

Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 16, 2014
6:30-8:30pm EST
Lake Superior State University-Cisler Center, Sault Ste. Marie, MI

Chair: Dick Pershinske Vice-Chair: Glenn Moll Secretary: Tom Buckingham

Council Members Present

Keith Aldrich	Gary Gorniak	Dick Pershinske
Tom Buckingham	Tim Hass	Chad Radka
Ivan Darling	Jim Hoy	Richard Serfass
Al Garavaglia	Michael Lawless	Jim Shutt
Jason Garvon	Glenn Moll	Mark Spencer

Council Members Excused/Absent

Phil Dennis	Ginny Giddings
Jim Duke	Bernie Hubbard
Gary Ellenwood	

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons

Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Assistant, Marquette
Lt. Skip Hagy, Law Enforcement Division, Newberry
Stacy Haughey, U.P. Regional Coordinator, Marquette
Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division, Ishpeming
Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry
Karen Rodock, Forest Resources Division, Sault Ste. Marie
Steve Scott, Fisheries Division, Newberry
Jon Spieles, Marketing and Outreach Division, Newberry

Call To Order

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC) meeting was called to order at 6:31pm EST by **Chair Pershinske**.

Adoption of Agenda

Chair Pershinske asked if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. Mr. Serfass asked to have Senate Bill 1093 added to the agenda for discussion; Chair Pershinske agreed and added it under New Business. **Mr. Buckingham motioned to adopt the agenda with the addition; Mr. Lawless seconded the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Dennis, Mr. Duke, Mr. Ellenwood, Ms. Giddings and Mr. Hubbard. Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Pershinske asked the Council if there were any corrections to the June 19, 2014 EUPCAC minutes; none were brought forth. **Mr. Lawless motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Serfass seconded the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Dennis, Mr. Duke, Mr. Ellenwood, Ms. Giddings and Mr. Hubbard. Motion carried.**

Chair Comments

Chair Pershinske stated it has been a busy time. There has been discussion regarding the Graymont land transaction proposal. There has also been stakeholder meetings held by Walther Farms regarding property in Mackinac County (no proposal has been made to date). They are looking at 7,000 acres for potato production that may create 40-80 potential jobs. He stated that he and other members of the EUPCAC had a chance to meet with Mr. Minzey and Mr. Dean Beyer from the Wildlife Division to discuss deer. He stated he also spent mentioned the two referendum issues on the November ballot. He indicated there has still been a lot of wolf issues in his township.

Public Comments

Chair Pershinske invited the audience to provide comments at this time; none were brought forth.

Reports

1. **Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator:** **Mrs. Haughey** introduced herself and indicated this is the first meeting of the EUPCAC in Sault Ste. Marie. She provided a brief overview of the CAC as several in the audience indicated this was the first time attending an EUPCAC meeting. She thanked Dr. Jason Garvon for his hospitality and help with the room arrangements at LSSU. She also recognized Mr. Dan Blough from Congressman Benishek's office who is here this evening. She provided an update on the following items:
 - There was another meeting in the area this evening that was planned after the EUPCAC was scheduled, in which the DNR was asked to participate regarding the land transaction process. It is being held at the Library. Land specialist, Ms. Kerry Wieber, will be attending that meeting to explain the entire process. Chief of the Forestry Division, Mr. Bill O'Neill is also attending that meeting.
 - She shared the DNR's press release that was sent out yesterday (October 15) regarding Graymont's revised land transaction. It was sent out via email to EUPCAC members the afternoon of the 15th. Comments are being accepted at DNR-GraymontProposalComments@michigan.gov or via mail at the address given in the press release. She indicated that "votes" or comments for or against are not tallied. All comments are taken as a whole.
 - **Chair Pershinke** reminded the audience to keep Graymont comments brief during public comment. Comments can be directed to Council member, Mr. Garavaglia, who is chair of the EUPCAC subcommittee on the Graymont proposal. He noted the EUPCAC does not have the authority to act on this issue at this time.
 - **Mrs. Haughey** noted that public meetings will be held before decisions are final, which is not normally in the land transaction process, but a special provision has been made to hold the meetings on this particular proposal. Ample notice will be provided when the meetings are scheduled.
 - Mr. Stephen King from the audience commented that he spoke with Senator Casperson and Representative Kivela about changing land transactions in reference to land being sold for a mine or a farm. **Mrs. Haughey** stated the DNR will base their decision (on Graymont and other high profile cases) by considering all different facets and public comment. She stated staff have put in many hours to work extensively on land

