

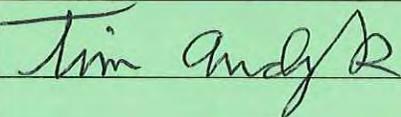
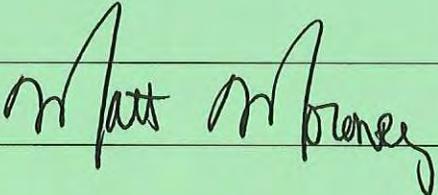
**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item**

Item No. 3.B.9

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2013 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions**FOR:** January 2013 Board meeting**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Rob Bohmann, Chair**SUMMARY:**

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress will present their 2013 advisory questions to the Natural Resources Board. The questions have been approved by the WCC Executive Council for inclusion on the Spring Hearing Questionnaire and will be used to gauge public opinion on a variety of natural resources issues. The questions will be presented to the public for their input at the joint Department of Natural Resources Spring Hearing and Wisconsin Conservation Congress Annual County Meeting held in each county of the state on Monday, April 8, 2013.

RECOMMENDATION: Information only**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):** Background memo

Approved by	Signature	Date
Tim Andryk, Bureau Director		1-11-13
N/A, Administrator		
Cathy Stepp, Secretary		1/14/13

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8

WCC Spring Hearing Questions

Bear Committee

1. Transfer Class A Bear Harvest Permit (from resolution 510112, requires legislation)

At present there is no way to transfer a Class A Bear Harvest Permit to a currently active duty Armed Forces member or Purple Heart recipient.

Permits that are transferred have already been applied for and received by a person. There is no need to have any special permits available above and beyond the approved quotas or permits that the DNR has set for that year's season.

Are you in favor of a Class A Bear Harvest permit holder to have the ability to transfer their Bear Harvest Permit to any currently active duty Armed Forces member or Purple Heart recipient for a once in a lifetime transfer?

Big Game Committee

2. End the December antlerless deer season (from resolution 160512)

The December antlerless gun deer season was established to provide additional opportunity for hunters and reduce the deer herd in designated units. The December antlerless gun season follows three consecutive weekends and 19 days of firearm hunting pressure on deer.

Do you support elimination of the December antlerless gun season?

Endangered Resources & Law Enforcement Committee

3. Remove back-tag requirements (from resolutions 570212, 500212, 660212, 200112, 670512, 680512, & 710212, requires legislation)

Wisconsin is one of two or three states that still require bear and deer hunters to display backtags during the designated hunting seasons. Some hunters cite noise, the inconvenience of changing tag holders from garment to garment, damage to clothing, and the possibility of facing a citation if the backtag falls off as reasons for removal of Wisconsin's backtag requirement for deer and bear hunting. Generally, landowners have supported the backtag requirement as a means to identify trespassers.

Do you favor removing Wisconsin's requirement of wearing a backtag during the archery and gun deer and bear hunting seasons?

4. Expand definition of artificial lights allowed for predator hunting (from resolution 160312, requires legislation)

Wisconsin Statute 29.314 currently restricts the use of a light for hunting coyotes, foxes, raccoons, wolves, and other non-protected species to a flashlight at the point

of kill while hunting on foot. Flashlight is defined by the statutes to mean “a battery-operated light” which is “designed to be held and carried by hand.” Since this statute originated, many lights designed to be mounted to the firearm or headlamps designed to be worn on the head or hat have come into the market and in practice are being used to hunt coyotes, foxes, raccoons, wolves, and other non-protected species while on foot at the point of kill. DNR law enforcement looks favorably on any reasonable efforts to improve safety through better target identification consistent with the rule of firearm safety on knowing your target and what is beyond.

To simplify the law and bring it in line with what is commonly practiced, do you support changes to Wisconsin State Statute ss. 29.314 (4)(b)2., (5)(b)2. and 3., that would allow a person to use any type of light at the point of kill while hunting on foot raccoons, foxes, coyotes, wolves, or other unprotected animals during the open season for the animal hunted, and no longer limit a person to only the use of a flashlight?

