

# FISHING HOLE

## SULLIVAN LAKE

**BY JOE SHEAD**

**WHY GO:** Sullivan Lake has a nice primitive campground on a quiet little lake with decent fishing for northern pike, yellow perch and bluegills. However, after heavy rains in June of 2024, the dam washed out and the lake level is greatly reduced right now. The boat ramp is currently closed, although it's possible to launch a canoe or kayak. Perhaps the fish are now concentrated in the remaining water.

**ACCESS:** Sullivan Lake is easy to get to. From Two Harbors, travel north up Lake County Highway 2 for 26 miles. Turn left onto Forest Road 11 and travel about a quarter-mile. A gravel road on your left takes you to the campground. The campground has 12 fee sites available on a first-come, first-served basis. Drink-

ing water and vault toilets are available. The campground also has four picnic areas and 2 miles of hiking trails. The boat ramp to the lake is currently closed because of low water levels.

**VITALS:** Sullivan Lake is a small, shallow impoundment of Sullivan Creek. Prior to the dam washing out, it measured 45 acres, with a maximum depth of 7 feet. "It's a 100-plus-year-old logging dam that was produced to drive logs that were harvested," said Matthew Weberg, Finland Area Fisheries Supervisor. "It dropped the water level probably three to four feet. It's a dammed-up creek, so it wasn't very deep to start with. It's kind of a question how reducing the volume by half is going to affect things. It might winterkill, but it's a stream system, so the flow through there might prevent that from happening. In the wide part of the

impoundment, there's still a fair amount of water." Although there are no plans right now to repair the dam, Weberg speculated it's possible beavers may dam it back up.

**FISH SPECIES PRESENT:** Northern pike, yellow perch, bluegills

**NORTHERN PIKE:** Pike are present in about average size and numbers in Sullivan Lake. You won't catch any real monsters, but every DNR lake survey turns up at least one fish of about 30 inches, which seems to be about top end for this lake. Given the shallow nature of the lake and good presence of weeds, finding and catching pike shouldn't be hard.

**YELLOW PERCH:** There are good numbers of perch in Sullivan Lake, and with some sorting, you should be able to get some keepers. Each DNR survey finds perch right around the 12-inch mark, which is a solid perch anywhere!

**BLUEGILLS:** The DNR tried to establish a bluegill fishery through four stockings back in the 1990s and early 2000s. The efforts weren't super effective, however, bluegills have hung on and are naturally reproducing. The population isn't robust, but some really high-quality fish in the 9- to 10-inch range do show up.



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