

Council of Lake Committees

Crowne Plaza Detroit Airport
Romulus, MI
20 April 2004

Executive Summary

Participants: Chair Dave McLeish (OMNR), Brian Breidert (INDNR), Bill Culligan (OMNR), Ken Cullis (OMNR), Bill Horns (WDNR), Roger Kenyon for Rick Hoopes (PFBC), Roger Knight (ODNR), Steve Lapan (NYDEC), Brian Locke for Mike Morencie (OMNR), Bill Mattes for Neil Kmiecik (GLIFWC), Tammy Newcomb (MDNR), Kurt Newman (MDNR), Dave Reid (OMNR), Bev Ritchie for Rob MacGregor (OMNR), Steve Scott (MDNR), Tom Trudeau (ILDNR), Jack Wingate (MNDNR)

Bob Adair (USFWS), Bill Archambault (USFWS), Dale Burkett (GLFC), Leon Carl (USGS), Margaret Dochoda (GLFC), Jill Finster (GLFC), Kofi Fynn-Aikins (USFWS), Marc Gaden (GLFC), Chris Goddard (GLFC), Sue Haseltine (USGS), Chuck Krueger (GLFC), Bob Lange (NYDEC), Heather Lutz (GLFC), Allison Niggemyer (GLFC), Geoff Steinhart (Ohio State University)

1. Call to order, introductions, and announcements

Chairman McLeish called the meeting to order, inviting those present to introduce themselves. At B. Horns' request, the CLC discussed the process of agenda formation. The Secretariat and the CLC Chair and Vice Chair drafted the agenda on 6 April, with the objective of keeping the number of items to a manageable number. Items for discussion were referred to the CLC by lake committees at their March meetings, by individual CLC members, or by the Secretariat, CLC Chair, or Vice Chair. While B. Horns appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat in arranging a CLC meeting two or three weeks after the last lake committee meeting, he was disappointed that LMC questions regarding consensus on sturgeon strains had not made it onto the agenda and looked for a regularized process for item submission by CLC members. He continued to be concerned that the density of agenda items discourages substantive discussion.

With respect to agenda formation, C. Goddard suggested that each lake committee should nominate items (including the time required) for CLC discussion, and that the CLC chair and vice-chair should remind CLC members to send in ideas for agenda two weeks before April meeting.

With regard to density of the CLC meeting agenda, Chairman McLeish suggested two options: reduce the number of agenda items or expand the length of the meetings. T. Newcomb added a third option: prioritize items, leaving no more than five minutes for actions that do not require CLC action.

The October meeting might need a slightly different approach for agenda formation.

Chairman McLeish will sketch out a procedure for CLC review outlining a procedure for agenda formation including early CLC review of the proposed agenda. The CLC Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretariat are challenged to be draconian in pruning draft agenda.

2. Large vessel program update and future direction

B. Lange reported on restoration of the USGS's large vessel program and on accountability to partners as outlined in a memorandum of understanding and a 2004 memorandum of agreement. CLC members will now be focusing on funding, which is still insufficient for a full program. The CLC recognizes and appreciates the sincerity and efforts of Dr. Leon Carl, director of the USGS Great Lakes Science Center. K. Newman added that the Dept. of Interior brought significant offerings to the table, which rebuilt partner trust.

L. Carl reviewed plans of the USGS Great Lakes Science Center for
monitoring, modeling, and predicting;
managing and replacing vessels;
staffing of the deepwater program; and
prey fish survey, hydroacoustics, and lake trout rehabilitation.

USGS representatives and CLC members signed a memorandum of agreement.

3. Threatened closure of USFWS's Allegheny National Fish Hatchery

On behalf of the LEC, B. Culligan relayed concerns that Allegheny National Fish Hatchery will not be producing, stocking, or marking lake trout for the lower lakes. The LEC asked that the CLC write USFWS Director Steve Williams.

Bill Archambault (USFWS) stated that the USFWS will not close Allegheny NFH, which ranked high in an internal priority-setting exercise. However, Region 5 is still facing a \$1.2 million deficit, and Allegheny NFH's 2004 budget, like other programs in Region 5, will be reduced—to \$300,000 in 2004. Therefore, in 2004, 600,000 yearling lake trout will be tagged and stocked, fry production will be reduced, and a 3,300-fish brood stock will be culled to 2,000. The USFWS's budget outlook for 2005 and 2006 likewise is low. Region 5 Director Marvin Moriarty hopes to have a more detailed program proposal before the CLC's October meeting. On the up side, Region 5 is advertising the manager position at Allegheny NFH, and hopes to advertise for a hatchery biologist in 2005 or 2006.

