

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
9 am – 3 pm, Tuesday, January 13, 2009
Lakeshore Technical College – Cleveland

Draft Notes – Prepared by John Nelson and Bill Horns

Present: Bill Horns, Chris Groth, Tammie Paoli, Scott Hansen, Steve Hogler, Dave Rowe, Brad Eggold, Mike Donofrio, Steve Fajfer, John Nelson, Paul Peeters, and George Boronow.

- 1. Review/revise agenda – added items on climate change, muskies and Ganaraska surpluses**
- 2. Review/approve meeting notes from December 8, 2008 – approved**
- 3. Designate a note taker – John Nelson volunteered**
- 4. Updates**

4/a/i. Skamania eggs - Brad received a memo from Brian Briedert that eggs were likely available. Sue Marcquenski asked that we back off a bit from our request because of the complexity of the situation, especially at KMSFH. Indiana may be able to comply with the testing requirements, taking 60 lethal tests and 150 ovarian fluid samples. Brad stated that someone should be asked to get some number of eggs from Indiana to KMSFH. Paul stated that if we want all three strains of steelhead, we need to pursue this request. Steve F. stated that it does take extra work for KMSFH staff to raise additional strains and that they have Chinook on the station, further adding to their burden in light of staff shortfalls there. He noted that it should be up to John Komassa and KMSFH staff to determine if they have space/time available to raise the fish. 75K of eggs should be adequate to produce 50K fish at stocking. The Team stated that the other strains could be reduced by an equal amount. Indiana started spawning Skamania on January 6th and will spawn once weekly for the next month or so. Our request is to be made now or never for 2009. Bill would have to ask Al Kaas to make the formal request and we would have to get clearance from DATCP. **The Team voted to have Bill make a request to Al assuming that John K. and KMSFH staff are OK with it.**

4/a/ii. Commercial fishing letter – letter pending

4/a/iii. NER Sturgeon Trailer - We had made some grant commitments to raise sturgeon in the Manitowoc River watershed. This request is to move the trailer to the Kewaunee River at the Besadny facility. The question was raised regarding whether the fish would home back to the Kewaunee River and whether the river had sturgeon stocks historically. Brad noted that there are only notes that the stocks were extirpated at Kewaunee. Paul stated that at the least, putting the fish in the Kewaunee would test whether sturgeon do in fact imprint to a watershed. Steve H. said that we needed to check on a discharge permit for the Kewaunee and he would do that. The stocking location could be the Manitowoc River. The Team voted in favor of moving the trailer to the Kewaunee for 2009. **Steve H. will talk to Rob Elliot about our decision.** (Brad had already mentioned it to Rob.)

4/a/iv. Net pens - Bill stated that we need to move forward with this issue brief. Paul felt that we needed the Lake Superior data to move forward. Steve F. stated that while there is definite benefit to releasing larger fish, the need for a discharge permit and the issue of “commercialization” of net pens was significant. It was felt that the Lake Superior Team should weigh in on it since it is a statewide issue. **It was decided that Bill would contact the Lake Superior folks before the LMFT made a decision.**

4/a/v. Coop research Agreements – There was a discussion on what permit/license was appropriate for cooperating with outside groups/agencies particularly related to egg taking and the disposition of the resulting fish. It was stated that neither the Scientific Collectors permit or the Scientific Research License would provide for the resulting fish to be given to private industry to be used as brood stock. According to Brad, the whole issue surfaced because a researcher wanted Department cooperation in obtaining eggs to establish brood stock for commercial use. George raised a concern about how to respond to requests to collect eggs for the purpose of creating private brood stocks. **Bill stated that he would write a broad issue brief that addressed both situations.**

4/a/vi. SCAA modeling group – There is some interest in rejuvenating this group.

4/b. Coho problems at WRSFH – Steve F. reported that we had taken 1.2M coho eggs with the expectation of producing 600K fry. However, the hatch has been closer to 25% and he expects 300K – 400K fry production. There are several possible reasons for the poor hatch. 500K was the quota for coho. Illinois has reported closer to 75% hatch and said that the eggs they got were some of the best ever. Steve also reported that KMSFH recently lost 90K Chinook out of the 250K they were holding because of a problem with back-up at the Annex. We may be able to make up some of the Chinook loss from Illinois and Indiana production. The Chinook at WRSFH are doing well and Steve expects to have a better handle on the situation by the end of February. We should hold off any notice to the public until we have more definite numbers to report. Steve F. later reported that Illinois may have extra Coho for stocking and the Team decided that those fish should be stocked in Wisconsin and not at Winthrop Harbor.

