

# Wisconsin Conservation Congress

## Motorized Recreation Committee



**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that members of the Motorized Recreation Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress will convene at 9:30 am on Saturday, September 30, 2023, at the Schmeckle Reserve Visitor Center, 2419 N Point Dr, Stevens Point, and via Zoom to review the agenda below. If you are joining via Zoom, please log on to the meeting at 9:15 am so that we can assist with any technical difficulties before the meeting begins at 9:30 am. Meetings of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress are public meetings and open to participation by any member of the public. If you would like to participate in this meeting via Zoom, please use <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86414179486> to join the Zoom meeting or call in using 1-312-626-6799 (Meeting ID: 86414179486#)

**ORDER OF BUSINESS – 9/30/23; time: 9:30am; location: Schmeckle Reserve Visitor Center and Zoom.**

### I. **Organizational Matters**

A. **Call to Order:** Al Marotz called the meeting to order at 9:31.

#### B. **Roll call**

- a. **Present:** Brett Weir, Stephanie Blazich, Al Marotz, Mark Pope, , Steven Tiegs, Nathan Magnine, Stephan Burr, Daniel Beauchamp, Robert Budworth, Wayne Schmidt, Michael Kohl, Steve Gehrke
- b. **Excused:** Katie James, Trisha Fisher, Richard Marti
- c. **Unexcused:**
- d. **Guests:**
  - i. **Resolution Authors:** Mike Strebe, Jeff Meessmann; Stacy Pettit; Yvonne Meessmann
  - ii. **DNR:** Michael Duke, Jacob Holsclaw, Darren Kuhn, Jillian Steffes; Kari Lee-Zimmermann; Rob Bohmann
  - iii. **Other:**

#### C. **Agenda approval or repair**

- a. Discussion: repair: move resolution 640423 to 5<sup>th</sup> in line due to request of author & Al.

- i. **Motion to approve – Robert Budworth, Seconded by Wayne Schmidt.**  
**Motion carries**

#### D. **Review committee mission statement**

The mission of the Motorized Recreation Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to provide citizen input on the use and management of motorized recreational equipment and devices on public and private lands and navigable waters, on behalf of all those who utilize these resources. The committee will review current and proposed policies for motorized recreation equipment and devices on public and private lands and navigable

waters and provide recommendations that consider the wide range of public and private property user's interests. Further the committee will explore opportunities to engage and collaborate with existing motorized focused organizations and will promote the safe and responsible use of motorized recreation.

**a. Motion to Approve – Brett Weir, Second – Dan Beauchamp. Motion carries**

- E. **Public comments:** Citizens who wish to address the committee should contact the committee chair (Al Marotz at [amarotz@live.com](mailto:amarotz@live.com)) prior to September 28, 2023.

**II. Information & Action Items**

**B. Citizen Resolution**

1. Requiring Registration for Any Motorized Vehicle on Public Frozen Waterways (350523) – Stacy Pettit
  - i. **Discussion from Author:** She lives on a waterway, and this creates safety concerns and DNR has no way to control road vehicles on the ice.
    1. **WCC Discussion:** Local policy sets their own rules for vehicles and ATVs. She is trying to set state rule and not local rule. Doesn't want to affect the ice roads but is talking about non designated trails. There is a rule for ATV, UTV, and snowmobiles already but would like to include vehicles. DNR isn't dealing with Vehicle laws unless on state lands. Get DOT involved.
  - ii. **Motion to Advance– Wayne Schmidt; Seconded by Brett Weir. Motion Carries**
2. Require All Motorized Vehicles to adhere to Reduced Speed Restrictions on Frozen Waterways. (350423) - Stacy Pettit
  - i. **Discussion from Author:** This is regarding on road vehicles on ice not the ATVs, UTVs, and Snowmobiles. There is no difference between frozen or liquid and thinks they should all be equal users and must register and be identified.
    1. WCC Discussion: ATVs, UTVS, and Snowmobiles need registration, Motorcycles do not need registration on ice. DOT would need to require register for on road vehicles and not the DNR as the DNR has no regulation of the on-road vehicles on ice. Also, where would the registration funds go back to since DOT is for roads and not waterways? Doesn't think this would pass with the WCC but thinks they should go to local legislation.
  - ii. **Motion to Reject – Wayne Schmidt; Seconded by Mark Pope. Motion Carries**
3. Evaluate the Impact Boats Designed for Wake Surfing May Have on Fisheries, Waterways, other Lake Users, and the Riparian Zone (090123) – Bob Mitchell
  - i. Discussion: Not present - Define wake boat because any boat can be made into a wake boat. University of Minnesota started research about 5 years ago and is trying to regulate level of waves being put off and they are trying to look at bottom scouring and looking at wave intensity. Going to cost a huge amount to redo the same study that our neighbors are already doing. Misguided and need to address all boats, not just wake boats.
  - ii. **Motion to Reject – Mark Pope; Seconded by Brett Weir; Motion Carries**

