

**Lake Superior Fisheries Management Plan – Advisory Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 15, 2017, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (CDT)**  
**WITC – Ashland, WI**

**Panel Members Present**

Organization

Advisor to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission  
Advisor to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission  
Apostle Islands Sportfishing Association  
Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa  
Brule River Sportsmen's Club, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation  
Charter Captain  
Chequamegon Food Cooperative  
Clean Wisconsin  
Douglas County Fish & Game League  
GLIFWC  
Isaak Walton League/Duluth Chapter (W.J. McCabe Chapter)  
Lake Superior Steelhead Association  
Northland College  
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa  
Western Lake Superior Trollers Association  
Wild Rivers Chapter Trout Unlimited  
Wisconsin DNR - Office of Great Waters

Participant

Al House  
Bruce Prentice  
Rob Jones  
Lorrie Salawater  
Ken Lundberg  
Darryl Fenner  
Steve Sandstrom  
Susan Hedman  
Tom Johnson  
Bill Mattes, Ben Michaels  
John Carr  
Mike Pitan, Keith Behn  
Randy Lehr  
Chad Abel  
Jim VanLandschoot  
Luke Kavajecz  
Michele Wheeler

**Panel Members Absent**

Organization

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce  
Bayfield County Land and Water Conservation Department  
Bodin Fisheries  
Douglas County Land and Water Conservation Department  
Superior Rivers Watershed Association  
Lake Superior Commercial Fishing Board  
Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve  
Northwest Rod & Gun  
Wisconsin Sea Grant

Participant

Mary McPhedridge  
Ben Dufford  
Beta Bodin  
Christine Ostern  
Tony Janisch  
Craig Hoopman  
Hannah Ramage  
Dave Sorenson  
Titus Seilheimer

**DNR Fisheries Management and Law Enforcement Staff Present**

Name

Amie Egstad  
Willie Fetzer  
Terry Margenau  
Brad Ray  
Paul Piszczek

Title

Conservation Warden  
Great Lakes Fisheries Specialist  
Lake Superior Fisheries Supervisor  
Lake Superior Biologist  
Lake Superior Tributaries Biologist

**Purpose:** Develop draft objectives for Goals 1 and 2.

### **Summary**

Paul Piszczek called the meeting to order and asked Board members to introduce themselves. Paul also asked the members if any major omissions or errors occurred in the October 16, 2017 meeting notes that were previously distributed to the Board. He acknowledged Lorrie Salawater's post hoc comment about the Tribe having its own management planning and governance over the shared resource and its sovereignty in the State's planning process; the Tribe need not abide by the State's plan. Susan Hedman noted to add "meeting" at the end of the first paragraph. No other comments were made, and Paul described the meeting agenda.

Willie Fetzer and Brad Ray facilitated the Goal 1 objectives discussion using the Goal statement shown on the PowerPoint slides, and Willie made real-time changes/notes in slides as comments and suggestions were voiced. A comment was made whether best management practices and land use patterns would be items to meet in the goal, and Willie noted that those can become "tactics." A brief discussion on the wording of the goal occurred, where Chad Abel asked whether "protect, maintain, and improve" are necessary. Darryl Fenner suggested to retain "improve," and Brad clarified that some areas would be "maintained" and some would be "improved." Brad added that the Goal can be word-smithed as we progress through the process. Willie introduced six draft objectives that conceptually arose from previous meetings; discussion occurred for each objective, as follows:

*Objective 1: Maintain existing refuges and restricted areas with the bounds of the Lake Superior Fish Agreement that provide relief from harvest and protection of spawning and nursery grounds.*

Susan Hedman asked about the Lake Superior Fishing Agreement, and Brad Ray explained that it dictates how the resources are used by various parties, and includes fishing grounds, fishing timing, etc. The Agreement is independent of the Lake Superior Fisheries Management Plan this group is currently helping to develop. Regarding refuges, only the Devils Island and Gull Island refuges exist in Wisconsin waters. Al House noted that the refuges were established according to knowledge of each area's dynamics, although a need exists for more information on the Devils Island refuge. Randy Lehr questioned the reference to the Agreement, and Brad responded that the restricted areas are established by the Agreement and therefore necessary to include.

*Objective 2: Identify, evaluate, restore and/or enhance spawning and nursery habitat for game and non-game species.*

The group discussed the need for additional details for this objective, such as addressing tributaries and riparian zones. Steve Sandstrom asked for clarification on the geographic scope of the Plan and Fishing Agreement. Although Brad Ray mentioned the Plan and Fishing Agreement occupy the same geographic area, Chad Abel commented that the Plan is more broad since the Fishing Agreement is specific to Lake Superior (not the tributaries). Michele Wheeler suggested a stressor ID could be included as a "tactic," and a process to identify stressors could inform the needs of this objective. Darryl Fenner added that a prioritization system could be developed to better focus our efforts (e.g., the Bois Brule River is a known

high-quality resource). Bruce Prentice suggested developing a map of known and unknown spawning areas, and Brad agreed that we need to increase our knowledge and determine gaps. Jim VanLandschoot cautioned that identification and prioritization could be a lengthy endeavor, yet Willie Fetzer noted it would help identify opportunities. Jim asked whether the priorities would come back to the stakeholders for review, and Brad affirmed. Al House suggested including some language regarding partnership development with public and private organizations, and Brad noted this would make sense as a “tactic.” Given the abundance of available data, Michele recommended collaborating on data compilation for this objective.

Group discussion continued regarding in-lake spawning /nursery habitat additions, such as reefs, turf mats, etc. Perhaps materials for this could be re-purposed from Superfund sites or Areas of Concern.

