

Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

5:30-8:00pm Eastern

Baraga Lakeside Inn Conference Room, Baraga

Chairman: Phil Wirtanen Vice-Chairman: Warren Suchovsky

Council Members Present

Jim Baker	Dave Johnson	Skip Schulz
Floyd Dropps	George Lindquist	Tom Solka
Barb Gajewski	Mary Peterson	Trevor St. John
Dave Hall	Horst Schmidt	Warren Suchovsky
Mike Holmes	Kirk Schott	Phil Wirtanen

Council Members Absent/Excused

Joan Duncan	Chauncey Moran	Travis Smith
Jim Lorenson	Jake Putala	

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff & Guests

Eric Cadeau, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
John DePue, Wildlife Division, Baraga
Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator, Executive Division, Marquette
George Madison, Fisheries Division, Baraga
Ryan McGillviray, Wildlife Division, Crystal Falls
Sgt. Marc Pomroy, Law Enforcement Division, Norway
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails, Marquette

Call to Order

Chair Wirtanen called the meeting to order at 5:35pm Eastern and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. He reviewed the purpose and history of the Council and how the Council conducts its business. Introduction of Council members were then made.

Adoption of Agenda

Chair Wirtanen asked the Council if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. **Mr. Schulz motioned to accept the agenda as presented; Mr. Solka supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Wirtanen asked if there were any changes to the September 11, 2019 Joint UPCAC and the November 6, 2019 WUPCAC meeting minutes that were distributed to the Council via email for review. None were brought forth. **Mr. Suchovsky motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried.**

DNR Reports from Division Staff

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on January 8, 2020. The following verbal updates were provided.

- **Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator:** Ms. Haughey welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mrs. Cella for bringing in baked goods. She noted DNR Director Eichinger recently visited the eastern UP, stopping at Lake Superior State University's fish hatchery as well as touring the new DNR office in Sault Ste. Marie. She indicated he will be in Marquette in February for the UP 200 activities, presenting at the UP Whitetails of Marquette County banquet and attending the UPSA meeting in Iron Mountain. She also noted the UP received over a million dollars in Natural Resources Trust Fund grant funding for a variety of local projects, including one in Baraga. Funding comes from oil and gas revenues on state property. Mr. Lindquist mentioned recreation passport grant recipients were also recently announced, which provides funding from the sale of recreation passports. Ms. Haughey mentioned an update on license trends and a status of the Michigan Wildlife Council's activities will be held until the next meeting. She added the Michigan Wildlife Council is looking for a new member (a governor appointment) to replace Mr. Jim Hammill who will be termed out. The updated licensing system will go online in February and staff and vendors are being trained now. Mr. Schmidt mentioned the Michigan Trail Advisory Council also has a few openings coming up as well.
- **George Madison, Fisheries Division:** Mr. Madison indicated he did not have any updates to add to his written report.
- **Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division:** Mr. Seablom stated he did not have any additions to his report. Mr. Lindquist asked how the wood markets are doing. Mr. Seablom replied the DNR is seeing an uptick in no bid sales and is looking into the issues. He noted the woods are very wet and the trade wars in China have had an effect. Mr. Schulz reiterated that lands enrolled in Commercial Forest does not give snowmobilers permission to ride on the property owners' land, and only allows a person to hike in to hunt or fish. Mr. Seablom agreed stating lands enrolled in CFA are open to foot traffic only, it does not have to be posted, and snowmobiling on those lands is considered trespassing. He stated it is a topic with the industry and creative solutions are being sought. Mr. St. John asked if the division is being asked for extensions on winter wood; Mr. Seablom stated yes, and a memo will soon be sent to contractors for winter sales to give weather related extensions. Mr. Schmidt noted that Weyerhaeuser recently sold their land and asked if the state is concerned. Mr. Seablom stated it provides an opportunity for land consolidation so that the public has more access to state forest land.
- **Sgt. Marc Pomroy, Law Enforcement Division:** Sgt. Pomroy indicated there are no additions to the report. Mr. Schmidt asked how snowmobile fatalities compare with last year and if speed is enforced. Sgt. Pomroy stated fatalities are about the same as previous years and officers do monitor speed, which must be safe and reasonable. A comment was made about downed trees and branches in the western UP not being as significant as in the eastern UP. Ms. Gajewski thanked Capt. Wright for providing a response to her email regarding invasive species enforcement and asked for an update on the number of tickets written. Sgt. Pomroy indicated Capt. Wright or Lt. Aho can best answer that question. Mr. Schulz asked about someone who received a ticket for putting out a bale of hay or alfalfa for deer feed. Sgt. Pomroy indicated its difficult to answer any questions related to the incident without knowing all the specifics. If deer are being fed in the winter or during hunting season, there is an allowable limit. And if a person is permitted, there are different requirements. A member of the audience also asked a question regarding sportsman group supplemental feeding. Mr. DePue explained the permit application process.
- **Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division:** Mr. Rich added recreation passports will be increasing from \$11 to \$12 for Michigan residents and from \$33 to \$34 for out of state residents effective March 1. The fees are tied to the consumer pricing index, thus, not requiring any legislative involvement. The rate is still the best price for access to state parks, boating access sites, and state forest campground facilities. He provided an update on the supplemental funding received to employ Gogebic County residents who lost jobs with the local

correctional facility when it closed. The program is going very well with those staff providing \$400,000 worth of work on various projects. **Mr. Solka** asked how much revenue is received in the voluntary tubes at non-motorized trails and pathway areas, such as Blueberry Ridge Pathway. **Mr. Rich** replied it is very minimal, filling up maybe twice a year. He further explained where the funding comes from to make repairs at those types of facilities. **Mr. Solka** added it is well posted that a rec passport is required, and the crews are doing a great job keeping that area groomed this winter. **Dr. Schott** asked about the high-water levels and storm damage from Lake Superior. **Mr. Rich** stated the division discusses it very frequently and with Lake Michigan also slated to go up a foot this year, it is an enormous problem for state parks and boating access sites across the state. He further explained the impacts to different state park infrastructure in the UP and in lower Michigan. He stated staff are looking at which projects can be shelved this year so that funding and efforts can be focused on needs related to this issue. **Mr. Schulz** added that he is pleased after 17 years, the signing program will be implemented in 2020.

- **John DePue, Wildlife Division:** **Mr. DePue** added the Copper Country Ruffed Grouse Society received a wildlife habitat grant to create a GEM (Grouse Enhanced Management) site in Keweenaw County on state land and with CFA partners off 5 Mile Point Road. There is also a GEM site on Point Abbaye on Keweenaw Land Trust land in Baraga County which opened last summer. He noted there is a funding opportunity with the Ruffed Grouse Society to help with future enhancements at the Point Abbaye site. **Mr. Schulz** asked for an update on the wolf delisting process. **Mr. DePue** stated there has been no change at this time. **Ms. Haughey** added that Michigan is part of a multi-state lawsuit and it is where Michigan will have an impact.
- **Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails:** **Mr. Yesney** indicated the upcoming long weekend will be a busy snowmobile weekend. He verbalized his thanks to all the snowmobile clubs for the amount of brushing and signing they've done this year as it has been an enormous amount of work with all the downed trees and storm damage. The program could not function without the hard work of the clubs. He stated overall, snowmobile traffic is up as people are coming to the UP to ride from all different states. It's good for the economy, but it is hard on the trails, especially with the storms causing water problems on multiple trails. Trail closures occurred in the eastern UP but with teams and club efforts, most everything is open now with a few exceptions. He reported an off-trail riding focus group has been established and will look to build parameters and define areas where snowmobilers can ride. Last year was the first year of the Ride Right campaign which has received a lot of advertising. He commented on the growth of the ORV program, with trail permits up 9-10% from 2018. 175 miles of trails were added last year in an effort to connect trails and communities. He also explained projects and equipment purchased with supplemental dollars, including six new groomers for the snowmobile program, improving bridges and dust control for the ORV program and trail expansion for the non-motorized program. An audience member asked what options exist for cleanup of illegal dumping. **Mr. Yesney** indicated there are funds available with the Adopt A Forest program through the Forest Resources Division. **Mr. Lindquist** asked about a replacement snowmobile sticker; **Mr. Yesney** indicated if entirely lost (no pieces), then a new one has to be purchased. **Mr. Lindquist** also asked about a Graymont land exchange that is part of a deer wintering complex and summer trails. **Mr. Yesney** stated it is in a proposal process; there are several pre-existing trails in that area, and it needs to be determined which ones will be managed. They will not be imposing trails on deer yards.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Chair Wirtanen indicated he received three inquiries for public comments, none of which pertained to a specific agenda item, and deferred them until the second public comment period of the meeting.

