

Annual Baptiste Lake Pike Tournament continues to grow



By Nate Smelle

With the sun shining and the fish biting the 3rd Annual Baptiste Lake Pike Tournament was again a big success for the fishing community on Baptiste Lake. Anglers participating in this year's tournament gathered near the docks at the Baptiste Lake Lodge early on the morning of Saturday, July 8 before heading out on the water for a fun day of fishing for pike and prizes.

With 52 teams and the best prize pool in the tournament's history, Baptiste Lake Association vice president and founder of the tournament, Michael Di Cintio described the 3rd annual Baptiste Lake Pike Tournament was the biggest and best one yet. Acknowledging how much the tournament has grown since its inception, he highlighted the crucial role volunteers played in making this year's tournament a success. Di Cintio extended special thanks to volunteers: Brodie Poulain for his help at the fish cleaning station; photographers Selina Ottonen and Emily Young; and, Gary Pirko and Paul Coleman for their assistance with planning the tournament and collecting donations.

Noting how incredible the prizes were this year, and how excited participants were to see the kayak donated by Tom at Bancroft Roofing Solutions, Di Cintio thanked the tournament's many sponsors, including: Bancroft Roofing Solutions; Up North Beauty and Wellness; Jaimie Jolly Beauty Co.; Cedar & Co. Botanicals; Birds Creek Farm Supply; Makin' Waves Marine; CARE North Hastings; Boyer GM; North Rush Ink; Bancroft Sport & Marine; Mack Attack Outdoors; Madawaska Property Management; The Spa Bancroft; Paul Price Ford; Rapala; and Shimano.

“On behalf of the Baptiste Lake Association I want to thank you all for your support, this tourney was a huge success all thanks to your kindness, generosity and genuine care for your community,” said DiCintio. “At the end of the day it was a really good feeling to see how many people came out with their friends and families to support Baptiste Lake.”

While the tournament is meant to be a fun day full of big pike and bigger smiles, its main purpose is to raise funds for spawning bed enhancement projects and restocking programs for lake trout and walleye on Baptiste Lake. Before this year's tournament, Di Cintio said they had Melissa Dakers and Robert Pye of Watersheds Canada come out to survey the spawning beds of Baptiste Lake. As a result of the survey, he said they discovered lots of silt and some areas that needed more rocks. According to Di Cintio, this discovery confirms their theory that lake trout are having trouble spawning, on top of the threat from pike. These findings have also given him hope for the future health of the lake ecosystem.

“Right now it is looking really good,” he said. “We have a plan in place and the best people in this field, on our team to help revive the lake trout population.”

For more information on the Baptiste Lake Association and the Baptiste Lake Pike Tournament, visit their website at: <https://baptistelake.org/WS/Main/index.php>.