



Grass Roots News

Advocating for Conservation and Sportsmen Since 1933

October/November 2017

Vol. 17 No. 5

CONVENTION REVIEW

By Chuck Parker, NYSCC President

To those who attended the annual meeting, thank you. For those who skipped it, you missed some good presentations, helpful information and equally important you missed your opportunity in the decision-making process used to direct the Council moving forward.

DEC's presentation was informative as usual but took on a little different approach since there are different people holding positions within Fish and Wildlife. For Wildlife, Fisheries and Habitat, Division Chiefs Jim Farquhar, Steve Hurst, and Chuck Neider were present along with biologists Josh Stiller and Mike Schiavone. Also present from the Governor's Office was Venetia Lannon, Deputy Director for the Environment. All offered a common theme and ample question and answer periods. Discussions included talk on Boreas Ponds access, hatchery updates, access, DEC funding, Wildlife Management Unit use, CWD, along with current accomplishments and future goals. We heard acknowledgement and appreciation for the role played by the NYSCC in advocating for sportsmen and conservation. Venetia Lannon as well as the new Directors within Fish and Wildlife expressed a better understanding or affirmed their appreciation of the NYSCC. On Saturday Fish and Wildlife Director Tony Wilkinson gave a presentation on the Draft CWD Management Plan, which led the NYSCC to support the proposed plan.

Fred Monroe from Access the Adirondacks spoke about land classifications and community impact. The presentation tied in common areas of concern for Adirondack landowners, local towns and governments, residents and sportsmen. He talked about future action needed and how all groups share a common goal.

Catherine Sun, a PhD candidate from Cornell University, gave an interesting and well-received presentation on management of black bear in NYS. Topics ranging from DNA collection, tracking collars, increased habitat ranges to interaction with man, nuisance bears and public input requests, were all discussed. We look forward to additional information as it is made available.

General session topics were many. One resolution on mandatory hunter orange was defeated, probably based on how it was written more than on the concept. Another resolution presented by the big game committee supporting hunting ½ hour before sunrise to ½ after sunset was approved. There was considerable discussion about how this resolution was only officially presented at the convention which did not give voting representatives the opportunity to go back to those they represent.

The issue of ranking DEC officials not attending the annual Atlantic Flyway Council conferences like other states do was discussed. A motion was passed to write a letter to DEC requesting greater representation at these conferences by DEC.

With the exception of one Director at Large, all current officers and directors were reelected. Due to a vacancy Mike Elam was elected to a Director at Large position, joining our other two serving in that capacity.

A bylaws review group/committee was created to look at our bylaws and regulations to see if any changes need to be made. If so, they can only be done by a vote from the general membership. Committee structure is one of a number of items they will be looking at.

Our position statements are subject to a periodic review. Current statements were reviewed and divided into different categories. A position was seen as: current and should remain, no longer relevant, can or needs to be combined with other positions, or needs to be reviewed and brought

back to the general membership. No resolution can be removed without a vote by the general membership.

This coming January will be the start of a two-year legislative session. In the past, very little has happened when it comes to legislation, and we are concerned with bills making it through both the State Senate and Assembly. A few pieces of legislation made it through one or the other legislative body. As sportsmen, we need to identify such bills and ask for the Senate or Assembly, whichever did not deal with the legislation, to take up the matter already considered by the other house.

By the end of the year Council members should visit with their representatives at their local office. Even though not in session, December is a busy month for the legislature. Tell your legislators the items you are concerned with, and ask your representative what items they want to go after in the upcoming session. Need a list of items to pursue? Contact our Legislative VP Bill Gibson or visit our website.

One last item -- the NYSCC needs your support through fundraising. Past endeavors need to continue, and new efforts are also needed. The Council works for and supports sportsmen; such efforts do not come without a cost.

Grass Roots News will now be published on a bi-monthly basis. Make sure you submit articles and information to be included in future editions. Content can be emailed to nyscc@nyscc.com or mailed to NYSCC, 8 E Main St., Ilion, NY 13357. Phone 315/894-3302.

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NYSCC SET TO REVIEW BYLAWS

By Mike Jennings, NYSCC Secretary

During the NYSCC's annual meeting held September 15 – 17, 2017 in Utica the Council's Board of Directors decided it was time to form a committee to review the organization's bylaws as currently written.

The task of this committee will be to evaluate the NYSCC's bylaws to determine if changes are warranted and to make recommendations as to how any changes should be written. The Committee will consist of the following members: Bill Conners – Chair, Glen Adams, Bruce McGowan, Pat McBrearty, and Stephen Wowelko. They will present suggested changes to the Council BOD after the 2018 Spring Committee/Legislative meeting.

As part of this evaluation, the Committee will be seeking input from the Council membership and will accept input from members as part of its review. The Committee requests that any comments, questions, or suggestions be submitted by November 30, 2017 to Chair Bill Conners, via e-mail at: conners@billconners.net or mailed to: Bill Conners, 686 Traver Road, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569.

The NYSCC's by-laws may be found on the Council's website at:
<http://www.nyscc.com/aboutthenyscc/document.html>.

NYSCC PRESENTS AWARDS AT ANNUAL MEETING

Access the Adirondacks - Conservation Advocacy Award

If there is any one issue that binds outdoor enthusiasts together, it is ACCESS to public lands. Without equitable access to the land purchased by the State of New York on behalf of its citizens, outdoor based recreation would die a slow death, as would the economies of many of our communities, no place more so than in the North Country – especially in the Adirondack Park.

In 2010, Governor David Paterson announced the acquisition of an 89,000-acre working forest conservation easement on a portion of the former Finch Pruyn Paper Company lands located in the Adirondack Park. In 2012, Governor Cuomo announced the outright purchase of an additional 69,000 acres of Finch lands.

It soon became apparent that if the environmental groups had their way, the sporting community and other recreational interests would be paying our fair share of the \$50 million price tag for these lands, but our access to them would be severely limited.

Access the Adirondacks informed, energized, and molded the nearly 50 member organizations into a cohesive voice that now speaks out on behalf of all the recreational and economic forces that are seeking nothing more than EQUITABLE access to lands that we all have an interest in.

Access the Adirondacks is looking beyond the Boreas Pond/McIntyre Tract, keeping the spotlight shining on the ongoing battle between environmental forces that would like nothing better than to turn the Adirondacks into a private park to be enjoyed by a small minority of New Yorkers, versus a diverse complement of stakeholders who see the Park as an economic engine that would make life better for the people who live, work and play there and the diverse army of hunters, anglers, trappers and other recreationists who come from every region of the state to soak in the beauty of the Park.



Great Lot Sportsman's Club – NYSCC President's Award



The Great Lot Sportsman's Club uses its property exclusively for the moral and mental improvement of men, women and children. The club was organized to encourage all persons to experience outdoor recreational activities, regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, language, national origin, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, education, religion, faith, socio-economic status or lived experience. It provides free access to utilize its facilities, equipment and programs to promote and encourage outdoor activities for all ages and abilities.

The Great Lot Sportsman's Club hosts guided mountain biking trips in the summer and fall and snowshoeing trips in the winter. The club also offers FREE hiking, fishing, canoeing, backpacking, bird watching and star gazing events. The Fresh Air Program along with Veterans, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and local church groups use the property for outings throughout the year. Special events include a military appreciation weekend in October each year.

Great Lot also awards a scholarship annually to a graduating Adirondack Central School senior pursuing a degree in an environmental course of study such as wildlife management, natural resource management, environmental law enforcement, environmental engineering, or other related field.

Steve Piatt, Editor: New York Outdoor News – Conservation Communicator Award

Steve Piatt is recognized for his contributions to the sporting community and in appreciation for the role that Outdoor News plays in educating the state's sportsmen and women while promoting New York's sporting resources.

For many of us who hunt, fish and trap in New York, or are otherwise connected to the outdoors through our sporting activities, "Outdoor News" enlightens us month in and month out. Wildlife management problems, harvest numbers, regulatory issues, are all presented for our edification. It is through the pages of "Outdoor News" that we often become aware of decisions that have been or are about to be made that could alter the hunting and fishing landscape across the state.

Steve Piatt and "Outdoor News" is a lifeline for the sporting community. We learn of the good things and the bad, and we are introduced to issues that we may not yet understand. It is through Steve and his assemblage of writers and columnists that we are forced to come to terms with the shifting demographic in our ranks and the cultural shift in attitudes regarding the sports we love.

It is because of Steve Piatt's role as a conduit between the sporting community and the people who can influence what we do, and how and when we can do it, that we are better prepared to keep our sporting traditions alive, not just for ourselves, but for future generations of sportsmen and women.

**William Augar Girvan - Lifetime Achievement Award**

The Council's Lifetime Achievement Award goes to individuals who have dedicated many years to working for conservation and the interests of sportsmen, women and youth.

This year the award goes to Bill Girvan, a man who has used his interest and skills as a sportsman to pass his knowledge along to future generations of anglers. Bill has promoted hunting and fishing at every opportunity, using casting contests, fishing derbies and Conservation Education Days; and by using media such as radio, television and print.

