New York State
FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board Meeting

September 11-12, 2017
White Eagle Conference Center
Hamilton, New York

Roll Call and Introductions

Fish and Wildlife Management Board Members Present:

Bill Conners[2]	Region 3	FWMB to Conservation Fund Advisory Board
David McLean	Region 4	Sportsman Representative
Robert Hodorowski	Region 5	Sportsman Representative
Lance Robson[1]	Region 7	Landowner Representative
Jim Petreszyn	Region 7	Legislative Representative
Matt Foe[4]	Region 9	Landowner Representative
Dan Tone	Region 9	NYSCC Representative
Zen Olow[4]	Region 9	Sportsman Representative

[1]Statewide FWMB Chair
[2]Statewide FWMB Vice-Chair
[4]Statewide FWMB Executive Committee

Guests and Presenters:

Shannon Johnson	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
Mark Rogers	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
Mark Whitmore	Cornell University
Paul Curtis	Cornell University
Rebecca Gorney	NYSDEC - Water
Stephen Hurst	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife
Douglas Stang	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife

Meeting Agenda –Approval

Motion to approve agenda – Robert Hodorowski
Second – Jim Petreszyn
Motion carried unanimously

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

Updates, Discussions and Presentations

Dr. Paul Curtis was introduced as the new Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) representative to the statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

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

- Acquisition of Wildlife Management Areas
    - More than 2050 acres (in total) have been added (acquired or under contract) to 15 Wildlife Management Areas
    - An additional 12 potential acquisitions totaling 8,100 are currently being pursued
- Hatchery Renovations
    - 16 projects completed to date
    - $14 million in New York Works funding available to the DEC hatchery system
- Game Farm Renovations
    - $2 million in New York Works funding is available for projects
- Uses of Wildlife Management Areas
    - WMAs are established for the purpose of **wildlife conservation** and **wildlife dependent** recreation (e.g. hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, fishing).
    - Protection/enhancement of wildlife populations takes precedence over all other uses
    - Internal guidelines were established for DEC staff to evaluate other requests for uses on WMAs
- Young Forest Initiative Update
    - 29 Habitat Management Plans have been approved to date or are pending approval

        - HMPs are very detailed with specific actions planned and timeframe for actions
    - 19 additional habitat management plans are in development
    - Forestry prescriptions have been prepared for 17 WMAs
    - 11 projects currently under contract
    - 12 projects completed (totaling 401 acres) have been completed
    - Inventories of timber have been competed on 62% of the acres across New York

Dr. Rebecca Gorney, DEC Division of Water

- Presentation New York's Harmful Algal blooms (please see attached)
    - Most algal blooms are not harmful
    - HABs – **H**armful **A**lgal (cyanobacteria, not true algae) **B**looms (proliferation of cells, dense concentrations)
    - Cyanobacteria – Blue-green Algae
    - 3 Main Toxins – microcystins, anatoxins, lipopolysaccharides

- DEC has a surveillance and sampling program – Citizen Statewide Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP)

Dr. Mark Whitmore, Cornell University

- Provided an update on efforts to control Forest Pests (copy of presentation attached)
    - Emerald Ash Borer
        - 3 point plan:
            - Establish biological control
            - Identify and incorporate resistance
            - Conserve the ash genome
        - Know where EAB is – plan to treat trees when symptomatic trees 5 miles away
        - Plan ahead

    - Hemlock Woolly Adelgid
        - Feeding kills buds then foliage
        - Usually kills trees within 4-10 years
        - Working its way south to north in New York
        - Ecological impacts are many
            - Reduced cooling effects of shade on waterways
            - Reduced canopy speeds up snow melt
        - Working on biocontrol: <u>Laricobius nigrinus</u>
            - Promising results

    - Balsam Woolly Adelgid

- Oak wilt (fungus)
    - Spread by firewood and nitidulid beetles feeding on fungal mat
    - Affects all oaks but Red oaks succumb more rapidly

- Southern Pine Beetle
    - Outbreaks are cyclic often coinciding with drought
    - Many species of pines are attacked with pitch pine the favored host on Long Island
    - Native to North America, but not New York
    - Wind-driven population expansion

- Spotted lanternfly

- Best Recommendation overall: **DON'T MOVE WOOD!!!**

Deer Hunting on Cornell University Property – discussion

- FWMB members are supportive of allowing culling during the hunting season (don't need to wait to institute deer cull until after hunting season as is current DEC protocol

RESOLUTION: ***Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board is supporting of allowing deer culling operations during the big game hunting season on Cornell University property – memo to DEC should be drafted and sent.***

Motion to approve – Jim Petreszyn
Second – Dave McClean
Motion carried unanimously

Mark Rogers of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation reiterated OPRHP efforts to increase hunting opportunities in New York State Parks.

