

## **Pawling Conservation Advisory Board – Annual Report**

Current Membership: Robert Bergdall – Chairman, Mark Chipkin, Rick Wilson, Lori Asquith, Marie Vedder, Deborah Stewart, Joe Willie, Steven DiFalco, Lou Trombetta, Laura Facchin

### **Summary of Activities**

Feb 2025 – March 2026 Board Meetings (13): 2/26/25, 3/27/25, 4/24/25, 5/22/25, 6/26/25, 7/24/25, 9/25/25, 10/23/25, 11/20/25, 12/18/25, 1/15/26, 2/19/26, 3/19/26

### **Summary of Projects**

- 1) Conservation Board Administration
  - a. Feb-May - Legacy Records Organization and Indexing - Rick reviewed 2 full filing cabinets of prior CAB records (1977 - 2011) and created searchable index Excel sheet.
  - b. March – Established initial Google drive location and folder structure - Marie
  - c. Monthly Agendas and Minutes - Robert
  - d. 5/14/25 – Town Board Intro Presentation – Robert, Stephen, Mark
  - e. 9/2/25 - Intro to CAB Presentation with Planning Board – Rob, Mark
  
- 2) Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Systems – MS4
  - a. Lori researched educational materials customized to town, identified target areas,
  - b. Wrote letter to property owners for Joanne explaining topic and promoting potential homeowner sewer grant available from Dutchess County.
  - c. Identifying targeted areas via online mapping resources
  - d. Stephen assisted with mapping to target riparian areas. Next stage is areas around municipal facilities such as DPW garage and salt shed.
  - e. Ongoing project, availability of funds for mailings are TBD, materials have been incorporated into Website (see #4).
  
- 3) Tree Board
  - a. March - Mark began working with Wendel Webber to resurrect a separate dedicated Tree Board focused on tree inventory and care in public spaces in Pawling.
  - b. 4/26/25 - Tree Board initial meeting – Trevor Grainger Chairperson.
  - c. Sept-Oct 25' - Lori also began working as a member of the Tree Board
  - d. 11/2025 – 2/2026 - Research on tree preservation ordinances adopted by comparable municipalities and their effectiveness - Lori
  
- 4) Website and Education
  - a. Deborah Stewart and Laura Facchin created draft website with sections on:
    - i. CAB Information
    - ii. MS4 and Stormwater education
    - iii. Avoiding conflict with wildlife
    - iv. Local trails and recreation opportunities
    - v. Land conservation
  - b. 9/25/25 – Board reviewed, provided minor edits, and approved draft Mission Statement
  - c. Ongoing - Photo and media collection and approvals

- d. November – Initial outreach to PCSD regarding engagement with students. Administration recommended further follow-up with peer leadership and interact club (lions).
- 5) Buildings and Grounds
- a. 4/24/25 – Letter in support of Nanobubbler grant application
  - b. 5/22/25 - Full board meeting with Wendel Webber 5/22/25
  - c. See #'s 10 – 11 below
- 6) Solar Generation
- a. 6/24/25, 9/8/25 – Preliminary meetings, evaluated buildings and current energy usage at those sites. Joe, Mark, Robert, Wendel Webber
  - b. Solicited RFI from multiple potential vendors
  - c. 10/15/25 – Town Board Presentation – Joe, Wendel Webber.
  - d. 11/12/25 – Robert, Joe, Mark breakout meeting with Wendel Webber.
  - e. November – January Wendel Webber arranged for a structural inspection of 5 short-listed buildings, engineer’s report declared all buildings sound to hold the weight of panels.
  - f. 1/28/26 mtg with Joe, Robert, Mark, and Wendel
  - g. Install must start before 7/3/26, and formally be placed in-service before 12/31/27, to capture 30% federal credit.
- 7) EV Charging – Marie
- a. 1/15/26 – Initial meeting with Wendel Webber to discuss project needs, secured log-in information for submission portal.
  - b. 2/19/26 - Marie has completed large portions of the grant and provided it to Wendel. Steven provided supplemental mapping information necessary for the application.
  - c. 2/27/26 – Wendel submits application.
- 8) Planning Board
- a. 6/26/25 Guest Speaker JoAnne Daley
  - b. 9/2/25 Intro to CAB Presentation – Rob, Mark
  - c. Site Inspections – Date, project, and CAB members present indicated. All site inspections were documented with letters to the Planning Board adopted by the full CAB.
    - i. 2/27/26 – Tremson Wood Products – Robert, Mark, Rick, Joe
    - ii. 7/13/25 - Pignatelli – Mark, Maire, Laura
    - iii. 7/12/25 - Wallace – Rick
    - iv. 2/21/26 - Holmes Farm – Steven & Robert based on plan review
- 9) Climate Smart Communities Program
- a. 9/2/25 - Initial interest from Planning Board at intro meeting
  - b. 9/25/25 - Marie provided review of program for discussion with full CAB at board meeting.
  - c. 11/3/25 - Presentation to Planning Board on Climate Smart Communities – Marie, Rob, Mark
  - d. 10/28/25 - Planning Board issues letter of support for Climate Smart Communities program.

- e. 12/10/25 – Town Board tables final resolution at CAB’s request based on a need for a specific language change – Rob, Marie, Mark
- f. 2/4/25 – Climate Smart Resolution adopted.

10) Mapping Intern - Stephen

- a. 11/3/25 - Stephen met with SUNY New Paltz Adjunct Professor Susan Hereth who is looking for GIS internship opportunities for students.
- b. 12/18/25 - Intern, Grace Jay at SUNY New Paltz, accepted position began January.
- c. 1/15/26 – Group discussed potential GIS related projects for Ms. Jay, wanted to provide her a variety of options.

11) Outreach and Coordination with other bodies

- a. 7/8/25 – Virtual Mtg Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Cat Rocks Viewshed study and comment, Robert, Marie, Mark, Steve
- b. 7/8/25 – Virtual Mtg Appalachian Trail Conservancy – Supplemental (north view) Cat Rocks Viewshed study and comment, Robert, Mark, Steve
- c. Beekman CAC
  - i. 1/20/26 - Initial contact at Grape Hollow Forest Unit Management Plan, Information Session – Joe, Rick
  - ii. 2/19/26 - Chairperson Suzette Lopane along with additional committee members Ken & Bill attended Pawling CAB meeting.
  - iii. 3/2/26 - Meeting at Beekman town hall with DEC, Matthew Paul, regarding Grape Hollow State Forest and East of Hudson Unit Management Plan. Robert, Rick, Joe

12) Ongoing Topics

- a. 4/24/25 & 5/22/25 - Road salt use and impacts, Lou
- b. 5/22/25 - Hydrologic monitoring system in place at Whaley Lake – Lou, Rick, Wendel
- c. Tree cutting and preservation ordinances – See also Tree Board
- d. Review and discussion of current and prior town Comprehensive Plan

13) Open Space Preservation

- a. 2/2025 - 6/2025 - Attempts to locate town NRI and other useful past studies in legacy record
- b. 5/7/25 - Meeting with Hudson River Estuary Program regarding potential grant to create new NRI – Robert, Marie, Mark, Steven
- c. 1/15/26 - Board Discussion of available DEC grants and funding mechanisms

14) Events Attended

- a. Dutchess Counting Planning – 3/26/25 Roundtable - Steve
- b. Hudson River Advocacy Day – 2/25/25 – Steve
- c. NYS Federation of Lake Associations – Rick – Regional Conference 6/13/25

## Recommendations

### 1) Wildlife feeding ordinance

#### a. Wildlife Feeding Ordinance

- i. Feeding wildlife has a variety of well-established negative consequences including habituation to contact with humans, malnutrition for wildlife, and increased risk of disease spread.
- ii. Pawling sits on an established migration corridor for a wide variety of native animal species; climate change is expected to increase animal movement through the area.
- iii. Lou provided CAB sample ordinances from other municipalities in NY. Feels that the sample from the town of Webb in Herkimer County is particularly good.
- iv. Pawling town code does not currently address wildlife feeding.

#### b. Invasive Aquatic Species posting

- i. Posting signage about the need to clean boats when moving them to new water bodies helps prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species. Even relatively small personal watercraft can spread organisms.
- ii. DEC has designed graphics and signs addressing this topic but the Town would need to fund sign fabrication and installation.