



**Comments and Background Information on
2021 MUCC Proposed Resolutions**

Prepared by MUCC Staff

Proposed Resolution #1
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 its population recovery in the 1980s. 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 opportunities 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, especially if there is competition between hunters who have not yet purchased a tag and hunters who have already purchased their first tag.

- Wild turkey restoration is a conservation success story and management that has been closely monitored ever since. Providing a second tag to hunters, regardless of quotas, could impact turkey movement and calling behavior through additional hunting pressure.
- Turkey populations may have reached their peak and the decline could suggest we are close to a population in balance with available habitat.
- 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 #2
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 doe's they harvest.

A combination license, as presented in the 2020 Hunting Digest, allows hunters in the Lower Peninsula to harvest two bucks or two does, or one of each. Hunters can use a deer license or combination license tag on a doe any time during a deer season in the Lower Peninsula. To offer an incentive to hunters to participate in adequate doe harvest, this proposal includes adding an antlerless-only tag to the combination license.

Resolution Content:

- MUCC will work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), 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 the antlerless harvest is valid; and
 - require the MDNR 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 MUCC to 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 #3
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, 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 the recess into the curriculum and still achieve mandated testing benchmarks.

DNR Response:

While the Department recognizes the important 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 #4
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by Erik Schnelle
MUCC region: 5
Passed: December 7, 2019 Conservation Policy Board
Title: **Restoring Antler Point Restrictions on 2nd 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 Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) 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 is most likely to be infected with the 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 #5
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 processors 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 the distribution of wild game processed at an MDARD or USDA inspected and approved wild game processor to feed the hungry of our state through the 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 bow hunting 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 Hunger 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 the 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 the 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 #6
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 not native and whose introduction cause harm, or is likely to cause harm, to Michigan's economy, environment, and 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 of 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 atrichinosis, 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 #7
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 #8
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 #9
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Chelsea Rod & Gun Club
MUCC Region: 8
Passed: March 7th, 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.

Discussions surrounding increasing senior licenses fees have increased to cover the potential loss in revenue for the department if youth license fee reductions occurred.

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 #10
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, MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #11
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club, Gary Gorniak & Steve Dey
MUCC region: 2
Passed: March 13, 2021 Conservation Policy Board meeting
Title: **Removing the Size Limit on Northern Pike on Inland Lakes in the Upper Peninsula**

Background/Problem:

Pike anglers on inland lakes in the Upper Peninsula have had to follow a minimum size limit (MSL) on Northern Pike since 1993. However, survey results since that time have not shown desired changes in the size structure of the fishery.

Resolution Content:

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) work with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to change the Northern Pike regulations on Inland Lakes in the Upper Peninsula to no MSL and the limit to five (5) with only one (1) being 24 inches or greater.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

MUCC members and staff have been involved in the management of Northern Pike in a number of Michigan’s inland lakes. Many resolutions have been passed in the past relating to specific bodies of water, however, MUCC members also passed a resolution in 2000 stating the following:

- MUCC shall “Support improved northern pike management through size limits that protect females where necessary, allow growth to large size where conditions are favorable, and allow thinning of overcrowded pike where they occur.”

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Altering the Northern Pike regulations on Inland Lakes in the Upper Peninsula could improve angler opportunity and allow for greater harvest
- Changing the Northern Pike regulations in question could positively influence the size structure of the fisheries in Inland Lakes in the Upper Peninsula

Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:

- Changing the Northern Pike regulations on Inland Lakes in the Upper Peninsula in this way could decrease the overall population of fish.
- Any changes to rules and regulations should be made under close review of population dynamic models.
- Rules and regulations should be consistent wherever possible to provide clarity to anglers.

DNR Response:

The Department is opposed to extensive changes to the minimum size limit and daily possession limit for Northern Pike on all inland lakes in the Upper Peninsula. Fisheries Division developed a statewide Northern Pike management strategy as the primary mechanism for informing management decisions, including regulatory recommendations. This resolution does not align with regulatory strategies described within the management plan, and therefore Fisheries Division advises against the resolution's proposed largescale changes to regulations in the Upper Peninsula.

Specifically, the [Management Plan for Northern Pike in Michigan](#) included a list of regulation options that are described in detail (see Table 4 on pg. 10 of plan) and each regulation is associated with a focused management goal. The plan describes when a no minimum size limit regulation would be appropriate for a given Northern Pike population and those decisions associated with achievable goals and accompanying regulations are based on available data for a specific lake and evaluations from local biologists. Northern pike populations in the Upper Peninsula are diverse and the plan recognizes that fact, and therefore population and lake-specific management goals and regulations should be data-driven and addressed by the local biologists and managers. As such, Fisheries Division encourages MUCC members that supported this resolution to continue to work with the local fisheries biologists on this issue because that is the most appropriate level for initiating the proper discussions and evaluations for northern pike populations in specific waters. These types of conversations are well suited for Fisheries Division's coffee and conversations meetings that are held in the spring but could also occur more informally through direct contacts with biologist representing the relevant [Fisheries Management Unit](#).

Position:

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #12
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Patrick Hogan and Tim Muir Jr.
MUCC region: 8
Passed: December 5, 2020 Conservation Policy Board meeting
Title: **Work with the MDNR to add FREE fishing on Mother'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. Further, 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 suggests that young people today do not have access to fishing opportunities that were enjoyed by generations before them. Some of the reasons include 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 work with and request from the MDNR that future free fishing weekends in the spring be aligned with Mother'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 through 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:

- Mother'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 a free fishing weekend could not be added.
- 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:

Currently, legislation allows for the Department to hold Free Fishing dates in Jan or Feb and another one or two days in the year. Adding free fishing to Mother's Day would eliminate the ability to offer free fishing in June, unless the legislation is changed. (see below)

Free fishing weekend on its current June date has a long-standing history that many programs have built volunteer bases around. Moving to Mother's Day could impact existing volunteer base availability (volunteers choosing to spend time with their mother rather than working at an event, for example). 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. The groups that have an interest/are impacted by free ORV and no Recreation Passports should be consulted for support before the decision is made to change the date.

After a quick review of other states, it appears that June/July is BY FAR the most popular month for free fishing weekends, with 44 states offering their free dates during those months. This is likely due to those months offering the most favorable weather and aligning with summer vacations.

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. The assumption could be made, however, that participation would be higher during months when school is out, and spring sports are winding down and there is less competition for free time.

Additionally, as stated in the resolution, if barriers to participation include living in urban/suburban with limited access, competition for time, and too little unstructured leisure time, we would have more success recruiting people using programs and strategies to directly address those barriers rather than creating something that competes for time on Mother's Day.

324.43534 Free fishing days.

Sec. 43534.

- (1) The department shall designate a Saturday and the following Sunday during January or February of each year as free winter fishing days. In addition, the department **may designate 1 other day or 2 other consecutive days each year as free fishing days.**
- (2) During free fishing days, a resident or nonresident may fish for all species of fish in waters of this state designated by the department without purchasing a license or permit.
- (3) A person who fishes during a free fishing day pursuant to subsection (1) has the same privileges and is subject to the same rules and regulations as the holder of a limited fishing license issued pursuant to section 43533.

Position:

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #13
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Erik Schnelle, State Advisory Council President, National Deer Association
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: December 5, 2020 Conservation Policy Board Meeting
Title: **Convenient Low or No Cost CWD Testing**

Background/Problem:

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has become a frequent topic of concern for DNR professionals, hunters, and conservationists in the state of Michigan. For many years, the state offered no-cost testing for hunters to ensure that each person harvesting a deer could make an informed decision regarding the consumption of their venison. During the 2020 season, state-sponsored testing was greatly reduced, leaving hunters to have to test their deer through private laboratories or consume venison without knowing whether or not their deer had CWD. The Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization do not recommend consuming untested venison from areas of known CWD infection.

Resolution Content:

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs will encourage and support the funding and provision of convenient, low or no cost testing for Chronic Wasting Disease in known CWD areas of Michigan.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

MUCC members have passed a range of resolutions relating to CWD, including measures to reduce the movement of captive cervids, carcass transportation, and a variety of management efforts. In 2018, MUCC members passed a resolution stating that MUCC staff would work with the DNR and the NRC to “find alternative funding other than what is provided by existing fish and wildlife funds and continue education efforts and promote hunter involvement in combating these diseases.” This proposal does not contradict previous MUCC member-passed resolutions.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Hunters deserve to have easy access to testing for CWD, to know whether or not they are feeding CWD-infected venison to themselves or their families.
- CWD testing provides valuable information to the DNR regarding prevalence rates and disease distribution.
- The DNR relies heavily on funding from the sale of deer hunting licenses. Challenges to deer hunting or aversion to license purchase over fears of infected venison pose a risk to broader revenue structures which fund a wide variety of conservation priorities.

Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:

- Private testing options do exist for those wishing to test their deer for CWD.

- The state government should not be in the business of testing deer over personal consumption concerns

DNR Response:

It's important to acknowledge that our current testing protocol is not a food-safety test. Test results that are submitted to hunters do not express that the deer is "Negative for CWD" but rather "CWD is not detected". Additionally, CWD has not been identified as a human health concern at this time. The Department does follow the advice of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in recommending not consuming CWD positive animals and understands that there is perception that the current CWD test offered is considered a standard for consuming deer by hunters. The Department also understands that the availability of tests is desired by many hunters before considering consuming deer out of a CWD affected area.

With those items acknowledged, the Department supports the availability of additional funds for testing additional animals for CWD but maintains a firm capacity with our staff and lab that cannot be expanded due to additional tests and related funding. The Department's priority right now is to conduct surveillance around the state to begin to identify whether CWD exists in areas lacking significant surveillance, while maintaining testing in existing CWD affected areas. The capacity within our lab will vary year-to-year based on several factors, including staff availability, but the Department's priority over these years will be to continue surveillance in areas where CWD may spread outside known areas to maximize opportunity for management and prevent establishment and spread of the disease in our deer herd. In summary, we need to collect heads for testing in areas where CWD has not been identified. The Department does not support increased testing at Department expense in areas where CWD is already established.

It's important to highlight that any additional funds acquired that leads to testing of additional animals happens on a parallel path that does not impact DNR's testing capacity. Though the Department can support additional funds that increases testing capabilities within our CWD affected areas, there would not be support for testing of animals that consume our staff's capacity and affects us from meeting our surveillance goals elsewhere in the state. Avenues for hunters to have their deer tested through labs such as the ones at Michigan State University or the University of Wisconsin have already been established, and if there was a way to reduce cost and burden for hunters submitting their heads independently to those labs, the Department would be supportive of those measures, especially since those labs are willing to share their surveillance results with the Department at the conclusion of the hunting season.

The Department supports proposed resolution #13 if the focus is on expanding the funding and provision of convenient, low or no cost testing **in known CWD areas** through labs at Michigan State University or the University of Wisconsin.

Position:

SUPPORT: MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Interim Resolution #14
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: MUCC Fisheries Committee
MUCC Region: 9
Passed: September 30, 2020 Executive Board meeting
Title: **The use of trotlines, setlines, and juglines as a method of take for fish and turtles**

Background/Problem:

Trotlines, setlines, and juglines are all passive methods of fishing and present a novel manner of take to the MDNR Fisheries Division and Michigan Natural Resources Commission. Each of these methods of fishing utilize hooks and lines which are typically set for extended periods of time. Fishers return to these sets to collect their catch after a given period of time, during which the gear is typically left unsupervised. In recent years, a member of the Michigan House of Representatives has introduced legislation which could legalize these methods of fishing.

Resolution Content:

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs oppose the use of trotlines, setlines, and juglines as a method of take regardless of the number of hooks used.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

MUCC members have not passed any policy relating to the use of trotlines, setlines, or juglines.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Trotlines, setlines, and juglines are indiscriminate methods of take and have the potential to create large amounts of bycatch, including species of turtles, amphibious mammals, waterfowl, fish-eating birds, or non-target fish.
- Trotlines, setlines, and juglines may generate large amounts of trash in waterways, if abandoned or moved in a weather event
- These methods of take would require additional resources from the MDNR Fisheries and Law Enforcement Divisions

Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:

- Juglines, trotlines, and setlines present a novel method of take for the state of Michigan and may offer additional angling opportunities.
- These methods of take have been implemented in other parts of the country, notably in southern states

DNR Response:

The Department is supportive of this resolution that opposes the use of trotlines, setlines, and juglines as a method of take for fish and turtles.

The Department supports this resolution because of the natural resource threats and potential public safety risks posed by allowing unattended fishing lines and hooks (i.e., trotlines) in our public waterways. The Department agrees with the multiple concerns related to using trotlines that were identified in the resolution.

Position:

SUPPORT: MUCC Fisheries Committee, MUCC Wildlife Committee

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #15
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Mark Hergenreder, Chelsea Rod and Gun Club
MUCC region: 8
Passed: March 13, 2021 Conservation Policy Board meeting
Title: **Encourage MI DNR to further engage opportunities of collaboration within the Michigan Trail Systems by utilizing citizen science data collection for natural resources management**

Background/Problem:

State fish and wildlife agencies require large amounts of high-quality information to use in decision-making processes. Recently, some agencies, as well as academic researchers, have begun to incorporate “citizen science” into their methodologies. These techniques have been advanced by developments in technology which allow citizen naturalists to record observations about the natural world on their smartphone. This technology may be used by state fish and wildlife management agency personnel as a cost-effective means for improving the quantity of information available for decision-making.

Resolution Content:

- Michigan United Conservation Clubs will encourage the Michigan DNR to further establish an opportunity for detailed data points to be registered quickly and shared easily with users utilizing a community driven application.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

MUCC members have not passed policy resolutions relating to the use of citizen science, however, MUCC remains committed to using the best available science in making decisions regarding wildlife management.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Citizen science has the potential to greatly increase the quantity of information available to agency personnel, who are often limited by time and resources.

- Citizen science platforms that have been created incorporate independent validation techniques to verify submissions of information
- Citizen science has the potential to greatly expand the capacity of an agency by drastically increasing the number of “eyes in the field”
- These techniques offer another avenue of stakeholder engagement for the DNR

Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:

- Citizen science ought to be rigorously reviewed before being incorporated into decision-making processes to ensure that information is of a high quality.
- The use of citizen science could increase the workload of agency personnel in the short-term

DNR Response:

The Department collects a lot of data and much of it we make available for public and private use on our open data portal. Groups like OnX, Polaris, Pure Michigan and others take that data, interpret it, and make it accessible and usable for customers.

Currently, the Department does not have a customer-facing app developed that would serve up community-driven data. It would require considerable (staff or contractor) time and financial resources to develop and maintain such an app. Unless there is new funding and support identified, it would need to be taken from elsewhere within the department. The success of a community-driven data app would partially be determined by customer contributions—which would require ongoing promotion and additional resources.

These types of apps already exist in the marketplace: All Trails, Strava, OnX, HuntWise, Fishbrain, Navionics, Polaris Ride Command, Facebook groups and Google Maps are some examples. In order for the Department to create and maintain something that is competitive, we would require significant IT expertise and investment.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION:

NEUTRAL:

Proposed Resolution #16
Requires 2/3 Majority

Submitted by: Tim Hossack, Individual Member
MUCC region: 3
Passed: March 13, 2021 Conservation Policy Board meeting
Title: **Establishment of an Annual Yellow Perch Season from April 26 to March 14**

Background/Problem:

Many Michigan fisheries are closed to anglers during important periods of the life cycle of fish, notably during spawning seasons. Anglers who frequent Northern Lake Michigan have noticed that perch populations may be in jeopardy and may benefit from a closure of the fishery during the perch spawning season.

Resolution Content:

- MUCC will work with the Michigan Legislature and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to enact legislation to establish a yellow perch possession season from the last Saturday in April to March 15 in MM4 and MM5 to allow for natural reproduction.

MUCC Current & Past Policy Standings:

MUCC members have voted numerous times on topic relating to fisheries management. On the topic of perch, many of these resolutions have related to creel limits and commercial fishing, and none have proposed a closure of the fishery during a spawning season. However, MUCC members have passed resolutions to protect other fish species, like sturgeon, trout, salmon, and walleye during their respective spawning seasons by a variety of means.

Arguments in Support of Resolution:

- Closing the perch fishery to harvest during the spawning season would reduce pressure on fish during an important period in their reproductive cycle
- Closure of the fishery could dramatically increase the quality of the fishery in just a few years.
- Rules and regulations of this nature are typically easy for anglers to understand

Arguments in Opposition to Resolution:

- Closure of the fishery could reduce angler opportunity.
- Regulation changes that vary in different management units sometimes confuse anglers, putting them at some risk of unintentionally violating state fish and game laws.

DNR Response:

The Department is opposed to the establishment of an annual Yellow Perch season in MM4 and MM5 because it would unnecessarily reduce angling opportunities and the proposed change would likely provide negligible benefits for Yellow Perch populations.

Yellow Perch is a species that has a life history strategy that does not require a large population abundance to generate large recruitment events, meaning that even at low abundance Yellow Perch can produce enough off-spring to sustain the population and contribute to the recreational fishery in the future. The most significant threats to Yellow Perch populations primarily include predation, competition for reduced prey resources because of establishments of invasive species, as well as other environmental conditions that reduces the survival of Yellow Perch during their early life stages.

Additionally, the Department opposes the resolution because the daily possession limit for Yellow Perch was reduced statewide in 2019, and it is too soon for Fisheries Division to evaluate the outcomes of implementing that more restrictive daily possession limit.

Position:

SUPPORT:

OPPOSITION: MUCC Fisheries Committee

NEUTRAL:

