

## **Educational Outreach and Communications Division Update**

**April 2025**

**Submitted by Tim Motz, Educational Outreach and Communications Coordinator**

### **Vernal Pools Video for Cooperators Meeting**

- We are deep into filming of our video for this year's Cooperators Meeting, with this installment focused on vernal pools in the Central Pine Barrens. Tough to say exactly at this point, but my estimate is it will run between 12 and 20 minutes. The video features John Turner, a founder of the Pine Barrens Society, covering all aspects of the fascinating spring phenomenon.

### **Brush Fire Media**

- We continue to field media inquiries connected to the massive brush fires that occurred in the Westhampton area in early March. After a blizzard of stories the first week, we averaged about one a week till the present day, the most recent being stories on WSHU, the *East End Beacon* and the *Riverhead News-Review*. Most coverage has been very good, highlighting the great work done by first responders and the impact on the forests.

### **Barrens to Bay Summer Camp**

- Camp is completely full, the earliest to my knowledge that that has happened, and even with session sizes a bit bigger than last year. Additionally, all counselors have been hired or signed up, all supplies have been ordered, and work on additions to the program are underway.

### **"A Day in the Life" Program**

- Work is underway on setting up a forum (now planned for late summer) at which the teachers in the program who have had the most success in utilizing ADITL data in their curricula will teach others how to do so. We're also working on a printed pamphlet explaining the program to distribute/hand out in order to recruit new schools to the program.

### **NYWIMA Promotional Video**

- Our 90-second dynamic video promoting the Commission's New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy is essentially complete, thanks to the additional

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# CENTRAL PINE BARRENS COMMISSION

## Science And Stewardship Program

### Bimonthly Division Report

04/16/2025

## Prescribed Fire Operations 2025

At the end of the first week in March the Commission's prescribed fire squad was fully staffed. The last two staff members (Matthew Elms and Katherine Hooper) arrived the weekend of March 8<sup>th</sup>, the same weekend that the Westhampton Pines fire occurred.

Commission staff (Nate Leclair) was present at the Westhampton Pines on Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup> after the fire had been classified as contained to assist with mop up of the scene. Nate then assisted the newly arriving staff in getting settled in at the Hubbard County Park cabins and outfitted with any PPE they needed for the next day.



*Figure 1: Justin Mangibin and Matthew Elms putting out a hot spot on the Westhampton Pines Fire near Speonk-Riverhead Road.*

From Monday March 10<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday March 12<sup>th</sup> the Commission's prescribed fire squad assisted the NYS DEC's Rangers in patrolling and monitoring for hot spots and ensuring that the fire was completely extinguished. Often logging at least fifteen miles on foot, individually, daily.

By the time the fire was out, the Commission's staff was operating well as a team despite only being together for a few days.

Following the Westhampton Pines Fire the prescribed fire squad and I settled in for a series of training sessions that took up the next few weeks of our time. Training sessions included safety and awareness courses on Tick Safety, CPR/AED (certified), Stop the Bleed (certified), Blood Borne Pathogens, ATV/UTV operation (certified), chainsaw safety, as well as practice sessions on trailering and towing.

Formalized training also occurred in March for the required annual wildland firefighter's refresher course (RT-130) which took place at Brookhaven National Laboratory on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025. During the refresher a fitness exam, referred to as the pack test, was conducted. All Commission prescribed fire squad members participated and completed the "Arduous" level pack test.

On April 1, 2025, the entire prescribed fire squad and I conducted a final training day, in the field, at Rocky Point Pine Barrens State Forest, near Currans Field, as a mock exercise. The purpose was to discuss the various situations they might find themselves in and to explore the various techniques that have been used in previous prescribed fire operations in the Pine Barrens.



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On April 2, 2025, the Fire Squad joined the NYSDEC Rangers for their first prescribed fire of the season and will continue to participate on all prescribed fires within the Central Pine Barrens until the end of May and the close of the 2025 prescribed fire season.

March 24, 2025, saw the departure of one of the prescribed fire squad, Justin Mangibin. Justin had accepted a permanent position with NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Places. While we were sad to see him go, it was for an awesome reason, and we wish him the best as he embarks on his career in environmental science.

Coming up in the next few weeks, I will be meeting with several former employees of the Commission to discuss the previous forest health monitoring and data collection that was being done in areas slated for prescribed fire. While I anticipate some changes to the survey protocols, simplifying and streamlining them for example, it will be good to maintain the integrity of the previous surveys and ensure we have a comprehensive record of the vegetation's response to prescribed fire.

