

*Scenes from Peck's Lake Resort, and the 2024 Fall Safari held in September. More photos and NYSOWA news inside.*

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**We are always looking for members to work with our Conference Committee and assist in hosting Safaris and Conferences in their region. Please email buck@adkhunter if interested.**

## Calendar

Jan. 15 - Deadline for EIC and Photo Contest Award Submission. Please note, membership must me up to date.

*May 15-18, 2025*

**Spring Conference**

Niagara Falls, N.Y.

(Date subject to change)

Renew your membership here:  
<https://app.joinit.com/o/nysowa>

## **Scenes from the NYSOWA Fall Safari at Peck Lake, Fulton County**

<https://visitoswegocounty.com>

Caroga Lake, N.Y. — The New York State Outdoor Writer's Association held its annual Fall Safari, once again in Fulton County. More than a dozen scribes from across the state attended all or part of the event held Sept. 12-15 at Peck's Lake Resort, near Caroga Lake in the southern Adirondacks.

Unlike the group's annual conferences, held in recent years in the spring – and with larger attendance and venues – NYSOWA's safaris are meant to be more casual meetings allowing members to sample the outdoor offerings of a particular region.

Although Fulton County is considered the “land of 44 lakes,” it was Peck Lake and Great Sacandaga Lake that provided most of the action, with local outfitters and volunteers offering to get the writers on these two bodies of water.

Both delivered, primarily in the form of small-mouth bass and walleyes with a couple of northern pike and pickerel in the mix. The weather and fishing patterns were more conducive to summer-like conditions that saw temperatures in the 80s. A few of the writers climbed Kane Mountain to take in the 360-degree view from the fire tower and the early fall foliage.

Local businesses and organizations also joined the mix. On the first day of the event, Franks Gun Shop hosted a meeting of NYSOWA and the New York Forest Owners Association, along with members of both the Fulton and Warren county Soil and Water Districts. Both groups spoke to the writers about conservation and proper forestry management.

NYFOA, which was founded in 1963, has chapters across the entire state of New York with private landowners making up its membership. Executive Director Craig Vollmer said there are many new landowners today who do not understand forestry management.

“Deer are incredibly damaging to our forests,” he said, “perhaps too much of a good thing.”

Vollmer also said 70% of the lands in New York are privately owned. Currently, NYFOA's 1,400 members own 3,000 acres, and he'd like to see





those numbers grow, and also see landowners properly manage their lands.

Mike Hauser is well known in the region and the sporting community as the promoter of the Adirondack Outdoorsman Show, held each winter in Johnstown. But Hauser's full time job is with Syonix, a company that specializes in night vision optics, including for marine use.

Hauser asked the writers to be patient one evening as he laid demo units on a picnic table as darkness approached. Once dusk arrived he passed the optics around for everyone to observe what night vision is all about, and explained how the technology has advanced in recent years.

Other than the NYFOA presentation, all events were held at Peck's Lake Resort and presided over by Alby Peck, who's family lineage extends generations. The area is shrouded in local history as, like Sacandaga, Peck Lake too is an impoundment with not one but two dams. The schoolhouse Alby Peck attended as a child still stands as a museum and was open for tours during the event.

Alby, his wife Pat, and grandson Clarence "Peanut" Chamberlain – and the entire Peck's staff – organized lunches and dinners at their establishment, while most of the attendees stayed at their shoreline cabins. Among the sponsors and speakers at Peck's were Harnish Outdoor Supply, Rogers Cideryard, Carla Kolbe of Fulton County Tourism, and local Assemblyman Robert Smullen, an avid sportsman who sits on the State Assembly's Environmental Conservation Committee.

The event wrapped up with an end-of-summer dinner at Peck's that featured Chamberlain frying fresh walleye and smallmouth bass, and barbecue from local chef TJ Wager, of T&D BBQ, who also shared some hunting and fishing tales with the scribes.

*This article appeared in the Oct. 18 issue of New York Outdoor News*

## **NYSOWA President Chris Paparo**



It seems like it was yesterday that we were at Peck Lake for our Fall Safari, but that was over two months ago already. Where has the time gone? We had a blast at Peck's. Besides the beauty of the lake, the Peck's family pulled out all the stops to make our safari a memorable one. We had quaint and comfortable accommodations,

guides to fish Peck and Great Sacandaga Lakes for bass and walleyes (caught my first walleye with Capt. Stephen George), and all of the meals kept us all extremely full and happy. Peanut's spice blend on the freshly caught and fried walleyes was excellent! For those of you that missed the safari, you can enjoy this peaceful sunrise over the lake

<https://youtu.be/ua3xwbBmiOU?si=l1mFwbRuVlitp2Ok>

Speaking of "where did the time go?," I cannot believe I have been the president of NYSOWA for four years (two terms). I remember the day when Leo called as the chair of the nominating committee to ask if I would be interested in running for the position. I was extremely nervous



to accept this nomination. I had never held such a position, so I was unsure if I would be qualified. I was intimidated, as many of the NYSOWA members are people who I have looked up to as mentors for years. How could I possibly “lead” such a well accomplished group of outdoor communicators. And lastly, we were in the middle of a global pandemic. How could NYSOWA survive if we cannot host board meetings, the annual conference, or the safari? It was not going to be easy, but I am so happy that I said yes.

As a lecturer, covid negatively impacted my business. I was no longer able to visit venues to give lectures and make money. I heard about this new technology called Zoom, and I was one of the first of the local lecturers to take full advantage of this new form of video-conferencing. By the time I was elected the NYSOWA president, I had given close to 100 Zoom presentations. This made me quite comfortable with the platform and confident it could keep NYSOWA activities moving forward. I had a little kickback from some members about using Zoom and not meeting in person, but overall, it has been beneficial for the organization. We started off with “Fireside Chats” as a way for members to meet virtually to socialize and share stories. Later, we had several information sessions with the DEC that enabled our members to ask questions to state officials which led to meaningful discussions about upcoming regulation changes. Our own members hosted craft improvement sessions. Joe Crance gave two great lectures on building a website, on your own, from scratch. We hoped that the pandemic would have passed by the time of our next conference, but unfortunately that was not the case. We were forced to go virtual with our annual conference, and although nothing beats being there in person, we were still able to host the conference and get the job done. We have not hosted as many virtual events now that we are back to normal, but they have still been a valuable tool for board meetings, and we hope to expand on the craft improvement series.

It has been a great four years as the NYSOWA president, but honestly, I cannot take any credit for all the good that has taken place during that time. Your NYSOWA board and committee members are the ones that do all the hard work keeping NYSOWA moving forward. The time and energy they devote to NYSOWA’s mission is truly great and I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart. As I step down as president, I look forward to remaining on the board as the past president, and excited to work with the incoming president, whoever he or she may be.

## Northern Region VP Dan Ladd



First, I want to take a moment to thank Chris Paparo for his service as president of this organization for the past four years (two terms of two years). In my two decades with NYSOWA he is the only person to take on that task. I still recall the conversation we had about it at the 2021 Spring Safari in Roscoe. Chris had missed out on a lot of opportunities to achieve his goals with this organization because of Covid, which resulted in a number of cancelled meetings and events. But it was Chris who came to the rescue with virtual (Zoom) meetings, allowing the organization to conduct business. Next was his fireside chats on a number

of topics. Looking back at the Covid crisis, we were lucky to have a guy like Chris at the helm to help us all through a difficult time. Kudos to Chris Paparo.

### Deer Season

It's been an interesting deer season thus far in the Northern Zone. I've heard of a fair amount of mature bucks being taken, but overall it might be less than what DEC expected ahead of the season. It's obviously been warm, and dry (until recently) and that's certainly impacting what the deer are doing. I was fortunate, however to harvest a deer with my father's old .44 magnum on opening day; a dandy 8-pointer. The real adventure was getting this thing out of the woods, including down a steep cliff I had just climbed 30 minutes before shooting him. But, that's Adirondack deer hunting. Like one of my hunting partners says, "I'd rather drag all day than not."

Here's a link to a video on the New York Outdoor News Group Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/dan.ladd.94/videos/858330769793742?idorvanti=535075554192335>

### Moose River Plains

Perhaps you saw the DEC press release about some improvements to two pond access sites in Moose River Plains. While the road will close for the season once snow falls, make note of the improvements at Helldiver and Mitchell ponds. Helldiver, especially, is a popular spot, mainly because of numerous moose sightings through the years. While I haven't been there myself, I look forward to checking the improvements out next spring or summer when the road re-opens.

If you've never been to Moose River Plains, by all means make it a destination. The 23-mile road between Inlet and Indian Lake (further actually) provides access to 116 campsites, many of which are roadside. There are more at Wakely Dam on the Cedar River Flow, an excellent canoe/fishing destination, especially if you can find your way up the river to a lean-to along the Northville-Placid trail.

Here's a link to learn more about the complex: <https://dec.ny.gov/places/moose-river-plains-complex>

### CWD In Herkimer County

Everyone in New York should pay attention to the situation in Herkimer County where CWD was discovered in a red deer at a private facility. 'Fingers crossed that this breakout remains contained.

## West/Central Region VP David Figura



It's been an extremely warm summer/fall.

Upstate New York recently finished one of the warmest summers on record – a trend that has continued into the fall.

Heck, it was 81 degrees in Syracuse on Halloween

Summer 2024 was the fourth-hottest since official records began in 1902. The National Weather Service defines summer as June, July and August.

Syracuse, for example, saw 18 days of 90 degrees or hotter, about twice as many as normal, according to Syracuse.com. There were four heat waves, defined in this part of the country as least three consecutive days of 90 or greater.

"Climatologists say the summer was extraordinarily warm because of a La Nina in the Pacific Ocean and the background effects of climate change, which is increasing global temperatures," Syracuse.com reported. "Globally, July was the hottest month since global records began in 1850, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration."

### **The impacts**

\* A proliferation of harmful algal blooms (HABs) on numerous waterways. Blooms were reported a couple of weeks earlier and weeks later than usual this year. During September, they were reported on every Finger Lake, with the exception of Canadice Lake, reported the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

According to the DEC, HABs "generally consist of visible patches of cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae. Cyanobacteria are naturally present in low numbers in most aquatic (freshwater and/or marine) systems.

"Under certain conditions, including adequate nutrients (e.g., phosphorus) availability, warm temperatures, and calm winds, cyanobacteria may multiply rapidly and form blooms that are visible on the surface of the affected waterbody. Several types of cyanobacteria can produce toxins and other harmful compounds that can pose health risks to people and animals through ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation."

Colors can include shades of green, blue-green, yellow, brown or red. Public swimming areas are normally shutdown if a patch appears in the area.

However, despite warnings from the DEC about drinking, cooking with or swimming in water where HABs are present, there are no warnings coming from the DEC or the state Department of Health about eating fish that come from waterways where HABs are present.

I chatted with Greg Boyer, a SUNY ESF professor, who is knowledgeable about the topic. He said any cyanotoxins in the water produced by the algae, if absorbed by fish, end up getting concentrated in their livers -- not in their muscles.

Thus, if one eats a fish's fillets there shouldn't be a problem, he said.

Boyer is acting director for the Great Lakes Research Consortium, a network of 18 New York Universities and nine Canadian affiliates looking at all aspects of Great Lakes science, policy and ecology. In addition, his research interests are in "biologically active natural products produced by algae. This includes toxins produced by dinoflagellates and cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) as well as allelopathic compounds and siderophores."

\*Meanwhile, this fall's warm, dry weather (exacerbated by windy conditions) have created drought conditions that increase the risk of wildfires – a situation that one usually thinks as problems out west or in Canada. Recently, there was a major wildfire on the New York/New Jersey border, with reports of smaller, wildfires across the state.

A story in New York Outdoor News reported drought-like conditions have DEC Forest Rangers



tackling wildfires in various parts of the state. In addition, Syracuse.com reported this month that "the number of counties considered at high risk for the spread of wildfires has grown to include much of Central New York ... and that the number of counties considered at high risk has grown to nearly 40."

Meanwhile, a state-wide burn ban is in effect until Nov. 30. Campfires, open cooking fires and brush burning are prohibited, according to Syracuse.com.

Just prior to this newsletter being sent out, a strong storm system arrived in Upstate New York, bringing a several-day stretch of soaking rain along with snow in higher elevations. While the storm wasn't expected to wipe out the big rain deficits from this fall, it most likely will reduce the threat of wildfires in many areas, according to media reports.

For those interested in learning more about climate change and wild fires across this country and beyond, I'd highly recommend the book "Fire Weather, a True Story from a Hotter World," by John Vaillant.

### **Southern Zone Shotgun/Rifle season for deer/tree stand fatality**

The Southern Zone firearm season, which started Nov. 16 and runs through Dec. 8, is the state's biggest hunting season (number-wise of hunters) in the state.

Much has been written about how back tags are no longer required and for the first time all state sporting licenses, tags and other printable items will be formatted to fit on 8.5 x 11 plain paper. Also, about the state's fluorescent clothing laws, along with the voluntary, "let them go, let them grow" campaign to pass on young bucks.

Most importantly, though, is the continue need to hunt safely – particularly when it comes to hunting from a tree stand. There has been one, tree stand-related fatality reported so far in the Buffalo area, just prior to the Southern Zone gun opener.

Mark Scanlon, 54, was found dead in a wooded area in East Otto from an apparent fall from a portable tree stand on Nov. 6. He was the brother of Acting Buffalo Mayor Chris Scanlon.

### **The annual fall salmon run on the Salmon River**

In the words of one veteran fishing guide, "You had to work for them."

The run this year followed an extremely productive late summer and early fall of salmon fishing out on the lake.

Nevertheless, George Zervos, a program guide at the Douglaston Salmon Run, a private fishing area near the mouth of the Salmon River, said this year's salmon spawning run on the Salmon River was sporadic.

It kicked off with huge surges of spawning salmon in late August, early September due to large amounts of rainfall then. However warm, drought conditions ("After that it was pretty much 'game over' for the rain," Zervos said.) had an impact on the run, with periodic trickles of fish coming into the river that.

There were considerable concentrations of fish upstream in pools, and for a couple of days there were some decent, sustained runs --- particularly around Columbus Day – but that was the exception to the rule, Zervos said.

The follow-up steelhead spawning run in November up the Salmon River has likewise been light and sporadic, due in part to low water levels.

### **The Niagara River/Lake Ontario's west end/ Lake Erie**

The Lower Niagara River fishing scene has been "OK, but hasn't been outstanding," according NYSOWA member Bill Hilts Jr.

"The big reason has been the warm water temperatures," said Hilts, noting water temps have been in the mid- to upper-50s in the river. Anglers have been landing a mixture of salmon and trout throughout the fall. In addition, they have also been catching smallmouth bass and wall-eye.

The fishing scene at Lake Ontario's western end – particularly around the Niagara Bar area – has been consistent, with anglers boating "mixed bags of fish." The one caveat, though, is "when

you can get out," Hilts said. The wind has been a big factor.

Hilts said the state's drought conditions have an impact on many Lake Ontario western tribs – including the four main ones: Oak Orchard, Johnson Creek, 18 Mile Creek and Sandy Creek. However, "the saving grace" for these waterways this fall have been Erie Canal water releases, which have brought their water levels up, pulling in spawning salmon and brown trout from the lake.

As a result, "fishing has been decent" on these tributaries this fall, with the brown trout fishing "particularly good" on 18 mile and Oak Orchard creeks.

Getting back to the Lower Niagara, Hilts added trout anglers are looking forward to the start of the lake trout season on the river, which begins Dec. 2. Fishing for lakers on the Lower Niagara is closed from Oct. 1 to Dec. 1 to allow the fish to spawn.

Shifting over to Lake Erie, Hilts again pointed to record-high, warm water temperatures. Nevertheless, the lake's bass fishing continues to be productive. The same with perch fishing, Hilts said.

### **Chautauqua Lake Fish Camp**

I attended the 2024 Autumn Chautauqua Outdoor Media Fish Camp, held October 1 – 4.

Myself and four other outdoor writers – including fellow NYSOWA member Mike Joyner – stayed at a house near the shore of Chautauqua Lake. The other writers were from Ohio and Michigan. The 3- ½ day event, which featured three fishing outings, with housing and meals covered, was sponsored by the Chautauqua County tourism folks and organized by NYSOWA member David Barus.

I went out the first day on Lake Erie with two other writers – Jim Proffitt and Jeff Frischkorn, both from Ohio – and guided by Rob Oram, a veteran walleye tournament angler. I have to say I was blown away by how good the fishing was. Trolling with stickbaits and Dipsy Divers that allowed us to have 6 lines out at a time, our morning outing produced 23 keeper walleye between 17 and nearly 30 inches, along with two impressive steelhead.

I wrote a story about the outing that recently ran on the "Share the Outdoors" website. <https://www.sharetheoutdoors.com/2024/11/16/dazzled-by-dipsy-divers-a-memorable-lake-erie-wall-eye-fishing-adventure/>

On the second day, I went out with Proffitt and guide Mark Richardson of Mark's Muskie Adventures, on Chautauqua Lake, which is well-known for its muskie fishing. We were offered the choice of trolling or casting and told that casting would be more effective. Unfortunately, after heaving huge lures for all morning, neither of us got a hit or follow. But that's muskie fishing. They don't call this huge, apex predator the "fish of 10,000 casts" for nothing.

The final morning, I went back out on Lake Erie with Frischkorn, guided by Hans Mann, of Buffalo Harbor Charters, with an emphasis on catching lake trout. It involved fishing deeper. After a couple hours of nothing, Frischkorn, who intended to write a story about lake trout in Lake Erie, connected with a massive laker weighing some 26 pounds and measuring nearly 40 inches. Soon after, I reeled in one that measured around 30 inches.

That accomplished, as we traveled back into the Dunkirk launch, we boated three more keeper walleyes.

It was a memorable three days of fishing – an experience I'd recommend to any NYSOWA member. An experience full of ideas for future articles.

Thanks again, David Barus.





## **Southeast Region VP Tom Schlichter**

When we left-off back in mid-August, it had been an interesting summer on New York's southeastern saltwater front. With plenty of bunker around, there were some super catches of stripers that had to be released for being too big to fit in the 28 to 31-inch slot size. Add in some shots of cobia to 60 pounds on those same bunker schools, and both Long Island's western north shore and the entire south shore were seeing some pretty darn good action. Even the fluke this summer seemed to get off to a fairly decent start with more keepers than most would have expected until the water got really warm in August

and the bite tapered off.

Fast forward to the fall season and you could have pretty much thrown out your old log-books in terms of making sense of the action. The South Shore striper action needed a little while for the water to cool down before things kicked into high gear. The real slugfest didn't start up until well into October but once it did, the bass were hot and heavy in the ocean surf from Jones Beach as far east as one cared to travel. Surf fishing in particular was smokin' immediately east and west of both Moriches and Shinnecock Inlets on poppers early while the bunker were prevalent before large masses of sand eels showed up along the ocean beaches and diamond jigs ruled the roost out to 40-foot depths from Montauk to Jones Inlet.

That proved to be refreshing; however, I found the renewed fluke action even more interesting although I didn't have much time to partake in the fun. For 2024, NYS extended its fluke season, which had ended in September, through mid-October. To do that, a split season with different regulations was instituted. From May 4 through August 1, anglers were allowed to creel up to three summer flatties each per day with a 19-inch minimum size, which many felt would be tough on bay and shore anglers since those fish have traditionally run smaller than in the ocean. From August 2 to October 15, the size limit increased to 19.5 inches, with the creel limit remaining at 3.

It was hoped that the opportunity to continue fluke fishing later into the season would offer anglers a shot at a new window of fluking productivity given that some of the best action over the past few years has come right at the season's end. As September advanced, that turned out to be a great choice as many anglers reported catching a keeper or two on most trips, and some even managed to limit out – especially inside Great South Bay, Shinnecock Bay and at Montauk. Congratulations to the DEC for making a bold move with this initiative. The big question now, though, is did that strong run of bigger fish push us over the quota for fluke? We'll have to wait a bit for the info to be worked up to see if anglers will have to pay back on their fluke quota next year – that seems unlikely, but I think it would still be worthwhile if simply to see the DEC willing to try a different approach in managing the summer flatties (there had never before been a split season for fluke in NYS).

On the big game scene, the fall bite of bluefin tuna up tight to the beach seems to have once again established itself as a reliable pattern. For several years in a row, anglers on Long Island's East End running out of Shinnecock Inlet have been able to tangle with giants sometimes within sight of land. That action is similar to what has become quite the

fishery in New England between Massachusetts and Rhode Island. As with stripers, huge schools of bunker have been the big draw for the tuna, although I suspect that and abundance of sand eels this year added to the shallow water allure.

One point of note on this bluefin action – stop by a tackle shop that specializes in off-shore fishing to talk rigging and tackle before you head out. And if new to the sport, fish with someone experienced before trying it on your own. A lot of anglers give it a shot and are under-gunned when a 300-pounder grabs their live-lined bunker, surface plug or diamond jig. That is bad for the angler, and bad for the fish since it is likely to break-off with the hook(s) still embedded, fight too long to be revived once it gets to the boat, or possibly even dump the reel. You'll find several shops on Long Island qualified to lend a hand in this endeavor. White Water Outfitters, in Hampton Bays, is close to the action, well-stocked, and has a staff that's experienced, willing to help, and taking the lead in teaching how to do it responsibly.

Not sure that everyone saw the press release from NYS DEC seeking public input on a draft list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and associated species status assessments, for use in updating New York's State Wildlife Action Plan for 2025-35. All comments and input are due by January 14, 2025.

On the freshwater front, warm water temperatures seemed to a put damper on the traditional fall bass fishing in the Southeast region. One interesting note, however, is that anglers tossing mega-sized swim baits managed to haul in some might impressive bass. If you haven't tried them yet, these big lures including Lanciotti's Psycho Gill, 6" Bucca Trick Shad and Toxic Bait's Wade Hog may be worth investigating. There's actually a Facebook site called Quest for A Trophy that sheds a lot of light on using big (6" and larger) lures to tempt hawg bass, with much of the action coming from Southeastern NY waters. It's worth scrolling through if you are interested in picking up a few tips and seeing what mega bass lures are turning heads these days. There's certainly a story here somewhere...

Once again back to that warm weather theme, hunters need to take precautions to prevent tick bites and the diseases they can transmit. You know the routine, but you've got to follow it to avoid getting bitten. To that end, at a minimum, treat your gear, boots and clothing with permethrin (if you want to use a repellent), take a hot shower as soon as you get home to wash off unattached ticks, and perform a full body check every time you come out of the woods or fields.

## **NYSOWA Membership News**

### **Dues Renewal 2025**

NYSOWA members are welcome to renew your annual dues anytime, in fact, the earlier the better. Using our online JoinIt software, renewing your dues is as simple as ever. And, if you intend to enter the annual photo and writing contests, your dues must be up to date.

**Renew online at: <https://nysowa.org/membership/>**

# NYSOWA Membership News

## UPDATE: NYSOWA Bob McNitt Memorial Scholarship Program

Each year, NYSOWA awards \$1,000 to a college student enrolled in a curriculum related to journalism, outdoors or the environment.

All applicants are expected to approve of and understand the need for ethical methods of environmental conservation of our natural and wildlife resources. Included in these practices would be seasonal hunting, fishing and trapping for the various species in a conscientious effort to control and establish healthy and continuing populations of these species.



The Scholarship Committee, consisting of David Figura, Deb Brosen and David Taylor decided to award two, \$1,000 academic scholarships this year. Committee members agreed that both applicants were equally worthy.

This year's recipients are Abigail Larrabee a senior at Paul Smith's College, and Justus Horton, a sophomore at the University of Miami. This is the second year in a row that Larrabee has been awarded the scholarship.

Larrabee (left), of Kennebunkport, Maine, who is majoring in fisheries and Wildlife Science, wrote the following when notified about winning the scholarship again:

"The NYSOWA scholarship will be extremely helpful coming into my final semester at Paul Smith's College. I am taking my capstone course, where I am creating a wildlife management plan for New York State, as well as sever-

al electives, including "The Science and art of Fly Fishing," "Keystone Species and Keystone People," and "The science of climate change," which are all writing-based courses.

"This scholarship will be helpful in many ways, particularly paying for books and tuition. Thank you so much for the opportunity to earn this scholarship, it will be put to good use."

Horton (right), of Greenport, N.Y. , is studying marine affairs, with double minors in law and politics and sociology. After graduating, he plans to attend law school.

He wrote the following after informed he'd be getting the NYSOWA scholarship:

"I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship which will help support my education at the University of Miami. This month I am becoming scuba certified, a skill essential for studying marine environments and this award will help cover those expenses. Thank you again for this generous support."



# **BOW Provides Opportunities for Women of All Ages and Skill Levels**

By Sue Bookhout

This past September 13-15th, I had the pleasure of attending the DEC-sponsored Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program at Forest Lake Camp in Chestertown, NY, thanks to a scholarship from the New York State Outdoor Writers Association. The weekend was packed with a wide variety of courses such as stand-up paddleboarding, fly fishing, shotgun and rifle shooting, plant identification, knot tying, map and compass reading, hunter education, kayaking, archery, crossbow, basic self-defense, backpacking, field dressing wild game and much more!

While the program was geared toward women with little or no outdoor experience, I found that even with my extensive outdoor background, there were plenty of opportunities to learn new skills and challenge myself. I particularly enjoyed nature journaling, muzzleloading, trailer towing, and Dutch oven cooking, all of which pushed me outside my usual comfort zone.



One of the things that struck me most about the BOW program was the incredible diversity of the participants. Women of all ages, from late teens to seniors, came together from all over New York State to share their love of the outdoors and learn from each other. The atmosphere was supportive and encouraging, creating a safe space for women to try new things without fear of judgment. The instructors were all experts in their fields and passionate about sharing their knowledge. Whether it was learning how to tie knots, identify plants and trees, or shoot a shotgun, the emphasis was always on safety, fun, and building confidence.

The weekend was a whirlwind of activity, starting with lunch on Friday, September 13th, and continuing through lunchtime on Sunday. Forest Lake Campground provided a beautiful backdrop for the event, and the weather couldn't have been better. We enjoyed blue skies, sunshine, and unseasonably warm temperatures throughout our stay. Between the classes, delicious meals, and quaint cabins, the BOW event provided an all-inclusive experience. I especially enjoyed the camaraderie among the participants. It was a reminder that it's always possible to learn something new and connect with nature.

# NYSOWA Excellence in Craft Writing, Janice M. Keesler Memorial Photo Contest

**EIC/Photo Contest submission deadline is Jan. 15**

## **Award Guidelines & Rules**

We are making entry to the awards program easier than ever. At least, we hope you will find that to be the case as we have now converted the entry process exclusively to a digital format. No more dealing with snail mail and the costs and time that entails. No more entry forms for each entry; instead, you'll list your entries on one form. As for your entry fee of \$25, (covers all EIC entries; a separate \$25 fee covers all photo award entries), you can still send in a check or money order, or you can go to our NYSOWA.org website and pay by credit card.

So, if you've never entered your work in our awards program, this is the year to start. Review your work from 2024 (2023 and 2024 for the TV, Radio, Video and Audio category) and begin to prepare entries for the writing and photo awards recognition program. Of course, photos could have been taken at any time, not just in 2024.

All you need for each entry is a file of the original article as a PDF or JPG and a file of that article that deletes or blocks out your byline, the name of the publication and any other identifying information, including photos with your image. The entry form below requires a listing of all of your entries

Because the awards presentation will take place at our banquet scheduled for the spring, entries must be received by the administrators of the writing and photo recognition programs by **Jan. 15, 2025**

Deb Brosen is chair of the Janice M. Keesler Memorial photo awards. This year I am co-administering the Excellence in Craft writing awards program with our president, Chris Paparo, and he looks forward to processing your submissions.

