

# The Quiver

Michigan United Conservation Clubs Region 7 Monthly Newsletter

February 2025 Vol. 43

## DNR Halts Future Considerations for Solar Lease on Public Land

By Justin Tomei January 17th 2025

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently announced they will be halting consideration of future solar arrays on public land for the foreseeable future.

[According to an Mlive article](#), the DNR cited the public outcry for the pause.

The change came after a proposal to lease 420 acres of public land for a solar array was announced earlier in January.

The proposal for the initial 420 acres will continue with an approximate three-month comment period and may or may not result in a request for proposal (RFP) at the conclusion.

MUCC submitted a letter to the department and released a [supplementing statement expounding the position of its members](#).

The department should not consider any further solar leases on public lands until transparent criteria are created, said Justin Tomei, MUCC Policy and Government Affairs Manager.

“The department needs to clearly define, through a public input process, what constitutes marginal lands, the parcels that are considered in a proposal, the scorecard used to decide what parcels are open for lease and include any accompanying land acquisitions to recoup lost acreage,” said Tomei. “Until that time it is not appropriate for the DNR to lease publicly owned land for these purposes. The department is doing the correct thing, listening to the recommendations of our members, and pausing these lease proposals for the time being.”

Inevitably the legislature will be considering forest planning, and solar array siting legislation in both chambers.

To ensure our natural resources remain protected and managed thoughtfully and our outdoor heritage defended, join Michigan United Conservation Clubs today: <http://bit.ly/JoinMUCC>.

# February NRC Preview by Justin Tomei Jan. 30, 2025

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meets on Thursday, February 13 at Lansing Community College's downtown campus.

Bear regulations are up for information for the NRC. [Wildlife Conservation Order #2 of 2025](#) proposes a number of changes to bear regulations.

- Changes the date bear hunters can place tree stands or ground blinds on public land to begin the same day a hunter can begin baiting for bear.
- Updates bear registration requirements in the wildlife conservation order (WCO) from the entire bear, or head, to instead require the entire bear or the undivided head and hide. Biological samples will still be required.
- Currently WCO requires the kill tag to be affixed to the bears lower jaw, the proposed regulation would allow the kill tag to be attached to the lower jaw, or eye socket to the upper jaw.
- Changes the quiet period for running dogs in the northern lower peninsula prior to bear season to a four-day period. This was to ensure people running dogs were able to enjoy a full Labor Day weekend, which current regulations prevented four out of every eight years.
- A number of regulatory issues considered by the department and the bear forum are also mentioned in the memo, with no amendment proposed.

The amendment also proposes a number of changes to license quotas for bear management units (BMU) across the state:

- Red Oak BMU: an 80 (+12%) license increase.
- Gladwin BMU: a decrease of 5 licenses (-5%).
- Baldwin BMU: an increase of 165 (+42%) licenses.
- Amasa BMU: an increase of 10 licenses (+2%).
- Baraga BMU: an increase of 30 licenses (+2%).
- Bergland BMU: a decrease of 85 licenses (-9%).
- Carney BMU: an increase of 15 licenses (+3%).
- Gwinn BMU: a decrease of 150 licenses (-17%).
- Newberry BMU: a decrease of 125 licenses (-12%).
- Drummond Island BMU: an increase of 2 licenses (+31%).

The order also contained a pair of administrative changes to WCO to comply with statute.

[Wildlife Conservation Order #1 of 2025](#) is also on the agenda, which allows for hunting to continue on the newly acquired Gete Mino Mshkiigan property, under state park land rules.

Both WCO amendments are eligible for action at the March meeting.

The director has four orders up for action. To learn more about these orders read our [January NRC preview](#).

There are two land transactions on the agenda, MUCC reviews all transactions exceeding 80 acres, which both orders do.

[Land Transaction Case #20240089](#) is a sale of 350 acres of surplus land in Crawford County for the Saab munitions plant.

[Land Transaction Case #20240082](#) is an 80 acre acquisition in Alpena County, the property will be managed as part of the Atlanta Forest Management Unit.

MUCC will be streaming the meeting on our Facebook page, as technology allows.

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# Dan Kildee Appointed as Chair of the NRC

By Justin Tomei January 20th 2025

On Friday Afternoon Governor Whitmer announced the appointment of former Congressman Dan Killdee to serve as the chair of the Natural Resources Commission.

