

# Wolf Management Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2013

## Facilitator:

John Beck (Michigan State University- Department of Human Resources and Labor Relations)

## Wolf Management Advisory Council (WMAC) Members in Attendance (listed according to seating arrangement):

Steve Schaub (Timber Wolf Alliance)  
Russ Mason (Michigan Department of Natural Resources)  
Pete Butchko (USDA- Wildlife Services)  
Nancy Warren (National Wolfwatcher Coalition)  
Tom Oakey (Michigan Trappers and Predator Caller's Association)  
Gary Roloff (The Wildlife Society)  
Al Ettenhofer (UP Whitetails)  
Dick Pershinski (Farm Bureau)  
Doug Craven (Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority)  
Amy Trotter (Michigan United Conservation Clubs)  
Mike Thorman (Michigan Hunting Dog Federation)  
Dale McNamee (Up Sportsmans Alliance)  
Linda Reider (Michigan Humane Society)  
Roger LaBine (Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission)

### **Member Organizations Not in Attendance:**

National Wildlife Federation  
Michigan Sheriff's Association  
Michigan State University Extension  
Safari Club International  
Resource Stewards

## DNR Employees/Others Present:

Adam Bump  
Brian Roell  
Terry Minzey  
Katie Shaw

## Welcome/Guidelines/Overview

John Beck was introduced. The WMAC member then introduced themselves. John then went over meeting guidelines and the agenda for the remainder of the meeting. He then explained that the issues discussed today will be made available to each member of the WMAC as well as to the public. John also explained the process of using a writing sheet to convey their messages/worries prior to presenting them to the WMAC out loud. Two different colored writing sheets were passed out, one color to the WMAC, another color to the public audience. The writing sheets listed four questions regarding the

draft regulations. The duty of the WMAC is to answer these questions based on Adam's presentation (which is yet to have happened) which will then be given to John so that he can address each WMAC member's answer. The writing sheets will be written by hand on flip chart sheets by each WMAC member. This information will then be conveyed to the NRC and to the public in the minutes so that they can understand the WMAC's stance regarding the regulation.

### **Presentation of the Draft Wolf Harvest Regulations**

Adam Bump began his presentation regarding the draft wolf harvest regulations. This is the same presentation given at the NRC meeting earlier this month. During this time, the WMAC was responsible for filling out their worksheets with their list of potential consequences if the DNR's recommendation were implemented. The presentation discussed the management authority of wolves, a review of the Wolf Management Plan relative to the public harvest of wolves, an evaluation of current field conditions, tribal consultation actions, public engagement efforts, and a summary of the DNR's recommendation on the public harvest of wolves. Directly following Adam's presentation, Brian Roell gave a presentation regarding how proposed Wolf Management Units were selected. Immediately following each of the presentations, Adam and Brian were available to answer any questions.

### **Report Out/Clarifications and Discussion of Worksheets and Flip-Charts**

Following the presentations, WMAC members were given time to write their perceived consequences of the implementation of the Proposed Wolf Harvest Regulations on designated flip charts. The results of this exercise will be summarized as the WMAC's 2013 Recommendation to the NRC and Legislature. Attached is the complete list of potential consequences from the flip charts, listed in the order they were written on the flip charts. The attached version includes a summary of the discussions of clarity that occurred during the meeting. Not all potential consequences required discussion. WMAC members were also asked to submit their worksheets which are also included as an attachment. Finally, the public observing the meeting were given the opportunity to complete the same exercise and those that choose to submit their comments are compiled in the attached document.

### **Talking about the Recommendation**

John read the proposed WMAC recommendation language to make sure the WMAC members are in support of the verbiage in it and that it clearly represents what occurred today. He then made it clear that the flipcharts would be clearly arranged in an un-weighted manner and unaltered when placed into the document. At this point, he asked the WMAC for support of the document. After some discussion about changes in the first and second paragraph, the WMAC unanimously agreed that the document, pending changes, was acceptable to represent the recommendation of the WMAC. The final recommendation as submitted will be attached to the minutes.

