

I. Catch and Release Program

Program Manager: Henry G. Drewes
Department of Natural Resources
Section of Fisheries - Box 12
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- A. M.L. 91 Chpt. 254, Art. 1, Sect. 14, Subd: 8.d
Appropriation \$35,000.
(7/01/93) Balance: \$00.

Catch and Release Program: This appropriation is to the commissioner of natural resources to accelerate the catch and release portion of the CORE program for matching grants to local anglers clubs for promotion of catch and release statewide. The work must be done in cooperation with the Minnesota Sportfishing Congress and other interested groups.

- B. Compatible Data: Not applicable.

- C. Match Requirement: \$35,000
Funds raised to date: \$35,000

Appropriations that must be matched and for which the match has not been committed by January 1, 1992, must be canceled. Amounts canceled to the Minnesota future resources fund are appropriated to the contingent account created in subdivision 15.

II. Narrative:

Increasing fishing pressure and over-exploitation of fish populations necessitate the need for additional protection of Minnesota fisheries resources. Catch and release is an excellent method for protecting fisheries resources and enhancing fishing quality. Efforts to increase angler awareness of the benefits of catch and release, provide information on proper methods for handling and releasing fish to ensure good survival, and ensure cooperation with sports clubs are needed to expand the use of catch and release as a viable management tool. This project will accelerate the catch and release ethic by involving sports clubs in developing catch and release informational materials, such as signs, decals, billboards and videos, and will describe proper methods for handling fish to ensure good survival.

III. Objectives:

- A. Assist sports clubs with accelerating statewide awareness of the benefits of catch and release as a method for enhancing fishing quality through use of the CORE program.
- A.1. Narrative: Provide or expose anglers to informational material directed towards promoting catch and release. Ensure informational material describes the benefits of catch and release to Minnesota's fisheries resource. This objective is best met through a cooperative effort with sports clubs statewide using the CORE program.
- A.2. Procedures: Contact sports clubs through Departmental news releases and direct contact to promote their participation in a matching grant program (including in-kind services) that accelerates anglers awareness of catch and release. Sports clubs will submit Cooperative Opportunities for Resource Enhancement (CORE) applications requiring they provide matching grants to develop catch and release promotional materials. Materials can then be produced either independently by sports groups or in cooperation with the DNR. The DNR will provide information to sports clubs concerning the benefits of catch and release and proper release methods, as well as potential vendors capable of producing high quality catch and release materials. Much of the information concerning catch and release and proper handling methods is currently available through DNR brochures that will be provided to interested sports clubs. Sports clubs will have several options for selecting catch and release material including signs, decals, public service announcements (radio and TV) and billboards. All materials produced will identify sports clubs and the DNR as cooperative members and owners of selected catch and release materials.

A.3. Budget

	LCMR Funds	Matching Funds
a. Amount Budgeted:	\$25,000	\$25,000
b. Balance (07/01/93)	\$00	\$00

A.4. Timeline for Products/Tasks Jul 91 Jan 92 Jun 92 Jan 93 Jun 93

Contact sports club
Provide information on the
 benefits of catch and release
Produce catch and release
 materials for distribution

A.5. Final Status Report : In October, 1991, a statewide news release was published describing the catch and release project and requesting participation by sports clubs via the DNR's Cooperative Opportunities for Resource Enhancement (CORE) program. In December, 1991, Area and Regional DNR fisheries offices were requested to contact local sports clubs directly to solicit their participation in this project. As a result of these efforts, sixteen clubs or organizations submitted CORE applications totalling \$45,000 in matching grant requests. The Minnesota Sportfishing Congress and DNR met and approved all CORE applications (with some reductions to reduce the total match to \$35,000). Projects approved include signs, decals, rulers, caps, tee-shirts, billboards, and radio advertisements. All 16 clubs were contacted and grant agreements were signed and approved by 14 clubs (two cancelled their applications). Two other groups withdrew their applications during the last two months of the project. Funding allotments from groups who withdrew from the project were reassigned through amendments to grant agreements with those groups that expressed interest in expanding their projects. All amendments were within the context of their original work plans. A summary of the products produced by the twelve cooperating groups is attached in Appendix 1.

Overall, public participation in this project was excellent. The groups that withdrew from the project expressed difficulty in garnering the necessary voluntary support from their membership to carry out their obligations under the grant agreements. Feedback from the public regarding materials produced by this project (eg. caps, tee-shirts, rulers etc.) was very positive. The catch and release program also gave the Department the opportunity to strengthen relationships with a number of angling groups and lake associations. While there is no way to objectively quantify the benefits derived from this program, it is safe to say that this project has helped to illustrate the benefits of catch and release.

