

Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 18, 2019

5:00-7:30pm Central / 6:00-8:30pm Eastern

Island Convention Center, Harris, MI

Chairman: Phil Wirtanen Vice-Chairman: Warren Suchovsky

Council Members Present

Jim Baker	Dave Hall	Jake Putala
Floyd Dropps	Mike Holmes	Kirk Schott
Joan Duncan	Dave Johnson	Skip Schulz
Barb Gadjewski	Jim Lorensen	Travis Smith
Tom Solka	Warren Suchovsky	
Trevor St. John	Phil Wirtanen	

Council Members Absent/Excused

George Lindquist	Mary Peterson
Chauncey Moran	Horst Schmidt

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff & Guests

Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator, Executive Division, Marquette
George Madison, Fisheries Division, Baraga
Karen Sexton, Wildlife Division, Escanaba
Sgt. Mark Leadman, Law Enforcement Division, Marquette
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga

Call to Order

Chair Wirtanen called the meeting to order at 6:03pm Eastern and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Introduction of Council members were 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. Suchovsky 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 May 2019 meeting minutes. None were brought forth. **Mr. Lorensen motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Hall 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 July 11, 2019. The following verbal updates were provided.

- **Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator:** Ms. Haughey welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the presence of Mr. Tom McNamee from Sen. McBroom's office (and later in the meeting, Rep. Beau LaFave). She provided the following updates:
 - The DNR is in the process over the next two years to update the license fee system with improved technology and equipment. Over 4 million licenses are sold each year so this is not an easy undertaking and will involve a lot of time, employees, and funding. Updates will be provided periodically.
 - May 12th was the kick-off for the 100th centennial celebration of Michigan State Parks at Interlochen State Park, which is known as the first state park. On May 12, 1919 the state legislature formed the Michigan State Park Commission. More information is available on the website at www.michigan.gov/StateParks100 including events and activities being held. A listing of eastern and western UP centennial events was included in the meeting packets.
 - The UP State Fair is in a month and the DNR Pocket Park is seeking volunteers. Ms. Dahlstrom and Ms. Jo Ann Alexander have done a wonderful job making it an enjoyable experience. Those able to volunteer can contact them. Free entrance to the fair will be granted in exchange for volunteer time.
 - The NRC regulations for baiting and feeding will be addressed later on in the agenda. Copies of the temporary wildlife positions available for additional CWD testing needs during the season are available. The deadline is coming up very quickly. She indicated it is a great opportunity for anyone interested.
 - **Ms. Haughey** opened the floor for questions. **Mr. Schulz**, addressing Chair Wirtanen, stated Ms. Haughey helped to start the Councils 10 years ago in the UP. There are currently no CAC's in the lower peninsula. He said CAC meetings provide an opportunity for those in the UP to ask questions and get answers. He thanked her for what she has done for the Councils. **Chair Wirtanen** stated the Council is very appreciative of her.
- **George Madison, Fisheries Division:** Mr. Madison indicated the division recently summarized the walleye pond harvest. Numbers are still coming in; however, they are expecting to be at a half a million walleye fingerlings for the year. Two additional ponds are being considered for next year. He also mentioned access to three trout lakes have been lost due to large corporate landowners selling off CFA property to private owners.
- **Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division:** Mr. Rich provided the following updates:
 - 4th of July camping numbers were up 7.07% in the UP and up statewide 3% overall. Campsites were at 95% occupancy across the state. Lake Gogebic State Park had over capacity, which has not happened before. Recreation passport sales have gone up 1.4% as well. This increased use is helping the division fund the maintenance backlog in state parks, where funding is greatly needed. He stated the support from folks in Michigan and neighboring states is appreciated.
 - The division is still looking for state workers. Fort Wilkins State Park is down 4 workers, Baraga State Park is down 2, Van Riper State Park is down 3, etc.
 - **Chair Wirtanen** asked about the trial treatment for Emerald Ash Borer at Lake Gogebic State Park. **Mr. Rich** stated this is a unique arrangement and is treating live ash trees for free by Arborjet in exchange for filming a mini documentary. Some black ash trees were also treated in the Porkies.
 - **Mr. Holmes** stated he was camping at Tahquamenon Falls State Park and he had heard of some money being used for a bridge to the island and felt it should go to the lower falls instead. **Mr. Rich** stated he will forward his comment to Mr. Eric Cowing who manages the east UP parks.
 - **Mr. Putala** asked if there was any update on the Houghton Douglass Falls site. **Mr. Rich** stated they met with Calumet Township and the townships was not interested in being a key partner in that development. The call for projects is due the end of the month and they will put it in their top recommendations to begin development. Once the plan is accepted, they will seek funding. Public input will also be sought in the process.

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- **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if those who obtain a Michigan ID card are offered the opportunity to purchase a recreation passport. **Mr. Rich** stated they have not looked at that option but will pass it along. He noted the opt-out option has been reintroduced in the legislature.
 - **Karen Sexton, Wildlife Division:** **Ms. Sexton**, who was attending on behalf of Mr. Terry Minzey, indicated she did not have any additional remarks to what was listed in the report. **Mr. Schulz** asked if there was an update on the Isle Royale wolf movements; **Ms. Sexton** stated she did not have any further information.
 - **Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division:** **Mr. Seablom** provided a brief update on the crews dispatched to Canada for fires and the state of Washington for training. **Mr. St. John** asked if the division was responding in any way to the low demand for winter timber sales by putting up more summer wood. **Mr. Seablom** explained how lands were acquired may incur some restrictions as it pertains to deer habitat areas. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked with the wet weather last fall and this year to date, if access to state timber sales that have already been sold is being impacted. **Mr. Seablom** stated yes and further explained.
 - **Sgt. Mark Leadman, Law Enforcement Division:** **Sgt. Leadman** noted three new officers are now in the field in District 1 (west UP) in Iron, Dickinson, and Ontonagon Counties. There are also five new officers in District 2 (east UP) for a total of 8 new officers in the UP. He encouraged Council members to introduce themselves when they see them. He also spoke about the higher number of drownings they have responded to and assisted with this year. It was asked if life jackets were worn. **Sgt. Leadman** stated some were swimmers who were not required to wear them, and others are found not be wearing them; specific details were not available.

Old Business

1. **Proposed Marquette County Shooting Range Update:** **Ms. Haughey** thanked everyone who has been involved in the shooting range process. She provided a brief overview of the process to secure a location and stated they have been working with Cliffs and Richmond Township on an area about a quarter mile past the original location in Sands Township-that location was approved by the township but with many stipulations. Both Cliffs and Richmond Township have approved allowing the DNR to move forward with the development of a lease agreement. The DNR will attend the August 6th Richmond Township Board meeting to reconfirm their approval. **Mr. Solka** asked if the proposed range location would be entirely in Richmond Township; **Mr. Haughey** replied yes noting the DNR has a permanent easement next to it that's located in Sands Township and would clean the site, berm it and sign it. **Mr. Hall** asked if the DNR is planning to have another public meeting before the site is built. **Ms. Haughey** replied yes, as part of the criteria will be to meet with the public, answer questions, review the specifications, and establish a timeframe. **Mr. Hall** spoke about the lack of supervision at a range that made the person feel uncomfortable. **Ms. Haughey** stated that was considered when choosing a location noting that multiple divisions will be going through the selected area at different times, providing a greater presence. **Mr. Suchovsky** mentioned a range that was closed in Wisconsin due to lack of supervision, but he didn't know if it was a Wisconsin DNR range or a public range.
2. **UP ORV Alpha Signage Update:** **Chair Wirtanen** stated the Council has been hearing about this topic for years from Council member Mr. Schulz. **Ms. Haughey** agreed this has been a conversation for a decade and indicated she is thrilled to announce that the ORV Advisory Board (a subgroup of the Michigan Trails Advisory Council) with the help of DNR staff, has passed alpha signage rules. She stated Mr. Schulz has been diligently working on this issue for years. She noted final approval is pending with a re-vote being held on July 22. Presenting an informal acknowledgement to Mr. Schulz on behalf of past and current Council members, she commended him for all the hard work and dedication put towards this accomplishment. **Chair Wirtanen** thanked Mr. Schulz as well.

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3. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update: **Ms. Haughey** stated this topic has been a standing agenda item for the last 3-4 years and introduced Ms. Karen Sexton, wildlife biologist from Escanaba, who is working extensively with CWD in the UP. **Ms. Sexton** stated she will provide a brief update on CWD surveillance in the UP. To date in 2019, 6 deer have been tested in the core surveillance area and 5 deer have been tested in the expanded surveillance area. 9 were also tested in Gogebic County and 4 deer in Iron County. All results have come back negative. She opened the floor for questions from Council members. **Mr. Schulz** asked if there was a sunset clause if no additional CWD cases were found in the UP. **Ms. Sexton** replied there isn't currently a sunset, but it will be revisited next year as regulations are reviewed every three years, with the next cycle being in 2020.

New Business

- Marketing Video for Forestry Division: **Ms. Haughey** stated Mr. Suchovsky and Mr. St. John mentioned at the last meeting the marketing work being done for forestry, particularly towards the urban population in southern Michigan, where the public is less aware of forestry in general. The DNR has partnered with GUD Marketing to help with an outreach campaign for that population. She displayed the four videos created by the campaign to be used in southern Michigan.
- Forest Development Fund Review: **Mr. Seablom**, in response to a request at the last meeting, provided an overview of the Forest Development Fund. He stated the fund is legislatively set so that the revenue from the cutting of forest products on state land goes back into this fund to provide future management of the state's forest. It helps to fund wildfire protection to all lands (not just state land) as well as taking care of bridges, culverts and road maintenance projects.

Mr. Schulz asked if there were school forests that could benefit from this fund. **Mr. Seablom** stated there are a few—**Mr. Suchovsky** mentioned Gwinn, Baraga, Crystal Falls, North Dickinson, Kingsford and Stephenson. He stated some school forests are not used for teaching aspects and are sometimes liquidated to get money for the school's general fund, although they are an important resource to get kids outside of the classroom. He has helped locate school forests for schools that didn't know they had one. **Mr. Schulz** asked why there isn't more interest. **Mr. St. John** stated the GLTPA has an education fund that helps to reach out to local schools with forests to help them manage it and help them use it for teaching. Some school boards don't realize they have a 40 of timber. Baraga had an event 3-4 years ago, usually every year, where shop classes used some wood from the lands for projects. He asked Mr. Seablom if improvements to a certain road was funded out of the fund.

Mr. Seablom replied yes, that an appropriation comes from the legislature and they can ask for money out of this fund. From 2017-2020, a significant investment in capital outlay was made and includes some of the major roads that need improvements. He added prices of bridges is extremely high right now and there is a long list of bridges that need replacing due to age. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if there is any chance of the DNR being able to do the work. **Mr. Seablom** stated liability and engineering is an issue and the days of the DNR building them is gone.

- UP Deer Regulations Update: **Ms. Haughey** provided an update on the recent UP CWD regulations passed by the NRC at their July meeting. She stated over the past week, staff have worked tirelessly to make sure all questions are answered, and everything was explained. Today is a week after the NRC set the regulations; the decisions have been made and are not up for debate, but rather this is intended to make sure the information is shared with the Council.
 - CWD: A photo of the CWD brochure was shown. She indicated the brochure is already out of date. It lists the number of states with CWD and nationally.

- CWD response plan was issued in August of 2002 (17 years ago) as a result of conversations with the Department of Agriculture and the DNR. This is not new information. The 2002 plan stated if CWD was found within 50 miles of the Michigan border, baiting and feeding would be shut down for the entire state. The plan was then updated in 2012 to indicate an alternate course of action—if a positive case was found in the UP, baiting and feeding would be banned in any county touching a 10-mile radius around the positive case. This was 7 years ago.
- UP Public Discussion: The Council and others have been a part of the meetings held since 2014 listening to all the work being done in regards to CWD. These meetings were advertised publicly, had CWD advertised as the main topic or topic on an agenda, and public comment was made available. 59 meetings were held that met these requirements since 2014.
- October 18, 2018: This is the day the 2012 CWD response plan was implemented, after a positive case in Dickinson County was identified by an Iowa lab. The work of UP community groups such as the CAC's, the UP CWD Workgroup, UPSA and UP Whitetails came to fruition.
- All core landowners in the core surveillance area were contacted either by staff in person or via a letter. Multiple officials were contacted, including legislative, township and county officials. An evening meeting was held with community leaders in Dickinson County.
- State veterinarian Dr. Kelly Straka presented at a Saturday UPSA meeting.
- October through May meetings were listed, showing engagement after the CWD case was confirmed.
- NRC UP Regulation Proposal Engagement: A listing of all the meetings held when the regulations were proposed was shown. The DNR does not make this decision but rather the Governor-appointed Natural Resources Commission does. **Ms. Haughey** stated she personally handed out over 200 sheets of information with the proposed regulations at an SCI banquet. Several hundred people gave comments at these meetings and 150 comments were submitted online to the NRC.
- Additional Outreach: A listing of meetings held were shown.
- NRC Process: The orders/regulations were proposed in April, they were up for discussion in May and June, and a decision was made at their July meeting.
- Antlerless Quota Licenses for the UP: Licenses were increased in areas that had antlerless available. A map was shown to indicate the areas. Over 2,000 unused antlerless tags for private land in the core area were still available after the CWD case was confirmed. A CFA landowner came to meetings with tags available to use.
- Effective immediately, deer baiting and feeding is banned in the red core surveillance area, which follows major roadways. The exception to this ban is for hunters with disabilities during the Liberty and Independence hunts. Crossbows will be allowed in late archery season in the core area only. It was asked if the combo license remains a combo license in the core area. **Ms. Haughey** replied no.
- The DMU previously open to antlerless during archery season that was previously closed is now open in the core area only.
- CWD Surveillance Plan for free-ranging whitetail deer by sampling unit: 54 Gogebic County, 230 Iron County, 609 for the expanded surveillance area and 2,654 in the core surveillance area. Also 18 in bordering Dickinson County not in the core area. This is based on detection rate. It's important to point out these are goals; if they are not achieved, relevant information can still be detected.
- The definition of BAIT and FEED were shown and is available online. **Ms. Haughey** stated she has been asked several times what the fee of the fine is. This depends on the county and statutes and can range from \$50 to \$500. The last bill signed into law after Rep. Kivela passed away was enhancing the penalty of fines to prevent the spread of CWD.
- At the July NRC meeting last week, there were 14 commission amendments, 2 sub-amendments, and 1 technical amendment, which caused an extreme amount of confusion. There were several media articles

that went live that night which were inaccurate. They are now working to clarify all the misinformation. If there are questions, please call a DNR office to get a straight answer.

- Where baiting is allowed in the rest of the UP, the allowance is a 10x10 ft area and limited not to exceed two gallons.

Ms. Haughey opened the floor for Council questions.

- **Mr. St. John** asked what percentage of hunters use bait. **Ms. Haughey** stated 82-83% use bait according to a 2017 survey. He asked another question about antlerless tags; she replied increase opportunity.
- **Ms. Gajewski** asked about the goal detection of .1% and .5%. **Ms. Sexton** replied it means there is a 95% confidence level that the disease existed on .5% of the landscape. If more detailed information is needed, she would have to refer to an epidemiologist.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** asked about the difference in sampling goals. **Ms. Sexton** explained.
- **Chair Wirtanen** asked how Michigan's actions differ from other states, conservative or proactive. **Ms. Haughey** stated two years ago a national symposium was held that included all CWD states and nations. There were several researchers there and lots of technical information. 25 other states have CWD and dealt with this, which helps Michigan. Some made recommendations on what not to do. Michigan's response plan is touted as one of the top plans. Tours were provided of the diagnostic lab and it was deemed top notch. Michigan is on the conservative side as a result of learning from other states.
- **Mr. St. John** asked how the testing numbers compare to last year. **Ms. Sexton** stated the goal is to test more than last year. Last year, the goal in the core area was 600 and 800 were tested. The goals are much larger this year.
- It was asked how Michigan sees a baiting ban as helping with CWD cases, since 14 other states have implemented reform in response to CWD but only one saw a decrease and other saw a rise in their CWD cases. **Ms. Sexton** stated the DNR looked at other states and each state's situation with CWD might look a little different. Some have done a good job with surveillance and others weren't surveying and meanwhile the disease was expanding. It's difficult to compare with other states.
- **Ms. Haughey** stated some people still believe CWD will freeze with our winters. There is no way to eradicate it unless its incinerated at 1500 degrees.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** stated he is concerned with the deer migration from the core area. **Ms. Sexton** stated the DNR is monitoring collared deer in the deer movement study and it is helping to monitor the core surveillance area. There have been movements of those deer into Wisconsin.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if a deer was found in Gogebic County with CWD, would it mean there would be a ban on feeding in Ontonagon County and if that's the case, would emergency feeding in severe winter months not be allowed. **Ms. Haughey** stated if the CWD case was found in June, it would've been a ban then. Because the case was not confirmed until October and the season was already in progress, the NRC held off. She indicated it would be difficult to predict.
- **Ms. Gajewski** asked if in 2018, 800 deer were tested in the core area, what was the detection goal then. **Ms. Sexton** stated the goal of 600 deer tested in the core area in 2018 was based on .5% detection. It is now at .1%. **Ms. Haughey** stated the modeling is very informative and she will pass it along to the group. **Ms. Sexton** added talking points for the sampling goals are being worked on.
- **Chair Wirtanen** stated Rep. LaFave signed up for public comment on this subject and stated he could make it now. Rep. LaFave stated he appreciated the Council's time here and what they do. He indicated his home and camp are impacted by the ban, even though his home is 60 miles away from where the CWD case was found. He said the DNR picked highways for the core zone, rather than miles, making it not a scientific reasoning for the core zone. He stated banning baiting and feeding will not impact the spread of the disease. He mentioned the cutting down of a cedar tree to go hunting could result in jail time for three

