



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

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July 30, 2009

TO: Dave Borgeson Sr., Resource Stewards
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 Bryan Burroughs, Trout Unlimited
 Rusty Gates, Anglers of the Au Sable
 Terry Lyons, Anglers of the Au Sable
 Andy Pelt, Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fisherman's Association
 Ray Schmidt, Michigan River Guides Association
 Jim Schram, Federation of Fly Fishers
 Thomas Buhr, AuSable Big Water Preservation Association
 Amy Spray, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
 Linn Duling, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
 Dean Molnar, Law Enforcement Division
 James Dexter, Fisheries Division, Plainwell
 Management Unit Supervisors, Fisheries Division
 Christian LeSage, Fisheries Division, Lansing
 Todd Grischke, Fisheries Division, Lansing

FROM: Kelley D. Smith, Chief, Fisheries Division

SUBJECT: Inland Trout Proposal

As follow-up to our discussions during the July 20 Coldwater Regulations Steering Committee, I wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate the decisions made at the meeting, outline a process for future discussions and decisions, and set up a meeting schedule for the Committee. I appreciate the open discussion that took place and believe it was productive in resolving outstanding issues on the inland trout proposal. It also highlighted the importance of continued dialogue between member organizations and Fisheries Division.

I believe I speak for all members of the committee by stating that our collective goal is, ultimately, to develop easily understood and publicly acceptable trout regulations that provide diverse fishing opportunities while adequately protecting our State's trout populations. Toward that goal, Fisheries Division will be moving forward with the task of combining the Types 5, 6, and 7 categories into one new category, which will be called "Gear Restricted Streams" and will not carry a number designation. This will leave four numbered stream categories (Types 1, 2, 3, and 4) that will remain unchanged from their current status. The proposal to fold category Types 5-7 into one new category will be submitted at the September 10 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission For

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
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Information Only and again at their October 8th meeting For Action. Modifications to category Types 1-4 will be delayed indefinitely until further review and discussion takes place with the Committee, staff internal to the Division, and the general public. It is important to note that the new Gear Restricted Streams category will not include the Mio-McKinley reach. The Division is completing a research project on Mio-McKinley, and so it will remain in research status until future notice.

Committee members also agreed to convene meetings on a regular basis, and several items were identified for future consideration. Our next meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. on September 9, 2009, in Fisheries Division's Conference Room, 8th floor, Mason Building, 530 W. Allegan Street, Lansing. At this meeting we will focus discussion on appropriate size limits for brook and brown trout on Type 1 streams. Since more than 88 percent of the total mileage of trout streams in Michigan falls into this category, it is important that members carefully consider the biological and social rationale for each possible decision and the effects of each potential decision on both the resource and our anglers. Staff in Fisheries Division will be prepared to discuss background data associated with our original recommendations for streams in the Type 1 category. We will also be prepared to spend a significant amount of time reviewing the June 12 letter signed by several committee members and the Division's response to that letter. Other issues, such as the size limit for splake and a possible change to the size limit for rainbow trout, can also be discussed at this meeting if time permits.

The proposed elimination of the current Type 2 stream category seemed to cause the greatest amount of concern among the Committee's members. Recognizing this, I recommend that the agenda for our early November Committee meeting be dedicated to this topic. It is likely that information from the ongoing research in the Mio-McKinley stretch of the Au Sable River will be available by that time and, therefore, further discussion of appropriate regulations for this stretch of river might be added to November's meeting agenda.

Your input on improving communications between Fisheries Division and members of the Committee is always welcomed and appreciated. Feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.