State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
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Wisconsin Conservation Congress
Environmental Committee
Meeting Minutes

WCC Meeting Minutes

ORDER OF BUSINESS	9/30/2023	9:00 A.M.	Zoom Meeting

I. ORGNIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by	Meeting called to order by Chair Mary Ellen O'Brien at 9:00 A.M.

B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	**Committee Members:** 13/20 committee members were present: Chair Mary Ellen O'Brien, Co-chair Claude Bovi, Secretary Scott Pitta, Douglas Kurtzweil, Ed Peters, Sean Keck, Allan Balliett, Jason Shelly, Michael Arrowood, Alexia Unertl, Mitch Baker, Kyle Walker, and Barbara Dahlgren. **DNR Liaisons**: DNR liaisons Kari Lee-Zimmermann, Madi Johansen, and Paul Hartrick participated in the meeting.
EXCUSED	Duane Harpster, Ronald Krueger, Chelsey Marquardt, Jake Pittman, Marc Schultz, Juliee de la Terre, and Michael Grimm.
UNEXCUSED	
GUESTS	In preparation for the meeting, DNR liaison Kari Lee-Zimmerman sent notices to authors of the 54 individual resolutions assigned to the Environmental Committee giving them an opportunity to participate in the meeting. Two people, Steve Betchkal (Eau Claire County) and Amy Mueller (Waukesha County) registered to speak under public comments (see item I.E). Three resolution authors provided comments on their resolutions: Jeff Meessmann (Vilas County), Steve Betchkal (Eau Claire County), and Amy Mueller (Waukesha County). DNR Board Chair, William Smith, sat in on a portion of the meeting by phone.

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	Chair Mary Ellen O'Brien asked if there were any questions or comments on the meeting agenda as posted on the DNR/WCC website and included in the Environmental Committee meeting packets. There were no question or comments.
ACTION	A motion was made by Ed Peters and seconded by Scott Pitta to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	Claude Bovi read the mission statement for the record: The mission of the Environmental Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to review citizen resolutions, rules, policies, regulations, and legislation affecting the air, land, and waters of the state of Wisconsin. The committee's purpose is to ensure that the ecosystems of Wisconsin are fully protected with every effort taken to support Wisconsin's native flora and fauna and educate the citizenry. The committee will work with DNR staff and the citizens of the state to effectively protect the health and integrity of Wisconsin's natural ecosystems, utilizing the best available knowledge, technical resources, and keeping a balance for all interested stakeholders.
ACTION	A motion was made by Claude Bovi and seconded by Douglas Kurtzweil to reaffirm the mission statement. Motion carried.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	Steve Betchkal (Eau Claire County) spoke in support of the two resolutions that would eliminate hunting with lead ammunition by 2030 and the resolution that would require DNR to include information on lead impacts and lead alternatives in hunting and fishing educational material produced by DNR. Amy Mueller (Waukesha County) supports all resolutions being considered by the environmental committee. Janet Raddatz (Sheboygan County) and Rebecca Gilman (Green County) could not attend the meeting, but asked the chair to pass along their support for the resolution on outdoor cats. No other public comments were received.
ACTION	None

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Citizen Resolutions

1. Eliminate lead from firearm ammunition used for hunting by 2030 (Resolution 130723)
No resolution speaker
See Attachment 1 – Advanced by Environmental Committee

DISCUSSION	This resolution provides a definite timeline for eliminating lead ammunition for hunting. A 7-year window (2030) for eliminating lead ammunition was suggested to allow time for transitioning to other options, both for hunters and ammunition manufacturers/retailers. Ed Peters read the resolution for the record. Informational notes from chair: Two resolutions on lead ammunition were passed by the environmental committee in 2022, but were subsequently rejected by the District Leadership Council (DLC) and therefore did not advance to the 2023 spring hearing. • Do you support the WCC working with the DNR, the Natural Resources Board and state legislature to implement limitations on lead ammunition? This would exclude ammunition used in target shooting and could be phased in over time? The DLC concluded that "implement limitations" and "phased over time" were too broad and/or vague. • The DNR must end the preventable deaths of millions of birds and wildlife by imposing a statewide ban on hunters' use of lead ammunition since suitable, moderately priced copper and non-lead alternatives are available. The DLC concluded that a statewide ban would be too restrictive and that legislation would be required for such a mandate.

DNR liaison input: Implementation of this resolution would require legislation. DNR has quite a bit of educational material on their website about use of lead ammunition for hunting. It is already illegal to hunt certain species with lead ammunition. The DNR hunting regulations state that it is illegal to possess or use any type of lead or toxic shot when hunting ducks, geese, brant, snipe, rails, coot and common gallinule. Possess or use any type of lead or toxic shot while hunting mourning dove on DNR-managed land. Note: Only non-toxic sizes BB, BBB, T or smaller are legal. Size F shot is illegal in Wisconsin. Only non-toxic shot may be possessed or used for hunting migratory and upland game bird species, including wild turkey, on all national wildlife refuges and federal waterfowl production areas. On DNR managed lands, steel shot or other non-toxic shot must be used for dove hunting. Lead shot may be used on private properties that are not leased by the DNR for public hunting and managed by the DNR for Doves, but hunters are encouraged to use non-toxic shot for dove hunting statewide. Lead shot may be consumed by doves that are feeding on similar looking small seeds.
Articles on DNR's Website include:

Lead Ammunition and Wild Game
Deer harvested with lead bullets have been shown to have tiny lead particles or fragments remaining in the processed meat. These are often too small to be seen and can disperse far from the wound channel. Although lead in venison does not rival lead paint in older homes as a health risk for the public, the risk is not low enough to ignore. Children under six years and pregnant women are at the greatest risk from lead exposure. The amount of lead found in a small percentage of venison samples suggests that long term effects of lead consumption could occur in people who regularly eat venison shot with lead ammunition. However, there is currently no known evidence linking human consumption of venison to lead poisoning.
These suggestions can reduce exposure to lead:

- Consider alternative expanding non-lead ammunition such as copper or other high weight-retention bullets, such as bonded bullets.
- Practice marksmanship and hunting skills to get closer, making cleaner, lethal shots away from major muscle areas. Aim for the neck or the head, or the vitals behind the shoulder. Don't shoot at running deer.

Additional information for hunters, consumers and meat processors is also provided. DNR also has multiple articles on lead poisoning effects on eagles and other birds. Necropsy data for Bald Eagles revealed approximately 15% of all Bald Eagle deaths in Wisconsin were attributed to lead toxicity.

Committee discussion: Some committee members thought this resolution was too restrictive in that it calls for a total elimination of lead ammunition for hunting. There were some concerns about non-supported statements in both lead resolutions assigned to the Environmental Committee. For example, a statement that lead is more toxic to some animals than others, unsafe levels of lead in many game species, and cost difference between lead and non-lead ammunition. One committee member expressed his opinion that lead kills more quickly than copper ammunition because it spreads out on impact. One member stated that all types of ammunition will likely have trace amounts of lead, therefore it isn't possible to totally eliminate it. One member stated that use of lead shot should be limited to specific species like coyote and deer. One member noted that lead in household pipes compromises public health; it is toxic and present in other aspects of our lives. One member stated that lead in the environment is not the same risk as other lead exposed to by citizens. One member mentioned he thought lead bullets were banned in New York state (subsequently found to not be the case).

ACTION	The Environmental Committee vote on advancing this resolution was close mainly due to personal viewpoints and preferences about lead versus other types of ammunition. After considerable discussion, the committee voted to advance this resolution to the District Ledership Council (DLC) for these key reasons: Lead ammunition is a continuing citizen concern as evidenced by past citizen resolutions on restricting or eliminating use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle. Advancing the current resolution to the 2024 spring hearing will provide an opportunity to gauge current public opinion on the possibility of eliminating use of lead ammunition for hunting. Implementing this resolution would require legislation. Motion to advance this resolution by Barbara Dahlgren; seconded by Claude Bovi. Motion carried on a roll call vote of 6 yes and 5 no.
2. Phase out lead ammunition for hunting by 2030 (Resolution 131723) *No resolution speaker*	
DISCUSSION	Chair, Mary Ellen O'Brien, recommended that this resolution be combined with Resolution 130723 because it had the same objective (eliminate lead ammunition for hunting by 2030), and because both contained some identical language. Further, it was recommended that resolution 130723 serve as the representative lead resolution because it contained less information in the problem statement that could be subject to differing opinions, and because it presented a clearer and more definitive bottom line – eliminate lead hunting ammunition by 2030.
ACTION	A motion to combine lead resolution 130723 with lead resolution 131723 and to use resolution 130723 as the representative lead resolution for discussion purposes was made by Sean Keck and seconded by Scott Pitta. Motion carried.
3. Expand educational and nest monitoring efforts to increase awareness about a decline in bluebird and grassland bird populations (Resolution 131223) *No resolution speaker* **See Attachment 2 – Advanced by Environmental Committee (with edit)**	
DISCUSSION	Claude Bovi read the resolution for the record. This resolution discusses the significant decline in Bluebird populations as evidenced by the nest monitoring program under the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin established by DNR. It also discusses the overall decline in bird populations nationwide, including grassland birds that have declined by over 50% in the last 50 years. Population declines can be attributed mainly to loss of habitat and environmental degradation including use of pesticides. The resolution recommends using DNR's publications and other interdepartmental educational resources to increase awareness of avian decline and causes, especially for grassland birds. DNR wildlife supports this resolution.
ACTION	The Environmental Committee voted to advance this resolution to the DLC with an amendment that removes WCC from the question portion of the resolution. Any implementing action taken would be by DNR or other agencies, not the WCC. The Environmental Committee concluded that increasing awareness and education about declining bluebird and grassland bird populations and the causes, warrants public input at the 2024 spring hearing. Motion by Jason Shelley to advance this resolution; seconded by Sean Keck. Motion carried.

4. Prohibit use of wake boat ballast systems on all waterways to minimize transfer of aquatic invasive species (Resolution 640523) *PowerPoint presentation by resolution author* **See Attachment 3 – Advanced by Environmental Committee**	
DISCUSSION	Jeff Meessmann, Vilas County did a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate and further explain the issues raised in the resolution body. This resolution states that while current regulations state that all boat ballast systems must be completely emptied prior to being removed from the boat landing, wake boat ballast systems are not designed to be completely emptied. Many of the wake boat systems are inaccessible and enclosed, and therefore not conducive to inspection. The primary concern is the potential for spreading invasive aquatic species such as zebra mussels and spiny water fleas, and fish diseases from one lake to another. Informational notes from chair: There have been several past resolutions on wake boating and all have passed at the statewide spring hearings by a fairly wide margin. These resolutions focused on regulating and prohibiting intentional generation of large waves in certain size lakes and within certain distances from the shoreline. While they did include environmental concerns such as adverse water quality effects from churning up bottom sediments, they did not specifically address ballast systems which many wake boats use to produce maximum wave action. Prohibiting ballast systems on all Wisconsin lakes has not been previously addressed. DNR liaison input: The general public is required to follow the decontamination steps identified in NR 40.02(44) and NR 40.07 to prevent the spread of invasive species. DNR's webpage outlines best management practices (BMPs) for the boat, gear and equipment as specified in DNR's Disinfection Manual Code 9183.1. which requires all DNR employees, agents, and permittees that transport equipment between waters to take additional prevention steps. Implementing this resolution would require legislation – creation of a new statute to address this specific prohibition.
ACTION	The Environmental committee concluded that this resolution warrants public input at the 2024 spring hearing because ballast systems that are not easily drained and that are not accessible for inspection or regulation have a high potential for transferring ballast water from lake to lake along with any invasive aquatic species. Motion by Barbara Dahlgren to advance this resolution; seconded by Ed Peters. Motion carried.

5. Develop and enact chronic toxicity limitations for PFAS compounds in surface and groundwater (Resolution 660223). *No resolution speakers* **See Attachment 4 – Advanced by Environmental Committee**	
DISCUSSION	Mary Ellen O'Brien read this resolution for the record. Citizen concern about PFAS has been increasing as additional information becomes available about their widespread occurrence in the state's surface waters and effects on fish consumption and human health. Two PFAS resolutions were included in the 2022 spring hearing and both passed by about 90% of the total responses. The focus of those resolutions was to support DNR's advocacy for PFAS testing, development of protection limits, and clean-up of known contamination sites. The current resolution specifically calls for DNR to enact PFAS toxicity standards for surface and groundwater. Informational notes from chair: Surface water standards for PFAS are currently in place, and DNR is in the process of reviewing them for consistency with current federal standards being promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Groundwater standards previously developed by DNR were not supported by the Natural Resources Board at their February 23, 2022 meeting. Currently, there are no groundwater standards in place. Two questions on PFAS were included in the 2022 spring hearing questionnaire. Both passed by about 90% of the total vote: • Would you support additional testing for PFAS levels in drinking water across Wisconsin? • Would you support the DNR continuing to advocate for strong PFAS protections and clean-up to ensure that everyone has access to clean drinking water and safe consumption of fish? DNR liaison input: Information on PFAS is available on websites for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. **Completed Efforts** WDNR Current NR 105 Water Quality Standards on PFAS The final rule effective August 1, 2022, includes surface water quality criteria for both PFOS and PFOA. For PFOS, due to the bioaccumulative nature of the compound and the critical exposure pathway being fish consumption, the water quality criteria is established at 8 nanograms per liter (ng/L) in all waters without consideration of dilution provided from a mixing zone. For PFOA, given the compound is not considered to be bioaccumulative, dilution can be considered from a mixing zone if the waterbody has assimilative capacity and is eligible for mixing zone consideration. The PFOA standard, which is based on drinking water protection, is tiered as follows: 20 ng/L in waters that are public drinking water sources and 95 ng/L in all other waters to ensure protection against the incidental ingestion of water by children during recreation. NR 809 Safe Drinking Water Standards On Aug. 1, 2022, the state's safe drinking water code chapter NR 809 Wis. Adm. Code was revised to include standards for two new compounds in the perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) group. The new Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) standards are for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS). The new Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) standards are for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS). The new MCLs are set at 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for each contaminant individually or combined.

DISCUSSION	**Ongoing Efforts** NR 140 Groundwater Quality Standards Update Pursuing MCL (maximum contaminant levels) in groundwater for PFOA and PFOS based on existing recommendations develop by DHS. View information on DHS's recommendations for PFOA and PFOS groundwater quality standards. Status Update: Economic Impact Analysis to follow **Summer 2023** NRB scope approval [PDF] - Dec. 14, 2022 • Preparation of proposed rule • Solicitation of information for economic impact analysis (EIA) ← **We are here** ○ Stakeholder Meeting - July 14, 2023 ▪ Stakeholder Presentation [PDF] ▪ Stakeholder Meeting DNR's website also includes current fish consumption advisories.
ACTION	The Environmental Committee concluded that the current PFAS resolution warrants public input at the 2024 spring hearing because it continues to highlight citizen concern about the need for DNR and the Department of Health Services to develop and promulgate safety standards to protect our drinking water, surface water, and groundwater resources. Rulemaking by DNR is required to document any new PFAS standards and incorporate them into current water quality laws, rules, and regulations. Motion by Ed Peters to advance this resolution; seconded by Barbara Dahlgren. Motion carried.
6. Include information on lead impacts and lead alternatives in all hunting and fishing educational material produced by DNR (Resolution 130623); a total of 31 identical resolutions submitted. *No resolution speakers* **See Attachment 5 – Advanced by Environmental Committee (with edits)**	
DISCUSSION	Claude Bovi read this resolution for the record. This resolution states that DNR should include information on the impacts of lead ammunition and fishing tackle on ecosystems and public health, non-lead alternatives, and best practices in all of its published material on hunter education, hunting and fishing. Informational note from chair: A similar resolution on lead ammunition was included in the 2023 spring hearing and was passed by 60% of the total votes: Do you support the Conservation Congress and DNR working cooperatively with other conservation organizations to develop a statewide outreach program that increases the use of non-lead ammunition to end the lead poisoning of wildlife? DNR liaison input: DNR has educational material on their website but nothing in the current hunting regulations. DNR fishing regulations have educational material about alternatives to lead tackle. In addition, certain bodies of water have lead tackle restrictions. In the past, DNR has offered two outreach programs - a copper shooting demonstration on the ballistic advantage of copper ammunition plus a field session that shows problems with lead and advantages of copper using the hunter's own gun. A similar demonstration for shotguns shows the efficiency of non-lead loads on a variety of game.

DISCUSSION	DNR Website Information **GET THE LEAD OUT** ***Fishing Wisconsin*** **Did you know that one lead split shot is enough to kill a twelve-pound loon?** **Anglers can tackle lead** Lead fishing tackle has been used by generations of Wisconsin anglers. One of the goals of the Get the Lead Out! Wisconsin campaign is to bring awareness to anglers about lead poisoning in fish and other wildlife from lead tackle ingestion. Inexpensive and ecologically sound alternatives to lead fishing weights are available. Anglers can use sinkers and jigs made from non-poisonous materials such as tin, bismuth, steel and tungsten-nickel alloy. • Wisconsin anglers: get the lead out [PDF] from the 2008-2009 Fishing Regulations • Minnesota Pollution Control Agency [exit DNR] Non-lead alternatives for fishing tackle • LoonWatch [exit DNR] - NonLead Fishing Tackle Suppliers **Dispose of lead properly** Dispose of your lead tackle properly— do not throw it in a lake or trash can. Contact your local recycling program to see if they will accept it. If not, take it to your local household hazardous waste collection site or a scrap metal collector/recycler. **Education** Another great way to help is teaching good stewardship to young anglers. Outfit kids with tackle boxes with non-lead weights. They are non-toxic and safer for youngsters to handle. Plus, inexperienced anglers tend to lose the most sinkers, so you'll be cutting down on the amount of lead getting left behind in Wisconsin lakes and rivers. Committee discussion resulted in amending this resolution to remove the mandate that "all" hunting and fishing material produced by DNR include information on lead. Committee members thought selection of the appropriate materials in which to discuss lead should be left up to DNR. Logically, key materials would include hunting and fishing regulations and DNR's hunter education materials.
ACTION	The Environmental Committee concluded that this resolution warrants public input at the 2024 spring hearing because it highlights continued citizen concern about the potential environmental and human health effects of lead ammunition and fishing tackle as evidenced by several past and current resolutions dealing with this topic. Motion to advance as amended by Alexia Unertl; seconded by Alan Balliett. Motion as amended carried.

7. Create a public awareness campaign on the impact of outdoor cats on wild bird populations (Resolution 180223); represents a total of 18 identical resolutions submitted. *Two resolution speakers* **See Attachment 6 – Advanced by Environmental Committee (with edit)**	
DISCUSSION	Ed Peters read this resolution for the record. Steve Betchkal (Eau Claire County), author of the original resolution, reviewed and elaborated on key points made in the resolution body. Resolution author, Amy Mueller (Waukesha County), also highlighted the impact domestic cats have on wild bird populations. This resolution and information provided by the speakers, highlights the effect that domestic cats when let out-of-doors are having on wild bird populations. Since the 1960's, North America's wild bird population has declined by almost one-third, and one of the main causes is hunting by domestic cats that are let out of the house. There needs to be more education on the impact of free-roaming cats on wild birds. DNR liaison input: DNR noted that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has an educational article on feral cats (Keep Cats Indoors/FWS.gov). Committee discussion: One committee member noted that feral cats is a different issue than domestic cats that are let out-of-doors, but asked for a link to the Fish and Wildlife Service article. Here is a link to the Fish & Wildlife informational brochure: https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/keep-cats-indoors.pdf Two committee members stated that the question portion of the resolution should be amended to remove language about the Conservation Congress working with DNR to create an awareness campaign. This is not within the purview of the WCC.
ACTION	The Environmental Committee concluded that this resolution warrants public input at the 2024 spring hearing to solicit additional statewide input. Further, the Environmental Committee concluded that DNR is the appropriate agency to take a leadership role in working with conservation groups to educate cat owners and wildlife advocates on the potential impacts of domestic cats on wild bird populations. The question portion of the resolution was amended to exclude WCC from the action item. Motion made to advance as amended by Jason Shelley; seconded by Allan Balliett. Motion carried.

8. Forbid use of aquatic herbicide 2,4D in all aquatic ecosystems in the State of Wisconsin. This resolution was submitted by a committee member for consideration as a committee resolution. **See Attachment 7 – Advanced by Environmental Committee (with edit)**	
DISCUSSION	Resolution author, Michael Arrowood read the resolution for the record. This resolution discusses documented impacts on aquatic ecosystems treated with the herbicide 2,4D to get rid of non-native aquatic plants. Detrimental effects include reduced fish reproduction, degradation of egg quality, larval mortality, and reduced egg hatching percentages. Decreases in beneficial zooplankton food sources have also been documented. DNR liaison input: **2,4-D Use in Wisconsin and Department Role** 2,4-D is a commonly used herbicide in Wisconsin waters: 2,4-D Chemical Fact Sheet [PDF]. The US EPA reviews and registers pesticides for use in the United States, WI DATCP then registers the pesticide for Wisconsin. The herbicide must be used in accordance with the product label. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources issues Aquatic Plant Management permits for the use of 2,4-D in Waters of the State. The DNR is charged with protecting and preserving native aquatic plant communities and managing the impacts of aquatic invasive species. Chemical management of Wisconsin waters is allowed in a manner consistent with sound ecosystem management that minimizes the loss of ecological values in the water body. The department considers several factors when approving any herbicide permit: waterbody type, size, and chemistry, fish and wildlife, plant community composition, stakeholder input and the current body of scientific research. The department weighs all of the facts relevant to the waterbody then makes a permit decision based on the standards outlined in Wis Adm. Code NR 107. In many cases, permits are conditioned with additional criteria to protect the lake ecosystem. An example condition used for 2,4-D permits includes timing control to avoid walleye spawning in the Ceded Territory. There is no one size fits all management approach which addresses the complex aquatic plant control problems in lake environments. 2,4-D is one tool amongst many; however, all control strategies have the potential for non-target impacts. When 2,4-D is used appropriately within an integrated pest management strategy, it can meet management goals while also minimizing non target impacts to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the department has the legal authority to deny the use of 2,4-D if it does not meet the standards of NR 107. **Summary of research on effects of 2,4-D application on early life stages of fish** Altogether, the results of the studies of the effects of 2,4-D application on early life stages of fish suggest that exposure to 2,4-D, even at concentrations legally permitted by the Environmental Protection Agency for use in Wisconsin lakes, can have a negative effect on the survival, behavior, and cognition of early life stages of fish. Not only can exposure to 2,4-D directly affect survival of fish larvae themselves, but it can also negatively influence skills that are vital for the survival and wellbeing of early life stages of fish, such as hunting for prey and predator avoidance. Researchers also found that 2,4-D can negatively influence a wide variety of fish species. Scheduling the timing of 2,4-D treatments after fish have completed spawning and larval growth stage development may be beneficial in minimizing non-target influences on these organisms. In addition, using an integrated pest management (IPM) approach, which considers the use of all available management options including non-chemical management strategies, can also help guide future aquatic plant management activities in a way that minimizes harm to aquatic ecosystems and ensures long-term protection of Wisconsin's natural resources.

DISCUSSION	Committee Discussion: Committee member and resolution author, Mike Arrowood, reviewed the key points made in the resolution: Detrimental effects such as reduced fish reproduction, degradation of egg quality, larval mortality, and reduced egg hatching percentages. Decreases in beneficial zooplankton food sources have also been documented. Mike affirmed his intention to have this resolution forwarded to the District Leadership Council so it can be considered for inclusion in the 2024 statewide spring hearing questionnaire. There were some committee questions on the decision-making process for using 2,4D as an aquatic herbicide in certain waterbodies, and DNR's role in that process. The Environmental Protection Agency reviews and registers pesticides for use in the U.S. The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) then registers the pesticide for Wisconsin. DNR's role is to issue Aquatic Plant Management permits for the use of 2,4D in waters of the state. After further discussion There was consensus among committee members to adopt this resolution as a committee resolution and advance it to the District Leadership Council for further consideration. The committee discussed possible language for the question portion of the resolution to replace the paragraph that says "Be it resolved…"
ACTION	The Environmental Committee adopted this resolution as a committee resolution and concluded that it should be advanced to the 2024 spring hearing to gauge statewide public opinion on eliminating this aquatic herbicide. The resolution was amended to make it consistent with the spring hearing question format. Motion made by Barbara Dahlgren to adopt this resolution as an Environmental Committee resolution and to amend it for consistency with spring hearing question format; seconded by Ed Peters. Motion carried.

B. Department Information and Updates

DISCUSSION	There were no updates from DNR. Mary Ellen O'Brien thanked the DNR liaisons for participating in the committee meeting and for providing information to the committee on each resolution.
ACTION	None
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE:	DEADLINE:

C. Committee Chair Update on WCC Environmental Issues

DISCUSSION	Mary Ellen O'Brien summarized key points from a prior memo that was sent to the Environmental Committee regarding WCC environmental aspects. At the WCC annual meeting on May 12-14, 2023, the District Leadership Council (DLC) and Executive Committee made a commitment to strengthen and better incorporate environmental aspects of natural resource management into the WCC process and partnership with DNR. The objective is to ensure that citizen resolutions on environmental and related matters brought before the WCC, are afforded the same level of consideration and action as hunting, fishing and trapping matters. Rob Bohman asked Mary Ellen (as chair of the Environmental Committee) to identify and recommend some ways to accomplish the WCC environmental commitment, and to present ideas at the May 23, 2023 DLC meeting.

