

Adjournment

Commissioner **Matonich** made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner **Klarr** seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 1/15/15



John Matonich, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

December 11, 2014

Lansing Center

333 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

J.R. Richardson, chairman
John Matonich, vice chairman
Louise Klarr
Vicki Pontz
Tim Nichols
Rex Schlaybaugh

Present for DNR Staff

Dennis Knapp, DNR chief of staff
Peter Manning, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC
Other department staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman **J.R. Richardson** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.

Oil & Gas Auction Results **Mary Uptigrove** from Minerals Management provided an update on the actual distribution including that the department auctioned off more than 152,000 acres of oil and gas leasing rights on public lands in 16 counties. The auction raised \$2.9 million for expansion and improvement of public recreation in Michigan.

Island Lake Sand Reclamation Parks and Recreation chief **Ron Olson** and **Mary Uptigrove** talked about the partnership between Parks and Minerals Management for this sealed bid mineral auction. This is an old sand and gravel pit, now what's left is a good sand product that can be used for road construction around the state. **Mary** gave an update on the criteria for the bids. There were three bidders and the department is the process of making recommendations to deputy **Moritz** regarding the bids.

Trails Update **Ron Olson** provided an update on the showcase trail's naming process. A name has not yet been chosen, but submittals are being vetted and discussed currently. In other news, funding for positions for non-motorized trail programs has been received. The snowmobile program launched December 1. Also more funds were left in the snowmobile

funds' balance and they were able to secure additional equipment. It was suggested that the free ORV weekend be the third week in August.

Natural Resources Trust Fund Board – Working with Foundations Ron Olson met with Sam Cummings, the chair of the Natural Resources Trust Fund Board to discuss assistance with getting connected with the foundation community to determine ways to get the foundation community involved in the projected planning expenses for the nearly 2000 miles of the showcase trail.

Olson updated the commission on the memo for the Silver Lake State Park Voucher System. Customers will be able to reserve a spot similar to a campsite, 6 weeks in advance at the dunes. With the involvement of social media Parks and Recreation division has received much input this past week. Before signing the memo Olson says that there are a couple of adjustments that will be made. They are going to be open to evaluating the system after the first year.

Supplemental Feeding of Deer Wildlife Division chief Russ Mason provided information on the interim order to allow supplemental feeding in the Upper Peninsula (UP) on private land beginning December 15 through May 15. He asked the commission to recommend that the director sign this order. Hunting is banned on land where supplemental feeding occurs.

Preliminary Deer Season Report Chad Stewart of the Wildlife Division summarized a decline in license sales, to be expected due to changes in license structure and other factors. Preliminary sales were down about 3%, currently, they are down about 6%. Check station data comparison to 2014 shows a decline in deer harvest from 6 to 30%. The UP is experiencing greater decline, at an estimated 30 – 40%. They are expecting a 5% decline in the Northern Lower Peninsula. The hunter harvest survey is to be completed after the end of the season.

Wildlife Council Update Marketing and Outreach chief Kristin Phillips told the commission that the Michigan Wildlife Council is currently seeking bids from firms to conduct a statewide information campaign to tell the public about the important role hunting and fishing play in natural resources management. The council hopes to select a firm in the next few months.

President's Award – Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs Forest Resources Division chief Bill O'Neill filled in the commission about an incident this summer involving one of his division's fire officers. Fire officer Bryan Russell was on his way to work at Yankee Springs Recreation Area on July 15, 2014 when he saw smoke pouring out of the top story of a home along his route. He called local firefighters then knocked on the door and found a man who did not know his home was on fire. The man told officer Russell that his two young grandchildren were upstairs. Officer Russell made his way through the smoke and rescued the two children, ages 3 and 5. The Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs honored Bryan with their President's Award for going above and beyond the call of duty.

Law Enforcement Update Law Enforcement chief **Gary Hagler** told the commission about recent successful investigations by his division, including an incident involving the illegal shipping of uncertified baitfish to Michigan and an elk poaching case in Montmorency County. The chief informed the commission that the Law Enforcement division has 44 recruits signed up for the January Conservation Officer Academy. Twenty-three new conservation officers graduated from the academy earlier this year. **Hagler** also noted that the 2014 firearm deer season was one of the safest on record. In November, there were only two reported hunter injury incidents, neither fatal. In fact, for all of 2014 there have only been nine reported hunting injury accidents.

Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award **Hagler** presented the Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award to **Mr. Warren Meyer** of Cheboygan.

Legislative Update **Trevor VanDyke**, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office Director, provided a written report of legislation related to the department. In addition to the written report, **VanDyke** provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

Thomas L. Washington Lifetime Commitment to Conservation Award

William Rustem was the first recipient of the Thomas L. Washington Lifetime Commitment to Conservation Award. He has a history rich in conservation, including coordinating the statewide campaign for the constitutional amendment creating the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. **Heidi Washington**, Thomas L. Washington's daughter, offered a couple of words, saying her father would be proud and humbled that **Bill** would be receiving this award. **Dennis Knapp** shared some information on **Bill's** career, while **J.R. Richardson** shared some comments from former commissioner **Bob Garner**.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

(**Stacy Welling-Haughey** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 3:48 p.m.)

Tom Matych presented the commission with a handout regarding Asian carp, he provided some comments regarding perch and walleye restoration in Lake Michigan and connecting waters. He proposes that he will be back at the March meeting to see what the commission/department will be doing in the case of the Asian carp.

Dan Kimmel, Michigan BASS Nation, stated that he wants to see Michigan be a leader in bass fishing, adding that now is the time to act, the support they have is significant. He urges the commission to support option 4D.

Dale Hendershot, Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers came before the commission to talk about the buckshot issue for predator hunting. He states that the discussions are heading in the right direction. **Hendershot** also mentions the Michigan Wildlife Council meeting, where they are deciding what is being done with our extra dollars, this is very important to everyone, and he urges all to take a big interest in this. He also notes the accolades that we give to hunter's safety instructors and adds that the DNR hunter safety program staff is dedicated above and beyond and should be recognized.

Chauncey J. Moran came to discuss a 40 acre parcel of land in UP that is a non-developmental lease. He does not think there should be project expansion allowed by Lundin until they have exhibited how they are going to continue without any pollution to the lakes and streams in the area. He is asking the commission, director, and Forest Resources, Minerals, Fisheries, and Wildlife divisions who have signed on to the restricted development of the parcel to rethink development near the Yellow Dog River. **Moran** asked for an extension on the comment period on this while they are waiting on the results of a Freedom of Information Act request.

Dick Zook from Mid Forest Lodge in Roscommon states that they received a wildlife habitat grant to plant soybeans and that the work on the ground has been completed and the final report has been submitted. He noted that this was good for the white-tailed deer herd and beneficial to other state land and neighbors. He told the commission that the grant program is a tremendous program as habitat is a critical factor in sustaining the wildlife resource. He would like to thank the State of Michigan for approving the new license fee structure that created the habitat grant process, and the NRC and DNR for managing the program.

Ray Karboske came to update the commission on breakdown regarding private marinas in Ludington.

Jefferson Henry shares that for two years they have been studying the commissions, and will take civil action against Ludington municipality due to contamination that has affected charter boats and Pere Marquette Lake. The biggest point is that Ludington is an anomaly; please be looking for their communications so they can better explain why they are at the commission meetings.

Amy Trotter, MUCC, stated that they support option 4D for bass regulations. The Conservation Coalition had a working session on December 10. It's the conservation community coming forward with that recommendation and support for the bass regulations option. They also support buckshot for coyotes. MUCC also supports the supplemental winter feeding order moving forward. Regarding the license fee impact, the coalition is very interested in seeing how it affects management on the ground and doesn't want a knee-jerk reaction to one year's results. They want to be cautious, to look at the data, and suggests a survey for former hunters. Financial reporting very important to continue down the path to transparency.

Rob Namowicz came to discuss the problem on small inland lakes, surf gate bladder ballasted extreme sport ski boats. They create oversized waves where roots of vegetation are exposed. Erosion is taking place at a great pace due to artificial wave boats. **Richardson** asked if there were any local lake ordinances that address this specifically. **Knapp** guided **Namowicz** to **Hagler** or **Molnar** for additional information on local watercraft controls.

