

# Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 22, 2019

5:30-8:00pm Eastern

Michigan Tech University-Memorial Union Building, Houghton, MI

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*Chairman: Phil Wirtanen Vice-Chairman: Warren Suchovsky*

### Council Members Present

Floyd Dropps  
Joan Duncan  
Barb Gadjewski  
Dave Hall  
Mike Holmes

George Lindquist  
Chauncey Moran  
Horst Schmidt  
Kirk Schott  
Tom Solka

Trevor St. John  
Warren Suchovsky  
Phil Wirtanen

### Council Members Absent/Excused

Jim Baker  
Dave Johnson  
Jim Lorenson

Mary Peterson  
Jake Putala  
Skip Schulz

Travis Smith

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

Brad Carlson, Forest Resources Division, Baraga  
Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette  
Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator, Executive Division, Marquette  
George Madison, Fisheries Division, Baraga  
Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division, Marquette  
CO Byron Parks, Law Enforcement Division, Ontonagon  
Sgt. Marc Pomroy, Law Enforcement Division, Houghton  
Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga  
Anna Sylvester, Parks & Recreation Division, Lansing  
Matt Torreano, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails, Marquette  
Jay Wesley, Fisheries Division, Plainwell  
Ron Yesney, Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails, Marquette

### Call to Order

**Chair Wirtanen** called the meeting to order at 5:34pm Eastern and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### New Member Introduction/Current Member Introductions

**Ms. Stacy Haughey** welcomed the Council, DNR staff, and public attendees. She introduced new Council member Ms. Barb Gadjewski from Iron River and provided a brief background of her interests, including those involving invasive species. **Ms. Haughey** explained Ms. Gadjewski fills the spot vacated by Mr. Bob Stinson who retired from the Council. The Council acknowledged the valued contributions Mr. Stinson provided and welcomed Ms. Gadjewski.

### Adoption of Agenda

**Chair Wirtanen** asked the Council if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. **Mr. Hall 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 March 2019 meeting minutes. None were brought forth. **Mr. Suchovsky motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Mr. Moran supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried.**

### Annual Election of Officers

**Chair Wirtanen** noted the Bylaws require the Council to have an officer election each year, which traditionally occurs annually at the May meeting. He opened the floor for nominations for 2019:

- Chairman: **Mr. Moran** motioned to nominate **Mr. Wirtanen** to continue as Chairman. **Mr. Wirtanen** accepted the nomination. **Mr. Holmes** supported the motion. After three additional opportunities, no additional nominations were brought forth.
- Vice-Chairman: **Mr. Schmidt** motioned to nominate **Mr. Suchovsky** to continue as Vice Chairman. **Mr. Suchovsky** accepted the nomination. **Mr. Moran** supported the motion. After three additional opportunities, no additional nominations were brought forth.
- Vote: **A vote was taken on the motions in favor of Mr. Wirtanen for Chairman and Mr. Suchovsky for Vice Chairman. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: See attendance on page 1. Motion carried unanimously.**
- Final Results: **Mr. Wirtanen remains Chairman for 2019 and Mr. Suchovsky remains Vice Chairman for 2019.**

### DNR Reports from Division Staff

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on May 15, 2019. The following verbal updates were provided.

