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MN-FISH NEWS

"Official Newsletter" of the MN-FISH
Sportfishing Foundation & Coalition

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT by Ron Schara November 2020

These crazy and unusual times with COVID-19 continue as we all know. When the wind didn't blow like hell this fall, the fall bite arrived as expected. Unexpected is the amount of fishing pressure on our lakes the past five months. After many weeks of driving on Highway 169 along the west shore of Mille Lacs, I'm amazed there are any fish left. Thank goodness for the catch and release ethic. However, a boom in fishing is a good thing in the long run.

The more anglers who are aware of the state of Minnesota's fishing—good or awful—the more support we anglers will have to improve and maintain the fishing experiences we enjoy. This also explains why MN-FISH and its mission is alive and well. In recent weeks, a few MN-FISH board members held a zoom meeting with DNR leaders including DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen, Fisheries Chief, Brad Parsons; Dave Olfelt, Director of Fish and Wildlife and Bob Meier, DNR assistant commissioner.

The general topic was walleye stocking such as: has stocking increased or declined in last 8 years? (still waiting for answer); how are walleye population goals in lakes determined and who decides? (Need more discussion on that question).

The meeting was a good first step in 1) learning how DNR views walleye stocking, etc. and 2) DNR learning about MN-FISH concerns, although these goals were not accomplished. The topic of stocking is complex with a lake by lake answer in some cases. The best news is we hope to have a face-to-face meeting with DNR fisheries in December to continue discussions.

At this time, we have not heard if our MN-FISH bonding requests were included in the final passage of the Bonding Bill. We requested dollars for public boat access repairs, walleye hatchery modernizing and youth fishing programs. We'll let you know ASAP. In the meantime, please update or renew your MN-FISH membership. Together we can shorten the time between bites.

Best Regards,
Ron Schara
MN-FISH President



MEET MN-FISH BOARD MEMBER TOM MACKIN

Time to meet MN-FISH board member Tom Mackin. When it comes to dedication to sport fishing and anglers, Tom Mackin sits near the top as president of Rapala USA. Yes, THAT Rapala. He is in charge of North American distribution of 12 brands of fishing tackle, including the famous line of Rapala lures.

"Through my association with Rapala... I try to leverage ALL resources available to help with conservation efforts and provide opportunities for kids to enjoy fishing and the outdoors," he says. "I'm proud to be a part of MN-Fish..."



We're doing great things in Minnesota. Fish-On!"

Indeed, fish on, especially if huge muskies are within casting distance, a favorite of Tom Mackin. As a leader in the fishing industry, Tom Mackin has helped MN-FISH in many ways, including tackle donations and fundraising programs.

He has his reasons:

"Minnesota is the State of Fishing... At MN-Fish we're all working together to make sure it stays that way... and to ensure that fishing will always be an important part of lives here in this great state."



HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD



MINNESOTA FISHING FACTS



Over 1.4
Million
Anglers



11,842 Lakes
5,400 Fishable



90,000
Miles of
Shoreline



18,000 Miles
of Fishable
Rivers &
Streams



162
Species
of Fish



825,000
Registered
Boats



#1 in
\$\$ Spent
in Freshwater
Fishing



Supports Over
43,000 Fishing
Related Jobs



\$2.8 Billion
in Retail
Spending



Generates
\$271 Million
in Tax Revenue

MN-FISH MEETS WITH DNR FISHERIES by Tom Neustrom

During the fall of this year, several MN-FISH Board Members met with the DNR Commissioner and members of her staff concerning the state of walleye populations, stocking, and concerns relating to the current number of walleyes in certain bodies of water in Minnesota. We also discussed the responsibilities of DNR personnel in a fisheries group known as WAE Stock.

Walleye Stocking Concerns

WAE stock is a spreadsheet of walleye fisheries throughout the state that look at region-by-region management for the need of increased walleye stocking or less stocking concerns according to recruitment. The goal is to hopefully get more natural reproduction on bodies of water without long term supplemental stocking. There were some questions by MN-FISH members regarding what happens when the numbers go down on decent walleye lakes in the future and what the plan would be to increase those numbers. One of the answers was to wait and see if after a couple years the numbers return to adequate or to increase supplemental stocking to hopefully bring numbers back.

