

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

July 7, 2011

Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery and Visitor Center
34270 County Road 652
Mattawan, MI 49071

Present for the Natural Resources Commission (NRC)

Tim Nichols, Chair
Mary Brown
John Madigan
John Matonich
J.R. Richardson
Frank Wheatlake

ABSENT

Hurley J. Coleman

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Rodney Stokes, Director, Department of Natural Resources
Kelley Smith, Acting Deputy Director
Debbie Whipple, Assistant to the Natural Resources Commission
Peter Manning, Legal Counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Other Department staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Natural Resources Commission (NRC) Chairman Nichols called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

Volunteer Legislation Signed

Director Stokes reported on House Bill 4111, recently signed into law by Governor Snyder, which allows the DNR to use volunteers on a wider range of projects, including stream bank restoration, fish stocking, wildlife habitat, deer check stations, and trail work.

Wolf Delisting Update

Russ Mason, Chief of DNR Wildlife Division, gave an overview of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) “listening session” held in Marquette, which offered individuals the opportunity to express opinions on the issue of wolf delisting in the Midwest. **Mason** also presented a copy of a letter from DNR Director Stokes that was formally submitted to Rowan Gould, acting director of the USFWS, recapping Michigan’s position that wolves should be delisted at the earliest possible date.

Huron-Manistee Plan Update

Director Stokes gave an update on the development of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that presents alternatives related to snowmobile use and firearms use in the semi-primitive, non-motorized management areas and firearms use in or near primitive areas of the Huron-Manistee National Forest. **Stokes** announced that a 90-day public comment period will be held roughly from October through December 2011.

Keith Charters Traverse City State Park

Director Stokes reported that a dedication ceremony will be held July 21 at the Traverse City State Park to honor former NRC Chairman Keith Charters for his lasting contributions to Michigan’s great outdoors heritage by renaming the park the Keith J. Charters Traverse City State Park.

State Forest Campground Marketing Report

Jim Dexter, Acting Chief of the DNR Fisheries Division, reported that the Fisheries Division has partnered with the DNR Forest Management Division and Trout Unlimited to help promote trout fishing opportunities in streams and lakes throughout the state. **Dexter** highlighted maps that have been developed to aid anglers camping in state forest campgrounds or state parks locate fishing opportunities within a mile of the campgrounds. **Dexter** said the information is also linked on the Web.

New DNR Mobile Phone Application

Director Stokes described the new DNR mobile phone application, the MI Camping and Recreation Locator, which was recently launched and offers an easy way to locate information on favorite Michigan state parks, forest campgrounds, boat launches and outdoor activities. **Stokes** highlighted the app’s features and mentioned that it is currently available at no cost at the BlackBerry App World, Android Market and App Store. He commented that there were more than 1,300 downloads by the afternoon of the day the app was announced.

Legislative Update

Gary Owen, DNR Legislative Liaison, who was unable to attend the NRC meeting, submitted a written legislative update. **Director Stokes** offered to answer any specific questions on the report.

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PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), gave an overview of the MUCC's annual convention held June 25-26 in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. **Trotter** reported that the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment were co-winners of the group's conservationist of the year award for their handling of the Kalamazoo River oil spill. **Trotter** submitted a summary of resolutions passed by MUCC in 2011, noting that an emergency resolution came before the convention to oppose SB 248, a bill that would prohibit the DNR from purchasing surface rights to land if the department owns surface rights to more than 4,600,000 acres of land. She said that MUCC will be furnishing an annual report to each commissioner.

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Chairman Nichols adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting and called the regular meeting to order at 3:50 p.m.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION FOR INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS

Chairman Nichols listed the Natural Resources Commission FOR INFORMATION ONLY item as:

Waterfowl and Other Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations for 2011-12
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 15 of 2011

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, June 9, 2011, NRC Meeting

Commissioner Richardson made a motion, supported by **Commissioner Matonich**, that the June 9, 2011, NRC minutes be approved. Motion carried.

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Waterfowl Hunting Regulations, Early Seasons **Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 13 of 2011**

Commissioner Madigan made a motion that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 13 of 2011 be adopted. **Commissioner Wheatlake** seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Antlerless Deer License Quotas
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 14 of 2011

Commissioner Madigan moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 14 of 2011 be adopted. Motion was supported by **Commissioner Brown**, and it passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

Director Stokes indicated he will sign all director's action items, including all land transactions, for July. Action items include:

Closure of Certain Forest Roads – Ogemaw County
Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 01 of 2011

Closure of Certain Forest Roads – Gladwin County
Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 04 of 2011

Keith J. Charters Traverse City State Park, Grand Traverse County
Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 5 of 2011

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

Commissioner Madigan, chair of the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, reported that an update on wildlife issues was provided by Wildlife Division chief **Russ Mason**; **Barb Avers** presented a framework on the upcoming waterfowl season; and a presentation on fishing issues and results of a survey was given by MSU graduate student **Jody Simoes**.

NRC Policy Committee on Land Management

Commissioner Richardson, chair of the NRC Policy Committee on Land Management, reported that the committee reviewed land transactions and talked about timber management opportunities. Further, a presentation on habitat enhancement projects and partnerships was given, and information on the short- and long-term goals for state forest campgrounds was offered. **Richardson** mentioned that a meeting will be held next week in Bergland to discuss U.P. habitat issues.

NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information, Management and Education
(T.I.M.E.)

Commissioner Brown reported that **Shana Ramsey** led a tour of the hatchery; **Jim De Clerck** of the Saginaw Field & Stream Conservation Club gave a presentation on mentoring youth as a DNR partner; and **Kevin Frailey** of the DNR Marketing and

Outreach Division led a panel discussion on expanding urban outreach in Southwest Michigan, which included staff from the DNR Parks and Recreation, Marketing and Outreach, Fisheries, and Wildlife divisions.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Madigan indicated he attended the Pigeon River meeting and sat in on a discussion.

Commissioner Matonich said he met a man from Wisconsin who was very complementary on the motorcycle trails in the northern Lower Peninsula. **Matonich** reported further that he received a copy of an email that the new Walleye for Tomorrow Chapter, on Lake Gogebic, will be holding a youth clinic in August, and **Matonich** thanked **Kelley Smith** and **Jim Dexter** for providing materials for the clinic. **Matonich** stated he attended the MUCC annual convention in Mt. Pleasant.

Commissioner Richardson reported on a wildlife habitat partnership with local U.P. sportsmen's clubs; a walleye release in three different areas of the U.P.; a unique opportunity to plant approximately 65,000 brook trout in partnership with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC); and participation in a fish rehab with the Ottawa National Forest Service.

Chairman Nichols thanked **Shana Ramsey** and the fish hatchery staff for their work in facilitating the meeting at the fish hatchery, and thanked **Commissioner Brown** for hosting the meeting in her area.

Chairman Nichols announced committees meeting in August are Wildlife and Fisheries, Land Use Management, and Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee. He announced that **the next NRC meeting is scheduled for August 11 in Lansing.**

Director Stokes announced that financial information updates on funds will be given during the Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries and the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee meetings August 11.

Chairman Nichols made a final call for public comments. There was none.

Commissioner Madigan made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Brown** and unanimously passed. The regular meeting of the NRC was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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APPROVED:
Date: _____

Timothy Nichols, Chair

Rodney A. Stokes, Director

