

Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council (WUPCAC)

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 14, 2013

5:30-6:00pm EST DNR Division Reports * 6:00-8:00pm EST Council Meeting

Michigan Tech University, Houghton, MI

Facilitator: Phil Wirtanen Co-Facilitator: Warren Suchovsky

Council Members Present

David Anderson	Dave Johnson	Jim Schmierer
David Anthony	Katherine Kruse	Robert "Skip" Schulz
Ken Buchholtz	George Lindquist	Travis Smith
Floyd Dropps	Jim Lorensen	Warren Suchovsky
Larry Heathman	Rory Mattson	Phil Wirtanen
Michael Holmes	Chauncey Moran	
Mick Jarvi	Terry Read	

Council Members Absent/Excused

Jerry Divine

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons

Greg Andrews, Economic Development Liaison, Marquette
Dan Dowdy, Parks & Recreation Division, Baraga
Sgt. Denny Gast, Law Enforcement Division, Houghton
John Hamel, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
George Madison, Fisheries Division, Baraga
Tim Melko, Facilities, Operations & Support, Marquette
Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division, Marquette
Debbie Munson Badini, Deputy Public Information Officer, Marquette
Dennis Nezich, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division, Marquette
Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Gail Voldarski, Facilities, Operations & Support, Baraga
Stacy Welling Haughey, Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator, Marquette
Lt. Pete Wright, Law Enforcement Division, Marquette

Special Guests

J.R. Richardson, Natural Resources Commissioner

Facilitator Wirtanen began the meeting with a council membership update.

- He thanked outgoing members Don Britton, Nancy Douglas, and resigning member Marty Johnson for their invaluable service to the Council and DNR. Each were mailed a certificate of appreciation.
- He congratulated members whose terms were renewed by the CAC Selection Committee in November: Mr. Dropps, Mr. Jarvi, Mr. D. Johnson, Mr. Lindquist, Mr. Schulz, and Mr. Suchovsky.

- The Selection Committee also chose three new members and two alternates, who would be called to serve if any openings become available within the next year. The first alternate was chosen to fill Mr. M. Johnson's slot as his resignation came after the application period and Selection Committee meeting. Facilitator Wirtanen and Mrs. Welling Haughey introduced and welcomed new members...
 - Mike Holmes of Dickinson County, representing Upper Peninsula Sportsmens Alliance (UPSA) and Michigan Darkhouse Anglers Association (MDAA)
 - Katie Kruse of Baraga County, representing the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
 - Terry Read of Iron County, Independent
 - Travis Smith of Marquette County, Independent
- **Mrs. Welling Haughey** noted for the Council's information, the CAC Selection Committee is comprised of three community stakeholders (representatives from the Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority, and UP Whitetails) and three DNR staff (note: the stakeholders change periodically). Selections are based on current member demographics, including counties with Council representatives, stakeholder groups represented, etc.

DNR Division Reports

Written staff reports were provided to Council members on January 7, 2013. Questions deriving from the content of the written reports were answered verbally by the following staff.

- **Stacy Welling Haughey, U.P. Regional Coordinator:** **Ms. Welling Haughey** welcomed Commissioner Richardson to the meeting and thanked Michigan Tech University for their hospitality in hosting the meeting at their facility.
- **Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division**
- **Debbie Munson Badini, Public Information Office**
- **Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division**
- **Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resource Division**
- **George Madison, Fisheries Division**
- **Lt. Pete Wright, Law Enforcement Division**

Call To Order

The WUPCAC meeting was called to order at 6:05pm EST by **Facilitator Phil Wirtanen**. Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Facilitator Wirtanen recognized and congratulated Council Member **Chauncey Moran** for being the recipient of the 2012 Lake Superior Binational Program's Environmental Stewardship Award for Outstanding Contributions to Protect and Restore the Lake Superior Basin. There was a round of applause for Mr. Moran, an honor well deserved.

Adoption of Agenda

Facilitator Wirtanen asked if there were any additions to the agenda; none were suggested. **Mr. Suchovsky** motioned to adopt the agenda as presented; **Mr. Jarvi** supported the motion. **Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Divine. Motion carried.**

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Facilitator Wirtanen indicated members were sent the September 17, 2012 minutes via email to provide an opportunity to review them prior to the meeting; he asked if there were any further edits needed. None were brought forth. **Mr. Suchovsky motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Divine. Motion carried.**

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

Facilitator Wirtanen explained the procedure for this public comment section of the meeting. No comments were presented at this time.

