

## MINUTES

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

January 14, 2016  
Crystal Mountain  
12500 Crystal Mountain Drive, Thompsonville, MI 49683

#### Present for the Natural Resources Commission

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

#### Present for DNR Staff

Bill Moritz, DNR director  
Bill O'Neill, DNR natural resources deputy  
Peter Manning, 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 2:15 p.m.

**Parks and Trails Update Ron Olson**, chief of the Parks and Recreation division provided updates, which included the visitation numbers on state parks system in 2015; 325,000 million. Iron Belle trail is a significant project with the goal to be done by 2018. **Olson** added that the Outdoor Adventure Center continues to be very popular and is a must visit place in Detroit. Belle Isle had 3.6 million visitors last fiscal year.

**Grand Traverse Bay Reef Restoration** Fisheries division's **Randy Claramunt** shared a video on the Grand Traverse Bay Reef restoration project where fish spawning habitat has been restored. He noted that it was a great collaboration between the department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Central Michigan University, The Nature Conservancy, and private donors. The project was a huge success and he looks forward to continued partnership on other reef restoration projects.

**Presentation on Recruitment/Retention/Reactivation Matt Dunfee**, program manager for the Wildlife Management Institute and director **Bill Moritz** led a presentation on recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) of hunters nationally. Hunters are a demographically monolithic group in our country, Dunfee said. The average hunter is age 47. Ninety percent are Caucasian and 80 percent are male. He added that R3 efforts need to focus on groups outside this traditional demographic. Among other things, social support is critical to moving people from being non-hunters to becoming hunters. A National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan,

developed by hunting organizations and agencies across the country, includes 40 targeted strategies that address the challenge. **Director Moritz** said the department has been active in the national conversation and plans to use the momentum of the national plan to find additional opportunities that will move the needle on hunter recruitment and retention.

In other news, **Director Moritz** shared that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service just announced 4D rule for northern long-eared bats. The rule provides flexibility for businesses that do their work inside of bat range. The federal government has built a new relationship with state natural resource agencies.

Marketing and Outreach Division chief **Phillips** shared an update on the Wildlife Council. They have contracted with GUD Marketing out of Lansing. Baseline research has been conducted and target audiences have been identified where their campaign will be focused; generally in southeast and southwestern Michigan. Creative recommendations and media plans have been approved by the council. They would like to invite GUD to a future meeting to present their ideas.

**Retirement of Doug Reeves** Wildlife division's chief **Russ Mason** shared that assistant chief **Reeves** is retiring after 31 years with the department. **Mason** added that **Reeves** has been a champion of the resource and is looked up to by all division staff. **Reeves** received a white pine plaque and a tribute from the State of Michigan and the Governor.

**Law Enforcement Division Lifesaving Awards** Law Enforcement division chief **Gary Hagler** introduced **Sgt. Ronald Kimmerly, Sgt. Todd Szyska, CO Michael Feagan, and CO Michael Drexler**, who were presented the Lifesaving Award for their participation in saving two individuals who had fallen through the ice near Belle Isle. **Hagler** congratulated the officers for their successful lifesaving efforts.

**Presentation of the Shikar Safari Officer of the Year Award** **Gunnar Klarr** presented the 2015 Shikar Safari Officer of the Year Award to Conservation Officer **Joel Lundberg**. This honor also carries the distinction of being Michigan's Officer of the Year. A Conservation Officer for over 13 years, he volunteers as a training officer and is one of the lead instructors at the training school. **Lundberg** thanked his parents and wife for their direction and continuing support.

**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, **Dennis Knapp** provided updates on recent legislative highlights.

### **Committee Reports**

**NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries** **Commissioner Schlaybaugh** noted that there were a number of excellent reports given during the committee meeting including one on the Black Lake sturgeon season which begins February 6. They also received a chronic wasting disease (CWD) update from chief **Mason**; there have been five cases found so far. They will be working with the division on an updated CWD memo and regulations later this year. They also received a preliminary elk season report. The committee reviewed two orders which

are up for information, one on the use of suppressors for hunting and another with administrative changes to the captive game order.

**NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration Commissioner Crumbaugh** stated they received a number of informative reports on FY2015. There was a report on the allocations on the new license package, also a report on the DRIP fund and allocations, and also the forest development fund. They also received updates on audits on the forest development fund and the commercial forest program, they are waiting on final reports on these. Upcoming audits include the camping reservation system and the fish and game fund.

**NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee: Chairman Matonich** noted that there was a special joint meeting between the NRC and the Travel Commission. The meeting covered much ground, including economics on outdoor recreation and metrics, a report from Outdoor Marquette and their new trail app, a report from Polaris on their app, and they discussed what is happening with Michigan Economic Development Corporation in 2016.

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

(**Dennis Knapp** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 3:51 p.m.)

**Jim Ludwig** came before the commission to discuss cormorant depredation. He is concerned with the collateral damage to non-target wildlife species due to cormorant control programs. He believes that the models provided by the Fisheries division are not well justified. He is also concerned with the Saginaw Bay perch situation. The commission has been asked in the past to reduce the take of perch and increase the take of walleye. **Ludwig** recommended that the commission be careful of what they issue for cormorant control in Saginaw Bay this year. He thinks the birds do not occupy the entire bay when nesting. He suggested that **Dr. Nancy Seefelt** of CMU be a part of cormorant control planning.

**Jefferson Henry/Raymond Karboske** came to speak about committee effects on director/commission orders. They also discussed an issue relating to fishery contamination within the Pere Marquette Lake. They want to know how an order comes to be. They also wanted the commissioners email addresses. They were directed to forward their correspondence to the NRC email and **Matonich** provided the basic procedure on creating an order.

**Chauncey Moran** applauded special use acquisition of Wigwam property. He also added that recently a meeting was held in Stephenson concerning a project on land that is a lease through the state, by Aquila; he will be having conversation with divisional staff on this and will forward to the commission. He talked about open pit mining within ¼ mile of Menominee River and added that he would like to have the state maintain ownership of that land so they can give better oversight of that project.

**Dakota Moore** from the NRA spoke before the commission on the use of suppressors, thanking **Hagler** for the presentation. He has a couple of objections to the recommendations that were proposed. He believes that the use of suppressors has never hindered the enforceability of

regulations. He would like the proposed restrictions removed. Regarding ballistic limitations and decibel limitations, the 37 other states do not have any restrictions on the use of suppressors.

**Michael B. Williams** from the American Suppressor Association thanked the commission for proposing the order on allowing the use of suppressors for hunting in Michigan. **Williams** said that it is all about the hunter's hearing safety. They oppose the proposed restrictions on decibel reduction and the prohibition on the use of subsonic ammunition in combination with suppressors. They do nothing to enhance public safety. He would like the commission to consider his statements before approving the order as drafted. **Matonich** suggested they set up demonstration before the next meeting for the commissioners, including subsonic rounds along with regular rounds.

**Andrew Milliron**, northwest Michigan QDMA, came to speak in support of antler point restrictions (APRs) in the 13 counties of NW Michigan. Herds are becoming healthier and stronger. He would like the APRs to continue and expand as the herd benefits from them. He also added that he would like to see baiting banned in southern Michigan as the department battles CWD.

**Dale Hendershot, Michigan Trapper Predator Callers Association** has concerns with restrictions on suppressors for hunting as presented to the commission. He stated that many of their members use 22 long rifles and they would not be allowed to use them, which creates a problem for them. **Hendershot** also added that night shooting should be suppressed; the department would receive less complaints. He doesn't think that anyone who is willing to go through the vetting process to get a suppressor will be a problem for the state.

**Robert L. Grooters** came before the commission to speak about two issues; he stated that he needs and deserves the commission's help, he is the third owner of Bear Creek Nature Preserve within the defined boundaries of Cannonsburg State Game Area. This property is highly used by hunters and fisherman. He stated that he is responsible that Michigan gets 1/6 percent royalty on gas and oil instead of 1/8, it all goes in the Natural Resources Trust Fund. He will send some things to the NRC and would like to coordinate to get this property owned by the department.

**Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:41 p.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:41 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 – NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**Use of Suppressors in the Taking of Game, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 1 of 2016**

## NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

### Approval of Minutes, December 10, 2015 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

**Commissioner Nichols** made a motion that the minutes of the December 10, 2015 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Richardson** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Schlaybaugh** added that because of the expanding coyote population and depredation on the deer herd, the Wildlife and Fisheries committee asked the Wildlife division to do research on what regulatory scheme the other states are doing on the harvest of coyotes. Michigan has a narrower season than the surrounding states. The Wildlife and Fisheries committee asked **Mason** to prepare a order that would expand the coyote season. He would like to make certain that the entire commission is in agreement with that. A motion was made by **Schlaybaugh**, supported by **Nichols** to direct the Wildlife division to prepare an order recommending options to expand the coyote season in Michigan. A vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously. **Matonich** added that they would like to see the order for information next month.

### FOR INFORMATION ONLY – DIRECTOR

**Director Moritz** listed the “for information only” items on the agenda.

### DIRECTOR’S ACTION ITEMS

**Director Moritz** listed the “director’s action” items on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items. He commented that the acquisition of Wigwam Bay is a very nice acquisition that has recreational value as well as educational value.

### COMMISSIONER REPORTS

**Commissioner Pontz** is taking over **Matonich’s** role on the TB advisory committee, representing the commission. There is a meeting next week for producers since there is a new finding in cattle.

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** had an opportunity to meet with the President/Vice President of the Emmet County and Charlevoix County QDMA chapter, noting there is growing excitement on the northwest 13 APRs. **Ashley Autenrieth** has been meeting with them often and they are very pleased with the communication they have been receiving from the division.

**Commissioner Crumbaugh** thanked Crystal Mountain for the hospitality and she looks forward to working with **Commissioner Pontz** on the TB issue.

**Commissioner Richardson** attended three meetings with **Representative Dianda** regarding deer in the Upper Peninsula (UP). The UP Habitat Group work is very popular. They also listened to people in Marenisco talking about wolves within the city limits.

**Commissioner Klarr** had a good muzzle loading season. She also took some family members to Belle Isle and Outdoor Adventure Center, noting that it was extremely busy and amazing.

**Commissioner Nichols** thought the earlier joint meeting went well, and that we should continue joint meetings with this group as well as others in the state. He thanked the director and chairman for their letter to **President Simon** at MSU regarding their passing the ordinance that removed the sunset on the Red Cedar River; it is now open to fishing. A fish planting will take place in early April. This is a good opportunity for students to catch and cook.

**Director Moritz** suggested that the coyote order be up for information in March, action in April. He thanked all for the support shown during this transitional period between himself and director **Creagh**.

**Chairman Matonich** enjoyed his time at the Whitetail Town Hall meetings. There was much discussion regarding wolves within the city limits. Tomorrow is his last day at Rowe; he will be enjoying retirement.

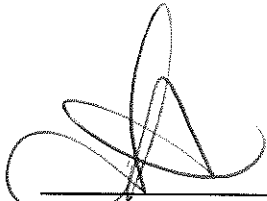
### Next Meeting

**Chairman Matonich** announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2016 at the Outdoor Adventure Center, 1801 Atwater, Detroit, MI. Committees meeting in February will be the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee, and the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries.

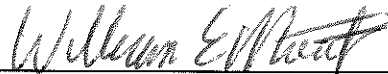
### Adjournment

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Nichols** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 2/11/16



John Matonich, NRC Chairman



William E. Moritz, DNR Director