

MI State Chapter
National Wild Turkey Federation
Board of Directors Meeting
January 17, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 am by Herb Lorentz, President.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Introductions and Roll Call

Region 1: Roger Shoemaker (Vice President), Ken Buchholtz

Region 2: Herb Lorentz (President), Pete Demos

Absent Region 2: Craig Meredith

Region 3: Troy Hopkins (Treasurer), Jan Kuhtic (Secretary), Phil Kuhtic, Tony Snyder, Sam Giese, Ron Hopkins, Gary Salmon, Bert VanderWeele, Hugh Marx, Gary Van Dyke

Past President: Mike Kennedy

NWTF Board: Al Bobrofsky

NWTF Staff: Steve Sharp, Tom Karsten, Scott Slajus

Keith Rubin had a banquet, Randy Showalter is at the Ontario convention.

DNR Representative: Al Stewart

Guests: John Barwacz (Grand Valley), Jim Harrington (White River), Anthony M. Decker (SW MI Longbeards), Senator Jason Allen, George Bench and Dan Potter (Beards & Spurs), Keith Tyrell, Dave Newhouse and Alger J. Cline (Huron-Manistee National Forest)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of July 19, 2008 were approved (Pete, Mike, carried).

Treasurer's Report

Troy reported that as of January 16, 2009, the General Fund has a total of \$21,749.94. The \$1 per member was recently added.

The Winter Survival Fund has \$3,379.98.

The Patch Program has \$76,592.24, with some Symposium printing costs still to be taken out.

The Treasurer's report was approved (Roger, Phil, carried).

NWTF Board and Staff Reports

Al Bobrofsky, National Board of Directors, reminded us that the NWTF Board is all volunteers, and oversees all aspects of this organization. Each Board member welcomes our input. There are 3 national meetings each year. The CEO, George Thornton, announced in December to the staff that the reorganization is completed. He reduced his own salary. There are 300 employees, some with changed job descriptions. The procedure for hiring field staff has changed. First local recommendations are considered, then a local interview, then an interview at Edgefield.

National event attendance is encouraged.

The Board has a new Treasurer, Vince Rosnow. Clear procedures are written for the handling of funds.

Regional Directors have updated procedures for banquets and reporting.

Michigan performs well in the national arena, and the RDs are highly ranked.

Al will not run for another term after this 2 year term. Think about a candidate from MI to run for this national position, and Al can discuss the requirements with him/her.

All the local board members are very much appreciated. We are encouraged to cooperate with the RDs as we work hard for the wild turkey.

Copies of the 2008 (ending July 31) annual report are available. There is more emphasis of regular membership since the numbers are down in 2008. We must wonder why 56% did not renew their membership.

Wheelin' Sportsmen and Women in the Outdoors continue to be subsidized, so it's important to continue to build these programs.

Again, Al thanks the volunteers and especially the state board members.

Steve Sharp is now the Regional Field Supervisor for MI and OH.

Project TOM is a national push to target our members and increase memberships.

With better communication links, the RDs will keep a current tally of chapter presidents and committees. Each board member should be assigned chapters in their area, with regular communication maintained. The RDs will assist with these assignments.

Steve will have a NWTF booth at the Deer and Turkey show at the Lansing Center on February 13-15. Volunteers are needed.

Tom Karsten is now the Regional Field Supervisor in Ontario, Canada.

Tom thanks the Big Rapids chapter for all their help at this convention.

For next year's convention, we would like to invite Dr. James Earl Kenamer.

Some new processes are in place for banquet reporting, and since federal grant money is involved, more paperwork is necessary

Scott Slajus suggests that an independent bank person be present the night of our banquets to receive the game, raffle, and auction money and make an accurate report.

Accuracy with money and memberships is vital on the night of the banquet.

It is critical to increase our memberships, since with falling numbers our political clout falls. We need to maintain our influence. Every person present at the banquet needs a membership. The best way to get memberships is the hand-to-hand method and personal invitation.

We appreciate all the volunteers of the NWTF as well as other reputable conservation groups. Our banquets are our opportunity for the volunteers to shine in our communities and to benefit the wild turkey.

