

Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 18, 2021

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

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Chairman: Jim Lorenson - Vice-Chairman: Warren Suchovsky

Council Members Present

Jim Baker	Dave Johnson	Kirk Schott
Floyd Dropps	George Lindquist	Skip Schulz
Joan Duncan	Jim Lorenson	Tom Solka
Barb Gajewski	Chauncey Moran	Warren Suchovsky
Dave Hall	Mary Peterson	
Mike Holmes	Horst Schmidt	

Council Members Absent/Excused

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, Lake Superior Management Unit
Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy, Executive Division, Marquette
George Madison, Fisheries Division, Baraga
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Brian Roell, Wildlife Division, Marquette
Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Bill Scullon, Wildlife Division, Norway
Jay Wesley, Fisheries Division, Plainwell
Scott Whitcomb, Executive Division, Lansing
Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails, Marquette

Welcome & Call to Order

At 6:00pm Eastern, **Chair Lorenson** called the meeting to order with 46 participants in virtual attendance, including Council members, DNR staff, legislative representatives, 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.

Chair Lorenson held a moment of silence for Mr. Bill Doan, former western UP Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) and Porcupine Mts State Park supervisor, who had relocated to a downstate PRD supervisor position several years ago. Mr. Doan passed away after a woods accident. Council members and staff remembered him as a good friend and colleague, and a hard-working individual with a love of Michigan's natural resources.

Ms. Haughey, DNR UP Field Deputy, introduced herself and thanked Council members, DNR staff, and guests for joining the meeting. She indicated the meeting will be guided with a powerpoint presentation and asked those attending to review a slide with virtual meeting tips. She then noted the Upper Peninsula Citizens' Advisory Councils (East and West) are advisory groups to the DNR.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Chair Lorenson asked if there were any changes to the January 7, 2021 WUPCAC meeting minutes that were distributed to the Council via email for review. None were brought forth. **Mr. Hall motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Schulz 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 March 11, 2020. The following verbal updates were provided.

- **Ms. Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy:** Ms. Haughey again noted the Upper Peninsula Citizens' Advisory Councils (East and West), which have been in existence now for 12 years, are advisory groups to the DNR. She thanked the group of volunteer members who put a lot of time and energy into conversations and discussions. The Council helps the DNR be more efficient and more effective to the public. Between the two Councils, over 90 resolutions have been put forth for DNR consideration with many of them implemented.
- **Mr. George Madison, Fisheries Division:** Mr. Madison mentioned that recent emails and phone calls are indicative of the interest in people wanting to get out fishing this summer, with questions on steelhead, smelt, and where to go trout fishing. He also introduced Mr. Jay Wesley, Lake Michigan basin unit manager and Mr. Patrick Hanchin, Lake Superior basin unit manager, who are both attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of Fisheries Division management. Mr. Lindquist asked if the number of fish stocking/planting and locations will be back to normal this year compared to last year. Mr. Madison indicated that all normal field operations and take processes are approved to resume while practicing safe work protocols. Staff will be collecting steelhead eggs this spring for next year, so there will be a one-year hiatus in steelhead stocking which shouldn't affect the fishery that much.
- **Mr. Tom Seablom, Forest Resources Division:** Mr. Seablom mentioned forestry staff are now working normal field operations with office time continuing to be done remotely. He noted spring fire season started earlier than usual because of the lack of snowpack this year. Downstate crews have been working fires already and UP staff are preparing for a potentially busy season. Mr. Schulz stated he wasn't aware his area school had a school forest. Mr. Seablom stated he will work with him to see if the school is interested in any activities.
- **Lt. Ryan Aho, Law Enforcement Division:** Lt. Aho indicated snowmobile season came late and left early; however, there was an uptick in anglers with good ice this year. There were several cases on the ice as well as several rescues on snowmobile trails due to low snow. He stated some ORV activity has occurred on snowmobile trails where there shouldn't be. Overall, officers got their snowmobile hours completed prior to the melt and it was a fairly decent season.
- **Mr. Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division:** Mr. Rich stated between October and February, attendance at state parks was up 64% in the western UP and lodging reservations for this coming summer at this point are 34% more than last year statewide, which was a banner year. It looks to be a very busy season.

- **Mr. Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails:** Mr. Yesney stated his report focused heavily on the construction projects that staff are involved in and with the lack of work last year due to the pandemic, he wanted to highlight what is being worked on. He provided an update on the Houghton County projects, including the Lake Linden trail which is close to having engineering underway. Repairs on the Pilgrim River Bridge is also expected this season. He also noted that despite snowmobile season having lack of snow, trail permits were up, with the highest numbers since 2011. This is a nice trend to see in terms of the winter recreational economy. Mr. Schmidt asked how long will it take to complete the Pilgrim River Bridge; Mr. Yesney replied crews have until October 1st to complete it. Mr. Schmidt asked what the timeline is for the Lake Linden/Dollar Bay trail. Mr. Yesney stated the projected goal is for construction to begin in the summer of 2022. He noted they are working with different funding sources and sometimes that can cause delays, but he is optimistic it could be completed by November of 2022. Mr. Schulz asked if there is any way to educate users not go to mudding this time of year on the trails. Mr. Yesney stated if they are operating on snowmobile trails that are on private land, it is jeopardizing the relationship with private landowners that can lead to closure of trails. He added he will initiate a press release and stated law enforcement can help if it is reported at the time of occurrence. Mr. Moran agreed that a press release would be important as mudding causes so much damage to the terrain.

- **Mr. Brian Roell, Wildlife Division:** Mr. Roell added staff are beginning their adult deer-to-fawn ratio surveys, which is far earlier than they have ever been able to do them due to the lack of snow and deer look to be in very good condition so far.

Chair Lorensen thanked staff for providing the reports, stating it is extremely helpful information for the Council to have. Mr. Lindquist stated he understands how much time it takes to create the division reports and wanted to relay his appreciation for them. He suggested sharing them with a broader audience. Ms. Dahlstrom added reports are emailed to local UP legislators and are also posted on the UPCAC website (www.michigan.gov/upcac) for anyone to view. Ms. Haughey thanked Mr. Lindquist for mentioning the reports. She also welcomed Representative Tristan Cole who joined the meeting.

Annual Election of Officers

Chair Lorensen 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 2021:

1. **Chairman:** Mr. Lindquist nominated Mr. Lorensen; Mr. Lorensen accepted the nomination. After three more opportunities, no additional nominations were brought forth.
2. **Vice Chairman:** Mr. Schulz nominated Mr. Suchovsky; Mr. Suchovsky accepted the nomination. After three more opportunities, no additional nominations were brought forth.
3. **Vote:** Dr. Schott motioned to close the nominations for the two officer positions; Mr. Holmes supported the motion. A vote was conducted by an online Zoom poll visible to all in attendance. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See listing on page 1. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Final Results:** For 2021, Mr. Lorensen and Mr. Suchovsky remain as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Chair Lorensen opened the floor to those who previously registered to comment on agenda items:

1. *Mr. Jerry Edde of Bessemer – 5 min:* Mr. Edde, a retired fish biologist with the Ottawa National Forest, spoke about the inland walleye management plan and mentioned he also provided written comments on the plan's website. He stated it is a good plan but recommended the addition of a few columns of information (walleye stocked in last 3-4 years, walleyes stocked in class 2 or 3 lakes, other adult fish predators), which would prove very useful for both managers and the public. He asked if unit managers meet periodically to review stocking of the lakes and make adjustments as appropriate. **Mr. Madison** stated all waters are managed on a 6-year rotation through a process called a prescription and is available for anyone to review before it is approved. They are reviewed at a statewide level by peers to make sure it's biologically sound and then reviewed by the basin teams. Afterwards, it is brought to the division's spring coffee and conversation meetings for public input. He added there are a lot of decisions on how many walleye get stocked and where they are allocated so there are variations year-to-year depending on the pond productivity or the situations of the lakes. There is also a social desire aspect that is considered. Stocking programs are very transparent, and they are shared with anyone interested as to why a lake was allocated so many walleye, why some lakes have heavy stocking and why a lake might get skipped for a year. He stated there are also spring work planning meetings with the Forest Service, tribal governments, and the Park Service. Mr. Edde stated again it is a good plan and would be better if the additional columns of information were added. **Mr. Jay Wesley** added that Mr. Edde's written comments were received and will be included in their review, and anyone interested in providing comments can do so on the walleye website before April 1. **Mr. Dropps** asked if the comment link is still active as he couldn't locate it; **Mr. Wesley** responded it is still active and will share it later on in the agenda (send comments by 4/1/21 to DNR-Walleye@michigan.gov.)

Old Business

There were no items of Old Business carried over from the last meeting.

New Business

1. Inland Walleye Management Plan: **Mr. Jay Wesley** introduced himself as the DNR's Lake Michigan Basin Coordinator and provided an overview of the Fisheries Division's draft inland walleye management plan that is available for review and comment until April 1. He reminded the group that it is a state plan that takes a broad high-level review of current and future management of walleyes. Management of specific lakes are included in separate prescriptions. The following components of the plan were explained:
 - *Status of Walleye:* A graph was shown indicating lakes that have natural reproduction of walleye. A series of dark dots in the state indicate the western UP is the best spot in the entire state in terms of lakes that support wild production or natural reproduction of walleye. Looking south of the state, there aren't nearly as many lakes with this quality and may require a bit of stocking. The stocking discrepancy between the UP and points south has been brought up many times, and a big part of it has to do with lakes in the south not being able to naturally support production and having to stock them to produce a fair fishery compared to what the UP offers.
 - *Lake Classification:* Lakes were classified according to having the right temperature for walleye to have good growth and survive, and would include fairly deep lakes with good oxygen or those lakes further north where the ambient air temperature doesn't get as warm. A map of class 3 and 6 lakes in the state (high number of low degree days, low mean temperatures, large or intermediate surface area and mostly deep) was shown and are mostly located in the UP and upper lower Michigan.
 - *Angler Behavior/Perceptions, Stocking, Regulations, Co-Management with Tribes:* Angler behavior and perceptions are assessed through several different surveys with the largest survey occurring in 2019 with 6,000 respondents from across the state indicating where they like to fish, what types of lakes they like to

