



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Tim Motz
(631) 563-0396 (O)
(631) 445-0562 (C)
tim.motz@scwa.com

Six Busted for Unlawful Dumping In the Central Pine Barrens

More than \$12,000 in Penalties Paid for Illegal Disposal Of Everything from Office Files to Construction Debris

Investigations by various law enforcement agencies have led to charges against six individuals for illegally dumping in the Central Pine Barrens region in recent weeks. All cases have been resolved, with the perpetrators paying substantial fines for their actions.

The results of the investigations, conducted by members of the Central Pine Barrens Commission's Law Enforcement Council, were announced by the New York State Department of Conservation's Division of Law Enforcement. According to Captain Tom Gadomski of the Region 1 office, the following individuals agreed to settle their violations for illegal disposal of solid waste administratively and paid the following fines:

Anthony Fernandez of Hauppauge: \$1,000
Michael Figat of East Patchogue: \$3,000, (plus \$880 to the Town of Brookhaven for clean-up costs)
John Gross of Rocky Point: \$2,000
Matthew Halliday of Shirley: \$2,000
James Petrella of Sound Beach: \$1,500
Ronald L. Weber of Selden: \$2,000

The materials disposed of included everything from truckloads of office files and household

furniture to significant amounts of construction and demolition and landscaping debris. All were violations of New York State Environmental Conservation Law.

The Law Enforcement Council (LEC), organized by the commission in 1993, is comprised of federal, state, town and village police agencies responsible for investigating offenses that occur within the Central Pine Barrens region. By sharing information and resources, the LEC investigates illegal activities including unlawful use of ATVs and off-road vehicles; unlawful hunting; unpermitted development; illegal disposal of solid waste; and other actions impacting the environment and public safety.

“In addition to the day-to-day enforcement concerns that we encounter as police officers on Long Island, the LEC also plays a unique role in protecting the environment in the Central Pine Barrens,” said Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office Lieutenant Michael Smith, chairman of the LEC. “Our partners include officers from the Suffolk County Police Department and County Park Rangers, the New York State Police, NYSDEC’s Environmental Conservation Police and Forest Rangers, the New York State Park Police, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service and Town Police from Riverhead and Southampton. Sharing our resources from our various jurisdictions allows us to address the myriad of offenses occurring within the three townships located in the Pine Barrens.”

The Central Pine Barrens Commission has its own staff of enforcement officers who provide the LEC with information and evidence from various sources and assist in coordinating the efforts of the members of the LEC.

“We would not be able to successfully protect the pine barrens without our partners on the Law Enforcement Council,” said the Commission’s Chief Enforcement Officer, Tim Huss. “They are the backbone of the enforcement program, working to successfully apprehend and prosecute persons who violate state and local laws specific to the pine barrens.”

Under New York State law, unlawful disposal of solid waste can result in civil penalties of up to \$22,250 and criminal sanctions of between \$1,500 and \$37,500. Jail time could also result from criminal convictions that vary from violations to felonies, depending upon the quantity and type of disposed materials. Unlawful disposal of hazardous material can result in even more substantial penalties.

The public can assist by reporting violations to the Pine Barrens Hotline at 1-877-BARRENS.

The Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission was established by New York State in 1993 to manage land use within the Central Pine Barrens on Long Island in order to protect the region’s vital natural, agricultural, historical, cultural and recreational resources.

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