



## President's Message

I hope everyone is keeping their heads above water and sampling gear below water as we move into the thick of the field season. I'd like to use this column to share a few highlights from the March 2009 AFS Management Committee (MC) and Governing Board (GB) meetings in Bethesda that I attended on behalf of the Fisheries Management Section (FMS). These highlights are organized into several categories:

**Financial** – Like most investors, AFS has lost about 50 percent on its investments since the economic downturn last fall. As one response, the GB voted to raise the library journal subscription rate eight percent starting in 2010. This is a major revenue source for AFS, so if you have any ability to support your library's continued subscriptions, now would be a good time to do so. There is concern over the revenue stream for the 2009 AFS meeting in Nashville, but the hope is to at least break even with 1500-1600 attendees. These are tough times for many FMS members to travel, but please strongly consider attending if at all possible. Information on the meeting and registration is available at [www.fisheries.org/afs09](http://www.fisheries.org/afs09).

**Planning** – The MC spent an afternoon reviewing the new AFS Strategic Plan for 2010-2014. This document that is also called the AFS 2020 Vision was published in the May 2009 *Fisheries*. Comments are requested through [www.fisheries.org/forum](http://www.fisheries.org/forum) by July 15. After further Governing Board action, the plan should come before the full AFS membership at the annual business meeting on September 1. There are also plans for an electronic ballot. Another type of planning is President Elect Don Jackson's draft plan of work for 2009-2010 that he presented at the meeting. A unique feature of this is to have AFS officers visit each Division to learn about a fisheries issue of importance that would be written up later in *Fisheries*.

**New Initiatives** – There was strong support expressed by

the GB for a new Fish Habitat Section within AFS. This Section would obviously have some overlap with the FMS mission, but my view is that it would be discrete enough and I support its

formation. The vote for this new Section will occur at the annual meeting in Nashville. A new Emmeline Moore Award to recognize equal opportunity accomplishments was also approved.

**Old Business Resolved** – A draft AFS policy on Economic Growth and Fisheries that had been in various stages of review over four years was voted down. AFS President Bill Franzin provided a good history of this policy statement in the March 2009 *Fisheries*. Closer to home, the GB approved the continuation of the officer exchange program between the FMS, Fisheries Administration Section, and the Institute of Fisheries Management in the United Kingdom. Bill graciously allowed me to use the President's Hook column in the April 2009 *Fisheries* to provide the information shared with you in last newsletter to all AFS members.

I hope to see you at the annual FMS business meeting from 3-5 pm on Sunday August 30 in Nashville, TN. Feel free to contact me at [ron\\_essig@fws.gov](mailto:ron_essig@fws.gov) if you have any questions on the information I've shared above.

Ron Essig

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## **New Brown Trout Strain Evaluation Slated for the Cumberland Tailwater in Kentucky**

The Lake Cumberland tailwater trout fishery is the largest in Kentucky with 75.2 miles of suitable habitat available throughout the year. It receives the largest stocking allocation of all Kentucky tailwaters with 161,000 rainbow trout and 38,000 brown trout stocked annually. The brown trout stocked into the Lake Cumberland tailwater represent more than 83 percent of all brown trout stocked annually in Kentucky.



The rainbow trout fishery is managed as a put-grow-and-take fishery with a 15 - 20 inch protective slot limit. This slot limit offers anglers the ability to harvest smaller size rainbow trout, yet maintain a quality fishery by protecting those rainbow trout that grow into the 1520 inch slot limit. The brown trout fishery is managed as a trophy fishery with a 20 inch minimum size limit and 1 fish daily creel limit. All rainbow and brown trout stocked in the Lake Cumberland tailwater are reared at the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery located below Wolf Creek Dam. This hatchery currently rears two different strains of brown trout that are stocked into the tailwater.

The Plymouth Rock strain is considered more “domesticated”, while the Sheep Creek strain is considered more “wild.” Considerable research has been conducted that has evaluated characteristics and performance of different strains of stocked trout. This research has shown that some strains are easier to handle and exhibit faster growth or feed conversion than others. Under hatchery conditions, some “wild” strains have been shown to exhibit a higher degree of thermal tolerance than more “domesticated” strains. However, strain characteristics and performance in a hatchery situation may not translate into the same performance after stocking, particularly in systems as dynamic as most Southeastern tailwaters, including the Lake Cumberland tailwater.

