

SUBJECT: Congress Matters: 2009 Conservation Congress Advisory Question Summary and Annual Convention Report

FOR: MAY 2009 **BOARD MEETING**

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Ed Harvey, Chair, Wisconsin Conservation Congress

SUMMARY:

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress convened for its 75th annual convention on May 7, 8, and 9, 2009, in LaCrosse. The Congress statewide delegation reviewed each of the proposed DNR rule changes, and each of the proposed Congress advisory questions from the 2009 Spring Hearing questionnaire.

There was general support for a majority of the proposals being advanced by the Department. However, the delegation did not concur with the Department's recommendation to advance four proposals: 1) defining partial concealment for waterfowl hunting; 2) establishing an antlerless only deer season at Wildcat Mountain State Park; 3) expanding the use of turkey hunting with dogs; and 4) establishing a 1 p.m. closure for waterfowl hunting at the Lake Mills Wildlife Area in Jefferson County.

The delegation endorsed the statewide votes on the 30 Congress advisory questions that received support statewide. We request that the Department consider these proposals as they begin to prepare their list of proposals for the 2010 Spring Hearings. The Congress also voted to support the Natural Resources Board advisory question pertaining to the establishment of a Youth Conservation Congress. Finally, there were four Congress advisory questions that received significant statewide support in 2008; we request that the Department reconsider these proposals this year.

RECOMMENDATION: Informational

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:

_____/s/
Bureau Director, Mike Lutz

Date 5-19-09

Administrator, n/a

Date

_____/s/
Secretary, Matt Frank

Date 5-19-09

- cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/8
- WCC Exec. Council -LS/8
- Scott Loomans - WM/6
- Joe Hennessy - FH/4
- Mike Staggs - FH/4

- Tom Hauge - WM/6
- Tim Andryk - LS/8
- Laurie Osterndorf - AD/8
- Todd Ambs - AD/8
- Randy Stark - LE/8

- Tom Van Haren - LE/8
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DATE: May 18, 2009
TO: Natural Resources Board
FROM: Ed Harvey, Chair
SUBJECT: Congress Matters: 2009 Conservation Congress Advisory Question Summary and Annual Convention Report

As established by Wisconsin State Statute, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Our mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

In accordance with our purpose and mission I would like to take this opportunity to review the business that was conducted by the congress at our annual meeting. The Wisconsin Conservation Congress convened for its 75th annual convention on May 7, 8, and 9, 2009 in LaCrosse. Our statewide delegation voted on each of the proposed DNR rule changes, and each of the proposed congress advisory questions from the 2009 spring hearings questionnaire (Attachment 1).

DNR Rule Change Proposals

Our 360 delegates from 72 counties reviewed and registered their support or opposition to each of the questions that appeared as Department rule change proposals. This year, at the Spring Hearings, the public voted on a record number of proposals, ninety-one in total.

Fisheries this year presented 27 rule change proposals for public consideration. Fisheries management is planning to advance all but two of their proposals for Board adoption. On May 8, 2009 the Congress voted to support the Department's proposal to advance the 25 proposals that received support at the April 2009 Spring Hearings, and also endorsed the recommendation to not advance questions 24 and 26. The two proposals pertained to Vilas County lakes (Kentuck and the Twin Lakes Chain – Questions 24 and 26 respectively) will not be advanced by the Department for adoption. Their rationale is that there was not support in Vilas County or the surrounding counties for the proposed musky size limit increase or the walleye slot and bag limit proposal.

The Bureau of Wildlife Management presented 28 rule change proposals at this year's Spring Hearings. At our convention the Wildlife Program recommended advancing all but two of those proposals for NRB consideration. Question 37 proposed a registration program for Sharp-tailed grouse. The statewide vote was opposed to this new requirement. The Department did not recommend advancement and the Congress supported that recommendation. Also, question number 50 proposed to eliminate the late archery hunt at Brunet Island State Park. The statewide and local vote in Chippewa County was opposed to the proposal, therefore the Department determined that this proposal should not be advanced for adoption and the Congress concurred with that decision.

While the Congress supported most of the other recommendations from the department, the delegation did not concur with the decision to advance four of the proposed rule changes. Question 28, while supported in 51 counties was not supported by the delegation at the annual convention. There was a lengthy discussion on the floor of the convention. Those speaking in opposition to advancing the proposal sighted confusion and decreased opportunity as the reasons for not advancing the proposal. At the end of a the discussion a vote was taken and the delegation diverted from the vote at the spring hearings and recommended that the department reconsider their position, rework the proposed language and come back with an improved proposal next year.

The delegation also recommended that the department not advance questions 42, 48 or 53. Question 42, extending and expanding the ability to hunt turkeys with dogs was defeated statewide and did not pass in a majority of the counties that voted on the proposal. Therefore, the delegation recommended that the question not be advanced by the department. Question 48 proposed the establishment of an antlerless only deer season at Wildcat Mountain State Park. That proposal passed statewide by 27 votes and passed in 34 counties, while being rejected in 32 counties and there was a tie vote in 6 counties. It was narrowly defeated in Vernon County and narrowly passed in Monroe County to the north. Given the uncertainty of those votes, the delegation voted to not support the department's recommendation to advance the rule. Finally, Question 53 proposed a 1:00 PM closure to the waterfowl season at the Lake Mills Wildlife Area. Statewide the question passed by 16 votes, and was supported in 39 counties (opposed in 31, tied in 2). The proposal also passed in Jefferson County (65 support, 31 opposed). However, the vote on the floor of the convention was to not support advancement. The rationale was that hunter opportunity should not be limited on public land.

NRB and WCC Advisory Questions

The Congress supported the Natural Resources Board advisory question pertaining to the establishment of a youth Conservation Congress. We look forward to working with the Board in the future to lay out the details of the proposal.

There were 35 Congress advisory proposals presented for public comment at this year's Spring Hearings. Thirty of these proposals were approved by the statewide and county votes, and were also recommended for advancement to the Department and Natural Resources Board Consideration. Five proposals were not supported by the public vote, consequently, these five proposals were also not recommended for further consideration by the department, legislature or the Board. These five proposals were: questions 57, pertaining to an earn-a-buck alternative; question 58, proposed restrictions for those hunting turkeys with the aid of a dog; questions 60 and 61 which suggested later and longer muzzleloader deer seasons; and question 63, which proposed the concept of a private land antlerless-only deer hunt.

Other Business

Last year, the Congress advanced four proposals to the Department for consideration that passed by significant margins on the 2008 questionnaire as advisory questions. However, these proposals, despite their support, were not advanced by the department. These proposals were: 1) Creation of an either-sex Junior Gun Deer License tag; 2) Allowing the quartering of deer in the field; 3) Allowing the use of a bow under the authority of a gun deer license; and 4) Allowing the use of colony traps for muskrat and beaver trapping. We would request that the Board direct the department to reconsider these requests at their annual meeting where proposed 2010 Spring Hearing rule changes will be discussed.

Awards

This year the Congress recognized a number of DNR employees for their outstanding service. Randy Jurewicz, Endangered Resources, received an award for his dedication and commitment to the recovery of the trumpeter swan in Wisconsin. His counterpart, Sumner Matteson, was also recognized for part in the recovery of the Trumpeter swan and Osprey in Wisconsin. Fisheries team supervisor, Ron Bruch, received our fisheries award for his contributions to the study and management of Wisconsin's Lake sturgeon. Our warden of the year, Ted Dremel, Waupaca County, was recognized for specifically for his part in investigating the deer killing incident by people on snowmobiles this past winter. We also took time on this special occasion to recognize two Customer Service and Licensing Staff members, Susan Meyer and Sheree Vande Brink for the last 13 years they have assisted with our annual convention.

We also honored our Congress delegate of the year, Lee Fahrney, Iowa County, for his contributions over the past year. We handed our years of service certificate and pins to those delegates who have served the congress for 20, 25, 30 and 35+ years. Dick Koerner, Winnebago County, received a special year of service award for his 43 years of invaluable service to the Congress, our waterfowl and our waterfowl hunters.

The 2009 Statewide Conservation Organization of the Year Award went to the Prairie Enthusiasts. The Outstanding Local Conservation Club was the Willow River Rod and Gun Club, St. Croix County. Club recognized for outstanding achievement by local conservation clubs were Outdoors Forever, Juneau County; the Stanley Sportsman's Club, Chippewa County; and the Jackson County Wildlife Fund. The 2009 Educator of the Year is David Tupa, a school teacher and Congress delegate from Door County.

Officer Elections

On Friday, May 8 our 12 districts elected their 2009-10 Executive Councilors. I would like to thank each of the councilors from 2008-09 that will not be returning this year and also congratulate those that have been reelected. I have included a list of our new Council in this memo for your information (Attachment 2).

