

Warmwater Resources Steering Committee Meeting

4/30/2025

10:30am-4:30pm

Hybrid Format: Jay's Sporting Goods (Clare) and Microsoft Teams

In-person attendees: Joe Bednar, Justin Bopp, Jim Burke, Jim Diana, Matt Diana, Jim Felgenauer, Jan-Michael Hessenauer, Heather Hettinger, Mark Johnson, Dan Kimmel, Cory Kovacs, Mica Kromrey, Duke LeBaron, Christian LeSage, Lucas Nathan, Melissa Nichols, David Steenstra, Randy VanDam, Brennen Wright, Bruce Yinger

Online Attendees: Spencer Berman, Andrew Briggs, Dave Caroffino, Randy Claramunt, Tim Cwalinski, Patrick Hanchin, Matt Klungle, Brad Koehn, Frank Krist, Joe Nohner, Dave Reault

- **Centrarchid Committee Overview:** Heather Hettinger and Matt Diana (DNR Fisheries) presented information regarding the formulation of the new centrarchid committee. The presentation included the history of the committee, why centrarchid management is important, habitat issues, and current panfish and black bass management in Michigan. Matt touched on some highlights of the 2022 panfish survey that was sent to anglers. Discussion focused on looking into angling pressure on black bass and panfish during spawning windows. Committee members provided positive feedback in support of a panfish and black bass management plan and noted that balancing biological benefits and regulatory complexity is important for any regulatory considerations.
- **Round Goby / Bass Concerns:** Lucas Nathan, Jan-Michael Hessenauer, and Melissa Nichols (DNR Fisheries) presented on the concerns from the Burt Lake Preservation Association regarding Round Goby impacts on Smallmouth Bass in Burt Lake. Fisheries Division shared a set of evaluation options that could be pursued to better understand the potential impacts to Smallmouth Bass. The committee was split into three groups in person and two virtually to discuss which recommendations each person preferred. After group discussion was over, each committee member expressed which option they would prefer to see done and why to the committee. Most identified adult surveys, using Status and Trends protocols, as the most comprehensive evaluation option, but noted those surveys are costly, may not provide targeted information on bass recruitment, and if completed by DNR would be done out of order in the Status and Trends rotation compared to other large lakes regionally. Bass recruitment surveys were identified as another supported option that may be more cost effective and targeted to

the concern at hand. However, there currently is no Centrarchid Management Plan that defines Smallmouth Bass life history sampling strategies and no past data comparisons available for comparisons to be made, particularly for sub-adults. Fisheries Division staff and members of Burt Lake Preservation Association will meet to discuss Committee feedback and identify next steps.

- **Aquatic Herbicides:** Mica Kromrey and Joe Nohner (DNR Fisheries) shared an overview of the importance of aquatic vegetation and the permitting process for aquatic nuisance control (ANC) treatments. Mica shared details of a new project entailing digitizing old ANC treatment data to analyze patterns and trends. The Committee discussed and shared concerns related to pesticide applications and the role of DNR in the permitting process.
- **Regulation Update:** Lucas Nathan (DNR Fisheries) provided upcoming regulation proposals that will be presented to the NRC in 2025. Regulation proposals include Walleye Protected Slot Limits (PSL) on a subset of Upper Peninsula Lakes, modifying Northern Pike regulations on one lake, and a recommendation on Underwater Spearfishing. Committee members provided feedback on the proposed regulations and asked questions related to the proposed changes.

Next meeting tentatively to be held in spring 2026

For additional information or questions, please contact Lucas Nathan (nathanl@michigan.gov)