

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF 78 YEARS LATER

By Chuck Parker, NYSCC President

Not since World War II has the New York State Conservation Council gone without an annual meeting. It is a given we will not have an in-person fall convention this September, but alternatives are in the planning stages and some serious suggestions and participation will be needed.

One item you can look for more information on soon is a series of online Zoom-style encounters. They will start with regional meetings followed by a broader statewide virtual assembly. We realize that not everyone has the capability to participate in virtual online meetings; internet capability in some areas of our state is severely lacking, and there are those of us who choose not to use the internet. Additional efforts will have to be taken by all of us to see that we have maximum membership involvement.

As you look at the above information one thing seems apparent. The level of activity and participation at the regional and county level will have to increase. It will be more active and a little less reactive.

While we are faced with some restrictive measures for 2020, facing them gives us the opportunity for growth and some further revitalization. Not a delegate or a director so you feel your role is basically unchanged? Not true. The involvement of all of us will help the Council successfully deal with this year's challenges and those for years to come. Will you be there to make this happen?

PASSING IT ON

By Mike Elam, Photo Credit Krysl Elam

With these trying times of social isolation and quasi house arrest, I've made one positive observation. From my backyard I can observe a local bridge and causeway that is a very popular fishing spot. What I've noticed is more people fishing and more people fishing with their children, often as a family.

Sure, there is still too much screen time, video gaming and thumb tag but with social distancing there aren't the distractions of sports and other group events. It's encouraging to see children using that time enjoying the simple pleasures the outdoors has to offer. I once heard it said, "If things were in proper perspective, there would be a shortage of fish poles!" I enjoy seeing young people exposed to outdoor opportunities, especially fishing. Watching children catch fish and the squeals of delight warms one's heart. I've been very fortunate to experience this with my two daughters, four grandkids and many other kids while being involved in 4-H fishing programs and Ducks Unlimited Greenwing Days. A simple piece of worm on a hook with a bobber, a cooperative sunfish or bluegill and a kid could be hooked on fishing for life.



Remember the dreaded "Wanna hear about my grandkids, see some pictures?" Well, keep reading 'cause it's your turn. I'll share how the love of my life and I exposed our daughters and grandchildren to the wonders of our surrounding environment. As a water-oriented family, a lot of our time was spent fishing, boating, canoeing and wading streams, but it all started when our first daughter was old enough to ride in a papoose carrier and we'd go check traps. As both girls got older, they sometimes accompanied me running the trap line or occasionally tagged along when we took our

shorthair pointer pheasant hunting. The girls loved to fish, especially for pan fish to eat; but they also enjoyed fishing for salmon in Lake Ontario and Oak Orchard Creek. Show and tell would include muskrat pelts or snapping turtle shells. It most likely wouldn't be politically correct in today's world but back then the teachers would send home notes thanking us for such interesting items.

Sometimes against my wife's wishes, I kept the girls home from school to expose them to outdoor opportunities. I always wrote the excuses for their absence saying it was because I took them fishing, hunting or trapping. My daughters now allow me to occasionally take the grandkids out of school for special outdoor adventures. They say, "There is more to education than a classroom." My daughters, through my influence, learned to respect women's most dreaded creature, the snake! A critter I am very fond of, they have no issue with a few snakes in the yard.



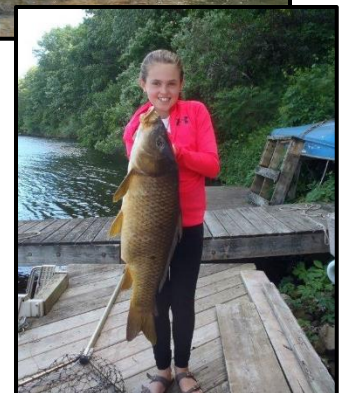
Now on to the grandkids. I'm very fortunate to have the ability and good health to do things with my grandkids and can often tire them out first! Grandkids come along when we have more time and patience to teach them the wonders of the natural world. I've been able to expose them to fishing, stream ecology, bird nesting and monitoring, duck and goose banding, shooting with a gun, the environment of a frog pond, required salamander habitat, canoeing, kayaking, catching frogs, catching crawfish and animal signs. In the spring and fall we go on what we call "poop patrol" to look for different scat and animal tracks.

