

**MAY, 2010 NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION (NRC) MEETING**

The first committee meeting was delayed because: On May 4, 2010, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) held an oil and gas lease auction of 118,578.55 acres. This auction generated \$178,377,990.56 in revenue. While the majority of this revenue will be deposited into the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, which provides acquisition and development recreational grants to state and local units of government, a portion will be deposited into the Game and Fish Protection Trust Fund (Trust Fund). A portion of this Trust Fund's revenue is transferred to the Game and Fish Protection Fund to be invested. The interest and earnings generated will be used in future years to continue the support of the game and fish programs. Since 1929 the state has collected a total of \$190 million in auction payments. This one day auction almost exceeded 81 years of auctions.

I am not going to get into all these funds and how they work. What we should be concerned about is the tactics the legislature will use to try to get their hands on the additional revenue. The fact that these funds are constitutionally protected will not stop attempted raids or strange spending justifications, particularly since the Governor now holds rein over the DNRE.

The Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee met to review and accept the by-laws and establish sub-committees. The promotional plans for the Recreational Passport (\$10 on your vehicle license renewal) were discussed. There are a number of retailers who are willing to give discounts to those who participate and a method of identification will be required. This passport is also good for all state boat ramps as well as State Park access. For the users, it's a very good deal.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Committee reviewed this year's antlerless regulations and changes to the youth hunts. The changes were too extensive to describe here so you need to refer to the guide.

There was a proposal on TB eradication from a coalition of hunters and farmers in the TB area. The proposal included a greater harvest of antlerless deer with an antler restriction on bucks. This antler restriction included a twelve inch antler span as well as three points on one side. Well now, let's keep the bucks around longer so the antlers get bigger and wider even though a twelve inch spread is somewhat rare and difficult to guess at on a moving animal and the older the animal is the more likely it will get TB. I cannot put together the words that would properly describe my disgust with this proposal. The object is to eradicate TB not grow antlers or maybe this wasn't mentioned in the coalition meetings. Fortunately, there were a number of people speaking during the public appearance portion of the meeting who opposed the antler restrictions – in their words “it doesn't make sense”. I couldn't agree more.

A similar proposal came fourth about spinning-winged decoys. A group wanted to outlaw them across the state but ran into resistance, so they just want them outlawed in the Shiawassee. Here we go again with “If you don't hunt my way you can't hunt at all”. I am going to suggest that anyone hunting in the Shiawassee be allowed to shoot only those geese flying east. I hunt west of the Shiawassee.

We are all aware of the cormorant fish predation problem. But there are problems beyond the loss of fish. Defoliation of the nesting islands because of droppings is a major concern. Tons of guano have been removed but it hasn't stopped the loss of trees and undergrowth. The droppings wash up on shore and cause a problem similar to the Bay City

**Recreational Area beach only more dangerous. This, of course, doesn't help the tourist trade. The feds continue to limit the number of birds that can be eliminated. It seems to me that perpetuating a species that has no redeemable value at the expense of the economy is not in the best interest of the people. This is another reason to revisit the endangered species act.**

**The Bear Work Group members were named. The plan was for 20 members but only 15 of the 22 applicants were named. MUCC will have a slot along with some land owners who are not bear hunters. It seemed like a fairly balanced group.**

**Our congratulations to Mike Borkovich on the special recognition he receive this last month. As he stated, "all the guys and gals in the Law Enforcement Division deserve special recognition and the award goes to them as well". We agree Mike but there are some, like you, that are a little more special.**

**Jim De Clerck**