A.6. Benefits: Acceleration of the catch and release program will result in increasing participation, by anglers, in practicing catch and release. With an increase in catch and release, improved fishing quality will result, enhancing recreational angling and its contribution to the Minnesota economy.

B. Accelerate awareness of proper handling and release methods to ensure survival of caught and released fish.

B.1. Narrative: Improper handling and release will result in high mortality rates for released fish. High mortality rates will reduce or eliminate the benefits that can be derived from a successful catch and release program. Informing anglers of the proper methods for handling and releasing fish is critical to the success of this program.

B.2. Procedures: Contact sports clubs through DNR news releases and direct contact to solicit their participation in a matching grant program (including in-kind services) that accelerates anglers awareness of proper catch and release methods. Sports clubs will submit CORE applications that require they provide matching grants for development of a catch and release video for distribution to sports clubs, schools, public television and other organizations or media. This video will be co-sponsored and co-produced by interested sports clubs and the DNR and will describe the benefits of catch and release and emphasize proper release methods. Through the CORE program, sports clubs will also have the opportunity to purchase videos (on a matching grant basis) for distribution to clubs and groups in their area. Sports clubs providing matching grants will be highlighted and credited in the video.

B.3. Budget

	<u>LCMR Funds</u>	<u>Matching Funds</u>
a. Amount Budgeted:	\$10,000	\$10,000
b. Balance (07/01/93)	\$00	\$00

B.4. Timeline for Products/Tasks Jul 91 Jan 92 Jun 92 Jan 93 Jun 93

Contact sports clubs
Provide information on proper
 handling and release methods
Produce catch and release video
 for distribution

B.5. Final Status Report: In October, 1991, a statewide news release was published describing the catch and release project and requesting participation by sports clubs via the DNR's Cooperative Opportunities for Resource Enhancement (CORE) program. In December, Area and Regional DNR fisheries offices were requested to contact local sports clubs directly to solicit their participation in this project. Several organizations expressed interest in developing a catch and release video or producing catch and release radio advertisements. Simply Fishing was selected by the Minnesota Sportfishing Congress and the DNR to produce a 15 minute video on catch and release (methods and techniques). A grant agreement was signed with Simply Fishing to produce this video. During the production of this video it became obvious that the complete catch and release message could not be conveyed in a 15 minute video. The finished product will be slightly more than 30 minutes in length. Final production should be completed during July, 1993. Sufficient copies of the video will be made to distribute to DNR Fisheries offices statewide. These will be made available to all angling groups, lake associations, and schools through a loaner program. Groups will be able to purchase copies at cost if they choose to do so.

The video produced during this project will provide an excellent educational/instructional tool for furthering the catch and release ethic and the concept of natural resource stewardship.

B.6. Benefits: Increasing angler awareness of proper catch and release methods will improve survival of released fish and ensure the benefits of catch and release are realized.

IV. Evaluation:

For the FY92-93 biennium the program can be evaluated by its ability to:

- 1) increase involvement by sports clubs in the CORE program to promote catch and release topics;
- 2) develop, produce and distribute catch and release signs, decals, award patches, billboards and videos;
- 3) increase angler awareness of the benefits of catch and release and proper handling and release methods.

In the long term, evaluation of this program will be the development and expansion of catch and release as a viable, ethical management tool capable of improving fishing quality. In addition, increased cooperation between sports clubs and the DNR will result in greater communication and awareness of angler needs.

V. Context

- A. Awareness of catch and release is increasing through efforts by sports clubs, the DNR, conservation magazines and others, however continued efforts to accelerate this concept are needed. Rulers, brochures, patches, decals and magazine articles have begun emphasizing the catch and release ethic, however these informational materials are relatively new (past five years) and have not received desired distribution. Current efforts towards promoting catch and release are accurate, however they must be accelerated to increase distribution in order to protect Minnesota fisheries resource.
- B. Current efforts by the DNR and sports clubs have included patches, yardsticks, brochures, signs and decals. While these methods have begun improving angler awareness of catch and release, they should be expanded to meet increasing demands on the resource. In addition, new techniques such as information videos, billboards and radio advertisements need to be developed to expose additional groups to catch and release. Cooperative efforts between sports clubs and the DNR will expand statewide knowledge of catch and release methods and help evaluate its impact on the fisheries resource.
- C. Catch and release work conducted in Minnesota prior to this date has not been funded by LCMR. Funding by the LCMR will allow Minnesota to accelerate its catch and release program to a level needed for protection of the resource and improved fishing quality. Such funding will allow increased cooperation and participation between sports clubs and the DNR.
- D. Not applicable.
- E. Biennial Budget System Program Title and Budget: Not Available at this Time