One of our favorite family activities is what we call crabbin'. I take them to places I went to 60+ years ago, doing the same thing. We flip some rocks in the stream looking for crawfish, flip others on shore to find salamanders, small frogs and occasionally a somewhat unfriendly northern water snake or a few very mean looking spiders. To the kids' great delight, we encountered a large mudpuppy on two occasions. We often take a seine and net different minnows and darters; then I can explain how they've adapted to survive in these habitats. When my youngest granddaughter was 5 years old, I asked her what her favorite thing was that summer. Immediately she said, "The big mudpuppy!" Kids love every opportunity for a new adventure.

On one outing my grandson caught some medium size bullfrogs and took one into Grandma for her to kiss. That got a quick "No, get that thing outside!" I said to let him go as Grandma loves a frog living under her fridge. He didn't listen; therefore, I'm alive and still married.

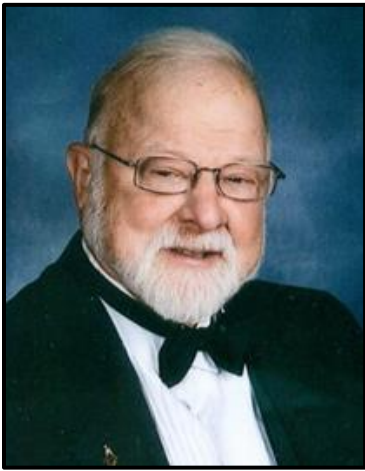
While we do a lot of fishing for panfish, carp are also a favorite fish to catch. Every year we have the carp count, keeping track of the number and total pounds caught from our dock. I have memories of my 6-year-old granddaughter giving instructions to her 7- year-old cousin while she's trying to net his 12 lb. carp. During the pandemic, my wife and I have been homeschooling our youngest granddaughter. Her Phys. Ed. class has been changed to "Fish Ed." We fished salmon and trout on Lake Ontario, carp and panfish from our dock, and from a boat on Lake Alice we caught perch, crappie, rock bass and bluegill which turned into a fresh fish lunch.

So, if you have an opportunity to teach kids about the great outdoors, go for it. It's a rewarding experience. You can help to make an outdoor person for life, whether they're your kids, grandkids, family members or friends, on your own or through a sponsored program from 4-H, DU or a sportsmen's organization. We need to recruit future sportsmen and sportswomen to protect our outdoor interest. And think, when you're an old, decrepit geezer, one of these youngsters may take you on an outdoor adventure ... might call it "feathering your nest."



ROBERT E. "BOB" BROWN

1942 – 2020



Bob Brown, 78, former Region 5 Director of the New York State Conservation Council, passed away May 15, 2020, at the University of Vermont Medical Center. The NYSCC will miss his contributions to our meetings as well as his writings for this newsletter.

Bob is a veteran of the United States Army, serving as Sergeant 1st Class from December 1966 to September 1968 and was stationed at the US Pentagon, Washington D.C. Department of Secret Intelligence. He was the first person in the United States to be notified that the USS Pueblo was captured by North Korean forces.

A graduate of Syracuse University, Bob earned a Master's Degree in Student Personnel Administration in 1965. Following several years at the NYS Alfred Ag & Tech College in New York's Southern Tier, Bob joined the North Country Community College Faculty in 1969 and worked there as

Professor of Social Sciences, teaching Social Science and Anthropology while also serving as a Student Services Advisor.

After retiring from the academic world in 1996 Bob and his wife, Pat, devoted much of their time to the Saranac Lake community, serving on the All-America City committees and as the 1999 Winter Carnival King and Queen. He also very much enjoyed and was very proud of his work with the Riverwalk. Bob was featured in the book, *Adirondack Faces*, by Mathias Oppersdorff, ©1991.

