

Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 16, 2016

6:30-8:30pm EST

Central Community Center, Munising

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

Council Members Present

Keith Aldrich	Al Garavaglia	Michael Lawless
Allan Augustyn	Jason Garvon	Glenn Moll
Tom Buckingham	Gary Gorniak	Dick Pershinske
Ivan Darling	Tim Hass	Chad Radka
Jim Duke	Jim Hoy	
Hawk Erickson	Bernie Hubbard	

Council Members Excused/Absent

Grant Dewitt	Mark Spencer
Travis Kangas	

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons

Craig Albright, Wildlife Division, Escanaba
Ashley Autenrieth, Wildlife Division, Gaylord
Adam Bump, Wildlife Division, Lansing (via conference call)
Bob Burnham, Forest Resources Division, Shingleton
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Assistant, Marquette
Sgt. Jerry Fitzgibbon, Law Enforcement Division, Division 2
Christina Hammill, Facilities & Operations Division, Newberry
Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division, Newberry
Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry
Jon Spieles, Acting U.P. Regional Coordinator, Newberry

Call To Order

The Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC) meeting was called to order at 6:33pm EST by **Vice Chair Glenn Moll**, at the request of Chair Pershinske who was arriving a bit later.

Adoption of Agenda

Vice Chair Moll asked if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. There were none. **Mr. Buckingham** motioned to adopt the agenda as presented; **Mr. Hass** seconded the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Kangas, Mr. Spencer. Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Moll asked the Council if there were any corrections to the April 21, 2016 EUPCAC minutes; none were brought forth. **Mr. Duke** motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; **Mr. Buckingham** seconded the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Kangas, Mr. Spencer. Motion carried.**

Public Comments

Vice Chair Moll opened the floor for public comments.

- Ms. Terri LeVeque asked if there were going to be any ATV and snowmobile trail and/or road closures in the near future in Alger County, as well as if the deer season will be changing. **Vice Chair Moll** explained the trail system and how road closures are determined. Proposed resolutions from the Council regarding deer management will be discussed later on the agenda.
- Mr. Jim Dean read a letter he sent to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) addressing products used in chumming that could cause potential health care concerns. The chumming regulation was up for NRC action at their June 9th meeting; however, a decision was delayed until their July meeting in order to gather more public input. **Mr. Hass** asked if the DNR will be looking in to this; **Mr. Kovacs** stated he has alerted Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter of Mr. Dean's concerns, and he will report back at the next meeting.

Chair Comments

Chair Pershinske thanked **Mr. Hass** for helping with the meeting arrangements in Munising. He indicated his appreciation to those in the audience for attending and provided a brief overview of the council's history and purpose to the DNR. He stated, for the convenience of two conference calls this evening, Old Business and New Business items will be in reverse order.

Chair Pershinske read a thank you letter from the Council to **Mr. Tom Paquin**, DNR Parks and Recreation Supervisor, who, having served on both the WUPCAC and most recently the EUPCAC, is retiring. He thanked Mr. Paquin and wished him well in retirement. Congratulations were given.

Reports

1. **Jon Spieles, Acting UP Regional Coordinator:** **Mr. Spieles** stated Mrs. Haughey, who he has been covering for the last three months, is returning on June 20th. He indicated furbearer regulations were passed at the June 9th NRC meeting (Mr. Bump will be discussing that further on the agenda) and a chumming regulation change was tabled for further public input. No movement has been made on the NOAA sanctuary proposals that he mentioned at the last meeting. The state's budget passed both the House and the Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature. There was a small decrease in the general fund; however, on the whole, it represents a stable budget for the DNR.
2. **DNR Division Reports:** Written staff reports were provided via email to Council members on June 9, 2016. The following are verbal additions to those reports:
 - **Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division:** **Mr. Kovacs** stated he did not have any additional information to his report. He did note the Thompson State Fish Hatchery received \$12 million for updates from the state's budget package; other smaller updates were included as well.
 - **Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division:** **Mr. Paquin** stated he did not have any additional updates to his report.
 - **Sgt. Jerry Fitzgibbon:** **Sgt. Fitzgibbon** stated he was attending on behalf of Lt. Hagy. He noted that 16 (out of 25 that started) graduated from the Academy in June and will be out in the field for the next phase of their training. **Mr. Gorniak** asked how many will be coming to the

east end of the UP; **Sgt. Fitzgibbon** stated one new officer will be placed in Chippewa County to replace an officer who transferred.