Al Stewart, DNR Upland Game Bird Specialist and Technical Representative of the NWTF. In general, hunters are happy with the turkey hunting seasons. Input is always welcome.

Committee Reports

Fund Raising Committee

Ron Hopkins was disappointed in the gun raffle. Only \$815 net dollars was raised to benefit Winter Survival. Only 15 chapters participated. Beards and Spurs Chapter won the gun. The Gold Fusion gun is still in inventory. The committee will discuss member incentives for selling tickets.

Suggestions are welcome for improving sales to benefit Winter Survival. A Fall Festival focused on Winter Survival was suggested.

We have 15 knives of 2008 left. Today, we are asking \$65 to liquidate.

The new Marble knife for 2009 costs \$85. 50 are available now.

Troy Hopkins gave the Patch Program report. The database is up to date with all patches purchased or requested. This list is available from Troy, and can be useful

for new memberships. 3700 post cards were sent, notifying them that the new 2009 patches are available.

The 2009 patch design winner is Jonathan Kneiper. Sales are slightly up each year. 9,000 patches were ordered for this year.

The DNR is happy with this MI State Chapter Patch Project. Troy is again recognized for his hard work all year on the patches.

Special report from Senator Jason Allen. We must be concerned with the loss of membership in the MI Congress' hunting and conservation committees. Our new Legislature has lost allies due to term limits. There are 46 new legislators. As turkey hunters, we must make sure the past and present legislators are invited to our banquets. Hunting and fishing committees need contact from our conservation clubs and their members. Half of hunting committees lost membership. We may offer to testify for 20-30 minutes at the committee level when a topic concerns us, and in this way we may help decide state policies. Invite legislators to your hunts.

Senator Paxton has worked with Wolverine Power on the expansion of right of ways to benefit wildlife. This power company outreach is good for everyone. To save money, the prison component is more involved in manufacturing, and can be utilized in other ways. You Tube, Face Book, and Twitter are ways our youth can be aware of hunting, fishing, and conservation. Make sure we are present there!

The Lt. Governor's hunt is being planned for the spring. Steve is working on this project. Consider how to choose the recipient and share ideas with Steve.

Winter Survival Committee

Pete Demos is grateful for the state raffle. Chapter gun raffles are working very well. The money raised by chapters have paid for the corn requests for winter feeding. The Livingston County chapter raised \$800 and donated feeders. Good reports are coming in from the northern chapters. Some chapters are subsidizing the landowner's corn costs with the first \$4 paid by the chapter.

The January turkey count is difficult due to deep snow. The usual feeding pattern is changed this year. It is still important for the Wildlife Biologist to know how many turkeys you see and where they are.

Any chapter, not only winter feeding areas, can have a gun raffle to benefit Winter Survival. One will be used at the deer and turkey spectacular in Lansing. 5 guns are still available, with 3 chapters interested in raffles. Gun requests go through Pete or a committee member.

Ken Buchholtz reports that in the UP, Wildlife Unlimited is a feeding partner. Turkey numbers are increasing. To feed, there must be a minimum of 35 birds using approved feeders, on an emergency basis only. The cost share is 50% maximum, from 75% last year. Now feeding is more controlled and more efficient, and more people are taking care of their own feed, especially if they feed for viewing pleasure. With 25% assistance, most people can afford feed. The most money Winter Survival

will pay is \$4, so the chapter or individual pays the rest. The goal is to make this assistance obsolete.

The tree program with local biologists, NWTF staff and RDs, using money from the DNR restricted funds, USFS, and Winter Survival, is an optimal habitat plan. The 6-7 foot trees are used on private land that has turkeys, with the landowner's cooperation.

Bays de Noc chapter is cooperating with a NWTF pilot program for tree planting.

This is a practical long-term solution, so feeding should be on an emergency basis only.

We should use local newspapers to publicize our successes. Other wildlife groups are giving their good news reports to the public.

Be aware that in the northwest, law enforcement is aggressive about any feeding. Follow all the rules and use approved feeders only.

Pete has all the forms used for Winter Survival, and he is the one to whom all the information or questions should be directed.

The DNR web site has a link to Winter Survival.

Rules and Regulations Committee

Hugh Marx reports that the spring hunt recorded a harvest of 42,000 turkeys, our highest on record. MI was #5 in the nation for turkeys harvested.

