



Wisconsin Conservation Congress  
 Great Lakes Advisory Committee  
 Meeting Minutes

<b>ORDER OF BUSINESS</b>	09/20/2021	6:30 PM	Zoom Meeting
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**I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by	Dale Maas at	6:30pm
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**B. ROLL CALL**

ATTENDEES	Tom Johnson, Mike Janeczko, Eugene Altwies, Robert Wincek, Michael Kelby, Al Marotez, Bryce Luchterhand, Tyrone Larson, Dale Maas, David Tupa, Don Anderson, Cody Lukes, Steve Klock, Greg Coulthurst, Anthony Grabski, Julie de La Terre DNR - Ryan Propson, Iyob Tsehaye, Tom Meronek, Brad Ray, Cary Fenske
EXCUSED	Steve Draginis, Eric Wojchik
UNEXCUSED	Joe Weiss, Dan Kevan, Nick Shertz, Bryce Luchterhand
GUESTS	Alan Spaeth, Tony Blattler, Cal Straub

**C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR**

DISCUSSION	Maas: requests flexibility on agenda order. Motion to approve by Tupa, second by Larson. Motion passed.
ACTION	None.

**D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT**

DISCUSSION	The mission statement of the Great Lakes Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to provide input from the public through county delegates assembled from all areas of the State of Wisconsin making up that committee and addressing issues where public input is deemed appropriate on matters concerning the Wisconsin territorial waters of Lakes Superior, Michigan and the Bay of Green Bay. The charge of the Great Lakes Committee is to ensure that the waters of the Great Lakes that boarder Wisconsin are managed to sustain a healthy fishery and pristine beauty while fully protected with every effort taken to enhance and upgrade their status whenever and wherever possible. The Committee will also assist the agencies that are involved in enforcing natural resource laws and regulations, by offering and facilitating public input. Specifically, the areas of concern will be defined as: 1) For issues related to regulations pertaining to resource management the committee will use outlining waters and their tributaries as defined in NR 20, Wis. Adm. Code. 2) For issues related to the general health of the Great Lakes, including water quality and ecological impact to native flora and fauna, the committee will use the Great Lakes Basin boundary as described in the Great Lake Compact. Motion to approve by Steve Klock, second by Dave Tupa. Motion carried.
ACTION	None

**E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

DISCUSSION	No public comments.
ACTION	None.

**II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS**

**A.**

1.	410121 DNR should implement NRB order FM-42-96, Stephen Alt	None.
	DISCUSSION	Maas: lake trout harvest on Lake Superior. Have had numerous resolutions submitted by the author. One of the previous resolutions passed. Some resolutions require legislation. Over 4500 - 5000 citizens supported the past resolution. Great input from citizens of the state of Wisconsin. Committee met its obligation. Tupa: 3rd option is that it could fail due to no motion. Zimmerman: POO - action must be taken on resolution in front of committee. Motion to advance by Klock, second by Wincek. Maas: need department input on resolution. Ray: Lake Superior Fisheries team supervisor. Resolution needs to be clarified. FM-42-96 was implemented. Rule cited was implemented to 7,140. Average harvest 5 years prior to to the rule, was 36,898 pounds, the five

	<p>years following was 18,721 pounds. 1980 to 1996 average 53,560 pounds, since 1997 average has been 24,707 pounds. So FM-42-96 has resulted in a reduction of commercial harvest by more than 50%. Average effort declined, 5 years prior to the rule was 1.4 million feet of state gill net, 5 years following was 348,920 feet of gill net. Rule has reduced effort, reduced harvest and the allotted quota was reduced. Lake trout is a by-catch species, makes up 6% of the current harvest. Economic stance not clear. Manage a multi-use fishery. Money spent on any use has benefits to all users. So if there was no money spent on enforcement and monitoring of commercial fisheries on Lake Superior, that would be detrimental to other users. The commercial allocation is still below the 1996 levels, despite ten adjustments to the quota, six of them being increases. FM-42-96 did not and legally could not have affected a permanent reduction in the state's Superior lake trout commercial allocation. Not being able to alter harvest limits with up to date data is a poor management decision. The idea behind the agreement was as restoration occurred, everyone's limits would increase.</p> <p>Maas: one of the sources quoted was documentation from Secretary Myer, December 12th of 1996, layed out the whole process. The paperwork is filed.</p> <p>Ray: One of the confusing (aspects) is that it does specifically mention 6,840. The rule language was 7,140 and the reason was the quota increased by over 17,000 fish in the process of making that rule. Commercial only got 660 of the 17,000 fish increase.</p> <p>Maas: is there distortion or mixing of the tallies?</p> <p>Ray: there has been numerous correspondence with Mr. Alt about this issue. A previous DNR employee sent a list of quotas over time. One of those quotas had a commercial allocation that was the higher number that (Mr. Alt references). That person is no longer with the DNR, think what it was trying to show was what was allocated against what was going to be protected. So what was issued was 7140, what was allocated 13,480 the other ones were protected from harvest. The difference was what was allocated (vs) awarded, given out was only 7,140.</p> <p>Motion to advance failed on voice count.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Send letter to Mr. Alt.
<b>PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
Eugene Altwies	

