

## GET THE LEAD OUT!

### LEAD-FREE FISHING TACKLE CATCHING ON STATEWIDE

FOR RELEASE: June 16, 2006

Saint Paul, Minn. - In its seventh year, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Get the Lead Out! fishing tackle program has seen several innovations including partnerships with retailers and outfitters, an educational kit for lake associations, a study from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a planned manufacturing plant for non-lead raw material and new product offerings.

"Market research has shown us that people have a hard time finding lead-free tackle in stores," said Kevin McDonald, Get the Lead Out! program coordinator. "It's difficult for retailers to find lead-free tackle stock, and they want assurances that customers will purchase it. So in response, we're offering retailers point of purchase lead-free tackle display racks."

Participating retailers, including numerous gift shops within the Minnesota State Parks system, now feature customized Get the Lead Out! display racks that offer a variety of the latest lead-free weights and jigs from five Minnesota-based tackle makers. Interested citizens are encouraged to visit [www.reduce.org](http://www.reduce.org) for a complete listing of locations.

In addition, the MPCA is offering lake associations in Minnesota an educational kit to help them educate members about non-lead tackle. The free kits include fact sheets, posters and sample packs of lead-free fishing tackle. The kits are designed to help spread the word about the dangers of lead tackle and the effects on the environment.

Minnesota is home to many of the nation's most successful tackle manufacturers. "We've seen an explosion of interest by manufacturers, and our state is now producing some of most innovative and high quality lead-free fishing tackle in the country," said McDonald.

Several major tackle makers, and a growing number of newer firms, have ambitious efforts underway to continue the rapid expansion of lead-free product offerings. Tundra Composites, based in White Bear Lake, recently announced plans to build a major manufacturing plant in Hoyt Lakes to produce tungsten polymers for use in fishing tackle, vehicle wheel weights and ammunition. The plant will eventually include up to 80 employees and produce composite raw materials for use by other tackle manufacturers.

Non-lead tackle continues to drop in price and is increasingly competitive with lead counterparts. For example, the new tungsten-composite weights by Gravity Heikkila are comparably priced to lead split shot and offer superior performance. These new weights, which snap on to fishing line, are an innovative feature drawing interest from anglers. Another promising new product is the tungsten-composite sinkers produced by Eagan-based Dr. Drop Inc. The weights feature an exclusive "friction grip" process that allows for fast attachment and retrieval.

This summer, lead-free tackle will be available for purchase at Minnesota State Parks. Carrol Henderson, supervisor of the DNR's Non-game Wildlife Program, is enthusiastic about Minnesota's approach to increasing the availability of lead-free tackle. "With a number of Minnesota's state parks jumping on board to provide the public with opportunities to buy lead-free tackle, we're addressing the biggest barrier to switching to lead-free products that protect our state's lakes and rivers and reduce the poisoning of wildlife," said Henderson.

The DNR recently completed a research study on lost lead fishing tackle. The study found that anglers lost on average one lead tackle item for every 31 hours of fishing. Over a period of several years, these losses lead to tons of lead jigs and sinkers accumulating on lake bottoms. "Even low rates of tackle loss

multiplied by hundreds of thousands of angler trips result in very large amounts of lost tackle, which can pose a significant risk to waterfowl," according to Paul Radomski, DNR research scientist and lead author of the study.

The Get the Lead Out! program uses education and partnerships to encourage anglers to use nonlead tackle. Although restrictions on lead tackle are becoming more common in the United States and other countries, here in Minnesota there are no bans on the sale or use of lead weights and jigs. "By educating the general public and partnering with tackle makers and retailers, we're making great progress in moving toward lead-free fishing tackle," said the MPCA's McDonald. "More anglers are excited about lead-free fishing products, and manufacturers and retailers are responding."

During the past three years, thousands of people have exchanged close to 3,000 pounds of lead tackle as part of over 90 lead tackle exchanges held throughout the state. Survey results from the 2006 Northwest Sports Show indicate a high level of awareness about the dangers of lead in fishing tackle, and further, that a significant number of Minnesotans are planning to or have begun to switch to non-lead tackle.

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## ANGLERS GET THE LEAD OUT! AT EXCHANGE EVENTS THIS SUMMER

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Saint Paul, Minn. - It's time to clean out your tackle box and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) want to help. The MPCA and the DNR are partnering with retailers and others to offer more than 30 lead tackle exchanges across the state this summer. The exchanges offer anglers a chance to try out non-toxic tackle and compare these new products against lead versions. There is no charge to exchange tackle.

Depending on what anglers turn in, lead tackle will be swapped for non-lead jigs, split shot, walking sinkers, bullet/worm slip sinkers and bell swivel weights in various sizes and colors.

"New at this year's exchanges are an array of the popular tungsten-composite weights," said Kevin McDonald, Get the Lead Out! program coordinator.

Lead is a toxic metal that has adverse effects on the nervous and reproductive systems of mammals and birds. Traditionally used in fishing jigs and sinkers, this metal has been found to poison wildlife such as loons and eagles that inadvertently swallow tackle made from lead. Specifically, loons dive to the bottom of lakes in search of stones to grind their food, where they can swallow lead sinkers. Eagles can ingest lead by swallowing fish with a lead sinker or jig still in its body.

Events will be held on the dates and locations listed below. Visit [www.reduce.org](http://www.reduce.org) for complete details.

June 22 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Forest Lake	Gander Mountain, 14640 West Freeway Drive
June 23 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Alexandria	Christopherson Bait, 309 3rd Avenue East
June 23 (12 pm - 5 pm)	Willmar	Brad's 71 Bait & Sports, 5255 Hwy 71 Northeast

June 26 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Minneapolis	Moore's Bait & Tackle, 618 West 58th Street
June 29 (2 pm - 7 pm)	St. Paul	Joe's Sporting Goods, 33 County Road B East
June 30 (12 pm - 5 pm)	Winona	West End Bait Shop, 950 West 5th Street
July 5 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Minnetonka	Gander Mountain, 4900 County Road 101
July 6 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Stillwater	Jimmy's Bait & Tackle, 806 Main Street South
July 7 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Hackensack	Swanson's Bait Shop & Gas, 33 North 1st Street
July 7 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Hermantown	Gander Mountain, 4275 Haines Road
July 11 (12 pm - 5 pm)	St. Paul	DNR Headquarters, 500 Lafayette Road North
July 13 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Crosslake	Bait Box & Marina, 36624 County Road 66
July 13 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Blaine	Gander Mountain, 10650 Baltimore Street Northeast
July 14 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Bemidji	Bluewater Bait & Sport, 801 Washington Avenue Southeast
July 14 (1 pm - 6 pm)	White Bear Lake	Hansen's Little Bear, 5051 Stewart Avenue
July 14 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Mankato	Scheels All Sports, River Hills Mall 1850 Adams Street
July 20 (12 pm - 5 pm)	Marshall	Borch's Sporting Goods, 1309 East College Drive
July 20 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Lakeville	Gander Mountain, 16861 Kenyon Avenue
July 21 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Detroit Lakes	Quality Bait & Tackle, 1210 Washington Avenue
July 21 (12 pm - 5 pm)	Grand Rapids	God's Country Outfitters, 29755 State Highway 38
July 22 (11 am - 4 pm)	Rogers	Cabela's, 20200 Rogers Drive
July 27 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Woodbury	Gander Mountain, 10470 Hudson Road
July 28 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Cook	Northwoods Bait & Tackle, 220 South Highway 53
Aug. 3 (2 pm - 7 pm)	Maplewood	Gander Mountain, 1747 Beam Avenue East
Aug. 4 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Baxter	Gander Mountain, 14275 Edgewood Drive
Aug. 11 (1 pm - 5 pm)	Longville	One Stop Convenience Store, 5006 State Highway 84
Northeast		
Aug. 15 (3:30 pm - 7 pm)	Minneapolis	Midtown Public Market, 22nd Avenue South & Lake Street
Aug. 18 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Two Harbors	Al's Bait & Tackle, 1028 7th Avenue
Aug. 18 (1 pm - 6 pm)	St. Cloud	Sportsman's Warehouse, 60 Waite Avenue South
Aug. 25 (1 pm - 6 pm)	Rochester	Gander Mountain, 1201 South Broadway

Additionally, two locations are offering continuous tackle exchanges this season:

Eagan (June 1 - Aug. 31): Lebanon Hills Visitors Center, 860 Cliff Road.

McGregor (June 1 - Aug. 31): Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, State Highway 65 near McGregor

For more information about lead-free tackle and the 2006 lead tackle exchanges, visit

[www.reduce.org](http://www.reduce.org).