Old Business

1. Proposed Marquette County Shooting Range Update: **Ms. Haughey** indicated the Attorney General's Office continues to work on a lease agreement between Cliffs and the DNR. Once the agreement is signed, the bidding process for construction on the property can begin. This may take some time and as a result, an extension may need to be filed to extend the funding, which runs out in 2020. The proposed shooting range will be the first UP DNR public shooting range with all funding to build the range coming from grant dollars. The plans for the range were first drawn up in 1993. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if this facility would be available for special use permits and groups. **Ms. Haughey** stated it is a public facility and cannot be closed to the public. **Mr. Hall** asked what the timeframe would be once a lease is signed and if there would be a public meeting. **Ms. Haughey** stated due to the delay with the lease agreement, the DNR may miss this year's construction season. She is hopeful things will move quickly and indicated a public meeting will be held in the future.
2. UP Habitat Workgroup Update: **Mr. Lindquist** reported the workgroup met on December 10, 2019 and discussion focused on the wildlife habitat grant the group received and identifying additional areas and work needed for deer wintering complexes in order to have a more sustainable deer herd. He further explained the long-term mission of the group's efforts. Discussion ensued with audience members on browse issues at the winter complexes and the need to expand those areas and also to increase thermal cover for deer. All agreed that any work done is a long-term solution.
3. CWD Update: **Ms. Haughey** stated the most recent testing results indicate 19,635 animals have been tested. The lab is very busy and staff have been cross-trained to help in the full-containment facility. In the UP core surveillance zone, 727 deer have been tested. In the UP expanded surveillance zone, 772 deer have been tested. Gogebic County 22, Iron County 241, Menominee County 796, and Dickinson County 549. The goal of 2,654 deer tested in the UP core zones was not reached. Statewide, out of those 19,000+ animals tested, there are 58 new positive cases in the lower peninsula. There are no new positive cases in the UP. Of those 58, 14 cases were in Kent County alone. Educational messages were displayed at the Mackinac Bridge during deer season to try to limit movement of infected deer as much as possible. **Mr. St. John** asked if the goal number is cumulative to next year; **Mr. DePue** said he believes it is. **Mr. St. John** asked how many of those deer tested in the core were under crop damage permits. **Ms. Haughey** stated she didn't have those statistics. **Mr. Suchovsky** spoke about the change in deer behavior that he's noticed, with deer being more comfortable around people. **Mr. DePue** encouraged people to call if they notice behavior that doesn't seem right. He stated biologists are receiving more calls from people with pictures of deer with abnormalities and others acting strange which is a good thing. **Ms. Gajewski** asked since the goal was not met, will the confidence of the detection on the landscape be impacted. **Mr. DePue** stated it will affect the confidence, of course, but a determination is still able to be made. **Mr. Johnson** asked about a shutdown of baiting and feeding if another CWD positive case is detected. **Ms. Haughey** explained the history of the baiting and feeding situation and indicated it is a decision that the NRC will make. She indicated discussion of the emergency regulation will occur again in May or June of this year. **Mr. Holmes** asked how CWD has affected the license sales. **Ms. Haughey** stated she has the trend information and will plan to review it at the next meeting. She noted not all the exact factors are known when someone does or doesn't purchase a license, but trends are available. **Mr. DePue** added overall, license sales are down 2-3% statewide from last year, which compares to the historical trend. **Mr. Lindquist** stated that he heard more deer were killed in areas that stopped baiting, but yet the UP was down with baiting. **Ms. Haughey** noted there are a multitude of factors. **Mr. Suchovsky** spoke about game farms with a high prevalence of CWD and the need for mandatory testing at those locations.