- **Paul Gaberdiel, UP Trails Specialist, Newberry:** **Mr. Gaberdiel** briefly ran through a trail update for the eastern UP, including the work by various snowmobile and ORV clubs on routes and connector trails and various maintenance and restoration projects currently under way. **Mr. Gorniak** asked if there were timeframes available for these projects; **Mr. Gaberdiel** stated specific timeframes vary with each project. **Mr. Gaberdiel** also introduced Mr. Charlie Marsh, District Ranger for the Hiawatha National Forest in Munising. Mr. Marsh indicated he will be available after the meeting to answer any questions related to the Hiawatha.
- **Bob Burnham, Forest Resources Division:** **Mr. Burnham** stated he was attending for Mr. Jeff Stampfly and did not have anything additional to report.
- **Craig Albright, Wildlife Division:** **Mr. Albright** stated he was attending for Mr. Terry Minzey and had no additions to report.

New Business

1. **Furbearer Regulations Update:** **Mr. Adam Bump**, Furbearer Specialist for the Wildlife Division, provided an update via conference call on the most recent furbearer regulation changes approved at the June NRC meeting. He stated the furbearer regulations are on a 2-year cycle (even years). Issues are selected from a running list of input received from stakeholders, DNR staff and the NRC. Topics are selected based on interest, data availability and time considerations. The issues for 2016 were selected in 2014 and were discussed internally and externally since that time. Topics reviewed that did not result in a recommendation for change to the NRC were use of floating colony traps (for muskrats), cable restraints and season/bag limit expansion for badger. Topics reviewed that resulted in a recommendation for change to the NRC included bobcat trapping opportunities in Units C&D (lower peninsula), raccoon regulations review and fur harvester license date changes (recommended fur harvester license available/valid May 1 to April 30 the following year). The 2018 topics will be drawn from a running list and selected later this year. **Mr. Gorniak** asked for clarification on the license dates; **Mr. Bump** further explained it was in an effort to reduce illegal take of bobcat. **Chair Pershinske** thanked Mr. Bump for the update.
2. **Mandatory Deer Check:** **Ms. Ashley Autenrieth**, Deer Program Biologist for the Wildlife Division, provided an overview via conference call on the topic in an effort to explain why the DNR has not instituted a mandatory deer check over the years. She stated several components are utilized in making changes to deer management regulations, such as deer camp surveys, hunter data, vehicle collisions, crop damage permits, to name a few. These are all used to monitor trends. And those trends are indicating a decreasing deer herd, which is accurate and which everyone in the UP agrees with. Adding another component would not change these findings or trends; therefore, adding mandatory deer checks would not make a difference in management plans. She reminded the group that although mandatory, not everyone would comply with these types of checks, thereby still creating an estimate/trend (an error rate would still apply). She added that Michigan has the richest and longest data set in the country and some of the data utilized would be lost with a mandatory deer check.

- **Mr. Buckingham** asked why mandatory checks are required of bear and elk hunts, but not deer. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated bear and elk have very localized populations and the herd is kept at a strict number. In addition, there is much more deer harvested than there are bear and elk. A mandatory physical check of deer with the amount harvested would require a multitude of staff and remote check stations that there is no funding for.
- **Mr. Augustyn** asked why so many states have gone to the mandatory online or phone check systems. **Ms. Autenrieth** replied many states don't harvest as many deer as Michigan, and many of these states believe they do not receive the numbers as in the past and have lost some valuable information in the process.
- **Mr. Augustyn** stated he does not understand why the DNR is so opposed to getting more information by offering all types of methods (postcard, surveys, mandatory checks, internet, phone, etc.). **Ms. Autenrieth** stated they receive more information now than would be received from a mandatory check alone and if there was unlimited funding, they could provide all/more options.
- **Chair Pershinske** asked if there has been any cost assessment of doing mandatory checks online or by phone. **Ms. Autenrieth** stated with the last license package, there was some funding to upgrade their software and they are testing it now. They will have to eventually move to a more automated system when funding becomes available. Ohio went automated a number of years ago at a very steep cost.
- **Mr. Augustyn** asked, in response to the low deer herd in the UP, why more is not being done to create additional feed habitat. **Chair Pershinske** deferred additional conversation to later in the meeting due to time constraints. He stated he asked the DNR to respond to the Council's questions on mandatory deer checks so the Council could determine whether to make a suggestion on the topic or to close further discussion.

