



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: July 25, 2016
RESUBMITTED: August 15, 2016

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Order to Restrict the Use of Motorized Vehicles on Specific Hunting Trails in the Cedar River Grouse Enhanced Management System, Garden Grade Grouse Enhanced Management System, and the Melstrand Grouse Enhanced Management System
Land Use Orders of the Director Amendment No. 9 of 2016

Authority:

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

Discussion and Background:

Grouse Enhanced Management Systems (GEMS) are a collection of intensively managed lands spread across the State of Michigan. The GEMS bring attention to Michigan's outstanding upland bird hunting opportunities through the creation of a series of walk-in access hunting trails. A majority of these hunting trails are the result of past logging activities that were specifically designed to offer leisurely walk-in access to hunters by providing minimal terrain challenges and easy trail and road grades. Currently, most of the hunting trails allow motorized vehicle access, which degrades the conditions of walk-in access hunting trails. The Department recommends restricting the use of motorized vehicles on specific hunting trails in three GEMS located in the Upper Peninsula; the Cedar River GEMS, the Garden Grade GEMS, and the Melstrand GEMS.

These restrictions are highly recommended for a variety of reasons. The trails are routinely used by traveling wing-shooters, mentored youth, and aging hunters who are no longer able to navigate the thick brush associated with grouse and woodcock hunting. The trails also provide wildlife viewing opportunities for additional game and non-game species. In addition, trees along the trails provide food and habitat for wildlife species. The proposed closures to motorized vehicles will protect the potential for motorized vehicle accidents and protect wildlife habitat. Closing specific hunting trails to motorized vehicles will also allow the Department to properly manage GEMS hunting trails for their primary purpose; to provide quality, walk-in hunting opportunities for hunters pursuing ruffed grouse, woodcock and other wildlife species.

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The Department recommends the following:

- A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Cedar River Grouse Enhanced Management System, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 5, 6, 7, and 8, T35N, R25W, and sections 1 and 12, T35N, R26W, Menominee County, without written permission issued by the Department.
- A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Garden Grade Grouse Enhanced Management System, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 31 and 32, T41N, R17W, Schoolcraft County and sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, and 24, T40N, R18W, Delta County, without written permission issued by the Department.
- A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Melstrand Grouse Enhanced Management System, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 21, 22, 27, 28, and 33, T47N, R17W, Alger County, without written permission issued by the Department.

The Department also recommends that Department employees and their designees be allowed motorized vehicle access, as well as emergency personnel performing official duties. Personal Assistive Mobility Devices are not considered a motorized vehicle.

In order to properly manage these trails, the Department will install gates, post signs or otherwise block unauthorized vehicle usage where motorized vehicles are not permitted. A management plan was developed for each of these GEMS sites by Department staff that outline the management goals for each GEMS. The management plans include kiosk placements and gate locations, as well as parking facilities for improved access to the properties.

Biological

A primary goal of GEMS is to promote ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat, as well as other wildlife species habitat including bear, deer, and turkey. Currently, motorized vehicles in the walk-in access trails often damage the habitat, specifically clover and fruit-bearing trees the Department plants to benefit wildlife habitat. In addition, closing the trails to motorized vehicles will allow the Department to properly maintain the wildlife habitat in order to enhance hunting opportunities, showcase grouse and woodcock habitat management for educational purposes, and offer exceptional wildlife viewing opportunities.

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Social

The increased revenue from the 2014 license fee package, Public Act 108 of 2013, allowed the Department to develop GEMS to enhance and offer recreational opportunities for grouse and woodcock hunting. In addition, GEMS trails create safe and easily accessible hunting opportunities for new hunters or those with limited mobility.

The Ruffed Grouse Society, Wildlife Unlimited of Delta County, UP Whitetails of Alger County, and Michigan United Conservation Clubs support the proposed changes. The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission do not support the proposed changes.

Economic

The GEMS are areas that are utilized by both local and non-resident hunters. Local businesses that sign up to be GEMS sponsors get free advertising that can bring hunters to their business in particular, as well as the general area. Closing hunting trails to motorized vehicles will further support the forest economy and will tie local communities to Michigan's natural resources by capitalizing and expanding the forest tourism industry.

Recommendation:

The Department recommends the following:

- A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Cedar River Grouse Enhanced Management System, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 5, 6, 7, and 8, T35N, R25W, and sections 1 and 12, T35N, R26W, Menominee County, without written permission issued by the Department.
- A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Garden Grade Grouse Enhanced Management System, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 31 and 32, T41N, R17W, Schoolcraft County and sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, and 24, T40N, R18W, Delta County, without written permission issued by the Department.
- A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Melstrand Grouse Enhanced Management System, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 21, 22, 27, 28, and 33, T47N, R17W, Alger County, without written permission issued by the Department.

