



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
LANSING



DR. WILLIAM E. MORITZ  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 16, 2016  
RESUBMITTED: March 14, 2016

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Order to Regulate Certain State-owned Lands, Gladwin, Arenac, Bay, Midland,  
and Ogemaw Counties, Feral Swine Research Area, Defined, Prohibited  
Conduct  
Land Use Orders of the Director Amendment No 4 of 2016

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director to issue orders to implement land use rules.

Discussion and Background:

Like other Midwestern states, Michigan is experiencing a growing problem with feral or wild swine. From 2001 until October of 2014, there were 473 feral swine sightings and 449 reports of feral swine killed or found dead in Michigan. Feral swine sightings may have included more than one animal. A sow can have two litters a year averaging four to six piglets, but larger litters have been documented in Michigan. Because of their prolific reproduction and the high survival of young, it is estimated that seventy-percent of a population must be removed annually just to maintain current levels. Although reports of feral swine have declined substantially statewide since 2011, there are still several areas where feral swine numbers are increasing. One of these areas includes portions of Arenac, Bay, Gladwin, Midland, and Ogemaw counties.

Feral swine carry several diseases that can infect humans including brucellosis, balantidiasis, leptospirosis, salmonellosis, toxoplasmosis, trichinosis, trichostrongylosis, sarcoptic mange, tuberculosis, tularemia, anthrax, rabies and plague. Feral swine can transmit swine brucellosis, pseudorabies, trichinosis and leptospirosis to domestic and wildlife species. The domestic swine industry is currently free of these diseases, but they are endemic in feral swine and circulate at levels above 30%, according to the Missouri Department of Conservation. The reintroduction of these diseases into domestic populations could seriously impact the agricultural industry.

Feral swine also compete aggressively for natural foods with valued Michigan wildlife, including wild turkeys, deer, ruffed grouse, black bears, waterfowl and small game. Feral swine will eat almost anything, including dead animals and many forms of vegetation and tree seedlings. Feral swine will also eat small mammals, and even white-tailed deer fawns. They feed aggressively on eggs and can have significant impacts on ground-nesting birds including game species such as pheasants, ruffed grouse, wild turkey and waterfowl. Feral swine also will forage on most agricultural crops, livestock feed, and domestic livestock young.

Feral swine routinely engage in two types of behavior that are damaging to soils, crops and water quality— rooting and wallowing. Their rooting behavior, during which they dig for insects and tubers below the soil surface, causes erosion, damages lawns, golf courses and farm lands, and weakens plants and native vegetation. Wallowing behavior, during which feral swine seek out areas of shallow water to roll in mud, destroys small ponds and erodes stream banks. Both activities impact water quality which in turn impacts fisheries.

As part of Department efforts to eliminate feral swine, the Department has partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services “USDA-WS” and two Michigan Universities to radio-collar, research, and lethally remove feral swine. The research is providing invaluable information about feral swine daily and seasonal movements, and responses to USDA-WS’s lethal removal activities. Because of their social nature, radio-collared feral swine are also used to lead USDA-WS to un-collared animals which are then lethally removed. Typically, for every feral swine collared, two to three other animals are killed. Since the research project began in 2014, the Department and USDA-WS have removed 19 feral swine and collared 8. Because of the increasing population of feral swine in Arenac, Bay, Gladwin, Midland and Ogemaw counties, research and removal efforts are currently focused in this area.

The feral swine research project has funding through a Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act grant in partnership with two Michigan universities through the summer of 2018. Michigan USDA-WS also receives annual funding through the Federal Feral Swine Initiative and they were recently awarded a Department grant to assist with the research and to increase lethal removal efforts.

Frequently, a group (4-8), or sounder, of feral swine will be captured at a bait site. Most of the group is humanely euthanized and collars are placed on one or two of the remaining feral swine which are then released and tracked. Often, the collared swine join another sounder, and the collars can be used to locate and lethally remove this group as well.

In addition, testing is conducted on all of the feral swine captured and removed to learn more about their disease prevalence, sex, age, reproductive status and other biological data. All of this information is used to inform management of feral swine.

The Department recommends designating a portion of state-owned lands within Arenac, Bay, Gladwin, Midland and Ogemaw counties as the feral swine “research area”. Within this approximately 600-square mile area, there are multiple feral swine bait sites used to trap feral swine. The Department also recommends prohibiting an individual from being within or possessing a dog or allowing a dog to be within 200 yards of a feral swine research bait site, as posted, from January 2 through April 15. The majority of research is conducted during this timeframe and human and dog activity in close proximity to the bait sites has been found to

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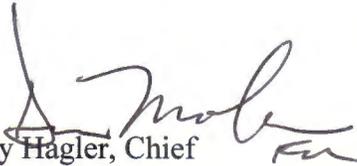
displace feral swine greatly inhibiting the effectiveness of research and removal efforts. USDA-  
WS has cameras at many of the feral swine bait sites that show individuals and dogs at the bait  
sites. The prohibition would sunset in October of 2018 when the research project will conclude  
and recommendations will be made for effective, continued lethal removal efforts.

Recommendation:

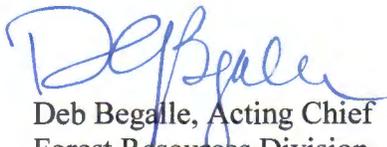
This order was submitted for information on March 10, 2016, at the Natural Resources  
Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's February 2016 calendar and may  
be eligible for approval on April 14, 2016.



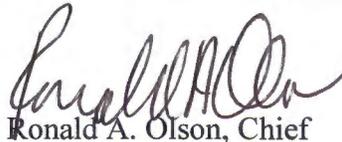
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief  
Wildlife Division



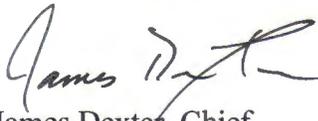
Gary Hagler, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division



Deb Begalle, Acting Chief  
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief  
Fisheries Division



Bill O'Neill  
Natural Resources Deputy

# LAND USE ORDERS OF THE DIRECTOR

## Amendment No 4 of 2016

By authority conferred on the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by Section 504 of the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.504, and in accordance with R299.921 to R299.933, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources orders the following:

### **4.20a Certain state-owned lands, Gladwin, Arenac, Bay, Midland, and Ogemaw counties, feral swine research area, defined, prohibited conduct.**

Order 4.20a (1) The feral swine research area shall be those state-owned lands within Gladwin, Arenac, Bay, Midland, and Ogemaw counties bounded by a line beginning in southeastern Ogemaw county at the intersection of interstate highway I-75 and state highway M-30, then southerly on M-30 through Gladwin county into Midland county to national highway US-10 located northwest from the town of Midland, then southeasterly along US-10 through the town of Midland into Bay county to interstate highway I-75 (also concurrent with US-23) west of the town of Bay City, then northerly and northwesterly along I-75 through Arenac county and northwesterly to the point of beginning.

(a) An individual shall not possess a dog or allow a dog to enter into or upon the feral swine research area within 200 yards of a feral swine research bait site, as posted, from January 2 through April 15.

(b) An individual shall not enter into or upon the feral swine research area within 200 yards of a feral swine research bait site, as posted, from January 2 through April 15.

(c) Subsections (a) and (b) shall be rescinded on October 11, 2018.

This amended order shall be posted on or after 15<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

Issued on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

William E. Moritz, Ph.D.  
Director

