

Autumn Ambling

Michigan State Parks, and the staff in them, LOVE the fall. They plan all kinds of fun and exciting events. And with 97 State Parks and Recreation Areas in Michigan, you don't have far to go to find one. Camping is one fun thing to do at a state park.

Picture yourself at a Michigan State Park campground. Campfire smoke rising into the night sky, s'mores being eaten, thousands of stars twinkling high above you, warm sleeping bags waiting in a nearby tent or RV. Maybe the distant call of coyotes or even wolves. WOW! What an adventure! Why don't you show us what your imagination cooks up? Draw a picture of your favorite Michigan campground memory. If you haven't tried camping yet, draw us a picture of what you think it would be like!

Mail them to us and we'll pick a few of our favorites to put on our new kids Web site. It's not ready yet but we hope to have it for Christmas! Send your artwork to:

Campground Memories
Michigan DNR
Office of Communications
P.O. Box 30028
Lansing, MI 48933

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Camping with the Goblins

Ah, fall camping--sunsets over the lake, songs around a campfire, witches sailing over the treetops. Witches? That's right, and goblins, too. For many people, spending Halloween at a Michigan state park has become a way to extend the camping season and enjoy some family fun. In fact, some parks offer more than one weekend of Halloween amusement, so park officials now call them Harvest Festivals.

This October, Harvest Festivals are being held at 24 state parks and recreation areas and the fun includes everything from campsite decoration, costume parades, pumpkin carving and trick-or-treating, to hayrides and haunted houses. Most events are for registered campers, but you can enjoy some day-use fun at Sleeper, Hartwick Pines, Bay City and Holly. To check it out, go to:

www.michigan.gov/dnrrecreationcamping
to find the full list of Harvest Festivals.



Fall into the OUTDOORS



DNR Director Becky Humphries, her daughter Jenny, and Chip, their dog, enjoying Michigan's great outdoors

Fall is my favorite time of the year! Why? It always reminds me why I love my job!

Everywhere I go, I see Michigan citizens enjoying the resources that our employees work so hard to manage and protect -- a young girl walking across a field on a pheasant hunt...a boy sitting in a duck blind with his dad and Labrador retriever... a family hiking through a colorful Michigan forest. Michigan's natural resources are some of the most diverse and beautiful on the planet. And the DNR intends to keep it that way for you, your friends and family.

Another reason I love the fall is what it does to all of my senses, the sound of honking geese flying south, the sight of bright orange pumpkins, the smell of wet leaves, the taste of apple cider, and the touch of warm clothing as the temperatures drop.

How about you? What is your favorite thing about fall? The beginning of school?

Why don't you let us know? I know my fellow employees at the Michigan DNR would love to hear what you love about the fall and which of your senses are piqued by something outdoors. You can e-mail us at:

naturenews@michigan.gov
and we'll put it on our Web site.

And after you do that, get outside and enjoy Michigan's great outdoors.

Yours truly,

Becky Humphries, Director,
Michigan Department of
Natural Resources

Great Lakes, Great Times, Great Outdoors



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Forests Worth Growing

It seems like television, newspapers and magazines are always reporting about the rapid loss of our planet's rain forests. While there is worldwide concern about rain forests being cut down at a very fast pace, Michigan forests are a different story! Michigan forests are growing, not declining. It may seem hard to believe but it's true.

First of all, Michigan forests are huge, covering more than 1/2 of the state and 19 million acres. This is more forest land than we had 25 years ago. As a matter of fact, only four states (Georgia, Oregon, Alabama, and North Carolina) have more timberland acreage than Michigan. Timberland is forestland that can produce trees for timber sale and other wood products.

Michigan forests have lots of uses. Our wildlife thrives in them. So do people.

Hiking, camping, hunting, skiing and snowshoeing are just a few ways we use our Michigan forests. There is no better time to get out in our forests than right now! The colors make hiking a wonderful experience and Michigan state forest campgrounds, all 145 of them, are waiting for you to visit. To find the closest ones to you check:

www.michigan.gov/dnrcamping



Ch-ch-changes

The only thing that never changes about nature is that it is always changing! At the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) we are also changing a few things. If you were a member of the Outdoor Explorer's Club, you will begin to receive the *Nature News*. In several months, we will introduce you to our new youth Web site. It is being designed to make learning about nature fun and exciting. And while we want you to "log on" when it is finished, we also want you to spend as much time outside as possible. Michigan's great outdoors and its natural resources are a treasure to experience and appreciate.

TOP FIVE reasons to get outside this fall

- 1. It's Cool Man** – After months of Michigan heat and humidity, fall weather brings a welcome chill to the air, perfect for campfire, sweaters, and that first cup of hot chocolate.
- 2. Skeeter Free** – With cooler temperatures, our six-legged friendly "mosquitoes" take a hike and disappear until next spring. Mosquitoes are good for the ecosystem but not so good for our legs, arms, and face.
- 3. Color, Color, Everywhere** – Michigan's many hardwood trees promise fall colors that look spectacular.
- 4. Harvest Time** – Whether you help in the garden, pick apples, or choose the family pumpkin, fall is a time to load up on food for the table.
- 5. Crepuscular Critters** – as fall prepares for winter, wildlife become more active at dawn and dusk. The best time to see many kinds of wildlife is at dawn or dusk. Biologists call animals, most active at these times crepuscular! Cre-PUS-cu-lar. Ask your parents if they know what THAT word means!