

## **Lake Freeze Up**

Ice is a hot topic! From Midwest lakes to arctic glaciers, the presence and absence of ice is helping the world better understand the effects of global climate change. Minnesota's waters and winters are a great combination for gathering ice data needed to track climate change locally.

During the fall season, as the angle of the sun drops, lake water begins to cool. And as it cools it shrinks, becoming more dense. Once the air temperature drops below 39 degrees, however, the water begins to swell, and this cooler water, having become less dense, naturally rises to the surface. Ice forms at 32 degrees. On the first calm, freezing day or night after a particular pond or lake reaches 39 degrees in all parts, an ice cover will form. The temperature of the water in contact with the ice sheet is 32 degrees, but a few feet below the ice the water remains above freezing, reaching 39 degrees at the very bottom.

Remember, it takes at least 4 inches of solid ice in contact with stationary freshwater for safe skating and ice fishing. A snowmobile requires 6 inches of ice for safe riding. Eight to 12 inches are needed for a car or small truck, and 12 to 15 inches for a medium-size pickup.

You don't want to fall through the ice as cold water saps body heat 25 times faster than air of the same temperature. In 32 degree water, you have about 15 minutes before losing consciousness.

Freeze-up is the first day when at least 90 percent of a lake is frozen over and stays frozen over. Freeze-up was two- to three weeks ahead of normal for many Minnesota lakes this year, especially for small- and medium-size lakes. But a late November warm-up and heavy winds kept Boot Lake open in the deeper south end. The "official" freeze up date for Boot Lake was on December 7.

For a listing of Ice In / Ice Out dates for the past 20+ years, check out our website at:

<https://minnesotawaters.org/bootlake/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2014/07/Ice-Dates.pdf>

## **Winter Sports at Boot Lake**

The winter of 2017-2018 has thus far been bitter cold with little snow. At this point it can only get better. Ice fishing has been the best winter activity so far as the cold weather and sparse snow cover has been ideal for making ice. Large vehicles and large fish houses have been seen on Boot Lake. The only caution is to avoid near shorelines where springs are keeping the ice thinner.

Although there is about 6 inches of snow on the ground at Boot Lake, Cross Country skiing and snowshoeing is still not the best. Skiing on the lake is adequate but on the ski trails it can be spotty.

The nearest trails to Boot Lake are at Itasca State Park and Soaring Eagle.

## *Itasca State Park*

The Trail Snow Report for Itasca State Park as of January 1, 2018, was that the snow is holding well with the cold weather. The Park had 8-inches of snow and this does make the winter big pine scenery more stunning and they are starting to enjoy some snow sports.

**Snowshoe Trails:** The Park is at the thresh hold for using snowshoes, visitors can hike or snowshoe along the snowshoe trails at this time. The snow depth will vary from 8-inches plus in open areas to just a few inches under the conifers. Be aware of icy patches from December rain events that froze on cold surfaces. Trails include: Dr. Roberts, Mary Lake, Brower, LaSalle, Schoolcraft.

**Ski Trails:** Crews were out on Friday, December 29 with the groomer packing this fresh snowfall in order to create a base. The groomer will be out on Tuesday, January 2 to set track. Crews had combed and packed the bike trail and the South Entrance Road to Red Pine. One set of track was set on the South Entrance Road, but it can be thin in places.

Check the latest trail conditions at: [http://dnr.state.mn.us/snow\\_depth/trails.html?facility\\_id=4136](http://dnr.state.mn.us/snow_depth/trails.html?facility_id=4136)

## *Soaring Eagle*

Soaring Eagle Cross Country Ski Trails are located on US Hwy 71, 8 miles north of Park Rapids, and across from the Eagle View Golf Course. The ski center consists of 10 km of marked and groomed trails through balsam pines and spruce. All trails are groomed classical and skate and are designed for beginner to expert skiers. Trails are groomed by Itascatur Club volunteers every Friday during the ski season and after any 2+ inches of snowfall. As of January 1, 2018, Trails were packed but the base is only 2-3 inches. Vegetation is coming through in many places. No tracks can be set until few more inches of snow.

For more information check out their website and facebook sites: <http://itascatur.org/ski.shtml>

And: <https://www.facebook.com/SoaringEagleSki>

## *Snowmobiling*

A lack of snow has thus far has made snowmobiling less than perfect. But the latest report is that groomers from the Forest Riders Snowmobile Club in the Two Inlets area will be heading out for the first time on Tuesday, January 2, 2018. The nearest trail to Boot Lake runs along East Boot Lake Road and around the north end of the lake and along County Rd 46 to Basswood Trail.

When the conditions improve Groomers, like Tim Eischens, are on the trails weekly. Eischens has been a Forest Riders Snowmobile Club member since its formation in 1974. He grew up in the Two Inlets State Forest area, where he still lives. Eischens is one of three groomers who tend to the club's nearly 300 miles of snowmobile trails in and around the Two Inlets State Forest, Itasca State Park, White Earth State Forest, plus the Park Rapids, Osage, Emmaville and Lake George areas.

