

ADVISORY COUNCIL
October 14, 2009 Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT

Patrick Early, Chair
AmyMarie Travis Lucas, Vice Chair
John Bassemier
Bill Freeman
Jim Trachtman
Rick Cockrum

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Lucas
Sandra Jensen
Jennifer Kane

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STAFF PRESENT

John Davis	Executive Office
Cheryl Hampton	Executive Office
Mark Reiter	Fish and Wildlife
Linnea Petercheff	Fish and Wildlife
Mitch Marcus	Fish and Wildlife
Rhett Wisener	Fish and Wildlife
Dave Kittulca	Fish and Wildlife
Bill James	Fish and Wildlife

GUESTS PRESENT

Brent Giaub	Jerry Giaub	Mark Williams
John Goss	George Yazel	Eclucerd Cassed
Joe McLeery	Greg Yazel	Winston Bush
Chad Miller	Holly Hadac	CeAnn Lambert
Chuck Brinkman	Lou Hughes	Eldon Crabtree
Bill Wilson	Bob Hughes	Mick Reindorf
David Higham	Randy Ratz	Tag Nobbe
Tom Jeffries	Jeff Odom	

Call to Order by Chairman, Patrick J. Early

Patrick Early, Chair of the Advisory Council, called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m., EDT, at the Fort Harrison State Park Inn, Post Road, Indianapolis, Indiana. With the presence of six members, the Chair did not observe a quorum.

The Chair reported regarding the October 8, 2009 meeting held in Brookville, Indiana. He said that he, along with Advisory Council member, Bill Freeman, Chris Smith, the Department's Legislative Liaison, and Sandra Jensen, Administrative Law Judge with the Commission, attended the evening meeting. He noted that the meeting was made "difficult due to the lack of communication...and there was a lot of emotion". The Chair said that it was announced to those in attendance at the Brookville meeting that the Advisory Council would not recommend any change to the existing rules governing the Brookville fishery. He also noted that there was "no movement by the DNR or [the Advisory Council] or by anybody else to get rid of the brown trout".

The Chair explained that some of the suggestions received associated with the Brookville fishery recommended rule amendments that would "take something away from one group of people in order to provide something to another group. Although there are merits...to both sides of the argument it becomes difficult for the DNR, in general, and for this body without biological evidence, to make changes" to rules. The Chair said that the Advisory Council is supportive in creating "better trout habitat and improving opportunities" in the Brookville tail waters, but any recommendation would "need to be something that all of the constituents are in agreement, which is the right thing to do".

Review of Minutes of public meetings conducted by Natural Resources Commission, Division of Hearings staff, for suggestions deferred by the Advisory Council:

- **Wild Animal Possession Permits; Administrative Cause No. 09-125D**
- **Disabled Hunting Licenses; Administrative Cause No. 09-126D**
- **Fish and Wildlife Area User Fees; Administrative Cause No. 09-127D**
- **Endangered Species Habitat and Reintroduction; Administrative Cause No. 09-128D**
- **Animal Sanctuary License; Administrative Cause No. 09-129D**

Sandra Jensen, Hearing Officer, presented this item. She explained that the Advisory Council deferred topics that had a "minimal" number of suggestions to the Commission's Division of Hearings staff with five public meetings held in total.

Jensen explained that the suggestion associated with disability hunting licenses recommended that a disabled veteran "be able not only to get lower cost regular hunting and fishing licenses with those licenses also to include deer and turkey license". She said the suggestion regarding the fish and wildlife area user fee requested that a new fee be established for those that use the property for other than hunting of wildlife or fishing, such as hiking, bird watching, mushroom hunting, berry picking, etc. Jensen noted that those who buy a license to hunt or fish on these areas are essentially paying a fee with the license purchase. She said that those with a hunting a fishing license would be exempt "across the board and then anyone else that might be using those areas might have to have some kind of card or user fee paid". She said it would need to be based on a random check arrangement, "just like the hunting and fishing license check". Jensen pointed out that the Department explained that some of the properties are funded

federally, and the suggested new fee may introduce “complications” regarding the funds generated by the suggested new fee.

Jensen explained that the suggestions associated with the endangered species habitat reintroduction were varied, and the minutes of that public meeting are self-explanatory.

Jensen said that suggestions to amend the wild animal possession rule are “a little complicated”, but essentially the suggestions recommend that the existing statute that exempts certain entities, such as zoos, that receive accreditation from the American Zoological Association be amended to allow additional entities to be included in an exemption. Alternatively the suggestion was that the statute be amended to remove the exemption entirely, thereby placing full regulation of wild animal possession, including the establishment of any exemptions, within the control of the Department.

Jensen noted that Jennifer Kane, also with the Commission’s Division of Hearings, conducted the public meeting regarding the suggestion that recommended the creation of a wild animal sanctuary permit. Jensen also noted that CeAnn Lambert and Holly Hadac, who submitted the suggestions, were present at today’s meeting.

The Chair asked for clarification regarding the review of the minutes of the five public meetings held by the Commission’s professional staff.

Jensen explained that the minutes will be incorporated into the materials for use by the Advisory Council in its deliberation and recommendations on all the suggested substantive changes.

Holly Hadac stated that she is the Educational Director for the Indiana Coyote Rescue Center, as well as a Michigan wildlife rehabilitator. She explained that a wild animal sanctuary license is needed for those wild animals that are not suitable for release due to habituation “mostly created by an untrained public”. She said that “most people” who possess a wild animal “intend” to release the animal back into the wild. Hadac said that if an animal is non-releasable due to permanent injury, improper nutrition or inadequate caging, the regulations require that the wild animal be euthanized in the absence of a wild animal possession permit.

Hadac said that in the 1980s, Michigan DNR estimated that wildlife rehabilitators in southeast Michigan answered over 30,000 calls from the public each summer. “The government doesn’t want that responsibility or that phone bill. This also illustrated to the DNR the importance of how much both the general public and wildlife rehabilitators cared about our wildlife.”

Hadac said that a wild animal sanctuary permit is “necessary...to lighten the paperwork” for the Indiana’s DNR and the permit holders, and to allow permanent possession of a non-releasable native wildlife. She also explained that the permit should be issued to “cover the premises as long as the sanctuary exists. If the permit covers an individual that has to transfer for a job or a spouse’s job, has to move for an ill relative, or covers an

individual that dies, the sanctuary can still exist when other people in the organization continue its operation. The sanctuary can proceed until the permit is relinquished.”

CeAnn Lambert, President of the Indiana Coyote Rescue Center, noted that she holds twelve wild animal possession permits “in order for me to keep the animals that I have”. She said that “most” of the paperwork associated with the permits is required to be annually reviewed and signed by a veterinarian before filing with the Department. She said that a sanctuary permit would allow for possession of wildlife indigenous to Indiana only and would exclude exotic wildlife. Lambert recommended that wildlife sanctuaries should be inspected annually by the Department, and a fee should be created for a sanctuary permit.

Lambert said that a wildlife sanctuary permit holder should be able to “solicit for funds” for management of the sanctuary. “The public would be more likely to become involved with Indiana wildlife if we did have sanctuaries available.” She said that a wildlife sanctuary would provide a means to care for a wild animal purchased at sales and auctions where a purchaser is no longer able to care for the animal and the animal is non-releasable. “I get about two calls a year from people begging me to take their coyote puppy that they bought in Indiana...I feel these exploited animals should be the responsibility of Indiana DNR since [it] allows the selling of these animals without proper permits in place for the animals that are bought”.

Lambert stated that wildlife residing in a permitted sanctuary would not be allowed to be sold and would only be allowed to be transferred from one licensed sanctuary to another licensed sanctuary. “This would make sure our wild animals were not being sold for private profit to be used as live bait”.

The Chair asked Lambert to provide a brief description of the Indiana Coyote Rescue Center.

Lambert said that she possesses 20 coyotes, twelve are held under wild animal possession permits and the remaining coyotes are held under a game breeder license. She explained that the coyotes are held in 20 x 20 pens that have “dig out” wire installed in the inside perimeter of the pens to prevent digging. She said the pens also have “overhangs” installed on the pens. The coyotes “can’t go over and they can’t go under”. Lambert said that one pen contains three two year old coyotes that were litter mates, two males and one female. She explained that coyotes are not like wolves; “you can’t keep them in a pack situation. I try to keep just pairs; that works out the best, a male and a female.” She noted that some of the coyotes she possesses do not tolerate another coyote in its pen.

The Chair asked whether Lambert’s coyotes are sterilized.

Lambert explained that the male coyotes have vasectomies rather than being neutered in order to allow for “normal coyote behavior”.

Bassemier asked, “Would you suggest that if there is a sanctuary permit, that part of the permit process would be that [the wild animal] should be neutered?”

Lambert answered that animals held under a wildlife sanctuary permit should be sterilized, but “I would prefer the vasectomy and removal of the uterus”. She noted, “One thing I do know is that you can’t keep a neutered coyote with a non-neutered coyote, male and female, because you are going to have bloody fights”.

AmyMarie Travis Lucas asked for clarification regarding permitting the sanctuary rather than a issuing the permit to an individual such as the director of a sanctuary.

Lambert stated, “My concern is my death, as far as my coyotes go”. She explained that Holly Hadac has agreed to be Vice President of the Rescue Center to “take over if something should happen to me”. Lambert said that issuing a sanctuary permit to the entity rather than an individual would assure continuation of the sanctuary in the event of her inability to manage the facility. Lambert also noted that the wild animal possession permits were issued in her name “though I’ve always been concerned about what would happen to my coyotes” being held “just with a possession permit if I were to die”.

Consideration of recommendation to the Natural Resources Commission for approval of a new nonrule policy document that provides a list of public freshwater lakes in northern Indiana; Administrative Cause No. 08-059W

Linnea Petercheff, Staff Specialist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, presented this item. She explained that in 2008 the Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation authorizing the Natural Resources Commission to approve and maintain a nonrule policy statement to list the public freshwater lakes in Indiana. A “public freshwater lake” is governed by IC 14-26-2 (sometimes referred to as the “Lakes Preservation Act”) and 312 IAC 11-1 through 312 IAC 11-5. Petercheff said pursuant to the legislation, the Advisory Council and the Department would make recommendations for creating and amending the nonrule policy document. She added that the list is required to include the name of the lake, county of location, and specific geographic location information.

Petercheff said the proposed nonrule policy document would provide the Department and the public with guidance for permitted activities, such as group piers, underwater beaches, and shoreline alterations on a listed lake to be subject under the Lake Preservation Act. She said the proposed list are those lakes “believed to qualify” as a public freshwater lake north of State Road 26. Petercheff said the proposed public freshwater lake list is an initial effort. The Department has also begun drafting a list of lakes which are qualified as public freshwater lakes and located south of State Road 26..

Petercheff explained that the proposed nonrule policy would be subject to review and modification through administrative adjudications, through licensure actions, and other enforcement actions and determinations. She said the public freshwater lake list “is a good starting point” for reference as to whether or not a lake would be subject to the

Lakes Preservation Act and associated administrative rules. Petercheff said that the list was formulated with input from the Division of Law Enforcement and the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Bill Freeman asked whether the list included “only natural freshwater lakes”.

John Davis responded, “I think the term is ‘public freshwater lake’, and that does not mean that it might not have a dam or another kind of control structure.”

Steve Lucas, Director of the Commission’s Division of Hearings, complimented Linnea Petercheff “in taking on what is a thankless task”, and added that Petercheff “has been able to carry it forward this far is to her great credit. I suspect we will have more challenges as we go forward.”

Lucas said the term “lake” is central to the development of the nonrule policy document. “Lake” is defined by statute for purposes of the Lakes Preservation Act. Although most lakes regulated under the Lakes Preservation Act are of glacial origin and natural lakes, the statutory definition “does not include the terms ‘glacial’ or ‘natural’.” A lake created by a dam could be properly included in the list. For example, Mt. Zion Millpond in Fulton County is included, and the watercourse “probably didn’t exist as a lake at all until the pond was constructed to service a mill.” Lucas added that the statute requires the lake to have existed as of March 12, 1947. He agreed with Petercheff’s characterization that “mostly what the statute covers” are those lakes in the northern counties, but a lake “farther south could properly be included. We will have to deal with that; and [the Department] has begun dealing with that.”

Freeman then asked, “So, for instance, Brookville Reservoir, since it was built after 1947, would not apply to this particular list?” Lucas answered, “Correct.”

The Chair said, “We appreciate your work. We don’t have a quorum so we can’t really have a vote, but we will move this forward.”

Consideration of recommendation to the Natural Resources Commission regarding proposed amendments to 312 IAC 9 that govern the hunting of ruffed grouse and wild turkeys; Administrative Cause No. 09-165D

Linnea Petercheff also presented this item. She provided a brief overview of the proposed amendments to rules governing the hunting of ruffed grouse and wild turkey. The proposed rule amendment to ruffed grouse would reduce the hunting on public lands to only six weeks, although the hunting season on private lands would not change. The bag limit and locations of hunting ruffed grouse would remain unchanged.

