



New Jersey Pinelands Commission PRESS RELEASE

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Pinelands Commission Chairperson Betty Wilson resigns from Pinelands panel

NEW LISBON, N.J. – Betty Wilson, who has served as the Chairperson of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission since 2005, has chosen to step down from the Pinelands panel.

Wilson tendered her resignation to Governor Jon S. Corzine on October 28, effective immediately.

“I have been honored to serve the people of New Jersey as a member and chairperson of the Pinelands Commission,” Wilson said. “There is enormous satisfaction in knowing that our work is preserving and protecting the New Jersey Pinelands. The greatest reward of serving on the Pinelands Commission has come from the privilege of working with the other Commissioners and our extraordinarily talented and hard-working staff. They are exemplars of the finest in public service.”

Wilson’s accomplishments as the Commission’s Chairperson will have a lasting impact on the future protection of the Pinelands, according to Commission members and staff.

“I found her to be most dedicated, most sincere and conscientious about the opportunity and responsibility in carrying out the federal and state acts to protect the Pinelands,” said Robert W. McIntosh, who has served as the federal representative on the Commission since 1995.

“Whenever anyone ponders the remarkable success of the Pinelands protection program, they have to consider the tremendous contributions and achievements of Betty Wilson,” added John C. Stokes, the Commission’s Executive Director. “Her love and knowledge of the Pinelands and her dedication to the Pinelands Commission and its staff will be sorely missed.”

A resident of Burlington City, Wilson had served on the Commission since 2002 and was appointed as the Commission’s Chairperson by then-Acting Governor Richard J. Codey on June 9, 2005.

During her tenure as Chairperson, Wilson led the Commission’s efforts to:

- Adopt 17 amendments to the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the rules that govern land-use, development and natural resource protection in the Pinelands. The changes bolster the Pinelands protection program and the Commission’s mission to protect, preserve and enhance the region’s significant and unique resources;

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- Complete a comprehensive scientific study that evaluates the current status of the Pinelands ecology by analyzing landscape and watershed conditions throughout the million-acre region. The study shows that the Pinelands protection program, which preserves environmentally-sensitive areas while steering growth toward appropriate areas, has successfully maintained characteristic Pinelands habitat in a vast majority of the region. The data is being used to re-examine and possibly refine existing Pinelands management areas to reflect current ecological conditions and to ensure that important natural areas are afforded the protection they deserve;

- Authorize an agreement to extend public sanitary sewer to the Ancora Psychiatric Hospital in Winslow Township, Camden County and eliminate a failing wastewater treatment plant located onsite. The agreement permanently protected open space, decreased demand on Pinelands water supplies and removed a significant source of pollution from a Pinelands watershed;

- Approve funds toward the preservation of approximately 3,000 acres in the Pinelands through the Pinelands Conservation Fund;

- Win a major legal victory when a federal judge signed an order that permanently barred the construction of a proposed solid waste transfer station on a 20-acre property in Mullica Township, Atlantic County;

- Complete a comprehensive examination of housing demand in the Pinelands;

- Complete a natural resource conservation plan for an environmentally-sensitive area of southern Medford and Evesham townships;

- Reach an agreement to end the direct discharge of treated wastewater into a Pinelands stream in Buena Borough, Atlantic County;

- Approve an agreement that enabled the environmentally-safe closure of landfills at the Stafford Business Park;

- Complete a wildfire safety planning project in Barnegat and Stafford townships; and

- Launch and expand numerous public education projects. This includes the creation of the first-ever National Park Service brochure for the Pinelands National Reserve, a regional road sign system and a new series of educational seminars, as well as organizing the annual Pinelands Short Course, which has drawn record crowds during the past three years.

A summa cum laude graduate of Jersey City State College (now New Jersey City University), Wilson has devoted most of her life to serving the public and protecting the environment. She has held elected office at the municipal level and served in the New Jersey General Assembly from 1974-1975. From 1976 to 1980, Wilson served as Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, handling an array of environmental policy issues including natural resource management, planning and acquisition. There, she handled Pinelands planning efforts following Governor Byrne's February 1979 signing of Executive Order 71 which established a planning process for the Pinelands and authorized creation of the first Pinelands Commission. Wilson also was the Associate Director of Recreation

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Programs for the U.S. Department of Interior in 1980, the Deputy Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry in 1981 and Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs for the New Jersey Department of Human Services from 1990-1993. Actively involved in civic and volunteer work, Wilson has served as Chairperson of the Burlington City Historic Preservation Commission as well as a Trustee of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, Whitesbog Preservation Trust and Family Service of Burlington, among other organizations.

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 are uncompensated for their service.

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