

Great news muskie anglers!

The new Long-Range Muskie Management Plan is complete! This is the document that will guide Minnesota muskie management for the next 15 years.

The actual writing of the document took some time, but the hardest part was getting DNR Management to acknowledge and accept the shortcomings of the current muskie management system. The great news is that this new plan is very well thought out and does a great job of addressing all of the concerns we've been expressing over the last 15+ years! Those of us that have had the opportunity to review the draft are pleased with its contents. Every single piece of this plan is the result of years of hard work and of never giving up on fighting for better muskie fisheries.

Whereas the last Long-Range Plan focused largely on expanding muskies to new waters, this plan focuses mostly on improving muskie populations and quality angling opportunities on existing muskie waters.

The biggest highlights are:

1. Prioritizing improving muskie fishing on "The Big 3" -Mille Lacs, Vermilion, and Minnetonka.
2. Improving muskie production, with a significant shift towards stocking yearlings rather than fingerlings in some waters.
3. Hiring a muskie specialist to help bring the new plan to fruition.

Steps have already been taken towards achieving some of these goals. Vermilion received a bump in its stocking quota several years ago, and fingerlings seems to do well there, so that program won't be reassessed until after the next population estimate in 2027-2028. Minnetonka has already been shifted towards yearling stocking. As soon as yearling production can be ramped up, Mille Lacs will be switched to yearling stocking, which will lead to significantly higher recruitment of stocked muskies.

Rearing yearlings on a consistent basis will be challenging, but there are already plans for improving production at current facilities as well as plans for an entirely new hatchery with space dedicated to yearling muskie production.

The DNR used to have a dedicated muskie specialist, or "topical expert" as it's written in the new plan, but has not filled that position in many years. In my opinion, filling that role with someone who can oversee all aspects of muskie management and help facilitate whatever steps need to be taken, is going to be the most important step in achieving all of the goals of this new plan. In fact, my personal input right now will focus on strongly encouraging that aspect of the new plan.

The DNR is accepting public input and comments on the new plan through June 12.

The DNR staff that serve on the muskie technical committee worked hard and did a great job putting together a very important plan. I would encourage you all to send your personal input along with a thank-you for their efforts. Email: mnmuskieplan2025@state.mn.us

It's going to be a challenge to accomplish all of these goals, but this plan is a massive step towards better muskie fishing in Minnesota!

Please pass this pdf along to all of your muskie friendly contacts.

Thanks!

Aaron Meyer

MN Muskie and Pike Alliance Co-Chair

Here is a link to the DNR news release:

Minnesota DNR invites public comment on muskie plan update : May 12, 2025 | News release

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/news/2025/05/12/minnesota-dnr-invites-public-comment-muskie-plan-update>

And here's a link to the DNR Muskie webpage where you'll find more info on an upcoming live webinar, a link to the actual plan document, an online questionnaire, and info on ways to provide public input.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fish/muskellunge/index.html>