## Wisconsin Conservation Congress
### Trout Committee
#### Meeting Minutes

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08/26/2017</td>
<td>0935 hours</td>
<td>Mead Wildlife Center, Stevens Point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
#### A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Chair D. Vanden Bloomen at 0935 hours.

#### B. ROLL CALL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTENDEES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Vanden Bloomen, Scott Pitta, Scott Simz, Bob Hasse, Bob Traczyk, Tom Podlesny, Brad Peterson, Dave Ninneman, Dale Ebert, Jim Wierzbka, Martin Sands, Nathaniel Brown, Dave Barron, Maurice Amundsen, Roger Roehl, Ben Siehoff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCUSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Cran, David Lois, George Korn, Thomas Johnson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNEXCUSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt Mitro (DNR Liason), Brad Peterson (Warden-DNR Liason)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

**DISCUSSION**

No changes to agenda.

**ACTION**

Accepted agenda.

### D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

**DISCUSSION**

Chair read mission statement.

**ACTION**

No changes suggested.

### E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

**DISCUSSION**

No public comments.

**ACTION**

No action needed.

### II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

#### A. Allow live bait fishing and harvest of trout during early season in SW (220117, 250617, 330417, 5704)

**PRESENTATION**

Resolution reads to allow live bait fishing and harvest of trout (first Saturday in February—first Saturday in May) for all streams in Southwest Wisconsin (Grant, Crawford, Vernon, La Crosse, Iowa Sauk, Lafayette and Richland counties).

Chair reminded the committee of the Conservation Congress Guidance—Only one issue, clearly stated, should be in a resolution. This resolution was confusing as to what change would be voted on by public at Spring Hearings. In all likelihood that resolution would not be accepted, as it 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) approved by four (4) counties and also rejected in one county.

The 2017 Resolution presented by these authors included two major issues—early season harvest and use of live bait.

In March of this year (2017) a draft of this resolution was provided to the Trout Committee. The same concerns were expressed about having multiple issues in a similar resolution as in 2016. One Trout committee member even provided 3 draft resolutions to separate the issues for this group to introduce at the County-level Spring Hearings. These authors ignored these suggestions. At a meeting with interested stakeholders, prior to the Annual Congress Convention in May, it was agreed to allow a special case to advance the items as separate resolutions at the Trout Committee meeting. This group of authors rejected that option.

The WI DNR does not plan on pursuing these rule changes 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. 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 15th. The DNR Usually waits 3 years after a rule change to measure the effects of those changes on the stream.

The Department has been asked by the NRB to continue to work on regulation consistency. If we did consider looking into removing catch and release and artificial only in the early season, it would make more sense to implement this on a statewide basis. Making those changes in the Southwestern Counties only, would only add to regulation complexity. Also, it is not clear why the proposed changes would begin in February instead of January as early season does now. However, in the 2012 spring hearings, the DNR asked several regulation development questions. One of them was “Is it important to you have identical seasons for a fish species statewide, even if it means that some waters are not managed to their greatest potential.” The results were 976 (yes) and 2601 (no). This was a general question for all species, not targeted at trout. Another thing to note is that not all streams in the Southwest part of the state or in the Driftless Area have high populations that can support that amount of harvest. Many of those streams are still being stocked.

**ACTION**

Allow live bait fishing and harvest of trout during early season in SW Wisconsin (220117, 250617, 330417 570417).

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**

M. Amundsen. Motion to reject. motion passed. unanimous.

**DEADLINE**

Chair sends letter informing authors of committee decision. 10 September 2017

---

**B. 640217 End October inland trout fishing, open season earlier in April**

**DISCUSSION**

The 2017 Resolution 640217 included two major issues—early inland trout season opening and eliminate the late season (15 October) closing. Conservation Congress Guidance—only one issue, clearly stated, should be in a resolution. That resolution was confusing as to what change would be voted on by public at Spring Hearings. The resolution, as written, would not be accepted 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 and approved in Vilas county.

