MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL (MTAC)

Meeting Minutes

Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center

July 10, 2024

1 – 4:30 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE MICHIGAN TRAILS ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Brian Beauchamp, Chairperson
- Kenneth Hopper, Vice Chairperson
- Michael Maves (virtual)
- Mark Losey (virtual)
- Ryan Laporte (virtual)
- Jason Aric Jones
- Richard Williamson
- Jenny Cook
- Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf (virtual)
- Karen Middendorp
- Tavon Brooks (virtual)

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Annalisa Centofanti, Greg Kinser, Jill Sell, Paige Perry, Nicole Hunt, Blake Gingrich, Daniel Heckman, Heather Durocher, Lee Maynard, Scott Slavin, Chris Stark, Cody Stevens, Ron Yesney, Rob Katona

Meeting minutes

Meeting called to order at 1:09 p.m. by MTAC Chairperson, Brian Beauchamp.

Council and DNR staff introductions.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion was made to approve the March 26, 2024 meeting minutes by Karen Middendorp and seconded by Richard Williamson, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Brian Beauchamp requested to add agenda topic “Meeting Attendance” under VI (d).

Motion was made to approve the July 10, 2024 modified agenda by Jenny Cook and seconded by Karen Middendorp, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

WAYNE KOPPA
Mr. Koppa brought forth the systemic barriers to non-motorized trail construction & development in Northern Michigan. Advocating that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT and Road Commissions be considered for trail grants from the Natural Resource Trust Fund, modifying criteria language. This change will give advantages to completing the Iron Belle Trail and other opportunities not feasible without grant funds. Asking MTAC to endorse this proposed change.

Jason Aric Jones understands but is concerned money allocated to linear trails may deter trail development for natural surface nonmotorized trails, considering the linear trails will be large dollar projects.

*Brian Beauchamp requested to add this topic to a future MTAC agenda after more information has been received and reviewed by board members.

RON GRIBB
Mr. Gribb expressed concerns about snowmobile trail conditions used by ORV's. He would like funds from the ORV program be considered to repair and maintain the snow trails used by ORV's.

SCOTT SILVERS
Mr. Silvers is happy to see revised rules for ebike access on motorized trails.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

FRD STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN
DANIEL HECKMAN, DNR (FRD)
Presentation attached.

Jason Aric Jones asked if there is someone inside the Forest Resource Division (FRD) that is dedicated as a trail specialist. Dan responded they are now in Parks and Recreation (PRD). Jason is concerned there is not a designated FRD staff trail specialist to represent trails. Dan ensures PRD trails specialist are involved and active with forest management plans.

Jenny Cook would like to see a buffer along the trails so horses can still have the shade to stay cool. Dan mentioned by adding up all the buffers, it would account for thousands of acres and eventually the trees will fall over. Forest management tries to stay away from linear buffers. Special circumstances can be considered. One has to look at the long-term picture, timber management is a slow evolving process.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) FY25 ANNUAL PROJECT LIST
LEE MAYNARD, DNR
Presentation attached.

Karen Middendorp would like to see more details on the projects listed and Jenny Cook added identifying the user groups that will benefit from these trail project improvements.

Jason Aric Jones would like more stakeholder engagement with trail users when these lists are created.

MOTION
Motion to approve and support the FY25 project list is made by Jason Aric Jones and seconded by Karen Middendorp with the condition that the project details are sent to board members, with all in favor. Motion carried.

DNR TRAILS USE SURVEY RESULTS
DNR TRAILS USE SURVEY RESULTS - Patty Janes, Grand Valley State University (GVSU)
Presentation attached.

MTAC MEETING ATTENDANCE
Brian Beauchamp
Brian would like members to make more of an effort to attend the meetings in person. Karen Middendorp agrees and believes more of an impact is to be had with in person attendance. Brian and DNR staff have suggested to add by-laws in place of the current “rules of procedure” for MTAC. This topic will be discussed further at the trails summit in September.

UPDATES

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS
Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS)
Report attached.

Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup (NAW)
Jason Aric Jones
The NAW April meeting talked about aligning advisory subcommittees goals with trails strategic plans to come from MTAC and distributed to subcommittees. Sage Hegdal, DNR, presented information about the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail to board members and after a discussion the members determined any trail additions will entail to many challenges to tackle. Liability insurance was discussed at the stakeholder level noting the State has increased required coverages for competitive/race events, also the State is exploring providing insurance for volunteer events. Improvement on horse etiquette signs was shared. The ETS and NAW are joining together to create a trail maintenance and funding committee to discuss opportunities for funding and maintenance. Lastly, the Ebike survey results were shared and discussed, this is still a divided topic.

Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (SAW)
Report attached.

Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup (ORVAW)
Report attached.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE (USFS)
NICK EDINGTON, USFS
The Huron-Manistee Forest is proposing a fee change and adjustments for campsites. Information is located on the USFS website. Hiawatha is in a planning phase for fee changes.

EBIKE LAND USE ORDER (LUOD) – UPDATE
TIM NOVAK, DNR
(proposed LUOD attached)
Tim Novak reported some language changes have been made explicit for the North Country Trail (NCT), which requires an additional 30-day review period. The LUOD will go back to the Natural Resource Council (NRC) meeting in August for the Director's approval.

Jason Aric Jones advised some sections of the NCT will overlap with State land, may want to look this over.

Ebike signage is moving forward and being shared with stakeholders.

HORSE TRAIL ETIQUETTE SIGN
TIM NOVAK, DNR
The final version was presented to ETS and is moving forward with the approved design.

THUNDER VALLEY PUBLIC MEETING

RON YESNEY, DNR

A public meeting is scheduled on July 15 in Marquette at 6:30 p.m. A DNR press release went out with meeting details and public information. This meeting is to hear public input on restricting bicycle access on the Thunder Valley Trail system.

NONMOTORIZED FUNDING & MAINTENANCE WORKGROUP UPDATE

- July 15; Kickoff Meeting Scheduled
- Members: Jason Aric Jones, Neal Glazebrook, Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, Jenny Cook - Greg Kinser (DNR)

KEWEENAW STATE TRAILS PLANNING UPDATE

TIM NOVAK, DNR

The Keweenaw lands are not owned by DNR yet. DNR staff have been working on potential plans if property is shifted to the States possession. Ron Yesney, DNR, is the trails representative on the planning committee. The first public meeting may be held in September.

SUBCOMMITTEE APPLICATION/APPOINTMENT PROCESS
BRIAN BEAUCHAM/TIM NOVAK

The language in the MTAC rules of procedure does not clearly define the application and selection process for subcommittees. This should be discussed further at the trails summit.

2024 MEETINGS

- SEPT. 24 (LANSING)
- SEPT 25-26 FALL ADVISORY BOARD TRAIL SUMMIT (LANSING)
- DEC. 10 (GRAYLING)

CLOSING/ROUND ROBIN

- DNR Finance Review (Dan Lord) moved to September agenda.

Karen Middendorp feels good about the progress MTAC is making, the group is working better, and having good conversations.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf would like to keep the virtual option for members.

ADJOURNMENT

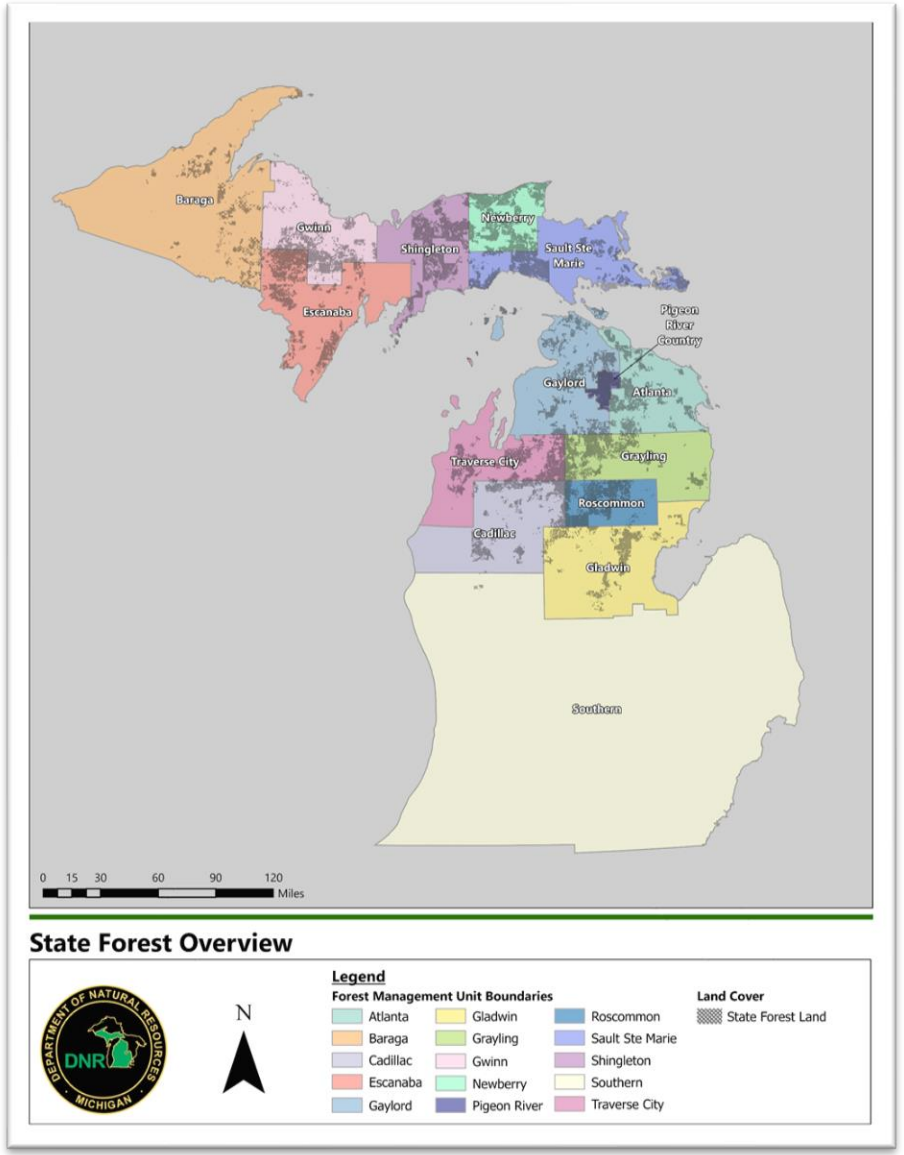
Meeting adjourned 4:54 p.m.

2024 State Forest Management Plan

July 10th, 2024

Topics

- Our team
- Legal authority
- Co-management
- What's new in this plan
- Lines of effort
- Plan Organization and Structure
- Timeline
- Review period
- Questions



Our Team

Forest Resources Division

- David Price
- Dan Heckman
- Chad Fate
- Ryan Zimmerman
- Lester Livermore
- John Hamel
- Tori Irving
- Brenda Haskill
- Kathleen Lavey
- Tim Webb
- Scott Jones

Wildlife Division

- Amy Derosier
- Erin Victory
- Sherry MacKinnon
- Shelby Adams
- Kristie Sitar
- Mike Donovan

Parks and Recreation Division

- Deborah Jensen

Fisheries Division

- Darren Kramer

Content Contributors

- Jason Hartman (FRD)
- Matt Fry (FOD)
- Josh Brinks (FRD)
- Patrick Cotant (FRD)
- Chris Hoving (WLD)
- Keith Kintigh (WLD)
- Ryan Wheeler (FRD /WLD)
- Katie Grzesiak (FRD/WLD)
- Heather Shaw (FRD/WLD)
- Stacy Tchorzynski (MHC)
- Paul Rogers (FRD)
- Simeon Wright (FRD)
- Adam Bump (WLD)
- Cody Norton (WLD)
- Tyler Petroelje (WLD)
- Clay Buchanan (WLD)
- Jack Saj (FRD)
- Rachael Coale (FRD)
- Margaret Spagnuolo (FRD)
- Casey Warner (MOD)
- Beth Fults (MOD)
- Dale Rabe (WLD)
- Brian Mastenbrook (WLD)
- Craig Albright (WLD)

Legal Authority

- NREPA - Act 451 of 1994 - Part 525
- State Forest Management Plan
- Stable, long-term, sustainable timber supply
- Promote and encourage outdoor recreation, tourism, and the forest products industry
- Incorporate biodiversity conservation goals
- Identify environmentally sensitive areas
- Identify forest treatments to maintain and sustain healthy, vigorous forests and quality wildlife habitat
- Prepared timber sale acres must be a minimum of 90% of planned harvests

451-1994-III-2-4-MISCELLANEOUS-TOPICS-525 - PART 525 SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY ON STATE FORESTLANDS (324.52501...324.52511)

- Section 324.52501 - Definitions.
- Section 324.52502 - Management of state forest; manner; duties of department.
- Section 324.52503 - Forestry development, conservation, and recreation management plan.
- Section 324.52504 - Harvest and sale of timber; deposit of proceeds into forest development fund; report.
- Section 324.52505 - Third-party certification that forestry standards satisfied; report.
- Section 324.52506 - Report.
- Section 324.52511 - Repealed. 2004, Act 123, Eff. Dec. 31, 2011.

Co-management of the State Forest

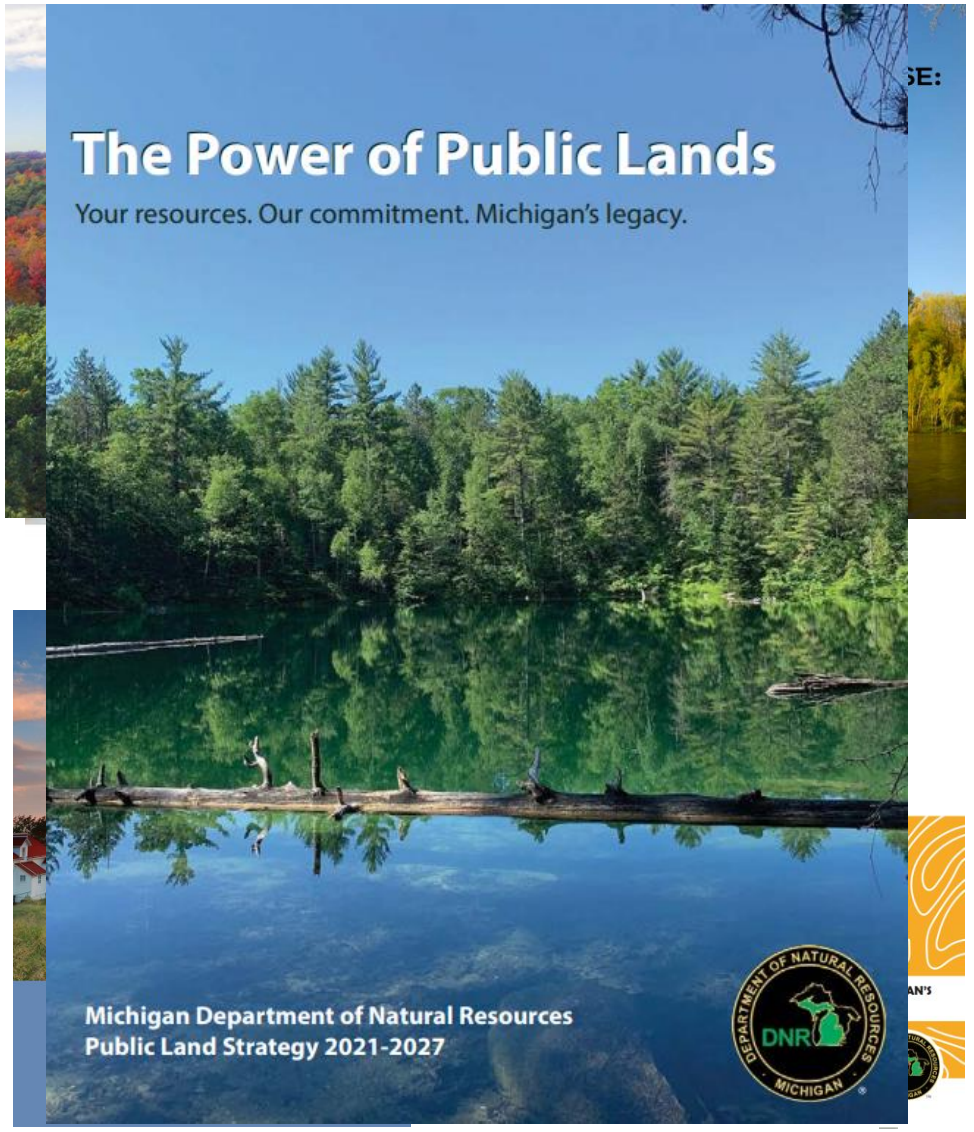
- First implemented in 1946 when State Game Areas and State Forests were merged in the northern 2/3 of the State.
- Forest Resources Division is the land administering division for the State Forest.
- Forest Resources and Wildlife Division are jointly responsible (legally) for developing the management plans and providing management guidance and approval on the State Forest.
- Recreation management on the State Forest has transitioned to PRD over the last 20 years.
- Parks and Recreation and Fisheries Division Co-manage through the "Compartment Review Process".

