FEF Project 12 – 041

2013 Adult Walleye Transfer Project

Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement Inc.

December 2013

Submitted by: Holly Urban & Brock Koutecky

2013 Adult Walleye Transfer Project – Beautiful Lake

The 2013 Adult Walleye Transfer Project was conducted during the month of October with a total of 1550 walleye being successfully transferred from Beautiful Lake to surrounding lakes including: Beaver Lake, Singush Lake and Wellman Lake, all which are located within the Duck Mountains Provincial Park and as far away as Vermillion Reservoir located near the city of Dauphin. This marked the 4th year in which the project was funded through the Fisheries Enhancement Fund. Through the past four years, Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement and Manitoba Water Stewardship – Fisheries Branch have developed an unique partnership with many user groups including Intermountain Sport Fishing Enhancement, which has made this project one of the most valuable projects to fisheries in our area.

Although during others years, this project has transferred some significant sized walleye, the winter of 2013 did not fair very well on the Beautiful lake fishery. Due to the extended closed water season and extreme snowfall measurements the lake experienced winterkill. This made the transfer project a little more challenging as the only fish being caught were walleye and brown trout stocked from the spring of 2013.

The following is the breakdown of the stocking:

Beaver Lake was heavily stocked with 882 walleye as this waterbody was just recently reintroduced with walleye through the Adult Walleye Transfer Project in 2011 & 2012 and many anglers have fished this lake hard during the 2013 open water season. Because of the size of this lake and the success anglers were having the population was being impacted significantly. SVSFE and MWS have implemented some changes to decrease these impacts for the future:

- Walleye limited has been changed to 2 with a slot size of 45-70cm to be released. The two groups did not want to completely close the lake to anglers at this time but to control the amount being harvested and implemented the same regulations as Wellman and Singush Lake so not confuse anglers with additional regs. SVSFE plans to closely monitor angling and the fishery itself at Beaver Lake to ensure this management change is effective.
- SVSFE resourced funding through the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program to build two walleye spawning shoals in Beaver Lake. The lake was lacking suitable spawning habitat but the potential this development/enhancement will bring to the fishery will be valuable in creating a self-sustaining walleye fishery.

The remaining stocked waterbodies; **Vermillion Reservoir** – 324 walleye, **Singush Lake** 200 walleye and **Wellman Lake** 144 walleye) are all established walleye fisheries and were supplementary stocked to boost the existing walleye population.

The planned transfer with students and volunteers for Line Lake was unfortunately cancelled following recommendation from SVSFE technicians as walleye have not displayed successful recruitment and indication of adult walleye survival from past transfers is low. SVSFE plans to continue student and volunteer involvement in future transfer projects.

SVSFE would like to emphasize the importance of this project and how this type of project provides instant and long term benefits to our walleye fisheries. The project will only grow to be bigger and better as partnerships and public awareness grow and develop each year.

Walleye Transferred

Brown Trout

Sampling walleye

Transferring and Stocking Walleye

SVSFE plans to create a short video from the 2013 walleye transfer and will post this video on Facebook, Youtube and ISFE & SVSFE's Websites. Onsite signage is currently being developed and will be installed in the spring of 2014.

The following is feedback from individuals involved in the 2013 Adult Walleye Transfer:

Beautiful Lake

Ian Kitch 10/10/2013

Actions

To: Stephens, Jonathan (MWS), 'stackle@mts.net', Rowe, Lloyd (CWS), 'connoll1@mts.net', 'svsfe@mts.net'

Although there is one more week planned for walleye transfer at Beautiful Lake my time to help appears to be done. Fisheries management in today's world depends on building strong partnerships and this project is an excellent example of working together . I just wanted to thank you all for the hard work and coordinating this successful cooperative project.
Looking forward to next year!
Ian

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To: Ian Kitch, Jonathan Stephens, Sticky, Lloyd Rowe, Brock Koutecky
Cc: Jeff Connolly, Leanne Kalinowich

Well everyone, it's another year completed for our Beautiful lake walleye transfer. This year marked year 5 and we succeeded even with the challenges we faced.

As suspected Beautiful lake did winterkill therefore all the walleye we transferred were this years fish. Measuring around 18 cm there was a little more work involved in catching them as they were getting caught in the mesh of our large trap nets.

But thank you to everyone who made this happen; Ian, Jonathan, Lloyd, Sticky, and Brock. We made an awesome team and in total transferred 1550 walleye!!! Yet again, together we made the walleye transfer a success.

These walleye are now a happily swimming in their new location
Beaver lake: 882
Vermillion reservoir: 324
Singush lake: 200
Wellman lake: 144

I know each of us know the importance of this project and I hope 2014 will bring us again another successful year.

Cheers

Holly Urban

Sticky 21/10/2013 Actions

To: Kitch, Ian (CWS), Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement Inc., Stephens, Jonathan (CWS), Rowe, Lloyd (CWS), Brock Koutecky, dyerama@mymts.net
Cc: Jeff Connolly, Leanne Kalinowich

From: **Don Stokotelny** (stackle@mymts.net) This sender is in your contact list.
Sent: October-21-13 7:41:57 AM
To: Kitch, Ian (CWS) (ian.kitch@gov.mb.ca); Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement Inc. (svsfe@mts.net); Stephens, Jonathan (CWS) (jonathan.stephens@gov.mb.ca); Rowe, Lloyd (CWS) (lloyd.rowe@gov.mb.ca); Brock Koutecky (brock.koutecky@gmail.com); dyerama@mymts.net (dyerama@mymts.net)
Cc: Jeff Connolly (connoll1@mts.net); Leanne Kalinowich (janni_kalinowich@hotmail.com)

Awesome project, was glad to be a part of it, from the FEF side, this one really is what anglers like to see, hopefully we can do it again next year, and thanks to BEAR, for keeping us in line! Was a pleasure working with this crew, Holly, great job in managing this project, no issues whatsoever!

Sticky 01/11/2013 Actions

To: svsfe@mts.net

I recently was involved with the 2013 Walleye transfer project at Beautiful Lake in the Duck Mountains. Besides acting as a fish technician for the project, I am also an avid angler. I am very familiar with projects funded through our current FEF fund. This particular project proves its value, and is exactly the type of project that in my opinion, be funded through FEF from an anglers perspective.

Besides the transfer of the walleye itself to establish and improve four new fisheries, it also proved that Beautiful Lake on occasion does Winterkill, as all fish trapnetted were this years fish, with Walleye Fry being stocked in the Spring as well as Brown Trout. With the amount of feed existing in this lake, and the rapid growth of those being caught, Beautiful Lake is definitely a great lake to treat as a rearing pond, and to be able to utilize these fish in other lakes that do not historically Winterkill. This project definitely has a lot of value, one of the best I have seen, and should be an annual activity.

The entire two week project was very well managed, thanks to Holly Urban, SVSFE project manager, and Brock Koutecky SVSFE, for their organized operation, as well as Ian Kitch, our West Region Manager, and Jonathon Stephens, (WSDBIO), as well as Lloyd Rowe, (WSDTECH). ISFE contributed in supplying equipment, and are interested in joint future projects that increase angling opportunities in our area.

Future assessments to these four lakes, Wellman, Beaver, Singush, and Vermillion reservoir, and others previously stocked, are required to determine the success of these newly established fisheries.

Thanks to FEF for providing some of the funding towards a great project.

Don Stokotelny
ISFE Co-Founder