

**Michigan Wildlife Council
Minutes**

October 27, 2023

The Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) met at St. Ignace Public Library, 110 West Spruce Street, St. Ignace, Michigan 49781.

Attendees

Nick Buggia, Chair, MWC
Beth Gruden, Vice Chair, MWC
Jason Garvon, MWC
Brent Pike, MWC
Franklin Hayes, MWC
Ed Roy, MWC

Jon Spieles, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/MWC
Lauren Abbott, GÜd Marketing
Jill Holden, GÜd Marketing
Chelsea Maupin, GÜd Marketing
Sarah Williams, GÜd Marketing

Absent: Sarah Topp

Chairman Nick Buggia called the MWC meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Chairman Buggia introduced **Senator Cherry**. **Senator Cherry** said bills 484 and 485 almost passed the Legislature. That would have changed the work for MWC. **Buggia** asked how the MWC can educate the new legislators. It was suggested that the MWC try working with the Sportsmen’s Caucus. The three most important people to educate would be the committee chairs.

Buggia called for a motion to approve the agenda. **Jason Garvon** made a motion to approve, **Brent Pike** seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Chairman Buggia asked for discussion on the minutes from May 19, 2023, but there was none. **Garvon** made a motion to accept the minutes as written and **Pike** seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously.

Lauren Abbott, account manager for GÜd Marketing, provided an overview of the 2023 campaign strategy, which included communicating the benefits of well-managed wildlife, showcasing people’s role in creating and sustaining a healthy outdoors, and creating new connections to wildlife management.

Sara Williams, associate activation director for GÜd Marketing, shared performance updates on campaign tactics to gain attention, deepen understanding, and create connections with the audience of focus. Tactics include outdoor, social media, streaming audio, TV, and content marketing. Key highlights included: Campaign ads have been seen over 51 million times so far, and our audience has been reached with those ads an average of 30 times. More people are engaging with social media content and staying on the website to learn more.

Pike and **Jon Spieles** asked for clarification and a further definition of “reached.” **Williams** explained that the number provided is individual people reached from any of the campaign ads that have been placed.

Williams also provided an update on the content partnerships with Michigan Chronicle and Mike Avery, which help leverage opportunities and experiences from trusted sources and

voices. Michigan Chronicle developed two 15-second videos to dispel misconceptions about Michigan wildlife conservation and management efforts that currently have a 13-second average watch time. The next video series will focus on Salmon in the Classroom and take place from November 2023 through April 2024. The partnership with Mike Avery this year included quarterly radio and live Facebook interviews, which received 2,100 video views and 339,000 impressions.

Abbott shared outcomes from the sponsorship with Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, which included a mural of Michigan-managed wildlife along the Dequindre Cut greenway. An unveiling of the final mural took place during the Detroit Harvest Fest in October with a community engagement component and received over 1,000 signatures. Thousands of people attended the booth at Harvest Fest and 300 attendees completed a short survey at the booth. This survey provides insights on attendee knowledge about wildlife management and increases the newsletter email list to continue to educate those who opted in.

Abbott also shared updates on creating connections with advocates through the quarterly email newsletter that is sent to conservation partners such as Michigan United Conservation Club, National Wild Turkey Federation and the DNR. This newsletter has 95% successful email deliveries and over 50% total opens.

Buggia mentioned other email communication opportunities to further share information about the council, as well as event opportunities with partners like Pheasants Forever to share some of the council's materials.

Franklin Hayes commented that the campaign imagery could include a variety of people who currently participate in hunting or fishing to address any misconceptions and to potentially encourage people within our audience to experience those activities.

Following updates regarding the campaign performance, **Maupin** shared insights from one-on-one interviews with conservation partners and lawmakers. Overall, there is limited awareness of the council and its work but there are many opportunities to collaborate with these key stakeholders (research and data share-outs, DNR meetings, and council member attendance at planned events).

Maupin provided research recommendations for 2023 that included a statewide survey, A/B testing, and qualitative research. Key highlights included: Updating the statewide survey methodology to recruit participants by phone and/or text and increase the number of participants to 1,000 Michiganders.

It was suggested that the statewide survey questionnaire more closely align questions with current and future messaging but continue to track key successes and guidepost questions. A/B testing will assess key audience reaction to differing message tonalities using live social ads.

Recommend an asynchronous online interactive platform for qualitative research to gather feedback from key audiences on the updated tonality, key benefits of wildlife management, and terminology but also to add context to survey numbers and trends.

Buggia asked about the key audiences' thoughts on the word "management" when included in campaign ads. **Maupin** noted that the online qualitative research will allow us to gain insights on their knowledge about wildlife management and the terminology.

Abbott shared creative updates on the three web video episodes that will be placed on streaming TV, social media, and in content marketing.

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Buggia dismissed the council for lunch at 12:25 p.m. Everyone picked up their lunches and returned to their seats.

Chelsea started presenting about the Annual Statewide Survey and methodology at 12:45 p.m.

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Public Comment

Buggia paused the meeting at 2:02 p.m. for public comment. There was none.

New Business

Jeff Poet (Jays Sporting Goods) reached out and would like to review some of the messaging used by the MWC.

Option 1: Michigan Wildlife Depends on us.

Hundreds of photos of people engaging in Michigan's Outdoors put together to create an animal/bird. If they enter the new building; they are okay with our message. Do you know what your license fees are paying for? What will that display look like?

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Option 2: Michigan Magic

"I Spy" educational guide for an informational tour of the exhibit.

Option 3: Beauty in the Balance

Semi-Annual Report

Buggia called for discussion on the Semi-Annual Report for the Legislature. There was no discussion, so **Buggia** asked for a motion to accept the report as written. **Hayes** proposed approval, **Beth Gruden** seconded, and the report was accepted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Spieles presented the treasurer's report and asked for questions. There were no questions, so **Buggia** asked for a motion to accept the report as written. **Hayes** motioned to approve, **Ed Roy** seconded, and the treasurer's report was accepted unanimously.

Adjournment

Buggia called for a motion to adjourn. **Garvon** moved, and **Gruden** seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. **Buggia** adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

APPROVED Date: _____

Nicholas Buggia, Chairman

Ongoing Level 2 Subcommittee Approvals Needed

Creative campaign materials
Content marketing materials
Public relations materials

2024 Meetings

February 21 - Lansing
May 17 – Detroit – Go to Tigers’ Game
August 23 – West Side – Gaylord
November 8 – RAM Center

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