

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

The Antler Point Restriction Work Group met for, what I believe was, the last time until the recommendations are drafted. There was very little change to the current process in our recommendations. Those requesting an antler point restriction will still pay for the surveys (at least in part), 50% of the surveys must be returned of which 66% must be in favor of the restriction before implementation can happen. There was a lot of interesting discussion at these meetings. The one buck regulation again raised its head but was squelched as not being part of our purpose. Quality deer management was handled similarly. Our purpose was to review and propose changes to the antler point restriction process. I am not in favor of any antler point restriction because it serves no purpose toward scientific wildlife management. It is strictly a personal desire on the part of some in the hunting community and should be voluntary. But, gee willikers!, if I want to shoot only eight pointers but my neighbor shoots any legal buck, I will never see an eight pointer. So I have to force my neighbor to hunt the way I do. Mule fritters!!

If you look through the hunting and fishing guides you will see a number of similar restrictions – not required for scientific management – put in place because a group of hunters/anglers wanted things that way. The fishing guide is full of them. The DNR calls these quality opportunities. I call them greed oft-times by selfish groups who want to limit access or gear in order to keep things to themselves. On the other side we are desperate to get more people involved. There are three things that keep people from hunting or fishing.

- Not having a reasonable opportunity for success.
- Excessive regulation.
- Cost in money and/or time.

- In Lower Michigan you could add not having access to an opportunity. I have said many times that I think it's time for the DNR to quit worrying about making sure I have a good time and put more effort into managing the resources to the carrying capacity of the habitat. If that were to happen there would be ample opportunity for success, no need for a lot of regulation and less time and money spent to participate. Everybody would have a good time. Whoops, there I go trying to offer a quality experience.

The Finance Committee reviewed the fund balances and investments. There will not be good news here until a new source of revenue is developed. I have been working with the finance people on more transparency. They are working on a reporting mechanism that will tell us where the money is spent. A couple of points – the General Fund contributes very little to the funding of the DNR wildlife, fisheries and law enforcement divisions. The funding comes from hunters and anglers through licenses and taxes on equipment. Point two – there are more than eighty funds in the DNR. Its like taking eighty check books to Wal-Mart and paying for each item out of a different check book or, maybe, multiple check books. This is not so simple a task as one might think, but they, and I, are working on it.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Committee reviewed the bat problem I discussed last month. There was a preliminary firearm deer season report which said things were similar to last year. The harvest results related to the inland consent decree were reviewed. I don't know why this is any longer a concern. The percent taken by the Indians is about equivalent to the General Fund contribution to fish and wildlife management.

Part of the day was spent at a reception for Sen. Patty Bircholtz who has been term limited out. She is renowned for her

**support of resource management. In addition, there were many accolades for Becky Humphries and the tremendous job she did as Director of the DNR.**

**The public appearances included a fellow who demonstrated the difficulty of antler point identification. He had some racks that he waved before the crowd and then asked if they would shoot that buck. Not many people participated mainly because they didn't want to be embarrassed. This was at no more than ten yards and it was difficult to make a quick determination. One was a seven point but small and of poor form – but legal where four points or more are required. Another was a beautiful six point – illegal in the same area. Sort of proved my earlier point.**

**The horse people were out requesting more trails. There were those who wanted to kill all the feral swine and those who wanted to save those businesses. The Director signed an order making these critters invasive species effective June 6, 2011, thus allowing the legislature time to pass regulations. We'll need to watch this one very close. There was an individual who did not want the DNR to purchase property on his lake because it would allow too many people access to the lake. What more can I say?**

**Jim De Clerck**