

PROPOSED STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT RULE CHANGES

(If approved, these proposed rule changes will take effect on April 1, 2010, unless otherwise indicated.)

QUESTIONS 1-2 – Background checks and angler education programs

Under current law the Bureau of Law Enforcement is required to conduct a criminal history, character and background check on any applicant who wishes to become a volunteer ATV, boating, snowmobiling and hunter education instructor. The Department is only allowed to conduct criminal history, character and background of applicants seeking to serve as mentors or instructors for learn-to-hunt, fish or trapping programs to determine their suitability for the proposed activity upon receipt of information indicating prior illegal activity relevant to a mentor's ability to properly assist or instruct novice participants.

The rule would allow the department to conduct criminal history background checks on individuals who wish to serve as department sponsored volunteer angler education instructor or a mentor as part of a department sponsored or approved learn-to-hunt program. These instructors often and primarily serve as instructors for youth. Similar to the hunter, boater, snowmobile, ATV and trapper education volunteer instructor programs, it is important that we make sure we are not providing the opportunity for any individual who is not allowed to associate with children or who has been convicted of an illegal act involving children, from having the opportunity to work with children during the outdoor recreational programs conducted by DNR.

This proposal would also remove the condition that a mentor for fishing programs may not serve as a mentor for more than 3 anglers and clarify that the applicant, instructors and mentors need to possess a valid fishing license. Section 1 will also reduce the 30 day advanced notice for applications for fishing programs to 15 days.

If adopted, this proposal will take effect on the first day following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you favor requiring criminal history background checks on individuals who wish to serve as department-sponsored volunteer angler education instructor or a mentor as part of a department-sponsored or approved learn-to-hunt program?**

1. YES _____ NO _____

- **Do you support allowing an instructor of a fishing program to mentor more than 3 anglers, and shorten the advanced notice requirement for a fishing program from 30 days to 15 days?**

2. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 3 – Minnows/ VHS rules correction

The rule proposes to correct an administrative error which was included in the recently adopted rules regarding minnow harvest and possession, as related to concerns regarding containing the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia. Currently Administrative Code (NR 20.20(73)(h)6.b.) states that "600 suckers in total" may be retained by an individual. However, the daily bag limit should be 600 minnows, including, but not restricted to, suckers.

Office of the Secretary approval:

Signature: 
Date: 01-13-2008

If adopted, this proposal will take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you favor a rule correcting an administrative error which was included in the recently adopted rules regarding minnow harvest and possession, as related to concerns regarding containing the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia?**

3. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 4 – Clarifying rules related to use of remote controlled-devices for fishing

This proposal is being advanced by the Bureau of Law Enforcement.

This rule clarifies legality of using a small remote controlled boat or similar device with a piece of line and hook attached for the purpose of catching fish in Wisconsin. The Bureau of Law Enforcement has discussed the use of this type of device for fishing purposes with the Bureaus of Legal Services and Fisheries. Our interpretation of the law is that these devices when used for fishing, if not tethered back to the boat, pier or shore where the person operating it is located, is not allowed under our "jug-fishing" rule in NR 20.06(10).

It is our opinion that a remote control device which is not tethered or connected with a line to which the angler has control of, does not comply with this rule or its original intent. This rule change proposal is meant to clarify this in the rule with language that will more clearly state what NR 20.06(10) means. That being that any line or device used for fishing must be under the control of the angler with a tethered line that allows for the retrieval of the device and attached hook and line.

It may also be argued that this type of device may violate the unattended line prohibition in s. NR 10.08(9), Wis. Adm. Code, which states that the failure to immediately respond to a fish bite is prima facia evidence that the line is unattended. Based on video we have viewed, depending on the size of the fish, a person operating this device may not be able to immediately respond in a reasonable manner. The manufacture advised that the "Fishing Buddy" remote controlled boat can only handle a fish of 2 pounds or less. If a bigger fish gets hooked, it can not be controlled or retrieved by the power of the small remote controlled boat. This also shows that the device is not always under the control of the angler.

