



Hook, Line, and Sinker

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New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen • P.O. Box 294 • New Ulm, MN 56073 Web Site: newulmsportfish.org

Stoney Award goes to Jason Kuester

By Ross Nelson

Congratulation to this year's Stoney award winner Jason Kuester! Jason has been a member for less than five years but it was clear to see he would be a valuable addition as soon as he started. He jumped right in volunteering time and energy to many of our events and fundraisers.

Over the last several years Jason has come out after every snow fall and plowed the club's parking lot as well as coming before every meeting and social night to make sure the lots are clear. Jason

did a terrific job this last year collecting prizes for our ice fishing contest covering the south side of New Ulm like a blanket. Speaking of the ice fishing contest he had his plow out again clearing a road out to our event site. Take a close look in the newsletter and you'll see two ads he's placed for his businesses: Imperial Porta-Place and Ground Zero. The port-a-pot you see at the clubhouse was donated by Jason for as long as we wish to use it and the units you see at the ice fishing contest.

Jason has been very involved this past

year with the planning and development of the MiniCon Park storm water pond project. He's met with city officials and other involved parties to help substantially reduce the cost of that project to more reasonable level.

The presentation of the Stoney award will be given to Jason at this month's meeting. Please come and give Jason our thanks for a job well done.

EPA okays goals for reducing Mercury pollution

St. Paul – The U.S.Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved a first-in-the-nation statewide pollutant-loading, or Total Maximum Daily Load, study for mercury that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency proposed last year. The TMDL study includes goals that the MPCA has set to reduce mercury pollution of Minnesota's lakes and streams to acceptable level.

EPA Approval of Minnesota's mercury TMDL means that meetings with stakeholders that the MPCA has planned for some time will have a federally-approved basis for discussions.

"Now that our mercury TMDL has been approved, the MPCA will work with the MN Environmental Initiative to con-

vene meetings with stakeholders during the next year to develop a plan to meet the ambitious goals established in the TMDL," MPCA Commissioner Brad Moore said. "Reducing air emissions in MN by about 2,600 reductions that are scheduled to occur, like those power plants as mandated in MN's Mercury Reduction Act of 2006, are a big step toward meeting the goal. However, achieving the goal will require additional reductions from all sources, including industrial sources, power plants and mercury-containing products."

Moore added that by achieving the mercury TMDL goal, MN will be doing its part to address the mercury pollution problem which is world-wide and respects

no state or national borders.

The MCPA's statewide approach to the mercury TMDL is a first for the nation. While other states have tackled the mercury-pollution problem by having a separate TMDL for each impaired water, the MPCA is taking a statewide approach because so much of the excess mercury comes from outside the state and atmospheric deposition of mercury is relatively uniform across the state. The mercury deposition-reduction goal set by the TMDL is high enough to address the mercury-pollution problem in northeastern MN. Fish from northeastern MN waters have mercury fish-tissue values 50 percent higher than do fish from water bodies in other parts of the state. The difference is thought to be due to the type of aquatic system that predominates. In Northeastern MN, aquatic systems are dominated by wetlands, where microorganisms produce more methylmercury, thus the higher levels of this dangerous form of mercury in fish.

Club Calendar

- April 14thCommunity Clean Up
- April 26thMeeting at the Clubhouse 7:30 P.M.
- May 10thSocial Night at the Clubhouse 6:30 P.M.
- May 31stMeeting at the Clubhouse 7:30 P.M.

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From the President. . .

By Scott Sparlin

Make sure to get to the next meeting because we need your input on several items. There will be a report from the Scholarship Committee, Community and Riverbank Clean Ups, review of a letter to the state head of fisheries on our recent discussion regarding bag limits vs. slots and impacts on anglers and what the next steps will be for our newly acquired boat.

To summarize our discussion at the March meeting about bag limits vs. slots, it was unanimous among attendees that we feel a genuine sincere debate should be opened to begin to explore what impacts slot limits have on both fish directly and anglers of all ages. We would also like to find out what the feeling of the greater angling public is in this regard. Statewide surveys can and should be taken in order to assess the sentiment of the angling public in this regard. The club felt that there was a definite down side to slot limit style fishing, which has anglers catching fish and releasing large numbers of them to ultimately die both in the winter and summer. It was also felt that we are losing many anglers who have become discouraged due to too many regulations that are quite complicated and a real drain on one's fishing experience, especially with older and younger anglers. Fishing simply should not have to be that complicated. We go fishing with the idea that we don't have a care in the world, until you read the regulations, boy then you think twice before throwing a line in, talk about intimidating to a beginner or someone who's eyes don't focus or understand things like they used to. If we need to take less fish to ensure future populations, let's take less fish, but let's not make a criminal out of someone who has no intent. I have been directed to write a letter to DNR Fisheries and to contact legislators willing to explore this.

