



## Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

Established by the Department of Natural Resources  
to improve and maintain fishery resources  
of Lake Huron through better communication and partnership.

**Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee**  
**Monday August 26, 2024**  
**10:30 am - 3:30 pm**

### **Attendees:**

Frank Krist, Randy Claramunt, Blaise Pewinski, Scott Lutz, Randy Terrian, April Simmons, Judy Ogden, Julie Shafto, Tom Keerl, Tim Slezsak, Bryan Darland, Tess Nelkie, Nick Torsky, Nick Atkin, Craig Milkowski, Tom Frontjes, Jeff Jolley, Laura Ogar, Mike Veine, Dana Serafin, Dennis Eade, Doug Schultz, David Fielder, LaKon Williams, Michael Kelly, Ed Blissick, Paul Nienaltowski, Scott Lutz, Leo Mrozinski, Aaron Switzer, Jason Gostiaux, George Brown, Jerry Brown, Ed Beckley, Jim Johnson, John Moore, Seth Herbst, Kendra Kozlaukos, Ed Beckley, Bryan Burroughs, David Cozad, Steve Griffin, Ed Retherford, Fred Sterns, Hans Hellenberg, Lauren Jescovitch, Brandon Schroeder, Ed Hock, John Walters.

### **Welcome and Introductions. (Frank Krist and Doug Schultz, DNR Lake Huron Basin Coordinator and Randy Terrian, Vice Chair)**

Frank began by thanking Jay's Sporting Goods for allowing the Committee to meet in the Outback Room and all the work that Scott Lutz, the store manager and assistant Bryan Darland do to ensure the room is set up and all the needed digital equipment and other amenities are provided. Frank also thanked Meaghan Gass and others from Michigan Sea Grant for their invaluable assistance with running the both the In-person and online meeting logistics.

It was noted that the meeting will be recorded to assist with compiling the meeting notes. Frank, Randy and Doug thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the introductions were completed.

### **Volunteer Awards for the Saginaw Bay Telemetry Study and acknowledgement of the Blue Water Sportfishing Association's very generous donations to help pay for fish food in the DNR Hatcheries.**

**Dave Fielder** discussed the telemetry study in Saginaw Bay: We are investigating where all walleye reproduction is coming from. We have hypotheses that certain tributary systems and offshore reefs are possibly important spawning locations. To conduct the study, fish from the open water had to be caught and be implanted with a transmitter. Much care was needed handling the fish while the transmitters were implanted inside the fish. The volunteers being acknowledged for this task deserve much credit for their efforts. Often the work interfered with other activities such taking clients out fishing on certain days.

Today the DNR Fisheries partner awards are being presented to **Mike Veine, Tom Marx, and Ed Hock**. Tom couldn't be present, so Mike delivered his award to him. Previously at the Fisheries Division conference back in July we gave the awards to **Karl Burnside and Ed Patnode**. So, five dedicated recipients volunteer angler helped on the Saginaw Bay walleye telemetry study.

**Doug Schultz** acknowledged the **Blue Water Sportfishing Association's** very generous donation of \$10,000 to help pay for fish food in the DNR Hatcheries. With the rising costs of nearly all aspects of hatchery production, this gift is important to maintaining the number of fish produced. Judy Ogden and the Association deserve much credit and appreciation for the gift.

## **Saginaw Bay survey summary and population status. (Dr. Dave Fielder, Fisheries Research Biologist).**

- a. Fish community survey & modeling**
- b. Walleye jaw tagging**
- c. Walleye and yellow perch population status**
- d. Annual Creel and Commercial harvest statistics**

**Dave Fielder:** Many sources of information are used to evaluate the fishery. I want to thank Andrew Briggs, and crew for conducting the annual trolling survey in the Saginaw Bay. In September the fish community gill net survey is undertaken. Exploitation rates, mortality rates, and fish movement is determined and used. Commercial reporting is considered, and various computer models are maintained. All this information gives us population-wide perspective rates including metrics and a population estimate. The context for all this is a new recreational management plan that you all have heard a lot about and you have had a chance to review. It is nearing completion.

The information indicates that there are about **five and a half million Age 2 walleyes** that have been added to the population in 2023. This large number has not occurred before, so it's the highest we've measured so far. There is a fair amount of uncertainty to this estimate, but it appears to be a record Age 2-year class.

Let's look at **sustainability**. One of our key metrics is the growth rate of Age 3 walleyes and for a long time, it was about 130% of the state average because the density was low and plenty of food was available. We predicted that as density of walleyes increased, growth rates would come down. And sure enough, that's what's happened.

The **forage fish biomass index** is based on trolling. It is a measure of the different forage species expressed in terms of kilograms per 10 minute of towing. As the walleye population became more abundant it does seem the prey fish went down. This was part of the concern that motivated recreational harvest and length limits back in 2015. Currently, the declining trend of the forage fish has begun to reverse, and for the most part, it has. Just one species might drive prey fish abundance, for example, that could be mimic shiners or white perch. I'd also say that round gobies are probably underestimated because gobies really prefer rocky habitat, which is difficult to trawl. therefore they are likely equally underrepresented across that time series.

A lot of our **walleyes out migrate** Saginaw Bay. By the second week of June estimates show that 47% of the Saginaw Bay walleyes move out into the main basin. The interesting thing is, the fish continue do the same migration patterns every year, while returning to the Bay late in the season. We're not really sure what triggers that dichotomous behavior, but whatever it is it occurs pretty much for life. Because of this, our models include not just the recreational fishery in the bay, but also the various fisheries in the main basin, including the recreational fisheries in the main basin, the Canadian commercial fisheries, and both Ontario and Michigan tribal fisheries in Lake Huron.

We'll move on to the **quality of the recreational walleye fishery**. In 2023, the harvest rate of walleye for **anglers specifically targeting walleye** was 0.7 per hour which is the second highest we've measured. This rate is extraordinary. 0.4 walleyes per hour or higher is considered good so we're way above that harvest rate, which is reflected with the population size.

Walleye harvest rate of **all anglers (regardless of target)** is also estimated. This is not targeted, and is split into open water and winter. The 2023 value is the second highest new record so far for the open water fishery. The recreational harvest in both the bay and Main Basin would be about 400,000 harvested walleyes. The harvest during the 2024 winter was 77,000. The winter fisheries vary much depending on the ice conditions. One of the things we're discovering is that even when we have mild winters now, a lot of anglers are keeping their boats going year round and taking advantage of that. As a result, there was a lot of harvest in 2024.

