STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: September 14, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Subject: Fisheries Order 212.16
Fishing Regulations – Sylvania Wilderness Area, Ottawa National Forest, Gogebic County
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to regulate the taking of fish in the waters of this state.

Discussion and Background:

This Order governs fishing regulations on waters within the Sylvania Wilderness and Recreation Area (SWRA) in the Ottawa National Forest in Gogebic County, located near Watersmeet, Michigan. The SWRA is a popular destination located in the Upper Peninsula comprised of over 18,300 acres of protected area with over 30 fishable lakes in a natural setting. Lakes within the boundaries of the SWRA are only accessible by shore angling or with non-motorized watercraft. The landscape includes old-growth forests and lies between the Lake Superior and Mississippi River basins with a unique topography as most of the lakes are land-locked and higher than 1,700 feet above sea-level. As a result, the lakes are all spring fed with low nutrient levels exhibiting low productivity. High use areas like this require more restrictive fishing regulations to protect fishery resources from overharvest. The current restrictive regulations protect fish with higher minimum size limits and reduced possession limits on Lake Trout (30 inches), Walleye (20 inches), and Northern Pike (30 inches) with one allowed per day for each. There is no possession of bass and possession of other species is limited to 10 singly or in combination per day. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used for fishing and the fishing and possession season is from the last Saturday in April - October 31. The current regulations have been in place for years and managers and anglers are supportive of maintaining the regulations. This Order is up for renewal with a recommendation to renew as written.

Issue Pros and Cons
Renewal of the Order will result in maintaining protection of this popular resource to be experienced by many. There are no cons associated with this.

Biological
High use areas like the SWRA require more restrictive fishing regulations to maintain a quality angling experience. Higher minimum size limits and reduced possession limits allow for greater protection of the resource while allowing limited harvest for a meal. Artificial lures with barbless hooks and a shorter fishing season also adds protection to the resource.

Social
People travel to this popular destination to experience a different type of recreational opportunity. Wilderness areas are managed under more restrictive regulations, which benefit those who prefer a more

natural setting. Anglers are supportive of restrictive fishing regulations set in place to protect limited resources.

Economic
The Department does not expect the proposed renewal of the Order to have any significant budgetary or personnel implications.

Recommendation:

This Order is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appears on the Department's September 2015 calendar and may be eligible for approval on November 5, 2015.

James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division

Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief for
Wildlife Division

for ~~Bill O~~'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division

for Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

FISHERIES ORDER

Fishing Regulations – Sylvania Wilderness Area, Ottawa National Forest, Gogebic County
Order 212.16

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Department of Natural Resources by Part 487 of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.48701 to 324.48740, it is ordered on November 5, 2015, the following section(s) of the Fisheries Order shall read as follows:

It shall be unlawful to take fish in any manner from the special provision lakes in the Sylvania area of the Ottawa National Forest in Sections 1 through 36, T44N, R40W, and Sections 31, 32 and 34, T45N, R40W, Gogebic County, except as follows:

1. Seasons

   Statewide seasons apply on all fish species except that no fishing shall be allowed before the last Saturday in April or after October 31 of each year.

2. Size Limits

   a. Lake Trout, not less than 30 inches.
   b. Walleye, not less than 20 inches.
   c. Northern Pike not less than 30 inches.
   d. All other species, no size limit unless otherwise regulated.

3. Daily Possession Limit

   a. Northern Pike, Walleye, Lake Trout, not more than 1 fish of any of these species.
   b. All other species, 10 singly or in any combination of species unless otherwise regulated.
   c. Largemouth or Smallmouth Bass must be returned immediately to the water without injury. Possession of any bass, regardless of where taken is prohibited on the special provision lakes of the Sylvania area.

4. Method of Take

   a. Hook-and-line fishing only.
   b. Only artificial lures with barbless hooks may be used for fishing. "Artificial lure" for the purpose of this Order means any lure that is man-made, in imitation of or as a substitute for natural bait, used to attract fish for the purpose of taking them, and shall include artificial flies.
   c. Live bait, dead or preserved bait, organic or processed food or scented material may not be used or possessed at any time on the waters or shore of special provision Sylvania Lakes (listed below).

5. Special Provision Lakes

   All species of fish may be taken subject to the provisions of this Order in Banks, East Bear, West Bear, Clark, Corey, Cub, Deer Island, Dorothy, Elsie, Fisher, Florence, Germain, Glimmerglass, Golden Silence, Hay, Helen, High, Honey, Katherine, Kerr, Jay, Johnston Springs, Liluis, Lois, Loon, Louise, Marsh, Moss, Mountain, Snap Jack, Trapper and Whitefish lakes.

This Order shall be assigned number FO-212.16, and is entitled "Fishing Regulations - Sylvania Wilderness Area, Ottawa National Forest, Gogebic County."

This Order supersedes the order entitled "Fishing Regulations - Sylvania Wilderness Area, Ottawa National Forest, Gogebic County," effective April 1, 2011, and assigned number FO-212.11.

This Order shall take effect on April 1, 2016 and shall remain in effect until amended/rescinded.

Issued on this 5th day of November, 2015.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

John Matonich, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh
Director