4/c. Stocking Illinois produced Chinook – Illinois reported to Al K. that they would have Chinook up to 80/lb. to stock in March rather than our usual May stocking. John K. asked if the fish could be stocked at Winthrop Harbor, 8 miles from the border. It was noted that the fish need to be marked in some manner. It was also suggested that the fish could be brought to KMSFH to finish them because of the 90K loss. There was much speculation about if Illinois could help us make up for some of the 90K loss and **the Team asked Bill to have Al K. gather the facts.** The Team agreed that we wanted bigger fish and wanted them stocked in Wisconsin.

4/d. GL Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act proposals – The deadline is January 23 for grant proposals. Dave R's proposal submitted last year for micro radio transmitter tags to be placed in musky oviducts to monitor egg deposition sites has been approved for funding.

4/e. LM Commercial Fishing Board Meeting – January 26th. They will discuss the minimum catch rule and reallocation of whitefish quotas at their meeting.

4/f. Vessel Acquisition – We have purchased old plans for \$3500 and are preparing to bid out plan modification by the end of January. It may be possible to get the new plans back in 1-2 months and then begin the bidding process for construction after notifying the FM board. It will likely cost \$25-30K to modify the plans. **Brad will write a memo outlining the timeline.** It was stated that construction and acquisition of the new boat might be eligible for inclusion in the national stimulus plan.

4/g. Cormorants – There was a conference call on the issue of cormorant control among affected agencies. Control will be similar this year to 2008's effort. Green bay perch are not showing up in the numbers that are expected and Paul suggested that cormorants could be a factor as research suggests that they could account for up to 30% of the mortality. Paul is trying to complete the EA process for control and would need to go back to the public if greater control was desired than was presented to the public.

4/h. NRB consideration of FH-21-08 (minimum catch) – This issue is going to the NRB at their meeting on January 28th. A hearing is expected to occur in March and adoption could occur in summer.

4/i. Michigan BNT evaluation – Nothing to report.

4/j. Annual reports to LMC – Bill needs the reports by April 1 so, it is time to think about these. The reports should include updated modeling.

4/k. USFWS lake trout production – USFWS is having trouble reaching production quotas.

4/l. Lakewide Trawl Survey – Preliminary USFWS data indicate dramatic declines in dreissenid mussels and increases in round gobies. Department trawl data from Green Bay, reported by Steve H. were not consistent with those results.

4/m. Poor Returning stocking products – The LMFT needs to provide more information/input on what hatchery products are least valued. After Splake, fall fingerling browns and coho are the low hanging fruit. The team wants a diversity of products maintained. Sturgeon Bay walleye stocks may be dependent on stocking and Scott is assessing the walleye. He would like to finish the evaluation before giving up the 100K quota on walleye. The Team considered Arlees a medium priority, although some team members would forego the Arlees before loosing the fingerling salmonines.

4/n. Yellow Perch Task Force – Brad and Tammie went to the meeting. Tom Lauer stated that we need to maintain fishing mortality rates around 0.1 - 0.2. We were at around .06 and could increase fishing mortality via regulation change but, the task force could not predict impact of rule changes on mortality rates. Illinois may shift to assessment protocols similar to Wisconsin with later fall surveys like Brad's. Brad will supply minutes from the meeting to us. It was suggested that it may be time to review the 50/50 sport/commercial allocation policy.

4/q. Climate Change – The climate change group (Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Issues?) is looking at brook and brown trout impacts only at this point. There is also a Great Lakes coastal group that needs to identify risks, data needs and adaptation strategies?

4/r. Muskies – We may be getting the fish from Ontario relatively soon. There may be a one-time exemption granted by DATCP for the importation and we expect to receive 1,200 fish to be stocked into the three brood lakes.

4/s. Ganaraska Surplus – There is a 20K surplus at this time. Brad will ask if there is room at KMSFH to grow them larger. If not, they should be stocked out.

5. Work planning – The deadline for regions is February 4th. There will be \$306K in Salmon Stamp, \$72,520 in Seg and \$78,030 in GPR available. The GPR and Seg allotments are divided: 2% CO, 15% NOR, 55% NER and 28% SER. We need to cut \$29,350. NOR will likely accept the cut based on pro-rating. For Lake Michigan, further pro-rating of the cut down means that we need to cut \$8,130 from Brad's group, \$3705 from Paul's, and \$12,402 from Mike D's. If FY09 Salmon Stamp projects are carried over to FY10-11 at present funding levels, there will be \$20K available for new projects. Bill suggested writing a project to run an analysis of creel data to determine if alternate year surveys would be sufficient. **Bill will talk to Paul Rasmussen and/or Mike Hansen about a study design and potential cost associated with analysis.**

6. Next meeting – Wednesday, March 11, 2009 @ LTC.

Note: Bill will check into out-of-state travel to the GLFC meeting.