

## **January, 2012 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION (NRC) MEETING**

**For legislative issues go to “Lansing Watch” on our web page.  
(saginawfieldandstream.com)**

The sturgeon spearing harvest on Black Lake will be reduced to five fish with the action ceasing at noon on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> or when the second fish is taken. Last year the quota was seven fish, but between the notification of the seventh fish taken and the closure of the lake, four more were taken. This put a dent in the Consent Decree agreement throwing the quota between the state anglers and the tribes out of whack. The hope this year is that, between the time the second fish is taken and the closing of the lake, no more than three will be added to the harvest. If this is successful, next year's quota will be increased.

The three Pure Michigan winners were announced. Next month these three will receive a half a truckload of prizes and a lot of hunting opportunity. Participation for 2011 was off 2010 by about 2,000 which nicely increases the odds but decreases the revenue for the DNR which, after all, was the intent of the program. \$4.00 per chance is not too much for the possibility of major hunting opportunities as well as that boatload of prizes. Remember to participate when you buy your licenses.

The elk harvest was slightly under the license quota of 155. State hunters took 112 elk with the tribal hunters taking 19. The herd is just under the population goal of 800 to 900 animals. The herd continues to expand out of the area intended for their habitat. The hunts are designed to confine the herd to that area. Good luck with that plan.

The monitored youth hunt continues to be discussed and clarified. I expect, like any new undertaking, things will change as results dictate. It is important to remember this effort is vital to the future of hunting in Michigan. We are losing too many hunters to

age and distraction. It is an excellent opportunity for the youngsters, with a \$7.50 license they can take two turkeys (one spring and one fall), two deer of any kind on private land, as well as, participating in small game hunting, trapping and fishing. All this with the intent of establishing a life-long love of the outdoors and a desire to maintain our natural resources.

Hopefully, by 1-27-2012 the state will have control over the wolf population. As of this writing, no law suits had been filed opposing the federal deregulation. But we have been there before.

The results of the federal compliance audit were reviewed. There were a few issues that the state has to address before the next audit – about five years. Complete correction is not necessary as long as a plan is place to make the correction. There was one item which should give you an idea of the types of violations the feds noted. You may recall I reported a problem in the Allegan State Game area related to field trials. There is a group who put on dog field trials with the release of native and non-native birds. This was done during the hunting season which allowed some uninvited and unwanted locals to participate. It seems that the feds are going to solve the problem as they objected to this use of the property, the releasing of non-native birds and the use of horses. These do not meet the criteria for the purchase of the property with federal money. This is not the first time we have heard of the potential loss of federal funding or the possibility of paying back federal funds. The use of horses in the Pigeon River country could cost \$25 million and yet some legislators are still pushing to allow that use. I don't know if they are just stupid or if it is a deliberate attempt to further deteriorate DNR funding. I expect the Allegan problem to have a similar dollar value and generate similar legislative action. Remember in November.

There were a number of people during the public appearances that praised the

Mentored Youth program and things started to look like I would have little to cover on this portion of the meeting. Then suddenly my faith in human nature was restored – twofold. It seems, on a lake I will not name, that an invasive plant has become a problem and it started at the DNR boat launch – naturally. So the lake group, or whatever they are called, asked if they could purchase the launch. A number of commissioner hands went up and the question of continued public use was asked. The person proposing the purchase hesitated and instantly the commissioner(s) said no. The discussion went on about wash, rinse and scrub facilities being installed with some suggestion that the DNR should foot the bill.

The second one had to do with an antler point restriction being proposed for ten counties in the northwestern lower. I served on a committee that recommended that groups requesting antler point restrictions foot the bill for the survey and related costs and the results had to be 66% in favor of the restriction. We had a person proposing that an antler point restriction be put in place for the ten counties under the guise of a research project. Nice try.

Ah, life is good again.

Jim De Clerck