



Lake Erie Committee updates Walleye Management Plan

Fishery managers from Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario and Pennsylvania released an updated walleye management plan for Lake Erie. The plan, which is an update of the original plan of 2005, sets new fishery goals and objectives for walleye. The plan is the result of extensive stakeholder and manager input through the Lake Erie Percid Management Advisory Group, or LEPMAG. The plan is available at: http://www.glfc.org/lakecom/lec/LEC_docs/position_statements/walleye_mangement_plan.pdf.

The Lake Erie Walleye Management Plan provides a brief history of walleye management in Lake Erie and reports on the status of the species. The plan also defines key reference points and harvest control rules to be used by the Lake Erie

Committee to establish an annual total allowable catch recommendation, or "TAC." The overall goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the walleye fishery on Lake Erie. The plan and objectives were developed through the LEPMAG progress and represent the consensus of commercial and recreational fishers and management agencies.

The LEC created LEPMAG to provide advice from all stakeholders based on their stated objectives and common evaluation of alternative exploitation policies. The LEC took this advice from LEPMAG into account in developing this plan, while also accounting for the sustainability of the resource.

In Lake Erie, walleye are managed under a quota-setting process that takes into account natural

fluctuations of fish stocks and the socio-economic needs of the five state and provincial jurisdictions that share the lake. Lake Erie walleye are managed as common fish stocks, and the jurisdictions, through management and technical committees, meet on a regular basis to understand the state of walleye in the lake, to share science and data, and to reach consensus on a TAC. The individual jurisdictions are free to allocate their fishery as they see fit, pursuant to the TAC. Ontario allocates most of its portion of the TAC to the commercial fishery while American states allocate their portion to the recreational fishery.

The TAC-setting process occurs through a bi-national forum called the **LEC updates Walleye plan**

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Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop

The Lake Michigan fishery has been changing dramatically in recent years. The annual Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop features presentations by scientists who work to understand how ecosystem changes affect salmon and trout.

This year's workshop will feature a presentation on the Great Lakes Mass Marking Program from the USFWS. Mass marking of stocked Chinook salmon and lake trout is now providing a greater understanding of when and where stocked and wild fish contribute to fisheries. Other topics include assessment of alewife and other baitfish and the controversial issue of aquaculture (fish farming) in Great Lakes net pens.

A unique feature of this year's workshop will be a facilitated discussion led by Michigan DNR. The discussion will utilize an audience response system and Q & A to help fishery managers understand

what charter captains, anglers, and conservationists would like to see in a Lake Michigan Management Plan.

Time and location: Jan. 9, 2016, 8:30-3:30 p.m. West Shore Community College, Administration and Conference Building, 3000 North Stiles Road, Scottville, MI 49454.

This is a full-day event with hot lunch included. Cost: \$30.00; pre-registration is required by Dec. 30.

Online pre-registration with credit card is preferred. Register online at: register.asapconnected.com/Calendar3.aspx?typecd=event

Note: You must use Mozilla or Google Chrome web browsers. Internet Explorer will not work.

Contact: Dan O'Keefe or Mary Frein at 616-994-4540 with itinerary questions.

Registration & location info or to register by phone: Cara Mitchell 231-843-5825, cmitchell@westshore.edu.

Rubbermaid to acquire Jarden Corporation in \$15B deal

[Newell Rubbermaid](#) and [Jarden Corporation](#), the parent company of tackle giant Pure Fishing have entered into a definitive agreement to combine the two companies. The transaction will create a consumer goods company named Newell Brands with a portfolio of brands including, Penn, Berkley, Abu Garcia, Fenwick, Pflueger, Shakespeare, Stren, Sebile, Mitchell, Coleman, Paper Mate, Sharpie, EXPO, Parker, Elmer's, Calphalon, Rubbermaid, Graco, Baby Jogger, Aprica, Goody, Irwin, Lenox, Rubbermaid Commercial Products, First Alert, FoodSaver, Jostens, K2, NUK, Oster, Rawlings, Sunbeam and Yankee Candle.

"The combination of these two great companies creates a \$16 billion consumer goods company with incredible potential to grow and create value," said Michael B. Polk, Newell Rubbermaid President and Chief Executive Officer. "The scale of our combined businesses in key categories, channels and geographies creates a much broader canvas on which to leverage our advantaged set of brand development and commercial capabilities for accelerated growth and margin expansion. I have long respected the value creation track record and entrepreneurial vision of Jarden's founder, Martin E. Franklin, co-founder Ian G.H. Ashken, and their team led by Chief Executive Officer James E. Lillie. I want to congratulate Jim on his strong leadership of Jarden over the last 12 years and his work positioning the business for the opportunity ahead, and I look forward to working with Martin and Ian as we drive the new Newell Brands towards its aspiration of becoming one of the preeminent consumer goods companies in the world."

Martin E. Franklin, executive chairman and founder of Jarden, said, "I am delighted that we are to play a part in bringing together these two winning companies. The combination offers significant value for our

shareholders and the opportunity to participate in the combined company's long-term value creation potential as shareholders in Newell Brands. I'm extremely proud of Jarden's success over the past 14 years, which has been driven by an extraordinary culture designed to perform at a high level.

