

SWAN VALLEY SPORT FISHING ENHANCEMENT INC.



2018 PROJECTS NEWSLETTER

Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement, with the support of partners and Fisheries & Wildlife Enhancement Fund (FWEF), have conducted/initiated various studies and programs including: fish habitat enhancement, fisheries research, stocking initiatives, promotion of local lakes, improvement of fishing access and has also become a strong venue for fisheries education. These programs and projects have been very beneficial for the local area and have attracted interest in the angling community. The results from recent research projects have already contributed to current management and stocking decisions. Many projects require continual or rotational surveys to validate results and to obtain a better understanding of the state of the fishery.

What's happening for the 2018 Season?

Trails Project: As always, SVSFE is constantly building partnerships to do meaningful work. Recently the group partnered with Swan Valley RISE on a Trails Project (funded through Partners 4 Growth) to collect information on various trails in the area. From hiking, biking, fishing, canoeing, skiing, snowshoeing, horseback riding, etc., the idea was to gather info and supply the trail data to public through various media. This information is now available on www.alltrails.com

Honoway Fish Passage: Technicians assisted SLWCD with operations of the newly installed water control structure at the Honoway Fishway. The control structure was installed to facilitate control of water levels within the fishway during critical spring spawning migrations on the **Swan River**. Parameters including water temperature, level of control structure and water velocity at multiple sites throughout fish way were monitored. Fish congregations at the ford crossing were first noticed on May 3rd. On May 7th hoop nets were set in the upstream portion of the fishway which yielded 44 fish/hour, and 155 fish/hour in two different sets. Fish caught included suckers, chubs, and pike. The 2018 monitoring identified adjustments to improve fish passage and the future function of the fishway.



SVSFE Zebra Mussel Early Detection Program: Aquatic invasive species (AIS), particularly zebra mussels are becoming a concern in the Province of Manitoba as they continue to move in a north-westerly direction year after year. In 2016, a Singush Lake substrate sampler tested positive for a suspect zebra mussel. This invader can completely shift the state of aquatic ecosystems including changing water chemistry, clogging up discharge drains, and even impacting fish health and survival. This situation is very serious and needs to be addressed to prevent further lake contamination. For this reason, SVSFE will continue to install *zebra mussel*

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substrate samplers in each of our local angling destinations with intention to be proactive, monitor potential spread, and limit further contamination. Stop the spread "Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose". More info found at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/stopais/help/index.html>

Lakes that received samplers:

North Steeprock	Marge
Whitefish	West Blue
Wellman	East Blue
Glad	Singush
Beaver	Beautiful
Two Mile	Gull
Spray	Laurie
Perch	Childs

Example of what a sampler prior to installation under the dock:



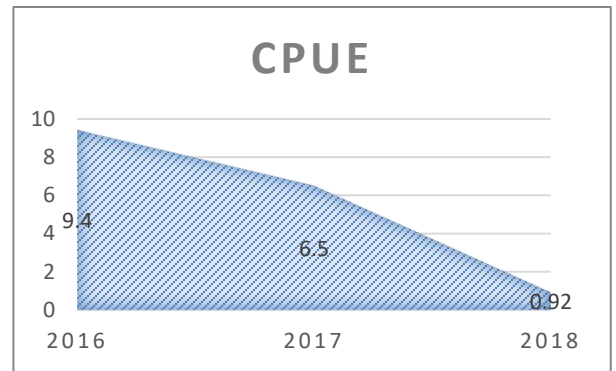
Trout Maintenance Programs: In many trout lakes throughout the province, the increase of non-trout species populations have become a growing concern. These species, including yellow perch, northern pike, white-sucker, and walleye etc. are strong competitors with trout and have resulted in decreased trout growth/survival and impacted fishing quality.

- Glad Lake Pike Removal:** Started on May 7th prior to full ice-off through to May 17th. Nine live trap nets were set and pulled during this period for a total of 557 fishing hours. CPUE (Catch per unit effort) equated to 0.44 fish/hour this year (0.182 in 2017) resulting in 230 pike transferred to Chain Lakes. Nets also yielded yellow perch and white suckers which were released back into Glad. The average size of the pike was 425 mm (fork length) with the largest being 680 mm. Majority of pike caught were sexually mature. No char from the 2017 stocking were caught during the removal program. To date SVSFE has removed a total of 1,204 pike since 2015. A report with full details will be provided following the 2018 field season.



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- The **East Blue** Lake Sucker Removal started on May 28th and continued until June 1st. Seven live trap nets fished a total of 266 fishing hours which yielded 246 white suckers repurposed to the public. CPUE this year was 0.92 fish/hour whereas in 2017 it was 6.5 fish/hour and 9.4 fish/hour in 2016. The white sucker numbers have dropped drastically compared to years previous. In 2016 the water temps were anywhere from 8-13°C, 10.8-16.8°C in 2017 and in 2018 15.6-16.8°C. Although the dates have been consistent for the past 3 years, the unusually warm spring warmed the waters very quickly. As for game fish species; 14 walleye were caught (range 514-738mm FL or 20" – 29"), 1 lake trout (728 mm FL or 28.6"), and 9 rainbow trout (range 492-560 mm FL or 19"- 22").



Lake Inventory Assessments: SVSFE executes scientific programs designed to assess current status and suggestions for future management objectives of select angling lakes. This year on the list is Childs, Whitefish, Marge and East Angling Lake.

- SVSFE and ISFE technicians conducted a four-day Spring Littoral Index Netting (SLIN) Program on **Childs Lake** May 14th - 17th, 2018. The purpose of an index netting program is to evaluate the relative abundance of a specific species (or group of species) in a lake at a point in time. The SLIN method uses 90 minute sets during the early spring (water temp <13 degrees Celsius). Data entry and reporting still to be completed but with the rough tally.... in 30 net sets a total of 531 fish were caught; 387 pike, 62 lake trout, 76 perch, 3 walleye, 2 splake and 1 white sucker. Information will provide more understanding on the status of the fish community, with a focus on lake trout. A full report will be available following the field season.



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- **Whitefish Lake** fishery was last studied in 2010/2011 following the ESTN (End of Spring Trap Netting) Protocol. The 2010/2011 survey was replicated June 3rd – June 9th, 2018 where 16 trap nets were set at predetermined random locations (selected in 2010). Nets were set overnight for 22 to 24 hours. Reporting will be completed following the field season, but the following are a few stats from the survey.

	Walleye	Northern Pike	Yellow Perch	Lake Whitefish
Largest (Length)	709 mm or 27.9"	1,110 mm or 43.7"	320 mm or 12.7"	535 mm or 21"
Largest (Weight)	7.6 lbs	24.75 lbs	0.8 lbs	3.5 lbs
Total Number	133	169	14	44



2018 Whitefish Lake Species Composition



■ NRPK ■ WALL ■ LKWH ■ LKCS ■ YLPR ■ WHSC



*Note: Marge and East Angling Lake surveys are in progress

Lake Inventory, Exploration, and Mapping: SVSFE is often involved in creating new fisheries, initiating sport fish introductions and providing anglers with advice/tools to enhance their sport fishing experience. In the summer of 2018, plans are to acquire baseline data on Cache, Line and Piasta Lake to determine potential for sport fish introductions. During this season, SVSFE plans to depth map some of our regional waterbodies in the Duck Mountains including Line, Ralph, George, Jackfish, Cache, East Angling and Piasta. In the Porcupine Mountain; Lars/Legacy, Lost, MacDonald, Mirror and Float Island lakes to name a few.

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Stocking Initiatives: As we all know; stocking fish is essential to sustaining fisheries where natural recruitment is either low or non-existent. For this reason, SVSFE intends to assist, whenever possible, Fisheries Branch in supplemental stocking. Through assisting we can aid in “scatter stocking” of both trout and walleye throughout the open water season. Scatter stocking, as the word suggests, essentially scatters fish throughout a specific water body and therefore increases chances of survival. *Highlight: musky stocking is tentatively scheduled for this fall in West Watjask Lake.



Walleye Recruitment Surveys:

SVSFE has always been interested in walleye recruitment success to facilitate efficient walleye stocking rates and stocking densities. New and ongoing walleye recruitment surveys will be conducted on Marge, Wellman, Whitefish, Deep and Virgin Lakes in the late summer/fall of 2018.



Stocked Trout Rivers: Some of our most under-utilized fisheries in the Swan Valley Area include the stocked trout rivers. To the contrary, these systems offer some of the most pristine fishing opportunities for anglers. In 2012, SVSFE assessed three main river systems found in the Porcupine Mountains (Bowsman, Birch, Steeprock Rivers). Through these programs, technicians



located various fishing access points throughout the systems and evaluated stocking success/natural recruitment. During the 2018 season, SVSFE would like to assess two of the stocked trout rivers in the Duck Mountains; the Pine and Roaring River. The Pine is noted as being a high-quality brook trout river while over recent years the Roaring has been stocked with both brook and brown trout. Following these assessments, SVSFE can promote stocked trout systems in both the Duck and Porcupine Mountains and provide anglers with the info required to explore some of our most untapped fisheries.

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Angling Promotion & Infrastructure:

Over the years, SVSFE has collected masses of data on dozens of local waterbodies. This data is intended to be public domain and for the use and enjoyment of the angling community. As each season comes to an end and project reports become complete, they are upload them to our website. Reports, maps and activities can be viewed at: www.swanvalleysportfishing.com. Also, each year the group invests in fishing infrastructure which includes the construction and installation of fishing docks along with access improvements. There are many angling docks available supplied by SVSFE, the latest locations include, Deep Lake, Beaver Lake, Perch Lake, Marge Lake, West Blue Lake, Spray Lake, Marge Lake and this summer – Verrall Lake. This winter a dock was transported into Black Beaver Lake dock with the construction funded by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).



Annual Fish Camp: SVSFE’s Fish Camp has become a popular entity for young anglers over the past few years. Our 8th Fish Camps are scheduled for August 18th – 24th at the United Church Camp for campers ages 10-14. SVSFE will be hosting two camps within this timeframe to accommodate the high numbers of interested youth. Camp provides both theoretical and practical fishing experiences designed to inform & motivate kids to pursue the goals of protecting, restoring, and sustaining fisheries and their watersheds. Camp registration fills up fast as spaces are limited.



Angler Surveys: 2018 will mark the 4th consecutive year of the “SVSFE Angler Survey”. This survey has been designed to incorporate anglers’ knowledge and acquire important qualitative data along with incorporating angler opinions into fisheries management decisions. Visit our website and fill one out today at www.swanvalleysportfishing.com/angler-submissions-surveys

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