

# My Most Vivid Memory Concerning Water



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Born and raised in North Dakota can mean different things to different people, but to me, among other things, it means respecting, enjoying, and preserving the natural resources that the state provides. One of the greatest natural resources within North Dakota is the various bodies of water. In many different shapes and forms, the lakes and rivers of North Dakota have shaped who I am today. My life, since the beginning, has been influenced by the water bodies of North Dakota.

Starting in life with a father who works for the North Dakota Department of Water Resources and loves the outdoors, I was bound to the water

in North Dakota whether I wanted to or not. Thankfully, it didn't take a lot of convincing for my father to convey his love, respect, and knowledge of water to me as I grew up, and to enjoy it as much as he does. My dad's background, profession, and outdoor hobbies he shares with me came with a few different life lessons. The first being, "always buy a house on a hill" my dad would say, because he knew the power and level of respect the Missouri River deserves. Second, was always respect the water. That meant never littering, double and triple checking the livewell and boat trailer for weeds and aquatic nuisances, and always obeying fishing and boating laws to a tee. Although he was always strict about certain aspects of our fishing adventures, he did so in a way that got me hooked on it for life (pun intended).

Fishing was, and will forever be, one of the highlights of my life. My dad would take me fishing on the Missouri River, Lake Sakakawea, and a multitude of other small lakes that he heard "were biting" from his coworkers. There are a few memories that vividly stand out from our times in the boat. The first was when I was about 13 years old and I was fishing with my family. I hooked into a huge walleye. I knew it was big, but I couldn't tell to what degree. Once the fish came in close enough to the boat, my young-self shouted out "That is massive!" My dad quickly told me to quiet down so the other 10 boats that were in the same backwater wouldn't try to come over and check out our spot. Another memorable moment was when we got word that there was an abundance of Northern Pike running through a culvert between two lakes and just enough ice had come off to cast spoons. Dad told me as I was leaving with my sister and stepsister, "You better not come back with your limit and an entire cooler full of Northern Pike." I shook that comment off quick because I was 15. I obviously knew more than he did, and I knew what I was doing, so we headed out. Obviously, we returned with exactly what he said not to do. A three-person limit of Northern Pike. After I cleaned fish for 2 hours I understood where he was coming from. The fish fry after, like all the others, was nothing short of a delicacy, though.

My time on the water did not just consist of fishing. My good buddy that I played hockey with has a house on the river up by Hoge Island. He not only has a house on the river, but all the toys too. I spent an entire summer of my life tubing, jet skiing, cliff jumping, skimboarding, and wake surfing. It was a summer very well spent, but it was short lived. The next summer my parents made sure I had a job and didn't just spend every day on the water. That really put a damper on my summer plans.

Hopefully it is clear that I have spent my fair share of time enjoying the great water resources that the state of North Dakota has to offer. And that I didn't just come out of my childhood with great memories, but also a great appreciation and knowledge. With every fishing memory also came life lessons on the respect, appreciation, and greater understanding for the water resources of this great state. I will forever cherish those memories and will do my part in preservation of our shared water resources so that others have the same opportunities to make memories and create an appreciation like I have.