

# UPSA Quarterly Meeting March 20th, 2021

## Members Present

Dave Johnson - UPSA President, Bob Gunkel – Northwoods SCI, Mike Veine, Steve Day – Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club, Stuart Boren – United Sportsmen’s Club, Richard P. Smith, Jordon Hoover – U.P. Whitetails Baraga County, Mike Holmes – Michigan Darkhouse Angling Assn, Gary Gorniak – Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club, Russ Louks – Portage Lakes Sportsman Club, John Dawydko - West Branch Sportsmen’s Club, Dan Absolon – U.P. Trappers Assn., Mark Spencer - Northern Great Lakes Fur Harvesters, Mark Stankey - Grand Marais Sportsmen’s Club, Craig Woerpel, Mike Taylor – U.P. Whitetails, Mark Stuhouski – William Anderson Sportsmen’s club, Al Ettenhofer – U.P. Whitetails Assoc., Gino Venditti – Wildlife Unlimited of Dickinson County, Norm Balko, Dennis Olson – Great Lakes Timber Professionals, George Lindquist – U.P. Whitetails, Rick Miskovich – Ontonagon Valley Sportsmen’s club, Jeremy Laakso, Kenneth Kesson, Mike Thorman – Bear Hounds man , George Graves, Bob Steinmetz – U.P. Trappers , Bob Warner ? conservation Club - , Russ Louks.

## Guests

DNR Director - Dan Eichinger, DNR U.P. Field Deputy - Stacy Haughey, DNR Deputy Public Information Officer - John Pepin, Patrick Hanchin – Fisheries Lake Superior Basin Coordinator, Brian Roelle - DNR Wildlife, Brian Bacon – Conservation Officer, Dan Kennedy - DNR Wildlife, Ashley Autenrieth – DNR Wildlife, Jerry Fitzgibbon – Conservation Officer, Kirk Schott – guest WUPCAC.

## Meeting Call to Order

**President Dave Johnson** - called the Zoom meeting to order. He then welcomed our guests.

**Meeting Minutes from last meeting** on Dec.19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 were presented. President Johnson asked if there were any required corrections. Norm Balko indicated that he was present at the meeting but not listed in the attendees. This was noted and correction to be made. Motion to accept minutes carried unanimously.

**The election of officers** will be moved to the next in person meeting.

**Treasurer’s Report** was presented by treasurer Dan Absolon. Motion to accept was made by Allen Ettenhofer, seconded by, Norm Balko, supported by all. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Wolf Management**

**DNR Director Dan Eichinger** - Thanked UPSA for the invitation and the opportunity to discuss the delisting of the gray wolf from the endangered species list. The Wolf was delisted January 12<sup>th</sup>. The director stressed that the DNR needs to make sure they have proper guidelines and the management plan needs to set a high bar. He doesn't want to give the anti-hunters any reasons to go back to court to get the delisting overturned. Director Eichinger discussed how Wisconsin had a wolf hunt soon after the delisting, as was required by a bill passed in the Wisconsin legislature. The Wisconsin hunt exceeded the public goal, by about 100 wolves, but the overall goal which included a tribal allocation was not surpassed. The director did not want this bad publicity for Michigan which could jeopardize the delisting. He explained that the DNR formed a new Wolf Advisory committee. The committee would provide input to the DNR to aid in development and revision of the existing wolf Management plan.

**UPSA President Dave Johnson** expressed concern that no conservationist club members from the U.P. were chosen to sit on the Wolf Advisory committee. This seemed illogical since the wolves were all in the U.P. and it was the U.P. sportsmen that had to deal with wolf conflicts.

**Director Dan Eichinger** – Commented on the process used to choose the members of the wolf committee. He also stated that being on the committee was not the only way to provide input and feedback on this issue.

**Gary Gorniak** - stated the DNR needs to provide more appointments from U.P. sportsmen groups or the U.P. sportsmen will lose faith in the DNR.

**Richard P. Smith** – Wolves are delisted for the entire 48 states. Western states are holding wolf hunts.

Other members expressed concern the anti-hunters would go to court as soon as possible to get the court to overturn the delisting. It was thought the need to get a wolf hunt in as soon as possible was the best way to ensure that the wolf population is kept in check.

