

Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (EUPCAC)
Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12/2/24
Wednesday, August 28, 2024
6:00-8:30pm Eastern
Quality Inn Conference Room, St. Ignace

Chair: Tom Buckingham Vice-Chair: Gary Gorniak Secretary: Steve Dey

Council Members Present

Tom Buckingham	Tim Hass	Joe Smith
Ken Collier	Mark Maida	Mark Spencer
Jeff Cox	Glenn Moll	Tony Wright
Gary Gorniak	Tom Paquin	

Council Members Excused/Absent

Grant Dewitt	Bernie Hubbard	Julie Weist
Steve Dey	Travis Kangas	
Al Garavaglia	Robert Liebermann	

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons & Guests

Randy Claramunt, Chief, Fisheries Division, Lansing
PJ Costa, Parks & Recreation Division-Trails Section, Newberry
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette
Dan Heckman, Forest Resources Division, Gaylord
Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division, Newberry
Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division, Newberry
Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division, Sault Ste. Marie
Kristie Sitar, Wildlife Division, Newberry

Call to Order

The Eastern UP Citizens' Advisory Council meeting was called to order at 6:00pm 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. **Mr. Spencer 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 June 5, 2024 meeting minutes which were distributed to the Council via email for review. **Mr. Cox motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Hass 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 August 21, 2024. The following were verbal additions to those reports:

1. Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy
 - **Ms. Haughey** acknowledged receipt of the resignation of Council member David Liebel (Alger County) due to work commitments preventing him from fully being involved.
 - Mr. Pershinske, attending in the audience, was recognized for being the first chair of the EUPCAC having resided in that position for 10 years. Also recognized in the audience was Fisheries Division Chief Randy Claramunt.

2. Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division, Eastern UP
 - The western UP Lake Superior management unit biologist position has been filled by Kris Nault of Arkansas, a native of the western UP.
 - **Mr. Maida** asked about population estimates. **Mr. Kovacs** explained, adding that write-ups will be done in the winter months and will be available to the public shortly after.

3. Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division
 - The Michigan DNR fire section has been supporting western US fire efforts with resources and expertise, specifically Montana and Texas. Michigan is seen as a great partner in supporting fire needs in other areas of the nation.

4. PJ Costa, Parks & Recreation Division-Eastern UP Trails
 - A report on the status of several eastern UP trails will be provided later on in the agenda.

5. Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division
 - A camera survey update is included in the division reports as requested. 50% of camera locations have been revisited to swap out sim cards and replace batteries. Vandalism to cameras is less than 5%, which is less than what was anticipated. Thank you to Council members for getting the word out early to leave cameras be as data being collected is very valuable to staff and will pave the way for future species results.
 - The request for a moose research project is very close to being approved. In addition to the collection of vital information needed on moose in general, such as vitals, pregnancy rates, twinning rates, etc., the camera survey data will be used to evaluate expansion of the moose range. Data collected back in the 2000s is very outdated. Moose collaring efforts will begin this winter and will piggy-back with winter flight surveys. The target is to collar 20-30 moose with another 20-30 the following winter.
 - **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated he spoke with Dr. Tyler Petroelje, head of the camera survey project, and he indicated preliminary data on the camera survey may be available the end of September and perhaps by the Joint UPCAC meeting.
 - **Chair Buckingham** asked if there was any update on using National Guard choppers to help with flight surveys. **Mr. Lemmien** stated there is no movement on that suggestion to date.
 - **Mr. Wright** asked if the division was aware of the success other states have had with biocontrol methods for controlling spotted knapweed versus the more expensive method being used at the Engadine clearing. **Mr. Lemmien** stated he is not aware. **Ms. Sitar** further explained the treatment that was done and why.
 - **Vice Chair Gorniak** asked if there were any updates on the recent Engadine sheep incident. **Ms. Sitar** shared details of the incident, noting despite rumors, the investigation clearly pointed out coyotes were involved. She explained the differences between wolf pup and coyote teeth spans. She stated the farmer believes coyotes were involved as well. **Ms. Haughey** asked about the differences in feeding by wolves and coyotes; **Ms. Sitar** explained. She stated the farmer will receive depredation payment regardless of what killed

the sheep. She added the farmer was present for finding the carcasses, but not for the skinning and evidence finding, and those details were shared with and explained to the farmer upon completion of the investigation. She added that she grew up on a sheep farm from 7th grade on. The sheep were wormed the day before, which tends to call in predators. **Chair Buckingham** and **Mr. Hass** stated they appreciated the informative explanation.

- **Vice Chair Gorniak** noted he and his neighbor had issues recently when they called the RAP line to report an injured eagle. They both waited more than 20 minutes. And at one time, there was a recording about hunter's safety. **Ms. Haughey** stated she did check into it and there was no record of any calls on the day and time mentioned and it is still being reviewed. She noted it may have been a different number that was called.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

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

1. Dick Pershinski, Engadine: Mr. Pershinske spoke about the recent Engadine sheep incident and feels the credibility of the DNR is being questioned because of it. He, as **Vice Chair Gorniak** also suggested earlier, feels it would go a long way to find out if any of the collared wolves from the known pack were in the area at the time. **Ms. Sitar** stated she will check to see if any were in the area and report back. Discussion ensued about expert investigations by qualified staff versus rumors. **Mr. Pershinske** stated knowing if no collared wolves were close by would help dispel rumors in the area. Discussion then continued about publishing depredation reports without private information of owners, similar to what Wisconsin does. **Mr. Hass** recommended the DNR create an informational depredation report to be published for public viewing. **Ms. Haughey** indicated a presentation on the depredation investigation process may be helpful at a future Council meeting to educate members of the public. **Mr. Maida** spoke about dog depredations; **Ms. Haughey** noted wolf-dog depredation events can be reported and are listed on the DNR's website (address provided).

New Business

1. *State Forest Management Plan Update (Mr. Heckman)*
 - **Mr. Dan Heckman**, forest management specialist for the Forest Resources Division, provided this presentation as part of the public review and engagement process of the plan update.
 - *Introduction:* This year, the DNR is rolling out a 10-year draft State Forest Management Plan (SFMP). The upcoming slides provide an update on what staff have been working on the last few years. Participation in the public review of the plan in September is encouraged.
 - *Our Team:* Staff from the Forest Resources Division, Wildlife Division, Parks and Recreation Division, Fisheries Division and content contributors from various divisions were listed.
 - *Legal Authority:* Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), Act 451 of 1994, Part 525, Sustainable Forestry on State Forestlands. Includes the State Forest Management Plan. Ensures a stable, long-term, sustainable timber supply, promotes and encourages outdoor recreation, tourism, and the forest products industry. Incorporates biodiversity conservation goals. Identifies environmentally sensitive areas. Identifies forest treatments to maintain and sustain healthy, vigorous forests and quality wildlife habitat. Ensures prepared timber sale acres are a minimum of 90% of planned harvests.
 - *Co-Management of the State Forest:* First implemented in 1946 when state game areas and state forests were merged in the northern two-thirds of the State. Forest Resources

Division is the land administering division for the state forest. Forest Resources and Wildlife Division are jointly responsible (legally) for developing the management plans and providing management guidance and approval on the State Forest. Recreation management on the state forest has transitioned to PRD over the last 20 years. Parks and Recreation and Fisheries Division co-manage through the “compartment review process”. Vision for a successful co-management system: collaborate in partnership to manage timber, habitat, and wildlife on state forest lands for the benefit of current and future generations.

- *What’s New in the 2024 SFMP:*
 - Improved alignment with other plans: DNR Land Strategy, Forest Action Plan, Wildlife Action Plan, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Trails Plan, and Division Strategic Plans.
 - Using a robust planning and optimization analytics platform to: define objectives, establish goals and constraints, design scenarios, analyze results, identify a preferred solution, implementation of the management actions.
 - Long term sustainability drives short term harvest levels: leverage site condition data to determine manageable land base.
 - Integrated forest cover type and wildlife habitat management.
 - Simplified for ease of implementation: reduced number of management areas to 35, 4 plans combined into 1.
 - Integration of climate smart management direction in each management priority: evaluated potential threat & related risk. Determine relevant adaptation approach: resilience, resistance, mitigation.
- *Lines of Effort:* SFMP model (scenario development and preferred management scenario), planning framework (planning process, desired future conditions), writing the plan (statewide and regional management priorities, management areas), engagement (internal collaboration and external consultation-obtain tribal, public and stakeholder feedback on information provided in the plan).
- *Modeling Effort:* Forest inventory, management strategies, timber and wildlife habitat goals.
- *SFMP Modeling Outcomes:* Future forest conditions (age, cover type, basal area), landscape habitat abundance (featured species potential habitat, forest diversity matrix), 10-year harvest levels (management areas, special analysis units). The forest diversity matrix describes the landscape position, successional stage, shade tolerance, and management availability of each management area.
- *Special Analysis Units:* Grouse Enhanced Management System (GEMS), Elk Management Plan, Pigeon River Country – Concept of Management, Kirtland’s Warbler Management Plan, Deer Wintering Complexes.
- *Forest Sustainability:* The three components are assumed to have the same weight and sustainability is only achieved when and where the three pillars of sustainability meet in the middle. The new approach suggests that the environment is the base of sustainability and carries far more weight than the other components.
Society is dependent on the environment and the economy is dependent on both society and the environment. A key takeaway is that there are limits to what our natural resources can provide and ensuring their sustainability should come first.
- *Planning Framework Overview:* Established seven management principles that are aligned with the Montreal Process Criterion & Indicator Framework for measuring progress toward forest sustainability. The state forest is managed to: 1) conserve or enhance biological diversity; 2) maintain productive capacity; 3) promote ecosystem health and vitality; 4)

conserve and protect soil and aquatic resources; 5) provide opportunities for social and economic benefits; 6) respond to a changing climate; 7) protect cultural and historic resources. Internationally agreed-upon criteria and indicators for the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests were first created in 1994. 12 countries are members including US, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand.

- *Planning Framework Effort*: Began with the mission then build on the mission with principles that align the DNR with the Montreal Process. Identified goals, strategies, then management priorities. Management priorities are the “natural resources” that are managed as well as obligations and commitments (communication, collaboration, protection).
- *Writing Effort*: Transition from planning framework to topic-based plan organization. Approach at different scales: 1) strategic: statewide and regional management priorities; 2) operational: landscape level, cover type and habitat management goals at the management area level and special analysis units.
- *Plan Organization & Structure*: A copy of the table of contents was shown within the following sections: Introduction, State Forestry History, Statewide and Regional Planning, Management Area Planning, Special Analysis Units, Implementation, and Monitoring and Revision.
- *Example of a Management Priority*: Examples with tables shown.
- *Examples of Management Area*: Examples with tables shown.
- *Looking Ahead*: A timeline of the review process was shown: 1) May 10: internal review period of the rough draft ended; 2) June-July: implemented changes based on feedback; 3) August 23: technical editing and Tribal review begins; 4) September 5: public/stakeholder review begins including Tribal, stakeholder, and public engagement opportunities; 5) October 4: review period ends; 6) October-January 2024: further implementation of changes based on feedback and final draft completed and submitted for approval (tentatively).
- *Review Period*: September 5 – October 4: Engagement meetings being held in September for questions, clarification, and discussion. The UPCACs are invited to attend.
- *Questions*:
 - **Mr. Hass** and **Mr. Moll** stated it was a very nice presentation. A copy of the slides was requested to be sent to the entire Council.
 - **Mr. Wright** asked if all trees planted on state forest lands come from state nurseries or if private nurseries are used. **Mr. Heckman** stated it is a combination of both and further explained. All seed is sourced from Michigan. Discussion ensued.
 - **Chair Buckingham** thanked Mr. Heckman for the extensive information on the plan and the opportunities for public engagement.

2. Eastern UP Trails Update (Mr. Costa)

- Updates on the following trails were provided. A map of the eastern UP trails was distributed and the number of trail miles in the eastern UP was noted.
- *Drummond Island*: Working on recreation plan. Kristi Beyer from the Drummond Island Trail Association was present and indicated they are making headway on the plan. The island has very unique trails with rocky terrain and it’s difficult to repair them.
- *Trail 49 (Sault Ste. Marie)*: Going south towards Kinross, a bridge is almost gone and underwater. The local club is working to help solve the issues.
- *Connector Trail (Barbeau)*: The town is working to get a connector trail to increase traffic into the area. It would tie into Trail 49.

