



## Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council DNR Division Reports Date of Production: May 2015

This documentation is provided by Michigan DNR staff as a supplement to verbal reports that will be distributed to the Western UPCAC at the May 11, 2015 meeting in Calumet, MI.

### Upper Peninsula Regional Coordinator: Stacy Welling Haughey

#### ***Public Meetings***

- May 7 Natural Resources Commission Meeting, Lansing
- May 18 Western UP Citizens Advisory Council Meeting, Calumet Colosseum, Calumet, 5:30pm
- May 19 Aquatic Habitat, Wildlife Habitat & Dam Management Project Workshop, Ramada Inn-Peninsula East Room, Marquette, 9am-12noon, 517-284-7268
- May 19 UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, St. Ignace (St. Ignace Public Library), 1:30pm
- May 20 Aquatic Habitat, Wildlife Habitat & Dam Management Project Workshop, LSSU-East Superior Room, Sault Ste. Marie, 9am-12noon, 517-284-7268
- May 30 ORV Advisory Workgroup, Great Lakes Sport & Recreation Club, Escanaba
- June 8 UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Crystal Falls (Sagola Comm. Bldg), 6:00pm Central
- June 9 UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Bergland (Antonio's Restaurant), 12:00pm
- June 9 UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Baraga (Ottawa Sportsmen's Club), 4:00pm
- June 11 Natural Resources Commission Meeting, Monroe
- June 18 Eastern UP Citizens Advisory Council Meeting, Newberry or St. Ignace TBD, 6:30pm
- June 23 Forestry Open House, Baraga Unit, Baraga DNR Office, 3-7:00pm
- June 24 UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Marquette (DNR Office), 6:00pm
- June 25 UP Sportsman Coalition Meeting, Escanaba (DNR Pocket Park), 6:00pm

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#### ***U.P. State Park & State Sponsored Activities***

- May 17 Open House, Michigan Iron Industry Museum, Negaunee
- May 23 Wells State Park - Memorial Day Weekend Celebration
- May 25 Fort Mackinac - Memorial Day Observance on Mackinac Island
- June 5-7 Summer BOW Workshop at Bay Cliff Health Camp
- June 6 Van Riper State Park - Paws in the Park & National Trails Day Hike
- June 13-14 Summer Free Fishing Weekend
- June 13 Houghton County S.P.O.R.T. Ride, Twin Lakes State Park, 9am, 906-288-3321 or 906-353-6558
- June 13 Wells State Park - "Crafty Campers" Craft Show
- June 13 Fayette Historic State Park - Christmas in June
- June 13 Bewabic State Park - Youth Fishing Derby
- June 13 Baraga State Park - Baraga County Lake Trout Festival
- June 16 Bewabic State Park - Total Women in the Outdoors
- June 21 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Antique Auto Exhibit, Michigan Iron Industry Museum, Negaunee

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#### ***Upcoming U.P. Recreation/Sporting Shows***

- May-June For a host of spring events around the U.P., go to [www.uptravel.com](http://www.uptravel.com)
- 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!)

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## ***May 2015 Natural Resources Commission Meeting Agenda***

### **NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Committee**

1. Marketing Funnel Concepts
2. Parks and Recreation Marketing
3. Social Media Monitoring

### **NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries**

1. Fisheries Division Update
2. Wildlife Division Update
  - a. Deer Regulations and Deer Management Plan Update
  - b. DMAP Pilot Study Update
  - c. Wolf Management Plan Update
  - d. Cormorant Report
  - e. White-Nose Syndrome
  - f. Guiding Principles and Strategies (GPS) Update

### **NRC Committee of the Whole**

1. Director's Report
  - a. Parks and Trails Update
  - b. Scorecard Report
  - c. Oil and Gas Lease Auction Update
  - d. Wildlife Council Update
  - e. Public Land Strategy
  - f. Trout Trails Initiative
  - g. State Game Area Blue Ribbon Advisory
  - h. Deer Regulations
2. Legislative Report (see below)

**Partners in Conservation Award:** City of Cadillac

### **Public Appearances Before the NRC** (Pre-Registered)

Tony Demboski, President, UPSA, Deer Herd in the UP  
Rory Matson, UPSA, Deer Herd in the UP  
Dale McNamee, UPSA, Deer Herd in the UP

### **REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

1. NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION – For Information Only
  - a. Deer Harvest Reductions in the Upper Peninsula, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 5 of 2015
2. NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION
  - a. Approval of Minutes: April 9, 2015 Natural Resources Commission meeting
  - b. Small Game and Upland Game Birds Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 3 of 2015
  - c. Bear Damage Shooting Permit Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 4 of 2015
3. DIRECTOR'S ACTION
  - a. State-Licensed Commercial Fishing
  - b. Fisheries Order 243.15
  - c. Land Transactions (U.P. only listed below)

- 1) Parks and Recreation Land Acquisition, Eastern Upper Peninsula District – Chippewa County, The Karen Fehner Tract, Land Transaction Case #20140199
- 2) Parks and Recreation Land Acquisition, Western Upper Peninsula District – Marquette County, The Silver Lake Tract, Land Transaction Case #20130304

#### 4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Committee
- b. NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

#### 5. COMMISSIONER REPORTS

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#### **NRC Meeting Summary by Ed Golder**

The Natural Resources Commission met today (May 7) in Lansing. Here are the highlights.

You have likely heard a lot of conversation about deer regulations for the upcoming season in the Upper Peninsula. The matter came before the Commission today for information, with action scheduled for next month's meeting. In considering how best to manage damage to the UP deer herd following two very severe winters, the department presented the Commission with six options for consideration. Those options ranged from the most restrictive (closing the deer season in the UP) to the least restrictive, (making no change to current regulations). Today, the Commission decided to consider only two of those six options at next month's meeting: eliminating the antlerless option during archery season, or making no change to current regulations. One option the commission will not consider: closing the deer season. The Commission made it clear that *the deer season will remain open in the UP this year*.

In other action, the Commission approved:

- Small Game and Upland Game Birds Regulations: Changes to small game and upland game bird regulations occur every five years as part of the Wildlife Division's multi-year hunting regulatory cycle. Several changes were made in these regulations.
- Bear Damage Shooting Permit Regulations: These revised rules will make bear regulations similar to deer regulations where crop damage is concerned. The change allows the department to issue Bear Damage Shooting Permits outside of bear season in bear management units where crop damage is occurring.

Director Keith Creagh approved an order on state-licensed commercial fishing. The modification to these regulations will allow the department to evaluate a commercial fishing opportunity for lake whitefish in southern Lake Huron. In addition, the director approved three land transactions.

The day began with a meeting of the Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Committee. Christine Schwerin of the Marketing and Outreach Division reported to the committee on how our marketing efforts are adapting to societal trends. Among the important trends she noted: Internet use has been steadily on the rise (no surprise), as has smartphone use. The department is working to make sure its information is available digitally and that its digital information is accessible on smart devices. Christine also discussed social media. Fifty-eight percent of adults are on Facebook daily. The DNR has the broadest Facebook reach of any department in state government. We have a very active Twitter account, Instagram account and have recently opened a Pinterest account. The last will enable the DNR to reach a larger female audience. Christine said the department is not forgetting the need to reach people through printed materials as well. Maia Turek of the Parks Division talked about a few ways her division is using some of this science-based data to market state parks.

Next the Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries met. Fisheries Chief Jim Dexter talked about steelhead, including a decision to rear 10 percent more steelhead in state hatcheries to be stocked in inland lakes and the Great Lakes. He also talked about the Little Thornapple River, where a 13-and-a-half mile drain project in Barry County has badly damaged trout habitat. As a result of this damage, the department will alter where it stocks brown trout in that watershed.

Wildlife Chief Russ Mason told the committee about the formation of a blue ribbon panel to review the use of state game areas. The panel will review the overall use and intensity of use on these public lands, and the potential for expanding compatible recreational uses and management activities. In addition, Russ said, the UP Deer Habitat Advisory Committee is working with private land owners to develop better deer habitat. Chad Stewart of the Wildlife Division updated the Commission on revisions to the state's Deer Management Plan. The goal is to present a final draft of the new plan to the Commission at its Dec. 10 meeting. Next, Chad reviewed for the committee the six options for the Upper Peninsula deer season, against the backdrop of the lowest antlered harvest seen in the UP in 30 years. Commissioner Rex Schlaybaugh, chair of the Wildlife and Fisheries Committee, then brought a recommendation to the full Commission for the two options outlined above.

Ashley Autenreith of Wildlife talked about Deer Management Assistance Permits, a three-year pilot program in Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties. Kevin Swanson of Wildlife reviewed the progress of the Wolf Management Plan update. Wolves in the state have surpassed state and federal recovery goals for 15 years. The state's highly regarded 2008 Wolf Management Plan is being updated on several points based on new information. The revised plan will be before Director Creagh for approval at next month's Natural Resources Commission meeting.

Karen Cleveland of Wildlife reported to the committee on management of double-crested cormorants to address damage to fisheries, vegetation on public lands and wildlife. From 2007 to 2014, there has been a 40 percent decline of cormorant nests in the state as a result of these efforts. Killing and harassment of cormorants will continue this year in targeted areas, Karen said.

Dan Kennedy of Wildlife reviewed the status of white-nose syndrome in northern long-eared bats. White-nose syndrome has been identified in 11 counties in Michigan -- Alger, Alpena, Clare, Delta, Dickinson, Houghton, Keweenaw, Mackinac, Manistee, Marquette and Ontonagon. The disease will kill 50 percent to 90 percent of cave-dwelling bats over the next two years, Dan said. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the northern long-eared bat as a threatened species with an interim 4(d) rule. That decision allows for maximum benefit to the species, while also allowing for reasonable regulations that will mitigate loss of bats.

During the director's report in the Committee of the Whole, Parks Chief Ron Olson updated commissioners on a \$325,000 federal grant the department recently received that will be matched by \$325,000 in General Fund dollars from the state. The money will be used to improve athletic facilities at Belle Isle State Park. Recreation Passport sales remain up, as do camp night reservations, Ron said. Ron also announced a recent award from the Detroit Free Press that the Parks Division received for being a "Green Leader."

John Cherry of the Executive Division reviewed the department scorecard with the Commission. Tracie Bonner of Minerals Management reported on the May 4 Oil and Gas Lease Auction, which raised \$1.2 million for public recreation in the state. Carol Rose, chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council, announced the selection of a marketing firm to educate the public on the benefits that hunting, fishing and trapping provide for natural resources. The council is expecting to ink a contract with Gud Marketing of Lansing by May 18, which means a public information effort will soon be launched.

Resource Deputy Bill Moritz updated the commission on public lands in Michigan. Several bills are currently before the Legislature that would affect public lands. Bill reviewed the effects of some of that legislation as well as issues surrounding state-managed public land. He said the department will continue to protect special places for current and future generations while also evaluating our portfolio to make sure we have the right public lands in the right places.

Suzanne Ebricht of Fisheries talked about Michigan Trout Trails -- information the division is putting together to promote the state's nationally recognized trout streams. A new web page, which will be mobile-friendly, will provide detailed descriptions and photos for specific trout waters, as well as information on area lodging, restaurants and guide services. The page will also provide information on trout species available, regulations and other noteworthy information. The division will start with a few areas of the state with plans to expand.

The City of Cadillac received a Partners in Conservation Award for the work it does with the Parks and Recreation Division. Among other things, the city has a Memorandum of Understanding with the department to maintain 1 mile of the Fred Meijer White Pine State Park. The city does the maintenance free of charge to the state.

That's the news from Lansing tonight. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Ed Golder

Public Information Officer

**May 2015 Legislative Update - Trevor VanDyke , Director, Legislative & Legal Affairs Office**

**PA 12 and 13 of 2015 (SBs 54 & 55) – Prohibits the Use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for the Taking of Game – Sen’s. Casperson and Pavlov:** These Public Acts amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to prohibit the use of unmanned vehicles and unmanned devices to interfere with or harass another individual who is hunting or fishing and prohibits the use of an unmanned vehicle and unmanned device for the taking of game. Further, PA 12 would provide the NRC with exclusive authority to regulate sport fishing under Part 487.

**PA 18 of 2015 (SB 18) – Provides for the Conveyance of Certain Property in Calhoun County after Acquisition from the Federal Government – Sen. Nofs:** This Public Act adds Section 2120a to the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act requiring 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.

**SB 265 – Provides Authorization for a Governmental Entity to Establish Beach and Shore Safety Programs and Designates These Actions as Governmental Functions– Sen. Hansen:** This bill seeks to amend Section 12542 of the Michigan Public Health Code to provide that if a governmental entity makes available suitable and adequate safety and rescue equipment for the protection of individuals at a water body within its jurisdiction and establishes a reasonable maintenance, inspection and replacement schedule that these actions constitute a governmental function. The bill also provides rule making authority to the Department to implement this section.

- This bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

**SB 283 – Establishes a Walleye Fish Stocking Rate – Sen. Casperson:** This bill seeks to amend Section 505 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Department to stock spring walleye fingerling at an establish minimum rate in Fish Stocking Priority Regions. A Fish Stocking Priority Regions consists of 2 or more contiguous counties with a combined population of not less than 34,000 and not more than 41,000 residents and contains at least 130 inland lakes.

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

**HB 4239 – Allows Hunting from a Personal Assistive Mobility Device – Rep. Smiley:** This bill seeks to amend section 40111 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow individuals, who possess a valid permit for hunting from a standing vehicle, to transport and possess an uncased loaded shot gun, if the action is open, and to also discharge the firearm from a personal assistive mobility device (PAMD) to take game.

- This bill was referred to the full House for consideration.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

**HB 4502 – Provides for the Designation of the Northern Spring Peeper as the Official State Amphibian – Rep. Singh:** This bill seeks to provide for the designation of the Northern Spring Peeper as the official state amphibian.

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

**HB 4509 – Provides for Prohibition on the Sale, Purchase, Barter, or Possession with Intent to Sell Ivory or Rhinoceros Horns– Rep. Singh:** This bill seeks to create a new act prohibiting the sale, purchase, barter or possession with intent to sell ivory or rhinoceros horns or products. And further, provides for the power and duties of the state governmental officers and agencies to require the seizure of certain items. While interstate commerce is federally regulated, intrastate commerce is not.

- This bill was referred to House Committee on Natural Resources.
- The Administration has not taken a position on 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](http://www.legislature.mi.gov).

