



Michigan Wildlife Council

Meeting minutes

February 26, 2026

10:00 am - 2:00pm

Lansing Customer Service Center

4166 Legacy Parkway, Lansing, MI 48911

Attendees

Jason Garvon, Chair, MWC
Dan Cooke, MWC
Dawn Levey, MWC
Dan Ulfig, MWC
Jon Spieles, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/MWC
Damion Frasier, MWC
Senator Jon Bumstead
Kristin Phillips, DNR
Craig Brunet, DNR
Rose Campbell-Gill, DNR-MOD

Nick Petrusha, Fusion92
Jay Fetterman, Fusion92
Jennifer Rees, DNR-MOD
Beth Fults, DNR-MOD
Dustin Isenhoff, DNR-MOD
Marcee Wardell, DNR-FSH
Chris Semrinec, DNR
Russ Mason, Nimrod

Absent: Beth Gruden, MWC

Virtual: Franklin Hayes, MWC; Mark Duda, Responsive Mgmt; Bryan Petrosky, Fusion92; Kaylee Brown, Fusion92; Monica Sipe, Public

Meeting Minutes

Garvon called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Introductions were made by all present.

Garvon asked to amend the agenda to add the discussion of new meeting dates. **Levey** made a motion to approve the MWC agenda with the added amendment. **Ulfig** seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Levey made a motion to approve MWC meeting minutes from October 16, 2025. **Ulfig** seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Nick Petrusha, Fusion92 outlined what they will be presenting starting with the responsive management survey presentation.

Mark Duda, Responsive Mgmt, gave an overview of who Responsive Management is, what their business is all about and who they've conducted business with. The survey conducted was a scientific survey consisting of Michigan residents 18 years old and older statewide and by regions. They were contacted by phone, text or email and it was completed late November early December. The survey focused on hunting and fishing. Not only what people thought about hunting and fishing, but what their attitudes are towards hunters, anglers and trappers. He shared their beliefs about hunting and fishing, the perception of deer populations, whether they're too high or too low and the awareness and

credibility of the Michigan DNR and the Michigan Wildlife Council. They then did a trend analysis looking over the last 7 or 8 years that they conducted this study to see what the trends look like and what kind of marks are being made when it comes to the public and how they view conservation, hunting, fishing and trapping. The trends help to assess where we're doing good, how things are changing and what we may need to do in the future. Overall, the report was very good for Michigan. Nationwide 72% support hunting as a wildlife management tool, Michigan shows 75% supporting. The report will be placed in Basecamp for future reference.

Marcee Wardell (DNR) asked why more fishing related questions weren't ask? Mark said the survey was inherited from another company around 10 years ago that was developed by the council and former consultants and so they wanted to keep some of those questions the same and hunting has been more controversial than fishing so they wanted to go more in-depth on hunting than fishing but maybe we should look further to see if that's not the case and if we should consider focusing more on fishing. He doesn't have an answer on it right now, maybe give it another year.

Monica Sipe (Public) asked are the results weighted for the population, like what area they're from? **Mark** stated in the old days they did what was called a study where they looked at individual regions and then put those together, but this was done top down. They didn't sample by region; they cross tabulated by region. It's called stratified sample and done properly things kind of fall out amongst themselves. While there's less people in the U.P. we still have a good sample size with 1100 people. Her next question was regarding MWC awareness. She asks if the responders knew that the council doesn't manage the wildlife versus promoting it. **Mark** stated they always train their interviewers on the difference between the Michigan Dept of Natural Resources and MWC. They have notes on that to differentiate the two.

Russ Mason (Nimrod) stated you noted the difference between having heard something about wildlife versus having heard something from the council itself. He stated Outdoor Stewards of Conservation has been running an advertisement and asked if Fusion was aware of polling that indicated how that was working. **Mark (Responsive Management)** stated they worked hard to differentiate when conducting the survey for Michigan between hearing something in general versus hearing something specifically from the council. He stated when they interview people they work very hard to differentiate between the two.

Mid-Campaign Performance Presentation & 2026 Media Plan Update

Bryan Petrosky, Fusion92, presented the mid-campaign performance metrics that ran August – November.

Streaming TV - Over the top television (OTT) – returned the highest video completion rate (VCR). OTT video ad performed as intended with the forced video view. \$77,800 spend, 2.8M video view, \$26.97 CPM, 41 clicks, and 97.2% video completion rate.

