

## MINUTES

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

February 10, 2011

Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health  
4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI

#### PRESENT FOR THE NRC

Tim Nichols, Chair  
Mary Brown  
John Madigan  
Frank Wheatlake  
John Matonich  
Hurley Coleman

#### ABSENT

J.R. Richardson

#### PRESENT FOR STAFF

Peter Manning, Legal Counsel, Office of the Attorney General  
Rodney Stokes, Chief of Staff, Department of Natural Resources and Environment  
Stacy Welling, Regional Director, Upper Peninsula Region  
Gary Owen, Legislative Liaison  
Debbie Whipple, Assistant to the Natural Resources Commission

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Natural Resources Commission (NRC) Chairman Nichols** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

##### *Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update*

**Director-Designate Rodney Stokes** asked **Dr. Steve Schmitt** from the DNRE Wildlife Division to give an update on bovine tuberculosis. Dr. Schmitt presented a brief update on the chronic wasting disease (CWD) situation in Minnesota. Dr. Schmitt reported that Minnesota just acknowledged a CWD infected, free-ranging deer in the southeastern part of the state. They've tested approximately 3,200 deer (about the same number Michigan has tested) and found just that one. Minnesota banned deer baiting in 1990. A public meeting will be held in Pine Island, Minnesota, on February 14 to educate the public and talk about what to do in the future.

### **Tuberculosis in White-Tailed Deer**

**Dr. Schmitt introduced Dr. Graham Hickling**, the third and final international expert on bovine tuberculosis, to address the Commission. (Dr. Mitchell Palmer, a researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Ames, Iowa, spoke to the Commission in December, 2010, and Dr. David Ramsey with the Arthur Rylah Institute in Australia addressed the Commission in January, 2011.) Dr. Hickling was born and raised in New Zealand and has been working on bovine tuberculosis management and research for over 25 years, first in New Zealand, then as a professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife at Michigan State University and currently as the Director of the Center for Wildlife Health at the University of Tennessee. **Dr. Hickling** spoke about the current progress of the TB program and the future prospect of that program. He said there always is a risk the disease will spread when an infected animal is present, but baiting elevates the potential. There is no guarantee the disease will not spread if there is no baiting, however, baiting increases the odds.

### **Legislative Update**

**Gary Owen, DNRE Legislative Liaison**, gave the following update:

#### **House Bill 4036 (Rep. Eileen Kowall)**

This bill increases funding for part of Michigan's marine safety/law enforcement component (counties), while at the same time, stripping another component (the State DNRE) of this particular funding altogether.

The DNRE Law Enforcement Division (LED) employs approximately 188 fully sworn, career Conservation Officers, who have primary responsibility for marine safety and marine law enforcement statewide. This bill would remove funding for this critical part of our state's marine law enforcement function.

County marine patrol efforts are staffed primarily by part time, seasonal, limited authority deputies. While this allows counties to provide supplemental marine law enforcement efforts using a low cost approach, it should not be viewed as the sole source of marine law enforcement statewide.

County sheriff departments are not statutorily required to conduct a marine safety and marine law enforcement program, and as such, it is not possible to know from year to year what counties will provide this function. Changes in local politics, local funding (match for grants), and other external factors ultimately determine the level of, if any, involvement in the marine law enforcement function. Stripping the State DNRE LED of all funding, while at the same time relying completely on fluctuating local influences, is undesirable.

The state's DNRE LED is specifically empowered to protect the state's natural resources and provide for marine safety and marine law enforcement. This bill would remove funding that is crucial to the continuance of this core function.

Additionally, the bill provides new factors for how grant funds are to be allocated. While it may be time to address how funds are allocated, the first criterion listed in the bill under 80117 (1) (A) is the number of registered boats in the county. This approach does not take into account the number of vessels registered in a given county but used primarily elsewhere. Michigan's citizens have the luxury of being able to live in or near large population centers and recreate elsewhere. This recreation often takes place on one of Michigan's 11,000+ inland lakes, or on one of Michigan's 36,000+ miles of streams or rivers outside of the counties where they reside, or on one of the Great Lakes outside of their county of residence. To award grant funds based on such superficial numbers would benefit a few counties, and short-change many others in areas with extreme levels of boat use but with low local boat registration numbers.