**Mike Thorman**- Who was appointed to the new Wolf Advisory committee (Michigan Hunting Dog Federation) stated that he will work with UPSA and the U.P. and that he is on our team.

## **Forestry**

**Stu Borden** – Forestry management of the U.P. lands need to be rebalanced between forestry and wildlife use of forests.

**Director Eichinger** – Yes, the DNR agrees, things got out of balance. We will work with you to make corrections.

**Stu Borden** – Need to enforce forestry for regrowth for those enrolled in forestry plans.

**Director Eichinger** - Yes, the DNR agrees, we need to work on regeneration of winter habitat.

**Dennis Olson - Great Lakes Timberman's Professional Association (GLGTA)** – Group has developed a good working relationship with DNR Forestry division. This helps ensure adequate wood supplies are available. Currently working with road commissions and sportsmen, together in an effort to help maintain the roads in good condition. We all need to stick together to make things happen.

**Stu Borden – U.P. Habitat Workgroup Update**, after a year of covid, things are picking up and gaining traction. A new employee has been hired and more grant specs are being written. This is getting more grants out there. We are also working with forest consultants, getting them to carry the message to let land owners know what help is available, for those that qualify having property close to wintering areas.

## **Trapping**

**Bob Steinmetz** – Trappers are frustrated they were not part of the first wolf hunting season. Trapping is a very effective method of taking wolves and would help to ensure quotas are met. Trappers are currently dealing with, having to release wolves caught in their traps. Trapping needs to be part of any wolf management plan. The DNR Wildlife personnel agreed trapping should be included in wolf seasons going forward.

**Richard P. Smith** – Does the DNR help release wolves from traps, and how many have they helped on? **Brian Roell** – Yes, the DNR does help release wolves accidentally caught in coyote traps. Brian will get the number and forward it to Richard Smith.

**Bob Steinmetz** – The U.P. Trappers association has drafted a letter to the DNR/NRC they have asked for individual clubs and UPSA to sign on. The letter was sent out along with the meeting agenda and other information prior to the meeting. Gary Gorniak made the motion for UPSA to support the U.P. trapper's letter, and send a letter of support to the NRC/DNR. Al Ettenhofer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Fisheries Items**

**Patrick Hanchin Lake Superior DNR Basin Coordinator** – Presented DNR PowerPoint on the new Inland walleye management Plan.

**Floyd Dropps, Mike Holmes**

The new Statewide Inland Walleye Management Plan.

Floyd highlighted the Fisheries Committee's comments to the new management plan. The plan calls for only 3% of the 10-million-dollar stocking effort to be spent on walleye rearing. Only around \$26,000 of that total would be spent on U.P. inland waters. In the opinion of the fisheries committee, the DNR has been trying to get out of the business of walleye rearing for the inland waters of the state. The document was made available online prior to the UPSA meeting. Floyd made a motion that UPSA approve the Fisheries Committee comments on the new management plan and that a copy of the comments be sent to the DNR Fisheries, DNR Commissioners and Director Eichinger. The motion was made by Gary Gorniak and was seconded by Mike Taylor, and passed unanimously.

#### Menominee/Round Whitefish – A request for a separate limit for the waters of Lake Superior

Prior to 2020 menominee were an unregulated fish. There was no limit or closed season for menominee. In 2020 the fish were combined with whitefish and cisco for a combined limit. This was done as the Great lakes have been suffering from loss of habitat caused by invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels. Lake Superior does not have this problem and the fish are plentiful. Conversations with the DNR fisheries indicate they are not opposed to this change on scientific grounds. John Dawydko made a motion that UPSA support the effort for a separate limit for the menominee fish. The motion was seconded by Mike Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Northern Pike Five Fish Limit for The U.P.

