



New York State
Conservation Council, Inc.

Grass Roots News

March 2014 Vol. 14 No. 3

THE NYSCC INFORMATION HIGHWAY

President's Corner- Chuck Parker

I hope it is not a major issue for a lot of us but I am hearing that some don't know what is going on with the Council. Let me first assure you we are busy; then let's look at ways that we all can be involved in or aware of what's going on.

Quite a few things have happened to date. Since January 1st here have been four trips to Albany, generally attended by two different Council members. A Region 7-8-9 meeting was held on January 12th, attended by NYSCC Officers (President and 2nd VP) and Board members of those Regions. The February 1st deadline for submitting resolutions has passed. Any further resolutions will come through committees. A Board of Directors meeting was held on February 8th. Committees for 2014 are presently being established (we are late on this one). Did you send your application in? Add to all this regional and local meetings attended by our Board of Directors and Officers.

The four trips to Albany included a get-together with DEC Legislative Affairs about 2014 legislation, comparing their views and positions with ours. A general quarterly meeting was held with DEC Fish and Wildlife personnel. A summit with the SWAP advisory group was attended on January 10th. This group looks at "species of greatest concern" and how to utilize federal funding that will be available. Yes, wildlife can be considered a species of greatest concern. Other sportsmen's groups represented at SWAP were NYS Trappers and NWTF. We presented testimony on the Governor's proposed budget on January 29th.

Addressing access issues for Walt Paul is nearly a full time job; and Bill Conners also devotes a significant amount of time. You have seen their comments in our newsletter.

Using our committees for input and advice in the month of February, the Council has submitted comments on the DEC's proposed Black Bear Management Plan, Mute Swans, and Fisher Management. Still awaiting committee input is the topic of invasive aquatic species control.

There have been approximately three updates to the Council's Legislative Report, a list of bills we follow; it is available for review on our website. Bill Gibson's work as Legislative VP requires almost-daily activity in these days of bill introduction and committee agendas. Along with the Legislative Committee, Bill has been busy.

Our office personnel have been staffing the headquarters office, publishing Grass Roots News, sending out membership renewals, reviewing and editing documents, answering your phone and email inquiries, arranging for Council meetings, and other activities too numerous to mention in this article.

There is a lot of information out there telling you what is going on. The following can serve as a guide to our website to help you find the information you're looking for.

Our home page can be found at www.nyscc.com. For our bylaws, positions, and policies, go to the drop-down bar labeled **About the NYSCC** and select **Rules and Regs**; from there you can select **Constitution and By Laws, Positions, and Policies**. These are the foundation blocks of the Council. The latest version of the documents is published here and we do our best to update them as Council action warrants. For example, updates for position statements are awaiting approval by the membership at our March 8th Legislative Meeting. Our calendar of events can also be found from this drop-down menu.

Especially at this time of year the most important thing you can find on the website is legislation, which can be found from the Council's home page (www.nyscc.com). From the **Legislative Information** tab you can find bills we are following or those we are watching. The "watch" list is similar to the "follow" list but may not be as important, or action on these bills is less likely. Our memos and statements on select bills are also available. **What you are looking at here is the same content that is available to our legislators if they want a quick reference to where the Council stands on a particular bill.**

If you are not computer savvy or don't have access, I would like to make the following suggestion. If you are a member with a vote at a general Council meeting, you are a representative of a group. That group is a member of the Council. Someone within your group uses the internet, has email, can visit a website and has a printer. Use them to get the information you want. Get them involved. You are a major link to keep our membership involved.

Often as President or as an Officer or Director we assume you are adequately aware of what is going on. If you do not think so then you are correct and you need to make it known; and together we will resolve the issue. At the same time you need to make use of what is available now. This is a consensus organization -- the views of the Officers and Board will reflect the prevailing opinions of the membership. Make sure you are there and aware.

JOHN L. CUSHMAN
Board of Directors



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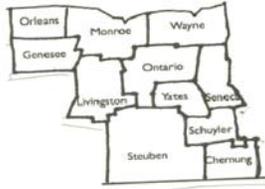

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REMINGTON TO OPEN HUNTSVILLE FACILITY – ILION'S FUTURE REMAINS IN DOUBT



By Bill Conners

Remington Arms has been the target of persistent rumors for years. Industry analysts, dealers and gun owners have had a tough time of it trying to decide whether Remington is here in New York for the long haul, or would Remington bail out at the first opportunity. Passage of the NY SAFE Act last year fueled the rumor mill that the company would shutter the Ilion plant as retribution became rampant. Surely, if expansion plans were being explored, the perceived anti-gun attitude of state government could hardly serve as the carrot on a stick that would be needed to keep the expansion plans focused here in New York.

