

Minnesota State Fishing Museum and Hall of Fame

Reference: S.F. No. 1708

Overview:

The Minnesota State Fishing Museum and Hall of Fame, located in Little Falls, is a cornerstone of Minnesota's fishing heritage. Our mission is to preserve the heritage and history of freshwater fishing in Minnesota while educating the public about the fishing industry and promoting the sport of fishing for future generations. The museum offers a variety of educational programs that engage the community and provide valuable learning experiences for youth and families. Through partnerships with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), fishing legends, and local educators, the museum fosters a strong sense of environmental stewardship and cultural pride.

Key Programs:

1. Master Angler Program:

For over 15 years, the Minnesota Fishing Museum and Hall of Fame has been administering the Master Angler Program on behalf of the Minnesota DNR, providing this important service. The program recognizes anglers for their achievements and encourages responsible fishing practices. This long-standing commitment to preserving Minnesota's fishing heritage underscores the museum's dedication to the state's outdoor culture and education. Funding will allow the museum to expand this program, offering additional resources and recognition for anglers across the state.

2. School Tours and High School Fishing League:

The museum offers school tours that provide students with hands-on learning about the history of fishing in Minnesota, conservation efforts, and sustainable fishing practices. Additionally, the museum is an active partner in the Little Falls Anglers High School Fishing League, which uses the museum to host their annual registration event. This collaboration helps local youth get involved in the sport, providing them with the tools and resources they need to participate in fishing tournaments and learn about Minnesota's aquatic ecosystems.

3. Scouts Program "Fishing for All":

The Fishing for All program, in collaboration with local scout groups, provides children with the tools and skills they need to fish, regardless of their socio-economic status. Scouts participate in making fishing kits, refurbishing rods and reels, and donating them to local community programs. This initiative ensures that children who may not have the financial means to access fishing equipment can still enjoy the outdoors. One scout even earned the rank of Eagle through this program, demonstrating its lasting impact on both the community and individual participants.

4. Carving Decoys and Youth Contest:

The museum also preserves the art of decoy carving, a key tradition in Minnesota's outdoor culture. Led by retired teachers and past board members, the museum offers workshops where youth learn to carve decoys. The museum holds a youth decoy carving contest at its Decoy Show, providing young people with the opportunity to showcase their creativity and connect with local artists.

5. Night with the Fishing Pros Fundraiser:

The Night with the Fishing Pros fundraiser is an exciting event that allows the community to interact with fishing legends and professional anglers. This event serves not only as a learning experience but also as a critical fundraiser that supports the museum's educational programs and operations.

6. Aquarium Collaboration with the DNR:

The museum collaborates with the Minnesota DNR to stock and maintain its 270-gallon aquarium, which showcases native Minnesota fish species. This interactive exhibit allows visitors to learn about the state's aquatic ecosystems and sustainable fishing practices while providing a hands-on learning experience for students and tourists.

Community Involvement:

The museum is deeply embedded in the local community and plays an active role in promoting outdoor education through civic and community organizations. We serve as guest speakers for a variety of local civic groups, including:

- Dandee Lions
- Little Falls Exchange Club
- Sertoma
- Rotary Clubs
- Little Falls Lions Club

Additionally, we are honored to be scheduled as a speaker at this year's Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener in Cross Lake, where we will share our knowledge of fishing traditions and conservation efforts with a broader audience. These engagements are vital in spreading awareness of the museum's mission and educating the community about the importance of preserving Minnesota's outdoor culture.

Why This Matters:

- **Preserving Heritage:** The Minnesota Fishing Museum and Hall of Fame is a vital institution in preserving and sharing Minnesota's fishing heritage. Supporting this appropriation will help maintain this essential cultural resource.
- **Educational Impact:** Through its programs, the museum provides invaluable educational opportunities for students, scouts, and the public. Partnerships with DNR, Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame Legends, fishing pros, and local educators ensure that these programs are of the highest quality.
- **Community Engagement:** The Fishing for All program and other initiatives ensure that all children, regardless of background, have access to fishing opportunities, fostering inclusivity and participation in outdoor activities. Additionally, the museum's role in supporting the Little Falls Anglers High School Fishing League helps nurture the next generation of anglers.
- **Economic and Tourism Benefits:** The museum's programs and events, such as Night with the Fishing Pros, Minnesota Fishing Hall of Fame Legend Induction and Christmas Tree Lane draw visitors to Little Falls, benefiting local businesses and the regional economy. The museum is also a significant contributor to Minnesota's outdoor tourism industry.

