

To: Indiana Bass Federation Members,
I am the Invitational Trail Director for 2012. One of my goals as Trail Director and a Zone 2 Director is to promote our organization and our fishing tournaments. I have been a member of an IBF club for over 20 years fishing club tournaments, Top 8, State Finals and the Invitational Trail series.

Currently,

The clubs or chapters establish a Top-8 team and those teams move on to fish against other clubs in a team format. The top teams receive awards of cash and prizes. The top individuals from the Top-8 tournaments move on to fish in the State Finals with hopes of making the top 12, "State Team".

Those 12 move on to fish a Divisional where two people from our state will move on to fish the National Finals with hope of being invited to the Forrest Wood Cup.

The Invitational Trail was created to allow individual entrants to fish for cash and points in a six tournament series with hopes of finishing well enough to be invited to a seventh tournament know as the Forrest L. Wood Classic where there is a Grand Prize package.

The Invitational Trail began in 1978 and over the past 33 years more than 30 Ranger Boats have been given away as a Grand Prize. That type of Grand Prize is no longer feasible but in 2011 the Classic winner on the angler side walked away with over \$12,000 in cash and prizes. The Co-Angler won over \$3,500 cash and prizes.

As everyone knows times have changed. Our national economy and other factors have changed our industry. Participation in our organization has decreased considerably. From approximately 3,000 members at one time our current membership hovers around 1,400. Our Invitational Trail once averaged 200 entrants, that has decreased significantly.

When I started to consider becoming the Trail director I spoke with several people who have been active in our organization for many years. I also spoke with several persons who have spent thousands of dollars over the years sponsoring our events. Everyone had great suggestions that I have considered. Several of those indicated we need to find a way to involve the two distinct groups of our organization together.

In an attempt to accomplish this I suggest a few simple changes to the organization's By Laws and Tournament Programs.

#1. Anglers who participate in their respective Top 8 tournaments and win the individual honors are then INVITED to compete in the Forrest L. Wood Classic as a boater. The angler who finishes second is INVITED to fish in the Forrest L. Wood Classic as a Co-Angler. Those two anglers would have to pay the same entry fee as the Trail qualifier who finished 31st through 40th.

There are currently eight Top 8 tournaments in the state. This would mean there would be 48 anglers and 48 co-anglers INVITED to fish the Forrest L. Wood Classic. This change would cost the organization nothing and would only cost the qualifying anglers the entry fee.

#2. In turn the top eight anglers and top eight co-anglers in points at the end of the Trail year (six tournaments) would be invited to fish the State Finals the following year. The stipulation would be that the qualifying anglers belong to a club that participates in the Top 8 program.

Some minor logistics would need to be worked out, such as: If an angler wins his respective Top 8 tournament and also qualifies to be invited to the Forrest L. Wood Classic by way of his top 40 finish in Trail points then the next highest finishing angler of the Top 8 would be invited. In turn if an angler qualifies to fish the State Finals through his Top 8 and also finishes in the top eight in points on the Trail, the next highest finishing trail angler gets the invite.

These changes would allow two things. A club fisherman not only could move up through the Top 8 series to move on the fish toward the Forrest Wood Cup on the national level. They could also qualify to fish for a large Grand Prize at the state level in the Forrest L. Wood Classic. The Trail fishermen could fish the six trail events and try to finish in the top eight on each side (Angler and Co-Angler) and therefore be invited to fish the State Finals and move onto the national level tournaments and the Forrest Wood Cup.

Please review these suggestions and ideas. Please comment to me as your thoughts are important to me.

I will be meeting with Mike Vertesch to make the suggested changes to the By-Laws and Programs. I hope to have these changes voted on at the February State meeting. I am asking for you comments and support.

Thank You,
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