

New York State FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD



Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board Meeting

March 15-16, 2018
White Eagle Conference Center
Hamilton, New York

10:15 Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call and Introductions

Fish and Wildlife Management Board Members Present:

Bill Conners ^{1,3}	Region 3	FWMB to Conservation Fund Advisory Board
Bill Wilklow	Region 3	Landowner Representative
Raymond Merlotto	Region 3	Sportsmen Representative
David McLean	Region 4	Sportsmen Representative
Richard Steele	Region 4	Legislative Representative
Robert Hodorowski	Region 5	Sportsmen Representative
Michael Candella	Region 6	Landowner Representative
Walt Paul	Region 6	Sportsmen Representative
Jim Petreszyn ^{2,3}	Region 7	Legislative Representative
Stephen Wowelko	Region 7	Sportsmen Representative
Pete Walrod	Region 7	Landowner Representative
Matt Foe ³	Region 9	Landowner Representative
Dan Tone	Region 9	NYSCC Representative
Zen Olow ³	Region 9	Sportsman Representative
Patrick McBrearty	Region 4	Otsego County FWMB
Mike Zagata	Region 4	Regional FWMB Chair
Gene VanDeusen	Region 8	Regional FWMB Chair
Paul Curtis	Cornell	Cornell University Advisor to FWMB

¹Statewide FWMB Chair

²Statewide FWMB Vice-Chair

³Statewide FWMB Executive Committee

Guests and Presenters:

Charlie Pace	Conservation Fund Advisory Board
Chuck Parker	New York State Conservation Council
Jacqueline Frair	SUNY-Environmental Science and Forestry
Roger Dziengeleski	
Mark Rogers	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
Tom Hughes	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
Kathy Moser	NYSDEC – Deputy Commissioner, Office of Natural Resources
Tony Wilkinson	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife
Angeline Ross	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife
Stephen Hurst	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife
Douglas Stang	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife
Chris VanMaaren	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife
Justin Perry	NYSDEC – Lands and Forests
Andy Goeller	NYSDEC – Lands and Forests
Lt. Liza Bobseine	NYSDEC – Law Enforcement
Lt. Nathan Ver Hague	NYSDEC – Law Enforcement
ECO Ric Grisolini	NYSDEC – Law Enforcement

Regional, NYSCC, and CFAB reports were available to meeting participants and are attached to the meeting notes

Updates, Discussions and Presentations

Kathy Moser, DEC Deputy Commissioner for Office of Natural Resources

- Enjoys working with FWMB and their representation of the sporting community; encourage input to DEC on fish and wildlife matters
- \$300 million in Environmental Protection Funding (EPF) for 2018-19
- Empire Forests for the Future Initiative (EFFI)
 - o The EFFI proposal would reform and expand New York's forest tax incentive law to increase sustainable production of timber on private property for the forest products industry, encourage preservation of open space, and to reimburse localities a portion of their tax shift resulting from this law; implement a timber harvest notification system; create a state wood product procurement preference; and establish two new grant programs to provide resources for municipalities and private forest owners to secure and/or manage forest lands.
 - o The new program would lower the minimum number of acres to 25, and offer the opportunity for properties certified by a third party as sustainably managed forest land or that undertake a DEC-approved forest management practice to enter the program, as well as require land owners to commit not to developing the property.

- The new law would provide a 70 percent reduction for sustainably certified properties and a 40 percent exemption from local property taxes for undertaking forest management practices and ease the tax shift burden on local governments by reimbursing taxing entities if the impact of exempt property in the program affects the assessment roll by more than one percent. The proposed changes were developed to encourage more enrollment in this forest protection and utilization program by forest land owners.
- The EFFI proposal also includes a harvest notification component that would require DEC notification of any commercial timber harvest covering an area of 10 or more acres
- aka 480-A / 480-B
- landowner can have up to ½ of property acreage in open space
- DEC Commissioner Seggos signed CWD Risk Minimization Plan
 - Expect NYS Ag & Markets Commissioner Ball to do same
 - Outreach event(s) in the planning stages
- June 6th is Outdoors Day across New York – opportunity for sporting groups to get involved
- Additional funds available to foster the AdventureNY effort
 - First time camper program was a great success and will be expanded
 - Additional funds available to improve access to lands and waters
- DEC will be participating in I LOVE MY PARK Day – opportunity for sporting groups to get involved
- DEC appreciated the input provided by FWMB and its members to the land classification referred to as the “Boreas Ponds Tract”
 - Draft UMP is in preparation
 - Public scoping session planned following Governor’s signature of land classification
 - Part of lands to be added to Vanderwacker Wild Forest and part of lands to be added to High Peaks Wilderness Area
- Questions, comments, and concerns raised by FWMB members:
 - Uses of Wildlife Management Areas
 - Some prefer to see guidelines on uses on WMAs as regulations and not guidelines to DEC staff
 - Concerns that guidelines will not be implemented consistently in all Dec Regions
 - DEC lands and WMAs being “abused” in some cases by snowmobiles
 - Reduction in snowmobile trails on Little John and Three Rivers WMAs did not occur as led to believe
 - Items inconsistent with agreement at Three Mile Bay WMA are being addressed
 - Forestry practices on some easement lands are abusive and would like greater oversight by DEC land managers
 - Favor reinstatement of the Forest Practices Board

- DEC and NYS do not seem committed to “NY Open for Hunting and Fishing”
 - NYS not moving forward with lowering age for big game hunting with firearms
 - NYS not leading the charge with fostering use of crossbows during archery season – even though aging hunting population
- Concerned that the expansion of public shooting ranges effort has been side-tracked
- DEC’s outreach on certain topics (e.g. living with bears, living with coyotes) seems “silly” for upstate communities
- Prohibition on use of plastic bags was not followed through as per the task force’s recommendation