The Wall Street Journal reports that Franklin could make up to \$500 million in the deal. Jarden shareholders would receive \$21 in cash per share, and 0.862 shares of Newell Rubbermaid. The acquisition is subject to shareholder approval from both Newell Rubbermaid and Jarden Corp and, is expected to close in the second quarter of 2016. ✧

Michigan Inland Lakes Convention set for April

The 2016 Michigan Inland Lakes Convention, "Science and Leadership: A Formula for Successful Lake Protection and Management," will be held April 28-30 at Boyne Mountain Resort in Boyne Falls. This biennial convention is a great opportunity for lake enthusiasts, professionals, researchers, local government officials and others interested in protecting Michigan's water resources.

Included in the three-day event will be plenary addresses, workshops, concurrent sessions on a wide range of topics, receptions, door prizes and various networking opportunities. The plenary addresses will feature Rebecca Williams, reporter and producer of Michigan Radio's "The Environment Report," and David Mifsud, herpetologist, wetland ecologist and owner of Herpetological Resource and Management.

For more information on the convention and details regarding the call for abstracts, visit michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu. Registration for the convention will begin in January 2016. ✧



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Position Statement

Representing a major interest in the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario, the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council is a confederation of organizations and individuals with a concern for the present and future of sport fishing, our natural resources and the ecosystem in which we live. We encourage the wise use of our resources and a search for the truth about the issues confronting us.

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Economic contributions of recreational fishing by U.S. Congressional Districts

The [American Sportfishing Association](#) (ASA) and [Southwick Associates](#) released a report, [Economic Contributions of Recreational Fishing: U.S. Congressional Districts](#), along with a [series of one-page infographics](#), which depict recreational fishing's economic impact on all 435 Congressional districts and the 50 states.

This is the first time this information has been made available in such detail. In the macro, America's 46 million anglers generate more than \$48 billion in retail sales with a \$115 billion impact on the nation's economy creating employment for more than 800,000 people. Recreational fishing is the foundation of an industry that involves not just the manufacturing, sale or provision of tackle and other fishing gear, but also includes services such as tackle retailers, boat builders, hotels, restaurants and much more.

The information in the report and infographics use data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' [2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#), conducted in conjunction with the U.S. Census Bureau, as presented in ASA's [Sportfishing in America](#) report. The study used mapping and population software to hone in on smaller geographic areas in a way that is particularly relevant to members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The results in *Economic Contributions of Recreational Fishing: U.S. Congressional Districts* report the economic contributions for the respective state economies from anglers who live within each congressional district.

"Members of Congress consistently identify jobs and economic opportunity as among their top priorities," said ASA Vice President for Government Affairs Scott Gudes. "Clearly, recreational

fishing is a tremendous economic driver and job creator. These pictorial reports deliver that point very succinctly by depicting for Members of Congress the economic impacts of recreational fishing in the district or state they represent."

Gudes further said, "These reports will help ASA and our partners to raise awareness among Members of Congress about the importance of recreational fishing in their state or district. Given the increasing number of legislative and policy issues confronting the recreational fishing community, it's critically important that we provide accurate, detailed information to decision-makers on the tremendous value that recreational fishing provides to the nation."

The report and congressional district infographics are available at www.ASAfishing.org under Facts & Figures – Studies and Surveys. ✧

Over 100,000 downloads of the New York Fish & Wildlife smartphone application Application quickly and easily locates places to fish, hunt, view wildlife and enjoy the outdoors in New York

A year and a half after its successful launch, New York has surpassed 100,000 downloads of the free mobile "New York Fish and Wildlife" application (app). The app provides up-to-date information on fishing, hunting, wildlife watching and other outdoor adventure opportunities in New York State. Launched as part of the NY Open for Fishing and Hunting Initiative, this milestone highlights the growing interest in outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state, and the economic importance of fishing and hunting-related tourism.

DEC developed the app in partnership with Parks By Nature Network® at no cost to the State. The app provides advanced GPS mapping features as well as many other features to maximize any outdoor adventure, including detailed species information, news, advisories and weather alerts, social networking and photo sharing, and cache-able map

tiles for offline use.

This app gives both novice and seasoned outdoorsmen and women essential information in the palm of their hand. Powered by Pocket Ranger® technology, the app's advanced GPS feature enables users to easily identify and locate New York's many world-class fishing, hunting and wildlife watching sites. Users also have access to real-time trail data, nearby amenity locations, including boat ramps, parking, restrooms and more. Up-to-date info on the state's current hunting and fishing regulations are also provided.

The New York Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife app can be downloaded on the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play store](#), or by going to the [Pocket Ranger website](#).

This effort stems from Governor Cuomo's NY Open for Fishing and Hunting Initiative aimed at improving recreational opportunities for sportsmen and women and boosting

tourism activities throughout the state. This initiative includes streamlining fishing and hunting licenses, reducing license fees, improving access for fishing and increasing hunting opportunities in New York.

In support of this initiative, last year \$10 million in NY Works funding has been dedicated to fish hatchery repairs and 50 new land and water access projects such as boat launches, hunting blinds, trails and parking areas.

Under the initiative, the 2015-16 Enacted Budget included an additional \$8 million for state land access projects and an additional \$4 million for the state's hatcheries in NY Works funding. The Budget also creates a new capital account which along with federal Pittman-Robertson funds will be used to manage, protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat, and to improve and develop public access for fish and wildlife-related recreation. ✧

Bill benefiting recreational fishing clears House Natural Resources Committee

Introduced by Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act (H.R.2406) benefits recreational fishing and hunting and natural resource conservation and includes provisions to improve public access to federal lands and guard against new regulations that threaten to block or limit access to hunting and fishing.

