



Lake Erie / Lake St. Clair Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee

Established by the Department of Natural Resources to improve and maintain the fishery resources of Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair, and the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers through better communication and partnership.

Meeting Notes Belle Isle Nature Zoo 176 Lakeside Drive, Detroit, MI 48207 October 6, 2015

10:00-10:05 Welcome and introductions (Bob Neely, Chair and Jim Francis, DNR)

Welcomed new member:

- John Bacarella – Sportsmen's Direct

10:05-10:15 Review the agenda and meeting minutes from April 2015 (All)

- Notes from the spring meeting were approved and there were no changes to the agenda.
- Action Item: Since the last meeting, Bob Neely sent a letter to DNR-Parks on behalf of the committee regarding shore fishing at the Selfridge Boating Access Site (BAS) and the need for a BAS at Belle Isle.

10:15-11:00 NOAA's HABs Program and Forecasting Tool (Sonia Joshi, NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory)

- Explained what an algae bloom is and what causes it (temperature is a prime trigger, but need nutrients and sunlight as well).
- Types of algae blooms include diatoms, green algae, blue-green algae, and red tides (not in MI).
- History of algae blooms in the Great Lakes; there were massive blooms in 60s into 70s due to cultural eutrophication, a decrease in late 70s and 80s due to nutrient abatement programs, but bloom began increasing again in the 90s.
- The more recent increases in algae blooms coincide with appearance of zebra and quagga mussels.
 - o Mussels may increase light penetration
 - o Since zebra mussels don't eat blue-green algae, their selective consumption of algae can change the composition of the algae community – favoring blue-green algae
 - o Mussels can change the nutrient composition in the water
- A Hazardous Algae Bloom (HAB) is a bloom of blue-green algae that produces toxins that are released as the algae dies. The toxins can be harmful to aquatic life and humans. However, most algal blooms do not produce toxins.

Sonia works in Saginaw Bay and western Lake Erie

- She reviewed the types of blue-green algae and what they do.
- Microcystis is the most prevalent - it looks like bright green paint on the water. It produces a liver toxin and can cause a skin rash in some people. But different blue-green algae produce different toxins.

NOAA has developed tools to track and predict algae blooms

- NOAA bulletins on blooms - you can sign up to receive.
 - o <http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/research/habs/forecasting>
- HAB Tracker (which gives different types of forecasts).
 - o http://www.glerl.noaa.gov/res/HABs_and_Hypoxia/
 - o Weekly sampling is conducted to ground truth the remote sensing and to test for additional parameters
 - o Continuous monitoring sensors have also been deployed to catch short term variations that weekly sampling could miss
 - o Data combined to give images of bloom extents and forecasts
 - o With HAB Tracker you can see how algae blooms are moving with a forecast 5 days out

General Issues/Questions

- Not sure about importance of total phosphorus vs. dissolved phosphorus and this is being investigated.
- Inland lakes have had more problems with algae blooms historically; the Great Lakes problem is a rather new issue.
- Bioaccumulation in fish is being investigated – preliminary information indicates toxins show up in fish livers vs. flesh.

11:00-11:45 Harmful Algal Blooms: the past, the present, and the plan (Kevin Goodwin, MDEQ-Water Resources Division)

Overview:

- Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes, therefore it is warmer and more biologically productive.
- From the 1950s-1970s Lake Erie was notorious for pollution problems – nutrients, chemicals, oils, and waste.
- Phosphorous inputs to Lake Erie were greatly reduced by the 1980s and total phosphorous has been fairly stable since then. Point sources of phosphorous have been greatly reduced and the primary input since the early 1980s is now non-point sources.
- Improvements in water quality have contributed to a recovered lake, a world class fishery on Lake Erie, and abundant recreation (boating and beaches).
- In the late 1990s and into 2000s, algae blooms started to become an issue in western Lake Erie and the large algae bloom in 2011 grabbed headlines.
- These HABs pose potential health risks.
- Non-point sources of phosphorus are high, point sources are low and stable, and the overall Total Phosphorous loading is stable. So what's changed?
 - Climate changes (temperature and precipitation increasing)
 - Invasive species (zebra and quagga mussels)
 - Land use practices (nutrient applications). TP is stable, is the composition changing?
- Different algae produce different types of toxins.

There are health (contact and drinking water), recreation (contact), and ecological concerns (hypoxia zones).

