



**Comments and Background Information on  
2020 MUCC Proposed Resolutions**

Prepared by MUCC Staff

**Interim Resolution #1**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Patrick Hogan, Region 8 Executive Board  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** September 11, 2019 Executive Board Meeting, and September 28, 2019 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Support FOIA When it Doesn't Interfere with Science or Fair Chase**

**Background/Problem:**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources ceased conducting ruffed grouse drumming surveys in response to a hunter who was filing Freedom of Information Act requests to find out specificities of the survey including number of grouse logged and their location. The Freedom of Information Act is federal and state law that grants the public access to information obtained, possessed, compiled, etc. by a government entity and are meant to ensure and provide government oversight to the public and media organizations.

**Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will work with the legislature to ensure continued access to state and federal information via the Freedom of Information Act.
- MUCC will work with the state legislature to ensure that the end user will not use any information to jeopardize the definition of fair chase, or hinder any scientific study involving flora or fauna.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

In November 2019 the MUCC executive board passed an emergency resolution to:

- Work with the legislature to ensure continued access to state and federal information; and
- Work with the legislature to ensure the end user will not use any information to jeopardize the definition of fair chase, or hinder any scientific study involving flora or fauna.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- FOIA should not be utilized to obtain information that aids in the harvest of game species. This directly contradicts fair chase.
- While the specific incident that prompted this resolution is rather moot in the scheme of overall game and nongame management, the precedent set could allow hunters and/or anglers in the future to pursue much more intimate information related to ongoing fisheries and wildlife studies.
- This resolution would allow the department to deny FOIA requests that would hinder or negatively impact ongoing, scientific studies.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Current precedent dictates that FOIA exemptions are spelled out in statute (MCL 15.243). No precedent was found where other departments were able to create exemptions above and beyond the list spelled out in MCL 15.243.

- This resolution has the potential to hinder the public’s ability to adequately and freely attain information that they currently have a right to access.
- “Fair chase” is not defined in any dictionaries. Without an objective, standardized definition, who decides what fair chase means?

**DNR Response:**

The Department agrees that it is important to ensure individuals will not utilize the Freedom of Information Act to access information gathered through scientific studies to locate game, take game, or harass game; or to assist others in locating, taking or harassing game in Michigan.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #2**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Zach Snyder, Individual Member  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Allow Hunters One Leftover Spring Turkey Tag.**

**Background/Problem:**

The wild turkey has been a closely observed game bird since their population recovery in the 1980’s. License quotas are based on population survey results and are set by wildlife biologists. At this time, Michigan hunters are only allowed to purchase one spring turkey tag. In 2019, there were 19,618 unpurchased turkey tags in Michigan which totals \$294,270 in potential revenue for the state’s natural resources efforts. This indicates that opportunity outweighs the current interest in tag purchases. However, there is an expressed interest for a second tag from current turkey hunters to utilize the remaining tags and increase conservation dollars available for the state.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to allow spring turkey hunters the opportunity to purchase one leftover turkey tag in addition to their already purchased tag when leftover tags become made available to the general public, for a hunt period and hunt unit different from their originally purchased tag.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has had a great deal of interaction with the MDNR and the NRC regarding turkey hunting regulations but has not engaged on the issue of leftover tags. Previous policy resolutions regarding the hunting of wild turkeys, including the manner and method of take, season start dates and length, and turkey hunting zones.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Allowing the purchase of the remaining tags has the potential to bring in a great deal of revenue natural resource efforts in Michigan.
- Allowing the purchase of one additional tag would increase hunting opportunity for those that participate.
- License quotas are set by biologists based on a population survey which means that over-harvest should not be an issue when selling the remaining tags based on location.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- There is a potential to decrease hunting opportunity depending on when a second tag is sold to hunters.
- Wild turkey restoration is a conservation success story and management has been closely monitored ever since. Providing a second tag to hunters, regardless of quotas, could be a worrisome regulation.
- Monitoring tag purchases within the MDNR electronic licensing system could be difficult.

### **DNR Response:**

Wild turkey regulations are on a three-year stabilized regulations cycle. This resolution is one to review as future regulations are being developed. The goal of the spring turkey season is to provide opportunity and maintain high-quality hunting. Michigan currently ranks fourth in the nation for turkey harvest and is recognized for the high-quality hunting experiences being provided. It will be important to determine if this resolution will impact the quality of the spring turkey hunt. Based on the continuing decline of Eastern wild turkey populations throughout their range and within Michigan, there may be a need to reduce license quotas as we review future turkey regulations. From a marketing perspective, given the longstanding trend of declining hunters, having the ability to sell additional tags to existing customers may be advantageous and could lead to additional revenue. The Department agrees to add this resolution to the list of topics to be reviewed as future regulations are being developed.

### **MUCC Wildlife Committee:**

The MUCC Wildlife Committee supports this resolution in principle and offers the following amendment:

- Strike “For a hunt period and a hunt unit different from their original purchased tag” from lines 17 and 18

### **Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee (pending amendment)

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #3**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Rob Miller, Bowfishing Association of Michigan  
**MUCC Region:** 9  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Better Define or Discontinue the Public Boat Launch "Restricted Hours of Use"**

**Background/Problem:**

With the longest U.S. freshwater coastline and more than 1,300 public boat launches, boating in the Great Lakes State brings endless opportunities. Boating in Michigan has a long and rich history and you are never more than 6 miles away from a body of water anywhere in the state. These boat launches are accessible to the public but having restricted hours of use hinders certain residences from accessing the docks during early hours of the morning and late hours of the day – sometimes the best available for hunters and anglers.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will work with relevant state government bodies to create policy such that any hours of use restrictions for public boat ramps specifically exclude the launching or retrieving of a vessel into the waterway; and,
- MUCC will work to ensure that hours of closed use do not refer to the parking of one's unoccupied vehicle/trailer necessary for the transport of the watercraft to and from the waterway; and,
- MUCC will advocate for policy so that any access restrictions applied to Michigan waterways will apply equally to both public and private access. This shall apply to both navigable as well as non-navigable waterways within the state of Michigan that have a public access point.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC consistently engages with state government on behalf of hunter and angler access. The following resolutions have been passed, specifically relating to boat launches:

- In 1989, MUCC members passed a resolution seeking the removal of charges and time limits from inland lake boat launching facilities.
- In 2001, MUCC members passed a resolution supporting a 24-hour open policy for legitimate boat launching and parking at public access sites.

MUCC continually advocates for enhanced infrastructure needs that meet the needs of hunters and anglers.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Would promote angling with specific user groups such as 2nd-3rd shifters and those who enjoy nighttime fishing activities. This could lead to an increase in angling licenses and business in local areas during not peak hours.

- Having a 24-hour open policy could reduce boat launch traffic at peak times at the boat launch, improving the overall angling experience.

**Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:**

- The use of restricted hours for boat launches helps with the maintenance of the boat launch and could allow employees to properly care for the facility when closed.
- Launching boats at unconventional hours of the day could disturb neighbors of the boat launch with unnecessary noise and traffic.
- Michigan law enforcement officers patrol the waterways to make your boating experience safe and pleasant. With a 24-hour open policy enforcing boating laws might be more of a challenge for law enforcement (e.g. washing down boats to impede the spread of aquatic species might decrease).

**DNR Response:**

The Department recognizes the importance of the state’s boating access sites to our water recreation activities and any limitations placed on the use of the state’s boating access sites should only occur if it is deemed reasonably necessary.

**MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

Some of the best fishing is done after dark and before dawn, which would be further facilitated by this resolution. This would also permit access to those that do not work a typical day shift.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL

**Proposed Resolution #4**

**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Charles Felcyn

**MUCC Region:** 7

**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board, as amended by MUCC Wildlife Committee

**Title:** **Change the Deer Management Philosophy in the Lower Peninsula**

**Background/Problem:**

Michigan is in an ongoing management battle with chronic wasting disease (CWD). It is known that a variety of factors contribute to slowing the transmission rate of the disease. Educating hunters on CWD and how they can contribute is a top priority along with setting harvest goals that reflect disease management in each deer management unit (DMU).

The risk of CWD transmission is elevated in areas of high deer density because of how the disease is passed from animal to animal. In order to combat this issue, an increase in doe harvest is prescribed in these areas and hunters are encouraged to voluntarily increase the number of does they harvest.

A combination license, as presented in the 2019 Hunting Digest, allows hunters to harvest two bucks. Hunters can use a combination tag on a doe any time during archery season and only in the CWD core area and northeast bovine tuberculosis zone during firearm season. To offer an incentive to hunters to participate in adequate doe harvest, this proposal includes adding an antlerless tag to the combination license.

### **Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will work with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), and the Michigan Legislature if necessary, to manage Michigan's deer herd for health, buck to doe ratio, and quality not quantity.
- MUCC will support a three-year trial of a regulation that would:
  - include a doe tag with combination license (3 tags total), which will include 2 bucks and 1 doe in DMUs where antlerless harvest is valid; and
  - require the DNR and NRC to provide sufficient additional antlerless tags to meet the needs of managing the deer herd in the Deer Management Units (DMU).

