



Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council DNR Division Reports

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This documentation is provided by Michigan DNR staff as a supplement to verbal reports that will be distributed to the Western UPCAC at the September 15, 2014 meeting in Houghton, MI.

Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator: Stacy Welling Haughey

Upcoming Events/Public Outreach

Public Meetings

September 11	Natural Resources Commission Meeting, Lansing
September 15	Western U.P. Citizen's Advisory Council Meeting, MTU, Houghton
October 1	Public Input on Dickinson & Iron County Forest Plans, DNR Crystal Falls Field Office, 3-6pm CST
October 2	Formal Compartment Review for Chippewa & Mackinac County Forest Plans, Top of the Lakes Snowmobile Museum, Naubinway, 9am
October 2	Public Input on Chippewa & Luce County Forest Plans, DNR Newberry Field Office, 3-6pm
October 9	Natural Resources Commission Meeting, RAM Center
October 14	Format Compartment Review for Dickinson & Iron County Forest Plans, MDOT Office, Crystal Falls, 9am CST
October 16	Eastern U.P. Citizen's Advisory Council Meeting, Sault Ste. Marie
October 23	Formal Compartment Review for Chippewa & Luce County Forest Plans, Newberry Correctional Facility Training Room, 9am
November 5	Wildlife Division Sportsman's Coalition Meeting – Bruce Township Hall, Soo, 1:30pm
November 5	Wildlife Division Sportsman's Coalition Meeting – Shingleton, DNR Cusino Field Office, 6:00pm
December 3	Wildlife Division Sportsman's Coalition Meeting – DNR Marquette Office, 6:00pm
December 4	Wildlife Division Sportsman's Coalition Meeting – Great Lake Sportsmen's Club, Escanaba, 6:00pm

State Park & State Sponsored Activities

September 19-20	Bewabic State Park - Harvest Fest (campground-only event)
September 20	Van Riper State Park - Harvest Festival
September 20	Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park - Trail Race
September 20	Fort Wilkins Historic State Park - Fall Spootacular with Geocaching!
September 20-21	Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park-Fall Color Chair Lift Rides
September 20-27	Michigan Trails Week! (http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10365_16839_62555---,00.html)
September 26-27	Wells State Park - Annual 'Spooooktacular' Halloween Celebration
September 26-27	Beyond BOW Salmon Fishing September, Carp River near St. Ignace
October 3-4	Michigan Iron Industry Museum - Iron Ore and the Civil War
October 4	Fayette Historic State Park - Fall Fest
October 4-5	Brimley State Park - Annual Harvest Festival Weekend
October 10	Tahquamenon Falls State Park - Archery 101: Arrows Away!
October 11	Tahquamenon Falls State Park - Harvest Festival 2014

UP Recreation Events

September 5-7	37th Annual Lake Gogebic Fall Walleye Tournament, info@lakegogebicarea.com
September 18-21	Toyota Bassmaster Angler of the Year Championship, Escanaba, Bays De Noc
September 20	Porcupine Mountains Trail Marathon, www.greatlakesendurance.com
September 20	Au Sable Day 2014, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, www.nps.gov/piro
September 20-21	St Mary's Walleye Cup, www.saultstemarie.com/events/5/842/

September 25	7th Annual Senior Citizen Fall Color OHV Tour Annual Events, www.mi-trale.org/club-news/calendar
September 27	41st Annual Copper Country Color Tour (Cycling), http://cycling.mtu.edu/color-tour/
September 27	Xterra Lake Superior Shore Run, Little Presque Isle, www.lakesuperiorshorerun.com
September 27	Seney NWR presents: "Youth in the Outdoors", www.fws.gov/refuge/seney/events.html
September 27	Hike Between da Falls, Tahquamenon Falls State Park, www.northcountrytrail.org/hss
September 27	Mighty Mac Bridge Race, info@stignace.com
October 4	Fall Color Float, www.fws.gov/refuge/seney/events/fcf.html
October 2-5	Autumn's Hiawatha Eco-Photo Tour, greatlakesphototours.com
October 18-19	Keweenaw Cup Cyclocross Races, www.keweenawcup.com

Graymont Land Transaction Update

From the August 14, 2014 Natural Resources Commission Meeting:

Resource Deputy Bill Moritz updated the commission on Graymont, the limestone mining company that has proposed a land transaction involving state-managed public land near Rexton in the UP. The Land Exchange Review Committee, the DNR body that reviews proposed land transactions, met earlier this week and voted to continue to table the application from Graymont to purchase public land for the purpose of underground mining and some surface mining. The department will continue to work with Graymont to address concerns raised in 870-some comments the DNR has received from tribes, local units of government and other interested parties regarding the company's proposal. Among issues that need further discussion are environmental protections, recreational access, whether a land sale is the right construct for this transaction and further analysis of the value of the minerals.

In June, Graymont, Inc. submitted a proposal to exchange more than 1,700 acres of mineral rights with the DNR near the Rexton area in the eastern Upper Peninsula. The offered minerals are under state-managed surface and the desired minerals are located under federally owned surface within the Hiawatha National Forest. This proposal will receive a similar review and decision process as the original Graymont land transaction application.

For a full review of all information regarding this proposal, visit the website at: www.michigan.gov/graymontproposal and <http://rextonproject.com>.

September 2014 Natural Resources Commission Meeting

AGENDA

NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration

1. Hunting, Fishing, and Camping Data
2. Social Media: An Overview of How DNR is Using Social Media

NRC Marketing, Partnership and Outreach Advisory Committee

1. Game and Fish Protection Account Primer
2. Dingell-Johnson Primer
3. Hunting and Fishing License Restructure Outcomes Update
4. Audits

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

1. Fisheries Division Update
2. Fishing Regulations
3. Wildlife Division Update
4. Trapping on Commercial Forest Lands
5. Deer Management Assistance Permit (DMAP) Regulations

NRC Committee of the Whole

1. Director's Report

- a. Michigan Brain Injury Association Meeting Update (Russ Mason)
- b. Wolf Update (Russ Mason)
- c. National Wildfire Update (Bill O'Neill)
- d. Belle Isle – MDOT Intelligence Transportation System (Ron Olson)
- e. Bass Seasons Survey Results (Jim Dexter)
- f. Director's Award Presentation (Director Creagh)

2. Legislative Report (Trevor VanDyke)

3. Safari Club International Involvement Committee Survey Winners

Public Appearances before the NRC

Regular Meeting of the Natural Resources Commission

1. NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- a. Rehabilitator Regulations and Veterinarians, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 14 of 2014
- b. Trapping on Commercial Forest Lands Technical Change, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 15 of 2014

2. NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION

- a. Approval of Minutes - August 14, 2014 Natural Resources Commission Meeting
- b. Deer Management Assistance Permit Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 10 of 2014
- c. Deer Management Assistance Permit Discount Technical Change, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 13 of 2014

3. DIRECTOR – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- a. Special Hook Size Fishing Regulations, Fisheries Conservation Order Amendment No. 1 of 2014
- b. Spawning Closures, Fisheries Conservation Order Amendment No. 2 of 2014
- c. Michigan-Wisconsin Boundary Waters, Fisheries Conservation Order Amendment No. 3 of 2014
- d. Special Fishing Regulations for Warmwater Species on Select Waters, Fisheries Conservation Order Amendment No. 4 of 2014
- e. Fisheries Order No. 240.14, Sturgeon Regulations Statewide (FO-240)
- f. Amendment to the 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan, http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505_33360-333691--,00.html

4. DIRECTOR'S ACTION

- a. Proposed October 29, 2014, Oil and Gas Lease Auction
- b. Proposed Nonmetallic Reclamation Lease Auction – Development
- c. Land Transactions (U.P. Specific Listed Only)
 - 1) Sale of Surplus DNR-Managed Land, Newberry Management Unit – Luce County, Land Transaction Case #20130062
 - 2) Conveyance of Surplus State-owned Land, Western UP District – Gogebic County, Land Transaction Case #20140144
 - 3) State Trail Acquisition, Keweenaw Trail – Houghton County, Land Transaction Case #20020209
 - 4) State Forest Land Acquisition, Gwinn Management Unit – Alger County, The Plum Creek Tract, Land Transaction Case #20140181

Natural Resources Commission Meeting Recap from the September 11, 2014 NRC Meeting from Ed Golder, Public Information Officer:

During today's meeting in Lansing, the NRC approved:

- A change to Deer Management Assistance Permits (DMAPs). DMAPs are used to control deer that damage agricultural crops and cause other conflicts with humans. Currently a hunter using a DMAP may only harvest a deer using the method that coincides with the current season – for example, no firearms during archery season. This holds true except on a case-by-case basis during the first two weeks of archery season. Today, the commission implemented a three-year pilot program in Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties. The

program will allow qualifying landowners to use firearms during the majority of the archery season provided those land-owners meet specified conditions. The conditions are [described in the memorandum accompanying the amendment to the Wildlife Conservation Order](#). In addition, the commission changed the DMAP fee – which is the cost of an antlerless deer license – to align with the new license structure.

Also during today's meeting, DNR Director Keith Creagh took the following actions:

- Approved the department's planned Oct. 29 Oil and Gas Lease Auction -- with one important change. The DNR has received numerous comments regarding parcels within Hartwick Pines State Park that had been nominated for auction. As you probably know, the land in Hartwick Pines had been designated "leasable nondevelopment," which means that no surface development could have taken place on that public land if it had been leased for possible development. Public comments regarding these parcels included information from two grandchildren of Karen Hartwick. Karen Hartwick initially gifted the land to the state in 1927. Upon review of the information received from these grandchildren, the DNR will remove approximately 7,849 acres from the auction to adhere to the spirit and intent of the generous gift of land from Ms. Hartwick. Staff are reviewing an additional 1,886 acres being offered within Hartwick Pines -- land not donated by Ms. Hartwick. Those additional parcels may or may not be removed from the auction, depending upon the result of that review. The director approved the remainder of the parcels nominated for auction that were outside of Hartwick Pines.
- Approved a sealed bid reclamation lease auction for sand and gravel mining on about 540 acres at Island Lake Recreation Area. The mining will reclaim areas within the park for recreation and wildlife habitat.
- Approved 18 land transactions. Full details of these transactions can be found [on the NRC's Web page](#).

Also significant today: During the Committee of the Whole, Wildlife Chief Russ Mason provided an update on Michigan's wolf season and the authority for wolf hunting in Michigan. A citizen's referendum, the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, has been approved by the Legislature. The act will, among other things, give the NRC authority to name game species -- including wolves, if the commission so chooses. However, the new law will not take effect until March or April of next year. Acting Chairman John Matonich told those gathered that even if two referendums on the November ballot are decided in favor of returning authority to the NRC, the authority would be granted too late in the year for consideration of a wolf hunt in 2014. Therefore, the NRC will wait until 2015 to consider another wolf hunt in Michigan, Commissioner Matonich said.

The meeting began with the NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration. Erik Eklund and Dawn Fedewa from the Finance and Operations Division gave the committee a primer on the state's Game and Fish Protection Fund. Established in 1923 as two separate funds -- joined in 1994 by state law into the Game and Fish Protection Fund -- the fund is derived from hunting, trapping and fishing license sales, interest earned and other miscellaneous revenue. The fund totals \$86 million. The money is used for a variety of critical conservation initiatives in Michigan. Next, Eric Sink and Finance Chief Sharon Schafter talked about the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Program. Dingell-Johnson is the companion federal program to the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration program. Established in 1950, Dingell Johnson is funded by a 10 percent federal excise tax on fishing equipment, a 3 percent tax on electric motors, import duties on tackle and interest earned on the trust fund. Michigan ranks No. 5 among states in dollars received since the program was established. Since 1952, the state has received more than \$277 million from the Sport Fish Restoration Program. In 2014 alone, Michigan received \$10.2 million from the fund for important purposes such as habitat management and public education.

Next, Sharon reported to the committee on outcomes from the recent hunting and fishing license restructuring. She used the template the department has [posted online](#). The department will report to the commission and to the public early next year about how the additional license dollars were spent. Sharon also updated the commission on audits affecting the department. A recent audit of the Wildlife Division did not identify any significant concerns, the state's auditor general has reported.

Next the Marketing, Partnership and Outreach Advisory Committee met. Christine Schwerin from Marketing and Outreach reviewed data related to fishing licenses. Fishing license sales are down about 5.2 percent over-all this year versus last year. This is still less than the 7 percent resistance rate we had anticipated as a result of the new license structure. Of particular concern: Nonresident fishing licenses are down about 41 percent over last year, likely due to the

cost increase for those anglers. The department is reviewing those numbers and talking about possible solutions. Dennis Fox from Marketing reviewed hunting license data. Hunting licenses are up this year over last, as are hunting licenses for new customers, non-resident hunting licenses and small game licenses. Parks Chief Ron Olson reported on Recreation Passport sales, projecting that the department might be over 28 percent of registered vehicles participating by year's end, a slight increase over previous-year participation rates. Recreation Passport participation in the City of Detroit continues to be up -- to 38 percent -- because of the addition of Belle Isle to the state parks system. That revenue, of course, benefits parks across the state. ORV License sales are down slightly this year over last year.

Tyler Czarnopis, the department's new social media coordinator, told the committee about the department's aggressive social media efforts. Building on the solid base established by Deputy Public Information Officer Debbie Munson Badini, Tyler has brought new focus to this tool for public outreach. The department's Facebook page has 50,000 likes. We have over 20,000 followers on Twitter. On YouTube we have over 80 videos with 800 subscribers and more than a quarter million video views. We are seeking to move into new social media platforms such as Pinterest and Google Plus.

During the meeting of the Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter reported on the table top exercise on grass carp -- a type of Asian carp that is less harmful than bighead and silver carp -- the department conducted along with other state agencies and Canada. In addition, Jim reported on recent eDNA sampling for bighead and silver carp in the St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, Paw Paw, Grand and Muskegon rivers. Some 700 samples were taken and all returned negative for the presence of this dangerous invasive species. Nick Popoff from Fisheries told the commissioners about proposed fisheries regulations related to hook regulations, boundary waters, warmwater species, spawning closures and sturgeon.

Wildlife Chief Russ Mason reported on the early teal season -- a success -- and the first period of elk hunting season, in which 23 elk have been harvested. Russ reminded everyone that the youth waterfowl hunting weekend will occur this weekend. Russ also talked about proposed regulations that would clarify what veterinarians can and cannot do with wildlife. In addition, Russ reviewed new proposed regulations related to trapping on Commercial Forest lands.

During the Committee of the Whole, Forestry Chief Bill O'Neill reported to the commission on a proposed State Forest Plan amendment. He also updated commissioners on the 20 personnel the DNR sent to the western United States to help battle fires that have been raging in that part of the country. The department is reimbursed for these efforts, which provide excellent training for our firefighting staff.

Parks Chief Ron Olson talked about the Intelligent Transport System World Congress that occurred on Belle Isle this week. The international event showcased the latest in automotive technology. The event was a cooperative effort between the DNR and the Michigan Department of Transportation -- complicated by storms that blew through the island right before the conference was scheduled to begin. Our staff responded quickly to those problems to help the ITS move forward.

Ray Fahlsing from Parks briefed the commission on the Island Lake reclamation project and on the Youth Jamboree -- involving 1,500 kids -- that took place at Lake Hudson State Recreation Area. The director recognized Chief Olson for [recently receiving the Distinguished Service award from the National Association of State Park Directors](#).

Jim Dexter and Patrick Hanchin from Fisheries briefed the commission on bass season survey results. The Fisheries Division will take the results of the survey and make a recommendation at next month's NRC meeting about how best to move forward.

Director Creagh presented an award to the team from DNR and the Department of Technology Management and Budget that instituted the department's new Campground Reservation System (CRS) -- a remarkable effort that vastly improved the reservation experience for customers.

Safari Club International presented prizes to randomly drawn hunters who took part in the state's annual deer survey. The survey is critical to the department's understanding of the deer season and deer herd in Michigan. Safari Club presented a rifle to Tim Balzer of Unionville and a crossbow to Bob Block of Bay City.

That's the news from Lansing and the NRC. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.
Ed Golder, Public Information Officer

September 2014 Legislative Update - Trevor VanDyke , Director, Legislative & Legal Affairs Office

Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act: Citizens for Professional Wildlife Management gathered the required signatures for a citizen's initiated legislation - Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

- The citizens-initiated legislation passed both the House and the Senate and becomes effective 90 days after this year's legislative session ends (approximately March/April 2015). While still on the ballot, the two other referendums would not be able to remove the NRC authority to designate game species or to manage the taking of fish regardless of outcome. The language of the two referendums can be found on the attachment.
- The Act will do the following three things:
 - Provide the NRC with authority to designate game species in Michigan and to manage the taking of fish.
 - Ensures the continued provision of free hunting and fishing licenses for active-duty members of the military who have maintained residency in Michigan.
 - Appropriates \$1 million to the Department in FY2015 for aquatic invasive species management activities designed to prevent, control, eliminate, or respond rapidly to, the presence of aquatic invasive species, such as Asian Carp.

HB 5709 -Proportion Limitation on Property Due to Funding Source- Rep. Stamas

This bill seeks to add Section 503d to the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require that limitations imposed on State owned property, due to funding source, are to be applied proportionally to sections of the property based on the amount of each funding source.

- This bill was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

HB 5722- Exempt Watercraft 16' or Shorter With a Portable Electric Motor From The Boater Registration Requirement- Rep. Rendon

This bill seeks to amend Section 80123 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to exempt watercraft 16' or shorter in length from boater registration when using a portable electric motor.

- This bill was referred to the House Committee on Tourism.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

Proposal 14-1

A REFERENDUM OF PUBLIC ACT 520 OF 2012, ESTABLISHING A HUNTING SEASON FOR WOLVES AND AUTHORIZING ANNUAL WOLF HUNTING SEASONS

Public Act 520 of 2012 would:

- Designate wolf as game for hunting purposes and authorize the first wolf hunting season.
- Allow the Natural Resources Commission to schedule annual wolf hunting seasons.
- Provide criminal penalties for the unlawful possession or taking of wolves, but shield a person who lawfully captures or destroys a wolf from prosecution.
- Require a person who wishes to hunt wolves to obtain a wolf hunting license.
- Create a Wolf Management Advisory Council for the purpose of making nonbinding recommendations to the legislature regarding the proper management of wolves.

Should this law be approved? Yes No

Parks & Recreation Division: William Doan, WUP District Supervisor

- **Baraga State Park:** Camping has been slow due to rainy weather, but the Fourth of July holiday usage was up 15%. Along with the 4th of July event, Kayaking 101/202 events were held in July and August. Christmas in July and our partner event with Baraga County Memorial Hospital, Out-Fit (a K-6th grade children's health and fitness event) were held. Electrical problems with pedestal breakers have persisted during event and high use weekends and we also had electrical issues with our lift station, incurring a costly repair. Due to students returning to school, staffing is the number one challenge at the current time.
- **Baraga Field Office:** Worked on the road at McLain State Park, the new booth at Piers Gorge and the ramp at the Kipling Boating Access Site. They have spent a lot of time working on projects at Porcupine Mountains including 3 parking lots, 10 culverts and 2 pit toilets.
- **Bond Falls Scenic Site** had normal day use and some use permit activity. Recreation Passport sales have been steady.
- **Escanaba Field Office:** Kipling Boating Access Site ramp replacement and dredging was completed during July. The project included a contract dredge of channel, ramp replacement and vault toilet refurbishment by DNR construction crews and parking lot stripping by contract. Laughing Whitefish Falls Scenic Site received improvements. The access trail was improved for water drainage and the 1.5 mile trail was capped with a limestone gravel base for improved accessibility. In addition the parking lot and entrance road were brushed and the parking area was defined with boulders.
- **Bewabic State Park** has had good attendance numbers. Christmas in July had a low number turn out for the event, but the campground did fill with rodeo weekend in Iron River. The Ranger position was filled July 20th, 2014. It remains a challenge being short-staffed at Bewabic State Park.
- **Menominee River State Recreation Area:** The new booth at Piers Gorge is already making an impact on Recreation Passport numbers. The ranger position still vacant. Good numbers at Piers Gorge, selling many out of state Recreation Passport Passes. It remains a challenge being short-staffed.
- **McLain State Park:** Finished the campground toilet building shower remodeling project. Camping use came back up despite the cool and wet weather. The last week of July and the first week of August were very busy.
- **Fort Wilkins Historic State Park:** Fort Wilkins Unit staff finished construction on the west barrack cedar roof project. We had 4 large events in July and August. The 30th Annual Battery D Civil War encampment was held on the last week of July. The Copperman Triathlon, Single Speed USA, and Bell's Beer Copper Harbor Trails Festival (use permit events) took place in the month of August. Attendance and camping numbers have been good in July and August. We have been close to filling the campgrounds every weekend. We have filled to capacity on 5 of the weekends (4th of July, Battery D, Single Speed USA, Copperman Triathlon, & Labor Day-Trail Fest weekends). We're running a little short-handed as we've lost a few summer employees earlier than scheduled.
- **Lake Gogebic State Park:** Alan Hocking is the new Seasonal ranger. Dave Merk transferred from the Porkies filling the Lead Ranger spot. The black bear interpretive program put on by the US Forest Service on August 30th was attended by about 50 campers. Ageing sewage dispersal system was down but has been repaired by staff.
- **Cedar River State Harbor:** The dock removal project received permission to commence the project & staff has begun removing deck boards from that section of harbor. Sewage pump out has been working intermittently this summer. Began prepping ice suppression equipment for winter. The Cedar River Annual Bridge Walk held on Aug. 31 was a success, despite rainy weather.
- **Wells State Park** held the following successful annual events: July 4th celebration, Christmas in July and a Corn Roast. Camping was down 8%, shelters up 55%, cabins up 1% and lodge up 21%. Seasonal staff seems to be leaving earlier than ever and we find ourselves short-staffed by early August.
- **Van Riper State Park:** Logging at Blueberry Ridge Pathway has been very controversial with our cross country ski users. Staff worked on a stairway/erosion project at Little Presque Isle. Van Riper staff in conjunction with an Escanaba construction crew worked on ORV restoration/improvements at Laughing Whitefish Falls. Reroute of Tyoga Pathway due to erosion issues from Laughing Whitefish River. Matena Coron, Ranger-E, and her husband Matt welcomed a new baby boy, Liam Coron on Wednesday, August 13th. July 4th and July 5th-Van Riper Day in honor of Doctor Van Riper and our 4th of July Jubilation- there were about 300 in attendance. Smokey Bear's 70th birthday party on August 9th was a huge success and there were 230 in attendance. Kayaking 101 and 202 we had 24 in attendance; the 12 kayaks were occupied for both events. There is a contact station at Little Presque Isle now and Recreation Passport revenue is up \$6,000 from FY13 and our staff is writing on average 100 violation notices a weekend. Little Presque Isle Cabins--cabin nights were down 23 nights for July and cabin nights were down 7 nights

for Aug. Van Riper State Park--camper cabin: July 2013-24 nights and July 2014- 19 nights; August 2013- 25 nights and August 2014- 28 nights. Rustic cabin: July 2013-13 nights and July 2014 was 17 nights; Aug 2013-9 nights and Aug 2014- 24 nights. Mini cabins: July 2013- 45 nights and July 2014 increased to 52 nights and Aug 2013-43 nights and Aug 2014increased to 49 nights. Campground nights: July a decrease of 185 nights; August an increase of 381 nights. Water building water softener/iron removal system issues.

