

Western Upper Peninsula Citizens' Advisory Council (WUPCAC)
Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12/12/24
Thursday, July 25, 2024
5:00-7:30pm Central / 6:00-8:30pm Eastern
Delta County Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, Escanaba

Council Members Present

Erik Bessonon	Dave Johnson	Tom Solka, Chair
Floyd Dropps	George Lindquist	Dwaine Starr
Barb Gajewski	Suzanne Petschke	Warren Suchovsky
Dave Hall	Horst Schmidt	Lucas Vold
Mike Holmes	Jeff Sierpien	

Council Members Absent/Excused

Chauncey Moran	Skip Schulz	Kelly Bennett Simon
Kirk Schott, Vice Chair	Carol Mason Sherrill	Faye Williams

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff & Guests

Dave Caroffino, Fisheries Division, Marquette
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
John Hamel, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy-Executive Division, Marquette
Darren Kramer, Fisheries Division, Escanaba
Dan Racine, Forest Resources Division, Escanaba
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Bill Scullon, Wildlife Division, Norway
Sean Sundholm, Facilities & Operations Division, Marquette
Matt Watkeys, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails Section, Marquette
Sgt. Mark Zitnik, Law Enforcement Division, Alger County

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

At 6:00pm Eastern/5:00pm Central, **Chair Solka** called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed members of the public as well as DNR staff and fellow Council members.

Introductions of Council Members/DNR Staff/Public Attendees

All public attendees, DNR staff and council members introduced themselves at the request of **Chair Solka**.

Adoption of Agenda

Chair Solka asked the Council if there were any further additions or revisions to the agenda. **Mr. Starr** asked to have an update on past resolutions added to the agenda. **Chair Solka** added it as item 4 under Old Business. **Mr. Bessonon motioned to accept the agenda as amended; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. After no discussion, Chair Solka called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Solka asked if there were any further changes to either the March 25, 2024 or the May 29, 2024 meeting minutes, both of which were distributed to the Council via email previously for review. **Mr. Lindquist** noted one small correction to the March minutes on page 11. **Mr. Lindquist motioned to accept the amended March minutes and May minutes as presented; Mr. Hall supported the motion. After no discussion, Chair Solka called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.**

DNR Reports from Division Staff

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on May 18, 2024. The following brief updates were added.

1. *Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy*

- **Sean Sundholm**, the new western UP facilities and operations supervisor, was introduced. He has 24 years in with the state, having come from a supervisory role at the Marquette Branch Prison. His office is located at the Marquette Customer Service Center.
- **Matt Watkeys**, the new timber sale and utilization program specialist within the Forest Resources Division, was introduced. He fills a role previously held by Ms. Brenda Haskill. **Mr. Watkeys** provided a brief synopsis of his role indicating he covers the program statewide, but primarily in the UP. His office is also located at the Marquette Customer Service Center.
- **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the use of state land by Eagle Mine has been extended now that the mine's life has been extended. **Ms. Haughey** indicated typically land use is renegotiated and a lease is renewed. She will obtain an update on lease information for the next meeting.
- **Mr. Starr** asked for an update on Vice Chair Schott and wished him well during his recovery. **Ms. Haughey** stated she can share his wife's contact number and address if members would like to reach out to him.

2. *Darren Kramer, Fisheries Division*

- No additional updates.
- **Mr. Lindquist** asked about the number of walleye stocked in certain lakes. **Mr. Kramer** stated some of the large stocking numbers reported are due to the size of the water base. Stocking started back in the 70s at the Bays de Noc.
- **Mr. Sierpien** asked if there were any updates on the Ford River boat launch which is currently unusable. **Mr. Kramer** indicated it was dredged but storms blew it back shut. It is very difficult and costly to keep open.
- **Mr. Johnson** stated the walleye stocking out of the Thompson fish hatchery has been very disappointing to the sportsmen. **Mr. Kramer** provided the walleye fingerling stocking rates for the last four years and stated Lake Michigan has had a great influence on water temperatures in those ponds. He described the plankton production and temperatures needed for it to be successful. **Mr. Dropps** asked why fingerlings are so small with good plankton production. **Mr. Kramer** further explained the effects of water temperature fluctuations and described the process further.

3. *Dan Racine, Forest Resources Division (filling in for Tom Seablom)*

- 16 fire personnel are on out-of-state fire assignments. The national wildfire response level is at a preparedness level 5 which is the highest level, necessitating requests and needs for additional resources and equipment for the nation's active fire areas.

4. *Sgt. Mark Zitnik, Law Enforcement Division*

- Both DNR law enforcement districts in the UP, District 1 and District 2, have been very busy with ORV and lake activity. Reports from anglers indicate lake trout seems to be doing well and bear season is coming up soon. A heartbreaking drowning of a young boy occurred in Lake Superior in Luce County recently. A lot of manpower gave it their all trying to save him. High waves were a significant factor.

5. *Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division*

- The Parks & Recreation Division's partnership with the Michigan National Guard was highlighted. Over \$750,000 in projects at several state parks and boating access sites will be completed. The DNR provides the materials and engineering, and the National Guard bring the equipment and labor working alongside DNR staff. It provides great training opportunities, and they stay close to home in the UP rather than traveling to Grayling. Craig Lake State Park, Baraga State Park and a host of boating access sites in the UP

benefited this year. Van Riper State Park, Baraga State Park, and possibly McLain State Park may be a focus for next year's activities.

- **Mr. Schmidt** asked if there have been any issues with repaired shorelines at the Porkies or McLain and if there will be funding for other repairs next year. **Mr. Rich** stated all sites are good and lower lake levels have helped. He added there will be funding available and explained how projects are prioritized statewide.
- **Mr. Johnson** asked if the division is keeping track of the value of what the National Guard is providing. **Mr. Rich** stated they are, and the current investment is two and a half times the value.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** asked about the status of the Menominee River State Recreation Area. **Mr. Rich** stated an ADA pathway is currently being designed; however, funding at this time has been going to higher priority projects.

6. **Ron Yesney, UP Trails Section of the Parks & Recreation Division**

- A report on the status of several western UP trails will be provided later on in the agenda.

7. **Bill Scullon, Wildlife Division** (*filling in for Dave Lemmien*)

- Colton Flak was hired as a wildlife technician in Baraga, a position vacated by Brad Johnson who retired after 46 years. John DePue, wildlife biologist in Baraga, was promoted to statewide bat specialist and will remain in Baraga. The biologist position will be refilled.
- A goal of banding 300 geese was exceeded with 499 being banded.
- **Mr. Lindquist** asked if Mr. DePue will remain in the Wildlife Division. **Mr. Scullon** stated yes, however, he is now a specialist. There are several specialists within the division, such as Cody Norton who is a bear specialist.
- **Mr. Sierpien** asked if there was recent cormorant work in Fairport. **Mr. Scullon** stated he was not aware of the status of cormorants.
- **Mr. Lindquist** noted the recent wolf survey results indicated a stable population; however, the statistics in the report show a 21% increase. He doesn't see that as being stable but rather the population is growing.
- **Mr. Schmidt** asked about the status of CWD. **Mr. Scullon** indicated they will be focusing on additional areas and updating their modeling methods. **Ms. Haughey** mentioned this may be a good topic for the Joint UPCAC meeting.
- **Mr. Holmes** spoke about a big red pine plantation on his property and the increase in blue heron nests as a result. He wondered how best to nurture them. **Mr. Scullon** suggested contacting the USF&WS regarding habitat management methods.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

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

1. John LaCourt, Gwinn, *State Land Cutting Practices (pre-registered)*: Mr. LaCourt stated there is cutting next to his property and he learned after meeting with a forester in Gwinn that the land was going to be clearcut. He wondered why the state is managing forests this way instead of select cutting. He stated he would like to see the silviculture for this process and feels it is the wrong type of cut for that type of property. **Ms. Haughey** and **Mr. Racine** both stated they would look into the issue and respond back to him.

