

**WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS
ANNUAL STATEWIDE CONVENTION
MAY 11 & 12, 2007
TELEMARK LODGE, CABLE, WISC.**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Edgar Harvey at 8:32 AM. Secretary John Edelblute called the role. All counties were present except Rusk County. Rusk Co. had been excused by Chairman Harvey.

The first order of business was the Chairman's address. Chairman Harvey reported that Dave Puhl and the Hunting with Dogs committee had resolved their issues. The sunset clause for the deer season has been removed. The Congress has gone on record opposed to baiting and feeding. Rules and resolutions meet five times during the year to work on items such as redistricting, Congress voting procedures, etc. Stewardship is a very important issue and will be taken up during this session.

Chairman Harvey introduced Dr. Christine Thomas who is the current chair of the Natural resources Board. Dr. Thomas gave a lively speech on the history of the Congress based on her research. She pointed out that 2009 will be the 75th Anniversary of the Congress. Reflecting on the history of the Congress and its past issues, her thesis is "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

DNR Secretary Scott Hassett was introduced by Chairman Ed Harvey. Mr. Hassett said that this was his fifth year addressing the Congress. He spoke on the success of the fisheries programs. In the past ten years 4.7 million deer have been taken in Wisconsin. The best in the U.S. There is presently no license fee increase proposed. Alternate funding needs to be addressed for the future. Stewardship land funding needs to be reauthorized. \$105 million dollars is in the budget for this purpose. He would like to see it passed with no attachments. Mr. Hassett is opposed to baiting and feeding and requests the Congress' help on this matter. At this point Mr. Hassett took questions from the floor.

Ray Heidel of LaCrosse Co. took Mr. Hassett to task for what he perceives as a lack of public input on the Mississippi River proposals. Mr. Hassett explained that the federal government has been working on this for some time and it is a federal issue, not a Wisconsin DNR issue.

Sawyer County said that they are losing forest crop lands and they should be looked at for stewardship funds.

Barron Co. said that DNR should try a reward system instead of sharpshooters to control CWD. Mr. Hassett says that this was explored, but they determined it would not be effective. 80% of deer taken by sharpshooters were antler less, and 12.5% tested positive for CWD.

Winnebago Co. thought that the fines for taking sauger are too low. Mr. Hassett explained that it would take legislative action to raise them.

Dane Co. wants more hunting access on stewardship lands. Mr. Hassett said that 92% of stewardship land is open to hunting. Get stewardship passed first. In Dane Co. the land was closed to hunting by a land trust with which DNR matched funds. More attention will be paid to this in the future per Mr. Hassett.

Vilas Co. The killing of trumpeter swans by two juveniles carried a \$500 fine that was reduced to \$50. Why? Mr. Hassett said that this is per the law regarding juvenile offenders, but the judge should have added a large dose of community service.

Jackson Co. said that they are concerned about the moving of elk under federal regulations. Mr. Hassett explained that he is not up to date on the latest rulings.

Marinette Co. We need stewardship, but we also need someone in DNR to be a steward. Mr. Hassett said that this is an issue they are working on.

Chairman Ed Harvey next introduced Ms. Marlaine Willms of the Wisconsin dept. of Revenue to explain Wisconsin Act 327 and how it will affect sales tax paid by gun clubs. Ms. Willms handed out a brochure that explains the new rule and took questions from the floor. Due to the many questions raised, she took names and telephone numbers from members with questions that couldn't be answered because of time restraints.

The election of district councilors was undertaken. The results are as follows:

District 1.	Joe Weiss	Ron Kobs
2.	Michael Reiter	Raymond Smith
3.	Allen Opall	Roger Sabota
4.	Wade Jeske	Arold Ninneman
5.	Marc Schultz	Mark Noll
6.	Frank Reith	Dave Puhl
7.	Dale Maas	Richard Koerner
8.	John Edelblute	Edgar Harvey Jr.
9.	Larrie Hagen	Mike Rogers
10.	Kenneth Risley	Joseph Caputo
11.	Robert Bohmann	David Poff
12.	James Wrolstad	JoAnne Kuharske

Council election results were announced to the body.

Chairman Harvey next introduced Dave Edwards of the DNR who gave a power point presentation on the health of the environment. Mr. Edwards touched on the current environmental state, current issues, and what we can do to chart the course for the future.

