



# New York Outdoors

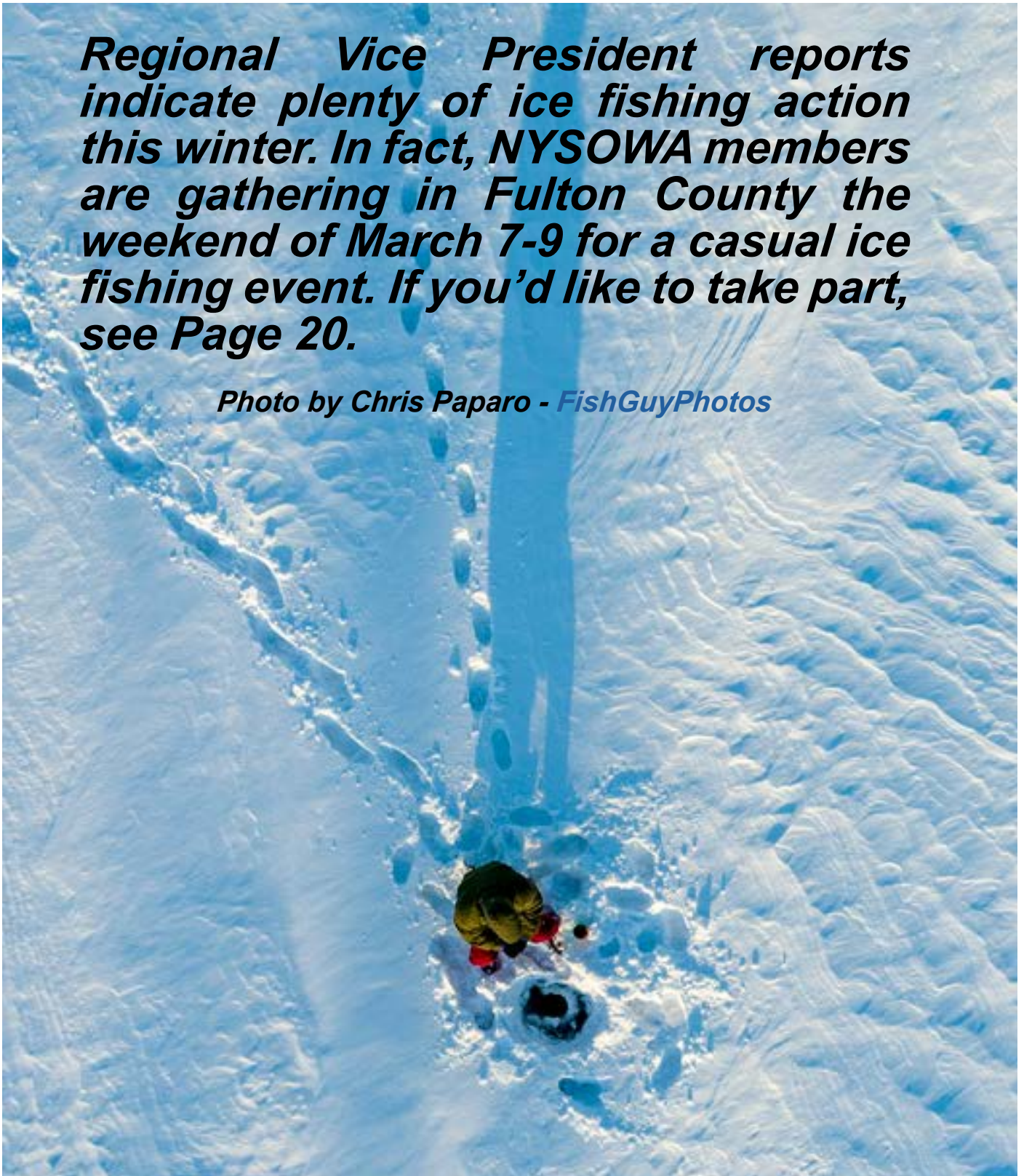
The Official Newsletter of the  
New York State Outdoor Writers Association

Winter 2025

[nysowa.org](http://nysowa.org)

***Regional Vice President reports indicate plenty of ice fishing action this winter. In fact, NYSOWA members are gathering in Fulton County the weekend of March 7-9 for a casual ice fishing event. If you'd like to take part, see Page 20.***

*Photo by Chris Paparo - FishGuyPhotos*



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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](mailto:buck@adkhunter) if interested.**

## Calendar

**May 15-18, 2025  
Spring Conference  
Lewiston, N.Y.**

[Destination Niagara USA](https://www.destinationniagara.com)

**Sept. 4-7, 2025 Fall Safari  
Rap-Shaw Club on Stillwater  
Reservoir, Herkimer County  
<https://www.rapshaw.org>**

Renew your membership here, please do so prior to March 15 to be included in the forthcoming membership directory:  
<https://app.joinit.com/o/nysowa>

# NYSOWA Spring Conference May 15-18, 2025

**Where:** Niagara Crossing Hotel and Spa, 100 Center Street, Lewiston, NY  
Continental breakfast daily 7-10 a.m.

## Tentative Itinerary

### May 15 (Thursday night):

Arrive by 6 p.m. for a welcome mixer at the hotel sponsored by Destination Niagara USA.

### May 16 (Friday morning) activities:

6:30 a.m. Lake Ontario fishing options out of Wilson for up to 4-5 anglers.

4 a.m. Turkey hunting for up to 2 hunters

7 a.m. Shore fishing options in the Niagara Gorge for up to 4 anglers. Only for the hardy.

7 a.m. Lower and Upper Niagara River Fishing Options for up to 15 people.

Some spouse options will also be available and will be offered at the meet and greet in Lewiston when everyone arrives. Some ideas include a tour of Niagara Falls, shopping at Fashion Outlets, and Lewiston shopping.



### Friday afternoon:

12:30 p.m. Lunch at the 3-F Club. Craft Improvement Sessions to include a brief talk and interview opportunity with Ernie Calandrelli who with recently named to the NWTF Turkey Calling Champion Hall of Fame.

Awards in Craft learning session on how to navigate sending in entries with Chris Paparo.

Update on salmon pen rearing projects in Niagara County at Youngstown, Wilson and Olcott.

w

Skeet shooting instruction.

### Friday evening:

5 p.m. Lockport Locks and Erie Canal Tours – Arrive for a boat tour on the Erie Canal, celebrating it's 200th Anniversary in 2025. Dinner to follow along the Erie Canal in Lockport.

**May 17 (Saturday morning) activities:**

4 a.m. Turkey hunting for up to 2 hunters.

6:30 a.m. Lake Ontario fishing options out of Wilson for up to 4 anglers.

7 a.m. Shore fishing options in the Niagara Gorge for up to 4 anglers. Only for the hardy.

7 a.m. Lower and Upper Niagara River Fishing Options for up to 15 people.

Some spouse options will also be available and will be offered at the meet and greet in Lewiston when everyone arrives. Some ideas include a tour of Niagara Falls, shopping at Fashion Outlets, and Lewiston shopping.

**Saturday afternoon:**

Lunch at The Brickyard in Lewiston at 12:30 p.m.

Afternoon activities at 1:30-2 include kayaking, birding, hiking, biking, fishing.

**Saturday Evening:**

6 p.m. Awards banquet will tentatively take place at Niagara Crossing. Sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Start time for dinner may need to be adjusted.

**May 18 (Sunday) – Membership meeting at 7:30 a.m.**

Note: Frank Campbell, Niagara County Outdoor Promotions Director, is in the process of finalizing room details including room rates. They will be roughly \$100 per night. You will be required to make your own room arrangements at this discounted rate for members. Final costs are still being worked on including a nominal registration fee. If you have any questions, give Frank a call at (716) 523-0013.

