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## **Doug Mientkiewicz Hits Home Run For Wildlife Conservation**

Minnetonka, MN – Nearly the entire Minnesota Twins team showed up at Maynard's on Lake Minnetonka to help Doug Mientkiewicz raise \$50,000 for Wildlife Forever and wildlife conservation.

The Doug Meintkiewicz Bass Fishing Classic was held Monday, June 23, 2003. Early morning thunderstorms threatened to delay the "gentlemen's" tournament. But by 8:15 AM the sky had started to clear allowing the boats to leave on time. For the 1:00 PM weigh-in, blue skies brought out a large crowd to watch each Minnesota Twin weigh-in with his bass pro guide and amateur angler.

Ron Schara, host of Minnesota Bound on KARE 11, acted as emcee. After each team weighed their maximum of five fish, Schara declared Twin Dustan Mohr the winner along with his fishing teammates of pro Brad Cline and amateur Steve Burke of Chanhassen. Their total weight was 18.13 lbs.

All but two fish were released back to the lake, a 98.6% release rate.

The Doug Meintkiewicz Bass Fishing Classic was a rare type of fundraising event in that nearly 90% of gross proceeds were given to Wildlife Forever. Frequently, charity events provide a small percentage of gross revenue to the charity due to high costs. Expenses were kept very low thanks to the donated support of the Minnesota Pro/Am Bass Tour, Maynard's the Minnesota Twins and volunteer pro bass anglers.

Sponsors of the tournament included: Genmar, WCCO Radio, Twin City Co-ops Federal Credit Union, Jiffy Pop Popcorn, Waste Management, ST Specialties, Cambria, Cabela's and Ross Strehlow who won a spot during an on air radio auction with his generous bid of \$2,500.

During the tournament, Wildlife Forever announced the availability of a new pool of conservation funding for local communities. The "Sportsmen' s Challenge" fund will provide \$50,000 in matching funds to assist in leveraging local conservation donations. All grants must be matched on a minimum of 1 to 1 resulting in \$100,000 for wildlife conservation.

"Wildlife Forever recognizes that many citizens are involved with local conservation organizations or sportsmen' s clubs in carrying out local conservation projects. We want to assist these grassroots efforts by matching conservation dollars and leveraging local donations." said Douglas H. Grann, President & CEO, of the Minnesota based nonprofit organization.

Sportsmen' s Challenge grants will be made available up to \$2,500 each to qualifying groups. The funds must be matched from a third-party donor and sent to Wildlife Forever for validation of the match. Groups that promote wildlife habitat and quality are eligible to apply for the funds. Programs that enhance fish and wildlife populations through management and research can also compete for the challenge grants. Grant applications can be found at the Wildlife Forever web site.

Wildlife Forever is one of the nation's leading multi -species nonprofit conservation organizations. Its national mission is to conserve America's wildlife heritage through conservation education, preservation of habitat and management of fish and wildlife. As the nonprofit arm of the North American Hunting Club and the North American Fishing Club, Wildlife Forever is the conservation advocate for one million outdoor enthusiasts.

To become a member of Wildlife Forever or to learn more about wildlife conservation efforts, visit the Wildlife Forever web site at: [www.wildlifeforever.org](http://www.wildlifeforever.org).

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