



STAFF REPORT

Title: Lake Trout Working Group - Fishing Regulations Consultation

Meeting Date: January 11, 2023

Executive Summary:

The Cold Lake Lake Trout Working Group completed its final meeting on December 12, 2022. The group arrived at three (3) proposals for Lake Trout Fishing regulations. These proposals will be considered during an online survey open to the public. Alberta Environment and Protected Areas will also be asking for the public's input on whether a bait ban should be considered on Cold Lake.

A fact sheet describing the three proposed options, the rationale for considering a bait ban, and the process and timeline that proposed changes will follow, is attached for the Committee's consideration.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas staff also encouraged participants to share the public engagement options in an effort to have as many people participate as possible.

Background:

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas established the Cold Lake Lake Trout Working group in September 2022 and tasked it with arriving at several potential changes to the Alberta Fishing Regulations governing limits for harvesting Lake Trout from Cold Lake.

The three options will be presented in a public survey for feedback beginning on January 19 and lasting until February 9 at noon. The survey is expected to be available at the following link:

<https://www.alberta.ca/2023-24-sportfishing-regulations-engagement.aspx>

For members of the public who would like to hear about the data presented, and gain more information about the Cold Lake Lake Trout population, as well as other fisheries management issues in Alberta's Northeast, a webinar is being held on January 24 at 7:00 pm. People can register at the following link:

https://goa.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Y7G-eHX_SjCm2RQAsY3mDA



Finally, for those who are unable to attend the webinar, but are interested in the presentation, a video will be made available on the Alberta Environment and Protected Areas YouTube Channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ESRDAlberta/videos>

Represented at the working group were: Beaver River Fish & Game (representing the Alberta Fish and Game Association); City of Cold Lake; Cold Lake Chamber of Commerce; Cold Lake Fish and Game Club; Municipal District of Bonnyville; Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment; Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation; local angling guides (representing the guiding community); local angling expert with strong connections to the provincial community; local angling community members.

The group was presented with historical data available for the lake and used population models provided by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas staff to arrive at three options for proposed changes to the fishing regulations for lake trout in Cold Lake.

AEP notes that Cold Lake is a unique aquatic ecosystem that is an important contributor to the local economy. After the lake trout population collapsed in the 1940s, the goal for the fishery was to achieve a recovery of the Lake Trout Population. The latest available data now shows that population levels have recovered, and are sufficient to explore opportunity for increased recreational harvest.

AEP staff noted that this is a new and relatively unusual method of stakeholder engagement which was decided upon after significant input from anglers and local politicians expressed dissatisfaction with the current regulations for lake trout on Cold Lake.

AEP will gather feedback from the indigenous communities through a separate process.

It should be noted that because the fishing regulations on Cold Lake are harmonized between the Alberta and Saskatchewan Governments, the results of Alberta's public consultations will be presented to the Saskatchewan Government, which will then undergo its process of studying and consulting on fishing regulations.

This process means that the earliest a change to the regulations would be seen is in the Spring of 2024.

Alternatives:

- The Committee may recommend that council consider government relations efforts regarding potential changes to the fishing regulations outside of the formal stakeholder engagement process.



- The Committee may accept this report as information.
- The Committee may recommend that administration assist with the online advertising of the stakeholder engagement options via the City's social media channels.

Recommended Action:

Administration recommends that the Corporate Priorities Committee accept the report as information, and recommend that Administration assist with the online advertising of the stakeholder engagement options via the City's social media channels.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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