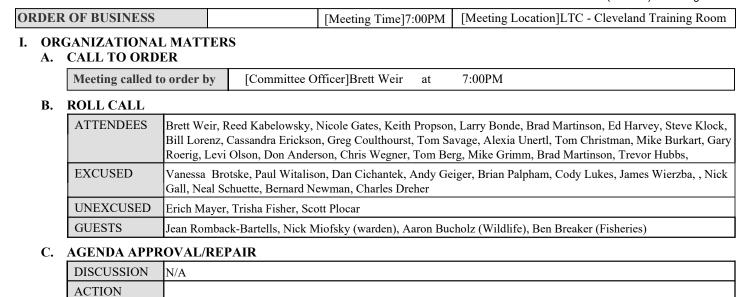
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Jean Romback-Bartels, Aaron Bucholz,

Wisconsin Conservation Congress [Committee Title]District 8 Fall Meeting Meeting Minutes



D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

KEVIEW COMMIT		
DISCUSSION	N/A	
ACTION		

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	No public present or requesting presentation time.
ACTION	

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Department of Natural Resources Staff updates.

DISCUSSION	Warden - Lt. Nick Miofsky Fall Conservation Congress Speaking Points 2023
	• The Division has secured a permanent position that will serve as the Shooting Range Program Specialist which will oversee all the state owned/operated shooting ranges. We are currently in the recruitment/hiring phase for this
	position.
	• Three Assistant Outdoor Skills Trainer (LTE) positions were added to support DNR public shooting ranges, safety
	programs and volunteers, R3 programs (hunter/angler/trapper/shooting sports), and representation at public events.The Angler Education/R3 program had a busy summer of teaching people in the Milwaukee and Madison urban
	areas how to fish using the "Fishmobile". Four summer "Finterns" were hired and they attended over 70 events in the
	Milwaukee and Madison metro areas.
	• The DNR continues to offer grant opportunities to help distribute funding dedicated to promoting hunting, fishing,
	and shooting. We have three grant programs: hunting R3, fishing R3, and shooting range. Interest in the grant
	programs has been high and we are able to fund a lot of good projects working with our conservation partners.
	• The class of 2023 graduated 7 new conservation wardens and one new recreation warden. Three have already
	started in their station, with five more anticipated to start in their station in October.
	• We are currently in the process of hiring our next recruit class, and will be making conditional offers in November,
	after completing their background investigations. This class will begin their academy training in January and then
	move on several post academy training weeks and field training stations. After almost a full year of training, these
	wardens will land in their field stations.
	• The Division remains engaged with our human resource partners to update conservation warden compensation to
	remain a competitive employer within the labor market.
	• We continue to identify key resource needs and investment opportunities to maintain and modernize our
	infrastructure, equipment, and fleets to ensure the division continues to provide well-trained, well-equipped first
	responders to our customers and local communities. The division recently received technology investments related to