New Business

1. **Houghton Trail Update:** **Mr. Yesney** indicated he met with the Council last May in Houghton to provide an update and a lot has occurred since then. He provided the following presentation/information:
 - *Natural Disaster:* 5 grades/trails were severely impacted by the Father's Day storms in 2018 in Houghton County. Two of them, the Hancock to Calumet grade and the Bill Nichols grade, were repaired close to FEMA reimbursement amounts and opened. The remaining three require significant repair costing millions of dollars. It is recognized that these trail corridors, Chassell to Houghton and the Lake Linden Grade, are vitally important economically to local communities dependent on tourism and recreation. Despite tremendous investment of manpower and machinery, much work remains unfinished, with recovery expected to take many years to complete.
 - *Impact:* A map was shown of the trails damaged in the storms. Damage to state-managed facilities has been assessed at nearly \$20 million but may likely cost much more than that.
 - *Lake Linden Grade:* There is damage at 103 locations on this grade. Two grades run parallel (mostly state-owned). It is estimated to cost \$4.2 million to naturalize it versus putting a trail back in. The estimate to rebuild the trail and naturalize remaining infrastructure is \$8-\$11.4 million, creating a large funding gap from FEMA reimbursement. (*Feb 2020 Update: New estimates are now available; funding gap is less than initially estimated.*)
 - *Lake Linden Grade Photos:* Photos from five selected sites along this grade were shown, depicting the extreme extent of damage. One photo shows the Hungarian Falls bridge which is completely blocked from access.
 - *Lake Linden Grade/Naturalize Pros & Cons:* Pros include: less expensive, quicker and easier. Cons include: leaves management responsibilities undetermined; contrasts with trails plan, community desires, and outreach work; impact on local economy-would force traffic onto another trail in the region; forces all traffic onto other trails; leaves Hungarian Falls bridge to deteriorate after significant improvements made in 2002.
 - *Lake Linden Grade/Rebuild Pros & Cons:* Pros include: ties in with trails plan-connects communities and creates a loop; preserves past investments-purchase of two grades and Hungarian Falls bridge; complies with community needs/wants; preserves for future rail usage; corresponds better to intent of grant programs. Cons include: cost; will take more time and resources; pulls funding from other statewide projects.
 - *Houghton to Chassell Trail:* This is mostly a bike and pedestrian trail. Damage in 30 locations are around homes, driveways, fiberoptic and transmission lines. Repair/replacement costs are estimated to be \$1.5-\$2 million with only \$280,000 available from FEMA.
 - *Remaining Challenges:* Significant challenges remain for both of these grades. For the Freda Grade, the health and human safety of this grade isn't as great as the others, so focus has been limited. It will be approximately 1-2 more years without that trail. An audience member stated it is important that it gets fixed as it hurts the Houghton and South Range areas. **Mr. Yesney** encouraged constructive and insightful written input from audience members on their thoughts. **Mr. Cadeau** asked the audience member if the interest is primarily the rail trail going to Freda or the loop; the audience member indicated the loop as right now traffic is diverted to Trail 3 and it's becoming too much. There is no gateway to the Keweenaw.
 - *Pilgrim River Bridge:* A photo was show of the bridge which is currently blocked and has been deemed unsafe for pedestrian and snowmobile traffic by MDOT. The damage to the pilings under the water cannot be seen but is significant.
 - *Trail Support:* **Mr. Yesney** indicated the DNR is committed trail remediation but wanted to provide an explanation of the funding needed to fix them. He again encouraged those who would like to voice their support to do so in writing. **Mr. Yesney** promised to provide an address to the Council and public once he spoke to his supervisor Mr. Paul Yalk.

