

## Catch 'em Like Kevin



Kevin Walsh retired as Ingersoll Scout Reservation's (ISR) Site Manager/Ranger on December 31, 2018. He had held the position since 1989 (30 years) giving him plenty of opportunity to know where the fish are in both Cedar Creek and Lake Roberts, what they feed on, the most successful lures and baits, and most importantly, how to present the offerings. He graciously granted my request to interview him on behalf of all of you Merit Badge Counselors and share his extensive knowledge.

Delivering the Promise to Scout and Scouter anglers is an exciting and energetic exercise in optimism in Kevin's mind. "So much adventure has taken place on our waters over the years and the calls to future adventurers have just gotten louder and louder. The waters are bursting with fish and just waiting for all of you to access, enjoy, and learn." To prove it he hastily broke out the topographic maps of ISR he provided and showed me the "hotspots" he had marked for you and me. And then, after getting a hot cup of coffee, he started to share generously.

### Cedar Creek

This phenomenal smallmouth bass (SMB) fishery runs along the entire southern border of ISR yet gets sorely little fishing pressure. In 2006 five sites at the southwestern end of the property were part of the Stream Bank Stabilization Project (please see the photos below and diagram on page 5). Roughly, in the vicinity of the North Canoe Launch and the South Canoe Launch, 7,200,000 pounds (3,600 tons) of rock were trucked in and laid down in a pyramidal configuration parallel to the shoreline. The five areas covered 75-125 feet of bank and were interspersed on opposite sides of the Creek.



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Casting worms or twister tails parallel to the rocks or across the stream to the opposite rocky bank and waiting for them to sink to the bottom about 8 feet deep was the presentation. After waiting for the “tink, tink, tink” of the nibbles he would start the retrieve. BANG! The smallies hit on the retrieve off the bottom. Kevin and his wife caught 27 SMB, the largest being 2 pounds, in one evening.



At Stream Bank Stabilization Site #1, a 12-18 minute walk from the dining hall, Kevin taught Scouts to make their own “Bank Poles” from willow branches or old fiberglass tent poles and wrap line on them and put reflector tape on the tips of the “rods”. Baited with night crawlers or minnows then stuck in the ground early in the evening and left overnight while the catfish were feeding, this method netted 63 catfish on 7 different outings.

And over on the east side of the Creek at Beaver Bend it turns south, the SMB would hit on night crawlers, too.

Kevin recalled the excitement, sounds, and adventures Scouts and Scouters would log during overnights on the Creek. At times a small school bus would convey 10-12 anglers to the sites. After an evening fishing, dinner around a great fire, and some stories of the “ones that got away”, things settled down and sleep took over. The solitude of the Creek environs during the night would give way to the “morning harvest” of the catch and preparation of an angler’s breakfast, fresh, hot, delicious fish.

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“And we were just scratching the surface in terms of all the opportunity Cedar Creek offered.” “The key”, he offered, “was adult participation, and at one point we had adults come and stay for a week of camp and devote their time to the fishing program. That is when things were on the upswing. It would be so much fun to see the CAI program reinvigorate that adult guidance and Scout camping and fishing.”

### Lake Roberts

At roughly 15 acres and max depth of 18 feet throughout much of the lake, Lake Roberts is a main attraction for residence campers, day campers, and troop outings. The sail boating, rowing, canoeing, stand up paddle boarding and kayaking are really big. But the secret to fishing Lake Roberts and significantly increasing the fishing activity there is this: **BOATS!** Anglers in boats have caught the most fish in almost every case. Make that “LOTS OF FISH!”

It can be a canoe, kayak, jon boat or rowboat, but, as your CAIs all need to understand, there are more fish in the larger lake as a whole than there are along the shoreline. We have the water craft and some of them could be secured at the Fish Shack and under the supervision of the Fish Shack Scouter. Using a Buddy Board, appropriately trained Scouts and Scouters could take out a water craft and cover the entire lake in an afternoon or evening with a very high chance of catching many fish.

When I asked where the “hot spots” were on the lake, Kevin told me the lake is a “fish factory” producing way above the average number of fish for a lake its size and the fish are everywhere around the main body, coves, and shoreline. The coves have had some fill-in but the drop-offs to 8 feet are still fairly quick and the filling in is not progressing with any concern.

The electroshocking of the lake was done in 2017 and revealed a tremendous number of fish including bluegill, largemouth bass (LMB) up to 7.5 pounds, and catfish up to 18 pounds. Of course there are some shoreline “hot spots” and one is due east from “The Slide” in a small inlet near a beaver lodge. Other shore “hot spots” include the dam and several “artificial reefs” made of sunken “Spider Blocks” located in the center of the lake. “Could your CAIs make netting one of those monsters a 2019 CAI Goal?”

For the bluegills use a slip bobber with a lead-head jig tipped with ½” of a night crawler down about 22” into the water column. Hold the boat about 10-20 feet from the shore and cast parallel to the shore. For the LMB use a rubber worm 7-8” long and inch it across the bottom. Crank baits, spinner baits and surface lures are all producers.

For catfish a device using a swim noodle has proven effective. A one foot long swim noodle is threaded with a Schedule 20 PVC pipe. Fishing line is run through it and out the far end. Use a regular hook and set it up to hang down about 2 feet deep tipped with a piece of liver or cut-up bluegill. Let it float free. The cats will hit it and pull it all over the lake, ala “JAWS”! Then chase it down and retrieve the fish.

