



# Natural Resources Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Date: February 10, 2022

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Lansing Community College

West Campus Rooms M119-121

5708 Cornerstone Drive

Lansing, MI 48917

### Roll call

Present for the Natural Resources Commission (Commission):

- Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair
- Mark Anthony
- Tom Baird
- David Cozad
- Keith Creagh – Absent
- Leslie Love
- David Nyberg

Present for the Department of Natural Resources (Department) Staff

- Dan Bock, Legal Counsel, Office of the Attorney General
- Daniel Eichinger, DNR Director
- Shannon Lott, DNR Natural Resources Deputy
- Trevor VanDyke, DNR Director of Legal and Legislative Affairs Office
- Brooke Parmalee, DNR, Legal and Legislative Affairs Office

### Meeting minutes

Opening Comments:

**Chair Rose** called the meeting of the Commission to order at 10:29 a.m. **Chair Rose** opened the meeting requesting everyone to mute all cell phones. **Chair Rose** began with an introduction to the newly appointed Commissioners. Mr. Mark "David" Anthony and Ms. Leslie Love. Both Commissioners were appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer Friday, January 7, 2022.

**Chair Rose** called for a roll call. **Commissioner Creagh** was absent. **Chair Rose** requested everyone in the room to introduce themselves. **Chair Rose** called for a motion to approve the day's agenda.

**Commissioner Nyberg** made the motion to approve, **Commissioner Cozad** supported the motion. **Chair Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of the January 13, 2022, Commission meeting minutes.

**Chair Rose** called for a motion to approve January 13, 2022, Commission meeting minutes.

**Commissioner Baird** made a motion to approve; supported by **Commissioner Love**. **Chair Rose** called for additional discussion, there being none, **Chair Rose** called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

##### Director's Report:

**Director Eichinger** welcomed everyone to the meeting. He discussed Governor Whitmer's executive budget proposal for the Department, which was announced on February 9, 2022, by State Budget Director Chris Harkins. The proposed FY 23 budget for the Department would be a gross appropriation of \$534.2 million. This is over half a billion dollars that will be going to natural resources conservation is truly remarkable. That includes \$95.8 million in general fund support for the Department which represents almost a 100 percent increase in what the general fund appropriation has been over the last number of years. Some of the critical investments include:

- **Fish Hatchery Infrastructure Improvements:** \$30 million one-time General Fund investment to address deferred infrastructure needs, improve energy efficiency, and enhance biosecurity at the state fish hatcheries, including the construction of a cool water fish production facility at the Wolf Lake hatchery to better support walleye, northern pike, and muskellunge production.
- **Natural Resource Equipment Modernization:** \$12.4 million one-time, department-wide investment (including \$10.9 million General Fund) to provide modern, safe, and efficient equipment necessary for the department's core work.
- **State Parks System Operations:** \$12 million increase from available restricted funds to help keep state parks and recreation areas clean, safe, and operating efficiently for the public to enjoy by adding ranger positions; increasing hours for seasonal and permanent-intermittent staff; improving recruitment and retention of short-term workers through increased pay rates; increasing funding for contracted service, material, and supply needs; and aligning spending authority with increased contracted vendor costs.
- **Great Lakes Fisheries Research Vessel:** \$4 million one-time General Fund investment to replace the 54-year-old Survey Vessel Steelhead with a modern vessel of similar size to better support the collection of fisheries assessment data from Lake Michigan.
- **State Trail Operations:** \$3.1 million increase from available restricted funds to improve experiences for state trail users by awarding more grants for off-road vehicle (ORV) trail

maintenance equipment and projects, increasing support for ORV enforcement efforts, adding trail ranger positions, and increasing hours for seasonal and permanent-intermittent staff to better address trail operations and maintenance needs, and addressing other priority needs across the state trails system.

- **Newberry Customer Service Center:** \$2 million one-time General Fund investment to address the current funding gap for a project to construct a 30,000 square foot mass timber Customer Service Center and storage facility in Newberry.
- **Emergency Response and Wildfire Suppression:** \$751,900 General Fund increase to better support the emergency response work of Incident Command Teams and the wildfire suppression and prevention efforts of fire staff.
- **Short-Term Worker Recruitment and Retention:** \$678,800 increase from available restricted funds to improve recruitment and retention of short-term workers through increased pay rates (this does not include state park short-term worker pay increases, which are part of the proposed investment for state parks system operations).
- **Tribal Relations/Fisheries Co-management:** \$652,800 General Fund investment to support more biologists and technicians within the Tribal Coordination Unit to work with tribal governments on fisheries projects and facilitate decisions for co-managed fisheries.
- **Archival Record Digitization:** \$485,000 one-time General Fund investment to purchase equipment to scan and digitize state and local records held by the Archives of Michigan and support limited-term staff to facilitate the work.

