

Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 8, 2015
6:30-8:30pm EST
Clark Township Community Center, Cedarville

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

Council Members Present

Keith Aldrich	Al Garavaglia	Bernie Hubbard
Allan Augustyn	Jason Garvon	Dick Pershinske
Tom Buckingham	Gary Gorniak	Mark Spencer
Ivan Darling	Jim Hoy	

Council Members Excused/Absent

Jim Duke	Bridget Nodurft
Tim Hass	Chad Radka
Michael Lawless	Jim Shutt
Glenn Moll	

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons

Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Assistant, Marquette
Stacy Haughey, U.P. Regional Coordinator, Marquette
Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division, Ishpeming
Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry
John Pepin, Deputy Public Information Officer, Marquette
Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resources Division, Shingleton
Steve Scott, Fisheries Division, Newberry
Jon Spieles, Marketing & Outreach Division, Newberry

Special DNR Guests

Natural Resources Commissioner Chair John Matonich
Natural Resources Commissioner JR Richardson
Ashley Autenrieth, Deer Program Biologist, Wildlife Division
Jim Dexter, Chief of Fisheries Division
David Jentoft, Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Division
Dennis Knapp, Chief of Staff & Tribal Coordinator
Russ Mason, Chief of Wildlife Division
Dean Molnar, Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement Division
Dr. Bill Moritz, Deputy Director
Ron Olson, Chief of Parks and Recreation Division
Bill O'Neill, Chief of Forest Resources Division
Sharon Schafer, Chief of Finance and Operations Division
Anna Sylvester, Parks and Recreation Division
Matt Torreano, Northern Michigan Outreach Specialist

Call To Order

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC) meeting was called to order at 6:43pm EST by **Chair Pershinske**. He thanked all who were present. Introductions by Council members were made.

Adoption of Agenda

Chair Pershinske asked if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. There were none. **Mr. Buckingham** motioned to adopt the agenda as presented; **Mr. Hubbard** seconded the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Duke, Mr. Hass, Mr. Lawless, Mr. Moll, Ms. Nodurft, Mr. Radka, Mr. Shutt. Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Pershinske asked the Council if there were any corrections to the August 27, 2015 EUPCAC minutes; none were brought forth. **Mr. Buckingham** motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; **Mr. Garavaglia** seconded the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Duke, Mr. Hass, Mr. Lawless, Mr. Moll, Ms. Nodurft, Mr. Radka, Mr. Shutt. Motion carried.**

Chair Comments

Chair Pershinske mentioned in the essence of time, he will not be making any comments. He stated the NRC meeting held earlier was a very constructive meeting and he thanked those who have stayed on to be a part of the Council meeting.

Public Comments

Chair Pershinske opened the floor for public comments.

- **Mr. Conrad Izzard** from the audience commented on the overpopulation of wolves and coyotes in his area and blamed them for the poor deer numbers and hunting, rather than severe winters being the cause. He feels it needs urgent attention as deer are running scared. **Chair Pershinske** responded that wolf control is out of the hands of the DNR since it's in federal protection under the Endangered Species Act. **Mr. Minzey** agreed deer numbers are down. He stated as a way to help recover the population, the NRC adopted a change in regulations for this year and next year to not allow the take of antlerless deer in the U.P. (except in three limited deer management units in the south central counties). He noted Commissioners Matonich and Richardson can be thanked for supporting this effort. **Mrs. Haughey** stated she will give contact information to Mr. Izzard to further voice his concerns.
- **Mr. Stephen King** from Newberry News asked if the tribal take of antlerless deer will be reduced. **Mr. Knapp** responded the DNR has shared the changes with the tribal governments and they make their own decisions. **Mr. King** also asked about progress on a proposed marina grant that a tribe received. **Mr. Dexter** stated he spoke with the Sault Tribe and the project is slow, but still ongoing. It is an area of environmental concern, although he isn't aware of the details. **Mr. King** asked if the money had been release; **Mr. Knapp** stated he does not know.
- **Mr. George Lindquist**, Western U.P. Citizen's Advisory Council (WUPCAC) member, discussed his concern with not being able to fish off the state dock at Copper Harbor this summer as he had in the past. **Mrs. Haughey** stated Mr. Lindquist also discussed this issue at the September 21st WUPCAC meeting and it was stated that because of funding regulations, no fishing is permitted on the docks in the presence of boats. This regulation has been recently enforced in state harbors