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has a number of previous resolutions regarding deer and deer hunting, relating to a variety of issues. With regards to combination license regulations, MUCC members have passed the following resolutions:

- In 2019, MUCC members passed a resolution to work with the DNR and NRC to change the following:
  - The current definition of a combo tag to read valid for the take of one buck and one doe or two bucks with any legal method;
  - To continue to allow a combo buck tag option in areas that would otherwise not allow the take of a doe with any means (such as archery);
  - To make available in all other areas either the new combo or single buck tag;
  - To maintain hunter-supported additional requirements in DMUs that have supported such (such as APRs);
  - In areas of special management needs such as disease or high-density areas additional tags can be made available per DNR recommendations or mandates.
- In 2011, MUCC members passed a resolution requesting that MUCC work with the Department of Natural Resources, the Natural Resources Commission, and the legislature if need be to bring the single buck tag system in line with the combo tag system by replacing the single archery and single rifle tags with a simpler, unrestricted single buck tag, good for all seasons combined.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- This resolution would encourage hunters to harvest a doe with the included doe tag in the combination license package.
- This resolution encourages hunters to actively participate in disease management with more accessible antlerless licenses.
- This resolution would reduce disease pressure with increased antlerless harvest participation.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Adding an antlerless tag to the combination license could decrease revenue if a hunter only purchases one antlerless tag per year based on how much meat they personally utilize.

**DNR Response:**

Michigan has a history of responding to deer diseases with discounted antlerless licenses and allowance of free disease controls permits (DCPs). This practice was started in bovine tuberculosis (bTB) affected areas back in the 1990s and has been adopted in areas downstate affected by chronic wasting disease (CWD) as well. Despite the increase in antlerless license availability at either free or reduced costs, harvest data do not show a significant increase in antlerless deer harvest.

In 2015, the Department began reducing costs of antlerless licenses per director’s order by 40 percent (from \$20 down to \$12) in CWD affected areas. The agency also experimented with issuance of disease control permits in CWD affected areas that can be used concurrent during the hunting season, as well as an option of having a discounted, expiring antlerless license to stimulate early season antlerless harvest. Impacts of these are difficult to measure, generally because other changes usually accompany a license discount. Despite efforts to increase antlerless harvest, most approaches have not seemed to prove effective.

About 6 percent of existing hunters are successful in harvesting two deer. With high antlerless quotas throughout much of the Lower Peninsula, there exists abundant opportunity to take an antlerless deer under the current structure. The Department recognizes that there is a need to look at alternative solutions for managing deer population ratios.

**MUCC Wildlife Committee:**

The MUCC Wildlife Committee is supportive of this resolution in principle and offers the following amendment:

- Strike “include a” on line 25 and replace with “offer a discounted.”

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee (pending amendment)

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #5**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Dawn Levy, Region 5 Executive Board member  
**MUCC Region:** 5  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** Recess in K-5 Schools

**Background/Problem:**

As legislation in Michigan becomes increasingly focused on test-driven results, teachers are losing the ability to create their own curriculum. With the loss of creative freedom when it comes

to curriculum, many teachers are forced to spend more time inside and are not given the option to get their students learning outside. There is a substantial amount of research supporting the benefits of recess/free play for students. By advocating for curriculum development focused on outdoor opportunity, youth and teachers may gain some flexibility in their classroom schedule.

### **Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will work with the Michigan State Legislature and the Michigan Department of Education to educate and encourage the development of standards and curriculum to maintain designated time during the school day for outside play/recess for the wellbeing of Michigan's greatest natural resource, its children.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has a number of policy statements regarding conservation education, including the following policy statements:

- MUCC members voted to develop an education program for young members of local clubs.
- MUCC members voted to support educational programs which promote perpetuation of our natural water systems.
- MUCC members voted to urge all clubs to help promote conservation education in their local schools.
- MUCC members voted to support the formulation of a State Environmental Education Plan, which would include efforts to make conservation education mandatory in Michigan schools.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Research suggests youth are spending 40+ hours each week connected to digital screens.
- Youth who participate in unstructured outdoor play average less than five hours per week.
- Undirected play helps children learn how to work collaboratively, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, and learn self-advocacy skills.
- Only 36% of children engage in the recommended daily amount of daily physical activity.
- Studies have shown that taking recess gives youth a break from classes and spending time outdoors increases the ability for both youth and adults to focus more when they return to indoor tasks
- 12 other states already have recess laws on the books encouraging students to spend more time outside.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- One-size fits all policy may not be in the best interest in all school districts around the state. Local control is traditionally a hot button issue for administrators and teachers in school districts.

- Local districts may worry about their ability to fit a new portion of recess into the curriculum and still achieve mandated testing benchmarks.

**DNR Response:**

While the Department recognizes the import role that outdoor play has to a child’s overall development and learning, the Department would defer to the Michigan Department of Education when making decisions regarding any standards and curriculum for Michigan’s schools.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #6**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Erik Schnelle  
**MUCC region:** 5  
**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board  
**Title:** Restoring Antler Point Restrictions on 2<sup>nd</sup> Tag in Disease Area

**Background/Problem:**

Antler point restrictions (APRs) work to protect the majority of yearling bucks while still allowing the opportunity to harvest bucks 2.5 years or older. There is ongoing research to show the effect of APRs in disease areas. APRs were removed from the restricted tag in disease areas for the 2019 – 2020 deer seasons.

Mature bucks are more likely to be infected with both bovine tuberculosis and chronic wasting disease. Due to the correlation between disease prevalence and age, APRs could help slow transmission rates. If the majority of yearling bucks are protected, bucks eligible for harvest are also the bucks most likely to be infected. Removing these bucks from the landscape has the potential to positively impact the fight against deer diseases while encouraging the hunters with the opportunity to harvest a mature buck

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will work with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Natural Resources Commission (NRC), to restore the antler point restriction on the second tag on the combo deer license.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has a number of policy provisions relating to deer, with a few addressing antler point restrictions specifically:

- In 2019, MUCC members passed a resolution to work with the DNR and NRC to change the following:

- The current definition of a combo tag to read valid for the take of one buck and one doe or two bucks with any legal method;
- To continue to allow a combo buck tag option in areas that would otherwise not allow the take of a doe with any means (such as archery);
- To make available in all other areas either the new combo or single buck tag;
- **To maintain hunter-supported additional requirements in DMUs that have supported such (such as APRs);**
- In areas of special management needs such as disease or high-density areas additional tags can be made available per DNR recommendations or mandates.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- APRs could lower the risk of transmission by removing deer from the landscape that are most likely to be infected with disease.
- Hunters would be encouraged to participate with an increased opportunity to harvest a mature buck.
- The resolution allows for two bucks to still be harvested by hunters; it does not decrease opportunity.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- APRs limit the bucks eligible for hunter harvest.
- APRs require hunters to participate in doe harvest which may be impactful in reducing disease transmission rates. However, this doe harvest cannot be guaranteed.
- APRs are often practiced on a volunteer basis. Some hunters would prefer that they remain that way.

**DNR Response:**

The initial proposal to reinstate antler point restrictions in the CWD Management Zone was brought forward with what appeared to be no impact after APRs were removed upon initial detection of CWD. As it was pointed out, this proposed change was not supported by the Natural Resources Commission. The Department will continue to evaluate the impact of deer regulations and will continue to prioritize regulations that make sense for responsible deer and deer disease management in our CWD Management Zone.

Due to a resolution passed by the Natural Resources Commission in August of 2018, the Department, in collaboration with the Quantitative Wildlife Center at Michigan State University, designed a study to determine the effects of antler point restrictions (APRs) on deer in portions of Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, and Newaygo counties. The study will look at the effects of APRs on deer numbers, antlerless harvest, and the sex and age composition of the deer herd. The data gathered from this study will better inform management and regulation decisions in chronic wasting disease (CWD) management. The study area was established, and the assessment began during the 2019 deer hunting season. It is proposed that the APR sunset on March 1, 2022, unless clear and negative impacts are seen prior to the completion of the study. The Department does not recommend changing APRs in disease areas while the study is being conducted.

**MUCC Wildlife Committee:**

The MUCC Wildlife Committee opposes this resolution awaiting results from an ongoing study being conducted by MDNR biologists 2019-2022, to which this option is being researched.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: MUCC Wildlife Committee (pending further research)

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #7**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Dean Hall, Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **A Resolution to Propose a State Tax Credit for the Donation and Processing of Legally Harvested Deer to Feed the Hungry of Our State**

**Background/Problem:**

The goal of this resolution is to provide an incentive to both hunters and processors for donating and accepting the donation of a deer in exchange for a tax credit. Processors that process donated deer receive a lower per processed pound rate than their usual processing revenue and this resolution would help to incentive both hunters and processor to participate in the program through Michigan Sportsman Against Hunger.

Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger has a mission of feeding the hungry in our state. The estimated amount of venison utilized at food banks, pantries and shelters through the MSAH program is 637,000 pounds. That equates to 3,185,000 much appreciated hot nourishing meals for the hungry of our state.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will support legislation to create a state tax credit to hunters per each deer legally harvested during a hunting season and donated to a charitable organization like the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger (MSAH) that is engaged in the distribution of wild game processed at a Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspected and approved wild game processor in our state to feed our state's hungry; and,
- MUCC will support legislation to also create a state tax credit to a wild game processor per each legally harvested and donated deer that is processed into ground venison burger to feed the State's hungry through working with a charitable organization like the MSAH that is engaged in distribution of wild game processed at an MDARD or USDA inspected and approved wild game processor to feed the hungry of our state through state of Michigan recognized nonprofit food banks, shelters and pantries.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has traditionally been supportive of the donation of legally harvested deer to food pantries, banks and/or shelters. In 2016, MUCC members passed a resolution to support the creation of a statewide urban deer management plan emphasizing bowhunting and venison donation. MUCC has engaged with the state legislature in the past on issues of individual tax credits, but never on this topic.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunter has aided in feeding thousands of Michiganders in need, and this resolution would help to feed even more through the use of an incentive.
- Processors have to make the tough decision whether to participate in the MSAH program or not due to the lower processing revenue and this incentive could help to get more processors across the state on board.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- A hunter would be receiving financial gains through a tax credit by harvesting and donating a deer, which can have a negative connotation among conservationists.
- One of the seven principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is “**Markets for game are eliminated:** Before wildlife protection laws were enacted, commercial operations decimated populations of many species. Making it illegal to buy and sell meat and parts of game and nongame species removed a huge threat to the survival of those species. A market in furbearers continues as a highly regulated activity, often to manage invasive wildlife.” This could be seen as a pseudo market for hunting due to the potential for private financial gain.

### **DNR Response:**

The proposal to provide tax credits for the donation and processing of legally harvested deer requires legislative action. Implementation of tax credits impacts the amount of General Fund available in any given fiscal year for the State of Michigan. Providing a tax credit could incentivize more participation in the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger program. The Department believes if this legislative change were to occur, the impact to the General Fund is de minimis (*sic*).

### **Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

### **Proposed Resolution #8**

**Submitted by:** Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers Association  
**MUCC Region:** 9  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Preservation of Hunting Contests**

### **Background/Problem:**

The topic of hunting contests has long been shrouded in heated debate, with many anti-hunting groups, non-hunting members of the public and select sportsmen and sportswomen considering the practice unethical and outdated. It has been argued that these events promote the senseless killing of animals by youth and adults while cultivating a sense of disregard for wildlife and supporting the idea of killing for sport instead of to provide food for oneself and family. Alternatively, those in support of the activity consider the contests an important component of hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3), a method of predator and nuisance wildlife control and beneficial to the local economies they are hosted near.

MUCC has supported past efforts to increase public awareness of the economical, ecological and social benefits of hunting, angling and trapping. As the hunting community faces the struggle of declining participation, anti-hunting groups and organizations have increased their efforts to have events like hunting contests banned by law. Through this resolution, MUCC will defend the continued use of hunting contests for the reasons of support mentioned above, and work with member clubs to develop clear information to be disseminated to the non-hunting public about the purpose and nature of these events and support the use of fur and wild game to its fullest extent.

### **Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will defend hunting contests such as small game round ups, buck poles, and predator contests as legal hunting opportunities that promote the benefits of R3, reinforcing the social and community aspects of hunting, as well as the economic benefits to local economies; and
- MUCC will work with member clubs to educate on best management practices for public relations/communications on these contests to the non-hunting public to ensure that public perception of hunters remains neutral to positive; and
- MUCC will continue to support the use of fur as a legitimate use of wildlife management and that these contests should be encouraged to utilize the fur and wild game to its fullest extent.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

While MUCC does not currently have policies regarding hunting contests, there are a number of resolutions that are tangentially related to this topic:

- MUCC members adopted a resolution to inform the public on hunting, trapping, harvest ethics, actual game laws, and the benefits of sustainable wildlife management due to hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- MUCC members passed a resolution such that the organization will affirm hunting, fishing, and trapping to be legitimate recreational pursuits and useful wildlife management practices as generally carried as in many states. National Wildlife Federation reaffirm every reasonable effort to ensure that these pursuits continue to be enjoyed by the citizenry whenever and wherever sufficient populations make these activities biologically acceptable.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Hunting contests can play a role in successful R3 efforts by providing youth and new hunters with a safe introduction to hunting, reintroducing former hunters to the love of the sport and by retaining current hunters through the building of positive social and community interactions.
- If hosted correctly, hunting contests may provide new hunters with the opportunity to learn the importance of ethical hunting practices that will guide them through their lifetime of enjoying the recreational activity.
- Hunting contests may benefit local economies when participants spend money on goods and services like food, fuel, gear and other supplies in the areas where the event is hosted.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- According to The Wildlife Society's (the professional organization of wildlife biologists) issue statement regarding wildlife killing contests, hunting contests targeted at predators like coyotes are often hosted on the basis of managing the population as a way to reduce predators that prey on wildlife like deer and other game and thus increase the mortality rates of these species. However, such a justification is based on "flawed science" that fails to acknowledge that predation, although influential, is not the main factor limiting the population of deer and other game species.
- Even when practiced ethically and in a legal manner, hunters face an abundance of criticism from the non-hunting public. Making a contest out of hunting may lead the hunting-neutral or hunting-positive public to consider hunting an unethical practice, even when the species taken during the contest are those legally classified as game and all hunting actions were done lawfully. This can be exacerbated when photos of piles of dead animals are widely shared or the animals are not used to their full extent following their taking, leading to the perception of wanton waste.

### **DNR Response:**

The Department supports legal hunting opportunities that promote the benefits of R3, reinforcing the social and community aspects of hunting as well as the economic benefits to local economies.

### **MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

There are close ties between fishing tournaments and hunting contests and this committee believes that all sportsman should be united to protect our ability to hunt and fish.

### **Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee, MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #9**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Patrick Hogan, Member  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Diversify Funding for Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund**

**Background/Problem:**

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) has provided more than \$1.1 billion dollars of acquisition and infrastructure funds for public lands since its inception in 1976. The impact of the trust fund can be seen in every county in Michigan from parks to trails to splash pads. Revenue for the MNRTF comes from royalties on the sale and lease of state-owned oil, gas and mineral rights. As we begin to see renewable energy such as solar and wind advance in technology, a concern for the use of public lands for renewable energy has heightened. This resolution aims to get ahead of that concern by including renewable energies into the matrix of funding for the MNRTF.

**Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will use the strength of its 40,000 plus hunters, anglers, trappers and conservationists and over 200 affiliated local clubs around the state to support an addition to the MNRTF to include the extraction of renewable resources, or creation of renewable energy.
- MUCC will work with our state legislature to see that Bonuses for lease rights, rent on acreage, and percentage of gross values of solar and wind energy creation is deposited into the MNRTF, and ultimately the State Parks Endowment Fund (SPEF).
- MUCC will work with the legislature to see that these Bonuses for lease rights, rent on acreage, and percentage of gross values will not negatively impact the establishment of renewable energy sources.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has been involved with the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund since its inception, as a voice that assisted in the formation of this important tool. Many MUCC resolutions have been passed relating to the use of MNRTF funds since it has been established, but deposits to the trust fund have not been addressed recently. In 1982, MUCC members passed a resolution to work to pass a constitutional amendment, via petition drive/voter referendum, to require that money from the development of publicly owned, non-renewable natural resources be used solely for land acquisition for outdoor recreation, natural resource conservation, and other natural resource programs that provide long-term benefit for the people of the State of Michigan.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- This resolution would provide for more funding for the MNRTF, and as a result more funding for public lands, trails, and communities across the state.

- As non-renewable energy demand dwindles in the future, funds for the MNRTF will do the same. This resolution ensure that renewable energy will fill that void of funding for public land acquisition and infrastructure in Michigan.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Having a royalty associated with renewable energy companies could make Michigan unattractive for these facilities. This could negatively impact Michigan’s potential economy growth and job market for when renewables become a larger part of the energy sector.

**DNR Response:**

The Department manages extensive infrastructure related to its natural resource management, land management, and public recreation. The Department continually searches for opportunities to secure additional financial support and leverage existing funding to address a considerable backlog of deferred infrastructure maintenance needs. Identifying additional revenue to address the Department’s estimated \$278 million backlog of deferred state park infrastructure maintenance is a key priority of the department. Directing this new revenue to funds already established within the Michigan Constitution helps ensure that the funding will be used for its intended purposes.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #10**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Greg Peter, MUCC Vice President  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Feral Cats as an Invasive Species**

**Background/Problem:**

An invasive species is one that is not native and whose introduction causes harm, or is likely to cause harm, to Michigan's economy, environment or human health. The damage that feral cats cause to wildlife species annually affirms the “cause harm” provision in the definition of an invasive species. It is currently a felony to exterminate a feral cat. This resolution would urge MUCC to advocate for designating feral cats as an invasive species and to work towards changing the regulations surrounding the extermination of feral cats.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will promote the designation of feral cats as an invasive species and thereby subject to regulation as such, and
- MUCC will support research into possible oral contraceptive methods to decrease the population and the resultant mortality of wildlife species; and

- MUCC will oppose Trap Neuter and Release programs and educate the public of the threat to public health and our wildlife resources of this invasive species and the inhumane practice of releasing neutered cats back into feral colonies.

#### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC does not currently have policies relating directly to feral cats but does have a number of positions favoring control and management of other invasive species.

#### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Feral cats are responsible for approximately 1 to 4 billion bird deaths, 6.3 to 22.3 billion mammal deaths and hundreds of millions amphibian deaths in the contiguous United States annually, according to research conducted by the Smithsonian Institute and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Feral cats are known carriers of diseases such as rabies, plague, ringworm and trichinpsis, among others.
- Feral cats are subjected to inclement weather, starvation and drought. Trapping, neutering and releasing these animals into such conditions is inhumane.

#### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- The public relations and lens surrounding feral cats is sensitive. Cats are generally thought of as domesticated animals and distinguishing the difference to the general public between feral and domestic could prove to be difficult.
- This is a national issue that has roots far deeper than Michigan. There is a reason, despite a Smithsonian and USFWS study clearly showing the negative impacts, why cats are still being released into the wild and why feral cats are still subjected to trap, neuter and release practices.
- The resources that this resolution will take to implement far outweigh current staff capacity. MUCC staff would likely need to set other resolutions/issues/advocacy efforts aside in order to work on an issue with breadth and exposure such as this.

#### **DNR Response:**

Cats are designated as domestic animals under Michigan law and the Department does not have management authority over this species. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has authority to regulate cats and animal shelters in Michigan. However, the Department does not allow the release of trapped-and-neutered cats to be conducted on Department-managed lands due to expected ecological harm.

#### **Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

## **Proposed Resolution #11**

**Submitted by:** George Lindquist, MUCC President  
**MUCC Region:** 1  
**Passed:** September 28, 2019 Conservation Policy Board  
**Title:** **Encourage the use of Non-Lead Alternatives**

### **Background/Problem:**

Lead is a powerful neurotoxin that can damage a variety of tissues and organs, notably those in the immune and reproductive system. Shot pellets, bullet fragments, and fishing tackle made of lead pose a threat to wildlife and fish at multiple levels of the food chain. Worldwide, studies document more than 130 wildlife species that are negatively affected by lead. Increasingly, there are more and more non-lead products available for use in ammunition and fishing tackle. These non-toxic metals, like tungsten and nickel, function in much the same way as lead, but are not toxic to wildlife or people. These alternatives may come at a higher cost to consumers than products containing lead.

### **Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will educate the sporting public of the potential impacts of using lead, and the alternatives, for hunting ammunition, as well as fishing gear.
- MUCC will encourage the use of non-lead fishing tackle and ammunition whenever these options are available, and practical.
- This provision will not apply to projectiles used at shooting ranges.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

In 1977, MUCC passed a resolution to work with the state legislature and MDNR to seek non-toxic shot to replace lead shot in duck hunting, and for all shotgun sports.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Lead alternatives are plentiful and do not pose risks to wildlife or humans.
- Lead-based products are known to cause harm to wildlife, notably bird species.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Lead-based ammunition and tackle is less expensive to consumers.
- Certain firearms are only able to shoot expensive non-lead alternatives, such as bismuth and tungsten.

### **DNR Response:**

This resolution would not require a change in statute or order. The Department believes information regarding the potential impacts of lead in hunting and fishing gear could be integrated into outreach efforts.

### **MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

The MUCC Fisheries Committee is in support of this resolution but does not wish for its content to become law/statute. It continues to be important for the anglers of the state to use the best available science in stocking their tackle boxes.

### **Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee  
OPPOSITION:  
NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #12**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Gary Gorniak, Straits Area Sportsmen's Club  
**MUCC Region:** 2  
**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board Meeting, as amended  
**Title:** **Add to MDNR Wolf Management Plan: Expand Hunting and Trapping Area for the Gray Wolf and Long-Term Population Goal for the Gray Wolf**

**Background/Problem:**

Gray wolves are likely the most contentious species in the Western Great Lakes Region. From livestock depredation and predator management cases to the influence of wildlife watchers and non-consumptive wildlife protection groups, it seems that nearly everyone in the conservation community has a stake in decisions regarding this large carnivore. Given the status of this species on the Endangered Species List, management of the species across the Upper Peninsula involves complex collaboration between multiple local, state and federal agencies. Trapping as a means of take is just one part of this plan.

**Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to revisit the Wolf Management Plan to expand the gray wolf harvest area to the entire Upper Peninsula of Michigan; and
- MUCC will advocate for both hunting and trapping to be legal methods of take for wolf harvest in Michigan; and
- MUCC will advocate for the Michigan Wolf Management Plan to include a goal of maintaining a population of 300-400 Gray Wolves (up to twice the population required to meet the delisting requirements in Michigan) in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has a long and involved history in advocating on behalf of the conservation community on this issue. Thus, there have been a number of resolutions passed regarding wolves generally. Relevant resolutions and actions are listed from most to least recent:

- In 2015, MUCC passed a resolution to urge staff to call on the United States Congress to enact legislation directing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reissue its 2011 rule removing the gray wolf from the Federal Endangered Species list in the states of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin and to provide that such rule is not subject to any judicial review. MUCC also fully supports the state's appeal to the court decision returning the grey wolf in the Western Great Lakes area to the endangered species list.
- In 2015, MUCC members passed a resolution to strongly urge the Michigan DNR and the Natural Resources Commission to add a new Wolf Management Unit that will include the east end of the Upper Peninsula in our future wolf hunting season.

- In 2011, MUCC passed a resolution to work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Natural Resources Commission to establish a trapping and hunting season to manage the gray wolf population in the State of Michigan based upon sound scientific management and to preserve the magnificent animal on the Michigan landscape.
- In 2006, MUCC passed a resolution to advocate to have the gray wolf reclassified as a game and furbearing species. Work with the legislature and Department of Natural Resources to have the wolf taken off the state endangered species list.
- In 2004, MUCC passed a resolution to urge the Department of Interior to delist the wolf from its threatened status, and urge the Michigan Legislature to, upon being delisted, to designate the wolf as a game animal. MUCC urges the Michigan Natural Resources Committee to establish a limited hunting and trapping season on wolves.
- In 2003, MUCC passed a resolution to strongly urge the MDNR to petition the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as soon as possible, to de-list the grey wolf in Michigan, and the MDNR keep the grey wolf delisting as a top priority.
- In the same year (2003), MUCC members passed a resolution to support an endangered species policy that gives priority to the protection of species based on their contribution to man's health, welfare, survival, and quality of life. MUCC supports resisting many extinctions but opposes endangered species policies that resist all extinctions without regard to ecological significance or importance to mankind.
- In 2000, MUCC members passed a resolution to work to have the gray wolf down listed from the endangered species list to threatened, with modification of the 4D rule, in Michigan.
- In 1998, MUCC adopted a position of support for the best of both SB 1180 and HR 2351 with the recommendation that the final draft require: 1) listing and delisting decisions be based on science and biological necessity; 2) listing decisions be subject to public scrutiny and scientific peer review; 3) listing decisions be subjected to periodic review as the law requires, reviews must be completed within one year of species will be delisted and 4) a five year plan for species recovery that contains biological goals must be developed.
- In 1997, MUCC members passed a resolution to support the draft Michigan Grey Wolf Recovery and Management Plan and work with the DNR and our elected representatives to ensure only the temporary closure of public land when needed.
- In 1994, MUCC members passed a resolution to support the natural recovery of the gray wolf as long as public access to all public lands remain open to all outdoor recreational purposes.
- In 1975, MUCC members passed a resolution to urge those who designate "endangered species" to use caution, avoiding the use of improper management of game resources.

#### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Wolf numbers are well over delisting requirements and far exceed what is needed for a sustainable population in the U.P.
- Hunter participation was low during the 2013 hunt, partially due to the high cost of a tag, and expanding the WMU's will hopefully increase participation.
- Wolf populations continue to expand across the U.P. and have expanded past the limited WMU's originally established by the DNR.

- In Western states and Canada, trapping continues to be one of the most effective methods of harvest to help manage predator populations.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Anti-hunting groups focus more time, attention, and money on state's that allow trapping, especially for wolves.
- Potential negative public perception of wolf hunting, risking a re-listing of the species

**DNR Response:**

In compliance with the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, Section 43540e (8), the Wolf Management Advisory Council (Council) is required to provide an annual report to both the Legislature and the Natural Resources Commission on recommendations concerning wolf management in Michigan. The Council must be comprised of at least one member each representing:

- The Department of Natural Resources
- An organization that promotes conservation in Michigan
- An organization that promotes hunting or fishing in Michigan
- A Tribal government
- Agricultural interests
- An animal advocacy organization

The Council last met on March 9, 2015. At that time, the Council reviewed and supported updates to the Michigan Wolf Management Plan. No further action has been taken due to the federal listing of wolves as endangered, which supersedes state management authority. However, wolves were proposed for delisting by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 15, 2019, and a final listing decision is currently expected by March 14, 2020.

