

## MINUTES

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

MARCH 8, 2007

RAMADA INN  
3325 DAVENPORT  
SAGINAW

#### PRESENT FOR THE COMMISSION

Keith Charters, Chair  
Bob Garner, Vice-Chair  
Mary Brown  
Hurley J. Coleman, Jr.  
Darnell Earley  
John Madigan  
Frank Wheatlake

#### PRESENT FOR STAFF

Jim Riley, Legal Counsel  
Becky Humphries, Director  
Dennis Fox, Chief of Staff  
Dennis Fedewa, Chief Deputy  
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy  
Jim Ekdahl, UP Field Deputy  
Teresa Gloden, Assistant to the NRC  
Other DNR Staff

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chairman Charters** called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the Natural Resources commission (NRC) to order at 3:15 p.m. The Committee of the Whole meeting is a working session of the NRC.

#### Deer Hunter Opinion Survey: Preliminary Estimates

**Brian Frawley and Brent Rudolph, Wildlife Division**, presented preliminary estimates of results from a deer hunter opinion survey conducted by staff. This survey was sent out to 9000 random 2006 license buyers (3000 each in the UP, northern Lower Peninsula, and southern Lower Peninsula). **Mr. Frawley** reviewed the survey questions and stated that two of three mailings of this survey have been completed. At this time the response rate is approximately 55 percent. Discussion ensued.

**Bill Moritz, Chief, Wildlife Division**, noted that in 2006, the "One Buck" option came before the NRC for action and was not passed. He noted that it is on the agenda for action by the NRC again today with two options: one buck for the UP only, or one buck statewide. He stated that the discussion of deer quantity versus quality has been around for a long time and is an indication from the hunting community that a change is desired.

However, it is difficult to develop tradeoffs between quality and quantity and said the decision should correspond with habitat. Implementing a one buck limit may alter hunting strategies but not significantly.

**Commissioner Wheatlake** noted that there are four ways to get larger bucks, larger antlers and more deer: 1) limit the number of hunters; 2) limit days allowed afield; 3) method of take; or 4) set a restriction on bag limit or type of animals taken (point restrictions). He believes it is necessary to conduct an on-line survey in addition to the hard-copy survey recently sent out.

**Commissioner Madigan** reviewed the preliminary survey results on the one buck issue. He observed that only 53 percent of licensed hunters in the UP supported a one buck limit and 45 percent were opposed. He asked that survey results be available by December 1 of each year so hunting regulations changes or considerations can be made considering survey results. He also stated that an on-line survey is needed. **Chief Moritz** agreed that the survey is a valuable tool and that staff will continue to develop and improve the process.

### **DNR Land Consolidation – Nike Missile Site**

**Mindy Koch, Deputy Director**, introduced **Linda Mayer**, an attorney representing Commerce Township, Oakland County. She also introduced Kerry Wieber, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, who chaired the Land Consolidation Review Committee.

The 564 acre site was purchased in 1945 with a mix of State Game and Fish Protection Fund and General Fund monies to provide hunting opportunities. Then in 1949, the Department of Defense established the Nike missile base as part of the Detroit Nike defense network. That base was active until 1974. After the missile base closed, the buildings on the property were used by the Michigan Conservation Corps, and then leased to the Oakland County Sheriff's Department and Michigan Works Office. As of January 2007, no buildings on this property are in use or leased. This is a large site in a heavily developed area. It holds several dilapidated buildings. Currently, there are several illegal activities occurring on this property, such as: ORV use; paintball; homeowner trespass; dumping along the property boundary; and deer feeding stations around the perimeter of the property. After all aspects of this site were evaluated, disposal was recommended.

Commerce Township has expressed an interest in this site to manage for recreational purposes. Possibilities include: 1) development of a competitive archery range in area; 2) instructional program to orient youth and adults to fish and game related activities; 3) create fishing access with "learn to fish" opportunities; 4) wildlife habitat education areas; 5) recreational amenities meeting fish and game funding criteria; 6) performance schedule established to ensure amenities are completed in reasonable time period. If agreed to, the Township would lease the property for 25 years according to grant guidelines with timeframes in the lease for grant opportunities. (In the land consolidation Phase III process, surplus property is offered to a local unit of government as a first priority in the disposal process).

**Ms. Koch** recommended this property proceed toward disposal with the understanding that a purchase agreement with Commerce Township would continue to be reviewed.

