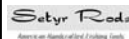




Illinois B.A.S.S. Federation Nation

P.O. Box 703 Streator, IL 61364

www.ilfednation.com



Conservation Times

BY MILT WALTERMIRE

Upon giving much thought to what types of conservation projects could be done by our member clubs at little or no cost, one idea stands out to me. Please give some serious thought to the suggested project explained below.

One of the foremost problems facing our fisheries, and the image of fishermen, is the issue of invasive species, both aquatic vegetation and animal. Eradication is no longer an option in larger bodies of water. It is simply too costly and the resources are not available. Once upon a time, all we needed to worry about was whether our lakes had too much "grass." Things have changed drastically and so have the players. I'm sure nearly all of you have "ducked" from leaping Asian carp or had your line cut by zebra mussels. Like it or not, fishermen of all kinds are taking a whipping for this situation in the public, being blamed for moving around all kinds of invasive species. There are some heavily leveraged groups out there who are wielding the "whip" aggressively.

OK, fine. Let's start by identifying and solving the #1 problem. Did any of you take your boat to the Amazon, fish there, and then return with your boat to fish your local lakes lately? How about the Yellow River in China? Europe? No? Obviously, we are NOT responsible for relocating these creatures from their home

waters to ours. We may inadvertently spread them around here, but it's past time we stopped being a target scapegoat and start VERY VISIBLY educating the public about the real problem and how best to cope with the resultant issues.

Informed anglers know the efforts of trying to control invasives are largely ineffective and remarkably expensive. These efforts are a tremendous drain on our public resources. THOSE COSTS SHOULD BE REDIRECTED TO THOSE TRULY AT FAULT IN THE FIRST PLACE! Billions of dollars are lost each year in the effort to deal with the invasives that could be better used to benefit our fisheries, access areas and state parks in the manner in which they were initially intended. So how do we go about removing ourselves as a target from those who would blame us for these issues, take away our right to fish and at the same time educate the public about real solutions to the issues? I'm finally getting to the point.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has really nice pamphlets about this issue that are free. They will send to your club all that you need. I would suggest that your club hand out the pamphlets at a ramp of your choice, perhaps after a club tournament or practice day. DO NOT SIMPLY PUT THESE UNDER WINDSHIELD WIPERS! That can be illegal at many ramps. Even if it's not illegal, doing so will not have the same effect as face-to-face conversation.

Personally hand these pamphlets out to boat owners of all kinds, not just fishermen, including our friends with personal

watercraft (I can't believe I just called them "friends"). Offer to inspect their trailers and/or livewells for "hitchhikers" and, if they have questions, try to be as informative as you can by being familiar with the pamphlet.

Yes, I know that the IDNR has put out signage at some ramps about how to help control the spread of invasives. While that may help some, handing out these pamphlets and educating the public in this suggested manner will have a much higher degree of success.

The only investment your club would make is in time, not money, and could be of great benefit in the long run. Perhaps your club would want to have a few different guys assigned to do this at several of your tournaments or have several guys spend partial days at a ramp on non-tournament weekends. However you choose to do this is, of course, your choice, as is whether you want to do this at all. I'm simply offering this as a possible solution to those clubs who are looking for a project that would be of great benefit to all.

To contact the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for this project, go to: joestarinchak@fws.gov. Let him know what you intend to do and ask for the appropriate pamphlet(s). While you're at it, search "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers" for some really nice stickers for your boat, trailer or truck. It's a very visible way to let everyone know you're serious about being on board with solutions and not just sitting idly by while being blamed for it. I would suggest that every IBFN rig should display one of these stickers.

2010 IBFN State Qualifier

This year's IBFN State qualifier will be held at Rend Lake. There will be over 100 IBFN members competing for one of the 12 spots on the 2011 IBFN Illinois State Divisional Team. The official days of competition are April 24 and 25. Official practice days are April 22 and 23. The tournament will take off and weigh in at the sailboat launch.

The event will start with a pre-tournament meeting that will begin at 6 p.m. at Rend Lake Resort. All participating clubs team captains must check in beginning at 5 p.m.

Rend Lake is off limits for all participants from Sunday, April 18 at sundown till Thursday, April 22 at safe light.

More Rewards for Divisional Team

BY FRANK LABANOWSKI, IBFN PRESIDENT

During the Presidents Conference in January, the club presidents voted to increase the IBFN dues by \$10. The motion that was made stated that the additional funds would be set aside in the Divisional Team account to cover more expenses for the State Team members when they go to compete in the BASS Northern Divisional.

The IBFN members' dues have not been raised in years. In fact, the current \$20 per member annual fee is the lowest mem-

bership fee in the country. With the economy being what it is, some of our state sponsors are going through difficult times and cannot support the IBFN as they have in the past.

The intension of the presidents is to give more funds to the Divisional Team to help with each angler's expenses so they can better concentrate on their mission, to bring a first place team win back home to Illinois.

The additional \$10 per member is to be submitted by each club by May 1.

Jr. Bassmasters / IHSA

BY FRANK LABANOWSKI, IBFN PRESIDENT

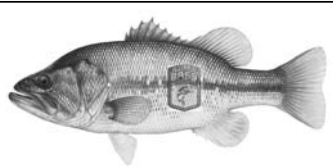
The Jr. Bassmasters are getting their season underway as well, and we are getting a lot of interest from new junior anglers looking for a club. If there are any IBFN clubs that would like to sponsor a Jr. Bassmaster club please contact Jim McCune, the IBFN Youth Director.

Most of the high schools have an IHSA bass fishing team and they need your help as well. I have recently signed up to be a sponsor for two IHSA bass team members at the high school here in Coal City. The two anglers are also members of "Off The Hook," an IBFN Jr. Bassmaster club. I have gotten to know both Matt Burchfield and Casey Stepp and they are both very good anglers. In fact, Matt and I recently went out to Braidwood and he caught what would have been a legal limit. I know a lot of anglers that have a tough time doing that on that lake, but Matt had a great guide.

Get involved with the Jr. Bassmasters or the IHSA bass team at your local high school—you will be glad you did!



Matt Burchfield, Board Secretary for "Off The Hook" Jr. Bassmaster club and Coal City IHSA Bass Team angler with a lunker just short of four pounds caught at Braidwood Lake on March 6.



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	BFN Northern Divisional / Escanaba, MI
Sept. 12	CASTING KIDS STATE FINALS
TBD	FNC / TBD

IBFN Question of the Month

1. Which former B.A.S.S. AOY has never won a BASS event?
2. Date of highest B.A.S.S. tournament finish (major)
3. Location of highest tournament finish
4. Margin of defeat (in pounds)

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. Forward all answers to jim.blumenstein@ilfednation.com. Individuals may only win once per year. Winner will be announced in next month's IBFN article.

Congratulations to Mike Tow of Maple Bassmasters. Mike was the first to answer last month's IBFN Question of the Month correctly.

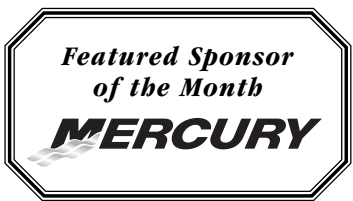


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