



**Pinelands Preservation Alliance**  
**Funding Request for: *Pinelands Is for Everyone***  
**Submitted to Impact100 South Jersey**  
**March 11, 2022**

**Section 1. Overview**

1. *Focus Area:* Community Health & Wellbeing
2. *Organization Name:* Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA)
3. *Organization's Website:* [www.pinelandsalliance.org](http://www.pinelandsalliance.org)
4. *Non-profits with which you are directly affiliated (if any):* N/A
5. *Name of Project:* The Pinelands Is for Everyone
6. *County Where Organization is Headquartered:* Burlington County
7. *Counties Being Served with This Project:* Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, and Gloucester
8. *Executive Director Name:* Carleton Montgomery
9. *Executive Director Email:* [carleton@pinelandsalliance.org](mailto:carleton@pinelandsalliance.org)
10. *Best phone number for Executive Director:* 609-304-9902 (Cell)

**Section 2: Organization information**

***Mission:***

1. *What is the mission of your organization?*

The Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) was founded in 1989 to protect the natural and cultural resources of the New Jersey Pinelands—a 1.1 million-acre region of great ecological significance in southern New Jersey. In order to build the community of people who know and love the Pinelands, PPA advocates for protecting the region's unique resources; provides recreation services and education programs through our Pinelands Adventures initiative; carries out stewardship and trails projects; partners with public and private landowners to create green infrastructure and restore habitats; promotes scientific research; and operates Rancocas Creek Farm, a regenerative farm at our headquarters in Southampton. PPA is working with individuals, landowning agencies and community and health organizations to overcome the barriers that individuals with disabilities face in enjoying the wonderful natural places of the Pinelands.

2. *Who is your organization's target population?*

All residents of and visitors to this region benefit from the role the Pinelands plays in sustaining freshwater aquifers, improving air quality and mitigating the impacts of climate change. PPA seeks to reach and engage a broad cross-section of New Jersey and

Philadelphia metro area residents, as they all benefit from the clean drinking water, healthy forests, recreational opportunities, and livable communities which the Pinelands protection program sustains. Substantial portions of each of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Cumberland Counties are within the Pinelands. The four counties of the target area have a population of almost 1.4 million (of whom about 400,000 live within the Pinelands), and more than 20 million people live within an hour's drive to enjoy the recreational assets of the Pinelands.

3. *Approximately how many individuals did your organization reach in each of the last two years through your program and services?*

PPA reaches people through a variety of methods. PPA staff recorded direct contact with 3,233 unique individuals in 2020 and 6,042 unique individuals in 2021. These individuals include PPA members and volunteers, visitors to our offices, and Rancocas Creek Farm Community Supported Agriculture shareholders. In addition, Pinelands Adventures hosted 5,632 people in 2020 and 5,445 people in 2021 on outings. PPA's newsletter circulation is 5,500. PPA also reaches a wide audience through social media, webinars and our web sites. For example, the total following of the PPA and Pinelands Adventures Facebook pages exceeds 34,000 and we have 4,414 Instagram followers. PPA's web site received 142,000 unique visitors in 2021, up from 106,000 in 2020.

4. *To what do you attribute any changes in these numbers?*

The increase in direct contacts with individuals noted above probably stems from the severe restriction in people's activities in 2020, including the fact that PPA staff mostly worked remotely throughout the year. The number of people who enjoyed our recreation and education programs was growing through 2019, when we took 12,389 people on trips, then fell sharply in 2020 and in 2021 due to the pandemic. Events and in-person gatherings were curtailed and Pinelands Adventures was severely limited because of the need for increased spacing on buses. Lastly, schools and other groups canceled field trips, furthering the downward trend. We aim to grow back to 2019 levels this year. The increase in web site visits from 2020 to 2021 may come from improvements we made to the content and usability of the web site during 2020.