"After failed attempts in the previous two sessions of Congress, the recreational fishing community is anxiously awaiting the long-overdue passage of a comprehensive sportsmen's package," said Scott Gudes, vice president, Government Affairs for the American Sportfishing Association. "The House Natural Resources Committee's action gives us optimism for the future. We applaud Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) and members of the committee for advancing this legislation."

Specific provisions in the Act that impact the recreational fishing community include:

- ▶ Protecting traditional fishing equipment containing lead from unwarranted federal bans,

- ▶ Requiring federal land managers to support and facilitate access for fishing, hunting and shooting on Forest Service and BLM lands, and

- ▶ Preventing unnecessary closures to fishing and hunting on public lands by implementing an "open until closed" management policy.

Additionally, an amendment to ensure that state and territorial fisheries agencies have a rightful say in fisheries management decisions in their own waters was approved. [The amendment](#) mirrors a bipartisan bill introduced earlier this year by Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), Mario Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.), Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.), and 33 other sponsors, titled the [Preserving Public Access to Public Waters Act](#).

Gudes noted, "This bill was introduced in response to the controversial fishing closure in Biscayne National Park, in which Florida's fisheries management expertise was dismissed by the National Park Service."

Also included in the bill:

- ▶ Components of firearms and ammunition and sport fishing equipment and its components (such

as lead sinkers) are exempted from regulations of chemical substances under the Toxic Substances Control Act. The authority of the Dept. of the Interior and the Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) to regulate the use of ammunition and fishing tackle based on its lead content is limited,

- ▶ The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act is amended to: (1) increase the proportion of funding from the Act that states may use for acquiring land for public target ranges, and (2) delay by 10 years until 2026 the date after which interest from the wildlife conservation and restoration fund is available for apportionment,

- ▶ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may not prohibit individuals from possessing a firearm in public areas of a water resources development project,

- ▶ Federal public land management officials must facilitate hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting on certain federal public land, and

- ▶ The National Park Service may not prohibit individuals from transporting bows and crossbows if certain requirements are met. ✧

Wis asks for input on strategic analysis for fish passage at dams

MADISON – The Wisconsin DNR is inviting the public to provide input as the agency works to develop a systematic approach for evaluating fish passage at dams statewide.

Fish passage describes the ability of fish to move upstream and downstream to find suitable habitat and breeding grounds. Where barriers such as dams exist, a systematic approach is needed to determine whether populations of fish and other organisms are best aided through practices such as stocking and habitat improvement or whether passage should be improved through use of techniques such as fish ladders, lifts or other transport systems.

DNR intends to use a strategic analysis process to engage the public and will assess the latest scientific, natural resource and socio-economic information relating to fish passage at

dams. The department will gather relevant facts, data and research and refine definitions. The strategic analysis will be used by the department to develop a consistent approach for fish passage proposals throughout Wisconsin.

Cheryl Laatsch, DNR's hydropower coordinator, said each fish passage project is unique and must take into account local issues related to fish health, aquatic invasive species, habitat considerations, engineering and design issues, costs and dam licensing agreements among other factors. The involvement of stakeholders, such as other state and federal agencies, tribes, local interest groups, non-governmental organizations and dam owners and operators, also factors into considerations relating to fish passage.

"Wisconsinites care deeply about

our rivers and streams as well as the fish and other aquatic life they support," Laatsch said. "We are inviting public input to help develop a process that draws on the wisdom and experience of our stakeholders."

The public comment period for the scoping portion of the strategic analysis runs through January 29, 2016. Information about the analysis and the proposed topics to be covered can be found at dnr.wi.gov by searching for "[fish passage](#)." The public is encouraged to provide comments on topics that may be included in the analysis.

Submit e-mail comments to: dnrfishpassage@wisconsin.gov or mailed to: Jim Doperalski, WDNR Green Bay Service Center, 2984 Shawano Ave., Green Bay, WI 54313-6727. ✧

MN grants to help recruit hunters, anglers

Groups that will help people start hunting or fishing, or continue these pursuits, are encouraged to apply for grants from the Minnesota DNR by January 29.

Angler and Hunter Recruitment and Retention Grant awards will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 out of a total \$175,000 available during the first round of this newly created grant program.

“This grant program will aid groups in trying to help more people take up fishing and hunting,” said Jeff Ledermann, angler recruitment and retention supervisor. “At minimum, we want to get people interested in the outdoors, because a person’s attitudes go a long way toward whether they will consider becoming a hunter or angler.”

People who hunt and fish in Minnesota create a conservation model that works because fishing and hunting license dollars pay for maintaining and improving fish and wildlife populations and habitats.

“Ultimately, we want more participation in these activities and we want those who already hunt and fish to continue to do so,” Ledermann said. “People are more likely to take steps to protect the environment if they participate in nature-based outdoor activities.”

Eligible projects must have a purpose that supports angler or hunter recruitment and retention. Types of activities could include fishing and hunting educational programs, clinics, workshops, and camps, and funding for fishing and hunting equipment and transportation.

Among other requirements, projects must have either a dollar-for-dollar match of the state grant award amount, or a match of the value of labor, materials or services of the state award. First-round projects must be completed in Minnesota, and be finished by July 2017. To learn more about the grant and how to apply, www.mndnr.gov/angler_hunter_grant_s.html. ✧

Indiana DNR will improve fish habitat with aid from partners

A new DNR partnership will build fish habitat in reservoirs where natural structure is lacking. The Reservoir Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Program (RAHEP) will start in the winter of 2016 with improvements at Sullivan Lake, a 451-acre reservoir in Sullivan.

