

Enhancing Angler Experiences- 2021

As CAI's, we have dedicated ourselves to improving Angler Experiences for Scouts and their families.

This month, I am challenging you and your fellow Council CAIs to visit your local Scout Property and walk the Fishing Program Area with the Ranger and other Scouters who may share a passion for Fishing and Scouting.

As ticks and chiggers are not usually around this time of year, the temperatures are moderate; there is no better time than now to visit your Scout Camp. Of course, getting out of the house is essential before winter hibernation. But, before you go, please read this article in its entirety. There is a helpful hint at the end.

Make sure to communicate your plans with your peers and Ranger so that no one area is over visited or not visited at all. Many hands make light work, grab a team. We hope that in 2021 our fishing shores will be re-opened, campsites full, and memories made.

My challenge is to record what you see; the best way is to take pictures that can be shared with others later. Focus on the following:

- [Fishing Trails and Fishing Program Signage](#)
- [Fishing Equipment Storage Shed/Lodge](#)
- [Fishing Equipment](#)
- [Fishing Program Area](#)
- [Fishing Docks and Piers](#)
- [Fish Habitat](#)

Fishing Trails and Fishing Program Signage:

Is there a map of the lake available to visitors detailing Fishing Program Areas and Angler access points around the lake or pond? What signage has been made available to direct the Scouts on the adventure that awaits down these paths?

Specifically, walk the trails accessing the Fishing Program Areas. How would you describe these trails? Are they safe to travel? Is the trail base eroded, overgrown, tree clearance, or deadfall?

Now walk the trails accessing the prime fishing spots around the camp. How would you describe these trails? Are they safe to travel? Is the trail base eroded, overgrown, tree clearance, or deadfall? Are the trails inviting to Scouts and Families?

How can you help your Council improve the Fishing Program? Who will answer the call to service and lead the effort?

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Fishing Equipment Storage Shed/Lodge:

While you are in the Fishing Program Area at Camp, review the Fishing Shed/Lodge that may be at the camp, if one exists.

How would you describe the exterior of those structures? Is the system well maintained, is there safe access pathways and doorways? Is there erosion around the building due to rain runoff? Is there any evidence of insect or wildlife damage? Look above you, is there deadfall? Low hanging branches? Is the landscaping overgrown around the building?

How can you help your Council improve the Fishing Program? Who will answer the call?

You now need to be brave and open the door Fishing Shed/Lodge. What do you see? What do you smell? What is your initial reaction? Do you smell urine or see feces? Do you see evidence of nesting activities? Bee or wasp nests? Any proof of mice, squirrel, chipmunk, raccoon, skunk activities/damage? Evidence of mold? Ask yourself who accessing this building in the coming year, Camp Staff? Scouts? Scouters? Scout Families? Is it safe?

How can you help your Council improve the Fishing Program? Who will answer the call?

Fishing Equipment:

Next step, take a look at the rod and reel storage systems? What do you see? What is your initial reaction? Is it organized by **type, skill level, working vs. repairs needed**?

Now is the time to ask the Ranger if you may take home the fishing rods and reels, angling equipment, and angling educational program materials back to your home for love and care for the winter months. We will be discussing **rod and reel maintenance, equipment replacement, angling program materials enhancement, and storage systems.**

Now remove all the remaining stuff, and separate between Angling Equipment and Other Equipment.

Angling Equipment should be ready for transport back to your home for Inventory, Inventory Assessment, Repair, and Replacement Activities.

Having removed all the **angling equipment and program materials**, What do you see? What is your initial reaction? Why is this stuff here? Should it be relocated? Does the Ranger need assistance in moving to a more appropriate area? Move it!

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Fishing Program Area:

Look at the shoreline, what do you see? Is the casting area clear from Tree Overhang? Is there distance available for both a back and roll cast? A minimum 35 ft. clearance from the water's edge is encouraged. What is the Weed Heights? Is it in need of a cut? What are the Trip and Fall hazards that may be present and need addressing? Is the program area sufficient size to maintain safety with the class sizes anticipated?

Fishing Docks and Piers:

Look at the structures, what do you see? How would you describe the exterior of those structures? Is the system well maintained, is there safe access pathways. Are they positioned correctly? What safety railings are available on the docks to the Scouts and Families. Is safety equipment at the ready in case safety structures fail.

Are there Monofilament Line Recycle Containers available for use? Have they been emptied?

Is the area clear of litter?

Fish Habitat:

Look at the water's edge, what do you see? Look at the aquatic vegetation. Can you imagine fishing from shore, trying to land your first fish, but losing it because of the aquatic vegetation? Is the water clear and clean? Now look into the water, do you see insects, do you see evidence of fish nests? Determine if there are Fish Habitat/Attractors deployed where the Scouts and Families will be fishing. What kinds? Do they need replacement?

Helpful Hint: Take your fishing rod, and spend 30 minutes or more fishing. Record your catch! What did you find?

Next Steps:

Start to think about a fellow Scouter who may share a passion for Fishing and Scouting. You are going to need their help and others! Start to develop your team over the Holidays! Make a cast, make a few strips, and hook a lifelong friend with whom you can perform cheerful service to our Scouts! FISH ON!

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