# State of the Fish: Recent Fox River Fisheries Monitoring and Plans for the Future

*Fox River Summit*
*Friday, March 10th, 2017*

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# Southeastern Wisconsin

- Close proximity to several large metropolitan areas
- Multitude of high quality fishing resources
- High number of local and visiting anglers
- Competing priorities (recreation, development, etc.)

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# Fox River – Racine and Kenosha Counties

- 21 river miles in Racine County
- 12 river miles in Kenosha County
- Connected wetlands, backwaters, bays, lakes
- Large warmwater to small coldwater inputs
- Two active dams
- Various large-scale disruptions
- Fish monitoring and stocking

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# Fox River Fish Community

- Nutrient-rich system
- Wide variety of habitat conditions
- 30+ fish species in recent surveys
- Strong forage base of non-game species
- Important top predator species
- Several imperiled fish species

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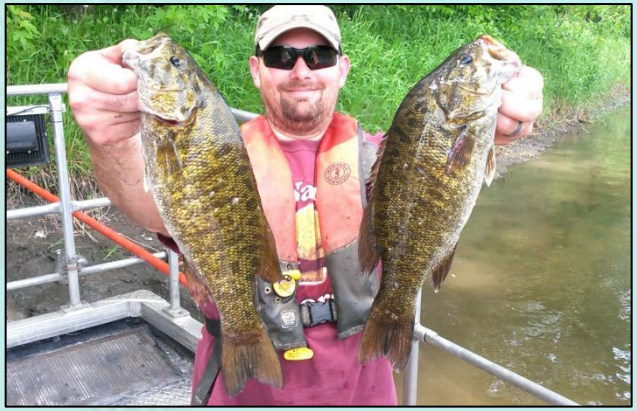
# Fox River Fishing Opportunities

- Strong support of stakeholder groups and municipalities
- Multitude of public access points
- Free-flowing river, lakes and impoundments
- Popular gamefish throughout
- Significant seasonal migratory runs



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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

- Annual electrofishing surveys in Racine and Kenosha Counties
- Specialized catfish netting
- Annual fall walleye electrofishing in Tichigan Lake
- Ongoing Tichigan Lake comprehensive fisheries survey
- Special surveys as necessary

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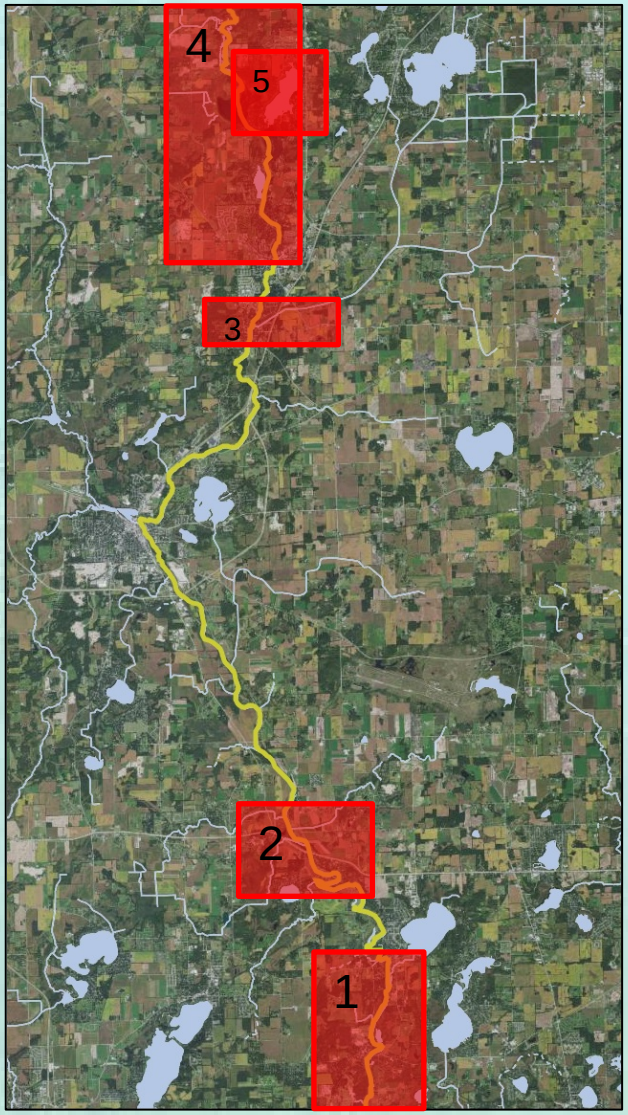
# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

1. County Highway F to state line
2. State Highway 50
3. Rochester impoundment
4. County line to Waterford Dam
5. Tichigan Lake

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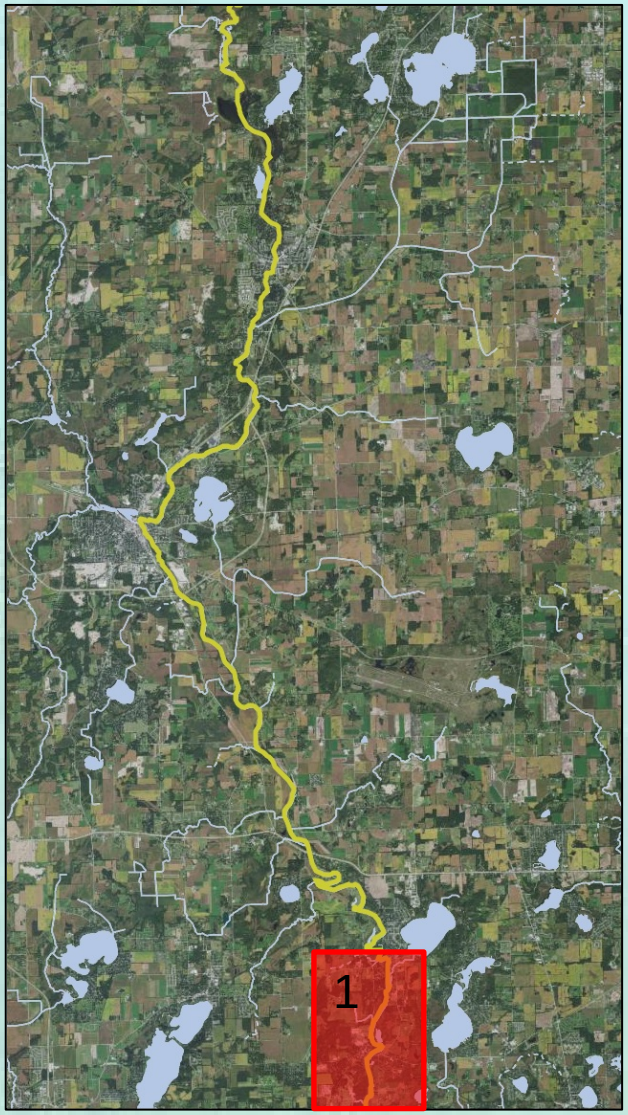


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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

1. County Highway F to state line
   - Highest river gamefish catch rates
   - Abundant SMB, WAE, catfish
   - Rough fish forage base
   - Abundant redhorse
   - Good IBI scores
   - Good public access points

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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

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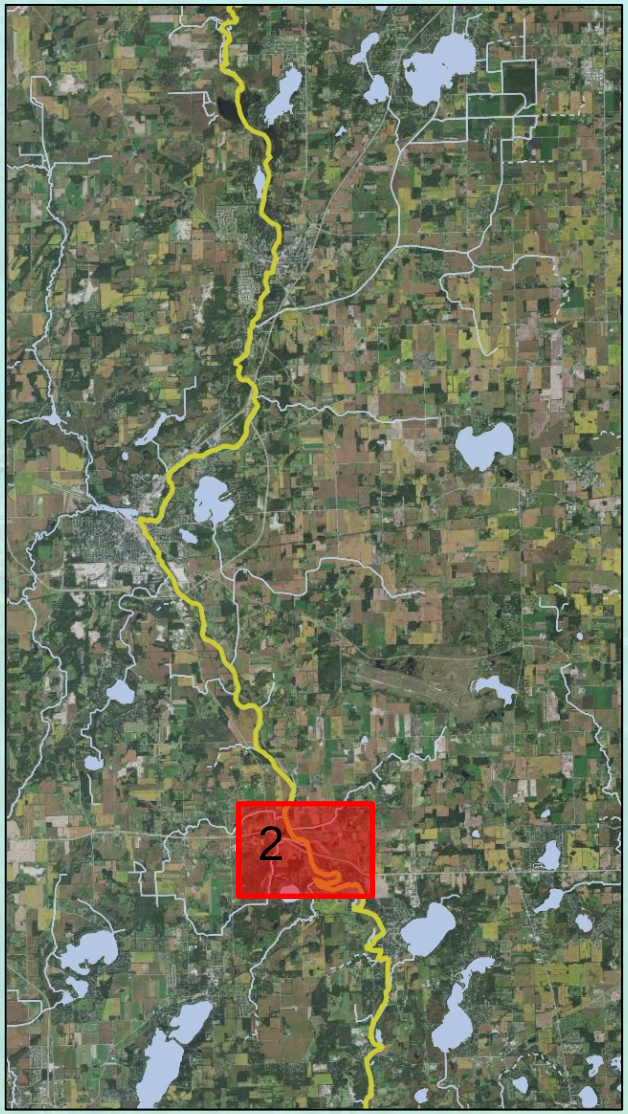


