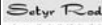




Illinois B.A.S.S. Federation Nation

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Conservation Times

BY MILT WATERMIRE

My rants and slants on state and national issues that affect us: I'm sure you've seen by now the proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency to allow an increase in the amount of ethanol in gasoline to 15% from 10%. The EPA was petitioned to do so by Growth Energy, a pro-ethanol group, who had collected signatures from 54 other groups for the petition. The Boat Owners Association of the U.S. and the National Marine Manufacturers Association have expressed strong opposition to this proposal. Outboard engines, and all other small engines, are not designed nor calibrated to run with more than 10% ethanol. To run these engines on 15% ethanol could void warranties and ruin fuel delivery systems.

It is widely known that ethanol's penchant for attracting water into the gasoline, or "phase separation", has led to major replacement or repair costs as well as degrading many fiberglass boat tanks. Yet, the EPA issues this proposal with absolutely no testing done on the possible hazards of E-15, even in the face of complaints from a national association representing convenience stores and gasoline stations worried about lawsuits from automobile owners over damage done by E-15.

Even Underwriters Laboratories, which certifies gas pumps for safety, states it will not certify E-15 pumps. So why would this

proposal be issued? In a word—greed. This isn't about doing something good for the environment (renewable energy) or reducing dependence on foreign oil as the proponents would have you believe. It's already been documented that the additional energy required to produce ethanol and the reduced gas mileage it causes, forcing you to use more gasoline, virtually eliminates its purported advantages. This is about a group of ethanol investors attempting to profit at everyone else's expense while hiding under their "green" camouflage. I wish it wasn't true, but it is.

I grew up in a small farming community in central Illinois and would like to see Illinois farmers do well, but ethanol has not tested out to be the great savior it was said to be when it was forced upon us several years ago. Let's not continue to be suckered by allowing even more of it to be forced on us just to satisfy the greed of a relative few. Let your congressman know you're sick of this being forced upon us without testing. Let science determine its value to society and the environment, not politics and greed.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois fishermen in general lost the leadership of an outstanding conservationist with the retirement of Mike Conlin. As you may recall, it was this writer who asked you to contact Gov. Quinn to support Mr. Conlin as new IDNR Director earlier this year. Mr. Conlin has been director of the DNR Office of Resource Conservation the past several years and had spent 38 years total with the IDNR, including 30 years as Fisheries Chief.

One of Mr. Conlin's major undertakings as Fisheries Chief was to promote and oversee the expansion of the hatchery system. At the beginning of his tenure, the DNR had two outdated hatcheries stocking only three species (largemouth, bluegill and catfish). The hatchery system now stocks 19 different species of fish. Under his guidance, the IDNR was one of the most respected agencies of its kind in the country. We certainly wish Mike the happiest of retirements and owe him much gratitude for making our fisheries better.

At the time of this writing, the plan to increase the Illinois fishing license from \$12.50 to \$14.50 was expected to pass. The future of the proposed state park admission fee was still in question. It is estimated that the fee's increase, including a \$5 increase in a hunting license, would bring an estimated additional \$3 million to the IDNR. With the costs associated with fishing nowadays, a \$2 increase in a yearly license is certainly not going to prevent anyone from pursuing the sport. However, if the lawmakers start making state park access a major investment, it could really backfire. I'm certainly not against a reasonable, annual fee that would allow access to all state parks, but to start charging daily admission, especially if you are there to camp and pay site fees (recently upped to \$20/night) or use a boat ramp that requires a fee, then it seems to me to be excessive. I am all for keeping the state parks open and funded properly, but hopefully the lawmakers don't get so unreasonable with their fee requirements that they would keep people away, causing the eventual demise of the state parks.

IBFN Jr. Bassmaster State Qualifier - July 26, 2009

On July 26 the IBFN Jr. Bassmaster club members competed in their State Qualifier tournament for a chance to go on to the BASS Northern Divisional in Escanaba Michigan. It was a windy day with a chop on the water when the launch began. Twenty-eight Jr. anglers were giving directions to their IBFN volunteer boaters to take them to their spots of choice. One hour into the tournament, news began to come in that some competitors have already put fish in the live well. As the day went on, more news of a limit or two and the Jr.'s spots were producing fish.

As the parents gathered at the launch, the competitors began coming in for the weigh-in. It was great to see the Jr. anglers coming to the scales with bags of fish. By the end of the weigh-in there were two limits, several very nice bass, and the winners in each age group were established.

The first place winners joined the IBFN State Team and competed at the BASS Northern Divisional in Escanaba, Mich. the week of August 10.

The first place winner for the 11- to 14-year-olds was Matt Birchfield from "Off The Hook" Jr. Bassmasters and for the 15- to 18-year-olds was Ronnie Putnam with Champaign Urbana Jr. Bass Club.

Great job to all who competed at the Jr. State Qualifier and congratulations to our Jr. State Champions Matt Birchfield and Ronnie Putnam. Good luck at the BASS Northern Divisional. They will compete at for the chance to move on to the Junior World Championship being held on Harris Chain of Lakes in Tavares, Florida at the Federation Nation Championships. In the past, the winners of the Title Junior World Bassmaster Champion have won prizes like a fully-rigged trion 15-foot aluminum boat, a set of rod and reels, a trip for the family to Disney World, sponsors

and a very nice trophy. The IBFN and Jr. Bassmaster clubs would like to thank all of the volunteer boaters who came out and spent their day with the Jr's. For more information about the IBFN or the Jr. Bassmasters go to www.ilfednation.com.



Jim McCune - IBFN, Ronnie Putnam - State Champ 15 to 18 years, Matt Birchfield - State Champ 11 to 14 years, and Frank Labanowski - IBFN.



Big Bass winner - Jim O'Neil.



11- to 14-year-olds: First place - Mathew Burchfield (State Champion), Second place - Jacob Rope, Third place - Casey Step.



15- to 18-year-olds: First place - Ronnie Putnam (State Champion), Second place - Nick Kohl man, Third place - Tim Long, Fourth place - Damon Hone.

IBFN Casting Kids State Finals—August 2, 2009

On August 2, at Strictly Fishing in Shorewood, the IBFN held the annual Casting Kids State Championship. The winners from this competition will go on to compete at the BASS Northern Divisional in the Divisional Casting Kids event.

During each year the member clubs of the IBFN hold casting competitions for the kids. The winners of these events are then invited to compete in these State Finals. There are winners in both age groups 7 to 10 years and 11 to 14 years of age. The winners of this year's event are Dalton Fox, age 10 and Noah Garnica, age 12. Congratulations to both of the winners and good luck representing the IBFN at the BASS Northern Divisional.

Great job to all who competed! All who competed were given a gift certificate for \$10.00 at Strictly Fishing and first place in both age groups received a \$50.00 gift certificate, a rod and reel and a savings bond. Thanks to Scott at Strictly Fishing for providing the space for our event. They are located in Shorewood. Please patronize our

IBFN sponsors. A special thanks to the IBFN clubs for holding the events that sent these Casting Kids to the State Finals.

For more information about the IBFN and Casting Kids go to www.ilfednation.com.



7 to 10-year-olds: Dalton Fox, Nicholas Trick, Ethan Roesch, Mitch Kraus and Audrey Cooper.



11 to 14-year-olds: Noah Garnica, Alex Karczewski, Nick Shaul, Kourtney Washick and Bailey Knight.



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



The IBFN thanks its sponsors for their dedication to the Illinois bass fisherman.