

A Study of the First Wisconsin Chapter
of Muskies Inc. Youth
Program

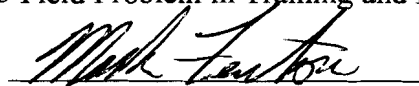
by

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ABSTRACT

The member's of Muskies Inc. International have identified three areas of focus for the future of their organization. These areas are youth, fisheries, and research. The First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. has over 200 members in western Wisconsin. There has been a minimal amount of focus on youth development in the First Wisconsin Chapter in the last few years. In this study; angler education workshops, youth mentoring, connections with the community, barriers towards increased participation, attitudes and behaviors, youth education and activities are explored. The researcher developed a 13-question questionnaire in the hopes to capture member's ideas, concerns, and suggestions toward improving the overall participation and success of their youth program. Each household with members 18 years of age or older from the First Wisconsin Chapter were sent the questionnaire during this study to help identify opportunities within the current youth program. This study contains the feedback

received from the members who returned the questionnaire and recommendations for the future of the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. concerning their youth program practices.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Fishing has been traditionally passed down in families from parent to child (Circle, 2003). Our world is changing; an increasing number of children are not exposed to fishing. They are often denied the opportunity because more parents are both working or they are being raised in a single-parent household. If this trend continues, there will be less and less anglers forming ties with our natural resources. The dollars generated by these anglers are detrimental for the health and quality of our water resources. There is hope; many anglers, organizations and companies are concerned about the future. Youth can be introduced to the world of fishing with the help from these adults.

In spring of 1963, Gil Hamm, a building contractor from St. Paul took a business trip to Rhineland, WI to develop plans for a funeral home for Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Ford (Benson, 1993). Floyd frequently bragged to Gil about muskie fishing. On one afternoon Floyd asked Gil if he would like to accompany him on a muskie fishing trip. Gil jumped at the opportunity, but that trip produced no fish for either. Back at the boat landing, Gil asked Floyd how many muskies he had caught in his lifetime. Floyd's answer was none. Gil left that day feeling that he had wasted his time and the effort. Little did he know, he had caught muskie fever. After that day, he started to fish muskie every opportunity he had to go fishing.

A few years later, Gil read an article in the St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press newspaper about the great muskie fishing in Canada (Benson, 1993). In July of 1966, he made his way to Canada and successfully landed a 25-pound muskie. On his way home from that trip, Gil formed his idea of Muskies Inc. and had an outline for a muskie club.

This was to be a club with many members, including women and youngsters dedicated to the raising and stocking of muskies.

On December 9, 1966 a group of 14 were in attendance to form the original board of directors of Muskie Inc (Benson, 1993). Shortly thereafter, the board established a list of By-Laws and was granted a non-profit exemption under Section 501(c) (3) by the I.R.S.

Over the years, the membership of Muskies, Inc. has been active with tagging studies, negotiations with Indian spearing issues, youth fishing, involvement in Camp Fish, publishing an excellent magazine for the members, developing research projects, tabulating muskies released by members tournaments among member Chapters, etc. Today Muskies, Inc. boasts 48 Chapters in 14 States and a membership exceeding 7,500. Although this historical review of Muskies, Inc. has been sketchy, suffice it to say that Muskies, Inc. has done considerable work in increasing the image of the muskellunge as a trophy sportfish and in particular in its conservation efforts to promote the "catch and release" philosophy among it's membership. Today Muskies, Inc is the premier muskie fishing organization in the world. This organization has become a strong and resourceful partner of state conservation management departments in many of the states where muskies are found. Today there are 38 of the lower 48 states with muskie populations and muskie fisheries management programs being conducted by state DNR's (<http://www.muskiesinc.org/About Us/ History>).

Muskies Inc. developed a set of objectives back in 1965. Here are the objectives that still guide this organization today:

- To promote a high quality Muskellunge sport fishery;
- To support selected conservation practices based on scientific merit and carried out by authorized federal and state agencies;
- To promote Muskellunge research;
- To establish hatcheries and rearing ponds and introduce the species into suitable waters;
- To support the abatement of water pollution;
- To maintain records of habits, growth and range of species;
- To disseminate Muskellunge information;
- To promote good fellowship among men, women and children

(<http://www.muskiesinc.org/About Us/Objectives>).

In April of 2002, Muskies Inc. adopted this mission statement:

Muskies Inc. is an active, service-oriented, non-profit organization with the single focus of improving the sport of muskie fishing for men, women and children .Our mission is to unite all muskie fishing interests for the promotion and protection of a high quality muskellunge sport fishery in the United States and Canada. We will accomplish this by supporting conservation practices and research based on sound scientific merit, and carried out by authorized federal or state agencies, appropriate academic institutions, Muskies Inc. Chapters, and their members. We are committed to the abatement of water pollution; maintenance of records for muskies habits, growth and range and the dissemination of muskie information to every one (<http://www.muskiesinc.org/About Us/Mission Statement>).

The First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. was established in 1976 (Benson, 1993). The First Wisconsin Chapter is located in the Eau Claire/Chippewa Valley. The

First Wisconsin Chapter has averaged 225+ members since its inception. The First Wisconsin Chapter is known for their raising and stocking of muskies in the Chippewa and Rusk counties of Wisconsin. The researcher of this study has been an active member of the First Wisconsin Chapter since 2001 and currently resides on the First Wisconsin Chapter's board of directors.

Statement of the Problem

Are there ways in which the youth program of the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. can be changed or improved? There has been very little activity in the First Wisconsin Chapter's Youth Program since the researcher became a member.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the areas that can be improved to better the youth program for the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. This study will gather ideas, concerns and suggestions through a questionnaire from the First Wisconsin Chapter members concerning their youth program. After the completion of this study, it will be presented to the members of the First Wisconsin Chapter for their future use concerning the youth program.