months according to the statute. As a result, he plans to go back to the legislature with Rep. Cambensy, Markkanen, and Sen. McBroom to end this. The disabled hunt only allows using bait to hunt for 4 days and the rest of us get 90 days. He added the baiting ban is one thing and the feeding ban is another and it shouldn't be done at all.

Chair Wirtanen thanked everyone for their contributions to this topic.

Reports from Committee Meetings Held

Chair Wirtanen opened the floor for Committee reports.

1. **Fisheries:** **Chair Wirtanen** stated he understands there are no formal resolutions to present but rather points of view. **Mr. Dropps** reported he came across an article which said there are UP legislators who think the commercial regulations should be modified to allow the catching of game fish, including walleye, lake trout and perch. He stated he remembers how fishing was decimated due to commercial fishing. He asked Mr. Lindquist if MUCC had any information on this issue and he shared with him MUCC's position. He stated the Fisheries Committee met before the meeting tonight and they would like the Council to put a resolution forward in support of the house bills supported by MUCC and oppose the other ones (HB 4790 and SB 389) which will take the DNR out of the process and deregulate it. He feels the Council's opinion needs to be voiced and requests an emergency resolution as the legislature reconvenes in August and an emergency resolution is needed as the Council does not meet again until September at the Joint UPCAC meeting. **Mr. Johnson** asked if Rep. LaFave would like to make any comments as he was involved in the proposed legislation. Rep. LaFave stated the bills are supported by all the legislators and the DNR has a rule that all the dead fish must be thrown back in the lake. He is very much opposed to the bills being pushed by MUCC. He said he would hope the Council would not consider doing an emergency resolution on this issue. He added if anyone wants to go to a restaurant and get fresh walleye from the great lakes, do not consider a resolution against the bills. Otherwise, the fish will come from Canada. **Mr. Putala** noted the bill does not strip power from the DNR; the DNR would still have the authority to enact rules. **Mr. Schulz** stated he would like to know more before making an emergency resolution as there seems to be too many sides to the issue. **Mr. Dropps** reiterated the lack of a Council meeting before the legislature reconvenes in August and the fact that MUCC, the largest sportsman's club, is making the recommendation. **Chair Wirtanen** stated he does not get the sense the Council wishes to pursue a vote to consider an emergency resolution and will refer this issue back to the Fisheries Committee for further examination and to bring it back to the Council for further debate and resolution if need be. **Ms. Duncan** asked if the Council could examine a resolution through email; **Chair Wirtanen** stated it should be a vote at a Council meeting. **Mr. Putala** noted that the Administration has not take a position on the bills according to the legislative report in the Division Reports from July. **Ms. Haughey** stated perhaps the Council will consider this a priority agenda item for the September Joint CAC meeting and suggested it be presented by Lansing staff from Fisheries Division if they are available; **Chair Wirtanen** agreed.

Mr. Dropps added that the walleye rearing for the UP is better than last year. He spoke with Mr. Kramer, fisheries biologist from Escanaba, who forwarded him the following information: 905,000 fingerlings were raised with about 130,000 coming from the Sault Tribe, who had prescriptions for 600,000 goals. This changed the Bays de Noc from 500,000 to 125,000. He stated 10% of the lakes in the UP with fingerlings requests still didn't get what they needed.

2. **Trails/Recreation/Law:** **Mr. Lorenson** reported the committee has not met in some time and would like to get a meeting together. Any agenda items can be sent to him or Ms. Dahlstrom.

Chair Wirtanen noted he is serving on the Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership. A swimmer's itch infestation can adversely affect tourism. The partnership was formed some years ago in the Leelanau area in the north western lower peninsula. Lake Gogebic is the only UP lake that has an association that has joined this partnership. He asked if anyone knew of a lake in the UP currently with swimmer's itch. Teal Lake in Negaunee and Lake Antoine in Iron Mountain were mentioned. He further explained that it is a serious enough problem that a legislative appropriation was granted for control.

- Wildlife:** **Chair Wirtanen** stated Mr. Lindquist is not present to provide a report due to a meeting conflict with MUCC, for which he serves as president. He stated it is interesting to note the Council membership and how active people are in this Council and in other organizations. He feels the Council is quite an impressive group. In Mr. Lindquist's absence, he acknowledged receipt of an email communication received from Mr. Dean Hulce regarding his request for an additional 1-2 weeks added to the antlerless harvest to follow black power season for the lands under the DMAP program. **Mr. St. John** stated there is agreement that this could have some support amongst the public and it would be much appreciated as the DMAP program is to provide assistance and it's not doing much good if the tags aren't being filled. He further elaborated. **Chair Wirtanen** felt the topic warranted referral to the Wildlife Committee. **Mr. Lorensen motioned to forward this suggestion to the Wildlife Committee for further review; Mr. St. John supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried.**
- Forestry:** **Mr. Suchovsky** stated he was in Marquette for the development of a forest action plan with a select group who is meeting across the state. He indicated it is an opportunity to bring in federal dollars that would support five programs including the forest stewardship program, forest legacy program, wildlife program, invasive species program. The nationally competitive grant is due in the spring of 2020.

Next Meeting

- Next Meeting Date:** **Chair Wirtanen** noted the next meeting will be the Joint UP CAC Meeting held on Wednesday, September 11 in Marquette at NMU's new Northern Center Ballroom (formerly called the University Center). The meeting will begin at 3:00pm Eastern and is expected to conclude at 5:00pm Eastern. This meeting date is the day before the UP Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting, being held on Thursday, September 12th, also at NMU and allows for an opportunity for NRC commissioners and/or DNR Lansing staff to attend.
- Suggestions for Joint WUPCAC Meeting Agenda:** **Chair Wirtanen** stated any ideas for the Joint meeting that would be of interest to both the East and the West Council can be sent to him, Ms. Dahlstrom or Ms. Haughey at least two weeks or more before the meeting.
- Items for Next WUPCAC Meeting Agenda:** **Chair Wirtanen** also indicated any suggestions for agenda topics for the November WUPCAC meeting can be sent to him in advance of the meeting.

Public Comments

Chair Wirtanen explained the guidelines for this portion of the meeting and opened the floor for public comment.

- Mr. Larry Mellstrom of Iron River** (5 minutes pre-registered) stated he would like to speak about overbrowsing, indicating he is a retired professional forester for 40 years and a deer hunter for 60 years. He passed out an article from the SFRES Newsletter, Summer 2019, titled *Deer Populations Stunt Forest Regeneration in the Western Upper Peninsula*. He said something needs to be done to get the doe population down and get the

deer herd in balance with the habitat in order to sustain both the herd and the forest industry. He indicated he spoke with Ms. Joseph, wildlife biologist from Crystal Falls as well. He feels decisions are not being made with sound science by rather by public and political influence. He indicated this is his fourth meeting talking about these issues and nothing is being done. **Chair Wirtanen** thanked him for his comments and dedication and stated the Wildlife Committee did review his suggestions for regulations; however, there was no consensus due to varying perspectives. He stated he feels though, with the focus on forestry and wildlife, perhaps the Forestry & Wildlife Committees could meet jointly to talk about this topic. **Mr. Schulz** stated the abundance of deer Mr. Mellstrom speaks to is certainly not seen in the Ontonagon area. Mr. Mellstrom indicated he would like to see more doe harvested in the southern portion of the UP. **Mr. Suchovsky** stated forestry and deer is an extremely complex issue and is further complicated when melding biological and social science. He noted deer as it pertains to forest health is discussed from several perspectives on a regular basis.

Council Closing Comments

- **Mr. Schulz** thanked Mr. Dropps for his perspective and thanked the Council for listening about the alpha signage issue for many years. He stated there is talk about deer, but no talk about small game.
- **Mr. Hall** asked if the August 6th meeting is open to the public; **Ms. Haughey** replied yes. He stated he would also like to know more about the commercial fishing issue before passing judgment. **Mr. Dropps** agreed, stating he'd like to meet with everyone involved.
- **Mr. St. John** added a point of clarification regarding Mr. Mellstrom's comments on overbrowsing. He indicated it is very regional. The overbrowsing issue is at the core of the DMAP program and he would like the Wildlife Committee to discuss that.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** added an increasingly serious program is access to the forest. There are two sides to the issue. Recently a logger was denied access on the county road system from the local road commission, but the DNR allowed a road parallel to the road.

Adjournment

Chair Wirtanen thanked everyone for their contributions. The meeting adjourned at 8:37pm Eastern.