



IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME -- WE'RE GOING TO SEE CHANGE

President's Corner- Chuck Parker

We Need You. To paraphrase another, there are changes coming that will require adjustment on our part. It is across the board -- internal and external to the NYSCC -- and it presents the **mandate** for all of us to become more involved.

The **NYSCC Spring Meeting** took place on April 11th. What started out as a low sign up turned out to be a respectable number of participants. We had a sound presence from DEC with Gordon Batcheller, Jeremy Hurst and Bryan Swift from Wildlife and Phil Hulbert from Fisheries attending. Based on their topics of discussion there was a not-too-subtle message about future concerns and possible changes on the horizon.

The Message of Change:

- We are going to see real habitat change on our Wildlife Management Areas through the Young Forest Initiative which could very well be a model for the future. We as the Council need to strongly support this initiative.
- The issue of antler restrictions will be presented from a different perspective. We need to ensure our position is well known.
- CWD -- concerns about future threats and challenges will be ongoing. We as Council members need to be aware and proactive regarding this serious threat.
- With time comes a change in personnel. We as sportsmen need to promote sportsmen and conservation issues. We cannot allow a program or policy drift when new DEC personnel come on board.
- Be it budget concerns or change in personnel, we the Council must continue to stay aware and hold the DEC accountable, both statewide and regionally.
- Different organizations such as ADK, the Adirondack Council, Protect the Adirondacks, and other statewide groups may not necessarily support our views on wise conservation and sound stewardship. Some of their methods are seen by us as being less than factual at times. We need to promote the honest message when it comes to access and land use.

Operation of the NYSCC: For both funding concerns and effective operation of the Council changes are being looked at and in some cases instituted.

The Message of Change:

- We have to increase our **Funding Initiative**. Sources available in the past just are not there anymore.
 - **BAM** - the Buck a Member Program needs a renewed effort. It is a great program that has seen a drop in participation over time.
 - **Recruitment** of new sustaining donors is a task we all need to be involved with.
 - We need more members ... more members ... more members. They are our base for representing sportsmen's interests.
 - This funding initiative will be an ongoing effort.
- **Grass Roots News is going quarterly!** Starting in June we are moving to a quarterly mailed newsletter with monthly (or more often as needed) email updates.

- **Special editions** will be printed as needed.
- Communication via email and our website will take on added importance.
- Be sure that you are on the email list.

Better Communication is coming our way. We will be using today's methods to meet today's needs.

The Message of Change:

- **Constant Contact** will be our new avenue of email communication, helping to bring you important breaking news.
 - It will allow easier emailing to the masses or to specific groups.
- **Our Facebook Page** is being redrafted so that it better represents Council interests and issues.
- **NYSCC's Website** is continually being improved and updated ... go to www.nyscc.com to see the changes.

The New York State Conservation Council's Fall Convention on September 18, 19 and 20, 2015 will have a dramatic change which **will require your involvement.**

The Message of Change:

- The conference will be held in conjunction with a fall sportsmen's show at the OnCenter in Syracuse.
- Wherever possible presentations will be open for the public to attend. (DEC reports, special topics, etc.)
- Admission to the sportsmen's show will be free for NYSCC delegates.
- The Council will receive \$1 for each paid admission to the show.
- This is a major effort to bring better awareness of the NYSCC to the public.
- The success of this venture depends on participation in and promotion of this event by people like you.

Yes, change is coming, and everyone can contribute to the success of the NYS Conservation Council by joining us in embracing these innovations.

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE...

The Adirondack-Catskill Chapter of Safari Club International is looking for a disabled hunter for its Youth Hunt 2015. Youth ages 11-17, male or female with a severe disability (wheel chair or similar) should apply. All expenses will be paid by SCI. For more information, contact Bill Mayer at 518/284-2953

May 9 - Women on Target instructional rifle shooting clinic 9 am – 4 pm at Hudson Valley Sportsmen's Association, Poughkeepsie.

May 23 – Introduction to rifle clinic 9 am – 12 noon at Hudson Valley Sportsmen's Association, Poughkeepsie. Contact Jackie Emslie for information and registration: jslie@earthlink.net or 914/475-4901.

