

THE RELEASE

MARCH 2014

Website:

www.stcloudmuskies.com



MEETING: MARCH 18, 2014 7:30 pm

Waite Park American Legion

SPEAKER: JEFF HALVERSON DNR c/o (Aitken Office)

Time on the WaterBy Bruce A. Kitowski, President

First off I would just like to say that even though it is 30 below chill factor the bright side of it all is that we should be on the water in just eight short months. Ok maybe not that long, but it sure seems that way when going outside. On Feb. 10th we held our large seminar at the Moose Lodge in Waite Park, and it went off without a hitch. Luke Ronnestrand who was our guest speaker did an outstanding job. Everyone had a great time and we signed up six new members. Thank you to everyone that came early to help set up, and make the evening run smooth.

I need to ask all the members to please try to find time to volunteer and gather prizes for the Anglers Dinner coming up on April 25th. This does not give us much time so I am asking to try to sell your tickets ASAP so that we can get a better grasp on the evenings turn out. Also thank you to those who already sold tickets, solicited prizes, and donated money.

Bruce

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Angler's Fish Dinner Friday April 25, 2014

Waite Park American Legion

Dinner served between 4:30 PM and 7:30 PM

Menu: Fish, Potatoes, Green Beans Bread and Dessert

Dinner Tickets:
Adult \$10.00
Kids 12 and under
\$5.00

Tickets available from
any Muskie's Inc.
Member in advance or
at the door

Prizes:
Door Prizes
Silent Auctions
Tip Boards



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND UPCOMING EVENTS By Eric Kohn

ANGLERS DINNER

Do you wonder how we as a club have money to bring in great speakers like Luke Ronnestrand? It is due to one large fundraiser for the chapter, the Anglers Dinner which is Friday, April 25, 2014. It is time to stand up and get active. The dinner runs smoothly if we have volunteers!!! We make more money if the evening runs smoothly!!! What a great night to help out and make it another success. Remember...great lectures...great meetings...all begin with funds from this volunteer opportunity. Please contact me at epkohn34@hotmail.com or sign up at the next meeting. Thanks

Big Brothers Big Sisters Program

Mark the calendar!!!! Sat May 3, 2014, 10:00 a.m -1:00 pm Big Brothers/Big Sister MI Annual Fishing Outing at the Rock Island Pond between Sand Companies and Bernicks. Please contact me for info or to sign up to volunteer. Time commitment is from 9-1pm. A short time to make a lasting memory on our future generation of anglers.

Volunteer and make a difference in the lives of area youth. Teach them your passion for the outdoors and fishing.

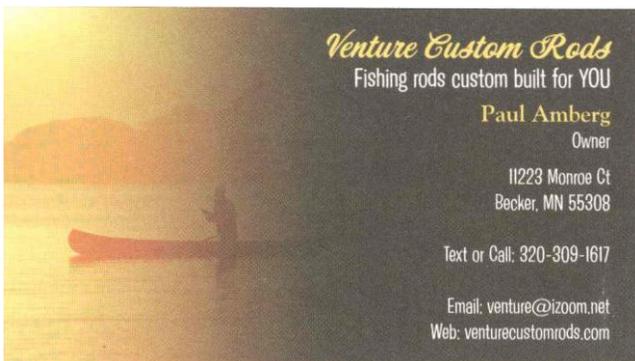
Eric

MEMBERSHIP REPORT By Marc Jefferson

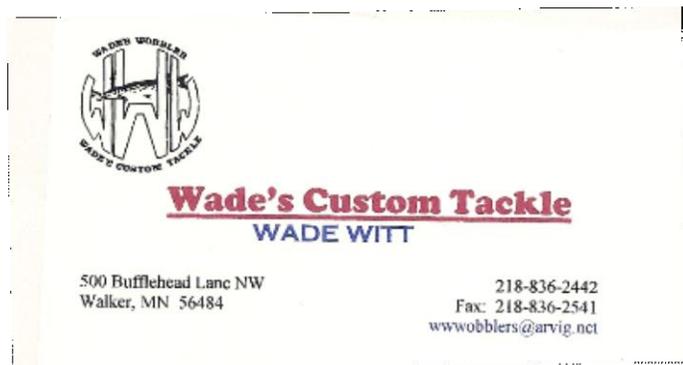
Greetings - We don't have any new members to report this month. We'd like to remind Don Mageney, Eric Kohn and Joe Lauer that they are up for renewal this month and we'd love to have them back for another season.

LAKE OF THE MONTH By Sven Larsen

Lake of the Month returns in March in a big way. Paul Amberg will be giving us some hints on how to fish Lake of the Woods. He has years of experience on this lake and I am sure everyone will learn something from his presentation. If anyone would like to share something about any of our Musky waters please let me know. I would really like to find someone who fishes the Mississippi and is willing to do a short presentation in it.



