

Eastern (EUPCAC) & Western (WUPCAC) Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils
Annual Joint Meeting Minutes – APPROVED 12/12/24
Wednesday, October 9, 2024
3:00-5:00 pm EST
Marquette Township Community Center, Marquette

Western Council Members Present

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| Erik Bessonon | Jeff Sierpien |
| Floyd Dropps | Kelly Bennett Simon |
| Barb Gajewski | Tom Solka, Chair |
| Dave Hall | Dwaine Starr |
| Dave Johnson | Faye Williams |
| George Lindquist | |

Eastern Council Members Present

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| Tom Buckingham, Chair | Bernie Hubbard |
| Jeff Cox | Robert Liebermann |
| Grant Dewitt | Glenn Moll |
| Steve Dey | Tom Paquin |
| Gary Gorniak, Vice Chair | Mark Spencer |
| Tim Hass | |

Western Council Members Absent

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|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Chauncey Moran | Skip Schulz |
| Suzanne Petschke | Carol Mason Sherrill |
| Horst Schmidt | Warren Suchovsky |
| Kirk Schott, Vice Chair | Lucas Vold |

Eastern Council Members Absent

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| Ken Collier | Julie Weist |
| Mark Maida | Tony Wright |
| Joe Smith | |

Guests

Dave Anthony, NRC Commissioner
Tom Baird, NRC Commissioner, Chair
David Cozad, NRC Commissioner
Pete Eardley, NRC Commissioner
Justin Tomei, MUCC
Bryan Reynolds, UP Whitetails of Marquette County
Joe Summers, UP Whitetails of Marquette County

Emma Woelkers, Senator Peters Office
Ken Rautio, Champion
JR Richardson, Ontonagon
Rich Rossway, Congressman Jack Bergman's Office
Andie Belanger, NMU Student
Jack Thomas, Newberry
John Truitt, WZMQ TV 19 News

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff

Craig Brunet, Legislation Section, Lansing
Eric Cowing, Parks & Recreation Division, Newberry
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Sgt. Mark Leadman, Law Enforcement Division-Marquette
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette
Dan Heckman, Forest Resources Division, Gaylord
Kerry Heckman, Forest Resources Division, Gaylord
Darren Kramer, Fisheries Division, Escanaba
Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division, Newberry
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
Brian Roell, Wildlife Division, Marquette
Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Jeff Stampfly, Chief of Forest Resources Division, Lansing
Sean Sundholm, Finance & Operations Division, Marquette
Sara Thompson, Chief of Wildlife Division, Lansing
Matt Watkeys, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Scott Whitcomb, Office of Public Lands, Lansing
Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-Trails, Marquette

Call to Order

EUPCAC Chair Tom Buckingham called the Annual Joint Meeting between the Western (EUPCAC) & Eastern (EUPCAC) Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils (CACs) to order at 3:05 pm Eastern. He welcomed everyone in attendance, including DNR staff and the Commissioners of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC).

Welcome & Introductions

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, including NRC Commissioners, DNR Deputy Director Shannon Lott, as well as DNR chiefs and staff from around the state.

Ms. Haughey 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. Since the CACs began in 2008, they have submitted approximately 125 resolutions to the DNR for consideration. She indicated these two groups are very collaborative, want to make a difference, have respectful discussions and learn from each other. She thanked them for their volunteerism in serving on the CACs.

WUPCAC Chair Solka also 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. **EUPCAC Chair Buckingham** asked council members and those in attendance to introduce themselves.

DNR Budget Overview (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, 2024 to September 30, 2025. He stated the state budget office provides the parameters and the DNR's goal is to prioritize and have initiatives included in the Governor's budget.