Our Vision for a Successful Co-Management System

The two Divisions collaborate in partnership to manage timber, habitat, and wildlife on state forest lands for the benefit of current and future generations. We follow statewide priorities set by the State Forest Management Plan and Guiding Principles and Strategies. We manage these resources at ecologically appropriate scales established in the three Regional State Forest Management Plans. Decisions are supported by scientific facts, and principles, and reflect the needs for timber and wildlife species, desires of stakeholders, and changing conditions.

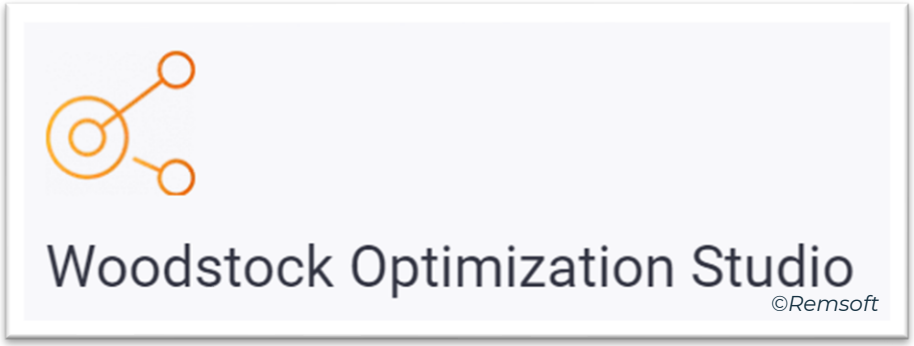
What's new in the 2024 SFMP

- Improved alignment with other plans
  - DNR Land Strategy
  - Forest Action Plan
  - Wildlife Action Plan
  - Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
  - Trails Plan
  - Division Strategic Plans



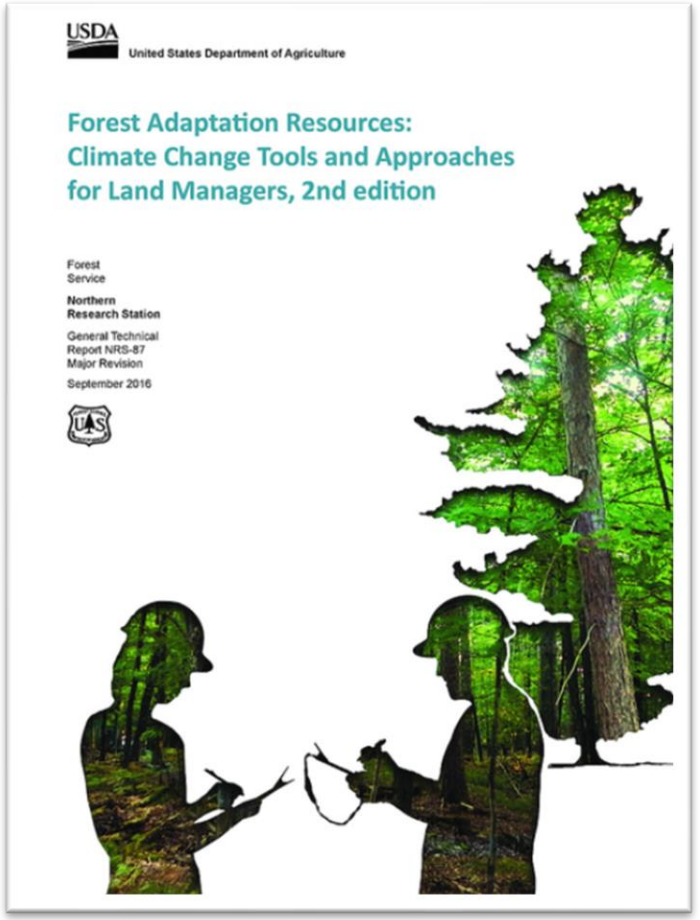
What’s new in the 2024 SFMP

- Using a robust planning and optimization analytics platform to:
  - Define objectives
  - Establish goals and constraints
  - Design scenarios
  - Analyze results
  - Identify a preferred solution
  - Implementation of the management actions



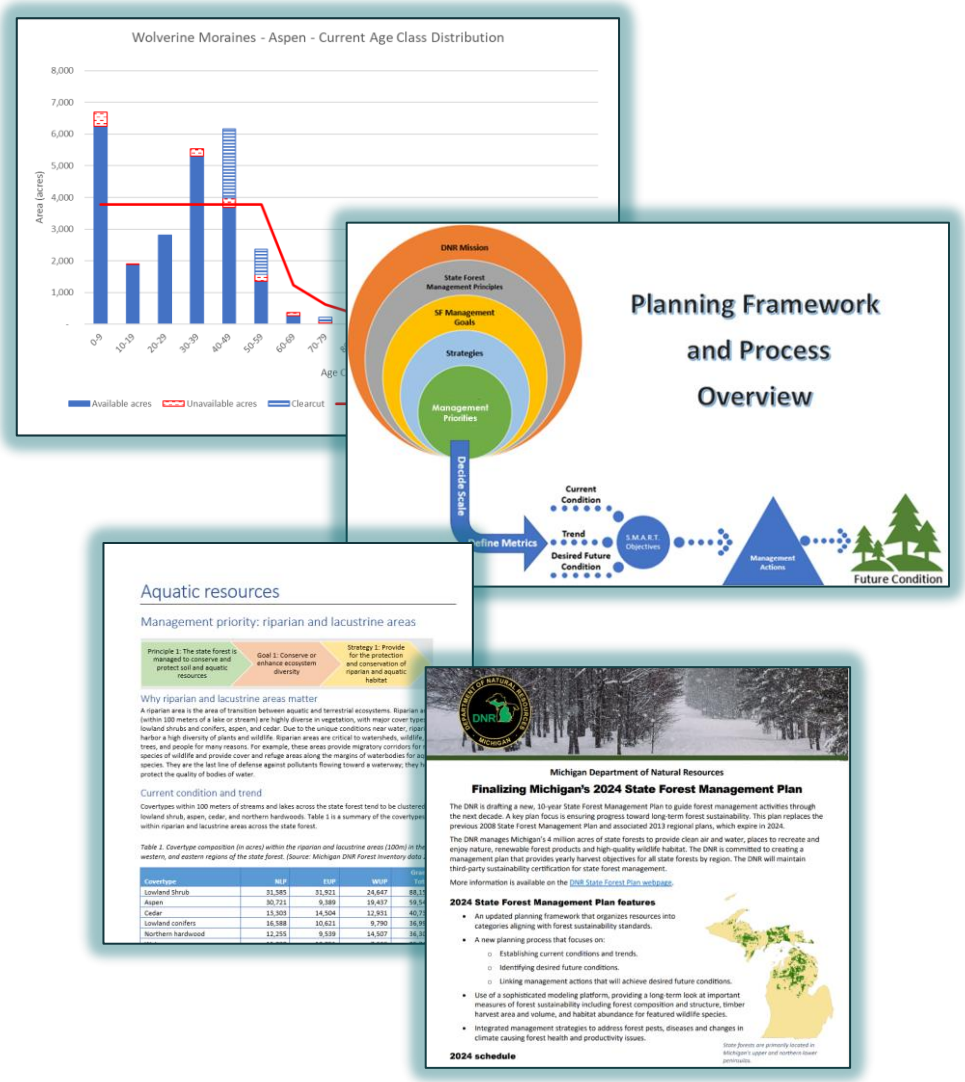
What's new in the 2024 SFMP

- Long term sustainability drives short term harvest levels
  - Leverage site condition data to determine manageable land base
- Integrated forest covertype and wildlife habitat management
- Simplified for ease of implementation
  - Reduced # of management areas to 35
  - 4 plans combined into 1
- Integration of climate smart management direction in each management priority
  - Evaluated potential threat & related risk
  - Determine relevant adaptation approach:
    - Resiliency
    - Resistance
    - Mitigation



Lines of Effort

SFMP Model	Scenario Development	Preferred Management Scenario
Planning Framework	Planning Process	Desired Future Conditions
Writing the Plan	Statewide and Regional Management Priorities	Management Areas
Engagement	Internal Collaboration	External Consultation



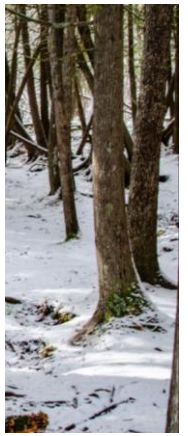
Modeling Effort

Forest Inventory

Management Strategies

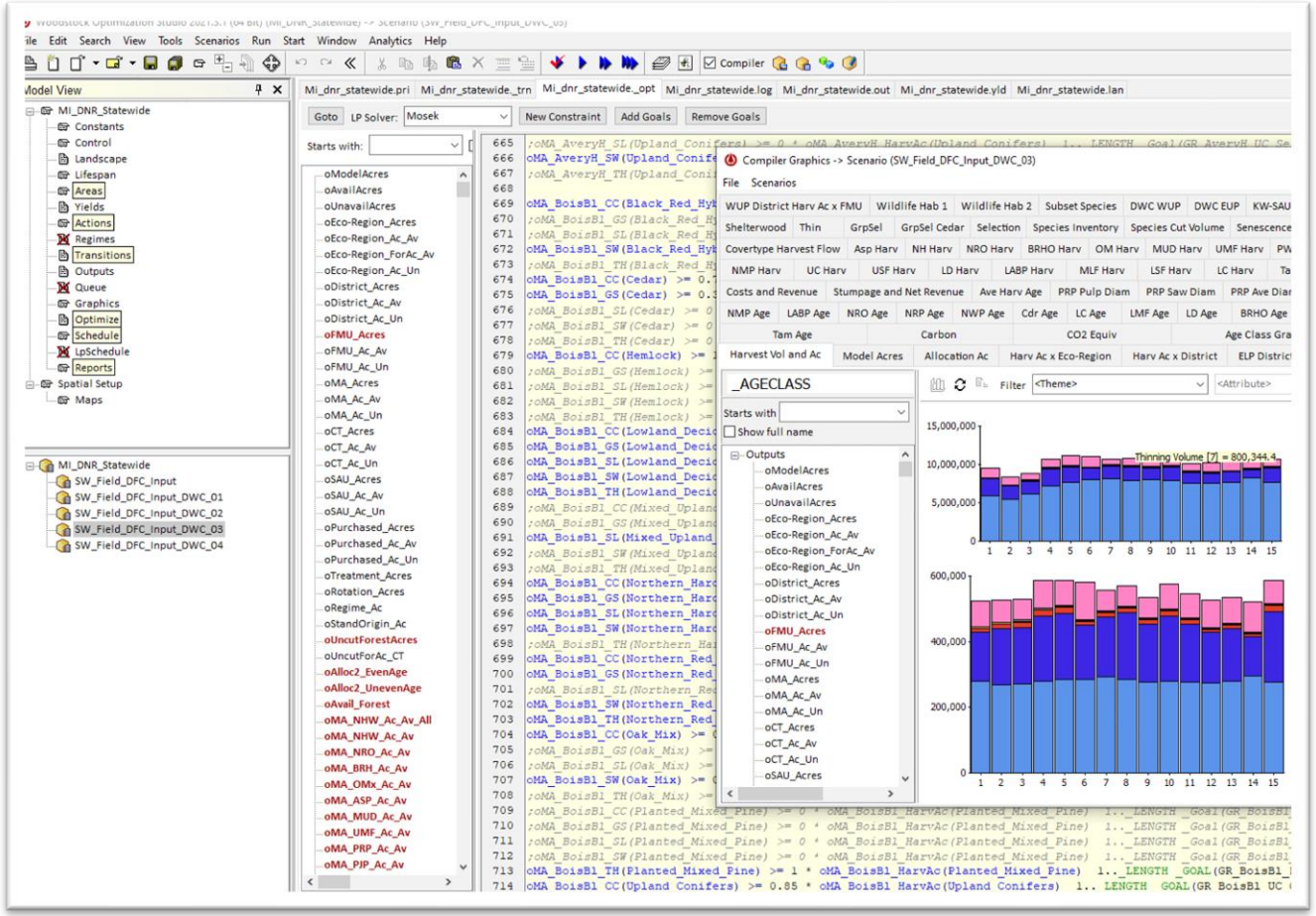
Timber and Wildlife Habitat Goals

SFMP Model



SFMP Modeling Outcomes

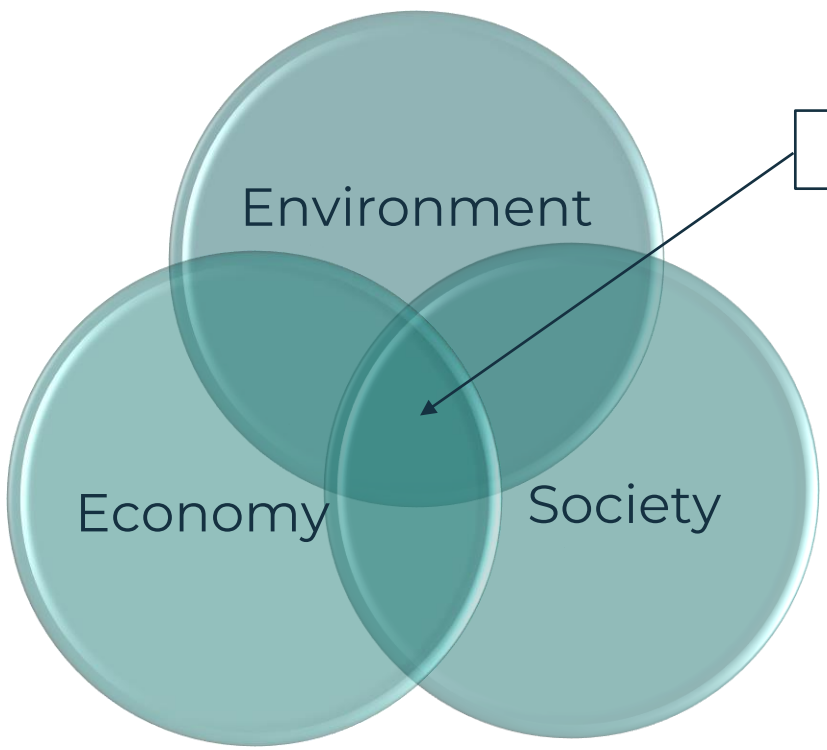
- Future forest conditions
  - Age, covertype, basal area
- Landscape Habitat abundance
  - Featured species potential habitat
  - Forest diversity matrix
- 10-year harvest levels
  - Management areas
  - Special analysis units