**Director Eichinger** continued his report with a lifesaving award presentation and introduced Chief Gary Hagler, Law Enforcement Division.

- i. Law Enforcement Division Lifesaving Award – Conservation Officer Holly Pennoni (*Gary Hagler, Chief, Law Enforcement Division*)
- ii. Partners in Conservation Award – Dean Hall (*Kristin Phillips, Chief, Marketing and Outreach Division*)

**Chair Rose** requested a break following the award presentation to take photos with the recipient.

The Director's Report continued with presentations.

- iii. [Wildlife Annual Report and Pure Michigan Hunt Winners Announcement](#) (*Holly Vaughn, Wildlife Division*)
- iv. [Furbearer Regulations](#) (*Adam Bump, Wildlife Division*)
- v. [Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and Managed Waterfowl Area Regulations](#) (*Randy Knapik, Wildlife Division*)
- vi. [Results of Wolf Public Attitude Survey](#) (*Dr. Shawn Riley, MSU*)
- vii. [Legislative Report](#) (*Informational Item*)

**Brooke Parmalee** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances. [NRC Public Appearance Guidelines](#)

- a. 5 Minute Comment
  - i. Molly Tamulevich, MI State Director, HSUS – Wolves and Bobcats
  - ii. Jeff Godi, Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee – Waterfowl season regulations
- b. 3 Minute Comment
  - i. Erin Stacks – Wildlife rehabilitation
  - ii. Jenny Cook, Michigan Equine Trails – Safe Passing Plan
  - iii. Erik Schnelle, National Deer Association – Making Michigan Deer Hunting Great – Together
  - iv. Mike Thorman – Bears, Furbearers, and Wolves
  - v. Mark Jones – Sandhill Cranes
  - vi. Mary Rosseell Jones – Sandhill Lake Region Predator Challenges
  - vii. Nicholas Green, MUCC – Cranes
  - viii. Michael Schippa, MTPCA
  - ix. Larry Holcomb

**Chair Rose** adjourned the public comment portion of the meeting at 10:40 a.m. then called to order the regular meeting of the Commission.

#### REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

#### New Business

**Chair Rose** noted there are two orders for the Director and the NRC for information this month.

- a. NRC/Director's Orders
  - i. [Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 1 of 2022 Furbearer Regulations](#)
  - ii. [Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 2 of 2022 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and Managed Waterfowl Area Regulations](#)

**Chair Rose** noted there are two land transactions for the Director.

b. Land Transactions

- i. [Sale/Release of Public Use Restriction on DNR Conveyed Land Western Upper Peninsula District, Keweenaw County Land Transaction Case #20210051](#)
- ii. [Acquisition of State Parks and Recreation Land Parks and Recreation Division, Keweenaw County The Faith World Outreach Tract Land Transaction Case #20210183](#)

**Director Eichinger** indicated he would sign all the Land Transactions.

Old Business

**Chair Rose** noted there is one order for the Director under old business this month.

a. Director's Orders

- i. [Land Use Orders of the Director Amendment No. 1 of 2022 Public Act 288 \(PA 288\) of 2016; Forest Road Inventory Update](#)

**Director Eichinger** indicated he would sign Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 1 of 2022.

**Chair Rose** noted there are no NRC Orders up for information this month.

b. NRC Orders – None

Commissioner Reports

**Commissioner Anthony** – reported he has attended several gatherings for different organizations and getting up to speed on their involvements. He'll continue to be a student for the next few months.

**Commissioner Baird** – reviewed what was provided at the Fisheries Committee (Committee) meeting held earlier in the morning. The members of the Committee were introduced (**Commissioner Baird, Chair, and Commissioners Cozad and Nyberg**), reviewed the procedures the Committee would like to utilize in the future. Chief Dexter presented on several items. Potential Fisheries Orders that are being looked at for consideration later this year and the process by which they will be handled. Regarding the potential orders, all are local, not statewide dealing with **several discrete items**. There will be a reconsideration of the steelhead regulations that were adopted last year, 2021. The Committee also received a steelhead update including reference to the Cold Water Resources Citizens Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for February 22, 2022. They also received an update on walleye on the Saginaw River and increased associated research. Finally, Chief Dexter discussed future Committee work and Fisheries Division with respect to regulations and ongoing research and management issues. The Committee is looking forward to working with Chief Dexter and the Fisheries Division in the future.

