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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** We kind of branched out and said, let's take other people. And kind of our focus was we wanted other families with kids to use this area and fall in love with it so that when it gets threatened by taking it away, there's going to be people that are saying, no, no. That's such a cool area. So that was in our mind, too, is to try and create more opportunities for people to see what we have here. You don't have to drive all the way up to Ontario, although that's lots of fun, and I love it. But. We can do a lot of those things right here, too.

[00:00:31] **Speaker 2** So how much of the guiding business you developed was just what you guys wanted to do versus, you know, there's hundreds or thousands of guides that will take you out on their 16 foot giant boat and take you on a big lake all day.

[00:00:47] **Speaker 3** Yeah, you know, I think, I think that's probably our biggest thing. First of all, we knew we had, we, we really wanted to try and create, create those moments for people that just make lifelong memories for them, especially families. And you get that, I think when you're totally immersed in not just the fishing, but you're in the wilderness river, you're going around, you know, you, you've seen wildlife, you getting the sights, the smells, all that makes a big impact. And sometimes it can be You know you have an experience that maybe didn't go as planned but that becomes the experience and that and you don't and I have I have all the respect in the world for the guides that hey meet me at the boat launch jump in my boat We're gonna go out in the lake and fish for eight hours. There's all those eggs, you know those guys But we always said if you go out on the lake, and the fish just aren't biting that day And it's hard you're just out in a boat on a lake with kids That's challenging, but when you're going down a river and oh, we got some fast water coming up here and you get it, you know, oh, look at the deer standing in the river, you know and eagles sitting up there. The kids get.

[00:01:48] **Speaker 1** The kids get restless, you can stop somewhere and let them float down the river for a while.

[00:01:51] **Speaker 3** Yeah, and they catch crayfish, they can do, you know, you can do things that they'll remember and that's, you now, so that's kind of our, our kind of thing.

[00:02:00] **Speaker 2** When was that? When did that start?

[00:02:03] **Speaker 3** How about 10 years ago?

[00:02:04] **Speaker 1** Was it that one?

[00:02:05] **Speaker 3** Yeah, yeah, 2014, 2014 was when we first started. And another part to this was we had, you know, we had just kind of finished doing the, doing the kids all, you know, doing all the sports stuff. We, I coached baseball for lots of years and football and, uh, in high school and, and our kids were in a lot of sports and music. And it was like, we knew what it was like to have to put all that stuff on the calendar first and not take the time to go. And do a camping or fishing or whatever. And then you had that one weekend where it's like, hey, wait, there's nothing happening? Did you really wanna pack up all your gear to go up north and get back late on a Sunday night? You got a car full of wet gear and tents and you got your dog, you know, all that stuff. Cause we had done that a lot. We had done and we thought, so we kind of thought that's a niche, instead of like families who have that situation. Come up north, instead of going to Noah's Ark, which is a great, you know, great fun weekend, but are you really going to remember that the rest of your life, right? But come up north. We'll take you for a day. We'll haul canoes into a little lake. You can fish, catch lots of fish. We'll even cook them for you, make a campfire, make some s'mores, hike out at the end of the day and leave all the stuff with us and you drive away and you know that's the stuff. Kids remember, lights a fire in kids, you know, a lot of times that they remember that and they want to do that again and we've been fortunate to make some really great relationships.

[00:03:37] **Speaker 1** That's been a big part of it. It's been a lot of fun. We talked about these little girls that have been coming to us since they were five, seven, and nine.

[00:03:46] **Speaker 3** Now they're driving and...

[00:03:47] **Speaker 1** In the little one, the first year, she couldn't really, we were afraid to let her cast in the boat. She might hook somebody.

[00:03:53] **Speaker 3** There's Barbie, Barbie fishing pool. Yeah.

[00:03:55] **Speaker 1** Yeah, John got this big bunch of rubber frogs and he said, well, Janie, pick out one of these. And so she's looking and she picks out this red sparkly one, which up until then, I don't think we ever use. And he puts it on and digs the hook right into the rubber. So there's no way she's going to hurt anybody. And she's casting a dozen of musky coming. Grab it right at both sides. She's screaming. She's got this fish on.

[00:04:11] **Speaker 3** Grab it right at the boat side and she's got this fish on it. It wasn't letting go and I mean I knew it was a matter of time before it would just break the line because it was the frog was gone and uh and she just you know she never she talks about that. They talk about it.

[00:04:25] **Speaker 1** They talk about it every time they come back and we tell the Janey story and then she didn't want to fish anymore. She put her pole down and she said, Janey, why aren't you fishing? I don't want that big muskie to get my pole.