Research in Virginia documented significantly different rates of harvest for five rainbow trout strains stocked in put-and-take streams, while another study showed that “domesticated” strains of trout survived at lower rates than did “wild” strains in two Austrian streams. Most importantly, a study in Michigan rivers documented that brown trout from wild broodstocks exhibited higher survival and growth rates than fish from two domestic strains.

Unfortunately, little information currently exists about the performance of either the Plymouth Rock or Sheep Creek strains of brown trout being stocked into the Lake Cumberland tailwater. Since the brown trout fishery in the tailwater is managed as a trophy fishery, it is imperative that stocked brown trout grow rapidly and reach trophy size in as short a time period as possible, in order to meet angler expectations of this fishery. An evaluation of the survival, growth, and susceptibility to angling of both these strains of brown trout is needed to fully optimize the stocking practices of brown trout in the Lake Cumberland tailwater.

Beginning in March 2009, brown trout from both strains will be uniquely marked to identify each strain following stocking into the Lake Cumberland tailwater. Monthly sampling of these strains will provide valuable information relating to survival, growth, and susceptibility to angling of both strains. Ultimately, this data will help better direct the Department’s ongoing efforts to optimally manage brown trout as a trophy fishery in the Lake Cumberland tailwater.





## How Important is Fisheries Funding



*Fisheries Managers Need to Weigh in!!*

In 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration Program (commonly known as Dingell-Johnson) brought the user pay/user benefit concept to fisheries management. Through this, anglers and tackle manufacturers pay an excise tax which is used to fund fisheries research and management activities that improve sport fishing. In 1984 boaters were brought into the fold (through the Wallop-Breaux amendments to the program) by applying the gas tax they pay to fisheries and boating access projects.

Few would question the benefits this program has had on improving fishing opportunities. We all cite statistics of how many fish have been stocked, boat ramps constructed, miles or acres of habitat improved, etc. In 2000, AFS published an entire special issue of "Fisheries" devoted to these types of success stories. But, to the companies that actually write those checks each quarter that fund this program, the question remains: what exactly does it mean to my business?

*While state and federal agencies often communicate success by how much we've "invested" (spent), business measures success by the return their company gets back on those investments.*

The support of the sport fishing industry was crucial for the passage of the original legislation and remains vital for continued support of the program in the halls of Washington D.C. and throughout the United States. In practice, individual companies write the checks that fund the Dingell-Johnson program. This tax is often the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> costliest item on a company's financial sheets and the amount paid may exceed company profits. To companies struggling to make payroll, increase profitability, or simply survive, knowing the quantitative return of this investment to their business is vital, and it is important to the continuation of this program that funds so many state fishery agencies' budgets.

To answer the question of "return on investment," the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is using a grant from the Multistate Conservation Grant Program to conduct an in-depth analysis of the cost/benefit relationship of fisheries enhancement and access projects. This will require identifying "case studies" of such projects for analysis.

### **We need your help with this!**

The minimum data needed to complete this analysis includes:

Investment (in dollar terms) made to improve the fishery or access.

Impact on participation and especially sales (angler days, angler expenditures, etc.).

These are the minimum elements needed, but additional data elements could also be used if available, including expenditures of anglers in the select fishery, etc.

If you know of such a project, please take a few minutes to tell us about it by visiting

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s/118711/identification-of-potential-case-studies>

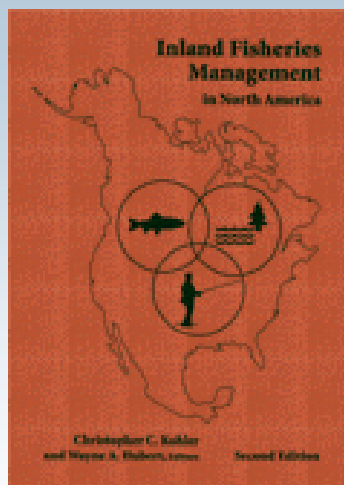
If you have any questions or are not sure if your project would be of interest, please contact Andrew Loftus at [aloftus@andrewloftus.com](mailto:aloftus@andrewloftus.com) Thank you!



