

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
9 am – 3 pm, Wednesday, September 16, 2009
Sheboygan County Room
Lakeshore Technical College

Final Notes –prepared by Scott Hansen and Bill Horns

Present: Brad Eggold, Steve Fajfer, Chris Groth, Dave Rowe, John Nelson, Tammie Paoli, Steve Hogler, Scott Hansen, Pradeep Hirethota, Randy Schumacher, Joe Jerich, George Boronow, Mike Donofrio, Mike Seider (joined most of the meeting by phone).

- 1. Agenda reviewed, no changes**
- 2. Draft notes approved for July 8, 2009**
- 3. Scott Hansen graciously accepted the job of note taker.**
- 4. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**

Background. The Presidents 2010 budget provides \$475 million for a new interagency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Funding will flow through the USEPA to states, local units of government, and other federal agencies to fund projects in five focus areas. Kim Walz of the Office of Great Lakes will attend the meeting to share information and answer questions.

Meeting Action. Kim provided an overview of the Initiative. The primary interest now is the portion of the funding that will be available through grants administered by USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO). An RFP is expected in early October. There are five "Focus Areas": toxic substances and areas of concern; invasive species; nearshore health and nonpoint pollution; habitat and wildlife restoration and protection; and accountability, monitoring, evaluation, communication, and partnerships. Questions remain regarding support for staffing to do the work, and other issues. Written information is available through OGL. The Team discussed possible projects and came up with the following list for consideration:

- Lake Michigan research boat acquisition (graciously assigned to Paul Peeters, in absentia)
- Retrofitting of the Hack Noyes
- Sturgeon restoration, including monitoring and assessment and enhancement of streamside rearing facilities
- Property acquisition. North Bay shoreline as related to lake whitefish was mentioned. Not mentioned but relevant would be property acquisition for northern pike spawning habitat protection on Green Bay's west shore.
- Quarantine facility to hold fish from VHS affected waters.
- New Great Lakes hatchery for native species restoration and/or cold water fish production.
- Menominee River fish passage.
- Menomonee River habitat.
- Beaver control on Lake Superior tribs.

- 5. Green Bay brown trout stocking plan**

Background. NER is drafting a Green Bay brown trout stocking plan for review and discussion by the LMFT.

Meeting Action. The draft written plan is not ready, but Tammie led a discussion of the issue. She stated that three general changes are under consideration: 1) discontinue fall fingerling stocking; 2) stock fewer and larger yearlings later in the spring, using Wild Rose domestics and Seeforellens; and 3) stock yearlings offshore to avoid nearshore predators. The discussion included arguments for establishing quantifiable management goals, the possibility of doing paired plants to experimentally assess the value

of different strategies, and questions about how to fund the new strategy. Tammie will prepare a written brief for the LMFT, including several options for review.

6. Yellow perch recruitment in Lake Michigan

Background. I have an old data set and draft paper about zooplankton abundance and recruitment of yellow perch in Lake Michigan. Some of you have heard versions of this in the past, but I'm thinking of dusting it off and submitting it for publication, so I would like to present it for discussion at this meeting. Because of the continuing failure of the Lake Michigan yellow perch population to bounce back despite some years of apparently good production of yoy, I think this is will be a good topic for discussion.
Meeting Action. This item was skipped because of lack of time.

7. Prepare Bill for September 26 meeting of Great Lakes Study Committee

Background. The Great Lakes Study Committee (Conservation Congress) will meet on September 26. They have asked for updates on forage surveys, lake trout restoration, the carp barrier, wind farm projects (if any), Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum direction. I must also be prepared to comment on the three successful spring hearing resolutions. Those resolutions pertain to 1) allocation of funds raised by sale of salmon eggs at weirs, 2) making the commercial fishery self-supporting, and 3) reducing the harvest limit for smelt. Finally, I would like to use that meeting to convey to the GLSC the memo, drafted by Brad and approved by the LMFT regarding 2009 advisory question #75, pertaining to commercial fishing in selected grids near Milwaukee.

Meeting Action. The Team reviewed the three resolutions. Bill will prepare a written summary of the Team's views on the resolutions, for review my Mike Staggs prior to the GLSC meeting.

8. Fish passage issues and initiatives

Background. On the Milwaukee River, proposals to provide increased fish passage have raised concerns regarding sea lamprey colonization of the river or colonization by other invasive species. This issue has also been raised regarding fish passage on the Menominee River. These are examples of a broader question of trade-offs between the goals of opening rivers up to fish migrations and containing the spread of invasive species.

