

NON-MEETING WEDNESDAYS ON THE WATER - NEWBURGH LAKE

Our 3rd stop on the Michigan Fly Fishing Clubs ***“Non-Meeting Wednesdays on the Water -Summer Tour 2025”*** will take us to one of my favorite lakes to fish. This stop will take us to Newburgh Lake in Livonia on Wednesday June 25th, 2025.

Newburgh Lake was developed in the 1930's as part of Henry Ford's "Village Industries" project on the Rouge River. Ford's Village Industries were part of a project in which Mr. Ford tried to blend industry, rural life, and ecology. By the mid 1990's, the lake had suffered from over 65 years of sediment accumulation, some contaminated with PCB's, which over time, degraded the lake water quality. The depth of the lake had shrunk to just under a 4 foot. The rebirth of this lake started in 1997 when the Wayne County River Rouge National Wet Weather Demonstration Project began construction on the Newburgh Lake Restoration Project. The first phase of the restoration was the draining of the lake and removal of over 550,000 tons of sediment from the lake bottom. Construction activities began in early winter of 1997 with the erection of a coffer dam at the eastern dam structure, which was used to slowly drain the lake at a rate of 3 feet every 3 days. The lake was lowered until only a 3-acre pool remained. In April of 1997, excavation activities began to remove the sediment and reconstruct the lake bed. The re-construction of the lake resulted in: Repairing the level controls to the dam structure on the north-eastern bank, removal and disposal of more than 550,000 tons of contaminated sediments, deepened the lake to a minimum of 8 feet, except where shoals were constructed, established 10 acres of aquatic vegetation on the shoals, established 7 acres of fish spawning beds and habitat structures throughout the lake bottom. And provided new boat ramp and docks. In addition to the construction activities, two fish kills took place to remove all of the contaminated and rough fish from the Newburgh and Nankin Lakes (to the south), and the 5 miles of river upstream and in between the two lakes. A total of approx. 30,000 pounds of fish were removed from the lake: 78 percent of this weight was represented by carp, goldfish, and their hybrids. During the reconstruction phase, 10 acres of aquatic planting shoals were constructed. After the shoals were completed, fish habitat structures consisting of defective new whole sewer pipe and rip rap placed in piles at "discreet" locations were constructed, along with "fish moguls" (areas of uneven contours). To further provide for greater fishing habitat, spawning beds were constructed using a stone and sand mix and spread in areas throughout the lake. In total, 7 acres spawning beds and habitat structures were constructed. Beginning in 1998, the Michigan DNR began a restocking program game and forage fish in Newburgh Lake with Hybrid Sunfish, Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Pumpkinseed Panfish, Walleye, Bluegills, Black Crappie, and Northern Pike.

For our meeting, we will meet at the Newburgh Pointe (boat ramp location) and they do have both of the fishing docks in the water system as of a week ago, when I was out fishing. One thing to remember we do need to be out of the park by 9pm (dusk) or the Sheriff patrol will escort you out. The flies I like to use there, top water flies like poppers, gurglers, various frogs, and other top water flies. My Splish Splash Frogger works really good in and around the lily pads and weed lines. Do not forget to have various panfish flies, dries, streamers (to represent fathead minnows or panfish), and nymphs.

For your travels to this park, best way is because of construction at Newburg Road, is take Haggerty to Hines Drive going east. Or come south on Newburg to Hines Drive West. Just be patient on your travels.

This lake is amazing for the fishery that it has become from its rebirth in 1997, and like I mentioned it has become one of my favorite lakes to fish. I honestly have caught a lot of decent bass and panfish with some real nice northern pike. Hopefully we will see you out there fishing in the water or on the docks. Tight Lines Todd and Ken.