



Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee Meeting  
Chocolay Township Fire Hall Training Room  
April 6, 2016  
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees:

Attendees for the April 6, 2016 meeting are identified on Attachment #1.

Agenda:

See Attachment #2.

Minutes:

Meeting minutes were recorded by George Madison. The minutes of each Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee (LSCFAC) meeting are posted on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website ([http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-65134\\_65139\\_65169---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-65134_65139_65169---,00.html)).

Intro:

Along with Chair Mylan Koski, attendees introduced themselves and mentioned the stakeholder group or sportfishing club they represent. Phil Schneeberger provided handouts of the 2016 meeting agenda, along with the 2015 meeting minutes.

Committee Business:

Approval of the April, 2015 meeting minutes was supported by all.

Appreciation was extended to members for attending this meeting, particularly because a heavy snowstorm had caused poor winter driving conditions and many members had to drive significant distances to attend. Growing attendance at these meetings necessitated moving the venue from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Marquette Customer Service Center to the Chocolay Township Fire Hall, which has a larger seating capacity. It was noted that various stakeholder groups were absent from this meeting, including representatives from Native American Tribes, commercial fishers, and universities. Possibly the poor driving conditions made it difficult for some people to make it to this particular meeting. In any case, efforts will continue to encourage and recruit active representation from as broad a spectrum of stakeholders as possible.

It was recognized from previous meetings that having the roundtable discussion moved to the start of the meeting allows for better awareness of common topics and/or themes that would warrant a more in-depth focus during the rest of the meeting. Other items on the agenda were also rearranged to better fit attendee schedules. Therefore, minutes for agenda items at this meeting are presented in the order they were discussed.

### New Members to LSCFAC:

The committee welcomed new members or first-time meeting attendees Tim Gasperich, Rodney Markham, Travis White, and Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Conservation Officers Steven Amsler and Matt Kniskern.

### Roundtable Stakeholder Summary:

Attendees highlighted activities and achievements during the past year for the groups they represented; they also expressed any fisheries management concerns or questions to the rest of the committee. The following is a brief summary of each stakeholder's comments:

South Shore Fishing Association (SSFA) is involved with more than just fishing tournaments, it is also actively engaged in community activities. They host an annual kids' fishing day (this year's event will be held on June 18, 2016), where each youth receives a fishing pole along with mentor instruction on casting and retrieving fish. The event is held at a pond where bluegills have been stocked prior to the fishing day. The group is also active in supporting military veterans through golf outings and an annual Veterans Day fishing event. For the Veterans Day event, military veterans are taken out for a day of fishing on Lake Superior followed by a parade and a dinner banquet. Between 70 and 80 people are involved or participate. This group also hosts various fishing tournaments through the summer and a fall tournament which this year will be coordinated with Munising, and with Baraga and Manistique the following year. Additionally the SSFA oversees a Chinook salmon net pen imprinting program each spring with four net pens operated in Marquette's lower Dead River.

Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance (UPSA) is an advocacy group for member clubs and serves as a voice for hunting and fishing issues. UPSA would like to see a new walleye rearing pond be developed. They also desire returning the northern pike minimum size limit regulation to 20 inches, down from the current 24-inch MSL, and with a five pike daily bag limit. The group would also like to see more fish stocked. UPSA is opposed to Great Lake commercial aquaculture net penning, and they would like cormorant control in northern Lake Michigan to continue.

Isle Royale Boater's Association (IRBA) has ~300 members. They have gone to court over the National Park Service's management plan which calls for removing docks on the island. They would like to see an increased daily possession limit for lake trout of 5 fish from the current 3 fish rule. IRBA members feel that there is very low fishing pressure around the island compared to the past and with the lengthy trip required to get to the island combined with boat fuel costs, the desire is to see an increased opportunity for possession of lake trout.

Copper Country Walleye Association (CCWA) has been in existence for 5 years. This group hosts a Chassell VFW fishing tournament in February, a young angler program in July, and an annual member's tournament. CCWA would like a new walleye sportfishing regulation for the Portage/Torch system whereby anglers could only keep one walleye 25 inches or larger within their daily 5-fish possession limit. The intent would be to reduce the number of large walleyes removed from the system. Additionally CCWA would like to see a stocking of muskellunge in the Portage waterway.

