

## 2004 Newsletter

The summer of 2004 was an interesting one in so many ways. We would especially like to thank those of you who vacationed with us, for your great cheer in the face of the odd weather. With the cool and wet summer came higher than normal water levels. Though we didn't end up with any serious problems, spring started late and then September found us with the lake right up to the retaining wall and no beach left showing at all. We'll consider it a 'once in a hundred year' event and would certainly be willing to wager a hot toddy or two that next summer will not include flying through snow showers on the morning of the last Friday in June. We also don't anticipate seeing frost on the boards at daybreak on the 16th of July nor flakes a flyin' on the 18th of August! All too true, I'm afraid but even in the face of adversity, true anglers are the masters! For the 15th season running the fishing continued to get better and amaze us all. Maybe there is some truth in the story we've been telling that 'fish feel less out of water when the weather is at it's worst so therefore a trophy is much more inclined to humor the angler by getting in the boat for a quick photo opportunity than when it's warm and dry up there!' Indeed, this last summer saw an amazing display of about 900 or so trophy walleye from 26 to 32 inches being caught by the 400 folks who fished with us! All we can say is WOW! On a per person, per season basis we've now witnessed an incredible improvement from 0.2 trophy walleye in 1990 to 2.25 in 2004. Granted, not every angler got their 2 ¼ trophy walleye but if you had a line in the water your odds sure were great and obviously some folks did INCREDIBLY well! On top of this we had almost daily reports of great numbers of 'almost trophies' in the 25 inch zone. Next summer those fish and their clones that eluded getting hooked this season will all move up into the +26 inch trophy zone! We love it.

With respect to the northern fishing we've got to say that over the last 15 years it too has also improved with the changed regulations. Those first 6 or 8 years our numbers of 38 to 46 inch lunkers also climbed to an average of 400 per year right in step with the walleye numbers. That said though, over these last 4 years while the trophy walleye numbers have continued to climb, the northern numbers have not. Upper Goose & Mamakwash are indeed great northern pike lakes... But they are almost unbelievable walleye waters!

Many of you are no doubt wondering how things are developing with the native economic development project known as 'The Whitefeather Forest Initiative'. Last year we had asked folks to offer input regarding the need for protections for both the environment and it's creatures and we were quite busy on that project through the fall and winter. We'd like to thank the 644 people who provided letters of concern which we then forwarded to the Whitefeather process and additional copies went to all related Federal and Ontario government leaders. We had also gotten some positive feedback from folks in local government and various business groups in Canada on the subject but much like standing on the tracks trying to stop a moving freight train, we have not stopped the project. Indeed though we made a noticeable impact in voicing concern on the issues of native land & wildlife management! It's too early to tell what, or if anything comes of our efforts but at least we can all feel comfortable in knowing that we spoke up on our issues of concern. At this point, we've seen preliminary mapping of the forest inventory (timber value) and the logging plan which both look very good specifically for us in the headwaters of the Berens River system on both Upper Goose Lake and Mamakwash. With the reserve located 54 miles west of us and no roads of any kind (not even seasonal winter roads) within about 35 miles

in that direction, the first phase of logging will be within reach of that existing infrastructure and extending our direction about 20 km (12 miles). The next phase being identified as having logging potential runs out from 20 to 40 Km (from 12 to 24 miles) our direction and ending short of Bull Moose Camp by over 10 miles. There is no third phase or zone identified so we are beyond reach of any planned logging according to the preliminary plan. Naturally as they reach farther out it will cost more to transport the logs and will require more investment in infrastructure though at the farthest fringes it will most certainly include only winter roads plowed mostly through swamps so as to make summer use impossible. In reality a road capable of allowing summer access by 4x4 or even 4 wheeler will likely never reach Mamakwash or Goose Lake which are within the reach of the second phase. Ultimately the topography appears to have worked in providing us some natural protection from logging. As those of you who have been able to watch the scenery on your flight/s in and out of camp know, those last 25 miles between Red Lake and your arrival at camp, cover a great deal of countryside that is very barren and often almost treeless.

As we suspected, the other reserves across Canada's north seem to be following suit with preparations to develop similar economic development models. Since we are on the very edge of Whitefeather, we will also be on the very edge of the Cat Lake reserve project to our east and McDowell to the north. Both reserves are about 40 miles away and the proximity of roads and access issues are almost identical to the Whitefeather scenario! In any and all regards, we are very fortunate to be on the extreme edge of the land use areas and as such we automatically get a 10 to 20 year break as they work their way out. There is also a very real likelihood of never having to deal with additional access!

The 2005 season is booking up quite nicely and though the dollar exchange rate has flattened considerably, it is our intent to hold the 2004 rates. If you have made plans already, thank you and we look forward to seeing you next summer. If you have not yet made plans for a fishing trip, please call, write or e-mail as we still have some openings.

We get to see a lot of good quality time being shared by family and friends and it's a joy to watch. Again we've got a 3 generation group coming back to Bull Moose after an absence of 23 years. Once 'hooked' on the Canadian fishing experience as a young man with his father, this man is bringing his son and naturally also his dad to both reminisce and create great times and great stories! As time and the cycle of life goes, again this year we've lost and will dearly miss some good friends who we have been privileged to have known and shared some memories with.

We would like to wish all of you and your families the very best for a healthy, happy, loving and safe holiday season and 2005.

*Tom, Shara & Family*

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