**Commissioner Cozad** – thanked everyone, both public and the staff, for attending and participating, and providing input. He welcomed **Commissioners Anthony and Love**. Stated he's happy to have a full Commission. Over the past month, there was a meeting of the Lake Huron Fisheries Citizens Advisory Committee. The bulk of the meeting was spent on the amendment to the regulation for

walleye on the lower Saginaw River. A good discussion was held on the outreach and communication component to get the public ready for the regulation to be in effect in a little over a year. He also thanked **Commissioners Baird** and **Nyberg** for their work leading up to and during the Fisheries Committee meeting, and also thanked the staff for putting the meeting together.

**Commissioner Love** – stated she was honored to serve with such a distinguished group and to hear from the professionals, stakeholders, and passionate citizens about the issues that have been brought before the Commission. She also thanked staff for their presentations for the day. She’s transitioning in the world of Commissioning. She, like Commissioner Anthony, will be a student for the next few months. She also stated she appreciates all the invitations and for everyone to continue to send them.

**Commissioner Nyberg** – welcomed **Commissioners Anthony** and **Love**. He thanked **Commissioners Baird** and **Cozad** for their work on getting the Fisheries Committee started. They have had some great conversations with Chief Dexter and staff, members of the public, and other interested stakeholders. In the previous week, a meeting of the year was held with the UP Habitat Workgroup (Workgroup). The Workgroup is an official function of the Commission started by previous **Commissioner JR Richardson**. The workgroup is made up of private landowners, retired Wildlife biologists, former or current Wildlife biologists, Department staff, and a dedicated group of people to advance their mutual interest as it relates to land management, forest management, and wildlife management. The meeting was to reorganize and reacquaint the group on the mission. Jim Hammill gave an overview of Workgroup and other initiatives at the Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Breakfast earlier in the day. He also reported he’s looking forward to the following week the Department will be visiting the UP to engage with stakeholders. He also thanked everyone for attending the meeting to give public comments.

**Director Eichinger** – stated he’s looking forward to his time in the UP, the events planned and meeting with the key stakeholders. He reported he had a chance to meet with the Schrems West Michigan TU Chapter at the annual State of the Trout meeting. Next month is the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference, which he will be attending to meet along with other managers and federal governments from across the country to talk about collective issues and research projects. He stated it’s nice to be able to get back to these meetings. He also welcomed **Commissioners Anthony** and **Love**.

**Chair Rose** – thanked all the Fisheries and Wildlife staff for the presentations to the Fisheries and Wildlife Committees. She also welcomed **Commissioners Anthony** and **Love**. She reported she was able to attend all 35 minutes of the sturgeon fishing season held at Black Lake. She also went to the Onaway check station when the sturgeon were being registered. The most memorable fun was when a white pick-up truck pulled up and before it had come to a complete stop, a young lad of 11 yrs. jumped out, ran to the back of the truck, dropped the tailgate, and stood there, full of excitement, to show off his sturgeon – which was only a couple inches shorter than he was. She was able to get photos of the proud fisherman. She said it was a remarkable experience and is sure he is still smiling. She thanked everyone that participated, both staff and the public.

Closed Session

**Chair Rose** moved that the Commission meets in closed session as permitted under section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by the Michigan Freedom of Information Act. Specifically, to consult with counsel regarding a memorandum provided to the Commission which falls under the attorney-client privilege exemption in section 13(1)(g) of the FOIA. The motion was supported by **Commissioner Nyberg**.

Adjournment

**Chair Rose** asked for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Nyberg** made a motion to adjourn the meeting; **Commissioner Baird** supported the motion. **Chair Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Commission is scheduled for **Thursday, March 10, 2022**, at the **Lansing Community College, West Campus Rooms M119-121, 5708 Cornerstone Drive, Lansing, MI 48917**.



Carol Moncrieff Rose, NRC Chair



Daniel Eichinger, DNR Director

DATE: March 10, 2022