

Muskellunge Program Meeting
January 10, 1998
Ohio Division of Wildlife – Central Office, Columbus, Ohio

WHAT DO WE WANT OHIO'S MUSKELLUNGE PROGRAM TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

Meeting Objectives

- 1) To collect input on the future direction of Ohio's muskellunge program from muskie clubs.
- 2) To share your club's thoughts about Ohio's future muskellunge program with other clubs.

Ground Rules

- 1) Respect the opinions of others - expect differences.
- 2) Convey the thoughts of your club's members - we could not invite everyone.
- 3) Share this information with your club's members.
- 4) Provide input but understand there are other muskie anglers who are not represented by clubs.
- 5) Think big and long term - don't think locally.
- 6) No decisions will be made today - this is not a popular vote.

Comments – *The following are a list of comments discussed by the muskie club members in attendance. Similar comments were combined to eliminate redundancy. Some comments were edited to help improve the reader's understanding. However, every effort was made to keep the integrity of the comment intact and not take the remarks out of context.*

1. Program lakes should be stocked first and keep the current stocking prioritization system.
2. Do not reduce the quality of muskie fishing at existing lakes in order to create other muskie fisheries.
3. Quality muskie fisheries are more important than the number of fisheries.
4. Pymatuning should be restored to the fishery it was in the late 1970's.

5. Fishing access will be a problem with rivers and streams. River and stream muskie fisheries may not be cost effective in terms of fish returns.
6. Muskie lakes should be spread around Ohio.
7. We need to determine how many muskies are escaping over and through dams.
8. Evaluate the potential of fish barriers and other devices to prevent fish from escaping.
9. Given the value of adult muskies, we need to minimize fish loss.
10. Muskie escapement at Rocky Fork Lake and Cowan Lake may be the primary reason for the poor muskellunge fishery at these areas.
11. Examine the potential for other muskie lakes (e.g., Caesar's Creek, Paint Creek) in southwestern Ohio, if we cannot keep fish in Rocky Fork and Cowan Lakes.
12. Rocky Fork Muskie Hunters have lost members over the last 3 years. The club may fold.
13. The Rocky Fork Muskie Hunters club is important to the Ohio Huskie Muskie Club.
14. A southwestern Ohio muskellunge fishery should be a high priority.
15. There is a lack of muskie (fisheries) in southeast Ohio.
16. Place scale envelopes (information) in the fishing digest – not everyone is aware of the Ohio Huskie Muskie Club program.
17. Muskie clubs should make an effort to advertise the Ohio Huskie Muskie Club program with signs and booths (clubs & ODOW) at sports shows.
18. We need to increase the percent of anglers seeking muskies (currently 1%).
19. We need to keep anglers in Ohio – Lake Milton anglers may go to New York.
20. It is very hard to fish for muskies at Alum Creek due to other users – especially in the summer. Could it be zoned?
21. Conflicts with other user groups should be criteria in establishing muskie lakes. User conflicts can affect how good a lake is.
22. The Division of Wildlife should work with Division of Watercraft to ensure boating regulations are enforced.
23. If we can increase production, then we can look at creating new quality lakes.
24. Stocking one fish per acre may not be adequate to create a muskellunge fishery.

25. Determine the status of the western Lake Erie muskie population. It may provide potential for northwest Ohio muskie anglers.
26. Determine if muskie spawning habitat is present in Lake Erie. How do we enhance natural reproduction? We do not want to create put-take (hatchery stocking) situation in Lake Erie.
27. Determine the potential of improving native muskie stocks in the Ohio River, Little Muskingum River, and other Ohio River tributaries.
28. Determine if we can enhance natural muskellunge reproduction at West Branch.
29. Determine the status of upper Ohio River native muskellunge populations. Contact other states.
30. Pymatuning Lake may not be evaluated correctly due to lack of scale returns from the Penn-Ohio chapter.
31. Closed seasons and size limits need to be in place in order for a muskellunge program to be effective.
32. Closed seasons should be used for biological reasons. Unnecessary in Ohio, since we do not have natural reproduction.
33. Determine the extent of muskie harvest from non-muskie anglers (non-muskie seekers). Non-seekers are keeping muskies, especially in the spring.
34. Would stocking all female fish create a trophy lake?