Bill co-founded the NYS Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame, became an inductee, and eventually a lifetime member. He has also won several local, state and national awards, including one modifying Trout Unlimited's Trout in the Classroom program to be more responsive to children with disabilities. He knew that the calming effect of watching the fish swim or just listening to the water, for these children, is immeasurable.

Bill is a long-time member of NYSCC and a 32-year member of the Council's Fish Committee. Since 2011 he has served as the co-chair of that committee.

**NEW GUARDIAN MEMBER:**

Nadya Wirlo, Canandaigua

NOVEMBER BALLOT PROPOSES LAND SWAP IN ADIRONDACK AND CATSKILL PARKS

Voters in November will see a ballot proposition that will help municipal leaders complete infrastructure projects designed to resolve health and safety issues in New York's forest preserves. An additional 250 acres of land will be added to the state's Forest Preserve to offset the eventual loss of the 250 acres set aside for inclusion in a land bank.

The proposal requires a Constitutional Amendment because of limitations on land use within the "Blue Line" that bounds the combined preserves. The six million-acre Adirondack Preserve includes 2.6 million acres of state owned land; 287,514 acres of the 700,000 acre Catskill Preserve are state owned.

New York Proposal 3: Forest Preserve Land Bank Amendment will read:

"The proposed amendment will create a land account with up to 250 acres of forest preserve land eligible for use by towns, villages, and counties that have no viable alternative to using forest preserve land to address specific public health and safety concerns; as a substitute for the land removed from the forest preserve, another 250 acres of land, will be added to the forest preserve, subject to legislative approval. The proposed amendment also will allow bicycle trails and certain public utility lines to be located within the width of specified highways that cross the forest preserve while minimizing removal of trees and vegetation. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?"

The State Constitution protects the forest preserve as wild forest land and generally prohibits the lease, sale, exchange, or taking of any forest preserve land. The proposed amendment will create two new exceptions to this broad protection of the forest preserve to make it easier for municipalities to undertake certain health and safety projects.

The land bank would be referred to in law as the Health and Safety Land Account. Municipalities would request to use acres in the land bank to address bridge and road hazards, water wells to meet drinking water standards, and stabilizing public utility lines. Before local governments could begin requesting acres in the land bank, the state would purchase/acquire 250 new acres to include in the Forest Preserve. The measure would also allow bike paths, sewer lines, and electric, telephone, and broadband lines within the width of highways (49.5 feet or the width of the easement in existence on July 1, 2015) cutting through the Forest Preserve.

Projects that would be eligible for land include:

- (a) addressing bridge hazards;
- (b) eliminating dangerous curves and grades on roads;
- (c) relocating, maintaining, or reconstructing local highways and associated culverts provided that no relocated portion is over one mile long;
- (d) water wells located within 530 feet of state or local highways; and
- (e) stabilization devices for existing utility poles next to highways.

Governments would need to demonstrate that no viable alternatives exist to using state Forest Preserve land for the projects. They would also be required to restore pre-project environmental conditions as much as is practicable. The proposal will also help reduce project costs without jeopardizing or threatening the environmental concerns of the people of the state.

Access the Adirondacks and other interest groups seem universally in favor of creating the land bank, maybe because the enabling legislation puts very stringent requirements for projects that can be approved. So, going back to the original question, "Shall the proposed amendment be approved?" We certainly think so; life is complicated enough for north country residents without depriving them of the opportunity to make local government just a little more efficient.

NYSCC President Chuck Parker states, "The New York State Conservation Council joins the many local town and village entities along with various other groups concerned with wise use of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks in asking all voters to support Proposition 3 on Election Day, November 7th."

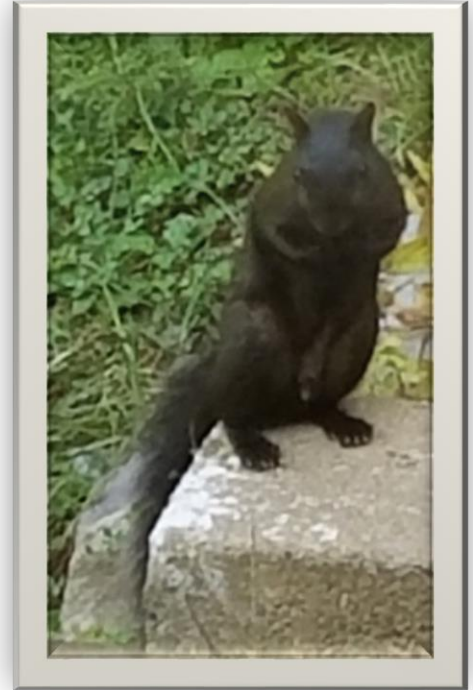
MEPPS SEEKING TO BUY SQUIRREL TAILS

Mepps creates hand-tied dressed hooks for its world-famous fish-catching lures. They've tried hundreds of other natural and synthetic materials: bear hair, fox, coyote, badger, skunk, deer, even Angus cow, but nothing works as well as squirrel tail hair. Mepps has been recycling squirrel tails for over half a century. In fact, they recycle more of them than anyone else in the world.