5. *What efforts do you make to incorporate the perspective of your target population into your strategic and operational planning (including your staff and board)?*

The entire staff and board collaborate on strategic planning processes. This strategic planning is informed by the day-to-day and year-to-year experience of working to protect the Pinelands and connect this resource with people in light of their own needs and aspirations. We listen to the broader constituencies of the public through social media, committees of active supporters and partners, and in "town halls" and focus group conversations as part of specific initiatives like the Pinelands Is for Everyone. Town hall meetings and focus group conversations are especially important when our staff and board are learning from people with whom we have not previously connected, or in a field where we are not experts, such as the concerns of people with disabilities wishing to enjoy natural

places. PPA is currently working with a Rutgers University professor to conduct a survey on recreational enjoyment of the Pinelands, which we will begin delivering this year through in-person contacts and on-line.

6. *What makes your organization unique from other organizations that do similar work?*

PPA is unique in our approach to conservation in several ways. First, we are the only environmental organization devoted to the NJ Pinelands region. We are regional, not hyper-local and not statewide, which allows us to develop relatively large staff and financial capacity while having great expertise in a special, distinctive region of the state. PPA is also more than your typical environmental organization because we embrace the interconnections between natural resources, human health, equity, recreation, and sustainable management of working lands. This inclusive and entrepreneurial perspective has led PPA to create several initiatives that reach a broader audience than most environmental organizations. For instance, our Pinelands Adventures service enables us to take thousands of people into the woods for recreation and learning, including school groups and civic organizations, while our Rancocas Creek Farm demonstrates and promotes chemical-free farming as a source for food and good stewardship of the land.

**Staff:**

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. <i>How long has the Executive Director served in this position?</i> | 24 years. |
| 2. <i>What is the current number of full-time employees?</i>           | 18        |
| 3. <i>What is the current number of part-time employees?</i>           | 0         |
| 4. <i>What is the current number of active volunteers?</i>             | 382       |

**Board:**

1. *What is the current number of Board members?* 22
2. *Please list your current Board members, including how they contribute to your mission (i.e. volunteer, donor, member of community served, etc.), professional affiliation and number of years served.*

Please see the attached Trustee list with affiliations and years served. All Trustees are donors and participate in quarterly meetings of the full Board. Many Trustees also participate in one or more of our executive, governance, finance, development and diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) committees. Others contribute expertise in areas reflected on the Trustee list.

3. *How frequently does your board meet?* The full board meets quarterly.

**Finance:**

1. *What was your organization's total operating budget for 2021?*

FY 2021 (January to December) income was approximately \$2.6 million. (Exact income will be adjusted due to accrual accounting for certain grants received in 2021 for work that occurs partially in 2022 and reimbursement grants for work in 2021 to be received in 2022.)

2. *What is your organization's total operating budget projected to be for 2022?* \$2,723,311.
3. *Please list your organization's top three revenue sources for each of the last three fiscal years, including amounts. (This would include fee for service, public or private grants, individual donations, etc.*

2019: Individual donations: \$1,452,077 (this included regular donations of \$942,077 and a donation of land valued at \$510,000 on which PPA has created Rancocas Creek Farm).

Grants: \$769,457 (the largest grants were from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$201,870 and the William Penn Foundation for \$180,000, both for promoting and carrying out green stormwater infrastructure projects).

Sales: \$583,585 (consisting of \$433,388 from Pinelands Adventures services, \$85,418 from rent for events at our barn and an apartment at Pinelands Adventures, and \$64,781 from other sales of merchandise, like used kayaks, books and t-shirts).

2020: Individual donations: \$1,278,052 (this included regular donations of \$574,704 and a bequest of \$703,348 restricted to use for purchasing land for conservation in Burlington County).

Grants: \$906,440 (the largest grants were from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$244,525 and the William Penn Foundation for \$202,000 for promoting and carrying out green stormwater infrastructure projects).

Sales: \$361,483 (consisting of \$241,626 from Pinelands Adventures services, \$90,435 from rent for events at our barn and an apartment at Pinelands Adventures, and \$30,422 from other sales of merchandise).

2021: Individual donations: \$956,661.

Grants: \$974,788 (the largest grants were from the William Penn Foundation for \$180,000 and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$123,535 for promoting and carrying out green stormwater infrastructure projects; note that this figure will be adjusted due to accrual accounting as explained above).