Next Mike Staggs, DNR Fisheries Bureau Chief was introduced. Mr. Staggs said that Questions 1 through 38 will be advanced with the exception of #20 which failed in its area, although it passed state wide.

Questions from the floor followed. Clark Co. Quick strike rigs. Any research on circle hooks? Mike Staggs said that there is not a lot of information. Marc Schultz asked about quick strikes for catfish fishing. There was a motion by Sawyer Co to advance, seconded by Lafayette Co. Motion carried. Bayfield Co. asked if DNR is looking into slot size limits. Mr. Staggs says they are looking at the evolution of slot sizes. They may not be doing what they are supposed to do. If they aren't working, they will be changed. Sauk Co. is concerned with spearing. Mr. Staggs says bag limits are reviewed after each spearing season.

Brown Co. asked about VHS. Mr. Staggs gave background information on this serious fish disease. Said it could possibly be in Lake Michigan. Emergency rules to attempt to stop the spread of this disease have been made and were stated for the benefit of those in attendance.

Chairman Ed Harvey then introduced Governor Jim Doyle. The Governor spoke on the value of the Congress and he requests the help of the Congress in getting the stewardship fund reauthorized at the \$105 million dollar level. He stated that while this is an increase, we have to reauthorize at a 2007 dollar level. The natural resources of Wisconsin define Wisconsin. The great northern forest will be lost to future generations if we fail to act in the present. We also need to involve more young people in fishing, hunting, and trapping. The Governor pledged to support these recruitment efforts.

Chairman Harvey asked that all counties get any memorial resolutions in to AnnMarie Kutzke.

LUNCH BREAK

The meeting resumed at 1:00 PM. Chairman Harvey introduced Bureau of Wildlife Chief Tom Hauge. This is Mr. Hauge's fourteenth year addressing the Congress. Mr. Hauge spoke on the Archery in the Schools Program. He introduced the new archery program coordinator. He spoke on the new Waterfowl Management Plan being worked on. The CWD Management Plan is being studied. They will need to decide what to do. Let it spread across the state or continue to try to contain it.

The Mississippi River questions will not be advanced. The use of dogs to hunt turkeys in the fall will be advanced. Both the Richfield and Sauk County delegates asked at this point to be included, even though the question was narrowly defeated in their counties.

Dave Puhl asked about how pheasant stamp money is being used. Mr. Hauge explained. Lincoln Co. asked for an explanation of what are state lands in #80. This was explained. Ray Heidel of LaCrosse Co. asked if the Mississippi River questions will return. Mr. Hauge tried to explain.

More member comments: Waushara Co. wants Question 54 struck. This is a Mississippi River question that will not be advanced. Marathon Co. Mike Brust. Wants each question handled and debated collectively as was past practice, not handled as a group. Washington Co. Dave Miller. He feels that the paint ball question needs the wording cleaned up. Mr. Hauge said that the paint balls are not nearly as biodegradable as they are reported to be. Crawford Co. wants rules made that are understandable and workable. Vernon Co. wants to know what areas are these. Mr. Hauge said that the rule that passed will go before the board as part of the migratory regulation rules. Possibly effective in 2008. Washburn Co. said that paint ball litter is a problem. Sauk Co. Petitions have been circulated to get more discussion on CWD. Mr. Hauge says that the current recommendation by health organizations is not to eat any affected deer. 12 to 13 % of the deer in Iowa Co. are infected. Mr. Hauge wants us to be able to eat our deer.

Vice Chairman Allen Opall read the Rules of Procedure for the operation of the Congress. Motion by Marathon to accept, second by Vilas. Motion carried.

Tony Blattler gave the Rules and resolutions Committee report. Questionnaires were sent out to all 360 delegates concerning Congress election and other procedures. 162 Responded. Less than 50 %. The Committee recommends that the following be implemented based on the results. A secret ballot should be used for Executive Council positions. Executive Committee candidates would have to declare early so that the Executive Councilors could get feed back from their districts. Term limits have been discussed, but will be determined latter. All resolutions must be acted upon by a committee. A committee absentee policy has been discussed and a final rule will be made. Local fish questions must go to the local fish manager for presentation as a department question to speed up the process. All committees must formulate a mission statement. If two or more committees have the same question, the Chairman of each must get together on the issue. There is to be a limit of twenty-four members on the largest committee. The Executive Council is to act on these proposals at the January 4, 2008, meeting after these items have been discussed at the fall district meetings.

