



**FRESHWATER
CAST**
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FRESHWATER CAST · MONDAY CAST NORTH DAKOTA

Lake Sakakawea: Midweek Pattern, Local Boards & Walleye

Lake Sakakawea · Mon Sep 21 – Thu Sep 24, 2026 · bank / kayak / boat · times CT

Mon–Thu Sep 21–24 · CT

Walleye

USACE Garrison

Check Heavy Traffic

The week still fishes if you respect wind, boards, and bait — pack a rain shell when midweek storms show, and let walleye tell you when the fall transition actually clocks in on Lake Sakakawea.

● MIDWEEK OUTLOOK

NWS point guidance for Lake Sakakawea keeps the Monday Cast window (Mon Sep 21 – Thu Sep 24) in a late-summer pattern that still rewards dawn and dusk first. All clock times below are **CT**. Read the day cards as a working plan, then re-pull the live NWS point forecast before you trailer — numbers below are from the Sunday research pull and can change.

Through the week: - Mon 21: High ~68°F, mostly sunny; SE 6–13 mph, gusts ~22 - Tue 22: High ~68°F, mostly sunny and breezy; SE 15–24 mph, gusts ~34 - Wed 23: High ~70°F, breezy, 50% showers/T-storms after 1pm; SE 16–20 mph - Thu 24: High ~78°F, partly sunny; S 5–7 mph afternoon; low ~55°F Thu night **Pattern note:** Obs pressure nearby:** Nearby K08D ~30.26 in (Sun afternoon)

For Walleye: lean first light and last light while heat or wind is the story, then fish wind-blown banks, points, and any confirmed current seams once the day settles. By Wednesday–Thursday, cooler or calmer air (where forecast) should widen the morning window. Clarity unconfirmed lake-wide — trust what you see at the ramp. Soft recreational pressure this Cast window. Never invent boat counts or trail names. Additional NWS detail from research: Mon 21: High ~68°F, mostly sunny; SE 6–13 mph, gusts ~22 Tue 22: High ~68°F, mostly sunny and breezy; SE 15–24 mph, gusts ~34 Wed 23: High ~70°F, breezy, 50% showers/T-storms after 1pm; SE 16–20 mph Thu 24: High ~78°F, partly sunny; S 5–7 mph afternoon; low ~55°F Thu night

MONDAY SEP 21

- Mon 21: High ~68°F, mostly sunny; SE 6–13 mph, gusts ~22

Best bite: first light~9 AM CT; re-check boards before midday plan

Abort for lightning; hydrate on warm days

TUESDAY SEP 22

- Tue 22: High ~68°F, mostly sunny and breezy; SE 15–24 mph, gusts ~34

Best bite: first light~9 AM CT; re-check boards before midday plan

Abort for lightning; hydrate on warm days

WEDNESDAY SEP 23

- Wed 23: High ~70°F, breezy, 50% showers/T-storms after 1pm; SE 16–20 mph

Best bite: first light~9 AM CT; re-check boards before midday plan

Abort for lightning; hydrate on warm days

THURSDAY SEP 24

- Thu 24: High ~78°F, partly sunny; S 5–7 mph afternoon; low ~55°F Thu night

Best bite: first light~9 AM CT; re-check boards before midday plan

Abort for lightning; hydrate on warm days

● GENERATOR SCHEDULE CHEAT SHEET

Live operator language for **Lake Sakakawea** (USACE Garrison / NDGF). Times and elevations below are from the Sunday research scaffold — **verify dam boards before you go (CT)**. Do not invent unit counts, CFS, or midnight targets that were not posted.

WATER	SUNDAY OBS (RESEARCH)	SCHEDULE / OPERATIONS	GUIDANCE
Lake Sakakawea USACE Garrison / NDGF	elev **1824.28 ft inflow ~**10,000 cfs release (sourced):** NWD MRBWM Reservoir Bulletin project data **09-20-2026 00:0	Next-day blocks may not be posted at Sunday pull — re- check live before launch	Predicted values only when operator posted — otherwise honest re-check. Failover: operator lake page / district phone if published. Schedules change without notice.

Operator: USACE Northwestern Division — Garrison Dam (Lake Sakakawea). Levels / release (sourced): NWD MRBWM Reservoir Bulletin project data 09-20-2026 00:00 (updated 09-20-2026 15:13): Garrison elev 1824.28 ft (daily change -0.09), multipurpose pool ref 1837.5; inflow ~10,000 cfs, release ~12,900 cfs. Generator schedule language: Mainstem Missouri River system operations — releases set for system balance, not a fixed angler “generation schedule.” Re-check USACE NWD water data / Garrison project page before launch; expect current below Garrison powerhouse. Sources: https://www.nwd-mr.usace.army.mil/rcc/reports/pdfs/MRBWM_Reservoir.pdf · <https://water.usace.army.mil/overview/nwdm/locations/garr>

Soft current→bite only when generation / release is the story. Dam restricted zones always off-limits. If boards show Sunday-only at pull, treat Mon–Thu as not yet posted and pull again evening-before or ramp-side.