## Status of *Inland Fisheries Management in North America*, 3rd edition

Mid-year Report to the  
Fisheries Management Section  
and  
Education Section,  
American Fisheries Society

January 15, 2009



Prepared by  
Wayne A. Hubert and Michael C. Quist, Co-editors

Substantial progress has been in the production of the third edition of *Inland Fisheries Management in North America*. The book will include a total of 21 chapters individually authored by one to three individuals. A tiered process is being used in the editing process. Upon submission of the first draft of manuscripts to the editors, the editors provide an initial review to assure proper content and format. The manuscript is then returned to authors for revision and a second draft is received from the authors. If there are not issues with the second draft it is sent to three anonymous peers for review and comment. Reviewers' comments and guidance by the editors is then returned to assist authors in the preparation of a third draft. Upon reception of the third draft, the editors determine if it is suitable for copy editing and additional revision is requested if deemed necessary. To date, the editors have not yet received first drafts of 5 chapters. First drafts have been received for 3 chapters and the authors are now preparing second drafts for peer review. A second draft has been completed for 4 chapters that are currently undergoing peer review. Peer reviews have been obtained for 7 chapters the authors are working on the third draft. Two chapters are ready for copy editing.

Drawing of figures by a graphic artist will begin shortly. We hope that third drafts ready for copy editing by the AFS books department will be completed for all chapters prior to the 2009 annual meeting of the society. Authors are being strongly encouraged to address the writing process.



## **JUDGES NEEDED FOR AFS!**

Judges are needed for the best student paper oral and poster presentations at the 139th meeting of the American Fisheries Society in Nashville. If you are interested in judging, please contact:

Jim Peterson, Committee chair - Best student paper presentation ([Peterson@warnell.uga.edu](mailto:Peterson@warnell.uga.edu)) or

Rich Fulford, Committee chair - Best student poster presentation ([Richard.Fulford@usm.edu](mailto:Richard.Fulford@usm.edu)).



# FISHERIES SAFETY HANDBOOK RELEASED

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The Professional Safety Committee of the American Fisheries Society has completed work on a Fisheries Safety Handbook. The 8-member committee was given the charge of creating greater awareness of safety issues within the fisheries profession. These safety issues include defensive driving, boating safety, electrofishing safety, CPR/AED (automated external defibrillator) and first aid raining, fish handling safety (injuries from spines and fins), pesticide application certification training (rotenone and aquatic herbicides), underwater and diving safety, and laboratory safety (chemical safety, slippery floors).

The Handbook will assist researchers, educators, managers, and administrators involved in the fields of fishery and aquatic science and resources management in creating a safe and productive work environment.

The Handbook can be viewed/printed on the AFS Web site at:

[http://www.fisheries.org/afs/docs/policy\\_safety.pdf](http://www.fisheries.org/afs/docs/policy_safety.pdf)

## Kentucky Fisheries Division Declares War on Hydrilla

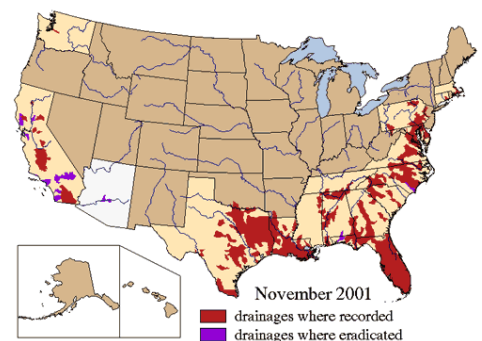
District fisheries biologists will have a battle on their hands in the eastern fishery district. The invasive aquatic plant Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) has been found in Dewey, Paintsville and Carr Creek lakes. Hydrilla is a nonnative aquatic plant, that can be highly detrimental to fish and wildlife through alteration of habitat and displacement of native aquatic plants. Hydrilla is a fast growing plant that can have stalks up to 25 feet long. This plant has been shown to grow 1 inch per day and a single tuber can produce 6,000 new tubers per square meter.

