

**MSSFA State Board Meeting
MUCC Headquarters, Lansing, Mi.
August 10, 2011**

1. The meeting was brought to order by President Rick Balabon at 7:05 pm. An 18 member quorum was present.
2. The DNR Executive Director (Rodney Stokes) provided a brief biography on his 32 years in the DNR. His #1 priority is customer service. The DNR wants most customers to purchase wildlife and fishing licenses on-line, and making the procedure user friendly will be essential if the potential cost savings are to be realized. The DNR gets 0\$ from the state revenue general fund, so DNR user and license fees are the primary source of revenue. The DNR employee level is at 1200 from 1800 a few years ago. There have not been any cuts to programs as yet, but "partnerships" with other public and private entities (outdoor groups) will be essential to maintaining the various wildlife, fisheries, and parks programs. A high priority is being placed on developing the partnering process. The #2 priority is to get more people to use the outdoors. Stronger focus on youth involvement and engaging adults to mentor youth outdoor activity will eventually provide more hunting, fishing, and user fee revenue. Michigan has the largest state park system in the country, but is 49th in state government funding for the park system. The motor vehicle license "passport" is a program to amend this lacking revenue structure and hopefully provide for the maintenance and repair of the state parks system. 24% of license plates have participated this year. 17% participation was needed to break even with the previous window decal system. The Natural Resource Commission (NRC) has jurisdiction over wildlife decisions, but not fisheries decisions. Fisheries decisions are presented to the NRC for "advice and consent", but the final decisions on fisheries are made solely by the DNR.

The DNR fisheries director (Jim Dexter) informed that a more detailed "fish consumption advisory" was being composed. The advisory is targeted to frequent (weekly) fish consumption by pregnant women, children, and health compromised older adults. Skinning the fish and removing the dark meat reduces exposure to toxins by 50%. The alewife year class that spawned their 1st time in June is more prolific than ones from recent years. The wide fluctuations in Lake Michigan temperatures and currents have caused some stress die offs, but in general, this year class bodes well the future fishery.
3. Presidents Report (Balabon): The MSSFA has moved the state office from Paw Paw to Holland. The new business address is; P.O. Box 8034, Holland, Mi., 49422. The new business phone # is 616-298-8842.
4. Approval of Minutes (Sickon): Motion (Anderson) to accept May 18th minutes as presented; second (Foster); passed.
5. Communications/Letters (Balabon); Norm Anderson provided a synopsis of the Cormorant Activity Report from the DNR. The DNR implemented the web-based cormorant activity form in 2005. Since then, 285 records have been submitted, assisting the DNR in identifying locations where congregations of cormorants are having detrimental effects on local fisheries and sensitive vegetation. The reported sites can then be considered and prioritized for management action. In 2011 the DNR and the USDA-Wildlife Service instituted an advanced notice system of stocking events for local volunteer/stakeholder groups. Volunteers provide cormorant harassment to protect the stocked fish from predation. To participate in the web-based cormorant reporting program, go to <http://www.dnr.state.mi.us/cormorantobs>.
6. Executive Directors Report (Eade): The Lake Michigan committee report by Dave Flagg showed 13 red flags out of a possible 15 (not good). However, the last year-class of alewives survived the winter very well and this will help the fishery. The Lake Huron catch rate for walleye is increasing rapidly. Lake Huron steelhead planting will increase this year. The DNR hatchery manager thinks that stocking size herring (5") can be produced at the Platte River hatchery. SB 248 legislation has moved from the state senate to the house natural resource committee. There is a provision in the bill that caps DNR land purchasing. This provision would make it very difficult for the DNR to purchase prime land that provides quality access to the waters and lands hunters and fishers need.

7. Old Business

A. Affiliate membership (Potts): The idea is to define and establish an affiliate membership status in the by-laws. Affiliation allows another organization with common interests to the MSSFA to participate in some of the benefits of the MSSFA, but not have voting privileges within the MSSFA. Bud Potts provided some notes for directors to assist in researching this idea.

B. Chapter Merchandise Discount (French): There is still a allotment left per chapter. Use it or lose it by August 31st. The merchandise costs are the wholesale price minus 15%. D&R, one of our newspaper advertisers, will host a "seminar day" for the MSSFA on Feb.18th, 2012.

C. 2nd annual Steelheader Challenge (Linderman): Wayne emphasized that getting more chapters involved at next years tournament is a high priority. Handicapping the Holland chapter boats will be in the rules for next year.

8. New Business

A. Tip of the Mitt Chapter (Eade): A group of anglers in the Petoskey area planning a September 13th meeting for the purpose of establishing a new MSSFA chapter in northern Michigan. Dennis plans to attend that meeting. The old Ausable Chapter is in the process of becoming reactivated with the help of Al Campbell and Greg Gumgrecht.

B. Dr. Howard Tanner Award (VanderMaas): The MSSFA strategic planning committee wants to establish an individual award that exemplifies outstanding contributions to the anadromous fish environment. The person awarded would be a MSSFA non-member recommended by the strategic planning committee, and require a majority vote by the board of directors. Motion (VanderMaas) that a "Dr. Howard Tanner Award" be established with the fore stated rules; second (Foster); passed.

9. Legislative Report (Merckel): The Jordan River Hatchery will have a dedication ceremony on August 18th.

10. Tribal Report (VanderMaas): The Little River Band (Manistee) law enforcement unit worked closely with the Ludington area tournament anglers to ensure that proper net marking and anchoring lines were in place. The major fishing violation case by tribal members during the 2009 over harvest of Walleye in the Bays de Noc was appealed on April 12th. The tribal court judge reduced the lifetime fishing rights suspension to a 1 year suspension. The tribal members were supposed to be subsistence fishing, but instead were selling the fish to Big Bay de Noc Fisheries through tribal middlemen. The (2) middlemen were found guilty by a Delta County circuit court jury and sentenced to 1 year incarceration and \$23,401 in restitution and fines apiece. The middlemen were arrested again on June 4th as the DNR found 4 miles of illegal gill nets full of decaying fish. Tribal court will have jurisdiction over this case.

11. Lake Committee Reports

A. Lake Michigan (Eade): Salmon size, weight, and population density are trending downward, but the huge year class of young alewives that survived last winter may help to turn this around. Early season fishing was very slow, but late July and august are producing larger fish with fuller stomachs.

B. Lake Huron (Eade): Walleye and perch continue their strong come back (walleye foraging on gobies). Some smelt and alewives are in the northern part of the lake as forage. The Steelhead population is rebounding and some of the steelhead that was to be planted in Lake Michigan will be diverted to Lake Huron. The planting strategy for Chinook salmon is being modified with a final recommendation to the DNR fisheries chief due October 1st. The DNR hatcheries manager concluded that 7" Atlantic salmon can be produced in volume at the Platte River hatchery, but that production runs of 5" Cisco are 5 years away.

C. Streams (Eade): The Cold Water Resources Steering Committee met in late June. The upper Manistee River use survey will be taken from July – September to ascertain the effect of enforcing gear restrictions with the usage of state campgrounds. Senate Bill 248 would have a damaging affect on the DNR ability to purchase and protect valuable property that is critical to the natural reproduction of Steelhead in our streams.

12. Financial Report (Eade): Motion (Potts) to table the report until the next meeting; second (Merckel); passed. The financial transactions are now being entered into a "QuickBooks" computer program. Monthly reports will be available to the board. The 2011 budget will need to be revised to reflect our current and expected revenue.

13. Membership (Gumbrecht): There are over xxxx new members this year. There is \$ xxxxx in unpaid renewal memberships outstanding. We need to get these members renewed.

14. Good of the Order: Joe Foster requested a letter of support from the Executive Director for the "Fishing Wall"...so done
Foster is looking for a fishing line recycler. Please contact him if you know of one. The Holland Steelheaders have a Fish Hawk X4 for sale to any other Steelheader chapter for \$ xxxx. Contact Wayne Linderman @ 616-283-2506.

15. Motion (Foster) to adjourn at 10:00pm; second (White); passed.

Respectfully yours,
Gerald Sickon
MSSFA Sec. / Treas.