

## **Council of Lake Committees**

18-19 October, 2005  
Doubletree Hotel Detroit Metro Airport  
Romulus, MI 48174

### **Executive Summary**

**Attendees:** Kurt Newman, Chair (MI DNR), Rob MacGregor, Vice-Chair (OMNR), Bob Adair (USFWS), Jim Dexter (MI DNR), Tom Gorenflo (CORA), Rick Hoopes (PAFBC), Bill Horns (WI DNR), Neil Kmiecik (GLIFWC), Roger Knight (OH DNR), Steve LaPan (NYDEC), Dave McLeish (OMNR), Tammy Newcomb (MI DNR), Steve Scott (MI DNR), Stuart Shipman (IN DNR), Jack Wingate (MN DNR).

**Guests:** Kofi Fynn-Aikins (USFWS), Jack Bails (GLFT), Gerry Barnhart (NYDEC), Dean Bavington (U of M), Dave Borgeson (MI DNR), Dave Bornholdt (USGS), Brian Breidert (IN DNR), Dale Burkett (GLFC), Leon Carl (USGS), Gavin Christie (GLFC), Alec Denys (OMNR), John Dettmers (IL NHS), Tracy Copeland (USFWS), Mark Ebener (CORA), Jill Finster (GLFC), Marc Gaden (GLFC), Chris Goddard (GLFC), Sue Haseltine (USGS), Gerry Jackson (USFWS), Suzette Kimball (USGS), Roger Kenyon (PAFBC), Chuck Krueger (GLFC), Patrick Leahy (USGS), Heather Lutz (GLFC), Robert Matthews (GLFC), Allison Niggemyer (GLFC), Jaci Savino (USGS), Sean Sisler (GLFC), Kelley Smith (MI DNR), Roy Stein (OSU), Mike Twohey (USFWS), Everett Wilson (USFWS).

### **Allegheny National Fish Hatchery**

Tracy Copeland, hatchery manager of the Allegheny National Fish Hatchery, informed the council that in 2005 the hatchery produced 144,000 Klondike strain yearlings, 384,000 Seneca Lake strain yearlings, 40,000 Superior Marquette strain yearlings, and 60 Seneca Lake strain yearlings for brood-stock. Infrastructure improvements such as variable frequency drives that save water and energy, improved bird barriers, and a new chiller were completed. The hatchery also made operational improvements including regular necropsies of fish mortalities, disinfection and vaccine procedures, enhanced brood-stock diets, and a closer collaboration with Lamar Fish Health Center.

In late April 2005, the hatchery experienced a catastrophic three-hour power shutdown resulting in the loss of 45% of the lake trout at the hatchery. The hatchery developed new protocols from this incident including notifying a stand-by electrician any time there is a nonstandard operation. A feasibility study is being performed by the Conservation Fund and the Freshwater Institute to review a change in their water supply from 100% well water to a combination of well and surface water.

In August, Infectious Pancreatic Necrosis virus (IPN) was detected during standard fish health monitoring. IPN was confirmed in September 2005 at the Lamar Fish Health Center. IPN was not found during the November 2004 inspection, which suggests that the introduction of IPN occurred after that inspection. The hatchery submitted ten individual

fish tissue and water samples to the USGS lab for follow-up tests. The lab found IPN in the water, but not in the fish tissue samples. No outbreak or mortalities have occurred since IPN was detected at the hatchery. Potential pathways for the spread of IPN are feces from birds (mallards passed through the new bird barriers) and/or the mist from Kinzua Dam. Unfortunately, there is no treatment for this virus, which is highly transferable. Consequently, all fish in the hatchery, including the Seneca Lake broodstock, will be destroyed. The hatchery will be disinfected using established procedures.

