

NYSDEC Region 8 Fish & Wildlife Management Board meeting was held on December 4, 2025. Seneca County Sportsman Delegate Tom Grasek, Land Delegate Frank Sinicropi and Legislative delegate Paul Kronenwetter attended the meeting. There were 18 people in attendance. Representing 9 Counties. This is the minutes as recorded by the Board Secretary.

County Reports

Chemung County: No county representatives in attendance.

Genesee County: No report

Livingston County: Processors are seeing issues with hunters dropping off deer with no tags likely as a result of the change to E-tagging this year. The E-tagging rules still require the hunter to attach a tag to the deer whenever they are leaving the deer somewhere. The tag needs to have the hunter name, hunter ID number and the E-tagging confirmation number. DEC has generic signs that can be used to educate hunters dropping deer off at processors.

Question on gun in vehicle. Answer is gun just needs to be unloaded while being transported in vehicle. Must be unloaded and locked in case and out of site if the gun will be left unattended in vehicle.

Monroe County: No county representatives in attendance.

Ontario County: Hunters having good success. Pro Cut processor has been busy.

Orleans County: Hunting has been good. Had a good turnout for the Pat Arnold Trapping Camp. Hosted an in-person hunter ed class that was well attended.

Question on how to hold a mentored pheasant hunt. Answer is application is on DEC website at: <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/learn-to-hunt-opportunities-in-new-york>

Schuyler County: Question for lakes with algae bloom issues, how should people clear their water filters. Recommendation is to not drink the water if there is an active blue-green bloom as the filters are not likely to remove the toxins that the algae produce.

Seneca County: Question on who is buying Babcock-Hovey Scout Camp. Answer is DEC is in process of purchasing possibly by the end of the year.

Federation has been having clubs drop out of federation claiming they did not know what the federation does. Federation has creating information pamphlet explaining what they do and how clubs benefit from being part of the federation.

Steuben County: Question why bow season opener was not pushed back to October 15 now that crossbow allowed all season? Discussion ensued on history of Bow opener was moved to October 1 several years before crossbow were allowed at all, but there was a brief time later when first two weeks of bow season were restricted to antlerless only.

Good numbers of deer and bear being harvested in county. Lot of hunting pressure noticed on gun opener, but seems like little since then. Lot of issues can impact hunting effort.

Wayne County: Montezuma Audubon Center and DEC along with Federation and Artemis are hosting a women's sponsored pheasant hunt on Saturday 12/13. Mike Wasilco will send announcement out to board again. <https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/237021>

Cars are already using the new parking lot on Rte. 104 to access Lakeshore Marshes WMA.

Yates County: Lot of big bucks harvested. Turkeys are doing well still with good numbers being seen. Deer have hammered the food plots and crops. Seems like not much soft mass was produced this year and the deer are really going after the acorns, but some concern of lack of food for winter.

Grape Country Coonhunting Club is now the Grape Country Houndsmen after expanding to allow in beagles, which has allowed the club to grow and continue to exist.

Advisory Organization Reports

Izaak Walton League – Chapter conducted a walnut harvest on the Guyanoga Road property and will be using the funds to upgrade the clubhouse. Doing trail work and addressing the remaining tops now. Chapter is struggling for members and planning a member drive. Some board members expressed that they had not been aware that the chapter actually had a clubhouse and expressed interest in possibly joining. Keuka Lake Chapter of Izaak Walton League has 51 acres on Guyanoga Road and also owns the bird sanctuary land at the mouth of Sugar Creek at the north end of Keuka Lake.

NYSCC – via Marc Osypian

Region 8 will be hosting the state Spring Meeting April 18, 2026 at the Conesus Lake Sportsmen's Club in Lakeville. Looking for topics to discuss.

FLCC – FLCC is on pause.

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

CFAB: Working on 24-25 and 25-26 reports. Will be working on legislative proposals soon. Board is still short two members with Region 3 and Region 9 currently not being represented.

Farm Bureau: No representative present

SWCD – No report.

Agency Reports

NYSDEC

Natural Resources: Region just got approval to start hiring process to backfill Brad's position in the regional Fisheries Unit. New Regional Forester Tim Wenskus started in early November, coming to the region from Region 2 where he had been acting Regional Forester and had previously headed up the NYC Parks Forestry Program. Tim is originally from the Rochester area.

Wildlife:

Deer Harvest

- Reported as of December 1: Southern Zone: 2024: 72,926 2025: 90,006 % Change: +23.42%
- Northern Zone: 2024: 13,436 2025: 14,717 % Change: +9.53%

CWD Sampling:

- Region 8 quota met, nothing found so far, but still some samples pending.
- Quota is by county. Total for region is 799 points. We sampled 1,078 points.
- Statewide quota is 4,729 points.
- Surveillance Points: Adult Male (≥ 2.5 yrs) = 3 points Adult Female (≥ 2.5 yrs) = 1.5 points Yearling Deer (1.5 to <2.5 yrs) = 1 point Fawns not sampled.