- **Stacy Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator:** **Ms. Haughey** acknowledged the presence of Mr. Brady Tervo from Sen. McBroom's office who was also present at today's listening session. She mentioned the UP CWD Listening Session for the NRC's proposal regarding UP baiting and feeding regulations was held earlier in the day. She stated she will be speaking about the regulations later in the meeting and if there is anyone here at the meeting who would like to comment, a public comment period will be held at the end of the agenda. There are also email and mailing options to send in comments and referenced a handout with that information at the entry table. She thanked Ms. Duncan for working with the DNR on the development of a UP equestrian trail map and thanked Mr. Yesney and his crew for putting it together (copy in meeting packets). She welcomed Ms. Anna Sylvester from the Parks & Recreation Division (Lansing) and Mr. Jay Wesley from the Fisheries Division (Plainwell).
- **George Madison, Fisheries Division:** **Mr. Madison** indicated it is a busy time for the Fisheries Division with staff heavily involved in field work. Hatchery trucks are on the road stocking UP waters. He introduced Mr. Jay Wesley who is the Lake Michigan Fisheries Coordinator. **Mr. Wesley** stated he will be filling in at the CACs as a representative for Chief Jim Dexter, who will be very involved in tribal negotiations over the next two years. **Mr. Lindquist** asked about the federal planting of lake trout in Lake Michigan. **Mr. Wesley** replied the majority are lean trout and described the strains and the process in evaluating what strains will work best. **Mr. Moran** asked about the grayling initiative. **Mr. Wesley** replied eggs from Alaska were just delivered to MSU for a research project and will be moved to Oden State Fish Hatchery afterwards. It will be another 2-3 years before

they are stocked into river systems in the lower peninsula. No stocking of grayling is planned for the UP at this time. **Mr. Moran** stated he spoke with Chief Dexter in boosting outreach to educate the public about not fishing for them. **Mr. Wesley** indicated it is currently illegal to fish for arctic grayling and a request to change the statute will be initiated once they are stocked. **Mr. Hall** asked about the status of invasive species in the Great Lakes. **Mr. Wesley** stated invasive carp are about 43 miles away from Lake Michigan at this time and they are reviewing barriers. There is no evidence of them here and to date, eDNA testing has been negative.

- **Brad Carlson, Forest Resources Division:** **Mr. Carlson** stated he was attending on behalf of Mr. Tom Seablom. He stated it looked like a promising season for prescribed burns, but with recent rainfall, it has come to a halt. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked about unit funding for road maintenance. **Mr. Carlson** indicated funding was raised from \$5,000 to \$7,500 for each unit, which is significant. He referenced several bridges that will be replaced, noting road infrastructure is being improved.
- **Bill Scullon, Wildlife Division:** **Mr. Scullon**, who was attending on behalf of Mr. Terry Minzey, indicated the division has funded 960 acres for prescribed burning to benefit wildlife and forestry. Summer and fall burns are planned in addition to the spring burns. He elaborated on the division report mention of a research project with White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in bats. He stated Mr. John DePue, wildlife biologist from Baraga, is working with MTU and others on a first-of-its-kind ventilation method at a site in the Porkies where a large population of 18,000 bats have been reduced to 100 because of the disease. He also provided an update on the replacement of an old pump system at the Sturgeon River Sloughs in Arnheim (Baraga County). **Mr. Lindquist** asked if funding for prescribed burns is less for the UP than the lower peninsula since they can start their burns earlier. **Mr. Scullon** explained the process has been changed to alleviate this issue, noting time is very short in the UP to get burns accomplished. **Mr. Hall** asked if the cause of WNS is known and if the DNR has contact with others in the country dealing with the disease. **Mr. Scullon** replied the DNR is involved on a national scale, working with universities and other states (the disease is in 28 states and 7 provinces). Michigan is the lead state in conducting trials here. An 80% decline is what they are seeing, with a 98% decline in brown bats. There is currently no resistance seen. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked where the funding comes from for research and if some bats are reaching endangered status. **Mr. Scullon** indicated Mr. DePue writes grants for the USF&WS and funding is also received from Pittman-Robertson specific to bat projects. He also described the current state of endangerment.
- **Sgt. Marc Pomroy, Law Enforcement Division:** **Sgt. Pomroy**, who was attending on behalf of Lt. Ryan Aho, introduced new CO Byron Parks who is assigned to Ontonagon County. Other new officers will be assigned in the summer, including one in Iron County and another in Dickinson County.
- **Doug Rich, Parks & Recreation Division:** **Mr. Rich** provided the following updates:
  - South Boundary Road in the Porkies just opened, and Craig Lake State Park just opened this past week.
  - A public open house will be held in the evening on August 14<sup>th</sup> for the Porkies general management plan at the Ontonagon High School.
  - The new bike pump tract is up and running at Van Riper State Park; it is the first of its kind at a Michigan state park. Friends of Van Riper and Craig Lake were very instrumental in obtaining the track and the Water Warrior Island. It is hoped the parking lots will be full this summer as a result of these new features.
  - Tentatively, 4 former Department of Correction employees from Gogebic County will be starting with the Parks and Recreation Division.
  - A meeting was held with the Oman family on the status of Oman Creek; they are very pleased with the overall progress.
  - A culvert blew out at the boating access site at Van Riper. Staff were able to get folks into the boat launch through another avenue until replacement occurs.
  - The Menominee River railroad dock was cleared off after the recent storm in that area.

