



Michigan Wildlife Council

Meeting minutes

May 6, 2026

10:00 am - 2:00pm

Rose Lake Shooting Center

14500 Peacock Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823

Attendees

Beth Gruden, Vice-Chair, MWC

Dan Cooke, MWC

Dawn Levey, MWC

Dan Ulfig, MWC

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

Damion Frasier, MWC

Franklin Hayes, MWC

Rose Campbell-Gill, DNR-MOD

Nick Petrusha, Fusion92

Russ Mason, Nimrod

Absent: None

Virtual: Jason Garvon, MWC; Kirstin Barton, Fusion92; Klara Welin, Fusion92; Jay Fetterman, Fusion92; Mark Cool, public

Meeting Minutes

Gruden called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Hayes made a motion to approve the MWC agenda with an amendment for Fusion92 to give an overview of the Protecting Michigan's Legacy 2.0 Campaign. **Ulfig** seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Ulfig made a motion to approve the MWC meeting minutes from February 26, 2026. **Levey** seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Nick Petrusha, Fusion92 introduced Klara Welin and Kirstin Barton from Fusion92 who presented MWC website discovery findings and recommendations with a prime objective to build a more robust experience for visitors. The focus themes were user experience, website content and content strategy and SEO and accessibility.

Audit

User Experience Audit: How easy is it for a user to navigate the site, find information and know what to do next. It's important because if visitors feel confused or lost, they tend to leave the site regardless of how good the content is. This matters because if people can't find the information when they search, they stop searching.

Having a strong potential to captivate visitors and a clear website purpose will help users instantly connect with what you're offering.

An opportunity to create a memorable user journey. A guided journey will give users a clear path forward and deepen their connection to the overall site goals.

Making navigation a powerful tool for engagement. We're finding that navigation to better service and available information is going to make it much easier for users to find what they're looking for.

Key page real estate to make it ready to work harder for you. The most prominent sections on each page will make a bigger impact with much stronger content.

Content and Content Strategy Audit: What information lives on the site, how it's written and how current it is. This matters because content is what builds trust and educates your audience. The goal is to improve the storytelling, update important stats, and make conservation efforts feel more personal.

The website has a lot of great content and does a really good job of explaining who the Michigan Wildlife Council is. The audit found there are some opportunities to incorporate why it matters to me and why it matters to you, the audience. Those improvements will unlock the opportunity to make conservation feel personal and get at the broader impacts. Therefore, wherever we're able to tap into specific outcomes and update the data helps to improve the storytelling.

SEO & Visibility Audit: How easily can people find the site through Google search or when interacting with AI chats.

The current state has very low search traffic compared to peer organizations. We're finding limited visibility for relevant searches around Michigan wildlife or fishing and hunting licenses or even basic beginner questions. So, we want to make sure people are able to find MWC in those searches. We also want to think about the new way people are researching and discovering, which is largely leading into AI agents. We want to make sure that when we structure content and information, we're aligning to the best practices and how those systems scan, read and present content as people are looking for it.

Spieles asked for elaboration on how those AI search engine optimizations are different from the organic google search. **Kristin Barton, Fusion92** answered that you don't want to stop using keywords, but to think expansion when you're structuring content on a page, focus on having a soundbite baked in, thinking about questions and the depth of the content. What would be the next question that's usually asked. Having that sound bite approach to the way content lives on a page. In the past SEO approaches was having keywords and longer blocks of text on pages, now it's more snippet, sound bite view.

Recommendations:

The primary role of the website is to educate people. The secondary role is enabling action. Once informed, it makes it simple for users to get involved by providing a way to get outdoors, attend council meetings and provide easy access to purchase hunting and fishing licenses. So, after providing the information and content that educates them, we're giving them opportunities in different ways that they can take action and get involved.

Introduce a Clear User Journey

The content is strong – the focus is creating a clear journey that move visitors from exploring their interest to educating them on what it means. Then the next step is providing proof, so we create trust and then eventually enable action.

Five Key Areas to Update:

1. Update key words and overall structure.
2. Renaming and simplifying the menu so visitors know where to go.
3. Enhance storytelling.
4. Make “get a license” an easily accessible action page.
5. Update design language and layout across the website.

Recommendations for refreshing Core pages/Sections on the site:

Home page – Enhance existing page. Connect visitors to the mission right away and guide them to what matters most.

About page – Enhance, build credibility and trust in the MWC’s mission and leadership.

Change Wildlife Management page to “Michigan Wildlife” page – Celebrate Michigan’s wildlife by telling conservation success stories.

Change Efforts page to “Conservation at Work” page – Show the real, measurable impact of conservation funding on MI wildlife, the economy, etc.

Change Explore/Content page to “News & Stories” page – rename and revitalize existing Explore Page content. Inspire and inform through stories about Michigan wildlife and conservation.

Get Involved page – Enhance, turn informed visitors into active participants.

Getting Outdoors (new page) – Make it easy for every Michigander – beginner or not – to get outside and participate.

Visual Enhancements – Make it easier for visitors to digest content and keep their attention. Then also doing cleanup, getting rid of outdated content or pages.

Upon completing the audit Fusion92 had three interactive ideas come to mind to drive deeper engagement, if it can fit in the current scope.

1. Creating downloadable guides that would go on the outdoors page. Creating helpful tips & tricks. (low effort)

Ulfig asked if the council members would also help with this. **Nick Petrusha, Fusion92** answered that maybe the approach could be reusing some of the guys that are already available through the DNR and using the council as thought leaders and the ones to connect Fusion92 to the right people that could help build out the framework. All were in agreement that posting some version of downloadable guides could work.

2. Creating an interactive quiz that would live on the website but be shareable and ultimately would drive to buy more licenses. (medium effort)
3. Having a calculator to show people where their license money is going for conversation. (high effort)

Ulfig asked if the council had any thoughts on the calculator. **Gruden** stated we usually stay away from that level of detail because of complexity.

Cooke commented the quiz seemed to be the better idea.

Ulfig made the suggestion of having a patch, stamp or sticker to help generate dollars for wildlife.

Spieles commented the quiz would be the better idea; the calculator is complicated with money coming from so many different places.

Frazier commented he liked the idea of showing where the money is going, maybe set it up from a broader view.

Cooke commented to maybe tie the quiz to an actual action – backpacking, kayaking, etc.

Spieles commented that any recreational items would go under Parks and Recreation.

Gruden commented that we should probably stay away from the calculator idea.

The consensus was the quiz would be the better option. **Nick Petrusha, Fusion92** stated they'll focus on the quiz and see if it fits into the scope of this year.

Spieles had a concern about a slide earlier that talked about wildlife. Feels our focus need to continue to be on hunting but also include fishing & licensing. And to make sure the language that's used is talking about conservation.

Spieles commented to also look at moving the meeting material contents to a place on the website that's less hidden and would like to see some of the campaign material on the website. **Klara Welin, Fusion92** stated they had the same concern and feels that information should be placed on the Get Involved page.

Next Steps for the improved website plan:

Information Architecture - A detailed blueprint of the new site - every page, every content block, and how visitors move through it.

Detailed Content Plan - A page-by-page breakdown of what stays, what changes, and what's new.

Council Review and Approval - Full alignment on structure and content before design begins.

Wireframes - Page-by-page layouts showing content hierarchy and user flow.

Visual Design - Wireframes brought to life with MWC's brand - ready for council to sign-off.

Development & Launch - Build, test, launch, and hand off.

Spieles made a motion to approve the strategy to update the MWC website, **Cooke** seconded the motion, The strategy was approved unanimously.

NRC Presentation Review

Nick Petrusha, Fusion92 walked through the presentation slides that will be presented to the NRC.

Presentation Feedback:

Slide 7: Audience Definition slide - Update the "Suppression Audience" language to be more friendly to the audience. Suggestion to rename to patron audience.

Slide 25: Campaign Performance slide - Fusion92 to provide high-level performance update.

Slide 27: Responsive Mgmt. slides - Fusion92 to voice over how Michigan is already in a good place compared to national results. Note that we are the only state in the nation that has increased favorability.

Slide 34: Recommended Channel Mix - Go into more detail on which channels we are supporting.

Slide 35: Remove slide

Protecting Michigan's Legacy 2.0

Fusion92 discussed their ideas and the objective going forward.

Fusion92 asked to add another meeting to review creative content for Protecting Michigan's Legacy 2.0. The date of June 10 was proposed since the NRC meeting is that date and Nick, Jon and Jason will already be together for that meeting. Jon will check the NRC logistics to see if the council can hold a meeting at the same location (LCC West).

Gruden dismissed the group for lunch at 11:53 p.m.

Public comment was taken at 12:32 p.m.

No Public Comment

Q3 Organic Social Creative Review

Jay Fetterman, Fusion 92 presented the review of Q3 organic social creative for July - September.

July Post:

Community Connection and Engagement: Aquatic Invasive Species Week (Static)

Fourth of July Holiday Post (Video)

Education and Awareness: Sturgeon Week (Static/Video)

Spieles asked to add some wording about a Saginaw post on sturgeon and committed to getting more info.

Impact of Outdoor Recreation: Want To Be A Master Angler? (Static)

Funding and Policy Transparency: Historic Forest Management (Video)

Conservation In Action: Better Forests, Better Hunting (Video) – Trail cam

Conservation In Action: Better Forests, Better Hunting (Alternate Video) – Deer in the forests.
Use a younger denser forest if we use this one.

August Post:

Community Connection and Engagement: Elk Hunting Clinic Coming Soon (Static/Video)

Conservation in Action: National Honey Bee Day

Education and Awareness: Chinook Salmon and Coho Salmon Migration (Video)

Talk about where they can be found in Michigan and link to a page. DNR where to fish webpage.

Impact Outdoor Recreation: Full Sturgeon Moon (Static)

Funding and Policy Transparency: Game and Fishing Protection Fund Heading to Hunting Season
(Stop motion video)

September Post:

Funding and Policy Transparency: Firearms Safety and Hunting (Static)

Impact of Outdoor Recreation: Whitetail Deer Season Begins (Video)

Add to post copy about youth/liberty hunt. If showing orange, tweak the wording to talk about the firearms clinic.

Education and Awareness: Waterfowl Hunting Season (Static)

Impact of Outdoor Recreation: Sheldon Mountain Bike (Static)

Education and Awareness: National Public Lands Day (Video)

Conservation in Action: Peak Raptor Viewing (Video)

Add locations around SE MI. Ex. Detroit River, Belle Isle. Add language around how license dollars led to abundance of these animals.

Hayes commented to do a post on the free fishing weekend.

Hayes shared to look at having the council take part in some of the events that'll be going on.

Ulfig commented he's not able to make the Oct. 22 meeting. The council decided to leave the date as long as we have a quorum.

Levey made a motion to adjourn the meeting, **Ulfig** seconded, the MWC meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.