fish, what methods are used for fishing and what is preferred in terms of walleye regulations. Historic stocking (past, current and rates) is also considered in the plan as well as regulations. A “regulation toolbox” in the plan offers potential new regulations such as a 13-inch minimum size limit, a traditional 15-inch minimum size limit, an 20-inch minimum size limit with a lower possession, and an option for no possession of walleye which would be typically used in management if the goal is to keep larger walleye in for pan fish management or a lake that might be contaminated (non-consumption). There is also a delayed possession season for certain lakes that are fairly cold and have a later spawning season. There is a section included on co-management with the tribes, especially in the 1836 treaty waters with shared allocation of walleye on certain lakes.

- *Goals:* 1) Provide diverse opportunities for walleye fishing. Look at certain areas of the state that don't have walleye fisheries and create them if appropriate lake types are available. Provide better access to lakes that have naturally reproducing walleyes to the public can reach them, including acquiring lands, which may require the building of facilities or boat launches. 2) Manage walleye populations to achieve desirable fish. For example, maintain good pan fishing while still having walleye and not overstocking lakes because of this. 3) Maintain and develop relations with tribal governments and stakeholders. 4) Maintain self-sustaining walleye populations. For example, through habitat protection. 5) Provide production capacity for walleye stocking. The Thompson Fish Hatchery will have more walleye capacity and other options will be sought out as well. 6) Protect, restore, or enhance habitats supporting walleye fisheries. This could include dam removals, adding reef structure to lakes or protecting existing reefs and natural shoreline habitat.
- *Public Input:* A snapshot of the website where the draft plan is available for viewing and the email address to provide public comment was shown. If anyone would like a hard copy of the draft plan, please let Mr. Wesley know and he would be glad to supply it.
- *Questions:*
 - **Dr. Schott** asked what kind of lakes [of the ones dotted in the south on the map] are those that aren't walleye lakes and will non-walleye lakes be turned into walleye lakes. **Mr. Wesley** stated the lake characteristic classifications can help biologists zero in on lakes that they probably shouldn't be stocking or lakes that they should be concentrating on. In the south, he stated there are diverse lakes that include bluegill, large mouth bass and the challenge is getting a small fingerling to survive to adulthood, so often they have to raise fall fingerlings to get them past being a predator issue. The best walleye in the south is often in rivers with a few lakes that have the right characteristics.
 - **Mr. Dropps** asked instead of managing walleye lakes with multiple species like bluegill and crappies, should UP walleye lakes be managed strictly for walleye and manage other lakes with good bluegill fishing, rather than trying to have both in the same lake. **Mr. Wesley** stated some people would like walleye in a good bluegill lake, and especially in the south, walleyes an actually help add some predation to the bluegills and increase the size structure. The goal is to not jeopardize a good fishery, however. **Mr. Dropps** stated he is concerned of putting bluegills into a good walleye lake just because they are wanted there. He also asked if all of the walleye fingerlings being reared at the Thompson Fish Hatchery are dedicated for the Bays de Noc in Lake Michigan, as he heard at a Lake Superior management unit meeting. **Mr. Wesley** stated that area is part of the entire walleye system and staff will look at existing prescriptions and units, filling in where they can. He stated he can see some of them going inland and some of them to the Bays de Noc, but they are not specified for one particular area.
 - **Mr. Holmes** asked if self-sustaining and natural reproduction are one and the same. **Mr. Wesley** stated there can be natural reproduction in a lake and to keep it self-sustaining, meaning it continues to go on and on, there may be some management needed or regulation changes. **Mr. Holmes** asked if those are monitored on a 6-year cycle. **Mr. Wesley** replied no, if they aren't being stocked, they wouldn't be part

of that cycle, but they could be part of a survey cycle, an electrofishing fall survey, a random survey, or the management unit may decide to step in. **Mr. Holmes** stated philosophy in Wisconsin is that they are for walleyes. He said they do supplemental planting in those self-sustaining and natural reproduction lakes to maintain them, so there are more walleyes in their lakes than Michigan has. He asked if that is something Michigan would consider. **Mr. Wesley** stated it would depend on the individual lake and further explained that he feels as a fish biologist, natural reproducing fish are a much better product than stocked fish and he would let the system run on its own, but if it needed a boost, then it certainly could be considered. **Ms. Haughey** added at an NRC meeting a few years ago, results of Wisconsin's assessment of Michigan's stocking were shared and they felt Michigan was adequately stocking. **Mr. Wesley** agreed, stating Wisconsin's review was supportive of what Michigan was doing. He said he believes that letter was circulated to groups.

