

OUTDOORS



Photo courtesy of Roger Harrod

JIM HUNTER enjoys the view of Lights on the Lake from his kayak on Onondaga Lake.

Lights on the Kayaks

Group paddles at night next to park's holiday display

DAVID FIGURA

OUTDOORS EDITOR



Take about a cool excursion.

A hearty contingent from the Central New York Kayak

Club got a unique look this past Sunday at the Lights on the Lake exhibit at Onondaga Lake Park.

In what's become an annual club tradition, 14 kayakers took part in a late afternoon/early evening kayaking trip on Onondaga Lake. They put in at Long Branch Park on the Seneca River.

The following report was filed by Walt Stroud, a club member:

"Two paddlers arrived early for some extra paddling on the river and reported seeing two eagles along the way.

"It was cloudy and cool but not cold, and the lake was calm.

"After leaving the launch site, we paddled south toward the entrance of "Lights on the Lake" and waited until darkness fell and the lights were on.

"It's great seeing all those lights from the water rather than the road because you can see more of them at one time. The return paddle took a little less than an hour, and only a few reported getting a little cold.

"Most were eager for something to eat. After completing the paddle, we headed for The Retreat in Liverpool and had a nice dinner sitting by the fireplace. This was truly another memorable trip."

Stroud said club members are trying to schedule at least one paddle every month through the winter, before resuming the club's regular weekend schedule in the



Photo courtesy of Jim Hunter

ROGER HARROD and Cindy Phillips wait for the sun to go down on Onondaga Lake.

spring.

For more on the CNY Kayak Club and pictures from last Sunday's trip, click on www.cnykayakclub.com/

'Green ammo'

State Department of Environmental Conservation commissioner Pete Grannis announced this week an initiative to switch to "green ammo" from lead-based ammunition for departmental firearms training — to help reduce the impact of lead at firing ranges.

"The DEC is committed to leading the way in finding new ways — large and small — to reduce the amount of contamination that is released into our environment," Grannis said. "DEC's 464 environmental conservation officers and forest rangers are leading the state by implementing a common-sense change to use non-toxic ammunition in order to protect public health and the environment from the effects of lead."

The ammunition the DEC will be using is considered "green" in comparison to standard ammunition because it is lead-free and includes

non-toxic primers. This combination greatly reduces the impact of firearms training on the environment.

The DEC officers and rangers will continue using lead-based ammunition when they're on duty, according to DEC spokeswoman Maureen Wren.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, lead from ammunition can be introduced into the environment in one or more of the following ways:

- ✓ Lead oxidizes when exposed to air and dissolves when exposed to acidic water or soil;

- ✓ Lead bullets, bullet particles and dissolved lead can be moved from firing ranges by storm water runoff; and

- ✓ Dissolved lead can migrate through soils to groundwater.

For more information about lead in bullets and details on protecting public health and the environment by implementing best management practices at firing ranges, go to the EPA's Web site at:

www.epa.gov/Region2/waste/leadshot/index.html.

Chasing walleyes

Christmas came early this year for Cicero walleye fishermen Brian Hammond and Dan Cramer.

The two were called Dec. 19 and told they qualified for the Cabela's national walleye fishing championship, scheduled for June 13-14 in Moberly, S.D.

"We're going to be fishing on Lake Oahe," Hammond said, adding they plan to drive out a week ahead of time to practice on the 232-mile-long reservoir, created by a dam on the Missouri River.

First prize in the competition is \$25,000 and a new Ranger boat, he said.

The two qualified for the competition by finishing third in a six-contest regional series held at lakes and rivers throughout the Northeast this past summer.

"We finished third out of 63 teams," Hammond said.

Both local fishermen grew up on Oneida Lake. The two have been fishing competitively for walleyes "on and off" for the past five years.

"Our next step is to get some sponsors," Hammond said. "We're committed. We're going."

David Figura can be reached at dfigura@syracuse.com or at 470-6066. Check out his blog, with its wealth of hunting, fishing and wildlife photos at blog.syracuse.com/outdoors/

syracuse.com

What do you think about this week's announcement by the DEC that conservation officers and forest rangers will now use "green ammo" at firing ranges? Join the discussion at:

www.syracuse.com/forums/outdoors/



Photo courtesy of Roger Harrod

FROM LEFT to right are kayakers Dana Mills, Walt Stroud, Irene Liberty, Cindy Phillips, Patti Kackel and Jim Hunter.