

MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

JANUARY 11, 2007

LANSING CENTER
333 E. MICHIGAN
LANSING

PRESENT FOR THE NRC

Keith Charters, Chair
Hurley J. Coleman
Bob Garner
John Madigan
Frank Wheatlake

ABSENT FOR THE NRC

Mary Brown
Darnell Earley

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Peter Manning, Legal Counsel
Becky Humphries, Director
Dennis Fox, Chief of Staff
Dennis Fedewa, Chief Deputy
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy
Jim Ekdahl, UP Field Deputy
Teresa Gloden, Assistant to the NRC
Other DNR Staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman Charters called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to order at 3:10 p.m. The Committee of the Whole meeting is a working session of the NRC.

Appointment to the NRC - Hurley J. Coleman

Chairman Charters introduced Reverend Hurley J. Coleman who was appointed by Governor Granholm to the Natural Resources Commission on January 10, 2007. Reverend Coleman replaces Commissioner Jerry Hall, who resigned resulting from health issues.

Chairman Charters noted that Commissioner Brown had heart bypass surgery shortly after the December 2006 NRC meeting. Commissioner Brown is doing well.

Conservation Summit

Chairman Charters reported that the NRC will be hosting a Conservation Summit on February 7, 2007 in Lansing. Conservation and natural resource management leaders are growing more and more concerned about the dire state of funding for natural resources management in Michigan. If the trend continues, Michigan may lose its place at the top of great destination states for outdoor recreation. Conservation groups, organizations and agencies will come together to discuss long-term, stable funding to sustain Michigan's natural resources.

Introduction – Keith Creagh

Director Humphries announced that **Keith Creagh**, formerly Chief Deputy of the Department of Agriculture, has been reassigned to a position working in the DNR with the Governor's Land Use Council. Mr. Creagh will be shared jointly with the Department of Agriculture and the DNR and will be housed in the Mason Building, Lansing.

Introduction – Donna LaCourt

Director Humphries announced that **Donna LaCourt** has been chosen as Assistant Division Chief for Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division and the new State forester.

Death of a DNR Employee

Director Humphries reported that Kent Kurtz, wildlife assistant at the Rose Lake office passed away recently. Mr. Kurtz had worked for the DNR since 1977 and initially worked at the State Game Farm at that location.

Oil And Gas Lease Auction

Lynne Boyd, Chief, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division, reported that the December 2006 Oil and Gas Lease Auction resulted in total revenue of \$857,557 for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. The percentage of the acreage offered for lease that went "no bid" increased significantly in this auction, with only 46% of acreage offered being leased. This was due mainly to unsuccessful exploratory drilling that was done in Presque Isle County prior to the auction.

Kennecott Update

Lynne Boyd reported that public hearings will be held in the Upper Peninsula (UP) by the Department of Environmental Quality relative to the Kennecott Mines permit. The DNR will participate in these hearings. Two decisions are pending by the DNR: 1) mining and reclamation plan approval (recommendations will be taken at the public hearings); and, 2) whether to issue a surface use lease. More information will be addressed at the May meeting of the NRC.

Partnership With Friends Of White Pine Trail

Dave Heyboer, Friends of the White Pine Trail, said he is pleased with the relationship the Friends have with the DNR and has a good working relationship with Parks and Recreation Division. **Mr. Heyboer** presented a check to the DNR in the amount of \$202,434 that was raised by the Friends of the White Pine Trail, Meijer Foundation, Frey Foundation, West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition, Cedar Springs, Nelson Township, and Balk Foundation. This is for the designated purpose of paving the Russell Road to Sand Lake stretch of the Trail. He reviewed the status of trail maintenance and pavings.

Peter DeBoer, Executive Director, West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, introduced the Coalition, reviewed their mission, and detailed some of the current campaigns. Currently, the Coalition is raising \$6 million to leverage \$9 million in Federal "Safe Tea Lu Grants" (for four trails) and \$12 million of state-administered grants (for 10 trails). This \$6 million campaign is nearly completed. Upcoming campaigns are in the concept stage but include linking Grand Rapids Trails to the Kalamazoo, Jackson, Mid-Michigan and Traverse City areas as well as develop more safe, urban bikeways and trails.

