

# Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC)

## Meeting Minutes-APPROVED 6/5/24

Thursday, April 4, 2024

6:00-8:30pm Eastern

Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital Administration Building Conference Room, Manistique

*Chair: Tom Buckingham Vice-Chair: Gary Gorniak*

### Council Members Present

Tom Buckingham

Jeff Cox

Gary Gorniak

Bernie Hubbard

Robert Liebermann

David Lieble

Glenn Moll

Tom Paquin

Joe Smith

Tony Wright

### Council Members Excused/Absent

Ken Collier

Grant Dewitt

Steve Dey

Al Garavaglia

Tim Hass

Travis Kangas

Mark Maida

Mark Spencer

Julie Weist

### Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons & Guests

Dave Caroffino, Fisheries Division-Lake Superior Basin

Eric Cowing, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry

Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette

Lt. Skip Hagy, Law Enforcement Division, Newberry

Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette

Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division-Newberry

Jon Spieles, Marketing & Outreach Division, Newberry

### Call to Order

The Eastern UP Citizens' Advisory Council meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by **Chair Tom Buckingham**. He welcomed everyone in attendance.

### Introduction of All Attendees (Council/DNR Staff/Public)

Introductions of those in attendance were made.

### Adoption of Agenda

**Chair Buckingham** asked the Council if there were any corrections or additions to the agenda; none were brought forth. **Vice Chair Gorniak motioned to adopt the agenda as presented; Mr. Paquin supported the motion. Chair Buckingham called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

**Chair Buckingham** asked if there were any changes to the February 20, 2024 meeting minutes which were distributed to the Council via email for review. **Mr. Wright motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Vice Chair Gorniak supported the motion. Chair Buckingham called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### DNR Reports from Division Staff

Written staff reports were provided via email to Council members on March 28, 2024. The following were verbal additions to those reports:

1. Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy

- A brief review of the Council's 16-year history was provided. Between the East and West Councils, there is one public meeting held in the UP every month. Council members are full-time residents of the UP.
- Extra copies of the reports provided by DNR staff representing all divisions were located on the table for public attendees. Also available was a handout on fisheries regulations and information on the recreation passport opt-out proposal.
- The DNR has been working with county officials on a trail reroute for H-58. The county road commission will be closing use of the shoulder in this area to snowmobile traffic at the end of 2024. Currently, there is no viable reroute available after many options have been investigated. Closure will eliminate access to the Miner's Castle area. The DNR will continue to search for options in the meantime.

2. Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division, Eastern UP

- Smelt runs were slow this past week with some areas reporting 1-2 fish per dip and taking an hour to get two gallons. The MiWaterNet link through Lake Superior State University has stream temperatures listed and may be helpful for smelt runs.
- There has been little rainfall except for the past few days which brought rivers up to high and turbulent levels for steelhead, which should trigger runs soon with recent weather.

3. Lt. Skip Hagy, Law Enforcement Division, District 2

- A summary of statistics for the recent snowmobile season was provided (see page 9 for details).
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** asked if the new nuisance and damage control regulation affects private land. **Lt. Hagy** indicated nothing has changed as it pertains to private land.
- **Lt. Hagy** also mentioned a 5-minute survey that just came out from the DNR regarding deer and encouraged everyone to complete it: [www.michigan.gov/deer](http://www.michigan.gov/deer). The survey is open until April 16.

4. Jon Spieles, Marketing & Outreach Division

- A brief review of the new Nature Awaits program was provided. This program offers a new opportunity for children to experience Michigan's outdoors. All fourth grade classrooms are eligible for a FREE experiential field trip to select state parks to support their classroom learning. Staff have been working for several months to put together the program and reservation system. There are 110,000 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Michigan.
- **Mr. Paquin** asked if someone is going into the schools to talk to teachers about the program. **Mr. Spieles** indicated a marketing person was hired to work with urban teachers, administrators, and going into the classrooms. It's the highest priority program at the moment.

5. Eric Cowing, Parks & Recreation Division

- A brief overview of the latest proposal in the 2025 budget recommendations for an opt-out feature for the recreation passport was provided. It is tied with giving veterans free access to state parks. The budget has not yet been approved.
- **Mr. Moll** stated the recreation passport is a great initiative. **Mr. Cowing** stated it would be an automatic part of license renewals; individuals would have to opt-out to not have it included whereas now one has to opt-in.

- **Vice Chair Gorniak** asked if the free access for veterans includes active duty. **Mr. Cowing** clarified it would. There is already something in place for disabled veterans.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** asked when the docks will get put in for the season. **Mr. Cowing** stated staff are in the process of this, weather dependent.
- **Mr. Liebermann** asked what the additional funding provided by an opt-out feature would be used for. **Mr. Cowing** stated the goal is to raise extra funding for state park improvements. The original model of the recreation passport included an opt-out feature, but it didn't start that way.

### **Public Comments on Agenda Items**

**Chair Buckingham** opened the floor for public comments on agenda items only.

1. *Wayne Koppa, Gaylord – Trust Fund Dollars:* Mr. Koppa spoke about his concerns that the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund discriminates against small counties when granting funding. He distributed a list of counties in Michigan and what they have received in trust fund dollars over the years. He stated the requirements for managing a construction project eliminate small counties who don't have those resources and feels road commissions, who do have the resources, should be eligible to apply for the funding. He indicated he is speaking with legislators about this. **Ms. Haughey** indicated she will get more information from him after the meeting.
2. *Paul Walker, Schoolcraft County Board of Commissioners Chair – Lake Levels at Indian Lake & Dam Repairs:* Mr. Walker spoke about the county's effort to get the Carpenter dam repaired and to fix the summer and winter lake levels at Indian Lake to prevent low levels like those that recently occurred. The county is looking into establishing assessment districts as well to protect people's properties and aquatic habitat. **Ms. Haughey** asked if any of the board has spoken to DNR staff who deals with dams; Mr. Koppa was unsure. **Mr. Kovacs** indicated he will notify habitat staff of their efforts. Mr. Koppa invited anyone from the DNR or council to attend their meetings as this topic is a standing agenda item.

### **Old Business**

1. *Wolf Management Update (Recurring) (Ms. Haughey & Mr. Lemmien)*
  - This is a standing agenda item at the request of the Council.
  - The DNR recently confirmed a wolf was killed in the lower peninsula. An investigation is ongoing, and a press release went out earlier this week.
2. *DNR Response to EUPCAC Resolution on NRC-Approved Wildlife Conservation Order (WCO) Amendment No. 1 of 2024 (Ms. Haughey)*
  - **Ms. Haughey** indicated she sent a copy of the council's resolution opposing a shortened coyote season to the NRC soon after the February 20<sup>th</sup> EUPCAC meeting so that they were aware of it before their March meeting at which the WCO amendment regarding the length of the coyote season was being considered. She attended the meeting and of the almost 3 hours of public comment, 80% of it was on this topic. The NRC did note the council's resolution during discussions. After consideration, the NRC changed the season back to July 15 to April 15 which includes a 3-month closure, avoiding the time when young are dependent on adults. Coyotes will still be able to be taken year-round on private land if a coyote is doing damage or physically present where it could imminently cause damage.

3. Deer Management Initiative (DMI) Update (Ms. Haughey)

- An in-person two-day meeting for the UP DMI group will be held at the end of April in Marquette. This will be the culmination of weekly meetings the last month or so and when the group will bring forward their suggestions for regulation changes for consideration by the DNR and the NRC. This process is the result of the NRC's request.
- **Chair Buckingham** stated the meetings have been interesting to the three members who also serve on this council and have been challenging at times to be in a group with people who have been involved for years and people who haven't been involved in any type of process at all, as well as those who are on the UP group but live downstate. Despite this, everyone is working diligently to make changes.
- **Mr. Hubbard** stated it definitely has been a different process than he's ever been involved in before. Six meetings have occurred so far which usually start around 7pm and end between 9:30 and 10pm. There are two meetings a week. Each meeting has a set of presenters on very specific topics such as researchers from MSU, and one from Wisconsin. How it all comes together will be interesting.
- **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated there are 50-55 folks on these virtual meetings and everyone seems to be very engaged. Wisconsin doesn't have deer management units, and instead manage their wildlife per county with every county having a five-person committee that responds to the DNR. Here in the UP, there is the West and East UPCAC to keep folks engaged and informed. The lower peninsula doesn't have CACs to keep in contact with sportsmen and women.

