

2025 Upper Peninsula Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Division Executive Summary Handout

The Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHIP) is a competitive grant program offered by Wildlife Division, and focuses on cooperative projects enhancing deer habitat on private lands in the Upper Peninsula. Now in its' sixteenth year, over \$1,150,000.00 of deer hunting license dollars have been invested into Upper Peninsula deer habitat through the DHIP program, with an additional nine hundred thousand dollars of matching funds contributed through partners in over 148 projects; enhancing thousands of acres of deer habitat in nearly all Upper Peninsula counties.

The request for grant proposals opens on Monday, February 3, 2025, with a total of \$100,000.00 available to award as grants through the DHIP program. Grants awarded in 2025 will range from a minimum of \$2,000.00 to a maximum of \$15,000.00 and require a 25% project match from partners in the form of financial or in-kind contributions.

There are three primary Initiative goals that all project proposals must include:

- (1) To produce tangible, on-the-ground deer habitat improvements,
- (2) To build and promote partnerships between the DNR and sportsperson organizations/other partners.
- (3) To showcase these cooperative projects throughout the community.

Applications can be submitted from conservation organizations, sportsperson groups, non-governmental organizations, local conservation districts, land conservancies, landowners enrolled in the Qualified Forest Program, or lands enrolled in the Commercial Forest Act. Landowners who have a certified Forest Management Plan and meet minimum acreage thresholds are also eligible to apply directly. Please refer to the DHIP Program Guide for full details and eligibility rules.

Projects can be proposed to occur on industrial forests, Commercial Forest Act or Qualified Forest Program enrolled lands, privately owned, or federal lands (with written permission). Public accessibility is an important consideration and project lands which allow legal public access (foot traffic at a minimum) will benefit in the competitive evaluation process. **State-owned lands are not eligible for DHIP funding.**

Examples of project proposals include, but are not limited to: wildlife shrub plantings, tree plantings (such as long-lived conifers, oak or other hard mast species, fruit/soft mast producers), scarification for regeneration of tree species, non-commercial timber stand improvement activities, direct mechanical habitat manipulation, wildlife opening creation or maintenance, warm or cool season herbaceous plantings and native prairie plantings.

Organizations considering participation in this Initiative are encouraged to contact their local wildlife biologist to develop suitable project proposals. It is the responsibility of the partner organization to undertake the primary role in the implementation of the project. The proposal should indicate specific plans on how the partner intends to accomplish the project including the required project cost share.

Proposed projects will be evaluated by a selection committee on the following five criteria:

- Production of deer habitat benefits.
- Feasibility of the proposal.
- Public accessibility and / or proximity to public lands.
- Partner cost share and project implementation.
- Communications strategy.

Successful applicants will need to register with the State of Michigan to facilitate grant funding. A partner organization or landowner must name a project contact person/representative and include appropriate contact information on the application. Additionally, the sponsor organization or landowner will be required to sign a contract agreement and liability release which specifies deliverables, timelines, and partner responsibilities.

Complete grant materials are available online at DNR Wildlife Grants page or type www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants then follow the *Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative* link. Contact Bill Scullon at 906-250-6781, fax 906-563-5820, email scullonh@michigan.gov with further questions or to request an application packet.

Completed applications must be faxed or mailed (post marked) to Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager, Norway DNR Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870 by close of business on Friday, March 14, 2025. Final notification of project selection process will occur by Friday, April 4, 2025.