

PROPOSED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT RULE CHANGES

1. Allow nonedible parts of deer, bear and elk to be left in the field after harvest

Wisconsin's current deer quartering rule requires all deer parts (minus the entrails) to be removed from the field after harvest. This rule primarily affects public land hunters, who unlike most private land hunters, don't have access to groomed trails or motor vehicle assistance and requires the hunter to manually remove the entire deer from point of harvest to wherever their vehicle is located. Since in-person deer registration is no longer required, this rule puts unnecessary strain on Wisconsin's hunters (especially youth and aging hunter demographic) and discourages deer harvest when hunting far from a vehicle or in difficult to reach areas that are not conducive to carting a deer out, which is often required when hunting public lands.

Many western states have successfully adopted regulations allowing hunters to quarter or completely debone harvested game and leave "non-edible" carcass material at the site of harvest. Adopting similar language would encourage Wisconsin hunters to hunt farther from roadways/parking lots potentially reducing hunting pressure and could also potentially reduce disease spread and the number of deer carcasses that end up in public parking lots, access trails and along roadside ditches by allowing hunters to leave "non-edible" material at the site of harvest and eliminating the requirement of removing the entire harvested deer from the field. Additional benefits of allowing this rule include preventing potential CWD infectious material from being transmitted to a different site that may not contain CWD prions. Also, adopting this proposal could potentially reduce the amount of littering of carcasses by allowing non-utilized parts to remain in remote locations where harvested.

1. Do you support allowing hunters who quarter their deer in the field to leave non-edible parts at the site of harvest?

2. Allow the use of technology to tend traps

Trappers are required to tend traps at various intervals, depending on where the trap is placed. Trap tending has historically been required to be done in-person. Some states have begun allowing trappers to use technology such as cellular trail cameras to fulfill trap tending requirements. These states have developed new regulations to ensure that the technology is used responsibly.

Adopting the use of technology has potential benefits to animal welfare. This includes being able to respond to a trapped animal sooner than if they were doing an in-person trap check based on the type of trap set since technology can now give almost instant notifications when a trap has been triggered. It could also potentially allow for more trapper participation including

individuals who are older, have injuries or are disabled which may cause them to be hesitant from participating in trapping since current rules require traps to be checked in-person.

Trappers utilizing this technology would be required to ensure that the trap tending technology is active and functioning. They would also be required to reduce the animal to their possession or release the animal within a specific timeframe from when they were notified of a triggered trap. Trappers would also be required to maintain records of the appropriate tending intervals of the trap type being used.

2. Do you support using technology to meet the trap tending requirements?

3. Extend the fall turkey season in zones 6 and 7

The fall turkey season opens statewide each year on the Saturday nearest September 15th. In turkey zones 1-5, the season closes on the Sunday nearest January 6th. In zones 6 and 7, the department has closed the season on the Friday before the Thanksgiving holiday. This early closure was done out of concerns that harsh winters in the northern part of the state could potentially impact turkey populations. However, the turkey populations in zones 6 and 7 have grown to the point that the department believe the season can be extended to additional fall hunting opportunity without negatively impacting the population.

The youth firearm deer season overlaps with the disabled deer hunt. It begins on the Saturday closest to October 8 and runs for two consecutive days. In contrast to the disabled deer hunt, youth hunters may harvest deer statewide.

Many disabled hunters have expressed the desire to hunt on their own property during the disabled deer hunt. This proposal would allow disabled hunting to occur statewide while the youth gun deer season is open. The requirement to participate in a sponsored event would still apply during the portion of the disabled deer hunt that does not overlap with the youth firearm season.

4. Do you support allowing disabled hunters to hunt statewide while the two-day October youth firearm season is open?

PROPOSED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT STATEWIDE RULE CHANGES

5. Allow motor trolling with up to 3 hooks, baits or lures (“3-lines”) per angler on all inland waters of Lincoln, Sawyer, Sheboygan and Waupaca counties; restrict motor trolling to 1 hook, bait or lure (“1-line”) on all waters of Forest County

“Trolling” means fishing by trailing a lure or bait from a boat being propelled by any means other than drifting or rowing. The current motor trolling regulations on inland waters took effect in 2018. Trolling is legal on all inland waters. However, in 8 counties (Florence, Iron, Lincoln, Oneida, Sawyer (select waters), Sheboygan, Vilas, Waupaca) trolling is only allowed with 1-line per angler, with a maximum of 3-lines per boat. In the remaining 64 counties, motor trolling is allowed with up to 3-lines per angler.

Since 2014, the department has been committed to continuously evaluating the potential impacts of trolling, particularly on walleye and muskellunge. For the last 10 years, the department has collected angler data on trolling with creel surveys on well over 100 lakes. These evaluations consistently show that trolling does not negatively impact walleye or muskellunge fisheries (based on angler catch and harvest rates, average size of harvested fish, and fishing pressure), and that there are no significant differences between using 1-line or 3-lines; therefore, there is no biological reason to restrict the number of lines used for trolling. Trolling typically accounts for about 10% of total fishing effort in surveyed lakes. In 2023, a citizen resolution was introduced in Forest County to change the trolling regulation from 3-lines to 1-line for consistency with adjacent counties (Florence, Oneida and Vilas).

This prompted the department to ask a statewide advisory question at the 2024 Spring Hearings to eliminate the 1-line trolling restrictions and establish a uniform statewide 3-line trolling regulation, given that we now have 10 years of data showing that trolling has no biological impact. A majority of voters, 6,915 to 5,119 (and counties, 60 Yes, 11 No, 1 Tie) supported this proposal. However, 4 counties in northeastern WI have consistently opposed this proposal (308 Yes, 576 No), including Iron (9 Yes, 31 No), Oneida (188 Yes, 259 No), Vilas (105 Yes, 272 No) and Florence (6 Yes, 14 No). This proposal was also opposed in Forest County in 2024 (21 Yes, 51 No), even though a majority of voters supported the 3-line statewide rule in 2017 (22 Yes, 8 No). Conversely, this 2024 statewide 3-line proposal was supported in the several other counties that currently have the 1-line restriction: Lincoln (88 Yes, 54 No), Sawyer (61 Yes, 42 No), Sheboygan (118 Yes, 64 No) and Waupaca (115 Yes, 86 No). Having one consistent statewide rule would greatly reduce rule complexity and would eliminate the requirement for disabled anglers to obtain a trolling permit and would provide more fishing opportunities to anglers who may have more difficulty fishing by other methods. However, there are clearly persistent sociological concerns with 3-line trolling within this contiguous block of 5 northeastern counties.

Therefore, rather than requiring all 72 counties to follow the majority vote, the department proposes to further simplify this rule throughout of the rest of the state, but to allow this contiguous block of 5 northeastern counties to retain the more restrictive 1-line trolling rule.

5. Do you support allowing motor trolling with up to 3 hooks, baits or lures (“3-lines”) per angler on all inland waters of Lincoln, Sawyer, Sheboygan and Waupaca counties and restricting motor trolling to 1 hook, bait or lure (“1-line”) on all waters of Forest County?

6. Change opening day of the general open season for trout and salmon on inland streams, springs, and spring ponds to the first Saturday in April at 5 a.m.

Current regulation: general open season for trout on inland streams, springs, and spring ponds is the first Saturday in May at 5 a.m. through October 15th

Proposed regulation: general open season for trout on inland streams, springs, and spring ponds to the first Saturday in April at 5 a.m. through October 15th

This proposal would open trout harvest on inland streams, springs, and spring ponds that are classified trout water on the first Saturday of April, instead of the first Saturday in May. This change would extend the harvest season on these waters by approximately 23 to 30 days. Open season for non-trout waters, put and take inland lakes and ponds would remain the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March for the following year. Allowing for an earlier

harvest season would provide additional fishing opportunity when fishing conditions are good for streamside fishing, without posing risk to trout resources.

Recent creel, angler and fish population surveys show trout harvest levels are generally low, while fish population monitoring has shown stable to increasing trout populations. From June through September, some trout resources, particularly smaller streams, are not accessible due to riparian vegetation growth. Opening the season in early April will add additional days in which anglers can fish these otherwise inaccessible waters and allow anglers to fish for other species such as white suckers.

An earlier harvest opener may also help reduce abundance of trout in high density streams when fishing conditions are most optimal. Some streams in Wisconsin have a very high abundance of trout. High population abundance may affect growth and size structure. Reducing densities in these streams through harvest could improve growth rates and size structure and lead to a higher quality fishery.

Nearby states such as Minnesota have a mid-April harvest opener and Iowa has a year-round harvest season. This proposal may improve tourism in local communities with trout streams by providing opportunities for anglers that choose to harvest fish to utilize local areas rather than having to travel to a neighboring state for this early harvest opportunity.

6. Do you support changing the statewide general open season for trout and salmon on inland streams, springs, and spring ponds to the first Saturday in April at 5 a.m.?

7. Five trout in total for county base regulation statewide

Current regulation: Two inland trout statewide county-based regulation categories for “other waters not specifically listed”: 5-fish bag, no minimum size limit and 3-fish bag, 8-inch size limit

Proposed regulation: One inland trout statewide county-based regulation for “other waters not specifically listed” of 5-fish bag, no minimum size limit

In the 2014 report *Public Input for Wisconsin’s Inland Trout Program*, only 17% of the respondents indicated that they “frequently” or “always” keep trout to eat, suggesting a strong catch and release ethic. In the same survey, anglers indicated that they had a self-imposed minimum size for harvest of 8 to 9 inches for brook trout and 9 to 10 inches for brown trout regardless of whether regulations allowed them to keep smaller fish. Similar angler preference has been reflected in recent creel surveys as well (Gordon Creek, Iowa County 2022; Rush Creek, Pierce County 2021; West Fork of the Kickapoo River, Vernon County 2019 and

Bohemian Valley Creek, La Crosse and Vernon counties 2016). During these most recent creel surveys trends for harvest preference started at 8 to 9 inches.

With a strong catch and release ethic and a size preference starting at 8 inches for keeping trout, lower minimum size limits such as 8 inches are no longer needed on the majority of trout water. The special regulation categories will still be available for high priority waters and special management needs and this change will not remove any special regulations currently in place. Removing the category, 3 trout in total over 8 inches, will simplify regulations for anglers with no significant negative impacts expected. There are currently 988 streams with the regulation of 3 trout in total over 8 inches.

