



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
 LANSING



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
 GOVERNOR

DANIEL EICHINGER  
 DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: July 15, 2019  
 RESUBMITTED: August 12, 2019

<b>A P P R O V E D</b> <hr/> _____, 20____ MICHIGAN NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION <hr/> (ASSISTANT TO THE COMMISSION)
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MEMORANDUM TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

**Subject:** Establish Hunting and Trapping at Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2019

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background

In Land Use Order of the Director No. 8 of 2016, the Department designated the Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve as the 103<sup>rd</sup> State Park. Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve consists of 1,122 acres in Southern Michigan and has unique features making it well suited for multiple outdoor recreational opportunities, including a waterfowl refuge and migration viewing area.

Watkins Lake is now open to the public and the Department manages and administers the property out of the W.J. Hayes State Park in collaboration with Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, which also purchased nearby land as part of a regional trail connection.

When the Department purchased the property using the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant hunting and trapping were intended proposed recreational activities – this was made clear during the planning process. Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission determined it would not open the County owned land to hunting unless it was necessary for natural resource management.

The Director approved the general management plan for Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve on October 10, 2018. As part of the planning process, stakeholders and the public had several opportunities to provide input. These were as follows:

- Stakeholder workshop (by invitation) - September 2017
- Public workshop (press release and letters to all park neighbors) - September 2017
- Online survey

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- Public input meeting to review the draft plan March 2018 – this plan included an area proposed to be open to hunting.

*Biological*

Watkins Lake historically has been and continues to be a significant stop-over site for waterfowl and other water birds. Opening a portion of the Watkins Lake property to hunting and trapping is not expected to have a significant biological impact.

*Social*

The Watkins Lake property is already being used for recreational opportunities such as hiking, fishing, scenic viewing, and draws many watchable bird and wildlife enthusiasts. Therefore, opening the property to hunting and trapping will allow for additional recreational opportunities.

*Economic*

The Department does not expect a significant economic impact. Opening a portion of the Watkins Lake property to hunting and trapping opportunities may provide economic benefits by potentially increasing the amount of recreation and hunting expenditures, e.g., costs of ammunition, food, travel, and lodging. It may also result in increased license sales.

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Relevant Divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This order was being submitted for information on August 8, 2019 at the Natural Resources Committee meeting. This item appeared on the Department's July 2019 calendar and may be eligible for approval on September 12, 2019.



Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief  
Wildlife Division



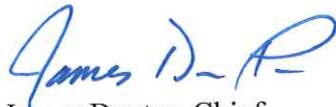
Gary Hagler, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division



Debbie Begalle, Chief  
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief  
Fisheries Division



Shannon Hanna  
Natural Resources Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Director has authority.

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Daniel Eichinger, Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

## **Amendment No. 8 of 2019**

By authority conferred on the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by sections 40107 and 40113a of 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.40107 and 324.40113a, it is ordered that effective September 13, 2019, the following section(s) of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

**7.40 Watkins lake state park and county preserve, hunting and trapping allowed.**

Sec. 7.40 Hunting and trapping shall be allowed during the established seasons on all state-owned lands lying north of the northerly right-of-way line of the LS & MS Railroad right-of-way and north of Arnold road in sections 12 and 13, T04S R02E.

Issued on this 12th day of September, 2019.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Vicki J. Pontz, Chairperson  
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Daniel Eichinger  
Director