

This is a draft copy of minutes, subject to change and approval at our next meeting

**Michigan State Chapter Board of Directors
National Wild Turkey Federation**

January 21, 2017

Art Pelon, President, called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Art led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Gary led us in a prayer.

Roll Call and Introductions

Present Region 1: Ken Buchholtz

Present Region 2: Pete Demos, Frank Darling, Brian McPhail, Evan Traynor

Present Region 3: Art Pelon, Gary Salmon, Tony Snyder, Jan Kuhtic, Dave Godley, Phil Kuhtic, Bert VanderWeele, Hugh Marx, Jon Gray, Jonathan Edgerly

Absent Region 3: Frank Brazynetz

NWTF Staff Present: Tom Karsten, Regional Director, Ryan Boyer, Biologist, Steve Sharp, R3 Coordinator, Aaron Shaughnessy, Regional Director, Jason Lupardus, Conservation Field Manager

Others present: Al Stewart (NWTF Technical Committee, MI DNR Upland Game Birds), Mike Kennedy (Super Fund, Conservation Seed), Ryan Longanback (Conservation Seed), Al Bobrofsky (former National Board member), Michelle Pelon, Ann Bobrofsky, Martha Darling, Mike Orzol, Sandy Snyder, Johanna Dart, Chris Hillman

Correspondence, Agenda, and Minutes

The minutes of the October 6 Conference Call meeting were approved (Jonathan, Gary, carried).

MUCC information on the federal wolf de-listing bill.

The agenda is approved with one addition, State Turkey Calling Contest (Dave, Pete, carried)

Treasurer's Report (Tony)

The bank for the State Chapter is changed from Macatawa Bank to Kellogg Community Credit Union.

The beginning balance is \$21,203.14. Deposits \$82,697.56, expenses \$92,293.05. Ending balance \$11,707.65.

The amount of \$1,956.50 was deposited at KCCC, and no expenses came from this account. The rest of the transition is now complete with the transfer of funds. The check records were shown to us.

The Treasurer's report is approved (Pete, Bert, carried).

NWTF Staff Reports

Becki reported that the NWTF had a great year, exceeding our Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt goals. Thanks to all for the hard work. The money that supports

our mission is very much appreciated. This year has seen the greatest growth ever. Some staff were shifted, many successful partnerships have been formed. The NWTF is the conservation group of choice. Many states envy MI for the R3 efforts, and look to us as an example.

On the national level, we are watching policies for forest reform. Some active forest management money is used for fire suppression, which worries us. Part of the energy bill passed the House, but is now stuck in the Senate. Some new appointments were made at the national level, so we are hoping for active managers for habitat and access.

The NWTF national board will meet in MI in August, and will visit some of our habitat projects.

Dave reported that he sees real progress in the field, thanks to great volunteers. Our many partners appreciate our attitude and cooperation.

Adult memberships increased by 8% last year, mostly through the banquet system. Remember that as our Super Fund increases, more goes toward our mission of Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt. Our R3 is a guiding light for other states.

We are at a crossroads for maintaining our heritage. We need extra effort now to gain new hunters, reactivate hunters, and find more places to hunt. Thanks for all we do, and thanks for our patience with new Regional Directors. We are now fully staffed. With this stability, we are set to grow.

Jason is happy with the NWTF staff in MI, and believes that the present growth will make us greater than we even imagine. Outside funding may increase staff and opportunities. Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt is leading the way.

Tom reports an exceptional year. MI now has 59 chapters. Our challenge is to target new chapters, one in Gaylord to start. Thanks to the chapters that worked on recruitment to increase their banquet committees, a proven strategy for better banquets.

One of our NWTF members, Scott Van Single, is a new MI legislator.

The local newspaper will be on site at tonight's banquet. We can all look for opportunities to promote our mission.

Adult and sponsor memberships are up this year. Keep working on upper level memberships.

Lloyd Edwards has replaced Skip Markland. He lives in Ohio.

Tom was the recipient of a "Top Gun" award, given to only the top RDs in the nation.

