

**2012 Annual Report**

**of the**

***Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board***

---

**Introduction**

*The Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board advises...*

the County Executive and the Commissioner of the Department of Environment and Planning on...

***"...matters concerning protection, development and access to fisheries, upon related issues, and upon such additional matters as may be requested by the Commissioner or by the County Executive."***

The 2012 Membership was composed of:

<b><u>FAB member</u></b>	<b><u>Associated With</u></b>
Joe Fischer, Chairman	NYS Conservation Council
Jerry May, Sr. Vice-Chairman	Great Lakes Fish Commission
David Barus	East Aurora Fish and Game
Rich Davenport	NYS Outdoor Writers Association
Scott Gault	WNY Bassmasters
Chuck Godfrey	WNY Trout Unlimited
Joseph Jemio	Boston Valley Conservation Society
Thomas Marks	Great Lakes Sportsfishing Council
Spencer Schofield	Citizen
Ronald Smith	Citizen
Paul Stoos	Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc.
(VACANCY)	

<b><u>FAB Ex-Officio member</u></b>	<b><u>Associated With</u></b>
Will Elliott	Buffalo News
Michael Wilkinson	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Buffalo
John J. Mills	Erie County Legislator, 13 <sup>th</sup> District
Richard Smith	Former New York State Assemblyman

Don Kill

Erie County Conservation Society

Herb Schultz

Southtown's Walleye Association

Mark Lee

Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

*Charter Captain Larry Jones has been formally recommended by both the board, by resolution, and Erie County Commissioner of Environment and Planning, Maria Whyte, by a memorandum for a three year appointment to the board to fill a vacancy.*

Collectively, the FAB sent, via the Chairman, a letter of introduction and concerns to Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz in early 2012.

**Development (Promotion) Issues**

Efforts continued in 2012 to quantify specific new data for input to the *online version of the Hot Spot fishing map* ([www.erie.gov/hotspot](http://www.erie.gov/hotspot)). If funding becomes available, FAB is prepared to assist other

**Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board 2012 Annual Report**

- Page 2 -

trade shows in and outside of the local region to help generate enhanced tourism revenue for Erie County.

With the online map, dissemination of information about the well-regarded Erie County fishery is accessible worldwide, greatly exceeding any audience reached by the printed version. The printed version still is very useful, particularly in the field, the online version can attract casual use of the map to entice first-time and return visits from outside of the region, including worldwide interests. We will continue to work with Environment and Planning to reassess effective updates to best meet growing public information expectations.

During 2012 FAB members continued to distribute the paper version of the "Hot Spot" fishing map throughout the region at appropriate government, retail, and special event, locations.

*Kids Day "Teach-Me-To-Fish" Clinics-* fishing rods and reels were provided by the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. (ECFSC) for distribution across 17 events, helping to introduce the fun of the outdoors through fishing for 1,595 kids across 10 different organization including these events:

- Bison City Rod and Gun, 4/29/2012; 570 total attendance; 38 volunteers;

- East Aurora's Majors Park (new), 6/2/2012, 100+ attendance, hosted by East Aurora Recreation and Erie County Federation of Sportsmen;
- Tift Nature Preserve, 6/16/2012; 176 total attendance, 18 volunteers, hosted by Erie County Federation of Sportsmen and NYSDEC;
- Chestnut Ridge Park, 6/23/2012; 310 total attendance, 21 volunteers, hosted by Erie County Federation of Sportsmen and NYSDEC.

Additional organizations which conducted the remaining 14 youth fishing events include: New York Walleye Association (Don Nikischer), Southtowns Walleye Association (Ron Wutz), West Falls Conservation Society (Dave Barus), Ducks Unlimited Green Wings (George Rockey), WNY Safari Club (Mark Mann) and Valley Community Association (Peg Overdorf).