due to an increase in user conflicts. **Mr. Paquin** explained when boaters rent slips, it is their private property for the rental period. He noted there are more issues than not being able to fish. **Mrs. Haughey** stated this item is on the next WUPCAC agenda for follow-up. **Chair Pershinske** mentioned he can add it to a future EUPCAC agenda if needed.

- **Mr. Grant DeWitt** from the audience asked about waterways funding. **Chief Olson** stated the funds come from gas taxes and are restricted for waterway use. Funding from registration stickers on boats must be used for motor boating. In the case for fishing, the state harbors are for boating and not fishing piers. In most cases, there are other fishing locations nearby. He stated if there is a need for more fishing opportunities in these areas, it should be discussed.

Reports

1. **Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator:** **Mrs. Haughey** stated this meeting is a unique one in that the EUPCAC decided to change their original meeting date in order to meet following the NRC meeting which was held during the day. This has allowed several members of the DNR management team to be present and see the Council meeting in action. Introductions of DNR staff, management team, and audience members were made. She thanked everyone for attending the Council meeting after a long meeting day.
2. **DNR Division Reports:** Written staff reports were provided via email to Council members on October 1, 2015. **Chair Pershinske**, in the essence of time, asked staff to reserve any verbal reports and opened the floor to questions from the Council about information listed in the reports.
 - **Mr. Hoy** asked if the tribal allotment of deer harvesting will be changed like the DNR has done. Mr. Knapp responded stating tribal governments regulate their own members' harvest. He also discussed the consent decree, which in order to be changed would require involvement by the federal court. He stated tribal wildlife biologists do keep in contact with the DNR's biologists on a regular basis.
 - **Mr. Hoy** also asked about a legislative wolf update and noted it had been removed from the appropriations bill. Commissioner Matonich suggested interested individuals contact their congressmen/offices.

New Business

1. **Process for Review of Great Lakes Commercial Netpen Aquaculture:** **Chief Jim Dexter** of the Fisheries Division provided an overview of recent activity involving aquaculture:
 - Fish are raised in different ways: ponds, flow-through systems, recirculating systems (expensive), and aquaculture in the Great Lakes through the use of net pens. Some feel there are opportunities in the Great Lakes. Raising fish requires feeding and waste control. The Governor believes the business could grow. Recirculating systems can control diseases; however, in net pens, it is more difficult to control.
 - The state has recently received two proposals. One comes from the U.P. in Little Bay de Noc and Big Bay de Noc for rainbow trout. The second proposal is in the lower peninsula for rainbow trout as well. There currently isn't a process in place for net pens. Similar to when wind power was introduced, it takes a lot of effort to put a new process in place.