If you are looking for specific story opportunities not seen here, or you would like to see some expanded, call Frank. This is Niagara Falls USA, home to the best spring salmon fishing in the Great Lakes, some of the best smallmouth bass fishing in the world, outstanding river fishing for trout in small boats, and access to spectacular fishing in the upper river above Niagara Falls, primarily for smallmouth bass. The Niagara River Corridor, internationally recognized as an Important Bird Area, offers great bird watching opportunities. Less than an hour away is the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, flanked by the Tonawanda and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Areas – 20,000 acres of prime public real estate. This is also home to the Erie Canal, celebrating its 200th anniversary of operation in 2025. We will be celebrating everything outdoors in Niagara Falls USA and this will be a great conference to attend – as a first timer or as a wily veteran media professional. It's also a great spot to bring your significant other!

Check out [www.niagarafallsusa.com](http://www.niagarafallsusa.com) for more information.

## **NYSOWA President Debbie Brosen**



Greetings! I have been a member of NYSOWA, and on the board of directors since 2010. I loved this organization and its members right from the start. My husband became a supporting member that same year. I can remember the first safari we attended which was held at Peck's Lake. We really didn't know what to expect but were pleasantly surprised. While everyone was very welcoming, one person in particular, Leo Maloney, immediately made us feel at home with this organization. While NYSOWA is a smaller organization than some we are affiliated with, I believe this has helped in creating the bond we have formed over the years with so many of its members.

As the newly elected President this year, you may have seen me refer to NYSOWA members as family in some of the emails I have sent out. I truly do feel that the members I have come to know are my extended family. I'm sure this would not have been possible if we hadn't attended as many safaris and conferences as we could over the years and spent time together enjoying the outdoors and camaraderie at these events. I strongly urge all NYSOWA members to attend whatever in person events they can. We have seen some great areas of the state doing so and have always had an excellent time. Whether it is sitting around a campfire, hanging out in the "hospitality room", or going on outdoor excursions, they have all been experiences I cherish and will never forget. We have two great events planned this year, the spring conference, which will be held in Niagara Falls from May 15-18, and the fall safari, which will be held September 4-7 at the Rap-Shaw Club on Williams Island in Lowville. Our members work tirelessly to provide the best experience possible at these events.

NYSOWA is an amazing organization, and I am proud to be part of it. As President, it is my goal to increase communication with and among members. The "spotlight initiative", where information on a selected member is shared via email, was created to help us get to know each other better. I have already received great feedback on this and would like to do a short segment on every single member this year. If you have not yet sent me information for a spotlight, please do so by emailing me at [nysowapresident@gmail.com](mailto:nysowapresident@gmail.com)! There may be a member out there who is looking for just the service you provide. We will be offering some Zoom sessions for members only soon so stay tuned for that!

I look forward to getting to know our members and being of service to this great organization!

## Northern Region VP Dan Ladd



### Winter returns

It's been a few years since we've made a big deal about winter in the North Country. For many, it feels good to be doing just that. Where I reside in the Eastern Adirondacks, we're actually still below our average snowfall amount thus far for the winter, but further north, in the parts of the Adirondacks, that is not the case .,

And while there's ice on most of the favored fishing lakes, there's not as much of it as we're used to. Still, it's better than in recent years and has allowed major ice fishing tournaments like those in Tupper Lake, Schroon Lake, Raquette Lake and Great Sacandaga Lake to take place.

There's no doubt, the snow and ice are good for the local economy. Now the question is how long it will last. Yes, things are warming up but keep in mind that in recent years some of our biggest snowstorms in Northern New York have taken place during the month of March.

### Trout season

April 1 is coming soon and that's still the trout season opener for many, especially if you like to fish for brook trout. Two notable items to mention are a new project in the works, mainly in the Western Adirondacks that will involve DEC, Trout Unlimited and other partners replacing culverts in order to expand navigable (for fish) streams beyond their current stretches. The good news is that project officials say this could open up hundreds of miles of trout stream access for anglers and fish alike. Stay tuned on this one.

Next, is the Adirondack brook trout management plan which got going about a year ago at this time. It's expected to be released anytime soon. We'll reflect more on that when the time comes.

### Fall Safari - Rap-Shaw Club

Mark your calendars now for the NYSOWA Fall Safari taking place in the West/Central Adirondacks at the Rap-Shaw Club, which sits on an island on the remote Stillwater Reservoir.

We'll be staying in a series cottages and cabins with all meals prepared, wi-fi and all the comforts of home, with excellent smallmouth bass fishing right out the back door. And, there's more padding and fishing opportunities on the nearby Beaver River impoundments. The dates are Sept. 4-7, right after Labor Day. Meanwhile, visit <https://www.rapshaw.org>



One of several cozy cottages at the Rap-Shaw Club, who will host the NYSOWA Fall Safari.

## West/Central Region VP David Figura

### 'Game on' for ice fishing

Following two unseasonable warm winters, this year has been "game on" for the CNY and WNY ice fishing crowd.

"Last winter ranked as the warmest, and one of the least-snowy on record," reported Steve Featherstone, outdoors writer for The Post-Standard and Syracuse.com. The thermometer hit 70 degrees on Feb. 27 in Syracuse.

Featherstone added, "Temperatures so far this year has been much more winter-like, and the forecast promises a long stretch of sub-freezing weather ideal for ice-making."

Popular CNY destinations this winter with safe ice (4 or more inches) have been parts of Cayuga Lake, Sodus Bay, Oneida Lake, Otisco, Cazenovia, Whitney Point Reservoir and Tully Lake.

Many Western NY inland waterways have likewise seen their share of safe ice and anglers.

"Western New York's inland waters have thick ice coverings, giving good vibes for an extended ice fishing season," according to a early February DEC Lake Erie and Western New York Fishing Hotline post. "Chautauqua Lake has ice of 10 inches plus. The yellow perch bite has been very good lake wide in 6-15 feet of water."

Local bait shops that sell ice fishing tackle and bait (spikes, mousies, minnows) couldn't be happier.

Al Daher, of Mickey's Bait and Tackle in North Syracuse, called this year's winter "a Cinderella Year. Everything lined up perfectly. Not a lot of snow. Cold temperatures."

Meanwhile, ice fishing derbies, a popular fundraiser in years past for various outdoor groups and organizations, have returned in many areas – particularly in the North County, according to a recent story in NY Outdoor News.

However, checking around, it appears many of the big tournaments of the past are no longer being held due to uncertainty about the weather. And those that are, have had difficulty getting sponsors and participation has been down.

The Almost-Annual Crappie Derby at Dorchester Park on the Whitney Point Reservoir, typically scheduled to coincide with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Free Fishing Days on Feb. 15-16, was cancelled in late January.

Whitney Point Sportsman's Association treasurer Tom Decker told said "cost issues, mainly related to insurance, time constraints and additional items needed on the ice" prevented organizers from holding the ice fishing event this year. The contest was last held in 2020.

The Binghamton Press reported the Broome County Parks, Recreation & Youth Services Department said the county offered to "cover the insurance ex-





penses to support the event," but ultimately the organizers decided to cancel due to "lack of ice and sponsorships."

The NYS Winter Classic Fishing Tournament started Jan. 1 and ends Feb. 28. The tournament, run by Tim Thomas of Ontario, features more than \$20,000 in cash and various prizes for seven species of fish and uses the Fish Donkey app to enter fish. (In 2019, I reported the tournament offered \$40,000 in sponsored cash and prizes, not including the general cash payout and Lunker Pool.)

The tournament once again includes all waterways in the state – those that are iced over, open water, streams and rivers. With the Fish

Donkey app, fish are entered via pictures and videos at the time of the catch. Category winners are determined by length.

The awards ceremony, which will include more than \$2,500 in door prizes, is set for March 15 the Batavia Downs Casino Resort.

"In the past, we'd have about 500-600 participants," Thomas said. "This year, only about 250-300."

