

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
9 am to 3 pm, Thursday, June 1, 2006
DNR Service Center
1155 Pilgrim Rd., Plymouth

Notes –prepared by Bill Horns

Attendance: Horns, Kapuscinski, Hogler, Mangan, Fajfer, Geihtbrock, Peeters, Marcquenski, Opgenorth, Hirethota, Donofrio, Hansen, Schumacher, Eggold, Coffaro, Link, Hewett~

1. Review/revise/cull agenda

2. Review/approve meeting notes from May 4, 2006

3. Brief updates

Time will be allowed for short updates and reminders of topics of interest. The following will be mentioned. Any of these could be elevated to discussion or action items if needed and time permitting.

- NRDA project development
 - I will inquire about the status of the Strawberry Creek flow enhancement project proposal.
 - Mike Donofrio is working on a new Menominee River sturgeon upstream passage project proposal, which will tie together other work by DNR and partners.
- Potential research connected with new artificial reefs to be constructed in SER
 - The reefs are going in as mitigation for shoreline work by WE Energies in connection with the Oak Creek/Elm Road facility. We believe funding will be available for follow-up studies, and the reefs will provide an opportunity for independent scientists to study colonization of fresh substrate by native and non-native benthos.
- Flies in the cormorant funding ointment
 - NRDA settlement funds cannot be used for cormorant control, so an alternative source of funding will be found.
- Lake trout research
 - I've been working with John Janssen, Matt Rise, and Brian Sloss to develop a revised proposal addressing lake trout early life history and genetics on the Mid Lake Reef Complex. We are cautiously optimistic about Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act funding.
- High capacity well at the Kewaunee Salmon Pond.
 - As discussed at the LMFT's January 26 meeting, Paul has drafted a letter of support for this project, for Mike Staggs signature. After allowing time for comments, I will ask Mike to sign it.

4. Stocking quotas for 2007-08

Background. Stocking quotas are due by June 23.

Action. The Team agreed to the following approach: 1) NER (led by Paul) and SER (led by Brad) will develop base quotas for salmonines. These will be target numbers, by site, that add up to the desired lake-wide stocking levels for each species. The numbers will not be reduced to reflect current production limitations. For nearshore rainbow, they may show differences in distribution of fish in odd and even years. 2) Work quotas submitted by biologists will be the same as the base quotas, except when reductions are needed or local reallocations are desired. 3) When fish production issues do not allow enough production to meet the work quotas of a species or strain, or when increased production of a species or strain is planned to compensate for the shortfall of another species or strain

(e.g., Chambers Creek to make up for Ganaraska shortfall), the following rules will be followed to allocate the fish that are produced: a) Stocking of feral brood stock species (chinook, coho, steelhead, and seeforellen brown trout) will not be cut or increased in brood streams (Strawberry, Kewaunee, Root). b) Stocking by species, strain, and age (fingerling and yearling) of strains of feral brood stock species in non-brood streams will be proportional to the work quotas in the non-brood streams. In other words, the overall production of yearling coho is cut 10%, the work quota for each non-brood stream is cut by a common percentage which will be slightly more than 10% because the brood streams are held harmless. c) Stocking by species, strain, and age of other species (domestic browns, brook trout, rainbow trout, and splake) will be in proportion to the work quotas. Thus, if production of Arlees is cut 10%, the work quota for each stocking site (including brood streams) is cut 10%. d) Minimums may be set by Operations (in consultation with the LMFT) for number of fish on a truck or number of fish to be stocked at a site. If a minimum is not met, the Regional Fisheries Supervisor will be consulted to determine how to reallocate the fish within the region. e) The LMFT will be advised as early as possible about adjustments to stocking distributions expressed in the work quotas.

5. M&M/GLSFC issues

Background. At a recent M&M sport fishing club meeting Matt fielded some questions that he would like to discuss with the LMFT. The club was interested in helping to rear walleye to supplement Green Bay stocking, adding a net pen to hold more salmon prior to release in the spring, and helping rear brown trout to increase their abundance in the Bay.

Action. Discussion. LMFT member expressed general opposition to extending walleye stocking to areas that are not already stocked. A number of aspects of the use of net pens were discussed. Brad, Sue, and Matt will draft a policy statement for later review by the LMFT.

6. Commercial gear at the surface in Green Bay

Background. Tom Hansen reports that trap nets are being fished on Green Bay with lines and floats at the surface. Complaints have been received. Commercial gear at the surface has been a long-standing concern of the Federation and the Great Lakes Study Committee.

Action. Discussion. Tom Hansen will bring the issue to the Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board for discussion. Hansen noted that the current NR 25 rewrite is focused on implementing recommendations of the Commercial Fisheries Task Force. Per advice from Flaherty, it would be inappropriate to deal with other major issues other than housekeeping without having public input in the process. Concerns that issues outside the LE/Task Force recommendations are too controversial and could adversely affect enactment of the current rewrite needed to complete the Commercial Fish law rewrite.

7. Concerns of Jeff Weborg regarding NR 25 re-write

Background. Jeff Weborg has raised some specific concerns regarding NR 25 revisions. Tom Hansen's memo on that subject was circulated to all LMFT core members on May 10.

Action. Discussion.

8. Steelhead recommendations

Background. On May 4 the LMFT recommended 1) that stocking of the Kamloops strain be discontinued after 2007, 2) that no steps be taken to create a captive or feral brood stock of either nearshore strain, 3) that we continue to stock 60K to 120K Arlees as long as possible using the present egg source, and 4) that apart from starting Arlee eggs, no nearshore rainbows be reared at KMSFH.

Action. The LMFT ratified these recommendations.

9. Yellow perch rule making recommendation

Background. On May 4 the LMFT recommended initiation of a pink sheet (“Rule Agenda/Board Action Checklist”) stating the intent to develop a rule that would automate the setting of yellow perch harvest limits.

Action. The LMFT ratified this recommendation (7-3 vote by Core Group, 4-0 vote by Policy Committee). The LMFT rejected a proposal to submit a pink sheet calling for bringing a rule to the NRB in September for approval of hearings (3-6 vote by Core Group, 2-2 vote by Policy Committee), but accepted a proposal to seek approval of hearings in February (6-3 vote by Core Group, 4-0 vote by Policy Committee).

10. Chub gill net depths recommendation

Background. On May 4 the LMFT recommended eliminating the sunset clause that would cause minimum depths for gill nets to revert to those in effect prior to adoption of NRB Order FH-34-01.

Action. The LMFT ratified this recommendation.

11. Cormorants

Background. A limited control program has been initiated. Cecil B dePeeters has produced a video record of events.

Action. We enjoyed the show.

12. Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Virus

Background. The recent discovery of VHSV is a major concern in the Great Lakes. It has been documented in muskies, drum, smallmouth bass, crappies and bluegill in Lake St. Clair and points down stream. On May 17, Sue Marcquenski circulated an e-mail summarizing the situation. Sue will attend the meeting to discuss this topic.

Action. Discussion.

13. Sturgeon issues

Background. Sturgeon are or have recently been the focus of stocking, research, and rule-making in Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

Action. Discussion.