Member comments: Dodge Co. Dale Maas. Executive Council can police the Congress without changing all the rules. Ozaukee Co. Wants “shotgun resolutions” to continue as an education process. Dane Co. Jane Meyer. We need to seek more opinions on legislation before the Congress takes a position. Marc Schultz wants committee mission statements to be voted on by the committee, not just the Chairperson. Waushara Co. laments that we no longer have any input on deer hunting seasons. Congress has lost its clout. Milwaukee Co. wanted to know why some resolutions are rejected. Tony Blattler explained that they can’t always understand the author’s intent.

A motion was made by Columbia Co., seconded by Racine Co. to adopt the Rules and resolutions report. Carried unanimously.

The election of the Executive Committee was held. The results are: Chairman Edgar Harvey, Jr., Vice Chairman Robert Bohmann, Secretary John Edelblute. The election results were than announced to the body by Chairman Harvey.

DNR Strategic Plan Reports;

Mike Staggs Fisheries. Outdoors worth billions to the economy. Spoke on how we spend fisheries dollars. Fish hatcheries, stream rehabilitation and restoration, dam removal, lake surveys, stocking, plus providing fishing locations and piers, fishing instructors. In the future we will need to replace our aging facilities. We must monitor fish populations and provide more access and opportunity.

Tom Hauge Wildlife. Spoke of states national ranking. Habitat improvement, pheasant stocking, Access 497,000 acres open to hunting, we lease 72,000 more acres for hunting. Waterfowl banding. Disease concerns are CWD, avian flu, and west Nile disease. DNR is hiring new personnel to replace retirees. Wants to conserve our land legacy.

Randy Stark Law Enforcement. We are continuing to fill warden vacancies. The legislative audit was favorable. We need to look toward the future. Today’s discussions will impact tomorrow. He also spoke on the “no child left indoors” initiative.

Mike Staggs than explained a questionnaire being passed out by Tom Hauge that should be handed back in at the meeting.

Other business. Outagamie Co. made a motion that the Congress's position on stewardship reauthorization be amended to include the extra provisions in resolution #020307. Seconded by Dane Co. After much discussion, motion carried.

Jane Meyer of Dane Co. spoke on AB-91. A motion was made by Marquette Co., seconded by Waukesha Co. to oppose the provisions of AB-91. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Bayfield Co., seconded by Menomonee Co. that the slow no wake question #69 from the 2006 questionnaire be sent back to the Warm Water Committee. Motion carried. Kurt Thiede stated that a question with this format is being considered for the 2008 questionnaire.

Ray Heidel of LaCrosse Co. thanked the delegates for supporting the rejection of DNR questions 48 to 54.

Mike Reiter made a motion, seconded by Marathon Co. that question #38, background checks, be endorsed and immediately sent to the NRB for action. Motion carried.

Milwaukee Co. seconded by Waukesha Co. asked that the voting question, AB-91, be sent to the Rules and Resolutions Committee. After much confused discussion, motion failed.

Joe Weiss asked if frozen smelt could be used for bait. He is concerned with VHS. He was told that freezing does not kill VHS.

Door Co. spoke on the new proposed turkey zones. He wants their zone two line to be split along the old boundary line. Kewaunee Co. seconded the motion. Motion failed.

At 5:28 PM a motion was made and carried to adjourn for day one.

2007 CONSERVATION CONGRESS MEETING DAY TWO MAY 12, 2007

Chairman Edgar Harvey called the Congress back into session at 8:30 AM.

Fisheries Supervisor Mike Staggs announced that VHS has been confirmed to be present in Lake Winnebago and Little Butte de Morts.

Ron Roettger Awards Chairman wants years of service information sent to him. AnnMarie Kutzke explained what information we currently have on years of service.

Kurt Thiede had us give a round of applause to the Telemark Lodge staff for making our stay pleasant and enjoyable.

Secretary John Edelblute than called the roll. The following counties were absent at roll call. Crawford, Dane, Iron, Langlade, Pepin, Rusk (excused), Shawano, Taylor, and Vernon.

The Memorial Resolution was read by Chairman Harvey. Motion by Washburn Co., seconded by Columbia Co. to accept. Motion carried.

Milwaukee Co. made a motion on a resolution to seek a reduction in the amount of mercury in drinking water in the future. Second my Monroe Co. Motion carried.

Mike Brust of marathon Co., second by Sheboygan Co. Made the following motion: "Whereas the Wisconsin Conservation Congress has a long and proud history of leadership on the critical natural resource issues of the day. And whereas the annual

Conservation Congress convention has historically been one of our primary venues to exercise that leadership. And whereas it continues to be one of our primary responsibilities to apply accurate up to date and complete information available to proposed rule changes for the upcoming year and make our recommendations to the Board of Natural Resources based on input from the public combined with that information and insight. Therefore be it moved that we as a Congress commit to reviewing all proposed rule changes applying insight and new information as it is available; and further respectfully request that the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of natural resources take no action on results of the Spring Hearings until that process has been completed. This would include new resolutions, until the appropriate study committees have had a chance to review and act on them.” Motion carried

Oconto Co. asked that baiting and feeding be allowed on private property. No action or vote taken.

Green Lake Co. would like to see resolution 240107 adopted.

Brown Co. expressed concerns that those attending the Spring Hearing don't know how the vote came out due to the new electronic ballots.

Mike Brust of marathon Co. moved that the Ed Harvey letter dated Mat 10, 2007, on wolves be mailed. JoAnne Kuharske of Milwaukee Co. doesn't want the wolves delisted. LaCrosse Co. says let's deal with it now. Motion to mail the letter carried.

Mitch Fisher would like to see the age for cross bow use lowered to retain more hunters. Mike Brust of marathon Co. opposed. No vote taken

Wood Co. favors lowering of the hunting age plus the age should be lowered for supervised training and use of a firearm.

John Cumming of Ozaukee Co. asked for advancement of resolution 460107 late season crossbow hunting. Lots of discussion on crossbows pro and con. Joe Caputo asked that crossbow concerns be brought to the Big Game Committee.

Dave Puhl on AB-409. We need to get this passed.

Congress questions were taken up as follows:

#69 Motion to advance Marathon, 2nd Price. Motion carried

#70 Motion to advance Ozaukee, 2nd Racine. Motion carried.

#71 Motion to advance Sauk, 2nd Washburn. Motion carried.

#72 Motion to advance Outagamie, 2nd Kenosha. Motion carried.

#73 Motion to advance Racine, 2nd Menomonee. Motion carried.

#74 Motion to advance Portage, 2nd Columbia. Motion carried.

#75 Motion to advance LaCrosse, 2nd Wood. Motion carried.

#76 Motion to advance Sauk, 2nd Racine. Motion carried.

#77 Motion to advance Buffalo, 2nd Sauk. Motion carried.

#78 Motion to advance Kenosha, 2nd Sauk. Motion carried.

#79 Motion to advance Buffalo, 2nd Clark. Motion carried.

#80 Motion to advance Kewaunee, 2nd Waukesha. Individual rights and safety aspects were discussed. Much support voiced. Motion carried.

#81 Motion to advance Polk, 2nd Forest. Motion carried.

#82 Motion to advance Oneida, 2nd Lincoln. Motion carried.

#83 Motion to advance Winnebago, 2nd Outagamie. Motion carried.

#84 Motion to advance Winnebago, 2nd Dodge. Motion carried.

Chairman Ed Harvey introduced Alan Crossley, DNR CWD Program manager. Mr. Crossley's power point presentation was about concerns for the future. It is thought that if nothing is done, potentially 40% of the deer herd may become infected. 129,000 deer have been tested in Wisconsin so far. Researchers have found that more males are infected than females in the CWD zone on an almost 2 to 1 ratio. Bucks four years old and older have an infection rate of one out of six in the CWD zone. He then outlined potential plans and how they may be implemented. Questions and answers followed.

This presentation then ended the full Congress session and the meeting was adjourned.

Chairman Harvey then conducted the new delegate training session with the aid of a power point presentation. This consisted of the history of the Congress and the duties and responsibilities of a Congress Delegate. A valuable addition to the Congress agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Edelblute
Secretary, WCC