- OPRHP is developing more detailed maps that clearly indicate which state park lands are open to hunting
- Letchworth State Park is open to bear hunting (all big game) in 2017
- Hunting in NY State Parks is generally more stringent than DEC allows

FWMB to become more active in developing a specific proposal for a public boat launch on Otsego Lake at Glimmerglass State Park.

Steve Hurst, DEC's Fisheries Bureau Chief discussed several items of interest to FWMB members:

- Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS)
    - outbreak in Cayuga Lake in 2016 was primarily confined to Round gobies

    - smallmouth bass in Seneca lake tested positive for VHS
- Walleyes were collected in Skaneateles Lake (43 in standard DEC sampling) indicating illegal introduction
- Trout stream management meetings – listening sessions to get in touch with trout stream anglers to identify the drivers of their experiences
- Stocking on Lake Ontario in 2018 – to maintain the 2017 stocking levels for trout and salmon
- Recovery Plan for Lake Sturgeon due out for public comment in mid-October

FWMB members are concerned with the number of snowmobile trails that cross streams and potential impact to ecology of streams. This led to broader discussion on ways to afford greater protection to New York's streams and increase classification of all streams to "C" or better

Change in FWMB Officers:
- Lance Robson is stepping down as Chair of Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board
    - Doug Stang present Lance with letter of thanks for his service from DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos
- Bill Conners takes over as Chair
- Jim Petreszyn steps up as Vice Chair

CWD Risk Minimization Plan
- Steve Heerkens, DEC Region 6 Big Game Biologist led discussion of:
    - Background of CWD outbreak in New York in 2015
    - Elements and rationale for recommendations of the plan
- FWMB would like to see recommendations on DEC website for best "reasonable" management practices for handling cervids and recommendations pertaining to clean skull cap, European mount
- FWMB reiterated support for resolution passed at spring 2017 FWMB meeting:

RESOLUTION: Statewide FWMB send a Memorandum of Support for measures to prevent CWD in New York
- *Supports continued prohibition of importation of live cervids into New York*
- *Supports prohibition on retail sale and use of natural deer urine products*
- *Supports prohibition of importation and possession of parts from CWD-susceptible cervids from all states and provinces outside New York*

Motion to support – Jim Petreszyn
Second – Bob Hodorowski

Bill Conners to send confirming support to DEC and Steve Piatt (New York Outdoor News)

Note: suggestion to invite Steve Piatt to spring 2018 FWMB meeting (pending appropriate agenda)

Waterfowl Season Setting Task Forces

- Discussion ensued regarding new waterfowl season setting process:
    - February-March 2017 – DEC met with regional waterfowl task forces to establish seasons for 2017-2018 and to inform them of the new structured decision making process and how they would be involved.
    - June 2017 – DEC held a facilitated workshop in Homer, NY that was open to all task force members. Task force members were asked to provide input on duck hunter values and objectives that influence their decision to go hunting. Approximately 20 task force members participated. Results from this workshop were used to develop the Cornell HDRU survey instrument.
    - August 2017 – Cornell HDRU reached out to all task force members who previously expressed interest in being involved in pre-testing portions of the survey.
    - September 2017 – Cornell will complete the survey development and incorporate comments from the task force members in consultation with the DEC contact team
    - October 2017 – Cornell will distribute the survey to a random sample of 6,000 duck hunters statewide. The western zone will be over sampled to ensure tight confidence intervals around the responses.
    - March 2018 – DEC will meet with regional WTFs to establish recommendations for the 2018-2019 waterfowl season
    - Summer 2018 – DEC will meet with regional WTFs to develop a suite of season date alternatives. Some sideboards may be placed on options. These sideboards and approach for developing alternatives will be discussed and decided on over the course of the next year in consultation with Cornell.
    - Spring 2019 – Through a structured decision making model, DEC will evaluate season alternatives based on the results of the 2017 waterfowl hunter survey and all relevant biological data. The model will be used to recommend season dates in all 4 zones in which the DEC sets season dates.
- Additional consultation with the waterfowl task forces will occur as DEC steps through this process

Discussion on future FWMB meetings and improvement in turnout / participation:

- Establish concrete agenda items well in advance of meetings

- Reach to Regional FWMBs for discussion topics, but focus on statewide issues
- Build agenda throughout the year as issues / items arise
- Send discussion items to Bill Conners right away

Next meeting: March 15-16, 2018 – White Eagle Conference Center

Meeting Adjournment –Approval

Motion to adjourn – Jim Petreszyn
Second – Matt Foe
Motion carried unanimously

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New York State Conservation Council Report
to fall statewide FWMB meeting

The council held a combined NYSDEC introduction meeting this past weekend March 18th, 2017, with many updates from the department and gave us a chance to meet the new replacements in various positions. When completed we then went to class rooms set up for committees to discuss various topics with the department and take committee positions on any resolution submitted to the council. Paloma Cappanna provided us with comprehensive updates on gun rights advocacy and current court litigations. Bill Gibson then gave us the 2017-18 legislation that the council needs to take positions on.

Issues the council has been concerned with is Bill S4739 more Antler Restrictions, Lower Universal Age to twelve hunting age to shoot, Crossbow Hunting Enhancement, Live Cable Restraints for Trapping. Increase Penalties for Illegal Taking of Deer, Eliminate Back Tags. Tax for Venison Donation, Prohibition of ATV's in State Forest Preserve, Registration Exemptions for ATV use on Owners Property, ATV Weight Increase, Safe Act Reformation, Capricious & Arbitrary Firearms Regulations, 480 Reformation.

Committees were asked to vote on their position concerning a Resolution submitted for Mandatory Blaze Orange while Big Game Hunting.

Coming up this September will be the council's Annual Meeting when Resolutions will be voted on and elections held. The committees will just give a recommendation at the Annual Meeting.

The four committee's that I had access to, however, had small attendance at them and voted no for Blaze Orange. Comments at discussions period made some good points for having Blaze Orange and other's ones not so good.

NYSCC Rep. - Dan Tone

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CFAB Report to State FWMB
White Eagle Conference Ctr
September 11 – 12, 2017

Conservation Fund Balance	**February 2017**	**August 2017**
	$13,475,383	**not**

Note: As of Thursday, April 6th, New York Budget negotiations have stalled. That does not mean that the parties could not come back to the table at a moments notice.

What the current situations does say is that items that were in the Executive Budget have been set aside, i.e., Universal 12-year old hunting, the 480B Program, etc. It is also not clear as to the status of the Department Bill (DEC). As of today, it is largely a wait and see situation.

Unfortuantely, the 2017 Legislative Session was a complete bust in so far as bills that support the sporting community. Nothing moved.

- 12-year olds did not get the privilage to hunt big game with a firearm
- Crossbow use was not expanded. They are still limited firearms seasons and the last two weeks of the Special Archery Season
- The 480A Program remains in place because no action was taken on 480B
- No improvement in the investment latitude in the Lifetime Trust Account

One "Item" had been ame avaialbe for National Archery in the Schools Program.

Work continues on the hatcheries including the re-circulation system at Salmon River.

Board members have raised concerns regarding urban deer management programs. Concern

Is about loss of hunting opportunities.

Department is using structuered decision making to get input from watefolwers and Waterfowl Task Force Groups. Intent to get input from hunters that are not active in hunting organizations.

The Imperial Dam Project is still not progressing.

CFAB continues to push OPHRP for more access to State Parks.

Academy graduated on August 5, but with fewer graduates (31 EOCs and 9 Rangers) than anticipated due to fallout. Hopefully there will be another Academy in 2019. High number of retirements continue to be a problem.

Dir F&W Director Ken Lynch reports that as of AUGUST no decision has been made on the critical fills for the hatchery system.

Asst. Comm. Kathy Moser reports that 5 dams previously under Canal Corp control have been transferred to DEC

Board was briefed on proposed regulations changes to control CWD. Proposed Regs are now available for public comment.

Revenue continues to be a problem due to decling license sales.

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Region 9 FWMB Issues for Discussion
Statewide FWMB Meeting
September 7, 2017

- Difficulties buying property to be managed as WMAs. WMAs do not pay property tax and some Towns will not support the sale of properties within their towns without some property tax benefit. Town support is a requirement for use of EPF funds but not for PR funds although DEC still applies this rule. Can FWMB play some role here?
- Shooting Ranges on WMAs? Where does DEC stand on this issue? If shooting is prohibited at Tonawanda WMA than target shooting is likely to shift to Carlton Hill MUA. A shooting range was proposed here but nothing has happened.....
- Access to duck blinds on Grand Island (OPRHP property). OPRHP proposes to close the West River Parkway which would affect public access to duck blinds. R9 FWMB sent a letter to OPRHP outlining their concerns and recommending that alternatives such as special access permits (allowing auto use) be available to those using the blinds. OPRHP responded that they intended to allow duck hunters to drive to their blinds under a special permit.
- Loss of public hunting on private property and rebirth of Co-ops. Access to private properties continues to decline as property owners decide to limit it to personal use or lease the property for profit. It is unlikely that property owners will open their property to the public as a co-op unless there is some measurable benefit, especially if the benefits do not exceed those from leasing. Could something similar to the 480a Forest Tax Law (reduced property tax) be used to reward the property owner for allowing public access? Other incentives?
- Youth drawing for lifetime license. If this hasn't been mentioned before?

MEMBERS: Representatives of County Boards of 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