

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

August 10, 2017
Jackson College – W.J. Maher Campus
3000 Blake Road
Jackson, MI 49201

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, chair
J.R. Richardson, vice chair
Vicki Pontz
Rex Schlaybaugh
Louise Klarr
J.R. Richardson
Chris Tracy

Present for DNR staff

Bill Moritz, DNR natural resources deputy
Peter Manning, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Brooke Parmalee, DNR legal 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 2:30 p.m.

Chairman Matonich read and presented the commission's resolution for **Dr. Moritz**, natural resources deputy of the department, who is leaving that position to take a position with the Wildlife Management Institute, and thanked him for all that he has done for the natural resources in the state of Michigan. **Dr. Moritz** will continue as a senior policy advisor for the department.

Parks and Trails Update Parks and Recreation division (PRD) chief **Ron Olson** provided an update on parks numbers; recreation passports are up 2.5% and are still trending upwards, non-resident passports are up 3000 over 2016, boating continues strong with slip nights up 38.3%, trail up 9.2. ORVs licenses are up six percent and trail passes are up 9.2%. **Olson** noted that August 19-20 is the free ORV weekend. Belle Isle state park is the only state park in the country to receive a special urban grant from the National Park Service for \$750,000. The newly replaced docks at East Tawas Harbor re-opened in mid-July; phase 2 will begin this fall. **Olson** shared a snapshot of 13,000 customer service responses for lodging/camping; which indicated a 90% satisfaction rate. Ninety-four percent of respondents would recommend to the state parks to others. On August 17, there will be an open house in Torch Lake area regarding building a boat launch. There are difficulties with boaters parking on road and is a contentious issue; PRD is working with local officials. The Bay City State Park renaming has been held over to September. They had a robust public meeting on August 7 with over 250 people sharing their thoughts on the possible changes to the state park. **Olson** shared that bi-lingual flyers have been done in Spanish and Arabic and will be made available to the public in the near future.

Matonich thanked **Olson** and PRD staff for the tours of the local state parks the day before, noting that the residents of Jackson and Lenawee counties have fantastic parks in their area.

Partners in Conservation Award Potawatomi Mountain Biking Association was presented the Partners in Conservation award for the work the 250 plus members have done to promote, build, maintain and protect trails in Washtenaw County for mountain biking. The group's recent efforts have resulted in the bike-optimized DTE Energy Foundation trail being constructed at Waterloo Recreation Area. The award was presented to Jason Jones. The department happily recognized this long-time partner in providing sustainable recreation opportunities in southeast Michigan.

Proposed October 25, 2017 Oil and Gas Lease Auction/Metallic Mineral Lease Updates

Karen Maidlow, property specialist from Minerals Management, provided information on the October 25 oil and gas lease auction; there are 821 parcels nominated consisting of over 30,000 acres. Minerals Management received a direct metallic minerals request from Eagle Mine, LLC. Total requested acres is 15,274 over four counties Recommended classification as leasable development with restrictions. They are currently in public notice comment period which ends October 26, at which time it will go on the DNR business calendar.

Red Swamp Crayfish **Nick Popoff** from Fisheries division provided an update on this invasive species, which is the most invasive species world-wide. He stressed that they dig complex burrows which cause erosion and infrastructure problems. They were found in a Novi retention pond and at Sunset lake in Vicksburg. There have been over 100 reports primarily in southeast Michigan. Management units are verifying these reports. Law Enforcement has inspected over 600 locations with many seized from various southeast and southwest Michigan. They will continue to make these inspections. There is a response plan with a goal to determine the distributional extent of the infestations. **Popoff** shared a video from the Department of Environmental Quality. The Lafayette Louisiana Visitors and Convention Bureau has contacted the Fisheries division; they would like to come up to Michigan and highlight the Red Swamp Crayfish's cultural importance. They have a visit scheduled at Sunset lake on August 19.

Invasive Carp and Japanese Stilt Grass Update **Joanne Foreman** of the Public Information Office gave a report on the Invasive Carp Challenge, an attempt to find innovative solutions to keep invasive carp from entering the Great Lakes. The challenge officially launched August 1 and there are currently over 400 people working on a solution. Total prize package for this challenge is \$700,000. Foreman also talked about the recent release of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers' *Tentatively Selected Plan*, which lays out plans for halting as much as possible the movement of invasive carp through the Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Illinois. Foreman also reported on the finding of Japanese Stiltgrass on private property in Washtenaw county. It is a "watch list" species that can displace native vegetation. The department is working with the property owner to treat the infestation with herbicide.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Symposium Update **Chad Stewart** provided a brief update on the October 3-4 CWD symposium which came to be from the resolution passed by the commission in April 2017. The symposium will be live-streamed. The meeting will end each day with a panel discussion where the public can ask questions of the speakers.

SCORP Update Marc Miller, the department's regional initiatives deputy, updated the commission on Michigan's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). To have access to federal Land and Water Conservation grants, the department must undertake the statewide recreation planning process every five years. The state has received nearly \$130 million from that fund. To provide the information for SCORP, the department has extensive engagement with public officials, local parks districts, focus groups, a statewide phone survey and an external advisory group.

Introduction of Bill O'Neill as Incoming Natural Resources Deputy Outgoing natural resources deputy Bill Moritz introduced the incoming deputy, Bill O'Neill. As the natural resources deputy, he will administer the divisions that oversee Michigan's wildlife, fisheries, state forests, state parks, minerals and law enforcement.

Legislative Report Anna Mooney, legislative liaison provided a written report of legislation related to the department.

Committee Reports

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

Commissioner Klarr reported that the committee received a report on the Highland Recreation Area, went through a general management plan for Muskegon State Park and passed a resolution of support for the plan. The committee discussed the continuing conversation regarding the designation of Bay City State Recreation Area to Bay City State Park along with the Governor's 2018 budget. They received an overview of Rose Lake and Plainwell district highlights.

NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee

Commissioner Pontz provided a synopsis of the morning's meeting which included discussion on engagement between the youth council and the commission. **Jennifer Kronkite** from Experience Jackson shared highlights of the Jackson area and how they use data to target their marketing. The committee received marketing and promotion reports from Fisheries, Wildlife and Parks and Recreation divisions. The committee also received a report on the Youth council and had discussion on how the commission can further collaborate with the council.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

Commissioner Schlaybaugh reported that they received a report from chief **Dexter** on the St. Mary's river assessment. **Dexter** also provided information on the survey the USGA and department are conducting Lake Huron on round gobies. The committee also received information on several fish regulation amendments. Wildlife division assistant chief **Steve Chadwick** reported on hunting digest for this year, which includes very detailed information on the importation of meat. It was also reported that what was thought to be an EHD-positive deer turned out to be false positive; to date there have been no findings of EHD. **Lt. Wanless** from the Law Enforcement division reported on recommendation for the order on changing hunter colors to include hunter pink; the division is recommending that no changes be made to the Wildlife Conservation Order at this time.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

(**Brooke Parmalee** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 4:00 p.m.)

Erik Schnelle, president of Michigan Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), shared that the previous week they had their first statewide habitat day at Maple River State Game Area in partnership with the department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and the National Wild Turkey Federation that was a big success. **Schnelle** provided information on why QDMA could enthusiastically support the CWD plan and why they could also support antler point restrictions (APRs) in the TB zone and in CWD zones. He provided a handout to commission on the group's recommendations. The QDMA would like to become a member of the CWD work group.

Perry Wood from Anchor Wildlife Co-op from the NELP in DMU 487, wanted to convey thoughts on the recently approved regulations in the TB zone. The co-ops goals include improving habitat, increase partnerships with different groups to educate them on a good way to accomplish their goals. They are working with several different groups including MUCC, local soil conservation groups, MSU extension educator along with local DNR biologists. **Wood** said to improve the TB situation the deer herd must be balanced. They were disappointed in the recent regulation changes and said that APRs would have increased the doe harvest. They would like the commission to reconsider their recent decisions.

Bill Friedrichs from Singing Hills Hunt Club in Presque Isle county provided the commission with a summary of his comments. He would like to see APRs in northern Michigan, which also leads to harvesting more antlerless deer. **Friedrichs** would like see the APR regulations revisited. The co-op practices voluntary APRs and feel they are doing the right thing and want the commission to follow suite.

Mark Straley from the Fruchey Rand Road Co-op provided a handout to the commissioners. The co-op wants to improve the age class and have practiced voluntary APRs for many years. More mature bucks are being seen and more does are being harvested. Hunter satisfaction is on the increase. The Fruchey Rand Co-op has been making habitat improvements with grants received from the department. **Straley** would like to see hunting fees lowered.

Brian Siess from Shiawassee Flats Citizens and Hunters Association talked about the siphon tube project. At the April 2016 commission meeting director **Moritz** informed the group that remediation would begin last summer. They have seen forensic work done, but no remediation work. They recommended keeping the siphon tube at the 60-70% flow that it is at and supplement it with an alternative pump site. **Siess** voiced concerns on escalating costs of infrastructure projects on the Shiawassee River State Game Area. **Moritz** added that the department is in agreement that it is impractical to investing more on the siphon tube, the practical alternative is pump stations. The department has been meeting on regular basis with DTMB to move forward.

Jim DeClerck representing Saginaw Field and Stream talked about the Bay City State Recreation Area and that the majority of property was purchased with Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds and some areas were no longer being used for wildlife. His concern is with going outside of PR rules, the land must either be brought back in line, the money must be returned to the

fund, or swap it for another piece of land. **DeClerck** stated that he thinks the problem may also be in other areas and asked about the possibility of an inventory of properties with deed restrictions so it may be verified that they are being properly used, or replace the land. A plan should be put in place before an audit occurs.

George Lindquist talked about wolf management and his concern about the recent judgement regarding the species management. Lindquist said that UP residents are frustrated. The people who want to save the wolves have turned other against the proper management of the species. He suggests that the commission, the department and the Governor's office put together letters to get congress to work on this legislation under Bill 1514, of which part is to delist wolves in the Great Lakes. Wildlife management needs to stay in the hands of the state. A strong, united front of support needs to occur to get wolves off the endangered species list.

Dale Hendershot from the Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers Association extended an invitation to their annual state convention in Ewart the weekend of August 18.

Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:32 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:33 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

FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Matonich reviewed the items up for information only.

Additional Colors for Hunting Apparel, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No.8 of 2017tion

Special Fishing Regulations, Big Island Lakes Complex, Schoolcraft County, Fisheries Order 201.18

Regulation on the Take of Reptiles and Amphibians, Fisheries Order 224.17

Ice Fishing Shanty Regulations, Fisheries Order 251.17

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, July 13, 2017 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

Commissioner Tracy made a motion that the minutes of the July 13, 2017 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

State-Licensed Commercial Fishing, Fisheries Order 243.17 (should be Director's Action)

Commissioner Schlaybaugh moved that Fisheries Order 243.17, State-Licensed Commercial Fishing, be adopted. **Commissioner Richardson** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

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

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Richardson thanked **Commissioner Klarr** for her hospitality and added words of appreciation for **Dr. Moritz**.

Commissioner Tracy thanked **Commissioner Klarr** and the city of Jackson for their hospitality. He noted that there will be a youth pheasant hunt in October at the Gordon Guyer Wildlife Area in Augusta Creek and he invited all to attend, which would more attention to the youth hunt.

Deputy Director Moritz noted that he will remain acting for **director Creagh** for another week.

Chairman Matonich attended the UPSA meeting in Hermansville where there was good discussion. **Matonich** thanked **Cheryl Nelson, Brooke Parmalee** and other staff, along with **Commissioner Klarr** for setting up the meeting in this marvelous part of Michigan. He added that we need to pay attention to West Nile and Lyme disease due to the amount of time spent outdoors and in the woods. In the future, we should think about providing education in terms of these diseases.

Next Meeting

Chairman Matonich announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, September 14, 2017 at the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Library (previously the MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health) 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, 48910

Committees to meet on that day will be the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

Adjournment

Commissioner Tracy made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Schlaybaugh** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 9/14/17



John Matonich, NRC Chairman



Keith Creagh, DNR Director