

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Warm Water Study Committee

Meeting Minutes



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| ORDER OF BUSINESS | 11/10/12 | 10:00 am | Mead Wildlife Area Visitor Center |
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

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| MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY | Chair Joe Weiss at 10:00 am |
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B. ROLL CALL

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| ATTENDEES | Joe Weiss, Rick Olson, Frank Pratt, Bill Herrmann, Wally Trudeau, Richard Warosh, Russ Warye, Peter Doperalski, John Aschenbrenner, Wayne Towne, Robert Bohardt, Larry Dobbe, Jack Quall, James Winkler, Henry Garn, Michael Arrowood, Dan Rewey, Louis Rudolph, Ray Wiess, Gregory Wells, Dave Miller, Mike Dreischmeier, Rick Knutson, Jeff Paske, John Blumreich, Eugene Altweis, Tim Simonson, Byron Goetsch |
| EXCUSED | none |
| UNEXCUSED | none |
| GUESTS | Mike Murphy, William Francis Murphy, John Michael Murphy, Duane Harpster, Marcus Arneson, Butch Podolak, Joseph Burger, Mark Seemich |

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

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| DISCUSSION | none |
| ACTION | The amended agenda (10/02/12) was approved without change. |

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

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| DISCUSSION | The mission of the Warm Water Study Committee is to review, discuss, and make recommendations on questions, rules, and policies concerning warm water fisheries in the State of Wisconsin. The scope of this review includes all bodies of water (lakes, rivers, and streams) located within the state as well as boundary waters surrounding Wisconsin. Furthermore, it includes all fish species traditionally known as "warm water" species regardless of what type of water body they may be located in. Our recommendations are made in an advisory capacity to the public, the Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Board, and the Conservation Congress. The committee supports the long term goal of protecting and enhancing our warm water fishery resource for future generations of Wisconsin citizens. |
| ACTION | The committee mission statement was discussed with a focus on a broadening of the wording to include an enhanced recognition of warm water species oversights in the Great Lakes. A motion to add the words "Great Lakes" to the boundary water words of the mission statement was passed unanimously. |

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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| DISCUSSION | none |
| ACTION | |

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. RESOLUTION 640512 BLUEGILL BAG AND SIZE LIMITS

DUANE HARPSTER

FOR ALLEQUASH LAKE, VILAS COUNTY

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| DISCUSSION | Duane Harpster, Boulder Junction, reported this lake has a history of being able to produce a quality bluegill population but has been repeatedly overharvested by anglers. While some discussion focused on the proposed 8-inch size minimum, overwhelming sentiment favored recognizing growing angler sentiment for panfish regulation and recognizing waters possessing the ability to sustain quality panfish populations. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was passed with opposition only from one member. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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B. RESOLUTION 640412 WALLEYE SIZE AND BAG LIMIT ON TROUT LAKE

DUANE HARPSTER

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| DISCUSSION | Also proposed by Harpster. He cited the lake's ability to produce trophy walleye and noted that angling attitudes are changing in that trophy fish are becoming important to anglers. Additionally, Harpster as a retired area game warden reported that Trout L. receives substantial angling and treaty harvest pressure. | |
| ACTION | After discussion and noting that this resolution included a non-standard DNR size limit (15 inches with a one fish over 20 inches allowed) a motion to reject was passed without opposition. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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C. RESOLUTION 370512

MARCUS ARNESON

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| DISCUSSION | Marcus Arneson, Marathon, reported that a significant decrease in larger crappie has occurred because of significant ice fishing harvests. He reported that Lake Wausau "...has a historic record of producing quality fish" and believes the current 25 bag limit has depleted numbers of larger 12 to 13-inch fish, citing increasing ice-fishing and open water harvesting. | |
| ACTION | With committee members concurring and citing the number of resolutions seen in recent years on crappie bag limits, a motion to approve was passed without opposition. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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D. A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT HOOK SIZE STANDARDS ON INLAND WATERS DURING CLOSED GAME FISH SEASONS

MIKE MURPHY

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| DISCUSSION | (No. 11 agenda item) was the amended item, added 10/02/12. This resolution was originally presented at the Conservation Congress Convention in Manitowoc by members of the William Murphy family, Portage. The suggestion to limit hook size to no larger than number 6 during the closed game fish season was presented by young family members who noted witnessing anglers casting large bass-size lures before season. Discussion focused on the hook size concept and the difficulty of implementing and enforcing. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was defeated by a 10 to 6 hand vote and a subsequent motion to table to Member Matters was approved unanimously. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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E. RESOLUTION 610312 REDUCE BLUEGILL BAG LIMIT ON CHEQUAMEGON WATERS

BUTCH PODOLAK

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| DISCUSSION | Was presented by author Butch Podolak, Gilman. His resolution to reduce bluegill bag limits to 10 reported that technology has dramatically improved the angler's ability to catch fish. The discussion focused on committee support with members reiterating increased pressure to reduce panfish bags in an effort to improve fish populations. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was passed unanimously. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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F. RESOLUTION 610212 CHANGE WALLEYE SIZE AND BAG LIMIT ON SPIRIT AND NORTH SPIRIT LAKES

