



Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Public Land Management Strategy



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Introduction

Since before statehood, land in Michigan has been highly desired for its natural resource values – first for furs, and then timber and minerals. Today, Michigan’s public lands are prized for those same things, being managed for wildlife habitat, timber, oil and gas exploration, recreational opportunity and mineral development. Michigan’s public lands contribute greatly to the state’s economy, supporting tens of thousands of jobs, pouring tens of billions of dollars into local businesses and companies and contributing to our high quality of life critical to the state’s future economic prosperity. Appendix 5 provides specific information about the state’s return from DNR managed public lands.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and the Public Trust Doctrine, the foundation that drove and still drives the acquisition and management of public lands, both rest on the principle that wildlife and, more broadly, natural resources belong to everyone. Managing wildlife and other natural resources for the common good would not be possible without public lands. In Michigan, the recognition of our quality of life linked to the quality of our resources led to some of the earliest laws protecting our land and waters and even led to constitution requirements requiring the same attention by those who serve in the Michigan legislature.

The road to modern public land management, while long, has always reflected the philosophy and policies of the times, as outlined in the History section of this document. Most of Michigan’s timber was cut in the 19th century; leaving barren lands that were not productive for agricultural purposes and caused the lands to revert to state ownership. Through sustained investment and management, those lands that no one wanted, grew into a robust state forest system that supports the state’s timber industry, provides numerous outdoor recreation opportunities and has restored natural processes. Through time, lands were purchased and sold, boundaries were re-aligned and consolidated and public land management evolved with scientific advances and changes in the public’s recreational pursuits.

While the use of the state’s land has changed over time, there are certain fundamentals that do not change. Wildlife and fish required adequate habitat. Lakes and streams need natural land for recharge areas and to filter pollutants. Forests and other plants need to exist at a certain level of abundance to pollinate, survive and thrive. These fundamentals are the laws of nature and do not respond to trends or public opinion. While the DNR has the responsibility to respond to public demands for recreation and resources, it also has a duty to manage resources in a manner that reflects the realities of nature and intricacies of the interworking’s of living systems.

This strategy reflects today's strategic goals for public land management with an eye toward the immediate future, but also remains flexible to adapt to emerging trends and issues with public lands. Adaptability is vital because as history shows – use patterns change, recreation changes and land management will continue to change right along with it.

Reason for the Strategy

In his November 2012 “Ensuring Our Future - Energy and Environment Message,” Michigan Governor Rick Snyder called for a “public land management strategy that protects the character and productive capacity of Michigan’s wide array of natural resource assets for future generations.” He directed the state to become more strategic about the “what” and “why” of ownership of public land. He stated that public lands should protect the unique places that provide habitat or other natural resources. The Governor said the strategy needs to ensure that high-value recreation experiences are available and attractive, and that all of the lands owned and managed by the state further these goals. He tasked the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to complete the strategy by May 2013.

The following strategy meets the objectives identified by Governor Snyder and also is intended to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of DNR-managed public lands and their contribution to the state, to answer the why, where, what and how questions regarding public lands: why DNR manages public lands, where DNR-managed public lands are located, what are the values associated with managed public lands, and how DNR-managed public lands are utilized.
- Establish collaborations with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) regions so that public lands assist in meeting regional economic prosperity initiatives, resource protection priorities, and job creation goals.
- Address the requirements of Act 240 of 2012 which can be found in the Appendix 1.
- Establish outcomes and metrics for public land ownership in terms of providing outdoor recreation opportunities, conserving cultural and natural resources and supporting land-based economic development.
- Revise strategic objectives and methods for land acquisition and disposal.
- Provide strategic direction on actions that the DNR will implement over the next six years to improve collaboration, provide linkages between public lands and public lands and communities, increase marketing, participate in

integrated strategies, utilize data to drive decisions and focus on the quality of DNR facilities.

- Ensure that future citizens of the state are able to experience healthy lakes, rivers, land and resources.
- Create economic efficiencies in the management of public lands and between the DNR and local units of government.

Protecting natural resources, providing outdoor recreational opportunities and fostering land-based natural resource industries are not missions that the DNR can or should accomplish alone. Strong partnerships and collaborations are imperative to fulfill these responsibilities and sustain both the social and economic opportunities that DNR managed public land provides. Other governmental agencies, non-profits and the private sector own significant amounts of land which also assist in protecting natural resources, providing outdoor recreation and fostering land-based natural resource economies. Michigan's recreational system is provided by the state and federal government, local and regional governments, non-profits and the private sector. Protection of Michigan's natural and cultural resources and natural functions occurs on private as well as public lands. This strategy calls for increased integrated planning among public land managers to clarify roles and responsibilities, grow opportunities, maintain standards for quality across all public facilities and improve marketing.

The strategy does not identify all actions that the DNR will take to meet the outcomes or objectives. For example, the Department has a role in assisting private landowners in managing their lands for wildlife through education, grants or providing technical assistance. While equally important, these roles are not identified in the strategy because they are not dependent on public lands. The strategy also doesn't identify all measurable objectives that are being tracked and that help to achieve the desired outcomes identified by stakeholders as important for protecting natural resources, fostering resource based industries and providing outdoor recreation opportunities.

In his Energy and Environment message, Governor Snyder also encouraged the continued use of an ecosystem management approach in developing the public land ownership and management strategy as a way to balance the demands for outdoor recreation, resource protection and economic opportunity. This strategy employs that ecosystem approach, providing a method of decision making aimed at protecting and enhancing the sustainability, diversity and productivity of Michigan's natural resources. This approach allows the strategy to adapt and respond to changing demands, information or outcomes following its implementation.

Nearly every acre of state land is actively managed for multiple uses and values with consideration for timber production, oil, gas and mineral exploration, fish and wildlife habitat, resource protection, recreation, cultural significance, and public access. In Appendix Two, as an example, there is a map of one state forest compartment which shows all of the activities managed in that area. These multiple uses are often at odds with each other and the resulting conflicts are managed by the DNR utilizing an ecosystem approach to balance the social, ecological and economic demands. The multiple demands for the use of public land will continue to evolve and provide challenges as pressures from current uses increase and new opportunities, such as alternative and renewable energies, emerge.

The desired outcomes, objectives and metrics in this strategy define how the state will manage public lands for the benefit of all Michiganders and for a variety of uses with minimal conflict. It sets priorities for the DNR, its stakeholders and partners who share in protecting our public lands and the natural resources they hold. A foundation is laid for a new way to manage, acquire and dispose of state lands that builds upon past success, yet remains adaptable to the changing needs and uses of DNR-managed public lands. The strategy is divided into three equal parts 1) public land management strategy, 2) a new approach the for the disposal and acquisition of state land and 3) background information about DNR-managed public lands which is important for informing the strategy. The background information also provides stakeholders and policy decision-makers with the information to make informed decisions about the role and future of DNR-managed public lands.

History

From the beginning of statehood, the State of Michigan has been in the real estate business and the owner of substantial acres of land. State policy shaped by public opinion determined how Michigan's public lands were viewed and how much land was retained in state ownership. The current DNR managed public land holdings -- state parks and recreation areas, boating access sites, historic sites, game and wildlife areas and state forests -- were acquired through a deliberative process that reflected state policy and public opinion at the time. Early state policy supported the sale of publicly-held land for settlement and development, then changed to support the sale of land for extraction, and then evolved to a policy of owning and managing public lands for public benefits.

In 1837, when the state was admitted to the Union, the public land management role of the state was to sell land for settlement and to support the development of government functions. Sold lands went through several cycles of reversion as the land's resources cleared of their timber resources and subsequent attempts at agriculture of the cleared lands failed.

From the 1890s through the 1930s, the state underwent a series of economic downturns that caused lands to return to the state for non-payment of taxes -- over 116 million acres (the land reverted multiple times) in a 22-year period. In an effort to stop this cycle of tax delinquencies, the Legislature created the State Forestry Commission in 1899 and began to set aside forest reserves. Further expansion of the state forests occurred with the creation of the Public Domain Commission in 1909. In 1909 legislative action required the state to reserve the mineral rights on all lands sold or homesteaded, and in 1911, the Legislature provided the state with the authority to exchange lands to consolidate ownership.

The exploitation of land and resources triggered the rise of the conservation movement, and state policy then changed to a focus on wise allocation of land, rather than sale for short-term gain. Various commissions including the Public Lands and Fisheries (1873); Forestry (1899) and Parks (1919) were created to manage resources and to stop tax reversions. The commissions were eliminated and their functions were merged into the newly created Department of Conservation in 1921. One of the first rulings of the new Conservation Commission was that no state lands bordering upon the Great Lakes or any inland lake were to be sold and were to be held for the “enjoyment of the people.”

Throughout its tenure, the Department of Conservation set forth a strategy to begin managing state land utilizing a co-management approach whereby the Game and Forestry Division could not conduct land management practices with concurrence from the other division. This approach comprised very similar facets to the current concept of ecosystem management. Both of these strategies continue to be the cornerstone of DNR public land management.

In 1922, the Michigan Land Economic Survey was created to survey the lands in northern Michigan to determine their value for agriculture or whether they were more suitable for recreation, other public uses or should be sold. The USDA (Land Use Planning Program) also had a land planning effort which lasted until the 1950s. This planning effort was also intended to stop the tax delinquency cycle.

By 1938, Land Use Planning Committees were organized for each county in the state. They were comprised of some 1,700 local, county, township and school officials who reviewed all state land holdings, including tax reverted lands, and made recommendations for their future. Recommendations included retaining the land in public ownership (state or local) or selling to private land owners.

As a result of this review, by 1950, over 1.3 million acres were sold and 130,000 acres were turned over to private ownership. The remaining acres were added to the state forest, wildlife areas or state park systems.

In addition to tax reverted property, over 26 percent of the DNR public managed lands were purchased with restricted funds for their natural resource values. These restricted funds generally require that the land continue to be managed for the purpose that it was purchased.

There were two extensive reviews of Michigan's public land policy in 1984 and again in 1996. The Report of The Task Force on Public Lands Policy was presented to Governor James Blanchard in 1984 and provided a series of 24 recommendations regarding the state's public land. The primary point of this report was that the state needed to consolidate its ownership of land and "did not find a need for major changes to land management practices and philosophies." In 1996, the Senate Select Committee on Public Land Ownership, Purchase and Management also conducted an extensive study of the DNR's land acquisition policy as well as other state land-holding agencies. The select committee proposed seven "principle changes" in the state's land acquisition policy including, greater flexibility in state programs to allow for shifts in land policy; adopt new attitudes and incentives to work with the private sector and that the legislature should reaffirm its role as the chief conservator of the state's natural assets.

In 2003, in response to Natural Resources Commission Policy 2627 of 2003 regarding DNR land holdings, the department initiated a thorough review of state land ownership. This project, known as the DNR Land Ownership Strategy, implemented a four-phase strategy to not only review the current DNR land ownership pattern, but to also evaluate those lands from a natural resources perspective and dispose of those parcels that do not contribute to the overall mission of the DNR. The purpose of the land ownership review was to continue the on-going effort to consolidate State land ownership for a variety of economic, outdoor recreation and other natural resource benefits and land management efficiencies by reducing trespass issues, safety zone encroachments and the need to monitor and survey public/private boundary lines. A summary of this effort is in Appendix One.

State Land Facts

Land Ownership

From 1921 to 2012 the DNR:

- Disposed of 2.5 million acres of land.
- Gave nearly 150,000 acres of land to local governments.
- Was gifted almost 100,000 acres of land.

During the last five years, the DNR:

- Expanded its land ownership base by only 0.34%.
- Sold 13,926 acres.

Land acquisition activities over the past decade are at record low levels.

Fifty-six percent of DNR managed parcels in the Upper Peninsula are classified as wetlands.

Timber

- By providing a steady flow of timber to the market, the State Forest system is a key participant in the \$14 billion forest industry, which directly employs 26,000 people.
- In 2012, DNR timber sales resulted in 800,000 cords of wood being harvested for the market.
- The State Forest system has received dual certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). This benefits the people of the State by improving the global market competitiveness of Michigan's certified timber products, resulting in improved economic vitality of Michigan's rural, timber dependent communities.
- DNR managed lands are much more likely to be managed for timber than non-industrial private forestlands, which comprise 43% of Michigan's forestlands.
- 11% of Michigan's forestlands are enrolled in the Commercial Forest Program, a program which provides property tax breaks to private landowners in return for them managing for timber production while providing public access for hunting, fishing and trapping.

Energy

- Michigan has 1.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas storage capacity, the greatest volume of any state. The DNR leases 13% of the acres that are involved in this activity. This results in a lower cost, and more predictable, year around, natural gas supply for Michigan's citizens and industry.
- Currently, 50% of State-owned mineral rights in the Lower Peninsula are leased.

Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

- In 2012, the State Parks hosted 1 million camp nights.
- The DNR manages more than 1,000 boat launches and more than 80 harbors, in support of the State's \$4 billion boating industry.
- Michigan has nearly 2,623 miles of rail-trail on the ground and available for use.

Wildlife

- The State has 9.9 million acres of land that are open to the public for hunting. The DNR managed lands provide nearly ½ of these acres.
- Hunters provide an estimated \$1.3 billion annually to Michigan's economy.

Fisheries

- Approximately 1.4 million Michigan residents and 347,000 nonresidents fished in Michigan in 2011, contributing an estimated \$4.4 billion to Michigan's economy and supporting 38,000 jobs.

Reasons for Public Land Ownership

To those who ride snowmobiles, hunt ducks, produce various forest products, or fish the Great Lakes, the answer to “why” the DNR owns and manages public lands for the people of the state is obvious. DNR owns and manages public lands to provide

“The abundance of public land in Michigan has a huge impact on our business. I’ve been in a lot of other states, and Michigan is blessed with public lands, especially for those that don’t have access to private land. We notice an increase in traffic traveling north for firearm deer season opening day. The result is an increase of traffic going through our stores in Clare and Gaylord. And it’s not just hunting and fishing – public lands also contribute to the sales of equipment for camping and canoeing.” – Jeff Poet, president, Jay’s Sporting Goods

citizens and visitors with opportunities to recreate, support local and rural economies and protect unique places.

Part One defines the reason why the state owns public lands, the desired outcomes from managing those lands for recreation, supporting land-based industries and protecting natural and cultural features. It also identifies the metrics that will be used by the DNR and stakeholders to determine if desired outcomes

are being met. Utilizing metrics to measure program progress is evolving in the DNR and the identified metrics should be expected to also evolve as additional data is collected. This part begins to answer the question of “how” the state manages land by identifying measurable objectives that are already guiding the work of the DNR. The objectives are products of planning efforts such as the State Forest Plan, Fisheries Division strategic plan “Charting the Course”, the Wildlife Division’s Guiding Principles and Strategies (GPS), Parks and Recreation Division’s Strategic Plan, Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Committee’s draft Comprehensive Trail Plan, ORV Strategy Plan and the Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel’s work.

Part One

Strategy

Goal 1: Ensure Recreational Opportunities to Enjoy and Appreciate Michigan's Natural and Cultural Resources.

Michigan citizens and visitors have the opportunity to enjoy a vast array of recreation activities and facilities ranging from the traditional, such as camping, hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling to new and emerging, like white-water paddling, disc golf and trail running. Many of these opportunities are found in state- managed facilities including the 101 state parks and recreation areas, 3.9 million acres of state forests 110 state game and wildlife areas, more than 1000 public water access sites and over 12,000 miles of trails. Michigan's many outdoor recreational activities also offer opportunities to connect to cultural resources, for example along trails and at lake and river access points, creating a sense of discovery that enriches the recreational experience.

Collaborations play an important role in fulfilling recreationists' desires for multiple and varied opportunities. For example, the state's renowned trail system is provided by state, federal, regional and local units as well as the private and non-profit sectors. Collaborations between the private and public sectors are also important in providing recreational opportunities. Private guides utilize state land for hunting or angling opportunities. The private sector provides the amenities that enrich a snowmobile trip or a deer camp experience.

For many small businesses throughout Michigan, proximity to DNR-managed public lands has a direct impact on their bottom line. Bob and Kurt Eppley, the owners of Alpine Cycles in Port Huron, next to the 37-mile Bridge to Bay Trail, have noticed a steady increase in sales of road and mountain bikes, and cyclists coming in for repairs – both residents and tourists. Katherine Weaver, owner of Weavers Market on Harsens Island, definitely notices the impact of waterfowl hunters coming to the island's DNR St. Clair Flats Wildlife Area to hunt.

“Without waterfowl hunters, business would die after September,” Weaver said. “I wish there were more (hunters)! We need hunters to hold us over once the summer people leave the island. (Hunters ensure) October to December is great for business.”

Because Michiganders and visitors to the state love to play outdoors, there is an increasing demand for more facilities, more trails, bigger campsites and new opportunities. Often these needs conflict with existing uses whether it is an existing trail, timber management, oil and gas activity or natural resource protection. The

DNR and its partners must manage these conflicts, sometimes by limiting growth or moving facilities to other areas of the state.

Desired outcomes for recreation opportunities

- Citizens and tourists experience Michigan's incredible natural and cultural resources through diverse, adaptable and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Michigan's population has the opportunity to be physically active through outdoor recreation opportunities.
- The recreational system in the state is planned, developed and managed collaboratively among all recreational providers.

Metric for access to DNR-managed public lands

Increase by five percent citizen satisfaction with access to DNR-managed public lands.

The Department of Natural Resources will annually conduct a survey of Michigan citizens to measure their use and enjoyment of Michigan's outdoor recreation resources. The baseline survey was conducted in 2012 to inform the 2013-2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Seventy-nine percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of outdoor recreation in Michigan.

Measurable objectives regarding access to DNR-managed public lands

- Completion of a road plan that ensures motorized and non-motorized access to public land. (Act 240, 2012)
- Provide access within 15 miles to a minimum of 500-acre blocks of public lands that provide dispersed recreation activities.(SCORP, Wildlife GPS, State Forest Management Plan)
- Increase by 25 percent the amount of land available for dispersed public recreation in southern Michigan with emphasis in areas with low per capita access. (Request of Public Land Management Strategy Advisory Committee (PLMSAC)
- Ensure that 50% of knowledge-based workforce resides within five miles of public lands. (PLMSAC)

Metric for access to the water

Percent of inland lakes and the Great Lakes (and connecting waters) with access that meet objectives.

Access to Michigan's water has always been a state priority. This metric reflects the land and water access measurable objectives that are reflected in the strategic plan of the Parks and Recreation Division and in the goals for land and river access established by the Fisheries Division.

Measurable objectives for access to water

- Provide public access on all lakes over 100 acres.(PRD Strategic Plan)
- Provide boating access on all lakes over 500 acres.
- Provide a safe harbor of refuge system on the Great Lakes with one harbor every 30 miles. (PDR Strategic Plan)
- Provide public access every six miles on the Great Lakes.(PLMSAC request)
- Provide access every mile on the connecting channels from Lake Huron to Lake Erie.(PLMSAC request)
- Complete a database and maps of existing access points on rivers identified as priorities by Fisheries Division and acquire identified gaps in access.
- Provide access to 25 percent of smaller lakes (less than 100 acres in size) that have significant recreational opportunity as identified by Fisheries Division.

*“Our customers use state land to access local lakes and the Kalamazoo River, and we often send customers looking for good hiking experiences out to Allegan State Game Area.” – **Skip Lee, owner of Lee’s Adventure Sports in Portage***

Metric for Trails

Completion of ten priority connections as identified by the Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC).

The Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council endorsed an action item in their Comprehensive Trail Plan to identify priority trail connections that should be completed in the next six years.

Measurable objectives for trails

- Designate public water trails that have appropriate signage, amenities and promotion on 30 percent of Michigan's navigable waters, five connected lake systems, and 75 percent of the Great Lakes and connecting channels shoreline. (Draft Comprehensive Trail Plan (DCTP))
- Provide a well-maintained, interconnected system of multi-use trails that are within five miles of 90 percent of Michigan's citizens. (DCTP)
- Develop critical linkages to complete five Great Lake lake-to-lake linear trails. (DCTP)
- Develop critical linkages to complete a north-south hiking trail system from Belle Isle to Wisconsin. (Governor Snyder)
- Develop an interconnected snowmobile trail system on secure permanent easements.(DCTP)
- Connect looped equestrian trails with other trails to create an interconnected equestrian system beginning by linking existing equestrian trails in southeast Michigan. (DCTP)
- Provide safe and connected off-road vehicle (ORV) opportunities. (ORV Strategic Plan)
- Develop off-road bike connections to the state's extensive off-road multi-use recreation trail network to create better access for communities, neighborhoods and families. (DCTP)
- Complete the 400 miles of the 1,150 mile North Country National Scenic Trail not yet completed within the state. (DCTP)

"We use state land as put-in and take-out points for our boats. We welcome (the state) and need them to run our fishing guide business." – Jeff Gardiner, owner, Old Au Sable Fly Shop in Grayling

Metric for urban recreation

Establish five signature urban parks with partners.

This metric is a priority action identified in The Future of Michigan's Parks and Outdoor Recreation: A Report to Governor Rick Snyder, Sept. 23, 2012 by the Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel.

Measurable objectives for urban recreation

- Use parks and recreation as a key tool for revitalizing Michigan's core urban areas by establishing with partners, five signature parks and integrating green infrastructure into Michigan's urban redesign and redevelopment efforts.

Metric for diversity of recreational offerings

Percent of citizen satisfaction with diversity of recreation opportunities provided on DNR-managed public lands.

The Department of Natural Resources will annually conduct a survey of Michigan citizens to measure their use and enjoyment of Michigan's outdoor recreation resources. The baseline survey of Michigan residents was conducted in 2012 to inform the 2013-2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Seventy-nine percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of outdoor recreation in Michigan.

Goal 2: Foster the Growth and Stability of Michigan's Land-Based Natural and Cultural Resources Economies.

DNR-managed public lands play a critical role in the state's land-based industries and the state's rural economies. State forest lands provide more than 20 percent of the timber that supports Michigan's \$14 billion timber economy. It is an industry that wants to grow, said Chad Bisballe of Bisballe Forest Products in Lake City.

"State land is important to the viability of our forest product company. More land would help in bringing more wood to market—as long as the land does not get used for set aside areas or other restrictions when it does not warrant it."-- Bisballe said.

Governor Snyder recently recognized the potential for expansion and the economic advantage that Michigan's natural gas underground storage industry provides to the state. Access to state land for natural gas exploration is a definite business advantage, said Glen W. Merrill, Jr., senior land representative for ANR Pipeline Company in Big Rapids.

"The value of state land leases encourages the development of critical energy infrastructure benefiting Michigan's energy users and the energy industry providing the service. Access to state land reduces the uncertainty and delay the energy projects would have if faced with having to negotiate with many individual land owners for easement rights," Merrill noted.

Michigan's rich and varied natural resources and recreational opportunities also support the state's thriving tourism industry. Half of the state's 6,200 miles of snowmobile trail are located on state land, and provide a steady flow of winter visitors to northern Michigan communities. The two weeks of firearm deer season are the financially critical in many rural areas, when hunters flood restaurants, bars, hotels and grocery stores. Several state parks host over a million visitors a year who spend time and money in surrounding communities, and in 2012, state parks exceeded one million camp nights. Michigan has world-class trout streams and visitors access these streams through access sites developed and managed by the DNR. Communities like Vanderbilt were founded during the lumber era and now depend on the state-owned North Central State Trail and the Pigeon River Country State Forest for its economic prosperity. Emmet County is experiencing increased tourism because of their "dark sky" area designation, bringing in astronomy enthusiasts to have clear night views of stars, constellations, meteor showers, lunar eclipses and other celestial observations.

"(State land) is very valuable to our business, during hunting season, most of the campers who stay at Apple Creek use state land." – **Mary Ann Brennan, owner of Apple Creek Campground and RV Park in Grass Lake**

In Luce County, businesses know the value of being close to DNR-managed public lands and the recreation amenities they support, said Jomay Bomber, director of the Newberry Area Chamber of Commerce.

"Tourism is huge for Luce County and our biggest attractions are the natural resources. The #1 draw to this area is Tahquamenon Falls State Park. These visitors drive the local restaurant and hotel businesses. Because so many people visit the park, it has a big impact on the tourism in the area," Bomber said. "The public land also draws people to the area for hunting, fishing and trail use, which is huge. I would estimate that at least 60 percent of the businesses in the county are tied to tourism. This does not include other businesses impacted by public lands, such as the logging industry."

The economic benefits of public lands are well understood in western states. According to *West is Best: How Public Lands in the West Create a Competitive Economic Advantage* "Western non-metropolitan counties with more than 30 percent of the county's land base in federal protected status such as national parks, monuments, wilderness, and other similar designations increased jobs by 345 percent over the last 40 years. By comparison, similar counties with no protected federal public lands increased employment by 83 percent". Similar to western states, Michigan has the natural resource assets to create a competitive economic advantage.

