

# YOU ASKED. WE LISTENED!

# FREE PARKING!

## FREE LOTS:

**P1**

THE VENDORS WILL MOST LIKELY FILL THIS LOT FIRST.

GRAB A TICKET ONCE YOU PARK, VALIDATE INSIDE OUR BUILDING.

**P2**

**P3**

ATTENDEES PLEASE FOCUS MORE ON THESE LOTS.  
GRAB A TICKET ONCE YOU PARK, VALIDATE INSIDE OUR BUILDING.



- PARK BLOCK
- MIDDLE BLOCK
- CONVENTION CENTER BLOCK
- ENTRANCES TO NIAGARA FALLS CONVENTION CENTER

### PAID PARKING LOCATIONS

- P1 THIRD STREET LOT
- P2 SHERATON NIAGARA FALLS LOT
- P3 RAINBOW RAMP

# HEADLINE SPEAKERS, KIDS FISHING CLINIC & DEC OPEN HOUSE

## DEC OPEN HOUSE A FEATURE ATTRACTION

*By Bill Hilts, Jr.*



### NEW YORK STATE FISHING IS GREAT!

It's an appropriate point worth highlighting as we prepare for the Greater Niagara Fishing Expo Feb. 15-18 at the Niagara Falls Convention Center, the "teaching fishing" show that is focused on education. As you work on expanding your angling knowledge, it's just as important to appreciate, respect, and understand the work that goes on behind the scenes to protect and enhance our natural resources. It all starts with the state's Department of Environmental Conservation and its Bureau of Fisheries.

While DEC can't take credit for everything fish and fishing-related, the agency truly is a big part of the success of the Empire State's sportfishing resources. To help create a better awareness for what they do as an agency, fish managers and biologists will be offering themselves to the public once again through a unique "Open House" at the Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo Saturday, Feb. 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Niagara Falls Convention Center. No other outdoor show in the state has this impressive offering for interested anglers!



These aren't seminars or workshops. It's a wide-open room with individual tables and some displays and handouts designed to educate people on DEC fisheries management efforts. Move freely between specific areas and learn about what Biologists and resource managers do. Ask whatever questions you would like. It's completely informal.

The focus of the Saturday gathering will, without a doubt, be the Great Lakes and DEC will be there to answer the many questions surrounding these natural resources – from the forage base and cormorant status to fish stocking and new angling regulations. All dedicated fishing enthusiasts should know about our outstanding natural resources, and this is a unique opportunity to get up close and personal with the agency personnel that help make programs click.

For Lake Ontario, Mike Connerton and Jessica Goretzke will be updating the public on stocking plans in 2024, including the increase in Chinook salmon that will be planted this spring. The new program involving parental-based fish marking using genetics will be discussed and there will also be information on sea lamprey status and how the open lake creel study and prey fish survey is conducted. If you have a question, they are there to answer it.

Scott Prindle and Mike DiSarno will be there to update folks on the tributary creel census for Lake O. that is currently underway. They are also familiar with the Erie Canal water releases, Atlantic salmon returns, and Salmon River habitat projects. You WILL learn something new about your favorite body of water, whatever it might be.



The Salmon River Fish Hatchery is one of the keys to the success of the Lake Ontario sportfishery. Hatchery manager Tom Kielbasinski and Peter Kinney will be on hand to discuss the hatchery, what species are reared there, and how they will avoid predation of stocked fish by using a barge.

Over on Lake Erie, Lake Erie Fisheries Research Unit Leader Dr. Jason Robinson and biologist Pascal Wilkins are there to present last year's open lake creel survey for 2023 and how things are looking as we head into a new fishing year. While walleye, smallmouth bass, and yellow perch top the list of preferred species in the lake, there is exciting news when discussing lake trout and cisco rehabilitation work. In the tributaries, steelhead and domestic rainbow are the key focus – offering one of the highest catch rates in the country. Learn about the programs in place to improve the stream fishing for these popular fish.



Research in and on the Great Lakes is an important component for lake management and research vessels are needed to accomplish the tasks at hand each year. Captains Alan Fairbanks and Mike Cochrane will be available to field questions on both the boats that are utilized, and the research being conducted. There will be fisheries experts on the Niagara River and St. Lawrence River, as well.

Jana Lantry, Chris Driscoll, and Les Ressegusie will be covering what is being done with black bass management in the St. Lawrence River and eastern Lake Ontario, what is happening in the Niagara River relative to the many studies underway, and they will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

For the state's inland fisheries, biologists Jim Everard and Mike Todd will be sharing insight into trout stream management, trout stream access verification, what's happening with the state's big panfish initiatives, and help cover other inland fishing opportunities across the Empire State.

Coleen DiNitto and Greg Kozlowski will be sharing their insight into a different kind of "tackle box" that will focus on the Hunt Fish NY app for your smartphone. Learn what it's all about and how to use it. It's a one stop shop for everything from fishing regulations and access locations to stocking numbers for every water body in the state. They will even help you upload the app to your phone! To help explain how it works, they will be using a big screen television to go through a step-by-step process.

DEC's Bureau of Fisheries Chief Steve Hurst will also be in attendance to answer the hard questions about all things fishing, from its various fisheries programs to fisheries management and research. He wants to meet fishermen and women face to face and enjoys the interaction with the public. He will also be giving some seminars to help educate the public on programs.

If you can't make the Saturday gathering, DEC will also have a booth on the main exhibition floor for the duration of the show (Feb. 15-18). Environmental Conservation Officers are often in the booth to help explain the Environmental Conservation Law and fishing regulations in place for most if not all bodies of water. DEC personnel will be attending the Salmon and Walleye School functions, and other fishing seminars. These DEC offerings are worth the price of a \$10 daily admission.

We encourage everyone coming through the doors of the Convention Center on Saturday to make a point to stop into the Cataract Room and say hello to our DEC representatives. Let them know you appreciate the work they do and fire away with any questions you may have. See you at the show!



11 A.M. TO 1 P.M. ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

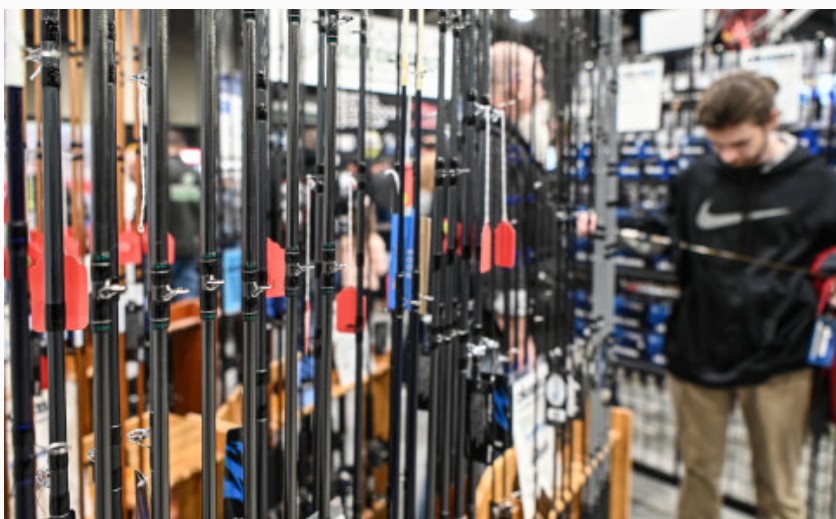
# KIDS CLINIC

Each paid adult can bring up to 2 kids to attend with them.

## Good words for Great Souls

The attendees will learn the basics from the "ground floor up" including:

- The gear necessary including rods, reels, line, casting, knots, baits, etc.
- The fish and their behaviors
- The techniques to use starting out
- The "where" locations and "when" timing to be successful
- Personal safety and conservation of the resource



## Want to join?

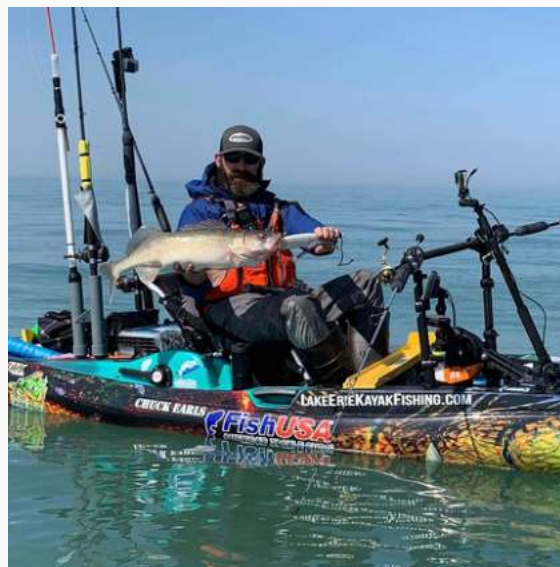
To register, please email [mgearhart@nfconventioncenter.com](mailto:mgearhart@nfconventioncenter.com) and provide the following details: child's name and age, as well as the name of the adult attending with them. Registration closes on Sunday, February 11, so please be sure to register as soon as possible!

# HEADLINE SPEAKERS

**Brad Brodnicki**



**Chuck Earls**



**Joe Fonzi**



**Steve Quinn**



# HEADLINE SPEAKERS

**Jake Romanack: Fishing 411**



**Mark Romanack: Fishing 411**



**Bob Songin**



**Lance Valentine**



# TICKETS & LODGING

# FREE PARKING!

- **ALL VETERANS, ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL, CAREER AND VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE, AND EMTS RECEIVE \$5.00 OFF SINGLE OR MULTI-DAY EXPO ADMISSION TICKETS WITH VALID ID. TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED IN PERSON, AND DISCOUNT IS VALID FOR PERSONS SHOWING ID ONLY. NO REFUNDS AVAILABLE IF TICKETS ARE PURCHASED ONLINE. OFFER VALID FEBRUARY 15-18, 2024.**
- **CHILDREN AGES 12 AND UNDER RECEIVE FREE ADMISSION WITH A PAYING ADULT. LIMITED TO TWO CHILDREN PER PAYING ADULT. [CLICK HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FREE KIDS FISHING CLINIC, INCLUDING REGISTRATION INFORMATION.**

TICKETS

**[CLICK HERE](#)**

LODGING : ALMOST SOLD OUT



**COMFORT INN STARTING \$75.00**

**[CLICK HERE](#)**



**WINGATE STARTING @\$89.00**

**[CLICK HERE](#)**