Fur Harvest Committee

5. Allow trapping on NPS owned land along Namekagan/ St. Croix (from resolutions 040212, 160112, 580112, 660312, requires federal rule change)

The Totagatic River is a tributary of the Namekagan River, which in turn flows into the St. Croix River. The Totagatic River is a state-designed wild river, and as a result, trapping is still allowed there. However, the Namekagan and St. Croix Rivers are a part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, and therefore are protected and administered by the National Park Service (NPS). In Wisconsin, trapping is not allowed on NPS owned land or adjacent river areas. However, individuals may trap on privately-owned parts of the river with the permission of the landowner and public land (and the adjacent river areas) not owned by NPS.

Would you support allowing trapping on National Park Service owned land and adjacent river areas along the St. Croix, Namekagan, and tributaries? This would require a change in federal regulations.

6. Extend muskrat season until March 31

Musk rats are late primers—that is, they produce their best quality pelts before “ice out” which normally comes after the end of the current season. Late March is a time of seasonal changes (rising temperatures, longer days, receding ice) that cause muskrats to become very active. This increased activity affords trappers an excellent opportunity to harvest prime pelts.

Would you support extending the muskrat season from the current season end date to March 31?

7. Statewide bobcat season

Currently hunting and trapping for bobcats is only allowed North of State Hwy 64 with two split seasons starting in the middle of October to December 25th. The second part is December 26th to the end of January. The harvest goal is split between these two seasons. The harvest goal is set each year by DNR staff. There have been an increasing number of sightings on trail cameras, incidental takes by trappers, and road kill incidents south of State Hwy 64 indicating that there is an increasing population in the southern portion of the state. For years, there has been interest in a statewide bobcat season by some members of the public.

Do you support allowing the statewide hunting and trapping of bobcats using the same harvest goal as is presently being used North of State Hwy 64?

8. Simplify season framework

Currently the coyote and fisher trapping seasons, and the raccoon (residents), fox and bobcat hunting and trapping seasons, do not start on the same date as the wolf season begins. The legislature has established that the wolf season opens on October 15th each year.

Currently the coyote & fisher trapping season, and the fox, bobcat and resident raccoon hunting and trapping seasons all open on the Saturday nearest October 17th. This can lead to incidental coyote, raccoons, fox, bobcat or fisher being caught in wolf traps a few days before their respective seasons open, and the trapper not being able to keep and utilize those animals. To correct this problem and also simplify the rules we propose the season dates for these six species to begin on the same date as the opening day of the wolf season, statewide. Coyote hunting season would not change and remain open all year. The ending dates for all these species would also remain unchanged.

Do you favor opening the coyote and fisher trapping seasons, and the fox, bobcat and resident raccoon hunting and trapping seasons on October 15th each year to be consistent with the new wolf hunting and trapping season opening date?

Hunting with Dogs Committee

9. Dog training in Bear Zone C

Wisconsin bear hunters are able to choose between two methods of hunting bears—one method is using bait and the other is using dogs to track and locate a bear. Hunting bear over bait is legal statewide while hunting bear with the aid of dogs is restricted to Zones A, B, and D. The practice of training dogs to hunt bear is currently allowed statewide including Zone C during July and August, where the practice of using dogs to hunt bear is prohibited.

Would you support closing Zone C to bear dog training seven days before the regular bear hunting season?

Legislative Committee

10. Increase non-resident deer license fees (from resolution 110112, *requires legislation*)

Wisconsin's non-resident deer license fees are low compared to some other states.

Would you favor that the State of Wisconsin increase the non-resident Deer license?

11. Non-motorized boat registration (from resolution 250112, *requires legislation*)

All boaters use or have access to many resources such as public landings, municipal water patrols, and DNR law enforcement when recreating on Wisconsin waters. . Currently, only motorized boats help pay for these things through boat registration. Besides increasing revenue for these amenities, requiring non-motorized boats to have registration would help return the craft to the owner if lost or stolen and would also help in search and rescue events.

Would you favor all non-motorized boats in the State of Wisconsin be registered through the Wisconsin DNR?

12. Sports license change (from resolution 360112, *requires legislation*)

A number of hunters no longer use a firearm to hunt deer, some due to legal issues. Currently, Sport Licenses include general fishing, small game and firearm deer licenses. This proposal would allow a choice between a gun deer or archery deer tag.

Would you favor the ability to choose between a gun deer and an archery deer license when buying a Sport License?

13. Armed Forces Licenses (from resolution 580312, *requires legislation*)

Currently Wisconsin issues about 2,000 free licenses to active duty Armed Forces members that are residents. Wisconsin has a large number of residences and non-resident visitors, some of whom are active duty members on leave or furlough. Wisconsin could offer these non-resident service members a hunting or fishing license at a minimal cost. A minimal charge is needed to receive federal Pittman Robertson funds for each license issued by the State.

Would you favor a rule change allowing non-resident active Armed Forces members on leave or furlough to buy, at a reduced cost, a hunting and/or fishing license?

14. Hunting Feral Pigs (from resolution 720212, *requires legislation*)

Feral Pigs are present in Wisconsin and are an unprotected species with no bag limit. Feral pigs can cause a great deal of agricultural damage. Currently a small game license is needed to shoot feral pigs with a firearm (except that landowners may shoot feral pigs on their own property without a license). An archery license does allow the harvest of unprotected species (like feral pigs) with archery equipment.

Should the State of Wisconsin allow hunting feral pigs year round with any hunting license?

15. Transfer of License/ Permit (from resolution 440111, *requires legislation*)

Some Wisconsin senior and/or disabled residents may not have the opportunity to harvest a bear, bobcat, turkey, fisher, otter, or sturgeon, as the ability to harvest these species requires individuals to obtain a harvest permit using the cumulative point preference system. The length of time it takes to secure a permit varies, but can be a number of years. This extended period of time required to acquire a permit may prevent some senior and/or disabled residents with deteriorating health from participating in one of these harvest opportunities.

Would you support legislation to allow the transfer of a valid permit from a successful permit holder to a senior (65 years of age or older) or disabled resident for a "first time" or "one time" harvest opportunity?

Migratory Committee

16. Waterfowl hunting concealment rule

There has been much discussion over the various problems over concealment of boats and blinds with the current concealment rule for waterfowl hunters. To resolve these problems, would you be in favor of the following revised rule?

"Open water" means any portion of a navigable water body which does not contain a naturally occurring growth of vegetation that provides all of the following:

1. The vegetation is of sufficient height and density to conceal at least 50% of the hunter and the boat, blind or similar device within or behind the natural growth of vegetation when viewed from at least one direction horizontally and parallel to the water surface from a height approximately 3 feet from above the water level.
2. The vegetation that provides the 50% concealment shall be within 3 feet of the exterior of the boat, blind or similar device.

Mississippi River Committee

17. Minnow harvest regulations as pertaining to control of fish diseases and invasive species (from resolution 220512)

Since 2008 it has been illegal to collect minnows from waters suspected to be infected with the fish disease Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), or in any connected waters not separated by a barrier that is impassable to fish. It remains legal to transport minnows away from such waters if purchased from a Wisconsin bait dealer and either not exposed to water or fish from that water body or only used again on the same water body.

This regulation is very difficult to enforce because it is extremely hard for law enforcement to determine if water has or has not been exchanged, or if minnows were purchased or caught on that water body.

Do you favor changing the rules regarding minnow harvest on all Wisconsin VHS suspect waters so that:

- Minnows may be collected on VHS suspect waters for personal use by ordinary traditional methods; and that
- Such minnows may only be possessed on/at such waters in quantity consistent with daily personal use, (determination or quantity TBD); and that
- No minnows may be transported away from such water bodies except during ice fishing if minnows are purchased from a Wisconsin bait dealer or are either not exposed to water or fish from that water body or only used again on the same water body

Outdoor Heritage & Education Committee

18. Allow 14 & 15 year olds to participate in the youth hunts unaccompanied by a mentor (from resolution 620112)

Fourteen and 15 year olds who have passed a hunters safety class may hunt all seasons unaccompanied by a mentor with the exception of the youth hunts (October gun deer, turkey, & waterfowl). During this set of seasons only, 14 and 15 year olds are required to hunt accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Changing this law would simplify deer hunting regulations for the youth hunts and bring the regulations into alignment with the rest of the hunting seasons for the youth of our state.

Would you support a rule change that would allow 14 and 15 year olds who have passed hunters safety to hunt unaccompanied during youth hunts?

19. Allow 16 & 17 year olds to participate in all youth hunts (from resolution 520112)

Currently, youth hunts for deer, turkey, and waterfowl are scheduled one weekend each year prior to the normal hunting season. These hunts are set aside for 10-15 year olds. Currently, only 10-15 year olds may participate in the youth hunts, but the Junior Conservation Patron, Junior Sports, Junior Small Game, and Junior Gun and Archery Deer License are for 12-17 year olds, but 16-17 year olds aren't allowed to participate in the youth hunts. There are youth that don't get introduced to hunting until they're 16 or 17 and currently can't participate in the youth hunts.

Changing the law to allow 16-17 year olds to participate in the youth hunts would allow mentors to recruit more youth hunters, increase youth hunting opportunity, and simplify hunting rules and seasons by making youth hunts concurrent with the youth hunting licenses.

Would you support a rule change that would allow 16 and 17 year olds to participate in all youth hunts?

20. Eliminate Inland Trout & Great Lakes Stamp for 16-17 year old youth (from resolution 520312, requires legislation)

Currently, 16 & 17 year olds who purchase a fishing license are required to purchase a \$10.00 Great Lakes Salmon/Trout Stamp to fish for salmon/trout on Lakes Michigan or Superior, and a \$10.00 Inland Trout Stamp to fish for trout on any inland body of water.

Eliminating the stamp requirements for 16 & 17 year olds may eliminate a barrier to participation for those youth who find the cost of the stamp prohibitive to their participation, and simplify fishing regulations for youth.

Would you support a rule change that would eliminate the inland trout and Great Lakes stamp requirements for 16 and 17 year olds who hold a valid fishing license?

21. Eliminate Hunting Stamp Requirements for Youth (from resolution 520212, requires legislation)

Currently, 10-17 year olds who purchase a small game license must also purchase a Pheasant Stamp to hunt pheasants. Ten-17 year olds must also purchase a Turkey Stamp in addition to their license if they're going to hunt turkey. Ten-15 year olds aren't required to purchase a Federal or State Duck Stamp in order to hunt waterfowl, but 16-17 year olds are required to purchase both stamps if they're going to hunt waterfowl.

Eliminating the state hunting stamp requirements for youth through the age of 17 to hunt pheasants, turkeys, and waterfowl, may help to recruit more youth hunters, eliminate cost prohibitive barriers to participation, and simplify hunting rules for youth.

Would you support a rule change that would eliminate the state Pheasant, Turkey and Waterfowl Stamp requirements for all youth hunters?

Upland Game Committee

22. Pheasant Hunting Season Opening Time Change To 9:00 a.m. (from resolution 140112)

Current regulations open the pheasant season at 12:00 p.m. (noon) on the third Saturday of October. Weather conditions can be dry and mid-day temperatures can reach 60 degrees or more. A state wide opening of pheasant season at 9:00 a.m. would allow for hunting during cooler temperatures and wetter conditions and may provide a more enjoyable opening day experience without compromising hunter and dog safety. Waterfowl season currently opens at 9:00 a.m.

Would you be in favor of uniform state wide pheasant hunting season opening time of 9:00 a.m. on the third Saturday of October?

Warm Water Committee

23. Bluegill bag and size limits on Allequash Lakes, Vilas County (from resolution 640512)

Upper and Lower Allequash Lakes in Vilas county, in the past, have shown the ability to grow quality-sized bluegills. In recent years, due to fishing pressure specifically targeting bluegills, the average size has been greatly reduced.

Do you support reducing the daily bag limit for bluegills to 10 with a minimum size limit of eight inches on Upper and Lower Allequash Lakes in Vilas County?

24. Crappie size and bag limit on Lake Wausau, Marathon County (from resolution 370512)

With the increase in the popularity of ice angling and the advancement of fishing technology and angling techniques there has been a decline in the size structure of the crappies in Lake Wausau, Marathon County. Many feel the current bag of 25 without any size limit for crappies is wrong for today's angling techniques.

Do you support reducing the daily bag limit for crappies to 10 with a minimum size limit of 10 inches for Lake Wausau in Marathon County?

25. Reduce bag limit for bluegills on Chequamegon waters, Taylor County (from resolution 610312)

The quality and quantity of bluegill populations on the Chequamegon Waters of Taylor County seems to be declining. Many feel the current daily bag limit of 25 bluegills is too high.

Do you support reducing the daily bag of bluegill from 25 to 10, but still have a total daily aggregate bag of 25 panfish?

26. Change walleye size and bag limit on Spirit Lake and North Spirit Lake, Taylor County (from resolution 610212)

Spirit Lake and North Spirit Lake, Taylor County, have a walleye protected slot size limit. No fish between 14 and 18 inches may be kept. The limit is five fish daily with only one over 18 inches. Because there is no natural reproduction and the population is maintained solely through stocking, many feel this is the wrong regulation. The Spirit Lake Improvement Association would like to see the harvest reduced.

Do you support removing the 14 to 18-inch protected slot size limit, with a daily bag limit of five walleye on Spirit and North Spirit Lakes in Taylor County and replacing them with an 18-inch minimum size limit and a daily bag limit of three walleye?

27. Musky size limit on Castle Rock and Petenwell Flowages (from resolution 290212)

The Castle Rock and Petenwell Flowages on the Wisconsin River have low densities of muskies and both have the potential to grow true trophy fish. They have high densities of prey and they fit the DNR's criteria of "trophy waters" for musky.

Do you support increasing the minimum size limit for musky on Castle Rock and Petenwell Flowages from 45 inches to 50 inches?

28. Size and bag limit change for northern pike on Winnebago system waters(from resolution 450112)

Currently the Winnebago system has a daily bag limit of two and a minimum size limit of 26 inches on northern pike. Results of spring netting surveys show an abundance of smaller northern pike less than 26 inches but few fish above the 26-inch limit. Anglers would be more than willing to harvest these fish less than 26 inches.

Do you support changing the daily bag and size limit on northern pike in the Winnebago system from a daily bag limit of two and a minimum size limit of 26 inches to a bag limit of two but only one may be less than 26 inches?

Wolf Committee

29. Introduce Year-round Coyote Hunting (from resolution 160712)

Coyote hunting has historically been closed at times when firearm deer seasons are open in Wolf Management Zone 1 in northern Wisconsin. This closure was established when wolves were listed in Wisconsin and federally as an endangered species, to prevent incidents of misidentification by people intending to harvest coyotes.

Do you favor a continuous coyote hunting season through the gun deer seasons in Wolf Management Zone 1?

Executive Council

30. Panfish

There continues to be pressure put on the DNR to respond to angler demands to reduce bag limits on panfish species.

Do you support a regulation change addressing panfish overharvest allowing a bag limit split by species?

31. Hunting/Trapping in State Parks

Wisconsin Act 168, Known as the "Sporting Heritage Act", established that state parks would be open for hunting and trapping, unless parks or portions of parks are closed by the Natural Resources Board to protect public safety or to protect unique

plant or animal communities. In addition, the legislation prohibited hunting and trapping within 100 yards of any designated use area, including trails.

The Natural Resources Board approved a modified proposal limiting hunting and trapping from November 15 - December 15, and from April 1 through the third spring turkey season, and allowed bow hunting from November 15 through the end of the deer archery season in early January.

The Department of Natural Resources developed a proposal to implement this law change that would have opened area of state parks for hunting and trapping from October 15 to the Thursday prior to Memorial Day weekend for any seasons that were opening during this timeframe.

This legislation was introduced in response to a 2011 Wisconsin Conservation Congress advisory question that passed in all 72 counties for hunting, and in 71 of 72 counties to allow trapping in state parks.

Would you support expanding the hunting opportunities in State Parks from the plan approved by the Natural Resources Board to the plan proposed by the DNR?