



Charter of the Upper Peninsula Citizen's Advisory Councils

Need

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (Department) is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

In order to carry out and fulfill this mission, the Department uses the principles of sound scientific management, integrating biological, social, and economic factors. Sound science is critical in managing our resources, and public support of our programs is crucial to their success.

As such, it is a Department priority to more fully involve citizens in the Department's decision-making processes. Advisory councils can help the Department by serving two main functions: (1) providing the agency with information, ideas, emerging trends and initiatives in a setting that welcomes diverse interests, and (2) providing a vehicle for the Department to inform key citizens with the expectation that they will, in turn, inform the broader public. This exchange of information, ideas and opinions will identify and address potential conflicts, inform various constituencies about the management of public resources, and present management choices in a broad context.

Purpose

Citizens' Advisory Councils (CAC), each representing a specific geographical region, will help the Department be more responsive. Citizen advisers can help the Department operate more efficiently and effectively within the constraints of state and federal law, Natural Resources Commission rules, Department policy, and other legally binding documents (court rulings, etc.). ***The primary role of the CAC is to offer informed advice to the Department to be used in establishing program and policy priorities at the local level and to participate in honest, open, and respectful dialogue.***

Expected Outcomes

The CACs will advise the Department on various regional programs and policies, identify areas in which the Department can be more effective, and offer insight and guidance from member experience and input from the groups they represent. Citizen advisers will help identify emerging trends and resolve conflicts before they become intractable. Department employees will benefit from having a deeper understanding of public priorities and expectations, and advisers can function as a trusted "sounding board" for ideas and initiatives. CAC members also serve to encourage Department employees to become more accessible and responsive to the public. CAC members will

benefit from understanding Department programs, priorities, administrative processes and limitations in a broader context.

Scope of Authority

Service on the CACs is voluntary. The groups are advisory in nature and do not have authority over any other current advisory group used by the Department.

Membership

Those interested in applying to serve on the CACs can fill out an application (available online or by request) and submit it to the Department. As often as needed, a selection committee of citizen volunteers from core constituent groups and Department representatives will select members to fill open positions. While there are no formal qualifications to serve on the CAC, members will be sought who have been active in their local communities, are willing to work collaboratively, have a general understanding of natural resource and outdoor recreation issues, and who represent a variety of interest groups and geographic communities. The demographics of current members on the CACs will also be considered. Members are appointed by the UP Regional Coordinator, with concurrence from the Department Director. Each CAC (Eastern and Western) will consist of no more than 20 members who volunteer to serve staggered terms ranging from two to four years (or the completion of a vacated term).

Roles and Expectations

Members are expected to attend meetings and offer their thoughts and ideas, communicate with others in a respectful manner, and share information about the work of the CACs with other individuals and groups as appropriate. Local Department personnel will provide logistical and administrative support to the CACs, gather data and information to present to the CACs, and offer technical support in providing scientific background on issues.

Communication

Minutes will be taken and distributed to members and interested parties. General CAC information will be disseminated through regional and statewide media and the Department's website. Feedback on advice and proposals/resolutions will occur on timelines agreed upon between the groups and the Department.

Evaluation and Review

A review of the operations and functions of the CACs will be conducted by the CACs and the Department every two years. Recommendations for charter changes will be considered by the Department at the end of the review process.