



THE GREAT LAKES SPORT FISHING NEWS

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Proposed Consent Decree Agreement Reached Among Four Tribes, Feds And The State Of Michigan

By Dennis Eade

A proposed agreement submitted to a federal judge would adopt for 24 years a system of overseeing commercial and sport fishing in areas of lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior. A Consent Decree between the state, the federal government and four of the five sovereign Native American tribes was submitted to Federal Judge Paul Maloney last week.

None of the parties to the agreement are the sport fishermen and women of the state. The Citizens to Protect Michigan Resources (CPMR) attempted to intervene on their behalf but that request was denied. That denial is being appealed to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, OH. The major members of the



CPMR are the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association (MSSFA), the Michigan Charter Boat Association (MCBA), the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Hamond Bay Area Anglers Association. Even though CPMR had amicus status (friend of the court), the State of Michigan refused to caucus with representatives of the CPMR starting this past July nor did the State take into consideration the biological reasons that sport fishers opposed many of the provisions that found their way into the proposed agreement.

Earlier this fall, the

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians also filed a motion in federal court to self-regulate their fishing by removing themselves from the Consent Decree negotiations contending that the 2000 Consent Decree has expired and no longer oversees commercial fishing in the treaty waters of the Great Lakes. The Sault Tribe is challenging the judge's power to enter any decree that would affect them. This action may take the court months to resolve.

"We believe this agreement has clear benefits for all the parties," David Caroffino, tribal coordination unit manager for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources fisher-

"Agreement"
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The Importance of Float Speed

By Roger Hinchcliff

Does the debate continue whether it is a Bobber, Float, or Strike Indicator? I've seen arguments emerge over this topic on fishing forums and social media. No surprise: people will argue about anything nowadays, which is sad if you ask me. But no matter what side of the aisle you're on concerning floats and its name, we should all agree on how vital a float is

to your success.

Some anglers say the hook, knot, or line sets precedence when fishing. Those points are no doubt important. However, the float sometimes needs to be noticed as one of the most critical items in your presentation and its speed.

People cannot say with proof when a float was first used. And what period in history? But we know that our ancestors used twigs and feathers as floats to

catch fish. The earliest writings of floats were in 1496, written by Juliana Berners. Who can forget the famous book by Isaak Walton, the "Complete Angler," written in 1653, who went into detail on the use of floats for fishing? They have been around forever and are used a lot for virtually any kind of fish around the globe.

"Float Speed"
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Selective Release For Steelhead

By Jim Bedford

Many years ago the phrase "selective harvest" was coined by, I believe, by the editors and writers

of "In-Fisherman" magazine. This philosophy was almost exclusively applied to warm water fish like largemouth bass and panfish or cool water fish like

northern pike, walleye, yellow perch and smallmouth bass. In general the plan was to harvest limited numbers of medium sized fish and releasing the juveniles and trophies. I believe that selective harvest can be applied to our steelhead fishery but would change the wording to selective release.

It has become pretty obvious that life has gotten tougher for our steelhead in recent years. The explosion of Quagga and zebra mussels have altered the food chain by greatly reducing phyto- and zoo-plankton levels in the lakes. These small creatures are the basis of life in the Great Lakes. Steelhead and salmon smolts feed primarily on plankton and larval bait fish when they arrive in the big lakes on their spring migration. Alewives diet is primarily plankton throughout

"Release"
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Joe Burcar with wild steelhead before release

Cracking Walleyes on First Ice

By Brian "Bro" Brosdahl
midwestoutdoors.com

It seems there is no such thing as a quiet lake during the summer months, even in northern areas. When freezing temperatures and snow move in, things change; busy lakes grow quiet during the ice freeze-up. But the fall bite doesn't end at first ice. The walleyes' instinct is to chew even more. This is where ice fishing really takes off!

Start small and weedy. I like to start with small, shallow walleye lakes because they freeze first, and I don't have to worry about heaves, breakaway ice or flocs every time the wind blows.

There are thousands

of shallow lakes to fish in Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Dakotas that have great walleye populations. Many are off the radar as walleye-seekers head to Upper Red Lake and Lake of the Woods—with great reason. However, "small lake" doesn't mean tiny. Numerous 300- to 3,000-acre lakes are walleye producers.

Study maps to find access points that are close to lake features that typically hold walleyes. Expansive weed flats always have active walleyes cruising through. Find a fairly steep break line or inside turn that comes close to shore. I have caught walleyes over 30 inches long only 50 yards from shore.

But every lake is differ-

ent. Some lakes will require you to put more work into walking out to the edge of the weed bed. The key thing to remember is that walleyes love weeds. They are creatures of edges, and transitions from rock to sand, in places where food is abundant.

Tackle 'Em With Spoons

Using spoons is one of the most productive ways to catch walleyes during first ice. I have tried hundreds of

"Walleye"
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Search groups for MSSFA

In Memory of Andy Pelt - *Founding Executive Director of MSSFA*

By Dennis Eade

Andy Pelt was the original executive director of the Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association and guided the association's efforts to promote sport fishing statewide for over thirty-eight years. He passed away November 19th at his home in Paw Paw, MI.

Andy was a "Rock 'n Roll" music promoter in the 1960's, at the height of the emerging concert tour phenomenon that characterized the era. He saw the opportunity to parlay his organizing talent to a new and emerging sport fishing craze created with the introduction of Pacific Salmon into the Great Lakes. The new group of anglers called themselves the Michigan Steelheaders and they were gaining followers quickly as more and more local fishermen wanted to learn how to catch these new salmon and trout that were trophy size within only two

or three years living in the Great Lakes. Andy saw an opportunity and offered to work full time for the new association as its executive director. He organized chapters and produced a magazine that went to all the members. Today it has become this magazine, the Great Lakes Sport Fishing News.

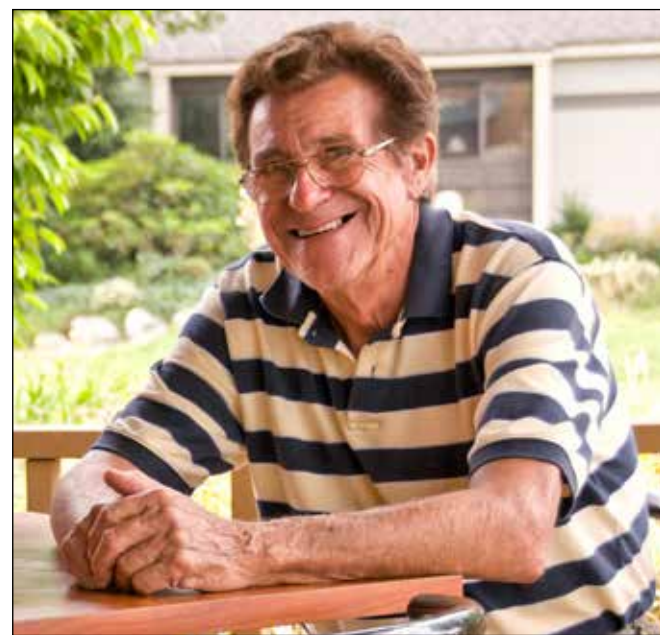
"Andy was a serious promoter with good ideas and a flare for creating events that would bring attention to sportfishing," says retired Judge Don Goodwillie of South Haven, Michigan and the South Haven Steelheaders. Don remembers the first salmon tournament held on the Great Lakes on June 3, 1974 in South Haven, MI. Andy knew the outdoor writer from the Detroit News and knew he was the president of the National Outdoor Writers Association. "Andy convinced the writer to send out an invitation to association members from all over the country to come to Michi-

gan for the weekend event and they came. It was a huge success with over 51 boats entered, nearly 2,000 pounds of fish caught and the event still carries on as South Haven Pro/Am Tournament annually in South Haven" according to Judge Goodwillie.

Gary Decker, a past president of the Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheaders living in Midland, MI, remembers Andy as gregarious guy you enjoyed being around and a great organizer. Gary says, "Andy promoted the Steelheaders by putting on a statewide 'Big Fish' tournament with a \$10,000 first place prize for the biggest salmon which was unheard of at the time. He had contacts with all the tackle manufacturers who donated prizes including downriggers, lures and terminal tackle. The 'Salmon Bonanza', as it was called, drew hundreds of entries at \$10.00 a piece but ended up costing the Steelheaders a balance that required

two years to pay off. The publicity was well worth it, however."

Al Laaksonen, retired Charter Boat Captain, now residing in Ludington, MI, shared his memories of Andy by saying, "The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association has lost the greatest friend and supporter of our fishery that many of today's salmon fisherman never got to know. When Andy Pelt's name comes to my mind, it brings another equally great personality by the name Howard Tanner to mind. While Dr. Tanner created our world class fishery, it was Andy's leadership that created an organization that protected our rights to fully utilize it. He created chapters of salmon and steelhead fisherman that became a forceful voice in making sure we were well represented in all sport fishing issues. As the President of MSSFA in the early eighties, Andy selected me to be their secretary and along



with the McNellis brothers and other volunteers, he worked tirelessly to make sure we were able to enjoy what Howard Tanner provided us. Andy did not back away from any issue. When the tribal gillnet fishing disrupted our ability to safely fish with downriggers in areas we knew that held fish, it was Andy who called me

and suggested that we had to do something to get the attention of authorities before someone got killed. That led to the first consent decree established in 1985. There is no one person that cared for preserving our rights to sport fish than Andy Pelt, may he rest in peace."



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"Agreement" Continued from page 1

ies division, told the Associated Press. According to state biologists, they are confident that the expansion of gill netting in all three lakes won't harm fish populations and will have "minimal impacts" on sport fishing." Dennis Eade, executive director of MSSFA, disagrees. According to Eade, "[MDNR Tribal Unit Chief] Caroffino is playing fast and loose with the truth. Gill nets are not selective and are extremely efficient. That was why over 14 million feet of gill nets were eliminated and recreational and commercial zones were created in the prior decree adopted in 2000. The expansion of large mesh gill net fishing is the biggest threat to the sport fishery," said Eade.

All the Parties admit that they are expanding Tribal gill netting opportunities into recreational zones so they can take more lake trout, walleye and yellow perch. This highly effective competition will directly impact the recreational fisher's ability to catch fish. No new recreational fishing opportunities are being implemented with the new decree. Rather, numerous gill net free zones will now have gill net fishing.

Retired senior biologist and former Alpena Station Manager for the DNR, Jim Johnson, said "This agreement is proposing exactly what happened in the 1940s and 50s when lampreys and other invasives pushed lake trout and whitefish to the brink of extinction. A time not much different from today."

"With gill nets, the commercial fishers could 'fish

up" their catch, meaning they could maintain their living (finding "opportunity") by setting more gillnet each time their catch rates declined. If catch rate declined to half last year's, they set twice as much gill net next year. This went on until the whitefish and lake trout fisheries were economically extinct and the fishery was down to targeting chubs", said Johnson.

The proposed agreement falls short in other aspects as well. The only lake trout refuge in Lake Huron is now half the size and subject to gill net fishing 10 months of the year which threatens lake trout rehabilitation. The proposed decree also doubles the grids open to walleye and perch fishing.

Enforceability of this new decree is at question. There are no penalties if a party exceeds its annual



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harvest quota. The 2000 agreement requires immediate fishery adjustments in catch effort following every year a party over harvests the fishery. Time lines for evaluating the health of fish stocks are extended out from yearly to once every 3 years. In the event of a dispute over harvest limits the

State must prove a threat of immediate irreparable harm, which is impossible in the case of overfishing for one or two years when the State has agreed that stocks will be reevaluated every 3 years.

The judge has not approved the proposed decree and will not until all argu-

ments are heard and the Sault Tribe's challenge of the judge's authority to enter any decree which affects them is resolved. It may take months before this agreement can be finalized.

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“Float Speed”
Continued from page 1

What I’ve learned about float fishing through the years and its importance, I have yet to see much on the subject other than rigging and not much on speed. Like slip floats, weighted floats, or stemmed. I will mainly focus on a stemmed float because I use it the most for Steelhead.

What To Look For
In A Float

Every river has a different flow rate. It’s an ever-changing place. The water flows can go up and down. It can occur over a few days or even hours, depending on weather patterns and where you’re located in the country. Rain is the biggest culprit, but so is snow melt. The point is you must have many different styles and sizes of floats for the conditions you are fishing. So, one float will only do it in some situations and definitely no all.

The best floats are the floats that are explicitly

designed for float fishing for Steelhead in a river setting. A red and white plastic bobber will not do this job. Although choices these days can be daunting, it’s simple if you know what you’re looking for.

Slip floats are a great choice when casting long distances or fishing water deeper than 8 feet. They come in many color variations or even clear plastic with a high viz paint top so the angler can see from longer distances. Be warned some mass-produced floats can have flaws and one is the high viz paint job on the top of the antenna.

They may look great in the store, but under over-cast skies or sunny days out on the river at longer distances, the float can disappear. So many anglers, once they find a brand and style that meets their needs, become brand loyal to what works for them.