A question was brought up during discussions regarding why stocking has ceased on some bodies of water that were previously managed. One of

the answers was there was little or no return for the stocking efforts and some lakes are a waste of effort because of strong panfish-bass populations that disrupt the recruitment of young of the year walleyes.

There are assumptions by DNR managers to concentrate on lakes that have a solid return on stocking as opposed to lakes that show little or no return. There were 3-4 lakes that Ron Schara and myself gave to the DNR in relation to the numbers declining over the last decade, which they promised they would review and get answers back to us.

We asked additional questions on fingerling versus fry stocking and how we can help to encourage people to buy a walleye stamp when purchasing their annual fishing license. The funds realized by the Walleye Stamp are for the purchase of additional fingerlings for future supplemental stocking. Overall, it was a good first meeting with the DNR and want to thank Commissioner Strommen and her staff for agreeing to meet with us on these important issues for the anglers of Minnesota. MN-FISH board members will meet again with the DNR very soon to discuss additional ideas and concerns.



Buy a Walleye Stamp!

FOCUS OF THE MN-FISH MISSION

By Kristen Merwin

The primary focus of MN-FISH is to become a grassroots sport fishing, marine and angler advocacy network to give anglers and business stakeholders a voice before the State Legislature and DNR on all fishing-related issues and concerns.



The fishing industry represents a \$4.2 billion industry in Minnesota, yet the funding to maintain and grow the resources responsible for this economy is almost entirely funded by the angler through license sales. MN-FISH seeks to secure a greater portion of the \$271 million in state taxes collected from the fishing and

marine industry. With greater reinvestment we can modernize the fish hatcheries that supply our stocked lakes with fish, provide more shore fishing opportunities, improve public accesses to our lakes and rivers, and secure funding to protect and restore aquatic habitats. There are more than 1.4 million anglers in Minnesota; collectively this is one

loud voice that our government offices will listen to. Your first call to action is to share MN-FISH's mission with your friends, family and colleagues to help us grow our membership. The more voices we have supporting our mission, the louder we become. The louder we become, the more we can do to ensure our fisheries are as productive as possible.



"Keep Minnesota Fishing"

Have a concern about Minnesota fishing? Reach out to us. As the organization representing all Minnesota anglers, we want your voice heard.

Kristen Merwin is a MN-FISH board member and President of W.A.M. - Women Anglers of Minnesota.

MN-FISH RECEIVES \$79,000 DONATION by John Peterson

MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation Board Member Dave Osborne, along with his fishing partners Dave Hanson and Jason Berg, won the prestigious Lake Minnetonka Invitational 'Partners For Charity' Bass Fishing Tournament on Lake Minnetonka July 30th. The trio won a total of \$79,001 and graciously DONATED IT ALL to the MN-FISH Sportfishing Foundation! The team caught over 40 bass casting soft plastics to weed lines in 10-18 feet of water while guided by Larry Hanson.

leading the way to Minnesota's fishing future."

Dave Osborne is the owner of CLAM Outdoors that includes CLAM Fish-Trap ice shelters, Blackfish Gear, and other ice fishing brands.

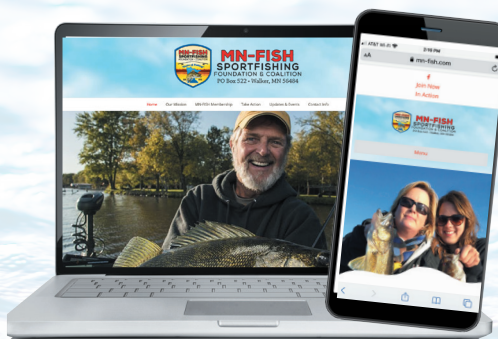


Left to right: Dave Hanson, Jason Berg, Dave Osborne

Dave stated "The Partners Group, a Financial Planning company in Wayzata, hosted its annual fishing tournament to raise funds for a number of good causes. After serving on the MN-FISH board for two years, I knew there was no better non-profit organization out there that deserves this charity more than MN-FISH. They have become the voice of Minnesota's anglers and business stakeholders . . . and are

MN-FISH COMMUNICATION LINKS by Chip Leer

Its no secret the first-year organizational tasks of any business or non-profit are many, and here at MN-FISH we found this to be true. Our staff of volunteers have been busy, mostly behind the curtain establishing systems and procedures all while working in St. Paul to ensure your voices and our missions are being represented. President Ron Schara and Steve Pennaz are toting our activities in other written pieces. I'm here to share with you our communication promise. Here is how you can expect to be updated on how MN-FISH is working for you as we grow.



