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NYSCC Policies

Policies listed are those that meet the requirements as established in the resolutions procedures to create a policy for NYSCC.

Resolution Committee Consideration (Board of Directors June 13, 1976)

The Board of Directors moved that it be a Council policy that committee and all resolutions will be accepted by the resolutions committee for review.

Club Listing Availability (Board of Directors March 1993)

A current up-to-date listing of clubs will be maintained in the Council office on computer. This list will be confidential and not be given out. The only list to be given out will be the county delegate listing (called Master List).

Use of Council Stationery (Board of Directors March 20, 1992)

No one may use Council stationery, his/her title, or the Council's name for anything except the position and policy of the Council. That is, Council stationery/ use of title/Council's name may not be used for personal positions or policy statements.

DEC Regulation Over Legislation It shall be the policy of the New York State Conservation Council to continue to support wildlife and fish, and land management through DEC regulation as opposed to management through legislation whenever it is in the best interest of sportsmen and the principles of sound conservation. *(2014)*

Landowner/Sportsmen Relations (Spring Meeting and Annual Meeting 1993)

Preamble: The sportsmen of New York State, of necessity, are vitally concerned with issues which affect private landowners and private lands and waters. Sportsmen rely on the landowner to maintain fish and wildlife populations, often to tolerate them, and to allow public access for fish and wildlife recreation.

Landowners are concerned with these same issues. However, of equal importance to the landowner are broader resource management issues, especially as they affect the landowner's capability to achieve a reasonable standard of living while providing adequate quantities of quality food and fiber at reasonable prices. In other instances, the desire for privacy may be paramount in affecting the landowner's philosophy and decisions. Sportsmen must recognize and be sensitive to these types of factors, which ultimately affect fish and wildlife populations and their use.

Both landowner and sportsmen groups have limited constituencies and thus limited influence. Both are often misunderstood; often the misunderstanding occurs between them. It behooves the sportsmen of the State to support the landowner and seek to resolve their concerns where and when possible. An important first step is recognition of their problems, especially those created by fish and wildlife, and to pursue a pathway of stronger and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Therefore, in order to improve the relationship between the landowners and sportsmen of the state, promote public access to private lands and waters, help protect the rights of private property ownership, and establish a closer working relationship to help achieve commonly- shared or mutually acceptable goals, the following policies and recommendations are endorsed:

A. Public Access to Private Lands and Waters

- The landowner has a right to know and control who is on and using his property; sportsmen should have permission to use private property for recreational purposes.
- Greater emphasis should continually be placed on providing information and training to sportsmen on the rights of private landowners, the trespass laws and other laws or regulations which apply to the use of private lands. The sportsmen training programs should be expanded to better cover these items with sportsmen.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on enforcing laws, which protects the rights and safety of private landowners.
- Greater emphasis should be directed toward systems of posting which will be less restrictive than general "posted" signs.
- Greater effort should be directed toward investigating new possibilities to provide public access such as hunting easements, tax incentives to non-posted landowners, alternative forms of cooperatives, etc.

B. Landowner Liability

- The current best interpretation of the limits to the landowner liability from recreational use should be more widely publicized in the landowner community.
- The General Obligations Law should be amended to create a \$500 exemption to the provision that the law does not apply if a private landowner receives any fee or payment for recreational use.

C. Farm Operations

- The use of registered and certified chemicals by approved methods by or under the control of certified applicators should be supported.
- Legislation should be passed providing for returnable bottles and cans.
- Greater research should be undertaken on ways of reducing agricultural damages by protected wildlife.
- Legislation should be passed to provide authority to the Department of Environmental Conservation to establish deer seasons beyond January 1 in areas of high agricultural damage.
- Department of Environmental Conservation should maintain close consultation with the landowner community in the development or implementation of any legislation, program or procedure, which affects them.

D. Communications and Cooperation

- The Fish and Wildlife Management Boards and the program developed under the Act should receive greater support and funding.
- Annual meeting should be called by the chairman of the State Fish and Wildlife Management Board of the elected leaders of the New York State Farm Bureau, New York State Grange, The New York State Conservation Council, Inc., and State FWM Board to discuss areas of concern and potential cooperation, including issues, programs, legislation, etc.
- Similar annual county level meetings should be encouraged.
- We pledge active support for the programs and legislation of landowner groups where conflicts in policy do not exist.
- New efforts should be made to utilize the mechanism of Cooperative Extension to promote understanding and cooperation.

Firearms (Annual Meeting 1965 and reaffirmed 1977)

- To oppose control measures which levy discriminatory or punitive taxes or fees on the purchase, ownership or use of rifles, shotguns, pistols, and revolvers; hereinafter referred to as firearms.
- To oppose legislation that would require firearms registration or that would require any citizen to give any governmental authority at any level, any accounting of ownership, acquisition, or disposition of firearms.
- To oppose legislation that would interfere with the unrestricted legitimate recreational use and ownership of firearms by law-abiding persons.

- To oppose legislation that would disarm the law-abiding citizen so that he could not protect himself, his family, his property, or his country against armed criminals or invaders.
- To support legislation that would restrict or prohibit the use, ownership, or possession of any firearms by persons convicted of a crime of violence, fugitives from justice, mental incompetents, and drug addicts.
- To support legislation providing severe additional penalties for the use of a dangerous weapon in the commission of a crime of violence.
- To support education that will overcome the ignorance that produces fear of firearms.
- To support legislation tending to produce a stronger educational program for firearms safety.
- To support legislation that will revise existing restrictive laws to permit law-abiding citizens free acquisition and possession of firearms.

Wetlands (Spring Meeting April 1991)

The New York State Conservation Council, recognizing the value and importance of our freshwater wetlands to both man and wildlife, fully supports Article 24 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law to protect, conserve, and preserve our New York State Freshwater Wetlands. We further adopt the national policy of No Net Loss of Wetlands for NYS.

The New York State Conservation Council supports and adopts the following recommendations or goals of the Freshwater Wetlands advisory committee and further puts forth the following as our policy:

- When the loss of wetlands is necessary and unavoidable, that losses be minimized and a policy of mitigation be used to restore or create new wetlands in an amount equal to or greater than the loss.
- That New York State restore or create new wetlands whenever feasible.
- That research on wetlands is encouraged and a long-term wetlands conservation plan be developed.
- That the Department of Environmental Conservation address urban wetlands with management plans and establish an educational program on the importance of wetland functions and preservation.
- That the Department of Environmental Conservation should be sure that all tax assessors are aware of the lower allowable assessments on wetlands.
- The New York State Conservation Council also acknowledges that the current 12.4 acre minimum size for wetlands is not adequate to protect our wetland resources and insure a no net loss policy. We therefore support a reduction in the acreage size to be considered a wetland, possibly down to as small as one acre.
- That the grandfathering provision of Article 24-1305 should be repealed as an outdated provision.
- The New York State Conservation Council supports sound agricultural water management such as improving drainage on agricultural land. But when wetlands are involved we would support mitigation measures such as creating new wetland or enhancing existing wetlands with improved habitat or nesting for waterfowl.
- We support additional DEC staffing as necessary to implement the freshwater wetlands program. Funding for additional staff could be raised by substantially increasing fees and earmarking them to the wetlands program through the Conservation Fund.
- The New York State Conservation Council asks for notifying new landowners, developers, investors etc. of the severe development constraints on mapped wetlands in order to avoid conflicts.
- The New York State Conservation Council urges the amendment of village, town, general municipal and county law to designate wetlands as a special land use category. Zoning, where in use, should be encouraged as a local tool to protect wetlands.
- We believe the Department of Environmental Conservation should order the restoration of wetlands more often; that civil penalties should go into the Conservation Fund to increase resources for the wetlands program; and that violators of wetland law and penalties imposed be published in the newspapers as a deterrent to potential offenders and to make the public aware of the value of our NYS wetlands.

Forest Preserve (Annual Meeting September 1994)

A. Commercial Lumbering in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council strongly supports Article XIV Section 1 of the Constitution and is opposed to commercial lumbering operations in any form or under any guise on lands constituting the Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks and Catskills, except on lands designated Wild Forest, with positive regulation and control.

B. Power, Canal, and Water Supply Dams in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation supports a policy of maintaining intact the river and lake basins and other water resources of the forest preserve and is opposed to the construction of reservoirs for any purpose on these lands.

C. Highways and Roads in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council support the policy that road building proposals involving the Forest Preserve must be narrow and specific in scope. The Council will actively oppose any highway amendment which proposes to further cut up or fragment Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas as defined by any State agency or committee which has the responsibility for the administration of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks.

