



GAGES LAKE
CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE



Presented by



Ice Fishing Derby Guide 2026

Rules, Regulations, and Event Information

Welcome!

Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby & Winter Fun Event

Welcome and thank you for participating in the second Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby & Winter Fun event! This event was planned with the purpose of bringing family, friends, and neighbors together, providing outdoor fun, and utilizing beautiful Gages Lake for all it has to offer year round. In addition, this event raises money for the Wildwood Park District for programs and special events, and for the Gages Lake Conservation Committee for Gages Lake fish stocking through registration fees, 50/50 raffle, and sponsorship.

About the Wildwood Park District

Mission

The Wildwood Park District serves our community by providing enriching and affordable recreational programs, events, and facilities that promote community building, and health and wellness. The Wildwood Park District also protects our natural resources, parks, and lakes through conservation and preservation initiatives. The safety of our residents, visitors, employees, parks, and facilities is our top priority, and the Wildwood Park District minimizes risks through our Park Safety Staff, comprehensive safety efforts, and partnerships with local law enforcement agencies.



Vision

The Wildwood Park District is committed to continuous improvement and aspires to exceed the needs of our community through a collaborative, innovative, and sustainable approach. We strive to maintain and preserve the beauty and functionality of our parks, lakes and shorelines, amenities, and facilities for current and future generations to enjoy

About the Gages Lake Conservation Committee

The Gages Lake Conservation Committee (GLCC) is a volunteer organization that manages the conservation needs and health of Gages Lake, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Lake County Health Department (LCHD), and Wildwood Park District (WPD).



Purpose of the GLCC

- **Promote** through cooperative community interest, the conservation of Gages Lake, a glacial lake, for the recreational use and enjoyment of residents of the several surrounding communities with lake use rights.
- **Maintain** a quality sport fishery, using advice from and services of the IDNR and LCHD.
- **Sample water quality** and monitor results in consultation with the Northern Illinois Planning Commission, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), and the LCHD Lakes Management Division.
- **Make residents aware** of their impact on the health of Gages Lake and to help provide conservation education.
- **Raise funds** to support the various conservation activities.

**GAGES LAKE
CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE**

2026 Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby Rules

The following rules shall apply to the 2026 Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby hosted by the Wildwood Park District and Gages Lake Conservation Committee (hereinafter the "Event"), scheduled for 8:00am to 3:00pm on Saturday, February 14, 2026.

Section 1. Rules and Regulations

The rules and regulations set forth herein are the official rules "Rules" of the Event.

1.1 Participants shall be subject to all applicable licensing requirements, as well as any local, state, and federal laws.

1.2 These rules may be changed by the Wildwood Park District, or by its delegated agent (hereinafter, the "WPD"), at any time with or without notice to the participants. Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the WPD.

1.3 By registering and participating in the event, all participants acknowledge and agree that they have reviewed, understood, and will abide by the Rules. Participants willingly agree to comply with the Rules for participation in the Event.

Section 2. Event Participation, Eligibility, and Measurement

2.1 The contest is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. local standard time February 14, 2026. You can only register your fish during that time frame.

2.2 To preserve the life of the fish, registering your fish will be done by taking photos on your cell phone and submitting photos via text message.

2.3 All participants 16 years of age and older are required to have a valid Illinois Fishing License. Please be advised that IDNR may be present and checking fishing licenses.

2.4 All fish must be caught on Gages Lake only.

2.5 Eligible species for the tournament are Bluegill, Catfish, Crappie, Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Perch, and Walleye. Per IDNR, minimum length for entering your fish are as follows: Northern Pike- 24", Largemouth Bass- 15", Smallmouth Bass- 15", Walleye- 16", Bluegill- no minimum length, Catfish- no minimum length, Crappie- no minimum length, and Perch- no minimum length.

2.6 Fish of each species will be measured by total length, with the longest fish of each category for both age groups winning the respective prizes.

2.7 All fish measurements must be on the yard stick provided at the Event registration check-in. Failure to comply will render your fish registration photo inadmissible. Additional measurement rules are as follows:

All submissions must include at least two photographs:

- 1) A picture of you holding the fish.
- 2) A picture of the entire fish on the provided yard stick noting the total length.
- 3) Please include your first and last name, species of fish, and total length measurement in the text message.

2026 Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby Rules Continued

The following rules shall apply to the 2026 Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby hosted by the Wildwood Park District and Gages Lake Conservation Committee (hereinafter the "Event"), scheduled for 8:00am to 3:00pm on Saturday, February 14, 2026.

2.8 We guarantee to verify all registered fish through the last prize spot. It is ultimately your responsibility to make sure your fish was entered, with media, correctly. The judges are not responsible for correcting errors in uploading fish below the lowest prize spot. For example but not as a limitation, if you enter a 28" Northern Pike as 2.8", you should contact the tournament director to correct the measurement.

2.9 Each contestant may register as many fish as the contestant wants but only the largest (by total length) will be entered into the contest.

2.10 All fish entered into the contest must be caught during contest hours. Dead or frozen fish are ineligible. Judges shall have the right to verify all fish are legally caught. The decision of the judge is final. Participants are responsible for verification of total length of the fish at time of submission.

2.11 Only fish personally caught by the contestant are eligible to be entered in the contest by that contestant. Fish caught by one individual and given to another person are not eligible. Any contestant who enters a fish caught by another individual will be immediately disqualified.

2.12 Heaters, chairs, bait pails, depth finders and underwater cameras are allowed.

2.13 All fish registrations must be uploaded by 3:15pm on the day of the contest. All fish must be photographed between 8:00am and 3:00pm. No fish registrations that finish uploading after 3:15pm will be eligible to win a prize. If you catch a fish outside of an area with internet service, you must return to an area that has reception to complete uploading your fish before 3:15pm.

2.14 Any Participant attempting to manipulate the outcome of the Event will be disqualified.

2.15 Contest results remain unofficial until verified by the head judge. Results that have been verified by judges will be posted on the online Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby Leaderboard. Efforts will be made to keep the leaderboard as up-to-date and accurate as possible.

SECTION 3: Prizes and Categories

3.1 There are two age groups for this contest; 16 years of age and older, and 15 years of age and under. There will be eight prize categories per age group (largest by total length- 1. Bluegill, 2. Catfish, 3. Crappie, 4. Largemouth Bass, 5. Smallmouth Bass, 6. Northern Pike, 7. Perch, and 8. Walleye), as well as a total of two Grand Prize winners; one for largest overall fish for each age group.

3.2 TIEBREAKER: In the event 2 fish of the same size are caught, the earlier-submitted fish will place above the later-submitted fish on the leaderboard.

3.3 Winners will be announced and all prizes will be awarded at Pebble Beach Park following the conclusion of the ice fishing derby at 3:15pm.

2026 Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby Rules Continued

The following rules shall apply to the 2026 Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby hosted by the Wildwood Park District and Gages Lake Conservation Committee (hereinafter the "Event"), scheduled for 8:00am to 3:00pm on Saturday, February 14, 2026.

Section 4: Interpretation and Discipline

4.1 Participants agree to abide by the Rules and any decisions of the Wildwood Park District and/or Event Staff.

4.2 Interpretation and enforcement of the Rules shall be left to the sole and exclusive discretion of the Wildwood Park District and/or its designee at the Event. In the event a Participant violates any rule set forth in the Rules, as determined in the discretion of the Wildwood Park District, the Wildwood Park District may impose a penalty and/or sanction on the Participant (including but not limited to disqualification from the Event and future events and/or forfeiture of Event prizes).

4.3 Each Participant agrees to report to the Wildwood Park District and/or Event Staff immediately any violation or infraction of the Rules.

