



Wisconsin Conservation Congress
Trout Study Committee
DNR Service Center
Baldwin, WI
Friday, September 16 &
Saturday, September 17, 2011 (Tour)

1. Organizational Matters

- A. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Reiter
- B. Roll Call

Position	County	District	First	Last
Chair	SAINT CROIX	D2	MICHAEL	REITER
Sec	EAU CLAIRE	D5	DENNIS	VANDEN BLOOMEN
X	ASHLAND	D1	ROLAND	PETERSON
Excused	CRAWFORD	D9	LARRY	KNUTSON
X	GRANT	D9	RALPH	KUNKEL
X	IRON	D1	DENNIS	HAANPAA
X	MARINETTE	D4	DARRIOL	STERCKX JR
X	MILWAUKEE	D12	MIKE	KUHR
X	MONROE	D6	MAURICE	AMUNDSON
Excused	OUTAGAMIE	D7	TODD	OESTRICH
X	OUTAGAMIE	D7	SAM	TIJAN *
X	OZAUKEE	D8	RAY	WEISS
X	OZAUKEE	D8	JIM	WIERZBA
X	RICHLAND	D9	DAVID	BARRON
X	RUSK	D2	ROGER	ROEHL
X	TREMPEALEAU	D5	EDGAR	ANDERSON

Also present were Warden Supervisor Dave Hausman, Fisheries Biologists Jordan Weeks, Marty Engle and Scott Stewart and past Committee Member Arby Linder.

- C. Review of the Committee Mission Statement indicated no changes as shown below by unanimous vote:

Trout Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress
Mission Statement

The Mission of the Trout Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to provide input from the public through county delegates assembled from areas throughout the State of Wisconsin making up that committee and addressing issues where public input is deemed appropriate on matters of cold water resources including the flora and fauna that make up those resources.

These issues include but are not limited to:

1. Water quality
2. Water resource management
3. Class and category water designations
4. Bag limits
5. Tackle restrictions
6. Season framework
7. Environmental practices effecting cold water resources
8. Enforcement policies
9. Any other business that would come before the Committee

The charge of the Trout Committee is to ensure that the cold water resources of the State of Wisconsin are not degraded or impaired in any manner, with the necessary steps taken to improve them whenever and wherever possible.

Position statements were reviewed and amended by unanimous vote as show below:

Committee Positions on the Issues (Reviewed/amended September 16th, 2011)

1. Regulation simplification

This issue has been a point of contention since the Category System was put in place back in the early 1990's. This system is an extremely important tool needed to properly manage our cold water fishery. Our streams and rivers are not all the same and a graduated system is necessary to address the unique properties of each on a case by case basis.

The Category System has been modified and simplified several times since its inception. The Trout Committee will continue to work on simplification without interrupting the integrity of the system.

The Category 5 portion seems to cause the most concern. We realize that catch and release regulations on certain waters may be necessary to achieve trophy water status but the number of this type of stream classification in any given area may be a cause for concern.

The Trout Committee feels strongly that the streams in the state should be reviewed every 3-5 years to insure that they are in the correct category and that the category 5 regulations are doing what they were intended to do. If this cannot be substantiated then a change must be made until the sought after results are achieved.

2. Youth Involvement

Every year there are continuing reports of fewer youth participating in the trout fishing experience. The same can be said for all types of hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities. Organized sports and other activities along with technologies such as computers and electronic games lead to a condition termed "outdoor recreational deficit". Time allotment in single parent families along with career timing in both single and dual parent families do not provide time allotment for parent/youth interaction. Many less obvious situations and conditions can be additive to arrive at less generalized outdoor youth involvement.

Several efforts with youth regulations have been suggested and tried with varying levels of success. Providing youth with increased opportunity can perhaps get them involved early in the desired activity. Some feel this type of approach is sending the wrong message however.

Mentoring is a viable method to expose youth to the outdoors. Parents, relatives and advocates are needed to offer the experience and get the youth involved. It is up to the youth after that to carry on with the experience.

3. Conflict of users (catch and keep vs. catch and release)

There is a perception, either real or imagined, that certain user groups can intimidate other users. Methods of fishing such as artificial vs. live bait, types or equipment or apparel and general approaches to fishing such as catch and keep vs. catch and release have caused concern and at times conflict in the trout fishing community.

The Trout Committee feels strongly that any activity on any stream that is legally allowed is appropriate. If the fisher desires to take a legal limit home for consumption then that is their prerogative.

4. **Water Quality**

The Trout Committee feels that to ensure a viable cold water resource, maintaining and enhancing water quality is our number one priority. Any activity that would degrade or impair water quality will be addressed swiftly and decisively. This also addresses activities that would influence water availability and water levels. Anything that affects any part of the macro or micro invertebrate stream inhabitants and aquatic in-stream or adjacent vegetation also falls into our oversight.

5. **Access**

Availability of stream access with proper vehicular parking is a concern of the Trout Committee. Resident vs. non-resident fishers has been an issue. Some feel that non-resident fishers, especially in areas that are close to state borders pose problems with landowners. Early versus regular trout fishing season participants could also be a concern. Reports, both confirmed and unconfirmed, have been voiced in both cases.

The Trout Committee feels that fishers must make the effort to foster good landowner relationships to assure reasonable stream access. Several organized groups, such as Trout Unlimited and certain area local clubs hold landowner appreciation day events. Incentive for landowners to open their land or keep it open is an option. Individual fisher/landowner contact will go a long way in obtaining access. An educational program or brochure put out by the DNR or TU to promote landowner/fisher interaction might help in obtaining and keeping access.

D. Public Comments – None

E. Former long time Trout Committee member Arby Linder from Pierce County was presented with an award plaque thanking him for his almost four decades of service to the Congress and his dedication to the protection and enhancement of the cold water resources of Wisconsin.

F. Members and guests provided their view of the 2011 trout fishing season. All were very favorable.

2. Department Information Items & Updates

3. Discussion & Action Items

A. Citizen Resolutions

- 660411 – Continuous Open Season for Trout in Put and Take Lakes

Following a lengthy discussion it was decided to submit a potential question for the upcoming questionnaire which would be written by Chairman Reiter with input from the Fisheries Biologists and reviewed by the committee and law enforcement. The types of put and take lakes would have to be defined. Information generated by the question would aid the DNR Fisheries biologists and law enforcement in the upcoming report and review of trout fishing in Wisconsin.

- 700211 – Allow Fall Fishing and Boating at Mecan Springs

Again, following a lengthy discussion it was determined that this was a local issue and the best course of action would be to work directly with the area fish manager and local residents to see if a solution could be worked out. Jordan Weeks indicated that he would contact the local biologist to get the ball rolling.

Chairman Reiter will contact the authors of both resolutions to advise them of the course of action the Trout Committee will take with them.

B. Governor's Charge to the Congress for Regulation Simplification—Chairman Reiter read the letter defining Act 21 which was sent to Congress Chairman Rob Bohmann by Secretary Cathy Stepp. Rob's response to the Conservation Congress delegates was also read. Each committee member had a

chance to respond to the letters. A decision was made to write up a committee position statement based on the comments at the meeting indicating the thoughts of the Trout Committee. This statement is attached at the end of these minutes.

- C. Fisheries Biologist Scott Stewart presented an overview of the current efforts on defining the future of trout fishing in Wisconsin. Public surveys on the web, open meetings and random surveys are being used to gauge the feelings of trout fishers in the state. A survey sent to individuals that have dropped out of fishing over the last three years will also be used to help to better understand the reasons for this drop out. When all the data is reviewed a comprehensive report will be generated that will help drive the direction the state will take going forward on their fisheries program.
- D. Scott also asked for individuals that might be interested on serving on the Task Force as well as representation from the congress on the DNR Trout Committee. Several individuals indicated an interest.

4. Members Matters:

- a. Dennis Vanden Bloomen described a system he was working on to do a computerized regulations search which would provide all the information a fisher would need to identify the steam regulations and other pertinent information.
- b. Other members commented on the quality of their fishing opportunities and water conditions. Special activities locally for kids, women and handicapped individuals were outlined.
- c. Upcoming events across the state were highlighted.
- d. Maurice Amundson suggested that each individual on the Trout Committee send a sort overview of themselves to let everyone know who they are and what are their interests. These should be sent to Chairman Reiter following our meeting so they can be tabulated and distributed back to the committee members.
- e. Fisheries Biologist Marty Engel provided the group with an overview of area fishing opportunities. He also provided detailed fishing maps for those that wanted to fish following the tour on Saturday. The Rush River and work on Plum Creek would be highlighted on the tour.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

On Saturday, the members of the Committee were treated to an excellent tour of work providing handicapped pads constructed on the Rush River and habitat work ongoing on Plum Creek. Marty and his crew lead this very informative outing which was highlighted by sample shocking demonstrations showing brook and brown trout densities. A presentation by Trout Crew Leader John Sours highlighted the work that can be accomplished when a variety of partners are banded together in a common cause.

(Act 21 Legislation Position Statement below)

**Wisconsin Conservation Congress Trout Committee
Position Statement in Response to the 2011 Act 21 Legislation**

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress Trout Committee at its Committee Meeting held on September 16th, 2011 in Baldwin Wisconsin, has taken the following position in regard to the implementation of the 2011 Act 21 legislation, and its impact on the Trout Committee's ability to be a viable part of the rule making process.

The Trout Committee feels that the legislation in Act 21, as written, will have a broad-based effect across all aspects of Wisconsin State Government. In many instances, Act 21 will allow for more government oversight to insure that adequate review is provided on several levels, to move viable legislation forward.

In the arena of the Trout Committee's activities however, it is important that the Committee can react to natural resource based situations in a proactive rather than a reactivity manner.

It is also very important that in situations that affect a highly sensitive natural resource, the process must move swiftly to insure that the integrity of that resource is not diminished. Decisions also must be made with sound biological data provided by experts in that natural resource area. Sound biology must drive the decision making process and do so in a timely manner.

The Trout Committee also feels that citizen input is the driving force of our existence as indicated in our Mission Statement and directive as listed below:

The Mission of the Trout Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to provide input from the public through county delegates assembled from areas throughout the State of Wisconsin making up that committee and addressing issues where public input is deemed appropriate on matters of cold water resources including the flora and fauna that make up those resources.

The Directive of the Trout Committee is to ensure that the cold water resources of the State of Wisconsin are not degraded or impaired in any manner, with the necessary steps taken to improve them whenever and wherever possible.

Anything that would prevent or hinder the Trout Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in abiding by its Mission and Directive Statements would greatly impair our ability to participate in the rule making process.