

Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 13, 2014

5:30-6:00pm EST DNR Division Reports * 6:00-8:00pm EST Council Meeting

Great Lakes Sports & Recreation Club, Escanaba, MI

Facilitator: Phil Wirtanen Co-Facilitator: Warren Suchovsky

Council Members Present

David Anthony	Michael Holmes	Robert "Skip" Schulz
Ken Buchholtz	Dave Johnson	Travis Smith
Jerry Divine	George Lindquist	Bob Stinson
Floyd Dropps	Chauncey Moran	Phil Wirtanen
Larry Heathman	Jim Schmierer	

Council Members Absent/Excused

David Anderson	Jim Lorensen
Mick Jarvi	Rory Mattson
Katherine Kruse	Warren Suchovsky

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons

Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division, Ishpeming
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Bill Doan, Parks and Recreation Division, Baraga
Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Division, Escanaba
Tim Melko, Facilities, Operations & Support, Marquette
Debbie Munson Badini, Deputy Public Information Officer, Marquette
Stacy Welling Haughey, Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator, Marquette
Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Lt. Pete Wright, Law Enforcement Division, Marquette
CO Trey Luce, Law Enforcement Division, Marquette

Mrs. Haughey began the Division Report portion of the WUPCAC meeting at 5:42pm EST. She thanked Mr. Ken Buchholtz and members of the Great Lakes Sport & Recreation Club for use of their facility for this meeting. She welcomed Mr. Bob Stinson, new WUPCAC member from Chassell, and thanked everyone in the audience for attending.

DNR Division Reports

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on January 6, 2014. The following verbal updates were provided.

- **Stacy Welling Haughey, U.P. Regional Coordinator:** Mrs. Haughey noted several dates of meetings and activities listed in the Division Reports, such as Trust Fund grant workshops and U.P. Deer Advisory Team meetings. She also gave an update on the following:

- Applications are being accepted for the NRC's Youth Conservation Council. The Council has been in existence for two years. Applications and more information are available online and she encourages any youth interested to apply.
 - There have been several successful initiatives the Council has worked on over the years. Recently, a few of the Council's newest resolutions have come to fruition, such as ORV signage, event permit, free OHV weekend, the new license structure, wolf hunt, and the combo tag. She thanked Mr. Schulz for his involvement with the ORV initiatives and Mr. Lindquist for his involvement with the license structure and combo tag.
 - **Mrs. Haughey** also mentioned the annual election of Council officers. **Facilitator Wirtanen** stated since the elections have been held the last two years in May, it will be included on the May 2014 agenda.
- **Debbie Munson Badini, Deputy Public Information Officer:** Mrs. Munson Badini welcomed to the meeting Mr. Craig Woerpel and Mr. Tim Kobasic, both from local radio stations. She stated 31 conservation officer recruits began the training academy yesterday; weekly updates will be posted on the DNR website and Facebook page. Also, a press release was just sent out regarding supplemental feeding being allowed in southern U.P. counties. Permits are issued for free as long as the group or individual qualifies.
- **Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division:** **Mr. Minzey** reported he just received the list of qualified candidates for a wildlife biologist in Escanaba, adding more boots on the ground. A large carnivore staff position will be stationed in Marquette and report to Lansing. He discussed the recent supplemental feeding press release. Supplemental feeding was stopped in 2009 due to concerns with disease. Through the efforts of several individuals, historical data was reviewed to determine triggers in which supplemental feeding could be done. This year's winter has exceeded that trigger, therefore, allowing supplemental feeding in southern U.P. counties on private land only.
- **Mr. Lindquist** asked if winter wolf surveys will be conducted every other year. **Mr. Minzey** stated the wolf and moose surveys were done together last year, however, it overtaxed staff and they weren't able to be completed. The wolf survey will be done again this year and then again in 2016.
 - **Mr. Divine** asked if the CWD reported in Wisconsin is moving north. **Mr. Minzey** stated it is about 75 miles from Menominee right now. Known cases in WI made a 200 mile jump north. **Mr. Divine** asked if the order still stands when CWD gets a certain distance from the U.P., supplemental feeding would be restricted. **Mr. Minzey** explained the order, stating there is a 10-mile radius and no longer restricts the entire U.P.
 - **Mr. Anthony** asked about prion. **Mr. Minzey** stated prion disease is the deer version of mad cow disease found in beef, for example. Prion is a protein whose structure gets mutated. It is always fatal in deer and now moose. **Mr. Minzey** answered several more questions regarding this disease. **Mrs. Haughey** offered a presentation at a future meeting or the upcoming Joint UPCAC meeting if the Council is interested.
 - **Mr. Schulz** asked about the Canadian lynx and cougars. **Mr. Minzey** stated the 24th sighting of a cougar in the U.P. has been confirmed and was poached. It was captured on a trail cam several days earlier. It is an open case.
 - A member of the audience asked if CWD remains in the ground. **Mr. Minzey** stated it needs a high temperature or bleach solution to get rid of it. It was asked if

supplemental feeding is only on private property. **Mr. Minzey** replied yes, however, it can be on public land if permission is received from the property administrator. The DNR has never advocated for public feeding of deer; however, a compromise was developed to offer a permit to private individuals who want to put forth the money and effort to do it. He further explained the permit process.

- **Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resource Division:** **Mr. Stampfly** stated there were no additions to his written report.
- **Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Division:** **Ms. Mistak** reminded the group that Free Fishing Weekend will be held February 15-16. A list of weekend events is maintained on the DNR website: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10364_52261_50497-317730--00.html. The new license structure takes effect March 1, 2014. New licenses will be sold beginning March 1, but will not be required until April 1 (last year's licenses are good through March 31). She explained the fishing licenses now available and reminded the group to review the options.
- **Lt. Pete Wright, Law Enforcement Division:** **Lt. Wright** stated there were no additions to his report. If there are questions, he will be available during the meeting.
- **Tim Melko, Facilities and Operation Division:** **Mr. Melko** stated a snapshot of the new license structure is included in the meeting packets. The 2014 licenses begin March 1. There will be public outreach events, videos, and trainings for front office staff and retailers to help better explain the changes.
- **Bill Doan, Parks & Recreation Division:** **Mr. Doan** stated he did not have any additions to his report.
 - **Mr. Divine** asked about plans for promoting and maintaining a closed ski trail in his area and if monies from recreation passport sales will be used to open it. **Mr. Doan** stated this particular site was discussed and they would like to re-open it; however, it's a matter of finding the internal resources to do so. There is an effort underway to look at those areas previously groomed to see if they can be funded and they are always interested in partners who may be willing to help. He stated the DNR fell short on the goal for recreation passport sales so some forecasted revenue was lost. **Facilitator Wirtanen** asked if a club or group could use equipment to keep it open; **Mr. Doan** replied yes.

Call To Order

Facilitator Wirtanen called the regular meeting to order at 6:18pm EST. Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance. He explained the Council is an advisory council and includes 20 citizen members who have shown interest in representing the citizens' point of view and who help guide the DNR in being more effective and efficient.

Adoption of Agenda

Facilitator Wirtanen asked if there were any additions to the agenda; no additions were brought forth. **Mr. Schulz** motioned to accept the agenda as presented; **Mr. Heathman** supported the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Jarvi, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Lorenson, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Suchovsky. Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Facilitator Wirtanen asked if there were any corrections or additions to the September 16, 2013 WUPCAC meeting minutes which were emailed to each member previously; none were brought forth. **Mr. Schmierer motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Jarvi, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Lorenson, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Suchovsky. Motion carried.**

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

Facilitator Wirtanen explained the procedure for this section of the meeting and opened the floor for public comments.

