

Charter: Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee (MLFAC)

Draft December 2020 – to be finalized pending addition of new committee members in 2021

DATE APPROVED: _____

APPROVED BY: _____

Sarah Strommen, DNR Commissioner

I. Purpose

To advise the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the State of Minnesota's fisheries management program for Mille Lacs Lake.

II. Functions and Scope

Scope of Activity

- MLFAC will advise on issues that are relevant to the state's management of Mille Lacs Lake fisheries, including any activities that are authorized, licensed, permitted, or otherwise regulated or managed by the state.
- DNR will support the committee by supplying information that is used to help manage the Mille Lacs fisheries (including standard fish population assessments, creel harvest surveys, status of invasive species, or other available information requested by the committee).

Key Functions of the Committee

- Represent the breadth of interests around Mille Lacs fisheries.
- Learn about and contribute to a shared understanding of biological, social, and economic aspects of the fishery.
- Identify and communicate to DNR staff significant stakeholder issues related to the state's management of the fisheries of Mille Lacs Lake.
- Facilitate dialogue between the public and the DNR regarding important issues.
- Provide input to advise DNR on potential approaches to respond to issues.
- Provide advice on the most effective and acceptable regulations for the state's Mille Lacs fisheries.

III. Intended Outcomes

- Effective and well-supported advice to address identified fisheries management issues.
- Shared understanding among committee members, the DNR, and the broader public of issues and potential solutions, through the following:
 - Full and open dialogue on fisheries management and related issues.
 - Collaborative relationships between the committee members and DNR staff.
 - Clear articulation of concerns, issues, or factors potentially affecting the fisheries.
 - Clear and fair dialogue process among committee members.
 - Effective administration and support of the advisory committee.

IV. Authorization and Authority

The Mille Lacs Fisheries Advisory Committee is authorized by the DNR Commissioner. This committee replaces the previous Mille Lacs Fisheries Input Group.

The committee is not a decision-making body and has no authority on fish management policy, research or operations. DNR may seek consensus recommendations from the committee, which DNR will strive to incorporate into their decision making, along with dissenting views.

V. Membership

Members will be appointed by the Commissioner of Natural Resources to three-year terms. At the end of the first three-year term, DNR may renew members' terms. At-large members may serve no more than six consecutive years, but may reapply after at least one year out of service. A chair and vice chair may be selected by the committee every three years. DNR may remove a member from the committee based on conduct or inability to participate.

Representatives

- Local and statewide angling representatives – up to 6
 - DNR species workgroups, angling organizations, lakeshore homeowners, etc.
- Local business representatives – up to 6
 - Resorts, guides, sporting goods, bait dealers, etc.
- At-large representatives – up to 6
 - Others with diverse interests and experience related to Mille Lacs Lake.
- Mille Lacs Area Tourism Council chair – 1
- Ex-officio members – as needed
 - Ex-officio members serve as resources to the committee and should play an official role related to the group's charge (e.g., academic, local elected official, agency partner, tribal co-manager).

Selection

Members are solicited through an application process. DNR staff will review applications and recommend applicants to agency leadership for selection. DNR may extend terms or leave terms vacant, for example in order to efficiently recruit and onboard members or to stagger terms. Recommended applicants will together:

- Represent a diversity of local and statewide angling interests, and a diversity of local business interests.
- Demonstrate knowledge of or familiarity with Mille Lacs Lake and/or fisheries management.
- Demonstrate a breadth of additional interests (e.g., recreation, conservation, enforcement, aquatic invasive species).

VI. Roles & Responsibilities

Participation: Appointed members will make every attempt to attend scheduled meetings and to review information relevant to agenda items under consideration by the committee. Members should provide advance notice of meetings they cannot attend. Members of the public may observe MLFAC meetings, but these meetings serve primarily as a way for the committee to hold group discussions.

Meeting schedule: Meetings will occur quarterly or as needed to address timely agenda items. Meeting locations rotate between sites in or near the Mille Lacs Lake area, or may be held via video-conference.

Meetings scheduling, agendas, and facilitation: The Mille Lacs Project Facilitator will organize meetings in consultation with the Region 3 Fisheries Manager, chair and vice chair, and will provide or arrange for facilitation assistance as needed.

External communications: Committee members are encouraged to network and discuss issues and information from the committee in their local communities. Members are free to express their views as private citizens, but should not imply that they speak for or represent MLFAC or the DNR in any external communications. Media requests should be directed to the Fisheries Section Manager or the DNR Communications Director.

Presentations: DNR staff will prepare relevant technical information as required to inform discussion on agenda items at regular meetings. If a particular topic lies outside of the Section of Fisheries purview, then DNR Fisheries staff will facilitate the assistance of the relevant subject matter experts.

VII. Recommendations Process

This committee may make advisory recommendations to the Fisheries Section Manager, who will elevate such recommendations to DNR leadership as needed. This committee does not have a decision-making role. DNR will provide facilitation assistance, as needed, to allow open discourse. All opinions on matters discussed along with their level of support by members of the committee will be presented to the Fisheries Section Manager and DNR leadership and taken into consideration during the policy and decision making process.

To ensure that the full context of committee advisory recommendations are communicated to DNR leadership, the following are best practices:

- All committee members will have an opportunity to review, discuss and provide input into draft advisory recommendations.
- Committee recommendations should be provided to DNR at a committee meeting.
- DNR will record a brief summary of any concerns or dissenting/minority opinions related to advisory recommendations, when applicable.

VIII. Charter Maintenance

This charter should be reviewed every other year, by MLFAC, the Region 3 Fisheries Manager and the Committee Facilitator, who will coordinate any proposed revisions to the Fisheries Section Manager for consideration.

IX. Ground Rules for Meetings

Agreed to October 8, 2015:

- Platinum rule (treat others as they would treat themselves, at their best)
- Respect others' comments
- Do not interrupt
- Keep on time
- Keep on task