We oppose this legislation.

#### House Bills 4072-4073 (Rep. Matt Lori)

This package would make it unlawful to operate a vessel in this state if the operator had a BAC of .08 or more, was under the influence of a controlled substance, or was visibly impaired. Additionally, the bills establish a zero tolerance for those vessel operators under age 21 and enhance penalties for repeat/subsequent offenders.

We support these changes which bring the watercraft laws into alignment with existing motor vehicle laws. These changes will enhance the safety of watercraft operators and the public while also simplifying law enforcement efforts. This “standardization” of the thresholds among different vehicle types should also simplify the public’s understanding of limits on operating all types of vehicles while under the influence.

We support this legislation.

#### **Asian Carp**

**Director-Designate Stokes** reported that environmental DNA (eDNA) tests have been conducted in Michigan waters in an effort to detect the presence of bighead or silver carp. From September 15 to October 5, researchers from the University of Notre Dame collected 74 water samples from the Galien River and 122 water samples from the St. Joseph and Paw Paw rivers, all in southwest Michigan. **Stokes** announced that he received news that all tests were negative for bighead and silver carp DNA. However, he said that even with this positive news, Michigan cannot relax its stance on Asian Carp and the threat they pose to the Great Lakes Basin. He said the University of Notre Dame intends to continue testing, targeting the Grand, Pere Marquette, Raisin, Belle, and Black rivers in 2011, and the Department will have input into the final sampling plan, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and will continue efforts to educate the public regarding Asian Carp, especially the anglers who are instrumental in monitoring these efforts.

Reports of Committee of the Whole ended at 3:45 p.m.

## **PURE MI HUNT PRESENTATIONS**

**Director-Designate Rodney Stokes** announced the following three winners of the 2011 Pure Michigan Hunt:

- Randy Willis of Augusta
- John Martin of Linden
- Bruno Brun of Ann Arbor

The winners can hunt bear, elk, antlerless deer, wild turkey, and reserved waterfowl during the 2011 hunting seasons. The winners also received prizes from Pure Michigan Hunt sponsors, including: crossbows donated by TenPoint Crossbows along with Quality Deer Management Association and Litchfield Outdoors; turkey hunting vests, custom box calls, and Michigan Turkey patches donated by the National Wildlife Turkey Federation; hats and shirts donated by Waterfowl USA; hats and record books provided by Boone and Crockett; and Ducks Unlimited gave one year memberships, Ducks Unlimited quarterly magazines, and duck decoys.

**Stokes** offered his sincere appreciation to the sponsors for making the hunt a success, and also gave a special thank you to the Natural Resources Commission and Quality Deer Management Association for purchasing the license tags for the winners.

**Stokes** said that this is the second year of the Pure Michigan Hunt, which really is a hunt of a lifetime experience. He reminded everyone that the cost is only \$4.00 to apply, and individuals can apply as many times as they wish. The application period for the 2012 Pure Michigan Hunt is March 1 through December 31, 2011.

In 2010, the DNR sold 23,437 applications to 8,719 applicants, which brought in close to \$94,000 to the Department's Fish and Game Fund.

**DNRE Wildlife Division Chief Russ Mason** and representatives of the sponsors joined Stokes in presenting the lucky winners their gifts.

## **PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARDS**

**Director-Designate Rodney Stokes** announced that several times each year, the Department gives recognition to those who assist the Department in doing its work by presenting Partners in Conservation Awards. He called up Jerry Gordon and Gary Engel, representatives of the St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers and the Harsens Island Waterfowl Hunters Association, recipients of the latest awards.

