



*The official newsletter for the Capitol City Chapter of Muskies, Inc.*

## Prez Sez

*If you are like me, you are daydreaming about being on a boat on a nice summer day. I am not liking these freezing temperatures one bit! I am ready for being in shorts and a t-shirt with a little cloud cover, a slight breeze, and 75 degree water temperature.*

*I was able to get in some musky talk and catch up with a bunch of people at the Chicago Muskie Expo last month. I always enjoy going to the expos and checking out the latest baits and gear, this year was no different. If you didn't get a chance to go to the Chicago show, stop by Milwaukee February 13-15 and see for yourself. And while you're there, stop by the CCMI booth and visit us.*

*At this month's Membership Meeting we will be holding our annual Awards Ceremony. It is one of my favorite meetings of the year. We get to hear all the big fish stories from 2025. Of course we will also have great raffle prizes. I hope to see you there.*

Brian Falleck

# 2026 Event Calendar



***NOTE: Some dates may have changed. Please double-check and mark your calendars!***

February 9.....2025 Awards Banquet  
March 9.....General Meeting, Speaker tbd  
March 28.....23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Muskie School

## **SPECIAL OFFER!!!!**

The Milwaukee Muskie Expo has generously provided 25 tickets to this year's show for our chapter to sell in advance. They are \$10 each with a limit of 2 per person, cash only. All proceeds go directly to Capital City Muskies Inc. These will be available at our February Awards Ceremony at Mekong on February 9th.

## **Release Chair Report**

***By Jeff Lyon***

Jeff Lyon CCMI Release Chair  
ccmireleasechair@gmail.com

Look forward to seeing everyone at the CCMI awards night February 9, 2026! Come enjoy a night of 2025 fishing stats, muskie stories, and celebrate the members that won awards.

Big Surprise, no muskies registered yet this year, so I'll just keep 2025's results posted here.

<u>Mens Division</u>	Muskies	Points	Avg Length
Wilhelm Zeichert	32	579	44.05"
Todd Berge	23	318	39.73"
Jamie Wersland	10	180	43.90"
Tripp Soma	11	145	39.07"
Kyle Kramer	9	138	41.33"
Mike Milia	8	123	41.09"
Steve Reinstra	7	108	41.07"
William N. Liegel	12	107	34.92"
William Suick	6	101	42.75"
Tony Artymiuk	13	100	33.54"
Adam Bergendahl	5	97	45.2
Garrett Lederman	8	87	36.81"
Brad Herda	5	77	41.25"
Fred J Schulze	5	73	40.10"
Pat Ewanowski	5	80	41.8
Scott Gennrich	6	66	36.83"
Nick Pierick	4	63	41.50"
Winston Hopkins	5	62	38.20"
Craig Eversoll	3	55	44.33"
Daniel Donovan	4	54	39.25"
Shane Nesheim	3	50	42.75"
Greg Voss	5	46	35.20"
Alex Landen	3	43	40.42"

<u>Mens Division</u>	Muskies	Points	Avg Length
Jerry Georgeson	4	41	36.25"
Steve Soma	3	39	39.00"
Allen Jenkins	3	39	38.92
Lee Bartolini	6	37	32.13"
Kevin L Wegner	2	36	44.00"
James Lawler	3	36	37.75"
John Cuta	2	35	43.25"
Brian Skaife	3	35	37.58"
Scott Trimborn	3	32	36.25"
Ray Petkovsek	2	31	41.50"
Matt Firestein	1	27	52.50"
Thomas Daggett	1	25	51
Chris Clark	1	25	51.00"
Noah Humfeld	1	24	50.25"
Mike Thoreson	1	24	50.25"
Justin Gasser	2	24	37.75"
Brett Cook	1	23	49.00"
Mike Beam	1	23	48.50"
Gregory A Rubin	2	22	36.75"
Kurt Brändli	1	22	48.00"
Erik Bunkoske	2	19	35.50"
Jeremiah Oakley	2	17	34.25"
Jeff Walker	1	16	41.50"
Ron Thompson	1	16	42.00"
Luke Will	1	15	41.00"
Tom Pollard	1	11	37.00"
Jackson Harris	2	9	30.25"

<u>Masters Division</u>	Muskies	Points	Avg Length
Brad P Nelson	38	552	40.43"
Jeff Lyon	25	408	42.12"
Jeff Lehr	32	347	36.71"
Aaron Laking	16	293	44.20"
Jeff M Hanson	12	215	43.79"
Matthew DeVos	7	114	42.32"
Matt Mc Cumber	5	68	39.30"
Craig Eversoll	3	55	44.33"
Matthew Hill	3	37	38.17