On February 17th in Huntsville, Alabama, Remington Outdoor Company CEO George Kollitides, flanked by Alabama Governor Robert Bentley and a host of municipal and civic leaders, announced that the Remington Company would be developing a 500,000 square foot manufacturing facility in the Huntsville area. When complete, Remington will have more than 2.1 million square feet of manufacturing space, a 25% bump in capacity.

Media reports revealed that 24 states courted Remington in the hope that the additional manufacturing space would be created in their respective states. Some reports were saying that Tennessee won the contest, but that rumor was laid to rest with the Huntsville announcement. There is little doubt that Alabama's more than \$54 million economic development package of enticements played a major role in Remington's decision to join Alabama's business community.

Unfortunately, Kollitides did not address the issue of Remington's future plans for the Ilion plant. What has been suggested is that Remington is angry over the new SAFE Act because it made many of Remington's firearms illegal to sell and own here in New York. That further fueled the long-standing rumors that Remington would pull up stakes. Gun owners, if not outright fueling the rumors, chose to believe them because they see the SAFE act as punishment of law-abiding gun owners for the misdeeds of a few lawless criminals.

It is almost ironic that Alabama's state slogan is "We Dare Defend Our Rights." We could speculate that company officials took the passage of the SAFE Act as an infringement of Remington's right to design, manufacture and distribute sporting arms here in New York. The cost of doing business in the Empire State is high enough without having to deal with onerous laws and regulations that limit or direct the use of your manufacturing facility. That kind of business climate gives producers outside the state an unfair competitive advantage.

The backlash and anger against the SAFE Act runs so deep that some gun enthusiasts are not upset at the prospect of Remington leaving New York; they see it as an embarrassment for Governor Cuomo. That does not mean that they don't recognize the damage that the loss of 1,300 jobs in the Mohawk Valley will have on the region and the state.

It was obvious that, faced with unprecedented demand for its products - driven in part by a handful of mass shootings followed by a virtual avalanche of anti-gun legislation - the Remington Company would have to increase capacity. Space in the facility is not currently earmarked for any one of the company's 18 individual brands, but rather to facilitate flexibility and growth of the Remington Outdoor Company. However, during the announcement it was revealed that research and development would be consolidated in Huntsville.

As for the possible reasons for Huntsville winning the bid, the economic incentives would be high on the list. But there is also the fact that Alabama has an available pool of skilled workers. Huntsville is site of the Army's Redstone Arsenal, home to a reported 35,000 military and civilian employees.

Following Remington's announcement in Huntsville, the Empire State Development Corporation said the current Remington workforce in place in the Mohawk Valley will remain intact. However, a statement made by Remington officials following the SAFE Act being signed by the Governor stated that Remington would not abandon its 1,300 employees in the Ilion plant without considerable thought and deliberation. That statement falls short of a solid assurance that the 1,300 jobs at the Ilion plant are safe. Also, one cannot help but wonder that if New York had been more thoughtful about a piece of legislation that has little hope of achieving its stated goals, would / could the 2,000 jobs earmarked for Huntsville have been filled right here in New York, providing an easy additional \$100 million a year in payroll and benefits for the Mohawk Valley.

Thank you!

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WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE...

THE NYS Southern Tier Local Chapter of the NWTF will hold its Annual Hunter Heritage Banquet on March 8 at the Owego Treadway Inn, Owego. Doors open at 5. Contact Larry Shutts 607/642-8609, email shuttsbird@gmail.com; Paul Litynski 607/754-5058; Andrew Munson 607/722-0572; or Daryall Sprague 607/775-2146 after 4PM. Tickets deadline: March 1.

ICE FISHING TIME

From the Desk of Bob Brown- Executive Program Director

Ice fishing is fun. It is probably one of the few outdoor unorganized group sports. We seldom go ice fishing by ourselves, and yet we don't go out and form teams with coaches, uniforms and stands of spectators. It is kind of a rural small town activity that attracts the hardy souls in a community. If you ice fish you probably spend at least three or four weekends a year on the lake.



Died-in-the-wool ice fishermen are split into two categories – the Ice Shanty folks versus the Nomads of the Ice folks. The Ice Shanty group: pick a spot and stake it out, kind of like a gold miner making a claim. "I know the fish are here!" They have faith in their spot and will hang out for a while, usually only moving once or twice a season, making only short distance adjustments.

