

## **Lake Superior Committee**

Clearly International Center  
Windsor, ON  
March 23, 2006

### **Executive Summary**

**Attendance:** Steve Hewett WDNR, Bill Mattes GLFWIC, Jack Wingate MN DNR, David McLeish OMNR, Tom Gorenflo CORA, Steve Scott MI DNR, Don Schreiner MN DNR, Mark Ebener CORA, Henry Quinlan USFWS, Bob Adair USFWS, Ken Cullis OMNR, Gavin Christie GLFC, John Dettmers GLFC

#### **1. Lake Sturgeon Stocking**

The Fond du Lac tribe has been stocking sturgeon well above the last dam on the St Louis River for the last 4 years. Last fall, their biologist passed away, resulting in the sturgeon program being taken over by Brian Burkholter. The current tribal plan is to get sturgeon fry from a Lake Superior source instead from Lake Michigan, assuming a clean bill of health regarding diseases. The new source is the Sturgeon River in Lake Superior. These stocked fish would need to go over four dams before they would be in the St. Louis River estuary. Mark Ebener asked whether Minnesota would stock fish if they tested positive for BKD, given that the fish are from within the basin. Discussions would be needed.

#### **2. Grand Portage Band Request to Join the LSTC**

The committee discussed the request by Grand Portage Band to join both the Lake Superior Committee and the Lake Superior Technical Committee. Great Lakes Fishery Commission staff clarified that the guidance says the Lake Superior Committee determines who should be on the Lake Superior Technical Committee. GLFC staff further clarified that it is the signatories to the Joint Strategic Plan that are the members to the lake committees and the Council of Great Lakes Fisheries Agencies are the 'keeper' of the plan and the proper group to consider the Grand Portage Band's request for LSC membership, which would likely require both a clarification of management authority and becoming signatory to the Joint Strategic Plan with all the associated rights and responsibilities. Grand Portage is not part of any larger inter-tribal group that is a current signatory to the Joint Strategic Plan, but is part of the 1854 Authority. The LSC decided to respond to the Grand Portage Band with an invitation to participate in LSTC activities as an invited guest and evaluate their sincere interest in participating in the activities of the LSTC with the goal of eventual membership on the LSTC.

This issue brought up a related point that the Terms of Reference regarding technical committee membership must be changed to account for changes in the 2000 treaty and the ability of individual bands to participate on the technical committee. As part of this process, the tribes must reaffirm their commitment to the Joint Strategic Plan. The LMC has changed the Term of Reference of the LMTC to accomplish this. **ACTION NEEDED**

### **3. State of the Lake Report**

The LSC is due to give its SOL update in 2007. EPA is also giving its SOL report in 2007 and wants to include the LSC. Such a meeting combining the two reports would be two full days, and would need to be in the Lake Superior basin. The LSTC believes that a joint meeting that covers the ecosystem as a whole is more valuable. Tom Gorenflo did not like the idea of losing the identity of the Lake Committee. The LSTC is already a partner in the LaMP process, why would there need to be a joint meeting? The LSC was generally supportive of interacting with other groups but it also has business that must be attended to.

The LSTC also advanced a suggestion that next year's State of the Lake Report consist of one-page summaries for each chapter. This would substantially shrink the number of pages produced and reduce the time caught up in editing and re-writing. The LSTC further suggested that perhaps a longer version be posted on the web at 10-year intervals. Any changes to the established format would need to be approved through the CLC.

### **4. Sea Lamprey Status and Control Efforts**

Gavin Christie updated the LSC about trends in sea lamprey spawner abundance and wounding rates. He then asked the LSC for its perspective on whether the GLFC was treating enough, in the right places, etc. The LSC members are definitely NOT happy with the increased wounding rates being observed in many areas of the Lake, including eastern Michigan waters. The committee does recognize the extra effort and resources being directed to Lake Superior by the GLFC. Overall, however, the LSC is **UNsatisfied** with the increasing trends in sea lamprey abundance, and lake trout wounding, in Lake Superior. We are still way above target levels and there is an overall increasing trend over the past 5-6 years (not a reduction). Also, the LSC is looking for funding levels to result in declines in sea lamprey to target levels.

### **5. Petition to List Coaster Brook Trout**

The Fish and Wildlife Service received a petition around March 1 to list coaster brook trout from the Salmon Trout River in Michigan waters of Lake Superior. Currently, there are no federally listed fishes in the Great Lakes. Within 90 days, the Service must come up with a finding, whether to proceed to investigate or not. Bob Adair described the listing process. Adair thinks it is likely the process will go beyond the 90-day finding. Refuting information in the listing petition can also be done. TJ Miller in Ecological Services is the lead on this.

### **6. Acoustic Survey**

The LSC would like to continue this for another year, but current funding runs out this summer. The additional year would allow for data analysis and completion of the forage report and optimal survey design. This requires an additional \$30,000 - \$34,000. If the LSC can get \$30,000 UM-D will make it work. Minnesota and Wisconsin will support this but looking for other support. Wisconsin has \$15,000 for this project. The LSC wondered about the GLFC's previous commitment. The LSC mentioned that \$2700 from Brad Ray's project through the GLFC remained unspent. Could GLFC release these funds?