proposals. It is a heavy decision that the DNR takes seriously. Mr. King stated he is very happy with the process, except for the designation of excess land. **Chair Pershinske** stated Deputy Moritz has told him many times they will go through this proposal very seriously with no stone unturned. He has received assurances from the DNR that it will be done in the most professional manner possible.

- She reminded the group that the DNR has not received an application from Walther Farms to date. It is normal for companies to talk to the DNR on potential projects. Walther Farms is being proactive in holding their own focus groups, however, this does not mean that anything has been approved. There has been no application submitted or received.
- She noted that bass and other fishing regulations will not be made prior to the printing of the fishing guide. At this time, there is no legislation in effect that delegates the authority to the NRC or the DNR Director to address fishing regulations (due to recent legislation).

2. DNR Division Reports: Written staff reports were provided via email to Council members on October 9, 2014. The following are current updates or comments provided.

- Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division: **Mr. Minzey** welcomed the fishery and wildlife students from Lake Superior State University. He provided the following wildlife updates:
 - The new bear/wolf specialist has been hired and will be transitioning into the Marquette position soon. Mr. Bump, who previously handled this in Lansing, will now be the furbearer and small mammal specialist.
 - The wolf management plan will be updated and revised by April. **Chair Pershinske** asked if the wolf advisory committee will be meeting again to provide input in upgrading the plan; **Mr. Minzey** said it is being reviewed.
 - A Wildlife Division management team meeting was held recently in the U.P. and sportsman coalition attendees were invited to lunch with the team. **Mr. Gorniak** stated he was invited to attend and appreciated meeting with the entire team. Discussion took place on a wide range of issues.
 - The GEMS (Grouse Enhanced Management System) held a successful kickoff event on Drummond Island with approximately 30 people in attendance. Sponsors are still needed for the Strickler GEM. There is no cost to sponsors; they must display a poster and provide a discount of a commodity in their business. If a business would like to participate, have them contact Mr. Minzey.
 - A review of the dog/wolf attacks in the U.P. was provided.
 - Awards for the next round of wildlife habitat grants were recently announced. Last year there were 9 applicants from the U.P. This year, there were only 4 applicants, despite a conference call to provide assistance being held. Students from NMU may be available to help write grants; **Mrs. Haughey** is helping to provide that link. Mr. Clay Buchanan, manager of the grant program, will be in the U.P. next week for a meeting on Tuesday, October 21st at the DNR Office in Escanaba from 3-4pm to answer questions on the applications. Anyone interested can attend. **Mr. Darling** described the grant received by the Hiawatha Sportsman's Club last year and the work involved; he stated besides it being a lot of work, it is well worth the effort. **Mr. Minzey** described the requirement for applicable projects.

- A new Wildlife Habitat Workgroup has been formed under Mr. JR Richardson, Chair of the NRC. A part-time biologist (2-yr limited position) will be hired to focus on winter deer habitat across the U.P., including working with private landowners. **Mr. Gorniak** asked how the National Forest fits in to this process; **Mr. Minzey** replied they will have representation at the meetings.
- Steve Scott, Fisheries Division: **Mr. Scott** noted there has been a positive hit on an environmental DNA (eDNA) for Asian carp on the Kalamazoo River in the lower peninsula. He explained what eDNA is and how the sampling technique works. This doesn't mean Asian carp are established in this river as there are several ways in which eDNA can get in the water. If there are additional questions, he can be reached at the Newberry office.
- Jon Spieles, Marketing & Outreach Division: **Mr. Spieles** stated he did not have any additions to his report.
- Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division: **Mr. Paquin** added the Pine River project is moving along with completion expected on October 29th.
- Karen Rodock, Forest Resources Division: **Ms. Roddock** added that the Forestry Division is hiring an Eastern UP district supervisor, a position that has been vacant a long time and has been covered in the interim by Mr. Stampfly.
- Lt. Skip Hagy, Law Enforcement Division: **Lt. Hagy** stated three new officers are now in the area and will be on their own soon. The next academy will be starting in January with 44 new officers. A number of them have already been offered conditional employment. Of these new recruits, 3 more will be coming to the eastern U.P. He referenced a recent accident on Drummond Island and reminded folks to keep loaded guns out of vehicles. An audience member asked if the new recruits are being paid for with the new funding. **Lt. Hagy** replied that funding is coming through appropriations. **Mrs. Haughey** stated that she has a handout on the license fee impact in the U.P. if anyone would like a copy.

Old Business

1. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Subcommittee Report: **Mr. Buckingham** stated the subcommittee was formed to find out more information about CWD and to come up with ways to increase outreach to the public. He thanked Mr. Minzey and the subcommittee members for attending multiple conference calls. As a result of discussion, the subcommittee created a handout about the disease (a copy was included in the meeting packets) that could be distributed to the public. The subcommittee would like the Council to review it and provide feedback. He stated that he was asked if humans can contract CWD from consuming an infected animal. There currently is no evidence that any humans have contracted it, but the CDC recommends not consuming an infected animal. **Mr. Minzey** explained further. **Mr. Serfass** asked what the process would be if someone shot a deer with CWD; **Mr. Minzey** stated it is suggested that rubber gloves and appropriate cover is worn when handling the deer and to bring it into the DNR. It would be tested and then incinerated. He stated the prion can exist in the environment for years. Once the prion is ingrained in the environment, it will get passed on quickly. He stated 1 of every 3 adult bucks are infected in the epicenter of the disease. The disease has now been found in Marathon County, Wisconsin, which is 75 miles away from the U.P. border. There are several unknowns yet with the disease. A wolf or coyote eating an infected animal, hay purchased and transported from an infected area, transportation from

ravens—these are all possible concerns. The best defense is to keep animals from being harvested elsewhere and bringing it back here. **Chair Pershinske** asked the Council to review the handout and bring back comments at the December meeting. He thanked the subcommittee for their work.

2. *Upcoming Sportsman's Coalition Meetings:* **Mr. Minzey** noted on November 5 there will be Sportsman's Coalition meetings held in Sault Ste. Marie and in Shingleton. These meetings are an alternative to the former U.P. Deer Advisory Team (UPDAT) meetings. The Coalition meetings offer an opportunity to receive more input and to decrease driving distances for those attending.
3. *Wolf Management Update:* **Mr. Minzey** stated there will be two proposals on the November ballot which challenges the laws that made the wolf a game species in Michigan. A yes vote on Proposal 14-1 would uphold the legislature's decision to add wolves to the list of game species in Michigan. A no vote would repeal this legislation and remove wolves from the list of game species. A yes vote on Proposal 14-2 would uphold the legislature's decision to share the authority with the NRC to declare game species and establish the first open season for a game species. A no vote would repeal this legislation and return sole authority to declare game species to the state legislature. The results of the two proposals on the ballot will only be effective until spring of 2015. At that point, citizen-initiated legislation passed in August 2014 will go into effect, restoring the NRC's authority to declare game species in Michigan. He reminded the group the DNR cannot take a position on either proposal.
 - **Mr. Hass** asked if there would be anything sent out to people who are filling out their absentee ballots explaining the above. **Mrs. Haughey** stated the DNR will not be sending anything out.
 - It was mentioned the US Fish and Wildlife Service, under the delisting, monitors how things are going. They have concluded they have no reason to relist the wolf in Michigan, Minnesota, or Wisconsin.

