

Lake Huron Committee

Ypsilanti Marriott at Eagle Crest
Ypsilanti, Michigan
22-23 March 2004

Executive Summary

Members: Chair Dave Reid (OMNR), Vice Chair Tammy Newcomb (MDNR), Tom Gorenflo (OMNR)

Highlights: Lake trout reproduce in Parry Sound and other areas of Georgian Bay and North Channel. Lake trout survival is improving. Approximately 80 % of chinook salmon are naturally reproduced. Young rainbow smelt and alewife are doing well; adult numbers are low. Traps removed 33% of sea lamprey in the St. Marys River. Commercial and recreational catches are down, and there is concern for the future of whitefish fisheries.

1. Pulse Stocking of Lake Trout

a. At this stage of the consultation process, the assumptions are that the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority and the Michigan Citizen Advisory Committee will support pulse stocking, that the USFWS hatcheries need to know in May 2004 to plan for 2005, that CORA will be more supportive if first pulse is in the north, and that the Togue will not be permitted to travel any distance (due to mechanical issues). CORA noted that considerable internal consultation is still required, as this stocking change will affect lake trout harvest limits and associated regulations that are developed annually under the 2000 Consent Decree.

b. The Lake Committee will charge the LHTC's Lake Trout Task Group with developing a plan for benchmarks and assessment to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the pulse stocking program. The assessment plan results will be shared with CORA and the Michigan Citizen Advisory Committee throughout the pulse stocking process. The idea is to provide reassurance to the stakeholders that if we seem to be going down a path that indicates failure that we will either return to status quo or seek an alternative approach.

2. St. Marys River Task Group

a. The LHC directed that by summer 2004, the St. Marys Task Group recommend measures to harmonize walleye sport fishing regulations for 2006, after reviewing reasoning for current regulations and generating options. Enforcement staff should participate in development of recommendations. The St. Marys Task Group should recommend a walleye management and assessment plan, scoping timelines by summer 2004. Modeling, predicted results, and an assessment plan would form part of the process. Note that this effort will take place in the larger context of a vision for a management plan that encompasses the St. Marys River aquatic community within the context of the Lake Huron Fish Community Objectives. Much discussion was held

regarding the need for Fish Community Objectives for the St. Marys River versus a management plan. It was recommended that the Lake Committee look to the rationalization for regulations/management planning from other places where boundary waters exist. Furthermore, notice was made that there needs to be consideration of the commercial fishery as well as the recreational fishery. The issue of the sturgeon fishery logistics in terms of CITES permits required for fish caught in Canadian waters brought into Michigan was also brought forward for consideration in joint management planning.

b. Recommendations are welcome for other species, if it is the Task Group's judgment that such regulatory changes will not be controversial. Otherwise the Task Group should prioritize species for future attention. Michigan prefers to tackle regulatory changes for all species as a package rather than one at a time.

c. Research priorities should be developed and questions provided at the summer LHTC meeting. After research priorities have been developed, LHC and Task Group discussed the possibility of seeking grants for providing financial and staff assistance in developing a river-wide research and/or management plans.

d. Stakeholder involvement should be re-established. Aim for a public meeting for the fall of 2004.

3. Environmental Objectives

a. The LHC accepted draft environmental objectives, thanking Arunas Liskaukas (OMNR) for his leadership in producing them. The Lake Huron Committee will conduct a final review of the document and LHC agencies will seek public input on the draft prior to submitting for GLFC publication.

b. Before the summer LHTC meeting, the LHC will name members to a new Environmental Objectives Task Group. As needed, outsiders may be appointed to the Task Group. It may function like the Lake Superior Aquatic Committee.

4. Technical Committee Priority List

a. Mark Ebener (GLFC, CORA) will provide the LHC and LHTC with a copy of an LHC sturgeon mission statement from the past.

b. The LHTC will review recommendations from the lake herring workshop for relevance to Lake Huron.

c. LHTC/LHC will review LHTC priorities at summer meeting.

d. David McLeish brought forward again the potential for developing a lakewide sturgeon management plan. A decision was made to address this at the summer meeting as well.

5. State of the Lake 2006

a. The LHC will suggest to the CLC that the state of the lake be updated every 5 years with a report produced every 10 years.

b. For the LHC, the state of the lake report will cover to 2004, reported in 2006.

6. Sea Lamprey Target (attachment)

The LHC approved an interim target of 74,000, with ultimate goal of 30,000 sea lamprey, but noted that the 2000 sea lamprey target in the FCOs has not been achieved.

7. Sea Lamprey Stocking (attachment)

The LHC approved the GLFC plan to prepare for stocking Lower Lakes sea lamprey in the Upper Lakes by screening for emergency and restricted diseases. Lamprey found to be positive for *Heterosporis* will not be stocked. GLFHC advice will be sought if other emergency or restricted pathogens are detected. Suggested that CLC be asked to coordinate the identification and distribution of pathogens by basin.

8. Consume Model

This summer, the LHTC will recommend a plan for use, ownership, and budget etc. for maintenance, upkeep and use of the consumption model. Ji He may be the person for maintaining this model but he will require lab work assistance.

9. Chinook Marking Study

The LHTC will recommend to LHC future action and development of a study plan after this, the last year of the chinook marking study.

10. CAP Proposals

Potential proposals for CAP funding include a whitefish aging workshop and any further collaborative work on EOs.

11. Summer LHTC Meeting

The LHTC will meet this summer in Bay City, MI at the Bay Valley Resort <http://www.bayvalley.com/>.