New Business

1. **Regional State Forest Management Plans Presentation:** **Mr. Stampfly** provided a powerpoint presentation outlining the regional state forest management plans. Three regions were defined and each will have its own management plan (Eastern UP, Western UP, and Northern LP). Public review of these plans has been extended through March 8th, 2013 with approval expected in July of 2013. The plans focus on a sustainable timber production and wildlife habitat. In the Western UP, the plan addresses 35 management areas, their use, featured wildlife species, health issues, fire management, rare species, cover types, and rotation of timber age classes. Council members were encouraged to review the plans, which are available on the DNR website (http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505_62551---,00.html), and submit comments on what is missing in the plan, what is liked, what is not liked, etc.

Mr. Schulz commented that there seemed to be little emphasis on recreation in the plans, specifically the lack of connected roads or recreation trails. **Mr. Stampfly** advised the Forest Resource Division is working with the Parks and Recreation Division on developing trails.

Mrs. Welling Haughey added that a trail update will be held on March 18th in Marquette which will offer an opportunity to provide trail related comments. **Mr. Stampfly** suggested that comments on types of trails, i.e. destination instead of loops, should be added. **Mr. Lorensen** suggested that the DNR ensure all plans are being worked on and there is no overlap. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked how the comment date for the plan was decided upon; **Mr. Stampfly** stated forest certification was a big driver for the date, as it occurs in the fall.

Mr. Lindquist stated the Western UP plan could be focused on Baraga and Marquette Counties, which have the most state forest hardwood acres. He stated a good job is being done managing forests and hardwood cutting is in a 20-year cycle. He asked if there was money available to manage for deer habitat, i.e. improved openings, and how it will be done. **Mr. Stampfly** suggested **Mr. Lindquist** submit his comments on the plan so they can be reviewed; money is tight right now, but may become available down the road.

Mr. Mattson stated that as a Council, they were promised an opportunity to review the plan, but it would have been nice to have a subgroup to review the plan, specifically the forestry and wildlife plans. The plan is late successional forest; there are wildlife recommendations for featured species, etc. How does one watch these plans as an

individual? He stated game funds purchased most of the land and he feels they are not being managed for game.

2. U.P. Deer Advisory Team (UPDAT) Update: **Mr. Minzey** noted a summary of the UPDAT's December meeting was provided in the meeting packets. He indicated a presentation on deer season options has not yet been made to the UPDAT. The group is taking into account the social issues of hunting and stressed that hunting experiences and wants differ greatly. The DNR is evaluating moving bucks to the 2 ½ -year old class by restricting spike harvest, limiting to one buck, or three points a side as options. Any decision has to be applied UP-wide (except for Drummond Island). He said the process is: 1) UPDAT members will meet with their groups; 2) UPDAT members will bring information to back to the meetings; 3) information will be reviewed at open houses with UPDAT members and the DNR; and 4) information will be submitted to the NRC. He indicated whatever the decision is, it will be in place by 2014.

Mr. Mattson suggested that the decision process should take a year, which is time enough to form an ad hoc committee that could look at the proposals. A wildlife biologist and conservation officer (who could speak to the legality of proposal) could be assigned to the ad hoc committee. **Mr. Minzey** stated the value of increasing the age is social structure. Research shows younger bucks are doing more breeding than previously believed. **Mr. Jarvi** stated that taking spike deer out is good since half don't make it through the winter; half is a generous statement. Locally, there have been high survival rates with current winters; weather is a key factor for mortality. He would like to see it go back to 1998 or so with no restrictions. **Mr. Lindquist** referred to a statement in 2007, in the Mining Journal. From a biological standpoint, younger bucks should be saved. That is why points were proposed. **Mr. Minzey** made reference to a Mississippi Survey Whitetail Study which shows younger bucks were doing a fair amount of breeding. However, young bucks do not understand the courtship rituals. Young deer make up 30% of the population. **Mr. Minzey** was asked if this was being taken as science and he replied yes, it was published credible data.