New Business

1. *Trapping on CFA Lands Update:* **Ms. Karen Rodock**, forester from the Sault office, updated the Council on a letter sent to commercial forest (CF) landowners explaining that trapping is allowed on commercial forest lands (a copy was provided in the meeting packets). She stated a legal review was done by the Attorney General's office resulting in a determination that trapping is an allowable activity on CF lands without the landowner's permission. Traps can be left on CF lands overnight as well.
2. *Graymont Subcommittee Report:* **Mr. Garavaglia** stated that Chair Pershinske requested a subcommittee be formed to review the Graymont land transaction proposal on behalf of the Council and to review the pros and cons of the proposal. He stated the subcommittee met and since that meeting several things have changed. A new, separate land transaction proposal was submitted. He met with Graymont representative, Mr. PJ Stoll, to get a better understanding of the proposal. The subcommittee realizes the vastness of the amount of land to be sold, which involves two land exchanges. He explained the acreage involved and what it

will be used for. The roads, hydrology, and other issues were reviewed. He stated the DNR is dealing with the land transaction only, but there isn't another government entity involved. It impacts communities on both sides. **Mr. Hass** added the subcommittee made an effort to put down in one place a list of all the various complaints and concerns, and they did pay attention to what those were. It was a very tedious process. The second subcommittee meeting will be on November 5th in which they will review the newest proposal. He assured everyone they are looking at everything. **Mrs. Haughey** thanked the subcommittee for taking on the task for the Council. She noted that in response to taking responsibility, the DNR statutorily does not have the authority over anything in this project other than the land transaction. She also informed the group that all the information on the proposal is online at www.michigan.gov/graymont including the second new proposal, press release, etc. **Mr. Hass** asked who from the State of Michigan will evaluate all of the citizen's concerns; **Mrs. Haughey** stated comments can be submitted on the website and will be reviewed in the process, as it pertains to the land transaction only. Of the authorities questioned, some of those are with the local units of government. Only the legislature can make the changes to the process (for the assurance of funding to fix roads, etc.). **Chair Pershinske** indicated that as the subcommittee goes through the process, they may wish to use other resources such as Ms. Kerry Wieber of the DNR who is heavily involved with the transaction process. He encouraged the Council to contact Mr. Garavaglia for any questions.

- An audience member stated this issue could end if the DNR would just decide not to go through with it. There are too many areas uncharted and too many unanswered questions.
- An audience member noted there will be a Hiawatha National Forest Friends Meeting tomorrow in which they will be discussing this project from their perspective and providing a tour of the site.

3. Deer Management Meeting with EUPCAC Update: **Mr. Minzey** stated he offered to sit down with Council members who were interested to talk about deer and deer management. He indicated discussion centered on the predator prey study, the impacts of winter, and a host of other related topics. He was pleased with the turnout. He reviewed the fawn predation that was discussed. Several died due to winter conditions as well as due to predators; however, the impact of winter was substantial on the predator species as well. Animals were found to be grossly underweight, including deer, wolves, and coyotes. He indicated that it was a very good discussion with a good group of people. **Chair Pershinske** stated he and Mr. Beyer did a remarkable job and felt it was a very beneficial discussion. **Mr. Gorniak** pointed out the University of Mississippi study was very interesting. **Mr. Minzey** stated they do a good job of producing reports and sharing them; those interested can sign up on the university's website to receive the reports.
4. Bear Harvest Report & Deer Herd Forecast: **Mr. Minzey** stated the bear harvest in the eastern U.P. is down about 10% from last year with 265 registered so far. This decrease was anticipated with a reduced number of tag applications last year. The deer forecast was discussed at the meeting mentioned above.

5. ORV Frequently Asked Questions: **Mr. Moll** stated he wanted to review several items pertaining to ORV's, such as lights, license fees and designated trail maintenance. **Lt. Hagy** indicated that light operation is according to the ORV handbook. **Mr. Moll** added when Public Act 240 was passed, it made it legal for county commissions to open up roads to ORVs; when the county implements this, ORV users must have a headlight and taillight on at all hours according to the law. Daytime headlights do allow people to see ORV users sooner. He also noted that an ORV sticker is required for riding on county, forest, and forest service roads that are open and designated trails. In addition, a \$10 permit is required for designated trails. He stated there are 4,000 miles of designated trails in Michigan, with 1,000 of them being motorcycles only. The DNR is obligated to maintain the designated trails with partners, and those trails require the extra \$10 permit. He distributed a route handout to the Council, noting he'd like to see the trails kept the size they are for safety reasons.
- **Mr. Aldrich** stated it is very difficult to understand what is open for ORV's on national forest land. He hopes they update their maps.
 - **Mr. Hoy** mentioned an email in which information was given on where to give comments for the Hiawatha National Forest. He also asked if roads in the US Forest Service are subjected to the quiet hours for ORVs during deer season. **Lt. Hagy** stated they do observe the same quiet hours.
 - Discussion ensued with a member of the audience regarding the size of trails and motorcycles. **Mr. Paquin** added clarification about monitoring motorcycle trails and the widening of trails.
6. Senate Bill 1093: **Mr. Serfass** stated he asked to have this added to the agenda to inform the Council that Senator Casperson has introduced a bill for a reduction in license fees for non-residents. Friends of hunters who don't live in the state would also see a reduction. He is concerned about the impact this would have on the recent increase in fees and the DNR budget. **Mrs. Haughey** stated when the DNR receives a draft bill there is an internal evaluation to review the impact to the DNR. The DNR cannot comment on the bill itself. However, she will check to see if there are any specifics on the monetary impact to provide to the Council.

Next Meeting

1. Next Meeting Date: **Chair Pershinske** noted the next regular meeting of the EUPCAC will be held on Thursday, December 4th at the Comfort Inn Conference Room in Newberry.
2. Topics for Next Meeting Agenda: **Chair Pershinske** asked if there were any additional topics, outside of the ones already mentioned during the meeting, the Council would like to put on the agenda for the next meeting. **Mr. Hoy** stated he would be interested in discussing the bag limit for Canadian geese; **Mr. Minzey** stated changing the bag limit would need to go through the federal framework.

Public Comments

Chair Pershinske opened the floor for additional public comments.

1. Mr. Lester Livermore of Naubinway stated he used to sit on the Council and he is currently the chair of the Mackinac County Road Commission. He stated it's been suggested that there are

so many unknowns about the Graymont project, however, there are no unknowns. Limestone mining is a common practice in the U.P. and it's been done for years. A limestone quarry exists 40 miles to the west and another one in Mackinac County. There are lots of agencies who will monitor it after the fact. Hydrology reports are readily available. The project parameters are up on the wall in their office. There will be job creation depending on the scale of the project. Roads seem to be an issue; however, Hudson Township is more suited to have heavy haul than any other township in Mackinac County. The mine is a positive aspect in an area that is dying of jobs.

2. Mr. Bob Simpson of Trout Lake stated he is the elected clerk in Trout Lake. He noted the township did not submit a resolution supporting this project. Trout Lake is left out when people talk about Rexton. The project would be three square miles of open pit mine, right next door to a veteran's area. The lowest form of government is the township boards. If the majority of the township citizens are against a project, the elected official has an obligation to express their oppositions to it. Don't leave Trout Lake out; they would have the most damage in the area due to the project.
3. Mr. PJ Stoll from Graymont indicated there are no plans for three square miles of open pit. He believes that reference is to the mineral exchange proposal. In the federal forest area, Graymont has not been able to explore or prospect on reserves that may or may not be there.
4. Mr. Russ Nelson of Hendricks Township asked how the Graymont project will compare to the plant in Gulliver for jobs. Mr. Stoll indicated the Gulliver site has 80 jobs.

Chair Pershinske closed the comment period and indicated his appreciation for the participation.

Closing Comments from the Council

1. **Mrs. Haughey** welcomed Forest Resources Division Chief Bill O'Neill to the meeting; he just came from another meeting in the area. He is willing to answer any questions from those wishing to discuss the Graymont proposal.
2. **Mr. Garavaglia** asked if the trust fund is capped, will more grants be given or would participation be limited. **Mrs. Haughey** stated once the trust fund caps out, remaining funding goes to the Park Endowment Fund. Any changes to this process would require a legislative movement. If there are any questions on the application process, please contact her.
3. **Mr. Moll** stated for those in the area that are interested in any roads they would like to be kept open, he has the contact name for comments that are being taken over the next 8-9 months.

Adjourn

There being no further business, **Chair Pershinske** adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm EST.