



Natural Resources Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: September 13, 2023

Time: 9:30 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):

- Dave Anthony
- Tom Baird, Chair
- David Cozad
- Carol Moncrieff Rose
- David Nyberg
- John Walters

Present for the Department of Natural Resources (Department) and Office of the Attorney General:

- M. Scott Bowen, Director, Department of Natural Resources
- Dan Bock, Legal Counsel, Office of Attorney General

Meeting Minutes

OPENING COMMENTS

Chair Baird called the meeting of the Commission to order at 11:48 a.m.

Chair Baird conducted a roll call of Commissioners, the Director, and the Office of the Attorney General.

Chair Baird began with an introduction of new DNR Director Scott Bowen, from Grand Rapids. Stating that **Director Bowen** has done a lot; he fishes and hunts, lawyer and judge, government official and businessman, he will be an asset to the department. Prior to the meeting **Chair Baird** asked **Director Bowen** to share a few words. **Director Bowen** shared that he is 58 years old, has three daughters, one son, two grandchildren and a black lab. **Director Bowen** stated he is excited about this work and the work that the department does. He understands the passion for the work and looks forward to being a temporary steward of these marvelous assets.

Chair Baird called for a motion to approve the day's agenda. **Commissioner Anthony** made a motion to approve the day's agenda, supported by **Commissioner Walters**. **Chair Baird** called for discussion. There being none, **Chair Baird** called for a vote. The day's agenda was approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of the August 10, 2023, Commission meeting minutes. **Chair Baird** called for a motion to approve the August 10, 2023, meeting minutes. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to approve, supported by **Commissioner Walters**. **Chair Baird** called for additional discussion. After no discussion, **Chair Baird** called for a vote. The motion was passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Director's Report

Chair Baird turned the meeting over to **Director Bowen** for the Director's Report.

The meeting continued with

- a. [Fisheries Orders](#) (*Dr. Seth Herbst, Fisheries Division*)

At the conclusion of the Director's Report, Stacy Welling Haughey read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances.

- a. 5-Minute Comment
 - i. Brian Pitser, Michigan River Guide Association – Steelhead Limits
- b. 3-Minute Comment
 - i. Rob Steenbergh – Deer Population
 - ii. David Peterson, Fly Fishers International – Steelhead Limits
 - iii. Jim Bedford, TU-MSSFA – Steelhead
 - iv. Jim Bos - Steelhead

Chair Baird adjourned the public comment portion of the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

New Business

Chair Baird shared report statistics from the youth hunt. There were 3,960 deer harvested: including 3,078 bucks. One of the statistics **Chair Baird** appreciated the most was that 100% of the hunters completed the online harvest report within 72 hours.

Chair Baird also noted that the DNR and NRC are implementing a new study process regarding the Michigan deer herd; relooking at deer management in Michigan for the 21st century, which will include research and literature reviews. In the spring of 2024, there will be two separate work group meetings, one in the lower peninsula and one in the upper peninsula involving traditional stakeholders but others as well. Agriculture and municipalities both have an interest, so we will be looking to other organizations to help us understand the situation. The group intends to be doing some in depth survey work. Will be hearing from staff and other experts on the issues.

This will not be a small project, and will take time, we have some major problems to deal with, with the overpopulation situation in the lower peninsula and the possibility of using the meat if we can harvest it and process it in a safe way to feed folks that need the proteins. There is a lot of things we are working on, much of the work is being done at a pretty good pace.

Chair Baird noted there were four land transactions for the Director this month.

- a. Director Matters – None
- b. Land Transactions
 - i. [Land Exchange](#)
[Forest Resources Division, Schoolcraft County](#)
[The Heiden Exchange](#)
[Land Transaction Case #20220251](#)
 - ii. [Land Exchange](#)
[Forest Resources Division, Lake County](#)
[The Selvig Exchange](#)
[Land Transaction Case #20230046](#)
 - iii. [Sale of Surplus Land](#)
[Forest Resources Division, Roscommon County](#)
[Land Transaction Case #20230044](#)
 - iv. [Sale of Surplus Land](#)
[Forest Resources Division, Marquette County](#)
[Land Transaction Case #20230047](#)

Director Bowen indicated he will sign all land transactions.

Chair Baird noted there were five new orders for information for the Director and NRC this month.

- b. NRC/Director Orders
 - i. [Fisheries Order 200.23A](#)
[Inland River and Stream – Trout and Salmon Regulations](#)

Chair Baird continued speaking on Fisheries Order 200.23A regarding trout and salmon regulations, noting commissioners continue to work with the Fisheries Division staff. **Chair Baird** asked **Commissioner Nyberg** to speak for the commission. **Commissioner Nyberg** thanked Fisheries Division staff for their responsiveness and assistance. **Commissioner Nyberg** stated he is preparing a draft amendment but will not be presenting today as the commission continues the dialogue with Fisheries division staff, stakeholders, and commissioners.

Commissioner Nyberg read a prepared statement regarding this amendment and noted commissioners will continue to have additional dialogue with staff and be prepared to discuss further at the October meeting in Escanaba. **Commissioner Nyberg** confirmed with **Chair Baird** that action on this order could be held over until November.

- ii. [Fisheries Order 204.24](#)
[Spawning Closures](#)
- iii. [Fisheries Order 252.23](#)
[Statewide Lake Whitefish, Round Whitefish, Cisco, Rainbow Smelt and Arctic Grayling Regulations](#)
- iv. [Fisheries Order 253.24](#)
[Great Lakes and Connecting Waters – Trout and Salmon Regulations](#)
- v. [Fisheries Order 254.23A](#)
[Inland Lakes – Trout and Salmon Regulations](#)

Old Business

Chair Baird noted there are five orders for the Director and NRC under Old Business this month.

- a. Director Matters - None
- b. NRC/Director Orders

- i. [Fisheries Order 206.23A](#)
[Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater Species on Select Waters](#)
 - [Commissioner Cozad Amendment](#)

Chair Baird called for a motion to approve Fisheries Order 206.23A - Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater. **Commissioner Anthony** made a motion to approve; supported by **Commissioner Cozad**. **Chair Baird** requested **Commissioner Cozad** present his proposed amendment into the record.

Commissioner Cozad made a motion to amend Fisheries Order 206.23A to implement no size limit on northern pike and allow up to five (5) northern pike in the daily possession limit with only one (1) 24 inches or greater in the following upper peninsula lakes: Norway Lake and Rock Lake in Dickinson County, Dawson Lake in Iron County, and Lake Ann in Menominee County. Commissioner Cozad

noted that this is an experimental regulation change and contingent on stakeholders and the department working together to gather data for evaluation purposes. **Chair Baird** asked for a second, **Commissioner Walters** supported.

Chair Baird requested a motion that Fisheries Order 206.23A and the amendment be tabled until the next meeting. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to table; supported by **Commissioner Walters**. The motion to table passed unanimously.

ii. [Fisheries Order 215.23A](#)

[Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Sauger, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass](#)

Chair Baird called for a motion to approve Fisheries Order 215.23A. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to approve; supported by **Commissioner Nyberg**. **Chair Baird** asked for discussion. After no discussion, **Chair Baird** called for a vote, the motion to approve passed unanimously.

iii. [Fisheries Order 219.23](#)

[Bow, Spear, and Crossbow Fishing Regulations](#)

Chair Baird called for a motion to approve Fisheries Order 219.23. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to approve; **Commissioner Nyberg** seconded. **Chair Baird** asked for discussion. After no discussion, **Chair Baird** called for a vote, the motion to approve passed unanimously.

iv. [Fisheries Order 229.23](#)

[Netting Regulations](#)

Chair Baird called for a motion to approve Fisheries Order 229.23. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to approve; **Commissioner Cozad** seconded. **Chair Baird** asked for discussion. After no discussion, **Chair Baird** called for a vote, the motion to approve passed unanimously.

v. [Fisheries Order 240.23](#)

[Sturgeon Regulations](#)

Chair Baird called for a motion to approve Fisheries Order 240.23. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to approve; **Commissioner Nyberg** seconded. **Chair Baird** asked for discussion. After no discussion, **Chair Baird** called for a vote, the motion to approve passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Fisheries Committee: **Commissioner Cozad** reported the Fisheries Committee received the following presentations this morning from Jay Wesley and Dr. Seth Herbst, of the Fisheries Division:

- a. [Michigan Steelhead Management](#) (Jay Wesley & Dr. Seth Herbst, Fisheries Division)

This was the only item of business for the committee this morning.

Chair Baird noted the presentation is linked on the agenda.

Wildlife Committee: **Commissioner Anthony** reported the Wildlife Committee has been talking about deer regulations, which are long and involved and will continue working on them for quite a while. In addition, Justin Tomei provided a presentation on the Michigan United Conservation Clubs policy recommendations during committee this morning.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Anthony: Spending too much time on the phone and can say it's clear the seasons are changing with everyone talking about hunting season now. People are going to their camps, cutting firewood so it's well on its way.

