



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

December 3, 2019

Lansing Customer Service Center
4166 Legacy Parkway
Lansing

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

PRESENT

Scott Norris, Chair
Tom Jones, Co-Chair
Ken Buchholtz (*via conference call*)
Vendela Collins
Michael Harris
Neal McKenzie
Will Purves
Jessica Stark
Billy Vickers
Bryan Wilkinson
Kim Woolridge

ABSENT

Cindy Burkhour
Justin Lippe
Sarah Peurakoski

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

Alexis Horton, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer
Michael Holsinger, ADA Coordinator
Yolanda Taylor, Assistant to the AAC

PRESENT FROM THE DNR ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (A-TEAM)

Lynne Thoma, Fisheries
Tamara Jorkasky (*A-Team Chair*), Executive
Erin Campbell, Grants Management
Sgt. Mike Mshar, Law Enforcement
Kirk Lapham, Legislative and Legal Affairs
David Haupt and Cindy Krueger, Marketing and Outreach
Diana Paiz Engle, Michigan History Center
Angie Herrera (*A-Team Co-Chair*), Minerals
Mike Evanoff, Parks and Recreation
Ryan Soulard, Wildlife

INTERPRETERS

April Davidson and Stacy Pierce

OTHERS PRESENT

Kelly Wolgamott, Pure Michigan [*Presenter*]
Annie Urasky, Director, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing
Chad Stewart and Ashley Autenrieth, DNR Wildlife Division
Kelly Frake, Department of Civil Rights
Olivia Jacques, Lighthouse Neurological Rehab Center
Tyler Czarnopis, DNR Marketing and Outreach
Duncan Wyeth, former AAC member/Guest (*via conference call*)
Christine McDunnough, Guest

REGULAR MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Scott Norris called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He announced that two new members were recently appointed to the council and invited them to introduce themselves.

Jessica Stark has been a Recreational Therapist with the Lighthouse Neurological Rehabilitation Center out of Traverse City for 12 years. She is a certified therapeutic recreation specialist and provides rehabilitative services for people with neurological, spinal cord and traumatic brain injuries. Jessica is also a certified hunting safety instructor. She runs a "Return to Hunting" program where they help individuals who have suffered injuries learn how to use adaptive equipment and to be safe hunters. They also offer adaptive outdoor recreational sports like adaptive kayaking and hand cycling, and they partner with Full Potential Adventures.

The council remembers Jessica from their August 2018 trip to Interlochen State Park where they participated in adaptive kayaking, adaptive paddle boarding and hand cycling, and once again thanked her for a fun and wonderful experience.

William "Billy" Vickers is the Business Development Manager at GNS Medical Supplies out of Fenton. Billy suffered spinal cord injuries from a motorcycle accident over 17 years ago but is quite active in various outdoor recreational and indoor adaptive sports. Billy is also a certified brain injury specialist who, due to his own personal experiences, dedicates his life to helping others through peer support, moral support, peer mentoring, life coaching and training. In addition to being a support group organizer with the rehab institute of Michigan (RIM), Billy is also involved in several programs at the University of Michigan and is a member of Michigan Adaptive Sports, MSU adaptive sports, and the UofM adaptive tennis program, to name a few.

Billy also volunteered to participate in the Pure Michigan fall photo shoot at Hartwick Pines State Park and has since then appeared on numerous websites, Facebook, Twitter, ads, and many more media outlets. Kind of a mini star of the community.

The council welcomed both Jessica and Billy. The Chair then requested roll call and introductions around the room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Norris asked the council if they had any additions, corrections or discussion regarding the August 20, 2019 Minutes. No additional corrections, edits or discussion was offered.

Chair Norris requested a motion to approve the August 20, 2019 Minutes; Michael Harris motioned to approve the Minutes; Tom Jones seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried, and the August 2019 Minutes were approved.

PURE MICHIGAN PRESENTATION

Kelly Wolgamott, Director of Travel Marketing for Pure Michigan, was thrilled to present an update to the council on the 2019 Pure Michigan campaign, the fall release, the creation of their accessible recreation webpage, and their recent filming at Hartwick Pines State Park and the Independence Hunt.

