

Division of Law Enforcement - NYSCC 2009

Meeting Report

DLE Mission: To protect the quality of the state's environment and the health and safety of its citizens; to protect the state's fish, wildlife and natural resources and the sustainability of those resources, to enhance the health and safety of the public as they engage in hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, camping, and related endeavors; through education, public outreach, criminal investigation, enforcement of law and regulation and through police assistance and emergency response.

The Division of Law Enforcement had a successful year in 2008, surpassing 2007 in enforcement statistics. Part of that success was due to the addition of twenty-three new officers to the southern three DEC Regions from the last Basic School. The quality of that class was such that the entire class made it through to graduation, and every one of those probationary officers is still with the Division. Advances were made in the following Agency Priorities:

Combat Climate Change: Environmental Conservation Officers in 2008 renewed their emphasis on combating air pollution statewide, helping to reduce the emissions that add to global warming. While Fishing without a License continued to be the number one charge written, violations of the emissions standards that apply to heavy duty diesel vehicles rose to number two, for the second time in the last three years, with almost a thousand charges filed. The new technology that is developing to make these vehicles run cleaner is testimony that the emphasis put on this area of enforcement in this and other states is having the desired effect of increasing compliance.

Foster Green and Healthy Communities: The Division of Law Enforcement has committed to assisting the Department's Environmental Justice Coordinator in helping to create a healthier environment for New York's communities, especially those in economically challenged neighborhoods, many of which have suffered from having to endure the least environmentally healthy commercial activities in their areas. In 2008, much of the Division's air quality enforcement was done in coordinated, focused details in both downstate and upstate urban communities. This included not only DLE members enforcing diesel truck emission standards but other DLE staff inspecting boilers, furnaces and other sources of pollution. Citizens in these communities, many of whom were not aware of the presence of Environmental Conservation Officers, have been very appreciative of these efforts.

Connect New Yorkers to Nature: In 2008 DLE members participated in nearly two thousand outreaches, including organized sportsmen meetings, sportsmen training classes, state and county fairs, and civic and youth organizations. Additionally DLE continues to conduct EAGLES Program classes in schools statewide, supported by financial backing from Shikar-Safari International.

Promote a Toxic Free Future: While continuing its traditional dedication to fish and game enforcement issues, the Division of Law Enforcement has been focused on the environmental protection issues that potentially affect all living organisms in the State. In 2008, DLE members initiated over 4200 prosecutions for violations of stream protection laws, freshwater and tidal wetlands laws, mining laws, pesticide laws, and solid and hazardous waste laws. In addition, hundreds of checks of uncertified shellfish growing beds are performed each year by ECOs to keep possible pollutants out of the human food supply.

Safeguard New York's Natural Assets: Just about everything an Environmental Conservation Officer does falls into this category. In 2008, ECOs issued nearly 18 thousand tickets to poachers, polluters, illegal dumpers, and other who interested in taking more than their fair share, or those for whom the profit margin is more important than the lasting destruction of the environment that sustains us all. Operating at nearly full strength with the graduation of the new recruit class, the Division was able to achieve these numbers, an increase of 3% over 2007, with over two hundred thousand fewer dollars spent on overtime