

Educational Outreach and Communications Division Update

December 2025

Submitted by Tim Motz, Educational Outreach and Communications Coordinator

Barrens to Bay Summer Camp

- **Our budget for the 2026 summer camp has been approved by the Friends of Wertheim board and includes a better distribution of pay for camp counselors. We accomplished this by eliminating the lead counselor position—a step made easier by the Commission’s hire of Emmanuel Jaquez—and splitting those funds among a greater number of counselors. This allows us, without adding expenses to the budget, the ability to pay more counselors who work hard to make sure Barrens to Campers have a great experience.**

“A Day in the Life” Program

- **The 15th annual “A Day in the Life” program, coordinated in conjunction with Brookhaven National Laboratory and the New York State DEC, has been concluded and was a great success. As with last year, events were held on 13 different rivers, estuaries, bays and streams over seven consecutive Fridays this fall.**
- **New to the program this year was Plainview/Old Bethpage district, which conducted student science at Massapequa Preserve.**
- **Major developments of this year’s ADITL season included writing and filming a series of five videos designed to teach ADITL teachers every aspect of the program’s workbook. The videos have been very well received by teachers and will serve moving forward to supplement in-person trainings, providing teachers with a resource they can review again and again until they know how to lead every task in the workbook.**
- **We also designed a new and thorough brochure explaining the program that we will use to encourage new schools to join, which will be a major focus of our efforts in 2026. The brochure will be used in conjunction with a general introduction to ADITL video we are in the process of creating to seek to bring new schools into the program.**
- **Finally, we have greatly enhanced the web page on the commission website focusing on ADITL, providing a link to accumulated data, the new videos, photos, information and more all in one place.**

Commission Annual Report

- **We have begun creating the commission's 2026 annual report with an eye on presenting the document to the commission at its February meeting. This year's report will feature the newly completed feasibility study for the creation of a Central Pine Barrens Nature Center.**



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Conservation Management Action Plan

Science and Stewardship primarily focused on beginning the drafting process of the Commission's Conservation Management Action Plan over the last reporting period. The first few sections of the narrative have been written, and the document is currently 45 pages in length.

The draft version, though incomplete, has been provided to both the Executive Director, Ms. Jakobsen, and Central Pine Barrens Manager, Ms. Hargrave, for their review. This includes the Introduction, Conservation Goals, and Conservation Issues and Risks sections of the plan. The Conservation Action and Recommendations section is currently being written.

The initial response has been positive, and their first comments and edits have already been incorporated into the draft version. After a thorough internal review, the plan will be ready for the public comment shortly thereafter. The Science and Stewardship division anticipates the Commission's conservation plan will be ready to begin the public review process by early 2026.

Remote Sensing Preliminary Budget

During the last reporting period Science and Stewardship developed a line-item budget, with three vendor prices per item where possible, for Ms. Jakobsen and Ms. Hargrave to approve. The budget includes all gear being requested to cover all three aspects of the proposed remote sensing survey methods, including laser scanning, multispectral imaging, high resolution photogrammetry, bioacoustics, and camera trapping techniques.

As it stands, based on online quote prices and cart-ready purchase amounts, the total estimated budget is just under \$125,000 for all equipment, gear, and protective cases. Most of that total is for the unmanned aircraft, lidar sensor, the high resolution and multispectral cameras, and the software to analyze the generated data. This sensitive and specialized equipment is approximately \$100,000 of the total costs. The computer, data storage, bioacoustic recorders, and camera trap equipment are the remaining \$25,000 of the budget.

It is believed that given the nature of the equipment, the limited number of available vendors, that several pieces of equipment will be able to be purchased from the same seller. This circumstance may provide opportunities for bundling equipment purchases with individual vendors leading to actual costs being lower than estimated costs.

There are, however, a few items that may be difficult to purchase other than from the manufacturer themselves. For example, rechargeable D-Cell batteries and the required charger



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may only be available from one manufacturer. The items can be found on general marketplaces, such as Amazon, which is not a preferred purchasing forum. Therefore, the manufacturer may be treated as a sole source provider to avoid general marketplace online sellers. In most, if not all, of these instances, however these types of items are relatively inexpensive purchases and generally less than \$250 (again, batteries are the prime example).

The online generated vendor quote estimated budget will be presented for Commission's approval at the December 2025 Commission Board meeting.



Figure 1: The DJI Matrice w/ Photogrammetry Sensor



Figure 2: LiDAR Mobile Laser Scanner by Green Valley International



Figure 3: Multispectral Imaging Sensor by AGEagle

Protected Lands Council Meeting

On October 22, 2025, the Commission hosted a Protected Lands Council (PLC) meeting at the Brookhaven Town Hall. The meeting was lightly attended, and the Vice Chair, John Wernet (DEC), was absent.

Despite this, the meeting was successful with presentations on the Commission's Conservation Management Action Plan, an introduction to remote sensing techniques, and John Turner (Seatuck and Town of Brookhaven) spoke about bird friendly glass and the recently constructed frog tunnel roadway crossing. Science and Stewardship staff were able to provide a summary of prescribed fire and general forest health on behalf of Mr. Wernet as well.

During open discussion, the future structure of the PLC was referenced. In response to that conversation Science and Stewardship reviewed the history of the PLC, including past structure (meeting frequency, voting, mission statements etc.), participation, and content of meetings. Upon concluding that review, and in consideration of comments received during the



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PLC meeting itself, Science and Stewardship proposed a revised structure for future PLC meetings.

There is, however, uncertainty in which parts, if any, of the historic PLC meeting structure were formally adapted by the Commission and cannot be revised without Board approval.

Other Science and Stewardship Activities

Science and Stewardship participated in several other activities throughout the reporting period. In early November, S&S attended the Technical Advisory Committee meeting of the Peconic Estuary Partnership (PEP) to hear updates on several research projects occurring in the Maritime Reserve and Peconic Bay.

S&S conducted two tours of the Dwarf Pine Plains for AP Environmental Science classes from Bayport Blue Point High School. These tours focused on general ecology and how the Pine Barrens protects the aquifers.

In mid-November S&S and Ms. Hargrave met with representatives from the Trust for Public Land to hear about and discuss the environmental and land use regulations associated with a soon-to-be proposed hiking trail from Manhattan to Montauk. The proposed project, the Long Island Greenway, may intersect with Central Pine Barrens lands in both the CGA and Core and request new construction in some areas.

Also in mid-November, S&S met with Mr. Tverdy to discuss and review the daily process for reporting the Fire Danger Risk rating. This included a discussion of online weather, and fire behavior modeling resources as well as guidance on distinguishing between various weather conditions, model indexes that may be on the threshold between to risk levels (ex. moderate and high, or high and very high). S&S feels comfortable that they would be able to provide Fire Danger Risk ratings if requested or required in Mr. Tverdy's absence.

During the second week in December, S&S staff participated in two external partner hosted online conference calls with the Carmans River Partnership and the Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIISMA). During the partnership meeting, S&S presented an update on Southern Pine Beetle in the Pine Barrens in 2025.



2025 Fall New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy

December 2025

The 2025 New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy (NYWIMA) was held from October 18 through October 24, 2025, at Brookhaven National Laboratory. This year's academy marks another strong turnout, with 115 students completing training sessions.

The academy offered a range of courses focused on wildfire suppression, incident management, and leadership development. Students included personnel from federal, state, and local agencies, volunteer fire departments, and conservation organizations, reflecting the Academy's mission to enhance interagency coordination and professional development in wildfire and emergency management operations.

Training was delivered by qualified instructors from across the country, bringing a wealth of experience in fire operations, incident management, and instructional leadership. Courses emphasized both classroom learning and field-based exercises, ensuring participants gain practical, hands-on experience aligned with National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards.

Logistical arrangements were coordinated in partnership with Brookhaven National Laboratory staff, NYS DHSES, NYS DEC and many other agencies and ensured a smooth and efficient training week.

NYWIMA December Training Session

The New York Wildfire and Incident Management Academy (NYWIMA) will conduct its December Training Session at Suffolk County Fire Academy, December 8-12. There are over 100 students registered for this session.

Courses Offered

- **ICS 300 – Intermediate Incident Command System**
Students will develop a stronger understanding of the Incident Command System for expanding incidents. The course will focus on incident complexity analysis, resource management, and the creation of incident action plans in increasingly challenging operational environments.
- **ICS 400 – Advanced Incident Command System**
This advanced course will build on ICS 300 and will prepare participants for leadership roles in large and complex incidents. Students will work through high-level command and general staff responsibilities, multi-jurisdictional coordination, and strategic decision-making exercises.
- **MGT 460 – Planning for Disaster Debris Management**

This FEMA-sponsored course will provide guidance on planning, coordinating, and managing debris following natural or human-caused disasters. Participants will evaluate local capabilities, mission assignments, and operational considerations that are essential for effective debris removal and recovery.

- **S-212 – Wildland Fire Chainsaws**
NYWIMA will deliver hands-on technical training for firefighters seeking certification in wildland chainsaw operations. Students will participate in classroom sessions and field exercises that will cover saw safety, cutting techniques, limbing, bucking, and basic felling. Instructors will monitor weather conditions and will work to complete all required practical components.



Compliance and Enforcement Division Report November – December 2025

Prepared by CAED Chief Enforcement Officer Alena Lawston

- We received thirty-six complaints during this period, for dumping, encroachment and clearing. The dumping was consistent being primarily landscaping debris, furniture, household trash, as well as construction and demolition debris.
- Three of these incidents were captured on surveillance cameras and referred to our law enforcement partner agencies and are currently pending.
- For this period, we have recorded \$17,450 in fines with one of these incidents generating \$15,000 alone for dumping six five-gallon containers of used motor oil in a tidal wetland. Several other cases were cleaned up by the responsible parties resulting in a more lenient disposition.
- 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.

Timothy C. Hubbard
Member

Ryan P. McGarry
Member

Maria Z. Moore
Member

Daniel J. Panico
Member

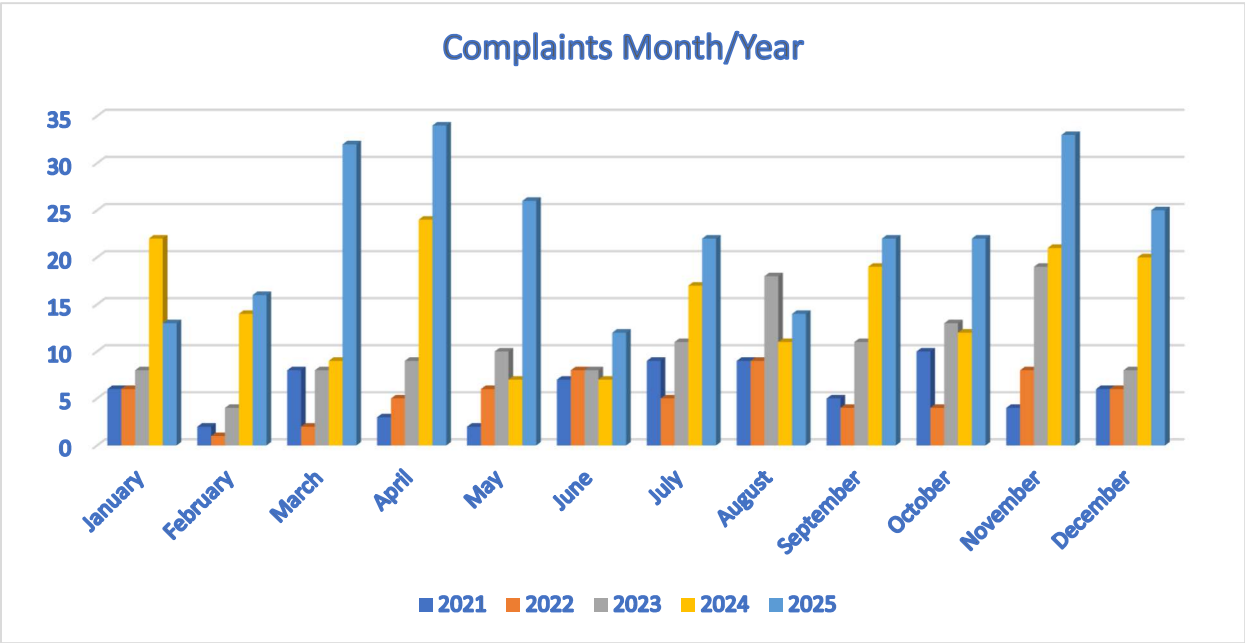
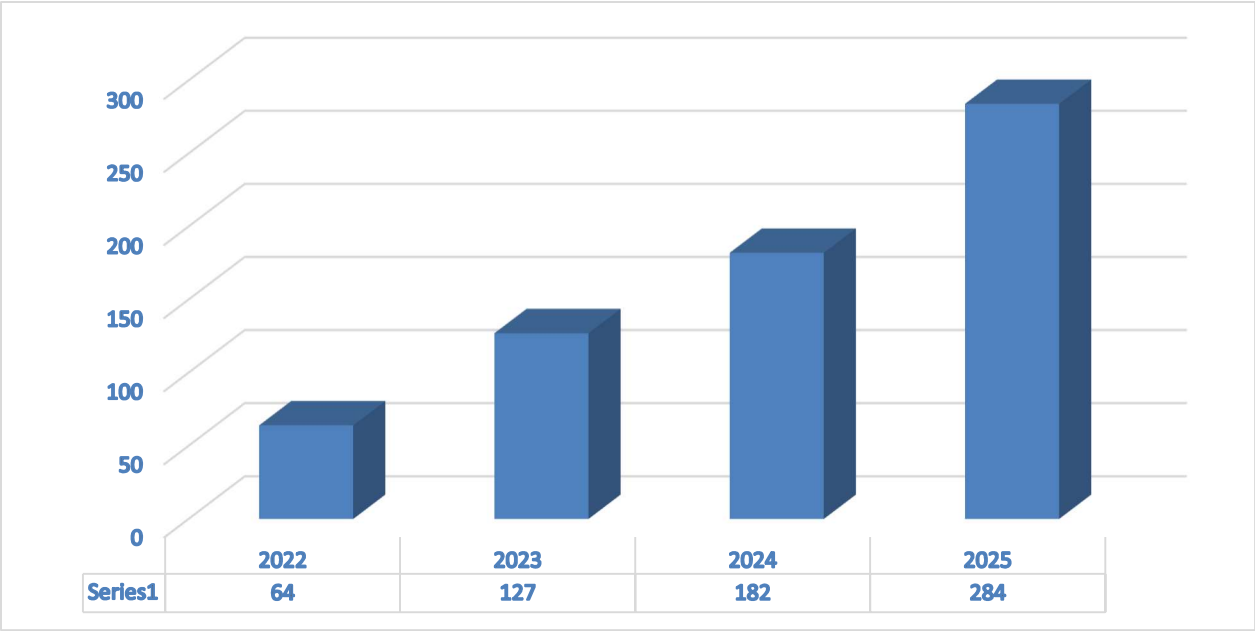
Edward P. Romaine
Member



624 Old Riverhead Road
Westhampton Beach, NY
11978

Phone (631) 288-1079
Fax (631) 288-1367
www.pb.state.ny.us

Incident Statistics - Reporting Period 2021 - 2025				
Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
Intake				
Sent by Agency to Commission	14	17	9	4
Discovered by Commission Staff	41	104	163	244
Called in by Individual to Commission	8	6	10	8
Total Incidents Reported	63	127	182	284
Location of Incident				
Brookhaven	46	69	102	182
Southampton	17	50	75	92
Riverhead	0	8	5	10
Occurring on Public Land	21	79	158	262
Occurring on Private Land	22	23	22	22
Occurring on Public & Private Land	20	25	0	1
Core	38	78	140	212
Compatible Growth Area (CGA)	13	39	30	57
Core & CGA	1	1	0	1
Outside CPBA	12	9	10	14
Nature of Incident*				
Clearing/Encroachment	24	20	21	32
Structures	1	2	1	0
Dumping	35	103	153	248
Mining	0	0	1	0
Hunting	0	1	0	0
ATV	1	0	0	0
Other	4	1	2	4
Referrals*				
Sent to Town	20	6	4	22
Sent to County	12	36	31	24
Sent to State	22	33	17	18
Commission	15	8	1	0
Sent to AG	1	0	0	0
Other	5	37	16	12
Status				
Founded	50	125	179	282
Unfounded	13	2	1	2
Open	18	52	51	72
Closed	45	75	131	212
Inspections				
Conservation Easement Inspections	1	0	0	6
Development project inspections	2	0	0	5



Central Pine Barrens Joint Planning and Policy Commission
Land Use Division Bi-Monthly Update for the Meeting of Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Action	Central Pine Barrens Location		
Municipality	Brookhaven Town	Riverhead Town	Southampton Town
Pending Applications, Requests for Determination of Jurisdiction, SEQRA Coordination, inquiries, proposals, items and other activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatible Growth Area Hardship: Sartory, Gull Dip Road, Ridge, clearing relief to develop a single-family residence on 0.56 acre, CGA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry: Calverton, industrial property redevelopment on 20 acres, Grumman Boulevard, Core. • Request: construction of a deck and shed for a single-family residence, 600-115-1-10.78, CGA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Preservation Area Hardship: Gazza, Old Riverhead Road, Westhampton, modify vegetation to reduce wildfire risk, Core. • Request: Eastern Suffolk BOCES, modify vegetation to reduce wildfire risk, Old Riverhead Road/Stewart Avenue, Westhampton, Core.
Division Activity, Regional Projects and Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Pine Barrens Nature Center Feasibility Study, completion of study and final report expected on December 17. • Review and analysis of land use development projects applications for Core Preservation Area and Compatible Growth Area Hardship waivers, SEQRA Coordination, interagency referrals, information requests, property inquiries, requests for determination of jurisdiction and conformance reviews. Development applications involve residential and commercial, industrial and mixed uses, zone changes, site plans, 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 activities with Commission divisions and interagency partners. • USGS two-year water resources study continues, 2024-2026, groundwater sampling and monitoring in Peconic River and Carmans River. • Website management and updates on land use and planning items and seasonal changes, natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources. 		



Item 2.f. Pine Barrens Credit Program Report for December 17, 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: 26 LOIs were issued and six parcels were inspected. Staff is following up on past LOIs for interest in the Program.
- Conservation Easements: Review and Monitoring
 - Nine easements are currently in progress.
 - 71 easement properties with road access were inspected.



- Pine Barrens Credits
 - Redeemed: 2.81 Credits have been used for commercial and residential projects in the Town of Southampton.
 - Conveyed: 3.32 Credits have been sold in the Town of Brookhaven, Riverhead and Southampton.
 - The average price is \$111,895 per credit.
- Credit Clearinghouse Program Fund Account
 - The Commission purchased 0.10 credits.
 - Balance: \$3,286,312.
- 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 December 10, 2025								
	Brookhaven	2025	Riverhead	2025	Southampton	2025	Total	2025
Parcels	532	1	37	-	471	-	1040	1
Acreage	833.67	0.23	516.78	-	889.51	-	2239.96	0.23
Average parcel size	1.57	0.23	13.97	-	1.89	-	2.15	0.23
Credits generated	550.26	0.10	173.39	-	340.26	-	1063.91	0.10
Credits redeemed	428.77	-	145.13	-	193.86	2.81	767.76	2.81
Credits not redeemed	121.49	-	28.26	-	146.4	-	296.15	-
Credits sold		0.60		0.50		2.22		3.32
Total value of PBC transactions		\$88,180		\$55,411		\$227,900		\$371,491
Average Credits value		\$146,967		\$110,822		\$102,658		\$111,895
Credits owned by the Clearinghouse	2.29		-		-		2.29	
# of Inspected CE Parcels	-	44	-	9	-	18	-	71
# of Installed CE Signs	141	2	15	-	91	-	247	2