

Michigan Wildlife Council Minutes

May 17, 2024

The Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) met at the DNR Outdoor Adventure Center, 1801 Atwater Street in Detroit, Michigan.

Attendees

Nick Buggia, Chair, Michigan Wildlife Council	Lauren Abbott, GÜd Marketing
Franklin Hayes, Michigan Wildlife Council	Drew Smith, GÜd Marketing
Ed Roy, Michigan Wildlife Council	Jill Holden, GÜd Marketing
Jason Garvon, Michigan Wildlife Council	Sara Williams, GÜd Marketing
Jon Spieles, Michigan Department of Natural Resources/Michigan Wildlife Council	Brooke Gieber, GÜd Marketing

Attended Virtually: Chelsea Maupin, GÜd Marketing

Absent: Brent Pike, Beth Gruden

Nick Buggia, MWC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. **Buggia** welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The chairman called for a motion to approve the agenda. **Franklin Hayes**, Michigan Wildlife Council, motioned to accept the agenda and **Jason Garvon**, Michigan Wildlife Council, seconded the motion. The agenda was approved by a unanimous vote.

Buggia asked for a motion on the February minutes. **Hayes** motioned to approve the minutes, and **Garvon** seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

GÜd Marketing Presentation

Brooke Gieber, senior strategist for GÜd Marketing, provided an overview of the 2024 goals, which are to educate Michiganders about wildlife management, including hunting and fishing, and build awareness of shared experiences made possible by the activities. **Gieber** also provided recommendations on audience and geography for the 2024 campaign, which includes sportspeople and advocates as a secondary audience.

Council members agreed on reaching this secondary audience statewide, as well as continuing to reach 18-to-34-year-olds in the Southern Lower Peninsula with an emphasis on Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties.

Drew Smith, creative director for GÜd Marketing, reviewed the campaign's creative evolution from 2021 to 2023 to showcase how campaign spokesperson "Annette" has changed over the years based on annual research findings. **Smith** proposed the creative strategy for 2024, which includes new webisode cut-downs and content with more wildlife and management activities, including hunting and fishing.

Following agreement on the creative strategy, **Smith** provided recommendations on two messaging directions for the council to review:

- *Funding focused* — messaging on hunting and fishing licenses as the funding source for wildlife and habitat management while evolving the message to focus on the people who buy the licenses (e.g., "paid for by hunters and anglers"). This direction would include the hunter and angler impact on Michigan's economy, jobs, and conservation.

- *Activity focused* — messaging on the activities responsible for wildlife and habitat management (e.g., hunting and fishing benefits to wildlife and conservation for future generations). This direction would include human interest and intervention stories ranging from pastime enjoyment to food donation to population management with wildlife experts, hunters, and anglers.

To show the differences in these message directions, video and audio concepts were shared for both options. **Jon Spieles**, Michigan Department of Natural Resources/Michigan Wildlife Council, commented that he liked the deer in the concept since it's a relevant way to reach the audience but would prefer to explore an alternative option for the second concept, which features a squirrel, due to a lack of direct connection to wildlife management. Güd Marketing agreed to revisit the concepts with those considerations in mind.

Headline and social media concepts for each message direction were shared with consideration of also reaching sportspeople and advocates as the secondary audience. **Hayes** commented that in addition to messaging about funding source to this audience, the value of shared experiences could also appeal to both the primary and secondary audiences.

Following discussion around message direction, **Chelsea Maupin**, Güd Marketing research manager, shared recommendations on message testing to address the question “Where is the line — at what point do we ‘lose’ our audience?” Recommendations include an online survey with respondents 18-45 who are neutral toward hunting (moderate approvers and strong approvers). They will react to a series of four to seven messages, each paired with an image. The sets of messages and images will become more direct to assess the “boiling point” for two or three messaging areas (funding, wildlife management, hunting, etc.) and pinpoint why people find certain messages and images too direct.

Public Comments

At 2:00 p.m., **Buggia** asked if there were any questions/comments from the public There were none. **Spieles**, however, had received an email from Alan Taylor describing his dislike of the MWC website. **Buggia** at 2:00 p.m. is going to touch base with Mr. Taylor to see if he was speaking of anything specific and share the results with the Council.

Sara Williams, strategic planner for Güd Marketing, provided insights on the in-market approach that identifies channels where key audiences can be reached and are most receptive to the campaign messaging, as well as utilizing targeted tactics to drive a deeper understanding with exposure to the most complete messaging.

The in-market approach included a June-through-September focus that takes into consideration outdoor activity levels and political windows. Tactics for the primary audience include social media, interactive TV ads, Michigan Chronicle, bus tails, and expanded opportunities in earned media. For the secondary audience, it is recommended to continue partnerships with Mike Avery and Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) but also incorporate targeted reach in social media and outdoor enthusiast social influencers.

Williams and **Gieber** presented two partnership activation opportunities for the council's consideration: using viewfinders throughout Detroit as an eye-catching and interactive learning opportunity and a harvest-to-table community engagement event showcasing harvested food with local chefs. The council agreed to proceed with both opportunities but with a heavier focus on the harvest-to-table activation.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the council approved the communications plan and message testing recommendations and moving forward with both message directions but to segment messaging by age group to effectively reach the primary audience.

Adjournment

Garvon motioned to adjourn the MWC meeting, and **Spieles** seconded the motion. They were backed up with a unanimous vote. The meeting was dismissed at 2:35 p.m.

APPROVED Date: May 17, 2024



Nicholas Buggia, Chairman

2024 Meetings:

- Friday, August 23, DNR Customer Service Center, Gaylord
- Friday, November 8, Ralph A. McMullen (RAM) Center

Ongoing Level 2 Subcommittee Approvals Needed:

- Creative campaign materials
- Content marketing materials
- Public relations materials