

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
9 am – 3 pm, Tuesday, September 30, 2008
Cleveland Training Room
Lakeshore Technical College

Final Notes –prepared by Bill Horns and David Rowe

Present: Randy Schumacher, John Nelson, Chris Groth, Brad Eggold, Scott Hansen, George Boronow, Paul Peeters, Steve Hogler, Pradeep Hirethota, Mike Donofrio, Steve Fajfer, Tammie Paoli, David Rowe, Bill Horns, Dave Giehtbrock, Ted Treska

1. Review/revise agenda

2. Review/approve meeting notes from July 31, 2008

3. 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 if time permits.

- a) Pending tasks
 - i) Inquiry about Skamania eggs from Indiana
 - Obstacles to obtaining Skamania eggs include 1) availability, 2) clearing VHS tests, and 3) achieving medical separation of units at KMSFH. No formal or informal inquiry of Indiana has been made yet. **Bill will follow-up.**
 - ii) Draft letter to commercial fishers for Staggs signature
 - **Chris will pursue this** following the 10/1/08 LMCFB meeting. Pete Flaherty has advised against such a letter.
 - iii) Out-of-state travel for sturgeon conference (December 3-4)
 - **Bill will submit a travel request** for Donofrio, Eggold, Burzynski, Hogler, and Fajfer, with priority for Brad, Mike, and Steve.
 - iv) LMFT request to FM Board re Branch River sturgeon trailer
 - This seems at an impasse because the Administrative Code appears to preclude operation of a trailer on the Branch River, but the LMFT asked **Bill to speak again with Mike Staggs** about it.
 - v) Net pen issue brief for FM Board
 - Steve Hewett has asked Bill to revise the issue brief with more complete citations regarding the legal framework. Brad noted that he has been repeatedly advised that, because the net pen used in Milwaukee is tied to a structure, not placed on the lake bed, no Chapter 30 permit is needed. **Bill will follow-up** with revisions to the draft issue brief.
 - vi) Steelhead proposal
 - Tabled for lack of funds.
 - vii) Brown trout proposal
 - Tabled for lack of funds.
 - viii) Issue summary regarding permanent closure of yellow perch fishery in LM
 - The LMFT has forwarded its recommendation regarding Congress advisory question #58. This year a related resolution calling for the prohibition of commercial fishing in nearshore areas in the Milwaukee vicinity and south has been advanced by the Great Lakes Study Committee for an advisory question at the 2009 Spring Hearings.
 - ix) Cooperative research agreements issue brief for FM Board
 - We will take this up at the next LMFT meeting. Resolution by January 2009 is desirable because requests for such agreements will be coming in over the winter.
- b) Great Lakes Study Committee meeting (September 27)
 - The GLSC endorsed the cormorant management EA.

