



Comments and Background Information on the 2018 Proposed Resolutions

Prepared by MUCC Staff
April 2018

Interim Resolution #01
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Region I Policy Board Member Tim Kobasic on behalf of the Hiawathaland Trail Association and Straits Area Sportsmen's Club

MUCC Region: 1 and 2

Passed: September 23, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting and October 18, 2017 Executive Board as interim policy

Title: **PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO ADEQUATELY FUND UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE, MAINTAIN NATIONAL FORESTS, NATIONAL PARKS, AND NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND REDUCE TORT LIABILITY**

Background/Problem:

The National Forest System was created by the Land Revision Act of 1891, which was signed under the presidency of Benjamin Harrison, and there are 155 National Forests containing almost 190 million acres of land. Land management of these areas focuses on conservation, timber harvesting, livestock grazing, watershed protection, wildlife, and recreation.

There are management decision conflicts between conservationists and environmentalists, and natural resource extraction companies and lobbies, over the protection and/or use of National Forest lands and these conflicts center on endangered species protection, logging of old-growth forests, intensive clear-cut logging, undervalued stumpage fees, mining operations and mining claim laws, and logging/mining access road-building within National Forests.

The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) is charged with the management responsibilities of the National Forests. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 (P.L. 94-588) is a United States federal law that is the primary statute governing the administration of national forests and was an amendment to the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974. NFMA called for the management of renewable resources on national forests lands and the objectives of the NFMA include requirements for the US Forest Service to develop plans for national forests from permanent damages. Congress requires the USFS in conjunction with other applicable agencies, to thoroughly, research, and plan for the nation's renewable resource use, the current demand, anticipated demands, and environmental and economic impacts. The ability for the USFS to fulfill its statutory requirement is paid for through funding appropriations controlled by Congress.

In 1986, the cost of fire suppression throughout the national forests consumed about 15 percent of the USFS total budget. Due to the annual increases of incidences of forest fires throughout the national forests, the cost of fire suppression to date now consumes an average of 56 percent of the USFS total budget. The negative impact in the loss of funding for the operation of the USFS has caused reduction in services that include forest management, education and outreach, recreation, and especially road maintenance and staffing reductions within some of the national forests have reached epic proportions

(i.e. Hiawatha National Forest at 45 percent) which further complicates their abilities to perform statutory obligations.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that Michigan United Conservation Clubs support an initiative for the United States Congress to amend the budget process used to fund the United States Forest Service operations to offset the extraordinary costs being incurred with fire suppression and assure committed budget line items to maintain fundamental services.
- It would also request that Congress pass legislation that will assure indemnification of the USFS and sponsor organizations from liability under Tort Law to reduce litigation from the inherent risks from outdoors activity by those who use the national forests for recreation and that Congress assure that all national forests, parks and national monuments remain intact and also continue to allow public access.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- MUCC has several past policies regarding increasing active forest management for wildlife habitat. These policies are in line with the management plans' allowable harvests.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- This resolution would help address the continual shortage of funds for forest and recreation management by protecting those funds from emergency use for forest fires.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

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DNR RESPONSE #01:

The Department did not offer comments on this proposed resolution.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee supports as written, unanimously.

Position:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #02

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Erik Schnelle, Michigan Quality Deer Management Association and Rob Miller
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **ANTLER POINT RESTRICTIONS (APR) INITIATIVE ACCELERATION**

Background/Problem:

Deer hunting in the state of Michigan is a \$2.6 billion industry, and our deer herd is out of balance with its habitat in many areas of the state, with far more bucks being harvested than does. As a result, in many areas of Michigan, our deer herd has many more does than bucks, and those does are on average much older than the bucks which creates a risk for high disease, high population density and causing excessive habitat and agricultural damage. The state is also losing hunters and not recruiting enough young hunters. Furthermore, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) are now established deer diseases in Michigan with increasing prevalence rates.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would require MUCC to advocate for the acceleration of Antler Point Initiative process to take no more than a calendar year from initiation to regulation change and more quickly when practical.
- The APR initiative process should be conducted at no cost to the sponsoring sportsmen's groups.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Antler Point Restrictions (APR) have strong majority support from hunters statewide in every Department of Natural Resources (DNR) survey since 2012 (57 percent support with only 16 percent against in the DNR 2016 harvest survey).
- In the Northwest APR counties (the Northwest 12), APR regulations have led to an increased doe harvest of 13 percent, and in the 2016 harvest survey, gained 77% support from hunters in the area.
- In the R3 (recruitment, retention, and reactivation) study commissioned by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and DNR, Antler Point Restrictions were the change most cited by all hunters when asked what regulatory change would lead them to hunt more; with younger hunters being the strongest supporters of the change.

- There are proven biological benefits of a more balanced harvest and herd (reduced dispersal, shorter, more intense, and synchronized rut, and increased natural selection for more genetically fit males ((larger body size & antlers))).

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- The workgroup that led to the creation of the APR Initiative process (which MUCC and QDMA served on) had previously agreed that the sponsoring organization should pay for the costs of the surveys required, and that the Fish and Game Fund would not be used to fund the survey work required to implement APRs through this process.
- There has been concern about how to manage DNR staff time to respond to new APR requests given the amount of time DNR is putting into the regulation process in reaction to the new CWD positives.

DNR RESPONSE #02:

The exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game has been conferred on the Natural Resources Commission (NRC). Accordingly, when determining APRs associated with the harvest of deer, the NRC adopted guidelines recommended by the APR Workgroup. The guidelines were initially developed in 1999 and re-evaluated in 2011. The guidelines allow hunting organizations to propose an implementation of a mandatory APR in one or more deer management units (DMUs). The Department will then conduct a survey to evaluate support for these regulations among hunters in the proposed area. If the Department has no concerns regarding implementation of the APR, implementation by the NRC will be recommended if the survey achieves at least 50% response rate and indicates at least 66% of hunters support the proposal. Support of APR regulations implemented under this process is to be reevaluated after they are in place for five years.

The Department supports voluntary implementation of APR practices on private lands in Michigan. Current Commission policy is that mandatory regulations should be imposed in a DMU only when it can be shown that a super majority (66%) of hunters and landowners support implementation.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

There was a concern to lines 25-26, but no action was taken to modify.

Positions:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: MUCC Wildlife Committee

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #03

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Diane Konneck
MUCC Region: 7
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **ESTABLISH REGULATIONS ON THE OPERATION OF WAKE BOATS**

Background/Problem:

It is becoming more common to see a surfer or wakeboard riding a wave being produced by a boat, and some of this activity is taking place on small to medium inland lakes in Michigan. The waves produced to support this activity are larger and create more energy than any wave produced naturally, even in the strongest winds or storms. These waves are producing inordinate amounts of damage on shore and near shore structures such as docks, seawalls, beaches and swim platforms. People have been knocked down or off docks and swim platforms. The propulsion units on wake boats that have the ability to pump water in and out of a boat are very disruptive to plant and animal life on the lake bottoms in shallow areas.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with the legislature, Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Commission to create regulations restricting the use of boats that produce a wake large enough to support surfing and wakeboarding to the larger lakes (example: 2000 acres), areas further from shore than the current rules allow (example: 1000 ft.).

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 1995, MUCC approved a resolution that supports changes to the Marine Safety Law which will make training and education of all personal watercraft users mandatory; provide for collection of adequate fees to be used for training and law enforcement of PWC operators; prohibit personal watercraft from operating on or through emergent vegetation; restrict personal watercraft speed to slow, no-wake when operating within 100 feet from shore, or within 100 feet of any boat on any public waters of the state; and prohibit personal watercraft use on streams and ON public lakes less than 100 acres in size; and encourage the PWC industry to aid in the education of PWC owners and operators. Further, MUCC support efforts to strengthen enforcement action against users of personal watercraft who are found to be flagrant offenders of marine safety laws; enforcement actions to include fines and possible confiscation of watercraft.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- The waves produced to support this activity are larger and create more energy than any wave produced naturally, even in the strongest winds or storms, and these waves are producing inordinate amounts of damage to on shore and near shore structures such as docks, seawalls, beaches and swim platforms, and people have been knocked down or off docks and swim platforms.
- The propulsion units on wake boats that have the ability to pump water in and out of a boat are very disruptive to plant and animal life on the lake bottoms in shallow areas.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- There are laws in place that restrict the distance an individual can operate while causing a wake near shore, docks, rafts, and other vessels.
- There is also a law that holds the operator of a vessel accountable for any damage/injury that is caused by the wake of their vessel.
- All vessels create a wake and attempting to further restrict a particular type of vessel that creates a wake may restrict all vessels.

DNR RESPONSE #03:

The Department is neutral on this resolution. The Department has the responsibility of regulating the surface waters of the state and believes that all user groups should have the opportunity to enjoy Michigan's waterways. At times, conflicts do arise that need to be addressed. Current regulations address the topic of this resolution. There are laws in place that restrict the distance an individual can operate while causing a wake near shore, docks, rafts, and other vessels. There is also a law that holds the operator of a vessel accountable for any damage/injury that is caused by the wake of their vessel.

The Department is concerned that increasing the distance a vessel needs to be from shore, docks, etc. could, in essence, reduce the size of a body of water for all users. All vessels create a wake and attempting to further restrict a particular type of vessel that creates a wake may restrict all vessels.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL: The Department of Natural Resources

Proposed Resolution #04
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Erik Schnelle, Michigan Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) and Rob Miller
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **MUCC WORKING CLOSELY WITH DNR IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CWD, TB AND OTHER DISEASES.**

Background/Problem:

Both Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) appear to be established diseases in the State of Michigan. Deer hunting in the State of Michigan is a \$2.6 billion industry, and there is no known cure for CWD.

At the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) 2017 Annual Convention, two resolutions were passed unanimously in regards to this issue: #13) Bringing Cervid Carcasses into Michigan From Other States; and #14) Captive Cervid Regulation Reform. The MUCC 2017 Annual Convention also unanimously passed a resolution regarding funding of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) #12, Unfunded Mandates on the DNR.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would require MUCC to bring to the forefront the above-mentioned resolutions and work with the DNR to enforce the above, as well as find alternate funding than fish and wildlife funds to combat these diseases.
- MUCC stay on top of the education of members by use of the magazine, website, email and or whatever they have available to both educate as well as promote hunter involvement in cooperation with the DNR while combating these diseases.
- MUCC support the additional harvest of does in the affected DMUs – may be late season, reduced doe tag cost or other means.
- MUCC support the implementation of antler point restrictions (APRs) being put in place to help promote the take of does and maintaining a balanced herd.
- MUCC continue to support baiting bans in all disease areas and per DNR recommendations.
- MUCC works with other organizations such as the Michigan QDMA in combining resources to help the DNR and NRC with this disease and management issue.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 2004, MUCC approved a resolution requesting MUCC continues its efforts to protect Michigan's deer and elk from CWD by encouraging the state and federal government to accept and fund the recommendations of the task force, and MUCC develops and promotes an educational program to inform all MUCC members about CWD and the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force.
- In 2007, MUCC approved opposing the continued use of bait as a means of harvesting whitetail in Michigan.
- In 2010, MUCC approved a resolution requesting that MUCC and the Michigan Resource Stewards to petition the Governor, the MDNRE, and the Michigan Department of Agriculture to immediately cease issuance of registrations for new confined cervid facilities, impose a strict schedule for expiration of registrations for facilities in noncompliance, and limit future registrations to and by the renewal, transfer, or sale of current registrations.
- In 2012, MUCC approved a resolution requesting that MUCC work with and urge the MDNR to actively and aggressively investigate these die-offs and pursue a solution to EHD and other emerging diseases.
- In 2017, MUCC approved a resolution to oppose any legislation which would result in the diversion of hunting and fishing license revenue, and also oppose any legislation that did not identify and provide for the funding of any initiatives not accounted for in the fiscal year where they are expected to be undertaken.
- In 2017, MUCC approved a resolution to urge the Michigan legislature to simplify the current regulation and increase fine and penalties for violations of the whole carcass prohibition, to help further reduce the chance of CWD or other diseases being brought into Michigan. The resolution encourages Michigan to adopt a stance similar to Montana or Minnesota whom have adopted regulations that require any cervid carcass brought into Michigan (whether taken from a wild or captive population) be in the form of deboned meat, clean skullcaps, finished taxidermy, and/or other parts not anticipated to carry CWD prions. The resolution also urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other federal agencies as necessary, with support from the Michigan delegation of U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives, work to make this federal regulation.
- In 2017, MUCC approved a resolution requesting that MUCC work with the MDNR, MDARD, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, the Quality Deer Management Association, and other interested parties, to reform captive cervid facility regulations to reduce the chance of CWD transmission between captive cervid facilities and wild deer herd. These regulatory reforms should include, but not be limited to:
 - Establishing double fencing to reduce opportunities for transmission through the fence.
 - A mandatory supervised testing process to eliminate opportunities for illegal substitution of deer for testing from outside the facility.
 - A state funding mechanism that would provide adequate funding for CWD surveillance and response both inside and outside captive cervid facilities.
 - Improved cervid facility record keeping requirements.
 - Non-removable cervid tagging.

- Oversight of cervid transportation.
- A 30-day maximum period for depopulating an infected facility once the decision has been made to do so.
- Improved enforcement mechanisms.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Being responsive to wildlife disease concerns is important. Many aspects of this resolution are in line with current MUCC policy.
- After mandatory Antler Point Restrictions were put in place in the northwest counties of lower Michigan, a 13 percent increase in doe harvest was observed.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- This limits disease management activities to selected practices such as additional doe harvest when other strategies might also prove useful.
- Implementation of harvest strategies, including some APR strategies, might exacerbate the spread of disease.
- Bovine tuberculosis and CWD are very different diseases, and the scientific literature suggests the most effective long-term control measures for each one are likely to be quite different.

DNR RESPONSE #04:

The Department is grateful for MUCC's support and involvement in the fight against challenging wildlife diseases such as chronic wasting disease (CWD) and bovine tuberculosis (TB). Stakeholder engagement is crucial for any measure of success, and MUCC plays an integral role in that process. Similarly, MUCC's involvement in the Legislature to support funding allocations for wildlife health is invaluable.

The Department looks forward to working collaboratively with MUCC to support regulations and management actions based on the best science available.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

There was discussion on whether APR's were necessary to promote the taking of does. Wildlife Supports with an **amendment to STRIKE LINES 19-20.**

Position:

SUPPORT: The Department of Natural Resources, MUCC Wildlife Committee supports with an amendment to STRIKE LINES 19-20.

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #05

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Saginaw Field and Stream Club
MUCC Region: 6
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting and amended at the March 10, 2018 meeting
Title: **LINE 5 AND ALTERNATIVES TO UNDERWATER PIPELINES**

Background/Problem:

The Line 5 pipeline consists of two parallel pipelines that are 4.09 miles long underneath the Straits of Mackinac. It was built in 1953 and runs from Superior, Wisconsin, through Northern Michigan and ultimately crossing the St. Clair River at Sarnia, Ontario and is currently operated by Enbridge Inc.

Enbridge is also the company that operated the pipeline that ruptured and spilled over 840,000 gallons of oil into the Kalamazoo River in 2010, and there are numerous places along the underwater section of the pipeline where the protective coating is missing. For much of the history of the pipeline until recently, numerous sections of pipe were not properly supported on the Lake Michigan lakebed – where it gets stressed by currents.

A recent 2017 National Wildlife Federation (NWF) report revealed that the land-based sections of Line 5 have leaked 29 times since 1968, spilling over 1 million gallons of oil. A 2016 University of Michigan study estimates an oil spill in the Straits could cover a segment as large as 20 percent (150 miles) of 700 miles of shoreline potentially at risk from a spill and impact a 17,000-square mile spill zone. At risk are the fish and wildlife of the Great Lakes, the drinking water relied upon by citizens, and the region's recreation and tourism economy which supports Michigan's way of life.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with National Wildlife Federation and the appropriate decision makers to make every effort to protect the Great Lakes and its tributaries from any potential oil spill, including serious consideration of alternatives to pipelines across or below the Great Lakes.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 1971, MUCC approved a resolution requesting legislation to require the encasement and barreling of all oil pipelines where they cross stream so that the possibility of oil leaking into Michigan waters will be reduced.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- The agreement between the State of Michigan and Enbridge Energy Company dated November 27, 2017 was not executed with any other concerned group participation.
- A recent 2017 National Wildlife Federation (NWF) report revealed that the land-based sections of Line 5 have leaked 29 times since 1968, spilling over 1 million gallons of oil.
- There are numerous places along the underwater section of the pipeline where the protective coating is missing, and for much of the history of the pipeline until recently, numerous sections of pipe were not properly supported on the Lake Michigan lakebed.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- None

DNR RESPONSE #05:

The Department did not offer comments on this proposed resolution.

Positon:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #06

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Millard H. Holton, MUCC Individual Member

MUCC Region: 7

Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting

Title: **COMBINE BOTH OF THE SPRING TURKEY SEASONS IN HUNT UNIT ZZ INTO ONE SIX-WEEK SEASON**

Background/Problem:

There is a desire to allow a hunter more flexibility to utilize a ZZ private land tag in May if it is not filled in the April season to offer more recreational opportunity and to help recruit and retain more turkey hunters.

