

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.

September 30, 2020 (6:30 pm – 8:30 PM) Meeting Minutes

Welcome and Roll Call Committee members and Attendees:

Attendees (25): Patrick Hanchin, George Madison, Cory Kovacs, Shawn Sitar, Troy Zorn, Randy Clairmont, Rodney Markham, Ross Rinkinen, Larry Argall, Brett DeLong, Terry Short, John Highlen, Travis White, Lauren Jescovich, George Lindquist, Floyd Dropps, JR Richardson, Stephanie Swart, Dave Johnson, Dave Shaw, Tim Gasperich, Frank Krist, Larry Brown.

Agenda:

See Attachment #1.

Minutes

Meeting minutes were recorded by George Madison. The minutes of each LSCFAC will be posted on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website

Meeting agenda:

1. Welcome remarks
2. Round Table
 - Isle Royale Boaters Association:
 - Rodney, nice summer, good fishing, less pressure at I-Royale.
 - Copper Country Walleye Association:
 - Ross, late bite on the spring walleye fishery. Good fishing in Portage-Torch, credit to DNR and those assisting with walleye rearing, upcoming small tournament on Portage.
 - Black River Harbor Boating club:
 - No attendees
 - Central Upper Peninsula Sport Fishing Association:
 - Chinook are showing up in the rivers.
 - Copper Country Trout Unlimited:
 - No attendees.
 - Fisher Price Charters:
 - No attendees.
 - Fred Waara Chapter Trout Unlimited:
 - John H discusses field projects that are planned such as tree planting near Yellow Dog and Pilgrim, pandemic affected some work and banquet plans, inquired about status of party fishing reg proposal, Hanchin noted that the party fishing proposal was not supported by internal Regulations Review Committee largely because of law enforcement complications.
 - Grand Marais Sportsmen's Club:
 - No attendees.

- Keweenaw Charters:
 - Travis White, lots of charter activity this summer and still busy, lots of new anglers of all ages, lots of pressure, catch rates were good, more fin-clipped brown trout being caught, some up to 13-lbs, concern on small splake mortality when badly hooked, wondered if fin clip on splake would allow different regulation between them and lake trout, support for the clipping of splake. Noted buoys of MTU in Lk Superior. Light commercial netting around Keweenaw this year. Copper Harbor boat launch needs dock extension due to high water.
 - Keweenaw Splake Angers:
 - Tim G. Good splake catches early in the season.
 - Lake Superior State University Aquatic Research Laboratory:
 - No attendees.
 - Michigan Sea Grant:
 - Lauren introduces herself to the Committee.
 - Michigan United Conservation Club:
 - George Lindquist, good summer fishing, Mqt, Munising, Big Bay, water warmed up and fish went deep, fishing is picking up. Want people to be aware of three legislative bills re: commercial fishing, asks for people to look into it. Passed the house, now in Senate committee. Concern for commercial fishermen being able to keep by-catch of other gamefish.
 - EGLE, Water Resources Division:
 - Stephanie Swart, no reports for the committee.
 - Ottawa Sportsmen's Club:
 - No attendees.
 - Sand Point Charter:
 - No attendees.
 - South Shore Fishing Association:
 - No attendees.
 - Thills Fish House:
 - No attendees.
 - Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance:
 - Dave Johnson, no report.
 - Request for phone attendees to report;
 - Larry Brown, sitting in to learn about issues, no report.
 - Frank Krist, Lk Huron Citizens Advisory he sits on, and Lk Michigan too.
 - Floyd Drops, concern for walleye stocking in UP, wants to reduce the MSL for northern pike, and would like the DNR to return to 10-bkt daily possession limit.
 - Randy Claramunt, just listening, no report
3. Basin Coordinator update (Hanchin, 10 min)
- Since several people commented on brown trout, Hanchin noted that while MDNR is not stocking browns, we are seeing the highest catch with 6K harvested last year compared to 1K in 2000. Brown trout harvest in Michigan waters of Superior is higher than Michigan waters of Lake Michigan or Lake Huron. Situation likely due to Wisconsin efforts and their use of offshore stocking and wild broodstock. Michigan has worked with many strains over the years and we have not seen the success that

WDNR is experiencing. Our plan is to stay in communication with WDNR. Brown trout will be addressed in the Lk Superior mgmt. plan with public input.