The **number of sub legal released walleyes** is estimated as part of our creel survey. In 2015 when we implemented the reduced 13-inch size limit, fewer were released. But in more recent years, we see a lot being released. In 2023 about a quarter million undersized walleye were released, which reinforces, to me, that we have, a very large number of walleyes under 13 inches.

The **recreational effort** is expressed as number of angler hours and is again broken up between the open water and winter fishery and during the recent years it's been rather stable at about 1 million angler hours. Overall, it's come down some and that's not unusual to see that in a lot of fisheries around Michigan and around the country. When fishing becomes extremely good, sometimes effort declines because of less time spent on the water to catch enough fish.

The estimated **abundance of Age 2 walleyes** in 2023 is 12 1/2 million. The confidence limits are tighter for past year classes because as a fish age more data are available.

After reviewing all the parameters, it is not clear if the **walleye population size** in the bay has reached its peak or it may continue to increase, but given what the growth rate and yield tell us, I don't think it will get a lot bigger.

**Dave switched to discussion the status of yellow perch:** The parameters the last two years showed that yellow perch were doing very poorly. Back in the 70s and 80s, right into the 90s there were good numbers of larger yellow perch. The 1990s began a period when dreissenid mussels invaded Lake Huron, which contributed to the alewife population collapse. When present, the large numbers of alewives in Saginaw Bay likely influenced survival rates of young yellow perch through competition and predation on larval stages of yellow perch. The alewives also preyed on young walleyes so when the alewives essentially disappeared, the walleye population surged in 2003. Walleye stocking was no longer needed and by 2006, stocking was discontinued. In 2003 with the loss of alewives, the older yellow perch were producing record numbers of newly hatched yellow perch, but the walleyes and other predators were eating the vast majority of them. Today there is no problem with yellow perch reproduction, but unfortunately few grow to be adults. The vast majority of the young yellow perch are eaten by the walleyes and other predators.

The recreational **yellow perch fishery harvest** in 2023 was about 100,000 pounds which is practically zero compared to what the fishery was in the recent years of 1990s. In addition, the most recent commercial harvest value of yellow perch is just over 12,000 pounds, which also was basically near zero relative to what it has been during the good years.

**In summary**, according to the framework of the management plan, walleye are within the prescribed range, which means no change will be recommended. Yellow perch are below the prescribed range but there is no management option on the horizon.

I wanted to say that, in light of these estimates, we are not always understanding all sources that are driving outcomes, so that has prompted me to put the model through some new tests for weaknesses and identify some potential improvements. I've been soliciting help from the Quantitative Fisheries Center at Michigan State University. During all the stress tests run so far, the model has passed. Testing will continue. I'm still working to develop a catch and age model for yellow perch. I am making improvements and additions to the walleye stochastic simulation model and I am working on these models all the time, trying to improve them, validate them, to make them more informative.

**There is time for some comments and questions:**

**Comment, NRC Commissioner David Cozad online:** It is good to be here and it is good to hear the business that has transpired. So far, as I mentioned before, we should be really proud and pleased with the amount of assessment work that, not only is ongoing now, but has been ongoing for a number of years on Saginaw Bay, with respect to multiple species. And we want to thank everyone who is involved with that. Thanks so much.

**Comment, NRC Commissioner John Walters in-person:** I really appreciate the presentation that you provided. Thank you recognizing that this is an ongoing trend where we're having more and more walleyes in Saginaw Bay and fewer and fewer perch and that's not a new topic. Are there any thoughts moving forward with the management plan on doing our best to correct the large volume of walleyes, we do need a balance. I don't think it's just perch that are taking it on the chin, but other species as well. Are there invasive species that are having a negative impact on recruitment, not just for these two species, but for all of them? There are lots of questions, but these are the ones at least at the forefront. **Dave Fielder Response:** In answer to your first part of your question, what I would say is that the walleye population is coming to its own equilibrium. We don't know yet what that is, but it's commensurate with what it was historically. We believe it's in line with the habitat by virtue of growth rate that's a little bit faster than the state average, close to 110% and the yield is at that historic average, or just a little bit beyond. So, one of the ways we often gauge our work of native fish restoration, is to compare it to populations that were established historically in the Great Lakes, before a lot of the degradation and changes took place. There has been a huge success story to see the native walleye restored to historic levels. But the problem is that not everything else is intact in Saginaw Bay, because before alewives, cisco probably played that same role of creating a buffer that protected the yellow perch. In the management plan, we wrestled a lot with what the goal should be. So, with the cisco not recovered and other changes in the ecosystem still broken, it is difficult to restore yellow perch to much higher abundance.

**Follow up Question:** There is some evidence in inland water that gobies may be eating eggs of bass and possibly yellow perch, is there any evidence that this is causing a problem in Saginaw Bay. **Dave Fielder Response:** There are lots of gobies in Saginaw Bay but survival of young yellow perch is not an issue since they produce very strong year classes regularly.

**Comment and Question:** The work that is being done with the models is commendable and appreciated. In the Saginaw River early season in March and April are you looking at the size of the fish and comparing them to other walleye populations in other areas and states? **David Fielder Response:** Yes, the creel clerks collect data and the fish can be aged and comparisons made. We rarely do cross basin comparisons but we often determine if the fish being taken are trophy size or smaller since anglers often prefer fewer but larger fish while other anglers just like to catch a lot of

fish. Because there are so many small walleyes currently, we see a lot of them but the surveys show that there are also trophy fish in the bay.

**Question:** What are considered the winter months: **Dave Fielder Response:** that would be January, February, and March as far as the creel survey is concerned.

**Question:** Why are there more metrics for walleyes than yellow perch? **Dave Fielder Response:** In regards to walleye having 41 as a maximum metrics score while yellow perch having 20 metrics was simply an artifact that we had more metrics for walleye to evaluate. Those yellow perch as a maximum was simply a function of the number of metrics evaluated. The metrics were generally derived by referencing values from the 90s and 80s when the yellow perch were producing good harvests. We are beginning to look at more ways to evaluate yellow perch but with limited staff time that has been a challenge.

**Question:** Why are cisco stocked inside Saginaw Bay not in the outer bay? **Response Dave Fielder:** Historically, both inner Saginaw Bay and Thunder Bay were nurseries for cisco production. Currently, Saginaw Bay is still nutrient rich with the inputs from the Saginaw River but Thunder Bay is nutrient poor so that is why the inner Saginaw Bay was chosen. There are many unknowns that make this an experiment.