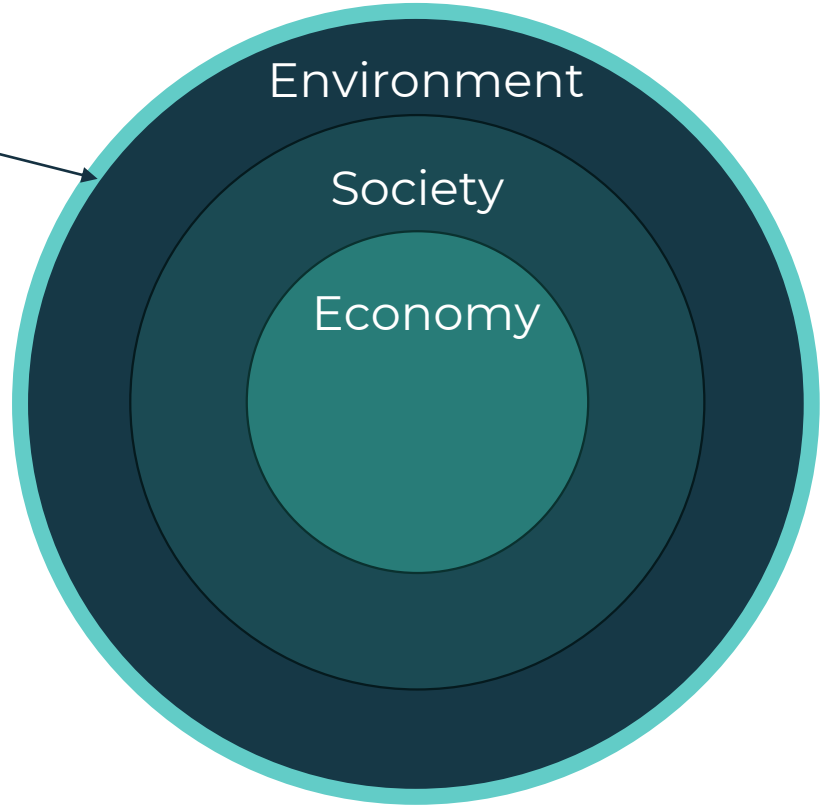
Special Analysis Units

- Grouse Enhanced Management System
- Elk Management Plan
- Pigeon River Country – Concept of Management
- Kirtland's Warbler Management Plan
- Deer Wintering Complexes

Forest Sustainability



Old model – weak sustainability



New model – strong sustainability

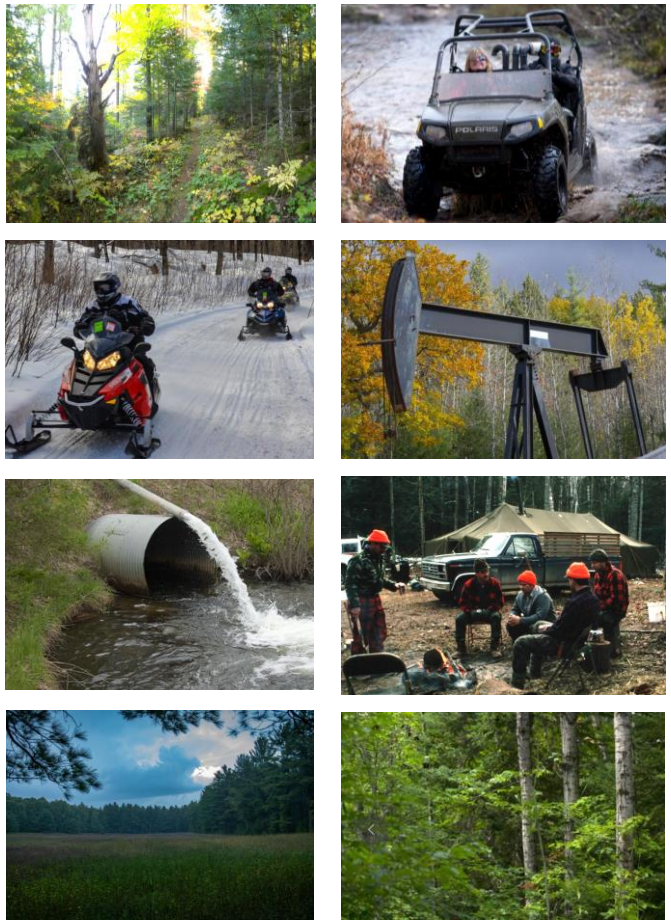
Planning Framework Overview

Established 7 Management Principles that are aligned with **Montreal Process Criterion & Indicator Framework** for measuring **progress toward forest sustainability**.

The state forest is managed to…

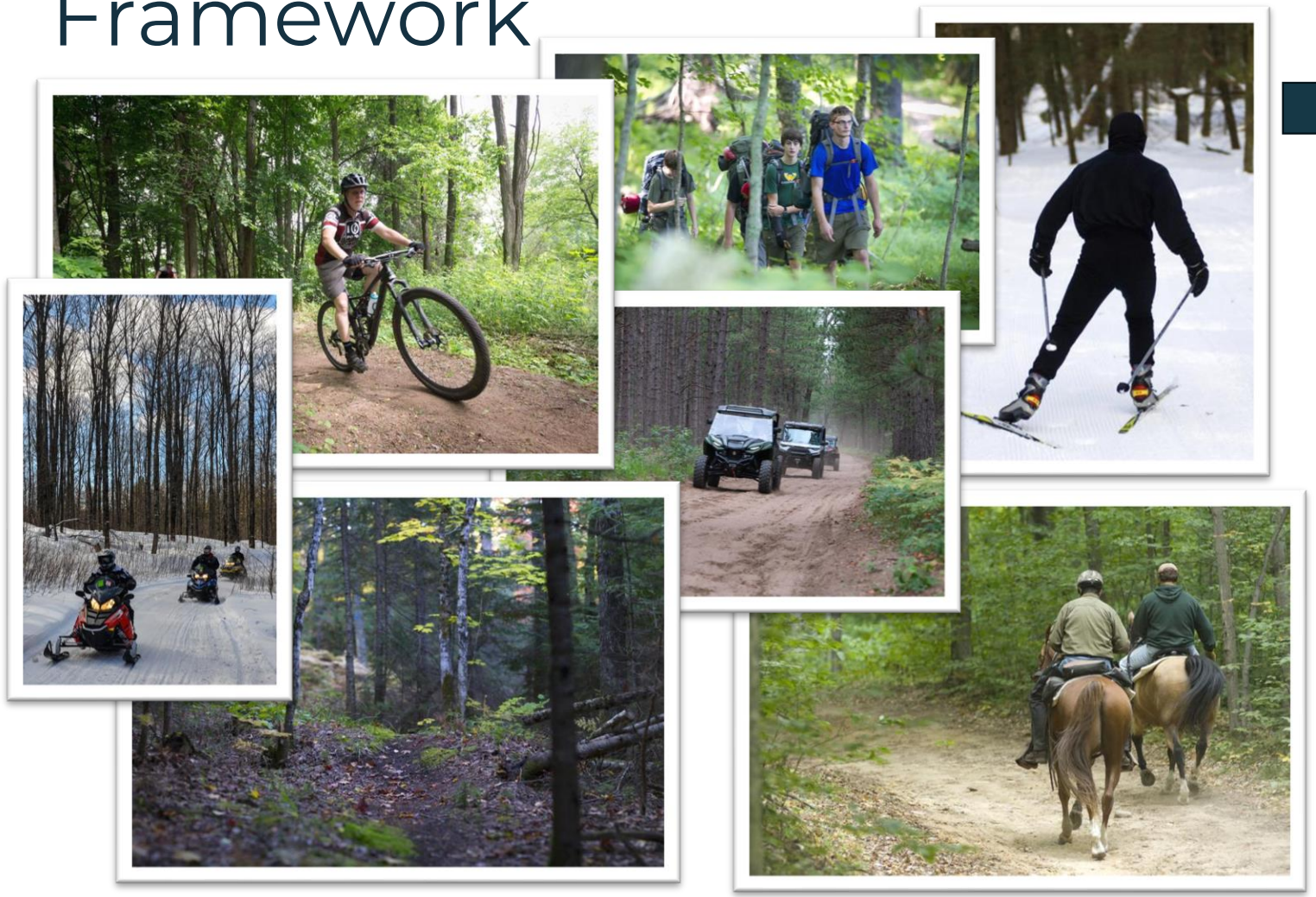
1. conserve or enhance biological diversity.
2. maintain productive capacity.
3. promote ecosystem health and vitality.
4. conserve and protect soil and aquatic resources.
5. provide opportunities for social and economic benefits.
6. respond to a changing climate.
7. protect cultural and historic resources.

Planning Framework Effort



Planning Framework and Process Overview

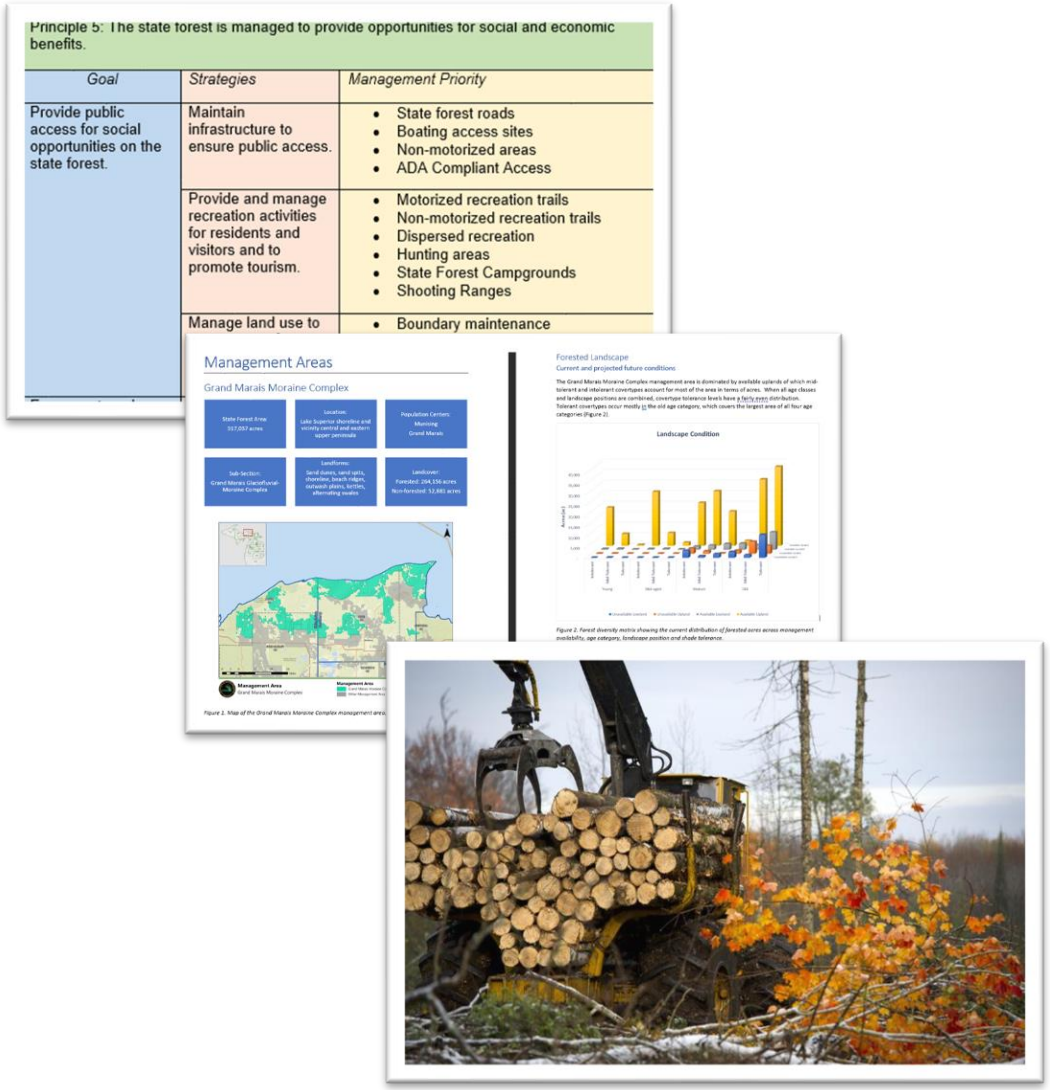
Trails in the Planning Framework



Principle 5: The state forest is managed to provide opportunities for social and economic benefits.		
Goal	*Strategies*	*Management priority*
Provide public access for social opportunities on the state forest.	Maintain infrastructure to ensure public access.	• State forest roads. • Boating access sites. • Nonmotorized areas.
	Provide for and manage recreation activities to benefit residents and visitors and to promote tourism.	• Motorized recreation trails. • Nonmotorized recreation trails. • Dispersed recreation. • Areas managed for hunting. • State forest campgrounds.
	Protect state forest lands from overuse and misuse.	• Boundary maintenance. • Use permits.
Ensure external engagement in state forest management.	Engage with tribal governments to ensure recognition of tribal rights and uses and to inform forest management through Indigenous knowledge.	• Tribal consultation.
	Provide opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement in state forest management.	• Public review and input. • Public observations and input. • Outreach, engagement and education.
	Engage with partners to address forest management issues.	• Collaborative partnerships.
Provide a variety of economic opportunities.	Manage for a variety of forest products.	• Timber harvest volume. • Fuelwood. • Carbon offset credits.

Writing Effort

- Transition from planning framework to topic-based plan organization
- **Approach at different scales:**
  - Strategic: **Statewide** and **Regional** management priorities
  - Operational: Landscape level covertype and habitat management goals at the **Management Area level** and **Special Analysis Units**



Plan Organization & Structure

1. Introduction
2. State Forest History
3. Statewide and Regional Planning
4. Management Area Planning
5. Special Analysis Units
6. Implementation
7. Monitoring and Revision

Glossary……xx

References……xx

Appendices……xx

Example of a Management Priority

Land Use and Access

Management priority: State forest roads

Principle 5: The state forest is managed to provide opportunities for social and economic benefits.

Goal 1: Provide public access for social activities on state forest land.

Strategy 1: Maintain infrastructure to ensure public access.

Why state forest roads matter

State forest roads are defined as DNR-controlled roads within state forest land, which provide access for management and recreational activities and often link to state, county or township public roads. State forest roads are intended to serve as access for public safety, public hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities, timber and wildlife management, wildfire protection, law enforcement, and access to private and corporate lands. According to statute and State Land Administrative Rules, a forest road is defined as a "hard-surfaced road, gravel or dirt road, or other route capable of travel by a 2-wheel drive, 4-wheel conventional vehicle designed for road use. Forest Road does not include a street, county road, or highway."

The public uses forest roads as transportation routes to destinations within the forest, such as a favorite camping, fishing or hunting spot, and as motorized and non-motorized recreation corridors for ORV, snowmobile, equestrian, biking and hiking use. The network of forest roads allows visitors to explore the 4 million acres of state forest land which would otherwise be largely inaccessible.

It is important to recognize that state forest roads can have a considerable environmental impact. Roads can result in habitat fragmentation, wildlife disturbance, soil compaction and degradation, sediment loading of streams and the introduction of invasive species. It is important to balance the desire for access with minimizing negative environmental impacts.