- All of the Quality of Life agencies are involved: MDNR, MDEQ, and MDARD. Permitting would involve three items: 1) MDARD would have to issue a permit to operate a farm in the Great Lakes; 2) the MDNR would have to issue a stocking permit—any fish stocked in public water requires a permit from the state unless the state is doing the stocking; and 3) MDEQ would have to issue a permit for pollution discharge (fish waste).
- A panel of advisors with a wide range of experience (NOAA, Maine, West Coast, professors, etc.) is helping with the process. Some of the questions being asked are what have other states learned about this issue and what would benefit Michigan if it were to consider net pens in the Great Lakes. Internal committees are working on this issue as well. They will be meeting soon to hear reports and those reports will be on the website for viewing and public comment prior to November 15. After which, a final report including public comment consideration will be prepared. The agencies will regroup to determine what the policy will be going forward.
- Senate Bill 526 has been introduced by Senator Rick Jones which would permanently prohibit any aquaculture in the Great Lakes. It is currently under review in the Agriculture Committee. MDARD also asked the Attorney General's office for an opinion on the issue and they determined that the state does not have the authority to issue a permit to raise fish in the Great Lakes.
- Questions:
 - **Mr. Buckingham** asked what neighboring states are doing. **Chief Dexter** stated none of them have received requests for net pens. There is a group in Canada that has been in existence for 20 years. They have been consistently asking to expand over the last 10 years, but there hasn't been any movement to approve the request on their part. All eyes are on Michigan.
 - **Mr. Hoy** asked how large the Canadian operation is; **Chief Dexter** stated 3 million pounds of rainbow trout. Both Michigan proposals are for 500,000 each.
 - **Chair Pershinske** asked what size the proposed structure would be; **Chief Dexter** replied a couple of acres of pens.
 - **Mr. Augustyn** asked if there has been any indication from the Governor's office on the economic benefits of aquaculture to the state. **Chief Dexter** stated there is high competition from Asia and the benefit may be low. In response to another question asked by **Mr. Augustyn**, **Chief Dexter** indicated the DNR would have to approve any tribal requests in terms of fish stocking.
 - **Dr. Garvon** asked about the dynamic difference between a marine system and a Great Lakes system. **Chief Dexter** stated there are no tides in the Great Lakes only currents. Systems would be put in non-current areas and attached to shore. **Mr. Scott** indicated they wouldn't be in open water due to ice and storms.
 - **Chair Pershinske** stated the Council may look to support or not support the proposals in the near future. **Mr. Scott** stated he will keep the Council apprised of any developments.

2. Munuscong Bay State Wildlife Management Area Project: **Mr. Jentoft**, Wildlife Biologist from Sault Ste. Marie, provided a presentation on the wetland project in this area:

- State Wildlife Management Areas: There are six high priority sites in the U.P. region, with two currently targeted for wetland management.

- **Munuscong Bay:** The location is the west wide of Munuscong Bay. Photos were shown: 1964, 1997 view showing dikes, north-south-middle impoundment views showing water conditions, 2012 view showing water levels matching those from 1964, 2012 with shrubby growth encroaching the area. Structures were removed in the 1990's and a connection with the bay was left so that water can drain out of the impoundments into the bay. A graph was also displayed showing St. Mary's River average water levels from 1903-2014 pointing out a decreasing trend over the last 10-15 years. The area is important for waterfowl and wetland habitat, and also for users too. This site is a main access point to the marsh habitat in Munuscong Bay. In recent years, user access has been affected by low water levels.
- **Goals and Current Plans:** To re-establish some functionality, the goals are to enhance near shore wetland habitat, enhance public access to the marsh in the bay, and control invasive species. Invasive phragmites are currently being treated. Current plans include placing water control structures, using natural events to hold water during low water periods (spring runoff, temporary high water levels), and free exchange with the bay during high water periods.
- **Resources for Management:** Funding has been received through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This project is one of two U.P. projects under a large multi-project grant application by multiple partners. Partners include three local sportsmen's clubs among others. The NAWCA grant is a \$1 million grant and half is slated for the two U.P. projects.
- **Timeline:** The surveying is being conducted in 2015, along with detailed plans being developed, and construction will begin in 2016.
- **Questions:**
 - **Dr. Garvon** asked about aquatic invasive treatment. **Mr. Jentoft** stated they are monitoring frog-bit in the bay and are looking at control and treatment options.
 - A member of the audience asked if there was a reason to not let the area go back to nature. **Mr. Jentoft** replied it was done once; however, it is a major draw for waterfowl and other activities.
 - **Mr. Scott** asked about pike spawning in that area. **Mr. Jentoft** stated they are looking at addressing the low water levels.
 - **Chair Pershinske** noted the one-year timetable for construction. **Mr. Jentoft** stated they are hoping to get everything done next year. Ducks Unlimited has been working closely on this project.
 - An audience member asked who will be doing the construction. **Mr. Jentoft** replied that it will likely get bid out. The design plans are being developed now. The goal for the design is to provide a control ability to hold water from draining out.
 - **Mr. Augustyn** stated the dike is almost 50 years old. **Mr. Jentoft** noted they were looked at and were found to be in good shape.
 - **Mr. Darling** asked about capturing more water from the river with spring run-off. **Mr. Jentoft** explained the project's objectives further.