- **Craig Lake State Park:** Janet Marr, botanist, visited CLSP and surveyed our invasive species. Construction work on bridges at Craig Lake State Park continues. Yurt attendance for July increased 13 nights and increased 5 nights in August. Rustic cabin nights were up by 15 nights in July and increased 7 nights in August. Backcountry camping was down 14 nights in July and increased by 48 nights in August.
- **Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park:** We put the Union Bay toilet shower building out for bids a second time and the bids came back over the budgeted amount. We are back in the planning stage and foresee rehabilitating the building with park staff and some contracted labor. We are in the midst of a three year project on the trail systems in the park - we have completed the expansion of three of our trailheads to accommodate more vehicle parking and we are currently working on improving drainages and replacing culverts along our cross-country ski trails. Our Lead Ranger, Dave Merk, accepted a position at Lake Gogebic State Park as their Lead Ranger, we have posted the open position and will be conducting interviews near the end of September. Our regularly scheduled interpretive programs have been very well attended. We also held the 10th annual Porcupine Mountains Music Festival at our ski hill August 22nd-24th which is presented by our Friend Group. New this year Gogebic Community College sold ski passes, resale items, and also offered chairlift rides. Over 100 volunteers assisted during the weekend and we are waiting to get a final attendance count. The month of July was slower than previous years (350 fewer visitors over the 4th of July weekend in the Visitor Center), August visitation has been slightly higher this year but with the switch in campground reservation systems we cannot compare campground attendance, only attendance at three of our contact stations. We gave a lot of refunds to campers who left early in the month of July due to the amount of biting insects.
- **Twin Lakes State Park:** July 4th events were held with a good number for the lighted boats on the night of the 3rd. The kid's parade on the 4th had good numbers, and all visitors enjoyed hotdogs, chips, pop and ice cream. July's camping numbers were fair, but problems with weather and late bugs slowed things down. Day use did well with the arrival of better weather. August brought back weather changes and rainy wet conditions. The hard winter has caused the staff to constantly be aware of broken or bad tree limbs. Other than equipment that is old and in constant need of repair is the our major issue.

Wildlife Division: Terry Minzey, Wildlife Supervisor (prepared by Brian Roell, Wildlife Biologist)

- **Bear Activity:** Bear activity reports and complaints have been up significantly this year compared to previous years across the West UP. Berry crops and soft mast availability is good to excellent across the West UP compared last year and we would have thought this would reduce nuisance bear issues by providing bear with widely available natural forage. Most complaints have been successfully addressed by working with owners to eliminate attractants, such as taking down bird feeders and securing garbage. However, as late as 9/4 we are still attempting to trap a problem bear in Harvey and out of the Marquette office we moved a record 14 bears. However, nine of these bears came from Grand Island where bears had become extremely habituated and were approaching campers.
- **Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act:** On 8/27/14 The Michigan House of Representatives passed the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. The citizen initiative, which passed the Senate on August 13 and was supported by the signatures of almost 300,000 registered voters, allows the Natural Resources Commission to name game species and issue fisheries orders using sound science, creates a \$1 million rapid response fund to prevent Asian carp, and provides free hunting and fishing licenses for active military members.

The Department supports the continued scientific management of fish and game by the Natural Resources Commission. The recent decision of the state Legislature to pass this citizen-initiated legislation further affirms the authority of the NRC to scientifically manage game species, as the public requested in 1996 when 69 percent voted in favor of Proposal G.

Because the Legislature did not vote for immediate effect, the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act will not become law until 90 days after the 2014 legislative session ends (approximately March/April 2015). Under this timeline, the next practical opportunity for a wolf management hunt would be the fall of 2015.

- **Grouse Enhanced Management System (GEMS):** The GEMS are unique ruffed grouse hunting areas across the northern Lower and Upper peninsulas that provide great hunting opportunities for a variety of hunters, including youth, adults new to the sport and seniors. Seven GEM's will be available for the fall 2014 hunting season - in Chippewa, Dickinson, Gogebic, Mackinac and Marquette counties in the Upper Peninsula and Cheboygan and Gladwin counties in the Lower Peninsula. In upcoming years more GEMs will be added and additional improvement to grouse and woodcock habitat will occur on these sites.



Governor Rick Snyder and Department of Natural Resources Director Keith Creagh with shovels in hand, planting nannyberry shrubs and crabapple trees in the South Marquette GEM.

- In addition to the MUCC, UP Wildlife Habitat Fund, Ruffed Grouse Society, the American Woodcock Society, Ducks Unlimited and National Wild Turkey Federation have also donated money and on the ground labor for the GEMS. Creating a successful and educational hunting experience has shown to be important to many wildlife organizations. Without their help, GEMS would not be successful.
- **Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey:** In 1991 the Michigan Department of Natural Resources established permanent survey drumming routes, across the UP. These routes were established in rural areas containing typical ruffed grouse habitat. The sample points along each route are spaced at least one mile apart. In 2014, forty two drumming routes were surveyed across the UPR. Six hundred and twenty five drums were heard for an average of approximately 15 drums per route. This is about a 7% increase from the 14 drums per route heard in 2013. The long-term average is about 13 drums per survey route. The decrease in number of drums heard in the 2012 and 2013 surveys may signal that a population cycle peak was reached in 2011 and grouse numbers will decline in subsequent years.
- **American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey:** Woodcock surveys are conducted in cooperation with the federally coordinated survey. In some years, there were up to 40 routes located in the UPR however, due to no woodcock being detected, several routes have been inactivated since 1991 and are no longer surveyed. In 2014, thirty seven regularly scheduled routes were surveyed. Survey personnel detected 299 birds with an average of 8.1 woodcock per route in the UPR. This represents about a 10% decrease from the 2013 level (9.0 woodcock/route) however, it is still above the long-term average of 5.6 woodcock detected per route.

Forest Resources Division: Jeff Stampfly, WUP District Supervisor (prepared by John Hamel, Inventory Planning Specialist)

- Forest inventory field work for the 2016 Year of Entry (YOE) compartments is complete. Open house and compartment review schedules, along with other state forest inventory information are located at: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_30505---,00.html. The next open houses in the Western UP are for the Crystal Falls Forest Management Unit (FMU) on October 1st and the Gwinn FMU on October 23rd.
- Timber harvesting activity is strong. As of August 13th, there are 234 open timber sale contracts in the Western UP. This represents 23,128 acres of timber valued at approximately \$18.2 million.

- All FMUs report bid competition for offered sales has been strong with good competition for all offered timber. The Baraga FMU reports stumpage prices continue to move upward with record high prices for sugar maple saw timber well over \$1,000.00 per thousand board feet (MBF).
- About 4,500 acres of new Commercial Forest (CF) applications for new enrollment have been submitted in the Western UP. For more information on Commercial Forest Act lands, go to www.michigan.gov/commercialforest.
- About 325 acres of Red Pine were treated with herbicide by helicopter aerial application last month. This annual project improves the quality of red pine by reducing plant competition.
- All units continue to complete road and bridge maintenance projects. The Crystal Falls FMU recently replaced a culvert and water control structure as a result of recent rains and beaver activity.
- As of September 2nd, 12 firefighters from the UP have been dispatched to wild fires in western states to assist in fire suppression efforts. Five firefighters, as single resources to various locations in the Northwest United States, and 7 firefighters from the UP joined an all-state hand crew of 20 that dispatched to Oregon. This is an opportunity for staff to provide support to other states as well as gain knowledge and qualifications while on assignment to bring back to Michigan. All personal have returned safely to the state at the time of this report.
- The UP fire activity has been light compared to previous years with only 2 fires in the month of August totaling 0.2 acres. Fire potential may increase across the UP during the last weeks of September and persist through November.
- While fire activity has been down, we have accomplished over 10,280 acres of prescribed burning across the state this year. Much of this has been in Southern Lower Michigan for a variety of wildlife and recreational values. There have been a few burns conducted in the Upper Peninsula.
- Our annual external forest certification audit will be occurring in October. The week-long audit will be conducted by both Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) auditor and will be occurring exclusively in the UP this year in the Newberry, Shingleton and Escanaba FMUs.

Law Enforcement Division (LED): Lt. Pete Wright, District Law Supervisor

Activity levels have been starting to rise as we push into the fall season. District 1 Conservation Officers have been busy responding to baiting and bear hunting types of complaints. The following biweekly report is typical for late summer related activity:

- CO Jason Wicklund and PCO Joshua Russell spent the afternoon on Lake Gogebic. Several boats were checked and verbal warnings were given for a variety of marine related issues. One group of individuals was also ticketed for fishing without licenses.
- COs Jason Wicklund and Brian Bacon, along with PCOs Joshua Russell and Jeremy Beavers, were on their way to a marine event when they observed two ORVs riding double and operating down the roadway. A traffic stop was conducted and it was also determined that both ORVs were unregistered. Enforcement action was taken.
- COs Jason Wicklund and Brian Bacon, along with PCOs Joshua Russell and Jeremy Beavers assisted local law enforcement with the annual Waterfront Festival held in Menominee. The COs gave over a dozen warnings, including bow riding, no navigational lights, and improper registration. The COs also issued a ticket to the operator of a personal watercraft (PWC) for failing to have an observer while pulling a tuber.
- COs Jason Wicklund and Brian Bacon, along with PCOs Joshua Russell and Jeremy Beavers observed an out of state vessel on Lake Michigan with five individuals riding on the bow. Contact was made with the vessel and it was immediately determined that the occupants on board were underage and drinking. The COs boarded the vessel and conducted sobriety and breath tests on the occupants. Three tickets were issued for minor in possession of alcohol, as well as enforcement action for bow riding and contributing to a delinquency of a minor.
- Lt. Terry Short, Cpl. Shannon VanPatten and CO Marvin Gerlach worked a marine patrol during Menominee's Waterfront Festival. Contact was made with a subject operating a 65 foot boat that was not displaying any registration. The subject claimed he did not have to register the vessel because it was federally documented;