- **FY 2025 DNR Budget Funding Sources:** Of the DNR's total budget of \$534.6 million for FY 2025, 66.2% (\$354.1 million) are from state restricted funds, 18% (\$96.1 million) are from federal funds, 14.4% (\$76.8 million) is from the state's General Fund, and 1.4% (\$7.6 million) are from private funds. The DNR's budget is less than 5% of the overall state appropriated budget. The mix of state restricted funds is the largest portion of the DNR's budget and are those that have a restricted use on the way the DNR can spend those funds, such as hunting license dollars and park revenue. The DNR tries to maximize the matching of federal funds. The General Fund is the most competitive part of the state's budget with all state agencies trying to get the most they can from this fund. A little more than 14% of General Fund dollars is a big deal to the DNR, having received success in this portion being increased over last 10 years.
- **FY 2025 DNR Initiatives:** Several initiatives have received funding for FY 2025 and are included below.
 - **Law Enforcement Records Management System:** The objective is to consolidate and improve the DNR Law Enforcement Division's incident and records management system through the implementation of a new software solution. Investment is \$700,000 ongoing General Fund.
 - **Communications Equipment Modernization:** The objective is to support a radio lifecycle replacement plan for DNR conservation officers and firefighting staff. Investment is \$878,300 ongoing General Fund.
 - **Land and Water Conservation Fund Compliance and Stewardship:** The objective is to help prevent and resolve grant compliance issues so communities can access new funding opportunities for public outdoor recreation investments. Investment is \$151,100 ongoing (\$76,100 General Fund and \$75,000 Federal); 1.0 FTE. **Chief Lord** explained how this funding will help conversions and the efforts to leverage state funds to obtain with federal funds.
 - **Nature Awaits:** The objective is to provide 4th grade classes across the state the opportunity to visit a state park and participate in outdoor learning sessions facilitated by the DNR. Investment is \$4 million ongoing General Fund (represents a \$4 million reduction from FY 2024 to align with the annual budget need).
 - **Fleet Rate Increases:** The objective is to accommodate increased vehicle mileage rates due to higher fuel and vehicle repair costs for leased vehicles managed by DTMB-Vehicle Travel Services (VTS). Investment is \$890,300 ongoing (\$343,100 General Fund and remainder from federal and state restricted funds).
- **FY 2025 Legislative Priorities (One-Time General Fund):**
 - Phragmites management equipment: \$250,000
 - Sportsmen Against Hunger Refrigeration Units: \$500,000
 - American Chestnut Restoration Initiative: \$500,000
 - Mass Timber Market Development: \$1,000,000
 - Huron Waterloo Pathways Initiative (Border-to-Border Trail): \$1,749,900
 - American 250 Commission Grants: \$5,000,000 (\$3 million for local initiatives, \$2 million for state initiatives) for the Michigan History Center to plan celebrations to commemorate the U.S. Semiquincentennial.

- *FY 2024 Supplemental Passed in July:* These are General Fund commitments that were passed earlier in the summer from last year’s budget.
 - Straits State Park Native American History Project: \$3.6 million (Private)
 - 2023 Great Lakes Fishing Decree: \$2.3 million (General Fund)
 - Great Lakes Research Vessel: \$2.5 million (General Fund)
 - Brandon Road Interbasin Project: \$1.5 million (General Fund)
 - One-Time Lump Sum Payments: \$561,900 (General Fund)
- Questions:
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked why the DNR doesn’t actively pursue with the legislature the reimbursement lost on senior licenses. **Mr. Brunet**, DNR Legislative Affairs Director, indicated there was an agreement but it has not been fulfilled. **Mr. Paquin** asked if the amount lost can be shared; **Chief Lord** stated he will look into it.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** also mentioned that the legislature needs to know where the needs are, such as the rising cost of fish and wildlife projects. So many good projects end because of the lack of funding. It seems like the Fisheries and Wildlife Divisions barely get by. **Chief Lord** stated of the priorities set forth by the state budget office, the DNR was able to submit three for next fiscal year and they have a game and fish focus. Proposals were put forward—26 of them—but only three were approved. Divisions pitch their projects with an effort to fit within the Governor’s priorities. For the Parks and Recreation Division, the large influx of funding they previously received came from the American Rescue Plan and it was very much needed. License fees have been stagnant for a number of years, and there has been declining participation. He noted the DNR tries their best to keep projects that people enjoy; they work hard on this effort all the time.
 - **Mr. Paquin** asked about issues with EGLE charging the DNR for permits and the long wait for inspections. **Mr. Brunet** stated that the DNR does not receive free permits from EGLE.

