

## Lake Superior Commercial Fishing Board Meeting

October 16, 2024 5 p.m.

Bayfield DNR Office

141 South Third Street

Bayfield, WI 54814

### Lake Superior Commercial Fishing Board Meeting Minutes

1. **Establish Quorum:** Three of five board members present
2. **Call to Order:** Maureen Halvorson called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm
3. **Roll Call:** Board Members: Maurine Halvorson, Bill Bodin, Jessica Resac, Craig Hoopman (absent), Bryan Bainbridge (absent). Public: Cliff Halvorson, Jeff Johnson, DNR: Brad Ray, Dray Carl, Bob Stroess Miranda Westphal (online)  

**Meeting posting:** Miranda posted meeting accordingly on the Board's webpage, and on the WDNR public meeting calendar.
4. **Approval of the Agenda:** Bill Bodin motion, Jessica Resac second, motion carries.
5. **Approval of the Minutes from April 17, 2024:** Maurine Halvorson motion, Bill Bodin second, motion carries.
6. **Discussion Items**
  - a. **Chris Boyd resignation:** Maurine Halvorson and the board recognized Chris Boyd's service to the board and wished him well on his upcoming ventures.
  - b. **Welcome to Jessica Resac:** Maurine Halvorson and the board welcomed Jessica Resac and recognized her willingness to serve on the board.
  - c. **Cisco and Lake Trout Rule progress:** Brad Ray (DNR) updated the board on the cisco and lake trout rule process. The NRB will meet next week to adopt an emergency rule to establish quotas for the 2024/25 fishing season. The cisco and lake trout rule will put the quota calculations into regulation so that quotas can be established in a more streamlined and clear manner.

Starting for the 2025 fishing season, cisco quota will be a single harvest number for the year. Fishers will only need to report cisco on their harvest reports, instead of current practice of reporting cisco for the first part of the season and cisco-spawning later in the season.

With the new rule, all nets will have to be marked with the informational tags including floating herring nets. Concerns were expressed about the durability and readability of the tags in rough weather and when fishing through the ice.

Emergency rule that is going through right now has these tag marking requirements, but changes can be made, if needed, prior to the permanent rule being adopted in December 2025.

Brad Ray explained that law enforcement (LE) needs to know what type of net is being fished to check compliance without having to pull and measure net mesh which disrupts fishing. DNR staff will talk internally about modifying the permanent rule tag requirements to ensure LE needs are being met while taking fisher concerns into account. Commercial fishers and board members are encouraged to communicate ideas for net tagging to the Bayfield DNR staff prior to the hearing on the permanent rule on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

- d. **Protected Areas benefit to Lake Whitefish:** Dray Carl (DNR) presented a paper he recently published on the history and efficacy of protected areas for Lake Trout and their benefit to Lake Whitefish populations. In WI-2 Lake trout populations have been considered restored for several decades but refuges are still in place as a management tool. No take refuges in WI-2 make up nearly 27% of the area, partially protected areas mostly open to sportfishing but severely restricted for comm fishers and make up nearly 10% of the area. These no take and partially protected areas encompass highly productive areas of the WI-2 area. Both levels of protection have similar positive impact on Lake Whitefish recruitment.

It was noted that tribal fishers can fish in the no-take refuges but they are closed to state fishers. It was clarified that portions of the no take area are off limits to all fishers but it is a relatively small area that is off limits to all.

- e. **Moving commercial and crew licenses into Go Wild:** Miranda Westphal (DNR) outlined a project to move commercial fishing and crew licensing into the online Go Wild DNR licensing system. Commercial fishers will need a Go Wild account ahead of the 2026 fishing season, although the majority of commercial fishers already have a Go Wild account. It is currently planned to have Go Wild contain a self-service function for commercial fishers to be able to add crew members, change boats, and change ports online.

It was noted by the board that it would be more efficient to have the commercial license holders print crew licenses to distribute. It was also suggested that since fisher information and crew rarely change year to year, to have Go Wild retain information.

## 7. Old Business

- a. **EFHRS:** It was suggested to make the comments section in the EFHRS harvest report larger since Lake Superior fishers run out of room to make notes. It was also suggested that it would be useful to be able to remove crew members. The board also suggested that it would be easier for the initial report to be able to report number of fish instead of estimated weight. Bob Stroes (DNR) explained that the requirement to report estimate weights was in regulation so a regulatory change would be needed ahead of any change to EFHRS.

Department staff outlined the DNR's current budget issues and how that is preventing updates to the EFHRS system at this time. Suggestions are being noted and will be considered when funds are available in the future.

## 8. Board Member Concerns

Bill Bodin noted that he saw an article about a commercial fisher in the state of Michigan operating near Escanaba. He reportedly sold a Lake Michigan fishing license and research permit for \$2.9 million. Bill Bodin stated that this information was obtained through FOIA request to the MI DNR.

**9. Comments and Announcements**

Brad Ray (DNR) announced that next week Craig Hoopman will present to the NRB to present commercial fisher concerns to the NRB. Brad Ray encouraged commercial fishers to relay any issues to Craig this week.

Agenda items for the next meeting – Update on moving licensing to Go Wild, harvest update for all species from the 2024 season, board members expressed interest in burbot

**Next Meeting date:** Tentative Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 5:00 p.m. @ Bayfield DNR office

- 10. Adjournment:** Bill Bodin motion to adjourn, Jessica Resac second. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm