

Fish Sticks

Lessons Learned from 13+ Years of Implementation

Scott Toshner – Wisconsin DNR
Shoreline n Shallows Conference
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In the Beginning



Know Why



Building Fish Sticks Complexes – The Fun Part!









Capstan
Winch

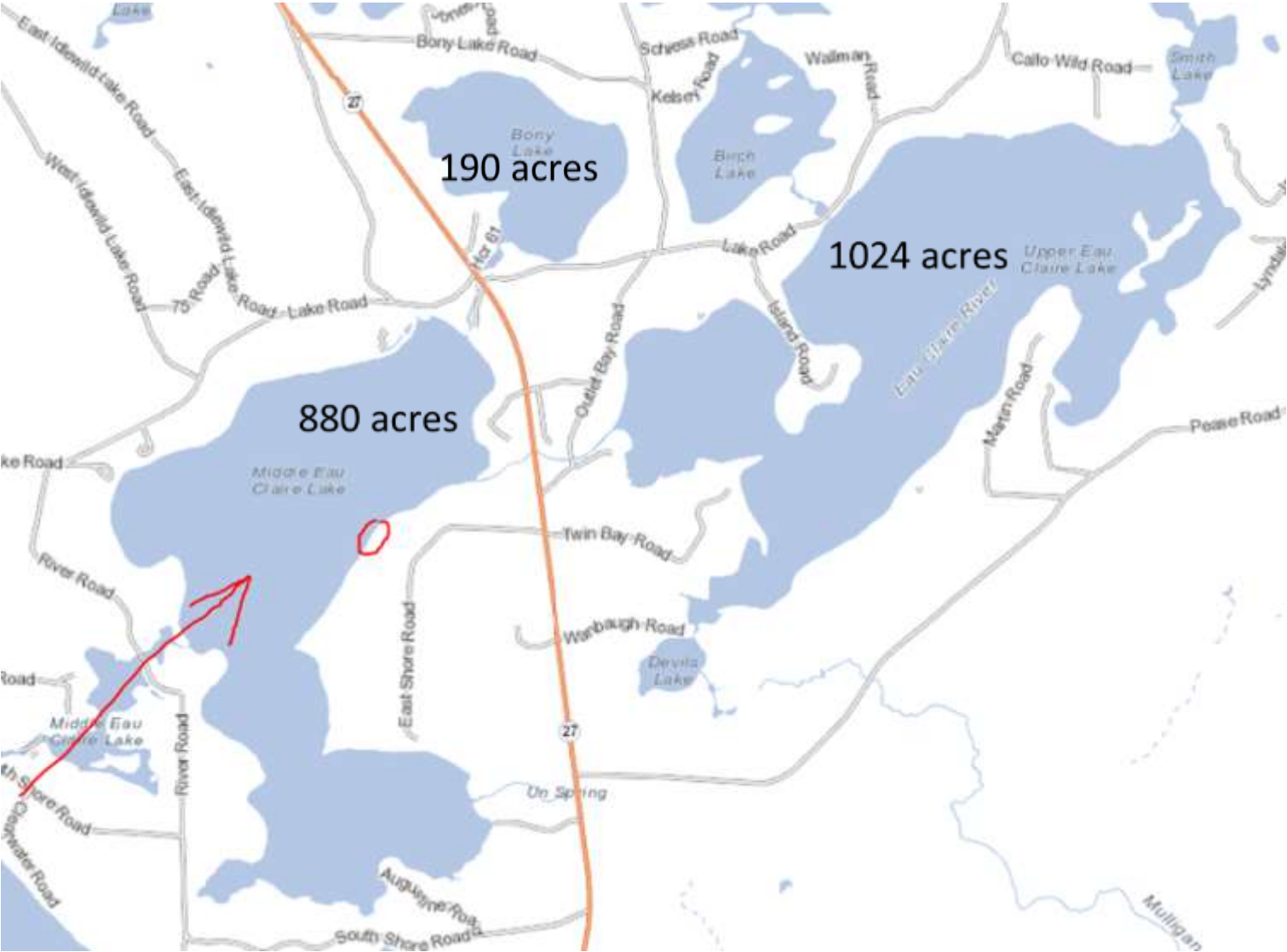
Open Water
Techniques?





Anchoring

Where to Place Wood or NOT Place Wood



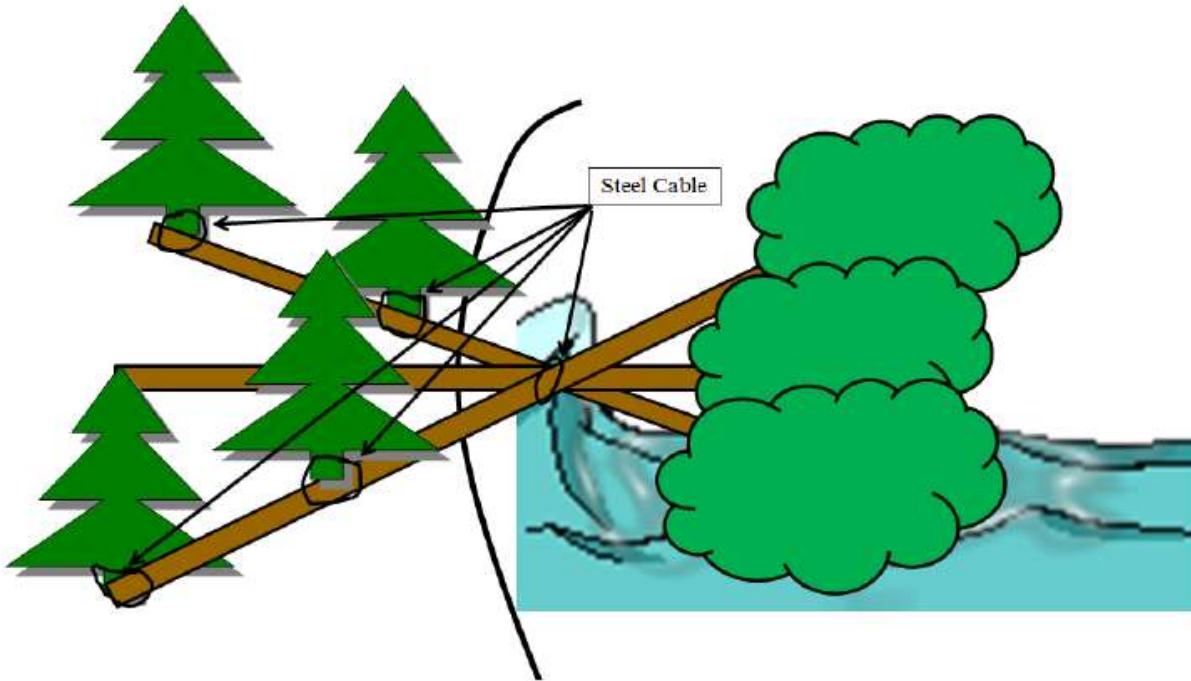


Fish Sticks FAQ's

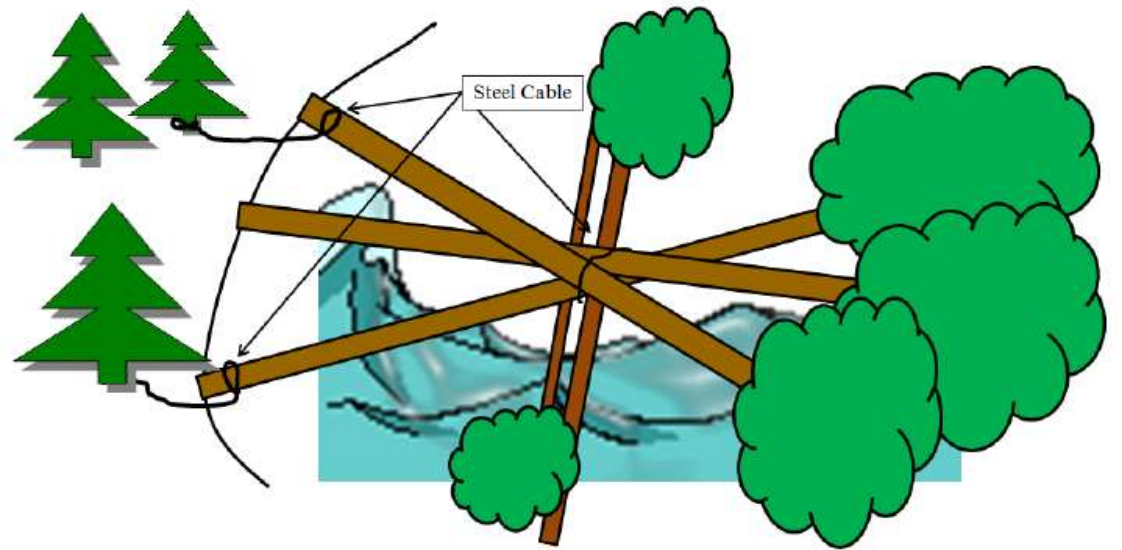


Techniques

High Energy Fish Sticks Design



Fish Sticks Low Energy Design



How much is too much?



Tree Sources

- Trees from properties where fish sticks will be placed, drag down from bank with winch
- Town road ROW near a boat launch
- Delivered to boat launch by logging truck (~\$400/40 trees)
- Publicly owned land (with permission)

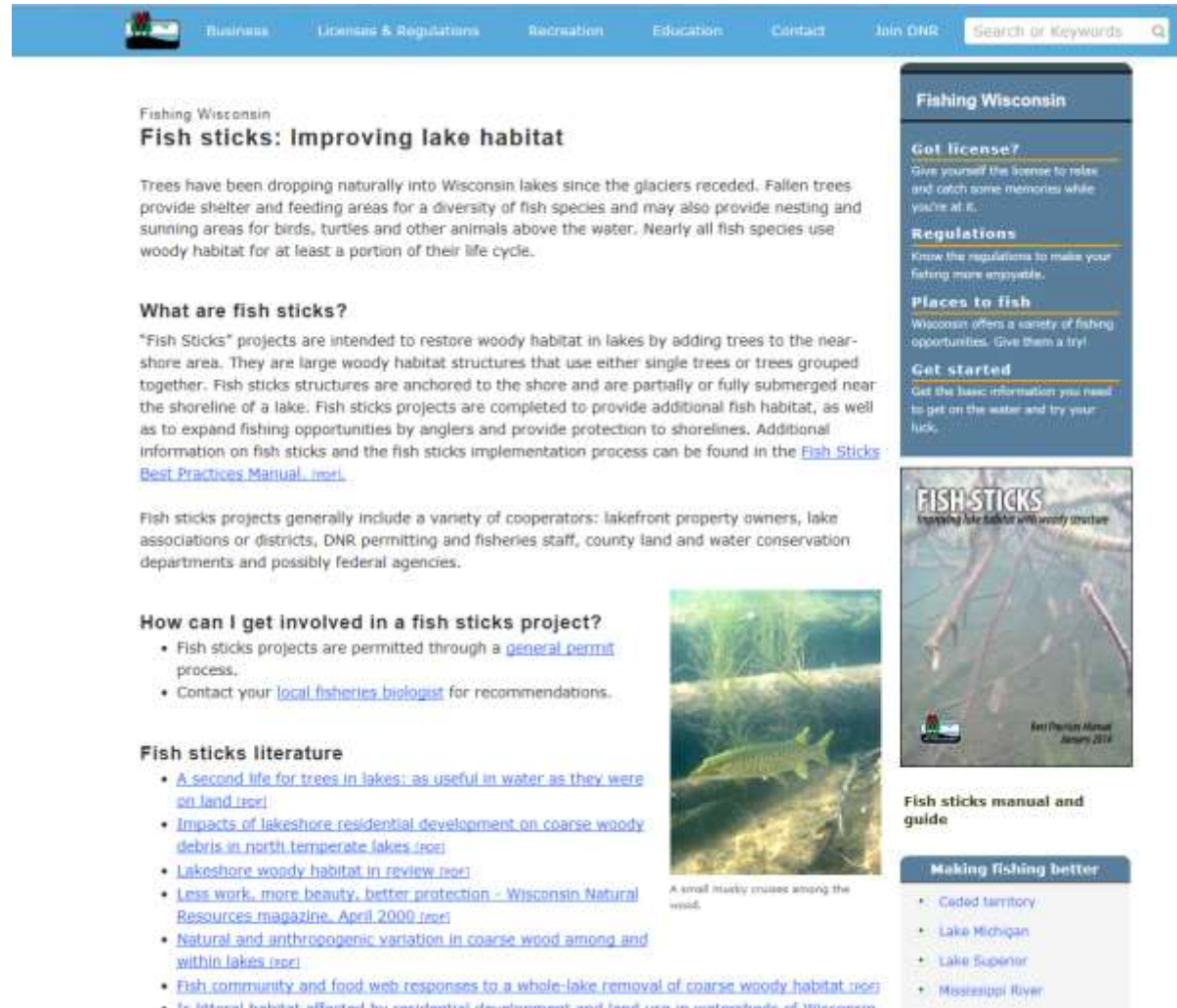
Ice

- Plow as soon as safe to drive on (12 inches?)
- Keep plowed after major snowfalls
- Heavy equipment (18 inches of ice?)
- Watch for springs near shore
- Flowing water hazards
- Plow banks away from shore
- Plow areas approximately 1.5x tree length

Safety

- Leader in charge at work site!
- Limit number of fallers to generally one
- Faller training recommended
- Projects in high visibility areas draw onlookers like flies on
- Heavy equipment area of operation a no-go zone

Best Practices Manual and Website



The screenshot shows the Wisconsin DNR website. At the top is a blue navigation bar with links for Business, Licenses & Regulations, Recreation, Education, Contact, and Join DNR, along with a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Fishing Wisconsin' and features an article about fish sticks. The article includes a sub-header 'Fish sticks: Improving lake habitat', a paragraph explaining that fallen trees provide habitat for fish and other animals, and a section 'What are fish sticks?' which describes them as woody structures anchored to the shore. A list of cooperators is provided, and a section 'How can I get involved in a fish sticks project?' includes links to a general permit process and a local fisheries biologist. A 'Fish sticks literature' section lists several research papers. To the right of the text is a vertical sidebar with links for 'Got license?', 'Regulations', 'Places to fish', and 'Get started'. Below the sidebar is a cover image for the 'FISH STICKS' manual, showing a fish swimming near a woody structure. Below the image is a caption: 'A small musky cruises among the wood.' At the bottom right of the sidebar is a section titled 'Making fishing better' with links to Ceded territory, Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, and the Mississippi River.

Fishing Wisconsin

Fish sticks: Improving lake habitat

Trees have been dropping naturally into Wisconsin lakes since the glaciers receded. Fallen trees provide shelter and feeding areas for a diversity of fish species and may also provide nesting and sunning areas for birds, turtles and other animals above the water. Nearly all fish species use woody habitat for at least a portion of their life cycle.

What are fish sticks?

"Fish Sticks" projects are intended to restore woody habitat in lakes by adding trees to the near-shore area. They are large woody habitat structures that use either single trees or trees grouped together. Fish sticks structures are anchored to the shore and are partially or fully submerged near the shoreline of a lake. Fish sticks projects are completed to provide additional fish habitat, as well as to expand fishing opportunities by anglers and provide protection to shorelines. Additional information on fish sticks and the fish sticks implementation process can be found in the [Fish Sticks Best Practices Manual](#).

Fish sticks projects generally include a variety of cooperators: lakefront property owners, lake associations or districts, DNR permitting and fisheries staff, county land and water conservation departments and possibly federal agencies.

How can I get involved in a fish sticks project?

- Fish sticks projects are permitted through a [general permit](#) process.
- Contact your [local fisheries biologist](#) for recommendations.

Fish sticks literature

- [A second life for trees in lakes: as useful in water as they were on land](#)
- [Impacts of lakeshore residential development on coarse woody debris in north temperate lakes](#)
- [Lakeshore woody habitat in review](#)
- [Less work, more beauty, better protection - Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, April 2000](#)
- [Natural and anthropogenic variation in coarse wood among and within lakes](#)
- [Fish community and food web responses to a whole-lake removal of coarse woody habitat](#)
- [In-lake habitat affected by residential development and land use in watersheds of Wisconsin](#)

A small musky cruises among the wood.

Fishing Wisconsin

Got license?

Give yourself the license to relax and catch some memories while you're at it.

Regulations

Follow the regulations to make your fishing more enjoyable.

Places to fish

Wisconsin offers a variety of fishing opportunities. Give them a try!

Get started

Get the basic information you need to get on the water and try your luck.

FISH STICKS

Improving lake habitat with woody structures

Best Practices Manual
January 2014

Fish sticks manual and guide

Making fishing better

- Ceded territory
- Lake Michigan
- Lake Superior
- Mississippi River

Sanford Lake Study



CONNECT WITH US

Scott Toshner

Scott.Toshner@wisconsin.gov

715-919-2007



/WIDNR



@WIDNR



@WI_DNR



/WIDNRTV



"WILD WISCONSIN:
OFF THE RECORD"