New Business

1. State Forest Management Plan Update (Mr. Hamel)

- **Mr. Hamel**, western UP inventory planning specialist for the Forest Resources Division, was asked by state planner Dan Heckman to fill in for him in providing this presentation as he had a scheduling conflict.

- **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 5: technical editing and Tribal review begins; 4) September 2: 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 2 – October 4: Engagement meetings being held in September for questions, clarification, and discussion. The UPCACs are invited to attend.
- *Questions:*
 - **Mr. Lindquist** stated he feels like the Forest Resources Division needs to be more involved with the Wildlife Division. He spoke about the loss of hemlock and hasn’t seen a plan to restore it.
 - **Mr. Schmidt** spoke about leases on state land. **Mr. Hamel** stated leases are not part of the state forest management plan. **Chair Solka** suggested the process in which state land is leased may be a good topic for a future council meeting.
 - **Chair Solka** thanked Mr. Hamel for the extensive information on the plan and the opportunities for public engagement.

2. Western UP Trails Update (Mr. Yesney)

- A UP trails planner position was added to the division to help with the planning of construction projects which will allow trails specialists to work on and complete their trail work. An MSU Glasson scholar is also assisting the division with evaluating the types of properties (private/public) snowmobile trails are on, which will be valuable data when looking to buy permanent trail easements.
- Updates on the following trails were provided:
 - *Nahma Grade (Delta County):* The community advocated diligently with the Forest Service to not decommission the grade and for it to be developed into a nice trail. Will be open this winter.

- *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 and diligence in trying to find a reroute, there is no feasible alternative. It is likely the trail will be closed this winter.
 - *Thunder Valley Equestrian Trail (Marquette County)*: The Equestrian Trails Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Michigan Trails Advisory Council) is requesting the elimination of all bike use on equestrian trails as bikes spook horses (seen as predators) and can cause accidents. A public meeting in Marquette County favored not having bikes on this trail and that recommendation will go back to the subcommittee. The final decision lies with the DNR Director.
 - *Bass Lake Motorcycle Trail (Marquette County)*: A proposal to connect two trails was approved and is in the process of being constructed.
 - *Watersmeet to Land-O-Lakes, WI (Gogebic County)*: The Forest Service came to the table with funding to work on some old bridges on this railroad grade. It is a great cooperative effort.
 - *Days River Pathway (Delta County)*: A ski, hiking and biking trail is being constructed with the addition of 12 miles of trail.
 - *Genes Pond Campground (Dickinson County)*: Adding an accessible pathway with an overlook of the pond to replace the deteriorated pathway.
 - *Forest Islands ORV Trail (Delta/Menominee Counties)*: Several improvements have been made to this trail which was in poor condition, including the addition of a trailhead being named after Tim Kobasic, who was a valued member of the ORV workgroup before he passed.
 - *Trail 12 (Ontonagon County)*: Bridge needs fixing and there is no portable bridge long enough, so it may not be fixed before winter. It needs a significant amount of construction work. Will be looking at all possible reroutes to avoid a closure to that area.
 - **Questions:**
 - **Mr. Besson** asked about a possible ORV route to connect Marquette, Alger and Delta Counties and how far out this possibility would be. **Mr. Yesney** stated they are waiting for a decision from the Forest Service before any action can be taken.
 - **Mr. Starr** suggested talking to the National Guard to help work on the Ontonagon trail bridge.
 - **Mr. Schmidt** asked about the proposal to allow ebikes on state park trails and asked if this would include walking and ATV trails. **Mr. Yesney** stated the allowance was for class 1 ebikes only and where normal bike use is already allowed. He further described the proposed land use order; a final decision by the DNR Director has not yet been made.
3. Approved Deer Regulations from July Natural Resources Commission Meeting (Ms. Haughey)
- 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.
- **Questions:**
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked how archery season changes. **Sgt. Zitnik** stated archery equipment can be utilized until December 10 and a doe can be taken, except in the northern tier of the UP.
 - **Mr. Sierpien** asked about the membership of the DMI. Both **Ms. Haughey** and **Mr. Scullon** explained, stating the Wildlife Division wanted to make sure all demographics were represented. **Mr. Sierpien** stated he felt the DMI process took away from the bigger problem and found it odd to get more people involved when the CACs already exist, especially in the UP. **Mr. Johnson** added the biggest question for the UP DMI was what happened to all the deer. The group spent a lot of time talking about wolves. He added the group was very informed, receiving a crash course in biology. It created good relationships and opportunities for the future. He stated he gives the NRC a lot of credit, as having to go through 20 amendments wasn't easy.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** noted the amendments were sent out too late for public comment, so the public never had a chance to review them until after public comment at the NRC meeting. **Ms. Haughey** explained they were available at the public meeting on June 26 in Gaylord. **Sgt. Zitnik** provide further explanation.
 - **Chair Solka** stated his impression was the DMI process seemed to be a recognition by the NRC that the situation was at a crisis point with citizen hunters. The CACs encompass a variety of national resource aspects and this situation needed a more focused group than the councils. He believes it is not the end of the process and it presents opportunities for the future.

Old Business

1. **Deer Management Initiative Summary (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, some of which are in attendance this evening: Dave Johnson, Bill Scullon, Sgt. Mark Zitnik, Al Ettenhoffer.
 - 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.
2. **DNR Update on January Resolution: *Crossbow Hunting Be Allowed in a Portion of the UP* (Ms. Haughey)**
 - **Ms. Haughey** indicated that 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. Starr** further explained the reasoning behind the resolution. **Mr. Scullon** also provided a historical perspective.

- **Ms. Haughey** noted that Mr. Lemmien will have a response to this resolution submitted by both the WUPCAC and EUPCAC available by the August 25th EUPCAC meeting and it will be shared with both councils.

3. DNR Response to March Resolutions (2) (Mr. Caroffino)

- *Recommend any increase in DNR Fisheries revenue be prioritized to provide deliverables:* **Mr. Caroffino** stated he is available to listen to responses, concerns, or address any questions pertaining to the resolution response letter sent by Fisheries Division Chief Randy Claramunt on July 22.
 - **Mr. Dropps** stated his impression from the letter is the Chief agrees that manpower is low and that there will be opportunities to hire more staff in the UP and across the state if additional revenue is secured. **Mr. Dropps** also noted, which was not addressed in the letter, the senior citizens license was never intended to decrease the fisheries fund, but because the intended reimbursement from the state is not occurring, the division is losing \$3 million a year for these reduced licenses. He would like to see that money reimbursed. He also mentioned a few other points from a discussion he had with Chief Claramunt.
 - **Mr. Caroffino** discussed the difficult decisions being made to fill open positions in the western UP management unit with limited revenue, adding that filling any additional or new positions hinges on a much-needed revenue boost that could be possible with a new license package.
 - **Mr. Johnson** asked if a new license package was approved, would rotations of lake surveys and more inland stocking take place. **Mr. Caroffino** stated there are several variables involved in these types of decisions preventing a simple answer. **Mr. Johnson** stated production of walleye stocking ponds are significantly lower than what they used to be. The sportsmen asked for deliverables with the last license package, and they are still asking for them again. **Mr. Caroffino** replied there are several cascading factors that led to where the division is at today in terms of revenue, which he and Chief Claramunt have reviewed.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the Fisheries Division can make a better case for additional funding with the legislature, similar to what the Parks and Recreation Division has done to receive large amounts of funding. **Mr. Caroffino** stated Chief Claramunt has put a spotlight on the lack of funding for the Fisheries Division and it is top priority. Operations are not sustainable under the current funding model.
 - **Mr. Bessonon** noted the lottery money was supposed to fix the lack of funding across the board.
 - **Ms. Gajewski** asked at what stage is the request for a new license package or additional funding currently. **Mr. Caroffino** stated the budget process just finished and the legislature is off for the summer. It is possible that this may be addressed in lame duck in the new legislative session or perhaps the Governor could put something in for the 2026 legislative budget.
 - **Mr. Schmidt** asked about aging infrastructure and providing talking points for legislative committees. **Mr. Caroffino** stated Chief Claramunt addressed the need in the first part of his resolution response which will be a good message to show legislators.
 - **Chair Solka** summarized the current discussion. The resolution is asking for any funding increases to provide deliverables, with a prioritization of walleye and trout stocking. The response indicated there are some issues with stocking ponds that are being worked on and numbers are still not where they are expected to be. The committee is still wanting to know where the money was spent and why it didn't happen, and the response was aging infrastructure. In conclusion, the committee doesn't seem satisfied with the status of the stocking ponds.
 - **Mr. Dropps** thanked Mr. Kramer and Mr. Caroffino for attending the meeting and working with the committee. He clarified they have no issues with the staff, but rather share the need to find the funding to do what needs to be done. He added the committee would like to have talking points to share with

local legislators to assist the division in being successful. **Mr. Caroffino** stated he would be happy to sit down with the committee and talk more about that.

- *Oppose expansion of underwater spearing under regulation FO 219.25:* **Mr. Caroffino** stated the Fisheries Division is recommending to the NRC to remain status quo on this regulation and not make any changes to the expansion of underwater spearing for at least another year.
4. Added Agenda Item: Pending Resolutions
- At the beginning of the meeting under Adoption of Agenda, **Mr. Starr** requested an update on pending resolutions. However, by this point in the agenda, updates had been addressed.

Committee Activity

1. Wildlife (Mr. Lindquist)

- **Mr. Lindquist** reported the committee met virtually on July 8 with 4-5 in attendance and reviewed both resolutions up for consideration that **Mr. Starr** prepared. **Mr. Starr** stated these resolutions were drafted last December but was asked to hold them until the DMI process was completed. He provided an overview of the very successful deer management process used on a co-op in Menominee County of which is he one of 18 landowners involved and is the premise for these resolutions.
- **Resolution #1: Recommend Changes to UP Deer Regulations:** **Mr. Starr** stated this resolution is for a 1-buck tag for the entire UP. He feels the deer herd can't be managed without managing both antlered and antlerless deer. DMAPs should be used to control antlerless deer. In summary, the resolution states *the following 3-part changes are recommended to be made to UP whitetails management: 1) 1-buck rule implemented across the UP; 2) the northern and center zones of the UP be closed to antlerless hunting through to the completion of the 2028 deer season then re-evaluated at the end of the 2028 season; 3) antler restrictions changed to 3 points minimum on one side to cover the entire UP, if a 1-buck rule is implemented.*
 - **Chair Solka** called for a motion. **Mr. Starr motioned the Council recommends the three-part changes be made to UP whitetails management as described above. Mr. Sierpien supported the motion. Chair Solka** called for discussion.
 - **Chair Solka** indicated Mr. Starr stated his case well.
 - **Mr. Johnson** stated the APR restriction accomplishes this and it was done in DMU 122. A very small percentage of folks take the second tag. He stated he is not against co-ops and their way of managing deer on their properties. He added several conservation clubs, the DMI and the NRC just camp up with this year's regulation package and although there might be a time in the future that it should be done, he doesn't feel it's a good time to send this forward.
 - **Mr. Sierpien** spoke about reviewing the DMI's process and how things are twice as bad as they were 17 years ago. No one is confident what the DMI put forth will improve the deer herd. **Ms. Haughey** stated the DMI had a hard time coming to an agreement on any one particular thing.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** stated UP Whitetails of Marquette County bargained for the 1-buck rule for years. It is in legislation to provide two deer tags. He would just like to see the resource managed appropriately.
 - **Ms. Gajewski** asked about the timeline for deer regulation approval. **Ms. Haughey** stated the regulations were up for information in May and June and were voted on at the July NRC meeting.
 - **Being no further discussion, Chair Solka called for vote. With 7 of 13 voting in support (1 member left the meeting early), 5 opposed, and 1 abstain, the motion passed by majority.**
- **Resolution #2: Create Long-Range UP Deer & Habitat Management Plan:** **Chair Solka** briefly reviewed this resolution which piggybacks on to the first resolution and the reasoning behind it.
 - **Chair Solka** called for a motion. **Mr. Starr motioned the Council recommends the DNR: 1) create a UP-wide long-range whitetail deer habitat management plan for the 3 distinct zones; 2) use DRIP**

monies heavily for securing through purchase and the creation of critical wintering complexes; 3) work with federal forest service to identify and protect winter complexes in the UP and work on a possible plan for private lands (like CRP for crop lands) to protect those winter complexes with compensation for private landowners; 4) create a long-range predator management plan for the same 3 zones; and 5) all whitetail deer hunting to end December 15 in the UP giving migrating animals from the northern zone unrestricted movement to the deer yarding areas. Mr. Sierpien supported the motion. Chair Solka called for discussion.

- **Mr. Johnson** stated most of the suggestions/recommendations are already in process. **Mr. Scullon** agreed, stating DRIP monies cannot be used for stumpage; however, it can and has been used for wintering complexes. **Mr. Johnson** stated use of DRIP funding is also set legislatively.
- **Being no further discussion, Chair Solka called for a vote. With 9 of 13 voting in support (1 member left the meeting early), 1 opposed, and 3 abstain, the motion passed by majority.**

2. Fisheries (Mr. Dropps)

- No information to report at this time.

3. Trails/Recreation/Law (Ms. Gajewski)

- No information to report at this time.
- **Mr. Schulz** requested the committee look into the Rockland Pond and why it is no longer stocked. **Mr. Caroffino** stated he will look into it, adding the pond was removed from the family friendly fishing list so people don't visit it thinking it's a stocked pond.

4. Other Committee Activity: None.

Next Meeting

1. Next Meeting: **Chair Solka** noted the next Council meeting will be held in person on ~~Thursday, September 19~~ at the Lake Superior Sportsman's Club conference room in Ontonagon beginning at 6:00pm Eastern, 5:00pm Central. **AFTER MEETING NOTE:** *Upon conclusion of the July meeting, it was determined several members, including the Chair, could not attend the scheduled September 19 meeting. An online survey of council members was initiated, and results determined the Council preferred to reschedule the September 19 meeting to a time in December. Based on schedules, Chair Solka determined Thursday, December 12 as the next meeting date, held in a virtual format. An email notice was sent to all council members of the date change on September 6.*
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. Suggested Agenda Items for Upcoming Meetings: **Chair Solka** asked Council members to forward any suggestions for upcoming agendas to him, Ms. Haughey or Ms. Dahlstrom.

Public Comments (On Any Topic)

Chair Solka opened the floor for public comments on any topic; none were brought forth.

Closing Comments from the Council

1. **Chair Solka** indicated that he is unable to attend the September 19 meeting as he has to attend another state commission meeting, and Vice Chair Schott is on an extended leave of absence due to illness. He stated in light of this situation and without this situation included in the bylaws, he asked the Council for support in the ability for the Chair to authorize an acting Vice Chair for an interim period. **Mr. Starr motioned to allow the WUPCAC Chair to authorize an acting Vice Chair position while the current Vice Chair is on an extended leave of absence. Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Chair Solka called for a discussion. Being no further discussion, Chair Solka called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.**

Adjournment

Chair Solka thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm Eastern/8:30pm Central.