The fact is squirrel tails are all hair—no fur. Practically all other animals have fur tails with just a few guard hairs. Fur doesn't have the rippling, pulsating movement of squirrel hair in the water. Squirrels are plentiful and have some of the best wild meat. Skins are used for caps, coats, glove linings and many other items, but the tail is usually thrown away. Mepps is asking you to help us recycle this valuable resource, AND is offering to reward you for your efforts!

Care & Handling of Squirrel Tails (Please follow carefully):

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- 6) Do NOT put tails in a plastic bag for storage or shipment. They could heat up and spoil.
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- 8) Put your name, mailing address and phone number or e-mail address, along with the tail count, inside EACH package.
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DUTCHESS COUNTY 2017 YOUTH PHEASANT HUNT

By Bill Conners

National Hunting and Fishing Day was Saturday, September 23; some sporting organizations celebrated it by planning events that would attract the whole family. Others – like the Federation of Dutchess County Fish and Game Clubs – held youth hunts for kids 12 – 15 years of age. In some areas of the state, kids who have a junior hunting license could hunt all weekend for waterfowl and pheasants if accompanied by an adult. However, the adults could not hunt; their role was to serve as mentors.

The Dutchess Federation's youth hunt on September 23 was held at the Lafayetteville Multiple Use Area in Milan. There were 35 youngsters and a few dozen volunteers on hand to support them. Only the kids were allowed to hunt that day because the regular pheasant season does not open until October 1.



Visually it was a glorious day, but afternoon temperatures reached 80 degrees or more. That could have made it tough on the dogs, but three cooling pools and enough dogs to rotate through as necessary kept things under control.

Nearly all the kids harvested at least one bird. There was plenty of food and drink on hand all day. They consumed about four dozen egg and sausage sandwiches, more than 100 hamburgers, a similar number of hot dogs, gallons of liquids. A Hunter Safety Instructor and an Environmental Conservation Officers briefed each youngster before he or she went afield. The kids enjoyed themselves, as did all of the volunteers.



National Hunting and Fishing Day dates back to the 1960s. In 1972, by Senate Joint Resolution 117, Congress requested that the President declare the fourth Saturday of September 1972 as National Hunting and Fishing Day. On May 2 of the same year, President Richard Nixon signed proclamation number 4128 designating the Fourth Saturday in September as National Hunting and Fishing Day.

Anyone can fish in New York State without a fishing license on National Hunting and Fishing Day. It is one of several dates

throughout the year that have designated as free fishing days. Hunting is another story. Anyone hunting in New York State must have a hunting license. To qualify for the license, you must have completed a hunter training course. There are other rules that apply and it would pay to research the laws and regulations before you pick up a firearm and head out to the woods.

However you chose to recognize the date, it is always a great opportunity to get outside with the family and celebrate New York's abundant fish and wildlife resources.



WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE ...

The New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame is now accepting nominations for individuals to be inducted into the 2018 Hall of Fame. Go to <http://nysohof.org/nominate/> for details.

The New York Open for Fishing and Hunting Initiative will provide additional free fishing dates to include Saturday, Nov. 11, 2017 on Veterans Day, and Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 17 & 18, 2018 on the weekend before Presidents Day.

NYSDEC Trout Stream Management public meetings began in September and will continue across the state into mid-November. For more information regarding the trout stream management program and upcoming meetings visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/111015.html>.

A Draft Lake Sturgeon Recovery Plan has just been released for a public comment period ending November 25, 2017. This new document provides up to date information on lake sturgeon status in NY, current research, and future needs. Due to the great success of sturgeon stocking programs so far, the DEC has outlined what would be necessary to consider removing lake sturgeon from its current Threatened Species listing, a first step toward opening a fishing season for sturgeon. The Lake Sturgeon Recovery Plan can be found at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/111557.html>.



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Roe Jan Creek Boat Club, Germantown * SCOPE Genesee County, Batavia
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Club doubled its contribution from last year: Toad Harbor Rod & Gun Club, Brewerton

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CHANGES AHEAD FOR WATERFOWL TASK FORCES

By Chuck Parker, NYSCC President

Waterfowl hunting is seen by a large segment of the hunting / sporting community as the ultimate form of hunting. The DEC spends a lot of time and effort dealing with waterfowl issues and those who waterfowl hunt.