Our Executive Committee, including Rich Kirchmeyer, Price County, Congress Secretary, Rob Bohmann, Vice-Chair, and myself were all reelected to serve another year.

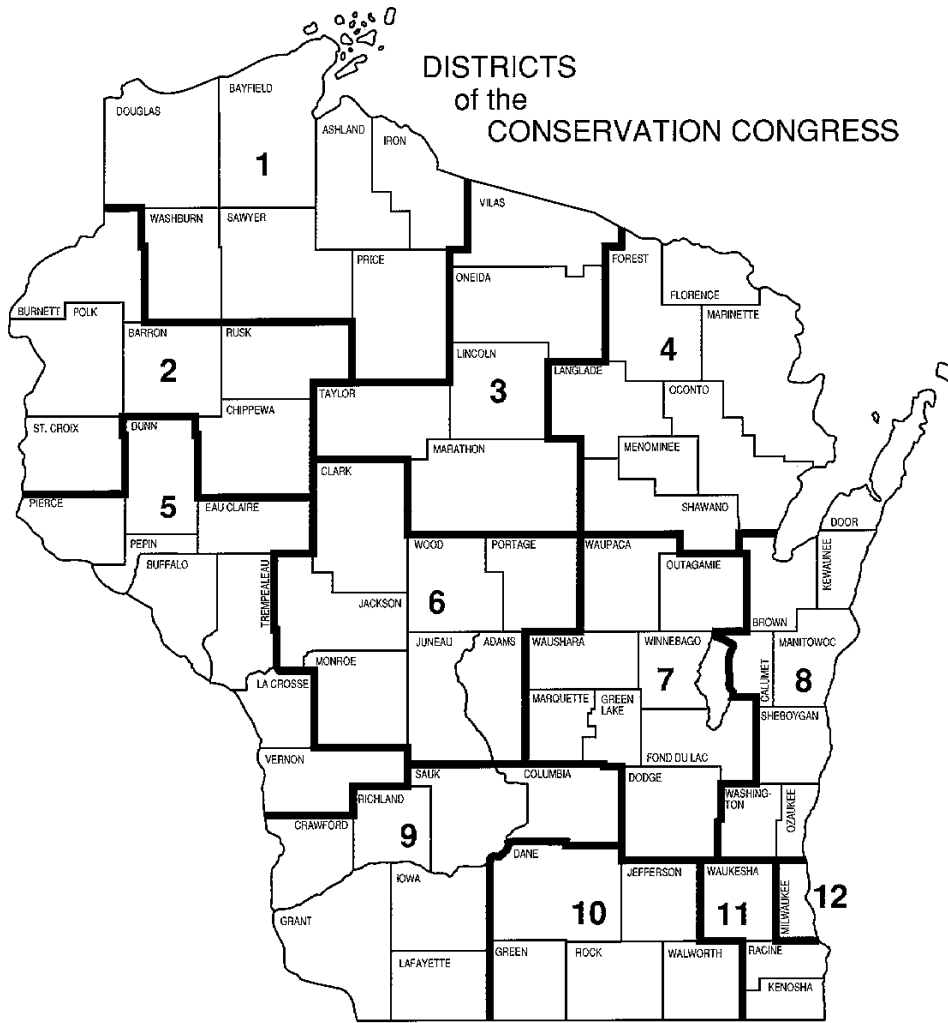
In closing we would like to thank Chair Thomas for her outstanding presentation at our convention, and Board members Duke Welter and Jonathan Ela for attending our meeting. Your involvement and attendance is a testament to your commitment to the role of the Congress as an advisory body to the Natural Resources Board.

Attachment 1. Spring Hearing Results and WCC Positions.

#	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Counties Approving	Counties Rejecting	Counties Tie vote	Counties Not Voting	Congress Recommendation
2009 STATEWIDE ATTENDANCE		7,939							
1	Background checks for angler education programs Part 1	5,960	844	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
2	Background checks for angler education programs Part 2	5,381	1,201	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
3	Lake Winnebago walleye/ sauger bag limit	4,632	1,071	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
4	Minnnows/ VHS rules correction	5,260	781	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
5	Clarifying rules re: use of remote controlled devices for fishing	5,094	1,165	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
6	Eliminate barbless hooks restriction during early trout season	3,379	3,032	Yes	43	27	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
7	Crayfish harvest license requirements	3,552	2,701	Yes	55	16	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
8	Provide clarification for sloughs, bayous and flowages Part 1	4,242	1,179	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
9	Provide clarification for sloughs, bayous and flowages Part 2	4,180	1,113	Yes	71	1	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
10	Mussel harvest	3,036	2,044	Yes	57	14	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
11	Beaver Dam Lake (Barron County) walleye regulations	3,263	1,825	Yes	67	4	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
12	Long Lake (Vilas County) walleye regulations	3,245	1,966	Yes	63	9	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
13	Dead Pike Lake (Vilas County) walleye regulations	3,156	1,930	Yes	64	7	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
14	Walleye Length Limits on Upper Clam (Ashland & Iron counties)	2,633	1,132	Yes	67	4	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
15	Bayfield County trout lakes	2,432	994	Yes	68	3	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
16	Twenty-six Lake bass regulation change	2,414	1,006	Yes	69	3	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
17	Anderson Lake trout regulations	2,139	1,011	Yes	68	2	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
18	Silver Lake northern pike regulations	1,982	1,411	Yes	53	18	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
19	Burrows lake bass regulations	1,862	1,390	Yes	51	18	3	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
20	Wisconsin River walleye regulation	3,010	738	Yes	70	1	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
21	Big Round Lake walleye regulations	2,264	1,070	Yes	62	9	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
22	Manley Creek trout regulations	1,986	1,085	Yes	60	10	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
23	Big Sand Lake and Long Lakes muskellunge regulations	2,296	1,709	Yes	52	18	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
24	Kentuck Lake muskellunge regulation	2,228	1,733	Yes	46	22	4	0	Approve DNR Recom. to NOT Advance
25	White Sand Lake walleye regulation	2,259	1,219	Yes	64	6	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
26	Twin Lakes Chain walleye regulations	2,094	1,411	Yes	57	15	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to NOT Advance
27	Urban pond proposals	2,378	840	Yes	66	5	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
28	Clarify the definition of "open water hunting" for waterfowl	3,133	2,424	Yes	54	17	1	0	NOT Approve the DNR Recom. to Advance
29	Extend the fall turkey season	4,607	2,142	Yes	62	10	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
30	Registration of wild turkeys	5,743	1,051	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
31	Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons Part 1	3,447	1,851	Yes	62	10	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
32	Modify the bobcat hunting and trapping seasons Part 2	3,061	2,071	Yes	58	12	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
33	Clarify the definition of legal firearm types for hunting	3,956	2,156	Yes	63	8	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
34	Issuance of left-over turkey hunting permits	3,639	2,753	Yes	57	14	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
35	Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders Part 1	4,290	1,918	Yes	70	0	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
36	Turkey hunting by disabled permit holders Part 2	4,745	1,426	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
37	Require the registration of harvested sharp-tailed grouse	2,500	3,208	No	20	50	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to NOT Advance
38	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead – 1PM	2,107	2,046	Yes	36	33	3	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
39	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead – Closed Prior to Duck Season	2,086	2,006	Yes	36	32	4	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
40	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead – Townline/Berkhahn	2,280	1,484	Yes	58	9	5	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
41	Special waterfowl hunting regulations at Mead – Rice Lake/Pool 10	2,269	1,505	Yes	57	12	3	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
42	Allow the use of dogs for turkey hunting statewide during the fall season	3,168	3,398	No	33	38	1	0	NOT Approve the DNR Recom. to Advance
43	Allow the harvest hen pheasants at Sand Creek Fishery Area, Monroe County	2,629	1,200	Yes	67	4	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
44	Allow the use of rifles for firearm deer hunting in Dunn County	3,532	836	Yes	71	0	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
45	Eliminate the Nelson-Trevino Mississippi River closed area in Buffalo County	2,969	1,068	Yes	66	5	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance

Attachment 1. Spring Hearing Results and WCC Positions.

