

# Dept. Natural Resources: Public has even greater opportunities to weigh in on proposed fish and wildlife rules at this year's Spring Hearings

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MADISON-The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Fish and Wildlife Spring Hearings & Wisconsin Conservation Congress' Annual County Meetings will be held in each county of the state, on Monday, April 8, starting at 7 p.m. People interested in natural resources management will have the opportunity to provide their input and testimony on proposed rule changes and advisory questions relating to conservation and fish and wildlife management in Wisconsin.

This year's Spring Hearings will offer additional opportunity for the public to weigh in. The DNR and WCC will provide an online option for input for those people who aren't able to attend a hearing in person or for those who'd rather provide input at the hearing using their smart phone. For security, and to ensure the integrity of the results, individuals will be required to sign in to use the online version, just as they do in person. People who want to attend in person can find meeting locations [PDF] on the DNR website.

The 2019 Spring Hearing questionnaire [PDF] is available by searching the DNR website, [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov), for keywords "Spring Hearings." An online input form will go live at 7 p.m. on April 8 on that page and remain open until 7 p.m. on April 11.

“This is the first year we have offered an alternate way for citizens to provide feedback on the Spring Hearing questions,” said Larry Bonde, Chair of the WCC. “We know there are citizens who work second shift, have little children at home, are farming, or for other various reasons can’t physically be there, but want to be heard. We are excited to provide a greater opportunity for input to those people who want to be a part of the process but otherwise couldn’t participate.”

People who attend a hearing in person but would rather provide their input using the online option instead of the paper form, can choose to get a random verifiable number (RVN) at the hearing instead of an input form. The RVN can then be entered into the online form when prompted. Providing an RVN will allow your input to be compiled along with the input provided by the in-person attendees in the county in which you attended. People who are unable to attend a hearing can still provide their input using the online tool. Responses gathered this way (without a random verifiable number) will be compiled and considered as part of the overall input (not county specific).

“We have security systems in place to identify any inappropriate use of the online system and we will continuously monitor the system for intentional misuse. The DNR and the WCC will analyze the data received from the input tool and consider any inappropriate attempts to influence the outcome when they interpret it,” said Bonde.

The Spring Hearing input process allows the public the opportunity to comment and register their support or opposition to DNR proposed rule changes as well as Congress proposals that could someday become the rules that regulate fishing, hunting, trapping and other outdoor recreation activities in Wisconsin. This year the DNR will be presenting 49 proposed rule change questions for input.

Citizens may also submit ideas to address conservation needs or concerns they observe through the WCC resolution process. County residents have the option to run for a seat on the Conservation Congress and to vote for the WCC delegates to represent them on the Conservation Congress. However, providing input on resolutions or participating in the WCC election will continue to require in-person participation.

People interested in attending the hearings are encouraged to review the questionnaire online prior to the April 8 hearings and should arrive at the hearing location early to register before the hearings begin at 7 p.m.



For additional information on the Spring Hearings, please visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search key words "Spring Hearings."