Sales: \$610,660 (consisting of \$251,744 from Pinelands Adventures services, \$234,704 from rent for events at our barn and an apartment at Pinelands Adventures, \$27,075 from sales of produce by Rancocas Creek Farm, and \$37,319 from other sales of merchandise).

### ***Strategic Outlook:***

1. *What is the date of the organization's last strategic plan and years it encompasses?*

The current strategic plan was adopted in May 2018 for the years 2019-2022.

2. *Please describe your organization's long-term goals or vision.*

We seek an engaged public who knows about and enjoys the Pinelands natural resources and therefore demands these resources are protected for themselves and future generations.

3. *In the next 6-12 months, do you foresee any significant changes possibly taking place within the organization? If yes, please provide details.*

PPA is currently hiring a community engagement associate, a new full-time position we are creating to help the organization connect with a broader range of Pinelands communities and neighborhoods – in terms of race, ethnicity and disabilities – than we have in the past.

### **Section 3: Project information**

1. *Project summary (please clearly define the project, the population it will serve and an overview of your plans to carry it out)*

#### **Project Background**

Over the course of the past year, PPA has laid the groundwork to establish the Pinelands Is for Everyone initiative by building our organizational capacities to improve access to nature for people with disabilities. We have built a network of partners from the disabilities community representing the spectrum of challenges—from mobility, vision, and hearing impaired to those with developmental and other intellectual disabilities. We have hosted town halls and focus groups and have held conversations and listening sessions to engage and learn from individuals living with disabilities, as well as public officials, advocates and caregivers. We have learned from this community and enlisted their help in assessing natural areas in the Pinelands and its neighboring towns from their perspectives. We have developed a mobile app, Access Nature NJ, to be launched this summer. The app will provide information on accessible nature sites, address the specific concerns of people with disabilities and caregivers, and help families plan outings with confidence. This program aims to address a broad range of disabilities, from those who simply need to use a walker due to infirmity (and may not identify as having a disability at all) to those born with severe developmental/intellectual disabilities (I/DD), because there are some common issues and solutions across this spectrum.

#### **Population Served**

According to the Census Bureau, the total population of Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, and Gloucester Counties is about 1.4 million, of whom more than 175,000 or 13% identify as having a disability. Of those 65 and over in these four counties, 35% have a disability. The overall portion of the population below the defined poverty level is 5%, but of these 26% have a disability. Among those with disabilities, 28% identify as non-white or multi-racial, and 12% as Hispanic. Adding in the family members, friends and caregivers whose activities are shaped by people with disabilities, it is reasonable to project that at least 25% of the

population of the four counties is significantly impacted by disabilities, and the actual number is almost certainly higher.

While many people are living with multiple disabilities, ambulatory challenges account for 51% of disabilities, representing by far the largest portion of the issues we face in increasing use of nature sites. Other disabilities, however, are also important in the design and promotion of access to natural areas, with 38% of disabilities being cognitive, 25% hearing and 19% vision, and each of these conditions presumably leads to the substantial numbers reporting independent living and self-care difficulties. Each of these conditions requires special consideration in assuring equitable access to nature in this region.

### Project Overview

PPA is seeking \$100,000 over two years to grow our capacity and implement programs that increase access to nature for people with disabilities and their caregivers, based on the learning and relationships we have gained to date. The initiative will include:

- Creating an ongoing forum for engagement and information exchange by people with disabilities interested in nature;
- Conducting a communications campaign to send the message that New Jersey's natural places are here for people with disabilities to enjoy through low-impact recreation, just as they are for the broader population;
- Promoting and improving the Access Nature NJ app for sites in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Cumberland Counties;
- Designing and carrying out inclusive eco tours at Rancocas Creek Farm and in natural places within the four counties that are suitable for people with and people without disabilities; and
- Testing and purchasing trail-adapted wheelchairs for our guests to use on eco tours.

