



TRAP-LINES

New York State Trappers Association

Winter Edition 2015

www.nystrappers.org

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President's Column

Just One

One of the important issues that I wanted to address when I took office was NYSTA memberships. I feel that it is extremely important to increase the number of our members. Membership numbers are very important when NYSTA addresses issues with the DEC, state legislators and other elected officials to try and protect or enhance trapping opportunities. Trappers are a small enough group to begin with and not banding together to speak with one voice on important issues such as the next fisher plan only dilutes our impact. In any given year, about 9,000-10,000 trapping license are sold in New York. Currently NYSTA has about 1,400 members; that represents between 14-16% of the state's trappers. When an issue comes up that allows us voice our opinion NYSTA members represent a minority of the trappers in the state. We really need to change this.

In my travel around the state this year I have talked to several trappers. Many didn't even know that the DEC had proposed a fisher plan so they could not respond to it. If they had been a NYSTA member, they would have been informed of the issue and could have participated in the dialogue.

Everyone knows at least one trapper that is not a member of NYSTA. There may be many reasons for this; they are upset with some NYSTA program from the past,

President's column continued...

they think the dues are too high, someone they know had a membership issue, but one of the biggest reasons is that they have never been asked. I would like to challenge every NYSTA member to convince "JUST ONE" trapper to join NYSTA. This single action will have a huge impact for the organization.

There isn't a trapper in New York that doesn't already benefit from NYSTA. If you need selling points tell them by joining NYSTA they benefit by;

- Trapper's Post magazine
- Full time lobbyist in Albany (only sportsman's group that has this)
- Insurance for affiliates that protect them so they can have fur sales
- Quarterly newsletter
- Trapper alerts that provide timely information on critical issues
- Educational scholarship opportunities for family members
- Annual NYSTA Convention in Herkimer
- Most importantly, NYSTA works to protect and enhance your right to trap!

Some people may complain about membership problems in the recent past. While I will admit that there were some issues that did affect some memberships they have been addressed and seem to have been corrected. If anyone does experience a problem, please contact me rather than let the issue fester and

become a source of irritation.

If an organization does not continue to grow, it cannot meet new opportunities, like the Pat Arnold Trapper's Youth Camp and ongoing challenges like the dangerous legal precedent that could have been set in the Rockland County case explained in detail on page 8. Without growth and a sound, consistent support base organizations slowly wither on the vine and die. The trappers of New York can ill afford to let NYSTA fade away.

In order to keep our organization strong, we **must** continue to grow. This is particularly important to show the importance of belonging to our young trappers. I again want to challenge every member to recruit "JUST ONE" new member, even if it is a youth trapper. If they can't afford the membership fee, consider buying one as a Christmas gift. NYSTA is your organization, put in this small effort to make it stronger.

In closing, I hope everyone has a safe, enjoyable and rewarding trapping season.

Ed Hogan

NYSTA President
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LOSS OF AN ADIRONDACK TRAPPING LEGEND: JOHNNY THORPE

Stony Creek:

John A. "Johnny" Thorpe, 82, a celebrated figure among trappers and die-hard outdoorsman, passed away peacefully, Tuesday, October 27, 2015 at his home in Stony Creek. His death coincided with the sixth super moon of the year, with the fifth being the ultra-rare "blood moon".

An avid outdoorsman, Johnny was living in a logging camp making more money trapping muskrats than grown men were making in defense plants - at the age of 15. Thorpe was lured to the Adirondacks by tales that spoke to his wilderness soul. After working as a wrangler at the popular dude ranches, Johnny became a farrier when he found he could make more shoeing horses than riding rodeos. Johnny met his first wife, Patricia Winch, a guest visiting the Rocky Ridge Ranch and after a courtship they settled in Lake Luzerne, eventually having six children.

Johnny is well-known to generations of trappers and fur takers. His documented fur catches are legendary; he was the record bounty trapper on the East Coast for several years. His first articles appeared in *Fur, Fish, & Game* beginning in 1956. Johnny has continued to trap and write about his trap line experiences for industry publications such as *Trapper's World*, even as he nears his eighth decade.

Legendary trapper, seasoned treasure hunter, and master woodcarver are just some of the titles Johnny earned in his long and colorful life. He was also an

accomplished writer, with hundreds of outdoor articles to his credit, written over the course of half a century. He published his memoir, "50 Years A Trapper & Treasure Hunter" in 1995 and it has remained in print to the present, a testament to Thorpe's storytelling talent.

His status as an elder statesman of trapping was established long ago. He was inducted into the National Trapper's Hall of Fame in 1996, and was known as an articulate advocate of the outdoor lifestyle. He wielded a keen pen, and was sought after as a writer right up to his last published articles for *Trapper's World*, just a few months before his death. He can still be regularly found at *Trapper's Conventions* and meets. When he isn't trapping, the man is usually busy carving wooden Indians, wildlife, and totem poles, digging for artifacts, or off on some adventure.

Johnny is survived by his sons, Jim and Bill Thorpe; daughters Maryellen, Holly and Carolynn; seven grandchildren, Keturah Thorpe, Miranda, Mallory, and Marcus Fariello, Madeline Thorpe, Maxine Reeve, and Jonah Thorpe; and his second wife, Patti Woods.

At Johnny's request there will be no calling hours scheduled. A memorial celebration of his amazing life will take place at a later date next year.

Please visit www.alexanderfh.net for online guestbook, condolences and future memorial scheduling.

Department of Environmental Conservation Creates Trapping Enforcement Team

By:

Environmental Conservation Officer
KC Kelly

Trappers come from all walks of life. Students, lawyers, plumbers, doctors and others share our time-honored lifestyle of pursuing furbearers with traps. Sometimes even game wardens get into the game.

In 1880, New York's first game protectors were appointed by Governor Teddy Roosevelt. ***"I want as game protectors men of courage, who can handle a rifle, axe and paddle; who can camp out in summer or winter; who can go on snowshoes if necessary; who can go through the woods by day or night without regard to trail,"*** he said.

Most people back then were quite familiar with rifles, axes, paddles and snowshoes. Today, however, many people have only seen these things on television. Today, most people have lost their connections with the natural world. Today, only a small percentage of New Yorkers are trappers.

It makes sense, then, that within the small group of officers now charged with enforcing trapping laws and regulations, the number of active trappers is also small.

Consider the fact that today's Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) must be "jacks-of-all-trades." They are responsible for enforcing over 40,000 laws in New York State: everything from

traditional fish and wildlife laws, to vehicle and traffic laws, the penal law, regulations on pesticides use, water quality, air quality, fresh and tidal wetlands, commercial fishing, shellfishing and lobstering, solid waste, medical waste, logging and mining operations, hazardous waste, chemical spills, boating, snowmobiling, ATVs... and the list goes on.

But a "jack-of-all-trades" is a master of none, and this has led to a few problems. In March 2014, the NYS Trappers Association (NYSTA) met with the DEC Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) and voiced their concerns that ECOs were inconsistently enforcing trapping regulations across the state. A search of dispatch blotter records of statewide trapping complaints indicated that their concern was valid. Not surprisingly, officers that were not trappers were having difficulty interpreting and enforcing trapping laws and regulations.

The Division responded by revising their basic training academy curriculum on trapping enforcement, and began teaching trapping enforcement refresher training to current field officers. A year later, it was clear that even more needed to be done.

In April of this year, the Division canvassed its officers for creation of a special team. In addition to their assigned patrol duties, the few ECOs chosen would be tasked with improving the consistency of trapping enforcement statewide, providing better regional training and guidance on trapping issues to fellow ECOs; dispelling common trapping misconceptions; and promoting trapping through increased public outreach.

In July 2015, the first regional representatives of the DLE Trapping Enforcement Team received training at the DEC's Law Enforcement Training Academy in Pulaski. Their first mission was providing public outreach support at the National Trappers Association's Northeast Regional Convention in Erie County.

If your local "Game Warden" isn't yet an expert on trapping, be patient with him or her. Remember how long it took you to

gain your trapping experience and learn the regulations in your area. If they didn't grow up trapping, they may have a lot to learn, and they've got a lot to do during trapping season besides checking your mink set or finding your stolen traps.

Better yet, if your local ECO is new to trapping, offer to take them along on your line. You may even find your next trapping partner!

NYSDEC October 20, 2015 New Chief for the Bureau of Wildlife

I am pleased to announce that Joe Racette has been appointed to the position of Chief of the Bureau of Wildlife.

Joe has an unusually diverse background to prepare him for this position. He has 23 years of experience with DEC, coordinating the regional sportsmen education program, and working with game species (migratory bird management, small game), public access, wildlife diversity and endangered species, special licenses, and habitat protection. He has worked both in the region (Region 5) and more recently, in central office. Before joining the Division, Joe worked in the Division of Water doing field studies and working with municipalities; this adds to his repertoire of experiences that have prepared him for the challenges of the Bureau. Prior to coming to DEC, Joe had six years of other professional experience, including as a commercial fisherman in Alaska, a wildlife research assistant in Kenya, and as a teacher in Tanzania.

In the past two years, Joe has been serving the Division by coordinating preparation of the State Wildlife Action Plan. In

developing the SWAP, he worked with staff in four bureaus across all regions to prepare technical materials. Consequently he has a good working knowledge of programs and resource needs across the Division. He worked collaboratively across the northeast with other state SWAP coordinators and the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a coordinated approach to the plans to enhance conservation outcomes. He prepared a strategic communication plan for outreach, and coordinated with multiple and diverse constituencies at numerous critical points in the process to ensure broad buy-in to the plan.

Joe is also an avid hunter, which when combined with his experience in game related programs in the region, provide a solid background in both game and non-game programs. Joe's diverse background, experiences, ability to work well with diverse groups, and hard-working ethic make him a good new Chief.

Please join me in congratulating Joe. I know all of you will do your best to help him succeed.

Patty Reixinger- NYSDEC Director of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

**July 31, 2015 -
Gatineau, Quebec -
Environment Canada**

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, today announced an investment totaling \$845,104 over four years for the continued research, testing and development of humane trapping systems for the capture of furbearing animals on land and in water.

The Government of Canada recognizes that hunting, angling and trapping are central to the livelihood, recreation and tradition of many Canadians. Management of these activities is an important component to the conservation of our natural heritage. This funding supports continued work by the Fur Institute to further Canada's commitments under the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards.

Quick Facts

- The Canadian fur industry directly employs 70,000 Canadians (including 25,000 Aboriginal people) and contributes more than \$800 million to the Canadian economy annually.
- The Fur Institute of Canada is the country's lead expert on humane trap research and is the official trap-testing agency for the Government of Canada and all provincial/territorial governments.

- The Fur Institute of Canada tests and certifies wild fur animal traps to animal welfare requirements, as required by the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards. This agreement was ratified by Canada in 1998 and entered into force in 2008. The agreement requires participating countries to prohibit the use of traps that do not meet the standards and to certify and regulate traps to the international standard.
- Hunting and trapping activities remain an essential traditional, cultural, and economic activity in rural and remote communities across Canada.

Quotes

"Our Government has been steadfast in its support for hunters across Canada and has stood up and defended both the seal and polar bear hunt on the world stage. Today's announcement demonstrates, once again, our firm commitment to support hunters and our understanding that hunting, angling and trapping are central to the livelihood, traditions and recreational activities of many Canadians."
- The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council

The Fur Institute of Canada's trap research and development program is unique in the world and reflects Canada's leadership role in the sustainable and wise use of our abundant wildlife resources. This investment will ensure the continuation of this essential program and is very much welcomed by the Canadian trapping community.

- Dion Dakins, Chair, Fur Institute of Canada
Related Product

For more information and to view a backgrounder on this announcement, please visit the [website of Environment Canada](#).

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Editor's Note:

This bears close watching. Many of our problems in the '70's and '80's were initiated by the same kind of efforts!

Cat disease detected in minks and muskrats

The Wildlife Society



Don't let the nickname "cat disease" fool you. A recent study in Champaign, Ill. shows toxoplasmosis, a disease spread by cats, is prevalent in semiaquatic mammals, minks (*Neovison vison*) and muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) as well. "Infected cats shed *Toxoplasma gondii* oocysts in their feces, and these oocysts are picked up by other hosts in the environment," said Adam Ahlers, University of Illinois graduate student and TWS Associate Wildlife Biologist who led the study.

Significant Other Regional news:

On January 12, 2015 a member of the **Rockland County Trappers Association (RCTA)** and a member of the **New York State Trappers Association (NYSTA)** trapped a coyote on private property in the Town of Haverstraw. The coyote was dispatched using blunt force trauma since there is a firearm discharge ban in the Town. The coyote was then removed from the trap site to another location on the property so it could be processed after the ice storm that was occurring was over. Unfortunately, the coyote was not deceased.

The **Town of Haverstraw Police Department** was contacted and responded. The **New York State Environmental Police** was also contacted and responded. The DEC officer arrived and investigated the scene. He met with the property owner who verified the trapper had permission to trap and showed the officer the written agreement. The DEC officer identified the trapper and made contact. The trapper advised the DEC Officer where the trap site was. The DEC Officer found the site and noted in his report that he found the sprung trap and evidence that supported that the coyote was indeed trapped. The case was closed by the Town of Haverstraw Officer and the DEC Officer without any citations being issued.

On February 25, 2015, the trapper was stopped by a **Peace Officer of the Hudson Valley Humane Society** in the parking lot of a local shopping plaza. He was removed from the vehicle, handcuffed and transported to the Town of Haverstraw

Police Department for processing on a **Misdemeanor offense of Overdriving, Torturing and Injuring Animals; failure to provide sustenance.** An offense of the **Agricultural and Markets Law.**

The trapper was fingerprinted and photographed and then released on an Appearance Ticket to reappear in the Town of Haverstraw Court.

The trapper contacted officers of the RCTA and the situation was explained. It was strongly felt that any conviction of the offense or even a plea bargain arrangement could set a dangerous precedent for all trappers in New York State. Because of the statewide concern of a dangerous precedent being established NYSTA assisted in the hiring of a law firm to defend the case. The case went to court where it stayed for several months. The case ended up being dismissed on August 2, 2015 in favor of the defendant. The judge cited in his dismissal that the complaint was based entirely on hearsay allegations.

Michael P. Finn
President
Rockland County Trappers Association



Spotlight on Region 4 East

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Back in April of this year, soon after our new president, Ed Hogan took office, he gave me a call and asked if I would be willing to do a write up on Region 4 East. He stated that he wanted to try something new for the **"TRAP-LINES"** newsletter that all of the membership receives. Each Regional Director is being asked to do an article outlining what goes on in their respective regions so that NYSTA members from throughout the state can know as well. Well, I guess it's my turn at bat, so I'll do my best to give all of you as accurate an idea of the goings on in my Region as possible.

First, Region 4 East is composed of five counties surrounding the Capital District. They are; Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene. I am most proud of the fact that the Capital of New York State is in my Region. Unfortunately, not all good comes from that. At the present time, we have two **organized affiliate chapters of NYSTA** in the Region. They are Columbia County Trappers Association and the Mid- Hudson Valley Fur Harvesters Association.

I want to start with the Columbia County Chapter first, as they have been in existence the longest. Columbia County Trappers were formed in 1980 with the leadership and help of people Jerry Leggie and Dick Leggett Sr. Both of these men are also past presidents and offices of NYSTA, and Dick is currently the Columbia County Representative.

They would welcome those of you in Columbia County, looking for a good group of people to meet with, to join them at their meetings. They meet at the **Ghent Rod & Gun Club the second Tuesday of each month, with the meeting starting at 7:30pm.** Each year, they put on two or three trapper training courses, where they work in conjunction with the Cooperative Extension 4H Trapper Education

program. They also sponsor a child to go to the NYSDEC camp every year, as well as contribute to the Ghent Sportsmen's Club fishing derby. For the past twenty years or so, they put on a wild game dinner the **last Saturday in March** as their primary fundraiser. Having attended this for the past nine years, I can say it is a great time. My Wife and I look forward to it every year. Besides the game dinner, they have a live auction and a Chinese auction as well. Most years, they also hold a gun raffle. Unfortunately, I have been informed by Dick that they will not be doing the dinner in 2016. Several of the members of Columbia County Trappers have been mentors and major players in the Pat Arnold Trapper's Youth Camp, the Eastern Camp. Tom Delisle from Columbia County was the first and now the past director of the Camp. He did a fantastic job! My hat goes off to Tom, his wife Debbi who did all the cooking and who makes the absolute best biscuits, and to all of their family for all their hard work in getting the Eastern camp started and becoming a success. **Thank-you for what you and your family contributed to that camp!!!**

As is the case with most organizations, finding people willing to step up to the plate and help out is getting tougher all the time. Columbia County Trapper's Association is no exception. I know I'm preaching to the choir, but it is getting almost impossible to find young people that are willing to get involved with anything other than electronic games and computers. Don't get me wrong, I believe computers have their place, and I myself would miss mine if it were taken from me. But, as it stands right now, if this trend continues, no organization will be able to survive without young people getting involved.

Unfortunately, Columbia County Trappers have had their share of troubles of late. In June, they lost their President, Harry Moskaluk, who was stricken while on a cruise with his wife. My sincere condolences go out to his wife Nancy and his family for their loss. He will be greatly missed. My predecessor, Ray Van Hoesen is currently ill as well and I want to wish him well and ask that you keep him in your thoughts. While at the NTA Convention I spoke with Dick Leggett and Ed Coon and are going

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to be holding a meeting to discuss the possibility of disbanding the club. This would be a tragic loss considering all the good that they have done for not only their community, but the trappers of New York as well. As Director, I have asked them if there is anything I can do to prevent that from happening, to please let me know. I for one, do not want to see that come to fruition. I wish them all the best in their decision, whatever it may be.

The Mid-Hudson Valley Fur Harvesters Association was formed in 2006, and we will be celebrating our tenth anniversary in March 2016. The MHVFHA is unique in the respect that it is combined of two counties (Rensselaer and Washington). However Washington County is in Region 5S, which is Director Frank Walters Region. Because of this, MHVFHA alternate their meeting sites so that the trappers from both Counties have an equal opportunity to attend meetings. **Meeting sites alternate each month between the Brunswick Sportsmen's Club in Rensselaer County and the Salem Fish and Game Club in Washington County. They meet at 7:00pm, September thru May.** They hold their Christmas party meeting in December at alternate clubs each year as well. We have a great group of people from both Counties that do an awful lot of work to make every endeavor they participate in a huge success. We hold at least one trapper training course a year and as many as three in past years, in conjunction with local sportsmen's clubs.

Each March, since it's inception, we have been a major contributor to the **Hoosick Falls Central Schools' "Outdoor Expo" program.** What started out as a one day program for students at attend in the high school gymnasium, to make them aware of all the outdoor activities that are available for them to get involved with, soon turned into a two day affair. This past March, it went for two and a half days, with the first day - until 4:00pm reserved for students only. The remainder of the time is then open to the public. This is all free of charge to everyone. No one gets paid for anything they do for this event, and no one can sell anything either. In the second year,

we produced a 45 minute video on fur handling, that we did on site, in the high school gymnasium.

Fleshing critters in school!

Now tell me, how many groups can lay claim to that? Believe me, it was a lot better received than you would think. I know, I was there. I did the fur handling, and I can honestly and proudly say that our booth had and to this day, still has the largest crowd gathering around it, whenever we handle fur. And that includes skinning as well. That video is still used in our trapper training courses each year. One of our members, PJ Hyde was the driving force behind starting the Outdoor Expo. It is because of his vision and leadership, along with a few other like minded individuals, including the school superintendent, Ken Facin, that the Expo is the success story that it is.

Each year, we hold a raffle as our major fund raiser, but it goes without saying, that people just don't like selling raffle tickets. Although we have had great success with our raffles, be it for guns or other items, including money, we felt it was time for a change. This year, we made our first attempt at doing a chicken barbecue along with a Chinese Auction and a 50/50 raffle. Since we had nothing to go on as far as what the support from the community would be, it was a huge gamble on our part, We decided to go with 224 meals and hope for the best. One of our members, Keith Davendonis was gracious enough to foot the bill for the rental of the pavilion at the local Polish Hall. **Thank you Keith for that very generous donation.** You don't know how much that meant to everyone!

The bad news, is that we didn't sell out. We had about 50 meals leftover, but I don't think that would been the case had there not been two other fund raisers going on in Town at the same time. unfortunately, we found this out long after our plans were set in stone and we couldn't change things. Sometimes you just have to deal with the hand

your dealt and make the best of it. And deal we did! The good news, is that we had overwhelming support from those that attended or bought tickets in advance. We ended up with six tables of donated items for the Chinese Auction, and with the 50/50 raffle, plus what we made on the dinners, we made around \$2,000.00 profit for the day. Not too shabby for our first attempt, if I say so myself! We received nothing but compliments from everyone and plans are already in the works for next years barbecue. We are already accepting items for the Chinese Auction also, so feel free to contact me if you would like to make a donation for that. I think that we will be holding it at the same location next year, as the folks at the Polish Hall (especially Sherry) were great to work with. The money we raised will be used to send kids to the NYSDEC camps and also to help with the Youth Trappers Camp. Since the MHVFHA was formed, we have been affiliated with not only NYSTA, but the Rensselaer County Conservation Alliance and the Washington County Federation of Sportsman's Clubs. Rick Vladyka, snow the current present of the Washington County Federation, marking the first time in it's history that a trapper has served in that position.

We man a booth at the Washington County Fair, the third week of August. For seven days, woman our booth from 10:00am to 10:00pm everyday. This takes a tremendous amount of manpower and planning to pull off every year, but somehow we do it with style. Rick Vladyka has had the huge task of coordinating this for the past several years and he has it down to a science. Our Federation building has won 1st place honors several times in the past nine years, as well as a few 2nd and 3rd place honors, for the displays that are present. Without exaggeration, I feel confident in saying that we have at least 20,000 people go through our building during the week to look at the displays and just ask questions about trapping. It is a long week, but very gratifying knowing that maybe we have

opened some eyes and maybe, just maybe converted a few people to at least have an open mind before casting judgement.

We also have a booth at the NYSTA Convention. We have a booth there every year, and you can find us in the Main Dealer Building right next to Joe Goodmen's booth.

Columbus Day weekend finds several of our members helping out with the Eastern Youth Camp. A few of us are mentors for the whole weekend, other are only able to make it there on the weekend to help out with the fur handling and other incidentals. I sure wish this was around when I began trapping way back when. It would have made the learning curve much shorter.

Presently we have County Reps. for Columbia and Greene Counties only.

There are no active affiliates in Albany, Schenectady or Greene Counties, however, I would like to see that change. I am currently looking for County Representatives for those Counties. If this sounds like something you might be interested in trying, or if you have any questions regarding anything I've spoken of here, please feel free to contact me,

Jim Greeley, Region 4 East Director:
(518) 658-9720, or e-mail me at live2trap@aol.com.

Contact Information for Columbia and Greene County:

Dick Leggett Sr. for Columbia County.
He can be reached at (518) 392-02062.

Harry Feines for Greene County.
He can be reached at (518) 989 6466.

I hope this has enlightened all of you a little bit, as to what we have going on here in 4 East and I look forward to hearing from you.

Jim Greeley
Region 4 East Director