

**TOWNSHIP OF SHAMONG
COUNTY OF BURLINGTON
STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

RESOLUTION #2024R-37

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SHAMONG OBJECTING TO THE NEW
JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION'S PROPOSED
ADOPTION OF WHARTON STATE FOREST VISITING VEHICLE USE MAP**

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has presented a proposal to introduce a Map restricting access to more than 60 % of the current roadways; and

WHEREAS, Wharton State Forest is the largest state forest in New Jersey at approximately 123,000 acres; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Pine Barren municipalities, and throughout the state, have enjoyed unfettered access to the elaborate system of roads since the land officially became Wharton State Forest in 1954 and even well before its official designation; and

WHEREAS, whether visitors are driving to get to a hike, a hunting or fishing expedition or just going for a drive through the forest, they need access to the various roads within Wharton; and

WHEREAS, the most comprehensive baseline of roads is documented in the USGS Topographical maps and were adopted as the baseline by the Pinelands Commission in 2017; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection collected 1,600 surveys from users and chose to ignore them and implement the same failed map from 2015; and

WHEREAS, those roads have always been open even long before the land officially became Wharton State Forest in 1954, for unfettered public use and access to this area; and

WHEREAS, the Public's responses to the NJDEP Survey with respect to this proposed plan have been ignored.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Shamong, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Township of Shamong opposes a plan by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to restrict access to anyone using more than half of the roads in the Wharton State Forest;

2. Individuals should continue to have the right to utilize all of these roads as same were always open to the public and requiring a permit to use said roads is unconscionable, oppressive and costly;

3. Limiting access to this Forest Resource precludes individuals from enjoying the benefits of the Wharton State Forest;

4. The State has sufficient tax assets to maintain these roads the same as any other public road; and

5. Further; we urge the New Jersey State Legislature and the Governor to take whatever action is necessary to discontinue the Wharton State Forest Visiting Vehicle Use Map and instead adopt the map adopted by the Pinelands Commission in 2017.

This Resolution shall be circulated immediately to all State Senate and Assembly Officials, the Office of the Governor and all local County Officials.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Adopted:

	DI CROCE	WOODS	WILKINSON	ZEHNDER	MOZITIS
YES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ABSTAIN					
NO					
ABSENT					

CERTIFICATION

I, Susan Onorato, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Shamong, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Mayor and Township Committee at its Meeting held March 5, 2024, at the Shamong Township Municipal Building, 105 Willow Grove Road, Shamong, NJ 08088.


 Susan D. Onorato, Municipal Clerk