## From her press release:

"Former Congressman Dan Kildee, of Flint Township, has recently been named president and chief executive officer of the Community Foundation of Greater Flint following his six terms of service in Congress. Kildee holds a Bachelor of Science in administration with a concentration in community development from Central Michigan University. Dan Kildee is appointed as a Democrat for a term commencing January 17, 2025, and expiring December 31, 2028. Kildee is also appointed as chair of the commission for a term commencing January 17, 2025, and expiring at the pleasure of the Governor. Kildee succeeds Thomas Baird, whose term has expired. "

Commissioner Kildee joins recently appointed James Laporte to fill vacancies. Commissioner Cozad's term also expired at the end of 2024. Commissioner Cozad can continue his service until he is reappointed, or another appointment is made.



## On the Ground: Stewardship Day at Gourneck State Game Area

Olivia Triltsch • January 22, 2025

On Saturday, January 18, 2025, MUCC's On the Ground program partnered with the City of Portage Parks and Recreation and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to host a stewardship day at Gourneck State Game Area in Kalamazoo County. This area was established in 1941 and is known as the state's first urban state game area. Surrounded by the metropolitan area of Portage, Gourneck offers many opportunities for hunters and outdoor enthusiasts alike in a unique setting.

### Volunteers Remove Invasive Vegetation

During this stewardship day, volunteers removed invasive woody vegetation that was encroaching on a wetland/fen within the state game area. Volunteers used loppers and handsaws to remove glossy buckthorn and other invasives and created small brush piles surrounding the wetland/fen area. Additionally, DNR staff applied herbicide after volunteers were finished cutting to ensure these invasive species would not grow back in the future. Volunteers also spent time with DNR staff on plant identification of glossy buckthorn and other native species found in the area to help minimize negative impacts. In total, volunteers improved approximately 1 acre of wildlife habitat directly through this project.

## Why is it Important?

Removing invasive species like glossy buckthorn is important because these plants can quickly overtake an area and degrade important wildlife habitat. Glossy buckthorn in particular grows rapidly and crowds out native plants, which are important food and cover sources for wildlife. It is also a host for several diseases including alfalfa mosaic virus and crown fungus.

Wetland/fen habitats are especially important because they are home to some of Michigan's most threatened and endangered species. Common species found in these areas include the eastern massasauga rattlesnake and the eastern box turtle, both of which have been confirmed in Gourdneck State Game Area by the Michigan DNR. These habitats also hold many other rare plant and animal species like willow aster, Mitchell's satyr, and the spotted turtle.

## Learn More

Want to participate in more invasive species removal projects? Visit our website for more information and a list of upcoming events. We work to conserve and enhance public lands by hosting volunteer workdays throughout the state geared toward habitat improvement. Common habitat projects include invasive species removal, wood duck boxes, river cleanups, tree plantings, and more. All ages are welcome, so bring a friend or two if you'd like! Registration details and more can be found on our website at [mucc.org/on-the-ground](http://mucc.org/on-the-ground).

Outdoorama - February 20-23, 2025 - Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi - [Sign up HERE](#)

Ultimate Sport Show Grand Rapids - March 13-16, 2025 - Devos Place, Grand Rapids  
[- Sign up HERE](#)

Michigan Trails [Click Here](#)

## Has your club considered having an AED?

Automated External Defibrillator

**They Should!**

**Are you ready to save a life?**



## CWAC Recap

The Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee met on January 11th at Jay's Sporting Goods from 10AM-4PM. Jack VanRhee (MUCC Past President) and I made the trip to Clair to take in the happening. Neither Jack or I had been to one of their meeting before.

Needless to say there was a whole bunch of passionate and dedicated waterfowl hunters attending ,representing groups state wide. Jack and I were surprised the discussions were kept respective and representatives willing to consider each sides concerns.

There were reports from Law Enforcement Division Lt. Todd Szyska and Wildlife Division assistant chief Keith Kintigh. Barbara Avers, Sustainable Population Section Supervisor and Kaitlyn Barnes, Acting Waterfowl &Wetland Specialist about 2025-2026 Waterfowl Season Considerations.

After lunch the real work began. Discussion and recommendations for hunting zone boundaries for 2026-2030. Discussion and recommendations of 2025-26 waterfowl seasons, bag limits. It was obvious that many of the committee members had been there before. It was very informative and interesting to see and hear all side to the questions and all coming together with recommendations to the DNR for consideration before their recommendations to the Natural Recourse Commission.

Prior to adjournment there were updates on the Canada Goose Program and Managed Waterfowl Area Plan.

It was a long day but well worth the experience.

Took the opportunity to get a photo of Dan King (MUCC rep to the committee) with Jack and I.

The next day he was headed to Alaska for a duck hunt.



