

# Wisconsin Conservation Congress

## Trout Committee

### Meeting Minutes



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| ORDER OF BUSINESS | 27 Aug 16 | 0935-1520 hrs. | Vernon Memorial Hospital, Viroqua,<br>WI |
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#### I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

##### A. CALL TO ORDER

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| MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY | D. Vanden Bloomen, Chair at 0935 |
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##### B. ROLL CALL

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| ATTENDEES | Robert Traczyk (Iron), Roger Roehl (Rusk), Nathaniel Brown (Taylor), Dale Ebert (Florence), Dennis Vanden Bloomen, Chair (Eau Claire), Maurice Amundson (Monroe), Scott Pitta, Secretary (Adams), David Ninneman (Outagamie), Robert Haase (Fond du Lac), James Wierzba, Vice Chair (Ozaukee), David Barron (Richland), Steve Gehrke (Grant) Martin Sands (Walworth) Thomas Daluga, Jr. (Waukesha) |
| EXCUSED   | Erick Flood (Douglas), Michael Cran (Polk), George Korn (Menomonee), Benjamin Siehoff (Ozaukee), Edgar Anderson (Trempealeau)  |
| UNEXCUSED |  |
| GUESTS    | Larry Bondi (WCC Chair), Duke Welter, Dick Propp, Dick Hewise, Stephen Heurise, Roger Kerr, Harry Turner, Matt Wagner, Samuel Coley, William Howe, Stan Herth, David Rowe, Marc Hopkins, Caden Goecks, Glen Hewise Jr., Bob Blumenreich, Dan Flaharty, Don Winch, John Slaney,   |

##### C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

|            |                       |
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| DISCUSSION | None                  |
| ACTION     | approved as presented |

##### D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

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| DISCUSSION | Chair read the mission statement |
| ACTION     | No changes made                  |

##### E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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| DISCUSSION | Larry Bondi. The trout committee is not over-staffed by Trout Unlimited members. District leaders, not top management pick who sits on the committees. Viroqua is a great location for the trout meeting. The goal is for all sides to be heard plus input from the public and all sides engaged. |
| ACTION     | None  |

#### II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

##### A. RESTORE JANUARY THRU APRIL TROUT FISHING FOR ALL IN SOUTHWEST WI

**ROGER KERR**

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| DISCUSSION | Resolutions 120216, 250416, 530116, 570216— Restore January through April Trout Fishing for all Anglers in southwest Wisconsin (120216), Crawford County, (250416) Iowa County, (530116) Richland County, (570216), Sauk County. Introduce rule changes to allow bait fishing and harvest (a 5 bag limit) in Grant, <i>Crawford</i> , Vernon, La Crosse, <i>Iowa</i> , <i>Sauk</i> , Lafayette and <i>Richland</i> Counties. |
|            | Roger Kerr--Restore Jan - April fishing for trout. Public comments for DNR trout regulations had minimal public  |

participation. In 1975, the long season impacted hatchery fish but did not impact wild fish. In 2000 the wild fish stocking program began. Iowa County needs a 5 fish bag limit year round.

Other public comments/questions were:

The state of Iowa allows year round fishing with liberal bag limits.

There are too many small trout in Vernon County.

In Crawford County stream restoration has greatly improved habitat and trout numbers.

A Pine River landowner wants fishing by any method, prefers for some fish to be harvested. Make the rules easier. Make the local landowners happy or they will deny access to the streams on their land.

How many fish are harvested on a given stream in Richland County? More data is needed.

A large fish density nurtures gill lice. (Note: not true according to Report on Gill lice from Dr. Matt Mitro (DNR) at the end of meeting.

What impact on license sales do regulations have?

DNR Comments: See Fish Retention Study by Jordan Petchenik (WDNR Science Services) prepared the report, "Results of the 2011 Survey of Lapsed Wisconsin Inland Trout Anglers," in 2012. This report is available on the following webpage:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/outreach/TroutRegReview.html>

Duke Welter. Creel surveys cost \$30 thousand each. A longer trout season is less productive. There is plenty of fish survey data. 2001 began the early trout season. There is a 40% morality rate for live bait caught-and-released trout. Should we seek to make changes to the entire state or should we make incremental changes?

