



**GOVERNOR'S
FISHING OPENER**

STILLWATER 2026

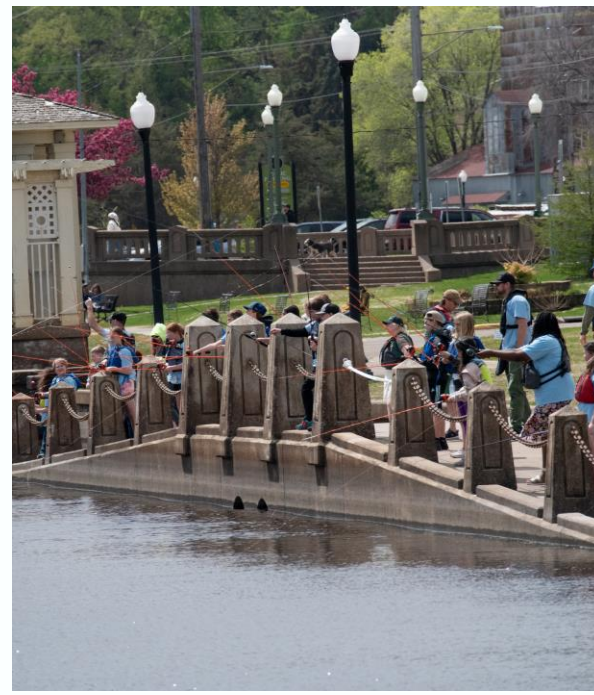
Media Summary & Event Recap

















GFO Media Result Summary

- The 2026 Governor's Fishing Opener in Stillwater, MN, netted **1,083 media placements** and an estimated audience reach of over **1.2 billion people** across print, broadcast, radio, and online.
- Media Row was bustling at the Water Street Inn, with over **20 media outlets** attending in person to interview the Governor, Explore Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Stillwater community members.

GFO Media Highlights

Minnesota's fishing season kicks off this weekend in Stillwater

By KSTP
Updated: May 8, 2026 - 6:24 AM
Published: May 8, 2026 - 6:13 AM



Acquired Through MGN Online on 02/02/2022

The start of the 2026 Fishing season kicks off on Saturday as the 78th Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener gets underway in Stillwater on the St. Croix River.

On Friday and Saturday, the governor's office will join Explore Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to honor the state's rich tourism and

Businesses in Stillwater geared up for Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener

By John Lauritsen
May 8, 2026 / 12:34 PM CDT / CBS Minnesota



WCCO NEWS

About half a million Minnesotans will be out on the water this weekend for the Fishing Opener.

FOX 9 K M S P

Gov. Walz previews fishing opener weekend in Stillwater



MINNESOTA FISHING OPENER TOMORROW

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz joins FOX 9 to preview the 2026 Fishing Opener, the unofficial kickoff to summer across the state. Thousands of anglers are expected on the water as Walz highlights the importance of fishing to Minnesota's economy. The governor discusses plans to go fishing with legislative leaders and his family during the weekend.

Posted May 8, 2026 8:17am CDT

KARE 11

Mayor Ted Kozlowski discusses MN Fishing Opener in Stillwater



Mayor Ted Kozlowski joins Meghan MacPherson to share what to expect at the Governor's Fishing Opener happening this year in Stillwater.

WJON AM 1240 FM 95.3

GOVERNOR WALZ CASTS HIS LINE AT MINNESOTA'S FISHING OPENER



STILLWATER (WJON News) – The fishing opener took place on Saturday, with anglers from all over the state taking part. Governor Tim Walz held the 78th Annual Governor's Fishing Opener in Stillwater.

VOICE OF MINNESOTA

GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER STILLWATER 2026



(Stillwater, MN)–The 78th Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener is coming up May 8 and 9 in Stillwater. Chris Morgan of Explore Minnesota says anglers will be fishing the St. Croix River this year. Morgan says "it's going to be really fun and exciting to do something different. And to be in a place that is as lively as Stillwater."

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BROADCASTING LIVE FROM

The SMORGASBORD
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1250 AM
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at the GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER

ON AIR

Live from STILLWATER, MN!

GREAT CONVERSATIONS
GOOD MUSIC
LOCAL FLAVOR & FUN

Be part of the Smorgasbord!

WCCO NEWS & TALK 650

Stillwater ready to host the 78th Annual Governor's Fishing Opener on the St. Croix River

This is the first time Stillwater has hosted the governor's traditional opener



Governor Tim Walz
May 9 · 4h

Hard to beat a sunny morning on the St. Croix – two walleye and a bass! Happy Fishing Opener, Minnesota. See less



NORTHERN NEWS NOW

2026 Minnesota Fishing Opener kicks off Saturday

DNR expects roughly 500,000 anglers on opening day, \$5 billion economic impact



KGO

Governor Walz Celebrates 2026 Governor's Fishing Opener

Fargo, ND, USA / The Mighty 790 KFGO | KFGO
Sports/Outdoors
May 11, 2026 | 5:00 AM



Governor Tim Walz celebrated the 78th Governor's Fishing Opener this weekend, reeling in two Walleye and one White Bass alongside legislative leaders on the St. Croix River.