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## **Fisheries Division**

### **West Lake Superior Management Unit (George Madison)**

- Held three Fisheries Division spring update meetings, referred to as “Coffee and Conversations” public meetings at Ishpeming, Houghton, and Ironwood
- Attended the Upper Peninsula Sports Fisherman’s Association meeting in Ontonagon
- Attended Lake Superior Citizens Fishery Advisory meeting in Marquette
- Participated in WMNU Ask-The-DNR TV show
- Attended a meeting to discuss the fishery of Lake Gogebic
- A summer creel census was put in place for Lake Gogebic for the 2015 open water fishing season
- Creel census programs will also be in place for Keweenaw Bay, Traverse Bay, and Copper Harbor.
- Attended a meeting in Copper Harbor to discuss the management of the Harbor, Fanny Hoe, Manganese, Lac La Belle, Gratiot Lake, and Lake Medora
- Attended a meeting with the Duck Lake (Gogebic County) property owners
- Attended a meeting with the Black River Boater’s Club (Ironwood)
- Launched a new splake fishery in Moon Lake (Gogebic County)
- Stocked Chinook salmon in net-rearing pens in Marquette, Ontonagon, and Black River
- Conducted brook trout creel census on the E. Branch Ontonagon River to evaluate angler use of this 10-fish possession brook trout river to see if anglers fish this river specifically because of the liberal bag limit or just because they favor this stream
- Conducted a fisheries survey on Lake Angeline (Marquette County)
- Finalized a land transaction for a public land acquisition of an access site on Silver Lake Basin (Marquette County)

### **Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit (Darren Kramer)**

- Continued with spring work consisting of report writing and survey gear/equipment repair
- Conducted spring walleye egg take operations and tagging on Little Bay de Noc with staff from Crystal Falls, Escanaba, Thompson State Fish Hatchery, Marquette State Fish Hatchery, and Marquette Fisheries Research Station
- Completed a fish population survey on Little Lake, Marquette County
- Completed a fish population survey on East Bass Lake, Marquette County
- Completed a fish population survey on Goose Lake, Marquette County
- Completed a fish population survey on Witch Lake, Marquette County
- Staff completed a training opportunity offered through MSU Extension

### **Marquette Research Station (Dr. Ed Baker)**

- Continued working on gear and net maintenance in preparation for field season

- Continued lab work on samples collected during 2014 field season
- Tagged walleye (900 fish) on 4/17 and 4/20 in Little Bay de Noc, surveyed Ogontz River and Saunders Point for spawning walleye
- RV Lake Char splashed April 28 and is gearing up to begin the 2015 lake trout spring survey
- Captured and tagged lake sturgeon in the Menominee and Sturgeon rivers and collected eggs for ongoing lake sturgeon stocking in the Ontonagon, Whitefish, and Cedar rivers

#### Marquette and Thompson Fish Hatcheries (Jan VanAmberg)

##### *Marquette Hatchery*

- Hired a full time trades helper to assist with the hatchery maintenance program.
- Crew is in the midst of the fish planting season as of the week of April 28<sup>th</sup>. Most planting is occurring in the lower peninsula so far as we are waiting for access and roads to open up in the UP (see <http://www.michigandnr.com/fishstock/> for details).
- All fish to be stocked in the spring of 2015 are healthy and we expect all stocking assignments to be met.

##### *Thompson Hatchery*

- Crew is in the midst of the fish planting season as of the week of April 28<sup>th</sup>. Most planting is occurring in the lower peninsula for far as we are waiting for access and roads to open up in the UP. (see <http://www.michigandnr.com/fishstock/> for details).
- Received 1.7 million steelhead eggs from Little Manistee Weir on 4/22.
- Collected 20 million walleye eggs from Little Bay de Noc on 4/17 and 4/20.
- All fish to be stocked this spring are healthy and we expect all stocking assignments to be met.

#### **Forest Resources Division: Don Mankee, WUP District Supervisor (prepared by John Hamel, Inventory Planning Specialist)**

- The 2017 Year of Entry (YOE) inventory is underway with staff gathering field information. Open house and compartment review schedules are posted online, along with other state forest inventory information at: [www.michigan.gov/forestry](http://www.michigan.gov/forestry). The next WUP open house will be on June 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Baraga OSC.
- Vacancies continue to be filled across the state and for the WUP. Don Mankee has been promoted to the WUP District Supervisor. Don was previously the Baraga Unit manager. Brad Carlson, will be acting manager for the Baraga Unit. Robert Tylka will be temporarily filling the role of the WUP Timber Management Specialist until that role is filled permanently.
- As of April 8th, we have 299 open timber sale contracts in the WUP. This represents 32,221 acres of timber valued at approximately \$28.4 million.
- Timber markets and sale competition is strong, especially for break-up sales. Approximately 24 sales were recently sold in the WUP, and there are upcoming bid dates for additional sales.
- There are approximately 26 active timber sales in the WUP at this time. With the onset of seasonal county road restrictions, timber harvesting activity have mostly switched from lowland timber types to upland timber types with Class A road access with the spring break up.
- DNR Forestry staff has been taking advantage of the recent weather conditions preparing timber sales and doing forest inventory. Forestry companies contracted by the DNR have also been busy preparing timber sales to be bid
- The Wyman State Forest Nursery is preparing to lift over 5 million trees this spring. These trees will be used to replant harvested sites in the UP and the Northern LP. About half will be red pine and the other half jack pine. Approximately 125,000 trees are expected to be planted in the WUP in the next few weeks. An additional 1600 acres are expected to be treated as part of the forest cultivation program with such treatments as trenching for planting or seeding, site preparation, and herbicide applications.

