



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Volume 94

November/December 2025

No. 6

New Pulse on Science: Project Spotlight

Rebuilding the Reefs of Saginaw Bay: A Collaborative Effort to Restore Fish Habitat and Coastal Health

How a Great Lakes regional partnership is rehabilitating lost reef habitat in Michigan's Saginaw Bay and why it matters for fish and local communities.

By Andrea Miehl, Great Lakes Fishery Commission; Dave Fielder, Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Terry Heatlie, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Jeff Jolley, Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Jeff Tyson, Great Lakes Fishery Commission; and Jill Wingfield, Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

Saginaw Bay, an embayment along the western shore of Lake Huron in Michigan, has long been known for its abundant fish, dynamic shorelines, and biological richness. But decades of stressors, including sediment inputs from land-use practices, pollution, invasive species, and habitat degradation, have erased much of what made the bay thrive, especially the rocky spawning reefs upon which many economically-valuable native fish depend. These stressors and the resultant environmental degradation led the International Joint Commission to designate Saginaw Bay as an Area of Concern in 1987.



Project partners for the Inner Saginaw Bay Reef Restoration Project hold signed and personalized rocks which are now part of the new Channel Island Reef (Lake Huron), which provides habitat for future generations of fish.

Credit: Jill Wingfield, GLFC.

Now, a partnership among the Great Lakes Fishery Commission ("Commission") and multiple federal and state agencies, universities, and small businesses is seeking to reverse this degradation through the Inner Saginaw

Bay Reef Restoration Project. The project is part of a broader Regional Habitat Partnership between the Commission and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which seeks to protect, restore, and improve fish hab-

itat across the Great Lakes basin. Restoration of fish habitat in Saginaw Bay is also a priority of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) via the Walleye Recovery Plan, which prescribed diversifying spawning sources of

walleye in the bay to build resilience in the population.

In September-October 2025, restoration efforts in inner Saginaw Bay moved from planning to action—or more accurately, from blueprint to barge. Just east of Channel Island near the

mouth of the Saginaw River, crews deployed tons of limestone cobble onto the bay floor, constructing a new reef which reintroduces the rocky habitat that native fish like lake whitefish and walleye once relied on to spawn—habitat that had all but vanished owing to sedimentation in the bay.

The Problem: Lost Reefs, Lost Fisheries

Saginaw Bay is one of the largest bays in the Great Lakes, covering approximately 1,150 square miles with a watershed spanning 5,500 square miles and 22 counties. The bay's fisheries today are valued at more than \$30 million annually to the region.

Walleye have long been a cornerstone of Saginaw Bay's fish community. At the peak, the bay supported one of the most productive commercial walleye fisheries in the Great Lakes—second only to Lake Erie—with annual harvests exceeding one million pounds. Walleye, along with other important fishery species such as cisco, lake

"Spotlight"
Continued on page 2

Fish Pass Update

By Andrew Muir, GLFC Science Director

The second phase of FishPass construction, which includes constructing the 400-ft length x 30-ft width fish-sorting channels, is well underway. In mid-August, the contractor completed installation of the steel sheet pile cofferdam. Dewatering of the areas inside the cofferdam, which permits work on the fish-sorting channels to be safely completed in a dry working environment, began. The remaining portions of the original Union

Street Dam were demolished and sediment and silt have been excavated for construction of the fish-sorting channel. Installation of the permanent sheet-pile cutoff wall, which will be located underneath the headworks of the fish-sorting channel is expected to begin by November 2025.

Prior to full dewatering of the area, staff from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) and Grand Traverse Band of

"Fish Pass"
Continued on page 5

Mastering the Art of Float Trotting for Steelhead

By Roger Hinchcliff, Steelhead Manifesto

Understanding Float Speed, Depth, and the Strike Zone

When it comes to steelhead fishing, few techniques are as deadly or as misunderstood as float trotting. When done correctly, it allows you to present

"Float"
Continued on page 6



Search groups for MSSFA

The Quality of Fishing Reflects the Quality of Living!

“Spotlight”

Continued from page 1

whitefish, and lake trout, relied on the bay as a seasonal spawning and nursery ground.

Much of this fish productivity was supported by the bay’s once-abundant rocky reefs—glacially deposited cobble and stone that provided ideal conditions for spawning, egg incubation, and juvenile development. These reefs also offered shelter from predators and strong currents. Over time, however, many were buried by sediment or eroded away. For species that depend on rocky areas to reproduce, the resulting soft, silty bottoms were poor replacements.

By the mid-1940s, the Saginaw Bay walleye fishery had collapsed, owing to poor reproduction due to degraded spawning habitat and construction of dams in the watershed. Overfishing and effects of invasive species, particularly alewife, compounded the negative effects of habitat alteration. Other notable fisheries, including cisco, also collapsed during this time.

The changes in habitat and the resulting negative effects on fish have cascading effects that ripple throughout the ecosystem and into local communities and economies. Fewer fish means reduced fisheries harvests and loss of economic value; less habitat complexity means less resilience to changing conditions; and weakened natural shorelines leave coastal communities more exposed to erosion, flooding, and storms.

The Project: Inner Saginaw Bay Reef Restoration

The Inner Saginaw Bay Reef Restoration Project



Construction of Channel Island Reef in inner Saginaw Bay, Lake Huron. The new reef replaces lost fish habitat and helps more fish reproduce and grow, supporting a variety of fishing opportunities and increasing resilience of the ecosystem to future changes. Credit: Zak Allan, GLFC.

aims to reestablish lost spawning reef habitat in the bay, thereby diversifying sources of reproduction and improving fish production, both of which provide benefits to fisheries harvests and resilience to future stressors. Habitat is being restored using natural materials (gravel, cobble, rock) in locations selected which contain suitable thermal conditions, water depth, nursery habitat connectivity, and sediment dynamics.

In 2022, Michigan DNR and Environmental Consulting & Technology carried out a feasibility study for reef restoration in Saginaw Bay. The study included hydrodynamic and sediment transport modeling, bathymetric mapping, and side-scan sonar surveys. Through this study, coupled with a public input process

engaging local stakeholders, a site near Channel Island in the inner bay, about two miles northeast of the mouth of the Saginaw River, was selected for restoration. This site was also selected to serve as a near-shore complement to the recently constructed Coreyon Reef, a 2-acre reef created in 2019 approximately eleven miles from shore.

After selection, a reef design process was initiated. Rigorous pre-restoration monitoring of sediment contaminants, the fish community, and fish spawning use, was also conducted. And once the U.S. Coast Guard confirmed that the location and design criteria of the reef did not interfere with navigation, construction was ready to begin.

During September

2025, approximately 20,000 tons of limestone rock—ranging from 4 to 8 inches in diameter, the optimal size for egg incubation and protection—were deposited via barge approximately 0.5 miles east of Channel Island. The resulting structure contains over 300,000 cubic feet of fish spawning habitat in a reef that measures 570 feet long by 190 feet wide (totaling 2.5 acres). The reef rises 3-4 feet above the bay bottom and sits at least 5.5 feet below the water’s surface, even when water levels are low. The reef cost \$1.74 million to construct.

To imagine the size of the new reef, picture two football fields placed end-to-end, with a player buried chest-deep in softball-to-volleyball size rock! The total volume is about

the size of a large concert hall. To create this massive structure, a whopping 40 barge loads of limestone were needed and crews ran 24/7 during project construction. The stone was installed on the bay bottom using a grapple attachment on a crane, like the toy claw machine in an arcade. Because the grapple attachment was so large (~15 feet tall), the limestone was essentially placed—not dropped—on the bottom. This allowed for precision placement of the material and meet design plans and specifications.

The Next Steps: Measuring Success

Design of the newly-constructed Channel Island Reef relied on lessons learned from Coreyon Reef, notably materials and techniques used during construction. In less than five years post-construction, Coreyon Reef has become a hot spot for fishing and fish reproduction, with documented spawning by lake whitefish and walleye in addition to habitat use by many other fish species.

To evaluate whether Channel Island Reef experiences similar success, post-construction monitoring will assess spawning, survival, and recruitment of fish, sediment movements, and other functional habitat characteristics, in addition to community benefits such as fishing opportunities, recreational use, and coastal protection. Like Coreyon Reef, Channel Island Reef will have a commercial fishing exclusion zone in place. Additional details on post-construction assessments can be found in the Quality Assurance Project Plans for fish communities and sediment.

The Future: A Shared Vision for a Healthier Bay

By restoring critical reef habitat, the Inner Saginaw Bay Reef Restoration Project is expected to rebuild fish populations, strengthen ecosystems, and support human communities that depend on a healthy bay. Reef restoration has the potential to not only enhance fish populations and fisheries, but also boost biodiversity, contribute to coastal resilience by reducing erosion, and support local economies. In the broader context of the Regional Habitat Partnership, this work helps fulfill a shared vision of resilient fish communities, connected habitats, and widespread benefits to the Great Lakes and the people who depend on them.

Partners & Funding

This project is conducted in partnership among the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc; LimnoTech; Walsh Service Solutions, LLC; Ryba Marine; Purdue University; Michigan Sea Grant; Michigan State University Extension; and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

Funding has been provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation—Coastal Resilience Fund; and Dow Chemical Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration settlement money.