May 16 - Trailblazer Adventure Program youth event at Camp Woodland in Constantia, NY, 9 am – 4 pm. Looking for volunteers to help with archery range, BB gun range, fishing, game calling, hunting dogs, trapping and other outdoor skills areas. Contact Frank Price at fprice@ussportsmen.org or 614/888-4868x202. Program overview at <http://www.ussportsmen.org/youth-programs/>

June 13-14 – Crosman All-American Field Target Championship at Rochester Brooks Gun Club in Rush, NY. Full schedule of events and registration information is available at <http://www.crosman.com/connect/crosman-field-target-championship>



2014 BLACK BEAR HARVEST REPORT RELEASED

By Bill Conners

The Department of Environmental Conservation has released the state-wide black bear harvest report for the 2014 hunting season. A total of 1628 bears were killed by hunters across the state. The count includes those taken in the new early season, archery season, muzzleloader and the regular season when all legal implements may be used. Hunters in the southern areas of New York killed more black bears in 2014 than ever before — and Ulster County had the highest total of any county in the state.

Hunters took 192 black bears in Ulster County in 2014, according to statistics released by the state Department of Environmental Conservation Monday. There were 17 taken in Dutchess County.

"With bear hunting areas expanded throughout upstate New York and a special early bear season in portions of the Catskills and western Hudson Valley, hunters had unprecedented opportunity to pursue black bears (in 2014)," DEC Commissioner Joseph Martens said in a statement.

The population in southeastern New York has expanded greatly in recent years; and the expanded hunting areas and early season should help reduce the population in the region before problems develop. Bears are becoming more of a problem in some areas, and complaints about nuisance bears are becoming more frequent.

Along with expanded hunting seasons in some areas, DEC is working to educate people about the actions they must take to reduce nuisance incidents by learning about things that will attract bears to their neighborhoods. A total of 1,110 bears were taken in the southern zone, a 13 percent increase over the previous year and well above the previous record of 983 in 2011.

The southern zone includes the Hudson Valley, the immediate Capital Region, the Southern Tier and areas of western and central New York. The northern zone includes the Adirondack Park.

Bear hunting is prohibited south of Westchester County, as well as in some other portions of the state.

The statewide record is 1,863 in 2003.

The 2014 numbers were much higher than 2013 because of the special early season, according to DEC. A reported 337 bears were harvested during the special season that ran from Sept. 6 – 21 in parts of the Catskills and other areas west of the Hudson River. The special season was not held in counties east of the Hudson River.

Ulster County also accounted for three of the five heaviest bears taken in the state. A 550-pound bear was taken in the Town of Wawarsing, ranking No. 3 statewide, and a 510-pounder was killed in the Town of Shandaken.

A 500-pound bear was killed in the Town of Rochester.

Bear hunting wasn't expanded into southeast portions of the state - including Dutchess County – until 2011. The expanded zone now includes Rockland and Westchester Counties, and all counties east of the Hudson River north to Washington County.

In 2011 hunters took 50 bears from this new area, including 18 taken in Washington County, 11 in Rensselaer County, 10 in Columbia County, seven in Dutchess County, two in Putnam County and two in Rockland County.

This past season, hunters took 11 in Washington County, 24 in Rensselaer, 12 in Columbia, 17 in Dutchess and 7 in Rockland County. Putnam produced no black bears this season.

The 1,628 bears harvested this season is well above the five-year average of 1,301 and eclipses the historical average calculated from 1991–2000 of 722 bears.

The largest bear reported this year weighed 646 pounds when field dressed. The estimated live weight could have been as much as 800 pounds. That bear was shot in the Town of Wells in Hamilton County. There were 10 bears reported with dressed weights of 440 pounds or more including the heavyweights mentioned earlier.

Dutchess County's bear population seems to be growing, but it will take a few years yet before we can expect to be able to tell which towns will produce the most bears from year to year. Right now it looks like odds are best in the Towns of Pawling and Pine Plains.

The special season will remain in place until DEC determines that the population has been sufficiently reduced to meet the Department's population goals.

ALBANY COUNTY FISH STOCKING

By Kevin Busch

Four-year-old Carter Barnard of Colonie, NY, and future member of West Albany Rod & Gun Club assisted Grandpa Tim Barnard with the distribution of trout into the Lishakill Creek. Carter, along with 12 people from various clubs in Albany and Schenectady Counties assisted NYSDEC with the dispersal of trout. DEC Officers Chris Valenty and Kurt Bush also offered assistance.



Carter's comments on the morning: "We let some monsters go." Grandpa Tim also reported Carter had the opportunity to release them again that afternoon.

