

**Lake Michigan Fisheries Team**  
**9 am – 3 pm, Wednesday, April 16, 2008**  
**Conference Dining Room**  
**Lakeshore Technical College**  
**Cleveland, WI**

**Draft Notes –prepared by Bill Horns and Chris Groth**

**Team Members:** Policy Committee: Bill Horns, Paul Peeters, Brad Eggold. Other Members: Tammie Paoli, Steve Hogler, David Rowe, Scott Hansen, Chris Groth, Mike Donofrio, Pradeep Hirethota, Ron Preder, Steve Fajfer, Wild Rose, Pete Flaherty.

**Attendance:** Bill Horns, Paul Peeters, Brad Eggold, Steve Hogler, Dave Rowe, Scott Hansen, Chris Groth, Mike Donofrio, Pradeep Hirethota, Ron Preder, Steve Fajfer, Randy Link, Sue Marcquenski, Randy Schumacher

1. **Review/revise agenda**
2. **Review/approve meeting notes from February 14, 2008**
3. **Brief updates**

The following topics were discussed briefly.

- 2008 Lake Committee meetings
- Boat replacement project
- FH-13-08, commercial fishing re-write
  - Going before NR Board in May.
  - Includes housekeeping provisions to clarify that entrapment nets are legal gear in Green Bay. Experimental trap netting for yellow perch may be conducted subject to provisions of cooperative agreements that may be reached between by the Department and commercial fishers. Dennis Hickey has expressed an interest. He should work with Mike Donofrio if he wishes to pursue it.
- IS-34-06, invasive species rule
  - Going before NR Board in May.
- Status of minimum catch requirement legislation and rule-making
- Cormorant control in 2008
  - The Environmental Assessment (EA) needed to support the control program is near completion.
- Lake trout rehab plan status and process
  - Bill was asked to discuss with the LMC the chart showing time series of lake trout stocking in Lake Michigan.
- Oak Creek/Elm Road headaches
- Continued interest in whitefish quotas for Zone 3. Discussion topics:
  - Status of knowledge and research about genetic stocks.
  - Allocation issues and role of LMCFB.
  - Seger interest in floy tagging. LMFT would not support tagging except as part of an adequately designed and funded study.
  - A full proposal from Brian Sloss was requested by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. This proposal if funded would answer the question about spatial and temporal movement of all the whitefish stocks via genetic markers.
- Tom Hansen's proposal to outlaw the sale by anglers of personally caught trout and salmon eggs
  - Personal use is more of VHS threat than sale.
  - Would require statutory change.
  - No consensus to proceed.

- Status of OTC mass marking project
- Pete LeClair letter regarding whitefish in Zone 3
- Continuing discussions regarding placement of wind turbines in Lake Michigan
- Michigan/Wisconsin boundary issues
  - Inconsistency in sturgeon regulations remains unresolved.
  - Dave distributed updated musky growth model.
  - Sue lauded Dave's VHS decision matrix for musky.
- April 19 meeting of WF/GLSFC
  - Bill, Ron, Mike D, and Dave plan to attend.
  - Bill was asked to discuss the NR 25 rewrite at the meeting.
- Status of Green Bay yellow perch modeling.
  - Tammie Paoli sent all 2007 yellow perch files to John Netto at USFWS in mid-February. We are looking forward to having the model updated as soon as possible.
- Manitowoc sturgeon trailer issue
  - Bill forwarded LMFT statement to FM Board on February 29, with e-mail copies sent to LMFT.
  - FM Board has not acted; Bill will follow up.

#### 4. Chinook stocking.

Background. The Salmonid Working Group is throwing up red flags. Our chinook stocking will be down significantly in 2008. I recommend that we consider unilaterally reducing our chinook stocking goal for 2009. Apart from ecological issues related to forage, would this offer special benefits in the production of steelhead, browns, and/or cohos?

Proposed Action. Discuss. It is premature to make a final decision on this, but the Team can decide whether to pursue further discussion of it, and, if so, what additional information should be brought forward for consideration.

