

Michigan Wildlife Council

MINUTES August 28, 2017

A regular meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council was held Monday, August 28, 2017 at Jay's Sporting Goods 8800 S Clare Avenue, Clare, Michigan 48617.

Present for the Michigan Wildlife Council

Matt Pedigo
Beth Gruden
Jeff Poet
Carol Rose
Ed Roy
Henry Stancato
Jim Hammill
Hollie Dietz (representing Kristin Phillips – not eligible to vote)

Excused Absence

Randy Stec
Kristin Phillips

Call to Order

Chairperson **Pedigo** called the meeting of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) to order at 10:03 a.m. and introduced new council member Beth Gruden.

Approval of Agenda

Chairperson **Pedigo** reviewed the agenda.

Roy made a motion that the agenda be approved as presented. **Rose** seconded the motion and the agenda was approved by unanimous vote (7-0).

Approval of April 18, 2017 Minutes

Pedigo called for discussion regarding the minutes of the April 18, 2017 meeting. There was no discussion.

Rose made a motion that the minutes be approved as submitted in the meeting packet. **Hammill** seconded and the minutes were approved by unanimous vote (7-0).

Treasurer's Report

Dietz gave an overview of the written financial report for the term October 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 listing current fiscal year revenue of \$1,043,321 and a fund balance of \$2,056,483. Fiscal Year 2017 ends on September 30, 2017. Authorization for FY18 was approved.

Hammill made a motion to approve the financial report as submitted. **Rose** seconded the motion and the treasurer's report was approved by unanimous vote (7-0).

Council Reports and New Business

Poet gave an update about Hunting Works for Michigan media events where he presented information about the MWC. It was well received. Hunting Works for Michigan's function is to

communicate about the economic benefits of hunting to businesses. They are using social media to get their message out.

Hammill sits on a panel that is studying Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Michigan. It has been found in parts of the state but it is not known how extensive yet. It has also been found in Wisconsin, Colorado and Pennsylvania. In Colorado, up to 25 percent of deer brought home for consumption have CWD and most recently it was found that it can be transferred to plants. Testing on primates has been conducted and they can contract CWD. There is no known path for eradication and it appears that the soil is forever contaminated. Elk are also not immune. Bovine tuberculosis (TB) is also a big issue and they are interfacing with the farming and livestock communities. **Stancato** advised the MWC should be mindful of the ways we can incorporate the message into what we are doing, such as why there is a ban on interstate transportation. **Jordan Burroughs** advised the Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will be having a CWD symposium October 3rd and 4th at the MSU Kellogg Center. She will find out if there will be a live feed available.

Pedigo informed the council that the Michigan Bear Hunters Association wrote an article featuring the MWC. He will send it to council members.

The next meeting of the MWC will be the afternoon of October 24, location and time yet to be determined (Traverse City area). The draft semi-annual report will be reviewed as well as a discussion and/or creation of a benchmark calendar for 2018.

Work Group Update

National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucus Annual Summit, October 24th-27th

The MWC is sponsoring a session of the conference on Wednesday, October 25 from 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and will provide an overview of the campaign. The presentation should be about 25 minutes leaving five minutes for questions and answers. **Jordan Burroughs** will work on getting the guest list ahead of time. The subcommittee will continue to work out the presentation and final details. Nevada, Louisiana and Colorado have Wildlife Councils similar to the MWC.

Güd Marketing – Year 2, Flight 2 Completion Report

Emmie Musser, media director for Güd Marketing, gave an overview of the completion report from Year 2, Flight 2. Content marketing continues to do really well with average read time 160 percent better than the industry average. Partners now take some of our stories and post them to their own Facebook feeds. Social media has almost 3,000 more followers. Cable and broadcast television had over 2,500 30 second messages with 670 bonus 30 second spots. Outdoor boards continue to lead in value added tactics with 11,988,400 bonus impressions. **Pedigo** asked how this is quantified and **Musser** explained they use MDOT data as well as seeing a significant spike in direct online traffic (from 23 percent to 31 percent). Digital music streaming and digital video streaming all exceed industry averages. Mobile devices lead for engagement and “Managed to Make Memories” was the best performing creative copy. The MWC was also the primary sponsor for the Grand Rapids River Run and every finish line photo was outlined with the MWC. This flight reached 47 percent value added media buys, much higher than other campaigns.

Roy asked what the single most significant item or event issue Güd Marketing sees, good or bad. **Jill Holden**, strategic planning director from Güd Marketing stated the opportunity within content marketing is very good. People want to digest the information differently. They will continue to break up the main story into different platforms to thread the audiences together.

Long form stories reach 25-35 year olds while digital platforms reach younger audiences. **Roy** requested the answer to this same question in six months.

Andrea Ness, client service director for GÜD reviewed the campaign analytics. There were 18 public relations interviews in the last five months. The top post on social media was “Michigan’s Elk Heard is Flourishing” which reached 128,890 people and had 6,721 engagements. Social media metrics had 4 million impressions, of which 3.1 million were paid impressions. The MWC Facebook page currently has 13,103 page likes, up 29 percent.

Public Comment

Pedigo called for public comment at 11:40 a.m.

John Bumstead

When will all of the campaign messages indicate how they are paid for (\$1 from licenses) since hunters and anglers are paying for this campaign. He is not seeing this on the billboards.

GüD Marketing

This will be discussed later today and we see this as a big opportunity going forward – messaging for both aspects: who pays for the campaign itself (\$1 on license) and who pays for wildlife management (sportsmen/women). This will also be an element of the sportsmen plan. Future messages will indicate that hunting and fishing license dollars paid for this message.

John Bumstead

Are the surveys online? Need to post the baseline survey and all survey results thereafter. Allow audiences to compare baseline survey to new survey and see differences. Results should be available online allowing comparison of the new survey to the original baseline survey.

GüD Marketing

The second statewide survey has not been posted to the website yet.

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The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m. for lunch and reconvened at 12:37 p.m. All council members present prior to lunch, were present after lunch.

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GüD Marketing Presentations

Jill Holden, strategic planning director from GÜD Marketing reviewed the baseline survey and focus group results.

Baseline Survey

- Campaign recall (participants who had heard of the MWC)
 - o Southeast Michigan - 24 percent
 - o West Michigan - 29 percentThere is a higher percentage of recall in families with children
- Statewide knowledge that hunting is an important part of Michigan’s culture and heritage
 - o No change from 2015 to 2017
- Wildlife does not require management by humans to thrive

- Disagree went from 39 percent to 48 percent
 - 18-34 year olds were static
 - Central Michigan numbers dropped
- Need to dig deeper into the numbers to find out why the static and drop in numbers
- Everyone in Michigan pays to protect our natural resources through taxes
 - Agreed went up to 72 percent from 62 percent
 - Neutrals went up to 31 percent from 22 percent
 - Disagreed went up to 7 percent from 6 percent
 - Hunting and fishing are the primary resources for funding
 - Stayed the same from 2015

Hammill noted the strong directional change that is contrary to what the MWC would like to see. **Güd Marketing** stated it is a natural consequence of educating the general public about wildlife management. **Joel Newport**, creative director for Güd Marketing observed that in the short term it may not look good, however in the long term it is good because people are caring and understanding that management is done by people. The campaign just recently began incorporating how wildlife management is funded (attract then inform). **Jill** explained that we are not seeing significant changes in southeast Michigan and they will be looking into the data to see if anything else is contributing to this. Campaign messages may need to be more direct to specific communities (e.g. those who value economics, we need to speak economics; food messages do well with women and minority groups). In the long term we may need to focus more on southeast Michigan and less on West Michigan. **Gruden** asked if the opening of Cabella's may have contributed to the shift in West Michigan. **Güd Marketing** thinks it is possible due to increased messaging of the sporting industry. **Hammill** stated the cultural breakdown of our state may have made an impact as well. Seven percent of Michigan's population supports 100 percent of wildlife management which contributes \$5 billion in economic value. **Roy** observed that we may need to make a choice on whether marketing to a place that is not changing such as southeast Michigan is beneficial in the future. **Güd Marketing** stated we are moving towards direct specific messaging and we can target messages to be relevant to a specific area.

The baseline survey should be done annually hereafter and it may be the end of summer or early fall before it is conducted.

Focus Groups

We use focus groups more exploratory of how we message the campaign and to understand the use of language and words with specific audiences. There were two 10 person groups in Canton and Grand Rapids

Next phase of messaging

- Benefits of wildlife management
- Hunting fishing licenses as primary source of funding
- Benefits of hunting and fishing (jobs economy, food)
- Hunters' and anglers' role in wildlife management

Key findings

- MWC is credible
- Year 1 campaign was compelling, believable, important and relevant
- Target audience understands that wildlife needs to be managed
- Most meaningful message is still: Wildlife should be managed for the use and enjoyment of future generations
- All natural resources are important

- Lack of awareness about how management is funded
- Messages about jobs and economy are important but they are not the lead message
- Hunting as tradition/heritage is true but not relevant
- Reservations persist, unconditional approval unlikely for many

Next steps

- Continue messaging about wildlife management and future generations
- More direct focus on funding message to all
- Targeting of key messages to key audiences
 - o Hunting/fishing creates jobs, strengthens economy
 - o To manage disease and control populations
 - o As a source of food
- Deeper exploration into target audience segments
 - o Southeast Michigan/West Michigan
 - o Age 18-34
 - o Women/men
 - o Suburban/rural/urban

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The meeting was adjourned at 2:17 p.m. for a break and reconvened at 2:40 p.m. All council members present prior to the break, were present after the break.

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Joel Newport, creative director for GÜD Marketing presented the creative content development. The MWC campaign is gravitating towards quick nuggets of information and fact based messaging. Within Pandora a Michigan Wildlife Channel was created. This was a value added piece and was called “Summer Time in Michigan”. The only advertising that was shown was from the MWC. It outperformed all Michigan branded content stations, including the Pure Michigan channel. Over 28,000 people signed up and the average listening time was 57 minutes compared to overall listening at 25 to 28 minutes. Ads run every three songs.

Video has also done very well. We have created six second text-over-videos which are performing 2.5 times better than industry standards for clicks to website.

Interactive quizzes, based on popular content marketing stories, entice our audience to interact with our brand but they also learn something at the same time. We will be able to obtain metrics and show demographics based on right/wrong answers. Our paid placement is targeted only to 18-34 year olds.

The interactive digital website on Detroit News provided 10,000 clicks to the MWC website and increased Facebook likes by 500. The News section on the MWC website will also be updated and we will embed 360 degree video which translates across mobile and desktop platforms.

Media Plan – Year 3 Flight 1 (October 1 thru Dec. 31, 2017)

- Increase 18-34 year olds in SE Michigan
- More 6 second video content
- Dig into the baseline survey and pull out peer groups to target messages
- Leverage hunting season (November 15th thru two weeks after) to talk about hunting and hunters and the impact they have on non-hunters’ lives.

New Media - Organic Radio

This will use radio DJs in southeast Michigan to talk to non-hunters’ and banter about issues.

Mike Avery is sold out of programming slots this flight.

Emmie stated they are recommending \$110,000 for the Year 3, Flight 1 media plan which will run from October to December 2017.

Hammill made a motion to approve the Year 3, Flight 1 media plan running from October to December 2017 in the amount of \$110,000. **Poet** seconded the motion and the Year 3, Flight 1 media plan was approved by unanimous vote (7-0).

Sportsmen's Plan

Critical influencers to our non-hunting community and non-fishing public

- Build awareness of the campaign
- Encourage positive action and language
- Correct misconceptions

The results of a Sportsmen's plan will build stronger advocates that will help inform and positively influence our target audience. We will work on creating an advocate list of our hunting and angling groups. **Hammill** stated concern that it will take away from the primary focus of the campaign. **Jill** thinks it will add to it because there are a lot of hunters and anglers who are misinformed as well. The investment would be approximately \$45,000. The messaging will have a different slant and will explain why we are doing it and how it's funded. **Stancato** noted that an important part of the message to those who hunt, fish and trap is communicating the misconceptions among these communities.

Jill is recommending \$45,000 to create and develop materials, capture video and evaluate efforts.

Roy made a motion to approve \$45,000 for the Sportsmen's communication strategy. **Gruden** seconded the motion. **Hammill** made a motion to amend the motion and approve \$45,000 using \$25,000 from staff support and \$20,000 from travel in the administrative budget and create a new line item for Sportsmen's Communication Strategy. **Roy** seconded the amended motion and the amended motion was approved by unanimous vote (7-0).

Suzanne Stone with the DNR-Fisheries Division requested creative for MWC ads by November for the hunting and fishing guides.

Rose suggested we hold a Sportsmen's Caucus in Lansing to bring them up to speed and explain why this message needs to be delivered.

Adjournment

Rose made a motion to adjourn, seconded by **Hammill** and the motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous vote (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

APPROVED: Date _____

Matt Pedigo, Chairperson
Michigan Wildlife Council