

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

January 17, 2015

Tony Snyder, President, called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM.  
Tony led us in a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call and Introductions**

Present Region 1: Ken Buchholtz

Present Region 2: Pete Demos, Bob Garner

Absent Region 2: Barry Danks, Jim Szilagyi

Present Region 3: Tony Snyder, Art Pelon, Gary Salmon, Jan Kuhtic, Dave Godley, Phil Kuhtic, Bert VanderWeele, Ron Hopkins, Hugh Marx, Frank Brazynetz, Jon Gray

Absent Region 3: Garry Biniecki

Guests: Ryan Longanback, Conservation Seed, Al Bobrofsky, Former NWTF National Board, Al Stewart, MI DNR Game Bird and NWTF Technical Rep., Fred Nordman, Bays de Noc Gobblers, and Frank Darling, Elk Country Gobblers

Present NWTF Staff: Steve Sharp, Senior Regional Director, Tom Karsten, Regional Director, Skip Markland, Regional Director, Ryan Boyer, Regional Biologist

**Correspondence, Agenda, and Minutes (Tony)**

Correspondence: Barry Danks notified Tony that he is resigning from this board. We accept his resignation with regrets.

The minutes of September 13, 2014 were approved (Ron, Gary, carried).

The agenda is approved with two additions: MI Outdoor News, and MI State turkey calling contest.

**Treasurer's Report (Gary)**

The Habitat Enhancement account has a balance of \$1,612.44 with no deposits or withdrawals.

The General fund account had a balance Sept. 2014 of \$16,999.52. Deposits totaled \$3,792.39 and checks were \$1,200.00 for a balance of \$19,591.91 on January 15, 2015. Note that part of the balance is reserved for the Conservation Seed. The Treasurer's report is accepted (Pete, Dave, carried).

**NWTF Staff Reports**

Steve Sharp reports that banquet registrations may be done online.

NWTF can uniformly track memberships, awards, etc. for each fiscal year (Sept. 1 to Aug. 31).

Our Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt (STH, STH) strategic plan is underway. Save the Hunt is being done well at our WITO and JAKES events. Chapters should try to track all mentored hunts and report to the RD.

We need to create new hunters outside our usual sphere of influence. Try taking the JAKES Take Aim trailer to a state park for a day, or get together with a family group, local church, or even a bar.

The Certified Mentor Program in the state, a cooperative project with the NWTF and DNR should be developed. This would connect willing certified mentors with first-time hunters in a geographic area, similar to Big Brothers.

#### Ryan Boyer

MI has been awarded \$40 million already for habitat work. Many areas benefit, including the Saginaw watershed, St. Joe River watershed, and many more areas.

All the Super Fund requests for MI were reviewed and the recommendations forwarded to NWTF.

When we set aside the 20% for STH, STH, this is used for two large focus areas. We are requesting \$4,500 for an additional area, with 10:1 money match for property acquisition directly adjacent to an area in Newaygo County already worked on. The proposal approval will be due 1/21/15, with the money joining DU (\$6,000) and Wetlands America Trust (\$3,500) already committed. We approved the \$4,500 for this project to come out of the STH, STH money (Bob, Pete, carried).

We are encouraged to use the MI DNR online reporting system for reporting on turkeys.

The USFS and Ruffed Grouse Society are meeting to develop partnerships.

MI Strategic Plan for STH, STH. A group (Jon, Steve, Tom, Ryan, Bob, Al Stewart, Skip, Grant, Tony, Art and Pete Pelon, Brian Zolinsky, Phil Ferrare, Jason Lupartis, and Shawn Dickey) met to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the national goals for STH, STH as it applies to the focal areas in and around MI.

The national goals are: 4 million acres of critical upland habitat conserved or enhanced, 1.5 million new hunters created, and 500,000 acres of new hunter access.

MI Save the Habitat objective is 5,273 acres a year, 52,730 acres over 10 years.

Our strategies for this objective:

- Increase the utilization of Conservation Seed by 3% each year.
- Establish and expand conservation work with other non-government organizations (Ruffed Grouse, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Quality Deer, etc.).
- Aggressively market ourselves to increase memberships, chapters, and money in our Super Fund.
- Appoint a MI Conservation Chair and revise duties of existing committee members (Habitat Enhancement) and also make district level conservation chairs.

- Refine and revise the current focal landscapes in MI.
- Maintain NWTF presence on the Conservation Coalition.

MI Save the Hunt objective is 20,000 hunters a year, 200,000 over 10 years. Our strategies for this objective:

- Look at the present Hunter Safety instructors, develop a plan to foster NWTF membership for all of them.
- Identify a State Hunt Coordinator and also district or local coordinators.
- Develop a Certified Mentoring program with the MI DNR in 2015 to focus outreach efforts.
- Educate MI citizens about the North American Model, the Pittman-Robertson Act, etc. to show the importance and impact of hunting.

MI Access objective is 1,000 acres a year, 10,000 over 10 years. Our strategies for this objective:

- NWTF serves as an advocate for public access to private lands.
- Develop a plan for assisting the Hunter Access Program by providing funding, identifying landowners, and improving habitat on these lands.
- Create and expand partnerships to actively acquire hunting lands.