Al Stewart reports that the spring license is available now. Special hunting opportunities are available at Ft. Custer and at Muskegon Wastewater for chapter youth hunts.

Hunter retention and memberships are a high priority, requiring our focus.

We are challenged to mentor new hunters, and interact with all segments, especially youth, women, and potential hunters. Think about restricted access places that have turkeys. Shiawassee has a great spring hunt on federal land for people with disabilities. Generally, regulations are stabilized with few changes. Note that MI has the least costly out of state license and longest turkey hunting season. We are considering a very cheap (\$1) youth license.

Spring regulations are satisfactory. Moving the fall turkey hunt date to small game season is being discussed. How can we encourage fall hunting? Is ZZ still an issue? Is there enough interest in a spring two-bird limit? We will discuss more at the next meeting. Remember that some changes would require a legislative change. Our interest and opinions are needed.

Super Fund Committee

Mike Kennedy handed out Super Fund chapter request/committee recommendation papers. Note that the Education boxes and the Hunting Heritage are no longer paid by the state chapter but by individual chapters. The Emergency Fund was decreased.

Some chapters still owe for seed, so that is taken from the 2009 Super Fund. The chapters set their priorities for Super Fund dollars, and no line items have preset dollar amounts. The state projects are helped by chapters who do not use all their Super Fund money.

These committee recommendations are accepted (Sam, Pete, carried).

The old green form is still used, but should be on line soon. When it is done by computer, it will be electronically signed and forwarded. Note that the RD does not complete the green forms- it is done by the chapters. The RD can advise chapters what monies are available for their Super Fund.

Many requests come late to the committee. When this process is done on line, requests will be processed quickly, although many projects, including those of the State Chapter, are funded annually. The committee may need to meet as often as quarterly, but for now, will meet annually.

Outreach Committee

Tom informed us of a recent change for outreach events. Each event has a reporting form which is filled in and given to the RD before and after the event. This is necessary for liability and insurance. If an insurance form is needed, take it from the web site and fill in the date and signature at least 8 weeks before the event.

Convention Committee

Jan reported that the location of this convention is Holiday Inn, Big Rapids due to a double booking at the Comfort Inn, Mt. Pleasant. Today's seminars are by Al Stewart, DNR, and Jim Cline, USFS. Preston Pittman, famous turkey caller, is our featured speaker. This event was publicized by the web site, chapter president and state board emails, chapter president's letters, and chapter president phone calls. The mailing included an invitation from Tom Karsten, banquet chair, Jan Kuhtic requesting donations, ticket information, a map, and Preston's biography. The schedule, menu, and awards were reviewed. We already enjoyed the Friday evening gathering space. We appreciate the contributing chapters, listed in the program.

The tentative date for 2010 is January 15 and 16 at this location. The committee of Tom, Jan and Phil, Gary Salmon, and Tony welcome any comments or suggestions about this location or future convention ideas.

For the future, we can consider a summer convention or location farther north.

Awards Committee

Herb reports that the awards are all set for tonight. Invites were sent to VIPs. Now we need scholarships from chapters sent to Herb by Feb. 1. We should all promote these scholarships and encourage our youth in conservation. Talk to school counselors, who do not often promote this scholarship. We are finding poor perception by teachers in schools unless one of us physically goes to the school.

Chapters earning the 5 star award will receive a patch collection. The national organization is trying to find ways to recognize 5-star chapters.

Conservation Seed, Seed Subsidy

Mike reports that Conservation Seed pick up date is tentatively set for April 4th. A letter will be sent to chapters telling them this date. This date and location (Ithaca) is a possible spring meeting time for this board.

Since the ban on feeding in the lower peninsula, more people are planting seed.

Approximately \$17,000 of chapter money is spent in MI on Conservation Seed, plus \$10,000 is spent by individuals for Seed Subsidy (offered by NWTF). Seed Subsidy orders are taken about February 1, on a first come, first served basis at half retail price.

Executive Decision

Sherlock Frederick of the Tuscola Longbeards will be reimbursed for the money he spent on JAKES boxes (Roger, Jan, carried). He will be informed of the Super Fund process.

