



*Silene caroliniana pensylvanica* (wild pink)

Steve Young

### 2008 Rare Plant Report

In June, the New York Natural Heritage Program published its annual status lists of New York rare plants. The program produces the status lists to: provide information to people of various disciplines; assist in the search for rare plants; and help conservation and protection efforts. The rare plant data is compiled via fieldwork and various oral, published or unpublished reports, as well as herbarium specimens. The contents of this year's list include six newly added species, the renaming of four species and the removal of four other species. In total, there are 570 rare plants in New York; 447 are vulnerable to extinction and 123 are extirpated. You can look at the entire 2008 New York Rare Plant Status Report on our website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/29396.html>.

### Special Licenses Website

DEC's Special Licenses Unit recently updated its website to provide greater accessibility, information and enhanced features. Now each special license has its own webpage with information on how to apply for that license, what the license authorizes, and rules and regulations applying to that license. In the future, the unit's website will also house information on various special licenses, such as: examination dates; fish and wildlife health topics; conferences and seminars; and changes in laws and regulations related to that special license. It will also include a frequently asked questions section. Visit the Special Licenses Unit at [www.dec.ny.gov/permits/359.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/359.html) to check out the updated look.

### Fish PCB Concentration Decreases

Rock bass and yellow perch around Wilcox Dock in Plattsburgh are showing a decrease in PCB concentrations. Remediation of Cumberland Bay from 1999-2000 removed materials containing more than 20,000 pounds of PCBs, including 195,000 cubic yards of sediment and wood- and paper-processing sludge from around the dock. An additional 37,000 cubic yards of material had been removed from a nearby wetland and shore area. Studies show the remediation has lowered the lake's PCB concentration over time. The overall result is that dredging contaminated sediment and other materials from the lake have resulted in a significant improvement in environmental conditions.

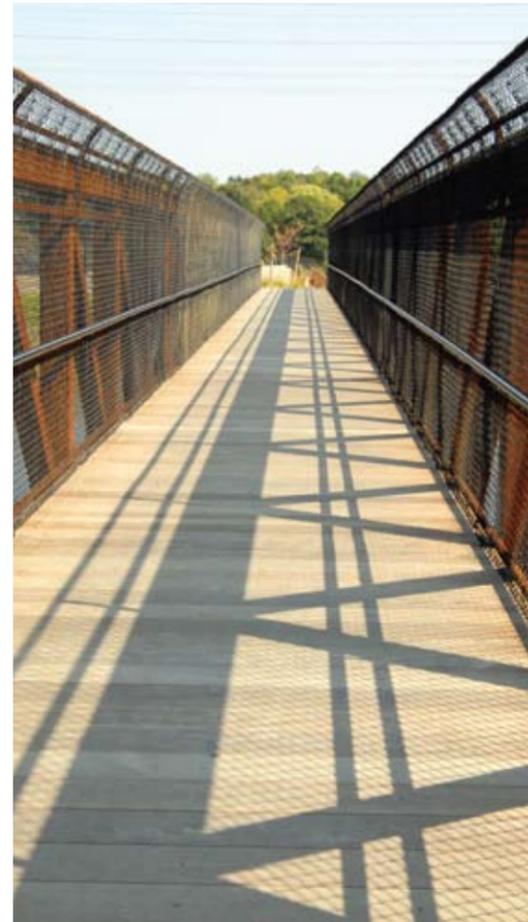
### Marinas Receive Awards

For their outstanding efforts to support the Clean Vessel Assistance Program's (CVAP) mission to improve the quality of New York's waterways, the town of Huntington on Long Island and the Cocksackie Yacht Club received awards in August. The CVAP provides federally funded grants to marinas, not-for-profit organizations and municipalities to assist with the costs of installing pumpout and dump station facilities to receive sewage from recreational boats. Huntington used grants from CVAP to make pumpout facilities available and convenient, while the Cocksackie Yacht Club used grants to install its first pumpout in 1995 and a replacement in 2006. They were chosen as winners based on nominations from New York's boating community, using a new Boater Survey developed by the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation.