- **Mr. Dropps** stated some members of the UPSA reviewed data for several lakes in Iron and Dickinson Counties and using the prescriptions that were written for them, surveys, and the natural reproduction in classes 1-4, results indicated some of the lakes shouldn't be stocked that currently are, lakes that were listed as self-supporting or having natural reproduction were either being stocked or weren't listed as walleye lakes. He asked if the DNR is open to a review of those lakes as the prescriptions are not being followed. **Mr. Wesley** stated if there is an issue, he can speak with Mr. Darren Kramer who is very open to meet with anyone who has questions and can get into the specific prescriptions for individual lakes in the northern Lake Michigan management plan. He also indicated the reason for the public comment period on the plan is to report these kinds of issues or concerns.
- **Chair Lorenson** thanked Mr. Wesley for discussing the plan and answering questions from the Council.

2. Carbon Credit Program on State Land (Suchovsky-Nov 2020): **Mr. Scott Whitcomb**, DNR senior advisor, stated the DNR has had an interest in forest carbon for some time, as industrial working lands and other land holdings have entered some of their acreage into carbon markets. It is using land for natural climate solutions, but it's never been tried, across the country, in a state forest system. The DNR wanted to enter a piece of the state forest into a pilot project to look at whether carbon would be a viable output and see if the carbon offset credits could be sold on the voluntary market.

- *Forest Carbon Pilot Project*: The Pigeon River Country State Forest was chosen for the pilot project. It is located in the northern lower peninsula 26 miles northeast of Gaylord and it's just over 100,000 acres. It is the smallest of the state forest units in the system and it has been home to Michigan's elk herd for over 100 years. There have been gas and oil production in that area with court battles dictating how that is managed and its managed for quiet recreation and scenic values as well. It also has its own citizens' advisory group with their own management plan. Commercial timber harvest is a key part of the DNR's management there for early successional young forest habitat for the elk. Carbon management has to be conducive with timber management which is another reason to test this theory in that area. There are strong co-benefits that align with forest goals, management and objectives in the Pigeon.
- *Pilot Project Steps*: The DNR issued a request for proposals and through a competitive process, three proposals were received and Bluesource was selected as the carbon credit developer. A carbon consultant was used as the DNR did not have the expertise inhouse to understand the nuances with the program and to measure the carbon outputs, market them, and go through the required protocols. Carbon markets are intensely regulated with improved forest management methodologies and credit accounting uses American Carbon Registry protocols. Bluesource has the expertise and are active and familiar with Michigan forests, especially in the Upper Peninsula in their work with The Nature Conservancy. The credits are calculated with fixed plots to determine how much carbon is being sequestered and then those credits are generated for independent verification and then sold on voluntary markets. It isn't a tax or mandatory. These credits

would be available to be sold to any company, corporation or individual who wanted to voluntarily offset their carbon emissions. A lot of big companies like Apple, Google, and Amazon are making commitments to their shareholders, their customers and in some cases to their employees that they have an interest to decarbonize their operations and what they can't decarbonize, they would purchase these credits to voluntarily offset their carbon use. The improved forest management methodology allows timber harvesting and accounts for durable timber harvests.

- *Interest:* Michigan is not the only state looking into this project, however, it is the first state to enter a state forest. There has been some local governments, NGOs, private landowners and universities that have tried it as well. The DNR polled state foresters from across the US and about 26 of them indicated they are looking at the same thing and are interested in Michigan's pilot project. Wisconsin, Alaska and Minnesota have reached out. The USDA is looking at ways to make these markets available and accessible to larger private landowners as well.
- *Summary:* This is a pilot project and no credits have been sold yet. The legwork is continuing, and more information will be available as the project progresses.

3. Repurposing Former Mine Sites for Renewable Energy (Suchovsky-Nov 2020): **Mr. Whitcomb** provided an update on the consideration and viability of using state land for utility scale solar. He presented the following information:

- The DNR manages 4.6 million acres of state surface ownership with most of this land used for state forest (3.9 million acres). Most of it is used for timber harvest, recreation and wildlife habitat. These will always be the primary uses.
- Most state land is not compatible for utility scale solar production. However, when looking at 4.6 million acres, there is bound to be some sites that have been degraded through past industrial use, including former mine sites and gravel pits. The DNR does not want to take way prime wildlife habitat, cut down timber and install solar panels. However, there may be other barren lands that may be conducive to utility scale solar.
- Proximity to interconnection with some sort of transmission line is key.
- Two sites of non-productive state land met the criteria to be conducive to this type of development: The Groveland Mine tailings site and a 7-mile gravel pit southeast of Grayling.
- The DNR issued a request for proposals and both sites were leased to Copper Country Power, LLC (CCP) as a solar developer.
- CCP has a 5-year period to conduct the interconnection studies and find an energy buyer. There is a lot of due diligence that has to be done to see whether the sites are actually viable and can be interconnected to the grid, such as environmental surveys, electrical capacity surveys, etc. There is a possibility the sites may not be suitable.
- PILT payments are still made to the local units of government. If developed, solar taxes and personal property taxes would be paid as well.
- Other scales of solar are also being investigated such as state park facilities, state fish hatcheries, etc. A small solar site was successfully installed at the Oden Fish Hatchery near Petoskey.
- An aerial photo of the Groveland Mine 613-acre site was shown indicating some grasslands and wetlands, a lot of soil compaction, the tailings basin, and a few forested plots.
- A lot of people don't see renewable energy on state lands as a good fit. In certain situations, like the Groveland Mine acreage, it is a good fit. Further explanations were provided.
- Questions:
 - **Mr. Schmidt** asked about the time commitment and if the amount charged is market based or a set fee. **Mr. Whitcomb** stated the life of the project is about 40 years. For the voluntary market, the DNR will

rely on the broker to get the best deal. The broker has a marketing division in Michigan that will negotiate a transaction between the different entities that may have an interest in these types of things. It's not an open market, but it's in the broker's best interest to get the highest value for the credit since they get a percentage.

- Mr. Edde from the public asked if durable timber harvest means it's not used for production or that it's not burned. **Mr. Whitcomb** clarified what durable timber is and that its life expectancy is quite long and further explained the process.
 - **Mr. Suchovsky** asked what kind of prices other folks in the carbon credit market have been receiving. **Mr. Whitcomb** stated it is not known what the volume would be, but some of the prices on the voluntary markets are in the \$6-\$12 per metric ton range. This may not be in this area but those are some of the prices in other areas. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked, in regards to the Pigeon River Pilot Project, how is the amount that can be harvested balanced with the type of harvest without running a deficit. **Mr. Whitcomb** explained the methodology used in modeling growth and establishing baselines and contingencies, using forest management plans, forest health, forest inventory data, etc.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** stated these are great projects and he is excited about both of them. He stated it would be nice to look at industrial sites or current mine sites, like the Republic Mine or Cleveland Cliffs mine who are large users of electricity in the UP, have a lot of space, is out of the public's way/fenced off, which could be used for something like this and should be high priority sites. He also noted a frustration with solar systems set up in the UP as fixed panels that do not tilt and become covered with snow and are useless for a portion of the year. **Mr. Whitcomb** stated the technology has improved to make them more efficient with tilting options, etc.
 - **Chair Lorensen** thanked Mr. Whitcomb for the update.
4. HANDOUT ONLY - History of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (Schmidt-Dec 2020): **Chair Lorensen** stated in lieu of a presentation and in consideration of time for the agenda topics this evening, a handout was provided in the meeting packet for Council members on the History of the Land & Water Conservation Fund. If there are any questions regarding the fund, a contact number and email for Ms. Christie Bayus was provided.
5. CAC Membership Update: **Ms. Haughey** stated every two years, half of the Council members' term limits expire and are up for renewal. She congratulated those up for renewal and who expressed the desire to renew for the current term: Mr. Floyd Dropps, Mr. Mike Holmes, Mr. Dave Johnson, Mr. George Lindquist, Ms. Mary Peterson, Mr. Skip Schulz, Mr. Tom Solka and Mr. Warren Suchovsky. There are a total of 2 vacancies left by Mr. Jake Putala and former Chair Phil Wirtanen. The CAC Selection Team, which is a mix of staff and outside stakeholders, met on March 8 to review all applications received and chose new members based on a variety of demographics (interest, experience, county, etc.). The background screening process is currently being done and once complete, new members will be contacted for a verbal acceptance. Orientation will take place afterwards with the hopes that new members can attend the next WUPCAC meeting on May 19.

Reports from Committee Meetings Held

Chair Lorensen opened the floor for reports from those committees that held meetings.

