

Susan Shafer



Lifejackets Required

Beginning November 1, 2009, each person on board a “pleasure vessel” measuring less than twenty-one feet in length—including rowboats, canoes, and kayaks—must wear a securely fastened United States Coast Guard approved wearable personal flotation device of an appropriate size, between November 1st and May 1st. The New York State Legislature recently amended the state’s navigation law as a safety measure for people boating during the colder months when immersion can very quickly cause people to be overcome by hypothermia. Failure to comply is punishable by a fine. For more details, visit the New York State Parks web at www.nysparks.com/recreation/boating/ and click on Navigation Law.

EAB Quarantine

Since the discovery of the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) beetle in Cattaraugus County this past June,

DEC and many other state and federal agencies have worked to combat the fast-spreading pest. One measure initiated by DEC and the Department of Agriculture and Markets is a quarantine of Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties that restricts the movement of ash trees, ash products and firewood from all wood species. Foresters hope the quarantine will stop the spread of EAB into other areas of the state. In addition, a multi-agency team continues to monitor the EAB purple prism traps that were set up throughout the state this past summer (see page 29 in the October 2009 *Conservationist*). Fortunately, no new EAB infestations have been reported to date. For more information on the new quarantine order and emerald ash borer, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/56774.html.

Deadline Approaching

If you’re interested in helping to protect the environment, a career as a DEC environmental analyst may be right for you. Environmental

analysts evaluate the effects of development projects on the environment, and take steps to minimize adverse impacts. Analysts work on a wide variety of important and challenging issues, from protecting tidal wetlands, water quality and endangered species to developing new wind farms. The deadline to apply for the environmental analyst civil service exam is December 21, 2009. The test will be given on January 23, 2010. Check the exam announcement at www.cs.state.ny.us/jobseeker/public to see if you qualify.

Nature a Mouse Click Away

If you have ever wondered what kinds of plants and animals are found in your neighborhood, or your favorite outdoor recreation area, New York Nature Explorer can help. The new online tool provides a variety of biodiversity information to residents, landowners, consultants, students, and anyone interested in learning about our natural world. Users can look up information about animals or plants for a specific geographic area or watershed. Results are gathered from various databases housed on the DEC website. The



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new gateway helps provide a better understanding of the diversity of life in the state, and DEC plans to add more information over time. To explore the new tool, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/57844.html.

Don't Burn Trash

To reduce harmful air pollutants and help prevent wildfires, DEC extended restrictions on the open burning of residential waste. Since October 14th, open burning of residential waste is prohibited in all communities state wide, regardless of population size, with certain exceptions, including burning tree limbs and branches at limited times of the year.

Once considered harmless, open burning releases significant amounts of dangerous chemicals into the air. Trash containing plastics, polystyrene, pressure-treated and painted wood, and bleached or colored papers releases harmful chemicals when burned. In addition, open burning is also the single largest cause of wildfires in New York. For more information and details, visit www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html.

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Amy Bloomfield

Stream Defenders

In October and November, as part of the “Hudson River Estuary Trees for Tribes” program, DEC and many partner organizations and volunteers planted stream buffers throughout the Hudson Valley. More than 2,500 trees and shrubs were planted at 20 Hudson River project sites by Boy Scout troops, municipalities, and environmental groups. Buffers like these are important in maintaining healthy streams and protecting water quality; they help reduce pollution by filtering storm water runoff, stabilize stream banks to prevent erosion, and increase overall biodiversity. The program is conducted through DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program, with help from DEC’s Saratoga Tree Nursery. To learn more about this project, visit www.dec.ny.gov/lands/43668.html.

Raffle Winner

The *Conservationist* would like to extend hearty congratulations to Philip Koons of Ithaca, winner of the lifetime fishing license from the drawing at the *Conservationist* booth at the New York State Fair this past August. On behalf of DEC, we wish you many years of happy, safe fishing!

Ask the Biologist

Q: I’ve been watching several deer, including one nice buck, along the wood’s edge near my house over the past few weeks. Last week I saw the buck with only one antler, and then the next day it seemed he had lost both antlers. Is this supposed to happen?

A: Yes. White-tailed bucks shed and regrow their antlers each year. Typically antlers are cast off or shed in late December or January, a result of decreasing levels of testosterone following the breeding season. Come spring, the antlers begin to grow again, and the cycle is repeated.

With deer losing their antlers each year, you might wonder why you rarely find the sheds. That’s because the antlers are a source of calcium and other nutrients for rodents (including mice, voles, porcupines and squirrels) who feed on them. If you do find a shed antler, look closely because you may see gnaw marks from a small rodent.
—Jeremy Hurst, DEC Wildlife Biologist