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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

2. State Highway 50

– High gamefish catch rates

– Abundant SMB, WAE, catfish

– Rough fish/panfish forage base

– Abundant redhorse

– Fair IBI scores

– Limited public access points

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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

1. County Highway F to state line
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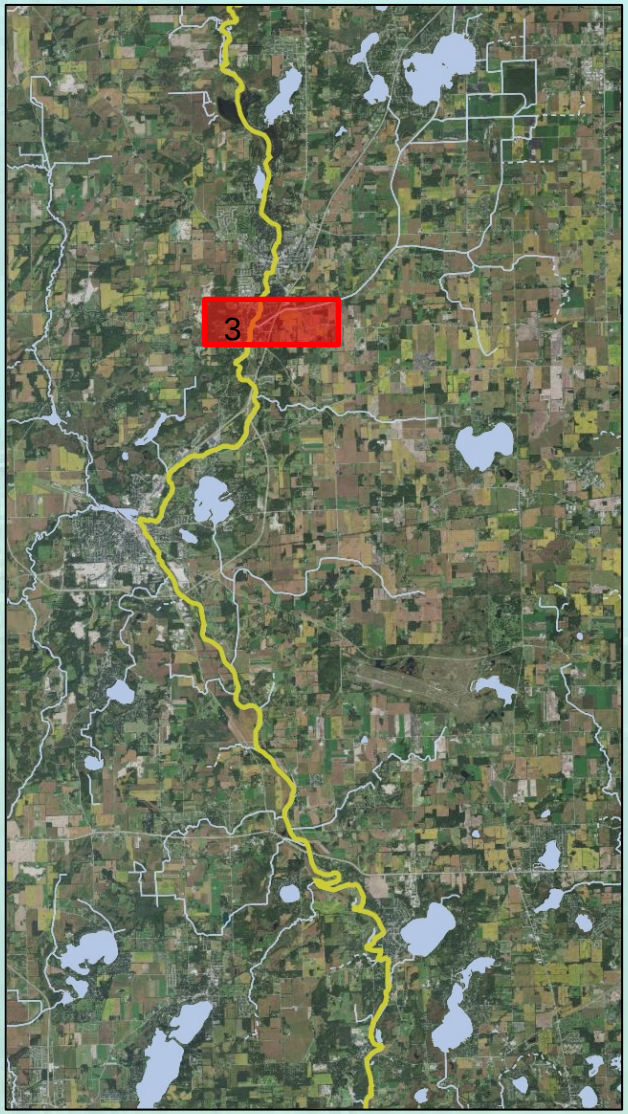


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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

3. Rochester impoundment & WLC
   - Lower gamefish catch rates
   - SMB, WAE, NOP, catfish
   - Panfish/rough fish forage base
   - Abundant redhorse
   - Fair IBI scores
   - Good public access points

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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

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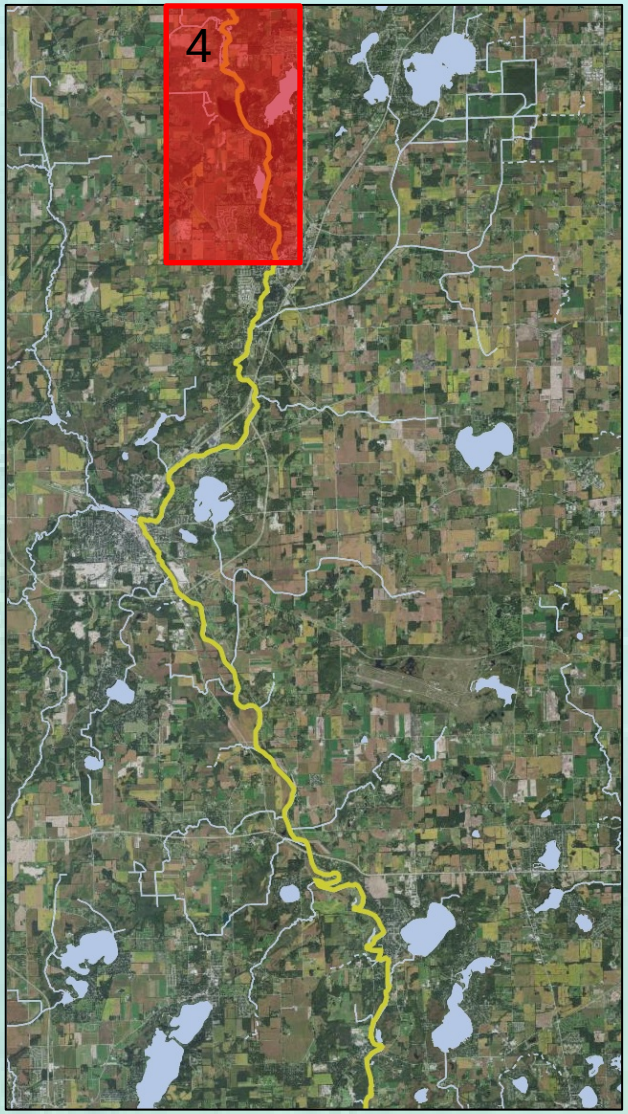


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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

4. County line to Waterford Dam
   - Moderate gamefish catch rates
   - LMB, catfish, WAE, NOP
   - Panfish/rough fish forage base
   - Abundant redhorse
   - Fair IBI scores
   - Good public access points

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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

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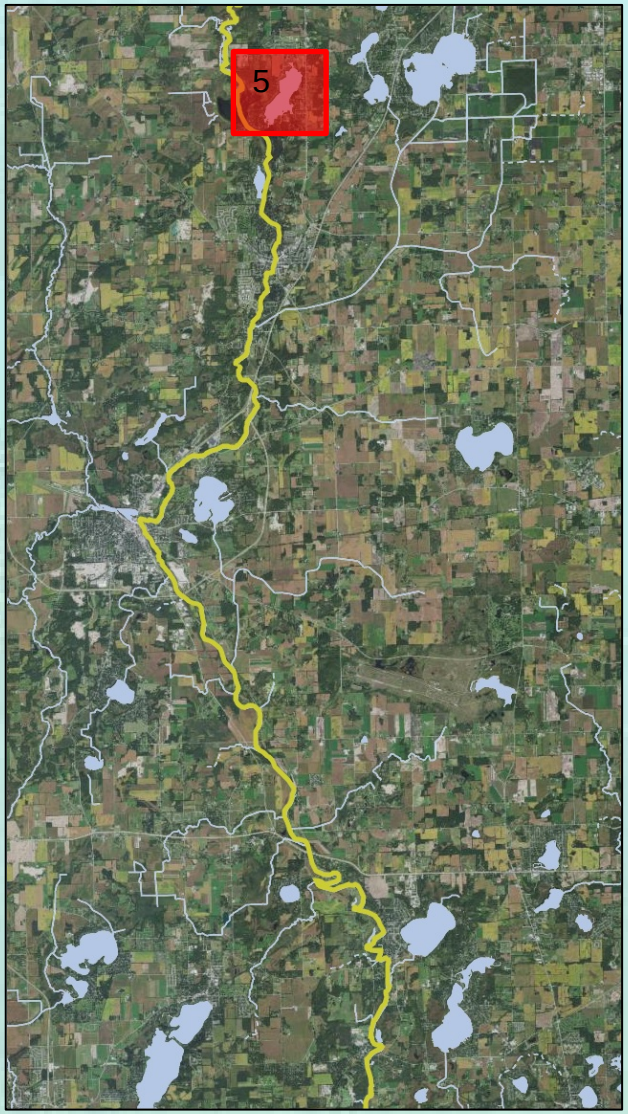


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# Fox River Fisheries Monitoring

5. Tichigan Lake

– Excellent gamefish and panfish catch rates and size structure

– LMB, catfish, WAE, NOP

– Panfish/rough fish forage base

– Abundant redhorse

– Limited public access points

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# Fox River Upcoming Challenges

- Ongoing winter drawdowns at Rochester Dam
- Possible upcoming winter drawdown at Waterford Dam
- Possible upcoming dredging above Waterford Dam
- Resident species
- Spawning migrations
- Imperiled species

Photo Credit: Brent Hess

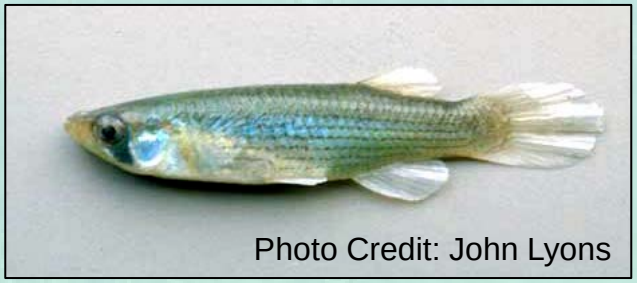

Photo Credit: John Lyons

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# Fox River Upcoming Opportunities

- Wisconsin Walleye Initiative stocking and regulation change
- Musky stocking partnership with clubs and counties
- Dedication to access assessment and development
- National Water Trail designation
- Ongoing fisheries monitoring and fish stocking

Photo Credit: Kenosha News

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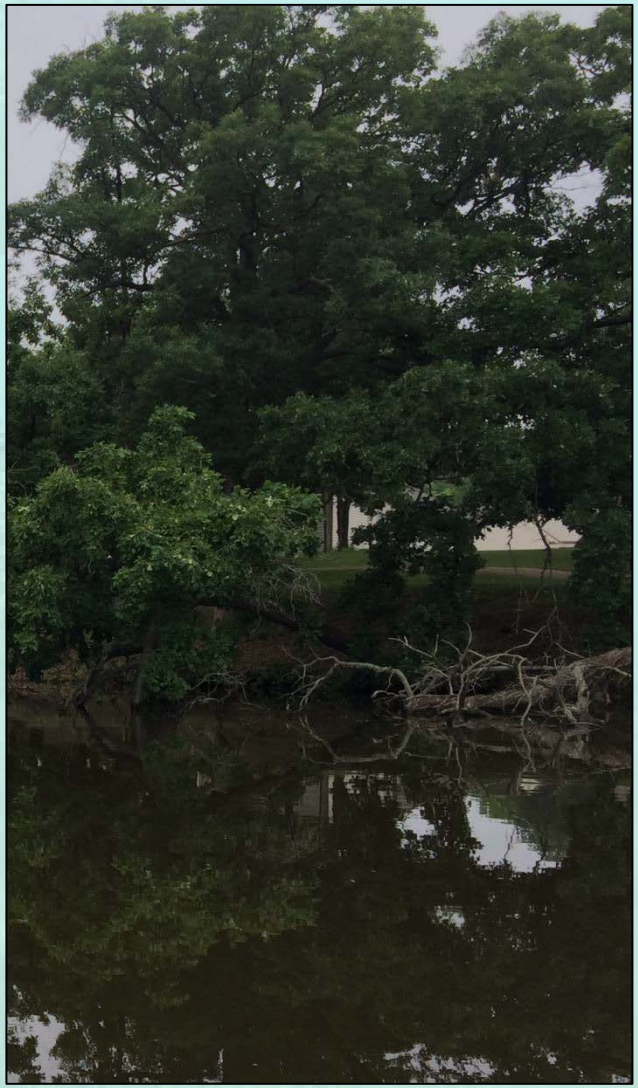
# Fox River Fisheries Summary

- Good to great fishing opportunities throughout
- Variety of access points for boats and shorefishing
- Strong network of dedicated stakeholder groups
- Large-scale challenges upcoming
- Dedication to maintaining and improving Fox River fisheries



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QUESTIONS?