### **2024-25 Hunting season accident wrapup**

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar recently announced another safe year of hunting seasons, with 2024-25 seasons being the second safest on record.

DEC released its annual report documenting hunting-related shooting incidents (HRSIs) and tree stand/elevated hunting incidents. DEC documented 11 HRSIs in 2024 – one, a self-inflicted fatality in Jefferson County. According to the DEC report:

\*2/3 – Jefferson County. Hunter was found deceased of apparent self-inflicted shotgun gunshot wound while small game hunting with their dog. Age 75. Hunting experience: 50 years. Victim orange: N/A. Violations noted: No.

There were 11 treestand/elevated hunting incidents (EHIs) reported in 2024, with two fatalities.

The two deaths were both treestand-related and occurred in my area:

\*9/18 – Seneca County. Not wearing a harness. Ladder stand. Hunter was found deceased, appearing to have fallen from the top of the stand. No safety equipment used, and the stand was intact. Age 63. Hunting experience: Unknown.

\*11/6 – Cattaraugus County. Wearing a harness but not attached to the tree. Climbing stand. The top portion of the stand broke, causing the hunter to fall approximately 15 feet sustaining a fatal spinal fracture. Age 54. Hunting experience: 38 years. (The man who died was Mark Scanlon, a sergeant with the Erie County Sheriff's Office, who was on a hunting trip in East Otto. He was the brother of Acting Buffalo Mayor Chris Scanlon.)

Read More:

You can view the 2024-25 hunting season reports and stories behind all the



hunting accidents by clicking the links below.

Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents:

<https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/dechrsisummary24.pdf>

Elevated Hunting Incidents:

<https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/dechrsisummary24.pdf>

### **Closure of state's sole pheasant-rearing facility proposed -- again:**

The days of pheasant hunting in New York – a tradition of nearly 100 years – is again in jeopardy.

For the fourth time since 2017 a state legislative bill is being proposed to amend state environmental conservation law – specifically to “prohibit the state’s participation in artificial pheasant propagation.”

Assembly bill A888, drafted by Manhattan Democrat Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal, would close the Reynold’s Game Farm, the state’s sole pheasant-rearing facility in Dryden, just off the Cornell University campus. Rosenthal’s bill is currently before the Assembly’s Environmental Committee.

“This artificial pheasant propagation program provides no conservational purpose, and it causes unjustifiable suffering and death to animals,” according to the bill’s wording. “These reared birds are unnaturally easy targets for hunters, making this hunting activity ethically troublesome. If not shot, the birds will die from exposure to severe weather conditions, predators or starvation.”

Meanwhile, the DEC website notes that “pheasant hunting is one the most popular small game hunting activities in New York and a great way to get young hunters into the sport. DEC’s Small Game Hunter Survey indicates that about 23,000 hunters harvest over 50,000 pheasants statewide, while spending almost 106,000 days afield annually.

The DEC also promotes an annual Youth Pheasant weekend, held on the last full weekend prior to the start of the regular fall pheasant hunting season in each area of upstate New York.

Today, the wild pheasant population in New York is at an all-time low due to habitat loss and land use changes. “Without propagation and release programs by DEC and private entities, pheasant hunting opportunities would not exist in New York State,” according to DEC.

Although many New York State residents grew up seeing pheasants in local fields and woods, the bird is not native to this state – or even this country. They’re originally from Asia.

The birds, commonly called “ring-necked pheasants” were introduced into the U.S. in 1881 when Judge Owen Nickerson Denny, the U.S. consul to China, shipped 30 Chinese ring-necks (26 survived the trip) to his home in the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

“Eleven years later, Oregon opened a 75-day season and hunters bagged 50,000 pheasants,” according to the Pheasants Forever website. The birds have since been released in 40 of the 50 states, many in which they’re naturally reproducing. The ring-necked pheasant is currently the state bird of South Dakota.

The bird was established in New York following a release in 1903 on the Wadsworth estate near Geneseo. The birds’ population spread fast, particularly with the help of continuous stocking efforts.

“The state pheasant rearing program, which began in 1908 and had a \$1.4 million budget in 2024, provides 65,000 birds a year to foster interest in field sports among children and other novice hunters.”

The program is funded by a federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition and fees collected by the state for hunting licenses as part of its conservation fund,” DEC said.

In addition to the birds raised at Reynolds and released on publicly accessible lands, the DEC also adds to the numbers of birds released with its Cooperative Day-Old Pheasant Chick Program. The DEC provides young pheasant chicks to approved program participants ((Rod and Gun Clubs, Pheasants Forever chapters, etc.) free of charge. Participants raise the pheasants on their property and ultimately release the adult birds on lands open to public hunting.

Avian flu likely killed dozens of geese on CNY waterways: Cornell University and federal researchers are looking into reports and testing carcasses of dozens of geese found late last month on local waterways – including Onondaga and Otisco Lakes and the nearby Seneca River.

“We’re unfortunately seeing a lot of incidents with geese, both Canada and snow geese on local lakes,” including Onondaga Lake, said Krysten Schuler, co-director on Cornell University’s Wildlife Health Lab in an article published on Syracuse.com.

DEC sent 12 geese carcasses collected from Otisco Lake (after some 50 dead birds were spotted on the waterway) to Schuler’s lab for testing, reported writer Steve Featherstone. Initial test results are “presumptive positive for HPAI,” referring to highly pathogenic avian flu, commonly known as avian or bird flu,” he said.

The disease is also suspected as the cause behind scores of dead waterfowl on Seneca Lake, he added. U.S. Department of Agriculture National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Iowa is testing a sampling of those carcasses.

Otisco Lake is a local source of drinking water, supplying nearly 40 million gallons per day to residents and businesses in five counties. Officials, however, say multiple processes treat the water and that it’s safe to drink.

“The current HPAI outbreak was first reported in February 2022 and has affected 153 million birds in every state and Puerto Rico. The number represents more than 1,500 poultry flocks, both backyard and commercial.

Typically, the virus burns out in a year. “We were actually hopeful for this summer, at least for wild birds, because we weren’t seeing any continued transmission and hoped that maybe the virus had run its course,” Schuler said. “But unfortunately, that was not the case,”

In Onondaga County alone, the virus this past year was detected in a variety of wild species including American crow, mallard duck, bald eagle, red-tailed hawk and Canada goose, according to USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Recently, a commercial duck farm in Suffolk County euthanized 101,000 birds, Featherstone said. In 2023, DEC reported more than 6,000 pheasants being raised at the Reynold’s Pheasant farm had to be euthanized due to an outbreak of HPAI there.

## **Lower Niagara River fishing**

The dead of winter is a great time to fish the Lower Niagara River. The river gets some ice from time to time, but doesn't freeze over, allowing anglers to fish from boats and often from shore for steelhead, lake trout, brown trout and wall-eye.

Back in 2017, I was in the area attending the Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo at the Niagara Convention Center. NYSOWA member Bill Hilts Jr., then working for the Niagara Tourism and Convention Group, set me up for outing on the river with Capt. Jeff Draper of Draper Sportsfishing to fish for steelhead and lake trout.

Once on the water, we concentrated on fishing Devil's Hole, about three miles downstream from the falls. We drifted and jigged, using emerald shiners as bait. I ended up catching my biggest steelhead to date, a 14.4 pounder.

According to a recent Niagara Falls USA fishing report, Capt. Matt Yablonsky of Wet Net Sportfishing noted "winter steelhead fishing on the Niagara River doesn't come without challenges. However, despite the cold conditions, boat fishing has been good for a mix of steelhead, walleye, brown trout, and lake trout. There are a lot of fish in the river system this year."

The fishing report added that the shoreline anglers "are catching lake trout by imitating natural forage such as emerald shiners. Rainbow/steelhead are being caught on beads. Colors may vary due to water clarity, but chartreuse and yellow/orange seem to be the best go-to colors." Others are having success casting white bucktail jigs.