Tony Wilkinson, Director of DEC’s Division of Fish and Wildlife

- Enjoys working with FWMB, CFAB, and NYSCC and looks forward to fostering efforts with these representatives of the sporting community
- National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP)
 - New coordinator, Jill Trunko, doing great job
 - 2018 statewide tourney – 500 participants, 25 schools
- 2017 was a safe hunting season
 - DEC Hunter Education Program coordinator, Chuck Dente, is retiring
- CWD Risk Minimization Plan
 - Prohibition of use of natural deer urine is not part of plan, but will continue to evaluate risk of this practice; everything else proposed in the plan is moving forward
 - Combined with NY’s CWD surveillance and CWD response plans, New York is the envy of other States and Provinces
- R3 (Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation)
 - Getting close to releasing DEC’s R3 plan
 - Need to improve internal and external communications
- Questions, comments, and concerns raised by FWMB members:
 - Chautauqua and Erie county fostering R3 by providing lifetime licenses to youth
 - Concerned about proliferation of “bucket biologists” and DEC’s efforts to curb unwanted introductions (e.g. walleye into Skaneateles Lake)
 - Do not support regulations making non-toxic ammunition mandatory

Stephen Hurst, Chief of DEC’s Bureau of Fisheries

- DEC has developed an updated hatchery infrastructure plan
 - Getting good work accomplished with current allocations of New York Works funds
- Delaware River Fisheries Study (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/112782.html>)
 - Comprehensive look at the fishery
 - Evaluating biological characteristics of fish, fish populations
 - Recruitment, age and growth, natural reproduction, movement

- Evaluating angler use and angler characteristics, desired outcomes
 - Including East Branch Delaware, West Branch Delaware, and main stem of Delaware River (to Callicoon)
 - Evaluating the benefit of operating under the Flexible Flow Management Plan
 - Assistance of anglers and general public in some monitoring efforts (e.g. redd counts)
 - Focus on outcomes, angler desires in development of fisheries management plan
- DEC Fisheries Programs will be focusing on using the 4 “Ps” – Principles, Policies, Plans, and Perspectives
- Trout Stream Management meetings
 - Focus on outcomes, much feedback was unexpected
 - Increase management focus on aquatic habitat
 - Additional opportunity to catch wild trout
 - Extend opportunities to catch stocked trout (spread out stocked fish temporally and geographically)
 - Seek diversity of trout stream fishing experiences
 - DEC should better characterize management actions and what its trying to achieve
 - Catch rate is not the over-riding factor – intrinsic values of quality habitat and fishing for wild trout are important
 - Participants in meet: 36% Trout Unlimited members, 33% no affiliation with any club or organization, 12% other conservation organization(s)
- Salmon River Fisheries Management Plan (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/112992.html>)
- Lake Ontario fisheries focus group
 - Discussions have been outcome focused
 - Develop suite of management actions that can achieve desired outcomes
 - DEC staff then compile available data
 - Evaluate risks and trade-offs with various management actions
 - Resulting decisions and actions
- New statewide angler survey is currently out to license holders – on-line (electronic) and hard copy (mail) surveys are being used

Angelena Ross, DEC Wildlife Biologist – Region 6, Potsdam highlighted DEC efforts to evaluate potential to recover spruce grouse populations in New York

- Spruce grouse recovery plan: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/89794.html>
- Spruce grouse are very different than Ruffed grouse in habitat needs, coloration, and flight patterns, etc.
- Preferred habitat is mid- to early successional stages of spruce forest along fringes of bogs and water courses
- NY spruce grouse populations lost most of their genetic diversity during the past 100 years
 - Ontario spruce grouse are most genetically similar to New York spruce grouse

- In 2006, 15 spruce grouse populations were identified; currently, 12 spruce grouse populations identified
- DEC recovery efforts to date:
 - o 86 adult birds translocated from Canada and Maine
 - o Approximately 45% survival (NY resident spruce grouse approx. 70% survival)
 - o Increased invertebrates where habitat has been managed
 - o Some production from translocated birds has been noted
 - o To date, recovery efforts have occurred inside of Wildlife Management Unit 6F

Dr. Jacqueline Frair, SUNY-ESF, highlighted river otter status assessment in New York that is currently underway

- Study: document historic trends, assess current status of river otter in areas currently closed to harvest, develop a robust monitoring plan to assess changes in status of river otter populations
 - o General approach is site occupancy modeling using winter bridge-based surveys
- Definitely evidence of expanded river otter populations in New York -with newly colonized sites
- In sampling blocks: river otter populations positively correlated with shoreline density and negatively correlated with road density
- Recommended survey design: 4 survey sites per sampling block and 400-meter survey per site

Chris VanMaaren, DEC Region 4 Fisheries Manager, led discussion on potential for development of public boat launch on Otsego Lake at Glimmerglass State Park

- Chapter 675 of the Laws of New York restricts state-funded boat launch on Otsego Lake:
 - o *... Notwithstanding any provision of law or regulation to the contrary, any state agency that expends funds for the construction of, or operates, a public boat launch on Otsego Lake or any tributary thereto, shall prohibit the use of such boat launch by mechanically-powered vessels greater than sixteen feet in length.*
- DEC interpretation is that such law does not prohibit construction of a site, but that mechanically-powered boats, etc. 16 feet and length and shorter cannot be allowed to launch at the site
- Previously discussed site at Glimmerglass State Park (site of former marina) is not suitable due to presence of wetlands
- Site(s) at Hyde Bay seem suitable (from an environmental position)
- DEC and OPRHP staff need to meet to discuss and gauge political will of moving forward with public boat launch at Glimmerglass State Park
- FWMB members to continue to work with elected officials, DEC and OPRHP to get to "YES"

Andrew Goeller, DEC Forester - Region 7 Sherburne, led a discussion on Unit Management Plans (UMPs)

- UMPs are comprehensive, detailed documents that are plans for DEC lands in a given area that cover a wide variety of subjects and DEC actions – access, forest / land management, history, improvements, fish and wildlife
- UMPs developed trying to satisfy multiple uses form a diverse clientele that wish to enjoy these lands
- Most effective input is during the scoping sessions and draft review opportunities

Justin Perry, Chief of DEC's Bureau of Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, highlighted current efforts to prevent and eradicate invasive species in New York