Current condition and trend

There are approximately 12,600 miles of state forest roads (*Table 1*), which are classified as primary or secondary forest roads or as forest access routes where the connectivity and condition varies accordingly. Forest access routes, while they may be open to use, may not be promoted or maintained for recreational use due to condition.

Of the approximately 12,600 miles of state forest roads, the majority (over 90%) are open to ORV use (*Table 1*). With the passing of PA 288 in 2016, the DNR is required to inventory and map all state forest roads, indicating what is open and closed to ORV use. In 2018, the DNR launched an online map to provide an easy way for the public to actively review forest road status and to submit comments on the management of those roads. The mapping is an ongoing effort, with reviews completed on the ground by DNR staff as well as an in-depth review of public comments. Reasons for closure may include environmental or resource protection, user conflict, or other administrative or management reasons.

The majority of state forest roads are dirt or natural surface, with 641 miles being gravel or natural surface; only 22 miles are paved. The condition of natural surface roads varies considerably as the DNR has limited funding to conduct routine maintenance and emergency repairs. Major repairs often are associated with stream crossings, and minor repairs are associated with incidental damage caused by routine use by passenger and recreational vehicles. The Forest Resources Division is in the process of inventorying the location and condition of road stream crossings throughout the entire state forest to help prioritize road maintenance needs. Increased stream flood flows are already occurring due to climate change and will likely cause an increase in the volume of repairs to improperly sized culvert and bridge structures.

Table 1. State Forest Road by ORV status, 2020-2022 (miles) (Source: Michigan DNR GIS)

ORV status	Length (miles) 2020	Length (miles) 2021	Length (miles) 2022
DNR roads open to ORVs	11,463.7	11,466.0	11,518.3
DNR roads closed to ORVs	565.2	556.2	561.6
Military roads open to ORVs	24.2	24.2	26.6
Military roads closed to ORVs	478.3	475.6	379.0
Military roads seasonally closed to ORVs	-	-	97.4
Seasonal DNR roads seasonal closures to ORVs	10.8	9.9	26.9
Totals	**12,542.2**	**12,531.9**	**12,609.8**

Since 2018, only minor changes in the status of state forest roads have occurred, and this is expected to remain relatively stable over time. There is no threshold, goal or objective for the number and extent of state forest roads at either the state or regional scales, other than to continue to review status on the ground and to consider public comment. In the future, a more detailed analysis is desired, tracking state forest road status in each region by density (miles per square mile). Any new road plans should carefully consider environmental impact and climate change risks, as well as the benefits of access.

Desired future condition, objectives and management actions

A network of forest roads providing adequate access to the state forest for management, resource protection, and recreation opportunities, is classified by a robust inventory of roads and associated attributes, which considers environmental impacts and is guided by a newly developed state forest road plan.

Objective 1. Annually review appropriate public access on state forest roads.

- Action 1. With public comment, review forest roads open and closed to ORV use in accordance with PA288.

Example of a Management Priority

Objective 2. Within five years, complete plans and inventories to guide access and maintenance of state forest roads, with consideration of predicted climate change impacts.

- Action 1. Complete a forest road plan to ensure appropriate, sustainable, motorized and nonmotorized public access, including guidance for maintenance, road density, resource protection, inventory schedule, quality standards and mapping.
- Action 2. Complete a road-stream crossing inventory for state forest roads.
- Action 3. Develop a protocol for maintaining and updating the road-stream crossing inventory.

Objective 3. Annually perform maintenance to ensure appropriate, safe access and minimize environmental damage.

- Action 1. Prioritize culvert/bridge projects based on the completed inventory and ensure future infrastructure is sized to allow for climate change impacts.
- Action 2. Perform routine maintenance such as grading, surface drainage, vegetation control.
- Action 3. Minimize public safety hazards during road maintenance activity via signing, temporary closure, or other means.

Objective 4. Continually ensure information regarding state forest roads is current and available to the public.

- Action 1. Maintain an up-to-date forest road inventory on the DNR website.
- Action 2. Provide information on temporary/emergency forest road closures.
- Action 3. Provide clear expectations for access for all newly acquired property.

Climate Change

All climate change data and information listed herein is pulled directly from the open-source Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS) Climate Change Impacts tool and adaptation workbooks. Based on three established climate models, there are varying levels of evidence (robust, medium, limited) and agreement (high, moderate, low) described in the Predicted Impacts table. Planning strategies, approaches and tactics from the workbooks were integrated into the objectives and management actions relevant to each management priority and are summarized in the adaptation approaches. For more information, please go to www.niacs.org.

Predicted impacts relevant to state forest roads

Predicted Climate Change Impacts	Potential results from impacts	Evidence Rating	Agreement Rating
Winter snowpack will be reduced from 30-80% by the end of the century	Higher use in late fall and early spring seasons	Robust	High
Intense precipitation events will continue to become more frequent	Flooding may impact access and exacerbate erosion	Medium	Moderate
Seasonal variation in soil moisture and altered precipitation may influence the magnitude and duration of flood events	Flooding may impact access and exacerbate erosion and damage to stream crossing infrastructure	Not given	Not given

Monitoring

Miles of road by type by region assessed every 5 years
Density by type by region assessed every 5 years

Examples of Management Area

Management Areas

Grand Marais Moraine Complex

State Forest Area: 317,037 acres	Location: Lake Superior shoreline and vicinity central and eastern upper peninsula	Population Centers: Munising, Grand Marais
Sub-Section: Grand Marais Glaciofluvial-Moraine Complex	Landforms: Sand dunes, sand spits, shoreline, beach ridges, outwash plains, kettles, alternating swales	Landcover: Forested: 264,156 acres, Non-forested: 52,881 acres

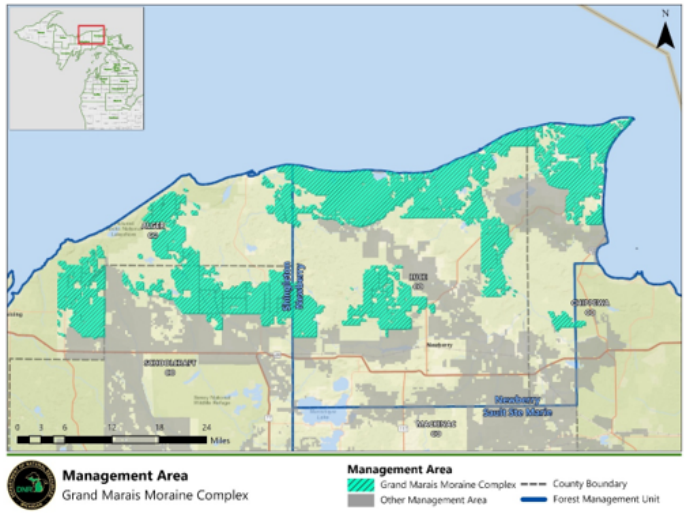


Figure 1. Map of the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area.

Forested Landscape

Current and projected future conditions

The Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area is dominated by available uplands of which mid-tolerant and intolerant covertypes account for most of the area in terms of acres. When all age classes and landscape positions are combined, covertype tolerance levels have a fairly even distribution. Tolerant covertypes occur mostly in the old age category, which covers the largest area of all four age categories (Figure 2).

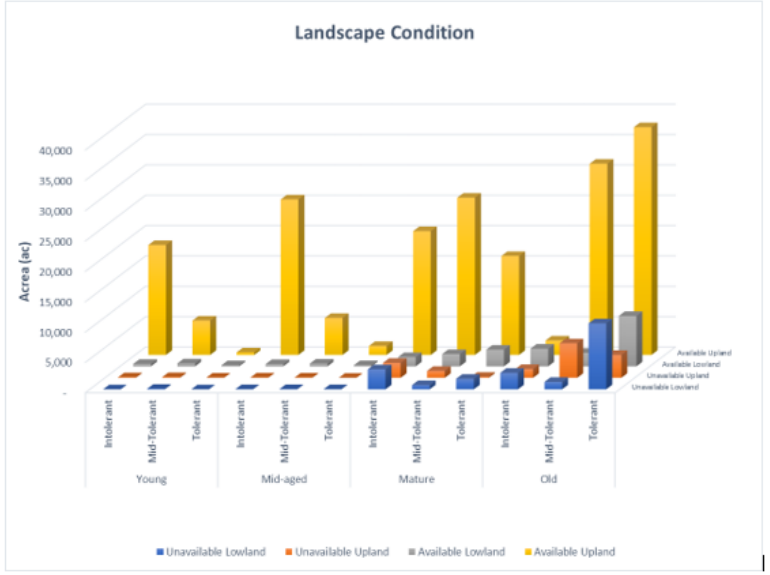


Figure 2. Forest diversity matrix showing the current distribution of forested acres across management availability, age category, landscape position and shade tolerance.

Landscape habitat conditions refine the management area landscape into featured species habitat context. Current and projected acres for the metrics identified in the Management Priorities (Section 3 Statewide/Regional) establish a baseline and future condition based on management over the planning period (Table 1).

Examples of Management Area

Table 2.. Summary table describing the current landscape context and distribution of covertypes.

Land Type	Landscape Position	Forest Type	Covertype	Area (ac)	Area (ac) by Category		
Forested (≥25% CC)	Upland	Deciduous	Aspen	22,309	74,461	220,728	264,156
			Northern Hardwood	43,676			
			Black Red Hybrid Oak	0			
			Northern Red Oak	364			
			Oak Mix	841			
			Mixed Upland Deciduous	7,271			
		Mixed	Upland Mixed Forest	11,089	11,089		
		Coniferous	Planted Red Pine	21,844	135,177		
			Planted Jack Pine	17,705			
			Planted White Pine	263			
			Planted Mixed Pine	921			
			Natural Red Pine	16,259			
			Natural Jack Pine	39,104			
			Natural White Pine	13,594			
			Natural Mixed Pines	14,800			
			Upland Spruce/Fir	1,315			
			Upland Conifers	7,865			
			Hemlock	1,498			
	Lowland	Deciduous	Lowland Aspen/Balsam Poplar	650	4,475	43,428	
			Lowland Deciduous	3,825			
		Mixed	Lowland Mixed Forest	3,919	3,919		
		Coniferous	Cedar	10,967	35,035		
			Lowland Conifers	13,669			
			Lowland Spruce/Fir	9,317			
			Tamarack	1,082			
Non-forested (<25% CC)	Upland		Herbaceous Openland	8,905	19,081		52,881
			Upland Shrub	5,133			
			Low Density Trees	3,149			
			Bare/Sparsely Vegetated	811			
			Cropland	87			
			Urban	995			
	Lowland		Lowland Shrub	15,281	33,800		
			Marsh	4,865			
			Bog	2,836			
			Treed Bog	5,106			
			Water	5,713			
						Grand Total:	317,037

There are 228,302 acres (83% of the total management area and 86% of the forested area) that can be managed toward desired future conditions via commercial timber harvest in the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area (Table 2). Of that, just under 16% is in the northern hardwood covertype, almost 14% is natural jack pine, aspen and planted red pine cover just over 8% each. The remaining covertypes each represent less than 6% each, for a total of 33.8% of the forested and available land in the management area.

Table 5. Ten-year planning period harvest goals (acres) by covertype and silvicultural regime.

Grand Marais Moraine Complex	Silvicultural Regime							
Covertype	Clearcut	Selection	Thinning	Group Selection	Shelterwood	Mastication	Biomass	Grand Total
Northern Hardwood	229	12,549	-	2,953	613	-	-	16,343
Planted Red Pine	2,089	-	4,296	-	-	-	-	6,385
Aspen	3,594	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,594
Upland Conifers	1,553	-	-	-	431	-	-	1,984
Natural Red Pine	-	-	416	-	1,249	-	-	1,665
Natural Jack Pine	1,433	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,433
Natural Mixed Pines	-	-	1,030	-	342	-	-	1,372
Mixed Upland Deciduous	901	118	-	-	245	-	-	1,264
Natural White Pine	-	-	885	-	296	-	-	1,180
Lowland Conifers	1,119	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,119
Upland Mixed Forest	1,074	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,074
Planted Jack Pine	999	-	-	-	-	-	-	999
Lowland Spruce/Fir	603	-	-	-	-	-	-	603
Hemlock	390	-	-	-	-	-	-	390
Lowland Mixed Forest	282	-	-	-	-	-	-	282
Lowland Deciduous	272	-	-	6	-	-	-	278
Planted White Pine	-	-	170	-	-	-	-	170
Lowland Aspen/Balsam Poplar	164	-	-	-	-	-	-	164
Upland Spruce/Fir	133	-	-	-	-	-	-	133
Cedar	71	-	-	56	-	-	-	127
Oak Mix	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
Planted Mixed Pine	-	-	65	-	-	-	-	65
Tamarack	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	49
Totals	15,026	12,667	6,861	3,015	3,176	-	-	40,745

Examples of Management Area

Bare/Sparsely Vegetated	811	811	0
Cropland	87	87	0
Total:	**317,037**	**317,037**	**0**

Featured species current and projected habitat acres

There are twelve featured species in this management area that span various covertypes, age classes, and stand level conditions. Current and projected total habitat acres by species across the decade provide a baseline and show the result of long-term management actions (Table 8). Some species show a loss in habitat over the next century. As mentioned in the Featured Species Management Priority (Section 3), the current condition for many covertypes is a surplus of acres in the 0-9 age class from the compensatory management approach applied in the previous decade. The model eventually evens out the age classes at a lower, sustainable level over time, usually by 50 years. For any species with northern hardwoods as a priority covertype, there is a perceived drop in acres between 40-60 years; this is due to the basal area dropping below 81 but because it only drops into the upper 70s, it is not expected to translate to any real habitat loss on the ground. Three of these species were not included in the SFMP model but are included here to inform management decisions over the decade.

Table 8. Featured species current and projected total habitat acres.

Featured Species	Priority Covertypes	Total Habitat Acres Current	Total Habitat Acres 10-year	50-year Projected Habitat Acres	100-year Projected Habitat Acres
Ruffed grouse	Aspen	7,239	6,877	7,574	7,849
Snowshoe hare	Aspen, cedar, hemlock, lowland aspen, lowland conifers, lowland mixed forest, lowland spruce/fir, mixed upland deciduous, natural jack pine, natural mixed pines, planted jack pine, upland spruce/fir	39,295	40,001	28,256	28,412
Kirtland's warbler	Jack pine (planted and natural)- Danaher/Kingston Plains, Duck Lake, Whitefish Point	22,779	21,858	14,684	14,540
Black-throated blue warbler	Northern hardwoods, mixed upland deciduous	29,387	39,563	22,596	39,938
Blackburnian warbler	Northern hardwoods, upland mixed forest, natural white pine, natural mixed pines, upland conifers, upland spruce/fir, hemlock	59,201	73,083	63,860	87,933
Red crossbill	Natural red pine, natural white pine, natural mixed pine, planted red pine	8,087	6,816	4,945	6,542
Spruce grouse- mat. forest	Natural jack pine, natural white pine, natural mixed pine, upland conifer, upland spruce/fir, lowland spruce/fir, lowland conifer, tamarack	41,262	40,140	60,774	67,520
Spruce grouse- young forest	Jack pine (natural and planted)	22,779	21,858	14,684	14,540
Marten	Northern hardwoods, mixed upland deciduous, upland mixed forest, natural white pine, natural mixed pines, upland conifers, upland spruce/fir, lowland mixed forest, lowland conifers, hemlock, cedar	68,525	81,765	67,425	89,457
Black bear	Generalist/mast	26,329	NA	NA	NA
White-tailed deer	Food: Northern hardwood, oak mix, aspen, mixed upland deciduous, lowland deciduous, lowland aspen/balsam poplar, lowland mixed forest Shelter: hemlock, cedar, planted red pine, planted white pine, planted mixed pine, natural red pine, natural white pine, natural mixed pines, upland	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Examples of Management Area

Covertype composition and associated featured species

Northern Hardwoods

Current Condition

Most of the northern hardwood covertype is currently between a stand age of 80- and 110-years old in the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area (Figure 12). The past management regime has been primarily single tree selection which allows for stand age to continue to increase over time. Some stands are beginning to achieve an uneven-aged condition where a featured stand age becomes less evident, but the dominant age of these stands will likely increase past 150 years old prior to a younger age cohort becoming the prominent component of these stands (Figure 6).

