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STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING



REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES  
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: April 12, 2010

TO: Rebecca A. Humphries, Director  
INFORMATION: Natural Resources Commission  
SUBJECT: Michigan Deer Management Plan

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Department) to plan and conduct wildlife management within Michigan.

Discussion and Background:

There has never been a statewide strategic Deer Management Plan for the state of Michigan. White-tailed deer have been an important wildlife species in Michigan since before European settlement. This species can be found in every county of the state and throughout all seasons. Citizens and visitors alike enjoy hunting and viewing of white-tailed deer. Deer populations have fluctuated through time based on the conditions of their habitat and the influence of humans. As European settlement expanded into Michigan, limited deer numbers increased as virgin forests, which were removed for timber, were replaced by young forest regrowth and agriculture. As these new forests aged, deer numbers decreased. As agriculture areas became mixed with new hardwood growth on abandoned farms, deer numbers increased in southern Michigan. As these changes occurred over time and space, human needs and desires also changed. Social issues have increased in quantity, relevance and importance when related to management decisions. The Department has developed a statewide strategic Deer Management Plan to address these changes in relation to future needs.

The new *Michigan Deer Management Plan*, which may be found on the Department's website at: [www.michigan.gov/documents/dnre/WLD\\_2010\\_Deer\\_Management\\_Plan\\_Draft\\_5.2\\_317605\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnre/WLD_2010_Deer_Management_Plan_Draft_5.2_317605_7.pdf) reflects: 1) extensive review of relevant scientific literature; 2) input received during public comment periods and deer-focused public meetings; and 3) recommendations of the Michigan Deer Advisory Team, a 24-member committee convened by the Department to represent the diverse array of deer-related interests held by Michigan society.

The draft Plan outlines six principal goals: 1) manage deer populations at levels that do not degrade the vegetation upon which deer and other wildlife depend; 2) promote deer hunting to provide quality recreational opportunities; 3) manage habitat to provide for the long-term viability of white-tailed deer in Michigan while limiting negative impacts on other species; 4) reduce conflicts between humans and deer; 5) reduce the threats and impacts of disease on the wild deer population and Michigan's economy; and

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[www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) • (517) 373-2329

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6) enhance public engagement in and awareness of deer management issues and knowledge of deer ecology and management. To help achieve these goals, the plan identifies strategies through objectives and planned actions to address several issues. Some of these issues include information and education; identifying critical habitat needs, research, use of hunting to achieve population goals, negative deer-human interactions, the reduction of user conflicts and monitoring the effects of actions on deer populations.

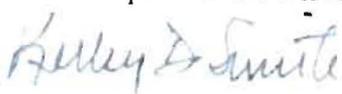
This plan provides strategic guidance to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment and involved stakeholders on the management of white-tailed deer. The plan does not outline operational details of deer management. Operational details will be specified within an adaptive-management framework based on local needs and conditions that allow for timely adjustments as conditions change.

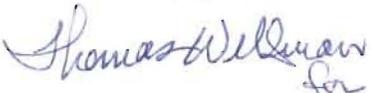
This plan was developed through a process including a review of the best scientific information available and substantial involvement of stakeholder groups and the public. The public comment period on this draft plan began in February 10, 2010 and closed March 26, 2010. Many citizens took advantage of this opportunity to provide input on the draft plan. Based on the comments received The Department modified the draft plan as appropriate based on comments received from the public.

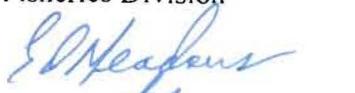
Recommendation:

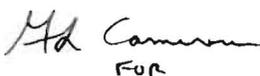
We recommend submission of the Michigan Deer Management Plan to the Natural Resources Commission in April 2010, for information and consideration prior to the Director's final approval.

  
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief  
Wildlife Division

  
Kelley D. Smith, Chief  
Fisheries Division

  
Lynne M. Boyd, Chief  
Forest Management Division

  
David Freed, Chief  
Office of Land Management

  
Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Recreation Division

  
Gary Hagler, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division

Arminda S. Koch, Deputy Director  
Resource Management

Frank Ruswick, Deputy Director  
Stewardship

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries  
Director