



New York B.A.S.S. Chapter Federation (N.Y.B.C.F.)

CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER

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REVIEW OF OUR 2008 CONSERVATION PROGRAM GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We started this year with four primary goals.

- 1) Continue our current conservation projects and develop new ones
- 2) Create a functional network of N.Y.B.C.F. regional representatives to be our eyes and ears across the state to dialog with the Dept of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Regional offices.
- 3) Improve our active participation in conservation related workshops and meetings with other stakeholders.
- 4) Improve our ability to tell our story to the masses.

Let's see how well we did with goal #1.

We have several projects we've been very successful with during this 2008 season; from fish tagging to aquatic invasive species management.

Salt City Bassmasters is participating in an on-going a fish tagging program on Onondaga Lake with our DEC Region 7 Biologists. Basically the club held seven 3-hour Wednesday night tournaments. During the weigh-in all fish are provided to the biologist for tagging and then returned the lake. It's hoped the information gathered from this tagging program will help in monitoring growth rates as well as migration patterns of the bass in Onondaga Lake. To date some tagged smallmouth bass have been recaptured as far away from Onondaga Lake as 2 miles east of the 481 Bridge in the Oneida River. This migration is a significant find, because it proves the fish migrate the three rivers system (Seneca, Oswego & Oneida) on their own crossing the DEC designated boundaries intended to help reduce the spread of VHS. It is our belief if these tagged fish continue to be caught across the three river system boundary that our DEC

will reassess the current VHS boundaries and use the established lock system as future VHS boundaries. As written the current VHS boundaries imposed on the three rivers system and being violated by nature, so in essence it's an unenforceable unmanageable boundary.

In May our Long Island Bassmasters (LIBs) stocked Ronkonkoma Lake with 1,200 largemouth bass. The club worked closely with DEC Region 1 Fisheries and the Twin Forks Bass Club over a three month period planning the event and providing the \$2,500 needed to purchase the bass.

July was a good month for combating invasive species as both the LIBs and SCBs worked projects in their areas of the state. LIBs members assembled to assist with removal of Water Primrose in Forge Pond and SCBs worked a Water Chestnut removal effort in the Seneca River.

Our second goal was to solicit N.Y.B.C.F. members as representatives to all nine Regional DEC offices across the state. So far we have six of the nine regions covered and we're still looking for volunteers to cover regions 2, 3 and 9. If you're interested contact conservation@nybassfed.com

Our third goal was participation in conservation related meetings, workshops and seminars with other stakeholders. We made significant inroads with this effort. In April and September we attended meetings with the NY DEC Commissioner Peter Grannis to review the state's 2009 conservation budget. During these meetings the commissioner asked our opinion on ways to help generate additional funds for the DEC. One area of consideration is a habitat stamp that all users must possess. If established any person who's already a licensed hunter or angler is exempt from obtaining the stamp. The primary audience for the habitat stamp is the non-angling & hunting users that frequent these DEC funded access ramps across the state. The sail boaters, kayakers, canoeing

enthusiast and personal watercraft users all enjoy the lake and river access these DEC funded ramps provide and the commissioner agreed they ought to help provide additional revenue to maintain these facilities. No decision was announced, but we're hopeful this stamp or a similar program will be implemented.

In October we attended a meeting hosted by the Oneida Lake Watershed Council to review the state of the lake and hear first hand about various environmental concerns and management approaches relevant to lake encroachment, habitat erosion and water quality.

In November we also meet with the Oneida Lake Association and the DEC Fresh Water Fisheries Manager to discuss the current C&R immediate release bass fishing season on Oneida Lake in the hopes of aligning the lake with the statewide C&R season. No determination has been made yet.

Our final meeting for the 2008 occurred this month when we met with the Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Leader of the Lake Champlain Sea Grant, and the DEC Region 5 Fisheries manager. Topics were aquatic invasive species in the region and management techniques. The real eye opener for these three organizations was our 45 minute review of tournament bass fishing. We reviewed the structure and organization of our Federation from state down to the individual club affiliation. The differences in the various bass fishing organizations in NY, from the FLW, The BASS Federation Nation, The BASS Federation, the American Bass Anglers (ABA), and ABA/BASS Weekend Series, to Angler's Choice and other local and regional team trails that frequent the region. Their main concern is getting information out to all of these tournament organizations about proper care of equipment and their boats to include cleaning/drainage of live wells, bilge water and removing any vegetation from trailers prior to launch and again right after take out. I provided a by-name, phone and email contact roster for tournament directors & managers for these organizations as well their organizational URL for additional information.

I also encouraged these three groups to periodically look at the regional message boards to see what topics are out there about the region and the fisheries. We all agreed these board topics can also spawn some heated debates and energetic followings of inaccurate statements versus facts. I pointed out that's true; however, once you see that happening it's pretty easy to make a post providing a URL or another source reference to the factual information and often times that quickly resolves any issue or concern that was spawned from the original misinformation. And this leads us to our fourth and final goal for the year.

Our fourth goal was to tell our story to the masses. We wanted to create an information blitz to tell our story through as many different media outlets as we could. Critical to our continued growth and the overall success of not only our conservation efforts, but also our Federation program is telling everyone exactly what we're doing to the benefit of all stakeholders. Toward that end we've enjoyed some moderate success. We've seen our story appear across regional message boards, such as NYBASS.com and national message boards like bassboatcentral.com We've also seen our story in the pages of Basstimes magazine three times this year and we've appeared twice on the Conservation home page on the ESPN/Bassmasters national website.

If you recall when we started this year I borrowed the phrase "A Year of Change" ... in my mind we've only just begun and there's certainly more to do, but we have indeed brought some positive change to our programs. We still need everyone's help to continue building our program for 2009 and beyond. Everyone has something to offer, so don't be shy. Look within yourself and within your club to find that special project that's best suited to your team and get involved. Together we can make a difference. If you have any ideas or concerns please let me know.

Practice Selective Harvest and Free the Fighter



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