JOHN L. CUSHMAN
 Board of Directors
NYSCC Life Member since July 1990



NRA
 NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
 107 TRUBERG AVENUE
 PATCHOGUE, NY 11772
 Tel: (631) 475-8125
 Fax: (631) 475-8125
 E-mail: jcushman@juno.com



New Members

GUARDIAN MEMBER:
 Michael Stump, Watervliet

LIFE MEMBER:
 Russell Wuest, Marcy

FINGER LAKES CONSERVATION COUNCIL INC.
 Representing County Federations and Affiliate Clubs
 of New York State Region 8



Member Federations 2013
 Chemung Co Fed of Sportsman's Clubs
 Genesee Co. Fed. of Sportsmen's Clubs
 Livingston Co. Fed. of Sportsmen's Clubs
 Monroe Co. Conservation Council
 Ontario Co. Fed. Of Sportsmen's Clubs
 Orleans Co. Fed. of Sportsmen's Clubs
 Seneca Co. Fed. of Sportsmen's Clubs
 Steuben Co. Fed. of Conservation Clubs
 Wayne Co. Fed. of Sportsmen's Clubs
 Yates Co. Fed. Of Sportsmen's Clubs

President Mike Elam
 Vice President Paul Griffen
 Secretary Glen Adams
 Treasurer Dennis Race

GATOR TIME

By Bob Brown, Executive Program Director

Because of a record breaking cold winter in New York State, more New Yorkers spent time this winter in Florida, hoping to warm up. After seeing ice fishermen dig down through 34 inches of ice to reach water at the Colby Classic Ice Derby and the Adirondack Enterprise newspaper reporting over 80 homes had frozen pipes, I decided to migrate with the rest of the flock.

We made a list of friends, former students and relatives who might provide shelter. It was a last minute decision, and motel rooms were at a premium. The inner circle of contacts took pity on us, and the Browns found several places to hang their hats. Two days later our plane landed in a magical place called the Sunshine State with 80- degree temperatures.

After renewing past memories with our friends and relatives, they suggested we do some sightseeing along the swamps and bayous to view birds, alligators and other creatures inhabiting the wetlands. During the next two weeks we spent a good deal of time in the swamps on both coasts of Florida. On these trips I observed numerous alligators in their natural habitat and learned some information that I thought I might share with you.

Alligators are only found in two places in the world, in the Yangtze River in China and the good old USA, mostly in Florida and Louisiana, with some found in eight other southern states. Today, Florida has 1.5 million alligators. Spanish Explorers called them "el lagarto" (lizard). Later settlers dubbed them "Allagarto". The slang expression became "alligator" and then was shortened to "gator."

You can tell the difference between an alligator and a crocodile, as alligators have large rounded snouts while crocodiles have long narrow pointed snouts. The largest alligators are about 14 to 15 feet long with a few exceptions (Louisiana's record was 19 feet in the early 1900's and Florida's was 17.2 feet in 1956). Their life span is about 30-35 years in the wild. Young alligators grow about a foot each year until they are about six feet long; then they grow less but they are difficult to measure!

Alligators have about 80 teeth with backup ones behind the visual teeth if they need to replace one.

The teeth are designed for holding, not for chewing. They eat about anything -- birds, mammals, insects, carrion, fish, frogs, turtles, and even other alligators. They enjoy eating dog. I don't recommend taking "Fluffy" on a hike with you in gator country (several dog collars have been found in the stomachs of harvested alligators). Feeding activity is controlled by water temperature. When it drops below 68-73° F they stop eating. During cold periods gators will sit on the bottom of a lake for hours; but in warm weather they need to breathe every few minutes.

It is not possible to tell males from female; however, the males are most likely the larger ones. To attract females during breeding season, males slap the water with their heads and make sounds similar to a lion roaring. Raising their backs and tails, males also vibrate their sides, causing low frequency sounds and creating turbulence in the water around their bodies.

After mating the female goes on land and digs a hole to deposit eggs in vertical stacks, then covers the entrance with sand and vegetation to bury the eggs. It takes about 65 days for eggs to hatch. She guards her eggs from raccoons, bears and feral pigs. The eggs at the top of the stack receive more heat than the eggs at the bottom in the cooler sand. Eggs at the top become males and bottom eggs produce females. (Turtle eggs are deposited in the same way but the outcome of the turtle gender is reversed with the eggs on top producing baby female turtles.) Gator eggs have about a 50% success rate. Freshly hatched alligators are carried by the mother in her mouth to the water. They all remain together near the nest through their first winter. Although the female fends off predators, about 80% of the young alligators die within two years as almost everything eats them (herons, snakes, otters and other alligators, etc).

After participating in three separate "first hand" gator experiences both on land and in water and learning from professional guides and information sheets, I asked all my friends on both the east and

west coast of Florida: "Why did we never go to a sandy beach where all the tourists hang out? They reminded me that the last time I visited their fair state and they took me to the beach my corpulent physique outdistanced my Speedo so much that a passing dolphin-watching boat got stuck in the sand. The tourists onboard all ran to the starboard side of the boat to report to the Coast Guard what they thought was a beached humpback whale caught in the receding tide.

