

Policy Committee Teleconference Minutes

12 August 2019

Present: Randy Helbach; Bruce Urben, Bruce Ross

Agenda

- Committee make-up and purpose
- Waterfowl Management Plan
- Duck stamp update: BR led discussion on current status.
- WWF Waterfowl Meeting this past weekend
- WIWaterfowlers survey by WWA
- New topics: Mississippi River topics (engine noise, zone considerations?), other

Minutes

Committee Organization: As the first formal meeting, the committee spent a couple of minutes discussing the purpose and goals of this newly formed committee. Randy agreed to chair the committee. Discussed the top few priorities to work on, which initially would include:

- Duck Stamp fee increase
- React to, and support, DNR's Waterfowl management plan that WWA helped develop
- Provide input to DNR's Closed area / refuge proposed rulemaking
- Conducting a fall/winter survey of WIWaterfowlers for season input and other WWA purposes

Waterfowl Management Plan input – Bruce Urben spent a few minutes reviewing the development history and content of the current draft plan. It was a collaborative process that in his experience resulted in a uniquely useful document from the DNR. Given WWA's involvement in its development, it was agreed that we need to strongly support its adoption through the public comments, NRB hearing, and ultimate adoption. This plan is a potentially pivotal tool for the DNR and also for WWA to better affect the state's circumstances effecting waterfowl. Its goals, specifically defined outcomes and implementing strategies, presents WWA an opportunity to find supporting roles, and at a minimum, encourage DNR follow-through on implementing it. This committee and maybe others can monitor efforts by the DNR and maybe also publically request the supporting work plans, staffing decisions, and budgetary plans that implement the plan. Now, Bruce R will compile feedback, if any, and submit through committee this week to meet DNR deadline for public comment. Here's a link to the draft plan

https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/documents/WisconsinWaterfowlPlan.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2qMtPLXwd_SZKNwPRyq119RNsh-VzK1PIdc55q3wNZVop3YxLm_aChH30

Duck Stamp Update – Bruce R updated the committee on current efforts to continue the effort to increase the State Waterfowl Stamp fee from \$7 to \$12 annually. Kyle Rorah (DU) has been continuing to engage decision makers at the capitol even after the

measure failed to be included in the biennium's Joint Finance budget and governor's review. Kyle reports:

"Legislatively, there is strong interest from Rep. Ken Skowronski and Rep Mark Born in the House and Sen. Testin in the Senate to introduce concurrent stand alone bills in late August or early September. We will want to organize an informational briefing day at the capitol in conjunction with these legislative announcements. We are working with the aforementioned lawmakers to get final bill language drafted. We will also be recruiting key democratic leaders to co-author the bills to ensure this issue remains bipartisan. We are on a solid trajectory. We must continue to educate lawmakers as much as possible and so we are continuing to nudge DNR to produce more details about the account.

As you can imagine, the Senate will continue to be the toughest nut to crack and therefore the chamber we should focus our educational efforts most intensely on. We need one of the three guys (Tiffany, LeMahieu, or Stroebel) to soften on this issue. "

The committee agreed this should be one of WWA's top legislative priorities, and individuals on this committee (and the board and maybe other volunteers) will need to play an active role to keep this ball rolling to conclusion. Bruce R will reach out to Kyle for latest.

WI Wildlife Federation Waterfowl Committee Meeting – Bruce U updated the WWA committee on his Saturday with the subject committee. New chair Mark Kakatsch (former WWA director) is interested in expanding the group to 10-12 to include other sportsmen groups.

- New UW-Stevens Point endowed waterfowl chair Ben Sedinger was there, still getting feet under him and will be supporting WWA's LTH by sending students to GB's LTH effort this fall. He will also likely be willing to submit articles for WWA's newsletter.
- Waterfowl Closed Areas: Discussion at the WWF meeting about the DNR's public input for their proposed adjustment of waterfowl refuges and closed area regs brought forth the observation that DNR is learning a lot they did not know... including the idea that some areas have special exemptions. Example: Sensiba closed area has an exemption (not clear if written or just informal) allowing Green Bay Duck Hunters Assoc to hold a LTH there. If this is continued, committee's feeling was such exemptions should include WWA. ACTION: Bruce R will compile any additional input for the DNR and submit to Taylor Finger soon. Here's a link to the article Taylor wrote for us that contains links to the closed area information (and also the waterfowl management plan)
[:https://www.wisducks.org/refuge-updates-and-waterfowl-management-plan-hearings/](https://www.wisducks.org/refuge-updates-and-waterfowl-management-plan-hearings/)
- Non-toxic Shot allocations—not likely for waterfowling purposes this year or next as the WWF has shifted its focus for such things to upland birds LTH efforts.

WWA survey - Wisconsin Waterfowl duck zones were a hot topic at the WWF meeting this weekend, with a push for a Lake Michigan zone gaining steam. The state is permitted to request different zone/split configurations every five years, but is limited to the number of zones and the number of splits in the season to a menu of four selections. Current sentiment from the state's various waterfowlers does not neatly fit into the federally allowable models. The committee agreed that WWA should work with the DNR and WWF on developing a survey to assess the current desires of WWA/WWF members in this regard—and for other organizational purposes. This was very helpful for WI Waterfowlers and WWA standing when last done. Timing for development of the

survey will be mid-season, with surveying to be conducted sometime thereafter. It was agreed with the DNR this would not be a truly scientific survey.

Mississippi River - engine noise enforcement initiative? Bruce R explained that Todd has reached out a month ago about some apparently new DNR enforcement of engine noise limits on mud motors. Some very upset people. There was committee interest in the topic, but requires more information from Todd as to the scope and specifics of the situation. To be discussed at next opportunity.

Mufflers and Noise Level Limits

Vessel operators may not hear sound signals if the engine is not adequately muffled.

- The exhaust of every internal combustion engine on any vessel must be effectively muffled. That is, the engine's exhaust must be muffled or suppressed at all times so as not to create excessive noise.
- It is unlawful to operate a vessel that exceeds a noise level of 86 dBA.
- The use of cutouts is prohibited.

Next meeting date: This was left open to allow Randy to reach out to Todd to find a mutually acceptable date. Randy will notify alcon when that is available.