St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers is a conservation group that has been active since 2005 and has successfully raised and contributed approximately \$208,000 to wildlife and habitat efforts in the St. Clair Flats wildlife area.

Projects include providing over \$74,000 for planting crops for wildlife and over \$13,000 to help maintain public lands. In addition, they have assisted with the purchase, rental and repair of needed equipment, with almost \$48,000 donated.

The waterfowlers have assisted in researching and controlling invasive Phragmites, with over \$23,000 donated for work in the St. Clair Flats. They have supplied over \$40,000 as a match portion of federal grant applications, which further multiplies the Department's dollars and ability to get work done on the ground

The Harsens Island Waterfowl Hunters Association was formed in 1982 as an interested group of hunters wanting to help the DNR in wetland and waterfowl conservation efforts. It is a hands-on group that has never been afraid to get dirty in order to help.

Realizing that the Department's ability to provide food and cover for waterfowl was limited, they formed a continuing partnership in 1984 by becoming a sharecropper for the DNR on Harsens Island. This unique sharecropping agreement has provided for continuing habitat programs over the last 26 years.

Specifically, the group has provided approximately \$15,000 per year in obtaining materials needed to get food and cover planted for migrating waterfowl; provided over \$12,000 in supplies and materials in assisting in the maintenance of the area; donated over \$87,000 toward the purchase and rental of equipment for the area; and supplied \$10,000 as a match portion of a federal grant application.

The Harsens Island Waterfowl Hunters Association has contributed over \$261,000.

Both groups actively support waterfowl hunting and programs that encourage youth mentoring and participation. The Department has been able to accomplish more because of the Harsens Island Waterfowl Hunters Association and the St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers. **Stokes** said they have been true partners with the DNRE, and it is an honor for the Department to recognize them. He thanked them for all they do for waterfowl habitat, waterfowl hunting and mentoring our youth.

**Stokes** asked **Wildlife Division Chief Russ Mason** and **Doug Reeves of the Wildlife Division** to assist in presenting the awards.

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**Chairman Tim Nichols** recognized and welcomed State **Representatives Ed McBroom, Greg MacMasters and Matt Huuki** and **Senator Tom Casperson** to the meeting.

**NRC Chairman Nichols** adjourned the Committee of the Whole at 4:00 p.m. and reconvened at 4:30 p.m.

## **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

**Amy Spray Trotter, Resource Policy Manager, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)**, urged the Commission to approve the mute swan management proposal. Because the Commission is entrusted to manage wildlife based on sound science, MUCC believes the Commission should approve the mute swan management order. MUCC feels more outreach and education on mute swans is needed, and stakeholders of the organization have a meeting scheduled to discuss getting the message out to the public on invasive species and mute swans in particular. MUCC supports the DNRE's long-term goal to manage mute swans. It is not their intention to have a hunting season on mute swans, however, they are a non-native, invasive species and should be treated as such.

**Brian Seiss, President, Shiawassee Flats Citizens and Hunters Association**, said he is in favor of the mute swan management proposal. He said the Natural Resources Commission has a difficult public relations problem in dealing with mute swan management. Proponents see mute swans as beautiful, stately, elegant, docile birds. Wildlife biologists know these birds are an aggressive, dominant, invasive species that displaces native waterfowl and consumes large quantities of aquatic vegetation, thereby reducing wetland habitat quality. Population control is absolutely necessary. Failure to act would be irresponsible.

**Larry Reinardy, Wixom, MI**, spoke in favor of lifting the deer baiting ban and presented petitions that support the governor overriding the decision of the Natural Resources Commission by executive order with regard to the deer-baiting ban. He is frustrated with big government, big spending, and high taxes. Reinardy said he believes too much money has been spent in the research of TB and/or CWD.

**Jack Kleinhardt, Michigan Wildlife & Business Association**, spoke against the deer-baiting ban. Kleinhardt said NRC members are charged with the responsibility of setting regulations that affect wildlife, waters and public lands of Michigan and that they have the responsibility, when they sign an order, to prove it is just and valid. He doesn't think the NRC has done that in the case of the deer-baiting ban.