### 2025 Camp Registration Opens February 10th, 2025 at 9 AM

We use a registration platform called CampDoc. If you have never used CampDoc before, you will need to create an account before you can register your child for camp. Even though registration does not open until February 10<sup>th</sup>, you can click on the register button below to create an account now. This will save you time when you go to register. Don't forget your password! You may need to log back into CampDoc from time to time. Our sessions will not show up on CampDock until February 10<sup>th</sup> [Register Here](#)

## Happenings Around the Region In February 2025

**Grand Valley Cap & Ballers** : 2025 Sporting Clays 4/19/25. 5/17/25, 6/21/25, 7/19-20/25, 9/20/25 10/11/25.... Frontier Shoot 7/21-8/2 MUCC fundraiser 7/19-20/25 [check here](#) for more events

**Fennville Rod and Gun Club:** For more events go [HERE](#)

**Grass Lake Sportsman Club:** go to Facebook and website for updates. [HERE](#)

**Hillsdale County Conservation Club:** Check HCCC Facebook page for upcoming events

**New Buffalo Rod and Gun Club:** Sundays in Feb. Trap Practice 10AM. Wed's in Feb Trap Games Practice 6PM Games 6:30 Thur's in Feb. Trap Practice 6PM

**Dowagiac Conservation Club:** 54551 M 51 North Dowagiac Mark your Calanders: Hunters Rendezvous Feb. 8th 2025 Squirrel Hunt Sunday Feb. 9th 7AM-3PM .Trap Meet Shoot Sunday Feb 16th 9AM-2PM /Wild Game Dinner Feb. 22nd 4PM-7PM

**Bend of the River Conservation Club** Monday's in Feb. Basic Pistol Training indoors. 8AM-5PM / Wednesday's 9am-4pm includes live fire. Contact Suzanne Beaty 312-618-3588 / Feb. 12th Hunter Safety Class materials Wed. in Feb. handout 6-8PM

**Paw Paw Conservation Club:** Year round Trap 4-6PM

**Edwardsburg Conservation Club** : Feb. 8th Valentines Dance 7PM no cover charge.

**Hamilton Rod and Gun Club:** Calcutta Feb 14th Protection 5:30 Shoot at 7PM food available

**Jackson County Outdoor Club:** Sunday's Youth League 1PM Beginners Class Basic Fundamentals / Winter Leagues 1/8/25-3/12/25 Weds. Spot league 6:30 PM /Thur. through 3/13/25 Animal League Archery 6:30PM

**Bellevue Conservation Club:** Open Trap, Skeet and 5-Stand shooting every Sunday 2-6pm and Wednesday 6-10pm. We have 3 Trap/Skeet combo fields with lights. Feb. 8th Shoot the Moon 5 Stand 5:30-11PM 8484 Greenfield Highway, Bellevue, Michigan 49021.

**St. Joseph Conservation Club.** See Feb. Calendar [HERE](#)

**All Species Conservation Club** Next meeting Feb. 11th at new location " Rooster Call" 6:30 9136 Shaver Rd. Portage Mi. 49024

**Van Buren Sportsman's Club** 2/4/25 Firearm safety training. 1-9PM 13, Thurs. all month Open shoot 7-10PM/ 2/4,18 Firearm safety Training 1-9PM

**Big 9 Sportsman Club** Breakfast 8am-10:30 thru April. Cost Adults and Children over 12 \$13 Senior Citizens 65+ and children under 12 \$10. Beautiful view of the Lake. Breakfast cooked to order also A' la cart. Go [HERE](#) on Facebook for Updates.

Since 1937, MUCC has been Michigan's first voice for the outdoors. From protecting our resources to preserving our outdoor heritage to fighting for the conservation of Michigan's wildlife, fish, forests and the rights of those who love the outdoors. Our history is impressive

If you would like me to show up at one of your membership meeting to give you an update of what's happening in MUCC's world, email me or call [rhbhunt3@gmail.com](mailto:rhbhunt3@gmail.com) or call 269-209-1770

**SAVE THE DATE : March 7-9 2025**

**2025 Annual Convention**

**[Treetops Resort in Gaylord Mi.](#)**

**Rooms are going fast call and tell them you are with MUCC**

**February 23rd 2025**

**The last Region 7 meeting before the Convention  
The meeting will be at [Jackson County Outdoor Club](#)**

**Guest Speaker: MUCC President Rob Miller.**

**2024 Deer Harvest Report**

Michigan Department of Natural Resources has released their preliminary numbers for the 2024 harvest report.

<https://www.mdnr-elicense.com/HarvestReportSummary>

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
[Wildtalk Podcast](#)**



# Claws of Concern: The Invasion of Red Swamp Crayfish

By: Olivia Triltsch • January 23, 2025

*When walking near a water body, it is not uncommon to see strange mounds of dirt or mud near the banks causing some to wonder how they formed. Others who are commonly near water may also find white exoskeletons that look like small lobsters that shed (molted). More than likely, the cause of both of these is crayfish. According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Michigan has eight native species of crayfish/crawfish and two invasive species including the rusty crayfish and red swamp crayfish. The latter species is the focus of this article due to its more recent introduction into Michigan.*

## HISTORY

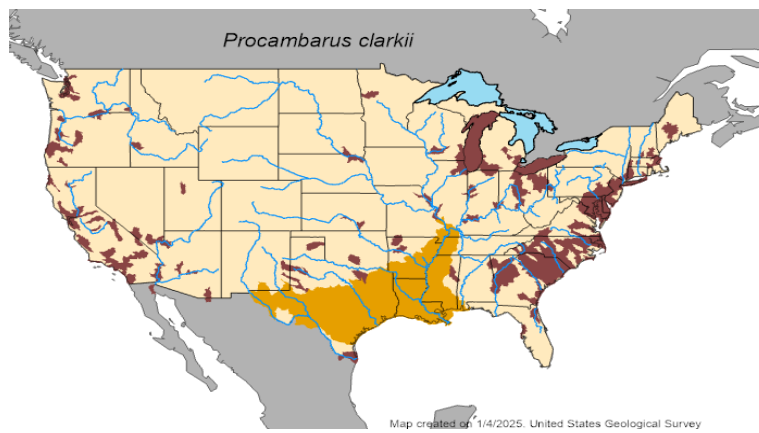
Within their native range, red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) are culturally important in cuisine and therefore the economy as recognized by the Huron River Watershed Council. This crayfish species originates from the Mississippi River drainage areas and the Gulf Coast of the United States. Michigan took steps to prohibit the sale of this species for bait in 2013 which expanded to prohibit possession for any reason in 2015. In 2017, the first established red swamp crayfish populations were identified in Michigan. The introduction of this species has many considerable avenues including aquaculture trade, pets, bait, or laboratory release. It is also speculated that the species was released into Lake Erie to create a harvestable population for consumers. The species has also been called the Louisiana crayfish/crawfish or tri-color ghost lobster.

## CURRENT STATUS

According to the Michigan DNR, the red swamp crayfish is listed as an invasive. This species is prohibited to possess, sell, import, or transport in Michigan, regardless of purpose. The range of this species has expanded to several states from California to Virginia and reaching every continent aside from Australia and Antarctica. This species is so robust that the Michigan DNR describes it as “one of the most widespread invasive crayfish on the planet”.







Distribution map of Red Swamp Crayfish across the lower 48 of the United States with native populations (dark yellow) and non-native populations (dark red). Courtesy of the United States Geological Survey

## Characteristics

This crustacean looks like a small lobster, typically ranging from 2.2 to 4.7 inches long (including the claws) with a bony exoskeleton. They can be identified by their dark red color with bright red spots, elongated heads, and a pointed nose (rostrum). However, coloration is not the best way to identify this species due to domestic breeding for different color patterns and many juveniles lacking the characteristic red, sometimes even looking gray. It is best to use other characteristics for identification purposes. When looking at the claws, this species tends to have a curved ‘saber-like’ shape with red bumps, however, coloration may change with the pet trade. There is a characteristic black line on the underside of the tail for this species as well. Additionally, the back of the crayfish has two lines (areola) that touch just before the tail according to the Great Lakes Almanac to Invasive Crayfish. Using multiple identifiable characteristics can lead to a positive identification of this invasive. This species and other crayfish communities can be indirectly located near water by recognizing their shallow chimneys in which they burrow creating large mounds of displaced substrate with a hole in the center.

Look-alikes for this species include the devil crawfish and white river crayfish, however, neither species displays the characteristic red bumps of the red swamp crayfish. The devil crawfish is mostly tan with red highlights in various places according to MSU Extension. The white river crayfish has a similar color ranging from tan to rust red with black or white bumps on the claws. In contrast with the red swamp crayfish, this species has an open areola on the back. Additionally, the white river species has an open areola on the back.

**This photo is different from what was in Olivia Tritsch article.**



**Continued on next page**

# CONSERVATION

As secondary burrowers, this species of crayfish is often found in areas with permanent freshwater feeding on snails, fish, amphibians, and plants. The presence of this species can be cause for greater conservation concern as they aggressively outcompete native crayfish and limit growth of their prey populations at the most vulnerable stages. Additionally, these crayfish can help spread parasites and diseases to native populations like crayfish fungus plague according to MSU Extension.

