

## PRESS RELEASE

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9 March, 2009

### WOODBINE HOSTS PINELANDS BYWAY CORRIDOR PUBLIC MEETING

**Woodbine**—Mayor William Pikolycky is pleased to announce that the organizers of the Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail will seek public input on a draft comprehensive plan for managing the 130-mile scenic byway during upcoming two meetings.

The public is encouraged to review and provide comment on the plan during meetings, one of which will be held at 7 p.m. on March 24 at the Woodbine Borough Hall on 501 Washington Avenue, Woodbine. Another meeting is set on March 25, 7 p.m., at the Egg Harbor City Hall on 500 London Avenue, Egg Harbor City for those closer to that area.

Recently designated as a State Scenic Byway by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the 130-mile Southern Pinelands Natural Heritage Trail meanders through areas of striking natural beauty and rich historic heritage. With a focus on maritime portions of the Pinelands, the route takes particular advantage of the scenic qualities and historic hamlets of the Mullica, Maurice and Tuckahoe River Corridors. The Trail passes through 16 municipalities and five counties – Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland and Ocean – in the southern portion of the 1.1-million-acre Pinelands National Reserve.

The primary quality of the Byway is its natural significance as demonstrated by the diversity of ecosystems and wildlife found along the route. Between the dramatic views of coastal areas and marshes lies a subtle and unvaried landscape of pine and oak forests.

For the past year, a coalition of local and county officials, representatives from the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, and state officials has been working to develop a management plan for the Byway. The management plan will include strategies for preserving and enhancing the scenic, cultural, and natural qualities of the byway. In addition, the plan will identify mechanisms for promoting and marketing the byway, including local businesses, visitor sites and attractions.

The two meetings will provide an opportunity for participants to review the draft plan and comment on the recommendations. The plan's recommendations cover a wide variety of topics related to management, promotion and development of the Byway, including:

- Creating a Byway identity (logo, catchy name, trademark);
- Creating a Byway management structure;
- Promoting economic development opportunities for town and village centers along the Byway;
- Developing travel itineraries for Byway paddlers, cyclists and birders;
- Sponsoring Byway-wide events and festivals;
- Creating themed tours -- Jersey Devil, Pine Robbers, Revolutionary War history, Genealogy; and

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