DISCUSSION	Initial ideas included: Establishing a working relationship with DNR environmental staff; DNR could give brief presentations on environmental topics at spring open houses and district meetings similar to what is being done for fishery, wildlife, and law enforcement; DNR could take a leadership role in helping WCC delegates and the public understand connections between broader environmental issues and resource conservation and management; the WCC Environmental Committee and DNR could host periodic educational webinars on environmental topics that are of interest to the public as identified in citizen resolutions; DNR could serve a resource to resolution authors and reviewers by providing links to environmental resource topics on the DNR/WCC website. On July 20, 2023, Kari Lee-Zimmermann arranged a Microsoft team meeting with DNR program managers to discuss WCC's environmental commitment, share ideas, and develop a mutual game plan that can be implemented in a reasonable manner by taking advantage of existing DNR information sources and technology that's already in place such as webinar and other presentation capabilities. DNR staff participating in the meeting were: Kari-Lee Zimmermann; James Zellmer, Division Administrator - DNR Environmental Management Division (division charged with protecting Wisconsin's air, land, water, and public health through compliance support and partnerships with customers); Ann Kipper, Division Administrator – DNR External Services Division (division serves as the primary entry point into DNR for the public, businesses and local government. It is charged with community financial assistance, customer and outreach services, environmental analysis and sustainability, watershed and waterways management); Scott Loomans, Division Administrator – DNR Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (division plans and directs activities to protect, manage, conserve and wisely use the state's lands, plants, wildlife, fisheries and recreational resources); and Sean Kennedy - DNR legislative liaison. These DNR leaders were very receptive to participating in WCC's plan to renew emphasis on environmental aspects of resource management. They acknowledged that staffing constraints and workload would likely preclude getting involved in multiple forums such as attending district meetings or spring open houses. The general consensus was that DNR's best contribution would be from an informational and educational standpoint. This would include periodic webinars on topics identified by the WCC environmental committee, delegates, or citizens as having high public interest. In addition, DNR can identify appropriate staff to review certain resolutions and assist the WCC in determining further actions. They can also provide links to their website or other agency websites where information on particular environmental topics can be found. It was agreed that the initial roll out will be a webinar or similar presentation through the DNR/WCC website that all WCC members and the public can access. I suggested PFAS as one of the first topics since we continue to get resolutions and questions on what is being done to test for and monitor PFAS levels in surface and groundwater, and the status of state and federal compliance standards. Our first line of contact will be Kari. She will direct our inquiries and requests for assistance to the appropriate DNR staff.
ACTION	Mary Ellen O'Brien will work with Kari Lee-Zimmermann to identify a topic for a webinar that will be prepared and posted by DNR on the DNR/WCC website.

D. Future Committee Meetings

DISCUSSION	Mary Ellen O'Brien noted that it is getting more and more difficult to schedule a meeting date that works for the majority of the committee as well as DNR liaisons. Part of the problem is that by the time committees are finalized and resolutions assigned to them by the District Leadership Council (typically mid to late summer), there is a short window of time to have committee meetings prior to the next DLC meeting typically held in October or November. In addition to meeting notes for the Environmental Committee meeting and notifying resolution authors of the committee's actions, a committee report needs to be prepared prior to the DLC meeting documenting the Environmental Committee's rationale for advancing particular resolutions to them for further consideration. There is mixed support for in-person versus Zoom only meetings. Any in-person meeting would also include a Zoom format to provide maximum opportunity for citizen participation. A possible issue with a dual forum meeting is that without a quorum at the in-person meeting, any technical difficulty that would drop Zoom participants out of the meeting, could result in not having a quorum and the meeting would need to be canceled. Also, it is not economically sound to rent a meeting facility for only a small portion of the committee. One committee member noted that another committee he serves on sets their meetings a year in advance at the same location. Several members support the Zoom forum because it saves travel time and costs, and because this method is environmentally sound. Others feel that interpersonal communication and interaction is an important benefit of committee deliberations that is missed with a Zoom meeting. Mary Ellen stated that she will send a follow up e-mail to the committee to solicit more specific input and suggestions.
ACTION	Follow up with committee required to explore attendance and scheduling issues/solutions.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE: Mary Ellen O'Brien will initiate	DEADLINE:

III. MEMBER MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Several members thanked the chair for conducting the meeting in an efficient and thorough manner. Douglas Kurtzweil reminded the committee that if we don't take care of our land and water resources, there will be no hunting, fishing, or trapping. Ed Peters said he prefers in-person meetings. Claude Bovi apologized for presenting incorrect information about the state of New York prohibiting lead ammunition. Sean Keck thought the meeting provided a very beneficial exchange of ideas and conversations and noted we all have the same goal – to protect and wisely manage our natural resources. Allan Balliett noted that virtual meetings help save on greenhouse gas emissions. New member Alexia Unertl though the meeting was a positive experience. Barbara Dahlgren was happy with the committee's actions on the resolutions. Scott Pitta was discouraged that republicans who control the state Senate's Sporting Heritage Committee voted down 4 of the 5 people appointed to the Natural Resources Board by Governor Evers, a move that could delay a vote on DNR's wolf management plan among other things.
ACTION	None

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	Motion to adjourn by Sean Keck; seconded by Scott Pitta. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.
SUBMITTED BY	Mary Ellen O'Brien, Chair and Scott Pitta, Secretary
DATE	October 11, 2023

Resolution passed by Environmental Committee on 9/30/2023

Citizen Resolution # 130723

Phase out lead in hunting with firearms by 2030

Lead is superior for many things. Lead is also toxic for animals, some more than others. When used for pursuing game, at harvest the lead can end up in entrails and be scavenged by sensitive animals like eagles. It can also be fragmented into the meat, and possibly even find its way into food pantries through donations.
The use of lead shot is already restricted from use in waterfowl hunting and for all game on some properties, and some people already choose not to use lead for reasons including safety in consumption.
Other options are available, but they're more expensive especially because they're considered specialty items. Providing a timeline would allow supply chains and retailers to adapt and compete as demand normalizes.

Would you support eliminating lead, statewide, from firearm ammunition used for hunting by 2030?

Additional Information provided by author:

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ATTACHMENT 1

Resolution passed by Environmental Committee on 9/30/2023 with edits noted below.

Citizen Resolution # 131223

The Eastern Bluebird and other Grassland Birds are declining at an unprecedented rate in Wisconsin

First identified by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in their journal Science (volume 365, issue 6459) dated September 20, 2019 whereby it was verified that there has been a decline of 2.9 billion birds within North America since 1970. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's publication Living Bird dated Winter 2023 (Volume 42, Issue 1) reports that bird populations are continuing to decline nationwide. Notably, the grassland birds were declining the most by 53% over 50 years.

The Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW), established by the Wisconsin Department Natural Resources (WiDNR) in 1986 to reestablish the population of the Eastern Bluebird and other cavity nesting birds (grassland species) in the State that showed significant decline since the mid 1960's. With the field work of hundreds of nesting monitors (Monitors are people who check on nesting boxes every 7-10 days during the nesting season which can last from April into September, but more commonly through July), statewide, BRAW end of season reports show a steady increase of fledged bluebirds to a total of 35,500+ in 2012. Since this time, there has been a significant drop in numbers fledged. The totals in 2022 was 13,683 fledged, almost a third less.

Causation has been documented to be attributed loss of habitat, environmental degradation including the use of pesticides and climate change. The latter can not be practically addressed at this time, but the others can.

Though this significant decline can be attributed to more than one issues, most can be resolved with a concentrated effort across the state with an emphasis on education. Using the resources of the WiDNR publications and statewide network, posters at libraries, participation of the appropriate departments within our state university sites, seminars through 4-H and the Farm services, a continued effort to alert people of these issue (avoiding just a one shot deal) may impact and help slow or correct the avian decline in our state, especially grassland birds.

Do you support ~~the WCC working with the~~ DNR using their resources and working with ~~BRAW~~ to expand nesting box monitors and to help educate farmers about the impact of pesticides on grassland bird populations?

the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW)

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ATTACHMENT 2

Resolution passed by Environmental Committee on 9/30/2023

Citizen Resolution # 640523

Wake boat ballast systems violate current Wisconsin regulations.

It has been known since the 1980's that ballast water containing aquatic invasive species was discharged into the St. Lawrence Seaway from European ships. From there the invasives made their way into our Great Lakes and now into Wisconsin's inland lakes. Current regulations state that all boat ballast systems must be completely emptied prior to being removed from the boat landing. Wake boat ballast systems are not designed to be completely emptied. Many of the boat ballast systems are inaccessible and totally enclosed. This makes the systems impossible to inspect and unable to dry because they are enclosed.
It is evident that manufacturers are aware that ballast systems don't drain completely. Wake boat owners' manuals say to add several gallons of antifreeze to the ballast system in winter to avoid problems from residual water freezing. A University of Wisconsin study has shown that wake boat ballast systems contain on average 8 gallons of residual lake water after "being emptied". In some boats as much as 20 gallons remained. The water tested contained zooplankton and, in some cases, it was still alive. When these boats are moved from lake to lake, they transfer the ballast water and its contents from one lake to another lake.

Wake boat ballast systems cannot be completely emptied. Therefore, they can transfer aquatic invasive species such as zebra mussels, spiny water fleas and fish diseases from one lake to another. Wake boats could be used on lakes and rivers for activities such as water skiing, tubing and pleasure cruising but use of the ballast system feature should be prohibited. Would you support the WCC and legislature creating a new statute that prohibits the use of wake boat ballast systems on Wisconsin's lakes and rivers?

Additional Information provided by author:
University of Wisconsin Study "Volume and contents of residual water in recreational watercraft ballast systems", January 2016, link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306920452
Article from Outdoor Life, "A spiky flea could ruin Midwestern ecosystems and kill native fish", February 17, 2021, link: https://www.popsci.com/story/animals/spiny-water-flea/.
Wisconsin regulation NR 19
Wisconsin regulation NR 40

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ATTACHMENT 3

Resolution passed by Environmental Committee on 9/30/2023

Citizen Resolution # 660223

Protective Limitations on PFAS Compounds

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a class of over 4,000 "forever chemicals." PFAS substances continually accumulate in the human body in never decreasing amounts. 98% of Americans have measurable levels of PFAS in their blood.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), certain PFAS pose risks to human health, including developmental problems in fetuses and infants, certain types of cancer, reduced antibody response, decreased immune response to vaccinations, and kidney disease.

People accumulate PFAs from a wide variety of consumer products, water repellants, non-stick pans, stain resistant materials, cosmetics, fire-fighting foams, fast food wrappers and paper production and biosolids or wastewater sludge applied to farm fields as a substitute for fertilizer. Eating fish and game can also be a major contributor to PFAS accumulation in our bodies. PFAS contaminate fish across the U.S., with higher levels in the Great Lakes. In fact, A group of scientists, the Environmental Working Group, found the median amounts of PFAS in freshwater fish were an astounding 280 times greater than PFAS detected in some commercially caught and sold fish. In Michigan, smelt consumption from Lake Superior has been restricted to a suggested 8 oz portion per month for adults.

Should the Legislature, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Health develop and enact protective limitations on PFAS compounds for acute and chronic toxicity in surface water, wildlife health, groundwater, fish consumption, and human health?

Additional Information provided by author:
This resolution has been discussed and is supported by the Government and Environment Committee and the Board of Directors, both entities of the Washburn County Lakes and Rivers Association
https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news-release/2023/01/ewg-study-eating-one-freshwater-fish-equals-month-drinking

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ATTACHMENT 4

Resolution passed by Environmental Committee on 9/30/2023 with the edits noted below.

Citizen Resolution # 130623

Include educational material on lead in all hunter education and fishing / hunting literature produced by the WI DNR

Lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle have been shown to pose ~~significant~~ environmental risks to wildlife and public health, and non-lead alternatives are increasingly available and effective. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a duty to provide hunters with information on best practices for hunting and conservation. This resolution would require ~~all~~ material produced by the Wisconsin DNR related to hunting and fishing to include information on non-lead alternatives and the impact that lead ammunition and fishing tackle have on our ecosystems and public health. Currently this information is only available online and is not included when purchasing a hunting or fishing license.

This information should include a description of the environmental and health risks posed by lead ammunition and fishing tackle. It would incorporate information provided by hunter education initiatives such as Sporting Lead-Free that offer information on alternatives to lead.

By providing this information and promoting non-lead alternatives, the Wisconsin DNR can help ensure that hunters and anglers in Wisconsin are informed and equipped to make responsible choices that promote conservation and protect our natural resources.

Do you support ~~that the~~ DNR ~~implement~~ implementing a requirement that ~~all~~ hunter education and hunting and fishing ~~material~~ regulations produced by the DNR in the future include information on lead alternatives and the impact that lead ammunition and fishing tackle have on our ecosystems and public health?

Additional Information provided by author:
https://sportingleadfree.org
https://huntingwithnonlead.org

<u>This resolution had multiple authors. Please see page 2 for author information.</u>

ATTACHMENT 5

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ATTACHMENT 5
(CONTINUED)

Resolution passed by Environmental Committee on 9/30/2023 with edit noted below.

Citizen Resolution # 180223

Keep Cats Indoors Education

Since the 1960's North America's wild birds have declined by one-third, or nearly 3 billion individuals. One of the greatest causes of unnatural mortality in wild birds is house cats thoughtlessly allowed to roam free outdoors. Cats let out-of-doors by people kill an estimated billion birds a year in the United States. A single house cat turned loose outside – even if declawed or belled – can kill several dozen wild birds in a year. A current practice called TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release) involves releasing trapped cats back into the wild after neutering them. The practice, while reducing cats' ability to breed does nothing to reduce the significant predatory pressure on birds. Education about the impact of free-roaming cats could change the behaviors of pet owners and reduce bird mortality.

Do you support the ~~Conservation Congress working with W~~DNR, and other conservation groups ~~to create~~ creating an awareness campaign focused on the ~~dangerous~~ adverse impact outdoor cats have on Wisconsin's wild bird populations?

Additional Information provided by author:
https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/moral-cost-of-cats-180960505/
https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms2380
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/outdoor-cats-kill-between-14-billion-and-37-billion-birds-a-year-study-says/2013/01/31/2504f744-6bbe-11e2-ada0-5ca5fa7ebe79_story.html
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23360987/
https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Loss-and-Marra-2017-Population-impacts-of-free-ranging-domestic-cats-on-mainland-vertebrates.pdf

This resolution had multiple authors. Please see page 2 for author information.

ATTACHMENT 6

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ATTACHMENT 6
(CONTINUED)

Resolution presented by a committee member. Adopted by Environmental Committee (with edit noted below) as a committee resolution to be advanced to the District Leadership Council

A RESOLUTION TO FORBID THE USE OF THE AQUATIC HERBICIDE 2,4D IN ALL AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.

2,4D has been used in an unsuccessful attempt to eliminate nonnative aquatic plants in Wisconsin aquatic ecosystems for decades. This has been an expensive and in general unsuccessful endeavor. A recently completed seven-year study in Ellwood Lake, Florence County Wisconsin (1) has documented the detrimental effect on the plant and animal communities of the lake. Extensive research has documented shifts in adult reproductive capabilities, egg quality degradation, larval mortality and reduced egg hatching percentages of many fish species at various concentrations and formulations of 2,4-D. (1), (2), (3), (5). Complete elimination of Crappie and Pumpkinseed populations were recorded in Ellwood Lake (1). Significant decrease in total Zooplankton populations and Zooplankton community changes have been documented. (1) Zooplankton, being the primary food source for larval and prolarval fish of many species are of utmost importance for successful fish communities

Total elimination of non-native vegetation using approved concentrations and types of 2,4-D has never occurred. Rhizomes and accumulated seeds are not killed by exposure to 2,4-D resulting in reestablishment of undesirable populations post treatment. Hybridization and herbicide tolerance in non-native species is well documented when subjected to long term exposure. (4)

Native plant species express the entire gamut of response from complete elimination to intolerance.

~~Be It Resolved on Saturday, September 30, 2023 the Enviromnental Advisory Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress supports the effort to forbid the use of 2,4-D, Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid in all aquatic ecosystems of the State of Wisconsin.~~

(1) Fish and Zooplankton Community Responses to the Cessation of Long-Term Invasive Eurasian Watermilfoil (Myriophyllum spicatum) Chemical Treatment in a North-Temperate, USA Lake. 6-2022

(2) Effects of 2,4-D application on early life stages of fish. 3-2018

(3) 2,4-D Chemical Fact Sheet, Wisconsin DNR 12-2022

(4) Evaluation of large-scale low-concentration 2,4-D treatments for Eurasian and hybrid watermilfoil control across multiple Wisconsin lakes. 6-2022

(5) Effects of Low, Subchronic exposure of 2,4-D Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid (2,4-D) and Commercial 2,4-D Formulation on Early Life Stages of Flathead Minnows (Pimephalis promelas). 3-2018

Do you support the position of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Environmental Committee to eliminate the use of herbicide, 2,4D in aquatic ecosystems in the state of Wisconsin?

ATTACHMENT 7