Online video (OLV) – Delivered lowest cost per completed view. It's a cheaper cost because it reaches larger audiences. OLV ads resonated with users, with a 68.56% completion rate which is 1.44% under industry benchmarks but the .01 cost per completed view surpasses industry benchmarks due to the low CPM of \$7.57. \$78,006 spend, 10.3M video view.

Meta – Delivered the lowest cost per thousand impressions and tied for the highest click-through rate. Meta performance was very strong delivering over 20.1M impressions at a CPM less than half of industry benchmarks. \$45,717 spend, 20.1M impressions, CPM \$2.27, clicks 32.9k, and click-through rate 0.16%.

Snapchat – Tied for highest click-through rate. Snapchat was a strong driver of both awareness and traffic. \$18.5k spend, brought 3.1M impressions, \$6 CPM, 4.8k clicks, 0.16% click-through rate, and \$10.1 M video view.

YouTube – Provided lowest ad frequency among exclusively video channels. \$83,191 spend, 5.3 M video view, \$15.41 CPM, 2.6k clicks, and 76.01% video completion rate.

Insights & Recommendations – Key Findings

YouTube - Recommend pushing a larger portion of the budget into the non-skippable portion of the campaign because it's superior video completion rate, thus leading to the lower cost per completed view.

OTT – Recommend pushing a larger portion of the budget into just the general adult ages 18 to 44 due to having the lower CPM while still having a higher VCR despite not being targeted specifically to outdoor enthusiasts.

Media Recommendations for 2026

Kaylee Brown, Fusion92; went through media recommendations.

The strategic approach is to continue what was previously approved and planned and to incorporate the subtle optimizations in 2026 outlined earlier. The media spend will include some funding remaining from the 2025 plan, providing a bigger bucket. Fusion92 will resume media in March and keep going with what's working based on 2025, increase the budget in the strongest performing channels and then analyze the performance within all of those channels, make optimizations based on the different audiences and what they're reacting to and then assess areas for expansion or breaking into new channels.

Campaign Geography - Focus 100% of media impressions within cities and surrounding suburbs of the highest population centers in the lower half of The Mitten.

Recommend keeping:

Mike Avery Outdoors contract

Out of Home

YouTube

OTT (streaming TV)

OLV (online video)

Owned and Earned Opportunities

Paid Social

Snapchat - Continue the campaign and strategy that's working and spend a little bit more money there. There was a question asked previously about why Fusion92 use snapchat. Kaylee stated it's because it's in the top four platforms that our target audience is using in a typical week. It's a high percentage for the 18-30 year old range.

Meta – Continue the campaign and strategy as well but shift some funds to the outdoor enthusiast audience since they were engaging a bit more.

Test Recommendation - TikTok

TikTok wasn't an option last year, but Fusion92 wondered by it being under new ownership if this would be an opportunity to introduce it again. If so, they would take 5% of the campaign budget and test it. It is a widely used channel among our target audience particularly among the younger cohort of 18 to 44 year olds.

Streaming TV and Video Recommendations

OTT – Continue with the campaign strategy, just increase the budget a bit because it's a great place

to reach both of our audiences.

OLV – Optimize by pushing some efforts into the outdoor enthusiast audience, therefore expecting to see improvement in our video completion rate.

YouTube – Continue running across YouTube Non-Skippable Video and Skippable Video placements. Prioritize non-skippable video as it drove the strongest performance.

Driving up North - Out of Home – Continue placing our billboards in the up north gateway during seasonal months. Extend the flight in 2026 to cover all of summer and well into the fall.

2026 Media Timing - Increase calendar coverage to nine months versus six months. Run March through mid-November.

Media Plan Summary:

Reiterated to test Tik Tok – 5% of overall budget. Recommend running for 4 months to start and see how it goes. If it's not an option, they'll redistribute the funds elsewhere.

The budget was increased slightly for all the top performing channels, Meta, Snapchat and Out of Home.

Estimated Audience Delivery – Expect to reach 75% of the 18 to 44 year old city and suburb dwellers on average 5-6 times per month.

Extended Reach Group – Outdoor enthusiasts (subset of 18 to 44 yr old) 7- 10 times per month, expect to reach 78%.

Garvon asked about the decision to move the US-24 billboard. There are two boards on I-75 and there was one on US-24, but it was moved. **Kaylee** said the board that goes up Bad Axe is not available and the alternatives were not good. Their recommendation is to put the money towards other areas because the boards on that drive aren't as great.

