

Home | Local | Wisconsin AP wire

Survey says Lake Winnebago System is valuable to local economy

OSHKOSH, Wis. (AP) - Tournament and recreational fishing on the Lake Winnebago System generates \$221.4 million in local spending and supports about 4,300 jobs, according to a survey.

State Wire
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A University of Wisconsin-Extension survey found anglers make 1 million trips each year to Lake Winnebago, Lake Butte des Morts, Lake Poygan, Lake Winneconne, the Fox River and the Wolf River, UW-Extension Community Development Educator Catherine Neiswender said.

The \$221.4 million in spending is near the \$230 million tourists spent in Winnebago County in 2005.

"We get tourism numbers thrown at us, but this is one activity often overlooked," Neiswender said. "It shows anything we do that impacts the fisheries and wildlife in this area can end up impacting the economy of this area."

The 51-question survey was sent to 2,000 fishers who registered in 2005 for fishing permits with the Department of Natural Resources. It asked them how much they spend on a variety of goods and services, what kind of fish they like to catch and who comes with them.

The 1,200 surveys returned allowed UW-Green Bay, which conducted the survey, to determine about 170,000 anglers went fishing last year throughout the system.

An out-of-state angler spent on average \$983 on a fishing trip, the

survey said. Wisconsin residents spent about \$400 on average and local residents spent about \$194 on average.

"Hopefully, this will bring a lot more attention to anglers and will give them a seat at the table when we talk about tourism and economic development activities," Neiswender said.

Tews Too Sporting Goods owner Ed Lemke said he hopes the city of Oshkosh and economic development agencies see the need to be more welcoming to boaters.

"If they want to call it 'Oshkosh on the Water' then we'd better do something about it," Lemke said. "I think we could use another facility in this town for docking and one for parking. We have so many tourists that come into this town to fish and yet most of our tournaments seem to be going to Winneconne right now."

Information from: Oshkosh Northwestern,
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