

Issue No. 1

April 2011

BigMOUTH

New Mexico B.A.S.S. Federation Nation Newsletter

www.nmbfn.com

Special points of interest:

- Read Steve Ragsdale's introduction
- Introduction from new Tournament Director
- Earl Conaway's New Year information
- David Herrera talks about Youth

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The State of the Nation... the B.A.S.S. Federation Nation that is, is in good shape and moving towards a positive future. No, I am not being presumptuous and equating myself with our **state or national leaders. It's** just that recently I, along with a number of other state presidents, attended a meeting with one of the new owners of B.A.S.S. Jerry McKinnis.

I had written in a previous BigMouth that I thought the new ownership of B.A.S.S. and in particular Jerry McKinnis would prove to be a very positive step for The B.A.S.S. Federation Nation. That certainly seems to be the case.

When I attended my first leadership conference in 2009, while BASS was still owned by ESPN, the atmosphere was one of constrained politeness. It **was as if ESPN wasn't really** sure what to do with us. When concerns were voiced by the presidents, ESPN quietly listened, recognized the concern and then moved on to the next question without really responding to the first concern or ensuing ones. The best part of the conference was working with Jon Stewart and Stacey Twiggs. But both of these gentlemen seemed to be under a constant strain to balance the Federation Nation needs and at the same time adhere to ESPN corporate restraint.



Steve Ragsdale
President

The atmosphere at the **president's meeting in January** was completely different. I first noticed it in the relaxed manner of Jon and Stacy. Then the meeting started and you immediately felt that Jerry McKinnis was genuinely interested in our concerns.

One of the first things Jerry addressed was The Federation Nation Championship. We had been warned that this was probably going to go under the old ownership. However, he quickly assured us that he had just attended the, what was going to be the last Federation Nation Championship, and that it would most definitely be continued. In fact, in his second update which I received today, he said B.A.S.S. would shortly be announcing the site **of next year's championship.**

The second thing that was addressed, and actually was completed just before the meeting, was the announcement of a new Conservation Director. This turned out to be a lady with many years at the

Conservation Director's desk, Noreen Clough. This action was immediately and loudly cheered by all the state presidents and conservation directors.

Since that first meeting we have received two updates on the subjects we discussed and **other matters such as the "no cull" rule in Wisconsin.**

B.A.S.S. has been in discussions with officials there and they hope to have a waiver for this rule for bass fishermen. This is good news since the rumor was other states were looking into it.

Of particular interest to our part of the world is the return of the Western Bass Opens. Jerry thought this was a good idea. Especially since this should help grow membership in this area. The plan is to have the Western Opens begin in 2012. There should be some discussion of this at our upcoming divisional May 9 – 13 at Navajo Lake.

On the local scene it is good to announce the addition of a new club to our state. The Southwest Bass Anglers are headed by President Mark Hettinga, Director Frank Ramsey, Vice President Roger DiCamillo, Tournament Director Frank Ramsey, Secretary Chase Kemp, Conservation Director Frank

Continued on page 8...

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Tournament Director's Report

Hello Johnny Johnson here. I had a short lapse in judgment and mentioned to President Steve that I would be willing to take on the tournament Director Duties for 2011 if no one else was interested. To my surprise he has accepted my offer and here I am. We haven't completely nailed down a tournament crew as of yet, but Steve assures me we can pull something together by the first tournament. So if anyone is willing to help out please let us know. I promise that I will do my best to make the tournaments run as smoothly as they have in the past. This is going to be quite a challenge considering the outstanding tournament directors we have had.

Enough about that stuff. I'm not sure about you, but it seemed as if winter was going to last forever. I think spring has finally sprung and I hope I'm not the only one ready to start fishing some tournaments.

Just like last season we will be holding four qualifying tournaments starting at Ute Lake April 30-May 1 then to Elephant Butte June 4-5 back to Ute July 16-17 and finishing up at Navajo September 10-11. Hopefully if the weather continues to cooperate the fishing should be about as good as it gets at Ute Lake. Just got to hope the wind doesn't blow.

Please take a moment and read the NMBFN tournament rules. They are published on the NMBFN web page at NMBFN.com. Also they will be



Johnny Johnson
Tournament Director

available at the tournament sign ups. I will be going over a good portion of the tournament rules at the pairing meeting. So hopefully everyone will know and understand the rules and the tournament officials won't have to make any unwanted rulings. Again this year Friday will be an official practice day which means the same rules for the tournament apply for the official practice day. Such things as wearing your life vest and kill switch while you're using the big motor. Could be others, so this is another good reason to read and understand the tournament rules.