#	Question Description	Votes Yes	Votes No	Majority	Counties Approving	Counties Rejecting	Counties Tie vote	Counties Not Voting	Congress Recommendation
46	Allow the use of rifles for firearm deer hunting in Shawano County	3,667	959	Yes	71	0	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
47	Allow firearm deer hunting at Whitefish Dunes state park, Door County	3,464	667	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
48	Establish antlerless-only deer seasons Wildcat Mountain State Park	1,949	1,922	Yes	34	32	6	0	NOT Approve the DNR Recom. to Advance
49	Hunting seasons at Cadiz Spring State Park and Recreation Area	2,805	786	Yes	71	1	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
50	Eliminate the late season archery deer hunt at Brunet Island State Park	1,401	2,965	No	4	68	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to NOT Advance
51	Reduce the size of Dike 17 waterfowl refuge Jackson County	2,625	982	Yes	68	2	2	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
52	Reduce the size of Vernon Marsh waterfowl refuge	3,039	622	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
53	1:00 p.m. closure of migratory bird hunting, Lake Mills Wildlife Area	1,649	1,633	Yes	39	31	2	0	NOT Approve the DNR Recom. to Advance
54	Allow firearm deer hunting at Potawatomi state park, Door County	3,622	622	Yes	72	0	0	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
55	Allow rifles for deer hunting on all of Hartman Creek State Park	3,260	926	Yes	71	0	1	0	Approve DNR Recom. to Advance
56	Youth Conservation Congress	4,377	1,637	Yes	69	3	0	0	Recommend Implementation
57	An EAB Alternative	1,126	5,472	No	0	71	1	0	Reject - No Further Action
58	Turkey Hunting with Dogs Regulations	2,158	3,988	No	5	66	1	0	Reject - No Further Action
59	Buck Fawn Identification Information	5,174	1,369	Yes	71	1	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
60	Later Muzzleloader Deer Seasons – 10 day	2,546	4,174	No	10	61	1	0	Reject - No Further Action
61	Later Muzzleloader Deer Seasons – 16 day	2,432	4,440	No	12	60	0	0	Reject - No Further Action
62	Deer Registration Information	5,772	962	Yes	71	1	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
63	Private Land-only, Antlerless-only Deer Season	2,570	3,933	No	12	58	2	0	Reject - No Further Action
64	Eliminate Earn-A-Buck (EAB) and October Antlerless Deer Hunts	5,513	1,321	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
65	Maximum of Two Consecutive Years Earn-a-Buck	5,112	1,325	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
66	Allow Bow Hunting During the 9-Day Deer Gun Season	4,659	2,270	Yes	69	2	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
67	Magnifying Scopes on Muzzleloaders	4,049	2,606	Yes	62	9	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
68	Prohibit the Shooting of Antlered Deer in the CWD Zone – Shooting Permits	3,602	1,959	Yes	66	5	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
69	Remove Woodchucks from the List of Protected Species	5,532	760	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
70	Treestands on State Lands	4,624	2,103	Yes	69	3	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
71	Statewide Coyote Hunting Season Year Round	5,870	582	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
72	Extend Trap Check Times	3,206	1,793	Yes	65	6	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
73	Bobcat Permit Application Fee Increase	2,843	2,740	Yes	42	30	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
74	Allow Trappers to Use Bait and Lures Prior to the Trapping Season	3,082	2,309	Yes	53	18	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
75	Restrict Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Harvest in Select Grids	3,850	574	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
76	Allow Elderly Persons the Use of All Terrain Vehicles while Hunting	4,421	1,966	Yes	69	3	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
77	Change in the Minimum Age for Sturgeon Spearing	4,081	1,339	Yes	70	2	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
78	Prohibit Legis. Re: Wildlife and Fisheries w/o Hearings/DNR input	5,379	970	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
79	Winter Free Fishing Weekend	5,519	742	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
80	Include 16 & 17 Year Olds in the Youth Hunts	3,294	3,003	Yes	42	26	4	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
81	Increased Youth Opportunity	5,677	894	Yes	72	0	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
82	Day Old Chick Program Requirements	3,365	1,120	Yes	70	1	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
83	Atlatl and Dart – Small Game	3,053	2,455	Yes	46	23	3	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
84	Combine Pheasant and Turkey Stamps	3,008	2,943	Yes	41	30	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
85	Increased Size Limit on Muskellunge, Green Bay and Related Waters	2,480	2,260	Yes	38	32	2	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
86	Creating a Size Limit on Northern Pike in the Waters of Green Bay	2,641	1,736	Yes	52	17	3	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
87	The Great Northwest Bass Restoration Initiative	2,316	1,354	Yes	62	9	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
88	Size Limit on Bass in Washburn County	2,481	1,134	Yes	65	7	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
89	Chippewa Flowage Winter Bag Limit on Crappie	2,745	1,062	Yes	69	0	3	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
90	Manage Smallmouth and Largemouth Bass as Separate Species	3,242	1,448	Yes	68	4	0	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration
91	Walleye Daily Bag Limit Change, Petenwell and Castle Rock Flowages	2,036	1,835	Yes	41	30	1	0	Advance to DNR for Consideration



2009 – 2010 Executive Council

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