Appendix 1
LCMR Catch and Release Program

VI. Qualifications

1. Program Manager:

Henry G. Drewes
Survey and Systems Coordinator
Section of Fisheries - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

M.S. Fisheries Science - South Dakota State University, 1984
Thesis Title: Factors Affecting Water Quality and
Macroinvertebrate Distribution in a Small Black Hills Stream

In addition to his thesis work, the program manager has been involved in fisheries management and research since 1984. His current position includes responsibility for the statewide lake and stream survey program and computer applications. This position was also responsible for coordinating Department of Natural Resources, Section of Fisheries efforts in producing a catch and release brochure and yardstick, available for distribution May 1990.

2. Major Cooperators:

- A) Major cooperators will include sports clubs interested in participating in the program and contractors selected for development of catch and release materials. Specific groups interested in involvement are unknown at this time.

GROUP	FY92/93 ALLOTTED FUNDING	PROJECT
Rainy Lake Sport Fishing Club	\$ 4,035.00	Radio advertising, newspaper advertising, posters, caps, awards, rulers
Lake of the Woods Area Catch and Release Program Committee	8,525.00	Radio/newspaper advertising, posters, caps, awards, rulers, billboards (4)
Lake Superior Steelhead Association	2,000.00	Signs
The Smallmouth Alliance	1,300.00	Brochures
Rough Rider Bass Club	200.00	Signs
Hackensack Area Chamber of Commerce	2,332.00	T-shirts
Crane Lake/Sand Point Lake	1,500.00	Buttons, rulers, brochures, posters
Wadena Fishing League/Knob Hill Sportsmen's Club	3,000.00	Billboards, rulers, catch and release seminar
Simply Fishing	6,600.00	Video Production
Lake Minnewaska Property Owners' Association	250.00	Rulers
Longville Area Lakes Association	500.00	Billboards, posters
Muskies Inc.	5,025.00	Postcards, awards, posters, caps

VII. Reporting Requirements

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than Jan. 1, 1992, July 1, 1992, Jan. 1, 1993 and final status report by June 30, 1993.

1993 LCMR PROGRAM ABSTRACT

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE, 30, 1993

This project was supported by the MN Future Resources Fund

Title:	Catch and Release Program
Program Manager:	Henry G. Drewes
Organization:	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Legal Citation:	M.L. 91 Chpt. 254, Art. 1, Sect. 14, Subd: 8.d
Appropriation Amount:	\$35,000

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

- (1) To assist sports clubs with accelerating statewide awareness of the benefits of catch and release as a method for enhancing fishing quality through the CORE program.
- (2) To accelerate the awareness of proper handling and release methods to ensure survival of caught and released fish.

RESULTS

The Cooperative Opportunities for Resource Enhancement (CORE) program served as the basis for administering this project. A total of 16 groups expressed interest in cooperating with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Sportfishing Congress (MSC) on the project. Original pledges from the groups totaled \$45,000 which exceeded the allotted budget for the project. The DNR together with MSC reviewed all of the proposals that were submitted and scaled them back to the allotted funding level. Of the 16 groups that expressed interest in the project, 12 participated and completed projects. The type of materials produced by each group varied and included such things as rulers, billboards, brochures, signs, posters, tee-shirts, buttons and caps. Several of the groups set up recognition and award programs whereby anglers were recognized for releasing fish of quality size. Radio and newspaper promotions were also used by a number of groups. A catch and release seminar funded by this project is scheduled for later this summer. A thirty minute catch and release video will be available for distribution and use by sportfishing clubs, lake associations and school districts later this summer. The video emphasizes the importance of catch and release fishing, and resource conservation. It also demonstrates proper handling techniques for releasing fish. Public participation during this project was deemed excellent. The promotion of a catch and release/selective harvest ethic was furthered by this project.

DISSEMINATION

Materials produced from this project have been distributed to literally thousands of anglers throughout the State of Minnesota. The video produced as a part of this project will be copied and distributed to DNR Fisheries offices statewide. Copies of the video will be made available to schools, lake associations, and sportfishing organizations on a loaner basis.