

March 4, 2024

Governor Phil Murphy
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: Wharton Visitor Map

Dear Governor Murphy,

We applaud the effort by DEP to create a welcoming, equitable, and sustainable visitor map for Wharton State Forest, the largest State Park in New Jersey, and the keystone of the Pinelands National Reserve. The team's efforts to put forward a vision of conservation and responsible use for Wharton, honors the work of generations of leaders in the environmental conservation and justice movements. The map also provides support to law enforcement who have been asking for this map, provides safe routes for the public, and will prevent fire trucks from getting stuck in roads damaged by illegal users and activity.

By being a leader in outdoor recreation, we can improve the health of our residents, our economy, and the perception of New Jersey as more than just a traffic congested area, but instead a beautiful Garden State with well-maintained parks, forests, farms, beaches, and trails.

We appreciate the significant effort the Department has taken in recent months to secure the input of many different user groups and we believe all these groups can be satisfied over time within the framework of the visitor map proposal. We look forward to providing positive comments on your team's work and await the coming adoption and implementation of the Visitor Map for Wharton State Forest.

We encourage Park Service staff to implement the Visitor Map as proposed and show that New Jersey continues to be a leader in environmental protection and equal access to open space.

Sincerely,

Carleton Montgomery, Executive Director
Pinelands Preservation Alliance

Ed Potosnak, Executive Director
NJ League of Conservation Voters

William S. Kibler, Director of Policy
Raritan Headwaters

Anne Poole, President

NJ Environmental Lobby

Jennifer M. Coffey, Executive Director
Association of NJ Environmental Commissions

Allison Mitchell, Co-Executive Director
NJ Conservation Foundation
Michael L. Pisauo, Jr., Esq, Policy Director
The Watershed Institute

Eric Olsen, Director of Conservation Programs
The Nature Conservancy

Doug O'Malley, Director
Environment New Jersey

Fred Akers, Operations Manager
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association

Greg Remaud, Executive Director
NY/NJ Baykeeper

Julia Somers, Executive Director
NJ Highlands Coalition

Anjuli Ramos, Executive Director
NJ Sierra Club