### **Future of the WMAC**

Adam addressed the WMAC and asked how they felt about when the next meeting would be. Over the next year or so, how often do you think we should meet? The WMAC tended to have a consensus on at least twice a year. Multiple WMAC members stated that this is a hot topic and that the issues brought up today, either with or without a hunt, will not go away. The WMAC also agreed that a good time for the next meeting would be sometime after the hunt, possibly sometime in February. The next question Adam addressed is how long should meetings should there be? As a group, the WMAC was divided as to

whether or not a four hour meeting was long enough or if a longer meeting is necessary. One suggestion was that it was an afternoon, overnight, and a morning but this idea created issues for some members that cannot take two days off from work. As for the location of the meeting, WMAC members didn't have a problem with the idea of alternating between places like Newberry and Grayling.

## Potential Consequences of Implementation of Proposed Draft Wolf Hunt Identified by the Wolf Management Advisory Council

The following potential consequences are not listed in weighted order, but simply the order in which they were written on flip charts during the WMAC meeting on April 24, 2013. This list includes a brief summary of the discussion that occurred for those topics the WMAC felt needed additional clarification.

After listing potential consequences, the WMAC had a limited, facilitated discussion to clarify the consequences listed. A summary of the discussion, as captured by the DNR, is available in the minutes of the WMAC meeting (attached) but are not to be considered as part of the recommendation since they are not the exact wording of the discussion. The WMAC was then asked to prioritize this list by voting for the potential consequences they felt were most important. Each of the 14 WMAC members in attendance were given five votes to distribute as they wished among all of the potential consequences (*no more than two votes to any given item – WMAC members could spend one vote on five items, two on one and three on three more, or two on two each and one on a third*). The number of votes each potential consequence received is listed after each potential consequence in parentheses.

### Barriers:

- Political/legislative/legal activity that distracts from science/biology
- Presentation of non-factual information by those against policy (3)
- Ballot referendum
- Lack of funding for non-lethal approaches.  
*Clarification: If the DNR doesn't have funding to implement nonlethal approaches that could be a barrier.*
- Hunter/trapper understanding of the process, which is unique in Michigan.  
*Clarification: DNR needs to make sure that hunters and trappers have a better understanding of how this "reporting of take" occurs in order for it to be successful.*
- Speed of process (2)  
*Clarification: It is happening too fast and is restricting time allowed for consultation*
- Failure to properly consult with 1836 treaty tribes

- MDNR- Resources to administer hunt. (5)  
*Clarification: This is mainly regarding a call in system. There hasn't been a clear articulation of how much that will cost and/or what is needed for that.*
- New legislature to change the future process.  
*Clarification: The process of listing is threatened to change because of a new bill.*
- Conflicts are not clearly defined by the department, they are not clearly presented, and the trends in those conflicts are not clearly presented (1)
- Lack of apparent evaluation of efficacy of plan and possible one-year vs. multi-year implementation
- Can hunters/trappers access the public wolf areas?
- Conflicts need to be addressed immediately and directly, still need Wildlife Services, hunting is additive mortality
- Tribal conflicts with a hunting season (1)
- Complete/proper tribal consultation
- Insufficient public input from the Detroit metro area
- Insufficient time for survey to be analyzed and included pre-draft
- Lack of support for hunting and trapping wolves by large percentage of Michigan Population (2)

## Resource and Policy Implications

- Funding required for wolf specialists to provide prompt, effective assistance to public (7)
- Opportunity for conservationists (WMAC members) to demonstrate we can manage/conservate a contentious species without political/legislative meddling (7)
- Geographic areas to not effectively impact the wolf population.  
*Clarification: By using such small zones, the areas surrounding the open zones are unlikely to see a decrease in conflicts.*
- Need to include non-lethal approaches, where they are needed, what has been tried, what works, etc. on a map with access to the public.  
*Clarification: If this information is missing, it is hard to justify that they have been used, and that a hunt is necessary.*
- Lethal control NOT be based as preventative
- Backlash from both sides (2)
- Public attitudes towards wolves improves (2)
- Human conflict is addressed outside the designated hunting area (1)
- Still have illegal kills despite hunting
- Violation of 2007 inland consent decree (1)
- State law requiring use of science in management actions by MDNR. There might not be evidence that this will address the issues.
- Reduction in complaints from hunt will lead to fewer resources required to address complaints
- More success on private lands could shift more conflicts to public lands
- Need to better establish pack boundaries and population estimates