- **Mr. Schmidt** asked about the status of McLain State Park. **Mr. Rich** indicated they are entering the last phase, phase 3 of design, with construction to be held next summer. The new campground will be open July 1. Phase 2, the campground office, is in the works. The day use area is entirely different and includes a nice ADA pathway down to the beach. **Mr. Schmidt** asked if there is any additional storm damage to the shore. **Mr. Rich** stated \$300,000 was spent to armor 1,100 feet of shoreline to protect critical infrastructure and it has weathered the storms well.
- **Mr. Solka** asked about the updates at Baraga State Park. **Mr. Rich** replied construction started on the north end of the campground which is closed until July. New electrical service will be installed. After the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, construction on the south end will occur with full hookup sites being added there. It is projected to be completed by November 1.

### **New Business**

1. **Western UP Trail Update:** **Mr. Yesney** presented an update on a variety of trail projects in the Western UP along with an update on the Houghton County trail incident from last June.
  - **Non-Motorized Trails:**
    - Approximately 26 miles of hiking and biking trails have been signed and is being managed at Little Presque Isle. The work was accomplished with the Forest Resources and Wildlife Divisions and serves not only the public but also the hunting population.
    - Grants were issued for the Copper Harbor mountain bike trail. The Keweenaw Point management plan was created for a mountain bike trail. Iron Belle Trail Grants were approved for Dickinson, Iron and Gogebic Counties for trail development. The North Country Trail received four grants for bridge and boardwalk work.
    - In 2011, the DNR worked with WUPPDR to commission and pay for the Copper Heritage Trail Plan. The concept was to use old railroad corridors to connect the mining sites with a bike path. The study is complete, but a grant sponsor hasn't been found. He explained the partnership they typically engage in for these types of trails. He encouraged any group interested in being a sponsor to contact him.
    - The Thunder Valley Equestrian Trail proposal was approved and is being marked by a forester and trail partners this week. A connector to the Marquette County Fairgrounds will be complete this year. In addition, Ms. Duncan suggested the development of a better map for those who want to come to the UP to ride their horses. One was developed (copy in meeting packets) and a map crew in Lansing developed an even more comprehensive one that is now available online. He thanked Ms. Duncan for her involvement and helping to advance that feature.
  - **Motorized Trails:**
    - Permits have been granted for a growing number of bike races (fat bikes, snow bikes and mountain bikes). The Snowball 500 with Ford Raptors from downstate is a successful event that brings people to the UP in the winter. Dog sled races are given permits on state trails in the winter. It can be tricky with snowmobile season in progress.
    - Snowmobile season went well. Trail permits sold are down a bit from last year. Trail counters reported the number of snowmobilers were less. Snow was all over the state and Wisconsin, so there wasn't the need to come to the UP for snow. Working with law enforcement, a new safety program called Ride Right was launched. A lot of website and internet outreach has been done and placemats are being developed for next year. The overall message is to slow down, ride sober, be aware of groomers, and ride home safe to family and friends.
    - ORV routes are expanding with the number of trail permits growing each year. Funding from the 2014 increase in the cost of ORV trail permits is now becoming available. 99 miles of trail have been added

to the eastern UP, 57 miles added to the central UP, and 22 miles added to the western UP. A connector to the two existing motorcycle trails in Marquette & Dickinson Counties will be open soon.