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- *Questions:* **Mr. Yesney** fielded questions from the audience regarding specific trails, getting through Houghton with ORVs, and city ordinances.

The Council thanked Mr. Yesney for the presentation and update.

2. County Road 107 (Porkies/Ontonagon) Update: **Mr. Cadeau** introduced himself indicating he works on facilities engineering for all types of projects within the Parks and Recreation Division. He has been working extensively on Ontonagon County's County Road 107 (107th Engineers Memorial Highway) which is the eastern and primary access to the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. He provided the following presentation:
 - *Damage Photos:* County Road 107 (CR 107) has 1.65 miles of exposure to Lake Superior on Union Bay. Storm damage washouts and erosion near the road was shown. Three-quarters of a mile of this road has less than 20 feet of shoreline left.
 - *Issue: Erosion of CR 107:* Damage is caused by Lake Superior's high-water levels. The highest recording ever was this past year, with the lowest level recorded in 2011. Shoulder closures and/or lane closures have impacted CR 107 in 2018, 2019, and are a likelihood to occur in 2020. CR 107 provides access to South Boundary Road, private properties, commercial forest properties, the Ottawa National Forest, is the primary access to the Porkies State Park, and is the only access to Lake of the Clouds and other recreation areas.
 - *Background-Roadway Significance:* CR 107 is found entirely within Ontonagon County. The roadway was built in 1935 and designated as M-107. In 1954, the entirety of M-107 was designated as the 107th Engineer Memorial Highway by the Michigan legislature. In 2008, the jurisdiction of the roadway was transferred to the Ontonagon County Road Commission (OCRC) after 73 years of ownership by MDOT. The DNR has a large stake in this roadway because of access to the state park and are coordinating efforts with the OCRC. Funding is limited with \$1.4 million available. Bridges, culverts, utilities and a trail are all impacted with any relocation or repairs.
 - *Recent Actions:* Long-term planning is ongoing with emergency and immediately response projects occurring. Opportunities for funding are being investigated by OCRC and the DNR. Public input has been sought and will continue.
 - *Options:* 7 options were provided by MDOT. The lowest option was \$6 million and the highest was \$13 million. OCRC has only \$2 million available. A quick review of the 7 options were presented.
 - *Public Hearing Response:* From the public hearings, there is unanimous support for protecting access to the Porkies. There is significant support for protection of the scenic, aesthetic, environmental, and recreation resources of the natural beach at Union Bay. There is some support (but more limited) for preserving the scenic vistas of a shoreline drive. The public generally prefers relocating the road over armoring for the primary reason of preserving the qualities and opportunities associated with the natural beach and day use. Private property owners are concerned. Without CR 107, there would be an 86-mile reroute.

The Council thanked Mr. Cadeau for the presentation and update.

3. Deer Season Recap: **Mr. DePue** stated the results are still preliminary; however, in the UP, the harvest is down about 11%, which may change once results are final. It is interesting to note that the age demographic of deer checked was in the 2 ½ to 3 ½ age range. Usually the larger portion of deer checked is in the 1 ½ year range. Based on accounts, there isn't a lack of 1 ½ year olds, but rather a good number of older deer were taken this year. Based on other check stations, body size was about average. He stated it was good hunting conditions this year for firearm season and it seemed to be a good season overall.

