

**Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12/16/25**  
**Thursday, August 21, 2025**  
**6:00-8:30pm Eastern**  
**Munising Township Hall, Wetmore**

**Council Members Present**

Ken Collier	Bernie Hubbard	Dennis Patchakos
Jeff Cox	John Kurkowski	Dick Pershinske
Steve Dey, Secretary	Robert Liebermann	Joe Smith
Gary Gorniak, Vice Chair	Glenn Moll	Julie Weist
Tim Hass	Tom Paquin	Tony Wright

**Council Members Excused/Absent**

Grant Dewitt	Mark Spencer
Mark Maida	Les Therrian

**Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff & Guests**

PJ Costa, Parks & Recreation Division-Eastern UP Trails, Newberry  
Eric Cowing, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry  
Kristi Dahlstrom, UPCAC Assistant, Executive Division, Marquette  
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette  
Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division, Newberry  
Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division, Newberry  
Acting Lt. Calvin Smith, Law Enforcement Division, Newberry

**I. Welcome & Call to Order**

At 6:00pm Eastern, **Vice Chair Gary Gorniak** called the meeting to order. He welcomed members of the public as well as DNR staff and fellow Council members. **Ms. Dahlstrom** confirmed a quorum for the purpose of conducting Council business.

**II. Introductions of All Meeting Attendees**

All public attendees, DNR staff and council members introduced themselves at the request of **Vice Chair Gorniak**. Emma Woelkers from Senator Peters office was present.

**III. Adoption of Agenda**

**Vice Chair Gorniak** asked the Council if there were any corrections or additions to the agenda; none were brought forth. **Mr. Kurkowski motioned to adopt the agenda as presented; Mr. Wright supported the motion. After no discussion, Vice Chair Gorniak called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

**Vice Chair Gorniak** asked if there were any changes to the June 16, 2025, meeting minutes which were distributed to the Council via email previously for review. **Mr. Patchakos motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Moll supported the motion. After no**

**discussion, Vice Chair Gorniak called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **V. Reports from DNR Division Staff**

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on August 14, 2025. The following brief updates were added.

### **1. Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy**

- In the last month, several DNR meetings were held in the eastern U.P. The Michigan State Waterways Commission met in Newberry, the DNR's Accessibility Advisory Council met in Newberry and toured Tahquamenon Falls State Park, an open house was held at the new Newberry Customer Service Center, and the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board met in Cedarville.
- Despite commentary circulating on social media, the funding for the new DNR facility in Newberry did not come from license dollars, but rather through a variety of grant sources and funding.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** feels hunting and fishing projects seem to take a back burner when funding is an issue. **Ms. Haughey** indicated a state budget has not been passed yet and some items and projects have been put on hold until more is known. The DNR has 85 restricted funds that have specific requirements as to how that funding must be spent. The DNR receives less than 2% of the state's general fund budget and is always under scrutiny.

### **2. Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division**

- The H-58 bridge replacement project on the Sucker River in Grand Marais is on schedule to be completed by the end of September. Footers for the new arch culvert have been poured and are curing. Phase 2 of the project, which is a sea lamprey barrier (seasonal lamprey weir) placed upstream, will occur next year. A public meeting will be held on September 2 at Burt Township Hall from 7-8:30pm. The project team will be present to answer any questions regarding the current project and the barrier, as well as any general fisheries questions.
- **Mr. Pershinske** asked what the current situation is with sea lamprey. **Mr. Kovacs** explained the target goals from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** asked why projects at the Thompson State Fish Hatchery have been put on hold. He also questioned the low number of spring walleye fingerlings produced from that hatchery. **Mr. Kovacs** explained the variability of walleye production in ponds in close proximity to lake Michigan, noting several other area ponds, including the Sault Tribe, also did not do well. Although the walleye egg take was successful, the quality of eggs was not as good as expected. As for a hold on projects, the lack of a budget for next fiscal year is causing planning challenges.

### **3. Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division**

- **Mr. Wright** asked about the status of the Good Neighbor Authority with the forest service. **Mr. Lakosky** stated the program continues to be funded as it was for next fiscal year if approved by the DNR Director. It is tied to the Farm Bill.
- **Mr. Pershinske** asked about the financial impact of the ice storm damage in northern lower Michigan. **Mr. Lakosky** stated the impact is at \$38 million, which

includes reforestation. **Ms. Haughey** mentioned a handout in the meeting packet that notes the expenses incurred. The DNR is asking for a supplemental funding package to cover those costs. The damage has impacted 25% of all state forest land and affects will be seen for years to come.

- **Vice Chair Gorniak** noted in the reports three no-bid sales in the Sault Ste. Marie unit for cedar research. **Mr. Lakosky** explained these are small sales and part of a research project with Michigan Tech University on experimental cuts for regeneration of cedar. It requires a little more leg work on the loggers' part, making it more difficult to market.
- **Mr. Moll** asked if timber harvesting in the eastern U.P. is less than typical/desired this year. He noted he sees a good amount of wood coming across the bridge. **Mr. Lakosky** stated it is notably down in the eastern U.P. and can be somewhat attributed to FEMA funding for hurricane response where loggers can make more money in hurricane-affected areas. Markets are soft and owners are having a hard time finding operators.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** noted an area where machinery has cut big furrows, but nothing was planted. **Mr. Lakosky** stated it's part of a schedule where trenches are cut and planting occurs the following year.
- **Mr. Wright** mentioned two insect options for knapweed control, which are approved by the USDA but not currently permitted in Michigan.

4. **Acting Lt. Calvin Smith, Law Enforcement Division**

- Three new officers are out in the field in the eastern U.P. After completion of 18 weeks of field training, they will be ready for regular duty.
- Officers will be present at the Straits Area Sportsman Club's meeting in December as requested by the club.
- **Mr. Pershinske** asked if the eastern U.P. counties will be at full staff once officers complete their training. **Acting Lt. Smith** stated they will still be short-staffed in several counties.

5. **Eric Cowing, Parks & Recreation Division**

- When the Michigan State Waterways Commission met in Newberry, they toured several areas including Whitefish Point State Harbor and Little Lake Harbor.
- The new DNR Parks & Recreation Division chief also completed site tours of several eastern U.P. areas.
- Regarding funding, 85% of the division's funding comes from recreation passport and camping sales, making it largely self-funded. Of the DNR's portion of the state's general fund dollars, the division receives only 3%, which mostly goes to Belle Isle. License dollars are not used for parks and recreation projects; specific funds have specific uses.
- **Mr. Pershinske** asked about park activity figures for the season. **Mr. Cowing** indicated reservations were down in June. However, August has ramped up. Several closures at Muskallonge and Indian Lake State Parks have affected overall numbers.
- **Mr. Kurkowski** indicated the new walkway at Muskallonge State Park is wonderful except for the last 10 feet. **Mr. Cowing** stated staff are working on a resolution. He

added the Tahquamenon Falls State Park project is a bit behind schedule with a projected completion date of sometime in October.

6. ***PJ Costa, Parks & Recreation Division-Eastern UP Trails***

- The Alger County road commission and the local club have come to an agreement to open up the Miner’s Castle snowmobile trail which was closed last season.
- A new mountain bike trail in Cedarville will be open for skiing and snowshoeing this winter. The black diamond portion is about 1.3 miles, and a median loop is 1.6 miles. There is also a quarter mile section leading to it that is considered easy. The trail also has a small portion that is ADA accessible.
- **Mr. Moll** asked about the haywire grade. **Mr. Costa** stated they are seeking federal approval to move ahead on 10 of the bridges. They have received approval for one bridge, but no funding has been released yet. He is hoping they will have approval by late winter in order to move forward next spring.

7. ***Wildlife Division***

- Wildlife Division staff were unable to attend; however, **Ms. Haughey** indicated she will take questions for them.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** inquired about the total number of collared wolves and the success of the collaring process. He also questioned the lack of visible habitat management projects for deer wintering complexes in the eastern U.P. **Mr. Lakosky** noted in the Shingleton management unit, there are some established planting areas. **Ms. Haughey** noted that only 28% of deer wintering complexes are on state land and the U.P. Wildlife Habitat group were working with private landowners to create habitat across the U.P. landscape.
- **Mr. Pershinske** inquired about the number of the registered wolf packs with collared wolves.

VI. **Public Comments on Agenda Items Only**

**Vice Chair Gorniak** opened the floor for public comments on agenda items only; none were brought forward.

VII. **Election of Chairman**

**Ms. Haughey** explained the process for electing a new chair after the former chair resigned in May. The person chosen will fill the role beginning with the next meeting and serve until the next annual election in 2026. She opened the floor for nominations.

1. ***Chair***

- **Mr. Cox** nominated Mr. Paquin; **Mr. Paquin** consented to the nomination. **Mr. Pershinske** nominated Vice Chair Gorniak; **Vice Chair Gorniak** declined the nomination. **Mr. Pershinske** nominated Secretary Dey; **Secretary Dey** consented to the nomination. After three additional opportunities for nominations to be made, no additional nominations were brought forth.

2. ***Vote***

- **Ms. Haughey** conducted a separate vote by show of hands for each chair nominee, Mr. Paquin and Secretary Dey. **Votes for Mr. Paquin: 8 (of 15) in favor. Votes for**

**Secretary Dey: 7 (of 15) in favor. Ms. Haughey asked for a motion to approve Mr. Paquin, who received the majority of votes, as Chair. Mr. Cox motioned to accept; Mr. Wright supported the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Final Results**

- **Mr. Paquin** will serve as Chair until the next officer election held in 2026.