- Farmers are bearing the cost of non-lethal control methods – even when they are not necessarily successful – are not a planned cost of business (2)
- Alternative sources of funding for DNR to carry out mission. (1)  
*Clarification: This is mainly regarding research.*
- What changes have been made regarding penalizations for illegal harvest of wolves?  
*Clarification: What are the specific changes now that they are a game species rather than endangered?*

## Unforeseen/Unintended Consequences

- Disruption of pack dynamics could increase depredation especially with smaller packs: if an alpha is killed, pups are inexperienced (3)
- More people in the woods in Nov/Dec (deer/firearm season, public land user conflicts?) (1)
- Season may be too limited to achieve goal of conflict reduction
- Estimated harvest number may be too low to achieve desired populations (2)
- Increased social carrying capacity for betterment of wolf conservation. (9)  
*Clarification: If 47 wolves increase the desire for Michigan residents to have wolves on the landscape, this could increase social carrying capacity.*
- Potential over-harvest – via legal and un-legal harvest.  
*Clarification: 24 hours might be too long of a wait between killing a wolf and reporting the kill.*
- Targeting wolves is not responsible. (1)  
*Clarification: The locations of the zones are meant to target problem wolves but some non-problem packs are in those zones as well. This will lead to un-targeted, non-problem wolves being killed because of conflicts that they did not cause and were not responsible for*
- Downward (continued) trend in overall wolf population
- Zones are too large.  
*Clarification: when compared to size of “problem packs”*
- Increasing fear of wolves by public (1)
- Increased depredation issues.  
*Clarification: The hunt itself is built on the assumptions that fewer wolves will mean less depredation issues. There is some science that says that if the age of packs is reduced, depredation will increase because of a “young pack”.*

- Resentment/mistrust of MDNR if management goals are not addressed by the hunt
- Movement away from other management tools (we may become dependent on lethal controls even though some non-lethal controls may work) (1)

## Questions/resources

- Has any consideration been given to possible need for a mandatory education/training session prior to the hunt- similar to elk hunting? Since wolves haven't been hunted or trapped legally for several decades, should training be provided to ensure a safe/clean kill as humanely as possible? (1)
- How was lethal evaluated? Was lethal un-effective because other wolves moved in – how will the hunt resolve this specifically?  
*Clarification: How were lethal takes, through permits and/or Wildlife Service, un-effective?*
- What specifically is being done to reduce deer numbers in ironwood?
- Does the management of wolves from a negative perspective have long-term negative consequences? (1)
- How will the mandatory call in be enforced? Can it be verified to insure no unreported take? (1)
- Are there any stats on the illegal take of wolves?
- Explain why the DNR uses pack territories as zone determinates when DNR has “no confidence in them? Educated guesses are not sufficient.
- How much money was spend bringing MT biologist to MI and why was that state chosen?
- Need to clearly demonstrate how hunting will address management/conflict issues – scientifically (2)
- How will success be determined? Need properly structure and fund evaluation
- How will conflict be used in future to authorize future hunts? Need to quantify and define what constitutes conflict and when hunting should be used to address.
- What plans does the DNR have to provide funding for wolf specialists to assist public conflict resolution? (4)

- Reduce wolf conflict, not “eliminate” wolf conflict – very purposeful wording.  
*Clarification: It is not possible to eliminate 100% of conflicts, so what is the idea of a success?*
- Little education being done, DNR is reactive, not proactive
- Why wasn’t the MN model considered? MN uses citizen trappers to resolve these issues.
- Will livestock producers be required to open up their land to hunting and trapping to receive compensation? (1)
- *See additional recommended resources submitted (attached).*

## WMAC Potential Consequences: Worksheet Summary

At the April 24, 2013 Wolf Management Advisory Council, WMAC members and members of the public were given the chance to fill out worksheets to help identify potential consequences of implementation of the DNR's recommendation for the public harvest of wolves. WMAC member worksheets were used by the WMACs in a group exercise to create a list of potential consequences which were then clarified with them (carried in these minutes as the "recommendation" of the group concerning the potential harvest of wolves). The original pre-discussion writing sheet of the WMAC members, however, had more detailed descriptions which are carried in the listing below. The public was asked to fill out identical worksheets, but their worksheets were not part of the discussion and are only reflected in the notes below. This document is a verbatim copy of all of the potential consequences as written on the worksheets of both the WMAC members and the public in attendance.

### Potential consequences described on the worksheets handed out to WMAC members:

- Possible barriers: Misinformation to the general public by others
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: UP Residents and hunter support by allowing implementation.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: With 55% or more of each units area being private, will the department have a sign-up sheet for land owners who would allow others to hunt their property with "permission?"
- Informational Questions: Are part of the license fee dollars going to be used for management? Example, DRIP funds?
- Possible barriers: Ballot referendum
- Possible barriers: Tribal conflicts and hunting season
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Geographic areas do not effectively impact the wolf population.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Human conflicts are added outside of hunting area!
- Informational Questions: We need to know the financial requirements and/or the specific budget for wolf management.
- Possible barriers: Referendum of PA. 529
- Possible barriers: Getting enough hunters to buy a permit at \$100 each
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Hunters money makes up 90% of the DNR budget, how much of their money is being used to manage wolves as a non-game animal?
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Lawsuits/referendum
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Public backlash from both sides
- Informational Questions: Why do we not trust the DNR to manage wolves now when they have done such a good job of protecting them to date?
- Possible barriers: Referendum on P.A. 520
- Possible barriers: DNR Staff capacity

- Possible barriers: Hunter/trapper understanding of the process, which is unique in Michigan.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Public attitude towards wolves improves.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Chronic trouble areas reduced
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Reduction in resource needs for responding to complaints
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: More success on private lands
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: More people in the woods in Nov/Dec (user conflicts)
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Not enough wolves taken
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: New areas emerge with no information to address them
- Informational Questions: Information needs to be provided to hound users/dog owners
- Possible barriers: Political/legislative/legal activity distracts us from science/biology (typically)
- Possible barriers: Enough MDNR (or USDA WS) resources to implement and monitor the harvest.
- Possible barriers: Enough hunter/trapper interest
- Possible barriers: Can hunters/trappers access the problem wolf area?
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Opportunity for conservationists (including ALL members of WMAC) to demonstrate that we can manage and conserve a contentious species without political/legislative meddling.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Harvest potentially has no impact on wolf conflicts in harvest areas. "Reduce" or "eliminate", very purposeful writing.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Increase social carrying capacity for betterment of wolf conservation
- Possible barriers: The most likely barrier to be implemented will be a ballot initiative or a lawsuit.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: If we manage wolves by only responding to negative situations (conflicts), does this mean the wolf and the DNR will only be perceived in the same light?
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: The ultimate viability of wolf existence must depend on positive views of wolves. Does the policy do this?
- Informational Questions: Any information on the current illegal kill of wolves?
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Funding required for wolf specialists to provide assistance
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Response to wolf problems/concerns must be prompt.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Season may be too limited to achieve goal of conflict reduction.
- Informational Questions: What plans does the DNR have to provide funding for wolf specialist?

- Has any consideration been given to possible need for a hunter/trapper education/training session prior to being allowed to harvest a wolf? (similar to elf permit requirement) To assure a safe and humane take of an animal that hasn't been hunted in Michigan for 40+ years. Probably more important for hunters than trappers.
- How will the mandatory call in be enforced? Trust based or verifiable?
- Do you anticipate any conflicts with deer hunters since the season coincides with firearm season?
- Possible barriers: Properly complete tribal consultation
- Possible barriers: Defined goals in conflict resolution
- Possible barriers: Undefined population control
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Over harvest with the call-in system
- Informational Questions: Lack of changes to penalties
- Possible barriers: proper legal consultation with 1836 Treaty Tribes
- Possible barriers: MDNR resources (funding/staff) to administer hunt
- Possible barriers: Increased speed of approval process, new legislation proposed.
- Possible barriers: Risk of proposed harvest, new process, not attempted in the state, with high potential for overharvest.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Violated 2007 inland consent decree with 1836 Treaty Washington tribes. Consultation after enactment is not consultation.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Effects of harvest not known, no studies to rely upon, may cause re-listing
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: State law requires MDNR to make management discussions based on science, no science to support if managed hunt will address management issues.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Potential for over-harvest
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Might cause wolf populations to increase. Wolf packs that are fractured often split and pack fill with newer wolves.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: May increase wolf depredation – wolf packs may become more youthful and more likely to predate on livestock.
- Informational Questions: Need to articulate how proposed hunt will address management issues. Also need to document failure of other methods.
- Informational Questions: Need to evaluate and fund effectiveness of managed hunts. How will success be determined?
- Informational Questions: How will “conflict” be used in the future? “Conflict” needs to be defined and quantified for purposes of authorizing hunts.

## Potential consequences described on the worksheets handed out to audience:

- Informational Questions: Do we know the percentage of wolves being poached?
- Informational Questions: Has poaching gotten worse as of late?
- Possible Barriers: Public may vote against wolf harvest in 2014.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Wolves would become more tamed and avoid human contact
- Why are the 240,000+ petitions signed against the hunt being ignored?
- The wolf is sacred to native American Indians and should not be hunted for that reason. If the wolf was sacred to any other culture or religion, the government pacifies in this country (Arab, Jew, Muslim, Blacks), the wolf could not be hunted. Another example of the governments disrespect for the native American Indian. Sad but true.
- Possible Barriers: Legislation, lawsuits, referendum, public sentiment
- Possible Barriers: Politics that have nothing to do with science.
- Possible Barriers: Lack of evaluative piece
- Possible Barriers: Many conflicts happen on private land, will hunters have access to depredation areas?
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Lacking science basis – killing wolves randomly has nothing to do with alleviating conflicts.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Renowned Michigan wolf biologists were left out of this process
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Lack of ethics
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Loss of benefits of the wolf, an apex predator
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Killing wolves in designated zones, that are not involved with depredations/conflicts and killing large percentages of populations
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: More poaching of wolves – unreported kills during hunting season – especially if option 2 for selling licenses is implemented
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: More non-targeted animals trapped and more damage done by wolf traps
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Because of wolves complex social order, taking out certain pack members, e.g. alphas, will disrupt packs and likely lead to more problems, e.g. depredations on dogs and livestock.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: State of Michigan is seen in negative light by tourists, wildlife watchers, even long-term residents who value the wolf population.
- Unforeseen or Unintended Consequences: Exploding deer population and other prey populations would lead to more spread of diseases for deer.
- Resource and policy Implications/Consequences: Better communication of information to areas of conflict with dogs and farm animals.
- Informational Questions: Will Michigan farmers that can collect depredation funds be required to open up their lands to hunting/trapping, as is done in MN? That would address conflicts as intended.

- Informational Questions: Will an evaluative piece be added, to measure the success, or not, of the proposed hunt in addressing conflicts? If conflicts are lessened, minimized or stopped, will hunting be reduces/made more restricted/ or stopped?
- Informational Questions: Why did the NRC bring in and pay a Montana expert in when Michigan has renowned experts and scientists? (Montana is known as a wolf-hating state, as reported by their expert at the April 2013 Wolf Stewards, Conference.)