- Alpha Signage:
  - **Mr. Yesney** touched on the history of the alpha signage issue that the Council has been discussing for several years. It involves a letter system that corresponds to a map making it easier for people to follow. He stated he spoke with Chief Ron Olson and Assistant Chief Jackie Blodgett who have asked him to put together a report that they will bring to the ORVAW Meeting on June 12. **Ms. Haughey** thanked him for his efforts and would like to acknowledge Council Member Skip Schulz when the system is in place, perhaps after the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Mr. Yesney** stated he is aware Mr. Schulz suggested this process 15 years ago.
- Houghton County Trails-2018 Flood Mitigation:
  - Maps: An overview of the washout areas in the county were shown.
  - Overview and Work Plans: As a result of the flood, there were 220 washouts, approximately 20 slumps, and hundreds of blocked culverts. To date, 59 have been completed or stabilized. Work plans for 2019 include engineering, hydraulic and hydrology analysis, gravel capping and grading on the Bill Nichols and Hancock to Calumet trails, washout naturalization on the Lake Linden trail, and culvert replacements on the Lake Linden to Normand Road area. Staff have worked hard to get the trail system open. There has been a significant amount of rain this spring causing 4-5 new washouts due to spring runoff. Several questions were answered.
  - Post Flood Update: Public input sessions and municipal meetings were held, and monitoring flights were conducted frequently. An incident management team was on standby. **Mr. Torreano** talked briefly about the number of sessions held and who with. He said people were positive and mainly wanted to know when the trails would be back in use.
  - Draft Work Plans: Maps and draft work plans on the Lake Linden and Hubble trails, the Bill Nichols trail, Freda Grade and the Houghton to Chassell trail were shown. Work to be performed on each trail along with a timeframe were listed.
  - Questions from Council Members:
    - **Mr. Schmidt** asked if any FEMA funding has been received to help with repairs. **Mr. Yesney** indicated the FEMA funding is a reimbursement, meaning the DNR cannot apply for funding until money is spent. He stated there are certain situations where funding can be obtained upfront, but under unique circumstances. The total cost of all the repairs is \$20 million and the DNR currently has about \$900,000 for this year. A lot of this year's work is for engineering and analysis with construction to occur next year.
    - **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Park Endowment Fund or other state grant funding could be utilized. **Ms. Sylvester** indicated because it's not a state park, the projects are not eligible.
    - **Mr. Lindquist** asked if there are any partnerships with local clubs, groups or communities helping with funding. **Mr. Yesney** indicated DNR staff and contractors have done most of the work and the Keweenaw ATV Club has helped immensely. Partners have helped with the work; however, as the projects move forward, more will be needed once construction begins.
    - **Mr. Suchovsky** asked what type of gravel is used. **Mr. Yesney** stated 22A or 23A gravel is typically used and sometimes limestone is used near homes because it causes less dust and it is good for multi-use trails, but it is more expensive.
    - **Mr. Schmidt** asked if monitoring of sites will be ongoing in Houghton county. **Mr. Yesney** indicated they will have people on the ground monitoring sites and press releases on the progress will be frequently sent out. **Mr. Schmidt** also asked whose responsibility is it to clean out blocked culverts.

**Mr. Yesney** stated the National Guard, forest fire officers, parks staff have all helped—it depends on situation.

**Chair Wirtanen** thanked Mr. Yesney for the thorough update.

### **Old Business**

1. **Proposed Marquette County Shooting Range Update:** **Ms. Haughey** indicated there have been a few internal meetings with Cliffs Natural Resources regarding the proposed location which is on Cliff's property. A more detailed update will be available for the next meeting in July.
  
2. **Proposed UP Deer Regulations Recommended to the NRC & CWD Update:** **Ms. Haughey** referred to a handout listing the proposed regulations as well as dates and times of listening sessions held. She asked the public to review them. She stated on April 25<sup>th</sup> regulations were proposed to the NRC for the May NRC meeting. She attended an SCI banquet in Harris and disseminated information on the proposed regulations there. In response to added feedback, meetings were scheduled around the UP since the NRC schedule, which was determined a year ago, was meeting in Detroit in June and in Lansing for May and July. She provided the following presentation which was the same provided at the UP listening sessions:
  - Three UP listening sessions were held: May 4 in Hermansville, May 22 in Houghton, and June 10 in Harris.
  - Meeting Format: CWD overview, NRC proposal, public comment and post meeting DNR staff will provide a written comment summary to the entire NRC.
  - No decision has been made. The decision will be made by the NRC.
  - CWD: A photo of the CWD brochure was shown. She indicated both the East and West Councils have been talking about CWD for several years.
  - CWD Response Plan Review: The response plan was issued in August of 2002 and was reviewed in July of 2012. 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.
  - A UP CWD Task Force was created in 2017 by then NRC Commissioner JR Richardson. She noted the Council members who are a part of the Task Force. In 2017, the Task Force passed a resolution supporting the banning of baiting and feeding in any township that touches a 10-mile radius of an index case (civil townships).
  - A map was shown of the 10-mile radius around the positive case in the UP (Dickinson County), confirmed in October 2018.
  - In 2019 the UP CWD Task Force revised their resolution to remove 71 square miles from their original resolution. This resolution was submitted to the NRC.
  - A map was shown of the latest deer movement study indicating deer near the location of the index case have crossed into the Wisconsin border.
  - UP Public Engagement: The DNR has been asked how long this topic has been discussed. Slides of meetings held in the UP which were advertised as 1) a public meeting, 2) public comments were accepted at the meeting, and 3) where CWD was the agenda topic or sole purpose of the meeting. 57 meetings were held in the UP going back as far as 2014. This does not include Task Force meetings.

- Opportunities for public input were listed on the handout. They include email, postal mail, listening sessions, NRC meetings, etc. She highlighted the upcoming June 10<sup>th</sup> listening session in Harris and the June 10<sup>th</sup> EUPCAC meeting in Wetmore as opportunities.
- The NRC will take public comments throughout May and June. They are expected to make a decision at their July 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Proposed antlerless quota changes in the UP were explained and will be decided upon by the NRC at their June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Ms. Haughey** opened the floor for Council questions.

- **Mr. Suchovsky** spoke about the national/federal regulation requiring electronic identification of beef cattle and bison and in talking with some biologists, he says they have a strong sense that CWD issues are coming from captive cervid facilities. He asked if this type of system should be required of captive cervid facilities. **Ms. Haughey** stated it may be something for the UP CWD Task Force to review. It was noted the Department of Agriculture is in partnership with the DNR and have had co-meetings to discuss things like this.
- **Mr. Holmes** stated on the Ask the DNR television show last week, a caller asked if they should be worried about consuming a deer if it was indeed infected with CWD. The DNR staff person stated if it is infected, do not eat it. **Mr. Holmes** stated it confused a lot of people. **Ms. Haughey** stated the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations state to not eat an infected deer, and the DNR's recommendation is if a deer is killed close to the core area, it should be tested, and if found positive, it is not recommended to eat it. **Mr. Holmes** asked if there is a charge for testing; **Ms. Haughey** replied there is no charge. He stated the staff person on TV did not say that.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** recommended anyone attending an NRC meeting in Lansing should take the opportunity to tour the MSU Diagnostics Lab where CWD testing occurs. It's really something to see.
- **Mr. Schmidt** asked if there is any cooperation on the Wisconsin side of the UP border. **Ms. Haughey** stated the DNR is working with them at the biologist to biologist level. She stated she spoke with someone at the listening session earlier who hunts in Wisconsin and they indicated how it became very divisive there. She noted the DNR wishes to make sure everyone is engaged in conversation on this issue. She spoke about the CWD Symposium held and the videos available on the website and encouraged everyone to view them.

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

**Chair Wirtanen** opened the floor for Committee reports:

1. **Fisheries:** **Mr. Dropps** reported the committee met through a combination of phone calls and email. All committee members agreed that the present method of walleye rearing was not meeting the needs of the UP. He provided a quick overview of the status of fisheries with a slide presentation. Members of the committee have reviewed it previously.
  - **Fish Production 2019:** The information presented is all preliminary projections and may have some inaccuracies or need interpretation. It is presented only to provide a general overview of where the stocking dollars are being spent throughout the UP. **Mr. Dropps** stated most of the information on the number of fish that are going to be raised in the UP is from Mr. Phil Schneeberger of the Fisheries Division.
  - **State of Michigan Fish Rearing:** 17.5% is going to the UP (\$1,750,000) while the rest is going to the lower peninsula (\$8,250,000). Total is approximately \$10 million.
  - **2019 UP Proposed Stocking Agenda:** A graph by species of UP proposed stocking cost in dollars was shown, with brook trout being the highest at \$476,196 and walleye at \$289,690.
  - **2019 UP Proposed Stocking by County:** A chart showed the percentage of stocking by county.

- Walleye Stocking: 17% (\$289,690) of UP total (\$1,410,310). **Mr. Dropps** noted when he showed this chart before it was 5-6%. He spoke about fall fingerlings being raised in different locations and the cost to raise them. The number of fingerlings is decreasing.
- Walleye Stocking 5% of \$1.5 million of UP Total: Using walleye rearing 10-year average 5% of 155,000 = \$76,000.
- Walleye Stocked Fingerlings: A stocking chart from 2009-2019 was shown, indicating UP walleye rearing is only achieving about 40% of the needed spring fingerlings. **Mr. Dropps** stated he is tired of hearing "it's been a bad spring" each year over and over.
- DNR Walleye Rearing Pond Production: A chart from 1997-2019 was shown (from the Lake Michigan management unit).

**Mr. Dropps** stated he would like to see a letter of recommendation from the Council that UP stocking be prioritized, with more emphasis put on it. He indicated he had discussions with the former Director and he agreed something more should be done. **Chair Wirtanen** asked if there was a formal resolution to consider.

**Mr. Dropps** indicated there were three listed on the written committee report in the meeting packets, but he is now removing the first one and only recommending two:

1. *Include walleye production as a priority in personnel goals. This will define who is accountable for production.*
2. *Management philosophy has to embrace successful walleye production. This is important to the department, the fishery, and the sportsperson.*

**Mr. Schmidt** asked about the 17% of stocking and what should be the ideal number. **Mr. Dropps** stated it depends on how many were raised this year. **Mr. Wesley** stated Mr. Dropps is correct in that the DNR has not met their goal for stocking fingerlings. Staffing is one reason. He thinks it's a great idea for hatcheries to raise fish and not have fishery techs raise them as it is not an efficient way of doing it. He stated he likes the first resolution. He indicated he's been around for 23 years and each year Fisheries Division has asked for capital outlay projects including a cool-water facility that could raise walleye, muskie and northern pike. However, it would cost \$33 million today to build it. In the meantime, he said, they are investing in the Thompson Hatchery to build production there and are working with the Sault Tribe to help with production as well. The DNR has to rely on groups to feed the fish and fertilize them. The Bays de Noc club is picking up two more ponds. **Mr. Dropps** asked how much one pond would cost as Wisconsin states it could raise 50,000 fingerlings in one pond. **Mr. Wesley** explained \$600,000 is the current bid for a one-acre lined pond (lined and drained so it doesn't contaminate). He said if more help is received, they can see what kind of production they can get out of them. **Mr. Dropps** indicated it doesn't seem like a big priority. **Mr. Wesley** indicated current hatcheries were not built for walleye, rather they were built for trout and salmon.

**Chair Wirtanen** stated he is hearing there is a need to bring the DNR to a general awareness beyond where it currently is on the value of walleye fishing, especially as it boosts tourism, economics, etc. He said Wisconsin doesn't do everything well, but they have done a good job of advertising walleye fishing. He asked if the Council approves of the resolution as it's written. **Mr. Dropps** stated he would welcome further development on the resolution. **Chair Wirtanen** suggested a delay on a vote until the resolution is further developed; **Mr. Dropps** agreed.