- The GLSC advanced musky and northern pike resolutions for consideration at the 2009 Spring Hearings, but did not advance a resolution calling for dark-house spearing for northern pike.
- c) WF/GLSFC meeting (September 20)
- d) Great Lakes Basin Habitat Partnership
 - Bill is the WDNR representative on the steering committee.
- e) LM Commercial Fishing Board meeting (October 1)
- f) Ruffe in Wisconsin waters of Green Bay
 - Ruffe have been collected near Peshtigo and near Marinette
- g) Stocking changes to reduce production costs
 - The following changes have been recommended to save Salmon Stamp funds: 1) stock fall fingerling St. Croix brown trout in or near Marinette, 2) forego splake stocking in Green Bay this year and do not collect eggs for next year, 3) eliminate distant ports for stocking fall fingerling coho, and consolidate other sites, 4) stock surplus and quota Arlees in fall of 2008, instead of next spring, if savings are significant. Dave Giebtbrock will review which of the recommendations have been implemented. **Steve Fajfer will provide** a summary of fish distributed from WRSHF this fall.
- h) FY09 budget cuts from Salmon Stamp projects
 - Budgets for several Salmon Stamp-funded surveys (both Lake Michigan and Lake Superior) have been cut, reducing the total allocation in that category from \$331,139 to \$281,139.
- i) Arlees and cutthroat virus.
 - The Great Lakes Fish Health Committee will discuss implications of new discoveries of cutthroat virus in western hatcheries, including Ennis, the source of our Arlee eggs.
- j) Wisconsin/Michigan boundary waters meeting (October 23)
- k) Office of the Great Lakes draft Strategic Plan
 - Shaili Pfeiffer is working on this. **Bill will draft comments** and circulate to the LMFT before submitting.
- l) Environmental Assessment for cormorant management in Wisconsin
 - Paul reported that of the 265 written comments that were received, all but 9 support the management goals or would like stronger measures.
- m) Commercial fishing tour by 3+ NRB members (October 7-8)
- n) Sea Grant Strategic Plan – comments due week of October 20th
 - Chris raised some concerns. **Bill will draft comments** and share with LMFT before submitting.
- o) The Great Lakes Regional Research Information Network (GLRRIN) held a conference call on September 29. Interested individuals can contact Bill for more information.
- p) Status of planning for importing Ontario muskies
 - APHIS interim rule will allow importation
 - This year, imported fish will be marked and stocked directly into Anderson, Archibald, and Elkhart Lake. Each lake will receive a genetic cross section of all fish imported.
 - Steve Hewett is point person regarding arrangements with Ontario biologists.

4. Brown trout in Green Bay

Background. The Marinette/Menominee Great Lakes Sport Fishermen have raised concerns regarding declining trout harvests, and are particularly concerned about the role of walleye. They have raised this concern to both Michigan and Wisconsin DNR's, and it will be discussed at the October WI/MI boundary waters meeting. This complements concerns raised by Dennis Hickey regarding effects of abundant walleye on the Green Bay food web.

Action. Discuss

Meeting Action. Discussion only. Dave Rowe advised against focusing on walleye, noting other actors in the system and citing a need for food web studies. Others noted the desirability of systematically studying effects on return to creel of various stocking strategies. Paul reminded the group of circumstantial evidence implicating cormorants.

5. Disposition of surplus lake trout fingerlings

Background. It's the time of year for our annual discussion of surplus lake trout. The USFWS may have 300,000 surplus fingerling lake trout available for Lake Michigan. If so, the LMC will be asked whether they should be stocked, and if so where.

Action. Discuss

Meeting action. The LMFT recommends rejecting any proposal to stock surplus fall fingerlings in Lake Michigan.

6. 2009-2010 production planning

Background. Dave Giehtbrock will attend the meeting to discuss production planning for the coming biennium. Because of our policy of not rearing Lake Michigan salmon outside the basin, and the consequent increase in demands on WRSFH, we face a decision about whether to cut back on chinook or coho production.

Action. 1) Discuss and develop recommendations. 2) Discuss public consultation re chinook/coho trade-off.

Meeting action. The LMFT asked Steve Fajfer to prepare a brief summary of the issue for use in discussions with clubs and other groups before the LMFT makes a final recommendation sometime in December.

7. Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum membership

Background. I have developed some ideas for re-constituting the LMFF, but I need to consult further with the LMFT.

Action. Develop a list of candidates and alternates to invite to participate in the LMFF.

Meeting action. Several names were suggested. Bill will follow-up.

8. Cooperative research agreements

Background. A draft issue brief on this subject was discussed last time, but tabled for further discussion.

Action. Discuss

Meeting action. This issue was put off for later discussion.

9. LMFT alignment survey

Background. I attended a short-course on team leader training. One of the items was a simple team self-assessment tool that I would like try with you.

Action. Discuss

Meeting action. Bill asked the group to complete the short survey. Dave Rowe will compile the results for discussion next time.

10. Propagation-management communication before and during stocking

Background. Tammie has raised concerns about this, echoing concerns raised in the past by others.

Action. Discuss

Meeting action. Discussion only

11. Next meeting date and location -- December 8, 2008 at Wild Rose State Fish hatchery.