



### \*\*\* Official Write-up & Youth Muskie Hunt Event Summary for 2013 \*\*\*

In the years ahead, Muskies Inc. ([www.muskiesinc.org](http://www.muskiesinc.org)) and the Youth Conservation Alliance ([www.theyca.org](http://www.theyca.org)) will place a major emphasis on teaching children about environmental sciences through the sport of Muskie fishing. This is being done not only to ensure the future of the Muskie fishery, but also to provide youth with a tremendous opportunity for environmental education outside of the classroom. Muskies Inc. & all its Chapter's across the United States continue to realize the importance of bringing youth into the framework of Muskie fishing. MI continues to dedicate significant resources towards this endeavor.

This past week, September 19-22, Muskies Inc. and the Youth Conservation Alliance held a regional youth Muskie fishing event on Moose Lake, in Hayward Wisconsin. The event was led by Kevin Bushnick, National Youth Fishing Director for Muskies Inc. Kevin is also the Founder & Chairman of the Youth Conservation Alliance. The YCA is an organization 100% focused on educating youth about the great outdoors primarily through fishing programs.

Nearly 40 children (boys & girls ages 6-17) participated from Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota. Each child was accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. There were dad's, mom's, grandparents, aunt's and uncle's who participated. Muskies Inc. & The YCA customize these events so every family member can participate regardless of their age. ALL the Muskies were released successfully. This gives other people (especially kids) a chance at catching one of these spectacular fresh water predators.

On the education front, many school teachers were present including Michelle Groves, Professor of Environmental Sciences at Oakton College in Northern Illinois. Michelle is also the VP of Education for the YCA. Kids at this event were challenged not only with fishing, but ecosystem study and water quality testing. The kids learned how to read lake maps, they learned about the importance of boating safety, and as a bonus, they were taught how to craft and use their own Muskie fishing lure by Hayward's retired fisheries biologist Frank Pratt who donated lure kits to each of the kids and was able to walk them through a lure making session where each child, made their own Muskie buck-tail.

Several professional guides were on-site to support the kids during the event. Our "Guide-Masters" included Hayward's fishing legend Larry Ramsell (Author & Muskie Historian), John Myhre (Professional Guide & Radio Show Host), and well known Hayward guide Daryl Neibauer. Other notable guides came from various Muskies Inc. Chapters including Tim Crews, Tyler Saile, Diana Nuyttens, Brian Corcoran and Glenn Zaroski. These guides drove hundreds of miles at their own expense to "take someone else's kid fishing."

Many Hayward area businesses supported the event in a big way through donations or by providing other items like tackle and clothing. Our three largest event contributors were the Saile Family from Illinois, Mike Anderson from Pine Insurance Agency in Minnesota, and the Hexum Family from Hayward Wisconsin. Other Hayward area business supporting the event included the Round Lake Marina, Famous Dave's who brought in a "famous BBQ lunch" one day, Lures Of the North and Chuck DiVito, Founder of Custom-X lures. Chuck hand-crafted a lure for each of the kids with colors designed specifically for fishing Moose Lake.

Jim Onarheim of the Mystic Moose Resort hosted the Youth Muskie Hunt (YMH) now in its fourth year. Jim manages accommodations for everyone and sets up the Mystic Moose as the Youth Muskie Hunt Command-



Center. Jim continues to operate at the core of this very special youth event and without a doubt, has one of the most beautiful and cleanest resorts in Northern Wisconsin.

Louie's Landing on Moose Lake was home to most of our group meals. Our opening dinner was held at Charlie's restaurant where we feasted on their famous prime-rib and cheesy potato's! Both of these Moose Lake landmarks serve up outstanding food and the restaurant owners Jack, Pam, Julie and Chuck go way out of their way to make everyone feels at home; especially the kids.

For documentary and educational purposes, the entire event was filmed by 4-time Emmy winning NBC field camera-man Bill Nuyttens. Footage from this event is used throughout the year by Muskie's Inc. and the YCA in schools and colleges to educate as many youth as we can about the outdoor environment.

For our closing ceremonies on Sunday morning at the Mystic Moose, we were joined by fishing rock star Pete Maina. The kids all lined up to get their picture taken with Pete, and get their lures, hats and trophies signed. This event "wrap-up" is where we recognize the kids for their extraordinary effort and achievements both catching & releasing the ever so elusive MUSKELLUNGE. It's also where we talk to them about these events not just being about fishing, but simply having fun, learning about the outdoors, and understanding the importance of relationship building. The reality is, by the end of one of these events, these kids get it. They truly value the time spent with the most important people in their lives; their family. They will remember these trips forever.

Next years Youth Muskie Hunt is already being planned for September 18-21, 2014. Information on the event will be posted in the months ahead on both the YCA & Muskie's Inc. websites.

Article by: *Kevin Bushnick*

**Youth Conservation Alliance & Muskie's Inc.**