Again this year boaters are not required to bring a non-boater to guarantee the use of their boat but it will cost you an additional \$50. There will be a \$10 entry fee increase pushing the total to \$110. The \$10 will offset new tournament administration expenses anticipated in 2011, don't get excited my duties will still be Pro Bono. Same as last year we will offer some option pots. First, there will be a big bass option pot for \$20 paid back 50% day one and 50% day two. The end of year option pot will

remain the same as last year and will be available for \$10. The non-boaters will have a winner take all option pot for \$15. Remember these pots are as published. Optional you need not enter them to participate in the tournament. More detailed info about the option pots will be available at the tournament sign up.

Also for the non-boaters instead of paying your boater for gas yourself as in the past, the Directors have decide to collect this money up front at the tournament sign up the fee will be \$50.

Boaters, there will be a random inspection of insurance coverage so please have an up to date policy with at least \$300,000 liability with you (we won't be able to let you go out with out it). Also Steve has informed me that all the boaters need to be ready for a AIS/ (Mussel) inspection. A couple things that will make the inspection go more quickly are 1. Completely drain your hull. 2. Clean and dry out your live wells. Steve thinks there will be an inspector at one of the launch ramps Friday morning. The last thing I can think of is the lake will be off limits from Monday April 25 through Thursday April 28.

I would like to break away for a moment and talk about what could happen by competing in the NMBFN qualifying tournaments. If you were able to watch the BASS Master Classic you saw Federation anglers competing along side the eventual winner (Pro) Kevin

VanDam for a ton of money and fishing prestige. Just think that could be you, all you have to do to make it to the Classic is compete in three NMBFN qualifying tournaments and be one of the top twelve anglers in New Mexico, then be the top angler in New Mexico at the Divisional level, then be the top angler in the Western Division at the National level (sounds like a piece of cake right) but seriously it has been done by New Mexico anglers in the past. If good fortune has shined on you and you end up being the top angler in the Western Division you will receive an invite to the Bassmaster Classic and complete for \$500,000. How could it get more exciting then that. So, I try to keep this in mind when I haven't got a bite for 6 hours.

One quick note to the non-boater. Not only do you have the same chance to qualify for the Classic as the boaters. You also will be able to fish with some of the best anglers in the West. When I fished as a nonboater I looked at it, as a great learning opportunity, almost like getting a two day guided fishing trip for the cost of my entry fee. Cause these guys are good. Plus you get to see how these guys go about fishing tournaments, which is insight that's hard to get anywhere else other then sharing a boat with someone who has fished a bunch of tournaments.

I think I have rambled long enough. Hope to see you at Ute.



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CONSERVATION REPORT

Pushing against an immovable object uses up a lot of energy but it won't get you anywhere. Complaining about the drought and irrigation or municipal water rights isn't going to make fishing better, so let's work where we can make a difference. Please help me make the best desert bass fishing lakes we can achieve.

I wish I had great news, but it is going to be a really tough year for water. To add insult to injury, I hear it is just a matter of time until they start pulling water out of Ute Lake for Clovis and other communities. But rather than sit and mope about it, I have started discussions with the Corp of Engineers (CoE) and NM Game and Fish about a project to restore vegetation at Conchas in a way that it will survive future water fluctuations when the lake comes back up. The project may not happen this year as I am learning that it takes a LOT of time to get a project through all of the red tape. However, the good news is that these agencies are very willing to listen to new ideas and do what they can to help make our lakes as productive as possible. I will need your support and some volunteers



Earl Conway
Conservation Director

when the time comes to get our hands dirty!

Speaking of getting dirty, Russel Whited and I overdid it. We relocated the spawning platform from Tingley Beach to "Lost Lake" (cow pond) east of Roswell were Russel Whited and Shawn Denny, NM G&F, will watch after it. Russel deserves a huge 'thank you' for working a deal to put the platform in a great place to see whether bass will use the suspended spawning beds. The pond may not look that impressive with all of the cows and cow pies, but I think we have a good chance of seeing some serious spawning activity. Did you know that one successful bed may produce 5000 to 25000 fry. Of course only a few will make it to adulthood, but if we can get one or two beds per cove to be productive, it will greatly help our fish populations. I'm still hopeful that these experiments

will show us how we can make it happen even when the bottom falls out of our lakes.

I saw the NM bass license number 49 on the back of a Subaru! That means we have about \$500 in that pot for fish habitat. I am hoping we can use it as "seed money" to write proposals that will bring in federal and sponsor money for new projects. If you haven't got your license yet, get with it! Casey Harthorn, NM G&F and I met last Sunday to discuss potential projects like Conchas, a draft fisheries management plan, and collecting tournament creel data.

I am also working on a new fish habitat that is cheap, easier to deploy than Christmas trees/brushpiles and uses recycled materials. I'm trying it out at Elephant Butte and I'll let you know at Ute how to build it. There were a few Red Tape hoops, but the local CoE and others are OK with the design.