If adopted, this proposal will take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you favor a rule clarifying legality of using a small remote controlled boat or similar device with a piece of line and hook attached for the purpose of catching fish in Wisconsin?**

4. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 5 – Crayfish harvest license requirements

This proposal is being advanced by the Bureau of Law Enforcement

Current Wisconsin fishing regulations state that a fishing or small game license is required for individuals 16 years old or older to harvest crayfish. However, nothing in NR Code or State Statutes state what type

of approval is required or authorized. The question boils down to what is the appropriate approval. By policy we have agreed to accept either a small game or a fishing license as a valid approval for taking crayfish because they are the licenses most related to the activities of harvesting these species. This is similar to what is also required for taking turtles. The main difference is that about 10 years ago the department clarified what the appropriate approval for turtles is by stating it in rule (NR 19), even though turtles (like frogs and crayfish) are not technically small game or fish.

If adopted, this proposal will take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you favor a rule clarifying that a fishing or small game license is required for an individual 16 years old or older to harvest crayfish in Wisconsin?**

5. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTIONS 6-7 – Provide clarification and consistency to the fishing rules which apply to sloughs, bayous and flowages connected to certain inland rivers.

This proposal is being advanced by the Bureau of Law Enforcement.

The Wisconsin River offers a unique continuous open season for game fish not found on most other inland waters. Fish size, bag limits and other rules related to methods of harvest on the Wisconsin River can also be significantly different than on other adjacent inland waters. Because current rules which establish fishing seasons and regulations on the waters of the Wisconsin river can be different than rules for other bodies of water in the adjacent counties, it can be difficult to determine what portion of a connected water (tributaries, etc.) the Wisconsin river seasons and rules apply. On the "Lower Wisconsin river" the fishing rules for the Wisconsin river include all sloughs, bayous, flowages and tributaries from their mouths upstream to the first highway bridge in Columbia, Sauk, Dane, Iowa, Richland, Grant and Crawford counties. In all other counties, the continuous open season on game fish also applies to all sloughs, bayous and flowages connected to the Wisconsin river, and do not end at the first dam or highway bridge. The inclusion of all sloughs, bayous and flowages without a specific distance or boundary could be interpreted as including all streams, rivers and lakes connected to the waters of the upper Wisconsin river. This can make enforcement of closed seasons, bag and size limits on other inland waters difficult and makes it difficult for the public to know for sure which rules apply. The department is proposing to clarify where fishing rules apply along the upper Wisconsin river as well as several other streams to which current rules apply not only to that river, but also to all sloughs, bayous and flowages, by defining how far up a connected slough, bayous or flowage the current fishing rules apply.

Specifically, the department is proposing to clarify that the Wisconsin River fishing rules will only apply to connected sloughs, bayous or flowages upstream to the first dam or highway bridge. In addition, this rule change will provide further clarification on where the Wisconsin river rules apply on portions of Lake Petenwell, in Adams and Juneau Counties; Lake DuBay, Portage and Marathon Counties; and on Lake Mohawksin, Lincoln County.

The eastern boundary of the Wisconsin River on Lake Petenwell in Adams County will be County Highway Z, and the western boundary of the Wisconsin River on Lake Petenwell in Juneau County will be County Highway G.

In Lincoln County, the boundary of the Wisconsin and Somo rivers will be defined as the Tomahawk Railway Railroad bridge on the west side of lake Mohawksin, the boundary of the Wisconsin and Tomahawk rivers will be defined as the Canadian National Railroad bridge

nearest Baymill road, and the boundary of the Wisconsin and Spirit rivers will be the confluence of the Spirit river with the Wisconsin river, one mile south of the Spirit river dam.

The eastern boundary of the Wisconsin River on Lake DuBay in Marathon and Portage counties will be defined as the South-Bound Lane of Interstate 39.

On all other waters that apply seasons or other rules to a river including all sloughs, bayous or flowages, the department is proposing to clarify that this means upstream to the first dam or highway bridge of any sloughs, bayous (including tributaries) or flowages.

