



Eastern & Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Councils DNR Division Reports for Annual Joint Meeting

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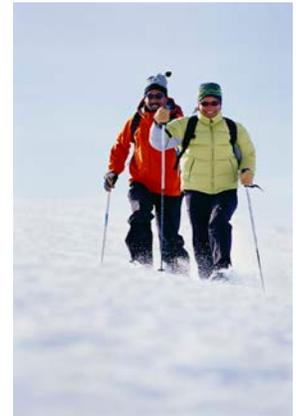
This documentation is provided by Michigan DNR staff as a supplement to verbal reports which will be given to the Eastern & Western UPCAC at the March 16, 2015 Joint Meeting in Marquette.

Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator: Stacy Welling Haughey

Welcome to the 7th Annual Joint Meeting of the Eastern & Western U.P. Citizen's Advisory Council!

Public Meetings

March 9	UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Crystal Falls, 6-8pm CST
March 10	UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Bergland, 12-2pm
March 10	UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Baraga, 4-6pm
March 11	UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Marquette, 6-8pm
March 12	UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Escanaba, 6-8pm
March 12	Natural Resources Commission Meeting, Roscommon (RAM Center)
March 16	Joint UPCAC Meeting – NMU, Marquette, 6pm
March 24	UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Sault Ste. Marie, 1:30-3:30pm
April 9	Natural Resources Commission Meeting, Lansing
April 16	Eastern U.P. Citizen's Advisory Council Meeting, Newberry, 6:30pm



U.P. State Park & State Sponsored Activities

March 6-8	BOW Winter Cabin Ski/Snowshoe Workshop at Wilderness State Park near Carp Lake
March 13	Van Riper State Park - Lighted Snowshoe Trail
March 14	DNR Trappers Education Course (\$10), DNR Pocket Park-Escanaba, 9am, 906-786-2351
March 14	Straits State Park - Winter Family Fun Days
March 21	DNR Hunter Safety Class (Free), DNR Pocket Park-Escanaba, 10am, 906-786-2351
March 28	Tahquamenon Falls State Park-Maple Sugaring Day
April 25	DNR ORV Safety Class (Free), DNR Pocket Park-Escanaba, 10am, 906-786-2351

Upcoming U.P. Recreation/Sporting Shows

March 20-22	UP Boat, Sport & RV Show, Superior Dome, Marquette (DNR Booth Present)
May 1-2	Manistique Outdoor Expo, Little Bear West Arena, Manistique (DNR Booth Present)
July 10-11	U.P. Trappers Convention, UP State Fairgrounds, Escanaba, 906-399-1960
August 17-23	U.P. State Fair, Escanaba (SIGN-UP TO VOLUNTEER AT THE DNR POCKET PARK!)

Upcoming March 19th NRC Meeting Agenda

NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

1. Fisheries Division Update
 - a. Fisheries Regulations
2. Wildlife Division Update

- a. Bear Regulations and License Quotas
- b. Deer Management Plan
- c. Wildlife Annual Report
- d. Wildlife Metrics

NRC Committee of the Whole

1. Director's Report
2. Legislative Report (Trevor VanDyke)

Partners in Conservation Award: Brian Price – Leelanau Conservancy

Public Appearances Before the NRC (Pre-registered: Kathy English, Graymont; Al English, Graymont; Mike Thorman, Michigan Hunting Dog Federation, Bear Regulations; Nancy Hudson, UP Bear Houndsmen, Bear Regulations; Joe Hudson, UP Bear Houndsmen, Bear Regulations; Steve Hanel, Bear Regulations)

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION - FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1. NRC Policy Review Recommendation
2. Bear Regulations and License Quotas, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 2 of 2015
3. Fisheries Order 200.15A, Statewide Trout, Salmon, Whitefish, Lake Herring, and Smelt Regulations
4. Fisheries Order 202.15, Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations
5. Fisheries Order 204.15, Spawning Closures
6. Fisheries Order 206.15, Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater Species on Select Waters
7. Fisheries Order 215.15, Statewide Coolwater Regulations for Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Northern Pike, Walleye, Muskellunge, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Yellow Perch, Sunfishes, and White Bass
8. Fisheries Order 249.15, Crayfish Regulations

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION - ACTION

1. Approval of Minutes: February 12, 2015 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – DIRECTOR

1. Order to Regulate Use of the Ishpeming to Humboldt Rail-Trail Segment of the Iron Ore Heritage Trail, Marquette County, Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 2 of 2015

DIRECTOR'S ACTION

1. Land Transactions
 - a. Sale of Certain Department of Natural Resources-Managed Land and Minerals, Exchange of Other Lands, and Sale of Option of Other Lands, Forest Resources Division, Graymont Sale and Exchange, Sault Ste. Marie and Newberry Forest Management Units – Luce, Mackinac, and Chippewa Counties, Land Transaction Case #20130281
 - b. Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land, St. Clair Flats Wildlife Area – St. Clair County, Land Transaction Case #20140103
 - c. Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land, Cadillac Management Unit – Osceola County, Land Transaction Case #20140192
 - d. State Forest Land Exchange, Gladwin Management Unit – Clare County, Knopf Exchange, Land Transaction Case #20130317
 - e. Conveyance of DNR-Managed Land for Public Use, Sault Ste. Marie Management Unit – Mackinac County, Land Transaction Case #20130271
 - f. Conveyance of DNR-Managed Land for Public Use and Gift of Land and Easement, Shingleton Management Unit – Alger County, Land Transaction Case #20010136

February 2015 Legislative Updates (March Update not yet available)

Submitted by: Trevor VanDyke, Director, Legislative & Legal Affairs Office

SB 16 – Amend the Natural Resources Trust Fund Modifying Allowable Expenditures – Sen. Casperson: This bill seeks to amend Sections 1902 and 1903 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to modify allowable expenditures from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to include: maintenance of trails, roads, management of land and water resources for recreation purposes, timber and mining infrastructure, infrastructure on waterways, breakwalls and dredging.

- This bill is before the Senate Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

SB 18 – Provides for the Conveyance of Certain Property in Calhoun County after Acquisition from the Federal Government – Sen. Nofs: This bill seeks to amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act by adding Section 2120a to require the Department to locate current de facto owners of certain lands in Calhoun County and convey a portion of the property to these de facto owners.

- This bill is before the Senate Committee on Local Government.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

SB 39 – Restrictions on Land Acquisitions, Land Sales and Land Management by the Department– Sen. Casperson: This bill seeks to amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to continue with the land cap restrictions on the Department until all of the following occur: 1) legislative approval of the strategic plan every 5 years; 2) state payments on tax reverted payments are made under subpart 13 of Part 21; 3) state PILT payments are made under subpart 14 of Part 21; and, 4) state payments are made under section 51106 (commercial forestlands). Further, the bill requires public access to all lands under the control of the Department, modifies the process for land exchanges, sales and appraisal valuations, and requires for each forest management area the establishment of an allowable sale quantity, a minimum sale quantity and management goals. In addition, the bill mandates that any road or trail approved, used or developed for forest management purposes must remain open, even after the harvest, for the public.

- This bill is before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

SB 40 – Expands the Acceptable Uses of the Land Exchange Facilitation Fund to Pay Certain Costs – Sen. Booher: This bill seeks to amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act by amending Sections 2135, 2154 and 51106 to expand the acceptable uses of the land exchange fund to pay for maintenance and natural resource management costs, special assessments on lands owned by the Department, payments for the exchange of lands with the United States under section 2150, PILT payments under section 2154, and payments on commercial forestlands under section 51106. The bill further increases the payment amount per acre on commercial forestlands.

- This bill is before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

SBs 54 & 55 – Prohibits the Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for the Taking of Game – Sen’s. Casperson and Pavlov: These bills seek to amend Sections 40102, 40111c, and 40112 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to prohibit the use of unmanned aerial/submersible vehicles (drones) to interfere with or harass another individual who is hunting or fishing and further prohibits the use of an unmanned aerial vehicle for the taking of game. Further, SB 54 would provide the NRC with exclusive authority to regulate sport fishing under Part 487.

