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.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
A. CALL TO ORDER

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

B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES

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

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS
A. CITIZEN RESOLUTIONS:
   1. RESOLUTION 410914: LAKE MICHIGAN PERCH PROTECTION  AUTHOR NOT PRESENT

   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
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.

**Person(s) Responsible: Author will be contacted**

**Deadline:**

### 2. Resolution 411014: Lake Mich Sport Season

**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**

### 3. Resolutions 020114, 160114, 260114: Trout Stamp Increase

**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

**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

**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 Walleye Tournament

**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 panties helps the image of an event like this.

**Action** None
**E. GUIDE REPORTING ON LAKE MICHIGAN**

**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

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**F. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATES**

**DISCUSSION**


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.

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

**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](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

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

**DISCUSSION**

October 23rd 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](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/lakemichigan/YellowPerch.html)

**ACTION**

Attend meeting if you can

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**I. DNR LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATES**

**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

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**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

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**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

Motion and second to adjourn at 1:53pm, Motion Carried.

**SUBMITTED BY**

David Tupa

**DATE**

9/27/2014