- Due to Abnormally Dry condition in the WUP the FRD fire protection staff has been on high alert. There have been 15 fires totaling approximately 40 acres so far, with the peak of the fire season still to come. The WUP fire outlook expects to be high as the dead fuels continue to dry and the live fuel moistures continue their normal spring decline. Typically, with normal precipitation the spring fire season winds down by early June when we see full green-up.
- Our Cooperative Forest Management specialist Foresters are gearing up for field inspections of new Commercial Forest (CF) list applications. Each has 2,000 to 3,000 acres of various size parcels that private landowners have applied to enroll in the Commercial Forest program this year. For more information on the Commercial Forest program go to <http://Michigan.gov/commercialforest>.

### **Law Enforcement Division (LED): Lt. Pete Wright, District 1 Law Supervisor**

Recruit school #6 is at the week 18 mark. 37 recruits are scheduled to graduate on June 7<sup>th</sup> at which time they will be scattered throughout the state as they enter into the 18 week field training phase. As of this writing, no permanent county assignments have been made yet.

The following examples are some of the recent happenings in District 1:

- CO Mark Leadman observed one subject attempting to net fish on a closed trout stream. The subject was in a remote location in close proximity to a camp, and had no identification on his person. The CO followed the subject to a nearby camp and contact was made with two other subjects who were also returning to the camp with similar nets in their possession. Unaware of CO Leadman's presence, one subject asked another if he had any luck netting fish. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Brian Lasanen instructed a hunter education class for the sixth graders in Ontonagon County. The class took place during a two day period with a field day scheduled for later this spring.
- CO Brett DeLonge was working an ORV trail in northern Menominee County when multiple ORVs were observed traveling in his direction. As the ORVs passed, CO DeLonge observed an ORV in the middle of the group that was missing a valid ORV registration. The ORV failed to stop for CO DeLonge when signaled to do so. CO DeLonge was able to catch up with the ORV operator a short distance up the trail and found that the machine was not currently registered and both the driver and passenger had open intoxicants. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Brett DeLonge observed two ORVs operating with numerous violations. When the operators saw the CO they attempted to cross into a wooded area away from the direction of CO DeLonge. CO DeLonge was quickly able to corral the two operators and discovered both were juveniles. They stated they were headed to pick up their ORV permits when they saw the officer. After a discussion on ORV regulations, the operators returned back to their residence.
- CO Dave Painter was working the turkey opener when he came across two hunters who were braving the winter-like conditions. It was quickly apparent that something was amiss when one subject stated they did not have any luck and the other stated they did. A short conversation revealed the hunters had shot two turkeys, but had left their tags in the vehicle. Both subjects possessed valid tags for the hunt area, and after gathering all the facts it was apparent it was an honest mistake related to the clothing choice for the cold weather.
- CO Dave Painter worked a local trout lake for the opening morning of trout season. Fishing activity was slow, but two anglers did not have life jackets in their boat. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Dave Miller watched a group of anglers fishing on Huron Bay. CO Dave Miller observed one of the subjects fishing with more than three lines. CO Dave Miller made contact with the subject. Appropriate enforcement action was taken.
- CO Grant Emery responded to the complaint of a dead horse being dumped in a river. He was able to locate the dead horse in the river, and began to investigate who may have dumped it. A suspect was soon developed and interviewed. The suspect admitted to dumping the horse that had died in November, as he had previously observed deer that had died dumped in the river. CO Emery explained the difference between nature's actions and littering. Enforcement action was taken.
- CO Marvin Gerlach, CO Brett DeLonge and Sgt. Marc Pomroy worked the spring walleye activity along the Menominee River. Patrols were conducted in conjunction with the Wisconsin Wardens to address walleye snagging and the taking of over limits of fish.

