Environmental Conservation Officers | Canadaway Creek | Hunter Education

NEW YORK STATE

Conservationist

OCTOBER 2009

SUMMIT SENTINELS

New York's Fire Towers Mark 100 Years

SENIOR SMOKEY

Firefighting Bear Turns 65!

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Photo by Bill Banaszewski

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Artwork by Greg Messier

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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NEW YORK STATE
Conservationist

Volume 64, Number 2 | October 2009

David Paterson, Governor of New York State

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Dear Reader,

Apple picking. Pumpkin carving. Hiking a forest trail under a brilliant canopy of leaves. These are just a few reasons why autumn is one of my favorite times of the year. There's a lot to do outdoors—and a lot to see, particularly in the animal world. Whether it's a flock of migrating geese in sharp formation, squirrels frantically stashing nuts for the winter—even a moose foraging in a marshy meadow off a backwoods trail—fall means an increased chance to see wildlife on the move.

The Watchable Wildlife Program can help you find the best places and opportunities to see wildlife in action. Created in 1990, the program provides official viewing areas throughout New York State which provide the best opportunities to observe plants and animals in their natural environment. Whether you live in the city or the suburbs, chances are there's a Watchable Wildlife viewing area nearby. At some of these sites, you can explore interpretive trails or a visitor center—even participate in a nature workshop.

To find a wildlife watching site near you, visit the Watchable Wildlife pages on DEC's website (**www.dec.ny.gov**), or go directly to Watchable Wildlife Inc.'s website at **www.watchablewildlife.org**. You can also find tips for where to go, what to expect, and many other wildlife viewing guidelines to help you prepare for your visit.

So this fall, make a plan to get outside and connect with nature. Take it from me—the trip will be worth it.

Have a safe and happy autumn!

Sincerely,

Commissioner Pete Grannis

New Saltwater Fishing License

Anglers should be aware that beginning October 1, 2009, all New York State recreational anglers who are age 16 and older fishing from the shore, a pier or a dock, or by boat (except aboard party or charter boats licensed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) for marine species and migratory fish of the sea, including striped bass, alewife, hickory shad, American shad and blueback herring species are required to have a recreational marine fishing license.

Licenses can be purchased through DEC's automated licensing system (DECALS) and are also available at all locations where hunting and fishing licenses are offered—including town clerk's offices, bait and tackle shops, sporting goods stores and DEC regional offices in Albany, Allegany, Buffalo, Ray Brook, Stony Brook and Watertown.

You can also purchase licenses by calling 1-86-NY-DECALS (1-866-933-2257) or by visiting the DEC Internet Sporting License Sales page at: **www.dec.ny.gov/permits/28941.html**

For more information about this new license, check out DEC's website at **www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7755.html** or call DEC's Bureau of Marine Resources at 631-444-0430.

Recreational Marine Fishing License Fees

Resident

Annual $10
7-Day $8
1-Day $4
Lifetime $150
Lifetime Combination Freshwater and Marine $450

Non-Resident

Annual $15
7-Day $10
1-Day $5

(Note: Certain residents qualify for a reduced-price or free license)

Donate your doe or dough to support New York's Venison Donation program that provides nutritious venison to those in need.

Donations of one dollar or more can make a difference. The money stays in New York State to feed individuals in need. Ninety-five cents of every dollar is used towards processing the venison.

Your Town Clerk's office or anywhere hunting and fishing licenses are sold can accept your donation. Just inform the DECALS license agent that you wish to make a donation to support the Venison Donation Program in their efforts to feed the hungry. Donations through DECALS are deposited directly into the venison donation fund.

Please donate today and help us feed the hungry.

For more information, call
1-866-862(3337)
or visit the website at
www.VenisonDonation.com.

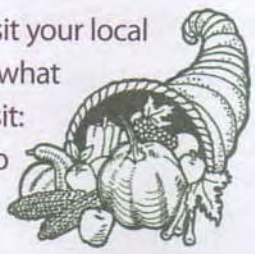
Discover great wildlife viewing areas near you

Whether you're in the city or the suburbs, wildlife is never far away if you know where to go. Visiting a watchable wildlife viewing area guarantees a great experience. In addition to wildlife, many of the selected sites feature interpretive trails, visitor centers and nature-oriented workshops.

Visit **www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/55423.html** for more information.

Be a Localvore

Harvest is the perfect time to visit your local farmers and growers to sample what your neighbors have to offer. Visit: **www.nyfarmersmarket.com** to see what's available near you.



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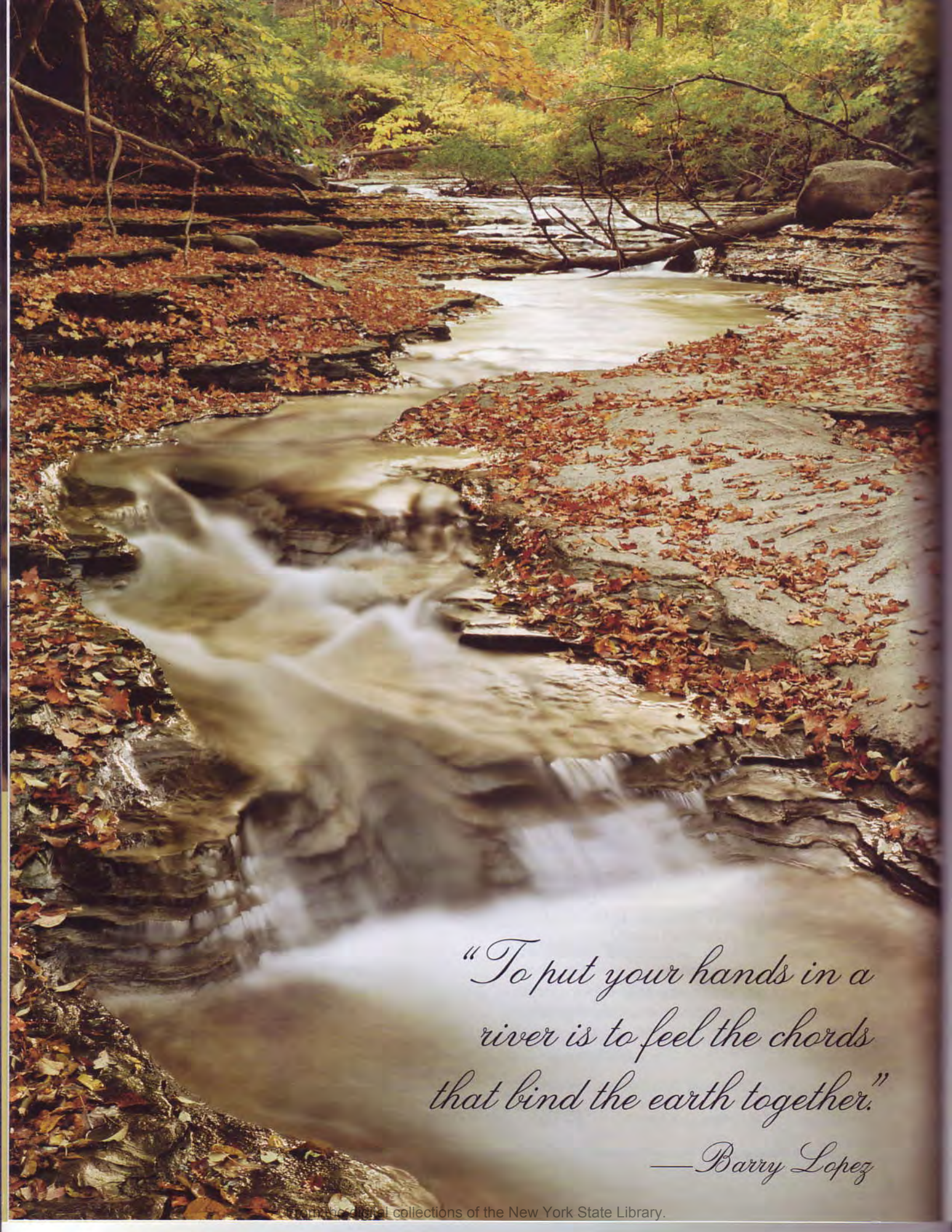


Whither it may flow

Photos by James Hoggard
Text compiled by Jenna DuChene

"So-this-is-a-River," said the Mole.
"THE River," corrected the Rat.
"And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!"
"By it and with it and on it and in it," said the Rat.
"It's brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing. It's my world, and I don't want any other. What it hasn't got is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing.
Lord! the times we've had together..."
-Kenneth Grahame, from *The Wind in the Willows*

Nestled in north-central Chautauqua County are 3,000 acres of predominantly forested land. The terrain in the uplands is very hilly, dissected by numerous deep ravines and covered mostly in maple, beech and hemlock forest. Through this sylvan glade flows a tiny stream, gradually increasing in width, depth and importance.

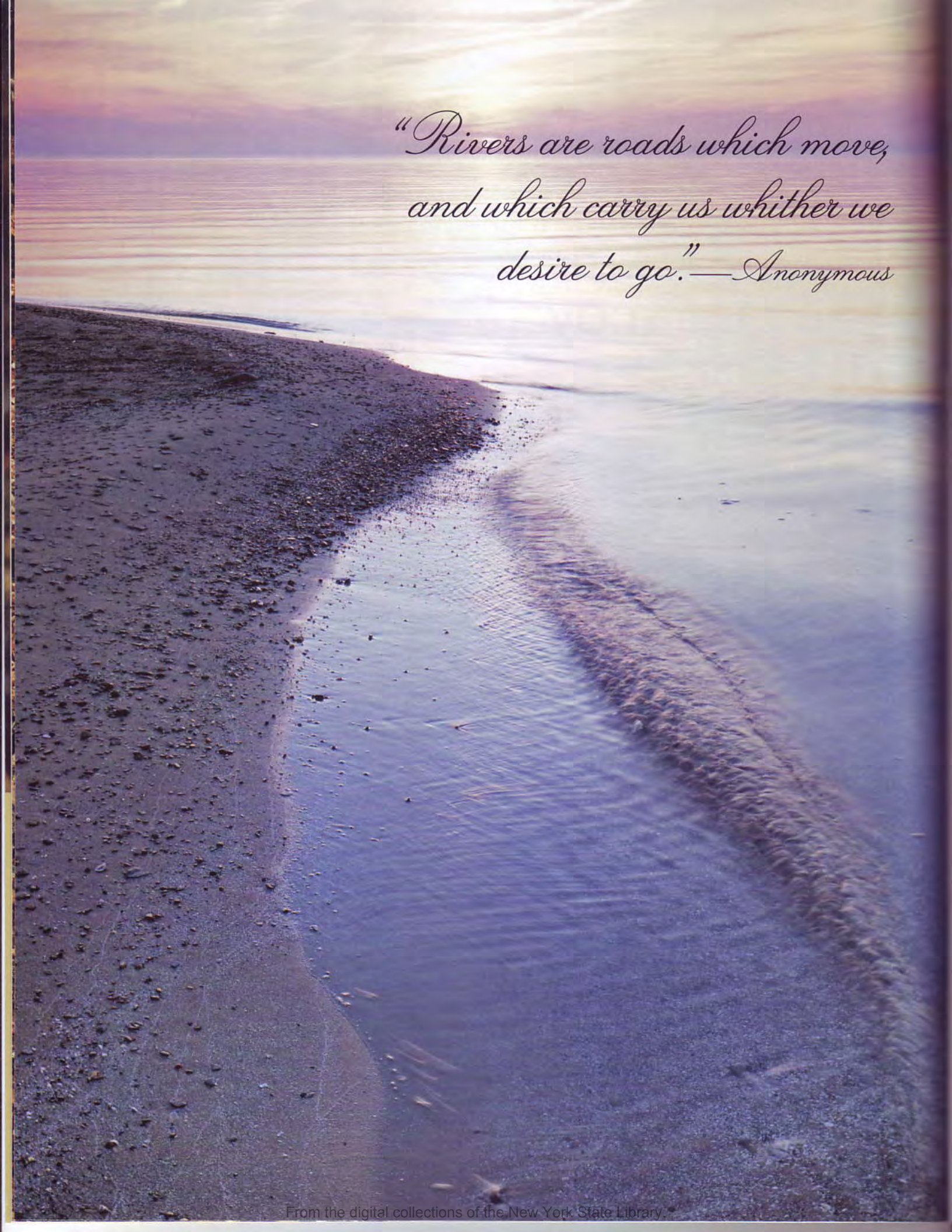
Erie tribes, and later the Iroquois, originally settled the stream and called it "Ga-na-da-wa-o," meaning "running through hemlocks." The name probably referred to the dense canopy covering the deep gorge at its headwaters. The early European settlers from eastern and central Pennsylvania pronounced the name as "Canadaway" and because the stream flows north, the name came into common use.