The 2008 Michigan Wolf Management Plan (the Plan) stated in the Monitoring and Review Section "To address ecological, social and regulatory shifts in a timely manner, the Michigan DNR will review and update this plan at 5-year intervals." The Plan also states the "process will include review of the best available scientific information and substantial involvement by affected stakeholder groups and the general public".

If wolves are delisted then state management authority will be restored, and the Wolf Management Advisory Council will be reconvened. We expect that many of the items in Proposed Resolution #E will be up for discussion at that time. Proposals regarding the hunting or trapping of wolves would be subject to the transparent process whereby any recommended regulatory changes are brought before the Natural Resources Commission for public review and comment. NRC meetings are subject to the provisions of the Open Meetings Act.

**MUCC Wildlife Committee:**

The MUCC Wildlife Committee supports this resolution in principle and offers the following amendment:

- Strike "of 300-400 Gray Wolves (up to twice the population required to meet the delisting requirements in Michigan)" on lines 26-27 and replace with "set by wildlife biologists."

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee (pending amendment)

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

### **Proposed Resolution #13**

**Submitted by:** Jack Ammerman, Michigan Gun Owners  
**MUCC Region:** 9  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Rescind Outdated MUCC Policy AC740676 and AC760676 Regarding Firearm Transportation in a Vehicle**

#### **Background/Problem:**

The most common reasons a person might have for transporting a firearm is because they are going hunting or target shooting. Current law states that firearm owners are required to first separate the ammunition from the weapon and then place the weapon into a locked container. This resolution aims to rescind policy that, in the eyes of the writer, is outdated. The writer cites the fact that many vehicles such as SUVs and trucks do not have separate trunks and that MUCC policy should reflect that change.

#### **Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs will eliminate its policy that all firearms being transported in a motor vehicle must be encased and the case positively secured from access to vehicle occupants, policy AC740676 will be rescinded; and
- MUCC's will eliminate its policy outdated policy that all firearms being transported in a motor vehicle must be in the trunk of a vehicle, policy AC770676 will be rescinded.

#### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

This resolution pertains to two current MUCC policies:

- **AC770676 Require** that all guns be locked in the trunk when being transported in a motor vehicle.
- **AC740676 Require** encasement of all guns being transported in motor vehicles.

#### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- States that already allow uncased firearms in vehicles have shown no safety issues related to allowing the firearms to be uncased.
- Older resolutions have already caused MUCC to testify in opposition to pro-gun bills. Passing this resolution would eliminate that situation in the future.
- With the increase in popularity of UTV's and ATV's, this would allow much more flexibility and freedom in how firearms are handled when traveling.

#### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Some people may use this justification to store their firearms and ammunition irresponsibly, putting themselves and law enforcement officers at risk.

#### **DNR Response:**

The Department has serious concerns with allowing uncased firearms in motor

vehicles due to safety reasons. Carrying a firearm unloaded and in a case is the safest way to transport a firearm in a motor vehicle. Firearms are already allowed to be transported uncased in trunk areas, pickup beds, and in toolboxes.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #14**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Greg Peter, MUCC Vice President

**MUCC Region:** 8

**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting

**Title:** **Further Measures to Facilitate the Elimination of Feral Swine**

**Background/Problem:**

Feral swine present a challenge to agriculture and wildlife wherever they are present. In many southern states, these subspecies cause millions of dollars in damage annually, leading states to form inter-agency teams to combat this problem. In the early 1980s, feral swine were detected in the state of Michigan and in 2011 it was estimated that feral swine existed in 72 of Michigan's 83 counties. At this time, Michigan established the Feral Swine Working Group consisting of USDA Wildlife Services, MDNR, MUCC, MDARD, the Michigan Pork Producers and others to study this problem. There have been a number of legal suits on this topic, particularly relating to the ability of state and federal agencies to reduce feral pig populations (and subsequent damage) by eliminating populations on game preserves. Swine in these enclosures are bred for hunting but are known to escape and cause property damage in some places. Feral swine cause an approximate \$1.5 billion in damages and control costs in the United States annually. Currently, there is still a great deal of debate over whether or not swine possessed by these game preserves could or should be depopulated.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will advocate for all strains of swine to be banned from game preserves for the purposes of hunting and be it further resolved that MUCC encourage the microchip identification of any pig that is not raised in an enclosed, confined pork production facility.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has engaged with the state legislature, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC), and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) on the issue of feral swine for a number of years. The following resolutions have been passed:

- In 2011, MUCC members passed a resolution requesting that MUCC, in all communications, advocate the proper use of the term "feral swine" rather than use the term "Russian Wild Boar", when "feral swine" is the proper terminology.
- In 2008, MUCC members passed a resolution to prevent the establishment of feral swine in Michigan by supporting the Joint Commissions on Agriculture and Natural Resources that recommend aggressive action to eliminate feral swine in order to protect animal

health, public health, and the environment by directing the Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources to pursue the following recommendations:

1. Ban all recreational shooting of swine behind fences;
  2. Depopulate swine from all Michigan Privately Owned Cervid (POC) ranches, game ranches, wild game breeding facilities and other enclosed hunting ranches.
  3. Depopulate and seek indemnity for those swine described above not otherwise hunted for profit or sent to slaughter by a determined date.
  4. Prohibit husbandry practices that involve raising swine for recreational shooting (such as wild pigs, razorbacks, piney-woods rooters, Russian and Eurasian boars, and crosses) for sale or transfer.
  5. Prohibit the sale, importation, or transfer of swine for the purpose of recreational shooting.
  6. Allow year-round shooting of feral swine as nuisance animals.
  7. Increase fines related to the importation and release of feral swine into Michigan.
  8. Use federal funds to trap, test, and remove feral swine from private property
- Also, in 2008, MUCC members passed a resolution regarding the feral hog registration and identification program, to work with the MDNR, MDA, and the State Legislature, as necessary, to mandate owner and facility identification systems for all feral hogs held captive in Michigan. The cost of implementing, managing and monitoring this program should be recovered through a licensing and registration fee to be paid by the owner or managers of the feral hogs.

#### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- It would be very difficult to eliminate feral pigs from the state without removing them from all of the game preserves.
- Feral swine are prone to escaping game preserves and other enclosures and cause significant damage to agricultural production and private property.
- Game preserves may violate the rules of fair chase.

#### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Feral pigs on game preserves are considered to be the property of the owners of the game preserves, thus eliminating these could be considered “take.”
- Game preserves allow easy access to hunting unique species

#### **DNR Response:**

The Department agrees that there is a need to eliminate feral swine from Michigan and thanks MUCC for its efforts to affect a significant decline in free-ranging feral swine statewide. The Department does not have authority to enact the regulatory changes advocated in MUCC Proposed Resolution #14 and therefore has no opinion on this resolution.

#### **MUCC Wildlife Committee:**

The MUCC Wildlife Committee supports this resolution in principle and proposes the following amendment:

- Strike “be it further resolved that MUCC encourage the permanent identification of any pig that is not raised in an enclosed, confined pork production facility.”

#### **Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee (pending amendment)

OPPOSITION:  
NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #15**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Leonard Shaner, MUCC Member  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Logging Quiet Time**

**Background/Problem:**

Michigan hunters have long enjoyed the tradition of firearm season on both public and private land. Public land users are concerned that logging on state property during this season, which is currently allowed, disrupts hunter satisfaction. Some users feel that because state forestland is partially owned by the citizens of Michigan, the condition of logging contracts should accurately reflect the needs of public land hunters.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) remains an advocate for hunters and the use of State Forest lands for people to enjoy during fall hunting seasons. To this end, MUCC will work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Forest Resources Division and the Wildlife Division to modify logging permits so as to close all state forest to logging operations during the firearm deer season to allow hunters to enjoy the peace and quiet of State Forest lands without interference of logging companies and their employees.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has worked with the MDNR Forest Resources Division in a number of ways to support the sustainable use of natural resources. The following resolutions have been passed:

- In 2008, MUCC members passed a resolution to work with the MDNR and state forest managers to ensure that all acreage denoted in the compartmental review for cutting goes up for sale in all state forests.
- To support increased state budget for use in managing Michigan's State Forests.
- To support multiple use land management of state forest lands.

No resolutions have dealt with the issue of timber harvest during the firearm deer season.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Logging on public land during firearm deer season interrupts the peace and tranquility that many hunters seek.
- Logging does not take place on private land during this time because landowners want to enjoy a quiet woods; users believe that public land hunters should be given the same opportunity.
- Equipment that is used or logging causes some access trails and roads to become impassible to hunters.

- Large equipment use during hunting season does not help attract new hunters to the state or help retain public land users.

#### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Logging is a large industry in Michigan and needs to capitalize on the best times to be utilizing forestland for commercial use.
- Logging could overlap with other outdoor activities or hunting aside from firearm deer season. Prioritizing certain activities over others could be difficult and controversial.