Aaron reports a chapter restart in Black River with new officers.

MSU has a college chapter. Hoping for more college chapters. In existing chapters, committees need to grow.

Aaron will work on more State Banquet representation from the east side.

Thanks for all the encouragement.

Ryan reports the habitat work has exceeded our goals. We are short on access acres (goal 10,000 acres in 10 years), so we are working with the DNR and more private land-owners to create more access.

Our grant applications of last October netted the NWTF 30% of the available funds from the State of MI. and revenue from increased hunting license fees. Our planned projects will influence 1000 acres in the Lower Peninsula, including work at Flat River, and the Barry State Game Area. MI National Guard is a partner to maintain areas for training while enhancing wildlife habitat at Fort Custer and Grayling.

The Karner Blue butterfly project at Manistee continues, with some of our partners present at the banquet tonight. More money is available for our match.

The most recent project money match is 17:1!

In the next 3-5 years, we know of at least a million dollars to be available for matching. Our kiosks are already funded, and we found a high school Shop teacher in Belding willing to build and place these. Three will be completed by spring.

Ryan will prepare a progress report that RDs can take to chapters. Our message must be clear and consistent, and our policies aligned with our mission.

Ryan is our policy communicator, and welcomes direct calls. Hopefully, we can connect more with local chapters about our STH, STH and the use of NWTF money for gaining matching funds from our many partners.

Maybe we can develop the "Adopt a Wildlife Project" with QDMA or other groups. One project in the UP had \$1,000 matched with \$15,000 (Ken's area).

Steve reports that we will receive a national award for most hunters recruited. In the past, most efforts were geared toward youth, but it was a "once and done" experience. We realize it takes multiple contacts to make a hunter, so the focus is more toward age 18-44 adults with families. Any youth events will welcome the parents/adults for training.

Our challenge is to record our successes. Any hunter ed. Instructors need to come to our banquets. 60% of their class counts for new hunters recruited.

There is a form for banquet use (shown to us).

At state parks, turkey clinics were held, and many who attended had never shot a gun before. The top 10 shooters were invited by mail to shoot at the Demmer Center on March 12.

13 organized hunts were held in 2016. Cabelas Outdoors helped with funds.

Safety was emphasized, many learned to use guns, target shoot, and hunt pheasants, turkeys, and deer. State land and the Rose Lake were used.

At the banquet, the winners of the mentor and mentee guns will be announced. Each will receive a Remington 870.

An up to date database is made for mentors and mentees. Future hunts include a turkey hunt in Barry County, new events in the UP and Manistee area. More help is needed to create and carry out more events around the state.

When the JAKES Take Aim trailer is used, please take pictures when it is received. If any damage happens, take pictures. One trailer is parked at Frank's place. Reserve the trailer through Steve. When it is used at state parks, 3

people are needed. We are still partnering with Pheasants Forever, and their logo is on the papers along with the NWTF logo. At the Ultimate Sports Show in Grand Rapids, Steve will share the booth space. Suggested that mentored hunt information be added to the turkey guide book. Steve asked that we be represented at all the sport shows with at least 3 workers. The Deer and Turkey show is the same date as the national convention. We have 3 volunteers, but would like more. We need to develop a uniform card to capture information at all events. Of course, all events must be registered by an RD.

DNR Report (Al Stewart)

Apply now for your turkey permits, deadline is February 1. The turkey regulations are set. We are satisfied that our opinions were heard. The new 3-year regulations are approved that we helped to forge. The habitat grants which we secured are very competitive – thanks to Ryan for his success on our behalf. Three Turkey Tract kiosks are in the works, one planned for the future. Keep reporting any wildlife diseases. Avian flu is a concern. The Wildlife pathology lab stands ready to accept any dead animals or answer questions. This winter has been good for the turkeys, the last spring hatch was good, but we don't expect to reach the past high population numbers. At the Willow Run Airport, turkeys are a problem. Trapping and local transfer is being considered. Thanks to the NWTF who supported the chair and table purchase for the new Rose Lake shooting facility. The DNR is pleased to work with Ryan and Steve. The NWTF leads the way with the focus on STH2. We and other NGOs are making a difference. We hope for more access in the northern Lower Peninsula. Both turkey sighting reports and hunting reports are helpful but not mandatory. Our partnership with the DNR has improved. The Director and others are asking our opinion.