7. Do you support having only one statewide county-based regulation of 5 trout in total with no minimum size limit?

8. Catch-and-release season for lake sturgeon on multiple waterbodies statewide

This regulation change proposal would establish a catch-and-release hook-and-line fishing season for lake sturgeon from the first Saturday in June through the first Sunday in March on the following waterbodies:

Waterbody (including all sloughs, bayous, and flowages)	Upstream Boundary	Upstream Boundary Counties	Downstream Boundary	Downstream Boundary Counties
Wisconsin River	Wisconsin Public Service Hydro Dam in Merrill (Merrill Flowage Dam)	Lincoln	Confluence with Mississippi River	Crawford/Grant
Black River	Black River Falls Dam	Jackson	Confluence with Mississippi River	La Crosse
Chippewa River	Chippewa Flowage Dam	Sawyer	Confluence with the Mississippi River	Buffalo/Pepin
West Fork Chippewa River	Moose Lake Dam	Sawyer	Chippewa Flowage Dam	Sawyer
East Fork Chippewa River	Source	Ashland	Chippewa Flowage Dam	Sawyer
Jump River	Confluence of its North and South forks	Price	Confluence with Chippewa River	Chippewa

Eau Claire River	Lake Altoona Dam	Eau Claire	Confluence with Chippewa River	Eau Claire
Red Cedar River	Lake Menomin Dam	Dunn	Confluence with Chippewa River	Dunn
Flambeau River	Confluence of Manitowish and Bear rivers	Iron	Confluence with Chippewa River	Rusk
Manitowish River	Rest Lake Dam	Vilas	Confluence with Flambeau River	Iron
Bear River	Lac du Flambeau Dam	Vilas	Confluence with Flambeau River	Iron
Little Turtle River	Lake of the Falls Dam	Iron	Confluence with Flambeau River	Iron
Butternut Lake	Inlet	Ashland	Outlet	Price
South Fork Flambeau River	Round Lake Dam	Price	Confluence with Flambeau River	Sawyer
St. Croix River	Source	Douglas	Saint Croix Dam	Douglas
Eau Claire River	Lower Eau Claire Lake Dam	Douglas	Confluence with St. Croix River	Douglas
Namekagon River	Hayward Dam	Sawyer	Confluence with St. Croix River	Burnett
Menominee River	Sturgeon Falls Dam	Marinette	Grand Rapids Dam	Marinette

Lake sturgeon hook-and-line angling opportunities in Wisconsin vary based on location. Currently, lake sturgeon can legally be targeted on specified inland waters and boundary waters with hook-and-line during the hook-and-line harvest season, which runs from the first Saturday in September through September 30. It is illegal to target lake sturgeon, including for catch and release, on other inland waters or outside the hook-and-line harvest season on specified waters.

Other states that border Wisconsin such as Minnesota and Michigan have eight to nine-month catch and release seasons for lake sturgeon on specific waterbodies. Typical fishing methods used for targeting lake sturgeon are also commonly used by catfish and rough fish anglers. The habitats used by lake sturgeon, catfish, and rough fish overlap as well. Therefore, lake sturgeon are caught routinely during the closed season, and it is difficult to determine if anglers are illegally targeting lake sturgeon or catching them incidentally to the targeting of other lawful species.

Recently, the DNR conducted a hooking mortality study to determine if expanding angling opportunities would have negative biological effects on lake sturgeon populations. This study took place on multiple lake sturgeon fisheries throughout the state across a range of water

temperatures. No lake sturgeon mortality was observed during the study. Additionally, the physiological impacts of angling on the test subjects were low. Most hooked sturgeon recovered immediately without impairment upon release. These results suggest that expanding the catch and release opportunities will have little, if any, negative impacts on lake sturgeon populations.

Lake sturgeon surveys conducted by the DNR around the state show stable sturgeon populations in many waterbodies where lake sturgeon exist. Surveys also have shown populations expanding in waterbodies that previously had low or remnant lake sturgeon abundance.

This proposal would achieve Objective 4.2 of the **Wisconsin's Sturgeon Management Plan** to *1.) Standardize sturgeon fishing regulations to the greatest degree possible and 2.) Use best available information to evaluate risks of expanding both harvest and catch and release opportunities for Lake Sturgeon. Options should include both opening new waters to hook-and-line angling and potential changes in season structure.*

In addition, during both the 2022 and 2024 Spring Hearings, advisory questions that proposed expanding lake sturgeon catch and release angling opportunities were asked with the 2024 questions presenting the same waterbody list and season dates listed above for a potential lake sturgeon catch and release season. In both years, the advisory questions were supported by the public on about a 2:1 margin.

8. Do you support establishing a catch-and-release season for lake sturgeon from the first Saturday in June through the first Sunday in March on the waterbodies listed above where lake sturgeon populations can support these activities? This proposal would maintain the existing hook-and-line harvest season, and anglers would not need a harvest tag to catch and release lake sturgeon.

9. Spawning season closure on Lower Wisconsin River for shovelnose sturgeon

Currently, the shovelnose sturgeon fishery on the Lower Wisconsin River has a continuous open fishing season that utilizes a 3-fish daily bag limit and no minimum size limit (established in 2001-2002). Recent creel data, DNR law enforcement concerns, and population research have indicated that the current regulations may not be appropriate for the long-term viability of shovelnose sturgeon in the Lower Wisconsin River. In particular, these findings indicate the need to implement more restrictive regulations to protect spawning populations of shovelnose sturgeon, such as through a shovelnose sturgeon season closure.

Recent creel survey data and shovelnose sturgeon fishery concerns have emerged in the Lower Wisconsin River. A 2020-2021 creel survey in the Lower Wisconsin River documented a

significant fishery expansion, where shovelnose sturgeon went from being historically not targeted to the 5th most targeted species in 2020-2021. Monthly shovelnose angling data indicated that 54% of the total catch occurs in May-July and 73% of the total harvest occurs in May-June. These high catch and harvest rates during spring spawning period confirms the DNR's understanding that shovelnose sturgeon are most vulnerable to fishing during their spawning period. Beyond the creel survey, DNR law enforcement have reported an increased prevalence in group fishing for shovelnose sturgeon in past 5-10 years. Currently, the incidence of group fishing occurs in approximated 66% of enforcement visits to the Lower Wisconsin River. Group fishing is concerning to law enforcement because it masks when over-bagging violations occur, particularly so for shovelnose sturgeon.

It is important for the DNR to implement regulations to better protect adult spawning fish in the Lower Wisconsin River. As an initial step towards improving shovelnose sturgeon management on the river, closing spring fishing will help to limit harvest of adult shovelnose during this critical period. Similar regulations have been implemented regionally in the Mississippi River basin to protect spawning fish.

9. Do you support closing the shovelnose sturgeon fishing season on the Lower Wisconsin River below the Prairie Du Sac Dam to the confluence with the Mississippi River to protect spawning fish that are vulnerable to fishing from the Monday following the first Sunday in March to the first Saturday in July?

10. Develop consistent walleye regulation for Western Lake Superior & St. Louis River estuary, across both Wisconsin and Minnesota jurisdictions

This proposal would include a more protective length regulation in the St. Louis River, while keeping the bag limit and minimum length limit of 15 inches the same. This proposal would also reduce the current bag limit in Western Lake Superior (management unit WI-1, Superior to Bark Point), while keeping the length limits the same, which currently include a minimum length limit of 15 inches but only 1 over 20 inches. This proposal would create consistent regulations across the St. Louis River and Western Lake Superior to manage this migratory population in the same manner and help with enforcement issues. The change will not affect the fishing season or any rules in management unit WI-2 (Apostle Islands and Chequamegon Bay).

The management goal of the St. Louis River walleye population is to maintain a self-sustaining, naturally reproducing stock of walleye that includes both harvest opportunities and opportunities to catch memorable fish. This proposal would create a consistent walleye fishing regulation between the St. Louis River and Western Lake Superior, which is needed for more effective law enforcement and because these are the same fish migrating seasonally between the lake and river. This proposal will also help lend extra protection to the spawning stock,

which is intended to increase the catch of memorable fish and improve the stability in walleye harvest from year to year.

10. Do you support applying a uniform regulation (beginning in 2027) for the migratory walleye population in the St. Louis River and Western Lake Superior (WI-1), of 15-inch minimum length limit with a bag limit of 2 but only 1 over 20 inches?

PROPOSED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT LOCAL RULE CHANGES

11. Northern pike slot on Crooked Lake (Adams County); Cedar Lake (Manitowoc County); and Wallace Lake (Washington County)

Current regulation: 26-inch minimum length, 2-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: no minimum length, 25 to 35-inch protected slot limit, 2-fish daily bag limit

The management goal for Crooked Lake (Adams County), Cedar Lake (Manitowoc County), and Wallace Lake (Washington County) is to provide a quality northern pike fishery while allowing some harvest of smaller, slower growing northern pike. This goal is currently not being met because consistent recruitment and no harvest of smaller northern pike has resulted in a high-density northern pike population that is dominated by smaller, slow growing individuals. The 25 to 35-inch protected slot limit with a daily bag limit of 2 northern pike will allow for some harvest of smaller, slower growing northern pike, which may reduce densities of smaller fish and improve growth rates of the population. Furthermore, the fastest growing northern pike will be protected once they grow into the slot, improving the overall quality of the northern pike population.

11. Do you support applying a 25 to 35-inch protected slot limit and a daily bag limit of 2 northern pike on Crooked Lake (Adams County); Cedar Lake (Manitowoc County); and Wallace Lake (Washington County)?

12. Northern pike slot limit on Lake Puckaway and portions of the Fox, Montello and Grand Rivers (Green Lake and Marquette counties)

Current regulation: 32-inch minimum length, 1-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: no minimum length, 25 to 35-inch protected slot limit, 2-fish daily bag limit

The management goal for Lake Puckaway and its connected river segments is to produce a self-sustaining northern pike population that provides anglers with consumptive and trophy fishing opportunities, while also protecting adult females from over harvest. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it will allow anglers to harvest small pike, keeping densities in check and protect primarily female pike that have the potential to grow to trophy size. It will ensure that regulations for Lake Puckaway and the river are aligned. Affected water(s) include the Fox River upstream of Princeton Dam to Fox River and Montello River Dams in Montello including Lake Puckaway and Grand River up to first dam.

12. Do you support implementing 25 to 35-inch protected slot limit and a daily bag limit of 2 northern pike on Lake Puckaway and portions of the Fox, Montello and Grand Rivers (Green Lake and Marquette counties)?

13. Northern pike bag and size limit on Nelson Lake (Sawyer County)

Current regulation: 32-inch minimum length limit, 1-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: no minimum length, 25 to 35-inch protected slot, 5-fish daily bag limit

The management goal is a trophy pike population, with some harvest opportunities. It is currently not being met because pike abundance has been increasing, reducing population size structure and creating less opportunities to harvest legal-sized pike under the current regulation.

This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it will allow anglers to harvest more pike than the current regulation, which may help control pike abundance and will allow people to harvest more fish in a lake where other harvest opportunities have been declining.

13. Do you support applying a 25 to 35-inch protected slot, 5-fish daily bag limit for northern pike on Nelson Lake, Sawyer County?

14. Change northern pike regulations on Silver Lake (Manitowoc County)

Current regulation: minimum length limit of 32 inches, 1-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: 26-inch minimum length limit, 2-fish daily bag limit

Between 2002 and 2004, Silver Lake (Manitowoc County) underwent a whole lake restoration that involved re-routing Silver Creek so it was no longer attached to the lake, a rotenone treatment to remove abundant rough fish such as common carp, and an alum treatment to trap nutrients in the sediment. The 32-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of one northern pike was put on Silver Lake in approximately 2004 to help with restoring the fishery following the rotenone treatment. This strict of a regulation is no longer needed and may actually be hurting the fishery to a degree. Results from a spring 2023 fyke netting survey targeting northern pike resulted in high catch rates of northern pike at 8.8 northern pike per net night as well as a population estimate of 4.5 adult northern pike per acre. Only one legal size northern pike (i.e., ≥ 32.0 inches) was captured in the spring 2023 fyke netting survey, meaning there are very few opportunities for anglers to harvest a pike despite a high number of adult northern pike in the lake. Given the high densities of adult northern pike with good numbers of fish up to 32 inches in length, a highly restrictive restoration regulation is no longer needed. A highly restrictive regulation on a fishery with these characteristics could reduce growth rates in the future, thus reducing the quality of the fishery due to density dependent stunting.

14. Do you support applying a 26-inch minimum length limit and a daily bag limit of 2 northern pike on Silver Lake (Manitowoc County)?

15. Northern pike harvest opportunity on Pike Lake (Marathon County)

Current regulation: 26-inch minimum length limit, 2-fish daily bag limit
Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit, 5-fish daily bag limit

The northern pike population on Pike Lake (Marathon County) has substantially increased while size structure has decreased since the implementation of the current daily bag limit of 2 fish with a 26-inch minimum length limit. Size structure is currently poor, likely due to the high density of northern pike in the lake. The 26-inch minimum length limit and daily bag limit of two northern pike offers minimal harvest opportunity, with majority of northern pike captured during a 2021 fyke netting survey being sub-legal in size. In addition, quality northern pike fishing is not currently being provided by the 26-inch minimum length limit. Decreasing the density of northern pike may reduce competition and increase growth rates. The management goal of reverting the northern pike regulation to the statewide general regulation on Pike Lake is to decrease abundance through new harvest opportunities and improve size structure through decreased competition. In addition, this regulation proposal would allow a harvest opportunity that has been expressed as desirable by many anglers who fish the lake.

15. Do you support the proposed daily bag limit of 5-fish and no minimum length limit on northern pike in Pike Lake (Marathon County)?

16. Change northern pike regulations on Wilson Flowage (Price County, east of Phillips in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest)

**** Don't confuse this Wilson Flowage with Wilson Lake, also called Wilson Creek Flowage, on the Phillips Chain of Lakes west of Phillips.***

Current regulation: no minimum size limit, 5-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: no minimum size limit, 25 to 35-inch protected slot, 5-fish daily bag limit

This proposal would allow anglers to keep a daily bag limit of five northern pike less than 25 inches or greater than 35 inches long on Wilson Flowage (Price County), which is located east of Phillips in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Pike between 25 and 35 inches may not be kept. Under the current regulation, anglers may keep five pike of any size. The management goals are to reduce pike abundance and restore the high percentage of memorable-size pike \geq 34 inches that Wilson Flowage once produced. Now, the population falls short of these goals because too many pike $<$ 25 inches must compete among themselves for food. This regulation would promote the management goals by directing anglers' harvest on abundant pike less than 25 inches and protecting pike 25-35 inches long. Our objectives are to reduce population density to 1-3 adults per acre by 2029 and to increase proportions of preferred-size pike from 2.5% to 20-40% and memorable size pike from 0% to 3-8% by 2032.

16. Do you support applying the 25 to 35-inch protected slot length limit and a daily bag limit of 5 northern pike to Wilson Flowage in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (Price County)?

17. Smallmouth bass extended catch-and-release season for Green Bay and Lake Michigan within 5 miles of Door County

Current regulation: bass harvest season first Saturday in May to first Sunday in March, catch-and-release all other times of the year

Proposed regulation: bass harvest season July 1 through the first Sunday in March, catch-and-release all other times of the year

This rule would primarily affect the nearshore waters of Green Bay and Lake Michigan surrounding Door County. Green Bay and Lake Michigan waters are separated by the Niagara Escarpment that forms the peninsula of Door County. This proposal primarily originates from considerable and long-term concerns raised by the angling public for additional protection of spawning fish. However, over the past 10-15 years populations in Door County waters have declined and a variety of human caused disturbances to the ecology of area waters continue to stack the deck against smallmouth bass populations.

The objective of this regulation is to provide protection during the spawning period for smallmouth bass in Green Bay and Door County waters of Lake Michigan, particularly on a population-specific level. This rule will inherently protect fish from harvest during this critical period and reduce the related stressors of moving fish over long distances during catch-and-release tournaments during the spawning period.

17. Do you support creation of extending the catch-and-release season until July 1 for smallmouth bass in the waters of Green Bay and within 5 miles of the Door County shoreline in Lake Michigan? This will also include the Fox, Oconto and Peshtigo Rivers up to the first dam. This does not include waters within ¼ mile of the town of Washington Island which have different regulations.

18. Change smallmouth bass regulations on Pike Lake Chain (Bayfield County)

Current regulation: 14-inch minimum for largemouth and smallmouth bass, 5-fish daily bag limit (smallmouth and largemouth combined)

Proposed regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit for smallmouth bass, no minimum length limit for largemouth bass; 5-fish daily combined bag for bass of which only one can be a smallmouth bass

This proposal would apply a minimum length limit of 18 inches and a daily bag limit of 1 for smallmouth bass in the Pike Lake Chain (Buskey Bay, Millicent, Hart, Twin Bear, McCarry, Eagle and Flynn Lakes in Bayfield County). The current regulation is a minimum length limit of 14 inches and daily bag limit of 5 bass (smallmouth and largemouth combined). The management goal is to increase abundance of smallmouth bass to levels previously observed from the 1990s through the early 2010s when the Pike Lake Chain provided a popular smallmouth fishery. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it will protect the smallmouth bass population and thus increase smallmouth bass abundance and size structure.

The Pike Lake Chain has had a 14-inch minimum length limit for largemouth bass since 1998; however, data suggests this population has changed and a different harvest regulation would

better regulate this population and improve the quality of this fishery. This population is at a high density with low size structure and slow growth. Providing anglers an opportunity for more harvest of largemouth bass by changing the regulation to a no minimum length limit could alleviate some of the density dependence this population is experiencing thus allowing fish to grow to larger sizes, increase size structure and improve the quality of the fishery. Further, increasing the opportunity to harvest largemouth would coincide nicely with limiting harvest for walleye and smallmouth bass.

18. Do you support applying a no minimum length limit for largemouth bass and an 18-inch minimum length and a daily bag limit of 1 smallmouth bass to the Pike Lake Chain (Bayfield County)? The combined daily bag for bass would remain 5 fish.

19. Largemouth and smallmouth bass protected slot for Camelot Lake, Lake Sherwood, Lake Arrowhead and all reservoirs on 14-mile creek (Adams County)

Current regulation: 14-inch minimum, 5-fish daily bag limit (smallmouth and largemouth combined)

Proposed regulation: no minimum length, 14 to 18-inch protected slot size, 5-fish daily bag limit with 1 fish over 18 inches

The management goal for Camelot Lake, Lake Sherwood, Lake Arrowhead and all reservoirs on 14-mile creek (Adams County) is to provide anglers an opportunity to harvest an abundant largemouth bass population while protecting larger bass in the population to improve size structure. It is currently not being met because of an overabundant population of largemouth bass (less than 14 inches). The objective is to increase the proportion of bass over 14 inches by 6-17% and those over 15 to 10-25% within 10 years. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because increased harvest of small bass is expected to improve growth rates by reducing competition, preserve a range of sizes by protecting 14 to 18-inch bass, and provide additional harvest opportunity.

19. Do you support applying a no minimum length limit and 14 to 18-inch protected slot size with a daily combined bag limit of 5, except only 1 fish can be over 18 inches for large and smallmouth bass to Crooked Lake, Camelot Lake, Lake Sherwood, and Lake Arrowhead (Adams County)?

20. Change largemouth and smallmouth bass regulations for Turtle Lake and Pleasant Lake (Walworth County) and Upper Gresham Lake (Vilas County)

Current regulation: 14-inch minimum, 5-fish daily bag limit (smallmouth and largemouth combined)

Proposed regulation: no minimum size limit, 5-fish daily bag limit (smallmouth and largemouth combined)

The management goal for Turtle Lake and Pleasant Lake (Walworth County) and Upper Gresham Lake (Vilas County) is to improve bass growth and size structure by allowing increased angler harvest. It is currently not being met because a 14-inch minimum length limit restricts harvest of an abundant, slow growing bass population.

This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because removing the minimum length limit will allow harvest of an abundant, slow growing population in an effort to reduce abundance and improve size structure.

20. Do you support applying a daily combined bag limit of 5 fish and no minimum length limit on largemouth and smallmouth bass to Turtle Lake and Pleasant Lake (Walworth County) and Upper Gresham Lake (Vilas County)?

21. Change regulations for largemouth and smallmouth bass in Pelican Lake (Oneida County)

Current regulation: 18-inch minimum length, 1-fish daily bag limit for largemouth and smallmouth bass

Proposed regulation: no minimum length, 14 to 18-inch protected slot size, 5-fish daily bag limit (largemouth and smallmouth combined) with 1 fish over 18 inches

This proposed regulation change is based off biological survey data. Largemouth and smallmouth bass on Pelican Lake (Oneida County) demonstrate increasing relative abundance and decreasing size structure. Increasing harvest of smaller bass while protecting some of the larger individuals should decrease bass abundance and improve size structure.

21. Do you support applying a no minimum length limit and 14 to 18-inch protected slot size with a daily bag limit of 5 (largemouth and smallmouth bass combined), except only 1 fish can be over 18 inches on Pelican Lake (Oneida County)?

22. Change current largemouth and smallmouth bass regulations for Crescent Lake (Oneida County)

Current regulation: 18-inch minimum, 1-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit with a 5-fish daily bag limit (largemouth and smallmouth combined)

This proposed regulation change is based off biological survey data. Largemouth bass population monitoring on Crescent Lake (Oneida County) demonstrates an increasing adult bass abundance; from too few individuals to generate a reliable estimate in 2010 to 7.4 per acre in 2022. The largemouth bass size structure has decreased from a mean total length of 15.2 inches in 2010 to 11.3 inches in 2023. Additionally, walleye reproduction has not met the abundance/size structure goals per mile since 2018 resulting in the lowest recorded adult abundance ever. Reducing largemouth bass abundance should maintain trophy bass opportunities (>18 inches), provide harvest opportunities, and reduce any potential competition between walleye and bass potentially facilitating a recovery in the walleye fishery.

22. Do you support applying no minimum length limit with a 5-fish combined daily bag for largemouth and smallmouth bass on Crescent Lake (Oneida County)?

23. Change daily bag limit of 5 trout under 12 inches to daily bag limit of 5 trout but only 1 trout over 12 inches on Gordon Creek (Iowa County), Willow Creek, Camp Creek, Knapp Creek, Mill Creek (Richland County), Elk Creek (Vernon & Richland counties), Big Green River, Borah Creek, Little Grant River, Crooked Creek (Grant County), Mt. Vernon Creek (Dane County)

Current regulation: 5 trout under 12 inches

Proposed regulation: 5 trout bag, no minimum size limit except only 1 over 12 inches

The propose regulation would apply to Gordon Ccreek (Iowa County), Willow Creek, Camp Creek, Knapp Creek, Mill Creek (Richland County), Elk Creek (Vernon & Richland counties), Big Green River, Borah Creek, Little Grant River, Crooked Creek (Grant County), and Mt. Vernon Creek (Dane County). The current regulation has not shown to increase size structure on these streams since being implemented in 2016. The management goal is to provide an increased harvest opportunity of one larger sized trout while maintaining protection of the overall population size structure. Current high densities of brown trout reduce growth potential and limit quality-size fish potential. Allowing harvest of five trout in total but only one trout over 12 inches allows for harvest opportunities and the potential to harvest a memorable or trophy sized trout. Recent evaluations of stream with high bag limits and no size protection show

harvest is targeted at larger individuals and reduces the population size structure by removing those larger individuals. Many other states use 1-over regulations for protecting the larger individuals in a trout population while allowing harvest of abundant smaller individuals.

23. Do you support applying a trout regulation of 5-fish daily bag limit, no minimum size but only one fish over 12-inch on Gordon creek (Iowa County), Willow Creek, Camp Creek, Knapp Creek, Mill Creek (Richland County), Elk Creek (Vernon & Richland counties), Big Green River, Borah Creek, Little Grant River, Crooked Creek (Grant County), Mt. Vernon Creek (Dane County)?

24. Open all streams in Waushara and Marquette counties to early season catch and release season for trout

This proposal would allow angling on all trout streams in Waushara and Marquette counties during the early trout season, simplifying regulations to match general statewide early trout season rules. The current regulations in Waushara County are that Carter Creek, Leola Ditch, Mekan River downstream from 11th Rd, Pine River downstream from CTH K to Poy Sippi Pond, Roche-a-Cri Creek, Willow Creek from Blackhawk Rd to 29th Lane, and White River from STH 21 to lower White River millpond are the only streams in the county open during the early trout season.

The current regulations in Marquette County are that Chaffee Creek downstream from CTH B, Klawitter Creek, Lawrence Creek, Lunch Creek, Mekan River upstream from STH 22, Neenah Creek, O'Keefe Creek, Wedde Creek and Westfield Creek are the only streams in the county open during the early trout season.

The management goal is to provide additional angling opportunities in Central Wisconsin. Providing additional trout angling opportunities in Central Wisconsin would increase quality of angling experience, decrease crowding during the regular season opener, generate economic benefits in Northeastern Wisconsin through additional angling days in the region, generate public interest in the welfare of trout streams and provide greater opportunities to teach angling techniques.

24. Do you support opening all trout streams in Waushara and Marquette counties during the early trout season?

25. Platte River (Grant County) and Onion River (Sheboygan County) trout regulations

Current regulation: 8-inch minimum, 3-fish bag

Proposed regulation: 12-inch minimum, 2-fish bag

The Platte River has an emerging brown trout population showing signs of increasing brown trout abundance with notable high size structure (brown trout \geq 12 inches). Recent increases in late-summer streamflow (baseflow) have expanded suitable habitat conditions for brown trout throughout the middle to upper portions of the Platte River. Although this brown trout population is naturally expanding throughout the middle Platte River, the abundance of quality (\geq 8 inches) and preferred-size (\geq 12 inches) brown trout is low when compared to similar Driftless Area trout populations. The department proposes a 12-inch minimum length limit with 2-fish daily bag limit for the Platte River, since this regulation has been effective for improving catch rates of both quality and preferred size brown trout in streams similar to the Platte River.

The Onion River is one of two high-quality trout angling opportunities in Sheboygan County. From its headwaters downstream approximately 10 miles the Onion River is a Class 1 trout stream. The management goal for the Onion River is to apply consistent regulations across the trout classified portion of the Onion River to simplify regulation and enforcement.

25. Do you support applying a 2-trout bag with a 12-inch minimum length limit and no bait restrictions to the Onion River downstream of CTH E to CTH N (Sheboygan County), and the Platte River (Grant County)?

26. Trout regulations on Nichols Creek, North Branch Milwaukee River (Sheboygan County)

Current regulation: 8-inch minimum length, 3-trout daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: no minimum length, 5 trout in total brown and rainbow trout, but all brook trout shall be immediately released

The management goal for Nichols Creek (from the headwaters downstream to Hwy. 28, Sheboygan County) is to maximize the potential of the existing native brook trout population by increasing harvest of brown trout. It is currently not being met because both species are

protected equally by the current regulation. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because increased harvest of brown trout is expected to improve brook trout populations by reducing competition, protecting brook trout with catch and release, and provide additional brown trout harvest opportunity.

26. Do you support applying regulation of 5 trout in total (daily bag), brown trout and rainbow trout no minimum length limit, but all brook trout caught shall be immediately released to Nichols Creek (Sheboygan County)?

27. Trout regulations on all Pierce County trout waters and tributaries including those that extend into Dunn, Pepin, and St. Croix counties (excluding Cady and Pine creeks)

Current regulation: 12-inch minimum (brown and rainbow), 8-inch minimum (brook), 3-fish combined daily bag on all Pierce County streams and the portions of these streams that extend into St. Croix and Pepin counties; 5 trout under 12 inches on the Kinnickinnic River and tributaries.

Proposed regulation: no minimum length and only one over 12 inches may be kept, 5-trout combined daily bag

The management goal for Pierce County trout waters and tributaries extending into Dunn, Pepin, and St. Croix counties, is to reduce densities of abundant, small trout (<12 inches) by allowing increased harvest of this size range and reduce harvest of larger brown trout >12 inches to create a higher quality trout fishery. Reduce densities of brown trout less than 12 inches to reduce intraspecific competition and allow for improved growth rates and overall maximum size and size structure of the population. The proposed regulation would provide more protection to preferred size (12 inches) and larger brown trout that are rarer within the populations to provide a higher quality fishery.

Current management goals are not being met because densities of adult trout within the 6–12-inch range are very high within these streams, while densities of large trout >12 inches are relatively low resulting in a skewed size structure and slow growing trout with low maximum size potential. Each of these streams exhibit high densities of small trout annually due to high rates of natural reproduction and recruitment. Catch rates of brown trout in the 8–12-inch size class, range from 152/mile (60th percentile, Big River, Class II) to 2206/mile (95th percentile, Rush River, Class I) with an average of 930/mile (85th percentile for Class I Driftless Area streams) across all streams (values were calculated using the average of the last 5 years of sampling data from trend sites). While growth rates have not been specifically evaluated, density dependence is likely a factor in influencing trout growth rates and maximum size

potential within these streams. The current regulation of the 12-inch minimum length limit with a 3-fish bag limit is restricting harvest on the abundant, small trout while focusing any harvest that occurs on less abundant, larger fish, further contributing to the poor size structure of the populations.

Additionally, the current bag limit of 3 is very conservative for these waters given the high trout densities that are present. Increasing the bag limit to 5 will allow for increased harvest on these high-density populations. The 1 over 12 inches regulation will allow for an angler to keep a larger fish to add to their bag, trophy fish or an injured fish. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because the proposed regulation will aid in reducing densities of small, abundant brown trout which will help to improve growth rates and increase the size structure of the populations. This regulation will also help to meet the management goal of improving the size structure of brown trout populations by protecting large preferred and trophy size fish (≥ 12 inches) which will help to further improve size structure. Increasing the bag limit will aid in overall reductions in high density brown trout populations to improve the health and size structure of the fishery.

27. Do you support applying a regulation of no minimum length except only one over 12 inches may be kept and a 5-trout combined daily bag to all Pierce County trout streams that extend into Dunn, St. Croix (Kinnickinnic River and tributaries, Rush River and Eau Galle River) and Pepin County (Plum Creek), excluding Cady and Pine creeks?

28. Catch and release of brook trout on North Fork of Clam River (Burnett County)

Current regulation: no minimum length limit, 5-trout combined daily bag

Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit (brown), 5-trout daily bag, but all brook trout caught shall be immediately released

There currently is a no-minimum length limit and 5 fish daily bag limit for brown and brook trout for North Fork Clam River (Burnett County). This proposal would continue to allow harvest of brown trout in this section of these streams. However, it would impose a catch and release regulation for all brook trout.

The management goal is to protect brook trout in North Fork Clam River and increase densities of brook trout in these streams. In addition, this regulation would help preserve a stream that has native brook trout genetics and is listed as a DNR brook trout reserve.

28. Do you support applying a 5-trout daily bag limit and no minimum length limit for brown trout, but all brook trout caught shall be immediately released on North Fork of Clam River, Spring Lake Road to CTH H (Burnett County)?

29. Trout regulation change for Lee Creek and Martin Creek (Iowa County), Sixmile Branch (Grant and Iowa counties) and Big Spring Branch downstream of Pine Tree Road (Grant County)

Current regulation: 8-inch minimum length limit, 3-trout daily bag limit, bait can be used

Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit (brown and rainbow), 5-trout combined bag limit but all brook trout must be immediately released; only artificial lures may be used

This proposal would apply a 5-bag limit, no minimum size on brown and rainbow trout, brook trout must be immediately released regulation to Lee Creek and Martin Creek (Iowa County), Sixmile Branch (Grant and Iowa counties) and Big Spring Branch downstream of Pine Tree Road (Grant County). The current regulation is 3 trout over 8 inches.

The management goal is to protect the genetically important brook trout within the Harker Creek and Blue River watersheds. These streams have the potential to be used as a broodstock source for the wild brook trout stocking program. Therefore, protection of these populations is regionally important for the stocking program. This would still allow for harvest opportunities of other trout species and help reduce competition between brook and brown trout.

29. Do you support applying the following regulation to Lee Creek and Martin Creek (Iowa County), Sixmile Branch (Grant and Iowa counties) and Big Spring Branch downstream of Pine Tree Road (Grant County): daily combined bag limit of 5 trout, no minimum size on brown and rainbow trout, but brook trout must be immediately released, and only artificial lures may be used?

30. Regulation change for trout on Unnamed Tributary to Melanchton Creek, Grinsell Branch, Hanzel Creek (Richland County)

Current regulation: 8-inch minimum length limit, 3-trout combined daily bag limit; no gear restrictions

Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit (brown and rainbow), 5-trout daily bag, but brook trout must be immediately released; no gear restrictions

The management goal on Unnamed Tributary to Melanchton Creek, Grinsell Branch, Hanzel Creek (Richland County) is to protect the genetically important brook trout within the Melanchthon Creek watershed. This stream is used as a broodstock source for the wild brook trout stocking program. Therefore, protection of this population is important for the wild trout

stocking program. This proposal would still allow for harvest opportunities of other trout species and help reduce competition between brook and brown trout.

30. Do you support applying the following regulation: a daily bag limit of 5 trout, no minimum length limit on brown and rainbow trout, but brook trout must be immediately released; to Unnamed Tributary to Melanchthon Creek, Grinsell Branch and Hanzel Creek (Richland County)?

31. Walleye restoration/ rehabilitation on Crescent Lake (Oneida County)

Current regulation: no minimum length limit, but only 1 fish over 14 inches is allowed, 3-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit except fish from 22 to 28 inches may not be kept, daily bag limit of 1 for walleye.

This proposed regulation change is based off biological survey data collected by the DNR, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), and the Sokaogon Chippewa Community Mole Lake Band on Crescent Lake (Oneida County). Walleye population monitoring demonstrates decreasing adult abundance from consistently having 4-7 adult walleye per acre in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s to 2.9 adult walleye per acre in 2022. Walleye reproduction has not met the size structure and abundance goals for non-stocked lakes in recent years as it consistently had in the past. Drastically reduced walleye reproduction began in 2018 to the point that no age-0 were detected in 2022 or 2023. Increasing the minimum length limit should allow adult walleyes at least one chance to spawn before being subjected to harvest and may bring back adequate reproduction and increase adult density.

31. Do you support applying an 18-inch minimum length limit, except fish from 22 to 28 inches may not be kept, with a daily bag limit of 1 for walleye for walleye on Crescent Lake (Oneida County)?

32. Walleye restoration/ rehabilitation on George Lake (Oneida County)

Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit, 20 to 24-inch protected slot, 3-fish daily bag but only 1 fish over 24 inches is allowed

Proposed regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit, 22 to 28-inch protected slot, 1-fish daily bag limit

This proposed regulation change is based off biological survey data collected by the DNR, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), and the Sokaogon Chippewa Community Mole Lake Band on George Lake (Oneida County). Walleye reproduction has not met the size structure and abundance goals for non-stocked lakes in recent years as it had in the past. Walleye population monitoring demonstrates decreasing adult abundance from consistently having > 4.0 adult walleye per acre in the 2000s to 0.9 adult walleye per acre in 2022. Increasing the minimum length limit and placing the restrictive bag should allow adult walleyes at least one chance to spawn before being subjected to harvest to bring back adequate reproduction and increase adult density.

32. Do you support applying an 18-inch minimum length limit, except no fish from 22 to 28 inches may be kept, with a daily bag limit of 1 for walleye to George Lake (Oneida County)?

33. Walleye restoration/ rehabilitation the Pike Lake Chain (Heart, Millicent, Twin Bear, Buskey Bay, McCarry, Eagle and Flynn in Bayfield County)

Current regulation: 14 to 18-inch protected slot, 3 fish daily bag limit with only 1 fish over 18 inches

Proposed regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit, 22 to 28-inch protected slot, 1-fish daily bag

The management goal for the Pike Lake Chain (Heart, Millicent, Twin Bear, Buskey Bay, McCarry, Eagle and Flynn in Bayfield County) is a walleye population sustained primarily by natural reproduction with a moderate adult density and a moderate percentage of quality and preferred sized fish. It is currently not being met because low levels of natural recruitment has not maintained a moderate adult density. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it will reduce angler harvest while additional management actions are implemented in effort to increase adult density and natural recruitment.

33. Do you support applying an 18-inch minimum length limit, except fish from 22 to 28 inch may not be kept, with a daily bag limit of 1 for walleye to the Pike Lake Chain (Bayfield County)?

34. Change walleye regulation for Redstone Lake (Sauk County)

Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit, 3-fish daily bag limit

Proposed regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit, 3-fish daily bag limit

The management goal for Redstone Lake (Sauk County) is to improve angler catch rates of adult walleyes by increasing adult walleye abundance, and to increase opportunities for anglers to catch quality and memorable-sized walleyes. It is currently not being met because reduced survival of stocked walleyes combined with angler harvest have reduced the walleye population from over 4 adult fish per acre in 2010 to less than 1 adult per acre in 2022.

Walleye stocking has been changed from small fingerlings to large fingerlings which will help meet the management goal by improving survival of stocked fish. This regulation proposal is the second tool (in addition to the stocking change) needed to help meet the management goal because it protects walleyes from harvest for one additional year on average which will increase the abundance of adult walleyes in the lake, and angler catch rates of walleyes will improve as a result. Additionally, by increasing adult walleye abundance, more walleyes will have the chance to grow to reach impressive sizes thanks to the excellent walleye growth rates in Redstone Lake, where walleyes average over 18 inches by age 4, 20 inches by age 5, and female walleyes average over 25 inches by age 7.

34. Do you support applying an 18-inch minimum length limit and 3-fish daily bag limit for walleyes to Redstone Lake (Sauk County)?

35. Change walleye regulations on Sand Lake (Sawyer County)

Current regulation: 15-inch minimum length limit, 20 to 24-inch protected slot, 3-fish daily bag limit with only 1 walleye over 24 inches

Proposed regulation: 18-inch minimum length limit, 3-fish daily bag limit

The management goal for Sand Lake (Sawyer County) is to increase walleye abundance to 4-8 adult walleye per acre and maintain a high catch rate fishery. It is currently not being met because population abundance is lower than desired. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because this system has been shown to be very sensitive to harvest and current regulations are not restrictive enough to maintain the desired density of adult walleye.

35. Do you support applying an 18-inch minimum length limit and 3-fish daily bag for walleye to Sand Lake (Sawyer County)?

36. Add Unnamed Lake (Marinette County) as a community fishing pond

Current regulations: standard statewide regulations

Proposed regulations: year-round season, no length limit, daily bag limit of three trout, one gamefish and ten panfish

This proposal would add Unnamed Lake (T30N R23E S21) in the City of Peshtigo (Marinette County) as a community fishing pond. This would include regulations as follows: no closed season, no length limit, daily bag limit of 3 trout, one gamefish, and ten panfish.

36. Do you support adding Unnamed Lake (T30N R23E S21; Marinette County) to the DNR's Urban and Community Fishing Program?

PROPOSED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PANFISH RULE CHANGES

Beginning in 2016, the DNR began a study of new experimental panfish regulations on 94 lakes across the state. Lakes selected were experiencing panfish overharvest which had resulted in fast-growing panfish being harvested more readily and reducing the likelihood of them reaching a desirable size.

The experiment applied one of three daily bag limit regulations to each lake: 1) 25 panfish in aggregate but no more than 10 of each species (e.g. 25/10); 2) 15 panfish in aggregate but no more than 5 of each species (e.g.15/5); or 3) 15 panfish in aggregate but no more than 5 of each species (e.g.15/5) only in the months of May and June and a standard 25 panfish in aggregate for the rest of the year.

The goal of the experiment was to identify a regulation option for overharvested lakes that would improve panfish size structures and be socially acceptable by anglers.

To assess the experimental regulations' social acceptability, the DNR has conducted a multi-method panfish angler survey since 2021 and collected fish population data on the experimental waters. Staff have analyzed the results and have made recommendations for future regulation options for panfish management. The experimental regulations sunset on March 31, 2026. The following are panfish regulation changes that reflect the information gathered through the panfish study.

37. 25 panfish daily bag in aggregate but no more than 5 black crappie option added to panfish regulation toolbox and apply the regulation to the following lakes: Black Dan Lake, Island Lake, Osprey Lake, Round and Little Round Lake, and Windigo Lake (Sawyer County)

This proposal is a part of a set of three proposals that would add species-specific daily bag limits of 5 fish to the panfish management regulation toolbox, allowing for harvest reductions of one species where they are not necessary for all panfish species together. During the panfish regulations experiment, bag limits of 5 for particular panfish species (not 5 in aggregate) were concluded to most consistently meet objectives for improving the size structure for that species. This particular question would apply a species-specific daily bag limit of 5 crappies to the standard panfish bag limit of 25 panfish in aggregate. Therefore, the regulation would be “25 panfish in aggregate but only 5 may be crappies”. All lakes in this proposal currently have one of the experimental regulations (either 25 panfish in aggregate with no more than 10 of any species, 15 panfish in aggregate with no more than 5 of any species, or 15 panfish in aggregate with no more than 5 of any species for the months of May and June but 25 in aggregate for the rest of the year). All of these experimental regulations will sunset on March 31, 2026, and revert to the statewide default of a 25 aggregate bag limit year-round.

The management goal on these waters is to improve crappie size structure, and for lakes under experimental regulations where size structure has already been improved, it is to sustain those improvements. All of these lakes either had or have existing poor size structure that is suspected to have been caused by overharvest, with crappies not able to reach large sizes due to high harvest as soon as they reach harvestable size. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it would reduce harvest of crappie, allowing many more individuals to grow to desirable sizes (e.g., 10-13 inches), while still allowing for more liberal harvest of other panfish species.

37. Do you favor adding species-specific 5-bag limits to the panfish regulation toolbox, and applying the daily bag limit of 25 panfish but no more than 5 crappies to Black Dan Lake, Island Lake, Osprey Lake, Round and Little Round Lake, and Windigo Lake (Sawyer County)?

38. 25 panfish daily bag in aggregate but no more than 5 bluegill option added to panfish regulation toolbox and apply the regulation to the following lakes: Long Lake (Manitowoc County); Deerskin Lake, Partridge Lake, High Lake, Fishtrap Lake, and Rush Lakes (Vilas County); Graham Lake and Hartman Lake (Waupaca County)

This proposal is a part of a set of three proposals that would add species-specific daily bag limits of 5 fish to the panfish management regulation toolbox, allowing for harvest reductions of one species where they are not necessary for all panfish species together. During the panfish regulations experiment, bag limits of 5 for particular panfish species (not 5 in aggregate) were

concluded to most consistently meet objectives for improving the size structure for that species. This particular question would apply a species-specific daily bag limit of 5 bluegill to the standard panfish bag limit of 25 panfish in aggregate. Therefore, the regulation would be “25 panfish in aggregate but only 5 may be bluegill”. For 5 lakes in this proposal, the current regulation is an experimental regulation (either 25 panfish in aggregate with no more than 10 of any species, 15 panfish in aggregate with no more than 5 of any species, or 15 panfish in aggregate with no more than 5 of any species for the months of May and June but 25 in aggregate for the rest of the year). All of these experimental regulations will sunset on March 31, 2026, and revert to the statewide default of a 25 aggregate bag limit year-round. One lake in this proposal is currently under the default of a 25 panfish in aggregate limit year-round.

The management goal on these waters is to improve bluegill size structure, and for lakes under experimental regulations where size structure has already been improved, it is to sustain those improvements. All of these lakes either had or have existing poor size structure that is suspected to have been caused by overharvest, with bluegills not able to reach large sizes due to high harvest as soon as they reach harvestable size. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it would reduce harvest of bluegill, allowing many more individuals to grow to desirable sizes (e.g., 7-9 inches), while still allowing for more liberal harvest of other panfish species.

38. Do you favor adding species-specific 5-bag limits to the panfish regulation toolbox, and applying the daily bag limit of 25 panfish but no more than 5 bluegills to Long Lake (Manitowoc County); Deerskin Lake, Partridge Lake, High Lake, Fishtrap Lake, and Rush Lakes (Vilas County); Graham Lake and Hartman Lake (Waupaca County)?

39. 10 panfish daily bag in aggregate but no more than 5 bluegill option added to panfish regulation toolbox and apply the regulation to the following lakes: Parker Lake (Adams County); Sea Lion Lake (Florence County); Crystal Lake, Long Lake T33N R10E S35, Mary Lake, Meyer Lake, White Lake (Langlade County); Crystal Lake, Echo Lake, Hilderbrand Lake, Hilts Lake, Pesobic Lake (Lincoln County); English Lake, Cedar Lake (Manitowoc County), and Silver Lake (Washington County)

This proposal is a part of a set of three proposals that would add species-specific daily bag limits of 5 fish to the panfish management regulation toolbox, allowing for harvest reductions of one species where they are not necessary for all panfish species together. During the panfish regulations experiment, bag limits of 5 for particular panfish species (not 5 in aggregate) were concluded to most consistently meet objectives for improving the size structure for that species. This particular question would apply a species-specific daily bag limit of 5 bluegill in conjunction with a daily bag limit of 10 panfish in aggregate. Therefore, the regulation would be “10 panfish in aggregate but only 5 may be bluegill”. For 13 lakes in this proposal, the current regulation is an experimental regulation (either 25 panfish in aggregate with no more than 10

of any species, 15 panfish in aggregate with no more than 5 of any species, or 15 panfish in aggregate with no more than 5 of any species for the months of May and June but 25 in aggregate for the rest of the year). All of these experimental regulations will sunset on March 31, 2026, and revert to the statewide default of a 25 aggregate bag limit year-round. Two lakes in this proposal are currently under the default of a 25 panfish in aggregate limit year-round.

The management goal on these waters is to improve bluegill size structure, and for lakes under experimental regulations where size structure has already been improved, it is to sustain those improvements. At the same time, the goal of the 10-bag component of this regulation is to maintain or improve size structure of other panfish species present in these waterbodies. All of these lakes either had or have existing poor bluegill size structure that is suspected to have been caused by overharvest, with bluegills not able to reach large sizes due to high harvest as soon as they reach harvestable size. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it would reduce harvest of bluegill, allowing many more individuals to grow to desirable sizes (e.g., 7-9 inches), while more moderately limiting the harvest of other panfish species.

39. Do you favor adding species-specific 5-bag limits to the panfish regulations toolbox, and applying the daily bag limit of 10 panfish but no more than 5 bluegills to Parker Lake (Adams County); Sea Lion Lake (Florence County); Crystal Lake, Long Lake T33N R10E S35, Mary Lake, Meyer Lake, White Lake (Langlade County); Crystal Lake, Echo Lake, Hilderbrand Lake, Hilts Lake, and Pesobic Lake (Lincoln County); English Lake, Cedar Lake (Manitowoc County), and Silver Lake (Washington County)?

40. Experimental limits to 10 panfish in aggregate on the following lakes: Crooked Lake, Camelot, Sherwood, and Arrowhead lakes (Adams County); Lake Eau Claire and portion of Eau Claire River (Eau Claire County); Halsey Lake and Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes (Florence County); Wabikon-Riley Chain of Lakes (Forest County); Big Twin, Dynamite, Moose, and Mueller lakes (Langlade County); Deer Lake and the Lake Nokomis/Rice Reservoir Chain (Deer Lake, Bridge Lake, Lake Nokomis, and the Rice River Flowage combined in Lincoln and Oneida counties); Bullhead Lake and Pigeon Lake (Manitowoc County); Mud Lake (Marathon County); Amber Lake, Boom-Rhinelanders Flowage Chain of Lakes including Boom, Bass Lake, Lake Creek, and Thunder Lake (Oneida County); Emily and Lime lakes (Portage County); Durphee, Schoolhouse, Winter and Lost Land/Teal lakes (Sawyer County); White Clay Lake (Shawano County); Rib Lake (Taylor County); Gilbert Lake, Big Cedar Lake and Little Cedar Lake (Washington County); White Lake, Stratton Lake, School Section Lake, and Shadow Lake (Waupaca County); and Witters, Porters, Irogami, Kusel, Big Hills and Big Silver Lake (Waushara County)

Current regulation: experimental bag limits sunsetting on March 31, 2026, when they would revert to the standard bag limit of 25 panfish in aggregate

Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 10 panfish in aggregate

The management goal is to maintain the quality panfish populations and improve size structure. It is currently not being met because the current regulation will sunset and revert to a 25 panfish bag limit which may lead to an increase in harvest and poorer size structures in the panfish populations as observed prior to the current regulation. The goals for applying this regulation to these waters are to protect or improve the size structures of multiple panfish species present in the lakes and to simplify regulations, make them more consistent, and more enforceable. This regulation proposal is one tool to help meet the management goal because it will reduce the bag limit for panfish and reduce harvest which will provide further protection for these quality panfish populations.

40. Do you support applying a 10-fish daily panfish bag limit in aggregate to Crooked Lake, Camelot, Sherwood, and Arrowhead lakes (Adams County); Lake Eau Claire and portion of Eau Claire River (Eau Claire County); Halsey Lake and Spread Eagle Chain of Lakes (Florence County); Wabikon-Riley Chain of Lakes (Forest County); Big Twin, Dynamite, Moose, and Mueller lakes (Langlade County); Deer Lake and the Lake Nokomis/Rice Reservoir Chain (Deer Lake, Bridge Lake, Lake Nokomis, and the Rice River Flowage combined in Lincoln and Oneida counties); Bullhead Lake (Manitowoc County); Mud Lake (Marathon County); Amber Lake, Boom-Rhineland Flowage Chain of Lakes including Boom, Bass Lake, Lake Creek, and Thunder Lake (Oneida County); Emily and Lime lakes (Portage County); Durphee, Schoolhouse, Winter and Lost Land/Teal lakes (Sawyer County); White Clay Lake (Shawano County); Rib Lake (Taylor County); Gilbert Lake, Big Cedar Lake and Little Cedar Lake (Washington County); White Lake, Stratton Lake, School Section Lake, and Shadow Lake (Waupaca County); and Witters, Porters, Irogami, Kusel, Big Hills and Big Silver Lake (Waushara County)?

41. Standard 25 panfish to 10 panfish in aggregate on the following lakes: Peppermill Lake (Adams County); Colfax Gravel Pond (Dunn County); Wolf Lake (Fond du Lac County); Big Green and Little Green Lake (Green Lake County); Lake Dubay, Norrie Lake and Wadley Lake (Marathon County); Wood Lake (Marquette County); Crooked Lake (with Bass Lake and Gilkey Lake) (Oconto County); Pelican Lake and Willow Flowage (Oneida County); Mc Dill Pond, Lake Helen and Lake Dubay (Portage County); Shawano Lake and connected waters, including Washington Lake, Loon Lake, Shawano Lake outlet channel, Wolf River Pond, and Wolf River from the Shawano Lake outlet channel upstream to the Balsam Row dam (Shawano County); Island Chain of Lakes including Chain, Clear, Island, and McCann lakes combined (Rusk and Chippewa counties); Green Lake (Washington County); and Pleasant Lake (Waushara County)

Current regulation: no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 25 for panfish in aggregate
Proposed regulation: no minimum length limit, daily bag limit of 10 panfish in aggregate

Concerns have increased regarding the quality and duration of the panfish fishery on these lakes and recent survey data indicates signs of exploited panfish populations. Recent research has shown that reducing panfish daily bag limits to ≤ 10 fish may noticeably reduce harvest mortality and may improve population size structure. It may also enhance the quality of the fishery by allowing more anglers a greater chance of filling a bag limit and potentially prolonging the duration of time anglers can utilize available year classes. The current management goals for these lakes are not being met because the current regulation allows for high panfish harvest, so their populations tend to have more year-to-year variability and relative abundance has declined over the past two decades. The future management goal is a moderate to high density population of panfish characterized by multiple strong year classes that can sustain quality harvest opportunities throughout the year and provide equitable harvest opportunities amongst anglers.

41. Do you support applying a daily bag limit of 10 panfish in aggregate to Peppermill Lake (Adams County); Colfax Gravel Pond (Dunn County); Wolf Lake (Fond du Lac County); Big Green and Little Green Lake (Green Lake County); Lake Dubay, Norrie Lake and Wadley Lake (Marathon County); Wood Lake (Marquette County); Crooked Lake (with Bass Lake and Gilkey Lake) (Oconto County); Pelican Lake and Willow Flowage (Oneida County); Mc Dill Pond, Lake Helen and Lake Dubay (Portage County); Shawano Lake and connected waters, including Washington Lake, Loon Lake, Shawano Lake outlet channel, Wolf River Pond, and Wolf River from the Shawano Lake outlet channel upstream to the Balsam Row dam (Shawano County); Island Chain of Lakes, including Chain, Clear, Island, and McCann lakes combined (Rusk and Chippewa counties); Green Lake (Washington County); and Pleasant Lake (Waushara County)

42. 10 panfish in aggregate but no more than 5 perch regulation for Harpt Lake (Manitowoc County)

The current regulation is a 25 aggregate bag limit for panfish with no more than 10 of any one species. The management goal is to maintain a high-quality bluegill fishery along with restoring and maintaining a high-quality yellow perch fishery. Historically, Harpt Lake supported an abundant yellow perch population. Yellow perch numbers declined to the point that a yellow perch restoration program was initiated in 2015 that included annual stockings of yellow perch. Fish sticks projects will also be completed to enhance yellow perch spawning habitat. The reduced aggregate bag limit of 10 panfish will maintain the quality of the bluegill fishery while the five-bag limit for yellow perch will help with the restoration program in the short term and

maintain the quality of the yellow perch fishery once the restoration program has hopefully resulted in a self-sustaining yellow perch population again.

42. Do you support a special regulation of 10 aggregate bag limit for panfish with no more than 5 yellow perch for Harpt Lake (Manitowoc County)?

43. 25 panfish in aggregate but no more than 5 perch regulation for Kentuck Lake in Vilas and Forest counties

This proposal would apply a 25 panfish daily bag limit but only 5 yellow perch can be harvested in Kentuck Lake, Vilas/Forest counties. The current regulation is 25 panfish daily bag limit but only 10 of any one species can be harvested. Yellow perch are an important food item for walleye. Dramatic swings in abundance of walleye in Kentuck seems to be closely correlated with the abundance of juvenile yellow perch. Protecting more adult yellow perch from harvest may help stabilize the production of juvenile perch, which in turn would stabilize the walleye population. An additional benefit would be the creation of higher quality yellow perch fishing for anglers with more and larger perch. Historically, there has been large year classes of black crappie that are produced in Kentuck Lake. High abundance of black crappie have been correlated to decrease juvenile walleye abundance and thought to be a variable to causes walleye population crashes. This regulation would allow more harvest of black crappie when numbers are high to help mitigate potential negative impacts on walleye.

43. Do you support applying a special regulation of a 25-panfish daily bag limit but only 5 yellow perch on Kentuck Lake, Vilas and Forest counties?

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD ADVISORY QUESTIONS

44. Require all active bear baits on public land to be labeled with identification

Bear baiting is allowed annually beginning April 15th and concludes with the end of the bear hunting season in early October. Currently there is no requirement to identify the person(s) responsible for placing the bear bait. Often, when a bait violation may be occurring, it is very difficult for law enforcement to make contact with the person responsible for the bait. Requiring either a customer ID number or the individual's name and address on bear bait placed on public lands would reduce the time for law enforcement to identify the owner of the bait and increase law enforcement's ability to address potential baiting or other violations. In addition, requiring bear bait to be labeled would increase voluntary compliance with existing laws regarding baiting and bear hunting and bolster a positive public image of bear hunting and associated methods. Requiring bear baits to be labeled on public lands would also be consistent with the requirements for other objects that are left on public property overnight including trail

cameras, tree stands, ground blinds, waterfowl blinds, traps and ice shacks. This proposal would not limit the number of bear baits that could be placed, nor would it require bear baits to be registered with the department.

44. Do you favor requiring that all active bear baits on public land in Wisconsin to be labeled with either the individual responsible for the bait's customer ID or their name and address?

45. Statutory Exemption from Wis. Stats. s. 227.139 (the REINS Act) for PFAS Rulemaking

During the rulemaking process, every agency is required to produce an economic impact analysis, estimating the implementation and compliance costs of the proposed rule. Under Wis. Stat. s. 227.139 (adopted as part of 2017 Wisconsin Act 57, commonly known as the REINS Act), if the costs of a proposed rule exceed \$10 million in any 2-year period, the department must stop rulemaking and wait for legislative approval to continue. The statutory requirements for an economic impact analysis do not allow the department to take into account the financial benefits of a proposed rule.

The department has proposed rulemaking to adopt groundwater quality standards for certain Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). The economic impact analysis determined that the costs of the proposed rules would exceed \$10 million in a 2-year period. However, there are many potential economic benefits that could result from the rules, including decreasing the risk of costly illness and disease. PFAS regulations could also encourage brownfield restorations, support water technology industries in the state, protect Wisconsin residents relying on private wells in rural areas, and enhance the state's ability to attract and retain businesses that rely on clean water sources.

Section 227.139(4) currently contains an exemption for proposed rules regarding air quality. Adding an exemption from section 227.139 for rules regulating PFAS in the environment would require DNR to do an economic impact analysis, but would allow DNR to continue with rulemaking without legislative approval if the proposed economic impact of the rule exceeds \$10 million in any 2-year period.

45. Do you support an exemption from Wis. Stat. s. 227.139 for rules regulating PFAS in the environment?

46. Require pipeline owners/operators to submit federally required spill notifications to the DNR Remediation and Redevelopment program

When a discharge of a hazardous substance (or spill) to the environment occurs in Wisconsin, with few exceptions, the responsible party is required under state statute to report the spill through an initial notification to the DNR. Currently, after the initial notification, additional spill updates to the DNR are not required under state statute or rule even though the volume of the spill may have increased.

An extensive network of pipelines carry various materials, including petroleum and other products, throughout the state. At times, spills may occur and only an initial notification is required.

The federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) requires reporting of spill incidents. PHMSA requires an initial notification and additional reporting related to a spill incident within 30-days of an incident and a written report within 1 year of the incident.

46. Do you support the legislature providing DNR statutory authority to require submittal of the same federal PHMSA reports to the Department for additional spill notifications?

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS ADVISORY QUESTIONS

Environmental Committee

47. Elimination of lead ammunition and fishing tackle (130624)

As a result of decades-long reliance on lead ammunition, susceptible wildlife falls to the debilitating and lethal effects of lead poisoning. Mammals, eagles, waterfowl, corvids, even songbirds as tiny as chickadees, routinely feed on the remains of harvested animals. Ingesting a small amount of animal tissue with lead can result in prolonged suffering and death for wildlife that feeds on the remains that are left behind.

Today's non-toxic bullets, shot and fishing weights are widely available and often comparable in price to lead. Lead poisoning is preventable and can be eliminated.

47. Would you support phasing out uses of lead so that it is not left behind on our lands and in our waters?

48. Protection of lakes, streams, and their fish, and wildlife from pollution caused by animal manure and commercial fertilizer (560324)

Pollution of Wisconsin lakes and streams by phosphorous and nitrogen from surface run-off from agricultural fields fertilized with animal manure or commercial fertilizer is a widespread threat to their ecological health. Phosphorous and nitrogen are the dominant pollutants in impaired waters. Improvements to the present water quality protection programs could reverse the trend of declining water quality and restore ecological health to our lakes and streams.

Protecting our waters from pollution caused by run-off from agricultural fields will require adequate funding for changes in the regulation of controlled animal feeding operations and the spreading of manure on agricultural fields.

Current practices are promoting pollution which may be getting worse and be ecologically unsustainable. Current non-point source pollution control practices are not meeting the state's public trust responsibilities to protect our water, lakes and streams. Surveys show that clean water has broad support and improvements will be popular.

48. Would you support increasing funding for nonpoint source pollution control and the establishment of an independent team of experts to recommend changes that protect our water, lakes and streams from pollution by spreading animal manure and commercial fertilizer?

49. Resolution to clarify or create minimum dimensions for seasonal campsites within shorelands. (requires legislation) (660324)

Campgrounds with "seasonal campsites" as defined in Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Administrative Code Chapter 79 are increasing in number statewide. They contain large recreational vehicles (RVs) that remain stationary. These campsites may be occupied by the same people for up to eight continuous months. Their RV can remain stationary at the campsite year-round or longer. The newer seasonal campsites often use a private onsite wastewater treatment system to manage sewage and wastewater disposal within shoreland areas of lakes and rivers. Shorelands are lands within 1,000 feet of a lake, pond, or flowage, 300 feet from a river or stream, or to the landward side of the flood plain, whichever distance is greater."

The purpose of the DNR's shoreland management rules are to "further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; prevent and control water pollution; protect spawning grounds, fish

and aquatic life; control building sites, placement of structure and land uses and reserve shore cover and natural beauty.”

Minimum lot size standards are not applied to seasonal campsites with treatment systems, even though occupants in an RV campsite may discharge as much sanitary waste as occupants in a residential home during the same time of occupancy.

49. Would you support the protection of Wisconsin's navigable waters by amending state regulations to require seasonal campsites with stationary RVs using wastewater treatment systems adhere to similar minimum lot sizes as required for residential homes?

50. Creation of a wastewater standard for seasonal campgrounds (560624)

Permanent and semi-permanent RV encampments defined as “seasonal campsites” are increasing in number statewide. These seasonal campgrounds contain RVs which may have plumbing amenities of modern homes and generate similar quantities of wastewater. Most regulatory authorities, including county zoning agencies, wrongly interpret the standards found in rules for private onsite wastewater treatment systems. The standards have wastewater generation estimates for four varieties of campground but there is no estimate for a “seasonal campground” or “seasonal campsite.”

Current rules require that, “treatment systems be designed to have sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated quantities of wastewater that will be discharged into the system.” Wastewater rules provide standards for some types of campsites but not one for “seasonal campsites.” Currently, state and county authorities use a 30 gallon-per-day standard for campsites at seasonal campgrounds.

Wastewater systems for one-bedroom cabins are required to process 100 gallons-per-day. Some states require 100 gallons-per-day or more for seasonal campsites. This higher standard is likely to prevent the polluting of groundwater and surface water.

50. Would you support increasing the wastewater discharge design standard to 100 gallons-per-day for seasonal campgrounds?

Fur Harvest Committee

51. Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge beaver trapping season (220124)

The Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge includes parts of Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The refuge is managed by the federal government. To trap in the refuge, a state license is required, and a special permit must be obtained from the refuge. The federal government establishes special rules, season dates, and restrictions on the number of traps which may be used.

In 2024, the Wisconsin beaver trapping season opened on November 2, except in the refuge within the Mississippi zone. The beaver trapping season in the refuge opened on December 2, at 9:00 AM. In those parts of the refuge lying within Minnesota and Iowa, the season opened concurrent with the rest of the respective state on November 2.

Wisconsin trappers have asked to move the opening day of beaver trapping within the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge to make it concurrent with the season opening dates of adjacent beaver management zones in the state. The state does not have the power to do that, but the Conservation Congress would like to measure public support for such a change, for use in potential discussions with refuge managers and federal representatives.

51. Would you support opening beaver trapping season within the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge to make it concurrent with the season opening date of adjacent beaver management zones in the state?

52. Increase jaw spread limit for foothold traps for water sets (330124, 540124, 68064)

Currently, foothold traps that are set in the water cannot have an outside spread larger than eight inches. Because of the large size of beavers' rear feet, large traps are normally used for beaver trapping. In the past few years, a new trap has come on the market which exceeds the legal size in Wisconsin. It is commonly used in other states with good results.

To allow use of this new trap, and to allow trappers to place lamination on the outside of the jaws of traps, which reduces the pressure per square inch on the animal without changing the total holding strength, some trappers have asked that traps with a spread up to nine inches be allowed.

52. Would you support allowing the use of foothold traps with a jaw spread of up to nine inches in the water?

53. Using BMP traps for canines and beavers (720624)

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) maintains a standard for Best Management Practices for Trapping in the United States (BMP's). They are based on the most extensive study of animal traps ever conducted in the United States and many different types of traps were tested and rated for use with different species of furbearers. Many Wisconsin trappers participated in the original research on which the BMP's are based. Currently in Wisconsin, the legality of a specific trap is largely dependent on its jaw spread, not its BMP rating. As new traps continue to be developed, some trappers are concerned that to promote trapping and to assure trapping will continue as a safe and humane wildlife management tool into the future, traps should be required to have a favorable BMP rating, irrespective of their jaw spread.

53. Would you support a rule change which would require a favorable BMP rating, irrespective of jaw spread, for traps to be legal for use in Wisconsin?

Legislative Committee

54. Allow DNR wardens to enforce local ordinances on all Wisconsin lakes (requires legislation) (360124)

The only enforcement of local ordinances on lakes comes from local law enforcement agencies. Ballast type boats are increasing in popularity, but town boards have been reluctant to create ordinances to deal with the situation. The DNR suggests that while there are negative impacts from these magnified wakes, until further studies, town boards should enact ordinances to deal with this situation on the lakes in their jurisdiction. It may be some years before statewide action is taken. In the meantime these boats may have a negative impact on our lakes. Town boards can address the following issues: shoreline erosion, scouring of the lake bottom, resuspension of nutrients, destruction of fish habitat and the eco system. There are town boards that have taken action to address these growing concerns. However, some town boards say they will wait until the DNR can enforce new laws.

54. Would you support legislation that would allow DNR wardens to enforce local ordinances on our lakes?

55. Guide licensing requirements (requires legislation) (640124)

As stated by the Wisconsin DNR "a license to guide is required to guide, direct or assist other persons in hunting, trapping or fishing in Wisconsin." To obtain a guide license in the state of Wisconsin on "sole-state waters" there are two requirements: the applicant must be at least 18 years of age and pay a \$40 license fee. In the federal waters of the state, guides must comply with both state and federal regulations of the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Examples of

these “Navigable Waters of the US” are Lake Michigan, the Bay of Green Bay, most of the Mississippi River and Lake Winnebago system. These guides must supply the U.S. Coast Guard with operational physicals every 5 years, be subject to random drug screening, and maintain CPR/First Aid certifications. The State of Wisconsin should raise the requirements for guides on “sole-state waters” to more closely match the USCG requirements including a higher fee, proof of commercial liability insurance, and current CPR/First Aid certifications. Insurance and proof of certifications could be submitted with the annual licensing application.

55. Would you support legislation that increases the guide license fee, requires proof of current CPR/First Aid certifications, and proof of commercial liability insurance when applying for a guide’s license each year?

56. Habitat stamp (requires legislation) (640224)

Currently, cold water projects are funded by the trout stamp and waterfowl habitat work is funded by the waterfowl stamp. However, projects to remove invasive plants and animals, restore critical habitats, create new habitats and maintain existing habitats are currently underfunded. On average, 1.2+ million people annually purchase a license or licenses to hunt, fish or trap. Requiring each customer to purchase one \$5 stamp per year would raise more than \$5 million to fund habitat work for our uplands, warm water lakes and streams. Such a stamp would also provide a way for non-consumptive users such as: hikers, nature observers, canoeists, kayakers and recreational boaters to help protect and enhance the resources they are enjoying.

56. Would you support legislation establishing a \$5 annual habitat stamp to fund upland, warm water lakes and streams habitat projects?

57. Wisconsin DNR support of farmers with non-lethal predator prevention programs (legislation required) (681124)

Currently, the DNR doesn’t have state funding to provide non-lethal predator prevention education and assistance to Wisconsin farmers and relies on federal grants each year to provide some assistance. However, one of the main objectives of the new DNR Wolf Management plan is to mitigate conflicts and leverage non-lethal predator prevention. Non-lethal interventions are more likely to reduce conflict, whereas translocations and lethal interventions are mostly ineffective and/or harmful to carnivore populations, without fostering successful long-term coexistence. Per USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, non-lethal options such as livestock guardian animals and hazing measures with audio/visual deterrents such as scare radios are rated the most effective among livestock producers to help reduce conflicts.

Additionally, farming practices with proper animal husbandry and carcass disposal bins will help reduce predator interest. Non-lethal programs are also constantly advancing. Scientists have gathered much evidence showing that random blasts of colorful lights, noise or motion can protect livestock. Even motion-triggered LED light-up ear tags on cows and sheep are proving effective deterrents for predators.

Minnesota has a program in place with grant money to purchase guard animals, pens, fladry, fencing, lights, alarms, calving or lambing shelters on an 80:20 matching cost share. The DNR's Urban Wildlife Damage Abatement and Control Grant Program could be used as a template. The DNR should identify locations where the funding is best spent to prevent conflicts. This should include purchases of non-lethal abatement supplies/materials to use and re-use at properties as needed as well as educational materials.

57. Do you support the DNR helping Wisconsin's farmers to mitigate livestock conflicts with non-lethal preventative solutions using education and state-funded financial assistance?

Warm Water Committee

58. Panfish daily bag limit on Beaver Dam Lake (140124)

Beaver Dam Lake receives high panfish fishing pressure, especially during spring spawning and ice fishing. The historic bag limit for panfish is 25 statewide per day. Panfish are aggressive feeders on all species of young fish and are a major component of the rough fish control strategy and thus the water quality improvement goals for the lake. Reducing the aggregate bag limit for panfish to 10 per day would be beneficial. Beaver Dam Lake can produce quality sized panfish when allowed to reach their growth potential. A reduced daily bag limit would allow panfish harvest to be more evenly distributed throughout the year and to improve catch quality.

58. Do you support changing the daily bag limit on Beaver Dam Lake from the historic 25 per day to a reduced limit of 10 per day?

