

## **MUCC Policy Action Report 12-21-07**

**Have a safe and happy holiday season! MUCC's office will be closed from December 24, 2007 through January 1, 2008. We will see you next year!**

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### **DNR Fee Fiasco—MUCC's responds to the \$10 million fund balance in the Game and Fish Protection Fund**

After months of behind-the-scenes work that included countless hours of discussion, meetings and correspondence that included the formation of a conservation coalition of more than three dozen of the state's outdoors organizations, the DNR's 2008 budget crisis appears to be resolved.

The solution? Well, they'll simply use the \$10 million that they "discovered" in the Game and Fish Protection Fund.

On Dec. 11, DNR Director Rebecca Humphries confirmed to state legislators that the DNR would have a \$10 million fund balance in the Fish and Game Protection Fund.

See MUCC's website for the full story [[Click here for our full response](#)]

While the DNR's budget issue is resolved for this year, there almost certainly will be a budget shortage in the near future. Conservation is still underfunded in our state and there are tremendous problems on the horizon that must be addressed. The DNR will, undoubtedly, be looking to members of the outdoors community to help solve the funding issues of the future.

MUCC will be there to represent the interests of hunters and anglers when that happens. And, next time, we're going to make certain that all the facts are being presented to all involved.

### **MUCC supports an independent analysis of Game and Fish Fund**

At the request of MUCC Executive Director Dennis Muchmore, we will be having an independent analysis and evaluation of revenues and expenditures of the Game and Fish Protection Fund performed. It's clear that we simply can not properly represent our members

without first clarifying exactly how much money the Game and Fish Fund has and how it's spent. It's also clear that those numbers must be verified from an independent source.

### **Kennecott mine moves one step forward; DEQ approves permits**

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) announced last week its decision to approve a series of permits to the Kennecott Eagle Minerals Company to conduct mining operations at the proposed Eagle Project Mine near Marquette. The department's decision follows a period of extensive review by the DEQ of public comments and supporting information to determine whether Kennecott's proposal met the standards contained within Michigan's air quality, groundwater, and mining laws. The DEQ is required to make its decision based solely on whether a proposal meets those standards.

This project is the first to be subject to Michigan's new Nonferrous Metallic Mineral Mining rules that were enacted in response to concerns over potential environmental impacts from mining of metallic sulfide ores. The rules, among the most stringent in the nation, were drafted and agreed to by a multi-stakeholder work group that included MUCC, as well as representatives from environmental, business, and mining organizations.

A list of all permit changes made in response to public comments and supporting information can be found on the DEQ website at [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq), then click on Kennecott Eagle Project.

### **MUCC appointed to serve on Michigan Climate Action Council**

Governor Jennifer Granholm has appointed MUCC's Executive Director, Dennis Muchmore, to serve on the Michigan Climate Action Council, which was created by Executive Order 2007-42 in November. The council will serve as an advisory body within the DEQ and is comprised of 35 representatives from public interest groups, environmental organizations, utilities, the manufacturing sector and other key industries, universities, and state and local government. They are responsible for making recommendations on how Michigan can address climate change, which may have a dramatic and positive effect on Michigan's efforts to grow the economy and create jobs.

The Executive Order charged the council with:

- producing an inventory and forecast of greenhouse gas emissions in Michigan and their sources from 1990 to 2020;
- compiling a comprehensive state climate change action plan with specific recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and
- working with local units of government and institutions of higher education to assist them in meeting the challenges of climate change.

An interim report from the council will be submitted to the governor by April 30, 2008, and a final report is due by December 31, 2008.

### **Please participate in NWTF survey on hunter access**

*More Places to Hunt* is a new National Wild Turkey Federation program designed to help provide more hunting land on both public and private property. Poorly-designed development, changes in land ownership, and tightened state agency and federal budgets have left hunters with

far less access to quality hunting areas. Studies by the National Shooting Sports Foundation indicate that one of the top reasons hunters give up the sport is that they can't find places to hunt. As you have seen in Michigan, when hunter numbers decline, the state loses revenue used to support wildlife habitat.

Give us your opinion about the direction of More Places to Hunt by filling out NWTF's [More Places to Hunt](#) survey. MUCC is working with the national NWTF office to collect and share information gathered from Michigan residents for our work on habitat and access and hunter recruitment and retention efforts through the Michigan Conservation Coalition.

## **2007 Farm Bill passed out of Senate; awaits Conference Committee**

The federal Farm Bill is important to Great Lakes restoration and wildlife! In fact, the Farm Bill provides more funding for conservation programs than any other federal law. It provides funding and technical assistance to farmers to help restore wildlife habitat, control soil erosion and reduce polluted run-off. Support from the Farm Bill affects nearly 10.2 million acres in Michigan, but the current caps on funding from the 2002 Farm Bill have made it hard for farmers to participate in important restoration programs. Nearly 75% of U.S. farmers are turned away from participating in the Farm Bill programs due to these funding caps.

On July 27, 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Farm, Nutrition, and Bioenergy Act of 2007 (H.R. 2419), otherwise known as the 2007 Farm Bill. This bill passed with increased funding for existing conservation programs and also added new smaller conservation programs.

The Senate's version of the 2007 Farm Bill, the Food and Energy Security Act of 2007, passed in the Senate on December 14 after much debate. The bill passed in the Senate extended conservation title programs at \$4 billion in increased funding than the 2002 Farm bill and will allow increased enrollment in three of the conservation programs. Also, new editions to the conservation provision is the Great Lakes sediment program and also income tax credits can be given for costs incurred to save endangered species and/or the costs of soil or water conservation, both introduced by Michigan's Senator Stabenow. In the Senate bill there is also a program called the Biomass Crop transition Program that would assist farmers and foresters in getting started in growing biomass for energy. Also, included in this bill Both the House and Senate versions of this bill also include a new \$20 million per year "Open Fields" program to promote voluntary public access on private lands to hunters, anglers and other low-impact outdoor enthusiasts.

The 2007 Farm bill will now go to conference committee between the House and the Senate to determine a final compromised version. The bill is expected to be finalized by the conference committee in early February.

Other key provisions in the Farm Bill to Michigan include:

- Specialty crops subtitle
- Alternative energy policies

- Rural development policies
- Nutrition policies

### **DNR Hosts Open House in Shingleton Forest Management Unit**

The Department of Natural Resources will host an open house Tuesday, Jan. 15, to provide information and receive public comment on proposed forest management treatments for 2009 Year Of Entry (YOE) and the Red Pine Project in the Shingleton management unit. The open house will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. EST at the Shingleton Field Office located on M-28 in Shingleton.

The formal compartment review to decide on prescriptions for these areas is scheduled for 9 a.m. EST Tuesday, Jan. 29, at the Hiawatha Township Hall located at 1595 N. M-94 in Manistique.

For more information on open houses and compartment reviews, please refer to the DNR's website on Forest Management and Planning (under Forests, Land, & Water on the left hand menu): [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)

**Updating our list for 2008:** If you would like to receive the policy report directly to your email address (or if you wish to be removed from this email list), please contact Amy Spray at [aspray@mucc.org](mailto:aspray@mucc.org).

*MUCC is committed to providing our members with up-to-date and accurate information on conservation policy issues from Lansing, Washington D.C., and around Michigan. If you enjoy MUCC's biweekly policy action report, please consider becoming a member and support our efforts to conserve Michigan's natural resources by remembering MUCC in your contributions and planned giving.*