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Conservation Times

BY MIKE WALTERMIRE

A new legislative animal protection caucus has been formed in California, becoming the first state legislature to have a caucus dedicated solely to the passage of "sensible" animal protection legislation. This in a state where the animal rights community has increased its priority of passing legislation challenging the freedom to hunt. The announcement of the formation of this caucus was trumpeted on the website of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). As you may recall, I have reported to you in previous Conservation Times articles the true purpose of HSUS (get rich by convincing massive numbers of people that they care deeply about animals and then receive huge donations, virtually none of which actually goes to assisting animals in need). HSUS claims to be backed by 11 million Americans, one in every 28. All this support, yet they do not invest in even one animal shelter. According to them, their purpose is to "educate" and "support" causes pertaining to animal protection. Apparently, talking must require the donation of untold millions of dollars.

Why bring up this California event in this format? Well, all you have to do is look at the formation of Marine Protected Areas in California that is making its way here to the Midwest by the attempts to form the same things in the Great Lakes. With the current political situation, don't be surprised if the formation of these "caucuses" aren't attempted in many states. We have to constantly be aware of those who would deprive us of our outdoor heritage and activities under the guise of other "causes."

In IBFN news, the Champaign-Urbana Bass Club has recently awarded their ninth annual Ron Ward Memorial Scholarship to Corey DeBoom, a Masters of Science candidate at the University of Illinois. The \$8,000 research scholarship brings the club's total fisheries research grants amount to nearly \$60,000 over the past nine years. The scholarship goes to students who are making bass research/fisheries managing their lives' work.

Corey received his Bachelor of Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences from Iowa State University and looks to work toward a PhD at the University of Illinois. His research focuses on two areas: 1) The role that aquatic habitat (especially coarse woody habitat) plays in the functioning of lake ecosystems and, 2) The effects of muskellunge introductions on largemouth bass populations. The latter of these is of interest to many Illinois anglers due

to the fact that, since 1988, the number of lakes with muskellunge introduction has increased from six to 38. As this stocking program increased in scope and scale, bass anglers have expressed concern about the potential for muskellunge to compete with largemouth for food and habitat.

In addition, there is concern about the rate at which muskellunge may prey on largemouth. As for lake habitat, shoreline development has negatively impacted both woody and vegetation habitat, upsetting the predator-prey dynamics, as well as the physical and biological processes that govern overall lake productivity.

Knowledge of the specific roles of various habitat types is therefore important to understand the implications of habitat modifications, whether it is in the form of addition (planting vegetation) or losses due to development. Corey plans to continue to focus his research on these two areas for his doctoral thesis.

The previous winners of the scholarship have gone on to distinguish themselves in the areas of fisheries management and research. I am sure that Corey will continue this pattern. Having been an avid fisherman himself since childhood, the requisite passion for improving and protecting the fisheries is definitely in place.



Jim Nelson presents the IBFN check to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

IBFN and Bass Pro Team Up For Casting Kids

The IBFN would like to welcome the Bolingbrook Bass Pro Shops as our new partner in the continuation of the Casting Kids program here in Illinois. The Casting Kids program introduces the art of casting to kids from ages 7 to 10 and 11 to 14 years of age. The member clubs of the IBFN hold Casting Kids competitions all over the state. In these events the kids are shown by the club members how to pitch, flip and cast. After some practice they then attempt to hit a target from several distances. Each event has a winner in each age category that moves on to compete at the IBFN Casting Kids State Championship. All of the kids that participate have a great time and are instructed by some of the best anglers in our area and the winners walk away with some great prizes.

For over 20 years, BASS has provided Casting Kids Kits to the clubs which included the rods and reels, targets and much more at no cost to the clubs. Due to the economic conditions and continued increase of costs, last year BASS announced that the Casting Kids program would be ending.

The IBFN would not let the program die in Illinois, so the

search for a new sponsor began. Jeff Hall and Tim Chapman of Bass Pro Shops in Bolingbrook stepped up to answer the call. At the IBFN Presidents Conference it was announced that Bass Pro will be the IBFN Casting Kids sponsor and the partnership began.

Jeff Hall and Tim Chapman were guests at the conference where Jeff stated that Bass Pro's commitment to the kids when it comes to fishing and the outdoors runs all the way back to the company's owner Johnny Morris. They are excited to do what they can for the IBFN and the Casting Kids program to keep the events going. Among other items, they will be providing Bass Pro Shops Stampede rod and reel combos. This will be the official rod and reel used at all of the events.

The IBFN and all of their member clubs want to thank Jeff, Tim and Bass Pro Shops in Bolingbrook for their support to continue this great program that helps to introduce the kids to the sport of fishing.

For information regarding the location of Casting Kids events, check our website at www.ilfednation.com.

"Off The Hook" Elects New Officers

"Off The Hook," an IBFN Jr. Bassmaster club, held their board elections for the new season. The new board is made up of Matt Burns - President, Chris Walter - Vice President, Matt Burdfield - Secretary, Alex Ellerbrock - Treasurer and Casey Stepp - Tournament Chairman.

At the club's last meeting they finalized their 2010 schedule. Some of the locations they will be fishing this season are: Braidwood Lake, Monee Reservoir, Mill Creek, Kankakee River and Shabbona.

The club will be fishing some of their tournaments from

boats that will be provided by their IBFN sponsoring club Maple Bassmasters.

"Off The Hook" is an IBFN Jr. Bassmaster club that meets once a month at Bass Pro Shops in Bolingbrook. The members of the club are from 11 to 17 years of age and the club welcomes junior anglers of all levels, from beginners to experienced. If you would like more information about the Jr. Bassmasters check out the IBFN website at www.ilfednation.com. You can also email me at president@ilfednation.com.



IBFN 2010 Schedule

Date	Event
Jan. 23	IBFN Presidents' Meeting
April 24-25	State Qualifier / Rend Lake
May 21-23	PVA / Rend Lake
June 13	Jr. Bassmasters SQ / TBD
Aug. 11-13	IBFN Northern Divisional / Escanaba, MI
Sept. 12	Casting Kids State Finals
TBD	FN / TBD

IBFN Question of the Month

"The Bassmaster Classic"

1. What was the largest margin of victory in pounds?
2. Date of Classic?
3. Location of Classic?
4. Name of winner?
5. Winning pattern and baits?

The first verified IBFN member to answer all questions correctly will win a \$25 gift certificate from restaurant.com. All questions must be answered correctly for winner to be awarded prize. Email all answers to jim.blumenstein@ilfednation.com. Winner will be announced in next month's IBFN article.

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