



**PUTNAM VALLEY
COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF THE ENVIRONMENT
Town Hall, Putnam Valley NY 10579**

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUTNAM VALLEY
COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Putnam Valley Commission for the Conservation of the Environment had a productive year by being on call to serve as an advisory body to the Town Board and Planning Board and by serving as an educational vehicle to town residents.

Joining the Commission in 2024 as new members were Beth Gorman and Jeffrey Coren. They joined several other passionate and dedicated members of the CCE: Mike Usai, Chair; Aubrey Carter; Eileen Reilly; Julie Ruben and Wendy Whetsel.

Among its accomplishments, the CCE worked with the Hudson Highlands Land Trust to advance planning of an Open Space Inventory for Putnam Valley. Discussions surrounded identifying grant funding and initial steps to be taken to apply for a grant.

The CCE continued to review revised plans for two large, proposed projects with potential environmental impact—Camp Combe’s expansion on Peekskill Hollow Road and the Rabbinical Cemetery of America at 74 Barger Street. The CCE submitted comments on these projects to the Planning Board. These proposals were first reviewed by the CCE in 2023.

The CCE conducted several educational outreach events including:

- Wendy Whetsel gave a presentation at the library on the importance of protecting the Town’s water resources for water quality and habitat.
- Aubrey Carter gave a presentation at the library on invasive species management and offered to identify and help remove invasive species for any town resident.
- CCE had a booth at Town Day on September 21st and handed out literature on composting and recycling, as well as packets of a native wildflower seed mix. The Food Scraps Task Force joined the CCE at our booth, soliciting signatures on a petition to the town board for town-sponsored food scraps diversion program.
- The CCE reached out to the Putnam Valley schools to engage them on environmental topics and the CCE’s work. Wendy Whetsel met with the head of the environmental club, and they expressed great interest in collaborating with the CCE.

The CCE also agreed to support a proposed Food Scraps Collection Program, presented by a task force of Putnam Valley residents that includes CCE member Julie Ruben. The CCE is regularly updated on the progress of this project.

Finally, the CCE maintained its membership in the New York State Association of Conservation Commissions (NYSACC), an umbrella organization for the state’s conservation commissions. The CCE’s Julie Ruben, who became a member of the NYSACC’s Board of Directors in 2021

and the Board's Executive Committee in 2024, provides an important link to this statewide network of CCEs and CACs.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Usai, Chair