Black River Harbor Boating Club (BRHBC) members operate an annual Chinook net-pen imprinting program each spring. They also host fishing tournaments and donate to local charities. The group has had good lake trout fishing, but they have concerns about the cessation of brown trout stocking at this site. BRHBC sees a need for habitat improvements to improve fish spawning. They report that they like the new Lake Gogebic walleye sportfishing regulations (allowing the possession of two walleye of 13-15 inches as part of the daily five-fish possession limit of walleye 15 inches and larger).

Keweenaw Splake Angers, are appreciative of splake stocking at Copper Harbor and would like to see fish cribs put into Copper Harbor to hold more baitfish in the bay.

Central Upper Peninsula Sport Fishing Association (CUPSFA) has been representing Marquette area fishing interests for over 30 years. Club members are aging and are not able to do field work projects like they were able to do many years ago. CUPSFA works to promote barrier-free access to waters, they work with kids fishing events, they help with Free Fishing Weekend, and they worked hard to see the new access site acquired and built at Lake Angeline. The group's current focus is on promoting the building of a boat access site to Lake Superior at the Michigan DNR Little Presque Isle Natural Area located just north of Marquette.

Copper Country Chapter Trout Unlimited has about 120 members. They received funding for the new Pilgrim River watershed land easement which will protect 1,300 acres of river-front land from future development. This chapter of Trout Unlimited works with brook trout habitat projects and is planning a May 7<sup>th</sup> flyfishing day/school at the Porcupine Mountains State Park.

Fred Waara Chapter Trout Unlimited is a group of approximately 300 members. This group has been working on a fish passage project to the upper West Branch Escanaba River opening fish passage to Schwartz Creek. They are celebrating a land purchase along the Yellow Dog River for use as a community forest. This chapter of Trout Unlimited sponsors a Salmon in the Classroom program for seven area schools. The group meets every other month and their member's banquet is planned for April 23, 2016.

Michigan Sea Grant is working with the bait industry on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) bio-security and Asian carp identification training. The bait industry will conduct concentrated AIS testing in Saginaw Bay this year because Saginaw Bay is where 80% of Michigan's live bait minnows are harvested. There was discussion on surveillance of fathead minnow and golden shiner imports. Lastly, information/perspective was given regarding Great Lakes commercial aquaculture net-pen rearing processes and the pathways of transport and/or uptake of phosphorous outputs from these net pens.

The Alger County Fish and Game Sports Alliance has been in existence for 14 years; its membership has not increased and is mostly older guys. They are working to get the final construction completed on the Munising Bay/Anna River mouth fishing pier. The final work here will include a kayak launch and vault toilets. The group is looking at sites for a possible boat launch near the town of Christmas. Recent sport fishing has been good in Munising Bay for splake, whitefish, and some coho salmon, however they say that Chinook salmon fishing has been poor. There are concerns about the number of gill nets being fished in the bay, and the

Alliance would like to see a removal of gill nets in Munising Bay when the 1836 Tribal Great Lakes Consent Decree is re-negotiated.

#### Tribal Commercial Fishing along Keweenaw Shoreline:

Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) law enforcement officers presented information on their roles overseeing tribal netting as well as addressing ghost nets, net marking, and all aspects of commercial fishing operating in compliance with tribal law. There has been an increased level of tribal commercial fisheries in Lake Superior waters in the 1842 Treaty waters. Some of the sport group representatives at this meeting expressed conflicts with fishing gear and nets when there is an increase of netting effort and/or if nets are poorly marked. GLIFWC officers stressed the importance of reporting problem net locations to help the officers find the problem nets when they address a complaint.