The Allegheny Hatchery will not be able to provide yearling lake trout to the lower lakes this May. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) agreed to provide 105,000 yearlings to Lake Ontario from inland stocking efforts. These yearlings will be coded wire tagged at the NYSDEC Bath Fish Hatchery, and Allegheny will work with the NYSDEC to disinfect the tagging trailers before their use. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) sent 470,000 Klondike strain eggs to White River National Fish Hatchery in Vermont, and the NYSDEC will try to ship 500,000 eyed eggs of the Finger Lake/Seneca strain to White River National Fish Hatchery for incubation and rearing. As a result, lake trout are expected to be stocked at normal levels in 2007. The USFWS is seeking a source of disease-free brood-stock for future production at Allegheny and the NYSDEC offered to retain some of the 2004 Seneca strain for this purpose.

Chuck Krueger asked if the Allegheny Hatchery also stocks brook trout, because they are a carrier of IPN. Copeland replied that Allegheny has a partnership agreement with Pennsylvania to rear brook trout, because Pennsylvania was unable to meet their stocking needs. The brook trout hatchery has two inspections a year and IPN was never detected. Chris Goddard inquired as to when the hatchery would be operating again. Copeland thought the hatchery should have eggs by fall of next year, but the operation depends on the recommendations from the Freshwater Institute and if the hatchery is disease-free. Tammy Newcomb wondered if the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tested the stocked fish at Paint Bank. Copeland and Kofi Fynn-Aikins explained that they are confident that IPN was not at the Allegheny Hatchery previously and that the fish stocked last spring have a high survival rate.

### **Status of Sea Lampreys, Progress Toward Targets, and the Sturgeon Protocol**

Gavin Christie briefly summarized the status of sea lampreys and marking rates for each lake. In Lake Ontario, the spawner population has been at target levels in recent years. Spawner abundance increased slightly in 2003 as did this year's marking rates. The estimate of sea lampreys in Lake Erie increased, but the confidence limits around this estimate were very large because of trap failures. Lake Huron has had low spawner abundance numbers and marking rates since treatment began on the St. Marys River in 1999. These numbers are still above target, but are declining consistently. Lake Michigan saw a significant decline in spawner numbers, but did not see the same decline in marking rates. This drop in spawner abundance is consistent with the effects of the first treatment of the Manistique River. Estimates of spawning-phase sea lampreys in Lake Superior increased after several years of decline. Wounding rates have consistently

been above target levels and are not showing improvement. Christie reminded the council that these results lag treatment efforts by a couple of years.

Next, Christie reviewed the 2005 stream treatments for each of the lakes. Lake Superior streams received the most treatments during the previous 20 years. Treatment on the lower Nipigon River was to be deferred because of low stream flow, but some hot spots were treated with granular Bayluscide. Likewise, treatments on the Jackfish and Pic Rivers were deferred because of low flows, although they may be treated during the remaining weeks of the field season. On Lake Michigan, the Muskegon River and tributaries along the shore and streams in Green Bay were treated. The Peshtigo River treatment was unsuccessful due to high flows released from a dam. The river will be re-treated next year. Granular Bayluscide treatments were increased on the St. Marys River and other key areas. Lakes Erie and Ontario received similar stream treatments as previous years.

As for 2006 treatments, the commission and the Sea Lamprey Integration Committee are analyzing larval population assessments to rank streams. The commission will try to maximize suppression of sea lamprey toward targets in all of the lakes.

Christie explained that the lake sturgeon protocol is a modification in the application of lampricide to reduce mortality on juvenile sturgeon from lampricide treatments. The maximum application dose is reduced based on toxicological studies from 1.5 X the minimum lethal concentration (MLC) for sea lampreys to 1.2 X MLC. Studies determined that young-of-the-year sturgeon greater than 100 mm in length were the least susceptible to lampricide. Based on this finding, the sturgeon protocol prescribes treating streams after August 1, when yearlings would have grown past this 100 mm threshold. Lake sturgeon protocol was first introduced in 1998 in lakes Michigan and Superior. During 2005, the states of Michigan and Wisconsin agreed to use a modified protocol on Lake Michigan streams to reduce risks of larvae surviving treatments, because sea lamprey numbers were above target levels. Treatments were applied at normal concentrations but scheduled after August 1 to protect young sturgeon as much as possible. During 2006, the commission recommends similar changes on the other lakes, to ensure effective treatments.

Kurt Newman wondered if Christie needed a decision from the council on implementing the sturgeon protocol. Christie was not looking for a decision specifically but wanted to introduce the idea for discussion. Bill Horns wondered how the sturgeon protocol came about and what would happen if a lake committee found sea lamprey control more important than protecting sturgeon. The protocol was established because of growing concern for the sturgeon, the commission's commitment to saving native species, and the effects that were observed on sturgeon by researchers. Gavin agreed that the lake committees would have a lot of say in the implementation of the sturgeon protocol, but reminded the council that the basin-wide effects also need to be considered. Gerry Jackson informed the council that a petition to list the sturgeon as an endangered species could be established soon, due to the fact that the Center for Biological Diversity has been interested in sturgeon issues recently. Christie agreed with Neil Kmiecik that

discussions would be necessary with the Bad River tribe regarding the relaxation of the sturgeon protocol. At Bob Adair's suggestion, Christie informed the council that, through work with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), there was a risk that some of the sturgeon protocol treatments were ineffective. Continued research into this is necessary. Selection of streams for treatment during 2006 will be completed during December. Based on these decisions, changes in application of the sturgeon protocol will be negotiated directly with the states/province governing the affected rivers. These changes will be reported to the Lake Committees during the spring meetings.

### **Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (1998) – Reauthorization**

Gerry Jackson updated the council about the reauthorization of the Restoration Act. In August, the Council of Great Lakes Fishery Agencies and Jackson, Charles Wooley, and Craig Czarnecki of USFWS met to discuss the Act. From that meeting, Kelley Smith revised the 1998 version of the Act to include important changes. Jackson announced that the USFWS is pleased with this draft and he addressed the modifications with the council. The changes made to the draft were additional wording regarding ecosystems, partnerships, and the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, and the substitution of Regional Director of Region 3 for the Director of the USFWS as the representative for the Service. Jackson identified this as a possible problem with Congress, and acknowledged another route would be to have the director officially delegate this responsibility to the Regional Director, the designated lead within the USFWS on Great Lakes issues. This would mean an increased ability to manage the issues and make implementation more efficient. The second major change was the addition of the concept of "special projects". Jackson said that Joy Mulinex (Great Lakes Task Force) pointed out that the "special projects" wording could be of concern to Congress and the bill should be more specific when defining these projects. Examples of special projects could include regional cormorant issues, mass marking, and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Third, it was deemed important to bring in a wildlife component into the restoration act process (membership) to gain broader support for the passage of the bill. The USFWS will develop a MOU that will specifically outline the set up of the committee and how it will operate. The committee will operate under the direction of the USFWS, which hopes that integrated projects will be created, forwarded, and chosen for funding. Jackson reported that Mulinex had concerns about the reports prescribed in the bill. She offered that more reports of an informal nature would be better than trying to push formal reports through Congress. Sponsors have been lined up and no opposition to the bill is expected. The new draft proposes to hold the appropriations at a 10% increase above the amount originally authorized for proposals, special projects, and administration. The 2002 Report to Congress has been submitted for approval and is being reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget. Jack Wingate added that additional organizations have expressed support for the bill, such as Ducks Unlimited and National Wildlife Federation.

### **In Camera Discussion: CLC Support of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act**

Kurt Newman reviewed the progress on the reauthorization since the last council meeting in April. Newman discussed the proposed changes in language, remaining questions the council has with regard to USFWS commitment, and his recommendations on how the council should proceed. Issues the council discussed: whether the reports should be made

to Congress or if they should be less formal in nature; what the USFWS's priority is for funding the Act and what their priority is for Great Lakes programs on a national scale; why special projects do not have a review process or a funding match; if the MOU should be written prior to agreement of the council to support the Act; what level of support the council has for the Act, and; if formal written comments from the council and the CGLFA need to be provided. Noted during these discussions was the wording in the previous bill that specifically identified the Council of Lake Committees; whereas the current version does not.

### **CLC Response to U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Reauthorization Initiative**

The council concluded the in camera discussion with a lack of resolution. Newman will draft a letter to the USFWS and Mulinex outlining the council's concerns with the document. The council believes that if there is a strong commitment to the development of the MOU, many of the remaining issues can be addressed and detailed in the MOU. The council would like to see a high level of support for the Act from the new director, Dale Hall. Jackson will organize a meeting with council members, Mamie Parker, and Director Hall.

### **Coordination Activities Program to Science Transfer Program**

Chuck Krueger reviewed the purpose of the Coordination Activities Program (CAP). Krueger explained that there was confusion about the overlap in the Fishery Research Program's purpose and CAP's purpose. Most of the programs funded by CAP were workshops, publications, symposiums, and databases. The commission met in June and established that it was committed to retaining the function of CAP, but needed to minimize the confusion, maximize the effectiveness of the delivery of CAP's function, and better define projects that are eligible for funding through CAP. At the meeting, the Commissioners revised and adopted a new terms of reference for the Board of Technical Experts (BOTE) that placed CAP within BOTE and renamed it the Science Transfer Program (STP). The STP's purpose is to promote partnerships by communicating information about the Great Lakes ecosystem and its fish communities, sea lamprey control, and emerging ecological concepts and technologies. With the placement within BOTE, the council will now recommend projects to BOTE, which will recommend STP projects to the commission. The commission hopes that this process will reduce confusion and streamline the program's administration. Types of programs the STP will fund are: science transfer and training workshops; database development and maintenance; scientific review papers; management planning; symposia; publication projects; and other projects that facilitate the use of information among agencies. Krueger then reviewed the project ranking criteria and the STP schedule, which is similar to CAP's schedule. Krueger needs the council to decide on a timeframe for reviewing the projects: late July when the project proposals are due from the project leaders, or in October when BOTE recommends projects for funding. *The council decided that the commission should send the proposals to the council chairs in late July, and the chairs will route the proposals to the lake committee chairs or designee so that in early September the chairs will have results back to the commission.*

Krueger also needed the council's recommendations on the two projects submitted, *Contract Expertise for the Development of a Mass Fish Marking Implementation Plan for the Great Lakes* and for *Synopsis and GIS Atlas of the Parasites of Great Lakes Fishes*. The council postponed a decision about the Mass Marking proposal until after the Mass Marking presentation. ***The council was modestly supportive of the GIS Atlas of Parasites proposal.***

### **Mass Marking Program for the Great Lakes Basin**

Mark Ebener explained the purpose of the mass marking project proposal submitted to STP. The proposal is to fund an expert from the west coast to help with the implementation, staffing, costs, and logistics of the mass marking program in the Great Lakes basin. The expert has experience with mass marking of coregonids and will be retiring in the near future, making him available for our use. Mass marking on the west coast also includes manual marking, so the expert would be able to help the Implementation Task Force identify and work with areas that cannot support a trailer. Ebener informed the council that the Implementation Task Force needs agencies to reaffirm their support of the program and identify senior hatchery managers to aid in the implementation phase. Ebener also explained that the Implementation Task Force was confused by which project the council would like to see implemented (page 18 of the briefing book) and how the council would like to see the projects prioritized when phased-in (page 19 of the briefing book). ***The council agrees to support funding for the proposed project through STP, but will hold off on deciding the plans for the phase-in until the implementation plan is finished. Newman will write a letter to the members of the Council of Great Lakes Fishery Agencies, asking them to reaffirm their commitment to the mass marking program by recommending a senior hatchery manager for the Implementation Task Force. Jackson will advise the USFWS to assign a lake trout expert to the Implementation Task Force.***

### **IJC Upper Lakes Plan of Study for the Review of the Regulation of Outflows from Lake Superior: Impacts on Fisheries**

Dale Burkett announced that, although the commission hoped to have someone attend the meeting representing the IJC Study Team, none were available. The Plan of Study described studies needed to examine improvements in Lake Superior's outflow regulations. It also described studies that would increase the IJC's understanding about how the St. Clair River may affect river flow and water levels of lakes Michigan, Huron, and Superior. Burkett explained that the river system of St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and the Detroit River (all of which connect Lake Huron and Lake Erie) has been disturbed by human activities that affect the flow of the rivers. The IJC is concerned that the relationship among the water levels of lakes Michigan, Huron, and Erie continues to change. The Plan of Study will address the issues with the water levels and flow of rivers and will comprise the upper lakes, including interconnecting channels, and the Niagara River. If the plan is accepted by the IJC and receives funding from the U.S. and Canada, the council could participate in the Public Interest Advisory Group that would be formed as a part of the study. The council could also send coordinated letters or comments to the Study Team. The commission will continue to attend the public meetings and work with the council chair to coordinate comments and letters as necessary. Tammy Newcomb

expressed Michigan DNR's interest in the Lake Superior outflows and would like to make sure the Lake Huron Committee works with the commission on this project. Burkett agreed that the commission should coordinate with the lake committees. Newman thought that this could be a potential topic for discussion at the common session at the next lake committee meetings.

### **USGS Large Vessel Research Program**

Patrick Leahy (Director, USGS) acknowledged the importance of the MOU between the USGS and the council, as well as the coordination of the USGS with the lake committees. The USGS has a strong commitment to the Deepwater Science Program, as seen in their investment in the science needed for efficient management, the investment in scientific staff (created seven FTE's in 2004), investment in vessel needs (Eastern Region invested \$600,000 for maintenance for 2004-2006 and all vessels were recently hauled out for maintenance), and improved survey designs to better meet partner needs. The survey also established a "working capital fund" to reserve monies for vessel maintenance. Nevertheless, some needs exist that must be addressed for the USGS to fulfill their commitments to the council, such as the addition of a Western Branch Chief, additional sampling and predictive models to understand food web changes, better integration of fish survey methods, and restoration efforts to link nearshore and offshore waters. Although the USGS remains committed to the program and the President reaffirmed his commitment to the Great Lakes through the Regional Collaboration, a bureau-wide budget recision will likely occur because of the Hurricane Rita and Katrina relief efforts. Leahy discussed the USGS's budget for the large vessel program for fiscal year 2006, which is \$4.59 Million plus \$1.42 Million ear-marked for the R/V Kiyi's dock repair. The USGS will maintain the basic surveys in 2006 unless a drastic recision occurs. The council and partner agencies briefed the Office of Management and Budget on the importance of the deepwater program in September of this year. Gaden asked whether the working capital fund would be protected and used only for Great Lakes vessels. Director Leahy responded that yes, the funds are only intended for that purpose and would not be subject to the rescissions or across-the-board cuts.

Leon Carl then gave the council an update on the USGS's Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC). Carl updated the council on the vessel cruises, vessel safety, staffing, and publications. Carl applauded the communication with the council, particularly with the chair, as important issues arise that need immediate attention. The next steps for the USGS will be to work with the council chair on a draft 2005 report and the 2006 MOA. Carl noted actions the GLSC has taken to address partner concerns to strengthen the deepwater science program. Carl then discussed other programs that are important to the GLSC, such as restoration ecology, the Huron-Erie Corridor Initiative, the Detroit River, the Thiamine Initiative, and food web disruptions that lead to ecosystem dysfunction. Krueger asked that since each vessel is different, will the contract captains be able to keep consistency in survey data from year to year. Carl informed the council that they have found some contract captains, but are still continuing to look for more long-term captains. Carl stressed that there is some continuity in the surveys each year, as the engineers and mates are generally longer-term employees and are able to aid the captains

with the surveys. Also, he mentioned there are GPS systems aboard each vessel to enable the captain to track the vessel course in previous surveys.