### Conservation Planning

While the prescribed fire program has been my overall focus during the last few months, the conservation planning process is still moving forward with several meetings and a conference serving as the major highlights.

Just before the end of February (27<sup>th</sup>) Commission staff (Judy, Julie, and I) met with three representatives from FOREST (Foundation for Research and Stewardship) to discuss ways for our two organizations to partner moving forward. In the past, FOREST has provided the funding to cover the costs of the prescribed fire squad's housing costs. We are hoping this partnership can help secure additional funding for grant projects and research within the Pine Barrens.

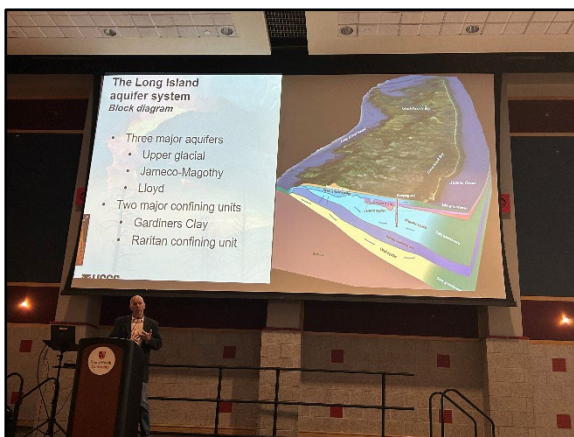


Figure 2: Long Island Natural History Conference at Stony Brook

On March 13, 2025, Commission staff met with academic researchers from SUNY ESF (Environmental Science and Forestry) to discuss planned research on the use and efficacy of air curtain burners, a type of portable incinerator, that can be used to assist in forest management in reducing the quantity of available fuels that can ignite during a wildfire. The CPBC prescribed fire squad will be working directly with the ESF research team as they collect their field data.

March 21, 2025, the Long Island Natural History Conference was held at Stony Brook University. A day long lecture series on various environmental research and projects occurring on Long Island. There were several



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directly relevant presentations on issues that impact the Pine Barrens including, previously undiscovered populations of herpetofauna (Northern Dusky Salamander found near Mill Pond), road and dam crossing projects for River Otter, the state of the aquifers on Long Island, and many other informative talks.

I have also begun establishing connections with some researchers at Seatuck that have been doing work locally on roadway crossings and the impact that roadways can have on some of our local species. I joined a web conference organized through the Four Harbors Audubon Society for a lecture by Ben Goldfarb the author of *Crossings: How Road Ecology is Shaping the Future of our Planet*. While the group and I do not have a specific meeting scheduled, we will be discussing this issue soon and determining how I and the Commission can assist in the ongoing research and project development in this important field.

### Nature Center

During the last few months, I have been participating in the planning meetings for the Nature Center. While I do not have any specific tasks assigned to me as it relates to this topic, it has been an enlightening process that has helped me better understand the current and future roles of not only the Commission itself but the role of the Science and Stewardship division.

I look forward to the remaining conversations, brainstorming, and planning sessions as we continue to refine our wants and needs while balancing that against the various scenarios and potential siting locations.



Figure 3: Pitch Pines that were part of the Westhampton Pine Fires have released their seeds in response to the fire, kick starting the forest rejuvenation process.





## **New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy**

This is a nationally recognized academy which provides wildfire and emergency management training. Academy students are trained to National Wildfire Coordinating Group and National Incident Management System standards by certified instructors from local, state and federal agencies and organizations. The Academy operated three academies over a five-month period, it also is providing specific group or agency training outside of the academy time frame.

This past year NYWIMA took place at Brookhaven National Laboratory, and Suffolk County Fire Academy. During this period, a total of 282 Students participated in 15 classes. They represented 17 states and 56 different agencies at the local, state and federal levels.

At a local level, the Academy offered free training to Nassau and Suffolk Volunteer Firefighters in Wildland Firefighter Training. Volunteers from 16 local Fire Departments took advantage of the classes offered.

### **October Classes:**

I-300 Intermediate ICS	S-290 Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior
I-400 Advanced ICS	S-390 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations
S-130/S190 Wildland Firefighter Training	S-230 Crew Boss
S-130 Field Day	S-231 Engine Boss
S-131 Firefighter Type 1	UAS – FAA 107 Prep
S-219 Firing Operations	

### **December classes:**

S-212 Wildland Fire Chainsaws  
S-130/190 Firefighting Training/Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior (2 Classes)

### **February Classes**

S-130 S-130/190 Firefighting Training/Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior (2 Classes)  
S-236 Heavy Equipment Boss (HEQB - Single Resource)

Agencies represented at NYWIMA: NYSIMT, NYSDEC, USFS, NH DNCR, Suffolk County Parks, Catskill Forest Association, Department of National Defense, Massachusetts DCR, The Nature Conservancy, Albany Pine Bush, NJFFS, USFWS, PADNCR, Rhode Island DEM, NPS, NYS Parks, and multiple volunteer fire departments.

*Planning is starting for the 2025 NYWIMA Academy*





## **Compliance and Enforcement Division Report March - April 2024**

### **Prepared by CAED Chief Enforcement Officer Alena Lawston**

- We received forty-nine complaints this period for dumping, encroachment and clearing. The dumping was consistent being primarily furniture, household trash, landscaping debris as well as construction and demolition debris.
- Four of these incidents were captured on surveillance cameras and referred to our law enforcement partner agencies. One of these incidents involved a commercial quantity of concrete currently being investigated by the Suffolk County Sheriff's Criminal Investigation Bureau. A total of five cases were resolved with a total of \$ 5,100 paid in fines and clean up by violators.
- We have an update on a case from early 2024 where a UHAUL dumped household furniture including mattresses, box springs, dressers, a television and other items in Manorville. We provided the surveillance and a subsequent investigation started by the Suffolk County Sheriff's resulted in subpoenas for records of the U-Haul rental agreement, clean-up costs as well as interviews with four potential suspects. D Felony and misdemeanor charges are pending.
- We continue to utilize the Flock surveillance camera and all integrated shared cameras with the outside partner agencies. This type of surveillance enables our division to provide multiple leads to law enforcement for dumping within the Pine Barrens.
- UAS Part 107 continues. With the warmer weather we hope to get out for some outdoor training exercises with the Science and Stewardship manger Jason Smith.

Timothy C. Hubbard  
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Daniel J. Panico  
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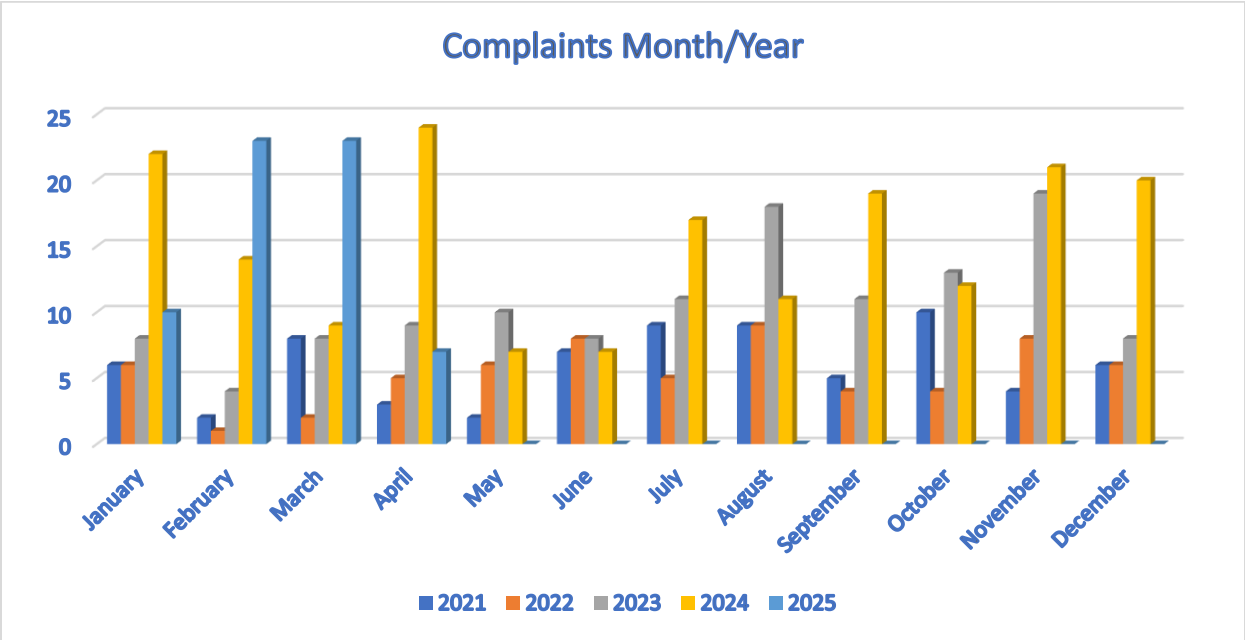
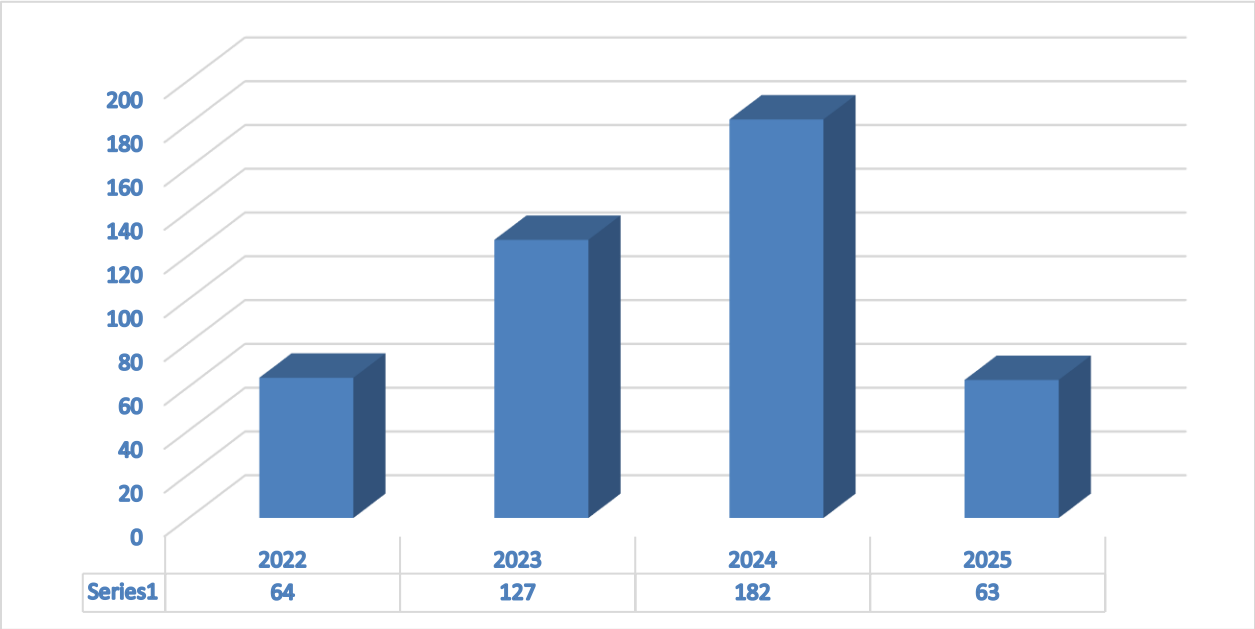
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Incident Statistics - Reporting Period 2021 - 2024				
Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Intake</b>				
Sent by Agency to Commission	14	17	9	2
Discovered by Commission Staff	41	104	163	56
Called in by Individual to Commission	8	6	10	5
Total Incidents Reported	63	127	182	63
<b>Location of Incident</b>				
Brookhaven	46	69	102	39
Southampton	17	50	75	24
Riverhead	0	8	5	0
Occurring on Public Land	21	79	158	53
Occurring on Private Land	22	23	22	9
Occurring on Public & Private Land	20	25	0	1
Core	38	78	140	48
Compatible Growth Area (CGA)	13	39	30	8
Core & CGA	1	1	0	1
Outside CPBA	12	9	10	6
<b>Nature of Incident*</b>				
Clearing/Encroachment	24	20	21	16
Structures	1	2	1	0
Dumping	35	103	153	46
Mining	0	0	1	0
Hunting	0	1	0	0
ATV	1	0	0	0
Other	4	1	2	1
<b>Referrals*</b>				
Sent to Town	20	6	4	3
Sent to County	12	36	31	4
Sent to State	22	33	17	2
Commission	15	8	1	0
Sent to AG	1	0	0	0
Other	5	37	16	5
<b>Status</b>				
Founded	50	125	179	63
Unfounded	13	2	1	0
Open	18	52	51	29
Closed	45	75	131	34
<b>Inspections</b>				
Conservation Easement Inspections	1	0	0	0
Development project inspections	2	0	0	0



**Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission**  
Land Use Division Bi-Monthly Update for the Meeting of Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Action	Central Pine Barrens Location		
Municipality	Brookhaven Town	Riverhead Town	Southampton Town
Pending Applications, Requests for Determination of Jurisdiction, SEQRA Coordination, inquiries, proposals and other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CGA Hardship:</b> Brookhaven Industrial Park Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Expansion on 4.28 acres. Yaphank, CGA</li> <li>• <b>Core Hardship:</b> Garafola two-lot subdivision of 4.46 acres. Ridge, Core</li> <li>• <b>Core Hardship:</b> V&amp;G Realty, single-family residence on 0.87 acres. Yaphank, Core.</li> <li>• <b>Determination:</b> Trevor Galvez, 4,000 square foot structure on 3.86 acres. Yaphank, Core.</li> <li>• <b>Inquiry:</b> Robert Klein, 608 Middle Country Road expansion of commercial use on 0.44 acre. Middle Island, Core.</li> <li>• <b>Project Review:</b> Verizon at County STP on 10.59 acres. CGA.</li> <li>• <b>Referral and CGA Hardship:</b> Starbucks Middle Island, redevelop bank site on 1.4 acres. CGA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development of Regional Significance:</b> Venezia Square, 37,000 square feet of commercial development. Wading River, CGA.</li> <li>• <b>Determination:</b> Shawn Turner, swimming pool for single-family residence. Calverton, CGA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core Hardship:</b> Homeland Towers, 120 foot monopole on 6.7 acres with a junkyard. Flanders, Core</li> <li>• <b>Referral:</b> 80 Anchor Street Subdivision on 0.94 acre. Flanders, CGA.</li> </ul>
Division Activity, Regional Projects and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental review of land use development projects including Core Preservation Area and Compatible Growth Area Hardship waivers, SEQRA Coordination, interagency referrals, information requests, inquiries, requests for determination of jurisdiction and conformance reviews. Applications include commercial and industrial uses, mixed uses and other site plans, residential and non-residential subdivisions, applications for Developments of Regional Significance, Assertions of Jurisdiction, zone changes and other development activities.</li> <li>• Monitor sites for compliance with decisions and conditions of approval.</li> <li>• Site inspections and land use surveys for applications.</li> <li>• Technical support on FOIL requests, compliance and enforcement violations, consent orders, Credit Program items, communications on land use matters, unauthorized development and clearing activities and encroachments in protected areas and regulated habitats.</li> <li>• Collaborate and coordinate with other Commission divisions.</li> <li>• USGS: completed five year monitoring study of groundwater and surface water resources in Peconic and Carmans Rivers, presentation in May; continuing 2024-2026 study.</li> <li>• Website updates on land use and planning matters, natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources.</li> <li>• Pine Barrens Nature Center Feasibility Study: March 25 Kick off Meeting, project continues.</li> </ul>		





***Item 3.c. Pine Barrens Credit Program Report for April 16, 2025:***

Activities in the Credit Program for 2025 included review of applications for Letters of Interpretation, Conservation Easements, Credit Program and FOIL requests management. Some specific work items include:

- Letters of Interpretation: 20 LOIs were issued and five parcels were inspected. Staff is following up on past LOIs for interest in the Program.
- Conservation Easements: Review and Monitoring
  - Six easements are currently in progress.
  - 37 easement properties with road access were inspected.



- Pine Barrens Credits
  - Redeemed: 1.98 Credits have been used for commercial and residential projects in the Town of Southampton.
  - Conveyed: 0.32 Credits have been sold in the Town of Southampton.
  - The average price is \$100,000 per credit.
- Credit Clearinghouse Program Fund Account balance: \$3,296,992.
- In January, 2025 the Commission sent 380 letters to core land owners soliciting their participation in the Credit Program. It resulted in 25 LOI applications.

***Pine Barrens Credit Program Statistics Table: represents figures for the total and annual summary of 2025.***

Easement Protected Lands and Pine Barrens Credits As of April 7, 2025								
	Brookhaven	2025	Riverhead	2025	Southampton	2025	Total	2025
Parcels	531	-	37	-	471	-	1039	-
Acreage	833.44	-	516.78	-	889.51	-	2239.73	-
Average parcel size	1.57	-	13.97	-	1.89	-	2.16	-
Credits generated	550.26	-	173.39	-	340.26	-	1063.91	-
Credits redeemed	428.77	-	145.13	-	193.03	1.98	766.93	1.98
Credits not redeemed	121.49	-	28.26	-	147.23	-	296.98	-
Credits sold		-		-		0.32		0.32
Total value of PBC transactions		-		-		\$32,000		\$32,000
Average Credits value		-		-		\$100,000		\$100,000
Credits owned by the Clearinghouse	2.19		-		-		2.19	
# of Inspected CE Parcels	-	24	-	-	-	13	-	37
# of Installed CE Signs	141	2	15	-	91	-	247	2