**Dave Rook, Nashville, MI**, first spoke on the issue of carp. He doesn't understand the reason for the August 15 season closing date for shooting carp with a bows and arrows. He next spoke against the deer-baiting ban. He believes a person should be able to feed when there is a need. Commissioner Madigan advised Mr. Rook that he could talk with Dr. Kelley Smith of the DNRE Fisheries Division on the carp issue.

**Therese Kline, Trails Chairperson, Michigan Horse Council**, presented a packet that detailed instances of positive interaction between the Department of Natural Resources and Michigan's equestrian trail-riding community. Kline reported that the Michigan DNR has had a very positive relationship with the Michigan Horse Council for over 30 years and also a very long-standing, positive relationship with the Michigan Trail Riders. Kline

said the Department is responsible for keeping 18 camps and over 400 miles of trails going to be used each summer. Director Stokes said he hoped the Department can build on this and tackle other issues with equestrian groups as well.

**Michael Thiede, representing Michigan Duck Hunters Association**, highlighted a report he prepared that includes seven different states and the province of Ontario, all of which consider mute swans an invasive species and are also dealing with the mute swan management problems. Quoting from the report, Thiede said mute swans are one of the most aggressive species of waterfowl in the world. Thiede read from an Indiana report that contends many states are enforcing removal policies for mute swans, including Maryland, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan, which has the largest concentration of mute swans in the region. Thiede urged the Commission make a decision based on fact and not feelings and adopt the proposed mute swan management plan.

**John Covert, Friends of the Detroit River**, a retired biology teacher and volunteer with the Friends of the Detroit River. The group heartily supports the efforts of the Department to manage the mute swan population. Covert said that the Friends of the Detroit River consider mute swans an invasive species and provided \$7,000 to fund a study by a U of M biologist who compiled a report, which is available online on the Friends of the Detroit River Website.

**Richard Wolinski, Ann Arbor, MI**, a professional wildlife ecologist, supports the mute swan management proposal. He has been conducting systematic surveys for many years and offered an independent view of the mute swan situation based on his more than 25 years of observation of inland counties of Michigan.

**Josh Haas, Glances at Nature Photography**, supports the mute swan management plan and urged a decision based on science and biodiversity of native Michigan habitats, not emotion. He is willing to put his trust in the DNR as a public citizen and is in support of any plan that protects our ecosystem from non-natives. He doesn't think the plan goes far enough, but it is a great start. He hopes the Department makes this decision and goes farther in controlling non-native, invasive species.

**Tom Funke, Michigan Audubon**, spoke in favor of the mute swan management plan. He said Michigan Audubon has over 100 years of history protecting Michigan's native birds and has supported the reintroduction of trumpeter swans to Michigan program for the past two decades. The ongoing effort to re-establish the trumpeter swan is threatened by the expansion of the invasive mute swans. Funke said Michigan Audubon is united with Audubon chapters and conservation organizations across America in support of managing invasive mute swan.

**Karen Stamper, Walled Lake, MI**, presented 960 signatures against the mute swan management plan and spoke against the proposal. Stamper questioned why rehabilitators won't be allowed to help injured swans and why they can't keep the

rehabilitated swans released on their own pond. She also questioned a report that the injured swans will be held in captivity. She has asked for Michigan studies but has received just the Maryland study. Stamper said according to the August NRC meeting minutes, there has been no Michigan study. Director Stokes asked Barb Avers from the DNRE Wildlife Division to answer Stamper's questions.

**Jeff Kala, Hillman, MI**, presented a CD with scientific articles that appeared in various journals, addressing the negative effects of baiting and feeding on wildlife. Kala spoke against bringing back deer baiting and said he would like to see pro-active management instead of reactive management for Michigan's deer herds.

