

Lake association to host pike tourney on Baptiste Lake



By Nate Smelle

On Saturday, Sept. 4 the Baptiste Lake Association is all set to host its first annual Baptiste Lake Pike Fishing Tournament. The event will take place rain or shine starting at 9 a.m.

Participants are asked to show up at the event's headquarters at the public boat launch on Dock Road at 8 a.m. for inspection and blast off placement. Baptiste Lake Association vice president, Michael Di Cintio says teams will be allowed to enter right up until 8:30 a.m. Saturday morning. He says those wishing to pre-register their team; or, anyone who has questions about the tournament can email: fishingdirector@baptistelake.org; or call: 647-929-1621.

According to Di Cintio, pike have been a problem on Baptiste, Elephant and Benoir Lakes for the past 25 years. He says the purpose of this tournament is mainly to raise awareness of the fact that pike are in Baptiste Lake. Di Cintio says they are also hoping to raise funds to pay for spawning bed enhancement projects and restocking programs for lake trout and walleye.

?We are hoping that from now on anglers will concentrate more on targeting pike, which are invasive and abundant, rather than targeting walleye or lake trout,? Di Cintio says. ?In a 2011 broad scale monitoring netting survey by the MNRF [Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry], pike accounted for four per cent of the total species caught in Baptiste Lake. A similar survey in 2016 showed that pike had grown to account for 12 per cent. We can safely assume that percentage has grown exponentially since the last survey.?

By putting more pressure on pike populations through increasing awareness and annual tournaments for pike, Di Cintio says they hope to help balance out the lakes fishery, and bring the population of lake trout and walleye ?back to where they should be.?

The entry fee to enter the tournament is \$50 per boat; and, prizes will be awarded to the teams with the 10 longest fish. Di Cintio says the person to reel in the biggest fish will take home \$500; while the second place winner will receive \$250. He says there are also several other prizes that have been donated to the tournament. If it wasn't for the support of sponsors such as: The Underground, Rapala, Classics Diner, and Cheshers Outdoors, he says the tournament would not have been possible. Noting how grateful the lake association is to all their sponsors, Di Cintio says 100 per cent of the proceeds raised from the event will be going directly towards improving the Baptiste Lake fishery through spawning bed enhancement projects and restocking.