#### Michigan DNR Great Lakes Enforcement Unit Update:

Michigan DNR Law Enforcement Division's Great Lakes Enforcement Unit gave a summary of the unit's activities during 2015. Meeting attendees were presented with a staffing update which, similar to past years, shows that the Great Lakes Enforcement Unit still has critical staff shortages for adequately covering all of the netting and marine undertakings that occur in their patrol jurisdictions. Staff in this enforcement unit provide maritime security at numerous events and festivals. They conduct commercial fishery oversight in 1836 and 1842 Treaty waters and enforce state commercial and recreational regulations as well. An overview was presented of some of the more notable law violations that occurred in 2015, including wholesale fish dealer inspections, Bays de Noc tribal violations, spear fishing infractions, gill net cases, and cases of commercial fishing laws in Northern Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. Other duties of this unit include AIS surveillance, including a case in which an angler posted a photograph of himself holding a snakehead fish that he reported having caught in Michigan. However, it was later found that the fish had been caught in Florida and the man was trying to pull a prank by alleging he caught it in Michigan. Continuing AIS cases include tracking of blue crayfish in the domestic pet industry, reviewing fish importations, and investigating red swamp crayfish at Lake Macatawa. DNR Law Enforcement Division is working to recruit and train new law officers with 44 conservation officers hired in 2015, and an Academy currently in process with 17 candidates enrolled out of the 24 individuals who started.

#### 2016 Fish Stocking Prescriptions:

Handouts were provided that summarized prescribed fish stocking sites and allocation levels for waters within the Lake Superior basin. There were general questions about particular lakes, species allocations with respect to rainbow trout and brown trout, and a request for muskellunge to be stocked into Houghton County's Portage Lake (editor's note, Michigan does not have a Lake Superior strain of muskellunge for stocking, so there are no current plans to allocate Lake St. Claire muskellunge to the Portage waterway).

#### Aquaculture in the Great Lakes:

A comprehensive review of Great Lakes commercial aquaculture net-pen rearing proposals was conducted by the Michigan Quality of Life departments (Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and Michigan Department of

Agriculture and Rural Development). There was group discussion about commercial aquaculture net-pen rearing and some of the perceptions and/or misconceptions of the impacts of aquaculture facilities to Great Lake waters and ecosystems. Additional discussion focused on the potential for pen rearing lake whitefish, as opposed or in addition to rainbow trout, for commercial markets.

#### Lake Trout Harvest Quantity and Size Limits on Lake Superior:

This agenda item addressed a request for consideration of a five-fish daily possession limit of sport-caught lake trout in the waters surrounding Isle Royale, along with a retraction of the current 1-over-34 inch size rule for lake trout. Comments were voiced that fishing pressure has diminished in the waters around Isle Royale over the past number of years and it is perceived that these waters could handle a larger daily possession limit without threatening the lake trout population. There was discussion about simplifying the Lake Superior lake trout regulations by having standardized common regulations for all Michigan waters. It was noted that prey-fish abundance were near an all-time low, so liberalizing the lake trout regulations to allow a five-fish daily bag limit could be a consideration for Isle Royale and possibly all of Michigan's Lake Superior waters.

#### Splake Stocking Site Evaluation:

Meeting attendees were presented with results from an evaluation of criteria developed to assess the relative success of existing splake stocking locations in Lake Superior. Other criteria will be used to assess new potential stocking sites. Splake provide a popular sport fishery at Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Bay, and Munising. At Marquette, however, despite annual allocations of 25,000 yearling splake, the number of splake caught is very low. Based on the assessment, splake stocking at Marquette will take place in 2016 but will be discontinued thereafter.

#### Chinook Salmon Fin-Clip Returns:

The State of Michigan and Ontario are the only agencies that currently stock Chinook salmon into Lake Superior. A sport fishing organization in Ontario's Thunder Bay region stocks ~120,000 Chinook annually. Minnesota and Wisconsin have discontinued Chinook salmon stocking due to sport fisheries sustained by wild fish. Beginning in 2012, all of the Chinook stocked into Michigan waters of Lake Superior (~400,000 annually; ~1.5 million to date) have received adipose fin clips via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mass-marking program. This has made it easy to distinguish between wild Chinook and those of hatchery origin. Analysis of creel data shows that more than 99% of the Chinook salmon caught in Michigan waters of Lake Superior are wild. Through this assessment, it has been determined that the Chinook salmon fishery is consistent and self-sustaining without need for further stocking in future years.

