

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
October 8, 2020
Conference Call/Virtual Meeting**

Present for the Natural Resources Commission (commission)

Carol Moncrieff Rose, chair
David Nyberg
J.R. Richardson
Keith Creagh
Louise Klarr
Chris Tracy
Mike Lashbrook

Present for Department of Natural Resources (department) Staff

Dan Bock, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General
Daniel Eichinger, DNR director
Trevor VanDyke, DNR director of legal and legislative affairs office
Brooke Parmalee, DNR, legal and legislative affairs office
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC

Chair Rose called the meeting of the commission to order at 9:01 a.m. **Rose** called for a roll call, all commissioners, the director and assistant attorney general were present. She then called for a motion to approve the day's agenda, commissioner **J.R. Richardson** made the motion to approve, commissioner **Klarr** seconded the motion. **Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the agenda was approved unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the approval of the September 10, 2020, commission meeting minutes. **Chair Rose** called for a motion to approve the minutes; commissioner **Lashbrook** made the motion to adopt the September 10 minutes, commissioner **Nyberg** seconded the motion, **Rose** called for additional discussion, there being none, called for a vote, which passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Director Eichinger welcomed the audience and summarized the day's agenda.

Director's Report

Fisheries Division Update: **Chief Jim Dexter** provided an update on a decades long collaboration with Michigan State University (MSU) on ecosystem research. The university provided a Smith Root electrofishing boat that the department uses to conduct inland lake and river assessments. The department continues this collaboration with MSU to provide student training and demonstrations. It was asked and noted that this collaboration is relative to the PERM between the department and MSU.

White-nose Syndrome in Bats John DePue, wildlife biologist from the Upper Peninsula (UP) gave a presentation on the White-nosed bat syndrome, a fungus disease with a 90-100% mortality rate, noting that October is bat awareness month. **DePue** updated the commission on statewide bat monitoring, the department's outreach and education programs and the Great Lakes Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) in conjunction with Wisconsin and Minnesota. The draft of the HCP is slated to be sent to the US Fish & Wildlife Service in early 2021 for possible addition to the public register in summer 2021.

Preliminary Elk Season Results Chad Stewart, deer and elk specialist, Wildlife division provided the commission with the preliminary elk season results. The early season ended on October 5; hunters harvested 29 bulls and 54 antlerless elk and Tribal hunters harvested five elk.

Deer Season Information Director Eichinger provided an overview of the department's hunter communication strategies regarding chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing and deer check stations for this year's deer seasons. **Eichinger** noted that the department does not have the capacity for rapid testing in the field and is connecting with other laboratories to assist with CWD testing.

The director's report ended at 10:04 a.m. at which time chair **Rose** did another roll call with all commissioners still in attendance.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE THE NRC

(Brooke Parmalee read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 10:05 a.m.)

George Lindquist, representing UP Whitetails of Marquette shared his concerns regarding proposed changes in phase II of the deer regulations, some of which included that a late season is not needed in the UP, it is not overpopulated, forestry issues and over-browsing in deer wintering complexes where food is an issue.

Bee Friedlander from Attorneys for Animals spoke about Sandhill cranes and wolf management in Michigan. If the department/commission puts together a group on cranes, **Ms. Friedlander** would like to be a part of that discussion. Her concern is that the Legislature may be bringing a Sandhill crane hunt to the table. **Ms. Friedlander** is not in favor of a wolf hunt if they are delisted.

Erik Schnelle, president, QDMA, spoke about CWD, mitigating damage and the educational video MSU is creating to teach hunters how to remove lymph nodes in the field. For the 2021 seasons, he feels that a simpler and lower cost approach must be found.

Molly Tamulevich, state director for HSUS, spoke about wildlife killing contests in the state. She is not against ethical hunting but is against these contests. **Tamulevich** mentioned correspondence sent to the department/commission regarding these contests. Per the Attorney General's (AG) office, wildlife contests do not fall within the purview of the commission, of which the director agreed, **Tamulevich** requested a copy of the AG's response.