## **Snowmobiling**

This year's winter weather has also been a much-needed boost for the state's snowmobilers.

"We're certainly having a good season so far," said Rollie Scroger, executive director of the New York State Snowmobile Association.

The State Snowmobile Trail System includes more than 10,500 miles of snowmobile corridor trails in New York stretching from one end of the State to the other, crossing both public and private land along the way.

The trail system is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and is substantially maintained by snowmobile clubs and funded, in part, by a portion of snowmobile registration fees. Many of these clubs are members of the New York State Snowmobile Association (NYSSA).

Each spring, the state Parks Department puts out a comprehensive report on the preceding winter season. The report is chock full of facts and statistics that outdoor writers can reference for stories. See last year's report: <https://parks.ny.gov/documents/recreation/snowmobiles/20223024SnowmobileSeasonReport.pdf>

The winter of 2023-24 saw a 10-year low in snowmobile registrations, with 79,727.

There were also 35 accidents with eight fatalities.

This year, with all the snow, registrations are up over 90,000, Scroger said.

Last year there were a total of 35 snowmobile accidents reported across the state, with eight fatalities. As of mid-February this year, there have been five

fatal snowmobile accidents, Scroger said.

"One is too many," he said, stressing his association preaches safe, responsible riding practices.

For more on safe snowmobile riding: <https://parks.ny.gov/newsroom/press-releases/release.aspx?r=2029>

### **DEC Summer Camp sponsorships:**

Each year the NYSOWA Scholarship Committee sponsors two deserving kids ages, 11-17, to attend week-long DEC-sponsored summer camps.

Online registration for the camps, which must be done by attendees' parents or guardians, is set for 1 p.m. March 23. They sign the kid up and we cover the costs.

DEC operates four residential camps for kids: Camp Colby in Saranac Lake (Franklin County); Camp DeBruce in Livingston Manor (Sullivan County); Camp Rushford in Caneadea (Alleghany County) and Camp Park Forest in Warrensburg (Warren County).

The camps combine environmental education, hunter education programs, and outdoor recreation into a fun adventure. Counselors use a hands-on approach to teach about the environment. Camps run Sunday afternoon through Friday afternoon.

I'm chairman of the Scholarship Committee and handle the awarding of the camp scholarships. Know a deserving kid that you'd like to recommend? Contact me at [davidjfigura@gmail.com](mailto:davidjfigura@gmail.com) or at 315-470-6066.

For more, see <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/summer-camps>

## **NYSOWA Membership News**

### **Dues Renewal 2025**

NYSOWA members are encouraged 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. A new membership directory is in the works. **To be included in this please renew your membership by March 15**

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



## Southeast Region VP Tom Schlichter

For those of us in the southeast sector of New York who have been beefing about a lack of cold and freezing temperatures, the winter of 2025 has been a toss-back to decades past. While it didn't slam us early on, since the New Year began we've had several days with temps in the 'teens, some roaring winds and, depending on where exactly you live, a mix of light, medium and possibly heavy snowfall.

I'll admit I'm one of those who like being outside in generally cold conditions, with snow on the ground and a dropping

barometer indicating more to come as I climb into my tree stand. I'm also one for ice-fishing and pond hockey, both of which were, for a few days at least, local options but in the lower Hudson Valley and on the east end of Long Island. In fact, on Long Island's North Fork, where I reside, this winter saw the first local ice fishing in five years. It only lasted a couple of days, but some anglers I know scored up to two-dozen panfish - a mix of sunnies, perch and crappies - on the day or two they were able to get out. The timing wasn't right for me to personally partake of the hard-water action, but it certainly was good to learn a few old-timers had their tip-ups and jigging rods rigged and ready to go on a moment's notice.

### Deer season

Deer season was once again solid this past winter and fall in our region and, although I haven't seen the 2024/2025 harvest stats as yet, DEC has reported it to be the second safest season on record.

According to a DEC press release, DEC "documented 11 HRSIs ("Hunting Related Shooting Incidents) in 2024, including four two-party firearm incidents and seven self-inflicted incidents. Unfortunately, one of the incidents was a self-inflicted fatality. Two incidents involved individuals who were not legally hunting. Hunting Safety Statistics are available on DEC's website.

11 elevated hunting incidents (EHIs) were also reported, with two being fatal. According to DEC, neither of the hunters involved in the fatal incidents were wearing harnesses that were attached to the tree.

DEC states that treestand safety is integrated into its hunter education course as these incidents are the leading cause of hunting-related injuries. DEC notes that, If used correctly, a full body harness and a 'lifeline' keep hunters connected from the time they leave the ground to the moment they get back down."

### Stripers

Of regulatory note in our region, last December saw the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council (ASMFC) vote in favor of leaving marine striped bass limits unchanged from 2024. Many anglers were concerned that we might see a season shutdown due to continued poor recruitment in Chesapeake Bay, the primary

spawning stock that migrates up and down the coast. Other anglers would have welcomed a reduction or shut-down as a conservation measurement.

According to the 2024 stock assessment update, six of the last seven striped bass year-classes since 2015 have been below average with only the 2018 year-class rated as above average. The commission will obviously be watching closely the next survey results, and a poor showing could force their hand at that point. In the meantime, anglers fishing in marine waters remain limited to keeping one striped bass per day measuring between 28 and 31 inches in length – this includes anglers fishing from open and charter vessels. Furthermore, all NYS anglers targeting striped bass in marine waters with bait must use circle hooks. This applies to those fishing from shore as well as boats. Circle hooks are not required on lures.



### **Boat speed**

In another interesting turnabout, the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recently withdrew a proposed rule that would have set speed limits for vessels measuring between 35 and 65 feet LOA to reduce the likelihood of collisions with endangered North Atlantic right whales (vessels over 65 feet have been subject to similar restrictions since 2008).

According to the Federal Register, the proposal was withdrawn “in light of numerous and ongoing requests from the public for further opportunity to review and engage with the Agency on the proposal.”

NMFS stated that over 90,000 public comments on the proposed rule were received reflecting views on all sides of the issue, leaving not enough time to finalize the regulation under the then current administration due to the scope and volume of the comments.

So, the sum of all this is that existing North Atlantic right whale speed regulations remain in effect. NMFS added that if it decides it is appropriate to issue regulations on this topic in the future, it will do so via a new rulemaking.

## NYSOWA Membership News

# Catskill fly-fishing legend Ed Van Put passes away at 88

DEC career, conservation, public access all part of Van Put's legacy

NY Outdoor News, Jan. 10, 2025

Livingston Manor, N.Y. — Renowned fly-fisherman and outdoorsman Ed Van Put, of Livingston Manor, passed away Dec. 14 at age 88. Van Put's status as an angler and conservationist extends beyond the streams of the Catskills where he regularly plied his craft with a fly-rod.

According to his obituary, Edward George "Ed" Van Put was born in Paterson in northern New Jersey in 1936 where he grew up learning to hunt and fish. Following high school graduation, he served in the U.S. Army as a medic.

Drawn to the Catskill region, he settled in Livingston Manor in 1965 and worked as a member of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation fisheries staff for four decades.

Part of Van Put's legacy is the fact that he secured more than 54 miles of Public Fishing Rights access in the region, a program that still exists today and establishes a unique land-owner/angler relationship resulting in stream management, stocking and angling access along privately owned stream banks.

Van Put also loaned his expertise to establishing special regulation fishing areas and was awarded the DEC's highest honor, the Ernest F. Trad Award. He became known as "the Admiral of the Delaware," his obituary said, as he spent countless hours fishing, most often using his favored trout fly, the Adams.

Van Put was an original instructor at the Wulff School of Fly Fishing, where he introduced others to fly-fishing, and also enjoyed the camaraderie of the Catskill Fly Tyers Guild, hoping to inspire others to carry on the traditions of the Catskill style.

