

# Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 22, 2021

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

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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*Chairman: Jim Lorenson - Vice-Chairman: Warren Suchovsky*

### Council Members Present

Jim Baker	Dave Johnson	Kirk Schott
Erik Bessonon	George Lindquist	Skip Schulz
Floyd Dropps	Jim Lorenson	Tom Solka
Barb Gajewski	Carol Mason Sherrill	Warren Suchovsky
Dave Hall	Mary Peterson	
Mike Holmes	Horst Schmidt	

### Council Members Absent/Excused

Joan Duncan	Chauncey Moran
Travis Smith	Trevor St. John

### Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff & Guests

Lt. Ryan Aho, Law Enforcement Division, Crystal Falls  
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette  
Patrick Hanchin, Fisheries Division, Marquette  
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette  
George Madison, Fisheries Division, Baraga  
Ryan McGillviray, Wildlife Division, Crystal Falls  
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga  
JR Richardson, NRC Commissioner, Ontonagon  
Bill Scullon, Wildlife Division, Norway  
Heather Shaw, Wildlife Division, Shingleton  
Eric Thompson, Forest Resources Division, Escanaba  
Matt Torreano, UP Trails-Parks & Recreation Division, Marquette  
Tom Weston, Licensing-Facilities & Operation Division, Lansing

### Welcome & Call to Order

At 6:00pm Eastern, **Chair Lorenson** called the meeting to order with 32 participants in virtual attendance, including Council members, DNR staff, guests, and registered public attendees. He led the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked Ms. Dahlstrom to read off the names of all those attending virtually and by phone. A list of Council members was also displayed on screen.

**Ms. Haughey**, DNR UP Field Deputy, introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting, including NRC Commissioner JR Richardson and other guests who registered and were listed on screen. She indicated the meeting will be guided with a powerpoint presentation and asked those attending to review a slide with virtual meeting tips. She briefly explained the 13-year history of the Upper Peninsula Citizens' Advisory Councils (East and West) which are advisory groups to the DNR. She indicated Commissioner Richardson spoke highly of the UPCAC's on last week's TV episode of The Ryan Report. She mentioned there are two opportunities for public comment, one focused on agenda items and the other for general public comments.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

**Chair Lorensen** asked the Council if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. None were brought forth. **Mr. Hall motioned to accept the agenda as presented; Mr. Suchovsky supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See page 1. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

**Chair Lorensen** asked if there were any changes to the May 19, 2021, WUPCAC meeting minutes that were distributed to the Council via email for review. None were brought forth. **Mr. Solka motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See page 1. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

### **DNR Reports from Division Staff & Follow-Up from Last Meeting**

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on July 15, 2021. The following verbal updates were provided.

- **Ms. Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy:** **Ms. Haughey** noted UP DNR customer service centers are now open to the public Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and customer service staff are answering phones Mondays and Fridays. Staff are available by phone at any time during usual business hours. She stated the Office of the State Employer guides state agencies when it comes to determining when state staff can be in the offices again and had designated July 12<sup>th</sup> to begin that process. State agencies are using the time between July 12 and September 7 to allow staff time to submit telework requests. As of today, staff will be required to be in offices for their normal work hours on September 7<sup>th</sup> unless a telework agreement has been approved. (Note: As of 8/26/21, this date has been extended to October 4<sup>th</sup>.) She also mentioned an upcoming meeting of the Wolf Management Advisory Council was announced by the Deputy Director at the recent NRC meeting. It is scheduled for August 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:30am at River Rock Lanes & Banquet Center in Ishpeming. There is a link on the webpage to email comments. The meeting will be included in the monthly public input opportunity press release. **Mr. Lindquist** asked if DNR offices will be open 5 days a week beginning September 7<sup>th</sup>. **Ms. Haughey** stated that is the plan at this time. **Mr. Lindquist** asked how the NRC can meet in person. **Ms. Haughey** stated the NRC is statutorily obligated to meet because it is a decision-making body. The executive order for the Open Meetings Act requires them to meet in person. The UPCAC's are an advisory group and is not a decision-making body. She added for the July WUPCAC meeting, a survey of members indicated only 9 were able to make it in person, so a decision was made to meet virtually.
- **Mr. George Madison, Fisheries Division:** **Mr. Madison** concurred with Ms. Haughey by stating staff are very accessible by phone or email should they need to be reached during this transition period. Field staff are continuing with their normal work and projects and all staff want to be responsible to the public and to the CAC members if they have questions. He stated streams are very low right now with the lack of rain, but the number of people out fishing is still very high. The number of kayaks and boats out in lakes has been incredible. He introduced Patrick Hanchin, Lake Superior Basin Coordinator, who is in attending. **Mr. Hanchin** stated he did not have anything to add and would be available for questions later in the meeting when fisheries topics arise. **Mr. Dropps** asked about the disappointing walleye rearing that occurred this season. **Mr. Madison** stated the success of walleye rearing is weather-dependent. The ponds need to be warm enough to develop plankton for walleye rearing and this spring had several nights with below freezing temps. A good number of walleyes were raised, although not as many as hoped for, and staff did an amazing job in miserable weather conditions to get the walleyes reared and getting sites stocked. **Mr. Dropps** noted the number of

