

**Region 8 Fish, Wildlife Management Board (FWMB) December 7, 2023 meeting held at the Elks Club in Canandaigua. This is my report and may not contain everything that was discussed at the meeting. Tom Grasek**

There were 21 people of which 3 were DEC personnel , in attendance. With nine out of eleven county's delegates present which is enough for a quorum.

**County Reports**

**Livingston County:** Issue of separating 9P line—Complaints from hunters on lack of DMPs but overabundance of does Livingston County portion of WMU. Would it be possible for DEC to provide postage for processors/taxidermists to submit collected bear teeth? There is a push for a bill to eliminate backtag requirement.

**Ontario County:** Requests that board send a letter to Governor encouraging her to approve the bill that would lower the retirement age for ECOs. This was mentioned at last meeting and now the bill has passed and is on Governor's desk. Motion to send letter made and passed. Letter send on Friday 12/8. Governor vetoed bill on Saturday 12/9.

**Orleans County:** Federation maintained and applied sealer to log cabin at fairgrounds. Federation asked to come to BOCES to discuss wildlife along with an ECO. Mike Elam will be stepping down as county Sportsman rep at end of year to take a leadership role in the NYSCC.

**Schuyler County:** Millport Gun Club had a successful "Turkey Hunt" with higher numbers of women participating. Deer season seemed to slow after first few days. Odessa club has a pistol course scheduled.

**Steuben County:** Would like to see a wanton waste law. Law Enforcement had submitted a proposal a few years ago that did not go through.

**Yates County:** Bow season harvest seemed good in the county, but gun has been slow. Heard there is a bill proposed that would require background checks for purchasing a 3D printer.

**Advisory Organization Reports**

**Izaak Walton League** – No report

**NYSCC** – Mike Elam: Council has a new chairperson.

**FLCC** – Sent letter to Governor to support signing the ECO retirement bill.

**Cornell Cooperative Extension** – No CCE representative currently on the Board.

**CFAB:** Marc Osypian – License sales are flat. Habitat Stamp sales are up. New licensing vendor, expecting changes in tags. Hatchery Rehab/Improvement project to ensure the hatcheries remain productive for the next 50 years. Youth Hunt alternate tagging changes being explored to that youth are not tagged out for season if successful in youth hunt. Possible fishing tournament permit/tracking system for freshwater being looked at would allow assessment of impacts caused by heavy tournament use of waterbodies. Three new CFAB members have been appointed this year.

**Farm Bureau:** No report.

**SWCD** – No report.

**NYSDEC**

**Natural Resources:** Mark Gooding effectively retired at end of September, Mike Wasilco is new Natural Resources Supervisor. Currently in process of hiring a new Regional Wildlife Manager to backfill vacancy created by the promotion.

**Law Enforcement:** Matt Lochner- Academy scheduled for the spring but might get delayed due to batch of applications that got missed in Albany that now need to be run through the hiring review process. This might allow the academy to be a full academy class, although slightly later start. Deer take seems to be up with some processors hitting their normal season totals by the 2 nd weekend of gun season. Fewer harvested bears have been encountered by officers. Hunter safety related incidents numbers are up this year including the fatality in Wayne County. Several serious tree stand incidents have been reported. ECOs hosted their youth hunt in September and 23 deer were harvested.

**Fisheries:** Pete Austerman -

Year 2 Inland trout stream access verification – contacting all landowners and reworking/verifying access agreements. Lost Canaseraga Creek stocking in Steuben County due to lack of public access. In the future, FWMB may be asked to reach out to landowners who have not responded. State FWMB had a zoom call to discuss issue of lost access to trout streams. Region 8 board expressed support for working to maintain/restore access. Last year was Steuben Co and this year is Chemung, Schuyler, Yates and Seneca. Ontario County scheduled for next year. Note this work does not include Lakes or their tributaries.

Footpath easement has been finalized to improve access on Mill Creek in Perkinsville, Steuben County.

### **Wildlife:**

Pheasant-- DEC now has a contract vendor to supply birds for stocking and has decided to not re-establish a breeder flock. The savings from not having to feed breeder birds all year will allow DEC to stock about 50,000 birds per year rather than the 30,000 normally produced at the game farm. Still working out details on how those additional birds will be utilized, but likely will be extending stocking later into the season to provide better opportunities after deer season, given that the pheasant season runs until February.

Grouse Study—DEC began a statewide multiyear study examining the possible impact that West Nile Virus (WNV) might be having on grouse populations. The study involves installing automated recording units to detect grouse drumming in the spring at study plots spread across the state. This is followed by mosquito trapping at those same plots in August. The mosquitos will then be analyzed to determine the level of WNV infected mosquitos at each site and how that relates to the number of grouse detected. Previous studies have found that 20-30% of harvested grouse have survived WNV in the past but we do not have a good measure on how many do not survive. The results of the new study may be used to determine which parts of the state or which landscape areas should be targeted or avoided for habitat management for grouse.

**NYS Parks(OPRHP) - No report**

**Old Business –**

See Ontario County report for discussion on ECO retirement bill on Governor's desk.

**New Business**

A. Harassment and Discrimination Letter—VanDeusen relayed to board the contents of a letter from DEC Albany reminding the regional Fish and Wildlife Management Boards that they are conducting official state business while at the board meetings and as such they need to be conscious of the prohibitions on any harassment or discrimination.

B. County Appointments to FWMB – Terms for Legislative and Sportsman Reps expire in odd numbered years, so counties will need to appoint reps to these positions for a new two-year term for next year. DEC will send reminder letters to county supervisors/boards.

C. Meeting dates for 2024 -- Dates selected for next year's meetings are March 7, June 6, September 12, and December 5.

Next meeting is March 7 at 5pm.