

**MI State Chapter Board of Directors
National Wild Turkey Federation
July 16, 2016**

Art Pelon, President, called the meeting to order at 9:12 AM.
Art led us in 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
Absent Region 2: Brian McPhail
Present Region 3: Art Pelon, Gary Salmon, Tony Snyder, Jan Kuhtic, Dave Godley, Phil Kuhtic, Bert VanderWeele, Hugh Marx
Absent Region 3: Frank Brazynetz, Jon Gray, Jonathan Edgerly
NWTF Staff present: Tom Karsten, Regional Director; Ryan Boyer, NWTF Biologist; Steve Sharp R3 Coordinator
Others Present: Al Stewart (NWTF Technical, MI DNR Upland Game Bird Spec.) Mike Kennedy (Super Fund, Conservation Seed), Evan Traynor (Reed City), Ryan Longanbach (Conservation Seed), Anna Mitterling (MUCC)

Correspondence, Agenda, and Minutes

The minutes of the January 16, 2016 board meeting were reviewed and approved (Ken, Bert, carried).

Dean Molner thanks us for Officer of the Year recognition and the trip to the Nashville convention.

Jordan Burroughs and Johanna Dart thank us for the mentored hunt.

Roscommon Archery Club thanks us for support given.

We received a letter asking us to support FFA.

Agenda additions: FFA support, Capital Area Sportsmen's Club, Glasson Foundation, UP habitat project in Marquette. The agenda is approved with these additions (Pete, Gary, carried)

Treasurer's Report (Tony)

The Habitat Enhancement account had a balance of \$1,322.44 in January. One check was written for \$1,000. The current balance is \$322.44.

The General Fund had a balance of \$21,303.14 in January. Deposits including R3 and Conservation Seed were \$36,399.12. Checks written were \$39,855.29. Details of checks were provided. The current balance is \$17,846.97. The Treasurer's report is approved (Pete, Bert, carried).

We discussed the Legislative hunt expense. This is time spent with our legislators who make decisions affecting our hunting and fishing rights. We can offset some expense by using other sources for the gifts.

With Tony as Treasurer, we need to change the bank location and order new checks. Suggestion to make it a bank present throughout all of MI. Checks may be signed by the Executive Board. This bank change, at Tony and Gary's discretion, is approved (Bert, Dave, carried).

NWTF Staff Reports

Tom Karsten reports that his chapters in west MI had a good year with many improvements. Recruitment meetings were held to identify new committee members. In Fremont, they doubled their gross and had 6 new members on their committee.

Aaron Shaughnessy is the new Regional Director.

Skip Markland will retire in the fall. The Regional Director position for Ohio and part of MI is posted.

We need to identify new people in West Branch, since the chapter has transformed into a gun range group.

Thanks for the care and prayers for wife Kathy, and please continue as she gains strength.

Ryan Boyer reports that in Daron's area the 2016 banquets are good with increases in memberships and net banquet revenue. There are 4 chapters in the U.P. His focus is on committee recruitment and targeting new communities (Iron Mountain, Crystal Falls).

Bays deNoc chapter leads the nation in hunts for the disabled.

One focus project has habitat work visible from M95.

Ryan reports that the Manistee agreement is finalized at \$500,000. Lots of Oak Savannah habitat work is done with Wolverine Power and the U.S. Forest Service.

In the U.P. Hiawatha area, ruffed grouse areas are enhanced, similar to the Ottawa project. Areas are cleared, planned, and ready for plantings.

In Ottawa, a 600 acre project was done a year ago.

MI Turkey Tracts new kiosk was vandalized 3 days after it was placed for display. It will be repaired and placed in a different location.

MI legislators that are interested in the Legislative Hunt are influential policy makers that we need to keep advocating for us. We can find funds to help finance the Legislative Hunt.

We are still hoping for NWTF license plates in MI.

Hunting Works for Michigan is a non-profit national organization of partners who support hunting and the shooting sports. The partners include businesses, chambers of commerce, hunting organizations including 12 NWTF state chapters, Pheasants Forever, Ruffed Grouse Society, Bass Pro Shops, Cabela's, and many small businesses and groups. There is no cost to join. A partner can attend meetings, sign letters to the editor, etc. The web site can report state specific statistics about hunting, shooting sports and their impact on the state economy. This group is consistent with our mission, and may be beneficial to Turkey Tracts, or may help identify future focus areas. Ryan will email a brochure to the board. Motion for the MI State Chapter NWTF to join as a partner (Ken, Bert, carried, subject to review by NWTF).

We are invited to help prune trees on 300 acres in Grayling on August 7 and 20, 2016. 90 crab apple trees will be planted on August 20th. Camp Grayling will be enhanced by wildlife plantings where openings are used by the military. NWTF will contribute to this 760 acre, 2 year project.

In Barry State Game Area, NWTF and USFS will cooperate with an oak stands project to create better habitat. Of this \$125,000 cost, NWTF pays \$90,000, USFS pays \$25,000.

Steve Sharp, R3 Coordinator, attended a Wildlife Institute. Our recruitment, retention, reactivation model is recognized nationwide. MI has been successful with partnerships with Pheasants Forever, Gourmet Gone Wild, Hal & Jean Glasson Foundation, MI DNR, etc. The 3 year contracted position is funded by the NWTF, local NWTF chapters, Pheasants Forever, the Glasson Foundation, and MI DNR. All parties are satisfied at this time. MI is second in the top ten states for recruited hunters.

Learn to Hunt seminars encourage family participation in all aspects of the hunt.

Wheelin' Sportsmen enjoys many successes with Ken of Bays deNoc Chapter.

The youth turkey hunts of Flat River and Turkeyville Toms were successful.

Small game hunts will be tried, similar to Learn to Hunt Wild Turkey.

Hunting mentors will be screened and certified, with a goal of 1 per chapter state wide.

Mentors will be nominated by the state board or NWTF staff, appointed by the state chapter president for a two year term, renewable. Background checks will be done by the MI State Police.

Steve is working on a brochure for R3 for national use, including etiquette, code of conduct, etc.

The target audience for R3 is young professionals age 18-35, past WITO members, MSU Fish & Wildlife Club, grad students, Sport & RV Show attendees, and DNR non hunting employees.

The JAKES Take Aim trailer has been busy at events and at the state parks. The best shooters were invited to the Demmer Center for a shoot-off at no cost to us. Winners earned certificates and were invited to be a NWTF member and visit the NWTF web site. Chapters can use the database of best shooters created by Steve.

At state parks, 75% of shooters have never shot a gun before. Steve forwards useful information to Regional Directors and local chapters. He hopes for 4 trailer units in the state to cover the many events.

Gary agrees with Steve on the need for booths at all sport and RV shows and all hunting expos because of the wide exposure to hunting and the NWTF.

MI DNR Report (Al Stewart)

Al reports that the DNR is happy to help Steve with Field to Fork and the Learn to Hunts. The spring wild turkey regulations are being considered now. The fall regulation comment period is done. Many are happy with the current hunting regulations. A proposal to include a weekend before the current season had negative responses from the NRCS, DNR, NWTF, MI Turkey Hunters, and favorable responses from MUCC. The process considers all comments of those interested in turkeys, and plans for 3 years out. Our negative response is because we desire a quality hunt. The original start date was established by hen setting activity. The State Board voted to oppose the weekend start of the spring turkey hunting season (Pete, Phil, carried).

The DNR of VA and other eastern states confirm the reality of turkey number decline, and are studying the reasons with other representatives nationwide.

The MI DNR offers wildlife habitat grants, and Ryan can help us obtain them.

Habitat Enhancement (Pete)

Pete reports many successes with habitat planting, including the Atlanta area oak and crab apple trees (850 planted). Black Mountain planted 14,350 trees with the help of a MUCC donation. Recommended fertilizer is 6/24/24 for good fruiting.

If corn feeding is necessary, the Enhancement Fund pays half.

More birds are helped since food plots and tree plantings are in place. The DNR considers these plantings a priority.

Awards and Scholarships (Bert)

The scholarships were awarded in January, and 2 have been chosen for January of 2017. We need to push our high schools to offer these scholarships. The first place is \$2,500, second place is \$1,000.

Think about nominations for outstanding service, preservationist, corporate, etc. now.

Board of Director Positions (Art)

A Region 2 vacancy remains for the 2014-2017 term. Evan Traynor is interested in this position, and presented his signatures. Evan lives in Reed City, is a military veteran, works at the 911 dispatch and fire department, is an active hunter, attends many turkey banquets, and founded the Reed City NWTF chapter. He is active with JAKES events, has hosted district workshops, and helps at the annual state banquet. We welcome Evan to the Region 2 position on the state board for the remainder of the 2014-2017 term (Bert, Pete, carried).

A Region 1 vacancy remains with no interest expressed. Ken and Daron will seek a suitable candidate.

Conservation Seed (Mike Kennedy)

Gross Conservation Seed sales were about \$50,000. Only 2 chapters owe for seed. We need to remind the people who picked up corn to complete the Monsanto release form. In the future the release should be signed on pick up day. These completed forms need to go to the NWTF national office.

Ryan has forms for 2017 seed. Only the corn and sunflowers are handled by NWTF.

New seed is available for a little more money. Next year Round Up Ready soy beans will be available. Seed order deadline is December 1, 2016.

Outreach (Tony)

The Outreach Fund has \$12,160. For outreach events, we have been requesting funds using Super Fund forms, but the money is not from Super Fund. Events must be registered by the Regional Director to be eligible for Outreach funds.

Convention (Jan)

The 2017 state chapter convention is set for January 20 and 21, 2017 at the Holiday Inn Big Rapids. All board members should plan to be active at the convention. We have asked a speaker from NWTF to attend.

Super Fund (Mike Kennedy)

Super Fund requests for 2017 are due to Mike on December 1, 2016 but may be done earlier. Last year's Super Fund was about \$118,000. The Emergency Fund has \$15,000 still available for this year.

The spreadsheet shows all the Super Fund requests and what was approved. Note that the 20% from each chapter going to the Focus areas will be a line item. Note also that "funded through Outreach" does not assume that the request has been processed.

Ryan is preparing a new page 2 on the form for habitat requests, to be added to the present SF form. He will get it to web site (Jon).

Patch Report (Mike)

The expense for 8,000 patches, postage and supplies is \$8,461.26. Revenue for 4,539 patches sold is \$22,696.89.

Patch profit is \$14,235.63, which is down. Several reminders have been sent to previous buyers.

The next patch design will be chosen soon.

Rules and Regulations (Hugh)

Our membership is satisfied with the current hunting situation. We need to watch the MUCC resolution, since it is not in line with our expressed opinion. We need to be present at the NRC meeting, especially to voice our objection to the weekend start of the spring turkey hunt.

We are concerned with the impact of CWD on hunting in MI.

We are very concerned with safety in the field while hunting, so we oppose the use of hand held turkey fans ("reefing" or "fanning"). We will express this position to Dean Molnar (DNR Law Division). We believe it is now considered illegal, but need to state our position firmly (Hugh, Gary, carried).

Finance and Budget (Tony)

No report today. A budget page will be ready for the September meeting.

Old Business

Guns may not be owned by any chapter or the state chapter. Any gun not used must be returned to NWTF.

We will discontinue the MI Outdoor News ad, since we have seen no return for our \$2,500. We benefit more from good reporting in local newspapers.

Gary managed the state turkey calling contest and a turkey workshop. The booth was free (usually \$1,800), and he uses volunteers to judge and make/donate prizes. Even the grand prize is donated, saving us lots of money. Only \$900 was spent, some on a new flier. From this contest, seven persons were advanced to the Grand National Turkey Calling contest. Many turkey patches are sold at the booth. Motion to continue to cover all expenses for the state calling contest up to \$1,500 (Phil, Tony, carried).

The MI NWTF license plate (SB264) is moving in committee, thanks to P. McGregor, Rusty, and John Walsh. This bill will probably die or get tagged onto another bill.

MI Turkey Tracts has been successful with state natural resources money, including the license restructuring funds. Outstanding bird hunting has been created through specific activities. The Iron Bell walking trail, wanted by Gov. Snyder, is another benefit. MI Turkey Tracts, which stems from the extremely successful GEMS project, has helped the STH, STH partnerships. NWTF's biologist Ryan helps to set goals and manage habitat in the state game areas. On April 13, the Allegan Turkey Tracts was celebrated with a new kiosk showing the outcome of our work, especially wildlife benefits. The signs and layout were a collaboration with MI DNR and NWTF, with some local sponsors offering discounts at their businesses. This kiosk was vandalized after 3 days, and even with a reward of \$5,000 posted, there are no leads to catch the offenders. Next year, areas of Flat River and Holly will benefit. In the 2017 spring turkey hunting guide, MI Turkey Tracts will be featured. This will help to share our information with a bigger audience and showcase our success. The damaged kiosk will be fixed or replaced, and 2 more will be made at a cost of \$750 per kiosk (materials \$500, printing \$250 each) or \$1,500 since the first one is paid for (Gary, Dave, carried).

The Grand Valley Chapter NWTF helps with the Hunt for a Cure Cystic Fibrosis benefit in the spring. This year the benefit raised over \$92,000 for research at MSU.

New Business

Mike Kennedy asked us to consider changing how we charge for Conservation Seed. Of the 40 chapters that get seed, 17 use Super Fund money. The average taken from Super Fund for seed is \$17,000. Usually the chapter Super Fund pays half and the recipient pays the other half. Consider cash only, not Super Fund at all. More money would be in Super Fund. Now 20% of each chapter's Super Fund goes into the MI focus projects, but with money not going for seed, that amount could increase, and the money maximized by the matching funds and grants. If individuals pay for their seed, they would likely use it more responsibly.

Comments: Some banquets offer the seed sales to gain members. This has been a great benefit of membership in many chapters. MI is still vulnerable, and needs this seed planted. If seed costs more, although it is discounted, the sales would decrease. Many chapters are rebuilding, and need every benefit possible to offer. Possibly other sources could subsidize seed sales. The Super Fund form's wording would have to change, so we would have to educate and communicate any changes.

The green form will be used if the Super Fund pays half, as before. An order form only will be used if the recipient pays the whole cost. The chapter may decide how the seed is paid for. Mike will clarify on the forms.

Steve needs supplies for the JAKES trailer, and money for certificates and mailing, or about \$40 per event. Also the trailer needs service and guns need to be replaced. We established \$2,500 before, but need to bump the amount to \$3,000 for 2017 (Gary, Frank, carried).

We will continue to support the Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council membership for \$750 a year (Gary, Hugh, carried).

The NWTF is offering a Leadership conference in Edgefield, SC on October 13-16, 2016. Conference cost is \$195. With travel and lodging, the cost will be about \$650 each to attend. We want to send 8-12 from MI. We could use the Outreach Fund or Emergency Fund to finance this. We will budget \$8,500 (Evan, Ken, carried). Tom, Aaron, and Skip will suggest names, and Tom will get names to NWTF.

We will sponsor a MI Sportsmen's Caucus meal, raffle gift, and presentation for not over \$1,000 (Gary, Dave, carried).

A large habitat project will be done in Marquette and Delta Counties this fall. This is a multi-partner, \$15,000 undertaking. Although this is usually a Super Funded item, we will give the Bays de Noc Gobblers \$1,000 for their cost share (Phil, Gary, carried).

FFA requests that we pay the \$500 we committed earlier. Tony will take care of it out of Super Fund.

Steve reports that the Glasson Foundation has approved \$30,000 for repairs at the Capital Area Sportsmen's Club, but they may give only to 501c3 organizations. We will accept the grant money and pay for the repairs. We could use the range for hunter recruitment or shooting practice. The legality of this move has been checked. We will accept \$30,000 from the Glasson Foundation, deposit it, and pay for the repairs as the bills come in, with careful accounting (Tony, Dave, carried).

Steve reports that with the mentor hunt raffle, the mentor and mentee can both win a gun at the 2017 state convention. See Steve for more details.

Mike reports that the Conservation Seed distribution has been making money, thousands of dollars some years. He suggests that any profit go to the MI focus projects. So any profit from 2016 will go to the general fund, be tracked and used for 2017 focus projects (Dave, Ken, carried).

Ryan has arranged for a joint meeting of the IN and MI State Boards on September 16-18 at Ft. Custer with 2 nights' lodging. The meeting on the 17th would have NWTF staff present. Time would be provided for each board's separate agendas.

Guest Anna Mitterling from MUCC is the Wildlife Cooperative Coordinator for MI. She presented the benefits of wildlife cooperatives, including social engagement, hunter satisfaction, greater areas of quality landscape management, shared resources, and more access to support. If we decide to become a partner, we could improve habitat, hunting, and neighbor relationships, as QDMA, Pheasants Forever, MI DNR, and MUCC have done already. She asks the MI NWTF to join, and stands ready to help any individuals who want to develop a cooperative in their area. Cooperatives have been around for up to 15 years, can involve up to 10,000 acres, and have 25-150 members.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 1:50 PM (Art, Jan, carried).

Minutes submitted by Jan Kuhtic

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