

## MINUTES

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

June 9, 2016  
Jay's Sporting Goods  
1151 S. Otsego Avenue, Gaylord, MI 49735

#### Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, chair  
J.R. Richardson, vice-chair  
Rex Schlaybaugh  
Christine Crumbaugh  
Tim Nichols

#### Present for DNR staff

Bill Moritz, DNR director  
Marc Miller, DNR regional initiatives deputy  
Dan Bock, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General  
Dennis Knapp, DNR chief of 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 2:34 p.m. **Paul Beachnau** from the Gaylord Area Convention and Tourism Bureau welcomed the commission to Gaylord. **Matonich** also welcomed Michigan State Representative candidate **Jordan Stancil**.

**Director Moritz** thanked the local staff for attending the day's Natural Resources Commission meeting.

**Arauco/Forest Resources Update** Forest Resources division acting chief **Deb Begalle** welcomed the commission to the Gaylord management unit. She provided an update on the fire season; 148 fires of 449 acres with 104 structures being saved. This is about half the acreage as compared to last year. 72 prescribed burns on a total of 8000 acres have been completed. **Begalle** also talked about the end of planting season; they have planted 7 million seedlings on 7200 acres. The Good Neighbor Authority agreement is close to being signed. It is an agreement between US Forest Service and the department to promote and collaborate management of national forest land in Michigan. Michigan is the second state in nation to sign this agreement. Next **Begalle** provided information regarding particleboard plant Arauco, who will be breaking ground in Grayling this fall. This is a \$325 million project which will create 250 jobs. She added that this is a great opportunity for this area and the state.

**Parks and Trails Update** Parks and Recreation division chief **Ron Olson** provided updates which included a summary on lodging nights, which are up 10.3%, recreation passports are up 1.8%, harbor nights are up 12%, ORV licenses are up 1.5% and trail permits are up 13.2%. More than \$500,000 was raised for Belle Isle during the two robust days of the Grand Prix.

Parks and Recreation division has met with Detroit Port Authority to introduce a water taxi; they are working to find locations to stop at Milliken State Park and Belle Isle, among others. The Mountain Bike Association will be cutting the ribbon on the first five miles of a mountain bike trail next week at Waterloo State Recreation Area. When complete, the trail will be 15 miles long. This trail will set the standard for mountain bike trails system-wide. **Olson** noted that in April, the Park Ranger Academy graduated 28 rangers. He also added that long-time Eastern Upper Peninsula district supervisor **Tom Paquin** will be retiring at the end of the month.

**Arctic Grayling Initiative** Fisheries division chief **Jim Dexter** provided information on Michigan's inland trout management plan and talked about the proposal to reintroduce the Arctic grayling to Michigan. The goal is to establish a self-sustaining population of the grayling throughout its historical range in the state. The department will be working in partnership with the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians on the initiative. The next steps include putting out a letter for assistance from additional potential partners, collecting baseline data in 2017 to 2018, with stocking to be initiated in 2019.

**Budget Update** Finance and Operations division's budget officer **Erik Eklund** provided an update of current year budget as well as next year's budget. Both the House and Senate passed their budget bills on June 8, 2016. It will be enrolled and provided to **Governor Snyder** for signature. **Eklund** highlighted the general fund reductions for 2017 of just over \$2.2 million. He discussed strategic investments, funding to increase transparency and accountability on public lands, creation of a real-time reporting system for commercial fishers and wholesale dealers; it adds funds to provide mobile IT solutions for customers and \$13.5 million to improve state infrastructure repairs. These investments will enrich the outdoor experience for Michigan residents and visitors.

**Conservation Officer Academy Graduation** Law Enforcement division chief **Gary Hagler** announced that the division graduated 16 officers last Friday. There are now 227 officers in the state. **Hagler** added that they assist with the fabric of law enforcement across the state.

**Lifesaving Award – CO Kyle Bader** **Hagler** introduced CO **Kyle Bader**, who was presented with the Lifesaving Award for his actions in saving an individual who had indicated that he was planning to commit suicide in Ogemaw County. **Hagler** congratulated the officer for his successful lifesaving efforts. **Hagler** added that this is a testament that officers are ready to go the extra mile.