Partners include Jones and Sons Concrete, Bass Unlimited, Sullivan County Parks and Sullivan County Jail. Inmates from the Sullivan County Jail will cut lumber for fish cribs. These structures are made from green poplar and look like a small log cabin, creating refuge for fish. Inmates will work with Sullivan County Parks and Lake staffers during winter to prepare materials and assist with building.

Other structures will include brush piles, Georgia Cubes (a PVC cube with corrugated pipe wound inside) and black bass nesting platforms. Jones and Sons Concrete in Bloomfield has donated 200 cinder blocks. Bass Unlimited, a non-profit angling group based in Terre Haute, has pledged materials and volunteers to help with structure construction.

Sullivan Lake was chosen as the program’s first lake because it holds little aquatic vegetation and has been awarded a grant for shoreline stabilization project through the Indiana Lakes and Rivers Enhancement Program (LARE).

“These improvements will make fishing better,” said Sandy Clark-Kolaks, DNR southern fisheries research biologist. “We hope to put more than 100 structures into Sullivan Lake in 2016, and it will take many hands to build them all.”

Most of Indiana’s reservoirs were built in the 1950s and 1960s. Over the years, the trees, logs and roots that provided cover for fish have degraded and decomposed. Anglers and the public can help during a work day in spring 2016. A date is yet to be determined. Volunteers will likely help assemble structures from ready materials. ✧

Landowners needed to assist with wild turkey research

Study to begin in January

New York State DEC announced the kickoff of the fourth year of a project on wild turkey survival rates to help improve the management of this popular game bird.

Studies show that wild turkey populations over the past 15 years have declined in many parts of New York. In an effort to better understand the factors influencing population changes and how these changes affect turkey management, DEC is beginning the final year of a four-year study. This project will help guide efforts and provide managers with current estimates of harvest and survival rates for female wild turkeys.

Beginning in January, DEC will embark on a statewide effort to capture wild turkey hens and fit them with leg bands to obtain accurate data on survival and harvest. A small number of these birds will also be tagged with satellite radio-transmitters. All of the work will be done by DEC personnel on both public and private lands from January through March. The research will be concentrated in DEC Regions 3-9.

DEC is looking for landowners in DEC Regions 3-9 interested in allowing birds to be trapped on their land, as well as alerting project coordinators when they see turkeys on their property on a regular basis. Once turkeys are trapped and banded, they will immediately be released at the same location. Not all locations are suitable for deploying capture equipment, so landowners should contact their regional project coordinator to discuss the suitability of their property. Observations of turkey flocks during January-March can be reported to the project coordinator for that region or can be reported using the Winter Flock Survey form: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/48756.html>.

E-mail wildlife@dec.ny.gov for more info. “Turkey Study” should be listed as the subject line. ✧

New tool finds sources of mercury in the Great Lakes

For the first time, land and resource managers in the Great Lakes will be able to distinguish between the various sources of mercury in the environment. This is thanks to a new tool that “fingerprints” the mercury, developed by the U.S. Geological Survey and the U. of Wisconsin.

For Lakes Superior and Huron, atmospheric mercury is the dominant form, while in Lakes Erie and Ontario, most mercury comes from industrial activity or runoff from the watersheds of the lakes. Lake Michigan is dominated in some areas by atmospheric mercury, in other areas by industrial activity and in still others by watershed contributions.

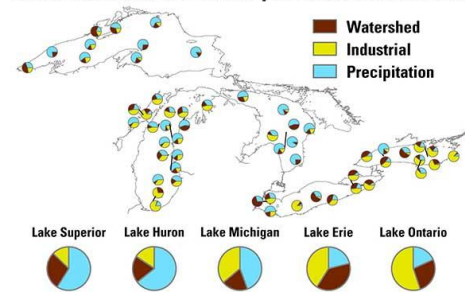
“I’ve been involved in mercury research for nearly 28 years,” said USGS scientist Dave Krabbenhoft, the project chief. “Back in the 1980’s, when I first got into this area of research, I dreamed of a tool that could provide geochemical markers of mercury sources. That dream has now become reality.”

Determining where the mercury comes from is important, because it informs decisions designed to minimize it. For example, minimizing

industrial sources of mercury alone will not be effective if the majority of mercury entering the Great Lakes is from atmospheric mercury.

“One of the surprising things we saw was just how much of the mercury building up in fish was due to atmospheric mercury,” said Krabbenhoft. “This shows that atmospheric mercury needs to be emphasized, even when the sediments in the Lakes show relatively little

Source Contribution of Mercury in Great Lakes Sediment



atmospheric mercury accumulation.”

A very common situation across the United States and elsewhere is the presence of large amounts of mercury that was released during industrialization, so-called legacy mercury. At these sites, resource managers often lack a tool

to help them understand whether it is legacy or other sources that substantially contribute to exposures in fish, wildlife and humans today.

We are very excited to explore the capability of this new tool to inform managers and decision makers responsible for managing these challenging situations.

Mercury is a naturally occurring element that can have toxic effects on people’s brains, kidneys and lungs. In certain environments, it can also bind with carbon and hydrogen to become methylmercury, which is far more toxic than elemental mercury. In addition, methylmercury can build up in the tissues of fish, resulting in higher doses when people or other animals eat them.

More information about this new tool can be found [online](#). USGS provides information on mercury sources; mercury cycling in the atmosphere, land surface, lakes, streams and oceans; and bioaccumulation and toxicity of mercury. This information helps land and resource managers understand and reduce mercury hazards to people and wildlife. ✧

DEC investigates death of Lake Ontario water birds

Loons, long-tailed ducks and grebes discovered

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is investigating the deaths of waterbirds found along the shores of Lake Ontario. Preliminary examination by DEC’s Wildlife Health Unit indicates type E botulism is the likely cause of death. Confirmatory testing will be completed in conjunction with the New York Department of Health.

Similar mortality events have occurred in fish-eating waterfowl and waterbirds on Lake Ontario since 2002. The mortality events associated with this disease usually occur during the fall and tens of thousands of birds have succumbed to this disease across the Great Lakes. Loons, grebes, gulls and certain duck species are the principle victims during these disease

outbreaks. Affected birds typically die from drowning after becoming paralyzed by botulinum toxin in the fish they are eating. The most common fish being consumed is the round goby, an invasive species that accumulates toxin by feeding primarily on invasive mussels on the lake bottom. The toxin is generated by *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacterium that may grow in decomposing algae and other organic matter in the vicinity of mussel beds.

Dead birds pose a threat to scavenging wildlife because the botulism toxin remains viable in the carcass, and carcasses can provide sites for *Clostridium* growth and the generation of additional toxin. Burial of carcasses is encouraged, either on-

site or in a landfill. As a general precaution, DEC advises people to use rubber or plastic protective gloves or a plastic bag when handling any sick or dead wildlife.

Hunters and anglers who harvest normal-acting waterfowl and fish do not need to take any special precautions when handling or consuming their harvest.

Any discovery of dead or distressed fish or wildlife should be reported to DEC’s offices in Buffalo at (716) 851-7010, Allegany at (716) 372-0645, Avon at (585) 226-5380, Syracuse at (315) 426-7400, Cortland at (607) 753-3095, Watertown at (315) 785-2261 or Cape Vincent at (315) 654-2147. ✧

PA comment period open for Trout Management Plan

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has opened a public comment period to submit comments on the agency's draft 2016-17 Trout Management Plan, which can be viewed at <http://fishandboat.com/troutplan.htm>.

Comments may be submitted at <http://fishandboat.com/promo/form/trout-plan2016.htm>. Written comments may be submitted to Mackenzie Ridgway, PFBC, 450 Robinson Lane, Bellefonte, PA 16823. Comments will be accepted through December 31.

"The plan includes input provided by a work group that consisted of commission staff, anglers affiliated with a variety of sportsmen's organizations, and independent anglers not affiliated with a sportsmen's organization," he added. As part of the plan, 22 priority issues have been identified encompassing four primary resource categories, which include: management of wild trout streams, management of stocked trout streams, management of stocked trout lakes, and trout management in Lake Erie. ✧

MI DNR Steelhead Clinics April 2 & 9

DNR Outdoor Skills Academy's Steelhead Clinic starts at 10 am at the Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center. The OSA Pro-staff will be presenting various strategies and techniques for chasing Michigan's chrome torpedoes. Feel free to bring your own gear, if possible, or if you're new to steel-heading some equipment is available on a first come, first served basis. The "hands on" portion of the clinic will be at the Hunt and Fish Center, then Sunday morning we will hit the water and show you how to fish and what to look for on the beautiful Manistee River. **Cost for the Class is \$25.00.** [Register for this class on the Michigan e-store.](#) ✧

MI DNR Hard Water School Jan. 2, 2016

The Carl T. Johnson (CTJ) Hunting and Fishing Center will host the DNR Outdoor Skills Academy's Hard Water School. This class will cover everything from how to set up equipment, how and where to fish, when to be out on the ice, ice safety, and rules and regulations. The main focus of this class will be techniques for pan fish, walleye, and pike. We will spend the first part of the day gearing up and after lunch we will hit the ice and spend the rest of the day fishing.

After dark we will meet back at the CTJ Center to go over the day's catch and to review what everyone learned. We will then head to dinner. There will be a warming hut, augers, and some shanties (available on a first come first served basis) provided, but we encourage you to bring your own equipment, if possible. We encourage the whole family to come. You will be responsible for paying for your own dinner. The event will start at 9am on Saturday. Sunday is available as an optional fishing day; if you are interested in fishing on Sunday please let us know. Cost for the Class is \$30.00 and includes Lunch, a rod & reel, and other gear. [Register for the class on the Michigan e-store.](#) ✧

Youth Goose Hunt

Youth can register now for the annual Central Illinois Youth Goose Hunt, sponsored by the IDNR, scheduled for January 17-18, 2016. To register for a drawing to participate in the hunt, youth hunters must phone the IDNR at 217-785-8060 by the registration deadline of Thursday, December 31, 2015. The youth goose hunt will be held at private waterfowl hunting clubs in Peoria, Fulton and Knox counties.

A lottery drawing will be conducted on January 4, 2016. The hunt is open to youngsters ages 10-15 at the time of the hunt. To register for the hunt or for more information, call 217-785-8060. ✧

Ice Fishing Seminars & Youth Ice Fishing Seminar - March 5

The Carl T. Johnson Hunting and Fishing Center and the Outdoors Skills Academy present the second annual Free Ice Fishing Seminar and Youth Ice Fishing Contest. This family oriented event will start at 9AM at the Center. We will begin the day with seminars presented by representatives from Jr's Jig Tails and Vexilar, as well as ice fishing Pros Bill Eising, Jerry Lawhead, Norm Smith, world famous tight-liner Dave Young, and the MDNR Outdoor Skills Academy Pro-Staff. They will be covering everything from jigs and bait, to floats, and ice safety. Also featured will be a MDNR Conservation Officer with a segment covering rules and regulations.