Chairman Charters stated, on behalf of the NRC and DNR, that this partnership sets the template for other partnerships. He thanked the Friends and Coalition for their efforts and looks forward to future partnership activities.

Director Action Items

Director Humphries reviewed the items for Director's Action on the Agenda. She noted that the proposed Fisheries Orders were basically technical amendments. She asked for comments or questions on other Action items. There were none.

Chairman Charters noted that the Wildlife Land Acquisition of the Robert Griffin Tract was an excellent acquisition for the DNR.

Legislative Report

Rodney Stokes, Legislative Liaison, distributed updated listings of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Committees have not been set as yet, but he will provide copies when they are available.

Free Fishing Weekend

Free Fishing Weekend is February 17 and 18. These and all other activities are posted on the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/dnr . Look under “Go-Get Outdoors for details of activities.

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The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m., and the Public Appearances portion of the meeting convened at 4:35 p.m.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Jenness Anderson, Citizens for a Quiet Community
Jim Clements, Grayling
Larry Holcomb, Quality Deer Management Association
LuAnne Kozma, Defense of Place
Tom Loundsury, United Sportsmen’s Alliance
Bob McReavy, Roscommon
James Meenaham, Save Our State Lands
Chauncy Moran
Paul Mulder
Ellen Nitz, Citizens for a Quiet Community
Ellen Smith, Save Our State Lands
Dan Timmons, Quality Deer Management Association
Mike Veine, Outdoor Writer
Robert Walker, United Sportsmen’s Alliance

Mike Veine, Outdoor Writer, supports a “hunters’ choice alternative” rather than a one-buck rule. He recommended considering allowing hunters the option to either shoot one buck of their choice, or two bucks that both meet certain antler restrictions. Hunters would have to decide beforehand what licensing option to pursue: either a single buck license or a combination license with two restricted buck tags. The antler restrictions would be applied based on geographic location to eliminate at least 75 percent of the yearling bucks from the harvest.

Commissioner Madigan noted that Wildlife Division has a survey out that includes Mr. Veine’s suggestions. Survey results will be back in early March.

Robert Walker, United Sportsmen’s Alliance, supports retaining the two buck combination license. **Commissioner Madigan** said that the one-buck rule has

been a major issue for UP hunters. **Mr. Walker** noted that he supports increased hunting license fees.

Paul Mulder, Great Lake Four Wheel Drive Association, was involved in the ORV Plan development process. He does not believe that all comments that were received during the public comment period were considered and included in the draft Plan. He provided comments on some of these issues including: the importance for the ORV community to have equal status as the snowmobile community; ORV training; trail maintenance; fatality reporting; and signage issues, among others. Staff will review his comments and continue to work with Mr. Mulder on these and other issues.

Ellen Smith, Save Our State Lands, Commerce Township, expressed opposition to the DNR disposing of a certain piece of land near the Proud Lake Recreation Area which is being considered in the Phase II land consolidation process. Commissioners asked whether consideration had been given by the local community to purchase this property. Ms. Smith responded that the price is too high and the community could not afford to purchase it.

James Meenaham, Save our State Land, expressed opposition to the DNR disposing of a certain piece of land near the Proud Lake Recreation Area which is being considered in the Phase II land consolidation process. Specifically, he requests the following: 1) Reclassify entire Proud Lake Recreation Area to class 1; 2) Work in collaboration with Commerce Township to upgrade and enhance this land for greater public use; and 3) Support a statewide bond issue for securing future funding the DNR. Discussion ensued relative to the subject property and its resource value.

Chauncy Moran, welcomed Hurley Coleman to the NRC and thanked the NRC for their hard work. He requested that separate hearings be held in the UP relative to the Kennicott mining issues to specifically discuss land issues.

Tom Lounsbury, President, Outdoor Writers Association and member of United Sportsmen's Alliance, asked the NRC to consider legalizing hunting varmints from an elevated stand.

Larry Holcomb, Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), commented that a one buck rule in the UP may be beneficial to both the deer and the habitat. In the Upper Lower Peninsula, a one buck rule would be beneficial. In the southern Lower Peninsula, a one buck rule would be definitely beneficial. Relative to license fees, the impact of a one buck limit on fees would have to be reviewed closely. The QDMA supports license fee increases. The shortage of Conservation Officers is of concern to him.

