

Michigan Wildlife Council

MINUTES December 9, 2019

A regular meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council was held Monday, December 9, 2019, at Jay's Sporting Goods, 8800 South Clare Avenue, Clare, Michigan 48617.

Present for the Michigan Wildlife Council

Matt Pedigo
Ed Roy
Kristin Phillips
Jeff Poet
Carol Rose

Excused Absence

Jim Hammill
Henry Stancato
Beth Gruden
Nick Buggia

Call to Order

Chairman **Pedigo** called the meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) to order at 8:02 a.m.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman **Pedigo** reviewed the agenda and called for discussion. There was no discussion. **Poet** made a motion that the agenda be approved as presented. **Rose** supported the motion, and the agenda was approved by unanimous vote (5-0).

Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC) Update

On behalf of the JEC, Roy provided a statement in summary of the formal selection process.

A consensus of the MWC members serving on the JEC selected Gd Marketing as the recommended vendor to provide the MWC with the strategy, creative design, and deployment of the next phase of the MWC campaign. The vigorous review of the applications, the Committee's in-person review of each application, along with the vendors' presentations occurred over the course of approximately 60 days (from August 1 to September 30, 2019). During that time period all the applications and applicants were evaluated on specific criteria to ensure that the process was fair, objective, and transparent.

Gd Marketing's objective scoring exceeded the next closest vendor by a considerable number of the available points. Any person who would have participated in this comprehensive JEC review process would have observed that Gd Marketing demonstrated a "step above" as the

vendor of choice. As a member of the MWC and having had the opportunity to participate in this meaningful process, in my opinion, GÜD Marketing will meet or exceed the MWC's expectations for the deployment of the campaign for the coming years.

GÜD Marketing – Photo Mosaic Update

Ally Caldwell, GÜD Marketing account executive, shared the latest information about this summer's experiential marketing and public relations efforts. This summer, the campaign kicked off a series of events featuring photo mosaics to further celebrate wildlife conservation successes and illustrate how it takes many people working together to make that success happen. **Caldwell** shared an overview of the previous three events: Crim Festival of the Races in Flint on August 23 and 24, pre-game festivities at the Michigan State University and Western Michigan University football game in East Lansing on September 7, and America's Thanksgiving Day Parade in Detroit on November 28, 2019. These events highlighted efforts to conserve and manage Michigan's elk, osprey, and turkey populations. The completed photo mosaics will be installed at the Michigan History Center, where they will be displayed for the enjoyment of visitors. A celebratory event will take place on January 28, 2020.

GÜD Marketing – Hunting Season Update

Caldwell shared approved custom campaign assets that supported marketing efforts during hunting season – when hunting is most top of mind for the campaign's non-hunting audience. Assets supported content marketing, digital music streaming, and paid social media efforts. These assets more directly addressed hunting and showed hunters broadly for the first time.

Beth McKenna, GÜD Marketing senior public relations manager, shared media coverage during the hunting season and the success of the MWC's earned media efforts. Like 2018, news outlets continued to tie the decline in hunters to a decline in conversation funding, successfully conveying hunting as a primary funder of conservation. This year, GÜD Marketing recommended partnering with Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger to share the story of hunters providing food for hungry community members in need. The resulting media coverage came from every media market in the state – from Detroit to Marquette, from Benton Harbor to Alpena. In total, 58 news stories were published for an estimated reach of 2.2 million people with an estimated value of \$200,000 (and counting).

GÜD Marketing – Statewide Survey Results

Chelsea Maupin, GÜD Marketing research manager, presented a summary of the statewide survey, including methodology, timing, purpose, and key measures. Maupin reviewed results related to statewide approval of hunting, fishing and trapping, campaign recall, knowledge of wildlife management and funding, and meaningful messages – including statewide results and shifts among various regions, races, ages, and genders. Key findings include:

- Approval of hunting and fishing remain high across geographic and demographic groups.
- Wildlife conservation activities are important to people but there is still work to be done in educating select audiences on their necessity for thriving wildlife populations.
- Increased awareness of the economic impact provided by hunting, fishing, and license dollars.
- New questions added in 2019 indicate greater understanding by Michiganders that hunting and fishing licenses are the largest source of funding for wildlife management.

- Benefits to all people from hunting and fishing are increasingly recognized.

Further reporting and a comprehensive written report will be delivered in early 2020.

Maupin then shared additional research methodologies GÜD Marketing recommends employing over the next 16 months, including interviews, on-line bulletin boards, a statewide survey, and in-person focus groups. In the month, **Maupin** aims to complete individual interviews with each council member to provide a solid foundation of knowledge for the new contract.

GüD Marketing – Future Campaign Efforts

Jill Holden, GÜD Marketing strategic planning director, reflected on the five-year communications strategy and project goals for the MWC campaign. Over the coming 16 months, GÜD Marketing aims to build upon the campaign's foundation of data, insights, message strategy, creative assets, and content. **Holden** introduced an overall campaign strategy recommendation, four elements working together in tandem – Elevate Statewide Awareness, Connect Through Micro-Campaigns, Create Impactful Experiences, and Activate Influencers. Through these strategies the campaign will:

- Expand geography and audiences for the campaign's "funding" message.
- Introduce specific, targeted messages for audience members based upon their unique interests and behaviors, making relevant connections.
- Connect personally via video, in-person events, and partner engagement.
- Engage stakeholders (media, legislators, sportsmen, and sportswomen); leverage the power of influence.

All future campaign efforts will be built upon research and knowledge gained on message delivery, language, imagery, tonality, and more.

Joel Newport and Amy Moore, GÜD Marketing creative director and associate creative director, introduced the creative strategy for the future of the campaign. The strategy, which is rooted in the council's goal, based in research, and formulated to be relevant and memorable, will continue to build off the "Here. For Generations." creative theme. Messaging will continue to focus on the statement "Wildlife needs to be managed for the use and enjoyment of future generations" while focusing on how these activities are funded. Future creative executions will leverage existing assets, reinforce the core message, and speak to the entire state. **Newport and Moore** shared three statewide television spots and two statewide radio spots. **Newport and Moore** then shared examples of digital display ads as part of the micro-campaigns, which highlight specific benefits of hunting and fishing. Finally, they introduced a custom social video series to be produced for Facebook Watch. This series will break through to new audiences, meet our audiences where they are interacting with content, and provide an opportunity to tell deeper stories.

Emmie Musser, GÜD Marketing development director, shared paid media recommendations based on the new campaign strategy recommendation, and provided specific recommendations for January 1 to June 7, 2020. Tactics included outdoor, statewide radio, digital music streaming, paid social, content marketing, digital display, experiential marketing, app-targeted digital, blogs, and niche content. Musser also previewed future marketing efforts during fall 2020 (post-election), including media tactics such as digital video streaming, broadcast television, paid social, content marketing, digital display, experiential marketing, TV social series, app-targeted digital, expert panel discussions, blogs, and niche content.

Rose moved to approve the media plan for January 1-June 7, 2020, which represents an expenditure of \$565,000. **Poet** seconded the motion.

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The meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m. All council members present prior to lunch were present after lunch.

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Research Methodology Discussion

Pedigo asked **Maupin** to summarize the recent challenges GÜD Marketing and their research vendor encountered in attempting to address the non-response bias as suggested by Chase & Chase Consulting. They sent invitations to specific individuals who met the desired demographics to take the survey. The overall survey fielding period extended across eight weeks, while previous surveys were completed in two weeks. After the initial three weeks of fielding, the research vendor still did not have enough respondents to represent the entirety of the state and was uncertain how much time would be required to gather a representative sample or if it would be possible. After five weeks, GÜD Marketing, with the approval of the MWC subcommittee, reverted back to the previous methodology of selecting candidates—which is respondent self-selection from an on-line panel; then, the responses are filtered to include responses from the desired demographic breakdown.

In the future, GÜD Marketing does not recommend an on-line survey with direct invitation because it took too long, and they didn't learn anything new to provide value.

The discussion shifted to whether the MWC should invest next year in a probability-based research methodology. **Maupin** said that GÜD Marketing is having conversations with vendors on various methods to generate a probabilistic response. A suggestion from Mark Duda was to use an on-line survey in a probabilistic manner. People who take the survey on-line would be recruited through mail or phone call. The cost is two to three times the cost of what is currently spent on research.

Phone or mail survey response rates are about 5% today. In practice, this type of methodology is unrealistic, and phone and mail surveys have a response bias of their own. A probabilistic survey is standard for academic reviews, because they are seeking a random audience. The goal of the MWC is to get a representative sample of the people in Michigan—drawing from a panel of people who've agreed to take surveys.

Phillips shared recommendations that were received from the three marketing vendors during the JEC process oral interviews. None of the vendors had recommended including probabilistic research in their plan. When asked “why not,” they gave the following responses:

“Current methodology is solid. Maintaining consistent methodology is the best way to measure change for a marketing campaign.”

“We reviewed your goal and budget. Our recommendations are industry standard for a marketing campaign and designed to meet the goals of the MWC. All research has response and non-response bias. Random sampling based on mailing addresses and standard mail will increase response rate by older, less educated demographic. Sampling through digital forums will increase response from younger and urban dwellers, which make up the target audience.”

"True random sampling is almost impossible in today's world. It's most important to focus on statistical reliability and the construct of the questions."

Phillips also shared that if the MWC decides to add an additional research project with a third-party firm AND wishes to have that separate from GÜD Marketing's contract, there will need to be a Request For Proposal with a JEC to evaluate bidders, which is a four-month process. Both vendors will need to perform research at the same time so there is no discrepancy across time.

Pedigo requested that **Phillips** and **Maupin** develop a pros/cons list of the options for discussion and decision at the January meeting.

Council Reports and New Business

Given the number of items for discussion and presentation, the council members present decided to hold a full-day meeting on Monday, January 27, 2020, with an invitation to stay in town overnight for the mural installation event at the Michigan History Center on Tuesday morning. The date change is pending a quorum is available.

Monday, Jan. 27-28, 2020	Lansing, Michigan History Center (not confirmed)
Monday, Apr. 27, 2020	Gaylord, Jay's Sporting Goods
Monday, Aug. 24, 2020	Traverse City, DNR Customer Service Center (not confirmed)
Monday, Oct. 26, 2020	Escanaba, Location TBD
Monday, Feb. 22, 2021	Lansing, Location TBD

Approval of August 20, 2019, Minutes

Pedigo called for discussion to be held on the minutes of the August 20, 2019, MWC meeting. There was no discussion. **Roy** made a motion that the minutes be approved as submitted. **Rose** seconded, and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote (5-0).

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer **Phillips** gave an overview of the presented written draft financial report for October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019, representing a full fiscal year (attached). At the end of the fiscal year, there was over \$700,000 on the marketing contract that will carry over into this fiscal year. This was intentional to finish out the current contract which expires in June 2020.

Rose made the motion to accept the financial report as presented. **Roy** seconded the motion. The report was approved by unanimous vote (5-0).

Sportsmen's Caucus, Outreach and Presentations

Rose agreed to contact Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) for dates of sportsmen's caucus and to get on the agenda. There will be a subcommittee to develop content for caucus events for 2020.

There was additional discussion on how to outreach and share information with legislators. A one-pager will be developed for council members to share.

In addition, **Roy** has plans to present at the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce. Slides and talking points will be prepared for his use and use by other council members.

Public Comment

Chairman **Pedigo** called for public comment at 2:15 p.m. No public comment was made.

Finally, there was discussion and a request for the DNR to include a teleconferencing option for each MWC meeting. This is to allow council members who might not have the ability to travel to still follow along as a non-voting member.

There was a request for Gd Marketing to make available/accessible reporting on the various media strategies that are being deployed moving forward. There was discussion about a dashboard or possible high-level report. **Phillips** will talk with **Caldwell** about options.

Adjournment

Rose made the motion to adjourn, seconded by **Phillips**, and the motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous vote (5-0). The meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 27, 2020.

APPROVED: Date _____

Matt Pedigo, Chairperson
Michigan Wildlife Council