

Lake Superior Committee

Eagle Crest Conference Center
Ypsilanti, MI
March 24, 2005

Executive Minutes

LSC Members

Vice Chair Ken Cullis (OMNR), Chair Tom Gorenflo (CORA), Steve Hewett (WI DNR), Steve Scott (MI DNR), and Jack Wingate (MN DNR).

1. Status of Sea Lamprey and Actions to Reach Targets (Attachments)

Gavin Christie was interested in receiving feedback from the Lake Superior Committee on three issues: 1) whether they agreed with the GLFC's interpretation of the status of sea lampreys on Lake Superior, 2) whether they agreed with control plans, based on the fish community objectives for 2005, and 3) whether they had concerns regarding the status and progress of sea lamprey control in relation to the targets set last year.

Rob Young clarified the status of sea lampreys in Lake Superior. Marking rates had increased in 2004 and in most of the lake there were six wounds per hundred fish. The northwest corner of the lake appeared to have a higher wounding rate than the rest of the lake. This year the GLFC plans on increasing TFM usage and stream treatments, and are looking at treating lentic areas.

For the treatment in 2005, the GLFC will focus assessment on streams and lentic areas where sea lampreys are not traditionally found, as the high wounding rates would indicate that lampreys are entering the lake from an untreated source. Short term plans for control include lampricide and long term plans include an increase in alternative methods. Jim Bence and Mike Jones are working toward establishing economic injury levels in Lakes Huron and Michigan. Mark Ebener suggests that the LSC push the GLFC toward using the economic injury levels on Lake Superior as an indicator of sea lamprey targets. Lake whitefish and lake trout could be used in the economic injury levels because they have an estimated chance of survival of a sea lamprey attack. Don Schriener would like to see a focus on how many lake trout are saved as opposed to the current focus on how many lamprey are killed.

The LSC agreed with the GLFC on the status of sea lamprey and on the plans for sea lamprey control in the future. The LSC is concerned with the current increase in the sea lamprey population and demand to see sea lamprey numbers closer to target levels. The LSC recommends that the GLFC make all possible progress toward the use of economic injury levels to aid in stream selection for Lake Superior. The decision on which fish, in addition to lake trout to be used in the economic injury levels will be determined at a later date.

2. Transfer of Sea Lamprey from Lake Ontario and Disease Screening Plans

The GLFC is planning on transferring sea lamprey from Lake Ontario to Lake Superior for use in the sterile male release program on the St. Marys River. The Fish Health Committee will continue to screen the sea lamprey for diseases, as they did last year, using Mohamed Faisal's laboratory. Last year BKD and furunculosis were found in the screened lampreys, and were the same strains found throughout the basin.

Lake Superior Committee approves of the disease screening plans for the transfer of the sea lampreys from Lake Ontario.

3. Prey Fish Assessment

The USGS plans to complete the prey fish assessment survey in 2006. Funding is still needed to complete this project. The funds needed are \$25,000-\$30,000 for a PhD student to finish data analysis and report writing. The USGS submitted a proposal to the GLFC for fishery research funds, but was not asked for a full proposal and will not be funded. The LSC identified three funding options: 1) amend the current GLFWRA project, 2) create a multi-partner contribution to USGS via an MOA, or 3) submit a GLFWRA project for next round. Dave McLeish will provide time on the Council of Lake Committees agenda for Jason Stockwell to present this funding problem.

The LSC understands the proposed modification of reduced numbers of stations sampled for prey assessment and supports them in order to do more exploratory assessment. The LSC recommends that appropriate redundancy be retained for the purpose of evaluation. A final proposal will be developed through the USGS including obtaining Lake Superior technical committee comments and LSC approval.

4. Environmental Objectives

Tom Pratt would like to finalize the Environmental Objectives document, but is waiting for comments from the LSC. The current draft is consistent with Lake Huron and Lake Ontario's Environmental Objectives documents. The LSC recognizes that this document should be used as a basis for the committee's comment on proposed projects that may have a major environmental impact on the lake. The LSC set the deadline for comments to Tom Pratt, copying the LSC, for May 1, 2005.

5. Research Needs and Proposals

Mark Ebener identified three high priority research issues, as recognized by the Lake Superior Technical Committee. These include: the lake herring stock-recruitment relationship, submitted by Mike Hansen to the GLFC Fishery Research Program; the lake trout sustainability task, submitted by Mike Hansen to Wisconsin Sea Grant, and; the lakewide acoustic survey, submitted by Tom Hrabik to the GLFC Fishery Research Program.

The task force of technical committee chairs is providing a series of workshops at the CLC meetings on basin wide topics. A Catch at Age workshop was held last October. The committee will hold a Harvest Management Strategies workshop this coming April.

Mark Ebener would like all agencies to support the workshops by sending their fishery managers to the next workshop. It will take place Wednesday, April 20, 2005 from 8am to 12pm.

6. USGS and Lake Committees

In the past the lake committees have had difficulty with coordination and cooperation with the USGS Science Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Recently, in the last 12 to 18 months, the Science Center has made great improvements with their collaboration and interest in the lake committees. Jack Wingate suggests the LSC should write a letter to the Science Center in appreciation of their recent efforts, stating that the LSC is cautiously optimistic for future cooperation.

