

Central Pine Barrens LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNCIL



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

*By Art Pendzick
(Chairman P.B.L.E.C. Dec. 2005 - Oct. 2014)*

THE CENTRAL PINE BARRENS LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNCIL

The Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Council (PBLEC) hit a milestone in 2014, celebrating its 20th Anniversary. Way back in May 1994 a small group of representatives from different Law Enforcement Agencies within the Pine Barrens met to discuss conditions and problems within their jurisdictions.

The effects of this meeting were so positive, that a Law Enforcement Council was created, growing to 26 member Agencies and various civilian groups over the years. Discussing problems, exchanging ideas and working together the PBLEC is a major force in helping to protect and safeguard the Central Pine Barrens today just as it has for the past 20 years.

The PBLEC's main objective has always been Law Enforcement and has been able to do that job more effectively by working with the Pine Barrens Protected Lands Council, Wildfire Task Force the Commission itself and numerous other civilian groups.

In 2014 one of the PBLEC's original, main member agencies, the Suffolk County Park Police, was abolished in October when it was merged with the Suffolk County Police. The Park Police were one of the lead enforcement agencies responsible for the major part of public lands within the Pine Barrens. In its place, a newly established Park Ranger division was resurrected as the Park Police replacement. A new County Parks Director and Deputy Director of Security have been appointed to oversee, manage and build up this division.

Also, as a result of the above merger, Sergeant Arthur Pendzick, who has represented the County Park Police on the PBLEC for the past 12 years and served as its Chairman for the past nine years, retired (after 43+ years) and relinquished the Chairmanship to Lt. Dallas Bengel of the New York State Environmental Conservation Police. Lt. Michael Smith of the County Sheriff's Department is currently the new acting Vice Chair.

As fate would have it, and not being able to keep an old horse down, Arthur Pendzick was recently appointed to the new Deputy Director position and is now back on the PBLEC as the official representative for the County Park Ranger unit. Together, he and new Director of Security Dodd Amrhein are working to organize, build up and strengthen the County Park Rangers to be as effective as possible not only in the County's Parks, but in the Pine Barrens as well.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT FUND

In 2014, the PBLEC started the year with \$46,266.27.

In May, due to a legal settlement another \$6,000.00 was added to the account bringing the total to \$52,266.27 and an administrative credit returned \$6,584.45 to the account, bringing the total to \$58,850.72.

Only two purchases were made for the year, involving two Polaris 500 All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Quads, each costing \$5,817.35 for a total of \$11,634.70. One was given to the New York State Police, the other to the Suffolk County Deputy Sheriff's to use for Law Enforcement purposes in the Pine Barrens.

A total of \$47,216.02 is left in the fund for future use. With a spending cap of \$15,000 annually, EBF Monies will last through 2017. Years earlier, these funds were projected to last only until 2014, so the PBLEC has been very vigilant and frugal in their appropriations.

TRAINING, MITIGATION, AVIATION ETC.

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and its Deputies, who are certified as ATV Instructors, once again have been providing training at their Gabreski Airport facility to Law Enforcement, Fire Department and Ambulance personnel.

The PBLEC has continued its involvement with the Commission's Protected Land Council (PLC), attending and participating at all their meetings and other activities. Working together various Pine Barrens programs and ideas have and are being implemented.

On April 21st and again on May 3rd, the PBLEC participated in Water Bucket Training Exercises conducted by the New York Army National Guard 3rd Battalion-142nd Aviation Regiment, based at MacArthur Airport, and the Wildfire Task Force at the Sarnoff Preserve in Southampton Town.



The PBLEC has been working with the New York Army National Guard in planning airlifts in 2015 of old abandoned vehicles in the Pine Barrens, which are inaccessible by conventional means.

Talks were resumed regarding recommendations for upgrading penalties in Suffolk County Code 822 (law involving ATV's and 4x4's). This has been an ongoing project that the PBLEC has been developing for the past several years, trying to come up with a workable solution for increased penalties on illegal operation of ATV's that can be submitted for a possible legislative amendment.

As usual there were eight regularly-scheduled PBLEC meetings plus one special meeting in November, all held at the Suffolk County Parks Lodge in Southaven Park. Two of these meetings had executive sessions which are for Law Enforcement personnel only.

At the April meeting, a cake was enjoyed by all, celebrating the PBLEC's 20th Anniversary (the actual date of the first PBLEC meeting was on May 26, 1994).

At the September meeting, EnCon Officers Mark Simmons and Kaitlin Grady gave an interesting presentation regarding the upcoming hunting season.

At the October meeting, Sgt. Pendzick current chairman, turned over the Chair to Lt. Bengel (who was officially elected at the December meeting) and Lt. Smith was selected as acting Vice Chair.

At the December meeting, members were treated to a Holiday Lunch.

2014 PBLEC MULTI-AGENCY ATV/4X4 TASK FORCE DETAILS

Illegal ATV's have been the scourge of the Pine Barrens since day one and in recent years the off road 4x4's have become almost as big a problem. The PBLEC, in an effort to combat these issues, created what it refers to as the "Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Council's Multi-Agency ATV Task Force" in which member agencies have joined together to conduct sting operations using their own ATV's and 4x4's. In 2002, Sgt. Pendzick of the Suffolk County Park Police was assigned the task of organizing and heading up these operations. He has done some 200 of these details over the years, resulting in 1,018 illegal ATV impounds and 2,461 ATV-related summonses. In the past few years, 41 illegal off road vehicles were also apprehended and issued 69 summonses.



In 2014 there were only three Multi-Agency ATV details performed as most of the agencies were experiencing manpower and funding shortages.

The following are the results of those details:

- 7 illegal ATV's were impounded (3 Quads & 4 Dirt Bikes)
- 25 ATV related summonses were issued as follows:
 - 3 - SC Code 822.3a (operate ATV on public lands)
 - 4 - SC Code 822.3b (operate ATV on private lands w/o written landowners consent)
 - 6 - V&T 2282.1 (operate unregistered ATV)
 - 7 - V&T 2407.4 (operate uninsured ATV)
 - 1 - V&T 2283.1 (failure to display plate on ATV)
 - 4 - ECL 11.2113.1 (ATV trespass on State lands)

2 illegal 4x4's were also apprehended and issued 2 summonses as follows:

1 - SC Code 822.1a (operate 4x4 on public lands)

1 - SC Code 822.1b (operate 4x4 on private lands w/o landowners consent)

The following officers participating on the Task Force Details:

Sgt. Pendzick- SC Park Police

Gregory Link- SC Park Police

Michael Malone- SC Park Police

Kevin Klokkel- SC Park Police

Sgt. Michael Smith- Deputy Sheriff

Will Cullen- Deputy Sheriff

Joe Sikora- Deputy Sheriff

Greg Negra- Deputy Sheriff

Matt Krug- EnCon

Tim Fay- EnCon

Landon Simmons- EnCon

Joe Pries- NYS Ranger

Dave Nally- NYS Ranger

Chester Lunt- NYS Ranger

Impounds were conducted by Superintendent Tony Trotta of the County Parks Department

Despite having so few of these details, which produced the above results, all the individual Law Enforcement agencies also worked separately doing their regularly assigned duties and did a phenomenal amount of enforcement on an individual agency basis in the Pine Barrens during the year.

2014 ENFORCEMENT AGAINST DUMPING AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES



During 2014, law enforcement personnel also conducted operations to combat a multitude of other unlawful activities including illegal dumping, fish and wildlife violations, illegal firearms and weapons violations, illegal encroachments onto public lands, vandalism and related activities including illegal cutting of trees and vegetation and trespass. Enforcement action was also undertaken in regard to other violations of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and in regard to drugs. Detailed statistics are provided below.

PBLEC ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS FOR 2014

Total for all reporting agencies:

89 Total # ATV complaints received
111 Total # ATV related summonses
22 Total # ATVs impounded
1 Total # ATV related injuries _____ #ATV Fatalities
1 Stolen ATVs recovered _____ #ATVs reported stolen
0 Stolen vehicles recovered
31 Illegal off road/4x4summonses/incidents _____ 4x4 impounds
18 Arson/fire incidents
88 Illegal dumping summonses/arrests/incidents
54 Fish and Wildlife summonses/arrests
6 Firearms & other weapons incidents
30 All other ECL summonses/arrests
33 Trespass summonses/arrests
3 Encroachments/ other property incidents
3 Illegal wood cutting summonses/arrests/incidents
2 Homeless summonses/arrests/incidents
26 Illegal drug summonses/arrests/incidents
4 Penal law misdemeanors
1 Penal law felonies

Incidents/events of special interest:

SCSD/DEC-DLE/DOT conducted commercial motor vehicle inspections resulting in 519 trucks inspected, 578 related summonses issued, 112 trucks placed out of service, 3 drug arrests and 5 warrant arrests.

2014 9TH ANNUAL

PINE BARRENS LAW ENFORCEMENT COUNCIL

Environmental Enforcement Officer of the Year Awards

The following Officers have been nominated by their respective Agencies, for their outstanding work and achievement in Law Enforcement helping to protect and safeguard the environment and especially the Central Pine Barrens, as such, the PBLEC would like to recognize the following Officers:

- 1) For Continuous Significant Environmental Enforcement Activity
New York State Environmental Conservation Police Officer Landon Simmons
- 2) For Continuous Significant Environmental Enforcement Activity
Suffolk County Deputy Sheriff John Noonan
- 3) For Demonstration of Sustained Commitment to Crime Prevention through the Central Pine Barrens Collaborative Process
New York State Police Officer Fabio Daino

Each Year the membership of the PBLEC gets to select an individual who they feel needs to be recognized for his/her work within the Central Pine Barrens. In 2014:

For Significant Contribution to Environmental Enforcement Efforts within the Central Pine Barrens
New York State Police Sergeant Mark Lynch

IN CLOSING

The PBLEC is a very special and unique organization dedicated to keeping the Pine Barrens a pristine and natural place so that future generations can use and enjoy it. Special thanks goes out to all the member agencies and their representatives for all their good work and efforts.

Thanks to the Commission Chairman Peter Scully and all the Pine Barrens Commissioners and designated representatives for their continued support.

A very special hats off to the entire Commission Staff, especially John Pavacic, Larry Hynes, Kathy Delligatti and Carol Ostrowski who are the heart of the PBLEC and instrumental in keeping it a working reality.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to everyone that I have been associated with working as chair on the PBLEC, both past and present. This has been the highlight of my professional career and a truly rewarding experience. Now it is time to turn the page but I am not saying goodbye.

Sincerely,

Artie Pendzick (PBLEC Chairman December 2005 - October 2014)