DNR Comments: The extension of inland trout fishing to October 15th has only been effect for one year.

In the 2014 spring hearings, we asked the question if we should extend the open trout fishing season to October 15th. This was supported statewide by 3112 (yes) and 1746 (no). In 2015 the proposed trout seasons were supported statewide with 2260 (yes) and 1222 (no) and in Vilas County 38 (yes) and 24 (no). So far, the Department has not received concerns or complaints related to the extended fall harvest. Spawning may begin in late September or early October, but peak spawning is in late October and early November. For example, the Hay River Merit Creek trout spawn between October 20th and November 20th with a peak around November 8th. Timber Creek is brown trout spawn between October 15th and November 15th with a peak around November 4th. We do not have any data to suggest that fishing in fall will have an impact on spawning. In general, anglers are careful and eggs are less vulnerable at this time. Spring flooding and other habitat and environmental factors are bigger issues for recruitment in some Wisconsin streams.

The Trout Committee along with the DNR biologists try to get three years of data to review to determine the impact of rule changes. The committee will ask the DNR to get agreement among the fisheries biologists in the northern counties about the impact of the extension of the inland trout season to October 15th. Also ask the DNR to suggest a dividing line where the state might be separated if the impact is greater in the northern of southern half of the state. (Highway 64, Highway 29, Highway 10)?

Based on the discussion generated the Committee will draft a Trout Committee Advisory question to move the Inland Trout harvest season opener (to include the use of live bait) to begin as early as 1 April. More fishing opportunities for trout with little or no impact seemed a good idea. It has been observed that in August in Wisconsin it is difficult to access the overgrown streams. This resolution should be presented to the Congress Leadership Council in October.

**ACTION**

Motion to reject passed. Draft advisory question to have 1 April inland trout early opener for October WCC Leadership meeting in October.

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**

JoAnna Griffin (Trout Liaison) for a consensus on northern trout spawn times, also ask GLIFWC.
### C. Increase guide license requirements 050617--assigned to Legislative Committee

**DISCUSSION**
Resolution 050617 (assigned to Legislative Committee)

The Trout Committee provides input on the need for increased requirements for WI guide license holders. Several committee members are WI guides and many members have used guides in Wisconsin and other states.

Guides should have, at a minimum, successfully completed a basic first aid or CPR class—a good first step. Additionally, graduation from the appropriate safety class when guiding—hunter guides using ATV's to move clients would need the Hunter and ATV safety certificates.

WI Fishing guides should complete the boater safety class. Great Lakes, Mississippi River and Lake Winnebago have federal requirements for guide boat operators.

Some kind of liability insurance should be required. Hunting guides put clients in tree stands—a dangerous situation. Fishing guides often use watercraft on lakes and rivers. A guide should have some minimal level of insurance.

As it stands now hiring a “licensed” guide in Wisconsin is really a buyer beware situation. Clients (customers) should have some reasonable expectation of competency and responsibility.

**ACTION**
Chair provide letter to Scott Gunderson, Chair—WCC Legislative Committee about Trout Committee position before 9 September meeting.

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**
Chair to send letter to Legislative Committee before their meeting

**DEADLINE**
before 9 Sept 2017

### D. Require penalties for tilling land within 5 ft of channel of surface water 540317

**DISCUSSION**
Resolution 540317 (assigned to Environmental Committee) require penalties for tilling land within 5 feet of channel of surface water. We need to protect the streams. Penalty needed. We are aware of issues with multiple jurisdictions. There is considerable political headwind. Landowner cooperation is preferred over enforcement actions. Easement purchases are an option.

**ACTION**
Send letter to environmental committee. MB: Richl, SB: Wierzba

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**
Chair to send letter of support by

**DEADLINE**

### E. DNR test water quality of all streams and lakes in WI 100217

**DISCUSSION**
Resolution 100217 (assigned to Environmental committee) There is no budget money for labor for this idea. Schools with tight budgets will not be able to assist. Instead, more awareness of the WAVE program and the Citizen Water Monitoring Program be promoted.

**ACTION**
Chair to send letter to environmental committee MB: Hasse, SB: Roehl

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**
Chair send letter before

**DEADLINE**

### F. Warden Review

**DISCUSSION**
Lots of fishing pressure. Lots of information requests about fishing in the driftless area. Castle Rock Creek parsnip cleanup underway. Popular properties are the focus. Trout are doing well despite rain events. The DNR hired 26 fisheries positions in the last 1.5 years. More are to be hired before Jan. 1, 2018. Sugar River work was completed in Dane County. Campbell Creek in Adams County work done. Beaver dams removed in Rusk County. No complaints about changes to regulations. Requests for changes to 5 bag limit continue.

**ACTION**

Brad Peterson
G. Trout Research update

**DISCUSSION**

Ash Creek data. Peer reviewed journal article about it. Email for it. So far 214 streams have been tested, 82% of the brook trout had gill lice. Some fish were heavily infected. In Ash creek, it crushed the brook trout population. Our gill lice distribution data is unique to Wisconsin. Trout lice affects brook trout health. Brown trout not affected by gill lice. Gill lice effects egg production in arctic char. Lice have a 30 day life cycle. A lower water flow gives more time for lice to attach to host. They are epizootic. Not sure about the relation of beaver activity to lice. Lice coexist with brook trout. Has something changed? DNA differences are to be tested in brook trout for markers that may indicate resistance to gill lice.

**ACTION**

Committee members should email Matt to obtain a copy of the journal article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matt Mitro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

**DISCUSSION**

Trout fishing review....

Ozaukee--lots of fishermen
Rusk--light fishing and consistent water
Jackson--too many rain events. Ongoing restoration with bunker structure installed.
Richland--Uptick in fishing pressure in March. Big rain event. Pressure drop due to environmental conditions.
Taylor--light pressure
Walworth--light pressure and rain events
Forest/Vilas--too much water. The public is OK with regulation changes
Florence--high water. More fishing pressure in June
Outagamie/Waupaca--good fishing, few fishermen. Lots of kayakers. They are a real problem.
Price--increase of kayakers and decrease of fishermen
Iron--slight increase of fishermen. Should we use culverts or bridges, Tyler Forks and Potato are low and have little pressure
Fon du Lac--lots of vegetation growth. Wild parsnip and buckthorn a real problem. Please promote fishing !! Light pressure
Adams--light fishing pressure. Water level good.
Dunn--stream restoration projects underway on Wilson Creek
Eau Claire--more fishing pressure on smallmouth bass than on trout.

The Trout Regulations booklet is a statewide guide--all the streams in all counties are listed. Fishermen usually fish one or perhaps two streams in a day and most county regulations can be put on a 4x6 card.

There is no data to support that 50% of fishermen use live bait. We do not know the percent.

Jim W. --youth delegates are important to both the WCC and TU
B. Haase--Promote youth mentors. We need live bait and artificial fishermen on the same side. Teach bait fishermen how to keep a tight line and reduce hooking mortality.
M. Amundsen--Does Waukesha water discharge put Root river at risk? What impact will Foxconn have on the watershed?
R. Roehl--Increase bag limit by upgrading "yellow" streams to a 5-bag "green" level. This should be a priority for the Trout Committee as the 3-year rule change impact is determined. Bundle a large number of changes to the 2015 regulations.

Next meeting Aug. 25, 2018--location to be determined. Having meeting in Park Falls is a possibility with a local fisheries tour.

**ACTION**

Check with DNR on studies if hooking with live bait fish mortality for catch and release is different than artificial lures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEETING ADJOURNED</strong></td>
<td>1510 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBMITTED BY</strong></td>
<td>Scott Pitta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATE</strong></td>
<td>09/07/2107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>