



# THE SMALLMOUTH HORIZON

Helping to Protect and Preserve Quality Smallmouth Bass Fishing

August 2008

Summertime — and the livin' is easy. Smallmouth are jumpin' and the corn is high.

With apologies to George Gershwin.

Smallmouth are indeed jumping and it's time you got out and caught a few for yourself!

On Saturday, August 9th, Steve Winters will be leading a club outing to fish for smallmouth on the Wisconsin River below Stevens Point. Steve says that this is really a nice piece of water and it would be a shame to miss this opportunity.

We will meet for breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at the Four Star Family restaurant at exit 151 off interstate 39 at Plover. Just exit right and the restaurant is about 100 yards on your left. They have decent food, and a large parking lot for those who may be towing boats. It's about 105 miles and a two hour drive from downtown Madison.

Here are the directions to the two landings on the river that our group will be using: Take I-39 to exit 156 (county highway HH) and go west for 2.6 miles to where HH turns left. Turn left on HH and go another 1.5 miles, which will take you just across the Wisconsin River, and turn left on River Road. Take River Road .8 of a mile and the landing for the Smallmouth special regs section is on the left.

There is a blue boat fishing access sign at the driveway entrance to the landing. For those members who want to fish for Muskies as well as Smallmouth, and have the opportunity to fish either a flowage or the river proper, you will continue another 1.2 miles further on River Road and turn left on Blue Heron Lane. The landing and large parking area are at the end of Blue Heron Lane.



This landing is one of the access points for the Biron Flowage, which supports good numbers of Smallmouth and is one of the best Muskie fisheries in southern Wisconsin. There is also about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of river upstream from the landing that offers some wade fishing opportunities at normal August river levels. Both stretches offer some really nice fishing opportunities, and are not usually crowded, even on weekends.

Members with any kind of craft from canoes to large motorboats will find this stretch of the river very enjoyable. There are also numerous shore fishing possibilities along River Road. Alternatively, if you don't have a boat and are looking for someone who does to fish with, call Steve Winters and he will see what can be arranged. Weather permitting, this should be a fun time for everyone. Call Steve Winters at 608-524-6348 for more details.



Above is a picture of Kieth Becker and his grandson, Joshua, taken on July 25th on the trip they purchased at WSA's auction in April. The trip was for White Bass, but these two Smallmouth just happened to be part of the day's adventure. Yup, White Bass were also captured & released during the day.  
Steve Winters

Right: "Larry Motherhead and I fished Lake Mendota for Northern Pike Sunday Morning July 20th. We were only on the water two and a half hours and caught 10 Northerns. Only one was under 30". The rest mostly being 34" and above with two at 38" and the largest a 43" Pike. What a wonderful fish — an angler's dream. I need to especially thank Larry for this fish as he let me use his rod to catch it. This could have easily been his. Another great day on the water!"

Jeff Western



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Articles, photos, information, and calendar events for the newsletter are encouraged and should be submitted by the 1st day of the month of issue to: Dan Johnson, 426 Glenway St., Madison WI 53711. If possible, MSWord files sent to: [johnson7@tds.net](mailto:johnson7@tds.net) are most appreciated.

## DNR helping dam owners assess and repair flood damage

MADISON – With record high waters receding in many southern Wisconsin communities, state dam safety engineers are helping owners of Wisconsin's public and private dams finish assessing the damage and where to go next.

"DNR staff inspected or had contact with the owners of more than 200 dams during the flooding. The good news is that, for the most part, the dams held up well and did what they were supposed to do," says Meg Galloway, Department of Natural Resources Dam Safety Chief. "There was no loss of life, and the five dams that were breached were low hazard, rural dams, with only minor damage reported downstream."

Heavy rains that started June 7 and continued for much of the next two weeks led to record flows on waters including major rivers such as the Baraboo, Rock, Milwaukee, Bark and Root. A portion of five dams in southern Wisconsin were breached and unable to hold back the impounded waters, Galloway says. Those dams were: the Cushman Dam on the Bark River, the Carlin Dam on Upper Spring Creek, and the Lower Spring Creek Dam in Jefferson County. The Wyocena Dam on Duck Creek also was breached, as was the Figor Dam on the Middle Branch of Duck Creek, and an unauthorized dam in Grant County.

