

**Eastern (EUPCAC) & Western (WUPCAC) Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils
Annual Joint Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12/18/25**

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

3:00-5:00 pm EST

Rozsa Center for the Performing Arts, Houghton

Western Council Members Present

Brian Driscoll Carol Mason Sherrill
Floyd Dropps Tom Solka, Chair
Dave Johnson Ryan Tanner
George Lindquist, Vice Chair

Western Council Members Absent

Erik Bessonon Suzanne Petschke
Barb Gajewski Skip Schulz
Dave Hall Kelly Bennett Simon
Gordon Maclean Warren Suchovsky
Chauncey Moran Lucas Vold
Chris Peterson Faye Williams

Guests

Jodi Ouellette, Congressman Jack Bergman's Office
Rep. and Mrs. Greg Markkanen
Becky Humphries, NRC Commission Chair
Brandon Fewins, NRC Commissioner
John Walters, NRC Commissioner
Rich Anderson
Kitty Belack, Keweenaw ATV Club
Al Ettenhofer, UP Whitetails, Inc.
Bob Jones, Michigan Bowhunters Association
B Lauer, Keweenaw Land Trust

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff

Robin Afrik, Executive Division, Lansing
Lt. Ryan Aho, Law Enforcement Division, District 1
Craig Brunet, Legislation Section, Lansing
Clay Buchanen, Wildlife Division, Lansing
Dave Caroffino, Fisheries Division, Lake Superior Basin
Randy Claramunt, Chief of Fisheries Division, Lansing
Eric Cowing, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry
Michelle Crook, Executive Division, Lansing
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Dan Dowdy, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Ed Eisch, Fisheries Division, Lansing
Colton Flak, Wildlife Division, Baraga
Ed Golder, Executive Division, Lansing
Carly Graff, Parks & Recreation Division-Trails, Crystal Falls
Jason Haines, Chief of Law Enforcement Division, Lansing
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette
Kerry Heckman, Forest Resources Division, Gaylord
Brandon Kieft, Law Enforcement Division, Lansing
Keith Kintigh, Wildlife Division, Lansing
Kristen Kosick, Parks & Recreation Division, Lansing
Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division, Newberry

Eastern Council Members Present

Jeff Cox Glenn Moll
Steve Dey, Secretary Tom Paquin, Chair
Gary Gorniak, Vice Chair Dennis Patchakos
Tim Hass Mark Spencer (Zoom)
Bernie Hubbard Les Therrian (Zoom)
Robert Liebermann

Eastern Council Members Absent

Ken Collier Dick Pershinske
Grant Dewitt Joseph Smith
John Kurkowski Julie Weist
Mark Maida Tony Wright

Brett Matuszak, Lyme Great Lakes Timber
Mike McMahan, Keweenaw ATV Club
Gina Nicholas, KORC/KCFC
Amber Oja, Lyme Great Lakes Timber
Molly Powers, KORC/KCFC
Evan Reister, Michigan House of Representatives
Bryan Reynolds, UP Whitetails of Marquette County
Lauren Stigers, MSU Extension/Michigan Sea Grant
Mike Taylor, UP Whitetails of Marquette County
Katie Wing, MTU Student

Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division, Newberry
Dan Laux, Forest Resources Division, Lansing
Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division, Sault Ste. Marie
Dan Lord, Chief of Finance & Operations Division, Lansing
Shannon Lott, Resources Deputy Director, Lansing
Lucas Nathan, Fisheries Division, Lansing
Kris Nault, Fisheries Division, Baraga
Brooke Parmalee, Legislative Section, Lansing
Dr. Tyler Petroelje, Wildlife Division, Marquette
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Kelly Somero, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Jon Spieles, Chief of Marketing & Outreach Division, Lansing
Jeff Stampfly, Chief of Forest Resources Division, Lansing
Jason Stephens, Forest Resources Division, Lansing
Sara Thompson, Chief of Wildlife Division, Lansing
Judy Tkaczyk, Executive Division, Lansing
Tom Weston, Marketing & Outreach Division, Lansing
Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-Trails, Marquette
Sgt. Mark Zitnik, Law Enforcement Division, District 2

Call to Order

Chair Tom Solka (WUPCAC) called the Annual Joint Meeting between the Western (EUPCAC) & Eastern (EUPCAC) Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils (CACs) to order at 3:06 pm Eastern.