**VIII. Old Business**

1. **Wolf Management Update (Haughey)**

- This has been a standing agenda item for several years at the request of the Council.
- **Ms. Haughey** responded to an inquiry from **Secretary Dey** whether a recent Supreme Court ruling on lower court decisions affects the relisting of wolves, noting DNR legislative staff felt the two issues were unrelated.
- **Mr. Pershinske** asked for an update on the wolf abundance camera survey. **Ms. Haughey** indicated a presentation was provided at the June meeting and also at the WUPCAC's July meeting. Another update will be provided at the Joint UPCAC meeting in October.
- **Mr. Cox** spoke about a Wisconsin camera program where the public is involved. **Ms. Haughey** stated the June presentation noted partners of the survey did not include a citizen volunteer aspect to this research project.
- **Mr. Pershinske** spoke about Wisconsin wolf depredations.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** inquired about the results of the lower Michigan wolf survey conducted earlier this year. **Ms. Haughey** indicated she will ask Wildlife Division staff to respond at the next meeting.

2. **Follow-Up from June Meeting (Haughey & Kovacs)**

- **Completed: Miles of UP Trails/All Types (Moll).** In response to **Mr. Moll's** request at the June meeting to receive the number of miles of UP trails of all types, a chart indicating this information was provided to him shortly after the meeting. A copy was also displayed on screen for the Council.
- **Update: Beaver Management Policy Update (Pershinske).** In response to **Mr. Pershinske's** inquiry at the June meeting regarding whether Michigan should follow Wisconsin in creating a beaver management committee. **Ms. Haughey** presented slides on the DNR's regulation changes and process from 2023 that affect beaver management. She noted Mr. Cody Norton presented these changes at an August 2023 EUPCAC meeting. She also mentioned the involvement of the DNR's human-wildlife conflict workgroup in the process. **Mr. Kovacs** also explained details of the recently revised internal policy on the management of adverse beaver impacts on trout populations, noting the process was reviewed at the last NRC meeting. **Mr. Pershinske** asked if a permit is needed to remove nuisance beaver on private property. **Mr. Kovacs** reviewed the process, explaining a permit is not needed if the beaver is actively doing damage to private property. He recommended contacting a local biologist before any action is taken to ensure the correct process is followed as well as referencing the furbearer harvest regulation summary, page 4.

3. **Tabled from June: Review of April Wildlife Resolution Response (Haughey)**

- Resolution #2: Recommend the Development of a Framework for a Regulated Wolf Hunting & Trapping Season Across the UP & Allocation of Resources for Ongoing Management Program: The Council previously reviewed the DNRs response to this resolution at the EUPCAC’s June meeting and further requested it be placed on the next agenda to allow time for a more in-depth review. In between meetings, **Ms. Haughey** noted a few issues arose from Council emails and discussions: 1) confusion regarding the Council’s resolution response process; and 2) awareness of delisting actions, although shared multiple times with the Council and other groups.
- **Ms. Haughey** briefly reviewed the Council’s resolution response process, indicating the Councils are advisory to the DNR and submit recommendations (i.e. resolutions) to the DNR, not to the NRC or to the legislature. It would be the DNR’s directive to share information from the Council with the NRC, which does occur. In this specific case, she indicated she shared the resolution and the response with NRC commissioners.
- **Ms. Haughey** stated the 11 delisting actions listed in the response letter were taken from the October 2023 presentation and have not changed. She noted the items are not listed in order of occurrence, but rather are action items; some items have been or are currently being completed.
- There were no further questions from the Council.

**IX. New Business**

1. **Little Lake Harbor (Cowing)**

- In response to the last meeting where a member of the public had inquired whether the DNR intended to close Little Lake Harbor, **Mr. Cowing** explained the history of dredging at the Harbor, noting regular dredging until funding dropped in the late 90s. He stated there has never been any intention to close it, and although it is listed as designated federal harbor of refuge, it was never designed to be one. The Army Corps of Engineers dredged the harbor in 2023 and 2024 and is operable. Dredging also occurred this year with more planned for the fall. Despite funding decreases from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Waterways Commission, Tribes and the DNR have contributed some funding for dredging. He noted the DNR does not staff this harbor due to lack of amenities like power and restrooms. He added that the Waterways Commission recently visited the harbor when they had their meeting in the area in August. A handout of harbor facts was included in the Council’s meeting packets.
- **Mr. Pershinske** asked if the DNR has any involvement at the Naubinway Marina that is considered a harbor of refuge. **Mr. Cowing** stated DNR staff are not involved with that marina.