Avian Influenza:

- Expect HPAI mortalities to start picking up.
- Some positive detection in hunter harvested waterfowl.
- Some vulture mortalities in September.
- 2 dead geese from Chemung County tested positive in late November.
- Regional DEC staff will continue to collect some samples to track outbreak throughout the region.

Places to Hunt Waterfowl Interactive Mapper

- Places to Hunt Waterfowl in New York
- Overlays the state with Waterfowl and Canada Goose Hunting Zones
- A wide selection of public hunting lands are displayed.
- Can click on these lands to learn if there are special rules and for a link to the respective webpage to read more.

DEC Pheasant Stocking:

- Approximately 5,226 pheasants stocked in R8 so far.
- Last stocking was early November.
- 2 stocking planned for early/mid-January o Will be approximately 693 pheasants for R8.

Sponsored Pheasant Hunts

- 10 hosted in R8 by private individuals or sportsmen's groups, on DEC land or club's land.
- Keep spreading the word, plenty of pheasants available for these.
- Upcoming DEC hosted Hunts: 12/13/25 – at the MAC – Women
12/13/25 – at FLX NF – for SUNY ESF students.

Oak Wilt:

- Detected at High Tor WMA this past summer, samples tested positive.
- Found in 3 different locations, some associated with a recent timber sale. Suspect spread was caused by warm weather during clean-up activities, casing wounds on trees when vector beetles were active.
- All trees have since been destroyed to prevent spread.
- Spread the word to your counties to prevent oak wilt spread; only prune, fell, or otherwise damage oak trees during the winter.

Fisheries:

Cohocton Fishing Rights and parking area project is delayed, but agreement signed and more PFR being added.

Agreement to allow funding of improved ramp at Town of Sodus boat launch in Sodus Point has been signed by County.

Trout Stream Access—Sugar Creek in Livingston County will continue to be stocked with some reductions from current levels.

Sending letters to landowners along Sandy Creek in Monroe County seeking more PFR.

Parking improvements being implemented on Naples and Mill (Perkinsville) Creeks.

Oatka Creek Stocked Extended reach may be reduced to just stocked if additional verified access is not secured.

Law Enforcement:

Div of Law Enforcement is hosted annual youth deer hunt at former Seneca Army Depot with the dinner being hosted at the Kunneytown Sportsmen Club. 25 of 27 kids harvested a deer and other two had opportunities.

Planning for youth turkey hunt with sign-ups being accepted. Contact Lt. Matt Lochner for information

Season has been safe so far. Officers are seeing some issues with hunters adjusting to the new rules for E-tagging and change to 48-hour harvest reporting deadline.

NYS Parks(OPRHP) - No representative present

Old Business –

A. State FWMB Meeting Report—meeting was held via WebEx on October 9. Report provided by Jim DeMay.

State FWMAB Meeting October 9th, 2025

Gary Muthig Chair. Webex meeting. Trying to put board back together after the passing of Chairman Bill Conners. Meet and greet and some business.

16-22 participants at any given time. Reg 8 Paul Kronenwetter, Dave Sauter, Jim DeMay, Tom Grasek.

Business:

1. Gary went back to mission statement Of 1957 and by-laws of 2013: Access to private property and habitat improvement. Albany does not feel we are doing our job.
2. Public fishing access for trout
3. Identify projects
4. Return to our purpose.

Discussion:

- 1) Region 5 has not had a meeting since Dec. 24th, last year. DEC will not support due to agendas not following mission statement.
- 2) Jeremey Hurst DEC stated that DEC is here for technical guidance only.
- 3) Trout Stream letter: loss of trout access on private property.
- 4) Listed empty advisory positions on State Board.
- 5) Looking for nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, and secretary.
- 6) Legislative rep does not have to a legislator, only needs to be appointed by the legislators.

7) After receiving updated contact information Gary would like to schedule an in-person meeting in the Spring at White Eagle, and a Webex meeting in January.

8) Grant applications important to show work toward purpose of board.

9) Future guidance from state board to regional boards.

My (Jim DeMay) take on the meeting: It was salted with innuendos and veiled threats concerning the future of this board. A question: If the DEC is here for technical guidance only, how can they prevent region 5 from holding a meeting? Although Reg 8 board seems to be doing a good job, we need to set our future vision heavily on the basics of habitat and access.

New Business

A. Meeting Dates for 2026

Meetings will be on first Thursday of every third month except March will be on second Thursday. Dates for 2026 meetings: March 12, June 4, September 3, December 3.

B. Nominating Committee

ing. Barlow Rhodes and Jim DeMay are retiring from board at end of the month and cannot serve on nominating committee as they have the past few years. Dave Sauter agreed to head the nominating committee with assistance from Mike Wasilco and Paul Kronenwetter. Suggested that committee nominate the existing members to the same positions they currently hold with exception of needing to replace retiring members DeMay (State Sportsman alternate), Rhodes (State Landowner alternate) and possibly Frank Shutter (Region 8 Vice Chair) who may not be able to attend due to health issues. Committee will report out at next meeting.

Next meeting is March 12 at 530pm.