This study addressed the following objectives:

1. Gather ideas, concerns, and suggestions about the youth program.
2. Promote the awareness of the First Wisconsin Chapter's youth program.
3. Determine if the First Wisconsin Chapter members are willing to use funds to develop leaders for a successful youth program.
4. Establish avenues for marketing the youth program to the members of the First Wisconsin Chapter and their communities.

5. Generate connections with other clubs and organizations.
6. Increase the participation by First Wisconsin Chapter member's in the youth program.
7. Identify valuable learning opportunities for the youth members and adult leaders.
8. Identify a target population for the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. Youth Program.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study are:

1. It is assumed that each questionnaire returned represents the ideas, concerns and suggestions of one household.
2. It is assumed that not all of the questionnaires will be filled out and sent back by the respondents.

Definition of Terms

Abatement – Eliminating or reducing water pollution.

Dissemination -To spread information.

Fishery - An established place to fish.

Hatcheries - A place where fish eggs are artificially hatched.

Muskellunge or Muskie - Is a large predatory fish from the pike family (Esox Masquinongy) that has been known to reach up to seventy pounds.

Rearing pond - An artificially constructed area filled with water for the purpose of hatching, fostering, feeding, holding, or raising a fish to release size.

Stocking - To add a collection of fish to maintain a balanced population.

Tagging - To fix or adhere a form of identification to individual fish.

Limitations of the Study

1. The questionnaire was only sent to households with members 18 years of age or older in the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc.
2. Lack of any material from Muskies Inc. International pertaining to the practices for a Chapter youth program. Muskies Inc. International does not have guidelines for youth involvement within the Chapters.
3. Lack of 100 % participation in the completion and return of the questionnaire

Methodology

The researcher developed a questionnaire to serve as an instrument in the data collection process. These questions will be used to capture the perspective views of the studied subjects. This questionnaire has both quantitative and qualitative measures that seek to gather views from the members of the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskie Inc. The questionnaire asks the respondent to differentiate the value of different learning opportunities. Also included in the questionnaire, is a set of open-ended and closed-ended questions for comparison between the respondents. The researcher chose to send each household within the First Wisconsin Chapter with members over the age of 18 a questionnaire. These households will serve as the research group in this study. The researcher will analyze the data that is collected. This will help draw some conclusions and recommendations for the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Angler Education Workshops

The state of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources hosts Angler Education Workshops throughout the state of Wisconsin each year (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/workshops.shtml>). These workshops are provided to assist in the education of adult volunteers to help establish fishing programs in their communities and schools. These programs were developed in the hope to pass on basic fishing skills and give children a connection with Wisconsin's waters. At these workshops, the adult volunteers receive free materials that can be used to guide the development of their own angler education programs. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources also has loaner fishing equipment and supplies to help aid with instruction.

The angler education instructors need to meet minimum qualifications, become certified, uphold duties, and follow time commitment and re-certification requirements (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/instructor.shtml>).

All instructors must be:

- be at least 18 years old.
- have an interest in aquatic resources and their well-being.
- possess a strong personal sense of outdoor ethics.
- enjoy working with people of all ages.
- have good communication and organizational skills.
- satisfactorily complete the certification process.

- hold a current fishing license when participating in any activity defined as fishing in the Wisconsin fishing regulations.

Each instructor will be required to attend an angler education workshop (<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/instructor.shtml>). The participant will become actively involved in his or her training during this workshop. The volunteer will complete and sign an angler education instructor application and agree to accept and adhere to standards of conduct.

The duties of the angler education instructor will be:

- Ensure safety of program participants.
- Initiate and/or deliver a(n) Angler Education program(s) with clubs or youth groups or schools outlined in the instructor training workshop.
- Recruit assistants and participants.
- Handle and return loaner equipment and materials promptly and in good condition.
- Document and submit timely and accurate program records to the Angler Education office.
- Supervise and assist Fishing Coaches, Fishing Buddies and other volunteers involved with your program.

After the initial Angler Education Workshop, instructors are asked to offer at least one program within their first year and one every two years thereafter

(<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/instructor.shtml>). An instructor must re-certify after two years of inactivity.

The angler education program maintains a list of grants that are available for educational opportunities

(<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/fish/kidsparents/anglereducation/educationgrants.shtml>). These include:

- Physical Education Grants Initiative: Fishing and Boating Educational Grants – These grants are available through the Wisconsin D.N.R.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education Grants - These are grants that can be used to increase the environmental education and public's awareness to make informed decisions affecting our environment (<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>).
- Wisconsin Environmental Education Board Grant Program – These grants were developed to increase and spread environmental education (http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/weeb/supportpages/grantprog_firstpage.htm).
- National Resources Foundation: Besadny Conservation Grants – This program helps financially support natural resource projects (http://www.wisconservation.org/index.php?page=About_the_Program).

Mentoring

Mentors are people who help translate experiences into learning opportunities for increased understanding (Gray and Albrecht, 1999). These mentors serve as models of success and responsibility.

Time and energy are needed to serve as a mentor (Gray and Albrecht, 1999). The mentor must be willing to lead their student into sometimes an unfamiliar world with the

student's interest in mind. Many of these experience often give the mentor a feeling of contribution to future generations and society.

When working with young people, the mentor should remember that there is a responsibility for the student to understand what principles are behind the actions (Gray and Albrecht, 1999). Often they learn by observing and imitating previously exposed actions. These students want to be successful. As mentors, there is a need to identify these successes and celebrate them. Students must also have a goal to work towards. Without goals, they may try to do too much too fast. The mentors should work with the student to help identify these goals and make a list of limitations for optimal results.

Community Connections

Support for your program will grow if people have an understanding of what and when activities are happening (Cross and Willis, 1994). Invite others from your community to observe the activities. Partnerships within the community are often developed by simply keeping the public informed about different events that are occurring.

A "skill's team" identified the following list of connections (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1994):

- Angler Education Workshops – 1,300 instructors and over 5,000 students trained. This program was described in the Angler Education section.
- Project Wild – active in all of Wisconsin 428 school districts. This program introduces new ways of teaching environmental education in the classroom (<http://www.projectwild.org/overview.htm>).

- Hook on Fishing, Not on Drugs. This program was developed by the Future Fisherman Foundation to promote angling skills, conservation ethics, and social skills (<http://www.futurefisherman.org/programs/hofnod.php>).
- “Pathways to Fishing” – sponsored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and private partners.
- “Fishing Has No Boundaries” – This organization was formed to open the world of fishing to those with disabilities (<http://www.fhnbinc.org/.history.html>).
- National Fishing Week and Free Fishing Weekend in Wisconsin. Wisconsin offers a free fishing weekend each year usually in June to allow people of all ages to experience this sport in any water of the state without a license (<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/fish/kidsparents/learningopportunities.html>).
- Fishing clinics and events sponsored by sports clubs.

Barriers

Deschenes and McDonald (2003) identified that it is not possible to predict all problems or challenges that an organization will encounter, but they are able to identify general areas of implementation issues.

These organizations can (Deschenes and McDonald, 2003):

Develop missions based on serving the interests and needs of youth and supporting them in their development, and focus their decisions on this mission. They can make choices based on what is in the best interest of youth rather than on where funding will come from or what foundations are interested in funding. They can also support youth in developmental tasks rather than provide them with activities that do not have much thought or meaning behind them. Though these

are all potentially difficult decisions to make, when youth are the focal point of organizational work, the choices about external conditions become clearer. (p. 32)

In a study completed by a “skill’s team”, there were several barriers that were recognized concerning youth learning (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 1994). There was an indication of a change in family structure and a loss of role models. Decreased opportunities based on the lack of resources available and a means of transportation to these opportunities. More demand on time from other competing interests for youth. Costs associated with participation in youth events.

Attitudes and Behaviors

According to Hungerford and Volk (1990), there are three variables that contribute to the environmentally responsible behavior (as cited in Siemer, 2001). These variables are:

- Entry- Level variables are good predictors of behavior related to environmental sensitivity and knowledge of ecology.
- Ownership variables make the issues personalized; which in turn creates ownership of the problem.
- Empowerment variables give humans a sense that they can make a difference in the outcomes of those issues. This variable often involves perceived skills, strategies, control and intentional acts.

According to Search Institute (1997), developmental assets are external and internal factors that will decrease the likelihood that youth will take on risky behavior (as cited in Jucovy 2001). Without these behaviors, chances are greater that they will grow to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults.

External assets are positive experiences that youth should receive from the people and institutions in their lives (Jucovy, 2001). Some examples of these are:

- Support – Youth need to be surrounded by positive and supportive environments.
- Empowerment – Youth need the opportunity to contribute value to others and their communities.
- Boundaries and Expectations – Youth need to know what is “inbounds” or “out of bounds” to know what behavior is expected.
- Constructive use of time – Youth need to have activities in which they can grow and enrich their lives and that of others.

Internal assets are responsibilities of the community’s commitment to provide internalized qualities that help make choices and provide a sense of purpose and focus for these youth (Jucovy, 2001).

Some examples of these are:

- Commitment to learning – There is a need to focus on a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Positive values – These values will guide their choices.
- Social Competencies – Skills are needed to make positive choices, build relationships, and future success.
- Positive Identity – This need is to provide a sense of power, purpose, self-worth, and promise in one’s life.

Youth Education and Activities

No youth program approach will fulfill the needs of the diverse activities that surround our youth (Trout Unlimited, 1992). These needs will have to be explored within

each program and tailored to best fit the goals of the program. The primary emphasis needs to be put on education, not on membership.

Here are some hints in effectively establishing a youth program:

- Do not make education harder than it has to be – Activities are naturally appealing to youth. They are fascinated with the hands on approach to learning.
- Make your Chapter's interactions with kids an ongoing affair – These programs have to incorporate on going and a wide range of activities.
- Chapter youth activities should have the ultimate aim of involving youth in Chapter resource work – An objective of your youth activities has to be geared towards that of the organization.
- Chapter members should serve as role models for youth – The adult members have skills that they can pass on to their youth members. They have to act as positive role models to encourage the youth to act in ethical and appropriate manners.
- Provide leadership opportunities for young people within the Chapter organization – Youth can become effective leaders in their Chapter if leadership roles are taught to them when they are young.
- Recognize the potential of youth and do not underestimate their abilities to contribute – Involve youth in discussions about their needs; often they know more about them than the adults.
- Youth education should model environmental protection as well as fishing – Put the focus on ethical behavior; not the best, the biggest or the most.

- The worst youth program is NO YOUTH PROGRAM – Youth are a valuable resource. Neglecting to have anything for them is a mistake for the future of your organization. (Trout Unlimited, 1992).

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to gather information about the current state of the youth program for the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. This section will address subject selection and description, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations.

Subject Selection and Description

There are currently 200+ members in the First Wisconsin Chapter representing 140 households. There will be one questionnaire sent to every household with members over the age of 18 in the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. These households will represent the research group and the population in this study. The response rate will be the number of questionnaires that are returned out of the 140 that were sent out.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher to gather feedback regarding the current youth program in the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. This questionnaire has a combination of both qualitative and quantitative questions (see Appendix A). These questions were developed as a descriptive study to explore what the common thoughts of the First Wisconsin Chapter members were on the current state of their youth program. Using qualitative and quantitative questions will help with the importance of outlining a realistic picture of the youth program in the First Wisconsin Chapter.

Qualitative research was utilized in this study to gain insight from the current members of the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. based on their own words.

According to Cresswell (1998):

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

The questionnaire in this study was designed to help expose member's viewpoints of the youth program to others. The questions in this study were developed in both a closed-ended and open-ended format.

Humans have the tendency to show bias in the study of subjects to hear and see what they want to (Borg and Gall, 1963). These tendencies present an obstacle and problem to obtaining pure findings in the study. The researcher understands the importance of showing no bias in reporting the findings in this study. The researcher in this study is a member of the First Wisconsin Chapter and will not be participating in the study.

Quantitative data will help describe the statistical research that is collected. These statistics will help represent all of the respondent's scores or rankings to one or two numbers (Borg and Gall, 1963). The mean or average will be expressed to show what the average response was about a particular topic.

Data Collection Procedures

A cover letter, questionnaire, consent form, and a self-addresses stamped envelope were sent out to each of the 140 households to be returned to the researcher when completed. The subjects in this study were sent an informed consent form assuring that their responses would be confidential and participation was voluntary (See Appendix C). There were no identifiers included in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The qualitative questions in this study will be compiled and sorted by common themes expressed by the members of the First Wisconsin Chapter. These themes will be presented to the First Wisconsin Chapter for improvements to their current practices associated with the youth program. These questions will address concerns about learning opportunities, membership, other community groups, program outcomes, and barriers in the development of the program.

The questions that will be analyzed using quantitative measures will be utilized to identify the views of the members. These will explore their gender, age group, number of years as a member, awareness of youth program, use of First Wisconsin Chapter's funds, number of events, a comparison of learning opportunities for the youth members, and number of youth in each household.

A Likert type scale will be utilized in question seven of this questionnaire to gauge the perceived difference of value of 15 learning activities. This type of instrument is a summated rating scale that consists of several items that are broken down to one score (Pedhazur and Scmelkin, 1991). Each respondent will be asked to assign a value to each learning opportunity. All of the responses will be tabulated and each learning opportunity will have an average response associated to its perceived value. This will help to identify what is believed to be the most valuable for the development of youth in the First Wisconsin Chapter. These learning opportunities will be individually rated using the following scale; 1 – Should not be included, 2 – Not important, 3 – Undecided, 4 – Important, and 5 – Very important.

Limitations

The limitations of this instrument are:

1. The questionnaire was sent only to the households with members that were 18 years or older from the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc.
2. The respondents were given less than 3 weeks to respond.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the ideas, concerns and suggestions of the members of the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. about their youth program. A questionnaire was distributed to each of the 140 households in the First Wisconsin Chapter. In this chapter, the findings of the questionnaire will be expressed. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher to gain insight to improving the youth program. There were a total of 52 responses that were returned to the researcher.

Item Analysis

Question 1 asked the respondents to identify their gender. The majority of the respondents in this study were male, 90.39%. This is what the researcher expected. There are very few women and children that participate in any of the First Wisconsin Chapter's activities.

Table 1 – Gender of the Respondent

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	47	90.39%
Female	1	1.92%
No Response	4	7.69%

In Question 2, the study asked for the subjects to select what age group best represented their age. The largest group in the study was the 50 to 59 year olds at 32.69%, followed by the 40 to 49 year olds representing 30.77% of the respondents.

Table 2 – Age Group of the Respondent

	Frequency	Percentage
A: (Under 18)	0	0%
B: (19 - 29)	0	0%
C: (30 - 39)	11	21.15%
D: (40 - 49)	16	30.77%
E: (50 - 59)	17	32.69%
F: (60 - 69)	8	15.38%
G: (Over 70)	0	0%

Question 3 asked the respondents to identify how many years they have been a member of Muskies Inc. On average, the respondents in this study have been members for 11.74 years. These responses concerning time as a member ranged from half a year up to 30 years.

Question 4 asked the respondents if they were aware that the First Wisconsin Chapter had a youth program. Only 3.85% of the respondents were not aware of the youth program of the First Wisconsin Chapter. These two respondents that were not aware of the youth program have been members for one year. One of these members was interested in learning more about the program.

Table 3 – Awareness of a Youth Program

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	96.15%
No	2	3.85%

Question 5 asked the respondents if they would support using First Wisconsin Chapter funds to send adult leaders to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Angler Education Workshops for youth directors. The majority (82.69%) felt that funds should be used to send adult leaders to these workshops.

Table 4 – Support of Angler Education Workshops

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	82.69%
No	8	15.38%
No Response	1	1.92%

Question 6 asked the respondents to indicate the number of events that should be geared towards youth each year. The respondents thought that 3.74 events on average should be offered each year for their youth members. Eight of the respondents chose not to answer this question.

Question 7 uses a Likert type scale to determine the perceived value of the respondents concerning 15 learning opportunities. Table 5 shows the percentage for each category on this scale. It also indicates what the average response was for each learning opportunity. Boater safety, fishing ethics, catch and release, safe fish handling, and basic fishing equipment were perceived to be the five most valuable learning opportunities for youth program.

Table 5 – Learning Opportunities

	Should not be included	Not important	Undecided	Important	Very Important	Average Response
Basic Fishing Equipment	0%	4.08%	16.32%	55.10%	24.49%	4.00
Boater Safety	2.04%	4.08%	4.08%	26.53%	63.27%	4.45
Catch and Release	0%	2.04%	2.04%	32.65%	63.27%	4.16
Educational Scholarships	10.20%	12.24%	44.90%	28.57%	4.08%	2.82
Fish Anatomy and Identification	0%	4.08%	16.32%	61.22%	18.37%	3.61
Safe Fish Handling	0%	0%	4.08%	43.88%	52.04%	4.07
Fishing Ethics	0%	0%	0%	29.59%	70.41%	4.30
Fishing Instructional Clinics	0%	0%	12.24%	67.35%	20.41%	3.76
Fishing Regulations	0%	8.16%	10.20%	44.90%	36.73%	3.78
Mentors	0%	2.04%	24.49%	51.02%	22.45%	3.61
Speakers	0%	12.24%	32.65%	53.06%	2.04%	3.16
Stocking	0%	10.20%	28.57%	42.86%	18.37%	3.39
Water / Land Conservation	4.08%	4.08%	14.29%	44.90%	32.65%	3.71
Youth Section in Follow Up Newsletter	2.04%	10.20%	32.65%	46.94%	8.16%	3.20
Youth Section on First Wisconsin's Website	0%	10.20%	22.45%	51.02%	16.33%	3.39

Question 8 asked for a list of applicable learning opportunities other than those listed in question seven. Each box in Figure 1 represents one respondent's feedback.

The most common theme that appeared in the responses was field trips as a learning opportunity. These field trips would serve as a medium for all members of the family to get involved in this organization. Respondents also saw the need for fishing days or clinics for youth development. Many of the responses were related to conservation of our natural resources.

Figure 1 – Applicable Learning Opportunities

Youth Fishing day Youth Games Casting Contest
Sponsor a "field trip" to large meetings such as the musky expo in the twin cities - for our youth members
Summer school classes (per individual school)
Sponsor a day with a DNR Fish Biologist Sponsor "Fishing Classes" through summer schools in local districts
"Guide for the day Program" – Kids don't have baits or opportunity to fish in boats General Fishing opportunities w/ older fisherman
Contact Judy Faust at Menomonie Middle School Judy is the advisor for the outdoor conservation club. She may be interested in having a speaker come and cover basic musky fishing. Consider a booth at the Red Cedar Women's Pheasant Forever youth day in September. Usually 200-300 kids attend at the Whispering Emerald Ridge Game Farm south of Menomonie. Contact Julie Smith
Place a note on the Website "we do youth group events" + advertise we are available to do some talks, etc. Hold a "basics" seminar for the kids at the expo or at the Holcombe sports show, etc. Annual kids event (or a "family" day) where we do stuff for kids in our chapter + their "bring along" friends
Youth musky contest with spotter boats, no adults allowed to fish
Invasive species and preventing their spread
Field trip (Bus Trip) to Cabela's or Big Gander Mountain stores Getting involved with fish crib, shore land, and fish structure Projects for habitat + spawning
Kids want fun + entertainment
Communication + involvement with other youth + adults
Should we be focused on learning or fun?
Youth fishing outings

Figure 1 - Continued

Should we be focused on learning or fun?
Youth fishing outings
Tapes, Books, Magazines that can be loaned out to younger or less experienced fisherman. Most Muskie fisherman have quite a collection of material that could be loaned out. I for one have books etc. that have served me well earlier on.
Perhaps we could sponsor an ice fishing "contest" to the North High School fishing club
Field trips to fish hatcheries, fishing hall of fame. One a month, fishing trips to area lakes w/musky. Encourage lure making, experimenting with lures. Tours excel energy power dams.
Sponsor a youth trip to the Spooner hatchery during the rearing season Sponsor a youth trip to Beaver Creek Reserve in Fall Creek Have a "Youth Night" with demonstrations on basic fishing skills – Knot tying – live bait rigging – local fishing opportunities available without having to own a boat
Outings revolving around the family (Camping, fishing, ice fishing, Beaver Creek, Work with DNR)
Field trip to hatcheries, beaver creek reserve, etc.
Lure making and field trip to hatchery (DNR involvement)
Bait making
Identify local fishing opportunities (locations) for youth How to filet fish
How to read electronics and maps

Question 9 asked for items in which the First Wisconsin Chapter could increase the number of youth members in the First Wisconsin Chapter. Each box in Figure 2 represents one respondent's feedback.

Advertising was veered as the most common theme towards increasing the youth members. Followed closely by more youth centered activities, a reduced membership rate, sponsoring family days, and providing ways to get youth exposed to fishing.

Figure 2 – Ways to Increase Number of Youth Members

Have more programs for youth
Student rates Classes in schools
Give presentations at local classes Work with Scouts on "Fish Conservation" Badge
Stop focus on members kid's – they will come automatically Encourage opportunities for all youth outside Muskies Inc. Plan open events for those who would be interested

Figured 2 – Continued

Reduced or free membership fees
Give free baits to any 15 + under at the meetings Hold our annual “family day” for our chapter + their families Give complimentary membership to juniors on a regular basis Give away fishing trips guided by chapter members to the kids
Contact schools that have a fishing program. Rice Lake offers one
Advertise on bulletin boards in areas that kids frequent Match kids with fisherman that don’t have a parent or boat
Offer a youth member a chance to fish with adult members during monthly meetings out at the Rod & Gun at Lake Wissota. Post a bulletin of a certain day that Muskies Inc. members will take a youth fishing. Providing equipment that some youth don’t have or have never fished before
More youth oriented events. Take youth fishing and the adults / guides / chaperones cannot fish, just the kids
Like any group or organization – it takes leaders + dedicated people
Have the youth sponsor another youth
Let them know that a club is out there
Wave membership fee
Promote to younger adults who have younger children
Combining musky fishing with other “types” of outings – camping, cookouts, etc
The single guys in Muskies Inc need to get married and have kids
Face to face contact / presentations to groups / individuals listed in the following section
Advertise
Not be such a closed knit bunch of fisherman. Cater more towards a couple of baits for new fisherman than stuff for fisherman that have boxes flowing over with baits
I think youth members will come mostly from children and grandchildren of members
Offer seminars geared to the youth Offer a youth fishing day with members of the chapter
Make it more fun to be a youth member
Have some youth oriented events to make the club more appealing to youngsters Allow any muskie caught by a junior member to count in the chapters contest
Promote mentor program – get involved with Big Brothers or Big Sisters or like organizations
More emphasis targeted towards advertising youth related events. Events must be well thought out and planned. Use of media such as radio and newspaper
Offer Muskies Inc. clothing in youth sizes (especially hats!)
Parent(s) + son/daughter tournament
We need to get a program going – It will start out small part as you have it you should get more students involved each year so it will grow. They are the future of fishing.
Increase adult / parental involvement
Big Brothers / Big Brothers Partnership