Putting Hull Street Energy On Notice

By Dennis Eade

In anticipation of the Consumers Energy sale of its 13 Hydroelectric projects in Michigan to Hull Street Energy (a private equity firm based in Bethesda, Maryland), the Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition, which MSSFA is a member, is informing the potential buyer that it has been engaged in Consumers Energy’s strategic planning for the long-term future of its hydropower projects since 2022, as it is a member of the Manistee - Muskegon - Au Sable Committee (MMAC) that oversees the implementation of the 1994 FERC license orders for the 11 hydropower projects on these river systems.

The Coalition is taking this opportunity to point out to Hull Street Energy and the public that six of these projects (Croton, Tippy, Hodenpyl, Mio, Alcona, and Foote) are not meeting

the water quality standards established in the Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification issued by the State of Michigan for the 1994 FERC licenses. In addition, the rivers below these six projects are listed as waters that do not support their designated uses (Coldwater Fishery) or attain Water Quality Standards.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) went on record in 2024 stating that until water quality standards are attained, it is likely that subsequent federal Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certifications will be denied if relicensing occurs. In its announcement of the planned sale of the 13 hydropower projects, Consumers Energy stated that Confluence Hydro, a Hull Street Energy subsidiary, intends to seek relicensing of these

projects, beginning with the 11 projects on the Au Sable, Manistee, and Muskegon Rivers in 2029. Issuance of a quality certification is a critical component of relicensing and it could be

difficult given these water quality problems.

The Coalition is simply pointing out potential outcomes which could arise during future relicensing in relation to the water quality

issues.

Finally, the Coalition’s position is that these water quality issues must be addressed above and beyond current license requirements in future

relicensing proceedings as the adverse effects are well documented.

Photo: consumersenergy.com



Troll For More And Bigger Panfish

By Dave Mull,
Midwest Outdoors

I first started trolling for panfish as part of an expedition spearheaded by my buddy Al more than a decade ago. Al had studied a map and found a lake in the middle of a summer camp. The lake was surrounded by private property, had no boat ramp, but was accessible through a small creek that ran under a county road about a mile away. The only way to get to the lake was by paddling against the current in a small jon boat, canoe or kayak. You had to get out and drag your watercraft over a beaver dam and through very shallow water a couple of times to finally get there. But it was always worth the effort, as this lake

was full of suspended, big bluegills and bonus crappies that didn't see a lot of anglers. And after a long day of harvesting a limit of big panfish, it was all downstream to get back to the trucks.

Al's favorite setup was a small, No. 14 or No. 12 Worden's Spin-N-Glo rigged on a 4-pound-test leader. A couple of tiny, round beads between the floating winged spinner and the No. 8 Aberdeen-style, Tru Turn Hook helped keep the Spin-N-Glo spinning. The long shank helped unhook fish. Sometimes, Al put two Spin-N-Glos in tandem to bulk up the presentation, but one usually worked just fine.

The best bait was almost always a couple of wax

worms, which were easy to keep lively in a small cooler on a hot summer day. My buddy Ron, who is a panfish trolling assassin, uses two-hook spinner rigs and, usually, leaf worms or nightcrawlers. He is a fan of Bo's Bluegill Buster, a pre-tied, two-hook rig that comes with two interchangeable spinner blades. It's available at bait shops around southern Michigan and you can order them online at vandamwarehouse.com.

Other good lures include the 2 1/2- and 3-inch Slim SwimmerZ on whatever size jig head will take it to the depth you want it to go. You won't need more than a 1/8-ounce jig head in most cases, and often, a smaller one will work better

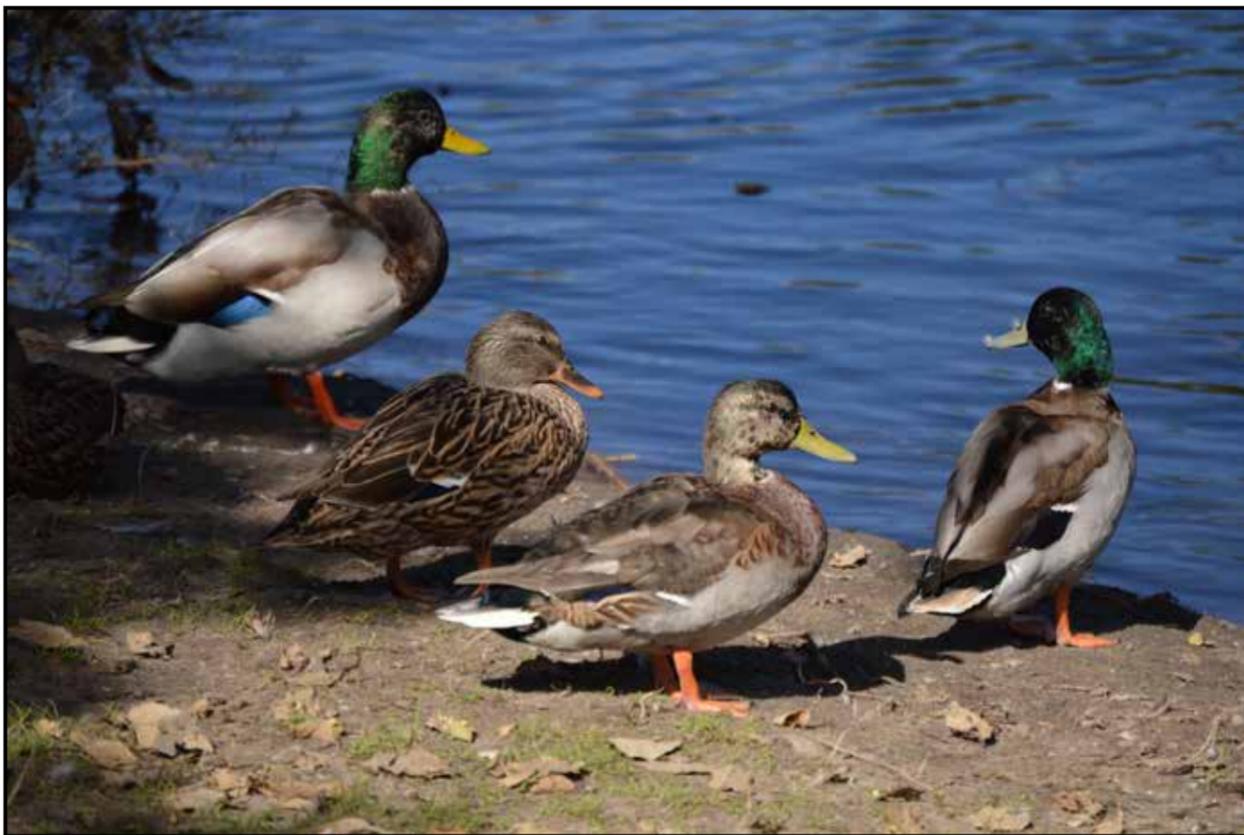
to keep it farther back behind the boat and near the surface. The SwimmerZ is a boot-tail swimbait, and any small, twister-tail type grubs on a jig can also catch fish.

Not all lakes are conducive to trolling for panfish. Some are just too weedy. Chunks of floating weeds are the real problem, as most of the trolling will take place over deep water where live weeds don't come up to the surface. Loose weeds and clumps of algae in some lakes can make trolling a pain.

The best lakes I know of for trolling have large, deep basins. What are the bluegills and crappies doing out suspended over the deepest parts of these lakes? We can make an educated



Panfish. Photo credit: lternet.edu



Some anglers prefer to watch ducks instead of electronic screens when they're fishing.

FISHING CAN BE CONFUSING

By Bob Jensen

Fishing, like life, can be confusing. On the six o'clock news a person says people should have the Freedom of Speech. A few weeks or months later, the same person suggests that someone should lose their job or go to jail because of something they said. Same thing with fishing. On a fishing trip a long time ago, my fishing partner told me to use a bright lure. A few days later the same friend suggested a natural looking bait. WTH? {What the heck?}

When I was young my Dad introduced me to fishing. At that time I didn't think about the hows and whys of fishing. Dad baited the hook, flipped the bait in the water, and handed me the rod. "When the bobber goes under, start reeling" was his instruction. So, when the bobber went under, I started reeling and was often rewarded with a bluegill and sometimes

a bass. My only thoughts were that fishing was fun.

As I got older, I started thinking about how to catch more fish. I read magazine articles and talked with older, more accomplished anglers whenever I could. Later on I attended fishing seminars where well-known anglers shared their secrets for catching fish. As I gained more knowledge about fishing, I had more questions. I found that the more I learned about fishing, the more questions I had about fishing.

For instance, a friend and I went fishing one day in early spring. He told me that we should use small baits because small baits were best. We caught some walleyes. That fall, the same friend and I went fishing again. He told me that we should use big baits because big baits were best. I was confused, but went along with his suggestion. We caught some walleyes.

This small bait/big bait thing got me thinking. In

the spring, we use small baits, in the fall we use big baits. When the water is cold, we move our baits slowly, but six weeks later when the water is warmer, we move them faster. Then six weeks after that, as the water cools, we're back to slow moving baits. I learned that fish react to changes in their environment. When the water is cold, many species of fish prefer a slower moving bait. Also, in the cold waters of spring, they prefer a smaller meal, but when the water begins to cool off in the fall, they look for larger meals. That can be confusing until we learn that fish react differently at different times.

Now, back to that bait color question mentioned earlier. When my friend suggested a bait color different than the one that he recommended a few days earlier, he explained that we were on a different lake and the water was more stained than the lake we fished

previously. He shared that usually, bright baits were better in stained water, natural appearing baits were often better in clear water. Not always, but usually.

Here's something personal about fishing that's really confusing to me. Forward facing sonar {FFS} has become a big deal in fishing. You watch a screen and it shows you where the fish are. You've got to keep your eyes glued to the screen. It's very effective and will usually add to your catch. I don't use it. I prefer watching loons, otters, deer, and the person I'm fishing with. Here's what I can't figure out: I'm not interested in FFS and watching a screen while I'm fishing in open water, but I would not want to go ice-fishing without my Vexilar, the ice-fishing version of FFS. My eyes don't leave that screen all day. Fishing, like life, can be confusing.

guess that they find food out there, either rising up from the lake bottom or falling in from above.

Crappies are likely after minnows that feed on small bugs out in the middle of the abyss. Generally speaking, we find most of the fish in the top 10 feet, sometimes right at the surface. Rarely do we add much weight to get the baits deeper than 6 to 8 feet. Running the baits too deep probably is worse than keeping the baits too shallow. It seems like these fish over the basins are always looking up.

That said, some days, you want your lure presented as close to the thermocline as possible. Just like in the Great Lakes, the break between warm and cold water in small lakes can concentrate the whole food chain at a specific depth. Almost any sonar unit will show the hazy line where plankton concentrates just above the colder water below.

Speed control is important, and Ron tries to keep his pontoon boat's 15-hp, four-stroke motor just barely pushing it. Sometimes, the wind is blowing at the right speed and direction so that Ron could turn off the motor and just let the breeze push us down the lake. He'd then fire up the Mercury outboard to troll back against the wind.

In my 17-foot Mirror-Craft, I used a Minn Kota bow mount trolling motor with the autopilot feature. It served well when trolling downwind; we could turn off the big outboard and let the trolling motor do all the propulsion and steering. Going back against the wind, we'd leave the trolling motor in the water, fire up the outboard for propulsion and steer with the trolling motor.

Kayaks work great, too. I have gathered more than one panfish dinner by trolling from one. Although you can troll while paddling a kayak, it's easier, in my opinion, to troll from a foot-powered kayak or one with an electric trolling motor. Paddling is great exercise, but you need the rods in front of you to monitor them for bites. Install rod holders so they stay out of the way of your paddle.

Here's a kayak trolling tip that might save you a lot of time and frustration. If you're in a state such as Michigan, which allows three rods for trolling, use just two. You'll catch plenty of fish, and a third rod, in my experience, causes time-wasting tangles and unnecessary frustration. Also, as mentioned, get decent rod holders that you can slide into your kayak track system in front of you. If you troll with your rods behind you, you can't react as quickly to bites.

While it's always fun to watch a bobber go down or feel a direct bite while tight-lining over the side of a boat, trolling can provide better panfish catches in the fall. Just don't keep all the big ones, which can really hurt some of these fisheries, especially in smaller lakes. Leave some big bluegill genes in the pool and you'll be trolling up panfish dinners for years to come.





Dennis Eade, Executive Director
Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fishermen's Association

The Michigan House released HB 5093, the long-anticipated legislation to address the funding concerns of the Fisheries Division. A summary of the benefits of the bill outlining the license increases and the expansion of the youth license to generate additional Dingell Johnson Federal Excise Tax benefits to the Fisheries Division if passed can be found in a separate article. It has been assigned to the Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee for hearings. If it passes the House, there is a good chance the Senate may reconcile both bill packages before them eliminating what the sponsors feel have little chance of passing and keeping provisions that both Republicans and Democrats can support. We need to contact members of the house committee and each of our local representatives to support and even co-sponsor by adding their names to the bill.

Consumers Energy is pursuing the sale of the 13 Hydro Electric Projects (obsolete dams) to a east-coast private equity firm for \$1 apiece and an agreement to buy back the energy produced for an extended period of time yet to be determined. The Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition is beginning a public relations campaign to respond to this news and begin alerting the public to the devastating results this could have. It is also reaching out to other potential partners in fighting this sale as well as meeting with the Michigan Attorney General to explore legal avenues to delay or stop the sale. We need to reach out to our legislators, local government officials and community leaders warning them that Consumers decision to remove themselves from the liability for dam failure and/or decommissioning costs will result in millions of dollars of exposure to the public and state of Michigan.

The Lake Michigan Citizens Advisory Committee met on October 8th to review the fishing license bills and the underwater spear fishing proposal being considered by the Natural Resources Commission. The advisors strongly supported HB5093. Advisors were not

in favor of expanding spear fishing in the Great Lakes as proposed in Commissioner Walters amendment and will issue a letter outlining the reasons for desiring a status quo position until more information is available regarding safety and the impact expansion would have.

Election of MSSFA's board of directors for 2025-2027 took place at our October 15th board meeting. We elected seven directors. They are Eric Braden (Metro-West Chapter), Alan Douville (SW Michigan Chapter), Alex Fergus (Holland Chapter), Joe Montella (SW Michigan Chapter), Paul Nienaltowski (Thumb Chapter), Rachel Ridley, South Haven Chapter) and Russ Sylte (Holland Chapter). MSSFA's recently adopted By Laws call for the new directors to meet and elect a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer for the coming two years. We anticipate that taking place prior to the December 17th board meeting.

Fishing for salmon and steelhead this year was universally heralded by lake advisors as superlative. There is concern about the average size of the fish and for alewife abundance. We will be monitoring modeling estimates closely before deciding on future stocking. Let's enjoy the results of this season and put away our boats with optimism for 2026.



MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dennis Eade



House Bill 5093 Summary

Here is the background and details of this bill:

1. The MDNR Fisheries Division has not had increased funding since 2014.

2. Inflation coupled with the legal requirement for the Fisheries Division to maintain a balanced budget, has forced a number of cuts to personnel, field offices, research, and asset maintenance.

3. The Fisheries Division is facing a budget deficit that will require more program cuts in the future and would result in hatchery production and stocking cuts.

4. In 2013, the Fisheries Division received 80% of fishing license revenue. When the all-species fishing license was reduced from \$28 to \$26 in 2014, only 55% of fishing license revenue went to the Fisheries Division for fisheries programs. The remaining 45% goes to other non-fisheries uses within the MDNR.

5. When senior licenses were discounted to \$11 in 2014, the loss of \$3 million in revenue to the Fisheries Division was supposed to be back filled from the State of Michigan general fund. This funding has not been provided back to the Fisheries Division. There was a total loss of \$30 million for the Fisheries Division in the 10 years since this was enacted.

6. Legislation to substantially increase fishing and hunting license rates did not gain support to proceed and failed in December 2024. There was significant opposition due to the proposed cost of license increases.

Stakeholders work to solve this problem.

1. Concerned fishery stakeholders from across the State of Michigan, representing angling associations, charter and marine

businesses and recreational anglers came together in January 2025 to create a new proposal to restructure fishing licenses to support fisheries, restore program cuts, avoid stocking reductions, and ensure transparency and trust for anglers.

2. The proposal has been introduced today into the State Legislature as House Bill 5093. A key part of this is allocating more revenue from fishing licenses to the Fisheries Division. This allows for a modest license fee increase of only \$2 for species not stocked by hatcheries.

3. Another key part of this proposal is improving opportunities for inland and Great Lakes anglers. This is done through a \$5 hatchery stamp that would be required for targeting species produced and stocked by the MDNR. It will allow Great Lakes anglers to use additional rods to optimize their trolling pattern. It applies to boats trolling for salmon, trout, and walleyes. Creel limits will remain the same so no additional impact on harvest, ensuring the resource is protected. This concept has broad support from Great Lakes fishing associations which include:

- Michigan Charter Boat Association
- Board of Directors of Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Assn. (MSSFA)
- Great Lakes Salmon Initiative
- Northwest Michigan Fishing Club
- Detroit Steelheaders
- Eastern Michigan Sportsman
- Ludington Charter Boat Association
- Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association
- Arenac County Walleye Club

- Bay De Noc Great Lakes Sportfisherman
- Battle Creek Chapter of MSSFA
- Bluewater Sport Fishing Association
- Isle Royal Boaters Association
- Manistique Area Sportfishing Club
- Muskegon Charter Boat Association
- Thunder Bay Chapter of MSSFA
- Copper County Walleye Association
- Michigan Spearfishing Association
- Grand Haven Chapter of MSSFA
- Hoosier Coho Club
- Grand Rapids Chapter of MSSFA
- South Haven Chapter of MSSFA
- Holland Chapter of MSSFA
- Thumb Area Charter Boat Association
- Great Lakes Bay Region MSSFA
- Pentwater Sportfishing Association
- Manistee County Sportfishing Association
- Southwest Michigan Chapter of MSSFA
- Michigan Muskie Alliance
- Michigan Boating Industry Association

4. The hatchery stamp will improve opportunities for inland anglers with increased walleye production, adding 1 million walleyes for inland stocking, 25,000 more muskies and increasing the number of inland trout stocking sites.

5. The Bill's increased funding will allow the MDNR to expand inland lake and river surveys to better understand fish populations and how to manage them. Most of our inland lakes, have not been surveyed in decades. This information is critical for stocking plans, habitat improvements and regulation changes like slot limits to increase natural reproduction of fish to improve inland lake and river fisheries.

6. Michigan's outstanding fisheries rely on research and stocking programs by the MDNR to sustain them. Fish stocking is critical to maintain salmon and trout fisheries in the Great Lakes. Ongoing research and data collection such as creel counts, charter reporting, fish population studies and forage surveys are required to properly

manage and sustain inland and Great Lakes fisheries. This legislation proposed by stakeholders will prevent future program cuts and prevent degradation of hatcheries and facilities. It will rectify the budget deficits facing the MDNR Fisheries Division.