Colors, shapes and sizes of these dwellings make interesting fishing villages on the ice for the eyes of passing motorists on the shore. Kids love them because it is like building a fort on the ice. For those youngsters lucky enough to visit the shanties, adventures lie deep in the ice holes with thoughts of monsters under the ice and in minnow buckets full of the exciting wiggles of baitfish. You never forget the warmth of the heater or stove and the smell of stew or coffee simmering over them.

Older fisher folk sit for hours in these shacks and relive the stories of past adventures. Their hands weave patterns with jigging sticks that move, dancing baits for hungry fish under the ice. Every few minutes their eyes stare out the tiny windows to spot the sprung flag of a tip-up or to note the advancing wind or snowflake of a pending storm.

Meanwhile, the Nomads of the Ice are those who are always thinking that the fish are biting somewhere else on the lake from where they are standing. By foot, snowmobile or ATV they tend to move, following that school of fish they cannot see. They often change locations daily and sometimes more frequently. Now and then they'll place tip-ups in several sites around a lake and then every hour or so make a circuit, visiting the various locations. One friend of mine who fishes for northern pike in shallow water sets out a line of tip-ups along the shore. About every hour he picks up his first tip-up and moves it past the last one, thus slowly fishing the shoreline around the lake.

Out in the elements, the Nomads tend to be more active because of the cold weather. Most of the time is spent cleaning ice out of tip-up holes and moving from one jigging hole to another. Keeping warm is a key factor in lasting the day. Portable sled-type structures that fold out into tent-type structures are popular. I found that ground blinds for hunting game make great temporary ice fishing shelters. I simply take a small cordless drill and make some holes in the ice, put some tent pegs in and add some water that freezes quickly. Plus, it is a lot safer to put up a temporary shelter than to sit in a pickup truck and begin to hear the ice crack!

The highlight of ice fishing season has to be the Ice Fishing Derby which is "carnival time" for ice fisher folk. There are a lot of derbies today and they provide great fun. You get to meet other fishermen, fish different waters, take a road trip and win some good prizes. All the derbies have different rules, entry fees and prizes. This is good family fun at its best and gives non-fishing families a chance to stop and see the fun without feeling like they are intruding. You also get a chance to see what fish are brought in to enter the contest and have a better idea of what types and sizes of fish are in the lake. You see some interesting scenarios such as tip-up flags going off and grown men running to "hook the big one."

The funniest incident I ever witnessed at an ice derby was at the Colby Classic in Saranac Lake several years ago. It was a beautiful day on the first weekend in March. The weather was sunny and warm enough that almost everyone was dressed in a light sweater or jacket and fishermen had brought light camp chairs to sit out on the ice. There were about 150 fishermen all sitting around and talking, watching about 600 tip-ups. It was early afternoon, and the chairwoman in charge of the derby could finally get out of the headquarters to take a break. She owned three Labrador retrievers that were in the back of her pickup truck and decided it was time to take them for a walk.

She put a leash on each one and proceeded to walk out on the ice. The dogs saw all of the contestants and activity; and after being penned up in the truck all morning thought it must be time for some exercise. They kind of all pulled at their leashes in the same instant. Being on ice, it was difficult for the woman to control the tugging which caused her to slip; and in trying to get her balance, she let go of all three leashes. Now let me tell you, having been cooped up all morning, those friendly dogs wanted to meet as many of these friendly fisher folk as they could. Each one of them must have been looking at a different fisherman because they split up in different directions to greet these good old boys. The problem was they each had an eight-foot leash following them that was swinging like a lasso.

Fishermen tried to get up out of their chairs to greet them, but what they saw was hundreds of tip-up flags popping up all over the lake as these dogs came running toward them. The fishermen were now not in the petting mood, and the dogs were coming toward them at excessive speed. Spreading out, the dogs were setting off more flags. In the distance came the chairwoman in a panic, and the fishermen did not realize that she was in charge of the derby. Their reaction in very loud voices is not printable in this article. They basically said that they would report this to the chairman of the event, to which she replied, "I am the chairman!" Lesson learned – don't mix dogs and tip-ups!



**SAVE THE HABITAT.
SAVE THE HUNT.**



NWTF's NYS Chapter is participating in a new 10 year initiative named **Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt.**

Together, with your help, we can and will conserve 4 million acres of wildlife habitat, open 500,000 acres for public hunting access and encourage 1.5 million new hunters.

For more information on this new initiative please visit:
www.nwtf.org/Save-the-Habitat-Save-the-Hunt/

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