

**MSSFA State Board Meeting
MUCC Headquarters, Lansing
December 6, 2006
Minutes**

President Rick Balabon brought the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. A 29 member quorum was present.

Presidents' Report (Balabon)... The annual chapter presidents' meeting is scheduled for Feb. 3rd, 2007.

Special Presentation (Jack Kelly)... Kelly introduced Natural Resource Commission member Frank Wheatlake. Frank distributed the Final Report of the Hunting and Fishing License Package Development Work Group and provided a synopsis. The following points were highlighted... **1)** The DNR budget will be 8 million \$ in deficit by September 2007. **2)** The US Fish & Wildlife Service estimates that hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing generates 2.7 billion \$ of annual spending in Michigan. **3)** The DNR receives little General Fund money for its' budget. The General Fund contribution was 23.3% in (1996) and has declined to 8.7% in (2006). **4)** With inflation of 4% yearly, the DNR operating budget (with no changes in management), has had to make due by innovating efficiencies into all conservation programs.

5) During the last 10 years, there has been a 13.8% decline of licensed anglers, and 18.3% decline of licensed hunters. The DNR receives a Federal Pittman/Robertson rebate of (\$9.80) for each licensed hunter and a Dingell/Johnson rebate of (\$8.18) for each licensed angler. **6)** In 1996, the Legislature allowed (2) \$1 license fee increases. No fee increases have been allowed since. **7)** In the past (2) years the DNR has had to go beyond efficiency and begin reductions in vital programs. **8)** The NRC concludes that we need to get beyond the almost total reliance on user fees from a sub-set of outdoor recreationists, and establish a long term funding source that acknowledges the essential importance that natural resource stewardship has to our economic vitality and quality of life. **9)** In the short-term, the NRC recommends that there be a "flexible" license fee increase. Flexible, in the sense that the NRC can adjust them (up or down) as market conditions dictate. This proposal will require Legislative approval, and the NRC is asking for support from the many natural resource user groups. The NRC hopes to have a response from all interested parties by March 15,2007.

Motion (Keebler) to accept minutes as presented... Second (Pilara)... passed.

Financial Report (Haddad)... YTD revenue, YTD expenses , Total Balance , **Motion** (Sickon) to approve financial report... Second (Saladine)... passed.

Old Business

- 1) Decals (Haddad)... Large boat decals have been designed for each chapter. They will be sent to each chapter with an order form. Cost is \$2.00/decals with a minimum order of 50.
- 2) By-Law changes (Haddad)... The approved by-law changes will be forwarded to all chapters.

Legislative Report (Merckel)... The NRC is looking for sponsors in the Legislature for the budget package that was in the special presentation.

Committee Reports

- 1) Lake Michigan (Pilara)...The Nov. 27 meeting focused on the hatcheries and their capabilities. 200,000 more Steelhead could be planted if Brown Trout plantings were eliminated. Joe would like to know what the local chapter consensus is at the Feb. meeting. Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin will be planting 400,000 more Coho in 2008.
- 2) Lake Huron (Merckel)... The DNR has increased funding for Cormorant control (\$150,000.00). A pilot program to raise Lake Herring will begin in 2007 at the Wolf Lake hatchery. The VHS virus attacks fish most frequently in the spring when they are weak and tired.

Executive Directors Report (Pelt)... With the crisis caused by the VHS (viral hemorrhagic septicemia) disease, Pelt has formed a working group to pressure the Federal Secretary of Agriculture (Michael Johanns) and the Dept. of Veterinary Service (John Clifford) to require ship ballast water treatment. The USDA-AHIS has the authority to order ballast water sanitizing.

Motion (Saladine)... to adjourn at 9:30pm...Second (Sickon)...passed.

Respectfully submitted, Gerald Sickon, MSSFA Secretary