- *Nunns Creek (Mackinac County)*: A washed out bridge has been a problem for a while. It should be up and running this winter.
 - *Chippewa Snow Chasers (Strongs)*: The club is putting a new trail head at their groomer barn with more places to park. An outhouse will also be added and will be built by DNR staff from Newberry.
 - *Peek A Boo Mountain Bike Trail (Cedarville)*: 10 miles of trail currently being built for different levels of mountain biking. It is a joint project on state land with Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund dollars. Should be completed by the end of October.
 - *Besty River Crossing (Paradise)*: A crossing bridge built in the 80s is failing. It is on the list for funding. It will be a million dollar project.
 - *New ORV Clubs*: There is a new ORV club in Grand Marais and possibly one in Seney soon. There is an effort to get the northern area more ORV routes to take pressure off southern trails which are getting tore up with the amount of traffic on them. Hoping to see more growth in the new few years.
 - *3 Crossings (Shingleton)*: Two are almost complete and a third one is delayed due to funding but should be fixed next spring.
 - *Haywire Grade Crossings (Manistique-Shingleton)*: There are 11 crossings on this grade with 1 that needs to be replaced. Funding should be available next year. The other 10 crossings need redecking. Working on approvals now.
 - *AuTrain Bridge on M-28 (Alger County)*: On south side of the road, the blocking on top of the pilings below the bridge caved in on one corner. It is currently closed. Working to get an engineer in to evaluate what can be done to get by. The reroute for snowmobiles is in place but it is a 10-15 mile loop. No reroute in place for ORVs. Working with the forest service for possible solutions.
 - *H-58 Snowmobile Trail Update (Alger County)*: The Alger County Road Commission is removing access of 0.8 miles of roadway in this area which is a route to Miner’s Castle. After many meetings with local officials and diligence in trying to find a reroute, there is no feasible alternative. It is likely the trail will be closed this winter.
 - *Questions*:
 - **Mr. Maida** stated he frequently gets questions about Trail 8 on the Tahquamenon River due to wet conditions and the condition of the bridges. **Mr. Costa** stated the local club has plans to get the bridges fixed.
 - **Mr. Smith** asked about mud bogging on Drummond Island and the lack of requirements to wash vehicles before and after coming in/off the island to prevent the spread of invasives. **Mr. Costa** stated it has been explored, but enforcement and funding are current barriers as well as applying it to all kinds of user groups.
3. *UP Deer Management Initiative Summary / Approved 2024 Deer Regulations from July Natural Resources Commission Meeting (Ms. Haughey)*
- In December 2023, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) asked the DNR to create DMI groups in UP/LP to help address contemporary issues in deer management. In general, the issues are too many deer in the LP and not enough in parts of the UP. Groups met over the course of several months to come up with regulatory recommendations for each peninsula. NRC added some of their own recommendations as well. Recommendations were debated and amended through the normal regulations-setting process at public meetings. The final changes were approved at the July 11 NRC meeting.
 - This process has shown just how difficult it is to set deer regulations. The DNR tries to keep regulations as simple as possible, so they are easy to understand and follow, but it is

extremely complicated in a state like Michigan that has so much variability in habitat, population density, and land ownership across the state.

- 31 pages of DMI resolutions went forward to the NRC in addition to what the NRC put forth in their own amendments, all for one order. Many hours were spent by members, including several UPCAC members.
- 10 UP DMI resolutions were reviewed; some of them were passed by the NRC in some form and others were either not in the DNR's purview or will be considered at a later time.
- NRC Commissioners passed Wildlife Conservation Order #6, which included 20 amendments, at their meeting on July 11. This order includes deer hunting regulations for this fall.
- The full package of regulations includes updates that won't begin until after the 2024 seasons have ended; those updates will be explained at a later date. The commissioners and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources thank everyone who gave their time, insight and feedback to the work of the DNR's Deer Management Initiative, which contributed to many of these regulation changes and decisions.
- The following updates apply to the fall 2024 deer hunting seasons for the Upper Peninsula.
 - A 3-point antler point restriction, or APR, was implemented on the single deer license in deer management unit (DMU) 122.
 - In the western central part of the Upper Peninsula, in DMU 352 when using a universal antlerless deer license, it is required to also have an antlerless deer hunting access permit. The eastern central part of the U.P., DMU 351, is closed to antlerless hunting with a universal antlerless deer license in 2024.
 - DMU 352 is made up of DMUs 027, 036, 152 and 252. DMU 351 includes DMUs 017, 021, 117, 149, 249 and 349. A map was shown on screen.
 - 500 access permits will be available in DMU 352. The application period is July 15-Aug. 15.
 - For each deer harvested, you will need one antlerless deer hunting access permit for the DMU you're hunting in, plus one universal antlerless deer license.
 - Antlerless deer can be taken in DMUs 017, 021, 027, 036, 117, 149, 152, 249, 252 and 349 during archery season on the single deer license or the combination deer license until December 10.
 - Contact any DNR office if there are questions.

4. *Additional Agenda Items Added by Council*

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

Old Business

1. *Wolf Management Update (Recurring) (Ms. Haughey & Mr. Lemmien)*

- This is a standing agenda item at the request of the Council.
- **Ms. Haughey** indicated there is no new information to report.

