



vaccines are distributed on guidance from CDC and ND Department of Health. We will contact you when we have a vaccine available for you based on which priority group you belong to.

#### **COVID-19 Testing**

Due to low demand, Coal Country Community Health Center will not be holding weekly COVID-19 testing events at WRT. Asymptomatic and symptomatic patients may contact the CCCHC Hazen Clinic to inquire about opportunities for COVID-19 testing. CCCHC Center and Killdeer patients should continue to contact their clinic to discuss opportunities for COVID-19 testing.



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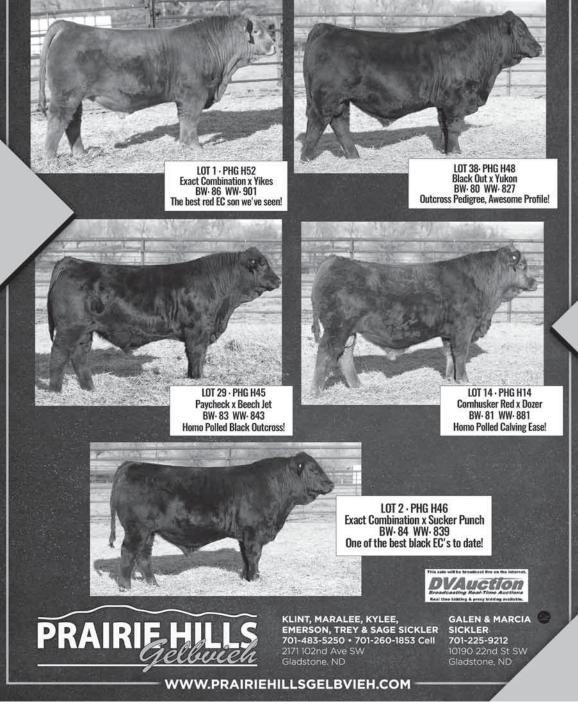
#### **DUI Seminar**

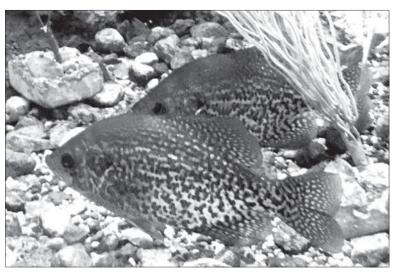
The next 16 Hour DUI Seminar will be held February 4, 5, 6 & 6th. Call Coal Country Community Health Center at 873-4445 to register by Feb. 3rd.



#### Visit our Web site: bhgnews.com







Learning where and when crappies bite on a water along with what they're feeding on and a presentation that seals the deal are three important factors in converting wintertime slabs.

## **Slab specifics**

#### BY NICK SIMONSON

Crappies through the ice remain one of my favorite winter angling pastimes. While slightly more mysterious in their ways than other panfish, when found they can provide fast action and teach anglers a lot about timing, tackle choices and tactics. What follows are some tips to turn the attention of winter slabs and add to the on-ice excitement.

#### A TIME TO EVERY WATER

For several winters, I regularly fished three lakes for crappies: a crystal clear shield style lake, a swampier and more stained lake just across the road from the former, and a horseshoe-shaped water with a slight alkaline stain a few miles down the road. What I found in terms of timing the crappies, was that each water was different as to when fish would get active and how long they would stay active. On the clear lake, it was a dusk bite that started as soon as the sun hit the tops of the pine-andpopple forests which bordered the body and subside about an hour after complete darkness. On the muddier lake, they'd fire up as darkness set in and would stay on the bite until an angler decided to go home. For the horseshoe lake, it was an all-day thing with the dingier water allowing schools to roam the basin and bite as they pleased.

What each lake taught me is that crappies under the ice on different waters have different feeding activity levels, and what happens on one might not necessarily happen on the other. Learning to time the winter bite on each lake was key to putting fish on the ice. With each hardwater season, I gained more knowledge on the trio of waters and learned to unlock the secrets of their speckled fish. While low light conditions usually provide a good starting point for determining when crappies are most active, do not overlook timing opportunities which may be unique to a particular water, or even a small part of it.

able as the forage base shrinks and cold-water lethargy may impact their feeding. Thus, having smaller offerings to represent midge larva, aquatic nymphs and worms while still hanging on to those minnow imitators can help catch more crappies through the ice.

Small jigs tipped with maggots, waxworms or thin plastics imitate those tinier morsels of food while a selection of spoons with flash, color and even some glow attributes can help match minnows crappies feed on. Having one rod rigged with a small spoon - say one to two inches in length - and another with a smaller option requiring a bit of finesse and a sensitive tip or spring bobber, will help cover the spectrum of stuff crappies key in on for food in the winter.

#### LOOKING UP

Call crappies the ultimate optimist, because with their large, front-mounted eyes, things are always looking up. All puns aside, a school of feeding slabs will generally rise to a bait as their field of view best detects those items in front of and slightly above them. For this reason, keep track of where crappies are coming in through the water column with a sonar unit, and lay out a lure presentation at a point about a foot above where fish seem most active.

With smaller lures, keep the action subtle with slight hops of the rod tip and gentle wiggles to imitate an underwater insect or non-fish creature. As a crappie rises, stop the movement altogether and watch the tip or spring bobber to register a bite. Sometimes a slight squeeze or tap of the rod handle will provide the last little movement necessary to convince a crappie to bite. Similarly for spoons, when no fish are on the screen, work them more aggressively to send out some flash and vibration, but as fish show up and enter the middle of the sonar cone, ease off with just a few twitches and slight jumps to trigger a bite. Keeping lake specifics in mind for resident crappies, along with noting the variety of food they key in on during winter and how they react to the motion of the real thing, and your lures, you'll be able to pattern these favorite panfish in just a few trips on the ice and build on that knowledge winter-after-winter. As a result, you'll find splendid fishing for specks and likely a few slabs to add to your winter memories.

#### FORAGE FOCUS

In summer, any minnowimitating bait will entice a bite from a crappie. A flash or marabou jig, a small crankbait, or a jig-and-twister combo is all but guaranteed as the aggressive panfish chase after their primary prey. In winter however, the options are more varied as panfish pick off whatever's avail-



Checking tackle and taking stock of what's needed for the next season is a winter ritual for many anglers which starts as January fades to February. Simonson Photo.

### **Getting set for spring**

Advertisements for boat shows, the arrival of 2021 tackle catalogs, and a pileup of daily email blasts highlighting new rods and reels are all signs that we're turning the corner toward spring. While it's still January and there's plenty of on-ice action left, the promise of spring and openwater fishing keeps anglers moving toward warmer days and the disappearance of a slipfloat in some northern bay for crappies, or that subtle take of a jig-and-minnow combo by a light-biting walleye. I do my best to live in the moment but have always found it to be a struggle I've always wrestled with, particularly this time of year, and thinking ahead and planning for what's to come is second nature to many outdoorsmen.

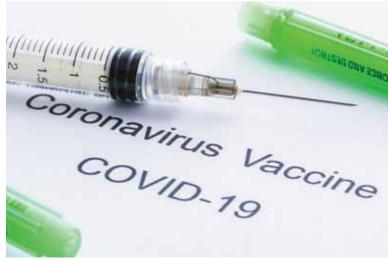
The preparations made now lead to success later. Whether it's respooling a favorite spinning reel with a new package of line or tying up jigs for crappies, walleyes, bass and trout, getting things ready on those longer, colder nights helps make spring on the water happen a little easier and get here a little bit faster, at least in terms of that "watched pot never boils" sense the dominates the mind of an anticipating angler. Taking stock of where a tacklebox sits after last season and filling the gaps with reliable favorites lost to the fishing gods and looking over potential new baits for the upcoming year is better done now, with time to spare, than a few days into the season after popping the plastic cover of a Plano 3700 and realizing its inhabitants are less than at the end of last fall. The march toward spring also provides a time to do a little reading. Research of favorite lakes and those yet to be explored and their recent stocking and sampling reports provide insight into how the fisheries are doing and the quality and quantity of species lurking in each. Each winter, I like to select a couple of waters I have never tried in hopes of finding a new personal hot spot, and a lot of web browsing, screen-shotting and note taking goes into the process of picking them. Some end up being a bust, perhaps the result of bad timing or bad luck, but others often end up becoming favorite destinations for seasons to come and





Cleaning or replacing line on fly reels and standard models assures clean casts on those first flowing waters of the season. Simonson Photo.

expand the opportunities in my local area. Finally, the run up to spring gives all anglers a chance to try something new. Whether it's a new line of flies or a new way to fish, the options we all these two events, and many others like them leading up to spring, I've created tackle for both platforms and become a more complete angler with the time mid-winter presents.



#### **COVID Vaccine Information**

As more coronavirus vaccines are delivered to the priority groups, others in the state look to find out when their turn might be or to get themselves waitlisted.

Here is a list of providers within the county that do have the vaccine available.

• Coal Country Community Health Center (Beulah) Currently prioritizing ages 75 and older However those

75 and older. However, those interested in being placed on the waitlist can contact the

clinic. • Custer Health-Mercer County (Beulah)

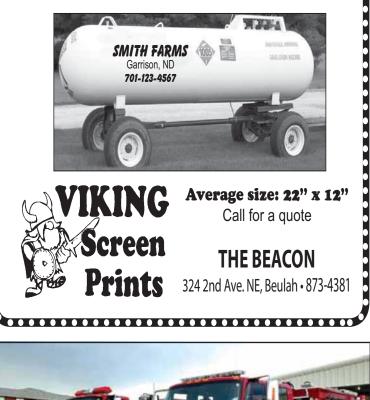
Currently prioritizing ages 75 and older. However, those interested in being placed on the waitlist can contact the clinic.

• Sakakawea Medical Center Hospital (Hazen)

Currently prioritizing ages 75 and older. However, those interested in being placed on the waitlist can contact the clinic.

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way to fish, the options we all have when it comes to angling are boundless. I can recall buying my first baitcaster one January and trying to figure out how to utilize it without ending up with a bird's nest of backlash between my thumbs, eventually succeeding with flawless flings of a weight over a field of melting snow and expanding the way I angle for bass, pike and muskies. One February I learned how to cast the fly rod on the floor of a gymnasium and opened a world of new possibilities which led me to my first rainbow trout on the Turtle River that May and then to crappies, smallmouth and pike on my

Through the preparations we make for spring, be it by our own hand, from a local tackle shop or a late-night order online, now is the time to get set for when the ice recedes and fishing opens up again. Learning how the table is set for the next season and planning to sample new waters keeps things exciting and can provide long-term fishing options. In addition to new lakes, fresh tackle options, styles of fishing and ideas about how to catch something different and those favorite fish will help set the stage for further success next spring, summer and years to come...in our outdoors.

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# A Hunter's guide to the legislature

#### By John Bradley

In every session of the North Dakota Legislature, numerous bills come forward that affect our public lands, waters, fish and wildlife resources. In addition, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDG&F) needs to craft a budget that meets the needs of those resources, as well as the North Dakotans who enjoy wildlife, fish, and our lands and waters in numerous ways. It is critical that hunters and anglers pay attention to what is going on in Bismarck and lend their voice when it is needed. Most sportsmen and women care deeply about wildlife conservation and our sporting opportunities and when we are faced with potential changes, it seems we let that care turn into knee jerk reactions. To conserve energy and focus on real threats, here are a few tips and tricks to eliminate the unnecessary responses and engage purposefully.

Contain that keyboard warrior

As much as we all love to engage in a good oldfashioned debate. I am convinced that social media is not the best place to do it. Policy is nuanced, and far too detailed to communicate in a tweet or an Instagram comment. While it can be done, I'd instead encourage social media as a tool to identify conservation issues and then do the work to research a bill or policy before jumping into the debate. I think the rules of debate remain the same, don't engage unless you know both your facts and your opponents, and you have the time for respectful discourse.

Reach out to decisionmakers

We have all seen our legislators sign on to a bad wildlife bill. Before calling out your legislators as sellouts, give them a chance to explain their position. Our state senators and representatives work directly with policy and usually have access to more in-depth information from agency experts. While they may not always follow that expert advice, they probably have a reason why. You may disagree but hearing their reasoning and explaining your side calmly goes a lot further than attacking them on social media. Citizen involvement is critical to our democracy, and respectful communications and relationships with our elected officials and decision-makers are fundamental to effective policy creation.

You are a far more effective voice if you are seen as a potential ally

If you aim to change a legislator or anyone else's opinion and to educate, this tip is the most important. People respond to peers, not opponents. Your tone and how you communicate will either open a door or slam it shut in your face. If you immediately present yourself as an adversary by using aggressive or belittling language, you have lost the debate before it even started. One of your most potent tools is empathy, the ability to see the problems and issues from your opponent's side and understand their motivations.

With a little homework, a touch of empathy, and a commitment to understanding all sides of the issues facing wildlife and hunting, hunters and anglers can gain more allies at the State Capitol and make a bigger impact in 2021.

#### CITY OF BEULAH Beulah Accepting Sealed Bids For the Lease and/or Purchase of Sun Valley RV Park

Sun Valley RV Park is located off of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE in Beulah, North Dakota. Lots included in this proposal are located directly on Meadow Drive and Roll Drive in Valley Court Addition. Detailed information can be obtained at Beulah City Hall.

Bid submittals may be made by completing a Bid Submittal Form available from Beulah City Hall or www.beulahnd. org. The completed form must be returned by 3:00 pm CT on February 26, 2021 to the City Auditor inside a sealed envelope marked with the following:

#### SEALED BID – Lease and/or Purchase of Sun Valley RV Park

The City of Beulah reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any irregularities and further reserves the right to award the lease or sale to serve the best interest of the City.

City of Beulah • PO Box 910 • 120 Central Ave N Beulah, North Dakota 58523

#### **HELP WANTED**



West River Telecom (WRT), a growing telecommunications cooperative, has a position opening for a full-time Construction Assistant. A complete job description for the position can be found at www.westriv.com



#### HELP WANTED

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HAZEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT @ 701-870-2253

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the NDG&F, the Department of Agriculture and other



#### **Construction Assistant (Full-time)**

**Job Responsibilities:** Assists in the construction, installation, and modification of OSP facilities, network facilities and equipment located at the customer premise. Required to locate and GPS network facilities locations. Position requires travel throughout the WRT service territories with occasional overnight stays.

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Complete application online and submit with resume via <u>www.westriv.com</u>. Call 701-748-4213 with any questions.

WRT is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Licensing Requirements: Valid Driver's License; North Dakota Class B Commercial Driver's License or a North Dakota Class A Commercial Driver's License not required – however, would be beneficial to the job. Applicant must live within 30 minutes driving time from the City of Hazen.

Applications will be accepted until 4 P.M. on February 11, 2021

For a complete job description and application contact Hazen City Auditor, Monte Erhardt, 748-2550.

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For further information, please call Human Resources at (701) 873-4322 or visit our website at: www.-krcc-nd.org

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Brown El Corona 0022 Reg# 19934273 Baldridge Eldorado E050 x Brown Emblynette 8504 (President)



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