**Linda Mayer** has been involved in this issue since 2004 when it was discovered that public ownership of this property was at risk. Her preference would be for the DNR to retain ownership. Barring that, Commerce Township's primary concern is for this property to remain open space and the Township is working toward a resolution on this issue. She noted that the property has to be something the township can afford. **Commissioner Garner** noted that there are some good solutions being discussed, but reminded of the obligation to the Pittman-Robertson Fund requirement that this land, while in State public ownership, must be maintained for purposes of hunting.

### **Kalamazoo River Settlement: Superfund Site**

**Mindy Koch** reported that the DNR is party to one of two settlement agreements reached with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the paper companies Georgia Pacific and Millennium Holdings concerning the Kalamazoo River Superfund Site. As a result of one of the settlements, work will convene to remove PCB waste from the river, river banks and floodplain soils of the Plainwell impoundment with a cost estimate of \$21 million as well as removal of the Plainwell Dam. A second settlement initiates investigations necessary to reach a conclusion about the need for further removal in the Kalamazoo River environment in the reach from Morrow Dam to the Plainwell Dam at a cost of approximately \$15 million. The stage is also set for phased investigation and remedial design for the rest of the river, moving progressively from upstream to downstream. Public meetings will be held at the Plainwell school administration building on March 15 regarding this settlement.

### **DNR's No Student Left Inside Day**

**Pat Stewart and Janet Canode, Office of Communications**, reported that Governor Granholm declared April 20 as "No Child Left Inside Day." In connection to that declaration, the DNR Office of Communications, in conjunction with Parks and Recreation Division and Fisheries Division, will celebrate "No Student Left Inside Day" to encourage Michigan's elementary and secondary teachers and students to get outside.

Teachers will be offered the following three opportunities to get their students outside for an outdoor classroom:

1. Register for one of the 10 programs being offered by our interpreters at a Michigan state park visitor center or hatchery visitor center.
2. Register to take their class to one of the other state parks on that day with free park admission and outdoor classroom activity pages, courtesy of the DNR. These pages will be available on the DNR website at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) .
3. Download activity pages, courtesy of the DNR, to use at a local park, school playground or other outdoor site.

These events are being held on Friday before the national observance of Earth Day and during national Environmental Education Week (April 15-22). To encourage

participation, all programs are free and all school buses will have free entry into any state park or recreation area.

**Commissioner Wheatlake** commended staff on these activities as well as the progress made on resolution of the land issues in Commerce Township.

**Chairman Charters** said the kids are the future of the DNR and that programs such as this are of utmost importance.

### **Director's Action Items**

**Director Humphries** noted her intend to hold over for further review, Land Transaction Case #20050557, State Forest Land Exchange and boundary Modification, Atlanta Forest management Unit – Presque Isle and Montmorency Counties.

### **Removal Of Campground Registration Fee And Adjustment To Camping Fees At Michigan State Parks And Recreation Area Campgrounds – FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**Murdock Jemerson, Citizens Committee On Michigan State Parks**, reported the subject proposed Director's action item on the Agenda "For Information Only" and possible action in April. He said that on January 31, 2007, the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks (CCMSP) adopted a resolution to recommend amending the State Parks and Recreation Area camping fees. Specifically, it recommends that, effective in 2007, the \$5.00 "registration fee" be rescinded; and effective in 2008, the State Park campgrounds that did not increase their nightly camping fee in 2006 raise their nightly camping fee by \$2.00 per night.

**Director Humphries** commended **Mr. Jemerson** for the work of the CCMSP and for bringing this forward for action.

### **Legislative Update**

**Director Humphries** introduced **Dan Eichinger** who will be assisting Rodney Stokes, Legislative Liaison, on DNR legislative issues.

**Chairman Charters** noted that House Bill 4016 had been introduced that, among other things, suggests that opening day firearm season be changed to the second Saturday in November.

**Director Humphries** brought attention to the written Washington, DC report from Carol Bambery.

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The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m. and the Public Appearances portion of the meeting convened at 5:00 p.m.

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**Commissioner Earley** welcomed the NRC to Saginaw. He recognized some individuals present: Tom Heritier, Saginaw Police Department; Jim De Clerck, Saginaw Field and Stream Club; representatives from Senator Kahn and Senator Horn's offices; and Jeff Martin from Lt. Governor Cherry's Office.

**Chairman Charters** recognized Kristin Fair from Senator Nancy Cassis' Office. He also recognized Sgt. John Harris, a retired DNR Conservation Officer.

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

**Doug Browne, resident, Commerce Township**, stated that he is an advocate of development. However, in the case of potential development of the Commerce Township, Proud Lake Recreation Area property, he does not think disposal and development would be a prudent idea. He supports this property remaining in public ownership whether it be State or local government.