B. Culligan commented that Region 5 (responsible for lower lakes) has not been as committed to coded wire tags (CWTs) as Region 3 (upper lakes). Without CWTs, it will be difficult to track the Klondike strain, which will be stocked for the first time in Lake Erie in 2003, and possibly later in Lake Ontario. NYDEC has assisted in raising some funds for CWTs.

M. Ebener noted that Allegheny NFH was proposing to eliminate Green Lake brood stock (a Lake Michigan strain). He asked if Region 3 had commented. B. Archambault

replied that Region 3 had not yet been consulted because Region 5 is still trying to find the funds that will allow it to continue maintaining the Green Lake strain.

The CLC agreed to write USFWS Director Steve Williams re Allegheny NFH. B. Culligan will make a few changes in the draft letter distributed at this meeting and send to the Secretariat for signature by the CLC Chair and Vice Chair. B. Culligan noted that stakeholders also were concerned and intended to write letters in support of Allegheny NFH.

4. Klondike strain of lake trout: future production and stocking needs

B. Adair reported that Klondike strain lake trout are being held at Iron River and Sullivan Creek NFH. Because the LSC, LMC, and LHC are not requesting Klondike strain for stocking, Klondike brood stock will be culled, some Klondike eggs are not being reared, and wild gametes are not being sought for upkeep of Klondike brood stock. Allegheny NFH has a standing order for eggs to produce 250,000 yearlings, and Lake Ontario will require 80,000 – 160,000 yearlings, if the LOC decides to stock the Klondike strain.

5. Asian carp update

M. Gaden briefed the CLC on the status of barriers on the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal. C. Goddard reported that southern U.S. aquaculturists are interested in importing a new Asian fish, the Sacramento greasefish.

The CLC will write the USFWS asking the status of Asian carp listings under the Lacey Act and requesting rigorous prescreening of any proposal to import new species in the Mississippi River basin. C. Goddard offered to draft the letter.

6. Asian carp rapid response

T. Trudeau reviewed a proposal for using rotenone should Asian carp be detected below the electric barrier on the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal, before a second barrier is constructed. The Lake Michigan Federation and others are advising Illinois DNR. Funds have not yet been secured, environmental constraints are still being investigated, and the Illinois DNR Director has not yet approved the plan. There is a communications component in the rapid response plan. The USACOE has been recommended as an entity to disburse funds.

J. Wingate added that five states on the upper Mississippi River are considering options for responding to the Asian carp invasion. A report discussing possible courses of action is posted on the Minnesota DNR website. One option is litigation directed against the southern states that are responsible for allowing culture of Asian carp.

Chairman McLeish thanked M. Gaden and C. Goddard for their efforts to move this issue.

7. Mass marking project

M. Ebener reported on the status of plans for a mass marking project, including demonstrating the technology this summer. He will recommend a course of action to the

CLC in October, and then to the GLFC. If approved, the GLFC will seek funding to cover trailer (s) and operating costs. Marking a fish with a coded wire tag and an adipose fin clip costs \$0.103 per fish and clipping the adipose fin alone costs \$0.023 per fish. Participation was up to individual agencies based on evaluation of its needs. C. Goddard will investigate a strategy for Canadian involvement.

This summer, Washington State's mass-marking trailer will be stationed at Michigan's Platte River SFH the last two weeks of July to clip 350,000 coho salmon, and at the USFWS's Iron River NFH the first two weeks of August to clip 100,000 lake trout. M. Gaden is arranging invitations for Congressional representatives to observe the demonstration of the mass marking technique. Michigan DNR fish chief Kelley Smith will write to CGLFA members inviting them to observe also.

B. Horns reported that there was skepticism among Wisconsin hatchery personnel and biologists, i.e., the CLC does not have consensus to proceed, but is planning how to sell the program. A better approach would be to identify information needs, potential uses of the technique, and costs, in order to decide whether and how to proceed.

J. Dexter replied that all agencies have had an opportunity to contribute to the planned uses part of the Mass-Marking Task Force's report, which M. Ebener chairs. M. Ebener stated that Wisconsin was the only state that had expressed such concerns.

C. Goddard explained that Kelley Smith (MDNR) had worked with his staff to develop a list of study questions, and B. Horns asked that the list be shared with the CLC. The objective of the mass-marking demonstration this summer is to demonstrate the technique; however, this will be the only opportunity Great Lakes decision makers and staff would have to see the technique being demonstrated. The CLC must approve mass-marking for the GLFC to seek support.

8. Executive breakfasts

C. Goddard requested that lake committee members, when preparing agendas for their executive breakfast meetings, identify people that they wish to have in attendance for lake committee deliberations. Such advance knowledge will assist the Secretariat in making hotel arrangements, notifying invitees, and discouraging attendance by walk-ins. (The invitee list can be updated as needed at the March meetings.) The lake committees will discuss processes for establishing breakfast meeting invitation lists.