Hydrilla forms thick mats that hinder boating, fishing and other recreational activities. The mats become so thick that they don't provide good habitat for larger fish. In its early establishment, hydrilla may be considered by some to be good fishing habitat since it is somewhat sparse. However, over time the plants mats become so thick that they are unfishable and what was once productive water becomes unusable.

One of the problems with hydrilla is the fact that it reproduces through regrowth of plant fragments. That means when a boat motor tears through the plant, all of the fragments settle to the bottom of the lake and start new plants. This can also be an issue when plant fragments are transported on boat motors and trailers from one lake to another. Someone fishing at Dewey Lake may travel to another lake without hydrilla the next day. When they launch their boat the next day, the plant fragments are deposited in the new lake and may start a new hydrilla colony. Currently, the highest management priority is at Dewey Lake. Hydrilla has covered 206 acres of the lake, including many access areas and the Jenny Wiley State Park marina. The goal will be to keep the hydrilla at a manageable level since complete eradication is virtually impossible.

KDFWR will be working with the U.S. Army Corps. to come up with a plan to treat Dewey Lake. This plan will use a combination of aquatic herbicide application along with a low stocking rate of grass carp. Ten acres of priority areas have been designated and they will be chemically treated 3 times per year. Along with the chemical treatment a total of 1030 grass carp will be stocked to feed on the hydrilla.

Management of the hydrilla by KDFWR fisheries staff will go a long way to maintain fishing, hunting and recreational opportunities at Dewey Lake. However, we will also need help from anglers, hunters and recreational boaters. Signs will be posted at several lakes to inform the public of the dangers of transporting hydrilla between lakes. These signs will offer plant identification and boat/trailer cleaning tips. A better understanding of this invasive plant will help prevent its spread in Kentucky.





## Operation Mongoose: Northern Snakehead *Channa argus* Eradication Piney and Little Piney Creeks, Arkansas



On April 14, 2008, a single northern snakehead *Channa argus* was documented on a gravel farm road in Lee County, Arkansas. In the days following the initial discovery, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) fisheries biologists sampled irrigation ditches that were in proximity to the farm road where the original specimen was discovered. The sampling yielded an additional 90+ northern snakeheads (NSH). Additionally, during this sampling event, AGFC biologists confirmed the presence of NSH in Piney Creek. During the following weeks, a large-scale, multi-agency sampling effort was conducted to evaluate the extent of the NSH infestation. While NSH were collected throughout the Piney Creek drainage, none were observed in the adjacent drainages, Big Creek and Cox Cypress Creek. This indicated that the NSH population was confined to Piney Creek and its associated tributaries (including Little Piney Creek).

Northern snakeheads are native to China and parts of Russia. The occurrences of northern snakeheads in the United States have been associated with Asian live-food markets. While no adverse effects on sport fish populations have been documented in waters containing NSH in the United States, concerns persist as to the impact that NSH could potentially have on native fisheries. These concerns are supported by several biological and behavioral traits of the NSH. Northern snakeheads are obligate air-breathers, can spawn up to five times during a season, practice dual parental care, and prefer vegetated backwater areas. Considering these traits, it is obvious how a population of NSH could easily become established in the delta habitat of Piney Creek. Combining these traits with the unknown threat potential, the biological concerns are warranted. Therefore, it was the objective of AGFC to take a pro-active approach and attempt to control the spread of the existing NSH population from the Piney Creek drainage. A complete eradication of all fish in the drainage using the fish toxicant rotenone was proposed by the AGFC Fisheries Division and approved (and financially supported) by the agency's board of commissioners. Continued on next page.....

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

## Operation Mongoose: Northern Snakehead *CONTINUED*

The eradication effort was operated according to the Incident Command System (ICS) created by FEMA and other federal agencies to provide communications and logistics structure to large-scale operations, which involve large incident areas, numerous task forces, and multiple agencies. The ICS facilitated this operation very well and is recommended for other agencies that may encounter such situations.