walleye fingerlings produced were less than half of the division goals expected and the new Thompson Hatchery rearing ponds had an even more disappointing year.

- **Mr. Eric Thompson, Forest Resources Division:** Mr. Thompson, who was reporting for Mr. Tom Seablom, stated he did not have anything to add to the forestry written report.
- **Lt. Ryan Aho, Law Enforcement Division:** Lt. Aho stated marine activity has been very high this season. The officers ran Operation Drywater (boating under the influence) during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. In District 1, 561 boaters were contacted with one DUI arrest. There is a high volume of people out on the lakes. Mr. Schulz asked if officers are still taking enforcement action on ORV users riding double on a straddle seat ATV even though more aftermarket products have been introduced. Lt. Aho replied users are still being cited for “operating an ORV with passenger when not designed”, even if a real good aftermarket product is being used. If the vehicle was originally manufactured as a one-person vehicle, the user will be cited if there is a passenger. There are not any less tickets as it is a safety issue; however, there are more two seaters on the market now than before. Mr. Solka stated he enjoys reading the law division report and the officers are doing an outstanding job of dealing with the large number of people who are out using public resources and unfortunately, officers are sometimes dealing with people at their worse, particularly intoxicated individuals such as the operation conducted. The officers are conducting themselves in a very appropriate and professional manner and he wanted to pass that recognition to the division. Lt. Aho thanked him for the comments.
- **Mr. Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division:** Mr. Rich reported that state park facilities were at a record-breaking 96% occupancy statewide over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend. Bond Falls is up 198% in day use passport sales. Baraga State Park, with its new improvements, is up 200% from where they were in 2019. The parks in the UP are experiencing the same kind of use pressures as popular downstate parks. The Porkies is fully booked through Labor Day, Baraga is a close second, and other units are following behind. Recreation passport sales are up 27.3%, which is extraordinary. In 2019 at this point in the summer, there were 889,000 camp nights, and right now in 2021, there are 1.2 million camp nights. Typically, a million camp nights is not seen until the end of August. In a few weeks, college staff will be heading back to school, so remaining staff will focus on core operational duties, such as grass cutting, cleaning bathrooms, picking up trash, etc. He spoke about the continued efforts of the National Guard’s 172<sup>nd</sup> Engineering Battalion, who worked on a Porkies project last year, and now will be staging a bridging exercise at the retired Horseshoe Lake Campground, south of Republic in which they will be installing a floating bridge from the boating access site across to the retired campground as well as making improvement to the roads there. This is the only area in the midwest the National Guard can train for bridging exercises. Their help also allows the stretching of project dollars even further to include parking lot improvements in addition to scheduled road and ramp enhancements at Silver Lake in northern Marquette County. They have also helped with the replacement of two pedestrian bridges on the North Country Trail in Craig Lake State Park. The Division is very excited at how this partnership has evolved.
- **Mr. Matt Torreano, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails:** Mr. Torreano, reporting in Mr. Ron Yesney’s absence, provided an update on the five trails affected by the Houghton County floods of 2018. A great deal of progress has been made since then. This year and in planning for next year, almost all the trails will be reopened except for the Freda grade, which remains closed due to very severe washouts particular on the northwestern side of that grade. The Houghton to Chassell trail is currently under construction and could reopen within a week or so. There will be some remaining work on that trail related to the flood, but it is minor, and it should be addressed this fall. In Lake Linden, there were dozens of washouts on the grade

