

West Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council

Wakefield VFW Post 9084
107 U.S. Highway 2, Wakefield, Michigan
Monday, July 20, 2009
Meeting Minutes

WUP CAC Members Present:

Robert Black
Donald Britton
Marcy Cella
Floyd Dropps
Shawn Hagan
Fred "Mick" Jarvi
Lorana Jinkerson
David Johnson
Martin Johnson
Rory Mattson
G. Dale McNamee
Chauncey Moran
Robert "Skip" Schulz
Warren Suchovsky
Philip Wirtanen
Alan Ettenhofer for Pete Jandro

WUP CAC Members Absent:

Pete Jandro
Tony Kakuk
George Lindquist
James Schmierer
Dennis Stachewicz, Jr.

Department of Natural Resources Staff Present:

Stacy Welling, Upper Peninsula (UP) Field Deputy, Marquette
Craig Albright, Wildlife Division, Escanaba
Debbie Begalle, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Marquette
Rich Hill, Parks and Recreation, Marquette
Tim Melko, Office of Land and Facilities, Marquette
Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Division, Marquette
Debbie Munson Badini, Office of Communications, Marquette
Lt. Tim Robson Law Enforcement Division, Marquette
Bill Scullon, Wildlife Division, Escanaba
Penny Bacon, Executive Division, Marquette

The Western Upper Peninsula (WUP) Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. by **Warren Suchovsky**.

Adoption of the Agenda: **Shawn Hagan** made a motion to approve the agenda as printed. The motion was supported by several members. Motion carried.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: **Marcy Cella** made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Motion was supported by **Skip Schulz**. Motion carried.

Public Comments:

Tim Long, Chairman for the Lake Gogebic Chapter of Walleyes for Tomorrow. They're a non-profit organization and raise money for projects to increase the number of walleye, water quality, and habitat on Lake Gogebic. Their Chapter would like a 13 inch size limit for walleye on Lake Gogebic.

Pat Kitzman said Commercial Forest Act (CFA) is equal to a tax break for private hunt clubs. He said hunt clubs have taken advantage of loopholes. They can't charge for hunting and fishing but they charge for the use of blinds and for guiding. Mr. Kitzman said the CFA needs to be looked at again.

Al Clemens would like a hunting season on wolves. He also wants to know where the DNR is collaring predators, does and fawns. He would like to know where the deer habitat is in the WUP that was purchased with the Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP) funds. He asked why there wasn't a hunting season on wolves for the month the wolf was delisted. **Stacy Welling** made note of the handout provided on the wolf delisting-relisting timeline. The DNR doesn't have full control of wolves when they're on the Federal endangered species list. Stacy said pursuing wolves as a game animal would require legislation. Senator Prusi has already drafted a bill.

Reports:

Warren Suchovsky, Facilitator said the citizens of Michigan voted to manage natural resources by science. Warren thinks the citizens have a very important role to play to keep check on individual emotions and what some people profess to be science. Warren said tied to that is what he calls a "social license" if there is a change in deer regulations or an opening of a mine, society has to agree that it's a good course to take.

Warren introduced Natural Resources Commissioner J. R. Richardson. **Commissioner Richardson** thanked the Council members and the DNR staff for their time. He said they value the Council member's opinions. He would like to hear their opinion on House Bill 4198, which extends supplemental feeding until 2016.

Council Committees Reports:

Dave Johnson said there are eight members on the deer subcommittee and six of the members met in mid-June at Crystal Falls. They decided to address all three topics; baiting, supplemental feeding, and habitat together because they are all linked. In short summary everything is habitat, habitat, habitat. There was a survey in 1999 in the UP, 70 percent of the respondents used bait in the UP. To change the culture in the UP would be a major issue. They decided as long as there isn't a negative consequence, baiting should continue. Also, baiting helps with the recruitment of young hunters. Supplemental feeding seems to be fine as long as people follow the regulations. The goal of supplemental feeding as they saw it was not to increase the deer herd but to maintain the deer herd. Since there is already a habitat work group, which some of the Council members are part of; they decided to meet with Bill Scullon and discuss what is being done by the Upper Peninsula Habitat Work Group (UPHWG).

Bob Black suggested the Council discuss House Bill 4198. **Stacy Welling** said the bill would extend the authority of the NRC to make the decision on supplemental feeding to 2016. If the bill sunsets on January 1, 2010; it would give the authority to the full Legislature to make the decision on supplemental feeding. **Commissioner Richardson** said if there is support, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) would send a letter to the Legislators in support of the bill being renewed. **Bob Black** said if the Council supports extending the bill it would give the authority to the NRC versus the Legislature of which the majority is located downstate.

Shawn Hagan asked as the bill reads right now is it functional. **Craig Albright** said it allows the NRC to set regulations for supplemental feeding of deer in the UP versus the full Legislature that represents the entire State of Michigan. There are probably advantages of having a group of seven people, two of which reside in the UP, setting regulations for supplemental feeding in the UP. Wildlife Division would be able to make recommendations to the NRC on supplemental feeding but the NRC would have the ultimate authority.

Warren Suchovsky asked the Council if they favored extending the current authority of House Bill 4198 by five years. **Rory Mattson** would like the Council to make a recommendation to the DNR on baiting and feeding in the UP.

Dale McNamee made a motion to support HB 4198 to extend the NRC authority. **Marcy Cella** supported the motion. Ayes: All Nays: None. Motion carried.

Marty Johnson said the private lands subcommittee of the UPHWG met in May. They discussed aspen decline, hemlock and lowland conifer management needs to include private lands, privatization of corporate ownership resulting in forest fragmentation, what type of habitat is needed where, commercial forest landowners should be included and are vital to this entire process, develop information on food plots, opening development and maintenance programs. The subcommittee will meet in August to finalize their recommendations. They will provide those recommendations to the Council at the September meeting and to the NRC at their October meeting. Marty added the DNR has a DRIP program with some limited resources available for private landowners to improve their lands.

Warren Suchovsky would like the CAC deer subcommittee to make a recommendation to the Council for discussion at the September meeting. Also background information should be provided to the Council members two weeks prior to the meeting.

Bill Scullon, DRIP Coordinator said the UPHWG has been in existence for eight years. Commissioner Richardson is the Chair of the UPHWG and the work group includes some of the CAC members. Rory Mattson and Marty Johnson are on the subcommittee to identify private land wildlife habitat issues. The subcommittee has started to identify what are some private land wildlife habitat issues that arise from private individual landowners as well as corporate ownership. They will identify those issues at their subcommittee meeting in August to help guide the Wildlife Division's private lands program plus they want to develop a recommendation to the NRC through the UPHWG in October.

Staff Reports:

Stacy Welling, UP Field Deputy recognized John Siira, City Manager of Wakefield and Mayor Dick Bolen. Stacy said the EUP and the WUP CAC's were formed to provide more input to the Department. There is talk about possible mergers with the DNR, Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Agriculture; and streamlining State government in 2010. History, Arts and Libraries was disbanded and the DNR assumed some of their functions, including state archives and the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. Stacy will continue to provide updates to the Council. Stacy noted the handout from Brian Roell, DNR Wolf Coordinator, showing the wolf relisting-delisting time line since September 2008. The wolf is back on the federal endangered species list. The Department is closing about half of the 125 deer checks stations. The Pure Michigan Hunt applications will go on sale July 27, applications are \$4.00 each, and three winners will be drawn. State employees have four remaining furlough days, July 24, August 7 and 21, and September 4. The Department is looking for volunteers to work at the DNR Pocket Park during the week of the UP State Fair. If anyone would like to volunteer, please contact the Newberry DNR office at 293-5131. In August the NRC will take action on the waterfowl and falconry regulations and some road closures. The NRC will meet in Ontonagon on Thursday, October 8.

Commissioner Richardson invited everyone to attend the NRC meeting on Thursday, October 8 at the Ontonagon Theatre of Performing Arts. The UPHWG will meet on Wednesday, October 7.

Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Biologist made note of the handout outlining the history and time schedule of the Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit, Walleye Management Plan. Jim Dexter will be meeting with his staff in the next few days to talk about the plan and revisions. They hope to have the final product in January 2010. They want make sure in this planning effort they create a document that serves Fisheries Division purposes but also addresses the questions and concerns from the public. If anyone would like to make comments on the plan, please submit comments to Darren Kramer by the end of August.

Marty Johnson would like the DNR to include all of the fishing clubs in the UP. **Floyd Dropps** said there are different versions of the walleye management plan. Jessica said this is your chance to provide input to help create the walleye plan. **Dale McNamee** said the walleye plan needs to cover everything not just one area. Jessica said Fisheries is managed by watersheds, each management unit has their own walleye plan. **Floyd Dropps** wanted the Council to know that even if the local clubs helped raise walleye fingerlings in an effort to make a better local fishery, it would be at the DNR's discretion where those fingerlings were planted and wouldn't necessarily be planted in the local area. Floyd said the Council passed a resolution supporting the restocking of the walleye lakes in Iron and Dickinson. He would like a letter of recommendation from the Council to the walleye management plan. Jessica said there isn't a need for the letter of recommendation because the information has already been provided.

Jessica said historically their hatchery and research projects have been funded with Federal dollars (Dingell-Johnson) but doesn't fund their field work. They are pursuing Federal grants for those activities. The results of the walleye VHS testing for 2009 is negative. The Inter-Tribal Fisheries Program made available to the Department 70,000 surplus spring fingerling walleye that were stocked in Big Bay de Noc last week. Jessica

noted the handout on the 1842 Treaty area talking points provided by Nick Popoff, DNR Tribal Coordination Unit Manager.

