

Western Upper Peninsula Citizens' Advisory Council (WUPCAC)
Meeting Minutes-APPROVED 3/25/24
Wednesday, January 24, 2024
5:00-7:30pm Central / 6:00-8:30pm Eastern
Virtual via Zoom

Council Members Present

Erik Bessonon	Suzanne Petschke	Kelly Bennett Simon
Barb Gajewski	Horst Schmidt	Tom Solka, Chair
Mike Holmes	Kirk Schott, Vice Chair	Dwaine Starr
Dave Johnson	Skip Schulz	Warren Suchovsky
George Lindquist	Carol Mason Sherrill	Lucas Vold
Chauncey Moran	Jeff Sierpien	

Council Members Absent/Excused

Floyd Dropps	Dave Hall	Faye Williams
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Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff & Guests

Dave Caroffino, Fisheries Division, Charlevoix
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy-Executive Division, Marquette
Darren Kramer, Fisheries Division, Escanaba
Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division, Sault Ste. Marie
Sgt. Mark Leadman, Law Enforcement Division, Marquette
John Pepin, Executive Division, Marquette
Jason Peterson, Facilities & Operations Division, Marquette
Jon Spieles, Chief-Marketing & Outreach Division, Marquette

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

At 6:00pm Eastern, **Chair Solka** called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed everyone in attendance for the virtual session of the WUPCAC.

Introductions of Council Members/DNR Staff/Public Attendees

Ms. Dahlstrom provided a roll call of virtual attendees at the request of **Chair Solka**. **Chair Solka** provided a brief overview of the Council's role as chartered by the DNR. He noted that all Council members volunteer to serve on this Council on their own time and expense.

Ms. Haughey welcomed everyone to the meeting including those who registered to attend: Emma Woelkers (Senator Peter's office), Ray Hutchinson (Washtenaw County), Craig Woerpel (WDBC News), Kitty Belek (Keweenaw ATV Club), Schott Minshall (WZMQ News), and Al Ettenhofer (UP Whitetails, Inc.).

Adoption of Agenda

Chair Solka asked the Council if there were any further additions or revisions to the agenda. He noted one topic he previously sent via email to the Council to add to the agenda was already an agenda item. No additions or revisions were brought forth. **Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the agenda as presented; Mr. Schulz 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 the September 6, 2023 WUPCAC meeting minutes or the October 11, 2023 Joint UPCAC meeting minutes, which were both distributed to the Council via email for review. **Vice Chair Schott motioned to accept both sets of minutes as submitted; Mr. Schulz 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 January 17, 2024. The following brief updates were added.

1. ***Sgt. Mark Leadman, Law Enforcement Division***

- The warm winter and lack of good snowmobiling conditions have created a quiet time for officers. To date, it has been a safe season. Ice conditions have been spotty; those venturing on the ice should be careful.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if it is illegal to have a modified exhaust system on a snowmobile as he remembers some meetings a few years ago indicated it was headed that way. **Sgt. Leadman** indicated he isn't aware of any new laws banning aftermarket exhaust systems. Officers can only test decibel readings which is in law. The test is somewhat difficult, but they are happy to conduct sound tests in problem areas.

2. ***Mr. Dave Lemmien, Wildlife Division***

- There were no updates since the written report was submitted.
- **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the UP Deer Camp survey will be sent out soon. **Mr. Lemmien** stated the mailings are being prepared and will be mailed shortly.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if the cougar video that was circulating on social media has been verified. **Mr. Lemmien** stated the sighting has been confirmed.

3. ***Mr. Darren Kramer, Fisheries Division***

- The no minimum size limit pike regulations implemented by the Natural Resources Commission in the fall of 2023 were reviewed. For the four lakes in the western UP affected by this regulation (in Iron, Dickinson and Menominee Counties), anglers are being asked to clip and collect fin rays to help the Fisheries Division determine age structure and make future decisions as to whether the new regulations should or should not be continued on these lakes. An example of the sign posted at access sites on the four lakes was shown. Also included at the sites are collection tools, scale envelopes and biologist contact information. How fin rays are evaluated to determine age was described.
- **Mr. Johnson** suggested making the sign and collection box a brighter color for greater visibility. **Mr. Kramer** thanked him for the suggestion.
- **Mr. Sierpien** asked when master angler results for 2023 will be posted. **Mr. Kramer** indicated staff were still working through submissions and verifying data; however, he will find out when the results will be available and report back.