- Budget update, temp layoffs of staff, reduced field work, \$1.5-2M surplus due to cutbacks. Federal money can be carried forward, but Game & Fish funds (license dollars) goes back to Game and Fish Protection Fund.
- Construction of new ponds at Thompson State Fish Hatchery progressing well. Should be operational in 2021, 6-ponds with production capacity of 250K walleye and 20K muskie.
- Cormorants, USFWS proposed rule for managing comments, DNR provided numerous comments, FWS will be addressing comments and meeting with agencies. Final rule to come.
- Buffalo Reef, sands are threatening to impact Traverse Harbor again. Seeking short- and long-term funds to address.
- Party Fishing proposal has not been adopted this year.
- Supplemental budget bill included \$8 million for project design and engineering for the Brandon Road Lock Project to prevent Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes. Illinois to come up with other 20%. Still would need money appropriated for construction.
- Au Train Basin Dam, owners are seeking to surrender license under FERC, offered sale to State, State is not interested in purchasing.

4. Revised Terms of Reference (For action, All, 10 min)

- Goal was to have identical TOR for all the CACs
 - Replace Lk Superior with language about all lakes
 - Nominate Chair for 3-year periods
 - Vice Chair fills in if chair absent
 - Members can be removed or replaced by Chair and Basin Coordinator if non-participating or threatening.
 - Decision making will be....1 Will live with, 2 chair makes decision if no consensus.
 - Any Questions?
 - Frank Krist, Lk Huron CAC will be talking about it, and LK Michigan talked about it, good support, would like to include language that chair serves at pleasure of committee and can be voted out at any time.
 - Ross supports this.
 - Patrick suggests amendment, do you approve to add language of committee can remove chair by majority vote.
 - Roll call of committee members support original document and amendment,
 - All support, no objections.
 - Hanchin noted that some CACs will be considering election of officers this winter/spring if TOR are adopted

5. Research projects (Sitar/Zorn, 10 min)

- a. Research summaries provided to members ahead of this meeting.
 - Food web diet study 2021, analysis reporting in 2022.
 - Highlen thanked for keeping aware of ongoing research
 - Swart added that MDNR projects were funded via GLRI via the Lakewide Action and Management Plan process and are part of the 5-year CSMI for which Superior is on in 2021

6. Splake stocking and fin clipping (Kovacs/Madison, 10 min)
 - Michigan DNR Fisheries staff (7) clipped 85K splake. Two separate raceways received a unique clip: Right pectoral going to Copper Harbor and Left pectoral going to Munising. These fish will be stocked in spring 2021. Splake will be clipped each year through 2025. Because other agencies have used adipose clips for brook trout and lake trout already, adipose clips cannot be a sole clip. Coordination with agencies will occur this winter ahead of future clipping efforts to align schedule of clips. We want to learn more about this fishery, where the fish go, looking to measure splake harvest rates, harvest ratios from various ports, comparison, and size structure. Movement and migration can also be investigated by using unique clips for each stocking port. Need feedback from anglers where these fish are being caught. Anglers are encouraged to keep an angler diary of catches, fin clips, and lengths. Participation with ongoing creel surveys is also encouraged. Additionally, Marquette Research staff would be able to validate age/growth calculations, as these will be known-age fish. Evaluation will go through 2030.
 - Questions if Mqt will have to reduce other fish or splake to allow for grayling?
 - No, capacity exists at Mqt because of reduced production of lake trout and brook trout.
 - Guest asked about the cost of rearing splake versus brook trout – yearling brook trout are \$4.83 and yearling splake are \$2.81.
 - Reminder of splake port-evaluation tool.
 - Splake will not be stocked in Keweenaw Bay in 2021, but if prescription is made permanent, splake will be stocked in 2022. Of note, Keweenaw Bay received around 44K splake this year due to 2020 stocking consolidation because of the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Members again asked if grayling are limiting splake production,
 - No
 - a. Lake Superior Technical Committee is preparing a white paper on splake in response to a charge from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The white paper on splake is expected to be completed soon. A committee member noted that the intent was to have splake from terminated stocking at Marquette to supplement Keweenaw Bay. Asked if white paper will be shared with CAC. Hanchin noted that there is a prescription for Keweenaw Bay though for surplus fish only. We are considering making the prescription permanent, but Basin Team wanted to wait for white paper since there is time due to the fact that the earliest KBay would receive splake is 2022 due to the lack of surplus fish in 2021. Can likely share white paper but will check with GLFWC that we are okay sharing if it is in draft form.
7. Steelhead journal project (Kovacs, 10 min)
 - Michigan State Extension and Michigan Sea Grant have created an on-line diary and phone app (iOS only at this time) for anglers to report their fishing trips, harvest, and catch information.
 - As part of the diary and app development, Michigan Sea Grant has developed a Michigan River Steelhead Project through the Great Lakes Diary Program (built into the app). Primary objective of the project is to evaluate stocked and wild steelhead while all yearling steelhead are being adipose clipped. The project covers Lake Michigan and Lake Superior tributaries (and open water). Anglers are encouraged to download the app, register either online or through the app, and begin reporting their