Jim Clements, Crawford County, expressed concern with clear-cutting in his area and recommended that more selective cutting be done. **Commissioner**

Garner asked Mr. Clements to provide him with a map of the area he is concerned with and said he would visit the property. **Chairman Charters** said that this issue is being discussed in the meetings of the NRC Policy Committee on Land Management, and the issue is not being ignored.

Dan Timmins, Quality Deer Management Association, supports license fee increases. And supports a true one-buck rule in the southern Lower Peninsula to force increased antlerless deer harvest.

Bob McReavy, Nester Township, Roscommon County, asked that the DNR replace the “no trespassing” signs in his area that have been vandalized. He noted that he had been attending NRC meetings for over two years and has continually recommended eliminating antlerless permits in Roscommon County as well as stopping clear-cutting, with no avail.

Ellen Nitz, Citizens for a Quiet Community, commended Commissioner Wheatlake for his presentation on the WJR talk show where he discussed license fees and other DNR issues. She presented a photo of the Island Lake Shooting Range hours of business. She expressed concern with the build-up of lead at the shooting range and is concerned with the future clean-up of the site and its impacts on surrounding property and waters.

Jeness Wiegand, Citizens for a Quiet Community, believes that lead from the Island Lake Shooting Range is contaminating surrounding waterways. Gun noise levels are high from the Range and she asked that the noise levels be addressed.

LuAnn Kozma, Defense of Place, expressed concern relative to the potential sale of property near the Proud Lake Recreation Area. She said that her organization, Defense of Place, protects parkland from being sold and destroyed. She also expressed concern regarding the sale of Gene Park in Novi.

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The Public Appearances portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m..

CLOSED MEETING

The NRC held a Closed Meeting from 6:04 p.m. until 6:40 p.m. to discuss a legal matter.

APPOVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 7, 2006 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Wheatlake made a motion, supported by Commissioner Garner, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

Director Humphries approved all Director's Action Items on the Agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NRC Policy Committee on Land Management

The NRC Policy Committee on Land Management met on January 11, 2007 at 12:00 noon. Minutes are attached.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

The NRC Policy Committee on Land Management met on January 11, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. in Lansing. Minutes are attached.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Garner said even though his NRC term had expired, he would continue as a Commissioner until he is replaced. He also reported he had a great hunting trip in Texas just prior to the holidays.

Commissioner Madigan said he is waiting for ice to appear on Munising Bay.

Chairman Charters again welcomed Hurley Coleman to the NRC and noted that Committee Goals will be formalized at the NRC meeting in February.

NRC POLICY COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries: Commission Madigan, Chair, and Commissioner Garner

NRC Policy Committee on Land Management: Commissioner Charters, Chair and Commissioner Coleman

NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration: Commissioner Wheatlake, Chair and Commissioner Earley

NRC Policy Committee on Technology, Information, Marketing and Education: Commissioner Brown, Chair and Commissioner Coleman

Legislative: Commissioner Wheatlake

Commissioner Coleman said he is excited to serve on the NRC and that he appreciates the Governor's confidence in his appointment.

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The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

**NRC Policy Committee on Land Management
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2007
12:00 p.m.**

Present:

Commissioner Keith Charters, Chair
Commissioner John Madigan
Commissioner Frank Wheatlake
Commissioner Hurley Coleman
Director Rebecca Humphries
Chief Deputy Dennis Fedewa
Resource Management Deputy Mindy Koch
David Freed, DNR, OLAF
Lynne Boyd, DNR, FMFM
Bill Moritz, DNR, WLD
Ron Olson, DNR, PRD
Dennis Fox, DNR, EXEC
Rodney Stokes, DNR, LL
Mary Dettloff, DNR, COM
Cara Boucher, DNR, FMFM
Kelly S. Carter, DNR, WLD
Cindy Salmon, DNR, OLAF
Harold Herta, DNR, PRD
Jason Fleming, DNR, PRD
David Spalding, DNR, FMFM
Keith Creagh, DNR
Mike Donovan, DNR, WLD
Jennifer Kleitch, DNR, WLD
Chuck Nelson, DNR/MSU
Steve Sutton, DNR, Fisheries
Kerry Wieber, DNR, FMFM
Scott Whitcomb, DNR, WLD
Ed Meadows, DNR, OLAF
Donna LaCourt, DNR, FMFM
Maureen McDonough, MSU
Bob Gwizdz, sports writer
Chris Klaver, Gongwer
Jerry Crandall, MIRS
Kevin Korpi, MI Forest Products Council
George Berghorn, MI Forest Products Council
Dick Ranney, ORV Board
Lewis Shuler, ED Cycle Conservation Club
Dennis Swanson, MI Resource Stewards