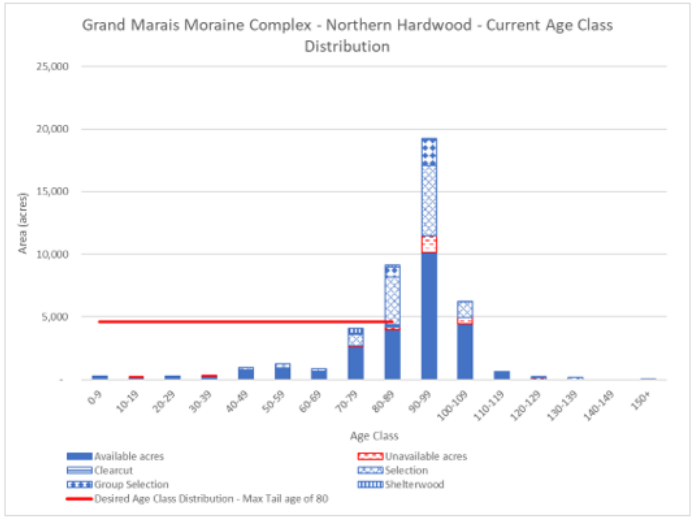


Figure 4. Graph showing the current age class distribution and projected harvests in the northern hardwood covertype in the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area.

The area of northern hardwood is well distributed in the ideal basal area classes for optimal growing conditions in the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area (Figure 5). Current conditions are a result of beech salvage efforts in the previous planning period and a regular selection harvest regime across this covertype.

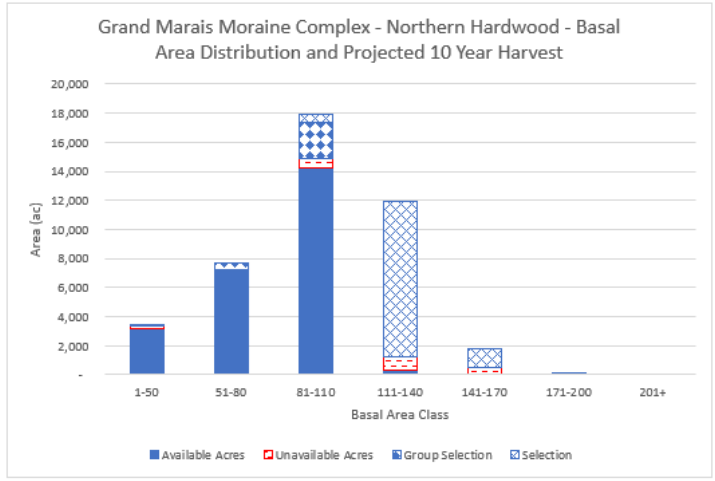


Figure 5. Graph showing the current basal area distribution of the northern hardwood covertype as well as the projected harvests from each basal area class.

There are very few acres of unavailable northern hardwoods in the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area. Selection is the primary silvicultural treatment projected during this 10-year planning period. There is a small amount of group selection prescribed and there may be opportunities to utilize even-aged management silvicultural regimes to increase stem density, species composition, and regeneration within the northern hardwood areas. A portion of this covertype meets the habitat requirements for black-throated blue warbler, blackburnian warbler and marten.

Table 5. Featured species with northern hardwoods as a priority habitat covertype, habitat variables, and current acres.

Featured Species	Featured Species Habitat – Northern Hardwood	Northern Hardwood Habitat Acres- Available	Northern Hardwood Habitat Acres- Unavailable
Blackburnian warbler	Age Category: 80+ Size Category: Pole, Sawlog Basal Area: 81+	25,655	2,022
Black-throated blue warbler	Age Category: 80+ Size Category: Sawlog Basal Area: 81+	25,655	2,022
Marten	Age Category: 40+	25,655	2,022

Examples of Management Area

- Additional Tables
  - HCVAs
  - Natural Communities
  - Forest Health
  - Aquatic Resources
  - Recreation

Rare Species

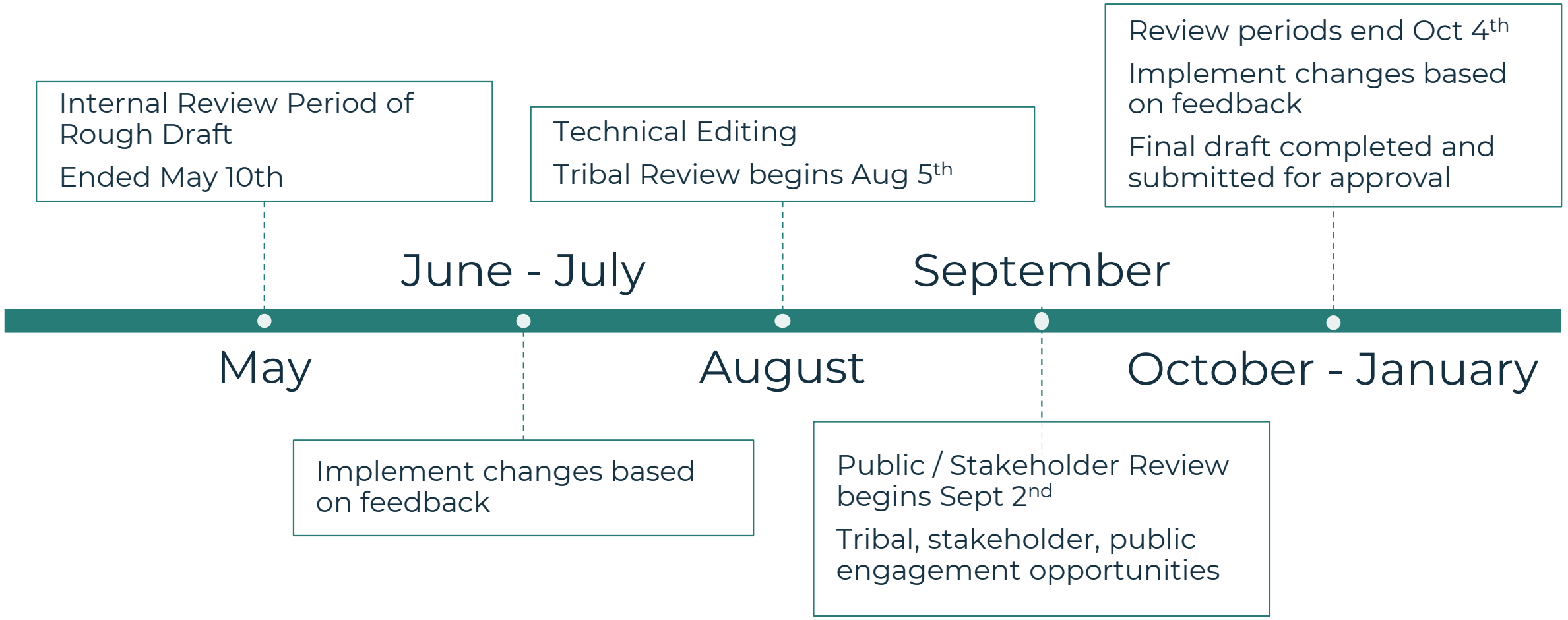
Table X. Rare animal species occurrence within the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area.

Element Category	Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status	Federal Status	Number of Occurrences
			E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern	LE = Listed Endangered LT = Listed Threatened PDL = Proposed for Delisting	
Animal	*Accipiter gentilis*	Northern goshawk	T		3
Animal	*Antrostomus vociferus*	Eastern whip-poor-will	T		1
Animal	*Boloria freija*	Freija fritillary	SC		1
Animal	*Bombus borealis*	Northern amber bumble bee	SC		2
Animal	*Bombus terricola*	Yellow banded bumble bee	SC		5
Animal	*Botaurus lentiginosus*	American bittern	SC		2
Animal	*Brachionycha borealis*	Boreal brachionycha	SC		1
Animal	*Buteo lineatus*	Red-shouldered hawk	SC		1
Animal	*Canachites canadensis*	Spruce grouse	T		1
Animal	*Charadrius meladus*	Piping plover	E	LE	4
Animal	*Coregonus artedi*	Lake herring or Cisco	T		1
Animal	*Cottus ricei*	Spoonhead sculpin	SC		1
Animal	*Elliptio complanata*	Eastern elliptio	SC		4
Animal	*Euxoa aurulenta*	Dune cutworm	SC		1
Animal	*Falco columbarius*	Merlin	SC		1
Animal	*Gavia immer*	Common loon	T		11
Animal	*Glaucomys sabrinus*	Northern flying squirrel	SC		1
Animal	*Glyptemys insculpta*	Wood turtle	T		1
Animal	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	Bald eagle	SC		7
Animal	*Myotis lucifugus*	Little brown bat	T		3
Animal	*Myotis septentrionalis*	Northern long-eared bat	T	LE	1
Animal	*Necturus maculosus*	Mudpuppy	SC		6
Animal	*Opheodrys vernalis*	Smooth green snake	SC		5
Animal	*Pandion haliaetus*	Osprey	SC		8
Animal	*Picoides arcticus*	Black-backed woodpecker	SC		1
Animal	*Polygonia gracilis*	Hoary comma	X		1
Animal	*Setophaga kirtlandii*	Kirtland's warbler	E		1
Animal	*Somatochlora incurvata*	Incurvate emerald	SC		1
Animal	*Trimerotropis huroniana*	Lake Huron locust	T		6
Animal	*Tympanuchus phasianellus*	Sharp-tailed grouse	SC		4
Grand Total	-	-	-	-	86

Table X. Rare plant species occurrence within the Grand Marais Moraine Complex management area.

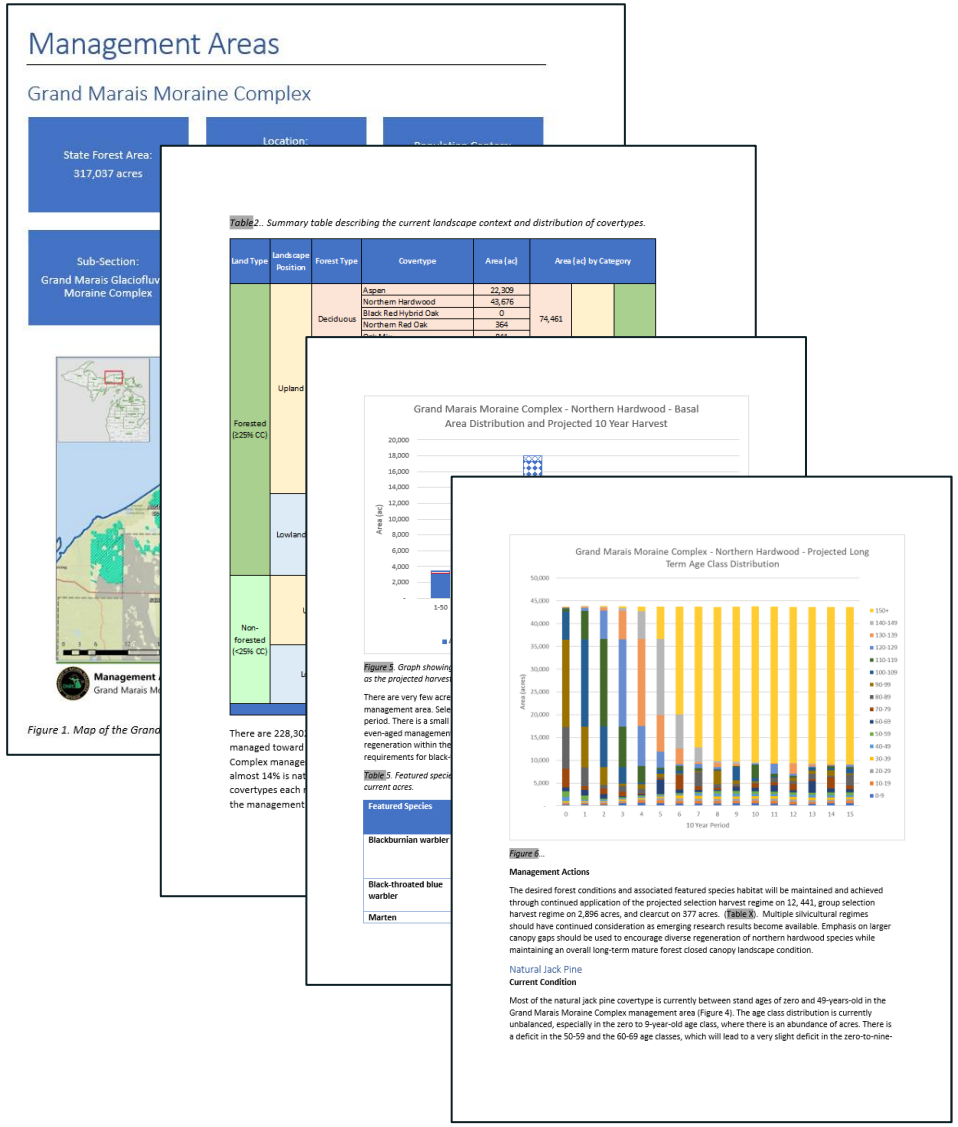
Element Category	Scientific Name	Common Name	State Status	Federal Status	Number of Occurrences
			E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern	LE = Listed Endangered LT = Listed Threatened PDL = Proposed for Delisting	
Plant	*Crataegus douglasii*	Douglas's hawthorn	SC		3
Plant	*Drosera anglica*	English sundew	SC		3
Plant	*Empetrum nigrum*	Black crowberry	T		3
Plant	*Juncus stygius*	Moor rush	E		1
Plant	*Juncus vaseyi*	Vasey's rush	T		1
Plant	*Leymus mollis*	American dune wild-rye	SC		10
Plant	*Littorella uniflora*	American shore-grass	SC		4
Plant	*Myriophyllum alterniflorum*	Alternate-leaved water-milfoil	SC		2
Plant	*Neottia auriculata*	Auricled twayblade	SC		2
Plant	*Potamogeton confervoides*	Alga pondweed	SC		1
Plant	*Pyrola minor*	Lesser pyrola	SC		3
Plant	*Rorippa aquatica*	Lake cress	SC		1
Plant	*Rubus acaulis*	Dwarf raspberry	T		2
Plant	*Salix pellita*	Satiny willow	T		1
Plant	*Spinulum canadense*	Clubmoss	SC		1
Plant	*Stellaria longipes*	Stitchwort	SC		2
Plant	*Tanacetum bipinnatum ssp. huronense*	Lake Huron tansy	SC		6
Grand Total	-	-	-	-	46

Looking Ahead



Review Period

- Sept 2nd – October 4th
- Engagement meetings in September for questions / clarification / discussion




Questions and answers

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Recreational Trails Program FY25 Project List

Michigan Trails Advisory Council

July 10, 2024

Tim Novak (he/him)

State Trails Coordinator

Lee Maynard (she/her(s))

Non-motorized Trails Grant Coordinator


The Recreational Trails Program
Improving America's Trails Since 1991
$281+M
Paid annually in federal taxes by non-highway recreational users.
From FHWA report to Congress on 7/29/21. Non-highway recreational fuel is taxed at 18.4 cents/gallon and deposited into the Highway Trust Fund.
HIGHWAY TRUST FUND
$84M
Appropriated annually for all trails.
Recreational Trails Program
Over 30,000 projects funded.
Benefiting tens of millions of motorized and nonmotorized trail users.
Administered by states (20% match required from states).
Trail users receive less than 30% of the taxes they pay.
Applies user pay-user benefit principle of Highway Trust Fund to recreational trails.