The Michigan early spring turkey season, Hunt Unit ZZ, Hunt Number 301, usually encompasses the later part of April and a few days of early May for a total of 14 days. The Michigan late spring turkey season, Hunt Unit ZZ, Hunt Number 234, is held during the last four weeks of May. The Michigan fall turkey season, Hunt Unit YY, has recently been expanded to include 60 days, starting on September 15 and ending November 14, where up to 60 turkeys of either sex can be harvested. Hunt Units ZZ and YY consist of the 38 most southern counties of the Lower Peninsula and most of the state's turkey populations are found in Hunt Units ZZ and YY. Hunt Units ZZ and YY are private land hunts only with the exception of Fort Custer; therefore, hunter pressure and overcrowding can be controlled by the landowner. Hunting seasons are designed to control the number of hunters allowed to enter a designated hunting area at one time to prevent overcrowding, as well as to protect the resource from over-harvesting.

A few decades ago we had far more hunters than we had most game animals; however, that problem has nearly been reversed for most species at the present time and only 80 percent of persons purchasing a Spring Turkey License ever go afield to exercise their right to hunt turkeys. Most turkey seasons in Michigan have shown a steady decrease in the number of licenses sold, and the DNR has determined that "family commitments" and "time constraints" are major contributors to the decline in license sales for the ZZ hunt seasons.

Resolution Content:

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and frame a Wildlife Order that would combine the two existing Hunt Unit ZZ turkey seasons into one, thereby increasing hunting opportunities, as well as recruiting and retaining more hunters.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 1995, MUCC approved a resolution urging the DNR to modify spring turkey hunting season so that those not successful in the regular spring hunt may receive a permit to hunt turkeys during a late hunt period that is open to spring turkey hunting.
- In 2016, MUCC approved a resolution to support moving the start date of the early turkey season in southern Michigan (private land unit ZZ) up from a Monday to the prior Saturday.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Due to the short, spring days, most working hunters, as well as students are limited to only four weekend days afield at best, during the 14-day early season and the early, 14-day season in Hunt Unit ZZ, experiences dramatic shifts from year-to-year, in the type of weather patterns hunters encounter, i.e., driving rains, gale type winds, sleet, extreme cold, and snow, as well as a few days of sunshine.
- Combining the two Spring Turkey Seasons in Hunt Units ZZ could lead to increased turkey license sales along with a desired rise in recruitment of new hunters, as well as a retention of the current hunters who are pressured to pursue competing activities, and allowing one, six-week long spring turkey season with over-the-counter license sales would provide a lot of expanded hunting opportunities during a period that is crowded with numerous competing events.
- The short, early, spring turkeys seasons are competing with all the other spring activities, such as, little league baseball, fishing seasons, graduations, open houses, gardening, farming duties, spring vacations, holidays, church attendance and numerous other events.
- DNR personnel reference combining the two spring turkey seasons in Hunt Unit ZZ. There have never been any scientific reasons presented for opposing the merger of these seasons, and based on the previously offered 65,000 desired license sales, there should be little if any harm to the turkey population or natural resources by combining the Hunt Unit ZZ turkey seasons.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- Under the current three-year stabilized regulations, turkey hunter numbers have stabilized or increased since 2015.
- Based on turkey hunter surveys, the hunting behavior of turkey hunters indicates that hunters spend four days per season hunting whether they have a five-day season or a 45-day season. This resolution will not change this behavior.
- The current system allows youth turkey hunters to hunt during any hunt period, in any open hunt unit, on private or public land. There is no application required for this license. The expanded hunting hours allow youth and other hunters to hunt all day. There are no restrictions on hunting hours.
- This resolution has a potential for a negative impact on spring turkey hunting on private land. It is anticipated that this resolution will decrease access to private lands by spring turkey hunters.
- Most hunters are satisfied with current turkey hunting regulations. According to the Department's annual survey of turkey hunters, hunter satisfaction, hunting quality and hunter success are high.

DNR RESPONSE #06:

The Department does not believe that this resolution will increase hunter numbers, expand participation, or increase hunter days afield. Under the current 3-year stabilized regulations, turkey hunter numbers have stabilized or increased since 2015. This compares favorably to the downward

hunting license buying trends being experienced nationally and within Michigan. For example, deer hunting license buyers have declined by 5% since 2015. Based on turkey hunter surveys, the hunting behavior of turkey hunters indicates that hunters spend four days per season hunting whether they have a 5-day season or a 45-day season. This resolution will not change this behavior. Since 2015, there has been an increase in youth turkey hunters. Participation by youth turkey hunters currently exceeds or is equal to other hunting activities. The current system allows youth turkey hunters to hunt during any hunt period, in any open hunt unit, on private or public land. There is no application required for this license. The expanded hunting hours allow youth and other hunters to hunt all day. There are no restrictions on hunting hours. This resolution has a potential for a negative impact on spring turkey hunting on private land. It is anticipated that this resolution will decrease access to private lands by spring turkey hunters. One of the complaints by fall turkey hunters is lack of access to private lands based on the competition by deer hunters for permission to hunt. A similar situation is expected to occur between turkey hunters competing for access to the same parcel of private land during the same hunting period.

Opportunities to hunt wild turkeys have expanded with the recovery and expansion of wild turkeys in this state. When wild turkeys had limited distribution and low numbers, hunters were managed by restricting hunter numbers within short time periods and confined hunting areas. Today, regulations and license quotas are based on turkey population information, harvest and hunter success data, and results of hunter satisfaction surveys that monitor interference and other hunt qualities. Most hunters are satisfied with current turkey hunting regulations. According to the Department's annual survey of turkey hunters, hunter satisfaction, hunting quality and hunter success are high. Regulations and hunting format have been developed through input from organized turkey groups such as the Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, numerous constituent groups and others interested in wild turkey management. The Department's goal of providing opportunity and maintaining quality turkey hunting remains key to the management of this unique bird. This resolution is not supported by the Department.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

Opposes based on comment and concerns offered by the DNR, NWTF and other members.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: The Department of Natural Resources, MUCC Wildlife Committee

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #07

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: George Lindquist, MUCC Vice President
MUCC Region: 1
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **DAILY PERCH HARVEST RULES TO BE EXPANDED**

Background/Problem:

In 2011, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopted Fisheries Order 206, which governs special fishing regulations for cool-water species on select lakes. The current law authorizes the Director of the Department to provide for better protection and preservation of fish, game and birds.

The regulations contained in Order 206 are more restrictive than the general hook-and-line regulations that were needed to improve upon the ability of the DNR to protect and enhance populations of sport fish in certain lakes.

Lake Gogebic was added to protect large yellow perch from Order 220 to Order 206. Large yellow perch are highly pursued by anglers and prized when harvested. Surveys indicate that nearly half of the yellow perch sport anglers harvest in Lake Gogebic consists of fish over 10 inches in size.

In 2011, local angling groups and residents requested that the DNR consider reducing the daily possession limit to help protect and instill stewardship for this population. This resulted in a 25-fish daily possession limit on yellow perch with no more than five fish 12 inches or greater.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to make those current regulations for yellow perch in Lake Gogebic a statewide rule for inland lakes and elsewhere as determined to be appropriate.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Perch fishing is a great way to introduce others, including children, to fishing so those that desire more than 25 fish could be encouraged to introduce others to the opportunities of perch fishing.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- Some have said that there is little biological reason to limit the bag limit. The DNR is currently reviewing the data.

DNR RESPONSE #07:

The Department is currently reviewing biological and social aspects of the current statewide regulation for yellow perch bag limit. The Department agrees that perch are among the most sought-after game species in Michigan and are considered a gateway species critical to the recruitment of youth in fishing. However, there is some disagreement among biologists regarding the benefits of a lower bag limit. Input from anglers and advisors will be sought at public meetings this spring to document their opinions about potential yellow perch bag limit regulation changes. The Department is currently neutral on this issue and will have a more established position following this comprehensive review.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL: The Department of Natural Resources

Proposed Resolution #08

Requires 2/3 Majority

A SUBSTITUTE IS OFFERED BY THE MAKER TO REPLACE THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE CONSERVATION POLICY BOARD.

Proposed Substitute Resolution #08

Submitted by:	Charles Felcyn, Paw Paw Conservation Club
MUCC Region:	7
Passed:	MUCC Conservation Policy Board, March 10, 2018 and amended by the maker and Wildlife Committee as a substitute for consideration.
Title:	REDUCE THE NUMBER OF BUCK TAGS PER HUNTER TO ONE PER YEAR

1 WHEREAS, there is a need to improve the buck to doe ratio among the deer population of Michigan
2 that will result in older age classes of bucks and a stronger deer herd; and

3 **WHEREAS**, reducing the number of buck tags per hunter to one per year could be accomplished without
4 losing significant revenue; and

5 **WHEREAS**, this could be potentially done by ~~having the~~ issuing only combination licenses, which would
6 include one antlered deer and one antlerless deer tag statewide, and ~~eliminating-limiting~~ the single
7 deer (buck) tag as an option to people only planning on hunting in the Upper Peninsula where
8 antlerless tags are not issued often; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Michigan will still get the license dollars needed for fish and wildlife conservation if most
10 hunters have ~~everyone has~~ to purchase a \$40 combination license tag versus the \$20 single deer
11 license tag; and

12 WHEREAS, according to the 2016 Deer Harvest Survey, only about 13 percent of deer hunters hunt in
13 the Upper Peninsula; and

14 **WHEREAS**, antlerless (doe) tags would then be available to all hunters instead of just a few people
15 getting more than one; and

16 **WHEREAS**, this would help disperse doe harvest more evenly across the landscape and there would be
17 more of an incentive to harvest a doe rather than settle on a small buck; and

18 **WHEREAS**, extra doe tags could be issued ~~after a two-year trial period~~ in areas with high deer numbers
19 or disease; and

20 WHEREAS, the use of doe tags could still be excluded, as it is now, in deer management units closed to
21 antlerless deer hunting which includes most of the Upper Peninsula.

