

Michigan Wildlife Council Minutes

February 21, 2024

The Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) met at Michigan History Center, 702 West Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, Michigan 48915.

Attendees

Nick Buggia, Chair, MWC

Beth Gruden, Vice Chair, MWC

Jason Garvon, MWC

Brent Pike, MWC

Jon Spieles, Department of Natural
Resources (DNR)/MWC

Lauren Abbott, GÜD Marketing

Jill Holden, GÜD Marketing

Chelsea Maupin, GÜD Marketing

Sarah Williams, GÜD Marketing

Tim Dilts, GÜD Marketing

Drew Smith, GÜD Marketing

Brooke Gieber, GÜD Marketing

Attended Virtually: Ed Roy, Elliot Shafer

Absent: Sarah Topp, Franklin Hayes

Chairman Nick Buggia called the MWC meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. The chairman welcomed everyone and had them introduce themselves, due to several visitors.

Buggia called for a motion to approve the agenda. **Brent Pike** made a motion to approve, **Beth Gruden** seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

Chairman Buggia asked for discussion on the minutes from October 27, 2023, but there was none. **Jason Garvon** made a motion to accept the minutes as written and **Pike** seconded; the minutes were approved unanimously.

Lauren Abbott, account manager for GÜD Marketing, provided an overview of the 2023 campaign strategy, which included communicating the benefits of well-managed wildlife, showcasing people's role in creating and sustaining a healthy outdoors, and creating new connections to wildlife management.

Sara Williams, strategic planner for GÜD Marketing, shared a performance summary on the 2023 campaign. Tactics included outdoor, social media, streaming audio, TV, and content marketing. Performance highlights included:

- Connecting with over 1.5 million targeted individuals through diverse touch points.
- Nearly 5 million video plays, focusing on content related to healthy habitats and wildlife populations.
- Showcasing a 15% overall increase in click-through rate (CTR) on Facebook campaigns and a substantial leap in Snapchat CTR from 0.43% to 1.39%, highlighting the effectiveness of tailored messaging strategies across diverse platforms.
- Implementing new creative strategies that fostered organic follower growth, achieving increased reach of 8% on Facebook and a 466% increase on Instagram.

Tim Dilts, implementation manager at GÜD Marketing, provided insights on tactics executed during the campaign that focused on gaining attention, deepening understanding, and creating connections with the audience of focus. These tactics included social media, outdoor, streaming video, digital audio, content marketing, and earned media.

Dilts also provided insights and updates on partnerships with the Michigan Chronicle that help leverage opportunities and experiences from trusted sources and voices. For the first social video series, two 15-second videos were promoted online and through social channels to dispel misconceptions about Michigan wildlife conservation and management efforts that resulted in 29,000 total impressions and 25,000 total video views. The Michigan Chronicle has finalized the first video. The article for the second video series focused on Salmon in the Classroom but unfortunately timing will be delayed slightly due to the last two fish not surviving in the tank.

Following the review of campaign performance, **Chelsea Maupin**, GÜD Marketing research manager, shared key findings for the 2023 research that included the 9th annual statewide survey, qualitative campaign testing, and A vs. B vs. C tonality testing. An overview was shared on the background of goals, methodology for each research method, and key measures that were tracked relating to the campaign’s main message around wildlife management. Highlights from the findings included 75% of Michiganders approve of hunting, 84% approve of fishing, and 45% approve of trapping. Across both the phone vs. phone methodology and the mixed method vs. web for the survey, there was an increase in strong agreement that “Hunting is a wildlife management tool” and an increase in disagreement that “Hunting and fishing are only important to people who hunt or fish.”

The qualitative campaign testing found that showcasing wildlife and outdoor places reinforces the environmental and conservation benefits with the audience we are trying to reach and that experts help to cement credibility and interest. It was also concluded that the current tonality, or a step back to a more factual tone, is right for the current audience of focus and the goals for Facebook and Instagram.

The council approved of continuing to educate Michiganders about wildlife management and build awareness of shared experiences made possible by hunting and fishing for the remainder of 2024, but to also incorporate more messaging about hunting.

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Buggia dismissed the council for lunch at 12:06 p.m. The meeting resumed at 12:40 p.m.

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Maupin provided survey insights to responses on “Hunting is a wildlife management tool in Michigan,” which included individuals who mostly disagree, believing that management means benefiting each animal or is limited to targeting only nuisance animals.

Jon Spieles commented that it seems like individuals don’t understand the value of professional wildlife conservationists and that the council’s efforts could highlight the professionals managing wildlife. **Jill Holden**, strategic planning director and partner at GÜD Marketing, noted that research has consistently shown that the audience of focus trusts experts who are featured in campaign materials and have had positive responses to experts when they have been included.

With insights from the 2023 research, the council had a discussion around planning for 2024, which included alignment on communications goals. **Garvon** asked about the timing of the campaign and any impacts to budget if the campaign is in-market during the political window this fall. **Williams** noted that certain platforms will be impacted more than others and campaign timing will be adjusted around months such as August when there is the most impact. GÜD

Marketing will provide a recommendation on timing adjustments to the marketing subcommittee before the next council meeting in May.

Public Comment

Buggia paused the meeting at 1:33 p.m. for public comment. There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Buggia called for a motion to adjourn. **Garvon** moved, and **Buggia** seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. **Buggia** adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

APPROVED Date:



Nicholas Buggia, Chairman

Ongoing Level 2 Subcommittee Approvals Needed

Creative campaign materials
Content marketing materials
Public relations materials

2024 Meetings

May 17 – Detroit
August 23 –Gaylord
November 8 – RAM Center