Spieles asked if everyone was familiar with the boards and happy with them. He commented that the one on US-127 toward St. Johns is marginal. The area has more distractions, so he doesn't usually have time to read the board. **Levey** said she hears positive reviews about the board. **Kaylee** said she can look at some other options.

Ulfig ask about the board on I-75 at Great Lakes Crossing. **Kaylee** said it's sold out and they'll be replacing it with a digital sign. It was the closest they could get in that area because there weren't really any static options available.

Garvon dismissed the group for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

Public comment was taken at 12:30 p.m.

Public Comment

Russ Mason (Nimrod) suggested that the council could engage with DNR Conservation Officers to help spread our message. Russ described accurately the tens of thousands of contacts officers have in the field with both hunters/anglers and outdoor enthusiasts (one of our core audiences).

Monika Sipe (Public) asked the council to take up the messaging around lead ammunition and the detrimental impact it has on wildlife - specifically bald eagles. She accurately described how vulnerable eagles are to lead poisoning. She also asked if we could encourage people to dispose of fishing line as it also causes a great deal of harm to wildlife. **Garvon** said that the scope of the council messaging is prescribed by statute, but we would look for places to help if possible.

New Business

Treasurer's Report

Spieles walked the council through the treasurer's report. He recommended adding \$45k from the MWC Fund Balance to bring the operating budget for FY26 up to the full \$1.4 million appropriation. The recommended change will leave roughly \$240k in the fund balance to cover any downturn in current year revenue needed to support this year's operational budget. **Cooke** made a motion to approve the FY26 budget, **Levey** second, all approved.

2026 Fusion92 Budget Review

Nick Petrusha, Fusion92 walked the council through Fusion's scope of work 2026 budget. **Garvon** asked the council if they'd like to keep the surveys annual versus doing them at a different timeline and is that beneficial or not. **Nick** felt having it built in as an annual cost made the cost less than if it was done quarterly or spur of the moment.

Nick pointed out the reason for the website cost increase is because Fusion92 would like to make it more robust and a stronger experience.

Ulfig ask about putting a billboard southbound near Frankenmuth for December, January and February as the snowmobilers and skiers are frequenting that direction. **Nick** said they can look at it as they plan for next year.

Nick asked the council if they agreed that the 45k from the deer hunting revenue should go in the campaign media bucket of the budget.

Spieles made a motion to approve the 2026 Fusion92 scope of work with the modification of adding the \$45k working media to the campaign media bucket, **Frazier** seconded, all approved.

Next meeting

May 6 - Rose Lake.

August 6 - Clare

October 22 - Lansing TBD

Russ Mason (Nimrod) ask that we invite some legislators to the meeting.

Q2 Organic Social Creative Review

Jay Fetterman, Fusion 92 presented the review of Q2 organic social creative for April – June.

April Post:

Impact of Outdoor Recreation: Hunting Industry and Jobs (Animated video)
Recommended using hunting and fishing so the number is increased. Rewording it to ask how many jobs hunting and anglers support.

Community Connection and Engagement: Outdoor fun that Fits Your Schedule (Video)
Reword to time spent in Michigan outdoors

Community Connection and Engagement: Hunter Education Courses (Static)
Provide the hunter safety URL.

Community Connection and Engagement: Fish Stocking (Animated video)

Impact Outdoor Recreation: Spring Peepers (Animated GIF)
Switch this to earlier April.

May Post:

Conservation in Action: American Wetlands Month (Static)

Conservation in Action: Turkey Hunting Skills: Sounds (Animated video)

Education and Awareness: Mother's Day (Static)

Impact of Outdoor Recreation: Do You Even Pish? (Static)
Use an indigo bunting bird.
Can use the wording conservation makes it possible.

Community Connection and Engagement: Turkey Hunts: Trickier Than You Expect (Static)

Education and Awareness: Pet Friendly Trails (Animated video)
Make them all DNR trails.
Move the run time to June.

June Post

Education and Awareness: Pheasants Forever Event (Static)

Funding and Policy Transparency: Three Free (Animated video)
Change the fly fishing photo to shore fishing.

Community Connection and Engagement: Stepping Stones (Static)

Funding and Policy Transparency: Hex Hatch (Animated GIF)

Impact of Outdoor Recreation: Fishing and the Michigan Economy (Static)
Add a photo with a more urban looking person.

Levey made a motion to approve the 2026 media plan, **Ulfig** second, all approved.

Cooke made a motion to adjourn the meeting, **Frasier** seconded, the MWC meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.