Red swamp crayfish can burrow into the substrate to escape drought, cold temperatures, and predation making them very robust. This burrowing is beneficial in helping the species survive and persist in non-native habitats like Michigan winters. In fact, they are suspected to survive being flushed down a toilet going into wastewater treatment plants due to their high prevalence in these areas. In addition to their ability to cope with changing conditions, they also can travel two miles on land for a new habitat as determined by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Reaching sexual maturity in two months, females can reproduce up to twice per year with up to 600 eggs per clutch, making eradication difficult. The burrowing habits of this species may also lead to cyanobacteria blooms and eutrophic conditions according to the Invasive Species Centre. Cyanobacterial blooms can occur when the crayfish feed on aquatic plants and fish which help control the bacteria. This creates a feedback loop in which more toxins are released, limiting the oxygen present, therefore leading to the suffocation of organisms in the water. In areas with high population density, the creation of chimneys along the shore also contributes to the erosion of banks.

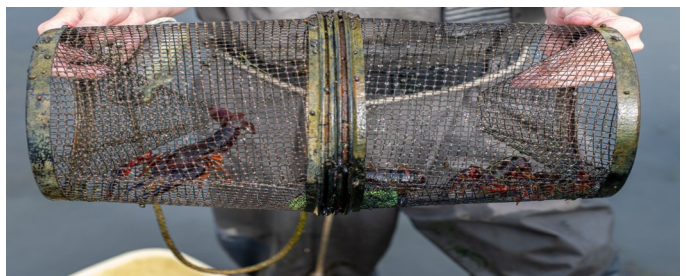
The Roth Laboratory at Michigan State University is one of the lead investigators in identifying effective control efforts for this species. This lab uses techniques like telemetry and trapping for ecological monitoring to help identify the impacts of treatments on populations. Chemical treatments and habitat modifications to support native crayfish populations are currently being explored in impacted landlocked sites of Michigan.

A great way to help prevent the spread of aquatic species is to clean, drain, and dry boats before moving to new lakes to prevent aquatic hitchhikers. One effort to help control or prevent the spread of this invasive could be to support habitat for predators like wood ducks. This Saturday, January 25th, our On the Ground program will be at Shiawassee River State Game Area with volunteers to maintain wood duck boxes. We will be doing a similar project on February 15th at Maple River State Game Area, if you are interested, sign up here!



Crayfish burrow along pond banks contributing to erosion along the shore. Photo courtesy of Michigan Department of Natural Resources

If you find a red swamp crayfish, it is recommended to report the information with photos to the DNR Fisheries Division at 734-780-5571



Trap used to catch Red Swamp Crayfish. Photo courtesy of Department of Natural Resources or QuebedeauxK@michigan.gov. Invasive species and details of findings can also be reported to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN).

Find your elected State Representatives

[HERE](#)

Episode 10

Michigan Out of Doors Podcast

[HERE](#)

## What's Cooking

### Porta Bella & Venison Puttanesca

From Dixie Dave Receipt book

"Puttanesca refers to "lady of the evening" This sauce is sinfully good.

6 Oz. of venison steak per person  
3 Oz. Porta Bella cap per person  
12 Oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, drained,  
diced large  
1 Cup sliced and pitted kalamati black olives  
2 Teaspoons capers (more or less to taste)  
1 Medium onion, diced fine  
1 yellow pepper, sliced medium  
2-3 Garlic cloves, diced fine  
1/2 jar beef gravy  
1-2 oz. Jim Beam  
4 oz Marsala wine (sweet)  
Flour to dredge, Olive oil to saut'e Fresh ground  
Pepper

Slightly flatten venison between tow sheets of plastic wrap. Cut stems off of mushroom and discard. Dredge meat and caps in flour. In a very hot pan, brown steaks in small amount of olive oil. Remove when very rare. Add more oil and brown caps on both sides; remove. In same pan add small amount of oil, saute' onions, garlic, and yellow peppers fo a few minutes. Flambe with Jim Beam and Marsala wine. Add diced tomatoes and gravy. Reduce by 1/2. Now put mushroom caps back in sauce to finish cooking for 3-4 minutes more. Add meat back to sauce and finish cooking. Only cook until it is medium rare to medium. Place mushrooms caps on plate first and place the steaks on top. Spoon sauce over the tops of both.

Listen to Mike Avery's  
Outdoor show on Sun-  
days at 5am on WBCK  
95.3 Battle Creek and  
WSJM St. Joseph 94.9  
Sat. at 7:00



Conservationist Pledge: I give my Pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste the natural resources of my country, it's Air, soil and minerals, it's forests water and wildlife

This Publication is compiled and distributed by Ronald H. Burris Past Present, Region  
7 Director Michigan United Conservation Clubs