

## Coldwater Resource Steering Committee

May 4, 2016

Jay's Sporting Goods, Clare, Michigan

*Attendees:* Bryan Darland, Jay Wesley, Nicole Watson, Steven Mondrella, Neal Godby (notes), Christian LeSage, Bernie Campos, Bryan Burroughs, John Walters, Linn Duling, Jim Bedford, Jim Bos, Todd Grischke, Jim Schramm, Roger Hinchcliff, Mike Verhamme, Don Wright, Dave Borgeson Sr., Jan-Michael Hessenauer, Jim Francis, Mark Tonello, Scott Heintzleman, Phil Schneeberger, Jim Dexter, Troy Zorn, Bill Ziegler (phone), Steve Hutchins (phone)

### *Welcome and introductions*

Troy Zorn welcomed everyone, and introductions were made.

### *Artificial fly/lure only, year-round fishing – Don Wright.*

Don Wright led the discussion on this topic, looking for an expanded fishing season (year-round) throughout the state, which could perhaps be done by changing some existing Type 1 trout streams into Type 4. The objective would be to provide opportunities for year-round trout fishing that are geographically dispersed throughout the state. As a follow-up to the CRSC discussion of this topic last fall, Troy canvassed the management units to assess management biologists' opinions of the biological effects of past changes to Type 4 regulations and to determine the availability of biodata for assessing such changes. Each of the units responding said they had inadequate data for a robust evaluation of the effects of changing trout stream regulations to Type 4 in their unit, but thought the change had no noticeable biological impact on the stream's trout population. *Action item:* Troy will formally ask management biologists to look at opportunities for increasing year-round stream trout fishing opportunities in their units (if such opportunities are lacking), by changing select Type 1 trout streams to Type 4. He will then bring the list of waters management biologists propose to change to the CRSC for comment. Committee members and others should feel free to send suggested streams to the appropriate management unit for consideration.

### *Inland Trout Management Plan draft – Zorn, Tonello, and Godby*

Troy gave an overview of the report structure, including objectives, trout biology, and regulations. Mark Tonello discussed the section of the plan that covered the status of Michigan's inland trout fisheries, while Neal Godby introduced the sections on habitat concerns, restoration, and partnerships. Comments on the following topics occurred following their presentations:

- Creel data are difficult to gather and often lacking for a number of reasons
- The purpose/goal of the plan came out too strong, suggesting we have a lot more control/influence than we actually do.
- What is background on selection of size limits? Jim Dexter responded it was based on modeling by Rick Clark and Andy Nuhfer. We have a write-up and can provide the reasoning behind them.
- To what degree has hooking mortality been considered in the regulations process? That was included in Clark and Nuhfer's modeling.
- Wants to see discussion of balance between biology and social considerations within the management plan.

- Concern about complexity of regulations, and desire for simplification. Dexter responded that we are working towards a mobile platform app to make regulations easier to interpret. He noted that the current Natural Resources Commission has been accepting of additional regulations.
- Inland trout fishing guides – important component, but difficult to know how many there actually are. On-foot guides do not require permits; guides are most prevalent on waters that accommodate drift boats. Some conflicts have been associated with guiding activities. Guide numbers are increasing, with the number of guides approximately doubling in the last 6 years. There is legislation pending that increases regulation of all guides, and would require annual permitting.
- It's good to have control over guides and information from them, but regulations are not needed to limit the number of guides. Guides help provide fishing opportunities and introduce new people to fishing.
- Suggestions to include discussion of the following items in the plan:
  - Drains: issues, hydrology, collaborations, partnerships
  - Angler education, communication as division, recruitment/retention
  - Riparian vegetation management, impact of managing for mature forests near streams
  - Invasive species

The above topics were largely included in the written report, but not in the oral presentations given. The draft plan will be distributed for CRSC review in early summer.

#### *TU's thoughts on Fishing Regulations Approach (Bryan Burroughs)*

Bryan Burroughs gave several different definitions of fisheries management, and indicated that identifying objectives is a critical step. Social science is also important, and the fishery and objectives should be fair and equitable. Management should be directed at things we can control, specifically habitat and regulations. Socio-economic science is important so we know what benefits to manage for. Bryan suggested that modeling tools should be used to overlay biology and social science. For the Inland Trout Management Plan, Bryan stated we must define our objectives; set forth a plan to achieve those objectives; and it needs to happen over the next two years in advance of a potential license increase.

The following comments were made during the discussion period:

- More time should be spent on habitat rather than regulations; one regulation can accomplish multiple objectives.
- Regulations are not always biologically driven, often socially driven.
- We should increase opportunity for every angler. Need to increase participation in the sport.