**Comment:** Excellent presentation. The prolific walleye sport fishery is great news. This drives a multimillion-dollar economy and is a very enjoyable benefit that a lot of us take advantage of. The impacts go way beyond Saginaw Bay to many other communities, but especially in the Saginaw Bay region. This even has a substantial positive impact on property values.

**Question:** I appreciated the presentation and discussions. I know a lot of people are supporting the walleye fishery, but I question if the large walleye population is impacting other species such as lake trout, steelhead, salmon and even prey fish. I have to travel 6 to 15 miles offshore to catch a couple of lake trout and I still catch more walleyes than trout or salmon. At one time, in these southern waters there was excellent salmon and trout fishing and is there a chance of restoring those fishing opportunities? **Dave Fielder Response:** So first of all, it's easy to observe that walleyes were less abundant before 2003 and the Chinook Salmon fishery was doing well then. The reason for that was alewives, which are a mid-water prey fish that the Chinook Salmon needed to thrive, were present in large numbers during the early years. With the crash of alewives in 2003, Chinook Salmon declined dramatically because of lack of food. One possibility for the decline of lake trout is they are no longer being stocked in central and southern Lake Huron. Instead, the focus has been to increase Coho salmon and other silver fish plantings. This issue can be discussed more at future meetings. I don't believe that walleye are a major determinant of Salmon and Lake Trout abundance, instead they are reflections of their niches and the pelagic community that includes Chinook has contracted greatly since 2003.

**Randy Claramunt follow-up to the question above:** If you look back at the advisory committee minutes, you'll see a long history of lake trout declining in the central and southern waters of Lake Huron. I agree with the assertion that this is not a walleye/lake trout interaction. Walleye are really benefiting from some ecological changes in Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay. But for lake trout, it was really the elimination of stocking in mid and southern Lake Huron that is contributing to this. Yes, we do not stock lake trout in southern Lake Huron anymore. Likewise, Ontario reduced their lake trout stocking. There was a substantial increase in natural reproduction in lake trout but that was occurring mostly in northern Lake Huron. When lake trout stocking was eliminated in the south it was the understanding that a lot of those wild lake trout would migrate south but that did not happen in large enough numbers to make much of a difference. The **drop in lake trout is not driven by the walleye,**

but it's driven by the natural reproduction of lake trout occurring mostly in the north, as well as management agencies not supporting lake trout stocking again in the south. Lake trout stocking is not done by the DNR but it is done by the US Fish and Wildlife Service which only stocks fish when supporting agencies like Tribal agencies, Ontario and Michigan all agree to reinstate the stocking.

**Question for Randy Claramunt:** Why did the other agencies not go along with **reinstating lake trout stocking** in the south? **Randy Claramunt Response:** The primary concern was the belief that because whitefish are declining sharply and lake trout and whitefish live in waters of the same temperatures and depths, the lake whitefish populations could be negatively impacted by an increase in lake trout. There is evidence, however, that lake trout and whitefish live successfully together in Lake Superior where they have coexisted for thousands of years.

**Comment from experienced Charter Captain fishing in the north** I have been fishing since the 1960s and I was a high school science teacher, so I am very familiar with fish identification and clips. When the weather permits, I've been running every day out of Presque Isle Harbor since June. But anyways, 60 to about 75% of the lake trout that I'm catching are natural and under 25 inches in length. The largest natural fish I caught this year was 16.5 pounds. This year, because of the wind and warm temperatures this is the **warmest water that I have ever seen** since I started Great Lakes fishing in 1969. We had water 73 degrees down to 95 feet from top down to there. And then when it breaks, it breaks. I mean, it goes to 45 or 48 but it's moving. But to get my point, I'm catching walleyes, those **little twisty critters** probably down 130 to 140 feet. Those fish migrated north. The professional walleye tournament anglers know exactly where those fish are. I see those anglers all the time. I mean, you could say they're fishing Alpena or whatever, but I know exactly where they're fishing. Those fish are often deep looking for food and **finding smelt, bloater chubs, and very small alewives**. Thank you.

**Comment:** The problem is the **over stocking of walleye has decimated the yellow perch** population and I can give you history for the last 100 years with our family involved in commercial fishing for the last 56 years. **Dave Fielder Response:** walleyes have not been planted since 2006, currently all walleye production is wild reproduction. The planting that went on before 2006 was just to sustain a limited fishery. **I assure you, it's not overstocking. Follow up comment:** When the walleye numbers were lower the **daily limit on yellow perch** was completely removed and that decimated the yellow perch. Now with a large population of walleyes there is still a 25 fish limit on spawning yellow perch which is decimating the population. **Dave Fielder Response:** The yellow perch are not limited by broodstock, they are reproducing very well.

**Question:** As the **Saginaw Bay walleyes move into the Canadian waters** their fishers must catch some of those walleyes. Is there any harvest limits or restrictions on the number of fish harvested. **Dave Fielder Response:** When their fish migrate into our water we harvest their fish too. The fish migrate throughout various management units so the only way to control harvests would be through an allocation agreement, which has not been done. Overall, the Ontario commercial harvest of walleye in the southern main basin is a small proportion of the overall harvest of Saginaw Bay walleyes.

Frank ended the session.

**Creel update 2024 Saginaw River season & mid-season creel update (Dr. Jeff Jolley/Jason Gostiaux).**

**Frank:** Introduced again Dr. Jeff Jolly, Dr. Dave Fielder and Jason Gostiaux, to talk about the midseason, creel survey on the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay area.

Dr. Jeff Jolley: I don't have a lot of content because it's a small topic. But if you remember, a couple years ago, we discussed and then decided to open the lower Saginaw River year-round to walleye harvest. The new open period occurs during March and April. A commitment of implementing the new season was to monitor the fishery in the river and to give annual status reports. The **new early season** began in 2023 and continued this year in 2024. As noted, the winter fishery is considered January through March. The two seasons, **2023 and 2024 were very different in terms of environmental conditions**. The fishery in 2023 occurred during the covid pandemic, lots of big rain events, lots of muddy water, and unfishable conditions. The fishing during 2024 was a lot different with a mild winter and good river conditions. Most of the winter effort was in boats. As climate has changed, and the winters have gotten milder, anglers have adapted keeping their boats up ready to go fishing in the open water. Because of these differing weather conditions and more effort, the harvest in 2024 was about four times higher than 2023. Here is the 2024 effort. The majority of the effort was in the Bay during the winter, and second place was in the river fishery including new the reopened season. The word was getting out that Saginaw Bay and the Lower Saginaw River is a good place to come at this time of year to catch fish. The harvest rate is how fast you are catching fish. **Fishing in Saginaw Bay and River is good all year** including fishing in the winter. The walleye start to move in from Saginaw Bay during the winter. Yes, there are some local fish in the area all the time, but the fish that are scattered throughout the bay begin to stage near the river mouth at this time. As the season gets closer to the spring, that's really going to improve and increase your harvest rate in both the inner bay and in the lower river.

One of the discussion points that we discussed when we opened the lower river was we knew there was a very large walleye population that is available to harvest. **Opening the new season created a lot of additional fishing opportunities**. This new season accommodates from big to small boats including even shore anglers in certain locations. Of course, shore fishing is a little harder since the fish must come to you but when you are in a boat, you can try to go to the fish. The lion's share of the harvest is through boats and just a small part is from shore.

We have some observations that occurred during this new fishery. People were **travelling** from a lot of different parts of the state, including **97 different zip codes**. The data show that **86%** of the people that were interviewed during the study period were **targeting walleye**. It is good to see people from other areas enjoying the fishery. This is especially significant since there is much fishing competition at this time here. You got Detroit River, and you got Lake Erie providing excellent fishing. Those are obviously great destinations this time of year as well.

One thing we like to look at is the **makeup of the catch** itself. During the six week newly opened season the fish are a little longer and a little bit older on average. As I mentioned, the harvest during the new early season was just modest. The biological makeup of that catch doesn't stand out as something to be concerned about. The sex ratio of the harvest was close to 50/50, which is what you want to see in a fishery. The biological impact of the new fishery is minimal and with a robust walleye population, the newly opened season should be sustainable.

A lot of assistance from the staff generated much of the information. I'm going to hand it over to Jason and he has some insights on the current creel survey and how the fishing is doing right now.

**Jason Gostiaux:** I am a fishery biologist in the Southern Lake Huron Management Unit. Today I'll be talking about the 2024 **preliminary catch data**. We review Dave's presentation once a year in August but there was also an interest in how is the fishery operating right now, as opposed to seeing the

summary from last year. Thank you to Eric Morrow and the local creel clerks around Saginaw Bay for putting this together and then working with Dave and I to get a presentation ready for you all. We will only be talking about the months of **April, May and June in 2024 (this year)**. Once again, there is a very high harvest rate, something I think a lot of folks in this room have experienced and spoken highly as you go out there and share your observations of the fishery. A lot of walleyes are being caught and harvested in the bay this year. Last year was one of the **highest harvest rates on record**. And again, 2024 has shaped up to be another remarkable fishery.

I want to discuss **jaw tags** from the Tittabawassee River since it is just another sort of checks and balances of what we see from the creel information in the interviews that are done at each of the boat launches compared to what we see on the back end from jaw tag reports. I like to show that because it really resonates with the anglers, I think because I often hear feedback from folks that enjoy not only submitting those reports but getting the letters back. It shows the amount of work that goes into putting these estimates together, and sort of the attention we pay to the Saginaw Bay fishery as a whole with some species specific focus projects out there.

**Question:** If there is truly a need or a desire to bring the yellow perch numbers up, and we are seeing that the walleye numbers are suppressing them, why not open up instead of just the Saginaw River, why not open the Tittabawassee and those other rivers to give more angler opportunity and also maybe help increase walleye harvest. Let me preface this by saying probably 10 years ago, when I went to a meeting in Saginaw, I said, Why don't we open the Saginaw river? And I was told that it would totally slaughter the entire spawning population of walleye. I'm not buying that explanation any longer. **Jeff Jolley Response:** Well, my knee jerk reaction to some of that is we consider the lower Saginaw River not a spawning site, but a staging location before the fish move up to the actual spawning grounds. As a fisheries biologist, we don't usually support fishing on spawning grounds. We don't promote or encourage or want to allow fish fishing on spawning fish. Opening that up in the Tittabawassee River and other rivers is fishing spawning grounds during the spawning season. That is my quick reaction to that. But that doesn't speak to whether or not the population could sustain that, but that would be just a wholesale sort of change. Doug may have something to add. **Doug Schultz Response:** Bass seasons for example, do not necessarily prevent anglers from fishing over spawning fish. It's more of a social topic. Fish passage at Dow Dam is scheduled for construction next year so it will be interesting to see how fish respond. Possibly, some spawning fish will move past the dam to upstream habitats, we expect the project will create additional spawning habitat at the site. That is something we're very interested to see over time .

**Comment:** It is very obvious that the commercial fishers are saying, hey, we're more than glad to help you guys out with lowering walleye populations and their arguments are getting stronger and stronger, and so we need to, as recreational people, come up with some alternatives to that. Else we're going to lose. That's just my comment.

**Comment:** Earlier, you showed a chart that showed there was roughly 100 million walleye in Lake Erie, you mentioned, that we don't like to allow fishermen to fish over spawning fish. In the Detroit River that is exactly what they're doing. That is also the situation in the St Clair, and Maumee Rivers. Now we're looking at 12+ million in Saginaw Bay. To control walleyes we need to catch some of them on their beds.

**Saginaw Bay walleye/yellow perch recreational management plan status (Dr. Jeff Jolley, DNR Southern Lake Huron Unit Manager).**

**Frank** introduced **Dr. Jeff Jolley**: This topic is mostly for questions and comments from the participants. We have been talking about the management plan and the status of it for an extended period and it is mostly complete. We've gone through many drafts, with the public and management team. A public, open comment period produced a lot of information that resulted in changes. The plan is nearing completion and is nearly ready to send up the chain and get it approved. It will be a living document and be available online. A year from now, we'll go through it at another Advisory Committee meeting just like we did today, and if we see things that are of concern we will discuss them and if needed make changes. There were approximately 50 questions and comments received during the open public period. That information is reflected in the **Frequently Asked Questions** document which will be in the appendix of the plan. Just recently, the management team discussed the plan, and the status of the Saginaw Bay fisheries. The results are reflected in Dave Fielders comments today. The walleye population is pretty good throughout the year classes. Consistently, the angler catch rates, and harvest rates, are good. We are not recommending any management changes at this time. My main goal is to leave a lot of this time for open discussion and any questions you might have for any of us, myself, Doug, Jason, April, Dave  
Thank you.

