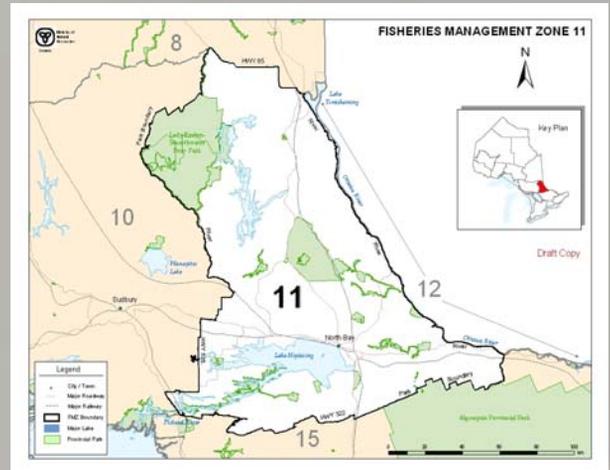


## **Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 11 Public Advisory Council** **Information update - Spring 2013**

As part of the MNR process to enhance public involvement in fisheries planning in Ontario, Advisory Councils have been established for the Fisheries Management Zones (FMZ's) across the province. FMZ 11 shares its border with Algonquin Park and the Pickerel R to the south, to the west it is bounded by Hwy 69 (FMZ 10), to the north by FMZ 8 at Lady Evelyn Smoothwater Park and to the east by Lake Temiskaming and the Ottawa R. (FMZ 12).



The FMZ 11 Advisory Council has 14 representatives from various communities of interest within the zone including anglers organizations, cottagers associations, lake stewardship councils, tourism operators, municipalities, naturalists, youth, and an independent science advisor.

A primary goal of the council is to advise MNR of the desired objectives for the future state of the fishery in the zone and to develop alternatives (options) that will meet those objectives. After the Advisory Council finalizes its recommendations to meet the objectives, MNR and the council will move forward with public presentations of those options and broader consultation before preparing the final 2014-2034 plan for ongoing fishery management for the zone.

The Specially Designated Waters (SDW's) in the zone, Lakes Nipissing and Temagami, will be subject to individual advisory processes. To date the FMZ 11 Advisory Council has been provided with biological, population survey and historical information about most of the important native gamefish in the zone including Lake Trout, Walleye, Bass, Northern Pike, Muskellunge, Brook Trout, Aurora Trout and Yellow Perch.

Some of the earliest work of council dealt with lake trout where recent fish population surveys and analysis showed that only 28 percent of lake trout lakes within the zone had healthy populations and among those healthy lakes only 1 in 8 were being fished at or below the sustainable level of effort. The FMZ 11 Advisory Council concluded that having only 28 percent of lake trout lakes healthy is unacceptably low and agreed on future targets of 32 percent of lakes healthy in ten years and 40 percent of lakes healthy in twenty years. Council has proposed lake trout management options that would meet these targets.

In the examination of walleye, Council learned from population surveys and analysis that the current state of the walleye populations in Zone 11 is better than that of lake trout across the region, although walleye in the SDW of Lake Nipissing are at a critical stage and changes to catch limits there may impact fishing pressure elsewhere in the Zone.

Smallmouth Bass populations are healthy and while they are a native species in the southern parts of the zone, they are an introduced species in some of the waters that they inhabit. These introductions include purposeful planting of bass in some cases by Lands and Forests (now MNR) in the 1950's , in addition to actions of well meaning citizens, earlier in the 20th century. Research has demonstrated that climate change advantages bass reproduction through earlier spring warmup and longer summer growing conditions. While bass are a valued species that provides additional angling opportunities, they also provide serious competition for lake trout in coldwater lakes that host both species.

Brook Trout within the zone are found in lakes with natural populations as well as in stocked lakes considered by MNR as "put-grow-take" lakes. Most Brook trout angling in FMZ 11 is done in stocked which makes these waters much more valuable than in fisheries management zones that have a wealth of natural brook trout lakes . The number of lakes with natural populations has been decreasing with time, largely due to the human introduction of yellow perch which are capable of overrunning the native fish populations through their prolific reproduction rates and subsequent competition for food as well as predation on young brook trout. Council recommendations are aimed at ensuring no further loss of natural or stocked brook trout lakes.

A common theme for several of the species points to the problems of introduction of new species into the native fish communities within a waterbody. While some of these introductions are not of exotic species, nonetheless they can pose a threat to the existing populations that may not recover once the new species becomes established. This and several other issues highlight the need for improved information to the public on certain of the threats to the fishery. Such matters are the subject of some of the recommendations being made by the FMZ 11 advisory council.

Detailed information about the status of gamefish species will be provided through factsheets that will be developed by the council and MNR and will be available at public information sessions. These sessions will outline the Council's recommendations for management options and seek public input, as the final stage of the consultation process prior to preparation of the final management plan for the zone.

For further information on the progress of council and the schedule of public consultation on FMZ 11 related planning please contact Chuck McCrudden, Lead FMZ 11 Biologist at 705-475-5522 or Jim Vance, Co-chair of the FMZ 11 Advisory Council at 613-220-5080.