Starting soon, the RD, Biologist, and 4-6 chapters at a time, along with state leaders, will hold district workshops to communicate these goals and strategies.

The revised focal landscapes will show 3 areas in MI, more in SE MI including the St. Joe watershed, Allegan and Barry counties. Menominee and Delta counties stay in the plan, even though they don't have a lot of turkeys.

This MI Strategic Plan was approved by the board on Jan. 22, 2015.

### Tom Karsten

The NWTF Senior Vice President of Field Operations, Dave Mahlke, is revisiting the 5 Star Program with the emphasis off conservation and on STH, STH. A new draft for local and state 5 Star achievement, is in the works, and includes:

Host one banquet with net income of at least \$3,500.

Increase chapter membership by at least 5% annually.

Host at least one outreach event.

Host and hold at least 5 mentored hunts.

The chapter volunteers participate in Archery in the Schools, 4H, shooting, or similar activity.

For state chapters, the goals would include:

Increase membership by at least 3% annually.

Increase the Super Fund by at least 3% annually.

Super Fund expenses are in line with NWTF mission.

40% to habitat, acquisition, and access

35% to mentored hunts, outreach, and recruit/retain/re-engage hunters

At least 5% of Super Fund spent to preserve the hunting tradition.

Actively supports its local chapters.

The award system remains unknown. When the 5 Star program is revised and publicized, we need it on our web site.

NWTF staff are developing a handbook to broadcast what we do. We need a state chair of conservation to keep track of our progress and keep annual reports, which would be used in our publicity.

#### Al Stewart

Thanks to Ryan, who has been active in the acquisition of federal funds for the DNR Wildlife Division.

New spring turkey hunt booklets are done. Apply by Feb. 1 for turkey permits for state land.

Turkey regulations are in a 3 year stabilized cycle ending in 2016. We will need an in-depth discussion by 2016 to integrate the DNR regulations with the NWTF new goals for STH, STH.

Over \$1 million has been approved for 20 projects, many involving upland game birds, and many intersecting with other partners. This includes the money from the license packages.

We have a hand-out of a graph of the MI turkey harvests from 1965 to 2013.

The MI DNR has one of the top diagnostic wildlife pathology labs in the state.

They are interested in dead turkeys with unknown pathology, or any sick turkey issues. Information can be sent online.

The NWTF appreciates this science-based approach.

#### Board Positions (Tony)

A vacancy remains in Region 1.

Barry Danks has resigned, leaving a vacancy in Region 2, term ending in 2017.

For the members whose terms end now, Tony, Gary, Hugh, and Art wish to take another term. Bob declines to run for re-election, so this leaves a second vacancy in Region 2.

We voted to approve the additional term for Tony, Gary, Hugh, and Art (Bob, Phil, carried).

Thanks to Bob for his valued service on this state board.

#### PR and Web Site (Jon)

The web site is up to date. We welcome pictures of events and banquets.

The JAKES Education box is being revised by NWTF.

Prestige Imports is working with us to promote Rod & Rifle whiskey. In return for their participation at our state and local banquets, they will place an ad on our web site.

Note the new links from NWTF.

NWTF can make graphics for us, fliers, posters, etc. Jon can connect us.

#### Outreach (Tony)

Activity will be forthcoming with the mentoring certification in cooperation with the DNR.

### **Habitat Enhancement (Pete)**

Miscanthus grass rhizomes are available from QDMA for developing screens along roadways and fields to discourage poachers and to create access to blind locations undetected. Use 2 rows to create a living fence. Pete has information. When planting crab apple trees, consider several species, and protect from deer browsing when young. 11,000 trees have been planted in Pete's area, mostly fruit trees.

Nut trees have been planted. Pete will try butternut trees this year. These trees need tree shelters cut short to protect from rodents during the winter and removed in spring. Use the shelters only for the first 2 years.

For young tree protection, plastic fencing costs less, but needs more stakes.

Please cooperate with the January turkey counts and report to the DNR.

We discussed habitat tree planting. Right now we have 200 trees at Art's house and 600-800 at Rose Lake. If we want to do more planting (the board wanted hands-in projects), we need more buckets and soil. We can use several locations, but to avoid the high cost of transporting trees, growing up north makes the most sense, since that is where most are planted. We agreed that this is an important project to continue. The locations and dates of tree planting will be determined and publicized.

### **State Convention (Jan)**

The annual state chapter is planned for tonight. We expect about 150 to attend. We have a 2-meat menu with potato, vegetable, salad, roll and butter, and dessert. We have raffles, live and silent auctions, and the award presentations. We appreciate the participation of the chapters, especially those who helped to underwrite the core package or donated something.

We are at the end of our 3-year contract. Shall we continue this location for our conventions? If a better offer is not found, the committee will seek another contract with the Holiday Inn. Our room rate has been \$89 and the meal price under \$15.

We have Al Stewart and Keith Creagh (DNR Director) for our afternoon speakers.

### **Super Fund (Tony)**

Many outreach events are funded from the Outreach Fund.

Every chapter dedicates 20% of their SF to STH, STH, including the state chapter. At the state level, total habitat money is about 43.58%, education 22.25%, outreach 5.02%, pro-hunting 0.55%, emergency 10.73%, and other 17.86%. A total of \$91,635 was funded. The detailed report will be available on the web site soon.

The loss of chapters (93 to 75) negatively impacts our SF dollars.

### **Patch Program (Ron)**

The 2015 patches are available now. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the NWTF/DNR patch program. The DNR will make a news release. A framed patch will be offered at auction tonight. Congratulations to Phoebe Talaga, the successful patch design winner, who will be present tonight. 6,000 patches were ordered. Expenses including patches, postage, and supplies were \$7,305.03. Revenue including 4,702 patches sold was \$23,511.40. Total profit is \$16,206.37.

### **Rules and Regulations (Hugh)**

There is nothing new to report. We welcome comments on the fall hunt, including opinions on the unlimited permits. On the spring turkey hunt, some non-residents find it too expensive, but Al assures us that the DNR did lots of comparisons when setting the prices. The non-resident hunters are expected to come back. We still have license buyers from all 50 states and several other countries.

### **Awards (Bert)**

The chapter scholarships advanced to state competition are due today. Email or letter are best communication methods for Bert. Wishing for more participation in the NWTF scholarship program. The award applications are available on our web site. Congratulations to the Turkeyville Toms chapter who will receive a national award for the Disabled Hunt at Ft. Custer.

### **Fundraising (Ron)**

No fundraising activities at this time. No interest seen in a state chapter knife. We could consider the Rod & Rifle Bourbon for fundraising.

### **Budget (Gary)**

The current budget with actual year to date expenses was reviewed, based on past expenses Jan. 2014 to Jan. 2015.

Executive Board \$2,350, YTD \$2,137;	Conservation Seed \$25, YTD \$0;
PR/Media/Web Site \$790/ YTD \$775;	Outreach \$700, YTD \$450;
Habitat \$1,525, YTD \$570;	Convention \$5,400, YTD \$2,005;
Super Fund \$25, YTD \$0;	Rules/Regs \$25, YTD \$0;
Awards/Schol. \$4,775, YTD \$4,926;	Fundraising \$25, YTD \$0;
RDs \$7,800, YTD \$2,523	

TOTAL budget for 2015 to 2016 is set at \$15,300. More detail for the above committees is provided in a hand-out.

### **Conservations Seed (Dave, Ryan)**

A total of 2200 bags were shipped last spring impacting 3,500 acres. The transition from Dave to Ryan was seamless. We will increase the education that will go with the seeds. The pick up day in April will be a good opportunity for some group discussions.

Ryan has orders for 1,826 bags with projected 2,591 acres to be planted as of January 7.

### **New Business**

For the national NWTF convention, we agreed to prepare a MI basket for a silent auction. Tony will gather items made in MI, and his wife Sandy will prepare the basket.

The JAKES Take Aim trailer has all new supplies. Joe Presgrove still manages the schedule. We are requesting an additional trailer for state park use. Midway is not sponsoring these trailers now, and Daisy is more involved.

We need to consider how we can cooperate with other NGO projects. For example, Conservation Districts could offer a tree package for wild turkey habitat. We could have seed available at Conservation District's order pick up day, or even placed on their order sheet. The NWTF cooperates with the Ruffed Grouse Society (GEMS) and Pheasants Forever projects already. There are 78 Conservation Districts that have annual meetings, and may look to the NWTF for speakers. With any habitat work, we need to promote the "how-to" of seed planting. We will discuss this more at the July meeting.

MI Outdoor News is a MI-based newspaper, willing to promote our events. Since we have lost some chapters, we can use this for education. They give away current issues at the 3 major sport shows, which is great publicity for the NWTF. They will give us a discounted rate for a half-page ad in color. We could include membership information and suggest locations for new chapters. (Ohio has successfully used this approach for years to expand their exposure.) We voted to buy a half page ad (Dave, Gary, carried).

Grand Valley has done sanctioned NWTF turkey calling contests for 19 years. They will have the MI State calling competition in March with some new categories. They get entries from MI and other states. With mailings and trophies, including youth prizes, they expect to spend at least \$1,500.00. Last year about 30 persons competed. Although the chapter gets some donations, and they charge \$10 for each class (\$5 for JAKES), the chapter requests some state funds to keep an attractive quality contest. Jon will post lists of previous winners on the web site. We appreciate Grand Valley's good efforts and will support this contest by approving up to \$1,500.00 from the State Chapter (Phil, Bert, carried).

Pete reminded us that we are losing some good representation in Congress, gave us articles on term limits and the lame duck session, and encouraged us to keep connected to our Congressmen.

The NWTF display used at our convention will be stored at Tony's.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 1:04 PM (Bert, Ron, carried).

Future meeting dates are July 18, 2015, maybe a weekend event, maybe camping options, location to be announced, and September 19, probably at the Demmer Center.

Respectfully submitted  
Jan Kuhtic



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