catches as early as this fall. Report even if you have a zero-catch day. Anglers can go to GLanglerdiary.org for more information app this project.

8. Lake Superior Management Plan process (Hanchin, 10 min)

- Patrick discussed the process of the plan
 - Fisheries Chief made it a priority for all the Gt Lks
 - Meaningful goals and objectives will allow for evaluation of fishery management.
- First step will engage stakeholders and users, define values. Important to get input from all users. There will be several points in time to provide input – beginning and following development of a draft.
- Patrick would like to hear ideas from group on how to engage, can comment now or email comments to Patrick.
 - Notify clubs, which have a lot of the users.
 - Not everybody has internet, so other formats for notification (radio, mail) should be used also
 - TU is willing to help disseminate info through newsletters, etc.,
 - Creel clerks will be able to hand out cards with QR code or link

9. Law Enforcement Division update (Terry Short, 10 min)

- Terry gives intro of Gt Lks enforcement unit.
 - Local update
 - Staffing, full capacity, officers on all Great Lakes. Brett DeLong and Kevin Postma covering eastern Lake Superior are the two officers covering Lake Superior.
 - Covid changed work plans for 2020, redirected some efforts
 - Water rescues, boater assists,
 - 40-ft patrol boat in Marquette, 30-ft patrol vessel in Sault
 - Net entanglement has been busy this year pulling tangled nets and ghost nets. Net entanglements, call the RAP Line
 - Technology update, side scan sonar (3) in UP. Also have a submersible ROV.

Attachment #1



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Co-Chairs Rodney
Markham & Ross Rinkinen

Alger County Fish and
Game Alliance
Bay Mills Indian
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Black River Harbor Boating
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Central Upper Peninsula
Sport Fishing Association
Copper Country Trout
Unlimited
Copper Country Walleye
Association
DNR Fisheries Division
DNR Law Enforcement
Division
Fisher Price Charters
Fred Waara Chapter Trout
Unlimited
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Keweenaw Charters
Keweenaw Splake Anglers
Lake Superior State
University Aquatic
Research Laboratory
Michigan Sea Grant
Michigan United
Conservation Clubs
Office of the Great Lakes
Ottawa Sportsmen's Club
Sand Point Charter
South Shore Fishing
Association
Thill's Fish House, Inc.
Upper Peninsula
Sportsmen's Alliance

1. Welcome and roll call
2. Basin Coordinator update (Hanchin, 10 min)
3. Revised Terms of Reference (For action, All, 10 min)
4. Research projects (Sitar/Zorn, 10 min)
5. Splake stocking and fin clipping (Kovacs/Madison, 10 min)
6. Steelhead journal project (Kovacs, 10 min)
7. Law Enforcement Division update (Brett DeLonge, 10 min)
8. Lake Superior Management Plan process (Hanchin, 10 min)
9. Advisor roundtable reports (All)

❖ Documents sent prior to the meeting:

- Externally funded coaster brook trout research led by Troy Zorn.pdf
- GLCFAC Terms of Reference 2020-09-04.pdf
- Sitar 2021 Lake Superior food web dynamics study.pdf