Recognizing that empowerment of an isolated community is essential to achieving full integration into any civic activity, including the enjoyment of nature, PPA will foster an Access Nature Forum for people with disabilities to meet, identify priorities, and advocate for actions and policies that improve access to natural places. Forum allies will include PPA and partners we have been working with during the planning phase, such as Disabilities Rights New Jersey, Kingsway Learning Center, and the Rowan Integrated Special Needs (RISN) Center. PPA will continue to expand outreach to include veterans groups and assisted living centers, among others, to be sure that the Pinelands Is for Everyone initiative is guided by people with disabilities for people with disabilities and their families.

PPA will elevate and amplify the place of disability communities in nature recreation. To do this, we will conduct a social media communications campaign aimed at reaching the general public and individuals with disabilities with the message that our natural places are here for all to enjoy. We will share images and posts with sister organizations and public parks agencies for them to use in their own communications. Over the last year, we have recognized that providing facilities and programs meeting the needs of the disabled are rare

and generally pursued as an after-thought or add-on to actions shaped initially for the abled-bodied. This approach is inefficient and unsustainable, and it tends to alienate those with disabilities and their caregivers from nature recreation. PPA is as much at fault in this regard as others: we realized that none of our own communications and social media images advertising nature recreation included people with disabilities. That does not send a message of welcoming or inclusion.

PPA will launch the Access Nature NJ mobile app in June 2022, and we need to continue working to populate and improve the app with detailed information on nature sites that are accessible in some manner and degree. PPA and our volunteers with disabilities will evaluate natural areas in the four-county region of Burlington, Camden, Cumberland and Gloucester and develop detailed site descriptions and imagery. Levels and types of accessibility will be assigned based on current facilities such as trails, boardwalks, restrooms, and parking; amenities such as educational programming; overall status and condition of facilities and amenities; what is to be found in the way of scenery, wildlife and flora; and directions to the site. The app will enable users to navigate to sites they wish to visit, giving them confidence that the site is as advertised, and enabling them to upload their own images and experiences to share with other users.

PPA and Pinelands Adventures will work with partners to develop inclusive educational programming and guided eco tours for outdoor excursions that both the able-bodied and those with disabilities can enjoy. PPA staff will work closely with the Access Nature Forum and partner organizations to ensure that people with disabilities and their families will be involved in the development of our outdoor programs. We will purchase trail-adapted wheelchairs for those participants who do not have their own wheelchairs appropriate for use on sand and gravel trails. Our tour guides will be trained to meet the needs of those with physical and developmental disabilities so that all participants can share in positive outdoor adventures.

2. *Who (name and title) will oversee this project?* Carleton Montgomery, executive director.
3. *What is the need or problem that this project will address?*

It is well documented that being in nature benefits physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Exposure to forests boosts our immune systems, lowers blood pressure, and reduces stress. It can improve our mood and increase our ability to focus. But, while every person can benefit from being in nature, access for those with disabilities is limited and discouraged by a lack of information, experience, facilities and equipment.

New Jersey's Pinelands encompasses the most natural parts of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Cumberland Counties. These areas are home to exceptional parks and preserves. But for a complex of reasons detailed below, very few people with disabilities are exploring these beautiful places and gaining the benefits these places were created to afford us. Indeed, people with disabilities often miss out on experiences that our society thinks of as fundamental to childhood and later life. One focus group participant, for example, recounted helping her brother find a unique place on the Jersey Shore where a

boardwalk was built all the way from the street to the water, letting him touch the sea for the first time in his life. Exploring the outdoors and nature can be a vital experience that most people take for granted, but that many children and adults with disabilities simply miss out on.

This is not a small or marginal problem. The Census statistics cited above show that a lot of people in the four counties identify as having a disability of one kind or another. And for every person with disabilities that impair their ability to enjoy the benefits of being out in nature, there are caregivers, family members and friends who share those challenges. As our staff have reflected on our own experiences, we have all realized how many people we each know who have one or another disability that inhibits their enjoyment of nature – and how we rarely if ever go into the woods with them. This separation from nature is a loss to all those who experience it, and to the people around them. It also inevitably contributes to a broader lack of engagement in the effort to save these natural places from harm or loss over time.

Through town hall and focus group meetings and numerous conversations over the past year, we have distilled the following list of key points this project must address:

- a. **People with disabilities want to enjoy the physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits of natural places just as much as the able-bodied:** We have heard from people with disabilities, from family members and from professional caregivers a consistent message—just because you do not see a lot of people with disabilities out in the woods, it does not mean they are any less eager to experience these places. It just means they lack the means, the knowledge or the experience to undertake such trips.
- b. **There is a hunger to see people with disabilities as equals in natural places:** People with disabilities have the same reasons for wanting to enjoy nature and needs for outdoor experiences as the able-bodied, yet their presence and situations are not typically acknowledged and accommodated by society in this field. From early on, most people with disabilities learn that natural places are not for them. With a few exceptions among major national brand commercials, the images we see of people recreating in nature present typical people (usually exceptionally able-bodied as well). The rare exceptions tend to be social media feeds or web sites specifically devoted to people with disabilities, not those that create our general cultural norms and expectations. This can discourage exploration. It is important to represent and elevate people with disabilities through photographs and videos on web sites, media and social media about nature and recreation, and events that bring people of all abilities together for shared experiences. Greater recognition and inclusion can lead to policy changes that make nature more and inviting to people with disabilities, their caregivers and friends.
- c. **Too few beautiful places are easy to get to and enjoy:** Disabilities vary greatly, and not all trails will ever be accessible, but individuals with a disability benefit from having a smooth path, short trip options, accessible signs and restrooms, and similar facilities. Few trails in the Pinelands meet these criteria. Even if a trail itself works, signs and amenities are rarely designed with everyone in mind.

- d. **Information on accessible nature sites is woefully lacking.** There is no comprehensive and reliable guide to accessible sites, making it difficult or impossible for the disabled and their caregivers to plan an excursion. Where information does exist, there might be a wheelchair icon indicating a parking space, but no real indication of the site's appropriateness to those with varying types or degrees of disabilities. This makes going into natural areas risky and potentially unsafe.
- e. **There is little if any nature-based public programming in this region designed for people with disabilities:** None of the state or county parks department websites currently advertises programming for people with disabilities. Nonprofit organizations (including PPA's Pinelands Adventures operation) occasionally advertise programs for people with movement challenges, such as those in wheelchairs, but this cannot be characterized as a well-organized or well-advertised effort over time. Schools and adult programs for people with disabilities want nature-based programs, but do not have partners with the knowledge and equipment to offer these benefits to their clients.
- f. **There is a tendency to become isolated but a desire to be part of the community for families and individuals:** For various reasons, having a disability can be isolating for individuals and families. It can feel like being on an island, separated from the people and civic life around you. Isolation can prevent people from connecting with all kinds of opportunities and activities that are not essential to daily life and acute medical care, including the enjoyment of natural places. The sense and reality of being isolated can stop people from seeing natural places, like other public amenities, as being there for them to enjoy just as much as they are there for the wider population. Yet people want to be a part of their community, not separated, and that includes engaging in the same kinds of outdoor activities that others enjoy.

Many families with members with intellectual/developmental disabilities choose to avoid public settings because they feel embarrassed or are even criticized by others when their loved one acts "abnormally." Even though the vast majority of people want to be welcoming and helpful to people with I/DD, it only takes a few who are not to make for a bad and discouraging experience. If you are stressed by worrying about how others will react to your child, you are less likely to go into public spaces when you don't absolutely have to do so.

- g. **It is also important for allies to recognize that people with disabilities are each unique:** People with disabilities, and particularly those with intellectual/developmental disabilities, are each as unique as the Pine Barrens ecosystem. So there is not one solution to making natural places accessible, appealing, comfortable, safe and fun. Not all trails or sites will work for everyone, but the goal should be to speak to as wide a range of capacities and needs as possible.
- h. **Many parents or caregivers of people with disabilities have too little time, energy or funds to take advantage of nature:** For many caregivers, the need to provide for the family and manage the logistics of daily life leave too little time, energy and money for adventures in nature (and other activities as well). It appears, moreover, that an exceptionally high percentage of people with I/DD are cared for by a single parent,

probably due to the stress this situation can place on families. A single parent is that much more likely to find that “optional” activities like nature adventures are even more difficult to plan and carry out on one’s own.

- i. **No agency or organization is leading an effort to improve access to and enjoyment of nature for people with disabilities in our region:** We have heard time and again over the last year that people with disabilities and their caregivers embrace the goal of enjoying the parks and forests our government and nonprofits have created in South Jersey. There is a demand for leadership in tackling this challenge that PPA and its partners can provide.

4. *How will this project address this problem or need?*

This project aims to address each facet of the basic problem of access to natural places detailed above.

- a. **Support an Access Nature Forum to elevate and amplify the place of people with disabilities in our lives and our natural places:** By fostering the forum of self-advocates and their allies, the project will ensure our communications and activities present this work to the disability communities and the broader public in a way that is effective and respectful.
- b. **Test and improve the Access Nature NJ mobile app:** The app will address the gap in information about accessible sites. We have learned that accessibility of nature is not a cut-and-dried determination, but a variable concept in light of different abilities, adventurousness and equipment. The app will enable us to provide detailed information so people can judge the suitability of each site. Because the eco tours described here will be held in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Cumberland Counties, we will focus on ensuring the app is comprehensive and reliable in these parts of the Pinelands and neighboring towns.
- c. **Create and distribute content like stories, photos, videos and memes:** PPA will collect and post images of people with disabilities who allow us to use images of them enjoying nature – or facing obstacles – on the PPA, Pinelands Adventures and Rancocas Creek Farm web sites and social media posts. We will encourage sister organizations and park-owning agencies to use them as well, so everyone gets used to the idea that everyone has a place in nature
- d. **Partner with organizations working in the disability and recreation fields:** By drawing on the expertise, networks and energies of organizations working both within and outside our own environmental field, we will ensure our programs are well-designed, broadly-publicized and safe. PPA staff are not yet experts in this field, so it is important that we team with those who are to ensure positive, respectful and caring interactions when we work together and share outdoor adventures.
- e. **Obtain trail-ready wheelchairs for participants to use if they do not have their own:** Such wheelchairs are desirable, and often essential, for most trails in our region, but they are extraordinarily expensive. Only those with the means and the dedication to

outdoor exploration will have their own. So it is important that PPA be able to provide high-quality wheelchairs as part of its programming. We have identified two models, one with electric assist technology (\$10,000 each), and one that is manual operation only (\$4,000 each), that are well-regarded and have a proven track record.

- f. Provide guided trips in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Cumberland Counties that are tailored to be safe and enjoyable for individuals and families:** When it comes to the general public, if families are not already enjoying places like the Pinelands, they are much more likely to try them if there are well-designed and advertised trips with competent leaders that make it easy and comfortable to get started. This is all the more true for individuals with disabilities and their families. Guided trips can help break the self-perpetuating cycle of not trying natural places, not knowing whether they will work, feeling these places are not right for them, and so not trying them. Moreover, it helps to normalize the fact that people with a range of disabilities are part of our communities and families if people of all abilities, ages and situations share experiences. Outdoor trips and events can be a great way to bring people together who usually are not sharing space or activities. We will provide eco tours that are suitable for everyone, and will market them in a way that makes this clear.

We will include Rancocas Creek Farm in the mix of outdoor experiences. We are already hosting regular visits with Kingsway Learning Center and the special needs program of Northern Burlington County Regional School District at Rancocas Creek Farm. This experience shows that farms are a special kind of natural setting that can bring special benefits to outdoor experiences for people with disabilities, and especially those with I/DD. With some planning, farms can be less challenging to navigate than a forest trail; provide enjoyable activities like planting and harvesting; and can be a source of useful volunteerism and employment for individuals with I/DD and other disabilities.

- g. Provide guidance to land managers on improving their trails, signs and other facilities:** We will help land managers address the scarcity of accessible nature sites by sharing the insights we obtain through programming and feedback on the mobile app, as well as staff and volunteer labor to help land management agencies and organizations improve their facilities for greater accessibility.

In addition to these activities for which we seek support from Impact100 SJ, PPA is partnering with Pemberton Township to develop a model accessible trail on municipal land at Pemberton Lake. This project will demonstrate the regulatory process for obtaining permission from the Pinelands Commission (no simple matter), trail design and amenities, and the costs of converting a typical Pinelands sand trail into a flat, stable surface through compaction and crushed stone. PPA is also researching additional sites and partners for expanding the accessible options available in the region.

- 5. *Please describe how this project specifically improves your organization's ability to more effectively carry out its core mission.*

PPA recognizes that in order to protect the natural and cultural resources of the New Jersey Pine Barrens over the long haul, people must come to know and care about its fate by

experiencing the Pinelands first-hand. Through the Pinelands Is for Everyone initiative, we will reach an important and underserved segment of our broader audience. The Pinelands Is for Everyone initiative seeks to provide access, education, and exploration of nature to the able bodied and disabled bodied alike. If the recent pandemic has shown us anything, it is the importance of time in nature to our mental and physical health. These opportunities should be afforded to everyone equally. Providing inclusive communications and programs helps PPA show the broader public that the Pinelands is a unique and powerful resource for promoting human health and well-being – a message that helps broaden support for protecting its forests, farms and waters.

6. *How does this project fit into your organization’s current strategic plan or long-term vision?*

PPA’s strategic plan stipulates that the Pinelands can be managed for both people and the rest of nature, and it identifies a key strategy as educating and engaging the public. The plan further identifies new initiatives as a way to build public love for the Pinelands and activism in its defense. The plan acknowledges that personal experience of the Pinelands is the most powerful means of coming to know, love, and raise one’s voice, and the plan calls for PPA to find new and improved ways to reach people with the Pinelands story. To this end, the strategic plan specifically recommends being open to new ideas, developing new and deeper partnerships and growing new initiatives. The Pinelands Is for Everyone project answers that call.

In order to be effective, PPA is always looking for new ways to grow the population of people who care about the Pinelands and to broaden PPA’s relationships with all elements of the region’s civic life and culture. Promoting the Pinelands as a resource for improving human health is one way to demonstrate the region’s value to people who do not necessarily identify as “environmentalists” or have not yet thought about the benefits their families can obtain from the natural areas all around them.

7. *Approximately how many individuals do you expect that this project will reach over the 24-month grant period?*

We expect to reach over 200 people with disabilities and caregivers through participation in the Access Nature Forum and through registrations for at least ten guided tours through Pinelands Adventures. Through our communications and partnerships, we will reach hundreds of thousands of people with stories, images and videos that secures the place of people with disabilities in our natural areas.

8. *Will you be collaborating with other organization(s) to carry out this project? If so, please list name(s) of organization, name of executive director, its 501(c)(3) status and describe each of your roles in the project.*

The Pinelands Is for Everyone initiative will work with many partners with expertise in disabilities and technology. Organizations that are committed to the initiative to date are listed below. We are also in discussion with the Rowan Integrated Special Needs (RISN) Center, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the MOCEAN Center for

Independent Living and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation about partnering. We expect to add them to this project as we move forward.

Disabilities Rights New Jersey—a 501 (c) 3 organization, Executive Director: Gwen Orłowski  
Disabilities Rights New Jersey will be instrumental in creating and expanding the Access Nature Forum.

Hopeworks Camden—a 501 (c) 3 organization, Executive Director: Dan Rhoton  
Hopeworks Camden will continue to assist with the improvement of the Access Nature NJ app which Hopeworks has developed for PPA.

Kingsway Learning Center—a 501 (c) 3 organization, Chief Executive Officer: Rachel Chan  
The Kingsway Learning Center will play an essential role in program development and staff training for guided tours as well as a participant in the Access Nature Forum.