Garrett Nolan, a Youth Conservation Council (YCC) member, talked about the youth hunt and appreciates the opportunity for youth to get out to hunt deer and states that this has given him and his siblings great quality of time together. Success shouldn't always be measured in the game that is taken, also the time spent with friends and family trying to achieve success. **Nolan** thanked the commission and department for believing that youth could be vital to our future of the management of Michigan's natural resources by putting together the YCC. He cares about the future and suggests that the commission/department find a way to keep the past members involved and informed. **Nolan** thanked **Ray Rustem** and **Kristin Phillips** for making this a relevant and beneficial program.

Chairman **Richardson** adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:40 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:40 p.m. He noted that all commissioners who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION

Approval of Minutes, October 9, 2014 Natural Resources Commission meeting

Commissioner **Klarr** made a motion that the minutes of the October 9, 2014, NRC meeting be approved. Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes, November 6, 2014 Natural Resources Commission meeting

Commissioner **Pontz** made a motion that the minutes of the November 6, 2014, NRC meeting be approved. Commissioner **Matonich** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Salvage Regulations for Game Killed by Collision with a Motor Vehicle, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 16 of 2014

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 16 of 2014, Salvage Regulations for Game Killed by Collision with a Motor Vehicle be adopted.

Commissioner **Matonich** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Elk Management Unit Technical Change

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** moved that the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 17 of 2014, Elk Management Unit Technical Change be adopted. Commissioner **Matonich** supported the motion. **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Schlaybaugh added a recommendation to have the commission adopt a resolution in support of the Director executing the supplemental feeding of deer, Interim Order of the Director No. 1 of 2014. **Schlaybaugh** moved that this be adopted, **Matonich** supported the motion, **Richardson** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR – ACTION ITEMS

Chief of Staff **Knapp** listed the “Director’s Action” items listed on the agenda and indicated he would approve all the listed land transactions on behalf of the Director. He also noted that **Creagh** will be signing an interim order for supplemental feeding for deer on December 15, 2014 along with the Oil and Gas Lease Auction to become effective on December 16, 2014. Minor adjustments are being made to the Silver Lake Off-Road Vehicle Voucher Reservation System memo and it will be signed within the next two weeks.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

Commissioner **Klarr** provided a report on the day’s earlier Michigan State Parks Advisory Council meeting, noting that youth initiatives and programming is touching many people who would not normally be touched in the outdoors and in our state parks. The resolution for the Brighton Recreation Management Plan was supported and passed. There was also a presentation on the Outdoor Adventure Center. **Klarr** added that more funding is needed. A conference call will occur soon to complete the committee agenda. The committee meets next in February.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** gave a summary of the Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, noting that the Fisheries division update focused on 2014 muskellunge stockings and the Michigan Tournament Information System, beta site, where Carbon Media Group put a webcam in the St. Joseph River Berrien Springs. Wildlife presented the preliminary deer season report,

along with some information on the supplemental deer feeding order. There were also updates on two research projects, Snowshoe Hare and the Plum Creek Deer Yard Research Project.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner **Nichols** attended the Boone and Crockett dedication, noting that it's a remarkable program with remarkable students. He commented that it's great to see the work put in by YCC and department to make that council successful. He believes that we need to ask more of the group. Engagement might continue to improve and also not losing touch with those who were former council members. He believes that there have been good achievements from department and commission, and that there is much to do in new year. Nichols thanked all DNR staff and partners.

Commissioner **Matonich** attended a meeting about financial reporting with some of the stakeholders, where they went over numbers and reporting mechanisms. He also attended a meeting of the Michigan Resource Stewards in Clare. They were looking for some advice on how to interact more positively with the commission.

Commissioner **Klarr** had the opportunity to be with her cattle business, which won several riparian awards. On their Jackson property, six youth had first time deer harvests.

Commissioner **Pontz** also attended the Boone and Crockett dedication and was very impressed with students there and what can happen when tying in state agencies and academic units.

Commissioner **Schlaybaugh** attended the dedication of MSU wildlife quantitative research lab. He met with MSU professors to discuss issues that they see in wildlife management.

Chief of Staff **Dennis Knapp** thanked the commissioners for all they do for the resources and the State of Michigan.

Chairman **Richardson** wished all a happy holiday.

Next Meeting

Chairman **Richardson** announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2015, at the MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. Committees meeting in January will be the NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration, NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, and the NRC Marketing, Partnerships, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee.