

2019 MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER ALBERT LEA AREA LAKES COMMITTEE

Media contact: Alyssa Hayes (Explore Minnesota), alyssa.hayes@state.mn.us, 651-757-1857

- Vern Rasmussen, Mayor of Albert Lea, mayor@city.albertlea.org, 507-377-4330
- Susie Petersen, Executive Director, Albert Lea Convention and Visitors Bureau, susie@explorealbertlea.com, 507-402-0110
- Dick Herfendal, Albert Lea outdoor enthusiast, raherfin@charter.net, 507-383-2231
- Jason Howland, city councilor/tournament fisherman, jhowland@hotmail.com, 507-438-1098
- Bob Furland, Albert Lea recreation manager, bfurland@ci.albertlea.mn.us, 507-391-1658
- Andy Henschel, Shell Rock River Watershed District administrator, Andy.Henschel@co.freeborn.mn.us, 507-391-2795

GOVERNOR TIM WALZ AND LT. GOVERNOR PEGGY FLANAGAN

Media contact: Alyssa Hayes (Explore Minnesota), alyssa.hayes@state.mn.us, 651-757-1857

- Governor Tim Walz
- Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

EXPLORE MINNESOTA

Media contact: Alyssa Hayes (Explore Minnesota), alyssa.hayes@state.mn.us, 651-757-1857

- John Edman, Explore Minnesota CEO/Director
- Nicole Lalum, Explore Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener coordinator

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Media contact: Dan Ruitter (Southern region information office), dan.ruitter@state.mn.us, 507-226-4117

- Sarah Strommen, DNR Commissioner
- Brad Parsons, DNR Fisheries Chief
- Col. Rodmen Smith, DNR Enforcement Director
- Scott Roemhildt, DNR Region 4 Director
- Jack Lauer, DNR Region 4 Fisheries Manager

FISHING HOSTS

Media contact: Alyssa Hayes (Explore Minnesota), alyssa.hayes@state.mn.us, 651-757-1857

- Bryan Skogheim, Governor's Fishing Host
- Mike Petersen, Lt. Governor's Fishing Host

SPONSORS (PLATINUM WALLEYE)

- Tracker Boating Center, Matt Ness, mattness@trackermarine.com, 701-306-9522
- Mayo Clinic Health System, Ilaya Rome Hopkins, 301-996-3559, hopkins.ilaya@mayo.edu
- Wedgwood Cove Golf Club, Jerry and Gerry Vogt, 507-473-0493, jrvogt@twojerrys.com

Brief bios and key media contact information enclosed:

GOVERNOR & LT. GOVERNOR

Gov. Tim Walz: Tim Walz is looking forward to his inaugural fishing opener as Minnesota's 41st governor in his home region of southern Minnesota. Hailing from Nebraska, Tim moved to Mankato, where he began teaching and coaching at Mankato West High School. In addition, Walz served 24 years in the Army National Guard and six terms for Minnesota's First Congressional District. In his free time, Walz enjoys running, spending time outside with his family, and playing with his rescue cat, Afton. Gov. Walz resides in St. Paul with his wife Gwen, their two children, Hope and Gus, and their cat.

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan: Peggy Flanagan is Minnesota's 50th lieutenant governor. This is Lt. Governor Flanagan's first Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener, and she's excited to be a part of this time-honored tradition kicking off the summer fishing and travel season. In her free time, she enjoys going to the zoo with her daughter Siobhan, attending concerts, and camping at one of our many wonderful state parks. A citizen of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe, Peggy lives in St. Louis Park with her daughter Siobhan and far-too-energetic dog Reuben.

EXPLORE MINNESOTA

John Edman, Director, Explore Minnesota: John Edman loves the great outdoors, especially fishing, skiing, golfing, biking and more. For 18+ years, Edman has directed statewide tourism plans, policies and programs to promote Minnesota as a premier travel destination. He has 30+ years of management and marketing experience in the leisure and hospitality industry and holds several professional leadership positions. He was named State Tourism Director of the Year in 2015 by U.S. Travel Association and serves on Brand USA's board of directors to help attract more international visitors to the U.S.

Nicole Lalum is the northwest and central regional manager for Explore Minnesota. As part of her role with the state's tourism agency, she is designated as the Governor's Fishing Opener coordinator. Lalum is the liaison between the local planning committee and the state agencies and offices involved in executing the GFO. Lalum enjoys exploring Minnesota, camping with her family and spending time on the many lakes near her home in New York Mills.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Sarah Strommen, DNR Commissioner: Strommen oversees a DNR staff of about 2,700 in St. Paul and around the state, with the mission of working with Minnesotans to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, providing outdoor recreation opportunities, and providing for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. Prior to coming to DNR as an assistant commissioner in 2015, Strommen served as assistant director, then acting deputy director, at the Board of Water and Soil Resources. She previously served as associate director of the Minnesota Land Trust and as a council member and mayor for the City of Ramsey. She is an avid outdoors person who loves fishing with her family, particularly her son who is part of a youth bass fishing league.

Brad Parsons, DNR Fisheries Chief: Parsons oversees a \$30 million annual fisheries section budget and a staff of 290 full-time employees. With personnel based in four regional offices, 28 area offices and 15 hatcheries, the fisheries section carries out research and management programs affecting state fish species and habitat. The fisheries section manages 4,500 fishing lakes and 16,000 miles of rivers and streams for public fishing throughout Minnesota. Sport angling alone contributes more than \$2.4 billion to the state's economy. Prior to becoming fisheries chief in 2018, he was a fisheries research scientist in Waterville and Glenwood for 24 years, then the Central Region Fisheries manager from 2010 to 2018.