between Dollar Bay and Calumet and that project is currently in the engineering phase and will hopefully go to bid next spring with the plan to be open by next fall. He also spoke about the work being done by the Trails Section to purchase permanent easements across the UP. A few large segments of easement in the western UP were secured at the end of 2020, one of which was 56 miles of multi-use/year-round rights with the Keweenaw Land Association through five counties (Houghton, Ontonagon, Gogebic, Iron and Dickinson). It was a good start in working with other commercial landowners. A 12-mile segment was successful with Lyme Timber who now owns all Weyerhaeuser holdings. They are the largest private commercial landowner in the UP and have about 200 miles of trails through their properties. Staff are currently working with them to purchase 90 miles of trail easements between Baraga and Marquette Counties. **Mr. Schulz** asked for an update on the multi-use trail from Wakefield to Ironwood. **Mr. Torreano** stated they are still working with landowners, with Longyear being one of them and they are agreeable to granting access, but he is not sure on the status of others at this time. **Mr. Lindquist** questioned the option to purchase areas of entry to fishing access sites, etc. instead of easements for trails, as private commercial landowners have been selling off land that included roads or access to good fishing locations and they are now closed off. **Ms. Haughey** stated it is a separate issue and not related to connectivity of trails or securing trail corridor easements. **Mr. Torreano** added the easements he is speaking of is strictly for trails as the funding for purchases is generated from snowmobile registrations. **Ms. Haughey** indicated staff around the state are continually working on access every day and it's a constant conversation during various meetings. It is the DNR's mission to make sure public access is maintained as much as possible. **Mr. Bessonon** asked if the failed bridge in the Arnheim area has been replaced yet. **Mr. Torreano** stated he was not sure but noted there was collaboration on that project with the Wildlife Division. **Mr. Scullon** added it's a complex project. Funding has been secured for it and engineering discussions will take place next week; however, it will be a year or two before there is resolution on that site.

- **Mr. Ryan McGillviray, Wildlife Division:** **Mr. McGillviray** stated the 2021 breeding waterfowl survey is out now and anyone interested can see details in the division report. Staff across the UP are busy handling nuisance wildlife, various habitat projects are being worked on, and the compartment review process with counterparts in the Forest Resources Division is occurring. Staff are excited to move into fall and working again with sportsmen and hunters.

**Chair Lorenson** thanked DNR staff for attending the meetings, preparing the division reports, and answering Council member questions.

#### **Public Comment on Agenda Items Only**

**Chair Lorenson** noted there were no pre-registered public comments. He opened the floor to any other public comments pertaining to agenda items.

1. **Ms. Krista Harveston of Macomb:** Ms. Harveston asked if there was a plan to test the foam she discovered on the Presque Isle River near the suspension bridge in the Porcupine Mountains State Park. She stated she was part of a waste management forum held by another Michigan regulatory agency and they advised there is PFAS leaching from some of the wastewater treatment plants that is uncontrolled and she was wondering if the foam was PFAS. **Ms. Haughey** stated she received the email Ms. Harveston sent and forwarded it to Dr. Tammy Newcomb in the DNR who handles PFAS issues, and she will assess the inquiry. It may be unlikely that it is PFAS considering the remoteness of the location. Ms. Harveston stated she remembered a recent DNR press release about not swimming in waters with foam as it might be PFAS. **Mr. Rich** stated EGLE has been out testing various rivers and streams in the area. However, most likely the foam is the natural result of very high tans similar to Tahquamenon Falls and with the water from the Presque Isle River being so soft, when it comes down from the series of falls and into kettle pools, it agitates and creates foam. **Mr. Madison** spoke about

animal fats in the water that can create foam and noted that PFAS has mostly been found near airports and other similar industries that use various retardants. He thinks it, too, is unlikely that it exists in the Porkies, although Ms. Newbcomb is the best person to make the determination.