Bill Murpy, MI Resource Stewards
Ron Shaver, MI Resource Stewards
Dave Cooper, Mid MI Sportsman's Alliance
Georgia Peterson, MSU Extension & FMFM
Pat Brower, Great Lakes 4WD Assn.
Jerry Brower, Great Lakes 4WD Assn.
Paul Mulder, Great Lakes 4WD Assn.
Jim DeClerck, Saginaw Field and Stream Club
Warren Suchovsky, Forest Mgmt. Ad. Council

Chairman Keith Charters called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

Chairman Charters introduced newly appointed Commissioner, **Hurley J. Coleman, Jr.** **Commissioner Coleman** is currently the pastor of Coleman Temple Church in Saginaw. He was formerly the Wayne County Parks and Recreation Director. He has an extensive background in Parks and Recreation. He also serves on the Parks Advisory Board.

1. Update on Commercial Use Permit Procedures/Fee Schedule

Scott Whitcomb, Wildlife Division, and Chair of the Use Permit Committee, explained that the procedure was adopted by the DNR Director in October 2005, and went into effect January 1, 2006.

This procedure only addresses the use of state land – for outside user groups holding events on state land, etc.

Use permits are not new, but this new procedure and fee schedule was the first time that we have an umbrella procedure that affects all the divisions the same way. It is also the first time that commercial operations were specifically addressed, such as canoe liveries, fishing guides, drift boat guides, and those holding events on state land.

Meetings were held with the user groups, and although there was initial reluctance, we had a very good rate of compliance. Training was conducted for field staff, as well.

There were some complaints regarding the fees, etc., but the best outcome is that we have a system in place, and are more able to treat groups consistently.

New for 2007, the committee has revised the instructions for staff and provided for standardization of scoring and fees. This will ensure consistency in the evaluation of applications.

We will provide a central point of contact for specific user groups. Canoe liveries and drift boat guides will each work with one person.

Anything going over one year in length will be a lease, rather than a use permit. Rather than have canoe liveries come back every year for a use permit, we will issue them a non-exclusive lease to a boating access site, for a five-year term.

Additional resources are available on the internet and intranet.

We have proposed a minor change to the fee schedule. We wanted the flexibility to go a little lower in the fee for a low intensity user to a minimum of \$150, and a minimum of \$350 for a medium intensity user, if they truly score that way. This will go to the Director for action.

Commissioner Wheatlake asked what the revenue was the first year. **Scott** stated he doesn't have the exact number for Wildlife yet – it is not covering the cost, but it is coming much closer to covering the cost.

Harold Herta estimated that Parks generated \$150,000 with the old fee schedule. **Deputy Koch** explained that we have just experienced the first year of the Commercial Use Permit Program. We will have a much better idea when we close the books for the past year. **Chief Deputy Fedewa** expects this to happen by February. Normally they books would be closed by now.

Scott Whitcomb clarified that we do not license guides. Also, none of the leases exclude the general public from using the land, access site, etc.

Chairman Charters asked what the process is related to the Commission. **Deputy Koch** stated it would be a Director Action item, but it is not on the agenda for today. This was brought to the Commission today for information. There will be a minimum of 60 days for public input.

Chairman Charters thanked **Scott Whitcomb** for the information.

2. Phase II Land Review Update

Deputy Koch introduced **Kerry Wieber** and **Steve Sutton**. **Kerry** is the chair of the Land Transaction Review Committee, and **Steve** is the vice-chair.

Kerry noted the recommendations for the 5th group of ten counties will be presented for NRC/Director action at the March NRC meeting. (NOTE: The complete listing of county groupings was provided at the meeting, and can be found on the DNR Internet.)

