



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

BOB MARTIN  
*Commissioner*

October 14, 2015

Anthony P. Mauro, Sr.  
Chairman, New Jersey Outdoor Alliance  
PO Box 655  
Belmar, New Jersey 07719

Re: Wharton Motorized Access Plan

Dear Anthony:

As follow up to our meeting on October 7, I committed to clarify the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) position and direction regarding the Wharton Motorized Access Plan (Plan).

DEP has heard the concerns raised by constituency groups, individuals and municipalities, which have provided us with an opportunity to reevaluate the implementation of that Plan.

To further the dialog between DEP, the public and stakeholders, we have scheduled several stakeholder meetings in October and a public meeting in November. The purpose of the meetings is to ensure that stakeholders and public are heard and that DEP is evaluating all concerns, suggestions and input. At this point in time, the Plan previously published in draft is suspended indefinitely. From this point forward, we are starting with a blank slate and have no specific timeframe to implement a plan.

While we all agree that there are parts of the Wharton that are environmentally sensitive and must be protected, we must work collaboratively to develop an enforcement strategy to deter and protect against the irresponsible users of Wharton who continually destroy the natural resources within the forest.

At the same time, DEP will reopen all recently closed roads except those that pose a risk to public safety or are environmentally sensitive. We also are developing a timeline to repair roads in order to provide safe access for all of Wharton's users.

I am under no illusion that every concern identified during this process will be completely satisfied, but our goal is clear: to find the balance between providing maximum access and our responsibility to protect public safety as well as the environmentally sensitive areas within this truly unique forest resource.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Martin". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Bob" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Martin".

Bob Martin  
Commissioner