Bob was Past Master and Chaplain of Whiteface Mountain Masonic Lodge #789 and served on the Local Prison Advisory Board, but his true passion was the woods and waters of the Adirondack Region. Bob loved hunting and fishing and his Adirondack Mountains. For him it wasn't necessarily about bagging that trophy buck or a massive bass, but the pure joy of watching wildlife, such as a turkey displaying for the favor of a hen.

He was past president and life member of Saranac Lake Fish and Game Club, and past president and member of the Franklin County Federation of Fish and Game Clubs. He also served as the Franklin County Delegate to the New York State Conservation Council and was a NYS Hunter Training Instructor for more than 45 years.

Condolences may be expressed to Patricia Brown at 29 Haward Street, Saranac Lake, NY 12983.

**Buck A Member Contributors:**

Albion Fish & Game Club, Inc., Pulaski
Brunswick Sportsmans Club, Inc., Cropseyville
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Manchester Hunt Club, Inc., Poughkeepsie
Otego Rod & Gun Club, Otego
Stamford Rod & Gun Club, Stamford

Donations in Memory of Bob Brown:

Mike & Krys Elam
Ray & Maryann Gawlas

REMINGTON IN TROUBLE – AGAIN

By Bill Conners

Published reports say that Ilion, New York based Remington Arms Company, LLC, is likely on its way back to bankruptcy court. If true, it will be the second time in two years that this icon of American firepower has struggled to stay afloat.

The company has been around for a little more than 200 years, a remarkable feat. Companies come and go, but not so Remington. It was founded in 1816 as E. Remington and Sons by Eliphalet Remington, cousin of the iconic artist of the America's Old West, Frederic Remington. The Company claims to be America's oldest gun maker and America's oldest manufacturer still making its original product.

Remington had filed bankruptcy in March of 2018 and by April of that year had managed to emerge from Chapter 11. At the time of the March filing the company was \$950 million in debt. On the surface it looked like Remington's lot was improving.



But then, recent reports surfaced that Remington was preparing another Chapter 11 filing and that the company was in process of negotiating a sale to the Navajo Nation. The negotiations were deemed to be "serious." There may be more than one potential buyer, but the Navajo Nation may be at the top of the list. If a filing is made, whatever deal emerges will have to be approved by the bankruptcy court.

The company did well during the years of the Obama Administration, but faltered under the Trump Administration because gun owners felt that Trump would protect their gun rights. Fears driven by the social and economic instability caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have pushed sales, but not to the point that Remington's fortunes have improved the bottom line. Operations at the Ilion site have been hamstrung by the Governor's Executive Order #202 – New York State on Pause. At the close of 2019 there were an estimated 820 workers in the Ilion plant.

Adding to the company's woes is the ongoing claim that the Remington Model 700 – a bolt action sporting rifle available in about 3 dozen calibers - continues to have malfunctions related to unintentional discharge. A faulty trigger assembly is said to be the culprit. And it's not just the Model 700 in question. More than 7.5 million firearms of various models are involved, although only 22,000 claims against the settlement have been filed.

Gun owners had until April 23 of this year to file claims for an installation of a new trigger assembly. Further exacerbating is the fact that some of the designated repair center have been shuttered because of the pandemic. The problem goes even deeper in that some gun owners claim that in spite of having their gun repaired their rifles continue to malfunction; the guns can, and sometimes do, discharge without the trigger being pulled. Remington maintains that the guns are functioning correctly, and their testing demonstrates that they are safe.

In February of 2014 Remington announced plans to build a new plant in Huntsville, Alabama. At least two production lines from Ilion were relocated to the Huntsville site. The move came on the heels of the passage of the New York Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act of 2013, dubbed the S.A.F.E. Act. The Huntsville move highlighted the tension between New York government and gun

manufacturers. The Huntsville site manufactures Remington's AR-15 based semi-automatic rifles like the Bushmaster, DPMS, and Remington R-15, as well as the 1911 style R-1 pistols. These types of firearms were specifically targeted by the S.A.F.E. Act.

The state of Alabama offered Remington millions in tax credits and other incentives to relocate there; unfortunately, \$3 million in incentives were just taken off the table because Remington has not been able to meet its employment commitments.