CONSERVATION FUND ADVISORY BOARD REPORT TO FWMB AND NYSCC SPRING MEETINGS

Prepared by Ray Merlotto and Bill Connors

The CFAB continues to monitor license sales and revenues. The migration from DECALS to ACCELA developed technical problems and availability issues that may have contributed to lower sales. There has been focused attention on the problems using resources guided by Asst. Director of DFWMR Doug Stang.

In the Board's October meeting Chairman Jason Kemper asked that CFAB members be provided with a list of deliverables. The issue has been reported and discussed on a continuing basis.

A decision was made to move forward with the development of a new front end (user end) for ACCELA including a new user interface for license agents and on-line customers.

CFAB has raised concerns about the marine funding account and asked for a more detailed report.

In the November meeting the issue of funding for ACCELA migration was raised, and the Department was asked to provide information on how the cost of problem resolution and system updates would be covered.

The Board asked for updates on the progress being made on the Works III Project List.

The Board has focused on the Governor's Executive Budget in recent months. The proposal for a new HCAA Account and the "Young Forest Initiative" and staffing for that initiative have been monitored and discussed extensively.

Staffing issues for the Division of Law Enforcement have been raised. It is possible that an academy will be scheduled for the first quarter of 2016.

A Works IV Project List is being considered. Regional Natural Resource Supervisors are receiving input on potential projects.

Concerns have been raised about the Recreation Web Group and the information provided via the internet. One concern is that if the information is not presented properly there will be abuse of certain DEC lands, i.e., Wildlife Management Areas being used for activities that are not allowed.

JOSEPH P. DEBERGALIS, JR.
Board of Directors



NRA

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

P.O. Box 1096

WEST SENECA, NY 14224

Tel: (518) 389-8322

E-mail: firstfreedom@live.com

NYSCC Life Member

PLACE YOUR AD HERE! GRASS ROOTS NEWS ADS

Business Card Size: \$30 per issue

Quarter Page Ads: \$40 per issue

Other Size Ads are available.

For more information, contact our office at nyscc@nyscc.com or 315/894-3302, or write to NYSCC at 8 East Main Street, Ilion, NY 13357.



IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY A MEMBER, JOIN TODAY!

Name _____
 (OR) Club Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Email (print clearly) _____

Check One:
 _____ Guardian \$30
 _____ Defender \$65
 _____ Life \$350 *
 * (individuals only)

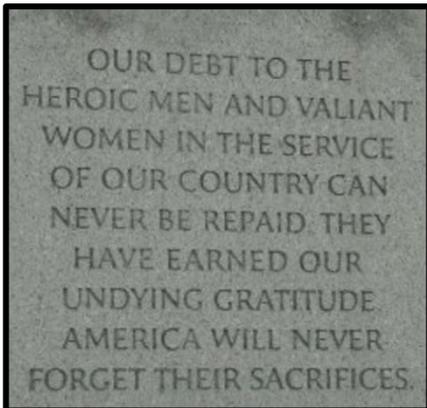
Send application with check or money order payable to:
 NYSCC
 8 East Main Street
 Ilion, NY 13357



Buck A Member Contributors:

- A-On-Do-Wa-Nuh Sportsmans Club, Inc., Leicester
- Black North Rod & Gun Club Inc., Waterport * Canaan Rifle Club Inc., Canaan
- Castleton Fish & Game Protective Association, Castleton * Delchenego Rod & Gun Club, Sidney
- George Washington Fishing & Camping Club, Inc., Buffalo
- Lake Keuka Chap. Izaak Walton League, Penn Yan * Mt. Morris Sportsmen's Club Inc., Dalton
- Niagara River Station Fishing Club, Grand Island * Northern Chautauqua Conservation Club, Dunkirk
- Otego Rod & Gun Club Inc., Oneonta * Unadilla Rod & Gun Club, Unadilla

GRASS ROOTS NEWS



| | |
|---|-------|
| President's Corner | 1 & 2 |
| What's Happening Out There | 2 |
| NYSCC Positions on ATV Legislation | 3 |
| 2014 Black Bear Harvest Report Released | 4 & 5 |
| Albany County Fish Stocking | 5 |
| Welcome New Members | 5 |
| Gator Time | 6 & 7 |
| Conservation Fund Advisory Board Report to FWMB and NYSCC | 7 |
| Spring Meetings | 7 |
| Thank You | 8 |