### New Cohoes Falls Park

Long regarded as an historic asset along the Mohawk Towpath Byway, Cohoes Falls has a new reason to attract visitors. Collaboration between Brookfield Renewable Power, the City of Cohoes and the National Park Service's Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor allowed the creation of Cohoes Falls View Park. The park was unveiled in August and sits next to the Brookfield Renewable Power's 38-megawatt School Street hydroelectric generating facility. It offers an unobstructed view of Cohoes Falls and a number of new features. For instance, visitors can now enjoy a 192-foot long pedestrian bridge, primary and secondary overlook areas with nearby trail access, and an 80-person amphitheater. In addition, new signage highlights the historical, geological and educational importance of Cohoes Falls, the Mohawk River and other nearby interest points.

Susan L Shafer



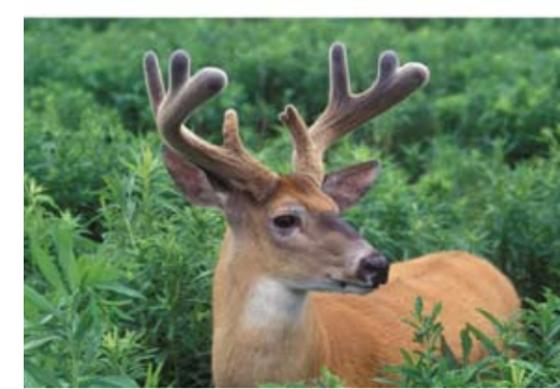
### Drilling the Marcellus Shale

Near-record energy prices, vast untapped gas reserves, a rush to lease rights, and concern for the environment have led to a lively debate in our state: how to access this energy, and at the same time, ensure that the environment is appropriately protected.

While drilling for oil and gas has a long history in New York State, recent interest in natural gas in the Marcellus Shale formation have raised much discussion. The formation lies deep underground, from Ohio to West Virginia, Pennsylvania and into New York; there is an estimated 168-516 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The possibility of harnessing this energy has led many land-management and energy companies to pursue leases with landowners. Questions, however, have arisen about potential environmental consequences of the proposed drilling technique and the other impacts that expanding the industry would have on communities. To address those issues, DEC has initiated a review of potential environmental impacts of horizontal Marcellus gas drilling using high-volume hydraulic fracturing techniques, and how these impacts could be mitigated.

New York State has one of the most stringent environmental regulatory programs in the nation for oil and gas drilling. There are approximately 13,000 active oil and gas wells in the state today.

For more information on drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation and for a brochure on private land leasing, please visit our website at [www.dec.ny.gov/energy/46288.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/46288.html).



Richard Thomas

### Ask the Biologist

**Q:** *What is the difference between an antler and a horn?*

**A:** Anatomically, they are different structures. Antlers are found on the males of deer, moose and other members of the deer family. A true antler is actually a bone. When antlers are growing during the summer months, they are covered with a thick, velvety skin called "antler velvet." The velvet is covered with blood vessels and pumps nutrients into the developing bone tissue. Antlers grow progressively larger until the late summer when the velvet finally dries up and sloughs off. What's left is the familiar, hardened bone—or antler—of the white-tailed buck or bull moose. By winter, antlers break off at the base of the skull, leaving the bucks and bulls antlerless until the following summer when antlers begin growing anew. In contrast, a horn forms on the head of both male and female members of relatives of the cow family. In North America, true horns grow on bison, wild sheep and musk ox. The difference is that horns are permanent. A bony base grows from the top of the skull, but the external sheath or "horn" is the anatomical equivalent of a hoof or fingernail. Formed of a substance called keratin, the horn continues to grow throughout the life of the animal. So while many hunters refer to a white-tailed deer's head ornamentation as "horns," they are really antlers. Despite these anatomical differences, horns and antlers perform similar functions. They are used by males while sparring for dominance during the breeding season.

—Gordon Batcheller, DEC Wildlife Biologist