

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR THE
WALLEYE TASK GROUP (WTG) OF
THE LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE (LEC)**

Adopted October, 1980
Revised April 2011

TITLE: The Lake Erie Committee Walleye Task Group (WTG)

BACKGROUND: The Lake Erie Walleye Task Group was formed in October 1980 to address walleye harvest strategies and population assessment. The main functions of the WTG are to address charges from the LEC and the Standing Technical Committee (STC) and to recommend appropriate harvest levels for the Lake Erie walleye fishery within a specific (annual) timeline. The WTG presents the results of these activities in an annual report and presentation at an annual meeting of the Lake Erie Committee.

MISSION STATEMENT: The WTG is dedicated to employing the best science in order to support international management of walleye on Lake Erie. In so doing, the WTG will adhere to the following principles:

- **Sustainability** of Lake Erie walleye component stocks, their fisheries, harvests, and a broad distribution of benefits,
- **Wise Use** of the Lake Erie walleye resource to promote its health for the future.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES: The primary objectives of the WTG are to:

- Describe the status of walleye stocks in Lake Erie using state of the art fishery and experimental assessment techniques.
- Provide sound scientific advice and background material to the LEC for the annual allocation process.

To achieve the mission and objectives, the members of the Walleye Task Group uphold the following tenets:

- **Membership-** LEC member agencies will provide personnel to address WTG charges. Task group members are selected by their parent agencies. Advisory and non-agency personnel can be appointed to the WTG at the discretion of the STC and LEC, following the Terms of Reference for LEC Task Group Responsibilities and Membership. If a member is withdrawn from the group, the parent agency may provide a replacement person.
- **Task Group Chairing** – Two co-chairpersons will be selected by WTG consensus and approved by the STC and LEC. The co-chairpersons will be comprised of one U.S. LEC member agency representative and one Ontario LEC member agency representative. These roles will alternate periodically at the

discretion of the WTG, STC and LEC. Task group chairs will serve as the primary liaison between the Task Group, the STC, and the LEC. In this capacity, task group chairs will serve to facilitate achievement and reporting on charges to the LEC, will administer the routine operations of the task group including the organization of meetings, conference calls, and recording of minutes, and will manage requests for task group data from outside agencies. Chairing commitments will extend a minimum of two years, and alternate periodically at the discretion of the WTG, STC, and LEC. See the LEC Task Group Responsibilities and Membership for further discussion and responsibilities of chairing.

- **Cooperation-** The members of the WTG will share responsibilities addressing charges; in collecting and collating interagency data, running analyses, producing reports and giving presentations.
- **Objectivity-** The WTG maintains objectivity through emphasis on a scientific approach.
- **Transparency-** Information and methodology must be disseminated completely to facilitate comprehension and input by LEC, other agency representatives, stakeholders and the public in general.
- **Science and Technology-** The WTG will use the latest available techniques to assess the status of Lake Erie walleye stocks and their associated fisheries. Task group members will address management and research initiatives as charges that emerge from the STC or LEC.
- **Restoration and Rehabilitation-** If walleye populations are considered degraded or at risk, the WTG will advise the LEC regarding approaches for restoration and rehabilitation of the Lake Erie walleye stocks.

CHARGES: Charges are assigned to the WTG by the STC and LEC in order to meet the primary objectives and to address specific tasks important to the LEC. On an annual basis, the STC and LEC determine whether the charges have been completed satisfactorily or if they require further elaboration.

RECOMMENDED ALLOWABLE HARVEST: Annually, the WTG provides a recommended range of allowable harvests (RAH), based on current adopted harvest strategies, to the LEC. The methodology used for annual RAH derivation must be clearly documented. RAH derivations will take into account the status of stocks, biological risks associated with various levels of exploitation, and other potential threats to the stability of the walleye resource. After Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is established by the LEC, quotas will be further allocated to the jurisdictions by a clearly-defined sharing formula.

REPORTING: One WTG co-chairperson, or a designated member, will report formally on the activities of the WTG at the annual meeting of the LEC. The co-chairpersons or individual WTG members may be asked to report on critical issues or charges to the LEC or STC chairperson or membership at other times, including the annual Pre-LEC meeting, seasonal LEC meetings, and/or STC business meetings. An annual written report summarizing WTG charges, activities toward those charges, and harvest

recommendations will be produced for the LEC, with the scheduled release to the public at the conclusion of the annual LEC public meeting.

CONSENSUS APPROACH: WTG issues are resolved by consensus of the members. If consensus cannot be achieved on an issue, the issue will be referred first to the STC and then to the LEC for resolution.

DATA SHARING: All data used to create the WTG report are shared freely among agencies. The report is available to the public online at www.GLFC.org, and from the distribution of reports at the annual LEC meeting. Agencies may not share with the public any other agency and/or task group data or intellectual property without the expressed consent of the originating agency.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS: The WTG meets as deemed necessary by its' members, the STC members, or the LEC, to address task group charges, with the intent to meet at least twice annually.

SUPPORT: Salary and traveling expenses of the members of the WTG will be the responsibility of the parent agencies, unless otherwise provided through an arrangement of the GLFC or other external funding sources.

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