#### **DNR Response:**

The Department has concerns regarding the proposed change to implement a 'Logging Quiet Time'. The four-million-acre State Forest provides many social, ecological, and economic values and benefits to the citizens of Michigan. Some of these uses and values can conflict with one another, and the Department strives to balance competing needs within our management framework. Forest management includes a number of activities on the forest, such as timber harvest, to help maintain these unique characteristics while also providing benefits, including revenue to the State and habitat for wildlife. When the State sells standing timber to loggers, it is sold on a contract that typically lasts two to three years. There are conditions and requirements in the contract regarding conduct of operations such as timing of activities. Because of concerns regarding water, soil, and residual trees, most contracts have limitations on the time of year harvesting may occur, including:

- Restrictions in the spring to protect trees when the sap is flowing.
- Restrictions when soils may be too wet for safe operation and to prevent damage to soil resources.
- Restrictions in the winter to protect snowmobile trails.

While acknowledging the need for these restrictions, the logging industry is justifiably concerned about how the cumulative impact of these restrictions decrease the available timeframe when logging operations may be conducted. Halting all logging on State Forest land in the month of November would limit the available period of operation even more. Within a given year, only about 50,000 of the 4,000,000 acres of the state forest are harvested. This leaves 3,950,000 acres available for "quiet" hunting.

In summary, the Department believes that further restrictions upon the logging industry would have an adverse impact upon the ability of industry to help manage the state forest for both timber and wildlife values, and that there are adequate acres available for quiet hunting that are not impacted by timber harvesting during the month of November to accommodate both uses without significant conflict.

#### **MUCC Wildlife Committee:**

The MUCC Wildlife Committee expressed concerns with the livelihood of timber professionals in moving forward with this resolution. Wildlife suggests the following amendment:

- Strike "month of November" on line 23 and replace with "first week of the firearm deer season"

After proposing this amendment, the Wildlife Committee stood opposed to this resolution by a roll call of 4.5 in favor, 5 opposed and 1 abstention. This decision stands pending MDNR comments on this resolution.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #16**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Chelsea Rod & Gun Club  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Reduced Youth Hunting Fees**

**Background/Problem:**

As the Department of Natural Resources continues to struggle to recruit and retain new hunters, the cost of licenses is always a topic up for discussion. Currently hunters classified as seniors are able to purchase licenses at a reduced fee, while youth hunters (under 16) are expected to pay full price.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs will use its influence to urge the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the State Legislature to reduce hunting license fees for youth hunters under the age of 16 to a level equal to or less than the fees paid by senior hunters.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC consistently engages on issues of hunting and fishing licenses, especially pertaining to the recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters and anglers. The following MUCC policies are relevant to the passage of this resolution:

- In 2015, MUCC members passed a resolution to provide hunting licenses at reduced prices for youth hunters, saying that MUCC should work with the DNR, NRC and the legislature to establish a lower hunting license fee for Michigan resident youth under the age of 17
- In 2010, MUCC members passed a resolution requesting that MUCC work with MDNR, the NRC, and other partner organizations to change our current law to eliminate the minimum age requirement for hunting and develop a mentor-type program (with direct and constant supervision) to give our youth every possible opportunity to become hunters, trappers and fishermen.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Reducing the cost of a youth license may ease the burden on families who are trying to purchase multiple youth licenses.

- A reduced license cost may allow youth hunters to purchase their own license, creating an improved sense of responsibility and giving a sense of ownership.
- Each new unique license purchase helps the department receive match funding from the federal government.
- Equalizing the prices of youth and senior licenses will streamline the license system and reduce regulations.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Currently the DNR is experiencing budget cuts due to loss of hunting license purchases; another reduction of license fees may continue the decline in revenue.
- In several studies, the cost of a license is much lower on the list of barriers to begin hunting, than other issues. The most common barriers being, time, perceived opportunity and access to somewhere to hunt.
- The Michigan youth base license is already cheaper than surrounding states (Michigan \$6, Indiana \$7, Illinois \$7 and Ohio \$10).

**DNR Response:**

The Department has concerns with reducing hunting license fees for youth under the age of 16 to a level equal to or less than the fee paid by senior hunters. From a marketing perspective, the price of hunting and fishing licenses, particularly the use of discounts has minimal effect as a marketing strategy. Discounts in a wide variety of applications have been tried in Michigan and by natural resource agencies nationally with minimal to no success. Surveys have shown that the price of a license has little to no impact on one’s decision to hunt or not. From a finance and operations perspective, providing a discount usually only gives those that already hunt a lower price but does little to recruit. A breakeven point would have to be calculated if a discount is provided to determine how many new licenses have to be sold in order to make up for the lost revenue. Typical break-even analysis for licenses point to decrease revenue as the needed increase in demand to overcome loss in revenue is not probable. Decreased revenue will lead to decreased service.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #17**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Tim Muir, Lake St. Clair Walleye Association  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Work with the MDNR to Align Free Fishing Weekend with Father’s Day**

**Background/Problem:**

For many, the annual Free Fishing Weekend has become a tradition - a time to get together and have some fishing fun. Experienced anglers who offer a child or young adult the chance to take

their first fishing trip can provide a rewarding experience for all. People who fish tend to understand the natural aquatic network of plants and animals that help to sustain fish as well as the regulations that govern fishing in Michigan.

Research shows that young people today do not have access to fishing opportunities that were enjoyed by generations before them. Some of the reasons: living in urban or suburban areas where fishing access is not readily available, competition for time by an ever-increasing schedule of special activities, and too little time for unstructured leisure.

### **Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will work with and request from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) such that future free fishing weekends be aligned with Father's Day in an effort to increase participation in fishing.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC often works with MDNR on issues similar to this by way of one of MUCC's oldest member-passed resolutions, which affirmed the MDNR's discretionary authority over fishing seasons and limits in Michigan. Further, MUCC supports efforts to recruit, retain, and reactivate anglers in the state of Michigan.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Father's Day is a traditional day of family gathering, providing the opportunity for everyone to fish for no cost may create new interest in the sport.
- MUCC is not aware of any scientific reason free fishing weekend could not move one/two weeks later in June.
- Having multiple generations of family member's participating in fishing touches each bucket of R3-recruiting, retaining and reactivating.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Changing traditional dates can sometimes be confusing for the public.

### **DNR Response:**

The Department has some concerns but is neutral on changing Free Fishing weekend to overlap with Father's Day weekend. From a marketing promotion view there is some potential additional push that could be gained from an association to Father's Day. Currently, fishing retail marketers invest heavily into Father's Day promotions which could be leveraged. There is also a marketing loss from a move to Father's Day in that fishing is already heavily promoted during Father's Day and free fishing weekend and combining those would remove the separate opportunity to promote. From a marketing data view understanding the free fishing day contribution to recruitment and reactivation is limited. Under the established free fishing days in Michigan no "free license" is required which means no available data. Free fishing weekend on its current date has a long-standing history that many programs have built volunteer bases around. Moving to Father's Day could impact existing volunteer base availability. Recently, Illinois and Ohio adopted free fishing on Father's Day. It is still too early, particularly with 2020 being the first year of Father's Day free fishing in Ohio, to have an understanding on their success.

Additionally, statute requires that the free ORV weekend must be the same as free fishing weekend and would also need to move. Recreation passport fee waive would also need to move to the same weekend.

**MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

The MUCC Fisheries Committee believes that this change could be an effective and impactful way to increase angler participation.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #18**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Bruce Levy, MUCC Region 9  
**MUCC Region:** 9  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** Hunter Orange

**Background/Problem:**

Hunter or blaze orange has been the universal attire and symbol for safety among the hunting and shooting sports community. It has been required since the 1970s in Michigan and has aided in reducing hunting accidents since that time. This resolution aims to maintain hunter orange as that symbol while simultaneously curtailing any efforts to allow other colors to be accepted as alternatives.

A bill to allow hunter pink as an alternative to hunter orange has been introduced in the Michigan legislature, and the proponents behind the bill are manufacturers of hunter pink attire and sporting wear. They have argued that it would help to get more women in the woods.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) will work to establish a policy that “Hunter Orange” be the only color that is to be used as a safety color for hunting in the state of Michigan.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has been actively engaged on the issue of hunter visibility in the past, especially on topics relating to the regulation of blaze orange. MUCC has passed similar resolutions, stating:

- MUCC members voted to approve a resolution such that the state should require that people hiking, skiing, etc. in game areas during hunting season wear orange clothing.
- MUCC members have also voted to exempt waterfowl and predator hunters from the hunter orange requirements required of upland and big game hunters.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Hunter orange has been proven to be the safest and most effective color for safety. It is universally recognized for identifying a hunter in the woods. The only study that supports Hunter Pink is not peer reviewed or widely accepted in the scientific community.

- According to the International Hunter Education Association “No nationally recognized study has established or verified standards for the wavelength, luminance, or excitation purity required for visibility of any color other than Hunter Orange in natural environments by human observers.”
- According to a DNR survey, out of 216 hunter safety instructors 209 did not support the addition of any color in lieu of hunter orange.
- Generally speaking, color of clothing is not a deterrent to hunter participation.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- There are several other states that have allowed hunter pink.
- Arguments have been made that allowing hunter pink would help in the R3 efforts of getting more women in the woods.

**DNR Response:**

The Department supports hunter orange as the only color to be used as a safety color for hunting in the State of Michigan.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #19**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Jack Ammerman, Michigan Gun Owners  
**MUCC region:** 9  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Work to Change Language in MCL that puts Michigan Hunters and Shooters in Jeopardy of Committing a Crime**

**Background/Problem:**

Current Michigan state law prohibits the resting or leaning of a loaded firearm on a non-moving vehicle. As most hunters use their vehicles to travel to and from their hunts, this has put many hunters at risk of easily becoming on the wrong side of the law. Simply placing a firearm on the tailgate of a truck or leaning it up against the side of a sedan has caused many individuals to be issued a citation.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) recognizes temporarily leaning or placing a firearm on a non-moving vehicle should not be a crime; and
- MUCC will actively pursue a change in Michigan statute to remove the prohibition concerning placement of firearms upon non-moving vehicles.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has engaged on a number of firearm issues, including the following:

- MUCC members passed a resolution to educate the public on the importance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and its importance to funding conservation in Michigan; and work with the

legislature and administration to advance thoughtful firearm policy in this state to conserve, protect, and enhance the rights of lawful individuals.

- MUCC members passed a resolution seeking increased efforts to curtail the practice of hunting from a vehicle. Also seeks legislation to increase fines for those caught hunting from a vehicle.
- MUCC members passed a resolution to seek legislation requiring that any firearm accessible to the driver of a vehicle be cased.
- MUCC members passed a resolution such that the organization will work with the NDR, NRC, and legislature to clarify regulations to allow the casing and uncasing of a transported firearm when the vehicle is stopped, and the person is outside the vehicle.

#### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Laws like this punish law abiding individuals.
- Placing a firearm on a vehicle, such as on a tail gate, is often a safe and responsible decision when handling a firearm, as opposed to leaning a firearm on a tree or other irregularly shaped object that could lead to the firearm falling.
- Other states have recently removed similar restrictions.

#### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Any loaded firearm on a vehicle is currently considered a safety hazard, and a punishable offense.

#### **DNR Response:**

The Department has safety concerns with allowing the placement of firearms upon non-moving vehicles.

#### **Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

### **Proposed Resolution #20**

**Submitted by:** Greg Peter, MUCC Vice President

**MUCC Region:** 8

**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board Meeting

**Title:** **Treatment Permits for The Treatment of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)**

#### **Background/Problem:**

Invasive species have been present in the Great Lakes since the founding of this country. They can harm the environment, the economy, or even human health. Species that grow and reproduce quickly, and spread aggressively, with potential to cause harm, are given the label “invasive.” Invasive species are primarily spread by human activities, often unintentionally. People, and the goods we use, travel around the world very quickly, and they often carry uninvited species with them. Ships can carry aquatic organisms in their ballast water while smaller boats may carry them on their propellers. Insects can get into wood, shipping palettes, and crates that are shipped

around the world. Some ornamental plants can escape into the wild and become invasive. And some invasive species are intentionally or accidentally released pets.

### **Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will promote more DNR biologist input into the permit approval process for the chemical treatment of aquatic invasive species to assess the risk/benefit of treatment regimens.
- MUCC will also promote further inquiry into the impact of these chemical treatments on other native populations of flora and fauna while considering the potential benefit of reducing the threat of AIS.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC members have passed resolutions relating to preventing the spread of invasive species by municipal water supplies (2014) and through commercial shipping (2007) but has not addressed chemical or physical treatment for these species. MUCC continues to promote the application of science-based management practices and encourages the input of the scientific community in MDNR agency action.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Allowing the DNR to have more on an input in the approval process for the chemical treatment of aquatic invasive species would provide for a more science-based approach to permit approval.
- There are only a few approved chemical treatments on the market and if applied wrong can have detrimental effects on the environment.
- By furthering our inquiries about the impact of these chemical treatments we can only further our understanding of these chemicals impact not only on the aquatic invasive but also on the local flora and fauna.
- Having more knowledge on how we are treating aquatic invasive species is a proactive step to reducing the over whelming amount of aquatic invasive species in Michigan.

### **Arguments in Opposition of Resolution:**

- DNR biologist should not have an input in permit approval for the chemical treatment of aquatic invasive species because there are better, more practical ways to eradicate aquatic invasive species that doesn't require dumping chemicals into our already polluted waterways.
- Implementing more biological and mechanical control methods may be reasonable alternatives to chemical treatment.
- DNR biologist time should be spent more wisely on more pressing matters at hand. Added DNR input adds to the bureaucracy of this process and might make permitting more strenuous.

### **DNR Response:**

The Department acknowledges the importance of DNR Fisheries Biologist input into the EGLE-Aquatic Nuisance Control (ANC) treatment permit approval process.

A primary responsibility of DNR Fisheries Biologists is to review, with guidance from Department Policy, and comment on EGLE-ANC treatment permits to minimize the direct, negative effects expected if aquatic invasive species become established in a water body as well as the side-effects of treatments to address aquatic invasive species. The Department policy entitled *Policy and Procedure 02.02.014: Aquatic Nuisance Control* acknowledges that, “Aquatic plants and algae play a vital role in healthy ecosystems” through provision of food, habitat, refuge from predation, and other benefits. The policy states that, “Control of non-indigenous nuisance species is valuable and should be conducted using methods that have the least adverse effect on native plants.” With respect to native species, the policy states that “Fisheries Division opposes the removal of native macrophytes (submerged, floating-leaf, and emergent aquatic plants). Limited removal of nuisance aquatic vegetation may be warranted in certain situations (such as removal to provide access channels); however, treatment should not adversely affect the diversity and relative distribution of native aquatic plants in the water body. Any removal of nuisance aquatic vegetation should preserve 60% to 80% of the native aquatic plants as a measure of cover during the active growing season (May – September).” The policy further states that aquatic vegetation treatments should also consider the potential for increased turbidity, biological dissolved oxygen demand, fish kills, and other unintended effects.

Although DNR fisheries biologists comment on permit proposals submitted to the EGLE-ANC program, ultimately the EGLE-ANC program determines whether to issue a permit and what conditions may apply based on statute. As such, there are instances where permits are issued despite DNR concerns about ecological and fishery consequences. In instances where ANC permits are issued, DNR fisheries will often request additional conditions that attempt to reduce adverse effects.

**MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

Increased input from DNR biologist(s) in assessing the risks and/or benefits for specific treatments would help protect the environment, as well as native plants and animals that might be affected. We see this change as a bit of a safeguard to our natural resources. Additionally, biologists would be able to provide relevant consultation on the proposed treatment.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #21**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Greg Peter, MUCC Vice President

**MUCC Region:** 8

**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board Meeting

**Title:** **Boat Wash Law and the Prevention of Spreading Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)**

**Background/Problem:**

Invasive species have been an ongoing evolving problem for centuries in the Great Lakes. From non-native phragmites to zebra mussels, invasive species are an ongoing threat. We have evolved our treatment methods over the decades to be more effective at tackling these problems. An

example of this is better mechanical and chemical removal of these invasive and learning more about their life cycles to implement better practices.

### **Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will pursue an active educational campaign to help increase awareness of laws relating to preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species and adherence to its intent, impressing on the boating public with the importance of this responsibility.
- MUCC will encourage the establishment of boat wash facilities/capabilities at state public launches particularly where the presence of AIS is established and the risk of spread is most likely.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC members have passed resolutions relating to preventing the spread of invasive species by municipal water supplies (2014) and through commercial shipping (2007) but has not addressed boat washes or the spread of aquatic invasive species via recreational boaters or anglers. Many of these previous resolutions relate to charismatic fish or mussel species, notably Asian Carp.

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- The spread of invasive species in our great lakes, inland lakes and rivers is a real threat that needs to be addressed. Educating the public on these laws can make them better environmental stewards for Michigan. With a strong environmental ethic established having boat wash facilities at state public launches that the public can utilize properly will hopefully reduce aquatic hitch hikers for spreading and damaging more of Michigan's watersheds.
- Invasive aquatic species destroy and damage private and public property every year. By doing our part as residences of Michigan we can educate ourselves and the public on how to decrease these damages by implementing best practices when it comes to boat wash facilities.
- By educating ourselves we are more aware of what is living in our local waters, we might not even know that we are supporting is damaging the overall habitat and ecosystem. Pursuing an active educational campaign would be a positive move in the right direction.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Taxpayer dollars might be used more wisely than in education and infrastructure of boat wash laws and invasive species.
- The problem of controlling aquatic invasive species goes beyond just educating the public about the proper way to wash down a boat. If real impactful change is going to take place ballast water laws and regulations needs to be changed and implemented, and fines needs to be increased on a state and federal level.
- Most of the aquatic invasive species in Michigan came from ballast water overseas. If there were stricter laws on regulating and restricting ballast water, we could possibly stop the ongoing invasion of aquatic invasive species.

- Implementing an education campaign about boat washing best practices is only putting a band aid over the ever-growing problem that needs to be addressed on a state and international level.

**DNR Response:**

Addressing invasive species through prevention, early detection, management and restoration remains a DNR priority. Through Michigan’s Invasive Species Program (MISP), the DNR works jointly with the departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) on invasive species policy, legislation, regulation, education, monitoring, assessment, management and control. The MISP and the DNR support the national public outreach campaign “Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers/Clean, Drain, Dry” through the installation of signs at public boat launches, support of Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week and its annual Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz, and provision of training and outreach materials to regional Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs). MISP efforts also support two staffed mobile boat wash units, available through Michigan State University, to assist lake associations in educating about invasive species prevention.

With the advent of the new boating law in March 2019, the MISP has expanded public outreach efforts by including information on the new law in every boater registration mailing sent from the Secretary of State for a three-year period (2019-2021), updating boat launch signs and making new signs available at no cost to municipal and private launches, initiating access ramp stenciling with Clean, Drain, Dry messaging at all paved ramps at state access points, and increasing social and traditional media outreach through department channels. A 2019 boating initiative through DNR’s Law Enforcement Division dedicated 3,000 hours to educating boaters at access points, resulting in over 2,300 contacts through which boaters were told about the new law. DNR Parks and Recreation Division has undertaken a pilot project at Higgins Lake, installing three boat cleaning stations at public access points and supporting outreach to encourage their use. Data from the pilot project will help to determine benefits and cost effectiveness of this effort. The DNR continues its work with the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association and the Michigan Waterways Alliance to seek new and effective means to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species through the recreational boating pathway.

**MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

Stopping the spread of invasive species should be a priority for all and educating boaters will only help. This is an extension of resolutions we already have on preventing the spread of invasive species, which continues to be a key issue for the sportsmen and women of the state.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #22**  
**Requires 2/3 Majority**

**Submitted by:** Joe Sommers, U.P. Whitetails of Marquette County  
**MUCC Region:** 1  
**Passed:** March 7, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** Clarify ATV Helmet Laws

**Background/Problem:**

Currently, Michigan Law requires ATV users to wear a helmet on roadways, trails, public land, etc. This runs contrary to current law that allows motorcycle and UTV users to ride un-helmeted, even though ATV users often travel at much lower rates of speed and are not allowed to ride on interstates or freeways.

**Resolution Content:**

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) shall work with the Michigan Legislature and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to change necessary state regulations such that the adult rider, driver or occupant of an ATV, quad or 4-wheeler not be required to wear a helmet.

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC has engaged the state legislature on the issue of ATV/ORV helmets, including the following resolutions:

- In 1998, MUCC members adopted a resolution supporting the optional use of crash helmets and goggles for ORV, ATV, and snowmobile operators over 21 years of age when they are on non-public lands
- In 2010, MUCC members passed a resolution requesting that MUCC adopt a position that allows them to work with organized ORV and motorcycle groups in seeking legislation to allow optional use of helmets for operators 18 years of age and over while operating ORVs under 25 mph for the purpose of hunting, trapping, and fishing and work related uses in Michigan.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Michigan has changed laws in recent years to allow other on and off-road vehicle users to make the choice whether or not they wear a helmet.
- Many ATV users use their vehicles for work, which does not involve traveling at a high rate of speed.
- While there are several ATV related fatalities in Michigan each year, the Michigan Legislature has removed the helmet restrictions for motorcycle operators, who account for a much higher fatality rate in the state.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- Helmets provide a great deal of safety to riders who choose to wear them, and we should be encouraging of people to use these safety precautions when they are reasonable.
- Ticketing ATV users is a source of revenue for the Department of Natural Resources.

**DNR Response:**

The Department has safety concerns with any modifications to the ATV helmet law in order to allow the operation of an ATV without wearing a helmet.

**MUCC Fisheries Committee:**

This resolution would apply to ice fisherman as well.

**Position:**

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Proposed Resolution #23**

**Submitted by:** Patrick Hogan, MUCC Region 8 Executive Board Member  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board Meeting  
**Title:** Ban Balloon Release

**Background/Problem:**

As the push to phase out single-use plastics like straws and beverage containers has gained momentum, other single-use products like balloons have also garnered increased attention for their negative environmental impacts. Across the country, both state and local governments are taking action to mitigate the negative impacts of balloon releases by introducing legislation or ordinances that prohibit the commercial or public release of balloons. This is a result of the growing awareness of the negative impacts released balloons have on the environmental quality and aesthetics of the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems upon which they land.

MUCC has a long history of supporting litter laws that aim to keep Michigan lands and waters clean of harmful pollutants like balloon debris. Since released balloons return to land deflated or in the form of popped debris and ribbons, large balloon releases lead to excessive accumulations of this litter in local areas and up to thousands of miles from the release location. Michigan has the opportunity to follow the lead of other states who have successfully adopted a balloon release ban to protect its habitats and wildlife from the harmful and potentially lethal impacts of balloon litter.

**Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will use the strength of its 40,000 plus hunters, anglers, trappers and conservationists and over 200 affiliated local clubs around the state to oppose commercial or public balloon releases

- MUCC work with our national affiliate National Wildlife Federation, or other like-minded organizations, to also encourage education and littering enforcement in other states that have the potential to impact our natural resources here in Michigan.

### **MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

While MUCC does not have any resolutions specifically pertaining to the release of balloons, this organization ardently supports clean lands and waterways. This has been expressed in a number of resolutions regarding trash and litter.

- In 2006, MUCC members passed a resolution to work with the state so that all matter dumped on park and recreation lands be considered litter and to work to gain stiffer fines for violations.
- In 1979, MUCC member passed a resolution stating “proposing a strengthened litter law, with all violators prosecuted; those who cannot pay the fine be made to do road work; and that a non-littering ethic be taught to our young people in our schools.”

### **Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- Balloon releases are a popular tradition at weddings, graduations and other celebratory events. However, many people fail to consider what happens to the debris following the release event. There is a need for increased public education of the problem and littering enforcement to both incentivize compliance and promote awareness.
- The simultaneous release of large amounts of balloons can have immediate negative environmental and aesthetic impacts around the globe, as balloons can travel to high altitudes and be transported via air currents before landing thousands of miles from their release point.
- Despite manufacturers developing “biodegradable” latex and mylar balloon varieties, studies have shown that these “eco-friendly” balloon types still take up to four years to decompose, leading them to persist in the environment with adverse consequences.
- Aside from becoming an environmental pollutant upon landing, released balloons also have the potential to be detrimental to the health of fish, livestock and other wildlife in both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Following ingestion or entanglement, balloon debris may also be deadly to any fish and wildlife that encounter them.

### **Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- A majority of balloon manufacturers, wholesalers, distributors and retailers prefer education of proper balloon disposal techniques over legislation that would ban mass balloon releases. This would prevent a negative stigma from developing around the product that would lead to a loss of sales.

### **DNR Response:**

The Department supports a public education campaign on the harmful effects of balloons or similar inflatable materials. The Department can ticket for littering on state land. The Department could promulgate an administrative rule applying to state-managed public lands

prohibiting the release of balloons or other inflatable objects that could end up as a waste product in the environment.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

**Interim Resolution #24**

**Submitted by:** Patrick Hogan, MUCC Region 8 Executive Board Member  
**MUCC Region:** 8  
**Passed:** June 17, 2020 Executive Board Meeting  
**Title:** **Encouraging Full Appointments to the Natural Resource Commission**

**Background/Problem:**

After two commissioners finished their terms on the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) in Dec. 2019, the Governor’s first two appointees were rejected by the state Senate. This left once vacant seat on the NRC for the months of January and February, and two vacant seats on the NRC for the months of March and April 2020. With another commissioner stepping down after the April 2020 meeting, the months of May and June saw an NRC with only four commissioners. As this body was in the midst of consider deer hunting regulations, the maker of this resolution thought that it would be best for the hunters and anglers of the state of Michigan to have a full commission responsible for decision-making. Days after this resolution was finalized, three new appointments were made, but this resolution intends to help prevent this issue from occurring again in the future.

**Resolution Content:**

- MUCC will encourage, and work with, the Governor’s office to fill vacancies on the NRC by appointment; and
- MUCC will encourage members of the state Senate to seriously and judiciously consider appointments made by the Governor to ensure the best possible candidates are appointed to the NRC, pursuant to MUCC Internal Policy AC030619 (“Michigan Natural Resource Commission Appointment Criteria;” a resolution passed in 2019).

**MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:**

MUCC members have passed a number of resolutions pertaining to the natural resource commission, including:

- Most recently, MUCC members passed a resolution to work with the state legislature to determine appointment criteria for the members of the NRC.
- **Another member-passed resolution** opposes any effort to abolish the NRC.
- **Further resolutions** support finding means of funding the NRC that would make them immune to political pressure.

**Arguments in Support of Resolution:**

- The leaders of the state of Michigan, in collaboration with stakeholder groups like MUCC, have determined that the best mechanism by which to incorporate science into natural resource management and insulate decisions from politics is through the Natural Resources Commission (NRC)
- Having vacancies on this seven-member body hamstrings its ability to make conscientious decisions about natural resource policy in the state, especially with important rules and regulations before the commission every month.

**Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:**

- The NRC should be filled with the best candidates possible and it is better to have the NRC with vacant seats than a seat which is filled

**DNR Response:**

No comments were received, given time constraints on department staff.

**Position:**

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL: