

Conservation Congress Trout Committee Meeting Minutes
Best Western Grand Seasons Hotel, Waupaca, Wisconsin
September 12th, 2008

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Reiter.
2. Roll call was taken with Mike Reiter, Dennis Vanden Bloomen, Eugene Altweis, Maurice Amundson, Edgar Anderson, Dennis Haanpaa, Larry Knutson, Todd Oestrich, Arby Linder, Harry Meinking, Todd Roensch and Lyle Vesperman present. **Also present** were Karl Mesman (DNR Warden) and Larry Claggett (DNR Fisheries) **Absent and excused:** Scott Hecker, Roger Roehl, Kirk Olson, Richard Moses, Robert Maass.
3. Members in attendance reviewed the 2008 trout season with the following comments: **Crawford County** - more fishing with good steam flows, and some damage to the West Fork of the Kickapoo, bad flooding in **Crawford County**, **Oneida County** - getting youth involved in outside activities, **Outagamie County** - some storm damage to streams, **Kenosha County** - steelhead issues with the daily bag limits are a concern, **Western WI** - good fishing but have drought conditions, **Trempleau County** - Traverse Valley stream work ongoing, **Iron County** - cold spring with no aquatic insects with high water early and low water late, **Pierce County** - same numbers of fishermen with high number of people from Minnesota, more streams fished including Rush River because of information on the internet, does not seem like local kids are fishing, Rush River Sportsman's Club got a mile on the Rush River donated with good handicapped accessible area, **La Crosse County** - high water early in the season with high usage on well known streams and light fishing on the lesser know streams, we lost the parents so the kids are not being taken fishing, can we get the kids back? Is it the bag limits as 65% of trout die of natural causes with only 15% taken by fishermen? Gas prices are too high to go fishing for 3 trout; **Monroe County** - stream restorations good, see kids on bicycles going out to those areas with some stream work in Sparta. Coulee Region TU DARE got \$250,000 grant to restore streams in the area. **Washara and Waupaca Counties** - opening weekend fewer fisherman, life is too busy with kids involved in many other activities, few youth seen fishing and the DNR Wardens have been looking at the lower involvement as there are more distractions with similarities to bow hunting and hunting.
4. The Trout Committee Mission Statement was introduced by Chair Reiter and modified to the satisfaction of the committee. A motion was made and approved to pass it on to the Executive Council for their endorsement.

5. Old Business

Larry Claggett was asked about cuts to the Trout Stamp budget. Presently he is trying to publish the current Trout Stamp expenditures. Through FY-2006/2007 a slight decrease was shown but well within the range of past fluctuations in trout stamp sales. Sales are down slightly but income has increased because of the increase in trout stamp cost. Patron license sales have been dropping over the last few years. The trout stamp fund doesn't get the full prorated money from patron license sales because a formula is

used by the state that is based on the perceived numbers of people that would actually fish trout.

There is presently no surplus in Trout Stamp money. We are spending past surplus money and none is being carried over.

The increase in fuel plus elevated vehicle use rates and equipment rental has cut sharply into the amount of real work that can be accomplished. With these increase we will go from 25-30 miles of stream restoration a year down to 15 to 20 miles per year.

The various regions of the state get money on an allocated system prioritized on perceived need.

What is the effect of special regulations on trout stamp sales? This question was initiated from southwest Wisconsin. The DNR is trying to gather that information and a draft report had been written. The bottom line is that C&R result in more fish and better quality fish with 95% of the total water open to bait and other methods for catch and keep.

The Trout Committee's barb-less hook question that passed on the 2008 Spring Hearings Questionnaire was approved by Fisheries Management and will possibly appear as a 2009 DNR question.

It was also felt by some members of the trout committee that we should consider some kind of advertising about trout related issues on the internet.

DNR Warden Carl Mesman commented that vehicle rates have increase dramatically. In the past the staff paid a flat rate but now use a per mile rate of \$0.63. Fuel and insurance rates have increase also due to increases in costs for repairs. The DOA will re-examine the rates based on last year's mileage by decreasing 20 % the vehicle miles per month. We will see less presence of Wardens as they try to lump "calls" in one area. This will also cause them to appear less responsive. Hopefully this is a one year issue with funds and a mileage increases approved for next year.

The last warden class graduated 10 and there are at least 20 openings. Attrition leads to fewer wardens. Wardens can retire at age 55 but health insurance costs and concerns are keeping them past 55. If the legislature changes the carry-over of sick leave there may be an increase in retirements.

A motion was made and approved to accept the reports from Larry and Carl.

6. Discussion and Action Items:

Resolutions and recommendations from the 2008 Spring Hearings were addressed.

- a. **110108 Youth Trout Fishing Proposal** – Comments - nightmare for law enforcement; difficult to enforce because it would be different regulations (bag limit) on the same portion of the stream for different fishers; Pittman-Robinson monies may not allow this as it may be deemed a form of discrimination; not all category 5 streams have more restrictive limits; each steam should have its own regulations and not a statewide blanket rule; the issue is there are too many Category 5 stream in that area; this is the same battle as before; work with the fish manager and change the category that will allow for more keep of fish; streams in category 5 are now reviewed every 10 years because of expense; no category 5 in Crawford County. Following a lengthy discussion a motion was made and approved to reject the resolution on a vote of 11 to 1 because the change is not applicable statewide and would cause enforcement problems.

- b. **340308 Wolf River Trout Refuge** - Comments: due to warm water conditions there have been poor stocking results; habitat work for pools is expensive and not that effective with refuge status; there is poor survival of trout in that river because of high water temperature but feeder streams have trout; trout survive by going into the feeder streams; no natural reproduction supported in the main river; this will be a “put & take” river; it is difficult to create a trout only refuge; pooled fish are easier to catch as they congregate. A motion was made and approved to reject this resolution on the basis that it is a local situation and should be worked out with the local fish manager if possible.
- c. **Lead Issue Introduced by Dennis VB** – This resolution will be considered by the Air, Water and Waste Committee in an upcoming meeting this year. Comments: put it out statewide to every county; we need a better explanation for buy back program; for waterfowl big size not a problem; is lead in the water a problem?; more fish die naturally than from lead. A motion was made and approved to table until next year and see what the other committee does with it.
- d. **Waushara County comment:** The White River has a population decline on the Category 5 section due to heavy pressure in the month of June
- e. The Clarification of the daily bag limit on trout stream in the Trout Regulation Booklet was discussed. Clarifications should be made to them.

7. Long Term Trout Management Plan/Other Business/Members Matters:

- a. A list of “Trout Related Issues” had been sent out with our agenda and it was decided for each member to prioritize them. The Delphi Method was described by Dennis VB. The Committee members are asked to select the 5 they consider most important and comment on them. These comments will be tabulated and sent back and forth via e-mail.
- b. Comments: Youth Involvement drop-off is due to non-involvement of parents; the female population should be considered and programs such as “Women in the Outdoors” could get involved; emulate the Archery in the Schools Program; institute a “Take-A-Kid Fishing” weekend statewide and invite the parents; Anglers Legacy Pledge; Angler Education Program description.
- c. A deadline set for October 1st was requested to get the initial comments and suggestions sent in to either Mike or Dennis. They will tabulate and report back to the committee members.
- d. We need to get the results of our discussion to the general public and publicize the other issues of the Trout Committee.
- e. A Fishing Industry Analysis data booklet was distributed by Dennis. He suggested having the committee members read the book entitled “Last Child in the Woods”.
- f. An overview of the upcoming tour scheduled for tomorrow at the Wild Rose Hatchery was discussed.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9: 55.

Respectfully submitted: Dennis Vanden Bloomen - Recorder