

Lake Michigan Committee

Eagle Crest Conference Center
Ypsilanti, MI
March 23, 2005

Executive Minutes

LMC Members

Brian Breidert (IN DNR), Jim Dexter (MI DNR), Chair Bill Horns (WI DNR), Tom Gorenflo (CORA), Tom Trudeau (IL DNR).

1. Approval of Meeting Notes for January 25, 2005 Meeting

Notes from the January 25, 2005 meeting were circulated via email and approved.

2. Review Progress of Lake Trout Task Group

The second draft of the Lake Trout Restoration Plan was completed in December, 2004. There was consensus during the March 22, 2005 meeting on all issues except one; whether if Julian's Reef should be included in the stocking site mix. This last item will be resolved via email. The writing team for the plan will incorporate the changes by April 20, 2005 at which time the task group will give their comments to Chuck Bronte by May 1, 2005. Chuck Bronte expects the document will be delivered to the Lake Michigan Committee by early May. Jim Dexter expressed concern that this should be provided to the LMC sooner because constituents are anxious for the results. Chuck Bronte will highlight the urgency to the task group.

3. Approve Lake Trout Stocking Numbers for 2005

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is planning on stocking 2.35 million lake trout in Lake Michigan in 2005, the same number as stocked in 2004.

4. Status of Sea Lamprey and Actions to Reach Targets (Attachments)

Gavin Christie was looking for comments from the LMC concerning the GLFC's interpretation of the status of sea lamprey in Lake Michigan, the GLFC's plans for control in 2005, and on other input or concerns regarding the sea lamprey in the lake.

There seemed to be a significant increase in sea lamprey spawners since the 1980's. In the last five years, the GLFC increased control in Lake Michigan streams, including the mouth of the Manistique River. Survey efforts have expanded into lentic areas to find other large sources of transformers. Marc Gaden pointed out that the GLFC may see an increase in funding next year which could mean an increase in sea lamprey control. If funding is increased, Gavin Christie would like to see an increase in alternative controls used on Lake Michigan, including a barrier for the Galien River (which is in planning stages) and a replacement barrier for the Manistique River. The LMC agreed with both the interpretation of the sea lamprey status and the plans for control in 2005. However, the LMC is deeply concerned with the continuing increase in spawning phase sea

lamprey and the associated increase in wounding rates on lake trout. It was noted that sea lamprey have replaced fishing as the greatest source of lake trout mortality in Lake Michigan.

The LMC considered the current sea lamprey population, and upward trend, to be alarming and of immediate concern. However, the LMC recognized that the results in reductions of transformers due to recent back-to-back treatments in the Manistique River in 2003-2004 have not yet been fully realized. The LMC also noted that if sea lamprey abundance and wounding does not show declines in 2005, then control effort would need to be refocused or increased in Lake Michigan, with further effort applied to address possible gaps in control efforts.

5. Transfer of Sea Lampreys from Lake Ontario

Gavin Christie announced plans to transfer sea lamprey from Lake Ontario to the upper lakes. The sea lamprey will be screened for diseases, as they were last year. Last year, BKD and furunculosis were found in the sea lampreys screened, but these strains were intermingled with Lake Michigan strains. The LMC was comfortable with the continued transfer of the sea lampreys.

6. Wisconsin Sturgeon Restoration Plans

By 2006, the LMC would like to see sturgeon raised at streamside facilities, following the genetic and stocking guidelines outlined in the document by Rob Elliot. Concern was expressed with mixing the unique stocks of sturgeon located throughout the basin with sturgeon of different genetic backgrounds via stocking. The fewer fish stocked of different genetic material, the less risk there is of damage to the unique stocks. Wisconsin is concerned with discontinuing all stocking on the lake until the stream side facilities are established. Constituents in Wisconsin are concerned with the low numbers of sturgeon left in the lake and wish to continue stocking to increase the population. It was understood that Wisconsin would stock 2000 fall fingerlings, 200 yearlings, and a few radio-tagged juveniles/adults in 2005. There was some indication from Wisconsin DNR that stocking could be stopped on the Manitowoc River and decreased on the Milwaukee River. The LMC will write a letter of support for the streamside stocking project to the Great Lake Fishery Trust and to the CLC for consideration in the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act.