

Legislature delivers win for Michigan sportsmen

OUTDOOR INSIGHTS



BILL PARKER

Legislation awaiting Gov. Engler's signature would allow the Department of Natural Resources to divert \$3.3 million deficit for the year 2003. That's great news for sportsmen, who faced the prospect of possible layoffs of field personnel in the wildlife, fisheries and law enforcement divisions without the legislation.

Sponsored by Rep. Larry DeVuyst (R-Alma), H.B. 4912 allows the legislature to appropriate up to \$6 million annually from the Game and Fish Trust Fund into the Game and Fish Protection Fund, the general operating fund of the DNR.

The bill sacrifices a portion of revenue that was supposed to alleviate the need for license fee increases in the future. The Trust Fund was established in 1987 and receives royalties from the sale of natural resources such as timber oil and gas on lands purchased with money from the Game and Fish Protection Fund.

The Trust Fund has approximately \$85 million and interest from that fund is transferred back into the Protection Fund to provide additional finances to the Department in lieu of a license fee increase. License fees make up the lion's share of revenue in the Protection Fund.

Now that the DNR can take up to \$6 million from that fund annually, it obviously won't grow at the rate it has been, about \$3 million to \$7 million annually.

While that news appears dismal, it could have been much worse. The original bill called for a cap of the Trust Fund at the current level and for all

future revenues to be diverted to the Protection Fund.

Thanks to a powerful effort by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, that version of the bill was amended in the House to the current version, which also calls for an appropriations process, with input from the public, before a penny can be diverted from one fund to the other.

We're fortunate to have such a group as MUCC supporting and watching over the rights of sportsmen in Michigan. Without MUCC, our future would be a little dimmer today.

Even with this legislation, there likely will be license fee increases in the near future. But that's not a bad thing, either. Stagnant license sales and rising inflation certainly make balancing the DNR budget a cumbersome affair. Periodically implementing 1% license fee increases generates millions of dollars that will be needed in future years.

Let's face it, current license prices — \$14 for deer licenses, fishing licenses, small game licenses — is really quite a bargain. To pay \$14 to enjoy Michigan's abundant fisheries is still a fantastic deal when compared to other recreational pursuits like a round of golf, an afternoon at Comerica Park or a concert.

Even if you pay \$28 for an all species fishing license, which includes trout and salmon, it's still a heck of a deal that runs all year long. Thanks to sound fisheries management practices by the DNR, salmon are plentiful throughout the Great Lakes, walleyes are stacked like cord wood in many areas, and hundreds of inland lakes have benefitted from DNR stocking efforts.

The opportunities are even more abundant in wildlife. There are more deer and turkeys in Michigan than there were at the turn of the century. The bear population is thriving and has grown to

some 16,000 animals. Canada geese, nearly nonexistent some 25 years ago are so plentiful today they are causing a nuisance in some urban areas.

We really do have a lot to be thankful for, and the DNR can take much of the credit. But while we're saying thanks, we better say a big one to MUCC for ensuring that our future will be as bright as the present.

Reservation problems

If you've had trouble in recent days making a campground reservation through the DNR's 800-44-PARKS number, you're not alone. The Department has been experiencing technical difficulties with its campground and harbor reservation number.

Evidently a train derailment knocked out major cable and telephone circuits used by the system.

"We regret any inconvenience and ask that State Parks customers please be patient with us while the circuit damage is repaired," said DNR Parks and Recreation Bureau Chief Rodney Stokes. "We hope the situation is quickly corrected."

In the meantime, the DNR is encouraging people to make reservations via the Internet at www.michigandnr.com.

Permit deadline nears

Aug. 1 is the deadline to apply for a fall turkey permit and an antlerless deer permit. Let's face it, the permit deadline is a little closer than you think. Let's face it, the permit deadline is a little closer than you think. Let's face it, the permit deadline is a little closer than you think.

When applying, be sure to check the map carefully as all boundaries have been changed, as have the numbers.

(Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to: Bill Parker, c/o Observer, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.)

Anglers must think small if they hope to catch big trout



KURT KUBAN

With the dog days of summer upon us, it's time for the trout fisherman to go back to the drawing board and come up with new strategies to land the big browns and brookies.

The recent summer heat and lack of rain has caused the water level to drop in many of Michigan's most prestigious trout streams, like the Manistee and Au Sable rivers.

Many of the larger trout have moved into the tributary streams that remain cooler because of their reliance on ground water.

Although the state has been blessed with a countless number of these streams, many anglers don't think about fishing them. Not only are they small in size, many are also encased by a canopy of overhanging branches and choked with downed trees.

Fly fishermen usually avoid them because there is little room to cast a fly. But there are other ways of landing trout than using a fly.

My favorite technique in the smaller streams is to use a spinning rod and reel to cast small spinners. There are a number of spinners on the market, such as the Mepps and Rooster Tail brands, but I have always found Panther Martins to work the best for trout.

Panther Martins come in variety of sizes and colors, and I keep a number of them in my fishing vest. Sometimes I have to use several before determining which one works best for whatever the conditions I am faced with.

Like flyfishing though, casting spinners can be difficult in these streams. Getting a lure stuck in a branch or on a submerged log is a fact of life. It's going to hap-

pen, so don't get frustrated when it does.

Another technique that can be employed on these smaller streams is to use worms. Even though many fly fishermen look down on anglers who use live bait, there are many old-timers who swear by worms.

In the spring, Canton Township resident Mike Gotta likes to fish the Manistee River where it runs through Kalkaska County. However, in July and August he moves to one of its tributaries, a beautiful little stream called Big Cannon Creek.

Gotta is convinced the best way to entice a large brookie or brown trout out of its hole is to string a couple of leaf worms on a small hook and put it right in front of the fish.

"You find a nice hole under a log. I like to stand upstream and cast the bait into the current. I let the current carry the bait into the hole and let it sit there. Sometimes it might take 5 or 10 minutes, but sooner or later the fish gets curious. I find a lot of times they will nip at the bait, so you have to be ready for it to strike," he said.

When we fished Big Cannon a couple weeks ago, Gotta's technique proved more successful than mine. While using my spinner, I caught several smaller brookies and had a couple decent strikes. Gotta, on the other hand, landed two nice brookies that went better than 13 inches, one of which had a nice sized belly.

Whichever technique is used, the key to landing these fish is to take your time and walk with care. Because the streams are so small, the fish are easily disturbed when there is movement either in the water or on the bank.

When I fish these streams, I like to take on the same mentality I would if I were stalking a deer. Still, a lot of times you don't see a good hole until you are on top of it. By that time, it is often too late.

I can't even count the number of times I've come across the perfect hole, only to get too close

■ Although the state has been blessed with a countless number of these streams, many anglers don't think about fishing them. Not only are they small in size, many are also encased by a canopy of overhanging branches and choked with downed trees.

and see the dark shadow of a large fish dart away. But that is part of the appeal of fishing such streams. It gets your blood boiling for the next hole.

When you are able to get off the perfect cast and your bait or lure is presented in the right way, sooner or later the dark shadow you see moving through the water will be fighting on the end of your line.

(Kurt Kuban is a reporter for the Plymouth Observer and can be contacted at (734) 459-2700 or kkuban@e.homecomm.net by email.

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STATE OF MICHIGAN PROBATE COURT COUNTY OF OAKLAND, File #01-578,800 DE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: Decedent's Estate Estate of DORIS A. MOREN, a/k/a DORIS ALLEN MORRIS, Deceased TO ALL CREDITORS:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Doris Allen Morris, who lived at 1158 Eastman, Birmingham, Michigan died June 4, 2001. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Doris Allen Grant, named personal representative, or to both the probate court at 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac and the named/proposed personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Doris Allen Grant
1152 Eastman
Birmingham, Michigan 48009
248-879-2000
Attorney: John A. Thurser P-21444
840 West Long Lake Road, Suite 200
Troy, Michigan 48060
248-879-2000

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