Discussion continued between **Mr. Dropps**, **Mr. Madison** and **Mr. Holmes** regarding the quality of UP and lower peninsula lakes, walleye stocking differences, lower staffing levels, and the lack of initiative to be successful in walleye stocking. **Mr. Solka** stated he's learning about this issue for the first time being a new member and asked if there are other lined ponds that meet standards or it is just the Thompson Hatchery. **Mr.**



**Wesley** stated there are 4 currently and the new one will be similar. **Chair Wirtanen** stated the Council has listened to this issue for 11 years indicating an obvious strength of conviction that walleye fingerling rearing in the UP is needed. He asked the Fisheries Committee to prepare their resolution in final form to present for review and consideration at the next meeting. **Mr. Hall** recommended the committee meet as soon as possible including Chair Wirtanen and Mr. Wesley as well.

2. Trails/Recreation/Law: **Chair Wirtanen** stated the committee did not meet and there is no report. **Ms. Duncan** added there is a very strong conflict building in Michigan with the equestrian trails being attacked by mountain bikers that want to use them. She noted it started in the lower peninsula where bikers wanted to take 6.2 miles of equestrian trail and use it strictly for mountain biking. Mountain bikers and horses are not compatible on a single-track trail. Two trails are being looked in the UP, one of which is the Pine Mountain trail system. Some of the trails are 50-60 years old and just recently, bikers now want to use them. Horses don't have many places to go, and bikers already do. She asked that Council members be aware and advocate for equestrian trails.
3. Wildlife: **Mr. Lindquist** stated half of the committee met via conference call recently. The following were discussion points:
  - Reviewed the recommendations submitted by Mr. Mellstrom. Those on the call did support several of them, but they were items already happening or being done. The committee was questioning what the goals were and what Mr. Mellstrom is trying to accomplish. The group felt there are bigger issues currently (such as CWD) than trying to rewrite the deer regulations at this point.
  - Discussed the date change for the Liberty Hunt which the group on the call was not supportive of.
  - Discussed the proposed baiting ban with regards to CWD and it was supportive by those on the call.
  - He'd like to see the development of a moose management plan. He served on the moose advisory team back in 2011. He stated he made this recommendation in the past and would like to move it forward again. He'll send information to the committee for review.
4. Forestry: **Mr. Suchovsky** stated the committee has not met in some time and the lead position is currently open. He asked Mr. St. John to consider being the lead. He noted the Society of American Foresters are working on a position statement for whitetail deer management. They are reviewing the impact deer management has on the forest itself, quality habitat, and other issues. They are also hoping to implement some type of program in the lower peninsula and southern UP. The process is ongoing. He stated as it stands, the DNR (working with Mr. Minzey) does not have any data to evaluate generation success, etc. **Mr. Lindquist** commented the UP CWD Task Force is hoping to get buy-in to reduce the herd (by asking for increases in antlerless permits) as there has been a problem in the southern UP for decades.

#### **Next Meeting**

1. Next Meeting Date: **Chair Wirtanen** noted the next meeting will be on Thursday, July 18 in Menominee County (location pending) beginning at 5:00pm Central / 6:00pm Eastern.
2. Items for Next Meeting Agenda: **Chair Wirtanen** asked the Council if there were any topics to be considered for the next agenda other than follow-up from this meeting. The Council provided the following suggestions: Wildlife Division budget overview (license sales, funding sources, etc.), update on GUD marketing for Forestry, and forest development fund (proceeds from timber sales). Any other suggestions can be sent to Chair Wirtanen or Ms. Dahlstrom.

### **Public Comments**

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

- *Mr. Larry Mellstrom of Iron River (5 minutes)* stated he is here to provide suggestions to the deer regulations. **Chair Wirtanen** reminded Mr. Mellstrom that his suggestions from the last two Council meetings have been given to the Wildlife Committee for review and asked if he had anything new for the Council to consider. Mr. Mellstrom stated he hasn't seen anything about the proposed CWD regulations on TV6 or Discovering and felt that in order to get public participation, it should be advertised well. He then discussed his former suggestions to fix current regulations that are ruining deer hunting. He indicated he hasn't heard back from the Wildlife Committee on his suggestions. **Mr. Lindquist** stated the committee reviewed the suggestions but are curious as to what the goal is as it sounds like he would like older bucks but is against antler point restrictions. **Mr. Lindquist** stated the committee supports some of the points but didn't agree with others. Mr. Mellstrom stated he is trying to establish some kind of hunt during deer season. **Mr. Lindquist** indicated they cannot debate each point.
- *Mr. Evan McDonald of the Keweenaw Land Trust (KLT) in Baraga (5 minutes)* stated the KLT, which is a 501c3 land conservation organization supporting the western UP, promotes recreational trails and sees the benefit of expanding the trail system in the western UP. The growth of the water trail system in Michigan is noteworthy; the Keweenaw water trail for kayaking and canoeing is worth promoting. He also provided an update on the Huron Bay Field Station, reporting they have successfully removed all of the perimeter fencing which was blocking about 70% of the peninsula and was an impressive barrier to wildlife movement. They are hoping wildlife movement will now be restored. They are working with the DNR on establishing a GEMS site that may be completed by September. They have also received a deer range improvement program grant, and they are in partnership with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community to establish a cultural garden area there. **Mr. Moran** stated he has been on that property for decades and he is proud of the KLT for all their work in restoring this best kept secret area.
- *Mr. Mike VanAckeron of the Chicagoan Lake Homeowners Association and Others in Iron River (3 minutes)* spoke in reference to the walleye issue discussed earlier stating Chicagoan Lake stocking is not making sense. He also spoke about private property and antlerless tags and confusing regulations on baiting for bear. **Mr. Dropps** stated that Chicagoan Lake is one of the lakes that he worked with Mr. Darren Kramer and Ms. Jennifer Johnson of the DNR Fisheries Division and the DNR will start stocking that lake again if they have walleyes to put in there. It is on their list and hopefully stocking will get better. He thanked Mr. VanAckeron for bringing it up.
- *Mr. Jay Green of the Nordic Ski Club in Hancock (3 minutes)* stated he'd like to ask the Council to encourage the DNR to support the trails for silent sports. There is a particular interest in getting trails connected in the Keweenaw area to Houghton, Chassell, Calumet, Eagle Harbor and Copper Harbor. If the DNR could supply planning or funding help, it would be a huge economic boost to the area. There is a multi-pass system already in existence between Chassell, Houghton, Calumet and Hancock. Daily passes are also available. These trails draw a lot people from Wisconsin. He stated Mr. Yesney's report was very encouraging regarding the support for the Little Presque Isle trail system. **Ms. Haughey** encouraged Mr. Green to contact Mr. Yesney for further discussion.

### **Council Closing Comments**

- **Mr. Moran** spoke about outgoing Council member Bob Stinson who elected to retire from the Council due to his health. He stated Mr. Stinson was an anchor when he was at Council meetings for both sides of the isle. He would sit back and his words were very thoughtful. He will be missed. He encouraged Council members to drop him a line. **Chair Wirtanen** stated he wrote to Mr. Stinson to thank him for his service and complimented him on his style. He was very effective.

- **Mr. Lindquist** noted he drove up to Houghton this morning and along the way, made a few casts in a little lake and got several brook trout, one of which was 16 inches. Very successful trip!
- **Mr. Suchovsky** mentioned he's been seeing a lot of blue birds and rose-breasted grosbeaks. He is still watching for golden wing warblers. Those species are indicators of the general health of the ecology of the area.

**Adjournment**

**Chair Wirtanen** thanked everyone for their contributions. The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm Eastern.

Approved 7/18/19