

Educational Outreach and Communications Division Update

June 2025

Submitted by Tim Motz, Educational Outreach and Communications Coordinator

Barrens to Bay Summer Camp

- We will hold on Saturday, June 14 our second Counselors Roundtable at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. This program allows us to orient the new counselors, go over all camp protocols, test out new planned activities, go over their schedules and assignments and take any questions they have.
- It is a primary goal of the division to constantly create new camp activities to educate and entertain our campers, and to that end, we've developed five or so new activities for this summer, after creating approximately nine last year. The new activities, coupled with last year's, will allow us to change up the program regularly, which is key since we have a number of campers who attend multiple sessions.
- Camp begins on Monday, June 30, and all sessions are full, despite increasing the number of registrations by 20% to accommodate increased demand. We also have an increased number of volunteer counselors this year and one more paid counselor to ensure we always have plenty of supervision and engagement with a higher number of campers.

"A Day in the Life" Program

- The fall schedule for our "A Day in the Life" of our local rivers has been set, and teachers have been notified.
- Prior to the fall, though, we have numerous goals we are seeking to accomplish to enhance the program, including:
 - 1) Creating a dynamic and thorough brochure highlighting ADITL in photos, explaining how the program works and how to join, and providing contact information.
 - 2) Scheduling a forum at which the teachers who have best utilized ADITL data in their classrooms will show others how to do the same. This, we believe, will help us to foster collaboration on ADITL-centered projects between school districts.
 - 3) Create a series of videos providing an overview of the program and guiding viewers through every aspect of the ADITL workbook. This will enable us to provide for teachers and experts an instantly available refresher—perhaps even

initial training—of everything they need to know to be ready to lead a class in the field.

In addition to these goals, we will be holding an in-person training for teachers in August at Wertheim and in September, holding the second edition of our online Q&A for teachers, to give them a forum to have all their questions answered and go over protocols just before the ADITL season starts.

New Videos

- **The division in the past two months has also created two new videos: one chronicles the fascinating topic of vernal pools in the Central Pine Barrens, and will be distributed to the public (after being introduced at the annual Cooperators Meeting) via YouTube and social media this week; the second video is a 90-second, image heavy look at the commission's New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy, and will be used for promotional purposes for this year's fall academy.**

New Staff

- **The division is also happy to welcome an assistant to the division coordinator: Emmanuel Jaquez, after working as an intern for more than a year, began work for the commission in late May.**



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Prescribed Fire Season Closed for 2025

The end of May brought the close of the 2025 Prescribed Fire season in the Central Pine Barrens. Overall, the season was a success but there were a few atypical scenarios that influenced the final numbers.

In 2025, in cooperation with the NYSDEC, the CPBC assisted on a total of 15 prescribed fires, down from 23 burns in 2024. There was a total of 321 acres burned in 2025. Grassland fires remained consistent with a total of 308 acres burned in 2025. Prescribed fires conducted in woodlands, however, were down from the year prior with only 13 acres of woodland being treated in 2025. That is down from 51 and 57 acres of woodlands burned in 2024 and 2023 respectively.



Figure 1: Rx Fire at Whiskey Road Grassland April 29, 2025

The reason why fewer acres of woodlands were prescribe burned in 2025 is a combination of two major issues. First, the weather was not in prescription for woodland burns, too much rain this year kept the forest damp and wet. Secondly, the DEC's Burn Boss, Bryan Gallagher, was called to Minnesota to assist in wildfire suppression efforts in the state. That resulted in no burn boss being available for two weeks in May.

While at first glance this season had lower woodland acres burned by prescription, the Westhampton Pines (424 acres) and Eastport (33 acres) wildfires in March brings the total woodland acres disturbed by fire to 470 acres. When coupled with the 308 grassland acres, the overall total area burned, within the Central Pine Barrens, during the 2025 fire season is 778 acres.

Southern Pine Beetle Symposium & LTV

On April 23rd Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine held a public symposium on the Southern Pine Beetle at Suffolk County Community College in Riverhead. The event was very well attended and included several media outlets. The symposium was a panel discussion which



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included representatives from the NYSDEC, Suffolk County Parks, Suffolk County FRES, and other local first responders and public officials. The Commission was represented on the panel through the Science and Stewardship Program.

The conversation focused on the impact the Southern Pine Beetle has had on Long Island and the management efforts, both past and present, to address those impacts. The essential message for the day was that we all need to work together to maintain a healthy and safe Central Pine Barrens.

On June 11th, LTV Studios, a public access television station in East Hampton hosted a panel discussion on Southern Pine Beetle in the Pine Barrens. The event was moderated by LTV with pre-determined questions as well as a live Q&A period with the studio audience. Additional panelists included representatives from the NYSDEC, East Hampton Trails Preservation Society, and Councilman David Lys.

Conservation Planning

The conservation planning effort continues to evolve. During the prescribed fire season, data collection for the monitoring of general forest health and the vegetative response to prescribed fire became a prominent issue. Science and Stewardship conducted a review of recent monitoring efforts conducted through or in partnership with the Commission and identified a few aspects that could be improved upon moving forward.

Briefly, traditional methods for collecting and then analyzing forest data are laborious, time intensive, and often require extrapolation after data has been collected. Additionally, vegetation is only one part of Pine Barrens ecosystem. The wildlife that inhabits the Pine Barrens is also reflective of overall system health, and they are not currently included in monitoring surveys.

As a way forward the Commission is looking to use remote sensing technology to both improve our data collection methodology and expand our understanding of the Pine Barrens community.



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The first remote sensing technology being explored is terrestrial laser scanning. This technology, also called LiDAR (**L**ight **D**etection and **R**anging), can create a three-dimensional digital copy of the forest. Capturing even the finest details down to less than a millimeter of the entire survey plot. Every leaf, tree, stem, and flower get measured. LiDAR technology is more accurate, more comprehensive, and considerably faster too. Traditional methods can take the

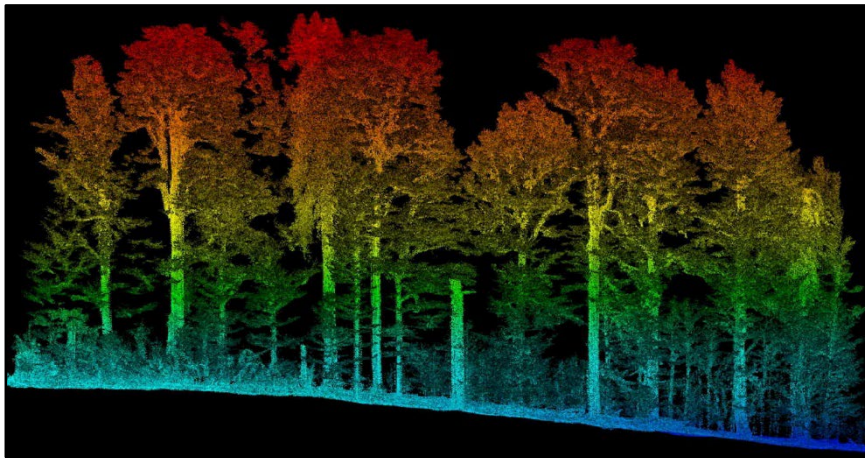


Figure 2: LiDAR scan of a forest plot.

better part of a workday to complete one survey plot, while LiDAR can cover the same area in a fraction of the time. Literally the amount of time it takes to walk through the survey area.

The second area of remote sensing we are exploring is to address the lack of data in the Pine Barrens on the wildlife response to prescribed fire

and overall use, distribution, and residency time within our local habitat. Here bioacoustics can be used to literally monitor the sounds of the wildlife. Bird calls for example can be recorded daily for several weeks and used to describe the local ecology. For example, which birds are using the habitat; how long do they use it for; are birds leaving an area after it has burned; or are birds attracted to areas after they burn.

We can also monitor for the presence of the Northern Long-eared Bat to inform land managers, especially those conducting prescribed fire, to their presence or absence in a particular area. Proximity to a Northern Long-eared Bat site can restrict use of prescribed fire or cutting

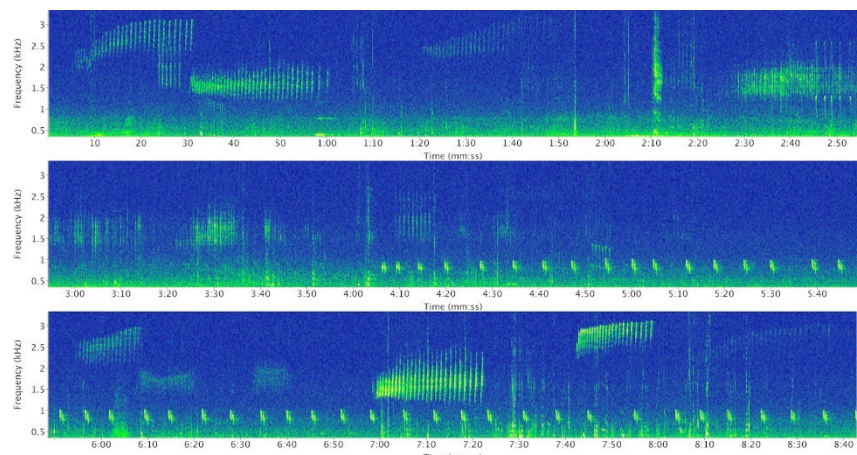


Figure 3: Bioacoustic audio patterns being analyzed.



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trees impacted by Southern Pine Beetle. Knowing if they are near can be useful information to have.

When combined, the two technologies can dramatically improve our understanding of how the Pine Barrens ecosystem is functioning and thereby lead to better management decisions by our local partners. Furthermore, these technologies can also be leveraged for us in other projects on the Commission's horizon. For example, road ecology and the design and installation of wildlife crossings. LiDAR scans of the roadway, surrounding site conditions including local topography and hydrology can be very useful to designing engineers.

In the coming weeks Science and Stewardship will continue to research remote sensing methods and work with SCWA's IT department to find the right way to integrate these technologies into the Commissions workflow.

Other Notes of Interest

June brought the addition of two new temporary staff, Intern Iasia Brown and Ecological Field Specialist Broderick DeAngelis. Both will be with us for approximately two months as they assist in a research project being conducted by a post-doc from SUNY ESF and in partnership with the NYSDEC. Iasia and Broderick will be primarily collecting forest characteristic and structural data using traditional survey methods developed by the post-doctoral student. Data collection will be centered around the Rocky Point Pine Barrens State Forest. This data will be used to establish baseline forest measurements as part of an Air Curtain Burner research project for fuel reduction.

On April 30th Science and Stewardship attended a New Hire Tour conducted by SCWA for new employees. We toured SCWA pump stations, water quality laboratories, and the construction and maintenance yard for a hands-on demonstration. It was a great opportunity to get exposed to the scope of SCWA operations and challenges.

On May 15th, the Commission hosted an Advisory Committee meeting at Brookhaven Town Hall. This was the first meeting of the Advisory Committee since 2013.

On June 6th, the Commission hosted their annual Cooperator's meeting at Atlantis in Riverhead. The event is intended to thank our local partners for all their hard work and dedication to the Central Pine Barrens and to recognize individuals who went above and beyond over the last year. Science and Stewardship took photos to help document the day's festivities.



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Figure 4: 2025 CPBC Cooperators Meeting in Riverhead.



New York Wildfire & Incident Management Academy - NYWIMA - June 2025

The New York Wildfire & Incident Management Academy, (NYWIMA) has always been a vital training ground for those who dedicate themselves to protecting our communities, our forests, and our natural resources.

Planning is underway for the 2025 New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy. This year's training session will be held at Brookhaven National Laboratory and Suffolk County Fire Academy from October 18-24th. Additional classes will be held in December at Suffolk County Fire Academy.

The Planning team is currently establishing a schedule for the Academy based on a survey completed by former students, cooperating agencies and wildland firefighters across the country. We look forward to working with these agencies in a collaborative effort to provide the best education for our students.

In addition, with the leadership of Chuck Hamilton as Academy Coordinator we look to expand our outreach and work on establishing additional instructors to add to our cadre of wildland fire professionals.

It is the mission of NYWIMA to continue to provide free Wildland Firefighter Training to Nassau and Suffolk volunteer firefighters, allowing local fire departments to benefit from these critical programs. The need for trained personnel is greater than ever, and we are proud to contribute to building a stronger, more prepared fire service.



Compliance and Enforcement Division Report May - June 2025

Prepared by CAED Chief Enforcement Officer Alena Lawston

- We received fifty 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.
- Eleven of these incidents were captured on surveillance cameras and referred to our law enforcement partner agencies. Three of these incidents involved the same individual dumping cinder blocks, soil and paint buckets in different locations. Another individual dumped household garbage several times in different locations leaving behind identifying information. The dispositions are pending clean up initiated by subjects.
- Our surveillance cameras have also provided evidence for the NYSDEC Police & NYS Forest Rangers. A subject was charged with illegal transportation of wildlife when caught on camera releasing an Opossum in the Pine Barrens from another location. Other subjects have been using NYS land to dump several truckloads of leaves and a BBQ grill.
- For this period, we have recorded a total of \$350 in fines with multiple cases pending.
- The February incident involving the commercial dump of 24 tons of concrete where our surveillance cameras provided evidence for the Suffolk County Sheriff's Criminal Investigation Bureau and the District Attorney's Office's Biological, Environmental, and Animal Safety Team received substantial media coverage. The Suffolk County Sheriffs held a press conference in late April detailing charges. The subject was charged with Criminal Mischief in the Second Degree, a Class D Misdemeanor and is facing 7 years in prison and 150,000 in fines.
- We continue to utilize the Flock Safety 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 training continues with our GLEIM testing platform. With better weather we hope to get out for some outdoor training exercises

Timothy C. Hubbard
Member

Maria Z. Moore
Member

Daniel J. Panico
Member

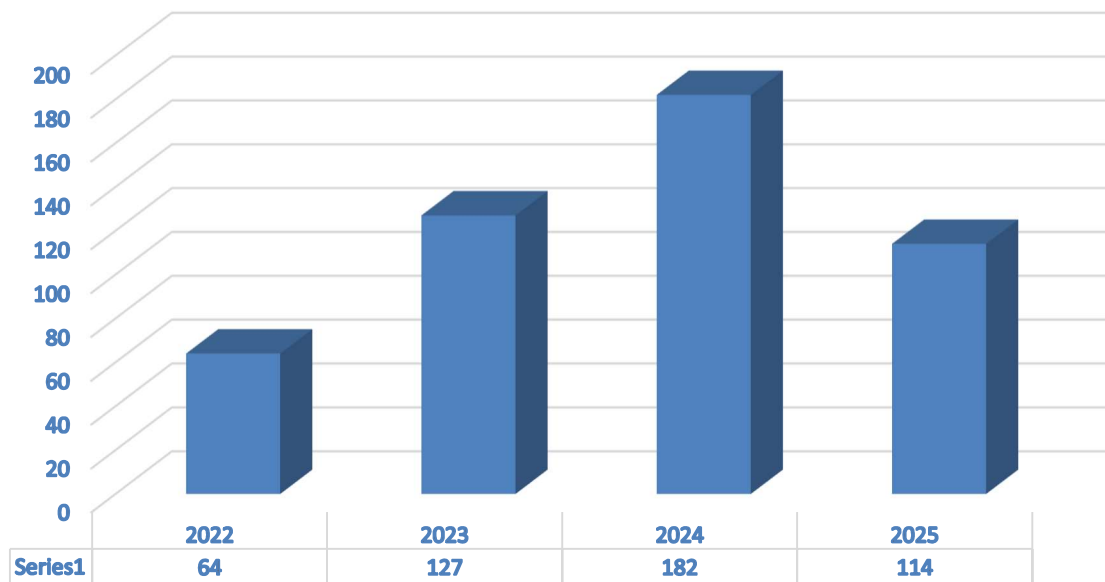
Edward P. Romaine
Member



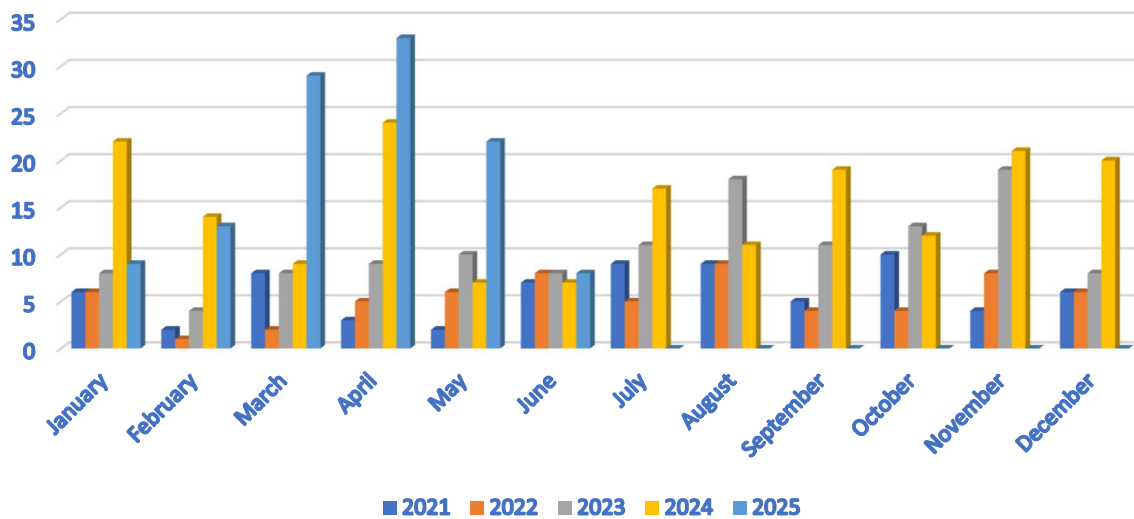
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Incident Statistics - Reporting Period 2021 - 2024				
Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
Intake				
Sent by Agency to Commission	14	17	9	3
Discovered by Commission Staff	41	104	163	106
Called in by Individual to Commission	8	6	10	5
Total Incidents Reported	63	127	182	114
Location of Incident				
Brookhaven	46	69	102	73
Southampton	17	50	75	38
Riverhead	0	8	5	3
Occurring on Public Land	21	79	158	97
Occurring on Private Land	22	23	22	16
Occurring on Public & Private Land	20	25	0	1
Core	38	78	140	92
Compatible Growth Area (CGA)	13	39	30	12
Core & CGA	1	1	0	1
Outside CPBA	12	9	10	9
Nature of Incident*				
Clearing/Encroachment	24	20	21	22
Structures	1	2	1	0
Dumping	35	103	153	89
Mining	0	0	1	0
Hunting	0	1	0	0
ATV	1	0	0	0
Other	4	1	2	2
Referrals*				
Sent to Town	20	6	4	3
Sent to County	12	36	31	14
Sent to State	22	33	17	4
Commission	15	8	1	0
Sent to AG	1	0	0	0
Other	5	37	16	8
Status				
Founded	50	125	179	114
Unfounded	13	2	1	0
Open	18	52	51	44
Closed	45	75	131	70
Inspections				
Conservation Easement Inspections	1	0	0	0
Development project inspections	2	0	0	0

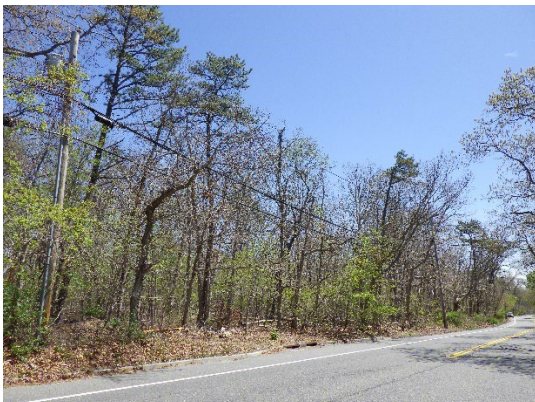


Complaints Month/Year



Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission
Land Use Division Bi-Monthly Update for the Meeting of Wednesday, June 18, 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"> • CGA Hardship: Starbucks Middle Island, redevelop bank on 1.4 acres. Route 25, Middle Island, CGA. • Core Hardship: V&G Realty, single-family residence on 0.87 acres. Gerard Road, Yaphank, Core. • Compelling Public Need Core Hardship: 608 Middle Country Road, Middle Island, expansion of building and parking lot on 0.45 acres, Core. 	<p>Boy Scouts Camp inquiry, Wading River, Core and Conservation Easement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compelling Public Need Core Hardship: Homeland Towers, 150 foot monopole on 6.17 acres with a junkyard. Flanders, Core. • Request for Determination: Pine Court, single-family residence on 0.36 acres, Northampton, Core. • Army Corps munitions removal study inquiry, Westhampton, Core.
Division Activity, Regional Projects and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analysis including SEQRA review of land use development projects and applications 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 are for commercial and industrial uses, mixed uses, zone changes, site plans, residential and non-residential subdivisions, Developments of Regional Significance, Assertions of Jurisdiction, Critical Resource Areas and other development activities. • Monitor sites for compliance with decisions and conditions of approval. • Site inspections and land use surveys for applications. • 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. • Collaborate and coordinate with other Commission divisions. • USGS: two year water resources study continues, 2024-2026, in Peconic River and Carmans River and groundwater sampling. • Website management and updates on land use and planning items and seasonal changes, natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources. • Pine Barrens Nature Center Feasibility Study continues, site selection and programming elements. 		



Item 2.f. Pine Barrens Credit Program Report for June 18, 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: 25 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
 - Seven easements are currently in progress.
 - 45 easement properties with road access were inspected.



- Pine Barrens Credits
 - Redeemed: 2.31 Credits have been used for commercial and residential projects in the Town of Southampton.
 - Conveyed: 0.65 Credits have been sold in the Town of Southampton.
 - The average price is \$102,538 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 June 9, 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	-	193.36	2.31	767.26	2.31
Credits not redeemed	121.49	-	28.26	-	146.9	-	296.65	-
Credits sold		-		-		0.65		0.65
Total value of PBC transactions		-		-		\$66,650		\$66,650
Average Credits value		-		-		\$102,538		\$102,538
Credits owned by the Clearinghouse	2.19		-		-		2.19	
# of Inspected CE Parcels	-	27	-	5	-	13	-	45
# of Installed CE Signs	141	2	15	-	91	-	247	2