<u>Womens Division</u>	Muskies	Points	Avg Length
Lynda Lawler	5	63	38.50"
Tara Jenkins	1	6	31.50"

<u>Juniors Division</u>	Muskies	Points	Avg Length
Devyn Hanson	16	227	39.97"
Cash Soma	3	43	40.33"
Jeffrey Falleck	1	13	39.00"

## MUSKY BAIT MANUFACTURING SHAKEUP!

If you haven't heard, there has been a major shakeup in the musky bait manufacturing world. Check out the recent Back Lash podcast announcing the sale of Musky Mayhem Tackle, Chaos Tackle, and Musky Innovations to Paul Check, who discusses his background, plans, and the transition process.

Hosts and former owners address rumors about production and big-box plans, explain timelines for inventory and staffing moves, and share reflections, thanks, and upcoming show appearances. You can find this podcast on the Podbean app, Spotify or Apple podcasts.

## NEW STATEWIDE MUSKY SEASON!

The change to a single statewide musky opener on the first Saturday in May is the result of years of angler feedback and an extensive public input process. This included three separate appearances at the Wisconsin Conservation Congress's Spring Hearings, where the proposal passed in all 72 counties each time. Proponents cited increased angling opportunities across the state, flexibility for anglers to respond to the impacts of a warming climate (such as earlier ice-offs and spawning seasons) and regulatory uniformity throughout the state, as anglers for other species (including northern pike) could already fish the Northern Zone after the general opener.

In response to the sustained public support, DNR staff reviewed the proposal, evaluating the potential benefits against any concerns. Ultimately, our fisheries experts concluded that a return to a single musky opener, (as was the case prior to 1984) could be implemented with no biological harm. That's because the original purpose of the 1984 adoption of a shorter Northern Zone season, reduced harvest spawning, is no longer a concern. In the years before that change, a 30" minimum and minimal catch-and-release fishing led to an annual harvest of over 65,000 muskies across the state. Today, musky anglers are some of the most passionate and protective anglers around, which, along with a 40" minimum (larger on some waters) means catch-and-release is almost universal.

## WIN A HUMMINBIRD!

Heading to a Muskie Show this winter? Be sure to stop by the Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc. booth to pick up your raffle tickets for the Humminbird Xplore 12 CMSI+ fish finder.

This raffle helps fund muskie stocking right here in the Madison area. Your ticket supports local conservation and gives you a chance to win a top-tier freshwater fish locator.

 Tickets will be sold at the following events:

- Feb. 9, CCMI Monthly Meeting, Mekong, McFarland, 7 PM
- Feb. 13 to 15, Milwaukee Muskie Expo
- Feb. 27 to March 1, Wisconsin Fishing Expo

 Winner will be pulled on March 1.

## 2026 Annual Muskie School

Keep an eye out for the opening of Registration the annual Musky School on the CCMI website. We should have some exciting new classes and instructor. There will be some incentives for signing up early as usual. Desired classes fill fast, so get in there and sign up!

## Garage Sale Items Needed!!!

We are in need of your gently used lures. Every year at the Wisconsin Fishing Expo in Madison we hold a Garage Sale, selling used baits donated by our members. This is a great source of income for our chapter and directly leads to putting muskies in the Madison Chain. If you have any lures that haven't seen water in a while or have some you just plain don't like, please consider donating them to our Garage Sale. We will be collecting baits at our monthly membership meetings from now until February.

February 9th is your LAST CHANCE to donate any lures to our Garage Sale. For every 3 lures you donate your name goes into a drawing for either a \$100 or a \$50 gift card to Dorn Outdoor Pro Shop. The Garage Sale is a great source of income for our chapter. If you have any fishing gear you don't need anymore, we'll take it!

Thank you for helping us keep Madison a great musky fisheree!



# **YOUTH MUSKIE CHAMPIONSHIP OF WISCONSIN**

June 20, 2026 – Lake Waubesa – 7 am - 12 pm

Come out for a day of fun, and to support youth fishing, and the great sport of chasing those big Muskies!

- Friendly tournament. We do give out prizes and trophies, but the idea is to simply have a good time fishing.
- FREE to all youth age 18 and under.
- Prizes for all participants
- Tournament Headquarters will be at **Goodland Park Shelter #1 and boat launch**
- Adults may accompany youth in the boat. We encourage participants (or their parents) to bring their boat. Otherwise, we will do our best to match you with a boat.
- Put on by Capital City Chapter of Muskies Inc. (CCMI)

For all rules and regulations, scan the QR code below.

Other questions? Contact Robbi Hron at 608-469-1518.



## Join the CCMI Mentoring Program

The Capital City Chapter of Muskies, Inc. conducts a mentoring program for its members. If requested, an experienced club member will help or assist (or mentor) another member in developing specific fishing skills or acquiring knowledge about a particular topic or body of water. These informal associations have been very successful in the past in helping members learn more about muskie angling, as well as helping newer members meet some of the more knowledgeable muskie anglers in the club.

Assistance may be requested in a general area (e.g., “I would like to know more about Lake Monona”) or a specific area (e.g., “I would like to learn how to make my own leaders.”) If you need or want assistance in some aspect of muskie angling, contact Lee Bartolini by email: [Lbartolini8475@charter.net](mailto:Lbartolini8475@charter.net), or by phone: (608) 293-4108, and he will try to match you up with a mentor to assist you.

*CCMI members who are willing to be a mentor, who are willing to help or assist another club member in some aspect of muskie fishing, are invited to let Lee know of their interest. If you would like to be a mentor and help another CCMI member, contact Lee using the information above.*



# A Big Thank You to 2024 and 2025 Donors

Many donors play a critical role in helping Capital City Muskies, Inc. (CCMI) meet our goals for improving the South-Central Wisconsin Muskie fisheries. These activities and projects include supplemental stocking of Muskie yearlings/fingerlings in Lakes Monona, Waubesa, and Wingra; supporting scientific research on the Madison Chain of Lakes fish populations; and sponsoring youth education and outreach activities.

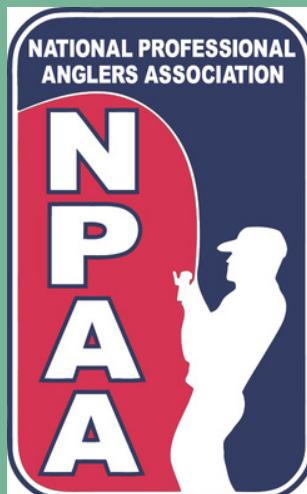
Without the generous contributions of our donors, many of the projects and activities CCMI conducts each year would not be possible. We would like to thank the following donors who have made generous cash, services, and/or merchandise donations to CCMI in 2024 and 2025 to date:

- Palac Family Healing Waters Foundation 2024 & 2025
- Dennis Lytle 2024
- Don Hollatz 2024 & 2025
- Dorn Outdoor Pro Shop 2024 & 2025
- Musky Fool Fly Fishing Company 2024 & 2025
- Chaos Tackle 2024 & 2025
- Spanky Baits 2024
- Team Rhino Outdoors 2024
- Suick Lure Manufacturing 2024
- Contributors to the CCMI Adopt-a-Muskie Program 2024 & 2025
- Leeann Soma – LeeLee Foundation 2024 & 2025
- Gil Hamm Foundation - Muskies Inc. 2024 & 2025
- Hugh C. Becker Foundation - Twin Cities Chapter of Muskies, Inc. 2024 & 2025
- American Family Insurance on behalf of Robbie Hron 2024 & 2025
- Craig Hungerford 2024
- Jeff Walker 2024
- Timothy “Pops” Voeck Memorial Fund 2024
- Jim Eller Memorial Fund 2024
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- Tuesday Night Muskie League 2024
- Quad Cities Hawg Hunters 2024
- Hiawatha Lodge and Resort, Eagle River, WI 2024 & 2025
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- Darren Dempsey 2025
- Noah Humfeld 2025
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## **PLEASE JOIN US IN APPRECIATION AND SUPPORT TO THE DONORS LISTED ABOVE**

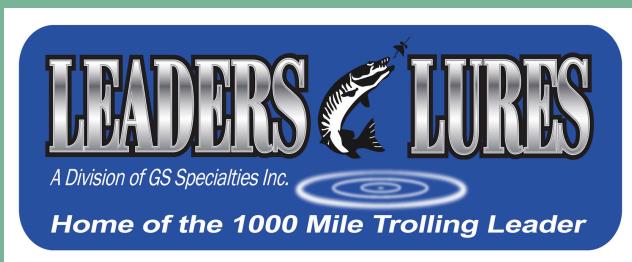
The Wisconsin DNR has announced they will not stock any Muskies in the Madison Lakes in 2025. Thanks to these generous donors, CCMI has successfully raised the required funds to supply the entire annual quota of Muskie fingerlings for stocking the Madison Lakes in 2025. Anyone who wishes to donate to CCMI can access the website at [www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org/donate/](http://www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org/donate/) or contact Bob Baumgartner, the CCMI Treasurer at bbaumgartner4@gmail.com or (608) 320-6336. *CCMI is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, so donations may be tax deductible.*

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