

UMRCC Law Enforcement Technical Session
Spring Meeting Agenda with Minutes

Date: March 17, 2021

Time: 1PM-4PM

Location: Virtual via Zoom

**Zoom Link for the FTS meeting is provided upon registration to the 76th Meeting of the UMRCC

Register here: <https://www.umrcc.org/>

Agenda:

1300 Greetings – Matt Markley

1310 Mussels and Asian trade in the twin cities – Bill Spece

1430 Recruitment

1500 Agency Updates

- Minnesota
- Wisconsin
- Iowa
- Illinois
- Missouri
- Fish and Wildlife Service

1600 Adjourn

Minutes from meeting

Law Enforcement technical session had 50+ registrations and between 30-35 participants.

William Spece, officer from Iowa, gave a presentation on the illegal take of mussels from a lake near Des Moines. He told the group that users had taken at least 2000 freshwater mussels that were being taken to consume. They operated a covert operation that resulted in arrests of individuals for taking mussels, non-residents taking crayfish, as well as other violations. He said that there was some information that mussels were being taken to the twin cities to be sold in the Asian marketplace. He also told the group that mystery snails, as well as some insect larvae were being taken to consume as well. He said that people had come from as far as Alabama to get these wildlife resources. During the operation they located individuals that had hidden mussels in their clothing and vehicles.

Matt Markley, officer from Missouri, gave a presentation on recruitment to the natural resources field. A graph was shared showing the significant reduction in applicants for jobs in Missouri. Missouri Protection Branch went from over 1000 applicants for a class to around 400, of that only 130 were qualified enough to get a job interview. Forestry is the field that is hurting the worst. We discussed strategies to further recruitment and increasing our pool of applicants. Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota did not seem to have the same issues as Illinois or Missouri.

Wisconsin stated that they were seeing increases in usage of natural resources. State Parks increased 42%, while permit sales had increased 15%, Other states are seeing similar increases. They were being tasked with going to the community unrest patrols being held in cities.

Minnesota was also seeing an increase in users. Much of their time is also being spent in Minneapolis with community unrest patrols.

Iowa was having issues with timber theft, with Black Walnut being the most sought. Other states that have harvestable timber are seeing the same issues.

Illinois was having issues with some of the new laws going into effect that were changing the way law enforcement does business. Also, they had some legislation that would tighten up definitions of hoop nets, trammel nets, and gill nets. Trying to keep entanglement nets from being attached to hoop nets and passing them off as wings.

Missouri has purchased 5 dogs to be used in a K-9 program. Five officers are in Indiana being trained with the dogs. Legislative issues are serious issues, with a bill proposed that would not allow officers to enter private property without probable cause or a warrant. This would effectively take away any enforcement activity on private property. A bill has also been proposed that would change Missouri's Conservation Commission from a four-member non-partisan commission with no more than two from one political party, to a commission with nine members that would be elected.

USFWS said that they were going to have numerous retirements in the next several years. They have a class of twenty-four officers that will graduate soon. A new regulation concerning cut-off switches on boats has went into effect. A guiding regulation that passed last year to have fishing or waterfowl guides get a permit and a three-dollar fee per client is to be enforced this year.