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) welcomed everyone to the Joint UPCAC meeting, adding it is the one time of year both groups get together to hear and learn about topics of benefit to both groups. He introduced **Chair Tom Paquin (EUPCAC)** who is jointly hosting this meeting. He noted the absence of two council WUPCAC Members, one who has resigned due to health issues and one who is currently in the hospital.

Stacy Haughey, DNR UP Field Deputy and liaison to the CACs, welcomed everyone in attendance on behalf of the DNR and the East and West UP Council members, and asked Council members and those in attendance to introduce themselves. She noted that many DNR staff from Lansing and NRC Commissioners are in attendance with the NRC meeting occurring tomorrow in the same location.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) provided a brief overview of the CACs, whose primary role is to provide local input and advise the DNR on regional programs and policies, identify areas in which the DNR can be more effective and responsive and offer insight and guidance from members' own experiences and constituencies. A few original members still serve on the CACs, which stands as a testament to the ethicality of the Councils. He introduced NRC Chair Becky Humphries who created the Councils in 2008 when she served as DNR Director.

Citizen Advisory Council Origins (NRC Chair Becky Humphries)

NRC Chair Becky Humphries opened by thanking the Councils for helping the DNR through the Council process and emphasized the importance of their input. She noted that former UP Commissioners JR Richardson and John Madigan were serving during a time when many UP residents felt their voices were not being heard, prompting them to travel frequently to Commission meetings to express their concerns. It became clear that the DNR needed to do a better job listening. **NRC Chair Humphries** explained that the Councils were created to provide a consistent platform for local input and to strengthen working relationships with resource managers. She and the UP Commissioners spent time developing the charter, discussing what would and would not work, and guiding the Councils through their early stages. She emphasized the important role the Councils play in bringing forward recommendations to ensure issues are not overlooked. Upon returning as an NRC Commissioner, one of her first questions was whether recommendations from the CACs reflected the issues Commissioners were hearing. She closed by thanking the Councils for their thoughtful input and contributions over the years.

Mr. Lindquist (WUPCAC), one of the original WUPCAC members, recalled attending every NRC meeting in those early years to provide public comment. He thanked NRC Chair Humphries for establishing the Councils, noting their significant educational value. He highlighted the reports provided by DNR staff, emphasizing that they offer a wealth of current information on activities and projects across all DNR divisions and that he finds them extremely valuable. **NRC Chair Humphries** thanked him for his time and continued dedication.

Mr. Dropps (WUPCAC) thanked NRC Chair Humphries for the opportunity she has provided to those who serve on the Councils.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked NRC Chair Humphries for providing the background. He stated that, from his perspective, the Councils have successfully conveyed substantial public input to the DNR from the communities and groups they represent. He added that Council members also share information back with friends, neighbors, the public, and their respective organizations about the DNR's work—helping, in some cases, to clear up confusion. He closed by thanking NRC Chair Humphries for creating the Councils.

DNR Land Transaction Process (Kerry Heckman)

Kerry Heckman, DNR Forest Land Administrator, provided an overview, in Scott Whitcomb's absence, of the DNR's acquisition and disposal process for DNR-managed public lands. Part of the DNR's mission includes a commitment to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural recourse for current and future generations. The following presentation was provided:

- ***State Land Overview:*** The DNR manages 4.6 million acres of public land and 6.4 million acres of mineral rights on behalf of residents of Michigan. State forests: 3.85 million acres; state parks: 363,000 acres; state game and wildlife areas: 364,000 acres.
- ***How State Land was Acquired:*** Tax reversion 52%, 2.4 million acres; purchased 26%, 1.2 million acres; exchange 19%, 870,000 acres; gift 2%, 90,000 acres; other 1%, 45,500 acres.
- ***Land Acquisitions:*** The DNR acquires land through the following ways: purchase of rights in land, exchanges, gifts of land, conservation easements, partnerships, and tax reversion.
- ***Land Acquisition Funds:*** A chart showing which funding mechanisms (federal and state-restricted) that can be used to acquire land was shown. Federal examples include (but not all): Forest Legacy Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act, Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. State-restricted examples include (but not all): Game and Fish Protection Account, Land Exchange Facilitation Fund, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Off-Road Vehicle Account. Land acquisitions are a strategic investment, guided by project boundaries, consolidated blocks of ownership, shooting safety zones minimized, wildlife habitat less fragmented, fewer encroachment issues, and management efficiencies gained.
- ***2013 Land Strategy Implementation/Project Boundary Review:*** The strategy called for a reduction of privately held inholdings by 1 million acres; internal review including public involvement completed; DNR Director dedicated in December 2020; DNR 2020 project boundaries available online.
- ***Priorities for Public Land Acquisitions:*** Hunting lands, recreation lands, permanent trail easements, trail connectors, water access, wildlife habitat, and land consolidation.
- ***2013 Managed Public Land Strategy:*** PA 240 of 2018 requires implementation of the 2013 Managed Public Land Strategy. Implementation includes a comprehensive review of ~240,000 acres of state-managed lands to determine contribution to the DNR's mission. This includes land less than 200 acres in size; blocks of land that due to an irregular shape have extensive private-public boundary interface that is potentially difficult to manage. This does not include trails, developed boat launches or DNR facilities.
- ***Review Process:*** Review groups of 10 counties at a time. Internal review for group 1 began in September 2020. All parcels receive multi-disciplinary and multi-level review to develop recommendations. Public review is an integral part of the overall process.
- ***Parcel Evaluation:*** All parcels are evaluated for: pertinence to the DNR mission; presence or absence of significant natural and cultural resources or recreation opportunity; legal access for public use and DNR management; adjacent land use and ownership; access to a river, lake or stream; meet purposes for which it was purchased (if purchased).
- ***Parcel Classification:*** All parcels are classified into one of the following categories: retain under state ownership and DNR administration; offer to a local unit of government or alternate conservation organization; make available for a land exchange; or dispose through a surplus land auction.
- ***Land Transaction Applications:*** To propose a purchase or exchange of state-owned land that is not already identified as surplus land, an application process must be completed as required by Public Act 238 of 2018. The DNR will consider selling such lands if the transaction enhances the management of natural resources or provides other public benefit. Each application will be evaluated on its own merits. Applications are available on the DNR website.
- ***Land Acquisition & Sale Processes:***
 - ***For Acquisitions:*** Title work and surveys (if needed) are completed. Appraisal and appraisal reviews are completed. Offer made to the owner(s) subject to DNR Director approval. Public notices for acquisitions over 80 acres. Recommendation to Director to approve acquisition. Title work and policy are reviewed and approved by the Attorney General. DNR Director approves at monthly NRC meeting. Closing on property

and state is issued a title insurance policy in the amount of the acquisition. Purchases are placed on the DNR PILT roll the following year.

