



Early ice is not safe, wear life jackets on cold water

With daytime temperatures still climbing above freezing even in the northern parts of the state, the Minnesota DNR is reminding outdoor enthusiasts to stay clear of early ice and use extreme caution when recreating on dangerously cold water.

Although some locations in the northern and western regions of the state were reporting ice formation at the end of November, the recent fluctuations in weather have led to degraded ice conditions and warnings from public safety officials to stay off the ice until at least 4 inches of new, clear ice is present.

“No fish is worth the risk of going through thin ice,” said DNR conservation officer Lt. Adam Block. “At this point, it is going to take several consecutive days of below-

freezing temperatures before enough solid ice has formed to support foot traffic, and even longer before ATVs and snowmobiles should be on the ice.”

A recent tragedy occurred in northern Minnesota when two anglers lost their lives after breaking through thin ice on their ATV. Several emergency ice rescues have also taken place over the last few weeks. Last winter, two people died after breaking through the ice.

Block stressed that once ice formation picks up again, it will be important to stay vigilant about safety on the ice, since conditions can be unpredictable and vary greatly even on the same body of water.

“In addition to checking conditions locally and being prepared

with an ice safety kit, anyone recreating on hard water should be wearing a life jacket,” Block said. “A life jacket is the one piece of equipment that exponentially increases your odds of not drowning from cold water shock, hypothermia or exhaustion should you fall through the ice.”

General ice safety guidelines

No ice can ever be considered “safe ice,” but following [these guidelines](#) can help minimize the risk:

- Carry ice picks, rope, an ice chisel and tape measure.
- Check ice thickness at regular intervals – conditions can change quickly.

Early ice not safe

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*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year*

Membership in the GLSFC

Thanks to all the members who have supported us financially with their dues and donations these many years. As we wind down our 46th year we are reminded of the many friends we have acquired in the sport fishing-conservation community; we are truly blessed. And we thank you for your continued support.

Oil drilling in ANWR moves ahead as part of Senate tax bill

Republicans took a major step forward in their decades-long fight to open a piece of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling.

Included as part of the sweeping tax reform bill passed by the Senate in a 51-to-49 vote is a highly controversial provision to allow energy exploration in a 1.5 million-acre swath of ANWR known as the "1002 area," which lies along the coast. In total, ANWR spans more than 19 million acres.

The drilling provision was seen as key to getting Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Alaska Republican, on board with the tax bill.

"Opening the 1002 Area and tax reform both stand on their own, but combining them into the same bill, and then successfully passing that bill, makes this a great day to be an Alaskan," she said in a statement after the measures passed. "I thank all of the senators who spent time learning about our opportunities and needs, and who joined us in voting for Alaska. We are grateful for their support and eager to take the next steps for this pro-jobs, pro-growth, and pro-energy legislation."

Drilling in ANWR has become one of the most high-profile fights in history between energy advocates and environmentalists. Those who favor oil drilling say only a small portion of the pristine area will be affected, and that exploration can be done safely; environmentalists maintain that opening any piece of ANWR to drilling sets a dangerous precedent, and they contend that an ecologically disastrous spill is inevitable.

The issue has split Republicans. Sen. Susan Collins of Maine has previously voted against ANWR drilling, as has Sen. John McCain of Arizona. Both now support the measure. ✧

U.S. Senate votes to open Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil & gas drilling

America's Last Frontier to be developed to pay for corporate tax cuts

Washington, D.C. – In the dead of night during a marathon of voting on a bill that no lawmaker had time to read, the United States Senate voted to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development, in order to raise \$1 billion for tax cuts for corporations. The provision was part of a sweeping measure to rewrite the U.S. tax code.

"This vote is an unprecedented attack on one of the only untouched, pristine wildlife areas left in the world. Today is a sad day for the wildlife that depends on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, the Gwich'in people, and, frankly, for future generations who will never experience the wild and raw beauty of this unique landscape," said Geoffrey Haskett, President of the National Wildlife Refuge Association.

The Senate has voted to destroy forever one of the last remaining great ecosystems of the planet, NOT in exchange for other wildlife habitat or restoration projects, but as offsets for the Trump Administration's push for tax cuts for corporations and for the wealthy.

The Arctic Refuge is America's last frontier. It has remained untouched for millennia yet pro-drilling special interests would despoil this iconic place forever – at a time when the United States has a surplus of oil.

Now the House and Senate must go to conference to reconcile the differences in their two bills. Please call your Senators and Representative at (202) 224-3121 and ask them to strip out this provision during conference. There is still one more opportunity to stop this travesty before it becomes the law of the land and we lose one of the most important wildlife ecosystems on Earth. ✧



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Position Statement

Representing a major interest in the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario, the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council is a confederation of organizations and individuals with a concern for the present and future of sport fishing, our natural resources and the ecosystem in which we live. We encourage the wise use of our resources and a search for the truth about the issues confronting us.

Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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Participants sought for DNR Hunting Access Program

The Indiana DNR is seeking partners and communities to participate in the Community Hunting Access Program (CHAP) in 2018.

In its second year, CHAP is an initiative through the DNR to increase hunting opportunities for deer in urban and suburban areas. Doing so can help alleviate human-deer conflicts. CHAP provides partners with financial and technical assistance to administer hunting programs in their communities.

Managed hunts are administered by a certified CHAP coordinator. The community partner determines when and where managed hunts occur, what hunters can participate, and which certified CHAP coordinator they use or contract.

Communities interested in participating in CHAP must submit a grant application by **March 31, 2018**.

Training for people interested in becoming a certified CHAP coordinator will take place on **February 1**. Before attending training, people interested in becoming a CHAP coordinator must complete these prerequisites:

- 1) Any state-sponsored Hunter Education certification.
- 2) Any DFW-approved Firearms Instructor Training. Examples include: NRA Firearm Instructor Training, Indiana Hunter Education Instructor Academy, 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Certification, etc.
- 3) Any DFW-approved Deer Hunting Training. Examples include: NRA Hunter Clinic Instructor Program Certification, QDMA Certification, etc.
- 4) Provide name and birthdate for routine DNR background check.

