



Onondaga County Legislature

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MICHAEL CUSANO – CHAIRMAN **MEETING MINUTES OF THE** **FISHERIES ADVISORY BOARD – MARCH 19, 2026**

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Michael Cusano, Les Monostory, Eric Stanczyk, Jason Howard, Bob Walczyk

ABSENT: Ken Crane, Brian Kelley

GUESTS: Gary Lopez

Chairman Michael Cusano called the meeting to order at 5:35 P.M.

Old Business:

Cusano went over the minutes from our previous meeting on January 15, 2026. Motion to accept by Eric, seconded by Bob to accept the January 2026 minutes. Motion passed.

New Business:

Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery

Eric Stanczyk reported that Onondaga County trout stocking operations began March 17, 2026. A CIP project is also underway for roof renovations at the hatchery. Engineer design/planning for the new hatchery will begin this year.

Committee member, Jason Howard, is working to create some area fishing events. He will be reaching out to Eric and Stefan to try to coordinate some workable dates at the hatchery. In addition, Jason will be reaching out to Tom Hughes of Izaak Walton to check availability on hosting an Onondaga Lake event.

County Parks operations

Gary Lopez provided updates. Currently there are 22 tournaments scheduled at Oneida Shores. He anticipates the Oneida Shore docks will be installed around April 22nd (always weather dependent). The work on the Onondaga Lake Marina renovation is underway; the tentative open date is June 15th. Parks department has been providing marina slip holders with continuous progress updates. The deep-water stationary pier (690 side) and new stationary Salt Museum docks are expected to be put in during the month of April.

Committee member, Bob Walczyk, reported that the OLA wanted to thank the Onondaga County Parks Oneida Shores staff for doing a wonderful job of keeping the park open for ice fishing anglers this past season.

Proposed DEC Regulation Change

Committee members, Les Monostory and Eric Stanczyk both brought up a proposed NYS DEC regulation change that would reduce the walleye season by two weeks in March; currently season is

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open through March 15th, proposal is to close it on March 1st. There were several points the OCFAB members shared – most relevant were as follows:

Due to warming water temperatures – it seems likely that walleye are starting their spawning runs early and this could offer more protection. Which then lead to the question of is this level of protection necessary on all bodies of water. Many states allow walleye fishing/harvest during the walleye spawn.

Some questioned why this change would be necessary on Oneida Lake where the hatchery has always gathered enough to stock not only Oneida Lake, but other lakes across the state. Additionally, members felt that the Oneida Lake population of walleyes seems to be doing extremely well and didn't necessarily need to be included in this proposed regulation change. They believe angler's fishing access should be maximized on all waters where the fish populations allow it.

Ultimately the OCFAB decided to neither support nor object to the proposed regulation change. The membership was hoping that the NYS DEC would provide supporting data to justify why this regulation needs to be applied to all the listed water bodies. They wanted to know why the NY DEC wasn't limiting the changes to focus on those waters that are experiencing poor recruitment/population issues.

5 Year EPA Review of Onondaga Lake Bottom – Chairman Cusano asked if the membership had received the report link via email from the NYS DEC. He said he would attach the link information: <https://semspub.epa.gov/work/02/765905.pdf>

Adjournment

The FAB meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M. Next FAB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 16, 2026 at 5:30 P.M. at the Onondaga County Parks office in Liverpool.

Minutes by Michael Cusano, March 26, 2026.