

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

July 13, 2017
Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, chair
J.R. Richardson, vice chair
Vicki Pontz
Rex Schlaybaugh
Christine Crumbaugh
Louise Klarr
J.R. Richardson
Chris Tracy

Present for DNR staff

Keith Creagh, DNR director
Peter Manning, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Bill Moritz, DNR natural resources deputy
Trevor VanDyke, DNR legislative/legal director
Brooke Parmalee, DNR legal staff
Stacy Welling Haughey, UP coordinator
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman John Matonich called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

Parks and Trails Update Parks and Recreation division (PRD) chief **Ron Olson** provided an update on parks numbers; lodging and camping are up 16% from 2016 and harbor nights are up over 30%. Belle Isle State Park was full for the July 4 holiday weekend; their 3500 parking spots were full. July 12 was the annual with Metro Detroit Youth Day, which drew over 35,000 students and was a great collaboration effort between the vendors, the department and the community. **Olson** made note of the issues at Grand Haven State Park and added that conservation officers did a great job keeping incidents to a minimum. **Olson** added that additional coverage would be on-site for the Coast Guard Festival.

Deer Management Assistance Permits (DMAPs) **Chad Stewart**, deer specialist from the Wildlife division fielded additional questions from the commission regarding deer management assistance permits (DMAPs). **Commissioner Pontz** inquired about earn a buck program for the TB area. **Stewart** said that antler point restrictions (APRs) seem to generate more steam in the state. If the APR in the northwest 12 (NW12) does not work they might look at the "earn a buck program. **Commissioner Tracy** asked about the August meeting with USDA. **Director Creagh** added USGA very interested in how best to reduce deer numbers.

Lifesaving Awards Law Enforcement division chief **Gary Hagler** and assistant chief **Dean Molnar** presented lifesaving awards to conservation officers (COs) **Michael Evink** and **Ben Shively**. **Hagler** thanked their families for supporting their positions as a CO. **Hagler** shared the heroic actions of **Shively** and **Evink**. **Evink** saved a man in Schoolcraft county from carbon monoxide poisoning. **Shively** saved a man from possible death who had a deep laceration from a chainsaw accident. There was a major concern about this man due to the severity of his wound.

Hunter Education Volunteer Instructor of the Year **Hagler** recognized **Tod Switala** of Sterling as Hunter Education Volunteer Instructor of the Year.

Forty Year Hunter Education Service Awards **Hagler** recognized hunter safety instructors **Chester Dymon** of Oakland county and **Robert Frey** of Genesee county for teaching hunter safety for more than forty years each.

Bear Patch Recognition Wildlife division chief **Russ Mason** along with the Michigan Bear Hunter's Association's (MBHA) past president, **Matt Pedigo** presented the commission with the current year's bear patch. Youth hunters, ages 10-17 with a valid bear hunting license may receive a free patch. Adult hunters, collectors and others may purchase a patch for \$5. **Mason** shared the department's and commission's thanks for all MBHA has done for bear management in Michigan.

Public Act 288 Bill O'Neill, Forest Resources division's chief provided an update on PA 288 which allows for the retrieval of big game using horses and ORVs and requires the department to inventory state forest roads, identify their location, condition, identify new restrictions on roads used by ORVs and annually post map and mileage of motorized use. He detailed the process the Forest Resources division must take to complete this requirement. There are over 7452 miles of road, with over 6000 open to ORVs. The draft recommendation is on the website and public comments are welcome. **O'Neill** also provided the criteria for road closure there will be a land use order for information in October and action in November. The plan will be published on the department's website in December 2017.

Michigan Arctic Grayling Action Plan Fisheries division assistant chief **Todd Grischke** along with Little River Band of Ottawa Indian's natural resources director, **Frank Beaver** thanked the Fisheries division for their partnership. The Michigan Arctic Grayling Action plan was completed in conjunction with the support and assistance of over 35 partners. The four goals of the plan include research, management, fish production and outreach and educational. Field studies are being done to allow the Grayling to grow. This is not a traditional stocking effort; instead they will be relying on a new technology of using remote site incubators. They will be developing a brood stock will be done at Oden fish hatchery. This will be a 10 to 15 year project.