4. ***Ms. Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy***

- Robin Clark of Sault Ste. Marie was recently appointed by Gov. Whitmer to the Natural Resources Commission beginning January 1. She fills a seat held by former Commissioner Carol Rose, whose term ended December 31. A review of her background was shown on screen.
- A moment of silence was held in memory of Ms. Tara Gluski, a Becoming an Outdoorswoman board member and instructor, who recently passed away in a tragic auto accident. **Ms. Haughey** spoke of her involvement in the BOW program and her active role in the outdoor community. Her loss will be felt across the entire UP.
- A fact sheet regarding the Copperwood Mine project in relation to the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park in Gogebic County was briefly reviewed. A copy was emailed to all council members. It was noted that EGLE is the regulating authority who approves permits and determines regulations for mining projects.
- **Mr. Lindquist** asked where the demand for cedar is coming from and how great is the demand. **Mr. Johnson** indicated there are several mills in Menominee County and **Mr. Sierpien** spoke about the number of cedar on his property. **Ms. Haughey** indicated she will obtain a list of cedar harvesters from Mr. Seablom who was not able to attend this evening.

Annual Election of Officers

Chair Solka noted the Bylaws require the Council to have a yearly officer election, which traditionally occurs at the beginning of the year. He turned the floor over to Ms. Haughey to conduct the election; **Ms. Haughey** opened the floor for nominations for 2024:

1. Chairman: **Mr. Schulz** nominated Mr. Solka; **Mr. Solka** consented to the nomination. After three opportunities for nominations to be made, no additional nominations were brought forth. **Mr. Lindquist made a motion to close the nominations; Mr. Bessonen supported the motion. No discussion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See listing on page 1. Motion carried.**
2. Vice Chairman: **Mr. Schulz** nominated Dr. Schott; **Dr. Schott** consented to the nomination. After three opportunities for nominations to be made, no additional nominations were brought forth. **Mr. Lindquist motioned to close the nominations; Mr. Bessonen supported the motion. No discussion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See listing on page 1. Motion carried.**
3. Vote: **Ms. Haughey** announced Mr. Solka was nominated for Chair and Dr. Schott has been nominated for Vice Chair and asked for a motion. **Mr. Schulz motioned to accept these two individuals for Chair and Vice Chair; Mr. Bessonen supported the motion. No discussion. An online poll vote was taken. Yes: 16. No: 0. Abstain: 1. Absent: See listing on page 1. Motion carried.** **Ms. Dahlstrom** noted that Mr. Hall who could not attend voiced his vote via email which supported the online poll results.
4. Final Results: **For 2024, Mr. Solka and Dr. Schott will serve another term as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively.** **Chair Solka** humbly thanked council members for their confidence in him, stating he pledges to continue running council meetings in a businesslike fashion and creating opportunities for everyone to be heard.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Chair Solka opened the floor for public comments on agenda items only. There were no requests to pre-register for comments and no comments were brought forth at the meeting.

Old Business

1. Trail Updates (Ms. Haughey for Mr. Yesney)
 - **Ms. Haughey** provided the update on behalf of Mr. Yesney who was unable to attend.
 - *Gogebic County-Trail 2*: The City of Wakefield opened old US-2 to be used as a segment of snowmobile Trail 2 again this season. Old US-2 was first used as a reroute in 2022 after access to a portion of the trail on private property (ski hill) was lost. The city stepped in to help then, but there were problems with vehicle traffic conflicts, so they revoked access in March of 2023. Considering the economic benefits the trail provides, the city voted to grant use again for this season using additional signage as they work with the DNR towards a more permanent solution. **Chair Solka** suggested a thank you letter from the Council to the City of Wakefield and those who worked to make this happen may be warranted; the Council agreed. **Ms. Dahlstrom** will prepare a letter on behalf of the Council.
 - *Houghton County-Lake Linden Trail*: The reopening of the long-awaited Lake Linden Trail was celebrated with a ceremony on November 30. The trail was heavily damaged by a Father's Day flood 5 years ago. This project was a huge undertaking for the DNR trails staff and with many partnerships, support and funding, it is now open again. It may be the largest single trail investment in the history of the state of Michigan at \$11 million. Over 100 culverts were replaced, and 171 sites were repaired. All those who helped to make this happen were acknowledged. **Mr. Schmidt** asked about the extensive trail work on the lake side of the highway as he thought it was only going to be repaired on the opposite side. **Ms. Haughey** indicated she will have to check with Mr. Yesney and report back.
 - *Follow-Up to Public Comment from September Meeting*: Mr. Miller from the Copper Harbor Trails Club provided public comment on the lack of movement on their trail proposals at the September 6th WUPCAC meeting. **Mr. Yesney** spoke with and emailed Mr. Miller several times since then. They also met virtually on January 16. A recap and the current status of the two issues Mr. Miller wanted addressed (trail proposals and Keweenaw Point trail phase 3) were reviewed.

2. DNR Response to Council Resolution re: Implement Michigan Moose Hunt (Ms. Haughey)

- The DNR’s response letter to the Joint UPCAC resolution to implement a Michigan moose hunt was reviewed. A copy was previously emailed to all council members. The response indicated although both Councils suggested a hunt to be held to provide research dollars, without first conducting a research project to investigate factors influencing the slowed growth rate and with climate change projections unlikely to favor moose in the long-term, the DNR feels it is not prudent to consider a hunt currently. A moose management overview attachment prepared by Mr. Chad Stewart and Dr. Tyler Petroelje was included.
- **Mr. Lindquist** relayed his frustration about the response, stating the response does not address the 5 tags suggested. The goal of the resolution was to provide funding for research, yet the DNR is indicating research needs to be done first. He stated the management overview contains information from 2011 and is not current. He further discussed the contents of the resolution which mirrors what is similarly provided for elk hunts in Michigan.
- **Mr. Johnson** stated he agrees with Mr. Lindquist. If funding is needed to do a study before a hunt could occur, then work collaboratively to find a way to raise the money needed to do it. To do nothing is not proper management.
- **Ms. Gajewski** stated most of her questions are technical ones and suggested another committee meeting to gather questions and perhaps have someone attend who could answer them. **Mr. Lemmien** agreed. **Ms. Gajewski** stated an example of one of her questions would be if the model from 2011, which was for 10-20 bulls, could be run for 5 to see what those results would be.
- **Mr. Sierpien** stated he’d like to also see the research on the climate change factors which was mentioned in the response letter. **Mr. Lemmien** provided a brief explanation of the moose’s range and how the UP is at the southern-most part of that range. He stated moose survive in deep snow and cold temperatures. As UP winters warm up and snow levels decrease, this greatly impacts the moose population in several ways.
- **Mr. Schmidt** asked if the DNR has looked into research dollars for a moose study from other entities. **Mr. Lemmien** stated the DNR is always looking for research funding and new partnerships, similar to those that already exist between several universities across the nation and the US Fish & Wildlife Service. He stated he is currently exploring different avenues to get a moose research project funded and off the ground.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if ticks pose a major issue for moose survival in the UP with warmer temperatures. It was noted that very cold temps (sustained below 10 degrees Fahrenheit) are needed to kill ticks over the winter.
- **Mr. Starr** suggested that with all the comments made this evening, it may be beneficial for DNR experts to attend the next meeting to answer questions. **Chair Solka** suggested compiling a list of questions and providing them to DNR staff in advance along with an invitation to attend the next meeting in March so that they can be prepared. **Ms. Haughey** stated she would be happy to take questions back to Ms. Thompson and Mr. Stewart and pass on an invitation.
- **Chair Solka** commented on an elk presentation by Mr. Stewart at the January NRC meeting and there seemed to him to be some similarities between moose and elk. **Mr. Lemmien** added that moose reproduce at a significantly lower rate than deer or elk. **Chair Solka** stated the wildlife committee presented a heartfelt position and it is worthy of further inquiry.