The eradication consisted of aerially applying 11,355 L of liquid rotenone and hand-distributing 8,172 kg of powdered rotenone to over 700 km of creeks, ditches, and backwater areas within the 20,250 ha Piney Creek watershed. At any given time, there were up to 110 individuals actively involved in the eradication, assessment, or support of the project. GIS technology was a crucial tool throughout the planning and implementation process. As many as 250 tactical maps were produced daily to guide the eradication and assessment crews. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was an essential partner of the AGFC in this effort. The USFWS provided a helicopter, pilot and support crew for aerial application of liquid rotenone, Marsh Masters with operators, and numerous field personnel. The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) also partnered with the AGFC and USFWS in this project and provided numerous student volunteers for post-treatment assessment and data collection. Additional assistance during this project was provided by biologists from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and several student volunteers from Arkansas Tech University (ATU) and the University of Arkansas (UA). A private helicopter was also contracted for additional aerial applications of rotenone.

Post-treatment assessments indicated that the eradication was a success. Hundreds of dead NSH were collected and no live fish were observed in any of the treated areas. This eradication effort will allow AGFC fisheries biologists and UCA researchers some additional time to further assess and monitor the threat potential of this species. It also allows time for biologists and researchers to plan additional NSH control measures in Arkansas and within other areas of the Mississippi River Basin.

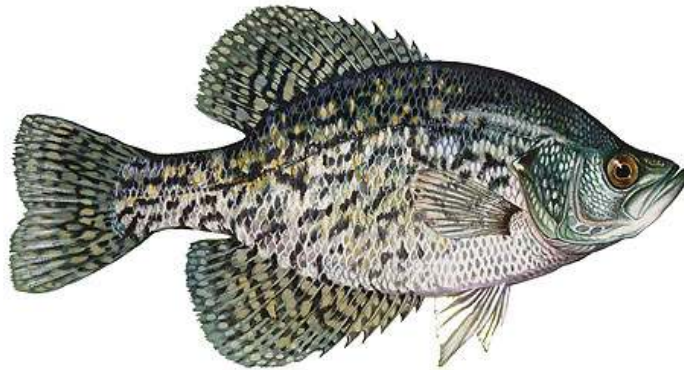


## ***Study to answer if stocked crappie can improve Kentucky/Barkley Lake populations***

It should be no surprise that crappie are a primary sport fish in Kentucky. In fact, crappie ranks a close second to black bass in terms of popularity in Kentucky and Barkley lakes, two of Kentucky's largest reservoir. During the spring, these areas come alive with anglers who are looking to catch the first big bite of the year. This is not just a local craze, as boat ramps begin to fill up with vehicles from states all around Kentucky and beyond. This flood of anglers is pretty much guaranteed from year to year even if the crappie fishing is not so consistent.

Crappie populations tend to run in cycles. Some years there are good spawns, while in other years they just do not live up to their potential. This happens for a number of reasons, including water level fluctuations, unfavorable weather conditions, and a lack of suitable spawning habitat. In the case of Kentucky and Barkley lakes, weather conditions and inconsistent water levels a couple of years ago resulted in poor spawns of white crappie, which means lower numbers of harvestable size fish today.

This was anticipated by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), who reduced the creel limit from 30 to 20 fish in 2008. But this may not be enough to fully protect the white crappie population and keep anglers coming back for more. In Kentucky, stocking is always an option when a sport fish population needs a boost. It happens with several different species from largemouth bass to catfish, but has never been done for white crappie. Other states including Tennessee and Alabama have stocked crappie with either excellent or marginal success. Because there is a chance for success and the high demand for more stable crappie populations, the KDFWR fisheries division will be starting a new research project on white crappie stocking in the Commonwealth.



Currently, biologists are collecting adult white crappie from various areas around the state, including Kentucky, Barkley, Taylorsville, and Green River lakes, which will be used at Minor Clark Fish Hatchery as brood stock. These adults should spawn this spring in hatchery ponds and produce enough 3 inch white crappie fingerlings by November to stock four different lakes in Kentucky. Carr Creek, Taylorsville, Barkley (Little River embayment), and Kentucky (Blood River embayment) lakes are all slated to receive white crappie fingerlings at a rate of 10 fish/acre. These fish will be marked prior to being stocked so that they can be separated from the natural white crappie on down the road. The lakes will be stocked in the same way for three consecutive years and then monitored to see how they contribute to the natural population and more importantly, what contribution they make to the anglers' catch.