Budget Presentation **Erik Eklund** from the Finance and Operations division shared the status of the budget for FY 2018. House Bill 4323 was enrolled and presented to Governor Snyder on July 10; he has 14 days to approve and sign. **Eklund** shared the supplemental adjustments, which included sustainable harvest of great lakes fish, increased understanding of wildlife management, improved state park experiences, connecting trails to communities, increased transparency and accountability for public lands, preservation of long-term access to public records, saving lives, property and timber, protection of public safety, enhancing environmental stewardship on state land and aligning spending authorization with available revenue.

Legislative Report Anna Mooney, legislative liaison provided a written report of legislation related to the department. In addition to the written report, **Mooney** provided updates on recent legislative highlights. **Creagh** added that the department is opposed to SB280; restrictions placed on land purchased with hunting and fishing funds.

Committee Reports

NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Operations – Commissioner Crumbaugh

The committee received annual reports from Fisheries, Law and Wildlife divisions which were based on strategic plans. The divisions shared how funds available were used to achieve strategic plan goals.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries – Commissioner Schlaybaugh

stated that Fisheries chief **Dexter** reviewed changes on making the two-year fishing guide into a one-year guide, putting as much information online as possible. The committee also received a report on the bass tournament fishing information system. Wildlife division chief **Mason** shared information on the pheasant restoration initiative. The committee spent the majority of the remainder of the meeting discussing deer regulations, including deer management unit (DMU) 487's antler point restrictions proposal, regulations on Drummond and South Fox Islands and a one year extension for the deer management assistance permit.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

(**Stacy Welling-Haughey** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 4:00 p.m.)

Jim Sweeney, Concerned Sportsmen of Michigan, recapped information sent earlier in the week to the commission which recommended changes for the northeastern Lower Peninsula for consideration as alternatives to the proposed antler point restrictions (APRs) in the TB zone.

Fred Bigler believes that APRs can promote a better balanced and healthier deer herd. He added that the doe harvest needs to be done, which will give the TB zone a better balanced herd.

Sam Morello president of the Michigan Bow Hunters Association, talked about APRs and DMAPs. He shared results from their two-question survey given to their members; it was available for two weeks on their Facebook page and website. Overwhelmingly, the responses were ten percent for the use of firearms during archery season, with ninety percent against. They feel DMAPs using firearms in October and early November is not necessary. Crop damage permits can also be used, so the farmer can control deer populations. The second question was for support for APRs in zone 2: 56% were in favor, 44% opposed. Michigan Bow Hunters Association will be an active partner throughout the DMAP process.

Erik Schnelle, president of the Michigan Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), said that quality deer management does not equal APRs; it is about achieving a healthy, balanced herd. Education, collaboration, voluntary efforts, habitat improvement are all things that QDMA does. He said QDMA support APRs, 64% approval. They recommend making the NW12 APR regulations permanent, approve department recommendations for the TB zone, implement APRs throughout the Lower Peninsula, with some (DMU) flexibility, support Drummond and

South Fox Islands regulations, and would like the APR guidelines amended due to now having clear biological data.

John Wagner talked about APRs and would like to see DMU 135 restored; he thinks that combining with DMU 35 should be science-based. He was behind APRs in Michigan beginning in 1997. He thinks the combining of DMUs 35 and 135 was done for administrative convenience and not science-based. Wagner would like to see DMU 135 restored and the no spike rule maintained.

Lisa Lightfoot talked about how the ban on chumming has harmed the Newaygo area. It has affected the community; not as many people come into the restaurant where she works, they normally saw many more guides and customers. **Lightfoot** would like to see chumming reinstated.

Mark Byford stated that fishing has been tougher since the chumming ban. With chumming he can catch five to six fish a day in the winter, without chumming he is lucky to get one. **Byford** would like to see the ban changed, possibly by limiting the amount of chum used. This should lighten up the economic impacts.

Deb Schumaker works for a large booking agency for fishing guides. She said there is a noticeable decline in the number of bookings due to the chumming ban. **Schumaker** also stated that the decreased number of trips, which economically affects guides as well as the community as a whole. **Schumaker** would like to see chumming reinstated during the winter months.

Eric Andersen, president of Michigan Charter Boat Association shared that many captains who are winter guide fisherman are members of this association and are complaining that they are catching very few fish without chumming. **Andersen** said that most guides in his organization are taking eggs from the fall run and using during the winter. **Andersen** would like to see a compromise. He would like to see limited amount of chumming or limited season.

Jim Bennett is a fishing guide that has been guiding on the Manistee river for 50 years and has chummed the entire time, with the exception of when chumming has been banned. **Bennett** doesn't believe there is any scientific reason to ban chumming. Fish are not getting hurt and that they have helped fly fisherman who follow behind them. **Bennett** said that his business is down 60-70% without chumming.

Anthony Rodriguez, runs a guide service on the Muskegon river for a living; said that bookings are down because of the chumming ban. Using chum gives the clients the satisfaction of the catch. He always uses steelhead eggs. The ban has greatly affected his family's economic status. **Rodriguez** believes they should be able to use whatever resources available to catch a fish. He doesn't think it gives an unfair advantage and that it gives clients the opportunity for the thrill of the catch. He hasn't seen any negative impact studies.

Cody Loeffers is a guide and said that he and his partners do not chum exclusively, generally only during the cold winter months. He believes that chumming can save a trip by getting the clients a fish or two and keeps them coming back. It puts money in the guides' pockets and helps local economies when the clientele return. **Loeffers'** business has seen a 40% decline

since the chumming ban. He said that it's hurting their economy and families. Most of his clients are catch and release and just want the pictures.

Karen Stamper from Commerce Township spoke on a goose roundup petition. She said that the petitions are not coming to the board and that she doesn't think the proper forms are being completed for the petitions. **Stamper** said that her supervisor would like to see the process go through their township office and that her supervisor would like to see the rules followed. She asked for clarification on how long the petitions are good for. **Director Creagh** asked chief **Mason** to meet with **Stamper** to assist with a solution.

Randy Rice came to speak on behalf of the average hunters of the NW12; he would like to see the APRs sunset. He stated that he has never received a survey in over 27 years of license purchases. He hasn't seen bigger bucks and thinks that APRs benefit the people who own property, not those that hunt on state property. **Rice** also wants to know that the meat he feeds his family is safe. He reiterated his concern about the survey process. **Matonich** directed that surveys may also be completed online.

Robert Moffit, city manager of Gladwin and Gladwin's mayor, **Dee Jongman** spoke to the commission on the Gladwin land transfer. They have been working on the land transfer with the department for approximately one and one-half years and thanked the department for their support with the land transaction process. **Moffit** talked about trail currently being worked on in Gladwin county, adding that Gladwin has the funds and will be building a mile of trail that will be handicap accessible. **Jongman** talked about the safety for the trail, noting that if Gladwin receives the property, a bike trail would be put in. She added that they want hunting and fishing to occur on that property. **Director Creagh** said this will be acted on during the August commission meeting, and that he is committed to getting the transfer completed.

Jim Brauker from Let 'em Go, Let 'em Grown, would like to see APRs implemented in the CWD area and throughout the entire state. Buck hunting needs to be restricted to improve the age structure, as does focusing on antlerless deer. **Brauker** said that hunter participation is the single most important item for managing in a disease zone.

Mel Smith, Let 'em Go, Let 'em Grow, would like APRs approved in at least the Lower Peninsula. As a veteran he would like to see an American flag at commission meetings.

Kevin Wernette, past president-Michigan Cattlemen's Association addressed the commission on bovine tuberculosis and APRs in DMU487. **Wernette** stated that the deer herd needs to be reduced in this part of the state because it is jeopardizing the cattle in the area. Tough decisions need to be made now to drastically reduce the deer herd in this DMU. He talked about the possibility of USDA removing the TB status of the state; if that happens the fallout for the state would be huge. **Wernette** said that we need to get numbers down in that area so we have healthy herds in the future.

Brian Plank, vice-president of the Michigan Cattlemen's Association talked about TB issues in northeastern Lower Peninsula. **Plank** said the state needs better action from the department, and thinks that the department has to be held up to their end of the MOU with USDA. **Plank** said that deer head submission should be mandatory. He wants the hunters and department to get the deer population in that area to levels that will control the problem.

Kevin Gould, who sits on the Michigan Cattlemen's Association board of directors, is discouraged with the current results. He added that testing the cattle will not eradicate the problem. A task-oriented solution is needed.

Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 5:23 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 5:24 p.m. He noted that all commissioners who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Matonich reviewed the items up for information only.

Order to Re-designate Bay City State Recreation Area to Bay City State Park Michigan; Tobico Marsh Boundaries, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 7 of 2017

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, June 8, 2017 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

Commissioner Klarr made a motion that the minutes of the June 8, 2017 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Antlerless Deer License Quotas 2017-2019, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 5 of 2017

Commissioner Schlaybaugh moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 5 of 2017, Antlerless Deer License Quotas 2017-2019 be adopted. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Deer Management Assistance Permits and Antler Point Restrictions, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2017

Commissioner Schlaybaugh moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2017, Deer Management Assistance Permits and Antler Point Restrictions be adopted. **Commissioner Richardson** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion; **Schlaybaugh** stated with respect to DMAPs, the work group has agreed to continue to work on resolution for DMAP issue and continue pilot program until May 2018. **Schlaybaugh** motioned to amend Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2017 by extending the DMAP pilot study to sunset on or before June 7, 2018, **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion, **Matonich** called for discussion on extending the sunset for the DMAP pilot program; **Commissioner Tracy** asked about work group follow up, **Matonich** responded that the work group would be meeting every two months. There was no further discussion, a vote was taken on the motion for the amendment to modify DMAP wording to extend pilot program one additional year, this motion carried unanimously. **Schlaybaugh** motioned to amend Wildlife

Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2017 by reverting South Fox Island bow hunting dates back to October 1 to October 28 and deer firearm season to October 29 to November 26.

Commissioner Crumbaugh supported, **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, **Matonich** called for a vote on the second amendment to the amendment, this motion carried unanimously. **Commissioner Pontz** motioned to amend Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2017 by removing section 3.101b; deer hunting and antler point restrictions in DMU 487. **Crumbaugh** supported, **Matonich** called for discussion on the amendment to the motion; **Crumbaugh** stated that she does not believe that APRs have the desired effect on the total population, **Schlaybaugh** stated that he would not be voting to pass this amendment as he feels that it was brought forward with the best available science, **Tracy** commented that he does not feel that it is based on science, it is based on a hope that more antlerless deer would be taken, in that context it is not science-based. **Klarr** added APRs should be up to the hunter, there should not be mandatory APRs. **Matonich** called for individual votes on the motion to amend the original order: **Tracy** yes, **Klarr**, yes, **Richardson** no, **Crumbaugh** yes, **Schlaybaugh** no, **Pontz** yes. This motion passed 4-2. **Matonich** called for any discussion on the amended motion, there being none, a vote was taken, this motion carried unanimously.

Director Creagh added that there was some great testimony during the meeting and dialog about partnerships. He asked for the commission's permission to engage in dialog and an action path with partners; there may be opportunities that would help with disease management by working together. **Matonich** said that he welcomes that. **Creagh** added that the department will keep the commission informed and engaged.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – DIRECTOR

Director Creagh listed the “for information only” items on the agenda.

DIRECTOR’S ACTION ITEMS

Director Creagh listed the “director’s action” items on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items. He added that he would not be signing the 2018 State Park Camping, Lodging and Modification/Cancellation Fees until August.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Schlaybaugh participated in the DMAP workgroup and he is hoping that we will have a resolution next spring. He had the opportunity to visit Beaver and Garden Islands and shared that it is a beautiful place to visit.

Commissioner Crumbaugh would like with regard to the TB zone, would like the commission to adopt a resolution developed to give direction to the director on disease management hunt with timetables on when that hunt should occur. **Matonich** suggested that the wildlife chief come back with specific suggestions for additional hunts, earn a buck, additional options, etc.

Commissioner Richardson said the system works as shown by the discussion at the day’s meeting. There was much good input that is greatly appreciated. He will be heading to Alaska on a fishing trip.

Commissioner Klarr is looking forward to next month's meeting in Jackson. She said that Jackson has an amazing trail system, the Falling Waters trail, all should see this trail.

Matonich closed by saying that he appreciated the effort and extra time taken on the deer regulations. **Schlaybaugh** agreed and said that we should allow for additional time on deer regulations to review.

Next Meeting

Chairman Matonich announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, August 10, 2017 at Jackson College, W.J. Maher Campus, 3000 Blake Road, Jackson. The committees meeting in August include the Michigan State Park Advisory Committee, the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries and a special joint meeting with the Travel Commission of the NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee.

Adjournment

Commissioner Schlaybaugh made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Klarr** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 8/10/17



John Matonich, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director