9. Technical approaches to quota setting

As recommended by M. Ebener, Chair of the CLC's Task Force of Technical Committee Chairs, the CLC welcomed the following Task Force organized workshops

Short course on statistical catch at age analysis
(afternoon of 19 October 2004)

Describing and evaluating management strategies for setting harvest limits
(morning of 20 or 21 April 2005).

B. Locke suggested that risk analysis should be addressed in the workshops. Although the workshops are primarily for CLC managers, K. Newman suggested that managers could bring others if desired.

10. State of the lake: format of meetings and publications; hiatus for one year; and process for developing guidelines

The LHC suggested to the CLC that the state-of-the-lake report be updated every 5 years with a full report produced every 10 years. (The LHC plans a conference in 2006 to report on data through 2004.)

The LMC plans to write the GLFC requesting a one-page authors' guide for use in drafting the next state of the lake report. The LMC has begun planning its 2005 state-of-the-lake conference and declined to wait until 2006.

As recommended by C. Krueger, the CLC established a task force to develop standardized guidelines for formatting state-of-the-lake meetings and publications. Guidelines will be provided to the CLC for consideration at its October 2004 meeting. The Task Force consists of M. Ebener (CORA), Randy Eshenroder, C. Krueger, Roy Stein, a lower lakes representative, and any CLC volunteers.

11. Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program support plan update

J. Galloway reported that the support plan for the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration Program is under review in the USACOE's Washington office. M. Gaden is working with CLC members on a USACOE-GLFC agreement to provide views of fish managers via lake committees. A fish management representative will be part of the project delivery team. Federal funding requires a match of 35%; monies may be available in 2005. Monitoring required for projects is the choice of the fish management community. An annual report will be made available to fish managers. He suggested that CLC members send short descriptions of desired projects to use in process for approving the support plan, etc.

T. Gorenflo suggested that the CLC needs to brainstorm desired projects and seek out PIs and matching funds. M. Ebener added that reviewing project preproposals was another way to proceed.

12. Heterosporis: agency reports on actions taken on Fish Health Committee recommendations

For Wisconsin, B. Horns reported that the list of *Heterosporis*-infected inland lakes reported in October 2003 had not changed. Wisconsin DNR has requested that its counterpart, the Dept. of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, list *Heterosporis* as a parasite for which testing is required before fish can be imported or stocked in waters of the state. Dan Sutherland (U. of WI) is working on a disinfection protocol for spores; he reports that ~three months expire before a fish exposed to the parasite develops visible muscle lesions. In response to M. Ebener, B. Horns reported that bait harvest from infested lakes is not regulated, although bait is not harvested from those lakes.

B. Breidert reported that Indiana is developing protocols for disinfection, importation of bait, and forage use in hatcheries. Indiana has found Minnesota imports to be relatively clean.

T. Trudeau reported that Illinois hasn't found *Heterosporis* yet, but is monitoring yellow perch. Hatchery fish are not fed live fish.

According to J. Wingate, Minnesota regulates bait harvest and equipment use in infested waters.

B. Culligan reported that New York will probably adopt the recommendations of the Fish Health Committee. Cornell University has contracted to examine specimens for *Heterosporis*.

R. Knight reported Ohio biologists are aware of *Heterosporis*, but have not found it. It may be added to proposed Asian carp and bait provisions in legislation or regulation.

R. Kenyon reported that Pennsylvania's agriculture department has authority to inspect bait. The Fish and Boat Commission hasn't officially adopted the Fish Health Committee's recommendations, but it does randomly inspect yellow perch.

T. Gorenflo reported that the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority hatchery operations are no doubt following Fish Health Committee recommendations since the hatchery director chairs the Fish Health Committee.

B. Mattes could report no action by the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission.

T. Newcomb reported that Michigan's fish management division adopted nearly all of the recommendations of the Fish Health Committee as formal division policy. In lake-to-lake transfers, both receiving waters and stocked fish will be tested for *Heterosporis*. Forage fish used in the hatcheries are from certified disease-free facilities. Hopefully, regular assessment will one day screen for *Heterosporis* through commercial catch and/or surveys.

D. Reid reported that Ontario has established a committee of Rod Penney, Bev Ritchie, a Fisheries and Oceans representative, and others to consider management actions. Walleye are tested prior to out-of-lake transfer; all have tested negative for *Heterosporis*. Pelleted food is used exclusively in hatcheries. OMNR is studying the movement of baitfish. Numbers of fish stocked have increased. The Lake Ontario Fish Management Unit has found that the incidence of *Heterosporis* has decreased in eastern Lake Ontario assessment and commercial catch. Research and education efforts are needed for shipowners and recreational users. The Canada-Ontario Agreement awarded \$40,000 in each of 2004 and 2005 to study cormorants and other potential transmission mechanisms.