- DEQ conducting beach surveys in Michigan to better understand beach conditions, better understand blooms nearshore, and get more information on algae toxins.
 - o 7 beaches done in a day, 4th year, every 2 weeks June-Sept

- Erie shoreline looks great most of the time, but sometimes very bad
 - Mayfly skins, piles of aquatic plants, algae mats
 - Sampling done of algae, toxins, etc. near the shore
 - You can't tell toxin levels by looking! Stay out of scum
- MI has no health criteria for toxin, but World Health Organization limit of 20ppb.
 - Some scum samples were very high
 - Water column samples never exceeded the 20ppb threshold
- How big of an issue is it in MI?
 - 2013-2015 complaint tracking
 - 2015 toxin monitoring
 - Targeted bloom response monitoring
- Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
 - Nutrients is an area of emphasis
 - Task Group to look at Lake Erie first
 - Major tribs to Erie and loadings (Detroit, Raisin, and Maumee Rivers)
- Recommended Target of 40% reduction in phosphorus load by 2025 using an adaptive management approach. But there may be contributing factors (invasive species or precipitation changes) that we have no control.
- Although nutrient reduction targets have been established as part of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (Annex 4), there is no funding mechanism in place yet.

11:45-12:00 Law Enforcement Division - update (Sgt. Todd Szyska, MDNR-Law Enforcement)

- Lots of out-of-state bass boats this summer (probably result of Professional Bass Tournament)
- Sturgeon event went well
- Some anglers have complained they are catching too many musky
- More COs (about 36-37) coming online in November
- Larry Deslover on commercial issues - look out for lost tribal net floating around near Harbor Beach somewhere. Let Larry know if anyone sees tribal gill nets across the line at Walpole near South Channel.

12:00-12:45 Lunch—provided by DNR

12:45-1:15 Veteran's fishing event for SE Michigan (Tom Jones, Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors)

- MiOFO is a collaborative partnership with Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Camp Liberty, Zero-Day, Eisenhower Center, Brain Injury Association of Michigan, Passing Along the Heritage Foundation, Safari Club International Foundation, Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, and more. Its mission is to provide improved outdoor recreation opportunities for wounded veterans and individuals with health challenges and to coordinate a support network that facilitates their recovery through connecting with nature.
- Basically this organization is involved with helping disabled veterans (and non-veterans) and their families recover from their experiences and deal with their disabilities through the healing benefit of outdoor activities.
- Michigan is way behind (ranked 47th among all states) in level of effort to help veterans.
- Many veterans are not aware of the opportunities so need to get the word out.

- Many outdoors people also not aware of opportunities to help.
- Some things coming up include:
 - o A fishing tournament on Lake St. Clair next year. Will need people to volunteer boats and assistance
 - o Some of the Selfridge buildings will be used for a rehab center
 - o Mentors are trained to accompany a disabled person, just need the opportunities. Can always use more mentors and volunteers
- Contact Tom directly with any offers of help.
- Monetary donations can be sent to "**Moriah Enrichment Center" address: 8735 M-52, Manchester, Michigan 48158 (with attention to Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors AND Tom Jones)**

1:15-2:00

Great Lakes Commercial Net Pen Aquaculture Proposals – An Update on QOL Agency Process (Ed Eisch, MDNR-Fisheries)

- There are four types of aquaculture
 - o Recirculation (totally self-enclosed)
 - o Flow-Thru design (all 6 DNR hatcheries)
 - o Pond Culture (DNR walleye, pike, and musky rearing ponds)
 - o Open Water Cage Culture (net pens)
- Ed reviewed current status of net pens in the Great Lakes (some in Ontario waters, none in U.S.), the process that will occur with current proposals, and the next steps in that process.
- Commercial aquaculture is currently small in Michigan, but they have a strategic plan to increase production.
- Two net pen proposals in Michigan have been discussed - Bays De Noc and Northern Lake Huron.
 - o Permits needed include National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) from state and Part 25-Construction Permit & Bottomlands Conveyance permit
 - o No permit applications have been received yet
- A Commercial Aquaculture Workgroup has been established in the State's Quality of Life (QOL) organization (MDEQ, MDNR, and MDARD).
 - o They have been meeting so a science-based policy can be developed
 - o A science review panel has been convened with a report to the workgroup expected mid-October
 - o Work on the QOL policy will continue after the panel report has been received
 - o They do plan to get public input during the process
- Ed answered several clarifying questions

2:00-2:20

St. Clair-Detroit River System (SCDRS) Fishery Update (Todd Wills, MDNR-Fisheries)

Todd gave an update on fish survey work conducted by the Lake St. Clair Fisheries Research Station in 2015

- Over 30,000 fish have been handled so far
- Spring Lake St. Clair trap net survey (bass & walleye primarily) – 2015 catch rates a little lower relative to 2014 catch rates

- June Lake St. Clair index trawl survey – yellow perch recruitment is highly variable, but good year classes in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2013 will make strong contributions to the fishery over the next several years, but yellow perch are growing slower
- Sturgeon St. Clair River set line survey and Lake St. Clair trawls – new record largest sturgeon (72”, 134 pounds), otherwise catches were average
- August Lake Erie trawl survey – yellow perch and walleye numbers up relative to 2014 and expect good 2015 walleye year class for both yellow perch and walleye
- September Lake St. Clair trawl survey just completed
- October Lake Erie gillnet survey coming up, in 2014 walleye numbers were up some

2:20-2:45

Fisheries Division Update (Jim Francis, MDNR-Fisheries)

- \$150,000 general fund designated to cormorant control in FY2016.
- Letter on behalf of CFAC sent to Chief of Parks & Recreation Division about Selfridge shore fishing issues and the desire for a Boating Access Site at Belle Isle.
- Fish Division hosted public meetings statewide during July to get input on 3 proposed regulation changes. A proposal to reduce the steelhead possession limit on certain Lake Michigan tributaries and a proposal to regulate the amount of chumming material in possession were not supported by the public and were dropped. The third proposal was for consideration of catch-and-delayed-release (CDR) for bass on 12 inland lakes. This topic was presented as an information item at the September NRC meeting and is on the agenda for action at the October 8 NRC meeting.
- Staffing updates: new Lake St. Clair Research Station biologist just hired and will start in November; LEMU manager position still vacant.
- The RV Channel Cat (Lake St. Clair Research vessel) will get new engines this winter (\$160,000).
- Ontario and Ohio August trawl surveys on Lake Erie: 2014 found highest numbers of walleye since 2003 and preliminary numbers in 2015 are higher than 2014. Yellow perch numbers were way up in 2014 and the 2015 numbers looks like another good year class.

3:00-3:15

Open discussion, summary of meeting, future meeting topics and locations (Bob Neely)

- The Lake St. Clair cutoff channel access site needs to be fully developed. Another public access site is needed on Lake St. Clair further south.
- Shore anglers need more access to shore fishing opportunities. Sites traditionally open to anglers are being closed off.
- There was additional discussion about the opportunities for a boat launch at Belle Isle. The suggestion was made to attend the monthly Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee to initiate a discussion about a boat launch at Belle Isle.
- There was more discussion on the Selfridge access issues. It was decided to include a topic dealing with Access Issues to the next CFAC meeting.
- There was a question about the St. Jean's access overflow lot. Was it being used this year?

Lake Erie / Lake St. Clair Citizens
Fishery Advisory Committee

Belle Isle Nature Zoo
October 6, 2015

Attendees:

Name	Affiliation
John Bacarella	Sportsmen's Direct
Mary Bohling	Michigan Sea Grant
Dan Boileau	Downriver Walleye Federation
Bob Burns	Friends of the Detroit River/Detroit Riverkeeper
Stan Bydlos	MUCC District 8/Lake St. Clair Walleye Association
Matt Einheuser	Clinton River Watershed Council
Ralph Kandt	Wholesale Bait Dealers
Rick Kretzschmar	National Professional Anglers Association
Ted Meyer	Shore Fisherman
Bob Neely	Chair
Paul Sacks	Michigan Bass Nation
Matt Shackelford	DTE Energy
Gerry Sickon	Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association
Gary Williams	MDNR/MSU Extension
Luke Yasuhara (alternate)	Downriver Bass Association
Larry Desloover	MDNR-Law Enforcement
Craig Milkowski	MDNR-Law Enforcement
Todd Szyska	MDNR-Law Enforcement
Jim Francis	MDNR-Fisheries
Todd Wills	MDNR-Fisheries
Jeff Braunscheidel	MDNR-Fisheries
Cleyo Harris	MDNR-Fisheries
Guests:	
Bill Furtaw	MUCC District 8
Dean Botek	Michigan Darkhouse Angling Association
Sonia Joshi	NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory
Kevin Goodwin	MDEQ-Water Resources Division
Tom Jones	Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors
Ed Eisch	MDNR-Fisheries
