

Program: Jennifer Bergman DNR Fishery Biologist

Jennifer described her role and duties in maintaining a productive and healthy fishery in Adams and surrounding counties. She and four other fishery specialists form a team that is responsible for managing the fishery within the state. Each of them has a specific speciality (trout, northern pike, musky, walleye, and sturgeon). Their responsibilities and activities include fish surveys, population studies, and stocking programs - all of which generates data on habitat, fish populations, and health of the body of water. The data goes into a central DNR data base and which is used to assist them in making the decisions needed to maintain the fishery. Many of the activities and studies involve valuable contributions from private groups such as Trout Unlimited, Musky Inc., and private industry such as Alliant Energy who, at great expense, provided much needed assistance to the Sturgeon stocking program in the Wisconsin River from Castle Rock dam north to Merrill, WI where 20,000 fish were stocked.

Re: Stocking Programs The primary use of stocking programs is to maintain numbers of specific species and to replace existing populations of species in lakes and streams damaged by ecological disasters -natural or man made. Adams County uses fish raised by DNR hatcheries. Species stocked are Musky, Northern Pike, Walleye, Trout, and Sturgeon as planned and controlled by the DNR and based on data from fish surveys and stocking history of the body of water. If desired by private groups/lake associations, other species such as panfish, bass, perch may be stocked by private hatcheries, but requires a permit through the DNR (Jennifer) and managed by the DNR and data base and stocking history. The rehabilitation of Goose Lake and the walleye stocking program at Tri-Lakes were examples given.

Re: Management of Fishery Public Input Jen stressed the importance of public input from public groups and special public meetings such as the special DNR Conservation Hearings held each spring. Data, opinions, and observations expressed at these meetings by these groups are instrumental in assisting the DNR to improve existing rules and regulations as well as formulating new regulatory legislation designed to protect and regulate the fishery. Example: a new panfish study indicated that the size of panfish at the time of harvest was declining and now is resulting in new fishing regulations involving bag limits .. daily limit total bag of 25 panfish of mixed species (10 bluegill, 5 perch, 10 crappie) Local lakes involved in the study are Crooked Lake, Parker Lake, and Tri-Lakes. Check DNR website for details and new regulations. New regulations state wide are coming soon.

Re: Management of Fishery Habitat Protection Issues mentioned were cooperative agreements between land owners, business and voluntary groups, DOT - special permits for construction projects, Chapters 30 & 31, permits for high capacity wells and their effects on water levels in surrounding wells, lakes, and streams. Also mentioned Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act, Outreach Education, Fishery Land Acquisition -protection of trout habitat, easement program and Knowles/Nelson Stewardship Program, land management -beaver dams, vegetation management (garlic mustard) and other invasive species.

Re: Fish Surveys WI has some 160 species of fish. Populations are studied by standard netting, electro-shocking and trapping techniques. Surveys are used to determine the population of specific species as well as mortality, size, and age - all can also be used to determine the relative health of the fishery. Surveys are performed in the early spring at a relative cost of \$300 each and according to a pre-determined schedule. The number of lakes surveyed has been reduced due to budget cuts. Private surveys can be obtained. Data from these surveys is sent to the central DNR data base, analyzed over the fall and winter, and released in the spring as a full report. Special issues studied in local lakes -carp in Easton and Mason Lake, Sturgeon study in Petenwell and Castle Rock, Walleye stocking in Castle Rock and Tri-Lakes.