22 ~~WHEREAS, this potential new license structure could eliminate the need for antler point restrictions;~~

23 **NOW**

24 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with the
25 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to simplify and
26 restructure the deer combo license to include one ~~buck~~ **antlered deer** tag and one **antlerless** (doe) tag
27 **for hunters statewide. For those hunters only wishing to hunt in the Upper Peninsula, they would**
28 **have the option of just buying a single deer tag for an antlered deer.**

Background/Problem:

There is concern that something must be done to reduce hunters propensity to harvest one-and-a-half year old bucks. This proposal would only allow hunters to buy the combination tag, which would include one buck tag and one doe tag. There would be an exception for hunters who wish to only hunt in the Upper Peninsula, who could buy just the single buck tag if they wish as there have been very few units open to antlerless harvest.

It is believed that by limiting hunters to only one buck per year, they would restrict themselves into ensuring it is used for older bucks as they would be provided a doe tag as an alternative to a young buck.

In working with the MUCC Wildlife Committee and the writer, the staff has heard many opinions on the impact of these changes: both positive and negative. In looking at the data from the 2016 Deer Harvest Survey, one can find:

- 43 percent of respondents support limiting hunters to one buck (no APRs) and 48 percent oppose. The proposal outlined in the resolution was not tested.
- About 40 percent of the license buyers purchased at least one antlerless license (252,014 people), while nearly 60 percent of license buyers (365,000) purchased the combination license
- Statewide, 44 percent of hunters harvested a deer in 2016. About 20 percent of hunters took an antlerless deer, and 31 percent took an antlered buck in 2016.
- About four percent of hunters harvest two bucks, and only about 12 percent of hunters harvest two deer of either sex.
- Hunters in the UP make up about 13 percent of deer hunters statewide.

In interpreting the data, it could be concluded that a move to this modified one buck rule (requiring the purchase of a combo license with buck and doe tags, except for UP hunters) would affect a significant number of hunters.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution urges MUCC to work with the DNR and NRC to simplify and restructure the deer combo license to include one buck tag and one doe tag.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- We supported the elimination of the archery and firearm specific single tags into a single deer license.
- In 1996, MUCC passed a resolution to create the combination license, urging MUCC to work with DNR to establish a harvest tag system for deer that will allow for the purchase of up to two antlered harvest tags and these tags may be used in bow or firearm season.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Could potentially simplify the license structure.
- This licensing structure could eliminate the need for antler point restrictions.
- This licensing structure could potentially help disperse doe harvest more evenly across the landscape and increase doe harvest as well.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- With 38 percent of hunters purchasing a single deer license in 2017 rather than the combination license, the DNR does not feel it would be an acceptable change to remove the single license from the current license structure.
- May complicate management in areas that antlerless quotas have been low, as it's uncertain what hunters would do with an antlerless tag they don't typically buy. It would make it more difficult for the DNR to determine how many hunters use antlerless tags in a given Deer Management Unit.

DNR RESPONSE #08:

The Department recognizes that it would be possible to move to a structure of a single combination license that includes one antlered tag and one antlerless tag. However, with 38 percent of hunters purchasing a single deer license in 2017 rather than the combination license the Department does not feel it would be an acceptable change to remove the single license from the current license structure. Also, there are several areas in Michigan that are currently closed to antlerless hunting due to low deer numbers. Allowing for anyone who purchases a combination license the ability to harvest an antlerless deer would likely be both socially and biologically unfavorable. The Department looks forward to working collaboratively with MUCC to support regulations and management actions based on the best science available.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee moves to replace the original resolution with the proposed substitute (above) that followed the 3-10-18 Conservation Policy Board meeting. Wildlife discussion occurred on how this resolution will affect deer camps and "up north" businesses that depend on hunter support. Different areas of the state have higher deer densities that may suggest higher harvest. How do you deal with areas that do not offer doe tags? This resolution concept if passed will need to consider all of the state's

different management objectives. Michigan had a one buck system until 1986; other states currently utilize the one buck system with varying results. Can we get hunter buy in to put harvest focus on does rather than yearling bucks to arguably strengthen the deer herd? Wildlife was split almost evenly on this vote, seven support to 7.5 opposed, on the proposed substitute as amended and presented above.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: MUCC Wildlife Committee

NEUTRAL: The Department of Natural Resources

Proposed Resolution #09

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: UP Whitetails of Marquette County
MUCC Region: 1
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **IMPROVING NO NET LOSS OF HUNTING LAND**

Background/Problem:

The current law states that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to keep land under its control open to hunting unless it determined that it should be closed to hunting because (1) public safety; (2) fish or wildlife management concerns; (3) homeland security concerns; or (4) other legal requirements.

The Department is required to manage land under its control to support and promote hunting opportunities to the extent authorized by law, and the DNR is required to manage land under its control to prevent any net decrease in the acreage of such land that is open to hunting.

The “no-net-loss” provision also requires the state to open additional lands to hunting if it closes land currently open to hunting and the current law does not acknowledge where the additional lands must be compensated, such as within the Michigan Hunting and Trapping Zones 1 (all of the Upper Peninsula), 2 (Northern Lower Peninsula), and 3 (Southern Lower Peninsula). These requirements do not apply to private land that qualifies as “commercial forestland” for certain tax incentives.

Public Act 240 of 2012 required the creation of a strategic plan for public land management. The resulting plan is Michigan's Managed Public Land Strategy, created in collaboration with a broad range of partners. The Strategy provides a framework for the continued conservation, use and management of public lands to provide an enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors and ensure the best use of public land.

Currently, a land transaction (acquisition, sale or exchange) is filtered through an internal review at the DNR. Land transactions recommended by the management team are brought forward to the public approximately seven days before a decision by the DNR Director. Public comment may be offered at the Natural Resources Commission meeting, which is typically where the DNR Director announces a decision on the land transactions.

Annually, the DNR submits a report to the Legislature detailing the location and acreage of land under its control (except for commercial forestland) that is closed to hunting during the previous year ending March 1, and the reason for closure, and the location and acreage of land under its control (except for commercial forestland) that it opened to hunting during the previous year to compensate for the land that was closed. Typically, this report only indicates that no land was closed, as the DNR does not include lands that were sold in this report. In a separate report, the DNR does detail the land transactions and their acreage. Both reports for 2017 can be found here:

https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350-79137_84669-448186--,00.html

Resolution Content:

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with the Michigan Legislature, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to continue to ensure that the amount of public land available to hunters does not decrease in the future.
- Should land under the control of the DNR close to hunting, compensation of additional land will be opened within the same region it was closed, to ensure fair opportunities to hunters within the designated regions.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 1998, MUCC approved a resolution that urges the DNR to adopt a policy that current traditional sport activities will continue with any transfer of state lands, or grants to aid the purchase of any lands. If the newly purchased property resides in an area open to trapping, fishing and/or hunting, it shall also be included in the resolution.
- In 1999, MUCC approved a resolution requesting that the DNR hold a public meeting in the area where any state-owned land is proposed for sale and that any revenues from such sale be reinvested to purchase land of equal or greater value to the public trust.
- In 2002, MUCC approved a resolution requesting that MUCC support land exchanges consistent with MDNR policies that consider the following criteria:
 - No significant loss of acreage
 - No significant loss of fair market value
 - No significant loss of recreational value including hunting, fishing and trapping or public access
 - Equal or improved wildlife/fisheries habitat

- Water frontage is received for water frontage
- Consolidates state holdings
- Reduces trespass or access problems
- Land in surplus to MDNR needs
- An exchange is given appropriate public notice, and interested parties are given an opportunity to comment.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Public land is not only about land open to hunting, but there is also a variety of habitat management activity that occurs on public lands. These values should also be considered by region under the "no net loss" law.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- On a regional basis, there are approximately 20 acres of public land per every resident within the Upper Peninsula, 3.77 acres per every resident within the Northern Lower Peninsula and 0.07 acres per every resident within the Southern Lower Peninsula. This information may suggest that we need to buy or open more land to public hunting in the Lower Peninsula rather than the Upper Peninsula.