● HOW TO FISH IT — BANK / KAYAK / BOAT

BANK

Shared: hydrate early; midweek storms mean a lightning abort — leave the bank. Dam/restricted water always off-limits. NDGF / USACE Garrison public recreation banks and ramp shoulders where bank fishing is posted — fees and gate hours verify live. Fish first light and last light CT on points, riprap, weed edges, and creek-mouth seams. Walleye lead with bass/pike in the mix; Heavy Traffic look-ahead Sep 25–26 White Earth Bay. Soft weekday recreational unless Heavy Traffic names an event. Give other bank anglers room on short shoulders. Pack a rain shell when midweek cells are in the forecast; never invent boat counts.

KAYAK

Lake Sakakawea kayak plan: launch at public ramps with kayak-friendly shoulders; work lee shores when main-lake or open-fetch wind rises. PFD on — whistle recommended on big water. Hug lee shores and boat canals when SE wind builds; after Wed storms expect a slower restart. Soft plastics, jigs, and compact swimbaits keep fish in the strike zone without long casts into timber or rocks. Leave a weather margin midweek; do not paddle open water into cells. Soft recreational — still yield in narrow cuts.

BOAT

Plan: first light—~9 AM CT shallow points / riprap / creek mouths; midday graph bait on breaks and channel swings; evening revisit shade or wind seams. Idle clear of blast-off lanes if a club event appears. Re-check USACE / NDGF / NWD boards before launch — no invented release numbers. Soft recreational unless Heavy Traffic says otherwise. Trailer first for lightning. Lead the day for the primary species named above — water-first, not a national paste.

● LURE BOX

Lead the box for **Walleye**. Stained water: louder / chartreuse profiles. Clearer: natural shad / green pumpkin.

TOP

Long-line crank early/late when bait is up

Rip jig on windy points

Hair jig on slick calm mornings

MID

Spinner rig / crawler harness

Paddle soft on a lead head

Blade bait on windy breaks

BOTTOM

Jig + minnow / soft plastic

Live bait on a slip float where legal

Slow bottom bounce along breaks

● BASS LIFE STAGE

Primary species this week: Walleye — water-first.

Bass life stage (late Sep ND — seasonal): Fall transition / pre-turnover window depending on lake depth. Cooler nights push bait shallow-to-mid; largemouth and smallmouth (where present) key on bait schools and wind-blown banks. Deep mainstem reservoirs: focus points, flooded timber edges, and current seams near structure. What's on the menu: Most likely young-of-year baitfish / cisco-smelt-shad analogs by water, perch/bluegill where present. Thin on dated 2026 forage reports this pass — seasonal most-likely only.

What's on the menu: Most likely young-of-year baitfish and lake-typical forage (shad / herring / perch / bluegill analogs by water). Thin on dated 2026 stomach-content reports this pass — seasonal most-likely only. Match lure size to the bait you see.

Life-stage language is seasonal, not a creel survey. If fish are locked deep on bait, follow electronics; if they are chasing on top at first light, stay shallow until the sun climbs.

● ALSO HOT / ALSO IN SEASON

Secondary chase on Lake Sakakawea: Walleye (primary regional chase); northern pike; smallmouth bass; cisco-related forage chase. (Regs: live-link NDGF only — do not invent.)

Crowd / Heavy Traffic: In Cast window (Sep 21–24): No bass trail event pulled on Sakakawea for these dates. Looking ahead: ND GF permitted tournaments PDF (pulled 9/20/2026): Lewis & Clark Big 10 Showdown — Sep 25–26, 2026 (alt Sep 27) on Lake Sakakawea – White Earth Bay (walleye-focused permitted event — still Heavy Traffic for boat pressure). Badlands Bass Bandits Sakakawea date was Aug 29 (past). Sources: <https://gfappspublic.nd.gov/reports/fisheries/PermittedFishingTournaments.pdf> · <https://www.badlandsbassbandits> Never invent boat counts. Soft recreational still means give rentals, pontoons, and bank anglers room.

Primary reminder: Lead the week for Walleye — water-first, not a national paste. Regs live-link only (state wildlife agency creel & size limits). Reciprocal / border waters: confirm live; do not invent sister-state rules.

Looking ahead (next 1–3 weeks): Lewis & Clark Big 10 Showdown Sep 25–26 (White Earth Bay) — Heavy Traffic. NWS: windy Fri possible after window. Fall walleye/bass bite typically improves with cooling. Watch for bait pushes into creek backs and less reliance on pure midday heat as nights ease. Keep pulling live elevations / lake pages. Next Cast product: Friday window Fri–Sun (CT).