New Business

1. 2023 Great Lakes Fishing Decree (Mr. Caroffino)

- **Mr. Caroffino**, DNR Tribal Coordination Unit Manager, provided a slide presentation on the new Great Lakes Fishing Decree that applies to the 1836 Treaty in the Upper Peninsula, which is roughly from Marquette eastward.
- *How We Got Here (3 Phases):*
 - *US v Michigan-The Parameters of Negotiation (1971-1985):* Stems from a federal court case that started in the 1970s when Tribes challenged the state’s ability to regulate their fisheries, particularly the use of gill nets as commercial fishing gear. The Tribal right to fish that was reserved in the treaty was reaffirmed by the federal courts. The state has been in a co-management agreement/arrangement since that time. An

initial court order occurred in 1985. Then in 2000, the consent decree was established, where everyone who was involved in the negotiations were seeing eye to eye on how the Great Lakes should be co-managed and it was termed the 2000 consent decree. That was in place until 2020.

- *Negotiation Process (2014-2022)*: The DNR began to negotiate a new agreement in 2014. The DNR engaged with different advisory groups and stakeholders to determine how they felt the agreement was going, which then helped inform their process internally to prepare for negotiations. The DNR began negotiating with the tribes in 2019. After delays and extensions due to the pandemic and after a majority of the parties finally agreed to a new document, a new agreement was submitted to the court in December of 2022.
- *Court Process (2022-2024)*: Since the submission in December of 2022, the court has undergone a lengthy process of making sure that this will be the agreement everyone can live with for 24 years. Currently, it is the end of the district court process. The reason for the lengthy process is the Sault Tribe did not agree with the document that everyone else agreed to and put before the court. The court then outline a process where the Sault Tribe could enter objections and there were some citizen groups that also did not agree with everything in the document. A hearing was held and eventually the district court entered that document as the new co-management agreement. Currently, the Sault Tribe and a citizen group that was part of the process are appealing the ruling in the US 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, which is ongoing. The agreement that was provided to the court in 2022 and that the district court approved in 2023 is what the DNR is abiding by now.
- *Lake Superior-Comparison to 2000 Consent Decree*: A comparison of a few changes from the 2000 Consent Decree to the 2023 Decree was shown for areas in the Lake Superior region from Marquette to Munising, west of Grand Island, including Munising Bay, Big Reef, Stannard Rock, and AuTrain Bay. Major changes relate to the type of fishing gear the Tribes will be using in this stretch of Lake Superior
- *Major Benefits*: Certainty (a negotiated outcome is always better than court), roughly equal sharing of the resource, important closures, more frequently reporting and transparency (data quality) by electronic means, enforcement, next steps. Michigan still has the authority to enforce tribal regulations under this agreement. The DNR's law enforcement division has a Great Lakes enforcement unit which helps to enforce the rules and regulations outlined in the decree. The decree is currently in effect, the appeals process is ongoing, and all parties are taking the steps necessary to implement the decree fully in 2024.
- *For more information or questions*: Contact Dave Caroffino at caroffinod@michigan.gov or 231-350-8654.
- Questions:
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked how close gill nets can be placed near the mouth of the Chocolay and Rock Rivers off of Lake Superior. **Mr. Caroffino** stated the distance from those rivers is three-tenths of a mile, which is the same as it was in the prior agreement.
 - **Mr. Sierpien** asked how the new decree affects the walleye fishery on Little Bay de Noc and stated he will send Mr. Caroffino an email instead with more specific information. **Mr. Caroffino** briefly indicated there are slightly more restrictions as it pertains to the tribal subsistence fishery in that body of water to make sure it stays a subsistence fishery. He stated he can provide additional information once he receives the email.
 - **Mr. Schmidt** asked if Big Reef is similar to Buffalo Reef in the Copper Country. **Mr. Caroffino** stated Big Reef is northeast of Munising near Grand Island. It is an underwater sea mount similar to and larger than Stannard Rock and has a unique lake trout population. **Mr. Schmidt** asked if enforcement involves administrative enforcement, by conservation officers or both. **Mr. Caroffino** stated Michigan conservation officers have the ability to enforce tribal regulations and can cite the fisher for violations which then goes to Tribal court. There are also items in the decree conservation officers cannot write a ticket for, and those items may have to be evaluated by the Tribes themselves or evaluated by the DNR's tribal coordination unit. **Mr. Schmidt** also asked if Tribal officers are able to cite violators of Michigan DNR regulations. **Mr. Caroffino** stated they cannot cite state fishers for violating state regulations going to a state court and further explained.