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4. Turkey Population/Hunting/Growth: **Mr. McGillviray** introduced himself, indicating he is a wildlife technician in Crystal Falls and is an avid turkey hunter. He provided the following presentation:
- *Statewide Statistics*: Michigan ranks 4th in the nation for turkey harvest. There are 80,000-105,000 turkey licenses sold each year. The spring harvest is greater than 30,000 birds. Hunting opportunities are available statewide.
 - *Turkey Management Goals*: Quality is based on hunter reports. At least 60% of hunters are satisfied with their hunting experience, hunter interference levels are below 30%, and hunter success rates are above 20%. Fall season goals: Maintain or reduce turkey numbers through hunting and providing a quality hunting experience. The UP Turkey Wildlife Coalition meets once a year.
 - *Partnership Accomplishments*: A progression of how the management unit was set up in the UP. Prior to 2007, the lower southern UP counties made up the management unit. It expanded slightly between 2007-2010. Starting in the fall of 2010, the management unit included the entire UP. These changes occurred through a partnership with the UP Turkey Wildlife Coalition.
 - *Spring Turkey Harvest*: Statistics over the last 10 years have shown an uptick in the number of turkeys harvested since 2012. Just under 1,800 were harvested in 2019.
 - *Spring Hunter Success*: Hunter success is also increasing, with just under 50% in 2019.
 - *Hunting Surveys*: 2015-2019 spring hunt statistics were shown. Turkey hunting is increasing in the state of Michigan and all points of success have been exceeded.
 - *2019 Turkey Harvest by County*: A chart was shown indicating harvest by UP county. Iron, Dickinson, Menominee, and Delta Counties have the highest populations. Turkeys moved to those counties in the 1980's.
 - *2010-2017 Fall Hunt Stats*: A chart with harvest stats were shown. Spring hunts are enjoyable as turkeys can be called in during breeding season. Fall hunts help with population and nuisance turkeys.
 - *Turkey Observations*: The UP Deer Camp Survey asked questions about turkey observations. Observation numbers by year were shown on a chart.
 - *Questions*: **Mr. McGillviray** answered various questions from the Council regarding moving problem turkeys (not done), the effect of spring/winter conditions, and increasing threshold of hunter satisfaction.

The Council thanked Mr. McGillviray for his presentation and update.

Reports from Committee Meetings Held

Chair Wirtanen explained the structure of the committee format and then opened the floor for Committee reports.

1. Fisheries: **Mr. Dropps** stated the group met on January 6 and discussed the news that the DNR will be developing a new inland walleye management plan. He discussed the history of discussions the group has had with regards to walleye stocking in UP inland lakes, stocking goals not being met, and the lack of dollars spent on stocking of walleyes in UP lakes in comparison with other fish types. He stated walleyes are the most sought-after fish in the UP. The committee felt they would like to have input into the new inland walleye management plan and developed a resolution with four recommendations for the new plan for Council review and approval. The resolution was emailed to the Council one week ago to review prior to the meeting. An opportunity for questions by the Council on the resolution was given; none were brought forth. **Mr. Holmes motioned to approve the resolution as submitted; Mr. Schulz supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Dropps thanked all the committee members for their input into the resolution. He stated another item the group discussed at their meeting was the 10-brook trout limit. He stated in December, the NRC approved a 10-

brook trout limit for 33 streams in the UP which was renewal of what was trialed previously. He noted a lot of science when into that decision which indicated it wouldn't harm the fisheries in those streams. It was felt it is strictly a social issue to allow a 10-brook trout limit. The NRC reversed their decision in January, reverting all streams to a 5-brook trout limit. He stated the committee supported the NRC in their previous decision and wanted to state their position.

2. Forestry: **Mr. St. John** reported there is no report from the committee. He encouraged the Council to send him any forestry related topics.
3. Trails/Recreation/Law: **Chair Wirtanen**, reporting for Mr. Lorensen who is lead for committee, stated the group met and invited Mr. Yesney and Mr. Rich to attend as well as a few guests from snowmobile clubs to have a discussion on the funding for snowmobile club operations. It was an involved meeting with no resolution to present; however, they will continue to pursue discussions. He stated the group felt there was a desperate need to re-evaluate the funding formula for snowmobile club operations. The western UP clubs use their equipment extensively and the need for maintenance of that equipment can turn into monetary concerns, compared with lower Michigan clubs with little snow and little need for equipment. He stated there was a general sense there is a need for equitable treatment for all clubs based on use. He indicated the committee will continue the conversation and pursue the funding issue with vigor. Another issue presented was the basic concern that the expectation of volunteers can be difficult especially with aging members and fewer people doing more and more work. A great share of the groomer operators are volunteers without being paid (some are). The group also discussed how in some areas, the convention and visitors' bureau used to put funding towards clubs (i.e. Keweenaw and Munising) in recognition that snowmobiling is critically important to a community's well-being. He noted the final topic discussed was noise levels, and the importance in maintaining easements from private landowners and enforcing fines for loud machines and perhaps making a recommendation to increase those fines. **Mr. Schulz** added he spoke about increasing permit fees to help provide funds to clubs, but it was just an idea and not supported. **Chair Wirtanen** stated outside of the snowmobile funding conversation, the group has put forward a resolution for the Council to consider regarding ORV and equestrian access at a few state parks: Van Riper (ORV & equestrian), Lake Gogebic (ORV), and Bond Falls Scenic Area parking lot (ORV). A resolution was approved by the Council back in 2017 for Lake Gogebic and including that one again since work is ongoing at that park. **Mr. Hall motioned to approve the resolution as presented; Dr. Schott supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried unanimously.** **Mr. Schmidt** asked how many state parks currently have ORV designations in the UP. **Mr. Schulz** replied Twin Lakes, Bewabic and Baraga do. A brief discussion followed.
4. Wildlife: **Mr. Lindquist** stated the committee has not met, but he keeps members informed with frequent emails about a variety of topics. CWD remains a hot topic in most articles.

Next Meeting

1. Next Meeting Date: **Chair Wirtanen** noted the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 25 in Marquette at the Marquette Township Community Center in Marquette beginning at 5:30pm Eastern/4:30pm Central.
2. Items for Next WUPCAC Meeting Agenda: **Chair Wirtanen** indicated suggestions for the next agenda can be sent to him, Ms. Haughey or Ms. Dahlstrom. Those submitted will be discussed at the next pre-meeting.

Public Comments

Chair Wirtanen opened the floor for public comment:

1. *Evan McDonald, Keweenaw Land Trust (pre-registered)*: Mr. McDonald provided an update on the recent activities of the KLT at the former game farm on Point Abbaye since the last update a year ago (a handout was provided). Since that time, the fence from a problematic historic deer yard has been completely removed, a GEMS trail has been installed and a second GEMS trail has been identified, and a conifer re-establishment has been identified and mapped. They are also working to secure private funding and grants to fix the poorly degraded access road. He noted they are also working on the Pilgrim River watershed project. Questions from the Council were entertained:
 - **Mr. Johnson** asked about funding sources; Mr. McDonald explained.
 - **Mr. Schulz** asked if property taxes are being paid. Mr. McDonald said the property is off the tax roll. **Mr. Schulz** asked what type of vehicles will be able to use the road. Mr. McDonald stated the goal is to have access for the public, but not taking motorized use out of that goal.
 - **Mr. Holmes** asked how the property is being protected by being purchased by KLT. Mr. McDonald stated it is now protected from development by private entities who could prohibit public use.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked if there is a permit needed to hunt on the property. Mr. McDonald stated there are multi-use properties with the desire to have a mix of quiet sports, ORV use, hunting, etc.
 - An audience member stated the tax base of Baraga County is poor with the amount of tribal, state, and commercial forest land in the county, and more land taken off the tax roll is not needed. **Ms. Haughey** added there is 40% commercial forest land and 13% state land in Baraga County.
 - An audience member asked about the orientation for hunters that was mentioned. Mr. McDonald explained the orientation is a simple explanation of the development of the property and an opportunity to seek additional volunteers. It is also a good way to get a sense of how much use it's getting, etc. There is no fee to users.