### **Old Business**

1. DNR Response to May Resolutions: 1) Menominee Separate Possession Limit, 2) Northern Pike Immediate Catch and Release, 3) Metrics of Fish Management Plans: **Mr. Madison** provided a verbal response on behalf of the Fisheries Division to the Council's May resolutions regarding the following three recommendations:
  - Allowing for a separate possession limit of 20 Menominee on Lake Superior: **Mr. Madison** explained the confusion in identifying this small form of whitefish compared to the white herring which has a much smaller possession limit. **NRC Commissioner Richardson** asked how many people were ticketed and how many people fish for them. **Mr. Madison** replied no one was ticketed that he is aware of because it is difficult to prosecute, and it is a popular fishery in Grand Marais, Munising, and Marquette. He stated the recommendation was presented to the NRC by the Fisheries Division and it passed as more of a fishing regulation. Some of the anglers who fish the breakwalls were opposed to the reduced possession limits so it will be brought back to the NRC for information at the August meeting. **Mr. Dropps** asked what the DNR's recommendation is. **Mr. Madison** stated they are asked repeatedly to simplify the regulations, so they are recommending a reduced bag limit for all whitefish, herring, Cisco, and Menominee. If the Council has any additional comments, the NRC would be the appropriate body to direct them to. He added that fishery managers are concerned about the future of Cisco as it is a large commercial fishery.
  - A recommendation not to approve an immediate catch and release season for northern pike: **Mr. Madison** stated this recommendation was not supported internally by fish biologists. They were asked to bring the suggestion to their stakeholders to see if there was an opinion. The fishery occurs regardless as people are fishing for bass or other fish in the spring and it would be difficult to enforce. There has been more desire to seek catch and release seasons for all types of fish species—it was expanded already to lake sturgeon, bass, and walleye—and it will be a continual conversation over the coming year. Discussion ensued in length on the no minimum size limit for northern pike recommendations that were reviewed at a previous WUPCAC meeting; however, to continue in order of the agenda, further discussion was paused and deferred by **Chair Lorenson** until the Fisheries Committee report.
  - A recommendation to increase involvement of stakeholder groups in the development of draft fisheries management plans prior to them being submitted for public review: **Mr. Madison** indicated the Director sent an initial response to the WUPCAC regarding its recommendations to the inland walleye management plan on April 5 and on June 10, Mr. Seth Herbst from the Fisheries Division followed up with a more detailed 15-page response. The detailed document was applicable as a response to the metrics of fish management plans resolution as well.
2. Moose Management Considerations (Lorenson-Mar 2021): **Chair Lorenson** stated the DNR responded to the Council's request to provide a listing of management considerations for moose at the last meeting; however, the Council felt what was provided pertained to hunting of moose and the question raised was how moose are managed in lieu of a management plan. **Ms. Haughey** began by sharing a slide of what is currently listed on the DNR website about Michigan's moose population including the origin, bi-annual surveys, and survey results. She noted the goal of the moose reintroduction was to produce a self-sustaining population of free-ranging moose in the UP. Although hunting was addressed in the report at the last meeting, it was intermingled with

other moose data and there may not be an official moose management plan in book form, but there is a plan. **Mr. Scullon** further elaborated on the reintroduction and the original goals of the moose population. The vital stats included in the report presented last month is what biologists look at, how the surveys help determine what the population is doing over time and is critical information if a hunt were to occur. He spoke about population growth stats from previous surveys, twinning rates, productivity, and habitat which is evaluated in conjunction with forest management during compartment reviews. He added there are several things outside of the DNR's sphere of influence that greatly affect the UP's moose herd, such as climate change (warmer winters, hot summers which cause lower breeding rates), privately owned ranges, etc. **Mr. Lindquist** stated one of the recommendations of the Moose Advisory Council of 2011 was to develop a moose management plan and MUCC has also done the same. He noted there is a desire to work on those limiting factors and make improvements. He also mentioned he'd like to receive the powerpoint used for the Council meetings earlier than the day of so that he can review the information and be able to respond to it at meeting time. **Ms. Haughey** indicated what was in the powerpoint was pulled from the DNR website, so it is not new information. **Mr. Scullon** stated they recognize there are entities that support having a plan, but there are many other factors that come into play as well, one of which is the moose range is in a tribal area affected by treaties. **Chair Lorenson** echoed Mr. Lindquist's request to receive the meeting powerpoint 1-2 days prior to the meeting.