7. The bill establishes a \$5 youth fishing license. Youth will be able to catch and release fish without this license. It would only be required for youth to keep up to a limit of fish on the Great Lakes and to keep fish in inland waters after age 12 (youth can keep fish in inland waters without this license up to age 12.) The age requirement to need a regular fishing licenses will be set to 16. The purpose is that with this change, the Fisheries Division will get an additional \$10 per youth license sold from the Federal Government Dingell-Johnson act.

8. Senior licenses would increase by \$2 starting in 2027.

9. The bill provides for license fees to increase by no more than the rate of inflation or no more than 2% annually pending approval from a stakeholder fishery oversight committee. The Fisheries Oversight Committee—comprised of representatives from across the state, including charter boat captains, inland lake and river fishing guides, recreational anglers, and citizen members—will ensure broad and ongoing stakeholder engagement in how Fisheries Division funding is managed. The independent FOC is formally tasked with reviewing annual revenue and expenditure reports, evaluating proposed budgets and work plans, and making recommendations to the Fisheries Division and Legislature. This structure ensures that future financial decisions reflect the diverse needs of Michigan's angling community and are made transparently, responsibly, and free from undue political pressure. Any future fee increases will need an approval recommendation from the Fisheries Oversight Committee to ensure trust and transparency that fee increases are justified. This guarantees the MDNR Fisheries Division can fulfill its mission to manage and enhance Michigan's fishing resources for decades to come and not face another budget crisis and programs cuts which is

For more information, contact your Chapter Membership Director or email mssfamembership@charter.net

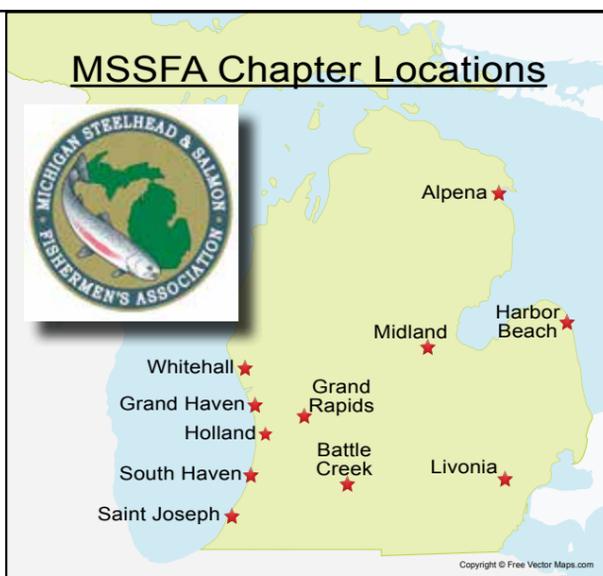




Image from the FishPass time-lapse camera: September 30, 2025 showing flow over the new weirs and into a temporary bypass channel, which permitted the contractor to install the cofferdam around the north bank of the river and begin constructing the fish-sorting channels.

“Fish Pass”
Continued from page 1

Ottaway and Chippewa Indians (GTB) recovered fish entrained in the cofferdam pools (above and below the historic dam) and relocated an assortment of fish back into the river – below the dam. Fish recovered from the upstream cofferdam pool included rock bass, round goby, smallmouth bass and yellow perch.

On September 10th, staff completed the third scheduled electrofishing survey in the lower Boardman/Ottaway River (below Union Street Dam). It’s to understand the seasonal diversity and abundance of

the fishery in this section of river. During these surveys, GLFC staff implant a variety of bio-telemetry tags into captured fish. Biotelemetry is the remote detection, measurement, and monitoring of animal activity.

This activity facilitates ongoing research on fish movement and presence in the river interim to the physical sampling of fish. The use of telemetry tags will further be used to assist the development of Fish-Pass, which will be outfitted with numerous telemetry sensors to understand the efficacy of various sorting and selective technology at the site.

It should be noted that

Pacific salmon primarily Chinook and coho salmon are not enumerated or measured as part of this work. Hundreds of Chinook and coho salmon were identified by staff on this survey but not processed because

their numbers are well monitored by the MDNR at the Boardman River Salmon Weir. The Boardman River fish community is very much dominated by these introduced salmon in September.

Fish Pass OUTREACH:

- 8 August** – Senior staff visit from the office of Senator Gary Peters (31 participants)
- 18 August** – ReShore: Innovation at the intersection of water, mobility and outdoor tech
- 28 August** – UnPlugged with 20Fathoms: MI BlueTech Innovation Hub round table
- 12 September** – Freshwater Research and Innovation Center ground breaking

“House Bill”
Continued from page 4

occurring today.

10. Continue reintroduction efforts of arctic grayling and sturgeon restoration.

11. This bill will fund increased cormorant control which have proven to improve fisheries. Managing cormorant populations is supported by and improves fishing for both inland and Great Lakes anglers. It will reduce Cormorant predation on fish by over 500,000 pounds per year.

Ancillary Benefits

Sport fishing in Michigan generates over 4 billion in economic activity. Robust fisheries support thousands of small businesses in Michigan. They draw anglers from all over the state and Midwest to spend money at hotels and motels, tackle shops, marinas, gas stations, charter boats and guide services and fishing lodges. Strong recreational fisheries are critical for business survival in remote locations in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan. Supporting House Bill 5093 is good for anglers and good for businesses that cater to anglers.



OFTEN IMITATED NEVER DUPLICATED!

THE BEST PLANER BOARDS ON THE WATER!

The **OR12** is ideal for walleye, salmon and most freshwater fish. The **OR37** will pull larger baits for trophy gamefish.

OR37

OR12 shown with the Tattle Flag® kit attached (sold separately)

DOWNRIGGER RELEASES

OR1

OR2

OR8

TADPOLE RESETTABLE DIVING WEIGHTS

OR36

Scan to view the Off Shore Release digital newspaper

MADE IN THE USA

YouTube f X

OFF SHORE TACKLE LLC

Your Leader In Trolling Technology
www.offshoretackle.com

Brethren Bungalows

Location near

- Manistee-Huron National Forest
- Manistee River
- Little Manistee River
- Tippy Dam and the Backwaters
- hiking, biking, & snowmobile trails
- Crystal Mountain
- Caberfae Peaks
- Little River Casino

Cabin Rental
Daily and Weekly Rentals
Joseph Gutowski- Owner
231-477-5588

Present this for 5% off your Booking

North Country Sport Fishing

We'll get you back on the water!
(231)492-2824
11541 US 31 Interlochen MI 49643
Trolling motor and downrigger service center. Marine electronics, installations and repairs.

Fishing The Lake Michigan Waters Off Manistee, Michigan For Salmon and Trout

Freddie B
Fishing Charters

Capt. Fred Bolton

USCG Licensed
State DNR Inspected

Cell: 248.670.2479
Email: FreddieB@acegroup.cc

www.FreddieBFishingCharters.com

13 September – Grand Traverse Band Ottawa/Chippewa Indians lake sturgeon release

17 September – GLOS leadership visit + tour

19 September – Grand Traverse County Commission tour

10 September – Rotary Square Citizen Advisory Council meeting

20 September – Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians fall festival

25 September – Tribal Council FishPass tour

25 September – Presentation during leadership Grand Traverse natural resources day

29 September – Oceans25

Fish Pass UPCOMING:

1 October – Blue Tech Challenge Finale – TC-based Wave Lumina Wins

14 October – GTCD staff tour

17 October – Rotary Club engagement

20 October – MSU Innovation Center engagement

21 October – Senator Slotkin staff engagement

24 October – Alliance for the Great Lakes tour

29-30 October – FishPass Advisory Board meeting

30 October – Freshwater Summit presentation

3 November – Traverse Connect Economic Summit engagement

3 November – Traverse City Humanists presentation at the Traverse Area District Library

5 November – FishPass public tour

6 November – GTRCF MI BlueTech Innovation Hub presentation

17 November – FishPass staff will provide an update to the Traverse City Commission.

“Float”

Continued from page 1

your bait naturally, control your drift, and keep your offering in the strike zone longer than any other method. Whether you’re chasing chrome on the Manistee River or working your favorite Great Lakes tributary, mastering float speed and depth control is the difference between a slow day and a full net.

What Is Float Trotting?

Float trotting is the art of controlling the speed and presentation of your float and bait as it drifts downstream. Instead of simply letting the current take your rig, the angler uses subtle reel control often with a centerpin reel or a bait caster to match the flow of the water and keep the tension just right on the spool.

The goal? To make your bait look like a natural piece of food drifting freely with the current. Steelhead can be wary, and if your presentation drags, speeds

up, or rides too high in the column, they’ll ignore it every time. Once you are well into the steelhead run your now fishing for overfished fish. A perfect presentation is key to your success.

Controlling Your Float Speed

Float speed should match the speed of the current just beneath the surface, not the surface water itself which often moves faster. Most anglers aim for their float to travel just slightly slower than the current, giving the bait time to hover naturally in front of fish holding tight to the bottom.

Here are some TIPS:

- Hold back slightly on your reel to slow the float’s pace.
- Maintain tension without pulling the bait out of its natural drift.
- Adjust based on current seams each part of the river moves differently based on river and flow rate.

If your float is racing ahead, your bait is likely too high. If it’s dragging or tipping back, you’re slowing too much. The perfect drift looks effortless and steady, balanced, and slow enough for a steelhead to commit.