[00:04:37] **Speaker 3** Yeah, and we just had one this year, I had a young man who was a junior in high school, a very quiet kid, and him and his dad get a lot of father, son, and mother, daughters, but very quiet, and he just, we had a fun day on the river. He caught three muskies. We had just, we caught, it was just, and, he was just gradually throughout the day just opening up, opening up. They got back home, we lived down by O'Connor Walk, and they got back His dad called me and it's like, John. I don't know what happened, but he's like a different kid. Like he's totally just starting to plan. He maybe wants to go to Stevens Point. He wants to do resources and everything. And then that was, he was like, so that was thanks a lot for the trip. Okay, that was it. Well, just this past summer, I got a call from him, from his dad. And he's, like, John, Ben's out of getting out of the Marine Corps. He's put four years in. It's the first thing he says, I want to go on a fishing trip up north. You know, call John, and I was like, that was cool. When he came up, we had just an absolute blast. You know, that kind of stuff makes it just, you know just so worth it.

[00:05:41] **Speaker 2** And I'm sure that different experience being offered doesn't take long for people to, you know, word of mouth becomes yourself. That's pretty much all.

[00:05:49] **Speaker 1** That's pretty much all it is, is word of mouth, and you know, we're not looking to, you know we're retired, you now, so we're looking to make a living at this, in fact most of it just covers

[00:06:01] **Speaker 3** Yeah, if we travel somewhere and hire a guy who can picture that, our gear, right?

[00:06:07] **Speaker 4** That's what it is, yeah.

[00:06:07] **Speaker 3** But yeah, we could guide every day if we wanted to. But then we wouldn't be able to go fishing hours. Lots of calls, lots of calls. So it doesn't take long for people to realize that we take everybody. We have fun with elderly people too who used to do it 20 years ago, and now you get them in a canoe, give them a comfortable seat, and they're like, hey, I think we can do this.

[00:06:30] **Speaker 1** We had that one gal that was like 80 and she just scrambled up in front of the canoony.

[00:06:34] **Speaker 3** Yeah and she we just back on the water. Yeah so that's it's really rewarding and when you're I think when you'r an educator that's what your career is all those teaching moments Brenda's master has her master naturalist certification so you know there's a lot so you know we do a lot of foraging too along the way and there's always things that you know so.

[00:06:59] **Speaker 2** One of the, obviously this story is focused on Walleye, but it's also the people that surround that. So, musky is a big thing, but Walleye is another big species, right? Like, are people...

[00:07:09] **Speaker 1** Everybody wants to catch walleyes because, I mean, they're the most finest table fare we have in Wisconsin, right? They're just amazing to eat. And so a lot of people want to catch walleyesh and we found a little niche for that. Yeah.

[00:07:23] **Speaker 3** Walleyes, I think it's funny. I said they're a very, I don't know what the way to say, like an intentional fish. Like people want to catch walleyes and you don't just, you just don't stumble across them like in lake. You got to, you might stumble across other fish when you're fishing for walleye but you don't just all of a sudden stumble into a bunch of walleys. You know, it's usually kind of the focus. But I get, we get a lot of calls from people. They say, hey, we're coming up. You know maybe from Chicago or wherever. We're coming for a week. We want to get a bunch walleyes in the freezers like Certain times a year, you can do that in Wisconsin and the guys that guide strictly walleyes up here and they're good and those guys don't, it's not, this isn't northern Minnesota or even you know or Canada, this is, there's great walleye fishing at times in certain areas but it's you know Green Bay is obviously really good, Schwabgen Bay is good and we do fish there too.

[00:08:13] **Speaker 1** But you kind of have to know what you're doing, or have a guide that knows what they're doing because it's a harder fish to catch.

[00:08:21] **Speaker 3** But the idea of just coming up and loading up on walleyes in Northern Wisconsin, it's challenging for a speech coming up in July and August for their one week vacation. Right. So we- People have that mentality. They do.

[00:08:34] **Speaker 2** And their expectation is... Northern Wisconsin, walleye heavy. They do.

[00:08:38] **Speaker 3** They do. And it is, it is it is challenging. Again, you know, you especially like there's a there's a really good lake by us that it's a very, very good walleye lake, but from about early July through August, it's solid weeds, and shallow and solid weeds. And there's lots of walleyes and big walleyess. But most people like how do you I mean, how do you even begin to fish them here? Like, you know? And it's frustrating because people aren't used to fishing in the thick weeds for walleyesh. But they're in there and you can get them, but it's totally a learning curve.

[00:09:11] **Speaker 2** So talk to me a little bit about the river experience. Because one thing that a lot of people probably don't realize is walleye are native to rivers. Lakes are where you think of them, but that's actually not their native habitat. So how do you stumble into knowing where the walleyes are in these little backwards rivers?

[00:09:28] **Speaker 1** Well, that's kind of funny, because we actually at first didn't really ever talk at them or catch them much. No, I mean...

[00:09:36] **Speaker 3** I grew up fishing the rivers around Eau Claire for walleyes, but it was mainly in the spring, you know, spring walleye fishing in the rivers, you know it was good. And that's kind of the cool thing about when you're fishing these small rivers, right? Like we said, deep water holds most of the fish and deep water on these rivers is literally three or four feet. So I mean, you're talking about a deep little hole that might get up to your chest if you walked in it, but everything else is this deep, there's fish in there and it's gonna have muskies in it, and there's gonna be smallmouth in it. And there's gonna be walleyes in it. And it's funny, in the summer, in spring, we can go and catch, hit those holes, and there are rivers high, and the walley, the water temps good, and there is a lot of feed in the water, and it's spring, so they're feeding, and we can catch a bunch. I mean, you can never see another boat the entire day, and you're catching some really nice ones, too. Then you get into summer and all these other fish are really actively feeding. You know, smallmouth in August, they're eating everything. So those walleyes are in the same holes a lot of times. So it's like you make that cast and oh, small mouth. Oh, here's a small one. And they're there. And all of a sudden at maybe four or five fish in, I was like, Oh, it's a walleye, you know, and it's the nice 17 inch walleye. Perfect eater, you know? And it's, like, but they're, they just don't. They aren't super aggressive. And so, and then you're also, you don't get them on the bite windows. If they want to eat morning, you know, early and late, well, if you're floating a river and there's a really good wall, I hope you got a three hour float out. How are you going to hit that right before dark? If you're not trying to float out in the dark or right at first light, how are you gonna get down to it in the darker? So sometimes we have to camp, you know, we'll make camp, so we hit it in the evening, hit it in the morning, you know. But you can usually pick one or two up in the afternoons, you know, and we have dark water here too, so that helps. These rivers are pretty dark. So, you know you find a little cloud cover and dark and deeper hole and you can usually find them, so.

[00:11:37] **Speaker 2** Growing up, you said you fished for walleye, and you were over by Green Bay, so was walleye a big thing for you as well?

[00:11:43] **Speaker 1** No, it's interesting because back when I was young, which is a long time ago, the walleye fishing wasn't a thing on the bay. You know, I'm back where the Fox River was almost a dead river when it was polluted really bad in the 60s. So our main fish that we fished for was perch, which a sister to a walleye, right? So I grew up perch fishing a lot, which there's a lot of similarities when you're but we'd go out and catch 200 perch and that was just a normal thing. But not walleyes, that was not a thing back then.

[00:12:15] **Speaker 2** So when you started coming up here, is that really the first time that you got into walleye?

[00:12:20] **Speaker 1** Oh yeah, and it was like, I didn't realize how much there was to it, you know, I didn't know that it was kind of this cult following of people that want to catch walleyes, and that was like the night we got up. Lighted bobbers. Yeah, I'd never fished with a lighted bobber, and he took me up north, and like not far an hour from here, and we went out at midnight at the boat landing and launched the boat, and we got these lights on our bobbers, and I'm watching the light go down slow with his bobber. I was just fascinated by it because I had never done anything like that and I just thought it was the coolest thing ever and then we got to eat them which was really awesome.

[00:12:56] **Speaker 2** So for you, was walleye just part of what you were looking for, or was like walleye the species?

[00:13:04] **Speaker 3** Certain times of the year, I'd focus on walleyes on the river, especially. Or when you were ice fishing. Or ice fishing, I did a lot. I always said, I probably got through college because of walleyers. I said I would drive my car. I went to Stout in Menominee, one of the lakes where I lived, and I'd drive my cars out there at night. I'd set up my three lighted tip-ups, and I'd turn on, leave the car on, turn on my dome, I'd do all my reading, oh, got a flag, go out there, catch one. I could do three or four hours of that. You're not going to find me three, four hours in a library doing that, but I could do that sitting in a car by myself, you know, and yeah, so I had some good friends. We were kind of walleye, we chased walleyes through the ice, and you know that was pretty, a good focus there and and and You know, I think too now with all the electronics that are available to people for the lakes, you know, you can find them when you used to not really be able to find them, right? I mean, you can't find them suspended in 40 feet of water, you know. How did you used to find those fish, right, you didn't really, most people didn't. But in the rivers, they really had, it really hasn't changed. I mean walleye fishing is very much what it was like when I was a kid and when I growing up and. Very simple, you know, and get put a bait in front of them. And when you're talking about a hole the size of this table and they're, you know, bait it, they're going to eat it most likely.

[00:14:26] **Speaker 1** And that's something we really appreciate is the lack of electronics in what we do. The simplicity, like even with that one wall we have mounted, I caught it. I was just floating in a canoe and dragging a bait behind me and in the middle of nowhere and it hit and I caught and there's just something, oh it's special when you do it that way.

[00:14:49] **Speaker 3** It's very, it's very primitive is not the right word, I suppose, but it's just very it's very simple. You know, there's no, you just read the water and they got to be somewhere in the water. This time of year when it gets low, you know, really concentrates and just getting to those places is very difficult.

[00:15:07] **Speaker 1** And during the year there's certain things like right now, you know, wherever the wood is in the water, they're in that shadow down there in the shallow water they want to hide, you know. You just kind of know those things. Get out of the sun, yeah.

[00:15:17] **Speaker 3** We've got a few places where there's big logs that if you can get it in there without getting hung up, you're usually almost always going to catch one.

[00:15:26] **Speaker 2** Is the, I mean obviously bass are known for fighting, they're a little different, a musky will take you a little bit. What's it like to catch a walleye? What's that experience like?

[00:15:37] **Speaker 1** The ones on the river are very different than the ones in the lake.

[00:15:39] **Speaker 3** I mean, they just fight like crazy. They don't want to leave that hole. You know, they do not want to come out of there. And when you're catching, we get some walleyes in the mid to upper 20 inch range. We got two 30 inches on the river in the last couple of years, but you get those five pound fish and they don't wanna come out of that hole and we're using light gear. You know like we usually, it's pretty intense. Yeah, yeah it's fun. And you're in a small boat, you know, everything is kind of like a circus when you get a big fish on a small board. It's just. Kind of chaotic, but that's what people remember, you know, and yeah, so they fight, they fight.

[00:16:14] **Speaker 1** Yeah, they definitely fight and that's just some of the fun of it, right?

[00:16:19] **Speaker 2** When you think of people that are out in Winnebago just trolling, just going back and forth for six hours, and the fish is on, and they just leave them in the net, is there any comparison between the two? Well, we do.

[00:16:28] **Speaker 3** Well, we do, we have a bigger boat and we'll go up to Schwammagen Bay and we will do some trolling. I enjoy some of that. He likes trolling a lot. I'm not so much. It doesn't compare to fishing them in the canoe or on the rivers, but I enjoy it. A lot of times I kind of call that a little bit of a meat hunt. I mean, you're going to go out and you're gonna reel in a 16, 17 incher and it's going to go in, you know, or even a 20 incher. It's not a lot of It's fun because you're catching a walleye, kind of in the middle of a big body of water, and that's kind of it. Figuring them out is fun.

[00:17:06] **Speaker 1** That's where we try and get most of our fish to eat, is fishing that way, because on the river, these are small rivers, we try to be pretty careful about keeping anything because, you know, we just don't know, you know what, you don't want to affect the population, so every now and then if something's hooked bad or...

[00:17:22] **Speaker 3** We'll keep a couple, we'll have clients that are like, can we ever, we're gonna catch a walleye, we're like, yeah, you can keep one, But if we catch four or five, they keep one. One or two, enough for a meal for them, and that's good, you know, and they're good with that.

[00:17:37] **Speaker 2** How did you get involved with Women Fitch?

[00:17:41] **Speaker 1** Wisconsin women fish. Yeah, a lot of bar. Don't you get involved with everything at a bar? Sorry to say Wisconsin No, we were we were at a Bar for the muskie school so my friend Amanda owns a deer foot down at on the Chippewa flowage and We were down there and I was working at that school and barb carry the president of Wisconsin Wisconsin women. Fish was there and we were We were talking and she started talking about going ice fishing up on Red Lake and they stay in sleeper shacks. And all these things went off my head. Sleeper shack? You get to fish while you're sleeping? It just sounded like the coolest thing ever. And I said that to her and she's like, you gotta come with us. And all of a sudden I was riding up to Red Lake with a lady I didn't know to sleep in a shack with people I didn't know and fish wall eyes and it was 28 below. And that was my introduction to the club, and it was awesome. The people are great, and I had a blast.