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body cameras and modernized records systems that will continue to support effective, efficient, and transparent law
enforcement operations. Enhanced funding requests will be submitted for the next biennial budget.
• We are seeing an uptick in fatal ATV/UTV crashes compared to last year - almost double - Lack of helmet or
seatbelt use contributed to most incidents. There were over 470,000 machines registered last year. The division
continues to utilize its resources to the best of its ability under the current funding limitations to provide presence on
the trails.
• Wisconsin had the highest snowmobile registrations in North America last year – 227,875 and remains a destination
stop for snowmobile enthusiasts in the surrounding southern states. While Wisconsin saw the best snow conditions in
several years, snowmobile crashes remained steady compared to past seasons, with 16 fatal crashes investigated.
Speed and alcohol consumption continue to be leading contributors to these crashes.
• Wake surfing and the use of ballast boats continues to be a hot topic throughout the state. Many local units of
government are contemplating developing local boating ordinances regulate their use.
• Fatal boating incidents are down considerably compared to last year. Wardens continue to utilize their specialized
resources (side scan tow fish sonar, ROVs) to assist with locating victims of these crashes as well as numerous
drowning victims. These devices are instrumental in bringing quick closure to the victims' families.
Fisheries - Ben Breaker Lake Michigan Updates for WCC District Meeting, August 2023
Staff Updates:
• North and South Lake Michigan fisheries teams in Sturgeon Bay and Milwaukee are almost fully staffed.
• Our commercial and sport fishing specialist position is currently vacant. This position was previously held by Al
Blizel, who was in this position for over 30 years. Al retired from the DNR in May, and interviews for this position
have occurred recently. We hope to have someone new starting soon.
Electronic Reporting:
• We implemented our electronic reporting system for charter captains this year.
• Captains have been able to use it since May 1, and the system became mandatory on June 1.
• We use the Survey 123 app from ESRI.
• So far, there have been over 5,000 trips recorded and feedback from charter captains have been generally positive.
Lake Whitefish TAC (Total Allowable Catch):
• New rules for commercial whitefish management went into effect on August 1, 2022.
• One component of these new rules includes revised whitefish commercial quotas, with total allowable catch based
on catch-at-age modeling.
• New quotas for both Lake Michigan and Green Bay have been developed with the most recent model runs, and a
public meeting was held on June 21st to gather stakeholder feedback. This meeting was recorded and was posted
online (search "Lake Michigan whitefish management" on the DNR website to find it).
• The new TACs have been discussed with the Lake Michigan Commercial Fishing Board.
• The next step is to present this information to the NRB.
Lake Michigan Stocking in 2023:
• The following have been stocked into Lake Michigan so far this year:
o 1,386,492 Chinook salmon
o 241,772 coho salmon
o 405,532 brown trout
o 522,852 rainbow trout
o Note that these totals do not include fall fingerlings that will be stocked this fall, including brook trout.
Brown and Manitowoc County Inland Fisheries Management Update
1.) During spring 2023, fisheries staff completed a comprehensive fish survey on Silver Lake. This comprehensive
fish surveys included a fyke netting survey at ice out primarily targeting northern pike and walleyes as well as a
spring electrofishing survey primarily targeting largemouth bass and panfish. Fisheries staff also completed a spring
electrofishing survey on Rockville Flowage, primarily targeting largemouth bass and panfish.
2.) There were 3 regulation change proposals on the spring hearings for Wilke Lake. All three of these regulation
changes received favorable support at the spring hearings and have continued to move forward in the approval
process. As long as they don't encounter any unforeseen concerns with the rest of the review/approval process, these
three regulations should go into effect in spring 2024. Below is a description of the three potential regulation changes:
a. Change the largemouth bass regulation to a minimum length limit of 18 inches and daily bag limit of 1. The
primary goal of this regulation change is to increase the number of predators to reduce the density of overabundant,
slow growing bluegills.
b. Change the walleye regulation to a minimum length limit of 18 inches and daily bag limit of 3. The primary goals
of this regulation change are to increase the number of predators to reduce the density of overabundant, slow growing
bluegills as well as enhance the quality of the walleye fishery in Wilke Lake.
c. Change the northern pike regulation to a protected slot limit where no northern pike between $25 - 35$ inches may be