Steve Sandstrom asked if we can address individual ideas and create benchmarks of success as a commitment to reporting success. Willie and Brad replied that this might fall under the “transparency” Goal. Al House expressed concern that some benchmarks in the previous plan were not attained, and Willie noted that the Plan we are developing should have reporting requirements.

Several other points were made by the group. Jim VanLandschoot noted a relative limitation of spawning habitat along the south shore, yet this could be offset by north shore spawning areas likely covered in the Minnesota Lake Superior Fisheries Plan. Darryl Fenner suggested a need to differentiate any “tactics” between warmwater and coldwater (e.g., management possibilities of Walleye in Chequamegon Bay). Randy Lehr asked whether water quality is included as “habitat,” and although Willie Fetzer related this more to physical habitat, Brad Ray commented that the Plan can include whatever is agreed-to by the group. Susan Hedman and Luke Kavajecz suggested considering water temperature and water level, respectively, and Willie noted water level and its associated habitat effects are information needs. Ken Lundberg mentioned the limited ability to control water level, and perhaps information is needed on impacts (e.g., can we minimize damages by managing riparian areas relative to water levels). Michele Wheeler observed that the conversation seemed to revolve around the need for a resource inventory. Willie Fetzer recapitulated these points of discussion and moved to Objective 3.

*Objectives 3: Minimize point and non-point sources of pollution and land use change impacts to fish in tributaries, estuaries, and embayments.*

Darryl Fenner suggested a continuance of land protection through easements, and this could be absorbed within a prioritization system. Further, he expressed a need to work with other partners toward establishing easements. Randy Lehr recommended including hydrology and flow regimes, and Darryl added this could be an outreach topic for various partners.

*Objective 4: Assist in studies and projects that will result in evaluation of impacts, remediation, restoration, and removal of contaminated sediments in watershed, tributaries and nearshore waters which have degraded fish habitat, and threaten human health and the environment.*

Steve Sandstrom suggested adding atmospheric influences such as mercury. Al House added that good water quality information/data is being produced by the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, which can be compiled and incorporated into management practices. Michele Wheeler noted the availability of Lake Superior Lakewide Management Plan's Critical Chemical Reduction Milestones document, as well as the need to consider microplastics (and their characteristics in the food web), and other emerging chemicals of concern. Randy Lehr acknowledged the need to be conscious of any requisite water sampling.

*Objective 5: Minimize impacts of dams and other waterway alterations that limit the movement of fish in rivers and degraded habitat and restore habitat and/or connections previously degraded from these alterations while limiting available habitat to undesirable non-native species.*

Various views were expressed relative to fish movement limitations. Jim VanLandschoot suggested including beaver dams, which were included in the Minnesota Plan. Paul Piszczek replied that this depends on what is being managed for. For example, deep pool habitat is extremely limited in south shore streams and often occur concomitant with beaver. Beaver ponds could offer good growth capacity for species such as Brook Trout. Al House mentioned the potential to use decision support tools that can inform cost-benefit vs. risk.

Darryl Fenner expressed concern of commercial netting impacts to nearshore species by-catch (e.g., herring in the fall season); location and duration play roles in fish movement. Willie Fetzer acknowledged the importance of by-catch, yet noted the information is already being collected; by-catch will be retained here for future re-visitation. Brad Ray and Chad Abel mentioned that herring nets have little by-catch and are very efficient at herring-only capture.

The importance of partnerships was once again voiced, specifically with Department of Transportation, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Department of Agriculture - Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Towns, and Counties. Chad Abel added that county land conservation departments need to be informed relative to the integrity of temporary stream crossings, although as Randy Lehr noted, this could be confounded by varying jurisdictions within county government (forestry, roads, etc.). Michele Wheeler commented on the need for additional education for road-stream crossings, particularly as "quick-fix" crossings are frequently inconsistent with stream needs. In addition to road stream crossings, Darryl Fenner recommended outreach within and among resource management programs (e.g., fisheries should consult land conservation staff) for roadside ditching and other concerns.

*Objective 6: Minimize impacts to fish, wildlife, and other aquatic habitat from construction and maintenance of in-water structures, lake-bed/stream-bed modifications (e.g., dredgings, filling), and filling behind bulkhead lines, and restore habitat previously degraded from these activities.*

Various points were voiced by the group. Al House recommended reviewing the track record of modifications and techniques, such as the Chequamegon Bay ore dock and its use for shore fishing. Darryl Fenner added the Washburn coal dock, as impacted by the recent storm, and its availability to anglers to fish deeper water not offered elsewhere in the area.

Brad Ray concluded the meeting's discussion by asking for items that were missed in the habitat objectives. Jim VanLandschoot suggested monitoring other state management plans and determine their consistency and communications. For example, Wisconsin fish are stocked in Wisconsin waters, yet those fish use and are subject to harvest in Minnesota waters. Darryl Fenner noted that not every habitat is suitable for all species (e.g., Whittlesey Creek may not be appropriate for Coaster Brook Trout). He also spoke of the group's contribution of ideas and asked for Wisconsin DNR's thoughts. Willie Fetzer and Brad did not find the need to add new ideas, as those of importance are already incorporated based on discussions in previous meetings. Al House was curious if an integrated management plan exists for the entire lake. The group affirmed, as the Lake Superior Fish Community Objectives serves as an integrated plan. Randy Lehr asked about invasive species, and Brad noted their likely to be addressed in other Goals and Objectives.

The dates for the next four meetings were announced, as follows:

- Monday, December 18, 2017
- Thursday, January 11, 2018
- Tuesday, February 6, 2018
- Monday, March 5, 2018

The intent is to complete our discussions of all Goals by the end of the series of meetings. **Similar to tonight's format, the next meeting will focus on establishing objectives for Goal 2, and the group was asked to prepare for that discussion.** Goal 3 may be introduced at the next meeting, if time permits.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Notes by Paul Piszczek