New Business

1. Michigan Wildlife Council Update (Mr. Spieles)

- **Mr. Spieles**, Chief of the DNR's Marketing and Outreach Division, provided a slide presentation and update on the Michigan Wildlife Council, a public education campaign. He indicated a presentation was given many years ago to the Councils and he will be offering a refresher on what the council is about, where they've gone and where they are going.
- **Background:** Public Acts 108 and 246 of 2013 established the Michigan Wildlife Council, a 9-member, governor-appointed body. It is funded through \$1 from the sale of every base hunting license and all-species fishing license, which started in 2013-2014. This adds up to about \$1.4 million annually.
- **Goals:** The purpose of the Council is legislatively set in statute. Their charge is to increase Michiganders' understanding that hunting and fishing: are wildlife management tools; fund habitat, wildlife and conservation work; contribute significantly to the economy; and are a part of our state's cultural heritage. The council hired Gud Marketing from Lansing to help them meet these goals.
- **Research Process:** Involves secondary research, interviews, a statewide survey, and qualitative research. Research goals include understand public perception and knowledge; define campaign audience; develop message that speaks to our audience; and use survey to track movement and inform message evolution.
- **Data-Driven Approach:** Michigan residents' attitudes toward hunting, fishing and wildlife conservation. Tribal negotiations may have had an effect on the approval of fishing.
- **2023 Statewide Survey:** A pie chart showing the percentages of approvals of trapping, fishing and hunting, along with percentages by region for each were shown.
- **Audience Definition:** Key considerations: who are they, where are they, what do they know, what do they believe, how can we get them to pay attention.

- Highest approval from men, white Michiganders, ages 55+, northern Michigan and UP.
- Lowest approval from women, black Michiganders, ages 18-34, southeast Michigan.
- Where does our audience live? Southern lower peninsula with an emphasis on Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties.
- What does our audience think about wildlife, hunting, and sportsmen? When we say wildlife, they hear nature. When we say wild, they hear lions. When we say hunting, they hear deer. When we say sportsmen, they hear athletes. When we say fees, they hear taxes.
- *Communication Channels:* How do we reach our audience? From broad advertising (billboards, back end of bus ads, radio streaming, etc.), innovative partnerships (including special event booths), digital media presence, media outreach, and social media influencers.
- *Campaign Background:* Slides were shown of several tag lines/messaging with matching photos the campaign utilized.
- *2023-2024 Audience & Goals:* Communications strategy: communicate benefits of well-managed wildlife; showcase people's role in creating and sustaining a healthy outdoors; create new connections to wildlife and management, increasing relevance through trusted influencers. The primary audience are ages 18-34 and in southern Lower Peninsula with an emphasis on Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties.
- *2023 Campaign:* A slide was shown with various messaging utilized.
- *2023 Survey Results:* Key metrics:
  - Management by humans is required for wildlife to thrive: 72% agree (24% increase).
  - Hunting is a wildlife management tool: 74% agree (55% increase in strong agreement).
  - Approve of hunting to maintain wildlife populations in balance with their habitat: 78% approve.
  - Legal, regulated hunting leads to the extinction of species: 64% disagree (19% improvement).
  - Hunting and fishing are only important to people to hunt or fish: 55% disagree (22% improvement).
- *What's Next:* Use research to plan for 2024—confirm audiences, refine messaging, and develop tactics. Ensuring our audiences are more aware, more informed and more engaged, which will lead to stronger support of hunting/fishing and the important role hunters and anglers play in conservation. A new campaign will be created and may shift just a bit due to the high cost of media. So much ground has been gained. Michigan is improving perceptions about hunting and fishing in the state, whereas other states are losing ground.
- *Questions:*
  - **Mr. Smith** stated his group in Curtis is doing a lot to encourage kids fishing. An event was restarted in Curtis this year called the Fish Coop and over 400 kids from 10 years old and under participated. About 100 of them came up from downstate with their parents who had vacationed there before. There will be about four more fishing programs held and they expect about 100 kids per program.

2. *Fisheries 2024 UP Conversations & Coffee Events Overview (Mr. Kovacs & Mr. Caroffino)*

- **Mr. Kovacs**, Fisheries Biologist, and **Mr. Caroffino**, Lake Superior Unit Basin Coordinator, provided a slide presentation and update on the conversation and coffee events held around the state by the Fisheries Division last month, specifically the UP. Getting feedback

from constituents is a request by the NRC. These meetings are an opportunity to share the proposals on fisheries regulations as well as other regulation ideas with the public and get their feedback.

- *UP Fisheries Division Management Units:* A map of the management units for the Lake Superior Basin, Lake Michigan Basin, and Lake Huron Basin was shown.
- *Lake Superior Unit Fisheries Staffing:* Basin Coordinator/Unit Manager is Dave Caroffino, Cory Kovacs is the Eastern UP Fisheries Biologist and the Western UP Fisheries Biologist is currently vacant, although the job was posted a few weeks ago.
- *Northern Lake Michigan Unit Fisheries Staffing:* The Unit Manager is Darren Kramer. Fisheries Biologists are Jennifer Johnson and John Bauman.
- *Northern Lake Huron Fisheries Staffing:* The Unit Manager is Tim Cwalinski and Fisheries Biologists are Neal Godby and Matt Klungle.
- *Fishing Regulations & Reminders:* New for 2024, splake/lake trout daily possession limit combination-Great Lakes, steelhead regulations (Manistique River-Type 4 and Carp River-1 rainbow trout 20 inches or greater, year round). Reminder, muskellunge harvest registration requirement: mobile app (iTunes or Google Play Store), phone line 888-636-7778, or online link-[www.michigan.gov/registerfish](http://www.michigan.gov/registerfish). One muskellunge per angling year, 24 hours.
- *MI Hunt Fish App:* Licenses, permits, regulations, maps, drawing results and more. Available on the app store and Google Play. [www.michigan.gov/DNRHuntFishApp](http://www.michigan.gov/DNRHuntFishApp).
- *Fishing Regulation Proposals:*
  - *FO 224-Regulations on the take of reptiles and amphibians:*
    - a) Temporary possession: Snakes, turtles, etc. occasionally need to be relocated from private property (e.g., garages). Some species are protected, which requires permits for handling. The proposed revision would allow temporary possession for the purposes of relocation to a nearby natural setting.
    - b) Adding blowgun to list of unlawful gear: Staff are at times contacted by public regarding confusion on whether blowguns are a legal method of harvesting reptiles or amphibians. The proposed revision would clarify that it is not lawful to use.
  - *FO 219-Bow, Spear, and Crossbow Fishing Regulations:* Underwater spearfishing amended in 2021. Initial request by the Michigan Spearfishing Association, supported by NRC with three-year expiration date (March 31, 2025). Included expanded opportunities to harvest lake trout, northern pike, and walleye in select waters. Lake MI: south of southernmost pier at Grand Haven. Lake Huron: south of southernmost Thunder Bay River pier to mouth of St Clair River. Free license add-on with monthly reporting requirement. Perceived to be low biological risk due to low overall effort anticipated.
    - a) *Underwater Spearfishing License Summary:* Total of 8,479 licenses (4,243/year). 430 total licenses reported at least one trip (215/year). 1,351 total trips (676/year). 5,234 total hours (2,617/year). Lower effort in 2023.
    - b) *Underwater Spearfishing Harvest Summary:* 244 total licenses reported harvest of at least one fish (122/year). Walleye most harvested species (464 fish/year). ~70% of harvest from Lake Huron, 30% from Lake Michigan. Top ten licensees harvested ~70% of the walleye. Low harvest of northern pike (26/year) and lake trout (8/year). Other species reported include common carp, freshwater drum, white sucker, catfish. No social or user conflict concerns have been reported to Fisheries Division.