Figure 2 – Continued

Mentor and family events would greatly increase youth involvement. This in turn would increase youth membership
Overall the chapter needs to be less “ A guys night out” and more family centric. Anything and everything (within reason) needs to include and involve families and therefore youth. A youth fishing event would be great but meetings need to be more for families
Recruit more parents to Muskies Inc. Free youth memberships
Do more hands on fishing and include youths on the committee
Combine pond stocking with High school and grade school ecology programs. The way to increase interest is to become involved.

Question 10 asked for suggestions of other community groups that the First Wisconsin Chapter could work with to form a youth connection. Each box in Figure 3 represents one respondent’s feedback.

Making connections with schools in the area was the most common theme expressed from the respondents. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, other fishing and hunting organizations, and the Boy/Girl Scouts were mentioned multiple times from the respondents.

Figure 3 – Community Groups to Form Youth Connections

Bass or Trout Clubs Big Brothers Organizations Lions Club
YMCA PTA Summer camps or programs that would incorporate fishing
Lions Clubs
Scout groups / School science classes Any type of youth groups
Local schools, Bass Club
Big Brothers Big Sisters Summer YMCA camps Local schools “Pass it on” program Boy Scouts Girl Scouts Church groups

Figure 3 – Continued

Big Brothers and Big Sisters Upward bound program for at risk youths Boys and Girls Club
Get together with the group that forms the take a kid fishing. It was held at the old Waters Edge a few years. Maybe work with the B.A.S.S. (Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society) association to get more youths involved
Chippewa Rod + Gun
Big Brothers + Sisters
High School meetings
Lions
Boy scouts, kinship kids, sporting programs Are there athletes that like to fish/ (yes there are) We compete with these other groups for kid's time, Can we find a way to work together. (little league Baseball – Fishing outing?)
Big Brothers – Big Sisters
Other clubs, Fishing + Hunting
DNR Lions Rotary Big Brothers / Sisters YMCA Schools – all levels Lake Associations Sport Shops Resort owners County Services (family, children's, sheriff) Local police
B.A.S.S. (Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society) Hunter Safety programs
Rod and Gun Clubs UWEC Rod and Gun Club High School fishing Clubs Jr. High fishing Clubs
Schools
Big Brothers Big Sisters Boy Scouts Girl Scouts Elementary, Middle + High Schools Chippewa Falls Rod & Gun Club Eau Claire Rod & Gun Club Westgate Sportsman's Club
Church youth groups – high school youth programs – Hunter safety groups to also promote fishing

Figure 3 – Continued

Grade schools, middle schools and elementary schools. Foster children or children with single parents. Youths in detention for breaking the law.
Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, School clubs. Maybe work with other clubs (Whitetails Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, BASS (Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society), NWTf (National Wild Turkey Federation)) to put on a youth expo for the EC/Chippewa Falls area. All of those organizations are interested in attracting youth/new members.
Bass, Walleye, Trout – all of us have to work together to improve this
Other fishing / hunting clubs, big brothers, local schools
Big Bros./Sisters
Boy and Girl Scouts
Church groups, University
Memorial High School has a Ducks Unlimited / 4-H chapter at their High School. I know it's not Muskies Inc, but these are the type of kids who'd probably be interested. North High – Fishing Club
Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts - Although Muskies Inc. should leverage their own aspects that draw kids and be self dependant
Big Brothers, Big Sisters DNR Area Schools
North High School fishing program

Question 11 seeks to find out what are the desired outcomes from the First Wisconsin's Chapter Youth Program. Each box in Figure 4 represents one respondent's feedback.

The most common theme to this question was more youth involvement and development. More fishing opportunities for youth, family involvement, ethical behavior, and youth education were commonly expressed themes.

Figure 4 –Desired Outcomes of the Youth Program

More youth in 1 st WI
Continuing education for youth Opportunities to fish Updates in Newsletter
Young people having fun learning to hunt muskies Young people learning to cooperative rather that competitive on the water
I would like to see members give back rather than fish for #'s and to compete against each other Muskies Inc. has lost focus... too much emphasis at individual efforts, #'s, and big fish