To sign up for the **February 1** CHAP Coordinator training, or for questions contact south region urban biologist Megan Dillon mdillon@dnr.IN.gov.

For more info/application: www.wildlife.IN.gov/9420.htm.

Marty Benson, 317-233-3853, mbenson@dnr.IN.gov ✧

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies support Recovering America's Wildlife Act

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies strongly supports the introduction of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([H.R.4647](https://www.congress.gov/bills/115/4647)). This bipartisan legislation would redirect \$1.3 billion in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters be dedicated to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program.

"Our nation's fish and wildlife are among its most valuable resources, along with clean air, water, healthy forests and agricultural lands that support all of us," stated Virgil Moore, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Director of Idaho Fish and Game. "Today we find ourselves at a critical crossroads and impending fish and wildlife challenge that could alter our children's and grandchildren's opportunities to enjoy these resources. By investing in our State Wildlife Action Plans, which serves as a blueprint for restoring the most sensitive and imperiled species within our state's borders, we will be ensuring future generations can enjoy our rich wildlife heritage."

These critical efforts are supported by the [Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife](https://www.allianceforwildlife.org/), whose purpose is to create a 21st-century funding model for critically needed conservation of our nation's most precious natural resources, our fish and wildlife. This effort was built upon the strong partnership created by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, consisting of members representing the outdoor recreation, retail and manufacturing sector, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups and state and federal fish and wildlife agencies. ✧

Cold water boating safety

Enjoying the marine environment doesn't have to stop when the warm weather ends! As the temperature begins to drop, fish and marine mammals are stirring around our local waters in preparation of winter. This change of seasons offers ample opportunities for fishing as well as wildlife viewing from our shores or even closer, from the water!

Boating during the cold weather can be exciting but it's necessary to take extra precaution while on the water. Review some suggested guidance on how to prepare for cold weather boating:



- Check the forecast and be aware of potentially hazardous [marine conditions](#);
- Wear multiple layers of clothing and bring extra clothing in case someone gets wet or goes overboard;
- Make sure to eat and stay hydrated. Bring additional food and water on board.
- Wear sunglasses. The sun's glare can be just as strong in the winter as in the summer;
- Make a float plan and inform a land-based person about your plan, then stick to the plan! This is especially important for solo boaters;
- Be sure to carry a communication device, such as a VHF Radio or cellphone, and signaling device, and secure them in a waterproof container or bag; and
- **Most important--wear a life jacket!**

In cold water, you can succumb to hypothermia in a matter of minutes, and having the proper equipment and resources can help prevent a dangerous situation. If an emergency arises, contact the local Coast Guard Station over your VHF Radio or dial 911 on your cellphone to contact local emergency personnel. ✧

Register for 'BOW' program in Marquette Cty, Feb. 23-25

Registration is open for the winter "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" program, which is set for **February 23-25, 2018** in Marquette County.

This winter will mark the 16th annual winter BOW program for women, ages 18 and older, who are seeking an opportunity to improve their outdoor skills in a relaxed, noncompetitive atmosphere. Registration for this popular program is already filling up fast," said Michelle Zellar, BOW program coordinator. Typically, about 80 women attend the activities.

The BOW program is sponsored by the DNR and offers instruction in more than a dozen types of indoor and outdoor activities, including cross-country skiing, archery, winter shelter building, ice fishing, photography, wilderness first aid, wood burning, snowshoeing and more. Instructors provide basic and advanced teaching that is tailored to each participant's individual ability. The program also includes special evening programs.

BOW participants stay and take their classes at the Bay Cliff Health Camp, a universally accessible facility overlooking Lake Superior, about 30 miles north of Marquette in Big Bay. Participants will be housed in a dorm-style facility with amenities, including a sauna and hiking trails, with access to northern hardwood forests and Lake Superior.

The \$200 registration fee includes all food and lodging, most equipment and supplies, except as noted in the registration materials. Scholarships are also available on a limited basis.

Class information and registration materials are available at www.michigan.gov/bow. Payment and registration materials should be sent to the address on the registration paperwork in Newberry.

More info: Michelle Zellar at the DNR office in Newberry at 906-293-5131 or zellarm@michigan.gov. ✧

BOW program offers winter sports workshop, Jan 26-28

The Michigan DNR Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Program is offering a Beyond BOW Winter Sports Workshop at Porcupine Wilderness State Park, the weekend of **January 26-28, 2018**. The program is for women who have some previous experience and would like to enhance their skills and abilities.

Participants will have opportunities to ice fish and cross-country ski Saturday and Sunday, and, in addition, snow-shoeing will be offered Saturday. Participants should bring ice fishing gear, snowshoes, cross country skis, and outdoor apparel appropriate for winter weather. There is a downhill ski resort as well for those who wish to bring downhill skis.

A fishing license is required for those who wish to fish during the workshop. An all-species fishing license should be purchased prior to the event. The cost is \$26, or a 24-hour license may be purchased for \$10. A Recreation Passport or daily parking pass also is required for entry to the state park.

Participants will meet at the Kaug Wudjoo Lodge Friday afternoon/evening for two nights of lodging. Instructors will be on-site beginning at 2 p.m. to assist with check-in. Dinner will be provided by the instructors Friday evening. The lodge has a full kitchen, so participants will be able to prepare their own meals on-site for the remainder of the event.

Enrollment is limited to 10, and must be 18 or older. Registration deadline is **January 8, 2018**. Class info and registration are available at www.michigan.gov/bow. This will be a rain, shine or snow event. For more info: Michelle Zellar: 906-293-5131, zellarm@michigan.gov. ✧

Outdoor skills BOW workshop, Jan 26-28

A supportive environment of fellow women is the backdrop for a workshop that embraces cold and snow this January with classes about sled dog mushing, dark house fishing, birding, archery hunting and other ways to get outdoors.

The winter workshop is **January 26, to January 28**, at the Audubon Center of the North Woods in Sandstone, Minnesota and organized by the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Program of the Minnesota DNR.