- **Do you favor clarifying the boundary of the Wisconsin river to include only the portion of sloughs, bayous and flowages upstream to the first dam, highway bridge or other specific location for the purpose of establishing fishing seasons, size and bag limits ?**

6. YES _____ NO _____

- **Do you favor clarifying the boundary of certain other inland rivers or streams in Adams, Ashland, Juneau, LaCrosse, Lincoln, Portage, Marathon, Monroe, Oneida, Price, Rusk, Sawyer and Wood Counties extends to affected sloughs, bayous and flowages up stream to the first highway bridge for the purpose of open seasons, size and bag limits?**

7. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 8 – Eliminate barbless hooks restriction during early trout season

Numerous scientific studies have been conducted suggesting that the use of barbed versus barbless hooks has little effect on trout mortality following release. In a 1997 study published in the North American Journal of Fisheries Management, for flies and lures combined, the average hook related mortality was 4.5% for barbed hooks and 4.2% for barbless hooks. Because natural mortality for wild trout range from 30-65% annually, the 0.3% difference in the two hook types is irrelevant at the population level, even when fish are subjected to repeated catch and release. Most biologists agree that how deeply a fish is hooked has more to do with mortality than what type of hook is used. Restricting barbed hooks appear to be a social issue and elimination of that restriction would simplify trout fishing regulations and eliminate law enforcement issues. The use of live bait will still be prohibited during the early catch-and-release trout fishing season.

If adopted, this proposal will take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you support the elimination of the barbless hook requirement for the early catch-and-release trout season in Wisconsin?**

8. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 9 – Mussel harvest in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and commercial mussel harvest in the St. Louis River

Most mussel populations, particularly state- and federally-listed threatened and endangered species, cannot support live harvest and still maintain self-supporting populations. Identification of threatened and

endangered species is often difficult and misidentification is very likely by the general public. Having consistent regulations of no live harvest or collection of dead shell for all regulatory agencies on the St. Croix River would also make enforcement of harvest rules clear and consistent.

The Department proposes to prohibit collection of live mussels or dead shell from the St. Croix River National Scenic Riverway. Mussel harvest regulations are inconsistent between regulatory agencies on the St. Croix River. National Park Service rules do not allow any harvest of mussels, live or dead, within the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Where the St. Croix River forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota, Minnesota does not allow any live harvest of mussels or collection of dead shells in the river. Wisconsin currently allows the personal harvest of 50 pounds of live mussels daily on border waters with Minnesota by hand picking. Wisconsin regulations also allow the collection of unlimited quantities of dead shell, except endangered or threatened species, from these border waters. Both Wisconsin and Minnesota currently do not allow harvest of live mussels from inland waters in either state. This proposal will make rules between the three jurisdictions consistent.

This rule further proposes to eliminate commercial mussel harvest in the St. Croix River where it forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota (the activity is already prohibited by National Park Service rules), and in the St. Louis River where it forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota. This will complete closure of all potential commercial mussel harvest in Wisconsin. There are no active commercial clammers in any of the waters affected by this rule.

If adopted, this proposal will take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you favor changing the Wisconsin mussel harvest regulations for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway where it forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota from the current 50 pounds of live mussels per day by licensed anglers to no live harvest and no collection of dead shells, and to prohibit commercial mussel harvest from those waters, and to prohibit collection of dead shell from inland portions of the Riverway, and to prohibit commercial mussel harvest from the St. Louis River where it forms the boundary between Wisconsin and Minnesota?**

9. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTIONS 10-12 – Smelt-induced walleye population crashes

Illegal introductions of rainbow smelt into inland waters of Northern Wisconsin have caused loss of walleye recruitment in these lakes. Prior to the introduction of rainbow smelt these lakes had healthy naturally recruiting walleye populations. The possible mechanisms for this negative interaction include direct predation by smelt on juvenile walleye and indirectly through competition for limited food resources. Rainbow smelt are a non-native, invasive species that is present in Lakes Superior and Michigan.

