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## Conservation Times

BY MILT WALTERMIRE

Several IBFN clubs have performed a conservation project this year and I thought I'd share them with you. If your club hasn't done a youth or conservation project yet, perhaps these might give you an idea of what your club could do. Some clubs even combine their youth and conservation projects into one event, which I think is really cool. Having the kids learn about conservation in a fun setting is a great way to insure the health of our sport for generations to come.

One such club who has been doing this for several years is the Quincy BASS Anglers. They held their 4-H Fishing Derby & Conservation Expo in June at Deer Ridge Lake Conservation Area. Working with the 4-H people and the DNR, the kids learn a great deal about conservation while they have their fishing derby. The club also works with the DNR in planting fish habs at Mark Twain every year. Great job, Steve, Joe and all the guys at Quincy North Shore Bass Anglers also have a great conserva-

tion/youth event each year at Gages Lake in Grays Lake, Ill. Up to 75 kids enjoy a fishing tournament from shore while learning about conservation. The club also has been erecting signage educating boaters about VHS and how to help avoid spreading the disease to other fisheries. The disease has been devastating to some fish populations. Matt, Casey and the boys are doing some great stuff at North Shore.

The Tri-County Hawk Hunters did a much needed cleanup at the Des Plaines Conservation Area launch sites. Jeff Wepprecht, Site Manager at DPCA, was very grateful to Larry and the club for the extensive work they put in there. Way to go, guys!

As you have probably read here and in Bassmaster, the Illinois Valley Bassmasters have been working with Excelon and the IDNR to implant several fish habs in Braidwood. The club is also beginning an aquatic vegetation planting, which could really be a boon to the lake's bass population. This has been an ongoing, major project in which Rich, Chris and everyone at IVBM should really be proud. Their hard work is paying off, if the catch rates and average size fish caught this year in their annual open tournament is a good gauge.

The Champaign-Urbana Bass Club recently held their 9th

annual Ron Ward Memorial Scholarship Tournament, the proceeds of which go to a research scholarship for a graduate student in fisheries biology. The former scholarship winners have all gone on to make significant contributions to bass research and management. To date, the club has awarded over \$50,000 in research scholarships. This year, for the first time, scholarship applications will also be accepted from Southern Illinois University fisheries grad students. By the way, this year's event was met with near record high water levels at Shelbyville, yet it still took nearly 20 pounds (5 fish) to win. Several heavy stringers indicated that Shelbyville is still a strong fishery, even under the high water conditions.

Many other clubs have performed or have plans for conservation projects this year. The above projects are simply the ones which have notified me through the Youth/Conservation Event Notice, which I handed out at this year's Presidents Conference. Please make sure that this notice is sent to me for verification and approval in order for your club to be eligible for next year's State Qualifier.

## JR. Bassmasters State Championship Tournament

BY FRANK LABANOWSKI

On July 26th at Clinton Lake the Jr. Bassmasters will compete for the title of the State Champion. Each of the JR. Bassmaster clubs will be sending their best anglers to compete for the title of state Champion. The age group for becoming a member of a Jr. Bassmaster club is 11 to 18 years of age. A Jr. Bassmaster club is sponsored by one of the IBFN affiliated clubs where the sponsoring club members help the Jr. Anglers to work on their fishing techniques.

|                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Jr. Club</b>                    | <b>Sponsoring Club</b>         |
| Champaign Urbana Jr. Bass Club     | Champaign Urbana Bass Club     |
| Mid-Eastern Illinois Jr. Bass Club | Mid-Eastern Illinois Bass Club |
| "Off The Hook" Jr. Bassmasters     | Maple Bassmasters              |

Special thanks go out to the clubs that sponsor a Jr. Club and for the time and effort they contribute to introduce and teach our sport to young anglers. If our favorite past time is to continue we all need to get involved and take a kid fishing. Introduce them to the adrenaline rush when a lunker largemouth takes line a doubles over the fishing rod.

The Jr. State Champion will then go on to compete along with the IBFN State Team on the last day of Northern Divisional

Tournament in Escanaba Michigan. Good Luck to all of the Jr. Angler's that will be competing. For more information about the Jr. Bassmasters go to www.ilfednation.com.

## B.A.S.S. Northern Division

In August the IBFN will be sending their State Team to the B.A.S.S. Northern Divisional up in Escanaba Michigan. The members of this year's State Team competed in the 2008 State Qualifier and won a position on the team.

As a team, they will be competing against the other states in our division and as an individual, for a chance to fish in the

B.A.S.S. National Tournament. From there the next stop would be the coveted Bassmaster Classic. The IBFN Board along with the membership wants to wish the 2009 IBFN State Team good luck during the tournament.

During the tournament we will post updates on the IBFN web site at www.ilfednation.com.

## Kids Casting at State Finals

BY FRANK LABANOWSKI

During the year our affiliated clubs hold Kids Casting events all over the state. The young anglers compete in two age categories, 7 to 10 years and 11 to 14 years of age. The winners from the individual casting events are then invited to compete in the IBFN State Kids competition where the State Champion will be determined.

This year's event will be held at one of the IBFN's sponsor locations in Shorewood. Strictly Fishing has been a great sponsor for the IBFN and our youth events for several years now. They have recently moved to a larger location on Earl Road in Shorewood. The event will be held outdoors, weather permitting, where the young anglers will compete by pitching, flipping and casting just as they did to win the event that qualified them as a contender for the State Finals. Good luck to all of the Junior Anglers who will be competing. Check next month's Midwest Outdoors for the results.

For more info about Kids Casting and the IBFN affiliated clubs go to www.ilfednation.com.

**IBFN CLUBS:**  
Send in your tournament info to be posted in Club News.



## IBFN State Team

BY FRANK LABANOWSKI

The 13 anglers that make up the 2009 State Team competed in 2008 IBFN State Qualifier. Each year the IBFN hosts a tournament where all of the affiliated clubs send their 6 best anglers to compete for a spot on the State Team. Once again Illinois will be represented by some of the best anglers in our state.

## The 2009 IBFN State Team

Rich Newell (Team Captain) - Aurora, Bob Blumenstein - Bolingbrook, Kevin Rebouche - Frankfurt, Jim Blumenstein - Bolingbrook, John Williams - South Elgin, Mike Rubino - Hoffman Estates, Bill Skowronski - Hennepin, Ed Schmidt - Granville, Mike Richetta - Spring Valley, Steve Brown - Danville, Jim O'Malley - Elmhurst, Gerald Sobkowiak - Granville and John DeMay - Palatine.

This year's B.A.S.S. Northern Divisional Tournament will be held in the Upper Peninsula at Escanaba. This is a great small-mouth fishery and should be an exciting tournament. Lake Michigan holds some lunker smallmouth but the big lake can be

unpredictable. I asked Rich Newell, the Team Captain for his thoughts about this year's team. Rich said "This team should do very well. We all know each other, having competed in other tournaments, and most of the guys have smallmouth experience fishing with light line techniques. These guys are good anglers and know what it takes to win. It would be great to have some spots off of the big water as well. If the big lake blows up it will be very tough and the smallmouth bite may not be there. That's when we need to have spots off of the big lake like in the marinas. We don't need to have the biggest bag on a given day we just need to be consis-

tent and bring fish to the scales, that's what will get it done. I look forward to fishing with this team they are a great bunch of guys."

As a team they will be fishing against the other state teams in our Division and individually for a spot in the B.A.S.S. National Tournament. The finalists at the National will then go on to compete in the 2010 Bassmaster Classic where they will compete with the likes of Kevin Van Dam, Skeet Reese and the rest of the pros. That is the ultimate dream of all bass tournament fishermen. The entire IBFN membership wishes them all good luck at the B.A.S.S. Northern Divisional.

For more information about the IBFN and our State Team go to www.ilfednation.com.

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