- **Mr. Tim Kobasic**, speaking as a representative of the Michigan Snowmobile and Trail Advisory Council's (MSTAC) ORV Advisory Workgroup, stated the group is working on the ORV signage issue. An outline of how it will be approached was recommended to Lansing and he will keep the Council apprised of the progress pertaining to legalities, uniformity and system type. He also noted that progress is being made on connecting routes, north of Rapid River (a map was distributed). He discussed the progress of the connector route to be designated which may take a long time. Another map was distributed for a connecting route in Cedar River of Menominee County. The Hiawathaland Trail Association was mentioned as being a part of the connection system. He stated things are progressing and the network of county and road commissioners is nice to see. There is a lot of work behind the scenes. The first formal action will be taken next week at a meeting in Marquette. He appreciates the support. He also mentioned a new mapping system called Rider X from Polaris. Snowmobile trails are already included, and ORV/ATV trails are being added.
- **Mr. John Lucas** from the audience, stated he had a question about supplemental feeding in the eastern U.P., however, he said Mr. Minzey provided an answer before the meeting. Mr. Lucas asked about feeding deer on state land. Mr. Minzey stated the state (through a Wildlife Conservation Order) does not authorize supplemental feeding on state land. If you receive permission from the land administrator, it can occur on public land.

Old Business

1. **Limited U.P. Wolf Hunt Update:** **Mr. Minzey** referenced a handout in the meeting packets, indicating 96% of those who purchased a wolf license had purchased licenses before. A total of 23 wolves were harvested out of the target harvest of 43. Unit A had a quota of 16 and 5 were harvested. Unit B had a quota of 19 and 14 were harvested. Unit C had a quota of 8 and 4 were harvested. There were 12 males and 11 females.
 - It was asked if trapping will be allowed next year. **Mr. Minzey** indicated it is too early as data is currently being analyzed. There are also two petitions circulating right now and the DNR will have to wait for the outcomes of those before determining the next step.
 - It was asked why the harvest was so low. **Mr. Minzey** stated the primary goal was accomplished, to allow hunting to help control the wolf problem. Temperatures were an issue. Also, some people who haven't hunted wolves before were not prepared for the conditions, i.e. no snowshoes, without blinds.
 - It was asked why trapping wasn't allowed. **Mr. Minzey** stated the DNR wanted to be conservative with this first hunt and didn't want to go beyond the quota of 43.

- **Mr. Lindquist** stated he was glad the hunt happened. He thanked the DNR for going this route.
 - **Mr. Smith** asked how the Wisconsin wolf population compares to Michigan. **Mr. Minzey** stated the population in Wisconsin is around 800, 15-20% higher than Michigan.
 - It was asked if the wolf season could be taken away. **Mr. Minzey** replied yes and explained how. Mr. McNamee from the audience explained the most recent initiative. **Mr. Smith** asked if there is a season after the election, will the same regulations as this last hunt apply. **Mr. Minzey** stated it is not known at this time; data will be examined and will be used to determine future hunts.
2. U.P. Deer Advisory Team (UPDAT) Open House Dates: **Mr. Minzey** pointed out the open house dates listed in the Division Reports. One will be held in Escanaba on February 6. He asked Mr. Lindquist or Mr. Johnson to provide an update as members who serve on the UPDAT. **Mr. Lindquist** indicated 8 meetings were scheduled and spread out across the U.P. to reach out to the public and let them know what the UPDAT has been working on. There are 10-12 people in the group and they meet sporadically to discuss a number of issues. A good deal of meeting time has been spent working on deer regulations, past, current and future. They would like to begin developing habitat initiatives. **Mr. Minzey** stated the goal of the open houses is to meet local DNR folks and local UPDAT members, find out what they've been working on, and get input on the buck options. They would like the public to get involved and be a part of the process. **Mr. Lindquist** stated the new license package and how it will impact deer licenses will also be discussed.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if supplemental feeding is what the UPDAT wants; he stated there is a lot of snow in the western end of the U.P. and feels it will be devastating to the U.P. herd. **Mr. Minzey** replied the weather has opened supplemental feeding up in the southern U.P. on private land and feeding can occur in the Lake Superior watershed every year.

New Business

1. Deer Season Recap: **Mr. Minzey** reported the deer check stations across the U.P. were down 25% almost universally. With the extension of last year's winter, the numbers were expected to be lower. It is anticipated next year's season will be down again, similar to 2008 and 2009 winters. There are not a lot of fawns going into this winter.
2. Partnering for Veterans Initiative: **Mrs. Haughey** reported, in Mr. Andrews absence, that a group of several different stakeholders have been meeting regularly to find ways to encourage returning veterans to be engaged in the outdoors and make it easier for them to do so. **Mr. Buchholtz** is a member of this group. An event is being planned for September 2014 and partners and any type of assistance are being sought to help the cause. **Mr. Buchholtz** added this group started in July 2013 and he got involved because of Wheelin' Sportsmen. The DNR's Accessibility Advisory Council is also working on this initiative. **Mrs. Haughey** stated if there are any groups with equipment or funding who would like to help, contact her or Mr. Buchholtz.

3. Discussion on Process Going Forward with Free ORV Riding Weekend: **Mrs. Haughey** stated the Council has talked about this for a long time. It was passed in recent legislation, coinciding with free fishing weekend, and the details are being worked out. She will share information with the Council as it's developed.
4. Additional Agenda Items Added by Council: There were no additional items added.

Committee Reports

Facilitator Wirtanen stated he has received communication from a few Council members to revisit the basis for the committee concept and he has talked with several members as well. In his opinion, parliamentary procedure was followed. As to the actual mechanics of committee function, it allows for flexibility. His committee, the Trails/Law/Recreation committee, has met twice in person with members and staff and it has worked very well. If there are no issues, there is no need to meet. If there is an issue, however, having a committee meeting is the main goal and the proper level of action should be initiated.

- **Mr. Dropps** indicated he thinks the process is okay, but there are some areas that need to be discussed. He feels a member should be able to be on more than one committee as they may have multiple interests. He also feels if the designated lead/chairman doesn't make the committee meeting, hasn't shown any interest, or doesn't answer emails, the group should be able to choose another lead.
- **Mr. Anthony**, lead of the committee Mr. Dropps is referring to, explained he was unable to attend the first and only meeting, and the resolution was put forth at the first meeting. He stated had he received the request for additional meetings, he would've checked with Facilitator Wirtanen on the committee meeting process; however, there was never a request for a follow-up meeting. He stated there was also no DNR staff at the first meeting.
- **Facilitator Wirtanen** stated it is the intention of each committee to involve DNR staff as a resource to offer input from an opinion perspective on what's being put forth. It is the whole idea to be as collaborative as we can with the DNR staff available to us. The combined effort of the committee structure and staff experience brings forth a workable product.
- **Mr. Dropps** provided further detail on their committee meeting. He stated the process worked, but the committee didn't function the way it was supposed to.
- **Mr. Johnson**, in conjunction with one of Mr. Dropp's suggestions, stated many members have an interest in other areas, and they were on other committees before. Since they are putting some of their jobs aside to come here, they should be able to participate in other committees.
- **Facilitator Wirtanen** asked the Council if they wish to participate in more than one committee. The initial assignments were meant to not burden members with additional meetings to start out with small groups. **Mr. Buchholtz** stated he feels they should. **Mr. Stinson** stated many members have multiple interests and if they are willing to put the time in, then they should be allowed. **Facilitator Wirtanen asked the Council by show of hands how many wish to participate in more than one committee; majority of hands were shown.** He asked members to let the committee leads know if they have an interest in serving on another committee. A lengthy discussion ensued on how members will be notified of committee meetings. **Mrs. Haughey** offered a conference call option.

- **Mr. Lindquist** stated he's happy with the committee makeups and doesn't agree with each committee having to pass everything through the entire Council for interest.
- **Mr. Schulz** stated his committee is great and if the right people with the interest and knowledge are involved, the process really works.
- **Facilitator Wirtanen** stated since there isn't a consensus on the issue, he would like to move onto committee resolution activity. He will talk to the leads of each committee afterwards.

1. Trails/Recreation/Law:

- **Response to Submitted Resolutions:** A written response from Director Creagh to the three resolutions submitted by this committee after the September 16, 2013 meeting was reviewed by the Council and read aloud by **Facilitator Wirtanen** for the benefit of the audience. **Mr. Schulz** clarified Resolution #1 is for all recreational safety programs.
- **Present Proposed Resolutions #1-5 for Consideration:** Facilitator Wirtanen reviewed each of the five resolutions proposed.
 - Resolution #1 requests the MDNR and its Law Enforcement Division, with the flexibility offered by hiring additional Conservation Officers (CO's), to place CO's in those Western UP counties currently understaffed with first consideration given to those counties with critical and priority CO needs. **Mr. Anthony motioned to approve Resolution #1 as presented; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Jarvi, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Lorensen, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Suchovsky. Motion carried.**
 - Resolution #2 requests the MDNR to develop a volunteer program throughout its organization, including the Law Enforcement Division, with the focus to provide greater communication and understanding of natural resource issues among stakeholders, as well as assist and supplement staff in the performance in their duties, and that these volunteer programs not serve as replacements for established positions. **Mr. Schulz** clarified this resolution came from a trail ambassador program in Wisconsin and Minnesota. It is to work with staff, not replace them. Discussion on the motion related to the how volunteers are utilized and concerns with taking away from boots on the ground. **Mr. Moran motioned to approve Resolution #2 as presented; Mr. Divine supported the motion. Ayes: 13. Nays: 2. Absent: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Jarvi, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Lorensen, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Suchovsky. Motion carried by majority vote.**
 - Resolution #3 supports the continued development of the Uniform Snowmobile/ ORV Trail Signing System, and that said system clearly differentiate between snowmobile and ORV trails. Discussion determined that development on this initiative has progressed and there is no need for this resolution being a similar resolution was passed at the last meeting. **Resolution stricken; no further action needed.**
 - Resolution #4 recommends the MDNR or other appropriate state agency/office set reasonable expectations for the use of recreational safety enforcement funds and that fund recipients be audited to ensure expenditures and activities are consistent

with the program expectations. **Mr. Schulz** further explained the suggestion is to create a mechanism to ensure that funding given by the DNR to local law enforcement agencies for recreational safety enforcement is used for this intent and no other activities. **Mr. Stinson motioned to approve Resolution #4 as presented; Mr. Anthony supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Jarvi, Mr. Lorensen, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Mattson, Mr. Suchovsky. Motion carried.**

- **Resolution #5** supports the passage of HB4993, the Wildlife Management Public Education Fund Bill, in recognition of the importance of hunting and fishing in wildlife and fisheries management, to Michigan's economy, and our cultural heritage, as well as to correct erroneous and misleading media depictions of hunting and fishing, and further that the WUPCAC communicate its support, as a group and individually, to the MDNR and appropriate Michigan legislative representative(s). **Mrs. Munson Badini** stated this bill has passed and was signed at the end of the December, therefore, negating the need for the resolution. **Resolution stricken; no further action needed.**
- **Facilitator Wirtanen** indicated all approved resolutions will be forwarded to the DNR Director for consideration.

2. Fisheries:

- **Response to Submitted Resolutions:** A written response from DNR Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter to a resolution submitted by this committee after the September 16, 2013 meeting was reviewed by the Council and summarized by **Mr. Anthony**, lead for the committee. The slot limits for the lakes requested by the committee have been removed as requested. They will be reviewed again and may come back as a suggestion in the future. It was recognized that support for slot limits was high statewide, but did not reflect the views of the local community.

3. Forestry: **Mr. Schmierer**, lead for the committee, stated the committee has not met and no major issues have been brought forward or were listed on the council agenda topic survey a while back. However, there are several mechanisms in place that offer opportunities to provide feedback related to forestry issues, such as through compartment reviews, forest management plans, etc. He congratulated the DNR on passing their forestry certification audit completed a few months ago. He passed around the guidelines for the Council to see. Any interested party can comment on these standards. He also mentioned the Michigan Biomaterials Initiative of which Michigan Tech University is a part of. Summaries are available on the MTU website if interested. He noted any discussions related to the forest should be approached from a position of strength and opportunity. He suggested, with the varying levels of knowledge and expertise, the impact of forestry on the state's economy might be an appropriate topic for the Joint UPCAC meeting. The presentation could cover a state of the forest aspect, the timber sale process, how it relates back to the compartment reviews and management plans, forest management practice as it relates to habitat, etc. His hope is for the committee to be more active in the spring, as there seems to be no issues at this time, except for ash borer which is being addressed.