The overall goal is to determine if poor year classes of white crappie can be successfully offset by supplemental stocking. And if we can develop this capability, then we may be able to use it as a tool to keep anglers on fish, regardless of whether or not the lake and Mother Nature decide to cooperate.

## A TASTE OF SOMETHING TO COME!

### Standard Methods for Sampling North American Freshwater Fishes

Scott A. Bonar, Wayne Hubert and David Willis

Standardization in industry, medicine and science has led to great advances. However, despite its benefits, freshwater fish sampling is generally unstandardized, or at most standardized locally. Standardization across large regions would allow for measurement of large-scale effects of climate or geography on fish populations; larger sample sizes to evaluate management techniques; reliable means to document rare species; easier communication; and simpler data sharing. With increased interaction among fisheries professionals worldwide, reasons for wide-scale standardization are more compelling than ever. The Fish Management Section of the American Fisheries Society in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, USGS Cooperative Research Units Program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, AFS Education and Computer User's Sections, and Arizona Game and Fish Department developed a book of standard sampling methods for North America. The book is currently in press and is scheduled for publication late spring or early summer 2009. In total, 284 biologists and managers from 107 agencies, universities and private industries contributed to the book as authors, reviewers or sponsors. Almost 50 Mexican, Canadian, and United States sampling experts are authors.

*Standard Methods for Sampling North American Freshwater Fishes* describes standard methods to sample fish in specific environments so population indices can be more easily compared across regions and time. Environments include ponds, reservoirs, natural lakes, streams and rivers containing cold and warmwater fishes. This book provides rangewide and regional averages; calculated from over 4000 data sets from 42 states and provinces; of size structure, CPUE, growth, and condition for common fishes collected using methods discussed. Biologists can use these data to determine if fish from their waterbody are below, above, or at average for an index. These methods were reviewed by 54 representatives from 33 North American agencies and by biologists from five European and one African countries. Final drafts were reviewed by an additional 36 sampling experts. These procedures will be useful to those hoping to benefit from standard sampling programs in their regions.



## OSU starts graduate program in fisheries management

Oregon State University officials believe the school will be the first to offer a comprehensive graduate certificate program in fisheries management when it introduces the program in the fall. The online program <<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/online-degrees/graduate/fisheries-management>> is directed toward fisheries managers who want graduate-level training while still working, said Michael Harte, an OSU professor who will coordinate the program.

Other universities provide fulltime graduate programs or one-term study programs. The OSU certificate requires 18 hours of graduate credit and an applied "capstone" project. Courses will be taught by experts in OSU's College of Atmospheric Sciences, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Hatfield Marine Science Center <<http://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/>> and other colleges. In addition to OSU colleagues, Harte worked with international fisheries management organizations and fisheries stakeholder groups to create a comprehensive curriculum. Harte said he hopes to enroll 50 to 60 participants in the first couple of years of the program and expand to 200. The program will include operations in freshwater and marine fisheries management.

--The Oregonian





## Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Snakeheads

Personnel with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries continued to sample the Potomac River tributaries as part of a northern snakehead investigation. Boat electrofishing samples ( $n=11$ ) in 2008 were commensurate with previous years, and effort was largely confined to the three core tributaries in the center of distribution (Little Hunting Creek, Dogue Creek and Pohick/Accotink complex). Boat electrofishing mean catch rate of northern snakehead was 4.8 fish per hour which represented an increase from 2007 (2.9 fish per hour) but was still below the record catch rate in 2006 (6.1 fish per hour). However, ANOVA ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) did not detect significant differences between catch rates in recent years. Mean catch rate since 2004 was 3.2 fish per hour, but variability was high ( $CV=72\%$ ). The linear trend continued to indicate an increasing population ( $r^2=0.47$ ,  $n=5$ ).