## **Wildlife Division: Terry Minzey, Wildlife Supervisor (prepared by Brian Roell, Wildlife Biologist-Marquette)**

- **Wolf Management Plan Update:** On May 7<sup>th</sup> the Department presented the draft wolf management plan to the NRC for information. On May 8<sup>th</sup> the plan was posted to the our website for an additional 30 day period, during this timeframe the NRC will consider the plan and will also receive additional comments from the public. The Attorney General's office may also provide additional comments during this time. This is the second draft presented to both the NRC and public. We are hopeful the NRC will endorse the plan for Director Creagh's signature.
- **AuTrain Sharecropping:** In 1997 the DNR in combination with the local farming community farmed an estimated 550 acres of crops (including 220 acres of grain). Over the years funding and priorities have changed and we have only been able to keep 231 acres of hay fields in production. This year we have reached out to the local farming community and offered them lease free land with the hope that these partnerships will reclaim many of the fields that have been fallow for many years, while also enhancing forage and habitat for white-tailed deer Canada goose, sharp-tailed grouse, and other open land associated wildlife species (bobolink, sandhill crane, red fox, badger, etc.). This project will certainly increase hunter opportunities in this area, as well as benefit wildlife. The project will be funded through sharecropping agreements and by habitat dollars allocated to wildlife staff of the Gwinn Forest Management Unit.
- **Spring wildlife surveys:** During May wildlife surveys are conducted across the UP for several species such as ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and sharp-tailed grouse. These surveys provide an index of wildlife populations to be used to compare populations from year to year. Wildlife division staff and partner agencies conduct the surveys annually between pre-determined dates and at established times and locations to maintain consistency in survey protocol. An annual spring wildlife survey report is prepared following the conclusion of each survey season to share data across the UP and with interested sports persons and the public.
- **Upcoming Gwinn field seasons:** As spring progresses and the summer season approaches, field work plans for habitat projects are being finalized and projects will move into full swing. In the Gwinn Unit we will be having three tree and shrub planting events, the first is on May 9<sup>th</sup> with the Ruffed Grouse Society and the second is with a local high school on May 13<sup>th</sup> and third is in early June with MUCC. On top of these planting projects we will be planting mast producing trees and shrubs ourselves and contract planting 100's of oak trees and rye openings.
- **Shingleton Biologist:** We are pleased to announce that we have filled our Shingleton Wildlife Biologist position made vacant when Kevin Swanson accepted the new Bear and Wolf Specialist position. Cody Norton is our new Wildlife Biologist. He began working at the Shingleton Field Office on April 27<sup>th</sup>. Cody is a Marquette native where he developed a great love for outdoor activities, particularly hunting and fishing. He obtained a Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Northern Michigan University in Biology.

## **Finance and Operations Division: Tim Melko, Administrative Area Manager**

No report.

## **Parks & Recreation Division: William Doan, WUP District Supervisor**

### **Unit Highlights**



**State Park/Recreation Area/Scenic Site/Forest Rec Units** Brief summary of Campground/ Lodging/ Day Use Attendance, Events, Passport Highlights, Construction/ Projects, Stewardship, etc.

**Baraga State Park:** Staff worked on hiring/rehiring of seasonal and state worker (STW) staff. Preparations for opening of the campground were a priority as the park opens on May 1. Big Eric's Bridge State Forest Campground (SFCG) was very busy for the spring steelhead run. Minimal snowmobile usage as snow conditions deteriorated. Staff did some TV and radio interviews for the opening of the season. The park's Facebook page was also launched.

**Bewabic State Parks:** No Report

**Bond Falls Scenic Site:** There were many inquiries about the site being open, but snow and ice conditions were prohibitive to opening. Projected opening date is early May.

**Craig Lake State Park:** No Report

**Escanaba Field Office:** Staff have refurbished two vault toilets for Little Lake SFCG. Campground wells have been tested and registration stations updated for start of camping season. First camper stayed on 4/14/15. Staff assisted Baraga Construction Crew installing replacement sewer line at McLain State Park.

**Fort Wilkins Historic State Park:** No Report

**Lake Gogebic State Park** is repairing/replacing sewage lagoon boundary fence. Staff worked on regular startup operations including skid pier installation at 14 access sites.

**McLain State Park:** Some campsites shut down due to erosion. Lake front sites will be local sale only, so that staff can shut them down if necessary. Currently there is construction in the park to replace sewer lines and put in new roads. Park opens April 30th for semi-modern and the park will turn the water on May 14th and open the buildings.

**Menominee State Recreation Area:** No Report

**Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park:** Day and cabin use were brisk with the snow melt and pleasant temps. Toilet shower/Union Bay Boating Access Site (BAS) building planning are ongoing. Staff worked on hiring STW's.

**Twin Lakes State Park:** No Report

**Van Riper State Park:** Little Presque Isle/Harlow Lake Rustic Cabins had an increase of 12 nights for the March/April 2015 time frame compared to FY14 and Van Riper State Park had an increase of 7 nights for its rustic cabin. Around 50 of the lanterns were stolen sometime between the afternoon before the event and the morning before the event. This was a bit of a challenge, but staff adapted and the event went on successfully with 50 visitors attending. Staff conducted STW/Explorer Guide interviews.

