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## MEDIA RELEASE

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DNR Spring Hearings & Conservation Congress Annual County Meetings April 11, 2016

**Madison** – Wisconsin residents will be able to nominate and elect local representatives to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) at the DNR Spring Hearings & Conservation Congress' annual county meetings held on Monday, April 11, starting at 7 p.m. in each county of the state ([Spring Hearing locations](#)). Individuals interested in natural resources management will also have the opportunity to provide their input by non-binding vote and testimony on proposed rule changes and advisory questions relating to conservation and fish and wildlife management in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only advisory body in the state where citizens elect county delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board (NRB) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

At the meetings, citizens will have the opportunity to comment and register their support, or non-support, for DNR proposed rule changes as well as Congress proposals that could someday become the rules that regulate fishing, hunting, trapping and other outdoor recreation activities in Wisconsin. They may also submit ideas to address conservation needs or concerns they observe through the WCC resolution process.

Results of the public's input on these proposals will be presented to the Natural Resources Board in May 2016. If there is significant support for a proposal, the WCC advisory question could become a DNR rule change proposal in following years.

This year in addition to 12 DNR and NRB questions, the Conservation Congress will seek public input on 33 advisory questions on a range of topics, some of which include:

- a proposal to eliminate the "artificial only" restriction from regular season trout regulations;
- a proposal to create a Senior Citizen Conservation Patron License;
- a proposal to disallow permanent waterfowl blinds on public lands;

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As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

- a proposal to ban lead fishing tackle and ban lead shot on DNR managed lands;
- a proposal to increase hunting, fishing, and trapping license fees.

"Conservation Congress advisory questions generally originate from citizens' ideas." said Rob Bohmann, Chairman of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress. "If resolutions presented at the county level meetings are supported, the resolution is advanced to one of the Congress' advisory committees and the Congress Executive Council for consideration.

"Each year, there are over 200 resolutions submitted locally. Not all pass, but the ones that do have the potential to become a rule, policy or legislative change in the subsequent years," Bohmann said. "It is a true grassroots process that empowers the citizens of this state to shape natural resources policy."

The complete 2016 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources [spring rules hearings questionnaire](#) is available for review online or at local DNR service centers. Individuals without internet access may be able to view the online questionnaire by visiting their local library.

People interested in attending the hearings are encouraged to review the questionnaire online prior to the April 11 hearings and should arrive at the hearing location early to register before the hearings begin at 7:00 pm.

For additional information on the Spring Hearings, please visit [www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov) and search key words "Spring Hearings."

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