

Leech Lake – Outdoor Lovers’ Paradise

LEECH LAKE, MN – From fishing and hunting to hiking, biking, golf and wildlife watching, Leech Lake is an outdoor lover’s paradise.

As the third largest lake in Minnesota, Leech Lake brings thousands of fishermen to the northwoods each and every season. In fact, in 2008, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) dubbed Leech Lake as the “hottest” lake in the Midwest.

“Leech Lake was *the* hottest walleye destination in 2008,” said Doug Schultz of the MN DNR Walker fisheries office.

Legendary Leech Lake fishing guide Al Maas agreed.

“Leech Lake was *the* lake of choice for walleye fishermen in 2008,” said Maas. “I believe it’s going to be the top lake for walleye fishing again in 2009.”

Dana Pitt of Bailey’s Resort concurs, “Walleye are our bread and butter, but it’s the other fish that set Leech Lake apart from any other lake in the state or the Midwest.”

Record-setting game fish like walleye, northern pike, muskie, crappie, bluegill and perch inhabit the unique and varying depth of the bays on Leech Lake and help to make this northwoods locale “a-must” for fishermen across the nation.

“The diversity in the depth of water on Leech provides the perfect habitat for several fish species,” said Schultz. “Shallow, vegetative areas provide ideal spawning and natural reproduction for many species.”

While Leech Lake is most well-known for its lake and world class fishing, many outdoorsmen (and women) have made this region a premier destination for other activities, like hunting.

Troy Morschen, of Carver, MN, began deer hunting in the Leech Lake region with his wife years ago and has developed into an annual event for the Morschens. In fact, Morschen’s wife bagged her very first deer here in 2008.

“It was a very exciting experience for my wife,” said Morschen. “It’s great that she was able to get her first deer in Leech Lake because I know she’ll be excited to hunt there every year...I have hunted ducks, grouse, deer, and bear and have always done well. The area provides great hunting opportunities for the game we hunt.”

Located in the heart of the Chippewa National Forest, the Leech Lake region attracts hunters from across the Midwest annually. Here, hunters have discovered trophy whitetail deer, grouse, waterfowl and other game that move through the small, well-distributed timber stands and openings of the Chippewa National Forest. This historical Minnesota forest provides a variety of aged forest habitat on which many sought-after game animals thrive, providing the ultimate hunting experience for outdoorsmen.

According to Shay Fortier, owner of Adventure North Resort in Walker, the Chippewa National Forest trail system that winds its way through the forest, helps make it easily accessible to hunters.

Here, more than 88 miles of non-motorized trails wander through some of the best grouse habitat in the Midwest. The trails are mowed periodically to help maintain vegetation and food sources utilized by wildlife throughout the year.

“In addition to excellent fishing and grouse, waterfowl and deer hunting,” Fortier states, “These trails also provide excellent hiking, cross country skiing and wildlife viewing every season.”

Cindy Wannarka, Executive Director of the Leech Lake Area Chamber of Commerce adds, “We’ve got a handful of activities for everyone....terrific golf courses, scenic hiking and biking trails, wonderful restaurants, events and so much more.”

For more information about Leech Lake, please contact the Leech Lake Tourism Bureau at 800-735-3297 and visit LeechLake.org.