Canadaway Creek was a blessing to the surrounding towns' settlers due to its importance for transportation and the economy. It looked different many years ago, with a different flow and even small waterfalls. Various saw and grist mills could be found on its shores. However, over time, construction projects and erosion have changed the flow of the creek.

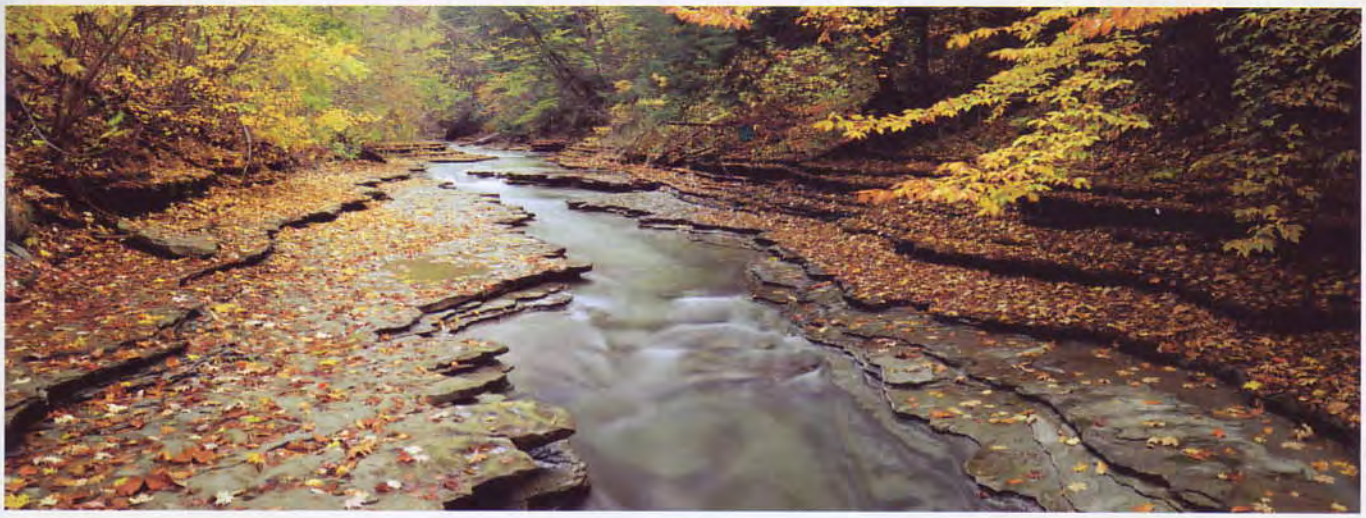
Canadaway is one of the county's major feeder streams to Lake Erie. The creek winds down from the hills to the site of the first naval skirmishes of the War of 1812. It was here that American soldiers fought off a British gunboat as it tried to seize a salt boat from Buffalo seeking sanctuary in the creek.

The creek's headwaters are nestled within Canadaway Creek Wildlife Management Area, a 2,195-acre lush, forested sanctuary that encompasses several stunningly picturesque ravines. Arkwright Falls, the highest waterfall in Chautauqua County, is a locally popular destination for hikers. The wildlife management area's large size and flora allow it to support a rich diversity of wildlife, including several species of raptors. Broad-winged and red-shouldered hawks nest here, and the adjacent area supports a colony of great blue herons. In addition, there are also common game species like American woodcock, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and ruffed grouse.

Canadaway is truly an ecological jewel hidden in southwestern New York.

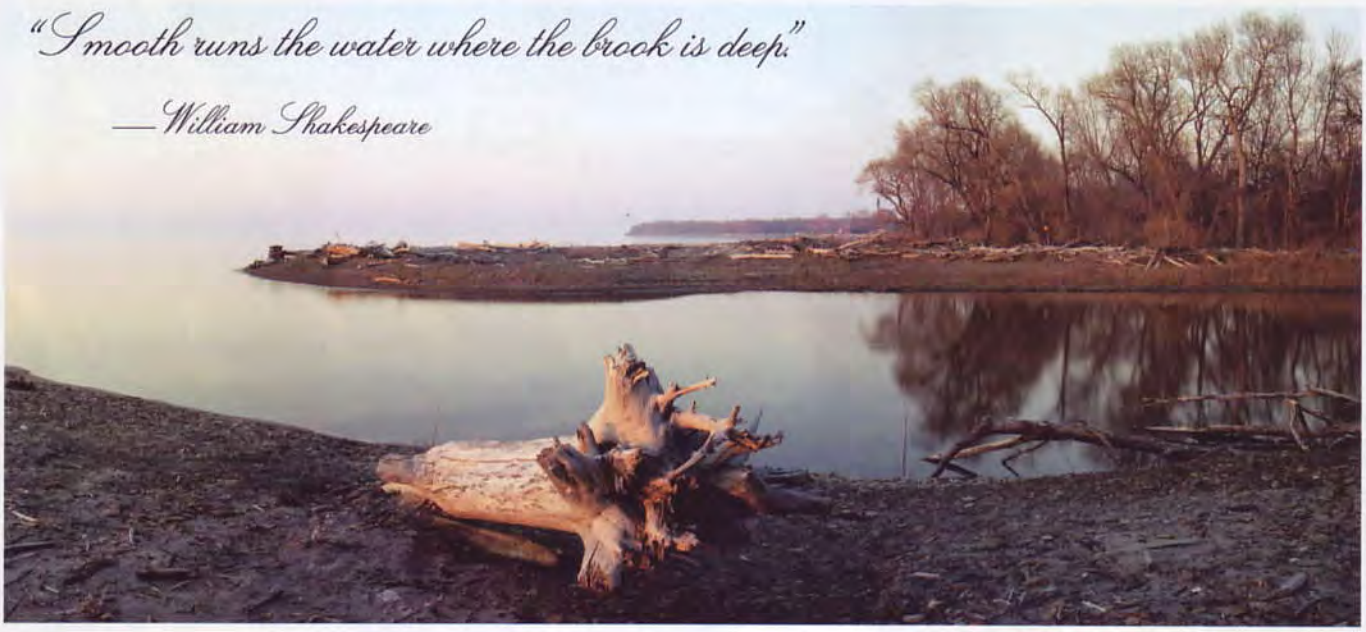


"Like dreams, small creeks grow into mighty rivers." —Anonymous



"Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep."

—William Shakespeare



About the Photographer:

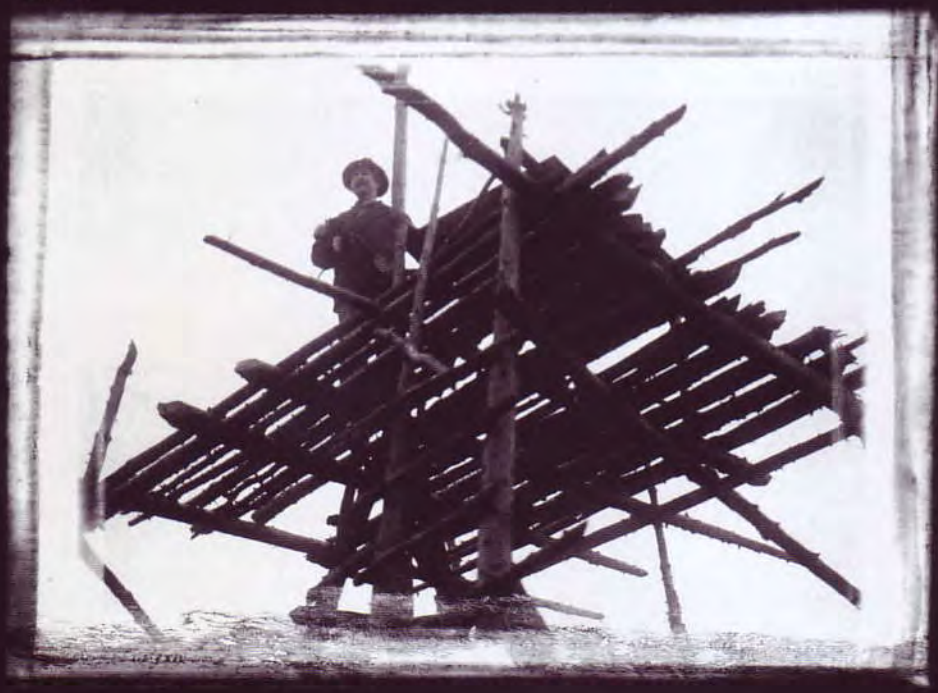
James Hoggard has been photographing natural scenes for more than two decades. Originally from Salt Lake City, he currently resides in New York and enjoys exploring, photographing, hiking, and skiing in "wild places." His work can be viewed at **http://jameshoggardphotography.com**.

Jenna DuChene is the staff writer for *Conservationist*.

(Author's note: some text adapted from Alberto Rey (**www.albertorey.com**), and *Images of America: Pomfret* by Todd Landworthy.)

Standin

DEC photo



Courtesy Forest Fire Lookout Association of NY

NEW YORK STATE FIRE TOWERS
100 YEARS OF SERVICE
1909 CENTENNIAL 2009

FOR 100 YEARS, FIRE TOWERS HAVE STOOD GUARD OVER OUR FORESTS

New York's first fire towers were made of wood logs; most had an open platform on top.

Mark Bowie

a TALL

BY MARTY PODSKOCH

Gazing at the peaks ablaze with color from my vantage point atop the fire tower on Hadley Mountain, I concluded that the trek was well worth the effort. I was high above the tree line, and the 360° vista afforded me spectacular views of the Green Mountains of Vermont, the Berkshires in Massachusetts, and the Adirondack High Peaks.

Peering over the edge, I marvel when I think of how long this tower has stood here. I think of all the people who have stood here before me, and can't help wonder what it must have been like to be a fire tower observer—spending hours in this tiny cab, on guard for the first hint of smoke that might signal a fire.

I've always been fascinated by fire towers and their history. In fact, it was exactly 100 years ago this year that New York built the first fire towers in the state; a response to too many deadly fires left undetected.

Fires posed a significant danger during the early 1900s when numerous blazes raged across New York's forests. Strong winds carried smoke and ash that darkened Albany's skies. Flames surrounded many towns, threatening homes and businesses, and forcing families to flee, clutching whatever valuables they could carry. Fire wardens couldn't keep up with the battle and called on every able-bodied man to help fight the fires.

THE WORST FIRES OCCURRED IN 1903 AND 1908, WHEN HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF LAND WERE DESTROYED AND MANY ANIMALS PERISHED.

The worst fires occurred in 1903 and 1908, when hundreds of thousands of acres of land were destroyed and many animals perished. Bushels of fish died in the streams from intense heat and from the lye (created from water mixing with ash) that leached into the water. Stands of valuable timber were destroyed, and in some areas the soil was so badly scorched that no new vegetation could grow.

Art Jennings, a surviving witness to one of the 1908 fires, recounted how a single spark from a Mohawk & Malone locomotive ignited the dry kindling along the tracks near his home in Long Lake West (now Sabattis). Approximately 150 men dug miles of trenches to finally contain the fire, but their efforts did not last long. Only a few weeks later, strong winds drove the lingering fire around the firebreak and it roared towards town. The railroad agent

In the early twentieth century, New York forests were ravaged by fires, and the public demanded something be done. In response, the state began building fire towers in the Adirondack and Catskill forests.

DEC photo

DEC photo

By 1916, New York State began building fire towers out of steel, which was more durable. Here a group of men, with the aid of horses, work to erect the tower on Mount Adams.

telegraphed Tupper Lake (19 miles north), who sent a rescue train.

Art recalled, "There were about 100 people in the town then, most of them lumberjacks. When the rescue train arrived, the women boarded first. My mother carried me on. The train plowed through smoke and flames that blistered the cars. There was a tremendous blast when a building containing four tons of dynamite exploded. It was a scary time."

Trains caused many of the fires at this time. Burning embers from a locomotive's stack, or live coals that fell from the ash pans onto the tinder-strewn right-of-way, would cause the dry wood to blaze. Other fires occurred from burning brush for agricultural purposes, or fishermen, hunters, and campers who left campfires unattended.

The damage from all these fires resulted in public outcry. New Yorkers wanted protection from forest fires, and the state responded by creating a rigorous fire prevention and control program that included building fire towers to spot fires early, hopefully before they grew out of control.

So in 1909, New York State began constructing fire towers in the Adirondack and Catskill forests. Soon, fire towers adorned Mount Morris, Whiteface Mountain, Gore Mountain, West Mountain, Snowy Mountain and Hamilton Mountain in the Adirondacks, as well as Hunter Mountain, Belleayre Mountain, and on Balsam Lake in the Catskills.