3. *Deer Management Field Day:* **Chair Pershinske** stated he noticed an article in an August issue of the Michigan Farm Newspaper about a Deer Management Field Day held in September in Posen, MI. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated this field day was in collaboration with the DNR, MDARD, US Wildlife Services and the MSU Extension Service. The overall goal of the day was to get hunters and

farmers together, see what crop damage really means, learn the impact of permits given out, and learn what can be done. A partnership is being formed with the MSU Extension on a co-op coordinator position, one of two people in the nation. This person will connect people who are interested, have similar ideas, and who own land. She stated the DNR will help on the sidelines, not the forefront. **Chair Pershinske** asked if this could be conducted in the U.P.; **Ms. Autenrieth** stated she is not sure, although the coordinator or herself could come and present at groups if interested.

Old Business

1. **Deer Management Plan Update:** **Ms. Autenrieth** reported the deer management plan is being updated this year; it was approved in 2010. The plan was vetted through a deer forum in April 2015 with two U.P. meetings, and one each in the northern and southern lower peninsula. A finalized draft will be sent to upper management for approval in two weeks and then it will be made available for public comment. Once public comment has been completed, it will be reviewed once again with the hopes of presenting a final plan to the NRC in December or January.
 - **Mr. Augustyn** asked if the state plan for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is adequate for the U.P. and questioned if there needs to be a separate plan. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated she feels it functions well for the entire state. The plan was relied heavily upon for the recent CWD cases in the lower peninsula and it will be adequate for the U.P. She stated there is a mandatory check in the CWD area. Over 1,000 deer have been killed there and only 3 of them have been confirmed with CWD. **Chief Mason** further explained the state plan.
 - **Chair Pershinske** asked about the regional deer management teams. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated a southern and lower peninsula deer regional advisory teams still exist. In the U.P., after reviewing the effectiveness of them after three years, it was felt there was a better opportunity to blend them with the sportsman coalition meetings. She stated it is working very well and she attends at least two U.P. meetings a year. **Mr. Minzey** stated it was difficult to get advisory team members to the meetings, especially in the far west U.P. There is better coverage with the coalition meetings. **Commissioner Richardson** stated the groups seem to be working well. **Mr. Lindquist** agreed that more information is received through the coalition meetings. **Mr. Augustyn** stated he had been to two former advisory team meetings in Marquette County and one meeting in Delta County and it was very poorly attended. Several more people attend now.
 - **Mr. Augustyn** stated at the Marquette coalition meeting, the group was not opposed to baiting as it relates to CWD and that there was no real indication that baiting is causing the spread of CWD. **Chair Pershinske** added the Michigan Farm Bureau is opposed to baiting and it's the most contentious item.
 - **Mr. Izzard** from the audience stated that he's lived in Cedarville a long time and it's disappointing to him to see he is the only one at this meeting. **Mr. Minzey** responded with the groups that do attend coalition meetings and noted no one from Cedarville has attended.
 - **Mr. Darling** stated his concern with CWD is if the deer population is reduced and the disease lasts indefinitely, there will be repeated cases over and over again. He feels if it comes to the U.P., it will explode overnight with the deer herding. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated CWD is new to Michigan and this hunting season will give the DNR a better idea of what's happening with it. Discussion ensued. **Chair Pershinske** asked if there is any ongoing research to eradicate it

from the soil. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated the only way to remove it from the soil is to incinerate it at 1200 degrees. **Mr. Minzey** noted there are areas doing research, but the answers are not known right now.