Club President Richard Ohm and John Weller also groom trails. "Each groomer has his own territory," Eischens explained. "We go every week." It takes Eischens three days to groom his portion. Having traversed these snowmobile trails his whole life, no one knows them better than he does.

"I'm partial," he admits. "I think Two Inlets is prettier than Itasca." Some are old logging trails, some are new snowmobile trails. Some run over private land.

"Homestead families" — longtime, local residents — are generous about leasing land for snowmobile trails, Eischens said. But when the land changes hands, the club often has to reroute the trail.

The Forest Riders Snowmobile Club owns and maintains three grooming machines, called a TrailBully. Its top speed is 15 miles per hour, but tends to average 9 mph while grooming. A heated windshield keeps the frost at bay. An "X track" provides traction when pulling the grooming drag across the snow. A long blade on the drag snaps off overhanging brush.

Groomers pass over a trail twice, once from each direction, in order to make up to a 12-foot path.

Eischens listens to country music to pass the roughly 30 hours of time in the groomer each week.

"You see deer. You see grouse. Turkeys. They're a nuisance," he said. "In a normal year, we'll groom 12 to 14 weeks. Throughout the trail system, the club has posted intersection signs and directional maps at each intersection. Each sign includes the intersection number, trail number, mileage to the nearest destination, and food/drink and fuel indicators. Posted at the bottom of the sign are the GPS coordinates for the intersection. "Our trails are numbered like highways. Odd numbers for north-south and even for east-west," said Eischens. "You can ride across the state without looking at a map if you follow the number."

The club also publishes a trail map, available on their website at:

<https://www.forestridertrailclub.com/>

Current trail conditions are reported on the club's website and Facebook page, attracting snowmobiling fans to the area.

(excerpts from article in Park Rapids Enterprise January 2017)

### ***New Northern Pike Fishing Regulations***

We have been talking about new northern pike fishing regulations for a couple years and now they are finally here for 2018.

Anglers and spearers pursuing northern pike this winter can prepare for new pike regulations that will be in effect for the spring fishing opener on Minnesota's inland waters.

"Pike regulations remain the same this winter, with major changes coming this spring," said Chris Kavanaugh, northeast region fisheries manager. "As anglers continue fishing for pike, we encourage them to get used to measuring their catches and even consider keeping some of the smaller ones in the north-central part of the state."

The new regulations on inland waters will be in effect starting March 1; however, fishing for northern

pike is not allowed on these waters until the fishing opener on Saturday, May 12.

Spearing season opened Nov. 15 and pike fishing remains open until Feb. 25, 2018. Current statewide regulations including the daily and possession limit of three northern pike is still in effect.

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The new fishing regulations beginning in the spring take a cue from hunting regulations and will set up three distinct zones to address the different characteristics of pike populations in Minnesota.

“Anglers and spearers have an opportunity to use this winter as a transition period and become accustomed to measuring their catch before the new rules take effect,” Kavanaugh said. “We know many anglers already do measure fish, and spearers judge fish size, but we want to highlight the importance of those practices when it comes to northern pike.”

### **Pike zones begin this spring**

When the new regulations take effect this spring, the majority of the state including Boot Lake will be in the north-central zone where the issue is overpopulation of small pike. **Anglers here will be able to keep 10 northern pike, but not more than two pike longer than 26 inches, and all from 22 to 26 inches must be released.** Northern pike taken by spearing follow the same rules except one pike may be between 22 and 26 inches and one longer than 26 inches.

For more information on the new zone regulations visit: [mndnr.gov/pike](http://mndnr.gov/pike)

## ***Boot Lake Clothing***

Last fall Boot Lake Association worked with Camp 71, a new local business next to Eagle View Golf Course, to provide Boot Lake Logo shirts. Over 200 shirts in six different styles (Tees, Sweats, knit polos, etc) were ordered and delivered in early December. From what we have heard there were many surprised and happy faces opening their gifts on Christmas Eve and Day! A big “Thank You” to Kathi Doroff for all her work in making this happen.

Camp 71 will keep the screen print logo until this summer so we are considering putting together another order if there is enough interest – Camp 71 requires a minimum combined order of at least 24 shirts. We will be distributing more information this spring.

Camp 71 is open year round. You can check them out on facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/camp71mn/>

### **Mark your Calendar**

Spring Road Pickup – Thursday May 3, 2018 — Gary and Kathi Doroff Hosting

Annual 4th of July Boat Parade – Sunday, July 1, 2018 – 11am

Annual Meeting and Potluck – Sunday, August 12, 2018 — Gary and Kathi Doroff Hosting

### **Association Dues**

A reminder, annual dues are \$10. If you haven't already paid you can make check payable to:  
Boot Lake Association.

Send your dues to our Treasurer:  
Craig Nieman  
53199 Sunrise Lane  
Park Rapids, MN 56470.

***See you on the Lake !!***