Col. Rodmen Smith, DNR Enforcement Director: A conservation officer since 1997, Smith has been director of the DNR Enforcement Division since 2016. He oversees the division's \$38 million annual budget and manages its 250 employees, who are spread across the state. The division works closely with others in the DNR and is responsible for enforcing Minnesota's laws related to game and fish; public lands, waters and natural resources; units of the outdoor recreation system and outdoor recreation-related public safety. Smith began his DNR career patrolling the central and northern portions of the state. He is a mediocre angler who enjoys spending time in the boat with his wife, kids and favorite fishing partner: his dad.

GFO ALBERT LEA AREA LAKES COMMITTEE

Vern Rasmussen, Jr.: Vern was first elected as Albert Lea mayor in 2010 and, prior to that, served on the Albert Lea City Council since 2004. A physical therapist by profession, Rasmussen has lived in Albert Lea for 40 years. He and his wife, Marilyn, have two children, AJ and Katie. His favorite thing about Albert Lea is enjoying the community's assets and opportunities.

Susie Petersen: Susie Petersen has worked as the executive director of the Albert Lea Convention & Visitors Bureau since 2007. Living in Albert Lea since 1976, she describes Albert Lea's lakes as the gems of the community, along with the vibrant downtown district and beautiful parks. She says people can find everything they love about the lakes "up north" right here in southern Minnesota. Everyone loves the water – whether it be fishing, cruising a lake by boat, walking or running around a lake, listening to live music at Fountain Lake Park, a picnic at Edgewater Bay or hiking at Myre-Big Island State Park. Petersen and her husband, Ken, of almost 44 years, have two sons and three grandchildren.

Dick Herfindahl: A lifelong Albert Lea resident except for four years spent in the military, Dick Herfindahl is an avid outdoorsman who has fished on Fountain Lake and the surrounding lakes since he was a child. Though he loves spending time in northern Minnesota, he would never want to live anywhere other than Albert Lea. Herfindahl is a retired graphic designer for the Albert Lea Tribune and Freeborn County Shopper and still writes a weekly outdoors column for the Tribune. He and his wife, Jean, have been married for 48 years and have two sons: Brian, who has three sons, and Brad, who has a son and two daughters. He takes pride in the fact that all of his grandsons love to fish and hunt.

Jason Howland: Howland is a member of the Albert Lea City Council and serves as the council's representative on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. An avid angler who competes in professional bass fishing tournaments across the country, he has lived in Albert Lea for more than 20 years. Howland is a former TV sports and news anchor at local ABC affiliate KAAL-TV who now works in communications for Mayo Clinic in Rochester. He also serves on the board of directors for the Albert Lea Community Theatre, where he performs in many of the non-profit organization's shows. He also coaches the Albert Lea Anglers school fishing team.

Bob Furland: Furland has worked as the recreation manager for the city of Albert Lea for three years and previously worked as ice arena manager and facilities manager for 18. He serves as a board member for the Albert Lea Convention and Visitors Bureau, Albert Lea Area Cyclists and Albert Lea Family Y. Furland grew up in Albert Lea but left for school and jobs in Wisconsin and Michigan. He returned 21 years ago with his wife, Sue, to raise their family. He loves the community's lakes, parks, trails and Myre-Big Island State Park.

Andy Henschel: Henschel, a lifelong resident of southern Minnesota, was raised with an appreciation for the land and a love of the water. In turn, he graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato, majoring in environmental services and geography. Andy turned his love for the outdoors into a career and has worked for several agencies including the Freeborn County Soil and Water Conservation District and Freeborn County Environmental Services. Most notably, Henschel has worked for the Shell Rock River Watershed District for over 10 years, and has been influential in the restoration of Fountain Lake.

FISHING HOSTS

Bryan Skogheim, Fishing Host to Gov. Tim Walz: Skogheim is the manager of business development at Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Service in addition to being a chamber ambassador and board member for the Albert Lea Economic Development Agency. Skogheim has fished the area lakes for more than 30 years and participated in multiple tournaments with FLW and Bassmaster. He resides in Albert Lea with his wife and two children.

Mike Petersen, Fishing Host to Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan: Mike Petersen is a partner at Security Insurance/Heartman Agency. As an avid fisherman in the area, Petersen is thrilled that Albert Lea is hosting the Governor's Fishing Opener, and happy to volunteer. He believes this unique opportunity will not only showcase the good fishing in the area, but the local attractions. Petersen resides in Albert Lea with his family.

2019 MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER CONTACT INFORMATION

Explore Minnesota

Nicole Lalum
Regional Manager/GFO Coordinator
218-316-3330 (office)
218-232-0883 (cell)
nicole.lalum@state.mn.us

Alyssa Hayes
Public Relations Officer
651-276-8738 (cell)
alyssa.hayes@state.mn.us

Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources

Dan Ruitter
Information Officer - Regional Operations
507-226-4117 (cell)
dan.ruitter@state.mn.us

Office of Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan

Teddy Tschann
Press Secretary
651-402-8841 (cell)
teddy.tschann@state.mn.us

2019 Governor's Fishing Opener Committee

Susie Petersen
Executive Director, Albert Lea CVB
800-345-8414 (office)
507-402-0110 (cell)
susie@explorealbertlea.com