2026 Minnesota Fishing Opener On Friday, Governor Walz participated in interviews with local and statewide press, joined the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner and fisheries staff for trout stocking at Browns Creek Nature Preserve, and joined Stillwater students at a youth fishing event highlighting conservation and water safety. The Governor also visited small businesses and attended a community celebration in Stillwater.

GFO Media Highlights

The top five media outlets that prominently covered the 2026 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener:



- **Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal:** Delivered the highest-value placement of the cycle — a major feature on Minnesota's livability and tourism economy that referenced the Fishing Opener as a signature driver of the state's visitor economy.



- **CBS News:** Provided national reach with five separate placements during the GFO window, including a prominent feature on Governor Walz and the fishing opener that reached audiences across the country.



- **KSTP-TV:** The single most active broadcast outlet, with 33 total placements — delivering consistent, multi-day coverage of the opener, Stillwater, and the surrounding events both on-air and online.

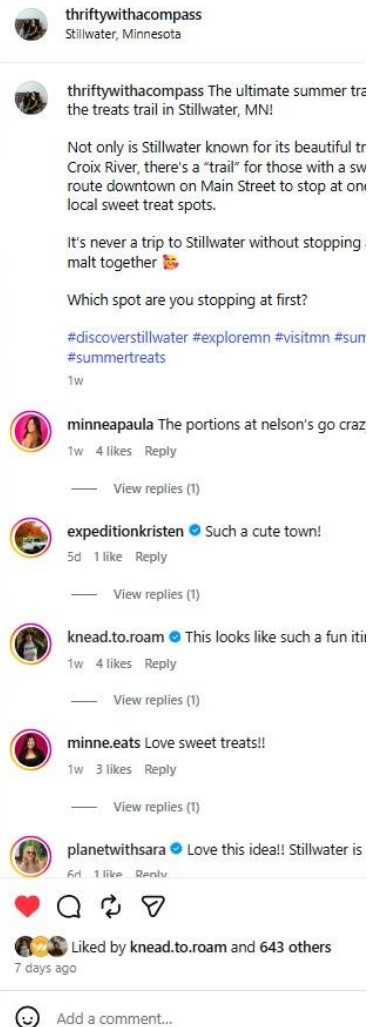


- **Minnesota Star Tribune:** Delivered two high-impact print and digital placements including a feature in "The Good Life" section following the event — reaching more than 218,000 readers.



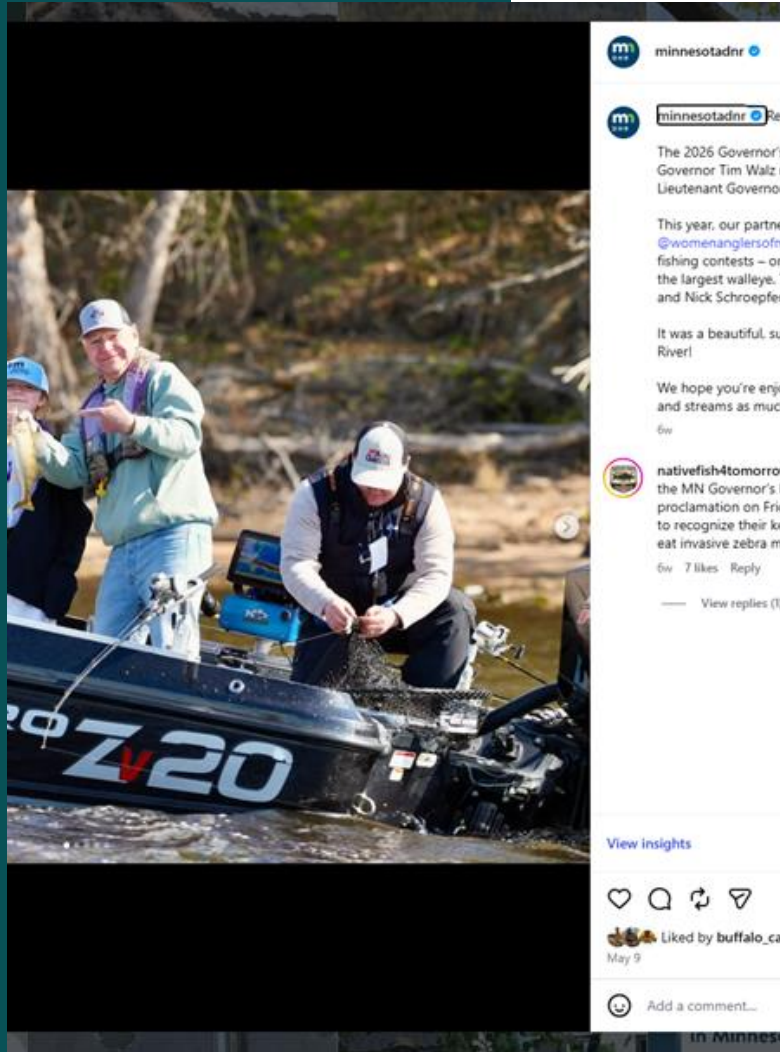
- **WCCO-TV:** Provided sustained multi-platform coverage across 20 total placements, including broadcast and online, with stories ranging from pre-event previews to live morning coverage during Media Row.





GFO Social Media Summary

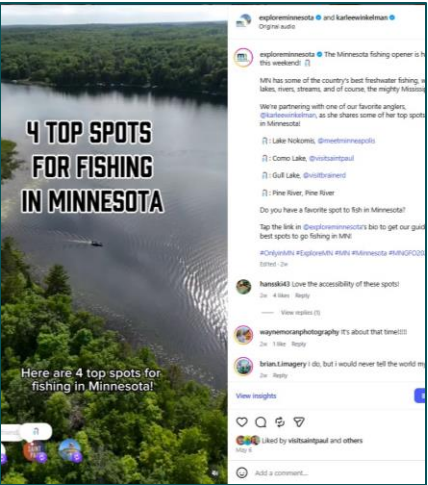
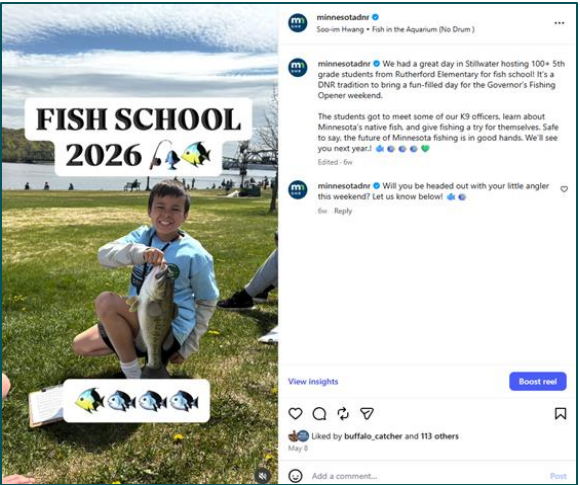
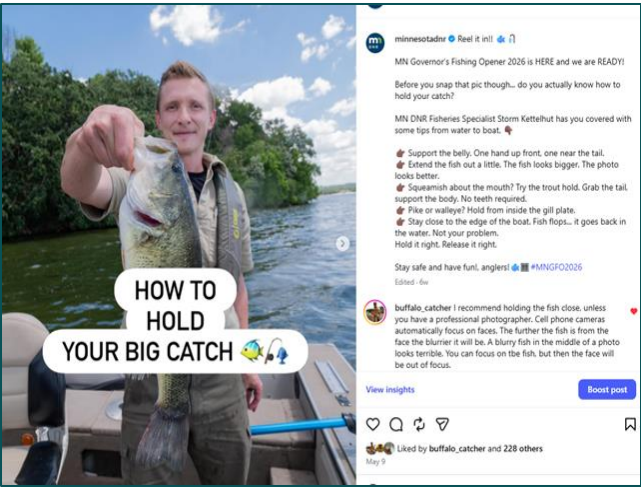
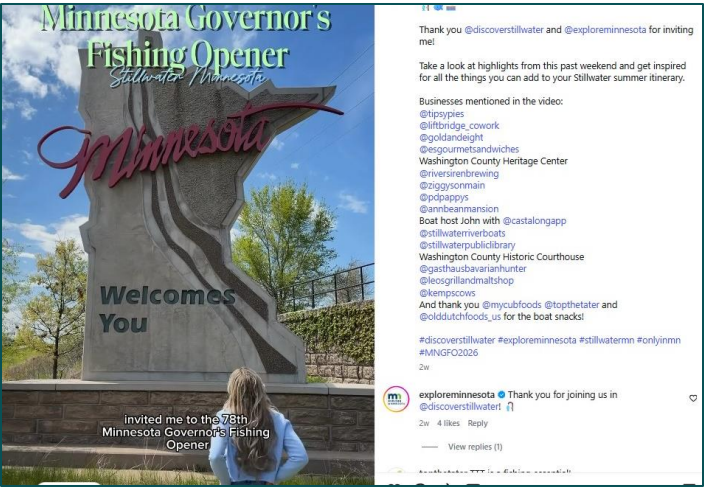
- Discover Stillwater hosted 3 creators: **@maddyswain**, **@thriftywithacompass**, and **@whereshe wore**. Each creator shared at least 1 social video, along with several Instagram stories throughout the weekend.
- **@maddyswain** and **@thriftywithacompass** posted multiple reels and carousels beyond the initial scope.
- Discover Stillwater and Explore Minnesota also garnered dozens of new short-form video clips from various businesses to use in future social media content.
- Over the weekend, Explore Minnesota and the creators generated more than **135K views** and **4.6K interactions**.



GFO Social Media Summary

- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' social media team created 11 posts across FB and IG during the event weekend.
- Topics highlighted youth angling, fish handling, women anglers, and the Governor's successful outing.
- DNR posts resulted in **261,312 views**, more than **9,500 interactions** and a **3.7%** blended engagement rate.
- DNR's top FB post: Gov. Walz license purchase, resulting in **93,210 views** and **2,116 reactions**.
- DNR's top IG post: Walleye stocking reel, resulting in **6,653 views** and **230 likes**.

GFO Social Media Highlights





Coordinated Effort

Statewide, Regional and Local Partners

Discover Stillwater
City of Stillwater
City of Bayport
City of Oak Park Heights
Water Street Inn
Hotel Crosby
Lora Hotel
Rivertown Inn
Stillwater River Boats
Xcel Energy
Lift Bridge Brewing Company
Stillwater Boat Club
Ultimate Events
Red Lake Nation
Minnesota Lottery
Northwestern Mutual
Darn Knit Anyway
Miss Minnesota
Mulberry Point Yacht Club

National Marine Manufacturers
Association
OnSite Companies
Old Dutch
Captain Ken's
First State Bank and Trust
Rapala
Heritage Embroidery & Design
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
AloeUp
Kemp's
Washington County Heritage Center
Stillwater Trolley
Herman Electric Bike Rental
Prairie Island Indian Community
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
Explore Minnesota
Department of Natural Resources
Office of the Governor & Lt. Governor



Stewardship & Conservation

Browns Creek Restoration and Trout Stocking

On Friday morning, Governor Walz and Commissioner Strommen stocked Rainbow trout yearlings in Browns Creek, along with remarks about the successful habitat restoration project, which included a new ADA accessible trout stream fishing platform. This project is a partnership of the DNR, the City of Stillwater, and the Browns Creek Watershed District.

Native Fish Day Proclamation

Governor Walz proclaimed May 8 as Native Fish Day, which recognizes efforts to conserve native fish species in partnership with Native Fish for Tomorrow, The Minnesota Wildlife Federation, The Isaak Walton League of Minnesota, The Nature Conservancy, and the DNR.

Elements of a Great Governor's Fishing Opener

Core events



Media Row



Youth Event



Community Celebration



Launch Ceremony



Fishing



Shore Lunch

Elements of a Great Governor's Fishing Opener

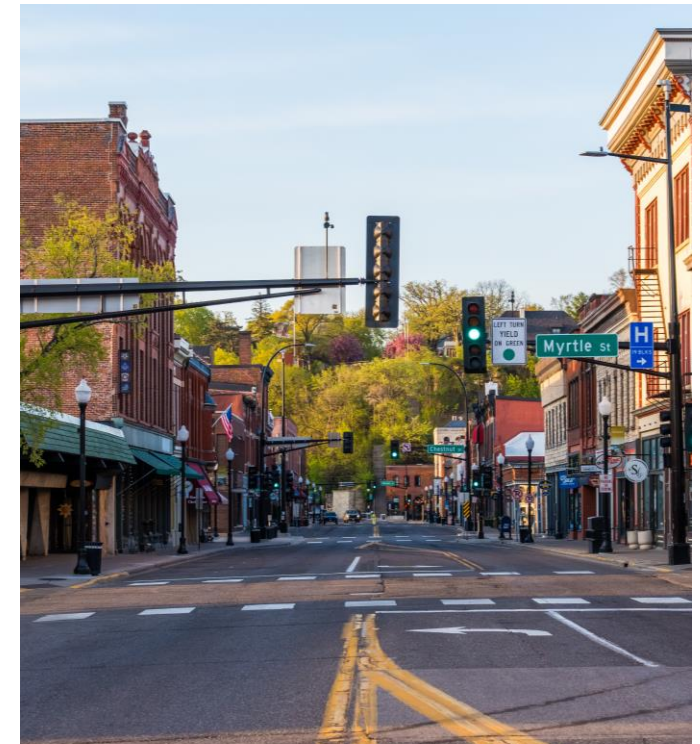
Additional activities in Stillwater



Trolley Tours



Lumberjack Landing Tour



Historic Downtown Scavenger Hunt