DNR (Prepared) Comments: The Department does not plan on pursuing this at this time. The Department launched a statewide effort in 2011 to review inland trout fishing. Trout populations, trout streams, and trout anglers themselves have changed significantly since the DNR last collected angler input on a statewide basis over 23 years ago. This process involved multiple forms of stakeholder input, including surveys, public meetings, stakeholder groups and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress. All members of the public were invited to attend the public meetings and the spring hearings. Surveys of trout anglers in Wisconsin show both preferences for and against artificial-only regulations. One goal from the effort was to create more opportunities. The proposed regulations were brought to the 2015 spring hearings. All questions passed statewide and in most counties, particularly each of the following counties: Grant, Crawford, Vernon, La Crosse, Iowa, Sauk, Lafayette and Richland. The Department went forward with the new rules that then went into effect in 2016. Along with specific bag and size limit changes, the early catch and release season was extended to begin on the first Saturday in January and the harvest season was extended until October 15<sup>th</sup>.

DNR Comments: Not fair to compare Wisconsin Trout streams to those in the state of Iowa. Iowa stocks many streams and is more of a hatchery put-and-take trout fishing program. Out of 81 trout streams in the state of Iowa; 50 are put- and-take, 24 are Class 2 with only seven (7) Class 1 naturally reproducing streams. The Class 1 streams have special regulations.

Usually wait 3 years after a rule change to measure the effects.

Trout Committee Comments:

James Wierzba. On-line creel surveys should be pursued by the DNR. There is also a place for volunteer observation reports.

Robert Traczyk. Kids are not fishing nationwide. Fewer parents are helping kids to fish. Only 3% of the trout streams in Wisconsin are artificial only. Focus on habitat, not technique. There is only one common news outlet for conservation issues, the Wisconsin Outdoor News. The DNR trout regulations are good just like they are.

Comments from Chair Vanden Bloomen:

The resolution needs clarification. Could read this resolution as three separate issues:

1. Allow early season 1 January to first Saturday in May, for bait fishing
2. keep fish in the early season 1 Jan to first Saturday in May and
3. change the daily bag limit to 5 fish in those eight counties listed in the resolution.

Congress Guidance--Only one issue, clearly stated, should be in a resolution. Confusing as to what change would be voted on by public at Spring Hearings. In all likelihood this resolution would not be accepted, as is, by the WCC Executive Council. Policy of WCC for the past few years does not allow substantial changes to resolutions, even with author approval, because the original resolution was voted on (in this case) by four (4)

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|  | counties.  |
| <b>ACTION</b>  | Motion to forward resolution to the district leadership council (MB: Maurice Amundson, SB: Dave Barron)—committee defeated this motion. Action taken: reject the motion (MB: Brown, SB: Traczyk)<br>Vote: reject the resolution. |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>   | <b>DEADLINE</b>  |
| Chair to send letters to four authors (they were all present at the meeting) | 9 September 2106   |

**B. RETURN 1 MILE SECTION OF CASTLE ROCK TROUT STREAM TO LIVE-BAIT CATCH AND KEEP**

**HARRY TURNER**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>                         | Resolution 220116—Beginning with the 2017 trout fishing season, the DNR return the Castle Rock trout stream to its 2002 status and 2002 regulations. This will restore the one (1) mile section of the stream, extending from the Castle Rock town bridge to the County Q Bridge west of the town to “live bait-catch and keep” status.<br><br>Presentation by Harry Turner, Resolution author.<br><br>The DNR says it is fine with the change. Change, if passed at statewide 2017 spring hearings will be a fisheries question in 2018 at the earliest implementation in 2019.<br><br>Amend Resolution to read: The DNR return the Castle Rock trout stream to its 2002 status and 2002 regulations. This will restore the one (1) mile section of the stream, extending from the Castle Rock town bridge to the County Q Bridge west of the town to “live bait-catch and keep” status. Minor changes approved by author. |
| <b>ACTION</b>                             | Action taken: move forward (MB: Hasse, SB: Amundsen). Delete wording "Beginning with the 2017 trout season", "opening day". Added wording: "No DNR impact." Minimal changes approved by the author.<br>Action taken: advance the resolution as amended (MB: Brown, MB: Wiezba)<br>Action taken: pass  |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>              | <b>DEADLINE</b>   |
| Chair Vanden Bloomen (forward as amended) | 14 September 2016   |

**C. CHANGE TROUT REGULATIONS ON DEVILS CREEK AND WEIRGOR CREEK WATERSHEDS IN RUSK AND SAWYER COUNTIES**

**ROGER ROEHL**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>                                  | Resolution 550116—Change Trout Regulations on Devils Creek and Weirgor Creek watersheds in Rusk and Sawyer Counties.<br><br>Roger Roehl comments: The locals want to liberalize the regulations on these streams. Some stocking is done.<br><br>The DNR noted that similar changes on this stream are in motion. There are parallel policy changes between the DNR and the WCC. This parallel movement is acceptable. Ideally the DNR will include these suggested changes in their rules in the Fisheries Department rule changes for the statewide 2017 Spring Hearings. |
| <b>ACTION</b>                                      | Action taken: advance the resolution ( MB: Daluga, SB: Ebert)<br>Vote : pass   |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>                       | <b>DEADLINE</b>  |
| Chair speak with DNR to coordinate the resolution. | 14 September 2016  |

**D. SUPPORT CONTINUATION OF WI INLAND TROUT STAMP**

**JOHN “DUKE” WELTER**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | Resolution 630516—the Inland Trout Stamp program should be maintained and not replaced with a multi-species habitat stamp.<br>Comments by Resolution author Duke Welter. The stamp works, don't change it.<br><br>DNR Response: Any change to the trout stamp program would need to come from the legislature. The Department is not aware of any proposal at this time. The Wisconsin DNR has a long history of trout stream habitat management, beginning as early as the 1930s. In 1977, the Inland Waters Trout Stamp program was |
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|  | <p>created to provide funding for improving and restoring trout habitat and to provide increased trout fishing opportunities. DNR biologists and technicians have used trout stamp dollars to improve and maintain over 25 miles of streams a year.</p> <p>The Great Lakes Committee should align the Resolution title with the actual resolution to increase the stamp cost—not a license fee increase.</p> |
| <b>ACTION</b>                                  | <p>Action taken: advance (MB: Brown, SB: Gehrke)</p> <p>Action taken: table till trout stamp increase discussion</p> <p>Action taken: motion withdrawn (Brown, Gehrke)</p>   |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE—NO FURTHER ACTION</b> | <b>DEADLINE</b>  |

**E. SUPPORT LICENSE FEE INCREASE TO FUND COLDWATER FISH HATCHERIES**

**D. VANDEN BLOOMEN**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>                   | <p>Resolution 160316 (assigned to Legislative Committee)</p> <p><u>DNR Response:</u> Any change to the Great Lakes Salmon and Trout stamp program would need to come from the legislature.</p> <p>Sense of the Trout Committee is to support the stocking funding increase.</p> |
| <b>ACTION</b>                       | Letter to Great Lake Committee  |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE--CHAIR</b> | <b>DEADLINE—14 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>   |

**F. ELIMINATION OF LEAD AMMUNITION AND LEAD FISHING TACKLE**

**SCOTT PITTA**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b>                                 | <p>Resolution 710716 (assigned to Environmental Committee) The resolution is too ambitious. Separate the fishing lead issue from the hunting ammunition issue. Forward to environmental committee with a letter including verbiage from Maine regulations that banned lead in fishing tackle.</p> <p>Add a recommendation to the resolution to have the WI DNR work with manufacturers and retailers to design a program to exchange current lead items for new environmentally friendly substitutes.</p> |
| <b>ACTION</b>                                     | Forward to environmental committee with a letter including verbiage from Maine regulations that banned lead in fishing tackle.  |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE—CHAIR VANDEN BLOOMEN</b> | <b>DEADLINE—14 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>   |

**G. RAISE THE WI INLAND TROUT STAMP FEE TO \$15**

**D. VANDEN BLOOMEN**

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p>Proposed resolution by Trout Committee</p> <p>The trout stamp fees fund trout stream (cold water) restoration, improvements, surveys and maintenance activities that have improved an average of 25 miles of stream and 1 spring pond per year. This has resulted in 865 miles of stream improved out of 13,000 miles of trout stream in Wisconsin. Total trout stamp expenditures from 2008 through 2010 were on average \$1.6 million. An average of \$411,812 per year from 2008 through 2010 was also spent on inland trout habitat from general fishing license fees. The cost of the trout stamp has increased from \$2.50 during 1978-1983, to \$3.25 during 1984-1991, to \$7.25 during 1992-2006, and is currently \$10.00 since 2006. The number of trout stamps sold varies from year-to-year and averages 142,000 stamps annually over the last 10 years. In addition, Patron License holders (currently about 50,000) support the Inland Waters Trout Stamp program. The costs associated with trout work crews have increased annually and the costs of fuel and materials have more than doubled in the past five (5) years alone. <b>Raise the Inland Trout Stamp fee to \$15.00</b></p> <p><b>Discussion:</b> Individuals need to lobby legislators individually. Present this as a stamp not a tax increase. Inland trout stamp money is used for habitat. Great Lakes salmon stamp is for hatcheries. Invite legislators to trout meetings. Last increase 2006. A decrease of \$142,000 in last budget. Fewer dollars means fewer miles of restoration. Sixteen (16) FTE positions were lost in DNR fisheries in the last budget. Some of these positions (FTE's) are the equipment operators who run the heavy equipment for trout stream restorations.</p> <p>Patron Licenses purchase a trout stamp, but only 38 percent use it, so only a small percent of the \$10 dollars goes to fisheries.</p> |
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| <b>ACTION</b>                                     | Forward Resolution to District Leadership Council. |
| <b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE—CHAIR VANDEN BLOOMEN</b> | <b>DEADLINE—14 SEPTEMBER 2016</b>                  |