### New Business

1. Summer Youth Program for Parks & Recreation: **Mr. Rich** provided a presentation on the DNR's partnership with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and the Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO), along with local schools or school districts, for a work-based learning program to provide students with disabilities access to paid work experiences. He is the lead for this statewide program for the Parks and Recreation Division.
  - Students are between the ages of 14-18, have not yet graduated from high school, giving them the advantage to not only work, but work in a learning environment. The students provide assistance with state park projects while learning teamwork, accountability, and respect for their environment. It also provides opportunities for local communities to see the students in the workforce.
  - This is year 9 of the program. It originally started in Traverse City and grew to 48 sites across the state. With COVID, there are currently 29 sites with 174 students. The full program would be over 300 students.
  - The program gives students diverse opportunities depending on their disability. They function as part of a bigger team, giving them greater exposure to the outdoors and allows them to connect with campers in the parks giving them greater social communication skills.
  - Match & Cost-Sharing: Each DNR site (in the Western UP: Twin Lakes, Porkies, Baraga State Park and Van River State Park) chips in \$2,495. LEO then leverages those dollars with a federal matching grant for up to \$9,200 per unit, totaling over \$11,000.
  - Return on Investment: The funding pays for the trainers who act as a job coach for these students (on a one-on-one basis). It is a great side job for teachers in the summer (\$15/hr). Students work for about two months and get paid minimum wage. It gives them their first job and first time handling money which is then used locally. It helps to expand diversity within the park system and enhances visitor experiences. It also helps add workers during peak periods.
  - Steps of the process were reviewed:
    - Step 1 - Initiating Communication: An MRS counselor and Mr. Rich meet to discuss the program and determine a site.

- Step 2 - Planning Meeting with Partners: Items discussed include the number of students they can expect, when the experience will take place, determine projects/tasks for students, communicate program details, address any issues, inclement weather options, schedules, etc.
- Step 3 - Assisting with Process: Meet with prospective students and their MRS counselor to assist with mimicking an actual employment hiring situation (if possible).
- Step 4 - Program Orientation & Safety Training: All DNR and MRS staff meet with parents and students together to review details and safety protocols.
- Step 5 - Planning for Projects: Consideration of what projects could be completed during the experience, meet/plan with skills trainer, obtain tools/materials needed, provide PPE when needed, ensure other park staff can assist as needed.
- Examples of Work Tasks: Examples include raking/cleaning beach debris, brushing/clearing hiking trails, cleaning parking lot islands, painting, picnic table repair, stewardship/invasive species work, putting out flags, putting up signs, assist with camper coffees, etc.
- Team: MRS counselor, DNR supervisor, student, and skills trainer.
- Timeline: The general timeline for the program includes confirmation in February/March, selection in April/May, administration in May/June, implementation in June/July/August, and conclusion in September/October.
- Safe Work Activities: A chart providing guidelines of work activities permitted or not permitted by specific age groups and with supervision such as ladders, hand tools, motor vehicles, hazardous substances, etc.
- Have Fun: It is important that students and staff have fun, to make this an excellent work experience for students so they want to come back. The parks have hired previous students to help during busy times.
- Questions/Comments: **Mr. Schmidt** stated this is a very exciting program and he's delighted to hear the parks are taking initiative. It gives people hope. **Mr. Solka** asked how many young people are participating in a particular park. **Mr. Rich** responded it depends on the site and from year-to-year; for example, there are 8 students at Twin Lakes this year. On average there are 4-6 students per site. **Mr. Schulz** asked if this program would be able to work on trails. **Mr. Rich** stated it has primarily focused on parks due to the diversity of jobs available as one day they could be cleaning fire circles and the next day brushing trails. He stated they are also looking at what other opportunities might be available within the broader scope of the DNR for these students in the future.

