

## Slot or not?

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a huge factor in slot limit success). The Rock River system is quite opposite. It's deficient in needed walleye spawning habitat and relies heavily on stocking to help maintain a healthy fishery. Even though stocking is a huge benefit, it can be inconsistent. For example, in 2016 the Bark River Fish Hatchery's attempts to harvest walleye eggs were unsuccessful for a variety of reasons, but no stocked fish were placed into the Rock River/Lake Koshkonong system. Although it's not normal, natural spawn numbers alone can sometimes hold their own. Thankfully this occurred in 2016 when stocking efforts failed and will help bridge potential gaps in walleye populations seen down the road.

So if a slot limit isn't the way to go right now, what are other options? Changing the size/possession limit to an 18" minimum size and three fish daily possession limit is one choice. This option targets the 15" minimum size and five fish daily possession limit currently in place. Since female walleyes are considered mature at 18", this change would allow female fish the opportunity to reach spawning potential for at least one season before they can legally be harvested. Allowing more fish to reach maturity and spawn will only help increase natural spawning numbers. The change in possession limit to three fish is pretty obvious. Less fish harvested daily increases survival rates and allows all walleyes a chance to grow.

Another option would be to enact a restricted season of some sort. Completely closing the season like that of other systems is not likely, nor would it be accepted by us as anglers. However, a reduction of the daily possession limit during the spawn (March-May) could be an avenue to pursue. Allowing only a one or two fish daily possession limit during this time would help increase chances of a more successful spawn in an already struggling system.

The third option would be to enact both a size/possession limit change and a restricted season. This would be the

most controversial way to go out of the options discussed above, but it would likely increase walleye survival and growth the quickest.

The fourth option is simple. Leave everything as is and continue down the path we're on. Currently, the stocking program on Lake Koshkonong helps fill any gaps inconsistent spawning may cause. This allows for a decent number of walleyes to continually remain in the system. However, this does nothing to help the fishery develop into something more. Studies have shown the Lake Koshkonong system has the ability to grow and hold larger numbers of trophy class fish. But without change to current practices, that is not likely to happen.

If anglers want to see a better fishery, the key to success on the Rock River/Lake Koshkonong system is walleye numbers. We need consistent high numbers to withstand the high pressure and/or we reduce the pressure to help the numbers. Enacting a slot limit at this time will help the fish currently in the 18" to 25" range, but the populations of those fish are small right now. A slot limit does nothing to protect the replacement fish needed for its success. Think of it like this: a slot limit is step three. Fixing the numbers first by enacting a size/possession limit or possibly a restricted season are steps one and two. A slot limit may very well be the answer down the road, but let's set it up for success and not skip the first steps.

*About the author: Adam Walton is the owner of Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service, located in Edgerton, Wis. He is certified USCG Captain who specializes in year-round, multi-species fishing on a variety of Wisconsin waters. Adam helps promote fishing topics through seminars, media, and sporting show events. You can also find him, along with fellow angler Hurricane Jerry, co-hosting the radio show "The Fishing Hole" every Saturday morning on Iron Country 101.9 FM. For more information on Pike Pole Fishing Guide Service, check them out on Facebook or online at [www.pikepolefishing.com](http://www.pikepolefishing.com).*



One of the antique steam tractors in a Thresheree "Parade of Power." (File photo)

## Thresheree steams ahead

This annual event has been smokin' — literally and figuratively — for six decades and counting.

The 61st annual Rock River Thresheree will be held on Labor Day weekend, Sept. 1-4 at Thresherman's Park, 51 E. Cox Road, halfway between Edgerton and Janesville.

The Thresheree is an exhibition of farm equipment and techniques from the late 1800s and early 1900s, including hundreds of antique tractors and other machines.

Steam will once again be the order of the day, from the roar and the whistle of the Rock River Cannonball locomotive to the sooty huff and whirring iron flywheels

that mark the massive steam traction engines that dominate the event.

Each day at 2 p.m., during the "Parade of Power," steam traction engines manufactured by J.I. Case, Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Co., Advance Rumley, and Nichols & Shepherd Co. roll through the park.

Other attractions include a flea market with 300-plus vendors; daily steam pile driver demonstration; blacksmith, wheelwright and wood carving demonstrations; corn shelling; antique car and truck displays; live music; a steam calliope; a museum of agriculture and industry; and much more. Also, this year's

Thresheree will be featuring Allis Chalmers and Fairbanks Morse engines.

The Thresheree is an outdoor event in a rural setting. You'll be doing a lot of walking if you come, so plan on wearing comfortable shoes and clothes. Don't wear white clothes, especially if you plan on riding the Cannonball — they'll probably get dirty. Admission is charged but parking is free.

In 1961, the Rock River Thresheree bought the first parcel of land for what would become Thresherman's Park. In 1965 the organization obtained tax-exempt status.

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10PM

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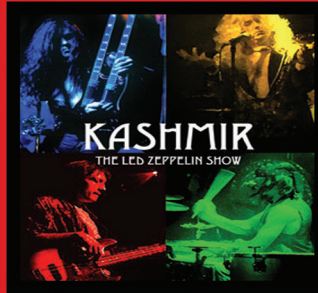


2PM

**UNITY THE BAND**

Roots reggae sounds from Appleton, WI

~ SATURDAY ~



5:30PM

**KASHMIR**

A true to life show bringing out the best of Led Zeppelin

~ SATURDAY ~



9:30PM

**BACK IN BLACK**

The return of an incredible, high-energy reproduction of AC/DC



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**SATURDAY, SEPT. 9**

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10:30am - 12 midnight

\$8/person | 12 and under free