### III. MEMBERS MATTERS

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| <b>DISCUSSION</b> | <p>Report by Dr. Matt Mitro (DNR) on Gill lice</p> <p>Our most detailed study of gill lice infection of Brook Trout comes from Ash Creek, which was a source of Brook Trout eggs for the state’s wild trout stocking program through 2013. Gill lice infection of Ash Creek Brook Trout was first observed in a routine 2010 health check of Ash Creek Brook Trout. A higher incidence of infection was observed in the 2011 health check. We began quantifying the prevalence and intensity of gill lice infection in Ash Creek Brook Trout in spring 2012, which has since increased to become epizootic and has now been documented to have impacted Brook Trout recruitment.</p> <p>A research paper on gill lice in Ash Creek has been peer-reviewed and recently accepted for publication in Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. The title of the paper is, “Brook Trout, Brown Trout and ectoparasitic copepods <i>Salmincola edwardsii</i>: species interactions as a proximate cause of Brook Trout loss under changing environmental conditions.”</p> <p>Paper Abstract: <b>Abstract:</b> Changes in environmental conditions are expected to affect stream temperature and ultimately the presence of native Brook Trout <i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i> in Wisconsin streams. While change in climate may be an ultimate cause of Brook Trout loss, proximate causes may involve factors other than intolerance to high temperatures. Here I present data to support the hypothesis that species interactions between Brook Trout, naturalized Brown Trout <i>Salmo trutta</i>, and ectoparasitic copepods <i>Salmincola edwardsii</i> in the context of changing environmental conditions can lead to declines in Brook Trout recruitment and abundance. <i>S. edwardsii</i> are endemic to Wisconsin streams and infect Brook Trout; they do not infect Brown Trout. <i>S. edwardsii</i> were first documented in Ash Creek, Wisconsin in 2010 and became epizootic in 2012. Conditions in 2012 conducive to an epizootic included anomalously warm stream temperatures, relative drought conditions, and an increasing sympatric population of Brown Trout. Infection prevalence increased from 42% in April 2012 to 95% in October. Average intensity of infection in 2012 was 5.5 copepods per age-0 Brook Trout and 16.1 per Brook Trout age 1 and older. Variation in Brook Trout recruitment appeared related to stock size and environmental factors including flood events, Brown Trout abundance, and <i>S. edwardsii</i> epizootics. In 2012, flow conditions were conducive to trout recruitment, but Brook Trout recruitment fell precipitously relative to Brown Trout. Recruitment of age-0 Brook Trout during <i>S. edwardsii</i> epizootics in 2012-2014 decreased about 77% and 89% compared to recruitment in 2007-2011 and 2005-2006. Following three consecutive years of <i>S. edwardsii</i> epizootics and poor recruitment, Brook Trout were nearing extirpation from Ash Creek. The data support the hypothesis that species interactions among trout and an ectoparasitic copepod under stressful environmental and ultimately climatic conditions can be a proximate cause of native Brook Trout loss.</p> <p>The DNR will do Housekeeping rule change on Trout Creek in Iowa County and Woods Creek in Florence County as errors in the rule on those streams were published in the 2016-17 Inland Trout Rules and Regulations from the original rules proposed by the DNR Fish Managers and agreed by the public input process.</p> <p>Meeting date for 2017 Trout Committee Meeting (Saturday, 26 August 2017) with a location TBD.</p> |
|                   | <b>ACTION</b>   |

### IV. ADJOURNMENT

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|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>MEETING ADJOURNED</b> | <b>1520 hours</b>             |
| <b>SUBMITTED BY</b>      | <b>Scott Pitta, Secretary</b> |
| <b>DATE</b>              | <b>10 September 2016</b>      |