Desired outcomes for natural resource based industries

- Outdoor recreation opportunities that enhance and retain Michigan's knowledge-based economy and local and regional economies.
- Thriving and sustainable forest products industries that support communities by providing jobs, products and diverse and resilient forests.
- Experiencing "Pure Michigan" is the first choice of travelers worldwide because of its integrated and renowned outdoor opportunities, vibrant cities and towns and amazing amenities.
- Strong and sustainable oil and gas industries that promote national security; maximize production opportunities and minimize adverse impacts.
- Extraction of a non-renewable resource on DNR-managed public lands provides sustainable funding for investments in other non-renewable resources.
- Michigan's unique geology for natural gas storage stabilizes energy costs and ensures natural gas supply.
- Strong metallic and nonmetallic mineral industries that leverage unique geological opportunities; minimize adverse resource impacts and provide sustained prosperity to local economies.
- Renewable energy industry becomes competitive by capitalizing on Michigan's unique geology.
- Vibrant fisheries and wildlife-based industry that promotes Michigan's world class fisheries and wildlife opportunities both game and non-game and sustains local economies.

*"Our state forest land base is a critical aspect of the raw material supply chain here in Michigan and was part of the decision to start our O.S.B. business here over 30 years ago." – **Todd Johnson, Forestry Services Manager, Weyerhaeuser NR Company***

Metric for forest products industry

Increase career-related forest products jobs by 10 percent.

This is a goal established for the forest products industry and endorsed at the Governor's Forest Products Summit.

Measurable objectives for forest products industry

- Increase the exports of value-added forest products from the state by 50 percent. (Timber Advisory Council)
- Grow timber economy from \$14 to \$20 billion. (Timber Advisory Council)

Metric for mineral management

Increase the number of acres leased for mineral production and underground natural gas storage by 10 percent.

While the oil and gas and mineral industries have not established measurable objectives for the growth of their industries, the DNR is interested in supporting this important natural resource industry as measured by increasing the number of acres of state land leased for mineral production, while still protecting the State's other natural resource values.

Measurable objectives for mineral management

- Hold two oil and gas lease auctions a year to make state leasable lands available for oil and gas production as nominated by the oil and gas industry.

Metric for tourism

Increase the number of tourists to Michigan by 10 percent.

A recent article in Bridge Magazine indicated that six of the top 10 tourist attractions in Michigan are managed by the DNR (Holland, Grand Haven, Warren Dunes, and Muskegon State Parks, Island Lake Recreation Area and Mackinac Island) Public lands are also vital for trails of all kinds from snowmobile to mountain bike. The DNR is a partner with Pure Michigan. All of these factors reflect the important role that DNR-managed public lands play in Michigan's tourism industry and contribute to a growing tourism sector.

Measurable objectives for tourism

- Three percent increase in tourism at historic parks. (Michigan Historical Center)
- Three percent increase in divers using underwater preserves. (Michigan Historical Center)
- Increase non-resident state park passes to 275,000. (DNR Scorecard)
- Increase overnight stays at marinas by three percent.

- Increase the number of anglers that purchase a fishing license for the first time from 245,790 to 260,000. (DNR Scorecard)
- The number of new hunters who purchase a hunting license increases from 99,361 to 110,000 each year. (DNR Scorecard).
- Increase participation in non-consumptive wildlife-based outdoor recreation by 10 percent (WLD GPS).
- Implement in partnership with Pure Michigan, a marketing strategy that highlights Michigan's unique natural assets.

Goal 3: Protect Natural Functions and Natural and Cultural Resources.

DNR-managed public lands hold significant natural and cultural resources that when considered as a whole encompass what makes Michigan a special place. Nestled in the Great Lakes, carpeted with a variety of ecosystems, Michigan is home to an enormous variety of wildlife (for example, 40% of the birds in North America spend part of the year in the Upper Peninsula) and fish species, diverse forest systems and numerous outdoor recreation opportunities that provide a means for people to connect with the natural world. Receding glaciers left Michigan with unique geological features, including a legacy of world class trout streams supporting by ever-flowing cold groundwater and thousands of lakes. Some of these, like the big northern Michigan lakes, are found nowhere else in the world. The quality of our Great Lakes depends on natural systems, like coastal wetlands and healthy rivers that flow into the Great Lakes. Cultural resources -- archaeological sites, landscapes shaped by human activity and standing structures -- all reflect the unique ways that people have interacted with Michigan's natural resources and made the places of Michigan their own. The natural beauty of Michigan is built upon its natural resources, drawing visitors from around the world to experience it. Providing ample access to the state's natural resources in turn supports thousands of small businesses.

"As a small business owner and a commercial fishing guide, it is extremely valuable to utilize state land access sites and rivers. In my business, standing in a state-owned river is a must and showing customers the closest access site is always helpful," said John Karakashian, a fishing guide with Baldwin Bait & Tackle, who works with customers on the Pere Marquette and Muskegon rivers. "More access and availability of state land opens up recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. Through those opportunities more licenses will be sold to outdoor users. A reduction in access sites will limit users and reduce revenue -- not to mention reduce tourist spending throughout the state."

Protecting both natural and cultural resources and natural systems is the state's responsibility as recognized in the Michigan Constitution. Degradation or loss of public land directly impacts many aspects of the state's economy – forest products, tourism, oil and gas production, mineral development and countless small businesses that rely on outdoor recreation pursuits. DNR-managed public lands support Michigan's economy in many ways, and protecting the natural and cultural resources on those lands ensures that continued contribution to the state's economy and to the sustainable quality of life for the citizens of the state.

Desired outcomes for protecting natural functions and natural and cultural resources

- Future generations have an opportunity to experience in context Michigan's natural and cultural resources.
- Diversity of resilient cover types and natural communities to sustain healthy ecosystems and species populations for future generations and economic prosperity.
- The public understands the economic and ecological benefits of natural functions (example includes gene flow, nutrient cycling and natural disturbance).
- Michigan's identity as **the** Great Lake state is sustained.

Metric for cover types and wildlife population goals

Double the number of habitat projects accomplished with partners.

Habitat projects-completed by partners are critical to the long-term health of the habitat on DNR managed state land. One of the outcomes from the passage of the proposed hunting and fishing license package will be additional grant dollars directed to habitat improvement projects by partners.

Tony Snyder, Michigan State Chapter president of the National Wild Turkey Federation

(NWTF), appreciates the value of Michigan's public lands especially for mentoring and youth recruitment opportunities. The ability to "go over to the state lands" is critical for rural or urban residents and out-of-state tourists who lack access to private land for hunting, hiking, or just spending time outdoors, Snyder says. NWTF's national initiative Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt is a bold effort to save 4 million acres of upland habitat and create 1.5 million new hunters. The initiative strives to make it easier to find new places to hunt by creating 500,000 acres of new public land.