The Importance of Depth

Depth control is everything. Steelhead spend most of their time within 8 – 10 inches of the bottom, especially in colder water. Your presentation should stay there, in the zone.

Try these Tips:

- Start by setting your float so your bait just ticks bottom occasionally.
- In faster or deeper water, add split shot or slightly lengthen your leader.
- In shallow or clear water, lighten up and shorten your presentation.
- Always adjust your float depth in inches at a time.

Tackle Haven
SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN'S PREMIERE FISHING TACKLE DESTINATION
CONVENIENTLY LOCATED ON THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER

- Explore our extensive inventory of rods and reels
- Lures and tackle for every adventure-big lake, rivers, or inland lakes
- Unbeatable prices and an impressive selection
- Live bait, fishing license & so much more!
- Shop in store or on-line!

Shop 24 hours a day at www.tacklehaven.com
(269) 925-0341 (269) 281-1951

sales@tacklehaven.com
741 Riverview Drive
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

mssfa.org

Staying in the Strike Zone

The strike zone is that invisible band just above the bottom where steelhead hold and rest. You want your bait to travel through it naturally, for as long as possible, without bouncing or hanging up.

Every adjustment you make float depth, leader length, shot placement, rod angle is about maximizing the time your bait spends in that narrow zone. That’s why experienced float anglers are constantly making micro-adjustments, reading the water, and trying to perfect each drift.

Final Thoughts

Float trotting isn’t just a technique it’s an art form in my opinion. When your float speed, depth, and control in the strike-zone all come together, you’ll catch more fish. Master those three elements, and you’ll not only hook more steelhead you’ll start reading rivers and runs completely different.



FISHING BOATS FISHING TRIPS FISHING TACKLE ICE FISHING VILLAGE

Outfitters Expo

Commemorative DARDEVLE EPPINGER
First 250 People on Thursday and Friday.

More seminars than any other show in the Midwest!

SHOW HOURS:
THURSDAY 1 pm – 8 pm
FRIDAY 12 pm – 8 pm
SATURDAY 10 am – 8 pm
SUNDAY 10 am – 5 pm

SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE
Grand River One Mile West of Novi Road
UltimateFishingShow.com





THE MICHIGAN STEELHEAD & SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE QUALITY OF FISHING REFLECTS THE QUALITY OF LIVING!

MSSFA was incorporated in 1971 by a handful of individuals who knew that Michigan's newly formed trout and salmon fishery was something worth working to protect. They were a small group who wanted to not only protect their fishery, but learn how to catch their elusive prey and tell fishing stories.

MSSFA chapters have membership meetings with guest speakers to learn about all the aspects of sport fishing. MSSFA chapters also sponsor fishing clinics, seminars, sport-fishing shows, derbies and tournaments. And are active sponsors for fishing outings for kids, seniors, veterans and our handicapped.

For those who love to fish but have no means, MSSFA chapters sponsor a "Crews" program that allows a sign up as a crew member for a day of fishing.

With a common goal, and a close working partner with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MSSFA helps to enhance the resource and sport fishing in our rivers, streams, inland lakes, and of course the mighty Great Lakes. MSSFA is a front-runner at all levels of the legislature and in courtrooms, and has spent countless hours working behind the scenes and attending hearings.

So why join the **Steelheaders**... Got kids, love fishing.. **JOIN NOW!** ...and become a member of the largest organized groups of fishermen in the Midwest. There are chapters throughout the entire state. You too can help protect and preserve this world-class sport fishery for you, your children and generations to come.

THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS (GLSFN)

The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News is owned and operated by The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association.

Better than fifty years ago, The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association began to publish a magazine called the "Guide to Great Lakes Sport Fishing". Five years later the magazine became a monthly format called "The Great Lakes Steelheader". Today the newspaper is called "**The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News**".

This paper has no paid writers and has a grass roots style. Its writers are the every day fishermen who share their techniques and fishing adventures; and the paper has become well known for its **January Special Edition** or "**Show Edition**" that is seen at all the spring expos and sport, boat and fishing shows throughout the Great Lakes.

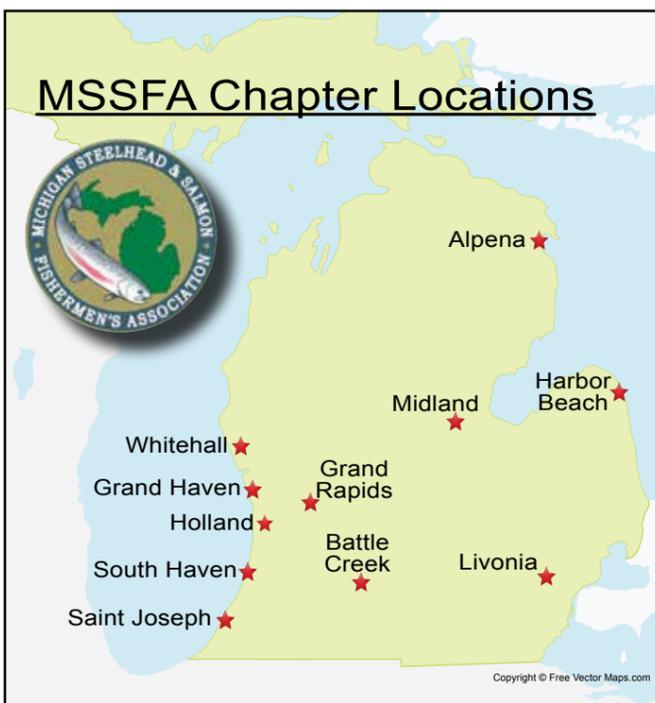
Information in the paper covers the entire Great Lakes Basin region from Minnesota to New York including all five of the Great Lakes and their tributary streams.

Chapter members receive the paper as part of their membership. And because of the diversity of fishing in the Great Lakes, the information covers everything from river fishing, big lake fishing to inland lake fishing. The paper also offers a direct route for all new products and techniques on the market offered by our advertisers.

<p>Executive Director Dennis Eade 616-298-8842 deneade@charter.net</p>	<p>Grand Haven Paul Zelenka, President and State Rep. 616-638-3273 pbzfarms@gmail.com Website: www.ghsteelheaders.com facebook.com/ghsteelheader</p>	<p>Great Lakes Bay Region Mark Trudell, President 989-839-4920 brandon_tacey@yahoo.com John Letts, State Rep. 989-798-2493 maintenance@stjohn23.net facebook.com/Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheaders Website: http://steel-headers.com</p>	<p>Metro-West - Livonia Bob Schulz, President 248-915-0043 bobschulz7@gmail.com Mark Platt, State Rep. 248-881-4890 mcplatt4565@gmail.com MetroWest Steelheaders PO BOX 531927 Livonia MI 48153-1927 Website: www.metroweststeelheaders.org facebook.com/Metro West Steelheaders</p>	<p>Southwest Michigan Ryan McCartney, President 574-274-6382 mccartneyryan@sbcglobal.net Joe Montella, State Director 616-283-4296 joe-monte@comcast.net Website: www.swmsteelheaders.com facebook.com/Southwestern Steelheaders</p>	<p>Thumb Chapter Dan Nichols, President 810-488-6767 nicholsdant@gmail.com Paul Nienaltowski, State Director 810-300-1561 pauliquo@yahoo.com Website: thumbsteelheaders.org facebook.com/Thumb Chapter Michigan Steelheaders</p>
<p>Membership Rebecca Goettl 231-349-3679 mssfamembership@charter.net</p>	<p>Grand Rapids Don Remington, President 616-742-0238 donremington2@gmail.com Rebecca Goettl, State Rep. 231-349-3679 Rgoettlcm@gmail.com Search on facebook: Grand Rapids Steelheaders Official Page Email: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com New address: P.O. Box 140198 Grand Rapids, MI 49514</p>	<p>Holland Brad Stephenson, President 330-495-9555 brad.stephenson32@gmail.com Alex Fergus, State Director 616-610-2410 afergus63@gmail.com Website: www.hollandsteelheaders.org facebook.com/Holland Steelheaders</p>	<p>South Haven Rich Chapman, President president@southhavensteelheaders.com Rachel Ridley, State Director ridleyrachel@gmail.com 269-206-2135 Website: www.southhavensteelheaders.com facebook.com/South Haven Steelheaders</p>	<p>Thunder Bay Dan Bouchard, President 989-255-7350 Cell dan-bouchard@hotmail.com Ed Retherford, State Rep. 989-657-2681 retherfe@gmail.com</p>	<p>White River Clint Pollock, President 231-893-0210 aftereyes2@gmail.com Terry Clark, State Rep. 231-730-6628 dadshideout03@yahoo.com</p>



Scan QR code or type www.mssfafa.org in your web browser.



Sign up ONLINE...

mssfafa.org
Click on the **BECOME A MEMBER NOW!** button

MSSFA State and Chapter Dues (Yearly)

<input type="checkbox"/> Battle Creek \$45.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Holland \$45.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Thunder Bay \$40.00 (Alpena)
<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Haven \$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Metro West \$50.00 (Livonia)	<input type="checkbox"/> White River \$40.00 (Whitehall)
<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Rapids \$45.00	<input type="checkbox"/> South Haven \$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/> At Large Membership \$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Great Lakes Bay Region \$40.00 (Midland)	<input type="checkbox"/> Southwestern \$45.00 (St. Joe)	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior Membership \$5.00 (Under 18)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Thumb \$40.00 (Harbor Beach)	

For questions email: mssfamembership@charter.net
MSSFA ~ PO Box 926 ~ White Cloud, MI 49349

The following Chapters accept online payments via Credit Card and/or PayPal.
 A PayPal account is not needed-use the option credit card. Note: some Chapters charge a small fee for processing.

Battle Creek www.battlecreeksteelheaders.com/membership • **Holland** www.hollandsteelheaders.org
Metro-West (Livonia) www.metroweststeelheaders.org • **Southwestern (Saint Joseph)** www.swmsteelheaders.com
South Haven PayPal Link: <https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/2GKMZWTWRTFZG>

Noodle Rods and Egg Patterns: A Primer For Winter Steelhead Fishing Around the Great Lakes

New to chasing cold season chromers on Great Lakes tributary streams? Check out these tips before hitting the water.

By Joe Cermele

Winter steelhead fishing along the Great Lakes can be some of the most fun you'll ever have. It can also be some of the most difficult and miserable fishing you'll ever experience. I've had it both ways, and I've been lucky enough to chase them in tributaries across their entire range from New York to Michigan. On one hand, the cool thing about Great Lakes steelhead is that they are accessible to everyone. But targeting them—especially in the winter—can be daunting for the uninitiated. Not only do you have to brave the cold, but you also have to be prepared to fight a fish that has far more power and stamina than your average resident stream trout.

To even get to that point, though, you have to first figure out what they want to eat, which, as you'll learn, is both simple and kind of complex. There are many nuances to steelhead fishing that will be learned over time, but if you're brand new to steelheading, you'll be ahead of the game with a little primer on how to gear up and what to tie on the end of your line.

Metal Work

Where you're fishing for steelhead and how you prefer to catch them naturally factors into rod-and-reel selection. There are, however, some common threads when it comes to tackle. Steelhead are incredibly strong, and they will change direction in a blink. It's during those quick direction changes that you most often lose the fish. They introduce slack into the line, and it happens so quickly that it's difficult to compensate by reeling in fast enough. But a good steelhead rod will compensate for you.

If you're fishing from shore, you want a rod with extra length and a slower action near the tip—what's often referred to as "soft action." Spinning rods designed specifically for steelhead can measure as long as 12 feet and have slow noodly tips, hence the nickname "noodle rods." If you're a fly angler, opt for a 10- to 11-foot rod in the 6- to 8-weight class instead of the standard 9-footer. With both rod styles, the extra length and give in the tip will help maintain better pressure during quick turns. Though additional length is less critical when fishing vertically from a boat, a rod with a slower action is still beneficial for surviving the fight.

Another common thread runs through the rigging process. During the winter, steelhead tend to be stacked right on the bottom in deeper holes and runs

with slower current, so it's critical that your offering gets down fast. One of the most commonly used rigs features a pencil lead that slides freely on the main line ahead of a barrel swivel that acts as a stopper. A 2- to sometimes 4-foot fluorocarbon leader in the 6- to 10-pound range gets tied off to the opposite side of the swivel, and your egg or fly goes on the end of the leader. Thin, cylindrical pencil leads are designed to tick along the bottom without getting hung up. I've chased steelhead in

Michigan and seen this same rig used on fly rods, though split shots are more commonly used for getting flies down faster. The need for ample lead that will drop into the zone quickly is what spawned the nickname "chuck-n-duck" fishing. It's not the sexiest way to fish, but if you dial in what those winter steelhead want to eat, it's certainly the most effective.

Make Lure Selection (Over) Easy

Entire books have been written about what flies and

lures to throw for steelhead, but it doesn't have to be that complicated. The fact is that no matter where you're targeting winter steelhead along the Great Lakes, fish eggs are going to be one of their primary food sources. In many areas, steelhead are sharing spawning tributaries with salmon, but even long after the salmon are gone, steelhead will slurp salmon eggs. They'll also feed on their own eggs during the winter, as well as the eggs of lake trout and suckers that often cohabit their streams and riv-

ers. The bottom line? When you have no idea what to use, tie on an egg.

Eggs, of course, come in all shapes and sizes. You might use a ball of natural eggs cured in brine and held together with a piece of mesh netting material. You could also use an egg fly made of yarn, or one of the many synthetic soft-plastic eggs on the market. In recent years, anglers have gravitated toward using plastic beads to represent eggs. These are pegged on the line with a toothpick or rubber stopper a few inches

above the hook, and when the fish takes the bead, the hook slides up, catching the fish on the inside or outside of the mouth.

The most difficult part of fishing any kind of egg pattern—whether cured and dyed or entirely synthetic—is choosing a color. But one thing I've learned over the years is that you don't choose the color. You let the steelhead decide. You do, however, have to start

"Primer"
Continued on page 9

Only YOU Can Save The Buoys!

The Port Sheldon buoy and the South Haven buoy play a key role in boater safety and successful angler outings on Lake Michigan. The buoys provide real-time data on wave height and frequency, wind speed and direction, and water temperatures from the surface to 70 feet below. Originally deployed in 2014 through a grant from NOAA, these buoys have provided critical life-safety and fishery environment information, enabling us to be better at our sport and to be safer while fishing.

Anyone can access the information generated by the buoys at any time through a text or on the internet. The valuable data created is all free of charge to the public, but each one of these buoys cost nearly \$15,000 per year to operate. There is no longer any government funding for these buoys; all funds to continue their operation come from individuals, organizations, and local businesses passionate about Lake Michigan.

On one hand, the cost to maintain these buoys is significant. But on the other hand we have hundreds of teams and thousands of anglers on the Trail. That means the math is on our side! By working together we can cover at least a big chunk of that cost if not the whole thing! So I'm challenging you to step up and help! Just before we went to print I made a \$50 donation to each Buoy and I hope you'll follow suit.

There is an individual fundraiser for each buoy. They are being run by the South Haven and the Holland Steelheaders - people we know, people who fish the Trail, people we can trust! Donating is simple! In fact you can do it right now! Just use your phone and scan one or both of the codes below.

Support The South Haven Buoy



Access The Buoy:
<https://limno.io/station/45168/>
 OR
 Text 45168 to: (866) 218-9973



Support The Port Sheldon Buoy



Access The Buoy:
<https://limno.io/station/45029/>
 OR
 Text 45029 to: (866) 218-9973



LimnoTech
Water Environment | Scientists Engineers

2026 Tentative Print Schedule

Issue	Deadline	Print/Online Date
1	12/19/25	01/05/26
2	02/13/26	03/02/26
3	04/10/26	05/04/26
4	06/19/26	07/06/26
5	08/14/26	08/28/26
6	10/16/26	11/02/26

GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

MSSFA, *Publisher* Bonnie Eade, *Accountant*
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 Stafford Printing, *Printing* Greenville, MI Cell: 616-928-8970
 bonnie.glsfn@charter.net

Dennis Eade, *Managing Editor* Laura Kleinheksel, *Layout*
 Tel: 616-298-8842 laura.glsfn@charter.net
 Cel: 616-836-0037
 deneade@charter.net

The Great Lakes Sport Fishing News (GLSFN) is the official publication of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA). Subscription to th GLSFN is through membership in MSSFA. The GLSFN publishes six issues per year. Permission for reprint from this publication is normally permitted, unless otherwise stipulated by the article, and proper credit is given to the author and the publication. The GLSFN or MSSFA does not necessarily agree or support the contents of articles within this publication. The views expressed are those of the author(s) of the articles.

MICHIGAN STEELHEAD AND SALMON FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Business Office Dennis Eade, *Executive Director*
 P.O. Box 8034 Gerry Sickon, *Secretary*
 Holland, MI 49422 Alex Fergus, *Treasurer*
 Tel: 616-298-8842
 e-mail: deneade@charter.net

The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA) is a multi-state, non-profit organization dedicated to educating the general public on improving, preserving and promoting sport fishing, the Great Lakes and their tributary streams and rivers. Commonly referred to as *The Michigan Steelheaders*, or simply *Steelheaders*. MSSFA represents sport fishing families in the Great Lakes region. MSSFA encourages the strictest observances of sport fishing laws and ethical fishing practices. www.MSSFA.org

Jim Fee with a winter steelhead on the Niagara River in New York. Credit: Joe Cermele



“Primer” Continued from page 8

somewhere, and the best place if the water is clear is with muted, natural tones, like pastel pink, orange, tan, or yellow. If the water

is off color, start with more vibrantly colored eggs that bright orange, chartreuse, or neon yellow.