Reported angler catches (52) were nearly identical to those reported in 2007 (53). Both years represented more reported catches than during 2004-2006 combined. The linear trend indicated an increasing population ( $r^2=0.85$ ,  $n=5$ ). Results of a creel survey conducted at Virginia boat ramps south of Washington, D.C. from June-October, 2008 suggested angler catch rate of northern snakehead may have been higher than anticipated. There were an estimated 201 northern snakeheads caught during the period, and 27% of the 290 anglers interviewed reported catching one or more snakeheads. Only 3% of anglers reported actually targeting snakeheads as some time, but none claimed they were targeting snakeheads the day of interview. Range, based on reported angler catches, increased dramatically in 2009 with the catch of a snakehead in a fyke net 20 miles below the previously known downstream limit of distribution. Currently, known colonized waters include approximately 70 miles of the mainstem Potomac River from just below Great Falls downstream to Upper Machodoc Creek (King George County, Virginia) including tributaries within Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. Between the upstream gradient barrier of Great Falls and the salinity barrier below King George County, it is unclear how much more area northern snakeheads will colonize. For more information, contact John Odenkirk, 540-899-4169 x117, [john.odenkirk@dgif.virginia.gov](mailto:john.odenkirk@dgif.virginia.gov).



**April 30, 2009**

## ***Coordinated Statement on Reauthorization Agreement***

The **Angling & Boating Alliance** is an ad hoc coalition of national recreational boating, angling, outdoor recreation organizations, conservation groups, and state boating safety and natural resources agencies committed to the sustainable future of the Sportfish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund ("Trust Fund"). The Alliance has reached consensus agreement on reauthorization priorities and statutory changes to ensure the Trust Fund's continued vitality and success as a "user pays, user benefits" program. The agreement is detailed below.

### ***About the Trust Fund***

The Sportfish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund serves as the backbone for conservation funding in the United States—a uniquely American System of Conservation Funding—and is a critical funding pool for a diverse set of important state and national recreational fishing and boating programs, including recreational boating safety, fisheries management, habitat conservation, vessel pump-out stations, water and boating access infrastructure programs, aquatic resource education programs, and angler and boater outreach, among others. Funding for the Trust Fund is attained through a "user tax" system, in which excise taxes on fishing tackle and equipment, motorboat fuel, and import duties on recreational boats and fishing equipment are collected for the various Sportfish Restoration programs operating under the Dingell-Johnson Sportfish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777). These combined excise taxes and duties on the boating and fishing communities generate nearly \$700 million annually.

The Trust Fund was most recently reauthorized in 2005 as part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users or "SAFETEA-LU" [Public Law 109-59, title XI, subtitle B, part 2, section 11115, approved August 10, 2005,] as amended by the Sportfishing and Recreational Boating Safety Amendments Act of 2005 [Public Law 109-74, approved September 29, 2005]. The Trust Fund is up for reauthorization as part of the 2009 Highway Bill.

### ***Alliance Agreement on Statutory Amendments to the Trust Fund***

- ☐ To ensure equity among all aspects of the Trust Fund, all administrative costs for both the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) will be taken before any percentage distributions to the remaining accounts. Because administrative functions of both federal agencies benefit all stakeholders, the Alliance agrees that these costs should be shared equally among all Trust Fund beneficiaries.
- ☐ In recognition of both the current economic climate and the likelihood that revenues for the Trust Fund will decline to some extent in immediate future years, the Alliance agrees that the current administrative cost baselines for both USFWS and USCG should remain at FY2009 actual levels as a hard figure—rather than a percentage of the Trust Fund—and be adjusted annually by the CPI. Continued on following page.....

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- ☐ To ensure equity among all aspects of the Trust Fund, the Alliance agrees that all set aside costs, such as those for commissions, councils, and grant programs, will be absorbed by the appropriate account (e.g., State Boating Safety, Sport Fish Restoration).
- ☐ To partially restore original legislative intent with respect to the Coastal Wetlands program, the Alliance agrees that the percentage allocation for Coastal Wetlands should be reduced from 18.5% to 18.3%. Coastal Wetlands, which was intended to receive the funds raised from the small engine excise tax, currently receives significantly more dollars than this excise tax generates.
- ☐ The Alliance agrees that in order to offset the impact of anticipated revenue declines for the crucial Clean Vessel Act (CVA) and Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) programs, and to take advantage of current lower real estate market values, the percentage allocation for each of these programs should be increased by .1% from 2.0% to 2.1%.
- ☐ The Alliance believes that Outreach & Participation is a critical component of the Trust Fund, particularly given the current economic climate. Therefore, the Alliance agrees to support an increase to the Outreach and Participation percentage allocation from 2.0% to 2.2%.
- ☐ The Alliance agrees to support an adjustment of the Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) percentage allocation from 57% to 56.8%.
- ☐ The Alliance, in recognition of the importance of recreational boating safety and the need for equity in the funding of federal advisory committees, agrees to add a line item of \$200,000 within the State Boating Safety Grant account for the National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC).
- ☐ The Alliance agrees that the federal/state match requirement for Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) grants should be 75% federal funds and 25% state funds.
- ☐ The Alliance agrees there should be a statutory Maintenance of Effort clause in the Recreational Boating Safety Program.
- ☐ In recognition of the importance of ensuring recreational access to waterways and of the need to have a coordinated approach to water access, the Alliance agrees that the statute should be amended to make available up to \$300,000 from the 15% allocation for water access under the Sport Fish Restoration account, subject to a competitive bidding process, for non-profit entities to address specific access concerns.
- ☐ The Alliance, in recognition of the importance of the USCG Manufacturing Compliance Program and anticipated increased future needs as a result of the current economic climate, supports modifying the statutory minimum funding for the program from \$2 million to \$2.25 million. Continued on following page.....

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- ☐ In recognition of anticipated future needs with respect to the USCG National Recreational Boating Survey, and in recognition of the importance of the data to be provided by this survey, the Alliance agrees to commit, in future reauthorization efforts, to discussions to identify a direct funding stream for this survey.
- ☐ In order to increase transparency, reporting, and accountability, the Alliance agrees that the current statute should be amended to require program administrators for each program under the Trust Fund to submit reports twice yearly to all relevant stakeholders on expenditures, accomplishments, and other crucial information with respect to the implementation of each program's mission. Additionally, the Alliance agrees current law should be amended to require such reporting to the relevant Councils to update stakeholders of the Trust Fund.
- ☐ In recognition of new challenges and opportunities associated with access to recreational water bodies and in awareness of new environmental requirements in states across the nation, the Alliance agrees to allow (but not require) a certain portion of Clean Vessel Act program dollars to be spent on a specific set of capital improvement and infrastructure projects to support clean marine programs, such as: power wash-down stations at ingresses to water bodies, including marinas; containment & treatment stations at marinas; and other such infrastructure projects. The Alliance agrees to a maximum allowance of not more than 25% of state-apportioned CVA program dollars to be used for such purposes.
- ☐ In recognition of the trend for recreational water bodies and fisheries being closed to recreational angling and boating access in a manner not consistent with scientific evidence, sound policy, or any available data to justify such closures and restrictions, the Alliance agrees to amend current law, or the Code of Federal Regulations, to make ineligible the use of any Trust Fund dollars for such closures.

#### ***About the Alliance***

*The Angling and Boating Alliance is an informal partnership of national recreational boating and fishing organizations, industry representatives, outdoor recreation organizations, conservation groups, and state boating safety and natural resource agencies. The mission of the Alliance is to protect the Trust Fund, lead a national advocacy effort for the Trust Fund's reauthorization as part of the Federal Highway Bill during the 111th Congress, and communicate the importance of the fund to the new Administration. The members of the Angling & Boating Alliance Steering Committee are: American Recreation Coalition (ARC); American Sportfishing Association (ASA); Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA); Association of Marina Industries (AMI); B.A.S.S. / ESPN Outdoors; Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatU.S.); Coastal Conservation Association (CCA); Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF); Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA); National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA); National Boating Federation (NBF); National Marine Manufacturers , and trout unlimited*

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