RTP Trail Use Funding

Annual apportionment of around $2,800,000.00 of new funds

Existing balance of funds $7.1 million

Balance of trail use types:

30% Nonmotorized

30% Motorized

40% Diversified trail use

Administration and safety

7% currently used annually to administer the program

5% can be obligated for safety an education projects

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Every year, tens of millions of Americans pay federal gas taxes to fuel non-highway recreation equipment like motorcycles, snowmobiles and ATVs. Created by Congress in 1991, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) puts these tax dollars towards trailhead facilities, trail construction and maintenance, environmental education materials, and more. RTP unites and benefits various trail users, including equestrians, hikers, bicyclists, cross-country skiers, joggers – even water trail enthusiasts in kayaks and canoes.

1 - Tax Dollars to Trails

Non-highway vehicle recreation is estimated to generate $[illegible] million in fuel taxes annually. The RTP is funded at $[illegible] million annually. This money is distributed to states, which select which projects to fund.

2 - Matching Dollars

RTP projects require matching funds. These dollars come from various sources, including donations, volunteer labor, and use of conservation corps. Details on projects are in the RTP database at http://recreationaltrailsinfo.org.

3 - Trailheads & Bridges

RTP bridge and trailhead projects have helped make thousands of miles of trails safe and accessible. Some of the projects even provide access to water trails. RTP is key to funding trail projects in many state and federal parks and forests.

4 - Local Economies

Recreational trails are key to America's outdoor economy. The Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates that outdoor recreation contributes $[illegible] billion annually and supports [illegible] million jobs.

5 - Access to Healthy Outdoor Fun

RTP aids the nation in many ways, including better physical and mental health. It helps those with mobility challenges, and millions of Americans with different trail preferences, access our public lands and waters.

For additional information on the RTP, contact the
Coalition for Recreational Trails at: **www.rectrails.org**

RTP Project List Development

- Per FHWA program requirements, the RTP program presents an annual project list to the RTP advisory committee, MTAC. The annual project list is curated from cycling 3-5 year RTP projects.
- RTP Projects are prioritized by Trail Specialists with review and allocation of funding by Trail Coordinators, Non-motorized and Motorized program managers.
- Trail Project Considerations:
  - Trail use(s)
  - Project Timeline
  - Federal funding compliance
  - Diversity of project types
  - Project Budget
  - Geographic spread of projects

FY 2025 Project List

- GIS Infrastructure Inventory, Sate-wide (non-infrastructure) Cont.
- Paint Creek Bridge
- Manistee River Bridge Replacement
- CIS Trail structural repairs
- Days River Pathway
- Gene's Pond Pathway
- Agate Bridge
- Swan River Bridge

Questions and comments?

Thank you!

Lee Maynard
Nonmotorized Trails Grant Coordinator

517-275-0299
Maynardl1@michigan.gov

JULY 2024

2023 TRAIL VISITORS

Campers, Boaters and Day Users

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

PATTY JANES, PH.D
SOPHIE MIKONCZYK, GA
MAIA TUREK, MDNR.
JANESP@GVSU.EDU

Today…

- Why look at data?
- How was this developed?
- What was learned about those using trails?
  - Who uses trails?
  - How do visitors use trails?
  - What do boaters, campers, and day users think about trails?
- How can these findings be helpful?
- What's next?

Why?

17,763

Trail visitor respondents

- **BOATER TRAIL VISITORS - POST VISIT**
  - 265/1,130 OR **23%** OF BOATERS IN 2023
  - 43 MARINAS/HARBORS REPRESENTED
- **CAMPER TRAIL VISITORS - POST VISIT**
  - 9,402/31,902 OR **29%** OF CAMPERS IN 2023
  - 77 CAMPGROUNDS REPRESENTED
- **DAY USER TRAIL VISITORS - SOCIAL POST**
  - 8,096/11,565 - **71%** OF DAY USERS
  - 80% IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS
  - 102 PARKS REPRESENTED

Trail visitor locations

- **T-BOATER MOST FREQUENT PARKS**
  - METRO BEACH - LAKE ST. CLAIR
  - BEAVER ISLAND
  - MACKINAC ISLAND
  - PETOSKEY
  - FAYETTE
  - TRAVERSE CITY

- **T-CAMPER MOST FREQUENT PARKS**
  - LUDINGTON
  - TACQUAMENON FALLS
  - WILDNERNESS
  - PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS
  - VAN BUREN

- **T-DAY USER MOST FREQUENT PARKS**
  - LUDINGTON
  - TAHQUAMENON FALLS
  - HOLLAND
  - PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS
  - WILDERNESS
  - SILVER LAKE
  - BELLE ISLE

Who are trail visitors?

T-Boater Profile

- **n=265**
- **Age 32 - 84 (M=60/59)**
- **Boat 59/50 days a year**
  - **42 in harbors**
- **Visit 9/1 trails a year**
- **Spend $940/855**
- **6% First timers**
- **40% in July**
- **70% Powerboats (26'-65')**
- **14% Kids**
- **75% Online reservation/17% called**
- **96% Caucasian/white**
- **48% Retired/45% FT work**
- **50% HHI 100-199K**
- **32% HHI over 200K**
- **6% Accessibility accommodations**

T-Camper Profile

- n=9,402
- Age 18 - 98 (M=53/55)
- Camp 23/24 days a year
- Visit 12 trails a year
- Spend $942/642
- 3% First timers (7% in MI)
- 44% First timer in this park
- 31% in June
- Accommodations
  - 27% - 24' or larger trailer
  - 26% - Tent
  - 20% - Under 24' trailer
- 30% Kids
- 95% Online reservation
- 95-97% Caucasian/white
- 52% FT work/31% retired
- 29% HHI 100-199K
- 5% HHI over 200K
- 6% accessibility accommodations

T-Day Use Profile

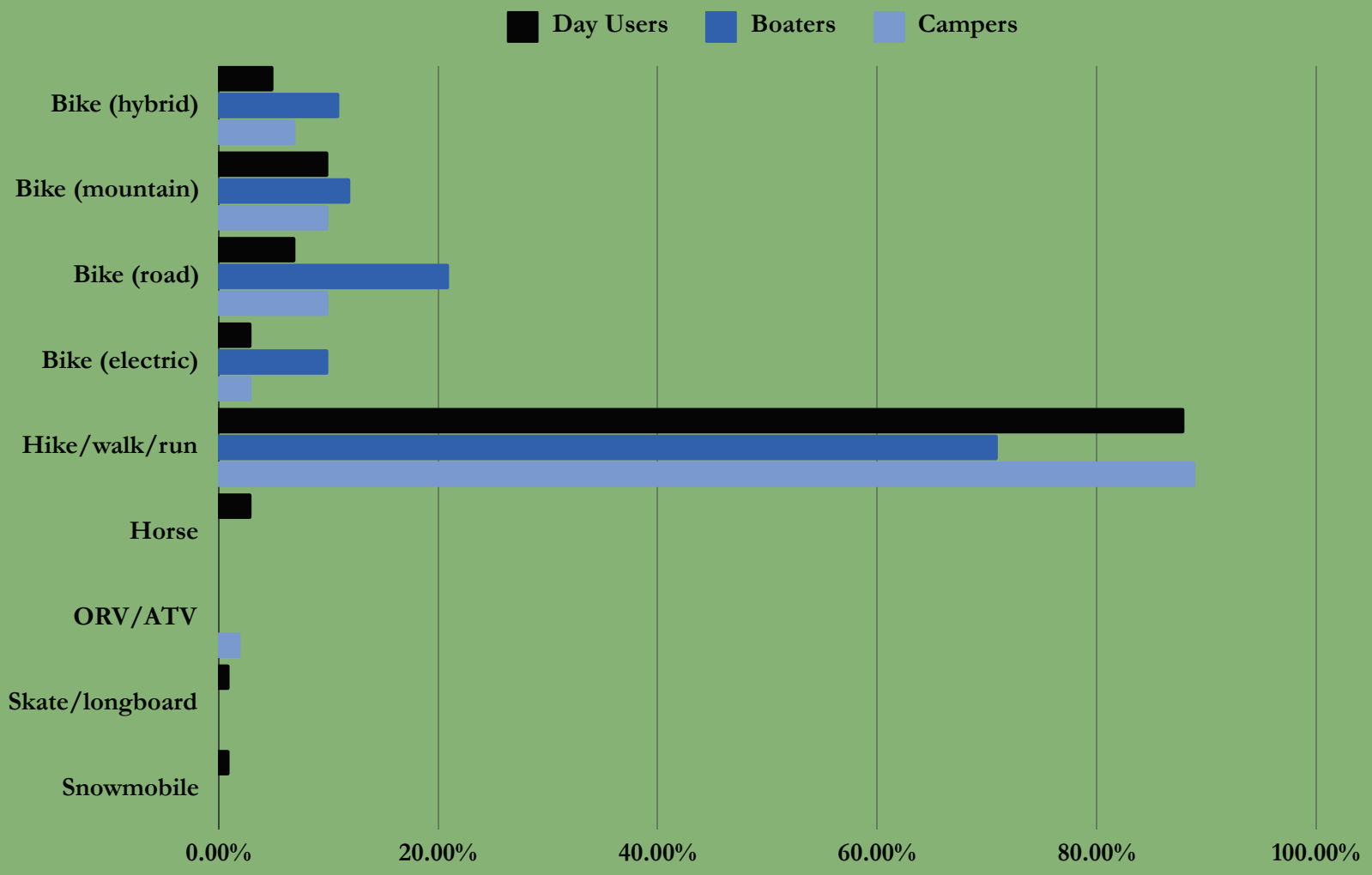
- n=8,096
- Age 18-94 (M = 60/57) - 32/27% under 50
- Trail users visit 25/19 parks a year
- 82%/50% - 10 or more times this park
- 4% First timers
- 1/3 Decide that day to go to a trail/park
- 22% October
- 13/17% Kids
- 97% Caucasian/white
- 50% FT work/39% retired
- 39/34% HHI 100-199K
- 8/6% HHI over 200K
- 9/11% Accessibility accommodations

OVERALL

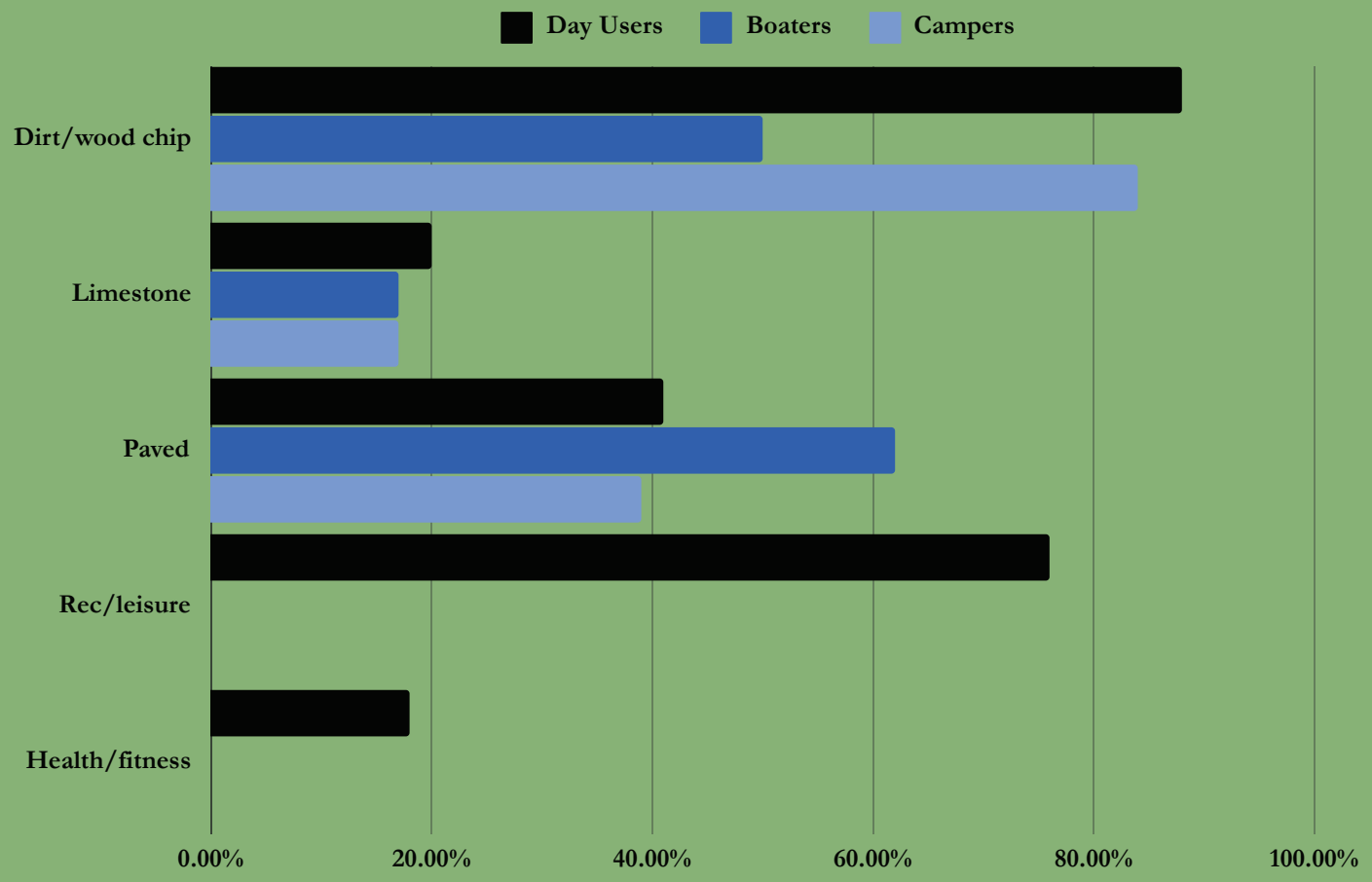
	BOAT	CAMP	DAY USE
AGE	60	53	60
TRAIL VISITS	9	12	25
% KIDS	14	30	13
HHI >200K	32	5	8
% BIKE	54	30	25

The way visitors use trails

Trail use


Day Users
Boaters
Campers
Bike (hybrid)
Bike (mountain)
Bike (road)
Bike (electric)
Hike/walk/run
Horse
ORV/ATV
Skate/longboard
Snowmobile
0.00%
20.00%
40.00%
60.00%
80.00%
100.00%

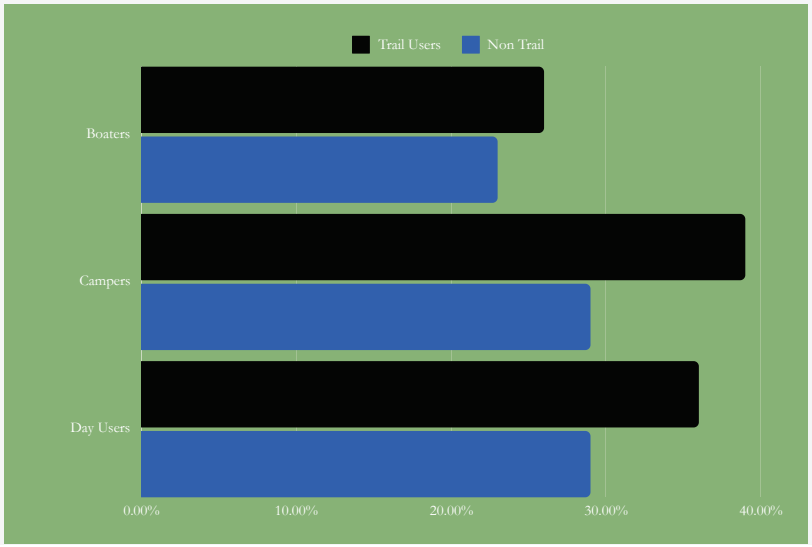
Trail type / purpose



Dogs and trails...