- For Sales/Auctions: Real Estate Section reviews parcel information and prepares legal description. Appraisal and appraisal reviews are completed to set minimum bid. DNR advertises auction (sealed bid or live). Newspaper ads, social media, notices sent to local governments and abutting property owners, DNR website, press releases. Public notices on properties over 80 acres. Auction held. Successful bidders are notified and invoiced for bid amount. Once payment is received, quit claim deed is issued.
- *For Sales/Direct Sale:* Real Estate Section reviews parcel information and prepares legal description. Appraisal and appraisal reviews are completed. Purchaser enters into a Land Transaction Agreement with the DNR. Public notices on sales over 80 acres. Recommendation to Director to approve acquisition and placed on NRC meeting agenda. DNR Director approves at NRC meeting. Purchaser is notified and invoiced for approved value. Once payment is received, quit claim deed is issued.
- *Proceeds from Land Sales:* Unless specifically required by law dictating where sale proceeds are to be deposited, the proceeds from any sale be deposited into the Land Exchange Facilitation Fund and used to acquire replacement land.
- *Questions:*
 - **Mr. Lindquist (WUPCAC)** asked about the status of purchasing deer wintering complexes. **Ms. Heckman** stated it is a continuing priority in the land transaction process. Currently, staff are working on a 73,000 acre working forest conservation easement project in the Michigamme Highlands which includes over 4,800 acres of deer wintering complex. The DNR has worked closely with Lyme Great Lakes Timber, the landowner, on this project, which should be finalized early next year. Additional projects are in the works that include deer wintering complexes, and those details should be available next spring. She provided assurance that staff are focused on these complexes throughout the process. **Mr. Lemmien** added another project (Mead Creek) being worked on includes additional 1,000 acres of deer winter yard.
 - **Mr. Liebermann (EUPCAC)** asked if Michigan is the only state with the largest amount of state forest land. **Ms. Heckman** stated Michigan is second to Alaska; however, Alaska is mostly tundra and wilderness. Therefore, she likes to note that Michigan has the largest actively managed state forest system in the continuous US. **Mr. Liebermann** also asked if the state is still selling and acquiring land. **Ms. Heckman** indicated the state continues to sell small parcels and actively works to acquire lands, especially those that consolidate state ownership which in turn creates management efficiencies and more access for the public. Discussion regarding the Michigamme Highlands project and the properties involved in that conservation easement ensued.
 - **Ms. Mason Sherrill (WUPCAC)** asked how the priorities are determined. **Ms. Heckman** replied it depends on the parcel. A main priority is consolidation, but within that is always a priority for habitat value, natural resources value, trail connections and creating opportunities for the public to bodies of water. She explained the Land Exchange Review Committee's (LERC) responsibility to review land transactions with both DNR and state-wide viewpoints.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked Ms. Heckman for the very informative presentation on the DNR's land transaction process.

DNR Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Highlights (Dan Lord)

Dan Lord, Chief of the Finance and Operations Division, provided an overview of the DNR's budget for Fiscal Year 2025 which runs from October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026. He noted the Governor signed the public act creating the state budget the day before. He mentioned the Finance and Operations Division includes smaller sections within the DNR such as budget auditing, coordination of federal funding, public-facing grant administration, and customer service centers around the state. The following presentation was provided:

- *FY 2025-2026 Budget & Legislative Timeline:* A typical year by month (August 2024 through September 2025) and budget processes were presented with items driven by the State Budget Office and legislative components delineated. Back in August 2024, the DNR's FY 2026 budget development began. The DNR's management

team work together to establish division and executive priorities such as hunting fishing licenses, watercraft registration, rec passport, with the goal of getting into the Governor’s recommended budget. With the Governor’s executive recommended budget, there was support for license packages, watercraft registration, and rec passport. With the Senate’s recommended budget, there was support for license packages, watercraft registration, and rec passport. With the House’s recommended budget, there was a 50% reduction of general fund, 5% reduction of restricted funds, and a 17% reduction in staff (434 total). A few programs would also be eliminated. Negotiations took place initially at the principal level, then at the typical level with appropriation subcommittee chairs in the House and in the Senate. DNR leadership representatives focused on “targets” which are specific funding amounts and this year FTE reductions. Over the past 27 years, only 5 years did not have political party alignment between the Governor, House, Senate. Of those 5 years, only 3 times (including this year) a budget has not been passed by September 30.