"This annual event is a fun way to try winter activities," said Linda Bylander, BOW coordinator. "We've also expanded course options so women can begin the process of learning how to archery hunt or bow fish with help from experienced instructors."

The classes are the first in a series of classes that continue later in the year designed for women who want to improve their archery skills and learn how to hunt. Winter workshop participants only interested in the archery classes can attend for a single day for \$20.

"Not only can women learn the basic skills of archery hunting, but they have guidance about where to hunt and opportunity to go on mentored hunts available for women who attend the series," Bylander said.

To host the archery series, the BOW program is teaming up with A-1 Archery, Chilakoot Bowhunters, Safari Club International and the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve of the Univ. of Minnesota.

Participants can choose from a variety of activities to learn about and experience during the weekend. Youth age 14 or older can attend with a guardian. Lodging, meals, instruction, equipment and evening entertainment are included in the workshop fee, which varies depending on activities chosen. A winter workshop schedule with a registration form is available at www.mndnr.gov/bow. ✧

New northern pike fishing regulations coming in spring 2018

Anglers and spearers pursuing northern pike this winter can prepare for new pike regulations that will be in effect for the spring fishing opener on Minnesota's inland waters.

"Pike regulations remain the same this winter, with major changes coming this spring," said Chris Kavanaugh, N.E. fisheries manager. "As anglers continue fishing for pike, we encourage them to get used to measuring their catches and even consider keeping the smaller ones."

The new regulations on inland waters will be in effect starting **March 1**; however, fishing for northern pike is not allowed until the fishing opener on Saturday, May 12.

Spearing season opened November 15 and pike fishing remains open until February 25, 2018. Current statewide regulations including the daily and possession limit of three northern pike is still in effect. So, too, are special and experimental regulations listed for

specific waters in the 2017 Minnesota Fishing Regulations.

The new fishing regulations – beginning in the spring – and will set up three distinct zones to address the different characteristics of pike populations in Minnesota.

Anglers can use this winter as a transition period and become accustomed to measuring their catch before the new rules take effect. "We know many anglers already do measure fish, and spearers judge fish size, but we want to highlight the importance of those practices when it comes to northern pike."

Pike zones begin this spring

When the new regulations take effect this spring, the majority of the state will be in the north-central zone where the issue is overpopulation of small pike. Anglers here will be able to keep 10 northern pike, but not more than two pike longer than 26", and all from 22 to 26" must be

be released. Northern pike taken by spearing follow the same rules except one pike may be between 22 and 26" and one longer than 26".

In the N.E. zone, the new regulation will maintain harvest opportunity and protect large fish already present and anglers here will be able to keep two pike and must release all from 30 to 40", with only one over 40" allowed in possession. Spearers also will be able to take two pike but only one longer than 26".

In the southern zone, the regulation will intend to increase pike abundance and improve the size of fish harvested. Anglers and spearers will be able to keep two fish, with a minimum size of 24".

For more info visit www.mndnr.gov/pike or contact a local area fisheries office. Contact information can be found at www.mndnr.gov/areas/fisheries or in the printed fishing regulations booklet. ✧

Record number of walleye stocked in 2017

Wisconsin Walleye Initiative funding boosts state and private production

MADISON – A record 881,977 walleye were stocked in key Wisconsin waters this past year as state, private and tribal hatcheries continued to put Wisconsin Walleye Initiative funding to work for anglers, state fisheries officials said. The initiative, proposed by Gov. Walker with the 2013-15 biennium budget and approved for continuation through the 2017-19 budget, has paid to upgrade state hatcheries and provided extra operating funds needed to keep fish on site longer and feed them minnows. It also provided grants to upgrade three tribal hatcheries and six private facilities to meet the stocking demand statewide.

"We stocked a record number of fish again, meeting the need identified by fisheries biologists and we're poised to meet the needs long into the future for walleye stocking using public and private partnerships," says Dave Giebtrock, DNR fisheries culture section chief.

Natural reproduction accounts for more than 80% of the walleye caught in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Walleye Initiative is part of DNR's overall strategy to help restore naturally reproducing populations of walleye in lakes that formerly supported natural reproduction and improve walleye numbers in lakes that need regular stocking to maintain good fisheries.

While stocking larger, extended growth fingerlings makes sense in some lakes, DNR also stocks about 1.4 million small fingerlings each year, and works with several cooperators to stock walleye fry into several waters. DNR biologists develop stocking plans for different sized fish based on specific lake conditions; in some lakes smaller fish perform very well and are more cost effective than larger fish.

In the last year before the launch of the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative, DNR stocked 142,121 extended growth walleye. Since the initiative

began, DNR has stocked 455,307 large fingerlings in 2013, 719,670 in 2014, 760,969 stocked in 133 waters in 2015 and 797,815 in 2016. Those totals include the contributions from tribal and private hatcheries. In 2017, 177,891 came from private and tribal hatcheries.

Walleye are a favorite quarry for Wisconsin anglers and boost the economy by driving expenditures for lodging, dining, retail purchases, guided trips and tournament participation among other things. Wisconsin remains one of the top three fishing destinations in the U.S. with resident and nonresident anglers generating an economic impact of nearly \$2.3 billion per year, according to the American Sportfishing Association. To learn more, visit the DNR website, dnr.wi.gov, and search "[Wisconsin Walleye Initiative](#)." ✧

Assessment of Chinook Salmon Diets in Lake Michigan, 1994 to 2013

Chinook salmon are the predominant piscivore in Lake Michigan and an annual assessment of their diet is important to determine their health in response to food web changes. The objective of this report was to use analyses of Chinook salmon diets to show how changes in the food web from 1994 to present may affect salmon and their relationship with Lake Michigan prey populations. We examined factors including the percent of empty stomachs for a given year, alternative prey use (fish and non-fish), size structure of predator and prey populations, number of prey items per salmon stomach, and total ration as indicators of the availability of prey for a particular year and of the health of Chinook salmon populations. Large changes in prey fish populations have been observed and the most recent diet data for Chinook salmon indicate that there is a shift to feeding on smaller alewife, the dominant prey of Chinook salmon. During

1994–1996, the size of the alewife being preyed upon increased with increasing size of Chinook salmon. However, 2012 and 2013 the size of alewife eaten by Chinook salmon did not increase with increasing predator size. In 2012 and 2013, alewife constituted over 98 percent of the diet of Chinook salmon collected for this study. Even with the decreased size of the available alewife, Chinook salmon consistently chose them as their primary prey item. Our results indicate that an annual assessment is useful to better understand how the predator-prey relationship between Chinook salmon and alewife is changing and what effect this changing relationship may have on the fishery.

Chinook salmon were introduced into Lake Michigan in 1967 as a way to control the rising alewife populations as well as a way to create a viable sports fishery. Over-abundance of salmon, via natural reproduction and

continued stocking, has contributed to a declining alewife population over the past 20+ years. Chinook salmon were the main contributors to the decline in the alewife population and that Chinook salmon were responsible for over 60% of all alewife predation since 1980. The results also demonstrate that salmonine predation on alternative prey (e.g. rainbow smelt) did not have a strong effect on alternative prey abundance in recent years. However, the predator-prey relationship between salmonine and alewife indicates the importance of top-down control in the pelagic fish communities in Lake Michigan. A continued dominance of alewife in the diet of Chinook salmon, even while alewife abundance declined substantially has caused concern that Chinook salmon may not be able to alter their diet from alewife, which is their primary food source. To read the full 19 page report: [Chinook Salmon Diets](#) ✧

USFWS still investigating how Asian carp got past the barrier

There are several federal agencies in charge of trying to control Asian carp, and they just came out with their latest [report to Congress](#) on how those efforts are going.

Charlie Wooley is the Midwest Deputy Regional Director of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He says this report focuses on the upper Mississippi River and the Ohio River basins.

“What we saw was that unfortunately, we have had movement of adult silver carp up the Ohio River, getting closer and closer towards Pennsylvania,” says Wooley. “And then on the Mississippi River, we had a bighead carp and grass carp caught in the Minnesota River, and that’s not good because that’s about a hundred miles north of the previous capture in the Mississippi River.”

Many people are worried about the [live silver carp](#) that was caught

above the electric barriers near Chicago, nine miles from Lake Michigan this June. Wooley says the Fish and Wildlife Service hasn’t learned how the fish got past the barrier yet, but they’re still investigating in the area. “We’ve been looking and spending a lot of time sampling in that area. We sampled above the Army Corps’ electrical barrier, we sampled in close proximity to where this fish was captured in June, we have just used every bit of sampling equipment we have at our disposal and we have not seen another silver carp in this area,” he says.

He says his agency hasn’t seen any other evidence of range expansion in the Great Lakes region, but there are concerns about grass carp reproducing in the Lake Erie basin. Grass carp are already in the Lakes, but for years, they were thought to only be in a sterile form.

Wooley says there are signs that grass carp have been spawning naturally in western Lake Erie.

Some groups have been critical of the federal government’s efforts, saying it’s taking too long to put in new control measures to keep carp out of the Great Lakes.

Wooley says he understands those concerns, but he argues this is a process that requires some patience.

“You have to have thought about what you want to accomplish both to allow barge traffic to move through a barrier safely, as well as being able to control Asian carp. You have to worry about long-term maintenance; you have to design something that’s going to last a hundred years. That’s complicated,” he says. ✧

Full funding for GLRI moves forward in Congress

The critical Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) would receive [full funding of \\$300 million](#) next year under a spending bill recently released by the Senate Appropriations Committee. The EPA funding bill passed earlier this year by the House also provided full funding of \$300 million for the GLRI. The GLRI, which serves as the most important line of defense against Asian carp, helps to protect drinking water for 48 million people and accelerates cleanup of Great Lakes toxic hotspots, was zeroed out in the President's proposed budget earlier this year. There is more work to be done to ensure the GLRI is fully funded in years to come, but thanks to the bipartisan Great Lakes congressional delegation for all of their work thus far! ✧

IDNR Police issue more than 1,800 citations and warnings during hunting season

SPRINGFIELD, IL – While firearm deer hunters in Illinois took more than 80,000 deer during the state's busiest hunting season, Illinois IDNR Conservation Police report just four hunting-related accidents were reported, three of them involving injuries resulting from tree stand falls. At the same time, Conservation Police officers were busy enforcing wildlife laws and hunting regulations in and around the 2017 Firearm Deer Season, issuing more than 1,800 citations and written warnings for hunting-related violations statewide from November 13 through December 4. As part of the three-week hunting enforcement effort, Conservation Police officers issued 831 citations and 971 written warnings. ✧

You asked for less ethanol with your gas; EPA adds more

This summer, the EPA asked the public how much ethanol it wanted to be added to the nation's gasoline supply, and recreational boaters as well as many other owners of gasoline engines and vehicles spoke up against increasing ethanol volumes under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). Earlier this month, [EPA](#) set the 2018 RFS at 19.29 billion gallons, a 0.05 percent increase over the 2017 standard. Signed into law in 2005, the RFS requires an increasing amount of biofuels, such as corn ethanol, to be blended into the gasoline supply.

"In August, EPA originally proposed a slight lowering of the overall ethanol mandate. However, bowing to pressure from the ethanol backers, the agency actually notched the mandate higher," said BoatUS Government Affairs Manager David Kennedy. "We think the EPA's decision unfairly supports the ethanol industry over protecting consumers, recreational boaters, and the environment."

When it was written, RFS assumed that America's use of gasoline would continue to grow. Since 2005, however, gasoline usage has not increased as forecasted, which today forces more ethanol into each gallon of gas. To keep up with the RFS mandate, in 2010 EPA granted a waiver to allow E15 (15% ethanol) into the marketplace. However, only fuels containing up to 10% ethanol (E10) are permitted for use in recreational boats. As higher blends enter the gas supply, the chance of misfueling increases.

"Ethanol has been demonstrated to cause harm to many gasoline engines at the present 10% ethanol level, especially legacy [outboard motors](#), decreases fuel efficiency, increases fuel costs for consumers, and has questionable environmental benefits," added Kennedy. "BoatUS will continue to fight on behalf of America's recreational boaters to fix the RFS." ✧

Refiners scramble ahead of White House meeting on ethanol

Refiners are gearing up for what could be a major showdown at the White House over the future of corn ethanol and the Renewable Fuel Standard.

Sen. Ted Cruz will be sitting down with Trump and members of his Cabinet to discuss his administration's decision not to curtail the RFS, and continue support of blending high amounts of corn ethanol in the nation's gasoline supply, while supporting soybean diesel and other more advanced fuels derived from crop waste.

Sources with large refiners said they are scrambling in preparations for the meeting, which is likely to include an industry component in addition to EPA and Agriculture Department officials and other high-level White House advisers. Cruz led a group of senators in sending a letter to Trump urging a meeting when it became apparent that the administration was scrapping proposed reductions in the RFS' annual targets that refiners are required to abide by.

Refiners complain that the cost of complying with the RFS would force them to lay off workers if they are not provided some kind of relief in meeting the standard. EPA set the 2018 goals recently with no changes to the annual targets, while rejecting refiners' request to change the program to free them from having to abide by the requirements.

The free-market think tank American Enterprise Institute issued a report ahead of the White House meeting listing the shortcomings of the RFS and is holding a briefing ahead of the meeting.

"The main potential benefits to society from the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) stemmed from potential reductions in greenhouse gas emissions due to increased biofuel and decreased fossil fuel use. The policy has failed to deliver these benefits," according to the report's summary. ✧

Early ice not safe

Continued from page 1

- Bring a cell phone or personal locator beacon.
- Don't go out alone; let someone know the plan and expected return time.
- Always wear a life jacket on the ice (except when in a vehicle).
- Before heading out, inquire about conditions and known hazards with local experts. The minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice are:
 - 4 inches for ice fishing or other activities on foot.
 - 5-7 inches for a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle.
 - 8-12 inches for a car or small pickup.
 - 12-15 inches for a medium truck.
 - Double these minimums for white or snow-covered ice.

Open water danger

"A fall into extremely cold water can incapacitate you within seconds," said Lisa Dugan, DNR recreation safety outreach coordinator. "Air temperatures have been relatively mild, but don't let that deceive you. Water temperatures are dangerously cold across the entire state, which means it's more important than ever to wear that life jacket."

[State statistics](#) show that one-third of boating fatalities typically occurred during the "cold water season," and that in the vast majority of cases the cause of death is drowning due to not wearing a life jacket.

So far in 2017, three boaters have died on cold water, and 12 total boating fatalities have been reported.

"The last three years boaters have enjoyed extended seasons with mild fall temperatures and early ice out in the spring," Dugan said. "With increased days on the water came higher fatality numbers and a dangerous trend, which should not be ignored. Ten of the 12 deaths involved male boaters who sadly drowned while not wearing a life jacket. This is a continuing and

Boaters need to weigh in on Lake Erie Wind Farm project

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – A small wind farm "demonstration project" in the planning stages, to be located on Lake Erie 8 to 10 miles northwest of Cleveland, Ohio, may be a sign of what the future holds for thousands of acres of Lake Erie waters. With more than 18,000 dues-paying members in Ohio, BoatUS urges recreational boaters to have their voices heard on the [Icebreaker Wind project](#) by the state's utility regulator, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO).

Those on different sides of the issue recently [weighed in](#) at a public hearing held November 8 in Cleveland. The six-turbine, 20.7 megawatt demonstration project is North America's first freshwater offshore wind project, which includes a plan to build more than 1,000 wind turbines on the lake.

"We have BoatUS members who see the growth of wind farms as a positive fishing benefit, while others have valid safety concerns," said BoatUS Government Affairs Manager David Kennedy. "Regardless, boaters have a right to use these waters, so we'll need a pragmatic solution to managing these shared resources. No matter which side you are on, Ohio wants to hear your comments, and we urge you to do so," added Kennedy.

To provide comments to PUCO, boaters can go to the Ohio Public Utilities Commission website at opsb.ohio.gov/Contact-Us and fill in the form. On the form "company name" field, enter: "Icebreaker Wind Project Case no. 16-1871-EL-BGN Icebreaker Windpower." ✧



troubling trend that will only plateau or reverse if boaters in that high-risk demographic choose to put safety first by putting on their life jacket."

For more information, visit mndnr.gov/icesafety and mndnr.gov/boatingsafety. ✧

Pilot trout program and bonus stockings offer Ohioans more fishing opportunities

COLUMBUS, OH – Catchable rainbow and brown trout were released November 20th at Malabar Farm in Lucas as part of a pilot project to evaluate both species' suitability for future stockings in the area, according to the Ohio DNR. The Inn Pond across from Malabar Farm Restaurant received 300 rainbow trout, and Switzer Creek on Malabar Farm State Park property received 400 brown trout. Both locations are spring fed, and biologists believe the water may be sufficiently cool to support year-round trout fishing opportunities. Stockings will continue in these locations if the trout find the area suitable for continued success.

Anglers in other areas of the state will also have additional opportunities to catch 9 to 15-inch rainbow trout. Thanks to a surplus of fish at ODNR Division of Wildlife's state fish hatcheries, hundreds of rainbow trout will be released at select locations around the state. Locations to receive these surplus rainbow trout are: Antrim Lake in Franklin County, Punderson Lake in Geauga County, Rush Run Lake in Preble County, Westlake Recreation Center Lake in Cuyahoga County and White Star Quarry in Sandusky County. Fish were released before the Thanksgiving holiday. Each location received at least 300 fish. Anglers are reminded that in these areas there is a daily bag limit of five fish and no minimum size limit.

Rainbow trout are also stocked every spring in public lakes and ponds across Ohio as long as areas are ice-free and accessible to anglers. Learn more about trout fishing in Ohio or trout stockings at wildohio.gov. ✧



Ludington Regional Fisheries Workshop

This year's topics will include the effects of zebra and quagga mussels, fish diets, cisco management, salmon and trout stocking options, and development of a Lake Michigan Management Plan. [AGENDA](#), Saturday, January 13, 8:15 – 2:30 PM, West Shore Community College, 3000 N. Stiles Rd. Scottville, MI 49454. **LODGING:** Ludington Holiday Inn Express & Suites, (231) 845-7311, \$75/night group rate, Group Code: MSU, Block: Fisheries Workshop. [Register](#) online now! \$30/person includes lunch. ✧

Wis. Gov. signs expansion of Hunting Mentorship Program

Recently this month, Gov. Scott Walker signed [AB 455](#) into law. Supported by NSSF, AB 455 does away with the age restriction for someone participating in the mentored hunting program and allows both the mentor and the apprentice to possess a gun or bow while hunting. ✧

Be on the lookout for invasive "jumping worms"

Most earthworms in the Northeast are not native and eat up nutrients on the forest floor that are needed by trees and other plants. However, the Asian [jumping worm](#) does so at a much faster rate than the European earthworms and can also damage roots.

They are called jumping worms as they jump wildly when handled. Jumping worms are approximately 4-8 inches long and have a white band near their heads. Help spread the word about the danger of these invasive species to our native plants and forest ecosystems. If you think you see a jumping worm, report it to [iMapInvasives.org](#). ✧

MI DNR to auction surplus public land starting Dec. 12

Most parcels located in central/northern Lower Michigan and the U.P.

The Michigan DNR will offer surplus public land for sale by sealed-bid auction between **December 12, 2017, and January 10, 2018**. The auction will feature 80 parcels located in counties mainly in central/northern Lower Michigan and in the U.P., including Alpena, Arenac, Barry, Bay, Cheboygan, Dickinson, Gladwin, Iron, Kalkaska, Lake, Menominee, Midland, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oakland, Osceola, Oscoda and Roscommon counties.

Properties range in size from less than an acre to 146 acres. These lands are isolated from other DNR-managed public land, are difficult to manage and provide limited public outdoor recreation benefits. Several of the parcels are forested and have riverside or lake frontage and are better suited for private ownership. In addition, several large-acreage parcels are being offered in Alpena, Arenac, Gladwin, Menominee, Montmorency, Osceola and Roscommon counties.

Info on the auction, including the minimum bid price, property descriptions and [conditions of sale](#), is available at www.michigan.gov/landforsale. Instructions for submitting a bid and printable bid forms are provided on the website. Sealed bids must be postmarked by midnight **January 10**. All received bids will be opened January 24.

Additional properties remaining unsold from previous auctions also are listed for sale at the former minimum bid price. [Click on DNR Surplus Land to BUY NOW!](#)

Printed property information may be requested from the DNR Real Estate Services Section, P.O. Box 30448, Lansing, MI 48909-7948. For general information about the sale of surplus, state-managed public land, contact Michael Michalek at 517-284-5950. ✧

Mich. Free Fishing Weekend, Feb 17-18

Two days twice a year, families and friends can enjoy one of Michigan's premiere outdoor activities, Michigan Fishing, for FREE!

The 2018 Free Fishing Weekends scheduled for this winter: **February 17 & 18** and this summer: **June 9 & 10**.

All fishing license fees will be waived for two days. Residents and out-of-state visitors may enjoy fishing on both inland and Great Lakes' waters for all species of fish. All fishing regulations will still apply.

For many, the annual Free Fishing Weekend has become a tradition—a time to get together and have some fishing fun. While some may find time to reflect while fishing, there are no limits to variations on a great theme!

Michigan offers some of the finest freshwater fishing in the world, with more than 3,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, more than 11,000 inland lakes and tens of thousands of miles of rivers and streams. So grab a rod and your family and friends and let's go fishing! ✧

Restoring native cisco in Lake Ontario

DEC Region 8 Fisheries and Caledonia Hatchery staff recently assisted staff from the U.S. Geological Survey lab in Tunison, NY and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Fishery Center in stocking 100,000 fingerling ciscoes (lake herring) into Lake Ontario.

DEC staff collected cisco eggs during the late fall and winter of 2016, and they were hatched at the Tunison Lab and Northeast Fishery Center. The stocking is part of an effort to restore Lake Ontario's native herring, which were once an important prey fish in the lake. [More about Lake Ontario fishery management](#). ✧

DEC and Cornell launch New Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Biological Control Lab

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Cornell University announced the creation of a new biocontrol laboratory on the Cornell campus focused on protecting the state's ecologically vital population of hemlock trees. The \$1.2 million lab, partially funded by DEC with monies from the State's Environmental Protection Fund and headed by Cornell entomologist Mark Whitmore, will be dedicated to researching and rearing biological controls to stop the spread of the invasive pest Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), which is threatening trees in about half of New York's 62 counties and more than 15 other states.

"Preventing the spread of invasive species is the most effective way to fight the damage these species can cause to our natural resources," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "DEC's partnership and ongoing work with Cornell researchers and the State's investments in this new lab will help prevent the spread of this invasive pest, HWA, with the use of better biological controls, bolstering our ongoing efforts to protect New York's irreplaceable hemlock forests."

HWA, a tiny insect from East Asia first discovered in New York in 1985, attacks forest and ornamental hemlock trees. It feeds on young twigs, causing buds to die and needles to dry out and drop prematurely.

Hemlock decline and mortality typically occur within four to ten years of HWA infestation in the insect's northern range. Damage from the insect has led to widespread hemlock mortality throughout the Appalachian and southern Catskill Mountains with considerable ecological damage, as well as economic and aesthetic losses. HWA infestations can be most noticeably detected by the small, white, woolly masses produced by the insects that are attached to the underside of the twig, near the base of the needles.

Biological control, or biocontrol

for short, is the use of natural enemies to manage the population of a pest. In the case of HWA, this means using predatory insects found in areas where HWA is native. The focus of the HWA biocontrol lab is to research methods to grow healthy colonies of predatory insects and evaluate their effectiveness in managing HWA population growth. The goal is to establish multiple predator species throughout New York to reduce HWA populations below the level where they cause hemlock trees to die.

"Cornell CALS is a leader in the discovery of new and improved biocontrols, such as parasites, predators and weed eaters, that naturally minimize pest damage to fruits, vegetables, and our natural resources such as hemlocks and cattails," said Kathryn J. Boor, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "Our researchers are carrying out our mission as NYS' Land Grant University in working closely with New York State to safeguard our natural environment. The HWA lab will protect New York's majestic hemlock trees by developing new controls for HWA, which is spreading at an alarming rate. We thank the DEC and lawmakers for their support for funding that enables this important research."

Eastern hemlock trees are among the oldest trees in New York with some reaching ages of more than 700 years. They typically occupy steep, shaded, north-facing slopes and stream banks where few other trees are successful. The trees help maintain erosion control and water quality, and the hemlock's shade cool waters providing critical habitat for many of New York's freshwater fish.

Governor Cuomo increased funding for invasive species control to \$13 million from the EPA in the 2017-18 state budget, including the funding for this important lab and a \$2 million grant program for communities and groups across New York. This funding is providing

critical support for prevention and eradication activities through programs like the Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) that protect against threats to New York's biodiversity, economy, and human health.

Invasive species are detrimental because of their ability to reproduce quickly, outcompete native species, and adapt to new environments. Because invasive species did not evolve with the other species in their new location, they often do not have natural predators and diseases that would normally control their population within their native habitat. Economists estimate invasive species cost the U.S. more than \$120 billion in damages every year.

Senator Tom O'Mara, Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said, "What an outstanding and effective partnership between Cornell and the state DEC to combat the spread of one of New York's most damaging and threatening invasive species. This invasive species is threatening trees in nearly half of the state's counties and, consequently, this new effort to control and stop its spread couldn't arrive at a better time."

"Invasive pests, like the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, can have a devastating effect on our state's cherished natural resources, and it's so important that we develop innovative solutions to control and limit their spread," said Assemblywoman Barbara Lipton. "That's why I'm so pleased to see Cornell and the DEC partnering on this initiative to protect the state's hemlock trees. Fighting invasive species has long been a priority of mine, and I was proud to support an increase in funding to control invasive species in the state budget."

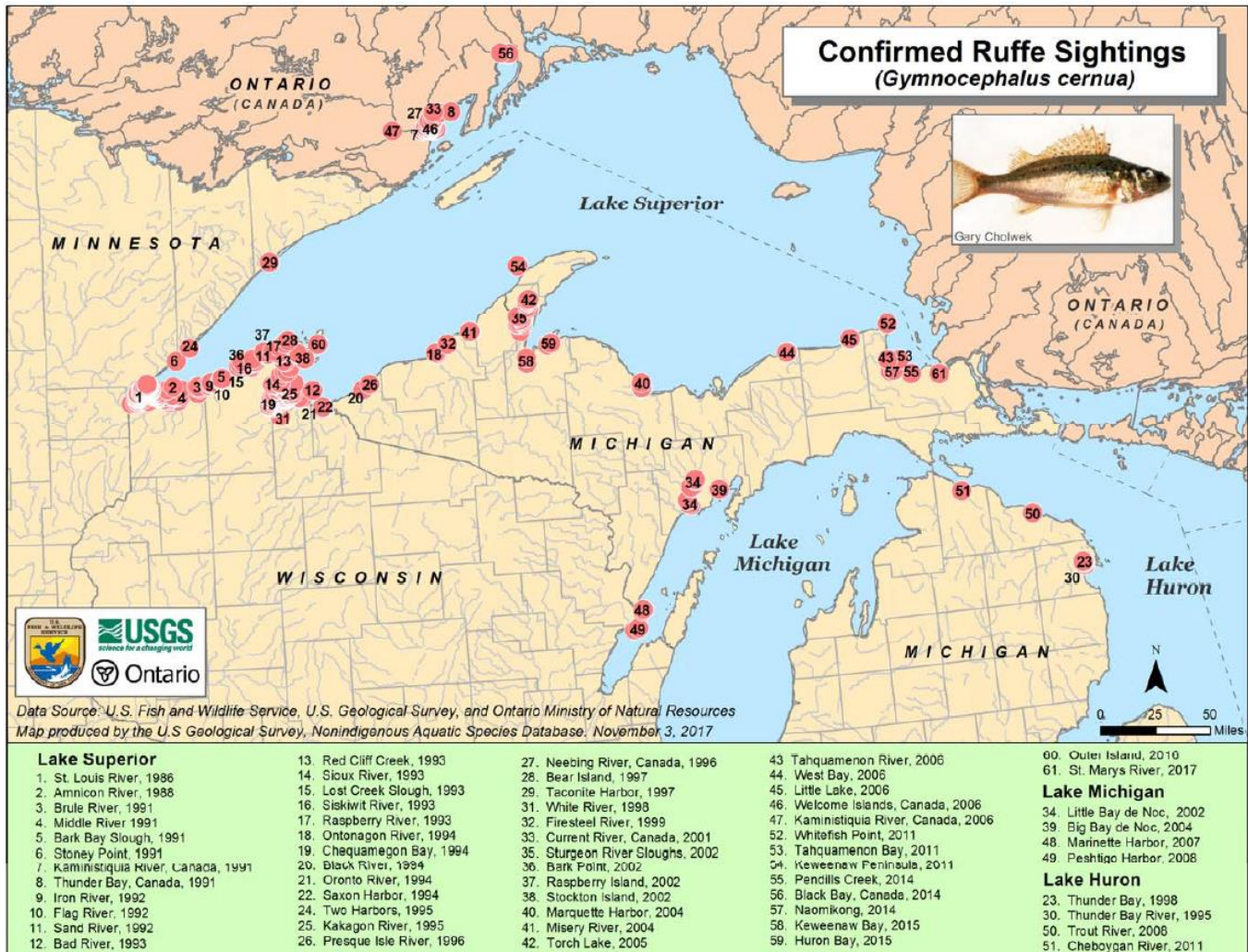
More information on [HWA](#), including identification, control techniques, and reporting possible infestations can be found at Cornell's [New York State Hemlock Initiative](#) (link leaves DEC website) or on DEC's website. ✧

Invasive ruffe expand in Great Lakes

Ruffe were captured in the upper St. Marys River off Brimley State Park in Michigan during August 2017 (see item #61 on map). This is the first capture of ruffe from the river, which connects Lake Superior with Lake Huron. From Eurasia, ruffe were introduced in the mid-1980s to western

Lake Superior in ballast water of shipping tankers, slowly spreading to lower lakes.

Ruffe range showing expansion in the St. Marys River: [2017 Confirmed Ruffe Sightings](#) (#61 on map below)



Ruffe pose a threat to native fish populations due to potential competition for food and space; however the impacts of ruffe in the Great Lakes are not fully known. Experimental research conducted by the U. of Minnesota Duluth revealed that ruffe consume a significant amount of benthic macro invertebrate energy (small animals living among stones, logs, sediments and aquatic plants on the bottom of streams, rivers and lakes). In a presentation of this research, co-author Carl Richards, U. of Minnesota Natural Resources Research Institute, stated: “With the significant amount of benthic macroinvertebrate energy that ruffe are consuming in the St. Louis River Estuary, something has got to be happening in that ecosystem. We are just not seeing it yet.”

The experiment also demonstrated significant declines in the growth of yellow perch *perca flavescens*, when

exposed to any ruffe densities. Similarly, trawl data from 1995-2002 in three Wisconsin tributaries east of the St. Louis River suggest that yellow perch abundance declined in years that ruffe abundance increased. This trend was analyzed and found to be weakly significant for all three tributaries combined. In contrast, a statistical analysis of bottom trawl data conducted by USGS showed no significant relationship between the increasing ruffe population and declining native fish populations in the St. Louis River.

The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force declared the ruffe to be a “nuisance species” in the spring of 1992 due to increasing abundance, expansion outside the SLRE, and speculation about potential impacts on native fish populations. By authority of the Nonindigenous Aquatic

Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990, this designation authorized the formation of a control committee charged with the responsibility of designing and implementing a control plan. The Ruffe Control Plan was drafted in early 1995, and revised following the fall 1995 discovery of ruffe in Lake Huron. The goal of the Ruffe Control Plan is “to prevent or delay the spread of ruffe in the Great Lakes and inland waters” (Ruffe Control Committee 1996). Dedicated ruffe surveillance efforts, designed and implemented specifically to find and collect ruffe, began in 1992 to detect pioneering populations of ruffe in the Great Lakes. These efforts were initiated by the USFWS Ashland

and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry-Upper Great Lakes Management Unit.

Since 1992, the range of ruffe has expanded with discoveries in Lake Huron (Thunder Bay River) in 1995, Lake Michigan (northern Green Bay) in 2002, across the south shore of Lake Superior (to Whitefish Bay) in 2006, and most recently – in the upper St. Marys River off Brimley State Park in Michigan during August 2017. Currently, dedicated ruffe surveillance efforts are conducted in Lake Huron by the USFWS-Alpena Office and in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario by the USFWS-Lower Great Lakes office. ✧

Other Breaking News Items:

(Click on title or URL to read full article)

[*Huge waves hit Lake Michigan's eastern shore, after Lake Superior waves set record in October*](#)

A collection of photos and videos illustrate the record-breaking heights of Lake Superior waves forming along the shores of Marquette, Michigan. The tallest wave reached 28.8 feet, the highest ever recorded on the Great Lakes.

[*COMMENTARY: The threat of Asian carp*](#)

If the plan released in August by the Army Corps of Engineers does not work, or is not approved, invasive silver carp could reach Lake Michigan and wreak havoc on the economic, ecological, and human health of the Great Lakes region. This threat should be

[*EDITORIAL: Ballast bill would be costly mistake*](#)

Analyses of the proposed Michigan ship ballast rules do not mention any increased costs of doing business caused by Michigan's current ballast rules, nor the increased costs of doing business caused by leaking nuisance aquatic species into the Great Lakes

[*Illinois DNR says no need for senators to fear carp in Great Lakes*](#)

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources says that, despite what some U.S. Senators believe, there is no need to rush to build a carp barrier near Joliet.

[*Researchers ask public for fish guts and the money to study them*](#)

Stomachs of more than 1,000 fish from Lake Huron and Lake Michigan in a freezer at Michigan State University are waiting to be dissected as part of a study critical to managing gamefish, but lack of funding is putting the project on ice

[*DNR proposes a study on the effect of commercial gill nets on Lake Michigan*](#)

The Department of Natural Resources has proposed a study of the impacts of commercial gill netting on non-target sport fish such as Chinook salmon and brown trout in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Michigan

[*Saginaw Bay perch populations up against the walleye*](#)

Wildlife managers worry that the walleye's comeback in Saginaw Bay, Michigan, threatens perch, which make up a large part of walleye diet.

[*COMMENTARY: How the DEC is improving fishing in Lake Erie tributaries*](#)

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Lake Erie Fisheries Research Unit is doing their best to make things better in Lake Erie's tributaries for trout and trout anglers

[*U.S., Canada fall short of protecting Great Lakes, agency says*](#)

Inadequately treated sewage, industrial chemicals and farm runoff are still flowing into the five lakes that provide drinking water for about 40 million people, the IJC said since both nations last updated the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in 2012.

[*\\$300 million for Great Lakes cleanup moves forward in Congress*](#)

The measure cleared committee this week and now goes to the full Senate for consideration

[*In latest discovery, DNR find four bighead carp in the Wisconsin River near Prairie du Sac*](#)

Four adult bighead carp, an invasive fish species, were captured this fall by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on the Wisconsin River, the agency reported this week



As we reflect on 2017, our soldiers on active duty around the world, our own safety, our health, family and all we have to be grateful for...our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year in 2018.

"...behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour..." Luke 2:10-11

***Merry Christmas and best wishes
for a prosperous New Year***