It was our contention that lower bag limits for primarily (but not limited to) walleye which featured a one over 26" trophy take would be a wise management tool to begin with. Then modification of the current regulation by allowing any size to be taken legally with a limit of 3 fish in the case of walleye would be entirely appropriate. Let's keep it simple and understandable even for a dunce like me.

This would have many benefits such as; when you catch your limit you would quit fishing for that species and more than likely diversify to some other type of fish which is present in that body of water that day. It would greatly simplify the fishing regulations which sparked this whole movement. It would lower the number of citations and simplify the conservation officer's job greatly. For those anglers who get out say 3 times a year and who in the spring of the year normally do catch a 6 bag limit a couple times, lowering the bag to 3 would leave more for those more consistent angling enthusiasts who support many of the initiatives directed at improving fishing and fish habitat.

When I complete the letter and it is approved by the club at the meeting, it will be posted on the website. See you at the next meeting.

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The Hook Line and Sinker is published monthly by Joyce Reese graphic design for the New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of respective writers and not to be construed as the opinion of the NUASF or its members. Send all correspondence and submissions to New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen, P.O. Box 294, New Ulm, MN 56073.

The NUASF Board

President - Scott Sparlin (359-2346); Vice-President - Jerry Carlson (354-8869); Secretary - Ross Nelson (354-8458) Treasurer - Tony Miller (354-2457); Board Members: Jim Huelke (354-3654), Dave Mecklenburg (794-7859), Ken Sutherland (354-4140).

Notes from the meeting

■ Membership update as of 3/29/07 is at 159 members. Ron Ludewig leads membership drive with 2 new members. Remember Eric Olson is donating a pheasant-hunting trip to Montana again this year for the member who brings in the most new members.

■ Our annual "Club Ice Fishing Contest" was held March 17th at Studtmann's Pond. The day was beautiful, the fishing was not. About 10 members were present through the day and \$60 was raised for the scholarship fund. Mike Studtmann and his lovely wife Danielle matched the total. We'll get the word out earlier next year so we can have a better turn out.

■ We're going to have to put some work into the boat that was donated to us by Steve Holm. A new deck and chairs, possibly more. We'll be putting a note in the newsletter and on the web site when we need help. Also, we're still trying to find a trailer for the boat. If anyone knows of one (cheap or donated) let us know.

■ We are looking for a used refrigerator to put in our clubhouse kitchen. With all the great meals we're having we don't have enough refig space. Mike Deinken is checking one out. If any one else knows of one let us know.

■ Food for next months meeting is going to be provided by Mark Dauer, Jim Hulke, and Erv Weinkauf. There is a sign up sheet at every meeting for anyone wishing to volunteer doing a meeting meal anytime during the year.

Mercury Pollution Continued from page 1

The federal Clean Water Act requires that states set standards to ensure that their lakes and streams can support "designated uses," such as "fishable and swimmable." Surface waters that do not meet the standard for a designated use are considered impaired." The Clean Water Act also requires that states develop plans to return polluted surface waters to a condition that will support their designated uses.

Mercury is one of the pollutants that can make a surface water "unfishable" because it leads to the methylmercury contamination of fish. Methylmercury-contaminated fish can be a threat to human health. That's why the MN Dept. of Health has issued fish consumption advisories for MN's lakes and rivers. According to the Fish Consumption Advisory program, "Young children, developing fetuses and breast-fed babies are at most risk, because small amounts of mercury can damage a brain that is just starting to form or grow. Too much mercury may affect a child's behavior and lead to learning problems in later life."

The mercury in MN's fish comes almost entirely from atmospheric deposition, with about 90% of that originating outside the state. The MPCA's mercury TMDL goal is to reduce mercury emissions from human activities within the state by 93% from 1990 levels.

Mercury is responsible for 1,312 impairments of MN lakes and streams – more than any other pollutant or condition. The TMDL document that the EPA approved this week describes the mercury impairment, its sources, and a pollution-reduction goal that will enable the impaired water bodies covered by the TMDL to meet water-quality standards.

Persons who have questions about the MPCA's mercury TMDL may contact Howard Markus at 651-296-7295 or 1-800-657-3864. The mercury TMDLs that the EPA approved can be seen at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/tmdl-mercuryplan.html#approval.

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