

THE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 2015

Website:

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COMBINED MEETING

Musky Fishing Presentation

- ✦ MN Musky Guide
- ✦ Outdoor Writer
- Josh Borovsky**
- ✦ Tournament Angler
- ✦ TV Personality



February 10th — 7 PM
Moose Lodge 1300 3rd St N. Waite Park

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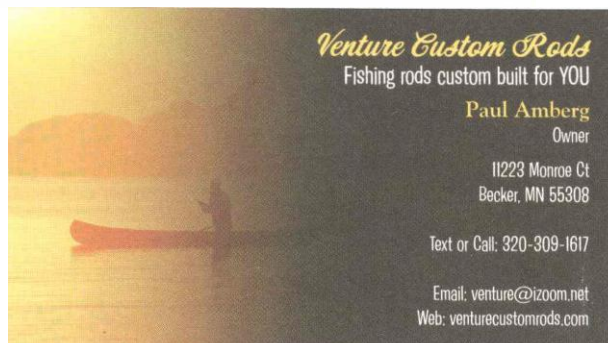
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Time on the Water By Bruce A. Kitowski, President

Well I don't know if anyone is counting, but there is one less month toward soft water. For me winter seems to be flying by.

Once again February is the host month for our big seminar. On February 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Moose Lodge in Waite Park, Josh Borovsky will be our guest speaker. This promises to be a most informative evening. There will be refreshments served and raffles. Please join us for this event and bring a friend with you. There will be membership brochures available to sign up new members. This night is open to the public. Don't forget that there is **no membership meeting in February** because of the seminar.

Please have a safe and fun month.

Bruce

2015 ANNUAL FISH DINNER. By Ken Schmitt

Our 2015 Annual Fish Dinner will be held on April 24, 2015. We are currently looking for prize items. Please contact Ken Schmitt (320-251-3322) if you are able to obtain donations for prizes and silent auction items. We are looking for volunteers to serve as well. Contact Ken or Eric to volunteer.

KIDS FISHING OUTINGS. By Eric Kohn

Call Eric or Bruce to volunteer!!

13th Annual Big Brother/Big Sister Fishing Outing - Saturday, May 2nd, 2015

Waite Park Family Fun Fest Kids Fishing Contest – Sunday June 14th

EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP & ANNUAL PARTNERS By Ron Sanders

Although not an Annual Partner at this time, the Blue Club joined us in the Sponsor Category and will be the Presenting Sponsor for our guest Speaker Josh Borovsky. They will also promote the event at both Blue Line Club locations at Sartell and St Cloud.

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FISHING REFLECTIONS. By Eric Kohn

As I reflect on the previous musky season, I recall some great highs and lows during the season. I witnessed my largest musky follow to date, fished with a new club member and started the process of introducing musky fishing to my boys. There were lows. I learned how to lose multiple muskies at the side of the boat, learned that rocks do like trolling motor propellers and hooks can be very sharp! The great sport that we share the same passion can deliver us the greatest highs and some of the lowest times. Amazing how that works. One thing that is consistent, the camaraderie and friendships that develop out of this fish we chase. I read an interesting article once; they polled the top athletes of all time and asked about their most memorable experiences. The results were all nearly identical, regardless of how many individual awards and records each sports icon had, their most memorable experiences involve their teammates and the relationships they had. Interesting... The awards are least important and the relationships built are more. As we look forward to 2015, make it a point to fish with other members and create memories. In addition, introduce youth to the sport we love. Start the youth on other gamefish and instill the passion for fishing that we all have and they may one day become like us, chasing a fish that creates so many emotions and builds lifelong friendships.

Volunteer Opportunities:

There are some great opportunities to share your passion for the outdoors with local youth. The minimal requirement of time can build a lifelong love for the sport of fishing. **Please remember that the future of our sport now with the opportunities to teach our youth.**

1. 13th Annual Big Brother/Big Sister Fishing Outing - Saturday, May 2, 2015
2. Waite Park Family Fun Day fishing derby, Sunday June 14th .
3. MN High School Muskie Fishing Tournament Early June

Please contact me for more info. We will be posting on the website more info when available .
Eric Kohn epkohn34@hotmail.com 612-636-7928



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MEMBERSHIP REPORT · · · · · By Nate Rose

In January we didn't have any new members or anyone dropping. Just a reminder Eric Nelson still needs to renew his membership. Up for renewal we've got Joe Braun, Alex Lauer, and Jacob Moren for the month of February. The easiest way to renew your membership is online. The website (muskiesinc.org) should prompt you for renewal once your membership expires.

Spread the word and encourage anyone interested in muskie fishing/management to join our chapter, it would be great to see our chapter grow.

Contest Standings December 25, 2014

LUNKER OF THE MONTH			
Month	Name	Size	Lake
June	Alex Lauer	47"	Alex
July	Donald Magney	46"	Alex
August	Eric Poissant	44.5"	Sugar
September	Alex Lauer	50.5"	Alex
October	Bryan J Thompson	51.5"	Minnetonka
November	Thomas Ardolf	52"	Alex

CURRENT STANDINGS					
Division	Name	# of Fish	Points	Largest	Average
Mens Master	Bryan J Thompson	7	157	51.5"	41"
Mens	Eric W Poissant	17	276	46.5"	42"
	Alex Lauer	8	145	50.5"	44"
	Thomas Ardolf	7	145	52"	46"
	Nathan Rose	6	109	49.5"	43"
	Troy A. Schmitz	5	96	48"	45"
	Joseph Lauer	4	69	44.25"	43"
	Donald Magney	3	57	46"	44"
	Eric Kohn	4	52	42"	39"
	Bruce A Kitowski	3	44	43"	40"
	Ken Schmitt	2	39	50"	45"
	Cliff Peterson	1	19	45"	45"
	Chad Schulzetenberg	2	16	35"	34"
Juniors	Elysa Amberg	15	154	48"	36"
	Ryan Schmitz	6	45	37"	33"
	Joshua Nielsen	1	11	36.5"	36.5"
Womens	Kara Poissant	1	17	43"	43"



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PROGRAM DIRECTOR REPORT By Aaron Meyer

This month I have several tidbits of information that came from presentations at the recent MMPA meeting, the 2015 DNR Roundtable, and the latest Esox Workshop. Some of these are just interesting things to think about. Some are directly related to issues we are currently involved in, and hopefully I'll be able to delve further into these in future newsletters.

It's well known that Lake Mille Lacs is currently under scrutiny because of problems with the walleye population. A lot of effort is being put forth to find answers. It appears that the adult walleye population is healthy, and also that reproductive rates are good. Walleye fry are hatching in good numbers and appear to be surviving their initial stage of life. Something is causing high mortality in these young walleyes in approximately the first 1.5 years of their life. The fry are not surviving to the age/size where they become targeted by anglers.

Among many other things being studied, there has been stomach content studies conducted to see what the various predators in Mille Lacs are eating. None of them have turned out to be the obvious culprit. There's much more to this complex puzzle than just pointing at one species and saying it is eating all the walleyes. A couple of interesting notes: Because of their overall population size, walleyes eat significantly more total food than any other species in Mille Lacs. Some of what they eat is other walleyes. It was shown that small northern pike eat more walleyes than large pike do.

We've been given some initial (and incomplete) creel survey data from Mille Lacs winter pike harvest under the current expanded harvest regulation. Overall, it shows fairly moderate levels of harvest. It shows most harvest is by spearing. It shows most harvest has been from 22-30 inches. So far it shows only 5 fish over 40 inches being taken by spearing and 2 by angling. I personally have first-hand accounts (and have seen the pictures) of more than that, and I know several others who could say the same. I've seen harvested fish up to 45 inches. I question how much time/effort/manpower has been put into the creel surveys.

It's important for the public to know that these expanded harvest regs are NOT meant to reduce pike populations or to imply that northern pike are causing the walleye problems. This regulation was put in place solely for economic reasons. The Commissioner imposed this regulation in hopes that expanded pike and bass bag limits would draw more anglers to Mille Lacs and hopefully provide economic stimulus to local businesses that usually rely on walleye anglers. This regulation was put into place on a one year basis. It might, or might not, be used again next year.

The DNR is getting serious about statewide pike regulation changes, but the current indication is that they may not be fully prepared until next year. The goal is to allow acceptable levels of pike harvest while finding a way to improve the balance and size structure of pike populations... a difficult proposition to say the least! The MMPA is closely involved in this, and we hope to make significant progress towards managing pike much better across Minnesota.

There is a smartphone app in the works that would allow anglers to enter similar data to what you would provide when talking to a creel clerk. Creel surveys are used to determine angling success and help establish population estimates and trends. However, they leave a lot to be desired in terms of collecting good information. Creel clerks simply cannot be everywhere, and are rarely present at peak times such as early morning, late evening, and after dark, when many of the more successful anglers are on the water. And, many lakes never even get creel surveys done. This app would fill a lot of voids and provide infinitely more data than the current methods.

Lake Rebecca is an important muskie brood stock lake in need of a new/improved aeration system. A Hugh C. Becker Foundation grant application is being put together to help fund this project. Muskies, Inc. chapters throughout the state might provide additional funding if necessary.

"Bioenergetics" is a scientific way for biologists to determine the energy fish require to sustain various life processes, and determine how much food is required to provide that energy. A couple noteworthy facts here:

Because of population dynamics, northern pike populations with a healthy balance of larger fish actually consume less total food than damaged populations consisting of high numbers of small pike.

In an "average" Minnesota muskie lake, with an average northern pike density, the pike population consumes roughly 96% more total food than the muskie population does! Now obviously a single large muskie needs to eat more than a small to medium sized pike does, but this really demonstrates the impact population density has on how a fish species fits into it's ecosystem. It also solidifies the fact that muskies have very little impact on their prey species.

We've had extensive discussion on initial findings, ideas and theories about the current state of our muskie fisheries and possible "problems" with muskie stocking methods. Many lakes seem to be on a downward trend. It's a complex situation. Overall, in the last 8 years, stocking quotas have been met. However, consistent stocking rates from one lake to another really haven't existed. Many people don't realize that even below average stocking levels have produced excellent fisheries. Often, these fisheries have been just as good as lakes with higher stocking rates. "Recruitment suppression" seems to explain the current downturn in some of our muskie populations. The concept is that once an adult muskie population is established, the survival of the muskies being stocked goes down significantly. Basically, the adult muskies self-regulate their population

numbers. The difference between these stocked fisheries and a natural, self sustaining one is that in these relatively "new" populations, most of the adult fish are roughly the same age, so when they reach maximum age and start to die, most of them go within a relatively short span of time. At that point, survival of stocked fish increases and there is noticeable lag time before these fish reach large size again. Every new angle of looking at it seems to indicate the same thing. It's actually exactly the same population dynamic that is well known among pike populations where people over-harvest the large pike.

It's possible that stocking based on total acreage makes more sense than the current littoral acreage plan. And/Or...It may be that stocking rates should reflect a lake's relative structural complexity. It also may be that muskies need "x" amount of space per fish, regardless of littoral acreage or lake size. Much more research needs to be done. I do think we're getting closer to understanding the complexities of muskie stocking, and I suspect we'll end up making changes to stocking methods that will result in better results in the future.

Aaron

MN Muskie and Pike Alliance Co-Chair

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WEBMASTER. By Tom Ardolf February 2015 Webmaster Report

This month I want to place all the emphasis on how we can use our technology resources to benefit our chapter --- *With Your Help.*

Our chapter has only one fundraiser each year – the Annual Fish Dinner on April 24th. Our key to success is simple: lots of people at the event. To get the people there, we need to let them know it's happening. While some people may see it on our web site, we need to put the information out there --- And you, yes you, the reader of this can make it happen. Do you have a Facebook account? Then let me get you a picture of the flyer so you can put it on your Facebook page and invite people to buy tickets and come to the Dinner. Do you Tweet (Twitter for the non-Tweeters!), Pin (Pinterest) or are active on other social media sites? Share it!!!! Not a computer person? No problem, let me get you a handful of flyers and you can pass them out!!!! The important thing is --- share the information!

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FaceBook: We gained 18 LIKES and we're up to 281. Between you, our members, INVITING your friends and also people [hopefully] coming to our page and LIKING it from seeing you share a photo of our flyer, I'm hoping we'll get this count up.

Cafepress: No news for this month, I did see that Eric Poissant got a nice SCMI sweatshirt from the musky huntress, Kara!!!

Web Site: Other than basic maintenance, my workload on the site has been light this past month. Of course, I'm always open to suggestions for enhancements.

Forward your pictures to scmi.webmaster@gmail.com. Keep your eyes posted for new information on our chapter and meetings!

Tom Ardolf

Web Guy for St. Cloud Muskies, Inc.



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