1. Fisheries: **Mr. Dropps** provided an overview of the last Fisheries Committee meeting discussions which included several items. He first addressed the inland walleye management plan for the entire state and reviewed concerns the committee had with several areas of the plan, which were emailed to the Council last week:

- *Angler Behavior & Perception Section:* Suggestions from a social and public perspective to help the public understand how management decisions are considered along with the rationale were given.
- *Additional Section on Previous Walleye Management Goals & Objectives:* It would be informative to include a section of the plan that reviews previous walleye management goals and objectives, including accomplishments, challenges, changing threats, how management and/or policy priorities have changed related to walleye management.
- *Lakes Classification:* It is felt some lakes were misclassified. It was recommended the DNR continually evaluate lakes and perform maintenance and supplemental stocking if lakes show unsuccessful multiple low year class survival. It was also recommended the DNR be flexible in defining the categories in Appendix A and to update the list as needed based on continued evaluations.
- *More detailed processes and procedures need to be developed and followed to ensure consistent development and sustainability of walleye lakes versus using professional experience:* There appears to be a conflict between “professional judgment”, “professional expertise”, and surveyed lakes when determining the status of which lakes are naturally reproducing and which require stocking. It is recommended that a proper lake survey be conducted on any lakes which relied on “professional expertise” or “professional judgement” for lake classification in lieu of survey data.
- *Walleye rearing pond failures:* It is recommended that an objective be added to the plan to address the systemic walleye rearing pond failures in the UP.
- *The cost of rearing walleyes:* It is recommended that a perspective needs to be shown about the cost of the walleye program compared to other fisheries to allow anglers to see where the DNR is spending their dollars.
- *Proximity to population centers and economic impact:* Economic consideration effects need to be included in the decision-making process and it is recommended a new section on economic impact should be added, particularly as it relates to the western UP.
- *Appendix D Regulatory Toolbox:*
 - *15-inch minimum size:* The committee is pleased with the 15-inch minimum size limit in the UP. Having a difference size limit between different lakes would further complicate the issue if natural reproduction was occurring.
 - *Slot limits:* Slot limits are a poor choice for most of the inland waters of the UP. The DNR should educate fisherman that slot limits have a place, but only where they will work effectively.
 - *No possession of walleye:* Property owners and fishermen would be opposed to losing a lake where walleyes could be kept.
 - *Changes to regulations:* It is strongly recommended that studies and public meetings with stakeholder approval be conducted prior to using tools in this toolbox. It is also recommended an automatic expiration date of five years be established for these regulation changes.
- *Closing Comments:* The committee’s views are presented from a perspective of someone living in the UP. It may vary from others, just as the fisheries vary within different parts of the state. The group looks forward to a new management plan that will be a useful guide to make walleye fishing better for the residents and fishermen of Michigan.

For the Council’s consideration, **Chair Lorenson** summarized briefly that the committee is asking for a resolution recommending the inland walleye management plan: 1) address angler behavior and perception so that people can better understand the fisheries audience; 2) add an additional section to look at quality management goals and objectives in the past, what’s worked, what hasn’t worked, etc.; 3) include a better description for lake classification, how data is used in determining that, what kinds of flexibility there would be in terms of definitions; 4) include a better definition of the processes that are used and how the data is used in

those processes and in the planning; 5) review the failures of walleye rearing with an eye toward improvement, given the sportspersons' demand for that fishery; 6) better explain the budget limitations with a need to have a better return on investment based on the economic impact of the region from the walleye fisheries; 7) address the significant economic impact that summer visitors and tourists from Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota have on the western UP, who buy fishing licenses to fish walleye, which ultimately contributes to DNR funding; and 8) address some options presented for the regulatory toolbox. **Mr. Dropps** agreed it is a good summary.

Mr. Schulz asked if it would be more economic to raise fingerlings in the private sector and would there be a possibility of raising the license fees to have funds segregated specifically for walleye rearing. **Mr. Dropps** explained the cost in private hatcheries raising fall fingerlings and the lack of return in raising spring fingerlings. He also explained the potential difference in standards between private hatcheries and the integrity of the fish coming from the DNR hatcheries. **Ms. Haughey** stated, regarding the license fees, a change in the structure would have to go through a legislative process. **Chair Lorensen** stated he would be personally concerned with a diversion of fishing license fees which could become a conundrum due to the specific preferences of different fisherman and could result in monies not being available for other things.

Chair Lorensen stated the Council has heard Mr. Dropps' explanation, and noted his understanding is the resolution, once voted on and if approved, would be sent to the Director asking that these considerations be included in the plan and that a copy of the resolution could be sent to the NRC as well. He opened the floor for DNR Fisheries staff to provide feedback.

Mr. Wesley stated he appreciated all of these comments and they will be included in the management plan review. Regarding lake classification, it is a model based on a few variables and wasn't sure if the model was being questioned or if it was the lakes that are classified as a type one and if they can still have walleye in them. He further explained lake classification is another tool to evaluate lakes to allow for an extra review when needed, but the classification is not set in stone. Regarding walleye rearing, he noted hatcheries are not built for walleye, but rather they are built for salmon and trout rearing. The extra ponds at the Thompson Hatchery are being built specifically for walleye so more can be raised. There are similar ponds at Wolf Lake to help raise walleye; however, 80-90% of walleye are raised through partnerships with satellite ponds that are scattered throughout the state and it works very well in southern Michigan. It's the only way it can be done in Michigan. He encouraged people and clubs to get involved to help start new ponds. Michigan gets compared to Wisconsin frequently, and they have 5 dedicated hatcheries just for walleye. He stated it would cost \$25 million to get to that point.

Chair Lorensen called for a motion on the resolution. **Mr. Lindquist motioned to approve the resolution to forward the WUPCAC Fisheries Committee's comments and recommendations on the inland walleye management plan as presented to the DNR Director with a copy sent to the NRC; Mr. Schultz supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See page 1. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

Next, **Dr. Schott** presented the second resolution for consideration from the Fisheries Committee regarding a proposal by the Michigan Spearfishing Association to allow free diving and snorkeling as a means to take gamefish by use of a spear gun. He explained the concerns by the Fisheries Committee:

- *Fair chase of spearing versus fishing:* Some members are experienced snorkelers and indicated it would be quite easy to spear game fish.

- *Future expansion beyond the Great Lakes:* The proposal is for the Great Lakes but most feel this would only be a first step and that once a season was established, it most likely could be expanded to inland lakes and could be expanded to include scuba equipment.
- *Participation could increase:* Although the current number who participate in spearing is low now, the committee feels it would expand rapidly once it's found there is an easier way to take game fish.
- *Final Comments:* The committee feels the taking of game fish needs to be conducted in a manner that allows for fair catch. Only methods that will not have the potential to adversely affect the population dynamics of the fishery should be employed. For those reasons, the committee is opposed to underwater spearing of game fish and urges the DNR not to allow this method of game fish harvest.

Dr. Schott indicated he did some research and could not find anything that indicates this type of fishing does anything good for the fish populations, only that a decline in populations of fish occurs. Most of the studies are in salt waters on a reef. He further explained the ease at which fish could be caught in this manner. **Chair Lorenson** asked if this is a proposal that the NRC is currently considering. **Mr. Wesley** stated yes and indicated the Michigan Spearfishing Association has made a presentation on how it's done and indicated they would like to target the walleye and trout species. He stated it's not as easy as one thinks as it's difficult to hold a person's breath long enough to get down to where these fish are and rarely would they reach a bag limit. He stated biologically, there is no issue with this type of fishing. It opens up opportunity, but it would need to be monitored. The current number of people that do this is small and they are rarely successful. **Chair Lorenson** asked what the timeline is for NRC. **Mr. Wesley** replied it will go to the NRC for information in September and a decision would be expected in October.

Mr. Lindquist stated he is in full support of this resolution, adding that he feels additional fish species and gear would be expanded beyond the initial proposal. **Mr. Hall** indicated he was a scuba diver and snorkeler for many years and agrees that the take of fish in this manner would be extremely easy; he is opposed to underwater spearfishing. **Mr. Johnson** stated he's been diving since he was 11 years old and agrees with everything Mr. Hall spoke about, stating it would be like fishing in a barrel. **Ms. Duncan** also indicated she was a diver for many years and it's very easy to sneak up on fish and feels it's an unfair way to catch fish.

Chair Lorenson asked for a vote on the resolution, indicating the resolution will also be sent to the Director with a copy to the NRC. **Mr. Lindquist** motioned to approve the resolution indicating the WUPCAC opposes underwater spearfishing of game fish as presented; **Mr. Solka** supported the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See page 1. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

Chair Lorenson asked if the Fisheries Committee can present their remaining resolutions at the next meeting, due to time constraints, if they are not time sensitive. **Mr. Dropps** agreed.

2. Forestry: No report.
3. Trails/Recreation/Law: **Chair Lorenson** reported the group did not meet and there is no report. **Ms. Duncan** stated she has supplied everything Mr. Rich wanted her to produce such as letters from different trail groups in Michigan for Van Riper to become an equestrian campground and asked if there is more that she need to do. **Ms. Haughey** mentioned equestrian use on state lands is an agenda item for the next meeting in May.
4. Wildlife: **Mr. Lindquist** reported the committee did not meet but he wanted to take time to acknowledge receipt of and comment on the DNR's responses to two resolutions regarding a moose management plan and

revisions to the wolf management plan. (Copies of both responses were sent to the Council members prior to the meeting.)