D. Land Acquisitions in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council supports the principle that, when the Department of Environmental Conservation finds it possible to acquire highly important lands for the Forest Preserve, the Governor and the Legislature assist in such acquisition whenever possible, with particular emphasis on acquiring lands for multiple use. The Council strongly supports the procedure for all land acquisitions in the Forest Preserve follow the policy of a "willing buyer and willing seller."

E. Motorized Travel in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council recommends protection of Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas in the Forest Preserve from motorized vehicle and equipment. Emergency official use of such equipment should be limited. Access by bushplane to a limited number of Wilderness area lakes and ponds in remote areas should be permitted. Provide liberal motorized access on designated routes in Wild Forest Areas.

F. Wilderness, Primitive, and Canoe Areas in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council recommends that continuous special attention be given to the large Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe areas of the Forest Preserve, to the end that these lands by virtue of state ownership of large contiguous blocks, reach their maximum potential as remote areas, with continued emphasis on multi-use, including the traditional recreational interests of hunting, fishing and trapping.

G. Access to Back Country

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council favors public access to lands in the Forest Preserve. The Council favors the opening of existing roads and trails in the Wild Forest Areas for use by motorized vehicles during the months of April through November except when the local Ranger determines that they are unusable. Development of access across private lands now blocking State lands must be actively pursued.

H. Recreation in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council favors continuing and expanding recreational opportunities and activities within the Adirondack and Catskill Preserves in accordance with presently existing rules, regulations and guidelines. The Council opposes non-conforming uses such as closed cabins or cabin colonies in Wilderness, Primitive and Canoe Areas within the Park.

I. Wildlife Management in the Forest Preserve

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council favors such habitat improvement for wildlife in the Adirondacks and Catskills as can be accomplished within the framework of Article XIV, Sections 1 and 3 of the Constitution. Cooperation with private landowners, including a program of tax concessions for wildlife management action, is also recommended and encouraged. The Council favors wildlife management activity on lands designated as Wild Forest as well as on State lands outside the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve counties.

Resolved, that the New York State Conservation Council favors the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation via procedure to conduct active habitat management on 5% of the Adirondack Forest Preserve lands through cutting trees, mowing, prescribed/controlled burning, and planting of trees and other vegetation, etc. to benefit wildlife. (Adopted September 1999 Annual Meeting)

Lead (Annual Meeting September 16, 1995)

Historical questions associated with lead and its effects on the environment, including those effects on humans and wildlife, generate public and scientific concern, both nationally and internationally. Those concerns relate to airborne particulate lead, metallic bullet lead and lead shot as used in regulations and the home manufacture of ammunition.

Where environmental effects of lead may exist, they are often site-specific and compound-specific; and any such effects will require greater scientific understanding in order to identify the level of risk, if any, and the appropriate response. Fortunately, the NRA has the expertise in the use and management of lead specific to hunting and the shooting sports.

The NRA will utilize its expertise by participating in efforts to further the scientific understanding of the effects of lead. In addition, The NRA will advocate for the use of the best available science to identify what, if any, remedial and precautionary measures are necessary to mitigate any legitimate negative impact resulting from the use of lead in the environment, especially as it applies to hunting and the shooting sports.

In furtherance of its role in lead-related concerns, the NRA will communicate, coordinate, generate and support responsible research in cooperation with the appropriate federal and state agencies and affected constituencies where lead in the environment is or could be a problem. The NRA will provide assistance to various government entities by participating in the development and implementation of scientifically sound research, policy and management decisions that affect the use of lead in all firearms related aspects of American culture and way of life. The NRA recognizes the inherent bias that persistently invades "scientific" policies promulgated to achieve predetermined regulatory outcomes by agencies whose motivations are driven by politics. The NRA will insist that scientific data is legitimate and that conclusions be shown by clear and convincing evidence which is empirical, not speculative and has full and fair disclosure. Lastly, the NRA will assist in identifying remedial and precautionary measures, if and when necessary, to alleviate legitimate ongoing environmental concerns and help ensure that future problems are avoided.

NRA's involvement in lead-related concerns is vital to ensure the continuation and perpetuation of hunting and the shooting sports. Adopted by NRA Board of Directors and the Council.

Forest Land Purchases (Annual Meeting 1981) Hamilton County Resolution:

Be it resolved that the NYSCC adopt as policy the support of a constitutional amendment that would enable the DEC to purchase lands in the Adirondacks as part of future Forest Preserve holdings, that may be designated as Forest Preserve Management Areas. Such lands are to be managed by the DEC for timber production, as a firewood resource and for recreational use.

