BAY MILLS — The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) Great Lakes Regional Conference was held Sept. 9-12 at the Bay Mills Horizons Conference Center. Bob Jackson, USFWS biologist, served as emcee for the 15th annual event, held on the Bay Mills reservation.

A handgun qualification held Sept. 10 also served as the competition shoot to determine the national shoot team that will compete this year in Alaska. The qualifications were followed by a fun shoot for amateurs and an archery competition.

After opening ceremonies the morning of Sept. 11, 26 golfers participated in a tournament at Wild Bluff Golf Course, raising $550 for the NAFWS scholarship fund. That evening, Bay Mills senior citizens hosted a traditional feast at the Bay Mills Armella B. Parker Elder Center. Sept. 12 saw a plethora of technical sessions, an illegal dumping course, and an awards banquet and silent auction.

COR Executive Director Faith McGruther thanked Bay Mills staff and community members who helped organize the conference. Fishery Biologist Ken Gebhardt (technical sessions and archery competition), Police Department (BMPD) Lt. Terry Carrick (competition shoot and fun shoot), BMPD Capt. Ben Carrick (golf outing) and all their staff, the Bay Mills executive council, and the Bay Mills elders for a wonderful dinner in their beautiful new facility.

Opening Ceremonies

After the parade of colors with an honor song from the Bay Mills Drum and invocation by CORA Resource Developer Bucko Teeple, Society Regional Co-Directors Faith McGruther (Sault Tribe) and Don Reiter (Menominee Indian Tribe) welcomed all the familiar faces to the beautiful country of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Representing the host tribe, Bay Mills Indian Community, Tribal Chairman Jeff Parker said it was a privilege and an honor to host the conference. He said that the tribes are charged with a great mandate to manage and protect the natural resources on our reservations and surrounding areas.

“When most think of treaty rights, they think of harvesting the resource … but it is also the ability to manage the resource ourselves and determine how it is harvested at the tribal level,” he said.

Emcee Bob Jackson called the NAFWS Great Lakes Region the “most progressive with the most active tribes,” which he attributed, in part, to the Great Lakes’ tribes ability to work with other federal agencies in a win-win situation.

William Hartwig, USFWS regional director, asked for a moment of silence for Lawrence Bedee.

Hartwig introduced USFWS Native American liaisons Pat Durham from the national office, and John Leonard from the regional office. He told the gathering that Fish and Wildlife is happy to fund tribes but it must be allocated in its budget. Today, every dollar is tagged, he said.

Hartwig discussed a proposed rule for international transportation of eagle items, which is still under analysis by the new administration. In the meantime, there is still an unofficial moratorium at U.S. Customs. Hartwig noted that the new Bush administration is a big change and a big challenge — a new Secretary of the Interior, Assistant Secretary over Indian Affairs, and the Fish and Wildlife Secretary yet to be appointed.

“We have to educate the new administration,” he said.

Hartwig announced that Neil Smith from the Wildlife Society has too many bison, inviting the tribes to take some off Smith’s hands in order to start their own herds.

Hartwig then turned to management. The USFWS ecosystem approach to management is partnership based. In fact, they are calling it partnership management now, because the term “ecosystem” is not clear to newcomers. The Service started the practice internally between programs, then turned to states and tribes. He recommended that tribes not involved could contact John Leonard for a team in its area. In about every case, he said, the USFWS will work with a tribe on natural resource damage assessment. He said that in one case, a state wasn’t meeting with a tribe. USFWS refused to meet with that state until it agreed to include the tribe.

“If we don’t include you, shame on us, call,” he said.

Hartwig led a presentation to McGruther of a framed print of “Bring Back The Bison” by Jim Brandenburg.

Next up was Hiawatha Forest Supervisor Clyde Thompson, USDA Forest Service. “I always appreciate an opportunity to come back to this place,” Thompson said, adding that there are lots of partnerships in this area creating a baseline for the forest service — camping, fisheries projects, a wetland waterfowl program, and management of the Iroquois Lighthouse. The government-to-government relationship is only a beginning, added Thompson.