#### *Roundtable updates*

- Jay Wesley: Lake Michigan is going through a management planning process, will be developing focus groups. Asking for recommendations/suggestions for participants in focus groups for the plan.
- Nicole Watson: Need to be cautious using live bait.

- Steven Mondrella: Trout opener was amazing on the Hersey. Well over a dozen fish caught over 20 inches. Interested to see variation in effort around the state. Few anglers on the Little Manistee River.
- Bernie Campos: Only been out once, but caught a 21" brown below Mio.
- Bryan Burroughs: Glad the net pen issue was resolved, appreciates state efforts. Out on the Pine on trout opener, lots of effort (more than he's ever seen).
- John Walters. Did not see anything on Aquatic Invasive Species, which should be included in next draft [This was addressed in the report, but not the presentations]. Sympathizes with Fisheries Division, dealing with a dissatisfied group that doesn't fish enough.
- Linn Duling. Comment: The Inland Trout plan should have priorities over a time period you can report back on. It's not a plan, it's an overview of FD philosophy, not a plan of what each unit is going to do in the short term. Dexter clarified that this is more of a vision document.
- Jim Bedford: Passion for resident trout and anadromous fish. Loves river fishing. Yesterday was an ideal day in which he covered miles of the Rifle River, and had some of his best catches of resident brown trout, plus a few steelhead.
- Jim Bos: New Zealand mudsnail found in Pere Marquette last year, curious how fast it will spread, what the final impact will be.
- Todd Grischke: Welcomed as new assistant fish chief.
- Jim Schramm: Happy with fishing in Michigan.
- Roger Hinchcliff: Steelhead fishing in Michigan is world class. Thanks for the great fishing. Regarding the net pen forum, he does not think the issue is over.
- Don Wright. Not against the idea of research (Hunt Creek), and thinks we need to remain open to trying new things and doing experiments (fishing regs, etc.).
- Dave Borgeson: Happy with fishing in Michigan. Happy with dam removal projects, and is glad that habitat concerns are a priority. Would like to see a study of impacts of reforestation on fish populations and groundwater yield.
- Jan-Michael Hessenaur. Glad to be here, and working on Fish Division's Status and Trends Program
- Mike Verhamme: Bay de Noc Fishing Group. Goal of CRSC group should be how to get people interested in fishing. Promoting the positive psychological impact of going fishing should be considered. He's been fishing 50 years at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Says guides are helping by introducing people to the sport.
- Mark Tonello: Living the dream.
- Scott Heintzleman: Today is the final day of steelhead egg take at the Little Manistee River Weir.
- Troy Zorn: Enjoyed his hour of trout fishing yesterday on the Tobacco River.
- Jim Dexter:
  - Just finished marking Chinook salmon, for the first time ever we are short of fish. We ended up about 60,000 fish short of goal. No fish will be stocked in the Boardman, and 15,000 less will be stocked in Cheboygan. [Note: Although it was announced at the CRSC meeting that no Chinook salmon would be stocked at the Boardman, slight reductions in Chinook salmon plants at three Lake Superior sites

will allow 30,000 Chinooks to be at the Boardman] All steelhead in the future will be received coded wire tags and adipose fin clips.

- Hatchery proposal: Governor's proposal included ~\$12M in hatchery upgrades to the Little Manistee River Weir, Thompson State Fish Hatchery, and a coolwater facility at Thompson. The budget request is still in process, but looks good. The Fisheries Division proposal was the only state agency capital outlay project that has been included.
- Fisheries Order 200 will be discussed at the Natural Resources Commission meeting on May 12 in regards to the chumming issue. Options will be: no change, banning use on Type 3 rivers, or banning the use on all Type 1-4 rivers.

*Inland Trout Management Plan- New initiative: potential reintroduction of Arctic Grayling. – Jim Dexter.*

Fisheries Division is interested conducting management experiments to inform future efforts to reintroduce Arctic grayling to Michigan. We think another reintroduction attempt is worthwhile given increases in our understanding of Michigan rivers, improvements in grayling rearing techniques, and recent successes with grayling reintroduction in Montana rivers, including some with resident populations of brook trout and brown trout. We are looking to partner with other organizations for the process, and think this will be an exciting project. We will be looking to initially partner with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians who have expressed significant interest in grayling and have been conducted research on the species for several years. We will then seek to expand the initiative by seeking other partners such as universities, non-profits and other agencies. The initial focus of this experimental effort will likely be the Manistee River watershed, and we hope get started with experimental reintroductions in 2019 or sooner.

Another focus from the ITMP is additional emphasis on wild trout, and reducing the number of fish we stock in streams where there is natural reproduction. This could mean revisiting stocking guidelines and reallocate stocking locations. The intent is to emphasize wild fisheries, and judiciously use hatchery fish.

Next meeting date: September 28, Jay's Sporting Goods **in Gaylord.**