Staff has received a considerable amount of public comment regarding the recommendations for Oakland and Livingston Counties. Those comments will be taken into consideration by the Land Exchange Review Committee later this month. That consideration will be reflected in the recommendations that go to the Director for approval. Some people have asked to speak at the NRC Committee of the Whole meeting today.

Parcels for the 6th group of counties are currently being reviewed by field staff. Field review will be complete by March 2, 2007. Public meetings will be scheduled mid-April.

Some of the challenges of the process include exchanges that are being requested, where the applicants are requesting property that we have designated to be retained in the Phase II process. Generally, the DNR doesn't consider giving up state land if we are not gaining something more valuable in return.

An example is a case that went before the Land Exchange Review Committee in December, where an applicant requested land in Dickinson County that was isolated and outside our boundary, but had been designated as retain. In exchange, they were offering land within our boundary in Keweenaw County that is adjacent to state land, and provides complete ownership of a high-quality trout stream. So under these circumstances, the Committee recommended that the exchange proceed, because it was felt we were getting something better in return.

Chairman Charters expressed the Commission's support for this process and commended staff. He encouraged the team to provide a status report to staff and the media, as Kerry requested.

In response to a question, Kerry explained that "offered" parcels are only offered to local units of government or a conservation entity like a land conservancy, and if none are interested, then the Department will retain. Those parcels classified as "dispose" will be auctioned to the public. A restriction on "offered" parcels is the land must remain for public use.

Ed Meadows provided a brief update on Phase III. Phase III is the disposal process – offering the parcels to local units of government, and then putting parcels up for auction to the public.

Berrien and Dickinson Counties were the first two counties to reach this point. After our experience with those, we have tweaked the process. Once we explain to local units of government that the parcels have to remain pretty much as they are, this has limited the interest. However, in Emmet County, the County expressed interest in all of the "offered"

parcels in exchange for some county-owned land. This was a win-win situation.

We have nine counties out on the web site now, which means they have been formally offered to organizations by letter. We plan to start offering those for auction or exchange to the general public February through May. Those nine counties include Branch, Cass, Hillsdale, Charlevoix, Leelanau, Emmet, Berrien, Dickinson, and Chippewa.

We have 19 counties that we have prepared to be offered, and are aiming to have letters go out by the end of January.

Chairman Charters summarized that when parcels reach the Phase III disposal process, they are not the “jewels” of Michigan. They are usually parcels the state received through tax reversion.

3. **Presentation on Public Participation in Forest Management Activities**

Lynne Boyd noted that one of the Committee goals for 2006 was to monitor the compartment review process as a critical tool for the management of the state forest for public input, and encourage stakeholders to actively and openly participate.

Concern has been expressed in the past that the system may not be working perfectly for allowing optimization of public input.

To improve that process, **Dr. McDonough** was invited to provide information on the latest research project that she has been involved in. She is a professor and extension specialist in the Department of Forestry at Michigan State University.

Dr. McDonough used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the problems with traditional public participation policies.

- They are all about the agency
- The agency sets up the meeting, decides who is invited, set the agenda
- Asks for input that may or may not be used

As a result, there is very little diversity in who participates. It tends to be well-educated older white males.

The second issue is trust. The public is concerned about the fairness in the process.

There needs to be transparency in the decisions that are made.

Inappropriate Methods

Public meetings have been evaluated as the least effective public participation method, yet we keep doing them.

The more involved people get, the more they expect to have a voice. They get frustrated if they don't have a voice and they no longer want to participate.

Nationally there is a shift toward collaboration, including:

- Diverse voices
- Mutual learning
- Flexibility
- Concern for building and maintaining relationships
- Trust and good faith in all participants

The benefit is improved trust; increased opportunity for public input; increased support for the agency; and a greater appreciation of the issue.

The cost is time, training, evaluation, and tune-ups. To implement you need policy and accountability. The agency needs to be a partner, not the director.

Chairman Charters informed **Dr. McDonough** that he would appreciate a meeting with the **commissioners** and the **Director** to discuss this further. The NRC feels they work hard at this and wonder how they are doing. We listen, but the decision is not always what stakeholder groups want to hear.

Commissioner Wheatlake asked if this has helped reduce legal challenges for the federal Forest Service. **Dr. McDonough** said they are in the third year of a six-year process, but it looks like yes, it is reducing challenges. You will never get rid of all conflict, but this process builds relationships and the level of trust.

Chairman Charters thanked **Dr. McDonough** and said he would look forward to future meetings with her.

4. Committee Goals

Chairman Charters noted that copies of the proposed goals have been handed out (attached). We will not act on these until next month,

particularly because **Commissioner Brown** is recuperating from surgery. He assured everyone that the goals would be measurable so he suggested that “Continue to Monitor Forest Certification” is a duty rather than a goal, and should be removed. The goal could be “Maintain Forest Certification.”

Chairman Charters requested that **Commissioners** and the public look at these, and said their input would be appreciated.

5. Proposed Recognition Policies

Chief Deputy Dennis Fedewa noted that he had brought this before this committee previously for information, and today he has proposed policies on naming and recognition.

The current policy was done back in 1978. It discouraged recognizing individuals or private sector partnerships, and it did not address the need for proactive management.

Deputy Fedewa provided two new proposed policies that complement one another.

One addresses naming of Department lands and facilities, and the other addresses private sector partnerships and donations.

PROPOSED 26.24.07 Naming Department Administered Lands and Facilities

The director would have the authority to name lands, facilities, and programs to include recognizing donors and private sector partners, for a term specific. The Natural Resources Commission reserves the authority to name property of the DNR in recognition of a donor or partner in perpetuity, or for a term absent of time.

PROPOSED 01.05.10 Private Sector Partnerships and Donations

These are self-initiated.

Next Steps

The next steps would be for these policies to go before the NRC Committee of the Whole at the next meeting, for information only, followed by a public comment period. After any concerns are addressed, it would be open for adoption.

Chairman Charters stated that because this is an important item, and **Commissioner Brown** is absent, he would like this to be an agenda item for this committee next month.

Commissioner Wheatlake asked if these policies and procedures were in place when the Meijer donation came about, would that qualify for naming that trail?

Deputy Fedewa stated it potentially could have; it would have required the DNR to go through these steps of review, to determine what we were potentially giving up for an economic value, and because the request was for perpetuity, it would have required NRC approval.

Chairman Charters thanked **Dennis Fedewa** and asked for any other agenda items for next month. There were none. The Chairman then asked if anyone had any other topics to address.

Commissioner Wheatlake asked **Lynne Boyd** if we are adjusting the minimum bid when we do not receive any bids on timber sales? She stated yes – we have committed to take a maximum of 60 days to get the no-bids back up on the market, with a reduction in the minimum. **Deputy Koch** noted that we do use the market to establish what the minimum bid should be.

Chairman Charters asked **Commissioner Wheatlake** if he would like this to be an agenda item next month. **Lynne Boyd** felt this should be an agenda item.

Chairman Charters brought up that we have a communication problem regarding clear-cutting. He would like information on what we are trying to do with our foresters. **Deputy Koch** suggested we set this communication problem as a goal.

Chairman Charters adjourned the meeting at 1:40 p.m.

**2007
DRAFT GOALS
NRC POLICY COMMITTEE ON LAND MANAGEMENT**

1. Continue to ensure timely implementation of the Land Consolidation Strategy.
 - a. The following Phase II reviews will be completed and ready for approval by the NRC and the Director in accordance with the following schedule:
 - Group 5 (10 counties): March.2007
 - Group 6 (11 counties): June 2007
 - Group 7 (11 counties): November 2007
 - b. Phase III of the Land Consolidation process will involve public auctions of lands in accordance with the following schedule:
 - Auction 1: February 2007
 - Auction 2: May 2007
 - Auction 3: June 2007
 - Auction 4: August 2007
 - Auction 5: October 2007
2. Evaluate options for improving public participation in land management decisions. Assess current research, obtain feedback from key stakeholders, and provide recommendations to the NRC by December 2007.
3. Review and evaluate the “Generally Accepted Forest Management Practices” submitted by the Forest Management Advisory Committee. Formulate recommendations for NRC consideration no later than November 2007.
4. Promote an understanding of the principles and benefits of ecosystem management in restoring, protecting and managing Michigan’s natural resources. Develop a policy statement on ecosystem management by March 2007.
5. Continue to monitor the Forest Certification process. Receive periodic status reports at committee meetings on audit activities and progress in resolving outstanding Corrective Action Requests.

**NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries
Minutes
January 11, 2007 - 1:30 p.m.**

Mike Bailey, Wildlife Division provided an update on the elk season. Although mandatory orientation occurs, there were still 5 cases of elk being taken illegally. In these cases, the hunters thought they had missed the animal with their first shot and shot again, killing more than elk. A total of 56 any elk and 112 antlerless licenses were issued for the first two seasons and 148 total animals were harvested. A third season is set for January 16 to 20.

Steve Schmitt, Wildlife Division, provided wildlife disease updates.

TB Surveillance (preliminary)

So far, during 2006, a total of 7,812 deer, 127 elk and 6 moose for bovine TB have been tested. At this time, there are 11 culture positive deer. In addition, there are 30 "good" suspects, which are all within the 4 county areas.

County	Final Pos	AF Pos	Gross Pos	TOTAL
Alpena	2	10	2	14
Alcona	2	6	0	8
Oscoda	4	9	0	13
Montmorency	1	3	0	4
Turtle Lake	2	0	0	2
TOTAL	11	28	2	41

A total of 153,485 deer have been tested for bovine TB since 1995, with 566 positives (includes 30 suspects). It is too early for the 2006 prevalence in DMU 452. TB positive captive cervid herd in Montmorency County. DNR used this herd to help validate the Rapid Test.

New TB Strategy - Capture, test and cull pilot study

DNR is trapping deer in several high prevalence townships in DMU 452 in January and February. The one area where improvement is needed is the TB blood test. The rapid test will be used this year.

CWD Surveillance (preliminary)

During 2006, DNR tested 1,494 deer, 105 elk and 7 moose for CWD testing. No positives have been found. 76 target animals (71 deer, 3 elk and 2 moose) were observed exhibiting neurological dysfunction and emaciation (skinny animals that could be walked up to) were collected and tested for CWD. No positives have been found. A grand total of 20,460 deer, 550 elk and 34 moose have been tested in Michigan for CWD. All tested negative.

In 2006, MDA has tested 1,108 captive cervids for CWD -- all tested negative. A grand total of 5,233 captive cervids have been tested and all tested negative.

Avian Influenza Surveillance

The DNR working with USDA-WS tested just over 2,000 wild bird samples for Avian Influenza. Approximately 30 species of waterfowl were tested. No Highly Pathogenic Asian Strain H5N1 virus was found. Three birds with Low Pathogenic North American strain H5N1 were detected (including the first one in the nation during the 2006 surveillance period). A mute swan from Point Mouillee, a mallard from Harsen's Island and a green-winged teal from Fish Point. AI surveillance of wild birds will continue in 2007, with fine tuning.

Feral Swine

To limit the expansion of feral swine hunters with a valid hunting license were encouraged to shoot feral swine this past hunting season, in 30 counties. Eight pigs were known to be taken by hunters and three of these were submitted for testing. All were negative for pseudorabies, bovine tuberculosis and trichinosis. The Wildlife Disease Laboratory received 34 emails and 30 phone calls from hunters asking where to find feral swine to hunt.

Bill Moritz, Wildlife Division, mentioned that fur prices have been up this year and announced that the next fur auction was on Jan. 20, 2007 at the Ravenna Sportsman Club.

The Committee went over last years goals and presented the suggested goals were 2007. A notable: Last year, 5,497 acres were acquired for deer yards.

2007 Suggested Goals:

1. Promote acquisitions of critical deeryard habitat
2. Increase emphasis on fish and wildlife habitat issues to encourage and facilitate the Departments partnering with fish and wildlife habitat groups and private property owners to manage their timber along with developing long-term plans for agricultural habitat enhancements.
3. Continue discussion on accessibility and review of current laws and policies to include more opportunity for hunters and anglers with disabilities.
4. Bring forth wildlife and fisheries regulations.
5. Ensure that the Department is fully engaged in regional, national and international fish and wildlife management initiatives that will ultimately improve fish and wildlife populations in Michigan.
6. Ensure the Department takes all possible actions to prevent the spread of fish and wildlife pathogens.
7. Simplify regulations.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.