

Regulation Proposal Form

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Proposal Title Removal of Special Regulations on Sandy Beach Lake Walleye	
Author Lawrence Eslinger	Date 06/21/11
Location Information:	
Affected water(s) Sandy Beach Lake	
County Iron	WBIC(s) 2316100
Upstream/downstream boundaries, if applicable—Law Enforcement should be consulted	
Will this regulation affect Ceded Territory water and are there any anticipated impacts to tribal fisheries? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sandy Beach Lake is in the Ceded Territory but is never speared or declared by the Chippewa.	

Current Regulation 1 over 14"; 5/day for walleye
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Proposed Regulation 15" minimum length limit; 5/day

Management Goal Summary statement that characterizes the desired fishery (e.g. provide a naturally reproducing harvest-oriented walleye fishery; provide a bass fishery dominated by large adults that maximizes predation on smaller fishes) Maintain walleye as the dominant sport fish in Sandy Beach Lake by protecting the limited number of young fish recruiting to adulthood, resulting in a walleye population of low to moderate density with a moderate proportion of quality-size fish.

Description of the Water(s) and Fishery Provide a brief description of the water(s), past regulations and other management actions. Summarize all applicable fisheries data, particularly from surveys meeting protocols (Table 1). Sandy Beach Lake is a relatively small, shallow, drainage lake located in south-eastern Iron County (approximately 9 miles from Mercer, WI) within the Bear River watershed of the Flambeau River subbasin. The lake is approximately 111 acres in size, with 2.1 miles of shoreline. Mean and maximum depths are approximately 7 and 13 feet, respectively. Sandy Beach Lake's water clarity is fair (measured at 6 ft.) with a light brown appearance (J. Cox, June 1995 survey). Watershed area surrounding the lake is approximately 0.9 sq. mi. with roughly 370 acres of wetlands (1970 Surface Water Resources). The lake is noted to be mesotrophic (moderate level of biological productivity), with aquatic vegetation present in the shallow-water areas of the lake with a number of emergent species present (Jim Cox, personal observations). Bottom substrate consists of 75% sand, 15% silt/muck, and 10% detritus. Water alkalinity was measured at 25 ppm, conductance was 53 µmhos, and pH was reported at 7.1 (1970 Surface Water Resources). Sandy Beach has a shoreline development factor of 1.49, and is therefore somewhat bowl-shaped in appearance (1970 Surface Water Resources). The lake has a state campground, and the riparian land is completely under state ownership within the Northern Highland State Forest. Public access is by means of a boat landing just outside of the campground. Fishing pressure is assumed to be relatively light; primarily from camping families using the state campground (Jim Cox, personal conversation). Historically, Sandy Beach Lake has been stocked with walleyes and muskies. However, since 1979, only walleye have been stocked in the lake. Small walleye fingerling stocking was fairly consistent between '79 and '05, but no stocking has occurred since 2005. The first thorough analysis of the fishery in Sandy Beach Lake
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occurred in 1973. In a summary of the survey results, regional fisheries biologist at the time, Jim Lealos, stated that “It appears that natural reproduction is not maintaining sustained year class strength in the walleye population. Age data reveals entire year classes are missing. Spawning habitat for walleyes is also poor” (Lealos 1974). Traditional, adult walleye population estimates (generated from a netting marking survey and shocking recapture survey) have been conducted in 1995, 2003, 2007, and most recently in 2011. Surveys conducted to index adult walleye relative abundance, occurred in 1973 and 1978. However, they were completed during times (e.g. August) in which catch rates would be biased and likely not reflective of the true adult population. Therefore, the 1973 and 1978 adult survey statistics are not presented here. Fall gamefish recruitment surveys have been completed in 1973, 1989, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, and most recently in 2010. See Table 1 for survey results of the walleye population in Sandy Beach Lake. Table 2 shows size structure indices of walleye sampled during adult surveys.

Table 1. Adult population estimates (no./acre), fall young-of-the-year recruitment estimates (no./mile), and the differentiation of whether documented recruitment was all natural (NR), or enhanced as a result of stocking (Stocked) in Sandy Beach Lake, Iron County.

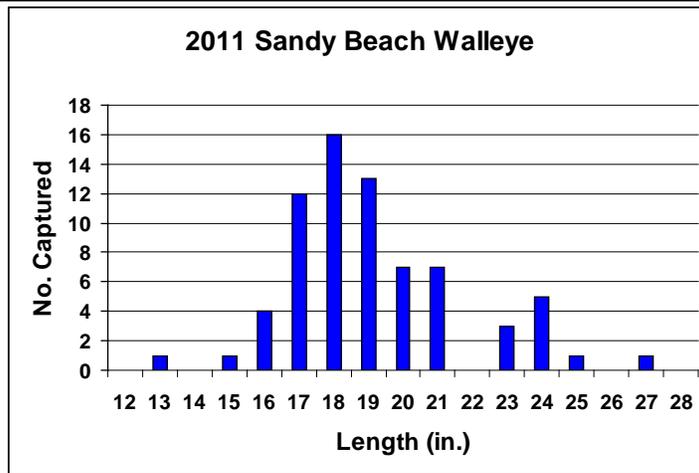
Year	Adult PE	YOY Recruitment	NR or Stocked
1973		1.9	NR
1989		2.4	NR
1994		73.9	NR
1995	2.76		
1998		7.6	NR
1999		35.2	Stocked
2000		0.0	
2003	2.05	10.5	Stocked
2005		11.9	Stocked
2006		0.0	
2007	1.82		
2010		0.0	
2011	1.51		

Table 2. Proportional and Relative Stock Density (RSD) values of walleyes sampled during adult walleye surveys in Sandy Beach Lake, Iron County. Lengths for stock, quality, preferred, and memorable indices follow Gabelhouse 1984.

RSD Parameter	1995	2003	2007	2011
RSD14	55	84	94	99
PSD			86	99
RSD18	5	15	37	75
RSDp			18	34
RSDm			5	3

2011 Fish Survey

Two early-spring electrofishing surveys (mark & recapture) were completed on Sandy Beach Lake, with the primary objective of assessing the adult walleye population. Based upon survey results, the adult walleye population was estimated at 168 fish or 1.51 adults per acre. Of the 71 different walleyes sampled during the two surveys, 70 were \geq quality size (PSD = 99), 24 were \geq preferred size (RSDp = 34), and 2 were \geq memorable size (RSDm = 3). The walleye length frequency is below:



Management Objective(s)

a) Goals are general, objectives are specific. Objectives are used to evaluate the effectiveness of your action and determine if you have achieved your goal. Provide a management objective that is specific, measurable, able to be achieved, related to the goal, and has a temporal component (e.g. increase walleye harvest rate to 0.1 fish/hour while maintaining recruitment at or above 10 YOY/mile within 5 years; increase largemouth bass RSD14 to 35 and bluegill RSD8 to 15 within 5 years)

During the scheduled 2016 early spring assessment, a shock-shock walleye density estimate (similar to that performed in 2011) should be 2-3 adults per acre. Walleye PSD should be 40-60%, reflecting greater survival of sub-adults and young adults under protection of the statewide 15-inch minimum length limit.

b) Describe how the management objective and associated target levels for metrics were developed (e.g. lake management plan, stakeholder meeting, comparison to other water(s)).

Management objectives and metrics for walleye were based on: 1) high angler preference for walleye in the Upper Chippewa Basin (first among all individual species); 2) past density estimates for Sandy Beach Lake, which established the lake’s potential (carrying capacity) for walleye; and 3) recent size structure estimates that indicate weaker-than-desired recruitment in recent years.

Current Problem

Use survey data or provide context for a similar water or group of waters (e.g. lake type, watershed) to demonstrate how the fishery is not meeting the desired management objective. Identify hypothesized problem(s) you hope to address.

Based upon the 2011 survey results (as well as all surveys conducted after 1995), the current (no minimum length limit on walleye, but only 1 fish over 14 inches) regulation is not appropriate, considering the lack of natural recruitment to sustain the fishery. The few natural recruits should be protected during their immature years to encourage survival to adulthood. In addition, walleye are being stocked (at least they remain on the quotas) to maintain population levels and to enhance the fishery.

Proposed Regulation Justification

How is the regulation change expected to meet your objective(s)? Demonstrate expected results of the regulation using tools such as modeling, comparisons to other waters, peer-reviewed literature, etc...

As shown above, 70 of the 71 walleyes sampled during the 2011 spring assessment were ≥ 15 inches. In addition, no natural walleye recruitment has been documented during the last two fall surveys conducted in 2006 and 2010, and historically, natural recruitment in Sandy Beach Lake has been very limited. Adult density estimates are on the low-end for walleye populations in Northern Wisconsin, and since stocking was eliminated in 2005, population estimates have continued to decrease. The statewide regulation (i.e. 15” minimum length limit; 5/day), which we’re proposing, would not only protect the small walleyes recruiting to adulthood, but it would offer anglers more of a harvest opportunity, assuming they were lucky enough to catch a couple walleyes while fishing Sandy Beach Lake. Given the relatively low-density nature of the adult walleye population, an apparently abundant forage base (observations during spring 2011 surveys), and relatively low recreational fishing pressure (due to the lake’s remoteness), over-harvest of quality-size adults is not likely. Therefore, the statewide minimum length limit for walleye seems most appropriate in this situation.

Evaluation Plan

Provide a suggested plan and timeline for evaluating whether the objectives are met in response to the regulation change. Indicate potential courses of action if objectives are not being met. If proposed regulation is not part of the “toolbox” (Table 2) the evaluation plan needs to be additionally detailed with an explanation of how the costs of evaluation will be covered. The fishery of Sandy Beach Lake is scheduled to be surveyed during the spring of 2016. If objectives are not met at that time, other management actions (e.g. alter stocking practices) will be considered, including the liberalization of harvest of largemouth bass if their density increases to a level that could interfere with walleye recruitment (currently only 13 largemouth bass \geq 8 inches per mile in our late spring 2011 electrofishing sample). The proposed regulation is not expected to be altered in the foreseeable future, given the walleye population history and limitations imposed by spawning habitat and fish community interactions.

Previous Action

Include details on previous regulation proposals that were intended to address the current problem, if applicable.
N.A.

Public Participation in Developing Proposed Regulation

Was input solicited from stakeholders when developing the proposed regulation change? Include documented comments from affected user groups (positive and negative), contacts made with local Conservation Congress Representatives, lake associations, angler groups, etc...

Sandy Beach does not have a lake association, and the riparian area of the lake is completely under state ownership as part of the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest. There is a state forest campground on part of the lake.

Contacts made: Dennis Haanpaa (Iron County Conservation Congress chairman) agreed with the rule change proposal. Dennis also mentioned that no Iron County constituents have contacted him in regards to the Sandy Beach fishery (phone conversation 5/17/11).

Small Business and Fiscal Effect

Explain who is likely to be economically impacted and in what way. If possible, provide estimates.

Small business owners (e.g. convenience stores and/or restaurants) may see some added revenues from anglers heading to fish Sandy Beach Lake as a result of being able to harvest more than one larger-sized walleye (over 15 inches if approved) under the proposed regulation.

Draft Question: for inclusion in Spring Hearing questionnaire

This proposal would (insert proposed regulation): replace the current “1-over-14” regulation for walleye at Sandy Beach Lake with the statewide 15-inch minimum length limit for walleye. The bag limit would remain unchanged at 5 fish daily.

The Management Goal is: to maintain walleye as the dominant sport fish in Sandy Beach Lake by protecting the limited number of young fish recruiting to adulthood, resulting in a walleye population of low to moderate density with a moderate proportion of quality-size fish.

This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because: immature walleye will be protected, thus giving them an opportunity to grow into the adult population. This will increase their opportunity to consume competitors (and potential predators) while protected as sub-adults and young adults.

Do you favor : replacing the current no minimum/1>14” regulation for walleye on Sandy Beach Lake with the statewide 15” minimum length limit?

Fish Team Supervisor Regulation Proposal Review Checklist

Instructions: Please use this checklist as a guide for your review of the regulation proposal. A completed checklist is only necessary after you have made your decision to reject or recommend. After completion, save a copy and use the email button at the top of the proposal form to send the proposal package to the Regional Fish Supervisor, Kate Strom Hiorns (automated), and CC the proposal's author.

Proposal Title Removal of Special Regulations on Sandy Beach Lake Walleye		
Author Lawrence Eslinger	Reviewer Dave Neuswanger	Date 7/1/11
<p>Fish Team Supervisor Reviewer Notes: I reviewed, edited, and approved this proposal. This is a small lake where the current 1-over-14 regulation for walleye is not appropriate considering the low documented recruitment and decreased adult density in recent years. We should reserve this special regulation for high-recruitment waters where harvest of small walleyes is needed in order to improve size structure (increase RSDs). The simpler, statewide minimum length limit sends the right message to anglers in this instance.</p> <p>I asked Lawrence about the rest of the fish community. Largemouth bass are present at relatively low density (13/mile \geq 8 inches electrofishing in late spring 2011). As a result of low predator density, panfish are overabundant and small. This tells me that walleye recruitment is still possible; and higher density of sub-adult and small adult walleye would help to achieve a better balance between predators and prey.</p> <p>--Dave Neuswanger 7/1/11</p>		

Recommended Action by Fish Team Supervisor

Approve Reject

Regional Fish Supervisor Regulation Proposal Review Checklist

Proposal Title Removal of special regulations for walleye on Sandy Beach Lake, Iron County		
Author Lawrence Eslinger	Reviewer Steve AveLallemant	Date 07/18/11
<p>Regional Fish Supervisor Reviewer Notes: Zero recruitment since 2005. A minimum length limit is clearly the better choice than a no minimum in order to protect what recruitment might be possible (NR or stocking).</p> <p>Simplifies regulations going back to the statewide base regulation for walleye</p>		

Recommended Action by Regional Fish Supervisor

Approve Reject

Species Team Regulation Proposal Review Checklist

Proposal Title		
Author	Reviewer Walleye Team	Date 12/14/11
<p>Species Team Reviewer Notes: Sandy Beach Lake- change to 15" minimum. Team recommends advancement.</p> <p>Rule simplification is primary goal. Team doubts potential of this 111-acre lake to sustain walleye as gamefish as dominant sport species.</p>		

Recommended Action by Species Team

Approve Reject