Old Business

As discussed at the July meeting, the term for a board member should be 4 years, not 2 years. We know that members become more valuable with experience, and annual elections are not necessary. To transition into this, the 2009 new members will serve for three years (Pete, Mike, carried).

Last July, the board approved \$1500 for 5 women to attend the national WITO event in Edgefield. No money has been given. Jan knows that 6 women from MI attended, and asks that the money (\$250 each) be given to them (Tony, Roger, carried).

MUCC policy has changed for affiliate membership. In the past, 10 paid members earned us an affiliate chapter membership. Now, there is a group rate of \$150 for the club, or \$20 individual membership, or \$5 for the on line magazine. Pete to clarify rules, then we need to supply names if we are not already members through our own chapters. We will continue this discussion at the next meeting.

Other Business

Board meetings have been in January, July, and September in the past, but attendance is poor at times. With no September meeting, we could meet on July 25,

preferably at Cadillac. But meeting less often does not necessarily fulfill the intent of the board and accomplish our work. We agree that committing to meetings is a responsibility of each board member. We agreed by a show of hands that June 27 and August 29 would work, then changed June 27 to Tuesday, June 23rd from 10 am to 2 pm with lunch. The location will be announced (Bert, Ron, carried). An abbreviated meeting could still be held on April 4 with a representative from each committee present.

Mike Phillips has created a stained glass turkey for display. The RAM Center in Tustin is making a new conference room, and could possibly install this. A plaque would acknowledge the artist and the donor.

Also under review is the Johnson Center in Cadillac, which is making a turkey display with a lighted studio ceiling.

Both projects promote the wild turkey in cooperation with the DNR, and are designed by architects. Dan Potter will offer to assist with these projects on our behalf, and asks the board to authorize funds to proceed. The money would be used for all materials and labor necessary for both projects, starting with the Johnson Center. The board will give up to \$3,500 for completion of both projects (Sam, Tony, carried).

Jim Harrington thanks this board for the work the chapters do, especially the Turkey Hunters Care. He is hearing good feedback.

Steve reports that Dale Elshof wants to use the JAKES Education boxes with the Explorer program. She also wants turkey legs, beards, etc. with harvest information. Turkeyville Toms will donate 7 boxes, and more are welcome from other chapters

Al Bobrofsky comments that at Cabela's when he worked the turkey booth, he heard many comments from people who miss The Gobbler.

Phil reminds us that the state chapter has bought the NASP medals and trophies for 5 years, and they will be delivered to Mary Emmons in March.

Tom sent a request to the board for a video camera, power point projector, and digital camera to be used at banquets and NWTF promotions. Estimates are here. We approved this for Carole a year ago, and it was not purchased. We now transfer this approval to Tom in the amount of \$1500 (Bert, Roger, carried).

The Executive Committee will consider how the property of the state chapter, such as trailers, computers, projectors, is insured.

Dave Newhouse of the USFS appreciates the Super Fund dollars, and notes that these funds are matched by the USFS and other agencies. Jim Cline from the USFS is giving a seminar today. The tree habitat promoted by this state chapter is very agreeable with the Forest Service. There is a national initiative called Kids in the Woods, which can be combined with our JAKES events, and can be done on Federal property. The USFS staff can be helpful to us at our events.

We are reminded to not to plant food plots on federal land, not to cut or plant trees, and we are encouraged to get this information out to all our members.

George Bench encourages the accountability of all persons, including volunteers. A past president's notebook, as well as treasurer and secretary guidelines could be helpful. He suggests representation from other conservation clubs at our meetings, and improved communications to all our members, maybe by sending correspondence to all chapters by email. A newsletter could replace the Gobbler. A central mailing location for all correspondence would assure that nothing gets lost. Consider a rendezvous of turkey hunters to camp, shoot, eat, and tell stories.

The Executive Committee has appointed Jim Slajik from Bay County to fill a Region 3 position. Now the available openings are one in Region 2 (vacated by Tim Miller) and one in Region 3 (to fill the term of Sue Tabor).

Congratulations to the MI State Chapter NWTF, recognized by the Wildlife Division of the MI DNR as an outstanding partner.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn (Roger, Pete, carried).

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Kuhtic, Secretary