

Coldwater Resource Steering Committee Meeting
Grayling DNR Field Office
October 24, 2011

Attendees: Jim Bedford, Dave Borgeson Sr., Jim Bos, Bryan Burroughs, Ray Danders, Jim Dexter, Linn Duling, Dennis Eade, Todd Grischke, Brian Gunderman, Kyle Kruger, Christian LeSage (notes), Terry Lyons, Dean Molnar, Tammy Newcomb, Nick Popoff, Marvin Roberson, Jim Schramm, Jay Wesley, Todd Wills, and Don Wright.

Welcome and Agenda Items

Jim Dexter welcomed everyone to the meeting and discussed the meeting agenda:

- 1) Approve June meeting notes
- 2) Update on Manistee River use survey
- 3) FO-200 and FO-245 updates (Christian LeSage)
 - Johnson Cr. regulation changes
 - CRSC role in regulation review
- 4) Brook trout bag limit discussion
 - MUCC resolution update (Linn Duling)
 - Modeling results (Todd Wills)
 - Next steps in review process
- 5) Steelhead discussion
 - Approaches to understanding Steelhead dynamics (Tammy Newcomb)
 - Future research needs
- 6) Manistee/Muskegon/Au Sable Consumers Energy agreements and Habitat Improvement Account project updates (Kyle K.)
- 7) Demographic and social surveys of anglers
 - License sales report review (Tammy Newcomb)
 - Updates on current efforts
 - DNR collaboration with MN and WI
 - TU collaboration with MSU
- 8) Options for modifying trout stream maps to facilitate identification of “artificials only” versus “flies only” reaches (Christian LeSage)
- 9) Topics for future meetings
- 10) Next CRSC meeting time, date and location

June Meeting Notes:

Bryan Burroughs indicated that he would like some comments added. **[ACTION ITEM] He indicated that he would send his comments to Brian Gunderman and Brian would resend the notes at some point.**

Update: Bryan Burroughs sent his comments. Brian Gunderman added these comments to the June meeting minutes and redistributed the minutes to CRSC members on November 4, 2011.

Update on Manistee River use survey

There was a delay in implementing the surveys. The surveys were not available until September so Marvin R. indicated that “in person” surveys were not going to be used because survey questions were not available in time. As a result, the early anglers were missed during the process. The mail survey

information is not available at this time. The surveys will be sent to users who camped at the facilities last year and the previous year, but not this year. More information will be brought to the next meeting.

Bryan Burroughs informed the group about angler surveys his group's intern has been working on for the Manistee River and Pigeon Rivers. **[ACTION ITEM] Bryan will present information at the next meeting. The surveys will include both campers and anglers.**

FO-200 and FO-245 updates

Christian LeSage briefly summarized the proposed changes to FO-200 for the group. Bryan Burroughs indicated that he had two more letters of support for the removal of Johnson Creek as a Gear Restricted Stream (GRS) to Type 1 regulations. Trout were not surviving in Johnson Creek so GRS regulations were not appropriate. Jim Bedford reported having caught a 16 inch trout in Johnson Creek once. Bryan Burroughs raised the issue about the effects of opening a stream up to year-round fishing and how will that effect the fish population. Bryan indicated that he would like to discuss this issue more at some point.

Christian LeSage summarized the proposed changes to FO-245 for the group. The use of roe is being relaxed and is not required to be placed on a hook. This is in part due to the fact that VHS has not exploded into an epidemic as originally thought or feared. Therefore, we are more comfortable trying to relax things a little.

There is a new fish disease in Michigan called Koi Herpes Virus (KHV) recently found in Kent Lake and Silver Lake. This disease is known to be deadly to common carp and Koi both of which are unlawful to possess live as bait. A discussion ensued about the identification skills of bait dealers. Dean Molnar indicated that the Department is looking into a larger assessment of dealers and the minnow trade at some point.

Brook trout bag limit discussion

MUCC resolution update from Linn Duling – MUCC will hold off on the brook trout bag limit issue due to muskellunge regulation reviews. Therefore, MUCC has not acted on this issue.

Modeling results PowerPoint by Todd Wills. Brook trout recruitment is highly variable and influenced primarily by environmental factors. Bryan Burroughs wants to focus on the number of spawners issue in relation to recruitment over time. A brief summary of the issue was presented to make sure everyone on the committee was informed about this topic. A sport fishing group has brought up the idea of moving to a 10 fish brook trout bag limit for the UP. The NRC has asked Fisheries to look into it. Fisheries is looking at the biological aspect by using survey information to model the effects of the 10 fish bag limit on brook trout populations. Prior to 2000, there used to be a 10 fish bag limit on brook trout. Todd's presentation indicated that there would be no biological problems with moving to a 10 fish bag limit on brook trout for UP streams.