- **Mr. Schulz** asked if it would work to have a roundtable discussion on the state forest as so many people have an impact. **Mrs. Haughey** stated last April, the first timber summit was held in many years and several stakeholders were there. The Timber Advisory Committee was charged with the findings of that summit and there were a list of things they wanted to accomplish. She could share the list with the committee so they would know what's happening at that level and how one can participate.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the cold winter weather will have an impact on emerald ash borer. It was noted that it can and there is literature available on the topic.
4. **Wildlife:** **Mr. Smith**, lead for the committee, stated he has had an opportunity to speak with members of the committee on different issues. They are not ready to move forward with a resolution at this time, but they will benefit from more information from Mr. Minzey.

DNR Reports on Requested Information

The following were requests for additional information at the last meeting or prior to this meeting:

1. **Deer Season Ground Blind Placement Order:** **Mrs. Haughey** stated a copy of the order was emailed to the Council on September 17, 2013 after the last meeting.
2. **U.P. Deer License Reference Sheet:** **Mrs. Haughey** stated a copy of the reference sheet was also emailed to the Council on September 17, 2013 after the last meeting.
3. **Land Acquisition/Legal Descriptions:** **Mrs. Haughey** explained a request was made at the July meeting for a listing of game fund sources broken down by county. It is a large file, and she has prepared one color copy for Mr. Mattson as he requested. **Mr. Johnson** offered to provide memory sticks to save the document on for everyone. **Mrs. Haughey** will follow-up with Mr. Johnson after the meeting.
4. **Event Permit Update:** **Mr. Doan** stated the update was provided with the DNR's response to Trail/Law/Recreation Committee's resolution #2 (see under Committee Reports).

Next Meeting

1. **2014 Meeting Dates & Locations:** The Council reviewed the proposed 2014 meeting dates and locations. **Facilitator Wirtanen** proposed moving the December meeting back to the first week of November, due to the last two December meetings being cancelled due to weather and other circumstances. The Council agreed upon November 10, 2014 as the meeting date in lieu of December 8, 2014, as well as all other dates listed.
2. **Next Meeting Date:** **Facilitator Wirtanen** noted the Joint UPCAC meeting will be held Monday, March 17 in Marquette at NMU. The next regular WUPCAC meeting will be held on Monday, May 19 in Gogebic County.
3. **Items for Next Agenda:** **Facilitator Wirtanen** stated discussion this evening indicated two suggested topics for the Joint meeting: a state of the forest presentation and CWD. He stated pre-meeting conference calls are held two weeks before the meeting and if there are any other topic ideas to please let him know before then. **Mrs. Haughey** stated she will bring these suggested topics to the EUPCAC meeting on January 23rd. **Mr. Lindquist** suggested the predator prey study as an agenda topic for a fall meeting.

Public Comments

Facilitator Wirtanen opened the floor to members of the audience for their comments.

- **Mr. AJ Campbell** introduced himself and his colleague. They both work with the Forestry Assistance Program for the conservation districts through the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Their role is to provide assistance to private landowners. Their office is located in Kingsford and Crystal Falls, and they will be available after the meeting for questions.
- **Mr. Al Ettenhoffer** of UP Whitetails stated he worked with Dr. Schmidt on the CWD program and it is the best program they could come up with. **Mrs. Haughey** invited Mr. Ettenhoffer to the March 17th Joint UPCAC meeting for the presentation.

Closing Comments

- **Mr. Schulz** and **Mr. Buchholz** were commended for their respective activities. Compliments were also given to **Mr. Holmes**, who was featured on this evening's episode of Discovering on TV6.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm EST.

Approved 5/19/2014