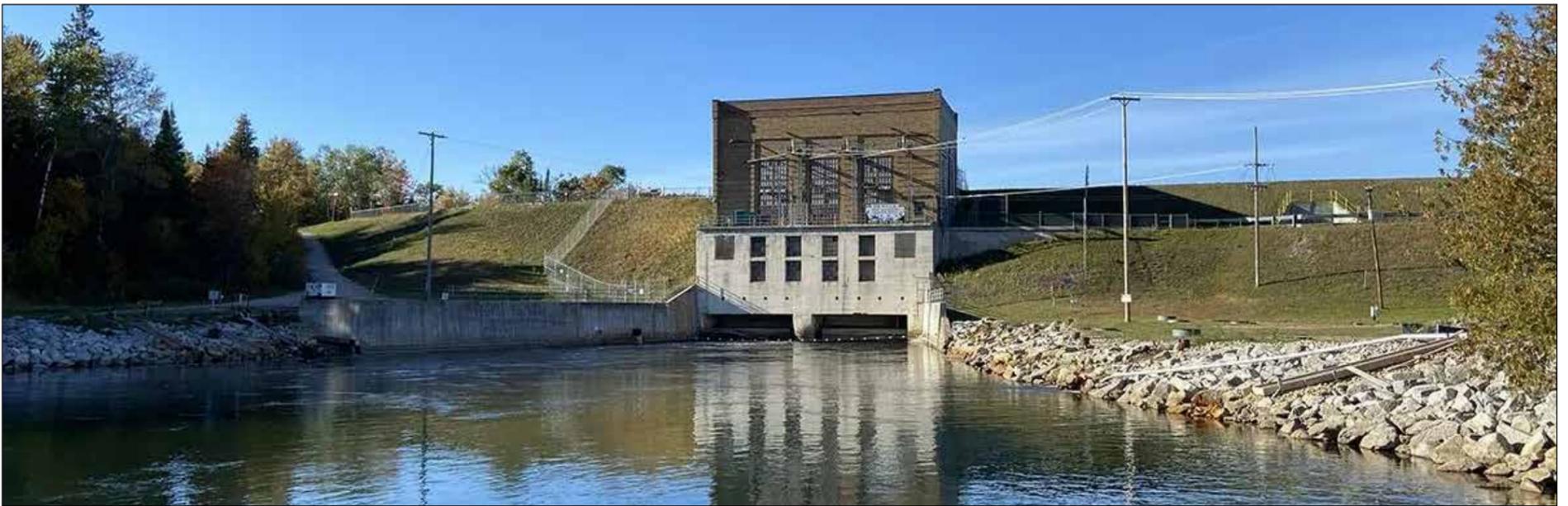
There will be days when it takes several changes to dial in the right color, which is why carrying a healthy variety is smart. There are

so many types of egg flies, dye colors for natural eggs, and bead colors that it can get rather overwhelming. But unless someone clues you into a color that's been on fire wherever you're fishing, always carry at least a few oddball colors

like blue, purple, and green. It makes no difference that there's nothing remotely natural about them, and I've experienced many days on Great Lakes steelhead rivers where Cookie Monster blue was the only color they'd slurp.

MSSFA State Board of Directors, Officers and Committee Chairs

Alan Douville	President	alandouville@outlook.com
Dennis Eade	Executive Director Lake Michigan Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee	deneade@charter.net
Russ Sylte	Vice President	sylterd@aol.com
Rachel Ridley	Secretary	ridleyrachel@gmail.com
Alex Fergus	Treasurer	afergus63@gmail.com
Paul Nienaltowski	Lake Huron Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee	pauliqo@yahoo.com
Eric Braden	Lake Erie Citizens Advisory Fishery Committee	esbraden630@gmail.com
(TBD)	Streams Committee	
Rebecca Goettl	Membership Coordinator	mssfamembership@charter.net



Consumers Energy's license to generate hydropower at the Alcona Dam, on the Au Sable River, was set to expire in 2034. The company is selling Alcona and 12 other dams that generate small amounts of expensive power. (Kelly House/Bridge Michigan)

Consumers: Selling Michigan Dams, Paying Double For Power Cheapest Route

By Kelly House, bridgemi.com

Consumers Energy plans to pay a premium price to buy back power from its 13 hydropower dams after selling them to a private equity firm for \$1 apiece, the company revealed Friday in filings with state energy regulators.

The disclosures, made in a nearly 2,300-page document filed with state and

federal regulators who will decide whether to sign off on the agreement, is the utility's first accounting of costs associated with its plan to essentially give the dams to Confluence Hydro LLC, a subsidiary of Maryland-based Hull Street Energy.

Consumers, which provides electricity to 1.9 million customers in Michigan, has spent years pondering how to exit a hydropower

business that generates little power and operates at a \$152 million net annual loss.

The plan revealed Friday involves signing a 30-year agreement to buy back the dams' power from Confluence at a starting price of \$160 per megawatt-hour, with a 2.5% annual price increase.

That's about twice what Consumers typically pays for power, company spokes-

person Brian Wheeler said, but the arrangement makes financial sense because it would cost Consumers and its ratepayers even more to decommission the dams or invest in maintaining and repairing them.

"It allows Consumers Energy to transfer substantial future operational and environmental liabilities and risk to Confluence," Srikanth Maddipati, a senior vice president at the

company, wrote in the filing.

Maddipati called it "the lowest-cost option for the future of these plants."

That's because Confluence Energy will assume the cost to maintain the dams and demolish them at the end of their useful life.

The sale-and-buyback arrangement may also benefit from public subsidies. In filings, Consumers officials outline plans to tap into

state clean energy incentives meant to encourage utilities to buy renewable energy. Those same subsidies are not available to Consumers today, because it is making the energy on its own, rather than buying it from someone else.

The Michigan Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities

“Consumers” Continued on page 11

2025 Battle Creek Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Location
November	8	KALAMAZOO RIVER TROUT QUEST	ALLEGAN DAM
November	15	KALAMAZOO RIVER MEMORIAL	ALLEGAN DAM
November	29	ST.JOE RIVER TUNE-UP STEELHEAD	I-94 BOAT RAMP
December	6	ST.JOE WINTER CHALLENGE	BENTON HARBOR
December	13	CHRISTMAS PARTY	KALAMAZOO EAGLES

Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting
Meeting Location: (In process of finding a new location)
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
 Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Dan Foster at 269-370-3693
 battlecreeksteelheaders.com

2025 Grand Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
TBD	2025	Net Pens	
December	10	Chapter Christmas Party	

Other Events TBD
 For information on these events and other information on the Grand Haven Steelheaders contact GHS President and State Director Paul Zelenka at pbzfarms@gmail.com
 www.ghsteelheaders.com

2025 Grand Rapids Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
November	8	Fishing Partners Manistee Contest	
November	15	Chapter Firearm Buck Contest** pre-entry required	
November	24	Chapter Meeting	
**December	TBD	Christmas Party, watch for details	

** Fishing Outings are subject to change based on weather conditions**

Events open to the public
 Meeting Location - Elks #48, 917 Bridge St NW, Grand Rapids
 Time: 6:00pm-7pm Social Hour with food and beverage followed by Speaker
 Board Meetings will take place after the regular Member Meeting
 Email Grand Rapids Steelheaders: fishgrsteelhead@gmail.com
 Dates with "*" are for members and family only

New address:
 P.O. Box 140198
 Grand Rapids, MI 49514

2025 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
December	13	Banquet at VFW 5pm

Membership meetings are the first Tuesday every month (no meeting in August)
 Meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 Phone: 989-496-3410

Board meetings begin at 7:00pm. **Please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the outing whether you plan on attending or not attending.** On the day of the outing, call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72.

Weigh-in follows each outing. Picnics follows weigh-in on Saturdays only.
 Outings: All Steelheader members pay \$5.00. All non-Steelheaders pay \$10.00 to participate.
 Children 16 and Under are free. Picnic is \$5.00 for everyone.

If interested in fishing with us please contact: Mark Trudell (989) 839-4920
 Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com

2025 Holland Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
November	3	Board Meeting
December	1	Board Meeting
December	4	Membership Meeting

Board meetings held at: TBD Locations
 General Membership: Bayshore Yacht Club at the Yacht Basin Marina
 Doors open at 6 pm., Dinner at 7 pm, speaker to follow

For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jimmy Van Brocklin 616-240-7017 or email Brad Stephenson at brad.stephenson32@gmail.com

2025 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Contact
November	1	Manistee River/Pier/Shore Tournaments w DS	Zawacki/Trenz
November	11	General Membership Meeting 2nd Tue.	Election Day Room at Senior Center Nov 4
November	29	Ohio Walleye Tournament	Dave Zawacki
December	2	CHRISTMAS PARTY - HAPPY HOLIDAYS	
December	6	PM & other NW Mi Rivers Tournament	Marc Traver/Adam Trenz
December	13	Huron River Tournament	Roger Hinchcliff

2025 South Haven Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
November	29	South Haven Steelheaders River Tournament

2024 South Haven Steelheaders Membership & Board Meeting Dates
Note: All Board and membership meetings are generally held the third Thursday of each month except for special circumstances such as Pro Am Captain's Meeting set up in May, Fish Boil organizational meeting in August and prior to Deer Season in November.
Meeting Location: South Haven American Legion Post 49, 129 Michigan Avenue, South Haven, MI 49090
 Board Meetings start at 5:45pm and membership meetings at 7:00pm.
 For more information email: president@southhavensteelheaders.com

SEP 18th - 3rd Thursday - Regular & Board meeting to prioritize & set next year's events. ID event chairs.
 OCT 16th - 3rd Thursday - Regular and Board meeting to finalize next year's events and set calendar
 NOV 6th - 1st Thursday - Regular and Board Meeting to finalize budget and calendar
 December 18th - 3rd Thursday - Regular Meeting, Election of Directors
 The 2025 Pro Am Tournament Committee Kick-off meeting is the 2nd Monday of November (11/10/25)

2025 Southwest MI Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Event	Information
Membership meetings and board meeting are held the second Thursday of each month but please confirm online for the most updated information. www.swmsteelheaders.com www.facebook.com/southwestmichigansteelheaders			
December	6	Winter Challenge River Fishing Tournament	

Meeting Location: Elks Lodge, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022
Southwest Michigan Steelheaders
 swmsteelheaders.com

2025 Thumb Chapter Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
Contact Paul Nienaltowski at 810-300-1561 for inquiries.				

2025 Thunderbay Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Information
December	1	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting

2025 White River Steelheader's Calendar of Events

Month	Date	Time	Event information
Note: All meetings will be held at 6:30 pm at the VFW, any changes in location will be decided a couple of days before the meeting. - Any questions or to verify dates/times please call Clint Pollock at (231) 893-0210 or Terry Clark at (231) 893-6805.			
November	6	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW
December	4	6:30pm	Meeting at the VFW



Join a Chapter, Join the Fun!

**For more information,
 contact your Chapter Membership Director
 or mssfamembership@charter.net**



mssfa.org
 We'll *HOOK YOU UP* with the latest news!

“Consumer”
Continued from page 9

like Consumers, will ultimately decide whether the deal can go through. Consumers also needs the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s approval to transfer the dams’ power generating licenses to Confluence.

A century ago, the 13 dams on the Au Sable, Manistee, Muskegon, Grand and Kalamazoo rivers were key components of Michigan’s early electrical grid. But in the decades since, they’ve become money losers that generate too little power to cover maintenance bills.

The dams produce just 1% of Consumers’ electricity, at nine times the cost of any other power source in the utility’s portfolio. The structures also superheat rivers and destroy fish habitat while trapping sediment upstream.

That put Consumers in an awkward position three years ago, when it began publicly pondering three options that each came with tradeoffs:

Keep the dams, pleasing neighbors who own waterfront property on the reservoirs and communities that have built economies around fishing, boating and swimming in them but locking utility customers into inflated rates and continuing to harm rivers.

Demolish the structures, reducing costs and restoring natural river flows while angering nearby residents.

Sell the structures, lifting Consumers’ financial burden, but passing it onto new owners who may have less incentive to spend on upkeep.

After years of deliberation, the company announced the sale plan in September.

Officials declined to reveal details at the time about how much it would cost to buy the dams’ power back from their new owners. But Maddipati referred to it as “the most cost effective for customers.”

Critics of the sale have questioned how a new owner could squeeze enough revenue out of the dams to cover maintenance costs, given that Consumers has been unable to do so.

“I don’t understand how it can be better for customers if we just transfer liabilities to a different company, but we’re still paying too much,” said Bryan Burroughs, executive director of Trout Unlimited, a group that favors removing the dams.

Dams are typically built with a 50-year design life, and the average age of the Consumers dams is 106 years old. Maintenance bills tend to rise dramatically with age.

Regulated monopoly utilities like Consumers have a financial incentive to maintain their infrastructure, because their captive ratepayers cover the cost plus a guaranteed profit.

That’s not true for private dam owners, which are not subject to the same regulations and privileges. For them, every dollar spent on maintenance is a dollar less in profits.

As a result, they tend not to maintain their dams as well. US Army Corps of Engineers data shows that all of Michigan’s 40 utility-owned dams with available inspection data are in fair or better condition. In contrast, 32 of 396 private dams are in poor or unsatisfactory condition.

Michigan’s most notorious examples are the privately owned and poorly maintained Midland dams, which failed in 2020 after owner Boyce Hydro spent decades putting off regulators’ demands to make safety upgrades. Taxpayers are now spending hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuild the dams.

A similar scenario is unfolding today in the Upper Peninsula’s AuTrain Township, where a private dam owner has declared bankruptcy, leaving the

local community with a major safety liability and a \$4 million dam repair tab that could fall on taxpayers.

In the wake of the Midland dam failures, both federal and state officials considered a host of reforms, including stricter dam safety standards and a requirement that buyers set aside money for maintenance. They have acted on almost none of them.

A new bill, introduced by state Sens. Jon Bumstead, R-North Muskegon, Rosemary Bayer, D-Keego Harbor and Joseph Bellino, R-Monroe, in response to concerns that the Consumers dams could be sold to another delinquent buyer, would require the Michigan Public Service Commission to probe dam buyers’ finances before approving a sale.

“We can’t just let them sell it for a dollar, give it away, whatever, without the protections that are needed,” said Bayer.

MSSFA Board of Directors Meeting 2025

**Wednesday,
December 17**
Via TEAMS - 6:00pm



Illustration from pngtree.com

~ Fishing Puns ~

- Have you seen the new fishing website? *It just came online.*
- What kind of money do fishermen make? *Net profits.*
- What do librarians take fishing? *Bookworms*
- How did the two ice fisherman initiate the conversation? *By breaking the ice.*
- Why are fishing dads the best? *Because they’re so sofishticated.*
- What’s the spider’s favorite sport? *Fly fishing.*
- Where does a fisherman go to get his hair cut? *The bobber shop.*
- What did the magician say to his friend while fishing? *Pick a cod, any cod.*
- Where did the fisherman and mermaid meet? *On line.*
- Why did the fisherman put peanut butter into the sea? *To go with jellyfish*
- What do you say to a fisherman on his birthday? *Hope you have a reely good day!*
- What’s the difference between a golfer and a fisherman? *When a golfer lies they don’t have to bring anything home to prove it.*
- What kind of guitar do fishermen play? *Bass.*

heresajoke.com/fishing-jokes/

The Original Michigan Sportsman’s Show!

OUTDOORAMA

SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE
Novi, Michigan—Detroit Market
FEB 19-22

MICHIGAN OUT OF DOORS TELEVISION

Big Buck Night Thursday 6-8 pm!

From exotic hunting trips to family camping trips, you can find them all at the

Outfitters Expo

Get the latest in Hunting & Fishing equipment from techs who know how to rig ‘em right!

Fishing Boat Supermarket!

SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE
Grand River One Mile West of Novi Road

SHOW HOURS:
Thursday 1pm-8pm Saturday 10am-8pm
Friday 12pm-8pm Sunday 10am-5pm

Outdoorama.com

Special Bonus!

Cottage & Lakefront Living Show
Detroit **SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE**

NoviCottageShow.com
with Paid Admission to Outdoorama



GUNS • AMMO

ARCHERY • CLOTHING

Your Headquarters For Everything Outdoors

Hornady
Black DR Custom
450 Bushmaster
\$39⁹⁹
Reg. \$49⁹⁹
Your Choice!

Winchester USA
Deer Season 250gr - 20rds
450 Bushmaster
\$39⁹⁹
Reg. \$54⁹⁹

Huge Selection of 350/400 Legend, 450 Bushmaster Guns & Ammo
Brands Like Savage, CVA, Christensen, Winchester, Ruger and MANY MANY More!

Mossberg Patriot - Walnut Stock 350,400 Legend / 450 BM Reg. \$599 ⁹⁹ \$549⁹⁹	Savage Camo Axis II w/ Bushnell 350 Legend Reg. \$549 ⁹⁹ \$469⁹⁹	CVA Scout - Stainless Steel 360 Buckhammer Reg. \$469 ⁹⁹ \$419⁹⁹
---	--	--

RAMBO Bikes Available!
RAMBO
ELECTRIC BIKES

Remote by Nebo
Blood Tracker 250
LED Light
\$19⁹⁹
HOT BUY!

Flambeau Gear
Hard Gun Case
Single Gun
\$19⁹⁹
Reg. \$29⁹⁹

Vortex Optics
Copperhead
3-9x40
\$119⁹⁹
Reg. \$144⁹⁹

Huge Selection of
Women's & Youth Camo!
\$69⁹⁹
Reg. \$89⁹⁹
Women's Habit
Jacket or Bibs
Waterproof & Insulated

Check Out Our Ammo Sales!
Many More Sales In Store!

Hornady 3.56 55gr FMJ 150rd Ammo Can \$79⁹⁹ Reg. \$109 ⁹⁹	Browning 140gr Maxpoint 6.5 Creedmoor \$24⁹⁹ Reg. \$34 ⁹⁹	Winchester 115gr FMJ 9mm \$10⁹⁹ Reg. \$15 ⁹⁹	Hornady 175gr FMJ 40 S&W \$19⁹⁹ Reg. \$24 ⁹⁹	Nobel 2.5" - #7.5 410 Shotshells \$9⁹⁹ Reg. \$14 ⁹⁹	Hornady 55gr Soft Point .223 \$34⁹⁹ Reg. \$49 ⁹⁹
--	--	---	---	--	---

All The Saddle Hunting Gear You Could Ever Need!

Springfield Armory
Hellcat 3.7" DSP w/ Sling Bag
9mm
\$569⁹⁹
Reg. \$699⁹⁹

Scent Shield
X-Factor Scent Killer
32oz Clothes & Boot Spray
\$4⁹⁹
Reg. \$14⁹⁹
HOT BUY!

Every Thermal Brand On the Market!

West Michigan's
Suppressor Headquarters!
Our Kiosk Makes Getting a Suppressor Quick and Simple. Ask Our Staff for Help Today!

Approval in Days!

LaCrosse Footwear
Alphaburly Pro 18" Boot
Mossy Oak Break Up
\$119⁹⁹
Reg. \$209⁹⁹

Michigan's Best Waterfowl Selection!

Calls, Camo, Blinds, Decoys and more We Have it ALL!

Full Selection of Redneck Blinds, Towers & Trailers!

Muddy Blinds Tool!

HUGE PREVIOUS MODEL SALES

2023 Nauticstar 227 Bay Boat w/ 250 Pro XS
\$31,000 OFF
\$79,495

2025 Ranger RB 210 w/ 200 Pro XS
\$5,500 OFF
\$54,480

Ranger 620 Cup w/ 250 4 Stroke & Lowrance Package
\$8,120 OFF
\$84,995

Nitro Z-20 w/ 250 Pro XS Garmin Package
\$8,005 OFF
\$71,995

Nitro Z-20 w/ 250 Pro XS Garmin Package
\$8,005 OFF
\$71,995