

## Central Pine Barrens Advisory Committee

*Stephen M. Jones, Chair*

*Richard L. Amper, Vice Chair*

### Meeting of Wednesday October 14, 2009

*(Final Minutes – Approved 1/13/10)*

Suffolk County Water Authority Coram Training Center

2045 Route 112, Building 5, Coram, New York

8:30 am

#### Advisory Committee Members present:

- Brookhaven National Laboratory: Timothy Green
- Suffolk Alliance of Sportsmen Bob Bauman
- Long Island Builders Institute: Bob Wieboldt
- Long Island Pine Barrens Society: Richard Amper (Vice Chair),  
Beth Motschenbacher
- Peconic Land Trust Dawn Liubenov
- Suffolk County Water Authority: Stephen Jones (Chair)
- Long Island Board of Realtors: Robert Herrick
- Brookhaven National Laboratory: Tim Green
- The Nature Conservancy Kevin McDonald

#### Other Attendees:

- Commission staff: Ray Corwin, Judy Jakobsen, John Milazzo,  
Melissa Griffiths
- Law Enforcement Council Sgt. Arthur Pendzick, ECO Dallas Bengel
- Town of Brookhaven: John Turner (*also representing the  
Commission*)
- NYS Dept. of Env. Cons.: William Spitz
- Credit Clearinghouse Andy Freleng ?
- U.S. Dept. of Energy – BNL Robert Gordon
- Suffolk County Water Authority Jeffrey Szabo

Mr. Jones called the Central Pine Barrens Advisory Committee (“AC”) meeting to order at 8:45 am without a quorum present.

## **Report on Research Forum**

On October 2 and 3, 2009 the Fourteenth Annual Research Forum was held and a handout with speaker abstracts was provided (attached). Mr. Corwin referred to the handout and stated that there were two keynote speakers at this year's forum, Mr. David Conover Dean of the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University who spoke in the morning session and Mr. Stephen Jones who spoke in the afternoon.

Mr. Corwin described other aspects of the Research Forum and stated that speakers attended from all over the country including Iowa and that Nick Procopio who represented the New Jersey Pinelands spoke about the Ecological Integrity Assessment, which describes methods of insuring that the Ecosystem stays healthy. On the second day of the forum events included the Web Conference between the students of Pisa, Italy and students from Longwood High school on Long Island. The second day also included a Field Trip at the Coastal Plain Ponds of the Peconic River Headwaters.

Melissa Griffiths, the Education and Outreach Coordinator and organizer of the Web Conference stated that it was very successful and she commented that the Italian students were well prepared. Ms. Griffiths provided photographs taken during the Web Conference and mentioned that all of the technical aspects of the web conference including audio and visual elements were successful. Earlier in the year Longwood High school Science Department Chairman, Ivan Suarez met with Isabella Marini an Italian Professor, in Italy to discuss protocols for continuing the biodiversity inventory program. The next web conference is scheduled for December 2009.

Mr. Corwin described the Field Trip a 4.9 mile hike along the Coastal Plain Ponds of the Peconic River Headwaters that lasted about 3 hours. Tom Casey led the walk with several other presenters and they discussed areas of expertise such as plants, animals, hydrology, water resources and invasive species. A goal for next year Research Forum Field Trip is to extend the area of interest to include the Pine Barrens Maritime Preserve. Next years Research Forum is scheduled to take place on September 30, and October 1, 2009. The point was made that Research Forum attendance increases yearly.

## **Report on Commission Meeting, September 16, 2009**

On September 16, 2009 Mr. Jones presented to the Commission the AC recommendations on the WTF, Wildfire Academy, PLC, LEC, and the Credit Clearinghouse and they did not take action at that meeting. Comments regarding the recommendations have been collected from all of the Committee members and boards, which were added to the final version of AC Recommendations.

Mr. Corwin spoke about the final eleven recommendations regarding the PLC, which restructure its operation through the Science and Stewardship Committee.

The suggestion was made that Mr. Jones or Mr. Amper should attend future Commission meetings to help prompt the Commission to act on the AC recommendations. Future Commission agendas will include time devoted to the AC recommendations until each recommendation has been acted upon.

### **Environmental Education Committee: Initial Review and Discussion**

Melissa Griffiths provided a handout (attached) and stated that the Environmental Education Outreach Advisory Committee was formed two years ago in order to promote Education and Outreach goals. She mentioned the names of members such as John Turner from the Town of Brookhaven and Joe Filippone from the Patchogue/Medford School District and others that represent a variety of disciplines in various areas of education. At an initial meeting a mission statement was devised. "To promote awareness, appreciation and understanding to citizens of Long Island On the Pine Barrens ecosystem and the critical role it plays in maintaining a quality of life. This includes its species, landscapes, natural communities, ground water protection and cultural and historical resources."

Ms. Griffiths described the different goals of the Committee, including teacher training to incorporate Environmental Education and Pine Barrens Ecosystem Education into K-12 curriculums. The thirteen member Committee supports Ms. Griffiths and other staff efforts in Public Outreach and Commission participation at various yearly Festivals, such as the annual Discovery Day event. Other initiatives and efforts include working with the media on editorials related to Pine Barrens issues and the distribution of press releases regarding Pine Barren activities, the creation of a Speakers Bureau provided in a handout, which is distributed to libraries, schools and at events. The Speakers Bureau is a directory of individuals that attend events and speak to the public on various Pine Barrens related topics. Ms. Griffiths mentioned a few of the projects she is currently organizing which include plans to build a Pine Barrens Discovery Center, the Second Annual Discovery Day Event, the Twinnings project between the students of Pisa Italy and the Pine Barrens Region, and others.

Provided in the handout were descriptions of the current Sub-Committees and members, which include Discovery Day, Visitors Center and Curriculum Development. Goals accomplished by the Committee include the designing of Pine Barren Education programs for grades K-12, the development of a 5-part Pine Barrens Education Module for Middle Schools, the Pine Barrens Discovery Day event on June 13, 2009 and others listed in the handout. Ms. Griffiths spoke about the success of Discovery Day and stated that money collected at registration went towards the on line registration website.

Ms. Griffiths reiterated that the Twinnings Biodiversity program has been a very successful initiative and mentioned that Ivan Swarez of Longwood Highschool, and herself went to Pisa Italy last year to introduce the biodiversity education program and a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) was created and signed by both participants. Additional pictures of the Twinings and Barrens to Bay program were handed out and discussed.

Ms. Griffiths spoke about the New York State Education Standards and those must be incorporated into the design of the Environmental Education curriculum. In the past Ms. Griffiths solicited the program to the schools by distributing brochures of the curriculum. This is the third year the program is being taught at the schools and Ms. Griffiths noted that the schools are now contacting her to schedule her into this year's curriculum. A discussion ensued regarding future Environmental Education Outreach efforts, including Long Island tourism sector and a Pine Barrens Visitors Center.

### **BP Solar Array at BNL**

The Draft Resolution for the BP Solar Array project at BNL was provided in a handout. Mr. Jones made the statement that during the September Commission meeting Mr. Tim Green and Mr. Mike Deering provided a presentation on the topic and asked the members to discuss ways in which the AC could advise the Commission in regards to the project. The Commissions jurisdiction over this project is unclear and its status as a development project is still in question.

Issues discussed include plausible reasons for clearing Pine Barrens land instead of alternative sites such as existing parks or farmland and if the project is within federal jurisdiction. Additional issues that need to be discussed with a quorum present include, if the project is development or exempt and if revegetation in other areas of the Pine Barrens would be an effective way of mitigating the project.

The statement was made that clearing two hundred acres of forest for a project designed to fight global warming and to provide energy efficiency is inconsistent with the provisions set up in the Plan to preserve the Pine Barrens ecosystem. The suggestion was made to relocate the project to areas that can be used without disturbing the Pine Barrens and the point was made that the Long Island Power Authority and BP Solar need to be involved in that discussion. Other topics, which need to be discussed include, the true impact on the power grid, ground water drainage and precipitation nitrate affects on impervious surfaces.

There was a consensus that further discussion of alternative sites, clearing standards, and if the project is of regional significance should take place before the AC can give recommendations to the Commission on the BP Solar project.

### **Next Meeting and Adjournment**

*A motion was made by John Turner and seconded by Tim Green to adjourn the meeting, that motion was unanimously carried.*

## Attachments

1. Fourteenth Annual Pine Barrens Research Forum program
2. Speakers Bureau Directory
3. The BP Solar Array at BNL Draft Resolution
4. Facts and Goals handout for the Environmental Education and Outreach Advisory Committee provided by Melissa Griffiths
5. Draft minutes from the 7/29/2009 AC meeting