- **Major Funding Sources:** A pie chart of major funding sources was shown. State restricted funds 67%, federal funds 19%, general fund 13%, and private funds 1%. Restricted funds are specific to their fund source and can only be used on those identified and supported activities. General fund is the tax base but the DNR only receives 0.5% of the overall amount available from the state. Federal funds, such as Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson are also critical. The FY 2026 DNR budget increased by 1.6% from FY 2025. Much of that increase comes from state restricted funding sources. Funding from General Fund decreased by 4.9%, which puts more pressure on restricted funds. State parks in the 1970’s received 70% of their funding from the general fund, today it’s 3%. The DNR’s budget does not grow at the rate of inflation; a fixed revenue stream that can’t keep up with inflation equals a structural deficit.
- **Ongoing General Fund Reductions:** Reductions were made to meet FY 2026 general fund reduction targets: road priorities, Medicaid, food assistance, school meals, per pupil ed. A reduction for the DNR’s Nature Awaits program eliminates ongoing funding for the program after FY 2026. An invasive species prevention and control reduction will result in a reduction of invasive species grant funding (however, grant funding for CISMAs will be held harmless). A reduction for wetland restoration, enhancement, and acquisition will cut the general fund for this capital outlay investment by 50%. The Mackinac Island State Park Commission reduction will eliminate all the general fund dollars for the Mackinac Island state parks operations appropriation line and most of the general fund for the historical facilities system appropriation line (no reduction in state restricted funding the two appropriation lines). The Michigan Conservation Corps reduction will leave approximately \$500,000 of funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program in FY 2026.
- **Budget/One-Time General Fund Investments:** \$2.8 million for fish production, \$2.2 million for reforestation, \$2 million for ice storm wildfire protection, \$2 million for the Natural Awaits program mentioned above, \$1.75 million for the Elberta Waterfront Community Conservation Project, and \$1.45 million for the removal and repair of high-hazard dams for a total of \$12.2 million.
- **Full-Time Equated (FTEs) Positions:** FTEs appropriated in FY 2025 budget totaled 2,545.3. FTEs appropriated in the FY 2026 budget totals 2,515.2, equaling a deficit of 30.1 FTEs. Two major areas affected are fisheries and wildlife, which will reduce seasonal employee boots on the ground work.
- **Appropriations by Funding Source:** An expanded pie chart displaying the delineation of state restricted funds was shown: Game and fish protection 16%, Park Improvement 18%, Forest Development 9%, Waterways 6%, Park Endowment 4%, Rec Passport 3%, ORV Trail 3%, Snowmobile 2%, Forest Recreation 1%, Marine Safety 1%, Land Exchange Facilitation & Management Fund 1%, Other 2% (which includes Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Fire Equipment Fund, Mackinac Island State Park Fund, Invasive Species Fund, and others).
- **Appropriations by Program Area:** A pie chart showing appropriations by program area was shown. For example, Law Enforcement 10%, Wildlife 9%, Fisheries 7%, Grants 7%, Parks and Recreation 26%, Forest Resources 14%, and others.
- **FY 2025 Supplementals:** 3 times a year, the DNR can request supplementals for important or critical investments. These can come from the general fund or restricted funds and require legislative action. While the requests were put forward in January 2025, action did not take place until the FY 2026 budget was finalized. Included were state parks repair and maintenance, northern Michigan ice storm reforestation, arctic grayling fish passage, dam infrastructure projects, high-speed internet infrastructure easements, fisheries

infrastructure projects, fisheries resource management, state game and wildlife infrastructure, decree negotiations, and wildlife management.

