

**MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
November 8, 2018
Outdoor Adventure Center
1801 Atwater Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48207**

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

Vicki Pontz, chair
J.R. Richardson, vice-chair
Rex Schlaybaugh
Louise Klarr
Dave Nyberg
Chris Tracy

Absent

John Walters

Present for DNR Staff

Peter Manning, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Bill O'Neill, deputy director
Trevor VanDyke, legal/legislative director
Brooke Parmalee, legislative assistant
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair Vicki Pontz called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:31 p.m. at which time she and the commission presented a resolution of appreciation to the staffs of the Outdoor Adventure Center (OAC) and Belle Isle State Park for professionally and efficiently accommodating the needs of the Natural Resources Commission and the Michigan Travel Commission for the events and meetings held on November 7 and 8.

Recognition of Amphibiville's Mayor; Trinity Favazza: **Chair Pontz** presented **Ms. Favazza** with a resolution of appreciation on behalf of the commission for her extraordinary efforts as the Mayor of Amphibiville. **Favazza** has also received recognition for her work from **Governor Snyder, Senator Debbie Stabenow** and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Director's Report:

Parks and Trails Update: Parks and Recreation (PRD) division chief **Ron Olson** provided an update on the Houghton Trail rehabilitation efforts. **Olson** also shared the monthly parks and recreation details; lodging nights were up slightly over 2018, harbor nights were up 11.7 percent, ORV sales were down one percent over the same time period last year, trail permits were up 1.9 percent, snowmobile trail permits are up 43%. **Olson** finished up his report

by detailing upgrades to the department's camping, lodging, and harbor reservation system along with highlights of development at Belle Isle State Park; nearly \$42 million has been invested over the past three years.

Partners in Conservation Award: Charter Township of Orion – Chris Barnett: Chief Olson said that the work of Orion township supervisor **Chris Barnett** and staff of their parks and recreation department have been instrumental in connecting trails from the Paint Creek trail to Bald Mountain recreation area along with working to diligently connect the Polly Ann trail to the Paint Creek trail, among other trails, with connections to the Iron Belle Trail as well. **Barnett** thanked the department for their continuing partnership. **Chair Pontz** and deputy **O'Neill** presented the group with a white pine plaque in appreciation of their partnership.

New Zealand Model for Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication: Dr. Graham Nugent, an applied wildlife biologist from New Zealand spoke before the commission on his primary focus of the eco-epidemiology and management of bovine tuberculosis in wildlife. Beginning with wild red deer in New Zealand, he demonstrated that in that country they were important vectors that could carry infection through time for many years. New Zealand has a goal of complete eradication of bovine tuberculosis from their wildlife by 2055; the work they have completed concluded that bovine tuberculosis can be eradicated, but only if all important routes of infection are identified.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update: Kristin Phillips and Chad Stewart provided an overview about the CWD positive doe found in Dickinson County taken by a deer management assistance permit four miles from Wisconsin border. **Stewart** talked about the department's surveillance areas, goals and what the department is now doing to increase the number of hunter-harvested deer for testing. **Phillips** said that communication efforts have been focused on the Upper Peninsula (UP) CWD confirmation, including press releases, partner meetings, media interviews and production of a range of fact sheets and other information materials. More information may be found at www.michigan.gov/cwd.

Committee Reports:

NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee: Commissioner Tracy shared that the morning's joint meeting with the Michigan Travel Commission went well. The group receiving a report on PRD's 100th birthday celebration in 2019.

Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council (ORAC): Commissioner Tracy noted that this group was established several months ago, with three meetings being held to date. This group is the advisory council for Michigan; there are approximately 8-10 other states that also have an ORAC-type committee. Many of those states met in July in North Carolina where they signed accords that address four sectors of outdoor recreation industry; economic development, conservation stewardship, workforce training and education and public health and wellness. Michigan's ORAC has established their goals around those four areas, with Michigan's accord scheduled to be signed by **Governor Snyder** before the end of the year. The next scheduled meeting will be a joint meeting with the commission in March at Shanty Creek.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife & Fisheries: Commissioner Schlaybaugh said that the group received reports from Fisheries division's **Todd Grischke** and Wildlife division's **Dr. Mason**, which included updates on the state's weirs, egg-take efforts, Cisco stocking, Largemouth bass virus, Arctic Grayling, the West Nile virus in grouse and that the department's

bear and wolf specialist, **Kevin Swanson**, had accepted a new position with the Nature Conservancy.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

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

Michael Betzold shared his feelings about having the Grand Prix auto race on Belle Isle; he feels that having the race at that state park violates the department's mission to protect and conserve Michigan's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. **Betzold** does not agree with the answers he has received at public meetings and said that park users do not want the Grand Prix on Belle Isle. He does not think having the Grand Prix at Belle Isle State Park is environmentally sustainable. **Betzold** said that the department puts corporate interests above public benefits. **Betzold** would like the commission to work with political leaders and citizen groups to find a new location for the Grand Prix.