[00:18:43] **Speaker 3** That's been a really nice, that's been a really niche for us too. A lot of women that want to come up here, learn to muskie fish or, you know, again, we float rivers and we fish with light gear. You know, we don't throw big heavy stuff. They really, they feel really comfortable having Brenda take them.

[00:19:00] **Speaker 1** And sometimes they just want a woman to take them and switch them in too.

[00:19:02] **Speaker 3** Yeah, and then sometimes after they come for a year then of course their husband back home is like hey I want to so then I'll take the husband she takes it and it actually isn't working out really good We do that quite a bit. She'll take mother daughter. I'll think father son and it ends up, you know being really good

[00:19:17] **Speaker 1** The more I got involved with Wisconsin Women's Fish, the more I started guiding too. In the beginning I was more like just a support system and now I take a lot of people by myself. And I even get requested sometimes over my husband and I'll say, if you really want to catch a fish, go with him if you want to have a lot fun.

[00:19:35] **Speaker 3** Well, especially in the fall, October, she guides a lot in October. We have dogs and I bird hunt a lot and I kind of back off. The first week or two I have some trips booked, but other than that, then I kind of back out, but she goes pretty hard all through the whole month.

[00:19:54] **Speaker 2** Well, I mean, having covered this around the state, this is a pretty male-dominated and masculine sphere, so what is it like to let women know, hey, there's a comfortable space for you to learn how to do this?

[00:20:07] **Speaker 1** Yeah, that's what the club that I belong to is all about really is giving people a chance to do it without feeling that pressure. And we have a lot of women too who used to have fish with their husband and their husband maybe passed away or they got divorced and they're like, I still want to do this, how do I do it on my own? And so we're a big support system, we have like a private Facebook page where you can ask questions and only the people in the club can see it so you don't have to be afraid someone's gonna jump in and start saying stupid stuff. And making you feel bad. So that's cool. And for me, when I take someone, I have a kind of a different approach than John. He's very, he teaches a lot about fishing and gives a lot of direction. And I'll often have people that are a little bit more trepidatious about what we're doing. And I will say, you know, we're gonna go fishing and we're going to have some fun. And if you want guidance or you want me to tell you things, please. Do so. If you'd rather have me be quiet and just paddle you along and you want to just cast a little bit. And so I try and approach it that way so it's not so intense and a lot of people appreciate that. And by the end they're like, should I cast at that spot? How about that spot, you know? And they're just all into it. But it's more of a slow...

[00:21:24] **Speaker 2** Imagine that as you give women space, they're very comfortable to take that space It's right to get it letting them feel like they can take some of that space exact

[00:21:34] **Speaker 1** Exactly, and I'm a pretty non-threatening kind of person and then and sometimes people look at me and they're like You're gonna roll the river for the next eight hours. And I'm like, yeah, I am

[00:21:45] **Speaker 3** Well, and it's funny because you either light that fire in someone who's never done it or you relight the fire in someone who used to do it when they were a kid and they just don't really know why they got away from it and they did And then I'll say like, oh my gosh, this is. Well, I have a.

[00:22:03] **Speaker 1** Well, I have a gal who's coming back this year. Last year she came to Muskie School from California. Her kids encouraged her to come back because she used to come up here and do stuff and she read about our Muskie school and she came. And I had her out on the river and I gave her a rod and she's like, she made like three casts. She's like I am so, I can't do this. And I was like, well, you know what? Let's just set you up with a sucker because in the fall we put suckers on a sucker rig with a bobber and whatever. And I said, you can just hold the rod. So, you make it work for. For her comfort zone, I wasn't gonna keep pounding on her on how to cast. It's like, no, let's just do this. And as she's sitting there and she's just holding this rod and all of a sudden this big muskie comes screaming in, grabs a sucker, runs into my little cargo canoe, splashes her with water, she screams bloody murder, pretty soon we got that fish flying all around. We ended up catching it, it's a 40 inch muskie and she gets a picture with it and it was just such a cool thing. And even her family was so happy to hear all about it. And now she's coming back this year. So we're gonna hopefully do it again. But, you know, those.

[00:23:08] **Speaker 3** Set a high bar.

[00:23:10] **Speaker 1** That's a little nerve-racking. I get a little nervous about all of it. I feel a lot of responsibility to help people have a good time and meet their goals or make their dreams come true, and if I don't, then that's hard for me personally.

[00:23:25] **Speaker 3** And kind of getting back to what you asked before, people's expectations. One of the things that is hard too is because we float these rivers where, these are small, you go down the middle of it, you can cast to both banks. I mean, this is not like, you can't get anything much more than a canoe on a lot of these stretches. And trying to understand that, well, what is a trophy or what is success in that river? You know, because social media, you mentioned, you know, Green Bay, you see all these pictures of people, these giant walleyes, you know, multiple string and laying on the bottom of the boat, you know, and it's like, and it's, like, well, that's not really what we're going to do. And we have some really good days where we catch a lot of fish. But with walleyed, if you go through, you catch some small mouth, maybe a musky and on your light gear and then pick up a couple of nice walleyess for the frying pan. That's pretty. That's pretty cool. I think about that in context. It's always important. So some people are really focused on numbers, numbers, numbers, and after the end of the day, they're like, that was really fun. Like, because it was just simple.

[00:24:34] **Speaker 1** With my big walleye, I mean to me that was more of a trophy than I've caught bigger ones when I was out trolling with you on the big water, but that one was more special just because of how it was caught. You know to me, you know, it was just...

[00:24:49] **Speaker 3** We had one, I had two guys, they're really dire, muskie fishermen, they fish everywhere. And they won a trip that we had donated to a local organization. And one guy was from, they were both from Chicago actually. And these guys knew more about muskie fishing than I did, I mean they were really good. So I picked their brains. It's one thing, we don't have any egos, so we're always, literally, we're don't, we're all always asking, when we get people in a bullet bat, we know, no sir, we're alway picking their brains But, but they were like, what should we bring for gear? And what are we going to use? And I told him, I said, here's the thing guys. We use medium, medium, medium heavy bait casting gear. If you want to catch muskies. I said we don't, don't bring any musky rods. No big ones, no big baits. I said it's fish in the river. Eat the same stuff as the bass. I said so we'll catch bass along the way. But I said this is what these muskys eat. Well, we get to in this, we're in the super small river. I mean, it's where it starts. It widens up, but it's small. And he cast Hiranaya. He had on a spinner bait and he cast a spinnerbait down in this little hole and also he's like, he's like, oh there's one. He's like oh man it's good and it was one of these giant walleyes. It was a 30-incher dark gold water. It's like dark gold. He was literally like this is one of the coolest fish I've ever caught. He just so appreciative of it and so you know and it was probably a 20-year-old fish. I mean it was just awesome awesome. Experience for him and you know we released it and let it go and uh you know that he wouldn't have got that with a you know a 40-inch musky because for him that's a nice musky in the river and for him, that would have been like oh yeah but that was pretty cool.

[00:26:28] **Speaker 2** So, one of the other things I want to explore a little bit is relationships and couples in fishing. We've ran into some people that they can't really have a relationship because they're almost married to the boat. And then there's other people where, you know, maybe the spouse will come along and they'll read and they will find a way to be together. And then, there's people like you where obviously your passion dovetails together. But how important is finding a way balance a relationship with fishing?

[00:26:57] **Speaker 3** Well, we-

[00:26:57] **Speaker 1** We've come full circle, haven't we?

[00:26:58] **Speaker 3** Well, that's really just just a quick example that a lot of my friends, when I tell them I got a new reel or I bought some, they'll say, did you tell your wife if they're my friends? They know they're joking, right? But like clients like, oh, I buy I had to hide that. I'm like, I'm, like, Oh, man, I said between her and I, we got to rein each other in because it's like we just, you know, we support each other all the time. But yeah, we don't have to hide what we buy when it comes to fishing.

[00:27:26] **Speaker 1** And it fishing together is a special treat because a lot of times we're taking other people fishing so when we get to go fishing we usually run away up to Canada to our canoe country and like we did that this spring and we just had an amazing time because we we could just fish for what we wanted to fish when we wanted fish, where we wanted to fish, it's just so natural for us.

[00:27:50] **Speaker 3** And I think too, when we first met, I had, I'd been fishing tournaments for bass. Um, and I was a pretty competitive guy. We're both athletes and stuff. So we were pretty competitive and I was pretty competitive about fishing. I was pretty intense and she was kind of like lighten up. Like, what's the, you know, geez, you know, you whatever. And I knew though that like, because of how competitive she can be that over time. She has become a lot more like, no, we gotta go work that section because I know that fish is there and I know, so she's- The more I've learned, the more-

[00:28:24] **Speaker 1** The more I've learned, the more input I've had, which is sometimes not always easy. And I just row, I row around and she just works it. I remember the first time we competed fishing, though, for perch on the bay.

[00:28:37] **Speaker 3** I've completely locked that out of my mind. I had floating jig head, slip bobber, I had all these rigs and we're out in 30 feet of water. She had a paint stick with line wrapped on it and she dropped it straight down with a spring on the bottom and two hooks coming off. And I was like, got one. She had nine in the boat before I even had a bite. I'm just like, I like this is just way too embarrassing.

[00:29:05] **Speaker 1** So there's lots of different ways to fish, for sure.

[00:29:09] **Speaker 3** Yeah, we work it out.

[00:29:12] **Speaker 1** And even like you know he likes to troll a lot and it's not my favorite but I go trolling with him and I've learned more about it and so I can participate more which makes it more interesting than it used to be I used to sit there like if you go out with a charter and you just sit in the boat and wait and wait wait for a broad to go off now at least I'm what bait should we put on and how many feet back and you know so it gives a lot more to think about.

[00:29:36] **Speaker 2** What would you recommend to couples that marriage therapy type thing of like well somewhat one of the partners is passionate and

[00:29:46] **Speaker 3** Well, kind of like we do with our clients a lot of times, ask what kind of fishing do you really like to do? Find out what each person really loves to do and find that happy medium because same thing. I mean, I have clients that they love to fish slow with jigs. They don't really want to cast topwater and other people, that's all they want to do. And it's like you if you can tailor your experience, if somebody doesn't like to sit and look at a bobber and then you make them sit and look at the bobber the whole day, they hate that. Right. So that's one thing.

[00:30:15] **Speaker 1** A lot of times, the guys that want to go up and troll on Schwalming and Bay, John just takes them. And I don't go along on that. And if I have girls that really want to sit and jig for crappies and bluegills, you know, I'll do that. Or like with my club, I go on some outings that, you know, that I really enjoy.

[00:30:34] **Speaker 3** And then the other piece is don't torch them, right? Once you have one of these days, and even if it's a good day, don't overdo it. When it's time to be done, be done. And just then go get a good dinner or something, or something. Just make it, because man, that's how, you just can really burn people out in a hurry. That extra hour or two hours in the boat or on the ice or whatever, it just.

[00:30:59] **Speaker 1** I've burned you out on that a little bit on ice fishing. I have a hard time getting off the ice.

[00:31:03] **Speaker 3** No, she doesn't ever want to stop. So that might cause us more. As a guy fishing, I can't believe I could complain about my wife not wanting to come off the water. But sometimes it's like, and we really do have to go, but no, it's good.

[00:31:21] **Speaker 1** I'm very competitive with myself. I'm not competitive so much with other people, but if I have a goal and we do that in our club, you know, you want to catch a fish a certain size, it's like, I really want to make that happen and I work really hard at it.

[00:31:35] **Speaker 3** I've kind of transitioned a little bit too. I don't really care if I fish a whole lot now. I love rowing people. I love taking people down the river and just I don't fish that much really anymore.

[00:31:48] **Speaker 1** And it's funny, because every now and then I'll say to him, I'll said, but I really want to, because I said, I didn't have all those years of fishing like you did. Because most of the time, I mean, I had three kids and I taught full time. I didn't go fishing when I was young. And so now it's like.

[00:32:04] **Speaker 3** But I still did a little fishing. Yeah.

[00:32:05] **Speaker 1** Yeah, you did a little bit more than me. I was inside making dinner, and you were standing out in the bay casting. But, and I don't have any problem with that, but now it's like, I wanna have my time, and I wanna, you know, there's a lot of times when I wanna fish too. Sometimes it's even hard for me when I'm guiding, it's, like, I'm guided and I'm like, I wanna just cast over there, cause I know there's fish, and they can't make that cast, and I just wanna see if there's the fish there. So I still have all that going on in my mind. I don't think you have that so much anymore.

[00:32:31] **Speaker 3** Well, that's a funny thing, too, up here. There's a number of guides, especially musky guides, that they fish right along with their clients. And I always ask a lot of the clients that I have that they travel all over the world and hire guides, you know, and I'll say, how many times do you come into where the guide is fishing right alongside you? They're like, not many. They're, like, that a little different up here, it's like there's some number of guide that they'll fish right along, you know. And to me. I've had it happen a number of times where I literally I want to make a cast to see if this reel this line is on right or I want see if there's action on this bait and I'll make a cast like this and I was like oh I feel so bad like I hook a fish and you know they haven't been catching them and it's like oh you know but no we typically don't fish.

[00:33:22] **Speaker 1** No, I will with friends, you know, I'll have some friends and they'll be like, No, you got to fish with us. And then twist my arm.

[00:33:31] **Speaker 2** Well, you guys can fish with us too, we'll be happy to have you.

[00:33:34] **Speaker 3** Yeah, we'll see what we can do.

[00:33:36] **Speaker 2** So in terms of like the culture of Walleye, I mean, the history is there, that legacy, but is that still as ingrained or is that kind of a generational difference, like the older people's view of Wallaye versus maybe some younger people's?

[00:33:54] **Speaker 3** That's a really good question, because again, up here, we're in a little bit of a throwback area right here. We kind of, I think a lot of people still really like, you know, we have multiple generations of people that come up here to these old resorts, these old lakes, they fish the same spots that they did 40, 50 years ago, and the walleye still has a, has kind of this mystique. I mean, that's the first thing you ask people about when they're fishing, you know. You know, tends to come up right away is, you know you get any walleyes? I mean, that's pretty, you know, and obviously the muskie has a whole different following, but usually no, in conversations that people talk about muskies, you know, it's just walleyers are still, there aren't many people up here that talk about like, oh no, I'm not interested in walleying. Most people, they want to go catch a few walleyess.

[00:34:41] **Speaker 2** When you think of the amount of research that's being done by, I mean, UW-Stevens Point and the tribes and the DNR and all the other agencies, Glyph Lake. And a lot of it focused on walleye. Is that worth it from a statewide perspective? What is the bigger, broader value to all that effort being put into walleye? That one-

[00:35:08] **Speaker 3** Well, I think, I mean, we're big proponents of science and all the data and research that shows that a lot of lakes are struggling, a lot populations are, and that would be really, really a shame. It would be.

[00:35:21] **Speaker 1** It would be a huge loss just for the Northwoods culture because the walleye is sort of... King of the fishing.

[00:35:30] **Speaker 3** And even the Chippewa Flowage, you know, this legendary body of water. I mean, it's a phenomenal fishery, no walleye fishing in the winter. You can't catch them through the ice. And it's all people talk about, like, why can't we, why does it, you know, so as soon as you took it away, you hear from the people like, that's ridiculous, but it also needs to be protected because, you know, we said it a million times, but with the equipment today, especially through the eyes, the equipment, everything from keeping people warm and transportation. And shelters, and then obviously the electronics, the gear, you can really, really... Decimate a population. Yeah, I mean, you could do a number of...

[00:36:10] **Speaker 1** We're very careful about little lakes that we go to, especially with ice fishing, keeping them sort of under wraps, and there's only certain people we will take to them that we know are responsible fishermen that are going to put them back, because you could just really wipe it out in no time.

[00:36:23] **Speaker 3** And then you add social media to the mix, right? And, you know, it ends up being a potential, you know, crappies. We talked about crappie a little bit earlier. I mean, crappy, I mean that has to stand people's radars because in the winter, towards the end of the winter all those crappys congregate in that, you now, in a deeper water. And some lakes only have one deep spot and pretty soon there's a shack, there's another shack, and pretty soon they're hammering them day after day, you

[00:36:52] **Speaker 1** So education is super important and I think having the science behind it just makes it all work together then.

[00:37:01] **Speaker 2** It's interesting that we've, I've talked to a number of people that are very focused on like putting walleye back in the lake, whether they're walleyes for tomorrow in the little mobile hatcheries, or they're guides, or their constant fishermen, a lot of those people are talking about catch and release being their primary thing, like it's the thrill of the catch, it's not the harvest, you know they'll do a fish fry, but that's not their priority. Yeah, so who who are is like if they're a different breed of person that is just about the harvest because it seems like there's almost like a bifurcation among walleye fishermen of those that are just the pursuit and then there's it's the table.

[00:37:39] **Speaker 1** Yeah, there's a hunting factor to walleyes, like figuring out how to get them and how to get them in the boat. It takes a lot, and so you take pride in figuring that out and finding them.

[00:37:49] **Speaker 3** Finding them. Let's save that question. Sorry, can I cut for one second? What's going on? You gonna be able to edit that out?

[00:37:55] **Speaker 4** I can barely hear him.

[00:37:57] **Speaker 3** Okay.

[00:37:57] **Speaker 4** If they were inside or not.

[00:37:58] **Speaker 3** No, no, no.

[00:37:59] **Speaker 1** Can we can we stop for just a second? Okay?

[00:38:02] **Speaker 3** Okay, hold on, you're tethered.

[00:38:04] **Speaker 1** I know

[00:38:05] **Speaker 3** I'm so sorry.