MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

November 9, 2017
MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
4125 Beaumont Road
Lansing, MI 48910

Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, chair
J.R. Richardson, vice chair
Vicki Pontz
Christine Crumbaugh
Louise Klarr
Chris Tracy

Present for DNR staff

Dan Bock, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Keith Creagh, director
Bill O'Neill, DNR deputy director
Trevor VanDyke, DNR legislative/legal director
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 1:55 p.m.

Director Creagh welcomed the Office of the Great Lakes to the Department of Natural Resources (department). This becomes effective December 28.

Office of the Great Lakes Introduction **Angela Ayers,** deputy director of the Office of the Great Lakes said that the transfer to the department will ensure the long-term sustainability and priority of Great Lakes policy initiatives and will align programs within state government. The commission will receive regular updates from **Ayers,** along with director **Jon Allan**.

Parks and Trails Update Parks and Recreation division (PRD) chief **Ron Olson** shared the video that earned the division an excellence in technology award; the Fly Like an Eagle exhibit that is on display at the Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit.

Olson provided an update on the storm damage that recent severe Lake Superior storms left in their wake in the Upper Peninsula (UP). Significant shoreline erosion occurred, as did damage to picnic sites, campgrounds and boat launches.

Olson concluded his report sharing that E-bike legislation has become law, regulating bikes that are assisted by electric motors and detailing where they may be used in Michigan. The PRD is working on a process to properly sign the trails managed by the department that will inform users of the new regulations.

Law Enforcement Division Lifesaving Awards; Officers Josiah Killingbeck and Jeffrey Goss Law Enforcement division assistant chief **Dean Molnar** presented lifesaving awards to conservation officers (COs) **Josiah Killingbeck** and **Jeffrey Goss**. **Josiah** saved a mother and daughter in Lake county whose canoe had overturned and trapped the child underneath. He advised the swift-water response team of their location and crawled out on a narrow log in the fast-moving water and rescued the girl. **Jeffrey** responded to a Calhoun county dispatch call of a drug overdose, the subject stopped breathing several times and **Jeffrey** started chest compressions and administered two sternal rubs with no response; he continued to monitor the subject until medical personnel arrived and medicated the subject. Within minutes the subject was up and able to move to a stretcher. **Molnar** added that because of general fund resources we were able to hire and support more officers such as these two.

October 25, 2017 Oil and Gas Lease Auction Update Results **Mark Sweatman** shared that 821 parcels were nominated with 349 lease offerings, total nominated acres was over 30,000, and total leased acres was over 15,800. $270,970 was generated in bonus bid, which is in the upper third of historical values. The next lease nomination period was open and closed on December 1. The next lease auction is tentatively set for May 7, 2018.

Public Act 288 Update **Scott Whitcomb** from the Forest Resources division (FRD) and talked about the process being used to map and designate forest roads in the Northern Lower Peninsula (NLP) to comply with Public Act 288. The process for the NLP will be complete by the end of 2017. A similar process will occur in the UP in 2018. **Whitcomb** stated that public input has been an important consideration.

Bay City State Recreation Area/Tobico Marsh Boundaries Update **Bill O'Neill,** the department's deputy director shared what changes have occurred via maps; showing the original proposal and the current proposal. **O'Neill** reminded that this is being done because of a friend's group recommendation to change the name from Bay City State Recreation Area to Bay City State Park. By statute, state parks are closed to hunting unless it is otherwise noted. The department is required to look for opportunities to enhance hunting. **O'Neill** stated that public engagement that has occurred. He thanked those who shared their opinions on the proposal. The additional recommendation suggested is that hunting will be for waterfowl only and limited firearms. The amendment will be brought back for action at the December meeting.

Director Creagh noted that **Deputy O'Neill** had received the Tuber award from the forest products industry, for his strong working relationship with the forest products industry.

Legislative Report **Trevor VanDyke,** legal and legislative director, provided a written report of legislation related to the department. In addition to the written report, **VanDyke** provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

Update on House Resolution 154 **Matonich** stated that there is some misinformation as to the status of Sandhill cranes in Michigan. He informed that the commission had not added them to the game species list. **Matonich** shared the steps that would have to be taken in order to have the Sandhill crane listed as a game species. Because they are a part of the Eastern population of greater Sandhill cranes, their management falls within the purview of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with recommendations from the Mississippi Flyway Council; the formal advisory council comprised of 17 states. If the commission considers adding them to the game species

list, and subsequent to that, consider hunting, it will do so only after a thorough consideration of the science and a complete exploration of all effective alternatives that might be used singly or in combination to resolve concerns.

Committee Reports

Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries: Commissioner Richardson stated that during the brief committee meeting they received a report on the draft Lake Michigan Management Plan from Fisheries and that the fall salmon egg take proceeded well, with the fish in good condition as is the egg quality. Wildlife division reported on the CWD Work Group noting that their recommendations will be presented to the commission by the end of the year. They also received an update on the American Woodcock Symposium that was held in Roscommon in October.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

(**Brooke Parmalee** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 2:48 p.m.)

Erik Schnelle, president of Michigan QDMA talked about quality deer management hunting and feels that this provides more opportunity to harvest a more mature buck. **Schnelle** said that disease in the bovine tuberculosis prevalence area is going up and needs to be more in-line for hunters and cattle farmers. **Schnelle** said that the state needs to provide a high-quality hunting product and with the quality deer management philosophy the populations may be lowered and still enhance the quality of experience the hunters have. We need to incent hunters to harvest does so they stay engaged and to bring the herd in check and to lower the disease level.

George Quakenbush, vice president of Michigan Cattlemen's Association agreed with **Schnelle's** statement regarding hunters' excitement before opening day. **Quakenbush** talked about enhancement and supporting bio-security for farms in the disease zones. They support additional hunts in January and February and the increased harvest of antlerless deer. Effective communication tools are necessary to help reduce deer numbers around farms with the highest disease rates. Working together will make an impact.

Kevin Gould, representing Michigan Cattlemen's Association, thinks there is an opportunity to talk about disease eradication efforts and using the tools to get the job done with the various partners. They are committed to bovine tuberculosis eradication. **Gould** said that their group has an intensive plan after current deer seasons to get below carrying capacity. **Gould** added that all have the same passion and stakeholder groups are critical to the success. Activities that are counter-productive need to stop. They are an advocate for disease eradication.

Chauncey Moran came before the commission to share his findings in a recent field trip to the Tobico Marsh area. He said that he took dimensions and that some statements made previously by area residents were incorrect. **Moran** talked about the 1955 agreement with the intent of the land usage; it was only closed to hunting for five years from the date of the title. He asked the audience to look at broad prospective of what was actually at the site.

Mark Whiteman from Equestrian Friends of Big Oaks, wants to save the campground in Montmorency county that will be affected by PA 288. **Whiteman** said that the state has spent much money on Big Oaks campground and it should not be open to ORVs. He asked the commission for assistance in maintaining Big Oaks as an equestrian campground. **Matonich**

added and clarified that there are some things that are out of the control-of the commission; some are in county control.

Brad Koehn, vice-president, Lake St. Clair Muskies, Inc., thanked the commission and Fisheries division for all they do to protect the natural resources of our state. He and his group do not want year around catch and immediate release (CIR) at Lake St. Clair. **Koehn** said that year around CIR would cause irreversible damage; science to date has not been conclusive..

Drew YoungeDyke and **Jason Meekhof** from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers talked about the implementation of PA 288. The submitted a letter asking to freeze the implementation. They do not have much of an issue with open roads, but there are certain places that are incompatible with ORV use, such as Pigeon River Country. They are asking that the Deward Tract area by Manistee river be saved from ORV use. They added that they are asking to save the 15% of the back country roads from ORV use.

Elliot Hubbard from Thumb Hunters for APRs, has submitted a proposal for a five-county APR in Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac, St. Clair and Lapeer counties. They feel that deer density is getting beyond capacity and that this would be good for hunters and local economies.

John Bayley shared his thoughts on a possible Sandhill crane hunt. He thanked the commission for sharing the statement that **Matonich** made on the commission's position. He believes that the population is fragile, and the growth has been very slow. **Bayley** asked that the commission look very closely at the necessity of a hunt.

Ellen VanSlyke, secretary, Big Oaks Friends Group, talked about the impacts of PA 288. Clear Lake and Big Oaks area-staff has worked with the friends group and it's the nicest equestrian camp in Michigan. She is concerned about the impact of PA 288 on the area by ORVs.

Bryan Burroughs, executive director, Trout Unlimited, came before the commission to talk about the UP brook trout bag limit issue. He does not feel that this proposal has been made using scientific management and that the proposed order to increase the bag limit falls sort of the standard. Trout Unlimited respectfully asked that there be no increase to the brook trout bag limit.

Joyce Janicki came before the commission to discuss Sandhill cranes. She was glad to hear the statement made by **Matonich.** She asked that the cranes not be added to the game species list.

Julie Baker from the Songbird Protection Coalition, reiterated that in 2006 the people of Michigan voted to protect the morning dove. They want to keep the morning dove and Sandhill crane protected as a traditional non-game bird in Michigan.

Jarrett Minch came to discuss PA 288**.** This was **Minch's** first commissioner meeting and is encouraged by what he has seen and heard and will attend meetings in the future. He feels that there are too many roads in Roscommon county to be open to ORV usage. He did say that department staff have been great to work with on this issue. **Minch** felt that it was difficult to find the inventory on the department's website.

Nan Spadacene is a farmer from Midland county who appreciates that animals wild or not do not know borders and feels that Sandhill cranes should not be added to the game species list.

Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 3:52 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 3:53 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.

Order to Re-designate Bay City State Recreation Area to Bay City State Park Michigan; Tobico Marsh Boundaries, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 7 of 2017

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Minutes, October 12, 2017 Natural Resources Commission Meeting
Commissioner Tracy made a motion that the minutes of the October 12, 2017 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations, Fisheries Order 200.18
Commissioner Richardson moved that Fisheries Order 200.18, Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations be adopted. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, **Commissioner Tracy** indicated that he does not support the change in regulation to allow the taking of 10 brook trout on certain streams/water bodies in the UP. **Tracy** indicated that from the perspective of keeping the fishing regulations simpler and easier to enforce and because he is not certain that science supports raising the limit on certain streams to allow 10 brook trout to be taken that he does not support that portion of the order, There being no further comments, a vote was taken and the motion 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 215.18
Commissioner Richardson moved that Fisheries Order 215.18, Statewide Warmwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass be adopted. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, commissioner Tracy indicated that for similar reasons (keeping regulations simpler/law enforcement purposes, he would be voting in favor of this order, including the portion about CIR of muskies in Lake St. Clair. **Commissioner Tracy** thanked the interested parties that attended several commission meetings to address concerns about having year around CIR of muskie for Lake St. Clair and requested that the Fisheries division monitor and work with the people that fish that basin to see whether issues arise regarding the health and population of muskies in that basin. There being no additional comments, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Bow, Spear, and Crossbow Fishing Regulations, Fisheries Order 219.18
Commissioner Pontz moved that Fisheries Order 219.18, Bow, Spear, and Crossbow Fishing Regulations be adopted. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, , a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Regulations on Freshwater Mollusks, Fisheries Order 228.18
Commissioner Klarr moved that Fisheries Order 228.18, Regulations on Freshwater Mollusks be adopted. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Netting Regulations, Fisheries Order 229.18
Commissioner Crumbaugh moved that Fisheries Order 229.18, Netting Regulations be adopted. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote 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 Pontz apologized for missing the October meeting; she was in South Carolina learning many things about forestry practices.

Commissioner Crumbaugh wished all a safe and successful hunt.

Commissioner Klarr commented about a UP grouse hunting, adding that she was successful outside of Bruce Crossing.

Commissioner Tracy thanked several wildlife staff for working on the Joe Johnson Memorial Youth Hunt. This successful hunt is planned to take place again next year on Saturday, October 27, 2018.

Director Creagh added when attending the Great Lakes Governor's and Premier's meeting there was conversation about getting support at Brandon Lock and Dam from stakeholder groups; he said that this is the time to get that support to ensure Invasive carp do not get above the dam. There was an invasive species meeting in Muskegon that wasn't well attended, this support is needed. Concerning Line 5, the risk analysis lead by **Dr. Guy Meadows**, will be a critical report to review. Creagh also reminded the commissioners that budget time is near and asked them to share any items they would like to see covered.

Chairman Matonich Reiterated concerns about the UP storm damage and what chief Olson and staff are up against. On a sunnier note, he had just returned from a successful mule deer hunt in Montana.

Next Meeting

Chairman Matonich announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2017 at the Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan, Lansing. The committees meeting that day will be the NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee and the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

Adjournment

Commissioner Tracy made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Klarr** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 12/14/17

John Matonich, NRC Chairman

Keith Creagh, DNR Director