- Invasive species efforts largely implemented via Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/47433.html>)
 - o Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP)
 - o Capital Mohawk PRISM
 - o Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP)
 - o Finger Lakes PRISM
 - o Long Island Invasive Species Management Area (LIISMA)
 - o Lower Hudson PRISM
 - o St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario (SLELO)
 - o Western NY PRISM
 - o PRISMs coordinate invasive species management functions including coordinating partner efforts, recruiting and training citizen volunteers, identifying and delivering education and outreach, establishing early detection and monitoring networks and implementing direct eradication and control efforts.
 - o Approximately \$13 million annually from EPF for invasive species prevention and management
- DEC and PRISMs develop a great deal of outreach material
 - o For fact sheets, please see: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html>
- Once located and isolated, best attempts to eradicate are the focus of efforts
- Many additional damaging invasive species on the horizon and set enter New York (e.g. Spotted lanternfly <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/the-threat/spotted-lanternfly/spotted-lanternfly>)

Dr. Paul Curtis, Cornell University, introduced FWMB members to a proposal in the 2018 Senate Budget bill that would allow for more effective permits to address wildlife damage:

Section 1. Subdivision 3 of section 11-0521 of the environmental conservation law, as renumbered by chapter 911 of the laws of 1990, is renumbered subdivision 4 and a new subdivision 3 is added to read as follows:

3. The department may, by permit issued to an employee of any state, federal or local government agency acting in their official capacity or to any person acting pursuant to a permit issued by the department under this section, exempt such employee or person from prohibitions contained in

subdivision one of this section, subdivisions three and eight of section 11-0505 of this title, subdivision two of section 11-0901 and subdivisions two, four and five of section 11-0931 of this article only to the extent that such exemption or exemptions are expressly provided for in such permit.

37 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

- The proposal would give DEC the authority to allow certain practices in control of wildlife that are impacting health, safety, and welfare of the people of New York e.g.:
 - o Allow for rifles in certain areas
 - o Allow for baiting within 300 feet of road
 - o Allow for possession of loaded firearm in a vehicle
 - o Allow for shooting from a road
- Many FWMB representatives were not in favor of the proposal as they feel that culling nuisance wildlife takes away opportunity to hunt and trap in the areas that wildlife populations have reached a nuisance level
- FWMB representatives unanimously want DEC to encourage hunting (and recreational trapping) as the first option to reduce nuisance wildlife populations

[Note: future FWMB discussion item – gaining access for hunting on State Park lands, land trust holdings, and other sizable land holders]

Lt. Liza Bobseine, Lt. Lt. Nathan Ver Hague and ECO Ric Grisolini, DEC Law Enforcement, led a discussion on 2017 hunting-related shooting incidents (HSRIs) and tree stand incidents

- Many HSRIs involve late and early shooting (outside of the legal shooting during low-light conditions)
- In 2017, 79% of the victims in shooting incidents were not wearing hunter / blaze orange
- DEC Law Enforcement has Forensics Unit for gathering evidence and scene mapping and reconstruction – highly effective effort!
- Tree stand incidents are now being tracked
 - o Leading cause to incidents seems to be poor (lack of) stand maintenance with old, worn pieces (buckles, straps, old wood)
- Fines have increased for taking big game out of season and with use of artificial light
- Effectiveness of enforcement is largely dependent upon support from the District Attorney and judge presiding over the case(s)

Roger Dziengeleski, formerly of Finch Pruyn, provided insight into impacts of climate change on forest management

- People are largely omitted in diagrams of the climate cycle, yet man is the only species that can change habits to impact the carbon cycle
- The broader the area (larger geographic area), the better the correlation with climate change assertions, the more micro the area, the less consistency with predictions / assertions
- Potential changes in climate
 - o Continued temperature increases in winter.

- Increased winter/spring precipitation. Summer/Fall precipitation events are more variable. More intense precipitation events.
- Shorter and milder winters, continued declines in snowfall but more winter rains.
- Shorter periods where soils are frozen (increase cost to harvest)
- Potential Impacts on forests
 - Boreal tree species will face increasing stress
 - Habitat will favor southern species
 - Forest composition will change across the region
 - These changes will take decades or longer to occur absent major disturbance
 - Tree regeneration and recruitment conditions will change
 - Forest productivity will increase over the next several decades due to longer / better growing seasons
- Future climate change impacts to forests
 - Reductions in Boreal species such as spruce and fir
 - Increases in species with ranges to the south such as red maple, red oak and cherry
 - Hotter dryer summers may cause common species to decline especially in the south
 - Forest productivity will be influenced by factors such as Carbon Dioxide and moisture
- Management Implications
 - Plants, animals and people that depend on forests may face additional challenges as the climate shifts
 - Greater financial investments may be required to manage forests and infrastructure and to prepare for severe weather events
 - Activities such as wildfire suppression or recreational activities (snowmobiling, skiing etc) may need to be altered as temperature and precipitation patterns change
 - Climate change may present opportunities for forest products industry, recreation and other sectors if changing conditions are anticipated
- Conclusions
 - Never say never but also never say always. Flexibility is needed going forward in order to address climate change – if we want to really address it.
 - Anti-harvest groups tend to use forest management as a fund raiser and prey on the fears of urban populations that no long have ties to the forest.
 - Don't take tools that could be used to address climate change off the table.
 - Wind turbines and solar panels must be used where they don't cause forest conversion
 - Trees are the most efficient solar panels
 - Fragmentation is a big problem and we need contiguous forest cover
 - We can't lose manufacturing of wood products. Once that infrastructure is gone it is very hard to replace

Douglas Stang, DEC Fish and Wildlife provided updates on administrative items and several DEC efforts