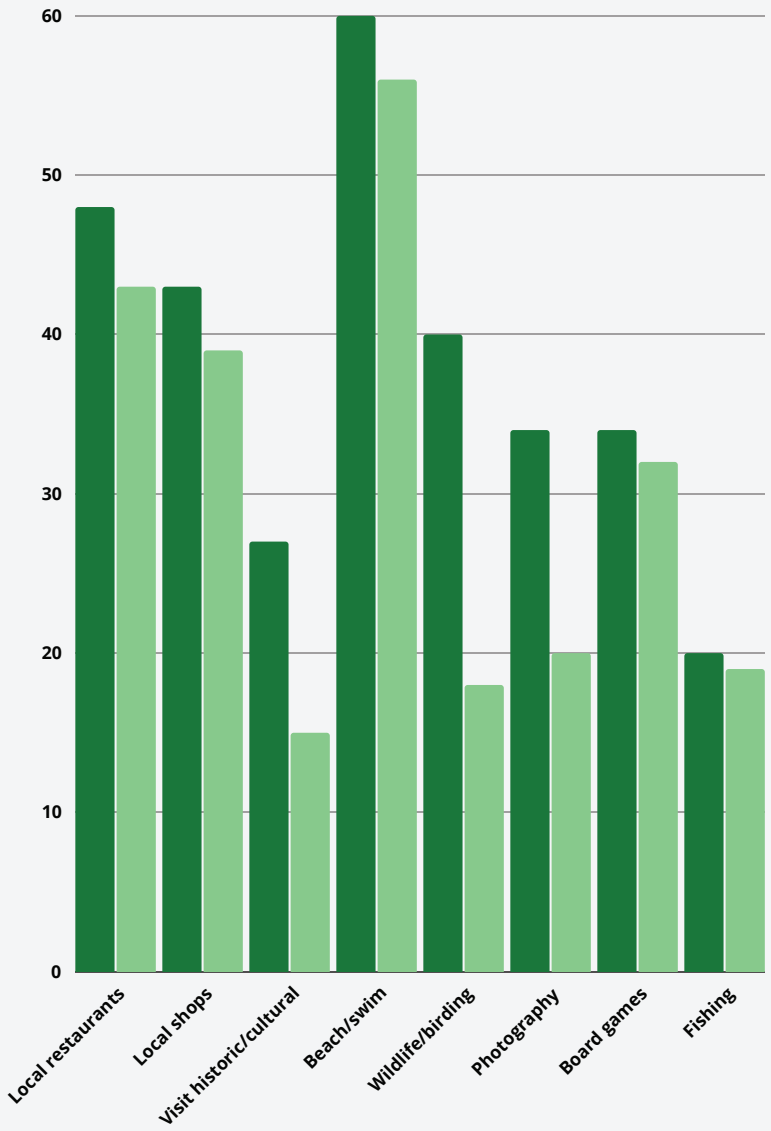
Dogs and trails

- BOATERS
  - 26% VS 21% (NON TRAIL)
- CAMPERS
  - 39% VS 35% (NON TRAIL)
- DAY USERS
  - 36% VS 29% (NON TRAIL)



What else trail visitors do when camping/boating

Trail vs non trail



Are visitors different in how they feel about the trail?

Trail visitor most important elements...

T-BOATER*
MOST IMPORTANT

- SAFETY (1.69)
- SIGNAGE (1.78)
- MAINTENANCE (1.83)
- TRAIL MAP (1.82)

T-CAMPER*
MOST IMPORTANT

- TRAILHEAD (1.48)
- TRAIL MAP (1.49)
- SAFETY (1.59)
- MAINTENANCE (1.6)

T-DAY USER*
MOST IMPORTANT

- SCENERY (1.49)
- CLEANLINESS (1.61)
- MAINTENANCE (1.63)
- SIGNAGE (1.74)

***The lower the score the higher the importance**

Trail visitor satisfaction elements...

T-BOATER*
MOST SATISFIED
OVERALL (1.6)
SCENERY (1.6)
SAFETY (1.66)
MAINTENANCE (1.67)

T-CAMPER*
MOST SATISFIED
SCENERY (1.59)
OVERALL (1.61)
SAFETY (1.61)
MAINTENANCE (1.69)

T-DAY USER*
MOST SATISFIED
SCENERY (1.51)
CLEANLINESS (1.7)
SAFETY (1.75)
MAINTENANCE (1.8)
OVERALL (1.61)

***The lower the score the higher the satisfaction**

Least satisfied with...

*The lower the score the higher the satisfaction

T-BOATER*

MOST IMPORTANT

- SAFETY (1.69)
- SIGNAGE (1.78)
- MAINTENANCE (1.83)
- TRAIL MAP (1.82)

MOST SATISFIED

OVERALL (1.6)
SCENERY (1.6)
SAFETY (1.66)
MAINTENANCE (1.67)

T-CAMPER*

MOST IMPORTANT

- TRAILHEAD (1.48)
- TRAIL MAP (1.49)
- SAFETY (1.59)
- MAINTENANCE (1.6)

MOST SATISFIED

SCENERY (1.59)
OVERALL (1.61)
SAFETY (1.61)
MAINTENANCE (1.69)

T-DAY USER*

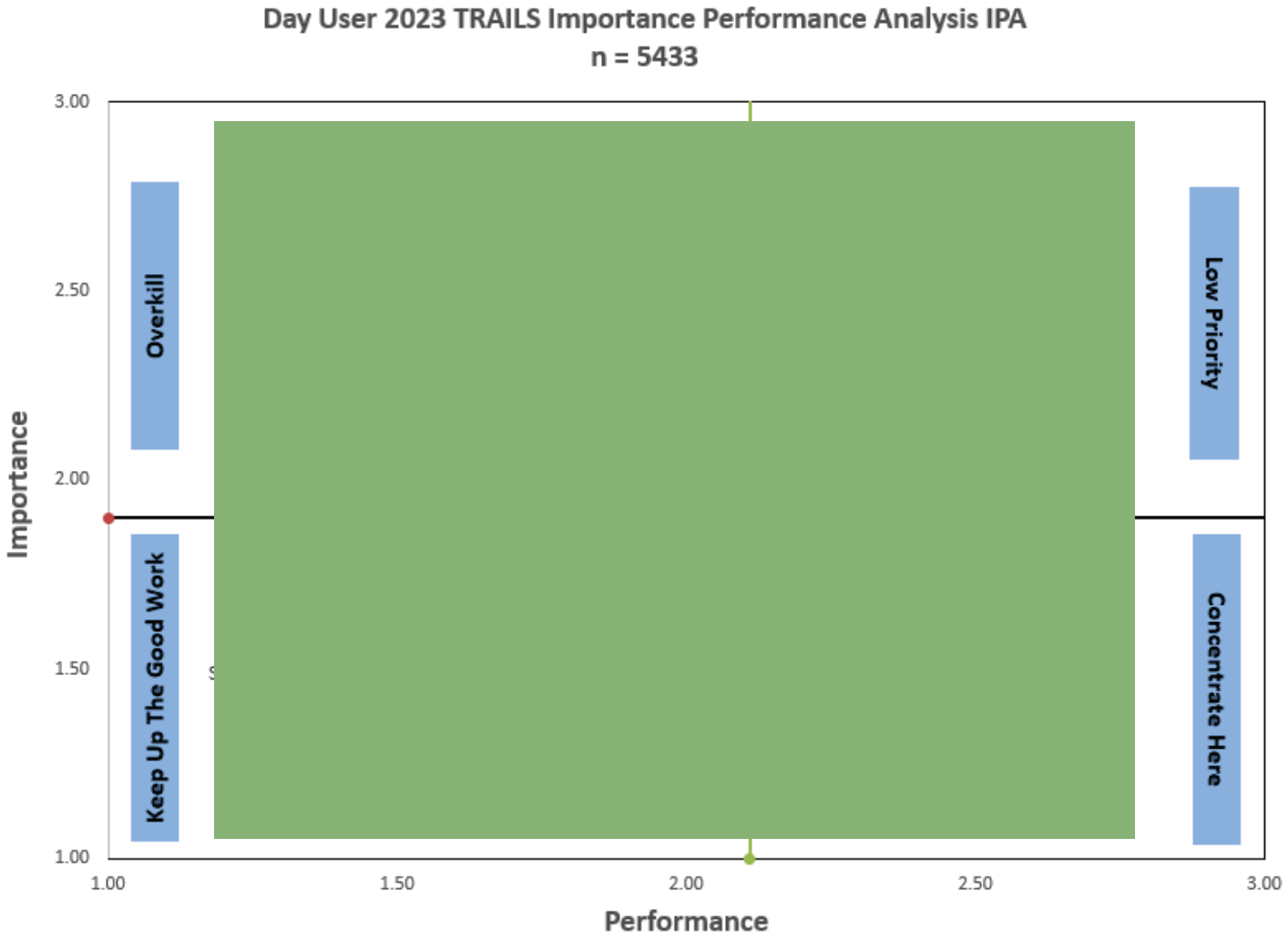
MOST IMPORTANT

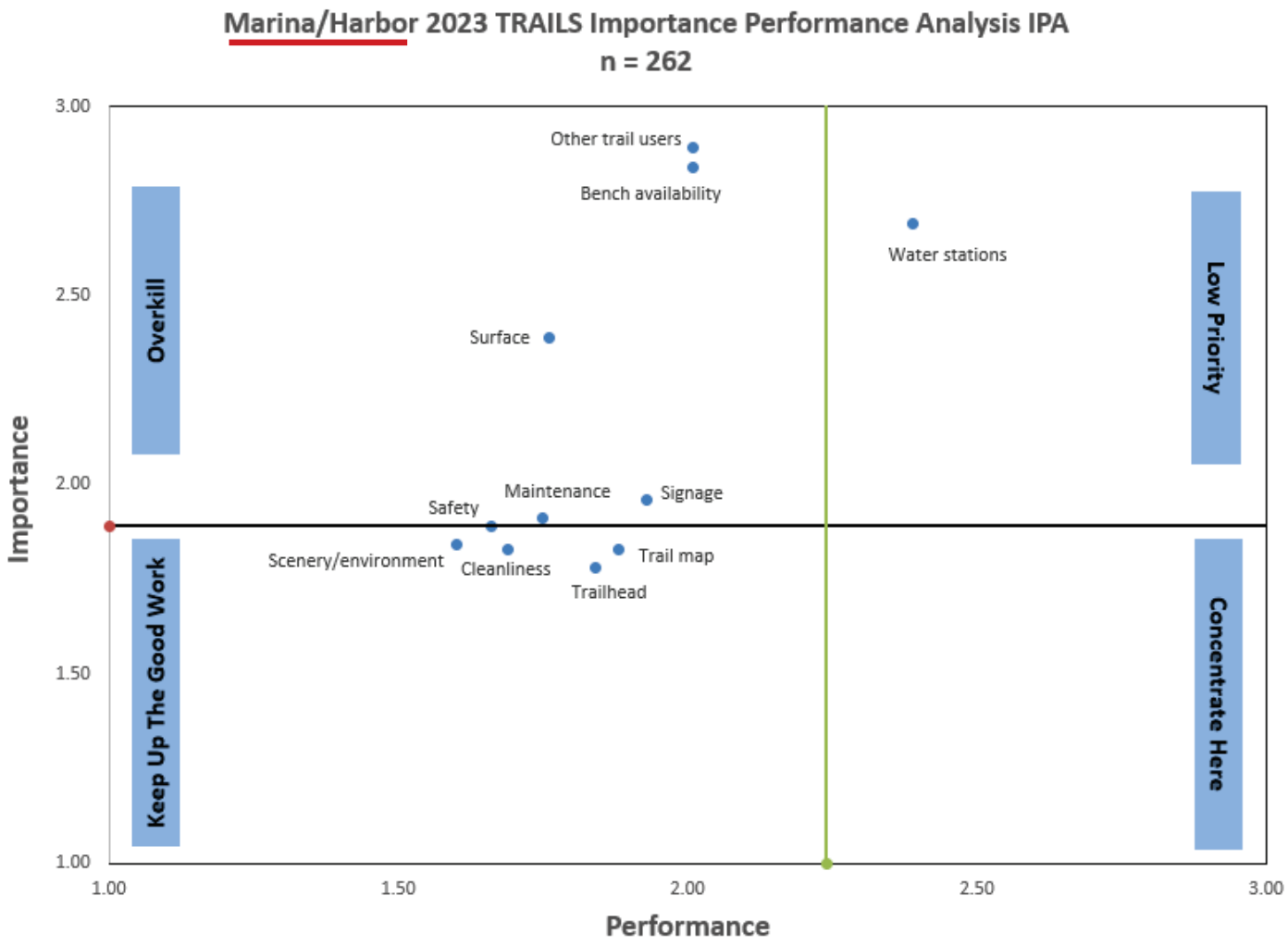
- SCENERY (1.49)
- CLEANLINESS (1.61)
- MAINTENANCE (1.63)
- SIGNAGE (1.74)

MOST SATISFIED

SCENERY (1.51)
CLEANLINESS (1.7)
SAFETY (1.75)
MAINTENANCE (1.8)
OVERALL (1.61)

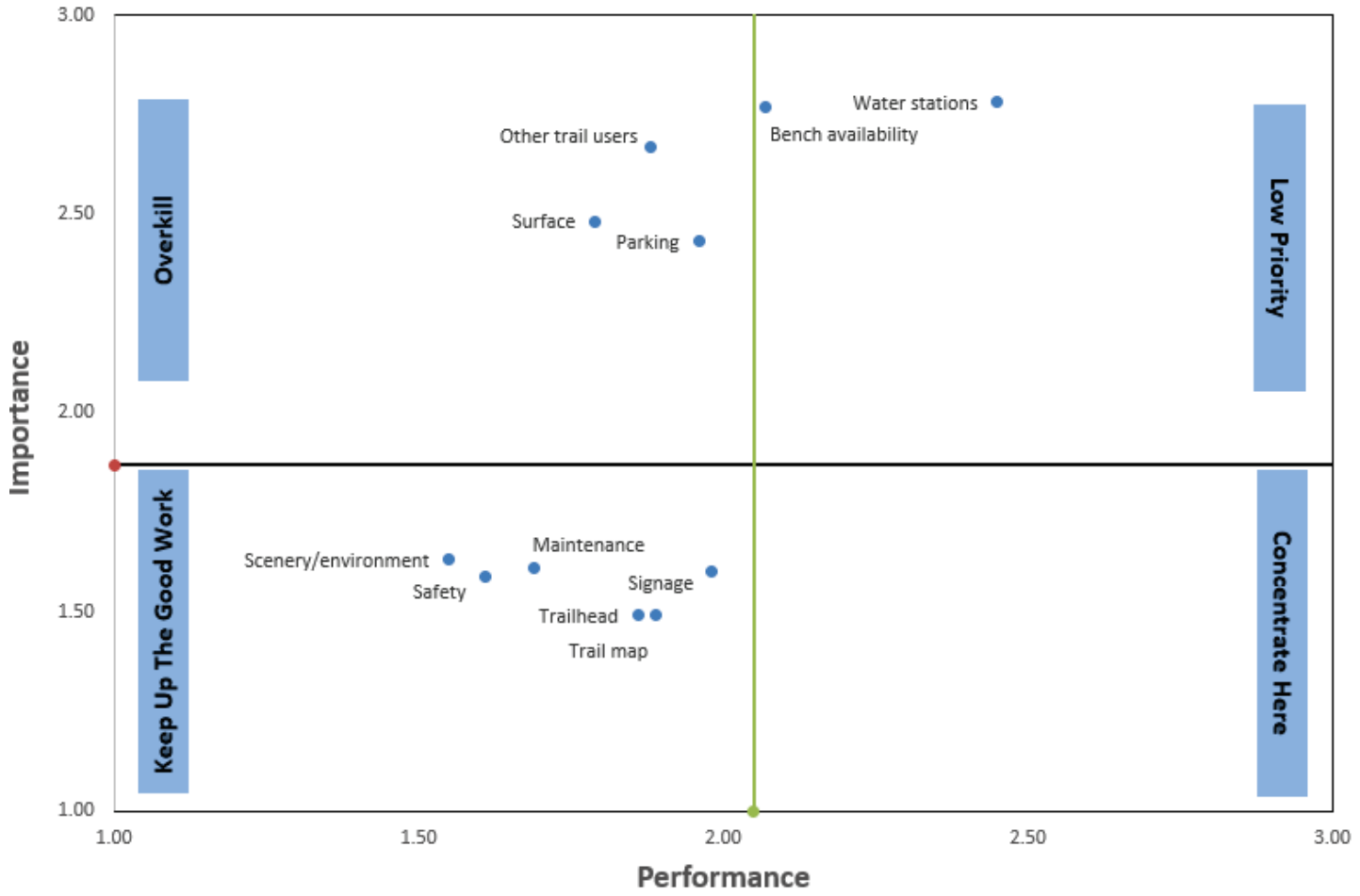
Combined...


Day User 2023 TRAILS Importance Performance Analysis IPA
n = 5433
Importance
Performance
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.50
1.00
1.00
1.50
2.00
2.50
3.00
Overkill
Low Priority
Keep Up The Good Work
Concentrate Here

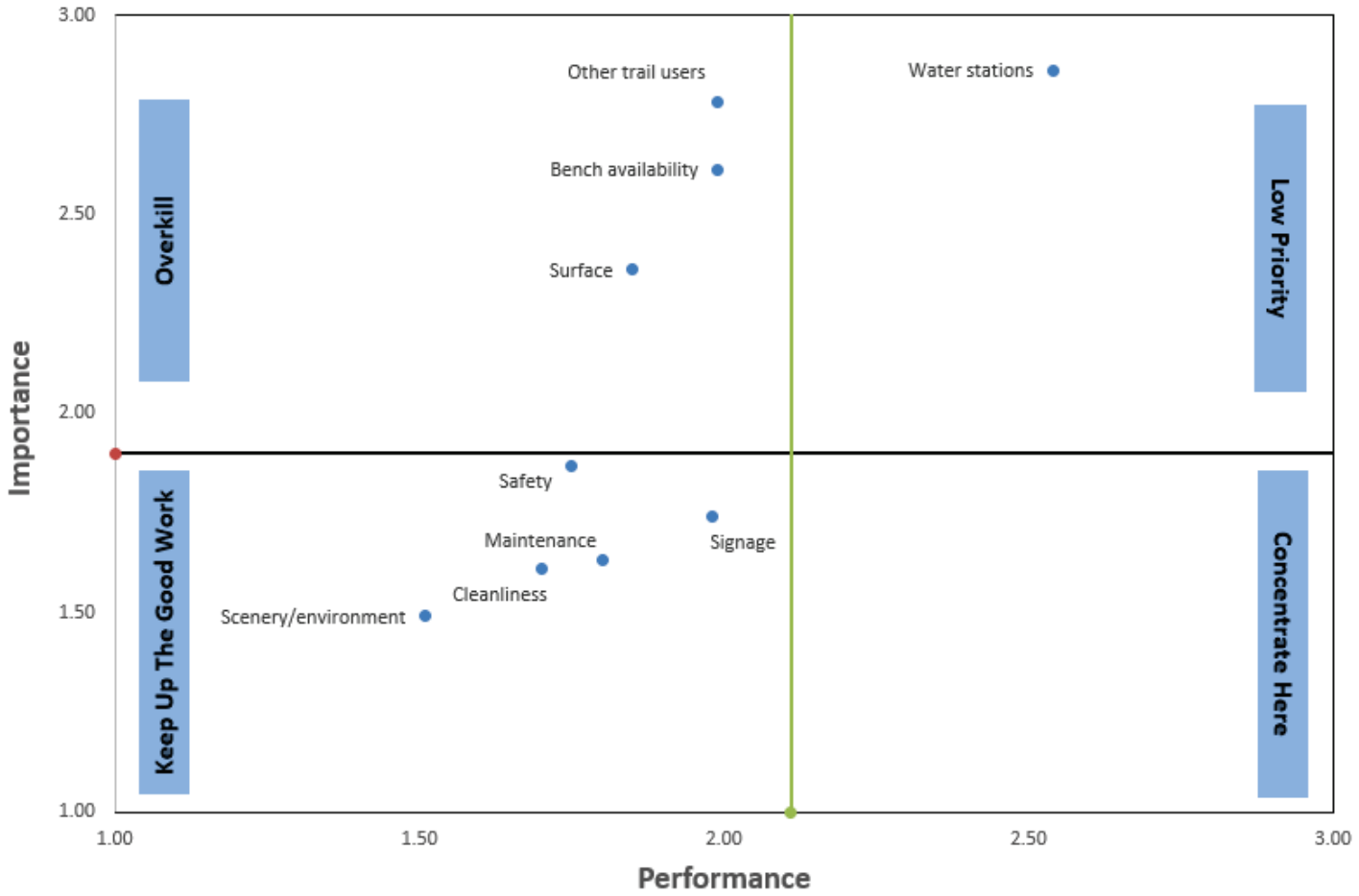

Marina/Harbor 2023 TRAILS Importance Performance Analysis IPA
n = 262
Importance
Performance
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.50
1.00
1.00
1.50
2.00
2.50
3.00
Overkill
Low Priority
Keep Up The Good Work
Concentrate Here
Other trail users
Bench availability
Water stations
Surface
Maintenance
Signage
Safety
Scenery/environment
Cleanliness
Trail map
Trailhead

Camper 2023 TRAILS Importance Performance Analysis IPA

n = 9,287



Day User 2023 TRAILS Importance Performance Analysis IPA
n = 5433



Overall Trail Satisfaction

95%

VERY SATISFIED (49%)
SATISFIED (46%)

94%

VERY SATISFIED (47%)
SATISFIED (47%)

94%

VERY SATISFIED (51%)
SATISFIED (43%)

Trail vs non trail visitor and overall satisfaction with their marina/campground/park?

Overall Satisfaction

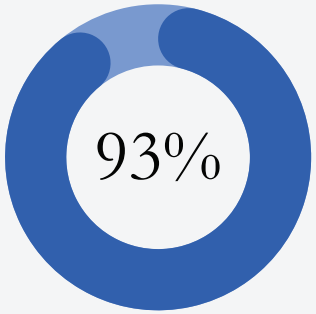
Trail Visitor/Non Trail Visitor

	Boater	Camper
Value	1.7/1.7	1.68/1.8
Amenities	1.91/1.74	1.78/1.9
Overall	1.56/1.5	1.57/1.7

The lower the score the higher the satisfaction

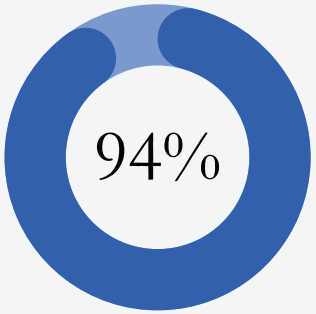
Would you recommend?

T-Boater



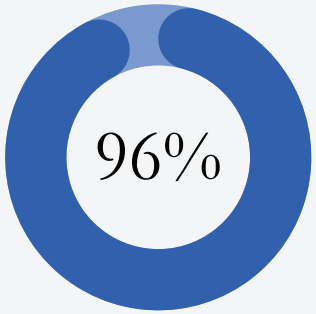
75% Absolutely
18% Likely

T-Camper



73% Absolutely
21% Likely

T-Day User



76% Absolutely
21% Likely

94%

NON TRAIL BOATER
77% Absolutely
17% Likely

92%

NON TRAIL CAMPER
68% Absolutely
24% Likely


Action...

Tell us your trail tales! 'Trails experience' survey open through Aug. 1

Michigan is home to more than 13,400 miles of state-designated trails and local and regional options that offer something for everyone – there's a reason we're known as the Trails State.

This summer, the DNR wants to hear what trail visitors have to say about biking, hiking, track-chair operating, paddling, horseback riding, off-road vehicle riding and snowmobiling these pathways. The 2024 Michigan Trails Experience Survey is open now through Aug. 1.

The online survey, available at Michigan.gov/DNRTrails, includes questions about the kinds of activities enjoyed on trails, conditions and amenities that make for a great trail experience, frequently visited trail regions in Michigan and more.

"We hope all trail users, from hikers and cyclists to paddlers, horseback riders and motorized trail users, will take this opportunity to let us know about their trail experiences," Novak said.

"Our goal with this survey is to capture a comprehensive picture of how residents and visitors use trails throughout Michigan and what their ideal trail experience looks and feels like," he said. "With this information, we'll be able to better understand the needs and wants of trail users, which in turn will help inform how we can best ensure optimal trail experiences for everyone, however they get outdoors and explore these pathways across the state."

Survey findings will be analyzed and shared with the Michigan Trails Advisory Council, a group of Michigan residents who advise the DNR director and the governor on the creation, development, operation and maintenance of motorized and nonmotorized trails.

Questions? Contact Tim Novak at 517-388-8347.

What's next?


THANK YOU
THOUGHTS?
JANESP@GVSU.EDU
989.424.0123

MTAC 2024 Q2 ETS Report

Equestrians are enjoying many horseback riding opportunities throughout Michigan.

pc: Lauren DeBoer Photography **Shoreline Horseback Riding Season at Silver Lake SP**

We are thankful for improvements of **electricity installed at the Fort Custer Recreation Area Equestrian Campground**, which is the first State of Michigan equestrian campground to have electricity,

and the **horse friendly steps** on both sides of Goose Creek,

These are **great examples** of **equestrian volunteers working with public lands managers**.

While we appreciate these improvements and opportunities, we also know there is **room for expansion** for people with horses to be welcomed in many counties throughout Michigan. **We are eager to work with you to safely welcome everyone, including people with horses.**

One of the best ways to welcome trail user groups is to post/advertise/educate with a **Safe Trails Passing Plan (STPP) sign.**

To **spread the word** and **increase funding**, the Department can print and sell the STPP sign on t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, hats, and stickers for trailers, vehicles, gear, accessories, etc. Trail enthusiasts would be happy to **purchase and promote** STPP sign, especially since it **helps everyone to be welcome and safe**. Trail enthusiasts will be walking/riding/driving billboards. Many people are courteous. Having a STPP sign will help **educate and provide a resource** for those who need direction.

Electric Motor Bike Land Use Order: Equestrian trail riders request to be brought into the conversation about opening Michigan state forest non-motorized trails and pathways to electric motor bicycles as this stands to greatly impact equestrian riding areas throughout our Michigan state forest lands. The fact that the equestrian voice has been left out of this conversation is a huge oversight by the DNR. There is still time for this to be corrected prior to the signing of the LUOD. Other non-motorized trail stakeholders were given over a year to get this figured out within the Electric Motor Bike Subcommittee. Equestrians, as a vulnerable trail user group, request to be part of the discussions and solutions.

Thank you for helping Michigan to have the best trails systems for everyone.

SAW REPORT - MTAC July 2024

We have two new members on the SAW committee, Doug Baum, who represents Trail Users and Snow Communities from the Lewiston area. He is a member of the NE Council of Governments and has a very long list of achievements in his past, including in law enforcement. I look forward to getting to know him better. Chad Van Bennecom is also a new member of SAW, Representing Region 1 MISORVA representative. Chad works with the Keweenaw Snowmobile Club and a few other tourism groups from the area. Chad is a wealth of information.

Snow Country Trails Conservancy proposed a Resolution to SAW that all future Permanent Trail Purchases will be snowmobile use only from Dec 1 through March 31 each year to align with the mission of creating a permanent snowmobile trail system.

Public Comment ;
Joe Schaffer—Allegan Snowmobile & Orv Club President—The DNR closed a section of trail due to an endangered species, the Karner Blue Butterfly, which the Fish & Wildlife Division has noted living in the area. The club has had a meeting requesting the availability of business in the state game area. We are waiting for the results of that meeting.

The Groomer Workshop was very successful in the new mid-week time slot. The attendance grew to just under 200 people and we had representatives from 47 of our 67 Grant Sponsor clubs. MISORVA would like to thank the DNR partners for their help and the instruction given at the event in the educational classes. MISORVA would also like to thank the grant from the snowmobile trail improvement fund for providing two registration costs for each club.

The Equipment Subcommittee has requested that clubs adhere to the handbook for guidance on using tracked machines to save on repairs and track replacement. The subcommittee has advised that snow equipment tracks are very different from the dirt tracks people see in the summer, working on farms, etc. The equipment is geared differently, and the genetic makeup of the actual tracks is uniquely different.

SAW chair requested that we investigate what impact if any would have on the change of snowmobile lease dates from Dec 1 - April 15 annually. After consulting with the grant sponsors, it was decided that this project should not be moved forward. Most clubs felt there was no substantial benefit.

Miners Castle—Ron Olson has again requested the county's permission for one more year of the trail to Miners Castle. Designated trail permission was denied. The road surface will be repaired and resurfaced; funding has been received. The reroute to Conservation Land will be a costly endeavor and will require two bridges.

UPDATE MINERS CASTLE - July 2024 Alger County Road Commission has requested the snowmobile program to pay for hardened asphalt. The road commission has agreed to a 5-year continuation of the current trail for a premium cost of around $250,000 for 5 years. Negotiations are ongoing.

Verizon GPS equipment is still being installed, and they are working out the bugs in the program. Although the tracking is not accurate in all areas, Jessica is still moving forward.

A new sign was proposed to be added to the gates that close off snowmobile trails. Jeff Smith mentioned that he had to make four passes on the trail to repair the damages and ruts caused

by wheeled vehicles. Drummond Island had to close its trail for two weeks due to damages caused by wheeled vehicles. This is a misallocation of program funds to repair damages inflicted on snowmobile trails. In support of the grant sponsors, we are asking MTAC to support the legislation or a LUOD to close designated snowmobile trails on state and federal lands to wheeled vehicles from December 1st through March 31st each year. Snowmobile users are asking for a safe and reasonable season. Nicole Hunt is reseaarching the possibility.

We discussed adding the DNR logo to the snowmobile trail signs in hopes of curbing their theft. DNR will research the process, why the logo was removed, and whether it can be added to the sign die and costs.

ORVAW Report

- Discussion of silver lake sand dunes ranger training along with the possible need to update trucks being used for emergency response and patrol as vehicles are getting dated and unreliable, group looks to see if ORV funds can be used to purchase these vehicles.
- High fines for extreme land destruction was also suggested by some board members.
- The raise in higher liability coverage for bike races and competitive motorized events was presented by the DNR in which has been in place for a year but needs to get out to groups as many are not aware of the change, no change to group rides.
- Group hopes to work with the DNR in improving the event permit process as it's lengthy and in some cases leaves little time prior to an event.

7/08/24

Michael Maves