**Mike Holmes** presented information about the UPSA Fisheries committee's request to have the whole U.P. changed to a 5 fish daily northern pike possession limit with no minimum size. The fisheries committee believes that most of the lakes in the U.P. have slow growing northern pike. Most will die of old age before every reaching the current 24-inch minimum size limit. Removing some of these stunted fish will provide a meal for anglers while providing a chance for better growth with the remaining fish. Mike Holmes stated that the Wisconsin DNR has a no size limit on northerns and it has worked well since it was instituted years ago. Mike thinks it should serve as a good model for the U.P.

**DNR Lake Superior Fisheries Management Supervisor Patrick Hanchin** - indicated he would work with us on specific lakes, but the DNR upper Management was not in favor of a wholesale change for the Upper Peninsula.

**Mike Holmes** requested UPSA send a letter to the DNR requesting a change to a five fish no minimum size limit for northern pike. Jordan Hoover made the motion and it was seconded by Mike Taylor. Motion received unanimous support.

## **Wildlife Committee**

### **Al Ettenhofer - Gary Gorniak**

**Al Ettenofer** – commented that membership is down in the wildlife committee. Al request that anyone interested in joining the committee call him at 906-786-9425, or email him at upwhitetails.com.

**Gary Gorniak** – provided information on the decreased deer numbers in the eastern U.P. and the increase presence of wolves. Presented a resolution on wolves and made a motion to send a copy of it be sent to the NRC and DNR. The motion was seconded by Al Ettenhofer. The motion passed unanimously.

**Jordon Hoover** – expressed concerns with current antlerless deer regulations. Jordan would like to see antlerless deer allowed to be taken with a regular archery tag. The DNR indicated that it is hard to micro-manage all areas. Jordan had presented documentation on two resolutions he would like to see UPSA vote on. These were for use of crossbows in the late archery season, and antlerless deer for archery season throughout the entire U.P.

**Dave Johnson** – stated that since all deer hunting regulations have just been passed and are set for 3 three years, it would be better to send Jordans resolutions to the wildlife committee. The wildlife committee can review the motions and discuss them and provide input at the appropriate time.

**Stacy Haughey** – Provided literature on new deer hunting regulations, new wolf information, and the use of purple paint for marking property lines vs no hunting signs. These items were discussed at the last meeting. She indicated that if anyone had any questions, she would be available to discuss.

**Dave Johnson** – asked for an update on the little brown bats and how they are dealing with the white nose syndrome. Brian Roell indicated nothing new at the present to report.

## **Legislative Committee**

### **Dave Johnson –**

Come Home to Hunt - has stalled, trying to get it moving.

Testified on use of purple paint bill (use of purple paint to mark no hunting vs signs).

Commercial fishing bill sitting in senate committee.

**Al Ettenofer** – House Bill HR 127 which doesn't have much support other than the sponsor would add all kinds of restrictions for gun owners, and add more taxes for guns and ammunition. So far it doesn't look like it is going anywhere.

## **Law Enforcement**

**DNR Officer Brian Bacon** – shared, there has been some hunters in CWD areas removing their deer from the area before processing. Deer killed in a CWD area, need to be processed in the CWD area. This needs to be done to prevent spreading of CWD.

## **Recreation Committee**

**John Dawydko & DNR U.P. Field Deputy - Stacy Haughey** – The new DNR shooting range in Marquette is progressing. Currently a site assessment needs to be completed. It is estimated this will take about 60 days. It is hoped the range will be up and running this fall.

**Dennis Olson** – Brought up a new bridge dedication will be conducted in Escanaba in honor of the late State Senator Tom Casperson. Tom recently passed away, but will be missed by UPSA as he was a friend of the U.P. sportsmen. Tom chaired the Michigan Senate Natural Resources Committee. He always checked in with his Yooper's to get a feel how they felt on issues.

The groups out of Escanaba/UP state fair committee are looking for anyone willing to donate for the cost of the signage, which has been set at \$4000.00 by the state highway department.

**Dan Absolon** – Made a motion for UPSA to Donate \$500.00 to help with the cost of the signage in honor of Senator Casperson. The motion was seconded by Gary Gorniak. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned By UPSA President Dave Johnson

Report submitted by Floyd Dropps, UPSA secretary