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	harvested and a daily bag limit of 2. Currently, Wilke has a high density, slow growing northern pike population that is dominated by small northern pike. This regulation will allow harvest of some of the smaller northern pike while protecting the fastest growing pike that grow into the slot limit to improve the quality of the northern pike fishery in
	 b) the lake. c) Staff continue to work on restoring the muskellunge population in Green Bay with the goal of a self-sustaining population in the future. Last fall, 750 large fingerling muskies were stocked as part of this restoration plan. Earlier this summer, 7192 yearling muskies were also stocked as part of this restoration plan. Staff have worked with UWSP to design a research project to help better understand the recruitment bottleneck that is occurring. Grant applications have been submitted to hopefully get funding to complete this research. c) Over the last year and half, I have received concerns from many anglers that the quality of the walleye fishery as well as overall numbers of walleyes in Green Bay have been declining. Starting in spring 2024, fisheries staff are planning to implement a walleye reward tag study on Green Bay to get a much better understanding of walleye
	exploitation rates. The goal of the reward tag study is to tag about 5,000 walleyes each spring for at least the next three years. The results from this reward tag study will help guide future walleye regulation recommendations.
	Green Bay (Northern Pike and Yellow Perch)
	 A Northern pike spring survey was conducted in Green Bay in April. A total of 781 pike were handled by 3 crews. 28 were recaps (3.5%). For the structures aged and entered, growth is fast. For example, 42.5 inch female = 9 years old. A more comprehensive report will be forthcoming. Yellow perch commercial fishery monitoring is ongoing in Green Bay. Annual quota remains at 100,000 pounds and daily bag at 15/day. The statistical catch at age model was run in spring 2023 with no major changes in population from 2022.
	 Green Bay community fish trawling assessments began on Monday, Aug 7 Creel surveys are ongoing on Green Bay and Lake Michigan. Weekly fishing reports can be found online at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/lakemichigan/OutdoorReport.html
	DNR Secretary - Jean Romback-Bartells
	Jean announced that she would be retiring early next year. I'll be working with the Secretary's Office on skills, expectations, and responsibilities of the Secretary's Director in NER.
	Jean advised that she and the Secretary are looking forward to their visit to the Expo and the Youth Zone this year.
ACTION	Wildlife - Aaron Bucholz
	Fall 2022 WCC District 8 Meeting
	Wildlife Management Program Updates by Aaron Buchholz Local and Statewide Staffing Updates
	 District 8 counties – Vacant Plymouth technician. The Sheboygan Marsh Dam, constructed in 1938, is currently well into the process of being replaced after years of discussions, fundraising efforts and extensive planning. Located in northwestern Sheboygan County and includes over 14,000-acres of land and surface water. It contains the largest restored wetland in the Wisconsin watersheds of Lakes Michigan and Superior. The Sheboygan Marsh Wildlife Area portion of the marsh includes over 8,166-acres of
	public lands, of which, Sheboygan County owns 7,414-acres and the State of Wisconsin owns 752-acres. The dam is owned by Sheboygan County and wildlife, fisheries, and forestry management services are provided by the DNR through a formal management agreement with the county. Replacement of the dam will offer greatly enhanced water level and habitat management options.
	State Building Commission recently approved a project funding for a new field station at Collins Marsh Widlife area that will consolidate staff from two offices and greatly reduce travel time to properties managed by the local team. Construction anticipated in 2024
	CWD sampling – same as last year; primarily hunter service testing other than Washington and Sheboygan Co were we continue surveillance due to wild positives. Sheboygan Co had it's baiting ban end but then was reinitiated for 3 years with the discovery of a second positive.
	Continuation of the Adopt-a-dumpster and adopt-a-kiosk programs • For the AAD program, continue the cost-share option of \$500/dumpster (maximum of 3/county)
	Wolf Management Plan The final plan schedule to go to the Natural Resources Board in Oct was publicly available on Aug. 1. This version didn't change significantly from the draft version but did take into account over 3,500 comments received during a 110 day comment period.

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 HPAI Update/Summary Significant and widespread mortalities and detection in 2022 from the associated mortality has not been detected in Wisconsin over the sprint declined significantly across North America. Recent research suggests to wild birds, likely as a result of combining with lower pathogenic Net HPAI are possible, if not likely. Survey Opportunities Operation Deer Watch and Game Bird Brood Survey Operation Deer Watch began Aug. 1 and goes through Sept. 30. The o We encourage WCC delegates to participate and encourage others to instructions are available on the DNR website. o These support management decisions (fawn:doe ratio for pop estimation) 	ng and summer of 2023, and detections have s that the 2022 strains have become less virulent orth American strains. Future outbreaks of e Game Bird Brood Survey is open Aug. 1-31. o participate as well.
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE DEADLINE	

B. Guidance for upcoming committee meetings.

Brett Weir

Brett Weir

DISCUSSION	Councilors should discuss with their districts the guidance for conducting the WCC's committee meetings, protocols for handling resolutions, and expectations for interactions with the public and participating DNR staff. It is important for committee members to understand their role in the committee, the expectations for committee leaders, and the role of DNR liaisons. If everyone understands and fulfills their respective roles at WCC committee meetings, the meetings tend to go more smoothly. Brett went over this topic and elaborated.	
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RES	SPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A		

C. WCC advisory committee assignments.

WCC advisory committee assignments. Brett Weir		
DISCUSSION	Delegates should review who is representing their districts on the various advisory committees. Councilors should review with your district any openings that there may still be on committees, in addition to persons not assigned a committee and determine if there are any delegates that wish to fill the open seats for your district. If so, please let Kari Lee-Zimmermann know following your district meeting. Brett went over committee assignments and let the delegates that one open seat on GLC is available - no takers at the meetings. There were a couple of questions asked and answered.	
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE
N/A		

D. Review resolutions that originated from your district.

Look at the resolutions that came from your district and help review the rationale and background DISCUSSION from your local district perspective so that the respective members on the various advisory committees can bring that to their committees. Brett described the importance of knowing the local issues and being ready to discuss them with knowledge. This is our job and the reason for our existance. N/A ACTION PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE DEADLINE N/A

