earliest beginnings in the Pinelands, ecosystem

gardening, an exploration of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, the hidden world of plants and pollinators, the use of "ecological forestry" to conserve native vegetation and rare species, invasive plant species, a history of the Fenwicks of Fenwick Manor, a photographic "peek" back into Pine Barrens history, the vital role played by the railroad industry in the survival of Burlington County and the Pinelands, and a field trip that will take a step back in time at historic Whitesbog Village. Other new courses include workshops detailing how to create a rain garden and how to build and install a rain barrel, a presentation by a Pinelands author who embarked on a yearlong adventure to explore New Jersey, a hands-on demonstration of how to use Geographic Information Systems to view maps of habitats for threatened and endangered plant and animal species, and a discussion of the benefits and logistics of installing a solar energy system for your home.

Canoes, paddles and life jackets will be provided for participants who register for the Rancocas Creek canoe tour. Participants should have some canoeing experience, and registration will be limited to the first 18 registrants. The other field trips will provide a living history of nearby Whitesbog Village, a guided tour of the North Pemberton Railroad Station Museum and Rail trail, including a 1.5-mile wagon ride along the trail, and a leisurely, two-hour guided walk of the



Participants learned how to make fire during a wilderness survival course at last year's Pinelands Short Course. The program will be offered once again during this year's event.

Photo/Paul Leakan

Franklin Parker Preserve, a 9,400-acre ecological gem located in Chatsworth.

The event also will feature popular courses from previous years, including a discussion of New Jersey's biodiversity, bats of New Jersey and how to attract them, Pinelands fish, frogs and toads, threatened and endangered snakes of the Pinelands, Pinelands bird ecology, the history of Double Trouble State Park, a tale of two cedars, the secrets of Pinelands plants, a photographic journey through the Pinelands, birding, botany and canoeing, stream assessment, Piney lifestyles, an update of the Cedar Bridge Tavern, Lenape living, and wilderness survival, including a hands-on demonstration of how to make fire.

Participants should register early to help ensure that they receive their first course selections. Discounted registration fees are offered to senior citizens and students.

For more information, please log on to www.nj.gov/pinelands.





Pinelands Commission helps local students test water quality, learn about resource protection during World Water Monitoring Day

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP, N.J. – More than 160 students gauged Pinelands water quality and learned about the importance of protecting the region's unique natural resources during World Water Monitoring Day on October 21.

Sponsored by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission and Wharton State Forest, the event was held at the historic Batsto Village here.

"We are thrilled to educate these outstanding students about the importance of protecting a natural treasure that cleans our air and is home to a vast, but sensitive supply of clean water," said Paul Leakan, the Commission's spokesman. "These students represent the next generation of New Jersey citizens, and we hope to empower them with the knowledge that they can help protect the environment for future generations."

Approximately 80 students from Hammonton Middle School in Atlantic County, 50 students from Pinelands Regional Junior High in Ocean County, and 30 students from Sterling High School in Camden County obtained and tested water samples from Batsto Lake, which is located in the heart of the Pinelands.

The students measured the levels of pH or acidity in water, as well as water clarity, temperature and dissolved oxygen. Water in the Pinelands is generally undisturbed, has a low pH and low dissolved solids, enabling it to support uniquely adapted Pinelands plants and animals. The students' findings will be posted on the World Water Monitoring

Day Web site (www.worldwatermonitoringday.org), where test results can be compared over time.

In addition to assisting with the water tests, staff from the Pinelands Commission worked with students to catch native Pinelands fish, and they demonstrated how the Commission protects wetlands, historic resources and habitat for rare plants and animals. Staff from the Wharton State Forest discussed the region's natural attributes at Batsto's Nature Center. Staff members of the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve discussed one of Batsto Lake's slimiest inhabitants: American Eels.

Meanwhile, staff from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) freshwater and coastal monitoring programs sampled the lake for bugs and insects, providing details about what the presence of certain insects can tell them about local water quality. They also highlighted the important link between the upland watersheds and the State's coastal resources, using a live display tank with some of the saltwater species that depend on the quality of water flowing into coastal estuaries.

"Protection of our water resources is a shared responsibility," said DEP

Commissioner Bob Martin. "Water monitoring information collected by our partners in local and state government as well as environmental groups and the general public is critical to effective monitoring and protection of New Jersey's waters. Public participation in water monitoring activities helps all of us understand how our everyday actions affect the quality of our waterways."

World Water Monitoring Day is an annual, global event coordinated by the Water Environment Federation and the International Water Association. People around the globe monitor the quality of their local watersheds and enter their results into an international database. A major goal of this effort is to create an awareness of the importance of protecting the resources upon which our lives depend.



Students used nets to catch native and non-native Pinelands fish during the World Water Monitoring Day event held at Batsto Village on October 21, 2010.

Photo/Paul Leakan



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