

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 14, 2021  
Conference Call/Virtual Meeting**

**Present for the Natural Resources Commission (commission)**

Carol Moncrieff Rose, chair, Hillman, MI  
David Nyberg, Marquette county, MI  
J.R. Richardson, Carp Lake township, MI  
Keith Creagh, Williamston township, MI  
David Cozad, Bay City, MI  
Tom Baird, Elk Rapids, MI  
Chris Tracy, Kalamazoo, MI  
Mike Lashbrook, East Lansing, MI

**Present for Department of Natural Resources (department) Staff**

Dan Bock, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General, Lansing, MI  
Daniel Eichinger, DNR director, Isabella county, MI  
Trevor VanDyke, DNR director of legal and legislative affairs office  
Brooke Parmalee, DNR, legal and legislative affairs office  
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC

**Chair Rose** called the meeting of the commission to order at 8:59 a.m. **Rose** then introduced new commissioners **David Cozad** from Bay City and **Tom Baird** from Elk Rapids. Next she asked for a roll call of the commissioners; all commissioners, the director and assistant attorney general were present virtually for the January 14, 2021, Natural Resources Commission (commission) meeting.

**Chair Rose** then called for a motion to approve the January 14, 2021, Natural Resources Commission's meeting agenda. **Commissioner Richardson** made a motion to adopt the day's agenda; commissioner Nyberg supported the motion. **Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the agenda was approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of the December 10, 2020, commission meeting minutes. **Chair Rose** called for a motion to approve the minutes; commissioner **Lashbrook** made the motion to adopt the December 10 minutes, commissioner **Creagh** seconded the motion. **Rose** then called for additional discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the December 10, 2020 meeting minutes passed unanimously, with the exception of new commissioners **Cozad** and **Baird**, who abstained.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**Director's Report**

**Director Eichinger** shared information on the invasive Carp agreement between the governors

of Illinois and Michigan, who have agreed to work jointly to protect the Great Lakes from the invasive Asian carp. He reported that he participated in a virtual ceremony marking the start of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Project that is a key part of the agreement. **Eichinger** gave special recognition to **Dr. Tammy Newcomb**, senior water policy advisor for the department, who was instrumental in getting the project pushed forward. He noted that this is a big win for the department and the state.

**Fish Order 245.21 Fish Disease Control** **Dr. Seth Herbst**, policy unit manager from the Fish division provided a presentation on upcoming Fish order 245.21, dealing with fish disease control. He spoke about the division's goal to enhance the biosecurity of the bait supply and to update specific provisions based on scientific information. **Herbst** presented several recommendations meant to reduce the spread of fish diseases.

**Elk Season Results** **Chad Stewart**, deer and elk management specialist from the Wildlife division, provided the 2020 elk season results to the commission. For the late season, the goal was 160 elk, 46 antlered bulls, 72 cows and 13 calves were legally harvested elk, a total of 131 for an 85.6% hunter success rate. There were four illegal takes. The Tribal harvest consisted of three bulls, eight cows and 1 calf for a total of 12. **Stewart** noted that all three Pure Michigan Hunt winners were successful. Because of the late season success rate along with the 83% early season success rate, the department did not recommend a January hunt.

**Overview for the Wolf Management Plan** **Cody Norton**, large carnivore specialist, also from the Wildlife division presented an overview of the draft timeline for preparing an updated wolf management plan. This timeline will include a public attitude survey, scientific review, input on the current plan from public and Tribal consultation, an updated draft plan will be created and publicly reviewed along with additional review from the Tribes, commission and director. **Norton** said that the expected completion date is June 30, 2022.

**Public Act 288 (PA 288) Forest Road Inventory Update** **Jeff Stampfly**, acting chief of the Forest Resources division provided an update on PA288, which determines motorized and non-motorized use recommendations on forest roads and requires the department to post maps and mileage open to motorized use each year and requires an inventory of forest roads open by region. The state's maps have been completed but must be updated each year. **Stampfly** noted that a land use order of the director with the proposed changes for 2020 was being presented for information at the day's meeting and would be up for approval in February.

That concluded the director's report at 10:17 a.m. and chair **Rose** called for another roll call at 10:22 a.m.

#### **PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC**

(**Brooke Parmalee** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 10:23 a.m.)

**Craig Dicus** shared his thoughts on changes to Michigan's deer regulations; he would like to see baiting prohibited in the entire state, 3-points on a side for antlered deer and would like the department to make public land a priority over private land when it comes to law enforcement.

**Capt. Mike Veine** spoke to the commission about the deer regulations in the Upper Peninsula (UP). He believes that hunter satisfaction in the UP is down and that the regulations should not aim at reducing the already decimated deer herd.

**Sam Morello**, Michigan Bowhunter's Association, said that they support mandatory registration, universal antlerless licenses, removal of hunter's choice in zone 1, elimination of the sunset of the late archery season in Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland counties, and changes to the supplemental feeding rules in zone 1. They do not totally support the zone 1 archery harvest rules passed in the summer of 2020. They support full inclusion throughout the state for antlerless harvest using archery equipment, saying that the true impact is little up in zone 1. Michigan Bowhunter's also do not support crossbow harvest in December in zone 1 as they feel that this weapon takes too much advantage of the deer during migration and in their winter range.

**Erik Schnelle**, National Deer Association, commented on several items that the association would like to see occur with regard to deer regulations, including controlling the spread of CWD by limiting the movement of both live deer and deer carcasses, reducing the spread by limitations on baiting, recreational feeding and livestock feeding, increasing and improving wildlife habitat, harvesting more antlerless deer, protecting the majority of yearling bucks, minimizing yearling dispersal, increasing landowner, hunter, farmer and state harvests; also by setting harvest goals and communicating those goals, providing low or no-cost bovine TB and CWD testing, and, support and expand deer and disease management research.

**Commissioner Creagh** stated that it is still his intent to propose an amendment that will terminate the APR study in the CWD study area at the end of 2021 hunting season. **Schnelle** added that a major key is education.

**Dean Beckman** commented on his thoughts on the APRs study in the CWD zone saying that he does not believe the research is a sound scientific study. The research should include more geographic areas. **Beckman** said that the management of the deer herd has to be about the resource.

**George Lindquist**, UP Whitetails of Marquette county started by saying that he appreciates the commission and the department for their work on the UP deer regulations. Upper Peninsula deer numbers are down and they are a part of the UP culture.

**Richard P. Smith** shared UP buck harvest data and feels that it is essential that UP deer hunters be able to harvest adequate numbers of whitetails this fall in the event that next winter is severe. **Smith** added that the best ways to make that possible is to eliminate "Hunter's Choice," make antlerless deer legal to bowhunters over the entire UP and to allow the use of crossbows in the UP during December, as the department is recommending. **Smith** said that failure to do so will set the stage for high deer losses again during the next rough UP winter.

**Ian Fitzgerald** from MUCC welcomed commissioners **Cozad** and **Baird** and provided them with the mission of MUCC. **Fitzgerald** also shared several items in the proposed deer regulations that MUCC is and are not in favor of in the UP. The MUCC supports updating the wolf management plan and hopes to have a seat at the table with that endeavor.

**Trevor St. John** is in agreement with the proposed UP deer regulations and believes that the elimination of antlerless deer quotas and the doe with a bow option are scientifically sound.

**St. John** is a strong proponent of youth hunting. He agrees with the simplification of the deer regulations as they still account for the landscape differences in the UP.

**Gary Gorniak** representing the UPSA, shared that he is not anti-wolf, but the UP wolves need to be managed and that most UP hunters want them to be managed. He added that most of the hunter groups in the UP would like to see the wolf population down in the 300-400 range. **Gorniak** would like to see a wolf hunting season to manage their population in the UP.

**Steve Dey** does not want to wipe out wolves in the UP. He indicated that many UP hunters would like to see the wolf management plan updated immediately and that a wolf hunting and trapping season needs to be put into effect to balance the wolf to deer ratio.

**David Cords** spoke about this hunting experiences in the eastern UP in the past three years and said that the success rate in close to zero. **Cords'** thoughts are that the proposed deer regulations are going to decimate the deer herd even more.

**Lynn Mackie** spoke about her family's wholesale bait business and that Fish order 245.21 will pose a significant financial impact and burden on their business as well as other wholesale bait businesses. **Mackie** proposed several controlled solutions to change the negative impacts. **Chair Rose** asked that **Mackie** forward her email explaining the controls to **Ms. Nelson** to share with the commission.

**Bill Kelener** was also concerned about VHS and Fish order 245.21 and shared his thoughts on the financial impact/costs and burden on the wholesale bait businesses in several states. **Commissioner Creagh** asked if Wisconsin, Minnesota and Ohio test for VHS, **Mr. Kelener** said that it depends on the species in those states.

**Dave Johnson** from UPSA spoke to the commission about the proposed UP deer regulations and recommended that the late archery season be limited and defined per DMU, they agree with the proposed changes to the combination license and the group is split on the 3-point on a side for the first buck or 3 inch rule. **Johnson** said that he is looking forward to a good hunting season next year, as this year's was poor.

**Karol Miller** runs a non-profit Facebook site for wolves with over 150,000 members. They want to see the wolves self-regulate their own population. **Miller** said that weather, not wolves have the most impact on the deer populations in the UP. As the wolf population has been stable for the past decade, they asked that the commission and department to not move forward with a wolf hunting or trapping season.

**Tom Spisz** shared a few new deer hunting ideas including; having a velvet deer hunt such as Tennessee does in the end of August, on private land only before deer change their habits, Kentucky also has a five-day velvet hunt September 1-5, and lastly **Spisz** asked to expand an urban deer hunt to Washtenaw county.

**Bee Friedlander** representing Attorneys for Animals came back to the commission with an update on wolf studies on what happens after they are delisted. She noted a study from **Santiago, Avila, et.al.**, that suggests trophy hunting in Wisconsin led to poaching that was successfully hidden from authorities. Another study suggested that hunting and trapping of wolves does not increase social tolerance. **Friedlander** also shared the five-year post delisting monitoring that is done by the USFWS on delisted species.

**Molly Tamulevich**, HSUS, welcomed the new commissioners and provided them with a brief overview of the functions of HSUS. She advocated for the commission and department to listen to the scientists and not allow trophy hunting of wolves.

**Trevor St. John** read a statement from himself, **Horst Schmidt** and **Joanne Duncan**, all members of the western UP CAC who are not in agreement with the CAC's resolution on wolf hunting from a meeting the previous week.

**Brian Plank**, Michigan Cattlemen's Association, asked the director if the association be allowed a seat on the wolf management plan update group. **Plank** spoke about the failure of meeting the minimum heads for testing in the TB surveillance area, which has some extremely large ramifications to the cattle farmers in the area, including that they will not be allowed to send meat or dairy across state lines. **Plank** asked about the possibility of using heads from processors.

**Mel Smith** from Montcalm county recently proposed the APR study to the department, which was modified by the department. Two years of the three-year study have been completed and Smith added that most hunters are happy with the APRs. He said that this will help with the three Rs; Recruit, Retain and Reactivate, not it's brown it's down.

**Trish Marie** she participated in the petition to protect Michigan wolves. She does not feel that wolf hunting or trapping is necessary as they do not pose a threat.

**Chair Rose** adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 12:11 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 12:21 p.m. She asked for another roll call of commissioners and noted that all who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

## **REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

### **NEW BUSINESS** **DIRECTOR**

**Chair Rose** read the new business for the director, which may be acted on during the day's meeting:

**Land Transaction Case #20190244, Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land Gaylord Management Unit-Emmet County**

**Land Transaction Case #20200156, Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land Grayling Management Unit-Crawford County**

**Director Eichinger** indicated that he would be signing these land transactions.

**Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 1 of 2021, Public Act 288 (PA 288) of 2016 Forest Road Inventory Update**

### NRC ORDERS

#### *Fisheries Order 245.21, Fish Disease Control*

### OLD BUSINESS DIRECTOR

*There was no old business for the director to act upon at this meeting.*

### OLD BUSINESS COMMISSION

#### *Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2020, Deer Regulations*

**Chair Rose** asked for a motion to take Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2020, Deer Regulations off the table. **Commissioner Nyberg** so moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2020, Deer Regulations be off the table. **Commissioner Creagh** supported the motion. **Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

The commission then began discussion regarding amendments they would like to see in the version that will be brought back for action in February, 2021. Various comments included thanking the department for their patience in working with them on the amendment, withdrawal of the APR study in DMUs 34, 54 and 59 at the end of the 2021 deer hunting season, increasing education for harvesting antlerless deer, increasing testing in the CWD zone and allowing antlerless harvest when in deeryards, to name a few.

**Rose** motioned to put Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2020, Deer Regulations, back on the table until February 2021. **Commissioner Creagh** supported the motion. **Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

### COMMISSIONER REPORTS

**Commissioner Lashbrook** said that he was pleased with the day's meeting and also welcomed commissioners **Cozad** and **Baird**. He shared that his is happy with the progress his five-month-old puppy is making.

**Commissioner Creagh** congratulated the department's team for their success in getting the Brandon Road Lock and Dam agreement with Illinois and also welcomed the new commissioners.

**Commissioner Nyberg** welcomed **Baird** and **Cozad** and spoke about the importance of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam agreement with Illinois. He said he had been out fishing, but so far it has been a mild winter in the UP. **Nyberg** added that he sat in on several meetings that had recently been held in the UP including both CAC meetings.

**Commissioner Richardson** said that he had attended UPSA, CAC, UP Habitat Work Group

and fish sub-committee meetings over the past month.

**Commissioner Cozad** said that the Brandon Road Lock and Dam agreement is a great success for the department and the state. He thanked the staff and commissioners he had worked with thus far.

**Commissioner Baird** said that he is pleased to be associated with the Natural Resources Commission and is looking forward to working with the department and the commission.

**Director Eichinger** said that he appreciated the positive comments on the Brandon Road Lock and Dam agreement, a project that has been on-going for many years. He welcomed commissioners **Cozad** and **Baird** as well.

**Chair Rose** said that Santa left a Ruger 10/22 under the tree for her and she is looking forward to using it. She reported that there is a lot of ice fishing in her area and enjoys the weekly fishing reports. **Rose** thanked **Dustin Isenhoff** for the work behind the monthly license reports he provides.

After Commissioner Reports, chair **Rose** made a motion for the commission to enter closed session. The motion was supported by commissioner **Lashbrook**, and unanimously approved.

**CLOSED SESSION adjourned 2:00 p.m.**

After the commission exited the closed session and before adjournment, the following motion was offered, seconded, and adopted: The Natural Resources Commission formally requests legal counsel from the Office of Attorney General related to privileged communication that was the subject to the commission's closed session on January 14, 2021.

### Next Meeting

**Chair Rose** shared that the next meeting of the commission will be held on Thursday, February 10, 2021 and will once again be in a virtual format.

### Adjournment

**Commissioner Richardson** made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Nyberg** supported the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.



Carol Moncrieff Rose, NRC Chair



Daniel Eichinger, DNR Director

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
February 11, 2021