



Federation of Dutchess County Fish and Game Clubs, Inc.

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The Voice of the Sportsman since 1932

Legislative Report March 2018

The outlook for success during the 2018 Legislative Session is no better than it was for the last. I would say that it might even be worse. The Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Conservation Fund Advisory Board are going to go after three important issues. This is an election year and it is not likely (actually, very unlikely) that the Governor will sign any legislation that he deems controversial. Pushing any particular piece of gun legislation will likely amount to being no more than a distraction.

Assembly Bill A00477 and Senate Bill S3156 - We should all be focusing on the Universal 12-Year Old Hunting Age. We need that for a number of reasons. If we do not start recruiting younger hunters, license sales will continue to fall and along with it,, revenue. This will make it difficult to maintain the programs we have. If we can't increase revenue we will need more support from the General Fund. That is a heavy lift.

Empire Forest for the Future – The 480-A Program will not be expanded. Moving forward the plan is to open up 480-B. New applications will not be accepted into 480-A. Hopefully, the Governor's Budget Bill will take care of this. Stand by for more info in the next week or two.

Assembly Bill A5468 and Senate Bill S04575 - Investment Plan for Lifetime Trust Account – Just a couple of years ago the more than \$50 million in the Lifetime License Account was earning less and one-hundred thousand dollars a year. It is now earning about \$800,000 and it should be earning much more. The Conservation Fund Advisory Board is working with the Comptroller's Office to get approval to expand the investment latitude. We could earn as much as \$2 million a year. The interest earned on the account is used in the Habitat Conservation and Access Account. One program the account funds is the Young Forest Initiative, a program that will create an early successional forest in Wildlife Management Areas across the state. The Division of Fish and Wildlife has hired eighteen foresters to manage the program. Matching funds from the Pittman-Robertson Fund have contributed to the program.