Kelly commented that she met with this group back in August 2018 to talk about the direction of the campaign and is thankful for all the input and suggestions she received on highlighting accessible recreation in this state. There were several contacts that were made that really helped to elevate their campaign. Kelly also wanted to congratulate the state parks for being at the top tier nationally for providing accessible recreation.

From an accessibility standpoint in tourism, Pure Michigan has been working closely with the lodging industry, encouraging them to highlight all the opportunities they offer at their facilities to make them accessible. Examples include free accessible shuttle services, AMIGOS rentals, ADA kits, accessible rooms, pools, etc. They are also working with media in promoting and showcasing accessible travel for their "All Are Welcome in Michigan" campaign and webpage. Examples include Curb Free with Cory Lee, who highlighted his vacation and accessible places to visit in Michigan. It included his trip to Muskegon State Park, where he used the wheeled beach chair and track chair rentals. Pure Michigan also highlighted the bike share program that is available in Detroit and other communities for people with disabilities. Their media team is talking to social influencers, nationally and internationally, encouraging them to get the word out on what Michigan has to offer.

In November, the first ever TravelAbility Summit was held in California. It was a gathering of travel industry professionals with product or service innovators dedicated to improving travel experiences for individuals with physical, visual, auditory and cognitive disabilities. Their goal is to make destinations accessible to everyone. Pure Michigan's travel director spoke at the conference and realized just how far ahead Michigan and the department is in providing accessible travel and recreational opportunities.

The Pure Michigan travel site, Michigan.Org, now has an Accessible Travel page. It highlights the fall footage they shot at Hartwick Pines State Park where Billy (newest member) is traveling down the Old Growth Forest trail. The caption states, "In Michigan, Everyone is Welcome." They also used this footage to promote the fall season on their Instagram page. Their goal is not to create a separate accessibility campaign but to integrate accessibility into the Pure Michigan campaign. They are trying to elevate the opportunities that are available and capture them on this page. She asked that council members and staff review the web page. She welcomes all input or improvements to the site.

Kelly also showed the filming/video they did at the Sharonville State Game Area Independence Hunt to promote the start of hunting season, including their interview with Tom Jones (council co-chair and MiOFO coordinator) and some of the hunters. Kelly thanked Tom, Billy, Tyler and Yolanda for their assistance in coordinating the filming at Hartwick Pines and the Independence Hunt.

Neal suggested that they share the video footage with the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing to disburse to various deaf communities. The council suggested she work with Annie Urasky, the Director of the division. Kim also offered her assistance and suggestion to include closed captioning on the video.

Pure Michigan will also be placing their videos on Michigan.org on the hunting and accessibility pages, as well as Tom's MiOFO web site. Pure Michigan has also worked with the television show, "Under the Radar," to do a feature that promotes accessible recreation.

The council thanked Kelley and Pure Michigan for all the exposure this past year, and the work that they continue to do to incorporate accessibility into their campaign.

DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

Photo Shoots/Facebook/Twitter

Tyler Czarnopis and Cindy Krueger, Marketing and Outreach, gave an update on what the marketing division is also doing to promote accessible recreation.

Tyler accompanied Pure Michigan on the Hartwick Pines shoot and took still photos that he is still in the process of developing. They will probably use them next fall. Tyler also reported that they were supposed to be involved in a pilot program for Facebook's live captioning service, but they are unable to use their service at this time. They will not be able to shoot live video with closed captioning until they find an alternative solution.

Accessibility Webpage/Hits

Cindy reported on additional efforts they are doing to promote accessible recreation. They did two showcasing stories that are picked up by the newspapers and distributed to over 30,000 subscribers. Some members of the department's accessibility team set up a booth at the annual Brain Injury Association's conference in September, while others participated in Blind Awareness Week at the Michigan History Center. They also helped to promote Tom's essay contest.

Diana Paiz Engle gave a presentation at the accessible learning conference at Michigan State University. The organizer shared information about what the department is doing and the opportunities that are available at state parks around the state.

The department's accessibility page has been getting a lot of hits and it just continues to increase. They had over 478 people visit the accessibility page in one day as a result of promoting accessible hunting for the season. The site is getting hits throughout the nation and internationally.

Other Initiatives

Yolanda reported that, since the printing of the accessible recreation postcards, shooting ranges, accessible kayak launches and the track chair programs at specific state parks has been added to the accessibility web page. New postcards will be printed to incorporate these additional activities. She also commented on the article "Making Michigan Outdoor Recreation More Accessible," that was written by team member Diana Paiz Engle. The article included pictures of this group riding the accessible luge at Muskegon State Park's Winter Sports Complex in August.

Ken Buchholtz, council member, also wrote a showcasing article in cooperation with the department's media staff, titled "If There's a Will There's a Way."

COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATES

Good Things Happening Around the State

David Pollie Essay Contest Winner

Tom Jones reported they received over 50 essays for this year's contest. He commented on how hard it is to choose a winner, especially with all the heartwarming stories that are submitted. Tom read the essay that they chose for the winner. The winner is Chuck Bohn, an elderly gentleman who was involved in an accident that left him quadriplegic several years ago. He loves gardening, hunting and spending time outdoors, especially with his grandchildren, but is limited by his wheelchair as to what he can do and where he can go. He lives on 80 acres but is unable to get out with his friends that hunt his property. Chuck was nominated by his daughter-in-law in hopes that, by winning the track chair, he can go back to hunting his own property with his friends, go fishing, spend more time in the outdoors with his grandchildren and create memories. Tom contacted Chuck to inform him he was the winner. The track chair will be personally delivered by Tom, Ford Motor Company and others.

Independence and Liberty Hunts

Tom reported they were running the track chairs all day long, every day, during both hunts; working 15-16 hours each day to get these hunters in the woods. The Independence and

Liberty hunts are for disabled veterans and others with disabilities that meet certain criteria. Tom reported they have harvested 32 deer in total.

Tom also has a dozen accessible hunting blinds on the ground. It's not just about hunting. Some people want to come out and do bird watching, photography, or just observe the wildlife. His dream is to put an action track chair in every state park and state game area throughout the state. Despite some hardships with funding, Tom has not turned anybody away.

It is becoming more evident that MiOFO is expanding. Garmin International has hosted golf outings for the past three years and several community organizations have held wild game dinners for them. Just never-ending warmth and appreciation from the veteran, disabled, elderly and local communities.

Yolanda played an interview that Tom had with MPR Radio promoting Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors and their hunting programs.

Tom is also working with Ford Motor Company in getting hunting blinds built, and he is seeking matching funds to purchase more track chairs. The Union Sportsmen's Alliance has offered to match him dollar for dollar.

Wheelin' Sportsmen

Ken Buchholtz reported they held two successful bear hunts this year, and they got more people involved in turkey hunting. Twenty-four hunters harvested ten turkeys, and the taxidermist in the area did the turkey mounts for free. He also offered to do the two bear mounts for free as well.

Ken continues to work with various groups and organizations on projects and outings. The National Wild Turkey Federation's R3 coordinator, Steve Sharp, and Ken will soon be meeting with a timber company to talk about a future partnership in getting people with disabilities and disabled veterans in the outdoors in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Wheelin' Sportsmen is also working on a new website to get the word out on the programs and equipment they offer. Ken also continues to build accessible hunting blinds.

Adaptive Sports and Island Lake Track Chair Hike

Bryan Wilkinson shared an article, the "*Top Ten States for Adaptive Sports.*" Disabled Sports USA was asking for nominations on the states that offer the best adaptive sports. Michigan made the top ten list.

The Friends of Island Lake held a Trails-to-Table event at the Island Lake State Recreation Area. Under the Radar was there so Bryan got an opportunity to interview and promote the track chair. The Friends of Island Lake converted 2.5 miles of a hiking trail into an accessible, track chair friendly trail. Bryan played a short video of the track chair hike at Island Lake.

The Friends of Island Lake are working to maintain and expand this trail. They are also looking to add another track chair and hunting trailer. They would also like to introduce more accessible programs at this facility. Their beach is also accessible. Bryan made good connections with the Island Lake supervisor and the Friends group. He hopes to partner with both to host more events at the park.

Bryan participates in adaptive tennis, handcycling, and other adaptive sports, and teaches archery.

Michigan Inclusion Campaign

Vendella Collins reported that they started their Michigan Inclusion Campaign last year to promote all types of employment for people with mental and developmental disabilities. For the next round they will be focusing on a recreational campaign for all seasons. She will be asking to use some of the video, footage, etc. presented today to incorporate into their recreation campaign. She will also be looking for people that are willing to be filmed for their videos and other promotional campaigns. The next campaign after that will promote accessible housing.

Kim suggested Vendella reach out to Marlene Cain, the housing supervisor with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Annie Urasky also offered to work with Vendella.

Other Member Updates

Will Purves reported that their organization received a state grant that went to their county health department for recreational opportunities. They held a series of adaptive inclusive cycling events this summer with over 150 participants. At Independent Living in Ann Arbor they set up ten different styles of adaptive cycles where people can look at them and try them out before purchasing. They had several physical and recreational therapists assisting patients with the bikes. Will also reported they conducted eight disability awareness trainings for businesses, educational institutions and municipalities, including Grand Rapids, the University of Michigan, and grant recipients of the Governor's mobility challenge. If anyone is interested in having a disability awareness workshop, they can contact Will.

Jessica Stark reported they have been working with a non-profit in Kalkaska, Come As You Are Recreation, to reinvigorate their hunting and horseback riding programs. They plan to incorporate planting food plots, etc. as part of the hunting program to make it a year-round event. They also do adaptive sports at Interlochen State Park and had a record number of kayakers this season. They were able to use the accessible kayak launch for the first time this year.

Michael Harris reported they had about 45 participants in a hand-cycling event this year. Many of the participants were military veterans who just returned from Iraq or Afghanistan and wanted to get back in the outdoors, and more women participated this year. They are hoping more people will enroll in this event year after year.

INTRODUCTION OF ANNIE URASKY

The group invited **Annie Urasky, Director of the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing**, which is housed within the Department of Civil Rights, to give an overview of the division. They have a 13-member Governor appointed advisory council (the chair is deafblind) that reside all over the state. They meet three times each year at varying locations, and she invited this council's members to attend.

The division and their council are responsible for the advocacy of and preserving the rights of deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing residents in the State of Michigan. They are starting to focus on a heavier initiative with the deafblind as they are the most underserved and underseen community. They are also focusing on what the definition of effective communication means. For example, a deaf person may be comfortable using a sign language interpreter, while someone who is hard of hearing may prefer to just use a hearing aid to communicate. However, if a person is deafblind, they may need large printed materials or braille materials in addition to an interpreter or other service provider.

Annie added that the division does a lot of collaborative trainings, outreach and education. Many agencies that provide programs or services are not aware of all the needs of the deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing communities and the barriers they face. In 2020 they are going to start talking to individual departments to drive the conversation on how they can ensure that all

information disseminated on social media includes closed captioning and/or a transcript for those who are deafblind or low vision.

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of the ADA and there is still a long way to go. Their goal is to make sure everything is inclusive. They received a grant to conduct an on-line census and a needs assessment called "Not Without Us" to gather information on the needs of the deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing communities. They are getting close to releasing the full/final data which will be available on their Facebook page. Annie will make sure this council receives the results of their findings.

Annie welcomed all members and staff to contact her if they ever need assistance or training, or if they would like to talk about collaborations or partnerships.

ADA 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Kim Woolridge reported that, initially, they had a lot of disability groups that were interested in planning an event. Unfortunately, talks did not go as planned so they are going to take a different direction. They do not have the resources to plan something on a larger scale, but they are considering a one-day event that focuses on the Americans with Disabilities Act, disability and accessibility, to be held at a venue in Lansing on July 23, 2020. She has also brainstormed with department staff about ideas of what they can do in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, to include the Outdoor Adventure Center, Belle Isle and the Detroit Riverwalk.

Kim is open to any and all suggestions. They will begin pulling together planning meetings as early as next week. Anybody that is interested in participating on this planning committee can contact Kim or Kelly Frake. Alexis offered to connect Kim with all equity and inclusion officers for each state department. Annie commented that their council is also planning an event so they would be willing to partner. Yolanda suggested the department's and the council's marketing subcommittees could also work together. The state parks just had their Centennial Celebration so Maia Turek would be a good contact as well, especially in coordinating events within the parks. Co-member Justin Lippe with mParks may also have some ideas since they represent all local (non-state) recreational communities.

Kim thanked the group for all their suggestions and willingness to participate.

EV CHARGING STATION UPDATE

Keith Cheli, regional field planner for Parks and Recreation, gave the council an update on the status of the EV charging stations at three select state park/harbor locations. Keith approached this group in December 2017 about a proposal they received from a local electric utility cooperative that is interested in placing three electric vehicle charging stations at Presque Isle State Harbor near Alpena along the US-23 corridor, Hoelt State Park outside of Rogers City, and Hammond Bay between Cheboygan and Rogers City.

They had discovered there were no federal or state standards in place for the installation of EV charging stations for people with disabilities. Through subcommittee meetings, council members and staff developed a standard design concept for EV charging stations for people of all abilities. They are still tasked with determining how they can elevate this design concept so that they become the state standard for the design and installation of EV charging stations on all state administered properties. Staff will have a conversation with the subcommittee chair to reinvigorate this discussion.

This additional work, however, connected them with the Michigan Energy Office, where Keith attended a panel discussion. It is very apparent that electric vehicles are on the rise and will

become more prevalent over the next decade, so there are a lot of efforts and initiatives underway to support more flexibility and use for electric vehicle stations.

The utility company had intended to implement the EV charging stations in the Spring of 2019, but they were unable to secure a subcontractor due to the busy construction season. However, the utility company is committed to getting these stations implemented in 2020 as soon as weather conditions allow.

Keith also reported there is sponsored legislation that, if approved, would legitimize the use and implementation of EV charging stations within all state parks. The department is in support and the bills are still working their way through the Legislature. It appears that the state parks system will implement a statewide concession contract. Any interested party would be required to submit a bid. The contract will be advertised in March 2020.

Tom commented that he envisions additional opportunities to use these charging stations to recharge track chairs or electric wheelchairs. Keith responded that some of these charging stations may accept adapters for this purpose, but it is something that may be worth adding to the proposed concessions contract. Neal commented that it seems the companies should provide adapters.

Keith will attend a future meeting in 2020 to give the council a further update on the installation of EV charging stations in state parks, the legislation, the contract and the status of the design concept. The legislation is House Bill No. 4788.

SPECIAL OR RESTRICTED HUNTS

Neal McKenzie asked about expanding the special or restricted hunts to people who are deaf. This would include the Liberty and Independence hunts, as well as other special hunting opportunities for people with disabilities. Currently, based on the criteria, these hunts are open to veterans who are 100% disabled or unemployable, those that hold a special permit to hunt from a standing vehicle or to use a laser-sighting device, and those that are blind. They do not include the deaf community. Neal noted that people who are deaf are also at a disadvantage because most hunters use their hearing to locate their prey.

Tom coordinates these hunts and responded that he is open to including people that are deaf in the special or restricted hunts.

Chad Stewart and Ashley Autenrieth from the Wildlife Division were present to address this request. Chad commented that they both develop policies and recommendations for the deer regulations. Ultimately, those rules and regulations are decided by the Natural Resources Commission, but he feels this is a perfect opportunity to talk about including deaf hunters in the special or restricted hunts for the 2020 season. However, Chad and Ashley would need guidance and language on what the proposal would look like and if there are additional exceptions that need to be made to make these hunts more inclusive. They would need a general idea of how many individuals would be included and how many hunters fit this category. Annie responded it would be a small number, possibly no more than 50 would fall into this category. They would also need definitions and language to craft this proposal.

After in-depth discussion, it was determined that Chad and Ashley will host an ad hoc committee to talk about proposed changes to the deer regulations to incorporate the deaf and hard of hearing. They have until May to get a proposal to the deer regulations committee, which means they should have something in writing by March. Others that offered to be included in this committee/discussion include council members Tom Jones, Will Purves, Scott Norris, Kim Woolridge, Ken Buchholtz, Billy Vickers, Jessica Stark, Bryan Wilkinson and, of course, Neal McKenzie. Department staff include Alexis Horton, Ryan Soulard, Kirk Lapham, Yolanda

Taylor, and of course Chad Stewart and Ashley Autenrieth. Yolanda will coordinate the scheduling of a meeting. In the meantime, Chad sent out a list of questions and asked that the members respond to them prior to the first meeting of this special ad hoc committee.

Sgt. Mshar commented that it is difficult for law enforcement to identify people that have a disability, especially a hidden disability. He feels a sportsman's card or something that would help them identify a person that has a communication barrier would be extremely helpful to law enforcement.

Neal also talked about additional legislation that was recently introduced that would identify a person via a state identification card as having a disability. He asked if the department may be interested in issuing an adaptive sportsmen's card that would identify that person as having a physical or mental disability or communication barrier. Tom agreed.

Kim commented that you cannot legally require a person to identify their disability, but something like a lottery card or sportsmen's card may be acceptable if it is voluntary.

Annie Urasky confirmed that the proposed legislation would provide a person with a state identification card (not a driver's license). The bar code would identify if that person is autistic, deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. Annie reported that they recently partnered with the Michigan State Police and five other law enforcement agencies to establish a visor card. A person that is deaf or hard of hearing can hand this to the officer. The officer and the driver would point to pictures of what they are asking for or what they want to communicate. Annie is willing to work with the department to establish a similar card.

Neal also brought up the question of baiting. Tom responded that only hunters with disabilities that meet specific requirements may use single-bite baits five days prior to the start of the Liberty and Independence hunts.

Neal also asked that the department work towards including captions to its videos on the web.

Ken Buchholtz also commented that he has included hunters with disabilities in crop damage hunts which may be another opportunity for the deaf community.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

DNR Executive Updates

Sharon Schafer reported changes that have taken place in the department. Scott Whitcomb, who managed the Pigeon River Country State Forest in northern Michigan, has accepted a position in Lansing. He will be working closely with the Deputy Director Shannon Hanna and the Real Estate Section in reviewing and revising the department's Public Land Management Strategy. Tamara Jorkasky, who is the chair of the department's accessibility team, has also accepted a position in the Executive Division as the department's Employee Engagement Champion. Jenny Kahn-Jacques is a new employee in the Executive Division working on Good Government. Brad Garmon has joined the department to head up the new Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry. This office will work with recreation industries to help promote outdoor recreation in this state. Brad Garmon will attend a future council meeting. Lastly, former Wildlife Division chief, Russ Mason, has moved to Michigan State University so they currently have an acting chief until the position is permanently filled.

ADA Coordinator Updates

Mike Holsinger reported he has been attending several training sessions through the Department of Civil Rights to become a certified ADA coordinator for the department. Mike also reported he has not received any complaints in the last quarter.

Mike also commented that all state employees receive eight hours of community service leave so that time could be used to assist Tom or others with their special hunts, projects or activities.

A-Team Updates

Tamara Jorkasky, team chair, reported that the information she provided regarding funded recreation grants that received universal design points from 2014 through 2018 needs to be corrected. She will provide the revised information to Yolanda to distribute to the council.

Ryan Soulard reported Kristin Wildman, Tom Jones and himself have been working to develop a streamlined process whereby Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors can donate track chairs and other adaptive equipment to be used on state game lands, and include the use of volunteers for certain projects (i.e. building a blind).

COUNCIL BUSINESS

2020 Meeting Dates/Locations

The council agreed on the following meeting dates for 2020:

- February 25 in Lansing;
- May 19 at the Rose Lake Shooting Range;
- August 11, location to be determined; and
- December 8 in Lansing.

Vacancies

Yolanda reminded the council that, despite our two newest members, there are still a couple of vacancies on the council. If they know of any person or organization that would be a good representative on the council, have them contact her to obtain an application.

Miscellaneous

Will Purves is looking for assistance in finding information about and applying for a grant for trail signage. The group suggested he contact co-member, Cindy Burkhour. He also added this is the first semester that Eastern Michigan University is adding a disabilities studies minor.

Bryan Wilkinson added that Michigan State and the University of Michigan have great programs for wheelchair and adaptive sports. Michigan State holds events every day of the week. There is going to be an additional university that will be adding adaptive sports to their programs. Michigan may be the first in the nation to have three universities that offer wheelchair, adaptive and inclusive sports. Bryan can provide contact information for anyone that may be interested in participating in these activities.

Sgt. Mshar brought up an issue that applies to his 17-year old son (and probably many others). Because of his disability he could never pass a hunter safety course, and possibly never hunt again after he exhausts his eligibility in the apprenticeship program. Kirk commented that a similar incident came up recently. There are instructors that work with people with disabilities, however, the department could do a better job of identifying those individuals and getting their contact information on the web. Jessica is a hunter safety instructor, and Bryan is working on his certification. They both stated they would be willing to put together a curriculum that applies to both adaptive and disabled hunting, and training for people with cognitive disabilities.

Yolanda reported that in August when this group was in Muskegon, there were a couple of issues at the hotel. The accessible parking spaces were limited so Mike had to park outside the main entrance and, eventually, was able to move his van when an accessible parking space became available. Although Mike secured an accessible room, he was unable to transition from

his wheelchair to his bed because it was too high. Mike ended up sleeping in his wheelchair. After contacting the hotel manager regarding these issues and giving her constructive feedback, she has incorporated training for her staff, reassessed all rooms, and vows to make improvements at the hotel to better accommodate people with disabilities. Kim responded that, unfortunately, the Americans with Disabilities Act does not cover furniture but if you ask for reasonable accommodations, it should be provided.

Duncan Wyeth, guest on the phone, commented that he gave a presentation at the department's Wildlife Division all-employee training. While he was there, he attended a breakout session on drone usage and how the department is using drones for forest and wildlife management. It occurred to Duncan that drone footage would provide access to difficult areas or sites around the state for people with mobility issues. He suggests this council invite the drone unit to a meeting to discuss opportunities to provide access to certain sites (i.e. historical or hard to reach sites).

Duncan also suggested the department incorporate accessibility training at all-employee meetings or conferences and talk about the fantastic programs and services that the department provides. Staff responded that Alexis Horton, the department's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, is working with the department's training team to incorporate ADA training into all future employee in-service meetings and/or conferences.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Duncan Wyeth (who was a former member of the council from its inception) commented that after hearing about the numerous accomplishments, initiatives and achievements, this group has fulfilled the council's initial vision. This group is a national model of collaboration between the disability community and the stewards of our state resources. He congratulated all council members and department staff on their fantastic dedication to this effort. He also thanked department staff for being incredible partners through this entire journey, and he can't wait to hear about more accomplishments and milestones down the road. He also thanked Kelly Wolgamott for the partnership they have with Pure Michigan and for getting the word out this year.

The council agreed that this was a very uplifting meeting and an excellent year.

CLOSING BUSINESS

The next meeting of the council is scheduled for February 25, 2020. It will be held at the same location, the DNR Lansing Customer Service Center.

ADJOURN

Chair Norris asked if there were any further comments. No additional comments were offered. He then asked for a motion to adjourn.

Kim Woolridge motioned for adjournment; Will Purves seconded the motion; and the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.