

Wild Rice Advisory Committee Meeting

August 11, 2014

State Natural Resources Building (GEF II), Room 413, 101 S. Webster St., Madison, WI

Attendance: Don Kirby (WWA), Tracy Hames (Wisconsin Wetlands Association), Bob Willging (USDA), Brian Glenzinski (DU), Jeff Barkley (WI Co. Forest Association), Michael Engleson (Wisconsin Lakes), Peter David (GLIFWC), Jason Fleener (WDNR, Co-chair), Sam Jonas (WDNR), Ryan Magana (WDNR), Chris Spaight (WDNR), Kelly Crotty (WDNR), Kevin Gauthier (WDNR, Co-chair), Carroll Schaal (WDNR), Keith Patrick (WDNR), Eddie Shea (WDNR), Kurt Thiede (WDNR), John Gozdziński (WDNR), Shelly Allness (WDNR), Chandra Harvey (WDNR)

Guest Attendees: Scott Smith and Kevin Maulson (Lac du Flambeau and Voigt Task Force members)

Meeting began at 1:00 p.m.

Introductions

Cathy Stepp and Scott Gunderson opening remarks

- Important to educate and connect the public to the importance of wild rice
- Link best management practices, water quality, and the benefits of wild rice, both for wild and human communities

Around the table: Stakeholder groups and DNR staff roles and involvement with wild rice

Roles and Responsibilities of Wild Rice Advisory Committee

- The draft committee and associated roles and responsibilities is a good starting place for the committee.
- Feedback is welcomed to improve the process.
- Committee will set the tone for cooperation between different entities, stakeholders, etc.

Explanation and Purpose of Wild Rice Advisory Committee

- This is an advisory committee to Department leadership.
- The goal is to work collaboratively to provide sound advice to decision-makers, and ensure stakeholder input before decisions are made.
- Advisory committee will work with staff and vice-versa to ensure wild rice issues are addressed.
- The committee has been formed, in part, because of the need to gather input from various DNR bureaus concerned with rice management, and a requirement outlined in the Voigt Stipulations to form a state committee.
- There is a strong commitment from leadership to this committee.

Review of the Joint Wild Rice Committee

- Focused on the Ceded Territory.
- Joint Committee formed and started immediately following the Voigt decision.

Overview of WDNR Wild Rice Involvement

- Authority for DNR wild rice management stems from Wisconsin State Statute 29.607 and from Administration Code NR 19.09.
- Wild Rice Inventory for the ceded territory was completed by the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission under contract with the Natural Heritage Conservation Bureau in 2010. Inventoried waters are relevant to Act 118, but need to be adopted yet to be considered ASNRI waters (Note - there is also a wild rice data layer on the DNR's mapping tool that was generated prior to the Wild Rice inventory, and is in need of an update).
- Seeding opportunities – DNR staff often seek assistance from GLIFWC to find a seed source to seed waters that are surrounded by state owned lands (e.g. Phantom Flowage at Crex Meadows, and Straight Lake Wildlife Area).
- Date Regulated Lakes: Department staff will work with Chippewa Tribes to determine lake opening dates when rice is ready for harvest, and post signage at boat launches. Not all rice waters are date-regulated. DNR staff will work on other communications to announce lake openings, such as a news release, Gov. Delivery updates to a listserv, refer to GLIFWC website to find an updated list, and postings at northern DNR service centers.
- Wild Rice presence and abundance surveys – Aerial reconnaissance prior to the harvest season in conjunction with GLIFWC surveys.
- Licensing/Permits – State sells wild rice harvest permits to non-tribal citizens between the ages of 17-64. Those who are within that age and live within the same household as a family member that has a license may obtain a wild rice ID card for free from a DNR licensing vendor.
- Research – DNR may support research related to wild rice. Currently looking into supporting research out of the University of Minnesota-Duluth to develop a standardized method of estimating wild rice abundance on rice beds.
Values of wild rice to wildlife, fish and ecosystems
Enforcement of regulations pertaining to harvest and water quality
Public outreach and education
Water level management related to dams. Water level management related to beaver control.

Current Topics

- The Bureau of Wildlife Management owns or operates approximately 100 large dams, and has begun discussions regarding an appropriate course of action to determine if certain dams should be abandoned.
- A wild rice “how to” video will be produced this season and released next year, with a focus on promoting the value of wild rice and ethical harvest.
- It was recommended that DNR look into opportunities to provide on-the-water training for harvesting rice through a training session or camp. The experience could benefit the new committee members that have never riced before, but would also be a good idea for the public.

- The wild rice web page will be redesigned; it was suggested to link the waterfowl page to the wild rice page to inform more citizens about wild rice.
- Little Rice Lake dam renovation – Bids are being solicited for contractors to begin construction in 2015. Water level manipulation needed to repair the dam will try to minimize impact on wild rice during the growing season. Voigt Task Force has been made aware of this project. **Editor's note: this project is now expected to move forward late 2014.
- Early teal season – The Chippewa Tribes would like to see more outreach on the department's end to notify ricers and teal hunters that each other may be utilizing the water at the same time.
- Rest Lake and Island Lake – Water level changes may be affecting rice abundance. Waters staff are involved in the issue.

Future Wild Rice Advisory Committee Meetings

- Meetings will be more frequent the first year or two until the committee is fully up-to-speed on current issues and has provided input to department leadership.
- The timing of most meetings would ideally occur approximately one month in advance of the Joint state/tribal wild rice meetings in case any issues need to be vetted through DNR sponsors and leadership teams before bringing recommendations or policy related issues back to the Joint Committee.
- Most meetings will occur in northern Wisconsin with some near project sites so that a field tour may be incorporated.
- **October 14, 2014** tentatively is the next Wild Rice Advisory Committee meeting time – location TBA.
 - Chandra Harvey and Peter David may give short presentations (exact topics to be determined)

Action Items Following the Meeting

- Finalize the Roles and Responsibilities document after soliciting final input for the stakeholders.
- Establish the committee's purpose and objectives with final input from the sponsors.
- Send out DNR Advisory Committee protocols to the committee.
- Generate a spreadsheet of contact information for the committee members.
- Follow-up with agencies and organizations that have not responded to the request to serve on the committee to see if they are interested and if they would like to assign a representative.
- Outline current wild rice related issues that should be addressed by the committee and discuss during the next meeting. Determine which issues are priorities.
- Follow-up on the wild rice inventory and determine steps for review and adoption.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.