**Chair Lorenson** thanked Mr. Rich for his presentation.

2. Antlerless Application Process: **Mr. Scullon** indicated there has been a few changes to antlerless permits and process for this year. He provided background information as to why the changes occurred. He stated last year, the Director asked if there were ways the antlerless process statewide could be changed to increase opportunity, to remove barriers, to simplify regulations, without harming the resource/deer herd. A statewide antlerless license was considered, but of course was not favorable for the UP because of resource concerns which are vastly different than southern Michigan. Wildlife staff then proposed a three-tiered system for the UP: south central UP, mid-zone UP (split into an east and west section) and northern UP. A colored map depicting these zones was shown. He explained the reasoning for creating these zones (snowfall regions, high mortality, deer per square miles, etc.) and provided license details for each (see page 60 in the 2021 Hunting Digest):
  - Northern UP Zone (White Area): No antlerless hunting allowed.
  - Mid Zone DMUs 351 & 352 (Purple Area):
    - Apply for an Access Permit for \$5.00 for one of the DMUs (351 or 352)
    - 1,000 Access Permits will be available for each DMU (351 and 352)
    - If successful, purchase a Universal Antlerless License

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- If leftover Access Permits are available, more can be purchased (10 kill tags max). One Access Permit and one Universal Antlerless License must be purchased for each deer harvested.
  - Southern UP (Green Area): Antlerless hunting is allowed in this section. Purchase a Universal Antlerless License to hunt antlerless deer.

He stated there is no separate antlerless digest this year, rather the information is incorporated into the regular hunting digest which is available online. **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the hunting digest will only be available online this year. **Mr. Scullon** replied there will be a limited printing of the digest overall reducing the number printed, which may be an issue as many hunting areas do not have cell coverage and it's important for first time hunters to have the printed digest to have rules and regulations readily available. He added as this year progresses, there may be some issues that occur from a biological standpoint, and they will have to refine these zones for future years. **Dr. Schott** asked whether the antlerless deer tag can be used on other people's land with permission. **Mr. Scullon** replied there use to be different tags for private land versus public land, but that no longer applies. If a universal antlerless license is purchased, one can hunt anywhere antlerless hunting is allowed, including the majority of southern lower peninsula. If an access permit is awarded, then a kill tag can be used anywhere in that broad DMU zone (with permission for private land) so it provides more flexibility. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if there have been any changes with the DMAP program or crop damage permits; **Mr. Scullon** replied there are no changes to those programs. **Mr. Bessonon** asked if the purple area (mid-zones) is defined by roadways. **Mr. Scullon** stated the mid-zones follow the outer portion of the old DMU boundaries. **Ms. Haughey** also mentioned an interactive DMU map available online in which an address can be typed in and it will display what DMU it is in (<https://midnr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a56c741486c44de88289804cd4a12777>).

3. Potential Revision of WUPCAC Bylaws: **Ms. Haughey** stated in response to virtual meetings and executive orders related to them over the past year, several of the DNR's advisory councils, which were not established by statute, have refreshed their bylaws to reflect some of the changes regarding references to the Open Meetings Act (OMA). She noted she and Ms. Dahlstrom reviewed the WUPCAC's bylaws, which were adopted in 2008 and had had minor wording revisions through 2016, and discovered a few minor procedural items, title changes, format, etc. that could also be updated. She reviewed the UPCAC's primary role, the Charter of the UPCACs and touched on how and why the UPCACs were created. A screen noting suggested minor changes by section was shown. Language regarding meeting in a virtual platform, especially during winter conditions, is an option but not necessary since it is allowed without a reference to the OMA. She stated two copies of the bylaws, one with revisions shown and a clean copy with revisions incorporated will be sent to Council members, and she encouraged a thorough review of them and to submit comments by August 25. A timeline was shown with the option to accept changes at the next meeting in September.

### **Reports from Committee Meetings Held**

**Chair Lorenson** opened the floor for reports from those Committees that held meetings.

1. Fisheries: **Chair Lorenson** stated the resolution up for consideration, Northern Pike 5 Fish NMS Limit, was tabled at the last meeting to allow the extensive work of the Fisheries Committee to be reviewed in depth, allow for a review of additional information in the presentation, and allow for the Committee to provide further commentary after that review. A copy of the tabled resolution was emailed to Council members previously for their review. The resolution recommends *"a review of most of the UP lakes in a short time can be conducted with a combination of older lake surveys, lake type data and computer modeling. The review will show it would be beneficial to change the current northern pike regulations in the UP. The Committee also recommends trying the northern Wisconsin model that has been practiced successfully, is based on similar lakes and temperature types and is a better fit than the lower peninsula model. A five (5) northern pike daily creel*

*limit and no minimum size limit (MSL) will greatly enhance the ability of UP. fisherman to take a meal of northern pike from their local waters, while helping to improve the quality of pike fishing in the Upper Peninsula."*

**Mr. Dropps** mentioned regarding the conversation earlier in the meeting, he hopes it can be distinguished when there is a difference between being dissatisfied with an outcome versus being dissatisfied with personnel. He stated he has no issues with personnel in the DNR. **Mr. Madison** stated he appreciates those comments.

**Mr. Dropps** provided explanations and reasonings behind the proposed resolution which was also stated in the committee's initial report. He stated there are a lot of UP lakes that have stunted fish with unlimited spawning habitat and lots of natural reproduction. There are a lot of northern pike, and they never reach 24 inches. Many of them are only 20 or 22 inches on the male side and they aren't growing. The group has a list of lakes they have been looking at and the DNR has been looking at them on a case-by-case basis, but with 4,300 lakes in the UP and only surveying 3-4 a year, they will never get to all of them. In Michigan, it used to be 20 inches with a 5-fish limit. Wisconsin has this regulation, and they still have plenty of walleye. There have always been interactions between northern pike, walleye, and bass. The committee would like to see the NRC review this information along with information from the DNR and discuss it. **Mr. Holmes** provided a comparison to what Wisconsin regulations and practice is for northern pike in comparison to Michigan and feels it should be tried in the UP.

**Chair Lorensen** asked if the recommendation is to cover all lakes in the UP; **Mr. Holmes** replied yes. **Chair Lorensen** stated he understands the reasoning behind the recommendation, and it looks to be a good faith effort. However, he stated he is concerned, as he fishes primarily for walleye, that if it is a five no minimum size limit, it could result in harming the walleye population. He asked if this recommendation could be on a more limited basis rather than all the lakes in the UP. **Mr. Holmes** replied if after 5 years, for example, people don't want it on a particular lake, it could be changed back to its original prescriptions. He stated it needs to be implemented across the board to be accepted. He added the NRC needs to hear this committee's concerns in addition to receiving information from the Fisheries Division. **Chair Lorensen** stated he understands, but also wishes a more targeted approach could be taken.

**Mr. Lindquist** asked if this recommendation would include the Great Lakes and all its tributaries. **Mr. Holmes** replied yes. However, the NRC and Fisheries Division can make that determination. **Mr. Bessonon** asked how many of the UP inland lakes have northern pike in them. **Mr. Dropps** would guess about 90% or better. **Mr. Madison** stated that estimate seems high, particularly when looking at lakes that are managed for walleye or a single species. He stated the end goal with this issue is that everyone wants good walleye fisheries. **Mr. Dropps** stated there were good fisheries with a 5-fish limit from 1930-1982 and fish weren't negatively affected. **Commissioner Richardson** interjected stating he tried to recommend a targeted approach, but it was made difficult to do so. He added through all his travels fishing across the UP, he did not encounter any fishermen that were opposed to this recommendation. **Mr. Suchovsky** noted if this was open to all lakes on a trial basis, would fishing be more dispersed, whereas if it were just on a few sample lakes, would there tend to be overfishing on some lakes and under fishing on others. **Mr. Holmes** stated it would and that it needs to be tried on all lakes on a trial basis. **Mr. Solka** asked for clarification on the resolution as the wording of the tabled resolution seems to be written to call for a review of the UP lakes before implementing a UP-wide 5 northern pike daily creel limit and no minimum size limit. **Mr. Holmes** stated the Fisheries Division has indicated they do not have the manpower to review all the lakes so it could not be done prior to implementation. **Chair**

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**Lorenson** asked if the committee is only recommending a 5 northern pike daily creel limit and no minimum size limit at this time. **Mr. Dropps and Mr. Holmes** agreed. **Mr. Johnson** stated he looks at the successes of neighboring states because it is in the same latitude and Wisconsin has a very successful northern pike program.

**Chair Lorenson asked for motion on that resolution. Mr. Schulz motioned to approve the proposed resolution; Mr. Hall supported the motion. A vote was conducted by an online Zoom poll visible to all in attendance. Ayes: 75% (12). Nays: 25% (4). Absent: See page 1. No further discussion. Motion carried by majority. Chair Lorenson** thanked the Council for the time spent on this resolution. **Mr. Dropps** also thanked the Council on behalf of the Fisheries Committee, for listening to all of the comments.

1. Forestry: No report.
2. Trails/Recreation/Law: **Chair Lorenson** reported he intended to get the group together prior to the meeting but will plan to hold a meeting soon in person at the Crystal Falls office. He asked for agenda items for the committee to be sent to him.
3. Wildlife: **Mr. Lindquist** reported the committee did not meet but he plans to hold a meeting before the next Council meeting in September to discuss turkey tags. He also mentioned the Wolf Management Advisory Council meeting will be held on August 4 at the Red Rock Lanes in Ishpeming. He encouraged Council members to attend if interested. **Mr. Scullon** stated conversations are beginning in the division regarding turkey regulations and asked what the committee might be considering; **Mr. Lindquist** stated he'd like to see the tags cover more of an area than what they do.

#### **Next Meeting**

1. Next Meeting Date: **Chair Lorenson** noted the next meeting will be in-person on Wednesday, September 22, 2021 beginning at 6:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Central. The location will be determined at a later time.
2. Items for Next WUPCAC Meeting Agenda: **Chair Lorenson** asked for any suggested topics for the next meeting be sent to him, Ms. Haughey or to Ms. Dahlstrom.

#### **Public Comments**

**Chair Lorenson** opened the floor for public comment on any topic:

1. *Ms. Terri Bocklund of Marquette, UP Environmental Coalition Board Member (pre-registered)*: Ms. Bocklund introduced herself and indicated she will be speaking about wolves in the UP. She stated her forthcoming comments are not political but rather drawn from an emotionally neutral realm of science. In sharing the UP with an estimated 700 wolves, she suggested three questions: 1) is there a documented rise in problematic human interactions; 2) is there a documented rise in wolf predation on livestock; and 3) is there a documented rise in wolf predation upon species that humans value for hunting, specifically the whitetail deer. If the answer to these questions is yes, then it's time for wolf management. If the answer is no, then it's time for allowing wolves to go about their business. She stated the answers to these questions are currently a resounding no, and the scientific evidence lies in favor of leaving wolves alone. If there is a day when the Michigan DNR and independent wildlife scientists conduct research proving the answers to these questions as yes, then, and only then is it time to manage Michigan's wolves. If that time comes, then science must sit at the head of the table

for any discussions on wolf management. **Chair Lorensen** thanked her for attending the entire meeting and offering her comments.

### **Council Closing Comments**

**Chair Lorensen** opened the floor for Council comments.

- **Mr. Hall** thanked Mr. Rich for his report on the summer youth program. He stated he has worked with Big Brothers/Big Sisters in the past and worked in many youth programs in the social services and mental health fields and that kind of work he spoke about is so important. It takes a special person to do that type of work and make those relationships and he commended him and the people that participate for what they do.
- **Mr. Schulz** stated the Council has been discussing wolves for a very long time and he has good friends on both side of the issue. He indicated he wishes there was someone on the Wolf Management Advisory Council that is completely neutral, not for one side or the other, to help end the controversy. He also praised Mr. Rich for the summer youth program and other good things he does as well.
- **Dr. Schott** stated he is looking forward to in-person meetings again as the unstable internet doesn't always allow one to hear the entire conversation.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** stated the Council has heard the term management with respect to wolves this evening, but other discussion also included turkeys, fish, etc. He asked for members to think about whether management infers the harvesting or taking of something or is management a lot more than that.

### **Adjournment**

**Chair Lorensen** thanked everyone who participated and for their contributions. He adjourned the meeting at 8:26pm Eastern/7:26pm Central.

Approved 9/22/2021