Meeting Action. Brad presented a Power Point review of the situation on the Milwaukee River and distributed a draft memo from the LMFT to Mike Staggs. After some minor editing, the memo closes with the recommendation that the Department endorse the modification of the planned new fishway at the Thiensville-Mequon dam including six specific steps listed in the memo. [Brad has since circulated the memo to the Team for review. If I hear no adverse comments, I will forward it to Mike. – Bill]

9. Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board resolutions

Background: From time to time the LMCFB adopts resolutions. Because the LMCFB is by charged by statute with advising the Department on commercial fishing matters, those resolutions must be forwarded through channels to the DNR Secretary. It is appropriate for the LMFT to comment on those resolutions. I would like to develop a LMFT recommendation on each of the following LMCFB resolutions: 1) "The LMCFB recommends to the Natural Resources Board to re-open the Zone 3 yellow perch fishery with a 100,000 pound quota. Also, the portion of Zone 2 that lies in Lake Michigan be reopened for yellow perch fishing." 2) "Change the mesh size law in Zone 3 for chub gill nets from 2 3/8 to 2 1/4." 3) "Change the lifting requirements in Zone 3 for chubs from 5 nights to 8 nights." The LMCFB will meet the evening preceding our meeting, so we may also want to review an resolutions that are adopted then.

Meeting Action: The Team discussed the recommendations listed above, plus two that had been adopted the previous evening by the LMCFB: 4) "To change the number of nights from 5 to 7 that trap and pound nets may be used for fishing whitefish." 5) "The LMCFB recommends that the current proposed

increase in whitefish limits be divided equally between all three fishing zones and then allocated according to the current formulas in use.” Tentative LMFT comments are as follows:

1. LM perch quotas. We will continue to review this issue, in consultation with the other affected jurisdictions.
2. Mesh sizes. No. With the chub population in dramatic decline, this is not the time to liberalize harvest regulations.
3. Gill net nights. We are sympathetic with the desire to minimize the costs of tending nets, and acknowledge that deep sets on Lake Superior may currently extend to 10 nights, but we are concerned about implications for added fishing pressure (more net nights) and increased incidental harvest of lake trout.
4. Trap net nights. We think this deserves discussion.
5. Allocation. This pertains to a rule that will go to public hearings soon. The recommendation will be placed with the hearing record and considered along with all others.

The draft LMFT recommendations will be summarized and clarified by Bill in a memo for review by Mike Staggs. The NRB meeting on September 23 will be an opportunity for Bill, following Mike’s review, to briefly mention the LMCFB recommendations and offer Department comments.

10. Updates

Time was allowed for short updates and reminders of topics of interest. The following were mentioned.

- a) Tasks not yet completed:
 - i) Net pen write-up for Fish Management Handbook
 - ii) Keweenaw River steelhead passage issue brief [The LMFT referred this to George and Randy for possible referral to the FH Board.]
 - iii) Management reports
- b) LE updates
- c) Sept 19 meeting of WF/GLSFC [Bill, George, Mike D., Chris, and Joe will attend]
- d) Green Bay yellow perch SCAA modeling prospects [Bill will talk with Mark Holey to clarify expectations and commitments regarding Ted Treska’s continuing assistance.]
- e) Minimum catch rule revisions (FH-21-08) [Awaiting Legislative review]
- f) Proposal to require electronic reporting by charter captains [In the hands of LE and the FH Board]
- g) October CLC meeting [To be attended by Bill and Brad]
- h) Annual quota review for NRB, Sept 23, in Sturgeon Bay
- i) Skamania [Mike Staggs has decided to not pursue acquisition of eggs from Indiana this year.]
- j) Sept 29- Oct 1 LMSOL Conference [Brad and Bill will give talks.]
- k) Walleye letter from M&M GLSF [Dave will draft a response for NER review concurring with the Michigan response.]
- l) Great Lakes Regional Marking Committee
- m) 2010-2011 stocking quotas [To be summarized by Dave G]
- n) Walleye stocking in Sturgeon Bay and Little Sturgeon Bay [In depth discussion needed at a later date.]
- o) Proposed appointment to LMFF [Henry Koltz, Trout Unlimited, will be invited to fill the current vacancy.]

11. Next meeting date and location – November 18, Lakeshore Technical College.