I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Larry Bonde at 2:30 PM

B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES

EXCUSED
Al Lobner, Brett Weir.

UNEXCUSED

GUESTS

C. Agenda Approval and Repair

Larry Bonde

DISCUSSION Larry asked for flexibility in the agenda to accommodate speakers as needed

ACTION Motion by Rogers second by Ellingson to allow flexibility in agenda. Motion carried.

D. Public Comment

DISCUSSION Marcel Wieloch Chairman Marathon County addressed the Council he had two concerns; in the past some committees would reject a resolution and then rewrite it contrary to the ideas expressed by the resolution writer. The rules of resolutions committee has given guidance on that but there still seems to be on occasion some variation. The second item has to do with shotgun resolutions, this year prior to the spring hearings there were a number of emails circulating to all counties suggesting each county weigh-in on a particular resolution. In the past this process was discouraged, even though in this case the author was a Conservation Congress delegate. It wasn't until the last of three emails that a disclaimer was put on the bottom of the email stating that this individual was acting as an individual and not representing the Congress. He is concerned by encouraging this action the Congress would be setting a precedent and urged that a mechanism he found to clarify this issue:

Wade Jesky, Oconto County delegate brought up his concerns at the number of people in his area that believes that the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is becoming irrelevant. He feels this is particularly important as we debate the issue of online voting. In his business he has had great success in getting information out to his customers and conservation minded people using the internet and social media. "If the Congress can get a bigger percentage of public opinion we would be able to get more political support for our positions". He urged the Congress leadership to encourage the other counties in the state to work together in finding an answer that will keep the Wisconsin Conservation Congress relevant now and into the future. He realizes that there will be some hurdles in the way but to keep an open mind and work through the problems to find a reasonable solution.

Chairman commented that the committee assigned this task in his opinion had done a terrific job in researching and developing options for the Congress. He mentioned that there would be an informational panel discussion later this evening and encouraged those interested to take time to attend the approximate one hour discussion. Larry thanked Wade and Marcel for their comments.

ACTION Information only. No action taken

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. DNR Secretaries Remarks

Dan Meyer

DISCUSSION Dan started out by welcoming the DLC to the start of the 84th Wisconsin Conservation Congress Convention and thanking them for all they do for conservation in this state. He also thanked all the staff in attendance for the great work that they do. Then shared the following observations from the first seven months as DNR secretary.

He participated in the harvest of Chinook salmon eggs on Strawberry Creek in Door County.

He was a participant at Cold Water Fish Hatchery in Wild Rose as an automated coded wire tag and fin clip was administered to fingerling salmon prior to release in Lake Michigan.

He was proud that for the first time in history there is the possibility to harvest elk in Wisconsin.

While some of the public does not agree, Wisconsin no longer has a back tag requirement, he reflected that 27 years ago had the
opportunity to hunt elk in Arizona and even back then there was no requirement for a back tag this system remains in effect. Dan stated that when he goes to the Dakotas to hunt pheasants he doesn't buy a license when he gets there that is all purchased ahead of time prior to traveling. Many states offer this option and he is pleased as Wisconsin transitions to allow for more and more of an automated opportunity not only for Wisconsin residents but for out-of-state visitors as well. He shot a deer last season on a Sunday morning he went into town to have breakfast and while he was waiting to be served he was able to register his deer.

Through our automated licensing system you are allowed to buy a license or register your deer online using just your phone. He mentioned that turkey registration online through the second season was at 17,238 55% of the total license sales for turkeys was purchased online and of the extra licenses left over 50% of those were purchased online. "This is the way things are going and whether you agree with it or not we are not going back to the old ways we need to stay with the technology available."

Dan then introduced two relatively new members of the DNR leadership: Pat Stevens who was appointed assistant deputy secretary of the DNR. Pat has a legal background he was an assistant attorney general in North Dakota serving their DNR in wildlife manners. He then moved to Wisconsin where for the last seven years has been working in the Environmental Management Division. Pat introduced himself and stated that he had some opportunities to visit other operations throughout the state in the last 2 1/2 months since his appointment and looks forward to working with the Conservation Congress in the future.

Scott Loonans was introduced as the new Policy Initiative Advisor, Scott has been with the department for many years serving as rules writer for wildlife and most recently fisheries prior to his new assignment. Scott thanked Dan for the opportunity and he looks forward to his new position and continue building his association with the Congress.