**Wells State Park:** Campground opened for season on April 17 with semi modern facilities. Began procedure/testing for the sewage lagoon discharge.

## Boating Reports



### **Boating Reports (Field Offices, Harbors, Work Done by Park Staff at BAS/Harbors)**

Brief summary of Major Projects/Construction, BAS Work, Harbor Work, FO assistance at Park units, etc.

**Baraga Field Office:** Attended Mine Safety training. Staff continued refurbishing/constructing skid piers and made posts for docks. Staff also transported equipment to McLain and began erosion and exit road work at McLain State Park's campground.

**Cedar River State Harbor:** Dock removal project suspended until vendor returns in May with barge to complete project, have salvaged wooden & metal posts for re-purposing within PRD. We turned off de-icing equipment 3 weeks earlier than last year.

**Escanaba Field Office:** Staff have begun to clean and push in skid piers at sites as ice melts. Bedding box was re-designed for upcoming construction season and a skid pier was refabricated. Sporley Lake vault toilet was burned on 4/19/15, it was a complete loss.

**Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park:** Both BAS sites open and operational. Fishing has been active in Union Bay. Union Bay Pier decking repaired from winter damage.

**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. A Public Open House and City Commissioners Meeting was held in Ishpeming with PRD staff and public.

**Wells State Park:** Pushed in skid piers and inspected BAS sites. Had to repair & clean up lots of washed up rocks & debris at Menominee BAS.

# Employee News/Recognition



## **Personnel News, Vacancies/Hires, Recognition, Etc.**

Brief summary of any personnel changes, vacancies, or staff recognition.

**Lake Gogebic State Park:** James Peace has been selected as the new Lake Gogebic Lead Ranger and will begin on May 11th.

**Van Riper State Park** received approval and posting for a Park Ranger for Van Riper Management Unit.

**Wells State Park:** Seasonal Ranger Zach Bishop will be transferring to Escanaba Field Office. Staff conducted State Worker 4 interviews. Supervisor Diffenderfer is attending Supervisor Academy in Lansing.

**Escanaba Field Office** has been funded for a third park ranger and will have Zachary Bishop of Wells State Park starting on May 10th.

## Challenges



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

List any issues or challenges (staffing, funding, infrastructure, etc.) or anything not covered in other sections.

**Baraga State Park:** There were difficulties this year with STW hiring this year. It was hard to find quality applicants that could start early in the season (before Memorial Day).

**Van Riper State Park** continued major improvements/upgrades to the water treatment system for Van Riper State Park.

**Wells State Park:** Received \$10,000 DNR Partnership Match Grant through Wells Friends' Group, who also put up \$10,000 for restoration of old CCC toilet building in campground.

## Trespass and Acquisition



**Trespass and Acquisition Report** Brief summary of work and progress on trespass issues and land acquisitions.

Staff is making good progress working with private landowners to fill a mile-long gap in the Stateline Trail near Wakefield. Staff also began investigating trespasses along the Felch Grade in Delta & Menominee Counties and researching ownership to resolve other trail related issues.

## Planning and Trail Reports

### Trails



**Trail Reports** Brief summary of efforts and projects on Western UP District Trails.

### Trail Permits

#### Event/Use Permits:

1. **Mount Bohemia:** Mount Bohemia has applied for a use permit to utilize a 20 passenger Snow Cat on a designated snowmobile trail to access a newly developed backcountry ski area. The trail is on land owned by GMO and they support the permit.
2. **Logging:** Many use permits have been issued to allow contractors to utilize rail-trails to access timber sales. Permits are issued to make sure damage doesn't occur to rail-trail and make sure safety measures are established.
3. **Bike Race:** An event permit has been requested to utilize a rail-trail in Marquette County for a bike race in June.

## Multi-Use Trails

**Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park:** Followed up with Rob Katona on three different blocked/damaged culvert complaints from spring runoff.

**Van Riper State Park** has an new approved Friends Group for the Harlow Lake/Little Presque Isle Area, and there has been progress toward new trail proposals for mountain biking.