As far as we know, New Mexico is still free of Zebra and quagga mussels. The good news is that studies are showing that bluegill and some other fish are eating them. The bad news is that they can get into your livewells when the bass regurgitate their stomach contents! One of the boats

that went to Grand Lake last year did have some mussels in a live well after the trip. My guess is that a bass ate a bluegill that had eaten the mussels. Make sure you keep your boat dry and clean. If you go somewhere that has mussels, you MUST have it inspected before you put it on a New Mexico lake. Along those lines, we are very close to being able to do our own boat inspections at tournaments. We have a few details to work out, but we should be able to put our qualified inspectors to work by May.

If you haven't checked out the Conservation page at NMBFN.com for a while, check it out. The new page is going to cover a lot of new stuff like the cool video on how to fizz bass, artificial fish structures, plans for Conchas and much more.

On the national scene, BASS Conservation is getting it back together with Noreen Clough at the helm. She has great experience, connections and leadership skills that are already making a big difference. I am expecting great support from her and BASS. Stay tuned as she sets a new course.



“Take care of those fish and get involved!”

YOUTH DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Four Corners Bassmasters held the 24th annual queens tournament on March 26th and 27th, this tournament is a fund raiser with a portion of **the entry fee's going to local youth baseball teams.** Water temperatures around the lake ranged between 43 and 48 degrees and while most teams struggled, the fish that were caught were considerably bigger than average. The cold mornings turned into cold days as the sun remained cloaked by clouds and the wind **reminded us that we're in New Mexico in March.**

During the weigh-in on Saturday I was pulling my fish from the live well when I noticed Julian Sosa-Carver walk by me to an area where he could observe the weigh-in. Julian is our 11-14 age-group contender at the Western



David Herrera
Youth Director

Divisional Tournament. I expect him to represent us well based on the fact that he demonstrates the intensity and commitment necessary to rise above his co-contenders. What impressed me was that instead of taking advantage of his free time during spring-break to take a fun vacation or just hang out with friends he chose instead to scout the Divisional host lake. Lets see – spring in Las Cruces with temperatures

in the 70's or spring at Navajo lake where any temperature over 40 degrees considered a heat wave what would most kids choose. After seeing 5 big smallmouth hovering close to the 5 lb mark and 3 largemouth over 5 lbs along with an 8.70 largemouth I think his confidence will be high coming into the Divisional tournament.

Jordan McMorris won his world championship with this **same confidence; it's about** putting in the time. Jordan will represent us again in the 15-18 age group. Jordan has moved to Texas but his dedication to the State Team has not wavered he will return to New Mexico two weeks prior to the Divisional and plans to send the majority of his time here on the lake. The fact that Navajo is his home lake

definitely does not hurt his chances of advancing to the championship. Even though the water temperature during **the Queens was in the mid 40's** we are expecting a warm spring and great fishing during the Divisional Tournament. New Mexico is well represented this year in both the Junior and Adult ranks and I expect a high finish for our State, I would predict a 1st place finish **if it wouldn't hex the team.** I will state for the record that if all the adults show the same dedication as our youth we are the force.

I wish to extend my congratulations to each member of the State Team adult and youth both and express my appreciation in advance for your devotion and dedication to the New Mexico Bass Federation Nation.



President's Message Continued Front Page..

Ramsey, Treasurer Chase Kemp, and Youth Director Frank Ramsey. This will be the home club for the junior club the Kids of the Southwest. You will notice several names in multiple roles which is normal for a new club but represents the commitment and dedication of those members involved.

You are probably reading this BigMouth on a new site thanks to the efforts of Brian Stangel. The new site will be much easier to navigate, provide us more room for expansion, and will save us money. Say thank **you to Brian... especially if you** have ever attempted something like this and know the time

and effort involved.

Next, I want to publicly and profusely thank Barry Stanley for his service as Tournament Director for the last three years. This is one of the most thankless, most criticized, and most difficult of all the jobs in the federation. In fact, without a tournament director the federation would be essentially pointless. Barry has stepped up and performed the job admirably. Barry has assured me and the new tournament **director that he won't be far** away. THANK YOU BARRY!!!!

Last but most important, I want to introduce you to your new state tournament director

Johnny Johnson. Johnny has graciously stepped forward and accepted the responsibilities entailed and will be heading up a team that will be guiding you through the tournament process from registration through weigh-in and the awarding of plaques.

After reading all of the above, I think you will agree that the state of The New Mexico B.A.S.S. Federation Nation is on a solid foundation and headed for a positive future.



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TOURNAMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

NMBFN 2011 TOURNAMENT TRAIL

First Qualifier - Ute Lake

April 30th – May 1st 2011 (Saturday and Sunday)

Registration: Friday, April 29th from 4:00PM to 5:30PM at the American Legion in Logan, N.M

Pairing meeting: 5:45PM, following registration

Entry Fee: \$100

Non-boater Pot Option: \$15

Big Bass Option: \$20

Year End: \$10

Lake off-limits: Monday, April 25th 2011 through Thursday, April 28th 2011

Official Prefish*: Safe-light, Friday, 29th 2011

**All NMBFN and BFN rules apply to the official prefish day same as tournament days.*

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