As a writer, researcher and historian, his work appeared in numerous publications and he authored five books: *The Beaverkill: The History of a River and Its People* (two editions); *Trout Fishing in the Catskills*; *The Remarkable Life of James Beecher*; and the forthcoming *A Fly-fisher's Revelations*, which is to be published this spring.



(l-r) Ed Van Put, Judy O'Brien Van Put and NYON Contributing Writer Rich Redman share a moment at a 2022 NYS Outdoor Writers Association meeting in Roscoe.  
Photo by Dan Ladd

He was a member of the NYS Outdoor Writers Association.

Van Put was inducted both into the Catskill Fly Fishing Center Hall of Fame and the NYS Outdoorsman Hall of Fame.

"Through his tireless dedication working with the NYSDEC, Ed helped shape not only the way we access our local rivers, but the spirit of our organization," a statement on the Catskill Fly Fishing Center and Museum's Facebook page said. "His contributions have left an indelible mark that will continue to guide and inspire us for generations to come."

He received many honors and accolades throughout his life, including the Sullivan County Environmentalist of the Year, the Sullivan County Historical Society's History Preserver Award; Trout Unlimited's Professional Communications Award; the Delaware Company President's Award; the Joan Wulff Award for Excellence in Fly Fishing; and Trout Unlimited's Catskill Conservation Award.

Amongst many family members and friends, Van Put is survived by Judy O'Brien Van Put, his wife of 43 years.

# Debbie Brosen Painting to be Feature in Global Publication

Congratulations to NYSOWA President, Debbie Brosen, of Feather Art Studio! Debbie has won numerous awards for her art in various juried competitions open to artists on an international level. Her most recent award came from Artistonish Magazine, who has accepted Debbie's painting titled "Restful Glance" into their 54th edition of the magazine. This magazine has a readership of over 100,000 people and is distributed both in print and digitally to over 150 countries. This is quite a huge accomplishment, since artists from all over the world submit to this competition. Restful Glance has won 9 international awards to date and was also included in the San Fernando Valley Arts and Cultural Center's exhibit last year.

Debbie received the following letter:

We are delighted to announce that after a meticulous jury process, your outstanding artwork has been selected for inclusion in the 54th issue of Artistonish Magazine!

Congratulations! This recognition is a testament to your talent and the unique vision you bring to the world of contemporary art.

## Unlocking Unparalleled Opportunities

Your selection means your work will now reach a vast and engaged audience, bringing you a host of benefits designed to elevate your artistic career:

### Global Visibility:

Your artwork will be featured in both the online and print versions of Artistonish magazine, reaching our extensive network of 100,000+ readers, mainly from the United States, Canada, Europe, China, South Korea, and Japan. Additionally, your art will be accessible to tens of thousands of art lovers, collectors, and experts across more than 150 countries.

### Permanent Online Link:

Your artwork will have a lifelong digital presence, enhancing your portfolio and boosting your search engine visibility. This permanent online link ensures that collectors and galleries can easily find and appreciate your work anytime they view this issue of Artistonish magazine.

<https://www.artistonish.com/p/home.html>





## Introducing Member Spotlights

This winter NYSOWA president Debbie Brosen began a “spotlight” initiative to share information about our members with our members. The goal to spotlight every member. Here’s a look at who we’ve “spotlighted” so far.

Read the spotlights at [www.NYSOWA.org](http://www.NYSOWA.org)



Angela Colangelo



Scott Faulkner of the  
NYS Outdoorsman Hall of Fame



Frank Campbell - Destination Niagara



Bill Hiltz Jr. NYSOWA Board Member

## NYSOWA Seeks Nominations for 2025 Pass It On Award

The New York State Outdoor Writers Association reminds members that nominations are now open for the 2025 Pass It On Award. Initiated by Bass Pro Shops, this annual award honors the person who has done the most to “pass on” our outdoor heritage. This award is given to Active Members of NYSOWA. The writer or media person is honored with a plaque at the Annual Conference and his or her name is recorded in the Annual Directory along with previous winners. Both Bass Pro Shops and NYSOWA have recognized the fact that it is vital to pass on our outdoor heritage, including understanding the role of conservation and promoting an interest in our outdoor sports. This can be done in several ways such as creating awareness through writing, helping organizations that promote these activities, or being directly involved in mentoring and educating.

Nominees must be Active Members of NYSOWA. Any member of NYSOWA may nominate a person they consider deserving of this award by giving a written description of the activities or accomplishments that this person has performed to pass on the heritage of outdoor sports and conservation.

Nominations should be sent to Bill Hilts, Jr. at 6409 Sherman Drive, Lockport, NY 14094 or by e-mail to [billhiltsjr@gmail.com](mailto:billhiltsjr@gmail.com). **Deadline for nominations is April 1, 2025.** Take note of the early deadline due to the shift of the annual conference. The winner will be honored at the NYSOWA Spring Conference in Lewiston/Niagara County May 15-18, 2025.

## NYSOWA Opens Nominations for New York M. Paul Keesler Outdoor Citizen Award

The 2025 NYSOWA M. Paul Keesler New York Outdoor Citizen Award will be presented to an individual or organization that has effectively raised the public’s awareness of outdoor recreational opportunities and conservation issues in New York State. The award recipient will be officially announced at the 2025 annual conference of the New York State Outdoor Writers Association (NYSOWA) in Lewiston May 15-18, 2025.

The award was created to honor worthy individuals and organizations, at the same time perpetuating the name of one of NYSOWA’s dearest members. The late M. Paul Keesler spent nearly five decades promoting and conserving the outdoor wonders and recreational opportunities within New York State. Beginning with outdoor columns for the Utica Observer Dispatch and progressing to the popular New York Sportsman magazine, Keesler, and his magazine’s contributors, enlightened, and educated readers statewide and beyond to the wild outdoor treasures of the Empire State. Keesler also wrote books on canoe fishing in New York waterways, including on his beloved West Canada Creek and Mohawk Valley.

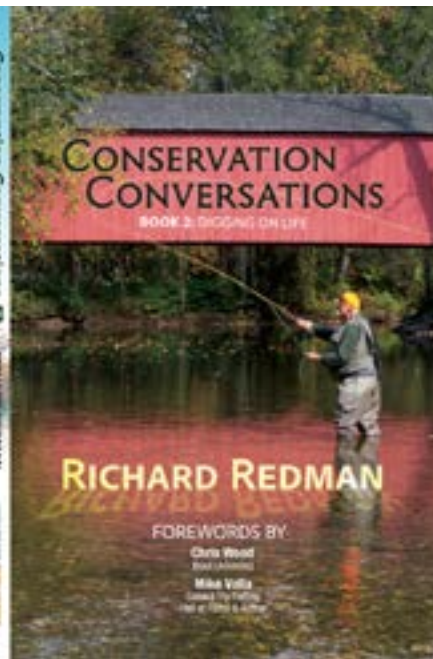
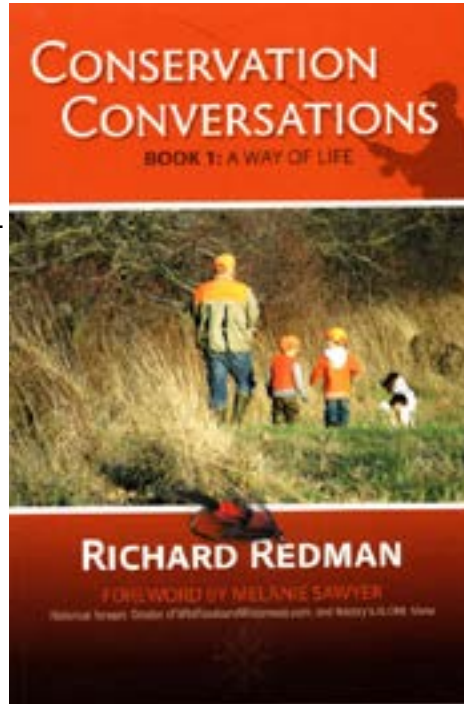
Anyone may submit a nomination of 350 words or less and have it endorsed by an active member of NYSOWA. You can nominate a member of NYSOWA (active or supporting) or a member/group outside the organization. To review award criterion and the nominating process, visit [www.nysowa.org](http://www.nysowa.org). To learn of a NYSOWA member in a nominator’s area who might endorse such a nomination, contact Bill Hilts, Jr. at (716) 622-6168, or Mike Joyner (607) 753-8420 or check the website [www.nysowa.org](http://www.nysowa.org).