Commissioner Cozad: The last 30 days have been quite busy with discussions between members of the Fisheries Committee, staff and stakeholders regarding proposed pike and steelhead regulation amendments. That work has and continues to evolve. I look forward to our ongoing dialogue on Fisheries Order 206.23A in the coming month. Commissioner Cozad noted that he participated in the monthly meeting of the Au Sable Watershed Sustainability and Resiliency Initiative. Data collection is ongoing. In November, initiative members will meet in-person in Grayling for the second time since the project's inception. As well, Commissioner Cozad had the opportunity to join members of the Michigan Hunting Dog Federation during a pre-season training session. It was a great day in the field and most enlightening.

Commissioner Nyberg: Not a lot to report this month, good luck to everyone starting bird season tomorrow. Great time of year to be outdoors in Michigan. Gratitude to the staff, department, colleagues, anglers, and stakeholders on the steelhead discussion.

Commissioner Walters: Reported that many calls were received over the last 30 days which have been well received and great conversation including Rob Steenberg, he invited me to his farm to meet with him and other farmer colleagues to discuss the issues at hand. **Commissioner Walters** met with them and now has a better understanding of what the issues are and perhaps a plan on how to address them. Thanking Mr. Steenberg for the invitation, appreciated the meeting. Attended Anglers of the Au Sable River clean up last Saturday, which was very well attended. It's more of a gathering of "great to see you now" and "look forward to seeing you next year", rekindling old friendships but the major focus is cleaning the debris from the river. There is a great effort in the recycling campaign they do with the materials they have found. **Commissioner Walters** worked on cooking crew, providing a nice lunch after the cleanup effort. Met with Chair Baird on Sunday to go fishing but the weather was not in our favor, so we watched a football

game. Has been doing a lot of fishing with his wife Sue, sometimes she catches more than he does. She will be with him on the opening day of bird season tomorrow, looking forward to bird season with her. Archery season coming up, wished everyone well, shot straight most of all be safe. Finally, he has moved to Indian River, very long, tedious process but thrilled where he is, very happy with his new location, brings peace and tranquility to watch the Pigeon River flow past.

Commissioner Rose: Reported she had a busy month, had lots of interaction with Stakeholders. She was recently appointed to represent the NRC on the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee; replacing **Commissioner Nyberg** and is looking forward to learning more from her involvement with them. She is looking forward to bird season starting on the 15th. Also looks forward to going out and maybe successfully harvesting a bird. **Commissioner Rose** and her husband engaged in Adopt-a-Forest activities on state land near their home, where garbage has been being dumped. The DNR provided a dumpster for them to clear the site of debris. While hiking they discovered an elk carcass that was being eaten by turkey vultures. She contacted a local Conservation Officer to notify them of the location. Attended a Trout Unlimited event, and a policy board meeting with MUCC. Thank you for your presentation on Steelhead and endurance for the longest presentation. Welcomed new director and looks forward to getting to know him.

Chair Baird: Very little to report, daughter is now married. That took a lot of time for a couple months. Attended some of the same meetings as Commissioner Cozad, including the Bear Forum Bear Dog Training. Can't decide what was more exciting following the dogs through the woods behind a bear or driving 60 mph over a wash board 2 track with Mike Foreman at the wheel. It was very interesting, thanking Mike for a great experience.

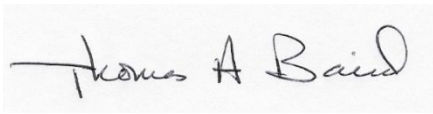
Closed Session

Chair Baird announced they would be going into closed session and adjournment would occur after that break. **Chair Baird** announced the next meeting date and location and moved that the commission meet 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 matter that falls under the attorney-client privilege exemption in section 13(1)(g) of the FOIA. **Commissioner Nyberg** supported; the motion passed unanimously.

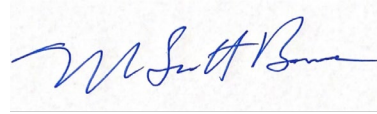
Adjournment

Chair Baird asked for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Rose** made a motion to adjourn the meeting; **Commissioner Cozad** supported the motion. **Chair Baird** asked for a discussion. There being none, a vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Commission is scheduled for **Thursday, October 12, 2023**, at **Bay College, 2001 Lincoln Road, Escanaba, MI 49503**.

Handwritten signature of Thomas A Baird in blue ink on a light blue background.

Thomas Baird, NRC Chair

Handwritten signature of M. Scott Bowen in blue ink on a light blue background.

M. Scott Bowen, DNR Director

DATE: October 12, 2023