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The Department also recommends that Department employees and their designees be allowed motorized vehicle access, as well as emergency personnel performing official duties. Personal Assistive Mobility Devices are not considered a motorized vehicle.

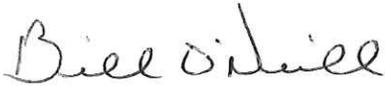
This order was submitted for information on August 11, 2016, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's July 2016 calendar and may be eligible for approval on September 8, 2016.



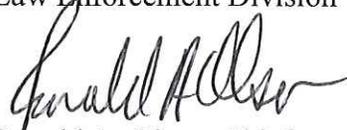
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division



Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



Bill O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



William E. Moritz, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Deputy

LAND USE ORDERS OF THE DIRECTOR

Amendment No. 9 of 2016

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

4.6 Certain state-owned lands, Alger county, prohibited conduct, exceptions.

Order 4.6. (1) A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle, except under a written permit issued by the department's authorized representative on state-owned lands within the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 10, T45N R21W, and the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 35, T45N R21W, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 18, T47N R17W, and section 36, T47N R17W, Alger county.

(2) A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Melstrand grouse enhanced management system, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 21, 22, 27, 28, and 33, T47N, R17W, Alger county, without written permission issued by the department, exception:

(a) This section shall not apply to department employees and their designees using a motorized vehicle or a motorized vessel to perform official duties, or to fire, emergency or law enforcement personnel to perform official duties.

4.31 Certain state-owned lands, Menominee county, motorized vehicles, prohibited conduct, exceptions.

Order 4.31 (1) A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle, without a written permit issued by the department, from April 1 through November 30 upon:

(a) Trail numbers 8 through 10 lying within sections 22, 26, and 27, T36N R28W; section 6, T35N R25W; and section 16, T36N R25W, Menominee county.

(b) Trail numbers 14 through 15 lying within section 10, T37N R28W, and section 18, T37N R27W, Menominee county.

(2) A person shall not operate a wheeled motorized vehicle upon roads gated or otherwise blocked within the following state-owned lands of Menominee county without a written permit issued by the department:

(a) E $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 10, T37N R28W.

(b) S $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 9, T37N R28W.

(c) E $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 35, T35N R29W.

(d) N $\frac{1}{2}$ of section 16, and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 17, T36N R25W.

(e) NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 23, T36N R26W.

(f) Section 31, T38N R28W.

(g) Sections 3-6, 8, 9, 16, and 21, T37N R28W.

(3) Except for department vehicles used for official business, a person shall not operate a wheeled motorized vehicle upon the following state owned lands of Menominee county, commonly known as the Peterson Pond, without written permission issued by the unit manager, Escanaba forest management unit, forest management bureau:

(a) SW ¼ and W ½ of the SE ¼ of section 19, T37N R25W.

(b) Entire section 30, T37N R25W, except for the E ½ of the NE ¼ and the NE ¼ of the SE ¼.

(c) Entire section 31, T37N R25W, except for the NW ¼ of the NW ¼.

(d) SE ¼ of the NE ¼ and E ½ of the SE ¼ of section 25, T37N R26W.

(e) NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of section 36, T37N R26W.

(f) NW ¼ of section 6, T36N R25W.

(4) A person shall not camp within one half mile of the township campground in the NW ¼ of section 8, or the Pemene falls parking area in the SW ¼ of section 16 and the NW ¼ of section 21, T37N R28W, Menominee county.

(5) A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Cedar river grouse enhanced management system, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 5, 6, 7, and 8, T35N, R25W, and sections 1 and 12, T35N, R26W, Menominee county, without written permission issued by the department, exception:

(a) This section shall not apply to department employees and their designees using a motorized vehicle or a motorized vessel to perform official duties, or to fire, emergency or law enforcement personnel to perform official duties.

4.16b Certain state-owned lands, Delta and Schoolcraft counties, motorized vehicles, prohibited conduct, exceptions.

Order 4.16b A person shall not operate a motorized vehicle within the area commonly known as the Garden grade grouse enhanced management system, where gated, posted, or otherwise blocked within sections 31 and 32, T41N, R17W, Schoolcraft county and sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, and 24, T40N, R18W, Delta county, without written permission issued by the department, exception:

(a) This section shall not apply to department employees and their designees using a motorized vehicle or a motorized vessel to perform official duties, or to fire, emergency or law enforcement personnel to perform official duties.

This amended order shall be posted on or after the 8th day of September, 2016.

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Keith Creagh
Director