**Nominations must be received by April 1, 2025.** The NYSOWA Conference will again be held in the spring in 2025. Get your nominations submitted early.

Send nominations to Bill Hilts, Jr., 6409 Sherman Drive, Lockport, NY 14094, or email at o [billhiltsjr@gmail.com](mailto:billhiltsjr@gmail.com)

# Rich Redman Releases Two Books

**Conservation Conversations, Book 1: A Way of Life** by Rich Redman is a collection of essays, articles and stories involving the outdoors, sure to interest those with a love of fishing, hunting, agriculture, rivers, forest management and ecology. Rich's deep knowledge of fly fishing history and techniques, hunting strategies and land management are reflected in these essays, as well as his zeal for living each day to its fullest.



**Conservation Conversations Book 2: Digging on Life** includes a Foreword by Chris Wood, President and Chief Executive Officer, Trout Unlimited, and a second Foreword by Mike Valla, member of the Catskill Fly Fishing Hall of fame and a prolific author of fly-fishing books.

Rich retired after 27 years with the USDA Soil Conservation Service, and opened his own consulting business, working with landowners on grazing, forest, agriculture and wildlife management. All told, he has spent 40 years working with private

landowners who were trying to improve their land, economics and wildlife populations. They all shared one thing in common, a love of the land. Conservation management was the goal.

For relaxation and peace of mind, Rich goes fly fishing in Adirondack, Catskill, Pennsylvania and Colorado mountain streams. In New York, a great wildlife and fishing state, he hunts ruffed grouse, pheasant and whitetail deer, and also fishes for Atlantic salmon and steelhead. On his own homestead he manages his forestland for firewood and timber. Sitting by the heat of a woodstove on a cold mountain morning with a hot black coffee in hand, or by a streamside observing and listening to nature's wonders with a book in hand, readers will surely dwell on these essays, and reflect on their meaning, substance and value to life.

So, sit back, relax, and read on! The book is available through Amazon books, or you can receive a signed copy by emailing [richredmanrangeric@gmail.com](mailto:richredmanrangeric@gmail.com), with Book in the subject line.

First Annual

# **NYSOWA Ice Fishing Weekend**

## **Fulton County, NY**

### **March 7-9**

Join us for a casual weekend of ice fishing in Hamilton and Fulton counties. Open to experienced and new ice anglers alike. Basically, the event will be fish-camp style as we'll split the cost of accommodations and figure out meals once we know who is coming.

Interested? Reach out to Dan Ladd: [buck@ad-khunter.com](mailto:buck@ad-khunter.com)





# 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?

Visit us online at [OutdoorNews.com/Foundation-Home](https://OutdoorNews.com/Foundation-Home) or snap the QR code!



## Meet the New York Outdoor News Advertising Sales Team



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**Jerrod Vila**  
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Contact us to start making the most of your marketing dollars!



[www.OutdoorNews.com/Advertise](http://www.OutdoorNews.com/Advertise)



<https://www.outdoornews.com/radio/>



# NYSOGA

New York State Outdoor Guides Association

**NYSOGA Winter Rendezvous Feb. 27 – March 2nd, 2025**

**White Eagle Conference Center, Hamilton, NY**

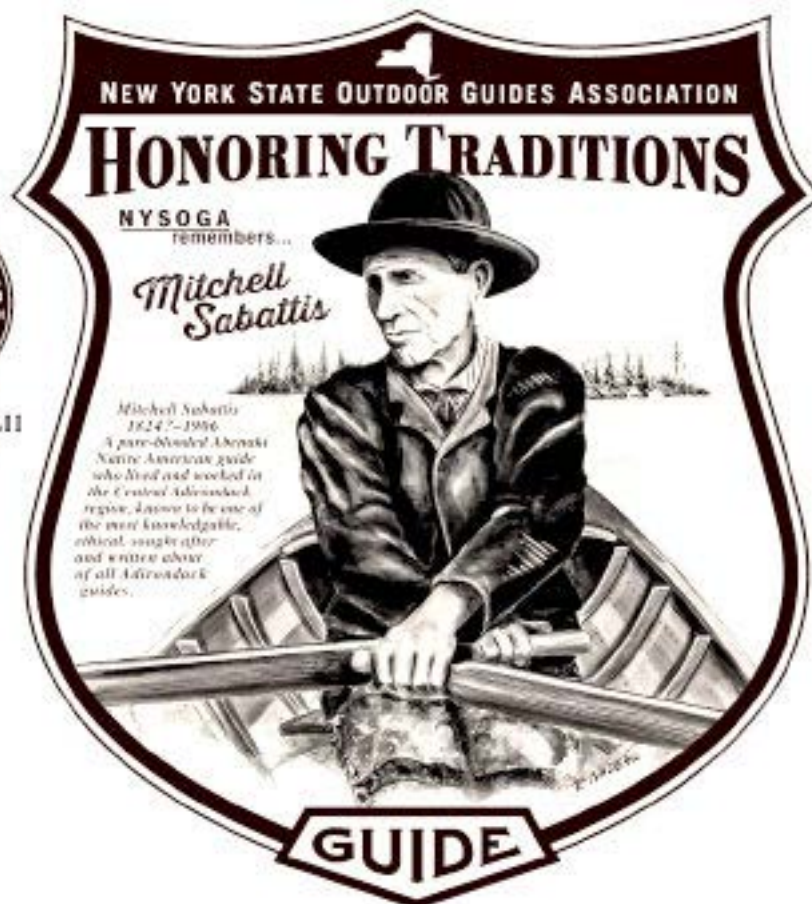
**“Remembering Our Heritage – Leaders of the Past”**

**Honoring Traditions: Voices from the Past –**

**Mitchell Sabattis**



**RENDEZVOUS XLII**  
*Hamilton New York*



[NYSOGA.org](http://NYSOGA.org)

**2025 Chautauque County Visitors Bureau - Outdoor Event Planning Calendar-12/14/2025 FINAL2**

Send changes to [dbarus35@yahoo.com](mailto:dbarus35@yahoo.com)

1	Feb. 1-2	Manly Expo 2025, Chautauque Harbor Hotel, Colton, NY, Kalia Fitness 585-287-7270, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/manlyexpo2025/">https://www.facebook.com/manlyexpo2025/</a>
2	Feb. 13-16	Niagara Outdoor Expo 2025, Niagara Falls, NY, 716-278-2788, <a href="https://www.niagaraexpo.com/">https://www.niagaraexpo.com/</a>
3	Mar. 7-9	WNY Sport, Travel & Outdoor Expo 2025, 814-790-5875, <a href="https://www.wnyoutdoorsexpo.com/">https://www.wnyoutdoorsexpo.com/</a>
4	Apr 1	NYS Inland Trout Opening Day
5	Apr 26-27	NYS Youth Turkey Hunt Weekend 2025 (1 bearded bird allowed)
6	Apr 24-26	Outdoor Writers of Ohio (OWO) Annual Conference 2025 (Deep Flory Post Office, OH)
7	May 1-31	NYS Spring Turkey Season (2 bearded birds/season, 1/day)
8	May 1-Mar 15	NYS Walleye Season, L. Erie: 1P min, 6/day, Inland lakes: 1P min, 5/day.
9	May 3	1-Day Perch Derby, L. Erie, \$40 entry, Southtown Walleye, Paul Sanchez, 716-228-6229
10	May 15-18	POWA Annual Conference 2025 (Fair, PA), 570-886-1808
11	May 15-18	NYSOWA Annual Conf. 2025 (Niagara Falls, NY), Visit <a href="https://nysowa.org">https://nysowa.org</a> .
12	Fr-Sat Jun 6-8	WNY Walleye Classic / Dunkirk Walleye Festival 2025, \$500 entry, Josh Larson, 716-480-4226; <a href="https://www.wnyoutdoorsexpo.com/wny-walleye-classic">https://www.wnyoutdoorsexpo.com/wny-walleye-classic</a>
13	Jun 7-15	41st Annual 9-Day Southtown Walleye Tournament, \$100 entry, \$100K prizes, Jim Sanchez, 716-766-5377; <a href="https://www.southtownwalleye.com/">https://www.southtownwalleye.com/</a>
14	Jun 15-Nov 30	NYS Black Bass Season, L. Erie & Inland Lakes: 12" min, 3/day
15	New Jun 21-27	NY Manly, Chautauque Lake Shoreline, Region 3, Chrysler Challenge, 585-287-7578
16	Fri, Jun 27	WNY Heroes Day (Dunkirk), Contact Jim Sleet, 716-481-9246; <a href="https://www.wnyheroesday.com/">https://www.wnyheroesday.com/</a>
17	Jun 28-Aug 18	NY Walleye Derby 2025, registration deadline Jun. 27, Contact Jim Sleet, 716-481-5393, <a href="http://www.nywalleyederby.com">www.nywalleyederby.com</a>
18	Tue	CHAUTAUQUE Outdoor Media 1098-CAMPs, Dave Benz, 716-287-4881
19	Sat-Sun Jul 2-3	Walleye Open in Dunkirk, LAUREN FORTNA - new location, \$400 entry, 3-4hr day 2-days, Captains Mtg on Jul 11, more info: 716-288-9871.
20	Thu-Sat Jul 17-20	Sunset Bay Walleye Shoot-Out 2025, \$500 entry, \$500K prizes, 6-fish bag/day - 1-day major contest, Don Rappert, 716-425-4137, <a href="http://www.walleyeshootout.com">www.walleyeshootout.com</a>
21	New Sat-Sun Jul 26-27	NYS Archery Shooters Association (NSA) Federation Championship, Bear Lake and 8 Gun Infr. Rudy Ahrens, 716-397-8717
22	Fri-Sat, Aug 1-2	20th Annual Northern Chautauque Conservation Club Walleye Tourney - Dunkirk Harbor, 3 fish bag/day - 8 days; Contact Ben Glass, 716-640-2776
23	Fri Aug 3	VIP Day 2025 (Dunkirk), ELEGANT / OCVO event, Contact ELEGANT President Capt. Jim Sleet at 716-481-9246. Starts/Fr. Aug. 4 evening.
24	Thu-Fri Aug 7-8	Cabela's National Walleye Tour event, Dunkirk Harbor. Professional angler TV event. Weigh-in open to the public.
25	Fri-Sat Aug 15-16	Innovative Outdoors Walleye Challenge (Dunkirk), \$200 entry, Jim Sleet, 716-481-9246; <a href="https://www.innovativeoutdoors.com/">https://www.innovativeoutdoors.com/</a>
26	Fri-Sat Aug 22-23	WNY Walleye Assoc., Lake Erie Walleye Tournament; \$200 entry, Fish Derby format, Rick Mault, 716-648-6219 or Ron Macintosh, 716-645-6865.
27	New Sep 13	NY Manly, Chautauque Lake Big Buller Tourney, Dangling Day, No FPS, 585-287-7578
28	Sat New Sep 13	WNY Walleye Assoc., 1st Responders/Volunteers Day of Fishing, Lake Erie; Rick Mault, 716-648-6219 or Steve Hazek, 716-223-0229.
29	Sep 19-21	NYS Special Early Firearm Antlerless Deer Season 2024 (specific WMHC.)
30	Sep 20	1-Day Walleye Derby, L. Erie, \$65 entry, Southtown Walleye, Paul Sanchez, 716-228-6229
31	Sep 21-25	ACI CW Annual Conference 2025 (Fox Chase, WI)
32	Oct 1-NOV 14	NYS Big Game Early Archery Season 2025 (southern zone)
33	Tue	CHAUTAUQUE Outdoor Media 1098-CAMP, Dave Benz, 716-287-4881
34	Oct 11-13	NYS Youth Big Game Hunting Weekend 2025 (Columbo Day)
35	Dark Sat	NYSOWA Fall Safari 2025, possibly Columbia-Greene County area
36	Nov. 1-14	NYS Big Game Crossbow Season 2025 (Southern Zone)
37	Nov 15-Dec 7	NYS Regular Firearm Big Game Season 2025 (Southern Zone)
38	Dec 1-Jan 14	NYS Winter Black Bass Season: 1. Fri: 2P min, 1/day, Inland lakes: Catch/Release only, Artificial Lures Only
39	Dec 8-16	NYS Late Archery, Muzzleloader Big Game 2025 (Southern Zone)
40	Dec. 28-Jan 1	NYS Holiday Deer Season for 2024-25

2025	
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- DEFINITIONS:**
- ACVO: Association of Outdoor Conservation Volunteers
  - CCVO: Northern Chautauque County Conservation Club
  - NYSDSP: NY State Department of Environmental Conservation
  - OWO: Outdoor Writers Association of America
  - OWO: Outdoor Writers of Ohio
  - POWA: Professional Outdoor Media of America
  - POWA: Professional Outdoor Media of America

NYS Fish Hunt Season Event  
Chautauque County Walleye Tourney



## BoatUS Magazine Wins 12 BWI Awards for Writing, Photography and Video Production Excellence



SPRINGFIELD, Va., – Boating Writers International (BWI), the professional association for writers, editors, publishers, bloggers, photographers and videographers in the recreational boating and fishing industries, bestowed 12 awards on BoatUS Magazine staff and contributors during a presentation

recently held at the group's recent annual meeting at the 2025 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show.

BoatUS Magazine articles and video earned three first-, two second-, two third-place and five merit awards across nine of the 16 award categories. This was the greatest number of BWI awards the national boating publication has ever won in a single year and the greatest number of top-three finishes.

“The sheer number of awards bestowed by our esteemed peers speaks volumes to the high-quality, engaging content we deliver to our more than 700,000 members. Our editorial, photo and video teams worked very hard to achieve this level of recognition,” Said BoatUS Magazine Publisher Elio Betty.

Said BoatUS Magazine Editorial Director Bernadette Bernon, “Congratulations to each and every one of our talented staff and contributors for being singled out for excellence. I thank them for bringing their passion and creativity to their work, and for making our magazine one of the best in the business.”

Recipients were awarded a plaque noting their “excellence in creating compelling stories about the boating lifestyle through entertaining, educational and inspiring journalism” as well as cash prizes.

