

**MI State Chapter Board of Directors
National Wild Turkey Federation
October 17, 2018**

Art Pelon, President, called this Conference Call to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call

Present Region 1: Ken Buchholtz, Chris Stewart

Present Region 2: Pete Demos, Evan Traynor

Absent Region 2: Brian McPhail, Frank Darling

Present Region 3: Art Pelon, Hugh Marx, Jan Kuhtic, Phil Kuhtic, Bert VanderWeele, Jonathan Edgerly, Zach Mulder, Al Bobrofsky, Mike Black

Absent Region 3: Tony Snyder, Dave Godley, Jon Gray

NWTF Staff present: Tom Karsten, Aaron Shaughnessy, Ryan Boyer, Steve Sharp

MI DNR present: Al Stewart

Correspondence, Agenda, Minutes

The minutes of July 21, 2018 were approved (Pete, Bert, carried).

The agenda is approved.

Treasurer's Report

No report today. Report to be given at the next meeting.

NWTF Staff Reports

Ryan's project report: We have been awarded \$422,400 in grant funding from the State Wildlife Habitat Grant Program for 2 proposals (work completion in 11 counties, over 1500 acres to be enhanced or restored). Since 2014, \$831,866 in State Wildlife Habitat Grant Funding awarded to the NWTF!

The southwest MI Oak Health Enhancement Project work completed as of now includes 40 acres of oak savanna enhanced in Newaygo and Oceana counties on USFS lands, 94 acres oak stand enhanced on Flat River SGA and 10 acres of openings enhanced each year in Montcalm County, 61 acres oak stand enhanced at Barry SGA, 2 kiosks purchased and installed at two sites, and signs installed for a total of about \$125,000 in project costs.

Northern MI Wildlife Openings Enhancement Project completed as of now includes 330 acres of openings enhanced on Grayling State Forest and Camp Grayling in Crawford

and Oscoda Counties in 2017 and 430 acres in 2018, 218 trees and shrubs planted, lime spread on 50 acres, 48 acres of openings mowed, and 5 project signs installed for about \$465,000 in total costs.

The USFS agreement on Manistee National Forest is ongoing, to be completed by October of 2019. Over 1700 acres conserved and protected at a cost exceeding \$750,000!

The USFS agreement for Baldwin Early Ecosystems Management Project is signed and ongoing through 2018, with about 200 acres of habitat to be conserved with cost currently at \$196,000.

The USFS agreement of Huron Shores and Cadillac/Manistee Districts are ongoing with 200 acres in work in Alcona and Manistee counties with \$104,000 in project costs.

3 Turkey Tracts kiosks are installed this year, next planned for Holly, Sharonville, Port Huron, Cass City, and Huron-Manistee National Forest.

There are many volunteer opportunities with these projects. Any of us can become engaged, improve awareness, and market our mission. Jon offered to store kiosks until installation.

Tom said the state convention needs all hands to help in some way. First of all, plan to be there for the meeting and banquet. We need the support of every chapter.

There should be a meeting planned soon (December) for STH2.

Aaron said all the 1000 NWTF calendars are out to the chapters, and soon to be sold. Checks will go to Tony. This will pump \$20,000 into the banquet system. Aaron needs all the stubs and payments by mid-November. If any calendars are unsold he will re-distribute.

Steve reports that many groups work on hunter recruitment, but most target small groups within their sphere of influence. Michigan lost over 400,000 hunters since 1985. About 1/3 of hunters will age out of the sport within the next 10 years. We need to change the way we reach out in order to target adult onset hunters. Some suggestions for change:

- Each adult hunter recruit someone outside their usual sphere of influence to hunt and introduce a hunting lifestyle.

- Every conservation organization and their affiliates host mentored hunts or family hunts each year, including how and where to hunt, tracking and recording the successes.

- Realize that youth events plant the seed, but do not often result in hunter retention unless they have an existing support system.

For women, start with awareness and outdoor activities, then introduce to hunting, fishing and shooting sports.

Disabled events have the greatest opportunity to reactivate.

Adult mentored hunts can best create and retain a hunter because they can afford it and can travel to hunt. Millennials and Gen X are needed to replace the aging-out hunters – they need social support and the knowledge of how and where to hunt.

The creation of a R3 Task Force for NGOs and concerned groups is essential to success.

Recruitment starts with awareness, created at state parks, festivals, etc. where we can connect with a diverse group of non-hunters. Draw attention to shooting with families, talk about hunting and shooting sports. Create interest by talking about the benefits of the healthy natural food. Offer a Learn to Hunt program offered by many NGOs, or other outdoor sports like archery. Showcase our public lands available for hunting and campgrounds with comfortable sharing time. Be a good mentor with quality equipment, keep the hunter comfortable and safe, learn about habitat, conservation, game processing, and recipes. Create acceptance by your non-threatening atmosphere and positive experience.

Retention occurs when multiple hunts are taught, and multiple opportunities to gain confidence are offered. Mentors keep in contact with mentees and develop friendships. Membership in a conservation organization is encouraged for additional help and social support.

Reactivate hunters who have experienced a job or family change. Some lapse because they need a place to hunt. Identify the barriers and work to eliminate them. Provide social support through social media. Track your successes, survey and evaluate each event.

The DNR and many others are cooperating with us. We must accept this challenge and actively recruit, reactivate and retain hunters.

Al Stewart said the next turkey regulation cycle starts in 2019. Now is the time to formulate ideas for any changes. In April and October the information for the spring and fall turkey hunts will be discussed. Workshop information for the spring DNR book is due now.

Habitat Enhancement (Pete)

Pete noted the loss of red oak trees and the resulting loss of habitat for wildlife in winter. We must closely follow the DNR and biologist recommendations to not feed deer and elk. Can we have the Conservation Districts make wildlife kits? With reasonable pricing, we can plant enough to make a difference.

To benefit turkeys in winter, we use barrels. Pete and Art will get the plans to Jon to post on our web site.

State Convention (Jan)

The State Chapter Convention is January 18 and 19, 2019 at the Holiday Inn, Big Rapids. We have a tentative speaker. The product will be shipped directly to the hotel. We will need the board to step up and help with set up on Friday, the raffles and games on Saturday, bid running and silent auction, and clean-up after the banquet. Each chapter will be invited by letter, and encouraged to support the banquet by sending \$100 or an equivalent donation. As with any banquet, the more donations we take, the better we accomplish our mission.

Old Business

Our State Chapter by-laws got to NWTF. We have not heard if they were approved.

The glass case for the turkey mount at the Glassen Center will be completed by Zach's uncle. Still working on design and price. Art is willing to help.

New Business

We discussed HB6362 regarding the legislation sponsored by Rep. B. LaFave which would decriminalize several natural resource statute violations. We agree with A. Trotter of MUCC that this would have negative consequences for the protection and management of our natural resources and would devalue our conservation efforts for wildlife and fisheries. Ryan and Art will draft our official position.

We discussed another bill introduced in the legislature, regarding making turkey hunting licenses over the counter only, first come, first served with no application process. We should take a position on this issue, not knowing when it will be voted on.

For the change: we do not generally run out of permits (only in Monroe County). All other areas had left-over tags. DNR would not have to do the drawings, no application process and no application charge.

Against the change: For budget, makes no difference. Drawings are fair, quotas can change, Management would remain the same. 80% of hunters use private land, so not affected. Leave alone, not broke. Watch for review by MUCC. No strong feeling to change by Ryan or Al Stewart.

Shall we keep the application process as it is now? 10 said "yes", 2 said "no".

Ryan and Pete will work with MUCC, Ryan and Art to draft a position for the NWTF.

NWTF National Convention attendees – Art, Bert, probably Al, possible Phil & Jan. We will not participate in the state table challenge.

We have no nominees for the Roger Latham award from MI.

Our MI Conservation Officer of the Year will be decided October 22nd by the Law Division.

All of us need to vote in November!

Adjournment, Next Meeting

Motion to adjourn (Jan, Phil, carried) at 8:15 pm.

Submitted by Jan Kuhtic

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