Craig Albright, Wildlife Division said they are working with FMFM on plans for state forest lands for 2011. They are also working on partnership programs with local groups and clubs. They are assigned every year to band geese and ducks in cooperation with the Federal Government. This year they reached their quota by catching and banding 173 geese. It helps to determine the local harvest of geese. Two bull moose were hit and killed near Alberta resulting in injuries to the motorists. Any salvageable meat is donated to local food banks. In reference to the deer check stations, only the Operation Service Centers will check deer during the archery and muzzleloading seasons. Most major DNR offices will be open during the firearm deer season. In the WUP, deer check stations slated to be closed include: Wakefield Field Office; Porcupine Mountains, McLain, and Fort Wilkins State Parks; and the Bessemer Ranger Station. The predator prey study will probably move around to several sites and done in stages. They started in Menominee County in the low snowfall zone of the UP and to make sure they could capture enough fawns. There are 50 radio collared fawns, and also some wolves, bobcat, coyotes and black bear. The researchers found part of a radio collared fawn in a bald eagles nest.

Tim Melko, Office of Land and Facilities said antlerless applications, are on sale from July 15 – August 15. During this time only one application can be purchased either for public or private land.

Debbie Begalle, FMFM said at a previous CAC meeting there was discussion on a state land issue at the mouth of the Huron River. Some of the issues were people camping without the availability of facilities and ORVs riding on the beach. They are still discussing some options but they are going to post carsonite signs stating no motorized vehicles pass this point. Three boat access sites are being developed at the Groveland Mine recreation area in Dickinson County, resulting in a temporary road closure of the West Pond Road from August 1 to November 1. However, the public access site on South Pond is open. The project is being funded through the Michigan Waterways fund.

Rich Hill, WUP District Supervisor, Parks and Recreation Division said state parks are funded by user fees; to date it's down six percent from last year statewide. The WUP parks are slightly above or the about the same as last year. The boat access site at Bergland is being redeveloped. The project should be completed by the end of August or the first part of September. The Stonington Farmer's Dock project will begin the first week in August. It will require blasting an 800' channel through rock to create an access to Bay de Noc. Rich said the Recreation Passport is still in the Senate.

Old Business - Council Survey Results:

Warren Suchovsky said about half of the Council members responded to the survey. He would have liked more comments from the members explaining their reasoning. Warren is planning to involve the Council members in things beyond the Council meetings.

New Business – ORV Issues:

Don Britton said the ORV trails and signage situation that Skip talked about at the last meeting is UP wide. ATV sales have outgrown snowmobile sales. Last year over

260,000 snowmobile trail permits were sold, imagine the number of ATV permits sold. There are approximately 1,000 miles of designated ATV trails in the State compared to over 5,000 miles of trails for snowmobiles. **Phil Wirtanten** said there are a number of issues, including private land easements and liability. He suggested addressing these issues at a specific session of the Council to take a broader approach.

Don Britton has been asked to sit on the Snowmobile Advisory Committee and he will be attending a joint meeting of the Snowmobile Advisory Committee (SAC) and the ORV Trails Advisory Board in Lansing on Wednesday, August 5.

Skip Schulz said the Mi-Trale signage program was not local issue. This is an issue that is statewide. The trail damage is the reason Mi-Trale is trying to make sure the traffic is funneled to specific trails. Most of the trails Mi-Trale maintains are non-funded, they have over 1,000 miles of trail of which 150 miles are funded and their membership funds the rest.

Warren Suchovsky asked Don and Skip to form an ORV subcommittee. Don suggested waiting until after the Joint SAC-ORV meeting. Don will provide an update at the September CAC meeting.

Stacy Welling said **Don Britton** was nominated for a 2009 Governor's Service Award. Don is a tireless volunteer and has focused his energy to develop, maintain and support all recreational opportunities in Marquette County. Stacy read some of the letter of recommendation for the Service award: "tactful with a sincere touch of humor makes it enjoyable for people to work with Don, he's proven in his many efforts to be reliable, thorough, and effective, in advancing recreation opportunities, and his commitment to work on various committees over the past 13 years has proven him to be a living definition of the word volunteerism." Don was awarded with a certificate recognizing his commitment to service.

Next Meeting:

The Council decided not to have Al Stewart give a presentation on woodcock at their September meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 28 in Keweenaw County, location to be determined.

Closing Members Comments:

Floyd Dropps said a motion was passed by the Council to restore fisheries on a number of lakes and to have the DNR consult with them. He would like to see it in writing and sent to more people than just Fisheries Division. **Jessica Mistak** said we have the motion and we are working with you to have a walleye plan in place by next spring.

Floyd Dropps and **Dave Johnson** will have a walleye subcommittee meeting.

Bob Black suggested having five minutes to discuss an agenda item and if more time is needed to make a decision send the topic to a subcommittee.

Chauncey Moran said the statement that the Department hasn't listened is a pretty broad brush and unfair. They have a job to do and they are willing to work with the public.

WUP-CAC Minutes
July 20, 2009
Page 7

Marcy Cella made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion supported.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.