**P.J. Garner, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and President of Michigan Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (MWRA)**, is against the mute swan management plan and respectfully requested that the vote on the proposal be postponed. Garner said the number of swans that come in to rehabilitators is very small, only approximately two dozen swans per year with successful releases approximately half that number. The MWRA would like to propose a compromise with regarding to mute swan rehabilitation. Instead of an outright ban, MWRA would like to propose a change to Section 5.74a(6) of the conservation orders to read: Mute swans may be taken into rehabilitation and released only under the following conditions:

1. That the swans are rendered sterile;
2. That they are rendered non-migratory by metacarpal pinioning;
3. That they are banded with information that allows them to be traced back to the rehabilitation facility; and
4. That they be placed only on private property.

They believe this will provide a compromise that will reduce the overall mute swan population while helping to prevent the negative public perceptions of the DNR and the Commission's actions.

**Sharon Smith, Private Practice Attorney in Oakland County**, is also a member of the animal law section of the State Bar of Michigan, however, her views are her own. She is against the mute swan management plan regarding rehabilitation. If man is responsible for harming the animals, then man should be responsible for providing care and treatment. She said there is a better solution than to letting mute swans die or euthanizing them.

**Terry Laymon, State Chairman of Ducks Unlimited of Michigan**, supports efforts of the Department to manage/reduce the mute swan population. Ducks Unlimited applauds the Department for their approach and fully supports the revisions recommended for mute swan management in Michigan.

**Bob Hoffman, Chelsea, Michigan**, spoke as a private citizen with the experience of working with and supporting the efforts of several other state wildlife agencies in the

mid-Atlantic, New England, and the Midwest. Hoffman supports the mute swan management plan and urged the Commission to take action on the changes proposed.

**Carol Ackerloff, Director of the Bird Center of Washtenaw County**, presented her personal views and those of the board of directors of the Center. She spoke against the proposed mute swan management plan.

**Dan Buyze, Big White Fish Lake Property Owners Association**, supports the mute swan management plan. He participated in the recent swan forum sponsored by the DNRE and has seen first hand the damage mute swans can do. The group is against any form of rehabilitation of the mute swan.

**Patricia Rusnell, Commerce Township**, is against the mute swan management proposal. She asked for more scientific information for the state of Michigan. Rusnell said she is concerned people will be turned loose and won't know the difference between the mute swan and the trumpeter swan. She questioned if the public will embrace the black beaks of the trumpeter swan vs. the orange beaks of the mute swan. She's concerned people will hurt all swans.

**Jason Dinsmore, Regional Representative of the National Wildlife Federation**, said the Federation fully supports the mute swan management plan as proposed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the present Wildlife Conservation Order up for a vote.

**Jill Fritz, Michigan State Director of the Humane Society of the United States**, spoke against the mute swan management plan. In addressing the science versus emotion issue, Fritz said the HSUS doesn't think there is anything wrong with allowing compassion and humanity to help form public policy decisions. The group believes lethal control should be used on a case-by-case basis and only as a last resort. Fritz asked the Commission to use their heads and their hearts in deciding the fate of the animals who live among us.

**Scott Berg, Grand River Chapter of Michigan Duck Hunters Association**, said the group has witnessed first hand the competition mute swans have with native species and fears that without action to control mute swans, the population will continue to increase and have devastating effects on wetlands, waterfowl, and recreational endeavors. The Association urges the NRC to support the proposal and adopt the order to manage the mute swan population.

**Crystal Brooks, a wildlife rehabilitator**, is against the mute swan management plan. Brooks feels because of the small number of mute swans rehabilitated each year, rehabilitators should be allowed to continue their work. There never should be verbal permission given to shoot the swans. Brooks supports a regulated, controlled hunt.

**Maxine Biver, Howell Nature Center**, manager of the wildlife rehabilitation program, said she is against the proposed mute swan management plan. Biver said the number of swans they rehabilitate is really very small, and she doesn't think the number that actually survive would make that much difference. She would hope that a way could be found to rehabilitate those few swans and then find a controlled area to put them. She would not advocate putting them back in the wild.