After the seminar concludes we will relocate to the ice where the hands-on lessons will continue, as well as kicking off the Youth Fishing Contest. The Derby will run from 1PM until dusk. The derby is open to all kids 16 and under. There will be various gifts for all derby participants, and special prizes will be awarded for the biggest, most, and first fish, for each age class. All ages and skill levels are welcome to attend the seminar, but all gear and prizes are reserved for attendees 16 and under. **Prior registration is required by February 28th to participate in the gear giveaways.**

To register call 231-779-1321 or email Edward Shaw at: shawe@michigan.gov with "March 5th" in the subject line ✧

Spring Turkey applications

Hunters may now apply for the second lottery for 2016 Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Season permits. Go to the IDNR website for more information at this link: www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/turkey. The application deadline for the second lottery for 2016 spring turkey permits is January 11, 2016. ✧

Eagle Marsh berm nears completion

Construction of an Asian carp barrier at Eagle Marsh is pretty much finished, just months after the federal project was literally stuck in the mud.

The berm is more than 9,000 feet long and 80 feet wide, or four times wider than before excavation began in early September. The broader ditch bank is supposed to keep invasive species such as Asian carp from migrating between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.

Covering more than 700 acres on the southwest edge of Fort Wayne, Eagle Marsh is a continental divide that drains into both basins. Although no Asian carp have been found near the preserve, conservation officials have long feared that the huge fish might swim from the Wabash River to the Little River and the Graham-McCulloch Ditch, then ride floodwaters in Eagle Marsh to reach the Junk Ditch, the St. Marys and Maumee rivers and Lake Erie.

In addition to halting the possible spread of carp and other invasive species, the wider berm will make it easier for Eagle Marsh turtles, frogs, deer, mink and raccoons to roam around the Graham-McCulloch Ditch. The berm will be closed to visitors until grasses and other plants are established next fall. ✧

Archery, Firearm, Muzzleloader, and Late-Winter/CWD Seasons CWD Sampling

Deer hunters statewide are encouraged to allow samples to be taken for chronic wasting disease (CWD) sampling from adult deer they harvest. Check the IDNR website at this link for locations that are serving as CWD sampling stations, taking samples from entire deer or deer heads through January 17, 2016: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/programs/CWD/Documents/CWDSamplingLocations.pdf> ✧

Snowmobile safety class

The Michigan DNR encourages snowmobilers to earn their snowmobile safety course certifications before winter arrives. All operators are encouraged to complete a safety course, although only youth ages 12-16 must have a certification prior to operating a snowmobile without direct supervision of an adult.

“With the potential hazards associated with operating a snowmobile, safety training is a crucial factor in safe and responsible snowmobile operation,” said Cpl. John Morey, DNR off-road vehicle and snowmobile coordinator.

The safety class covers terminology and function, safe operation of the machine, basic first aid and snowmobile ethics, rules and regulations.

[Find a class near you or register for an online course.](#) Read all [snowmobile regulations](#) or view the updated [regulations brochure](#).

The entire state snowmobile trail system is open to riders annually Dec. 1-March 31 to coincide with seasonal access leases for state trails that utilize private land. ✧

Gander Mountain to open: Monroeville, PA

Gander Mountain will open another Pennsylvania location in Monroeville in the spring of 2016. The store will be located in an existing 80,000-sq. ft. facility at 4680 Old William Penn Hwy., in the Monroeville Plaza shopping center, just west of the junction of William Penn Hwy. and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. It will be the 12th Gander Mountain location in PA, joining existing stores in Chambersburg, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Johnstown, Moon Township, Scranton, Washington, Williamsport and York, and a recently-announced store in Warrington Township also slated to open in the spring of 2016. ✧

Annual Winter Free Fishing Weekend Feb 13 & 14

The Michigan DNR 2016 Winter Free Fishing Weekend will be held February 13 & 14. As part of this weekend, all fishing license fees are waived for two days with residents and non-residents allowed to enjoy fishing statewide during their respective open seasons.

To encourage involvement in Free Fishing Weekends, organized activities are often offered in communities statewide. These activities are coordinated by various groups, schools, parks (local/state), businesses and others. Will you be joining them and planning a 2016 Winter Free Fishing Weekend event?

We have numerous resources to help you plan and execute an event in your community. Simply visit michigan.gov/freefishing and look through the *Free Fishing Weekend Event Planning e-Toolkit*. If you've already been hosting Free Fishing Weekend events, thank you! We've got tools to help you as well via the *Free Fishing Weekend Event Promotion e-Toolkit* located at the website listed above.

Once your event is coordinated, please register it as an official 2016 Winter Free Fishing Weekend activity online at: surveymonkey.com/r/2016WinterFFW-Registration. Upon doing so you will be contacted about receiving a packet of resources from Fisheries Division to use during your event. ✧

'Becoming an Outdoors Woman' in the Upper Peninsula

Registration is open for "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" program, February 26-28 in Marquette County. For class info and registration: www.michigan.gov/bow. Registration fee payments may be made online through the website's E-store. For more info: Sharon Pitz, 906-228-6561 pitzs@michigan.gov. ✧

MI rears/stocks muskies statewide

The Michigan DNR recently stocked 27,449 muskie fingerlings into 17 state water bodies, in an effort to enhance its world-class fisheries.

Michigan is home to two strains of naturally producing muskies: Great Lakes and northern. The DNR has reared muskies since the 1950s. While the hatchery program initially focused on the northern strain, it has shifted focus in recently to the Great Lakes strain, as it is native to Michigan and widely distributed in water bodies throughout the Lower Peninsula and eastern area of the U.P.

Due to extremely high survival during early stages, an additional 79,948 fish averaging 1.3" were stocked in July. Ottawa Cty's Lake Macatawa received 49,972 fish, and Mona Lake in received 29,976 fish.

An additional 1,500 northern strain were stocked in Bankson Lake (Van Buren Cty.- 434 fish), Eagle Lake (Kalamazoo Cty.-142 fish), Lake Hudson (Lenawee Cty.- 502 fish) and Long Lake (St. Joseph Cty.- 422 fish). These fish came from the Wisconsin DNR as part of an agreement to trade Great Lakes strain muskies for northern strain muskies.

For more info: www.michigandnr.com/fishstock/ ✧

NSSF hails priority legislation over ammo and components National Defense Authorization Act of 2015

The National Shooting Sports Foundation hailed Congressional passage of legislation that precludes the USEPA from asserting Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) authority over ammunition and its component parts. A top legislative priority for the NSSF, this important provision was included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2015 that President Obama signed into law November 25.

In recent years, radical anti-hunting organizations have been trying to force the EPA to issue a regulation under TSCA to ban ammo made with lead components. Had they prevailed it would have resulted in detrimental impacts on countless manufacturing facilities and increased costs to the Department of Defense. In addition, the assertion of TSCA jurisdiction over traditional ammunition would have resulted in considerable reductions to the excise taxes ammunition manufacturers pay on the sale of their products that is a critical source of wildlife and habitat conservation funding throughout the country. ✧

LEC updates Walleye plan

Continued from page 1

Lake Erie Committee. This process has evolved over the years to include robust discussions among the management agencies and to incorporate stakeholder goals and needs into the decision-making process. LEPMAG, which was initiated in 2010, is the primary way managers and stakeholders meet to discuss walleye management on a bi-national level. Michigan State University's Quantitative Fisheries Center supports the LEPMAG process and biologists from all jurisdictions provide key information to ground decisions.

Said Lake Erie chair Jeff Tyson of the Ohio DNR: "The Lake Erie Committee and representatives of LEPMAG have worked extensively together over the previous several years to develop Lake Erie walleye harvest strategies that recognize the importance of sustainability and socio-economic impacts. The Walleye Management Plan is the culmination of this collaborative work and institutionalizes the commitment of the Lake Erie Committee to work with stakeholders to sustainably manage the shared Lake Erie walleye resource for the benefit of multiple jurisdictions and fisheries." ✧

Ludington State Park offers snowshoe hikes/events January and February

Families and friends are invited to get outdoors this winter and take part in free snowshoe walks and lantern-lit ski and snowshoe events at [Ludington State Park](http://www.ludingtonstatepark.com/) on Saturdays during January and February.

Guided snowshoe hikes

Daylight snowshoe walks will be offered Jan. 9, 16, 23 and 30, and Feb. 6 and 13. Moonlight snowshoe walks will be offered at 6 p.m. Jan. 16 and 30 and Feb. 13. Park staff members will guide participants through a 1.5-hour hike, while highlighting the park's natural and historic resources and venturing through the snow-covered sand dunes.

Participants are advised to dress warmly, wear fitted winter walking shoes or boots, and bring a flashlight

if attending the moonlight walk. Hikes will begin at the park's warming shelter, located next to the parking lot at the end of State Highway M-116. The park has 45 pairs of snowshoes to loan out on a first-come, first-served basis. Loaner snowshoes fit visitors ages 10 and up. Reservations are not required.

Lantern-lit ski and snowshoe events

Free lantern-lit ski and snowshoe events will be offered Jan. 2, 9 and 23, and Feb. 6. Visitors can bring their cross-country skis and/or snowshoes to ski or walk a lighted, groomed trail through the park.

The lighted trail begins at the park's warming shelter, located next to the parking lot at the end of State Highway M-116. The park has 40

pairs of snowshoes to loan out on a first-come, first-served basis. The park has no cross-country skis to loan out. No reservations will be accepted.

Park staff members will be on hand to help visitors get started. Participants are advised to dress warmly in layers. A campfire will be available along the trail, where visitors can warm themselves and enjoy a hot beverage while talking with park employees.

For more info: Alan Wernette at wernettea@michigan.gov or 231-843-9261. Snowshoe hikes and cross-country ski events are taking place this winter at many state parks across Michigan. To learn more, visit www.michigan.gov/gogetoutdoors. ✧

Griffy Lake stocked with adult bass to control carp

The DNR has stocked adult largemouth bass in Griffy Lake in Bloomington, IN to control a population of common carp.

Common carp are considered a nuisance because they reproduce and grow quickly, and they feed primarily on aquatic insects by dredging up lake and stream bottoms and filtering insects from sediment. The process degrades water quality and habitat.