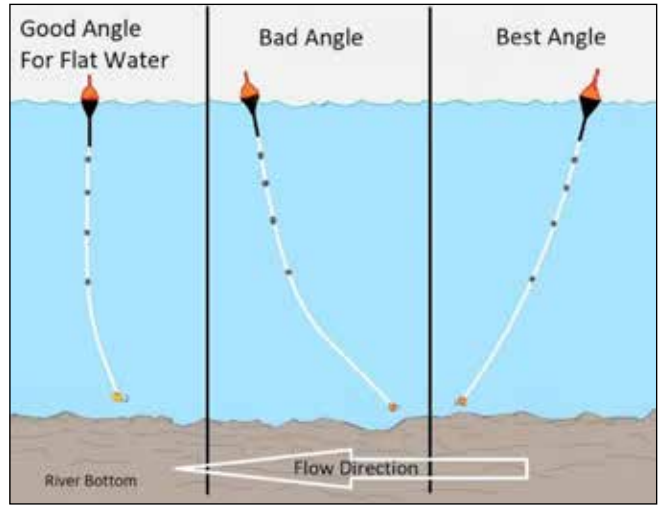
The next float to discuss today is the fixed stemmed style float with a graphite shaft running through the center of it. These floats are typically pegged with

surgical tubing on the top and bottom of the float. But be warned that the quality could be better with mass-produced floats overseas.

The angler needs to take each float between the thumb and indexed finger and spin the float and look for a wobble. The float is key to your success. If the stem is not perfectly through the center, this creates problems on the stream.

The imperfect float will help create line twists when casting, causing twisted lines leading to tangles and premature line changes. But the most important reason to check for a wobble before purchasing a float is tracking.

If the float doesn’t track very well, it will cause your offerings to not stay on track in the strike zone. In cold weather, it becomes a game of inches with Steelhead.



The right angle of your leader and float makes all the difference. Illustration from troutandsteelhead.net

Once you have decided on fixed or slip for your river conditions or preference, ensure the float is appropriately cocked. Cocking the float is very easy. The manufacturers have added a paint line or water cocking stripe line on each float.

Add enough weight to the float to ensure the water line is at the paint edge or the white cocking line. This ensures the float is now neutral buoyant, and ready for a fish to strike. A well-balanced float will allow the float to go under with the least resistance, which is precisely what you want for weary shy Steelhead to feel the least resistance.

Properly weighted straight floats cast easier and track easier. These tips alone will cause any angler to up their odds of landing more fish with less hassle with the right float that is straight and true.

Why I Love a Fixed Float

I want to say sometimes a slip-float is a better choice under the right circumstances for me. For example, most Steelhead are

caught in 4-8 feet of water in a river setting. This fact alone makes a fixed float an excellent choice for me and used most often, and this is why.

Trotting a float is much easier with a fixed float. A simple definition of trotting is controlling the speed of the float, doing this can slow your bait down as it goes through the run.

This is accomplished by simply thumbing the spool on a bait caster, feathering the spool of a center pin reel, or grabbing the spool of a spinning reel with an open bail. The first two reels are the most deadly and easiest with this technique. Doing this causes the float to tilt towards you at an angle.

Slowing down your presentation provides many benefits. One, the top current is faster than the bottom current. Therefore, slowing the presentation to match the bottom current provides a more natural bait speed as it rolls through.

Second, it gives the fish an extended look at the offering and produces more strikes. This is a slippery slope; you don’t want to be too fast or slow but as natural as possible.

However, the most beneficial aspect of trotting is that it causes the bait to lay ahead of the float at a slower speed, and all they see is the bait before the rest of the rig. This alone helps a novice float fish angler catch more fish.

Lastly, I haven’t found anyone in Steelhead circles who talks about the lift, Stahl, and Fall Rate. The fall rate is discussed in the Bass world, but only a few talk about the lift and why it causes strikes. Sometimes I will sthal the float, causing the bait to lift through the run, and then let the rig go. As the bait falls, it triggers a response and bites. Why is this so important?

If you have ever watched an egg tumble down the river, you watch it rise, Stahl, and then fall as it tumbles down the river. Most do not realize this is a natural thing that occurs due to the hydraulics of a flowing river. This technique works best with a fly, bead, or spawn sack. As you can see, the float is an essential piece of gear, and its speed is so important and will result in more fish caught.

You can have the right bait, fly, lure, or color for that day. But if it’s not at the right speed equals less bites.

The next time you need to buy some floats at your local tackle shop check for quality and pay very close attention to how that float goes through the run. Obviously, the right depth is critical but how that bait goes through the run and at what speed will catch you more fish. Refrain from arguing whether it’s a float, bobber, or strike indicator. Instead, pick one and improve your argument by catching more fish.



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

CPMR is appealing Judge Maloney's denial order for intervening into the Tribal Negotiations process to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, OH. Oral arguments will be heard in January. On December 16th CPMR issued a press release in opposition to the submission of a proposed Great Lakes Consent Decree by the State of Michigan, the Federal Government and four of the five Tribes. We are in the process of analyzing the provisions in the proposed agreement and comparing it to the 2000 Decree to determine how the sport fishery will be impacted by the provisions outlined in the new agreement. The use of gill nets by tribal fishers is of huge concern for the sport fishing community because these gill nets kill fish indiscriminately.

When it comes to total allowable catch, there must be severe enough penalties to dissuade tribal commercial fishers from overharvesting the resource. These concerns will be taking center stage in our fight to preserve the \$7.1 billion dollar sport fishery in the Great Lakes.

On December 14th, I attended the Conservation Coalition Meeting in Lansing, MI whose members range from bear, deer, and bird hunters to dog handlers, environmental stewards and angler groups like MSSFA and TU. Our collective mission is to ensure the scientific management of our natural resources, habitat restoration, access for hunters and anglers, adequate funding, and addressing environmental threats. We had the opportunity to meet direct-

ly with newly appointed Acting Director Shannon Lott, a 25-year veteran of the MDNR with a strong background in wild life management and forestry. Shannon shared her priorities as we move into 2023 and it is apparent, she is definitely up to the job. The department's focus will be on continuing to prevent invasive species from getting a foothold in the environment, addressing the infrastructure needs for parks, hatcheries, and overall equipment upgrades. Water is major topic and of the 100 dams the state has authority over, 62 of them are targeted for removal. Environmental justice and renewable energy as well as carbon credits round out the priority list. Back filling positions will be on the agenda as Dave Shaw (law enforcement) will be leaving and Jim Dexter (fisheries) is planning on retiring in April 2023. Covid caused the majority of personnel to work remotely but need for proper job training will mean mandatory/

in person days for staff and managers especially. In January, Shannon will hold mandatory all chiefs' meetings and conduct cabinet meetings with three person teams. I walked away from the coalition meeting feeling that the department is in good hands if only with an Acting Director.

The Michigan Legislative Sportsmen Caucus Advisory Council met in Lansing as well in mid-December and its purpose is to share our Michigan outdoor hunting and fishing heritage with our lawmakers so we connect them to the values and priorities shared by sportsmen and women. The house and senate has flipped and for the first time in forty years all three branches of state government are run by Democrats. However, the majorities are slim and gov-

erning will require working across the aisle. There are fifty-five new members and they have potentially twelve years of representation in government. The question is what can we get done given the composition of the branches? It means getting to know them which we will do by sponsoring breakfast gatherings to showcase our sporting activities and one-on-ones to determine interests in sponsoring or supporting legislation that benefits our hunting and fishing heritage. The most positive aspect moving forward is the Caucus Co-Chairs are John Cherry (D) and Jon Bumstead (R) from the Senate and Amos O'Neil (D) and Sarah Lightner (R) from the House. These folks have been strong supporters of our outdoor heritage in the caucus for a number of

years. February 9th will be the first breakfast meeting with the new legislature.

Finally, the Steelhead Spectacular Committee has outdone themselves for the second year in a row with a dynamite cast of presenters for the Seminar Event on February 18, 2023 at D&R Sports Center in Kalamazoo, MI. We will be hosting a podcast during the event with some of the most experienced captains on the water. Raffle prizes, giveaways and much more will be highlighted during the day. Register now and reserve your spot at the event on the 18th!



MSSFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dennis Eade



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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 he 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 forty 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 it’s **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.

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MSSFA - 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Wednesday, Feb. 15
Via Teams – 6:00pm

Wednesday, June 21
Via Teams – 6:00pm

Saturday, April 29
Lansing MI at 10:00am
Presidents Meeting

Further dates will be published in GLSFN March Edition

2022 Tentative Print Schedule		
Issue	Deadline	Print Date
1	12/12/22	01/04/23
2	02/13/23	03/03/23
3	04/14/23	05/05/23
4	06/14/23	07/07/23
5	08/14/23	09/01/23
6	10/13/23	11/01/23

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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

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Monster Kings, Big Payouts are the Lures of Ludington Offshore Classic

Register Your 2023 Crew Now

Mark your calendars and prepare your crew for the 2023 Ludington Offshore Classic/Big Boys Tournament, to be held July 10-16 off the Ludington port. This big-lake tournament is offering big payouts and, if it's anything like last year's event, you'll be landing some lunkers before the week is over.

In 2022, there were six fishable days that went off without a hitch. There were no event delays or cancellations due to weather – and it was the largest event on the Tournament Trail in the last 8 years with 119 boats participating.

Not only that, but Ludington produced more 20+ pound Kings than all of the previous 2022 events combined!

Big Boys competition winner, Fin Scout of St. Joseph, took home \$19,100 after bringing in the biggest boxes over two days

of fishing action. It was the second time the team has landed the top spot.

“Day 1 we were not able to land the larger salmon but did get our limit,” said Fin Scout captain, Joel DeVries. “Day 2 we had heard of some larger salmon caught straight out of Ludington and decided to start fishing south of Big Point. That strategy worked, as we were able to catch two mature salmon to fill out tournament limit.”

DeVries said his crew began fishing Ludington's week of tournaments in 2017 and has not missed a year since.

“I know our team looks forward to Ludington every year, and it is my favorite week of the season!” he said. “Ludington offers all the southern teams an opportunity to fish water and structure we don't see in southern Lake Michigan. The tournament is well

run, the community comes out to watch the events and support their favorite teams, and we get to catch up with friends we have made from the area. What's



Image by macrovector on Freepik

not to love?”

The second-place team in the 2022 Big Boys tournament was Pure Chaos, who took home a prize of \$5,460, and third place went to Winn-N-Angel receiving \$2,730. The latter team also brought in the largest fish of the tournament at 26.25 pounds.

The weekend's pro tournament saw Pure Injection taking away the \$18,000 top prize. Its 5-member crew had two days of spectacular fishing during the event, bringing in the 12-fish limit both days, weighing a whopping total of 230.35 pounds.

Other winners of the pro tournament were Sportsmen, second place, awarded a \$7,500 prize; and In-U-Endo, third place, awarded \$5,000. Some Girls Do was the Big Fish winner with a 29.15-pound fish, and awarded \$3,000.

Throughout the week-

long Ludington Offshore Classic, there are contests for pros, amateurs, ladies and youth. These events, supported by Ludington-area businesses, will return for 2023 – and a week full of fishing, cookouts and camaraderie is promised.

“For 20 years, this has been one of the best tournaments on the lake,” said Brandy Miller, president of the Chamber of Commerce, which puts on the event. “Now headed into our 21st year, we plan to again offer big payouts over 100 percent of boat registrations. We invite all crews to come and enjoy the lakes, recreation, restaurants and shopping here in Ludington. It's the best place to be in the summertime.”

Register at ludington-tournament.com.

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- ### 2023 Schedule of Events:
- July 10: Big Boys Captains' Meeting
 - July 11-12: Big Boys Tournament
 - July 13: Ludington Legends Memorial Tournament
 - July 14: Ladies and Youth
 - July 15-16: Pro/Am Ludington Offshore Classic



Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Great Lakes Fisheries Survey Findings

A lot of factors go into effective fisheries management, including the valuable research data conducted each year by Michigan DNR research vessels on Lake Michigan, Lake Erie and Saginaw Bay that guides management decisions on how best to care for fisheries now and for future generations.

DNR Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter said the most recent survey results highlight important population trends among walleye, yellow perch and other species, as well as factors such as angler intensity and presence of forage fish.

“Regular surveying of Michigan waters tells us things about state fisheries that we’re not going to learn through other means, and that data helps us make sound, informed choices for different regions,” said DNR Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter. “Our research crews and biologists, along with state and federal partners, do an incredible job of collecting and analyzing information that’s essential to these three regions.”

Here are the highlights by each survey area:

Lake Michigan

The DNR’s survey vessel Steelhead and vessels from two other agencies cooperatively plied the waters

of Lake Michigan in August, sampling key forage fish populations critical to the health of salmon, steelhead and lake trout, and found forage fish numbers to be improving in Michigan waters.

The 2022 hydro acoustic survey comprised 26 transects spanning near-shore and offshore regions around Lake Michigan. A transect essentially is a pre-determined line, from point A to point B, that determines the survey route.

The S/V Steelhead completed 13 of these transects in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey research vessel Sturgeon (eight transects) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service R/V Baird (five transects).

“The work was completed in late summer in spite of midseason shipyard repair delays that gave the S/V Steelhead a later-than-normal start,” said Dave Clapp, Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station manager. “Thanks to the crew’s hard work and favorable weather, though, the S/V Steelhead was able to complete the largest number of annual survey transects since this survey began in 2004.”

Transects completed by the S/V Steelhead this season stretched from waters offshore of Chicago in the south, around the Michigan shore, to Platte Bay in the north. At roughly the same

time, the R/V Sturgeon completed transects along the Illinois and Wisconsin shore in the west, while the R/V Baird completed transects along the Wisconsin and Michigan shore in the north.



Rainbow smelt and alewife

While final survey results have not yet been compiled, several noteworthy observations emerged:

- As expected in recent years, forage fish abundance was much greater in nearshore areas than further offshore. However, unlike previous years, midwater trawl catches and apparent fish densities were higher in the northeast nearshore than in the southeast nearshore where fish abundance is nearly always greatest.

- Largest catches in midwater trawls were yearling and older rainbow smelt, alewife and bloater. Yearling and older rainbow smelt have rarely been encountered in recent years,

so the large catches this year mark a sharp departure from recent surveys.

- The size distribution of the alewives captured in 2022 was also very different than recent years. Typically, smaller size groups have dominated the catch, but this year’s alewife catches included a much broader range of sizes from 4-8 inches and included some large individuals greater than 8 inches in length. Moreover, very few young-of-year (< 4 inches) alewives were captured at any transect location. These results may indicate that 2022 was a low recruitment year for alewives, but also that predation and other mortality was low, allowing some to survive to larger sizes.

- Finally, acoustic density estimates and midwater trawl catches of bloater have been increasing in recent years; 2022 survey results suggest that densities of bloater continue to remain high and may be increasing regionally in Lake Michigan.

Overall, the forage community is showing signs of improvement that bodes well for future fishing on Lake Michigan.

Saginaw Bay

Based on the 24 trawl tows and 16 gillnet lifts conducted in September by the Department’s R/V Tanner and Channel Cat,



Saginaw Bay Survey

initial findings indicate few changes to the Saginaw Bay fishery. Overall, a total of 24 different species were collected by trawling and 27 different species were collected by gillnetting, with no new species collected.

Walleye abundance appears strong, and there are large year classes being documented from 2021 and 2022. Observations of a strong 2021-year class were supported by a large catch of juvenile walleye ranging in size from 10 to 12 inches. The evidence supporting the predicted strong 2019-year class will have to wait until all specimens can be aged in the laboratory this winter. Overall, the mean catch of larger walleye in gillnets (36.6/net) was slightly higher than the average (33.8/net) since 2003. The mean catch of young-of-year walleye in trawls

was the highest since 2009, and second highest ever, indicating young walleye production remains very high.

Yellow perch appear to continue to be very depressed in numbers and may be nearing record lows. The catch of larger yellow perch in gillnets remains low (33.5/net), and much less than the average since 2003 (45.3/net). The production of young yellow perch was also noted to be very low, and the trawl numbers were the lowest since 2014. Research also indicated that the survival of yellow perch in their first year of life was low.

Preliminary forage fish numbers appeared to have declined for the second straight year, too, and were below the long-term mean but slightly above the last 10-year mean. The most common forage fish in the trawling by number were trout-perch, sand shiner, white perch, round goby and young age-0 yellow perch.

While the DNR has been working cooperatively with partners including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey to restore native cisco to the Saginaw Bay area, no cisco were collected during the survey. A juvenile lake sturgeon, another species with active rehabilitation efforts, was collected in a gillnet and then tagged and released.

“Overall, walleye continue to dominate Saginaw Bay and its fish community, while efforts to improve yellow perch continue to struggle with that component of the fishery and forage fish numbers are generally stable,” said David Fielder, Alpena Fisheries Research Station, research biologist. “We expect the Saginaw Bay fishery will continue to look similar to 2022 for the next few years.”

Lake Erie

Lake Erie is one of the most popular fisheries in our state as it accounted, in 2021, for 14% of the total Great Lakes angling effort, 31% of the catch, a catch

“Survey”

Continued on page 20

The Southwest Michigan Steelheaders



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Uncertainty for Michigan Rivers And Residents

As Consumers Reconsiders 13 Dams

By Kelly House
www.bridgemi.com

GLENNIE — Just west of this tiny town near Oscoda sits one of six hydroelectric dams that tamed the Au Sable River a century ago to supply power to a growing population.

At the time, before policy had caught up to the environmental consequences of dams, the impoundments seemed like miracle assets, delivering emissions-free power as reliably as a river flows. The ponds they created became destinations for boating, swimming and

fishing, fueling tourism in a part of the state with limited jobs.

But fast forward a century, and the same structures have become expensive, environmentally costly assets that deliver negligible amounts of power at a premium price.

Their owner, Consumers Energy, has begun to ask whether their existence still makes sense.

All of which lead Tonya Wertheimer to wonder: If the Alcona Dam were to disappear tomorrow, taking with it the 1,075-acre reservoir that draws tourists all

summer long, would Glennie's grocery store be next?

"Where are we gonna buy our bread?" the 67-year-old resident said through tears at a recent public meeting hosted by Consumers. "Where are the people that actually live here, where is this community going to survive?"

Consumers, one of Michigan's largest electric utilities, began a lengthy process this autumn to consider the future of its 13 hydropower dams that plug five Michigan rivers: The Au Sable, Manistee, Muskegon, Grand and Kalamazoo.

At issue is whether to keep the impoundments in place, or remove them. The decision has more potential to alter Michigan's rivers and the communities that surround them than perhaps any action since their construction stopped up the rivers and inundated a collective 17,200 surrounding acres with water that people built lives and livelihoods around.

While the company is years from making a decision, its deliberations are drawing keen interest from nearby residents who fear lost property values and dying towns, from electric ratepayer advocates wary of the high costs to maintain dams that deliver little power, and from environmentalists who see a once-in-a-lifetime chance to restore rivers harmed by the impoundments.

Boom To Bust

During hydropower's heyday, Consumers and its predecessors owned more than 90 dams across the state.

The structures generate electricity by stopping up rivers, flooding the land behind the dams and then releasing that water through the dam, where the force of its flow spins turbines to power a generator.

For much of the last century, it was a cheap and reliable form of energy. But its massive environmental tradeoffs quickly became clear. The dams fragmented rivers and warmed their water, harming fish. Fluctuations to rivers' flow from the fillup and drawdown of reservoirs interrupted natural rhythms that guide many river species' reproduction and growth cycles. And sediments became trapped in reservoirs, starving the river downstream while causing the ponds to fill with silt.

"It's not best for the river," said Tess Nelkie, board

secretary of fishing and river conservation group Anglers of the Au Sable. "And it's not best for everything that lives in the river."

Over time, the economics of power generation shifted, too. New regulations ended the practice of "peaking," or filling and then rapidly draining reservoirs to maximize power output during times of high demand. As a result, the dams now operate at less than 40 percent of their capacity.

And cheaper energy sources entered the fray while the aging dams became increasingly expensive to operate and maintain.

Today, "it's one of the more expensive power sources we provide," said Adam Monroe, Consumers' executive director of hydro operations. Wind, for example, is 31 times cheaper.

Amid those changes, Consumers sold or retired most of its dams between the 1940s and 1970s. The 13 that remain provide just 1.2 percent of the utility's annual power mix, barely enough to cover their \$12.6 million in annual operating costs.

And at an average of 105 years old, Consumers says the dams need hundreds of millions of dollars in maintenance and upgrades to continue operating safely.

The company's dilemma is familiar: More than 80 percent of Michigan's 2,521 dams have aged beyond their intended life span, resulting in growing costs to keep them going. Hydropower's waning cost-competitiveness at times leaves dam owners struggling to cover those costs.

Those imbalances played out dramatically in 2020, when two privately-owned Midland area dams failed amid heavy rainfall. Regulators for years had flagged safety issues at the dams, but Boyce Hydro insisted it lacked the money to make fixes.

Following the disaster, a state task force concluded that dams across the state need "immediate attention" to avoid future tragedies, including money to fix problem dams and "substantially enhance dam removal."

Federal regulators consider Consumers' dams to be in satisfactory condition, with none of the alarming deficiencies that plagued the Midland dams. But licenses for 11 of the 13 dams will expire in 2034, putting the company on a timeline to decide whether it's logical to make the investments needed to keep them safe for the future.

Consumers is considering one of four options for each dam: Relicense and continue generating power; sell to a new own-

er who would maintain the impoundment; remove the dam and restore a free-flowing river; or build a new barrier that generates no power, but preserves a reservoir.

Consumers plans to announce its preferred solution for each of the 13 dams next year. After that, state and federal regulators will decide whether the company can move forward with its plans.

Good For Tourism, Bad For Fish

The idea of losing the dams has nearby residents nervous.

On the Kalamazoo River, hundreds of residents who live on the reservoir created by the Calkins Bridge Dam have joined a property owners' association that is lobbying for its survival. On the Au Sable, a Facebook group has cropped up devoted to saving the dams.

And across the state, large crowds showed up at public meetings with Consumers to voice their fears about the future.

"All of these communities are dependent on waterways that are created out of those dams," said Coco Soodek, president of the Lake Allegan Association, which represents landowners on the impoundment created by the Calkins Bridge Dam, near Allegan in the Kalamazoo River.

"And the communities that surround those bodies of water would be destroyed."

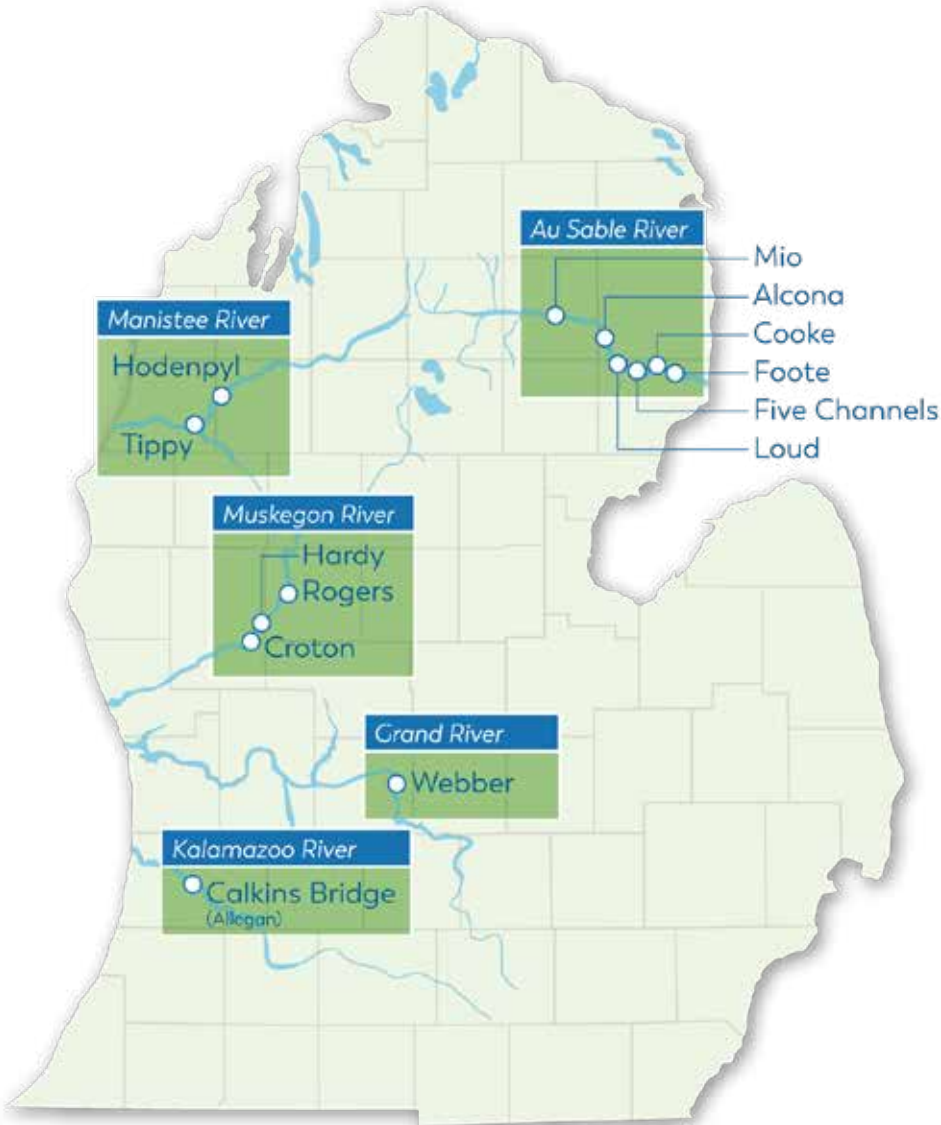
Those efforts are met with counterpoints from environmentalists who see Consumers' process as a rare opportunity to undo the environmental impacts of dams, which have thwarted the survival of migratory fish and other river life.

Take, for example, the Muskegon River, where migratory native lake sturgeon once had free reign of the 219-mile river from Lake Michigan to Higgins Lake. Now, the massive ancient fish can go a few dozen miles before a concrete wall blocks their path. Cut off from spawning habitat in lakes and rivers across the state, Michigan's sturgeon population has shrunk to 1 percent of its historic size.

"If you were to take out all the dams," said Scott Faulkner, executive director of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, "you would have a fishery that some have estimated is 50 to 100 times more productive than if the dams were here."

Dams also warm rivers by trapping water in reservoirs and then releasing the sunbaked water downstream, harming fish such as trout that prefer temperatures below 70 degrees.

"Consumers"
Continued on page 11



Consumers Energy hydropower dams
Consumers Energy is debating the future of its 13 hydroelectric dams, including whether to keep the impoundments in place or remove them.
Credit: Map courtesy of Consumers Energy

Consumers Energy's license to generate hydropower at the Alcona Dam, on the Au Sable River, expires in 2034. The company is now considering the fate of Alcona and 12 other dams that generate small amounts of expensive power, and need hundreds of millions of dollars in maintenance and upgrades. (Bridge photo by Kelly House)



“Consumers”

Continued from page 10

Summer temperatures in the Au Sable River’s storied trout waters routinely exceed that threshold below Consumers’ dams, said Bob Stuber, executive director of the Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition, an environmental and conservation group focused on the impacts of dams.

