

## MINUTES

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

January 12, 2017  
MSU Diagnostic Center  
4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI 48910

#### Present for the Natural Resources Commission

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

#### Present for DNR staff

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

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chairman John Matonich** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

**Matonich** introduced new commissioner **Chris Tracy** adding that he and his family reside in the Richland area and that **Chris** has served on a number of conservation commissions and boards.

**Parks and Trails Update** Parks and Recreation division (PRD) chief **Ron Olson** provided an update on camping numbers which are up 23 percent over last year. Snowmobile permits are up almost 60 percent to 36,000 from 2015. Oak wilt has been discovered on Belle Isle; 127 oak trees will be removed and many others will be treated to prevent spread. The strategic plan for Belle Isle is slated for completion in July. Concerning the Iron Belle trail; in partnership with the Michigan Fitness Foundation; they will be honoring **Michael Levine** for his contributions towards several areas of the trail. Leland harbor has problem with siltation caused by storms which has virtually shut the harbor. The Waterways Commission and PRD are working to secure grants and matching funds to get the harbor back open.

**Lifesaving Awards** Law Enforcement division chief **Gary Hagler**, presented lifesaving awards to Conservation Officers **Richard Cardenas**, **Ken Kovach**, **Greg Patten** and **Isaac Tyson**. **Cardenas** saved a suicidal subject who jumped off MacArthur Bridge into the Detroit River, using a ResQ Disc, **Cardenas** was able to rescue the man. **Kovach** responded to a call of an accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound. He applied a tourniquet to stop the victim's bleeding, by the time emergency personnel arrived the man's condition was improving. **Isaac Tyson**, while on marine patrol, received information that a person was unconscious face down in the water,

when he arrived the subject was sitting in the boat and appeared to be fine. **Tyson** was called back to the boat an hour later as the subject was once again unconscious and had stopped breathing. **Tyson** performed CPR and the subject started breathing again and had a pulse. **Greg Patten** responded to a call to rescue a subject who had fallen through the ice, **Patten** put on snowmobile flotation coat and saved the subject using the ResQ Disc.

**Arctic Grayling Review** Fisheries division chief **Jim Dexter** provided an update on the Arctic Grayling initiative and their reintroduction. The department is partnering with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and 31 other partners on this project. **Dexter** stated that the goals include management, research, production and education, outreach and stewardship. He also noted that a strategic plan is currently being worked on. This project was able to start with a grant of \$117,000 from the Consumers Energy Foundation and that more organizations are offering the department additional grant offers.

**Invasive Species Grant Awards** **Dexter**, who is part of the Quality of Life steering committee, shared that in year three of four, 17 applications were awarded for more than \$3.5 million for the control of invasive species. These proposals are the most effective for reaching the Quality of Life steering committee goals for invasive species control.

**Wetland Mitigation** Wildlife division's Wetland Mitigation Banking program manager **Steve Shine** gave an update the new wetland mitigation banking on public lands program, which is a collaboration of the department, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Urban Development and the Department of Environmental Quality. Mitigation is done to address wetland impacts from drain projects, road projects, municipal projects, blueberry production expansion and production agriculture, in addition to wildlife habitat improvement. This will have the added benefit of helping local governments meet environmental regulations as they make necessary improvements to infrastructure, and it will help farmers in complying with the federal farm bill.

**Photo History of State Forests** **Kerry Fitzpatrick** from the Wildlife division gave a presentation on the DNR Camera Point Project where cameras set up on specific locations and repeat photos are taken over time so that changes are recorded. This project started in the 1920s and photos have been taken approximately every ten years. The series tell a story for forestry and wildlife management, and for recreational purposes. This information is preserved in the state archives and is available to the public on the Digital DNR website. The project will continue and expand into the future with the next photos being scheduled to be taken in 2022.

**Ann Arbor Deer Permit** Wildlife division's **Chad Stewart**, **Kelly Straka** and **Brent Rudolph** informed the commission about the decision to issue a Scientific Collector's Permit to the city of Ann Arbor for management of deer conflicts within the city limits. This permit will allow the city to hire a contractor, White Buffalo, Inc., to remove 100 deer and surgically sterilize another 80 deer. The sterilization method is not a procedure that is favored by the department, but has issued the permit as it is not always safe to use sharpshooters to remove deer in urban settings. **Straka** shared the process for evaluating the proposal for issuance of a Scientific Collector's Permit. **Rudolph** talked about the proposed treatment areas for years one, two, and three of the permit adding that the department did not solicit nor are funding this research. They are looking at this as an evaluation opportunity; these combined techniques have not been attempted previously. A contractor camera survey will be done. **Stewart** added that the division maintains that hunting more cost effective. He also added that sterilization alone will

not alleviate the issue; it must be done in conjunction with culling. **Stewart** stated that the permit could be withdrawn in the future. The sterilized deer will be marked and monitored to learn about their movement. It is currently assumed that the deer are moving outward from the urban setting, not coming into the city.

**Legislative Report 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.

### Committee Reports

**NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee: Chairman John Matonich** shared that chief **Kristin Phillips** updated the committee on the division's strategic planning process. **Julie Ellsworth** gave a presentation on the new DNR website redesign preparation, which should be much more user-friendly. **Phillips** told the committee the various different ways that video is being used to promote the department. They received an update on the new Glassen Education building at the Rose Lake shooting range. The final update provided information on winter programs at visitor centers.

**NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries: Commissioner Rex Schlaybaugh** shared that the committee received fish and wildlife updates including information on the proposal on by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians for a sturgeon weir on the Manistee river. **Dexter** stated that Fisheries division is working to determine the feasibility of this project. Wildlife division chief **Russ Mason** talked about Crystal Waters acquisition and that they will be using the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations for management of this land. The committee received an update on predator prey project. **Chad Stewart** reported on the 2016 December elk hunt, with all hunts being successful. **Mason** talked about \$1 million appropriation from the general fund for chronic wasting disease (CWD) work. **Brent Rudolph** provided an update on the hunter retention research. **Schlaybaugh** also added that they received the proposed Calendar of Issues for 2017, which the committee will be reviewing and reporting back to **Mason** with any additional items they would like to see added.

### PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

(**Dennis Knapp** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances, which began at 3:43 p.m.)

**Tony Smith** from the Michigan Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), shared his observations regarding hunter's contributions toward the CWD efforts. He wants to keep hunters engaged in this effort and wants more work to be done using antler point restrictions. He feels there should be more department biologists dedicated to deer. The QDMA is interested in hunter heritage and tradition and would like it to move forward in a positive light. **Smith** talked about protecting the younger age class bucks.

**Jim Sweeney** from Concerned Sportsmen of Michigan spoke on the topic of deer management issues. With regard to the Ann Arbor deer situation, they believe culling done by professional shooters is the most humane, efficient, and biologically sound. They would like the decision revisited and the permit for sterilization be rescinded.

**Neal Porter**, past president of the Flint Chapter of Safari Club International (SCI) talked about the Ann Arbor deer situation. He disagreed with biologists' statement regarding culling on the permit is required, saying it is not tied together with sterilization. Safari Club International chapters of Flint, Novi and Detroit oppose sterilization in deer in Michigan. This permit could jeopardize future funding to the department from SCI. They do not feel this permit approval is well vetted, thought out, or planned and is not in the deer management plan. There is no reference to this as a research project in the plan. He talked about the far-reaching implications of sterilization. **Porter** said that a collector's permit is not to be used to remove ovaries from deer and then release deer into the wild. He requested that this permit be rescinded and stated that SCI will be pursuing legislative action to get this action stopped.

**Dave Buikema**, representing the Southern Mecosta Whitetail Management Association Deer Co-op, stated that they support antler point restrictions (APRs) for the entire state. His group has been doing volunteer four-point on a side in Mecosta county for seven years and have seen many benefits. He would like to see residents from all over the state see the same results they are getting.

**Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:01 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

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

**Commissioner Rex Schlaybaugh** made a motion that the minutes of the December 8, 2016 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a voted was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

### DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

**Director Creagh** listed the "director's action" items on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items.

### COMMISSIONER REPORTS

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** has been enjoying Michigan's winter sports activities and met with the QDMA's immediate past president and president regarding the 2016 season and success for Northwest 12 APRs.

**Commissioner Richardson** attended a CWD workgroup meeting and UP Habitat workgroup meetings. He added that the Timber Advisory Council is establishing new goals. He has heard many positive comments in west UP with concern to the coyote hunting regulation change.

**Commissioner Klarr** thanked all for attending today's meeting. Her family has a 400 acre farm in Jackson county and added that they pass on the smaller bucks to hold out for more mature bucks.

**Commissioner Tracy** thanked all for welcoming him to the Commission.

**Director Creagh** spent some time with USDA Veterinary Services regarding bovine tuberculosis; there will be more discussions between the department and the department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The current Memorandum of Understanding will be amended. The director and **Mr. VanDyke** are currently doing meet and greets with new legislators. Budget roll-out will be coming after the state of the state address in a couple of weeks. He also said that the All-Employee meetings are coming up and that he appreciates the commissioners' attendance. Based upon conversation, **Creagh** is asking chief **Mason** to come back with more comprehensive information on urban wildlife management.

**Chairman Matonich** shared that the Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance president **Tony Demboski's** wife passed away and a number of department staff attended her services. **Commissioner Richardson** and he attended a meeting of the Ontonagon Sportsmen's Club to talk about natural resource management; they are very interested in habitat and land management. He applauded **Richardson's** work with the UP Habitat Workgroup. **Matonich** and **Richardson** attended a meeting on Copper Peak last week, which has the only ski-flying hill in the western hemisphere, where they are seeking to make it a year-around jump center. He added that he has had the pleasure of having a piebald deer at his home and it's great to watch.

#### Next Meeting

**Chairman Matonich** announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, February 9, 2017 at the MSU Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. The committees meeting that day will be the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee and the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

#### Adjournment

**Commissioner Crumbaugh** made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Klarr** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 2/9/17



John Matonich, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director