### **Black Carp Federal Register Notice**

Everett Wilson began by defining an injurious species and discussing what would be prohibited if a species is listed under the Lacey Act, including importation and interstate travel. Intrastate use (including possession) is not prohibited by a Lacey listing of injuriousness. There are exceptions to what is prohibited. For example, these transportation rules do not apply to dead animals unless specified, such as with salmonids whose carcasses may be disease carriers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Division of Environmental Quality, Law Enforcement, and Division of Management Authority implement the provisions of the Act. Factors that contribute to injuriousness (such as escape, establishment, spread, and impacts) and factors that reduce or remove injuriousness (such as the ability to prevent release, eradicate, manage established populations, and any ecological benefits) are what is evaluated when determining the listing. Wilson then described the process the service must go through to determine if listing is warranted. The timeframe for each species' evaluation varies, but "significant" and "economically significant" rules take longer, because more detailed analyses are required. The Office of Management and Budget outlines "significant" rules in the Executive Order 12866 (refer to Everett's handout). Black Carp were determined to be "economically significant", with silver and bighead carp to follow. The Regulatory Flexibility Act requires agencies to assess the economic effect of rules on small U.S. businesses, non-profits, and small governmental jurisdictions for species deemed "economically significant." He then described the status of the black carp and its current status with the Lacey Act. He did the same for the silver carp and bighead carp.

Jackson informed the council that aquaculture companies use triploidy as a way to allow the use of carp in their operations, even though the triploidy process does not guarantee 100% sterility. He calculated that a single black carp could consume 2 to 10 tons of mollusks in a lifetime. He reported that black carp are not contained fully and have been found in the wild, including a diploid found in Louisiana. It is important that agencies comment about the economic and ecological impacts of these fish during the comment period. Jackson admits that a certain amount of interpretation must occur with the data as carp and the damage they inflict are not wide-spread yet. Tom Gorenflo asked what the agencies could do to help the process of listing the species. Wilson responded that letters in general have not been very effective unless they contain specific data regarding the species and their potential economic and ecological damage. Jackson reminded the council that the public comment period is over in two weeks, and any letter from the agencies is better than nothing. Gerry Barnhart suggested that the agencies could pull information from their comprehensive control strategies to build their statements for the letters. *Newman recommends that the agencies take Barnhart's suggestion and that the CLC continue to work closely with the commission to gather comments and as needs arise in the future.*

### **American Eel Update: Process of Listing with ESA and Implications if Listed**

Mike Twohey discussed the life history of the American eel and their commercial importance in Europe and Asia. Since the 1970s, when American eel numbers peaked, abundance has steadily declined. A species can go through the listing process either by the USFWS identifying the species through internal studies and discussion with states, academia, and other experts, or by a petition from a citizen. The American eel listing was initiated by a petition from Douglas and Timothy Watts, of Augusta, Maine and South Middleborough, Massachusetts, respectively. The USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service both have jurisdiction over the listing, but the USFWS will be the lead agency. After a petition is filed, there is a 90-day comment period to determine whether or not there is substantial evidence to continue investigating the listing of the species. Next, a 12-month period is entered where the USFWS will find and use the best available science to determine if listing is warranted. The 90-day comment period on American eel concluded in September and the USFWS will now continue investigations through regional workshops with eel experts. The workshop for the Great Lakes region will be in early January. Twohey explained the factors involved with potential listing, such as habitat destruction, over-use, disease, predation, inadequate existing regulatory mechanisms, and other natural or man-made factors. Lastly, Twohey discussed special rules that allow for the take of some listed species, such as for conservation purposes, zoo imports and exports, and immediate threats to human safety.

Rob MacGregor asked Twohey what the implications would be if the American eel was listed. Twohey answered that they would be varied. For example, hydro-power companies will be concerned with accidental take; recreational fishermen may also be affected. Newcomb wondered if stocking of other species would be affected, and Twohey thought that the workshops would help sort out those details and the impacts of listing.

### **Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program (GLFER)**

Marc Gaden thanked the members of GLFER for the meeting the day prior and appreciated their input. Bill Culligan was named chair. The program received ten projects from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Under the terms of reference, the CLC's project review committee must comment on proposals before they move forward. The members divided the projects into four categories; high priority, medium priority, need more information, and projects not to be funded.