2. **DNR Graymont Update (Lakosky & Haughey)**

- **Ms. Haughey** indicated at the June meeting, a member of the public had inquired about water testing and permitting by Graymont. She reached out to partners at the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), who indicated Graymont’s permits have been renewed through 2030 and they are in compliance with all water testing requirements.

- **Mr. Lakosky** indicated Graymont had submitted an application to EGLE to develop a railroad but there wasn't any movement on that. Discussion ensued regarding the land sale and exchange from years ago.
3. ***Upcoming Bear Forum & Furbearer Forum Meeting Dates (Haughey)***
    - A copy of the meeting agendas for both upcoming forums were shown on screen.
    - The Furtaker User Group meeting will be held on Friday, August 22 from 10am to 4pm at Little Bear Arena East in St. Ignace. The group intends to provide input on regulatory topics, assess population indicators, review harvest statistics and consider potential bag limit and regulation changes for the 2026-27 seasons.
    - The Bear Forum meeting will be held on Saturday, August 23 from 10am to 4pm, also at the Little Bear Arena East in St. Ignace. The group intends to provide input on similar topics as the Furtaker User Group; however, regulation changes would be for the 2027-28 seasons.
    - Several members of both CACs will be in attendance and can report back information that may be of interest.
  4. ***Additional Agenda Items Added by Council (Vice Chair Gorniak)***
    - There were no additional items added to the agenda by the Council.

## **X. Committee Activity**

1. ***Fisheries (Vice Chair Gorniak)***
  - **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated he recently became aware that cormorant relief acts were being voted on in the legislature. He feels control has gone in a backward direction and stressed the need for sustained control efforts. Discussion ensued regarding the number of cormorants seen on area lakes, including Big Manistique Lake and Indian Lake. **Vice Chair Gorniak** highlighted the importance of stocking efforts and the need for continued support from the DNR and US Fish & Wildlife Services for cormorant control.
2. ***Policy Impact (Hass)***
  - **Mr. Hass** reported he received an inquiry from a Council member to review a series of bills, one of which was a commercial fishing bill. He felt it was well written and logical but has issues with license requirements for new fishermen. Once he reviews the bills in full, he will report back.
3. ***Wildlife (Secretary Dey)***
  - No items of business to report. If there are items of interest, please let Secretary Dey know.
  - **Secretary Dey** asked if there was any movement on an increase in license fees. **Ms. Haughey** indicated not at this time.
  - **Mr. Pershinske** asked if there was any movement on controlling sandhill cranes. It was noted there was none. **Mr. Wright** indicated there is a chemical (Avipel) that can be added to seed which has proven to be effective in deterring sandhill cranes from eating crops.
4. ***Other Committee Activity:*** None.

## **XI. Upcoming Meetings**

### **1. Joint UPCAC Meeting**

- This is an annual meeting of both the Eastern & Western UP Citizens Advisory Councils.
- Wednesday, October 8: 3:00pm, MTU Rozsa Center, Houghton

### **2. U.P. Natural Resources Commission Meeting & Events**

- Wednesday, October 8: 6:00pm U.P. NRC Welcome Reception (Location in Houghton TBD)
- Thursday, October 9: 8:30am Coffee with the Commissioners, 9:30am NRC Meeting, MTU Rozsa Center

### **3. Next Regular EUPAC Meeting**

- Tuesday, December 16: 6:00pm, virtual via Zoom

### **4. Topic Suggestions for Joint Meeting & Next Meeting**

- DNR Land Transaction Process (Joint)
- Harvest Reporting App Statistics (Joint)
- Moose Research Project & Wolf Abundance Camera Survey Updates (Joint)
- Good Neighbor Authority (December)
- Federal Grant Cuts Affecting the DNR (December)

## **XII. Public Comments (On Any Topic)**

**Vice Chair Gorniak** opened the floor for public comments on any topic; none were brought forth.

## **XIII. Closing Comments from Council**

**Vice Chair Gorniak** opened the floor for closing comments from the Council and DNR staff.

1. **Vice Chair Gorniak** praised DNR staff for their submissions to the division reports, stating those who read them should have no question what DNR projects and activities are occurring in the eastern U.P. He also praised Ms. Dahlstrom for the meeting minutes. **Mr. Lakosky** stated he appreciated the comments and will pass them along to staff who provide the information for the reports. **Ms. Dahlstrom** noted the reports are also shared with NRC commissioners, U.P. legislative offices and are available to the public on the CAC webpage.
2. **Mr. Pershinske** thanked staff for bringing back information on the topics he brought up at the last meeting and commended staff for a job well done.
3. **Mr. Hubbard** noted a deer advisory team meeting will be held next week.

## **XIV. Adjournment**

**Vice Chair Gorniak** thanked Council members for their participation and contributions to the meeting and to everyone for attending. The meeting adjourned at 7:49pm Eastern.