- These bills are before the full Senate.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

SJR A – Constitutional Right to Hunt, Trap and Fish – Sen. Hildenbrand: This joint resolution seeks to amend the Michigan Constitution by adding Section 29 to Article I to provide a constitutional right to the citizens to hunt, trap and fish.

- This joint resolution is before the Senate Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this resolution.

SJR C – Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – Sen. Casperson: This joint resolution seeks to amend the Michigan Constitution by adding Section 35 to Article IX to modify the allowable expenditures from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund to include funding for: maintenance of trails, roads, management of land and water resources for recreation purposes, timber and mining infrastructure, infrastructure on waterways, breakwalls and dredging.

- This bill is joint resolution is before the Senate Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this resolution.

HB 4078 – Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – Rep. Bumstead: Pursuant to the recommendation of the Natural Resources Trust Fund Board the bill would appropriate \$24.7 million from the MNRTF for 25 acquisition projects and 44 development projects. Matching funds of \$9.8 result in total project costs of \$34.5.

- This bill is before the full Senate.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

If you would like to learn more about these and other bills, you can access the Michigan Legislature website at www.legislature.mi.gov.

Finance & Operations Division: Christina Hammill (Eastern UP)

Dates to Remember

- 3/1 – New Year licenses go on sale (most licenses expire 3/31)
- 3/1 – Can apply for 2016 Pure Michigan Hunt
- 3/1 – Hand netting opens (smelt, suckers, bowfin, carp, gar, shad, goldfish)
- 3/1 – Squirrel and Fox seasons close, also Fox, Coyote, Muskrat, Mink trapping close
- 3/1 – Bobcat hunting closes (Units A, B, C)
- 3/1 – Tree stands and ladders must be removed from all public lands
- 3/2 – Drawing results posted for Spring Turkey hunts
- 3/9 – Leftover Turkey & Hunt 234 on sale (unsuccessful applicants, rest on 3/16)
- 3/11 – Last day to register Bobcats taken by hunting (Units A, B, C) – see p. 45
- 3/15 – Walleye, Pike, Muskie seasons close (Inland Waters).
- 3/20 – Dip netting opens (smelt, suckers, bowfin, carp, gar, shad, goldfish)
- 3/31 – Hunt, fish, and ORV Licenses expire (also Watercraft Registrations)
- 3/31 – Last day for ice shanties in the Upper Peninsula
- 3/31 – Early Crow and Rabbit/Hare seasons close
- 4/1 – Hand net size restrictions begin on trout streams (through 6/30)
- 4/13 – Beaver & Otter trapping close (Units A & B; designated trout streams close 4/30)
- 4/15 – Coyote season and dog training closes
- 4/20 – Spring Turkey opener (for the early hunts)
- 4/23 – Last day to register Otter from Units A & B
- 4/25 – Trout Opener (Inland Waters)
- 5/1 – Can apply for Bear and Elk hunts
- 5/1 – Deadline for returning incidental trapping seals to DNR
- 5/5 – Last day to register Otter from Unit A designated trout streams
- 5/15 – Walleye, Pike, Muskie open in U.P. inland waters and U.P. Great Lakes waters
- 5/30 – Frog, Toad, Salamander/Mudpuppy seasons open (until 11/15)
- 5/31 – Hand net & dip net seasons close

Parks & Recreation Division: Thomas Paquin, Eastern UP District Supervisor

- EUP CAC Meeting Update 3-02-2015 Rob Katona, DNR Recreation Specialist PRD
 - ORV Trail and Route Development Updates EUP: *Regionally for the EUP the following proposals have recently been approved or are in the works*
 - St. Ignace to Trout Lake ORV Route: Approved and signing will occur this spring.
 - Soo to Raco ORV Route: Review is nearly complete.
 - Brimley SP ORV Trailhead: Under review.
 - Newberry M-123 Connector: Approved and a signing will remain in place.
 - Newberry to Cut River ORV Route: In progress awaiting permission form county road commissions.
 - Cut River to Trout Lake ORV Route: In progress awaiting landowner permission.
 - Curtis to Haywire Grade (Manistique): In progress will finalize route around Gun Club and old landfill site north of Manistique this spring.
 - Seney North M-77 Connector: Under review this will provide connectivity from Seney to designated ORV trails and forest roads to the north.
 - Alger County Community Connector Routes: In progress had second meeting with grant sponsors and Alger County Road Commission.
 - Simmons Woods and Gould City Connector: In progress held a meeting with various stakeholders, trail clubs and Mackinac County staff.
 - ORV Projects/Grants for 2015: *EUP Projects scheduled for this summer*
 - Drummond Island ORV Route Improvements: Improving six areas on the 46 mile Drummond Island ORV Route work includes spot filling, route shaping and culvert installation.

- Kinross Motorcycle Trail Reroute and Construction: Complete motorcycle trail construction this summer.
- Marquette-Manistique ORV Route Improvements: Continuing multi-phased route improvements by shaping, resurfacing and graveling.
- USFS Travel Analysis Plan: Provided GPS files and information on potential/proposed ORV routes to be included into the Hiawatha East Unit's review process.
- ORV Route Grading: Machine grading state designated ORV routes to provide a smoother riding surface and to promote proper water drainage.
- Scott Falls Culvert: Replace failed culvert on Marquette-Manistique Trail which allows water flow to popular Scott Falls project was pending DEQ public notice and comment period which is now complete.

Program staff is in the process of reviewing and approving internal ORV Trail Improvement Fund Grants for 2015. We will be reviewing and making recommendations on additional projects with the ORV Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW) during the March 11th meeting in Lansing. The goal is to implement showcase type on-the-ground projects, utilizing the ORV fund balance that will benefit the ORV riding community and address maintenance and environmental needs.

- ORV Related Events
 - Six days of Michigan Motorcycle Event will begin July 18th in Kinross Michigan.
 - Drummond Island Jeep Jamboree will be held on Drummond Island June 18th-20th.
- Other: *Land use rule proposed changes*
 - Soo-Raco Grade: Open grade to ORVs 65" or less in width, current rule only permits ATVs and motorcycles, public support has been gathered and proposed rule change is currently under DNR review. Rule changes will be discussed during March 11th ORVAW meeting.
 - Marquette-Munising Junction Trail: Remove current restrictions that are in place from Casino Road to Munising Junction that prohibits ORVs greater than 50" including full sized vehicles from operating on the rail trail. We are currently soliciting comment from DNR staff, local units of government and various stakeholders for this proposed rule change.

MDOT Highway ROW ORV Ordinance: Now that the State Law has been changed to allow certain segments of highway to be authorized for ORV use; language has been developed and is suggested to amend a county ordinance to authorize using specific segments of state highway that are posted open and approved by MDOT. MDOT, DNR and ORV trail clubs will work with local units of government and/or county officials to amend and clarify their ordinances to address these changes.

➤ Indian Lake/Palms Book

- Phase one of the shoreline erosion project at Indian Lake State Park is scheduled to begin this spring. The first phase of the project will be put out for bids & with a project completion date of June 25. The bids for the new toilet building at Palms Book are in & the contract has been awarded. Construction will begin in this spring with a completion date of late June. The sewage system at the Indian Lake Park Headquarters is failing and will be replaced this spring. The waterline for park headquarters froze up for the second year in a row. We were able to get it thawed and working again.

➤ Fayette Historic State Park

- Historic Townsite: Found family of raccoons living in Hotel; in process of live trapping and relocating. Continuing to work to complete plans for furnace stack reconstruction/restoration. Construction is planned in the summer of 2015.
- Harbor: 100% complete plans in hand for replacement of old dock. Pre-bid meeting held 2/25/15. Bids due 3/11/15. Planned construction May-October 2015
- Campground: Continuing to work to complete plans for toilet/shower building, dump station and onsite sewage treatment. Planned construction late 2015 into 2016.
- Seasonal repair/maintenance on various pieces of equipment. Request for quotes sent out for roofing material for the supervisor residence. Time also spent plowing snow and groom cross country ski/snowshoe trails
- Events: Kerosene Lantern Cross Country Ski/Snowshoe/Hike was held January 31st. 101 folks tuned out for a low snow, cold event that went very well!