Volunteer support from FAB members keep costs to a minimum. Generous support is provided by: Sahlen's (hot dogs); Weekley's (worms); Bass Pro Shops (fishing tackle), Dick's Sporting Goods (fishing tackle); Pure Fishing Tackle (Berkeley), Northern King Lures, Musky Joe Netli (fishing tackle), Mustad Hooks, Sheldons (Mepps) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) at Erie County Federation of Sportsmen Clubs events (displays, educational materials, youth handouts, etc.). A special Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs summary report is available at <http://erlectyfsc.org/>.

*In 2012 the sole funding for clinics has been the balance of one-time 2011 grant funds from the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo (\$5,000), to the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc., and \$1,500 from the Safari Club (also to the ECFSC). Frugal use of such funds, and lack of anticipated future funding resulted in the Federation decision to set aside approximately 200 rod & reel sets for a minimal quantity to distribute at 2013 fishing clinics. The demand by youth, many of which are from low-income families, is expanding, and demand always quickly outstrips supply. Other sports organizations continue to host and fund such clinics.*

The fish cleaning station at the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority's Small Boat Harbor was noted as being operational since past discussion with NFTA's representative. Ron Smith and Paul Stoos offered to advise and assist the NFTA, if they so desire, to develop and install informational operational signage to aid proper usage and have less chance of machinery breakdown. A laminated instructional poster had been entertained as a possible suggestion to NFTA.

The *eleventh annual Greater Niagara BassEye Celebrity Challenge*, fishing on Lake Erie and the upper Niagara River, which is scored by FAB volunteer members, raised a net of \$125,000 to benefit Cystic Fibrosis. FAB members also assisted the Stoolhead Challenge which raised \$118,000, also to benefit Cystic Fibrosis.

**Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board 2012 Annual Report**

Individually, FAB members, in their official capacities as members of other fishing/sports clubs have provided additional volunteer hours to promote the active fishery use for tournaments. The result is added awareness and substantial economic benefit to the region. Residents and visitors experience the continued high quality of life the water-based special events afford.

The Erie County FAB, in concert with the Chautauqua County FAB, with the cooperation of five charter captains, provided a boat tour of select areas of the local Lake Erie fishery for executive and legislative elected county officials of the two counties. Those in attendance received firsthand review of recreational tourism opportunities, and potential growth of tourism-related revenues generated by the fishery. The tour was based out of Dunkirk in Chautauqua County. Northern Chautauqua County Conservation Club provided walleye dinner at the Dunkirk marina after the tour.

#### Access Issues

FAB members continue to monitor, and support, by resolution, a Town of West Seneca creekside new Buffalo River Handicapped Access Kayak Launch site development with \$50,000 invested for initial construction.

The FAB in 2012 discussed with Erie County Parks Commissioner the great popularity of the Chestnut Ridge Park Lake fishing access dock, installed at the park's reservoir. Consensus was reached on procedures which can insure site integrity, and avoid need to restrict access as a means to that goal.

#### Protection and Enhancement Issues

The Buffalo River Walleye Management Project: A Plan for Restoration (aka Walleye Rearing Pond). A 2004 draft Cooperative Agreement between the United States Department of the Interior (USDI) and Erie County continues for \$115,000 federal funds received by the Department of Environment and Planning. Project final design specifications, accurate current costs, and substantial necessary other funding, have not been quantified or secured.

The potential need to return the grant award has been acknowledged by the FAB in meeting discussion. FAB recognizes the USDI strong desire to now expedite expenditure of the grant. FAB will advise, when requested by DEP, as DEP continues works with USDI on a beneficial redirection of the grant funds to an existing fully-funded public environmental enhancement project with similar goals and a viable budget.

South Park Lake Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project is a project overseen by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Fiscal years 2012 and 2013 have no funding for completion of the feasibility project, which currently is approximately fifty percent completed, according to October, 2012 Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Fact Sheet. USACE estimated that 100,000 cubic yards of organic material needs to be dredged from the lake. The agency estimates that \$150,000

more is needed to complete the fully federally funded feasibility phase, estimated to cost \$550,000 total. Design and installation will require a 35% non-federal share.