- ***Economic Impacts:*** The value and economic impact of DNR programs and services to Michigan were noted. State parks \$53 billion to Michigan's tourism industry, fishing \$3.9 billion and 35,400 jobs, hunting \$8.9 billion and 135,579 jobs, boating \$11.7 billion and 45,000 jobs, mining \$3.5 billion and 31,371 jobs, forestry \$26.5 billion and 88,275 jobs, oil and gas \$30 billion and 228,000 jobs, and grants \$80 million in grant funding to local units of government, state agencies and nonprofit partners.
- ***Questions:***
 - **Mr. Tanner (WUPCAC)** questioned the \$1 million reduction for wetland restoration, enhancement and acquisition. **Chief Lord** indicated the \$2 million program was cut in half, leaving \$1 million although it will be matched with other funding opportunities.
 - **Mr. Lindquist (WUPCAC)** questioned the changed focus of the deer habitat grants to grasslands which seem to be geared towards southwest Michigan rather than in the UP. **Sara Thompson**, Chief of the Wildlife Division, clarified there are two grant programs: the wildlife habitat grant program and the UP deer habitat improvement grant. The UP deer habitat grants were granted to UP projects. The wildlife habitat grant program shifted its focus this year to grasslands due to the decline in projects submitted. Of those awarded with this different focus, two were in the UP for wildlife openings.
 - **Chair Solka (WUPCAC)** mentioned in terms of budget, the Council members are all volunteers and serve without any compensation.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked Chief Lord for the very informative presentation on the DNR's budget.

Moose Research Project & Wolf Abundance Camera Survey Updates (Dr. Tyler Petroelje)

Dr. Tyler Petroelje, Wildlife Research Specialist with the Wildlife Division based out of Marquette, provided an update on current wildlife search projects, specifically developing a cost-effective technique to estimate wolf abundance in Michigan and factors limiting moose population growth in the western U.P. of Michigan.

Developing a cost-effective technique to estimate wolf abundance in Michigan (in conjunction with MSU)

- ***Background/Need for Wolf Abundance Project:***
 - Current minimum count requires significant effort to provide index of abundance, although it's done a good job of documenting wolf recovery in Michigan. As wolf density has increased, more time is needed to discern adjacent packs. Does not account for imperfect detection. Does not provide an abundance estimate with confidence intervals.
 - Proposed wolf abundance project to research alternatives to estimate wolf abundance (2022-2027). Increase precision, provide uncertainty. Decrease cost. Compare to minimum count survey.
- ***Peninsula-Wide Deployments (of Cameras):***
 - July-October 2023 to 2024: 159 cells with cameras, 1,230 cameras deployed.
 - July-October 2024 to 2025: 177 cells with cameras, 1,306 cameras deployed.
 - UP map with cells: There are about 8 cameras in each grid cell shown.
 - Finishing data collection from 2nd annual deployment.
- ***Camera Status:*** A comparison of camera status in 2024 and in 2025 was shown. For the 2025 check, 78% of cameras were functioning. Lithium batteries were working well with only 11% of the batteries being depleted. 2% of cameras were misdirected (moved by bears, etc.), 4% were stolen, 5% were intentionally misdirected (moved by people), 1% malfunctioned, and 1% were damaged.
- ***Wolf Abundance Project – Wildlife by the Numbers:*** 1,475,217 wildlife images. Images of people and vehicles are filtered out from review. Preliminary sorting using Wildlife Insights artificial intelligence. Actively reviewing photos with human observer to confirm species ID. First population estimate following human photo review.
- ***Wolf Detection:*** ~53,000 photos predicted as wolf from AI. >69,000 photos confirmed as wolf from human taggers. A dotted map of the UP indicating detection of a wolf on cameras.
- ***Additional Confirmed Canid Species Detection:*** Other species detected on cameras included coyote, red fox, moose and turkeys. A photo of moose distribution/detection was shown.

Factors limiting moose population growth in the western U.P. of Michigan (in conjunction with NMU, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community)

- *Collaborative Research Objectives:* Moose capture and GPS collaring. Capture adult (bull, cow) and calf moose in January/February 2025 and 2026. Estimate moose vital rates: survival and cause-specific mortality, pregnancy rates and calf production of adult female moose and emigration and dispersal rates. Calf survival monitoring via monthly drone flights.
- *Monitoring/Survival:*
 - Survival Through September: Monthly drone flights for newborn calves (8 of 11 newborn calves alive). Daily updates on movements and survival of yearling and adult collared moose (3 of 5 yearling moose-calves collared this winter-alive; 9 of 10 adult female moose alive, 5 of 5 adult male moose alive).
 - Early Results: High calf survival through first 4 months (73% survival). Other NA studies: 30-day survival ~61%, 1-year survival ~33%. Exception, protected populations in Ontario. Primarily data! Be cautious due to small sample size and single year.
- *Next Steps:* Continue monthly survival flights for calves of the year. Drone flights for bulls to estimate age class by antler class. Preparations for winter captures in February 2026 to capture and collar 40 moose (10 bulls, 10 calves (short yearlings), 20 cows).
- *Quarterly Research Updates:* <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/education/michigan-species/mammals/moose/research-updates>
- Questions from the Council were entertained:
 - **Vice Chair Gorniak (EUPCAC)** questioned if it would be roughly three years before moose population data would be available. **Dr. Petroelje** clarified it will be three years before good vital rate information would be available. The biennial aerial survey will be done for population estimates and combined with this survey, the main source of mortality can be determined and answers to the growth of the population established.
 - **Mr. Driscoll (EUPCAC)** asked what the target population number is. **Dr. Petroelje** indicated initial estimates were 1,000 moose on the UP landscape could be sustained. Staff are also looking at changes in habitat to see if that has affected growth patterns as well.
 - **Mr. Tanner (WUPCAC)** asked about the core moose range; **Dr. Petroelje** responded.
 - A copy of the presentation will be sent to Council members.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked Dr. Petroelje for his presentation, noting the Councils appreciate the frequent updates as it is an interesting topic to both groups.

Harvest Reporting App Updates (Tom Weston)

Tom Weston, with the Licensing Section of the Marketing and Outreach Division, provided an update on the harvest reporting app. He indicated there are currently 400,000 active users of the app. He addressed the WUPCAC's recommended updates to the app submitted in March 2025 including deer harvest summary headings, location of tabs and a separate summary for deer harvests for the UP and the lower peninsula, which is on the implementation list. He noted the Council's recommendation to merge the disease control license column with the crop damage license if they were same license will not be implemented as they are two separate licenses. He showed on screen a few other improvements made that are not yet live. Future app updates currently in discussion with the Fisheries Division are to include trout and salmon regulations. **Vice Chair Gorniak (EUPCAC)** asked when licenses can be shown via the app versus a printed copy. **Mr. Weston** responded it is already available in the app with the ability to print a copy from the app as well.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked Mr. Weston for the updated app information which will prove helpful in the upcoming hunting seasons.

Public Comments

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) explained this portion of the meeting and opened the floor for public comments. There was one pre-registered comment.

1. *Katie Wing, (MTU Student) – Wolf Population:* Ms. Wing shared concerns about the impact of wolves on the deer populations and local communities near her family hunting cabin in Mackinac County. She called for the DNR to encourage the delisting of wolves and to actively manage the population once delisted to protect the deer herd and UP traditions.

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked Ms. Wing for her comments and noted that both Councils have passed resolutions to the DNR recommending they move forward with a management plan as soon as the federal delisting of wolves occurs. Wolves are currently still listed on the endangered species list.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division Updates

Written reports were provided to Council members on October 1, 2024 by the following UP division leaders: Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy; Lt. Ryan Aho and Sgt. Mark Zitnik, Law Enforcement Division; Darren Kramer and Cory Kovacs, Fisheries Division; Tom Seablom and Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division; Doug Rich and Eric Cowing, Parks and Recreation Division; Ron Yesney, Rob Katona, Carly Graff and PJ Costa, UP Trails Program- Parks and Recreation Division; and Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division,

Wildlife Division Chief Thompson provided a brief update on the division’s Hunter Appreciation Days/Deer Drop-In Mondays being offered at state-wide customer service centers in November and December as an alternative to deer check stations that were previously offered several years ago. Hunters can bring in their harvested deer—or just the lower jaw—to have it aged, chat with staff, ask questions, and pick up free swag. The importance of hunter feedback and ongoing communication is the driving force behind this effort.

Adjourn

Chair Solka (WUPCAC) thanked the Council for their commitment and contributions and thanked those in the audience for attending. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55pm Eastern.