

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Outdoor Heritage Committee Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Outdoor Heritage Committee was held on Saturday, December 20, 2008 at the Schmeekle Reserve Visitor Center in Stevens Point Wisconsin.

The meeting was to be called to order at 10:00 AM, however there were not enough members of the committee present to have a quorum. It was decided at this time to here what information DNR liaisons had prepared for us hoping because of the weather we would have some members coming in late.

Committee members present were: Wade Jeske, Kevin Smaby, Tom Briski, Todd Cook, Jim Johnson, Mark Judd, Brett Weir.

Committee members excused: Lee Fahrney, Scott Bestul, Paula Hermansen, Jay Koenig, Mike Reese, Jim Shurts.

Committee members not excused: Daniel Carroll, Mark Hinz, Kyle Kulow, David Mabie.

DNR staff present: Kurt Thiede, Mary Kay Salway, Tim Lawhern.

Tim Lawhern gave the committee a presentation in place of Jon King who was unable to attend the meeting. The first information presented was on the "Learn to Hunt" update. Information was passed out showing the amount of Learn to Hunt programs and participants . Turkey hunting is the largest usage of this program and also the safest(game comes to hunter). Tim would like to see program expanded to Dove hunting , very safe and low cost. Any time you have game coming to hunter makes muzzle control and other safety concerns easier to achieve. Doves require little land and low cost plantings making it a easier to implement the Learn to Hunt program.

Tim's next information was in regard to Hunter Education program. As most Hunter Ed instructors know there are now new procedures for class paperwork. Tim explained to us why exactly this has happened. The biggest change is the requirement of the student to have a DNR customer number. This is now required because of the computer program intermarriage of the Department to keep records of Hunter Ed and Licenses. Previously these were completely different computer programs and there was no way to share info between them. A few sheets were handed out with current changes and future changes to the Hunter Ed program guidelines. Some instructors are not happy with these changes but these are changes that have to be done as required by the national standards and state standards. By 2010 standardized curriculum with mostly hands on experience, standardized lesson plans, home study, meeting or exceeding IHEA standards. Expansion of advanced hunter ed classes is another wish of the program. Surveys of students, parents, volunteers, and staff is a goal for implementation for 2009. Instructor training records, creating a system that will record hours of training service of volunteers, this is needed to receive national funding for education programs, as the hours need to be documented. State wide conferences every 3 years for all ed programs to get together. New instructor exam will be required and consist of a 100 question test. There will also be a " test out " program available in 2009. This test out program is a directive from the top and no way around it.

Throughout this presentation the reoccurring theme is we need to get the word out and promote our sport to recruit more participants.

Mary Kay Salway was the next DNR presenter with information on Youth Hunts (deer, turkey, waterfowl), Project Wild, Wildlife Ed, and the NASP. Youth hunts this past year were very well used with new hunters getting valuable experiences and harvesting about 4000 deer. The waterfowl youth hunt

is 2 days and between 7000 and 8000 ducks are harvested and an additional 300-500 Canada geese are harvested.

Project Wild has been coordinated by the DNR for 23 years and has trained 32000 educators in this program.

The NASP (National Archery in the Schools Program) is going over really well in the schools but is running into trouble at the Department level. The budget freeze is getting in the way of this program. The Dept. is struggling with a way to find a permanent solution to the continued operation that has grown so much that it now requires a full time position. A January meeting with Secretary Franks is scheduled. There is now 650 trained instructors and about 35,000-50,000 kids learning archery skills in this program! State tournaments have grown each year nearly doubling in size each year and has grown into a 2 day event now!

The Dept. it shows is definitely out trying to get to the public for recruitment.

After hearing the Departments reports we still did not have enough members present for a quorum. At this time Kurt suggested that we have a conference call January 5, 2009 at 7:00 PM to vote on the resolutions that were forwarded to our committee. We all agreed this would be the best plan, but we decided to discuss the resolutions amongst ourselves to be prepared for the conference call and discuss the "mission statement".

Wade Jeske had prepared the following mission statement:

The mission of the Outdoor Heritage Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to explore ways to help recruit new outdoor enthusiasts, both young and old, and to develop and review strategies to retain those groups and individuals who currently participate in outdoor recreation opportunities in Wisconsin. To accomplish these goals the committee will take into account the diversity, demographics and expectations of those using Wisconsin's rich natural resources.

The committee present thought that this was a very fitting mission statement that really explained what the goals and purpose of this committee was all about.

Resolution # 440308 was next discussed. This resolution was for the expansion of Special Youth Hunting opportunities to include 16 and 17 year olds. The discussion on this resolution began with negative issues first.

Negative issues were: no wording in resolution regarding supervision, 16 and 17 year olds are now becoming young adults(should they be grouped as youth), "Learn to Hunt Program could address this issue if first time hunters (no age restriction in that program), risk of other programs if this was abused or injury occurred while unsupervised, landowner permission problems if unsupervised, driving age (are they still considered youth?), waterfowl is regulated by Feds.

Positive issues were: increased and expanded opportunities for 16 and 17 year olds to get hooked on hunting is the biggest positive. Adding into the resolution that the 16 and 17 year olds would have to have adult supervision would be the best way to get this resolution to pass. As a side note the CWD Committee brought this resolution up at their meeting and were in favor of it. Wade will talk to resolution author before conference call to see if author would be OK with supervision aspect to be added. Consensus of committee was that if supervision was added this would be a good proposal.

Next on the agenda was resolution #480108. The author of this resolution would like to see the WDNR institute a free fishing weekend in February like the free weekend in June. Amongst our group we were not able to think of any negatives associated with this resolution. The positives were: opportunities to get more people "hooked" on fishing, would have no impact on license sale decrease (hopefully would

increase license sales), could be a tourism drawing tool, free introduction into sport for young and old alike. Our group's consensus was that this was a good idea, furthermore it was discussed about asking DNR Fisheries to add to their questions on the Spring Hearings to speed this idea along.

Resolution #570108 was the next discussion topic. This resolution wishes to eliminate supervision provision of the Youth Hunt programs for 14 and 15 year olds. The discussion on this resolution centered around the main idea and goals of the youth hunt is the safety of an hand supervision and the emphasis on the hunt not the kill. The idea of the youth hunt is to extend an opportunity to youth to experience the hunt with an adult who is not carrying a gun, but is there teaching and assisting the youth without all the crowdedness and pressures of the regular season framework. As a group we were against this idea but we will see what others have to say at conference call time.

On the agenda next was new business.

The first new business was an idea of Wade Jeske to alter the current framework of the hunter safety program, by allowing "grads" turning 12 during a hunting season to be allowed to hunt from the beginning of the season instead of their birth date. The committee was in agreement of this and Wade will write up a draft of this before the conference call.

Discussion next was on an idea to make turkey permits more available and easier to obtain for youth. For the learn to hunt program as it is now requires a youth and/or adult to apply for a permit (which they may not have any idea of how this works) in December for something happening in the spring. Once a person has gone through this process it is easier to understand but a new person to the sport may not be aware of proper procedures. It was recommended that we share this with the Turkey Committee next year and see what our committee and theirs can come up with together.

The Wall of Fame has been updated and improved with much more attraction with skulls, furs, etc.. to draw people in to see what we are all about.

Conference call will be 1/05/2009 at 7:00 PM
Meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Kevin Smaby secretary of Outdoor Heritage Committee .

**Outdoor Heritage Committee Conf. Call – 7 pm
Monday, January 05, 2009**

Attendance: WADE JESKE, LEE FAHRNEY, SCOTT BESTUL, TOM BRISKI, DANIEL CARROLL, TODD COOK, PAULA HERMANSEN, JIM JOHNSON, JAY KOENIG, KYLE KULOW, DAVID MABIE, JIM SHURTS, BRETT WEIR

Acting Secretary – Kurt Thiede, WDNR

Guest – Rich Kirchmeyer

Excused: Kevin Smaby

Outdoor Heritage Proposed Mission Statement

The mission of the Outdoor Heritage Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to explore ways to help recruit new outdoor enthusiasts, both young and old, and to develop and review strategies to retain those groups and individuals who currently participate in outdoor recreation opportunities in Wisconsin. To accomplish these goals the committee will take into account the diversity, demographics,

social demands and expectations of those using Wisconsin's rich natural resources.

Original Motion to Adopt as written - Shurtz / Fahrney

Motion to Amend to add "Social demands..." - Fahrney/Shurtz

To accomplish these goals the committee will take into account the diversity, demographics, social demands and expectations of those using Wisconsin's rich natural resources.

Vote on amendment – Unanimous

Vote on Original Motion as amended - Unanimous

DNR Informational Items from December 20

Jeske provided a summary of the informational presentations from the 20th

Hunter Education

Archery in Schools Programs and Participation Learn to Hunt Events

- Dan Carroll - Recommend and testified in support of the DNR partnering with an organization to administer the NASP Learn to Hunt Program

Citizen Resolutions:

a. **440308** Extend Youth Hunting Opportunities to 16 and 17 Year Olds

Motion to Support as written - Jim Shurtz / Bret Wier

Discussion -

- Discussed whether an amendment is required to make sure supervision is required to ensure safety
- A Mentor is required under all youth hunts, so an amendment is not needed
- Todd Cook – Youth Waterfowl Hunt could not be included (Federal)
- Jake Henig – Should clarify that a mentor is required
- Jim Johnson – A lot folks are supportive, but supervision needs to be required
- Clarify in the question that supervision is required
- "Take Appropriate Action" – Approval for 16 and 17 years olds to participate in the waterfowl hunt should be requested by the state, and mentorship should be required

Vote – Unanimous

b. **480108** Free Winter Fishing Weekend

Motion to Support as written – Lee Fahrney / Jim Shurtz

Discussion –

- Requires a statute change
- Opportunity to get a large number of kids involved as a boat is not necessary

Vote – Unanimous

c. **570108** Eliminate Supervision for 14 and 15 Year Olds during Youth Hunts

Motion to Reject – Cook/Brett Wier

Discussion -

- For reasons stated previously, the committee felt that there were benefits including safety and access for all participants to include mentorship

Vote – Unanimous

3. Other Business:

a. Allow hunter safety grads turning 12 during the fall to hunt from beginning of a season

Jeske Provided background and rationale for proposal, great opportunity to involve a kid on the opening day phenomenon. Thiede read the question as drafted by Jeske...

Increased Youth Opportunity

The 12-19 year old Hunter Safety graduate is one of our safest groups of hunters according to accident data. Twelve and thirteen year old hunter safety grads must hunt in voice contact with an adult. A pre-twelve year old hunter safety grad must wait until he/she turns 12 during a respective season to begin hunting. This means they lose the excitement of opening day anticipation, preseason scouting and practice with older hunters. In the case of spring turkey this means they lose out on the youth hunt which is held the weekend before opening week. Allowing the pre-twelve youth to begin on opening day if they turn twelve during the season will not only allow them to experience the full excitement of the practice, scouting and opening day anticipation, but in the case of the fall hunts lets them begin when the weather is warmer and the game is the most plentiful. For example, currently our Whitetail Archery season is over 3 months long which means over 25% of our 12 year olds will have a birth date during the season.

Would you favor allowing youth who have attained their hunter safety certification to begin on opening day of their respective hunting season if they turn twelve during the respective season?

Motion to support as written - Bestule / Fahrney

Discussion –

- Shurtz... Might there be criticism that this is a backdoor way to lower hunting age?
- Jeske... may get some criticism, but I think it is justified since the child is turning 12 during that hunting season and hunter safety is required and all 11, 12 and 13 year olds require an adult to be present
- Paula Hermanson – Include all seasons?
- Jeske – Yes, all seasons including small game
- Bestule – Should take reference to scouting out of question. A child can always scout
- Jeske – I agree.
- Fahrney – Could it wait... table, refine it some more, and strengthen
- Shurts – No time... if we want it on the questionnaire this year then we need to get it to the Exec.

Council this week

- Kirchmeyer – Legislatively, there will be efforts to lower the hunting age limit to 10 this session.
- Fahrney – How does that weigh into this discussion?
- Kirchmeyer – This may be a mute point if the legislation goes through
- Jeske – either way, if it goes through (legislation) mute point, if it doesn't go through then we have at least advanced this idea

Vote - Unanimous (w/ removal "scouting" reference)

Lee Fahrney

Feb. 6 – 8, 2008 – Pheasant Forever Festival - \$500 / 10 x 20 booth, ~ 30,000 people, Alliant Energy Center

Friday: 1 – 9

Saturday: 8 – 6

Sunday: 10 – 5

Lee – Set up / Take down, but need more bodies
Volunteers?

Need two people per day – 4 hour shifts

Jim Shurtz – Sat or Sunday

Lee – Sat or Sunday

Kurt – Help Set & Take Down

Jim Johnson – Might be able work, will check schedule

Lee Fahrney will coordinate the schedule - 608-967-2208 call Lee if you can work

Dan Carroll – Admission? We get 6 free passes

Todd Cook – Can work

Kurt will also check with local delegates in Dane County

Dan Carroll – will work an entire day

March Deer and Turkey Expo

Jim Shurtz – Not available...

Work on it down the Rd. – We have a little more time

Members Matters

Rich Kirchmeyer – WCC has a Learn – to – Hunt Bear Tag

- Gave an overview of process & application procedures

Make sure Wade contacts resolution authors to let them know about the fate of their resolutions

Adjourn - Shurts / Lee Fahrney – Unanimous 7:50 pm