Wisconsin Conservation Congress
Migratory Study Committee
Holiday Inn & Convention Center
Stevens Point, WI
Friday, December 2, 2011 7:00 PM

1. Organizational Matters
A. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dick Koerner at 7:00 PM.

B. Roll Call was taken by Dick Koerner in the excused absence of our Secretary Mitch Fisher.


Committee members excused: Mitch Fisher, Al Shook, Brad Wagner.

Committee members unexcused: Craig Conroy, Brad Wagner.
DNR personal Present: Kent VanHorn - migratory Game Bird Ecologist, James Christopoulos, assistant Ecologist and Todd Schaller, DNR Liaison

C. Mission Statement was read to the group

D. Public Comments: We had 3 authors of resolutions present, John Shillinglaw on resolution 700211, Will Minette on resolution 350211, and Paul Madden on res. 520811. All 3 resolutions were advanced.

2. Department Informational Items
   A. Kent VanHorn had a power point presentation
      - 2011 Waterfowl Season Report
        Duck Hunting pressure about the same. Water levels mostly lower across the state. Most biologists reported about the same or slightly lower number of ducks compared to 2010 and a normal year

        - Canada Goose pressure light
        - Season dates provided good overall hunting opportunity
        - Wood Ducks #1 Mallard #2 BW Teal #3
- Review of new reg - No problem on Miss River Zone with boundary changes, season dates/splits Collins Zone Eliminated - no feedback

- Mississippi Flyway Updates
  Flyway Council will meet in Feb. 2012 to review data and issues

- Proposed DNR Rule Changes and Proposed Legislation
  This is the end of the 5 year stable season of 85 days 2 bird bag Possible outcomes, 3 bird bag on MVP Geese

- 2011 DNR Migratory Committee Related Rule Proposals Status
  Review Horizon Zone Changes
  The harvest by county
  The MVP harvest within & around zone
  Hunting Pressure
  Flyway Issues - Sea Duck Proposal
  Open Water Hunting Expansion
  2012 Spring Hearing Advisory Case
  Possible open water hunting on 13 lakes with a hearing on each lake
Legislative Actions

- Act 21
- Disabled Concealment exemption
- AB 311
- Several issues raised by legislators that would normally be role changes

B. Law Enforcement Updates

From Warden, Todd Schaller

The 2011 Waterfowl Season had some hunter conflicts
- They had 4 waterfowl shooting events
- Only 2 citations for not tagging Hor. Goose

3 Discussion and Action Items

A. Resolutions.

- There were 10 resolutions - 6 were advanced and 4 were rejected

Res. 70 0211 - Allow Fall Fishing and boating at Mecan Springs (Currently Designated Goose Refuge) DNR should open to any other uses

Motion to advance by Guy McFarren

2nd by Noel Dolde

Motion to advance carried unanimous

* Author was present
Res. 060311 - Delay Start to Spring Crow Season
Ray Heidel motion to advance, 2nd by Jerry Merryfield
Vote on motion to advance carries

Res. 060111 Removal of Brownheaded Cowbirds from Federally Protected List
Noel Dolde motion to Reject, 2nd by Ron Earnest
Vote on the motion to Reject carries

Res. 060211 State/Feds Collaboration to Enable Control Measures of Cowbirds
We took both Cowbird questions as one
Motion to Reject by Noel Dolde, 2nd by Ron Earnest
Vote on the motion to Reject - carries

Res. 350211 Eliminate the 50% Concealment Requirement for Waterfowl Hunting

* Will Minette is the author
There was a lot of discussion on this
Ray Heidel motion to advance 350211
2nd by Jeff Scott
Discussion
Kent VanHorn said the objective is to maintain an open water refuge area good for waterfowl and waterfowl hunting

Warden Todd Schaller said its now easier for enforcement

Audric Limmer said distance is better

Will Minette (author) said on flowages there is no emergent vegetation along the edge - it eliminates shoreline hunting areas. Authors issue isn't what is presented in the question (access INTO vegetation for older hunters) but rather what happens on flowages when the water is down and there is no vegetation that would provide 50% concealment

Ray Heidel - we need to reopen this discussion for some clarification

John Edelblute - current regs address your issue
Roger Hanson said the new rule works much better on Green Bay. No concealment rule leaves the situation open to hunter conflicts. Someone setting up out from an existing hunter-change will increase user-conflict.

Tim Morgan raised the issue with the Miss River drawdown and no vegetation left.

Jim Daley - early in the season, all vegetation is blown down - problem!

Noel Dolde - we just modified this rule - we haven't given it enough time to see how well it works - allow it to work a couple more years.

Kent Varnhorn provides suggestions for changes to wording which could be incorporated before the spring hearings to address this concern. (Author approves)

Suggested wording "are you in favor of a rule-change that requires..."
hunters to hunt near shore but not be concealed by 50% vegetation.

John Edelblute, Co-Chair, called for a hand vote - 11 in favor as amended, 5 opposed, 5 abstain. Motion to accept carries.

Res. 4902-11 Close Waterfowl Season during the 9 day Deer Gun Season. - Reopen after.
Motion by James Dailey to Rejected.
2nd by Paul Gettelman.
Kent Vanhorn said he will bring up the issue during normal rules process. Vote on the motion to Reject carried.

Res. 4901-11 Restore the Opening Date of Exterior Goose Zone to Sept. 16.
Motion by Dick Koerner to advance.
2nd by James Dailey.
Kent Vanhorn said the DNR will probably do this anyway. Motion to Advance carried.
Res. S20811 Revision of Tagging Requirements for Geese in the Horizon Zone

Motion by Paul Gettelman to advance

2nd by Tim Morgan

Discussion - The author was present and read his resolution.

Current regulations require that Canada Geese be immediately tagged with a validated tag before being moved or carried from the spot where they fell in the Horizon Zone. The intent of the rule is to insure proper and legal validation and placement of the Harvest tag. This regulation may put the hunter in a potentially dangerous situation if the goose falls on a road or waterway.

Motion to advance carried.

Res. S50111 Sandhill Crane Season

Motion by Guy McFarren to advance

2nd by Ron Earnest

Kent VanHorn suggests modifying to match needed legal parameters - "Are you in favor of the Cons Congress asking the legislature to authorize the WDNR to have a Crane Season."
Sandhill Crane Continued
Motion to advance carried unanimously

Res 240211 - Allow Bowhunting on the closed area of Grand River Wildlife Area
Motion by Noel Dolde to reject
2nd by Todd Cook
Paul Gettelman said he talked to property owners, wildlife manager and hunters with most being opposed to this Resolution
Motion to Reject carried

Note - GRM manager and the author of the resolution discussed this. The manager said he agrees with some of the authors concerns but would not support opening the closed area at Grand River for bow hunting prior to the deer gun season. Only 10% of Public land in closed area - current lines follow boundaries

B. Other Business
Open Water Ad-hoc Committee
Results and Next Steps
Open Water Hunting Expansion
- Evaluated 130 largest lakes based on agreed criteria - Narrowed down to 13 potential locations w/Ad hoc committee
- Conducted local meetings to get feedback on proposal before recommending to NRB for Spring hearing questionnaire
- Provide lake associations time for review
- Fall rules meeting OK
- Act 21 will add extra year to process
- Advisory Spring hearing questions on each individual lake
- Governor’s charge for Regulation Simplification
  John Edelblute said it’s not a big issue with hunters - no one is complaining
- Member Matters - Ray Heidel said the Seaduck season should include Lake Superior

Motion: Andrew Limmer 2nd Roger Hanson
To adjourn. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted

acting Secretary Dick Koerner