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Title: Reinstate Northern Pike Ice Spearing on Wi/Mi Boundary Waters

The Problem: Years ago Wisconsin DNR deliberately chose to end their mutual rule agreement to have an ice season for spearing northern pike on the Wi/Mi boundary waters. Michigan reluctantly agreed to change their traditional rule so it would not cause angler confusion and create enforcement issues.

Neither state has since offered any biological data to support significant negative spearing concerns for pike or other game fish species that these waters are primarily managed for. Michigan would like to reinstate boundary water spearing.

Wisconsin still has a northern pike ice spearing season on Lake Superior and offers sturgeon spearing on Lake Winnebago waters, both without adverse social or biological issues. Michigan and Minnesota also have pike spearing seasons. Studies suggest pike caught by hook and line through the ice and released experience up to 40% mortality.

Dark House Spearing Associations in both states are actively promoting the camaraderie of the sport, including traditional fish decoy carving, and lobbying for spearing opportunities. Increased new angler participation and winter tourist benefits would be realized in border communities.

We recommend reinstating the spearing season on Wisconsin Boundary Waters citing historic interests, creating uniform boundary rules, and increasing angler participation through an alternative method with no adverse biological concerns.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in Marinette County on April 8th, 2013 recommends that the Department take action to correct this situation by introducing rule changes allowing the reinstatement of pike ice spearing on boundary waters.

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