Meeting attendees had questions about how the reduction or cessation of Chinook stocking might affect other stocking programs, and whether there'd be a redistribution of hatchery funds for other programs or species. Answers to questions such as these will be investigated and discussed with stakeholder input in the near future. Another question was about whether Chinook of hatchery origin are important to spawning runs even if they are not contributing to recreational fisheries. However, clipped fish have not been documented in spawning runs and all indications are that the population is almost completely composed of and sustained by wild fish. There was additional concern of a possible collapse of the Chinook fishery, though it was pointed out that

Lake Superior stocking of coho salmon ceased almost 10 years ago and the current angler catch rates are similar to or better than catch rates during stocked years.

#### Fisheries Division Update:

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder included \$12 million in his 2016 state budget for proposed upgrades to the Little Manistee steelhead egg-take weir along with upgrades to the Thompson State Fish Hatchery. The Little Manistee weir is over 45 years old and is crumbling. It is the only steelhead egg-take collection facility for the state. Improvements at the Thompson Hatchery will allow for increased production of steelhead and walleyes, with plans to refurbish eight lined rearing ponds from the former holding ponds located north of Highway US-2. Four of these ponds will be used for walleye rearing and four will be used for muskellunge rearing. It is expected that these ponds will allow for the annual production of 250,000 walleye fingerlings.

While the budget recommendation is listed as a line item in the state budget, it still needs legislative approval. Support for this funding would be most beneficial if it came from hunting and fishing stakeholder groups.

#### 2020 Negotiation Consent Decree for 1836 Great Lakes waters:

Planning is underway for upcoming re-negotiation of the 2000 Consent Decree for 1836 Treaty waters which expires in 2020. Comments have been gathered from stakeholders and a subgroup of staff from Fisheries Division and Law Enforcement Division has been developed to begin to address issues. Michigan DNR anticipates entering into structured discussions with 1836 Tribes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2017. The Great Lakes Sport Fishing Association of Escanaba will work in an *amicus curiae* role and is asking for assistance with costs associated with this legal status. In other tribal-related matters, Michigan DNR is working with GLIFWC to increase communication among biologists on subjects of mutual management concern in 1842 Treaty waters.

#### Fisheries Division Mini-Grants:

At the 2015 Fisheries Division in-service training, a silent auction was held to raise money for mini-grants that will assist qualified non-profits who support fishing-related activities or purchase fishing equipment. Grant recipients could include local community groups, sportsmen clubs, public libraries, schools, youth-focused organizations or conservation groups. The deadline for submission for this year's grant program is May 2, 2016.

#### Recognition Awards:

Award recognition was presented to both Steve Scott and Doug Moyle for their outstanding contributions to the LSCFAC over the years. Steve Scott will be retiring after 29 years of service in Fisheries Division and Doug Moyle will be stepping down from the committee. Both of these gentlemen have provided significant contributions to the Department and to Michigan's natural resources.

#### Lake Superior National Marine Sanctuary Proposal:

A brief description was provided regarding a proposal to develop a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Keweenaw National Marine Sanctuary in Lake Superior. The sanctuary would encompass portions of the lake from the Keweenaw Peninsula northward to

Isle Royale. This proposal is in its initial stages of development and many of the facts of the proposal are unknown at this point. Meeting attendees had questions about federal management oversight within a marine sanctuary and asked how state management jurisdiction would possibly be affected. There may be more information about this proposal at future meetings.

#### 2015 Creel Survey Results:

Creel summaries for Lake Superior fishing ports were provided to meeting attendees. The summaries showed variation of harvest, effort, and catch rates for trout, salmon, and cool- and warm-water fishes in Michigan waters of Lake Superior. Meeting attendees had questions about statistical calculation of catch rates when the creel clerk possibly misses some better catch occurrences. The creel calculation methods follow vetted statistical methods which are used Great Lakes wide and which allow comparisons of one port to another. A reminder was given about the importance for anglers to provide creel clerks with accurate data and not to avoid them, in order to ensure the best possible estimates.