3. Resolution of Congratulations: **Facilitator Wirtanen** read the prepared draft resolution, to be submitted on behalf of both the Eastern and Western UPCAC's, congratulating Conservation Officer Mike Hammill of Newberry on being named Officer of the Year. The resolution was approved by the EUPCAC at their December 6th meeting. **Mr. Suchovsky motioned to approve the joint resolution of congratulations; Mr. Jarvi supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Divine. Motion carried.**
4. Additional Agenda Items Added by Council: There were no items added to the agenda by the Council.

Mr. Minzey asked if he could provide an update on Wolf Permits; the Council agreed. **Mr. Minzey** stated that 16 wolves were put down; 8 were on issued permits to area farms with one in the Ironwood vicinity and the remainder killed while in the act of doing damage.

Mr. Suchovsky raised a concern regarding the dwindling number of license retail outlets. He also questioned the impact of the deer hunting season starting on a weekend instead of the historical November 15. **Mr. Mattson** stated a local store had problems with their terminal and didn't feel they were addressed quickly by the agency; **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated she stopped in the store and they were up and running. It was noted internet sales were felt to be affecting local area sales. **Mr. Lindquist** suggested making recreation laws simpler as a good start in helping these U.P. businesses; at present the laws are perpetuating confusion.

Old Business

1. Subcommittee Updates

- a. **Mr. Dropps** added discussion on a walleye stocking project. He stated it was suggested his group have talks with the DNR regarding stocking issues. Several phone meetings took place and a proposal was offered by his group to assist with the walleye ponds. His impression was the proposal had been accepted, but when they heard again from the DNR, it had been turned down. The Fisheries Division would be willing to work on some issues, but could not guarantee a specific number of fish to a club. It is understandable that clubs want to subsidize plants for their area, but Fisheries has to plant fish according to statewide priority. **Commissioner Richardson** commented on his group working with Fisheries, stating that once the fish are grown, they do not belong to the club. **Mr. Madison** indicated the Fisheries Division is short on funds and without additional funds, stocking, surveys and manpower could be cut. The lack of funding is already affecting the U.P. **Mr. Mattson** asked if a local group wants to participate, could they keep a portion of their stock. **Mr. Madison** replied that Fisheries has to stock equally regardless of where the funding and/or assistance comes from. **Mr. Mattson** asked if Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County has resources and the DNR has a need, why couldn't they work together. **Mr. Madison** reiterated that Fisheries cannot stock at a guaranteed number per acre, which is what the group wants. **Mr. Dropps** added they were at a standstill on the proposal for now. **Mr. Jarvi** commented that things are better off this year than last and the walleye pond harvest depends greatly on weather. **Commissioner Richardson** noted the NRC is working with many agencies and groups (federal, tribal, etc.) to accomplish stocking quotas.
- b. *Subcommittee Structure:* **Facilitator Wirtanen** began the discussion with the suggestion that any subcommittee mirror the DNR divisional structure, i.e. wildlife, fish, parks and recreation, etc. **Mr. Mattson** asked if wildlife and forestry could be together as there are too many issues involving both divisions that are lost in the details; discuss the main issues and prevent overlap. **Mr. Schulz** commented there is not many on the CAC that participate in ORV/snowmobile recreation activities and was concerned these activities would not be addressed or considered. **Mr. Suchovsky** stated that recreation impacts forestry, forestry is tied to streams; everything impacts other resources, including trail recreation. Discussion ensued on how best the Council can perform its activities, i.e. if issues come up that the Council needs to focus on, will it get referred to a subcommittee first and then make a recommendation to the whole Council. Several logistical questions were asked: labeling of subcommittees, up front or reaction

committees; the best structure for the Council to handle issues, having an ad hoc subcommittee meet after the regular Council meeting. **Mrs. Welling Haughey** asked when a subcommittee last met; there was no comment. Subcommittees would be helpful, however, someone would have to take the lead. **Mr. Minzey** suggested having subcommittees, but to select a person to cross over to another committee. He stated within the DNR, wildlife biologists work with foresters on a regular basis.

Facilitator Wirtanen asked for a consensus. The Council agreed it will address items by issue. Email and phone meetings can be utilized. Ad hoc committees will be issue-based. If an ad hoc committee presents a recommendation, it will have to go before the full Council before any action can be taken.

2. Jackie Strauch-Rantala Award Update: **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated she spoke with the Michigan Conservation Officers Association (MCOA) about the award and scholarship feature that Mr. Schulz added to his proposal, since the CAC's are not set up to handle awards or scholarships. The MCOA was very interested in the award program and will be meeting with Mrs. Welling Haughey and Mr. Schulz via conference call in the next few weeks. **Mrs. Welling Haughey** will provide an update at the next meeting.
3. DNR Strategic Planning Update: **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated a written report will be presented to the Council at the next meeting. There is no current deadline for the plan. The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) will have a proposed list of topics that will provide items to add comments to and there will be an opportunity to address these agendas. **Mr. Lorensen** suggested working with Commissioner Richardson to develop a timeline to come back to the Council.

DNR Reports on Requested Information

The following were requests for additional information at the last meeting or prior to this meeting:

1. CFA Review Status: **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated the commercial forest rules are under administrative review and are on hold; they will be reintroduced at a later date.
2. Reduction of Mineral Audit Taxes: **Mrs. Welling Haughey** referenced a handout in the meeting packets addressing mineral audit program fees up for action at the NRC. It was reported that the senate bill did not make it into the last session.
3. Free OHV Weekend Update: **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated there has been no progress to report. This will require a legislative movement to implement. A copy of the current bill analysis was included in the meeting packet for Council members to review.
4. Hunter Safety Instructor Recruitment Update: **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated recruitment continues through clubs and officers, however, she feels there is more that can be done and will be looking into it further.

2013 Meeting Dates/Items for Next Agenda

1. Approval of 2013 Meeting Dates: The proposed meeting dates and locations for 2013 listed on the back of the agenda were reviewed. After discussion on where to hold meetings during the winter months, the 2013 dates and locations were approved by the Council.

2. Next Meeting Date: The next meeting will be a joint meeting with the EUPCAC on March 18th to be held at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.
3. Items for Next Agenda: A presentation on aquatic invasive species was suggested as the featured presentation at the joint UPCAC meeting in March. The EUPCAC approved the suggestion at their December meeting. **Mr. Suchovsky motioned to approve the suggested joint topic; Mr. Lindquist supported the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Divine. Motion carried.**

Public Comments

Facilitator Wirtanen opened the floor to members of the audience for their comments:

- **Facilitator Wirtanen** read an email from **Mr. John Florian**, by request as Mr. Florian was not able to be in attendance. The email addressed Mr. Florian's inability to access his camp due to the US Forest Service (USFS) blocking roads within their boundary. It was noted that the USFS's primary responsibility is to protect the resource and if there is a road in the area and it is damaged, they will not allow access. Mr. Florian indicated the contradiction between the DNR trying to sell more hunting licenses and the USFS restricting access to hunting lands. **Mr. Suchovsky** stated there is a coordination directive mandated for federal agencies to work with local units of government. **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated the USFS has made themselves available for questions; there are also leases on hunting property/camp land that expire in 2017 and may not be renewed. **Mr. Schulz** suggested getting legislators involved. **Mrs. Welling Haughey** stated DNR staff met with the Ottawa National Forest staff (the area of land Mr. Florian references) to discuss this inquiry; overall, it is out of the DNR's scope and is solely a USFS issue. Mr. Florian will be contacted and encouraged to contact the Ottawa National Forest to discuss his issues further.
- **Mr. E. Halverson** of the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community stated he would like to give his comment time to Mr. Otchingwanigan.
- **Mr. Earl Otchingwanigan**, representing the Ojibway Tribe and several members of the audience, spoke on the prospect of a wolf season. During his commentary, he explained his upbringing and culture, which the wolf is a part of, and the differences between current cultures. He stated he did not agree with the current legislation (and legislators) to develop a season to kill wolves. He referenced wolf bill 1350 and the wolf management plan. He stated if the new law went into effect, it would degrade one part of life and environment. He stated he is speaking for the Ojibwa Tribe and they do not support a hunting season on wolves.

Closing Comments

There were no closing comments made by the Council.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm EST.