JOSEPH BURGER

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| DISCUSSION | Was presented by author Joseph Burger. His proposal of establishing a 14-to 18-inch slot with a one over 18 inches in the bag was discussed and supported by the vast majority of the committee members. It was noted that the local biologist was in support of the change and that a combination of private and DNR stocking had created a solid fishery. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was passed with strong support, only two voices dissenting. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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G. RESOLUTION 290212 INCREASING THE SIZE LIMIT ON MUSKIE FOR PETENWELL AND CASTLE ROCK FLOWAGES

MARK SEEMICH

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| DISCUSSION | Was presented by author Mark Seemich, Elroy. He noted the Wisconsin River continues to improve in muskie quality and placing a 50-inch size limit would allow trophy potential, which muskie anglers have asked for repeatedly in state surveys. It was noted that a 50-inch size option has been used for trophy water designation. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was passed unanimously. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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H. RESOLUTION 450112 CHANGE SIZE AND BAG LIMITS FOR NORTHERN PIKE IN THE WINNEBAGO SYSTEM

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| DISCUSSION | Was supported by author. The proposal would change the current limits to a bag limit of two of which one fish could be larger than 26 inches. This is supported by the local biologist, Kendall Kamke, and would keep exploitation down on adult female pike. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was passed without opposition. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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I. RESOLUTION 700112 CREATE A 16-TO 18-INCH PROTECTED SLOT FOR LARGEMOUTH BASS STATEWIDE

DAN REWEY

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| DISCUSSION | Was presented by committee member, Dan Rewey of Wild Rose. Discussion noted that largemouth bass populations of small fish have increased in many waters with the current 14 inch minimum size rule, and establishing the slot would encourage harvest. However, it was noted that slot proposals are "difficult" for largemouth, often failing to achieve the targeted goal. | |
| ACTION | A motion to approve was passed on a 11 to 6 hand vote. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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J. RESOLUTION 370312 YEAR ROUND SPEARING AND BOW FISHING SEASON ON ROUGH FISH

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| DISCUSSION | It was noted in discussion that rough fish harvests are possible in southern waters but areas of the north don't possess species designated as rough fish. | |
| ACTION | A DNR proposal that appears to be proposed at the spring hearings resulted in the committee tabling the resolution because of the potential statewide change. | |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE | |
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K. RESOLUTION 490212 ALLOW FISH MANAGERS TO IMPLEMENT WALLEYE SLOT SIZES

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| DISCUSSION | Much discussion focused on the usefulness and success of slot sizes and members noted that fish managers should have the option of imposing a variety of slots with a clear understanding of where | |
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| | they work – for example, in systems with natural reproduction. However, more flexibility could allow more specific watershed management, which was strongly supported by committee member, Frank Pratt. |
| ACTION | A motion to reject failed and a new motion to forward passed without voiced opposition. |
| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
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L. DEPARTMENT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

TIM SIMONSON/ BYRON GOETSCH

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| DISCUSSION | <p>DNR representatives reported on the strong emphasis not to create identical regulations and reaffirmed that fish managers want to manage for lake and watershed potential...and not a one size fits all concept. In the law enforcement sector, conversations are ongoing to see if there are rules that can be streamlined or eliminated.</p> <p>While spring hearing questions have not been finalized, proposed changes include rough fish seasons, catch and release protection on smallmouth bass in the northern zone, statewide trolling with three lines, walleye bag limits, a 54-inch muskie size limit on L. Michigan, sturgeon regulation changes and lead tackle mandates on Pallette and Escanaba lakes as a pilot project.</p> <p>Tim Simonson, DNR liaison to Warm Water Committee, agreed with Chairman Weiss' contention that increased congress involvement with DNR's species committees is important. He also confirmed that some of the standing committees have been inactive. Weiss asked for volunteers and passed a sign-up sheet around the committee.</p> <p>The law enforcement report to the committee revealed approximately 2,300 fishing and 3,000 boat citations were issued in the previous year. New warden recruitment is ongoing but retirements will mean that shortfalls in staffing will continue to occur.</p> |
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| PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE | DEADLINE |
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III. MEMBERS MATTERS

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| DISCUSSION | <p>Member Frank Pratt strongly encouraged involvement in angler mentoring programs that are being worked through local fish managers. After this discussion, the panfish harvest question was again discussed, to demonstrate continued pressure on the DNR to respond to angler demands to reduce bag limits on panfish species. The committee passed a resolution that states – “Do you support a regulation change addressing panfish overharvest allowing a bag split by species?” This resolution sponsored by the Warm Water Committee was approved unanimously by motion and vote. Finally, after discussion that included recognizing the Murphy family for their actions in observing illegal gamefish harvest before the season opener the tabled resolution on hook size, would be discussed with them by Chairman Weiss.</p> |
| ACTION | |

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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| MEETING ADJOURNED | 3:00 pm |
| SUBMITTED BY | Russ Warye, Secretary |
| DATE | November 15, 2012 |