

**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, Gd Marketing
Jill Holden, Gd Marketing
Chelsea Maupin, Gd Marketing
Sarah Williams, Gd Marketing

Absent: Sarah Topp

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

Chairman Buggia introduced **Senator Jon Bumstead**. **Senator Bumstead** said Bills 4855 and 4856 almost passed the Legislature. That would have changed the work for the MWC. **Buggia** asked how the MWC can educate the new legislators. It was suggested that each MWC member make a point of meeting their own Legislators and that the Council try working with the Sportsmen’s Caucus (wields a lot of influence). 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 Gd 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 Gd 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, **Chelsea 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 the 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.

Maupin presented about the Annual Statewide Survey and methodology at 12:45 p.m.

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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.

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.

Public Comment

Buggia paused the meeting at 2:02 p.m. for public comment. Pam Carter, from Barton City, Michigan, who had joined the meeting virtually, had several questions for the Council.

1. Is the MWC a fund-raising apparatus that raises funds for conservation projects exclusively through hunting and fishing?

Buggia explained that the MWC is not involved in fund raising.

2. Why aren't there other ways conservation is funded?

Buggia elaborated that it is defined in legislation what the MWC can do and talk about.

3. Referring to the bills **Senator Bumstead** had referenced, Ms. Carter said she understood the bills were talking about widening the scope of the people on the Council to include native Americans, non-hunters, and non-profit people. Her questions was, "Why is the Council against that?"

Buggia answered that the Council don't take positions on legislation. It's up to the Legislature to decide who's on the Council, and the MWC members are appointed by the Governor.

4. Does the MWC have any influence on upcoming hunts, wolf management, etc.

Buggia responded by saying that was under the scope of the Natural Resource Commission. **Roy** concluded the dialogue by thanking Ms. Carter for her questions and telling her that the Council can't take a position on a couple of the questions she had asked.

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: 02/21/2024



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