As climate change warms the world’s rivers, environmentalists see dam removal as key to protecting coldwater fish like trout. Because Michigan’s northern rivers are spring-fed, Stuber said, they are poised to withstand climate change far better than western streams that rely on snowmelt.

“Think of how important Michigan streams will be?” Stuber said.

Groups like his and the Angler’s of the Au Sable generally favor removing most dams, while maintaining a downstream barrier to keep Great Lakes invasive lamprey from entering rivers.

Michiganders pay to offset the dams’ environmental impacts: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources spends \$1 million annually to stock salmon and trout in the Muskegon and Au Sable, where state fisheries chief Jim Dexter said heat from dams puts waterways in “a marginal category for trout survival.”

The DNR prefers dam removal wherever feasible, a position it made known in an Oct. 21 letter to Consumers’ executive director.

James McKormick, supervisor in Curtis Township, which includes Glenzie, is familiar with the statistics on the dams’ environmental tradeoffs. But he has a few of his own:

Eighty-six thousand people come to recreate on the Alcona Dam’s reservoir each year, including those who fill up the township’s 450-site shoreline campground all summer. Those tourists frequent nearby canoe liveries and corner stores, restaurants and motels. Without them, McCormick said, communities surrounding the dams would wither.

The river “might be a better place to fish,” he said, “but there wouldn’t be anybody around here to fish it.”

Any dam removal on the Au Sable would likely also change the river’s annual canoe marathon, a storied nonstop dash from Grayling to Oscoda.

From the perspective of a weary paddler, “the dams are everything,” said Phil Weiler, the AuSable Canoe Marathon’s spokesperson. Racers exit their boat to portage over each dam’s embankment, an opportunity to stretch legs cramped from hours in a canoe.

As a race organizer and lifelong resident of the area, Weiler said he has grown used to the dam’s existence. But as a business owner, he can relate to Consumers’

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conundrum.

“They’re not in business to give away money,” he said.

If They Stay, Who Should Pay?

Consumers officials spent the fall making the rounds to communities surrounding the dams, from Newaygo and Big Rapids on the Muskegon, to Mesick and Brethren on the Manistee, assuring residents that the company has made no decisions yet.

“We recognize that there’s other values to these facilities than just the megawatts,” said Marianne Walter, a senior engineer at the company.

But Consumers is also unlikely to relicense dams unless it gets regulators’ permission to charge ratepayers for spillway replacements, new generators, and other upgrades that the company says will cost about \$165 million yearly. That’s far from certain.

The Michigan Public Service Commission regulates the rates that utilities

charge for electricity, a process that involves asking whether a utility’s proposed investments are reasonable, prudent and necessary, Commission Chair Dan Scripps said. That process focuses on ensuring reliable electricity at fair rates, leaving limited room to consider the environmental consequences of dams, or their benefits for nearby communities.

And environmental and ratepayer advocates have signaled they’ll be watching closely, ready to object to any effort to stick Consumers’ ratepayers across Michigan with costs to keep a dam around primarily because its reservoir benefits lakeside residents or neighboring communities.

“We don’t think that customers should be paying the full cost of a dam if the reason it’s going to continue to operate is other than hydropower,” said Douglas Jester, an energy policy expert who has represented the ratepayer advocacy group Citizens Utility Board in ratemaking cases.

There are other financial models: In mid-Michigan, property owners around the infamous Midland dams took control of them, covering maintenance costs with annual taxes imposed on properties near the reservoirs. But many of Consumers’ dams are surrounded by largely undeveloped land, leaving far fewer people to split the tab.

With 1,087 residents in the entire township surrounding the Alcona Dam Pond, McCormick said, “I don’t know who around here would have that kind of resources.”

Soodek, of the Lake Allegan Association, said she doesn’t feel it should be property owners’ responsibility to keep the Kalamazoo River reservoir intact. And she fears removing the dam could release PCB-contaminated sediments from the reservoir, creating new environmental consequences.

“Consumers is an immensely profitable company,” Soodek said. “It’s not like this is an existential

threat to them.”

Faulkner, with the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, sees both sides of the argument. He spends his days advocating for the river’s health, and believes an undammed Muskegon River would produce “a fishery on a world-stage level.”

But he also lives on Croton Pond, the impoundment created by one of Consumers’ three Muskegon River dams. His daughter learned to swim there, his family goes pontoon boating daily, and his property value benefits from the dam’s existence.

If the dam goes away, Faulkner said, “I’m in the same boat with everybody else.”

Viewing Consumers’ eventual exit from the hydro business as inevitable, he and his colleagues have begun working with Muskegon River communities to envision a future that doesn’t involve the dams in their current form.

Maybe Rogers Dam, the oldest on the Muskegon, could be replaced with

a free-flowing river ringed by parks and a golf course. Perhaps Croton and Hardy dams stay put, but with new fish ladders to let migratory fish pass upstream, and better technology to cool the water coming out of the impoundments.

“In a perfect environmental world, all of them are gone, and we restore the river to its original form,” Faulkner said. “That’s not a perfect world for property owners.”



“Release”

Continued from page 1

their lives so their numbers are quite depressed right now even with the apparent uptick in their numbers last year. With baitfish or prey fish numbers down there are a lot of hungry predators at the river mouths when the smolts arrive in May and early June. And, guess what, adult steelhead and salmon have no problem becoming cannibals when bait fish are scarce.

Sensing that steelhead are having a tough go of it right now, anglers, guides and Natural Resources Commissioners teamed up to reduce the limit to one steelhead on select Michigan streams last spring. No attempt was made to treat wild steelhead differently.

Wild or naturally reproduced steelhead smolts are hugely better at dodging predators and finding food than the hatchery smolts. These fish have spent two or three years in their natal streams avoiding predators and finding enough to eat. Conversely, hatchery smolts are fed daily and usually protected from predators. This easy life helps them grow to smolting size in just one year but has them woefully unprepared for survival in the wild.

This difference in survival has been vividly demonstrated in Prairie Creek, a tributary to the Grand River in southern Michigan. A number of years ago, Michigan’s hatchery steelhead all received a right pectoral fin clip. About 5,000 steelhead smolts are planted in this stream each year. Around the same time a study was

done on the creek and it was determined that between 3,000 and 5,000 wild smolts were produced annually by the stream. Once the time came that all of the hatchery fish should have been clipped it was determined that well over 90% of the returning steelhead were wild fish. In my personal catch it was over 95%.

It is significant that smolts from Prairie Creek have a long, tough trip to Lake Michigan. About 100 miles of the Grand River that contains very healthy populations of predators like smallmouth bass, walleyes, pike, and catfish, both channel and flathead, makes for a real gauntlet for these 7-8” rainbows. This fishery speaks volumes about the fitness of wild steelhead to become adult steelhead.

Starting in 2018 all hatchery steelhead were mass marked with an adipose fin clip by the states bordering Lake Michigan. This past spring we were able to tell with some certainty whether the steelhead we just landed was wild or of hatchery origin. The only reason we will not be able to tell with complete certainty is that Ontario will not be marking all the hatchery fish they stock in their Lake Huron tributaries. Not only did this affect the Lake Huron tributaries but also, possibly some Lake Michigan streams because we know that fish can freely move through the Straits of Mackinac. The Lake Erie states (Michigan and Ohio) and Ontario are not currently marking their hatchery steelhead but are studying the possibility of doing so in the future.


Steelhead are a fine ta-

ble fish, whether eaten fresh or smoked and there are relatively few situations where releasing them is mandatory in the Great Lakes. Like coho, Atlantic and chinook salmon, brown and lake trout, and splake, steelhead are stocked for a put, grow, and take fishery. However, releasing some of your catch will help to maintain and improve the fine sport fishery in our Great Lakes. In fact when fishing for wild trout and steelhead or any large predator fish, releasing most or all of your catch is the best idea in my opinion. With the likely continued decline of salmon in Lakes Michigan and Huron and increased pressure on other species like steelhead, catch and release will be even more important for a good fishery.


When you do decide to keep fish for the table being selective can make for a better meal and help sustain a good fishery. Almost always smaller fish will taste better than the trophies. Let the big fish spawn and keep the smaller but legal fish for the pan. When harvesting steelhead, remember that the males can fertilize the eggs of several females. Producing the milt also takes less out of the fish than making the eggs so the flesh of the males will be firmer. So keep a small male for the table or smoker and let the females go. It is absolutely hard to beat a fresh run, bright silver skipper for eating.

Successful releasing of fish begins with the catching. Never fight a fish to exhaustion. Use sturdy enough tackle to subdue your quarry in a relatively short amount of time. Preserving the fish from the side

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Bob Bryans admires steelhead

with your rod rather than lifting it to the surface will tire it faster and enable you quickly conquer large fish with relatively light tackle. When lifting fish with your rod, you are mostly fighting gravity and not tiring the fish.

Remember to always keep the handling of the steelhead to a minimum. For smaller steelies that you can control by lifting from the water or grabbing your line, simply grab the hook, fly, or lure with your forceps and shake the fish free. If you need to handle the fish wet your hand first and turn it upside down to quiet it before removing the hook. A net will greatly speed the landing of large fish. Use it as a corral and leave the net bag in the water to minimize any abrasion damage or protective slime removal. Nets are now available with mesh material that is really easy on the fish. If you must “beach” a large fish never drag it up on dry land. Find a shallow area where you can force the fish on its side but still have several inches of cushioning water. If you can’t get to the fish from a large boat, plan on having a large cooler half full of water to set the net bag and fish in when you plan to release it.

Along with a net, a pair of forceps (or needle nose pliers for large fish) should be a mandatory part of every angler’s equipment. Trying to manually unhook a fish can be hard on the

fish and, when fly fishing or using soft plastics, hard on your fly or lure. And, if the fish has sharp teeth like all members of the trout and salmon family, your fingers are likely to be scratched or punctured. Barbless hooks also help but even they can be stubborn at times and sometimes it is hard to pinch down those barbs after a big fish has prematurely dislodged a lure or weighted fly.

Usually your fish will be ready to take off after being unhooked but if it needs some resuscitation always take time to do this. Gently cradling the fish facing into slow current is best. If you are fishing in a lake slowly move the fish forward until it recovers. Moving the fish backwards is counterproductive as the fish can’t breathe when moved backwards.

Releasing that steelhead of a lifetime can be tough to do, especially if you are fishing by yourself. The solution to being able to let trophy fish swim away is to shoot them first. A camera is always part of my gear, ready to capture a deer drinking at streamside, an eagle watching me fish, a sunrise or sunset on a lake, or a freshly caught beauty of a fish. Obviously, almost all of us are carrying a mobile phone with us now and, of course, they also take good photos. When taking a picture of a fish always have everything ready before you lift the fish out of the water. Of course, if

you are taking a picture of yourself with the timer this will be automatic.

Measuring the length and girth of the fish along with a clear side view photo will allow you to have a replica mount made of your trophy. While you can calculate an estimate of your fish’s weight with these measurements it is fun to know the actual weight. This is easy to do using your net. Simply hook your scales on meshes on the opposite sides of the fish and weigh it as your big steelhead is cradled in your net. Then just subtract the weight of the net or suspend the net rim with your other hand so that it is not being weighed.

As life gets tougher for steelhead in the Great Lakes, I think we should strongly consider releasing all of the wild fish we catch. In the states of California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska and the province of British Columbia, the release of wild steelhead is almost always mandatory and virtually all hatchery steelhead are marked. On the few rivers where wild steelhead can still be retained, the daily limit is one and the season limit of wild fish is 3 or 4. Usually the daily limit on hatchery steelhead is two with a season limit of 20 or less. Obviously the limits on steelhead in the Great Lakes are much more liberal, usually 3 or 5 per

“Release”

Continued on page 14

“Walleye”
Continued from page 1

different spoons and I believe it is all about the action and color. Getting the right combination required a lot of spoon dunking in my life.

Tip it with a minnow head and jig it. Make a quick, one- to two-foot sweep with the rod tip to get their attention. Then, impart short buggy whips to get the rattles working. Pause for a second or two and start up again. Using my Humminbird MEGA Live and Aqua-Vu 722 in concert, I have watched walleyes race over from 20-plus feet away to crush it. This really gets your heart racing!

Tip: Match the hatch. Try multiple colors, as every lake has a different preference. But you can’t go wrong with perch patterns, red glow or metallics on any body of water.

The Spoon Rod

When jigging a spoon, don’t use a rod that is too soft. You want the spoon to move when you jig it. I have seen people jigging with noodle rods; they jig, but the rod tip bends and the spoon doesn’t move much. Ice fishing rod actions are very important, just as in open-water fishing.

Medium-light action is good for 1/16- to 1/8-ounce spoons

Medium is good for 1/8- to 1/4-ounce

Medium-heavy is best for 3/8-ounce and up

I use a 28- to 36-inch St. Croix Skandic when I’m outside roving on the ice. I use a 24- to 28-incher when I am in my portable fish house, and a 28- to 32-inch rod in my Otter Vortex Pro. I want to be able to jig and set the hook without hitting the ceiling. The lightness in the rod helps the jigging cadence. I also want backbone for fighting big walleyes and for piercing their boney mouths, and I like their flexible tip for walleye tantrums at the bottom of the ice hole.

Tip: Smart storage is worth it! I used to have a bad habit of rods bouncing around in my buckets, but now I safely store my St. Croix rods in an Otter Pro-Tech rod case. Lesson learned!

Hook, Line and Sinker

Many northern Minnesota lakes have cleared due to invasive species. While braid works in bog-stained lakes like the murky waters of Lake of the Woods, it does wick water, so you end up with frozen rod eyes when fishing outside a shelter. If you’re inside, it works fine in a lighter diameter with a 3- to 4-foot fluorocarbon leader.

Don’t be afraid to try light line. Just set your drag accordingly and use abrasive-resistant fluorocarbon. For the most part, I use 3- to 7-pound, clear Sunline Fluorocarbon Ice; 6- to 7-pound is for fishing spoons. Three- to 5-pound is for live bait rigs.

I use Gamakatsu Octopus-style or Finesse Wide Gap #4 or bigger hook when using larger minnows. I also keep a multipack of Gamakatsu fluorescent or metallic colors and add split shot sinkers to sink the minnow.

For more tips from the pros who know, check out the winter issues of Mid-West Outdoors, available by subscribing on our website.



Right:
Brian Brosdahl focuses on small, shallow lakes to begin his ice walleye season.





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An Angler's Evolution In Ice Fishing



J.C. with a much larger than ordinary walleye that he took through the ice.

By Bob Jensen

It's interesting how things evolve. Change is part of the world that we live in. If we don't accept change, we're not going to be as productive as we could be. I've learned that especially with computers and digital cameras. They've made my life easier(usually) and more productive(sometimes). In a recent conversation with a fishing friend, I learned that my attitude toward moving from hole to hole while ice fishing needs to evolve if I wanted to be more successful at catching fish through the ice. Here's what I mean.

John Crane is an avid ice angler. He's on the leading edge of ice fishing techniques and technology. In a recent conversation with John(J.C.) the talk turned to ice fishing. I asked J.C. how long he'll sit on a hole if he doesn't see a fish on the sonar. His answer surprised me a little. Not a lot, but a little. He said that if he doesn't see a fish on the sonar, he doesn't drop a line. He moves to another hole. I've fished with J.C. several times through the years. In the past, we'd pop 20-30 holes in the ice in an area that we suspected held fish. We'd put a sonar transducer down the hole and then drop a bait down. If we saw a fish, we would hold the bait a foot or two above the fish and try to get it to come up to the bait. Most fish are more likely to feed up than to feed down. If we didn't see a fish on the sonar, we'd move the bait in hopes that a nearby fish but out of the transducer's cone angle might be attracted to it. If nothing showed up, we'd jiggle the bait a little more aggressively. We were trying to draw a fish to the bait. If nothing showed up after a couple of minutes, we moved to another hole. For a long time,

that worked well and it still does. However, in the past couple of years with advancements in technology, J.C. doesn't drop a bait if he doesn't see a fish. He uses sonar that can scan an area and will show where fish are in relation to where an angler is. J.C. can go to the holes where the scanning sonar says the fish are. He then drops his down-looking sonar transducer in the hole. He will usually see a fish, and if he can see it, he can usually catch it.

Not all of us have sonar that scans. I don't, and many of the people that I fish with don't either. However, we have traditional sonar. We know that sonar will help us catch more fish through the ice. The Vexilar FLX-20 that many anglers prefer provides outstanding target separation. It will show within inches where the tiniest jig is in relation to a fish on the screen. In the past several

years we've realized even more that if a fish isn't on the screen, move along to the next hole.

J.C. has also been evolving from live bait on a jig to plastic bait on a jig. The evolution is almost complete. J.C. says he rarely takes live bait on the ice, and never does if he's after panfish. Plastic comes in different shapes, colors, and sizes. Live bait doesn't offer those options. Plastic baits are also much easier on the hands: You don't need to put your hands into cold water in a minnow bucket to get a plastic bait, and plastic bait stays on the hook longer and doesn't die. It's much less expensive than live bait. When the crappies, perch, or bluegills are wanting a slower presenta-

"Evolution"
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"Release"
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day and no season limit. This angler is worried that our great steelhead fishery can't continue with such liberal limits along with the tremendous pressure the environment and dwindling food supply is putting on these great fish. Releasing all the wild fish and keeping only the occasional male steelhead will go a long way toward preserving our steelhead fishery. If you are fishing streams where hatchery steelhead are not marked, remember that the dorsal fin is commonly worn down or has bent rays in hatchery steelhead. Other signs are worn pelvic or ventral fins.

Interestingly, it is often suggested that you keep hatchery steelhead on the West Coast so they won't spawn with wild steelhead and "dilute" their genetics. Not a worry if you are fishing a Michigan stream, however, as our hatchery winter steelhead have wild parents and thus have the "right genes". They just had too easy of a time becoming smolts.

If you need another reason to release wild steelhead, it has long been known in the Pacific Northwest that wild steelhead bite better than hatchery fish. It probably is due to the fact that the wild fish had to forage for themselves and protect their space or territory in a stream for the first two or three years of their lives.

Releasing a large, wild steelhead is one of the most satisfying and rewarding things you can do as an angler!

And, don't forget to enter your steelhead in the Great Lakes Angler Diary program. Another article in this issue tells you how to do it.

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ANGLER DIARY PROGRAM CONTINUES

By Jim Bedford

Early last October schedules meshed so that I was able to fish with both my son Al and my daughter Terri along with my son's significant other, Shelley. I followed them through a long run on the upper Grand River with my net handy. Five steelies were

hooked but as it can happen with extremely feisty early fall steelhead, only 2 were brought to net. My son caught a 29" hatchery female steelhead that had all the characteristics of a summer run, long and lanky. It was his first steelhead as he rarely fishes, preferring to hunt deer and waterfowl in the fall. Ter-

ri, who is a frequent fishing partner, caught the trophy of the outing, a 32" wild male steelhead that put up a very long battle. Al timed the battle as he attempted to film it with his phone and the big steelie kept us in suspense for almost five minutes before being corralled in my net. Photos of both accompany this article and you can be sure these catches were entered into Angler Diary program.

The Great Lakes Angler Diary program continues and anglers will help researchers and themselves learn more about this special fish by participating. All hatchery steelhead that were planted in Michigan in the last three years, 2018, 19, 20, and 22 had their adipose fins clipped and a coded wire tag implanted in their snouts. There was no egg take in 2020 so no steelhead smolts were planted in 2021. The lack of small steelhead or skippers in streams that are dependent on hatchery fish was very noticeable in the angler reports for the 2021-2022 season. Since a significant percentage of the steelhead run after their second summer in the lakes there could be a noticeable reduction of these fish, which will mostly weigh from four to seven pounds, in streams that are dependent on hatchery fish for a significant part of their run.

A very noticeable trend for the steelhead reported from the 2021-22 run was that hatchery fish were more prevalent in the spring. This was especially true in the Big Manistee River, where we had over 1,000 steelhead reported using the Great Lakes Angler Diary. The seasonal

trend held true for all parts of the river but was most pronounced in the upper river from Tippy Dam to Pine Creek where 18% of the fall run were clipped versus 53% of the spring running steelhead were missing their adipose fin. Despite the strong seasonal difference in 2021-22, the reports from the previous 2020-21 season did not show strong evidence for the prevalence of stocked

steelhead in the spring run. It will be helpful to get additional data this year from the 2022-23 run and future seasons so we can better understand if differences in river temperatures and water levels might play a role in the timing of the stocked versus wild runs.

When anglers record and report their trips and catch that includes time spent, length of steelhead caught and whether they were missing their adipose fin or not they will provide valuable information. If they decide to keep a steelhead that is missing its adipose fin they should cut off its head and freeze it, placing information about where and when you caught it in the bag. MDNR can provide tag forms and drop locations.

It is important to note that Michigan Sea Grant and Michigan State Univer-

sity Extension handle all of the data reported and work to ensure that all your data remain confidential. This means that they never share your data in a way that can be traced back to you. When they report results, they only report aggregated results for a river or stretch of river. The program doesn't even ask for details on specific holes or runs fished. Thus your "secret spots" will be preserved.

When you register for this program you will be able to enter their catch data via mobile devices and home computers. For more information and how to register, anglers should check out www.glanglerdiary.org. Questions can be directed to Dr. Dan O'Keefe of Michigan Sea Grant who is leading this program and can be contacted via email at GLanglerdiary@gmail.com.



Al Bedford with his first steelhead.



Terri Bedford with her trophy steelhead.



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ICE-FISHING IS COMING



An angler appreciates quality bibs when kneeling in slush is required to land a nice walleye.

By Bob Jensen

It may not look like it now, but the ice fishing season is just around the corner. In some areas, it's already gone around the corner and is pulling into the driveway. Winter means different things to different people. To some it means shoveling the sidewalk and icy roads. But for those of us who enjoy fishing through the ice, winter brings excitement. If you're one of those people, following are some ideas that you might want to consider. If you haven't discovered ice fishing but would like to, these ideas will help you get started. Here we go.

First things first: Make sure the ice is safe to walk on. Some anglers don't think about going on the ice until there are vehicles on it. Others want to be the first one out there. I'm always content to follow. There are life jackets made for ice fishing. Clam's Rise Float Parka will help keep you afloat if you should find a thin spot in the ice.

Matt Johnson spends more time on the ice than almost anyone. He's fished in a lot of places early in the year for a variety of fish, but he really likes to get after panfish. Crappies and bluegills mostly. Matt says

that mobility is a priority early in the year. He likes to wear Ice Armor Bibs with a Blackfish Gale top. The bibs are durable and don't absorb water, while the Gale allows him to be very mobile. He can drill holes and set the hook comfortably with this set-up.

John Crane is another guy who ice anglers could be envious of. He's on the ice from as soon as it's safe until the time when it's no longer safe. He gets to the area that he wants to fish and drills some holes. He uses a K-Drill because it's electric. Electric drills are quieter than the gas drills that many of us grew up with. He uses the 6 inch hole size. A 6 inch hole can be created with less noise than a larger hole simply because there is less ice being drilled. That sounds like a small consideration, but it's an important one.

Matt and J.C. don't spend much time at a hole unless they see fish on their sonar. Both use Vexilars to determine if there is a potential biter below. If they see a fish, they fish. If they don't, it's on to the next hole.

Plastic bait on small jigs are a traditional favorite for panfish, but a bait called a Pinhead Pro is quickly becoming a very important

part of many ice anglers arsenal. These baits are made of zinc alloy. Zinc alloy can be machined, so the detail on these baits is incredibly lifelike, and sometimes, especially when the panfish are skittish, lifelike is very important.

However, on early ice the fish sometimes aren't skittish at all. Remember, these fish haven't seen fishing pressure for several weeks. There can be a considerable time lag between the end of the open water fishing season and the start of ice fishing. If you keep quiet and show the fish a bait, chances are good that fish will bite. Start ice fishing in the areas where you last caught them in open water.

Now, first things last: Make sure the ice is safe! You don't need to be the first one out there. But as soon as the ice is safe, drill some holes, move about quietly and fish where the fish are. If you've done this before, you know why you're doing it again. And if this is the first time you've done this, you'll be anxious to do it again.



Grand Rapids Steelheaders...

By Rebecca Goettl

When you read this title, you may think we are only seeking to catch the great steelhead fish. Let me stop you right there. Our chapter members, as well as all the other chapters, seek out a variety of good fighting, tasty fish from the Great Lakes to the inland streams. Perch, walleye, trout, salmon, we will gladly net them quick as we can.

Now that we have stirred the waters, let's have a deeper look at this group of fishing nuts. Our Board and Members are made up of people that enjoy everything from "just fishing" to those that build and repair rods, and make their own baits. Some fish every week, and some fish only a few times in the warmer months. A lot of our members have been a Steelheader for better than 20-30 years, while some of us are less than 5 years into it. We welcome ALL to the chapter; if you don't own a fishing rod that is ok! Before you leave the meeting, you will have a connection on getting all set up to fish for whatever species you desire.

GRSH Chapter has a list of events that we participate in, as well as outings for fishing enjoyment for the members. I will cover just a few of the items that our people volunteer their time and knowledge to, and I hope these few items will nudge you into checking out our chapter (or a chapter in your area).

Salmon In The Classroom: Steelheaders collaborate with the DNR, Wolf Lake Hatchery, and qualified schools to get salmon eggs into schools for the students to learn about the life cycle of the fish. The students care for and track from egg to fryling to the 3-4 inches/approx 5-6 month old fish that they get to release into a tributary that will lead to Lake Michigan. The students have papers to fill out and report back to the DNR; things like egg mortality, feed amounts, growth records, water quality, etc.

Sportsman for Youth: This is a huge event at Muskegon County Fairgrounds in early September. Grand Rapids Steelheaders are present at this event. Grand Haven Steelheaders host a fish simulator booth, and Grand Rapids volunteers in the food tent to help feed the kids and their parents.

Ultimate Fishing Show: Grand Rapids hosts an information booth to share our love of fishing, whats going on that affects our fishing industry, and to encourage people to join our GRSH family. Our favorite event at this show is Lake Ultimate. Our chapter is given run of Lake Ultimate on Saturday and Sunday for an hour to let youth enjoy the opportunity to land a big fish. Imagine being an 8 year old, walking down the dock, stands are full of people cheering you on. The audience shares in the excitement of landing a big



fish, or the defeat of "the big one" that got away.

One of our favorite outreach events is to share fishing with a class of students. As this is going to publication, GRSH just finished up with South Christian High School. In this class, we got to share the fishing tactics for multiple species, fish their on-location ponds, make lures, and treat the students to an experience of catching "the big one" on

the Salmon Simulator. Mrs. Cashen has an amazing group of students, and they did awesome at creating and naming their own lure!