DNR RESPONSE #09:

The Department fully supports efforts to continue to ensure that the amount of public land available to hunters does not decrease in the future. On a regional basis, there are approximately 20 acres of public land per every resident within the Upper Peninsula, 3.77 acres per every resident within the Northern Lower Peninsula and 0.07 acres per every resident within the Southern Lower Peninsula. In accordance with the Department's Public Land Strategy, newly purchased lands are to be open to hunting unless, by their intended use such as Boating Access Sites or other public facilities, hunting is not a safe and acceptable use.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

Some members supported buying land in the same region as the land was sold where others feel that population density should play a part in where more lands are acquired. Buying where sold helps to secure the very reason so many travel to different areas of the state to enjoy different resources. An argument was made that areas of higher population are in more need of public land to utilize. *They ask that staff help explain the current process in place regarding the buying and selling of state land in staff comments.* No action was brought forward on this discussion. Wildlife Committee supports the resolution unanimously.

Position:

SUPPORT: The Department of Natural Resources, MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #10

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Leonard Shaner, Huron Pointe Sportsmen's Association
MUCC Region: 8
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **CHANGE OPENING DAY OF FIREARM DEER SEASON TO THE SATURDAY CLOSEST TO NOVEMBER 15TH**

Background/Problem:

The problem this resolution is trying to address is the loss of deer hunters and whether a Saturday opening date would help to reduce this loss. This issue has been examined from a variety of different perspectives over time.

There is no uniformity among other hunting and fishing season dates—some open on a particular day of the month (3rd Saturday) or a specific day (November 15th), and some stagger the opening day by region (waterfowl dates).

Resolution Content:

- This resolution asks for a review of the potential benefits of moving opening day of the firearm deer season from November 15 to the Saturday closest to November 15th and if the review is positive, to ask MUCC to support such an initiative.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- MUCC reviewed this issue in 2011, but the proposed resolution failed at the Annual Convention.
- In 2016, MUCC supported a Saturday opener for Spring Turkey in southern Michigan.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- There would be three weekends during the firearm deer season each year.
- There could potentially be more hunters in the field with a Saturday opening day which could also help increase the number of deer taken early in the firearm season and could potentially have a positive impact on the spread of CWD.
- Younger hunters are less tied to the November 15th tradition and may be more open to change.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- The 2016 Deer Harvest Survey posed a question on opening on the closest Saturday and concluded that approximately 36 percent of the respondents favored moving opening day and 56 percent opposed such a change.

DNR RESPONSE #10:

Firearm deer hunting season currently begins on November 15 annually and closes on November 30. Because opening day may fall on any day of the week, some people assume that more hunters would participate if the season opener was on a Saturday. The Department's data does not support this assumption.

We asked deer hunters in 2006, 2009, and 2016, whether they wanted to change the opening date of the regular firearm season. These assessments have shown that the traditional November 15 opening date has consistently been the preferred choice. For example, most deer hunters (85 percent) in 2016 supported maintaining the November 15 opening date. In contrast, only 10 percent of deer hunters opposed maintaining this date.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee discussed that we already have the youth season which gives youth their own time and a dedicated weekend. There was concern of consideration to those who travel a good distance to hunting camp and the benefit of opening on a Saturday to that cause. No scientific data is known to any effect this may have on the resource. There was also concern with the rut typically in full swing early November. Other concerns were raised about the impact on other user groups this could have such as hounds men, small game hunters, archers, bird hunters etc. Reference made to Michigan history on this subject. Wildlife opposes.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: The Department of Natural Resources, MUCC Wildlife Committee

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #11

Submitted by: Greg Peter, MUCC At Large Director
MUCC Region: 8
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE MOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Background/Problem:

The DNR has created comprehensive management plans targeting various species including bear, elk, wolf and deer. Several states, including those located in the upper Midwest and the northeastern United States, have a comprehensive moose management plan.

The Michigan Moose Advisory Council was established and tasked by Public Act 366 of 2010 with the development of a comprehensive moose management plan and their report of September 2011 made recommendations for the establishment of a plan along the guidelines of the North American Model of Wildlife Management. The Council's White Paper of February 2011 outlined a management plan contingent upon many factors impacting the sustainability of the species population.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that MUCC encourage the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to create a comprehensive moose management plan understanding the need for an increased commitment of funds and personnel to work to ensure a vibrant, sustainable moose population supporting hunting as a management tool understanding the many complicating factors in consideration.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- MUCC supported the bill that created the Moose Advisory Council and supported their recommendations.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- The Michigan Moose Advisory Council was established and tasked by Public Act 366 of 2010 with the development of a comprehensive moose management plan, and their report of September 2011 made recommendations for the establishment of a plan along the guidelines of the North American Model of Wildlife Management.
- The limiting factor for moose management is thermal refugia in the summer, such as wetlands and mature hemlock forests. There is little active management associated with these habitats.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- Land ownership presents challenges, as 87% of the western core moose range is privately owned, with about 54% owned by commercial forest and 33% by private nonindustrial.
- The creation of a moose plan will require additional commitments by staff for habitat management (much of which is already being done) and health monitoring, and take away from existing management priorities, including CWD management.

DNR RESPONSE #11:

The Department recognizes that the limiting factor for moose management is thermal refugia in the summer, such as wetlands and mature hemlock forests. There is little active management associated with these habitats. Additionally, land ownership presents challenges, as 87% of the western core moose range is privately owned, with about 54% owned by commercial forest and 33% by private nonindustrial. Moose in Michigan have otherwise similar needs as deer, and the Department is committed to maintaining and improving high-quality forest stands that will benefit both moose and deer. The Department is also committed to surveying moose populations in the western core area every two years to estimate abundance and population dynamics. The creation of a moose plan will require additional commitments by staff for habitat management (much of which is already being done) and health monitoring, and take away from existing management priorities, including CWD management.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

Noted that they supported the amendment made at the December Conservation Policy Board and support the resolution unanimously.

Position:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #12

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Charles Felcyn, Paw Paw Conservation Club
MUCC Region: 7
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **CENTER FIRE CHANGES TO MICHIGAN'S LIMITED FIREARM ZONE**

Background/Problem:

Historic caliber and case length restrictions for the limited firearm deer zone (formerly the shotgun zone) were relaxed in 2014 and just reauthorized in 2017 to allow many straight-walled cartridges in the limited firearm deer zone for firearm deer hunting. Large caliber rifles are currently used in Zone 3 for species other than deer. Unifying the caliber and case requirements for all zones would conform with a desire to simplify regulations. With the addition of new calibers and firearms in the limited firearm deer zone, Michigan continues to have one of the nation's leading records for safety.

Deer hunting regulations may be updated this summer in response to Chronic Wasting Disease; however, the standard deer regulations cycle would not come up again until 2020.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution urges MUCC to work with the DNR and NRC to change Michigan's limited firearm deer zone to have the same firearm restrictions and regulations as the rest of Michigan.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 2010, MUCC passed a resolution requesting that MUCC urge the NRC to change the law regulating the Shotgun zone to allow use of Rifles using straight walled pistol cartridges and to allow the use of Single Shot Rifles that are chambered for Black Powder cartridges loaded with cast lead non-jacketed bullets between 38 and 46 calibers, some examples being 38-55, 40-65 and 45-70.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Unifying the caliber and case requirements for all parts of the state would conform with a desire to simplify regulations.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- Restrictions in the limited firearm deer zone are intended to protect the public during the firearm season by preventing the use of rifles in the field as well as in areas with high population densities. There is a safety concern that inexperienced hunters may use these rifles without proper training and may take inappropriate shots at game, causing stray bullets near more populated areas.

DNR RESPONSE #12:

In June 2014, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) established the limited firearm deer zone and approved the use of certain centerfire rifles with a straight-walled cartridge and certain air rifles to take deer in the limited firearm deer zone with a three-year sunset. In May 2017, the NRC reauthorized this regulation and removed the sunset entirely. Restrictions in the limited firearm deer zone are intended to protect the public during the firearm season by preventing the use of rifles in the field as well as in areas with high population densities. There is a safety concern that inexperienced hunters may use these rifles without proper training and may take inappropriate shots at game, causing stray bullets near more populated areas. The Law Enforcement Division will not support if the intent is to remove the limited firearm deer zone.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee noted that deer regulation review is not opened back up until 2020 with DNR and NRC. Indiana has currently gone to this with assumed success. Concern was brought about areas

specifically of flat ground such as the east side of the state and thumb area, but no action was taken. There was discussion that a .243 makes a great youth firearm, this was followed with the ability of a .44 magnum to also be a great youth firearm and one that is currently allowed in the limited firearms area, but no action was taken. There was also discussion about technology always improving and ranges expanding of equipment. Wildlife opposes.

Positions:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: DNR Law Enforcement Division, MUCC Wildlife Committee

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #13

Submitted by: David Van Lopik, Sport Shooting Committee Chair
MUCC Region: 7
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: FIREARMS EDUCATION AND SAFETY

Background/Problem:

Many public schools do not have a firearms safety program or hunter education safety programs available, and most do not do not allow firearms or conservation clubs to hold extracurricular classes in firearms safety or hunter safety at their facilities. Many public schools do not allow any advertisements, flyers, posters or other information about firearms safety programs or hunter safety programs on public school property. It has been proven that classes and programs in firearms safety and hunter education safety have reduced, and, in some cases, eliminated firearms-related hunting deaths.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that MUCC work with the State Department of Education, Intermediate School Districts (ISD's), and local school districts to provide access to promoting, advertising and providing information about firearm safety classes and hunter education classes at local, regional and state facilities and other range facilities open to the public.
- It would also request that MUCC work with the State Department of Education, Intermediate School Districts (ISD's) and local school districts to ensure each student has the opportunity to attend a firearms safety course within the public school system, or on the public school grounds or alternate non-profit facility or sportsmen's club.
- Additionally, the resolution would ask that MUCC work with the State Legislature and Department of Education to ensure the above goals of providing each student an opportunity to access a firearms safety or hunter education safety class.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- Most recently, in 2013 MUCC approved two resolutions in support of the Second Amendment and firearms education:
 - **AC120613: CONSTITUTIONAL FIREARM RIGHTS.** Educate state and federal legislators, public officials and the general public about the constitutional rights of Michigan citizens in regards' to all firearms, accessories and ammunition; and take any necessary action to prevent any encroachment of these rights at the state or federal level, by any new legislation, executive orders or other methods not enumerated above.
 - **AC130613: 2ND AMENDMENT RESOLUTION.** Educate the public on the importance of the 2nd Amendment and its importance to funding conservation in Michigan; and work with the legislature and administration to advance thoughtful firearm policy in this state to conserve, protect, and enhance the rights of lawful individuals.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- It has been proven that classes and programs in firearms safety and hunter education safety have reduced, and, in some cases, eliminated firearms-related hunting deaths.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- There may be concern from some schools, teachers and parents about any mention of firearms in schools.

DNR RESPONSE #13:

The Department supports hunter education and firearm safety statewide and recognizes the value in training youth in safe and responsible hunting. The Department gets federal grant money to administer the hunter education program and state-managed ranges. Currently, hunter education is offered in three different delivery methods across the state at sportsman's clubs, public and private facilities, and other non-profit organizations. Should MUCC be able to work with the Department of Education and the State Legislature to implement a hunter education program in the school systems of this state, the Department would support the program within the scope of the hunter education federal grant agreement.

Position:

SUPPORT: The Department of Natural Resources

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #14
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Tim Dusterwinkle, Michigan Bear Hunters Association
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **BOBCAT LICENSE**

Background/Problem:

Under current law, a bobcat may be harvested legally on a fur harvester license (\$15), provided that a free bobcat tag has been obtained before the start of the trapping season. Previously, the free bobcat tag was available at any time during the open trapping or hunting season for bobcats. The bobcat bag limit is two. However, only one of those may come from the Lower Peninsula. It is estimated that approximately 50 bobcats are taken on the second tag each year.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would establish a stand-alone bobcat license and decouple harvest of bobcats from the fur harvester license.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- There is growing interest in the pursuit of bobcats, including by hunters with commercial guides, which may be impacting the populations in some areas.
- A stand-alone license would recognize the bobcat as the premier game species that it is.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- There is concern that this would raise the cost of pursuing bobcats by hunters or trappers.
- Depending on the price, annual revenue would likely be less than \$100,000, or an increase of 0.1% of the Game and Fish Fund annual appropriation (\$75,210,400).

DNR RESPONSE #14:

The Department is neutral on the issue of a “standalone” bobcat license. While the current licensing structure for bobcats is effective and allows for appropriate management of bobcats in Michigan,

bobcats could also be managed effectively with a standalone license. There is no Departmental need for such a license but if desired by stakeholders, would not hinder bobcat management efforts.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

Concern was presented about the guiding business utilizing the bobcat with concern that there should be a dedicated license to do so. Wildlife opposes.

Positions:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: MUCC Wildlife Committee

NEUTRAL: The Department of Natural Resources

Proposed Resolution #15

Submitted by: Paul Rose, MUCC Past-President
MUCC Region: 4
Passed: December 9, 2017 Conservation Policy Meeting
Title: **MICHIGAN ARCTIC GRAYLING STOCKING INITIATIVE RESOLUTION**

Background/Problem:

Native Arctic Grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) were believed to have been extirpated in Michigan in the 1930s, and the extirpation of Arctic Grayling is believed to have occurred due to the degradation of habitat and unsustainable harvest. All prior attempts to plant Arctic Grayling in Michigan have been unsuccessful, and Michigan now enjoys a restored trout fishery which is among the most highly regarded in the nation.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has announced an Arctic Grayling stocking initiative which lacks a clear public or stakeholder engagement process for the selection of water bodies and watersheds for planting. The decline of Arctic Grayling in other states could potentially result in a changed legal status of the species such as listing under the Endangered Species Act, and many of Michigan's watersheds continue to undergo fisheries habitat restoration which could be impacted by the presence of a species which may become subject to federal protections elsewhere.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would request that MUCC and its partners work with the MDNR to assure that introduction of Arctic Grayling to Michigan rivers and streams will only be done if the following conditions are met:

- The management of Michigan’s existing fisheries will not be affected by a change of legal status of Arctic Grayling such as designation as “threatened” or “endangered” under the terms of the Endangered Species Act elsewhere in the United States
- The planting of Arctic Grayling will only occur in those water bodies and watersheds where support exists from stakeholder groups and a surveyed majority of responding anglers who use areas proposed for stocking, and
- If the funding for an Arctic Grayling planting program is confirmed to be sustainable and will not undermine existing fisheries programs or staffing requirements in Michigan.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- There is concern about the significant costs of reintroducing an extirpated species, particularly because prior efforts failed. While the DNR claims that this initiative is externally funded, there is a significant level of Fisheries staff time (funded by license dollars) that has been devoted already to working on the research needed for this initiative that could be used for other existing and long-term priorities.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- The resolution recommends that reintroduction occur only if support exists from a majority of surveyed anglers who use the proposed areas. The Department would argue that turning resource management into a popularity contest goes against sound scientific management principles and collaborative decision making.

DNR RESPONSE #15:

The Department opposes. This resolution states that the Arctic Grayling Initiative lacks a clear process for stream selection and introduction and ties the decision of Arctic Grayling introduction to three conditions. While the Department welcomes the opportunity to work with MUCC and other partners on this initiative, the Department cannot support the resolution as written. Since the formation of the Arctic Grayling Foundational Partnership in the fall of 2016, the DNR has worked diligently to create a highly transparent process and open forum for discussion on this effort. As a result, it is difficult to recall an initiative that garnered more support and interest than this, with more than 45 agencies, universities, Non-government Organizations, communities, and corporations now involved. The Arctic Grayling Action Plan was developed collaboratively by these partners, including a representative of MUCC. The plan outlines four Focus Areas (Research, Fish Production, Management, and Outreach) that ensure all critical issues are identified and resolved before introduction.

Working together, the partners developed rigorous criteria for stream evaluation and selection, and a grant of \$117,000 covered the initial cost of stream evaluation. An additional \$190,000 has been secured from grants and gifts for research on knowledge gaps for competition and predation, and outreach activities to foundations. Additional grant monies are currently being solicited which, when secured, will be spent on evaluating other potential streams, purchasing needed equipment, and implementing the Action Plan. A funding strategy is in place, with a goal of raising \$1.1 million to finance the cost of this Initiative. It is important to point out that this is not intended to be a large-scale fish rearing and stocking effort such as currently exists with the Department's brown trout, brook trout, and rainbow trout rearing program.

The resolution recommends that reintroduction occur only if support exists from a majority of surveyed anglers who use the proposed areas. The Department would argue that turning resource management into a popularity contest goes against sound scientific management principles and collaborative decision making. Instead, it is the Department's goal to educate Michigan citizens on this effort, cooperate with its partners, and arrive at decisions for Arctic Grayling reintroduction that are supported by the partnership, anglers, and Michigan communities.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: The Department of Natural Resources

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #16

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Tim Dusterwinkle, Michigan Bear Hunters Association
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **PROTECTING LIVESTOCK FROM BEAR DEPREDATION**

Background/Problem:

Owners of livestock have the ability to kill an animal that is chasing, attacking, injuring or killing their livestock. Privately-owned captive cervids (deer and elk) are considered livestock. Bears are natural predators of fawns, so they are attracted to cervid operations. Bears are primarily attracted to cervid operations due to year-round feeding practices. Electric fences have been found to be an effective deterrent of bears.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution would require the use of an electric barrier fence to deter bears which have been killed by private captive cervid owners out of concern for their livestock (deer or elk).

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- MUCC doesn't have anything directly on bear deterrent, but MUCC supports establishing double fencing to reduce opportunities for disease transmission through the fence to free-ranging, wild deer.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- There are a variety of reasons to favor additional fencing requirements and standards for privately-owned cervidae operations (POCs).

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- High cost of implementation for POC's.
- Electric fences are not always effective at deterring bears or other species. Bears have been known to easily go through electric fences without being deterred, and other species such as wolves and coyotes are able to dig under or jump over the fence

DNR RESPONSE #16:

The Department strives to help minimize conflicts between bears and people. The Department is unaware that bears are an ongoing problem for privately owned cervid (POC) facilities. Requiring electric fences for POC facilities to deter bears and other species would be a high cost due to the size of many facilities, and it would require maintenance due to heavy vegetation/tree limbs that surround the facilities. Electric fences are not always effective at deterring bears or other species. Bears have been known to easily go through electric fences without being deterred and other species such as wolves and coyotes are able to dig under or jump over the fence. The Department will work with POC facilities to provide technical assistance on lethal and non-lethal methods to help prevent or minimize negative bear interactions.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee raised questions to see if there has been any documentation of bear issues within captive cervid facilities and if so then to what extent. Discussion also occurred on the ability of an electric fence to this job efficiently. However, comments were made that this lines up with many MUCC policies trying to protect wildlife from the captive cervid industry issues such as disease, etc., on that basis alone this resolution should be considered. Wildlife supports the resolution as written.

Positions:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL: The Department of Natural Resources

Proposed Resolution #17

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: MUCC Parks, Recreation and Trails Committee
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **ORV USE IN THE STATE FOREST**

Background/Problem:

The state's forest resources economy contributes tens of billions of dollars each year to Michigan's economy. That large figure is due, in part, to the state's dual-certified state forest system, which allows timber and wood products derived from Michigan State Forests to have a unique market advantage as more and more companies and their customers demand certified wood and paper. Forest certification requires sustainable harvest plans and provides important considerations for environmental concerns and balancing recreational use in the state forest.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution calls for the development of a report that describes observed changes in enforcement, environmental damage, and accidents as a result of newly opened ORV activity as a result of PA 288.
- Additionally, the resolution calls for a freeze on expansion roads opened pursuant to PA 288 until the report has been completed and forest certification remediation steps have been funded and acted upon.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 1994, MUCC passed a resolution requesting that MUCC continue their support of the responsible use of four-wheel drive vehicles, ORVs and ATVs and be it further resolved that MUCC is not in support of a ban on ORVs and ARVs in Michigan through their endorsement of a "closed unless posted open policy."
- In 1994, MUCC reaffirmed its position to support a statewide system of designated trails, routes and scramble areas for ORVs to curb environmental damage and user conflicts. Further, all ORV funds be used strictly for ORV programs and administration and that ORV fees be set at an

appropriate level to support cost of program. ORV advisory committee continues in its present form with oversight and input on the ORV program and the ORV enforcement citation and accident data be aggregated and analyzed.

- In 1998, MUCC passed a resolution supporting the recommendations of two ORV task force study groups and discontinue attempts to secure a "closed unless posted open" policy for state-owned lands in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- There would be an available annual public report that provides data on ORV damage, enforcement activity and accidents in the state forest.
- This could prohibit the expansion of forest roads open to ORV use until the ORV report is posted for public review and evaluated related to the DNR's compliance with forest certification criteria and the ability for adequate funding to mitigate resource damage caused by ORV's.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- Lack of funding.

DNR RESPONSE #17:

Forest certification requires the DNR to track and remediate ORV damage on state forest lands. Therefore, the DNR maintains a database of ORV damage sites that is used each year to prioritize areas for remediation efforts. Off-road vehicle restriction grants from ORV licenses and trail permits are utilized each year to address damage areas, but the funding is inadequate to remediate all identified sites.

Positions:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL: The Department of Natural Resources

Proposed Resolution #18

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Sam Morello, Michigan Bow Hunters Association

MUCC Region: 9

Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting

Title: **PRIMITIVE ARCHERY SEASON EXTENSION FROM ONE DAY AFTER THE LIBERTY HUNT THROUGH JANUARY 31ST**

Background/Problem:

Archery hunting today is virtually unrecognizable from its rapid growth in popularity that began in the 1970s. Advancements in technology and hunting method have changed the nature of our archery seasons. These advancements have been largely successful in drawing more individuals to participate and to extend their participation through the long archery deer season.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution proposes adding a primitive archery hunting season that would begin in mid-September and extend through the month of January, essentially creating a 6-week primitive archery season immediately prior to and following the regular archery season which begins on October 1 and runs through January 1st.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- This hunting method and weapons can be used in more urban areas to control deer due to their limited range.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- Recently, we have been aware of growing interest in providing more specific opportunity for traditional equipment; not only for archery, but in the muzzleloading seasons as well. One point of concern is that the traditional archery season would coincide with the beginning of small game season. Small game hunting has declined precipitously over the last 20 years, while there are many reasons for this decline, one frequently identified issue is competition in the woods with other hunters – primarily archery deer hunters. The number of primitive archery deer hunters is probably low enough, however, to mitigate any such concerns.

DNR RESPONSE #18:

The Department recognizes the value of archery hunting in Michigan and fully supports the current season structure and allowances within that season. However, the Department also recognizes the desire by hunters to keep season type, length, and structure as minimal and simplistic as possible. One of the main complaints we receive from hunters is the complexity of Michigan's deer season currently. Since primitive archery hunters can utilize the current archery season structure and there is a strong

desire to keep seasons and regulations simplified, the Department does not feel an additional season and dates are necessary at this time.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee raised some concerns from the hounds men groups who suggested to split the current archery season, but no action was taken. Concern was voiced about splitting the archery group, but no action was taken. Concern was voiced about continuing through 1-31 in the UP. The Wildlife Committee offered the following amendment was supported by the Committee:

Line 15: Amend: Add to the end of the sentence the words **“WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE UPPER PENINSULA, WHERE THE SEASON WOULD CLOSE ON JANUARY 1.”**

The Wildlife Committee supports the resolution with the above amendment.

Positions:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee with the above amendment

OPPOSITION: The Department of Natural Resources

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #19

Submitted by: MUCC Parks, Recreation and Trails Committee
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **ESTABLISH DESIGNATED WATER TRAILS PROGRAM**

Background/Problem:

Interest in the development of water trails in Michigan has grown significantly in recent years. The DNR has undertaken a planning effort to better standardize and define criteria for water trails and associated facilities.

Resolution Content:

- The resolution calls upon MUCC to urge finalization of that draft plan.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Water trails provide a great opportunity to attract tourists, promote healthy lifestyles and grow local and regional economies.

- Establishing a water trails program is provided through PA 451 of 1994.
- Recommended in the Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Department of Natural Resources Managed Public Land Strategy and the Michigan Parks and Recreation Division Strategy.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- None

DNR RESPONSE #19:

Water trails program development is an identified action in the adopted trail plan. To date the following action has occurred:

- Completed a plan to create criteria to designate water trails.
- Collaborated with the Office of Great Lakes and our trail staff to develop an outline of a water trail program. This includes benchmarking with other states.
- Currently there is no designated funding for a program. However, we do have use of a half-time person in partnership with OGL.

Once the program plan options are complete, a budget target will be established, and funding options considered. This should be completed by July 2018.

Positions:

SUPPORT: The Department of Natural Resources

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #20

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Daniel L. McMaster, Shiawassee Conservation Association
MUCC Region: 6
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **WANTON AND WASTE LAW PERTAINING TO WHITETAIL DEER**

Background/Problem:

Research conducted by the Michigan Wildlife Council demonstrates that public support for hunting is highest when the public knows or believes that harvested game will be consumed.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution concerns the retrieval of deer to ensure utilization of protein and of proper carcass disposal.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- The resolution may contribute to increasing public support for hunting by requiring that a reasonable attempt to recover the main meat portions of the animal.
- Further, it may assist in controlling a possible vector for transmitting disease by not allowing haphazard carcass disposal.
- There is a precedent for laws such as these – several other states have adopted wanton waste laws and federal law currently requires reasonable attempts to recover waterfowl.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- None

DNR RESPONSE #20:

The Department supports working with MUCC, other stakeholders, the public, the legislature, and the NRC to develop CWD regulation recommendations over the next six months. The Department acknowledges that deer carcasses left on the ground and not properly disposed of may be a vector for the spread of CWD. Current law states that a person shall not kill or wound any game animal without making a reasonable attempt to retrieve the animal and include it in their daily limit. The Department would support a Wanton and Waste Law but recommends adding all game species.

MUCC Wildlife Committee:

The Wildlife Committee raised concerns to incorporate penalties into this resolution; consensus was to add this portion later or as this evolves. No action was taken. Heavy concern was shared about bear waste. Discussion ensued as to how you determine reasonable effort and what constitutes waste, suggestion was made to study other states laws that currently have this in place. Resolution format needs to include an explanation of the abbreviations used in the resolution. Concern was also offered to expand to all wildlife. The Wildlife Committee offered the following amendment:

Add at the end, **“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT MUCC LOOK AT WANTON WASTE REGULATIONS AND PENALTIES TO COVER OTHER WILD GAME SPECIES.”**

The Wildlife Committee supports the amendment unanimously.

Positions:

SUPPORT: The Department of Natural Resources, MUCC Wildlife Committee supports unanimously with the offered amendment

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #21

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Tim Muir, Lake St. Clair Walleye Association

MUCC Region: 8

Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting

Title: **WORK WITH THE DNR TO EXPAND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE DETROIT RIVER AND LAKE ST. CLAIR BY CONSTRUCTING A PUBLIC BOATING ACCESS SITE ON BELLE ISLE.**

Background/Problem:

Providing additional recreational access to world-class fisheries in southeast Michigan has been identified in previous resolutions as a high priority for MUCC's members.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution puts a finer point on those prior resolutions by specifically calling for a launch facility on Belle Isle that is capable of supporting tournament fishing.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- In 2013, MUCC passed a resolution requesting that MUCC Support the State of Michigan assisting financially in the rebuilding of Belle Isle provided that the lease or sale agreement is long-term and any public investment is tied to keeping Belle Isle open to the general public for recreation rather than private development.
- In 2015, MUCC passed a resolution requesting that MUCC encourage and support the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Belle Isle Conservancy, and Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee with the initiation of enhancements that will draw people from around the state and outside the state to the island, including operating or contracting with a third-party operator to offer the following on and around Belle Isle Park: ice skating on the canals, canoeing on the canals, new and improved public boat launches, campgrounds, and other recreational opportunities.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Building launch facilities to that high standard will ensure that these launches can support not only tournament anglers but will also ensure that these facilities will be able to accommodate the high demand for a launch at that point in the Detroit River.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- None

DNR RESPONSE #21:

Reviewing enhanced options to access the Detroit River is underway. A BAS study has been funded with waterway funds to assess current and future options to access the Detroit River including Belle Isle. The study is reviewing all potential public access options. The study should be completed by June 2018.

Positions:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #22

Submitted by: MUCC Parks, Recreation, and Trails Committee

Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting

Title: **ESTABLISH WORK ORDERS TO REQUIRE PARKS TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER DIVISIONS ON HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

Background/Problem:

Co-management relationships between land managing divisions in the MI DNR are designed to ensure that a broad array of values are represented across the different types of land managed by DNR. Wildlife Division (WLD) and Forest Resources Division (FRD) have done an admirable job at co-managing our state forest system to ensure a stable supply of timber for market and aligning that supply with the need to create and maintain excellent wildlife habitats. We have fewer successes to identify in the co-management relationship between Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) and FRD and WLD. Many recreation areas are managed by PRD but have a primary focus of supporting wildlife-dependent recreation. A more complete realization of this co-management concept for PRD with WLD and FRD is long overdue.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution brings greater attention for the need to manage recreation areas in particular, and parks, where appropriate to reflect more of the wildlife and habitat values that could be brought to the forefront in those properties.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Cooperative management by all divisions would best serve the habitat management for the wildlife.
- Brings greater attention for the need to manage recreation areas in particular and parks where appropriate to reflect more of the wildlife and habitat.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- None

DNR RESPONSE #22:

The Parks and Recreation Division has a long-standing collaborative relationship with the Wildlife Division to maintain and enhance appropriate habitat throughout the system. Over 90% of the Parks and Recreation system is open to hunting activities. Parks and Recreation funds a robust stewardship staff that has transformed many areas of land to enhance habitats, for example, the enhanced pheasant habitat at Lake Hudson State Park.

The Parks and Recreation Division has updated over 37 State Park and Recreation Area management plans. Each has evaluated with Wildlife Division, Forestry and Fisheries to enhance where appropriate, current and future wildlife habitats.

Positions:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee supports unanimously

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #23

Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Michigan Resource Stewards
Passed: March 10, 2018 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **RESOLUTION ON THE VALUE OF PUBLIC LAND**

Background/Problem:

The public lands debate over the last few years has yielded a number of important insights. Chief among them is that the value of public lands, not only economic terms, but cultural and social terms, is not well understood and no serious effort to document those benefits has been undertaken. MUCC has been a leader in advocating for the adoption of the Managed Public Lands Strategy and for arguing in favor of policies that protect and enhance our public land resources.

Resolution Content:

- This resolution calls attention to a need to better understand and articulate the many benefits of Michigan's public land resources so that future conversations and debates about our public lands can be informed by this vital information.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

- None specifically, however MUCC has been supportive of public lands and access throughout our history.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Public land benefits Michigan's economy through our estimated \$22 billion annual return from tourism, \$20 billion from forest products on DNR-administered land and \$5 billion from hunting and fishing.
- The economic benefits and jobs created thanks our public lands are not very thoroughly studied and not always given appropriate recognition.
- The DNR is working with MSU and others to study the value of and value added to Michigan's economy by public land. Such studies are important in documenting the importance of public land in economic terms and helping the public and policy makers understand the importance of public land to Michigan's citizens and our economy.
- Loss or diminishment of our public land base would lead to irreparable damage to the quality of life enjoyed in Michigan and to our economy.

Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:

- None

DNR RESPONSE #23:

The Department would like to acknowledge the advocacy for public lands and the values that our shared and common heritage brings to Michigan residents and visitors alike. Gathering information on the breadth of economic impacts from public lands and outdoor recreation is a difficult endeavor, but the Department is making attempts to gather and quantify those economic impacts.

We applaud the efforts by MUCC, MSU and others to provide information on the economic impacts of outdoor recreation. This includes public lands, hunting, fishing and trapping, and we at DNR look forward to reviewing this information. It will be useful in quantifying the economic benefits of outdoor recreation and public lands.

DNR recently concluded its development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and was pleased to have an MUCC representative on its External Advisory Committee. A specific thank you to Chuck Hoover for his participation. This Committee helped guide direction of the SCORP, and helped revise objectives. Resolution J touches upon many of the objectives and key actions in the SCORP:

1. Foster Stewardship and Conservation: Natural and cultural resources are protected and residents and visitors are effective stewards of those resources.
2. Improve Collaboration: Outdoor recreation stakeholders collaborate and cooperate to ensure that Michigan's recreation system meets the needs of residents and visitors.
3. Raise Awareness: Residents and visitors are aware of the variety of outdoor recreation opportunities in MI and have access to relevant information to connect with these opportunities.
4. Improve Recreational Access: Recreation opportunities are connected and accessible to residents and visitors of all backgrounds, abilities, means, and geographic locations.
5. Provide Quality Experiences: Michigan's outdoor recreation system provides users with quality experiences in balance with resource management and conservation.
6. Enhance Health Benefits: Outdoor recreation increases physical activity and the health of Michigan's residents and visitors.
7. Enhance Prosperity: Outdoor recreation advances economic prosperity and supports a high quality of life as well as talent attraction and retention in Michigan's communities.

Within the Objective 7 to Enhance Prosperity are the following key actions:

- *Quantify and promote the economic impact of public lands, regionally and statewide. Support ongoing, updated research on the role of outdoor recreation in promoting economic prosperity, including information on how and which recreation investments provide high social and economic returns for the state, including attracting and retaining talent and providing a high quality of life.*

For the first time, DNR utilized the SCORP public survey instrument to ask for baseline economic information associated with outdoor recreation activities. A telephone survey asked respondents questions about 34 activities. Specifically, they were asked if they participated in the activity in the

previous 12 months, and, for the first time, how many days did they participate in the activity. This provides DNR with the baseline to conduct economic analyses on economic impact. We did not ask about participation on public lands. However, we may be able to make some assumptions from the data.

We would like to share some of the results with you on participation days:

Non-Motorized Trails	888,177,402
Motorized Trails	66,911,895
Parks and Camping Activities	314,106,053
Wildlife- and Fish-Related Activities	249,494,292
Boating-Related Activities	110,157,504

More information on the SCORP results may be found on the DNR Grants Section page within the 2018-2022 SCORP Plan.

We have done some preliminary scoping of what might be done to turn this information into an economic study and have found that the estimated cost for such work would be between \$80,000 to \$120,000.

Finally, we should also add that the most recent NRC meeting, Vicki Pontz announced that an Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council will be created to recognize the importance of outdoor recreation as a significant economic sector in Michigan. This will be patterned after the successful Timber Advisory Council. NRC Commissioner Chris Tracy will chair the council, which will recommend collaborative strategies to support, expand and grow outdoor recreation businesses and opportunities in Michigan.

Positions:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee supports unanimously

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL: