

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Endangered Resources and Law Enforcement Committee

The regular meeting of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Endangered Resources Committee & Law Enforcement Committee was held on Saturday, August 29, 2009, at the Gander Mountain Conference Room, Wausau, Wisconsin.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by chair Ray Smith.

Committee members present: Ray Smith (chair), Jim Shurts (secretary), Claude Bohn, Don Camplin, George King, Ron Krueger, Art Malin, Scott Strook, Rich Swenson, Ken Thorpe, Tom Wilda

Committee members excused: Henry Garn, Mike Gruenhagen, Jim Heffner, Randy Symicek

Committee members not excused: Ken Balistrieri, Dave Ferris, Matt Jacowski

DNR staff present: Randy Jurewicz, Dan Michels

Others present: Bill Fournier, Peter Fournier, Mark Palan

Order of business:

Organizational Matters:

C) Approval of Committee Mission Statement

The agenda called for a review of the Study Section Committee Mission Statement that reads as follows.

“The Mission Statement of the Endangered Resources Committee and Law Enforcement Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to provide input from the public through county delegates assembled from all areas of the State of Wisconsin making up that committee and addressing issues where public input is deemed appropriate on matters of protecting endangered resources and addressing natural resources law enforcement policies.

“These issues include but are not limited to:

- 1) Designated listings of flora and fauna (watch, endangered, threatened...)

- 2) Public education
- 3) New laws and restrictions on natural resources
 - a. Season framework
 - b. Weapons and equipment restrictions
 - c. Environmental practices
 - d. Review and modification of laws and restrictions presently in place
- 4) Law enforcement training
- 5) Any other business that would come before the Committee

“The charge of the Endangered Resources Committee and Law Enforcement Committee is to ensure that the resources of Wisconsin are fully protected with every effort taken to enhance and upgrade their status whenever and wherever possible. The Committee will also assist, with public input, the agencies that are involved in enforcing natural resource laws and regulations.”

This mission statement was approved last year; the committee affirmed this approval on a voice vote.

Discussion and Action Items

Department Updates

Informational: *Randy Jurewicz, WI DNR*, gave an update on the status of the Kirtland's warbler in Wisconsin. Highlights of the presentation:

The good news is that 10 nesting pairs were found in Wisconsin in 2009. The bad news is that cowbirds parasitizing nests is a problem. But active nests in Wisconsin means that the Kirtland warbler is gaining ground.

Informational: *Randy Jurewicz, WI DNR*, gave an update on the status of the gray wolf in Wisconsin. Highlights of the presentation:

The wolf population in late winter of 2009 was estimated at 625. This is the number used as the official count. In the spring and summer there may be as many as twice that number, but pup mortality is high.

On July 1, 2009, wolves were once again listed as endangered. This has negative impacts on the DNR's management plan. Livestock depredation is increasing; 39 wolves were killed for depredation reasons. In 2008 20 hunting dogs and one pet dog were killed by wolves.

We are no longer talking about a rare animal. The wolf is now common enough to have a hunting season as a management tool. The DNR has a framework in place to have a wolf hunt in Wisconsin once the wolf is delisted.

Informational: *Randy Jurewicz, WI DNR*, gave an update on the status of feral/wild hogs in Wisconsin. Highlights of the presentation:

Feral and wild pigs are an ever increasing problem in Wisconsin. The DNR is working on a rule to designate wild or feral pigs as harmful wild animals (along with wolf-dog hybrids and mute swans). Mr. Jurewicz asked that committee members support these rules and attend the meetings. The committee unanimously approved (motion – Strook, second – Smith) support of the proposed rules.

Informational: *Randy Jurewicz, WI DNR*, gave an update on bats in Wisconsin; Mr. Shurts also spoke on the subject. Highlights of the presentation:

A brief introduction to Wisconsin's bats was given along with a presentation of the threats to bats. The two major threats are wind turbines and white nose syndrome.

Informational: *Dan Michels, WI DNR warden*, did not have anything to report to the committee.

The committee took a break for lunch.

Action items:

C) Resolutions

040209 Penalty of Repeat AIS (aquatic invasive species) Violations **Supported**

The committee agreed that AIS violations are a threat to Wisconsin's waters. Dan Michels, DNR warden, said that a change to increase penalties would require legislative action. It was also reported that there is a senate bill in process to address this problem. The committee noted that such a change is outside the scope of the WCC but voted to offer support of the resolution. Motion to support by Camplin, seconded by Thorpe. Passed 6 - 5

250209 Turtle Harvest Season **Rejected**

The author was present and stated his contention that a longer harvest season for turtles would not have a negative impact on the species. He also clarified that he was referring specifically to snapping and leatherbacked turtles. Dan Michels, DNR warden, reported that there would probably not be any enforcement issues with such a change. Randy Jurewicz stated his thoughts on the matter, that the current laws had gone through the normal process. He also stated the Bob Hay (DNR herpetologist) was instrumental in getting the current law passed based on scientific findings. Committee members felt that the season should not be extended. Motion to reject by Shurts, seconded by Wilda. Passed 11 – 0

570209 Identification of Ownership of Ice Fishing Shelter **Approved**

Author wants the option of being able to use the owner's DNR customer number in place of the owner's name on ice fishing shelters. Dan Michels stated that this would not be an enforcement problem, as all wardens have computer access. Motion to approve by Camplin, seconded by Smith. Passed 10 – 1

650509 Making Poaching a Felony **Rejected**

This change would require legislative action. Motion to reject by Wilda, seconded by Camplin. Passed 11 – 0

690209 Legalize Pistol Rounds in Long Guns in all Shotgun Zones **Approved as amended**

The author was present for the discussion. There was concern among committee members that have long guns in a shotgun zone would cause law enforcement problems. There were also concerns, given the vague description of pistol rounds, about ensuring that the rounds being used were actually pistol rounds. Initial motion to approve by Bohn, seconded by Camplin. Failed 4 – 5

The author changed the language of the resolution to read, "Legalize the following pistol rounds in a long gun in all shotgun zones -- .41 and .44." Motion to approve by Malin, seconded by Thorpe. Passed 7 – 2

710309 Lesser Weapon Proposal **Rejected**

This change would require legislative action. Motion to reject by Wilda, seconded by Malin. Passed 11 – 0

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Jim Shurts