1. Land Management Plan Update: **Mrs. Haughey** stated the land management plan is one of the top priorities of the DNR for the last several years. She provided the following presentation:
 - Reason for the Managed Public Land Strategy:
 - Governor Snyder called upon the DNR to create a public land strategy to answer questions regarding DNR-managed public lands. What are the values associated with public lands? Where are the public lands located? How are DNR-managed public lands being utilized? How will public land management differ in the future?
 - The Managed Public Land Strategy, completed in July 2013, awaits approval in the Legislature. Until the strategy is approved, a cap remains in place on the number of acres of state-managed public land in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.
 - It satisfies the requirements of Act 240 of 2012 and reinvents how the DNR will manage public lands to achieve three specific goals: foster regional economic prosperity, provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities, and protect natural and cultural resources. The entire plan is on the website.
 - Strategic investment and disposal: **Mrs. Haughey** indicated the DNR has changed, as a department, how land is purchased and how it works with stakeholders. Local unit of government input is key in this process.
 - History of public land management:
 - The decision on which lands should be in public ownership was deliberate and reflected state policy and public opinion at the time.
 - 26% of DNR public managed lands were purchased for their natural resources values with restricted funds (1.2 million acres).
 - In the last 10 years, the DNR has expanded its land ownership by 66,738 acres and disposed of 33,846 acres.
 - The DNR has taken a hard look at the parcels of lands it owns through an intense inventory process.
 - Location of DNR managed lands: A map was shown indicating 4.6 million acres of surface ownership and 6.4 million acres of mineral ownership.
 - How public lands were acquired: A circle graph was shown indicating acquisition of lands from 1921 to present. 66% of land (4,775,498 acres) the state owns was tax reverted back in the 1930's and 40's. **Mr. Stampfly** explained a conservation easement which includes 3% of land.
 - Value of DNR managed lands: Public recreation. Public lands help to drive Michigan's economy, support the state's quality of life, and protect resources. State forests provide 20% of timber for the forest products industry. State parks host 22 million visitors each year. Six of the top 10 tourist destinations in the state are managed by the DNR. 1,000 boat launches and 80 harbors of refuge support a \$4 million boating industry. There are over 12,000 miles of trails.
 - How the strategy was developed: A new acquisition and disposal plan was developed. The process was improved to make it more user friendly.

- Engagement process: External coordination, advisory committee, NRC public meeting, public outreach, MEDC regional economic development meetings, public open houses, top 10 county meetings, and stakeholder meeting. **Mrs. Haughey** stated four of the top 10 counties with the most state land are in the U.P.: Mackinac, Luce, Dickinson, and Schoolcraft. The Director has visited these four counties each year the past three years. She has personally met with every county commission in the U.P. to talk about state land ownership. Overall, counties would rather see land acquired for public recreation.
- Key actions include: become data driven, focus regionally, link facilities, participate in integrated planning, increase collaboration, focus on quality facilities, and increase marketing. Many of these actions have been implemented.
- **Mrs. Haughey** stated that Mr. Dean Reid from Mackinac County, who attended the last EUPCAC meeting, had asked for follow-up on a few parcels in the county. A summary of those parcels are included on a handout in the meeting packets.

Next Meeting

1. **Next Meeting Date:** **Chair Pershinske** noted the next meeting date will be Thursday, December 3rd at the Comfort Inn conference room in Newberry.
2. **Topics for Next Meeting Agenda:** **Chair Pershinske** stated items requiring follow-up from this meeting will be added to the agenda. **Mr. Hoy** suggested adding SB 245 to the next agenda since public comment was made at the NRC meeting earlier in the day. **Mr. Augustyn** suggested adding stolen traps to the next agenda as well. He stated there is an issue in Alger County with traps and the game in them being stolen.

Public Comments

Chair Pershinske opened the floor for additional public comments.

- Mr. Conrad Izzard from the audience discussed the problem he's had on his farm with bears.

Closing Comments from the Council

- **Mr. Garavaglia** stated he attended a Federal Forest Service meeting in Mackinac County about Graymont and they did an outstanding job stating the facts. He provided a brief summary of the meeting.
- **Chair Pershinske** stated in the course of this Council meeting, it has given audience members an idea of the diversity of the subject matter covered in two hours. A good portion of it is educational from DNR staff and the staff does a great job. He feels the Council is the best informed organization.

Adjourn

There being no further business, **Chair Pershinske** adjourned the meeting at 8:37pm EST.