- c) *Underwater Spearfishing Reporting:* Monthly reporting challenging at times. Confusion about reporting requirements. Many anglers didn't fish. 963 licenses voided between the two years. 40% of licensees never reported. Most likely those that never fished. High administrative cost to void licenses and ensure compliance.
  - d) *Michigan Spearfishing Association Proposal:* 1) Expand waters to all Great Lakes: Remaining portions of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Addition of Lake Superior, Lake St. Clair, St Clair River, Detroit River, and St. Mary's River. Exclude 2-mile radius around Stannard Rock Lighthouse. 2) Permit underwater spearfishing to occur at night to further avoid conflict in busy areas. 3) Expand opportunities to include additional species: largemouth and smallmouth bass, white bass, yellow perch, sunfishes, salmon and trout species. Exclude lake sturgeon and muskellunge. Follow species-specific harvest limits.
  - e) *Attendee's Feedback on FO 219:* 1) NLMMU (March 12, 2024): Attendees were rather split. Fear this is just next step to moving to inland lakes. Nighttime spearing should not be allowed. This proposal is coming early and ahead of 3-year sunset of the 2021 amendment. Why did muskellunge and lake sturgeon get removed from the original proposal? 2) LSMU (March 14, 2024): General support from the group. Cold water will limit effort in Lake Superior, very limited effort already for Lake Superior (rough species). Some felt there would be conflict at rivermouths, others disagreed. Where is the scientific data to support not including lake sturgeon and muskellunge? Handspear rather than a propellent speargun to level the playing field.
- *Investing in Michigan's Fisheries:* a) Challenge: Current funding level and structure limits the ability to accomplish the critical mission of the Fisheries Division effectively and efficiently. A change in the department's funding structure and operational resources is critical to the future of Michigan's fisheries. b) Potential Solution: A fishing license restructure. The DNR is exploring options to increase funding by evaluating a new license structure.
  - *Quick Facts:* Michigan is home to 3,300 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, 10,899 inland lakes and over 52,000 miles of rivers and streams. The average amount of freshwater per fisheries biologist in the US is 15,000 acres, but in Michigan it is 500,000 acres per biologist. An inland lake in Michigan is likely to be surveyed once every 90 years. The average price of an annual resident fishing license in the U.S. is \$31.33. Michigan has the second lowest fee for resident annual and the lowest daily fishing licenses compared to mid-west states. Michigan has not had an all-species license cost increase since 2014 and the current cost of a license (\$26) is identical to the cost of an all-species license in 1997.
  - *Future Outcome-Gain: What Michigan Fisheries will gain from a license restructure:* Increase information for anglers on fish populations and water bodies. Expand habitat protection and restoration. Reinstate the inland fisheries program, including lake and stream surveys. Extend the useful life of existing capital assets. Focus funding to protect Michigan's inland trout and coldwater fisheries. Focus funding for Great Lakes salmon and trout fisheries and new opportunities for more rods while trolling. Expand opportunities to fish using unique methods.
  - *Future Outcome-Maintain: What Michigan fisheries will maintain from a license restructure:* Michigan's world-class fishing waters. Current level of participation with partners and angler groups. Efficient use of division resources. Current fish tagging and marking program. Reintroduction efforts of Arctic grayling. Development and implementation of

adaptive management strategies to respond to threats to our fisheries. Advancement of fish culture techniques and biosecurity to produce healthy fish needed for stocking goals.

- *Future Outcome-Prevent: What will be prevented from happening with a license restructure:* Closures of hatcheries and/or research facilities. Future degradation of our capital assets. Reduction of future fish stocking. Elimination of muskie, walleye and sturgeon stocking initiatives. Degradation of our diverse fishing opportunities. Reduction in support for aquatic resource stewardship programs and watershed management. Loss of federal funding and ability to compete for grants for habitat work, fisheries restoration, fishing access, and invasive species.
- *Next Steps:* DNR is working with stakeholders to gain feedback and suggestions. A survey will be distributed to anglers regarding a fishing license restructure. Comments and suggestions from today will also be incorporated into the stakeholder feedback. 2014 was the last license change.
- *Feedback-Investing in Michigan's Fisheries:* a) NLMMU: General support from group. Is Fisheries Division looking at what other states have? Nonresident attendee stated they would favor an increase in nonresident license cost? Support a \$4 increase. b) LSMU: General support for an increase in license cost (resident and nonresident). Suggest to chop-up licenses to a 1-day, 3-day, 7-day, and a conservation license, panfish license.
- *General Discussion Session:* Contact emails and phone numbers for staff in each management unit were shown on screen.
- *Questions:*
  - **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated the West UPCAC passed a resolution against the spearfishing proposal and the East UPCAC will consider the same resolution at their June meeting. He stated in talking with different sportsman's groups, they are not in favor.
  - **Mr. Wright** asked what happens if a 14-inch walleye is speared. **Mr. Caroffino** stated this proposal is coming from the Michigan Spearfishing Association and not the DNR. He encourages comments on each piece of their proposal rather than a blanket proposal.
  - **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated many of the gains mentioned above were the same as what was mentioned in 2014 and none of it happened. He feels the grayling is taking up space at the Marquette hatchery which should be producing fish for the UP. He would like to see more boots on the ground and that hasn't happened either. **Mr. Caroffino** stated what was received in 2014 was designed for certain buckets and it didn't give the division everything they needed and wanted to do. When funding is passed through legislation, it depends on how the statute is written. Funding with no strings attached is much better. The legislature is intimately tied to every bit of funding the Fisheries Division can spend. **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated the public needs to know that. **Ms. Haughey** concurred stating there are 85+ restricted funds in the DNR and there are restrictions on how those funds can be spent; the legislature dictates that.
  - Mr. Walker from Schoolcraft County thanked the DNR for the investment made at the Thompson Fish Hatchery in Manistique.
  - A member of the public suggested developing a card or patch similar to a turkey patch to raise funding. **Mr. Paquin** stated the public would have to lobby the legislature to make that happen.
  - **Mr. Caroffino** discussed how a license package increase would work.
  - **Mr. Cox** asked if the division worries about people not buying licenses if fees increased. **Mr. Caroffino** stated the last license increase in 2014 did not see much of a change. **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated the license fees should keep in line with inflation.

- **Mr. Kovacs** and **Mr. Caroffino** both encouraged continued feedback to be sent to the division regarding this topic and both can be contacted at any time for questions.

3. *Snowmobile Season Summary (Lt. Hagy)*

- **Lt. Hagy** reported during the recent snowmobile season, law enforcement had 1,579 contacts and gave 57 warnings, 21 civil infractions, 8 misdemeanors, and 4 complaints. There were 443 miles of patrol that occurred. There wasn't a lot of snowmobile repairs or fuel utilized this year.
- There were 2 fatalities that occurred, one in Chippewa County in which the individual failed to negotiate a curve and alcohol and speed were factors, and one on Indian Lake in Manistique involving a 15-year old individual who encountered unsafe ice conditions.
- **Ms. Haughey** indicated a question was asked at the recent WUPCAC meeting about whether there was a surplus in funding due to the lack of grooming needed. Last year, 126,000 snowmobile permits were sold and currently this year, only 92,000 were sold, representing a 26% decrease. Because of the lower permit sales, it is unlikely there will be a surplus of funding.

4. *Additional Agenda Items Added by Council*

- There were no additional items added to the agenda by the Council.

**Committee Activity**

1. *Wildlife Committee (Mr. Dey)*

- *Council Consideration of Resolution – Allow December Crossbow Use in a Portion of the UP*
- **Chair Buckingham** indicated that Mr. Dey was not able to be present this evening. He also noted that due to a lack of quorum, consideration of this resolution will be deferred to the next meeting.

2. *Policy Impact Committee (Mr. Hass)*

- *Council Consideration of Resolution – Oppose the proposed allowance of E-bikes to access and utilize the Michigan State Park managed lands and Michigan state forest lands managed by the Michigan state parks and urge the DNR Director to deny and/or not recommend such use.*
- **Chair Buckingham** indicated that Mr. Hass was not able to be present this evening. He also noted that due to a lack of quorum, consideration of this resolution will be deferred to the next meeting. He asked if any of the council members had any comments before moving on.
- **Mr. Wright** stated he is confused on which locations this proposal pertains to. There are safety and maintenance concerns. **Mr. Cowing** stated it is a division-wide proposal and has been vetted by policy staff. It only affects trails on Parks & Recreation Division state park lands that are currently already open to bikes and not state forest lands. It doesn't open any additional areas that aren't already open to that use on park lands. Not on North Country trails or trails that are closed to bikes.
- **Mr. Liebermann** stated it seems almost all activity in the woods is motorized of some kind. He doesn't think bikes belong on trails where people are using them to hike.
- **Mr. Moll** stated E-bikes do have to be pedaled and if they aren't, they won't run. He explained the three class levels of E-bikes. He feels this is a good idea and is an asset.

Hiking trails would never allow bikes and this proposal wouldn't either, only the basic E-bike.

- **Mr. Hubbard** provided an example of someone with a bad back and bad knees who can use a class one E-bike which allows them to get pedal assistance to go up hills. He stated he read the proposal several times and did not find any reference to North Country trails, which the resolution indicates. He added there are a few cases downstate where a paved trail with North Country Trails allows bikes.
- **Mr. Paquin** stated he also did not see any reference to North Country Trails in the proposal.
- **Mr. Wright** stated he only seen that the DNR or local authority can allow this.
- **Mr. Paquin** added the DNR has to change with the wants of the public. Rather than saying what can't happen, they need to look at the situation and see how it can work. The Council and public can help with providing ideas.
- **Chair Buckingham** thanked everyone for their input. He encouraged the council to review the resolution again prior to the next meeting.

3. Fisheries Committee (Vice Chair Gorniak)

- **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated the DNR Director indicated additional funding was needed. **Mr. Caroffino** added for this spring, the DNR has the ability and authority to have some lethal control, but it would be by Wildlife Division staff at stocking sites. Discussion ensued pertaining to trained individuals, the increased number of cormorants, etc. **Mr. Caroffino** stated the Director understands the issues. He encouraged members to continue to advocate for funding to increase control.

4. Other Committee Reports

- The Forestry/Invasive Species and Recreation/Trails Committees did not meet since the last Council meeting.

**Next Meeting**

1. Next EUPCAC Meeting: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 beginning at 6:00pm in Newberry at the LMAS Health Department conference room.

2. Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- **Chair Buckingham** indicated suggestions for topics for the next meeting can be submitted to him, Ms. Haughey or Ms. Dahlstrom. Suggested topics will be discussed at a pre-meeting with the Chair and DNR staff.

**Public Comments (Any Topic)**

**Chair Buckingham** opened the floor for public comments on any topic.

1. *Wayne Koppa, Gaylord*: Mr. Koppa suggested members read the current SCORP (located on the DNR website), which is the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. It indicates research on what people like to do, such as fishing is listed a lot lower than biking. **Mr. Hubbard** noted he remembers as a forester in the late 1960s and 1970s getting a little pressure to build trails. Since then, the requests seem to increase each year as does the vehicle type using them.

**Closing Comments from Council**

**Chair Buckingham** opened the floor for closing comments from the Council and DNR staff; none were brought forth.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, **Chair Buckingham** thanked everyone for attending. He adjourned the meeting at 8:45pm Eastern.