

Eastern (EUPCAC) & Western (WUPCAC) Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils
Annual Joint Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 17, 2014
6:00-9:00pm EST
Northern Michigan University's University Center, Marquette, MI

Eastern Council Members Present

Jim Duke
Al Garavaglia
Jason Garvon
Ginny Giddings
Tim Hass
Bernie Hubbard
Michael Lawless
Glenn Moll, Vice-Chair
Dick Pershinske, Chair
Chad Radka
Mark Spencer

Eastern Council Members Absent

Keith Aldrich	Gary Ellenwood
Tom Buckingham, Secretary	Gary Gorniak
Ivan Darling	Rich Serfass
Phil Dennis	Jim Shutt

Western Council Members Present

Floyd Dropps	Chauncey Moran
Larry Heathman	Bob Stinson
Mike Holmes	Jim Schmierer
Mick Jarvi	Robert "Skip" Schulz
Dave Johnson	Travis Smith
George Lindquist	Warren Suchovsky, Co-Facilitator
Rory Mattson	Phil Wirtanen, Facilitator

Western Council Members Absent

David Anderson
David Anthony
Ken Buchholtz
Jerry Divine
Katie Kruse
Jim Lorensen

Guests

Dan O'Brien, DVM, PhD, DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory, Lansing
John Madigan, Natural Resources Commissioner

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Liaisons

Kristi Dahlstrom, Executive Division, Marquette
Lt. Skip Hagy, District Law Supervisor-Eastern UP, Newberry
Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division-Eastern UP, Newberry
Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Division, Escanaba
Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division, Marquette
Debbie Munson Badini, Public Information Office, Marquette
Bill Doan, Parks & Recreation Division-Western UP, Marquette
Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resources Division, Marquette
Stacy Welling Haughey, Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator, Marquette
Lt. Pete Wright, District Law Supervisor-Western UP, Marquette

Call To Order

The Annual Joint Meeting between the Eastern (EUPCAC) & Western (WUPCAC) Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils was called to order at 6:02 pm EST by EUPCAC **Chair Dick Pershinske**.

Welcome & Introductions

Mrs. Haughey began the meeting with introductions of guests present: Mr. John Madigan, Natural Resources Commissioner, and Mr. Dale McNamee and Dr. Kirk Schott, representatives of Senator Casperson's Office. She thanked everyone for their attendance this evening. She stated this was the fifth year for the Citizen Advisory Councils and thanked all of the volunteer members. She also welcomed new EUPCAC member Mark Spencer of Mackinac County to the meeting and noted there are two additional new

EUPCAC members who weren't able to attend, Mr. Ivan Darling of Mackinac County and Mr. Keith Aldrich of Schoolcraft County.

Chair Pershinske welcomed everyone to the fifth annual joint meeting of the CAC's. He stated since the CAC's started in late 2008, there have been 62 resolutions combined from both CAC's that have been forwarded to the DNR as a result of the Councils' work. The Councils should be proud of this accomplishment. These Councils provide an opportunity for citizens to come to these meetings and have their questions answered by DNR staff or the Council either at the meeting or quickly afterwards. He commented the DNR staff has been tremendous in making the Councils' jobs easier by being available at these meetings. There isn't always agreement, but a good solution is always found. Members of both the East and West Councils introduced themselves and named the stakeholder group they represent.

WUPCAC **Facilitator Wirtanen** stated Council members look forward to this meeting each year in which broader issues that concern the entire U.P. are presented and discussed. **Chair Pershinske** noted there will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting for the public to address the Council on any issue.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division Reports

Written staff reports were emailed to Council members on March 10, 2014. The following are current updates to those reports.

- Stacy Welling Haughey, UP Regional Coordinator: **Mrs. Haughey** discussed the accomplishments of the Councils over the years and reviewed a handout listing highlights of resolutions put forth. One of the resolutions initiated by Mr. Schulz recently came to fruition; the free ORV weekend dates were announced by Chief Ron Olson (Parks & Recreation Division) at the March 13th Natural Resources Commission meeting. The free weekends will be June 7 & 8 and September 27 & 28. In the division report, she included updates on Biodiversity Stewardship and the State Trail Initiative. She also thanked Mr. Johnson, WUPCAC, who copied the land acquisition map (discussed and distributed in September 2013) onto memory cards and provided them for all west members this evening. She also noted the land review process is included in her written report as it pertains to the Graymont proposal. The proposal is currently at Step 7 in the process.
- Tom Paquin, Parks & Recreation Division-Eastern UP: **Mr. Paquin** noted he did not have any additions to his report.
- Bill Doan, Parks & Recreation Division-Western UP: **Mr. Doan** noted he did not have any additions to his report.
- Lt. Skip Hagy, Law Enforcement Division-Eastern UP: **Lt. Hagy** stated the law enforcement academy began its 10th week, with 27 recruits remaining out of 31. He does not know the status of where recruits, once they graduate, will be placed. How many graduate, internal transfers, and a review of critical vacancies will be considered in a few months and then a decision will be made on placements. For the eastern U.P., **Lt. Hagy** stated he is hoping for 3-4 new officers.
 - **Mr. Moran** stated the U.P. should be given priority due to the amount of area that needs to be covered.
 - **Mr. Schulz** asked about the cougar poaching case and if it has been determined where the cougar came from. **Lt. Hagy** stated there was no tag on the cougar and until further testing is completed, it is assumed it moved in from the western states. There have been no further sightings in the area where it was poached.
 - **Mr. Lawless** asked if enough feedback was received for the Law Enforcement Division's strategic plan. **Lt. Hagy** stated he appreciates all the feedback that has been given. If anyone would still like to submit their comments, please do so soon, as the process is almost complete.
- Debbie Munson Badini, Deputy Public Information Officer: **Ms. Munson Badini** welcomed individuals from the media: the Mining Journal, ABC10 and Newberry News. She added a weekly Monday update

on the law enforcement academy has been publicized on the DNR's Facebook page as well as the law enforcement's website. The updates provide a glimpse into what the recruits have done the week before.

- Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Division: **Ms. Mistak** noted the Fisheries Division is holding several meet-and-greet sessions (called Conversations & Coffee) with the public around the state. Dates of these meetings in the U.P. are referenced in the division report.
- **Mr. Lindquist** noted the musky habitat project at Chicaugon Lake in Iron County had a good turnout despite the below zero weather conditions. He stated a lot of good can happen when several groups come together; it was good to see different fisheries groups represented at this project.
 - Mr. McNamee from the audience stated he is dismayed that the two fisheries technicians in Escanaba who are retiring are not being replaced except for utilization of state summer workers. He feels it falls short of what stakeholders were hoping for when supporting the license fee increase. **Ms. Mistak** replied the Fisheries Division is doing an overall review of their staffing needs and are anticipating more funds for hiring in fiscal year 2015 with the license fee increase. Summer workers were hired throughout the state using fiscal year 2014 license fee increase funding. Currently there are a fish biologist and three technician vacancies in the Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit. She stated she has advocated filling these vacancies and the public can too. Mr. McNamee stated he hopes to see a change made to fill these vacancies soon.
 - **Mr. Holmes** asked if the proposed regulation changes for the Menominee River area will be discussed at the meet-and-greet sessions. **Ms. Mistak** stated Wisconsin has already passed a musky regulation change from 50 to 54 inches and the Fisheries Division is looking to do the same. She stated they are currently only reviewing the musky regulation changes for the lower most portion of the Menominee River. **Mr. Holmes** stated he was disappointed to hear that Michigan would go along with one of Wisconsin's changes and yet Wisconsin wouldn't follow suit if Michigan made a change to spearing regulations on border waters.
 - **Mr. Suchovsky** stated he is bothered by decisions being made based on social science instead of biological science on fishery matters. **Ms. Mistak** explained the reasoning behind their use of biological science vs. social science, stating the social science of managing fish plays a large role when there isn't much of a change in the biological science. **Mr. Suchovsky** stated he questions how accurate it is when the DNR says they use science.
 - **Mr. Mattson** stated they've been led to believe fisheries and wildlife positions were going to be filled with the new license fee increase money. He asked if, in fiscal year 2015, these vacancies will be filled. **Ms. Mistak** stated staff has been asked to identify critical positions and minimum staffing requirements needed by mid-May. At that time, the Fisheries Division management team will make decisions on the priority of vacancies. **Mr. Mattson** asked if the minimum will be matched with extra staff. **Ms. Mistak** stated her minimum staffing requirements are for more staff than what she currently has.
 - **Mr. Dropps** asked if the results of the white sucker study conducted in four Iron County lakes were available. **Ms. Mistak** responded not yet, but she will provide the raw data. Mr. Dropps wondered if it is being paid for by Dingell-Johnson funding; **Ms. Mistak** replied she is not sure.
- Lt. Pete Wright, Law Enforcement Division-Western UP: **Lt. Wright** stated there are four critical and two priority vacancies in his district in the western U.P. Those officers graduating from the academy will provide some relief, but will probably not fill all the vacancies right away. Additional hiring will address continuing staffing needs. As Lt. Hagy mentioned, the division's strategic planning is in progress. **Lt. Wright** encouraged members to call or send comments to him.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if enforcement of snowmobile noise could be increased. **Lt. Wright** encouraged Mr. Schulz to call with specific complaints so they can investigate further as it would be more helpful to law enforcement. This is an area that is difficult to monitor, with limited expensive equipment available and limited staff to dedicate manpower. **Mr. Schulz** asked how much coordination exists between the DNR and local law enforcement for these types of complaints. **Lt. Wright** stated it depends on the location and how much other enforcement is available.

- Terry Minzey, Wildlife Division: **Mr. Minzey** added that interviews have been completed and offers were made for a new wildlife biologist and a technician in Escanaba. He also noted that Mr. Koski, whose farm was associated with several wolf depredations, sold all his cattle thereby eliminating future issues. He mentioned the new Wildlife Habitat Grant program, which has come from the increase in license fees. Also, the Wildlife Division is working with private landowners to enhance winter deer habitat with large scale plantings. A handout is available in the meeting packets which shows several wildlife habitat projects scheduled for 2014.
- **Chair Pershinske** asked about the overall status of the deer herd. **Mr. Minzey** stated the herd is down substantially due to winter conditions. Models suggest there may be a 30% or more reduction.
 - **Mr. Mattson** asked if the positions in Escanaba are replacements or new positions; **Mr. Minzey** responded they are replacements. **Mr. Mattson** asked if there will be new wildlife staff and winter range improvements with the new license fee increases. **Mr. Minzey** stated he is filling the Escanaba positions only at this time. The amount of projected funding available for additional hires is not yet known. Factors that will affect additional license funding include less antlerless permits statewide, a reduction in turkey tags, winter impact on the deer herd/less licenses sold, etc. Lower Michigan's deer herd was hit just as hard as the U.P., which is the first time in his career to see this. The total ramifications are not yet known.
 - **Mr. Lindquist** asked if the furbearer position in Marquette is moving forward. **Mr. Minzey** stated yes, which will free up the local biologist so he can work on habitat projects.
 - **Mr. Schmierer** referenced the percentage of corporate and state land and doubling the number of acres to have an impact.
 - **Mr. Mattson** stated winter range is critical and asked if there was a plan on what will be done on a larger basis, such as how many acres and a prediction in the next 10 years on game purchase lands. **Mr. Minzey** agreed that winter range is critical. He stated he does not have the numbers Mr. Mattson is asking for. He stated under past administrations, they were instructed as an organization to manage the forest without paying attention to acquisition source. This has now changed, and aspen habitat has been made a top priority for wildlife. **Mr. Mattson** asked what the age is for rotation; **Mr. Minzey** replied the majority is 50 years.
 - **Mr. Jarvi** stated he's mentioned before the lack of a habitat plan for deer in the Keweenaw where there is little state land and the largest amount of snowfall. The deer herd is impacted tremendously in that area. **Mr. Minzey** stated he will discuss this issue with Mr. Stampfly and Mr. Don Mankee of the Forest Resources Division.
 - **Mr. Schulz** asked about the moose survey. **Mr. Minzey** stated the moose survey is done every other year, opposite of the wolf survey, with the next one being done in 2015. Cold does not affect the moose, although the deep snow can potentially cause a problem. He does not anticipate a lot of issues with moose this winter. He explained the survey rotation and why it's done every other year, as well as how the growth rate has not increased enough to warrant a hunt.
- Jeff Stampfly, Forest Resource Division: **Mr. Stampfly** stated he had no additions to his report.
- Council members asked a variety of questions regarding soils, seeding Lake Mary Plains, etc.
 - **Mr. Radka** asked about the notation made in the forestry report about speeding up the process of timber sales on class A roads. **Mr. Stampfly** stated the Forest Resources Division sent a letter to all of the state road commissions asking them to consider road use options for the mills that are typically strapped for raw materials this time of year and are limited to the weight they can haul due to road restrictions. When timber is processed, depending on the timing, class A bids will be put out to line up class A work.
 - **Mr. Mattson** asked if Forest Resources works with the Wildlife Division when making recommendations for state forest land; **Mr. Stampfly** replied yes. **Mr. Mattson** asked who would make the decision, on game purchased land, to burn out aspen and plant white pine. **Mr. Stampfly** explained the co-management process between all divisions, Forest Resources, Wildlife, and Fisheries; discussion continued.

- **NRC Commissioner John Madigan:** **Commissioner Madigan** thanked members for serving on the CAC's and stated their thoughts are very well respected. He understands the Council's concerns with the replacement of staff and he has sent an email to Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter based on comments made. The U.P. commissioners will relay the message very strongly in Lansing.
 - **Chair Pershinske** stated a Council member asked him to mention the CO's in the U.P. do an extreme amount of work; they must put in a lot of hours because they are seen everywhere and he commended them for a great job.
- **Chair Pershinske** recognized EUPCAC member Mr. Jim Duke for being inducted into the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame (<http://www.ishof.com/php/press.php>) last fall. **Mr. Duke** described the requirements and stated he is honored by the designation; a round of applause was given.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Pershinske suggested that Item #3 Approval of Last Meeting Minutes be deferred to the next regular meeting of each Council due to time constraints. No other changes to the agenda were brought forth. **Mr. Moll motioned to adopt the amended agenda; Mr. Heathman seconded the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Anthony, Mr. Buchholtz, Mr. Buckingham, Mr. Darling, Mr. Dennis, Mr. Divine, Mr. Ellenwood, Mr. Gorniak, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Lorenson, Mr. Serfass, and Mr. Shutt. Motion carried.**

Update of UPCAC Charter

Mrs. Haughey stated the U.P. Citizen Advisory Councils charter was created five years ago and it was revised when the merger between the DNR and the Department of Environmental Quality occurred. Since that time, the merger was revoked and the charter wasn't changed. Revisions were made to remove the DNRE language as well as update the charter to reflect current DNR practice. **Chair Pershinske** asked that this agenda item also be deferred to the next regular meeting of each Council due to time constraints. **Mr. Suchovsky motioned to defer this topic to the next regular Council meetings; Mr. Holmes seconded the motion. Ayes: All. Nays: None. Absent: Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Anthony, Mr. Buchholtz, Mr. Buckingham, Mr. Darling, Mr. Dennis, Mr. Divine, Mr. Ellenwood, Mr. Gorniak, Ms. Kruse, Mr. Lorenson, Mr. Serfass, and Mr. Shutt. Motion carried.**

Wildlife Disease Issues

Chair Pershinske introduced Dan O'Brien, DVM, PhD, from the DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory in Lansing, who will present information about the DNR's Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Response Plan, which is a topic of common interest to both Councils.

Dr. O'Brien stated he will begin with a presentation, which he gave to the Natural Resources Commission at their February 13th meeting, and then will answer any other wildlife disease questions the Council may have afterwards.

