

**Central Pine Barrens  
Joint Planning and Policy Commission**



**2020 Annual Report**



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*This document contains activity reports from the following  
Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission  
Divisions and Councils for 2020*

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## **Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission**

**Carrie Meek Gallagher**, Commission Chairwoman, Governor's Appointee,  
and Regional Director, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

**Steven Bellone**, Member and Suffolk County Executive  
*Designated Representatives: Sarah Lansdale, Dorian Dale,  
Andrew Freleng, and Janet Longo*

**Yvette Aguiar**, Member and Riverhead Town Supervisor  
*Designated Representative: Daniel McCormick*

**Edward P. Romaine**, Member and Brookhaven Town Supervisor  
*Designated Representative: Emily Pines*

**Jay H. Schneiderman**, Member and Southampton Town Supervisor  
*Designated Representatives: Janice Scherer and Martin Shea*

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### **Staff**

(from the Suffolk County Water Authority)

**John W. Pavacic**, Executive Director

**Judy Jakobsen**, Deputy Director

**Jade Blennau**, Ecological Field Specialist

**Broderick DeAngelis**, Ecological Field Specialist

**Julie Hargrave**, Principal Environmental Planner

**Timothy Huss**, Chief Enforcement Officer

**Michael Lewis**, Enforcement Officer

**Katherine Malangone**, Academy Coordinator

**James Mazzio**, Enforcement Officer

**John Milazzo**, Legal Counsel

**Tim Motz**, Director of Communications

**Melissa Griffiths Parrott**, Environmental Education and Outreach Coordinator

**Carol Sholl-Ostrowski**, Administrative Assistant

**Jerry Tverdy**, Senior Environmental Analyst

**Polly Weigand**, Science and Stewardship Manager

**Shaun Ziegler**, Ecologist

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## **Compliance and Enforcement Division**

Timothy Huss, Chief Enforcement Officer  
Gary Enright and James Mazzio, Enforcement Officers

The Compliance and Enforcement Division of the Central Pine Barrens Commission is responsible for overseeing compliance with the mandates of Article 57 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, the Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act. Within the more than 100,000 acres of the Central Pine Barrens, including the Core Preservation Area (CPA) and the Compatible Growth Area (CGA), there are a collection of jurisdictions with the responsibility for regulating land use, development, resource management and recreational activities. These include federal, state, county, town and village authorities, all of which have jurisdiction and responsibility for assuring compliance, not only with Article 57, but also with local laws and regulations. Enforcement personnel from these agencies comprise the commission's Law Enforcement Council (LEC). A primary objective of the compliance and enforcement division is to coordinate the efforts of these agencies and assist them in meeting their objectives as they relate to the goals and objectives of the commission.

In 2020, the division was comprised of three members, including Chief Enforcement Officer Timothy Huss, Enforcement Officer James Mazzio and Enforcement Officer Gary Enright (Enforcement Officer Michael Lewis left service during 2020). Collectively they provide the commission with many years of experience in conservation, environmental enforcement, and public protection.

### **Compliance and Enforcement Division Duties and Responsibilities**

#### *Compliance:*

- Conducting inspections to assure compliance with commission-permitted land use activities and development projects
- Regularly reviewing and monitoring permit compliance as well as complaint response
- Tracking and coordinating compliance inspections for all easements held by the Commission

#### *Enforcement:*

- Applying knowledge of the NYS Environmental Conservation Law, Penal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Vehicle and Traffic Law and Suffolk County Code related to compliance and enforcement matters in the Central Pine Barrens
- Responding to and investigating land use and natural resource complaints received by the commission, reporting findings to the commission as well those other agencies having jurisdiction
- Assisting other regulatory agencies with investigations related to the commission
- Monitoring areas experiencing environmental violations
- Assisting with implementing measures to deter and prevent environmental violations
- Monitoring and coordinating actions of the Law Enforcement Council (LEC)

- Providing education and training to the LEC relevant to Article 57 of the NYSECL
- Representing the commission and the LEC at relevant enforcement and emergency preparedness meetings
- Serving as a liaison to local elected and appointed officials on enforcement and compliance matters
- Providing investigative support for the NYS attorney general and Suffolk County district attorney on matters related to the Central Pine Barrens
- Providing bi-monthly and annual compliance and enforcement reports to the commission board
- Overseeing and ensuring proper maintenance of files, records, and databases related to compliance and enforcement and land use incidents

### **2020 Investigations and Incidents**

During calendar year 2020, the division documented 78 new investigations and incidents. Some of the more significant cases investigated by the division and other division activities are presented in this section

#### **Unpermitted Land Clearing, Encroachment and Impact by ATVs**

Addressing complaints and monitoring unpermitted clearing and development is an important issue for the division, as is monitoring damage done by illegal use of ATVs and BMX bikes. Twenty-nine clearing and encroachment complaints were investigated in 2020. In one instance, ten oak trees were cut to enhance the available sunlight for a residential swimming pool. Unfortunately, the trees were on SCWA property and in the Compatible Growth Area of the CPB. In addition to a \$2,500 fine paid to the NYSDEC, Town Code enforcement officers cited the resident for several town code violations related to the in-ground pool that did not have proper permits.



NYS Forest Rangers and Suffolk County Sheriff investigate site of illegal tree removal





## **Solid Waste Enforcement**

The unlawful disposal of solid waste, from litter to large quantities of construction and demolition debris, continues to be a problem in the Central Pine Barrens. The more hazardous components of this material can include heavy metals, PCBs, petroleum, and other potentially carcinogenic agents. Other dumped materials include household garbage and abandoned vessels and vehicles.

Division officers go to great lengths to apprehend these violators, often sifting through household garbage, tracking down receipts, or running hull numbers of abandoned boats, many times with positive results.

A video surveillance program established by the enforcement officers of the Central Pine Barrens Commission continues to assist the LEC in the apprehension of violators who dump waste in the Central Pine Barrens.



Dumper caught on surveillance camera and arrested by NYS P



Officer Enright inspects large stumps dumped illegally in Manorville



Officer Enright checks surveillance camera



Night dumper apprehended on camera and later prosecuted by NYSDEC for dumping large tree debris near LIE Service Road

The division documented 36 solid waste complaints in 2020 that were investigated by the division and the LEC. Nine apprehensions were made by LEC members resulting in fines and in some cases restitution. In one instance, a repeat offender caught on camera 11 times was apprehended by the NYS Police and charged with 11 counts of illegal disposal of construction and demolition debris. The case is currently pending in court.

### **Monitoring of Suffolk County Water Authority Properties**

In 2018 at the request of SCWA, the division developed a program to monitor conditions of SCWA facilities within the Central Pine Barrens. Additionally, the division will investigate complaints of trespass and encroachment of these SCWA properties. It is an important responsibility that helps to maintain the integrity and safety of these important public water facilities. The division continues to monitor the SCWA sites in 2020.



Officer Enright at site of encroachment and trespass on SCWA property

### ***Meetings and Outreach***

Throughout the year, the division attends monthly meetings with the Central Pine Barrens Commission members, providing opportunities for review of pending investigations as well as updates on division activities. Additionally, monthly enforcement meetings are held with the LEC and occasional meetings are held with planning and code enforcement personnel and the town attorneys of the Towns of Brookhaven, Southampton and Riverhead, as well as members of the NYSDEC Division of Law Enforcement. The division also continues to meet with Suffolk County Parks Principal Environmental Analyst Nick Gibbons and Environmental Analyst Diana Sanford as they work together to deter encroachment and other unlawful activity on county-owned lands. These meetings are essential in coordinating the efforts of the various member groups responsible for protecting the lands within the core and compatible growth areas of the CPB. The level of cooperation with the commission's partners continues to be outstanding.

## **The Law Enforcement Council**

In 1994, the law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction in the CPB joined forces to organize the Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Council, or LEC. Comprised of federal, state, county, town and village enforcement agencies the LEC works together to protect the CPB in a coordinated effort to address violations, enforcing the laws that protect the resources and quality of life in this environmentally sensitive region. These include federal and state environmental laws, state



LEC members

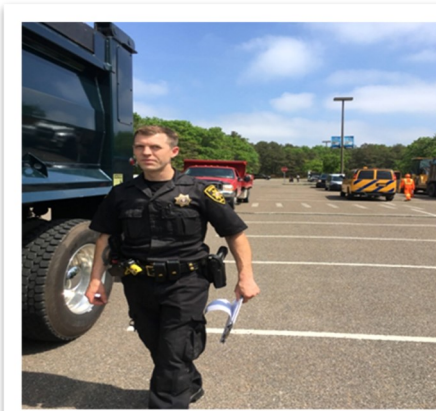
and county vehicle and traffic laws, state penal laws, and town codes that regulate development and protect the environment. The division assists in coordinating these efforts and depends upon the LEC to assist the Central Pine Barrens Commission's mission to protect the natural resources and environment within the Central Pine Barrens. It is a relationship that has proven to be a highly effective enforcement program that is essential for maintaining the integrity of the Central Pine Barrens.

- Member agencies include:
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- NYS Police
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Law Enforcement
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Forest Rangers
- NYS Park Police
- Suffolk County District Attorney
- Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
- Suffolk County Police
- Suffolk County Park Rangers
- Brookhaven Department of Public Safety
- Riverhead Town Police
- Southampton Town Police
- Quogue Village Police
- Fire Marshals from Towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead and Southampton
- US Army Air Guard

The following highlights describe some of the accomplishments of the LEC in 2020:

### **Commercial Vehicle Equipment Detail**

Commercial vehicle enforcement is an important initiative throughout Suffolk County. The Motor Carrier Units of the Suffolk County Police and NYS Police have been conducting these details for years in various locations in Suffolk County with partner agencies such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and New York State Department of Transportation. One location along the Long Island Expressway at the rest area in Yaphank lies within the Compatible Growth Area (CGA) of the Central Pine Barrens.



Within the Core Preservation Area of the Central Pine Barrens this effort is often led by Lt. Mike Smith of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office. Coordinating this effort with members of the LEC, large trucks weighing over 10,000

pounds, traveling through the Central Pine Barrens, often carrying large amounts of fuel, pesticides, hazardous materials and other deleterious substances, are brought into a designated area to be inspected and checked for equipment violations, leaking fluids, overloading, proper documentation, emissions and numerous other factors to minimize accidents and promote safety, protecting both the public and environmentally sensitive lands.



Lt. Smith coordinates an average of two commercial vehicle inspection details each month within the Core Preservation Area of the Central Pine Barrens. In addition to the Sheriff's Office, other agencies that frequently participate, include:

- Suffolk County Police Department
- NYS Police
- NYSDEC. Division of Law Enforcement
- NYS Forest Rangers
- Suffolk County Park Rangers
- NYS. Department of Transportation

These details have a direct impact on the quality of life and environmental quality issues within the CPB. Truck safety issues can affect the safety of the resource users and local residents, and faulty equipment allowing leakage of contaminants can and does impact groundwater and air quality.

**Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Council Multi-Agency ATV/ORV Task Force Details. The LEC operates enforcement details through the year to deter illegal ATV/ORV use in the Central Pine Barrens**



Deterring illegal ATV and off-road vehicle operation is one of the foremost priorities for the LEC. In addition to the environmental damage done by these vehicles, these are quality of life issues caused by illegal off-road use.

The following statistics are from the 25 Multi-Agency ATV details held during 2020.

**Participating Agencies**

- NYS Environmental Conservation Police
- NYS Forest Rangers
- NYS Park Police
- NYS Police
- Riverhead Town Police
- Southampton Town Police
- Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs
- Suffolk County Park Rangers
- Suffolk County Police

**ATV IMPOUNDS**

A total of **107** ATV's were impounded in 2020;

- 44 Quads
- 56 Dirt Bikes
- 5 Enduros (street legal bikes riding off-road)
- 1- Trike
- 1 Go Cart

## **ATV Impounds from past 6 years (shows increase due mainly to COVID19)**

- 2020-107 Impounds
- 2019- 62 Impounds
- 2018- 65 Impounds
- 2017- 75 Impounds
- 2016- 64 Impounds
- 2015- 58 Impounds

## **ATV Related Summonses Issued in 2020**

A total of 215 ATV related summonses issued:

- 66-SC Code 822.3a (operate ATV on public lands)
- 10-SC Code 822.3b (operate ATV on private lands w/o written consent)
- 16-V&T 2410.4 (parent allows minor to operate ATV illegally)
- 17-V&T 2403.1 (operate ATV on public roadway)
- 24-V&T 2282.1 (operate unregistered ATV)
- 11-V&T 2283.1 (failure to display plate on ATV)
- 1-V&T 402.1 (obscure plate)
- 4-V&T 306b (uninspected vehicles- Enduros)
- 22-V&T 2407.4 (operate ATV w/o liability insurance in effect)
- 2-V&T509.2 (operate vehicle out of license class)
- 5-V&T 2406.2 (not wearing a helmet on ATV)
- 10-V&T 2404.2b (fail to comply with lawful order on ATV)
- 4-V&T 2404.2a (fail to stop for emergency vehicle on ATV)
- 1-V&T 1212 (ATV driving reckless on highway) Misd.
- 7-V&T 2404.1b (reckless operation of ATV)
- 7-V&T 2404.1a (ATV operating at unreasonable speed)
- 2-RTO 285.1 (ATV trespassing on old Grumman runway) Misd.
- 1-V&T 2403.1a (ATV crossing controlled access highway)
- 1-V&T 1127a (ATV going wrong way on highway)
- 1-V&T 1160c (ATV making improper U-turn on highway)
- 1-V&T 1111d.1 (ATV going through red light)
- 1-V&T 2406.1e (operate ATV after dark having no lights)
- 1-V&T 2404.4 (operating ATV w/o permanent seat attached)

Since LEC's Multi-Agency ATV Task force details have been operating more than 18 years, 1,453 illegal ATVs have been impounded with 3,530 ATV-related summonses being issued.

## Revenues Collected for Suffolk County from Impounded

**ATVs in 2020                    \$63,171.14**

93 impounded ATV's were redeemed (\$650.00 each)	\$62,450.00
14 unclaimed ATV's were junked (\$51.51 each)	<u>      \$721.14</u>
Total	<u>\$63,171.14*</u>

\* This was an increase of \$21,543.96 from the previous year.

These redemptions also included impounds (21) conducted separately by the Suffolk County Park Rangers in the performance of their regular duties.

### **OFF ROAD VEHICLES (ORVs)**

In November 2011, new Laws regulating ORVs were enacted into the county's ATV 822 Law, as they were starting to become almost as big a problem as the ATVs. The LEC started to incorporate those enforcement numbers into their details in 2013.

In 2020, operators of 46 illegal ORVs were apprehended and issued the following 44 summonses;

- 31-SC Code 822.11a (operate ORV off-road on public lands)
- 11-SC Code 822.11b (operate ORV off-road on private lands without written landowners consent).
- 2-V&T summonses for misc. offenses

Since 2013, operators of 302 illegal ORVs have been apprehended and issued a total of 376 related summonses.

At the old Grumman facility (EPCAL) in Calverton, there have been numerous vehicles (many drag racing) on the old plane runways in violation of Town of Riverhead Ordinance (RTO 285.1) for trespassing.

In 2020, 11 operators of these vehicles were apprehended on the runways, plus two ATVs and charged under the Town Code, which is a misdemeanor.

Back on our September 15<sup>th</sup> 2019 detail, a huge group of spectators and racers were encountered on the runways in which one of our officers was struck by a fleeing vehicle.

Several of these vehicles were apprehended but many more escaped. State Police kept an ongoing investigation and in June 2020 another individual from this incident was identified and charged with the following violations:

- RTO 285.1 (trespass on runway)
- PL 270.25 (unlawful fleeing police)
- PL 1212 (reckless driving)                    All Misdemeanors

## **Miscellaneous Summonses Issued on the 2020 details;**

Besides ATVs & ORVs, officers handle a number of other problems that they encounter in which they issued the following additional summonses:

19- New York State Vehicle & Traffic Law summonses were issued which included seven misdemeanors:

- 5-V&T 511.1a (operate vehicle with revoked/suspended license.)
- 2-V&T 1212 (reckless driving)

Environmental Conservation Law (ECL); 10 summonses issued;

- 5-ECL 11-2113.1 (trespass on state lands)
- 2-ECL 11-0703(6)a(1) (hunt small game w/o a license)
- 2-ECL 11-0901(10) (taking game during closed season)
- 1-ECL 11-0931(5) (possess a rifle afield on Long Island) Misd.

Suffolk County Code- Chapter 643 (Parks) one summons issued:

- 1-Section 8E (unauthorized vehicle in restricted area)

Brookhaven Town Code (BTO) one summons issued

- 1-Section 3-1 (open alcohol in park)

## **ARRESTS**

These details have led to numerous arrests related to many offenses, dumping, stolen dirt bikes and other offenses.





## **Environmental Education and Outreach Division**

Melissa Griffiths Parrott, Environmental Education & Outreach Coordinator

The Environmental Education and Outreach Division develops, coordinates and maintains programming on a regional basis. The services the division provides include:

- Public outreach as a participant in local festivals, conferences and other events
- Working with all Central Pine Barrens staff on special commission projects
- Central Pine Barrens ecology, Long Island watershed, Long Island biodiversity, global biodiversity, the impacts of climate change and "A Day in the Life" educational programming and teacher training opportunities for grades K-12 and higher education institutions
- Opportunities for engagement in Citizen Science
- Creation, organization and presentation of Pine Barrens Ecology-oriented K-12 educational programs
- Writing and distribution of regular press releases and press advisories about newsworthy education and outreach events
- Promotion of educational opportunities and events through social media accounts
- Responding to media, telephone and mail inquires pertaining to environmental education and outreach
- Development and maintenance of important partnerships to advance the mission of the Central Pine Barrens Commission
- Development of new programming promoting educational opportunities
- Representing the Central Pine Barrens Commission at national and international educational, scientific and advocacy conferences and events
- Grant writing to support new and ongoing programming

In 2020, the education and outreach programs adapted to COVID-19 restrictions and took the programming virtual or reduced the numbers of participants.

1. Developed, implemented and taught environmental education programs to grades k-12, STEM and STEAM related classes, high school research classes, higher education classes and various outreach events in a virtual environment. The division continued to focus primarily on direct interaction with students, teachers and environmental professionals through hands-on programming, by increasing the number of one-to-one opportunities with students.

2. Reached approximately 2,000 youth and adults through speaking engagements and school programs. And through our redesigned virtual programming, virtual public programs, "A Day in the Life" events, Pine Barrens Discovery Day, Barrens to Bay summer camp and speaking engagements.
3. Continued to develop, coordinate and implement one-day synoptic educational events titled: "A Day in the Life" of a river. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and schools working remotely, the program was adapted this year. Some schools were still able to go out in small groups. For those that could not, staff filmed us at each site and classes watched the videos and then completed their own water quality tests in their classroom. All our videos are on the Central Pine Barrens Commission YouTube page. We filmed on the Carmans River, within the Peconic Estuary and on the Nissequogue River, the Connetquot River, the Forge River and Fire Island.

Commission Education and Outreach staff in 2020:



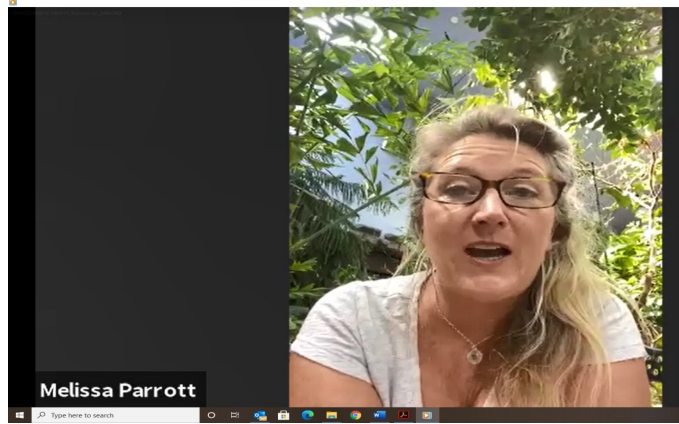
- Partnered for a fifth year our "A Day in the Life" program with school districts and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory's DNA Learning Center and "Barcode Long Island" project.



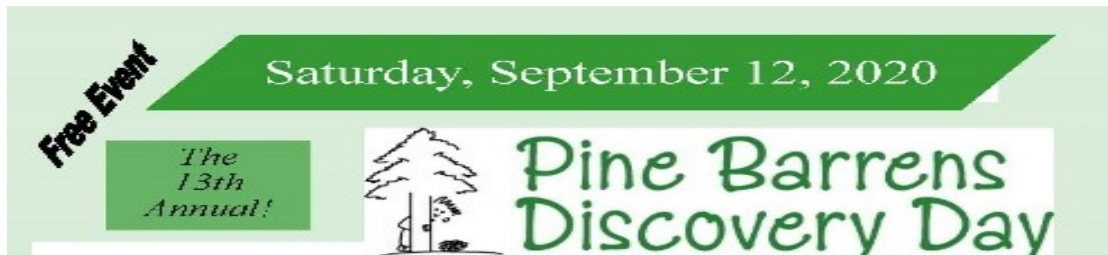
**Barcode Long Island and "A Day in the Life"**  
A unique and collaborative opportunity for students to study the biodiversity of Long Island's river and estuary ecosystems



- Developed, organized, and directed our 13th annual "Barrens to Bay" summer camp. This camp is operated in partnership with Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge in Shirley, which is located within the Core Preservation Area of the Central Pine Barrens. 2020 challenged us on the best way to hold camp. We decided to do a live virtual camp experience using Zoom. We provided live programming twice a week and traveled to naturally diverse locations across Long Island, including the Center for Environmental Education and Discovery, Quogue Wildlife Refuge, Fire Island National Seashore, the Great South Bay, Fire Island (with the Suffolk County Parks Department), Sweetbriar Nature Center, the Long Island Aquarium and Morton and Target Rock Wildlife Refuges. We utilized our many partnerships to enhance the education opportunities. Each presentation was well attended by our campers.



- Held our 14th annual Pine Barrens Discovery Day event, also adapted to fit the new COVID-19 restrictions. In lieu of a large event, we chose to host several hikes within the Pine Barrens. This allowed a limited number of the general public to engage and learn about the Central Pine Barrens. The hikes were led by some of Long Island's premier naturalists and each walk was well attended.



- Presented at a variety of programs and conferences such as the Youth Assembly at the United Nations and virtual library programs on topics such as Climate Change on Long Island, Pine Barrens Ecology and Long Island Biodiversity.





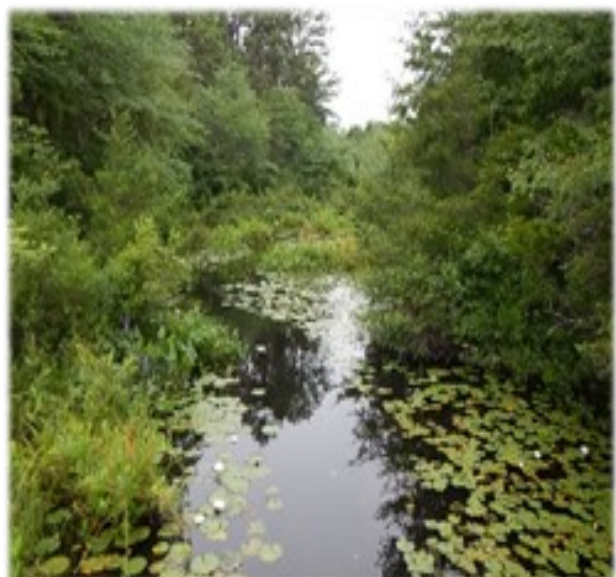
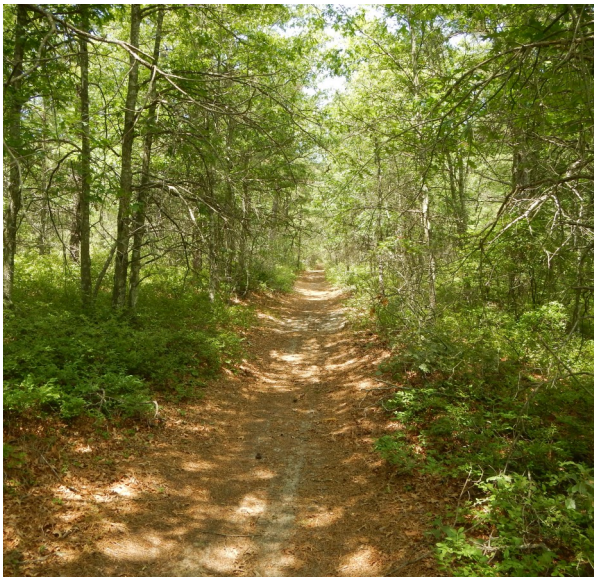
## Land Use and Planning Division

Julie Hargrave, Principal Environmental Planner

In 2020, the Central Pine Barrens Commission's Land Use and Planning Division diligently reviewed land use development proposals and applications under the commission's regulatory jurisdiction pursuant to ECL Article 57 and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Presentations of land use matters occurred at monthly commission meetings and public hearings.

Land use division activities in 2020 included:

- Providing comments on SEQRA coordination referrals on development projects received from the Towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead, and Southampton, Suffolk County and New York State agencies. Projects involve residential, commercial, industrial and other land use-related actions such as zone changes. In 2020, approximately 20 referrals were received.
- Reviewing Requests for Determination of Jurisdiction for the commission.
- Drafting the Supplemental Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan amendments.
- Responding to daily inquiries and requests from the public and others for information related to land use, planning and development matters in the Central Pine Barrens.
- Performing site inspections and overseeing restoration activities on development project sites to confirm compliance with conditional decisions granted by the commission.
- Continuing to update the commission website with development application information, decisions and statistics.
- Assisting with FOIL requests on land use development project matters.
- Managing the Central Pine Barrens Commission-USGS five-year water resources monitoring study in the Central Pine Barrens.
- Participating in the committees of the Peconic Estuary Partnership.



**Determination of Jurisdiction (in the Core Preservation Area, unless otherwise noted):**

- Army Corps of Engineers Dwarf Pine Plains munitions removal, 4,300 acres
- Cathedral Pines innovative alternative wastewater treatment system
- County Road 21 drainage improvements
- Island Water Park Site Plan, 42 acres (Compatible Growth Area)
- Jeni Kreiger residence, 0.6 acre
- Quogue Wildlife Refuge septic upgrade, storage/maintenance barn, expansion of existing nature center, 305 acres



**Applications**

Reviewed land use development applications for hardship waiver exemptions, assertion of jurisdiction, development of regional significance and other proposals. Prepared staff reports for public hearings, SEQRA documentation and drafted decisions for projects under review by the commission including:

**Assertion of Jurisdiction Application:**

- Lewis Road Planned Residential Development Assertion of Jurisdiction. Seasonal resort with 118 residences and a private, 18-hole golf course, 608 acres (CPA, CGA, Critical Resource Area), Southampton (approved January 2021)

**Development of Regional Significance Application:**

- Silver Corporate Park CGA Development of Regional Significance Hardship Waiver, 12-lot subdivision with 550,000 square feet of commercial/industrial uses, 71 acres, Brookhaven (approved)

**Core Preservation Area Hardship Waiver Applications:**

- Joseph F. Gazza 12 lot cluster subdivision (withdrawn), single-family residence (withdrawn), 70 acres, Brookhaven



- Kogel Brothers residence, five acres, Brookhaven (pending)
- Vincent DellaSperanzo two lot subdivision, 1.8 acres, Southampton (withdrawn)

This table reports the number of decisions made by the commission on development applications in the Core Preservation Area and Compatible Growth Area from 1993 through 2020. The commission reviews projects defined as development in New York State Environmental Conservation Law Article 57.

Projects in the Compatible Growth Area involve either a hardship waiver request from development standards contained in the land use plan or require a decision by the Commission because the project was a development of regional significance, in a critical resource area or the Commission asserted its jurisdiction over the project pursuant to NYS ECL Article 57. Development projects in the Core Preservation Area require a hardship waiver from the Commission either based on extraordinary hardship or compelling public need as identified in NYS ECL Article 57.

Pine Barrens Commission Development Project Decisions 1993 through 2020									
Year	Core Preservation Area			Compatible Growth Area			Central Pine Barrens		
	Approvals	Disapprovals	Decisions	Approvals	Disapprovals	Decisions	Approvals	Disapprovals	Decisions
1993	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994	6	2	8	6	1	7	12	3	15
1995	7	4	11	12	2	14	19	6	25
1996	7	2	9	9	0	9	16	2	18
1997	8	1	9	0	0	0	8	1	9
1998	3	1	4	3	0	3	6	1	7
1999	3	2	5	3	0	3	6	2	8
2000	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
2001	7	1	8	1	0	1	8	1	9
2002	4	2	6	0	1	1	4	3	7
2003	2	1	3	2	0	2	4	1	5
2004	1	0	1	4	0	4	5	0	5
2005	3	0	3	6	2	8	9	2	11
2006	1	0	1	4	0	4	5	0	5
2007	0	0	0	3	1	4	3	1	4
2008	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2
2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	2	1	3	1	0	1	3	1	4
2011	1	1	2	3	1	4	4	2	6
2012	1	0	1	2	0	2	3	0	3
2013	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
2014	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
2015	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
2016	1	4	5	1	0	1	2	4	6
2017	1	2	3	3	0	3	4	2	6
2018	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2
2019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	61	30	91	66	9	75	127	39	166



## Science and Stewardship Division

Polly Weigand, Science and Stewardship Program Manager

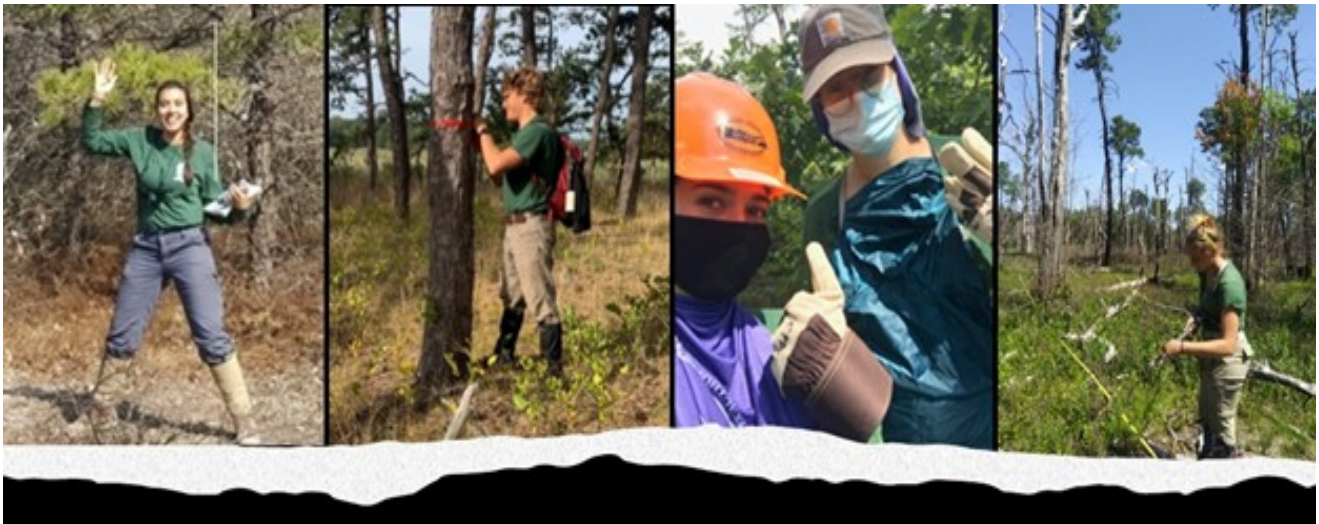
Shaun Ziegler, Senior Ecologist

Robert Panko, Fire Management Specialist

Jade Blennau, Ecological Field Specialist

Broderick DeAngelis, Ecological Field Specialist

In 2020, the Science and Stewardship Division continued to grow in staffing and programming by increasing the organizational capacity to implement prescribed fire, continuing to monitor and manage emerging non-native species such as oak wilt and spotted lanternfly, advance restoration and management of declining ecosystems, support education and outreach programming to increase the public's awareness of Central Pine Barrens ecology, support research initiatives as a means to better understand and manage the Central Pine Barrens and advance professional development. The COVID-19 pandemic made this year challenging as the virus added a new layer of safety precautions to our day-to-day operations; however the division advanced a positive and intentionally-cautious response resulting in a very safe, productive and successful year of achievement as is noted in further detail below.



### Staffing:

The Science and Stewardship Division continued for a second year to expand staffing with the hiring of Jade Blennau and Broderick DeAngelis in the new part-time ecological field specialist positions which were created to assist with increased restoration activities, ecological inventories and research studies. Jade holds a bachelor of science degree in coastal environmental studies from Stony Brook University and has worked locally for The Nature Conservancy's Mashomack Preserve on Shelter Island and has also conducted field research on the Channel Islands of California as well as stewardship and educational programming. Broderick is a recent graduate of Drexel University with a

bachelor of science degree in environmental science. He has a strong science background focused on pine barrens ecosystems, gained from research conducted in New Jersey and participating in the Central Pine Barrens Forest Health monitoring program sponsored by Brookhaven National Laboratory's Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internship program in the summer of 2019. The division was also fortunate to hire three summer interns: Sabrina Cohn, Kassidy Robinson and Alana Falzon whom conducted the final year of data collection for the Central Pine Barrens Forest Health Monitoring program and Empire State Pollinator Survey while honing their field and research skills.

### **Protected Lands Council (PLC):**

Established by the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the PLC is an association of agencies, organizations and individuals who collaboratively advance the protection and restoration of natural, cultural and scenic resources of more than 60,000 acres of public lands in the Central Pine Barrens. Thomas Casey of the Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference and John Wernet, Supervising Forester of NYSDEC Region 1, were reappointed as chair and vice chair respectively in 2020. We are very appreciative for their commitment to leading the PLC.

Due to COVID-19, the spring PLC meeting was cancelled and in its place the PLC co-sponsored two web-based workshops on emerging forest health concerns and tickborne disease prevention. The first, Identifying Menaces to Forest Health – An Early Detection, Rapid Response and Emerging Species Workshop for Land Managers was co-sponsored by Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIISMA), NYSDEC, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County and had well over 150 attendees. The daylong conference, included presentations on emerging non-native pests and diseases of concern, such as winter and brown tailed moths, in an effort to help advance early detection and rapid management response to help prevent establishment in the Central Pine Barrens. Updates on established species, such as southern pine beetle and oak wilt were also provided. Anyone interested in viewing this presentation, should visit the LIISMA You-Tube Channel via this link: <http://www.liisma.org/identifying-threats-to-forest-health-an-early-detection-and-emerging-species-webinar-for-land-managers/>



The second educational program was an informative and engaging presentation entitled the Tick Identification and Tick-Borne Disease Awareness workshop and was given by the very knowledgeable and entertaining Dr. Tamson Yeh of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. As tick exposure and risk of contracting tick-borne illness on Long Island is extremely high, this was a high priority presentation to provide for our staff and colleagues. This extremely beneficial presentation was recorded allowing viewing before each field season via the commission's You-tube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=625wzSjZEms>.

### **Ecosystem Management Planning and Restoration:**

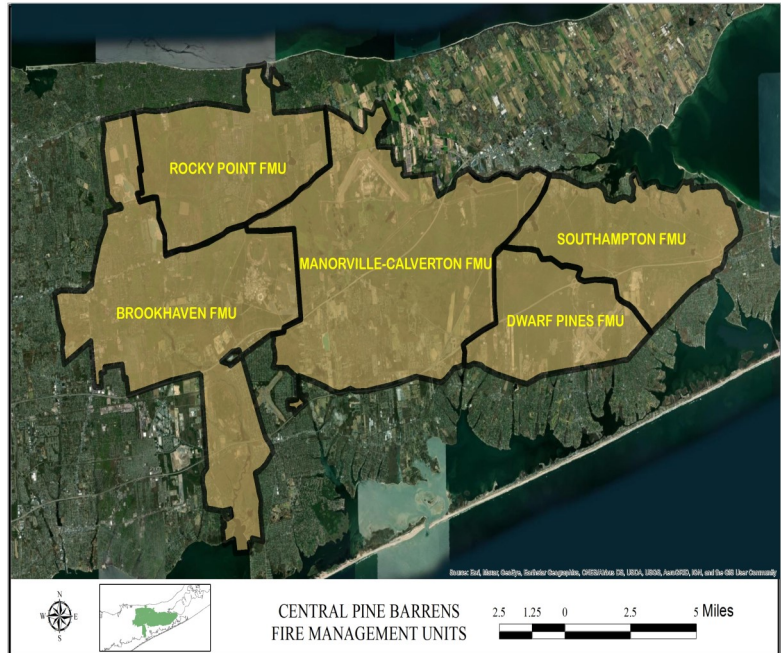
This year, a number of ecosystem planning and restoration activities were undertaken to reintroduce necessary disturbance regimens (such as fire) in order to maintain the ecological health, maximize habitat and species diversity while reducing wildfire risk within the Central Pine Barrens.

#### *Prescribed Fire Management Program*

The Central Pine Barrens is a disturbance-dependent ecosystem that depends on periodic fire to retrogress succession, cycle nutrients, expose mineral soils, reduce competition and reduce pests and disease, which in turn opens niches for species enrichment and recruitment and improves plant vigor and diversity, while increasing food and nesting resources for wildlife. Due to the large wildland urban interface within the region, wildfire suppression is common practice in order to protect the public, their homes, businesses and communities from devastating loss associated with wildfires. Unfortunately, the long-term culture of fire suppression coupled with a lack of active management has inadvertently resulted in a higher wildfire risk due to the accumulation of high fuel loads, degraded ecosystem health and increased disease and pest pressures within the Central Pine Barrens.

Planning: The commission completed the third of its five-year Prescribed Fire Contract provided by the NYSDEC to develop and implement a prescribed fire program for forest health improvement and wildfire risk reduction. Of the many programmatic milestones achieved, one of the timeliest was the drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. This agreement, once finalized, is necessary to permit commission-led prescribed fire on county-owned lands. To help facilitate prescribed fire on other public lands, similar MOU development discussions have commenced this year with NYSDEC, Brookhaven National Laboratory and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Two notable management plan milestones were recognized with the finalization of the first draft of the Comprehensive Prescribed Fire Management Plan, which is a necessary and integral guidance document of a prescribed fire management program. Plan development commenced with the delineation of the Central Pine Barrens into specific prescribed fire management units and the updating of the Central Pine Barrens Wildfire History database. Thereafter, section development commenced detailing the context and



justifications for prescribed fire which included ecology, geology, topography, weather and fire history as well as legal planning and implementation considerations; strategies by which to prioritize and coordinate management; and research and monitoring techniques to advance a safe and adaptive prescribed fire program. In the fall, final planning phases advanced with the initiation of environmental review under State Environmental Quality Review Act and public review. Finalization of the plan, which is expected in January 2021, will bring 30 years of similar prescribed fire management plan attempts by many different agencies to fruition and help ensure prescribed fire becomes standard management practice within the Central Pine Barrens.

On the ground, prescribed fire operations require the development of prescribed burn plans. This year, the division was able to successfully draft two. The first is a Wildfire Drill Zone Prescribed Burn plan within Otis Pike Pine Barrens State Forest, which was finalized in the fall. This progressive training burn plan is the first of its kind to utilize live wildfire suppression drills for training and practical exercises for wildland fire management staff development. A second prescribed burn plan, the South of Currans Woodlands plan, has been written for the management of 121 forested acres in Rocky Point Pine Barrens State Forest (of which 60 acres have been mechanically treated by NYSDEC) to improve protection to nearby subdivisions and forest health as well as help advance resilience to southern pine beetle outbreaks. This plan is currently undergoing internal review that will be followed by outside technical review and then final NYSDEC review and approval.



Education and Outreach: A wealth of unique education and outreach activities were advanced to help increase the public's awareness of pine barrens ecology, prescribed fire and public safety.

In January 2020, Polly Weigand, John Pavacic, Robert Panko, Wildfire Task Force co-vicechair Ed Schneyer (also the director of emergency preparedness of Suffolk County Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services), Fire Marshal John Rankin and Volunteer Firefighter Bayard Fenwick had the fortune to participate in a Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF)- Land Air and Sea segment sponsored viewing and panel discussion on the documentary *Fire in Paradise*. Following the public viewing of the film about the 2018 California Camp Wildfire, the deadliest wildfire since 1918, the panel fielded questions posed by the moderator and attendees covering topics such as the relevancy to local wildfire risk; the resources available within the region to increase preparedness; and what local efforts are being advanced to help improve local ecosystems and resiliency.

The Northeast Forest Fire Compact/Northeast Pest Council winter meeting held in the end of January in Portland Maine provided a valuable platform to facilitate information sharing and networking to support prescribed fire and forest health programs related to emerging pests. Polly Weigand and Shaun Ziegler embraced the opportunity to share the unique challenges, opportunities and needs associated with reintroducing prescribed fire within a fire dependent landscape by presenting "Reintroducing Prescribed Fire in an Urban Landscape – motivations, objectives and progress" at the compact's general session. This presentation was very well received and numerous tenured fire practitioners and land managers provided support and recommendations to help strengthen and increase the success of this emerging management program.





Locally, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sunrise Fires was well covered by media outlets, which provided ample opportunities to reflect on past wildfires as well as highlight the ecology, wildfire risk and prescribed fire programming within the Central Pine Barrens. A series of articles were published by the *Express News Group* with Weigand, Ziegler and Pavacic providing interviews and photos covering ecology, wildfire response and personal reflections. Press coverage on the Sunrise Fires was also provided by News12 with Pavacic providing quotes for the retrospective.

Rounding out the education component of the year, was a field tour and discussion for Dr. Steve Raciti's field ecology course from Hofstra University, which was conducted in the Rocky Point Pine Barrens State Forest Demonstration Forest in the fall of 2020. It was a perfect morning to provide support to a local higher educational institution's initiative to increase local students' awareness and understanding of the Central Pine Barrens and hopefully inspire them to pursue a career or research in disturbance or fire ecology.







**Mutual Aid Assistance:** Weather conditions aligned early this year, allowing for prescribed fire season to commence earlier than usual (in February) at the Fresh Pond grassland in Calverton. NYSDEC's Department of Forest Protection led this prescribed fire grassland operation as well as two additional grassland burns within Otis Pike Pine Barrens State Forest, ensuring 134.5 acres of habitat management, staff training and task book signoffs.

COVID-19 Testing Center Response Assistance: Shaun Ziegler, Robert Panko and John Pavacic put their incident command system knowledge and experience to work at the onset of the pandemic by providing initial and critical guidance in setting up the NYS COVID- 19 Stony Brook Testing Facility. Thereafter, Shaun continued to provide staffing assistance by serving as the planning section chief and was integral in creating and establishing the facility’s planning section from March 18 through the end of April. Pavacic followed up with sustaining support, relieving Ziegler from this important yet time-intensive response.

**From the Forest to a (Very Important) Parking Lot: Central Pine Barrens Commission Employees Play Key Role at Stony Brook COVID-19 Testing Site**



Professional Development/Training: Staff capacity to conduct and support prescribed fires increased this year, with Senior Ecologist Shaun Ziegler successfully completing National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) coursework including: L380-Fireline Leadership, S430-Operations Section Chief and S590-Advanced Fire Behavior Interpretation, all of which are required courses for achieving NWCG prescribed fire burn boss qualification. Additionally, Ecological Field Specialists Jade Blennau and Broderick DeAngelis successfully completed New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy (NYWIMA) the S130-190-Fire Fighting Training/Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior course and field day, which provided them with the necessary training and qualifications to participate in prescribed fire operations. At that training, Shaun Ziegler and Fire Management Specialist Robert Panko assisted with teaching responsibilities, which allowed NYWIMA to safely host this important course Blennau and DeAngelis further increased their skill set by passing the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department ATV operations training course, which provided the necessary training to facilitate safe and certified use by staff for field work and operations.

Polly Weigand and Shaun Ziegler continue to advance their training to support the commission’s drone program. Both are licensed drone operators and had been participating in hands-on drone pilot training course offered by NYSDEC in order to hone drone piloting skills and develop an agency practice and training regime. Unfortunately, like many other trainings and operations, COVID-19 halted the training regimen, which the team hopes to resume in the spring of 2020.

Shaun Ziegler and Jerry Tverdyy attended five days of federal web-based training and workshops to prepare for National Fire Danger Rating System changes on new fire danger processing and reporting methodologies.



### *Southern Pine Beetle:*

Since being first discovered on Long Island in 2014, the southern pine beetle has successfully established itself as a persisting and impactful forest pest. In less than a decade, this little but tenacious beetle has and continues to cause significant and substantial loss of pitch pines from forests and urban areas and as a result incurs high management, public safety and recovery costs.

A multi-agency planning and management response continues to be coordinated through the Incident Command System to suppress devastating outbreaks of this pest and reduce the loss of its preferred host, the pitch pine (*pinus rigida*) led by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and supported by the U.S. Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Suffolk County Department of Parks and Recreation, National Park Service, Town of Southampton, Town of Brookhaven, prominent southern pine beetle scientists and others. The commission continues to be a very active partner in southern pine beetle response, participating in numerous planning meetings and trainings; serving as the restoration branch leader as well as temporarily serving as the survey branch leader and providing technical support to agencies, municipalities and the public related to suppression, hazard tree removal and restoration.

Thanks to ongoing suppression efforts, there has been a declining trend in outbreaks of the beetle since 2019, with less frequent and smaller scale outbreaks as compared to 2014-2018. In 2020, the largest outbreak was observed in North Sea in the Town of Southampton. Within the Central Pine Barrens, a new outbreak was documented and suppressed on the eastern side of Warbler Woods in Yaphank within the Dennis Puleston County Park, while the SPB infestations in Hubbard, Sears Bellows, Manorville Hills and Robert Cushman Murphy County Parks remained small in size and readily suppressed.

In order to help ensure outbreaks and spread remained low, the division and NYSDEC deployed rapid detection and suppression response. Ground truthing of suspected outbreaks resulted in the flagging of 1,030 infested and buffer pines, of which 556 were cut shortly thereafter by the NYSDEC Forest Health Sawyer crew as part of cut

and leave suppression. The remaining trees were not cut because the southern pine beetle already emerged and already killed the tree at the time of suppression or the infested tree was located where cutting could not commence. Cut and leave suppression is the standard treatment technique for infested pines as a means to reduce populations and potential for mass attack, as the action creates a twofold disruption of the life cycle. The action of cutting forces dispersal of southern pine beetle before the beetle is mature in an attempt to reduce survival by exposing the insect to the environment when most vulnerable. Second, the openings created in the canopy through suppression cutting help with minimizing reproduction and mass attack by dissipating pheromone plumes that attract the beetle. The commission will continue to remain vigilant in supporting inventories and suppression in an effort to keep the "Pine" in the Central Pine Barrens!

Southern pine beetle is not just a Central Pine Barrens issue but a regional issue that has spread northward. In an effort to help suppress the beetle outside the boundaries of the Central Pine Barrens and help prevent further spread and impact to regional ecosystems, Polly Weigand contributed the article highlighted below providing the following update on outbreaks in East Hampton.



**Oak Wilt:**

Oak wilt, a serious fungal disease of oaks, was discovered west of Connetquot State Park in 2016 with additional infections confirmed between Brooklyn and Orient Point in 2017. The commission continued to support NYSDEC monitoring and reporting of oaks displaying symptoms of oak wilt as well as help providing public outreach regarding this disease. A fortunate outcome of these efforts is that for a second year in a row, there were no detections of oak wilt on Long Island, a trend that we hope will continue to protect the most abundant, common and beneficial wildlife tree of the region.

### *Sandplain Grassland Network:*

The commission serves on the Sandplain Grassland Network Steering Committee, a regional collaborative effort to coordinate grassland management and research within the Northeast from Long Island to Maine. Grasslands are being lost at a faster rate than any other habitats due to development, conversion to agriculture, invasive species encroachment, natural succession and emerging issues such as climate change. The commission has contributed to a web-based resource guidebook which condenses regional grassland research making it readily available to advance restoration, management and monitoring reflective of previous land uses, current levels of rarity, diversity and species compositions. While

a field trip to Albany Pine Bush was postponed due to COVID-19, the working group shifted its focus to converting the guidebook into a manuscript for publishing in a scientific journal as well as researching and drafting grant applications to help advanced grassland mapping and management in the face of climate change. Interested in keeping up with our most recent activities? Check out the new "What's New Feature" on the Sandplain Grassland Network's homepage: <https://sandplainingrassland.net/>



### *Invasive Species Management:*

The widely recognized definition of an invasive species is "a species that is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health." Invasive species are recognized as the leading cause of loss of biodiversity along with development and as such, continue to be a prominent focus of the commission.

Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIISMA): The division remains an active partner of LIISMA, the local Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) which is a voluntary partnership of more than 50 entities who collaborate and share information related to invasive species education and management for purposes of prevention, early detection and rapid response, mapping, training, and prioritization and planning. Staff participated in the New York State PRISM monthly conference calls and webinars and continues to be an active partner within LIISMA in co-hosting presentations and workshops as highlighted in the PLC section of this report.

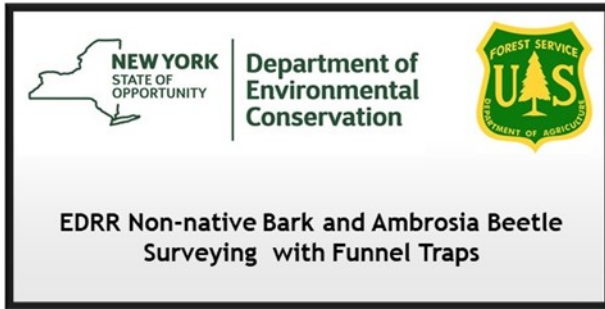
Early Detection, Rapid Response: The division regularly surveys ecosystems and maps detections of many different non-native species, especially those that are new or emerging, in order to help prevent establishment and protect habitats and species of concern. Caper spurge (*euphorbia lathyris*) is an example of an emerging invasive species that has been actively managed by the division in hopes of eradicating it from the Central Pine Barrens. Hand pulling continued for a fourth season in East Quogue and third year at the Hampton Bays Transfer station. Currently these efforts have been successful in containing this caustic plant and hopefully eradication will be accomplished with further dedicated monitoring and management.



Chinese Silvergrass (*miscanthus sinensis*), the popular but increasingly invasive ornamental grass has been observed escaping into grasslands and roadsides. Within the grasslands just east of Calverton National Cemetery, the division busted out shovels, pulaskis and a bit of muscle to dig out a total of 30 mature bunches of miscanthus and also removed an additional five specimens from NYSDEC's Eastport Conservation Area.



These areas as well as the other regional grasslands will continue to be monitored for miscanthus invasion in order to prevent these ecologically valued habitats from transitioning into a monotypic stand of non-native miscanthus.



A six-week NYSDEC and US Forest Service-sponsored trapping study to facilitate early detection of non-native ambrosia and bark beetles around high-risk transportation and trade hubs across New York was conducted in the spring 2020. A total of 12 trap locations were monitored bi-weekly from May through July from Brooklyn to Hampton Bays with the division monitoring the traps installed in NYSDEC’s Henry’s Hollow Pine Barrens State Forest and Southaven County Park and Town of Brookhaven lands off River Road. Results from this study will help the NYSDEC, United States Forest Service, the commission and landowners rapidly respond to newly detected non-native pests that may threaten regional forest health, especially within the Central Pine Barrens.

*Scientific Research and Monitoring*

In order to best manage the Central Pine Barrens, understanding the complex ecological processes and species interactions requires progressive research and monitoring. The division has been helping support the below listed collaborative approaches in an effort to expand and support research, especially as it relates to ecosystem and species trajectories that are being driven by urbanization, climate change, sea level rise, restoration and management.

SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) Cooperative Research Program: The Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) recently established a cooperative research program to help guide and increase scientific research occurring within this unique and valuable ecosystem. To further strengthen and support this collaborative initiative, this year the commission and ESF established a similar Memorandum of Understanding to support future research collaboratives within the Central Pine Barrens. Additionally, as addressed in the prescribed fire section of this update, the commission is also in the development phase of establishing a MOU with BNL to bring this collaborative full circle.



Forest Health Monitoring Program: The second phase of the Long-Term Forest Health Monitoring Study (FHM) commenced in 2019 as a multi-entity partnership with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) and the Commission. In the summer of 2020, the second and final year of field sampling for this study commenced utilizing the division's intern field crew (in place of the SULI program which was cancelled due to COVID-19) which was led by field team leader Joanna Lumbsden-Pinto, doctoral candidate for ESF. With half the number of interns as last year, the field team exhibited perseverance and dedication by successfully sampling all 51 of the slated plots; establishing and sampling 10 new plots as well as digitizing and conducting quality assurance and control. Many accolades are extended to the interns, 2019 SULI intern and 2020 ESF volunteer Haley Gladitsch, the division staff and Lumbsden for their collaborative effort to finalize this enormous data collection effort in a safe and successful manner. The commission looks forward to Ms. Lumbsden's dissertation findings which will identify the trajectory of the Central Pine Barrens' forest health and will be used to inform the need for future management actions.



## NYNHP Empire State Pollinator Survey CWMI/NYS DOT Manufactured Soil and Pollinator Study



Pollinator Surveys: This year was the year of the insect inventories. The division finalized two pollinator survey programs in partnership with the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) and the Cornell Waste Management Institute (WMI). The Empire State Pollinator Survey, a “multi-year effort to inventory and assess the current state and distribution of pollinators in order to develop and implement future conservation practices,” was spearheaded by the NYNHP. Surveying for flies, bees, beetles and moths was conducted at numerous sites across New York, Long Island and within the Central Pine Barrens in order to document the occurrence and diversity of pollinators inhabiting grasslands, forests, wetlands and roadsides as well as the taxon’s response to management activities. In the past two years, the division sampled a total of 14 sites via hand netting and bee bowl trapping then pinning and mailing the trap catch to NYNHP for identification.

The Manufactured Soil and Pollinator study coordinated by the WMI and funded by the New York State Department of Transportation was the second pollinator study of the year that the division supported. This statewide study examined the relationship between predominant soil types of the region, the dominant vegetation of grasslands and pollinators inhabiting these herbaceous ecosystems. Study findings will allow best management practice development for disturbance remediation and restoration needs associated with NYSDOT road and right-of-way maintenance and construction activities. Seasonal pollinator sampling as well as soil coring was conducted at four grasslands by the division. The plant lists for each grassland sourced from Polly Weigand’s master’s thesis provided the key floristic data set needed for this important program. We thank the NYNHP and CWI for engaging the commission in this programming, which will help land managers better understand the valued species inhabiting the Central Pine Barrens and how to best restore their habitat. Results and reports from both studies are anticipated in 2022-23.



## Compliance, Enforcement and Mitigation Assistance

Compliance, Enforcement and Mitigation Assistance: The division regularly works with public land managers, the PLC, the Law Enforcement Council, and the New York State Attorney General's office to help mitigate encroachments, dumping, ATV damage and vandalism within the Central Pine Barrens. This year, the division staff most notably provided extensive technical assistance in restoration planning to the state Attorney General's office for a serious case in the Town of Brookhaven that involved clearing, dumping and earth moving on properties in the Core Preservation Area, some of which are Suffolk County nature preserve land and lands encumbered by commission-held conservation easements. Significant time was also dedicated to developing restoration plans and monitoring restoration plantings at two encroachment sites in Middle Island. At the restored location, planted native vegetation has established well and reduced invasive species abundance; however, invasive species such as mile-a-minute vine and Japanese siltgrass continue to require management. Also, seedlings of a miscanthus sinensis were found encroaching the restored site. At the second encroachment site, which is slated for restoration in 2021, Japanese stiltgrass, wineberry (*rubus phoenicolasius*), and mile-a-minute vine were detected and hand pulled at the encroachment area adjacent to a residential location. Due to the size and severity of these encroachments, restoration at these sites will be ongoing.

## **Pine Barrens Credit Clearinghouse**

James T.B. Tripp, Esq., Senior Counsel, Environmental Defense Fund, Chair

Andrew Freleng, Chief Planner, Suffolk County Div. of Planning & Environment, Vice Chair

The Long Island Pine Barrens Protection Act specified the need for land use protection mechanisms to protect the Core Preservation Area (CPA) that included the purchase of development rights that later came to fruition when the 1995 Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan was completed and the Pine Barrens Credit Program, a transfer of development rights program, was created. Chapter 6 of the land use plan outlines the overall credit program that defines sending and receiving areas, specifies operating procedures and tracking requirements and includes credit allocation formulas. The plan specified a five-member Clearinghouse Board of Advisors to oversee the operation and implementation of the credit program and is comprised of representatives for the State of New York, Suffolk County and the Towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead and Southampton, which are appointed by these entities and serve without compensation.



Owners and purchasers of pine barrens credits transact business in an open market, with all credits and transactions tracked by the clearinghouse from beginning to end. The clearinghouse can choose to actively assist the market by offering to purchase credits as it has done in prior years. Information on prior clearinghouse initiatives to purchase credits is available on the commission's website at <https://pb.state.ny.us/>. The Clearinghouse also publishes a monthly Registry which lists potential buyers and sellers of credits that is also available on the commission's website.

This update reports on 2020 credit program statistics including credit sales and prices, intermunicipal redemptions, clearinghouse funds, other activities and conservation easement enforcement.

### **2020 Credit Program Activity and Statistics**

Credit program transactions and core parcels that have been preserved since the inception of the program in 1995 are captured in the information provided in Table 1 along with highlights of the program's activity in 2020.

Except where noted, the statistics reflect the program's activity across the three participating towns, Brookhaven, Riverhead and Southampton. Individual town level breakdowns are available in tables 1 through 4 and on the commission's website at <https://pb.state.ny.us/our-work/credit-program-tdr/program-overview/>

### *Acreage Enrolled*

As of January 1, 2021, there are 993 parcels enrolled in the program (see Table 1), which are now protected from future development or for partially developed parcels, from further development since they have conservation easements placed on them. The development potential has been removed from these parcels and translated into pine barrens credits in a certificate form. The owner may either use them directly to develop outside of the CPA or can sell to a developer who may need credits to satisfy town zoning code requirements for extra development density or Suffolk County Department of Health Services sanitary requirements. The total acreage that has been encumbered by conservation easements is approximately 2,145 acres, with an average parcel size of 2.16 acres. From the larger Central Pine Barrens preservation perspective, these easement protected lands comprise approximately 3.7 % of the statutorily defined 57,817 acre CPA.

Table 1. Pine Barrens Credit Program Statistics as of January 1, 2021

<b>Easement Protected Lands and Pine Barrens Credits As of January 1, 2021</b>								
	<b>Brookhaven</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Riverhead</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Southampton</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Parcels</b>	509	5	36	0	448	0	993	5
<b>Acreage</b>	781.96	2.5	516.60	0	846.71	0	2145.27	2.5
<b>Average parcel size</b>	1.54	0.50	14.35	0	1.89	0	2.16	0.50
<b>Credits generated</b>	532.91	2.34	172.39	0	330.94	0	1036.24	2.34
<b>Credits redeemed</b>	343.97	8.46	131.16	1.15	151.32	8.09	626.45	17.7
<b>Credits not redeemed</b>	188.94	-6.12	41.23	-1.15	179.62	-8.09	409.79	-15.36
<b>Credits sold</b>	558.03	7.41	218.3	0	253.11	6.09	1029.44	13.5
<b>Total value of PBC transactions through this date</b>	\$29,429,819	\$686,475	\$7,961,747	0	\$16,914,582	\$465,500	\$54,306,148	\$1,151,975
<b>Average Credits value</b>		\$92,642				\$76,437		\$85,331
<b>Credits owned by the Clearinghouse</b>	10.19		-		-		10.19	
<b># of Inspected CE Parcels</b>	-	71	-	5	-	38	-	114
<b># of Installed CE Signs</b>	69	49	7	6	76	20	152	75

### Credits Issued, Redeemed and In Circulation

Since the start of the program in 1995 (the first credits were actually issued in 1996), 1036.24 credits have been issued. Of these, 626.45 have been redeemed (60% of the issued credits), while the remaining 409.79 credits remain "outstanding" (i.e., issued but still in private hands and unredeemed). The Pine Barrens Credit Clearinghouse owns 10.19 credits at this time that were purchased in 2011 through an offer made by the clearinghouse to spend up to \$1 million to purchase credits from credit owners located in the Town of Brookhaven.

During 2020, 17.7 credits were redeemed and 2.34 credits were generated. The net inventory level of the outstanding credits went down by 15.36 credits, which slightly reduced the ratio on the side of unredeemed credits. (See Table 1)

### **Credit Sales and Prices Recorded**

There were 13.5 credits sold during 2020. The average "per credit" sales price is \$85K (with the range from \$55K up to \$120K "per credit"). To place this in a historical perspective, this 2020 average unit price is close to the 2011 year level. Finally, from the program's inception to January 1, 2021, the PBC Program has recorded a grand total of \$54.3 million in private sales. The complete history of credit sale prices by year and by Town is in Table 2.

Table 2. *Pine Barrens Credit sale prices as of January 1, 2021*

Pine Barrens Credit Sales 1996 through 2020												
Year	Brookhaven Town			Riverhead Town			Southampton Town			Totals		
	# PBCs	Sales Value	Avg PBC Value	# PBCs	Sales Value	Avg PBC Value	# PBCs	Sales Value	Avg PBC Value	# PBCs	Sales Value	Avg PBC Value
1996	1.00	7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	7,500.00	7,500.00
1997	31.18	383,140.00	12,288.01	56.17	561,700.00	10,000.00	4.52	48,814.00	10,799.56	91.87	993,654.00	10,815.87
1998	67.88	1,016,760.00	14,978.79	0.10	500.00	5,000.00	5.84	57,500.00	9,845.89	73.82	1,074,760.00	14,559.20
1999	54.95	1,445,902.00	26,313.05	18.19	245,600.00	13,501.92	0.72	8,050.00	11,180.56	73.86	1,699,552.00	23,010.45
2000	36.29	1,280,211.00	35,277.24	6.00	102,000.00	17,000.00	9.71	194,200.00	20,000.00	52.00	1,576,411.00	30,315.60
2001	29.04	1,142,000.00	39,325.07	7.00	118,000.00	16,857.14	0.89	19,900.00	22,359.55	36.93	1,279,900.00	34,657.46
2002	49.56	1,973,400.00	39,818.40	26.98	485,640.00	18,000.00	1.77	53,800.00	30,395.48	78.31	2,512,840.00	32,088.37
2003	60.02	2,920,350.00	48,656.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.84	173,450.00	61,073.94	62.86	3,093,800.00	49,217.31
2004	16.85	1,209,550.00	71,783.38	6.00	288,000.00	48,000.00	10.59	912,700.00	86,185.08	33.44	2,410,250.00	72,076.85
2005	2.00	232,500.00	116,250.00	2.15	146,000.00	67,906.98	38.89	2,877,900.00	74,001.03	43.04	3,256,400.00	75,659.85
2006	7.50	830,000.00	110,666.67	1.00	70,000.00	70,000.00	53.80	3,779,750.00	70,255.58	62.30	4,679,750.00	75,116.37
2007	13.68	1,353,000.00	98,903.51	2.10	208,000.00	99,047.62	16.55	1,488,350.00	89,930.51	32.33	3,049,350.00	94,319.52
2008	5.50	456,000.00	82,909.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	9.85	795,450.00	80,756.35	15.35	1,251,450.00	81,527.69
2009	13.24	1,060,650.00	80,109.52	1.64	123,000.00	75,000.00	3.84	299,786.00	78,069.27	18.72	1,483,436.00	79,243.38
2010	3.11	251,622.49	80,907.55	0.40	26,000.00	65,000.00	47.57	2,607,030.00	54,804.08	51.08	2,884,652.49	56,473.23
2011	26.32	2,316,926.41	88,029.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.02	195,000.27	64,569.63	29.34	2,511,926.68	85,614.41
2012	6.55	486,000.00	74,198.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.20	602,000.00	73,414.63	14.75	1,088,000.00	73,762.71
2013	5.99	439,620.00	73,392.32	9.24	541,450.00	58,598.48	3.15	210,500.00	66,825.40	18.38	1,191,570.00	64,829.71
2014	5.59	488,562.50	87,399.37	43.91	2,729,570.00	62,162.83	0.78	55,400.00	71,025.64	50.28	3,273,532.50	65,106.06
2015	0.99	79,450.00	80,252.53	27.00	1,543,387.50	57,162.50	1.00	85,000.00	85,000.00	28.99	1,707,837.50	58,911.26
2016	30.85	2,378,550.32	77,100.50	6.26	406,900.00	65,000.00	4.88	323,450.00	66,280.74	41.99	3,108,900.32	74,039.06
2017	4.07	333,600.00	81,965.60	2.06	137,000.00	66,504.85	10.48	812,850.00	77,562.02	16.61	1,283,450.00	77,269.72
2018	18.15	1,432,250.00	78,911.85	2.43	161,500.00	66,460.91	5.68	463,050.00	81,522.89	26.26	2,056,800.00	78,324.45
2019	61.31	5,225,800.00	85,235.69	0.90	67,500.00	75,000.00	5.02	385,152.00	76,723.51	67.23	5,678,452.00	84,463.07
2020	7.41	686,475.00	92,641.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.09	465,500.00	76,436.78	13.50	1,151,975.00	85,331.48
<b>Totals</b>	<b>559.03</b>	<b>29,429,819.72</b>	<b>52,644.44</b>	<b>219.53</b>	<b>7,961,747.50</b>	<b>36,267.24</b>	<b>255.68</b>	<b>16,914,582.27</b>	<b>66,155.28</b>	<b>1,034.24</b>	<b>54,306,149.49</b>	<b>52,508.27</b>

### **Intermunicipal and Intertown Flows of Credits**

As of January 1, 2021, a total of 137.69 credits have crossed a municipal boundary (town or village) from their sending parcels to their receiving parcels, representing approximately 22% of all redeemed credits, or approximately one in every five redeemed credits (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Intermunicipal Flows of Pine Barrens Credits as of January 1, 2021*

Intermunicipal Flows of Pine Barrens Credits as of 1/1/2021				
Destinations	Originating from			Totals
	Brookhaven	Riverhead	Southampton	
Babylon (District 100)	0.67	3.61	4.68	8.96
Brookhaven Unincorporated (District 200)		33.19	14.01	47.2
South Country Village (202)	0.54			0.54
Patchogue Village (204)	0.2			0.2
East Hampton Village (302)			2.75	2.75
Huntington Unincorporated (400)		1		1
Islip Unincorporated (500)	11.38	16.3	16.14	43.82
Hauppauge Village (504)	0.53		1.17	1.7
Riverhead Unincorporated (District 600)	3.05		0.16	3.21
Smithtown Unincorporated (800)			0.1	0.1
Southampton Unincorporated (District 900)	0.46			0.46
Quogue Village (902)			0.37	0.37
Southampton Village (904)			18.67	18.67
Westhampton Beach Village (905)			8.71	8.71
Totals	16.83	54.1	66.76	137.69

From a strictly intertown perspective, 105.19 of these 137.69 credits crossed a town boundary, representing 17% of all redeemed credits, or approximately one in every six redeemed credits (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Intertown Flows of Pine Barrens Credits as of January 1, 2021*

Intertown Flows of Pine Barrens Credits as of 1/1/2021				
Destinations	Originating from			Totals
	Brookhaven	Riverhead	Southampton	
Babylon (District 100)	0.67	3.61	4.68	8.96
Brookhaven (District 200)		33.19	14.01	47.2
East Hampton Village (302)			2.75	2.75
Huntington (District 400)		1		1
Islip (District 500)	11.38	16.3	12.13	39.81
Hauppauge Village (504)	0.53		1.17	1.7
Riverhead (District 600)	3.05		0.16	3.21
Smithtown (District 800)			0.1	0.1
Southampton (District 900)	0.46			0.46
Totals	16.09	54.1	35	105.19

In 2020, 0.8 credits were redeemed to the Town of Brookhaven, 0.25 to the Town of Riverhead and 16.65 credits to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services for sewage flow intensity and additional density increases.

### **Clearinghouse Funds**

The clearinghouse currently has approximately \$2.5 million in available funds which are administered by the Suffolk County Treasurer's Office. Interest earnings for 2020 were in the amount of \$4,870.72. There were no new deposits or disbursements during 2020.

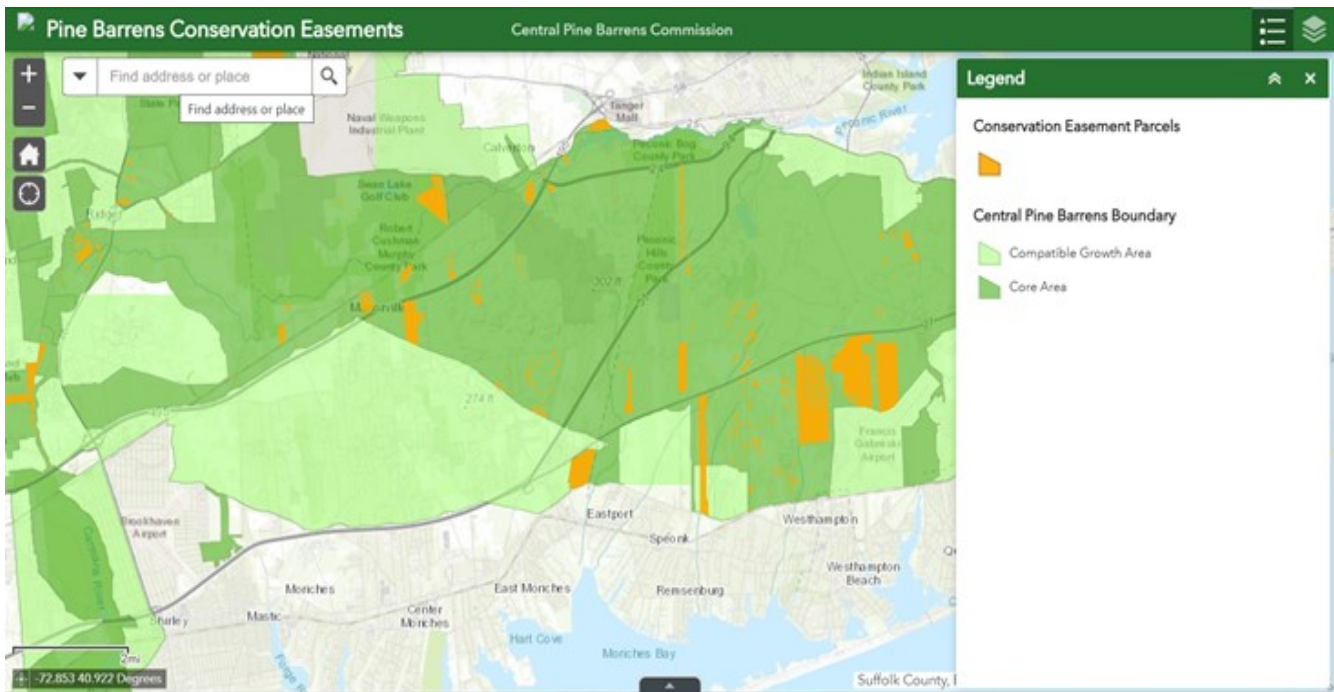
### **Other Credit Program Activities**

In 2020, a total number of 58 Letters of Interpretations were issued, 24 in the Town of Brookhaven, eight in the Town of Riverhead and 26 in the Town of Southampton. Some specific work items included:

- Letters with updated list of conservation easement parcels were sent to the Town of Brookhaven, Riverhead and Southampton Assessor and Planning Departments.
- Letters to the private conservation easement parcel owners were sent reminding them of their obligations under the easement, parcels inspections and installing of the CE signs.
- Letter with updated list of conservation easement parcels was sent to the Suffolk County Real Property Tax Service Agency.
- Letters to solicit participation in the credit program were sent to owners of undeveloped land located in the CPA within the Towns of Southampton, Riverhead and Brookhaven.
- New Pine Barrens credits brochure has been completed and posted on the website.



- Suffolk County GIS portal application was created with layers identifying credit program conservation easement parcels and Central Pine Barrens boundary: <https://gis.suffolkcountyny.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=81c5df97b0974f3d9e03a302edd937ad>

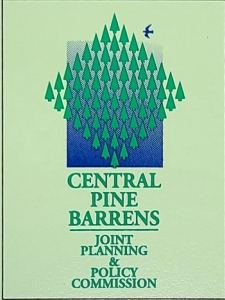


### **Conservation Easement Monitoring and Compliance**

Credit Program staff, working with the commission's Compliance and Enforcement Division enforcement officers, completed onsite inspections for 114 parcels enrolled in the program and installed 75 conservation easement signs on properties with road access.

In 2020, routine monitoring of conservation easement properties continued. Easement monitoring is required to confirm properties are used in accordance with easement provisions, including reserved rights and to protect Central Pine Barrens resources. If an activity is observed that is not consistent with the easement, it is reported to the division. Further research and investigation occur to determine if a violation exists. The division's Incident Reporting System tracks incidents until they are resolved.

Conservation Easement Property



Property protected by  
Central Pine Barrens  
Joint Planning and Policy Commission  
Conservation Easement and Article 57 of the  
New York State Environmental Conservation Law

Uses Restricted

For more information, please contact our office at (631) 288-1079 or at  
info@pb.state.ny.us or visit our website at <https://pb.state.ny.us>



# NEW YORK WILDFIRE & INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

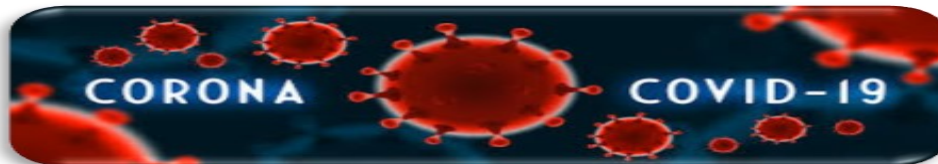
Katherine Malangone, Academy Coordinator

In 2020, the New York Wildfire & Incident Management Academy (NYWIMA) offered the following training opportunities on Long Island:

- Spring 2020 training
- October 2020 — annual fall 10-day training period

## 2020 Spring NYWIMA

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, the 2020 Spring Academy had to be cancelled.



## 2020 October NYWIMA

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, the 2020 fall Academy was reduced to one class and the remainder of offered classes were postponed until the Spring 2021 Academy. The classes scheduled to be held during the 2020 October Academy were:

- S-130/190 Firefighting Training/Intro. to Wildland Fire Behavior (5 day) (postponed)
- S-130/190 Firefighting Training/Intro. to Wildland Fire Behavior (Field Days Only) *HELD*
- S-131 – Firefighter Type 1 (postponed)
- S-211 – Portable Pumps & Water Usage (postponed)
- S-212 – Wildfire Chainsaws with Storm Debris Removal (postponed)
- S-215 – Fire Operations in the Wildland Urban Interface (postponed)
- S-219 – Firing Operations (postponed)
- S-290 – Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (postponed)
- S-330 – Task Force/Strike Team Leader (postponed)
- S-339 – Division/Group Supervisor (postponed)
- L-280 – Followership to Leadership (postponed)
- ATV – All-terrain Vehicle & Driving Operations (postponed)
- BTT – Brush Truck Training (postponed)
- UTV – Off-Highway Vehicle Basic Driver Course (postponed)



## **S-130/190 Firefighting Training/ Intro. to Wildland Fire Behavior – Field Days Only**

The S-130/190 (field days only) was the only class held during the 2020 October Academy and was held on October 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. This class is an introductory course designed to train entry-level firefighters and covers basic incident management organization, firefighting techniques, suppression equipment, safety, tactics and strategy along with field exercises.

This class was held at the Holiday Inn in Holbrook and consisted of 23 students and was taught by local instructors. Participating attending agencies and departments included:

- US Forest Service
- Paul Smith's College
- Onondaga Hill Fire Department
- Pearl River Fire Department
- Pompey Hill Fire Department
- NYSDEC
- West Islip Fire Department
- West Babylon Fire Department
- Brookhaven National Laboratory
- Rocky Point Fire Department
- Hauppauge Fire Department
- Saltaire Volunteer Fire Company
- Syosset Volunteer Fire Department
- Central Pine Barrens Commission



### **Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact**

New York State is a member of the Northeast Forest Fire Protection Compact, a Congressionally-chartered entity comprised of New York, the New England states and six Canadian provinces, in which all members agree to provide mutual aid to one another in actual wildfire responses and cooperate in various wildfire prevention, mitigation and training efforts. The Academy is exploring additional training programs with a number of individual members.



## Central Pine Barrens Commission Staff & Areas of Responsibility

Administration	John W. Pavacic, Executive Director Judy Jakobsen, Deputy Director Carol Sholl-Ostrowski, Administrative Assistant Kathy Delligatti, Academy Coordinator
Communications	Tim Motz, Director of Communications
Compliance & Enforcement Law Enforcement Council	Timothy Huss, Chief Enforcement Officer Michael Lewis & James Mazzio, Enforcement Officers
Environmental Education & Outreach	Melissa Griffiths Parrott, Environmental Education & Outreach Coordinator
Land Use & Planning Advisory Committee	Julie Hargrave, Principal Environmental Planner
Legal	John Milazzo, Esq., Attorney
New York Wildfire & Incident Management Academy	Kathy Malangone, Academy Coordinator John W. Pavacic, Executive Director
Pine Barrens Credit Program	Jerry Tverdy, Senior Environmental Analyst
Science & Stewardship Protected Lands Council	Polly Weigand, Science & Stewardship Manager Shaun Ziegler, Ecologist
Wildfire Task Force	John W. Pavacic, Executive Director Kathy Malangone, Academy Coordinator Judy Jakobsen, Deputy Director Timothy Huss, Chief Enforcement Officer Michael Lewis & James Mazzio, Enforcement Officers



### Office Location & Contact Information

**624 Old Riverhead Road (CR 31)**  
**Westhampton Beach, NY 11978**  
**Main Telephone: 631-288-1079**  
**Fax: 631-288-1367**

### Office & Library Hours

**Monday – Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm**

**Ray Corwin Pine Barrens Reference Library**  
**(open to public by appointment, non-lending)**  
**<https://pb.state.ny.us>    [info@pb.state.ny.us](mailto:info@pb.state.ny.us)**