- Division of Fish and Wildlife currently has 308.45 permanent position fills
- 2018-19 Budget projected to be flat
 - o General Fund: \$ 608 K (OPS) \$4.2 M (NPS)
 - o Conservation Fund: \$2 M (OPS) \$3 M (NPS)
 - o Federal Aid – projected apportionments
 - Wildlife Restoration: \$22.6 M
 - Sport Fish Restoration: \$4.5 M (freshwater portion)
 - State Wildlife Grants: \$2.2 M
- Hatchery Renovations
 - o 26 projects completed to date
 - o \$14 million in New York Works funding available to the DEC hatchery system
- Game Farm Renovations
 - o \$2 million in New York Works funding is available for projects
- Legislation of interest:
 - o S7952 – DEC authority to manage deer and bear
 - o S7951 – DEC authority to adopt hunting regulations NZ
 - o S7950 – DEC authority adopt migratory game bird regulations
 - o Senate Budget:
 - “crossbow bill” – special archery seasons
 - “nuisance wildlife damage permit” provisions
- Acquisition of Wildlife Management Areas
 - o More than 2,245 acres (in total) have been added (acquired or under contract) to 15 Wildlife Management Areas
 - o An additional 15 potential acquisitions totaling 7,250 acres are currently being pursued
- Young Forest Initiative Update
 - o 34 Habitat Management Plans have been approved to date or are pending approval
 - HMPs are very detailed with specific actions planned and timeframe for actions
 - o 18 additional habitat management plans are in development
 - o 23 public meetings (for 29 WMA plans) held to date
 - o Forestry prescriptions have been prepared for 27 projects
 - o 17 projects currently under contract
 - o 14 projects completed (totaling 338 acres) have been completed
 - o Inventories of timber have been completed on 66% of the acres across New York WMAs
- Promoting 2018 Habitat / Access Stamp sales
 - o Goal – 25,000 2018 H / A Stamps (Barred Owl)
 - o “Stickers” – agents, State Fair
 - o Agent Incentives (recognition)

- Banner-ups – State Fair, top retailers
- Posters – (image of “stickers”)
- Update DEC website
- Social Media
- Change Call-out Box in DECALS

FWMB Executive Committee

Walt Paul added and joins: Matt Foe, Zen Olow, Bill Pike, Tom Ryan, Bill Conners, Jim Petreszyn, and Barlow Rhodes.

Nominating Committee

Patrick McBrearty (Chair), Dave McLean, Ray Merlotto

Next meeting: September 20-21, 2018 – White Eagle Conference Center

Meeting Adjournment –Approval

Motion to adjourn – Matt Foe

Second – Walt Paul

Motion carried unanimously



STATE OF NEW YORK CONSERVATION FUND ADVISORY BOARD
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4800

CFAB issued a letter of support for the connector road proposed from the Kildare to the Five Mile Conservation Easements. There has been public opposition to the road proposed in the Recreation Management Plans. Environmental groups claim it will impede the Spruce Grouse Recovery Plan. CFAB feels that is not the case, the area that will be used for the road is not Spruce Grouse habitat.

The board continues monitor filled positions, i.e., hatchery staff and DLE vacancies. DLE will hopefully conduct an academy in early 2019. Current vacancies and projects retirements show that the Division will be well-understaffed if there is not an academy. The board has expressed its concern to the Governor that an academy be held in 2019.

The board supports the CWD Risk Minimization Plan. It is not likely that the use of natural deer urine will be curtailed at this time.

A major issue is the viability of the Conservation Fund. Lagging license sales continues to plague us. The Office of Budget (OMB) will move Items (staff) from the Conservation Fund to the General Fund when necessary.

CFAB is pushed hard to get the Universal 12-year old Hunting bill through the Legislature.

A rack card has been developed to educate the sporting community and the public about the work that CFAB does. We are waiting approval on the design so that it can be produced and distributed.

CFAM continues to work with the Comptrollers office to improve the investment plan for the Lifetime License Account. Interest revenue has improved on the account, but it is still far short of what it could be.

CFAB has raised questions regarding guidelines for use of WMAs. The guidelines were to be formalized across the stat to held have consistent permissible uses in all regions. We have been informed that the guidelines will not be published. CFAB will continue to work with the Department to reach a solution. At issue are non-primary uses that are in conflict with Part 51 guidelines.

Hunter Safety including treestand safety is being addressed. There were 18 personal injuries including one fatal, during the 2017 season. There were 6 fatal falls from treestands.

The Division will receive 60 new vehicles during February and March.

The board has expressed concern with Conservation Fund projections. OBM is addressing the issue.

The National Archery in the Schools Program coordinator is on board and a tournament has been held

Bill Conners
CFAB Rep

New York State FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

21 South Putt Corners Road
New Paltz, NY 12561-1696



Region 3 Fish and Wildlife Management Board March 2018 State Board Report

National Hunting and Fishing Day – September 23, 2017

Members of the Region 3 Board continued to be instrumental in the organization of local public events on national Hunting and Fishing Day. Examples of specific events that regional board members assisted with include the following:

Rockland County – Rockland County’s sportsman representative Stan Pascoo once again organized a large public event celebrating NHF Day at Congers Lake Memorial Park, a Town of Clarkstown facility. NYS DEC was a co-sponsor of the event for the first time in 2017. The event attracts approximately 25 vendors, including New York City Department of Environmental Protection for the first time in 2017, and approximately 1000 visitors. Visitors are provided with information on hunting and fishing access, hunter and trapper education, and venison donation.

Dutchess County – The Federation of Dutchess County Fish and Game Clubs, with very significant involvement and organization by William Conners, the FWMB’s Dutchess County sportsman representative, hosted their annual David Wohlbach Memorial Youth Pheasant Hunt at Lafayetteville Multiple Use Area. There were 35 youth participants at the event.

Putnam County – Ray Merlotto, the Putnam County sportsman representative, worked with the Putnam County Federation to host youth pheasant hunt at Great Swamp Wildlife Management Area. There were 20 youth participants at the event.

Young Forest Habitat Management

The Region 3 Board continues to discuss the importance of young forest management on private and public lands in the region. Kaylee Resha, habitat management specialist with the National Wild Turkey Federation, attended the Board’s September meeting to report on the progress she has made to encourage young forest habitat management on private lands in Dutchess and Putnam Counties. Ms. Resha discussed the financial incentives available to landowners through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement young forest management. The Board will be assisting Ms. Resha in making landowner contacts in the areas where her efforts are focused.

MEMBERS: Representatives of County Boards or Supervisors/County Legislators, Landowners and Sportsmen.

ADVISORY MEMBERS: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Conservation Council, Inc., New York Farm Bureau, New York State Pomona Grange, New York State Forest Practice Board, New York State Izaak Walton League, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, New York State College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse University, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.

