

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Great Lakes Study Committee

Meeting Minutes



ORDER OF BUSINESS	9/21/2013	10:00am	George W. Mead Wildlife Education Center
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	Chairman Dale Mass at 9:58am
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Alvin Bochler, Pearl Holmstadt, Al Marotz, Hugh Hatch, Dale Mass, Staush Gruszynski, David Tupa, Don Anderson, Tom Kleiman, Richard Becker, James Baumgart, Anthony Grabski, John Blumreich, Eugene Altwies, John Collen, DNR Liaisons: Chris Groth, Bill Horns, DNR Fisheries Staff: Brad Eggold, Peter Stevens.
EXCUSED	Thomas Johnson
UNEXCUSED	none
GUESTS	Resolution authors, supporters of resolutions, and concerned citizens: Scott Cameron, Jake Wagner, Bruce Prentice, and several others.

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	Motion and second to approve agenda repair with reordering of DNR presentations.
ACTION	Motion Approved

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	Read by Dale Mass. Discussion of the mission. Motion and second to maintain mission statement.
ACTION	Motion Approved

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	Motion and second to allow public discussion in order of resolutions on our agenda. Scott Cameron spoke on perch concerns in the Chequamegon Bay area and provided hand-outs to support resolution 020113. Jake Wagner said he will present later in the meeting.
ACTION	Motion Approved

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. DNR FISHERIES CHINOOK SALMON REPORT

BRAD EGGOLD

DISCUSSION	There is an effort to reduce stocking in Lake Michigan by 50% lake wide, by 34.49% in WI, and monitor chinook salmon through Strawberry Creek data collection. Future stocking quota allocation strategies will consider multiple variables to determine stocking location allocations. Balancing chinook stocking numbers with coho, rainbows, lake trout, and brown trout is complicated with available space to raise these fish within the Great Lakes Watershed due to VHS and the predator biomass that can be supported by the Great Lakes forage base. Further complicating the balance of predators in the lake is the natural reproduction that takes place in many Michigan rivers and streams. Invasive aquatic species add to the dynamic fluctuations and complexity of biomass distribution within
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	the Great Lakes. Approximately 50%-55% of the Chinook salmon in the Lake Michigan basin continues to come from natural reproduction sources. The complexity of species specific life zones, habitat distribution overlap, and forage base availability plays a role in predator competition within the lake. The open discussions and public input period continues as DNR Fisheries biologists evaluate the strategic plan for stocking allocations before implementation of the plan.
ACTION	Motion and second to support DNR fisheries to continue with monitoring and collecting data through the coded tag program with enhanced effort from sport and charter fishermen involvement in 2014 and beyond. Motion Approved

B. RESOLUTION 020113 CHEQUAMEGON BAY PERCH

SCOTT CAMERON

DISCUSSION	Dale Mass reminded us that WCC makes decisions and recommendations based on research, scientific studies, biologically supported data, and in the best interest of the resource. Motion and second to advance the resolution. Presentation by Peter Stevens (DNR Lake Superior Fisheries) about perch population and average size of fish. Perch numbers are on an overall upward population increase. Typically, DNR fisheries managers would increase bag limits to reduce numbers of fish if the desired result is to increase size structure. Data shows that the average size structure of perch in creel survey is maintaining at between 8"-10" and the fish community index is indicating relatively stable size distributions. The current bag limit is 25 perch per day. A change in bag limit or closure during the spawning period may not produce the desired effect to bring about larger perch. Reducing the bag limit may actually result in the stunted growth of the perch. The panfish team is working on a much larger-state-wide effort to manage panfish. Scott Cameron pointed out that the large population growth may be due to the Bad River stocking program.
ACTION	Motion Failed.

C. RESOLUTIONS 150113 AND 380113: REINSTATE ICE SPEARING FOR NORTHERN PIKE

JAKE WAGNER

DISCUSSION	Motion and second to group identical resolutions 150113 and 380113. – Motion Approved Motion and second to advance the combined resolution. Presentation by Jake Wagner to reinstate spearing northern pike through the ice indicated that he saw many fish last season and harvested less than 5 pike in the 28"-35" range during the legal 2012-13 spearing season. A very small user group has traditionally participated in this sport fishing opportunity. MN and MI both have trophy musky fisheries coexisting with northern pike spearing through the ice. In MI the spearing bag limits are the same as hook and line. A former "Dark house spearing" resolution submitted to the JOINT committee of Great Lakes and Warm Water in 2008, failed due to the greater numbers of Warm Water members voting against the resolution while the majority of Great Lakes members were in favor of the resolution in 2008. A northern pike spearing resolution had advanced through the Great Lakes Committee in 2010, but was rejected by the Executive Committee due to misinformation within the resolution. Reinstating the northern pike spearing season would provide an opportunity to promote recreational outdoor activities and pass on the hunting and fishing heritage. Law enforcement has no objection to reinstating the northern pike spearing regulation.
ACTION	Motion Approved. Question title, background, and question drafted. Motion and second to forward question as written below: Motion Approved.

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
Committee	9/21/13
Title: Reinstate Northern Pike Ice Spearing on WI/MI Boundary Waters	
Wisconsin currently has a northern pike ice spearing season on Lake Superior and offers sturgeon spearing on Lake Winnebago waters. Michigan and Minnesota also have pike spearing seasons along with 5 other states. Dark House Spearing Associations in neighboring states are actively promoting the camaraderie of the sport, including traditional fish decoy carving and lobbying to maintain spearing as an outdoor heritage opportunity. Increased new angler participation and winter tourist benefits would be realized in border communities. We recommend reinstating the northern pike spearing season on the Wisconsin/Michigan boundary of the Menominee River from the Hattie Street Dam to the river mouth at the bay of Green Bay citing historic interests, creating uniform boundary rules, and increasing angler participation through harvest methods that have minimal biological impact. Would you support the Department of Natural Resources taking action to reinstate northern pike spearing on the Menominee River from the Hattie Street Dam to the river mouth at the bay of Green Bay along the Wisconsin/Michigan Boundary waters?	

**D. RESOLUTION 320313 WI/MI BOUNDARY WATERS
SPEARING PIKE THROUGH THE ICE**

NO PRESENTER

DISCUSSION	A question was raised that the context of the resolution may be outside the scope of the Great Lakes Committee. Motion and second to table the resolution.
ACTION	Tabled

**E. RESOLUTION 410113 DELISTING COMMERCIAL
PERCH HARVEST**

NO PRESENTER

DISCUSSION	Motion and second to advance the resolution. A prior resolution passed in a statewide vote and was supported by the Great Lakes Committee in support of closing commercial fishing for yellow perch on Lake Michigan. Currently there is no open season for commercial perch fishing on Lake Michigan. This resolution is asking to remove perch from the list of commercially harvestable species. Although the committee supported the closure of commercial perch fishing on Lake Michigan, the WCC Great Lakes Committee cannot sponsor legislation to remove the yellow perch from the list of commercially harvestable species within the state statute that currently mandates commercial fishing opportunities. The WCC GLC does not have the authority to accomplish what the author of the resolution is asking. A major overhaul of the state statute would be needed to accomplish the desired outcome of this resolution. The author was informed of this fact at a prior committee meeting and will be reminded again.	
ACTION	Motion Failed by unanimous vote. Author will be contacted by the secretary.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	
David Tupa	9/27/2013	

F. LAKE SUPERIOR FISHERIES UPDATES

PETER STEVENS

DISCUSSION	DNR State Tribal agreement: DNR Fisheries Biological Committee continues to work with tribal fisheries. Negotiations October 8 th . Rulemaking process is a collaborative effort. Trap net rule review: Trap nets on Lake Superior. Commercial / sport fishing-recreational angling conflicts and safety issues especially in Chequamegon Bay area. There are currently 10 license and 10 total nets in the restricted use area no closer than ½ mile apart. June 1-Aug 15. Establish a zone of safe passage. Commercial cisco harvest: Lake wide commercial harvest of cisco on Lake Superior is on the increase, mainly to harvest the eggs for European markets. The amount of effort is increasing “exponentially”. The harvest has increased exponentially and has topped out in 2011. There is currently no harvest limit or quota set for commercial harvest of cisco. Agreements need to be negotiated with tribal authorities for effective implementation of any limits or quotas.
ACTION	none

G. DNR FISHERIES UPDATES

BILL HORNS

DISCUSSION	Integrated Fisheries Management plan: Bill Horns made copies of the plan for committee members to read and make comments. Commercial fishing automated quota review: Bill Horns reported on relative abundance of various commercial species. Rule on bloater chubs coming soon. Bill spoke in support of the fully automated quota system that would adjust with the index of abundance. This would give real-time harvest quota adjustments to real-time abundance levels both in raising and lowering quota limits. Trout and salmon stamp: Bill handed out copies of the AB 155. Support for sea lamprey control. Bruce Prentice spoke about stamp money being used and pointed out that sea lamprey control is a multi-state issue of concern. There were also comments that general fund money should not be used for lamprey control.
ACTION	none

H. DNR LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATES

CHRIS GROTH

DISCUSSION	Chris gave reports on warden force, strategic plan, goals, salmon starting to migrate, \$15,000 violation in illegal whitefish harvest, radio standardization P25 compliant system presenting issues of concern, asking legislators for funding to upgrade radios to 4 separate radio systems.
ACTION	none

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Tony- Salmon stocking concern brown trout for salmon. Al- Water quality concerns. It was suggested that we add DNR Department of the Great Lakes person to our committee. Concerns about Milfoil, Salmon allocation model concerns: Motion and second to support the individual port allocations of salmon stocks as presented by Brad Eggold in his report – Approved. Altwies- willing to help out with salmon tags, Dale- DNR needs to ask clubs and volunteers for help. There are many sports clubs that would gladly help with DNR studies and research. Ben Bruns (YCC) expressed his appreciation and opportunity to experience two different study committee meetings.
ACTION	Motion Approved

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	Motion and second to adjourn at 3:26pm, Motion Approved.
SUBMITTED BY	David Tupa
DATE	9/21/2013