MN-FISH News – Every spring we will send an old school, printed annual newsletter directly to you via U.S. mail. To ensure delivery, simply go to our MN-FISH website and look up your membership data to confirm that your physical address is correct. This is a FREE publication paid for by your donations.

MN-FISH E-News – Each quarter (4X a year) you will receive an electronic E-Newsletter submitted to your email address. Look for occasional special issues when important hot topics arise. If you HAVE NOT been receiving emails from us in the past:

1. Check your JUNK MAIL where it's likely being redirected. If so, mark them as NOT JUNK.
2. Go to MN-FISH website, click on membership and check to make sure the email address listed for you is correct. You are welcome to email us at info@mn-fish.com and we can confirm it for you as well.

Social Media – We have active pages on Facebook and Instagram. They are easy to find, just search MN-FISH Sportfishing on the platform. These pages will keep you informed on a daily/weekly basis on important issues, events, successes and special events. It's vital you follow LIKE and SHARE MN-FISH content. We've gained over 1,100 followers and likes since March.

FOLLOW US



@MNFISHSportfishing



@mnfish



MN-FISH MISSIONS

Become a grassroots sport fishing, marine and angler advocacy network to give anglers and business stakeholders a voice before the State Legislature and DNR.

Seek greater reinvestment back into sport fishing of the estimated \$271 million in state taxes derived from Minnesota's robust \$4.2 billion fishing industry.

Act as a watchdog and support DNR fish stocking policies and fish management programs when appropriate.

Support scientific and common-sense fish management of all gamefish species to "shorten-the-time-between-bites".

Advocate and promote youth fishing recruitment and fishing programs in school curriculums.

Seek funding and assist in expanding the Minnesota Fishing Museum/Hall of Fame/Education Center programs and facility.

To restore, protect and enhance Minnesota Sportfishing for present and future generations of anglers to enjoy.



MN-FISH SPORTFISHING FOUNDATION & COALITION

Restore, Protect and Enhance Minnesota Sport Fishing

MN-FISH TRIP SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS SELECTED by Steve Pennaz - - NEARLY 1,500 NEW MEMBERS ACTIVATED

Two winners have been awarded the top prizes in the "WIN-A-MN-FISH Trip" prize drawing that took place October 27.

Grand Prize winner Trevor Murphy of Fridley, selected the trip for two with legendary angler Al Lindner. His trip will take place next spring on a lake of Al's choosing.



Grand Prize Winner Trevor Murphy (L) and Al Lindner

Second place winner is Kevin Bosley of Minnetonka. He wins the three-day trip for 4-8 guests at Rainy Lake Houseboats, owned by Bill and Cathie Dougherty. Rainy Lake is known for its fabulous multi-species fishing, with walleye, pike, muskie and crappie available. Trip includes houseboat accommodations in the heart of the Voyageurs National Park and use of 16-foot

boat with 15 hp engine. Total value of the trip is \$1,740.

We launched the "WIN-A-MN-FISH Trip" sweepstakes in May to substantially grow the MN-FISH Sport Fishing Foundation membership. Becoming a member of MN-FISH was required to enter the sweepstakes.



Kevin Bosley wins trip with Rainy Lake Houseboats

Participants signed up for a free, 2-year Charter Membership, \$35 Founding Membership or \$250 Life Membership. Nearly 1,500 qualified entries were received, either at the 50 participating retailers across the state, or by those entering at the MN-FISH website, MN-FISH.com.

"I am just tickled about this," said Trevor

Murphy. "I am super excited to get in the boat with Al. I love fishing and sharing it with others."

We are launching a second "WIN-A-MN-FISH-ICE FISHING DREAM PACKAGE" promotion in November that offers MN-FISH members the chance to win an ice fishing trip to Sportsman's Lodge on famed Lake of the Woods or a prize package from Clam, Blackfish Gear, StrikeMaster Augers and Northland Fishing Tackle. Enter at participating retailers or go to the MN-FISH.com to enter. Current MN-FISH members are eligible to enter. Go to MN-FISH.com for more information.

We'd like to thank Big Rock Sports, Blackfish Gear and participating retail outlets ([CLICK HERE FOR LIST](#)) for their support of this valuable MN-FISH program.