4. Ballast System Inspection Requirement (130223) – James Olson
  - i. **Discussion from Author:** This is a DNR regulation and shouldn't have to go through Legislation. We are talking about boats that put-on ballast systems and not just wake boats. We must do something about the problem that it doesn't drain fully.
    1. **WCC Discussion:** We can't inspect or see into these ballast systems, and we can't see into inboard or outboard engines either. 500 gallons is what some of these ballast systems take in and there is not way to check this and clear all the water out of these systems. This can spread harmful and invasive species from lake to lake. 8-20 gallons never drain out of the ballast. Many boats can use ballast systems and we might not know if this system is being used or not. Mastercraft openly claims that ballast system must be winterized due to it holding water and fear of freezing. There are lakes in Wisconsin and local ordinances that already ban the use of ballast systems but does not ban the use of the boats that were made with this system. We can't assume people are guilty of using these systems even if equipped. Do they have some sort or cap that can be put on so when looked it they know it's capped and not in use – inspection port. Drain is not at the low point currently. Full inspection authority out in Western States provides stickers to passed boats, but we don't have this in Wisconsin. Thinks it should go to state legislation to take it up with the manufacturers not the DNR.
  - ii. **Motion to Advance – Wayne Schmidt; Seconded by Brett Weir. Motion Carries**
5. Regulation of wake surfing boats is necessary to protect our lakes, personal property and safety of everyone else using the lake. (Requires legislation) (640423) – Jeff Meessmann
  - i. **Discussion from revolutionist:** PowerPoint presentation that broke down the wake boats and the ballast systems they use. Boats can generate wakes 3-4.5 feet tall. Shorelines are being eroded and destroying spawning grounds. Cutting Furrows into the bottom of the lakes and destroying plant life and limiting the nutrients for algae blooms, the wrong algae blooms are toxic to people and animals. The residual water can hold invasives they can survive for years in the ballast tanks. Wisconsin needs to consider distance from shore, water depth, invasives, and pre-emption of the lake. Making a documentary on Big Cedar Lake coming out October 9<sup>th</sup>. Listed all current statues that can possibly be amended to implement this resolution.
    1. **WCC Discussion:** provided many good points for this resolution. The muk is becoming a problem because it is being stirred up and creating awful smells and clouding the water. This year was more specific on depth and distances from shore compared to last year.
  - ii. **Motion to Advance – Brent Weir, Seconded by Wayne Schmidt. Motion carries.**
6. Wake boats cause property damage and endanger lives (160323) – Barb Resheske
  - i. Discussion: not present – ties into Jeff's resolution and this this one could be compiled together with resolution 640423. Requires legislation more than likely.
  - ii. **Motion to Reject – Mark Pope; Seconded by Brett Weir. Motion carries.**

7. Hazardous Wakes from Wake surfing Boats (360123) – Michael Strebe
  - i. **Discussion from Author:** He talked to the town board and the board says they won't do anything about it. More and more boats are coming in and local users don't want to go out due to the high wakes and waves. Locals are complaining about how rough the water has gotten even on lakes with deep depth. Local lakes are battling invasives with a lot of money and it is being diminished by these ballast system boats. He is just concerned about the lakes and especially Crystal Lake.
    1. **WCC Discussion:** Cedar Lake has a lot of traffic. This would have to go to legislation. Town would also have to be with it and if they won't deal with it, legislation would be the next step. Ordinances are being input on other lakes that ban the use of the ballast systems, but the boat is still allowed – the towns with these ordinances are enforcing these rules.
  - ii. **Motion to Advance - Brett Weir; Seconded by Rob Budworth. Motion Carries**
8. Ban use of wake boat ballast systems in Presque Isle Township (requires legislation) (640123) – Yvonne Meessmann
  - i. **Discussion from Author:** Repeating the same thing with the ballast systems. Violates NR19 & NR40 but because they are sealed you can't drain them or see into them. Invasives are a big concern. Decontaminate system would be expensive with manpower especially for small towns. We need to protect the economy and protect our lakes. Wake boat owners have threatened lawsuits over their boats.
    1. **WCC Discussion:** Presque Isle is working on their local ordinances and the WCC should let them make their decisions before we step in. Presque Isle is pushing back against their own ordinance decisions, and they don't look like they want to move forward with it. Need a biologist to step in on how long it would take to regenerate the lakes. If we make this a statewide rule, it will push the towns faster.
  - ii. **Motion to Reject – Mark Pope; Seconded by Steve Burr. Motion Carries**
9. Prohibit intentional magnification of wakes for wake surfing because State boat wake laws are obsolete. (Requires Legislation) (640323) – Yvonne Meessmann
  - i. **Discussion from Author:** Current boating laws are obsolete since time past when created. Wake surfing needs more than 100 feet of distance compared to normal ski boat. These are destroying the bottoms and lakes are becoming unsafe for other recreational users. These boats need better regulation. These wake boat waves have higher wave lengths and are more powerful than ski boats. They are turning up buried pollutants in the lakes and poisoning the water for marine life.
    1. **WCC Discussion:** Requires legislation. There are lakes that should be allowed to have wake boats and now this would close off the use throughout the entire state.
  - ii. **Motion to Advance by Wanye Schmidt; Seconded by Mark Pope. Motion carries**

**C. DNR Liaisons Reports – Daniel Yankowiak (Trails/Facilities), Jacob Holsclaw & Darren Kuhn (LE), Jillian Steffes (NR Grants)**

a. Discussion:

- i. Daniel Yankowiak has stepped down and unfair to ask Mike Duke to speak since he has sat in position for about a week.
- ii. **Darren Kuhn:** Recreational boating season is done, and waterfowl season is starting. Fall fishing is kicking off as well. 18 fatal boating incidences this year compared the 20 from 2022. Most were from not having life jackets. #1 violation in boating is from not having proper lifejackets or not enough on board. Wake surfing issues are becoming a national problem and we are not the only ones trying to fight this battle. Grant application for 2024 through the Coast Guard. \$3.6 million is projected to be granted for federal money towards the boating program.
  1. **Question:** Zebra Mussel is being replaced with new mussel (Ligumia Nasuta) that is eating metal and wooden boats. **Answer:** Superior & Michigan are connected and can easily spread though these ballast systems. Boats should be 100% drained before hitting the great lakes.
- iii. **Jacob Holsclaw:** Snowmobile: working closely with partner to patrol and get grants. Got more grant increase in 2023 – \$600K divided between partners. Were able to get some new machines and updating warden equipment. 26K hours of snowmobile portion were patrolled. 26K hours of enforcement. All hands-on deck enforcement week the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January. ATV: Was able to increase to \$1.3 million in reimbursement for deputies to help. 31K hours towards enforcement. Increase in participation, citations, warnings, and patrolling. 26 ATV/UTV Fatalities in 2023(up from last year). 18 Snowmobile fatalities from last season. Lights on UTV & ATV need to fall into sticker guidance with colors can confuse people at night. Working on changing seatbelt rule verbiage for UTV. Adults are the ones getting hurt more than the kids.
- iv. **Jillian Steffes:**

**D. WATVA (Wisconsin ATV (UTV) Association) Update – Wayne Schmidt**

- a. Discussion: Randy Harden is having Wayne read his notes since he couldn't attend. Working on drafts for new bills. Open intoxication bill amendments are being made for on trail - no open container in cab on trails or roads. Allowed to still carry in coolers in non-reachable areas. Working on getting more safety instructors for classes in case law changes. Promoting more safety to the youth with helmets and seatbelts. Collecting economic impact surveys and being released at annual meeting in 2024. Welcome Centers provide outside safety information. Asking for raise to \$1.2 million for funding with the state. 2024 meeting is April 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> in Stevens Point.

E. **AWSC (Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs) Update**

- a. Discussion: - not present.

III. **Member Matters**

- a. **Wayne:** we need to get someone from biology and fisheries to talk about this environmental and impact of the boats.
- b. **Mike:** Legally not supposed to ride without safety classes but how do we get the kids involved otherwise
- c. **Al:** Notify the chair if you are going to be in attendance of the meetings. We need to be better next year. Spent a lot of time chasing people down. Conservation Hall of Fame is in Stevens Point so go check it out!
- d. **Dan:** ATV & snowmobile classes need to be in person. I think they would be safer and it's much easier to coach.
- e. **Steve Gehrke:** commend the resolution authors on the info given with these wake boat matters. We learned a lot today.
- f. **Steve Burr:** Wants to make all training in person. Number of questions needs to be brought up to the environmental person and we need someone at this meeting. These resolutions are misguided, and we need to address all ballasted boats not just wake boats. Large boats in general that make large wakes.
- g. **Nate:** Agrees with the wake boats but the fishing boats don't cause the damage. We should be pushing back at the manufactures.
- h. **Steph:** Thank you for the authors and the knowledge they provided. It's very helpful to people who don't see these boats very often and to understand what they are doing to the lakes.

IV. **Adjournment**

- a. Motion to Adjourn