



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



RODNEY A. STOKES
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: April 7, 2011

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Designation of the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center as a Michigan State Park --- Crawford County

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), 1994 PA 451, Part 741 authorizes the Director to designate state parks and recreation areas.

Discussion and Background:

The Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center (RAM Center) was established in 1941 and has operated as a conference center pursuant to legislative authority contained within the NREPA, 1994 PA 451. The RAM Center was also included in the approved boundary of North Higgins Lake State Park in 2004, and is currently managed by the DNR Parks and Recreation Division.

The current vision of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division is to enhance conservation and outdoor recreation learning at the RAM Center, which will augment the RAM Center's mission. Plans are underway to not only enhance the use of the RAM Center for mission-related conferences, meetings and educational sessions, but also to use it as a location to enhance the goal of expanding our user base.

Funding for the RAM Center included General Fund support up to 1970. Since that time, the RAM Center is required to operate on a self-supporting basis. Capital improvements, however, have been funded for the RAM Center from grants received from other sources, including the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

The Park Endowment Fund requires funds to be spent for state park purposes only. In the near future, mineral royalties will be directed into the Park Endowment Fund once the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund reaches the \$500 million cap. Therefore, having the RAM Center clearly designated as part of the Michigan state park system will enable Park Endowment Funds to be used for justified capital improvements into the future.

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Recommendation:

Since the RAM Center was adopted as part of the North Higgins Lake State Park boundary in 2004, and is administered by the DNR Parks and Recreation Division, it is recommended that the RAM Center be changed from the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center to the "*Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center --- North Higgins Lake State Park*," and, therefore, be designated as part of the Michigan state park system.

This item is being submitted for information and consideration. This item appeared on the Department's March, 2011 calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 7, 2011.



Kelley D. Smith, Ph.D., Chief
Fisheries Division



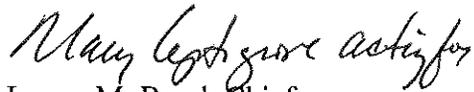
Gary Hagler, Chief ^{FOR}
Law Enforcement Division



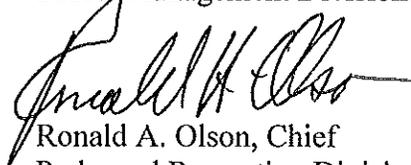
Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division



Mindy S. Koch, Deputy Director
Resource Management



Lynne M. Boyd, Chief
Forest Management Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division

I concur and approve the staff recommendation.

Rodney A. Stokes
Director

Date Approved