

"LANCE VALENTINES' TALK ON GPS"



At the **May 19, 2003 West Michigan Walleye Club meeting**, **Lance Valentine** gave a **presentation titled: "GPS: The Basics and Beyond"**. Last year Lance gave an excellent program at one of our meetings about Sonar, and this one was as good or better. He felt that **after his sonar, his GPS unit was the most important aid to his fishing success**. He does a lot of **"pre-fishing" at his dining room table going over maps and GPS coordinates** to plan for the next days fishing or tournament. **Coordinates** from productive structures on previous trips, **new structures** to check out, and **spots where friends have caught fish** are all **put in his unit** to refer to the next day. This planning ahead **saves considerable time on the water**.

Lance recommends that if we are purchasing a unit, we get one **with a 12-channel satellite receiver and WAAS** (Wide Area Augmentation System) capability for **greatest accuracy**. Most units sold in the last year are WAAS capable. DGPS units offer good accuracy to 15-25 feet. WAAS capable units are **accurate down to 3-10 feet**. DGPS units need a 3-4 foot antenna, whereas WAAS units have a very tiny antenna built into the unit. **All GPS units are more accurate on water than land**.

It was emphasized that even though one has a GPS unit, it is **important to be knowledgeable in navigation on the water**. **Carry extra** sets of **batteries** for hand held units **and a compass**. At times, the transmissions from the satellites will stop. **Pencil, paper, map, and latitude-longitude ruler are critical tools** Lance uses **to record information**. He recommends that **information be recorded each time a waypoint is entered**. If he fishes a body of water several days in a row, he can often **plot the progress of groups of walleye** and even **predict where they will be the next day**. GPS is the most accurate way to **get ground speed for trolling**, especially if the unit is **put on a 5 second update rate**. When running fast, the update rate should be more frequent.

Lance Valentines' talk was clear and concise in down-to-earth terms. He explains a difficult subject very well and is animated in his presentation. **From the perspective of one who does not own a GPS unit yet, he made a very convincing argument!**

(Update, 2014—I now own one and love it, using it mostly to pinpoint structures on specific Michigan lakes that I fish. My unit has downloaded Michigan lake contour maps so waypoints are saved on the contour map in the unit. Electronic aids can be helpful and save time, yet we need to remember that Buck Perry talked about fishing tools, and that their main function is to help us control depth and speed in our lure presentation. Aids such as GPS units and sonar can be helpful, especially with mapping and interpretation of structure.)

Chase Klinesteker, CSI