59. Remove the use of SCUBA while underwater spearfishing (500224)

Underwater spearfishing is performed by a diver that is holding their breath while underwater. This is referred to as freediving. The freediving (breath-holding) element is key to the nature of underwater spearfishing, as it presents a significant physical and mental challenge. Permitting SCUBA to be used while underwater spearfishing removes that challenge. Hunting and fishing hinge on the idea of sportsmanship for an outdoor pursuit to be embraced. In the world of underwater spearfishing, SCUBA goes beyond that threshold.

59. Would you support a ban on the use of SCUBA while underwater spearfishing?

Land Use Committee

60. Build accessibility cabins in state owned campgrounds (160124)

Currently (2024), there are only ten accessible cabins in Wisconsin State Park and Forest campgrounds. Of those, eight are full amenity cabins and two are rustic cabins. Full amenity cabins have an accessible shower, electricity, bed with lift, an accessible kitchen, table, and bed with lift. Accessible rustic cabins are smaller, under 400 sq. feet, and offer a bed, table, and electricity.

A full amenity cabin exists at Mirror Lake State Park, Harrington Beach State Park, Bong Recreation Area, Buckhorn State Park, High Cliff State Park, Kohler-Andrae State Park, Potawatomi State Park, and Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit. A rustic cabin exists at Blue Mound and Copper Falls State Parks.

Only Potawatomi, on the Door County peninsula, and Copper Falls, east of Mellen, are north of State Highway 29. Currently, the cabins are so highly sought after, especially the eight full amenity cabins, that few perspective users can actually use them. Those with the most severe disabilities are given the highest priority, and so, according to the DNR, thousands will never be able to use these cabins since they have a lower need. Therefore, seniors, and thousands of others struggling with mobility, are not able to camp in our state parks due to the lack of accessible cabins.

Under this resolution, the Wisconsin DNR would be encouraged to build a site appropriate cabin per campground they manage throughout the state, thus giving additional camping opportunities to those with disabilities.

60. Would you support having the Wisconsin DNR's Bureau of Parks and Recreation build additional site appropriate camper cabins in campgrounds to allow more opportunity for those with physical disabilities to go camping?

Migratory Committee

61. Mississippi River Zone goose season

The Mississippi River has been a stand-alone goose hunting zone for decades with season dates in accordance with the wishes of the public to maximize opportunities within the federal framework.

Survey data clearly shows a non-significant difference on statewide survey concerning the opening date of the zone. Recent and anecdotal survey data show overwhelming support by the public who hunt the Mississippi River Zone area for the goose season opening and running concurrently with the duck season as the public has supported for decades.

Inclusion of the Mississippi River Zone with the South Zone results in a closure at the end of the duck season rather than the traditional continuance of the goose season into January. Rather it does not re-open until December 21, 2024, when ice conditions are generally prohibitive for public goose hunting.

Removing the Mississippi River Zone from the South Zone framework also removes it from the "Holiday Hunt" which was primarily created to increase opportunities for goose hunting in southern areas of the state with field hunting opportunities. Because goose hunting in agricultural fields is rare in the Mississippi River Zone and the holiday hunt does not necessarily increase opportunities.

Allowing the Mississippi River zone to return to its stand-alone status meets the wishes of the public, who have supported the Mississippi River Zone season dates for several decades and poses no negative effects on hunters from other goose hunting zones.

61. Would you support returning the Mississippi River Zone to its former goose season structure and dates, opening and running concurrently with the duck season with splits if applicable and continuing open at the end of the duck season within federal framework dates?

62. Sandhill crane stamp to help farmers experiencing crop damage (390124)

Wisconsin hosts a large population of sandhill cranes each year. The 2021 fall count for the Eastern Population of sandhill cranes, which includes birds in Wisconsin, was 90,029 sandhill cranes, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The native birds provide value to wildlife watchers and as members of the state's ecosystem, but they also cause crop damage, the most common and economically important crane management problem. Cranes eat planted seeds, especially corn, and can cause substantial damage in springs the birds gather in germinating agricultural fields. In 2019 USDA Wildlife Services in Wisconsin received 162 complaints regarding sandhill crane damage to crops, with reported damage estimated at \$1.2 million, according to the agency.

No program currently exists in Wisconsin to assist farmers with crop damage caused by sandhill cranes.

Prior to planting, corn can be coated with a product (one commercially available product is called Avipel) that has been proven to deter sandhill cranes from eating the kernels. To help farmers pay for the cost associated with treatment this resolution suggests creating a Sandhill Crane Stamp. Funds raised by stamp sales or donations to the crane stamp program would be used to compensate farmers for treating their corn with a crane deterrent or purchasing pre-treated corn. Stamp purchases would be voluntary and available to the general public.

62. Would you support legislation that creates a Sandhill Crane Stamp to help farmers reduce crane-caused crop damage?

63. Military / Veterans waterfowl hunting season proposal (670324)

In 2019 federal regulation changes allowed two days of hunting to be allocated by each state specifically for military and veterans to hunt waterfowl. This legislation was passed to show appreciation and gratitude to service members past and present and recognize that they often miss hunting opportunities due to deployments, weekend drills, or other duties. To date, numerous states have instituted these authorizations; however, Wisconsin has not.

The new law authorizes states to set aside a two-day special hunt period for youths, and a separate two-day hunt open to veterans and active-duty military. These special hunts may occur up to 14 days before or after the regular season framework. They would also be treated as separate from and in addition to the annual federal framework hunting season lengths. Eligible participants are members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty.

As of 29 March 2023, 29 States currently have approved military and veteran waterfowl seasons.

63. Would you support the DNR adding two additional dates for servicemembers and veterans for waterfowl hunting that are distinct from the youth hunt dates?

Deer & Elk Committee

64. Deer season options (700224)

County Deer Advisory Councils (CDAC) are tasked to help manage deer harvest numbers via opportunities such as approving a Holiday hunt. (antlerless-only season typically December 24 through January. If a Holiday hunt is put in place by CDACs in a particular year, then this tool (Holiday Hunt) limits the option for a late extended archery season in a county. Currently CDACs can only have the late archery season hunt option if they approve the Holiday Hunt option.

There are counties that do not want the Holiday Hunt but would like to maintain the late archery season ending January 31. Allowing the extended archery season with or without an approved Holiday Hunt in place will provide hunters more opportunities to participate and harvest excess deer on Wisconsin’s landscape.

64. Would you support allowing CDACs the option to extend the late archery season archery hunt to January 31st without having an approved Holiday Hunt in their county?

65. Deer hunting license fees (requires legislation)

Wisconsin Resident deer hunting license (both archery and firearm) fees have not had an increase since 2005. Our neighboring states all have higher resident fees for these licenses.

	Michigan	Minnesota	Iowa	Illinois	Wisconsin
Gun Deer	\$31.00	\$34.00	\$68.00	\$42.00	\$24.00

65. Would you support increasing resident deer hunting license fees for archery and firearm to an amount that is more in line with our neighboring states? (This increase would also be reflective of an increase in the sportsman’s license and patron’s license).

Great Lakes Committee

66. Allowing the use of Cast nets for Smelt fishing (600124)

Smelt are not native to the Great Lakes. There is no bag or possession limit on these small silver fish that are found in our Great Lakes surrounding Wisconsin. Thousands of anglers take to the shorelines every spring, when the water temperature hits the preferred range for Smelt to begin their annual spawning runs, in pursuit of these tasty little fish with both dip nets and/or seines.

Cast nets are very popular in the southern part of the United States for the harvest of bait fish but are currently not allowed to be used in the state of Wisconsin for any purpose. The use of cast nets for Smelt fishing would provide another recreational opportunity for fisherman while having little impact on the resource.

66. Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR to allow the use of cast nets in the harvest of Smelt?

67. Creation of a Wisconsin sport fishing board (requires legislation) (680324)

Sport fishing in Wisconsin generates over \$2 billion annually for our economy. In 2011 Wisconsin commercial fishing boats harvested 3.9 million pounds of fish from the Great Lakes valued at \$5 million. Lake whitefish made up 58 percent of the harvest. A substantial difference in economic benefits. Currently there is a commercial fishing board for Lake Superior and another for Lake Michigan. Both are authorized through state statutes. These boards work with DNR personnel and directly with the NRB to set commercial fishing policy and quotas. They are designed to advocate for commercial fishing.

In 2018, a WCC resolution to create a sport fishing board with the same rights and privileges as the commercial fishing boards was approved at the county level but not advanced by the leadership council. The reason it was not advanced is because the department said that they are already required to advocate for sport fisherman.

In early 2023, a special team was assembled by the DNR to help decide if commercial harvest of lake trout in Lake Michigan should be allowed. After four meetings there was no majority for a decision. The DNR received hundreds of comments against opening Lake Michigan Lake Trout to commercial fishing nets. In spite of this negative feedback, the department still initiated rulemaking to allow commercial harvest of lake trout on Lake Michigan.

This is not an indication of advocating for Sport Fishermen.

67. Would you support the creation of a Wisconsin Sport Fishing Board with all of the responsibilities, rights and privileges as the existing Commercial Fishing Boards?

68. Reduce the daily bag limit for steelhead to three fish on Lake Michigan and its tributaries (680824)

There has been a reduced number of steelhead returning to streams and harbors along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline. This has been documented in the data gathered at DNR fish collection weirs in the last decade.

Recently, Michigan DNR made an emergency reduction in the steelhead stream take to 1 fish in certain rivers with significant natural reproduction. No change was instituted to Michigan's 3 steelhead limit in general. Illinois and Indiana have a 5 steelhead bag limit. Other Great Lakes states, however, have bag limits of 1 to 2 steelhead. Lake Michigan has changed and cannot support the same number of fish that it did in the 1990's. Now, the return of salmonids has decreased, and it is apparent that there is a poor return of steelhead

to Wisconsin streams. Ultimately, there will be a need for a four-state solution, but Wisconsin should show leadership and establish a daily bag limit of 3 steelhead in support of a reasonable and continued growth of the steelhead population.

68. Would you support a daily bag limit of 3 steelhead for Lake Michigan and its tributaries?

District Leadership Council

69 to 73. Harvest of white deer

Wisconsin has a growing population of white deer with some parts of the state seeing significant increases. In several Wisconsin counties, the population of white deer continues to grow annually with many locations currently having significant populations. Some counties have reached the point where private landowners have indicated that most deer that they see are white deer and thus are unable to harvest them. In addition, there are several landowners and municipalities that are experiencing damage because of the growing white deer population. Wildlife Management staff and County Deer Advisory Council members have fielded many questions and concerns and are requesting modifications to the current white deer harvest restriction.

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- 69. Would you support legalizing the harvest of white deer in Jefferson County?**
 - 70. Would you support legalizing the harvest of white deer in Marathon County?**
 - 71. Would you support legalizing the harvest of white deer in Portage County?**
 - 72. Would you support legalizing the harvest of white deer in Winnebago County?**
 - 73. Would you support legalizing the harvest of white deer in Wood County?**
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74. Create a K9 Unit program in the Wisconsin Dept of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division

37 states currently have K9 Units (handler/dog teams) within their natural resources law enforcement agencies. These K9 Units are unique tools in the enforcement of our country's fish and game laws. They have increased the effectiveness and efficiency in their enforcement agencies and are readily available to assist other law enforcement agencies within their state when needed.

The dogs are uniquely trained to assist conservation officers in accomplishing various tasks such as detecting fish and game violations, discerning the presence of aquatic invasive species, aiding in evidence recovery, locating missing persons, providing officer protection, and performing educational demonstrations throughout their state. Along with all of the other

duties that conservation officers are required to accomplish, the teams are required to receive ongoing training that demands an immense amount of dedication to the K9 Unit.

74. Would you support the State of Wisconsin creating a K9 Unit (handler/dog teams) program within the Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division?
