

Media Release

January 23, 2012

Note: Three photos are attached. Suggestion caption material as follows:

Photos #1 and #2

"Self-rescue ice picks, either homemade or "store-bought," can be critical to surviving a fall through the ice. The two picks, made of wood or plastic, each contain a sharp metal spike and are attached to each other with a cord or light rope. The cord is threaded through the arms of the wearer's coat, which leaves the ice picks dangling within ready reach at the wrists. If the user falls through the ice, the picks are grasped one in each hand and used to pull the victim up onto the ice and safety. The technique is demonstrated in the short video "Danger, Thin Ice!" produced by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, which can be seen on Youtube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPd2h9nvU4 and elsewhere on the Internet. Here, Jack Weimer of the Sweetwater Dive Team demonstrates how the picks are worn when on the ice."

Photo #3

"A member of the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office Inmate Community Service Program building self-rescue ice picks. The pick sets will be available free of charge while supplies last, provided by the Sheriff's Office and the Sweetwater County Dive Team at this year's Burbot Bash safety briefing January 25. Materials for the pick sets were donated by local Ace Hardware, Bloedorn Lumber, and Home Depot stores."

Sheriff's Office reissues ice fishing safety advisory
for upcoming Burbot Bash on Flaming Gorge

(Rock Springs, Wyoming - January 23, 2011) With the second annual Burbot Bash on Flaming Gorge scheduled for January 25

through 28, the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office is reissuing its safety advisory and some tips for safe ice fishing. In addition, the Sheriff's Office and the Sweetwater County Dive Team will be distributing self-rescue ice pick sets at no charge.

Free self-rescue ice picks to be distributed at Burbot Bash

The Sheriff's Office and the Sweetwater Dive Team will be giving away free self-rescue ice picks at a safety briefing at Buckboard on Wednesday afternoon, January 25, starting at around 2:00 PM.

Sweetwater County Sheriff Rich Haskell said about 200 sets of the picks were made up by members of the Sheriff's Office Inmate Community Service Program with materials donated by the local Ace Hardware, Bloedorn Lumber, and Home Depot stores. "We're very grateful for the donated materials," he said. "To buy this many commercially manufactured pick sets would have cost over \$2,000."

The Inmate Community Service Program allows non-violent, pre-screened, misdemeanor-level volunteer inmates of the County Detention Center, working under the direction supervision of Sheriff's Office detention officers, to perform cleanup, light maintenance, and other special projects for not-for-profit, governmental, and community service organizations.

The ice pick sets will be available as long as the supply lasts. Donations to the Dive Team will be accepted and appreciated.

Ice fishing safety tips

- First and foremost, bear in mind the tried-and-true adage that there is no such thing as safe ice. Ice conditions can fluctuate drastically over short times and distances; water levels in lakes, and especially in reservoirs like Flaming Gorge, can change - freezing and thawing weather patterns come and go, and submerged springs in certain areas can make a big difference. Always exercise caution and never become complacent.
- Check ice thickness before venturing out and check thickness every 100 to 150 feet. (A cordless drill with a 5/8-inch, 5-inch long wood augur bit makes this an easy proposition.) Clear ice 4 inches thick or more is generally considered safe for an angler on foot, and though guidelines exist for appropriate ice

thickness for snow machines, four-wheelers, and larger vehicles, the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office does not recommend taking motorized vehicles of any kind out onto the ice, regardless of thickness.

- Never ice fish alone.
- Wearing a PDF, (Personal Flotation Device) is highly recommended. A little more bulk won't matter much, and a PDF might save your life if the ice gives way.
- Remember that fishing from shore ice when the lake is not frozen over from bank to bank can be particularly hazardous.

Ice fishing safety video available online

Haskell recommends an excellent 10-minute ice fishing safety video produced by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources called "Danger, Thin Ice!" which can be found on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPd2h9nvU4 and elsewhere on the Internet by entering the term "Danger, Thin Ice!" into Google or some other search engine.

Among the many safety issues and tips highlighted in the video is the use of either the homemade or commercially-manufactured ice picks, which are easy to carry on the ice and can make all the difference in getting yourself out of trouble.

Burbot considered an invasive species

Burbot, also known as "ling" or "ling cod," are extremely aggressive fish that found their way into Flaming Gorge, where they are considered an invasive species doing a great deal of harm to other fish species in the lake.

The Burbot Bash, co-sponsored by the Rock Springs, Green River, and Flaming Gorge Chambers of Commerce, will kick off with registration at Buckboard Marina at 11:00 AM on January 25 and will wrap up on January 28 at the Manila Rodeo Grounds with a fish cleaning competition and Burbot cooking demonstration. Over \$7,000 in awards are being offered for catching a tagged fish, the most Burbot, and the largest and smallest fish.

"Ice fishing is a great sport and we want everyone to have a good time," Haskell reiterated, "but we also want everyone to stay safe."