Both **Mr. Augustyn** and **Chair Pershinske** thanked **Ms. Autenrieth** for her time and information.

3. North Country Trail (NCT) Update: **Mr. Hass**, who is also a member of the Superior Shoreline Chapter of the NCT, provided a brief overview of the NCT and the positive relationships those who work for/on the trail have developed with the National Forest Service and the DNR. He stated he gives both agencies the greatest respect and cited a few examples of the collaboration exhibited by all. He introduced several members of the Munising Bay Trail Network, who shares a portion of the NCT, to the Council to become familiar with one another. He also introduced Ms. Carol Stucht of the NCT who has done amazing work on the trail.
4. Naubinway Marina Update: **Mr. Paquin** explained the recent progress on the project. He stated he has spoken with the DNR's waterways grant program manager to see what can be done to assist the township, who has control of the project at this time. He has offered them additional assistance to help obtain an alternative engineering firm to keep the project from stalling any further. **Chair Pershinske** asked if construction will begin soon; **Mr. Paquin** stated he does not know those details at this time. Mr. Stephen King from the audience asked about cost of the project; **Mr. Paquin** replied cost will depend on the supplies, etc. He noted he will follow-up with Mr. King after the meeting.

5. *New Subcommittee Proposal:* **Chair Pershinske** suggested an Education Subcommittee be activated, based on Mr. Hammill's presentation at the last meeting on the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC). This new subcommittee would review some of the research and issues the MWC has uncovered about the public's perception of hunting, fishing and the taking of game in the state. He would like the subcommittee to assess how the MWC's goals can be applied to the eastern UP. He asked those interested in serving to contact to Mrs. Dahlstrom within the next 10 days.

Old Business

1. *Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update:* **Mr. Albright** stated there have been no new cases of CWD found in Michigan since the 7 reported cases that Mr. Minzey mentioned at the April meeting. He indicated the Wildlife Division has implemented an aggressive testing program this summer in the UP/Wisconsin border counties since CWD was found in Wisconsin about 25 miles away from the UP border. Farmers (with deer management permits) will be required to submit deer heads for testing; this will bring in about 400 heads for testing and hopefully all will be found negative for CWD. So far in the entire state, 5,300 have been tested with 7 positive cases.
2. *Cormorant Update:* **Mr. Kovacs** provided a brief history of the federal lawsuit involving the control of cormorants. The federal ruling has been given and now enters a 60-day appeal process. Hazing of birds can continue after the ruling, as long as the nest is not abandoned and no oiling of eggs can occur as of May 25. The control efforts made a huge difference with management and without control, these efforts will have gone to waste. Any input, feedback or support can be provided to sean_kelly@fws.gov.
3. *Good Neighbor Authority Update:* **Mr. Burnham** stated the master agreements between the federal forests and the state have been signed. The Shingleton field office will be doing some work for the Hiawatha National Forest.
4. *Township Designated ORV Trails:* **Mr. Gaberdiel** stated, in response to Mr. Garavaglia's question at the last meeting about ORV designated trails through townships, he is working on additional data to finish the proposal for Hudson Township.
5. *Deer Subcommittee Report:* **Mr. Buckingham** handed out a final draft of 4 resolutions the Deer Subcommittee developed based on multiple and long discussions. There was a 5th resolution pertaining to a mandatory deer check, but there was no support from members of the Deer Subcommittee and it was removed. He presented the following 4 resolutions, which were discussed individually and voted upon by the Council as a whole:
 - ***Resolution #1:*** *The EUPCAC recommends the MDNR contact tribal natural resource departments [added: for those treaty areas in the Upper Peninsula] to request they consider voluntarily reducing the number of whitetail permits issued to tribal hunters.*
 - **Mr. Buckingham** stated this was a shared concern/discussion in subcommittee. **Mr. Augustyn** noted for the Council that tribal hunters are bound by federal treaties, not state regulations.

- **Motion:** Mr. Augustyn motioned to approve the resolution as submitted; Mr. Buckingham seconded the motion.
 - **Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Hoy stated because he is an independent, he distributed copies of resolutions to eight hunters he knew and their feedback was not positive. Mr. Buckingham noted he did not receive any feedback from the Council and explained the end result is that there is no deer. He stated the treaty does give the option to voluntarily change regulations. Mr. Garavaglia noted it is beneficial to at least make an ask. Chair Pershinske stated he spoke to officials in Lansing and they were responsive to this resolution. Mr. Gorniak added there are tribal members/hunters from his sportsmen's club who would be in support of this. Mr. Moll stated his understanding is the tribal counterparts feel the same way in regards to lack of deer. Mr. Spieles reiterated the need to be respectful of the relationship that exists between the DNR and the tribal government. After further discussion, the Council agreed to amend the resolution to add [for those treaty areas in the U.P.].
 - **Vote on the Motion:** The Council agreed to proceed by amending the existing motion to add the wording suggested (see [...] in above resolution). Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Kangas, Mr. Spencer. Motion carried unanimously.
- **Resolution #2:** *The EUPCAC recommends the MDNR identify and provide a method or "trigger" on [added: timber] harvesting certain lands adjacent to a deer yard when the winter index hits a certain level.*
- Mr. Buckingham explained this pertains only to state land. Mr. Hass asked if this pertained to timber harvest; Mr. Buckingham agreed and added [timber] to the resolution. Mr. Burnham stated this would be difficult to accomplish; non-commercial private producers would have to be paid to do this with no revenue coming in. He stated there are designated deer yards around the UP and when a prescription is written, it is in contract that it be cut in the winter. The harvester gets 2-3 years to cut those sales so it may not hit certain areas. Mr. Buckingham agreed there are several issues, such as mild winters and cost of doing small acreage. Mr. Hubbard added only 19% of state land is adjacent to winter deer yard areas. Mr. Radka stated this is a very good plan, it is outside of the box, and it would work very well. It would be a new program that would have to be funded through the state or privately; Mr. Burnham agreed. Chair Pershinske noted this may be the perfect time for a program like this.
 - **Motion:** Mr. Erickson motioned to approve the motion with the amended wording suggested (see [...] in above resolution); Mr. Lawless seconded the motion.
 - **Discussion on the Motion:** Dr. Garvon asked about ecological role between deer and wolves. Mr. Buckingham stated the subcommittee did discuss this; the wolves are already there. Mr. Hubbard stated he's not sure this is outside the box—it was done back in the 70's and found not to be cost-effective. Mr. Moll, Mr. Hoy and Mr. Aldrich added their views of the deer herd in the 70's and what was done differently.
 - **Vote on the Motion:** Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Kangas, Mr. Spencer. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Resolution #3:** *The EUPCAC recommends the MDNR, through the necessary channels, support the return of a bounty on coyotes.*
- **Mr. Buckingham** stated he verified the voting in subcommittee and it passed overwhelming with one in opposition. **Mr. Hass** asked where the money would come from to pay the bounties; **Mr. Gorniak** replied it should come from the license sales. **Mr. Augustyn** stated he has attended the UP Sportsman Coalition meetings and overwhelmingly this has come up over and over; the biologists say it won't happen as the funding is not available. He stated hunting coyote year-round has just been passed by the NRC, and he did not believe the year-round coyote hunt rule (already in place) would increase kills much. He believes a coyote bounty would substantially increase the number of coyote kills. There was a bounty back in the 70's and is not sure why it disappeared, other than possible lack of funding. **Mr. Radka** asked if there is any information on predation of deer by coyotes. **Mr. Albright** added it is not known how much of the coyote herd would need to be taken in order to make a large enough impact. **Chair Pershinske** stated he read that unless 50% of the population is taken for 5 years in a row, an impact will not be made. **Mr. Radka** stated the term bounty has a very negative impact and is not a good term to use. Discussion continued on the negative term. **Mr. Gorniak** added coyotes kill as many deer as wolves do according to a University of Mississippi survey. He stated there needs to be something like this that will have an immediate effect for the deer population. **Mr. Hoy** stated his surveyed hunters stated they would agree with this resolution if it would help get rid of some predators, but feel it should pertain to wolves rather than coyotes.
 - **Motion:** **Mr. Buckingham motioned to approve the motion as submitted; Mr. Garavaglia seconded the motion.**
 - **Discussion on the Motion:** **Dr. Garvon** stated the social side of a bounty is not being considered as a bounty is not socially accepted in Michigan. **Mr. Gorniak** added South Carolina has a bounty on coyotes and explained the program. **Chair Pershinske** asked if the resolution needed to go back to the subcommittee for re-wording; the Council agreed to vote on the motion as stated. It was also noted that a similar resolution presented at the Michigan United Conservation Club's annual convention recently did not pass.
 - **Vote on the Motion:** **Ayes: 11. Nays: 5. Absent: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Kangas, Mr. Spencer. Motion carried by majority.**
- **Resolution #4:** *The EUPCAC recommends the MDNR end all current whitetail hunting seasons in the Upper Peninsula as they currently exist and replace them with the following: 1) one season, 30 to 45 days long, ending on November 30 [added: **the season can be divided up—bow, rifle, etc., within the 30 to 45 days**]; 2) all legal methods of take allowed; 3) bag/tag's as currently provided; 4) combo tags or single tags; 5) no change to APR's; 6) no doe hunting UP-wide; and 7) those areas encompassed within Delta, Menominee, and Dickinson Counties under the direct control of the MDNR's biologist having the ability to issue DMAP's only in those areas.*
- **Mr. Buckingham** stated this was the most controversial resolution discussed in subcommittee. The group's thought process involved the knowledge that deer are driven