Section 5: Safety

5.1 All Wildwood Park District rules, regulations, and ordinances apply on Wildwood Park District properties, which can be found here: www.wildwoodparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/park-rules/

5.2 Contestants are responsible for their own safety, and actions at all times.

5.3 Participants understand and are aware that the weather can be severe. Participants are responsible for their own wellbeing, and monitoring the weather and ice conditions.

5.4 Participants are aware they are participating in a physical activity in the sport of fishing on ice, which may be dangerous and can cause injury. Walking on ice subjects the participant to certain risks including, but not limited to, death, serious neck and spinal injuries resulting in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage, and/or serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, muscles and internal organs, and property damage. Although particular Rules, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce the risks associated with participating in the Event, the risk of serious injury does exist and cannot be completely eliminated.

Section 6: Miscellaneous

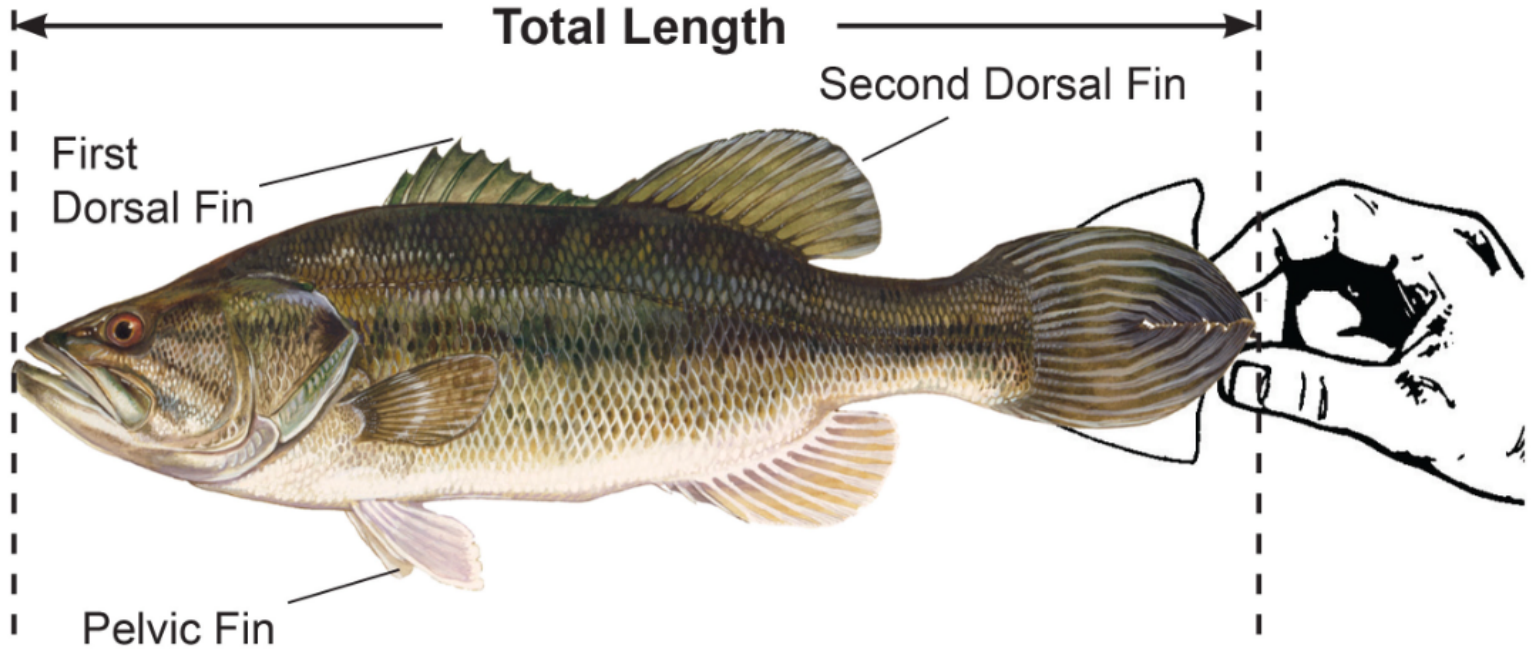
6.1 ATV/UTV/snowmobiles are authorized for use during the Derby. BE RESPONSIBLE!

6.2 Don't cheat!

6.3 Be safe!

6.4 Have fun!

How To Measure Your Fish (Total Length) and Submit Your Fish Photos



1. Lay the fish on its side flat on a ruler (belly facing you).
2. Measure from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail with its mouth closed, ensuring the tail lobes are pinched together to get the maximum length.

Minimum Length for Entering Your Fish

Accepted species for the Ice Fishing Derby are Bluegill, Catfish, Crappie, Bass, Northern Pike, Perch, and Walleye. Accepted species **MUST** meet the minimum length to be entered:

- Bluegill- no minimum length required
- Catfish- no minimum length required
- Crappie- no minimum length required
- Largemouth and Smallmouth Bass- 15" minimum
- Northern Pike- 24" minimum
- Perch- no minimum length required
- Walleye- 16" minimum

How to Submit Your Fish Photos

1. Two photos per fish submission are required.
 - A. A picture of you holding the fish.
 - B. A picture of the entire fish on the provided yard stick noting the total length.
2. Text the photos to **(224) 545-8762**, and make sure to include your first and last name (that you registered with), species of fish, and total length measurement of fish.
3. All photos are due by 3:15pm. Photos submitted after 3:15pm will not be accepted.

Please note: if you have any questions or concerns during the Ice Fishing Derby event, you may also call the above number as it will connect you with a Wildwood Park District employee.

Leaderboard, Prizes, and Raffle

Leaderboard

New this year, the Gages Lake Ice Fishing Derby will feature an online leaderboard so anglers can check standings in real time without having to leave their spot on the lake. The leaderboard will be organized by age group and further broken down by each fish species. Time stamps will be included to ensure anglers are viewing the most up-to-date results throughout the event.

View the Leaderboard

www.wildwoodparkdistrict.com/gageslakeicefishingderbyleaderboard/ or scan the QR code below:



Prizes

Winners will be announced and prizes will be awarded in person at Pebble Beach Park at 3:15pm. As a reminder, all fish submission photos are due by 3:15pm. Photos received after 3:15pm will not be accepted.

Raffle

Winners will be announced in person at Pebble Beach Park at 3:15pm. Winners do not need to be present to win. All proceeds go to the Gages Lake Conservation Committee for Gages Lake fish stocking.



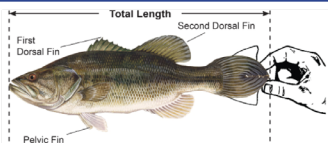
GAGES LAKE FISHING RULES & REGULATIONS

1. An Illinois Fishing License is required to fish Gages Lake.
2. Please keep all carp.

The following regulations have been established for these species to maintain a quality sport fishery.

<p>Largemouth Bass 15" minimum length limit 3 fish daily harvest limit</p>	<p>Smallmouth Bass 15" minimum length limit 3 fish daily harvest limit</p>
<p>Northern Pike 24" minimum length limit 3 fish daily harvest limit</p>	<p>Walleye 16" minimum length limit 3 fish daily harvest limit</p>

How to Measure a Fish (Total Length)



Lay fish flat on ruler and measure from tip of snout to end of tail with its mouth closed and tail lobes pressed together.

These regulations are established, enforced, and monitored by Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers.
Courtesy of Gages Lake Conservation Committee.

Thank You Sponsors!

Presenting Sponsor

Beckman **BROS.**^{INC}
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

847.223.7870 

In-Kind Sponsors



GAGES LAKE
CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE



JRV TECHNOLOGIES LLC