9. *Please list the specific activities/components of the project and a projected timetable for each in the format indicated below. NOTE: The timetable for the project activities should begin on July 1, 2022 and go through June 30, 2024, which corresponds to the Impact100SI grant award period.*

<b><u>Activity/Project Component</u></b>	<b><u>Timetable</u></b>
Establish and Coordinate Access Nature Forum (ANF)	July 2022 – June 2024
Update Access Nature NJ app	July 2022 – June 2024
Produce and Distribute Promotional Videos & Materials	July 2022 – June 2024
Develop and Test Eco Tour Programs	July – October 2022
Purchase and Test 1 <sup>st</sup> Round of Assistive Equipment	September 2022
Host Inaugural Meeting of ANF	October 2022
Provide Staff Training for Eco Tours	October 2022 and April 2023
Host Quarterly ANF Meetings	January 2023 – June 2024
Refine Educational Programing for Eco Tours	January 2023 – April 2023
Purchase 2 <sup>nd</sup> Round of Assistive Equipment	March 2023
Conduct Eco Tours inclusive of people with disabilities	May 2023 – October 2023, and May 2024 – June 2024

10. *Please list 2-3 specific outcomes that your organization hopes to achieve with this project. Include the ways you will measure each outcome in order to determine if the project was successful.*

- a. **A forum led by and for people with disabilities** for community-building, information sharing, advocacy on policies and actions to improve access, guidance on program development, testing of assistive equipment, and identification of natural areas and assistance in evaluating their suitability for nature exploration to inform the Access

Nature NJ app. Success will be measured by representation of a diverse range of individuals with disabilities, the number of participants, and the participation of allied organizations.

- b. A comprehensive and reliable mobile app and social media campaign** that serves as a guide for people with disabilities and their caretakers who wish to explore nature, provides a tool for planning excursions, advertises the app’s availability and amplifies the *naturalness* of those with disabilities to be in nature through images, videos and memes. Progress will be assessed by the number of downloads of the app, the number of uploads of personal experiences to the app, the number of followers on social media, and an accounting of the media traffic generated.
- c. At least 10 Guided Eco Tours** that are inclusive for those with disabilities and providing assistive equipment such as outdoor wheelchairs. This includes obtaining trail-adapted wheelchairs and staff skills for guiding these trips. The success of the program will be evaluated through the number of participants and participants’ responses to a post-event survey.

**Project Budget**

1. What is the total budget amount for this project (including grant from Impact100SJ)? Please list all project expenses, using the format indicated below. NOTE: Make sure each activity listed above is reflected in an expense listed here. Expenses may include individual staff; make sure to include the percentage of their time to be spent on project under the “Additional Details” column. Total of all expenses must equal total project budget amount.

<u>Specific Expense</u>	<u>Additional Details</u>	<u>Total</u>
Staff Costs	Managing the project (800 hours at \$45/hr average)	\$ 36,000
	Designing, leading guided trips (200 hours at \$48/hr)	\$ 9,600
	Updating app, images and video (200 hours at \$42/hr)	<u>\$ 8,400</u>
	Subtotal	\$ 54,000
Consulting	DRNJ, Forum assistance and coordination	\$ 10,000
	Kingsway Learning Center, staff training and trips	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
	Subtotal	\$ 15,000
Assistive Equipment	2 electric assist wheelchairs @\$10,000 ea.	\$ 20,000
	8 manual-only wheelchairs @\$ 4,000 ea.	\$ 32,000
	Trailer for storage and movement of wheelchairs	<u>\$ 4,000</u>
	Subtotal	\$ 56,000
Administrative	Overhead, supplies, phone, web services, etc.	\$ 19,000
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>\$144,000</b>

2. *If the total project budget amount exceeds \$100,000, please list all proposed additional funding sources and date you anticipate securing these funding sources. You may include in-kind support if applicable. (Please use the following format.)*

<b><u>Funder/Donor</u></b>	<b><u>Amount/Value</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
Project management (In-kind)	\$25,000	July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024
Administration and overhead-(In-kind)	<u>\$19,000</u>	July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024
<b>Total In-kind</b>	<b>\$44,000</b>	

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