

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# State Bowhunter and Muzzleloader Associations Compile Joint Southern Zone Deer Season Proposal

Canandaigua, NY - 9/18/09 - New York Bowhunters, Inc. (NYB) and the New York State Muzzleloader Association (NYSMLA) have been working jointly for several months on a southern zone deer season proposal that allows both parties to meet their objectives. Copies of the proposal have been sent to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Wildlife (DEC) and other Sportsmen's organization throughout New York State.

The DEC desires to increase the harvest of antlerless deer in their effort to effectively manage the whitetail deer herd as well as allow for a weekend of early hunting opportunity for junior big game firearms hunters. The NYSMLA wishes to have an early "primitive" muzzleloading season and NYB seeks to restore lost hunting opportunity that occurred with the implementation of the 2005 big game restructuring regulations. Therefore, both organizations reached out to one another to work on a sensible proposal that would be acceptable to firearms hunters, muzzleloader hunters, bowhunters, the DEC and to the general public. The timing of the proposal coincides with the DEC's scheduling of public meetings this September and October regarding the state of the deer herds in New York.

The DEC recently scheduled public meetings in an effort to *"capture the issues that are important to sportsmen, particularly as they relate to bag limits, season structure and tag options. We (DEC) hope to receive feedback from meeting participants that helps us (DEC) prioritize the issues that are important for NYS deer hunters and the public"* stated DEC Wildlife Biologist Jeremy Hurst. Information on these meetings can be found by going to the DEC website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/57795.html>.

The NYB/NYSMLA joint proposal would restructure the southern zone hunting seasons as follows;

- Open the 23-day regular firearms season on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.
- Open the early archery season on October 1<sup>st</sup>, ending on the Friday prior to the beginning of the regular firearms season.
- Allow for a weekend of junior (ages 14 & 15) big game hunting opportunity on the weekend prior to the opening of the regular firearms season.
- Open a 5-day antlerless-only "primitive" muzzleloading season on the Monday prior to the beginning of the regular firearms season, ending on the Friday prior to the beginning of the regular firearms season.

NYB President, Gary Socola stated, *"The DEC follows a progression of weaponry in the northern zone, starting with archery season, muzzleloader season and then progressing into the regular firearms season. The NYB/MYSMLA proposal follows the precedence already set by the DEC."* Socola indicated that he has records over the past two years showing that bowhunters have sent over 8,000 letters and signatures on petitions to DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis asking that the DEC open the early southern zone archery season on October 1<sup>st</sup>. "I've heard people complain that bowhunters are greedy and that they kill all of the bucks prior to the firearms season". Not true says Socola, *"Statistically bowhunters take a very small percentage of bucks when compared to the regular firearms season take. In my 31 years of bowhunting experience, I have never met a more sharing and caring group of hunters."* If we want to *"harvest more antlerless deer and expose new hunters to the outdoors, why are we taking early season bowhunting time away from archers and at the same time increasing their license and permit fees, asked Socola?"*

New York States 2009 southern zone early archery season is the latest opening date in the Northeast states Socola, *"let's get our youth, seniors, persons of disability and all hunters out earlier in the season so that they can enjoy our natural resources in better weather while helping the DEC control our expanding deer herd."* The states of

Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, and Virginia all have early archery season opening dates in September. Maine opens up on October 1<sup>st</sup> in most areas, Pennsylvania and Vermont open on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and Massachusetts on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Having an archery season opening date on a Saturday is not as critical for bowhunters as it is for firearms hunters. An October 1 opening date is an easily recognizable date and also coincides with the DEC's licensing year.

Socola added, ***"Let's not forget that the economic impact of hunters being afield for additional hunting days would add a huge influx of funds into the states sagging economy. More time afield has a direct correlation to monies spent."*** According to a US Fish and Wildlife Service 2006 National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife, New York's 1.2 million hunters and anglers spent \$5 million a day for a total of \$1.8 billion. Annual spending by New York's sportsmen is equal to the combined cash receipts for dairy products and apples, two of the top agricultural commodities in the state (\$1.8 billion).

NYSMLA President, Bill Brookover (Black Powder Bill) is excited about the possibilities this proposal offers. ***"The NYSMLA has tried for over 10 years to get a primitive muzzleloader season in the southern zone. This proposal will allow us to do that and also allows provisions for the youth and for bowhunters. Bowhunters and muzzleloader hunters are not at odds with one another in New York State. This is not a hunter issue but a season issue created by the DEC's current season structuring. By working together, our organizations are showing sportsmen throughout New York State that we can put aside any differences and work together towards our common goals."***

Pennsylvania (PA) has had an early muzzleloader season since 2000. The PA early muzzleloader season regulation states ***"Those wishing to hunt deer during the flintlock muzzleloading and muzzleloading seasons are limited to single-barrel long guns manufactured prior to 1800 or a similar reproduction."*** PA also offers a special firearms season for junior and senior hunter. Brookover states ***"Our joint proposal will allow the youth and seniors a chance to hunt in better weather. With the NYSMLA/ NYB proposal, kids can strike out after school for a late afternoon bow hunt because of the later sunset time. The antler-less primitive week will give families a chance to work together as a team instead of dropping Papa, Sally Mae & Jr. off at tree stands 200 yards apart. You'll not see a dozen hunters driving deer through a block of woods either."***

The straightforward proposal will allow increased hours afield during warmer weather with a sunset later in the day and provide a regular firearms season pre-Thanksgiving weekend opener. What better week to start the regular season? Many hunters are off the following Thursday & Friday and can take off the whole week using only three additional vacation days. Brookover added, ***"Our proposal will provide more and often more agreeable - deer hunting opportunities for families, kids, seniors, persons with physical disabilities and just about every hunter across the board."***

New York Bowhunters, Inc. was formed in 1991 to promote bowhunting, educate hunters and non-hunters, and to fight anti-hunting legislation. NYB annually runs youth archery camps, a physically challenged program and supports special projects such as the "Gift Boxes for Troops" and helped establish an archery range for troops serving in Iraq.

The New York State Muzzle-loaders Association was born from the Tryon County Militia in 1977 and is "dedicated to the continuing support of black powder events, people, and legislation." The NYSMLA has over 40 affiliated clubs throughout New York State. The NYSMLA has 6 major events in 2009. The first event was the **"Primitive Snowshoe Biathlon"** held in March and the last will be the **18<sup>th</sup> annual "Primitive Rendezvous & Hunt."** The Rendezvous will be held just outside Inlet, NY at the Moose River Plains wilderness area October 9th - 16<sup>th</sup> with Visitors day Sunday October 11<sup>th</sup> 10:00am till 5:00 pm.

NYB can be contacted by phone at 585-905-0961 or by email at [nyboffice@newyorkbowhunters.com](mailto:nyboffice@newyorkbowhunters.com) or check out their website at <http://www.newyorkbowhunters.com/>. For information about the NYSMLA contact them at NYSMLA Inc., 200 Clifford Drive, Vestal, NY 13850 or by email at [bpb@frontiernet.net](mailto:bpb@frontiernet.net) or by checking out their website at <http://www.nysmla.org/>.

- END -