Additionally, DEC representatives provided an update young forest management efforts on DEC lands in the Region. At this time, DEC's young forest management efforts are largely focused on Wildlife Management Areas; however, the Board is very supportive of DEC expanding this emphasis to state forest lands and multiple use areas. DEC currently has a 172-acre timber commercial timber sale planned at Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

Hunting and Fishing Access on New York City Department of Environmental Protection Lands

The Region 3 Board continues to be actively engaged with NYC DEP regarding public hunting and fishing access on DEP's watershed protection lands and water supply reservoirs. Representatives from DEP continue to attend all Region 3 Board meetings to provide a comprehensive recreational access update. Board members are currently engaged in discussions with DEP regarding additional wheelchair accessible fishing locations on several of the reservoirs and offering Family Fishing Day icefishing events.



Region 5 Wildlife Unit | Program Highlights March 9, 2018

Contact:

Paul G. Jensen

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Habitat Work Completed at Washington County Grasslands WMA

Region 5 Wildlife staff, with assistance from Forest Rangers and a local BOCES crew, have been hard at work removing mature hedge rows at the Washington County Grasslands WMA this fall and winter. Although hedgerows provide important habitat for some wildlife, even small trees and shrubs pose problems for grassland birds. A line of brush or trees delineates the edge of a grassland habitat patch to birds that prefer large grasslands for breeding. Also, hedgerows and brush lines attract weasels, raccoons, skunks, foxes, crows, and more—all nest predators that eat grassland bird eggs and nestlings. Reducing the woody corridors that intrude into or border grasslands helps young grassland birds to survive.



Grassland Bird Surveys

Region 5 staff conduct annual spring and winter surveys at the Washington County Grasslands WMA for grassland-dependent species. The grasslands provide habitat for multiple at-risk bird species in the winter and a different group of species in the summer. During spring breeding bird surveys at the WMA, staff counted many Bobolinks, Savannah Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, and a single Sedge Wren. In addition, we had a pair of Northern Harriers nest in a field on the WMA and a pair of Kestrels nest in a Wood Duck box that staff installed.



Highlights from this past winter include fewer Short-eared Owls than last winter, with a few Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Harriers also present. Another highlight this year has been the numerous Snowy Owls that have been observed around the Fort Edward Area, including the WMA. Sections of land that are being mowed with less frequency seem to consistently support the ground-roosting Short-eared Owls. We will continue to evaluate our management approach of rotational mowing for creating and maintaining grassland bird habitat.

Waterfowl Banding

To date, Region 5 Wildlife staff have banded 501 Mallards and 72 American Black Ducks this winter from several locations including Plattsburgh, Port Kent, Fort Edward, Fort Ann, Queensbury, and Saratoga Lake. This post-season banding effort is targeting Black Ducks, which are difficult to catch before hunting seasons, with a statewide goal of 500 Black Ducks banded each winter and 2,000 within the Atlantic Flyway. Data collected from this annual banding effort have greatly increased the quality of biological information that waterfowl managers use to manage this species. For example, this information has enabled managers to evaluate the effect of harvest on survival rates of Black Ducks, directly resulting in the recent increase in bag limits from 1/day to 2/day.

Connor Cincotta, Fish & Wildlife Technician, Ray Brook



Adirondack Park Moose Surveys

This winter, Region 5 Wildlife staff completed the third and final year of aerial surveys to estimate moose population abundance in Adirondack Park. This research project represents the first effort to better understand our moose population in New York State and has been very successful due to strong partnerships within the agency (DEC Region 6 and Central Office), and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, New York Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, Cornell University Animal Health Diagnostic Center, Biodiversity Research Institute, and Wildlife Conservation Society Adirondack Program. During the period of January 3 – 18, 2018, we surveyed 45 sample units using a helicopter and detected a total of 72 moose groups representing 131 individuals. Using the survey data that we've collected during the past three years, we estimate that approximately 400 moose occur within Adirondack Park. We will continue to monitor radio-collared moose and calf production over the next year and Region 5 staff will continue to work with our partners to develop a moose monitoring plan.



Fisher Surveys – Adirondack Park/Tug Hill

Region 5 Wildlife staff are currently working with Region 6 staff on the final year of a three-year study to better understand fisher distribution in the Adirondack and Tug Hill region of northern New York. These surveys, which use camera traps, will provide important baseline data as we prepare to begin a larger research project on fisher population dynamics starting in October 2018. This work is designed to elucidate drivers of fisher population declines that we have observed in the Adirondacks during the past 10-15 years. Additionally, we are collecting information on many other species, including American martens, coyotes, and other furbearers.

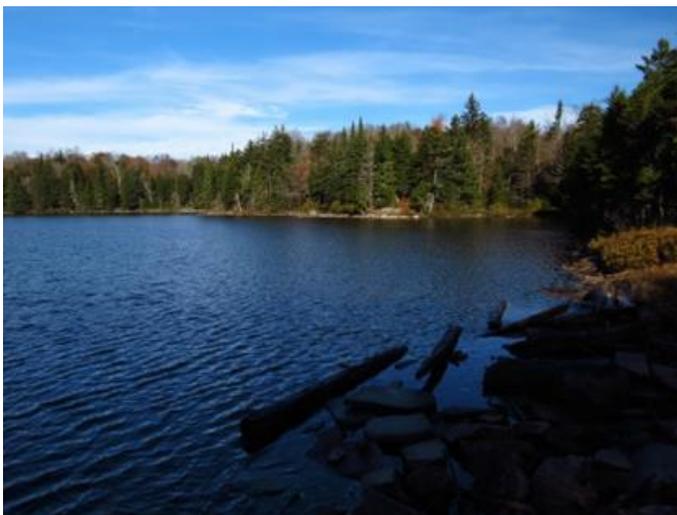


Fisher (top) and American marten (bottom) detected in the Adirondacks using camera traps, winter 2018.

FWMB
March 2018
Region 5 Fisheries Highlights

Public meetings about trout stream management – DEC held a series of 16 public meetings across the state to share some of the research we've conducted on the fate of stocked trout in streams and to gather public input on our trout stream management. The meetings featured a 30-minute presentation describing how DEC currently manages trout streams and included key findings of a statewide study completed in 2015. The presentations were followed by a 90-minute discussion period aimed at identifying the measures of trout stream angling quality most important to anglers. Information on trout stream management and the purpose of the public meeting series is available on DEC's website at: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/111015.html. A summary of the public input we received is under preparation. *Lance Durfey (518) 897-1290*

Brook trout restoration in Marion Pond – Marion Pond, Town of Schroon, within the Hoffman Notch Wilderness Area, was reclaimed with the organic pesticide rotenone in October. The pond had become dominated by non-native golden shiner. A NYS Police helicopter assisted by transporting equipment and personnel to and from the 10-acre pond. This was a relatively straight forward reclamation thanks to a general lack of wetlands along the shoreline and an outlet with a nearby natural barrier that will prevent non-native fish from swimming back upstream into the pond. Despite mechanical difficulties with the helicopter which caused staff to do some unplanned hiking, the project went well and we achieved our desired rotenone concentration based on bioassay results the following day. Marion Pond will be stocked with Windfall strain brook trout next year, reestablishing both a native fish community and a brook trout fishery. *Rob Fiorentino (518) 623-1234*



Marion Pond

Thirteenth Lake Fisheries Survey- In late September Region 5 fisheries staff completed a survey of Thirteenth Lake's fish population. In addition to updating our survey records, this effort was intended to evaluate the success of the experimental splake stocking policy begun in 2013. The netting survey caught multiple age classes of splake (up to 20") and some sub-legal landlocked Atlantic salmon from a recent stocking of surplus fish. In addition, numerous brown trout (up to 21") were captured. Results indicate both the splake and brown trout stocking policies are successful and should be continued. *Jim Pinheiro (518) 623-1264*

Fishbrook Pond Brook Trout Egg Take - Region 5 Fisheries staff conducted a brook trout egg take at Fishbrook Pond, located in the Lake George Wild Forest. The purpose is to provide native Horn Lake heritage strain brook trout eggs to hatcheries for rearing and stocking in other brook trout waters throughout the Adirondack Park. This is an essential part of the brook trout restoration program. Thanks to excellent coordination with the state police aviation unit, the heavy and bulky equipment staff needed was transported to the pond via helicopter. After successfully handling over 200 brook trout, a total of just over 18,000 fertilized eggs were transported to the Warren County fish hatchery for propagation. *Jim Pinheiro (518) 623-1264*

Little Clear Landlocked Salmon Egg-take - The annual landlocked salmon egg take at Adirondack Hatchery began on November 8 and the egg-take target was achieved. Regional fisheries staff were present the first day to collect biological data. Eggs and milt were collected from wild landlocked Atlantic salmon that were netted directly from Little Clear Pond. The pond's salmon population is now entirely comprised of the Sebago strain. The fertilized eggs will be raised in the hatchery prior to stocking. Day 1 was outstanding, with 610 salmon captured - well above the previous three year's first day average of 368 fish. The fish looked to be in great condition overall and included an impressive 8-pound male. Timing of the egg take appeared good as many of the female salmon were "ripe" and able to contribute eggs. *Tom Shanahan 518-897-1334*

Brant Lake Boat Launch is Paved - The Brant Lake boat launch, owned by the Town of Horicon, has been paved. The Town signed a cooperative agreement with the DEC to operate the site as a boat launch to provide public access to Brant Lake. Part of the agreement was for DEC to improve water quality impacts at the site. Annually, stone material from the parking area would wash into the lake and nearby wetland. The new paving and site modifications will significantly reduce runoff impacts. The new blacktop will be painted with traffic flow arrows and striping and will be ready for anglers in the spring. *Rob Fiorentino 518-623-1234*



New blacktop at the Town of Horicon-owned Brant Lake boat launch site.

Mud Lake Fisheries Survey - Warrensburg fisheries staff surveyed Mud Lake in the Town of Johnstown in Fulton county for the first time ever. The eastern end of the lake is in the Peck Hill State Forest, so public access is available. The species captured include yellow perch, chain pickerel, and bluegill. The pond is a great example of a cranberry bog-ringed Adirondack water. *Rob Fiorentino 518-623-1234.*

Lake Lonely Fisheries Survey - Warrensburg fisheries staff electroshocked Lake Lonely to collect data on the lake's largemouth bass and panfish. Many quality-sized largemouth were collected, along with black crappie, bluegill, yellow perch and northern pike. Staff were pleasantly surprised at the number and size of the bass (up to 20") and happy to see some nice northern pike (up to 23"). Lake Lonely will continue to be managed as a warmwater fishery. *Rob Fiorentino 518-623-1234.*

Egg Take for Round Whitefish - Region 5 fisheries staff conducted an egg take for round whitefish in Lower Cascade Lake (Essex County) in late November. Lower Cascade Lake is an important brood water for this species which is endangered in New York State. The timing of the spawn for round whitefish often makes this effort problematic weather-wise, and 2017 was no exception, as snow and cold covered the landscape the day of net-tending. The timing of the egg take was very good with most of the females ripe and about 220 round whitefish were

caught. A total of 71 pairs were stripped and 27,500 eggs were produced. The eggs were immediately transported to the Oneida Hatchery to be raised as part of the ongoing restoration efforts for this rare native species. *Jon Fieroh (518) 897-1337*



Lower Cascade Lake during the 2017 round whitefish egg-take.

Saint Regis Falls Impoundment Fisheries Survey -- This electrofishing survey was undertaken as part of the evaluation of the walleye stocking policy for 3,200 fifty-day fingerlings which began in 2014. No walleye had been collected prior to stocking. Walleye are currently surviving here, as two individuals were collected during this survey. The lengths of the walleye collected were 6, and 14 inches, respectively. Largemouth and smallmouth bass, northern pike, brown bullhead, and pumpkinseed sunfish were also collected. Rock bass were abundant. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*

Kiawassa Lake Fisheries Survey -- This electrofishing survey was undertaken as part of the evaluation of the walleye stocking policy for 5,200 fifty-day fingerlings which began in 2014. Two large walleye were collected during this survey, about 21 and 22 inches in length, respectively. These larger walleyes are likely remnants of a failed walleye stocking policy in Lower Saranac Lake. Largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, brown bullhead, yellow perch, pumpkinseed and rock bass were also collected during this survey. A sample consisting of four different fish species was sent to the USFWS in Lamar PA as part of the sampling program for wild fish health. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*

Little Wolf Pond Fisheries Survey— This night-time electrofishing survey was done to evaluate the walleye stocking policy for 5,200 fifty-day fingerlings which began in 2017. A total of 30 walleyes were collected, with 17 walleyes of about 6 inches or less and 13 additional walleyes ranging from approximately 9.5 to 18 inches. Largemouth and smallmouth bass were also collected and young of year yellow perch were observed to be extremely abundant. Walleye are present in this watershed both above and below Little Wolf Pond. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*

Long Pond Fisheries Survey—Natural spawning here is adequate to maintain the pond's population of Windfall Strain of brook trout. In 2016 a survey was conducted to see if using this water for production of Windfall Strain brook trout eggs was feasible, and this was judged to be the case. In 2017 this water provided the required 34,000 Windfall Strain eggs from about 75 pairs of brook trout. The brook trout here are quite small but they are also very abundant; 513 trout were handled during the survey. Our requirement for this strain was met in a single day of effort from staffs of both the regional fisheries office and South Otselic Hatchery. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*



A brook trout egg-take in progress at Long Pond.