The Department of Natural Resources has initiated costly stocking programs in these waters in an attempt to re-establish these walleye fisheries. It is hoped that given enough protection we can build up walleye numbers to point where they will control rainbow smelt numbers and we may again see natural walleye recruitment. Recent research shows that a combination of an 18 inch minimum size limit and stocking can substantially decrease smelt numbers in a lake.

QUESTION 10 – Beaver Dam Lake (Barron County) walleye regulations

Beaver Dam Lake was surveyed in 2006-2007. The 2006 adult walleye population estimate on Beaver Dam Lake was only 0.7 fish per acre. Walleye natural reproduction and recruitment has been very poor since the illegal introduction of rainbow smelt around 1980. Rainbow smelt have been shown to negatively impact walleye natural reproduction and recruitment through predation on early life stages of walleye.

A comprehensive management plan has been generated for Beaver Dam Lake in cooperation and support of the Beaver Dam Lake District. This plan includes reducing smelt abundance and improving walleye densities. Several components of this plan have already been implemented such as stocking trout to predate on smelt and opening the water to smelt dip netting. The last two components of this plan are in the process of being implemented. These are to stock large fingerling walleye and minimize angler harvest of small walleye to increase the adult population.

Most female walleye do not mature until they are 16-18 inches in Beaver Dam Lake. The existing 15 inch minimum length limit does not offer any protection of female walleye which are critical if natural reproduction is to occur in significant numbers again in the future.

Considering this at the 2007 annual meeting of the Beaver Dam Lake District, members were asked if they would support an 18 inch length limit for walleye in Beaver Dam Lake. The membership unanimously supported this proposal. The 18 inch minimum length limit will likely increase the adult population from 0.7 to 2.0 adult fish per acre. In addition, it will allow female walleye to spawn at least once before having a chance of being harvested. This regulation will increase walleye catch rates and maintain walleye harvest rates in the long-term and still provide ample angling opportunities for walleye anglers.

Therefore, in an effort to reduce angler harvest of small walleye, allow female walleye the chance to spawn once before being subjected to potential angler harvest and to increase the adult walleye population to 2.0 fish per acre do you support the following regulation?

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 15 inches to 18 inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 five to 3 in total for walleye on Beaver Dam Lake in Barron County?**

10. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 11 – Long Lake (Vilas County) walleye regulations

The current 15 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish daily bag limit is not adequate to protect walleye stocked as part of a planned 10 year effort by the WDNR to rehabilitate the walleye population in Long Lake. It is recommended that the walleye regulation on this lake be changed to an 18 inch minimum size limit and 3 fish daily bag limit. This regulation should improve walleye catch rates and increase the number of adult walleye present, thereby providing additional angler opportunity, protecting female walleye for an additional two to three spawning seasons, and hopefully re-establish natural walleye recruitment. Increasing numbers of walleye may also help control abundant numbers of rainbow smelt that are responsible for the decline in this important walleye fishery.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 15 inches to 18 inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 five to 3 in total for walleye on Long Lake in Vilas County?**

11. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 12 – Dead Pike Lake (Vilas County) walleye regulations

The current 15 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish daily bag limit is not adequate to protect walleye stocked as part of a planned 10 year effort by the WDNR to rehabilitate the walleye population in Dead Pike Lake. It is recommended that the walleye regulation on this lake be changed to an 18 inch minimum size limit and 3 fish daily bag limit. This regulation should improve walleye catch rates, increase numbers of adults present providing additional angler opportunity, protect female walleye for an additional two to three spawning seasons, and hopefully reestablish natural walleye recruitment. Increasing numbers of walleye may also help control abundant numbers of rainbow smelt that are responsible for the decline in this important walleye fishery.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 15 inches to 18 inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 five to 3 in total for walleye on Dead Pike Lake in Vilas County?**

12. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 13 – Lake Winnebago walleye/ sauger bag limit- administrative correction

In 2008, a proposal to change the daily bag limit for sauger from 0 to 1 in Lake Winnebago was passed at the DNR Spring Rules Hearings. As worded in the 2008 Spring Hearings questionnaire, the bag limit was intended to be a “daily bag limit for walleye, sauger, and walleye/ sauger hybrids of 5 in total of which no more than 1 may be a sauger or walleye/sauger hybrid?” However, the words “in total” were inadvertently dropped in rules submitted to the Natural Resources Board and State legislature for adoption. This proposal would correct the regulation.

- **Do you favor correcting the walleye and sauger bag limit for Lake Winnebago?**

13. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

ASHLAND/ IRON COUNTIES

QUESTION 14 – Walleye Length Limits on Bearskull, Owl, Fisher, Upper Clam, and Upper and Lower Springstead Lakes in Ashland and Iron Counties

In 1997 a new regulation took effect on 23 waters in Iron and Ashland counties that restricted walleye harvest to one fish over 14 inches long in the daily bag of five. It was expected that with adequate survival of naturally produced or stocked fish, 30-50% of all walleye 10 inches and longer in early spring surveys would be 15 inches or longer, assuming good angler compliance.

Biologists have evaluated the impact of this regulation and determined that it is working on most of the 23 Ashland and Iron county waters where it was applied. But on five lakes (Bearskull, Owl, Fisher, and Upper Clam), low survival of naturally produced or stocked fish and unsustainably high harvest of legal-size walleye shorter than 14 inches have resulted in walleye population characteristics that fail to meet our stated objectives. The walleye populations in these five lakes have declined and are now dominated by relatively few large adult fish. On two other lakes (Upper and Lower Springstead), loss of public access has resulted in the Department's inability to enforce or evaluate special regulations.

Biologists are now proposing to manage these seven walleye populations more appropriately by restoring the 15-inch minimum length limit, which is the more biologically sound option on all of these lakes and the more enforceable option on at least two of them.

- **Do you favor changing the one-over-14 regulation to the statewide minimum length limit of 15 inches for walleye on Bearskull, Owl, Fisher, Upper Clam, and Upper and Lower Springstead lakes in Iron and Ashland counties?**

14. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

BARRON COUNTY

Please see questions 10-12 regarding smelt-induced problems in walleye lakes.

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

BAYFIELD COUNTY

QUESTION 15 – Bayfield County trout lakes

Nymphia, Overby, Beaver and Little Star Lakes are located within the Chequamegon National Forest in Bayfield County. All of the lakes have historically been managed as trout lakes. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the management of these lakes shifted to having the lakes open for fishing in alternate years. The reason behind this change was to provide a quality trout fishing opportunity for anglers. Initially the change appeared to work, stocked trout were surviving an entire year in the lakes and were available for anglers to catch the following year when the season was open at average sizes of 13 inches. However, in recent years the DNR has received complaints about lack of trout on these waters. A creel survey was initiated in 2007 and continued in 2008. The results of the creel surveys indicate that the trout are no longer surviving an entire year so that they can be caught by anglers the following year. The reasons for this lack of survival remain unclear.

The management objectives of providing a trout angling opportunity in these lakes were not being met by the current regulation and stocking regiment. It is recommended that these waterbodies be open to fishing annually and stocked annually to accomplish the goal of providing this unique trout angling opportunity.

Balsam Lake in Bayfield County is also located in the Chequamegon Nation Forest and is no longer accessible to stock with trout. The last time Balsam Lake was stocked was in 1998. Therefore the

Department is recommending removing Balsam Lake from the trout regulation pamphlet so that anglers are aware of the change in management.

- **Do you support changing the trout fishing regulations from alternate year open fishing season to an annual open fishing season for four managed trout lakes (Nymphia, Overby, Little Star and Beaver Lakes) in Bayfield County?**

15. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

BURNETT COUNTY

QUESTION 16 – Twenty-six Lake bass regulation change

Twenty–Six Lake is a 230 acre, infertile, spring-fed lake in northern Burnett County. Largemouth bass are very abundant, but growth is so poor that few reach the minimum 14 inch minimum harvest restriction. Bluegill growth and size quality is also poor with only 2% of the population \geq 7 inches. Other sport species except musky are rare leaving little opportunity to harvest anything for the table.

- **Do you favor a no minimum size, 5 fish daily bag limit for bass on Twenty–Six Lake?**

16. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

MANITOWOC COUNTY

QUESTION 17 – Silver Lake northern pike regulations

The management objective of this proposed regulation is to increase the density of adult northern pike by reducing harvest. Increased northern pike density in the lake should lead to increased reproduction resulting in establishment of a self sustaining population that will help maintain a desirable fish population in Silver Lake.

Silver Lake is located in east central Wisconsin, near the City of Manitowoc. It is a 69 acre lake that lies in a zone of glacial outwash with a maximum depth of forty-three feet and a mean depth of sixteen feet. Historically water quality in Silver Lake was considered to be poor and the fish community was dominated by carp and bullhead. To address the undesirable fishery and the poor water quality of the lake, a complete lake restoration project was undertaken. In late 2001 construction of a berm was began to isolate the lake from Silver Creek. Following the completion of the berm, the lake was treated with rotenone to eradicate the fish population (Fall 2003), treated with alum to reduce the phosphorus level of lake water (spring 2004) and was restocked with a desirable mix of fish species (beginning in 2004).

The goals of the Silver Lake Restoration Project are to develop and maintain a fish community that is self-sustaining, that exhibits a quality size distribution and one that protects the water quality of the lake

through bio-manipulation of the fish community by maintaining a high level of predator abundance. It was recommended that greater minimum size limits and reduced bag limits be placed on most species of fish that were reintroduced into the lake following the rotenone and alum treatments. Current regulations include an 18" minimum size limit and a 1 bag limit for largemouth bass, 18" minimum, 3 bag limit for walleye and a 10 fish per day bag limit for panfish. Northern pike regulations were set at the default 26" minimum size and 2 fish daily bag limit.

During the past several winters local citizens have been concerned that too many northern pike have been harvested from the lake during the ice fishing season. Most are concerned that this harvest is hurting the pike population because these fish are being harvested after only spawning once. Others are concerned because that with the reduction in pike numbers, the overall abundance of predators in the lake is not what it should be to protect the lake from any incidental reintroduction of carp as was the case in 2008 when high creek flows allowed carp to access Silver Lake. Fall electrofishing data indicates that natural reproduction of northern pike has been limited and the catch rate for adult northern pike has been decreasing.

- **Do you favor changing the northern pike size and bag limit on Silver Lake, Manitowoc County from a 26" minimum size limit with a 2 fish per daily bag to a 32" minimum size limit with a daily bag limit of 1 fish?**

17. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

IRON COUNTY

Please see question 14 regarding walleye regulation changes in six Ashland and Iron County lakes.

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

ONEIDA COUNTY

QUESTION 18 – Burrows lake bass regulations

Under the current 14-inch minimum length limit, bass recruitment and early growth in Burrows Lake is suppressed by over-abundant, stunted bluegill. The best remedy for overabundant bluegill is increased predation by bass, but bass numbers are low with poor size. An 18-inch minimum length limit will protect spawners and improve bass size and numbers, resulting in increased predation on stunted bluegill.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 14 inches to 18 inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 to 1 in total for bass on Burrows Lake, Oneida County?**

18. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 19 – Wisconsin River walleye regulation—administrative correction

An error was detected in Wisconsin Administrative Code which improperly lists walleye harvest regulations as “no minimum” rather than the 15 inch minimum which was adopted in 1994 for the Wisconsin River downstream from St. Regis Dam in Rhinelander. This proposal will take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register.

- **Do you favor correcting walleye regulations in Wisconsin Administrative Code for the Wisconsin River, downstream from the St. Regis dam in Rhinelander, in Oneida County?**

19. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

POLK COUNTY

QUESTION 20 – Big Round Lake walleye regulations

Big Round Lake was surveyed in 2007. The 2007 adult walleye population was only 1.4 fish per acre. This is 62% lower when compared to surveys in 1989 and 1997 when 3.7 adult walleye per acre were present. The size structure of walleye in 2007 was also poorer. Only 7% of the walleye were larger than 20 inches. In comparison, in 1989, 52% of the walleye were larger than 20 inches.