**Comment:** The prior presentation showed a slide of all the zip codes utilizing the Saginaw Bay fishery. There has been a lot of concern that the walleye population is too high, and it needs to be brought down. But I think just the opposite. The **walleye fishery is driving a huge economic benefit**. You see all those zip codes traveling to Saginaw Bay, spending money fishing out there. So, I just want to stress that I think it's important to try to bring the perch back, but the walleye fishery drives a much larger economic benefit. The walleye fishery is clearly being utilized and is a major benefit to the local communities. **Jeff Jolley Response:** Yes, a year ago we had, a quick study done on two bass tournaments that were held in the area, and it was something like \$800,000 in direct spending, and maybe a similar amount or higher in indirect spending. I think last year there were 17 walleye tournaments. By doing that math, it shows the potential economic benefits the walleye fishery brings to the area as well.

**Question:** You say no management changes are recommended, and you also say, we protect the walleye spawning season. Why aren't you **protecting the yellow perch spawning season?** **Dave Fielder Response:** having this large walleye population, the consequences are a suppressed perch population. We tried some of the management levers that we've had and talked about before, but we didn't get the response that we wanted. By pushing on the walleye population harder, there's lots of risks and consequences to think about. From my perspective, you're not going to be guaranteed to see the response that you want. The other point about taking spawning perch is that **Age 0 yellow perch production is not an issue** because it is consistently high, and it is as high as it was during the peak years. So, it is likely that having spawning restrictions on yellow perch would have little if any impact.

**Question:** You start off with 4 million walleyes, and then over the years increase the population to 12 million walleyes. **How many more people are fishing now** compared to when there were just 4 million walleyes in the Bay? **Dave Fielder Response:** The number is about the same.

**Question:** You say protecting the spawn won't help, I get that now that you explained it. But what is apparent is the only way to help yellow perch is to get rid of some walleye and that's something that DNR is not willing to do even experimentally based on a research commercial fishing permit. So that's the problem I have. You guys have had these numbers for 15 years, and you say there's no management changes recommended when it can easily be researched in a year. We could see if the yellow perch bounces back, and we wouldn't be guessing like Dave Fielder says. We would actually have lots of data, because in a recent study, the DNR came right on the commercial boat. They were

out there every time we lifted. So, to say you can't do anything for the yellow perch is not correct.

**Doug Schultz Response:** We cannot guarantee that perch numbers will increase by increasing the walleye harvest by whatever means. I have not seen that happen in any walleye/perch fishery across the entire Midwest. I understand where you're coming from, but I cannot give anybody in this room any certainty that doing the experiment will have the desired effect.

**Question:** A possible experiment to bring back yellow perch would be to have the commercial fishers stop harvesting them for a few years. Could that be beneficial? Could the commercial fishers be paid to not fish for yellow perch for a certain period of time? **Commercial Fisher Response:** Yes, if you want to pay us to stay home, by all means, we'll stay home. Good idea.

**Question:** Personally, I feel like all yellow perch should be closed and we should be focused on whatever is biologically sound in the Great Lakes and including managing walleye in Saginaw Bay. My question to Randy Claramunt is, why does the Michigan DNR not use biological reasons to manage their fishery? Every other fishery in the world does? If the Alaskan salmon are hurting they would have a closed season. We should have a closed season on perch for everyone and should manage walleye based on biological reasons. **Randy Claramunt Response:** It is a very complex ecosystem.

Just looking at the walleye and yellow perch fisheries it was several years before the walleye recovery happened despite management efforts. It actually was not the management efforts that brought about the changes, it was the impacts of invasive species and the resulting nutrient changes that affected the yellow perch growth rate, but not reproduction. This not only occurred in Saginaw Bay but in some of the other Great Lakes. In Lake Michigan, for example, one of the biggest yellow perch fisheries in the state saw the exact same decline in yellow perch because of the nutrient changes. The Dreissenid mussels drove those nutrient pathways. Likewise, because the mussels impacted the decline of the alewives, that led to the recovery of walleye, even though the managers had been promoting and managing walleye with marginal success for many years. It was an unexpected change in the ecosystem that drove the change in both the walleye and yellow perch populations. Some of the mechanisms or actions that are being suggested, especially with management and social history, is currently outside of our realms and influence. And with that, we're left with management actions really focused on a recreational fishery standpoint. Liberalizing the Saginaw River Fishery was an action to provide more fishing opportunities and reduce the impacts on yellow perch. I want to just circle back quickly. We don't license anglers in an area and we don't sell Saginaw Bay fishing licenses. We sell a fishing license for all species across the state of Michigan, of which the fishery in Michigan has increased and benefited from the recovery of walleyes and the recovery of other fisheries because good biological approaches we taken.

**Revisiting the Advisors Consulting Decision of the motion, "Recommend to the DNR that stakeholders from both sides of House Bills 5108 and 5553 come together and work on a compromise" (Frank Krist, Jim Johnson and all other Advisors with input from participants).**

**Frank:** Our goal at the last meeting was to bring together interests from both sides of the commercial fishing House Bills to exchange ideas and possibly find common ground. I've had a chance to talk to lots of people on each side of the issue and many were intensely dug in to their positions. In addition, many persons from Lake Michigan were not very interested because the heaviest impacts from the bills would be south of Grand Haven.

Since it has been suggested that many changes have been made to House Bill 5108, it would be informative to exchange ideas, so I plan to provide about an hour at the next meeting for the

commercial fishing liaison to provide an overview. Possibly, the discussion will bring the sides closer together and provide some insight to the legislature.

Today Jim Johnson will provide the concerns he found in his analysis of the House Bill 5108. So I'm going to let Jim give an overview of 5108, we actually have a handout.

**Jim Johnson** made the following points of concern about 5108

- The costs of the stock assessment work required by the bill would be too high for the state's Game and Fish Fund to cover, essentially turning the Fisheries Division into a division of commercial fisheries management. The Bill dedicates 25% of most species directly to commercial fishing. It requires the state to develop total allowable catch estimates for each species and management unit, which would be extremely costly and burdensome for the DNR to implement.
- House Bill 5108 does not adequately address the state's public trust responsibilities. In areas where commercial and recreational fisheries are in competition, the commercial harvest could lower catch rates to the point where the recreational fishery is not viable. The recreational fishery must be carefully managed to maintain acceptable recreational fishing opportunities, since the recreational fishery has much higher economic value to the state compared to the commercial sector.
- The importance of public trust responsibilities need to be emphasized in managing public waters and there is an extreme need to rewrite the archaic language in Public Act 451
- Due to the decline of whitefish commercial fish stocks, especially in central/northern Lake Huron and most of Lake Michigan, the commercial fisheries are in a financial crisis. The commercial fisheries would not generate enough funds to support the stock assessment work required by the bill.
- The bill undermines science-based decision-making by authorizing the legislature to overturn or modify science-based quotas along with other political regulating of the fishery.
- This type of divisive bill drives the commercial and recreational fishing sectors apart, when there is an enormous shared interest in the future sustainability and health of the Great Lakes fisheries.

**Points made by an Advisor:**

- Argued House Bill 5108 would actually lower the cost of fish by about \$3 per pound, which would benefit restaurants, consumers, and the public.
- Sports fishermen in Michigan only represent 10% of the population, while the other 9 million Michiganders are currently buying Canadian walleye, whitefish, and lake trout because of limits on Michigan's commercial fisheries.
- Strongly urged the need for compromise between the two sides to find a solution.

**Points made by an Advisor:**

- In 1964 Michigan's Department of Conservation and its director, Howard Tanner and the chief of fisheries made the basic decision that the allocation of most fish populations to commercial exploitation no longer made sense. This was a critical factor in creating a world class sport fishery, plus sport fishing was recognized as the best allocation of resources. That decision is as important today as it was in 1964 now that the state of Michigan generates \$4.2 billion in revenue from sport fishing

A motion was being made to have the Chair send a letter to the legislature to oppose 5108. Some discussion followed.

### **Points by an Advisor**

- Shocked by how fast that everybody's opinions have changed from compromising and making an urgent plea to the legislation to compromise on these bills. You're not even willing to hear someone from the commercial side tell you what has been amended in the bill and discuss areas of compromise

**Bryan Burroughs**, Trout Unlimited Executive Director and **John Walters**, Natural Resources Commissioner both stressed that the Lake Huron Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee mission is to provide recommendations to the DNR and not the Legislature.

It was then decided to vote on a motion to recommend to the DNR that the Advisors oppose House Bill 5108.

The vote was 12 yes and 1 no. Since the vote was not a unanimous, "Will Live With" consensus, the decision is left to the Chair to make a "Consulting Decision" whereby the Chair considers the input and other options and makes a decision. Based on all the information, Frank decided that no recommendation would be sent to the DNR and instead representatives of the state commercial fishers would be provided time at the October meeting to share the changes they are backing in House Bill 5108. The meeting will be informational only to respectfully share viewpoints with the goal of bringing all sides closer together.

### **Fishery Chief, Randy Claramunt, License Fee Proposals to the Legislature.**

#### **Doug Schultz introduced Randy Claramunt:**

There are three approaches to increase funding to the Fisheries Division including:

- Base license fee package increase
- Potential adjustments to the license fee structure
- Identifying longer-term funding alternatives beyond just fishing license fees

This year Randy will be focusing on a base line fee package increase and he will elaborate on the progress that is being made.

**Randy Claramunt:** We are taking three approaches going forth. Number one, we're working with our leadership team at DNR and the legislative process to get something potentially ready very soon for the Lame Duck session. There are lots of bills being proposed in lame duck session, so we are not likely to move forward this fall. The next step will be working in the 2025 legislative process. We have commitments, both within leadership and with legislators, to move funding proposals through the 2025 legislative session. We also have support from our Director to include an active requisition, which is a request made by the Director to the administration in terms of funding needs for Department, and this will go into the 2026 budget development process. We are pursuing every venue that we can to get this to move and as you know, we don't have control over the process.

We proposed a \$10 to \$20 increase in the current cost of a \$26 fishing license. Depending on the results, we have documented the needs and services the various increases would provide. The higher the price increase on any goods or service, the more buyers would just decide to resist that price increase and decide not to purchase that item. We have modeled all this. Roughly a \$76 non-resident fishing license would increase between 10 and \$20 depending on the outcome of the different avenues. The current \$11 senior license, is a 60% discount with none of the discount added to fisheries funds. The goal is decreasing the discount between 60% and 25%. We asked for language so that those dollars that are provided as a discount to a senior license come back to managing fishery activities. We are proposing a \$10 to \$20 increase in the resident 24-hour fishing license.

I wish I could provide hard and fast numbers today but there are many unknowns. Assistant Fisheries Chief, Ed Eisch has been intensely involved in the funding issue and he is here to provide an update.

**Ed Eisch:** Increasing funding has been the major focus of what we've been working on. There is clearly an urgency because even if progress can be made in the lame duck session the funds would not be increased until March of 2025 and it takes a year before the funds are generated and can be used. We are at the point that some services will have to be reduced. If funding cannot be increased until Fiscal Year 2026 then the funds will not be available until 2027. Timing really matters! We can see the cliff in front of us and we are holding on by two fingers. Yes, inflation is a problem, but all of this requires legislative action, which requires support through the DNR leadership. Leadership in the DNR has been supportive so it is just a matter of when and how it gets through the legislature.

**Question:** I know you cannot control a bunch of things, but you could possibly increase income by offering a 3-day permit fee since many of my customers would buy it? Many customers would feel their getting a deal even though the price is increased. **Randy:** We have been looking at that issue. One of the things that we have done is to develop an app, which makes it very easy for someone to buy a 24-hour license. It would be easy to purchase additional days.

## **Agency Updates.**

**Randy Claramunt Fisheries Chief:** We have been really working hard at obtaining additional funding and it has been successful. We were able to successfully receive funds to help implement the **2023 Fishing Decree**, we received \$2.5 million additional funds for the replacement of the research vessel the R/V Steelhead, in addition to \$500,000 awarded by the Great Lakes Fisheries Trust. We now have a successful bid for the construction of R/V Steelhead, and we're going to be looking to replace the RV Channel Cat in Lake Erie, which is our last vessel that needs replacement. Just a few years back our **Great Lakes research vessel fleet** in all the lakes was aging along with much of the Fisheries Division infrastructure. Once the R/V Channel Cat is replaced all the DNR's research vessels on each of the Great Lakes will be updated. Ed Eisch has been working to articulate the needs of our facilities which are extremely outdated. One of our hatcheries actually uses a wooden piping system. We have been successful obtaining \$60 million in infrastructure funding to be used to upgrade these research stations and other facilities.

We are not just looking for license packages, we are looking to obtain **adequate funding for all the needs in fisheries**. For example, Michigan has funded its share to complete the Brandon Road Project in Illinois that will prevent Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes. The **Carp threat** is very real and hopefully this effort will not be too late since it could take several years to complete this project. **Frank:** Thanks, Randy, for participating in the meeting most of the day. It must have been difficult with your extremely busy schedule.

**Lt. Nicholas Torsky, Great Lakes Law Enforcement Unit Supervisor:**

**Frank:** We have been ignoring our law enforcement unit like I usually note, but we really respect all of you Officers for coming and keeping an eye on us. I noticed that Lieutenant Torsky is getting up, but over there on the left, that looks like Officer Craig Milkowski. It seems like **Officer Milkowski** has been to our meetings for about 30 years. I bet he is very close to **retirement**. **Lieutenant Torsky**

**Response:** Well, that's a good place to start. We are getting to the point where the number of these Lake Huron meetings, that Officer Milkowski attends is getting smaller and smaller. You may see him again but then maybe not. You scared him a little with saying that there won't be any senior fishing license discount, so he's probably going to have to stick around a little bit longer. Yes, Officer Milkowski's retirement is near. **Frank:** We enjoyed working with Officer Milkowski over the many years very much.

**Lieutenant Torsky:** I do have some updates. There will be **another academy** beginning right after the first of the year with approximately 20 officers. This will help us maintain the Unit with retirements and other issues over the last couple years. Within our Unit, we have struggled to get our fleet back together, so we had to borrow and move some folks around to accomplish our goals this year. But we were still able to provide the same services within the Unit as we normally do. We were busy in Lake Huron. We removed another trap net from the Goose Island Shoal area. That's the sixth one that we've removed in about as many years. We hope it's the last one, but we said that before. There were no identifiers on that net, but we believe it is from the same fisher that moved out of the state. We did remove some gill net from the Detour area which was part of two gill net removals which is good since **incidences are down** this year. The trend has been positive over the last few years. If anyone does become tangled in a net or notices a problem, they should contact DNR Law Enforcement so issues get documented.

**Dr, Jeff Jolly, Southern Lake Huron Unit Manager.** I have one quick comment. We are in the Sturgeon release season. Saturday September 21st is our second **sturgeon release** in Chesaning, Frankenmuth, Flint and Midland. Bring your kids and come out and release a sturgeon together.

**Ed Eisch, Assistant Fish Chief:** Most of what I have for updates are fish health related concerns. It's been a busy, few months for us. We had a Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (**VHS**) outbreak in Lake Macatawa near Holland Michigan this spring. The species impacted was freshwater drum with a few other species mixed in, but it was at least 75% and probably as high as 90% freshwater drum that were affected. During routine testing there were two positive bait fish submissions for **VHS** this year, and both were collected from Saginaw Bay. There were no symptomatic fish in the sample. As I'm sure you are aware, this spring we had the issue with **Atlantic Salmon** at the Harietta Hatchery that were positive for Bacterial kidney disease (**BKD**). We tried to treat those fish with antibiotics but unfortunately those fish were sick enough that they were not taking feed well and they remained very

positive and very symptomatic after the treatment. Because of this, We had to euthanize and dispose of those fish. That was very unfortunate. This was a **rare occurrence**, and euthanizing production fish has only happened three times in the last 35 years so hopefully it will never happen again. You may remember conversations a while back about **Tetracapsuloides bryosalmonae (Tbryo)**. It's a pathogen that is known to cause proliferative kidney disease (**PKD**) in other parts of the world. It's been identified here in the Great Lakes region. It has been found in Lake Huron waters and in returning adult salmon in Lake Michigan. We had it in our coho salmon yearlings at the Platte River Hatchery but as we tested through the year, they cleared it from their system. Other states have found it as well. It's been found in steelhead broodstock in Indiana along with is being found in Ohio recently, and possibly Pennsylvania, So it's still around. It's not causing any mortality or any symptoms of PKD. It is a very understudied pathogen, and it is very possible that what we have here is a unique genetic strain that does not causing any sort of mortality. The other thing that I wanted to mention on fish health side, is we are working in concert with the folks from the Health Lab of the US Fish and Wildlife Service in La Crosse. They are working with our staff in the Upper Peninsula sampling fish during the late summer early fall **shocking surveys checking for pathogens**. Next year that work will probably move to the Lower Peninsula. The goal is to learn how pathogens are distributed in wild populations. That is a very positive thing to do. This is important overdue work and it's great to see that through this partnership.

**April Simmons, Southern Lake Huron Unit Fisheries Biologist:** From my portion of southern Lake Huron, which extends from Tawas to the Saginaw River. We been doing field work, going to **stakeholder meetings** as usual for this time of year and working on the **sea lamprey treatment** that was conducted on the Rifle River for much of August and has been completed as of last week. We are hoping to start soon working with the brown trout run. I was down for a bit because I got married.

**Dave Fielder, Fisheries Research Biologist:** All I have to add is the Saginaw Fisheries Survey will be underway shortly, so you **might see the research vessels the Tanner and Channel Cat moving around the Bay**. We also just wrapped up our hydro acoustics assessment of outer Saginaw Bay. So a lot of field work right now is here for us.

**Jason Gostiaux, Southern Lake Huron Unit Biologist:** Our management Unit has obtained a **Hummingbird side-scan sonar**. We just recently began using it with the goal of doing some habitat mapping, and quantifying what is in our lakes and streams.

**Brandon Schroder, Michigan Sea Grant Management Team:** A highlight would be the **extensive work being done with youth**. There are several 4H youth programs that we partnered in. The statewide 4H Great Lakes and Natural Resources camp had over 70 youth team leaders from around the state. They got together and explored the Great Lakes and natural resources **stressing science, recreation, careers, fun and fishing**. The kids worked with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Sea Grant staff exploring fisheries science. The kids explored a commercial fishing operation out of Alpena learning about the historical values of the industry and cleaned some fish, and then ate them at a fish fry. Now I will pass to Meaghan since she had a lot of fish camps in the Saginaw Bay region this year.

**Meaghan Gass, Michigan Extension Educator, Saginaw Bay District:** Locally, in the Saginaw Bay region, we host a **series of 4H fishing camps** geared with Project fish learning, and we have some **great partners** from the Lake Huron citizens fishery Advisory Committee and DNR that come out to help with it. We had camps in Arenac, Bay and Saginaw counties. We had **over 70 youth that participated**. Each camp was two days, and all the kids got a rod, reel and loaded tackle box.

But I just wanted to **highlight a specific accomplishment** as a result of the camp. One of the campers, Myra, was outstanding on her first day. She caught more fish than any of the other campers, and all she wanted for her birthday was to go out on Saginaw Bay and do a charter fishing experience. She was able to go out and had a really great time. If any of you are interested, we would love to have you volunteer and **share your knowledge** about Saginaw Bay and the resource with the young campers next year.

**Julie Shafto, Senior Creel Clerk covering the Port of Rogers City and nearby area:** I am involved in a **telemetry transmitter study of Chinook Salmon**. I have not been involved with inserting the transmitters in the fish, but I have been involved in collecting the biological data from salmon which is part of the study. The idea of the study is to learn if and how the Chinook Salmon have adapted to living in the Great Lakes. The fishing season is peaking, and I just wanted to put the word out that northern Lake Huron in the Roger City area is alive with fishing right now. The Chinook salmon fishing has been very good. While I was just sitting here, I got a message from one of my friends, and they caught a **33-pound Chinook** this morning. Since the wind and weather has cooperated recently the fishing has been very good. They are **catching a variety of species** including Chinook, steelhead, lake trout, pinks, cohos, and walleyes. I wanted to stress that for the first time in a long time the field clerks were able to attend the Fisheries Division wide get together last month, which was really great. The Clerks along with the biologists and managers have a **round table discussion** of the issues encountered by working at the ports and in the community. Those meetings are always productive for all of us and, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issues.

**Aaron Switzer, Fish Production Manager:** There are some updates I would like to cover. **Atlantic Salmon** at the Platte River Hatchery are tagged and are down in the big tanks right now doing well. At the Harrietta Hatchery as I discussed at the previous meeting, **BKD** was a severe issue at stocking time, but MSU did formulate a vaccine, and that is being given this week to those young of the year Atlantics that are going to be moving outside soon. **Flavobacterium** issues continue to plague us at the Thompson and Wolf Lake hatcheries. I bring that up for two reasons. One, we are likely going to be **short of steelhead this year** because of this health issue. There are, however, good things about this issue that are occurring. The **Great Lakes Fish Health Committee** has made this a priority and is **investigating** it. There are several questions. Is it something in the lake? Is it something we're doing? Is it how we're handling these fish or eggs that's causing issues? We are also teaming up with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, that **regulates the drugs** that we use in aquaculture. The drugs used to treat Flavobacteria are not approved and currently a **ton of paperwork** must be completed each time the drugs are used. A pivotal study is being done that hopefully will eliminate the paperwork burden, which is good news.

On the **muskie** front, Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery is normally where we rear all the muskies. This year they were reared up to the fingerling size and then shipped up to Thompson at their cool water facility where the muskies are all there growing now. The reason we did that is because **upgrading the Wolf**

**Lake Hatchery has begun**, and the old liners are coming out of the ponds at Wolf Lake. The new liners are coming during the next few weeks and the **ponds will be relined soon**. As usual there are lots of things occurring with fish production.

**Seth Herbst, DNR Fishery Research Manager:** Our **research staff including the managers, biologists, creel clerks, technicians and others** did a comprehensive job sharing the data produced for Saginaw Bay and other areas. We are **committed to continuing that very much needed research**. It has been noted that the implementation of the funding to upgrade the hatcheries, research vessels and other infrastructure is in progress. This is an exciting process that will result in improving the significantly the quality of our work. I will now discuss some of the items not covered earlier today. We're moving forward with **hiring a technician** that's going to be helping with the **Coded Wire Tagging Program**. So as soon as we have a new individual onboard, we will share that information because I know a lot of people around the table assist by providing samples and promoting the program. I know you have worked with Kendra in the past with that program, but she is really busy with the Great Lakes charter boat industry and the new inland guide reporting program, so we needed to address that heavy work demand within the Division. So, we are **working on filling that technician position right now**. We have been **working a lot with Michigan State University** over the last several months finding people that could backfill some of their positions. Many of you may be familiar with **Dr. Kim Scribner** who was a fish geneticist that was active in our MSU partnership for ecosystem research and management program. He **retired** about a year ago. We backfilled that position and a new person that will be starting in January to build upon the work of Dr. Scribner. **Dr Kelly Robinson has moved on** from the MSU Quantitative Fisheries Center. We are working with the Center to hire a replacement. As you can see, we are very active on many fronts. **Frank:** With the huge number of unpredictable outcomes and the ever-changing ecosystems, it will be interesting to follow the future of each Great Lake, especially Lakes Huron, Michigan and Superior.

**Doug Schultz, Lake Huron Basin Coordinator.** I will be providing two updates from persons that could not attend today, Robin DeBruyne and Tim Cwalinski.

**For Robin DeBruyne U.S. Geological Survey Great Lakes Science Center Science Center (USGS) is replacing Ed Roseman as the USGS Lake Huron representative.**

Robin is traveling today and was not able to participate in the meeting. Ed Roseman retired from USGS in April. **Robin has been hired as Ed's replacement** to serve as a Lake Huron biologist. Ed has big shoes to fill, but Robin will be continuing his legacy of collaborative research and **public outreach to Lake Huron**. The fall hydroacoustic and bottom trawl forage fish surveys are planned for September and October. If there are any questions about the forage surveys or other work in Lake Huron, Robin would be happy to comment. More detailed updates of the survey results will be provided at upcoming meetings.

**For Tim Cwalinski, Northern Lake Huron Unit Supervisor:** Tim is conducting a **major stream survey** today and could not participate in the meeting. Tim and Neal Godby and their crew have been conducting a **mussel survey in the drawdown flats at the Cornwall Flooding Dam site**. This work is ongoing and challenging. **Doug's own Report:** The US Fish and Wildlife Service contacted me and indicated they are conducting **eDNA sampling** of the Saginaw River to determine if any **invasive Asian Carps** are entering the river. Thank you very much, everybody for your time today, the time

being travel and the dialog, very much appreciated. Very happy to see you all here in person, and looking forward to the next time we exchange ideas.

**Frank:** Now that we are completing the meeting I want to give a special thanks to Jay's Sporting Goods and Manager Scott Lutz and Bryan Darland for their special effort to make sure the meeting room was set up perfectly and digitally equipped to make the meeting a success. A very special thanks goes to Meaghan Gass for her outstanding ability to keep the in-person/Zoom hybrid meeting running smoothly. I want to thank all the presenters and participants for taking the time to attend and allowing all of us to exchange ideas. Finally, a special thanks goes to the Law Enforcement Officers that watched over us at the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:31 pm