This technique is done under adult supervision and in accordance with fish survey and monitoring of the health and size of the population on an annual basis. Otherwise bobber fishing or tight lining on the bottom are productive. Catches yield the prestigious “Big Cat Daddy” or “Big Cat Mama” status for the anglers. The dam and boat house cove are “hot spots”!

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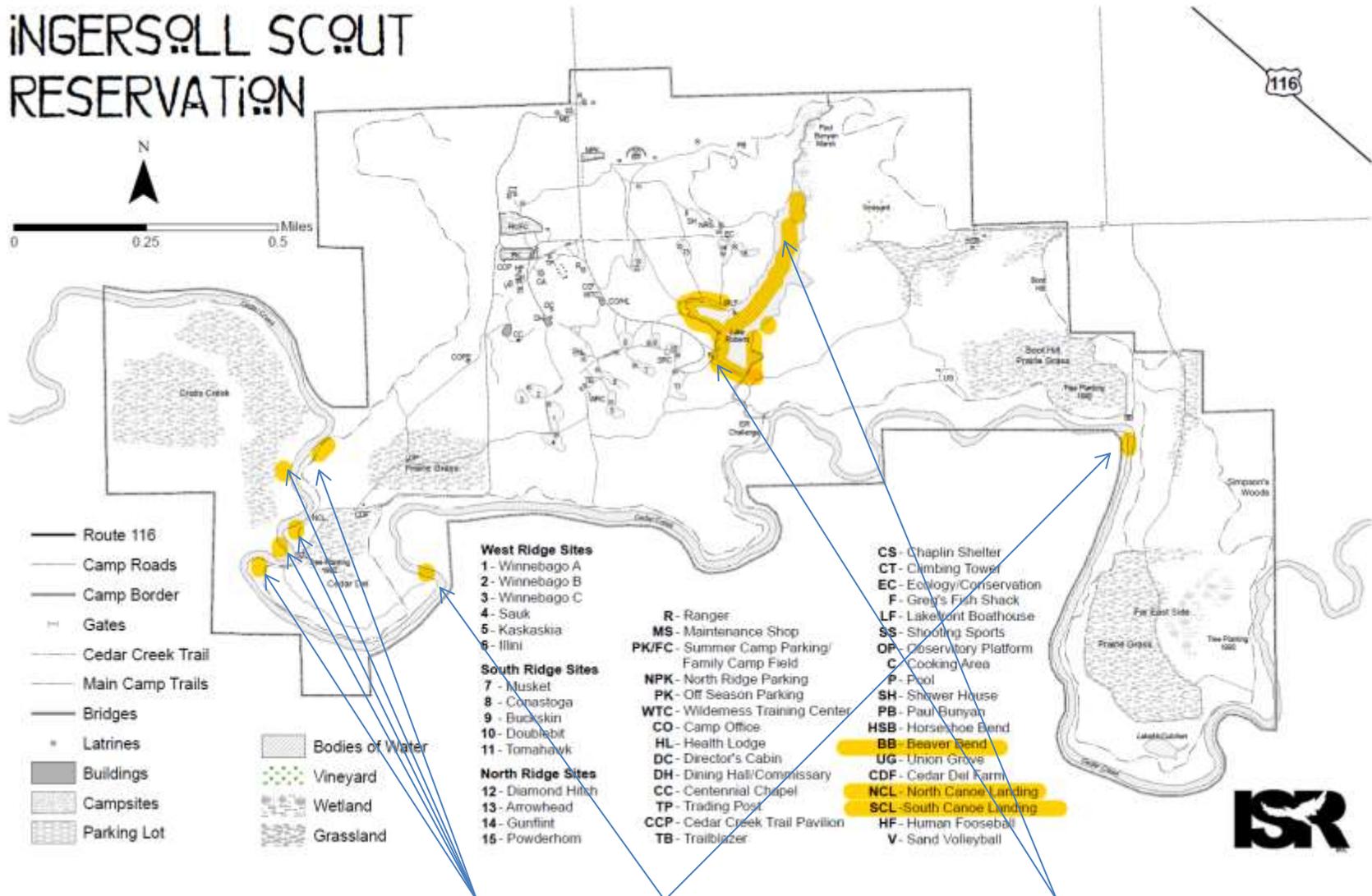
Kevin said he is unabashedly optimistic about the greatness both of these excellent fisheries can achieve because in his 30 years at camp he has witnessed it, in fact, he participated in it. He was thrilled by the many wonderful memories he has shared with Scouts and Scouters. He wholeheartedly endorses the CAI program and wishes it great success! "I am ecstatic", he said. This is such a wonderful program and so essential to fishing at ISR becoming all it can be for years to come.

"Best wishes to you all and thank you for the opportunity to share these memories and hopes for the future."



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## INGERSOLL SCOUT RESERVATION



Cedar Creek Stream Bank Stabilization Project  
2006  
Areas 1-5 (from north to south)

Cedar Creek  
"Riffles"

Lake Roberts "Hot Spots". By boat, the fish are EVERYWHERE, all over the main body and against the shoreline. Walking the shoreline is possible only from "The Slide" southward to the dam and the up the east shoreline to the first small dock because of overhanging trees elsewhere.