E.	Advisory committ	tee evaluation forms.	Brett Weir/Reed Kabelowsky
	DISCUSSION	USSION Following your committee meeting, please take the time to complete the WCC Advisory Committee Evaluation Form and provide leadership with input and feedback on how well the committee functioned. Visit http://dnr.wi.gov/about/wcc/local.html and click on Advisory Committee Evaluation Form under Delegate Resources.	
		Brett showed the form and informed delegates where to find. Reed of the past. Larry indicated that as chair, he did address the negative po- positives, but did not respond to these. Delegates were asked to utiliz	ints of the evaluations, but also appreciated the
	ACTION N/A		
	PERSON(S) RES	SPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
	N/A		

F. Delegate reimbursement process.

Brett Weir/Reed Kabelowsky

-		
DISCUSSION	The mileage rate remains \$0.40 per mile for 2023. There is a fillable treimbursement guidance under Delegate Resources (http://dnr.wi.gov TravelVoucherGuide2017.pdf). Please carefully review the guidance delegates so that everyone is clear about what expenses are reimbursa reimbursement. Vouchers needs to be filled out, printed, signed and mailed in to the E actual signature, not a copy of one, so no emails/faxes). In addition to have on file for reimbursements, there is also a STAR vendor form th are available onl-ine under Delegate Resources. Brett described the process. Reed reiterated that they now need to be required. No more scanning and e-mailing or faxing. Good description	 about/wcc/Documents/DelegateResources/ document that is on-line with your district ble and what the timelines are for requesting DNR Liaison (Finance wants an the W9 that the state needs to at needs to be completed. Both sent in via regular mail with original signature
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RES	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE DEADLINE	
N/A		

G. Unexcused absences.

DISCUSSION	Councilors should discuss with their districts the importance of attend reiterate the new WCC policy that ALL delegates must contact the ch be in attendance. Unexcused absences from committee meetings may committee and unexcused absences from required WCC meetings con the Congress. Per the COP, it is the responsibility of delegates to dou attendance is accurately reflected. There were some questions and answers and some examples were giv DLC representatives to follow up on unexcused absences and to expla completed timely to have effect.	air and indicate if he or she will be grounds for dismissal from a ald be grounds for dismissal from ble check the minutes to ensure ren. The group iterated that it is the job of the
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE
N/A		

H. Filling vacancies on county delegations.

Brett Weir

Brett Weir

DISCUSSION	If there are vacancies in counties within your district, the county chairs in those counties may appoint
	someone to fill the vacancy. Please talk with the county delegations about how to identify and locate
	interested parties and work with them to get them appointed.

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	Some discussion about challenges. Brown county was used as an example. Some of these positions have been filled. Importance of staying with this challenge.	
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE
N/A		

I. WCC Outreach.

Brett Weir

wee Outreach		Dieu wen
DISCUSSION	 Please remind WCC delegates that there is a PowerPoint WCC outreach presentation available under delegate resources that delegates can take to organizations and give to help spread the word about the WCC. If there are delegates wanting to give educational talks to folks in their county about the WCC, this is a helpful tool to use. Also, WCC brochures and business cards can be obtained by requesting them from Kari Lee-Zimmermann. There was discussion about uses of social media and the different forums available - examples and forums discussed for strengths and weaknesses. Cassandra gave some information to help folks with these endeavors. Reed mentioned the opportunity available at the upcoming Expo. Other events and sportsman's clubs were discussed - this is part of our job. Lengthy discussion about involvement of legislators and the challenges this presents in present day. Larry and Ed described their experiences. Some old successes were discussed compared to present day challenges - some suggestions were discussed to revive legislative involvement. 	
Some discussion about the upcoming Expo and how to reach out successfully for press coverag help involve the press.		cessfully for press coverage. Larry offered to
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) R	ESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE
N/A		
		é

J. Sharing WCC press releases, events, etc. with community, friends, etc. on social media and through other outlets.

Brett Weir

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DISCUSSION	As Outreach is a priority for the WCC, it is important that all WCC delegates share the WCC press		
	releases and events in each of your local areas. This includes local newspapers and radio stations,		
	community events calendars and bulletin boards, etc For WCC events, write a special invitation to		
	local groups and clubs to attend your event. The more publicity we all do, the more we will spread		
	awareness about the WCC. And don't forget to send us your information (write ups, pictures, etc) so		
	we can post it on our Facebook page. It takes all of us to do outreach!		
	This topic and the above topic became part of same discussion.		
ACTION	N/A		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE	
N/A			

K. YCC - standing item.

Reed Kabelowsky

DISCUSSION	Be sure to engage any YCC delegates in attendance at your district meetings, ask them about any YCC activities or experiences they may want to share, and continue to encourage delegates to reach out to schools and youth in their areas to promote the Youth Conservation Congress program. Delegates on the YCC Oversight Committee may have additional information to share about the status of this youth engagement opportunity. This is an opportunity to educate new delegates (and remind long-time delegates) about this program.
	Reed gave a recap of the weekend's activity at the YCC Summer Program and the many activities packed into this weekend. Reed touched on fundraising efforts and how they have been very successful in Sheboygan and Manitowoc Counties. Reed volunteered to come to other counties to give presentations about the YCC. Nicole Gates and Keith Propson were also present at the YCCSP and gave enthusiastic discussions. Mike Hranicka was present at the stream improvement activity on the Onion River and talked about his role with TU and how fantastic this weekend was - one

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	of the single largest work days he has ever been a part of and described how enthusiastic and functional the youth delegates were on this project. Tashina related some of her knowledge of previous activities and how sorry she was to have to miss this event. Everyone received this information with enthusiasm and commented on the growth and success of the program. Thanks and praise was extended to Kyle Zenz and all the members of the committee for their efforts. Please check out YCC newsletters.	
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE
N/A		

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Ed Harvey - Sent after meeting -Currently, Committee assignments are made by the DLC with allotments for each district. Those assignments are complete around mid summer.
	Committee leadership is appointed by the Chair and the rest of the Executive Committee. Those assignments are made after the committee assignments are received from the district councilors. If there is a vacancy in the vice chair or secretary positions, committee chairs are asked who they might want elevated from their committees and those assignments are made.
	So the process is to divide the 360 delegates up into committees and then, from each committee choose leaders.
	Historically, the Committee leaders were chosen before the delegation was divided up into committees. So, everyone's ticket was still in the drum when the big prizes were drawn (so to speak). The leadership assignments were announced at the DLC meeting in late May. Then, the committee assignments were made much later.
	I see some advantages to the old timing: While making committee leadership assignments, the Exec committee can chose from the entire delegation. Thus assuring that all secretaries have secretarial resources and skills. Under the current timing, some committees don't wind up with a capable secretary in their ranks. This is tough on the poor soul who ends up with the job. The old timing also allows the Exec committee to monitor the delegation and, when they see a promising future leader, move him or her from one committee, where there is no opportunity for advancement, into a committee leadership role in another committee where an opportunity for advancement exists. Knowing earlier that they will be committee leaders allows the Chair, Vice-chair and secretary to begin planning meetings earlier.
	I'm not on a mission to have this changed, This is just a suggestion. I know that we currently do bring new leadership into committees from outside the committee. I also know that it is hard to change committee leadership without failures at a level which we have rarely seen in our history.
	Tom Savage - Delegates need some further support and resources to be more successful at their roles. Favored in- person meetings and discussions. Especially important for folks with less technology available. Greg Coulthurst - Talked about Wisconsin Land and Waters and GLCommittee and funds available for Great Lakes projects - he can help coordinate.
	Mike Grimm - Talked about comments from citizens and how our state legislators need to be better informed about WCC activities/actions. This discussion grew out of this. Cassandra Erickson - Department updates are her favorite part of the meetings. She was also very enthused about the YCC update.
	Tashina Peplinski - Apologized for needing to step down from DLC and praised Reed for stepping in and taking the role.
	Tom Christman - Discussed the need to level the playing field for bonus permits - some folks can sit at their computers (usually older folks have this time) and others cannot. Suggested having this occur on a Saturday.
	Larry Bonde - Spoke to legislators needing/wanting to stick to their lanes and not seek conservation advise from Congress. Expressed frustration over access to, attention from, and actions of legislators. NRB Board used to be more informed about WCC and its activities - this needs to get back on track.
	Gary Roerig - Legislative actions - these folks used to attend club meetings. Talked about "legislative days." when these folks were available. Ed harvey spoke of League of Conservative Voters and their close contact with legislators in past.

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	Mike Hranicka - Mike has often invited legislators to work days - no responses. He had advocated for trout stamp increases for years with. Reed Kabelowsky - Talked about the Expo and the Youth Zone. The YCC is the motor behind the YZ at the Expo. Young people doing great things for the public. Would really like to see WCC presence at the Expo with a booth. Spoke of the amazing numbers of volunteers from YCC and WCC - almost 40 folks.
ACTION	N/A
ADJOURNMENT	

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	Motion by Nicole Gates/Tashina Peplinski to adjourn at 8:50PM - motion carried.
SUBMITTED BY	Reed Kabelowsky
DATE	08/16/2023