



Wisconsin Association of Lakes

A nonprofit group of citizens, organizations, and businesses working for clean, safe, healthy lakes for everyone.

4513 Vernon Boulevard, Suite 101 · Madison, WI 53705-4964
608-661-4313 · 800-542-5253 (in WI) · 608-661-4314 fax
wal@wisconsinlakes.org · www.wisconsinlakes.org

Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board
PO Box 7921
Madison WI 53707-7921

January 15, 2008

RE: Proposed Fishing Tournament Rules (NR 20.40)

Dear committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Department's proposed fishing tournament rules (NR 20.40). We appreciate the time Department staff and other Fishing Tournament Advisory Committee members have devoted to developing a reasonable rule that balances diverse interests and resource needs.

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes is pleased with the revisions that have been incorporated into this draft, especially those regarding aquatic invasive species and the requirement that local governments are notified of permitted tournaments. While we support this rule, we offer additional suggestions for improvement as follows.

- A) The Department should include a mechanism for adjusting the terms of the permit should environmental conditions change on the day of the tournament. This could be accomplished by adding a subpoint in section (10)(g)(8) as follows:

The Department may include potential environmental conditions and associated remedies that mitigate those conditions within fishing tournament permits. Should the environmental conditions itemized within the tournament permit occur on the day of the tournament, the tournament operator shall follow the remedy outlined in the permit.

- B) Tournament organizers and participants should be aware of any local boating or other recreational water use ordinances that apply on waters used by the tournament. We recommend including an additional subpoint after 5 (e) as follows:

Upon permit approval, tournament organizers shall obtain any local boating or other recreational water use ordinances from local units of government and inform tournament participants of the requirements of these ordinances.

- C) The provisions for limiting the size and number of tournaments by size of the water body are a good approach to help minimize shoreline and other impacts that can be caused by increased boat traffic and greater numbers of people using the lake. To better protect smaller lakes, we propose adding an additional lake acreage category to section 7 (a) as follows:

For lakes greater than 100 and less than 249 acres, limit the maximum daily number of boats to 20, limit the number of boat days to 20, limit the number of ice fishing participants to 100, and limit the number of concurrent tournaments to 1.

- D) In the current rule, no open tournaments are permitted on lakes of less than 100 acres unless one of two exceptions is met. Regional fishery biologists determine if a permit request meets these exceptions and a tournament permit can be issued on a lake smaller than 100 acre. The caps for number of boats, participants, and concurrent tournaments for lakes less than 100 acres are zero in section 7(a). If a fishery biologist determines a proposed tournament meets the exceptions and grants a permit, the limits in the Section 7 (a) table do not apply, and it is up to the fishery biologist to determine the maximum number of boats, participants, and concurrent tournaments. The fisheries biologist would also have discretion to determine what the best management practices for the lake are and how the tournament could conform to those practices. We suggest the following additional requirements in Section 7 (b) for lakes less than 100 acres where it is determined that a tournament permit may be granted:

Limit the maximum daily number of boats to 10, limit the number of boat days to 10, limit the number of ice fishing participants to 50, and limit the number of concurrent tournaments to one.

If a lake management plan exists for the lake, the Department shall use the lake management plan and available data for the lake to establish best management practices for that lake.

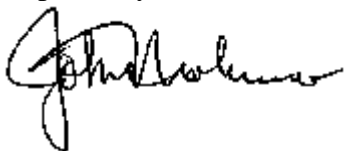
If a lake management plan does not exist, the Department shall use available data for the lake to establish best management practices for that lake.

- E) We appreciate the Department's attention to aquatic invasive species in Section 11 of this rule. Requiring tournament participants to comply with all aquatic invasive species statutes and administrative rules and requiring tournament organizers to inform participants of decontamination procedures are positive additions. We request tournaments also provide a mechanism for participants to clean their boats at the tournament as follows:

Fishing tournament organizers shall provide tournament participants with a method to decontaminate boats and equipment of aquatic plants and invasive species such that tournament participants can comply with s. 30.715, Stats., and all department rules pertaining to control of aquatic invasive species.

- F) While it is ambitious to have this rule take effect on the first day of the month following publication of the rule, we believe the Department may need time to set up its permitting process and guidelines. Given that permit applications may be accepted beginning April 1st each year, and it is likely these rules will be approved in the spring of 2008, we recommend April 1, 2009 as the effective date for these rules.

Respectfully submitted,



John Molinaro, Wisconsin Association of Lakes President