Five projects were found to be of high priority:

- Ballville Dam
- Chautaugua Fish Passage (subject to verification that there are ecosystem benefits)
- St. Marys River Habitat Restoration (subject to successful feasibility study)
- Ford Estate
- Frankenmuth Dam

Two were found to be of medium priority:

- Dowagiac River Aquatic Ecosystem
- Dowagiac River Meanders

Three were deferred, pending more information:

- St. Louis River
- Northerly Island
- Waukegan Harbor

For high-priority projects, the review committee recommends that the corps proceed with implementation. For projects receiving a medium priority ranking, the recommendation is to proceed with implementation, should funds be available. For deferred projects, the recommendation is to revisit the projects at a future meeting, when the proposals are improved or when more information becomes available. Comments from the review committee are attached to these minutes.

Gaden stated that the committee sought concurrence from the council on the ranking of the projects. *The council concurs with the members' ranking of the projects.*

The review committee also recommended changing the GLFER Project Review Committee Terms of Reference to allow for the Corps to submit projects 30 days prior to review committee meetings instead of 60 days. Being the first meeting, the review committee also discussed process issues. The committee acknowledged that more time would be needed than was allocated to discuss the projects. The group also agreed to try a web-based system of distributing project information (instead of email or hard copy distribution), to better explain the criteria for evaluation, and to develop a system to articulate feedback to the corps (i.e., if the projects cannot be supported, to explain how they could be improved). *The council concurs with the review committee's recommendations.*

### **Great Lakes Regional Collaboration**

Gaden reminded the council that the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Strategy Team, co-chaired by Chris Goddard (GLFC), Gerry Jackson (USFWS), and Ken DeBeausseart (Michigan Office of the Great Lakes), produced an action plan that outlines the invasive species issue and made approximately 80 specific recommendations. The AIS Strategy Team received more comments than any other Strategy Team, and the majority of the comments were endorsing the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act (NAISA). The AIS Strategy Team provided the Environmental Protection Agency with a list of short-term priorities. The team listed five activities that could be done in the next year or two with little or no cost, including funding the sea lamprey control program.

### **Aquatic Invasive Species: Legislation and Great Lakes Regional Collaboration**

Gaden updated the council about the progress of the NAISA. The legislation is currently pending and there has been little movement of the bill in Congress. The Act addresses all major aquatic invasive species vectors, strong ballast water standards, screening processes for organisms in trade, rapid response, and authorizes the completion of the dispersal barrier projects on the Chicago ship canal. A competing bill was introduced into Congress and is very problematic. This new bill is not comprehensive, does not adequately protect the Great Lakes from ballast water introductions, has a long

implementation time frame, and does not include any screening processes or rapid response legislation. Unfortunately, this bill appears to have more support in Congress than NAISA, meaning a bill could pass that doesn't fully protect the Great Lakes.

### **Basin-Wide Coordinated Management? – Cormorants**

Steve LaPan would like the council to coordinate a management plan for cormorants. He states that these birds negatively impact fisheries, population management is needed and there is a need for a Great Lakes basin-wide approach to management. Bill Horns is apprehensive about the council taking ownership of the problem and offered that the states should develop management plans that the council could support. Newcomb would like to see the council participate in the Mississippi and Atlantic flyway councils. Likewise, she would also like to see the CLC extend a seat to the flyway councils so we can have two-way communication. David McLeish suggested that the technical committee chairs or another group could look further into coordinated management of cormorants. Barnhart informed the council that it could sit on the flyway councils through the non-gaming member seat. He hopes that the council would continue to play a leadership role in addressing the cormorant issue. *Newcomb will draft a letter for Newman to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's director regarding the CLC's concern with cormorants, and will copy Doug Hansen, chair of fisheries division in the USFWS, the state, tribal and provincial agencies and the U.S.D.A. Newcomb also recommended that the council start to pursue a seat on the flyway councils.*

### **Steelhead Management in the Great Lakes**

LaPan addressed this issue on behalf of Bill Culligan, stating their wishes that steelhead management in the Great Lakes be a topic for the common session at the combined Upper and Lower Lakes Committee Meeting in March, 2006. *Kurt Newman will add this topic to the agenda of the common session.*

### **Center for Quantitative Fisheries Science and Management**

Kurt Newman informed the council that three states (Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio) received confirmation of funding for the center from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the Inter-Jurisdictional Fisheries Act. Roger Knight is currently working out the details of the funding with Dr. Mike Jones and Dr. Jim Bence of MSU. Newman strongly encouraged the other states to join in with funding for the Center. McLeish announced that Ontario would like to participate in prioritizing projects and, therefore, intends to appropriate funds to the Center. *Newman placed on the April council agenda an item to discuss how to guide the center's projects.*

### **Report of the Task Force of Technical Committee Chairs**

Mark Ebener updated the council on the findings of the predator-prey workshop that occurred prior to the council meeting. The workshop found that there were common effects of predator-prey relationships across the basin, and need for more coordinated effort, more objective setting by managers, and different research priorities. Many basin-wide commonalities were discovered, including alewife and smelt biomass declines, predation on round gobies, and low predator abundance. Mark reported that chinook salmon populations appear to be declining. Chinook natural reproduction however,

appears to be increasing. He also noted that lake trout recruitment from stocking also appears to be declining, but relatively large numbers of naturally reproduced lake trout are being found in Michigan waters of Lake Huron. The workshop established two ways to accomplish prey fish assessments: through inter-lake coordination and technology transfers and managers identifying what types of prey fish data are needed. Ebener reviewed the basin-wide research priorities established in October of last year and asked that the council members let him know if their research priorities have changed since then. Ebener asked the council to decide on future workshop topics.

***Newcomb requested that the council break from the workshops this coming April to allow for the integration of the findings from the predator-prey workshop with the agencies and lake committees. This break was approved by the council and the workshops will continue in October 2006.*** Horns questioned the need for a workshop on management objectives for salmonines, because Lake Michigan already has a management plan. He suggested that decisions about the management plans need to be performed on a lake committee level, not on a technical committee level. Ebener explained that the objective of the workshop is to provide a forum for basin-wide predator-prey issues, not to change management plans. Newcomb agreed, stating that this is a way for those attending the workshop to address the technical aspects of performing the plan. Krueger stated that the research priorities that Ebener presented the council today were additions to those already existing (page 151 of the briefing book). ***The council agreed to add these priorities to the existing list.***

#### **Combined Upper and Lower Lake Committee Meetings: Review of Schedule and Solicit Agenda Items**

Newman would like feedback from council members about the new format of this council meeting. Newman is also actively soliciting agenda items for the common session of the Lake Committee Meetings. LaPan would like to see the Lake Ontario Committee meeting switched with the Lake Erie Committee meeting, as the Lake Ontario Committee members have farther to travel. Stuart Shipman was interested in shortening travel time, and wondered if some of the lake committee meetings, such as the Lake Ontario Committee and the Lake Erie Committee, could overlap. Krueger reminded the council that the new schedule was intended to encourage cross-fertilization of attendees of the meetings. In many cases, each lake committee will find issues of interest or commonalities on the other lakes, especially with Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. McLeish agrees, stating that council members should attend all the meetings to gain a perspective of what is happening on all the lakes and with basin-wide issues. ***The schedule remains unchanged with the exception of the Lake Erie Committee switching meeting times with the Lake Ontario Committee. Barnhart will write to his colleagues encouraging full participation at the meeting.*** Gaden announced that the advisors will have a combined upper lakes lunch and a combined lower lakes lunch, but there will be time to schedule individual lake advisor meetings if necessary. ***Newman reminds members to prepare common session agenda items.***

**Future Meetings**

Newman announced the council must decide on a date and location for the October 2006 meeting. *The council decided that the CLC meeting, Restoration Act meeting, and the Great Lakes Fisheries and Ecosystem Restoration Program meeting will take place the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of October, in Romulus, MI.*