Lake Delton drained when floodwaters washed out a section of road, but the dam itself held.

The five dams that were breached are rated "low hazard" because they have few people and buildings downstream, and thus a lower potential for loss of life or property damage.

Another 23 dams are estimated to have substantial damage, while at least 31 others suffered minor damage. Damage assessments are still to come on about 20 more dams once the water recedes to allow for such inspections, Galloway says.

Regional engineers are now working with the owners of damaged dams on repair or reconstruction, and for those owners who no longer want the liability of owning dams, removing them. DNR has ordered owners of some of the damaged dams to draw down water levels to allow inspections to be completed, or to reduce the risk of failure and damage should more flooding occur before work is done to repair, replace or remove the dams.

Many of the 200 dams DNR inspected or contacted dam owners about during the June flooding had been inspected by DNR during last August's flooding. "We ordered a handful of dam owners to draw down water levels, and we think that probably

prevented more breaches from occurring during June's flooding," she says.

Altogether, DNR staff have completed 543 dam inspections in the past year, including those in response to the flooding concerns. All of the state's high hazard dams are current on their inspections; under state law, the DNR is required to perform comprehensive inspections of these dams every 10 years.

The department also has been focusing on getting dam owners – many of them private citizens or companies – to prepare their required emergency action plans. Such plans identify the area potentially affected by a dam failure, who to call, and the people and local officials responsible for responding in case of a dam failure.

"The past year's been a textbook example of why it's important for dam owners to meet their responsibility for developing an emergency action plan and making sure the appropriate people are aware of it and can carry it out," Galloway says.

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## An update on flood damage to Southwest Wisconsin smallmouth streams

Wisconsin DNR fisheries biologist, Bradd Sims, reports that the habitat work completed on Blockhouse Creek has survived this summer's severe flooding. What did not survive was the original bank of rock placed by the Department of Transportation.

This bank was used to re-meander Blockhouse into its new channel. The top 2 feet was lost and the stream has created a second channel. There are now two stream channels which anglers can fish so that might not be all bad.

After completing some miscellaneous training surveys and talking with some anglers, Bradd says that the smallmouth have already established themselves in the second channel. The main Blockhouse channel still has above normal flows and is holding adult and yearling fish just as it always has.

He goes on to say, "The majority of the smallmouth bass sampling will be completed late July into August, and researchers complete their reports in September. We will have a good picture of flooding impacts after all our surveys are complete. As of now it looks as though the adult smallmouth populations have held on and are doing well. However, with all the high water that we have experienced, spawning conditions in our wadeable streams will be poor and we do not expect a good year class this season.

Bradd works out of the Dodgeville office and will be giving us future updates on the smallie streams in his area

# Our Next Meeting:

Join us for a smallmouth outing on the Wisconsin River on Saturday August 9th. See details in this issue.

# Upcoming Events:

- Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup> Meet 8:30 A.M.  
Wisconsin River below Stevens Point  
Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance outing. See details in this issue.
- Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00 P.M.  
Mapletree Restaurant, McFarland  
WSA monthly meeting.  
Bob Harrison, "North Country Pike"
- Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> 7:00 P.M.  
Mapletree Restaurant, McFarland  
BFF monthly meeting.  
Program T.B.A.
- Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> 7:00 P.M.  
Mapletree Restaurant, McFarland  
WSA monthly meeting. DNR biologist Tim Larson on Wisconsin River smallmouth populations between the Dells and Sauk dams.
- Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup> 7:00 P.M.  
Mapletree Restaurant, McFarland  
BFF monthly meeting.  
Program T.B.A.
- Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> 7:00 P.M.  
Mapletree Restaurant, McFarland  
WSA monthly meeting.  
Guide Ron Barefield on Lake Mendota and Wisconsin River smallmouth fishing.