Some discussion ensued about allowing a 10 fish bag limit in LP waters too. Anglers may feel different socially about where this regulation should be enacted. Perhaps, the regulation that makes the most anglers happy should be implemented. Someone mentioned that the Department used to conduct focus groups and UP anglers mentioned they were not happy with the change from a 10 fish bag limit. A discussion ensued about UP angling pressure. Some people indicate

that they see the same number of anglers out there and others note a decline in anglers over time. Burroughs asked whether or not the limit should be 10 or even higher and should that be looked at as well? Jim Bedford asked “What is reasonable?” That is what the Department needs to figure out. Terry Lyons asked what other state’s regulations were and **Tammy Newcomb indicated that she would be able to provide that information [ACTION ITEM]**. Someone raised the issue about stocking larger sized trout and Dave Borgeson Sr. indicated that that practice was stopped in 1965. Tammy Newcomb indicated that trout survival is habitat dependent most likely and how much more staff time do we need to focus on this subject again with our limited staff resources? A landscape approach may be a little better to look at this and rules don’t apply perfectly everywhere. The group indicated that they would like to see more information focused on some brook trout streams. Some indicated that the 10 fish bag limit should not be UP wide. A discussion ensued about fishing a spot out of fish. Jim Dexter indicated that we should take this issue out for public comments. It was noted that many LP anglers fish in the UP, so some public meetings should be held in the LP. Tammy Newcomb asked whether or not the model needs more tweaking and if the model should be focused on how many fish should be the upper limit? Todd Wills brought up the fact that so many people catch less than 5. Socially, put the regulation at 10 and people will only catch so many anyway.

Steelhead Discussion

Some angler groups have indicated that they would like Fisheries to consider reducing Steelhead bag limits either statewide or at various locations. Tammy Newcomb provided a presentation on Steelhead. Tammy indicated that the Huron River/Clinton River steelhead stocking return rate ranges from 2 – 30% generally. The question everyone wants to know is how many adults does it take to get a return of “x” number? Tammy went over the general life cycle of Michigan steelhead and an estimate tool that was developed to estimate steelhead smolt production by stream reach. Tammy indicated anyone could contact her for a copy of the production estimate tool. **[ACTION ITEM] Dexter indicated that we will bring back a summary for this issue to the next meeting (where we are and where we want to be).**

Future coldwater research needs? **[ACTION ITEM] Dave Borgeson Sr. wanted to know how many 8 – 10 inch Steelhead have been aged and sexed during September surveys? How many are maturing?—Todd Wills?**

Manistee/Muskegon/Au Sable Consumers Energy agreements and Habitat Improvement Account project updates

Kyle Kruger summarized the relicensing agreements and provided a presentation on habitat improvement projects funded by the program.

Demographic and social surveys of anglers

Tammy Newcomb summarized the license sales report review for 2010 and pointed out that this was the lowest number of licenses sold since 1980. The 24 – 40 year old group had the largest significant decline compared with the other age groups. Tammy indicated that MI is collaborating with MN and WI on angler surveys.

Bryan Burroughs indicated that TU is collaborating with Frank Lupi (MSU) about an angler survey. The two year project will cost about \$180,000 and will fund a PhD student looking at social/angler issues.

Options for modifying trout stream maps to facilitate identification of “artificials only” versus “flies only” reaches

Christian LeSage informed the group about Kelley Smith’s decision during the Gear Restricted Streams review period that the trout maps will represent all GRS in the same manner with the same color. This was explained that anglers will need to review the regulations in the text portion of the guide and to reduce map complexity, flies only waters will be the same color as artificials only waters. To split both regulation types now, by color, would erase the gains made by combining Types 5, 6, and 7 into one category. That was the tradeoff to which this committee previously agreed. Don Wright indicated that he could not find where he was on the Au Sable River so he wanted to raise the issue to help other anglers like him who may be experiencing the same problem. Some ideas or options presented included adding GPS points or TRS information. **[ACTION ITEM] Fisheries will put together a list of options for the next meeting.**

Bryan Burroughs asked about the printing of the trout maps and wondered whether or not it would make a difference to bring this issue to the Natural Resources Commission? Ray Danders brought up the option of having MUCC or TU print the maps for the groups to make money on and to provide the anglers this information.

Topics for future meetings

- Upper Manistee River angler survey
- Type 4 streams – options for expanding fishing opportunities
- Leader length restrictions – for reducing snagging
- Brook trout daily bag limit expansion
- Steelhead daily bag limit restrictions
- Rationale for seasons?

Future Meeting Dates

The next meeting will be in Lansing or Grayling in the first week in February.