Jim Felgenauer addressed the commission on several topics including APRs in the thumb area and how it would affect hunters such as himself who hunt for meat, not antlers; this change could potentially stop hunters such as **Mr. Felgenauer**. He suggested that the commission look closely at the regulation process and how their decisions could effectively make local hunters and anglers stop participating in the sports they enjoy in the state.

Amy Trotter, deputy director, MUCC, discussed the upcoming fish regulations, specifically that the bass anglers and members are very supportive of the drop shot regulation, although MUCC doesn't have a policy on that. Regarding perch fishing, they would like to reduce limits to bring the possession numbers in line with other sunfish limits, as well as the other Great Lakes states. **Trotter** suggested setting criteria to look at key inland water bodies and fish population attributes, similar to Lake Gogebic, to look at goals and parameters to manage for a quality perch fishery. The chair asked **Trotter** about MUCC's position regarding the change of the hook size, 3/8 inch to 1/2 inch that commissioner **Walters** asked about in October and how they would address that; **Trotter's** responded is that MUCC agrees with the regulation as proposed, not changing to a different size.

Ed Beckley talked about polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS, that has been found in the deer near his home in the Northern Lower Peninsula. He asked the commission and the department to ramp up getting the information out to the public about PFAS and the "*do not eat venison*" order as soon as possible. **Beckley** also shared his concerns about CWD in the UP and his concerns regarding the tribal regulations as compared to the Michigan hunters' regulations. He suggested renegotiating treaties to make the baiting/no feeding laws consistent between the Tribes and the department. **Beckley** did add that deer feed is still selling great at his store. The chair thanked **Mr. Beckley** for attending NRC faithfully and asked if he had any specific recommendations for the NRC to consider; **O'Neill** added that he would put him in touch with **Dr. Newcomb** concerning PFAS to get the latest information and noted that the Department of Environmental Quality is the lead department on this issue.

Pete Cornish talked about saving another piece of land in Cornish SGA; project #2, which is detailed in the SGAs management plan. He spoke of the project and a pheasant release. In the trust he is allowed two years to complete project two on Grass Lake and is asking for the commission's and department's assistance in getting it done quickly. **Cornish** wants this land

preserved. **O'Neill** said that **Scott Goeman** is the best person for him to work with on this project.

Steve Hamilton has fished Lake St. Clair for 35 years, spoke about the perch limits in Lake St. Clair. He does not want to see the perch limit cut to 25. **Hamilton** said that we should have the same limit as the Canadian side.

Jim Felgenauer spoke about a lake sturgeon fishing tournament; North Channel Sturgeon fishing tournament. Fifty-eight teams landed 87 lake sturgeon in one night. Twenty-four percent of the fish were legal for harvest. This year there were 45 tagged sturgeon caught and tagged in the St. Clair river. This year there were actually 14 lake sturgeon harvested, which means the anglers are voluntarily doing catch and release. This is a great fishery with a lot of voluntary catch and release going on.

Molly Tomlevich, state director from the Humane Society of the United States reiterated that the commission recognize that wildlife watchers contribute to Michigan's economic strength and bring in more dollars than Michigan hunters, and they outspend hunters 3-1. She asked that non-consumptive users get a seat at the table if there is an issue that could affect wildlife watching.

Chair Pontz adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:21 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:22 p.m. She 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

Pontz reviewed the items up for information only.

Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations, Fisheries Order 200.19, FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Commissioner Klarr requested a revised order be prepared that removes the additional waters from the order. **Pontz** asked for discussion, there being none she asked the department to prepare for action at the December 13 meeting. **Schlaybaugh** said that he would be working with **Trevor VanDyke** and the department to request the Lake Trout daily possession limit in Lake Huron grid MH-1 be reduced from a three Lake Trout daily possession limit to a two Lake Trout daily possession limit. His reason for requesting this change is so that the state can meet its Lake Trout management requirements laid out in the 2000 Consent Decree due to angler overharvest of the state's Lake Trout allocation in 2016 and 2017. **Commissioner Nyberg** talked about the upcoming consent decree with the Tribes and understands **Schlaybaugh's** request to come in compliance with the existing consent decree as they are concerned with over-harvest in the unit. The state's fisheries committee consisting of department, Tribal and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists would manage MH-1 and MH-2 as one model. **Nyberg** has issue with this reduction of the harvest limit when the science doesn't support that decrease. **Nyberg** added that this important as we have the Consent Decree coming up for renegotiation in 2020. He does support **Schlaybaugh's** request to vote on this issue at the December meeting. **Pontz** asked if there were any additional comments or requests for revision of this amendment. **Commissioner Richardson** brought forth another requested revision

where he recommended that the proposed additional waters to the UP's 10-possession Brook Trout waters be removed from fisheries order 200.19.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, October 11, 2018, Natural Resources Commission Meeting

Commissioner Tracy made a motion that the minutes of the October 11, 2018 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Richardson** supported the motion. **Pontz** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations, Fisheries Order 202.19

Commissioner Klarr made a motion that Fisheries Order 202.19, Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations be adopted. **Commissioner Tracy** supported the motion. **Pontz** called for discussion, **Commissioner Schlaybaugh** requested an amendment to change the single-pointed un-weighted hook size regulations from the proposed 3/8 inch to 1/2 inch or less from point to shank; this would provide for a consistent special hook size regulation state-wide. **Schlaybaugh** added that he was making this request on behalf of **Commissioner Walters** who was absent from the day's meeting. **Pontz** called for any additional discussion on the amendment, **Tracy** seconded the motion to amended. **Pontz** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion to amend carried unanimously.

Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes and White Bass, Fisheries Order 215.19

Commissioner Schlaybaugh made a motion that Fisheries Order 215.19, Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes and White Bass, Fisheries Order 215.19 be adopted. **Commissioner Tracy** supported the motion. **Pontz** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Gear Restrictions for Fishing, Fisheries Order 218.19

Commissioner Schlaybaugh made a motion that Fisheries Order 218.19, Gear Restrictions for Fishing be adopted. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Pontz** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – DIRECTOR

Chair Pontz listed the "director's action" items on the agenda.

DIRECTOR - ACTION

Chair Pontz listed the director's action items on the agenda and **O'Neill** indicated he would approve all items on behalf of director **Creagh**.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Schlaybaugh met with a couple of members of the Miller-VanWinkle Chapter of Trout Unlimited regarding some habitat improvements on the Maple River, and he attended a Ruffed Grouse Society banquet.

Commissioner Nyberg immersed himself in stakeholder comments on the finding of the CWD-positive deer in the UP. He commended the department and staff on the proactive job they are doing to address the situation. He thanked **Pontz** for connecting the landowners and having productive conversations. **Nyberg** said he appreciates the monthly updates on CWD so the commission can evaluate whether or not they need to supply additional management tools for the department.

Commissioner Richardson said that there have been many proactive CWD meetings in the UP.

Commissioner Klarr went on boating trip down Erie Canal that has 26 locks and was very interesting. After returning home she had the opportunity to shoot some geese then traveled to British Columbia to hunt moose and caribou. **Klarr** thanked the staff of Belle Isle State Park for the tour with the Michigan Travel Commission the day before.

Commissioner Tracy said that on October 27 he attended the second annual **Joe Johnson** youth pheasant hunt at the Gordon Guyer SWA in Augusta. There were 31 youth hunters and much help from partners and staff. He noted the help from department staff including **Cindy McQueer, Mark Mills, Randy Heinze** and **Mark Sargent**. Partner assistance came from Ruffed Grouse Society, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. At the bird sanctuary they were treated to a decoy carving demonstration by **Willy McDonald**.

Deputy Director O'Neill said that he is looking forward to upcoming deer season and reminded all to be safe and spend some time out in the natural resources.

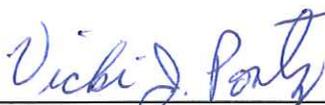
Chair Pontz visited two pheasant farms in the Saginaw Valley and thumb area with chief **Mason**. **Pontz** participated in a phone conference and a stakeholders call on CWD with the UP; she was very impressed with the spirit of cooperation of the sportsmen and women. They are being and have been very proactive; the tone of the meeting was impressive. **Pontz** spoke at the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development employee recognition event. She met with Detroit Zoological Society on several issues of mutual concern, and the previous night attend the Boone and Crockett banquet where she heard several reports on doctorate and post-doctorate research going on to better impact our knowledge on CWD.

Next Meeting

Chair Pontz announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, December 13, 2018, at the Lansing Community College West Campus Auditorium, 5708 Cornerstone, Lansing. Committees meeting that day will be Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee and the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

Adjournment

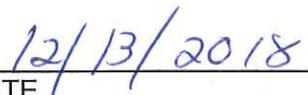
Commissioner Tracy made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Schlaybaugh** supported the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.



Vicki J. Pontz, NRC Chair



Keith Creagh, DNR Director



DATE