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham thanked Chief Lord for the very informative presentation on the DNR’s budget.

Wolf Abundance Project Update & Proposed Moose Project (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, with a focus on two of them: developing a cost-effective technique to estimate wolf abundance in Michigan and factors limiting moose population growth in the western U.P. of Michigan.

- *Ongoing Wildlife Research:* Current research projects include Drummond Island bear abundance, wildlife response to innovative silvicultural approaches in northern hardwood forests of Michigan, developing a cost-effective technique to estimate wolf abundance in Michigan, quantifying individual and population-level response to black bears to baiting in Michigan, gray and red fox harvest and distribution across the northern forest of Michigan, collaborative Great Lakes wolf research, 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:* **Dr. Petroelje** stated counting animals is very difficult, especially trying to cover 60% of the UP to survey every other year.
 - Current minimum count requires significant effort to provide index of abundance
 - 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
 - Decrease cost
- *2022 Pilot Surveys – Lessons Learned:* **Dr. Petroelje** stated cameras did a much better job of tracking wolf occurrences than snow tracks. Charts showing the differences of wolf occurrences based on cameras and snow tracks with cells were shown.
 - Greater occupancy estimated from camera surveys

- 3 visits vs. 120 ‘visits’ (119 vs. 1,490 unique detections)
- Not feasible to scale up occupancy-based track surveys
- Year-round camera surveys should provide good detection for comparison
- *Peninsula-Wide Deployments (of Cameras):* **Dr. Petroelje** indicated research staff are in the process of going through 5-6 million photos to date.
 - July-October 2023: 159 cells with cameras, 1,230 cameras deployed
 - UP map with cells: Some cells excluded due to size/ownership: 22 partial cells, 21 cells mostly private ownership
 - Currently collecting data from first annual deployment
- *Camera Status:* **Dr. Petroelje** indicated 75% of the cameras are functioning after 12-14 months of deployment. Lithium batteries are working well with only 7% of the batteries being depleted. 18% of the cameras fell into one of these categories: 1% were damaged, 5% were intentionally misdirected (moved by people), 4% malfunctioned, 3% were misdirected (moved by bears, etc.), and 5% were stolen (which is the standard and was expected but hope this declines).
- *Wolf Abundance Project – Next Steps:*
 - 2024-2026
 - Cameras deployed in summer 2023, revisited in 2024, 2025 and 2026
 - Photo analysis using AI during the winter months
 - Generate UP-wide wolf abundance estimate (tentatively available summer 2025)
 - Annual reports available to the public
 - Public-facing website with interactive results
 - 2027 and beyond
 - Final report to compare efficacy of wolf monitoring techniques
 - Potential to continue full camera deployment to monitor wolves

Factors limiting moose population growth in the western U.P. of Michigan (in conjunction with NMU, MSU)

- *Western UP Core Moose Range:* A map was shown indicating the core range for moose in Baraga, Marquette and northern Iron counties.
- *Moose Population Estimates and Growth in Western UP:* Number of moose per year from 1996-2023, abundance and observed. **Dr. Petroelje** stated there was good growth in the 90s and early 2000s with the herd growing about 10% annually. Surveys showed a relatively strong switch in 2010 and have been stuck at 500 animals since. The landscape supports 2,000 moose and this project will look at the reasons for the lack of growth.
- *Moose Demographics Western UP:* Ratio/percent of bulls, calves and twins between 2008-2023 was shown. The decline in 2010 showed the bull-to-cow ratio dropped and that is concerning. Reasons that would affect reproductive output was given; could be due to calf survival or reproductive output.
- *Estimates of Vital Rates 1999-2005:* Reproduction: ~71% of adult cows pregnant (well below N.A. average 84%; ~0.7 calves/cow; ~18% twinning. A chart of sex/age and survival was shown.
- *Current Passive Monitoring – Moose-Vehicle Collisions :* Vehicle collisions generally follow patterns in abundance, but greatly increased around 2010 when the population growth slowed and has remained high since. 1999-2005 vital rate study estimated 4-6% emigration. Passive monitoring for disease. A chart showing the number of moose-vehicle strikes was shown (for the entire UP). **Mr. Johnson** asked if moose collisions per mile drive as looked at. **Dr. Petroelje** stated he did review some MDOT data and paired it with his chart and the correlation is very poor. During covid, moose collisions dropped since folks weren’t driving. He doesn’t see a trend in per miles driven. He noted about 4% of the moose population is involved in a vehicle collision per year and further discussed moose emigration. Vehicle collision mortality is also used for passive monitoring of disease, with samples sent to the lab for review. Passive monitoring is biased as only moose that are hit are assessed.
- *Sources of Mortality (%) for Radio-Collared Moose in the West-Central UP (Marked) and Uncollared Moose (Unmarked) in the UP from 1999-2005:* Percentage and types of mortalities (disease, trauma, parasites, other, unknown, and vehicle) were shown in a bar graph.

- *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
 - Emigration and dispersal rates
 - Moose population modeling: Use vital rates to estimate population trajectory
- *Additional Information: Wolf Abundance Cameras*
 - Distribution of moose UP-wide (summer vs. winter). A lot of pictures of moose occurring.
 - Unique bull ID from antler characteristics
 - Distribution of calf production
- Questions from the Council were entertained:
 - **EUPCAC Vice Chair Gorniak** asked when some of the reports from camera surveys (moose, bears, wolves) will be available. **Dr. Petroelje** stated he expects the tallies of photos, etc. will be available in February, adding that density reports will not be available at that time. **Vice Chair Gorniak** added that sportsmen agree that this is a fantastic tool, and they are doing their best to let people know to leave cameras alone (adding that there is a Facebook site telling people where to find the cameras). He looks forward to the data in February.
 - **Ms. Gajewski** asked if the tracking surveys are still being done. **Dr. Petroelje** stated yes and they will be compared with the cameras.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** stated the Councils pushed to look at moose more and he is thrilled to hear about this research project. He asked if the predator study was the first to use cameras. **Dr. Petroelje** stated yes, they were used in the high-snowfall zone, 3-10 deer per square mile in those high snowfall zones depending on the year. **Ms. Thompson**, Chief of Wildlife Division, stated these are all good research projects and she decided to fund the moose project based on the Councils resolution and discussion. **Mr. Lindquist** stated he is very excited about it.
 - **Mr. Williams** stated he feels the ratio of bulls to cows is very skewed right now and he looks forward to hearing more about the project.

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham thanked Dr. Petroelje for his presentation and stated he looks forward to additional updates at future meetings. A round of applause was given.

Depredation Investigation/Reporting (Shannon Lott & Brian Roell)

Deputy Director Lott stated this topic was added to the agenda since there were many questions resulting from a recent depredation incident at an Engadine sheep farm and shared details of the incident. She stated she has been involved in many depredation investigations and the photos of the sheep clearly indicate coyote depredation as it relates to bite marks and remaining carcasses, which is very different than a wolf depredation. She noted pictures of the bite marks are available if anyone is interested in viewing them.

A brochure on depredation of livestock was shown on screen and indicated the steps for examination and reporting a livestock depredation event. The RAP (Report All Poaching) line was also shown on screen, which is the first step in reporting. **Mr. Roell** stated there are several caveats with reporting a depredation event and he has books and brochures available if anyone would like them. **Deputy Director Lott** added that staff have received depredation training.

The statute for depredation payments was also shown on screen, indicating the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is the responsible agency to negotiate with and provide payments for depredations. Reimbursement rates are the same regardless of what predator caused the depredation. **Deputy Director Lott** stated the sheep farmer is eligible for payment for the depredations that occurred. Payments are not

the same price for every species. **Mr. Roell** explained the reimbursement process, noting that MDARD does not provide reimbursement for missing carcasses. If there have been previous wolf depredations on a farm, then missing livestock are eligible according to the statute. In this recent case, the farmer did not have previous wolf depredations and therefore, was only eligible for reimbursement for the carcasses present but not for any of those missing. **Ms. Gajewski** asked if the reimbursement is only for livestock. **Mr. Roell** replied the statute covers livestock only and does not include pets such as cats or dogs.