➤ Straits State Park

- A pre-bid meeting was held for the two new lower campground toilet/shower buildings. A low bidder was obtained with the building being stick built and construction due to start in September 2015. Four new toilet building shower steel doors for the north #2 toilet building are completed and being delivered to the park for staff installation. A contract was awarded for the manufacture of the sink counters in north #1 toilet building with installation by the manufacturer due in 4-6 weeks.
- An application was put in for a new position for a lead worker at the Detour Harbor/Lime Island area.
- The park staff held a family fun day in the park with many winter activities to get families outside. About 47 people attended.
- We have had many days of below zero degree temperatures. About 850 people a week walk or snowshoe on the park roads. The campground reservations for the St. Ignace Car Show and July 4th weekends are coming in strong with about 65% of the campsites filled.
- The Straits State Park general management planning process held a meeting before the Natural Resources Commission and is complete. The District meeting was held in Newberry. Tom Pawlowski from the Department of Management & Budget met with the contractors from the Monroe House office building at Detour Harbor to try and close out the construction process from last year.

➤ Tahquamenon Falls State Park

- The 90% submittal of the phase 100 part of the Lower Falls Improvements was approved.
- State worker applications are trickling in.
- The "Saturdays in February" events were a big success. The night ski/snowshoe averaged close to 100 participants each Saturday.
- The Tahquamenon Snowshoe race was held on Feb. 21st.....54 racers participated. Park Staff were assisted by several volunteers, including some from the TCPA (Tahquamenon Country Pathway Association).
- Maple Sugaring Day will be held on March 28th from Noon -4pm at the Upper Falls.
- Passport compliance has been down, even with increased signage & enforcement. Snowmobile traffic continues to be heavy at the Upper Falls. The lodge is booked for 15 nights in March.

➤ Muskallonge Lake

- Plans continue to move forward with the Park Headquarters relocation. Drawings have been submitted for plan review and bid packets are scheduled to go out this month.
- The vacant ranger position has been approved to fill and posted for hire. We are looking at conducting interviews the end of this month.

➤ Brimley State Park

- The Algonquin Fundraising event raised over \$4000.00 to put towards the grooming/maintenance of the trail. The Algonquin Pathway cross country ski trail has attendance of 250 to 300 skiers per week.
- Brimley State Park, the east UP Recreation Specialist, and the east UP District Supervisor met with the City of Sault Ste. Marie to identify a route that would connect the Soo to Raco grade with the LSSU campus as well as the downtown area of Sault Ste. Marie. A route has been identified and we will be moving forward to designate the route.
- The Brimley State Park MRS Youth Workers Program was the main topic at the Community Conversations event Feb. 18 in Sault Ste. Marie. Over 60 people participated; the Brimley State Park Supervisor was the keynote speaker. Scott Slavin spoke about the parks successes with the program for the last two years.

➤ Newberry Field Office: The crew is working on building new vault toilets for various locations in the east UP.

Parks & Recreation Division: Bill Doan, Western UP District Supervisor

➤ State Park/Recreation Area/Scenic Site/Forest Rec Units

- **Baraga State Park** Staff worked on hiring/rehiring of seasonal and STW staff. We also worked on preparations and purchasing for upcoming projects for the park, other district units and the field office. Staff worked on getting quotes for remodeling of shower stalls in the South Toilet Building, which need to be replaced. Staff attended the all-staff meeting and other special meetings for projects and events, such as the SPORT Ride and 100th Anniversary.

- **Bewabic State Park's** boat ramp and ski/snowshoe trails in the park have continued to receive a lot of use in spite of the cold weather. We had to cancel a lantern lit ski/snowshoe event which was scheduled for 2/14/15 due to dangerously cold weather. Staff is working to upgrade the headquarters building - painting complete, waiting for carpet delivery to install new carpet. We will be installing a few new fire rings at some state campgrounds this summer (locations and quantities to be determined pending facility inspections). There have been good fishing reports from many lakes in the area. We plan to do road work on Faithorn BAS entrance road this summer. We have begun the initial stages of planning an ORV access route into Bewabic State Park. The request to change our land use order has been completed but not submitted, pending letters of support from the community. We have already received support from local municipalities, law enforcement, MDOT and the ORV club. The route would bring travelers from the Stateline Trail, south on Kaski Road, across US-2 and into the park via a proposed ORV access trail. This access trail would separate ORVs and vehicles directly at the entrance of the park and give riders a better vantage point of US-2 traffic. Fire officers have been checking snowmobile trails, good reports and grooming is going well from what we can tell. We met with a group of individuals interested in forming an organized group of volunteers to help maintain the Lake Mary Plains Pathway. On 2/16/15, the park supervisor met with five members of the community who knew of at least four others who were interested in helping to not only groom the pathway for cross-country skiers, but also complete maintenance during the summer months for mountain bikers/hikers (mow and brush the trails, as well as clear deadfall). A project proposal was submitted to Lansing 2/20/15. We have had reports that the Merriman Pathway is being utilized by skiers and snowshoers, but the trails have not been groomed. A handicap shower will be constructed in one of the toilet buildings in the campground this summer. Tennis courts will be resurfaced.
- **Bond Falls Scenic Site** Inquiries about winter use have been declining as temperatures were below zero though winter hikers and photographers are using the site as ice formations have developed on the falls.
- **Craig Lake State Park** Yurt rentals for January 2015 (21) increased 14 nights over Jan 2014 (7).
- **Fort Wilkins Historic State Park** Supervisor position vacant as of 3/2/15. Position is posted and planned to be back filled asap. Staff have been working on miscellaneous maintenance projects.
- **Lake Gogebic State Park** is closed for the winter season. The Ranger 9 is working at Porcupine Mountains for the winter.
- **McLain State Park** has a number of campsites shut down due to continued shoreline erosion. A new campground exit road will be constructed in the spring. Erosion has also impacted the sewer line system causing the need for sections to be rerouted and replaced which will also be performed as soon as the weather permits. There have been good cabin numbers so far through the winter and a fair number of hikers, snowshoers, and cross country skiers.
- **Menominee State Recreation Area** Management planning is going well for Menominee River State Recreation Area.
- **Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park** Cabins, Lodge, and Yurts have all been very busy all winter long. The ski hill numbers are better than last season and far ahead of two seasons ago. Interpretive snowshoe hikes and lantern lit trails have had an increased attendance so far this season as well. A joint project between the Friends of the Porkies and the park to make the Folk School universally accessible has begun starting with the bathroom remodel/expansion. Snowburst 2015 was held at the ski hill on February 21st and was very well attended. The Union Bay toilet/shower building replacement is continuing to move forward. The Union Bay BAS launch depth and maneuverability upgrades is through the 50% review period and is continuing on schedule.
- **Twin Lakes State Park** Fishermen are using the park boat launch; this is the first time keeping the launch open. Lodge rentals were good for the month of February. Extreme cold is keeping cross-country skiers away.
- **Van Riper State Park** Little Presque Isle cabins nights were up by 8 nights for Jan 2015 (41) vs Jan 2014 (33); Our January Lantern Lit snowshoe had 125 people in participation and it was a great night, however our February event was MUCH colder and there were only 60 visitors in attendance, at the February event we also hosted a wedding on the trail. The Friends of Van Riper and Craig Lake State Park, LLC have secured a \$90,000 Cliffs/Lundin Foundation grant for a playground, and DNR staff has been working diligently applying for matching grants. Staff from FRD and

PRD was approached by a local mountain bike group discussing the trail proposal process; we met the group of trail users and the Marquette CVB regarding the possibility of mountain bike trail development at Little Presque Isle. PRD staff met with the group once again to discuss a possibility of a Friends of Little Presque Isle Recreation Area; this group of people represents various user groups including fisherman, mountain bikers, boaters, hikers, XC skiers, runners, etc. DNR partnered with Superior Heartland Equestrian Group to acquire new equestrian trail signage. Blueberry Ridge Pathway had 12,000 visitors in January 2015; this is an increase of around 4,000 visitors from Jan 2014 and lots of great comments about our grooming. Van Riper State Park's water treatment facility is in the planning process for an upgrade/overhaul.