A comprehensive management plan has been generated for Big Round Lake in cooperation and support of the Big Round Lake District. This plan includes improving walleye densities by stocking large fingerling walleye and increasing the walleye minimum length limit from 15 to 18 inches. Large fingerling walleye have been shown to survive better than small fingerling walleye in local waters and walleye recruitment is expected to increase because of this effort. However, the cost of stocking large fingerling walleye is very expensive and considering the decline of larger fish in Big Round Lake it was determined that an 18 inch length limit would be best to allow the fishery to recover. In addition, most female walleye do not mature until they are 16-18 inches in Big Round Lake and the existing 15 inch minimum length limit does not offer any protection of female walleye which are important if natural reproduction is to occur again in the future.

Therefore, in an effort to reduce angler harvest of small walleye, improve the adult population to historic levels and to increase the size structure of 20 inch and larger walleye do you support the following regulation?

- **Do you favor an 18 inch minimum length limit with a daily bag limit of 3 for walleye in Big Round Lake?**

20. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

SAUK COUNTY

QUESTION 21 – Manley Creek trout regulations

Manley Creek is a moderate size (4-7cfs, 2 miles) native brook trout in east central Sauk County. Native brook trout streams are not common in southern Wisconsin. Brook trout streams which provide quality

size fish are rare. Prior to 1997 it supported few brook trout because of its wide, shallow habitat. It was lightly fished due to the dense, tag alder choked streambanks. Habitat improvement work from 1997-2002 has enhanced fishability and increased the number of the 4-8" size group of native brook trout of Manley Creek to extreme levels, 1,800 per mile. Today, the abundant brook trout are easily caught but not harvested because of the existing 9" minimum size limit. Anglers are unable to catch larger size fish due to both the high abundance of 4-8" fish and limited number of trout 9" and larger.

Reduction of the dense, small size brook trout will create living space and food to allow, the density of larger size trout to increase from 20-60/mile (annual variability) to at least 120/mile, noted elsewhere in a stocked, but lightly fished, similar brook trout stream which has a lower density of 4-8" brook trout (350/mile). The 9" maximum size limit will allow harvest of the overabundant smaller size brook trout and provide an opportunity for anglers to catch and release larger size fish, which will be protected from harvest. It is expected brook trout up to 15" can be produced. The proposed rule will have a ten year sunset, after which time it will revert back to the standard county rule of 9" minimum size, 3 bag limit, if positive results are not demonstrated. No bait restriction will apply.

- **Do you favor changing the 9" minimum size, 3 bag limit to a 9" maximum size limit with a 5 daily bag limit on Manley Creek?**

21. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

VILAS COUNTY

Also see questions 10-12 regarding smelt-induced problems in walleye lakes.

QUESTION 22 – Big Sand Lake muskellunge regulation

The current 34 inch minimum size limit is not adequate to produce a trophy muskellunge fishery. It is recommended that the muskellunge regulation on this lake be changed to a 50 inch minimum length limit. This regulation should improve muskellunge catch rates, increase numbers of adults, and provide an opportunity to catch fish 50 inches and longer. Big Sand Lake has the size, growth rate, and forage base to produce greater numbers of trophy muskellunge. This regulation passed as a resolution introduced from the floor at the annual Conservation Congress spring rules hearing in Vilas County in 2008.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 34 inches to 50 inches for muskellunge on Big Sand Lake in Vilas County?**

22. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 23 – Kentuck Lake muskellunge regulation

The current 40 inch minimum size restriction has been in effect on Kentuck Lake since 1993 and has not produced significant numbers of fish longer than 45 inches in length. This lake has the potential to grow trophy muskellunge if given additional protection from harvest. It is recommended that the muskellunge regulation on this lake be changed to a 50 inch minimum length limit. This regulation should improve muskellunge catch rates, increase numbers of adults, and provide an opportunity to catch fish 50 inches

and longer. This regulation passed as a resolution introduced from the floor at the annual Conservation Congress rules hearing in Vilas County in 2008.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 40 inches to 50 inches for muskellunge on Kentuck Lake in Vilas County?**

23. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 24 – Long Lake muskellunge regulation

The current 34 inch minimum size limit is not adequate to produce a trophy muskellunge fishery. It is recommended that the muskellunge regulation on this lake be changed to a 50 inch minimum length limit. This regulation should improve muskellunge catch rates, increase numbers of adults, and provide an opportunity to catch fish 50 inches and longer. Long Lake has the size, growth rate, and forage base to produce greater numbers of trophy muskellunge. This regulation passed as a resolution introduced from the floor at the annual Conservation Congress spring rules hearing in Vilas County in 2008 and has the support of the Long Lake of Phelps Lake District.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 34 inches to 50 inches for muskellunge on Long Lake in Vilas County?**

24. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 25 – Twin Lakes Chain walleye regulations

The Twin Lake Chain (North and South Twin Lakes) has strong natural walleye recruitment and a more liberal regulation is needed to promote harvest of smaller walleye, improve growth rates, and increase the numbers of larger fish. The current 15 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish bag limit has not provided this and a 2007 survey found that 91% of the adult population was less than 15 inches in length. It is recommended that the walleye regulation on this chain be changed to a no minimum size limit, but fish 14 to 18 inches in total length may not be kept, and only one fish over 18 inches is allowed with a 3 fish bag limit. This regulation should improve walleye harvest rates, increase the numbers of larger adult fish present, provide additional angler opportunity, and protect female walleye for two to three spawning seasons.

- **Do you favor removing the minimum length limit of 15 inches and replacing it with no minimum size limit, but fish 14 to 18 inches in total length may not be kept, and only one fish over 18.0 inches is allowed and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 to 3 in total for walleye on North and South Twin Lakes in Vilas County?**

25. YES _____ NO _____

QUESTION 26 – White Sand Lake (T42N R7E Sec 27) walleye regulation

Due to low natural recruitment and harvest of smaller walleye the current protected slot size limit is not adequate to protect smaller walleye. It is recommended that the walleye regulation on this lake be changed to an 18 inch minimum and 3 fish bag limit. This regulation should improve walleye catch rates, increase numbers of adults present providing additional angler opportunity, protect female walleye for an additional two to three spawning seasons, and hopefully increase natural walleye recruitment.

- Do you favor removing the 14 to 18 inch protected slot and setting the minimum length limit at 18 inches in total length and keeping the daily bag limit of 3 fish in total for walleye on White Sand Lake (T42N R7E Sec 27) in Vilas County?

26. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

WASHINGTON COUNTY

QUESTION 27 – Urban pond proposals

The Department proposes to add Regner (Washington county) and Foxbrook (Waukesha county) ponds to the State's urban fishing program, in which there would be a continuous open season but only persons under 16 years of age or disabled may fish (pursuant to s 29.193 (3) (a), (b) or (c), Stats.) from the second Saturday in March to but not including the last Saturday in April, and in which persons may possess 1 largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleye, sauger or hybrid in total; 10 panfish and bullheads in total; 3 trout and salmon in total, and an unlimited number of rough fish.

- Do you support adding Regner (Washington) and Foxbrook (Waukesha) ponds to the State's urban fishing program?

27. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

WAUKESHA COUNTY

Please see question 27 regarding urban ponds.

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

WAUSHARA COUNTY

QUESTION 28 – Long Lake trout regulation changes

Long Lake is a 272 acre clear water seepage lake with a maximum depth of 71 feet. Long Lake had historically been managed as a two story fishery and stocked with trout. As part of the current management plan, local fishing clubs and the DNR began a coldwater stocking program. The current regulation closes the trout fishing season on September 30. This proposal would extend the season for trout until the first Sunday in March and increase opportunity by allowing trout to be harvested through the ice.

- Do you support extending the open season for trout, on Long Lake in the Town of Saxeville, Waushara County, from the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March?

28. YES _____ NO _____