States set annual dates for waterfowl seasons under Federal regulations and guidelines that offer the best opportunity for a successful harvest for the most people. The topography of New York State and difference in migratory patterns within the state has led to the formation of four different waterfowl regions.



As you can probably imagine, those who know, those who think they know, and the views of those who would like to know has led to a difference in opinion and theories on how to manage waterfowl hunting.

For a better decision-making process the DEC established Regional Waterfowl Task Forces in 1997 for the Western, Southeastern, Northeastern and Long Island [Waterfowl Hunting Zones](#). DEC's website states that "DEC established hunter task forces in 1997 to get specific recommendations for duck hunting season dates for areas of the State where hunter preferences vary widely." These [Waterfowl Hunter Task Forces](#) have helped DEC establish season dates that provide equitable duck hunting opportunities for the various interests in each zone."

"To establish a membership list the SST [Season Setting Team] first looks to organized groups to provide a member to serve on a TF." The **NYS Conservation Council** has representatives serving on the various Regional Waterfowl TFs.

The NYS Waterfowl Task Force has been in existence for around 20 years. The NYSCC has within the various regions a total of six dedicated individuals representing the Council membership. We have the most representation of any single group within the state. These representatives also need to be members of the NYSCC Waterfowl committee. Is the Waterfowl Task system a perfect system? Nothing is perfect but it is a functioning system. How good or bad is mostly determined by the Individual.

Earlier this year the NYS DEC announced the intent of "transitioning from the task force model of making season recommendations to an SDM process which includes their frequent input as we

progress, a widespread waterfowl hunter survey, and ultimately a five year convention on season dates for each zone. At the end of five years we will revisit with waterfowl hunters to determine any needed changes. We are taking a full two years to implement with input from the task force occurring regularly as a part of the process. The task group made the season recommendations in 2017, and will again in 2018 before the new process is fully in place for 2019."

This SDM (strategic decision making) process transition is being met with skepticism and opposition by Task Force members I have talked to, and waterfowl hunters are approaching this movement with concern. SDM has its detractors and promoters. A listing of the concerns on this move to SDM could go on for pages and pages.

If there is a transition to use the SDM process to determine future waterfowl seasons and conservation practices, then there should be no mention of eliminating the Waterfowl Task Force system at this time. The Task Forces should be included as they are now to look at the data collected under the SDM process and have the same ability to make recommendations as they do now. If the SDM process shows that the Task Force system needs restructuring, then the issue can be addressed at that time. I feel to state or assume now that Task Forces will be curtailed in a couple of years is just not a good working practice. There is no data to support either the elimination or continuance of a Task Force. Faults or benefits of an SDM process need to be identified. There are many groups out there concerned with waterfowl hunting. What better group can you think of to review, evaluate and recommend a new SDM process for waterfowl hunting than those who serve on the Waterfowl Task Force, a group that has been in existence since 1997 to serve the waterfowl sporting community?

Important!! Appointment to NYSCC Committees is not automatic. If you have served on a committee in the past and wish to do so again, you *must* re-apply each year.

NEW YORK STATE CONSERVATION COUNCIL, INC. COMMITTEE APPLICATION

If you are interested in serving on a committee of the New York State Conservation Council, Inc., in order to advise the Council and its members of the best management procedures for natural resources, you should make your interest known by filling out an application.

Please indicate which committee(s) you would be interested in serving on as an active member, complete the remainder of the application, and **submit it to the NYSCC Office**. Applications will be compiled; and a list will be sent to Regional Directors for review and recommendations before appointments are made.

It is a physical impossibility to appoint everyone who applies to the Committee of his or her choice, but every consideration will be given to those who do apply. Where advisable, some committees will have a representative from each Region; but for others it is not feasible to have regional representatives serve, as in the case of special interests or of area concerns. Where regional representation is customary, should an application from a Region not be received, that seat on the committee shall be filled by the President with the advice of the Vice Presidents.

By signing on as a committee member, you will be added to our lists for general mailings, Grass Roots News, and alerts. Providing us with your email address will enable us to contact you about important issues quickly.

Please see that your application is filled out completely and legibly to assist in compiling the Council committee list for publication. Your signature is also required at the end of the form. Please return your completed application immediately to: **NYS Conservation Council, 8 East Main Street, Ilion, NY 13357-1899**

Download and print applications at: http://www.nyscc.com/images/Committee_App.pdf.



IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY A MEMBER, JOIN TODAY!

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