- **Wells State Park** staffed a booth at the RV show in Escanaba.
- **Escanaba Field Office** staff has built new campground site marker posts for three campgrounds. Two State Campgrounds will undergo reductions in size in early spring as a means to reduce costs while meeting normal use patterns. The design and approval process was completed over the last few months. Unit staff have been grooming weekly at Anderson Lake Ski Pathway and Days River Ski Pathway. Public comments have been very positive and donations continue to come in with positive comments as well. Heavy snowfalls have been consistently bending over young growth trees and breaking old growth which has required extra time and staff to cut and clean-up.

➤ Boating Reports

- **Baraga Field Office** worked on constructing 2 new skid piers and refurbished 4 skid piers. They constructed 13 gates, 10 of which are for Van Riper State Park's units for an ORV Restoration Grant. The crew also worked on plans for the upcoming work on the new campground exit road and sewer line for shoreline erosion damage at McLain State Park. A lot of routine tasks, like snowplowing were also completed.
- **Cedar River State Harbor** removal project is almost complete. They will finish the project in May. The harbor was treated and completed for fragilities by local contractor.
- **Escanaba Field Office** staff has constructed bulletin boards for all unit administered sites. Staff assisted with Cedar River Harbor dock and pile removal process. Two additional garage stalls have been acquired from Lands Survey adjacent to the PRD cold storage stall in the Escanaba Facility. Space was traded at the PRD Norway facility. This space will provide a location for welding and equipment maintenance and is in process of being renovated to meet those needs.
- **Van Riper State Park** A Lake Angeline BAS in Ishpeming has been cleared of the property dispute and the Boating Construction Crews are planning boat site development for August 2015.

➤ Employee News/Recognition

- **Western UP District** welcomed Darrell Welch to PRD to fill a long needed Resource Analyst position working on Trespass and Land Acquisition issues for the district (and the UP)! Darrell began working with us on 2/17/15.
- **Bewabic State Park** Ranger Louise Hunt is currently at the PRD law academy and will be graduating 3/20/15.
- **Fort Wilkins Historic State Park** Supervisor position is vacant as of 3/2/15. Position is posted and planned to be back filled asap. Rob Strittmatter, former supervisor at Fort Wilkins, accepted a manager position with Mackinaw Historic State Park.
- **Menominee State Recreation Area** was given approval to fill a new Ranger position. Applications are due by 3/5/15 and interviews will follow. In previous years the Rec Area has been maintained by short-term workers, they will continue to assist and, with a Ranger in place, we will have a law enforcement presence in the area for the first time. In addition, the Ranger will be able to complete some of the administrative requirements, giving some relief to Bewabic SP staff.
- **Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park** Supervisor 10 opening was posted on NEOGOV from January 29th to February 12th.

- **Van Riper State Park** Matthew Topp hired for Ranger-E position. Michael Knack took a Ranger-A position with Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.

➤ **Other Issues, Challenges or Items of Note**

- Conducted research at the Gogebic County Courthouse and have identified lands still owned by Union Pacific RR near Wakefield. Now in a position to prepare and present an "acquisition packet" to Union Pacific for their consideration. Previous conversations with them have been favorable.
- Recently met with a private landowner in Gogebic County to discuss the acquisition of a portion of the former RR grade for the Stateline Trail near Wakefield.

➤ **General Trails Info**

- **Ongoing Projects**

1. Menominee River Bridge: A \$70,000 grant was attained through a RTP grant for engineering on the Menominee River Bridge. Efforts are still underway to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Wisconsin and then put new decking and railing on the bridge to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, ORV's, etc.
2. Stateline Trail Connector – Wakefield to Bessemer: We are working on purchasing easements to complete the segment of trail between Korpala Road and Bessemer.
3. Houghton to Chassell rail-trail: Brushing was completed this fall on portions of the trail. We are working on a lease arrangement where Portage Twp. and the City of Houghton would lease the segments of rail-trail in their respective municipalities.

- **Successes**

1. Brule River Bridge – Connection near Iron River between Wisconsin's Nicolet State Trail and Michigan's Stateline trail now complete. This has been over 8 years in the making. This project was grant funded with ORV dollars and RTP dollars. This was a collaborative effort between Michigan, Wisconsin, Florence County, and Iron County.

- **Event Permits**

1. Mountain Skillz: Off trail snowmobile event in Houghton County will be occurring in March. This will be carefully monitored and a chance to offer education to off trail riders regarding trespass, noise pollution, resource damage, and use conflicts.
2. Sled Dog Events: 3 Sled dog races were permitted in the WUP from January-March where the event used portions of groomed snowmobile trails.
3. Snow Bike: One snow bike race was permitted in February that utilized a portion of groomed snowmobile trail. Feedback was mostly positive.

- **ORV Trails**

1. **ORV Trail and Route Development Updates WUP**

- Regionally for the WUP the following proposals have recently been approved or are in the works
- Powers-Arnold ORV Route: Approved and signage will occur this spring.
- Ishpeming-Republic ORV Route: Approved and signage will occur this spring/summer pending land use rule status.
- Lake Linden ORV Route: Approved and signage will occur this spring.
- Gwinn-Arnold ORV Route: Under review.
- Ontonagon-Rockland ORV Route and Snowmobile Trail: Under review.
- Veterans Park ORV and Snowmobile Trailhead located in Powers: Under review.
- Days River ORV Route: Under review.
- Pioneer Extension: Under review.
- Bewabic State Park ORV Connector and Access: In process pending land use rule change.
- Keweenaw ORV Community Connectors: Six routes total in process or under review.
- Wisconsin Border (Land O' Lakes, WI) to Watersmeet-Bond Falls: In process awaiting landowner permissions.
- Sands-Gwinn ORV Route: In process awaiting landowner permissions.

2. **ORV Projects/Grants for 2015**

WUP Projects scheduled for this summer:

- Norway ORV Trail Improvements: Decking and water drainage work.
- Pioneer Route Assessment: Phase 100-500 design plans for necessary route surface and drainage improvements.

- WUP Dust Control: Routine dust treatment at 17 sites along state designated ORV routes.
 - ORV Route Grading: Machine grading multiple state designated ORV routes to provide a smoother riding surface and to promote proper water drainage.
 - St. Louis Creek Box Culvert: Replace large box culvert on Lake Linden ORV Route, route will be rerouted during project.
 - USFS Travel Analysis Plan: Provided GPS files and information on potential/proposed ORV routes to be included into the Hiawatha West Unit's review process.
 - Scott Falls Culvert: Replace failed culvert on Marquette-Manistique Trail. Blocked culvert impedes water flow to the popular Scott Falls. Project was pending DEQ public notice and comment period which is now complete.
3. Program staff is in the process of reviewing and approving internal ORV Trail Improvement Fund Grants for 2015. We will be reviewing and making recommendations on additional projects with the ORV Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW) during the March 11th meeting in Lansing. The goal is to implement showcase type on-the-ground projects, utilizing the ORV fund balance that will benefit the ORV riding community and address maintenance and environmental needs.
- **Snowmobile Trails**
 1. Trail 11 South from Wakefield to Winchester WI Remains Closed:
 2. Decibel Enforcement: Sound level patrols by our Law Enforcement Division are helping us sustain positive working relationships with property owners and people living in communities near snowmobile trails.
 3. Groomer Breakdowns: There have been a number of groomer breakdowns this year causing certain trails to be ungroomed for periods of time. We are working with our grant sponsors, the Michigan Snowmobile Association, and equipment companies to develop a better maintenance system on our groomers.
 - **Equestrian Trails**
 1. New Signage: We have developed some new signing for shared use trails in Marquette County.
 2. Simar Campground Proposal: This is still under review but near approval stage. This would be a new campground for equestrians in Ontonagon County.
 3. Thunder Valley Trail Proposal: This is a proposed connector trail in Sands Township, Marquette County. The proposal needs permission from private landowners in order to be approved.
 - **Pathways**
 1. Keweenaw Bike/Hike Pathway – Copper Harbor to High Rock: This proposal has been entered in the trail proposal database and is being reviewed. This would be a bike and hike trail from Copper Harbor to High Rock Bay developed mostly on State lands.
 2. LPI Project: There is a mountain bike trail that is being proposed for the Little Presque Isle tract north of Marquette.

➤ **Planning**

- Oman Creek groin/jetty engineering and design is being pursued primarily for shoreline protection of the Boating Access Site. There is currently no dedicated construction funding for this project and the results of the engineering and design will be used to garner the necessary funds.
- Engineering and Design continues on the Union Bay Boating Access Site rehabilitation project. Construction funding has been awarded and late summer early fall construction is anticipated. The project focuses on two primary defects of the site which include low water depths causing difficulty in launching vessels and limited parking for vehicles with trailers.
- Porcupine Mountains Winter Sports Complex is currently undergoing engineering and design of the Ski Chalet building. This work is focused on addressing multiple roofing system problems which have resulted in numerous leaks caused primarily by ice damming. The design efforts will address the need for new roofing material as well as defects in the insulation of the structure. Construction funding has not been dedicated however the results of the engineering/design will be used to seek funds.
- Multiple smaller scope projects are in the planning and construction phases throughout the district including many listed in the individual unit reports and planning section is working with the units to insure quality and compliance.

Forest Resources Division: Jeff Stampfly, Eastern/Acting Western UP Supervisor

- The 2017 Year of Entry (YOE) inventory is underway with staff gathering field information. The next open houses will be in the Baraga Unit on June 23rd in the West UP and in the Sault Ste. Marie Unit on June 24th and 25th in the East UP. Other unit open house and compartment review schedules are posted online, along with other state forest inventory information at: Michigan.Gov/Forestry.
- The East UP District Supervisor position has been permanently filled by Jeff Stampfly. He will continue to cover the West UP district supervisor position until it's filled in mid to late March. The Gwinn Unit Manager position has been filled by Thomas Seablom. Tom has been with the DNR since 2004 starting as the West UP District Roving Forester in Crystal Falls. He has served as a Unit Forester in Ishpeming and as the West UP District Timber Management Specialist. Tom is a graduate of Michigan Technological University.
- With Tom's promotion we have put an acting Timber Management Specialist in place to get us through planting season. Bob Tylka from the Shingleton Management Unit will be covering these duties through the spring.
- As of February 11th, we have 555 open timber sale contracts UP-wide. This represents 65,046.1 acres of timber valued at approximately \$47.7 million.
- Timber sale interest is strong to steady in most areas of the UP. Only one sale has been reported as going No Bid. This sale was a beech selvage on Drummond Island and not reflective of our normal sale offerings.
- Forest Resources fire staff has been busy throughout the winter preparing equipment and making plans for the upcoming fire season. The S-290 Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior fire training was held in December (FRD and Wildlife Division (WLD) folks) and S-390 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations fire training was held in January for the entire state (FRD folks). Several UP staff attended these trainings to enhance their qualifications and knowledge. Spring Fire Meetings in the West and East UP were held on the 3rd and 4th of March.
- With Snowmobiling season in full swing FRD Staff have been working with the Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) and the clubs to ensure safety as well as assisting on operational issues. For more information on the snowmobile trail system visit: Michigan.gov/Snowmobiling.
- Volunteers responsible for the grooming the Paradise Ski Trails have recently organized and are in the process of forming a new association called The Tahquamenon Country Pathways Association. FRD and PRD staff are involved with this group as advisory members.
- FRD and WLD are working this winter on plans for the GEM areas (Grouse Enhanced Management Area) that are located across the UP. For more information on GEM's visit: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10363_10958_10967-334352--,00.html.
- The State Forest Health Specialist reports, spruce budworm will likely continue impacting our spruce/fir resources. To date, the impacts have been difficult to predict, affecting some localities more than others. The long range forecast includes a long-lasting regional outbreak that will impact older (>60 years old) spruce/fir stands the most. A second concern is continuing impacts of the Eastern Larch Bark Beetle. If you have tamarack (eastern larch) stands, be on the lookout for pockets of mortality that often start on the stand edge. From these pockets, the ELB often moves into the stand causing significant mortality. The Western UP has many EAB free counties. This is likely to change in the not too distant future. We would greatly appreciate any reports of suspected EAB activity in these un-quarantined counties. Eastern Marquette County has a significant American beech resource which has not yet been affected by beech bark disease. Again, this is likely to change in the not too distant future and reports would be appreciated. Lastly, the 2014 Forest Health Highlights have been released, and cover these and many other Forest Health Issues in more depth. The 2014 Forest Health Highlights can be found at: Michigan.gov/foresthealth.

Fisheries Division: Eastern & Western U.P.

➤ Eastern Field Units – Steve Scott

- Staff have been busy entering collected information in our computers and analyzing the information for summary. Fish scales are also being prepared and read to determine age and growth rates of those fish collected. Equipment and net repairs continue also. The lakes have good ice conditions and many anglers are enjoying fishing opportunities this winter. Moderate to good catches have been reported. Staff have participated in the Lake Superior Technical Committee, Basin Team meeting, Forest Certification meeting, and department-wide meeting.
- **Cormorant control funds have been secured for this coming season (2015) and the same level of activity should occur this year that has been conducted in the past.**

➤ Western Lake Superior Management Unit – George Madison

- Attended Michigan DEQ public hearing for water discharge permit for the Lundin/Eagle Humboldt mill
- Developed fisheries management prescriptions and stocking proposals for numerous western UP lakes and streams
- Finalized the Fisheries 2016 Western Lake Superior Management Unit workplan
- Hosted a joint agency workshop with US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Michigan DEQ Water Resources Division, and Michigan DNR Fisheries Division
- Attended a Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission spear fishing safe-harvest allocation quota meeting
- Presented a “State of the West UP Fisheries” presentation for the Central Upper Peninsula Sports Fishing Association
- Attended a “Dog attack prevention” workshop
- Met with NRC Commissioners Richardson and Matonich to discuss current fisheries management topics for the western UP.
- Reviewed numerous DEQ permit applications for seawall construction projects, due to the increased water level of Lake Superior.
- Ice fishing for lake trout, whitefish, burbot, rainbow smelt, and splake has been very popular on Keweenaw Bay, and Coho and whitefish are being caught at Marquette’s upper harbor.
- 2015 fishing license sales began on March 1st, with the new license season being in effect on April 1st. Anglers purchasing a 2015 fishing license in March can fish the remainder of the 2014 season with their 2015 license. Changes from last year include a 10% discount on the price of the nonresident annual fishing.

➤ Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit – George Madison/Darren Kramer

- Assisted Wildlife Unlimited on Michigamme Reservoir and Fortune Pond with the construction of Brush Bundles, Assist USFS with the construction of fish cribs on Hagerman Lake
- Stocked 3,000 yearling splake in Mirror Lake of the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness Area, by snowmobile with winter fish transport unit.
- Office and shop work- data entry, aging, equipment repair and maintenance.
- Preparing for spring walleye egg take on Little Bay de Noc and steelhead egg take at the Little Manistee weir.
- Staff have been busy with survey data entry, equipment repair, and survey report writing.
- Technician and biologist staff have also recently completed training opportunities and attended annual winter meetings.
- In the process of hiring seasonal workers for field surveys and the Brian Creek & Twomile Creek creel surveys.
- Partnered with the USFS-Ottawa National Forest to complete fish crib projects on Lake Ottawa and Hagerman Lake, Iron County.
- Partnered with the Western Lake Superior Management Unit with a winter splake stocking effort.
- The NLMMU will host a “Coffee and Conversations” meeting held in Iron Mountain at the Bay College West Campus on April 2nd from 6:30pm-8:00pm in room 231-A. Topics will include: proposed fisheries regulation changes for 2016; highlight new fishing regulations for 2015; NLMMU updates; and a general Q&A period.

➤ Marquette and Thompson Fish Hatcheries – Jan VanAmberg, Manager

- Marquette Hatchery
 - Recruiting to hire a full time trades helper to assist with maintenance at the hatchery.
 - Last phase of construction planned for this summer to finish securing outside raceway buildings with fencing.
 - Cold summer and cold winter has resulted in smaller lake trout, splake and brook trout but all groups are healthy.
 - 3,000 splake stocked through the ice at Mirror Lake on 3/4/15 with assistance from Crystal Falls fisheries staff.
 - Expect all spring fish stocking requests to be met.

