

**Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
Thursday, February 15, 2007
DNR Service Center
Plymouth, WI**

Draft Notes –prepared by Bill Horns

Present: Brad Eggold, Steve Hogler, Lee Meyers, Paul Peeters, Pradeep Hirethota, Matt Coffaro, Mark Opgenorth, John Komassa, Randy Schumacher, George Boronow, Mike Donofrio, Bill Horns, Chris Groth

1. Review/revise agenda

2. Review/approve meeting notes from November 13, 2006

3. Brief updates

Time was allowed for short updates and reminders of topics of interest. The following were mentioned.

- Green Bay yellow perch commercial quotas, FH-07-07
 - Mike Donofrio expects analyses and model runs to be completed with a few weeks.
- OTC mass marking project
- Grant funding opportunities
 - Brad Eggold expressed some frustration regarding the grant application process. I will work with Cheryl Goodman to update an earlier guidance document dealing with gifts and grants. In my conversation with Cheryl this morning she stated a) that DOA form 9020 can be prepared concurrently with a grant application (it does not have to be approved by DOA before the grant application goes out), b) that time work-planned for projects can be used as match for related grants, as long as the Regional Fish Supervisor approves and hours are not committed to more than one grant proposal, and c) the package (DOA form 9020 and grant application) will go out from Dennis's shop, so they must arrive here with reasonable time for review.
- Electronic Fish Harvest Reporting System (EFHRS)
- Reports for LMC requested by March 2
 - I was asked to look into the cost of adding color. After talking with the DOA print shop, it appears that we can accommodate 6 to 12 color photographs and/or charts at reasonable cost.
- Great Lakes GIS and Environmental Objectives
 - The Great Lakes GIS web site is: http://www.glfrc.org/glgis/GLGIS_User_Guide.htm
- Brook trout stocking in Fischer Creek
 - Steve Hogler will provide a brief summary of the stocking plans. I will share that with the Lake Michigan Committee
- Pete LeClair's request for trap net rule changes
- Status of request for Green Bay drop net rule changes
- Possible statutes and rules regarding invasive species

4. Work planning

Background. The deadline for filing projects is the day following this meeting. We should review proposals and discuss the process.

Action. Projects were listed by prospective funding source. Brad Eggold will forward the spread sheet to LMFT members.

5. Long-term production planning

Background. I've reduced this to a table that you have seen. I'd like to go over that and make final changes before passing it on to Al Kaas.

Action. We reviewed the table and made several changes. I will provide the final version of the table to Al Kaas and to the LMFT.

6. Net pens

Background. Brad, Sue, and Matt (Mangan) drafted a memo on net pens for LMFT review.

Action. We reviewed the memo. Mike Donofrio will re-work the memo to address issues raised in the discussion. It was thought that the memo did not adequately highlight all concerns. Some of the concerns mentioned were as follows: 1) Feeding fish in a pen may require discharge, DATCP, and/or structure permits. 2) Extended holding and feeding of fish in pens might encourage applications for fish farming in public waters, and establish a precedent for that. 3) Wisconsin streams tend to be flashy, because they are predominantly fed by surface water, and therefore fish held in pens in river mouths could experience lethal changes in water quality and temperature.

7. Salmon redistribution from the Root River

Background. Brad circulated a proposal to re-allocate cohos to enhance returns to the Root. Brad's proposal was to enhance coho stocking in the Root River by reallocating from other locations in both Regions. Specifically, 12% of coho quotas at other locations would be reallocated to the Root, thereby increasing the stocking of yearlings in the Root from 40,600 to 73,653. To accommodate those fish, chinook stocking in the Root would be reduced by a similar number. The rationale was that this would give additional reassurance that our coho egg-taking target will be met in the future. Since the emergence of VHS makes egg transfers from Michigan problematic, it was argued that such steps are needed to increase the likelihood that we will meet our annual egg-taking target. It was further argued that the enhancing stocking in the Root would be more productive than enhancing stocking in the Kewaunee because returns to the weir have been higher there during the past decade. George Boronow requested additional data regarding run times of chinooks and cohos, which has been charted by Jim Thompson and will be forwarded to you. Paul Peeters suggested that any reallocation from NER not be taken proportionately from all stocking locations, but rather that NER make the call about where those fish would be reallocated from. There was no disagreement about that point. Finally, it was suggested that as more cohos are stocked in the Root, an even larger number of chinooks should be reallocated to other SER stocking sites.

Action. The LMFT did not reach consensus on the proposal, but the Policy Committee voted 3-2 in favor of a 12% reallocation from other sites. Because LMFT procedures require a second vote on significant policy questions, I will poll the Policy Committee again next week. .

8. Desired capabilities of the replacement for the Barney

Background. Fisheries has put forward, probably in different contexts, a proposal to replace the Barney Devine and the Hack Noyes, at a cost of \$1.5 million each. At this point, as far as I know, no funding commitments have been made. Because that is a lot of money, it seems to me that it would be a good idea, at some point, to discuss what capabilities we want the new Barney to have.

Action. Not discussed.

9. VHS issues

Background. Now that VHS has been documented in Lake Huron, and is almost certainly already in Lake Michigan, there is a need to clarify the policy and practices of this agency. At least three issues bear discussion: 1) Sucker contracts on Lake Michigan streams. Several discussions have already taken place, including one by the Fisheries Board. 2) Skamania. To minimize the risk of transmitting VHS virus into our hatcheries, we treat eggs with a surface disinfectant. Because Skamania steelhead are held as adults in the hatchery there will be a risk of bringing VHSv into KMSFH. Randy Link has asked if we have a policy to deal with this. 3) Upstream passage on the Kewaunee and Root Rivers. Can and should we try to limit passage in order to protect brook trout in upstream areas from VHS?

Action. The questions were discussed. It was said that the Fisheries Board had established a blue-ribbon committee to address the VHS issue. There was strong support, but not quite consensus for terminating sucker contracts on Lake Michigan. The group was divided on the question of whether all fish should be blocked from upstream passage at the BASF. A decision regarding Skamania is needed by July 1.

10. Selecting a nearshore rainbow trout strain

Background. Steve Fajfer asked for clarification about what nearshore rainbow strain we want to work with in the future. He notes that we have space dedicated in our new broodstock building for these fish. In June of 2006 the LMFT recommended the following: 1) Discontinue Kamloops after 2007 stocking. 2) Do not pursue creation of a captive or feral brood stock. 3) Continue stocking 60K to 120K Arlees each year as long as possible using the present egg source. 4) Do not rear nearshore rainbows at KMSFH, except for starting Arlee eggs.

Action. Not discussed.

11. Fingerling brown trout shortfall

Background. Wild Rose cannot produce all the Wild Rose strain fall fingerling brown trout in the 2007-08 production plan. The shortfall is 28,000 fish. Steve Fajfer has proposed to move 28,000 Wild Rose strain browns (that had been slated for stocking as fingerlings) to the Manitowoc pond, displacing 28,000 St. Croix strain browns. Since the pond had been slated to produce 18,000 yearlings and 10,000 fingerlings, if nothing else is done the results will be a) no net loss of yearlings (18,000 WR strain produced at the pond instead of 18,000 SC strain) and b) a 28,000 net loss of fingerlings (10,000 WR strain produced at the pond instead of 28,000 WR strain produced at the hatchery and 10,000 SC strain produced at the pond). We have a policy of stocking Manitowoc-produced fish in that area. We can ask one of the western hatcheries (St. Croix Falls or Brule) to make up the 28,000 fish shortfall.

Action. The question was referred to Mark Opgenorth and John Komassa, who have already resolved it.

12. Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum membership

Background. We are again at a point of replacing some Forum members whose terms have expired.

Action. No discussion.

13. Whitefish strain analysis

Background. Brian Sloss and students have produced some interesting data about whitefish strains in northern Green Bay.

Action. No discussion.

14. Next meeting date and location

May 15, 2007. Plymouth Service Center.