Black Pond Fisheries Survey—This survey was performed to monitor the brood stock population of Windfall Strain brook trout present in this water. Egg needs for this strain were met using Long Pond. A disease sample was sent to the

Rome Lab to continue the ongoing disease history for this water. A total of 95 brook trout were collected during the survey and about 70% of the females were ripe at the time of the survey. Golden shiner and creek chub continue to be abundant, and 3 brown trout were collected. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*

Lake Trout Egg Take at Raquette Lake—This effort is undertaken each year, primarily by the staff of the Chateaugay Hatchery and the egg take is conducted in Raquette Lake in Hamilton County. This Adirondack, "Raquette Lake", strain of lake trout is used to stock many Adirondack waters. Although warm fall weather seemed destined to make the egg take a challenge, the target of 155,000 -160,000 eggs was met. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*

Little Green Pond Fisheries Survey—This trap net survey was undertaken to assess the brook trout population of Little Green Pond. Little Green Pond was reclaimed in 1991, 1999, and 2003. It is currently used as one of the brood waters for the endangered round whitefish and No Angling is allowed at Little Green Pond. The Horn Lake strain of brook trout was stocked in 1996 and it is possible that the current remnant brook trout population may be of the Horn Lake Strain. Brook trout were last stocked here in 1996. A total of 17 brook trout were captured even though the survey was conducted after the spawning period for brook trout was concluded. *Jon Fieroh (518)897-1337*

Two new rivers to be added to the Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Program – As required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), a *draft* Environmental Assessment has been prepared which explains the intent of the Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative (comprised of NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and US Fish and Wildlife Service) to add the Little Chazy River and Rea Brook, streams located in Clinton County, to the existing, federally authorized and state permitted Lake Champlain sea lamprey control program.

During the long-term control program, parasitic sea lamprey wounds on host species have declined by more than 70%, yet remain above program objectives. Because sea lamprey can spawn in and colonize new rivers, their distribution among tributaries to the lake is not static. All tributaries in the basin are quadrennially surveyed to monitor and detect the presence of lamprey in streams not previously colonized. Those surveys recently found substantial numbers of sea lamprey in two tributaries not previously colonized.

Successful suppression of sea lamprey in Lake Champlain depends on comprehensive control of colonized tributaries throughout the basin. Experience has shown that one uncontrolled source of lamprey production can overwhelm successful control efforts on dozens of other tributaries. For this reason, the Cooperative is proposing to add the Little Chazy River (Town of Chazy) and Rea

Brook (Town of Beekmantown) to the Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Program. In addition to maintaining our current level of control, these newly emerged populations of sea lamprey will need to be addressed to achieve our reduction goals.

We also propose to add Corbeau Creek to the program, but because it drains into the Great Chazy River, a separate NEPA process is not required (the Great Chazy River was already addressed in a previous NEPA process).

The draft Environmental Assessment can be found at:
<https://www.fws.gov/lcfwro/sealamprey/NEPA.html>.

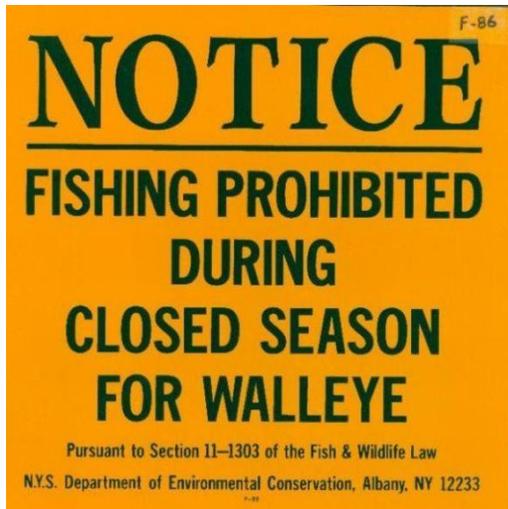
Toxic Substance Monitoring Program Samples Collected:

South Pond — A fish sample of 10 yellow perch and 2 chain pickerel was collected from this 427acre water in Hamilton County for submission to DEC's Hale Creek Laboratory for analysis as part of the Toxic Substances Monitoring Program. This is the first time chain pickerel have been documented in South Pond, or in the Upper Raquette River drainage. Lake Trout are stocked here and although yellow perch were the target species in this survey, a single lake trout was collected - a 26" fish stocked some 16 years earlier.

Upper Saranac Lake — A sample of 10 yellow perch was collected and sent to the Hale Creek Laboratory. Several other species were also collected during the survey including pumpkinseed, rainbow smelt and smallmouth bass.

The fish from both of these waters will be tested for contaminants like mercury or PCB's, which the Department of Health will then use to modify the fish consumption advisories on these waters if indicated. *Adam Kosnick (518) 897-1338*

Regulations Poster Checks – Fisheries staff are checking our signs and posters at locations where there are special fishing regulations in effect. The signs are intended to help anglers know what's legal and what isn't when they are fishing in our regional waters. *Lance Durfey (518) 897-1290*



Example special regulation poster.