- Expect clearance from state vet to allow stocking the remaining lots of fish by the end of March.
- Fish planting season to start as soon as roads clear up and waters open.
- Thompson Hatchery
 - First phase of construction planned for this summer to enclose and secure outside raceway buildings.
 - Expect all spring fish stocking requests to be met.
 - Expect clearance from state vet to allow stocking of steelhead, Chinook and brown trout by the end of March.
 - Fish planting season to start as soon as roads clear up and waters open.

Wildlife Division: Terry Minzey, Wildlife Supervisor (Eastern & Western UP) (prepared by Dusty Arsnoe, Wildlife Biologist and Craig Albright, Field Operations Manager - Escanaba)

- **Deer Winter Condition Assessments:** Weekly snow depth measurements are being collected by Wildlife staff at 16 sites across the U.P. Current snow depths are 20-30 inches in many localities, and total accumulated snowfall since November is above the 10-year average for the region. Wildlife staff is evaluating deer distribution and condition in deer wintering complexes prior to spring breakup.
- **Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHIPI):** This is the 7th year of availability of state “Deer Range Improvement Program” funds for projects on lands other than state forest. DHIPI is a grant program designed to foster productive relationships between the DNR, sportsmen’s organizations, and other partners to improve deer habitat by a variety of methods, such as tree planting and herbaceous seeding. Twelve proposals for funding were received by the Feb. 28th deadline, and successful grant recipients will be notified shortly.
- **U.P. Habitat Workgroup:** The Upper Peninsula Habitat Workgroup has reconvened with new members and a renewed mission focused on improving and conserving critical U.P. winter deer habitat. The workgroup, comprised of natural resource professionals, private landowners and sportsmen's groups, is led by Natural Resources Commission member J.R. Richardson of Ontonagon and Jim Hammill of Crystal Falls, a wildlife management consultant. The goal is to develop deer winter range improvement strategies across all land ownerships in the U.P. and to implement management plans for individual deer wintering complexes.
- **UP Grouse Enhanced Management System (GEMS):** Wildlife Division is gearing up to develop 5 new GEMS in the U.P. by September bringing the total on state land to 10. In addition, 4 GEMS will likely be ready on national forest, county, and commercial forest lands. GEMS provide walk-in access to land intensively managed for ruffed grouse hunting, and they promote early successional habitat that benefits numerous other species, such as woodcock, wild turkey, and snowshoe hare.
- **State Forest Habitat Projects:** Wildlife personnel are finalizing their 2015 plans for habitat improvement projects across the UP. This year more than 12,000 oak and crabapple trees will be planted to increase food resources for deer and other wildlife. Forest openings and food plots will be created to improve wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. We are striving to build relationships with local sportsman organizations, and many partnerships have been created to help complete these projects.
- **Sportsman Coalition Meetings:** Wildlife staff met with 5 of the 7 sportsman coalitions that have been active in the region during the week of March 9th. These quarterly meetings, which are open to the public, foster information exchange and build relationships among sportsmen and Wildlife managers. The schedule of meetings can be viewed on the DNR website public calendar: [Public Meetings Calendar](#)
- **Wild Turkey Management:** The annual U.P. Turkey Partners Meeting will be held March 25th at the DNR’s Escanaba Field Office. The group will look at past hunting season statistics, review regulations, and discuss future habitat improvement projects. The 2015 spring turkey season runs from April 20 to May 31 in the U.P. Left-over licenses are plentiful and will go on sale to the public March 16th.
- **Waterfowl Management:** A statewide meeting of the Citizen’s Waterfowl Advisory Committee (CWAC) was held March 7th in Roscommon. Participants reviewed last year’s waterfowl season and discussed hunting season considerations for 2015 and beyond. The U.P. has 3 members on this committee to represent waterfowl enthusiasts in the western, central, and eastern portions of the peninsula.

- **White Nose Syndrome in Bats:** This winter significant mortality and widespread infections of White Nose Syndrome (WNS) have been observed in bats. Winter hibernacula surveys indicate the disease has continued spread to additional locations throughout MI. Surveys done in 2015 have detected WNS at new locations. Counties with confirmed WNS include Alger, Clare, Dickinson, Houghton, Keweenaw, Mackinaw, and Ontonagon.
- **Wolf Legal Status:** On Feb. 27, 2015 the MI DNR filed an appeal of a December 2014 federal district court ruling that returned wolves in Michigan and Wisconsin to the federal endangered species list and wolves in Minnesota to threatened species status. The appeal – filed by the Michigan Attorney General in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia – asks the court to uphold the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's December 2011 decision that removed the Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of wolves from the federal endangered species list. The DNR will argue against the court's ruling that wolves must recover across their historic range – which includes the lower 48 states and Mexico – before Michigan's wolf population can be removed from the federal endangered species list. In addition, the state will argue against the court's conclusion that the USFWS failed to demonstrate that Michigan's laws and regulations adequately protect the wolf population within Michigan.
- **Wolf Management Plan Update:** The DNR has completed a draft update of the 2008 Michigan Wolf Management Plan and is seeking public comment during a 30-day period beginning March 4th. The 2008 Plan was created using extensive public input to identify issues and assess public attitudes toward wolves. The DNR received more than 3,000 responses to a survey regarding implementation of the 2008 plan. Based on those responses and internal review of the document, a draft updated plan was completed and is available for public review. The [draft updated plan](#) and the [2008 Summary of Management Accomplishments](#) document are available for download at Michigan.gov/wolves. Send comments on the draft updated plan to DNR-Wildlife@michigan.gov or via U.S. mail to DNR Wildlife Division, P.O. Box 30444, Lansing MI 48909. Comments must be received no later than April 3.
- **Wildlife Division Strategic Plan Update:** A statewide workgroup has been created to update the Wildlife Division's strategic plan—"Guiding Principles and Strategies (GPS)". Wildlife staff, conservation groups, the Natural Resources Commission, and others will be involved in the update process which is scheduled to be complete in December 2015. The updated GPS will provide a framework of principles to prioritize work, and will outline strategies to reach future goals of the Wildlife Division.

Law Enforcement Division: Lt. Skip Hagy, District Law Supervisor (Eastern UP/District 2)

Great snow and ice conditions continue to give us an abundance of snowmobilers, fisherman and predator hunters with many folks braving the sub-zero temps to do it.

Law Division's latest Recruit School which began on January 4th is still underway at this time. The school began with 44 recruits and as of this writing we are at 38, upon graduation in June some of the new officers will join the ranks in the District.

A Snowmobile enforcement training course was held for new officers from across the state at the end of February. 33 officers went through the course held in Newberry. On one of the nights it was -27 while officers were out training.

Below are some of the activities our District offices have been involved in since the last CAC.

- Following up on complaints from the community, COs Robert Crisp, Acting Sgt. Jerrold Fitzgibbon and Rob Freeborn conducted a group snowmobile patrol in the Alger County area. During the patrol COs Crisp and Freeborn were watching a stop sign and observed a group of snowmobiles approaching, beginning to slow down when the rear sled accelerated and passed the entire group running the stop sign at approximately 60 mph. COs pursued the sled at speeds in excess of 80 mph in a posted 30 mph zone. The snowmobile was stopped at the next intersection and enforcement action was taken.
- CO Robert Crisp was returning home from a day at court when he came upon a personal injury accident on M28 near Munising. CO Crisp checked on injuries, notified Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and rendered necessary first aid until other units arrived.

- CO Robert Crisp worked an afternoon shift during a massive winter storm that hit the Alger County area. CO Crisp responded to an accident where the highway travels along the lake shore with no protection from the elements. Conditions were white-out with zero visibility. CO Crisp tended to the accident victims, notified Alger dispatch and then made the decision to close the roadway to prevent further accidents and injuries until the scene had been cleared and the zero visibility subsided.
- Conservation officers Rob Freeborn, Mike Evink, Jared Ferguson, John Wenzel, and Jerrold Fitzgibbon worked a group patrol on the waters of Lake Michigan. Two officers worked Big Bay De Noc, and the other three worked Little Bay De Noc. Almost 200 anglers were contacted with several violations encountered. Tickets were issued for fishing without licenses, fishing too many lines, unregistered snowmobile, no ORV license, and using illegal device to fish.
- While patrolling Little Bay De Noc, near Saunders Point, CO John Wenzel contacted two individuals lifting a gill net and then began lifting a second net. Only one of the individuals was able to produce a valid tribal Identification card and the other individual admitted to not being a tribal member. A ticket was issued to the nontribal member for using illegal fishing gear and a case report detailing the additional tribal violations will be forwarded to the tribe prosecution.
- Several hundred people attended a public hearing in Newberry regarding the proposed Graymont Limestone Mine project in the Rexton area. Conservation Officers along with representatives from the other Department of Natural Resource Divisions were on hand to answer any questions about the proposed project.
- CO Jerrold Fitzgibbon attended a Wildlife Coalition meeting in Shingleton. The meetings are an opportunity for the area sportsmen to hear about timely issues from the DNR and voice their concerns to the DNR on a local level. It was attended by 19 area sportsmen.
- While on routine snowmobile patrol CO Rob Freeborn observed a snowmobile traveling without a trail permit. Upon stopping the snowmobile, the driver stated that he had it in his wallet and had not yet stuck it on his snowmobile. The driver also had an expired driver's license. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO John Wenzel, along with a Federal Forest Officer, gave a group of park service employees training on cold weather survival and the basics of off trail snowmobile riding. The class consisted of basic winter survival techniques, shelter building and off trail self-recovery methods for snowmobiles.
- CO John Wenzel spoke to a trapping safety class at the DNR Pocket Park. There were about 30 students in the class, mostly adults. CO Wenzel spoke about and answered questions about trapping laws.
- CO Michael Evink was working a patrol on Indian Lake when he heard regional dispatch calling for assistance. Officer Evink abruptly ended his patrol to assist the Michigan State Police (MSP) and Manistique Public Safety with an accident on US-2 that closed the highway for close to five hours.
- CO Jon Busken received a complaint of an individual keeping a deer as a pet. CO Busken made contact with the landowner who had recently purchased the home. When he moved in he found his front door open and a yearling deer in his living room. The deer had returned several times but he had not let it in.
- While on Patrol in Mackinac County CO Jon Busken was passed by a snowmobile at a high rate of speed. Contact was made with the operator who was operating on a public roadway without a trail permit. Further investigation revealed that the registration on the snowmobile was expired by more than two years. CO Busken asked the driver if he owned the snowmobile and he replied, "We own it but it might not be registered to us yet." The operator was elusive as to when his family purchased the snowmobile. It was ultimately discovered the snowmobile was purchased approximately two years ago and the registration had not been transferred. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Jon Busken was on patrol south of Newberry when a snowmobiler approached to ask for directions. Afterwards he asked if anyone was foolish enough to actually drive with an expired registration or old trail permit. While explaining this to the snowmobiler three snowmobiles approached a nearby stop sign. CO Busken stopped the snowmobiles after noting

several violations. All three snowmobiles were expired with expiration dates of 2012 and 2007, while one had never been registered. Also, none of the three snowmobiles had valid trail permits. Enforcement action was taken.

- CO Jon Busken was on patrol near Newberry and made contact with several snowmobilers from Indiana. One of the snowmobilers was operating a snowmobile bearing an expired Minnesota Registration. The snowmobiler said he purchased the snowmobile two years ago in a parking lot and never transferred the title. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Jon Busken made contact with snowmobiler operating a snowmobile without a valid registration. The operator stated he had recently bought the snowmobile and wanted to make sure it ran right before he registered it. He later confessed that he had purchased the snowmobile more than a year ago. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Jon Busken was discussing snowmobile regulations with several riders at a Mackinac County gas station. He observed a snowmobile operator sitting on her snowmobile just across the road. The operator started her snowmobile when CO Busken began leaving the gas station. Upon seeing the officer taking the same trail the operator left the trail and started riding along the power line. CO Busken followed her route across the power lines and a frozen lake. CO Busken made contact with the operator and discovered she did not have a valid trail permit. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Kevin Postma contacted an angler as he pulled up to his fishing shanty for the afternoon bite. CO Postma checked the angler's license and then asked to look in his fishing shanty for unattended lines. The subject advised CO Postma that he had forgotten his key and his wife would be out shortly with it. CO Postma advised the angler that he didn't mind waiting with him for his wife to show up. CO Postma then asked if there would be a set line in the shanty when his wife arrives with the key. The subject advised there would be and then proceeded to open the shanty. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Kevin Postma contacted two anglers as they were arriving at their ice shanty for the afternoon bite. Licenses were checked along with the shanty to check for set lines. Both anglers assured the CO that there were no set lines in the shanty. CO Postma checked three lines that were down only six inches. A fourth line 4.5 feet down with a baited hook was pulled up by CO Postma. The owner of the line advised that he thought it was up far enough. CO Postma explained to the angler that a baited line 4.5 feet down in five feet of water was fishing. Enforcement action was taken.
- COs Robert Watson and Jon Busken were patrolling along a well-used snowmobile trail, making multiple contacts throughout the day. During their patrol, contact was made with an individual who had no visible registration on his snowmobile. The individual claimed that the sled had been registered in Wisconsin and that he had left the sticker and paperwork at his hotel. After checking the VIN through dispatch it was discovered that the sled was not registered. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Robert Watson was patrolling in the town of Paradise in response to multiple complaints of snowmobilers speeding through town and failing to stop at stop signs. CO Watson observed three snowmobilers approach a stop sign. The first two sleds came to a complete stop and began scanning in both directions for traffic, while the third sled maneuvered around the stopped sleds, continuing through the stop sign and failing to stop and look for traffic. CO Watson stopped the careless operator and enforcement action was taken.
- CO Robert Watson responded to a complaint of an individual harassing anglers on Big Manistique Lake. CO Watson made contact with the complainants who stated they thought they were fishing near a friend's permanent shanty, when an individual approached them aggressively and began harassing them about fishing too close to his shanty. The two fishing parties shared a heated exchange. The complainant's fishing party gathered their equipment and left the area after the owner of the shanty claimed that he would take care of them and entered his shanty. Statements were gathered from both parties, and evidence will be presented to the prosecutor for further action.
- CO Jeff Panich was checking ice fisherman near Cedarville when he pulled up to a portable shanty with tip-ups out. A check of the area revealed no one was around. The CO checked the tip-ups, all were baited, so after pictures were taken, the tip-ups were confiscated and a notice was put in the shanty. CO Panich left the area and sometime later two snowmobiles flew by him and cut him off forcing the CO to stop his sled. One man started yelling at the CO and then realized he was an officer. The subject slumped his shoulders and said he believed they might be in trouble. The two fishermen followed the

CO's tracks leaving their shanty, and assumed someone stole their tip-ups. The CO thanked the men for their speedy response in identifying themselves as suspects in the case. Enforcement action was taken.