Figure 4 – Continued

Better on water ethics, for future fisherman
First to watch kids having fun
To expose those kids less fortunate to the wonderful world of fishing
To see more adults taking more kids out, more often
To get more families involved at the chapter level
To increase the youth's respect + admiration for the outdoors
An increasing group of young people contributing to improving the fishery
Getting more kids fishing and not sitting in front of a video game
To make more youths get involved with fishing overall not just aware of Muskie Fishing but fishing as a whole
Future leaders
More involvement from the youth
Tournaments
Well informed kids
More catch + release, safe fish handling + boater safety instructions
More youth members
Kids having fun w/fishing
At least 10 – 20 participants per school / outings
An increase in youth membership, and hopefully one or both parents
A quality program that others want to emulate
Develop well-rounded, conservation-minded, young members who respect the laws while exercising good etiquette on the water. Develop into tomorrow's leaders
Have knowledgeable fisherman take younger fisherman out after meetings and teach them first hand
More family participation
More educated fisherman
To put out knowledge of how fragile the lakes & rivers (ext) can be & to put out the word Respect & thankfulness that we have these great places to go & enjoy
A new generation that will be responsible enough to carry on what 1 st Wisconsin Inc has established as a credible organization dedicated to the future of musky fishing in Wisconsin + elsewhere
More youngsters develop a love for the outdoors
Area youth deciding to pursue a career in the outdoors
Program outreach to include more future fisherman and women
I would like youths to value and appreciate opportunities spent in the outdoors with family and friends
Get more kids interested in muskie fishing
Make Muskies Inc. more of a family organization (not just Dad)
Promote a greater understanding / respect for nature
Instill an interest in the outdoors, don' focus just on muskies
Keep it growing
It would be nice to see the "Future" of our chapter

Figure 4 – Continued

Overall goal to just get more families and kids into fishing and fishing for muskies. My two kids are in soccer and baseball. They could easily be in a “Musky League” and instead of going to the soccer field I am taking them to the lake.
More parents bringing their children to First WI meetings, outings, tourneys, etc. Opportunities for youth where transportation / equipment / mentoring could be provided
Kids fishing rather than getting into trouble
Increase youth involvement

Question 12 asked the respondents to indicate how many youth under the age of 18 in their household would be interested in participating in the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. Youth Program. There were 19.23% that indicated they had children under the age of 18 in their household with interest. Of these 10 households, there were a total of 17 children that fell in this age group.

Table 6 – Households with Children Under 18

	Frequency	Frequency
Yes	10	19.23%
No	42	80.77%

Question 13 wanted the respondents to identify barriers towards improving the First Wisconsin Chapter’s Youth Program. Each box in Figure 4 represents one respondent’s feedback.

Lack of commitment or involvement to the youth program was the most commonly recognized theme. This was followed by the cost associated with operating an active youth program.

Figure 5 – Barriers to Improving the Youth Program

None
Volunteers
Money
Transportation
Time
Lack of Commitment
Old attitudes / Too many guys into trying to outperform each other... Members are not considerate of each other

Figure 5 – Continued

Manpower
Members must commit time
Long hours and low catch rate of Muskies. Better to start with pan fish, bass + northern and work your way up.
Possible insurance problems
People like me who don't help with the effort. I have little free time to fish much less help with the youth program
\$
Lack of funds and some members are set in there ways. Which they don't want to change
Just trying to reach out to young people
Price
None
The biggest problem is finding ways to get kids in a social environment related to fishing. Fishing is typically done in small groups
Involvement from members
Participation may be low
Member participation / commitment to working program
Lack of family membership participation
Lack of commitment by members
Video games & the fast pace of everyday life
Funds, complacency, lack of understanding the program
Adult participation within the club has been poor but seems to be turning around
The vast number of other youth activities
None
Money
Limited amount of Chapter / individual member time
Kids may easily lose interest in Muskie fishing because they're not catching a fish every other cast
Trying to get people there and help. Finding people to get involved.
Like with all members – member involvement
If the adults don't participate neither will their kids
Adult member involvement
Volunteers
Guys are guys and many of the core members see Muskies Inc. as a "Guys Club" or a guys night out. That is fine and I as a guy like that too. But... if we want to get more youth active we need to change the overall look and feel of the meetings and events. Get the families involved; wives and the kids will be there.
Transportation for youth
Financial support for equipment
Communicating awareness of First WI to youth
Time people can put into it

Figure 5 – Continued

Equipment; most older members do not fish pan fish.

Keeping interest after long hours of casting.

Youth age equipment in the industry is mainly designed for adults. Cost to have custom equipment designed can and is expensive.

Chapter V: Discussion

This study was conducted to solicit feedback from the members of the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc. about their current youth program. There was a review of literature performed on subjects relating to youth program development. A questionnaire was developed and distributed for this study to the 140 households of the First Wisconsin Chapter with members 18 years of age or older. The results and findings were displayed using quantitative and qualitative measures. This chapter will cover the limitations of the study, conclusions, and further recommendations.

Limitations

1. The questionnaire was only sent to households with members 18 years of age or older in the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc.
2. Lack of any material from Muskies Inc. International pertaining to the practices for a youth program. Muskies Inc. International does not have set guidelines for youth involvement and education.
3. Lack of 100 % participation in the completion and return of the questionnaire

Conclusions

There were many ideas, concerns, and suggestions that were gathered for exploration into improving the First Wisconsin Youth Program. The feedback received should serve as a stepping-stone towards getting an active and structured youth program going for the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc.

Respondents indicated that field trips would serve as an applicable learning opportunity for the youth (See Figure 1). Many respondents thought that field trips such as trips to muskie shows, large sporting stores (Cabela's and Big Gander Mountain's),

fish hatcheries, the Fishing Hall of Fame, Beaver Creek Reserve and other lakes would provide valuable learning for the youth members. They also stated that a fishing day or clinic could be focused towards learning and fun. These events could provide youth opportunities to learn more about fishing, compete in contests or games, visit with a fish biologist, learn about water resources, bait making, and meet others their age.

Advertising was seen as the largest opportunity to attracting more youth to the First Wisconsin Chapter (See Figure 2). They thought that these promotions should be focused towards organizations, schools, or other areas that kids frequented. The respondents stated that simply having more youth and family centered activities would draw more attention to the Youth Program activities. Providing opportunities for youth to fish that never have, are from a single-parent family, or do not have a boat would attract more participation. There was also the mention of reducing or elimination of membership fees to increase the number of youth members.

Responses in Figure 3 suggested that affiliation with area schools could serve as the best way to make connections and reach out to youth. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters organizations were also mentioned as ways to make connections to the communities of the First Wisconsin Chapter. Other clubs such as B.A.S.S. (Bass Anglers' Sportfishing Society), Trout Unlimited, Junior High and High School Fishing clubs, Whitetails Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, NWTF (National Wild Turkey Federation), 4-H, Boys Scouts/Girl Scouts and other related to outdoors could be opportunities where youth interest in muskie fishing could be found.

More youth and a future for the First Wisconsin Chapter was the largest desired outcome concerning the youth program. According to the information in Figure 4.,

respondents wanted to see more family involvement in the First Wisconsin Chapter as this program grows. Another desired outcome was the increase of opportunities or outdoor experiences offered to the youth of the First Wisconsin Chapter. A focus on education and ethical behaviors such as catch and release were other desired outcomes of this program.

Volunteers willing to donate time and lack of commitment from the First Wisconsin Chapter members to the youth program were seen as the barriers for an improved youth program in Figure 5. Members also thought that the costs associated with more youth participation would be too great for the First Wisconsin Chapter.

Recommendations

The researcher strongly suggests taking advantage of the workshops that are offered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These workshops will help establish a structure and introduction to youth angler education for the First Wisconsin Chapter. The strong majority of the respondents were willing to support spending funds on adult leader education. The First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskie Inc. should consider having their youth committee members attend an Angler Education Workshop. The teaching skills acquired along with the free materials available at these workshops would help address opportunities for improvement in their youth program.

The First Wisconsin Chapter should contact other community organizations to see if there is interest in learning more about muskie fishing or Muskies Inc. activities. Contacting the groups that were listed about possible interest and or connections would be beneficial to this organization. These connections would gauge the level of this interest and provide a key audience for the youth activities.

The First Wisconsin Chapter should use benchmarking to get an understanding of the practices from other organizations that have established youth programs. For example, the Trout Unlimited Organization has hints towards establishing an active youth group and developing community partners outlined in their Youth Handbook.

Finally, it would be beneficial for the First Wisconsin Chapter to pursue available grants and other donations to help control the expenses that are associated with more youth activities. These funds would create an operating budget for the youth program and not take away from other First Wisconsin Chapter activities. Many organizations are willing to invest time and money into worthwhile youth education.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

First Wisconsin Muskies Inc. Youth Questionnaire

What is your gender? Male or Female

What best represents your age group?

A: (Under 18) B: (19 - 29) C: (30 - 39) D: (40 - 49) E: (50 - 59) F: (60 - 69) G: (Over 70)

How many years have you been a Muskie's Inc. member? _____

Are you aware the First Wisconsin Chapter has a youth program? Y or N

If not, would you like to learn more about our Chapter's youth program? Y or N

Would you support using Chapter funds towards sending adult leaders to Wisconsin D.N.R. Angler Educational workshops for youth directors? Y or N


How many events per year should be geared towards our youth members? _____

Please rate the following learning opportunities by the value they would add for our youth members? (1=Should not be included 2=Not important 3=Undecided 4=Important 5=Very Important)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| _____ Basic Fishing Equipment | _____ Fishing Regulations |
| _____ Boater Safety | _____ Mentors |
| _____ Catch and Release | _____ Speakers |
| _____ Educational Scholarships | _____ Stocking |
| _____ Fish Anatomy and Identification | _____ Water / Land Conservation |
| _____ Safe Fish Handling | _____ Youth Section in Follow Up Newsletter |
| _____ Fishing Ethics | _____ Youth Section on First Wisconsin's Website |
| _____ Fishing Instructional Clinics | |

Please list ideas of other applicable learning opportunities. _____

What can we do to increase the number of youth members in the First Wisconsin Chapter? _____

Continued on other side 

Please suggest other community groups that the First Wisconsin Chapter can work with to form a youth connection? _____

What outcomes would you like to see from the First Wisconsin Chapters Youth Program? _____

How many youth (under 18) in your household would be interested in participating in the First Wisconsin Chapter's Youth Program? _____

What barriers do you see in improving the First Wisconsin Chapter's Youth Program? _____

Appendix B: Cover Letter

March 22, 2006

Dear Muskies Inc. Member:

My name is Clint Keuler and, I am sending this letter and questionnaire in efforts to help obtain some useful information for the First Wisconsin Muskies Inc. Chapter. This instrument will also help to fulfill a research requirement needed to complete my master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Training and Development. You have the opportunity to express your comments, suggestions, ideas, and overall perception on youth activities within our Chapter.

Please take a few moments of your time to fill out this questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-address stamped envelope by April 15th, 2006.

This is your chance to contribute to the quality and overall success of the youth program for the First Wisconsin Chapter of Muskies Inc.

The results of this study will be presented to the club and available for future use. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns of this study.

Thanks for your participation,

Clint J. Keuler
7320A Curvue RD.
Eau Claire, WI 54703
715-556-9410
ckeuler@hotmail.com

Enclosure

Appendix C: Human Research Subjects Consent Form

I understand that by returning this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceeding small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that I have the right to refuse to participate and that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

Note:

Questions or concerns about the participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researcher – Clint J. Keuler, 7320A Curvue Road, Eau Claire, WI 54703, phone # (715) 556-9410 or to the research advisor Professor Mark Fenton, UW-Stout, College of Technology, Engineering, and Management, 232 Technical Wing, Menomonie, WI 54751 phone # (715) 232-5268; and secondly to the Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the protection of Human Subjects in Research, 152 Voc. Rehab. Building, Menomonie, WI 54751, phone # (715) 232-1126.