

THE RELEASE



JANUARY, 2013

Website: www.stcloudmuskies.com

NO MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN JANUARY – COMBINED WITH FEBRUARY GREG THOMAS SEMINAR

February 11, 2013

7:30p.m

**MOOSE LODGE
WAITE PARK, MN**

MAKING WAVES...

By Bruce A. Kitowski, President

I truly hope that everyone had a wonderful and safe Christmas, and with that a positive fresh start to a new year. A white Christmas, the lakes are freezing fast, and the muskie shows will be starting soon. This makes for a recipe that will get us through winter without a hitch.

We will once again be having a large seminar for Jan/ Feb. meeting on February 11, 2013. Make sure to note the change in our meeting location, at the Moose Lodge in Waite Park, for our speaker, Greg Thomas.

One of our members Paul Amberg of Venture Custom Rods has done it once again. Paul has built and donated a beautiful rod to be raffled off at the seminar. This rod is outstanding with gorgeous designs and craftsmanship. It is a SlingBlade, and from what I'm told you could pull stumps with it. We cannot begin to thank Paul for his generosity. Check out his website by locating his ad in the newsletter or on-line.

Speaking of ads, we have a new advertiser with us this year. Big Wood Lures has joined our family and we couldn't be happier. Also check out Suick's new ad, and please make sure when you have the chance or opportunity to thank these people for supporting us.

The Board of Directors has a few changes for 2013. First of all Ken Smith has stepped down from Magazine Reporter, and Eric Poissant has agreed to take over. We would like to thank Ken for all he has done. Eric will be a great asset to the board, and we welcome him with open arms. Sam Larsen was our secretary last year and part of this year, but due to a college promise in 2012 he had to leave, so his father Sven took over. Sven will now be secretary full time. We are also very pleased that Sven decided to stay on. The Board sure does make my life much easier. They are the backbone of this club. To all that stayed on and continue to do outstanding work without even wanting a pat on the back, I tip my hat and applaud you. Thanks for your devotion.

I hope to see you at the Greg Thomas seminar on February 11th at the Moose Lodge, and please tell your friends. This is what it's all about.



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PROGRAM DIRECTOR

By Aaron Meyer

Well, it's January 1st... another year is in the books. Muskie season is long gone, bowhunting ended yesterday, and it looks like the real cold is here to stay for a while. I hope everyone had a great Holiday season. I ended my year by putting some fresh venison in the freezer, getting a couple cool new muskie baits for Christmas, and spending time with my brother who hasn't been home from the Air Force in quite some time!

As usual, our Muskies Inc. Christmas meeting was a really good time. I think everyone had fun sharing stories and swapping lures! Like we've done the last few years, we'll be combining the January and February meetings and bringing in a "big name" speaker. We're planning to have Gregg Thomas. Gregg has done some outstanding seminars for us in the past and I'm sure this will be no exception. Right now we're having a little difficulty in scheduling dates and locations, so we don't have it locked down yet. Keep your eyes on the website and your e-mails because when we get it down, we'll let you know.

At our Christmas meeting we discussed the possibility/likelihood of increasing the minimum size limit for muskies in MN. This is one of the big issues we'll be tackling at the MN Muskie and Pike Alliance this year. The DNR is also forming a "technical group" of biologists and fisheries experts to look into this.

Over the years it has become quite obvious that each time size limits are increased the muskie populations have responded very favorably. Minnesota's muskies just keep getting bigger and even our smaller lakes are producing fish of 54 inches or more! This success has greatly increased to popularity of muskie fishing and has also turned Minnesota into a true "destination" for anglers from around the world. The downside is that we're seeing a very substantial increase in harvest of true trophy class fish of 54-57 inches. The DNR feels it may be time to better protect these fish, and based on conversations within the MMPA and the Muskies Inc. chapters throughout the state, it looks like anglers agree.

Here are some interesting facts. Muskie fisheries that are in their natural state (meaning those not being affected by human interference) are actually made up of mostly large adult fish and relatively few smaller fish. Current on-going genetic and age related research is showing that once muskies reach a large size they become the main base of the population, and they stay a part of that population for a long, long time. They essentially keep their own population in a natural balance through displacement and/or cannibalism. Researchers are also seeing that fisheries (both natural and stocked lakes) with high size limits or total catch and release regulations can mimic un-tapped fisheries.

To add my observations, this research proves what I've been seeing... we are all catching the same fish. We are catching these fish multiple times in their lifetimes, and even multiple times in the same season! Every fish we catch has been caught by someone else, probably several times... especially the big ones! Taking even one large fish from a lake has a dramatic impact on the potential success of other anglers on

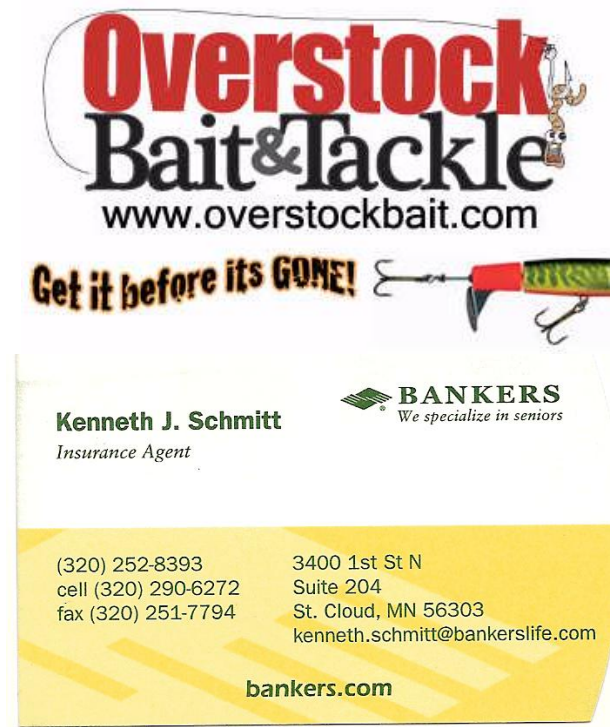
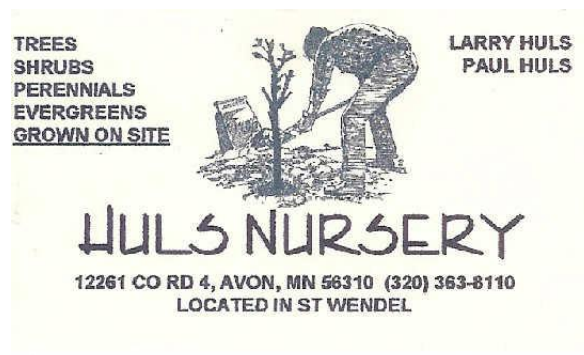
that lake. We've all seen the pictures in Musky Hunter of fish caught by more than one angler. The reality is that this is far more common than most people believe. Most fish look somewhat the same and aren't always recognized as being caught before. I personally have several fish that I've caught multiple times.... some of them are BIG! I know a lot of other anglers who have similar stories.

Here are a couple more interesting stats from scientific studies.

1. If the mortality rate of large muskies 21-23 years old can be decreased by only 2% it is comparable to increasing their initial recruitment by 70%!
2. If the annual harvest of record class muskies 25-30 years old were increased by 2%, it would be necessary to DOUBLE initial recruitment to compensate for it!

Obviously these big fish are a very important and very limited resource! Based on all of this, the MMPA has offered the proposal to increase the size limit to 56 inches, which would protect the future of our fisheries while still allowing for the possibility of harvesting a new state record. This is only an initial proposal and we are waiting to see what kind of figures come back from the DNR technical committee. Personally I'm 100% for it! We'll let you know how things progress.

Aaron



January 2013 Webmaster Report

The most significant item this month is the potential for starting up a Cafepress site for SCMI. This would allow us to have a very easy-to-use sales and delivery channel for SCMI goods, most notably apparel but a myriad of other products, too. Folks on the SCMI Board are researching the availability and/or creation of new artwork that we could use. Stay tuned!

Our Facebook site as of 12/31/12 has 57 LIKES, or 11 up from 46 a month ago. The traffic has declined significantly since the close of musky season – likely a direct correlation, but here's a chance to keep up the spirit during the off-season!!! Please post your pics from 2012, and share your experience and hopes for 2013!

The web site has had a month of stability and not a lot of change, just time-sensitive info. I've updated the Sponsor page, so please take the time to see who helps support us. The development tool that is used to create and modify the site has rolled out a few new features, so I'll see what I can do to add functionality to our site. I still would really like to get some more pictures of members fishing in 2012, so please forward to me via the web site or through Facebook anything that you may have to put up onto the site.

Thomas L. Ardolf

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