**Dan Timmons, Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA)**, stated that the association would like to see Michigan's deer herd managed be more balanced – specifically managed for density in accord with health habitat, more balanced sex ratios, and a more complete buck age structure. He said that QDMA, Michigan State Chapter does the following:

- Supports the recommendations of the Hunting and Fishing License Package Development Work Group to increase license fees and would support the one-buck rule statewide;
- Opposed adoption of a new statewide limit of three antlerless tags per hunter in 2006 because it would be counterproductive to the objective of herd reduction in the southern Lower Peninsula and recommends returning to selling one antlerless tag per hunter per day subject to public and private land limits by DMU;
- Recommends consideration of early antlerless-only seasons as a strategy to increase antlerless harvest;
- Encourages educating hunters on the value of purchasing and filling antlerless tags.

**Larry Holcomb, QDMA**, stated that QDMA on the state and federal level agreed that buck populations cannot increase if they male deer cannot get beyond 1.5 years old. He supports a one-buck rule statewide.

**Harry Hawkins, Secretary/Treasurer Cranberry Lake Hunting Club**, believes that the Cranberry Lake, Montmorency County property slated for exchange and discussed earlier should be kept in the public domain and said denying access to Cranberry Lake is not appropriate. He also disagrees with the divestiture of the dam on the property.

**Director Humphries** reiterated that she intends to withdraw this action to allow further review.

**James Meenaham, Save Our State Lands**, requested that the Commerce Township property remain in DNR ownership.

**Ellen Smith, Save Our State Lands**, presented the history of this property and asked that the DNR retain the Commerce Township property near the Proud Lake Recreation Area and maintain it with help from Commerce Township and Oakland County. She said that selling off this parcel, or any parks land, should be a last resort option.

**Randolph Ston, Save Our State Lands**, said their group is passionate about saving state lands and supports retaining the Commerce Township property near the Proud Lake Recreation Area in state ownership. He noted that there are volunteers available willing to restore and protect the property.

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### **PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

**Director Humphries** was pleased to present the Partners in Conservation Award to the Flint River Watershed Coalition (Lapeer Committee) and the Rotary Club of Lapeer. **Steve Montle, Executive Director for the Flint River Watershed Coalition and Dave Woolfenden, Kathryn Smith, and Earl Gravlin** of the Rotary Club of Lapeer were present to receive the Awards.

She thanked the organizations for collaborating with Fisheries Division on a stream enhancement project on the south Branch Flint River. Over a three year period, they developed a strategic plan, secured 63 landowner permissions, and contributed hundreds of hours repositioning over 100 logjams to restore canoe navigation on a 25-mile reach of river.

The efforts of these organizations efforts have shown that partnerships and public stewardship can work to achieve the common goal of fostering Michigan's natural resources. **Director Humphries** thanked them for their hard work and for investing in conservation.

### **Director Humphries Receives 2007 Outstanding Alumnus Award at MSU**

**Chairman Charters** congratulated Director Humphries for having received the 2007 Outstanding Alumnus Award Michigan State University's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources during an award ceremony at MSU on Tuesday.

She was cited for her special interest in helping graduate students in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department develop into successful professionals.

Particularly noteworthy is the following quote:

“Ms. Humphries stands at the vanguard of new agency leaders who are not only willing to involve the public, but who also have the skills to involve the public effectively so that the long-term sustainability of the resources is not compromised by short-term societal desires, but rather is enhanced by the public's role.”

**PUBLIC APPEARANCES (continued)**

**Kristen Fair, Senator Cassis' Office**, stated that the Senator supports Commerce Township purchasing the Proud Lake Recreation Area, Commerce Township property, as discussed earlier, and maintaining it for public use.

**Jim De Clerck, Saginaw Field and Stream Club**, stated that, within a close proximity to Saginaw, hunters can hunt just about any species available in the state. He fully believes in sound scientific management and thinks the DNR is doing a great job and expressed appreciation for all the NRC does also.

**Kenneth Foor, Saginaw**, opposes the proposed one buck regulations and believes they would restrict hunting time afield.

**Dave Dalton, Michigan Sportsmans Congress**, opposes any decision to restrict hunting opportunities in Michigan (referring to the one buck proposals). He also opposes quiet periods.

**Tony Hanson, MUCC**, distributed the MUCC Conservation Agenda and reviewed upcoming events.

Regarding the one buck proposals, he is concerned that they would reduce the time afield. He said that MUCC Policy supports two tags to be used in bow or firearm season or a combination of both. MUCC supports using sound science in decision-making as well as maximizing recreational opportunities.

**Carl Hawkins, Petoskey**, opposes Land Transaction Case #20050557, State Forest Land Exchange and Boundary Modification, Atlanta Forest Management Unit- Presque Isle and Montmorency Counties.

**Jeff Adams, Caro**, opposes the one buck proposals and believes there is no sound scientific evidence to support them. He also mentioned he would be working with Senator Barcia to develop increased fines for recreational trespassing.

**Sue Wells, Oakland County Parks and Recreation**, requested that there be further dialog between the County and the DNR relative to the fate of the Proud Lake Recreation Area, Commerce Township property (the Nike Site).

**Chuck Hoover, Saginaw**, is 65 years old and cannot physically do many of the hunting and fishing activities due to knee surgery. He recommends allowing off-road vehicles (ORV) for purposes of accessing hunting and fishing areas. If speed and damage from rugged tires is at issue, he suggested a governor be installed on the machine to reduce maximum speed and to utilize special tread on the tires. He would also condone a special fee to be paid by individuals who will utilize the vehicles in this fashion.

**Lou Leavens, President, Michigan Bow Hunters Association**, opposes the proposed one buck options and supports the current combo license structure.

**Don Belisle, Saginaw Field And Stream Club**, oppose one buck proposals and recommended that a validation tag be attached to each deer harvest to better document harvest.

**Ron Shaver, Mid-Michigan Sportsmen Alliance**, opposes a one buck regulation suggesting that it would divide the hunting community. He noted that he is actively engaged in the long-term funding discussions for the hunting and fishing programs.

**Jerry Keck, Tuscola County Archery Club**, reported that the Club unanimously opposed the one buck proposals.

**Ron Spaulding, Cass City**, opposed the one buck proposals.

**Darrell Seegmiller, Sportsman**, made the following comments:

- There should be a property tax proposal to support DNR;
- License Fees should be raised gradually;
- Suggested a separate license for muzzleloaders;
- The DNR should confiscate weapons, autos., and etc., of those who poach in Michigan;
- Opposed the one buck proposals;
- The UP needs more does;

**Mr. Seegmiller** thanked Commissioner Garner for his contributions to the DNR and the State of Michigan.

**Doug Brown, Ada**, opposed the one buck proposals and supports the current combo license structure.

**Ryan Swartz, Sebawing**, is neutral on the one buck proposals, although he does not believe imposing a one buck regulation is the way to develop a stronger buck population. He suggested regulating antlerless harvest by developing more specific zones and suggested deeming a button buck a buck would further protect the buck population.

**Bill Mott, Saginaw Field And Stream Club**, opposed the one buck proposals and supports keeping the combo license. He thanked the NRC and DNR for doing a great job handling the financial issues in the DNR.

**Gale Tufts, Brant**, cannot pull a compound bow, however, his inabilities do not meet the physical therapy requirements for a crossbow permit. He recommended that the crossbow permit requirements be altered to allow anyone who cannot pull a bow to be allowed a permit to use a crossbow. He also requested the allowance to use a laser site if vision is restricted. **Chairman Charters** said that this will be the charge of the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries to address these issues.

**Rodney Romaine, Saginaw**, suffers wildlife crop damage and asked for further assistance from the DNR to address the damage. He supports license fee increases as well as maintaining a combo deer license.

The Public Appearances portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m. and the Regular Meeting of the NRC convened at 6:50 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 8, 2007 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING**

**Commissioner Wheatlake made a motion, supported by Commissioner Earley, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.**

**Director Humphries** asked staff to clarify the intentions of the bear quota recommendations given the concerns of Commissioners during the meeting of the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

**NORTHERN LOWER PENINSULA BEAR MANAGEMENT UNIT (BMU) RESTRUCTURING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 2 OF 2007**

**Commissioner Madigan made a motion, supported by Commissioner Garner, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.**

**STATE FOREST TRAIL ACQUISITION: GAYLORD FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT- EMMET COUNTY, MACKINAW TO PETOSKEY TRAIL**

**Commissioner Brown made a motion, supported by Commissioner Coleman, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.**

**ONE BUCK LIMIT OPTIONS FOR THE UPPER PENINSULA ONLY OR FOR THE ENTIRE STATE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 3 OF 2007**

**Commissioner Madigan** said that this has been a very interesting process over the past 18 months. He noted that the process, including many public meetings and discussions with hunters and groups statewide, is not just a “rubber stamp” process. The reason he pushed for the proposed one buck limit options was because those he met with in the UP especially, expressed interest in the options. Therefore, the NRC held several meetings where the one buck issue was discussed. In 2006, the NRC voted on the one buck issue and the vote was a tie, meaning it failed. At that time, the NRC promised to bring the issue back in early 2007 for discussion. In addition, DNR staff sent out a random survey to 9000 licensed hunters statewide including questions addressing the one buck option. Preliminary results from that survey indicate 50 percent or less support for the one buck option. After reviewing this option, **Commissioner Madigan** said he cannot support the one buck option. He commended DNR staff for its efforts in assuring that this issue was determined in a scientific manner.

**Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Wheatlake, to adopt Wildlife Conservation Order, Amendment No. 3 of 2007, Option 1. Motion unanimously failed (0-7).**

**Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Wheatlake, to adopt Wildlife Conservation Order, Amendment No. 3 of 2007, Option 2. Motion unanimously failed (0-7).**

### **DIRECTORS ACTION ITEMS**

**Commissioner Madigan** inquired about the status of the structure on the property being acquired for the Pine River Boating Access Site, St. Ignace Township, Mackinac County. **Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division**, responded that the house will either be removed or Parks and Recreation Division will remove the house and attempt to sell it. That area where the building currently stands is needed for parking.

**Director Humphries** highlighted the Director's Action item that was added to the Agenda as a late memo: Release of State-Owned Reversionary Interest, Gaylord Forest Management Unit – Emmet County, Land Transaction Case #20070041.

**Director Humphries** stated her intent to approve all of the Director's Action items **except State Forest Land Exchange and Boundary Modification, Atlanta Forest Management Unit – Presque Isle and Montmorency Counties, Land Transaction Case #20050557**, which will be held over for further review.

### **POLICY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information, Marketing and Education**

**Commissioners Brown (Committee Chair) and Coleman** were present for the Committee. Commissioners Charters, Earley, Madigan and Wheatlake were also present for the NRC. This meeting convened at 11:05 a.m. in the Midsection Room of the Ramada Inn, Saginaw. Committee meeting Minutes are attached.

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

**Commissioners Madigan (Committee Chair) and Garner** were present for the Committee. Commissioners Brown, Charters, Coleman, Early and Wheatlake were also present for the NRC. This meeting convened at 2:30 p.m. in the Midsection Room of the Ramada Inn, Saginaw. Committee meeting Minutes are attached.

#### **Commissioner Reports**

**Commissioner Garner** reported that he toured some areas that were deemed by members of the public as being "carelessly clear-cut." He noted that these areas are great grouse and woodcock hunting areas.

**Commissioner Wheatlake** met with Legislators and snowmobiled in the Grand Marais area.

**Commissioner Earley** expressed appreciation for the meeting being held in Saginaw and noted that he is working to bring the water park in Saginaw to full function.

**Commissioner Madigan** thanked Commissioners Earley and Coleman for hosting the NRC meeting in Saginaw. He attended banquets and meetings in the UP to discuss the license fee issue.

**Commissioner Coleman** thanked the NRC and staff for their support in his confirmation before the Senate to serve on the NRC. He credited the success of the meeting in Saginaw to Commissioner Earley.

**Chairman Charters** said he was pleased with the discussion held earlier during the NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information, Marketing and Education relative to state parks outreach.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

**NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information,  
Marketing and Education**

Presentations were given on DNR efforts in the area of attracting young urban audiences to Michigan's natural resources, especially in the Saginaw/Bay City area. **Murdock Jemerson, city of Lansing Parks and Recreation Department and chair of the Citizens Committee for Michigan's State Parks** kicked off the meeting quoting from Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods*, which discusses the need to get kids outside. Representing Parks and Recreation Division were **Jackie Culberson and Ron Olson**; from Office of Communications were **Pat Stewart, Kevin Frailey, Janet Canode and Valerie Blaschka**; and **Gary Williams** from DNR/MSU Extension.

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

The meeting convened at 2:30 p.m.

**Rod Clute, Wildlife Division**, presented the proposed elk season dates and units, which include early hunt Aug 25-29 and Sept 15-29 (hunt unit L), Dec 11-18 ---- (hunt units A-E & X). The Wildlife Division is also requesting the option of a Jan 16-20, 2008 hunt, if needed which is consistent with previous years. In addition, Rod outlined the need to remove outdated language within WCO.

**Dave Bostick, Wildlife Division**, presented the proposed bear license quotas for the Bear Management units across the State. Approximately 2,650 bears were harvested in 2006. Commissioner Coleman requested a report outlining where licenses are sold for elk and bear.