Chair Rose adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 10:29 a.m. and called to order the regular meeting of the NRC at 10:30 a.m. She asked for another roll

call of commissioners and noted that all who were present at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

NEW BUSINESS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Chair Rose read the new business for the commission, which may be acted upon at the November 12, 2020 commission meeting:

There was no new business presented to the commission at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS
DIRECTOR

Chair Rose read the new business for the director, which may be acted on during the day's meeting:

LTA 20160169: Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land, Forest Resources Division Schoolcraft County

LTA 20200047: Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land, Forest Resources Division, Iron County

LTA 20200146: Gift of Land – Marathon Oil, Parks and Recreation Division, Wayne County

LTA 2020096: Release of Reverter – Whitefish Township, Forest Resources Division, Chippewa County

Director Eichinger indicated that he would be signing these land transactions. **Eichinger** also noted that during the past month he approved and signed the following director's order:

Discounted Private and Public Land Antlerless Licenses in Deer Management Units 452 and 487. **Director Eichinger** indicated under part 435 of NREPA, the director has the authority to discount certain licenses; during the FY21 budget negotiations, under appropriations chair **Senator Stamas**, we continued to encourage the harvest of deer in the bovine Tuberculosis area. Boilerplate language was added that allowed the director to discount antlerless licenses to \$5.00 and the Legislature agreed to offset any Game & Fish funds with General Fund dollars.

OLD BUSINESS
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Regulations on the Take of Reptiles and Amphibians, Fisheries Order 224.21

Commissioner Klarr made a motion to adopt Fisheries Order 224.21, Regulations on the Take of Reptiles and Amphibians. **Commissioner Creagh** supported the motion. **Rose** called for

discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Hook and Line Restrictions During Walleye Spawning Closures, Fisheries Order 226.21

Commissioner Nyberg made a motion to adopt Fisheries Order 226.21, Hook and Line Restrictions During Walleye Spawning Closures. **Commissioner Klarr** supported the motion. **Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Possession Limits for Fish, Fisheries Order 248.21

Commissioner Nyberg made a motion to adopt Fisheries Order 248.21, Possession Limits for Fish. **Commissioner Lashbrook** supported the motion. **Chair Rose** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS
DIRECTOR

Chair Rose read the director's order up for approval:

Fisheries Order 243.20, State-Licensed Commercial Fishing

The director indicated that he would not be signing this order at this meeting as gaps have occurred in trying to enforce and prosecute under the Administrative Rules. **Eichinger** has asked the Fish division to bring back an updated order with only those items that align with statute. This order will no longer have one year stop gaps, aligning with statute allowing with only what the department can do under the law.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Richardson shared some of his conversations with UP hunters and anglers and noted that he got to successfully fish for "brookies" the last few days of the season but would not be sharing that location.

Commissioner Tracy shot a grouse the previous week.

Commissioner Creagh went camping at Interlochen and commended the staff for a great job. He reminded all that now is a great time to camp and see the state's beautiful colors. **Creagh** shared his concerns regarding both the CWD experimental area and a lack of the public sharing their issues during these virtual meetings. He has a concern over the lack of input and feedback. He would like to possibly contact other boards/commissions to see what their meeting structures entail.

Commissioner Klarr is sad that we are not able to communicate as we were previously. **Rose** added that she looks forward to in-person meetings in the future.

Commissioner Lashbrook congratulated **Rose** on her appointment as chair. He is looking forward to fall and the seasons that open and getting out into the outdoors.

Commissioner Nyberg is encouraged to see positive licensing trends, especially among new demographics. During COVID 19 more people are taking to the outdoors. **Nyberg** also mentioned committee groups, establishing, and reinvigorating and encouraging participation among new groups that may be considered non-traditional stakeholders, especially since our state is experiencing an influx of new people trying hunting and fishing. He would like to do a session to explore how we could reach out to people who do not participate in commission meetings.

Chair Rose did some upland bird hunting and some turkey hunting, adding that she left them in their original homes.

Director Eichinger is open to their suggestions to how we can replicate in-person meetings. **Eichinger** also said that the department has received a lot of written feedback on the deer regulations.

Next Meeting

Chair Rose shared that the next meeting of the commission will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2020 and will once again be in a virtual format.

Adjournment

Commissioner Creagh made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Tracy** supported the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.



Carol Moncrieff Rose, NRC Chair



Daniel Eichinger, DNR Director

DATE: November 12, 2020