For list of the winners and links to the articles, visit: <https://www.boatus.com/newsroom/release/boatus-magazine-wins-12-bwi-awards-for-writin>

# NSSF Launches Faces of Firearms Safety Outreach

WASHINGTON, D.C. – NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, launched its **Faces of Firearms™** safety outreach program with a **commercial** on NBC's Meet The Press in the Washington, D.C. region. Faces of Firearms is a national, precision-targeted digital outreach campaign demonstrating that today's gun owners, who are from all walks of life, and the firearm industry are united in true firearm safety. This effort is part of NSSF's **Real Solutions. Safer Communities.®** firearm safety campaign that includes longstanding and nationally-recognized safety initiatives including:



- **Project ChildSafe®**
- **Don't Lie for the Other Guy™\***
- **FixNICS®**
- **Operation Secure Store®\*\***
- **Suicide Prevention™**

\*partner program with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

\*\*partner program with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Department of Veterans Affairs

"This campaign challenges the stereotypes often portrayed by those who oppose lawful firearm ownership to show America who gun owners really are," said Joe Bartozzi, President and CEO of NSSF. "Today's gun owners are representative of America because they come from every part of American society. We don't all look the same or talk the same, but we share the very important ideas that safe and lawful firearm ownership is our right. We share the responsibility for true firearm safety which is embodied in our Real Solutions programs. This outreach aims to spread the firearm safety message and highlights the growing diversity of today's gun owner who is invested in safety."

Gun owners have been often depicted as long-outdated stereotypes to paint gun owners and the firearm industry as detached, uncaring and disinterested in true firearm safety. **Faces of Firearms™** is a project celebrating the diversity of gun owners and their unity in advancing safe, responsible firearm ownership. Some of the featured gun owners are domestic violence survivors, Stop Asian Hate advocates, Olympians, and Purple Heart recipients. Some live in big cities, some identify as gay, some utilize mobility devices, and some work in white-collar jobs. Many of the featured gun owners describe themselves as parents or grandparents, brothers or sisters, sons or daughters, and neighbors or friends – a reminder that our similarities are just as worth celebrating as our differences.

What unites tens of millions of gun owners, though, is their desire to protect themselves and their families through firearm ownership. This program shows that being safe transcends race, gender, religion, income, and any other facet of individual identity.

NSSF Press Releases: <https://www.nssf.org/category/press-releases-2/>

## Media Getting A Free Ride at SHOT Show (The Outdoor Wire):

<https://www.theoutdoorwire.com/features/3350bef4-19d6-4b8c-ac93-b0cec9fo76be>

# Otis Technology Announces Sales, Marketing & Operations Promotions

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Otis Technology is proud to announce several key promotions and new hires within the sales, marketing and operations team. These promotions are not only well deserved but fulfill our strategic goals for 2025 and beyond.



On the Sales & Marketing Team, **Kenda Campbell** has been promoted to Vice President of Commercial Sales. Kenda has eight years of tenure at Otis Technology and will continue to lead the commercial sales team as they continue their positive sales growth trajectory.

Otis also congratulates **Heather Pleskach** on her new role as Vice President of Marketing. She has been on the Otis team for 16 years and will continue to drive marketing and new product strategy for the organization.

In Otis' commitment to innovation, Otis Technology welcomes **Samantha Harter** as its New Product Manager. Sam brings a wealth of firearms knowledge which will be vital in her role at Otis.

Over his 4-year tenure, **Jared Sturtevant** has been instrumental in driving brand awareness efforts through brand influencers, social media, paid media and video content. In his new role as Brand Marketing Manager, Jared will also be responsible for leading Otis Technology's public relations efforts.

On the Operations Team, **Sean Fox** was promoted to Production Supervisor. Sean previously held the role as Area Specialist, leading the assembly team in their production goals while ensuring operational quality, processes and policies were being met. Fox has been employed at Otis for 12 years and in his new role will oversee the entire production team.

**Shelley Lallier**, previously Production Supervisor, now tackles her new role as Production Training Supervisor. In this role, Shelley is responsible for designing, implementing and overseeing training programs for the various production departments. Lallier has been with Otis Technology for 21 years.

"I am very excited to announce these promotions on our team," states **Bill Kleftis**, Chief Executive Officer for Otis Technology. He continues, "We have many talented employees and are very fortunate to be able to promote from within. With their leadership in their new roles, along with the rest of our team, we are positioned for continued success. The future is bright for Otis and Shooter's Choice."

Otis Technology is known for manufacturing the most advanced gun cleaning systems and accessories available. The superior Breech-to-Muzzle® design combined with unmatched quality has positioned Otis as the gun care system of choice with the US Military. Otis Technology is **SMART GUN CARE**.

**NEW YORK STATE OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**Jan. 20, 2025**

President Deb Brosen called the Zoom meeting to order at approximately 7:05 p.m.

Deb led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

Recording Secretary Glenn Sapir took attendance.

Present were: President Deb Brosen, VPs Dave Figura, Dan Ladd and Tom Schlichter, Membership Secretary Charles Witek, Treasurer Stephen George, Recording Secretary Glenn Sapir, Immediate Past President Chris Paparo, Directors Steve Piatt, Leo Maloney and Mike Joyner and Director Elect Bill Hilts, Jr.

Absent were Directors Jerrod Vila and Steve Zahurak.

Deb reported that she had sent out several notices of this meeting.

Motion was made and passed unanimously to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

Motion was made to confirm Deb's appointment of Bill Hilts, Jr. to the Board of Directors to fill the vacancy created by Megan Postol's resignation. Motion was passed unanimously. Glenn Sapir pointed out that Bill will have to be elected at the Annual Meeting to fill the remainder of Megan's term, which expires in 2027.

Deb updated the Board on some of the activities with which she has been involved since assuming the presidency last month. She has been very active in reaching out to new members, to spotlighting supporting members and contacting members in arrears with reminders. She has reached out to the Recruiting Committee as well. She reported that Joint software is being cleaned up, and that under Dan's tutelage, she, Charles Witek and Glenn are gaining a proficiency in use of the software.

#### Unfinished Business

The question of upgrading our Joint account was discussed. Dan Ladd pointed out some advantages to the upgrade, such as an increase in allowed administrators and the ability to issue digital membership cards. Board members did not feel that we should pay the additional cost of \$250 to \$300 more for the upgrade at this time.

Deb reminded the board of the bylaws stating that new members should

receive a welcome kit, including letter from the president, a directory, an organizational brochure and a membership card. Dan reported that a digital directory will be made available to members in March and update thereafter semiannually. Chris Paparo offered to create a limited number of membership cards upon request. Charles, as Membership Secretary, can bundle the necessary elements to issue to new members.

Glenn reported that in a discussion with Bill Suitor, carver of the EIC first-place awards, he learned that Bill had some health issues as well as concern over procuring the walnut he would need for the bases for the carvings. In a more recent conversation, however, Suitor said he was feeling better and that he can obtain the necessary walnut.

A motion was made and passed unanimously to invite Suitor to our awards banquet in Niagara Falls this May and present him with a plaque to commemorate his longstanding contribution to our awards program. Glenn volunteered to order the plaque.

### New Business

Stephen George and Leo Maloney explained our current banking situation, in which at one bank we have a savings account, for which scholarship fund revenue is exclusively deposited, and at another bank we have a checking account from which all expenses are paid. Stephen said he would like to bring the two accounts to one bank and even combine them as a savings and checking account under one name if possible. A motion was passed unanimously to move the scholarship savings account to the bank at which we have our checking account.

Dave Figura asked about the advisability of getting an organizational credit or debit card. After discussion, there didn't seem to be enough interest to pursue this idea.

Glenn mentioned the great work Greg Foster has done for several years in designing the Awards Publication, and a motion was made and passed unanimously to increase his payment from \$250 to \$300.

Deb reported that at the New York Sportsman's Expo this winter, NYSOWA will be sharing, for free, a booth with the New York State Outdoorsmen's Hall of Fame. Stephen offered the use of a booth backboard. Dan reported that he had the organization's banners.

Dan raised the idea of bestowing Honorary Membership on George Franke. A motion to do so was passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was passed unanimously at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Glenn Sapir,  
NYSOWA Recording Secretary

# 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:  
 Charles Wittek III, 1075 Tinker Ave., West Babylon, N.Y. 11704  
 631-827-8664 - [charcswittek@gmail.com](mailto:charcswittek@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>