

Charter: Fisheries Workgroup

Purpose:

The Fisheries Workgroup is to enhance dialogue between members of the public and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as we work together to discuss topics such as recreation, populations, harvest trends, and fisheries research and management in Minnesota.

Functions and Scope:

1. The Fisheries Workgroup will provide input on fishing interests in Minnesota.
2. The Fisheries Workgroup will:
 - Provide a venue for discussion of current fish management and research issues;
 - Learn about and contribute to understanding biological, social and economic aspects of fish management, including stakeholder group perspectives and angler relationships;
 - Identify and inform DNR Fisheries staff on potential approaches to respond to issues, program monitoring, research, and enhancements to the quality of fishing in Minnesota;
 - Advise on effective and publicly acceptable fishing regulations; and
 - Work together to address topics such as recreation, water quality, fish habitat, harvest trends, fish management and effects on local economies.
3. The DNR will support the Fisheries Workgroup by:
 - Providing relevant information (e.g., available data, potential management alternatives);
 - Engaging them on Fisheries plans, program implementation/innovation, initiatives to enhance fish habitat, and angler recruitment and recreation;
 - Addressing issues deemed significant by the Fisheries Workgroup; and
 - Fostering dialogue, including feedback on how public and Workgroup input influences decisions.

Desired Outcomes:

- Shared understanding among members, DNR and the public on issues and potential solutions.
- Effective and well-supported actions to address identified fish management issues.
- Enhanced public-agency collaboration and partnership to collectively achieve management goals and angling opportunities
- Share fish species relevant information with members including any updated technical guidance or research developed by the DNR Fish Species Technical Teams.

Authorization:

The Fisheries Workgroup is authorized by the DNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Section of Fisheries and established to support quality fish management in Minnesota. Public engagement is integral to fisheries management and the DNR values the participation and opinions of its stakeholders. The DNR may establish or decommission the Fisheries Workgroup and amend the terms and conditions of the group. The Fisheries Workgroup holds no formal authority with regard to policy or operations in management of the fishery.

Membership

The Fisheries Workgroup will consist of 10-15 members appointed to two or three-year terms. The Fisheries Workgroup will be chaired by a DNR Fisheries Regional or Program Manager. At the end of the first term, DNR will solicit nominations for at-large members. Current members may reapply but may serve no more than two consecutive terms (six years). Vacancies will be filled through an application process. The DNR may consider terms longer than six total years if, for example, the Fisheries Workgroup member has great interest in remaining or there is no other interest. Efforts will be made to ensure that the entire Fisheries Workgroup does not change over at once (e.g., stagger appointments). DNR may remove a member from the committee based on conduct or inability to participate.

Recommended applicants will demonstrate:

1. Representation from all geographic regions in Minnesota that reflect broad interest in the fishery; to specifically include but not limited to diverse fish management and angling interests.
2. Effectiveness and respect working with those with different experience, background and perspectives.

Meetings

The DNR Fisheries Workgroup chair will plan meetings in locations that meet the needs of members, with a preference for at least two in person meetings a year. Additional meetings may be held at alternative locations around the state to address local issues or view active fish management actions onsite or may be held via videoconference. DNR staff will develop agendas and organize meetings in consultation with Fisheries Workgroup members and the DNR Fish Species Technical Teams. Fisheries Workgroup members are strongly encouraged to suggest agenda items. DNR staff will prepare technical information to inform discussion, including facilitating assistance from subject matter experts as needed.

Meetings will be facilitated by the Fisheries Workgroup chair, with the option of formal facilitation from DNR P3 staff. The Fisheries Workgroup is responsible for keeping meeting notes (members can take turns or the chairs can ask a non-member to take notes). DNR will also provide meeting summaries, which may be made available to the public. Fisheries Workgroup business shall take place at DNR-convened meetings only. The DNR Fish Species Technical Team members can be invited to attend as necessary to provide project updates and help bridge Fisheries communications between the DNR and the Fisheries Workgroup.

Participation and Communication

Fisheries Workgroup members must attend the majority of meetings and arrive familiar with the agenda and any pre-work. Members will provide advance notice if they are unable to attend. Members agree to common ground rules, including being respectful of other participants and ensuring involvement of all members. Members must disclose conflicts of interest (e.g., if a member stands to benefit financially from a decision item).

The DNR Fisheries Workgroup chair is the main point of contact for the Fisheries Workgroup. Dialogue is also encouraged among Fisheries Workgroup members and with other DNR staff.

Fisheries Workgroup members are expected to coordinate with the organizations or stakeholder interests they represent and discuss issues and information from the Fisheries Workgroup in their local communities. For external communications, including social media, members are free to express their views as private individuals; however, they should be clear that they do not speak for or represent the Fisheries Workgroup. Media requests involving the Fisheries Workgroup should be directed to the DNR Fisheries Workgroup chair or the Fisheries Section Manager.

Charter Maintenance

The Fisheries Workgroup shall review this charter regularly (at least when reviewing membership), updating it as necessary and obtain any required approval for changes.