- *Resolution re: Moose Management Plan:* **Mr. Lindquist** stated he served on the original moose hunting advisory committee on behalf of MUCC and one of the main recommendations from the team was to develop a moose management plan. He noted this is why he brought it forward again as it has been years since the recommendation was made and although the DNR said it was low on funding to create a plan several years ago, he felt the license package that was passed would create funding for programs like this. He added from various reports, it seems deer have not been the limiting factor on moose here in the UP compared to Minnesota. **Chair Lorensen** stated he understood there to be no management plan, but instead there were prescriptions or guidelines used in managing moose. **Mr. Roell** indicated when the DNR did research on collared moose, a lot of brain worm was not found like researchers originally thought. It is not really known what the limiting factors are for moose in the UP. He stated when writing a management plan, it includes how to mitigate limiting factors that may affect moose abundance and in order to determine what those limiting factors are, a large amount of research is needed to get to that stage. The DNR currently takes an active role in looking at forest management prescriptions where there are moose and within the moose range, and staff consciously looks at habitat features that favor or benefit moose. Every other year surveys continue (it was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic) and staff continue to monitor the population in that fashion. **Chair Lorensen** stated it would be helpful for the Council to understand when the DNR looks at the moose population, what considerations are evaluated, absent a management plan. He suggested putting something together to share with the Council by email. **Mr. Roell** stated he will speak to Mr. Chad Stewart to come up with a bulleted list to share. **Mr. Lindquist** asked if other area biologists provide input like Mr. Roell does for his area. **Mr. Roell** stated they should be and knows that biologists in Baraga and Iron Counties do look at the same things to benefit moose when reviewing forest management prescriptions. **Mr. Seablom** concurred with Mr. Roell stating moose and moose habitat are definitely considered in the forest management plans across the UP.
- *Resolution re: Revisions to the Wolf Management Plan:* **Mr. Lindquist** noted the DNR responded they would like to wait to for the legal status to be more appropriately settled before considering a wolf hunt; however, he said he doesn't see that it will end. **Ms. Haughey** stated currently there are two pending lawsuits and explained the response is not in letter form as it is intended to respond to several groups who sent the same exact resolution. **Mr. Lindquist** mentioned the response also indicates the plan will include public input and the resolution was just that.

Next Meeting

1. Next Meeting Date: **Chair Lorensen** noted the next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 beginning at 6:00pm Eastern / 5:00pm Central and held virtually.
2. Items for Next WUPCAC Meeting Agenda: **Chair Lorensen** noted at the bottom of the agenda were a list of future agenda topics which will be considered when developing the next meeting agenda. They include rules and regulations for equestrian use on state land and the State Forest Management Plan updates. He explained he is trying to manage agenda topics so there is an appropriate amount of information or education but also preserving as much time as possible for discussion, since the Council is an advisory group and items need to be discussed if recommendations are to be given. Any additional topics can be sent to him, Ms. Haughey or to Ms. Dahlstrom.

Public Comments

Chair Lorensen opened the floor for public comment:

1. *Mr. Jordan Hoover, Baraga County UP Whitetails:* Mr. Hoover spoke about archery doe tags, late season crossbow use, and sound scientific management, stating he's been working on these issues since early last spring, speaking at previous WUPCAC meetings as well as the NRC meetings. He stated the DNR was very good about conducting their research, gathering data and canvassing for public opinion and despite the DNR's recommendations on archery doe tags and late season crossbow use which went to the NRC twice, the NRC chose to act against those recommendations at their last meeting. He stated he questioned both UP commissioners and neither answered his questions. He stated he feels that sound scientific management was not considered in their decisions. He asked the WUPCAC what their position is and how the Council can help. **Chair Lorensen** stated he doesn't believe the Council can reply directly to that question and explained the role of the Council is to provide advice to the DNR, which then it is evaluated and may or may not be accepted. He further stated that the Council cannot speak to the commissioners' decisions. Mr. Hoover asked if the WUPCAC supports the DNR's findings pertaining to the archery doe tag and the late season crossbow. **Chair Lorensen** stated the Council did discuss it, but due to the variety of different views presented, the Council did not pass a formal resolution and council members individually submitted their preferences to the DNR and NRC. **Mr. Lindquist** felt it wouldn't be right for the NRC to rubber stamp everything that is handed to them and stated there may be different ways to look at things with sound science included. He provided an example of crossbow usage. **Chair Lorensen** thanked Mr. Hoover for his comments.
2. *Ms. Marcy Cella, L'Anse:* Ms. Cella stated she was instrumental in getting the crossbow legislation changed initially to allow people of a certain age to use them. It took off and the DNR benefitted in funding due to the increase in sales. She stated she appreciated being able to use it as she wasn't able to shoot a rifle.

Council Closing Comments

Chair Lorensen opened the floor for Council comments.

- **Mr. Moran** noted that many people are looking forward to the new Marquette County shooting range, stating it will be a beneficial public range for people to shoot and learn better gun/shooting safety in a regulated environment.
- **Chair Lorensen** added he spoke with Ms. Dahlstrom and for a future meeting, she will put together a program that will help everyone find information on the DNR website as it's sometimes difficult for Council members to navigate and find what they are looking for or may not realize is available.

Adjournment

Chair Lorensen thanked everyone who participated and for their contributions. He adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm Eastern/7:30pm Central.