A total of 165 adult largemouth bass from the Cikana Hatchery and 113 bass from a private hatchery were stocked. The fish ranged in length from 14 to 22 inches. Fisheries biologists hope the adult bass will eat young carp before their numbers reach nuisance levels. The stocking also will provide big-bass fishing opportunities for Griffy Lake anglers.

Griffy Lake was drained for dam repairs in 2012 and 2013.

In 2014, the DNR restocked the lake with fingerling largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish.

Biologists conducted electro-fishing surveys in the summers of 2014 and 2015. All the species of fish that were stocked were found, as were common carp, green sunfish and longear sunfish. The carp and green and redear sunfish were likely remnant fish populations that survived the draining by retreating to the historic Griffy Creek stream channel, which held water during dam repairs.

The minimum size limit at Griffy Lake for black bass is 14 inches. ✧

Archery Deer and Fall Turkey Permits

Illinois Archery Deer and Illinois Archery Fall Turkey seasons are open through January 17, 2016. Permits are available over-the-counter at DNR Direct license and permit vendors. Find a vendor near you at this link: <http://dnr.illinois.gov/DNRDirectMonitor/ VendorListing.aspx> ✧

DEC posts \$2 million grants to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species

Two million dollars in grants are available to organizations for projects to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in New York waterways. The grants are the latest action in the state's comprehensive efforts to combat aquatic invasive species and aim to foster outreach to users of water bodies, install decontamination stations and provide steward training programs in high priority areas.

Grant amounts will range from a minimum of \$25,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000. A 25 percent match is required. For a full list of eligible and ineligible forms of match, please view the Request for Application (RFA) at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/103921.html>.

New York is particularly vulnerable to AIS due to the frequency in which ocean-going vessels travel through the Great Lakes. Once established, AIS, such as zebra mussels and spiny waterflea, can spread easily to other inland waterbodies through the State's extensive canal system and through recreational boating and angling. Strategically placed boat stewards help prevent the spread of AIS by educating boaters on how to properly remove and identify AIS and conducting voluntary boat and equipment inspections.

A recent study by the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program found that if invasive species are allowed to spread, they could cost the Adirondack economy alone up to \$900 million. This includes annual losses in visitor spending, and agriculture and primary forest production value as well as losses in property value that will affect the tax base and borrowing ability for property owners on an ongoing basis.

The highest scoring projects will have a statewide or regional focus rather than a local focus, involve multiple partners and stakeholders.

New 10-yard range at Sharonville shooting range

The Michigan DNR recently opened a 10-yard handgun range at its Sharonville shooting range in Grass Lake. The project was funded by a \$25,000 grant from the National Rifle Association, as well as program income revenue from operating other DNR shooting ranges.

The range opened on November 29. Four 10-yard shooting stations were built as an extension of Sharonville's existing shooting stations.

The Sharonville shooting range is located within the Sharonville State Game Area in Jackson County. The [Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors](#) initiative, centered around the Sharonville State Game Area, is a cooperative effort between the DNR and many partners to provide improved outdoor recreation opportunities for wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges, and to coordinate a support network that facilitates their recovery through connecting with nature. As part of this effort, the DNR provides special recreation opportunities and services at the state game area for those with disabilities. ✧

Grants will be awarded to applicants who clearly demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skill to successfully complete the project. Priority will be given to projects located on or in close proximity to waterbodies where the shoreline is 50 percent or higher in public ownership. Targeted waterbodies must be located wholly within New York State.

The deadline for grant application is January 29, 2016. DEC anticipates announcing grant awards in April 2016. Applicants can apply for the grant through the Consolidated Funding Application by visiting the following

<https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>. ✧

From all of us to all of our many members, friends, and visitors...

Season's Greetings



As we reflect on 2015, our soldiers on active duty around the world, our own safety, our health, family and all we have to be grateful for... our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and wonderful and safe New Year in 2016.

"...behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior..." Luke 2:10-11

Merry Christmas

and

*best wishes for a safe and
Happy New Year*

(It's ok to say Merry Christmas)

Other Breaking News Items:

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[Wisconsin increases lake trout limit in Lake Superior](#)

An emergency rule governing the lake trout harvest in Lake Superior gained approval from the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board. The rule calls for a daily bag limit of three lake trout in key recreational areas.

[Lake Michigan fish spawning reef made from 450 tons of limestone](#)

Limestone was strategically dumped into East Grand Traverse Bay, Mich., under a \$181,000 project to restore a reef that functions as spawning ground for herring, whitefish and lake trout. An old iron ore dock built more than 130 years ago had degraded the reef.

[Ohio group moving ahead with big plans to harness Lake Erie's wind](#)

An Ohio group is moving ahead with plans to harness Lake Erie's strong winds, in sharp contrast to neighboring Ontario that slapped a moratorium on wind farms in all its Great Lakes amid a public backlash to the spectre of the highrise-sized turbines along its shorelines

[New Zealand-mudsnail Michigan's latest invasive-species](#)

Michigan has a new addition to its roster of Great Lakes aquatic invaders — a tiny snail from Down Under, smaller than a grain of rice, that could spell big trouble.

[Muskegon River gets 50,000 additional hatchery trout](#)

Anglers who fish the Muskegon River for trout are going to get a little extra something this month. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources intends to stock an additional 50,000 brown trout in the waters downstream from Croton Dam.

[Army Corps gets \\$1.35M to study Soo Locks upgrade](#)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has received \$1.35 million from the Obama Administration to study a reconfiguration of the Soo Locks, according to Michigan's Democratic U.S. senators.

End