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham thanked Deputy Director Lott and Mr. Roell for the information.

Resolution Consideration from Joint UPCAC Wildlife Committees: Do More for Wildlife in the State Forest Management Plan (George Lindquist, WUPCAC Lead & Steve Dey, EUPCAC Lead)

Mr. Lindquist stated the wildlife committees from both the EUPCAC and the WUPCAC met on September 17 to review the resolution he prepared. It was approved by both committees and sent to both Councils for review on October 2. He reviewed the resolution in its entirety. In summary, the resolution recommends: *“That wildlife management, with a particular focus on deer, be given greater priority in the new State Forest Management Plan, especially within the Special Analysis Unit for Deer Wintering Complexes. We urge that the necessary resources be allocated to acquire, maintain, and improve critical habitats across the Upper Peninsula, with an emphasis on developing and maintaining high-quality cover areas that benefit Deer as well as other wildlife species. In addition, that hemlock be recognized for the valuable wildlife tree that it is and that increased efforts be made to protect and restore hemlock and cedar where possible.”*

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham called for a motion. **Mr. Lindquist motioned the Council approve the resolution as stated above. Mr. Cox supported the motion. EUPCAC Chair Buckingham called for discussion. Mr. Seablom** noted hemlock woolly adelgid mortality can exceed 90 percent if temperatures drop below -22° F. Winter mortality may be an important factor helping to slow HWA spread and population growth in areas of northern lower Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. It is important to remember, however, that temperatures in a forest can vary considerably, depending on factors such as exposure, aspect or height and it is monitored. The hemlock stands get it first. **Being no further discussion, EUPCAC Chair Buckingham called for vote. The motion passed unanimously.**

Natural Resources Commission (NRC) Meeting Preview (Stacy Haughey)

Ms. Haughey reviewed a copy of the NRC’s agenda for tomorrow’s meeting (October 10), which will be held in the Peninsula Rooms at NMU’s Northern Center. There will be an informal coffee with the commissioners beginning at 8am and the meeting will begin at 9am. **Deputy Director Lott** mentioned a few of the informative presentations that will be provided during the committee portion of the meeting. **Ms. Haughey** stated there will also be an opportunity for public comment. It will be a long day with lots of information. She thanked the NRC commissioners for traveling to the UP to hold their meeting in Marquette as well as attending the Joint UPCAC meeting. **NRC Chair Baird** thanked everyone for the UP hospitality shown to them. He stated tomorrow’s NRC meeting is pretty heavy with presentations that are designed around the interests of the UPCACs as well as the UP public. While the commissioners are in the UP and before the next regulation year discussions start, they plan to get as much good information from the UP public as possible. They know there will be heavy discussion regarding deer habitat and management as well as deer regulations over the next year. He explained the presentations that he and Commissioner Anthony put together with leaders in their area of expertise. He stated the Commission looks forward to hearing feedback from those who get a chance to see the presentations. He encouraged everyone to attend.

Public Comments

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham explained this portion of the meeting and opened the floor for public comments.

1. *Jack Thomas, Luce County – Antlerless Deer, Coyotes and Luce County Wolves:* In summary, Mr. Thomas stated he doesn’t agree that hemlock was taken away by commercial operations, believes that antlerless deer

hunting should not be allowed, is disappointed three months of coyote hunting was taken away when they are one of the main predators of deer, and feels that wolves in Luce County are not being counted appropriately. He indicated hunters and camp owners in the area are discouraged and not hunting or buying a license anymore.

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham thanked Mr. Thomas for his comments.

Mr. Lindquist asked for a clarification of the new coyote hunting rule for private land versus public land. **Deputy Director Lott** stated coyote hunting is closed for three months for public and private land; however, there is a clause included that coyotes can be hunted on private land if they are harassing animals or cause damage. **Mr. Spencer** added the predator callers worked very hard with the DNR's Law Enforcement Division to prepare a paper on what damage is included and other details. **EUPCAC Chair Buckingham** asked Ms. Dahlstrom to circulate a copy to the Council members.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division Updates

Written reports submitted from UP division representatives (see below) were provided to Council members on October 2, 2024. Additional updates to those reports are included below.