“There is a warmer relationship here based on common interest and respect.”

The forest supervisor talked about dealing with increased conflict due to dwindling resources and clashes in values. Upcoming challenges will be based on the increase in demand for fish and wildlife, which leads to an increase in threats to habitat. The United States is the biggest consumer in the world, now more than ever before. He pointed out that since the first Earth Day in 1970, family size has decreased 16 percent, yet housing size has increased 40 percent.

Consumption leads to increased conflicts in values, he said. People are looking at our water, for example. There is more oil and gas consumption, so a proposal for drilling under the Great Lakes is not surprising, he said, and we will see more outlandish proposals.

One would think all would agree fishery habitat projects are valuable but not everyone shares those values. Others think snowmobiles or ORVs are unnatural and shouldn’t be allowed in the forests. Conflict arises and will lead to more litigation, he predicted.

Sault Ste. Marie — The CORA Great Lakes Resource Committee met September 27 at the Big Abe Building in Sault Ste. Marie. Gerald Chingwa chaired the meeting. Present were Fred Paquin and Vic Tape of Sault Tribal Police and Tim Kinney for Bay Mills. For Grand Traverse, Natural Resources Director Christine Mitchell sat in for an absent Robert Rastetter. The meeting was held in Kinney's house. A motion to adjourn was absent. Mike Snieider represented John Koon for Little River. Bob Guendhardt and George Anthony were also absent.

COMMITTEE OFFICERS
Matson reported for Sault Tribe. He said a fisher wanted to fish in LTBB waters, went through the agreed tribe-to-tribe procedure, and was denied. The rest was in-house.

The LTBB commission reviewed the permit request from Sault Tribe fisher and approved it with stipulations, said Biologist Randy Claramunt, chairman for Little Traverse. Stipulations are: marking requirements, up to four nets, subject to Little Traverse biological sampling; and any other applicable conditions.

Paquin said there's no problem with the stipulations, but fishers know that if they don't follow them the permits will be pulled.

Claramunt reported that the Green Bay damage assessment effort Little Traverse is involved in is discussing allocation of monies now that paper mills will potentially face huge fines. He said there are no small gill net operations is successful, and they should have up to 10 supported by the end of the year.

Little Traverse attorney is communicating with the DEQ on permits in the Little Traverse zone.

There were 12 African American and 14 Native American participants.

Teeple reported success on the youth camp. Gorenflo then reported the trap net zone 3 permits for dredging up to 35 yards but has no enforcement.

Paquin said the tribes have met the gill net reduction requirements, and the council has reviewed the gill net reduction. He added that the tribes have signed off for the GOREF plan and that the state has permitted the gill net reduction.

Paquin motioned to use $3,000 of the funding for McKay Bay. He needs a backhoe.

Teeple reported securing a fourth mooring for McKay Bay. Gorenflo then reported the trap net zone 3 permits for dredging up to 35 yards but has no enforcement.

Teeple needs a CORA resolution for his DNR application. Law enforcement should be informed.

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“Most of what you get (in
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The scientists say air pollution
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DEVELOPING GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS

Great Lakes outgassing toxic chemicals
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NAFWS Great Lakes region 2001 awards

Bill Schofield: 281.83 (shoot team)

Carrick, Mike Staples, Kurt Alaska at the national shoot.

The shoot team will compete in average scores out of six rounds.

The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation spent six hours at it.

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Thompson also talked about partnerships - common interests, pooling energy, lobbying for others and involving tribes in forest planning were some examples.

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Don Wikke, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, made a presentation on his organization. The Foundation’s focus is to encourage public and private collaboration. Foundation priorities are tall and mixed grass prairie, aquatic conservation, Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Native American lands, large conservation areas near urban centers, and wildlife in agricultural settings, Wikke said.

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Patricia Zacovec Conservation Officer of the Year Award

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