The first towers were made of wood—built on trees or from logs—and most had an open platform on top. In 1916, however, many of these were replaced with steel towers that had an enclosed cab on top. Steel was more durable and the cab provided protection from the weather.

Each tower was manned by a fire tower observer, and outfitted with a telephone, maps and binoculars. At the first sign of smoke, the observer called in the location to a forest ranger. It was an effective early warning system that greatly reduced the number of acres destroyed by fires.

Being a fire tower observer was a challenging and sometimes lonely job. Observers worked six days a week (seven during dry periods), manning the tower from April till it snowed in October or November. Since most towers were located in remote areas, observers would live in a cabin near the tower and trek to town for supplies when the fire threat was low.

Hikers, who used the observer trails to reach the mountain summit, would often provide company to fire tower observers. The hikers enjoyed the panoramic view from the top of the tower—20′ to 80′ high and towering over the trees—as well as the informative, and sometimes entertaining, stories the observers told about the plants and animals in the area.

One of New York's earliest fire observers was Sam Cheetham (1886-1953). Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Sam grew up in Dublin, Ireland, and spent many years as a sailor. After contracting tuberculosis, he traveled to Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks to be cured. Only able to climb stairs on his hands and knees, he could see Whiteface Mountain from his room and vowed to climb its peak

some day. So he devoted his energies into walking and working outside, and was healed. In 1915, Sam became the fire observer on Whiteface Mountain, climbing the 6½-mile trail to the summit carrying a heavy pack. Initially, Sam just had a tent and wood stove on the summit, but in 1919 a 22-foot, steel tower with a cab replaced the tent. Sam worked as observer until 1919, and then again from 1934-42.

Harriet Rega was one of the state's first women fire observers. Like Sam, Harriet came to the Adirondacks to improve her health. Her earliest stint as a fire tower observer was on a private estate, where she worked for six years. In 1930, she began working at the state fire tower on Rondaxe (Bald) Mountain. Harriet was an expert outdoorswoman, and knew the woods so well that she rarely carried a compass. Thousands of tourists visited her tower, where they learned the names of nearby mountains and lakes and heard about her hunting and trapping adventures. In 1934, Harriet told an Associated Press reporter, "I love the woods and get more fun wandering alone through the forest than going to the movies."

BY THE EARLY 1960s, MORE THAN 100 FIRE TOWERS DOTTED NEW YORK'S LANDSCAPE.

By the early 1960s, more than 100 fire towers dotted New York's landscape. However, in the early 1970s the state began using air surveillance, which was more economical, making manned fire towers obsolete. And so, one by one the state began closing its fire towers.

The last of New York's fire towers (four in the Adirondacks and one in the Catskills) shut down around 1990. While 52 of the towers were removed, many were left in place and began to deteriorate due to lack of maintenance. Hearing that the state might remove their local tower, several communities and groups raised money to restore the towers as historic places for the public to visit. Standing on one of those restored towers, I am pleased that they did.

As I carefully make my way down the Hadley tower, I am grateful that people had the foresight to restore these towers. While the advent of new technology may have rendered them no longer necessary for fire detection, it's nice to know they can provide another type of public service. Having climbed a number of these towers, I think it's great that those willing to make the trek get to sample a unique piece of history, and are also rewarded with incredible views.

Being a fire tower observer was a hard and sometimes lonely job. Observers spent many hours in the small tower cab, armed with binoculars, maps, and a telephone or radio. Their dedication to this early warning system greatly reduced the acres of forest destroyed by fires.

DEC photo

James Clayton

New York's fire towers are no longer staffed, but some, like the one on Goodnow Mountain pictured here, have been restored and repurposed as an enjoyable destination for families, hikers, backpackers and school children alike.

Entering the tree line, I glance back at the tower—a steel sentinel outlined against the cloudless, deep blue sky. Reflecting on what a great day it's been, I start thinking about next weekend. Perhaps I'll climb the Goodnow Mountain fire tower.

Marty Podskoch is a retired teacher and author of three books on NYS fire towers. He also writes the weekly column, "Adirondack Stories," published in five Adirondack area newspapers. Marty became interested in fire towers after climbing Hunter Mountain in 1987. You can e-mail him at podskoch@comcast.net

Hadley Mountain

Mark Bowie

Climb a FIRE TOWER

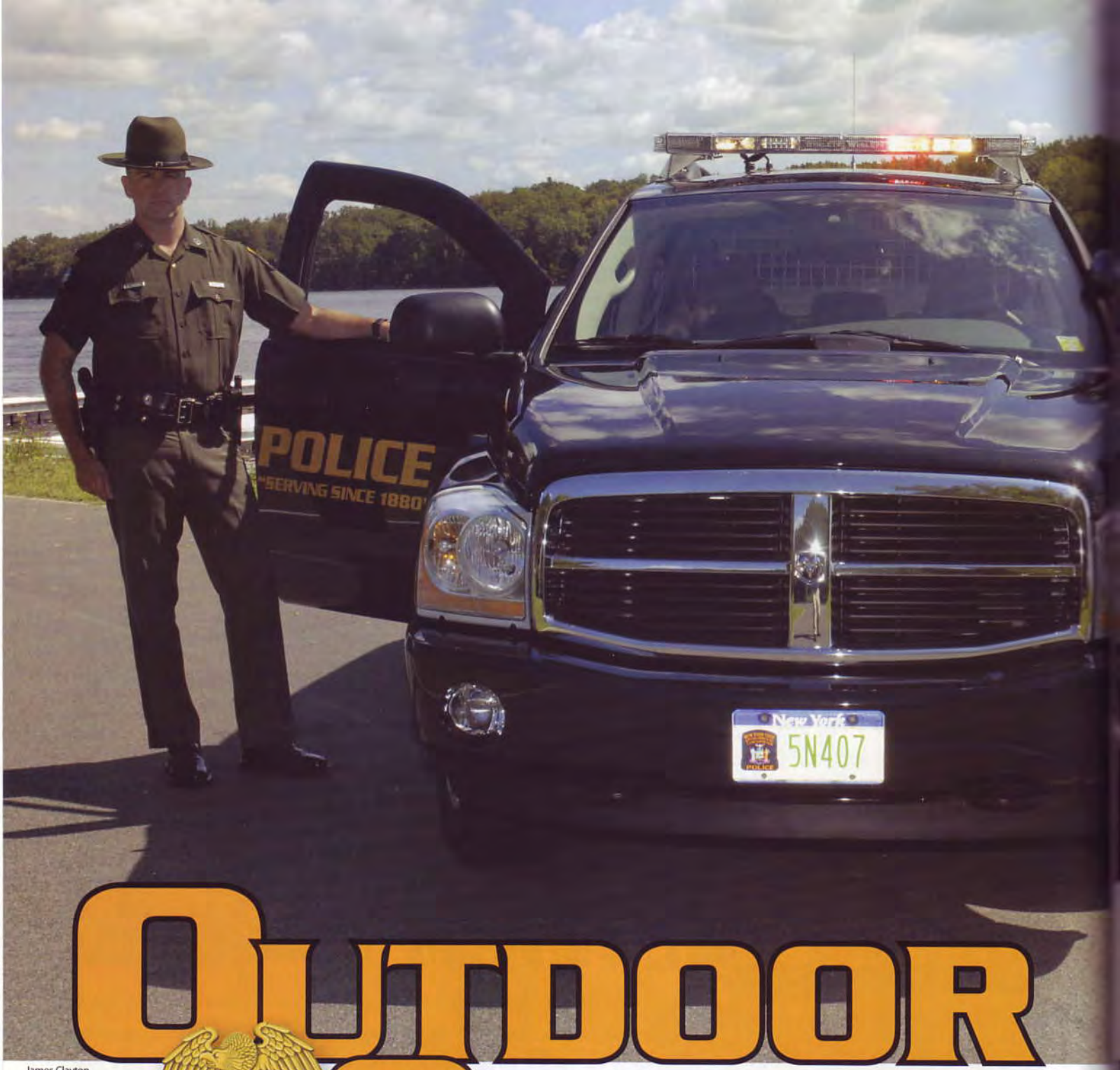
James Clayton

Although no longer manned or used for detecting fires, some of New York's remaining historic fire towers are being restored and repurposed as a destination for hikers, families and school children alike. The towers are a valuable piece of state history, and from the top visitors get a 360-degree panoramic view of the surrounding forests, lakes, mountains and valleys.

If you are interested in dimbing one of the state's fire towers, the following have been restored in the Adirondacks: Mount Arab, Blue Mountain, Hadley Mountain, Goodnow Mountain, Kane Mountain, Azure Mountain, Vanderwhacker Mountain, Rondaxe (Bald) Mountain, Owl's Head Mountain, Poke-O-Moonshine Mountain, Mount Adams, and Snowy Mountain.

In the Catskills, five fire towers have been restored: Hunter Mountain, Mount Tremper, Red Hill, Balsam Lake, and Overlook Mountain. In addition, the fire tower on Mount Utsayantha just outside the Catskill Park (in Stamford) has also been restored.

For more information on New York's firetowers, visit **www.beebehill.info/towers**.

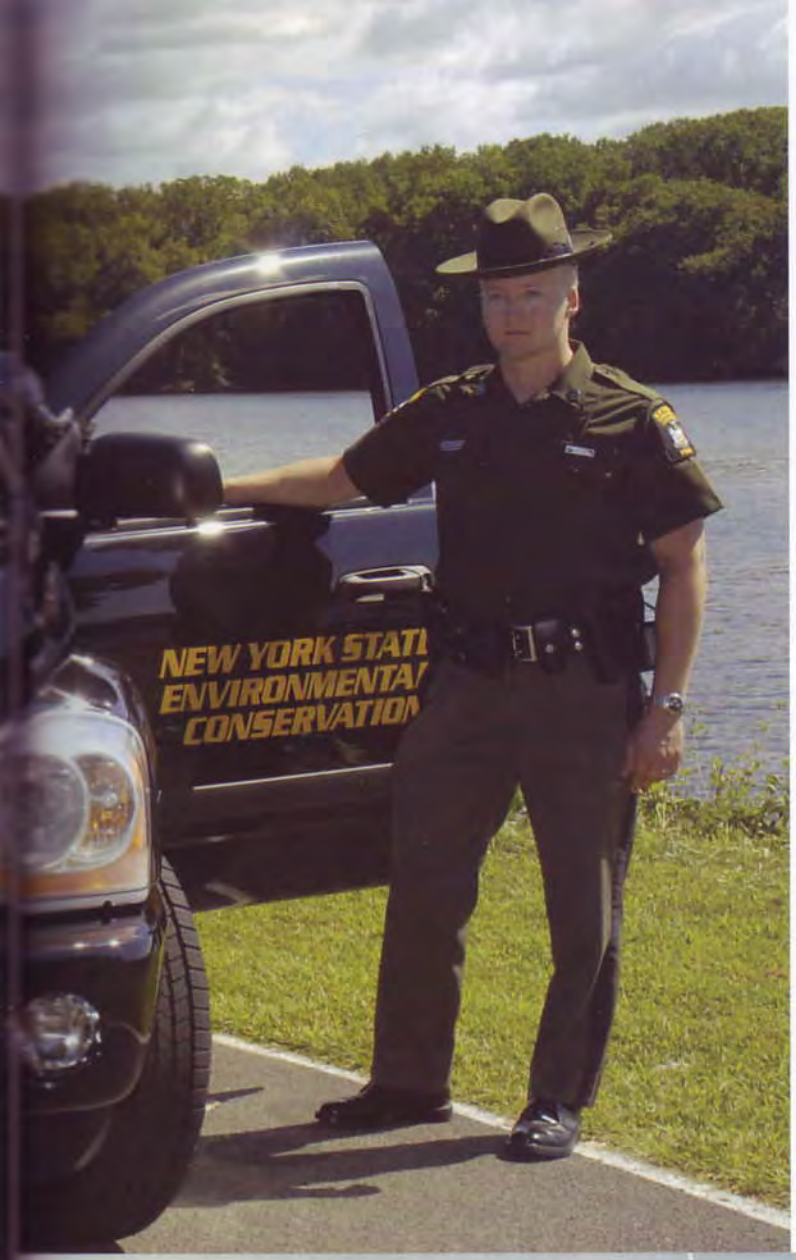


James Clayton

OUTDOOR OFFICE

Adventurous careers await future Environmental Conservation Officers

by Captain Timothy Huss



Years ago I would thumb through my dad's copies of *Outdoor Life* and *Sports Afield*, curious about the hunting and fishing stories within. My father introduced me to these outdoor pursuits at an early age, and I loved reading about other sportsmen's adventures. Inevitably, a small ad in the back of these publications would catch my eye— "Live a life in the outdoors; become a game warden." The accompanying photo of an officer holding a cougar or some other ferocious-looking game animal really thrilled me. As a young boy who spent much of his time wandering around the oak-brush plains of Long Island, and clamming on Great South Bay, I loved the thought of making a living in the outdoors.

When high school was drawing to an end, I found myself applying to colleges that offered curriculums in wildlife management, soil and water conservation, forestry, and other related topics. Four years later, upon graduating from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, I applied and took the state civil service exam for Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO).

DEC photo

...the job was a lot more complex than I imagined, and sometimes a lot more dangerous.

The day I was offered an ECO position was one of the most exciting of my life. As my assigned veteran, ECO Mike Berrio, helped me complete the process of getting fingerprinted, sworn in, and outfitted with uniforms and police hardware, I realized I had little idea of exactly what an ECO did. It didn't take me long to find out that the job was a lot more complex than I imagined, and sometimes a lot more dangerous.

One of my first assignments was patrolling Long Island's marine district. I hadn't been on the job long when I found myself in a boat at night chasing illegal clammers on the waters of Great South Bay. It was pitch black, and there we were speeding after poachers. My heart was pounding, I was concerned, but excited at the same time. I loved what I was doing, and felt like I was doing something meaningful—protecting the environment and its natural resources.

Over the next few years I discovered just how varied the job could be. My work on Long Island exposed me to a range of issues, including protecting endangered species, enforcing hunting and fishing regulations, protecting wetlands, enforcing air and water quality regulations and proper pesticide practices, and doing some basic police work. I never really knew what each day would bring. One day I would be checking duck hunters along Long Island's shoreline and the next I'd be investigating the unlawful disposal of a regulated waste, or the unregulated filling of a protected wetland. For me, that diversity made the job more interesting and rewarding.

Talking to fellow ECOs around the state made me aware of the diverse natural history, and social and political dynamics found in New York State, as well as the variety of other duties being performed by my colleagues. For instance, ECOs in rural areas of upstate are most often involved in fish, wildlife, and other natural resource issues, from nuisance bears to timber theft. In contrast, ECOs in New York City are more likely to be involved in air and water quality issues, perhaps checking emissions on diesel trucks, or enforcing laws regulating solid waste. On the other hand, these same ECOs may also find themselves involved in stopping the illegal trade of protected endangered species in exotic markets.

DEC Photo

DEC Photo

DEC Photo

ECOs must fulfill a variety of roles, from patrolling New York's waters on jet skis to recovering illegally poached animals like black bear. An ECO can find him or herself checking hunters or tire dumpsites or vehicle emissions one day, and helping with wildlife conflicts the next. It's all part of the ECO's job and what makes it an exciting and rewarding career.

The day I was offered an ECO position was one of the most exciting of my life.

Sometimes, work and patrol areas overlap and ECOs from various regions of the state work together on a case. Perhaps it's illegal clams and other marine species that show up in upstate markets, or illegally taken bears from upstate that show up at a taxidermist on Long Island. Such cooperation illustrates the camaraderie among ECOs—we are a single group working together toward a common goal.

Occasionally ECOs are called on to lend a hand in work that is seemingly outside their duties. In World War II, for example, ECOs assisted the FBI in a number of tasks—from investigating mysterious parachute landings to rounding up saboteurs. And in 1980, ECOs assisted with security at the XIII Olympic Winter Games held in Lake Placid. More recently, ECOs have aided with emergency operations associated with TWA Flight 800, the 1995 wildfires on Long Island, and the tragic events of 9/11. Since 9/11, officers are more often tasked to assist fellow law enforcement agencies in homeland security efforts.

Being an ECO allows me to be part of a proud heritage that dates back more than 125 years. Initially called Game Protectors, in 1880 Governor Alonzo B. Cornell appointed the first eight men to the job. While the original focus was game protection, primarily via catching poachers, these first officers also enforced laws protecting streams from pollution, and were authorized to bring legal action against all violators. Over the years, more environmental duties were added, and in the 1960s the job title changed to Conservation Officer. In 1970, the then Conservation Department merged with facets of the State Health Department to form the current Department of Environmental Conservation. At that time, the role of the Conservation Officer changed dramatically and the job title became Environmental Conservation Officer. At the same time, ECOs were also given broader powers, and their legal status was modified from peace officers to fully empowered police officers.

Today's conservation officers continue their predecessors' mission to protect New York State's resources and environment with the same dedication and passion. It takes hard work to become an Environmental Conservation Officer, but in return, you will find yourself in a fascinating and rewarding career. I'm proud to be an ECO and it's something I've enjoyed for many years.

Captain **Timothy Huss** is the chief ECO on Long Island. He has served with DEC since 1977.

DEC Photo

DEC Photo

DEC Photo

Becoming an ECO

Your career as an Environmental Conservation Officer can be exciting and fulfilling.

DEC Photo

Duties

ECOs are sworn police officers who protect natural resources by enforcing the Environmental Conservation Law. They investigate complaints, conduct patrols, and meet with school and service groups, the regulated community, and hunters' and anglers' clubs to promote compliance with environmental conservation law. The K-9 Unit aids in search-and-rescue operations, and in the apprehension and arrest of violators. All ECOs carry a firearm.

HEADS UP...

The Environmental Conservation Officer Trainee examination will be given on November 14, 2009. Applications are due by October 13, 2009. For details, check out Civil Service's website at: www.cs.state.ny.us/jobseeker/public/stateexam.cfm.

You can also sign up at the Civil Service website to receive automatic e-mail notifications of upcoming examination announcements.

Qualifications

To become an ECO, you must first pass a written civil service exam administered by the Department of Civil Service. This exam is generally given only once every few years, so don't miss it.

Based on test scores, candidates are placed on an eligibility list. If selected, they must pass a medical physical, a psychological screening and an agility test. Candidates are then interviewed by a board. If a candidate is hired, he or she must then complete a 26-week training program at DEC's Basic Training School for Uniformed Officers. The academy emphasizes police skills as well as the technical aspects of environmental law enforcement, and includes many hours of classroom instruction, firearms training, police vehicle operation, and physical fitness. Upon graduation from the school, recruits are assigned to the Field Training and Evaluation Program. Here they work under, and are evaluated by, a senior officer. When the program is completed, the trainee is given his/her first assignment in their own patrol sector.

For more information about a career as an ECO, visit **www.dec.ny.gov**, or **www.cs.state.ny.us** and search for "Environmental Conservation Officer."

Civil Service Exam Requirements

To be eligible to take the ECO Trainee 1 test, an applicant must have:

1. Bachelor's or higher level degree, including or supplemented by 18 credit hours of qualifying course work (such as natural resource conservation, environmental studies, and natural science); or

2. Associate's degree, including or supplemented by 18 credit hours in qualifying course work, and one of the following:

a. one year of experience in freshwater or marine sciences, wildlife sciences, environmental engineering, environmental technology or forestry; or

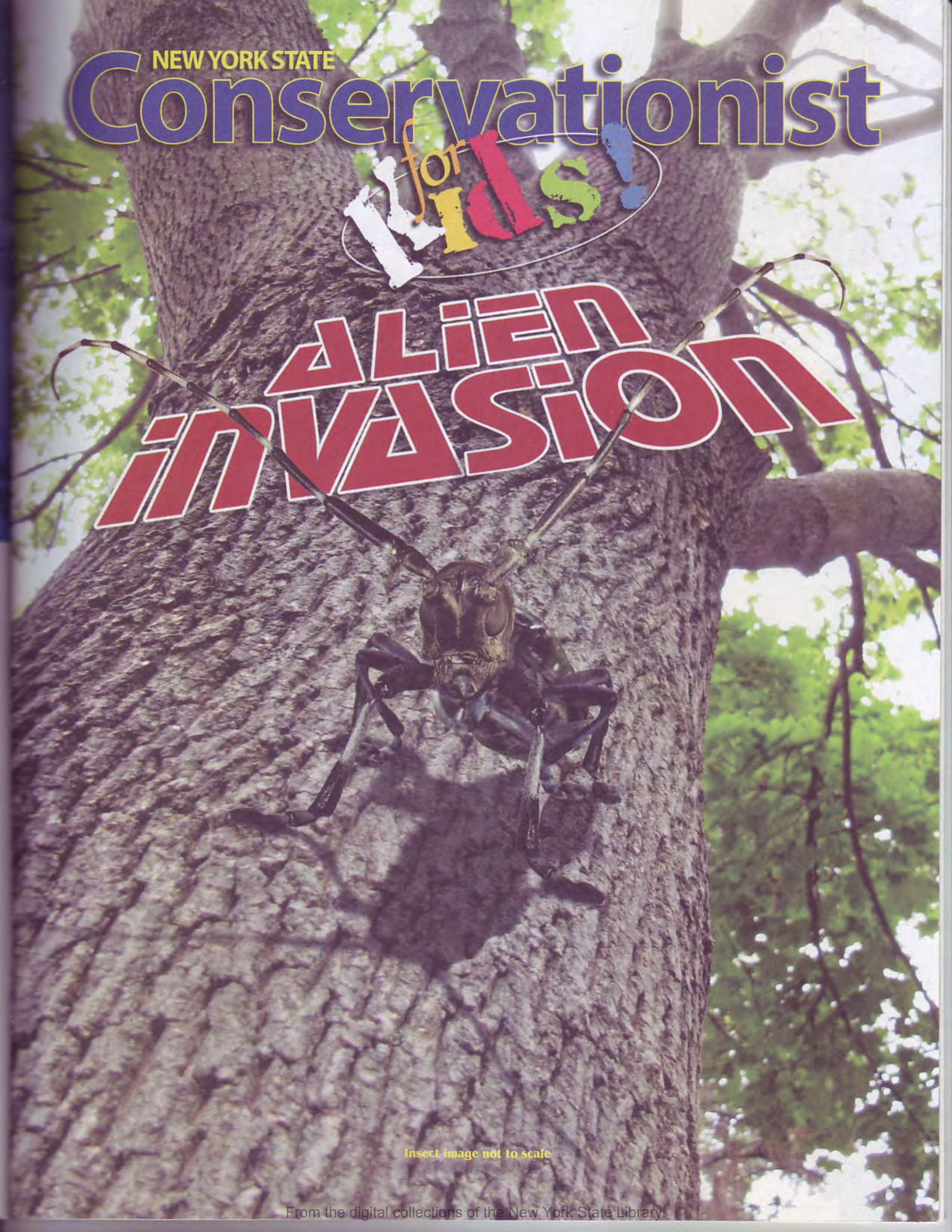
b. one year of experience as a police officer with Municipal Police Training Course certification, or as a certified federal law enforcement officer (a certified Peace Officer Training Course does not satisfy this requirement); or

c. two years of active United States military service with an honorable discharge.

NEW YORK STATE

Conservationist for Kids!

Alien Invasion



Insect image not to scale

This is

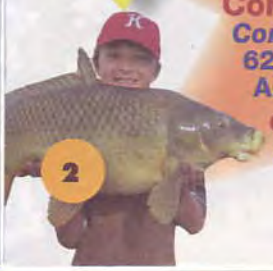
NEW YORK STATE

Conservationist for Kids!

In this issue we'll take a look at some invasive species. Having lots of variety in an ecosystem helps to keep things in balance. Invasive plants and animals limit the variety and upset the balance. Join us as we explore the challenges of invasive species, and learn why and how to help stop them from spreading.

Meet Brandon!

He sent us this photo of himself and the 42-pound carp (an introduced species) he caught in Seneca Lake. You could be a page number kid, too. Send us a photo of yourself enjoying the outdoors. We'll send you the details about what's required for us to print your photo or use it on our website.



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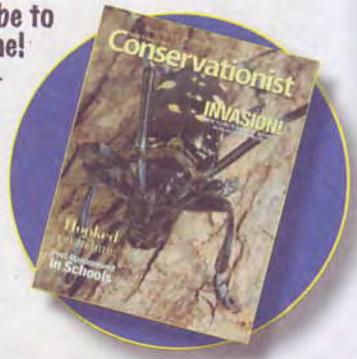


Visit www.dec.ny.gov for links to lots of information about the outdoors. Check out DEC's online newsletter for families, *Outdoor Discovery*. Every two weeks readers receive articles about nature with fun activities for kids, plus lists of upcoming events at nature centers near you. Go to **www.dec.ny.gov/public/43355.html** to sign up and have it e-mailed directly to you.

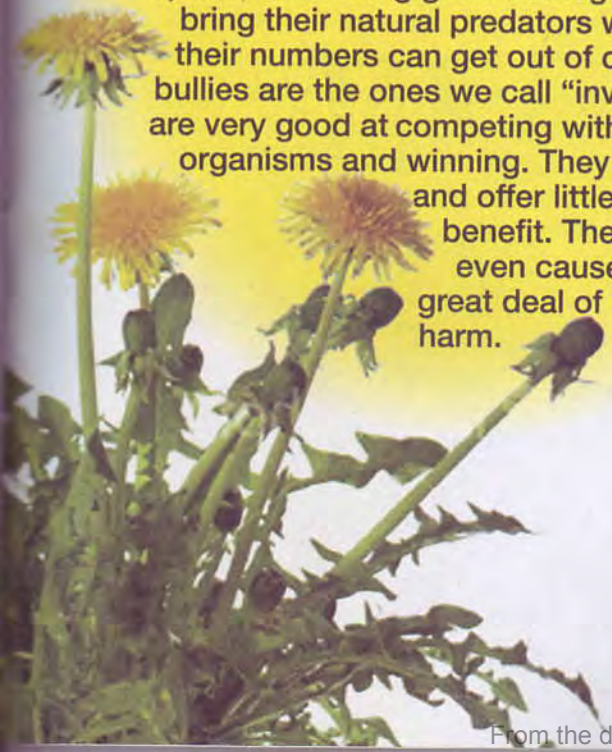
We call them alien, exotic and non-native.

They are the plants and animals that have arrived here from somewhere else and established a new home. Some cause no serious problems and live in harmony with our native species. Others create major challenges for native plants and animals, and for people.

Plants and animals arrive here in many ways. Sometimes they arrive by accident, such as when an insect is in the wood of a packing crate or aquatic animals are carried in the ballast water of ocean-going ships and unintentionally released into waters around the world.

Alien, Exotic or Non-native: a living species originating from somewhere else

Some non-native species, like **honeybees,** can be very helpful. Some, like **dandelions**, are considered to be a nuisance but do no real harm. Others are like biological bullies. They arrive and take over, out-competing local species for space, or causing great damage. They don't bring their natural predators with them, so their numbers can get out of control. These bullies are the ones we call "invasive." They are very good at competing with our native organisms and winning. They take over and offer little or no benefit. They may even cause a great deal of harm.

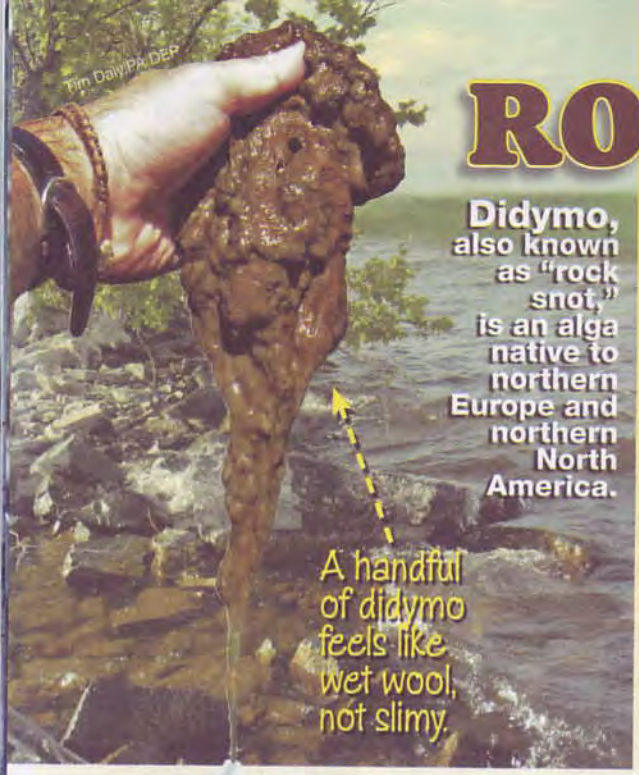


European starlings

were **introduced** (released on purpose) in New York City's Central Park in 1890 by fans of William Shakespeare who wanted to bring in each kind of bird mentioned in his writings. They've spread across North America, and can now be found from Alaska to Mexico. Starlings are so well established now, it's as if they are native. We say they are **naturalized**.

Invasive: an alien species that causes problems in its new environment

Purple loosestrife and Norway maple are non-native plants that have been sold at garden centers for use in landscaping. Their seeds traveled away from the gardens and the plants "**escaped**" and spread into wild areas. They crowd out native plants and don't provide food for native wildlife.



ROCK SNOT

Didymo, also known as "rock snot," is an alga native to northern Europe and northern North America.

A handful of didymo feels like wet wool, not slimy.

Its range is expanding, and as it expands it is acting as an invasive. Rock snot is becoming plentiful in areas where it was known before only in low amounts, and in new areas too. It forms long stalks attached to rocks on the river bottom. As the stalks grow longer, especially during a growth spurt called a "bloom," they can form into wavy mats that cover the stream bottom. The mats smother the aquatic insects living there. These insects are food for fish, so the effects are felt up the food chain. To limit the spread, people should completely dry and disinfect their boat and all of their gear before moving from one waterbody to another.

Rock snot cells are microscopic and can be spread in a single drop of water carried from one stream to another. (Enlarged image; actual size is about the width of a human hair)

CHINESE MITTEN CRAB

Hairy claws make these crabs look like they're wearing mittens.

Chinese mitten crabs have been found in the Hudson River. They may have arrived here in ballast water of ships, or been released on purpose by people hoping to establish them here as a food source. Chinese mitten crabs burrow into stream banks and cause erosion and habitat loss. They are aggressive and may out-compete our native crabs and crayfish. They can travel over land to go around barriers and reach new areas upstream. If you find one, do not return it to the water. Instead, freeze it and contact DEC immediately to report your finding.

The adult's body is about three inches wide. The eight sharp, pointed walking legs are twice as long as the body is wide!

NORTHERN SNAKEHEAD

These fish, native to Asia, have been found in two ponds in New York City and in Orange County. If left unchecked, the population in Orange County could spread throughout the Hudson River system. What sets these fish apart is their ability to breathe air. They are primitive lung fish and can survive in waters with very low oxygen levels. Adults can grow to three feet long and females can produce many young by spawning up to five times per year. They are voracious predators that prey upon our native fish as well as compete with them for food.

EXCELLENT PREDATORS!

With their sharp teeth, they eat fish, frogs, crayfish and aquatic insects.

If you catch a snakehead fish, do not return it to the water. Freeze it and report your catch to your DEC Regional Fisheries Office.

ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE (ALB)

Asian longhorned beetles have been found in New York City and on Long Island. Adults are up to 1¼ inches long. Females lay eggs on a variety of tree species, but maples are a favorite. The larvae hatch, burrow into the tree, and feed on the inner bark and the sapwood. They can do enough damage that eventually the tree dies.

Adult ALB emerge through holes almost the size of a dime. They make a perfectly round hole by rotating their body as they chew their way out of the tree.

Pennsylvania Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources-Forestry Archive, Bugwood.org

DON'T MOVE FIREWOOD!

The larvae of **EAB** and **ALB** can travel great distances and infest new areas when people move firewood. It's illegal to bring untreated firewood into New York State and to move untreated firewood more than 50 miles from where it was cut. Check out **www.dontmovefirewood.org** to learn more.

Did you know...

There are more than **900 million ash trees** in New York, about seven percent of all the trees in the state.

Many baseball bats are made from New York-grown ash trees.

Dobbie Miller, USDA Forest Service

EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB)

The name says it all: it's emerald green and it eats ash trees. Adult emerald ash borers are about ½ inch long. Females lay their eggs on ash trees. When the eggs hatch the larvae chew through the bark and live between the bark and the wood, eating the inner bark, disrupting the flow of water and nutrients. Eventually they cause enough damage that the tree dies. In June 2009 EAB were found for the first time in New York State, in Cattaraugus County.

WATER CHESTNUT

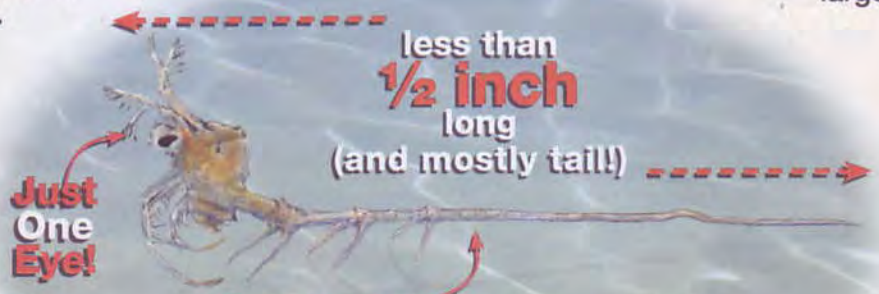
The roots of this plant anchor it in the mud at the bottom of waterbodies while a long stem stretches to a clump of leaves floating on the surface of the water. Water chestnut can become so plentiful that their leaves limit sunlight from reaching underwater plants that need it for photosynthesis. To help limit water chestnut from spreading, people should completely clean their boats and all of their gear before moving from one waterbody to another.

Water chestnut seeds are hard nuts with four ½-inch barbed spines.

Thick floating mats make it difficult for boaters and swimmers to enjoy the water.

SPINY WATER FLEA

This tiny crustacean from northern Europe and Asia arrived in the Great Lakes in ballast water of ocean-going ships. It has spread to inland lakes, including Great Sacandaga Lake. Spiny water fleas disrupt the natural food chains in the areas they invade by competing with native zooplankton (microscopic aquatic animals) for food, as well as eating native zooplankton.



They can be bothersome to anglers when they attach to fishing lines in large numbers. To limit the spread, people should completely dry and disinfect their boats and all of their gear before moving from one waterbody to another. Spiny water fleas are similar to fishhook water fleas, another invader in the Great Lakes.

To report an invasive species, contact: NYSDEC, Office of Invasive Species Coordination, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4756; Phone 518-402-8924; e-mail fwhabtat@gw.dec.state.ny.us

GIANT HOGWEED

WOW!

This plant can grow up to 14 feet tall and has huge leaves and large showy clusters of white flowers. It spread from the gardens in which it was planted and it now also grows in the wild in Western and Central New York.

If you see this plant, DON'T TOUCH IT!

Tell an adult where it is and ask them to call the Giant Hogweed Hotline at 1-845-256-3111. If you get the sap on your skin and your skin is exposed to sunlight before you wash it off, it causes painful blisters. If it gets in your eyes, it can cause blindness.

GOT SHEEP?

Scientists looking for natural ways to control invasive species have found that sheep will eat giant hogweed, often with no harm to themselves.

JAPANESE KNOTWEED

If it would stay in the garden, like those who brought this shrub here in the 1880s intended, we might love Japanese knotweed for its green foliage and August-blooming flowers. Instead, it spreads like crazy, growing quickly along forest edges, stream banks and disturbed areas. Growing to 10 feet tall, it spreads over large areas with dense growth and crowds out native plants. To control its spread, remove Japanese knotweed when you find it in the wild and don't use it in gardens.

GARLIC MUSTARD

To limit its spread, teams of people cut garlic mustard down or pull it up before the seeds form each year.

Garlic mustard was brought here from Europe in the 1860s to be used for food and medicine. It escaped from garden plantings into nearby woods. It comes out early in the spring, getting the jump on native plants, and shades them, growing 2-3½ feet tall. The native plants have trouble getting enough sunlight to grow. Garlic mustard produces many seeds, so the plants can spread far in just a few years.

The OUTSIDE Page

Ideas for Exploring Outdoors!

Become an Invasive Species DETECTIVE

An outdoor detective does many things. They observe the world around them. They investigate things they're curious about and record their observations. Become an invasive species detective and go a step further. Share your findings with others and work to combat invasive species. Here are some ideas to get you started. What else can you do?

- Watch for invasive species in your neighborhood. Learn what to be on the lookout for, including native look-alikes. If you find something suspicious, report it to DEC's Office of Invasive Species Coordination (see page 6).
- Become a Weed Warrior and help organized groups in your area to remove invasive plants.
- Don't spread invasive animals and plants. Don't move firewood. Clean and dry your equipment (boats, fishing gear, boots, etc.) if you've been in or near water.
- Use native plants in the garden instead of non-native species.
- Make a "Not Wanted" poster to teach others about invasive species.

Not Wanted Poster

Make a "**NOT WANTED**" poster about an invasive species in your area. Include a picture or drawing of the invasive. Describe what the plant or animal looks like, where it came from, and how to prevent it from spreading further. Use your poster to let your friends and neighbors know how they can help stop the spread of invasive species.

For more information:

Alien Invaders: Species That Threaten Our World by Jane Drake and Ann Love (Tundra Books, Toronto, Canada, 2008)
Science Warriors: The Battle Against Invasive Species by Sneed B. Collard III (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 2008)
"Intruders! New York's Battle to Stop the Spread of Invasive Species" by Leslie Surprenant, in *Conservationist*, April 2009, pg 9-13. (available at www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/53542.html)

Also visit our web page at **www.dec.ny.gov/education/40248.html** for links to websites about invasive species, including one with songs about how you can prevent their spread.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
New York State *CONSERVATIONIST FOR KIDS* Volume 3, Number 1, Fall 2009
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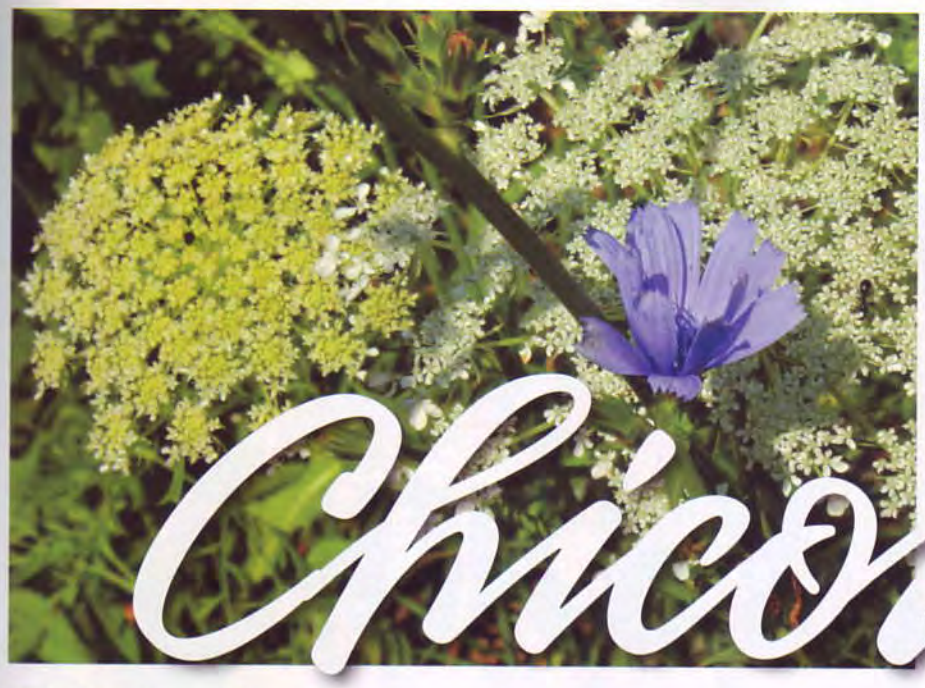

Barbara Nuffer

Barbara Nuffer

Chicory

Cichorium intybus

By Barbara Nuffer

Sky blue flowers of wild chicory beautifully decorate the shoulders of New York's rural and urban roads. A European native, this perennial herb was first cultivated in North America in the 1700s. Although each individual flower lasts only one day, the plant is continually in bloom from May through October. Common names include "cornflower" and "coffee weed."

amorous pursuit of the Sun God Apollo. To avenge his rejection, Apollo turned the maiden into a blue flower that opens each morning to face the sun and slowly fades throughout the day.

Europeans prize young chicory leaves for salads. Egyptians have eaten them for thousands of years and still do. The French dig up the deep tap root and force white shoots during the winter for a salad called Barbe de Capuchin or "Beard of the Monk." The root has been roasted and ground as a coffee substitute since the Napoleonic Era in France, although it contains no caffeine. You can find chicory coffee today in New Orleans cafes being sipped along with a fresh sugary beignet. It can also be used as a flavoring for brewing stout.

other uses as well; surprisingly, the blue flowers produce a yellow dye and the green leaves produce a blue dye.

Thomas Jefferson grew chicory on his Monticello farm. Chicory's leafy growth has a higher nutritional value than alfalfa, is particularly grazed by pregnant beef cows, and is an excellent livestock forage supplement due to its toxicity to parasitic worms. And the 3,000 seeds that the average chicory plant produces are a prized food for birds.

Blooming early in the morning, the flowers turn to follow the sun.

The silver-dollar-sized flowers are scattered in clusters along the three- to four-foot tall stems of the plant. Rarely, white or pink flowers may be found. Like dandelion, chicory has a composite flower, meaning the single "flower" is actually made up of many flowers. Each blue petal, with its distinctive toothed edge, is actually a ray flower, containing both male and female parts.

Blooming early in the morning, the flowers turn to follow the sun. The Swedish botanist Linnaeus used the flowers as a "floral clock," finding that they opened at 5 a.m. and closed at 10 a.m. in that latitude.

An early Greek legend has it that a beautiful blue-eyed maiden refused the

The medicinal qualities of all the parts of the chicory plant have been known for centuries. It has been used for everything from an aphrodisiac to a cure for constipation. Nicholas Culpeper, the famous seventeenth-century herbalist, described it as "good for those who have an evil disposition." The plant has

Queen Anne's Lace, with its delicate, doily-like white flowers, frequently grows intertwined with chicory, creating a lovely blue and white fringe along New York's summer roadsides. Look for brightly plumaged goldfinches flitting among chicory plants gathering seeds, flashing yellow around the true blue flowers. It is a sight that will make you smile.

Barbara Nuffer works in DEC's Division of Air Resources in Albany.

One careless match . . . Yours ?

Remember – Only you can

PREVENT FOREST FIRES !

U. S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service 54-CFFP-3E

NATION-WIDE COOPERATIVE FOREST FIRE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN
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New York State Conservation Dept.

Happy 65th Birthday, SMOKEY BEAR

By Ellen Bidell

Most of us remember the slogan ***"Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires."*** That famous saying has been Smokey Bear's mantra for nearly all of the 65 years the big bear in a ranger hat has been reminding us about the dangers of careless behavior in the forest.

Smokey's beginnings date back to 1944, when illustrator Albert Staehle created the image of Smokey Bear pouring a bucket of water on a campfire with the caption "Smokey says—Care will prevent 9 out of 10 forest fires." But the fire prevention awareness campaign actually began several years earlier during WWII. In the spring of 1942, a Japanese submarine surfaced off southern California and fired a barrage of shells at an oil field in Santa Barbara, near the Los Padres National Forest. Since most experienced fire fighters were involved in the war effort, there were limited resources to fight forest fires. This caused the public to become concerned that another incendiary shell could spark a raging blaze. In response, the U.S. Forest Service created a public awareness campaign, using slogans like "Don't Aid the Enemy," and "Our Carelessness, Their Secret Weapon."

However, a common cause of forest fires wasn't enemy shells or bombs—it was (and often still is) children. The Advertising Council believed the way to reach children might be through the image of a cute forest animal. At the time, Walt Disney's 1942 motion picture "Bambi" was garnering a lot of attention. Disney agreed to lend Bambi's image to the Advertising Council for their forest fire prevention effort. The campaign was a huge success. However, since Bambi was on loan from Disney for only a year, the Forest Service needed to create its own icon, and the image of Smokey was born.

The real live Smokey Bear appeared six years later during a forest fire in the Lincoln National Forest in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico. The fire was spreading rapidly, and forest rangers, personnel from a nearby Army base, staff from the New Mexico Game Department, and civilian volunteers were called in to assist. Twenty-four of the brave firefighters were trapped in the fire's path, and lay down on a rockslide for more than an hour to escape the scorching heat and flames. They emerged from the ordeal unharmed, but noticed a small bear cub that had taken refuge in a tree that was directly in the path of the fire. His hind legs were badly burned and his mother was nowhere to be found. The firefighters nicknamed him "Hotfoot Teddy" and brought him to receive veterinary care.

Hotfoot Teddy soon became a national phenomenon, and the New Mexico game warden offered the cub to the Forest Service with the understanding that the bear would help publicize fire prevention and conservation. Hotfoot Teddy became Smokey Bear and went to live at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. He passed away twenty-six years later and is buried at the Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan, New Mexico.

Smokey's image continues to convey the fire prevention message to children and adults alike.

DEC forest rangers visit many elementary schools each year with a life-sized Smokey Bear in tow. Smokey also makes regular appearances in parades, fairs and special functions.

More than 100,000 wildfires start each year because of careless human behavior.

Over the years, however, Smokey's message and image have evolved somewhat to reflect the times. About five years ago, the official slogan was changed from "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" to "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires." The Forest Service wanted people to know that there are more than just forests at risk, there are also fire threats to prairies, grasslands and rangelands. In fact, wildfires claim an area nearly equal to the size of New Hampshire every year. And while the acreage of burned forest has decreased from 22 million acres in 1944 to 5 million acres in 2008, the incidence of wildfires is on the rise, at a cost of billions of dollars annually.

In recent years, Smokey's message of fire prevention has taken an interesting twist—Smokey now informs us that some forest fires are okay. Prior to this, Smokey's message was that all forest fires are bad. But fire professionals want to change the public perception of fire in our forests. Now, wildfire professionals make a distinction between good and bad fires. Fires set intentionally by professionals under controlled conditions, to manage ecosystems or reduce fuel loads are called prescribed fires. Fires which start accidentally or by natural causes such as lightning strikes, but are allowed to burn under specific conditions are called natural prescribed fires.

Susan L Shafer

The icon of forest fire prevention for 65 years, Smokey Bear continues to convey the fire prevention message to children.

Scientists now understand that fire plays a major role in many ecosystems. Some species, such as the pitch pine found in the Albany Pine Bush and the Long Island Pine Barrens, require periodic fires to open seed cones and to allow regeneration of the species. Fire also enhances woodland diversity by allowing different plant species to take

DEC photo

While many forest fires are bad, some are set by fire professionals in controlled situations. These kinds of prescribed fires can help manage ecosystems and allow for greater biological diversity.

the place of formerly large, homogenous stands of mature trees.

One hundred years of total fire suppression have resulted in accumulations of forest fuels—dead trees, fallen branches and heavy leaf litter—on the forest floor. These conditions can lead to more intense fires, which are difficult to control and cause more damage to forest ecosystems than do lower intensity fires. Between 2004 and 2007, the number of acres burned due to wildfire each year was nearly double the national annual average of 4.6 million acres, despite there being ten thousand fewer fires. In addition, more and more people are building homes at the forest edge, resulting in property value losses in the hundreds of millions in the event of a wildfire. Some larger fires have caused property loss of more than $1 billion.

Some "bad" wildfires are unintentionally caused by humans. They generally start where wild land meets suburban or urban areas, and endanger property of high value. These fires ignite in the absence of firefighters, allowing the fire to expand and grow more intense, making suppression more difficult. Typically, these fires are caused by burning trash, unattended campfires, barbecue or woodstove coals and ashes, careless discarding of cigarettes, children playing with matches, arson, and outdoor machinery operating without spark arrestors. More than 100,000 wildfires start each year because of careless human behavior.

Smokey Bear knows that many of these wildfires are preventable, and asks each of us to stop and think about our behavior. At 65, Smokey has no intention of retiring. He remains committed to continue educating the public about the dangers of fire, and reminds us that "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires."

Ellen Bidell is a citizen participation specialist in DEC's Division of Public Affairs and Education.

A Teacher's Legacy

by Paul Schnell

For 60 years, volunteers like Don Bronson have been sharing conservation messages and making hunters safer.

Editor's Note: This year marks the 60th anniversary of New York's Hunter Education Program. In observance of this milestone, we offer herein a profile of one volunteer instructor. While you may not have had the good fortune to meet Don Bronson, he is symbolic of the many instructors across this great state of ours who tirelessly volunteer their time to pass the traditions of hunting, archery, waterfowl identification and trapping on to the next generation. —D. Nelson

Studio Z Photography — Alan Zamorski

Don's legacy is not in his many accolades, rather it lies in the many lessons he instilled in young hunters about respecting the world around us.

Aficionados of vintage American side-by-sides—the Foxes, Parkers, Lefevers—would look askance at this Sears and Roebuck Co. brand. It was, however, the nicest of the three double guns that Paul Bronson, Don's eldest son, said I could select from the estate of his beloved dad.

The other two, a severely tired Sears Co. gun and a sloppy Brazilian over/under, were entirely unsuitable for the memories I held of my dear friend and mentor Don Bronson of Newfane, a quaint town in western New York. While fine arms collectors might call them "beaters," that is, inexpensive, well-used field pieces, I like to think of the Sears guns as all-American, utilitarian straight shooters—in every respect like their previous owner.

You see, Don was a no-nonsense, meat-and-potatoes guy. His sons Paul and Greg are likewise. A product of the post-war era, Don was a U.S. Marine, college graduate, high school science teacher and a respected hunter safety and waterfowl identification instructor for more than 35 years. In his time, he taught thousands.

As a respected Hunter Education Master Instructor, he also taught dozens of volunteers to become archery and firearms safety trainers. His gravelly voice sounded, at times, like the heavy report of a 10-gauge bearing down on overhead geese. Don's sometimes gruff, impenetrable exterior however, contained a gentle, unassuming manner that lent itself to the "teachable moment." It was a congenial mix of disciplining father, lovable uncle, professor, and competitive brother.

I first met Don in 1973 as his hunter safety student. Two years later, Dad and I enrolled in his waterfowl identification course so we could hunt in the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in western New York. In 1994, my son Luke, age 12, took Don's class, and in 2000, Caleb, at 12, followed suit. Three generations; one teacher.

Don believed that new hunters should start with a single-shot shotgun. His mantra: using a single-shot improves a young hunter's proficiency. In time, graduating to a double-barrel was equally sporting. To this day, many hunters still use these classic side-by-sides and over-and-under guns, preserving the aesthetics and mystique of a bygone era.

James Clayton

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1949, NYS enacted a law requiring all first-time hunters to pass a hunter education course. This law was a direct result of sportsmen's requests to attempt to reduce the number of hunting-related accidents.

New York's Sportsman Education Program is directed by DEC and delivered by volunteer instructors. The program serves to train "safe, knowledgeable, responsible and involved hunters."

Most of the funding for hunter education comes from excise taxes on firearms and ammunition.

NY has 2,500 volunteer instructors, who certify 30,000 students in 1,200 courses each year.

Courses are generally given from August to October in advance of fall hunting seasons, and in March and April in advance of spring turkey hunting seasons.

To find a course near you, visit: **www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9191.html** or call 1-888-HUNT-ED2 (1-888-486-8332).

Over the years, Don received many accolades from his peers. At the 2005 Conservation Federation awards banquet in Niagara County, Don received Bowhunter Safety Educator of the Year. A very surprised Donald approached the emcee and upon accepting the award, leaned forward into the microphone and quietly declared, "It's a conspiracy." Moments later, after returning to our table, I pressed him to explain. He whispered, "Others are more deserving."

In 2003, the western NY chapter of Pheasants Forever sponsored Don, me and a couple of others to attend the first workshop held in the state to become Leopold Education Project facilitators: to teach schoolteachers and students the conservation philosophy of Aldo Leopold, considered the father of wildlife management. Leopold's crowning literary achievement, *A Sand County Almanac*, published posthumously in 1949, is thought by many to be the definitive statement on the modern conservation ethic.

In one activity, participants were asked to jot down the name of a person who had positively affected their life, and why. Someone in the class indicated that Don had a significant impact on their life, that he displayed great integrity and discipline, and had the gift of a talented teacher. In many ways, they felt he espoused the values attributed to the late, great Leopold—naturalist, conservationist, sociologist, and family man.

Don had no time for self-serving individuals, braggarts or game law violators. At Niagara-Wheatfield High School, where he taught for 26 years, former students recall certain pupils being suspended for disrespect or tardiness.

Once, in a hunter safety class filled to capacity, two young men arrived late—three minutes late by our watches. Their swagger of indifference was readily apparent as they approached Bronson the Instructor. Don's stern rebuke, "You're late; the class has already started," met with little resistance as the pair returned to their car.

I suspect Don's Marine Corps duty coupled with countless hours spent in his beloved duck blinds and deer stands shaped his punctuality and focus. He possessed sharp wit and was well-read. We spent many hours discussing current environmental issues, articles and books recently read.

Studio Z Photography — Alan Zamorski

Don's no-nonsense, yet compassionate, disposition made him--and others like him--the perfect candidate to teach young hunters about the importance of hunter safety and conservation traditions.

Don's library contained mostly science and outdoor related titles: natural history, botany, hunting, woodcraft, history. Ian McHarg's "Design with Nature" was a favorite. McHarg's tenet—that wise land use and planning are necessary for humans to coexist with nature and natural processes—held great appeal to Don.

In the courtyard at Niagara-Wheatfield, Don's students created a natural habitat complete with a pond, turtles, native trees, shrubs and bird-feeders. Songbirds, pheasants and waterfowl frequently visited and occasionally nested there. He was proud of the students' accomplishments. Like

Don's sometimes gruff, impenetrable exterior however, contained a gentle, unassuming manner that lent itself to the "teachable moment."

Leopold, Don believed that introducing youth to the joys of nature, whether hunting, fishing, trapping or simply marveling in its beauty, was a key element in building real American character.

After retirement, Don continued to share his understanding of the co-dependency of wildlife and habitat. As a board member of the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF), Don distributed hundreds of native chestnut seedlings that he grew in cardboard milk cartons. Visitors to his ACF table at conservation events learned about the rare trees and were given a free tree with instructions on how to nurture and grow one. For his efforts, the NYS Chapter awarded him the Director's Award for Excellence in Education.

However, Don's legacy wasn't measured in the many awards that he collected over the decades, but in his practicing wise stewardship of natural resources, and particularly for mentoring young people. Don stressed personal accountability for one's actions, to be knowledgeable in the subject one

Kenneth Bagjinski

Not only does hunter safety education teach young hunters valuable and important lessons, it also promotes the practice of conscientious stewardship of our natural resources.

Paul Schnell

As a hunter education instructor, Don used many items as reference and teaching materials for his class. Here is a collection of some of the things Don held most dear: important works on ecology, conservation ethics, and his side-by-side shotgun.

pursues, and to share what one has learned for the benefit of the resource and for the development of the individual as well.

These are the intangible things that I am reminded of every time I shoulder Don's old Sears twin-barrel. And sometimes in the quiet, I hear Don compassionately teach me yet again.

Photographer and previous *Conservationist* contributor **Paul Schnell** lives in Hilton, NY.

As a final tribute to Don Bronson's conservation legacy, Don was inducted into the New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame (NYSOHF) at the 25th Anniversary banquet in Canastota, April 26, 2008. The NYSOHF recognizes sportsmen and sportswomen from all parts of New York State who have given selflessly to improve hunting, trapping, and fishing, and the preservation of the environment.

According to President Leo Maloney, "Some members of the OHF have made major, well-publicized achievements while others have worked anonymously helping achieve their goals slowly over many years. By recognizing individuals and uniting them in a common organization, the Hall of Fame helps to create even more momentum for the common goals."

The NYSOHF is also involved with other activities that further the enjoyment and preservation of the outdoor heritage. Members frequently present seminars, conduct clinics, or are involved in educational displays and programs. There is a special focus on getting youth involved through fishing derbies, casting clinics, working with handicapped youngsters, or Future Anglers Outreach (FAO). FAO is a program that provides tackle to interested youth and instructs them and their parents or guardians in hopes that they will avoid frustration, enjoy success, and continue fishing as a lifelong sport.

More than 200 men and women have been honored with induction into the NYSOHF. Classmates of Don's inducted in 2008 include Bud Woodfield, Ron Kolodziej, Tim Noga and Scott Sampson; like Don, Tim and Scott were inducted posthumously.

Plaques highlighting their achievements are displayed in the OHF located inside Gander Mountain's store at 8634 Clinton Street, New Hartford. The website is **www.nysohof.org**.

Flotilla Flagships

by Jenna DuChene

To commemorate Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage up the river that now bears his name, a grand flotilla of ships sailed up the Hudson from Battery Park to Albany in September 2009. The following are two of the most celebrated ships that made up the flotilla.

Susan L. Shafer

The Half Moon: In 1609, the Dutch East India Company commissioned Captain Henry Hudson to explore the New World via the ship, *Halve Maen* (Dutch for Half Moon). Hudson would indeed explore the strange new land in search of a passageway between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, but rather than find this passage, he would instead discover the river later named after him. The *Half Moon* is a replica of the *Halve Maen* and was built in Albany in 1989. The ship accurately depicts the seventeenth-century ships of the Dutch East India Company, and acts as a floating museum, holding events and conducting public educational programs. Visitors can explore the ship and see the accurate flags, navigational tools and maritime paraphernalia from Henry Hudson's day. Oftentimes the crew is even found in traditional colonial dress. Volunteer crew members are given proper training dockside and, true to history, everyone aboard has an important role to play.

Susan L. Shafer

The ship *Half Moon*

The Onrust: Nearly four hundred years ago, Adriaen Block, a merchant ship captain, sailed up the Hudson River to explore resources discovered by Henry Hudson on his maiden voyage. However, Block and his crew were stranded after a fire destroyed their ship, the *Tyger*. Instead of waiting for a ride, though, they decided to build a new ship. This ship, the *Onrust*, took six months to build. With its completion, the *Onrust* became the first ship ever built entirely in the New World, and thus the first ever built in New York. In their new ship, Block and his crew explored much of New England, giving the area the name New Netherland. The replica *Onrust*, a member of this September's flotilla, took three years to complete. In accordance with the non-profit group New Netherland Routes, Inc., Gerald de Weerdt, a maritime museum curator from Holland, spearheaded the build. The result is an amazing, accurate replica of Block's ship. On May 20, 2009, it was launched into the Mohawk River, and like the *Half Moon*, the *Onrust* is a floating museum where the public can learn about seventeenth-century maritime explorations.

Jenna DuChene is the staff writer of *Conservationist*.

Barbara Nuffer

The ship *Onrust*

Susan L. Shafer

BRIEFLY Compiled by Jenna DuChene and Eileen Stegemann

Bill Banaszewski

James Clayton

BearVault

Smarter than the Average Bear

A small, middle-aged female black bear in the northeastern Adirondacks has become a national celebrity. Called Yellow-Yellow for the two yellow ear tags that biologists put on to keep tabs on her, the bear has figured out how to open the once-believed impenetrable storage canister, the BearVault500. The canister is one of many on the market meant to keep camper's food and necessities safe and secure, away from rummaging bear paws. While the vault baffled the biggest grizzlies in Yellowstone National Park, Yellow-Yellow deciphered the canister's tricky locking mechanism. (Author's note: you have to squeeze the lid hard in a particular spot while simultaneously twisting—there are many people, myself included, who have difficulty doing this.) Eye-witnesses to the bear's cunning problem-solving describe how she bites the canister's lid and twists her whole head to remove it. Campers have also reported seeing other bears starting to solve the puzzle. Currently, the makers of the BearVault500 are developing a new canister and plan to test it on none other than Yellow-Yellow.

Archery in the Schools

Archery is the new gym choice for many students in some schools across New York State. First begun in select New York schools in January 2008, the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) seeks to promote student education, physical education and participation in the lifelong sport of archery. NASP is aimed at 4th-12th graders and teaches archery history, safety, technique, equipment, mental concentration and self-improvement. Interestingly, it appears that students who don't normally participate and enjoy sports-related or extra-curricular activities seem to excel at the program. Twenty-eight schools from 21 New York school districts participate in NASP, and an additional 25 schools are signing up this year. For more information on NASP, visit DEC's website at **www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/49506.html**.

James Clayton

Native Returns

Recently, scientists discovered wild young Atlantic salmon in the Salmon River, New York's largest coldwater tributary to Lake Ontario. Gone from the river since the late 1800s—the result of overfishing, deforestation and construction of dams—the return of wild salmon after more than a 100-year absence is cause for celebration. One possible explanation for their return is that the invasive alewife, a small prey fish of the salmon, has been decreasing in number. Alewife contain high levels of thiaminase, which when eaten causes low levels of thiamine in adult salmon and their eggs, and the early death of newly hatched fish. The discovery of young wild salmon (offspring of previously stocked fish) provides hope that the fish will steadily grow and thrive. DEC and the United States Geological Survey plan to continue to monitor tributaries to track populations of this important native fish.

BRIEFLY

Rick Wouda

Daredevil Muskie

A tagged muskellunge is believed to have survived a trip over Niagara Falls. The muskie, originally tagged and released in the Upper Niagara River near Navy Island in 2008, was caught by an angler this past March in the Lower Niagara River. While the fish could have traveled by way of the Welland Canal to the Lake Ontario system, biologists feel this is unlikely, and that the more probable route was via Niagara Falls. This wouldn't be the first time, as previous studies have also documented similar muskellunge movements from the Upper to Lower Niagara River.

EAB Invades New York

The destructive, non-native emerald ash borer (EAB) has been found in New York. DEC and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets first documented the invasive insect in Cattaraugus County, but how far the insect has spread is unknown. EAB is responsible for the destruction of more than 70 million ash trees in the United States. DEC and staff from various other agencies and organizations set traps and conducted surveys of suspected infected areas to determine the range of the beetle in New York. If you see one of the purple prism traps, please leave it undisturbed. To prevent EAB from spreading further, DEC is asking everyone to follow the new firewood regulations found at **www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28722.html**. For more information on EAB, visit **www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html**.

David Cappaert — Michigan State University — Bugwood.org

Winning Marinas

Two marinas are being recognized for providing outstanding marine pumpout services. Boaters nominate the marinas during a boater survey conducted by the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation Clean Vessel Assistance Program (CVAP). The annual excellence awards recognize marinas that provide high-quality, affordable pumpout services, thus protecting and improving water quality in the state's navigable waterways. This year's winners were: the City of New Rochelle Municipal Marina at the Echo Bay Yacht Club (not-for-profit/municipalities category); and Barrett Marine Inc. on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal and Finger Lakes (private marina category). The winning marinas will receive grants that reimburse the construction, maintenance and promotion of their facilities. For more information about CVAP, visit **www.nysefc.org** and click on CVAP in the "Programs" menu.

Long Island's First Turkey Season

Susan Shafer

This November, Long Island hunters will be able to enjoy the first wild turkey hunting season. Wild turkey disappeared from the area in the mid nineteenth century due to a reduction in forested habitat, but thanks to reintroduction efforts, the population is now estimated at more than 3,000. The new hunting season will be open in all of Suffolk County and limited to five days. Successful hunters will be encouraged to bring harvested birds to a DEC check station so staff can record data to use in evaluating the season. For details, regulations and guidelines of the new wild turkey season, please visit DEC's website at **www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8366.html**.

Editors Note: *Please note that on page 25 of the June 2009 issue, the caterpillars pictured are eastern tent caterpillars, not the similar-looking forest tent caterpillar. The accompanying photo shows the difference—the eastern tent caterpillar has a white line down its back with light blue and black spots on its sides; the forest tent caterpillar has white footprint-shaped marks down its back and light blue stripes on its sides. In addition, forest tent caterpillars do not make tents in crotches of trees.*

James Clayton

LETTERS Compiled by Eileen Stegemann and Jenna DuChene

Dinner for Two

Enclosed is a picture taken on our back deck. I never saw a turkey and a squirrel share a meal at a bird feeder before! Is this common?

Mr. Bill Franklin
Monticello, Sullivan County

This certainly is an unusual photograph. Wild turkeys and gray squirrels share similar food preferences. In natural habitats, they both prefer "hard mast," such as the nuts of oak trees (acorns) and beech trees (beechnuts). When New York's forests produce hard mast in abundance, it is not unusual to see signs of turkey, deer, bear, grouse, and squirrels in the same small area, as these species forage and compete for acorns and beechnuts. Seed in bird feeders provides similar high energy foods, and may attract unusual numbers or assemblages of wildlife, such as the pairing pictured here.

—Gordon Batcheller, DEC Wildlife Biologist

Piebald Deer

Conservationist intern Erika Hooker shared this picture of her 16-year-old brother Mitchell with his first white-tailed deer.

The six-point piebald (technically, "skewbald" is the correct term here) buck was taken on the family farm in Richfield Springs during bow season last November. An avid outdoorsman, Mitch was named the Young Hunter of the Year by the Adirondack-Catskill Chapter of Safari Club International. The chapter sent him to a week-long leadership camp in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Congratulations to Mitch on his distinctive buck. Piebaldism is an uncommon genetic variation in white-tailed deer that causes the normally uniform brown parts of a deer's coat to be mottled with white, similar to a pinto pony. Though often used interchangeably, the term piebald usually refers to black and white coloration; skewbald refers to white and non-black colorations.

—Eileen Stegemann, Assistant Editor

Friendly Chickadees

The October 2008 article, "Back Trails, Nature's Irony," struck a chord with me. I have been a bow hunter for more than fifty years, and a few years ago I got the idea of feeding the birds while I wait for deer to show up.

As far as the birds are concerned, I am part of the tree, especially with the friendly chickadees. They land on my head, shoulders, bow, arrow, pant leg or any other handy perch. I feed them out of my hand sometimes just for the thrill.

One year I had a strange chickadee that appeared all season. It had several extra tail feathers growing above and left of the regular tail. One of the feathers was even growing upside down!

Kenneth G. Furness
Aurora, Cayuga County

Thanks for sharing. It's nice to hear from a fellow hunter who has enjoyed a similar experience.

—Dave Nelson, Editor

LETTERS

Dish Network

Here is a photo my uncle Doug took. The beaver lodge was in the south inlet of Raquette Lake. We're wondering if it's Direct TV or Dish Network and if they have HD.

Jennifer Peyser
Troy, Rensselaer County

Thanks for the amusing photograph. Obviously, whoever placed the dish out there had a sense of humor.
—Jenna DuChene, Staff Writer

Write to us
Conservationist Letters, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4502
or e-mail us at: magazine@gw.dec.state.ny.us

REVIEW by Leo Maloney

Deer Hunting In the Adirondacks: A Guide to Deer Hunting in New York's 6-Million-Acre Adirondack Park

By Dan Ladd
168 pages; soft cover $17
North Country Books, Inc.
www.northcountrybooks.com; (315)735-4877

Visit any bookstore or sport shop and you will see lots of books on deer hunting. However, if you are interested in hunting in the Adirondacks, *Deer Hunting in the Adirondacks* belongs on your shelf. Written by Adirondack resident and deer hunter Dan Ladd, this book is easy to read and flows nicely. It is designed primarily as a guide for those who want to experience the challenge of Adirondack deer hunting, which means that even experienced hunters will find it enjoyable and useful.

Ladd gives realistic ideas of what is involved in hunting, how to hunt, and suggestions on where to go. Some hunters may be overwhelmed by the vastness of the Adirondacks, but this book makes it easy by providing sections on hunting locations, including descriptions of the terrain and the area's habitat. Like any hunting guide, there are chapters on techniques, weather and weapons, as well as sections on equipment, ethics, safety and other hunting concerns. One chapter in particular focuses on how Adirondack hunters get their bucks.

While some books on deer hunting are either too basic or too technical, Ladd's book contains an interesting and manageable combination of aesthetics and practical advice. On top of that, Ladd spices up *Deer Hunting in the Adirondacks* with his own love of the Adirondacks and deer hunting, which you can grasp through his descriptions and personal anecdotes.

What was most enjoyable in *Deer Hunting in the Adirondacks* was that amid the advice and guidelines came the spirit of a hunter who spends all day in the woods without seeing a deer but still says what a great day it was. It is something that everyone should experience. This spirit and the spirit of the Adirondacks are very apparent in Ladd's book. *Deer Hunting in the Adirondacks* will actually make you want to get up and go hunting.

Oneida County resident and outdoor writer **Leo Maloney** is past president, and current secretary of the New York State Outdoor Writers Association.

Always an Adventure

by Kelly Isles

It wouldn't be a stretch to say that my childhood was...well, different. As one of three children of a New York State Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO), there was never a dull moment growing up. From late night phone calls requiring my father to go out on a search with his K-9, to looking out the window at the back of his police truck (or simply opening the freezer in our garage) and finding road-killed deer carcasses—or parts of them—used for training purposes, one could say that the Isles household is not a place for the faint of heart.

I will spare you the goriest of details; let's just say that life was always interesting. You may think that these elements made me wish that my dad would have chosen a different career; but you'd be mistaken. I have learned that one must take the bad (and the gross) with the good in life. And there is always more good than bad.

Along with deer carcasses at our house, we've had dogs that are specially trained to detect them. Throughout my father's career, he has trained, worked with, and retired three K-9s and is currently training his fourth. The dogs grew up with my siblings and me, each one as much a part of the family as our other pets. When one of the K-9s retired, it would stay home full time with our family. For us, a K-9's retirement meant that if we didn't have a new dog yet, we'd be getting one very soon. It has always been something that my brother, sister and I looked forward to—another adventure. My mom looked forward to

this as well, if only it weren't for the dog hair...everywhere you can imagine!

I have never seen anyone put as much love and dedication into their work as my dad does when he's working with his dogs. Along with family, dogs are his joy in life. Our family has dealt with the deaths of two of my father's K-9s. The passing of his dogs never slowed him down; instead, he became motivated to train other dogs. Eventually, this passion led him to succeed as coordinator of the K-9 unit.

On many occasions my dad was called out for a search in the middle of the night. Hearing him leave with his K-9 always made me feel proud. But the older I got, the more nervous I became. I realized that not even my dad always knew what he would find on a search, or what potentially dangerous situation he might encounter. I always stayed awake until he came home, listening for his heavy boots coming up the stairs to wake us up, give us each a kiss and let us know he was home safe. Those early mornings, when my dad would sit on the edge of my bed, still cold and wet from being outdoors, are some of my favorite memories.

All of these things make me proud to be my father's daughter; proud that people turn to him in a time of need, proud that he works so hard to make sure people are environmentally conscious and law-abiding.

I wouldn't change a thing about growing up with my dad as an ECO. It's been a great adventure, and I have learned so much from him. I have a feeling that I'll still be learning for years to come.

Kelly Isles is a senior at Nazareth College in Rochester.

Growing up in the Isles household was well, different.

Hunter Orange

Every Hunter Has to Know the Rules:
1. Point your gun in a safe direction
2. Treat every gun as if it is loaded
3. Be sure of your target and beyond
4. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot

Q & A about Hunting

Q. Can anyone hunt?

A. No. Hunters must be licensed. To qualify for licenses, there are educational requirements and age limits.

Educational Requirements: You must first pass a Hunter Education course that covers safety, wildlife conservation, responsible use of natural resources, outdoor skills and hunting techniques. Other special courses are required for bowhunting and trapping.

Age Limits: Junior Hunters 12 through 13 years old can hunt only under supervision of a licensed parent or guardian, or adult hunter designated in writing by the parent or guardian. Also, 14-and 15-year-olds can now hunt deer and bear. (See rules in Hunting Regulations Guide.)

Q. Is hunting dangerous?

A. The most dangerous part of a hunting trip is the drive to the hunting area. Safety courses and strict hunting laws have reduced potential dangers. Activities such as bicycling and swimming are many times more likely to result in injuries or death than hunting.

Q. Does hunting endanger wildlife?

A. No. Hunting is highly regulated. Limited seasons and bag limits ensure proper numbers of overwintering breeding stock. Too many animals in winter, when food is limited, can mean decreased survival for the whole population. Regulated hunting helps manage populations of some species to reduce crop and environmental damage, diseases and road collisions.

NYSDEC Sportsman Education
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Search "Sportsmen Education Classes"

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Pledge Card and Entry Form

Here is how I am renewing my commitment to recycling in the coming year. (Check all appropriate boxes)

- ❑ I will recycle at home, work and/or school.
- ❑ I will buy recycled-content products and packaging.
- ❑ I will purchase environmentally friendly products.
- ❑ I will try composting at home.
- ❑ I will return my deposit bottles and cans.
- ❑ I will encourage others to reduce, reuse, recycle, and bag recycled products and packaging.

Please enter me in the NY State Drawing to promote recycling and buying recycled that will be held on or about December 15, 2009. One entry per person. No purchase necessary. Your name will be kept confidential, it will not be sold to any mailing lists.

Name:_____

Daytime phone, include area code:_____

❑ Please check here if you are under the age of 18.

For contest rules go to our website: www.dec.ny.gov

Reducing Our Waste

Too Many Plastic Bags...It's A Waste! USEPA estimates 500 billion-1 trillion bags are used worldwide every year!

In New York City alone, one less grocery bag per person per year would reduce waste by 109 tons and save $11,000 in disposal costs.

Become one of the growing number of consumers who bring their own bag when shopping, thereby reducing the number of paper and plastic bags used.

We can save the energy equivalent of 11 barrels of oil, if one ton of plastic bags is reused or recycled.

Plastic bags are recycled at most grocery and retail stores.

Too Many Bottles...It's A Waste! Single-serve bottles are the fastest growing beverage choice in the United States.

Nearly 2.5 billion bottles of water are sold in New York alone—stacked end to end, they'd reach the moon.

Bottled water costs as much as $10 per gallon, where tap water costs less than one cent per gallon.

Nationally, only 10% of plastic bottles are recycled—90% end up as garbage or litter.

Be a refiller, not a landfiller! Look for a safe, durable water container and use it. This saves money and reduces waste.

2008 Big Buck Club Awards

The New York State Big Buck Club, Inc. is a private organization that maintains records of large deer and bear taken in New York. Each year since 1972, the Big Buck Club has recognized the hunters who take the largest trophy bucks in the state. The winner in each category receives an original painting by renowned artist and former *Conservationist* art director Wayne Trimm.

Largest Archery Deer:
Taken in: Erie County
Score: 170-4
Typical
Points: 10
Taken by: Stephen Hess

Largest Gun Deer:
Taken in: Orleans County
Score: 171-6
Typical
Points: 10
Taken by: Donald McKay

For more information, write to: NYSBBC, Records Office, 360 McLean Rd., Kirkwood, NY 13795
Or visit their website at: **www.nys-big-buck.org**

Autumn in Allegany State Park by Carl Heilman II