by snow load and migrate south. **Dr. Garvon** suggested clarifying that the one season can be divided up between different options of take, such as bow, rifle, crossbow, etc.

- **Motion and Vote on the Motion:** **Dr. Garvon** motioned to accept the resolution with the amended wording he suggested (see [...] in above resolution); **Mr. Erickson** seconded the motion. **Ayes: 15. Nays: 1. Absent: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Kangas, Mr. Spencer. Motion carried by majority.**
- **Mr. Hoy** stated the hunters he spoke to were very concerned with rifle and bow hunting being at the same time and did not prefer it be that way. He also stated they are dismayed with having to make concessions as they have major investments in hunting camps and contribute to the local economy. Many of them just want to see how next hunting season turns out. **Mr. Buckingham** stated a fair amount of discussion went into this resolution and it passed marginally in subcommittee; the goal is to make a difference now since the DNR is on a three-year cycle for deer management planning.

Next Meeting

1. **Next Meeting Date:** **Chair Pershinske** noted the next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 25th at the LMAS Health Department conference room in Newberry.
2. **Topics for Joint Meeting & Next EUPCAC Meeting Agenda:** **Chair Pershinske** stated topics for the next agenda will be taken from this meeting and from Council suggestions.

Public Comments

Chair Pershinske opened the floor for additional public comments.

- **Mr. Stephen King** asked if tribal staff could attend and/or speak at a future meeting. He also stated he has heard fishing licenses are not being purchased because of the increased price. **Chair Pershinske** stated he will note these items for future topics of discussion.

Closing Comments from the Council

- **Dr. Garvon** thanked Mr. Buckingham and other members of the EUPCAC Deer Subcommittee for all the work they put forth on the resolutions, noting the amount of time and discussion that took place.
- **Mr. Augustyn** thanked the Council for having the meeting in Alger County.

Adjourn

There being no further business, **Chair Pershinske** thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm EST.