

Michigan Wildlife Council

MINUTES October 18, 2016

A regular meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council was held Tuesday, October 18, 2016 at Jay's Sporting Goods, 8800 South Clare Avenue, Clare, Michigan 48617.

Present for the Michigan Wildlife Council

Merisa Campbell
Jim Hammill
Matt Pedigo
Kristin Phillips
Jeff Poet
Carol Rose
Ed Roy
Henry Stancato
Randy Stec

Call to Order

Chairperson **Pedigo** called the meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) to order at 9:01 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

Chairperson **Pedigo** reviewed the agenda. **Rose** made a motion that the agenda be approved. **Poet** seconded the motion and the agenda was approved by unanimous vote (9-0).

Güd Marketing Presentation

Emmie Musser, media director for Güd Marketing, presented media plans for Year 2, Flight 2 (January 2017 to June 5, 2017). The core geography and strategy will remain the foundation on which the campaign will continue to build. The "attract and inform" messages cannot be abandoned when people are first beginning to accept the message. The campaign will have an upward momentum beginning in January and will increase in April and continue through the summer months. **Hammill** stated that attitudes about hunters are formed this time of year and it's a great time to see messages about the value that hunters and fishermen play in Michigan. **Musser** stated that this is our foundation year and our focus is connecting with conservation efforts right now. We are being intentional to make sure we do not draw negative comments. Moving forward into next year we will increase market presence to discuss these things. We also need to evaluate the information from the baseline survey. For every one negative story, we need ten positive stories, which we are doing right now.

Roy asked if the baseline survey will show us the value of where the dollars are being spent. **Jill Holden**, strategic planning director from Güd Marketing, stated the baseline survey will not show which media choices affected which measures, but it will show the percentage of increase of understanding of particular messages. It will help to show the impact of the campaign but will not break down by media format. **Holden** advised they are tracking all media metrics and can pair and overlay the data.

Recommend to continue outdoor advertising along major corridors and we are asking for value added (free ads) is side street locations. A smaller amount of people will see them but 40 percent will drive past them every single day and we can put more information such as the broad message of how hunters help manage and protect wildlife and wildlife management.

Recommend mix of broadcast TV (Live, DVR Proof programming), cable, and public broadcast TV.

Recommend long form stories, such as the comeback of turkeys in Michigan.

Recommend continuing Pandora with 30 second video messages and we also want to offer video streaming with incentives – if you listen to the long form video you get the next hour of listening ad free.

Recommend content marketing in the following formats: TV – interviews; News – add partner in Grand Rapids 8 West and Fox 17 which will run a custom series for the MWC; continue with Detroit News and Detroit Free Press; digital video content; Facebook; Instagram; digital – moving everything to mobile and personalizing the digital experience – they will be served twice and then it will become interactive – touch and learn, place in gaming apps.

Recommend aligning advocates (Drew YoungDyke and Mike Avery) for paid media.

A discussion between the council and GÜD Marketing took place whether we should have a little more effort and money to help engage the sportsmen and women. GÜD advised that we can customize messaging as these groups become a key audience but we need to determine if this is the right time and level to do it. **Rose** stated MUCC still has access to three to five minutes within the weekly TV program that they do not use often but maybe we could encourage them to use that spot. **Holden** stated it's good to discuss but reiterated our goal is to talk to our core audience. If the council feels we need to dedicate resources to talk to our key stakeholders it requires us to take and move funds away from our core objective. **Poet** said we need to time the message to sportsmen when our campaign starts to go in that direction but he is not sure that now is the time but at some point it will be important. **Hammill** stated Gretzinger has shown interest in running the work of the MWC on his show. **Holden** stated they have already done some legwork to develop a plan to reach sportsmen but is concerned with dedicating funds if it does not contribute to the immediate campaign. **Roy** stated that all of this is running cross grain to what the experts are telling us, that we need to stay the course. He would hate to see what momentum has been gained be counter turned by targeting sportsmen. Additional conversation ensued with GÜD Marketing suggesting that two percent of the investment be targeted to sportsmen. **Rose** stated the value add opportunity that MUCC has may be the opportunity to align advocates without spending any money. Gretzinger does 52 shows per year. **Holden** commented that we have been discussing two goals, one is funding and the second is to make sure that sportsmen and women are comfortable with the campaign. We see that as separate that can be carried by partners. **Phillips** wanted to make sure the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is on the list for partners. The agency has specific messaging through these channels.

Hammill asked how the DNR feels about the prospects of a new license package. **Phillips** responded that there has been legislation put forward to remove the sunset and three other bills have been introduced about electronic licenses which also include removing the sunset.

Musser gave a summary of overall investments regarding the foundational plan: New TV spots, outdoor boards, radio spot, video content, content articles and additional website content to include hunting wildlife management; and paid social media. The goals are a reach of 80 percent with a frequency of five times. The supplemental plan would give a stronger foundation moving into year three with an escalating presence. The supplemental plan proposes goals of 93 percent reach and nine times frequency.

Stancato asked Phillips if we have received any feedback or pushback from the legislature regarding the fact that we have not spent all of the money. **Phillips** responded no, and that the question came from central purchasing as to why we had a fund balance. She explained that the reason there is a fund balance is because there was a lapse in time from the beginning of the license year to when the council was given authority to spend the money. **Stancato** stated we should not spend just to spend but rather to optimize for later phases.

Poet made a motion to adopt document three of the supplemental plan in the amount of \$761,000. **Campbell** seconded the motion and the motion was approved by unanimous vote (9-0).

Pedigo suggested a committee be formed to make recommendations to the council regarding a promotional campaign towards sportsmen and volunteered to be on the committee. Hammill, Phillips and Stancato also volunteered.

Roy made a motion to form a committee consisting of Hammill, Stancato, Phillips and Pedigo to be tasked with evaluating a promotional campaign to sportsmen and provide written recommendation to the council for approval. **Rose** seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote (9-0).

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. for a break and reconvened at 11:07 a.m. All council members present prior to the break, were present after the break.

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Roy amended the motion to adopt document three of the supplemental plan in the amount of \$761,000 to approve an additional \$90,000 making the total amount \$851,000. **Rose** seconded the motion and the motion was approved as amended by unanimous vote (9-0).

Discussion – What is Success – Facilitated by Jill Holden

Holden began by giving an overview of year one. Year one set the foundation and attracted our target audience. What is year one success? We want them to be more knowledgeable, increase their awareness and generate appeal and interest in the MWC. If we do not make the connection that it takes people to make conservation work then we have lost the audience. We are telling success stories and how things work together in Michigan and how it's done – that wildlife needs people. We are connecting the dots - it is important, people are needed to do it and that it is funded by licenses. This will be part of the stories we tell.

The next message in the progression is that conservation is not funded by taxes or government, but that it is funded by hunting and fishing licenses. We will need them to understand the importance of hunting and fishing as a tool of wildlife management. Sportsmen impact the health of wildlife and natural resources. Food, jobs and economy are the last messages to be communicated.

The baseline research talked about approval of hunting/fishing vs. hunters/anglers. We need to tell the positive impact of hunters' activities to start to change perception and increase approval. That takes time.

Holden stated the purpose is to understand the awareness, knowledge, beliefs and actions of Michigan's non-hunting, non-fishing and non-trapping public. We are not changing values, we are increasing awareness and understanding.

At 12:12 Chairperson **Pedigo** invited public comment and there was none.

Pedigo asked to carry on with the presentation from GÜD Marketing presentation and then carry on with the agenda. There were no objections.

Joel Newport presented to the council the creative campaign for year two. It will be broad awareness and we need to continue to attract people with emotional and simple messaging that make them want to learn more. We will make the connection between attracting, informing and introducing the management message: Regardless if we are sportsmen and women we all love the outdoors – properties all need to be managed for use and enjoyment for future generations.

Outdoor boards were presented that contained the following messages and images:

- Managed to make a comeback – image of turkey
- Managed to keep a healthy herd – image of deer
- Managed to make memories – image of father/son fishing

Holden stated this is a broad way of talking about management which will then direct to the website to dig into deeper layers by using stories to back up the information. GÜD will also develop content to explain what managed means.

Phillips advised there are major issues across the state with diseased deer and is concerned with messaging that may be a contradiction to what the DNR is saying, particularly with our sportsmen and women. **Newport** responded that looking at it from a managed point of view, what would actively happen if you were not there? The idea that we want to stay focused on is “management” and how it impacts animal health.

Pedigo asked GÜD what the key milestones were. GÜD responded:

- January – Review timing for the baseline survey and full creative review and approval of media campaign
- Mid-April – Year 3 phase one; quarterly review of Year 2
- Early August – Year 2 completion report
- Mid-late October - Year 3 media plan

Roy asked GÜD about what they see as the potential impact of the Michigan Wildlife Council’s temporary website. **Ness** stated we are not getting any metrics from the competing website so we do not know how many hits they are getting nor do we see the traffic that does not make it to the official campaign website. It is potentially drawing traffic that we never see and although we are outranking it, traffic from that website is the fourth referring site. **Roy** asked if it was fair to say that the sportsmen’s dollars would be more efficiently spent without the competing website. **Ness** agreed to that statement.

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The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m. for lunch and reconvened at 1:31 p.m. **Stec** was not present after the break.

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Approval of July 19, 2016 and August 3, 2016 Minutes

Chairperson **Pedigo** called for discussion regarding the minutes of the July 19, 2016 and August 3, 2016 meeting. There was no discussion.

Roy made a motion that the minutes be approved as submitted in the meeting packet. **Campbell** seconded the motion. **Stec** returned at 1:32 p.m. and Pedigo updated Stec on the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote (9-0).

Treasurer's Report

Council treasurer **Campbell** gave an overview of the written financial report for the term October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016 (DRAFT - attached) and explained that it must be approved as a draft since the fiscal year end has not closed yet. **Campbell** explained details of the report, listing total expenditures of just under \$1.9 million, revenue of \$1.8 million and a fund balance of \$2.2 million.

Hammill made a motion to approve the draft financial report as submitted. **Stec** seconded the motion and the draft report was approved by unanimous vote (9-0).

Reception Debrief

Pedigo stated he received a lot of great comments. **Roy** suggested doing this on an annual basis and including Michigan's bear and grouse hunters. **Rose** noted the program was very good and gave kudos to Mike Avery. **Roy** thanked Hammill and the planning committee. **Campbell** stated we need to continue to look for opportunities to go to the sportsmen at their meetings. **Phillips** encouraged regular updates at the Conservation Coalition meetings. **Poet** offered the Jay's Sporting Goods in Gaylord at no cost if the council decided to duplicate the Sportsmen's Reception. **Hammill** stated there is wisdom in maintaining some sort of record with outreach to the sporting community that the council has done. **Rose** agreed and advised we can include this in the semi-annual report. The council then proceeded to discuss additional events including: boating and fishing shows in Detroit and Grand Rapids; deer and turkey spectacular; home and garden show in Grand Rapids – Rose suggested sponsoring an event to get materials and logo visible without having to personally attend; Outdoor expos in Traverse City, Detroit metro area; Midwest fly fishing event in Warren. **Poet** expressed appreciation that State Representatives Bumstead and Johnson, as well as DNR Director Creagh, attended the event.

Semi Annual Report

The council members agreed to table the decision to approve the semiannual report at 1:58 p.m.

Council Reports

Poet attended the Hunting Works for Michigan kickoff on Tuesday in Lansing. He is the co-chair and it parallels with a lot of what the MWC is doing. More information can be found at huntingworksformi.com.

Hammill spoke to students at Lake Superior State University.

Website

Pedigo stated that after the August 3, 2016 meeting he drafted a letter to Mr. Alan Taylor and received a response back from Mr. Taylor's attorney stating they are not going to change anything on the website.

Phillips stated that the DNR had conversations with the AG regarding this issue, but did not have written recommendations.

There was discussion among council members expressing the desire to further pursue this issue with the AG. **Hammill** stated that the website that Taylor created had been intended to be temporary. **Campbell** added that the original website created by Taylor was done to fill a void and that the rest of the council members assumed and trusted the experts (marketing agency) would build the official site. **Rose** said that new content has been added [to Taylor's website] regarding past members of the council and it's not up to date with current members' information. **Stancato** stated that there had been an agreement that the council would be in charge of the content—and that is not happening now. **Roy** stated that he'd like to see formal opinions from the AG. **Stec** agreed that the council would like a formal written response.

Roy made a motion that the MWC requests the AG provide a written legal opinion addressing alleged improper use of MWC website that includes the following: AG legal analysis – MWC strength of claims and potential defenses; AG recommendation whether or not to pursue legal action and timing of legal actions; also to include potential cost to pursue legal relief and analysis of the statute of limitations any claims the AG regards to claims that AG seeks; and is also seeking the DNR's input and analysis of issues arising from the AG's formal opinion. **Stancato** seconds the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote (9-0).

Decision to edit the semiannual report was made at 2:50 p.m.

Hammill left at 2:51 p.m.

Semiannual Report

The council discussed edits to the semiannual report (attached with tracked changes).

Roy made a motion to approve the semiannual report with changes as discussed. **Rose** seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote (8-0).

SharePoint

The following council members need to be added to SharePoint: Campbell, Roy and Stancato.

2017 Meeting Dates and Locations

January 31, 2017 9a.m. – 2p.m.	MSU Diagnostic Center Lansing, MI
April 18, 2017 9a.m. – 2p.m.	Jay's Sporting Goods Gaylord, MI
August 8, 2017 1p.m. – 5p.m.	DNR Customer Service Center Traverse City, MI
October 17, 2017 9a.m. – 2p.m.	DNR Outdoor Adventure Center Detroit, MI

New Business

January agenda to include the operational report

Adjournment

Rose made a motion to adjourn, thanked Jay's Sporting Goods for hosting the MWC, seconded by **Roy** and the motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous vote (8-0). The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.

APPROVED: Date _____

Matt Pedigo, Chairperson
Michigan Wildlife Council