

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Great Lakes Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes



ORDER OF BUSINESS	9/27/2014	9:30am	George W. Mead Wildlife Area Visitor Center, S2148 County Road S, Miladore, WI.
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	WCC Great Lakes Committee Chairman, Dale Maas at 9:27am
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Committee Members: Alvin Bochler, Thomas Johnson, Bob Ellingston, Hugh Hatch, Tyrone Larson, Dale Maas, Sandie Becker, Joseph Felhofer, David Tupa, Don Anderson, James Baumgart, Mitch Fisher, Anthony Grabski, John Blumreich, Eugene Altwies, John Collen. DNR Liaisons: Chris Groth, Brad Eggold. YCC Delegates: Mikayla Kifer, Joe Altwies.
EXCUSED	Al Marotz, Tom Kleiman, James Houck.
UNEXCUSED	none
GUESTS	Resolution author/representative for trout stamp increase and Adam Lindsey DNR Liaison to the WCC.

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	None
ACTION	None

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

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

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	None
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II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. CITIZEN RESOLUTIONS:

1. RESOLUTION 410914: LAKE MICHIGAN PERCH PROTECTION

AUTHOR NOT PRESENT

DISCUSSION	Dale Maas read resolution: Motion and second to advance the resolution. Discussion: WCC – GL members discussed the merits of this petition. Many members were confused by the numbers and percentages presented in the petition. Brad Eggold indicated that he thought the intent of the statement that the perch population was down 96% was from the all-time high to 2008 but other members thought it meant 96% down from 2008 to the present. The perch biomass is estimated by fisheries biologists to remain about the same today as it was in 2012 and is able to support current commercial and sport fishing quotas. The ability of yellow perch to “come-back” in both the lake and the bay is far more dependent on habitat, spawning conditions, and competition from year to year. Limiting the sport and commercial quota levels would have little impact considering all the other variables that are preventing perch from making a “come-back.” Sandie B expressed some initial support for the resolution. Brad Eggold addressed biology of perch in the lake vs the bay. Spawning and recruitment has been relatively stable in recent years. Chris Groth: Most of the commercially harvested perch are taken from a few zones in northern Green Bay and is “self-regulating,” driven by the market demand and cost. Also, the DNR may have the authority to take perch off of the commercial list but are not interested in doing so only to have a legislator add it back. Nobody is in dispute that perch populations are lower now than 40-50 years ago, due to many variables, including invasive species, competition, habitat shortfalls, spawning conditions, predation, redistribution of biomass, and many other variables. Only a finite amount of biomass can be supported by the lake ecosystem. The decisions of this committee need to be based on biology, science, and accurate data to advise the DNR on how to best manage the resource. WCC does not make or change laws, legislators do. Even when the WCC forwards a resolution, and
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	even when the majority of our state citizens support a resolution and it gains the support of the DNR, state legislators may reject the resolution, as we have seen in the past. Wisconsin law states that commercial fishing is currently closed on Lake Michigan, but is offered in limited areas of Green Bay. Our committee is not legislative. Currently, no commercial perch fishing is allowed in any state surrounding the lake, so the “protection” is already in place. A similar resolution was rejected in previous years for the same reasons as listed above.
ACTION	Motion to advance failed.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: AUTHOR WILL BE CONTACTED	
DEADLINE:	

2. RESOLUTION 411014: LAKE MICH SPORT SEASON

AUTHOR NOT PRESENT

DISCUSSION	Motion and second to reject. Discussion: 96-63 was the county vote. Current bag limit is 5 for sport fishing. Current sport harvest is mostly from the 2010 year class and it is estimated that the sport take is very low. Removing the sport harvest would not have any significant impact on their population. Closing commercial fishing for perch on Lake Michigan has not resulted in any significant increase in perch population on the lake. Cormorants and pelicans are estimated to be taking several millions of pounds of perch per summer, but the DNR has their hands tied and are limited in their ability to control these invasive birds as the management of these birds is controlled by the Federal USFWS Agency. Perch year class numbers are highly variable and lake-wide competition for food is intense.
ACTION	Motion to reject carried.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: AUTHOR WILL BE CONTACTED	
DEADLINE:	

3. RESOLUTIONS 020114, 160114, 260114: TROUT STAMP INCREASE

AUTHOR PRESENT

DISCUSSION	Motion and second to support resolution. Discussion: Hatcheries have been struggling to remain open with funding cuts. Hatcheries provide cultural, historical, economic, and biological services to the waters of Wisconsin. Some Great Lakes Stamp funds have been diverted to sea lamprey control programs. VHS has complicated issues and made hatchery management more costly. Last fee increase in 2007. Some states have a “habitat stamp” that funds programs. The entire state benefits from sports license fees that fund many programs and habitat. Current trout and salmon stocks have been reduced to balance with forage base. Motion and second to “strike “inland trout.” Motion failed.
ACTION	Motion carried to support the resolution. Motion and second to split question in two parts for spring hearing: one Inland and one Great Lakes. Motion Carried.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: QUESTIONS WILL BE DRAFTED FOR ADVANCEMENT	
DEADLINE:	

B. LAKE MICHIGAN PUBLIC ACCESS

CHRIS GROTH

DISCUSSION	NR Board purchase of land \$1,051,000 4.8 A. for water access. DNR agreement w/ Wagontrail for parking at the public access point. Until the Town of Liberty Grove takes over, no further development is planned because the DNR cannot apply for grants. That is why the township will be involved and they would do the grant requests. Door County Parks may also get involved.
ACTION	none

C. RE-ESTABLISH NORTHERN PIKE ICE SPEARING

DAVID TUPA

DISCUSSION	Resolutions 150113 and 380113 passed from this committee in 2013 to reinstate ice spearing for northern pike. The WCC Executive Committee failed to support the WCC Great Lakes recommendation due to inconsistent regulations being created between Michigan and Wisconsin. Similar resolutions asking to reinstate the northern pike ice spearing season have been passed by the Great Lakes Committee in previous years. Motion and second to write a letter of support of resolution #050114 to the warm water committee, whereas Great Lakes portions of this resolution fall under our jurisdiction and our committee has historically supported reinstating the ice spearing season for northern pike on certain waters of the Great Lakes.
ACTION	Motion carried to draft letter to Warm Water Committee, in our support to reinstate ice spearing season for northern pike.

D. GREEN BAY WALLEY TOURNAMENT

CHRIS GROTH

DISCUSSION	Brad Eggold reported on walleye data and 1000 fish harvested during the event is small compared to the total annual harvest as reported by creel surveys. The DNR was able to collect otolith samples from fish harvested to collect aging and growth data. Donating fish to food pantries helps the image of an event like this.
ACTION	none

E. GUIDE REPORTING ON LAKE MICHIGAN**CHRIS GROTH**

DISCUSSION	Chris Groth reported on discussions at meetings with sport fishermen and talked about an electronic system of reporting. Be on the lookout for some proposed ideas. Commercial trial reporting system was less than successful in Lake Superior. Looking at internet based reporting in October.
ACTION	none

F. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATES**BRAD EGGOLD**

DISCUSSION	Brad Eggold reviewed public meetings, topic discussions, (Dale would like us to go on record about our support or not of the 57 page plan). http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/Documents/LakeMichigan/LMIFMP2015-2024Draft.pdf as found on the DNR website: http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/LakeMichigan/LMIntFishManagePlan.html 5 vision statements found in report: Do we agree with or have a position on these? 9 controversial topics as found in report: Do we agree with or have a position on these? Committee Assignment: Motion and second to review the plan and poll the committee by conference call on Wednesday, October, 29th at 7:00pm.
ACTION	Motion carried. Check for call-in information.

G. CHINOOK SALMON TAG PROGRAM & POPULATION...**BRAD EGGOLD**

DISCUSSION	Brad Eggold presented on mass marking program process and results as seen on the DNR website: http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/fishmanagementreports.html Reductions in stocks since 1989, through 2013 due to increased natural reproduction from Michigan. Close association between forage and chinook harvest. Predator prey ratio model to help monitor and guide stocking. Chinook biomass vs Alewife biomass. Optimum biomass ratio is about 0.05 pounds chinook per pound of alewife. With upper threshold limit of 0.10 Chinook : Alewife.
ACTION	None

H. YELLOW PERCH POPULATION AND PUBLIC INPUT...**BRAD EGGOLD**

DISCUSSION	October 23 rd 5:30-9:00pm public perch meeting. Lake ecology discussion... See also the DNR website on perch information: http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/YellowPerch.html
ACTION	Attend meeting if you can

I. DNR LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATES**CHRIS GROTH**

DISCUSSION	Chris gave report on warden force and field training officers. Currently 25 wardens short state-wide with 10 entering the force and 15 in the program and uncertain about retirees.
ACTION	none

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Concerns about faucet snail may create new invasive problems (It has been around since 1870's), Lake Superior coho run may have been impacted by flooding storms, YCC "thank you for your participation," value of WCC, individual fishing reports, concerns of ever-changing lake ecology, history of WCC "80 years."
ACTION	None

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	Motion and second to adjourn at 1:53pm, Motion Carried.
SUBMITTED BY	David Tupa
DATE	9/27/2014