**Steve Schmitt Retirement** Wildlife division chief **Russ Mason** shared that Wildlife veterinarian and supervisor to the Wildlife Health section is retiring after 38 years with the department. **Mason** added that **Schmitt** is a man of great honor, and is not easily replaced. **Schmitt** also received a special tribute from **Governor Snyder's** office.

**Legislative Report** **Trevor VanDyke**, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office director provided a written report of legislation related to the department. In addition to the written report, chief of staff **Dennis Knapp** provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee** Commissioner **Tim Nichols** provided a highlight of the day's activities in the committee. They included discussion about polling results for Belle Isle, a pilot concept for pet-friendly lodging which will take place in 2017, a finance update to get

resources in place for the division, a presentation of Big Oaks Equestrian Campground, and work session that had committee members trying to decide what the appropriate permit cost would be to hold an event in a state park which will aid the staff in having the same outcome for activities.

**NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries Commissioner Rex Schlaybaugh** stated that the committee received updates from Fisheries chief **Dexter** who reviewed the chumming proposal, and an upcoming meeting of the Joint Lake Michigan/Lake Huron Advisory Council that will be looking at the Chinook salmon impacts of declines. Wildlife chief **Mason** updated the committee on the wildlife habitat grant program and briefed the committee that the US Fish and Wildlife Service is thinking about putting the northwest moose on the endangered species list because of declining populations. **Mason** also provided information on the replacement for **Dr. Schmitt; Dr. Kelly Straka**. **Mason** provided information on the vacatur order of the cormorant public resource depredation order by a DC judge. **Mike Parker** provided an update on the Hunting Access Program, including the purpose and the history. **Brian Frawley** provided an update on the estimates of the 2015 deer hunting seasons; hunting success for Upper Peninsula was down 5%, Northern Lower Peninsula up 2%, and Southern Lower Peninsula was up 2%. Overall, the state was up 1%. **Frawley** also noted that hunter satisfaction was up significantly over the previous year.

#### **PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC**

(**Dennis Knapp** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 3:37 p.m.)

**Drew YoungeDyke** chief information officer from MUCC provided an update on surplus public lands. He spoke of the opportunities in the Pigeon River area. Regarding public lands, they want to make sure that the department is not pressured into designating lands as surplus if they don't need to be. **YoungeDyke** noted that the next wildlife habitat project coming up will be at Haymarsh state game area on Friday, June 17. In addition, MUCC's annual convention is to be held June 17 – 19 in Big Rapids. MUCC also extended their congratulations to **Dr. Schmitt** on his retirement.

**Dale Hendershot** from Michigan Trapper and Predator Callers Association (MTPCA) came before the commission to talk about the furbearer process used this year. He commended **Adam Bump** for the manner in which it was done; separate meetings were held with all the user groups. They endorse the furbearer regulations as presented today. Regarding centerfire at night, MTPCA looks forward to MUCC's convention and should have more information to bring back to the commission next month. **Hendershot** presented the commissioners with a flyer for the National Trappers Association convention being held in August 18-20, 2016 in Kalamazoo and extended an invitation for the commissioners to attend.

**Adam Trenz** came before the commission to speak about the chumming issue. He does not support a ban on chumming. He suggested that the commission reach out to truly understand what the majority of the state wants. He would like the commission to allow for more public input.

**Cody Liessers** also addressed the commission on the chumming issue. He believes that this is a social issue. He does not support a ban on chumming, and stated that there is no scientific data that proves chumming is harmful to fish.

**Chad Betts** from Betts Guide Service stated that there is no scientific evidence to prove chumming is harmful to fish. He stated that no study exists that chumming makes an area unfishable and that chumming does make fishing easier. He added that most anglers only keep one steelhead and it has increased local commerce. **Betts** said that chumming promotes enjoyment of the resource and encourages social and economic benefits associated with fishing.

**Chris Hettinger** stated that he was concerned over the proposed chumming regulation changes. **Hettinger** said that he prefers option one, status quo, no regulation changes. The proposal should matter from a biological standpoint.

**Jay Allen** stated that he does support a ban on chumming. He spoke of ethics of fishing and said that his right to fish is no less important than anyone else's.

**Ray Schmidt** from Manistee County came to the commission to share his point of view on chumming. He would like the practice of chumming be banned in the state. **Schmidt's** belief is that tossing eggs into a river to fish is not a good science.

