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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



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DIRECTOR

TO: Natural Resources Commission
DATE: November 7, 2013
SUBJECT: Regional State Forest Management Plans

Purpose of the Memo:

To provide an overview of the Regional State Forest Management Plans, the next steps in the approval process for the three plans and the role of the Natural Resources Commission pertaining to the plans. Copies of the plans can be found at:

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505_62551---,00.html.

Background:

DNR Forest Certification Work Instruction 1.3 (Regional State Forest Management Plan Development) directed Forest Resources and Wildlife Divisions to co-lead the development of three regional state forest management plans to provide specific operational direction for the management of state forest lands. There is one plan for each of the western Upper Peninsula, eastern Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula regions. The state forest land in the southern Lower Peninsula has been included in the plan for the northern Lower Peninsula.

The plans are organized by a framework of distinct management areas which are groupings of state forest compartments that have similar ecological, socio-economic, and ownership attributes. The three plans took a collaborative approach to preparing direction for cover type management and the management of habitat for featured wildlife species on state forest land. The management direction includes consideration for other values on the state forest such as special resource areas, rare and uncommon species, fisheries, recreation and oil, gas and mineral development.

Draft Plans were completed and posted for public review from October 1, 2012 through March 8, 2013. All input was summarized, analyzed and responses were prepared. A summary of this information can be found at:

<http://www.midnr.com/Publications/pdfs/ForestsLandWater/RSFMP/PublicCommentsonFinalDraftRSFMPs.pdf>.

A series of stakeholder meetings were held across the state to further discuss issues identified during the initial public review and to obtain further input. This input was used to revise the draft plans into the proposed final plans. A summary of the major changes to the draft plans can be accessed at:

<http://www.midnr.com/Publications/pdfs/ForestsLandWater/RSFMP/SummaryofMajorChangestoRSFMPs.pdf>

Next Steps:

The final draft of the plans are available for public review until December 9, 2013. Any comments will be reviewed and assessed for possible additional changes to the plans.

When approved and implemented, the plans will provide direction for management of the state forest for the 10-year period of 2014-2023 (2016-2025 years of entry), subject to revisions based on new knowledge during that period.

Role of the Natural Resources Commission:

The proposed final plans have been placed on the November agenda of the Natural Resources Commission as a Director's information item to facilitate the final public review. Approval of the plans will be sought as a Director's action item on the agenda of the December Natural Resources Commission meeting.