

Muskie Anglers Passionate about Preservation of Recourse



If muskie fishing has an “official” home, it might be Hayward, Wis., where you’ll find the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum – a huge muskie structure is the centerpiece – and the Chippewa Flowage, where the world’s largest muskie was caught in 1949.

When it comes to the marquee muskie tournament, home is Leech Lake. Or Lake Bemidji. Or Lake Winnibigoshish ...

Those popular muskie fisheries are just three of 20 in northern Minnesota that are part of the Frank Schneider Jr. Memorial Muskie Tournament.

Yes, 20. And like the fish at the center of this longtime annual event, everything associated with the Frank Schneider is trophy-sized, with an emphasis on keeping these fisheries

trophy-worthy – a multi-lake, multi-county event with hundreds of participants that has become a blueprint for going the extra mile to protect the resource.



The Frank Schneider, which celebrated its 50th year in September 2017, has accomplished that almost in spite of those muskie-sized numbers. Consider the following from the 2017 milestone event:

- Nearly 500 anglers participated in the three-day tournament.
- Those anglers registered 90 muskies 40 inches or longer (all photographed and immediately released, per the event's rules).

- The tournament venue spanned those 20 northern Minnesota lakes, over four tournament “zones,” from Bemidji to Longville.

According to the Twin Cities chapter of Muskies Inc., which hosts the tournament, the event is held on more lakes, for more hours, with more participants competing for the largest guaranteed cash prize than any other muskie tournament in the country.



The tournament is ultimately a fundraiser to support all things muskies for the chapter, particularly stocking efforts. And all things considered, in this day and age of aquatic invasive species and with an emphasis on protecting the resource, the Frank Schneider has become the poster child for just that.

Just ask those whose job it is to oversee the protection of those resources.

“The number of participants and the fact that they pioneered a catch-and-immediate-release format for such a large event, and the dedication of its sponsors to the betterment of muskie fishing in Minnesota,” Henry Drewes of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources said of what makes the Frank Schneider so special.

Drewes, longtime DNR regional fisheries manager in Bemidji, has been reviewing and issuing permits for the Frank Schneider for 20 years. In that time, he’s been impressed with how the tournament is all about protecting the resource.



“They are exclusively catch-photo-release, and anglers have to sign off on an invasive species waiver form, and they have to pre-select waters to fish to reduce the possibility of moving water and invasive species to other basins,” Drewes told *Minnesota Traditions*, which celebrates events like the Frank

Schneider, embracing the natural resources that they call home. (For more, go to <http://www.minnesotatraditions.com>)

And the future is bright.

“I will add,” Drewes said, “that they are actively trying to get youth involved.”

This information is produced and distributed by the Mississippi Headwaters Board in an effort to motivate everyone to protect our natural resources. A recreation based lifestyle is part of our MN Traditions and is only preserved when we protect our aquatic resources from invaders such as zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil. To support Minnesota Traditions join us on social media here <https://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaTraditions/> , <https://twitter.com/MNTraditions> and look to <http://www.minnesotatraditions.com> for more information

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