Saratoga Lake report finalized – In 2015, Rob Fiorentino conducted an extensive fisheries survey of Saratoga Lake. The final report from that netting and electrofishing effort has now been completed. The survey was primarily conducted to assess the status of the black bass, sunfish, and stocked walleye populations. The lake is dominated by a quality largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) population, and large sunfish are also abundant. Smallmouth bass are moderately abundant, indicating that the statewide black bass regulation is providing adequate protection for the black bass fishery. Sunfish are managed under a special regulation of 15 fish per day, which is maintaining populations that could support exceptional fisheries. This regulation will therefore be maintained. Only nine walleye were captured in the survey, too few for analysis. Another attempt to evaluate the walleye population via an electrofishing or netting survey, is proposed for the spring of 2018. To improve survival of walleye fry, the stocking location was moved from the Nelson Avenue Extension Bridge over Kayaderosseras Creek to directly into Saratoga Lake at the Riley Cove Association boat launch. Due to intense angler exploitation of the spring spawning walleye run in Kayaderosseras Creek in some years, a regulation change to close the fishery in the creek two weeks earlier than present (to March 1 from the current March 16) will be proposed. A special regulation to shorten the walleye season on Saratoga Lake by two weeks (1st Sat. in May through February 28) to reduce angler exploitation of pre-spawning concentrations of walleye will also be considered. *Rob Fiorentino 518-623-1234.*

Quarry dam removal – We are working on the permitting required for removal of Quarry Dam, located on the West Branch Ausable River within the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest. The dam is no longer used for anything, and is negatively impacting the river and its fishery. Consequently, we are working with our partners in Trout Unlimited, the Ausable River Association and the USFWS to

remove the dam. When originally conceived several years ago, it was intended that volunteer labor would be used to remove the dam by hand over several years. However, no volunteers were forthcoming, so the removal will now be conducted by a paid contractor using heavy equipment. It appears our partners have lined up the necessary funding – now we just need the required permits from both DEC and the US Army Corps of Engineers. *Lance Durfey (518) 897-1290*



Quarry dam on the West Branch Ausable River.

Free Fishing Days - The first of several free fishing days in New York State for 2018 will take place this weekend on Saturday, February 17 and Sunday, February 18. During these designated days, New York residents and non-residents are permitted to fish for free without a fishing license. Additional free fishing days slated for 2018 include:

- June 23-24
- September 22 (National Hunting and Fishing Day)
- November 11 (Veterans Day)

New York State FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Region 7 Fish and Wildlife Management Board



March 14, 2018

The Region 7 FWMB Board held meetings in August, October, December 2017 and February 2018.

The following is the list of new Officers for 2018:

Stephen Wowelko, Chairman

Jim Petreszyn, Vice Chairman

Jim Corbet, Secretary

State FWMB Sportsman's Rep - Stephen Wowelko, Alternate Sportsman's Rep - Tim Evans

State FWMB Legislative Rep - Jim Petreszyn, Alternate Legislative Rep - Dale Weston

State FWMB Alternate Landowner Rep - Pete Walrod

The R7 Board continues to work with the DEC, gives input and receive updates on progress on the following public access fishing projects:

Cleveland Dock - public access fishing dock

Skaneateles Lake – public access fishing dock

Redfield Island – public docks

Otisco Lake – public boat launch

Cayuga Lake Mud Lock - public boat launch

Salmon River 1.6 miles of PFR Purchase from Village of Pulaski

We also receive updates with R7 DEC Wildlife on

Young Forest Initiative

WMA Land Management

CWD Surveillance

R7 Board has taken active roles in attending and commenting on Unit Management Plans within our region like the Onondaga Unit Draft 2017 Unit Management Plan. We urged that hunting and trapping be included as sporting activities allowed at the 355-acre Camillus Forest Unique Area.

The board would like to see: continued big game hunting with archery in this area and expanding it to include the use of crossbows; allow small game hunting with archery, crossbows

and allow air guns hunting as permitted by DEC regulations; allow for hunting with a firearm; allow for upland bird hunting (shotgun) in the grassland areas. The board would also like to see trapping included as a wildlife management tool.

The R7 Board sent a letter to Gov. Cuomo and requested that he veto A.6818-A/S.5967-A
Requires the Department of Environmental Conservation to report on deer management techniques in urban and suburban areas.

The board is opposed to this proposed legislation for the following reasons:

1. The bill refers to “an evaluation of alternative deer control methods, other than traditional hunting,”
The board feels that methods other than traditional hunting would take away access and opportunity for sportsmen WHO BUY LICENSES to harvest deer.
2. The DEC already provides this information in:
A Citizen's Guide to the Management of White-tailed Deer in Urban and Suburban New York http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/ctguide07.pdf and
Management Plan for White-tailed Deer in New York State 2012-2016
http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/deerplan2012.pdf
3. Requiring the DEC to do any additional reporting would take resources away from the Conservation Fund and burden the DEC staff from performing their regular job functions.

R7 Board sent a letter of Support for Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan Projects for Onondaga Lake.

The Board feels that these projects go far and above what our expectations were in this remediation process to compensate the public and the environment for losses sustained while the lake was being cleaned up. We realize that time is of the essence and the longer that these projects are delayed, the longer it will be before we and future generations will be able to enjoy their benefits.

The board strongly urges that hunting and trapping be allowed in the areas that lend themselves to these sports, in particular the Hudson Farms (217 acres of habitat protected) and Tully Recreational Area and Nature Preserve (1,023 acres of habitat protected).

New York State
FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD



182 East Union, Suite 3
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Region 9 FWMA Board
March 13, 2018

- **Hunting Co-ops vs Hunting Leases on Private Lands.** Leasing of private lands is becoming prevalent in Western NY. For example, the largest private parcel in Cattaraugus County, previously owned by Potter Lumber Company (12,000 a), was historically open for public hunting. The property has since transferred hands and the new owner has leased or sold all of its property. Leasing fees average \$15/acre. Might hunting co-ops be the answer to leasing if comparable fees be met-perhaps in the form of a comparable tax benefit to the property owner? Other ideas?
- **Public Shooting Ranges.** Lots of demand in Western NY for shooting ranges outside of organized hunting clubs. An unofficial range at Tonawanda WMA (administered by DEC R8) is heavily used but considered marginally safe by state officials. If Tonawanda is not acceptable a nice alternative would be Carlton Hill MUA in DEC R9. Closing the Tonawanda location without alternatives would not be popular with shooters/sportsmen. Status?