2. *DNR Update on June Resolutions (Ms. Haughey)*

- *DNR Response to Crossbow Hunting Allowed in a Portion of the UP:*
 - **Ms. Haughey** indicated this resolution recommends the allowance of crossbow hunting in a select southern portion of the UP. She displayed a map of the UP CWD core area zone from 2019-2022 in which crossbows were allowed in this area. The NRC reversed the allowance when the core zone was removed for the 2023 regulation year. The resolution is asking the NRC to go back to what was just reversed last season with a slightly different boundary.

- **Mr. Lemmien** stated a DNR response letter was sent to both the EUPCAC and WUPCAC, since the resolution came from both Councils, indicating the deer program staff and UP field staff were not supportive of the resolution as written as it would split deer management unit (DMU) boundaries. It also indicated that staff may be supportive of the resolution if it were rewritten to follow current DMU boundaries.
- *DNR Response to a) recommend any increase in DNR Fisheries revenue to be prioritized to provide deliverables; and b) oppose expansion of underwater spearing under regulation FO 219.25:*
 - **Fisheries Chief Randy Claramunt** was present to address any questions or concerns about the response letter that was sent to both Councils regarding to these two resolutions. He stated the division had a kickoff meeting last February with MUCC about the need for funding. The division is 5% of the DNR's entire budget being a \$30 million program. Staffing of 200-300 employees has been reduced to 150 and then again reduced to about 100 in 2018-2019. A lot of research has gone into license packages in other states and Michigan's program is very underfunded. Since February, alternative solutions to different funding modes have been investigated. If an increase in funding is not received, programs will have to be cut. He added based on the statewide walleye plan, certain members of the WUPCAC do not support a license package going forward.
 - **Vice Chair Gorniak** asked what is needed. **Chief Claramunt** stated a \$10-\$20 increase would allow the division to grow programs and expand them. Beyond a \$20 increase may incur resistance.
 - **Mr. Smith** mentioned for each youth voluntary fishing license costing \$2, the federal government would reimburse the DNR \$10. **Chief Claramunt** stated he promoted this program in an article in March 2024 and 1700 licenses went to 5000 after the article ran. **Mr. Smith** added more effort needs to be made to get 16 and 17-year olds into fishing. **Chief Claramunt** noted more recruitment resources are needed to make that happen.
 - **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated more boots on the ground are needed, and fisherman know the DNR needs money to operate. **Chief Claramunt** mentioned an increase of \$10-\$20 would provide 40 more staff and help operations as well. Without biologists and technicians, stocking cannot be increased. License fees have been constant since 1997 despite the high rise of inflation. **Vice Chair Gorniak** stated he would be on board for an increase, as compared to a burger meal, it's not much.
 - **Mr. Spencer** asked if a license increase could be tied to inflation. **Chief Claramunt** replied yes, that is a must, similar to other divisions. He noted license fees are fixed in statute and explained the simplistic changes they are reviewing. A lot of thought and research has gone behind the changes. He stated the division is asking if stakeholders are supportive.
 - **Chief Claramunt** noted cormorants are an issue and DNR Director Bowen has made it a priority. The Director asked each division (wildlife and fisheries) to add in-kind resources and asked the USF&WS to allow for more control. **Chief Claramunt** stated he firmly believes the Director will be in support of more cormorant control using license dollars.
 - **Chair Buckingham** thanked Chief Claramunt for attending the meeting to provide explanations and answer questions.

- *DNR Response to Oppose E-Bike Use on State Park & Forest Lands:*
 - **Ms. Haughey** noted after review and further considerations at the June and July 2024 Natural Resources Commission meetings, the Director approved the Land Use Order of the Director, Amendment No. 4 of 2024 – Parks & Recreation Management of State-Owned Lands – E-Bikes, at the August 8 Natural Resources Commission meeting.

Committee Activity

Due to lack of time, there were no committee reports.

Next Meeting

1. *Next EUPCAC Meeting:* Monday, December 2, 2024, beginning at 6:00pm, held virtually.
2. *Upcoming Joint UPCAC Meeting:* The annual joint meeting of both the East and West Councils will be held on Wednesday, October 9 beginning at 3:00pm Eastern/2:00pm Central in Marquette at the Marquette Township Community Center. It was also noted a UP welcome reception will be held later that day at 6:00pm Eastern. The following day on October 10, the NRC meeting will be held at NMU at 9:00am Eastern with a Coffee with the Commissioners hour starting prior at 8:00am Eastern.
3. *Suggestions for Joint UPCAC & December Agenda Topics:* **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; none were brought forth.

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 8:54pm Eastern.