

WALLEYES FOR TOMORROW



Lake Gogebic Chapter

We need to start with a brief history of the person that saw a need to start a Walleyes For Tomorrow chapter here on Lake Gogebic. This person is Tim Long, who has a passion for Walleye fishing. Tim has been walleye fishing at a professional level for many years now and is an active member of the N.P.A.A. (National Professional Anglers Association), has his U.S. Coast Guard Captains License, and has been a walleye fishing guide (Eyes-Guy Guide Service) for the past 15 yrs. Tim was previously guiding on the Lake Winnebago system, the Bay of Green Bay, and part of the Wisconsin river system called the Petenwell Flowage. Currently Tim is guiding on the Lake Gogebic and the Bay of Green Bay for walleye. Tim has also fished walleye tournament circuits such as the PWT, FLW Tour, FLW League, MWC, and various others. Tim was an active member of the Fox Valley Chapter of Walleyes For Tomorrow on Lake Winnebago for about 10 years. Lake Winnebago has many similarities to Lake Gogebic, structure around the outer edge of the main lake and a mud flat down the center. The north end of the lake is shallow and weedy which is like the upper lakes on the Winnebago system.

Tim worked in the paper industry for 25+ years in Neenah, WI., and his wife in the hospitality business for the same 25+ yrs. Looking to make a career change, Tim and his family had been searching the Midwest for several years to purchase a resort. They settled on The Timbers Resort in Bergland MI. In June of 2008 they made that a reality. The facility is located on HWY M-28 on the north end of the lake. The resort has 11 fully furnished housekeeping cabins, a camping area, dock space, boat rentals, live bait sales, snowmobile trail permits, access to snowmobile trails from the resort, and ample parking for boat and snowmobile trailers.

Not long after his arrival to the Lake Gogebic area, Tim realized that Lake Gogebic needed to be managed differently than it has been in the past. Due to it being a unique body of water and the largest body of water in the U.P. (13,380 acres), Lake Gogebic has been a great fishing vacation destination for many people from around the country for decades. The State of Michigan has a general set of rules for all lakes in the state and nothing specific to the uniqueness of Lake Gogebic. Although Tim believes that a blanket set of rules has never helped any body of water, Walleyes For Tomorrow will remain a neutral

organization in regards to any legislative changes, but will try to enhance the walleye population by the projects that it undertakes. Legislative changes should be made by the DNR based on adequate scientific data that has been collected over a sufficient amount of time.

Tim has seen what Walleyes For Tomorrow has done for the Lake Winnebago System in Wisconsin. In the 1980's it was very difficult to catch a perch or walleye on the Winnebago system. Now, in 2010 Lake Winnebago is in the best shape that it has ever been in. The walleye and perch season is open year round where anglers normally are satisfied with their catches due in large part to the efforts of Walleyes For Tomorrow and the projects that they have done to enhance the walleye fishery.

After being here for several months and talking with the local anglers, and customers at the resort. Tim made a phone call to the W.F.T. organization inviting them to come up to the Lake Gogebic area and give a presentation to the local people on what the organization is all about. Mark Derricks, V.P. of Walleyes for Tomorrow Chapters, and his son Matt came up to the Lake Gogebic area and gave a power point / slide show presentation that was held at the Gogebic Lodge. 21 people were in attendance at that meeting. At the end of the presentation, the majority of the people wanted to form a chapter. A Board of Directors was formed that evening and a Walleyes for Tomorrow Lake Gogebic Chapter was started.

In our first year we organized and held our first annual fund raising banquet which was very successful. We brought in about \$10,000.00 and had a net of around \$6,000.00. Tim considered the first banquet to be a huge success. We currently have 108 members in our chapter to date. We are presently working with the Michigan DNR on our first lake project that we call "a Perch spawning Habitat Project". We have the support from our local Michigan DNR Marine Biologist (George Madison), and will be conducting this as a five year research project. Our goal in doing this project is to enhance the population of the yellow perch that this lake is so well known for. Lake Gogebic has seen a decline in the perch population over the past several years, and this project will also provide a natural food source for the walleye. By increasing the food source of the walleye and giving them a high protein diet we may be able to increase their growth rate, equal to that of other walleye lakes in the Mid-West.

The Lake Gogebic W.F.T. Board Members, chapter members, and other local organizations /associations are working together with the MI. DNR on ideas to enhance fishing on the lake. The W.F.T. organization will work hand and hand as a team with the Michigan DNR. We have independent funding and man power to implement the projects but need approval from the DNR to get these projects off the ground. We also have over 20 yrs. of experience to fall back on from the other 12 chapters of Walleyes for Tomorrow in Wisconsin. The proof is in the success of the projects that they have done in the past, and that a good working relationship with the DNR is the key to that success.

Walleyes For Tomorrow Lake Gogebic Chapter mission

The mission of Walleyes for Tomorrow is to undertake projects and activities that will improve the quality of walleye population.

This may be achieved by, but not limited to the following goals and methods;

- a. Water quality improvement
- b. Habitat quality improvement
- c. Spawning protection
- d. Stocking
- e. Promotion and support of studies and research
- f. Education of the public to increase awareness of resource needs

Walleyes for Tomorrow will provide the needed resources to achieve the above through the fundraising efforts of the local chapters.

Projects and activities by Walleyes for Tomorrow may be accomplished by Walleyes For Tomorrow alone or in collaboration with other conservation orientated organizations, federal, state, and local governmental agencies.

The Chapter presently meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Bergland Town Hall in Bergland at 6:30 EST. All members and those wishing to become members or receive more information about Walleyes For Tomorrow are welcome to attend meetings. For information on joining the Lake Gogebic Chapter contact one of the following: Chapter Chairman; Tim Long 906-575-3542, Vice Chairperson; Dave Anderson 906-229-5074, Secretary; Tony Piencikowski 920-252-0539, Treasurer; Bill Kenealy 906-828-3025, New member Chairperson; Brian Berquist 906-842-3321.

Walleyes For Tomorrow is a nonprofit organization. Its major fund raising banquet at the present time is an annual spring banquet. The next annual banquet will be at the Konteka in White Pine on May 7, 2011. Doors will open at 5pm with dinner at 6:30pm EST.

GIVE A MAN A FISH, AND FEED HIM FOR A DAY

TEACH A MAN TO FISH, AND FEED HIM FOR LIFE

This article Written in collaboration by: Tony & Sandy Piencikowski, Tim & Sarah Long