Petercheff explained that as stated in past Advisory Council meetings, the grouse population is “extremely low” and that the grouse is experiencing “deteriorating habitat conditions with uncertain prospects for improvement raise concerns about hunting

mortality”. She noted that Steve Backs, Grouse and Wild Turkey Biologist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, recommends the proposed rule amendment to “start very quickly” to protect the remaining grouse populations in the state. Petercheff said that grouse hunting on private lands remains unchanged to encourage and provide incentive to private landowners to maintain woodlots for grouse habitat.

Petercheff explained that the proposed amendments to the rules governing wild turkeys would increase hunting opportunities. 16 new counties are opened for fall firearm season, with seven counties located in northern Indiana. Other amendments would open all counties statewide for the fall turkey archery season; add seven days to the early archery portion of the fall turkey season; add a second, or late, archery turkey season to “match up” with the late deer archery season, although hunters would be required to wear hunter orange; and the fall turkey firearm season would be expanded seven additional days for southern Indiana. Petercheff noted that the Steve Backs has found that the proposed rule amendments “won’t impact spring harvest” but “are warranted” to provide opportunities for hunters.

The Chair asked whether any Advisory Council member “objected” to sending the proposed rule amendments on to the Commission. No member of the Advisory Council voiced objection.

Consideration of public comments received through the Fish and Wildlife Comprehensive Rules Enhancement Project regarding fishing (except trout and salmon on the Brookville Tail Waters); Administrative Cause No. 09-086D

The Chair provided a brief overview of the process of considering the suggestions received through the Fish and Wildlife Comprehensive Rules Enhancement Project regarding the topic category of fishing regulations.

Rick Cockrum, Advisory Council member, commented, “I was overwhelmed by the comments. The fishing public, I think, is ahead of us in policy as to the requests for catfish, bass, bluegill, crappie, trout, small mouth, large mouth to increase size limit and decrease the creel limit. I was very, very impressed with the fishing public. They want to protect the fishery for the future and limit the harvesting. That really bodes well for the direction that we are headed”.

The Chair asked Bill James to provide a brief overview of the status of Indiana’s catfish fishery.

Bill James, Chief Fisheries Biologist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, agreed with Advisory Council member Cockrum. James said the national trend in the last several years has been for reduced bag limits and increase in size limits “particularly on the long-lived, slow growing” predator fish, such as muskellunge, bass, and big catfish. “These are species that are very difficult to replace.” He explained that with “careful” handling of these fish “they can be recycled, catching these fish over and over again”.

James said that Indiana has three catfish—channel catfish, flathead catfish, and, in the larger river systems, the blue catfish, which can reach over 100 pounds in size. He said that in certain rivers and in the larger rivers, such as the Ohio River, the Wabash River, and the Lower White River, both sport and commercial harvest of catfish is allowed. He said the commercial fishermen are primarily using hoop nets. James noted that Indiana’s catfish harvest regulations “match” Kentucky’s regulations on the Ohio River; “that has certainly lead to questions on resource sharing, partitioning, and conflict over the years where there’s a growing perception, I think, that the commercial fishing may be impacting the quality of sport fishing”. He said the Department continues to have discussions with neighboring states with inter-jurisdictional waters, such as the Wabash River and the Ohio “where we want to be sure that whatever steps we take are uniformly taken by states on both sides of the river. It doesn’t do much good if [Indiana is] more protective” than the neighboring state.

James said the Department is taking a “close look” at the regulations governing catfish harvest. He said that the Department has also, in concert with universities, conducted catfish studies on the Wabash River, and the data from these studies is currently being reviewed. The Department, on an ongoing basis, is “developing what we believe are science-driven, biologically-justified fishing regulatory proposals” for rule amendment.

The Chair asked James to clarify the regulations governing commercial fishing of catfish.

James explained that there are no bag limits regarding commercial fishing for catfish; however, there are specific stretches of Indiana rivers that are designated as “commercial fishing”, such as the Wabash downstream limits from Lafayette down to the Ohio River. He said that the small and medium rivers are not open to commercial fishing. He noted that there has been “a lot” of catch and release of the large catfish by sports anglers, which is “something you did not hear about 20 or 25 years ago”. As sport anglers are targeting the larger catfish, “at the same time they are aware that commercial fishermen are targeting some of those same big fish that are often times sold legally to pay lake operations...The hard to replace big old fish that have been taken out of the public domain and put in a for-profit private operation, and that raises a public policy question on use of the resource”. James also noted that the Department has been reviewing the regulations governing the catfish fishery prior to the comprehensive rule review enhancement project initiated at the end of last year.

The Chair then opened the floor for comment regarding size and bag limits.

Chad Miller, owner of Wildcat Creek Outfitters, commented regarding small mouth bass bag limits. He commended the Department on its actions regarding Sugar Creek, which “has been viewed by those who come to this state to fish with us as very progressive”. Miller said that he has provided guide service for 14 years and grew up on Sugar Creek in Crawfordsville. He commented that the 20-inch size limit and one fish bag limit per day for small mouth bass, which has been in effect for four years, has had an impact on the fishery. Miller said this past summer “we caught a [small mouth bass] 23 inches and well over six pounds, so that is evidence in my mind this has been a success”. Miller

recommended the 20-inch size limit and one fish per day bag limit to continue on Sugar Creek and be extended to the Tippecanoe River. “I would like to see something be done from the 19 miles from the Oakdale dam down the [Wabash River] junction. I would like to see it managed for quality fishing”.

Chuck Brinkman, from Zionsville, Indiana, and resides on the board of Indiana Small Mouth Alliance. “We are after any protection that we can get of [small mouth bass] as well as any protection of the habitat”. He noted that he wades and paddles “a lot” of Indiana streams. Brinkman said that he has noticed impacts to habitat from “big storms”, which introduce sediment levels “beyond anything I’ve seen in 20 years”.

The Chair then opened the floor for comment regarding fishing with shad in bodies of water where shad already exist. He asked Bill James to provide a brief overview of regulations governing fishing with shad.

James explained that the current regulation is that carp and shad, when live, may not be used for bait except at Brookville Reservoir. He said that Brookville Reservoir was developed as an exception “many years ago when it looked like Brookville [Reservoir] was going to be Indiana’s striped bass fishery, true Atlantic striped bass”. He said the striped bass fishery was expanded to Patoka Lake, Raccoon Lake (Cecil M. Harding Lake), and Ohio River. Hybrid striped bass has also been introduced, a man-made hybrid of white bass and striped bass. James noted that Monroe Reservoir is “probably” the “most famous” hybrid striped bass fishery in Indiana.

James said that a Department taskforce, made up of biologists, have reviewed the issue of using live shad. The main concern is how to allow use of live shad for bait without risking introducing shad to waters where shad do not exist. “We unfortunately had gizzard shad show up in a lot of places that they were not distributed by Mother Nature”. He explained that shad is a “great” forage fish that can grow “big” predator fish, if shad is in the right fish community. If shad is in a lake that is basically a bass-bluegill, such as Monroe Reservoir was for 30 years” the shad “get in between the bluegill and the bass,” which decreases the quality of the pan fish. “Bluegill quality fades and then the number of bass decrease; the very opposite of what people that would want to introduce shad had in mind”. He said the Department is “very concerned” about the movement of shad and the introduction of exotic species, such as Asian carp. James noted that at certain lengths shad and silver carp look “pretty much the same” to the untrained eye.

The Chair noted that some of the suggestions requested the use of live shad as bait in the same lake where the shad were harvested.

James said the enforcement of the requested change to allow use of live shad in same lake the shad was harvested would be difficult. “Putting [the shad] on the road is going to be the issue, and that seems to be the potential point of control”.

Rhett Wisener, fisheries biologist at the Cikana State Fish Hatchery, said that gizzard shad carry viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS). He said that last year the Department

drafted a rule amendment to include additional lakes to the list of bodies of water (Cecil M. Harding Lake, Monroe Reservoir, Patoka Lake, Lake Freeman, Lake Shafer, and Hardy Lake) where the use of gizzard shad and thread fin shad as live bait would be allowed on those waters where the shad were harvested; however, the rule would not list all bodies of water where shad currently exist. He said that for some bodies of water with shad “we still have the opportunity to do renovations and other management options” to remove or decrease shad populations. He said the proposed rule draft would disallow possession of shad on those bodies of water other than those listed in the rule. The rule would also require that gizzard and thread fin shad collected on bodies of water not listed in the proposed rule be “killed immediately upon capture” and prior to being used as bait. Another proposed amendment in the rule draft would allow the use of live alewife as bait on Lake Michigan only.

Greg Yazel, Greensburg, Indiana and officer of the Indiana Striped Bass Association “the “ISBA”), noted that he was “designated” as spokesperson for some of those present at today’s meeting. He said that he would support the rule draft as presented by Wisener regarding the use of live shad as bait. He said that the ISBA has “tasked itself” in promoting striped bass and hybrid striped bass fishing in Indiana; we do this by advocating and educating anglers on proper catch and release techniques”. Yazel said the ISBA is “specifically” requesting amendment to the rules to allow “live gizzard shad as bait”, but “we are not asking for the changes for all waters in Indiana”. He said the Brookville Lake exception to use live shad as bait should be extended to other “specific” lakes where shad currently exist and “where renovation to rid the shad from the lake would be impossible and where DNR has stocked hybrid striped bass and striped bass”. Yazel commented that allowing the use of live shad as bait would “add more angling opportunities”. Yazel provided the Advisory Council with a 500-signature petition supporting a rule amendment to allow the use of live shad as bait in other certain bodies of water in Indiana as allowed on Brookville Reservoir.

Bill Freeman said, “I find it fascinating that a conservation group like [ISBA] would advocate at all using an invasive species to catch one of your sports fish”.

Yazel said that shad has been labeled as an invasive species. “I assume...that there was no gizzard shad in the State of Indiana at some point in time. But, as I see it, in every major reservoir and lake in Indiana, and for as long as I can remember and been fishing, there has been gizzard shad in those lakes”. He said that shad exist in Monroe Reservoir, and “you will not renovate Monroe Reservoir and get rid of all the gizzard shad; that’s never going to happen...[Shad] are there, so why not utilize the resource that is already there”. Yazel noted that shad are “fragile” and “very hard” to keep alive. He also noted that killing captured shad would “help control the shad population to a certain extent, but I don’t see that as being a factor at reducing populations”.

Craig Nobbe, Brookville, Indiana, said that the “window of opportunity” to catch a striped bass “usually consists of about the first hour in the morning”. He said he has three 30-gallon shad tanks for bait. “You actually have to have a special tank to keep the shad alive”. He noted that “you can’t really catch the shad before you go fishing the same

day”. He explained that when the sun rises, the shad will “move up shallow and spend a lot of time on the surface”. He said the shad can be caught with a cast net, placed in a shad tank, kept overnight, and taken back to the lake the next morning, for that “one hour of opportunity in the morning” to catch striped bass. Nobbe stated that he was “perfectly okay” with a rule amendment that would require the use of live shad as bait in the same body of water the shad was harvested. “If I have to not catch the bait until that morning, I’m not going to very successful unless I can catch the bait in the lake the day before and have some kind of holding pen within the lake where I actually collect the bait the next day. I don’t know what the answer is, but waiting for that morning to catch bait is not really going to work for me”.

Greg Yazel suggested an increase in the casting net size from a 5-foot radius to 10-foot radius or 20-foot diameter cast net. “If we are bound to catching out bait in the open waters the same day and the same lake, up to 30 to 40 feet deep, our current 5-foot radius net will not be effective at all catching bait”.

Winston Bush said that there “seemed to be some misunderstanding” regarding catfish anglers, pay lakes, and commercial operations “being at war; for the most part, that is not true”. He suggested that a size limit be established for catfish, such as “no fish over ten pounds can be kept in or purchased by a pay lake; that would go some way to prevent commercial fishermen targeting huge flatheads and blues, and then selling them for handsome profits to pay lakes”. He said that he has “witnessed first hand commercial fishermen coming in with boats full of live fish and putting them straight into a fish truck; that fish truck is not bound for market; it’s bound for the pay lake”. Bush noted that he was “not against” pay lakes, and believed pay lakes provide a “valid” service to children, to the infirm, and disabled anglers, but “it’s not necessary for [those] lakes to have 40, 50, 60-pound fish swimming in them”. He also noted that the fish are coming from public waters; “they are not farm-raised fish”. Bush said the larger fish in the pay lakes “usually die while in captivity”. He said the issues regarding pay lakes “need to be sorted out”.

Bush said, “We’ve got to manage this valuable resource”. He said that the catfish fishery in Tennessee’s Cumberland River is “resurging” since Tennessee introduced size limits for anglers and commercial operations. “There is no reason why certain parts of Indiana couldn’t benefit from that sort of thing, too”.

Bush agreed with the recommendation of increasing the cast net size, and said the size limit “currently is woefully inadequate if you are struggling to catch bait. I would strongly second [Yazel’s] suggestion.” He concluded, “I just wanted to let you know that from somebody on the frontline of cat fishing, that the pay lakes are the sole problem, in my view, of why commercial [operations] are tempted to harvest those big catfish, because there it lot of money to be made”.

Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m., EDT.