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Fall Get Together - 2014 By Dave Mendel

We are proud to announce the dates for our 2014 Fall Get Together. It will be held from September 11th through September 14th at Cass Lake. Back again, by popular demand, Cass Lake Lodge will be hosting our event. CLL 218-335-6658 www.casslakelodge.com

The camping and cabins rates for this year will be:

RV Camping / W full hook ups	\$44.00 / Night
Cabins	\$45.00 / Night / Person
Boat Slips in the Harbor	\$10.50 / Day

This year the resort will be saving 3 cabins for our event, and the use on the 'Lodge' for the Thursday night seafood buffet. The Cass Lake area is very busy this time of the year, so these cabins will only be held until August 15th 2014 at which time they will be opened up to the public. Please make your reservations early to ensure a spot.

CLL has built a new and much improve harbor that will serve us much better. If you need a boat slip, please request one at the time you make reservations. Camping is in limited supply and rented on a first come first served basis. If you plan to camp make your reservations early.

When making reservations, be sure to mention that you're part of the St. Cloud Muskies Inc. group.

Once again we will be charging a \$10.00 fee which includes a Friday night meal catered by CLL and a chance to win a fine attendance prize. Plus everyone attending the Friday meal will receive a lure as part of the drawing.

We hope you can join us for a great weekend of fishing on one of Minnesota's premier Muskie waters. If you have any questions please contact me at,

Dave Mendel
320 - 293 - 6633
mendjo1118@charter.net



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PROGRAM DIRECTOR REPORT By Aaron Meyer

Hi everyone! I have quite a bit of information to share with you this month, regarding the two main issues that our chapter is working on in conjunction with the MMPA. These two topics we are addressing are: increasing the minimum size limit for muskies, and solving Minnesota's pike management problem. Both of these topics are likely to come up in this year's legislative session and we will need all of your support to keep moving forward.

I've discussed the pike management problem several times in the past, but here's a current over-view of the issue. It's not exactly news to most anglers that many of Minnesota's lakes are full of small pike, or that most lakes don't have many large pike. What is news to many is that this problem is directly caused by overharvest of mid-sized and large pike, and that our state pike regulations do nothing to keep our pike populations healthy. Most people aren't aware of how influential these pike are to the over-all health of the entire fishery. Pike are literally the most influential species in our lakes, and these "hammer-handle" pike populations are extremely destructive to the entire lake ecosystem.

For those of you who don't know Jim Lilienthal, he is a retired DNR Fisheries Biologist, and an expert on northern pike. While working for the DNR he could only dedicate so much time to any one species because he had to manage hundreds of lakes for all the species present. Since retirement he has been able to put hundreds of hours into collecting data on what he feels is the biggest problem in Minnesota fisheries management... northern pike. I'll try to summarize and keep this very complex problem relatively simple: Pike reproduce very quickly in most of MN. They also grow very quickly when they're small. The problem starts because their growth rates slow down right around the same size range that many people start harvesting them. The result is a "bottle-neck" where you have lots of small pike growing quickly, and relatively few fish surviving to larger sizes. The subsequent lack of bigger pike actually compounds the problem further, because large pike are cannibals that help keep their own populations in check in a healthy fishery. So, you end up with lots and lots of small pike, and a snowball effect with the problem just continuing to get worse and worse. Here's where things get interesting, and this is what Jim has been working so hard to show us. When you get to this point in your pike population, you start seeing VERY DRAMATIC negative effects on walleye populations! In fact, walleye stocking in these lakes essentially becomes nothing more than a northern pike "feeding program"! Jim's got the actual numbers and stats, but put it this way- you can DOUBLE walleye stocking and see almost NO INCREASE in walleye recruitment! Now, what's really shocking is that a huge percentage of Minnesota's walleye lakes are at this point with their pike populations! So, we as anglers and tax-payers are

literally WASTING millions of dollars in walleye stocking because of our current pike harvest activities and regulations! To put it simply, we NEED a drastic change in pike regulation, and a drastic change in our own harvest practices. Essentially, every time you keep a pike over about 24 inches you are hurting the overall fishery, as well as your own fishing in the future. Yet at the same time, you could do yourself and the fishery a HUGE favor by keeping as many small pike as you can! The "magic number" is around 22-24 inches. Keep those smaller pike- they're over-abundant and tasty! Jim has been having some success lately in getting this problem noticed, and we expect to see some things happening this year with the DNR and the Legislature. Share this information far and wide- and stay tuned.

The second issue we are making progress on is the muskie size limit. Minnesota has some excellent muskie fishing opportunities, and is known worldwide for it's BIG muskies. But, the rapid rise in muskie angler numbers is putting the fish more at risk, and in many cases fishing is starting to suffer. We need further protection of these fish in order to maintain the quality fisheries we have today. Release of these big fish is the key. I've said this before, and I'll say it again- every time you catch a big fish, you caught that fish because someone else released it! We are catching these fish over and over. If you choose to keep your "fish of a lifetime", you are directly taking that fish away from someone else in the future. Or look at it this way- if another angler had made that choice, you would have never caught that fish! Almost every issue of Muskie Hunter magazine is now showing fish that were caught multiple times by multiple anglers. It seems like a rare and lucky occurrence, but in reality it is happening to all of us! When we work so hard to catch one of those giants, it's hard to imagine that elusive beast being handled before, but they all have been! A prime example is a fish I caught several years ago. The fish was 53.5 inches with a 25 inch girth... a true giant! It came from a large lake with a lot fish and a lot of open water for those fish to disappear into. When looking at a few photos from a couple anglers I know, I discovered this fish had been caught at least 4 times between 53 and 55 inches! I wonder how many times it's been caught in it's whole life! Probably dozens. For many serious fishermen, that fish would truly be the "fish of a lifetime". How many people would have never had that opportunity if someone had kept that fish? I'm going to attach a message from fellow MMPA co-chair John Underhill, giving an update and some great info on where we are at with this issue.

Hello Anglers; We've been working on a substantial increase in Muskie size limit for about 25 years. Frank Schneider Jr., Dave Overland, Jack Burns, Hugh Becker, and a host of others have been at the forefront of this effort since the 1980's when these folks realized the only way to grow bigger fish was through a combined approach. One effort was in Catch and Release; another in handling fish to be released; third- an effort involving educating all anglers about Muskies and Pike; and the fourth leg of the effort is regulations.

We've made incredible strides in three of the elements that have created a great fishery. Now, the interest in the fish and the sport has grown to the degree that our fish are being impacted negatively. With 120,000+ anglers keeping only 1% of the fish they catch we stand no chance of sustaining the fishery that was created by us keeping 1% of the fish when there were only 30,000 of us. The DNR has recognized and acknowledged our concerns and believes the increase is needed. The MMPA voted to support a statewide 56 inch minimum on Muskies. Last summer the DNR did a creel survey on Mille Lacs, Bemidji, St. Croix and Winnie. The questions were not geared toward a simpler statewide regulation, but in a 2 tiered manner, asking if the statewide increase should be 50 or 52. The majority said 52. They asked about select trophy waters being 54, 55 or 56 inch minimums. The majority said 56". The DNR has currently chosen to go with 50 statewide, and possibly 56 on select waters in the future.

We are going to work on getting the statewide minimum increased to at least 55 inches. The major issue with the DNR system is it does not address the pressure and the harvest on small and mid-size lakes... the very lakes that many of us are fishing the most. The fact is, these smaller lakes are having 52-55 inch fish taken, which is currently well within the law but does nothing for the sustainability of the trophy Muskie opportunities in those waters. Stay safe on the ice and look for Voter Voice requests for action in the coming weeks and months. The fish need some good friends.

Respectfully;

John Underhill muskiefool@yahoo.com

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Aaron Meyer



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WEBMASTER. By Tom Ardolf

Facebook: We are up to 111 LIKES, so we gained one over the last month. It's a great way to spread the message of our meetings, our events, and our sport in general, so please, take the time to invite your Facebook Friends. There is a tool right on the main page to click "Invite" for each of your friends.

Cafepress: Zero activity on this site by anyone.

Website: The board member listing has been updated. Please let me know if you'd like any contact information to be different than what is listed.

This month I'd like to highlight our Community Services page. I have updated the events that have dates quoted, which include: 1) the Big Brothers/Big Sister event - I have the first Saturday in May listed, which is May 3rd; 2) The Waite Park Youth Fishing Contest I've listed as June 7th 3) The High School Fishing tournament I have on Lake Alexander on Friday, June 20th for the regional portion and Friday, June 27th for the Statewide component.

The last item on this page is "Lake Landing Cleanups". Our chapter performs cleanup at the following locations:

- SCMI cleans up the south landing on Sugar Lake.
- SCMI cleans up the landing in Sartell by the dam.
- SCMI cleans up the west landing on Lake Alexander.
- SCMI cleans up the west landing on Lake Shamineau.
- SCMI cleans up the Mississippi River landing in Sartell.
- SCMI goes to the Horseshoe Chain of Lakes and spends all day with several boats cleaning shoreline.
- SCMI does an annual cleanup of the Mississippi River shoreline on the west side in Sartell.

We have briefly touched on this work at a couple Board Meetings. Now, spring is right around the corner, and we'd like to see a member make the commitment to take each one of these, get a little help, and take care of the respective location. Most of us have been on one or more of these lakes or the river and here's a chance to take care of a resource we use. If you'd consider spending just a little of your time to making one of these locations look good and enhance our reputation, it would be greatly appreciated!!

Tom

Web Guy for St. Cloud Muskies, Inc. Scmi.webmaster@gmail.com

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1208 8th Street South
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