Board of Directors (Art)

In Region 1 there is a vacancy.
In Region 2 there is a vacancy.
Frank Brazynetz will not seek reelection.
Dave, Bert, and Jon will serve another term (2017-2020) (Phil, Gary, carried).
For the Region 3 vacancy (2017-2020) we have an applicant Zach Mulder from the Highbanks chapter. He can be nominated now (Bert, Gary, carried), appointed and approved in July.

Committee assignments remain the same with Zach to join the State Convention Committee.

Budget Committee (Tony)

The 2016 budget was shown with actual expenses, non-budget expenses, and 2016 budget amount:

	Exec	Mtgs	Seed	Media	Outr	Hab	Conv	Call	Award	Staff	Misc	Banq	Total
Actual	1,500	280		2,174	6,834	3,788	1,856	934	6,862	1,082			25,314
Non-b			16,164								38,150	17,997	
2016	2,000	1,050	25	2,500	4,000	3,200	2,500	1,500	5,000	2,500			24,275
2017	2,000	1,050	25	2,500	4,500	3,200	2,500	1,000	5,000	2,500			24,275

For 2017 keep Awards the same, watch spending. Reduce State Calling contest by \$500, move to Outreach. Many expenses under Outreach for Sportsmen's Caucus discussed, value of legislative relationships and defending our hunting heritage, can cut some costs. Otherwise, keep budget the same for 2017 (Hugh, Jon, carried).

Conservation Seed (Ryan Longanbach)

2,900 acres were impacted with Conservation Seed with 40 chapters participating. All beans will be Round Up Ready for 2017.

For early planting, an oak fire mix (oats, peas, turnips) can be offered. Buckwheat was suggested.

PR and Media (Jon)

Links will be available on the web site for R3, reporting events, and mentoring. For our own protection from anti hunters, we will post less personal information on the web site. We made our preferences known, and the web site will be updated.

Habitat Enhancement (Pete)

Note that Habitat Enhancement used to be Winter Survival. We still use the old request form that includes corn feeding, although only a few requests have been received.

We have planted crab apple trees for years, and we see birds using them. We are anticipating the red oak blight, and recommend white oak planted far apart or the MSU hybrid oak. Aaron will talk to MSU to secure these for our planting.

We need a new source for trees/seedling planting. County Conservation Districts were recommended for good trees and fair prices.

Ken said that the Wheelin' Sportsmen hunt where planting projects have been completed.

Convention Committee (Jan)

The banquet is set up, thanks to a great crew on Friday. We enjoyed hospitality last night. The ticket count is about 145. We have Dave Mahlke and Becki Humphries from NWTF, speakers Stewart, Boyer, Sharp for the afternoon, and many awards to give at the banquet.

We are contracted at Holiday Inn Big Rapids for the 2018 banquet. Any offers are welcome after that. We prefer lodging and banquet facilities under one roof, with reasonable room and food prices.

We mailed two information packages to each chapter, then made follow-up calls. We have 19 Core Package underwriters and 6 more chapter donations. We appreciate help on games, raffles, and auction bids. The turkey calls are different – we welcome your response.

Super Fund (Mike, Tony)

The Super Fund total contribution amount is \$98,280.68. 20% to Focus projects is \$19,330. The 2016 carry-over is \$13,809, which reflects chapter contributions. Some chapters don't use their available Super Fund, so their money goes to state projects or other chapters.

The requested amount is \$108,236.96, which was approved after adjustments.

R3 is funded. Outreach is funded by WITO and WS events.

Each chapter's Super Fund amount is known by the RD about a month after the banquet, so each chapter should balance requests with their available money.

This year, some chapters gave up their money to help out other chapters.

All requests are processed and approved by NWTF by the end of January.

Thanks to Mike for the spreadsheet and the hard work.

Patch Report (Art)

Troy reported that 8,000 patches were ordered for \$6,065.61. With postage and supplies, the total expense is \$8,461.26. 4,857 patches were sold for \$24,288.49. Total patch profit \$15,827.23.

Rules and Regulations (Hugh)

At the NRC meeting, we made our opinion known on the proposed turkey hunting date change (we supported "no change"). At the last minute, MUCC supported a date change. Pete will investigate the reason for this puzzling position by MUCC. The Saturday opening and date change ideas were defeated. We are pleased with the final outcome.

Awards and Scholarships (Bert)

All requests for scholarships must go through a chapter.

The application dates are January 1 to state competition, February 1 to national competition. Bert will accept state applications till February 1. All applicants are considered. The number of applicants is down. Both scholarship winners are here tonight. Jon and Bert will clarify the deadlines on the web site.

Al Bobrofsky will receive the Roger Latham award at the national convention.

Turkeyville Toms will receive an award for their Disabled Deer Hunt.

Old Business

The NWTF license plate bill will probably die, but might be tagged on another bill in the future. It is possible to re-generate, but the outcome is in doubt.

The Leadership meeting in Edgefield in October was a very good experience for the 9 from MI that attended. They saw the Palmetto Shooting Complex, toured the whole property, networked with other volunteers, attended meetings on how to improve banquets, and learned about the current national initiatives. All the staff at headquarters had open doors, and warmly welcomed everyone.

New Business

Super Fund allocations need to be prioritized by the chapters. In some cases, the requests did not match the available funds. The committee feels that the priority should be mission-focused. Where possible, we need our money to go toward money-matched projects. Turkey Hunters Care is an example of a cause with no mission focus, but it is a popular chapter request.

We may consider suggested caps on some Super Fund requests, such as Turkey Hunters Care and Outreach events.

The state has worthy projects that are under-funded. Should each chapter share the cost? Many chapters are not aware of the state priorities and the money matches. Some other states have established caps for some requests. NWTF 5 Star is still active, but there are no incentives. Should we make a state 5 Star based on STH, STH? The state board needs to communicate again with local chapters, and all the chapters need the same information about local, state, and national priorities based on our mission.

Ryan offered to help with this communication and establishing caps. Phil offered to create a tool which matches state board members with every local chapter. The Super Fund committee, plus Hugh and Gary will propose Super Fund priorities, and prepare a communication plan. This discussion will continue at our July meeting.

The state still pays half the bill for Conservation Seed. Consider total funding by the user, which would result in more than \$14,000 more to use for focus projects.

Brian, Pigeon River State Forest rep, requests crab apple trees for certain sites, along with volunteers for planting. No objections, granted.

Jonathan will help transport trees to Ryan for planting.

The JAKES trailer has a new dent in the diamond plate. It does not impact its function. Bert will repair. One older trailer is still used for storage, and Tom still has a trailer.

Everyone who uses a JTA trailer is responsible for its care, and must return it in good shape. Steve will educate the volunteers who store them so they are checked often.

We saw the State Turkey Calling Contest March 18 flier. Note that some categories are eliminated. Judges are still needed. Last year 7 callers were qualified and advanced to national competition. Instead of trophies, winners will get a slate call. The date is the same day as the Ultimate Sport Show, and the same date as the Camo Ball for Cystic Fibrosis (Grand Valley runs the games for this event, which donates proceeds to MSU for CF research).

Al Bobrofsky thanks us for the Roger Latham nomination.
Chris Hillman, Learn to Hunt mentor, appreciates the experiences of mentoring and loves the program.

Adjournment

Adjournment at 1:25pm (Pete, Evan, carried).

Our next meeting is July 15th at the Rose Lake shooting complex.

Submitted by Jan Kuhtic, Secretary

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