**Eric Richards** spoke on the lack of scientific evidence to ban chumming. He said that maximizing the fishing experience is what is important. He does not want to see the practice of chumming banned. **Richards** enjoys seeing the happiness of those people who don't get to fish much when they catch "that" fish that they can remember for a lifetime.

**Denny Kuenzer** is from the Manistee County Sport Fishing Association, which consists of 130 plus members. Their focus is the impact to Manistee County. He said that there is no biological evidence that chumming harms the fishery. The association does not want to see any changes at this time to the chumming regulations.

**Steven Kuieck** from RiverQuest Charters shared his recommendation that he is in support to ban chumming in the state. He added that he would also be in support of a limited ban on just the Muskegon, Pere Marquette and Manistee rivers. **Kuieck** stated that angler success is affected by those that chum.

**Eric Andersen** president of the Michigan Charter Boat Association spoke to the commission on the chumming issue. The association's concern is that they are worried that a special interest group wants a ban on the practice. They want to see sound science used to make this decision. They do not support a ban on chumming, they would like to maintain status quo.

**Merle Jones** from Michigan Predator Hunters for Centerfire at Night provided the commission with a handout concerning coyote related news articles in the state. The group is in the process of putting together the safety data requested and should have it at the July meeting. **Chairman Matonich** commented that the expansion of the season will help regarding coyote issues.

**Chauncey Moran** talked about the leases that will be affecting the lands around Bond Falls in the Western Upper Peninsula. He spoke of some of these methods including using charges in PVC pipe to get minerals. Many of the areas are located in or near water bodies. He would like

the department to look at the nominated lands, there has been an increase in the recreational value of the land owned by UPPCO. He questioned where eggs come from for chumming. On the moose story, **Moran** said that it's great that we have collaboration with other agencies.

**Rob Harkonen** is opposed to a ban on chumming. He is concerned that this issue is back in front of the commission so quickly. **Harkonen** stated that they do not dump pails of chum; they are dedicated fishermen who respect the resource.

**Dr. Bryan Burroughs**, executive director of Michigan Trout Unlimited came before the commission to speak about chumming. Trout Unlimited will be offering an official position on chumming once their position is approved by their board. **Burroughs** stated that there is an absence of hard data and spoke on the mechanisms for the risks and impacts that this issue causes. Their position will talk about the mechanisms that the commission should scientifically think are there; disease, invasive risks, where the eggs are coming from. Trout Unlimited thinks that a precautionary approach should be used.

**Larry Raney** from Premier Angling Guide Service spoke on the chumming issue. He is personally against the use of chum, however sees no problem using chum when he is guiding. He does not want the commission to conform to a small interest group. He questioned the targeting of just the three rivers instead of having the ban cover the entire state. He does not think it is right for a small interest group to try to change the regulations for their benefit.

**Matt Zudweg** from Feenstra Guide Service shared that most of their clients are from out of state. Their position is that chumming is unsportsmanlike because it changes a fish's migratory and feeding behavior. He spoke of the impacts of chumming on the river system. They do not want to see high volume chumming.

**Marv Rubingh** thanked the commission for the tools they provide to the farmers to keep deer under control for crop damage and disease control. He urged the continued use of disease control permits, adding that prevention is worth a lot more than a cure. He also spoke about deer management assistance permits, noting that they are very beneficial now with antler point restrictions. **Rubingh** asked that the permit process be streamlined.

**Marvin Simons**, owner of Huron Tackle Company came before the commission to say that 95% of the state's eggs come from his company, which are taken from the state's weirs. Most guides get less than one-half of a four gallon bucket. **Simons** added that the eggs he sells are certified.

**Luke Galloway** came to share his opinion on the chumming issue. He is an avid outdoorsman and is pro-chumming, stating that it is a useful tactic when used properly. **Galloway** said that it is effective for those who do not normally fish. He thinks that chumming is misunderstood; those against it need to be better educated on the chumming process. **Galloway** closed by saying that he does not feel that special interest groups should be allowed to change the regulation.

**Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 5:06 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 5:07 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

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

#### Approval of Minutes, May 12, 2016 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

**Commissioner Nichols** made a motion that the minutes of the May 12, 2016 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Furbearer Regulations Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2016

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2016, Furbearer Regulations be adopted. **Commissioner Richardson** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, **Commissioner Crumbaugh** provided that there was a wording issue in the order that needs to be updated before it should be signed. **Matonich** called for an order to table the motion until later in the meeting, **Schlaybaugh** moved that the order be tabled, **Crumbaugh** supported the motion, a vote was taken and carried unanimously. **Matonich** called for a motion to take the order off of the table, **Commissioner Nichols** moved to do so, **Commissioner Crumbaugh** supported the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously. **Matonich** asked if there was an amendment to the motion to amend the order to correct the language. **Commissioner Crumbaugh** moved to modify the order section 3.608, item no. 5, the sentence to read: Through the day before the open bobcat season, a resident issued a fur harvester's license may obtain a free bobcat kill tag. A resident who intends to hunt or trap bobcat shall request and be issued up to 2 free bobcat kill tags. A resident shall not sell, loan, or permit in any manner another individual to use the bobcat kill tag to use or attempt to use another individual's bobcat kill tag. Free bobcat kill tags may be obtained only a resident who is *at least 8 years old*, subject to section 2.14. An individual who kills a bobcat shall immediately validate the kill tag by appropriate information on the tag and attach the kill tag to the hide of the bobcat from the upper jaw to the eye socket or through the lower jaw of the bobcat in a secure and permanent manner. An individual shall not tag a bobcat with a kill tag that is not valid for the unit in which the bobcat is taken. The kill tag shall remain attached to the bobcat until the animal is registered and sealed by the department. An individual shall not possess a bobcat or bobcat hide that is not tagged with a validated kill tag unless a department seal is attached as provided in subsection (6). **Schlaybaugh** seconded the motion to amend. **Matonich** asked for any discussion on the amendment. There being none, a vote was taken and carried unanimously. Next **Matonich** asked if there was any discussion on the amended order, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Letters of Appreciation **Matonich** asked if it would be appropriate to provide a letter of appreciation or resolution to thank Jay's Sporting Goods and Cops and Doughnuts for their hospitality. **Nichols** moved to do so, **Crumbaugh** seconded, **Matonich** asked for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring and Smelt Regulations Fisheries Order 200.16A

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** moved to hold Fisheries Order 200.16A over to the July meeting. **Commissioner Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none a vote was taken to hold the order over until the July meeting, **Commissioners Schlaybaugh, Richardson, and Nichols** voted to hold the order, **Commissioner Crumbaugh** voted against holding the order over, the motion was carried.

### DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

**Director Moritz** listed the "for action" items on the agenda and indicated that he would approve all items.

### COMMISSIONER REPORTS

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** attended the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce policy conference on Mackinac Island last week.

**Commissioner Nichols** asked that resolutions of appreciation be prepared in advance when we travel across the state. He also noted that we need to recognize the Demmer Center.

**Director Moritz** also attended the conference on Mackinac Island. He spoke of Detroit and that Belle Isle is recognized as an important symbol in the recovery of Detroit. The Outdoor Adventure Center was named the number two destination to go to for tourism in Detroit. He also attended the Grand Prix, noting that Belle Isle looked great and thanked the staff for their hard work. Yesterday Moritz spoke to the Michigan Townships Association about economics of natural resources and showing that the department is paying attention to collaboration with local areas.

**Chairman Matonich** attended the dedication of the R.V. Tanner in Alpena. **Dr. Tanner** and his wife of 72 years were in attendance. **Matonich** added that it is going to be a marvelous tool for the department. He also attended a meeting along with **Commissioner Richardson** at the Cedar River with the SCI Conservation Committee to review projects for additional funding.

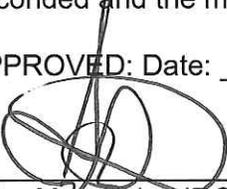
### Next Meeting

**Chairman Matonich** announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, July 14 at the MSU Diagnostic Center, 4125 E. Beaumont Road in Lansing. Committees meeting in July will be the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

### Adjournment

**Commissioner Crumbaugh** made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Richardson** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 7/14/16

  
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John Matonich, NRC Chairman

  
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Dr. William E. Moritz, DNR Director