Measurable objectives for cover types and wildlife population goals

- Achieve habitat management goals for grassland, mesic conifer, aspen cover types and wetlands to assist in achieving the goals as stated in the Upper Mississippi & Great Lakes Region Joint Venture, Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative, American Woodcock Conservation Plan and North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
- Achieve population goals for state and federally- listed non-game species as defined in recovery plans including for the Karner Blue Butterfly, Kirkland's Warbler and Piping Plover.
- Double the number of acres involved in habitat partnership projects in order to meet the habitat goals identified in the Wildlife Division's GPS, Fisheries Division 2013-2017 *Charting the Course* Strategic Plan and specific species plans.

Metric for diversity

Prevent corrective action requests regarding biodiversity management associated with forest certification audits.

Annual audits are conducted on state-managed forests to ensure that the state forests are managed to meet the requirements of forest certification. One of the tenets of forest certification is that maintaining diversity must be considered when conducting forest management practices and that failure to do so might cause a corrective action request forcing the DNR to address the problem.

Measurable objectives for diversity

- *Maintain or enhance quality of natural communities ranked A or B under standards nationally recognized and applied in each state.*

Metric for protection of cultural resources

Complete cultural features spatial comprehensive database

To advance the protection of Michigan's cultural resources, a comprehensive database of known cultural features needs to be completed on state land. This metric reflects an important first step in meeting the outcome of future generations having an opportunity to experience, in context, Michigan's natural and cultural resources.

Measurable objectives for cultural protection

- Develop a protection strategy for 10 critical natural and culturally significant rare and unique places (Parks and Recreation Division Strategic Plan and Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel on State Parks and Outdoor Recreation).
- Protect and conserve all significant natural and cultural features within parks, forests and other DNR managed state lands (Parks and Recreation Division Strategic Plan and Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel on State Parks and Outdoor Recreation).
- Develop a comprehensive database of known cultural features on state land.

Metric for protection of aquatic resources

The number of acres of land or miles of corridors protected for each aquatic habitat classification.

Healthy aquatic habitats depend on the use of the land and how water travels through the landscape. Priority watersheds will be collaboratively protected through Department and partnership initiatives to maintain and restore aquatic habitats and their connectivity.

Measurable objectives for protection of aquatic resources

- Develop a strategy using current GIS-based classification systems to protect represented river, lake, and Great Lakes coastal habitats in each region by 2015.
- Use Natural River designations (Part 305 of PA 451) to protect and enhance a variety of values on Michigan’s river systems. Values include free-flowing condition, recreation, ecologic, scenic, historic, and fish and wildlife.

“We depend on state land for our survival. We cater almost entirely to folks who enjoy the outdoors – fly-fishers, hunters, hikers, bird watchers, mountain bikers. All these pursuits, so popular among our customers, depend on public lands. Access to state lands offered by this area of Michigan is one of the main attractions of a trip ‘Up North.’” –Josh Greenberg, owner of Gates Au Sable Lodge in Grayling

Part Two

Looking to the Future – How Will We Look Different, What Actions Will We Take, What DNR-Managed Lands Plans Hold

In the immediate future, the DNR will evolve as it becomes a more data-driven state agency, relying on economic impact analyses of DNR-managed public lands, gap analyses and more consistent citizen input through annual surveys. The DNR also will engage more with local and regional units of government to implement land strategy reflective of regional economic initiatives. A new land acquisition and disposal approach that refocuses on priority inholdings and reducing existing boundaries also has been developed for this land management strategy.

State land ownership can have a significant impact on local economies, recreational opportunities, local tax base and future economic growth potential. Moving forward, there will be improved collaboration through a more interactive relationship between the DNR and local units of government regarding land ownership issues.

How the DNR Will Refocus Public Lands Ownership

In answer to the question “what” public lands should the DNR manage, the following section describes the process the DNR will utilize going forward to balance the state’s portfolio of public lands.

The DNR continuously engages in acquisition, exchanges or disposals of land to balance the Department’s public land ownership to meet its diverse mission. To guide the Department’s public land ownership, a strategy is used for both acquisitions and disposal of state lands. The intent of this new approach is to

“Chippewa Landing is a canoe livery/campground on the Manistee River that has been in business for 50+ years. For a majority of that time, the business has been located on privately-owned lands and operated under a lease with the landowners. Recently the landowners decided that they wanted to sell their property, putting the future of Chippewa Landing at risk. The State of Michigan acquired this property and in an effort to ensure continued public access to this stretch of the Manistee River, has continued the lease of the Chippewa Landing canoe livery and campground. In doing so, the future of this business is more secure. Chippewa Landing is dependent upon the State of Michigan ownership. This property is a very valuable asset to the State because without it, good public access for use of this stretch of the river would be nil. This is a unique property and I’m glad that the State owns it.” – Rick Walsh, owner, Chippewa Landing in Manton

refocus ownership to priority areas; adapt to changing demands, and to move toward greater efficiency and effectiveness in land management.

Historically, the Department has focused on land consolidation and the purchase of high value resource and recreation lands. The new strategic direction will do the following:

- Initiate a review process for potential disposal of 240,000 acres of public lands that are less than 200 acres and separated from other DNR land holdings, because of the shape of boundaries are difficult to manage, or because public access is not provided..
- Shrink boundaries to reflect current state owned properties and high priority inholdings within those boundaries. In doing so, the acquisition interest of the DNR is sharply focused.
- Use revenues from the sale of this surplus land to acquire lands in high priority areas, including near urban centers, for high resource value properties, trail development or to link recreation facilities.
- Entertain requests for DNR-managed land to support other state economic development needs such as agriculture.

The new strategic direction will be implemented in a four-phase approach to review the current DNR public land ownership pattern, evaluate those lands from a natural resources perspective and dispose of those parcels deemed surplus.

Phase 1: Identify State Lands for Disposal

The Department has mapped all lands that are either 200 acres or less or because of the shape of the state ownership boundary are considered “unconsolidated”. These total approximately 240,000 acres. These acres will be reviewed by the DNR on a county by county basis utilizing criteria approved by the Department’s management team. These criteria may vary by region and will recognize the metrics identified in this plan. Based upon the criteria, parcels will be placed into one of three categories: dispose, offer to a local unit of government or alternative conservation owner or retain in state ownership. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on lands identified for disposal.

Phase 2: Focused Boundaries

Once the review has been completed, the DNR will establish smaller project boundaries for state forest, state game areas, state wildlife areas, state recreation areas, state parks and public boating access sites. This will serve to remove a significant number of private inholdings within the boundaries.

Phase 3: Disposal of Identified Lands

Lands identified and approved for disposal, to a unit of government, alternate conservation owner or to the general public will be made available for purchase or exchange. The DNR will entertain requests for sale/exchange of state land for other state economic development priorities.

Phase 4: Maintain an Up-to-Date Public Land Base

In compliance with Act 240 of 2012, after six years the DNR and its partners will review the strategy for changing land ownership and management priorities.

Natural Resource and Land Management Benefits

The land ownership strategy is critical for increasing efficiencies in state land management. The pattern and distribution of ownership and land use greatly impacts the management of natural resources, land management options, and ecological function and processes. This new strategic direction is intended to significantly reduce staff time spent on land management issues, while extending natural resource protections and high quality opportunities for public outdoor recreation. Consolidated lands also provide benefits to the public including reducing the risk of trespass on to private lands, avoiding safety zone violations and enhancing resource management. The benefits include:

- Prevent habitat fragmentation and habitat loss;
- Increase public recreational opportunities on contiguous blocks of DNR-managed public lands;
- Increase timber management efficiency;
- Prevent illegal encroachment on DNR-managed public lands;
- Prevent loss of hunting lands due to safety zone requirements;
- Reduce public/private land recreational use conflicts.

Acquisition

Strategic acquisition of land in priority areas will help achieve the DNR's mission and desired outcomes by meeting one or more of the following criteria:

- Acquire new recreational opportunities especially in southern Michigan and near urban population centers;
- Consolidate existing state lands within focused consolidation boundaries;
- Provide new or additional public access to surface waters or other state lands;

- Contain high natural resource or significant outdoor recreation values;
- Contribute to existing initiatives or plans such as trail corridor acquisition.

Disposal

An important component of this new strategic direction is to make effective use of those lands that are determined to be surplus to program needs. These parcels may be recommended for sale at a competitive auction, sold directly to private buyers, exchanged or transferred to other land managers. Conveyance of these parcels may be conducted in a manner that 1) provides for their continued protection where warranted; and, 2) provides a means to purchase or exchange for more desirable replacement lands.

Review of unconsolidated parcels involves evaluation by all DNR land administering divisions and the public utilizing criteria approved by the DNR's management team that reflects a holistic resource management approach. Evaluation criteria may include the following:

- Pertinence to the Department's mission and desired outcomes;
- Presence or absence of significant ecological features, recreation potential or regional economic opportunities.
- Other relevant natural resource, public recreation, and cultural resource values;
- An exchange or sale of these lands will result in an improvement in the location or pattern of state ownership and will provide for greater natural resource, ecological or outdoor recreation values.

Key Actions in the Next Six Years

Refocusing ownership, measuring progress toward meeting desired outcomes and implementing measurable objectives will precipitate significant change in the management of the DNR. The following informs DNR stakeholders, employees and the public what changes they should expect over and above the implementation of the measurable objectives identified in the plan over the next six years as a result of the Public Land Management Strategy.

Become Data Driven

Investment by the DNR in understanding user needs and interests is lacking. To ensure that public lands are meeting the needs of Michigan's citizens, visitors and businesses, the DNR will do the following:

1. Complete an annual citizen survey to understand outdoor recreation interests, needs, satisfaction and emerging trends.
2. Complete a gap analysis with partner organizations of recreation assets, high quality rare or representative natural areas and other culturally significant assets to ensure that Michigan's portfolio of public lands is meeting the strategy and to focus on priority acquisitions.
3. Conduct regular analysis of recreational trends to determine changing facility needs.
4. Complete an analysis of the economic value of state lands and products from those lands. This analysis could be used by local and regional economic development initiatives as well as the DNR to make investment decisions.
5. Understand the recreation and resource drivers for fostering a knowledge-based economy and target investments to those drivers.
6. Continue to improve the use of metrics and indicators to measure progress toward meeting desired outcomes.

Focus Regionally

Integrated planning strategies for public land with local units of government and more collaboration with stakeholders will be key to managing public lands in the immediate future. The DNR must become a more active player in regional planning initiatives due to the tremendous economic asset we bring to the table – the state’s public lands. The DNR intends to focus regionally in these ways:

1. Use state outdoor recreation facilities to help regions establish their own unique sense of place by “understanding, differentiating and marketing their unique assets often found on state lands.”
2. Participate in regional economic prosperity initiatives and environmental planning to help integrate public land management and DNR expertise into regional priorities.
3. Pilot two regional collaborative outdoor recreation planning initiatives as called for in the SCORP.
4. Improve communication and relationships with local units of government through an intentional process of initiating contacts and meetings to discuss land ownership issues and to provide technical expertise that is unique to DNR staff.
5. State parks and recreation areas will increase their collaboration with adjoining local communities by hosting events, and providing information about surrounding DNR public recreation amenities.

“This area is known for the public land and natural resources and it is what draws people to the area. At least 80 percent (and likely more) of the area businesses are almost solely dependent upon the public land and natural resources/tourism in the area for their survival. The natural resources in this area are 100 percent of the tourism draw. Due to that, and the fact that this area is known for the State land, the Chamber of Commerce recently changed our tag line to ‘Pure Water...Pure Trails...Pure North’ since that better embodies what brings people to this area to spend their time and money.” – Dawn Bodnar, executive director, Indian River Chamber of Commerce

Link Facilities

The desire to have linked recreation facilities is an emerging trend in current research and collaborative projects. The SCORP, the Michigan Snowmobile and Trail Advisory Committee Draft Comprehensive Trail Plan and the Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel report to the Governor all call for linking recreation facilities, identifying critical trail connections and focusing on completing those priority linkages. The Blue Ribbon Panel also calls for programming, stewardship and volunteer opportunities to connect people to their outdoor “places.” To link facilities and people with the outdoors, the DNR will:

1. Expand and adapt based upon survey results Recreation 101 programming, which teaches new outdoor skills to novices, both in state parks and with partner organizations to grow the public’s use of outdoor recreation offerings and appreciation of resource stewardship.
2. Establish a trails-oriented economic development program to link communities with DNR managed trails. Lessons learned from this initiative will be applied to linking other department facilities with surrounding communities.
3. Establish a pilot project to identify priorities associated with a river corridor, measures needed to protect the key values of that corridor and identify collaborators’ responsibilities to addressing those measures. Lessons learned from the pilot project will be applied to other key river corridors.
4. Improve signage on all department managed facilities that links those facilities to surrounding communities.

Participate in Integrated Planning

The SCORP calls for improved collaboration and cooperation between all outdoor recreation providers to ensure that Michigan’s recreation system meets the needs and desires of its residents. The same collaboration and cooperation is needed to ensure that DNR managed lands meets the needs of local and regional economies. Over the next six years, the DNR will:

1. Complete a southern Michigan recreation plan with partners to identify roles, responsibilities, areas for expansion and strategies for meeting unmet outdoor recreation needs. The plan will build upon the gap analysis discussed earlier, interest and need surveys and priorities of the partnering organizations.
2. Work with the mineral industry and other resource-based industry to help identify desired outcomes and measurable objectives for DNR-managed public lands.

Increase Collaboration

As stated earlier, collaboration with partners is essential in protecting natural resources, providing quality outdoor recreation and fostering the growth of land-based industries. Bob Frye of Cross Country Ski Headquarters in Roscommon already collaborates with the state as a part of his tourism business. Frye leases state land to maintain a network of cross country ski trails for his business.

“I think this is a good example of how the private sector and the public sector can partner and add value for everyone without destroying the very ‘Pure Michigan’ part of northern Michigan that residents and tourists from many states and provinces have come here to love and enjoy,” Frye said.

Over the next six years, the DNR will work collaboratively with its partners to improve the outdoor recreation system of the state, enhance the quality and diversity of its facilities, grow Michigan’s resource-based economy, restore habitats and species and protect cultural resources. This is not a new approach, but the Department recognizes that it can only meet its mission in the future by increasing collaboration and partnerships. It will:

1. Improve the process by which citizens can become a “Friends” organization to a DNR managed facility.
2. Launch annual meetings between public, private and non-profit recreation providers to foster collaboration and cooperation between providers and to coordinate among competing demands for the public land base.
3. Expand the habitat restoration program with partner organizations.
4. Collaborate with other large property owners to work on large-scale land consolidation efforts that are mutually beneficial and provide a public benefit.
5. Collaborate with the forest products industry and other economic interests to expand employment opportunities, increase forest product markets, and coordinate competing demands on DNR managed lands.

Focus on the Quality of Facilities

SCORP, the Draft Comprehensive Trail Strategy, and the Blue Ribbon Panel Report all recognize the importance of maintaining quality facilities to retain and attract visitors.

Over the course of the next six years, Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) expects to focus capital outlay funding on upgrading and replacing aging and obsolete infrastructure. Replacement/upgrades will not be in total, but using a “sustained

contraction” approach. For example, two campground restroom buildings may be replaced with one centrally- located building and reviewing recreation trends in camping will influence the level of electrical service being replaced in a campground rather than like-kind replacement. All infrastructure replacement will consider longevity and sustainability. Many underground septic systems are failing due to their age. PRD will be reassessing these systems to determine priorities for improvement/repair/replacement in order to protect the overall water quality of the surrounding area. PRD recently instituted a fund-match incentive, to encourage local friends groups to fund raise for recreational elements, such as new play equipment or a fishing pier. This approach helps PRD provide the recreational amenities that our customers value, while still allowing PRD to focus on major infrastructure improvements. Other measures include:

1. Guidelines for quality maintenance will be established for the state-managed trail system and other DNR- managed recreational facilities and regular inspections will be made to ensure compliance with guidelines.
2. Proactive enforcement strategies will ensure that visitors to DNR managed facilities feel a sense of safety, environmental integrity is maintained and illegal use is controlled.

Increased Marketing

Over the next six years, the DNR will focus its marketing efforts to fully leverage all of the recreational, natural and cultural resource protection and economic benefits provided by DNR-managed public lands. To achieve this, the DNR will:

1. Continue to partner with Pure Michigan to promote Michigan’s natural features, and also improve its geo-referenced database to allow outdoor enthusiasts to better plan their outdoor fun and utilize the amenities provided by local communities.
2. Increase public understanding of natural resources management, recreation offerings and resource-based industries through the use of technology, including more Web-based tools like MI Hunt, which allows hunters to identify public hunting lands; or mobile or MP-3 applications, such as the ones that provide a downloadable audio tour of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.
3. Collaborate with the public health community to highlight the linkages between outdoor recreation and opportunities for improved individual and family health.
4. Work with the land-based industries to provide improved information and processes to help guide the industries’ investment decisions.

5. Explore ways to build cooperative marketing strategies to increase visitors and use with locally impacted partners.
6. Improve the permitting system for events and use of state land to cross-market facilities, attract event users to surrounding communities and better understand the economic impact of the events.
7. Improve marketing efforts targeted at encouraging the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and increasing camp nights.

Conclusion

From its much-prized furs and forests in the 18th and 19th centuries to the modern, professionally managed woods, water and minerals, Michigan has long benefitted from its abundance of natural and cultural resources. Today, Michigan citizens and businesses demand investment in public lands as a way to grow the economy through tourism, forestry, oil and gas exploration and outdoor recreation.

“If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you” is the official motto of the State of Michigan. Making our peninsulas pleasant requires nurturing opportunities for recreation, collaborating with natural resource-based industries and protecting ecosystems to keep them functioning and healthy. This Public Land Management Strategy ensures that DNR public managed lands will continue to support this mission by providing quality recreation facilities, economically viable natural resource based industries and robust, functioning ecosystems. This strategy also ensures that DNR-managed public lands will be focused in priority areas and managed efficiently. It charts a course for DNR public managed lands to play a more integrated role in regional prosperity initiatives and creating a sense of place by taking a collaborative approach with partners.

For generations, Michiganders have valued protection of natural resources and access to public lands on which they can enjoy and use those resources. These values, while not completely unique to Michigan, are a part of nearly every Michigander’s experience – whether you are casting a line into the Detroit River at Milliken State Park in downtown Detroit, tracking a deer in the Pigeon River Country State Forest, hiking among the hemlocks at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park or making a living in the forest products industry. The future of these resources, and access to them, is dependent upon an adaptable land management strategy that can evolve with the trends, interests and needs of people and businesses.