

**Lake Michigan Fisheries Team**  
**9 am – 3 pm, Monday, December 8, 2008**  
**Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery**

**Final Notes –prepared by Brad Eggold and Bill Horns**

**Present:** Tammie Paoli, Scott Hansen, Steve Hogler, Dave Rowe, Pradeep Hirethota, Brad Eggold, Mike Donofrio, Steve Fajfer, John Nelson, Chris Groth, Randy Schumacher, Paul Peeters, Al Blizel, Cynthia Moore, George Boronow, Bill Horns



Figure 1. Warden Christopher Groth with 14 suspected fish and game violators.

1. **Review/revise agenda – no changes**
2. **Review/approve meeting notes from July 31, 2008 – approved**
3. **Designate a note-taker – Brad Eggold**
4. **Plan lunch and noon-hour tour of the facility – pizza brought in**
5. **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
    - No formal request at this time. Discussions ensued about why not pursue this avenue? **Bill will pursue this further and get more answers from Indiana and respond to LMFT via e-mail ASAP.**
  - ii) Out-of-state travel for yellow perch task group and sturgeon conference
    - Sturgeon completed for two staff.
    - Approval still needed for 1/7/09 YPTG meeting.
  - iii) Draft letter to commercial fishers for Staggs' signature
    - **Chris will report at next meeting.**
  - iv) LMFT request to FM Board re Branch River sturgeon trailer
    - Mike Staggs does not see a way to move on this issue. Admin Code is pretty clear and leaves no room for a WPDES discharge into the Branch River. At this point the Manitowoc SRF will probably not run in 2009.
  - v) Net pen issue brief for FM Board
    - No progress. **Bill will prepare a new draft** for LMFT consideration at next meeting and FM Board approval prior to March 2009.
  - vi) Cooperative research agreements issue brief for FM Board

- No progress. **Bill will prepare a new draft** for LMFT consideration at next meeting and FM Board approval prior to March 2009.
- vii) Office of Great Lakes Strategic Plan.
  - Bill sent the first draft to the LMFT members via e-mail several weeks ago. **It is under review and revision.**
- viii) LMFT alignment survey (see below)
- ix) Summary of 2009-2010 WRSFH production.
  - We will be at full production for chinook and coho, with the help of 65,000 provided by Indiana or Illinois for stocking in the spring of 2009. In the long term, some Chinook salmon will be raised on the cool water side of WRSFH, which is currently under development.
- x) Summary of fall 2008 distributions from WRSFH
  - Slightly fewer coho salmon fingerlings than on the quotas so that full yearling quotas could be filled.
- b) Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act proposal solicitation - Bill
  - Pre-proposals are due January 23. Dave Rowe submitted a musky proposal in the last round and Scott Hansen is considering submitting one for the current round.
- c) WF/GLSFC meeting (December 6) – Bill/Paul/George/Chris
  - There was a good turnout, with the Department well represented. A number of topics were raised and discussed with speakers Matt Frank and George Meyer. The group discussed the draft lake trout restoration Implementation Strategy, with concerns raised about implications of increased lake trout stocking for stability of the forage base. Later the members voted to formally object to the strategy because of those concerns. The Wildlife Federation may object to the strategy as well. In a separate discussion, concerns were raised about the Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum relating to its advisory roll.
- d) LM Commercial Fishing Board issues - Al
  - 1) The LMFCB has been asked by a commercial fisher to review a whitefish re-allocation scheme in which surplus from one particular quota year would be re-allocated to a commercial fishermen pool subject to certain criteria. This topic will come up at the next CFB meeting. 2) The LMCFB rejected a Department proposal regarding the minimum catch rule. (see below)
- e) Status of electronic reporting - Al
  - We are overdue for getting the product out to the commercial fishermen. The Department has hired a person to deploy the computers and printers to commercial fishers. A manual has been created. Units will be deployed in early January. Both paper and computers will have to be used for now, we are shooting for 2010 for full computer deployment.
- f) Status of vessel acquisition to replace the Barney - Paul
  - Lake Char plans revised to meet our needs are in for a quote from the original designer. This quote may come out the week of Dec 8. Basing our design on the existing Lake Char plans may reduce the design/construction timeline by up to a year and save \$50,000 in design costs. We should start thinking about a vessel name instead of getting one assigned to the boat (e.g., Aldo Leopold, Birge, Hoyle, Kernan, Uecker, Opgenorth).
- g) Replacement of Arlees with Erwins for 2010 yearling stocking - Bill
  - Erwins will be stocked and finclipped instead of the Arlees.
- h) Cormorant control planning and funding - Paul
  - In 2008 Wildlife Services oiled eggs on 3 of the 5 islands, as specified in the control plans. On two of the islands we oiled more frequently but still some hatched. An EA has been released and comments have been recorded. The comments were overwhelming in support of our activities; in fact many called for more aggressive control. A WDNR/Wildlife Services planning meeting is scheduled for Dec 18.
- i) Water Division brainstorming exercise regarding climate change - Bill
  - **Get comments to Bill ASAP.**

- j) LMFT procedures under revised charge - Bill
  - Bill suggested that at some point we should review our internal procedures, now that have received a new charge from the FM Board that is similar but different.
- k) Green Bay yellow perch trawling update - Tammie
  - Techs are aging fish from commercial samples (2003 and 2005 year-classes dominant). Trawl catches of YOY were down from last year, but similar to 2002 and 2004. SCCA model will be run in early spring of 2009.
- l) Update on fall Seeforellen broodstock collections – Tammie
  - Root and Kewaunee Rivers produced a lot more fish than the Menominee River for brood stock. Something is going on in the Menominee River, but what exactly is reducing survival is unknown at this time.
- m) Status of SCAA modeling – Scott
  - John Netto has left the GB FRO. Ted Treska has possession of models developed by Netto and others and will help out as best he can. In addition, Scott has talked with Mark Ebener about him helping us on the whitefish model. This is an ongoing process and is a work in progress. Ted is also helping Tammie with the YP SCCA model. Bill may try and revive the modeling group which had several meetings a few years ago. Bill, George, and Randy should confirm Ted's availability to work on models with staff as needed.
- n) Status of minimum catch rule revisions – Bill and Al
  - Concerns/thoughts raised (not ranked or endorsed by the LMFT) regarding the latest proposal are: 1) Carrying quotas over from one quota year to the next, even in this special case, establishes a bad precedent. 2) Dropping the alternative minimum from 30 to 20 times the average daily harvest is significant for commercial fishers. 3) The rule must anticipate and deal with changes in total allowable annual commercial harvests, 4) Why don't we drop the MCR but keep the cap on number of licenses? 5) Sport anglers in Green Bay will not like any rule that could increase the commercial harvest, even for one year. 6) Sport angler would object to the funding reduction implicit in letting commercial fishers fish for 18 mo on a one-year license fee. 7) Perhaps we could have an 18-month license year but allocate quota for one year and then an additional 6 months. 8) If the commercials get more YP, then the sport guys will want a higher bag limit. 9) The original MCR was to get at dropping inactive fishermen and now should be abandoned.

## 6. Work planning for 2009-2010

Background. Allocations for this biennium will be significantly smaller than last time. Final work planning guidance has not yet been released and we will have time at one or more future meetings to discuss this issue, but I want to take some time now for some preliminary discussion.

Action. Discuss

Meeting action. Paul suggests that we have cut as much as we can and now we may have to cut projects. SEG funding is down \$30,000 and SS funding is down \$25,000 for each year of the next biennium. Bill will confirm that these are truly the intended reductions. Bill suggests that it will take more time to go over these projects than in the past and that we should plan for that. The LMFST will meet in Cleveland during the week of January 12, 2009, to work on this.

## 7. Yellow perch in Lake Michigan

Background. On January 7 the Yellow Perch Task Group will review findings of the Yellow Perch Decision Analysis Workshop and discuss possible rule changes in the four states. Brad will present background information.

Action. Discuss the management options.

Meeting action. Brad gave an update on the status of yellow perch in Wisconsin waters including our recent information on our surveys, model updates, SCCA inputs, and DA model outputs. The Team

discussed implications of opening a commercial quota, raising the sport bag limit, and possible mesh-size limitations for commercial fishers if the season is reopened.

## **8. Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum**

Background. The LMFF will meet during the evening. **Bill will be asking that group to consider the scheduling of two meetings in 2009**, one in spring and one in fall, pursuant to the ideas we discussed most recently on May 29. You may remember that the idea is to have two significant meetings scheduled around important decisions and actions, and with enhanced efforts to encourage larger public attendance.

Action. Bill would like to lay out an annual work calendar with expected decision and action points and discuss how two LMFF meetings could be scheduled to complement and support our work.

Meeting action. Deferred

## **9. Wisconsin's Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy**

Background. This document is the Wisconsin-specific expression of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. It is in draft form. Cynthia Moore, the Great Lakes Program Coordinator for the Office of the Great Lakes will be present to discuss the Strategy and the process and timetable for finalizing it.

Action. Discuss.

Meeting action. Cynthia Moore came to talk to us about the GL Restoration and Protection Strategy report. The OGL has prepared this part of the report to highlight projects and success stories on WI Great Lakes. Cynthia's roll at OGL is in strategic planning and how the OGL can work better with their partners. Eight priorities are highlighted in this document and associated goals are established. A draft has been out for comment for 18 months. The report has not been finalized but Cynthia will be updating the document and hopefully complete this task by July 1, 2009. Bill suggests that FM is regarded as only a client of the Water program instead of a partner. This has been a point of frustration. Cynthia wants to work with FM on this, and will follow-up with Bill and Mike Staggs.

## **10. LMFT alignment survey**

Background. Last time I asked everyone to complete a simple "alignment survey". I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the results.

Action. Discuss

Meeting action. Bill handed out the results from our survey.

## **11. Next meeting date and location - Week of January 12, 2009. Lake Shore Technical College, Cleveland, WI**