however, the subject could not produce any documentation paperwork or any other paperwork regarding the boat. The subject was ticketed for operating an unregistered vessel. Additional tickets were written to other boats during the festival for operating unregistered vessels and failure to provide sufficient personal flotation devices (PFDs).

- CO Dave Painter stopped an ORV for riding double. The operator and passenger also had no helmets and the ORV was unregistered. Enforcement action was taken.
- Probationary conservation officers are entering their 3rd and final step of their field training. They will be hitting the field sometime around November 1st and will be a welcome addition to our work force.

Fisheries Division: Darren Kramer, George Madison, Jessica Mistak

- Fisheries Management (Darren Kramer, George Madison, Jessica Mistak)
 - Held bass regulation public meetings in Iron Mountain, Ishpeming, and Houghton to review opportunities for an expanded season.
 - Reviewed Eagle Mine seismic exploration plan and participated in mine tour.
 - Attended the NRC meeting in Munising, Great Lakes Fishery Commission Lake Superior Technical Meeting, and the annual American Fisheries Society Meeting.
 - Met with Lourdes University staff regarding the development of a biological research station in Keweenaw Bay.
 - Reviewed numerous DEQ permit applications.
 - Met with stakeholders to discuss 10-brook trout bag limit regulation and the 3 additional streams to be added in 2016.
 - Conducted numerous surveys with the help of summer workers (all of whom have returned to college for the fall semester to study biology/fisheries).
 - Held a public meeting to discuss Otter Lake Dam.
 - Prepared application materials for Crystal Falls Fisheries Biologist position, which was posted on 9/5/2014.

➤ Marquette Fisheries Research Station (Ed Baker, Manager)

The Lake Superior survey season got off to a late start due to the persistent winter weather that kept ice on the lake into late May. The Lake Char started the survey season with a weeklong trip to Isle Royale in late May to survey lake trout around the island. The Lake Char concluded the spring survey in mid-July with a 3-day sampling effort at Stannard Rock. The vessel is now conducting the summer lake trout survey covering south shore waters from Ontonagon to Grand Marais. The Lake Char also returned to Isle Royale for a survey in August and will make a final trip to Isle Royale in mid-September.

Walleye tagging was completed in northern Little Bay de Noc in conjunction with the walleye egg take. Marquette Research staff measured, tagged, and released 900 walleye as part of ongoing assessment of the walleye population in the bay. Staff also sampled the zooplankton in the bay in an effort to assess food availability for newly hatched walleye. The summer survey work in bays de Noc is currently underway and focuses on measuring year class strength of walleye.

Stream fish and habitat surveys associated with evaluating the 10 brook trout bag limit on selected streams have been completed. Electrofishing surveys on these selected streams will begin later this fall and focus on potential coaster spawning activity.

Lake sturgeon tagging and egg collections were conducted on the Sturgeon and Menominee rivers this spring. Egg collections support the streamside rearing and restocking efforts on the Ontonagon, Cedar, and Whitefish rivers. Lake sturgeon growth and survival in the Cedar and Whitefish River facilities has been good this summer and fish will be stocked in late September. Unfortunately, lake sturgeon eggs failed to hatch in the Ontonagon River facility and there won't be any lake sturgeon stocked in the Ontonagon this fall.

Debbie Munson Badini, Public Information Office

- Ask the DNR will air on three Thursdays this fall: Oct. 2, Nov. 13 and Dec. 4. Each episode airs live from 8-9 p.m. Eastern Time. Questions for the panel of DNR staff can be called in to be answered on the show: 906-227-9668 or 800-227-9668. If you are unable to watch the program when it airs, the episodes are rebroadcast the next day at noon and are also posted online at <http://wnmuvideo.nmu.edu/program/ask-dnr/>.
- Do you receive our weekly Showcasing the DNR stories by email? These stories are written to highlight programs and initiatives taking place within the Department. In fact, two recent articles focused on habitat improvement work recently completed by the Wildlife Division and volunteers in the Upper Peninsula (visit www.michigan.gov/dnr-stories to read these articles). You can sign up to receive these weekly stories through our email subscription system by visiting the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/dnr and clicking on the “Sign up for email from the DNR” red envelope icon.