If you are not already a MN-FISH member, join and help us build an active and influential membership of anglers, industry stakeholders, marine, tourism and economic beneficiaries to maintain and grow Minnesota's robust \$4.2 billion fishing economy.

CORPORATE BENEFACTOR SPONSORS - *Copper Level or higher*

Johnson Outdoors, Rapala USA, Clam Outdoors, Vexilar Inc., Big Rock Sports, Metro Marine Dealers, Yamaha Motors, Northland Fishing Tackle, Reed Family Outdoor Outfitters, Otter Outdoors, Diawa Corp., HT Enterprise, Lake Master, Pradco, Aqua-Vu, EBSCO Industries, Normark Corp., Catchcover, Jiffy, Frankie's Marine, Lindner Media, Pennaz MultiMedia, Ron Schara Productions, Rassat Outdoor Group, Fishing The Wildside, Trappers Landing Lodge, Arneson's Resort, Deco Pumps, Arrowhead Fulfillment, Rainy Lake Houseboats, Babe Winkelman Productions, Environmental Troubleshooters, Phillips Wine & Spirits, Factory Motor Parts, Village Bank, Fuller Wallner Law, Innovative Outdoor Solutions, Don Coffee Agency, Traditions Media, and Timber Ghost Realty.

Corporate membership supports MN-FISH grassroots advocacy work, legislative activities and public policy development to win pro-angler policy and legislative victories to Keep Minnesota Fishing. Please JOIN US!

GET ON-BOARD

JOIN US by going to MN-FISH.com and sign up for a FREE 2-Year Charter Membership, a \$35 Founding or \$250 Life Membership. Your donation and participation will help to grow our coalition so we can voice your concerns, lobby and negotiate better legislative fishing programs and politics to secure the future of sportfishing here in Minnesota.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov. 1 Ice Fishing Dream Package Sweepstakes
Dec. 4-6 St. Paul Ice Ice Show / cancelled
Mar. 25-28 Northwest Sports Show

www.MN-FISH.com



WIN-A-MN-FISH ICE FISHING DREAM PACKAGE by John Peterson

To celebrate another year and kick off the 2020 Minnesota ice fishing season, MN-FISH is launching the 'Win-a-MN-FISH Ice Fishing Dream Package' Sweepstakes in 50 of Minnesota's best sporting goods locations throughout the state. The Point-of-Purchase entry box display promotion is supported by Big Rock Sports and an amazing cast of sporting goods retailers to help create awareness of MN-FISH and grow our membership. There are 2 Ice Fishing Packages available to win.

Prize Package 1: The 'Sportsman Lodges Ice Fishing Dream Trip Package' is valued at \$1,870. It is being donated by Sportsman's Lodges on Lake of the Woods near Baudette and includes 3 Nights Lodging and 2 Full Days of Fishing for a party of 4. You will relax in 2 lodge rooms and have access to an indoor pool, hot tub, live entertainment, transportation to heated fish house, fishing equipment and fish cleaning! Visit sportsmanslodges.com for more information.

WIN SPORTSMANS LODGE ICE FISHING DREAM TRIP

\$1,870 Value!

**3 Nights Lodging/
2 Full Days Fishing for 4 People!**

- Relax in 2 Comfortable Rustic Lodge Rooms.
- Fish in Warm Heated Fish House on Lake of the Woods.
- Transportation, Fishing Equipment & Fish Cleaning included.
- Restaurants, Indoor Pool, Hot Tub, & Live Entertainment.

Prize Package 2: 'Win Ice Gear Dream Package' is \$1,500 Value! The package includes a CLAM Nanook XL Fish Trap fish shelter, a StrikeMaster Lithium 40 volt electric auger and a 46-piece Team Northland Fishing Tackle ice tackle assortment.



StrikeMaster
★★★★★
ICE AUGERS



Northland
FISHING TACKLE



CLAM

How You Can Win – The only way to win a MN-FISH dream Ice Fishing Package is by a MN-FISH member. (Yes, current members are eligible). If you're not a member, click here to join MN-FISH.com ... there are three levels of membership. Once you are registered, you can enter online on the MN-FISH website or by stopping one of the 50 participating sporting goods retailers in your area (locations shown on the MN-FISH website, click [here](#) for list) and fill out an [Entry Form](#). The Sweepstakes started on November 1 and ends on February 28, 2021. Drawings will be held on March 19, 2021.