Chair Wirtanen thanked Mr. McDonald for the update.
2. *Nathan Miller, Copper Harbor Trails Club (pre-registered)*: Mr. Miller provided an update on the non-motorized activities of the Copper Harbor Trails Club, which is supported by donations, grants, etc. to construct and support non-motorized sporting activities. Mountain biking is a big portion of what they support, in addition to snowshoeing, skiing, and bird watching. In 2019, over 5 miles of trail were added, existing trail was re-developed, and they updated a jump trail to make it wider and safer. One of their biggest initiatives is to construct more easy trails for those just getting into the sport. They are partnering with the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, which was just recently privatized, to enhance the fast-growing adventure tourism in that area and several local businesses are also on board. They will be constructing 3 miles of easy trails on that property which will be a huge impact to that area for kids, cross-country skiers, snowshoeing and mountain biking. It's also an effort to keeping the community healthy. They have recently worked with a local trail company to purchase 600 acres in the Keweenaw to build trails there. With big events coming to the area, such as the Copper Harbor Trails Fest with 659 participants last year, people are coming from across the US. In 2020, they will continue work on the Keweenaw Point Trail which is a huge project that Mr. Yesney is helping with. **Ms. Peterson** thanked Mr. Miller for the update and for creating trails for kids in Copper Harbor, as the south trails in Marquette only has one for kids. **Mr. Suchovsky** stated he is pleased to hear about building on a plan for the tip in the Keweenaw. He feels it would be a good topic for the Council's Houghton meeting in the future as to the DNR's plan for that property over the years. **Mr. Yesney** elaborated on the recreation plan that was created in the early 2000's when it was first purchased. **Mr. Schmidt** thanked Mr. Miller and stated he has seen a change in Copper Harbor, perhaps a generational change, where once it was difficult to find anything to do there, and now it has become an economic success story. **Mr. St. John** asked about easements for the trails. Mr. Miller explained their process.

3. *Zach Fryer, Calumet (day-of registered)*: Mr. Fryer stated Mr. Yesney gave an excellent presentation on the trail conditions in Houghton County. He would like to emphasize the importance of getting these trails opened again. Closures have shut off access for a lot of people who live there and use ORVs from their homes and there is no viable alternative from public roads. Trail 17, the Bill Nichols trail, is the only one true trail and it's getting pretty beat up from increased use due to closures. He reiterated the importance in getting the other trails repaired and open. **Mr. Suchovsky** mentioned that MTU engineers have a snow paver and asked if there any way they can be used on some of the highly used trails; discussion ensued.
4. *Jordan Hoover, Baraga Chapter of UP Whitetails (day-of registered)*: Mr. Hoover asked if there is a reason the DNR is not making use of live testing for CWD in the UP, stating he read an email that stated the test is USDA approved and available. **Mr. DePue** stated there is a field test being developed but it is far from use. **Chair Wirtanen** stated he hasn't seen a relevant article that included a reference to a live test. **Ms. Haughey** stated research is occurring; however, at the CWD Symposium, this test was not mentioned as no other state or country is using it. Cost to do such a test would be enormous in order to tranquilize deer. **Chair Wirtanen** stated he will ask the DNR to research the issue and get back to Mr. Hoover personally.
5. *Harold Miron, Covington (day-of registered)*: Mr. Miron spoke about his concerns with wolves on his properties in Covington and his deer yard in Pelkie, stating he feels they have decimated the deer on the Covington property. He stated not one penny should be spent on wolves and recommended the Council pass a resolution of the same. **Mr. Hall** asked if he has pics of the wolves in action on trail cams or if he has contacted the DNR to take a look at tracks. Mr. Miron stated the wolves walk through his yard and doesn't feel the DNR can do anything about it.

Council Closing Comments

Chair Wirtanen deferred additional comments due to meeting time constraints.

Adjournment

Chair Wirtanen thanked everyone for their contributions. The meeting adjourned at 9:13pm Eastern.