

LITTLE LONG LAKE

A Hidden Gem To Share

By Randy Lage

I feel that it is time to tell a little bit about a wonderful lake that has had a good trout fishery for many years.

I, along with several others, have enjoyed catching the trout of Little Long Lake. We kept it to ourselves to keep the lake peaceful and avoid that opening day combat fishing often found on Courthouse and other metropolitan trout lakes. None of us would have dreamed of bagging some trout, taking that bag to a watering hole and slapping them on the bar saying "Look at these Little Long Lake trout!" I guess we were selfish and did not wish to share our good fortune with others. We practiced both catch and release and some selective harvest. The lake was never

clear (around 15 feet visibility) even in the summer. The clarity also makes the lake a great spot for spearfishing in the winter. Consider harvesting the northern pike present in the lake to give the trout a break. This lake provides a more natural 'up north' feel and experience. Now that Three Rivers Park has purchased the surrounding land around the lake it should remain as it is today: woodsy and a bit like being up north.

The low point for Little Long Lake trout came after the DNR budget cuts in 2009. It was determined that not enough folks were fishing for trout there. Our little secret had worked against us. Stocking ceased for two years. Thankfully, we have been able to restore about 1/3 of



STOCKING RAINBOW TROUT IN LITTLE LONG LAKE



A LITTLE LONG LAKE RAINBOW TROUT CAUGHT THROUGH THE ICE IN WINTER

be worth it. There are no areas suitable for shore fishing or wading, despite the depths dropping off drastically. Plan on a small boat, kayak, or inflatable to fish in the summer. All of the usual methods will work during the summer and winter seasons. Four-pound line and a quality rod and reel should suffice. In winter, walk or drive where other locals have made tracks, as there are some springs to be avoided. Don't take chances on the ice. Trout roam the entire lake so you should not have to travel far from the parking lot. Under the ice, trout can be seen cruising at less than 15 feet along still-green weed edges or just below the ice surface. Summertime trout will be a bit deeper in the cold, oxygen-rich waters of this two-story lake.

If you go and experience what has been said so far, please share it with your friends. Our secret was too well kept in the past and a lake like this should really be shared. If you should have a chance meeting with the DNR please thank them for their effort to restore the stocking of trout in this special place.



ANGLERS FISHING FOR TROUT ON LITTLE LONG LAKE. THE LAKE IS LOCATED NORTHEAST OF WHALETAIL LAKE IN MINNETRISTA, WEST OF LAKE MINNETONKA. MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.DNR.STATE.MN.US

given any promotion by any agency or publication. I think that we loved it too much and shared it too little. Now it's time to share.

Little Long is a metro two-story lake along with others such as Square Lake, Christmas Lake, and Courthouse Pond. You will not experience jet skis or power boating here because of its 10 hp limit. 108 acres in size and 76 feet at its deepest, the water is

what it had been in past years. It is our hope to return to the stocking patterns in the past that were working well. Recently the stocked trout have come from the Peterson Hatchery in SE Minnesota and averaged around 11 inches. These folks produce beautiful trout that are colorful and robust and put up a great fight when hooked. There are even a few carry-over fish that may top 5 to 6 pounds. If you go, expect to work for your fish but catching a couple of these trout will

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