### Rail-Trail Projects:

1. Menominee River Bridge: A \$70,000 grant was attained through an RTP grant for engineering on the Menominee River Bridge. Efforts are still underway to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Wisconsin and then put new decking and railing on the bridge to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, ORV's, etc. We are waiting on Wisconsin DNR to respond to the MOU.
2. Stateline Trail Connector – Wakefield to Bessemer: We are working on purchasing easements to complete the segment of trail between Korpela Road and Bessemer. Several landowners have expressed an interest in selling an easement to the State. There are also segments of this unused rail line that still belong to the railroad. We are in discussions with them to buy their portions. Our goal is to complete the Stateline rail-trail from Iron Mountain to Ironwood. This would benefit the communities of Wakefield, Bessemer, Ramsey, and Ironwood greatly.
3. Houghton to Chassell Rail-Trail: Brushing was completed this fall on portions of the trail. Brushing will resume this spring with some drainage work being accomplished as well. Additional grant dollars will be sought this spring. 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.
4. Rockland to Ontonagon: This segment was purchased last summer. We are in the process of designating this as a multi-purpose trail. The ownership that we attained in the Village, where the old rail-yard was, will be leased to the Village for use as a park.
5. Washouts: We have had several washouts on our rail-trails this spring. The most notable is in Lake Linden and involves about 100' of missing trail. Repair is two faceted: a) much of the sediment washed downstream and we are looking at remediation. b) Working with DEQ and contractors to rebuild the trail where the washout occurred.
6. Bridges/Trestles: We have many trestles in the West U.P. that need rehabilitation. Grants are being sought and engineering and construction are occurring on trestles on the - Stateline rail-trail, Baraga to Arnheim rail-trail, Bergland to Sidnaw rail-trail, Felch Grade rail-trail, and Houghton to Chassell rail-trail. We have identified the highest 15 priorities and are focusing on them. We have over 100 trestles in our rail-trail system.
7. Ironwood to Bessemer: A grant has been secured for construction and engineering on the rail-trail between Ironwood and Bessemer. This rail-trail is going to be paved for non-motorized activity. Three trestles will be rehabilitated in the process. This will not interfere with the existing snowmobile trail connecting these communities.
8. Ishpeming to Humboldt: This rail-trail will be designated as an ORV route this spring. A ribbon cutting is planned for May 19th. A Directors Order (D.O.) was recently executed to prohibit vehicles over 65" in width from operating on this rail-trail. The D.O. also prohibits discharge of a firearm.
9. Escanaba to Hermansville: This rail-trail is under construction and is being resurfaced and three bridges are being re-decked and railed. This is occurring as part of an agreement with the utility company ATC who is also installing an overhead power line on the rail-trail. This construction project is planned to be completed by 2017 at which time the rail-trail will be designated as a multi-purpose trail.
10. Little Lake to Chatham: Work just beginning on acquiring the segments of this rail-trail that the State does not own. A snowmobile grant has preliminarily been approved to fund key acquisitions. If these acquisitions can be completed, this corridor would help connect the eastern and western U.P. with multi-purpose trail.



## ORV Trails

**McLain State Park:** Trail #3 in Lake Linden had a severe washout over a 100 ft. long and over 30 ft. deep.



## Snowmobile Trails

**McLain State Park:** Trail #3 in Lake Linden had a severe washout over a 100 ft. long and over 30 ft. deep. On Trail (#3), we were informed that the washout affected the snowmobile trail downstream. The snowmobile trail that crosses Hammell Creek (122) now has the creek running down it. Debris from the washout collected along the willow trees and dammed up the creek, re-routing it to the snowmobile trail.

### Snowmobile Trail Updates:

1. Trail 11 South from Wakefield to Winchester WI Remains **Closed**. Logging continues on this trail, it's been closed the last two winters - it will be closed until logging winds down.

2. Trail 2 Between Wakefield and Bessemer is **closed** until Further Notice: A key land permit has been lost and currently a reroute is not available. The Gogebic Range Trail Authority and Convention and Visitors Bureau are exploring possible reroutes and hopefully have something for next winter.
3. Trail 11N between Wakefield and the Porkies is **closed** until Further Notice: A key land permit has been lost. Reroutes are being explored.
4. Trail 8 Near Eben Junction: **Closed** due to loss of key land permit. A reroute has been identified but involves a new MDOT crossing, construction work, and permission to use Alger County Road. A trail proposal is in process.
5. 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

**Van Riper State Park:** Via grant approval, there have been signs purchased for the Thunder Valley Equestrian Trail System.

**Wells State Park:** Attended a meeting of local equestrian group regarding new equestrian campground at Cedar River North State Forest Campground.

### Equestrian Trail Projects:

1. New Signage: We have developed some new signing for shared use trails in Marquette County.
2. Simar Campground Proposal: This campground proposal has been approved. Work is ongoing now to identify money for construction and develop a Directors Order allowing us to require Recreation Passport and collect money for camping.
3. Thunderberry 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

**Van Riper State Park:** The Friends of Blueberry Ridge Group received an MRPA Community Service Award.

**Wells State Park:** Plowed the Cedar River pathway parking lot.

**Escanaba Field Office:** Unit staff suspended grooming for the season at Anderson Lake Ski Pathway and Days River Ski Pathway mid-March due to snow melt. Public comments for the season were positive and a volunteer agreement has been set up for Anderson Lake Pathway for summer season.

### Pathway Projects:

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



**Planning Report** Brief summary of completed, ongoing and upcoming planning efforts and projects.

**Van Riper State Park** completed better/updated signage for Little Presque Isle Recreation Area.

**McLain State Park:** Construction is underway to put in sewer lines, new manhole, and the new exit road at McLain. If all goes well, hopefully all work will be completed by Memorial Day weekend.