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B. Proposed Code of Procedure Changes

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C. Spring Hearing Review

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virtually inexcusable and what he’s hearing from guides on Green Bay and Lake Michigan is that clients will shoot three or six depending upon how many people are out; take the bird with the longest tail and give the rest of the birds to the guide to dispose of. There are no population studies according to the waterfowl biologists that would confirm a population problem and these birds only pass through our state resting on big water during migration. Our state biologist did state that if state hunters had a concern he would bring forward the option of reducing the bag limit in an attempt to get ahead of a possible problem until more information is available. For this reason AI would like to have this brought to the district leadership Council at the May 22nd meeting. Motion by Shook second by Eltingson advanced to May 22 DLC meeting. Motion carried. (Authors will be advised and invited to the meeting to comment)

Larry stated that the actions at the DLC will need to be concurred with from the floor of the Congress when we convene tomorrow.

Dale Maas brought up an issue on a resolution that made it to the spring questionnaire from Dodge County and was on the questionnaire this year. Was question number 30 having to do with changing the catfish bag limit on Beaver Dam Lake, Dodge County from 5 to 25. While he was happy that the question passed statewide he was confused that it failed in three counties, Bayfield, St. Croix and Rusk voted against it. While he appreciated the input from the three counties he questioned whether or not there were five people in all three of the counties that knew where Beaver Dam Lake was and actually had a concern about bag limit. In his opinion this puts in question how we interpret the results of the Spring Hearing. We as an organization keep talking about streamlining and reducing our number of questions on a statewide questionnaire and thinks that we should see what other options might be available to us. He asked “wouldn’t it be a great idea if the local fisheries biologist, lake associations, sporting groups or whatever concerned stakeholders were interested got together and agreed on something?”. The concept of not getting into a statewide question and handle it as a local issue seems more efficient. Creating the mechanism for that might include a district subcommittee or any other creative device that would have the assurance of public input.

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**Regional Master Planning Approach**

Diane gave a Power Point presentation explaining that the department’s planning process and the role we play in the process involving the department, stakeholders and the public.

A master plan is defined as a long-term goal of a specific region.

A master plan would apply ecosystem management principles.

Prioritize department activities.

Integrate management across programs.

Receive public input.

Regional Master Planning Approach

NRB approved June 2017.

Meets planning requirements.

Offers planning and management efficiencies.

Allows prioritization of resources.

Responsive, Transparent and Decision-Making.

The phases of planning:

phase 1 prep work public scoping.

Phase 2 plan development-draft plan review.

Phase 3 plan approval, public input at NRB.

Diane stated that there are many master plans in the process none are currently at the phase 3 approval yet but some are very close.

(Copy of the presentation is available by contacting Congress liaison)

DNR website for further information online: WWW.DNR.WI.GOV, keyword “master planning”

Larry stated that we have a resolution number 150318 originating out of Door County to request that a safe harbor be included as a possibility into the master plan. Larry felt that this would be an item that would be coming off of the floor of the convention either tomorrow or Saturday and asked for information from Diane about it. She stated that there were many entities involved in more work needed to go into the planning process and in the course of the discussion on the plan she felt that they were not prepared to be included in the plan at this time. Dale Maas made a request that it at least be mentioned as a possibility down the road. Diane stated that it did appear in the draft document that was not included. Dale commented that there is a need from a safety concern because of the distance between Sturgeon Bay and Baileys Harbor are approximately 25 miles and why funding may not be available currently given the 20 year plus life cycle of a master plan it might be worthwhile to allow some options. He also asked for her opinion on being able to modify an existing master plan. Diane stated that there was a policy and procedure in place to allow that to happen. Dale questioned the validity of that process based on past issues with master plans in his area.

| ACTION | Information only. No action taken. | Diane Brusoe Property Planning Section Chief |
E. Inland Trout Management Plan

Dave Boyarski, Fisheries Northeast District Supervisor

**DISCUSSION**

Dave gave a review of the trout management plan as follows:
- Explain why and what we do
- Identify needs.
- Set constraints.
- Set priorities.
- Communicate with stakeholders.
- The scope of the plan is as follows:
  - Manage Brook, Brown, Rainbow and Lake trout in inland streams.
  - Cold water stream and habitat management plan.
  - Great Lakes tributaries (trout and salmon in the Great Lakes proper are not included).
  - Fisheries program/Fisheries management plan.
- Time line on this plan started December 2017 and is expected to be completed and approved by April 2019 by the NRB.
- His planning project has a number of opportunities for stakeholder review and everyone interested in the topic is encouraged to participate. Wisconsin Conservation Congress has five representatives on this review committee they are as follows:
  - Bob Haase Trout Member
  - Roger Roehl Northern Rep.
  - Dale Ebert Eastern Rep.
  - Dennis Vander Bloomen Western Rep.
  - Jim Wierzba Southern Rep.
- By reviewing the plan, commenting on the plan looking up and following the management plan on the DNR website telling friends and other conservation groups to do the same.
- (Copy of the presentation is available by contacting Congress liaison)

**ACTION**

Information only. No action taken.

F. DNR Strategic Alignment Update

Aaron Buchholz, Deputy Administrator of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

**DISCUSSION**

Todd Schal

Aaron started out his presentation by stating that the realignment program as it pertains to habitat and equipment management is in a constant state of review. Why? We need to make sure that we maximize the limited funding that we have in the most efficient way as possible. Just because we do a study does not mean that we are writing the process in concrete, if we review ongoing study plans and find a better or more efficient way of accomplishing our goal we will make corrections. It was one of the things that Larry was concerned about when we made the initial presentation and I understand, we are committed to finding a reasonable path that makes sense.

Staffing levels and the reduction are the reality of how we continue to do business. In order to better utilize our available staff there have been and continue to be many reviews of our process and systems. Some of those reviews are as follows:
- Infrastructure (dams and dikes) this is a very costly process having to do with safety and health along with structural integrity.
- Best utilization of staff, (we hired an agriculture specialist in wildlife to get a better understanding of grazing opportunities in order to not only help agriculture but enhance habitat and as a result offer reallocation of habitat management to other priority topics). Heavy equipment needs and costs (review charge out schedule and create utilization standards that would maximize the use and inventory of equipment).
- Reviewing equipment operator standards & making sure that skilled operators are fully utilized to create maximum efficiencies throughout the department.
- Work with existing and develop new contractor partnerships (continued discussion on utilizing outside contractors that would make contracted work for efficient and profitable for both sides).

In closing he commented that we have had great feedback from Congress delegates and other stakeholders whenever we explain what needs to be done. There feedback has been a valuable element to this process and is much appreciated.

Todd in his review of the law enforcement report covered the following:
- R-3 recruit, reactivation and retention; department was able to partner up with the National Wild Turkey Federation and Pheasants Forever to make this issue even stronger. This along with hunting dollars from Pittman Robertson and fish dollars from SFS allows the department to strengthen this program even further.
- He heard about the consolidation of law enforcement the Parks and Forest Rangers this resulted in the transfer of 32 positions to LE.
Additional staffing information:
- warden class of 2017 graduated (12) wardens.
- In the fall of 2017 (9) additional wardens graduated.
- As of July 2018 we will have 209 credentialed law enforcement personnel, with that said we still have 28 vacant stations and one investigator position.
- In 2017 we engaged 177,133 contacts from patrol operations.
- Hotline complaints generated 0172 contacts of which 2173 were hunting related, 1590 were environmental, and 863 were fisheries issues.
- Another benefit from our upgrade to our radio system was the incorporation of GPS map navigation for those units, this allows a state wide computerized map to be accessed to better utilize available staff and know their location.
- Todd thanked the Congress delegates for all the work that they do in partnering with law enforcement and the rest of the DNR in making Wisconsin such a great state to live and play.

**ACTION**
Information only. No action taken.

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**

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G. Review of County Deer Advisory Councils’ final recommendations

**DISCUSSION**
- Kevin thanked all the Congress delegates for their work as chairs and secretary's to the 72 CDAC County Councils. There was over 7000 public comments of record on CDAC recommendations state wide it was also noted that there was a slight increase in meeting attendance. Three of the 72 counties recommendations were reviewed those being Ashland County, Price County and Monroe County. Contact was made with each of CDAC chairs and total delegation if needed to resolve the issues after all was said and done compromises were made and the final recommendations on those three were adjusted accordingly. These recommendations will be presented to the NRB at their next meeting for approval.

**ACTION**
- Motion by Maas second by Weiss to support final CDAC report to be submitted to the Natural Resources Board. Motion carried.

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### III. MEMBERS MATTERS

**DISCUSSION**
- Joe Weiss reported that there was no history committee meeting last year and is waiting for a new computer program that is being developed that will aid in collecting data on resolutions and tracking them in the system. He displayed a ring binder with news items and pictures that he found or was sent and encourage this to continue. He also questioned the criteria for minutes for special committee meetings and stated that there is little consistency by delegates that attend throughout the state.
- Al Suchla commented that district 5 had every county showing an increase in spring hearing attendance.
- Al Shoock encouraged anyone that had a complaint to call the DNR office and put it on record, he also said that there has been a complaint on the start and agenda times for the convention he feels that we can and need to do better on speaking with our agenda. He also opposes the COP change on three executive committee members to review complaints. He feels that would be better served if it was 3 District councilors from the area that the complaint was generated from.
- Larry commented on whether the Congress wanted to again have a role in a potential fee increase and if we want to be a part of the sportsmen's for wetlands stewardship.
- Information only. No action taken.

**ACTION**
- Motion by Gunderson. Second by Breunig to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.

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### IV. ADJOURNMENT

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