Meeting Action:

- Discussion
  - Wild Rose production for 2008 fingerling stocking will be down from 1.125M to 0.75M because of Wild Rose transition and VHS.
  - Michigan production may also be down, as indicated in notes from MI/WI boundary meeting.
  - Paul estimated that the Wisconsin reduction amounts to about 4% of lakewide production of fingerlings (stocking plus natural reproduction)
  - Concerns were raised about buy in from other states and user groups.
  - Decision regarding 2009 stocking must be made by August.
- Decision
  - Steve will analyze possible benefits for production of coho, steelhead, and brown trout if the chinook production goal were reduced to 0.75M fingerlings.
  - Bill will bring stocking reduction of all salmonids to the Lake Michigan Committee for discussion.
  - Next meeting will be follow up discussion

#### 5. Steelhead issues.

Background. A handful of questions have been raised related to the steelhead program 1) Because early returns of Ganaraska and Chambers Creek steelhead were poor crews have spawned some of the unclipped steelhead collected at the Root River facility and BAFF. The thought has been to rear those eggs as a back-up for stocking non-weir streams in the event that egg-take goals from marked Ganaraska and Chambers Creek fish are not met. Opinions are mixed about this tactic. 2) Randy Link has raised concerns regarding the wisdom of trying to rear Ganaraskas beyond six inches, as we have recommended. 3) Sue Marcquenski has raised concerns regarding the size of steelhead returning to the

Root River. 4) We have not yet identified location for holding Skamania brood fish that is compatible with our VHS control policies. 5) If sufficient Ganaraska and Chambers Creek eggs are taken, Randy could produce 60K of each strain for stocking as fall fingerlings in 2008, without compromising production goals for 2009 yearlings. 6) We budgeted \$21K of Salmon Stamp funds for developing a comprehensive data base for our feral brood stock management. I was not able to recruit a suitable LTE for the work. Should the money be re-programmed to address steelhead information needs in 2008-09?

Proposed Action. 1) Discuss and decide whether or not to rear the eggs. 2) Discuss and consider revising our past rearing goals related to size of Ganaraskas. 3) Discuss. 4) Discuss. 5) Discuss and decide whether or not to ask Randy to produce the fingerlings. 6) Discuss and decide whether or not to recommend reprogramming the funds.

Meeting Action:

- Discussion
  - Randy believes that we will have enough Ganaraska and Chambers eggs, but urged us to hold the orphan eggs until it is clear that production goals are met.
  - Paul encouraged crews to collect eggs throughout the runs.
  - Randy described problems that arise when Ganaraskas are raised beyond 6 inches.
  - Sue argued for allowing the production of smaller Ganaraskas, to assure good condition of stocked fish
  - Mike D suggested that smaller earlier-stocked fish could go in non-brood rivers.
  - Randy noted that if smaller size-at stocking were approved, production costs could be saved by turning off the boiler and holding the fish longer.
  - Steve argued that available research supports stocking larger fish and that sustaining the current size-at-stocking goal of 160 mm would be wise.
  - Paul Peeters suggested reducing the production goal to 250K yearlings, but retaining the size-at-stocking goal of 160 mm.
  - Three options were discussed for yearling stocking in 2009:
    - Raise 350K fish to 160 mm, stock in April.
    - Raise 250K fish to 160 mm, stock in April.
    - Raise 350 fish to whatever length is possible and stock them out as dictated by health.
  - Sue M summarized concerns regarding size of steelhead returning to Root River, noting slow growth, low body fat, and small egg size.
- Decision
  - Select the second option (seek to stock 250K 160mm yearlings in April of 2009).
  - Steve and Randy will develop a study design to use the available SS funds to study aspects of this issue during 2008-09.
  - RRSF will remain in operation for 2 more weeks unless we detect very low numbers of fish. Randy said that he needs about 25 – 30 females or 50,000 eggs to make it worth a spawning day.

## 6. Review of LMFT charge and procedures

Background. 1) The FM Board has formalized new guidance regarding standing teams and task forces. 2) Brad has raised some points about meeting notes.

Proposed Action. Discuss. Consider changes to LMFT operating procedures.

Meeting Action:

- Discussion
  - Brad noted that in the recent past LMFT notes have been sketchy.
  - FM Board guidelines discuss note taking.
- Decision
  - We will assign a note-taker for each meeting. The note taker each week will designate the note-taker for the next week. The note-taker will send notes to Bill, who will

compile draft notes for distribution to the Team. Chris volunteered to take notes for this meeting and designated Paul Peeters for next time.

## **7. Quota year**

Background. Mark Maricque has asked the Department to consider changing the commercial fishing license year from July-June to Jan-Dec or April-March. The LM Commercial Fishing Board endorsed a Jan-Dec license year.

Proposed Action. Discuss

Meeting Action:

- Discussion
  - Some considerations that must be explored before advancing a rule change:
    - Complications during transition year (e.g., quotas, fees, minimum catch requirements).
    - Effects on Lake Superior State/Tribal Agreement if Lake Superior were included (not essential).
    - Must review the dozens of places where the license year is cited in the existing code to anticipate all complications.
- Decision
  - LMFT has no problems in principle with the change, and will continue to explore it.

## **8. Next meeting date and location**

May 29, 2008 @ Lakeshore Technical College, Cleveland, WI