If the latest reports are true, the most pressing question will be, what does a Navajo Nation buyout mean to New York, and the Mohawk Valley in particular. Remington is reportedly one-sixth of the Herkimer County economy.

More broadly, will the Nation complete what many see as an inevitable outcome of Remington's perceived mistreatment by New York officials -- the complete withdrawal of operations from the Empire State? Maybe there will be a consolidation of operations from New York, Alabama, and the headquarters operation in North Carolina. Maybe Remington will find a new home in New Mexico, closer to the Navajo Nation's other business interests.

STEELHEAD RELEASED INTO LAKE ONTARIO

By Mike Elam, Photo Credit Krys Elam

On May 7th four volunteers with two 17-ft. aluminum boats transported two pens each containing 5,000 pen-raised steelhead from Oak Orchard Creek into Lake Ontario at Pt. Breeze for release. The task began at 7 p.m. and took two hours to complete. By releasing the fish directly into Lake Ontario in the late evening, there would be less predation from the large population of migrating double crested cormorants. The fish could acclimate to their new environment, disperse into the lake under cover of darkness and hopefully have a better chance of survival. Some predation from terns and gulls was observed but none from cormorants. The salmon stocked for Oak Orchard were also pen raised but were released in the creek and had to make their way to Lake Ontario by their own instincts.



Releasing pen-raised steelhead trout into Lake Ontario

The pens used to raise the fish are large enough and displace enough water that they are difficult to move; and towing them in tight quarters is not an option. Moving them was accomplished by tying them between the two boats so the pens could be driven through the channel with no issues. They were maneuvered by adjusting the boat speed. Turning around in Lake Ontario was achieved by putting one boat in forward and one boat in reverse, similar to maneuvering a larger twin screw boat. Both volunteers who provided the boats previously worked together on various projects and each has many years of boating experience.

Hopefully the time and effort put into this project will help enough of the 10,000 steelhead released that night to survive to provide anglers with good fall, winter and spring steelhead fishing at Oak Orchard in future years.

OAK ORCHARD RIVER STEELHEAD PEN REARING

By Ron Bierstein

The first Lake Ontario effort at net pen rearing, or just simply pen rearing, was started on the Oak Orchard River for king salmon and steelhead. Now multiple popular fishing ports and destinations all along the south shore of Lake Ontario have independent projects for salmon and/or steelhead. Three years ago the local Oak Orchard charter fishing community decided not to pen rear any more steelhead. That year the NYSDEC-allotted steelhead were direct stocked.



In 2019 a group of enthusiastic primarily tributary fishing anglers took back up the steelhead pen rearing efforts. With financial support for materials from the NYSDEC and logistical help, two brand new aluminum frame pens were built and welded with care by Spencerport BOCES students. The pens were transported to the Oak Orchard River and were fitted with the "nets" -- wire tied inside the frames -- that hold the fish. Top nets are an important part of this equation to keep the vigorous steelhead inside and bird predators out! The Seth Green Chapter of Trout Unlimited was key for volunteer help in putting the nets on the frames, assisting in receiving the steelhead

fingerlings from the NYSDEC, and feeding/caring for the steelhead. Pen rearing yields excellent survivability with hopeful smolting and imprinting for later return to the Oak Orchard River. Usually about half of the NYSDEC allotted steelhead stocking is earmarked for pen rearing.

For the second year of the rejuvenated steelhead pen rearing in 2020, the frames needed some repair; and Killian's Welding Service graciously donated time and help with that. The nets were once again hung with care and checked for any holes that could mean escape for eager steelhead. Due to the most recent national health emergency, NYSDEC had an early timetable for delivery of the 10,000 fingerlings; but the volunteers were ready, and the fish were received without a hitch in April. For the next nearly five weeks the steelhead were fed daily with a new high-tech Bio-Oregon pellet feed supplied by the NYSDEC. Automatic feeders make it easier because they can be loaded once a day. Spring weather cooperated with nearly consistent cool weather which kept the water temps favorable while the pens were secured to docks at Ernst's Lake Breeze Marina. In May, one at a time the pens were towed by two boats out to the mouth of the Oak Orchard River at sunset where the nets were dropped. This is not an easy operation, as the pens tow a bit like a lead sail, and river mouth conditions can be challenging! But the effort when undertaken near dark on prevailing westerly wind conditions is important to allow the best possible chances of the fingerlings to disperse into the main Lake past the gauntlet of seagulls, terns and the dreaded cormorants.

By all indications up to the time of release, the past two years of hard work have been a success. Next year in spring 2021 everyone involved (more volunteers are always welcome!) looks forward to another successful effort and then the chance to drift a fly, bait or lure to some of the first returning spawners to the upstream Oak Orchard River gravel in 2021/2022.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

DEFENDER MEMBERS:

Edward J. Horick, III, Malta
M & M Outdoorsmen Group, Inc., Nanuet

CALEDONIA FISH HATCHERY – SOME HISTORY AND AN UPDATE

By John Spaulding, Chili - Aug. 9, 2014

In 1864 a man named Seth Green changed the world of fishing.

Rochester was a boomtown and the streams, creeks and rivers were being decimated from overfishing to put food on the table. The streams were becoming filled with silt from farming, construction and industry, and the fish were unable to thrive in it. Green owned a fish store on Front Street that employed 100 men, so to keep them employed and feeding Rochesterians, he went to Keeler's Creek in Coburg, Ontario, Canada. There he discovered how fish spawned after watching them for two days from his perch in a tree. What he learned was that nature's way was inefficient.

After returning to Rochester and pondering several ideas, he implemented a plan that used artificial propagation, using a dry method on felt. His success rate skyrocketed from the 10 percent to 25 percent range up to 90 percent, and that's when he purchased several acres of land with perfect water for raising trout and salmon on what was then called Caledonia Creek and is now known as Spring Creek. He used gravity and the ultra-clear water with just a trace of lime to be successful.

In 1870 the state bought the land and built the barn that still stands and is used today to raise fish. Through the years almost every variety of cold and freshwater fish have been raised here at one time or another. Some years ago, whirling disease killed off the Rainbow and Brook Trout leaving now just Brown Trout, which Green brought from Germany.

The Caledonia Fish Hatchery is the oldest one in the western hemisphere. The only two people who attempted to artificially raise fish prior were Marco Polo and a German scientist; both had mild but short-lived success.

The hatchery today uses about 203,000 pounds of fish meal annually to produce 90% of the Brown Trout released in New York. That equates to 175,000 pounds of one species of fish from the 12 hatcheries in New York.

By Glen Adams, LeRoy – June 10, 2020

Good news -- the state has finally decided how to move forward with repairs and upgrades to the Caledonia Hatchery after a three-year lull.

A widened door was cut on the south side of the building in order to get equipment in to remove the concrete raceways and install the new ones used to rear the fry/fingerlings. Some of the existing raceways were crumbling, while other parts were so strong that work crews needed a large jack hammer to remove them.

Some of the new fiberglass raceways have been waiting for about three years on the asphalt at the hatchery to be installed and are now in place. These pictures illustrate good news. Perhaps by this fall the Caledonia Hatchery will be back to full production. Over the last three years we have had to mark the sidewalk to see if any movement had occurred. They are now proceeding at a gallop by comparison!



Top: interior of fish culture building with concrete raceways being re-moved



Bottom left: outside raceways with fish culture building in background



Bottom right: fiberglass raceways staged for installation in fish culture building



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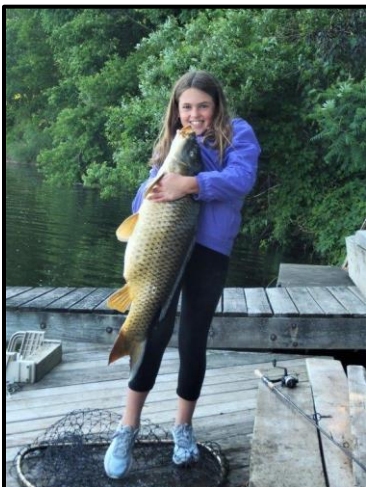


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