

Good evening EWG!

Attached please find the 2023 angler survey Leslie summarized at our last meeting, minutes from our Nov 6th meeting, and the final 2024 muskie stocking summary.

Also, below please find information based on some of your questions at our last meeting:

- **2024 stocking summary (see attached):** met our quota and should have two decent natural pond options (Lily and Lake 12) for yearlings in 2025, if we don't have a hard winter (cross fingers). Little Falls is looking into solar aeration units for Lake 12 too. More to come on that one. We also have around 800 fingerling muskies that are being overwintered at New London and may have a private fish grower that could produce spring yearlings in 2025.
- **Fathead minnow harvest:** with the uncertainty of getting fatheads from private minnow dealers the last few years, DNR Fisheries has made considerable efforts to harvest fatheads for our muskie fingerling production program. In 2024, Bem-idji, Fergus Falls, Ortonville, New London, Park Rapids, Tower, and Waterville collectively harvested approximately 1800 gallons of fatheads with a market value of \$72,000. Can't thank them enough for the extra effort!
- **ENRTF/LCCMR:** (From our DNR LCCMR liaison)- There will be no changes with how ENRTF dollars will be allocated by the LCCMR based on the passage of the constitutional amendment. The LCCMR will still issue an RFP and make recommendations to the Legislature on specific projects and how to spend up to 5.5% of the market value of the trust fund each year. There will be about \$103 million available through the upcoming ML 2026 RFP. With passage of the amendment, the Legislature will be able to appropriate an additional 1.5% of the value of the trust fund each year. This is in addition to the 5.5% overseen by the LCCMR. The Legislature created a new process and structure (Ch. 116X MN Statutes) for these additional funds. Since that process is in statute (not the constitutional amendment), it is subject to change by the Legislature. As currently written, the additional 1.5% will be available for a community grant program overseen by the DNR. The Legislature will determine how much of the 1.5% available to appropriate to the DNR each year. The DNR will make decisions on how to select and award grants in consultation with an advisory council and consistent with state law and the constitutional purpose of the ENRTF.  
<https://www.legacy.mn.gov/environment-natural-resources-trust-fund>
- **Cove Bay muskie rearing pond (near Mille Lacs):** We have two old rearing ponds on Mille Lacs. One is just north of Garrison and it had problems holding water due the permeable soils used to dike it. The one in Cove is right across the road from the Cove Bay public access and was last used for rearing muskies in the mid-1990s; however, just before harvesting them out in the fall, cormorants would consume most of that year's production. Cove Bay pond had one good year of muskie production. After Aitken discontinued muskie production, Hinckley used it for raising fatheads.
- **Minnetonka yearling muskies:** all yearling muskies stocked in fall of 2024 were PIT tagged.
- **Waterville State Fish Hatchery update:** We have developed a bioplan and are using that plan, based on production goals, to establish design needs regarding general building needs and space. We exchanged some initial concept layouts and discussed with HDR (consulting firm), but as always, some things still need to be worked out. Timeline is still in discussion but HOPING for a spring 2028 completion.

Hope you are all doing well!

Les, Brian, Mike, Steve, and TJ

TJ DeBates  
East Metro Area Fisheries Supervisor|Fish & Wildlife  
Serving Anoka, Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
1200 Warner Road  
St Paul, MN 55106  
Phone: 651-259-5770  
Fax: 651-772-7977  
Email: [timothy.debates@state.mn.us](mailto:timothy.debates@state.mn.us)  
[mndnr.gov](http://mndnr.gov)