- CO Jon Busken was checking ice fishermen on Millecoquin Lake when he encountered a group of 4 anglers. One angler stated she did not need a fishing license because she was 16. When asked what year she was born she had difficulty remembering the year. Further investigation revealed the anglers true age and she was required to have a fishing license which she knew. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Jon Busken was patrolling Seney when he noted a snowmobile with a strange looking Trail Permit. Upon closer inspection it was discovered to be an ORV License, the out of state subject was trying to save money by purchasing a less expensive ORV License. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Jon Busken was following up on a complaint when he observed a snowmobile roll over in front of his patrol vehicle. He stopped to render aid, it is believed that the occupant lost consciousness prior to the accident. She was transported by paramedics to the local hospital for medical care.
- CO's Brett Gustafson, Mike Hammill, John Wenzel and Mark Leadman served as instructors at the Basic Snowmobile Training school. Training was held in Newberry and 32 Officers were trained over 3 sessions. Students were trained on Law, Maintenance and Operation. Students endured extreme weather conditions during the class with temperatures reaching -27 degrees during one of the trail rides.
- CO Jared Ferguson while working a group patrol on Little Bay De Noc drove his snowmobile up to a shack off Saunders point. The fishermen apparently thought he was "alone" and had a total of 7 lines out. A ticket was issued for fishing with too many lines a reminder that there is always someone watching.
- CO Jared Ferguson while working a group patrol on Little Bay De Noc checked a group of three fishermen in the head of the bay. They had a total of 15 lines out. They all quickly passed responsibility to 2 friends who had gone to town to eat dinner a couple hours ago. Further investigation led the Officer to a vehicle about ½ mile away stuck in a snow bank. It was one of the fishermen returning to the party. The 5th had decided to stay at the hotel for the evening. Enforcement action was taken for leaving lines unattended.
- CO Robert Crisp responded to a personal injury snowmobile accident on Trial 417 and Deerton Road. Upon arriving on scene, CO Crisp found first responders administering CPR and immediately assisted with the CPR. After approximately 20 minutes CO Crisp and other first responders carried the victim to a waiting ambulance. It was later found that that the victim did not survive the crash. This was the second fatal snowmobile accident in Alger County in three days. Speed was the main factor in both accidents.
- CO Robert Crisp was the only officer on in Alger County during a snow storm on a Sunday. CO Crisp responded to several vehicle accidents, including a truck and trailer accident that blocked a lane on M28 for over an hour.
- CO Robert Crisp and CO Rob Freeborn conducted snowmobile patrols on Saturday and Sunday over the past weekend in Alger County. The two officers put almost 225miles on their snowmobiles, working Grand Marais to Munising Bay and all trails in between, many contacts were made however no citations were issued.
- CO Michael Evink had a busy Saturday. His day began by participating in a little jigger's youth fishing derby in Manistique. Following the youth derby CO Evink assisted with a hunter's education class at the DNR pocket park in Escanaba. After the conclusion of hunters education CO Michael Evink conducted a patrol on Little Bay De Noc.
- CO's Michael Evink and Mike Hammill responded to a motorist in distress call, the subjects had followed a route directed by their GPS which took them down a groomed snowmobile trail and became stuck on the trail. The officers found the motorist, and with some assistance, were able to get them unstuck and back on their way.
- CO Robert Freeborn assisted MSP and Manistique Public Safety with a snowmobile vs pedestrian PDA in the town of Manistique. Both parties were uninjured.

- While on routine patrol CO Rob Freeborn was stopped at a red light on US2 in Gladstone when he observed a tractor trailer still traveling at a high rate of speed coming up behind him. As the CO watched the tractor trailer get close to the rear of his patrol truck, the semi swerved around CO Freeborn at the last second and went through the red light. Luckily there weren't any cars crossing at this time. CO Freeborn was able to stop the semi. A citation was issued to the driver who stated that the light snuck up on him.
- While checking fishermen on the ice off of Kipling, CO Rob Freeborn and Acting Sgt Jerrold Fitzgibbon watched an ORV pull up to an ice shack. The rider observed the officers at a nearby shack and just sat there. When the officer approached the rider stated he had come out to check the ice conditions. He claimed the shack was his but didn't have a key to it and hadn't intended to go into it. Sgt Fitzgibbon recognized the behavior, as he'd seen it many times before. A quick peak under the side of the shack revealed the "set line" the fisherman didn't want the officers to find. A key quickly came out to allow the officers access without moving the shack. A baited hook had been fishing for long enough to freeze 1/2 inch of ice in the hole of his shack. A ticket was issued for fishing with unattended line.

Remember the best lesson you can share with a new hunter or fisherman is leading by example when you do things right!

Law Enforcement Division: Lt. Pete Wright, District Law Supervisor (Western UP/District 1)

District 1 conservation officers have been aggressively enforcing the sound decibel limit law regarding snowmobiles. To date they have issued 11 tickets and 7 warnings with another group patrol planned for the upcoming weekend. In addition, numerous tickets/warnings for an assortment of revenue and operation related violations have been addressed as well. The support of the local courts has been crucial in this endeavor as several tickets have been fought and lost by the operators of the sleds in question.

Recruit School #6, which started on January 4th with 44 recruits is progressing well. They are 8 weeks into the 22 week academy with 39 recruit conservation officers remaining. I have heard good reports as to the quality of candidate and am looking forward to them hitting the field. As of this writing it is too early for field assignments to have been made. I am hopeful that District one will see a few more officers added to the district this fall. In addition to this, I am hopeful that I can get the 3rd Sergeant vacancy filled in Baraga that has been sitting empty for the last 3 years.

The following are some examples of the work District 1 conservation officers have been engaged in recently:

- CO's Elton Luce, Mark Leadman and Dave Miller participated in a search and rescue readiness exercise that simulated a plane crash in a remote area of Marquette County. The exercise was a joint effort with the Marquette County Sheriff's Department, Marquette County Search and Rescue, U.S. Coast Guard and DNR Forest Resources Management. GPS coordinates were given to the group and an outstanding response time was achieved by the responding agencies.
- CO Brian Bacon responded to the scene of a serious snowmobile accident in Iron County. The operator lost control of his snowmobile on a corner and crashed into a tree. The accident scene was five miles from the nearest road access, and CO Bacon assisted with getting EMS personnel to the scene.
- CO Grant Emery worked snowmobile activity along the trail system near Lake Gogebic. Five subjects were cited for unregistered snowmobiles, failure to purchase a trail permit and careless operation.
- CO Brian Lasanen conducted a patrol on Lake Gogebic targeting anglers. Numerous fishermen were contacted. One subject that was contacted stated that he had not caught any fish. As CO Lasanen spoke with the angler he heard what sounded like a fish flopping around in the anglers shack. The subject then stated that he forgot about catching the fish that was identified as an undersized walleye. Appropriate law enforcement action was taken.
- CO David Miller interviewed and obtained a confession from a subject that used a crossbow to take an antlerless deer inside the Village of L'Anse. CO Miller located and seized the crossbow and appropriate enforcement action was taken with the subject.
- CO Elton Luce and CO Mark Leadman found a number of trapping violations walking into sets in a desolate area in Marquette County. The next day CO Mark Leadman was able to make contact with the trapper near the same location. In addition to addressing the trapping violations discovered the previous day CO Leadman addressed the loaded firearm in a motor vehicle that the trapper also was in possession of.
- CO Grant Emery worked snowmobile activity along the Michigan/Wisconsin border near Ironwood. Heavy snowmobile activity was reported. A total of 117 contacts were made with 9 tickets and 23 verbal warnings issued.

Marketing & Outreach Division: Jon Spieles, Statewide Interpretive Manager

- Through the past two months more than 4,500 participants have tried ice fishing and spearing, snowshoeing, learned to carve spearing decoys, called owls or participated in other great nature-based programs around the state with DNR interpretive programs.
- Free fishing weekend activities were severely curtailed this winter as ultra-cold and windy conditions made programming on the open ice unsafe. We did stick to programs that had been scheduled, but only where indoor alternatives existed. More than 350 participants attended programming at five locations around the state.
- The Explorer Program hiring is in full swing for 45 State Parks around the state. Seasonal Interpreters will be hired and trained to lead all kinds of nature-based campground programs for summer visitors. Through the summer, this group of energetic employees will present more than 3,000 programs for about 50,000 visitors.
- Marketing and Outreach Division staff is in the midst of the show season. MOD staff attends many outdoor shows through the winter representing all divisions. The most recognizable shows include Outdoorama, Grand Rapids Boat, Show Ultimate Fishing Show, and the Ultimate Sport Show. We will also participate at the Marquette Boat and RV Show later this month in the UP. Contact at these events exceeds 300,000 customers through the season.
- Marketing and Outreach Division staff continues to collaborate with Parks and Recreation Division to complete exhibits for the Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit, the Ludington Beach House Visitor Center and smaller projects around the state. Interactive exhibits, wayside (or trailside) exhibits and educational publications including State Park newspapers are all on track to be ready for the upcoming summer season.



"REPEAT AFTER ME: AT LEAST WE DON'T GET HURRICANES...
AT LEAST WE DON'T GET HURRICANES... AT LEAST..."