Panfish and catfish remain seasonal options where the lake supports them — early-fall brush and deeper channel swings on warm nights early-week. White bass / hybrids (where present) often show on wind or current seams when bait compresses. Smallmouth (where the lake holds them) reward clean rock and current edges when wind sets up. If a club or permitted tournament appears on a look-ahead calendar, treat ramp density as Heavy Traffic even when the species focus is walleye or multi-species — boat wakes and blast-off lanes still matter.

Weather look-ahead stays subordinate to the live NWS point forecast: cooler mornings widen the bite window; post-storm mudlines can fire then shut off. Pack a rain shell when midweek storms are in the forecast. Hydrate early-week heat. Clarity, boat traffic, and bait location will tell you more at the ramp than any Sunday scaffold — use this Cast as a plan, not a guarantee.

● ETHANOL-FREE FUEL NEAR THIS WATER

Current **E0** (ethanol-free) identity from Pure-Gas.org as of the Sunday research pull (CT). Prices may change; verify octane and price at the pump. Call ahead — availability changes.

- **E0** — 31.6 mi — Farmers Union Oil Company (UNBRANDED), 211 Main St E, Halliday ND — listed E0 octane(s): 91; tel 701-938-4716 [Pure-Gas id 48849]
- **E0** — 34.4 mi — Meier's Corner Stop (SINCLAIR), 6165 Hwy 8, Stanley ND — listed E0 octane(s): 87, 91; tel 701-421-1373 [Pure-Gas id 16439]
- **E0** — 41.6 mi — Circle K (CIRCLE K), 4004 Frontier Ave, Watford City ND — listed E0 octane(s): 87, 91; tel 701-997-0997 [Pure-Gas id 53195]
- **E0** — 43.2 mi — Farmer's Union Oil Cenex (CENEX), 209 4th Ave Sw, Garrison ND — listed E0 octane(s): 91; tel 701-463-2256 [Pure-Gas id 51744]

Listed **E0** only. Crowdsourced Pure-Gas listings — not a pump guarantee.

● HEAVY TRAFFIC

In Cast window (Sep 21–24): No bass trail event pulled on Sakakawea for these dates. Looking ahead: ND GF permitted tournaments PDF (pulled 9/20/2026): Lewis & Clark Big 10 Showdown — Sep 25–26, 2026 (alt Sep 27) on Lake Sakakawea – White Earth Bay (walleye-focused permitted event — still Heavy Traffic for boat pressure). Badlands Bass Bandits Sakakawea date was Aug 29 (past). Sources: <https://gfappspublic.nd.gov/reports/fisheries/PermittedFishingTournaments.pdf> · <https://www.badlandsbassbandits.com/schedule.html>

● LOOKING AHEAD

Lewis & Clark Big 10 Showdown Sep 25–26 (White Earth Bay) — Heavy Traffic. NWS: windy Fri possible after window. Fall walleye/bass bite typically improves with cooling.

Next Cast: Friday window Fri–Sun. Keep pulling live lake pages and trail calendars 1–3 weeks out.

● RAMP-TO-DARK CHECKLIST

- **Boards:** Re-pull operator lake / district pages the evening before and again at the ramp — Sunday research ages fast.
- **Sky:** Live NWS point forecast + radar; lightning means trailer first, every time.
- **Fuel:** Confirm **E0** still on the Pure-Gas listing and price at the pump — no invented prices.
- **Crowd:** Soft recreational still yields to rentals, pontoons, and bank anglers; named Heavy Traffic overrides the soft call.
- **Species:** Lead the day for the primary named above — water-first, not a national paste.
- **Exit:** Leave a weather margin on storm days; do not fish restricted dam water.

● FOUR-DAY FISHING PLAN

Use this as a Mon–Thu working script, then adjust to live boards and sky:

- **Monday:** First light on windward points and riprap; midday graph bait on breaks; evening revisit shallow shade. Soft recreational opener.
- **Tuesday:** If wind builds, fish mudlines and lee pockets rather than fighting whitecaps. Keep a storm abort plan if NWS cells are active.
- **Wednesday:** Often the unsettled day — shorter morning window, then trailer before storms. Post-cell mudlines can fire briefly; lightning still ends the day.
- **Thursday:** Clean-up day when skies improve — widen the morning window, cover water thoroughly, and note any look-ahead Heavy Traffic for the weekend.

Primary species leads every day — do not force a national bass paste on a walleye/pike/perch lake. Re-check operator pages and Pure-Gas **E0** before you trailer.

● SOURCES

NWS point forecasts for the pin · USACE Garrison / NDGF lake / district pages · trail calendars when a named event was pulled · Pure-Gas.org public **E0** listings · Freshwater Cast gold standard (TN River AL Chain Monday Cast reference). Schedules change — verify dam boards before you go.