G. Christie reported that larval and adult sea lamprey from Lake Ontario will be screened for *Heterosporis* before being moved to the upper lakes. The Fish Health Committee and affected Lake Committees will be advised of any findings. S. Lapan offered help in holding and screening the sea lamprey. (Also, the GLFC is funding Dan Sutherland's (U of WI) research on Heterosporis transmission.)

13. CAP proposals for CLC sponsorship

The CLC sponsored the Morencie and Newman proposal *A Data Sharing Protocol to Support a Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* for consideration for funding under the GLFC's Coordination Activities Program.

14. Restoration Act recommendations

J. Wingate reported proposals recommended for funding under the Restoration Act, a total of \$566,334 worth. The CLC approved. Sponsoring agencies will notify Principal Investigators and the USFWS Director.

15. Revisions to CLC terms of reference

The CLC approved B. Horns' recommendations for revision of its terms of reference, i.e., to provide more guidance for the process of choosing a chair and vice-chair. As recommended by T. Newcomb, it further recommended that the terms Chairman and Vice-Chairman be updated to Chair and Vice-Chair. Recommendations will be forwarded to the GLFC.

16. Travel update

J. Dexter reported that out-of-state travel is banned in Michigan through 2005. D. McLeish reported that currently OMNR can send 2-3 people to GLFC and lake committee meetings; a lake manager can make a case to send more. M. Dochoda will provide CLC members with a copy of a letter the GLFC once sent in support of cross-border travel; a number of jurisdictions replied positively to that letter. D. McLeish, K. Newman, M. Dochoda, and C. Goddard will draft an updated letter for CLC consideration

17. Update on American eel

J. Casselman and B. Lange briefed the CLC on the status of the American eel and efforts to prevent its extirpation in Lake Ontario.

18. Lake Erie conflict resolution post mortem: recommendations

R. Knight reported that the LEC had agreed on a 2004 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for walleye, which should keep the population above the 19 million threshold. In 2003, the LEC told the public to expect a 40-60% reduction in 2004; it normally takes two years to change sportfish regulations. Commercial quotas in Ontario are a condition of permit and can be stated at the beginning of a fishing year. Mediation helped move the LEC to a new consensus for a 30% cut in 2004.

Mediators Burton Ayles (DFO & GLFC, retired) and IL DNR Fish Chief Mike Conlin, with Secretariat assistance, supplied a briefing book of pertinent documents. The

agencies gave presentations and were queried by the mediators. The mediators recommended a 27% reduction in 2004's TAC. They identified gaps in science and socio-economic data, and they made procedural recommendations.

R. Knight was positive about the mediation process, which “worked”. Recommendations from a neutral party were helpful, but identification of problem areas was particularly useful.

The LEC will concentrate on healing relationships (between agencies and with stakeholders) as well as completing the decision analysis model, clarifying management objectives for percids, developing a transparent exploitation strategy, and stream-lining the process for revising angling regulations.

While R. Knight thought it was helpful that Ayles and Conlin were familiar with fisheries and the Joint Strategic Plan—especially given the short timeline—D. McLeish noted that, in his experience, professional mediation expertise, such as that possessed by retired judges and lawyers, have also proven helpful.

In response to D. Reid, R. Knight explained that sport catch is regulated by bag limits, etc. Ohio has not exceeded its share of the TAC. Michigan oscillates above and below its share of the TAC. Weather and location of fish influences size of angler harvest.

19. Allocation of control based on lake targets

G. Christie discussed GLFC allocation of sea lamprey control effort based on deviation from marking-rate based targets. He will provide the CLC with plans in October 2004 for comment.

With drafting assistance from C. Goddard, the CLC will write a letter to the GLFC reporting that there is 18% more sea lamprey control in 2004 than previously, and that targets are being reached in lakes Superior, Erie, and Ontario.

20. Charges for new CLC Subcommittee of Technical Committee Chairs to consider

The Task Force of Technical Chairs was asked to support the CLC as follows:

Organize workshops on catch-at-age and harvest management per item 10.
(A workshop on implications of SCOL 2 might be warranted in future.)

Advise on the mass-marking project (item 8).

Encourage research on reason for interlake similarities in year class strength, e.g., climate.

Work with hatchery personnel on lake trout rearing issues such as strain and brood stock development, i.e., Parry Sound brood stock.

Recommend to CLC format for state-of-lake conference and report (item 11)

21. Meeting locations, date, and schedule

Upper Lakes Committees

Eagle Crest Country Club, Ypsilanti, MI, week of 21 March 2005

Lower Lakes Committees

Niagara Falls, ON week of 28 March 2005

Council of Lake Committees

Detroit Metro Airport, pm of 19 October, all day on 20 October 2004

Detroit Metro Airport,

Restoration Act Committee on 19 April 2005

all day on 20 April, am of 21 April 2005