- **Brief Overview of the Plan:** The plan was initially developed in 2002 in response to CWD found in Wisconsin. The plan was revised in July 2012. Scientific literature was reviewed and summarized into 11 principles to guide management. There are separate, but cooperative surveillance and response plans for wild (by the DNR) and privately-owned (by the Department of Agriculture) cervids.
- **Free-Ranging (Wild) Deer, Elk, Moose: Surveillance (Testing):** The goal is to determine the presence/absence and extent of CWD. There is an ongoing routine to test skinny and/or abnormally-behaving animals reported by staff and the public. For an outbreak, testing is done of culled and/or hunter-harvested animals obtained via mandatory check after identifying a CWD-positive.
- **Free-Ranging Deer, Elk, Moose: Surveillance To Date (All CWD-Negative):** Statistics were shown regarding the species tested.
- **Free-Ranging Deer, Elk, Moose: Response to a Positive:**

- The goals are to limit further CWD transmission and eradicate if surveillance suggests that is likely to be achievable. The trigger for a response is when CWD is identified in either a privately-owned or wild cervid, in Michigan or within 10 miles of the Michigan border.
- Once a response is triggered, a population survey is conducted to determine species presence, density, and distribution, and a CWD Management Zone (MZ) is established. To establish the MZ, a radius (10 miles if the CWD-positive animal is wild, 5 miles if it is privately-owned) is drawn around the index case. At a minimum, any county the boundary of which is intersected by that radius will be defined as part of the MZ.
- Actions in the MZ are then initiated. This includes implementing a deer feeding and baiting ban, which at a minimum should include the entire MZ, prohibiting movement of carcasses and parts out of the MZ, and intensifying surveillance with a mandatory check and testing of all cervids taken in the MZ.
- Results of the surveillance in the MZ will be presented to the DNR and NRC for informed decisions (consistent with their legal authorities) concerning the necessity, nature, and extent of response actions.
- **CWD Management:**
 - **What's Worked:** Measures to prevent establishment (detecting infected animals as soon as possible, keeping densities low, minimizing aggregations, regulating/enforcing POCs, carcass movement).
 - **What's Sort of Worked:** Agency culling (which in Illinois has held prevalence steady by decreasing incidence, but doesn't stop spread, decreases hunter success at county, but not regional, scale).
 - **What Hasn't Worked:** Hunter harvest alone has not worked. There has been growing prevalence, spread in Wisconsin, Wyoming, Colorado, West Virginia and other states that have attempted to rely on hunter harvest alone.
- **Timely Food for Thought:** There is a very good article online from *The Wildlife Professional* that discusses "*The Threat as CWD Approaches Western Feedgrounds.*"
<http://news.wildlife.org/twp/2013-winter/elk-winter-feeding-disease-facilitation/>

Dr. O'Brien opened the floor for Council questions.

- **Mr. Johnson** asked what will be cut in order to fund the resources that will be needed to react to the disease. **Dr. O'Brien** stated in other states, disease control does take away from resources; however, he cannot speak to what will happen in Michigan.
- **Mr. Holmes** asked if there was any type of inoculation against CWD. **Dr. O'Brien** stated he is not aware of any at this time and explained why some vaccine studies have failed.
- **Mr. Dropps** asked what the relationship is with deer density and the disease. **Dr. O'Brien** stated density plays a role early in an outbreak in a new area, helping CWD to become established by cervid-to-cervid contact. Once the environment becomes contaminated, density doesn't matter as much.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if transmission of the disease can occur outside of the infected species, such as in a predator. **Dr. O'Brien** stated so far, elk, moose, and deer can get CWD. Currently, studies which looked at predators of cervids indicate they do not become infected. There isn't any evidence at this point, but it cannot be ruled out with prions as a disease agent.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if there is any movement in Wisconsin. **Dr. O'Brien** indicated there are cases in Washburn County, Wisconsin, 50 miles southwest of Ironwood and in Marathon and Portage Counties, about 50 miles from Menominee County, Michigan. There is more of a threat from Wisconsin than Illinois at this point.
- **Mr. Mattson** stated if a case did occur in the U.P., he would hate to see feeding areas taken away which are important in the U.P.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** discussed the possibility of some agriculture folks getting rid of their forests which may concentrate deer to less of an area and questioned whether this may pose a problem with transmission. **Dr. O'Brien** replied.

- **Chair Pershinske** asked if privately held deer are being adequately controlled or are they moving around freely. **Dr. O'Brien** stated it depends on who one speaks to and explained.
- **Mr. Moran** asked what is used to treat an area where the infection is in the plants and ground. **Dr. O'Brien** stated prions can exist in the soil for years and although a variety of methods have been tried, nothing has worked. In one study, the prions were still viable after five years.
- **Mr. Schulz** asked if wildlife habitat areas for deer need to be made larger or smaller. **Mr. Minzey** stated expanding winter complexes would be the best option so deer aren't in close contact with each other.
- **Chair Pershinske** asked if there was information from Wisconsin on how much of a spread there has been in five years. **Dr. O'Brien** stated there have been 355 positives out of 6,500 animals tested in 2013. The vast majority of cases continue to occur in the southern third of the state.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** noted potential unintended consequences of a CWD outbreak could be a drop in land base, real estate values, and tourism. It's more than just deer.
- **Chair Pershinske** asked if there is anything specific the Councils might review to be helpful on this issue. **Dr. O'Brien** encouraged a continual open dialogue about the seriousness of the disease and how to move forward, realizing how close CWD is to the border of the U.P. Have the discussion now about how stakeholders would like the NRC and the DNR to respond. When the time comes, decisions will need to be made very quickly and everyone needs to move forward together. Indecisiveness in Wisconsin did not help them.
- **Dr. Garvon** asked if humans can become infected. **Dr. O'Brien** stated there isn't any evidence that humans can become infected at this time.
- **Facilitator Wirtanen** asked if there are other sources of information available. **Dr. O'Brien** stated there has been an explosion of information on CWD in the last 10 years. The appendix of the CWD Response Plan is a great place to start as well as the CWD website: www.cwdinfo.org.
- **Chair Pershinske** questioned if there was any ongoing research at Michigan State University. **Dr. O'Brien** stated he is not aware of any, although the University of Wisconsin has done quite a bit. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked how much of the license fees are going to research to help universities to do studies. **Dr. O'Brien** stated he is not aware of any going to research CWD. **Dr. O'Brien** emphasized that a lack of research is not the factor limiting control of CWD at this point, but rather that management to control the disease is publicly unpopular and so has little political support.

Chair Pershinske thanked Dr. O'Brien for a very informative presentation; a round of applause was given. He stated the topic will certainly be an issue on future Council agendas and may require occasional input from him. **Dr. O'Brien** thanked the Council for their time and questions.

Financial Aspects of Forestry & Fire Management

Mr. Stampfly stated a request for this presentation initially came from the Forestry Subcommittee of the EUPCAC. The following slides were presented and discussed.

- **Michigan Forestland Ownership:** There are 20.2 million acres of forestland in Michigan. 21% is state forestland and 46% is owned by a family or individual. Other small percentages of ownership include the US Forest Service, Corporate, Other Private, Other Public, and the National Park Service.
- **Forest Economy:** \$14 billion is generated in annual economic activity; 154,000 jobs are supported; employs 1 out of 10 manufacturing jobs; and supports outdoor recreation economies (hunting and fishing generates \$4.8 billion in annual economic activity). This information and the few slides that follow are from the Governor's Economic Summit.
- **Economic Value & Impact of Forest Products Industry in Michigan:** Approximately 27,600 direct jobs, including \$1.3 billion in employee compensation and \$8.1 billion in total output. \$~\$14.6 billion contribution to the state's economy.
- **Forest Products Exports:**

- Wood product exports: \$1.9 billion in domestic exports in 2007 and \$146 million in international exports in 2012.
- Paper exports: \$3.4 billion in domestic exports in 2007 and \$370 million in international exports in 2012.
- Economic Value and Impact of State Forests in Michigan: The total state forest area in the state is about 3.9 million acres. State forests timber sold in 2013 was reviewed. State forest timber sale revenues from fiscal year 2011 to 2014 were provided. Fiscal year 2013 was up mainly due to the Duck Lake fire.
- Other Economic Impacts Associated with State Forests: Forest Recreation, such as hunting and trapping, trailing riding and use, camping; and Mineral, Oil and Gas Extraction, such as oil, natural gas, sand and gravel, gold, nickel and copper.
- Annual Budget Development Process: The steps involved in developing the annual budget were explained. The final budget bill for fiscal year 2015 will be passed around June.
- Forest Resources Division (FRD) Appropriation: Out of FRD's budget, 58% is appropriated for forest management and 29% is appropriated for wildfire protection.
- Where Does FRD's Funding Come From? A large portion of FRD's budget comes from the Forest Development Fund (67%). Other funding comes from federal grants (16%), the General Fund (8%), and other miscellaneous funding areas (9%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Timber Sales Revenue: A majority of the timber sales revenue goes into the Forest Development Fund (87%). A small portion goes to the Game and Fish Protection Trust Fund (12%) and Pittman-Robertson Fund (1%).
- FY 2013 Forest Development Fund Expenditures: From the Forest Development Fund, 72% is expended to Forest Management, 24% to Wildfire Protection, and smaller portions to other miscellaneous items such as forest fire equipment, minerals management, etc. **Mr. Stampfly** noted there is no dedicated funding for repairing/maintaining state forestland roads (not county roads). Mostly, funding comes from timber sale revenue; however, if the road/bridge is on an ORV trail, then funding may come from ORV and timber sales funds. If on a snowmobile trail, could be snowmobile, ORV and timber sale funds. If a road/bridge isn't fixed, it's because there is no funding.
- FRD Facts: Staff generally accounts for 82% of projected expenditures. There is approximately 280 staff statewide including about 225 field staff. The Forest Development Fund contributes \$7-8 million to wildfire suppression which is a little greater than half.
- DNR Role in Fire Suppression: The DNR is responsible for over 30 million acres; staff train and partner with rural fire departments in wildland fire suppression for a regional approach; 791 pieces of fire equipment are provided to 410 rural fire departments.
- Fire Statistics: Suppressed 367 wildfires which burn 7,152 acres annually on average. 62% of forests are on private land and 71% of fires occur on private land.
- Fire Program Funding: Only 27% of funding is General Fund. 57% of funding comes from the Forest Development Fund. Most of the assets are on private land. The dollars earned from harvesting timber on state land goes to fighting private land fires.
- Wildfire Protection FY 2013 Expenditures: A total of \$12.8 million was expended in fiscal year 2013 for wildfire protection. A pie chart was shown depicting which funds expenditures come from, with the majority being from the Forest Development Fund.
- FY 2014 FRD Projected Year-End Summary: There is currently a \$1.6 million deficit projected for fiscal year 2014, and after a carry forward (balance in the bank account) of \$2.3 million, it will leave a surplus of only \$653,000 (1.6%).
- Status of Year to Date Timber Sale Revenue: Fiscal year 2014 revenue is at \$12 million as of February 15th, which is ahead of fiscal year 2013 total by \$875,000. Projected fiscal year end (2014) revenue is \$31.7 million.
- Status of Expenditures: Other expenditures from the budget include post-employment benefits, early outs, rent, transportation, raises and health insurance. Previously, retirement costs were paid for by

the General Fund appropriation. Now the division has to cover the costs, which amounted to \$4.2 million this year alone.

- **Carry Forward Status:** The carry forward amount continues to decline annually due to covering the division's budget deficits over the last five years.
- **FY 2015 Budget Request:** The Governor's budget recommendation for FRD includes \$4.0 million ongoing in the General Fund; \$2.0 million to invest in forestry and fire, and \$2.0 million to fix structural imbalance.

Mr. Stampfly opened the floor for Council questions pertaining to his presentation.

- **Mr. Duke** asked if the recreation portion of timber sales maintained the staff through the non-productive months. **Mr. Stampfly** indicated when the recreation program was transferred to the Parks and Recreation Division (PRD), part of the stipulation was to have the fire officers do the work. There were 15 FTE's that were funded out of those programs and FRD did not transfer those employees to PRD. PRD is funding them to do state work at a cost of \$1.4 million. This year brought a few less hours than last year.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** stated there was an effort to get the legislature to appropriate \$5 million to wildfire suppression a few years ago. A lot of the Forest Development Fund is going to fight fires on private land. The General Fund needs to step up and appropriate a larger share.
- **Mr. Schulz** stated, in regards to the forest roads, the ORV community wanted a lot of them opened. With the ORV rate increase and new revenue, he asked if it would be a way to maintain these roads without taking money from FRD. **Mr. Stampfly** stated in cases where ORV groups are on state roads, that revenue should go up. On general forest roads, there isn't money there unless there is a trail there.
- **Mr. Radka** asked what the \$2 million to fix the structural imbalance was for. **Mr. Stampfly** stated it covers the \$1.6 million deficit from fiscal year 2014 mentioned earlier.
- **Mr. Holmes** asked about the decrease in the number of fire officers. **Mr. Stampfly** acknowledged the numbers are down. He noted it has been difficult for a number of them to pass the fitness test the older they get.

Chair Pershinske thanked Mr. Stampfly for his presentation and a round of applause was given.

Public Comments

- Mrs. Katie English, public attendee, spoke about the Graymont mine proposal in the eastern U.P. She stated the application is from a Canadian company to purchase 13,000 acres, which is the largest land transaction the DNR has seen. She cited environmental and economic concerns, stating the mine will damage tourism in Mackinac, Luce, and Chippewa Counties. She stated she feels mining is in direct conflict with the Pure Michigan campaign which is promoting tourism. She mentioned a survey she conducted and stated the voice of people in the affected areas are not being heard. The people who live in Hudson and Rexton Townships do not want this mine.
- Mr. Stephen King of the Newberry News stated he has written quite a bit on the Graymont issue and he has found a lot of people who support the mine. He asked if Mr. Garavaglia, Council member, if he can state what the land is worth, the actual sale value. Mr. King also asked what the DNR plans to do with the money from the sale of the land.
- **Mr. Garavaglia** stated his township would lose money; however, Graymont indicated they would make the township whole. He indicated it's a vast project and the underground portion would be critical; it would be good to get geology studies done quickly. His township is being pushed for a resolution of support, but they don't have enough information to do that.
- **Chair Pershinske** stated he had a conversation with DNR Deputy Moritz and he stated the DNR was going to walk very slowly with this issue.

- **Mr. Stampfly** responded to Mr. King stating revenue from minerals will go to the Park Endowment Fund. He believes the money from the land sale if it were to happen would go to the Land Exchange Facilitation Fund.
- **Mrs. Haughey** reminded everyone the proposal is being reviewed and not yet decided; all the answers are not known at this time. She explained the 14-step process for this proposal which was included in the meeting packets. Staff are currently in the middle of the review process. The DNR is taking a slow, thoughtful approach with this proposal. The Council will be kept up to date and there will be a public meeting in the future. In addition, local legislators are aware of this project as is the Governor's Office. She encouraged members of the public to contact their legislators as well.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** stated this is primarily a DNR land transaction, but it hasn't gone through the DEQ permitting process yet. **Mrs. Haughey** stated the DEQ permitting process changed in 2011 and is not the same as what the Kennecott mine dealt with.
- A member of the audience indicated Trout Lake is also affected by this proposal. Rexton will be an underground mine, but Trout Lake will be the open pit mine, right next door to a veteran's rehab facility that promotes outdoor recreation.

Closing Comments from the Council

- **Mr. Holmes** asked if new members for the NRC Youth Council were chosen yet; **Mrs. Haughey** stated they have not.
- **Mr. Moran** encouraged the Council to respond to the law enforcement's request for input into their strategic plan. It may help those areas without officer coverage.
- **Mr. Dropps** suggested manpower and boots on the ground be discussed at the upcoming Fisheries meetings. He stated with the license fee increase, the public wants to see more people on the ground. Positions are not being filled. **Mrs. Haughey** stated information on staff levels will be brought to the next meeting.
- **Mr. Suchovsky** stated a baseline should be established of how many staff there were and what the cost of more staff will be. Technology has made a difference in how many staff are actually needed today and this should be kept in mind. Comparing this year to next year may not be as simple as it seems.
- **Facilitator Wirtanen** stated the presentations were very good tonight. He stated that his stakeholder group recently became aware of the Aquatic Habitat Improvement Grant program. After looking into the mechanics of it, it's a very daunting, difficult process. However, he would like the Council to be aware of the program and evaluate how to get those dollars into their organizations.
- **Mr. Garavaglia** stated, in regards to the Graymont proposal, there are quite a few people in Hudson Township who support it, but are afraid to verbalize their support. They want to know the facts, such as how it will affect their wells.
- **Chair Pershinske** thanked the Council for traveling to Marquette for the meeting. He also thanked staff for their input.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11pm EST.