

Shabbona Muskie On A Rampage

By: Denny Sands

It is rumored at Shabbona Lake that the Shabbona Muskies were upset that Muskie Anglers were beginning to talk about other Illinois' Muskie Lakes as the premier Muskie Lake in Illinois. Kinkaid ?, Shelbyville ?, Otter ?, Even the water skiing infested Chain Of Lakes ?. "Who are they kidding?", was the talk of the Shabbona Muskie.

Shabbona Lake is, and always will be, the Muskie Capitol Of Illinois. My God, what other lake even has 2 State Of Illinois Record Muskie, LET ALONE 4 State Of Illinois Record Muskie !!!

So, the elders of the Shabbona Muskie called a school meeting, to once and for all settle the issue of what is the premier Muskie Lake in Illinois. They asked for 3 volunteers. They got several !

The first volunteer struck Mike Reynolds crank bait on May 15th, 1999, at precisely 3:02 PM. He was a mighty brute, measuring 47 inches and weighing over 32 pounds. A thirty pound Muskie is a big fish in any lake, anywhere. Of course, Mike took some quick pictures and released Volunteer # 1 back into Shabbona Lake.

The second volunteer attacked just 4 days later on May 19th, 1999. This 48 inch, 34 pound, Muskie struck Pete Petros' spinner bait with a force only a true Muskie angler can relate to. Pete proudly took some pictures and released Volunteer #2 back into Shabbona Lake .

Now, the Muskie elders listened as WGN's "The Great Outdoors" radio show talked about two 30 plus pound Muskies being caught less than a week apart at Shabbona Lake. They read newspaper clippings of the noteworthy catches. But, it was not enough ! Shabbona Lake, the Muskie elders felt, needed to make a 3rd statement, to once and for all reiterate the claim of "Muskie Capitol".

As they swam in their schools, the Muskie elders debated the pros and cons of releasing Volunteer # 3 to attack a Muskie angler's lure. "Is it needed ?", one elder asked. "Haven't we done enough ?", another elder asked. A third commented, "Isn't a 47 inch and a 48 inch sufficient ?"

As they debated, the underlying tone was that Shabbona Lake Muskies were not getting their due respect. The news media had to be shocked at least one more time.

So, on Sunday, May 16th, 1999, authorization was granted to Volunteer #3 to seek and attack Pete Goerke's crank bait. The Muskie elders all lined up to bear witness to the event. Little did Pete know what was about to happen.

Volunteer # 1 was 47 inches. Volunteer # 2 was 48 inches. Now, here comes Volunteer #3, a 49 inch 35 pound monster, meaner than the devil. Now, Pete is an avid Muskie fisherman. He has fished for Muskie for several years., but he had never caught a 30 plus pound Muskie before. Boy was he in for a treat.

Volunteer # 3 struck at 9:06 A.M. Pete knew he had a 30 pound Muskie from the beginning. He expertly boated the fish, after the thrill of a lifetime. Several pictures were quickly taken and Volunteer # 3 was released back into Shabbona Lake. Surely, the elders felt, this would satisfy the Muskie enthusiasts. But there is still one or maybe two "doubters" out there.

The last time I talked to the Muskie elders, they were contemplating that one of them (elders) should volunteer and become the first State Of Illinois 50 Inch, 40 Pound Muskie caught in Illinois. Now that would definitely get everyone's attention. It could only happen in Shabbona Lake ! By the way, I'll mention to the elders that I have had several Muskie angler volunteers since this article was printed, and I'll try and get the spelling of your name correct !!!

(Author's Note : Volunteer # 1 & 3 were caught out of Shabbona Lakeside's Guide Ron Fulk's boat and Volunteer # 2 was caught by Shabbona Lakeside's Guide Pete Petros. Both can be reached by calling 815-824-2581. They apparently have a connection to the elders !)