

Draft minutes
Minnesota 1837 Ceded Territory Fisheries Committee (MN 37 FC)
9:00 a.m. August 2, 2017
Eddy's Resort

1. Agenda Approval and Introductions

Attendees:

Melissa Treml, MNDNR
Brad Parsons, MNDNR
Gretchen Hansen, MNDNR
Tom Jones, MNDNR
Brian Beyerl, MDNR
Robert Gorecki, MNDNR
Don Pereira, MNDNR
Eric Jensen, MNDNR
Reginald Defoe, Fond du Lac
Brian Borkholder, Fond du Lac
Susan Klapel, Mille Lacs
Kelly Applegate, Mille Lacs
Ryan Rupp, Mille Lacs
Chad Weiss, Mille Lacs
Perry Bunting, Mille Lacs
Carl Klimah, Mille Lacs
James Zorn, GLIFWC
Aaron Shultz, GLIFWC
Ben Michaels, GLIFWC
Adam Ray, GLIFWC
Mark Luehring, GLIFWC
Joe Dan Rose, GLIFWC
Jonathan Gilbert, GLIFWC
Kia Hmielewski, GLIFWC
Frank Mitchell SR., Lac Du Flambeau
Conrad St. John, St. Croix
Chris Vandergoot, USGS

In addition to attendees listed below, there were five legislators present.

Representative Erickson
Representative Lueck
Senator Ingebrigtsen
Representative Fabian
Representative Heintzman
and three Legislative staffers

Opening words – Frank Mitchell

Welcome to Mille Lacs – Susan Klapel

2. 2017 Spring Band Harvest Summary (GLIFWC)
 - Spring harvest totals, Ben Michaels - See hand out. Ben M. reviewed harvest totals.
3. 2017 Mille Lacs Angler Harvest Update (MnDNR)

Eric Jensen reviewed handouts of harvested and released fish. The harvest summary included hooking mortality for walleye and pike.

 - Hooking Mortality estimates based on walleye released and water temperature.
 - Currently (during the walleye closure) the majority of launch boats are targeting NOP and SMB
 - Winter angling pressure was much higher than summer pressure. Summer pressure is below average.
 - Projections of total kill for the season will improve as the season progresses.
 - FDL will attempt an estimate of tribal angling harvest based on self-reporting trip logs.
4. 2017 Spring Electrofishing Survey for Juvenile Walleye in Mille Lacs Lake (GLIFWC)
 - Spring Electrofishing Update - Mark Luehring reviewed handout of results.
 - Large midge hatch observed and made sampling difficult in some sections.
 - Average CPE of 4.3/ mile
 - At age 2, 2015 year class was the lowest observed. 2016 year class was about average.
 - Variability among stations is typical
 - Usually 7, 8, 9 are sections with higher catch rates. Section 3 traditionally has lower catch rates, but was fairly good in 2017.
 - Map of segments is needed. Susan asked for trends of these surveys over the years.
 - Aaron handed out a document showing survival and catch rates of age 1 walleye.
 - o Don asked if the Modeling Sub-Committee reviewed this document. Answer was no.
 - o Decided that the Modeling Sub-Committee should review this document, but review was not needed to publish in Masina'igan.
5. Modeling Sub-Committee Updates
 - A. Ongoing Sub-Committee Work
 - Modeling Sub-Committee update. Walleye recovery plan decision tree. Charge from FC to modeling subcommittee. Mark L. reviewed progress of subcommittee.
 - a. Principles of draft plan
 - i. SSB should not fall below lowest observed
 - ii. Recovered population is defined as near historical levels until new information becomes available
 - iii. Recovered population has both spawners and recruits.
 - b. Decision levels – 3.
 - i. Are there enough spawners?
 - ii. Is the population increasing?
 - iii. If not, is recruitment high enough for future increase?
 - c. Level 1. Why use SSB in 52 nets to measure spawners?

- i. Includes males and females
 - ii. Nets from all over the lake
 - iii. Simple
 - iv. Categories agreed at MN 1837 FC in January 2017
- d. Level 2. Is SSB increasing?
 - i. Increasing, or maintain level if recovered
 - ii. >26 lbs per net, recovered despite lack of SSB increase
- e. Level 3. Are there Recruits coming?
 - i. Recruitment index above 1.0 could lead to increase in future. Recruitment index based on assessment catches of age 0, 1, 2 and 3 fish
 - ii. Slide shows how this categorization would have been applied in the past.
- f. Stability rules? To avoid drastic changes in classification from one year to the next. Full MN 37 FC must decide on balance of stability and responsiveness.
- g. Classification system as developed by Modeling Sub-Committee is a good approach, with the caveat that as more data becomes available, changes may be needed. The plan should tie population classification to management response. Discussion over who/how to determine management response. Additional discussion and clarification is needed on this (see H below). **The classification system as described was endorsed by consensus by the MN 37 FC.**
- h. Modeling subcommittee was charged with developing a set of questions to consider when determining a management responses to the various lake classification. The subcommittee will present these policy questions to the full MN 37 FC at the next meeting.

6. Data Exchange and Review

A. Mille Lacs Lake

1. Creel Survey Report for 2016 Open Water and 2015-16 Winter Seasons (MnDNR)
Report emailed.
2. 2016 Large Lake Sampling Program Assessment Report (MnDNR)
Report emailed.

B. Other Lakes

1. 2016 Summer Assessments (MnDNR)
Report emailed.
2. 2016 Creel Reports (MnDNR)
 - 8 lakes to be surveyed this year
 - Sullivan on the list for next year
 - Grindstone Lake
3. 2017 Adult Walleye Population Estimates in Green and Goose Lakes (GLIFWC)
 - Mark Luehring reviewed population estimate reports. See handouts.

7. Update on Management and Research Activities

A. Large lake ecosystem research – Gretchen Hansen

Gretchen described some initial work exploring: how thermal and optical habitat has changed over time on Mille Lacs Lake and how this might affect walleye production; potential non-stationarity in alpha from Ricker stock recruitment function; and potential use of Safe Operating Space (SOS) concept to explore relationship between harvest and non-manageable factors such as climate change.

B. DNR External Review, meet Dr. Chris Vandergoot

Dr. Vandergoot gave a brief description of his background and experience. Dr. Vandergoot is assembling his review team (Doug Walkinson, Randy Jackson, Troy Zorn). He is planning to condense the list of questions presented by MLFAC and indicate which will be addressed by the review. All communications with the MN 37 FC will be through the MN 37 FC Co-Chairs, Jonathan Gilbert and Missy Treml. A preliminary review should be finished by January. Only technical issues will be addressed. The review will not recommend how things should be done, but will provide information about how other managers are addressing similar issues.

- The panel will review the assessment procedure and indicate whether they think the data collection and analyses are sufficient.
- Timeline: October- MLFAC group preliminary findings, January- draft report will be completed
- No contract exists between Dr. Vandergoot and the State, work is being done as a professional courtesy.
- The review will provide perspective in relation to other quota based fisheries & stock assessments

C. Initial Planning for 2018 Mille Lacs Lake Walleye Population Estimate See handout.

- State budget will limit amount of interns and temp help.
- For marking, State will provide 6 trap net crews and at least one EF crew. Asking Bands for one trap net crew and three EF crews. State should be able to provide trap nets for all crews.
- For recapture, State proposes 10 State crews (5 day and 5 night), 2 GLIFWC crews (at least one at night), and 1 Mille Lacs Band crew and one FDL crew, both at night
- More night netting helps increase recapture rates
- Weekend work required for marking but not for recapture.
- 40,000 tags
- Dr. Carl Schwarz to do the data analysis

8. Summer and Fall 2017 Survey Plans

A. MnDNR Assessments in Mille Lacs and Other Lakes

- Zebra mussel survey, sampling for isotope food-web study, standard fall assessment including forage netting, YOY walleye EF, and assessment gill nets.

B. GLIFWC Assessments in Mille Lacs and Other Lakes

- Whole shoreline YOY WAE night EF.
- Whole shoreline fall electrofishing on Goose and Green Lakes for YOY and age 1 walleye.

9. Planning for Mille Lacs Lake Data Exchange and 2018 Modeling

A. Identify Dates for Exchange of Modeling Data

- Initial exchange by November. Final by December

B. Identify Staff Contacts for Joint Mille Lacs Lake Walleye Modeling:

- Patrick Schmalz (MN DNR) and Mark Luehring (GLIFWC).

10. Next Meeting

- October 30, 10:00 a.m. at FDL.
 - Recovery Plan Policy Discussion – subcommittee to present questions to full MN 37 FC on management options.
- Winter MN 37 FC meeting will be held on Jan 17-18.