

**Michigan Wildlife Council  
Minutes**

November 8, 2024

The Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) met at the Ralph A. McMullen (RAM) Conference Center, 104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, Michigan 48653.

**Attendees**

Nick Buggia, Chair, MWC

Daniel Ulfig, MWC

Brent Pike, MWC

Dawn Levey, MWC

Daniel Cooke, MWC

Jon Spieles, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/MWC

Lauren Abbott, GÜD Marketing

Jill Holden, GÜD Marketing

Chelsea Maupin, GÜD Marketing

Sara Williams, GÜD Marketing

Tim Dilts, GÜD Marketing

*Absent: Beth Gruden*

*Virtual: Franklin Hayes*

**Chairperson Nick Buggia** called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Introductions were made by all present.

**Buggia** made a motion to approve the agenda, with the exception of moving lunch to 12 p.m.

**Dan Ulfig** seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

**Buggia** made a motion to approve the MWC meeting minutes from August 23, 2024, and **Ulfig** seconded. The MWC meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

**Lauren Abbott**, greeted everyone and turned the meeting over to **Chelsea Maupin**, research manager for GÜD Marketing. **Maupin** provided background information about the council's public education campaign over the years. Data from previous surveys and focus groups was shared to highlight various perceptions and concerns about hunting and fishing among different demographics that inform the campaign's strategy and creative direction each year.

**Buggia** stated the campaign's goal is to take the neutral and moderate approvers of hunting and fishing and shift them to strong approvers. **Maupin** added that as a council, they focus on the black women ages 18-34 and spend most of their effort down in Detroit to reach these people.

Following background about the campaign, **Maupin** discussed research updates that included the progress on the statewide survey, A/B testing, and message acceptance testing. Highlights included results from round two of A/B testing that found that the "Thanks, Hunters" message had the highest click-through rate, and that 15-second videos were the most effective in engaging the audience and driving them to watch longer videos.

**Maupin** explained the message acceptability study aimed to determine how direct the campaign could be about hunting and fishing without alienating the audience. Results found that most people were comfortable with direct messages, but images of hunters with their harvest and messages about wildlife protection while showing dead animals were identified as triggers for discomfort among some audience segments.

**Maupin** also reviewed the methodology and discussed changes to the questionnaire for the statewide survey that will be conducted with Responsive Management in December.

**Ulfig** provided feedback on the length of the survey and asked if there were opportunities to shorten the number of questions being asked. **Maupin** shared that the average time a person took to complete the survey over the phone in 2023 was 16 minutes and offered to revisit the questions for opportunities to reduce the completion time.

**Buggia** made a motion to approve the survey as a whole with the understanding that Responsive Management would go back and streamline the questions to ensure a reasonable completion time. **Dawn Levey** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

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**Chairman Buggia** dismissed us for lunch at 12:02 p.m. and called us back to order at 12:37 p.m.

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**Tim Dilts**, implementation manager for GÜD Marketing, provided insights on the in-market campaign running from June through November. However, there was a break during the election period to avoid competing for attention with political campaigns. Paid media resumes post-election in November. The paid media tactics include social media, interactive TV ads, outdoor, and digital audio. Key highlights included:

- Over 2.9M people were reached with interactive TV ads on Hulu, ESPN+, Disney+, and YouTube.
- 27M people were reached on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.
- 101K new visitors to the website.
- Over 7M people reached across multiple streaming audio platforms.
- 12.4M impressions in outdoor poster and bus tail placements.

Press releases for Wildlife Conservation Month and National Hunting and Fishing Day resulted in 44 media mentions and 1.7 million impressions. The earned media value was estimated at \$51,000.

**Dilts** also discussed partnerships with the Michigan Chronicle and Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, emphasizing the success of the Detroit RiverWalk stickers and the engagement they generated. He also highlighted the importance of social influencers in spreading the council's message by engaging followers with posts about hunting, fishing, and conservation, generating millions of impressions and thousands of engagements.

Continuing with successful partnerships, **Dilts** shared updates from the Harvest to Table event, which brought together a diverse audience to experience a game dinner prepared by local chefs. The event facilitated conversations about conservation and the importance of hunting and fishing among the public, council members, and conservation partners.

**Sara Williams**, strategic planner for GÜD Marketing, took a look ahead with updates on the new webisode, the press release for firearm deer season opening day, and an overview of in-market tactics for November.

**Williams** and account manager for GÜD Marketing, **Lauren Abbott**, reviewed tactic and timing recommendations for the council to be in-market next year using existing creative from 2024, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a presence during the council's transition to a new marketing agency. These recommendations also included a breakdown of investment for paid media and professional services from January 1 through June 7, 2025.

The council decided to hold on approval of the 2025 recommendations until further conversations are had with the new agency of record in December.

Following discussion around the proposed in-market timing and 2025 budget, the council appointed **Dan Ulfig** to the Level 2 Subcommittee and scheduled two of the four quarterly meetings for next year.

### **2025 Planning**

- **Buggia** explained that Fusion92 will be the new marketing agency. He also thanked GÜD Marketing for all the hard work they've done for the council.
- MWC wants to have a presence from January to June.
- MWC has to decide how to split the budget.

### **Public Comment**

**Buggia** paused the meeting at 1:30 p.m. for public comment. There was no public comment.

### **2025 Planning**

GÜD Marketing is recommending organic social (Facebook, Instagram), the quarterly newsletter, continuing partnership with Mike Avery, and some paid media.

**Jon Spieles** said we have \$1.4 M to work with between the two campaigns in 2025. **Spieles** suggested we stick with the paid social and maybe not do the additional investment. **Buggia** asked what it would cost to just take out TV. **Sarah Williams** said she could take off the broadcast TV and bring the total down to \$300,000. **Buggia** said it might be beneficial to find out what Fusion92 thinks they need. We will give GÜD Marketing a number by mid-December. **Pam Vance** will work with Fusion92 and find some dates to send to the council for a meeting in December. **Buggia** says we want to maintain the presence that we have but do that as fiscally responsibly as we can. Don't expand new material. **Buggia** motioned that **Dan Ulfig** be part of the marketing subcommittee. **Levey** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

### **Semi-Annual Report**

**Buggia** made a motion to accept the Semi-Annual Report, and **Ulfig** seconded it. The motion was passed unanimously.

### **Treasurer's Report**

**Spieles** went over the treasurer's report with the council. **Spieles** made a motion to approve the report and **Levey** seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Ulfig** made a motion to send **Ed Roy** a plaque for his years of service on the MWC, **Levey** seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Buggia** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, **Ulfig** seconded it, and the motion was passed unanimously. The MWC meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on December 13 at the Hal and Jean Glassen Shooting Education Center with Fusion92 to see their ideas.

**2025 Meetings**

February 21 in Lansing

April 25 at the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery

**Buggia** made a motion to accept these dates, **Ulfig** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

**Ongoing Level 2 Subcommittee Approvals Needed**

Creative campaign materials

Content marketing materials

Public relations materials