



CONSERVATION CORNER

By Burnie Haney - Conservation Director



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO ACT

It's time for action and not "re-action" to bureaucratic policies and regulations.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

In the last edition of *Fishlines* magazine I announced we are working with two state agencies on a survey to identify angler knowledge of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). We originally identified the survey information would be sent to club representatives and placed on our Federation's conservation webpage and our member's only message board. We also identified August 30th as the deadline to complete the survey; then we extended that window until September 30th. Unfortunately as of this writing we've only had 55 members participate in the survey.

In order for this survey project to be successful we're seeking every member's participation. In the coming weeks each member will receive a mailer that also explains how to access the online survey. We are keeping the survey website open until December 30th and asking for your support on this project. For additional information go to <http://www.nybass-fed.com/Data/Conservation/Index.htm>

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION - *From Chris Horton, BASS Conservation Director*

Folks, we need your help. This is our opportunity to demonstrate the collective power of the BASS Federation Nations. Basically, the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act has been introduced and is before the House Natural Resource Committee. However, because of ridiculously insane partisanship in Congress right now, there are no co-sponsors to a non-partisan bill that normally would have no problem passing. You would think that Congress would jump on an opportunity to pass a bill that everyone, regardless of affiliation, is in favor of. Because of the lines in the sand and lack of people speaking for the bill, Congress hasn't budged on the issue. The Senate version of the bill has numerous co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle... it's in the House where we have a problem.

We need our NYBCF members to write to representative Hinchey (D-NY) and let him know we want him to co-sponsor this bill (H.R. 2565). Tell him that this bill is vital to the future of our fisheries and a sensible conservative investment for our nation. For talking points go to http://www.fishhabitat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=213:national-fish-habitat-conservation-act-toolkit&catid=36:news&Itemid=50

FRESHWATER FISHING REGULATIONS

On Sep 18 the DEC released proposed changes to the 2010-12 freshwater fishing regulations for public comment. The full text of the proposed regulation changes is available on DEC's website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/57841.html>

Of great importance to us is the process of regulation changes and the fact that each year we submit proposed regulation changes that never make it out of the Regional Fishery Manager's office to the actual public comment period.

From what's been explained from the DEC HQs, Chief of Fishery, Steve Hurst, anyone can submit a proposed change to the standing fishing regulations. All submissions must go through the DEC Regional Fishery Managers and they screen them for appropriateness and further review to the DEC state offices and this is where the process gets a bit cloudy. From past practices, if that particular Regional Fishery Manager decides your recommendation is not good enough or improper, then they don't have to send it forward for state level review or public consideration.



(Conservation message continued)

Over the past three regulation cycles our Federation has submitted four changes.

- Align the C& R season on Oneida Lake to meet the statewide regulations
- Open Jefferson County and the Eastern Basin of Lake Ontario to the statewide C&R season
- Remove the 15 inch minimum size limit (MSL) for black bass on Black Lake and return to the statewide 12 inch MSL
- Remove the 20 inch MSL for black bass on Lake Erie and drop down to a 18 inch MSL during the early trophy C&R season

To date, not one of those proposals has made it to the DEC public comment period for proposed freshwater fishing regulation changes. If you think we deserve consideration then we need your help to contact your elected officials and let them know your dissatisfaction. When you do write them be sure to include everyone that needs to know. Here's a recommended list of officials.

- DEC Regional Directors
- DEC Regional Chief of Fisheries
- Assembly Members and Senators
- Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee
- Chairman of Tourism Committee

My gut says these Committee Chairs have no idea of the lost revenue due to current fishing regulations or the fact that if implemented as requested it costs the state nothing to enact yet it provides greater access to the resource for all anglers and yes generates additional revenue for the state.

We have a great opportunity right now to start sending letters of concern to our state officials about the due process, because if our recommendations are never seen by the public, then how can the DEC honestly report they're providing what the public wants?

The one undeniable truth in all of this remains that until our elected officials are made aware of your dissatisfaction with current DEC fishery policies or the lost revenue because of those same policies, nothing will change. Collectively it's up to us to sound off and let our policy makers know what we want.

To learn more about this go to: <http://www.nybass.com/showthread.php?t=39083>

This thread was initiated to provide general awareness for all bass anglers in New York and it identifies who to contact to voice your concerns.

Practice Selective Harvest and "Free the Fighter"

Burnie Haney
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NY BASS Chapter Federation