- **Mr. Moran** asked about the 1836 agreement regarding subsistence fishing. **Mr. Caroffino** stated Tribal members can subsistence fish with their Tribal ID card. If they want to subsistence fish and harvest more than what the state allows, a subsistence fishing license is required and also a separate permit if using a gill net or net of some type. The state receives notices of the permits and there is a reporting requirement for subsistence fishing with nets. Discussion ensued about tagging lake trout under the 1842 treaty area compared to the 1836 treaty area.
- **Chair Solka** thanked Mr. Caroffino for an excellent job summing up a very complex, legal and resource issue.

2. UP Deer Season Feedback (Mr. Pepin, Ms. Haughey & Mr. Lemmien)

- **Mr. Pepin** spoke about the results of the firearm deer season and the tremendous amount of feedback received across the UP, at DNR field offices, from staff, and from conservation officers regarding the recent UP deer season. Many staff, including wildlife biologists and officers hunt as well, and are in the field along with all other hunters. What the public is seeing was also seen by staff. He ensured everyone that the DNR is concerned and there is a lot of understanding and empathy for the issues hunters are facing. It is well known there are different issues in the lower peninsula compared to the UP. A list of the top concerns or questions that were heard throughout the season were displayed on screen and covered a variety of issues from weather, wolves, habitat, distrust, changes in regulations needed, etc.
- **Mr. Pepin** then noted a feature article that was issued by the DNR in late December which included a compilation of facts from Michigan's latest deer harvest. Information for this article was pulled from a wide range of topics including wolves and other concerns from the public and DNR that was previously mentioned. The article speaks to many factors such as harvest figures, hunter demographics and reaction to the overall season. It also mentions a new initiative starting up this year that will allow hunters and the DNR to work on several things both together and separately to help improve the UP deer herd and hunter success. Called the Deer Management Initiative (DMI), it will include the development of UP and lower peninsula-specific workgroups (one for the UP and one for the LP) representing a diverse set of opinions and values. This includes traditional groups the DNR has historically worked with, unaffiliated hunters, and non-hunters who can provide a unique perspective such as agriculture. The goal of the workgroups will be to position the DNR's deer management to meet future challenges working collaboratively and using the best available science. The workgroups will help develop a broad survey about deer trends to be distributed to hunters and non-hunters. The workgroup participants will attend a multi-day, facilitated meeting to look at data, identify problems and develop recommendations for DNR and NRC action. A press release with information about the DMI and how folks can apply was issued on January 17th. The deadline to apply is January 31st. As of a few days ago, 100 applications have been received. A general timeline of meetings and tasks was provided.
- **Ms. Haughey** stated she has had many conversations with CAC members and respective organizations about this latest season. The message she'd like to get across is she and the DNR are hearing the concerns loud and clear. Harvest reporting showed a significant reduction. All types of predators, habitat, weather, etc. play an important role in deer management, especially in the UP. She also touched on authorities and roles of the DNR versus the NRC and the federal government which affect how decisions are made.
- **Mr. Lemmien** stated he has communicated with Mr. Lindquist and the council's wildlife committee, but also wanted to reiterate it to the Council as a whole that he has asked his UP wildlife staff to think outside of the box as it relates to summer and winter habitat, different management techniques, possible future research projects, deer wintering complexes, management plans, etc. For example, one thought is to bring back the deer check stations; biologists and field staff feel it's important to have a one-on-one connection with hunters as they bring their deer in and can get valuable data from them that otherwise isn't collected. This staff effort will sort of mirror the DMI process, but on an internal (and local) level. He stated the UP biologists and wildlife staff are trying to move the ball forward and are not taking a backseat on this topic. They know the concerns and they have concerns themselves. They want to make a difference.

- Questions:
 - **Chair Solka** asked if a position on the DMI will be available specifically to a CAC member. **Ms. Haughey** stated she spoke with Mr. Stewart who is the lead for the DMI. She believes the CAC's will be well-represented on the DMI by folks who may be representing another group but also happen to be a CAC members. **Chair Solka** encouraged those interested to apply for the DMI.
 - **Mr. Schmidt** stated when he read the UP deer harvest report, he was impressed by the fact that staff put the wolf issue into perspective and that there are multiple problems. Staff seem to be aware there are interesting conundrums of nature that are put before them that aren't easily answered. When the DMI begins their process, he would like to have people think of wolves as part of the solution to the problem of overabundance of deer, especially in the lower peninsula, and also coyotes as a way of dealing with the declining hunter population. He also noted that when the Council voted on a wolf hunt resolution in the past, not all Council members voted in support. He wanted to make sure it is understood that not all council members are hunters.
 - **Mr. Sierpien** stated he was shocked to see the numbers in the harvest report and is fully aware the winters in the southern UP where he lives is far from hard. When talking about thinking outside the box, people don't seem to look at the effect of black bears on fawns in the spring and perhaps increasing the number of bear tags as a way to reduce one predator issue for deer. **Ms. Haughey** stated everything is on the table and an immense amount of data will be looked at. **Mr. Lemmien** added staff are looking at everything that is factored into the equation. He stated science and data show that black bears do kill more fawns than wolves do. He stated they will be evaluating a lot of different dynamics, different aspects of the issue and if other species programs have the ability to be adjusted which could play a role in alleviating some pressure on deer.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** stated he is excited about the DMI process and is hopeful that citizens and the Wildlife Division can work together. He felt last year when the DNR made recommendations to the NRC that they were not representative of what the wildlife staff in the UP would've recommended. He appreciates these efforts and also of Mr. Lemmien's efforts with his staff which can hopefully have an impact for the UP region. He is encouraged that citizens and UP sportsmen will have a voice in what comes forward.
 - **Mr. Moran** asked if the DMI meetings will be available for the public to attend or only for members. **Mr. Pepin** stated he will find out from Mr. Stewart and report back. **Mr. Moran** also asked if the DMI group will be doing any research in the affective areas. **Mr. Pepin** stated the group will not be doing any research themselves, rather they will be reviewing data from several different perspectives, such as the predatory prey study for example, to identify issues and make recommendations. **Mr. Moran** asked if the most recent data, like the UP camp survey, will be available. **Mr. Pepin** stated the most current data will be available to the group such as the wolf survey, snow depth levels, and the UP camp survey, etc. The DNR is not conducting any additional research specifically for this group between now and the time they will make their recommendations.
 - **Mr. Schulz** commended the efforts of the DMI process to include folks like himself who do not hunt but who cares greatly about the deer herd in the UP.

3. UP Habitat Workgroup Update (Ms. Haughey)

- The UP Habitat Workgroup met on January 17, 2024. The agenda was shown on screen and covered the workgroup charge, the Deer Management Initiative, deer winter range acquisition status and discussion, habitat grant funding, a brief post deer season update and next steps.
- Dave Johnson and George Lindquist, who are both on the WUPCAC, are members of the UP Habitat Workgroup.
- Habitat is a key component when it comes to deer management. The workgroup mapped critical deer winter habitat areas. Only 20% is in state ownership and 80% is on private/commercial lands or federal property.
- The focus of workgroup is having all parties (private/commercial/federal) at the table to talk about how these areas can be protected/enhanced. The workgroup has been meeting for several years.

- The DNR has made large investments in funding for on-the-ground habitat work in the UP. From 2000-2011, the DNR purchased over 13,000 acres, \$14 million invested specifically in critical deer winter habitat areas. From 2013-2023, the DNR was either gifted or purchased approximately 5,000 more acres of deer wintering complexes. Over 132 habitat projects were completed.

Committee Activity

1. Fisheries (Mr. Dropps)

- No report.

2. Trails/Rec/Law Committee (Ms. Gajewski)

- **Ms. Gajewski** reported the committee met on January 16 via zoom and discussion dovetailed with the Fisheries Committee regarding wake boats. Additional information was provided on the topic and the group formulated questions for the upcoming presentation about the topic at the March council meeting.
- **Mr. Schulz** stated **Ms. Gajewski** is doing a great job with this committee. He mentioned that one of the topics discussed previously in committee was packing snow on snowmobile trails with a roller first instead of dragging it. This holds the snow longer on trails allowing people to use the trails longer in the season, which helps tourism dollars. However, there is no funding for this type of grooming, so it's a topic he'd like to see brought up again in committee in the future.

3. Wildlife (Mr. Lindquist)

- **Mr. Lindquist** reported the committee met on December 12 to review two resolutions submitted by **Mr. Starr**. There have also been several email communications between members as well as phone calls. This is a very active group, and he appreciates that.
- **Resolution #1: Allow December Crossbow Use in a Portion of the UP:** **Mr. Lindquist** indicated the boundary initially submitted by **Mr. Starr** was changed after committee discussion to what is stated in the copy that Council members received and explained why. He stated there is a lot of concern about this resolution from the UP Whitetails of Marquette County as people may want to expand this into other areas of the UP in the future when the intent is strictly to target those areas where the deer density is a lot higher. Questions were answered.
 - **Ms. Haughey** added a change in these regulations would be an NRC decision, not a DNR decision.
 - **Mr. Johnson** stated he would not be in favor of this as he is two miles north of the suggested boundary and there is no deer there; he suggested a different boundary.
 - **Mr. Starr** countered that the boundary line was discussed in length during the committee meeting and was agreed upon as stated in the current resolution. Initially, he stated he chose the pheasant hunting line since it shows up on the regulations. He said after committee discussion, the current boundary line suggestion was an agreed upon compromise.
 - **Ms. Gajewski** stated she believes it is a good idea, considering CWD issues that are still present in nearby Wisconsin.
 - **Mr. Sierpien** stated he supports the pheasant hunting line as it is a well-known line and includes 98% of the area referenced.
 - After no further discussion, **Chair Solka called for a motion. Mr. Schulz motioned *the Council recommends the DNR to allow crossbow hunting in this portion of the UP (includes the area south of US 2 between Escanaba and Iron Mountain) in December following the regular archery season dates, December 1 through January 1.*** **Mr. Bessonen supported the motion. Chair Solka called for discussion. Being no further discussion, Chair Solka called for an online poll vote. Results were displayed on screen. With 8 voting in support and 4 opposed, the motion passed by majority.**

- **Resolution #2: Include Crop Damage & Deer Management Assistant Permit (DMAP) Take in Harvest Reports:** **Mr. Bessonon** motioned *the Council recommends the DNR, to show the public a more detailed picture of whitetail deer harvests, add a column to the yearly harvest reports with crop damage and DMAP numbers listed, and use these numbers in the total yearly harvests.* **Mr. Johnson** supported the motion.
 - **Chair Solka** called for a discussion. **Mr. Lemmien** stated he is pleased to report that this suggestion has just been implemented through the new harvest reporting system. **Mr. Lindquist** thanked **Mr. Starr** for putting this resolution together. He thanked **Mr. Lemmien** for making this happen. **Mr. Starr** thanked Mr. Colter Lubben from the DNR Escanaba office for helping him with DMAP and crop damage numbers and provided a brief count of 2023 totals.
 - **Chair Solka** suggested amending the motion to indicate the Council supports the action the DNR took to include crop damage and DMAP numbers in the harvest reporting system. **Mr. Starr motioned to amend the resolution to state the Council is in support of the DNR's actions to include those numbers rather than recommends.** **Mr. Lindquist** supported the motion to amend the resolution presented. **Chair Solka** called for an online poll vote on the amended resolution. Results were displayed on screen. With 12 voting in support and no opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Other Committee Activity: None.

Next Meeting

1. Next Meeting: **Chair Solka** noted the next Council meeting will be held in person on Monday, March 25 at the Baraga Lakeside Inn conference room in Baraga beginning at 6:00pm.
2. Items for Next Meeting Agenda: **Chair Solka** stated planned topics for the next meeting agenda include a wake boat report and local watercraft control process as well as possible additional deer management resolutions to consider from the Wildlife Committee. Any additional items can be emailed to him before early March when a draft agenda is discussed. **Mr. Schulz** suggested an update on cougar sighting numbers. **Mr. Lindquist** suggested including a DMI update on the next few agendas.

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

Chair Solka opened the floor for closing comments from the Council:

1. **Mr. Schmidt** thanked **Chair Solka** for a well-run meeting.
2. **Mr. Schulz** thanked the DNR for collaborating with the Keweenaw ATV Club on completing the Lake Linden Trail. This was an \$11 million project for 8 miles of trail. This was an unsurmountable project to complete, and it's now open. He thanked everyone who was involved with this project.

Adjournment

Chair Solka thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:44pm ET.