#### Commercial Fishery Summary:

A summary of State-licensed commercial fisheries statistics was provided that covered the period of 2008 – 2015. This summary covered the six Lake Superior lake whitefish management zones of Isle Royal, West Keweenaw, North Keweenaw, Keweenaw Bay – Huron Bay, Big Bay – Marquette, and Au Train – Munising. There were no questions regarding the summary.

#### Lake Superior Sea Lamprey Update:

As reported by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, lamprey wounding was down in 2015 in Lake Superior and is now within the desired target range. Past lampricide treatments have been effective in reducing sea lamprey populations.

#### Wrap-up:

General discussion by all.

#### Next meetings:

- October 5, 2016 (if emerging issues warrant having a meeting)
- April 5, 2017

## Attachment 1

### Committee meeting attendees

Name	Representing
Andy Allan	South Shore Fishing Association
Steven Amsler	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission
Larry Argall	Central Upper Peninsula Sportfishing Association
Ed Baker	MDNR Fisheries
Jim Cantrill	Fred Waara Chapter Trout Unlimited
Dave Caroffino	MDNR Fisheries
Jim Dexter	MDNR Fisheries
Floyd Dropps	Upper Peninsula Sportsman's Alliance
Tim Gasperich	Keweenaw Splake Anglers
Marvin Gerlach	MDNR Law Enforcement
Ron Kinnunen	Michigan Sea Grant
Matt Kniskern	Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission
Mylan Koski	South Shore Fishing Association
Cory Kovacs	MDNR Fisheries
George Madison	MDNR Fisheries
Rodney Markham	Isle Royale Boaters Association
Dale McNamee	Upper Peninsula Sportsman's Alliance / Sen. Tom Casperson
Doug Moyle	Keweenaw Splake Anglers
Ross Rinkinen	Copper Country Walleye Association
Doug Scheuneman	Alger County Fish & Game Sports Alliance
Phil Schneeberger	MDNR Fisheries
Steve Scott	MDNR Fisheries
Dan Talkowski	Black River Harbor Boating Club
Jan VanAmberg	MDNR Fisheries
Shannon VanPatten	MDNR Law Enforcement
Charles Westerberg	Upper Peninsula Sportsman's Alliance
Travis White	Copper Country TU; Keweenaw Charters

## Attachment 2

### Meeting agenda



#### Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

A citizen-based committee charged to review and provide input and advice relative to fishery goals, objectives and management plans for Lake Superior. Members assist Fisheries Division in charting the future course of fisheries management by providing voice to and for the diversity of citizens' interests in the Lake Superior basin.

Mylan Koski, Chair

Alger County  
Fish and Game Alliance

Bay Mills Indian Community

Central Upper Peninsula  
Sport Fishing Association

Copper Country Trout  
Unlimited

DNR Fisheries Division

DNR Law Enforcement  
Division

Fisher Price Charters

Fred Waara Chapter Trout  
Unlimited

Grand Marais Sportmans  
Club

Keweenaw Splake Anglers

Lake Superior Advisor

Lake Superior State  
University Aquatic  
Research Laboratory

Michigan Sea Grant

Michigan United  
Conservation Clubs

Office of the Great Lakes

South Shore Fishing  
Association

Thill's Fish House, Inc.

Upper Peninsula  
Sportsman Alliance

Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee spring meeting,  
April 6, 2016, Chocoley Firehall Training Room, 10am-3pm

#### Meeting agenda (associated materials attached for asterisked items):

- Committee Business
  - Review/approval of 2015 meeting minutes\*
  - New members
- 2016 Fish stocking prescriptions\*
- Aquaculture on the great lakes and the possibility for net pen aquaculture on Lake Superior
- Increase in tribal commercial fishing along Keweenaw shoreline
- Lake trout harvest quantity and size limits on Lake Superior
- Splake stocking site evaluation criteria
- Chinook salmon fin-clip returns
- Updates from or regarding:
  - Law Enforcement Division
  - Fisheries Division
  - National Marine Sanctuary proposal
  - 2015 creel survey results\*
  - Commercial fisheries\*
- Highlights / information from the Lake Superior presentations at the March 2016 Great Lakes Fishery Commission meetings
- Roundtable: opportunity for all committee members to summarize the past year from their perspective and bring up any questions, issues, or areas of interest