Board of Directors Expenses (Board of Directors December 1974)

It shall be policy that no expenses will be paid until the President receives a full report of meeting held or conference attended. (Board of Directors minutes April 1971) There shall be a time limit of 60 days for submitting vouchers; and the date starts from the date of the incurred expenses.

Speaking on Behalf of the NYSCC (Board of Directors August 1970)

It shall be the policy that no one of authority in the Council has the right to go on his own in the name of the NYSCC without the explicit permission of the Council.

Policy Rule Established 1951 (The 75% rule)

In 1951, the Board of Directors proposed and the convention accepted the concept that resolutions intended to set Council policy should require approval by 75% of the counties present and voting. Since there has been discussion of this rule from time to time, the following is recommended as a clarifying statement:

It is recommended that resolutions intended to set Council policy be defined as those directly perpetuating, furthering or otherwise affecting the objectives of the corporation as set forth in its certificate of incorporation including, but not limited to, such existing legislation, approval or disapproval of proposed or existing legislation, approval or disapproval of a given cause, movement or philosophy. It is further recommended that in the votes where the 75% rule is required no proxies be permitted, but the requirement of 75% of counties present and voting be interpreted literally. The above policy changed with by-law change and then with resolutions procedure changes.

Board Agenda Timeframe (Board of Directors April 1991, *Fall Convention 2012*)

Agenda shall be provided be two weeks days in advance, if possible; all notices for Board of Directors meetings shall list all items for discussion and for vote. This is to enable the members' time to review and comment.

~~**Board Roll Call Voting** The roll will be called at the beginning of each board meeting to identify those qualified to vote and to determine if a quorum is present. All votes taken at a board meeting shall be by roll call and not show of hands~~

NEW: The roll will be called at the beginning of each board meeting to identify those qualified to vote and to determine if a quorum is present. The secretary shall record all voting results (even verbal or show-of-hands votes) taken at a board meeting. In the minutes, these results will indicate any abstentions, and the number of yes & no votes cast.

Annual Calendar of Meetings An annual calendar of meetings and events for the next year shall be established no later than the close of the current annual meeting (Fall Convention)

Meeting Minutes

At all Board meetings, accurate minutes are required to be kept. Draft copies of these minutes shall be provided to ALL members of the Board (whether present or absent) as soon after the close of the meeting as is practical, but not later than thirty days after the meeting has occurred.

County Membership (Policy statement 1945, later reaffirmed 1964)

Where there is a county federation in a county, and that federation is affiliated with the Council, its representative is the councilman and had the right to speak for that county. Where additional clubs in that county are not affiliated with the county federation but wish to join the Council, they are welcome to do so upon a payment of the per capita membership fee. They may send a representative to Council meetings, but where the vote of the county is involved; the councilman's vote shall be received and counted.

Where a county is not represented in the Council, the first club applying for membership will have the privilege of selecting the councilman. Where subsequent clubs apply for membership, all the clubs in the county should be urged to form a federation to elect the councilman so that the councilman represents not only one small club, but also all the organized sportsmen of the county. Inasmuch as the Council favors public hunting, private so-called posted land clubs having dissimilar objectives will probably not apply for membership. If there should be two applications, one from a posted land club and the other from an open club, the open club should have the preference in selecting the councilman.

Litter in Parks (Annual Meeting 1967)

Be It Resolved that the Adirondack and Catskill Parks area, being part of the forest preserve, should be maintained and kept in its most attractive state for the benefit of all the people of New York State; accordingly, be it the desire that all possible steps be taken either by state or local legislation, or both, to the end that the Adirondack and Catskill Parks shall be forever in a clean and healthy condition free from waste, debris and any obnoxious or unsightly waste material; and further that this organization shall support any such movement by state or local government.

Wildlife Management Area Transfer (Annual Meeting 1984)

The NYSCC strongly opposes the transfer in any manner of any wildlife management area (especially Howland Island Wildlife Management Area) to any entity.

Acid Rain (Spring Meeting 1981)

NYSCC implores the President, US Congress, and the Governor and Legislature of NYS to provide leadership and funds as are necessary to bring a solution to the acid precipitation dilemma.

Hinckley Dam Project (December Meeting 1984)

Council strongly states its policy in opposition to any surface impoundment within the "blue line" of the Adirondack Park. Also (Council special meeting December 1992) Strongly against proposals from major developers to subdivide large tracts of land within the Blue Line.

As further policy statements are found this booklet will be updated.