

# Modifying Citizen Oversight Committees and Required Report



## Related Facts

Citizen oversight of the Game and Fish Fund was established in statute in 1994.

About 25 appointed members participate in oversight committees every year.

Annual reports of the oversight committees and the DNR since 2002 are available on the DNR website at [mndnr.gov/gamefishoversight](http://mndnr.gov/gamefishoversight).

## Summary


Citizen oversight of the Game and Fish Fund has been required in statute since 1994. The current citation is Minnesota Statute 97A.055, Subd. 4b. These citizen committees conduct oversight and write an annual report on Minnesota's Game and Fish Fund, the most important fund for delivering fisheries and wildlife management and natural resource law enforcement.

The **Fisheries Oversight Committee (FOC)** reviews fisheries funding and expenditures, including activities related to trout and salmon stamps and walleye stamps.

The **Wildlife Oversight Committee (WOC)** reviews wildlife funding and expenditures, including activities related to migratory waterfowl, pheasant, wild turkey, deer, and big game management.

An umbrella **Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC)** addresses matters of common concern and merges all drafts into a final joint oversight report. The report is delivered to the DNR commissioner and the legislative committees with jurisdiction over natural resources financing and policy, and also posted on the DNR website at [mndnr.gov/gamefishoversight](http://mndnr.gov/gamefishoversight).





The DNR commissioner appoints committee members and the BOC Chair through an open application process. The DNR is committed to appointing a diverse group of license-holding Minnesotans who bring a variety of knowledge and interests about game and fish funded activities (hunting, fishing, etc.).

The statutory requirement has been revised twice previously, in 2001 and 2011. Each revision aimed to streamline and integrate oversight structure and responsibilities. This proposal continues that pattern of continuous improvement for effective public engagement and review of Game and Fish Fund expenditures and outcomes.

## Proposal

This proposal aims to refresh and consolidate the DNR's Fisheries and Wildlife Oversight committees so they can provide meaningful input on improving the alignment between license fee expenditures and fish and wildlife management outcomes.

### Changes in committee structure include:

- Merging the committees into a single “Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee” of at least 15 persons plus a chair, and a vice chair, all appointed by the DNR commissioner.
- Streamlining committee tasks to focus more on aligning budgeting strategies with desired outcomes.

### Changes in committee responsibilities include:

- Producing a committee report every year with an alternating focus.
  - » Reports produced in even-numbered years must focus on developing a biennial budget that supports desired outcomes.
  - » Reports produced in odd-numbered years must focus on improving alignment between funding and expenditures and outcomes related to protecting habitat, fish and wildlife population management, monitoring, and research.
- Holding an annual open meeting, with virtual participation available, for the public to provide comments for the committee to consider when making recommendations in its report.

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