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**Chairman Nichols adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting and called the regular meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.**

**Chairman Nichols** listed the For Information Only items as:

Field Dog Trials  
Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 03 of 2011

Possession Limits for Fish (FO-248)

### **NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Approval of Minutes, January 13, 2010, NRC Meeting**

**Commissioner Brown** made a motion, supported by **Commissioner Madigan**, that the January 13, 2011, NRC minutes be approved. Motion carried.

APPROVED:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Timothy Nichols, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rodney A. Stokes, Chief of Staff

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#### **Mute Swan Management**

**Commissioner Madigan** made a motion that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 02 of 2011 regarding the management of mute swans be adopted. **Commissioner Wheatlake** supported the motion.

**Commissioner Coleman** questioned the lack of adequate local scientific evidence in support of the efforts of the plan. He said he didn't hear anyone disagree with inventory, numbers, or volume. Coleman's concern is whether the plan would actually accomplish the goal of reducing the mute swan population. The issue is not whether there is a problem but whether this anti-rehab action is the appropriate action.

**Commissioner Matonich** stated he has had an opportunity to review the studies and agrees that non-lethal methods of controlling the mute swan population have not been effective, and he is concerned with the population explosion of the birds. He feels attention needs to be focused on reducing the number of mute swans but wants to separate the issue of rehabilitators. Matonich doesn't feel the yearly number of rehabilitations is significant enough to make a difference on the resource.

**Chief Russ Mason** said the present proposal is just one part of a plan moving forward to reduce the population of mute swans. Director Stokes asked Chief Mason to explain how the Flyway Council works to help manage wildlife. Mason said Michigan is part of the Mississippi Flyway Council and works with a number of states up and down the Mississippi River to promote waterfowl conservation, to set hunting regulations and to come up with common management themes useful for preservation, conservation, and increases of a variety of native waterfowl species. Up and down the Flyway, mute swans are causing a variety of problems.

After further discussion, Commissioners Madigan and Wheatlake voted in favor of the motion, Commissioners Matonich and Coleman voted against the motion, and Commissioner Brown abstained from voting, because she had decided how she would vote on the motion prior to public comments. NRC Chairman Nichols broke the tie with his vote in favor of adopting the amendment. Motion carried by a vote of 3-2.

### **DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS**

**Chief of Staff Rodney Stokes** intends to sign all Director's Action items.

### **2011 NRC Committee Appointments**

Chairman Nichols read the following list of recent appointments to the NRC committees for 2011:

#### ***NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration***

*Commissioner Frank Wheatlake, Chair*  
Commissioner John Matonich  
Commissioner J. R. Richardson

#### ***NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries***

*Commissioner John Madigan, Chair*  
Commissioner John Matonich  
Commissioner J. R. Richardson

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

*Commissioner Mary Brown, Chair*  
Commissioner Hurley Coleman  
Commissioner John Matonich

***NRC Policy Committee on Parks***

*Commissioner Hurley Coleman, Chair*  
Commissioner Mary Brown

***NRC Policy Committee on Land Management***

*Commissioner J.R. Richardson, Chair*  
Commissioner John Madigan  
Commissioner Frank Wheatlake

***NRC Committee of the Whole***

All Commissioners

***Upper Peninsula Habitat Work Group***

*Commissioner J.R. Richardson, Chair*  
Commissioner John Madigan

Natural Resources Commission Chairman Tim Nichols will be the standing alternate for all committees.

**Deer Baiting Ban Review**

**Commissioner Madigan** announced that three years ago, a CWD plan was enacted and approved by the governor, which placed a three-year ban on deer-baiting in the Lower Peninsula where CWD was found. A commitment was made at that time to review the ban if there were no other CWD-positive findings in that three-year period. Since that is the case, Commissioner Madigan proposed holding three public meetings, one each in March, April, and May, to be held on NRC Commission dates. Options will be developed by Madigan for action in June so that if there is a change, the deadline for the Deer Guide can be met for publication in the fall. Madigan requested the first meeting be held March 10, 2011. Some issues to be considered will be other states' regulations, disease issues, equity, heritage, economics, social impacts, and other concerns brought by the public. It was agreed that the first public discussion would be held March 10, 2011.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Commissioner Madigan, Chair of the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries**, reported that bovine tuberculosis issues were discussed at the meeting, as well as the deer-baiting ban. There also was an interesting presentation regarding antler point restrictions on Beaver Island; a presentation on environmental DNA and update on Asian carp by Dr. Tammy Newcomb of the Fisheries Division; and Dr. Kelley Smith talked about some fisheries orders which will increase the possession limit for some species. The full report can be found below.

## **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

**Commissioner Coleman** reported that a number of Parks Committee members attended the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association Conference in Traverse City recently where a number of sessions were held with local parks and recreation agencies regarding provisions for grants to local governments through the Recreation Passport. The Department received an award for the promotion of the Recreation Passport, the program being one of the most innovated public relations activities taking place during the year. Coleman added that the Department was well represented by DNR staff.

**Commissioner Matonich** had an opportunity to attend the Maple River Co-op Quality Deer Management meeting, and it was an exceptional evening that highlighted the success of the co-op and how much the members care about deer management and habitat management. Commissioner Matonich added that he recently attended a local SCI chapter meeting and heard some of their issues and comments, and it, also, was a good meeting and well-received. Lastly, Commissioner Matonich commented on his attendance at a Trail Advisory Committee meeting near the end of last year, saying it was a very fruitful opportunity.

**Commissioner Madigan** said he went sturgeon spearing on Black Lake with 330 participants, and it was a great event.

**Commission Chair Nichols** reported that he had an opportunity to talk with quite a few Department enforcement groups at a chili cook-off by Fenton which was attended by approximately 800.

**Commissioner Wheatlake** made a motion to adjourn, seconded by **Commissioners Matonich and Brown**. Motion passed and the regular meeting of the NRC was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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## **NRC POLICY COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES MINUTES**

**Wildlife Division Chief Russ Mason** provided an update on the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) situation in Minnesota. A 12 to 13-year-old, free-ranging deer tested positive for CWD January 24, 2011. The deer was killed three miles from a CWD positive captive elk facility (January 2009). There has been a 25-mile surveillance done since that time. Over 1,400 deer were tested in the area, and all were negative for CWD. Recreational feeding will be banned in a four-county area.

**Chief Mason** stated that since CWD has not been found in Kent County, Michigan, where a captive cervid tested positive for CWD in August 2008, the deer-baiting discussion should be brought to the table for discussion. In 2008, deer baiting was no longer allowed in the Lower Peninsula due to the CWD situation.

**Dr. Powers** from Beaver Island offered a proposal related to Beaver Island Quality Deer Management and Wildlife Certification. Dr. Powers provided information on the size of the island. He discussed the various levels of support for antler point restrictions on the island and the biological data relevant to this support. Dr. Powers outlined the wildlife certification components such as adopting APRs, continuing control, improving management of wild turkeys, monitoring and enhancing common loon nesting success, and improving waterfowl habitat. Lastly, he presented information on an economic case study indicating this plan will increase tourism on the island.

**Dr. Tammy Newcomb**, DNRE Fisheries Division, gave a presentation on how DNA methods are used to detect Asian carp. There is indirect detection using DNA-based methods. These techniques have been in use for more than 20 years. The DNA is collected from the environment. Fish naturally shed sloughed cells in the mucus, scales, feces, and urine. Some cellular materials remain in suspension. Since Asian carp produce large amounts of feces and urine, this is a good technique. She outlined the eDNA surveillance method that appears to be a viable, early detection tool by allowing rapid surveillance across a large spatial scale, broad range of habitats, and greater detection sensitivity than traditional sampling methods.