

Resolution Opposing a Boat Transfer System around the Rapid Croche Locks

Whereas, due to aquatic invasive species contained in the ballast water of foreign ships coming into the Great Lakes, literally hundreds of nuisance aquatic species damaging to fisheries and lakes and stream have become established in Lake Michigan including zebra mussels, lamprey eel, quagga mussels, the spiny water flea and the round goby.

Whereas, Lake Michigan is connected through the Fox River to the Fox-Wolf River System including Lake Winnebago, this system containing 166,000 acres of water, twenty-two percent of the freshwater lakes and streams in the state;

Whereas, within the Fox River is the Fox River Navigational System, a series of seventeen locks and dams extending from Lake Winnebago to Green Bay, this system was transferred by the United States Corps of Engineers to the state of Wisconsin in the 1990s.

Whereas, during this transfer, one of the seventeen locks on the system, the Rapide Croche Lock was permanently sealed for the express purpose of preventing the sea lamprey and other aquatic invasive species from moving from Lake Michigan into the Fox-Wolf River System.

Whereas, it is proposed by a local group, the Fox River Navigation System, to construct a boat transfer system around the Rapid Croche Lock allowing recreational craft to move from Green Bay to Lake Winnebago and back, with an anticipated six hundred and fifty round trips annually.

Whereas, to facilitate this navigation, it is proposed that this transfer system utilize a human-operated, heated wash system to kill any aquatic invasive species contained in or on the watercraft being transferred.

Whereas, sportsmen and women are greatly concerned that the proposed system is subject to technical and human failure, thereby allowing new aquatic invasive species into the Fox-Wolf River System upstream of the Rapid Croche Lock.

Whereas, the Fox-Wolf River System has an outstanding sports fishery including one of the best walleye fisheries in the mid-west and the largest self-sustaining lake sturgeon population in the world.

Whereas, according to the Winnebago County UW-Extension, a 2006 survey of the economic impact of angling on the Winnebago pool lakes found that fishing in the Fox-Wolf River System brought into the region, a total positive economic impact of \$234 million and 4, 300 jobs.

Whereas, if the proposed boat transfer system fails with the result of Lake Michigan based aquatic invasive species becoming established above the Rapid Croche Lock, it will cause substantial damage to the valuable Fox-Wolf River System fishery and the great economic value that it brings to the region.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, at its Annual Meeting on April 10 and 11, 2015 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, hereby reaffirms its strong opposition to the building of the boat transfer system at the Rapid Croche Lock and calls on the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources to disapprove the construction of the boat transfer system.

Submitted by the WWF Fisheries Committee, Gordy Merz, Chair