As I end this article, I want to touch on a few other things our chapter is involved in. We hold monthly meetings and showcase speakers that will further our learning as we aim for "The Big One". We have hosted everything from Ice Fishing to Big Lake to In-

land Lakes and Streams. We have covered a huge variety of species, gear used, and how to make or adjust lures/gear to target a species in a specific season. GRSH has aided in the funding for Tribal Negotiations, as well donations to God's Kitchen. Grand Rapids also collaborates with Grand Haven and the DNR on the Net Pen project. Every 2 years, baby salmon (250,000 last in 2021) are shipped in

and housed in net pens in Grand Haven just inside the river off Lake Michigan. We also make sure to plan some outings, and gather as a group for bragging rights, hearty laughs, and food off the grill. Please look for our Chapter Calendar in the paper for chapter events and outings. To help stay up to date, join our FB page, Grand Rapids Steelheaders Official Page.



Some of the lures South Christian made during the "Fishing Classes"



Some of the students sporting the shirts given out.



South Christian High School Students



Jake Cashen, one of the South Christian students, shows off his 2 catches off Grand River by 6th Street Bridge.



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"Congratulations to The Chairman of the Boards, Bruce DeShano, on his 2020 Freshwater Hall of Fame Induction!"

Michigan’s Outdoor Recreation Boom is Becoming a Business Boom

By Kelly House
www.bridgemi.com

Michigan’s COVID-19 outdoor recreation boom has produced a subsequent business boom, according to a new federal report on the state’s outdoor scene.

Buoyed by a global pandemic that shuttered public gathering spaces and pushed people outdoors, Michigan’s outdoor recreation economy grew by 15.4 percent last year, contributing \$10.8 billion and 109,595 jobs to the state’s economy, according to a new report by the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis.

That’s more than double the rate of growth for Michigan’s economy as a whole during the same time frame, and an increase of 1,600 jobs and \$1.3 billion in economic impact over 2020.

Fresh off those stats, the state this month moved its Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources into the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, signaling a growing commitment to viewing Michigan’s outdoors as an economic driver.

The state this week also released its latest five-

year plan for Michigan’s outdoor recreation scene, which stresses the need for more investment in local outdoor amenities as record numbers of people continue to flock to Michigan’s trails, waterways and parks.

Statistics collected as part of the five-year plan show that a quarter of Michiganders are getting outside more today than they were before the pandemic. Early data suggests those new habits have staying power, said Brad Garmon, director of the state Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry.

“There are things that are probably going to be lifestyle choices that will stick around,” Garmon said.

Bridge Michigan spoke with Garmon about Michigan’s changing outdoor recreation scene, and how he sees Michigan capitalizing on its growth. Here are key takeaways:

Kayaking and biking are up, hunting and snowmobiling are down.

The federal statistics show boating and fishing were the most economically-impactful pursuits, accounting for 948 million dollars last year. Next came RVing, followed by hunting and related sports.

But below those topline



Donna and Leon Genre saw record business at their Germfask kayak and canoe livery, Northland Outfitters, as Michiganders flocked to the outdoors at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
(Bridge photo by Kelly House)

figures, Michigan’s outdoor recreation scene is showing signs of change.

Paddlesports and bicycling are growing dramatically more popular, while hunting and snow sports are on the wane.

The gradual loss of enthusiasm for hunting is nothing new; Michigan hunting participation has declined by 2-3 percent annually since the 1990s as older hunters age out and younger generations opt for other pursuits.

Garmon attributed the

decline of snow sports partly to a momentary lapse caused by the pandemic, and partly to an alarming long-term trend of waning winters as the globe warms.

“Shorter seasons, less dependable snow — that’s affecting snow sports across the board,” Garmon said.

And it’s forcing snow tourism-dependent industries and communities to innovate. More ski hills are manufacturing snow during lackluster winters, Garmon said. And communities that

have long thrived on the reputation of their snowmobile trails and ski hills are investing in mountain biking trails and zip lines to capture tourists when snow is thin.

Adapting to change may mean investing in manufacturing.

Garmon sees an opportunity to offset the loss of some winter tourism by building more manufacturing and innovation into Michigan’s outdoor economy.

“We should be able to make more, design more, test more gear,” he said. “And that’s going to help communities in the long term, so maybe you’re designing and testing skis here and you have to fly out west to do some skiing sometimes.”

Marquette, for instance, is building out a business incubator to support outdoor start-up companies. Garmon said he hopes to see more equipment and apparel manufacturing in Michigan, pointing to shoe company HOLO Footwear’s new Grand Rapids headquarters as an example.

He also said there’s opportunity for Michigan to cultivate an electric boating, ATV and snowmobile manufacturing industry alongside efforts to make the state a hub for electric vehicle manufacturing.

more equitable recreation access for those who are less willing or able to travel long distances to get outdoors.

“We should continue to support travel tourism,” Garmon said, “and we will. But we can also do a lot of this that’s closer to home.”

To that end, state lawmakers and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer earlier this year allocated \$115 million for recreational greenways in Detroit and Grand Rapids, \$20 million for sports-related tourism and recreation in northern Michigan, and \$65 million in grants to local parks across Michigan.

State officials noted in Michigan’s draft recreation plan that those investments are still not enough.

Casting outdoor recreation as economic and public health development

Garmon said one way to close the funding gap is by starting to think of outdoor recreation amenities as economic development and public health assets.

Research done as part of the state’s five-year plan found that the health benefits of outdoor recreation save Michigan an average of \$2.8 billion annually in avoided health costs.

And close-to-home amenities are also a recruitment tool for businesses looking to lure talent. Access to outdoor recreation is the number one reason tech professionals live in Utah, for example.

“We want to keep people, we want to keep our college graduates, we want to keep our young people and provide them opportunities,” Garmon said. “Outdoor recreation is a way to do that.”

To that end, Garmon said his office is focused on helping cities build recreation into their regional economic development strategies, which may allow them to tap into new sources of federal funding for bike trails, parks and other outdoor amenities.

“We’re starting to think of those things less as amenities, and more as infrastructure,” Garmon said.

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Ryan Minton Photography



Member Gary Towns teaching at our Kids Outing.



Manistee 30 lbs King, Eric Braden

The Metro-West Steelheaders (MWS) is a 170+ member “Family Fun” oriented fishing club. MWS goal is to promote sport-fishing, sharing of fishing information to those wanting to learn and educate young people through participation in fishing events throughout the Great Lakes region. The MWS is one of twelve Michigan Steelhead & Salmon Fisherman’s Association (MSSFA) chapters across the state.

MWS has something for everyone’s interest with fishing events, socializing, environmental education, community outreach, and fund raising. MWS holds roughly sixty (60) events a year ranging from community outreach at shows, fishing on Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan for walleye, salmon and trout. There is a river group that will fish river systems in Michigan as well as “Steelhead alley” in Ohio. A kayak and small boat groups hold numerous events in Lake Michigan ports and multiple inland lakes. Last-

ly, there is pier-beach group that will fish several ports annually. MWS also holds their annual Swap Meet in April. There are three social events (Summer Picnic, Kids Fish & Christmas Party) and two funds raisers (Comedy for a Cause & Annual Sportsman’s Banquet).

MWS is active representing MSSFA on the MDNR Cold Water Steering committee and participates in Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) Policy Board meetings and serves on the MUCC Fisheries Committee as well as serving on the MDNR Lake Michigan & Lake Erie Citizens Fishery Advisory Committees. MWS also participates with MUCC and other conservation groups in three annual river clean ups on the Clinton and Manistee Rivers

MWS sponsors an annual “Kids Fish” at Kensington Metro-Park with 200+ kids and related guardians annually. Each child receives a new pre-rigged fishing rod, bait and instruction by MWS volun-

teers throughout the morning. MWS also supports six (6) Salmon In the Classroom projects by providing equipment for the schools.

MWS holds (10) General membership meetings per year. These meetings are open to the public with expert speakers related to fishing topics as well as MDNR officials and biologists. When able to meet in person each meeting promotes social interaction and the exchange of information through time set aside for social interaction and networking. There are also 50/50 and tackle raffles, event updates and fishing reports.

Other fun activities include “Captain & Crewperson of the year” contests as well as River, Kayak, Small Boat, Beach and Pier “Anglers of the Year” contests. There are also “Big Fish” and “Warm Water Challenge” annual fishing contests.

MWS Fundraisers annually support sending area children to the MUCC Kids Camp, the Annual Kids

Fish at Kensington Metro Park, (6) classrooms in the MDNR “Salmon in the Classroom” program & donations to fisheries related special programs like the “Clinton River Watershed Council” and the Lake Superior State University Atlantic Salmon project.

MWS is always looking for new members welcome anyone interested in fishing or learning more about sportfishing. Please feel free to come join us at one of the general meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. Meetings are currently held at the Livonia Senior Center located at 15218 Farmington Rd, MI. 48154.

For more information visit the MWS Website at www.metroweststeelheaders.org or contact Henry Nabors - Membership at hnnabors@gmail.com (258.225.4964)



Hunter SpanglerCrewman of the Year with Granddad Richard Spangler and Crewman Mike Baumgartner



Above: Bounty Hunter Captain Bob Schulz – President MWS

Left: Pier Marquette steelhead fishing



Metro West Steelheaders Kids Outing



Sara Ann Captain Kirk Traver at Benton Harbor



Tailgate Lunch!

Why Line 5 Will Likely Remain Open Despite Democratic Control of Lansing

By Kelly House
www.bridgemi.com

The Enbridge Line 5 pipeline was one of few environmental issues to take center stage this campaign season, with Republicans touting their stance in support of the pipeline as pro-business, and some Democrats claiming pipeline opposition among their environmental bona fides.

But don't expect that to translate into new efforts to shut down the pipeline that runs from Wisconsin to Canada down through the Straits of Mackinac after Democrats take control in Lansing.

Instead, experts, Democratic leaders and even key Line 5 opponents say, the battle for the pipeline's future lies mostly in federal courts and international diplomats' negotiating rooms.

Here's what to know about the pipeline battle as Michigan prepares for a change of political power in January.

All eyes on the courts

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel vowed during their first campaign for office that shutting down the Canada-based Enbridge's Line 5 pipelines would be a top priority.

Both have tried, but so far, their efforts have failed to stop the 69-year-old pipeline from transporting petroleum across the straits. The latest court developments bode well for Enbridge.

Nessel filed a lawsuit seeking a shutdown shortly after taking office, but Enbridge has since convinced a judge to remove the case to federal court, dealing a blow to the state's legal strategy after the case had already gone through lengthy proceedings in Ingham County Circuit Court.

And after Enbridge reported "significant damage" to the anchor support of one

of the dual-span pipeline's spans in the straits in June 2020, Whitmer ordered Enbridge to cease operations in the straits by the following May, and followed up with a lawsuit in state court. Enbridge has defied that order, and successfully combated Whitmer's lawsuit by again successfully arguing that it should be removed to federal court, prompting Nessel to drop the suit.

A countersuit by Enbridge remains in play, with the company arguing that Michigan has no legal authority to shut down the pipeline because the federal government has sole oversight of pipeline safety

issues.

"The State's attempts to shut down this critical energy infrastructure raise important federal questions of interstate commerce, exclusive federal jurisdiction over pipeline safety and the serious ramifications for energy security and foreign affairs if the State and the U.S. government were to defy an international treaty with Canada that has been in place since 1977," Enbridge spokesperson Ryan Duffy said.

Nessel's team still hopes to return its original suit to state court, where the state's odds of prevailing before a state Supreme Court that has a majority of justices nominated by Democrats are better than its odds before federal courts that contain more conservative appointees.

She said in October that her team is appealing U.S. District Judge Janet Neff's August decision to keep the case in federal court, saying she is "baffled" by the ruling.

Nessel said the removal "sets an incredibly dangerous precedent" for parties sued by the state to abruptly remove cases to federal

court when proceedings in state court "aren't going so great" for them.

While campaigning for her second term, Whitmer acknowledged the fight over Line 5 is now largely out of her hands, while maintaining that "we've got to get that out of the water."

Sean McBrearty, coordinator of the anti-Line 5 campaign Oil & Water Don't Mix, said that it's unlikely the new Democratic majority in the Legislature will take any action designed to aid in Whitmer and Nessel's shutdown fight.

"There was a time when the legislature was the appropriate forum for that discussion," McBrearty said, but given that the cases are now tied up in federal court, "the time has long passed."

Incoming House and Senate leaders haven't signaled an appetite to wade into pipeline politics.

A spokesperson for Sen. Winnie Brinks, the incoming Senate Majority Leader, said the lawmaker is "not commenting on

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"Survey" Continued from page 9

rate three times the other Great Lakes waters combined, and an angling intensity more than 54% that of the other Great Lakes waters in our state.

Fisheries surveys and other companion surveys are critical to maintaining this fishery, which Michigan shares with New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania and the Canadian Province of Ontario.

The DNR does two surveys using the R/V Channel Cat to obtain information from Lake Erie's complex fisheries community:

- The first is a bottom trawl survey that examines the number of young-of-year walleye and yellow perch in Michigan waters of Lake Erie, contributing to interagency knowledge about reproduction for these two species. This survey, in its ninth year, also documents the relative abundance of forage fish species that live near the bottom.
- The second survey is a gillnet survey that samples the abundance and age structure of yearling and

older walleye in Michigan waters. These data drive the population models that are used to determine the total allowable catch and daily bag limits for walleye in this valuable water. This survey was conducted in October at four locations with two index stations (Stony Point and Luna Pier) that have been sampled every year for 45 years.

Walleye populations remain near the all-time high, with trawling indicating that recruitment continues to be very strong. The age-0 walleye catch rate in the bottom trawl (14 fish caught per 10-minute trawl tow) was comparable to the past two years, coming in above the nine-year average of 11 fish per 10-minute trawl tow. Walleye reproduction during the past seven years has been strong, with multiple large year classes beginning in 2015.

Similarly, older walleye were caught in gillnets this year at rates (150 fish per net lift) 40% greater than the long-term average. This was a 150% increase from last year and the highest rate at index stations since 2005. Of the 404 walleye captured and measured for

biological data, nearly 75% were above the minimum size of 15 inches. All these fish have had their stomach contents examined; 80% had food present, with 66% of them having eaten gizzard shad. More information on these larger adults will be gathered this winter when the fish are aged.

Yellow perch populations were found to be holding their own. While reproduction was down, as the trawl catch rate of age-0 yellow perch dropped from last year (>1,200 fish per 10-minute trawl tow to 157 fish per 10-minute trawl tow). This level of young-of-year relative abundance is not unprecedented; in fact, it is comparable to observations during the first four years of the survey (2014-2017).

Survival of young-of-year yellow perch to older ages is needed to increase the abundance of harvestable-sized fish. This seems to be occurring, as the catch rate of yearling and older yellow perch (46 fish per 10-minute trawl tow) was at a six-year high and above the time series average of 33 fish per 10 minute trawl tow. Creel data from clerks'

conversations with anglers will be available later this spring and should show whether these fish are appearing in the recreational fishery.

Sufficient number of forage fish are required to support Lake Erie's important recreational fisheries. Even though bottom trawling shows that forage catch rates were down, driven by a decrease in age-0 white perch and age-0 yellow perch, anglers shouldn't be concerned about their favorite target species running out of food.

"These collections are on the low end of the range of forage catch rates observed during the last nine years. However, this doesn't mean that there is a lack of forage in the lake, as our trawls only sample fish that live near the bottom," said Todd Wills, Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station manager. "Walleye health, as measured by visceral (stomach) fat, is very good, and their diets often contain gizzard shad, which are not sampled well by our trawls and live higher in the water column."

The DNR will know much more about this re-

"Evolution" Continued from page 14

tion, he shows them a Drop Jig tipped with a Maki Jimei XL or a Maki. These plastics wiggle even when the jig is barely moving. If a faster presentation is employed, a Maki Mino or Mino XL is threaded onto the Drop Jig.

In our conversation, I did a lot more listening than talking. I learned that

an angler can catch fish through the ice using traditional techniques. I also learned that we can catch more fish through the ice if we change our techniques a little bit. Fishing is like so many things in life: We can do things the way we've always done them, or we can evolve and often times do things better. I'm looking forward to evolving on the ice this ice fishing season.

"Line 5" Continued on page 23



Crew of the R/V Channel Cat prepare to lift a gill net

markable urban fishery when all of the fish are aged, survey data is fully examined, creel census data is proofed and creel census biological data is available in early 2023.

To learn more about how the DNR manages fisheries in Michigan, visit Michigan.gov/Fishing.

2023 Saugatuck Fishing Tournament

“The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel” Big Lake Classic

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing association along with the Saugatuck CVB invite you to join us for this exciting weekend for a get away that is rich in relaxing, fun and recreation. Come and walk the boardwalk in the downtown area and see all the happenings of the Fishing Tournament and visit many of the businesses that help sponsor this annual event.

The 2023 Saugatuck – “The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel” Big Lake Classic will be held on Friday, August 11th – Sunday, August 13th. Boats will be allowed to stay and leave each day from any of the following Ports: Saugatuck, South Haven and Holland. Please call early and reserve your slip.

The Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association committee would like to thank all of the people for making the 2022 Salmon in The Classroom project, the 2021 RAZE Eyewear Tournament and the Net Pen Projects happen. The Net Pen project is the imprinting process of Chinook Salmon. Salmon are released from the Hatchery into a net pen in a river system, they

are feed multiple times a day. Then after two to three weeks the baby salmon are released into the river and migrate to Lake Michigan where they live for 4 years prior to their return to the imprinted river for spawning. Over 100,000 were released in the spring of 2022. Many Business and private citizens in the area helped make these three projects a huge success in 2022.

Tournament Participation for the 2022 tournament was 52 boats, 15 Pro boats - of which 7 places were paid at a total of \$20,000. 29 Am boats of which 15 were paid at \$14,450 and 8 boats fished the Big Fish Tournament only. Payouts to the fishing teams was at a return of 190% of entry fees paid. The Denny Allen Big Fish Tournament paid 15 places at a total of \$5,100.

The changes made by the 2022 Tournament Committee - In the Amateur Division in the 2022 tournament Am teams could Catch 15 weigh their biggest 5 fish. Another change to 2022 was in the Pro Division – Observers were placed on the 3 top boats returning from 2021 Tournament and the second day the 3 Observers were

placed on the top 3 boats from the day 1 Tournament. This will be the same plan for the 2023 Tournament.

Details for the One Day “Spectators Pretournament Shootout”. Friday August 11th – Set lines at 6:00am, DNR Rules. Weigh in will be at Spectators Restaurant on Blue Star Highway just north of Saugatuck, Bring your 5 biggest fish. Must be in line by 2:00pm. Entry fee \$100 per boat.100% payback for this event. Check the box on the Entry form or contact a committee member by 6:00am Friday August 11th.

2023: Dual Port Tournament- South Haven and Saugatuck – Overall scores from both Tournaments will be combined and a winner will be crowned the Dual Port Tournament Champion! Daily Prizes for both Tournaments will be awarded each day to participating teams. Both Pro boats and AM boats will be eligible to enter this Dual

event. Watch for more information on both South Haven and Saugatuck Websites for this event soon.

Saugatuck 2023 Tournament:
Pro Division – Observers will be provided by tournament committee.

Pro Division – Catch 15, weigh 12, “9 Trout Max”

Am Division 2023 – catch 15, weigh 5 fish

The 6th Annual “DENNY ALLEN MEMORIAL” big fish contest will have a guaranteed first place payout of \$2,000 if that boat is entered in the Tournament in either the Pro or Am division. If just in the Big Fish Tournament, first place will be \$1,000. This Big Fish event is Sponsored by Jet’s Pizza of Holland, MI. All boats can enter this special event in which any and all boats can try for that ONE big fish over the two-day tournament, one fish may be weighed per day. \$50 entry

and 15 places will be paid. A boat may enter this contest without participating in the Pro or Amateur division if they so desire.

The 2023 Barge and Ship and Shore Motel Big Lake Classic Tournament is planned for Saturday, August 12th and Sunday, August 13th, with the captains meeting Friday, August 11th in Saugatuck. Boats will be able to dock and leave and return to their docks in Saugatuck, Holland and South Haven. Available slips in Saugatuck fill up fast. Please contact the dockmasters at Tower Marine, Seargents Marine or contact committee members for assistance in getting your slip for the 2023 Tournament.

The Saugatuck tournament is put on by Sportsmen for Sportsmen and is a non-profit organized event. Monies raised for the tournament from sponsors and entries are put toward the payout to tournament. Oth-

er beneficiaries from the tournament are: Salmon in The Classroom, we are now supporting Classrooms in the Saugatuck/Douglas, Hamilton and Holland Schools and the Net Pen Projects.

Contact the 2023 Tournament Director John Watson with questions regarding the 2023 The Barge and Ship and Shore Motel Big Lake Classic at 616-218-6686 or at HYPERLINK “mailto:1137watson@gmail.com” 1137watson@gmail.com , or check out our website HYPERLINK “http://www.saugatucksportsfishing.com” www.saugatucksportsfishing.com

Thank you
2023 Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association
Tournament Committee

2022 Pro Division Top 5

Best Chance too –

Dave Engel - Saugatuck

E-Z Limits –

Josh Ezinga – Holland

Northfin –

Devin Manino – Holland

Best Chance – Hunter Engel- Saugatuck

Blue Chip – Eric Schippa - Saugatuck

2022 Am Division Top 5

Diamond Edition – Tracy Larson – Grand Haven

Offline – Brad Stephenson – Holland

Lakavea – Matt Wing – Holland

Teaser – Randy King - Saugatuck

Reel Property - Bill Sikkel – Holland

2022 The Big One – Big Fish Top 5

Reel Property - Bill Sikkel – Holland

Fish Whisper – Joe Thornburg - Holland

Breaktime – Jim Bellman – St Joe

Lakavea – Matt Wing - Holland

EZ Limits – Josh Ezinga – Holland

2022 S&S Dual Port

Best Chance too – Dave Engel – Saugatuck

Best Chance – Hunter Engel – Saugatuck

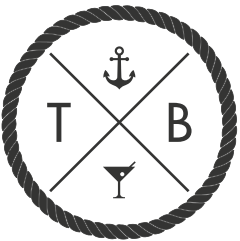
EZ Limits – Josh Ezinga – Holland

Blue Chip – Eric Schippa - Saugatuck

The One – Don Bale - Holland



SAUGATUCK/ SOUTH HAVEN DUAL PORT CHALLENGE



THE BARGE



Saugatuck
Big Lake Classic

PRO
Division
9 Trout Max

2023
New Payouts

Pro/Am Fishing Tournament

August 11th - 13th 2023

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Sponsored by Saugatuck Sport Fishing Association

- ★ \$10,000 First Prize Pro Division - based on 20 entries
- ★ \$4,000 First Prize Am Division - based on 30 entries
- ★ Reserve your slip early

- ★ 2023 Check In - Spectators Restaurant 5:00-7:00pm, Food Provided
- ★ Captains Meeting at 7:00pm
- ★ August 12th - 13th Free Hamburgers and Hot Dogs at Weigh-in and Awards Ceremony

All Provided by Coral Gables Restaurant



The King Co.



2023 Battle Creek Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Location
February	25	St. Joe River Trout Quest	I-94 Boat Ramp
March	4	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	Sand Bar
March	18	Kalamazoo River Spring Steelhead	Allegan Dam
May	20	Lake Michigan Spring Tournament	Benton Harbor
June 2-3	2-3	Connie McGowen Invitational	Lake Erie (Captain must be member)
July	15	Panfish / Family Picnic	Portage Lake
August	5	Lake Michigan Memorial	South Haven
August	19	Veterans Outing	South Haven
October	28	Kalamazoo River Salmon Slam	Allegan Dam
November	11	Kalamazoo River Trout Quest	Allegan Dam
November	18	Kalamazoo River Memorial	Allegan Dam
November	25	St. Joe River Fall Steelhead	I-94 Boat Ramp
December	2	St. Joe River Chapter Challenge	Babe’s Lounge
December	9	Christmas Party	Kalamazoo Eagles
<p>Meetings are held every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 6:00 pm Social, 7:00 pm Meeting Meeting Location: Travelers Cafe and Pub, 5225 Portage Rd. Exit 78 off I-94. FOR MORE INFORMATION: River Tournament - Joe Foy at 269-303-1894 / Lake Tournament - Dan Foster at 269-370-3693 battlecreeksteelheaders.com</p>			

2023 Grand Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Contact Info
April	20	Spring meeting	
May	18	Bill Rogers Memorial Tournament	
May	19-21	Grand Haven Offshore Challenge	
July 28 - August 10		Weeklong Plus Event	
August	10	Picnic	
September	9	Sportsman For Youth	
December	TBD	Christmas Party	
<p>Other Events TBD</p> <p>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</p>			

2023 Grand Rapids Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Information
*January	14	Wabasis Ice Fishing Outing (Safe ice pending)	John Plekker
January	30	Speaker: Kurt Stareka Ice Fishing	
February	18	Steelhead Spectacular	D&R Sport Shop, Kalamazoo
February	27	Speaker: Ken Clark, Walleye	
March	9-12	Outdoor Sports Show	DeVos Place, GR
*March	17-19	Spring River Outing	Spencer Kroesing
March	27	Recap Outdoor Show	
April	24	Speaker: TBD	
*May	20	Big Lake Cobweb Blowout	Don R & Paul Z
May	22	Fishing Awards	
*June	8-11	Lake Erie Walleye Event	Contact Steve Heintzelman
*June	17	Wabasis Fish Outing	John Plekker, Details in the spring
June	26	Speaker: TBD	
July	12	Picnic at 6pm, no member meeting	Details in the spring
*August	5	GR/GH Chapter Challenge/Double D Big Lake Tournament	GR - Don Remington, GH - Paul Zelenka Details in the spring
August	28	Speaker: TBD	
September	25	Speaker: TBD	
*October	27-29	Fall Rier Fishing Contest	Spencer Kroesing
October	30	Speaker: TBD	
*November	11	Fall Fishing Partners	Contact Steve Heintzelman
November	27	Speaker: In-House Speaker	
December	11	Christmas Party - watch for details	Members & Family only
<p>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</p>			

2023 Great Lakes Bay Region Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	
April	1	Harbor Beach	
April	15	Manistee	
April	29	State Wide	Membership meetings held at: 3013 Bay City Road, Midland, MI 48642 989-496-3410
May	6	Linwood	
May	20	Linwood	Board meetings begin at 7:00pm
June	3	Sebawaing	Please call the Port Chairman no later than Monday prior to the outing whether you plan on attending or not attending.
June	17	Sebawaing (Kids Day)	
July	1	Linwood / AuGres	TBD On the day of the outing, call in on Marine Radio, Channel 72.
July	15	Manistee	Weigh-in follows each outing.
July	29	Ludington	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.
August	12	Ludington (2-Day)	
August	26	Manistee (2-Day)	
September	9	Manistee / Frankfort	TBD If interested in fishing with us please contact: Gary Decker at 989-859-7472 Visit our web page www.steel-headers.com

2023 Holland Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
January	9	Board Meeting
February	6	Board Meeting
February	23	Annual Banquet
March	6	Board Meeting
April	3	Board Meeting
April	20	Membership Meeting
May	1	Board Meeting
May	16	Tuesday Night Fishing League Starts
May	18	Board Meeting
May	20	Spring Challenge
June	5	Board Meeting
June	10	All Species Tournament
June	24	Kids and Kings Tournament
July	8	Fishing with Veterans
July	10	Board Meeting
July	27	Membership Meeting
July	29	Summer Challenge
August	4-6	Big Red Classic Fishing Tournament
August	7	Board Meeting
August	19	Ladies Tournament
August	22	Fishing League Final Night
September	11	Board Meeting
October	2	Board Meeting
November	6	Board Meeting
November	11	River Tournament
December	2	River Tournament
December	4	Board Meeting
December	7	Membership Meeting
<p>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</p> <p>For event information, go to hollandsteelheaders.org, or call Jeremy Erdman 616-510-9405, or email Steve Weatherwax at Waxer1221@yahoo.com</p>		

2023 Metro West - Livonia Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Event	Chair / Location
January	3	General Membership Meeting	
January	11-15	Ultimate Sports Fishing Show - Showplace Novi	Marc/Keith Traver
January	21	Lake St. Clair Ice Fishing Outing	Adam Trenz
February	7	General Membership Meeting	
February	3-5	Manistee River/Ice Fishing	Adam Trenz
February	23-26	OUTDOOR-RAMA - Showplace Novi	Gale Frazee/Sharon Bledsoe
March	4	Clinton River Steelhead	Abdulkarim/Nabors/Somers
March	7	General Membership Meeting	
March	9-12	Novi Boat Show	Bob Schulz/Eric Braden
March	18	MWS Sports Banquet	MWS Board
March	25	MI Steelhead Challenge Manistee River/Pier	Adam Trenz/Eric Braden
April	4	General	
April	15	Clinton Rier Clean Up	Jay Labban
April	15	New Buffalo Coho Tournament	Dave Zawacki
April	22	Detroit River / Lake Erie Walleye	Robert Grech / Chris Cristoph
April	29	Lake Huron Lexington Tournament	Bob Schulz
April	30	Lake Huron Lexington Tournament	Marc/Kirk Traver
May	2	General Membership Meeting	
May	6	Carp Bow Hunting Event	Gale Frazee
May	13	Lake Erie Walleye Tournament	Bob Schulz
May	20	Bruin Lake Kayak / Small Boat	Chuck Davis
May	20	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Saturday	Chris Thompson / Mark Platt
May	21	Benton Harbor Salmon Tournament Sunday	Brad Allan / MarkPlatt
May	27	Pt. Moullé SM Bass / Walleye	Keith Childs
June	3	Kids Fishing Outing at Kensington Park	Brad Allan
June	6	General Membership Meeting	
June	TBD	Lake Erie Brest Bay Walleye Tournament	Len Wood
June	10	Sterling SP Walleye Tournament	Fabian Sepulveda
June	10	Cristal Waters Kayak / Small Boat	Eric Braden
June	17	Muskie Tourney at Lake Hudson Kayak/SB	Michelle Braden
June	24	Silver Lake Kayak/SB	Keith Childs
July	8	Tippy Dam Back Water Kayak/SB	Eric Braden
July	11	Club Summer Picnic	Jim Robertson / Dave Zawacki
July	14	Erieau Tournament - Saturday (Erieau, Canada)	Henry Nabors / Ron Bellemore
July	15	Huron River Kayak (Argo to Barton Dam)	Keith Childs
July	15	Manistee River Cleanup Day @ High Bridge	Roger Hinchcliff
July	27	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Thursday	Gale Frazee / Tom Abdelnour
July	29	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Saturday	Dave & Kim Zawacki
July	30	Ludington Salmon Tournament - Sunday	Chair: Henry Nabors
<p>Metro West Steelheaders Calendar for August through December 2023 will be available in the next issue of Great Lakes Sport Fishing News.</p> <p>** ALL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** 7:00 PM at The New Livonia Seniors Center at the Southeast Corner of Farmington Road and Five Mile Road WEB Site: Go to www.metroweststeelheaders.org If you have questions, contact Henry Nabors - HHNabors@gmail.com or call 248-225 4964.</p> <p>Contact: <i>President</i> Bob Schulz, bobschulz7@gmail.com, 248-915-0043 <i>Membership Director</i> Henry Nabors 248-225-4964</p>			

2023 South Haven Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
January		No Membership Meeting
February	16	Guest Speaker - TBD
February	18	Russ Pomeroy Memorial Ice Fishing Tourney - Date/Location based on ice conditions
February	18	MSSFA Fishing Show and Seminars at D&R Sports in Kalamazoo*
February	18-19	Michigan Free Fishing Weekend
March	9-12	Ultimate Sport Show - DeVos Place, Grand Rapids
March	16	Best Chance Fishing Seminar - South Haven American Legion Post 49 *
April	20	Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - South Haven American Legion Post 49*
April	20	Southern Lake Michigan Fisheries Workshop - Dr. Dan O’Keefe presenting
May	5-7	Horizon Bank Quake Coho Classic - Michigan City, IN
May	12-13	St. Joe Tourney / SW Chapter
May	18	Membership Meeting *prior to SHS Pro/Am
May	19	South Haven Pro Am Tournament Captains Meeting - Location is TBD
May	20-21	South Haven Pro Am Tournament
May	27	Merle Morris Tournament - River Bend Boat Club
June	10	South Haven Steelheaders’ Ladies Tournament
June	10-11	Free Fishing Weekend
June	15	Membership Meeting
June	16-18	South Haven Harborfest
July	10	Membership Meeting
August	10	Membership Meeting *prior to the Annual Fish Boil
August	12	SHS Fish Boil (Blueberry Festival - August 11-13)
August	19	SHS Operation Injured Soldier / SH Salute to Veterans
South Haven Steelheaders Calendar for September through December 2023 will be available in the next issue of Great Lakes Sport Fishing News.		
Note: SH Steelheaders (SHS) Chapter Events in BOLD * = Not Confirmed		
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		

2023 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			
January	19	Annual Meeting	St. Joseph - Benton Harbor Elks Club - 7:00pm
March	4	Tackle Mania Swap Meet	American Legion Post 568, Stevensville, MI
May	11-13	Summer Challenge Tournament	www.fishthesummerchallenge.com
June	24	Trolling with the Troops	www.trollingwiththetroops.com
December	2	Winter Challenge Tournament	St. Joseph River / Weigh-in @ Babe's Lounge
Membership Meetings Held at: St. Joseph-Benton Harbor Elks 541, 601 Riverview Drive, Benton Harbor MI 49022 Board Meeting 5:30 - 6:30 PM, Social 6:00 - 7:00 PM, Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM Contact: Jim Marohn 269-208-2784			

2023 TCAS Steelheader’s Calendar of Events		
Month	Date	Event
All events are TBD		
TCAS meets the first Wednesday of each month except July (Cherry Festival) and December (Christmas Party) Meetings begin at 7 pm at the Traverse City Senior Center, 801 Front St., next door to the Maritime Academy.		

2023 Thumb Chapter Steelheader’s Calendar of Events				
Month	Date	Time	Event	Location / Information
May	6	6:00am	Can2Can Fishing Tournament	Harbor Beach Marina - NEED WORKER
May	18	7:30pm	Regular Mtg - Speaker: TBD	Ubly Foxhunters
June	10	6:00am	Veterans Fishing Outing	Harbor Beach Marina - Contact: Kevin R
July	13	7:30pm	Regular Mtg - Speaker: TBD	Ubly Foxhunters
October	19	7:30pm	Regular Mtg - Speaker: TBD Election of Board/Officers	Ubly Foxhunters
Contact Scott Stanke at 989-553-0972 for inquiries.				

2023 Thunderbay Steelheader’s Calendar of Events			
Month	Date	Time	Information
January	2	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
February	6	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
January/February - Date TBD			Ice Fishing Weekend
March	4	4:00pm	Annual Meeting / Dinner
April	3	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
May	12-13	7:00pm	Captains Meeting - Alpena Harbor / Alpena Tournament
June	9-10	7:00pm	Captains Meetgin - Presque Isle Harbor / Presque Isle Tournament
June	24-26	7:00pm	Captains Meeting - Presque Isle Harbor / Presque Isle Tournament
July	10	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
August	7	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
August	25-26	7:00pm	Captains Meeting - Roger City Harbor / Roger City Tournament
September	4	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
December	5	7:00pm	Monthly Meeting
Contact Dan Bouchard at dan-bouchard@hotmail.com for inquiries.			

2023 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.			
January	5	6:30	Member meeting
February	2	6:30	Member meeting
March	2	6:30	Member meeting
April	6	6:30	Member meeting
May	4	6:30	Member meeting
June	1	6:30	Member meeting
July			No meeting this month
August	3	6:30	Member meeting
September	7	6:30	Member meeting
October	5	6:30	Member meeting
November	2	6:30	Member meeting
December	7	6:30	Member meeting

“Line 5”
Continued from page 20

Line 5 at this time.” Rep. Joe Tate, who will become House Speaker on Jan. 1, didn’t respond to a request for comment.

Nick Schroeck, an environmental law expert at University of Detroit Mercy, said there may be other ways lawmakers could exert pressure on Enbridge, from imposing new insurance requirements on Enbridge to strengthening infrastructure siting requirements that apply to pipelines.

Political will to make such changes is another matter, he said, noting that unions, normally a reliable Democratic ally, generally support Enbridge’s efforts to build a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac, putting them at odds with environmental groups.

“(Democrats) have got a majority, but it’s not huge,” Shroek said. “And I’m sure there’ll be pressure from unions and other stakeholders.”

Any action to preserve the pipeline or hasten its removal could alienate a key Democratic voter base, leaving Democratic candidates in tight races more vulnerable in 2024.

From a political standpoint, Shroek said, that makes it advantageous for incoming Democratic leaders in Lansing to have the pipeline battle tied up in court.

Diplomats also hold cards

With action in Lansing unlikely, Line 5 opponents are pressuring the Biden administration to shut down the pipeline, while supporters apply pressure to keep it open.

Enbridge’s fight to keep Line 5 open has hinged on an argument that federal regulators, not state officials, are responsible for regulating pipeline safety issues.

McBrearty, of the anti-Line 5 campaign, said he believes regulators at the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration have ample cause to order a shutdown on the grounds that Enbridge is violating Michigan law and trespassing on Native American territory in Wisconsin.

In the Wisconsin case, a federal judge ruled in September that Enbridge is trespassing on land owned

by the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, but declined to shut down the pipeline section that crosses the tribe’s reservation.

The Biden administration has so far hesitated to publicly weigh in on the pipeline fight, instead meeting in private negotiations with Canadian officials, who have twice invoked a 1977 treaty governing cross-border pipelines in response to Whitmer’s shutdown order and the Bad River Band’s lawsuit.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly said in August that efforts to shutdown the pipeline would cause “widespread and significant” disruptions to Canada’s economy and energy.

U.S. State Department officials have declined to answer specific questions about the talks. In an emailed response to questions from Bridge, a department spokesperson lauded the U.S. government’s close relationship with Canada, vowing to “engage constructively in the Treaty negotiations.”

Despite the federal government’s apparent hesitation to pick a side, McBrearty said he sees reason for optimism among pipeline opponents.

“We’re closer now than we have been,” McBrearty said. “We’ve moved us up to a point where it’s become an international issue.”

Pressure on the tunnel process

While the existing pipelines’ fate remains uncertain, Enbridge supporters and foes are exerting pressure on U.S. regulators who will decide whether the company can replace the existing pipeline with a new span buried in a concrete tunnel beneath the straits, as the energy company has proposed.

Enbridge has hailed the tunnel project as a solution to fears of a spill from Line 5, arguing that getting the pipeline out of the Straits’ open water would make it safer.

“With the state’s support and assistance, permits needed to build the Great Lakes Tunnel can be timely secured and we can put Michigan’s trades people to work to build this modern infrastructure,” said Duffy, the Enbridge spokesperson.

Whitmer has avoided issuing a public opinion on the tunnel, saying state and federal regulators will decide whether Enbridge qualifies for the multiple permits it needs to start construction.

That process is expected to drag on for at least another two years.

Members of the Michigan Public Service Commission, which regulates petroleum pipelines, said in July they needed more evidence about safety, engineering and fire and explosion risks before deciding whether Enbridge can move Line 5 into the tunnel. That extends the timeline for a decision until at least next spring.

And the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is studying the tunnel’s potential impact on the straits as it decides whether to approve permits for the tunnel project, doesn’t plan to make a decision on the applications until the fall of 2024.

While regulators deliberate, propane providers in the Upper Peninsula are crafting contingency plans should the existing line go offline, eliminating a transport option that now supplies about 65 percent of the U.P.’s propane, said Derek Dalling, executive director of the Michigan Propane Gas Association.

“They’re preparing for other options,” Dalling said, “and I think we’ll continue to plan that way.”

But the propane industry’s investments in rail and other transport options have so far been minimal, he said, and Line 5 remains the main source of propane in the U.P. and a major source in the Lower Peninsula.

The industry could adapt to a gradual shutdown, he said, but an abrupt shutdown would likely bring “stress and heartache, and certainly substantial price increases.” Dalling said he is not expecting any surprises.

“Everyone, at this point, is kind of wagering on it being settled in court,” he said.

Bridge Michigan reporter Lauren Gibbons contributed to this report.



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