

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Legislative Committee was held on Saturday, September 27, 2008 at the MacKenzie Environmental Center, Poynette, Wisconsin.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Meyer.

Committee members present: Jayne Meyer (*chair*), Dustin Grant (*vice-chair*), Ann Marie Kutzke (*secretary*), Bob Chojnowski, Allen Haase, Dave Schwanz, William Howe, John Jones, Harley Kurtz.

Committee members excused: James McCaulley and Jason Veerer.

DNR staff present: Tom Van Haren, Paul Heinen

Others present: Jennifer Giegerich (Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters), Cecil Boyd (resolution author).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Organizational Matters

The mission of the Legislative Committee of the Conservation Congress is to advise the legislature of the official positions of the Congress and to testify to such at legislative hearings and meetings; to review resolutions and legislation in order to advise and recommend positions to the members and leadership of the congress; and to work with the department of natural resources in the development and implementation of wildlife, habitat and conservation legislation and administrative rules. Motion by Howe to approve the mission statement, seconded by Grant. Motion passed unanimously.

Informational Items and Updates

Informational: *Paul Heinen, DNR Legislative Liaison* gave an overview of what took place during the last legislative session. (See handout 2.B.) The DNR is in the process of thinking about what bills will be coming up and the DNR will obtain division proposals in October. They will then provide them to WCC legislative committee members, WCC Executive Council and the NRB in December, furthermore drafting and finding authors for the next legislative session.

The Presidential election and statewide elections in November will be significant as it will determine who controls the senate and legislature which will have an impact on what bills will or will not move forward. If all three houses are democratic it will be a different house than it currently has been in the past.

It is a good time to be back from military service. The legislature was really willing to assist with special preference for veterans. With much effort, the bills related to pier's were finally passed and finalized. The appointment of the DNR Secretary will be a topic that returns during the upcoming legislative session.

In the 2007-09 Legislative Session the following is an overview of noteworthy bills:

Building a new plant to burn biomass, highly looked at. We have to get our carbon output down, major shift going on AFLCIO is already on board. More and more of the state is trying to go to renewable energy. Start up companies are looking at grasses and wood for biofuels and agriculture and forestry are being seen as opportunities.

Youth hunting bill – bag limit license fees/cost ratios.

High capacity wells near townships and lakes will be reviewed. High capacity well bill was very limited and we are now getting pressured by lake associations and towns to deal with wells that are too close to lakes, DNR needs regulatory authority.

There are miscellaneous items that were part of the budget bill for example, ATVs and land owner opportunities for trails; catch and release bass bill is currently being worked on by the DNR to establish a catch release musky season (maybe it will be readdressed next session); shovelnosed sturgeon \$50 permit for commercial on Mississippi river including but not limited to setter bank poles and to file report regarding eggs, caviar, etc. potential miscellaneous fee increase.

Bass tournament regulations are being worked on by M. Staggs and P. Henderson. The rule is now in DNR hands and there is a very small group of bass fisherman that would like to see this bill happen. Culling is the issue, the DNR is not going to allow it and the DNR would have to regulate fishing tournaments and let local government and local people know about the tournament. The biggest complaints about tournament fishing were thousands of cars and what is going on and the fee is really minimal. The DNR is looking into an additional fee and will be entering into negotiations. Warden authority to inspect live wells is a negotiation point as presently wardens do not have specific live well checking authority, fisherman usually consent but without probable cause wardens can't check and bills has the opportunity to look at any fisherman's live well and/or boat during tournaments. Tournament permits can have conditions put on them, which can have the condition of that during the tournament the inspection of live wells shall take place. Tournament permits are more restrictive than what the public typically is under.

Jennifer Giegerich, *Wisconsin Conservation Voters liaison* came to discuss the conservation priorities and to encourage people to show a united front. There are 4 issues: (1) adoption of great lakes compact; (2) clean energy; (3) stewardship; and (4) hunter angler bill of rights.

WLCV held 11 listening sessions – everybody agrees and excitement among citizens who are willing to form a relationship with their representative make calls, emails, letters attend hearings.

There are a number of issues to be brought up, alternative funding issues from the DNR – invasive species across the board – handout.

Motion by Schwantz, seconded by Howe that WCLV and the WCC would support no fishing hunting or trapping rule changes be part of the Wisconsin State budget bill. Motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Howe suggests that if we have desires of dealing with all the conservation issues regarding the State of Wisconsin that we are provided with more information and literature, so the various committees that deal with issues will have the background to make informed decisions.

Discussion and Action Items

Resolution 020108 – Allow the introduction to rule changes allowing a 40% discount in fees for Patron and Sportsman licenses for seniors 65 years of age and older. After much discussion, though this appears to be an incentive to get individuals into the outdoors when presented with the loss of revenue would be devastating to the budget of the DNR. Motion by Schwantz to accept, seconded by Chojnowski. Motion failed 0-9 because of revenue concerns. Motion by Haase, seconded by Chojnowski to reject. Motion passed 9-0.

Resolution 110708 – Allow elderly person the use of all terrain vehicles as a mode of conveyance during hunting. Motion by Kutzke to accept, seconded by Schwantz. Motion failed 0-9 for what the intention of the resolution would and would not allow for. Mr. Boyd agreed to allow for a compromise on the resolution/question to allow for potential department concerns. The following is the proposed question to be submitted to the Executive Council in January: “Would you be in favor of the of seniors 65 years old or older or hunters with a disabled hunting permit have the opportunity to purchase a \$5.00 permit to be able to utilize a ATV or similar vehicle to able to go in and be able to go out to hunt and harvest deer, bear or other big game animals on already established trails (other than gated or sensitive areas) on state land. This would be a DNR rule change to NR 45.” Motion by Grant to accept, seconded by Haase. Motion passed 9-0.

Resolution 150608 – Allow provisions for spousal fishing and hunting licenses at a reduced rate under the conservation patron license. Motion to reject by Haase, seconded by Howe. Motion passed 9-0.

Resolution 200208 – Allow a change in the minimum age for sturgeon spearing from 14 to 12 with the accompaniment of a parent or legal guardian. (See attached) Motion to accept by Kurtz, seconded by Grant. Motion passed 8-1.

Resolution 480408 – Allow a rule to ban legislators from making wildlife management rule changes without first having public hearings and input from the DNR. Motion to accept by Kurtz, seconded by Schwantz. Motion passed 8-1.

Resolution 600708 – Allow bow hunting with a crossbow at age 50. Motion to reject by Kurtz, seconded by Grant. Motion passed to reject 9-0.

Resolution 690108 – Allow hunters age 55 and older to automatically be eligible for crossbow use without medical proof of disability. Motion to reject by Grant, seconded by Chojnowski. Motion passed to reject 9-0.

Resolution 630108 – Allow Earn-A-Buck tag transfer to family members, friends and landowners. Motion to reject by Grant, seconded by Kutzke. Motion passed to reject 9-0.

Resolution 650108 – Allow out of state residents the opportunity to purchase licenses in Wisconsin at the same rate as the state that they reside in if they are a state that Wisconsin has reciprocity with or at least raise Wisconsin fees to a competitive rate. Motion to reject by Haase, seconded by Chojnowski. Motion to reject passed 9-0.

Resolution 680708 – Allow out of state residents the opportunity to purchase licenses in Wisconsin at the same rate as the state that they reside in if they are a state that Wisconsin has reciprocity with or at least raise Wisconsin fees to a competitive rate. Motion to reject by Haase, seconded by Chojnowski. Motion to reject passed 9-0.

Priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session – high capacity wells and youth hunting.

Member Matters

Questions and comments about NR115 regarding shoreline zoning is close in theory but are not in reality. Strong, aggressive negative commentary about tournament fishing rule that the DNR is presently working on to include the impact that it will have on the habitat, fish, costs and the potential impact on local fisheries. Commentary on the high rain falls with respect to soil erosion and the necessity to work with railroads to improve the environment surrounding the railroad beds. Remarks that power plants who wish to come into an area need to have an environmental clean-up plan and continued maintenance with respect to environmental clean up as the taxpayers have been left with the costs of clean up in the past.

Meeting to adjourn by Kurtz, seconded by Haase. Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted – Ann Marie Kutzke