2.	091021 Lower walleye limit on GB.	Allen Spaeth
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<p>Al Spaeth: quality of fishery is declining. Past 2-3 years sizes declining. Closure of Canadian border has increased fishing pressure. Want to preserve for the future. FB discussions - concerns with fishery. Potential overbagging with multiple trips. Tournaments catches low.</p> <p>Motion to advance Tupa, second by Wincek.</p> <p>Coulthurst: fishes in Sturgeon Bay - got feedback from bait shop and walleye guides - feel population is as high as its ever been, but overall size has gone down. Guides looking for slot limit. No one was in favor of the resolution.</p> <p>Maas: was the local biologist contacted?</p> <p>Meronek: feedback from Mike Donafrio (fisheries team supervisor in Peshtigo) future is sound. There are substantial walleye year classes over last ten years. 2018 year class one of the biggest on record from fall index shocking, largest ever. Most years since 2013 year classes average or above. There is an on-going creel survey. Water is getting cleaner year over year after Fox River cleanup. Fishery is not in danger. New guide reporting rule, hopes that it will pass and goes into effect 2022. Previously was only whitefish. Would include all guides on Green Bay.</p> <p>Iyob: population trend has been positive, steady increase in walleye populations, agrees with Mike Donafrio assessment.</p> <p>Grabski: many people fish for walleye, bass, and trout on Green Bay. Destination fishery. 3 fish won't make it worthwhile. Believes population is healthy.</p> <p>Wincek: commercial fishing board, actively pursuing increase of by-catch, whitefish 500,000 pounds. Want to keep and sell by-catch. By-catch consists of walleye, salmon, trout. CFB pressing NRB and DNR for 750,000 pounds of whitefish. Will vote to advance.</p> <p>Maas: invited Charlie Henrickson, President of Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board. Need to understand both sides between commercial interests and sport fishermen.</p> <p>Henricksen: Have not requested to keep by-catch in Green Bay. Only lake trout in Lake Michigan. In 5th year of 2 year study to study impact on sport fishing in GB. DNR has modeled and have verified whitefish are very abundant. Seldom encounter walleyes, walleyes are released and some fish die due to barrel trauma. Typically less than 20 fish per trip. Not asking to target sport fish in Green Bay.</p> <p>Working with UW Green Bay on study under Dr. Forsythe and Taylor Rabek. Waiting for DNR analysis of data to move permanent rule forward.</p> <p>Wincek: spoke with Brad and Cheryl at DNR, proposed total allowable catch over 1 million pounds. 600,000 commercial, 400,000 sport fishermen. Resource needs to be shared with all. Need to work together.</p>	

	<p>Maas: Comments were on behalf of Federation of Great Lake Sport Fishermen?                  Wincek: Yes.                  Meronek: Charlie's H. comments accurate for by-catch. Catch count study data meeting Sept 28 whitefish information meeting.                  Klock: worked in Sturgeon Bay after graduating w fisheries degree. Did a lot of work in Green Bay. Need to try to keep commercial fishing a part of this. They have been in this since day one.                  Motion to advance failed on voice vote.                  Maas: recommended talking with DNR biologist on slot size idea. Need to get the biologist support.                  Meronek: recommended to talk to Mike Donafrio (Sturgeon Bay), also new Green Bay biologist coming on board.</p>	
ACTION	None needed.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

3.	500121 Underwater spear fishing for salmon, Calvary Straub	Cal Straub
DISCUSSION	<p>Author present.                  Straub: rational behind resolution. Use a banded spear gun while diving and holding your breath. Requires stamina. Hunting like other forms of hunting. Salmon are supported by many states and their stocking plans. 100 spearkers are not going to have a big impact on the fishery. Currently only open to rough fish and pan fish. Not out there to kill all the fish. Oriented to eating your catch. Submitted another (spear fishing) resolution for pike and catfish. Passed in three counties, failed in another. People are interested in this.                  Maas: is this free diving? This is not stated in the resolution.                  Straub: spearfishing legal under scuba and free diving.                  Klock: motion to advance, 2nd by Marotz.                  Wincek: would it require a salmon stamp?                  Straub: yes                  Klock: Are there law enforcement issues? Would wardens be on board?                  Straub: didn't expect it to pass, realizes there are issues. Don't think the challenges are insurmountable.                  Propsen: asked for input from marine warden team on Lake Michigan. Concerns about safety, fish are concentrated depending on water flow and water depth. Concerns about user conflicts between conventional fishermen and spear fishermen. Also concern about harvest of non-target species.                  Meronek: Lake Michigan team meeting, biological concerns for spearing other fish. Salmon can be hard to approach. Especially in open water in Lake Michigan. Only (state) legal in AK, in saltwater. Illegal everywhere else. Do not have a lot of spearing activity with exception of sturgeon. Foremost concern from warden force.                  Coulthurst: how many (big) fish could you expect to harvest? Concern about wounding fish.                  Grabski: hard to approach, best opportunity when spawning. Don't allow snagging or spearing now. Opposed.                  Lukes: In harbors and channels - lots of navigation issues with boat traffic.                  Klock: thanked author. Not a biological issue, more of a safety issue. Can he refine the resolution to improve the safety?                  Wincek: need dive buoy out (while diving), need to keep distance. Where would it take place?                  Marotz: thinking to spear wrong fish. In certain parts of the lake, fish are concentrated. Scuba diving for fish is fun, but where it is allowed, you see a lot less underwater life.                  Motion failed on voice vote.</p>	
ACTION	None needed, author was present.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE
n/a		n/a

**B. DNR Updates**

Various, see below

DISCUSSION	<p>DNR Updates                  Lake Superior - Brad Ray, Bayfield office (715)779-4036                  Lake superior quotas have been updated. Emergency rule in place. Permanent rule by Nov 1, 2021. Cisco quota reduced to 897,000. Sporadic year classes. Sport quota reduced to 12,670 fish. Trigger at 75% of quota, passed on July 31 of this year. 8/15 lake trout fishery was closed. 11417 fish harvested, did not include all charters. Higher effort than normal, good catches through the ice (in the winter) and in May. Especially in the Saxon, Washburn and Bayfield ports. Don't have all charter fishermen data in yet to finalize numbers. Walleyes offering on west side of Chequamegon bay. Did not have a lot of complaints about the closure. Cisco: 2020 harvest 532,375 dressed pounds,</p>	
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700488 round pounds. Collect age composition from commercial fishery. 2009 and 2015 make up more than 80% of overall fishery.

Guide reporting rule FH-08-20. Requires Great Lakes guides to report. Electronic reporting will be used. Will be more timely Important to quantify effort. Should be in effect Jan 1, 2022.

EFHRS Rule (FH-02-20) requires Electronic Fish Harvest Reporting System for commercial fishing. Important to measure harvest effort. More timely and accurate data than paper system. Plan to be in effect Nov 28, 2022.

WCC resolutions 160119 Fish Passage for Orienta Dam. Complex issue. Starting to compile information. Support from certain angler groups for fish passage, other groups have expressed concerns, i.e. about invasive species.

Management reports are listed in Lake Superior page. Includes creel reports, commercial harvest reports, and survey reports from R/V Hack Noyes. Overall commercial production slightly under 1.2 millions pounds of fish. Hasn't varied too much since 2013. Lake trout are a small portion of the overall take. Lake Trout 34,545 pounds.

Commercial monitoring report: total catch by net type. Majority of the harvest is trap net. By-catch is relatively low, under 1% for the three categories of nets in 2019. Trout and salmon species typically under 0.5%.

Creel report: total harvest by management zone. During April through June no creel survey in 2020. 2020 data not complete due to lack of employees.

Lake trout - bulk of harvest is open water.

Stocking: 2022 quotas, brown trout 175,000, Splake 60,000, Lake Trout 90,000 WI-1, Walleye 100,000.

Biologist contact info:

Dray Carl (715)779-0197 Bayfield (Lake)

Paul Piszczek (715)392-7990 Tributaries

Maas - it would be nice to have presentations in advance.

Johnson - sportsmen groups are happy to help with any DNR projects.

Ray - need help with clipping.

Lake Michigan - Tom Meronek N. Lake Michigan Team Supervisor, Lake Michigan update.

Whitefish: outreach project to set new quotas. Goal is to gather comments and feedback on Lake white fish permanent rule. Six public meetings, and multiple LM Commercial Fishing Board meetings.

Draft rule in process, to be released for economic analysis. Emergency rule in effect, commercial fishery allotted 250,000 pounds of additional harvest quota. Expires Oct 17, 2021 will request extension to Dec 31, 2021. Second emergency rule, if approved, will start Jan 1, 2022 and run until Jun 1, 2022. Will have same provisions as current rule. Has EFHRS requirement and large mesh gill net cap if monitored trips show by-catch in excess of 10%. Did not exceed.

Permanent Rule Provisions (zone quotas): Zone 1 - 800000, 2 - 945000, 3 - 351487 pounds

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) 1,176,889 for Green Bay and 800,407 in Lake Michigan. Leaves a remainder of 376,889 pounds for Green Bay and 448,920 pounds in in the lake for Zone 2. (Zone 2 splits the Lake and Bay) TAC formula is in code. Will continue to investigate and model can change over time.

Mandatory EFHRS - commercial fishing electronic harvest reporting. Mandatory for all commercial fishers on Great Lakes. Also working to include trap net locations into the system.

Bay quota 50/50 split between commercial and sport. 1.17 million pounds for for commercial fishery, and 1.17 million pounds for sport fishermen. No effective split for Lake Michigan, no effective angling for whitefish in Lake Michigan. Catch composition study may affect rule as well.

Stocking goals for 2022. Similar to 2021. 1,200,000 Chinook, 500,000 Coho, 460,000 Steelhead, Brown trout 450,000, Lake trout 45,000, Brook trout 50,000. Total 2,705,000 fish

Creel counts and interviews resumed in July 2020 (due to COVID). No bio data or CWT data was collected. USFWS working on a solution for this issue with data analysis. Ran the weir successfully in fall of 2020. Fin clipping was completed by hatchery staff.

Net pen: no pens in 2020. Locations in 2021: Marinette, Gills Rock, Algoma, Kewaunee, P. Washington, Racine, Kenosha. Some pens held for 3 weeks, and some pens were released in two weeks due to water temperatures.

Maas: is the 10% rule for by-catch daily or total?

Meronek: looked at monitored lifts for by-catch, if exceeded more than 10% would set cap. By-catch on average (of monitored lifts) was about 4%. Did not have to put cap in place. Cannot exceed 10% in total over the season. Does not recall any days where by-catch was 10%. If 10% is exceeded, nets need to be moved. Could limit the amount of gill net that could be fished if by-catch was a concern.

Wincek: what is the total allowable by-catch? 10,000 pounds can be a lot of fish. In Milwaukee only keep fish (in net pens) for 24-48 hours and fish are released at night. Super population of 3-4 yr olds of salmon in the harbor. There is a state statue trap nets have to be 1/2 mile from the main entrance to harbor (north of Sheboygan). 1/4 mile south of Sheboygan. How can we get the locations of trap nets. Need a better way to show where the trap nets are located, considers it a safety issue.

Meronek: trawling is allowed in Lake Michigan. Preliminary results of net pen study are available.

Propsen: in Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc or Sheboygan counties (trap nets) have to be 1/2 mile from piers, breakwaters, or harbors. 1/4 mile from shoreline. Code varies by county. Nets are required to be marked by code. All waters 1/4 mile from mouth of navigable stream flowing into Lake Michigan or Green Bay. Trap net locations will

	<p>probably not be shared. Questioned if it was proprietary.                  Maas: after the sinking locations were shared.                  Meronek: Under new rule will ask for co-ordinates of trap nets. Not sure if it can be shared.                  Henriksen: 10% rule has been in code for a long time. 200,000 pound rule was to get data. There will be monitoring of gill nets next spring. Sea Grant published locations but there were two individuals that did not comply. Reports his net locations and catch for catch composition study as part of reporting. No issues with transparency and reporting net locations. Easy to figure out where trap nets are located.                  Marotz: is trawling on bottom or at depth?                  Meronek: trawling is bottom trawling only. Permanent rule in effect in 2020. There was a 5 year study. Will be under review in 5 years. Video monitoring for by-catch.                  Propson: There is a prohibition of commercial fishing gear within 1/2 mile of the shoreline in Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine and Ozaukee counties.</p> <p>Summary of Two-Stock assessment of lake whitefish in Green Bay/Lake Michigan - Iyob Tschaye (Scott Hansen co-author)                  Requires spatially distinct stock assessment/management by zones. Managing mixed stocks as single may lead to over exploitation. Divided into 3 management units. Total harvest allocations Zone 1 - 10%, Zone 2 - 80%, Zone 3 - 10% Fishery changes: zone 2 commercial catch decreasing, zone 1 increasing. Distinct populations between L Michigan and Green Bay. Size distribution supports two (distinct) populations of whitefish - larger in Lake Michigan than in Green Bay. Used telemetry study to show separate spawning populations for southern Green Bay to Northern Moonlight Bay. Modeling approach uses statistical catch-at-age model, track fish age and mortality factors. Use various input data like recreational harvest, effort, harvest age composition, YOY indices from bottom trawl surveys, etc. Lake Michigan model better than Green Bay due to number of years of data. Lake Michigan data shows higher total mortality rates <math>Z_{max}=0.53</math> compared to Green Bay <math>Z_{max}=0.33</math> Green Bay can sustain higher level of fishing activity compared to Lake Michigan. Whitefish biomass estimates - GB increasing, LM declining from 2003 to 2015. GB shows higher recruitment than L. Michigan. Conclusion: "estimates for relatively larger productivity for GB suggest need for reallocation of harvest quota accordingly".                  Will be used for determining management quotas for the three zones.                  Maas: recruitment chart shows a huge drop in 2013.                  Tschaye: recruitment is highly variable.                  Wincek: is there any correlation in 2013 and 2014 with changes in mussel population(s)?                  Tschaye: Past dietary studies have shown quagga mussels make up significant portion of the whitefish diet.</p> <p>Law enforcement update - Ryan Propson                  New supervisor for marine enforcement team. Condensed operations for land and water responsibilities. Moved forward with restructure and all people working on Lake Michigan are now part of the same team. New wardens have been added. Starting next year there will be another person joining in Ashland (pending hire).                  Maas: what was your previous position?                  Propson: worked in AIS specialist, field warden, and investigator.</p>
ACTION	None
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
n/a	n/a

C. [DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC]

[PRESENTER]

DISCUSSION	Future committee meetings
ACTION	Maas: future dates Sept 17th or 24? Wincek: August 27th? Marotz: Motion for August 27th. 2nd by Dave Tupa. Motion carried.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
n/a	n/a

**III. MEMBERS MATTERS**

DISCUSSION	Dave Tupa - good meeting, 32nd year of teaching will be taking 31st annual trip to Strawberry Creek. Greg Coulthurst - several facilities close to Strawberry Creek that can be used to meet. Government center and Knights of Columbus. Maas: would like a poll of committee members are willing to go to Strawberry Creek.
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	Blattler: good meeting. Kari Fenske: looking forward to working with everyone. Mike T: willing to drive to Sturgeon Bay for next meeting Maas: pls share this information with your district and county
<b>ACTION</b>	None at this time.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

<b>MEETING ADJOURNED</b>	<b>9:35pm</b>
<b>SUBMITTED BY</b>	<b>Eugene Altwies</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>09/20/2021</b>