

*This is a draft copy of minutes, subject to change and approval at our next meeting.*

**MI State Chapter Board Meeting  
National Wild Turkey Federation**

January 16, 2022

Jon called the meeting to order 8:48 AM.

We recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Tony led us in a prayer.

Members Present: Ken Buchholtz (Zoom), Chris Stewart (Zoom), Ryan Longanbach, Bert VanderWeele (Zoom), Jon Gray, Tony Snyder, Jan Kuhtic, Art Pelon, Hugh Marx, Dave Godley, Jonathan (Zoom), Jason DeFrenn, Pete Demos, Al Bobrofsky

Members Absent: Brian McPhail, Frank Darling, Evan Traynor, Zach Mulder, Mike Black

NWTF Staff Present: Tom Karsten (RD), Aaron Shaughnessy (RD), Matt Fenoff (NWTF CFO)

Others Present: Adam Bump (DNR), Mike Arnold (guest Mid MI), Erin Sattazahn (guest Mid MI)

**Minutes, Agenda, Correspondence**

There is no correspondence.

The minutes of July 31, 2021 conference call are approved (Dave, Pete, carried).

The agenda is approved with one addition: Executive Board positions.

**Treasurer's Report (Tony)**

This report is for January 16, 2021 to January 14, 2022.

The beginning balance was \$14,547.43. Deposits \$17,211.68. Expenses \$14,189.97. The current balance is \$17,569.14. The expense report was provided.

The Treasurer's report is approved (Dave, Art, carried).

**Board Nominations and Elections**

Since we did not have elections in January of 2021 (Covid, Conference call), we have 6 members whose term was extended by one year: Art, Hugh, Tony, Chris, Brian, and Mike. Of these, Art, Hugh, Tony, and Chris agreed to serve another 2 years, term ending January of 2024. Brian's status unknown due to lack of contact, and discontinued. Mike's status will be determined.

Eligible for another term are Jan, Ryan, Ken, Jason, Jonathan, and Pete. All these agreed to a term ending in 2025.

Zach Mulder informed Bert of his resignation from the State Board.

Evan Traynor status to be determined due to lack of time available.

Mike Arnold is interested in a position on the State Board. He stated his personal account of hunting and conservation, and asked to be appointed. He is appointed to a position ending in 2024 (Brian's possible vacancy) with unanimous consent.

Erin Sattazahn is interested in a position on the State Board. She stated her personal account of hunting and conservation with a special interest in empowering women, and asked to be appointed. She is appointed to a term ending in 2023 (Zach's vacancy) with unanimous consent.

Thanks to our outgoing members, and welcome to the new members. The new members were presented with the handbook.

The handbook, presented at the July meeting, was discussed. Some members will not sign because of volunteer status, the apparent questioning of our commitment, and the appearance of a contract. Jon and Bert noted that this handbook is intended as a guide for members, to give them expectations of what membership on the board requires. With some changes, suggested by members, the handbook can be improved to be more accurate, and as a result, more likely to be accepted by all members. Jon will make changes, noting that this was taken from the IN State Chapter, and can better reflect the way we operate in MI. Members do need to learn what is expected of them and appreciate frequent communication.

For the Executive Board, nominations were opened for Treasurer and Secretary. No new nominations, nominations closed. Tony and Jan are willing to continue in their roles for another year (again, a year retroactive) (Pete, Art, carried). Nominations were opened for President and Vice President. No nominations, nominations closed. Bert and Jon are willing to continue in their positions for another two years (Dave, Pete, carried).

### **MUCC Report (Pete)**

MUCC is working on commercial licensing of hunting guides in MI, HB #5358-5360. Still working on wolves. Working with Debbie Stabenow on CWD.

MUCC contributes to schools by providing Tracks magazine to grades 3-5.

In an effort to be proactive and clearly state our positions on recent changes and future proposals, we want Ryan Boyer to draft a communication to all involved parties, to include our opposition to the 2-bird limit and extra licenses (Art, Dave, carried unanimously). Our statement will be based on scientific data by biologists, keeping written and oral conversations professional.

We appreciate Amy Trotter's leadership.

## NWTF Reports

Ryan (written report): With the challenges of Covid and the Super Fund freeze, we greatly appreciate the efforts of state and local chapters to support the Call for All and fundraising events. New projects were necessarily delayed, but we continued our ongoing grant agreements and Conservation Seed program, resulting in 3,958 acres conserved last year.

Other work and updates:

- Additional DNR WHGP grant funds over \$350,000 for ongoing work from Manistee County to St. Joseph County. Net project funding is over \$1.2 million since 2014 and total project cost over \$3 million on this program.
- Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District work continues. The agreement is being modified. Project totals since 2018 exceed \$1.5 million.
- We are working with MI DNR and MUCC to find the best approach forward regarding the leftover license resolution (which passed). We are in opposition, and are currently working to improve communication with the MUCC. Ryan will provide more information at the March meeting, and Adam is providing information at this meeting.
- Work is finished on the Enhancing Pine Barrens and Wildlife Openings Enhancement Project through the MI DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant Program. We received over \$231,000 in grant funds for the project totaling over \$500,000 in total costs, resulting in 700 acres enhanced annually.
- Restoring Oak Savannas in West MI through the MI DNR SHGP is ongoing and extended due to Covid. Work should be completed in September 2022. We were awarded \$191,000 for over \$323,000 in project costs. Over 400 acres are enhanced and restored.
- The state accomplishment flier will be finalized soon. Tom and Aaron will distribute to chapters.

Matt NWTF CFO. NWTF has seen tremendous changes. Our new logo is a result of years of research and testing. Our mission has not changed. As a conservation organization, we are so focused on what we do, we forget to tell our story. Our work for the wild turkey benefits so many more species than turkeys. We continue to reach for a broader demographic.

In past years, the NWTF bought in the fall for spring banquets. In the past year, we changed to provide some NWTF product and encouraged chapters to shop locally for the rest. We are “cash positive”, which has never happened before.

Memberships are the key to our success. Covid hurt our memberships drastically. We were 250,000 and rising, now 140,000 and rising. We expect a continued upward trend. Think about our memberships in MI. Can we manage second events? These can be any time of the year.

Chapter manuals are being revised.

A volunteer committee studied Super Fund and presented change proposals to the NWTF. More changes are expected. A Core Package is no longer required at banquets, and local chapters make decisions on products offered. The NWTF Core Package will feature more products made in the USA.

The NWTF convention is happening at the Gaylord Opryland in Nashville, TN in February. Next year we will celebrate 50 years. This will be a catapult into an exciting future, thanks to our many volunteers.

Tom is thankful for those who held events in 2020 and 2021. We have overcome challenges with good energy. We need to encourage more women to get involved at all levels – they are great ambassadors with good contacts.

Plan something special for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Consider a fall gun bash – it takes 3 hours of food and raffles, and is very successful. We have a working template we are happy to share.

Looking for new development in the Gaylord and Big Rapids area.

Consider a West MI and East MI gun bash. Tom and Aaron can help us make it happen.

Aaron loves to try new ideas. Thankful for good events last year, and seeing good ticket sales now. We expect to be more profitable because of chapter choices. Less quantity, more quality can be a benefit. Live auction is reduced or non-existent in some cases.

Timber Ghost hosted the State Chapter banquet with Jason the chair with a new look and a new venue. Thanks to all who helped set up, assisted with games and raffles, and clean up. The banquet used a \$2,300 Core Package, focused on the volunteers and awards, fun and giving thanks.

We need new recruits in East MI, and need the Mid MI chapter revived.

The 1,000-calendar project is successful again, with \$20,000 coming back to chapter's events.

### **DNR Report (Adam Bump)**

For the fall turkey hunt, probably no changes in the regulations, except maybe quotas.

MI DNR is working on a memorandum of agreement with the Patch Program.

Adam can resolve the turkey feeder issues (acceptable construction) and have documentation for us.

The Good Neighbor Authority allows the DNR to do active work on federal lands. A new Wildlife position will work with organizations' work on federal land, and assure compliance, resulting in work done on large blocks of land.

For the spring turkey hunt, Adam and Ryan Boyer are discussing how to balance social and political pressure, and make our NWTF position known regarding the recent changes. We will

seek common ground with MUCC, DNR, and other involved parties. We will try to share more research on turkey populations and other issues affected by the rule changes, as well as suggest possible quota adjustments (numbers, dates). We resolved to be in active communication and work pro-actively in the future.

NWTF is giving an award to the MI State Chapter for most hunters recruited (R3).

### **PR, Media, and Web Site (Jon)**

The web site is updated and active. The patch information on the web site is changed and current.

### **R3 Program (Jon, Steve)**

For the fiscal year 2021, these are the coordinator highlights:

- MI is #1 in the nation for hunter recruitment, and will receive an award at the NWTF Convention on Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Hosted 20 JAKES Take Aim events at MI State Parks with 626 shooters and 1,046 participants.
- Hosted 4 Skeet Shooting classes.
- Hosted 6 Wing Shooting 101 classes with invitation to mentored pheasant hunts.
- Hosted a 3-day mentored Spring Turkey Hunt at Pierce Cedar Creek.
- Hosted an alumni Spring Turkey Hunt at Yankee Springs.
- Hosted 2 Learn to Hunt mentored Pheasant Hunts.
- Hosted a 3-day mentored Fall Turkey Hunt at Pierce Cedar Creek.
- Hosted a mentored Deer Hunt for disabled veterans at Camp Grayling.
- Local chapters cancelled many JAKES events, but did mentored hunts with youth, women, or disabled persons.
- Congratulations to Ken Buchholtz and Bays De Noc for hosting over 40 Wheelin' Sportsmen events. Ken and Billy Spirito won the mentor/mentee coolers.
- Wheelin' Team 457 hosted a spring turkey hunt and a fall deer hunt for the disabled, as well as bass fishing tournaments, ice fishing, bowling, and golf events.

LOOKING AHEAD:

- Create a \$1,000 raffle to be used for the 25% match for R3 programs at Rose Lake. (Budget \$4,000, NWTF and PR).
- Local chapters to take the 4 JAKES Take Aim Shooting Ranges to State Parks and host BB gun shoots, mail top shooter certificates. Invite top shooter and family to a Rose Lake family day of shooting. Have a plaque made for the top shooter to display at their State Park, and invite the family to a mentored hunt. The shooters will be invited to a NWTF banquet and join the committee.
- COVID will diminish and many volunteer programs will reopen!

### **Habitat Improvement (Pete)**

Improvement uses no money from the State Chapter, only from local chapters and individuals. The most successful improvements have been the tree planting with fertilizer and fences. Thanks to MSU and some nurseries for trees, and the Dept. of Agriculture for the grant to buy trees, shrubs, and bushes (already planted, fenced, and staked).

### **State Convention (Jason)**

Thanks for the banquet help. Next year will be bigger, family friendly, and maybe with a Friday hunt. The gun dealer raffles were a surprise. All of us can help attendance by word of mouth, in addition to the mailings and Facebook postings.

For the future, Jason will negotiate a Friday set-up with non-board help, board meeting Saturday, and banquet Saturday to avoid any Sunday activity.

### **Super Fund (Tony)**

Since Super Fund was suspended, the committee did not meet in 2021. We allotted \$350 per chapter, mostly used for JAKES or scholarships. Remember that events must be registered before approval, and chapters can register their own events. The Super Fund will probably increase when incomes increase. Chapters can fund their own needs for now. Harlan Starr and a volunteer group decided how the Super Fund will come back. We can expect adjustments. Each state will make decisions.

### **Finance and Budget (Tony)**

The budgets for 2020 and 2021 were minimal. For 2022, we will plan for the Legislative Hunt and the Pure MI hunt. The R3 budget is unknown. For now, we will use the 2020 budget for 2022 (Art, Pete, carried). Tony will make and send a more detailed 2022 budget for our approval.

### **Patch Program (Bert)**

Bert is now in charge of patches. Patches are ordered and paid on the web site. Charging \$6 now with a veteran-owned, USA based company in FL. Bert will get a printout of purchases, and the money comes back from NWTF. He will have monthly meetings to get the patches mailed out, and he will catch up on those who did not receive their patches. Adam has a rough draft of the memorandum of understanding for DNR/NWTF patches, including how the funds are used and reported.

A patch fund report was requested, but not available at this time. The money accounting will be forthcoming.

### **Rules and Regulations (Hugh)**

We remain in conversation with the DNR and MUCC, and await NWTF research concerning recent turkey population declines and its implications for turkey rule changes.

### **Awards and Scholarships (Jon)**

Thanks to the Highbanks Chapter for paying the State scholarship winner last year. Scholarship applications are accepted online, with a February 15 deadline for the state, and March 1 for national. Chapters can see their own applications in the chapter portal. Jon can see the chapter winners and decide on a state winner. We will keep the \$2,500 amount as before. The funds may be Super Fund, treasury, or patch program, to be determined later. Pete suggests multiple scholarships for less money for each person as Presque Isle does, and make more scholars happy.

We will be paying \$1,000 for Nick, the state Conservation Officer winner, to go to the national convention.

### **Conservation Seed (Ryan)**

Ryan reports that 2,300 acres were conserved in 2021. We saved money on shipping by working with Rupp in Ohio instead of NWTF. We have the earliest day corn for the UP. The soy bean order is limited to 300 bags (foliage plants). We can accept orders until mid-February. Pick up date is the week of April 4, 2022.

### **Fund-Raising (Jason)**

This committee would like to try a state-wide raffle May to September offering 10 prizes, 5 of which are guns. 1500 tickets sold can net \$6,000. Jason will ask for help on this committee, and Aaron will assist. Another possible fund-raiser is a new state pin with the new logo.

### **Old Business**

Pending some editing, we will table the handbook signatures. The new members will take a handbook, understanding that some pages will be replaced. To get and keep a position on the State Board, members are expected to show passion and engagement in activities, or consider leaving their post.

### **New Business**

Steve Sharp is retiring in April. The R3 position will be filled. Steve's position has evolved. Now the position is supported by NWTF, PF, DNR, and the Glasson Foundation. To use the JAKES Take Aim trailer, talk to Steve. One trailer is owned by the DNR. Others are in the UP, northern lower MI and southwest MI.

Gary Salmon reports that Grand Valley will not sponsor and hold a state turkey calling contest this year.

The NWTF 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is being planned for 2023. How can this state chapter celebrate? Maybe a tag line on the raffle? NWTF working on a logo for this, and allows no logo adaptations for local or state use as yet.

### **Adjournment and Future Meetings**

Tentative State Board meeting dates: March 15, virtual at 6:30PM, June 1, virtual at 6:30PM, and July 30 in person in Cadillac.

Motion to adjourn (Ryan, Tony, carried) at 1:19PM.

Submitted by Jan Kuhtic, Secretary

POST SCRIPT:

Brian McPhail is interested in continuing on the State Board. He is appointed to the term ending in 2023 (Evan vacancy).



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