- *Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy:* The DNR recently acquired a new piece of property in the U.P., the Carp River falls, adjacent to the Michigan Iron Industry Museum in Negaunee. It includes three waterfalls and has beautiful topography. The acquisition will provide waterfall viewing and access and interpretive opportunities of this historic location in association with the Museum once the property is fully developed. A dedication will be held on October 10. It is also the one-year anniversary of the opening of the Skoglund-Erickson Shooting Range in Marquette County. Members of the NRC and staff visited today to do some shooting. Part-time range officer, Curt Jay, goes above and beyond to keep the range safe and in good order. The new Newberry Customer Service Center is a few months from being completed. The mass timber building is a great investment in the Newberry community.
- *Sean Sundholm, Finance & Operations Division:* A proposal for a new roof for the Crystal Falls field office is in the works. The Marquette and Escanaba Customer Service Centers recently had an energy efficiency assessment completed. Minor health and safety improvement projects are also being considered for area DNR facilities.
- *Sgt. Mark Leadman, Law Enforcement Division:* The division is nearing the end of the hiring process for 20 conservation officers who will be in the field in the very near future. It has been a busy law season. **EUPCAC Vice Chair Gorniak** asked if there was a status report on the wolf that was shot in self defense in Delta County. **Sgt. Leadman** stated the case was investigated and turned over to the county. **EUPCAC Vice Chair Gorniak** also asked if new officers will be added or if they are filling openings; **Sgt. Leadman** responded filling openings. A moose collision in the eastern UP was mentioned. **Mr. Roell** noted one was hit in the western UP and it was the largest animal he has dealt with, and it was fortunate the driver was not injured.
- *Darren Kramer, Fisheries Division:* No additional updates to report.
- *Tom Seablom & Scott Lakosky, Forest Resources Division:* **Mr. Seablom** stated it is still fall fire season with a few active fires this past week in the western UP; **Mr. Lakosky** echoed the same for the eastern UP. **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the timber market is turning around yet, if the state is mandated to cut a certain amount, and if there is any marked increase in no-bid sales. **Mr. Seablom** stated there is no long-term positive turnaround at this point and time and noted 90% has to be prepared according to the state forest plan. **Mr. Lakosky** added the eastern UP market for hardwood pulp has picked up some. **Mr. Watkeys** indicated for the last few months (since early July), the no-bid sales have been consistent with no marked increase.
- *Doug Rich & Eric Cowing, Parks and Recreation Division:* **Mr. Rich** invited those interested to come to Copper Harbor on October 29 to attend the management plan meeting for Fort Wilkins. **Mr. Cowing** noted

new ranger staff started the division's operations academy this past Monday in Roscommon. He added the stewardship unit may be able to keep some funding to keep the rangers on through the winter.

- *Ron Yesney, UP Trails Program-Parks and Recreation Division:* Snowmobile season is coming up. The Alger County Road Commission is removing access of 0.8 miles of roadway on H-58 in this area which is a route to Miner's Castle. After many meetings with local officials and diligence in trying to find a reroute, there is no feasible alternative at this time. It is likely the trail will be closed this winter. A bridge in Ontonagon County is also a concern and staff are working to hopefully resolve that issue before season arrives.
- *Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division:* **Mr. Lemmien** noted a correction to an item in the division report for the Wildlife Division. For the deer harvest reporting numbers, on October 2, 2023 there were 354 deer reported. This year on October 2, 2024 that number was over 1,400. What changed from last year to this year is deer damage reports are now included. Out of 1,400+ harvests as of October 2 for this year, 925 were for deer damage, and 488 deer were harvested during the youth hunt, the Liberty hunt, and first few days of archery season. This is a 35-40% increase from 2023.

Adjourn

EUPCAC Chair Buckingham 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 5:05pm Eastern.