During 2012 the FAB continued to monitor presentations from the (DEC) and others regarding development of a *fish passage ladder as part of a feasibility study at Scoby Hill Dam on Cattaraugus Creek, within Erie County parkland*. The US Army Corp of Engineers suspects the structure may be unstable, and continues to explore the three potential actions: demolition, modify to allow greater water flow rates, or repair. Concurrent with these options is the possibility of a fish ladder.

The FAB continues to monitor the advance of the *Asian Carp* on the Great Lakes which will have very negative effects on our fishery and more significantly on the waters we in Erie County, New York, and millions of other Great Lakes states and province of Ontario people use for drinking, fishing, swimming, sailing, etc. .

**Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board 2012 Annual Report**

- Page 4 -

FAB member Thomas Marks has continued to participate in multi-state Great Lakes Region government discussions to control *asian carp* which has the capability to eliminate the plankton and low-level food sources for other aquatic life. He has advised on the potential adverse impact to natural, economic, and financial realms in the Great Lakes as it has in the entire Mississippi drainage basin

The federal Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework continues to supply a scope of potential work to address Asian carp threats. Implementation efforts have not reached the local fishery. No known federal or state policy changes, or implementation actions, have occurred that warrant new advisement from the FAB.

The FAB intends to continue to advise against *windmills on Great Lakes waters*. No actions have occurred to warrant additional formal FAB advisement to Erie County on this matter during 2012. No permit applications for Lake Erie based windmills in this region have been submitted to USACE. US Department of Homeland Security will have input regarding impacts on long-range radar if proposals develop. Multiple federal, state, and local other agencies would be involved in any proposal.

**Future Activities**

The FAB will work to host a fisheries boat tour for invited executive and legislative officials similar to the 2012 Erie and Chautauqua Counties FABs' event that was based out of Dunkirk Harbor.

The FAB will continue its advisory role to protect, promote and seek additional access for Erie County residents and visitors that are seeking to fish locally. Many of the current and proposed projects in which FAB is involved have cooperative state, federal and municipal agency involvement. Activities may include:

- Clear Creek Steelhead Fishing Access - Taylor Hollow Rd. to Ketchum Rd., North Collins
- Scoby Dam fish access - US Army Corps fish passage feasibility study - Phase II study funding not yet secured, study is approximately 50% completed as of 10/2012.
- Pond Fishing at Erie County forest - off Genesee Rd, east of Rt. 240, Sardinia
- Upper Cazenovia Creek - Public Fishing Rights access and parking - Holland
- Cazenovia Creek Dam - steelhead stocking area - East Aurora
- Big Sister Creek Access - near Bennett Beach Park & ECSD #2
- Expanded Sturgeon Point Marina
- Buffalo Crushed Stone - marina & ramp on Lake Erie
- South Park Lake - monitoring feasibility study completion, and habitat restoration for fishing
- Enhancement of Steelhead fishing opportunities in the Buffalo River system
- Buffalo River Walleye Management study area
- Buffalo River - boat and/or kayak launch discussion, West Seneca site, recreational improvement

**Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board 2012 Annual Report**

- Page 5 -

- Buffalo River - monitor Army Corp Buffalo River dredging activities, aquatic habitat impacts
- Cazenovia Creek - monitor steelhead fishing

- **Buffalo Creek Blossom Dam - access at Blossom Rd.**
- **Cayuga Creek - shoreline access**
- **Amherst State Park - trout stocking - Glen Falls Park**
- **Strawberry Island Habitat Restoration**
- **Frog (Sisters) Island Habitation Restoration**
- **Beaver Island Marsh Restoration**
- **Fish Habitat Structures - near the south Grand Island Bridges**
- **Tonawanda Creek - New Road to Rapids Road for canoe access & shoreline fishing**
- **Niagara River / Buffalo Harbor- monitor NYSDEC communications re/muskellunge management**
- **Niagara River - non-native Rudd fish species found, high abundancy, DEC monitor/reports**
- **Motor Island - habitat improvement project, fish community effects**

---

**ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK'S  
FISHERIES ADVSORY BOARD**

---

**MRL/SPS**

**2012 FAB Annual Report FINAL VERSION**