— Glenn Sapir

Click NYSOWA EIC [2024-25 to download the registration form](#)

**Deadline for receipt of entries for both writing and photo award entries  
is Jan. 15, 2025.**

**Also, please note that your NYSOWA membership must be up to date to qualify  
for an award.**

Renew your membership here:  
<https://app.joinit.com/o/nysowa>

# NYSOWA Supporting Member News



## Help cast a legacy for tomorrow's hunters and anglers

The outdoors community faces a critical challenge. As demographics shift, fewer people are buying hunting and fishing licenses. This decline threatens the funding vital for managing our natural resources and preserving wildlife habitats. But, there's hope. The Outdoor News Foundation is taking action.

**Our mission?** To cultivate the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts and conservation leaders. Your generous donations power our impact, directly benefiting young people through essential education and resources at environmental learning camps, environmental scholarships for future outdoors journalists, fish and wildlife biologists, and other stewards of our natural world, and free access to Outdoor News.

Join us in turning the tide. A single donation of \$25 helps fund a child for a year, and ensures a vibrant future for our sporting heritage. Together, we can share the wonder of the wild with the next generation of sportsmen and women.

**Make your mark.** Donate now and help us forge a lasting legacy for the outdoors community.

### INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

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# NYSOHOF seeks 2025 nominations

## Staff Report

The New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame recently announced that the organization is currently in the process of receiving nominations for the 2025 class of inductees for 2025. They are also seeking nominations for a number of special awards.

Each year the group honors numerous individuals from New York's outdoor community for their contributions, dedication and commitment by inducting them into the NYSOHOF. Inductions take place at a banquet/ceremony typically held in the spring. A plaque for the honoree is eventually put on display at the Wildlife Sports and Educational Museum, in Wall Mills, in Fulton County.

There are two basic categories of nominations for the outdoorsman:

- **Outdoor Volunteer/ Men and women** who have given many years of volunteer service and accomplished significant things to help others, especially future generations, enjoy the outdoors. These volunteers have truly given back more than they have taken.

- **Outdoor Professional/ Volunteer:** Reserved for those who use their professional talents to support the causes of conservation and outdoor sports. These individuals go above and beyond their regular job duties to "give back", so that others can benefit. Many also volunteer in addition to giving back through their professional careers. This category also includes outdoor writers and authors.

- **Pioneer:** Since its creation, the New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame has been inducting individuals who worked tirelessly to preserve our outdoor

heritage. The Pioneer category was established to honor those earlier sportsmen and women who did so much for sportsmen's issues all across New York State. Many of these sportsmen and women are now deceased.

Submitters should contact the Hall of Fame to obtain the revised nomination cover form along with instructions on what is to be included with the nomination. This can all be found at the organization's website, [www.nysohof.org](http://www.nysohof.org), or by sending an email to: [info@nysohof.org](mailto:info@nysohof.org) or [nysohof@gmail.com](mailto:nysohof@gmail.com).

Be sure to include mandatory supporting documentation and letters of support with your nomination.

## Special Awards

The New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame has also established the following special awards:

- **Educational Program Award:** Designed for youth or youth programs, related to conservation programs.

- **Media Award:** The Media Award is used as recognition in special cases where a writer/ author did something really special, beyond their regular duties.

- **Outdoorsman of the Year:** Presented to an individual or organization that has made a significant impact on conservation or outdoor sports. This may have been a specific project or several actions that have enhanced hunting or fishing or helped preserve our natural environment for future generations. These actions have typically been performed over a shorter period of time than the efforts of an inductee in the Hall of Fame.

- **Dave Pitzer Memorial**



**Award:** Given to someone who has done outstanding work with youth.

- **Extra Mile Award:** Conservation and Law Enforcement Professionals do an important job in protecting the state's resources ranging from fish and wildlife to the health of the environment. They regularly enforce the laws protecting fish and wildlife, monitor pollution, and much more. At times they even put their lives on the line. The Law Enforcement Professionals serve as symbols of our natural resources and help educate the public on proper behavior. Many also go beyond the call of duty to help educate the public or create a new generation of ethical sportsmen and stewards of our natural resources. This "extra mile" that they often go can take many forms. They regularly make appearances at youth groups, speak at various meetings, act as mentors to youth hunts, fund many events, and help organize events to introduce people to outdoor sports.

The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2025. Nomination instructions can be found on our website <http://nysohof.org>.



NYSOGA and the NYSOWA are partners in championing the great outdoors of New York State with both organizations contributing to the introduction and continual education of how to enjoy and protect the diversity of the massive native resources we have at hand. Each of our members contributes greatly to the economic impact of outdoor recreation which generates billions of revenue dollars annually throughout the state of New York.

As New York State Outdoor Guides our organization takes great pride in creating a community that trains, supports, and represents on a legislative level the guiding profession of New York State. We strive to uphold the highest levels of professionalism and ethics in outdoor guiding.

In March we held our 41<sup>st</sup> annual conference which was hosted at The White Eagle Conference Center located in Hamilton NY. The guide community comes together to offer courses in wilderness first aid, CPR, water safety and the state guide exam which are all offered on site. This year's event agenda offered additional sessions in Operations and Marketing, Physical Demands of Guiding, NYS DEC Sustainability Plan and Wilderness Safety. The keynote speaker Leslie Surprenant shared a presentation titled, "Empowering Wilderness Exploration – Anne LaBastille". This supportive community encourages new aspiring guides assisting individuals down the path to obtaining their first right of passage license as well as providing active guides an environment to take recertification classes and renewal testing.

We would like to acknowledge the work NYSOWA does in garnering attention for the great outdoors and promoting all the outdoor sports throughout New York while featuring the vastness of all the New York landscape has to offer. We recognize the importance of promoting the great outdoors through media resources especially when championed by those who are also stewards to all we know and love of our diverse natural ecosystem. This press attention encourages others to step out and start exploring with our hope being they hire a skilled NYS Outdoor Guide to make the experience that much more pleasurable.

# BoatUS Foundation, National Safe Boating Council Launch Pilot Program to Make Borrowing a Life Jacket Easier

ANNAPOLIS, Md., Oct. 3, 2024 – The non-profit BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water and the National Safe Boating Council, which provides national boating safety outreach, have teamed up with boating app provider DECKEE to make it easier to find and borrow child- or adult-sized life jackets for temporary use, such as for a day or weekend, with the goal of increasing life jacket wear and boating safety.



This pilot program has integrated the BoatUS Foundation's more than 600 life jacket loaner sites across the nation into the simple-to-use DECKEE app, allowing boaters to find their closest BoatUS Foundation loaner site on a map – highlighted by the BoatUS logo – or be notified when they are near a BoatUS Foundation Life Jacket Loaner location.

“It's a great way to find a life jacket loaner if you have unexpected guests aboard,” said BoatUS Foundation program manager Alan Dennison. The Foundation's loaner database includes more than 600 free kids' Life Jacket Loaner Program sites at marinas, boat clubs, campgrounds, marinas, firehouses and TowBoatUS companies. “We really want to make it easier for families to get the right size life jackets, whether infant, child, teen or adult,” he added. The program loans out more than 140,000 life jackets annually.

Said Peg Phillips, executive director of the National Safe Boating Council: “The pilot app project with DECKEE and the BoatUS Foundation will help give us an accurate and scalable way to measure the influence of ongoing outreach programs. For example, a notification that comes as a gentle reminder of a nearby life jacket loaner site may reinforce or prompt increased life jacket wear by kids and adults.”

In 2023, statistics show 75% of fatal boating accident victims drowned (where the cause of death was known). Of those, 87% were not wearing a life jacket.

The DECKEE app is available for free for iOS and Android devices. For more information on the BoatUS Foundation Kids Life Jacket Loaner program, go [BoatUS.org/LJLP](https://BoatUS.org/LJLP).



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# The Industry Mourns the Passing of Richard Beebe

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For 50 years, Richard Beebe has been the driving force behind Redding Reloading Equipment. Richard passed away at his home in Central NY on October 31st, 2024 surrounded by his family. He was born on October 11th, 1941 and is survived by his wife Sherri of (47) years and four sons. The industry has lost an excellent sportsman, innovator, family man and a true friend to many.

With the purchase of Redding in 1974, Richard worked tirelessly to instill his vision of quality in the products that he produced. His commitment to the shooting sports community combined with a gift for innovation and ingenuity led to the development of many world-renowned products that discriminating handloaders rely on in their quest for better accuracy.

During his years at Redding, Richard's positive attitude and charismatic personality allowed him to assemble a team of some of the most talented folks in the industry – something he felt was essential for the success of his customers and his company. His pursuit of quality and precision was relentless and his dedication and hard work was and will continue to be an inspiration. He loved the people, the machine shop, and being successful at the range or in the field with his handloads. His legacy will continue, Richard was a truly remarkable man and will be dearly missed by all who knew him.



# Two NSSF Fundraisers with Great Prizes

NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, is running two fundraising efforts featuring great products.

NSSF's Celebration of Freedom Auction presents more than 30 bucket-list items, from one-of-a-kind firearms to exclusive hunting and shooting experiences, including skeet-shooting lessons and dinner with a four-time Olympic skeet gold medalist. The auction, which supports NSSF's GunVote program, runs through January 24, 2025. To participate, visit: <https://e.givesmart.com/events/DX1/i/>

The Project ChildSafe® Sweepstakes offers nine great prizes, including a full-size Vault Pro gun safe, Swarovski 10x42 EL Rangefinder binoculars, firearms and more. A donation to Project ChildSafe earns a chance to win a prize at that donation level. NSSF's Project ChildSafe program provides free firearm safety materials to communities in every state. [Enter here](#) through January 31, 2025

**VISIT: NSSF.ORG**

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Trade Association



**NEW YORK STATE OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, NOV. 18, 2024**

President Chris Paparo called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Recording Secretary Glenn Sapir took the roll call:

Present were President Chris Paparo, Vice Presidents Dan Ladd, Dave Figura and Tom Schlichter, Recording Secretary Glenn Sapir, Immediate Past President Charles Witek, Directors Deb Brosen, Jarrod Villa, Megan Plete Postol and Leo Maloney.

Absent were Treasurer Stephen George and Director Rich Redman.

Motion was made and passed to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last Board meeting.

Dave Figura and Dan Ladd gave the report of the Nominating Committee, presenting the slate to be voted upon by the members at the Annual Meeting. It was President, Deb Brosen; Regional Vice Presidents, Dan Ladd, Dave Figura and Tom Schlichter; Recording Secretary, Glenn Sapir; Membership Secretary, Charles Witek; Treasurer, Stephen George. Megan Plete Postol and Mike Joyner, Directors for 3-year terms; Steve Zahurak, Director for two years to fill Deb Brosen's unexpired term; Chris Paparo will automatically serve on the Board as the Immediate Past President.

A motion was made and passed to endorse this slate.

For the record, if this slate is elected by the members, Directors and the year that their term expires will be:

Terms expiring in 2025: Steve Piatt and Jarrod Villa

Terms expiring in 2026: Leo Maloney and Steve Zahurak

Terms expiring in 2027: Megan Plete Postol and Mike Joyner

A motion was made and passed to waive V.P. reports until the upcoming Annual Meeting. They will be appearing in the soon-to-be-published newsletter.

Charles Witek gave the Membership Secretary's report, stating that one Joint report shows a total of 168 members, including 93 active and 52 supporting. The rest are student, apprentice and honorary members. Dan offered his assistance to Charles in getting reports and interpreting the data on Joint



Glenn Sapir gave the Recording Secretary's report, stating that the job this year entailed recording of membership and board meetings and sending cards out on behalf of NYSOWA on the occasion of a death of a member or a member's spouse.

Glenn and Deb gave the awards program report. Deb reported that a new judge has been obtained, and she encouraged early entries. Glenn reported that 18 judges are in place for the EIC, including newly added Tim Christie, an award-winning writer and photographer. Chris will have to confirm that each person submitting entries to the EIC are members in good standing.

A motion was made and passed that after Chris and Stephen review our finances and find it affordable, Bill Suitor will be authorized to create six carvings for the EIC first-place awards.

Dave gave the Scholarship Committee Report, stating that the committee has awarded \$1,000 scholarships to two equally deserving applicants. One is a Paul Smith's student; the other is a Greenport, NY, resident studying at the University of Miami. This year, member Sue Bookhout was sent via a NYSOWA scholarship to the Becoming an Outdoorswoman weekend.

Jerrold and Megan reported that they have met with a third member as the Recruiting Committee and have put forth some good suggestions, but they have nothing solid to report at this time.

Dan reported on the Conference, stating that Frank Campbell was to meet with the hotel this week regarding the annual conference in Niagara Falls. The targeted dates are May 15-18, but that has not been locked down. Dan reported that there are no plans for a Fall Safari and encouraged suggestions. Deb said she would look into a Columbia-Greene County event.

Old Business:

Glenn and Charles addressed the need to amend the bylaws regarding our residency restrictions, and the proposed amendments will be voted upon by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

# APPLICATION FOR NYSOWA MEMBERSHIP



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you receive payment for your services? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Writer Affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORIES** (Note: fillers are not considered to be articles in applying for Writer status)

**A. Newspaper** \_\_\_\_\_ Attach 12 tear sheets

City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Circulation: \_\_\_\_\_ Column Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Published:  Daily  Weekly  Monthly  Periodics

**B. Magazine** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Staff position: \_\_\_\_\_ Freelance: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ National- Attach two tear sheets \_\_\_\_\_ Regional- Attach four tear sheets

**C. Lecturer** Attach copies of a published schedule or six paid presentations.  
 Staff position: \_\_\_\_\_ Freelance: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Photographer / Illustrator / Artist** - Attach proof of publications of film/video, 8 stills, or prints.  
 Staff position: \_\_\_\_\_ Freelance: \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Book Author** - attach a copy of the Publishing House Catalog listing the book.  
 Name of Book: \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Editor/Publisher** - Attach a copy of a current issue of magazine/newspaper.  
 Name of Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

**G. Radio/Television** - Attach audio/video tape documenting (4) 30 minute or (8) 15 minute programs. Station: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_

**H. Public Relations Agency** - Attach copies of (6) news releases.  
 Staff position or occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Electronic Publishing** - Attach 8 published outdoor columns or articles in last 12 mos. Electronic  
 Publication: \_\_\_\_\_ web address: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Active: \_\_\_\_\_

**Specialties**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Hunting            | <input type="checkbox"/> b. Firearms/Shooting     | <input type="checkbox"/> c. Archery/Bowhunting  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Freshwater fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Saltwater Fishing     | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Flyfishing          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> g. Boating            | <input type="checkbox"/> h. Camping/Backpacking   | <input type="checkbox"/> i. Wilderness Survival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> j. Trapping           | <input type="checkbox"/> k. Outdoor Travel        | <input type="checkbox"/> l. Outdoor Politics    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> m. Nature             | <input type="checkbox"/> n. Environmental Affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> o. Natural Resources   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> p. Water Sports       | <input type="checkbox"/> q. Cooking               | <input type="checkbox"/> r. Nature              |

**Areas of Expertise**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Book Author        | <input type="checkbox"/> B. Magazine Editor     | <input type="checkbox"/> C. Newspaper Editor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. Public Relations   | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Television          | <input type="checkbox"/> F. Electronic Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G. Magazine Columnist | <input type="checkbox"/> H. Newspaper Columnist | <input type="checkbox"/> I. Freelance        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> J. Radio              | <input type="checkbox"/> K. Illustrator         | <input type="checkbox"/> L. Lecturer         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> M. Photographer       |   |  |

Sponsor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Active Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose a check, made payable to NYSOWA, with this application and mail to:  
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 631-827-8664 - [charleswittek@gmail.com](mailto:charleswittek@gmail.com)

Join online at <https://app.joinit.com/o/nysowa/members>



## APPLICATION FOR NEW YORK STATE OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSN. SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP

Supporting Membership Dues: \$60.00 per year.

Our company or organization, wishing to support the New York State Outdoor Writers Association (NYSOWA) in its program to further the causes of conservation and wise use of our natural resources, and to promote outdoor recreation activities, hereby applies for Supporting Membership.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Please outline your organization's interests and activities in the outdoor field:

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Active Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose a check, made payable to NYSOWA, with this application and mail to:

Charles Wittek III, 1075 Tooker Ave., West Babylon, N.Y. 11704  
631-827-8664 - [charleswittek@gmail.com](mailto:charleswittek@gmail.com)

Join online at <https://app.joinit.com/o/nysowa/members>