

## The Pinelands: An Evolved and Evolving Natural and Cultural Community

Featuring some of the largest unbroken tracts of forest in the northeastern United States, the Pinelands presents an unparalleled experience and educational opportunity. Much of this opportunity lies along the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail.

The Trail follows existing roadways in the southern region of the 1.1-million-acre Pinelands National Reserve through a landscape dotted with small farms, pastures, and river towns and punctuated by eccentric historical ruins, such as the paper mill built over the iron furnace at Weymouth and the World

War I munitions complex in the oak/pine woods at Belcoville. At night the lightly settled byway is a stargazer's paradise, and during the day it provides sights and points of interests for a wide variety of tastes. It is also easily accessible to vacationers and day-trippers, surrounded as it is by New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and the Jersey shore.

The route traverses a landscape of fields, forests, bogs, marshes, swamps, and villages, emphasizing both the natural beauty of the Pinelands and the ways humans have adapted to the region's unique environment over time.

The Pinelands' natural beauty is highlighted at the scenic vista where the Mullica River crosses Green Bank.

The region's rich heritage and historic sites are featured at the 18th century settlement of Batsto, the Woodbine

Brotherhood Synagogue and the port of Tuckerton.

The byway and its spur routes reflect the natural and cultural currents of the Pinelands. Along the roughly 130-mile stretch of the byway and its major offshoots, visitors will see some of the largest cranberry and blueberry operations in the world; small furnace complexes that made glass and smelted the bog iron of the Pines;



Revolutionary War sites; animals and plants found nowhere else; two federally designated Wild and Scenic rivers; a pristine, protected estuary at the mouth of the Mullica River; quaint and picturesque towns with unique

shopping opportunities; thousands of acres of state forest land and federally protected natural areas; wildlife management areas at almost every turn; a federally administered marine preserve and research center; and vast tracts of pine and oak forest. All of this can be found within a half-hour's car ride from Jersey shore points and less than an hour from Philadelphia.

The effort to create a Scenic Byway in the Pinelands is a major outgrowth of the Pinelands Commission's Rural Economic Development Program. The Scenic Byway is part of the implementation of legislation passed in 1997 that appropriated \$250,000 to the Pinelands Commission to help rural communities identify and plan economic development strategies.

The designation enables the 16 municipalities through which the trail travels to apply for federal grants. The funds would be used to work with byway stakeholders to develop a Corridor Management Plan for the trail, including a marketing plan, signage and usage studies and strategies for preserving, protecting and maintaining the intrinsic qualities of the trail.

For more information about the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail, please contact the Pinelands Commission at P.O. Box 7, New Lisbon, NJ 08064, or (609) 894-7300, or log on to [www.nj.gov/pinelands](http://www.nj.gov/pinelands). Also, visit the Department of Transportation website at [www.nj.gov/transportation/community/scenic/pinelands.shtm](http://www.nj.gov/transportation/community/scenic/pinelands.shtm)



Photo 051



Photo 035

## The Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail

### *A State Scenic Byway*



